

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

+

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MASCOT

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Picture: Graeme Main

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Creature comrades



WELCOME to our February issue, in which we look at the diverse role of animals in today's British Army.

From a winning edge on the battlefield to companionship for those affected by post-traumatic stress disorder, they certainly bring a huge amount to the military table.

In particular, check out the feature on page 35 about what it takes to turn the Service's ceremonial horses into parade-ground pros.

Also this month, a senior officer gives us some welcome detail on what another restructure will look like (and yes, we're struggling to keep up with the pace of change at the moment as well). Turn to page 20 for more.

Enjoy the issue and, as ever, please let us know if there is something we are not covering.

We rely on your feedback to keep these pages relevant, informative and entertaining. ■

Sarah Goldthorpe • Editor

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Online

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Image: Ben Rishton & family, Andy Garthwaite and Les Fryatt, Soldiers' Charity beneficiaries



The Light Dragons on a previous multinational exercise in Eastern Europe; now it's for real

Reassurance role

First British unit deploys to Poland under Nato plan

THE Light Dragons are about to test the interoperability that's been at the core of so many exercises of late.

Next month they will begin a year-long deployment with a multinational Nato force based in Orzysz, Poland to provide reassurance and support after Russia's military build-up in the region.

It will cap a frantic period for the light cavalrymen after learning of their new mission in October.

"Theresa May namechecked the regiment when the Polish leader Beata Szydlo visited the UK in November but we only found out about the task ourselves shortly before that," said the formation's commanding officer, Lt Col Ben Cossens.

"We've had a lot to do, what with preparing kit and training, but it's all good and it's great to be at the forefront of something new."

The regiment's A Squadron will be the first British unit in Poland, staying for around six-months until B Squadron arrives for the next half-year tour in the summer.

They are taking 15 Jackals, nine Coyotes and six Panther vehicles.

The unit will slot into a Stryker

battalion from the US Army's 2nd Cavalry Regiment, operating alongside Romanian and Polish troops under the command of the Polish Army's 15th Mechanised Brigade.

"We're there to defend the country against limited aggression," added Lt Col Cossens.

"We will provide a reconnaissance capability that the American battalion doesn't have."

The mission will provide the operational experience that's been missing since Afghanistan.

"Our task gives us a really meaty focus," continued the officer.

"Some of our personnel haven't deployed anywhere before so this is very exciting for them."

"They're all up for working with other nations too, to see what it brings and what they can learn."

"The deployment will also allow us to bed-in our light cavalry skills, a role we assumed only three years ago."

"We have a fantastic opportunity to enhance our mounted close combat expertise as our wheeled platforms are compatible with the Strykers, making us quick and manoeuvrable, individually and collectively."

IN NUMBERS

135

The number of personnel in A Squadron who will be travelling to Poland

6

Length of deployment in months for each of the two Light Dragoon squadrons

FIVE

The number of years the Nato reassurance measures are expected to last

SOLDIER

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A taste of Army events across the world

GLOBAL SITREP



FROM CATTERICK TO CANADA

Personnel from the Infantry Training Centre Catterick have been testing themselves in the annual Canadian Patrols Concentration. Find out how their soldiering skills fared on the frozen prairie on page 11.



1. UK

HONING HELICOPTER SKILLS

AROUND 400 soldiers from 16 Air Assault Brigade took part in Exercise Kukri Dawn with three Chinooks from the Royal Air Force's 28 Squadron.

Troops from 2nd and 3rd Battalions, The Parachute Regiment practised raids onto Fingringhoe Ranges near Colchester while members of 16 Medical Regiment rehearsed casualty evacuation.

Personnel from 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment and 13 Air Assault Support Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps also honed their ability to move supplies and vehicles as underslung loads.



3. SIERRA LEONE

JOINT JUNGLE PACKAGE

TROOPS from The Queen's Dragoon Guards have been conducting the UK's first joint jungle exercise with the armed forces of Sierra Leone.

Exercise Guma Sun saw 88 soldiers from B Squadron spend five weeks in the wilderness, where they learnt to fight and live in extreme conditions.

"It was a really new experience," commented Tpr Samuel Nookie.

"We learnt a great deal from their troops.

"It was an eye-opener to see what they can do with the little equipment they have and quite remarkable how they survive off the land."

2. MOROCCO

MARATHON MISSION AWAITS

FORMER soldier James Yeardley will tackle the punishing Marathon des Sables in April.

Staged in the Sahara Desert, the event sees runners cover a 250-kilometre course in six days, with temperatures ranging from 40 to 50 degrees Celsius.

Yeardley, who served in the Royal Corps of Signals during the 1990s, is raising money for military charity Blesma and donations can be made by visiting www.virginmoneygiving.com/mds2017



Troops conquer last great wilderness...

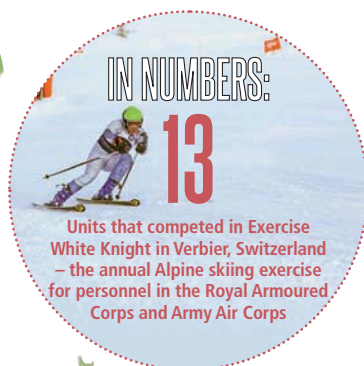
Service success in South Pole – page 13

INTELLIGENCE FOR THE ATLAS?

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4. NIGERIA

TWIN TRAINING TASKS

SHORT-term training teams from the Royal Engineers and the Infantry have been coaching the Nigerian military.

Members of A Company, The Royal Anglian Regiment helped to develop the combat skills of the country's troops.

They also supported the Nigerian School of Infantry's counter-terrorism and tracker courses.

Meanwhile, sappers from 101 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) hosted a three-week intensive course in search and EOD to help Nigeria in its fight against the terrorist organisation Boko Haram.

The deployments were the latest in an ongoing British Army effort to support defence engagement in the country.

“
They can
push
themselves
to collapse
”

Revolutionary new kit
tracks soldier strain
– pages 44-46

6. FRANCE

CHUNNEL CHALLENGE

THE Army sent tanks through the Channel Tunnel for the first time as part of an exercise to test the viability of moving them to mainland Europe quickly.

Five tracked assets were loaded on to trains and taken to France and back in a trial organised by 29 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps.

The tunnel has been used to transport supplies and kit but never armoured vehicles.



5. IRAQ

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

DESPITE the tragic loss of LCpl Scott Hetherington (see page 13) it has been business as usual for the 150 troops of The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment and 4th Battalion, The Rifles who have been training Iraqi and Kurdish security forces since December 2016.

They have been developing the local troops' skills in urban warfare and will be providing expertise and support until mid-2017 as part of the UK's commitment to the 67-member global coalition boosting the fight against Daesh.

The number of British military personnel in the region is set to rise to around 1,350 over the coming months.



"I believe I can become a champion"

– Boxer's title target, page 78

FEARLESS FUNDRAISING



Money raised:
£23,021
For: Various causes

Gunners set the standard

THE gunners of 14 Regiment, Royal Artillery have seen their fundraising efforts rewarded with the Cornwall Cup. Given by the Royal Artillery Charitable Fund, the accolade honours the regiment that has raised the most money in 12 months. The unit raised an impressive total for ten different causes in 2016.



Money raised:
£2,353
For: Walking with the Wounded

A marathon effort

COVERING more than a marathon a day, Capt Adam Hugill (Yorks) walked 220 miles from Warminster to his home town of Beverley, East Yorkshire. The officer completed his challenge in nine days, sleeping rough each night.



Welsh wander

SERVICE teams are being encouraged to

sign up for this summer's WAAT4 Challenge – a 40km navigation event in the Brecon Beacons. Run by CSgt Gary Philpott (R Irish), the route includes South Wales' highest peak, Pen y Fan.

For details visit:
www.waat4.co.uk



Age, in years, that 3rd Battalion, The Rifles reaches this month. The light mechanised infantry troops are based in Edinburgh and equipped with the Foxhound vehicle.

PUBLIC FIGHT FOR SITES

LOCAL councillors are opposing the closure of Woolwich Barracks in London.

The historic site, which has been a mainstay of the community since 1802, has been included on a list of 91 locations the Ministry of Defence is hoping to sell off by 2040.

Announced late last year, the move will see the department's most expensive sites disposed of to create £140 million of savings over the next decade.

However, Greenwich-based campaigners want Woolwich Barracks to remain, and a cross-party campaign to lobby the MoD is now underway.

"The barracks have a long and respected connection with our borough and we value their continued presence here," said council leader Cllr Denise Hyland.

"We stand united in our mission to lobby at the highest level to keep the Army in Woolwich at the heart of our community."

“I simply parroted the party line”

Confessions of a former OC

TALKBACK
PAGE 47

Smashing smoking

THE Surgeon General's office has assured personnel that a smoking ban is not being enforced at DMS Whittington, despite reports to the contrary.

A recent letter from VAdm Alasdair Walker had been sent to those based at the facility to inform them that smoking at work and in uniform would be prohibited from March 8.

But a Ministry of Defence spokesman told *Soldier* that a ban will not be put in place and, instead, troops will be encouraged to engage in a pilot scheme aimed at reducing smoking on site and giving them the support they need in their efforts to quit.

Details of how the six-month initiative will work are still being planned. Look out for more information in future issues of the magazine.



BROADCASTING COURSE LAUNCHED

THE Services Sound and Vision Corporation (SSVC) is launching a media academy for ex-military personnel interested in a new career in journalism and broadcasting.

Based at the organisation's headquarters in Buckinghamshire, the course will offer 15 places a year and lead to an HNC-level qualification.

Candidates will benefit from work experience at SSVC – which runs a range of television, digital and radio services for the military community – as well as tuition from academic professionals.





Attention to detail pays in Canada

AN eight-strong team from 1st Infantry Training Battalion proved they can stand shoulder to shoulder with some of the world's best soldiers during the fourth annual Canadian Patrols Concentration.

Temperatures of -12 degrees Celsius greeted the personnel at the start of the 40-kilometre challenge, which is based on the Cambrian Patrol event in Wales and features a live-fire element using the host nation's C7 rifles.

The UK line-up included three

private soldiers who had recently passed out of the Infantry Training Centre Catterick and they saw every element of their efforts assessed – from the efficiency with which they zeroed their weapons to the enemy information gathered in the field.

Their attention to detail paid off as they won a bronze medal.

"It was harder than anything we'd done in training but it felt great to be representing the Army in Canada," said Rfn Gareth Donovan (Rifles).

AWARD WINNING

■ CELEBRITIES, soldiers and veterans will turn out to honour some of the military community's most impressive people at the Soldiering On Awards in London next month. Among those shortlisted for a prize is the Scottish charity Bravehound, which is featured on page 40. Visit www.soldieringon.org



MEME OF THE MONTH   

AND THAT, TROOPS

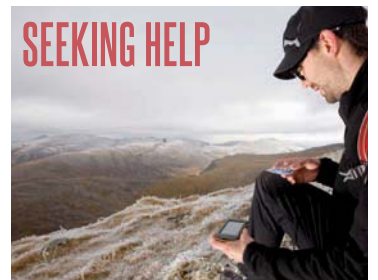


HIP TIPS HUNT

■ A SPECIALIST team at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court is to conduct a major study into the causes, prevention and possible cures for hip pain in the Armed Forces.

Around one fifth of military personnel are diagnosed with musculoskeletal injuries at any one time, with soldiers the most likely to be medically downgraded.

SEEKING HELP



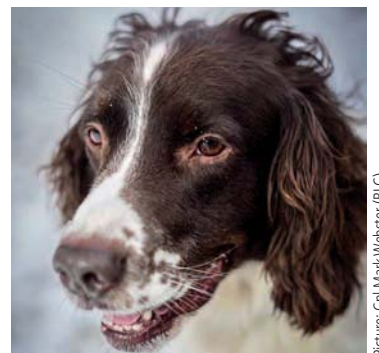
■ A WEBSITE has been launched to help the military community navigate the range of charities, support groups and other services available to them.

Visit www.forcesonline.org.uk

CHAMPION CHARITY

■ ABF The Soldiers' Charity has been named as the number one organisation for using its money well when it comes to supporting soldiers, veterans and families.

The result comes from the latest Charity Brand Index, which surveyed more than 4,000 people across the UK.



Picture: Cpl Mark Webster (RLC)

DOGGED DETERMINATION

■ MILITARY working dog Charlie from Germany-based 102 Military Working Dog Squadron has made it through to the final four of the Kennel Club's "extraordinary life of a working dog" award.

The overall winner will be announced at Crufts 2017 next month after a public vote.

● Pooch protection – page 30

“
I wasn't
prepared for
the extreme
weather
”



"She saved my life – she's just good company"

– Dog helps veteran fight PTSD, page 41

BIRTHDAY TREAT FOR TOT

■ A SOLDIER'S spontaneous act of kindness towards an Army-mad youngster went viral after footage of the encounter was uploaded to social media.

LCpl Paul Edden (Coldm Gds) was marching his men to the guardroom after they came off duty at Windsor Castle, when he saw four-year-old Marshall Scott wearing a tiny red tunic and bearskin.

The tot, who was on a birthday outing, saluted the troops as they passed and LCpl Edden decided to pose for a photograph with him.

"I spotted that he was wearing the red plume of the Coldstream Guards," the junior NCO told *Soldier*.

"I was always really into the Army when I was little so I thought it would be nice to give something back and let him have a picture together."

A tourist captured the moment on video and the clip was liked and shared thousands of times on Facebook.

The pair were even invited to appear together on *Sky News*.



Picture: Joanna Feng

WILDCAT DEAL SEALED

■ TRAINING and support services for the UK's fleet of Wildcat aircraft are secure for the next five years, thanks to a new deal between the MoD and Leonardo Helicopters.

The £271 million-contract to look after the 62 platforms flown by the Army and Royal Navy will also protect 500 skilled British jobs.



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



UPROOTING TROOPS CAUSES ANGST

AT the end of last year, when the MoD published its Better Defence Estate strategy, we at the AFF knew that families would have concerns over the effect that yet more upheaval would have.

Since then the "Army 2020 refine" announcement has outlined further changes to the structure of the Service (page 20) and where its formations will be based in years to come.

News like this will of course be really important to the serving person, but it must never be forgotten that such changes also have a huge effect on loved ones.

Worried families continue to contact us, uncertain of what their future holds.

Where will they be living? When will they move? How will it work for those that have put down roots and purchased homes in their adopted local community?

Army families are used to change and moving is second nature for many, but not to all – especially not

those who were looking forward to more stability and have now found out they are moving, again.

Therefore I would like to reassure families that a key focus of AFF's work this year will be to look closely at the impact rebasing will have.

“**WORRIED FAMILIES CONTINUE TO CONTACT US**”

”

We will be working with the chain of command and various organisations such as local authorities, sharing our evidence and recommendations and ensuring that families' voices are heard throughout the process.

For those who do have concerns get in touch with your unit welfare officer, who should be able to offer clarity around these issues.

The AFF's local coordinators are also on hand to offer support, so visit our website to find out who your local representative is.

www.aff.org.uk

“
It's very relevant to what we do
”

SNOWBOARD HIGHLIGHTS RECOVERY BATTLE

A FREELANCE illustrator has designed a bespoke snowboard for soldiers taking to the slopes through the Battle Back scheme.

The monochrome graphic was created by artist Hannah Joyce and depicts a forest and path to signify the rehabilitation process.

"It's about people struggling to come to terms with a different way of life," said WO2 John Craig (RAPTC), the brains behind the collaboration.

"I hear all the time how personnel have to find a way through the dark, so it's very relevant to what we do."

Twelve boards have been produced, which will also help the organisation to cut down on equipment rental costs.



Picture: Sgt Jamie Peters (RLC)



Any other bright ideas?

THE Service is embarking on a year of innovation as it bids to become a better performing and more affordable organisation.

As well as structural changes under the "Army 2020 refine" programme, improvements are being sought across the board and a number of initiatives are planned over the coming months, with serving personnel and civilian staff encouraged to have their say.

"We need to be more innovative," Lt Col Chris MacGregor (KRH) of the Organisation Branch at Army

Headquarters told *Soldier*.

"We know we do that in the battle space but we want ideas in other areas from those who are closest to the challenge.

"These can be small or large scale. The cumulative effect of everyone doing things a little differently can be really beneficial."

The MoD already encourages ideas aimed at improving the way it does business via the Gems scheme and personnel are also urged to take any further suggestions they have to the chain of command.

“
We need
to be more
innovative
”

In memoriam

TRIBUTES have been paid to a "first class leader" who was killed in an accidental shooting at Camp Taji, north of Baghdad.

LCpl Scott Hetherington of 2nd Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment had deployed to Iraq as part of the mission to train local forces in their fight against Isis.

The 22-year-old was a member of Blenheim Company and a vehicle commander in the force protection platoon.

"LCpl Hetherington was a superb soldier and first-class leader," said Lt Col Rob Singleton, commanding officer of 2 Lancs.

"Utterly professional and talented, he was full of character and his enthusiasm was infectious. "He will be missed dearly and we will never forget him.

"Our hearts go out to his parents, siblings, girlfriend and young daughter. They are all in our thoughts."



LCPL SCOTT
HETHERINGTON,
2 LANCs,
DIED JANUARY 2
CAMP TAJI, IRAQ

SOUTH POLE RECORD SET

■ FIVE Reservists have become the first military team in history to complete a 1,100-mile crossing of Antarctica.

The South Pole Expedition Army Reserves team (Spear 17) spent 67 days on the ice, pulling their own equipment and food in temperatures as low as -50 degrees Celsius.

Only three people had ever accomplished the feat before them.

Having reached the South Pole on Christmas Day, the soldiers took on resupply and said goodbye to comrade, LCpl Alun George, who was deemed medically unfit to continue.

They then went on to finish the final leg – the same route taken by former officer Henry Worsley, who died attempting his own solo crossing last year.

Expedition leader, WO1 Lou Rudd, said the mission had challenged all the Servicemen physically and mentally.

"With this team, it's been possible to attempt the distance, face the weather, the crevasses, the terrain and the isolation," he commented.

Spear 17 is raising money for ABF The Soldiers' Charity. To support the cause text SKIS90 and £5 to 70070 or visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/spear17



ALLOWANCE AMENDED

■ THE operational locations where troops can claim unpleasant living allowance have been updated.

The payment acknowledges the hardships faced on prolonged deployments where living conditions are judged to fall below a minimum standard.

For details read *JSP 752*, chapter 10, section four.



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ON COURSE AT WARMINSTER

THE Land Warfare School has been renamed the Junior Staff Centre after being brought under the direction of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. The Warminster-based establishment delivers two key educational packages: the junior officer tactics and awareness course and the junior command and staff course (land) – formerly the captain's

warfare course.

Speaking to *Soldier* about the change, course director Lt Col Rob Lindsay (SG) said it would ensure less accidental repetition of content for junior officers.

"We will continue to provide the right education at the right stage," he added.

● Final word – page 82

Pictures: Steve Dock

Q: What's been most useful about the junior command and staff course?

"Being able to bring the different cap badges together. You're brought out of your own bubble and made aware of how others do things."

Capt James Thomas (R Signals)



"To stop and think about what we are doing, rather than just doing it, and having time to focus on our professional development."

Capt Conor O'Shea (RDG)



"This feels like the start of the professionalisation of the Army officer. Troop commanding is a very different sport to being a staff officer, where you take on more responsibility."

Capt Rowan Dalglish (Int Corps)



Flexible duties step up

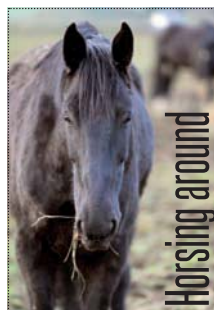
A TRIAL of flexible duties for Armed Forces personnel has been extended.

Troops have until the summer of 2018 to apply for the arrangement if they are interested, and must commit to a minimum period of six months.

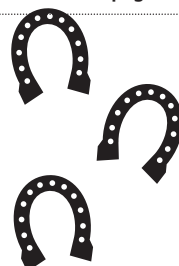
Part of the new employment model, it gives personnel the option of reducing their liability for deployment and/or taking up to 93 days' unpaid leave in separate stints rather than in a single block.

The trial will run from next month to March 2018 and for more details about the scheme and its restrictions read **2017DIN01-006**

Troops serving in Defence Equipment and Support are not eligible.



How do you take one of these from zero to hero? Turn to page 35



SPINE LINE COMPETITION



WIN

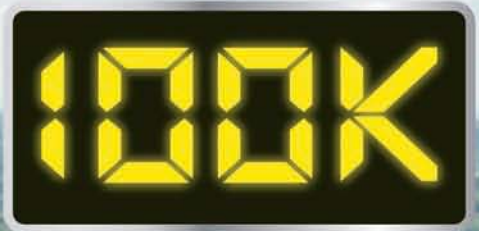
LAST month's spine line clues were inspired by the intrepid Antarctica explorers who were due to arrive back in the UK as this issue hit the shelves.

(Tpr Alex) Brazier, (LCpl Alun) George, (WO1 Lou) Rudd and (Tpr Ollie) Stoten were all members of the Spear 17 team who took part in the gruelling coast-to-coast traverse of the ice-covered continent.

This month, courtesy of country clothing and equipment supplier Fur Feather and Fin (www.furfeatherandfin.com), we have a classy leather and canvas travel accessory kit worth more than £250 to give away.

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Picture: Graeme Main

Recruitment hurdle is revealed

THE Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Nicholas Carter, has spoken out about the challenges the Service is facing as it recruits from the next generation of teenagers and twenty-somethings.

At an event at London's BT Tower involving the company's re-signing of the Armed Forces Covenant and the official launch of the Army's leadership doctrine, Gen Carter said the millennial generation might take more convincing to join up but are equipped with the

technological skills suited to more modern warfare.

"They are much more adaptable to the information age than my generation, but they want to know what's in it for them," he added.

Top brass have high hopes that a recently launched £3 million advertising campaign which focuses on the "unique and lasting bonds of friendship" found when serving will help to boost the number of new recruits in the Army.

Learning the drills

TROOPS from Sierra Leone, Malta, Canada and Hong Kong are among those to attend the latest all-arms basic drill course run by the Army School of Ceremonial.

They were the first foreign and Commonwealth personnel to join the programme in recent times and will be taught how to instruct drill to colleagues back home.

Staged this month, the training follows a trip to Hong Kong by the UK instructors, where they worked with members of the local police force.



"On completion they should have gained the confidence to deliver instruction and use all the items they need to teach with," said Capt Graham White (SG), the school's OC.

MUSEUMS FACE CUTS

■ THE MoD has issued reassurances over the future of regimental museums after newspapers reported that more than a dozen are facing funding cuts.

The department is reducing the number of museums it supports from 67 to 36 – one for every current British Army regiment.

Among those in the firing line are the museums of The Surrey Infantry, The Essex Regiment, The Mercian Regiment, The Royal Welsh and The King's Royal Hussars.

But the move has prompted fears of a breakdown in the relationship between local communities and the Forces.

"We recognise the important contribution made by these museums in preserving military heritage and acting as a bridge between communities and the Army," an MoD spokesman said.

"This is why, irrespective of funding, they will continue to receive support and have close ties with their associated regiment."

Last June *Soldier* reported how the Firepower Royal Artillery Museum in Woolwich was forced to close its doors and move to Larkhill after failing to reach a target of 200,000 visitors a year.

VIRTUAL MADE REALITY

■ BRITISH troops will continue to benefit from cutting-edge virtual training after the MoD signed a new contract with simulation specialists NSC.

The Camberley-based firm will deliver a diverse range of exercises that are designed to prepare Regular and Reserve personnel for future operations and complement what they learn in the field.

The hi-tech system (shown below) is run on a network of laptop computers and immerses soldiers in a variety of terrains that feature authentic vehicles and weaponry and intelligent non-combatants and hostile forces.

Known as unit-based virtual training, it is the successor to the joint combat operations virtual environment programme previously delivered by NSC.



200

Service personnel who have taken advantage of the **tenancy deposit loan scheme** since June 2016. The initiative is part of the **new employment model** and allows soldiers to apply for an advance-of-salary loan to cover the cost of a deposit on a rental property.





THE BIG PICTURE

BRUNEI

AIMING HIGH

HOUSEHOLD Cavalry soldiers secure a landing site as 7 Flight, Army Air Corps delivers more troops during Exercise Ulu Rajah. In a departure from their usual role, the personnel have been conducting long-range reconnaissance and live firing in some of the most demanding jungle terrain on the planet.

Picture: Sgt Rupert Frere (RLC)

‘NO SOLDIERS WILL

Senior officer explains changes on horizon for Army's fighting forces

IN last month's issue of *Soldier* we brought news of a restructure to the Infantry, involving the set-up of so-called strike brigades and specialised units. Here, Brig Roly Walker, the Army's head of strategy, explains what this will mean exactly for troops affected by the overhaul.

Why more change?

Nothing has changed about the core purpose of the British Army; we're still here to provide contingent forces for defence and deterrence and engage both at home and overseas.

But we've recognised that the character of conflict is evolving.

Since our defence policy was reviewed in 2015 we've been required to be able to fight a war at scale as a joint force, while at the same time remaining appropriately balanced in capability terms to deal with emerging threats.

One of the requirements we have is to be able to field a modernised division of anything up to 40,000 personnel.

The broad aim is to have a large fast-reacting force that can integrate effectively with the other Services as well as the militaries of allied nations.

So what exactly are these strike brigades?

They group together armoured cavalry and mechanised infantry formations.

They will offer considerable firepower and will be able to operate over greater distances with less logistic support, mainly because the new vehicles such as Ajax (pictured far right) and the proposed mechanised infantry vehicle

will be more durable than platforms we have now.

These brigades will be optimised to operate in more complex terrain, such as urban areas, as well as enabling divisional armoured manoeuvre as part of a larger force.

Our three current armoured infantry brigades will be reorganised to provide two armoured and two strike brigades, increasing the overall number of combat formations in the 3rd (UK) Division.

It's a vital capability because we know certain potential foes have developed layered air and sea defence systems which means the land route into theatre is more important than ever.

How large will the strike brigades be?

Each will consist of about 5,000 personnel, including all the support functions – engineers, medical, artillery, Istar and so on. From about 2023 onwards we will have one strike brigade and one armoured infantry brigade at readiness at any one time with the lead elements at notice to move within a couple of days.

What are specialised infantry battalions?

They will be smaller than non-

specialised battalions but with a greater proportion of rank and experience because that's what is needed for their role.

In Iraq and Afghanistan we trained Infantry personnel to advise, assist and mentor partner forces and we became very adept at it.

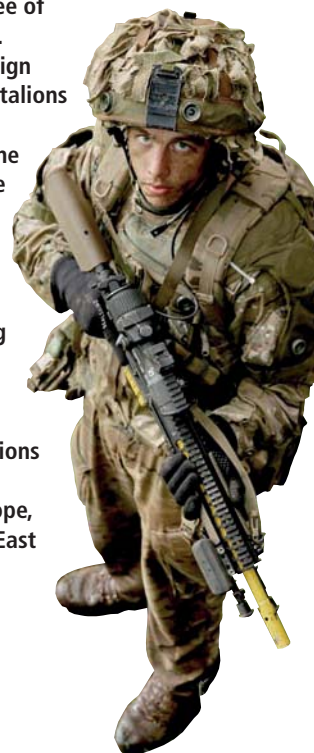
This move is recognition that this was a very sensible way of operating, getting to know the indigenous forces and working effectively with them.

Each specialised battalion will have around 300 Regular posts compared to around 550 in other Infantry units.

They will be optimised to operate in potentially hostile environments, in scenarios and situations where it might be too risky to employ the services of a light role infantry battalion without a high degree of preparation.

We will align the new battalions to specified regions of the world where defence is currently engaged in training and advising partner nations and allies.

These regions are likely to include Europe, the Middle East



LOSE THEIR JOB?

and Africa. We will have a permanent presence in these areas on a rotational basis so teams can build their lingual and cultural expertise and forge strong relationships.

The system mirrors how some US special forces battalions are organised.

Which units are slated to become specialised infantry battalions?

4th Battalion, The Rifles and 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland will move to their new role in the next year or so and then 2nd Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment and 2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment will join them by the end of the decade.

They'll all be based in Aldershot. The requirement for a fifth such battalion is under consideration.

What happens if you are a lower ranked soldier serving in one of those units, and not required under the new structure?

It's not everyone's cup of tea, we recognise that, and the role isn't a specific function of rank.

The personnel involved need to want to do this so I'm sure we'll see a



“
We need
more units
in fewer
divisions
”



→ redistribution of personnel as a result, but no soldier will lose his job.

Will anyone lose their job as a result of the restructure?

There will be no redundancies at all as a direct consequence of this.

There is a government manifesto commitment to maintain an Army of 82,000 Regular troops and build a Reserve force of 30,000 personnel and there are no plans within the Service to get rid of any cap badges.

Some units are being disbanded (see January issue, page 7) and those soldiers will be moved to other similar units if they want to work in the same role.

And where we grow one cap badge and reduce the footprint of another, the process will be done through recruitment and natural outflow as people leave.

Will some units have to move location?

Yes, a number will be affected (see right), partly for operational reasons and also because the MoD is reducing our estate by a third over the next few years.

The Army needs to be sited where it can best meet operational and training needs and also near places of critical mass to help Service families with employment and easy access to amenities.

We're also putting certain units, especially those with a more technical role, close to

specific colleges and reputed centres of expertise, which will help recruitment. We also have to maintain an evenly distributed national footprint in order to meet potential homeland resilience tasks.

Why are the infantry divisions being altered?

We have created a new role in specialised infantry to add to the mechanised, light role and armoured infantry formations so we need more units in fewer divisions to make sure each one has a proper spread of capabilities.

We're dropping from seven to six with The Scottish and The Prince of Wales's administrative divisions merging and incorporating The Royal Regiment of Scotland, The Royal Welsh and The Royal Irish Regiment.

It will be called The Scottish, Welsh and Irish Division.

The Mercian Regiment, currently in The Prince of Wales's Division which is to be dissolved, will join the King's Division.

There will be no changes to the names or regimental construct of any of these units.

When can soldiers expect all these moves to take place?

They will be completed within the next five years and some units will have to move before that but everyone affected has now been given a warning order. The Defence Infrastructure Organisation has yet to complete the detailed timings but they will be finalised in the near future. ■

● Look out for an update on how the changes will affect other parts of the Army in the next issue.

On the move

Strike brigade units

Household Cavalry Regiment – Windsor to Bulford

1st Battalion, Scots Guards – Aldershot to Catterick

1 Royal Logistic Support Regiment – Bicester to Catterick

3 Medical Regiment – Preston to Catterick

21 Engineer Regiment – Ripon to Catterick

Royal Dragoon Guards – Catterick to Warminster

1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment – Warminster to Catterick

Royal Lancers – Catterick to Warminster

3rd Battalion, The Rifles – Edinburgh to Catterick

4th Regiment, Royal Artillery – Topcliffe to Newcastle

2nd Close Support Battalion, REME – Leuchars to Catterick

New Reserves

Three new Reserve battalions will be formed.

These will be **4th Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment**, which is to be based in the South East of England, and **8th Battalion, The Rifles**, which will be located in the North East of England.

One **explosive ordnance disposal Royal Engineer regiment** will also be created but its location has yet to be confirmed.

Specialised infantry

1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland – Northern Ireland to Aldershot

2nd Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment – Blackpool to Aldershot

2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment – Dhekelia in Cyprus to Aldershot



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Tony Smith, FPS Member



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WONDERS OF AN IRISH WOLFHOUND

What makes this massive dog a good mascot? *Soldier* investigates

A PLAIN-clothed British soldier runs manically round a field in Ireland shouting "Paddy". It might sound like the start of a politically incorrect joke and to be quite honest, as a spectacle, it is hilarious. But Sgt Brian Curley (R Irish) is attempting to persuade a pair of huge Irish wolfhounds to come to heel to pose for a photograph.

Soldier is at the home of Nutstown Irish Wolfhounds, the birthplace of The Royal Irish Regiment's mascot, Brian Boru X – or Conri for short – to get some answers about how and why a dog the size of a small horse is linked so strongly with troops.

The farm belongs to world-renowned breeder Kathleen Kelly, who came to the attention of the regiment when it was searching for a new mascot.

Capt Nathan Reid, the formation's adjutant, says: "The regiment has had a wolfhound as its mascot since 1972 and we had two dogs die quite young so we were searching for one with the best bloodline to ensure it would be strong.

"Irish wolfhounds have such elegance and an imposing stature and we wanted to know we were getting a pure breed that was actually from Ireland."

After almost two years without a mascot, Conri was received by his new military owners last May.

In keeping with the formation's close links with the community the dog's pet name, which is Celtic for "the wolf king", was

chosen by pupils at Dundonald Primary School.

Historically the breed was used in war to drag men off horseback or chariots, but as we walk past the kennels and into the farmhouse it is evident that these modern-day descendants are good-natured, loveable animals.

However, the question is: why have one as an Army mascot? In fact, why have a mascot at all?

"The Irish wolfhound really defines who we are," says Sgt Curley, who works on the regimental support team.

"Being led out by the pipes and drums and the dog brings it home to our lads that we are unique.

"It bonds the troops, whether from Northern Ireland or south of the border.

"These days you look at the likes of the US Army and everyone looks the same, whereas the British Army has its quirky traditions like having a mascot and it is a big part of what makes us proud."

Inside Mrs Kelly's busy house, adorned from top to bottom with trophies and ribbons boasting success at dog shows, we get an insight into how to breed champions.

Despite her efforts to play the process down, it is quite clear that it would be difficult to match her knowledge of keeping a coveted bloodline going.

"I've been breeding for 58 years," she says, smiling and patting Polly, Conri's mother, who is pregnant with another litter.

"My dogs are sold to people from all over the world –



> KELLY'S HEROES

Clockwise: A young Conri enjoys a run off the leash; being introduced to wolfhound major Rgr Robert Moore (R Irish) in 2016; Kathleen Kelly displays her impressive haul of competition trophies and ribbons

Pictures: Kellie Shattock and Graeme Main



South Africa, New Zealand, Japan, Sweden, France, Switzerland and the rest."

While dismissing that what she does is a clever science, Mrs Kelly knows her wolfhounds are top of the class – some have been sold for around £50,000.

"When you're winning awards people want your dogs," she concedes. "They're in films too."

That casual comment is a reference to a recent cameo of some Irish wolfhounds that featured in a little-known television series called *Game of Thrones*.

Between making more tea, preparing the dogs' next meal and slicing cake for her guests the 76-year-old expands on her methods: "They're always out galloping in the field and all are bred here on the farm."

"They have free rein and that really makes a huge difference; being outside and living life. Everybody says that my dogs are much stronger than others."

Given that the Irish wolfhound is the tallest breed of dog in the world it seems natural to ask what they are fed to sustain their energy.

Foolishly I expected a technical answer, perhaps along the lines of specially-formulated protein shakes.

"Every morning we give them a fried egg," says Mrs Kelly, showing me her frying pan full of breakfast.

"Everything is natural food and we get buckets of scraps from the golf course that backs on to the farm."

"We never really went in for the fancy food."

"Tins? We never give our dogs tins, oh no."

"We've got about 25 dogs so we can't be going round with tins for each one – porridge is much better."

"We've been very lucky so far with our breeding so would never deviate from our ways."

Assembled in the open kitchen, a discussion unfolds with a group of Irish wolfhound enthusiasts, visiting to admire the products of the Nutstown farm.

The consensus is that a good quality specimen has "nice ears, strong bones, a nice head and nice angulation", which apparently means it will move well.

"They have a lovely temperament – in all my life I have never had a problem with one," insists the breeder.

"Obviously that's perfect for being a mascot."

Conri's status as one of the official mascots sanctioned by the Army honours and distinction committee grants him a regimental number, the rank of private, and rations and quartering at public expense.

On duty at various ceremonies and events his uniform includes a green coat trimmed with lace and displaying the regimental badge.

The man who knows him better than anyone else is wolfhound major, Rgr Robert Moore (R Irish), who is enjoying his first job as the unit's dog handler.

"It's completely different to being an infantry soldier," he admits.

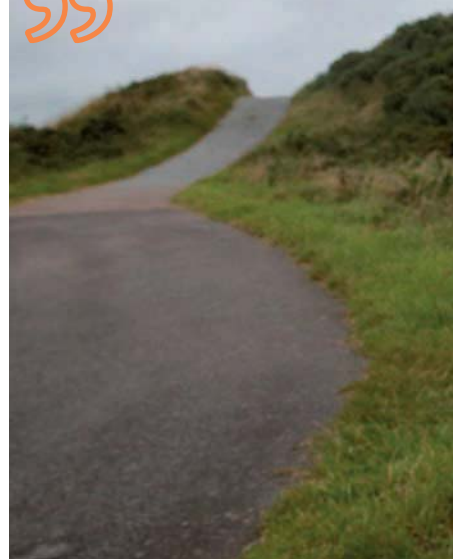
"Put simply my day-to-day role is looking after Conri – grooming, feeding, exercising, training and basically just playing. It's the best job in the Army."

Rgr Moore's devotion is clear because he is standing with his foot in a cast after his canine partner pulled him in an awkward direction a few weeks prior to our meeting, ripping a tendon in his leg.

We meet the powerful beast in the flesh – sporting his rare blonde fur coat – later in the day and the trio of Capt Reid, Sgt Curley and Rgr Moore agree that he works wonders for morale, promoting their regiment and building bonds in the community.



On parade he leads the blokes and off-duty he's always happy to play with them





"He is very popular and our companies request to have photographs taken with him before tours," says Rgr Moore. "On parade he leads the blokes and off-duty he's always happy to play with them."

Sgt Curley adds: "My job involves going into schools to talk about the Army and open pupils' eyes to the world of soldiering."

"Having the dog with us is brilliant because everyone remembers him."

Luckily for the soldiers of The Royal Irish, Mrs Kelly was impressed by their values and the life the Army could offer Conri.

They may not have realised it at the time but ahead of handing over the dog the breeder ran a full assessment of his potential new owners.

"I would only ever give my dogs to a good home, it doesn't matter how much money I might be offered," emphasises the tough-talking woman.

"The rich and famous come here looking for a pet but they don't provide a good life – they're never at home."

"I had Michael Flatley wanting a dog, but he's always away."

The taskmaster is happy with her new military friends, though.

"I love working with the Army, they're lovely people," she beams. "This is the first mascot I've produced for The Royal Irish Regiment and the lads seem to love Conri."

Providing a huge morale boost for troops, adding an extra element of prestige on the parade square, advancing community relations and having a positive impact on recruitment – solid answers for why The Royal Irish Regiment has this particular dog as its mascot.

On the downside, though, Conri might just be outshining even the best human soldiers. ■

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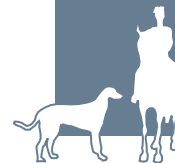
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FORCE'S FRIENDS

Meet some of the other regimental mascots who share the ceremonial spotlight with Service personnel...

➤ **Fus Llywelyn** joined the regiment early last year following the passing of LCpl Gwillam Jenkins after nine years of service. He was recruited from the wild herd on the Great Orme and trained by the unit's goat major. The tradition dates back to 1844, when Queen Victoria presented The Royal Welch Fusiliers with the first royal goat. However, it is believed that the animals have been part of parades since the 1700s. The Reservists of the formation's 3rd Battalion also have a regimental goat – **LCpl Shenkin** – who is most famous for leading the Welsh rugby team onto the pitch during home internationals.

The Royal Welsh

Mascot names: Fus Llywelyn and LCpl Shenkin

Animal: Kashmir goat



✓ Accompanied by a ram major and ram orderly, **Pte Derby** joins the regiment on parade and at other public appearances. Chosen by the Duke of Devonshire from his flock on the Chatsworth Estate in Derbyshire, he is the 31st Pte Derby to represent the formation. The tradition dates back to 1858, when the 95th (Derbyshire) Regiment of Foot acquired the first Pte Derby during the siege and capture of Kotah in the Indian Mutiny campaign.

The Mercian Regiment

Mascot name: Pte Derby
Animal: Swaledale ram



The Royal Regiment of Scotland

Mascot name: Cruachan

Animal: Shetland pony



➤ He leads the regiment on formal occasions and on parade and represents it at events across Scotland. The current mascot, **Cruachan IV**, continues a tradition that began in 1928 when HRH Princess Louise, the Duchess of Argyll, presented a Shetland pony to the formation in her role as colonel-in-chief. His name comes from the war cry of the Campbell clan.



Irish Guards

Mascot name: Domhnall

Animal: Irish wolfhound

➤ Donning a special silver collar and a scarlet tunic, **Domhnall** joins guardsmen in their ceremonial role at occasions such as the Queen's Birthday Parade. The name means "world leader" in Gaelic and he arrived at the regiment in 2012. The breed has been associated with the formation since 1902, when the Irish Wolfhound Club of Northern Ireland first offered the dog as a mascot.

✓ The regiment's first ever pony mascot dates back to 1950, a black New Forest gelding that was presented to the 1st Battalion. The title **Pegasus** refers to the formation's capture of the bridge on D-Day in 1944. **Bruneval** stems from a raid on a German radar site in the French town of the same name in 1942. The steeds attend various ceremonial events.



The Parachute Regiment

Mascot names: Pegasus V and Bruneval III
Animal: Shetland pony



^ CANINE COMRADES

Among the breeds that make good military working dogs are the Belgian Malinois, Dutch shepherd (top), springer spaniel and Labrador (above)

POOCH PROTECTION

How new kit is helping military working dogs meet the demands of contingency

IT'S a chilly evening in Sennelager, and as the sun slowly sets behind the majestic oaks the mournful, soporific notes of the first movement of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* can be heard wafting through the windows of the low-level building.

But this isn't an officer's mess hosting a musical-themed evening – it's a dog kennel.

And the "audience" enjoying one of Ludwig's most celebrated works are Sonic, Urban, Wilson, Bracken, Oscar and a few canine colleagues from 1st Military Working Dog Regiment.

The harmony-filled hour is part of their regular routine; after working hard all day on drills and exercises it's an essential part of the dogs' wind-down before tucking-in for the night.

"The animals always come first in everything we do," says Maj Ken McIntosh, officer commanding 102 Military Working Dog Squadron.

"Every single thing I organise is done primarily with their welfare in mind.

"They are as well looked after as we are; they are our assets and our whole point of being."

That role has changed recently, however, as the demands of contingency have taken hold.

Where the focus used to be on training animals in support of operations in Afghanistan, now the regiment's squadrons must be able to reinforce overseas defence engagement, capacity building missions, short-term training assignments and exchange programmes.

And to assist them in this increasingly wide array of tasks the dogs have seen their kit bags updated with the latest in canine protective equipment.

The animal may need goggles (or "doggles") to protect its eyes during helicopter landings or in sandy or dusty conditions, and



Words: Steve Muncey Pictures: Graeme Main



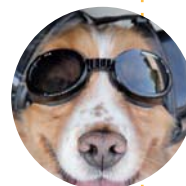
They are as well
looked after as we are;
they are our assets



VEHICLE SEARCH DOG BRACKEN WEARS:

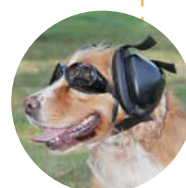
Doggles

These provide 100 per cent ultraviolet protection and have shatterproof polycarbonate lenses with a flexible frame – and they even look cool.



Earmuffs

Comfortable and lightweight with adjustable straps for optimum fit, these specially designed ear seals are engineered to mould to the contours of a dog's head. Equipped with sound-deadening foam similar to that found in pilots' headsets.



Cooling vest

Covers the torso, sides, back, chest and neck, and is lightweight so can be worn under ballistic vests. Uses a non-toxic chemical that absorbs heat away from the body.

Boots

Quick and easy to don thanks to the flexible Velcro fastening mechanism, these all-terrain footpads feature rubber soles which allow the dog to keep a firm footing. Tightly woven air mesh keeps out dirt and debris while providing ventilation.



✓ A SERVICEWOMAN'S BEST FRIEND

Being a dog handler is great for morale – no matter how bad my day is I get him out of the kennel and I'm smiling in five minutes.

Very rarely do you find any of the handlers down in the dumps or upset about anything; it's definitely the effect of the animals on them.

We are all so motivated and involved in our work, we look after the dogs virtually 24 hours a day, feed them, walk them and look after their welfare.

Tonic is the best dog in the world. I've had him for seven months now and I've been able to progress him up to a great standard, which is very satisfying.

He's one of my best friends and you form a strong bond.

If you come up here in the evening you'll find loads of the handlers out walking or playing with their animals; it's a vocation not a job.

Pte Kerry Baxter (RAVC)



➔ it might also have to wear special boots that protect its paws from injuries by dangerous fluids, glass splinters or rough ground.

Ear defenders can be employed on deployments for certain tasks that don't require the animal's acute hearing, or during the training phase to gradually desensitise it to the sounds of gunfire and explosions.

In hot climates cooling vests are also used to keep the dogs comfortable and in some situations they will be equipped with stab- and bullet-resistant body armour that is fitted to the dimensions of their neck, chest, and torso.

102 Squadron is one of 1st Military Working Dog Regiment's three Regular sub-units (there is also one Reserve squadron) and each aims to have between 40 and 50 deployable teams consisting of a dog and handler at any one time covering roles such as protection, tracking, vehicle search or drugs and explosives detection.

Teaching a working animal to perform these tasks to the level required is not easy, though.

A soldier with a newly-trained dog can take four to six weeks to reach the standard required for deployment while a more experienced combination can achieve the same level in as little as four to five days.

"Preparing teams for the Herrick tours was pretty straightforward because they would go out to Afghanistan to fulfil a certain number of roles," explains Maj McIntosh.

"But things are more varied now. For example, we currently have eight dogs from this squadron out on live ops doing tasks such as inspecting VIP locations in Germany and the UK, one is in the Mediterranean working on anti-weapons smuggling operations, while others are checking recreation areas in Cyprus.

"We've also had a couple of dogs out in Afghanistan at the National Army Officers' Academy, sweeping buildings and training areas for IEDs before the cadets arrived."

On top of all that, 102 Squadron fulfilled a high readiness role during 2016. "We've been held at five days' notice to deploy anywhere in the world so staying prepared has meant maintaining a high tempo of continuous training to keep the right number of dogs and handlers ready for a variety of possible roles," adds the officer.

Supporting the Lead Commando Group and Air Assault Task Force has meant spending time practising alongside 43 Commando, Royal Marines at the urban defence training area in Sennelager.

^ IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

Pte Caen Morris (RAVC) won't give the all-clear until Bracken's ultra-sensitive nose has done its work



A trained infantry patrol dog can detect an enemy up to 200 metres away



The relocation of British Army units from Germany to the UK has also added to the workload, with the regiment's dogs heavily employed in clearance tasks, ensuring buildings are empty and fit for handover to the German authorities.

On top of that, some old skills are having to be relearnt.

"We're looking at using dogs in jungle warfare again because surveillance systems don't work that well through the canopy," explains Pte Stephen Murphy (RAVC).

"But a trained infantry patrol dog with its enhanced sight, hearing and smell has an ability to detect an enemy presence up to 200 metres away, even in dense foliage."

Pte Murphy recently returned from a two-month stint in Belize with the Coldstream Guards where he advised on how to adapt patrol procedures to accommodate a dog team.

"I showed them how the animal moves forward and silently signals to the handler, who is trained to be able to read its body language," he continues.

"For instance, when my dog, Bandi, detects people ahead in the jungle he will suddenly sit down without making a sound and point in the direction of the target with his nose.

"The demo worked really well, the unit was impressed.

"We relied on dogs a lot in the jungle during the Second World War and in Malaya and Borneo in the 1950s and 1960s.

"The British even started the US Army's scout dog training programme when it began operating in Vietnam.

"Knowledge of using dogs in this environment has lain dormant for years because it wasn't required for the conflicts in places like Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan."

It's not the first time the return to contingency has resulted in old skills and tactics being reawakened.

Thankfully, these working animals are selected for their ability to learn and master new requirements extremely quickly – and what's more they seem to enjoy every tail-wagging minute of it. ■

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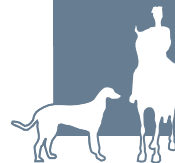
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THE CAVALRY

Months of patient **training**, hours of **spit and polish**:
here's what it takes to turn the Army's ceremonial steeds
from **raw recruits** into **parade-ground professionals** →

Words: Becky Clark Picture : Graeme Main



FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH



With kit a trooper could weigh 20 stone



Capt Skip Nicholls (RHG/D)



CAPTAIN Skip Nicholls is casting a keen eye over his latest purchases: 12 impressive, if slightly grubby, black horses grazing peacefully in a field near Melton Mowbray.

Every year in his role as officer commanding of the Defence Animal Centre's (DAC) equine training squadron, he oversees the procurement of some 25 new Irish draught-thoroughbred crosses – or remounts, as they are known in military parlance – for The Life Guards and The Blues and Royals.

Munching contentedly on hay, these youngsters are, as yet, a far cry from the polished steeds that form such a familiar part of British ceremonial life.

But with patient handling – not to mention a lot of grooming – the next generation of “cavalry blacks” could be fit for duty in London in as little as six months.

Handpicked from Ireland at around the age of four, they have been selected not just for their colour, but because their robust build and biddable nature make them good candidates for the high-profile role.

“We want them to be substantial enough to carry the weight of a soldier in full ceremonial dress,” says Capt Nicholls (RHG/D).

“The average trooper may weigh around 12 or 13 stone, but add seven-and-a-half stone of kit and that weight could increase to 20 stone, and the horse will have to be able to cope with that for hours at a time.

“The minimum height we therefore look for is 16.2 hands.

“We also require a calm temperament, which is why we go for the Irish draught element because traditionally it's quite a mellow breed.

“They need to be able to go on busy roads safely in London and they also have to get on with each other.

“When you have 24 horses being ridden side by side in formation you don't want them biting and kicking.”

16.2 – 18

height in hands of most cavalry horses



10+ hours needed to prepare a horse and rider, and their kit, for ceremonial duty

A-Z

The Household Cavalry names its steeds alphabetically according to the year they were purchased and 2017 will see the letter R introduced

A to Z



Cavalry charge

The regiment's annual trip to the Norfolk coast furthers training of horses and riders and, below, Tpr Tom Omara (LG) and Fortress

Pictures: Steve Dock, SSgt Adrian Harlen (RLC) and Graeme Main



Prior to their arrival at the DAC, some remounts may already have been ridden, or "backed", but most will have had very little training, so their introduction to military life is done gradually.

The process of desensitising them to the sights and sounds of the parade square won't begin until they join their units in Windsor and Knightsbridge; at Melton Mowbray the focus is on getting to grips with the basics.

"Some of the horses might have done something before we get them but we treat them as if they're raw," explains instructor SSgt Ben Moore (RHA).

"We start with baby steps, from getting them used to the saddle and bridle to lunging and long-reining without a rider."

Part of this initial schooling is done by personnel on the regimental riding instructors' course, which the centre runs twice a year for members of the Household Cavalry and King's Troop.

"It's good for the students to see that process from the start," adds SSgt Moore.

"We teach them how to work with youngsters so that when they return to their units they know how to back the horses."

"With a green animal they're a bit wobbly and you have to cajole them along and for some that haven't ever been ridden they have to learn to balance with the extra weight."

"Some horses are going to take longer than others. You quite quickly get an eye for which temperaments are going to suit."

The next step sees the remounts assigned to either The Life Guards or The Blues and Royals, where they begin to learn to cope with the additional weight and noise of the ceremonial equipment, how to ride in formation and, crucially, how to ignore the hustle and bustle of city life.

Describing how they are gradually trained to overcome their natural aversion to loud noises and unfamiliar objects, Capt Nicholls continues: "We have to do a lot of work with them to get them used to things like banners or cheering crowds to prepare them for state ceremonial duties."

"We train in Hyde Park and on our annual camp in →



Picture : Cpl Luisa Scott (RLC)



● **THE DEFENCE ANIMAL CENTRE** originally became a military remount depot around the turn of the 20th century.

During the early months of the First World War the number of horses and mules serving in the Army rose from 25,000 to more than half a million, with Melton Mowbray acting as one of five supply centres in the UK and Ireland.

It became the home of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps in 1946 and today it is responsible for procuring the Services' canine and equine assets, as well as training them and the personnel who work with them.



Norfolk we use soldiers to line the route with flags and bang pieces of metal.

"We also get the band involved. Horses don't seem to like the snare drum in particular to start with so they need time to get used to it."

Only once they have successfully taken part in a large-scale parade are the new arrivals considered to have passed out of training, at which point they are given names. These begin with a common letter for each year – much like car registration plates – and are put forward by members of the regiment, with the commanding officer having the final say.

While most horses will meet the required standard within two years, some ten per cent will eventually prove ill-equipped for the job.

In such cases staff will try and find them another role within the Army, possibly as riding school horses at the DAC or elsewhere at garrison stables, or they will be sold to suitable civilian homes.

But for those who do make the grade, they can expect to serve until around the age of 20 before being retired for light riding work, as companion horses or put out to grass at sanctuaries like the Horse Trust.

SSgt Moore concedes that personnel take pride in watching the successful animals progress through their careers.

"It's very rewarding," he says.

"Along the way you always have your favourites, especially the ones who have come through the Service at the same time as you.

"It's nice when you see them on telly, trooping the colour in front of the Queen and you can say 'that was my remount'."

Of course, this latest intake of recruits remain blissfully unaware of the prestigious but challenging job that lies in store.

But if all goes to plan they will be firm fixtures on the streets of the capital for years to come. ■



It's nice when you see them on telly and you can say 'that was my remount'



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MUCKERS

It's not just a fighting or ceremonial edge that animals offer to the military community...

Words: Sarah Goldthorpe Pictures : Steve Dock



“
She's an
amazing
wee dog
”



"SHE saved my life," ex-Royal Engineer Paul Wilkie tells me as I walk through his front door in Perthshire, Scotland.

He points down at a frantic one-year-old springer spaniel pup, Irma, who runs rings around me so fast I wonder if she's capable of breaking the sound barrier.

Well versed in media appearances since he received this companion dog from an organisation called Bravehound last summer, the father-of-three cannot speak highly enough of the difference she has made to his life.

With tours of Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq under his belt, the former staff sergeant entered civvy street in 2012 to be met with a series of health problems that began with disturbing flashbacks to operations and ended with a broken marriage and homelessness.

But thanks to Irma, life as a veteran is a lot less lonely now.

"I was suicidal; PTSD takes a lot out of you," he tells me, explaining his battle with depression, anxiety and panic attacks.

"But she has got me through.

"I was in Veterans First Point in Dundee one day and they asked if I fancied getting a dog.

"Bravehound came to visit and two weeks later said they had one for me.

"I was over the moon; I went to meet her and it was great.

"There was another dog there but Irma was the one, she came straight up to me."

The springer spaniel has not quite graduated from the university of professional companionship, still receiving regular training sessions with an ex-police dog handler.

But according to her owner she has proved her worth already, staying at his bedside during a recent stint in hospital and helping to bring him round from flashbacks.

"She is always jumping about everywhere," says Wilkie, who also keeps a pet cat and two ducks called Hesco and Bastion.

"When I take her for a walk she is straight into the pond with the other ducks.

"But she knows when there's something wrong with me; when I'm suffering flashbacks during the night she will come and lick my face, which brings me out of it.

"She's just good company.

"She always wants to play and to be touching me – I can't even go to the bathroom without her coming and sitting outside the door. She's an amazing wee dog.

"And with the depression that just cheers you up."

Paul has had his share of challenges – physical and mental – since leaving the British Army.

But it is fair to say that his positive attitude in the face of seemingly-constant setbacks makes him one of most impressive people I have ever met.

If this strength of character is what the friendship of a four-legged friend does, I need to look into it... ■

< GOOD COMPANY

Ex-Royal Engineer Paul Wilkie and his companion dog, Irma



● **Bravehound** is a Scotland-based project that was set up by Fiona MacDonald, after she learnt about the role of dogs during the First World War.

"I discovered that in the trenches, as well as being messengers and sniffer dogs, they were used to comfort dying soldiers," she tells *Soldier*.

Bravehound is one of a handful of UK organisations that uses animals to bring support and companionship to veterans with mental and physical health problems.

But as a fledgling project that has only placed a couple of dogs so far, it needs more funds; demand is outstripping the supply.

"It's so popular," Ms MacDonald says.

"Dogs introduce another focus; it's the difference between going for a walk on your own and feeling awkward, and feeling like a normal person.

"Lots of veterans, particular with PTSD, become quite isolated and find it difficult to talk to people.

"But having a dog who isn't judgemental, and who gives you a reason to get up, gives you a purpose and structure to life like you have in the Army."

To fundraise for the charity or to learn more about its work visit www.bravehound.co.uk

Hard-won lessons

Interview: Joe Clapson Picture: Sean Lewis, Spark Media Partners

This month an Army officer-turned-TV personality talks about getting things done and keeping life interesting

Name: Dick Strawbridge

Age: 57

Dates of service: 1978-2000

Cap badge: Royal Signals

Standout operations: Deployed to Northern Ireland to command 30 Signal Regiment, working on communications and anti-terrorism. Rapid response tasks got the Serviceman into the habit of solving problems, he says, as well as doing things quickly and well – skills that would prove important for his first TV job on *Scrapheap Challenge*.

Current status: The former lieutenant colonel lives in France, where he is restoring a five-floor, 45-room chateau complete with moat, walled garden and woodland. His attempt to create a fairytale lifestyle for his family has been captured on Channel 4's *Escape to the Chateau*.

TOO MANY OFFICERS GO IN WORRYING ABOUT THEIR CAREER WHEN THEIR FOCUS SHOULD BE ON LEARNING THEIR TRADE AND GETTING STUCK IN.

It's very important to understand this otherwise you can be a real pain in the arse. As an officer you are there for the soldiers.

THE ARMY TAUGHT ME TO DEAL WITH PEOPLE - TO COMMUNICATE AND SELL IDEAS.

That set me up for a career in industry and television. You are taught to interact with human beings. Even when the proverbial hits the fan, I love to smile and have a giggle.

SOLDIERS KNOW WHAT IT IS TO WORK HARD AND GET THINGS DONE.

That attitude has held me in good stead and I live by the four-letter mantra "JFDI". With the chateau I know others are thinking "how stupid", but I know I can do it.

UNDERSTAND THAT INDIVIDUALS YOU WORK WITH IN THE FORCES ARE SPECIAL.

Sometimes people can be a pain but the bonds that you form won't be found anywhere else.

NEVER FORGET THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VALUE AND COST.

For example, the value of having a piper is so much more than the cost to a Scots regiment.

DON'T BE CONSTRAINED BY THE FEAR OF WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN WHEN MAKING DECISIONS.

For me, that could have been leaving the British Army or leaving industry, or even leaving Britain for France, but fear is no reason not to do something. Just get on with it, no matter what the task is.



A man with a grey beard and black chef's hat, smiling, in a kitchen setting. He is wearing a black chef's jacket. In the background, there is a large metal oven or grill with some food cooking inside. The background wall is made of light-colored stone or concrete.

[VETERAN INTERVIEW]

**“
The
bonds
won’t be
found
anywhere
else
”**

Listening to the vital signs

This revolutionary earpiece can accurately monitor a soldier's wellbeing

IMAGINE being able to analyse exactly how your body is responding to any kind of exertion without being wired up to a machine.

And not just a heart-rate sensor with rough estimates; think a bit of kit that accurately measures your core body temperature, pulse, oxygen consumption and the speed, distance and rhythm that you are moving at. It may sound like the stuff of science fiction but this technology has become reality in the shape of the Bodytrak earpiece.

Unveiled by Inova Design Solutions at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, the British-made device captures precise data about an individual's physiological wellbeing while they are in action.

So it is no surprise that there is already a long line of elite performers from sport and industry waiting to make use of it.

The Army is also trialling the 18-gram gizmo and some of the first troops to get their hands on it are the Servicewomen aiming to enter the record books by skiing coast-to-coast across Antarctica on Exercise Ice Maiden in November.

"We responded to a call from the Centre of Defence Enterprise for technology to address soldiers sustaining heat injury in the field," said Leon Marsh, Inova's founder and CEO.

"The Bodytrak earpiece is the first and only unobtrusive body monitoring platform to accurately measure multiple physiological factors in real-time and via one device – that makes it unique.

"It exploits the only part of your body from which all vital signs can be measured."

From the single in-ear device, whole body biometrics and activity data are sent wirelessly to the user by means of a smartphone, smart watch or internet hub.

The technology also provides two-way communications, music playback and what is known as ambient sound transparency, which allows the wearer to maintain their situational awareness – vital for a soldier on the battlefield.

By measuring the body's responses to heat and other stressors the groundbreaking kit also enables third parties to monitor the individual's performance remotely.

At the moment the only way to obtain accurate core temperature readings from troops is by getting them to swallow a telemetric pill that can only be used once.

Alec Creighton, Bodytrak's business development manager, explained that this level of information could help prevent heat injury while highlighting the problem of premature fatigue.

"Elite soldiers and athletes have a mindset and focus that means they can push themselves to collapse," he said. "We saw that recently with the Brownlee brothers in the sport of triathlon.

"The Bodytrak platform will flag up if a Serviceman or woman is suffering."



Bodytrak earpiece



Biometric and activity data is used to monitor individual performances

It will flag up if a soldier is suffering

Cutting-edge capability

Advanced algorithms and real-time data analytics for single and multi-users

Non-invasive, continuous and automated measurements

Informs key performance and health decision-making in any environment

Protects hearing, while maintaining situational awareness

Measures core body temp, as well as heart rate and motion, in a single earpiece

Music playback

Integration with existing equipment

Mobile and web-enabled applications and Cloud-based data analytics

Two-way communications and hearing aid features



The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory has invested in Inova to develop the novel device and tests have already been carried out using the earpiece with MoD architecture. The Army is due to begin field tests in the coming months.

"It is essentially a body monitoring system," added Marsh, the brains behind the innovative sensor.

"This is focused on high performance areas where the data needs to be wholly reliable and is not comparable to the likes of a general wellness device.

"The concept is to transfer the idea of having sensors on vehicles to humans. In Formula 1 racing, for example, the car has more than 200 sensors while the driver only has one – we want to change that."

"There are monitors on ammunition, fuel, vehicles and weapons and we are very passionate that the health of individuals should be looked at in the same way.

"We see this as something that all troops have as part of their kit, just like boots and a helmet.

"If a soldier goes down in the field you can use his data to find out what has happened.

"At the moment a medic may have some sort of commentary on to find out more details.

"If the medic has data from the outset they have a far better picture of how to treat them."

The product still needs to pass through the stringent trial phase with the Army before being taken on by the MoD, but according to its creators its many benefits include improving physical performance, reducing the risk of injury, improving recovery time and even being able to detect signs of illness.

"Put simply, it's an early heads-up," commented Marsh. ■

CC
It is
essentially
a body
monitoring
system
DD

In numbers:

18

weight,
in grams,
of the
system

battery
life, in
hours, with
one hour
needed for
full charge

5+



Religious services have long been part of life on operations

Risky religious order

Is ordering soldiers to attend religious services, including but not limited to Christmas carol services, lawful?

I am a serving officer, and this issue arose many years ago when I was acting officer commanding of a squadron in Germany, and I am ashamed to say that I simply parroted the party line because I didn't want to damage my career.

I fear that I may have acted unlawfully in making troops attend back then, and that some of my colleagues are continuing to do so now, mainly for selfish career-preservation reasons.

– Maj Ross McLeod, R Signals

Rev Jim Francis, Staff Chaplain, responds: It is not well known that routine church parades were abolished in the Armed Forces in the late 1940s.

Since then religious observance, while part of the history, traditions and practices of the Armed Forces, has been deemed a private matter.

Nevertheless, a responsibility is placed on the chain of command to ensure that, where reasonably practical, the spiritual and religious needs of Service personnel are met.

This will involve services and other forms of observance.

For further explanation on this matter I would refer you to the Queen's Regulations and the MoD's guide on religion and belief in the Armed Forces.

The Queen's Regulations state that "no one is to be compelled to attend divine service against his or her wishes".

There are two exceptions to this. Personnel under the age of 17 years may be ordered to attend a service of their own denomination.

The rules also state that while parades are not to be ordered in connection with divine service, a commander-in-chief or general officer commanding may order a parade which includes a religious ceremony on special occasions of national or local importance.

No officer or soldier on such a parade is duty-bound to take part in a service of any denomination other than his own, or in any joint ritual.

Secondly, the MoD document puts religious belief, adherence and practice within its diversity and inclusion policy and quotes the Equality Act 2010.

It states that Service personnel should not be compelled to attend services of a faith different to their own. Neither should those who have no faith have to attend.

Therefore, while religious ceremonies for occasions like pre-deployment, remembrance, battle honours and even Christmas have proved to be significant moments in the life and identity of units, it is neither lawful nor desirable to order soldiers to attend.

“
I fear that
I may have
acted
unlawfully
”

Talkback

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**I was told the claim
was not allowed**

TALKBACK



Thirst for an answer

AFTER reading "Drinks rule leaves bad taste" (*Soldier*, December) can you confirm that we cannot claim for buying beverages outside meal times?

If this is the case, I assume the advice from the Defence Nutrition Advisory Service, which says adults should drink at least two litres of fluid each day, cannot be followed.

For example, I was stuck on a train for nearly five hours due to the rail service being rerouted that day.

It was on a hot sunny morning in June and the carriage was overcrowded. There were no refreshments and the only water available was from the taps in the toilets.

As a result, I bought a bottle of water for £1 when I got off and subsequently claimed this back on JPA. I was then selected for an audit and the pound was recovered from me.

I explained the circumstances but was told the claim was not allowed.

I submitted a case to the pay and allowances complaints and casework cell, which also refused my claim. However, I intend to appeal on principle. – **Name and address supplied**

Brig Chris Ghika, Director Personnel Capability, replies: The aim of a subsistence allowance is to reimburse allowable expenditure within MoD limits when travelling on duty.

Unfortunately, without knowing

whether or not you were on duty it is not possible to give you a definitive answer.

If you were away from your normal place of work for over five hours for a meeting or visit, you should have been able to claim day subsistence.

This provides reimbursement of the costs of meals and drinks incurred during the day, up to a daily limit of £25.

Drinks should normally be taken as part of a meal but there is some flexibility in how the rules are applied; a hot or cold soft drink and snack may be claimed in lieu of a meal if this is the only option available (JSP 752, part two, has all the details).

If, however, your journey was part of your normal daily commute you are ineligible to claim day subsistence and this may be why your submission was rejected.

In common with many jobs, it is assumed that breakfast and dinner will be taken at home and that lunch will either be a packed meal or purchased in a cafe, shop, mess or canteen if available.

The advice provided by the Defence Nutrition Advisory Service is certainly a useful guide but it does state that you should "always have access to water, even when you are out and about".

We're told we get free medical treatment

PAYING FOR THE PAIN

I INJURED my back on a potential non-commissioned officer course recently and while it's a lot better than it was the pain reoccurs every now and again.

On average, I'm taking one or two strong painkillers every fortnight or so.

My supply of 60 prescribed pills ran out so I went to the medical centre to get topped up.

However, the nurse refused to give me anything and I walked out with only a pamphlet on the exercises I should do along with instructions to buy my own standard-strength pills over the counter.

I protested at the time but the doctor who was on duty there agreed with the nurse's decision.

We are told that we get free medical treatment in the Army so why am I having to purchase weaker painkillers?

– **Name and address supplied**

Maj Fiona McKinnie, Chief of Staff, Defence Primary Healthcare, replies: Service personnel are entitled to have free prescriptions.

However, it can be more convenient to have the flexibility to purchase over-the-counter treatments in order to self-manage your intake.

If you wish to make a complaint then I would advise you to speak with the practice manager of the respective medical facility.

If you are not content with the response you receive, then the practice manager will advise you on the process for raising a complaint.

This will initially be resolved by the senior medical officer but can be reviewed by the regional clinical director if local resolution is not possible.



GOT A GRIPE?

✉ mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk

🐦 @soldiermagazine

Reservist thrilled with three

● **I BELIEVE** I may be one of the last Reservists to be eligible for a third long service award.

I received the Territorial Army Efficiency Medal in 1992 after 12 years of service, commissioned 18 months later and accrued just enough time to qualify for the Efficiency Decoration, which I gained in 2004. Since then I have accumulated another ten years of service, first with the Territorial Army and then on a full-time Reserve service contract.

As a result, I will soon receive the Volunteer Reserve Service Medal. Not bad for someone who joined to get a free driving licence! – **Maj Martin Shakespeare, AGC (SPS)**

RANT OF THE MONTH

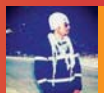


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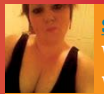
www.facebook.com/soldiermagazine

THE recent flooding along the east coast of England saw (mostly) appreciative feedback for the personnel of the British Army who were on hand to help out



Aarav Rai

Yet again we rely on our wonderful Armed Forces to protect us. Bless 'em all!



Sadie Buttress

Well done to 2 Yorks who helped out in Skegness



Chris Jones

Not a welly boot in sight. I'm convinced this was pure publicity and a news stunt



Sheila Fearon

Hope the pizza shop gave them freebies



Louise Brayford

Well done, our Army men and women are amazing. I should know my son's one



Ian Swift

British Army still the best in the world. Utter respect



James Shaw

Camouflage uniform so you can't be seen, high viz to be seen... interesting combination

“ I have hit a brick wall in relation to DII access ”

Flexible failure



READ with great interest your article “Flexible working shift” (*Soldier*, January) that explained the new system for requesting various work options on the joint personnel administration system.

I have been pleasantly surprised by the new policy – particularly for those personnel who care for young children.

It would suit my current domestic circumstances very well.

Prior to approaching my chain of command, I worked through some of the practicalities but have hit a brick wall in relation to DII access.

It would appear the MoD does not have enough laptops to support flexible working and I've exhausted all the options available to me.

So while on the face of it the policy is attractive, in practice it seems to be unsupported, specifically in relation to DII access.

As a result it could prevent people taking up the offer.

How does the Army intend to address this? – **Maj Duncan Hayes, RA**

Lt Col Robert Gascoigne, Information Superiority Directorate, Army HQ, responds: You refer to the flexible working policy that lists the options available to work from home.

As you point out, this requires access to DII, most likely in the form of a laptop.

These are scaled across defence, with each top level budget receiving a core allocation.

A machine must either be issued from this stock or an additional one purchased at cost to the Army.

The core allocation is sufficient to support some personnel engaged in flexible working but the laptops must be distributed according to business priorities.

They can be issued by i-hubs when required rather than permanently to individuals so I would encourage you to check whether this is an option for you.

Units that require an additional number should submit a business case via G6 along with the proof of funding.

You refer to hitting a “brick wall” and in your case this may be due to the current transition from old to next-generation laptops.

The latter will provide access to either DII or Modnet (DII's replacement) and should be available to order from the Service catalogue shortly.

Let me reassure you that the Army remains committed to supporting new ways of working but all applications needs to be balanced against a justifiable requirement, budgetary constraints and business priorities.

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UK's 2016 Top 20 Independent Schools % A*/A A level (Sunday Times)

Ranking of Schools taking boarders

Nationally Ranking all type schools

		%age A*/A at A level
1	St Paul's Girls' School	93.8
2	Magdalen College School	88.7
3	North London Collegiate	88.5
4	Westminster School	88.0
5	Queen Ethelburga's College	86.9
6	Winchester College	86.1
7	Wycombe Abbey School	86.0
8	King Edward's, Birmingham	85.6
9	Sevenoaks School	85.2
10	St Paul's School	84.7
11	Guildford High School Girls	84.3
12	Haberdashers' Aske's Girls	83.8
13	Faculty Queen Ethelburga's	83.7
14	James Allen's Girls' School	82.5
15	Eton College	81.9
16	Withington Girls' School	81.4
17	Godolphin & Latymer Sch	80.2
18	St John's College, Cardiff	80.2
19	Brighton College	79.8
20	Haberdashers' Aske's Boys'	79.6

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If you made a list, the same reasons would keep appearing. We think the list might include: happy children, top ten academics a personalised approach, top quality teachers with specialised expertise, good discipline, latest technology and superb facilities, excellent pastoral care, amazing sport, first class boarding accommodation, diverse experience, small classes, university success, excellent career prospects and first class confidence and self assurance. If you want the best for your child, and to stand a chance of achieving most of this list, we believe you would need to pick one of the top 10 UK Independent boarding schools as ranked by the Sunday Times. BUT, most importantly of all, we unashamedly also offer TLC - tender, loving care!

Other Schools' Results % A*/A A level (Sunday Times)

5	QE College	87%
13	Faculty of QE	84%
76	Kingswood School	61%
94	Bromsgrove School	56%
136	Monmouth School	51%
n/a	Gordon's School	48%
171	Cheltenham College	47%
177	Dauntsey's School	47%
209	Kingham Hill School	44%
245	Dean Close School	41%
277	King's Sch Bruton	37%
288	Monkton Combe	36%
n/a	Welbeck College	34%
317	King's Coll Taunton	31%
328	Stamford School	30%
336	Millfield School	28%
349	Warminster School	26%
375	Royal Hospital Sch	21%
376	Licensed Vict Ascot	20%
378	Barnard Castle Sch	19%

BULLET POINTS

Bite-sized data to keep you in the know



APPOINTMENTS

Lt Gen Patrick Sanders appointed Commander Field Army, succeeding **Lt Gen Sir James Rupert Everard** who is to be promoted to the rank of general and appointed Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe in March.



CAREERS

Veteran Employment Transition Support programme, aimed at connecting ex-Forces personnel with employers. For details visit www.veteranemployment.co.uk

Transition Force provides personalised career support to ex-Service personnel nationwide. To register visit www.transitionforce.com/events

Ex-Military Recruitment helps veterans of specialist technical regiments trained in electrical and mechanical engineering, logistics and telecommunications to find similar civilian careers. For details visit www.xmr.co.uk

HighGround is a charity providing land-based skills to serving and former Army personnel, helping them move into civilian life. Log on to www.highground-uk.org for more



COMPETITIONS

Spine line winner: Ron Gordon, Ex-R Signals and QOY



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Chaplain 020 7414 3411;
www.afbs-uk.org

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Armed Forces Muslim Association:
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www.afma.org.uk

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

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

Army Libraries: 01252 340094

Army Ornithological Society:
www.armybirding.org.uk

Army Welfare Service:

01904 882053;
www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support

Big White Wall:

www.bigwhitewall.com

Blesma, The Limbless Veterans:

020 8590 1124; www.blesma.org

Blind Veterans UK:

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

Career Transition Partnership:

020 7469 6661

Children's Education Advisory Service:

01980 618244;
dcyp-ceas-enquiries@mod.uk

Combat Stress:

01372 841600;
www.combatstress.org.uk

Defence Humanists:

www.defencehumanists.org.uk

Erskine:

0141 814 4569; www.erskine.org.uk

Family Escort Service:

020 7463 9249

Felix Fund – the bomb disposal charity:

07713 752901
www.felixfund.org.uk

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

Forces Pension Society:

020 7820 9988

Help for Heroes:

0845 673 1760 or 01980 846 459;
www.helpforheroes.org.uk

Heroes Welcome:

www.heroeswelcome.co.uk

HighGround:

www.highground-uk.org.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office:

01722 436575

Medal Office:

94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

Mutual Support

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

National Ex-Services Association:

www.nesa.org.uk

National Gulf Veterans' and Families' Association Office:

24-hour helpline 0845 257 4853;
www.ngvfa.org.uk

Poppyscotland:

0131 557 2782;
www.poppyscotland.org.uk

Regular Forces' Employment Association:

0121 236 0058; www.rfea.org.uk

Remount:

01451 850 341; www.remount.net

Royal British Legion:

0808 802 8080;
www.britishlegion.org.uk

Royal British Legion Scotland:

0131 550 1583;
www.legionscotland.org.uk

RBL Industries Vocational Assessment Centre:

01622 795900; www.rbli.co.uk

Scottish Veterans' Residences:

0131 556 0091; www.svronline.org

SPACES (Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex-Services):

01748 833797; www.spaces.org.uk

SSAFA:

0845 1300 975; www.ssafa.org.uk

Stoll (formerly known as the Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation):

020 7385 2110; info@stoll.org.uk;
www.stoll.org.uk

The Not Forgotten Association:

020 7730 2400 www.nfassociation.org

The Poppy Factory:

020 8940 3305;
www.poppyfactory.org

The Royal Star & Garter Homes:

020 8481 7676; www.starandgarter.org

The Veterans Charity:

01753 653772;
info@veteranscharity.org.uk

uk4u Thanks!:

01798 812081; www.uk4u.org

Veterans Welfare Service:

0808 1914 218 (from the UK);
0044 1253 866043 (from overseas)
www.gov.uk/government/groups/veterans-welfare-service



INTELLIGENCE

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

ABN 169/16: Mandatory diversity and inclusion objective

ABN1 68/16: Security guidance for online defence websites

ABN 167/16: New performance management review

ABN 166/16: Temporary early release scheme

ABN 165/16: The Army flag

ABN 164/16: Change to JPA ID verification (memorable date)

ABN 163/16: Extension of Reserves commitment bonus to Army Medical Services and Royal Army Chaplains Department professionally qualified officers

ABN 162/16: Introduction of the Army Reserves Reinforcement Group

ABN 161/16: Army participation in the Invictus Games 2017

ABN 160/16: Current account switch service

ABN 159/16: Automation of flexible working applications

ABN 157/16: Changes to the Army recovery capabilities assessment board

ABN 156/16: Wearing of female headdress in consecrated buildings

ABN 155/16: Management of items attractive to criminal and terrorist organisations

ABN 154/16: National Anti-Bullying Week

ABN 153/16: Civil servant compensation scheme reforms

ABN 152/16: Four themes of Army health

ABN 151/16: AGAI Vol 1, Ch 7 – Physical Training AEL 83, November 2016

ABN 150/16: Army TLB apprenticeship launch

DIN 2017DIN01-003: 2017 pilgrimages by the Armed Forces

DIN 2017DIN01-004: Basic skills development managers threshold assessment guidance

DIN 2017DIN04-001: Establishment list management – draft E lists

DIN 2017DIN05-001: Defence attache and loan service centre

DIN 2016DIN01-177: Resubordination of HQ Surgeon General personnel division

DIN 2016DIN01-176: National insurance credits for spouses and civil partners accompanying Service personnel on overseas assignments

DIN 2016DIN01-173: Civilian employees posted to non-operational hardship locations

DIN 2016DIN01-172: The Reserve Land Forces regulations 2016

DIN 2016DIN01-171: Service pupil premium details for 2016/17

DIN 2016DIN01-170: MoD civilian consultants pay award 2016

DIN 2016DIN04-233: Management

Continued on page 54

Intelligence continued

of morphine auto-injectors and training devices

DIN 2016DIN04-232: Withdrawal of L81A2 cadet target rifle

DIN 2016DIN04-231: Declaration of obsolete – commanders' lightweight radio and all associated spares

DIN 2016DIN04-230: Declaration of obsolete – mobile adjustable (crew/maintenance) access steps

DIN 2016DIN04-229: Amendments to operational medical modules contents – October and November 2016

DIN 2016DIN04-228: Interim instruction of light weapon mandatory inspection periodicity

DIN 2016DIN04-227: 2D barcoding of armoured vehicle power packs

DIN 2016DIN04-226: Confirmed out-of-service date – Chadwick Helmuth 8500C+ propeller balancer/analyser test equipment

DIN 2016DIN04-225: Use of MoD property by private commercial companies and organisations

DIN 2016DIN04-223: Relocation of AP116B-0908-123 – emergency personal

locator issue two, amendment two

DIN 2016DIN04-222: Declaration of obsolete and deletion of misc NSN's within DMC v6

DIN 2016DIN04-221: Before use inspections for the pistol 9mm, Glock, L131A1 and L137A1; DMC R9GSP, NSN 1005-41-002-1014 and NSN 1005-41-002-5387

DIN 2016DIN04-220: Morpheus sub-programme overview

DIN 2016DIN04-218: Distribution of maritime spare gear lists via a web-enabled application

DIN 2016DIN04-217: The use of cartridge .50in electric EOD propelling L1A1 and L3A1

DIN 2016DIN04-216: Intended out-of-service date – declaration of obsolete hand tool

DIN 2016DIN04-213: Amendments to operational medical modules contents – inclusion of Nomad Pro II mobile dental X-ray system within medical modules

DIN 2016DIN04-212: UCR – CereTom portable head and neck CT scanner

DIN 2016DIN04-211: Declaration of obsolescence – PSC 510

DIN 2016DIN04-210: Declaration of

obsolescence – VSC 501

DIN 2016DIN04-209: Declaration of out-of-service date for Sea Skua missile

DIN 2016DIN04-208: Weapon equipment – declaration of obsolete/obsolescent status

DIN 2016DIN04-207: Land deployed gateway – introduction to service and asset management

DIN 2016DIN04-206: Notification of contract LSL/DC/0007: saddlery and harness

DIN 2016DIN04-205: Airborne Forces equipment CSPEP Mk 3 location identification

DIN 2016DIN04-204: Movement of private vehicles at public expense



REUNIONS

223 Durham Field Ambulance reunion on April 1 at the Barnard Armoury, Greenwell Road, Newton Aycliffe, Co. Durham, DL5 4EW from 1900. All members welcome. Bring photographs and memorabilia.

13 (Martinique) 1809 Battery reunion takes place on April 7-9 at the

Copthorne Hotel, Merry Hill, Dudley. For more details email k.brooksusher@hotmail.co.uk

Army Apprentices National Memorial Trust annual reunion

on May 6-7 at the National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire. All ex-apprentices welcome. For further details contact mohope118@gmail.com

83rd Artillery clerks' reunion dinner at Larkhill on June 10. For information go to www.artyclerksassn.org



ROADSHOWS

The Army Engagement Team

wants to hear from members of the public who would like to attend one of its hi-tech roadshows. The events start with a reception followed by a presentation, questions and culminates with refreshments. Military personnel are on hand to answer questions. Email your name and address to armyacgs-aeg-mailbox@mod.uk with the event you'd like to attend.

February: 1, Kingston; 9, Llandudno; 21, Bovington

NO. 903 JUST HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

TEN details have been changed in this picture of Maj Richard Chambers (HCMR) and Hightide during the presentation ceremony at the Olympia International Horse Show Services Jumping Championship in London.

Circle the differences in the left image and

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Runners up: Hayley Bodman, RHQ REME and Michelle Marshall, Aspire Business Centre, PAC.





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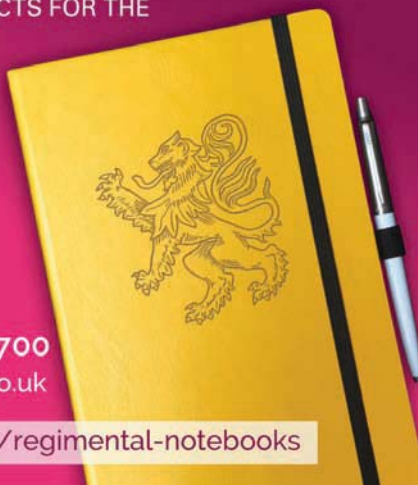


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ARMY SPORTS LOTTERY

REVIEWS

TOP GEAR

ON THE PACE

Accomplished SUV is bred for the road not the range



P63

MOVIES

P64


BOOKS

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MUSIC

JAGUAR was one of the last major motor manufacturers to introduce a sports utility vehicle (SUV), or crossover as they're often called, into its model range.

The delay was down to the company going to great lengths to ensure the new vehicle wouldn't damage its performance-orientated image.

The result of this is very evident in the F-Pace, launched only last year, because while it can handle mud and gravel thanks to its sophisticated four-wheel drive system, it really is far more at home on the road. 



We tried out the newest Jaguar offering in top-of-the-range "S" trim, mated to a powerful three-litre diesel engine.

It was nimble and almost as car-like to drive as a hot hatchback, despite being noticeably larger than compact SUVs such as the Nissan Qashqai or Audi Q3.

It stayed level and composed around the bends, leaning a little only when being pushed hard through the sharpest of turns.

That's partly down to being built predominantly from aluminium to keep its weight down, which benefits both performance and handling.

But it's also due to the relatively firm suspension. Take it down a potholed country lane and you might wish you had the softer springs and greater wheel travel of a Land Rover.

The V6-engined version we tried went like the clappers and averaged 37 miles per gallon during mostly motorway driving.

Unless you really feel the need to accelerate to 60 miles per hour in under six seconds the more efficient two-litre diesel makes more sense because it's much cheaper to buy and run.

The interior of the F-Pace was well laid out but in places the plastics looked and felt a little cheap for a car costing more than £50,000.

The model we drove also came with a host of extras – but beware what you tick on the options list.

For example, the 22-inch alloy wheels on our vehicle looked superb but their low profile tyres are not suitable for any kind of off-roading and are also vulnerable to kerb scrapes.

The panoramic glass sunroof added some light and airiness, but if you're over six feet tall you may appreciate the extra headroom available when it's not specified.

Externally, however, there is much to appreciate and while beauty is in the eye of the beholder there will be few people who won't think the F-Pace is a real head-turner. It features a large grille and slim light clusters similar to those on Jaguar's sports cars.

The F-Pace is roomy inside with generous seating for five and a boot of 650 litres that increases to a van-like 1,740 litres when the rear seats are folded flat. They also split 40:20:40 for flexible loading while other thoughtful touches include a reversible boot floor – one side carpet, the other waterproof rubber.

A large touchscreen controls many of the functions, which include satellite navigation, USB and Bluetooth connectivity, parking sensors and onboard Wi-Fi.

A gesture-operated tailgate, keyless entry, air quality sensor and a lockable, cooled glove box are just some of the useful upgrades that can be specified from the massive options list. ■

REVIEW: STEVE MUNCEY



Practical? The large alloy wheels look the part but aren't brilliant for off-roading



VERDICT:

An SUV that is very capable and stylish but designed mainly for the road not the rough stuff.

★★★★★



Price and spec

> You'll pay **£35,020** for an entry level Prestige-badged F-Pace with a **two-litre diesel engine, rear-wheel drive** and a **manual gearbox**

> The R-Sport version starts at **£37,520** and features a racier design with **19-inch alloy wheels** and deep bumpers at the front and rear as standard

> Portfolio trim, from **£40,020**, places an emphasis on technology and luxury with lots of standard gizmos like **ten-way adjustable leather seats**

> Add around **£2,000** to each version for **all-wheel drive** and another £1,800 for the **eight-speed automatic gearbox**

> Two types of **three-litre engine**, one petrol and one diesel, come in "S" trim only with an **automatic gearbox** as standard

They also feature **20-inch alloy wheels** and adaptive suspension that monitors each wheel and adjusts the chassis and suspension settings depending on the road conditions.

The starting price for both of these versions is **£52,300**.

● Many thanks to Marshall Jaguar and Land Rover Military Sales in Peterborough for supplying our test vehicles. They currently offer a wide range of exclusive savings and benefits for Service personnel. Go to www.jaguarlandrovermilitarysales.co.uk or telephone 01733 213231

MOVIES

PICK OF THE MONTH:

'Two hours I'll never get back'

Assassin's Creed hits rock bottom

> IF your idea of entertainment is watching someone else play on an Xbox then you're in for a real treat with *Assassin's Creed*.

The bemusing plot revolves around sending an ex-con Callum Lynch (**Michael Fassbender**) 500 years back in time to the period of the Spanish Inquisition for a spot of fisticuffs, again and again.

Directed by **Justin Kurzel**, the feature also stars **Marion Cotillard**, **Jeremy Irons** and **Essie Davis**.

But sadly, this unashamed attempt to plug the computer game series of the same name is about as entertaining as athlete's foot.

Big scrap follows CGI-heavy big scrap with mind-numbing monotony.

And although Kurzel claims that he "saw an instant film" in the franchise, the 3D version of his handiwork only just stopped me switching to Facebook in order to stay awake.

That's 116 minutes of my life down the pan.

I demand a refund. ■

REVIEW: MAJ NEIL JOHNSON, AAC



VERDICT:
Stick with
the computer
games
★★★★★

DVD RELEASES



The Girl on the Train Out February 6

I CAN'T describe what I thought of this film because I honestly don't know. Based on the bestselling

Paula Hawkins novel, it tells the story of a woman battling alcoholism and a marriage breakdown, who forms a weird obsession with a couple she sees every day on the train. Things get messed up, and the whole thing becomes sad, twisted and full of suspense.

Kate Goldthorpe, civvy



Nocturnal Animals Out March 13

OH my days, what did I just watch? From the truly off-the-scale opening scene

to the macabre end, this tour de force had me gripped. The film sets out to chill, challenge and shock. Amy Adams' lead character receives a novel from her ex-husband, played by Jake Gyllenhaal. His book parallels and contrasts with her outwardly cosseted life and forces her to question everything she holds dear. Infidelity runs alongside freaky turns of fate as the plot runs in real time against her turbulent love life. Casting, tick. Script, tick. Concept, first class. This one twisted my melon.

Maj Neil Johnson, AAC



« WIN

NICOLAS Cage stars in the Second World War action drama *USS Indianapolis: Men of Courage*, which is based on the true story of the Navy cruiser torpedoed by a Japanese submarine.

We have teamed up with Lionsgate UK to offer a copy of the DVD to five lucky readers. To be in with a chance of winning one, tell us what year the Second World War ended. Answers to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by February 28.



Lucca the War Dog is published by Ebury Press, priced £6.99

PICK OF THE MONTH:

LUCCA THE WAR DOG

Heroic hound's inspiring tale

➤ **EXPLOSIVES** search dog Lucca completed some 400 missions in her career in the US military but in March 2012 she was on patrol with a Green Beret team in Afghanistan, when a bomb detonated, blowing off her left paw.

Medically evacuated back to America, the Belgian Malinois-German shepherd mix went on to make an almost full recovery, becoming somewhat of a celebrity in the process.

Five years on and her story is being published for the first time in the UK.

Lucca the War Dog, by journalist Maria Goodavage, reveals not only the journey of this brave canine, but that of her US Marine Corps handlers, GySgt Chris Willingham, with whom she served during a challenging tour of duty in Iraq, and Cpl Rod Rodriguez, who was at her side on that fateful day in Afghanistan.

As a reader, you quickly appreciate the close bond that forms between military working dogs and their handlers, which is so important if the team is to be an effective weapon against improvised explosive devices.

The book also depicts the brutalities of conflict, with Lucca and the soldiers having to cope with the deaths of comrades

VERDICT:

A story of canine courage to warm the cockles of every animal lover's heart

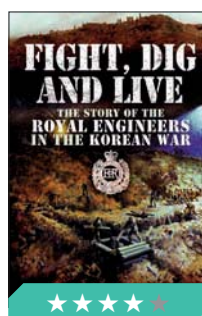
★★★★★



“It’s not only humans who fight and suffer in war”

Picture: Dominic Lipinski / PA

SOLDIER SELECTS

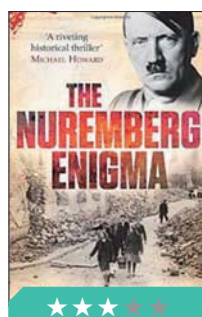


Fight, Dig and Live by George Cooper

IN 1950 the North Koreans launched an unprovoked attack on their Southern neighbours sparking a war that lasted over three years. This book highlights the role played by the Royal Engineers, who were doing such work as road building, mine clearance, bridging and, not least, fighting fiercely in battles throughout the peninsula.

Some 100,000 UN forces were killed in action, including 4,500 British troops and 42 sappers. The text is very enlightening as their stories have been largely forgotten. It is also very humorous and tragic, made more so because the accounts come from the soldiers themselves.

Tony David, ex-RE



The Nuremberg Enigma by Yves Bonavero

HISTORIANS have long debated Hitler’s final hours and ultimate demise in the Führerbunker. This book will astonish and grip the reader from the get-go and raises the question: what if this were all true? That the author came up with this terrifying, if somewhat unbelievable, storyline is in itself remarkable. Post-war Germany

was a confused and dangerous place with several elements vying for supremacy. This novel provides one of the more outrageous options available to a paranoid and unpredictable administration that knew no bounds when it came to self-protection. It leaves you thinking about what might have been and comes highly recommended.

WO1 Dave Henley, Int Corps

– a poignant reminder that it’s not only humans who fight and suffer in war.

When she herself was injured the whole apparatus of support that swings into action for a wounded US servicemen was activated in just the same way.

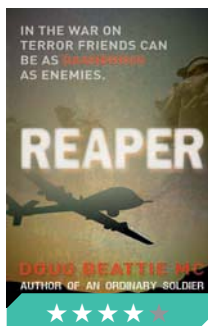
Her military career may have been over but Willingham, having never forgotten his former partner, requested to be allowed to keep her as a pet and she went to live with him and his family.

This title is a well written, easy read which, while tugging at the heart strings, is not too soppy. It is well worth checking out – especially for the dog lovers.

Last year, Lucca and Willingham travelled to Wellington Barracks in London, where she was awarded the Dickin Medal – the animal equivalent of the Victoria Cross – a fitting postscript to this tale of dedication and loyalty. ■

REVIEW: ANDY KAY, EX-RS

BOOK RELEASES CONTINUED

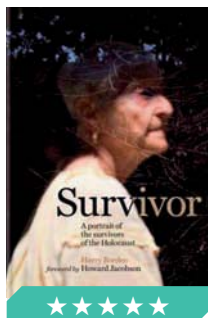


Reaper
by Doug Beattie

FOLLOWING huge success in his non-fiction offerings, Military Cross holder Doug Beattie takes a step

into the thriller genre and a mighty fine step it is too. Following disgrace and discharge the main character, Caine, is recruited by the secret service in order to track down a treacherous Pakistani officer who's set on anarchy and giving the Taliban the advantage in Afghanistan. With awkward CIA operators getting in his way, our man is battling on two fronts. No doubt based on real experiences, the book has a gritty and dark feeling that will have you motoring through the chapters in no time.

LCpl Scott Roberts, Rifles



Survivor
by Harry Borden

THE theme of 2017's Holocaust Memorial Day was: "How can life go on?" There are fewer and fewer

survivors left to inform our response to such a question, so this moving photographic study of more than 100 of them is all the more poignant. Its author travelled the world capturing their stories and portraits, and the result is an unsentimental, thought-provoking collection of images. The fact that several of its subjects died before publication underlines how important books like this are, not just as tributes, or historic records, but as reminders of what can happen when political extremism grows unchecked.

Becky Clark, Soldier

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PICK OF THE MONTH:

ALL THESE COUNTLESS NIGHTS

by Deaf Havana

› THE release of 2013's *Old Souls* album saw Deaf Havana catapulted into UK rock's big league.

Having crashed into the top ten it earned positive reviews and saw the Norfolk band go on to sell out bigger venues, appear higher up the bill on the festival scene and even support frontman James Veck-Gilodi's hero, Bruce Springsteen.

In many ways it was a make-or-break offering from the outfit, who were experiencing financial difficulties while suffering from a lack of communication between members.

"The record made us feel like a proper band," Veck-Gilodi recalled. "It stepped away from the emo world; there were a lot more layers to it and the songwriting was much more mature."

"But I came very close to quitting. Basically, I didn't want to do it anymore."

The singer had planned to use the group's 2014 Reading and Leeds performances to clear the debts and act as a swansong.

But a sudden burst of creativity followed and Deaf Havana moved forward with renewed optimism.

And now, two-and-a-half years later, they have returned with new offering *All These Countless Nights* which Veck-Gilodi describes as moving him "from a not particularly fun place to somewhere much better".

He added: "The album needs to take us to a higher level. Not necessarily in terms of chart positions, because I don't care about that."



"I just can't wait for people to hear it. We appreciate that everyone has waited this out with us. It's going to be great."

On the first listen, these tracks certainly seem to have been worth the wait.

Opener *Ashes*, *Ashes* hints at the star's turmoil in recent times – a theme that is revisited throughout – while lead single *Sing* brings the electrifying riffs and melodies that have become the band's trademark.

An acoustic escape is found on *Happiness*, a song that delves into the way anxiety and drinking has impacted on the artist's relationships, but the heavy pace returns on the likes of *Trigger* and *Like a Ghost*.

All in all, some slick production has created a polished offering in which the band's excellent musicianship comes to the fore alongside some deep and powerful lyrics.

The decision to come back from the brink has paid off. ■

REVIEW: RICHARD LONG, *SOLDIER*

VERDICT:

A breakthrough moment

★★★★★

MUSIC RELEASES



Oczy Mlody by The Flaming Lips

THE 2002
release of
*Yoshimi Battles
the Pink*

★★★★★

Robots hinted at a promising chart career for American rock band **The Flaming Lips**. While being far from mainstream it delivered blissful melodies that appealed to the masses but retained the quirky edge that made the group so unique. The offerings since have seen them divert in increasingly psychedelic directions but their latest effort, *Oczy Mlody*, sees them slowly attempting to reverse the trend. The weirdness remains but underneath the surface there is a core of off-centre pop songs that prove rather entertaining. Highlights include *The Castle* and *Sunrise (Eyes of the Young)*. There's also a surprise appearance from **Miley Cyrus** – an unlikely friend of frontman **Wayne Coyne** – on *We a Family*.

Richard Long, *Soldier*

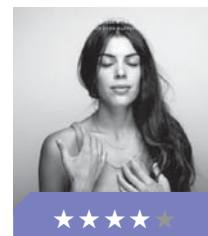


I See You by the xx

INDIE outfit **the xx** return from exile with their first album in five years. While

previous offerings *xx* – which won the Mercury Music Prize – and *Coexist* drew critical acclaim the band's members were seen as unassuming and inward-looking. Latest effort *I See You* has prompted an emergence from the shadows and tracks such as *Say Something Loving* and *Dangerous* highlight the more expansive, electro-pop vibe the trio have now embraced. The vocals of **Oliver Sim** and **Romy Madley Croft** again blend perfectly and the duo shine throughout the ten songs. With third member **Jamie Smith** recently gaining prominence in the dance world the return of the *xx* may have been in doubt. However, such questions are emphatically quashed here as the group hit form.

Richard Long, *Soldier*



Not Even Happiness by Julie Byrne

SINGER-songwriter
Julie Byrne
has drawn

★★★★★

high praise for her delicate take on classic folk and Americana. Indeed, in some quarters new offering *Not Even Happiness* has already been billed as one of the albums of the year. Opener *Follow My Voice* sets an elegant tone that is maintained throughout and it is hard to pick fault with the understated approach that works so well on her music. The combination of acoustic guitar and gentle vocals is perfectly balanced and tracks such as *Natural Blue*, *Sea As It Glides* and *All the Land Glimmered* form the ideal showcase for this. Byrne's 2014 debut offering seemingly slipped under the radar meaning she has been a relative unknown, but with a scintillating new body of work to her name her stock is surely set to rise.

Richard Long, *Soldier*



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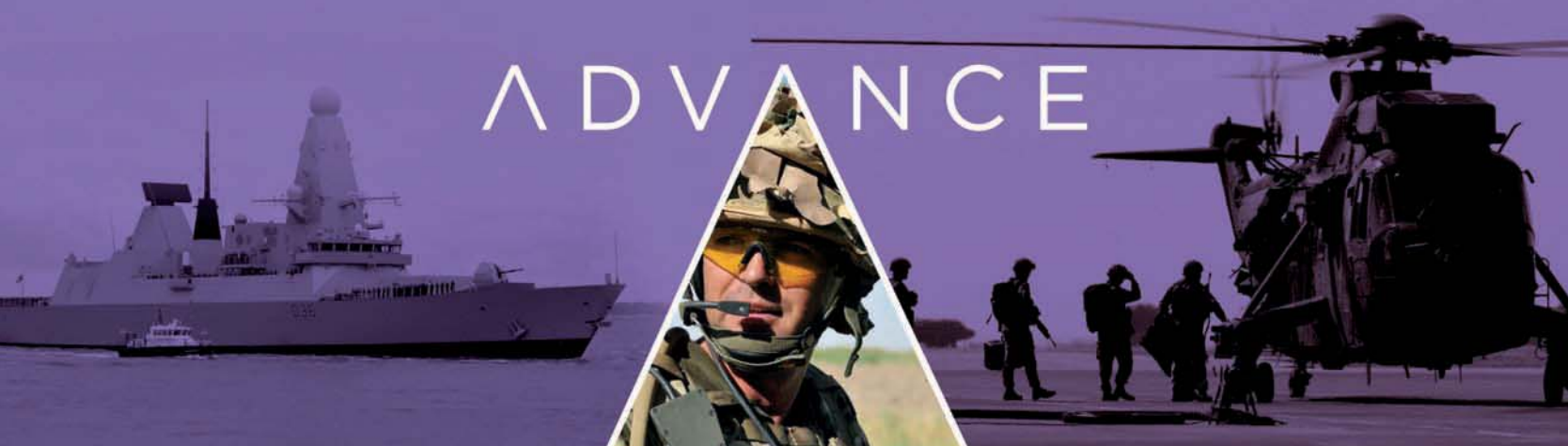
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ADVANCE



SOLDIER SPORT

Sports Editor: Richard Long
Photographers: Graeme Main and Steve Dock



JUMP SEASON

THE Army equitation set-up is getting ready for another hectic campaign in 2017. Read about what lies in wait for the riders on pages 72-73...

SKIING

FRENCH FAVOURITE: LES CONTAMINES HAS HOSTED THE EVENT FOR 23 YEARS AND BOASTS A BIATHLON STADIUM AS WELL AS NATIONAL STANDARD NORDIC AND ALPINE COURSES

Pictures: Capt Matt Noone (RTR)



SEASON IN SWING

SKIERS from the Royal Armoured Corps and Army Air Corps tested their Alpine skills when they travelled to Verbier for Exercise White Knight.

Aimed at improving troops' ability on the piste, the event also served as the ideal warm-up for those who would go on to compete at the Divisional and Army Championships.

Races included the giant slalom, individual and team slalom, super giant slalom and the daunting downhill – where athletes reached speeds of up to 70mph on the slopes.

This year also saw the inclusion of snowboarding, with riders competing in a giant slalom competition.

"White Knight again proved to be a challenging and well run exercise," said Capt Matt Moone (RTR). "It is only as good as its participants though, and all personnel were encouraged to give it a try."

Elsewhere, the Inter-Services Skiing, Snowboarding and Telemark Championships get underway this month along with the annual Ice Sports showdown and the Tri-Service Scottish Ski Championships in the Cairngorms.



Keep up to date with all the news and results from the 2017 season by visiting www.awsa.org.uk



Picture: Lt Col Rick Eve (RA)

PIPEDOWN PUSHES ON



"THE SKIERS SEEM TO GET BETTER AND BETTER"

THE French slopes at Les Contamines played host to a fierce battle between Service skiers as the winter sports season gathered pace during Exercise Pipedown.

Open to personnel from 1st (UK) Division, the ten-day event attracted 364 athletes who tested themselves in a punishing schedule of Nordic and Alpine races.

With the competition forming a qualifying stage for the Army Championships there was no shortage of quality on show and exercise controller Lt Col Rick Eve (RA) believes the contest is going from strength to strength.

"The standard of skiers seems to get better and better each year," he said. "It is clear that teams are doing a lot of preparation ahead of the competition which really does make for a world-class demonstration on the slopes."

The exercise was reaching its conclusion as this issue went to press with top prizes on offer in a variety of disciplines including the biathlon sprint, military patrol race, super giant slalom and the downhill.

Featuring a 20-kilometre course in which teams have to carry 40 kilograms of weight, the patrol race is seen as the 'blue riband' event of the Nordic scene with personnel having to complete a series of gruelling command tasks and serials while negotiating terrain on and off piste.

Athletes were reaching speeds of up to 70mph in the Alpine events on a course that saw an altitude drop of 303 metres, which made for some exciting action.

And the soldiers were keen to impress with places on the Army Alpine team for the Inter-Services up for grabs. ■

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STARS OF THE SHOW

ARMY BRACED FOR BUSY YEAR AS EQUESTRIAN SET-UP GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

HAVING wowed crowds at the year-ending Olympia Horse Show the stars of the Army equestrian scene could be forgiven for dreaming of a well-earned rest.

But with 2017 already boasting a packed schedule they will be returning to the saddle sooner than expected.

The first port of call will be the UK Armed Forces Equestrian Championships in April, which is swiftly followed by The Royal Windsor Horse Show three weeks later.

The pace continues throughout the summer as the soldiers stage the Royal Tournament – a four-day extravaganza in Melton Mowbray – before their rival Services take to the fore with their own contests.

A Forces dressage competition is also planned ahead of the annual Army and Royal Artillery Hunter Trial in early November. The year then ends in Earl's Court with another Olympia showdown.

Maj Richard Chambers (pictured right), the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment's riding master, won the Services Jumping Championships at last year's event and the quest to emulate his success promises to be fierce.

This relentless pace is a reflection of the sport's growing popularity and those at the top are keen for the trend to continue over the coming years.

"We have 12 to 15 events

throughout the season, from grass roots level to senior riding," Maj Becky Darke (RLC), competitions secretary of the Army Equitation Association, told *SoldierSport*.

"One of the highlights is the Royal Tournament, which serves as the Army Championships, and we throw everything we have at it.

"There are 60cm jumps for those who are taking part in their first show through to a 120cm senior derby on an incredibly challenging track.

"It is not for the faint-hearted and it takes some guts to get round that course.

"We also have the UK Armed Forces Dressage Championships to give the guys who are not showjumpers something to work for.

"In fact, we cater for all equestrian disciplines. We had a recent skill-at-arms tour to India and there is also the hunter trial, which is a good day out on Salisbury Plain. There is so much going on."

The sport is viewed as one of the most inclusive in the world, with age and gender proving no barrier to those seeking the thrill of competition.

The same principle applies to the Army set-up, where all riders are welcome regardless of experience or rank.

"Within the UK Armed Forces scene we have everything from a private soldier through to an admiral," Darke explained. "It is entirely rank free.



**"THIS IS
NOT THE
ELITE
SPORT
PEOPLE
THINK IT
IS"**

"This is not the elite sport people think it is and a lot of our officers will find themselves fighting for a place on the different teams."

With Army equitation centres spread across the country – mostly at major garrison towns – there are plenty of opportunities for newcomers to get involved. A number of corps also boast their own mounted sports clubs.

While the various disciplines are expensive in nature the use of such facilities means soldiers can jump on a horse and build some experience before making an initial outlay.

Darke added: "We have people who used to ride before joining the Army and there are those who pursued a military career so they could work with horses.

"One of our Army Medical Services riders is in a relationship with an airman. He started riding through her and now has his own horse. He's doing his first competition season this year.

"So there are people from a variety of backgrounds and that is something we encourage. We have seasoned competitors who are happy to help.

"But you do not have to ride to be involved and we are always looking for helpers. This is not a sport – it is a way of life." ■



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UP NEXT: THE REDS FACE OXFORD UNIVERSITY, RUSSIA AND THE FRENCH ARMY IN MATCHES THIS MONTH

RUGBY UNION



NEW-LOOK REDS START IN STYLE

THE Army overcame a determined Cambridge University outfit to record a welcome win in the opening match of their 2017 campaign.

Two tries from the outstanding Pte Junior Bulumakau (Scots) proved to be the highlight for the new-look Reds, who boasted just six players from last season's Inter-Services campaign.

Victory looked anything but certain during the early exchanges as the students bossed the possession and territory, and their efforts were rewarded when Rory Triniman crashed over under the posts for the opening try.

The hosts continued to dominate but when further points failed to follow they were emphatically punished as Bulumakau received the ball in space on the half-way line and sprinted home in style.

Fellow winger Gnr Craig Edwards (RA) edged the soldiers ahead moments later when he

made a superb break from the restart for a solo score but Brian du Toit drew the sides level as another spell of Cambridge pressure yielded a try.

LCpl James Dixon (RE) and Mike Phillips exchanged penalties during a quiet start to the second period before the Army launched a late onslaught to pull clear of their rivals.

Bulumakau profited from some smart play by Rgr Chris Leatham (R Irish) to touch down in the corner and a quick penalty from replacement LBdr Sai Vunivesilevu (RA) created the platform for Cpl Lewis Bean (Rifles) to stretch the lead.

Vunivesilevu was in the thick of the action for the Reds' final try as another searing break set Gnr Connor O'Reilly (7 RHA) free and the substitute eluded the defence to find the line.

A final score of 39-17 was somewhat harsh on the hosts but it will give the Army confidence ahead of a busy month. ■

**RUGBY UNION
FRIENDLY
FIXTURE**

CAMBS

17

ARMY

39



GAME BRIEF

DATE: January 18, 2017

COMPETITION: Cambridge University v Army – rugby union friendly

VENUE: Grange Road, Cambridge

ARMY

Reeves 1	Dwyer 2	Dowding 3
Bean 4		Bilton 5
Parkins 6	Taura 8	Cross 7
Chennel 9		Dixon 10
Simpson 12		Leatham 13
Edwards 11	Davies 16	Bulumakau 14

SUBS: Titchard-Jones, Smith, Austin, Burnham, Vunivesilevu, Gray, O'Reilly, Rokoduguni

COACH'S COMMENTS:

"THE ATTITUDE AND DESIRE THAT WE'VE PERHAPS BEEN ACCUSED OF LACKING WAS THERE FOR ALL TO SEE"

JUDO





UP NEXT: THE ARMY PLAYERS WILL LOOK TO MAKE AN IMPRESSION AS THEY COMPETE AT THE ENGLISH SENIOR OPEN ON MARCH 17

ALL EYES ON TOKYO

JUDO PLAYERS PUSH FOR OLYMPIC PLACES AS ELITE TEAM'S LONG-TERM PLAN TAKES SHAPE

AS elite operators the Army's top-flight judo players are used to the pressures of performing on the big stage.

So the prospect of facing team trials ahead of another gruelling year of domestic and international action proved far from daunting for the athletes.

The process allowed the outfit's management structure to cast an eager eye over the talent available before handpicking the individuals they believe can help them achieve the next step in their five-year plan.

Culminating in 2020, the aim is to see soldiers competing at the Tokyo Olympics and recent performances on the mat have suggested this dream could become a reality.

LCpl Russell Parker (RL), Capt Alex Paske (RE) and Cpl Sarah Hawkes (AGC (RMP)) all attended the last Team GB trials and the latter is now in full-time training with the squad.

Unfortunately, Paske was sidelined through injury on the day but further opportunities to shine will hopefully follow.

Hawkes' sister Rachel, a lance corporal in the Intelligence Corps, is in a similar position and having previously been part of the national squad she aims to return once her recovery is complete.

"The 2020 Olympics are the end goal," said Maj Dave Campey (RE), the Army's outgoing elite player manager.

"I would say Alex is on track, as is LCpl Victor Ahiavor (RRF), and we will look at pushing others towards 2024.

"We have young guys coming through. We can't pick too many as we want to keep the number in the elite set-up to around 20.

"These are players who have proven their worth at UK Championship ranking events but there are a couple of others who could step up.

"It is all about progression so we don't have a vacuum when our more experienced people move on."

The elite team already has three soldiers on the Army's talented athlete sponsorship scheme, which is run in partnership with UK Sport and the English Institute of Sport.

And in another innovative move players have been working on a strength and conditioning pilot scheme with the latter body that will see them follow specific programmes back at their units.

One of those is Cfn Alex Tew (REME), who won a silver medal at last year's Southend International and is ranked 34th in the UK 73kg division.

He said: "I'm only 20 and need to improve my strength if I'm going to compete with the older players on the senior circuit.

"If it wasn't for the Army I wouldn't have this opportunity.

"My goal for this year is to qualify for the national championships and I'm



**"THESE
ARE
PLAYERS
WHO
HAVE
PROVEN
THEIR
WORTH"**

confident I can do that.

"I'm taking it day by day and this is a good team. Having people like Russell and Alex onboard really helps."

Another soldier looking to make an impression is Spr Jack Radburn (RE, pictured far left).

His father Paul is a two-time Olympian and the sapper made a promising start with victories in last season's Army and Inter-Services Championships.

"First of all I want to get selected for the team," he said. "It is a good set-up and there is no point me being a small fish in a big pond.

"If I train with people who are better than me I will hopefully reach the same standard."

But the squad is not just home to aspiring athletes.

LCpl Nathan Salkeld (REME) competed at the 2016 World Veteran Championships and is hoping to return to the event later this year.

After recovering from a broken hip the 30-year-old has made rapid strides and is eager for more success.

"The injury made me more determined than ever," the athlete told *SoldierSport*.

"I may not be the most experienced judo player but I have a lot of life experience and that helps me overcome the various challenges I face." ■



SPORT SHORTS



Soldiers set for Sandown

THE Grand Military Gold Cup Day returns to Sandown Racecourse on Friday, March 10.

Featuring two races for military jockeys and four for professional riders, the event offers visiting personnel the chance to support their colleagues on the track while watching the sport's top athletes in action.

Discounted tickets are available at www.sandown.co.uk quoting GM2017.



Women invited to camp

THE UK Armed Forces Judo Association will hold its first ever "women only" training camp at the end of next month.

Staged at RAF Cosford from March 29 to 31, the sessions are aimed at promoting the sport among female personnel from all three Services and will cater for novices through to advanced athletes.

Those interested in taking part in the event should contact Cpl Sarah Hawkes (AGC (RMP)) on 07751 929162 or email sarah.hawkes100@mod.uk

HOBBS HITS TITLE TRAIL

LIGHT heavyweight prospect LCpl Chris Hobbs (R Signals) will make his long-awaited southern area title challenge next month.

The boxer was due to fight for the belt before Christmas but the contest was cancelled at the last minute after his opponent received a suspension.

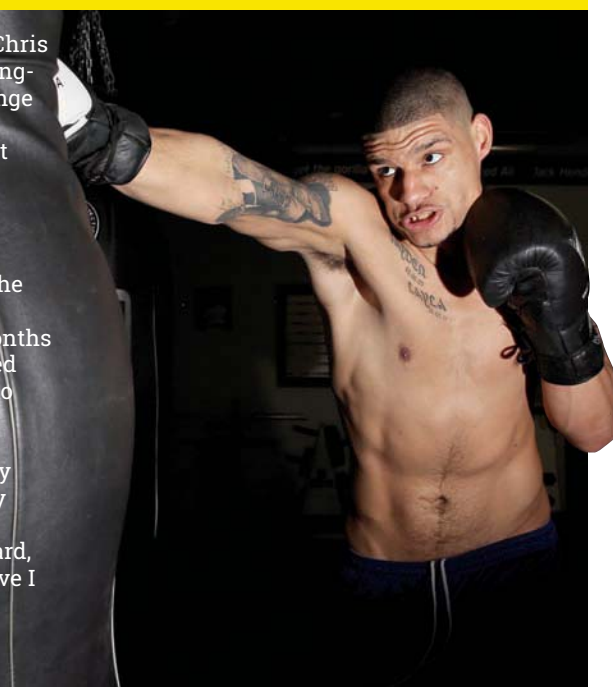
His attention has now turned to the prestigious setting of York Hall, where he will face Jordan Joseph on March 11.

"I can't wait for the fight and after months of training and rehabilitation I'm excited about winning the title and moving onto bigger things," Hobbs told *SoldierSport*.

"This is a big show and I'm looking forward to having a good crowd of Army guys coming to support me as I face my toughest fight."

"I'm going to hit my training camp hard, inbetween my regular work, and I believe I can become a champion."

For tickets and information contact Hobbs on 07517 121544.



**"I'M
EXCITED
ABOUT
WINNING
THE
TITLE"**



● THE Army's rugby league stars were in action in the first round of the Challenge Cup as this issue went to press.

Cumbria-based outfit Egremont Rangers formed the opposition and the Reds were looking to make progress on the pitch following a disappointing Inter-Services campaign last year.

In other news, eight Army players have been named in the preliminary UK Armed Forces squad for the Defence World Cup.



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MONTH IN SPORT

February's key fixtures...



« **WHAT:** Army Cross Country Finals
WHEN: February 1
WHERE: Sandhurst
NEED TO KNOW: Maj Ady Whitwam (RLC) claimed a third

successive title in 2016, while SSgt Shan Mansfield (RAPTC) took the women's crown. The top performers will go on to represent the Army at the Inter-Services



« **WHAT:** Inter-Services Under-23 Football Championships
WHEN: February 8
WHERE: RAF Cosford
NEED TO KNOW: The Reds begin their title defence with an away fixture against the Royal Air Force before facing the Royal Navy – who they beat 5-1 last season – on home turf a week later



« **WHAT:** Army Women v England Under-20s – rugby union
WHEN: February 16

WHERE: Army Rugby Stadium, Aldershot
NEED TO KNOW: England were too strong last year but with the women's game going from strength to strength the soldiers should offer a stern test



CLASSIC IN NUMBERS

SERVING and former personnel descended on Abbey Lakes in France for the annual Forces Carp Classic. Here is a breakdown of their efforts...

RAISED FOR
BLESMA
IN RECENT
YEARS

15k

PAIRINGS IN
ACTION

49

NEW
ANGLERS AT
THE EVENT

43

FISH
CAUGHT

159

AVERAGE
WEIGHT, IN
POUNDS

29

BUILDER DREAMS BIG

BODYBUILDER Cpl Emily Smith (RAMC) is preparing for one of the biggest tests in her short sporting career after a promising debut year.

The Reservist only took part in her first event in October but having made it to the finals of the UK Ultimate Physiques competition she has now set her sights on the Bodepower Expo.

Held at Birmingham's NEC in May, the show is expected to attract more than 100,000 people and will see Smith face a host of seasoned performers.

"It is a world-famous event and athletes come from all over Europe to compete," she told *SoldierSport*.

"For me to be going there is a huge achievement. It is the one thing I have always wanted; people dream of this throughout their careers and for me to have that chance after just two competitions is crazy."

Smith served for eight years as a Regular and participated in sports such as rugby and skiing but when bodybuilding was suggested during a gym session her focus swiftly changed.

"I didn't know anything about it but decided to give it a go," she explained. "It is a lot harder than people think."

"The diet is really tough and you have to train on low calories but it is worthwhile."

Smith has been boosted by the support of her unit, 202 Field Hospital, and while

the pursuit has its challenges she believes it holds great appeal to fellow personnel.

"Without the help of the Reserves I could not do this," she added. "They have given me time off to go to competitions and that is a massive boost."

"It is hard for soldiers to combine the level of athleticism needed for this sport with their Army careers but they manage to do it." ■



Picture: Wright Aperture Images

Final word

Interviews: Sarah Goldthorpe
Pictures: Steve Dock



Lt Albany Mulholland (LG)

I am a lot busier than I thought I would be; you are always undertaking different roles, tasks and exercises. The variety of what we do in the Royal Armoured Corps makes it exhilarating, though.

Lt Dave Williams (AGC (SPS))

The admin burden is larger than I anticipated. Before Sandhurst I was a Reservist for a few years and managed to



do an Afghanistan tour. Back then I would see officers getting stressed, with their hair on fire, and now I know why.



Lt John McKeen (RLC)

You are constantly learning, every day. Just because you have left Sandhurst doesn't mean you aren't. I was expecting that, but not to the same extent.



Capt Hamish Hardy (Gren Gds)

It's exceeded my expectations in terms of how fast you have to grow up. You must quickly change your attitude from being told what to do all the time, to understanding what's expected of you, using your initiative and doing it off your own back.

Lt Vicky Phillips (RAMC)

It's met my expectation of cavalry officers... they are exactly as you would imagine them to be. For all the best reasons, of course!



Lt Alex Bradford (RE)

I was expecting to spend my time behind a desk, managing spreadsheets and writing, but the reality is that you have to fight to make time for your soldiers and the reason you joined, such as taking troops on exercise and going on adventurous training. It's an uphill struggle.



Capt Mark Stevens (RE)

The amount of time spent in the office doing organisation and planning, compared with being out in the field, is different to the experience you get at Sandhurst.

Expectation v reality

Soldier asked personnel at Warminster's Junior Staff Centre (page 15) if life as an Army officer is what they expected when they commissioned.



Capt Rob Nicholson (RLC)

Yes. For me, life has been exactly as I expected. You make an informed decision when you join.





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