

# THE SOLDIERS' GAME

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ARMY FA

Issue 16 - September 2017

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# Welcome

Welcome to the Soldiers Game magazine and a very warm welcome to our new headline sponsor, Fujitsu UK who I hope will be our partners helping us develop Football across the Army for many years to come. So what are we focusing on in the future and how are we doing?

**First, increasing participation.** With 700 league fixtures across 14 leagues by approximately 130 major and minor unit teams throughout the UK and NI – and other 150 cup fixtures - last year has seen the most unit level football played in a decade; even though the Army is smaller. That is a good sign.

After many years of trying there is now a growing women's unit football league in the North of England; much down to the leadership Major Mark Normanton. We have also seen the most entries into the Army Reserve Challenge Cup for 20 years, the first Army Reserve Women's 6 A-side competition held and a Women's Reserve Representative Team on their first overseas tour to the Netherlands. Reserve football is growing rapidly.

But we won't rest on our laurels either with new initiatives to increase participation. The first Regional league champions final was held with 1 Signal Regiment becoming the first Army Champions League winners and the first Headquarters Cup was held, attracting many staff officers and soldiers who rarely see the light of day! Finally, we will increase our collaboration with Army Cadet Football. There are 41,000 cadets who are the Army players of the future. Army Football's tentacles have stretched further into the Whole Army to increase participation. If you have any more ideas to go even further then let us know.

**Second, increasing success.** The Inter-Services will always remain a key marker of our success; the Senior men dominated this year's competition to make it two in a row; our Ladies sadly lost for the first time in eight years on goal difference without losing either game; and the U23s can see the competition around them with the Navy coming out on top. We aim for a clean sweep every year. Our Army Football Masters team won the Over 30's World Cup in New Zealand; an outstanding achievement which we will look to repeat in Japan in 2021. The RLC again dominated both Men's and Women's Corps football, between them winning all 19 games in their combined seasons.

**Third, being well run.** Rarely do we mention success away from the players and teams, and yet we have developed 255 qualified officials who have provided cover to 97% of all fixtures and who's leadership ability is in the spotlight in the middle of the park two or three times a week. I'm keen to see our officials' contribution fully recognised by their chains of command this year. Our disciplinary record across the board is rightly improving, with 40% less incidents pro-rata than all other FA Counties. Our aim is also to increase our mentoring of the Corps coaches, to create an elite coaching group who can raise the standard in the Corps game which will pay dividends at both unit and Representative level. This has been an elusive objective for some while which we will look to crack over the next few seasons.

**Finally,** CGS as our President has challenged Army Football to lead the way in two initiatives; first, the Army's Community Engagement Through Sport Initiative alongside Regional Command, aligning local units to local football clubs, both of which should be at the heart of their communities; and second, the use of sport to support overseas Defence engagement objectives. There is much we are doing here to be at the forefront of these efforts. Sadly space precludes me reporting on these efforts despite the many articles inside which highlight the ongoing work and success. I will report our progress more fully next time. Something, perhaps, to wait for with bated breath!

So finally a big thank you to our sponsors - who's adverts are throughout this publication - to the Trustees, to our permanent Football staff under Billy Thomson and to all of the Football volunteers who make it all happen.

Without them there is no Soldiers' Game.

Mitch Mitchell

Chairman of Army Football.

# Army Football Men's Senior Team

October 2016 saw the Squad reassemble for its annual pre-season/development week where 35 members of the squad which included 9 staff and 26 players which included 9 new players from AMS, RAC, AGC and AAC. The week started on a wet and windy Sunday afternoon giving an overview of Army football; this included promoting the vision for success, past opportunities for development and setting out the code of conduct for all to adhere to (Total professionalism on and off the field at all times).

After a convincing 5 – 2 win against Stafford Town on the Tuesday night the squad prepared for a much more challenging opposition on the Thursday where Stafford Rangers at their ground proved to be a tougher test. Eventually beating the Evostick Prem side 4 – 1 in what was an excellent advert for not only Army Football but for local community engagement. The week culminated with a recovery session on the Friday morning and the release of several faces that didn't quite make the standard this time!

The next fixture was the Prison Service who once again proved to be a tough test both physically and mentally. This fixture has always been a feisty occasion and this year was no exception, and with a depleted team due to 8 of the senior players representing the UKAFFA the remaining

squads weaknesses were exposed and the Army were convincingly beaten 3 – 0.

After a convincing 7 – 1 win over Fleet Spurs in the last 16 of the Aldershot Senior Cup the squad's attention turned towards the prestigious and now annual German Bundeswehr game which celebrates the Battle of The Somme and was played at Burton Albion FC with an attendance of nearly 2000 spectators. The two days that led up to the occasion were spent visiting various war graves and memorials where all players and staff had the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of the match. The Germans eventually winning 2 – 1 in what can only be described as a game of 'two halves'.

With Christmas out the way the squad now started to get focused on the business end of the season with the possibility of winning 3 trophies. The Southern Counties Cup was up first and a semi-final with Middlesex FA saw a very strong performance from the Army who dominated proceedings with a 5 – 1 win and a hat trick from Cpl Callum Wilkinson RLC.

Next up was the match against the Army Reserve; this fixture had not been played for over a decade and both sides were keen to compete in what is now planned to be an annual fixture. A cagey start to the game with both sides trying to outwit their opponents however the Army started to find their rhythm and dominated the second half with another hat trick from Cpl Callum Wilkinson and the Army eventually finished 5 – 1 winners. The following week the Army progressed to the semi-final of the Aldershot Senior Cup by beating Chertsey Town 3 – 1 with another solid and convincing performance.

In March the squad gathered for the Inter Services campaign; a warm up fixture against a very strong opposition in Bognor Regis was

the perfect test for the Army. After a strong start and taking the lead Bognor started to show why they were promotion contenders in their step 3 league. Two goals in quick succession resulted in a defeat with the game finishing 2 – 1, however a great run out on the final game before the Inter Services and many positives for the Head Coach to work on for the RAF match.

The Inter Services kicked off with the Army at home to the RAF; a very slow and poor start saw the RAF take a 1 – 0 lead in to half time. A robust and frank team talk and a re-shuffle saw the Army come out all guns blazing in the second half. A penalty and a great strike from 18 yards was enough for the Army finish victorious as well deserved winners on the night and yet again Cpl Callum Wilkinson scoring a brace!

Next up was the Senior Service; a beautiful night in Dorset at Yeovil Town was the perfect setting for two teams who liked to play attractive football. The first half was totally dominated by the Army and chance after chance came and went without scoring. As the game moved in to the second half it was evident that the Royal Navy were hanging on for a draw. The Army broke the deadlock in the 63rd minute with a sublime move through midfield and a composed finish by LCpl Dan Stoneman, this became the catalyst for the onslaught. Goals came quickly and the Army eventually came home 4 – 0 winners and deservedly retained the Inter Services for 2017.

In April the Army were beaten 3 – 0 in the Semi Final of the Aldershot Senior Cup by Fleet Town FC. The score line did not reflect the performance even though the Army were missing 6 key players from the team that had beaten the Royal Navy only two weeks earlier. The dream of the treble was over!





# Season 2016 - 17 Summary

With the double still possible, the Army regained focus and got its act together for the Southern Counties Cup Final against the Amateur Football Alliance. Enfield Town provided a great venue and were fantastic hosts for another great final. 0 – 0 at half time with both teams not creating many chances the Army changed their shape and were quickly in front. LCpl Jack May and LCpl Dan Stoneman both scored within 6 minutes but the AFA scored soon after making it 2 – 1. With minutes to go the AFA committed too many forward and the Army broke on the counter attack and won the game 3 – 1 in the last minute of the game. The double had been completed!

The curtain closer to a long and demanding season saw the Army travel to Germany to play the return fixture against the Bundeswehr. Fantastic hosts, fantastic facilities and a great celebration of the Bundeswehr Armed Forces Day were the only positives taken from the weekend as the Army were given a master class in ball retention and tactical movement. As the army over committed in the last 5 minutes at only 1 – 0 down they eventually lost 3 – 0 to a very classy Bundeswehr outfit!





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# BUNDESWEHR V ARMY

## 10 JUNE 2017

## AUGUSTDORF, GERMANY

In early June, and at very short notice, the Army sent the men's senior and the women's team to Germany to play our opposite numbers in the Bundeswehr as part of their Armed Forces Day (or Tag Der Bundeswehr). Much like our own Armed Forces Day the aim of the event is to reconnect and strengthen understanding between the public and the armed forces.

The two matches were played in Augustdorf (for most read the north end of the Sennelager Training Area) in the Feld Marshal Erwin Rommel Kaserne, home of the German Panzer Brigade on the 10 June as part of the main programme of events.

The teams arrived late into the night of the \*\* to be met by an enthusiastic and attentive group of liaison officers who provided the teams with some much needed sustenance before showing them to their rooms in the heart of the Camp and amidst what can only be described as a party atmosphere among the resident and visiting troops.

Both teams had one day of preparation but with only one pitch available for training, the teams took advantage of spilt sessions with both coaches having both morning and afternoon slots to prepare their respective teams for the games. The morning sessions went well and both teams looked lively despite the late night and early rise. The training pitch was top class as were the liaison staff who provided water, squash and a constant flow of information of arrangements for media access et al. The afternoon sessions were slightly more challenging for the coaching staff as the weather closed in and torrential rain took its toll on moral and enthusiasm.

The Germans had kindly offered to arrange for a night out at a local Greek Restaurant and while the girls took up the invitation, the men opted to make their own arrangements for supper. I chose to go for the Greek option and despite the chaotic arrangements (what else would you expect with three teams descending on the restaurant with only 1/3 speaking the local language) the wait was worth it - satisfied soldiers all round.

Match day called for an early start for the girls who were scheduled to kick off at 1000hrs. This was a full bells and whistles occasion with two bands (including our own Ghurka) leading the teams onto the pitch prior to the VIP line up and eventually kick off. As you would expect from the Germans, every detail was timed to the minute and despite the lengthy

musical introduction, the game kicked off just about on time. The prevailing conditions were not conducive to a fast paced game with the temperature already tipping 25 Deg Centigrade. A patient, structured and efficient match was the order of the day. As was to be expected, the Germans dominated the possession throughout but tenacious battling and closing down of the wide spaces afforded by the massive pitch saw the army girls hold their own. Both teams scored just before the half time whistle blew and I have no doubt both coaches welcomed the respite as much as the teams at the end of a nerve jangling half of football that saw goal line clearances, superb saves, defensive frailties exposed and opportunities missed on both sides. Who knew what the second half would bring.

It was the army who struck first in the second half with reactive and opportunistic strike 10 minutes into the half. The goal galvanized the German girls and their tempo increased dramatically. The army girls worked harder and harder to get close to their opponents and the heat was starting to tell. The Germans finally brought the scores level and then sought to press home their advantage. The army girls were now working on the counter and on several occasions their endeavors nearly brought just rewards but it was not to be. With increasing possession and greater depth in reserve, the Germans pushed home their advantage and scored two late goals to take the match out of reach. Full credit to the army girls who, without doubt, played their best football this season.

Next up, the men's match and with temperatures on the rise, there was an inevitability that the conditions would have the better part of the say in the outcome. With the second 'battle of the bands' (which the Ghurkas won by a country mile) over and the VIPs introduced the teams set down for battle. From the off the game was played at a very high tempo that belied the weather and the degree of technical football on display was truly impressive. Both teams enjoyed periods of possession and by definition control but neither seemed capable of breaking down two very tight and well organised defences. If anything, the army looked more likely to score on the counter with pace down the flanks, in particular with Stoneman and Noble, the former going close on at least two occasions. The half went by quickly and both teams welcomed the referees whistle for half time and the opportunity to find some shade from the gaze of the sun.

The second half followed a familiar pattern with the Germans dominating possession and the Army playing an effective counter attack strategy, going with pace and accuracy through the thirds to release Glass and Wilkinson up front. It was however the Germans who broke the deadlock about 15 minutes into the half. The Army tried to report d quickly but consecutive saves from the German keeper kept the hosts in front. As the clock ticked down the Army pushed for the equaliser and had the ball in the back of the net courtesy of Wilkinson, only to be ruled out by the referee for alleged foul play on the keeper. With the Army pressing higher, the Germans resorted to the counter attack and in the dying minutes of the game took advantage of the Army's attacking strategy to snatch two late goals. The match ended with the Army on the losing side of a 3 - 0 defeat that belied the closeness of the game. the match itself was a great spectacle and both teams finished as they had started; fiercest of rivals and best of friends.

The post-match dinner and award ceremonies were held in the VIP tent in the main arena after the public had left for the day. Their General made a faultless speech in English to thank the Army for supporting 'Tag de Bundeswehr' and then presented Brigadier Bell a gift on behalf of the Bundeswehr. Brigadier Bell made an equally excellent reply in perfect German, presenting the General with a gift from the Army FA to mark the occasion. When the VIPs departed later in the evening further less formal and certainly more intimate presentations were made between the two teams and as you can surmise, the bonding between the two teams went on into the small hours.

The return journey to the UK was a quiet one with most of the party taking a time to reflect on another great match against the Bundeswehr. On a personal note, and on my last outing with the teams, it was a pleasure to take the out there, the men and the women were, as ever, strong ambassadors for the Army and have done much to strengthen relations between the two forces. I was equally pleased to see a better bonding between our own teams who sometimes seem at odds with each other; long May that understanding continue. All that is left to say is a big thank you to all involved in the hosting and administration and to the two coaches, Maggs and Dinger, for making my life very easy indeed.



# Football in the Army Reserve

Army Reserve Football is in an extremely healthy state, at all levels, with both national representative teams demonstrating real growth and development during the season. The Women's team is building its squad in all positions, depth and just in March won the UK North Open Invitation Six A-Side competition. This is great news especially as this is only the third season since the team was established. We also saw Private Destiny Toussaint, 150 Regt RLC, being selected for the Combined Services team and it is believed this is the first time in history that an Army Reservist has been selected. The Men's team saw a well earned victory against the AGC and a hard fought draw in Northern Ireland against a 38 (Irish) Brigade Select XI. In February 2017 we saw the re-introduction of the Army Reserve playing the Army, following many years of the game not being played. It was great to have the game back in the annual fixtures, even though the Army Reserve lost on this occasion however they should be proud of their performance. Both Teams went on to represent the Army at the 2017 National Armed Forces Day football challenge in Liverpool where the men played an Everton Legends XI and the women's team played Merseyrail Bootle Ladies FC.

Looking forward to next season we have new head coaches for both our Representative Teams. Captain Joey Collins, who has been supporting the Mens Team in a coaching role, takes over as Head Coach following the retirement of Major Steve Cotter. Joey, currently serving as the Regimental Career Management Officer at 4 LANCS, has a wealth of experience having played and coached at the top level in the Army. This includes 169 appearances for the Army, 50 games for the Combined Service and five years as the Army Team Head Coach. Joey is also the lead academy coach for Fleetwood Town's U16 Team. The Womens Team will now be led by WO1 Karl Silverwood who has accepted the position of Team Manager. Karl has been involved in Army football for over 20 years, as a player and a coach and is based at Chillwell where he

works in the Personal Recovery Unit. He will be supported by WO2 Paul Hughes who takes over as Head Coach. Paul serves with 7 MI in Bristol, completed the UEFA A Licence in 2016 and is the Academy U16 Coach at Bristol Rovers. Paul also works for the Army FA as a coach educator where he assists Steve Stone in delivering FA level 1 and level 2 coaching training in Aldershot. The Army FA welcomes Joey, Karl and Paul to their new appointments.

Unit football started back in Sept 16 with the first round matches in the Challenge Cup and was completed in spectacular style, in Aug 16 with the biggest 6-A-Side Reserve competition in recent history. 32 teams went into the draw, which was the first season for some time that there was a full first round. The final was played in April between 152 (North Irish) Regt RLC,

their fifth final in six years and first time finalists 154 (Scottish) Regt RLC. 152 had a run of three wins from season 2010/11 and after missing out in the 2013/14 have also been finalists in the last two seasons. 154 have been steady building over the last few years including a quarter final appearance last season, where they were knocked out at the by the eventual winners 71 Engr Regt.

152 travelled to 39 Sig Regt and ran out 11-1 winners in Bristol, 154 had a less comfortable 2-0 win against a strong 103 Regt RA, which has three of the Army Reserve Representative team players including the team captain. While 152 comfortably avoided tough games in round 2 and quarter final 154 had a comfortable 7-2 win over 150 Regt RLC and an equally strong 4-0 win over 159 Regt RLC.





The semi-finals, played at the beginning of April, saw 152 win by the narrowest of margins when they beat 167 Catering Support Regt RLC 6-5 on penalties. Having taken a 2-0 half time lead 167 scored twice to take it to extra time. Each team added one more goal before 152 held their nerve when the penalties went to sudden death. 154 met Northumberland UOTC in their semi. NUOTC had knocked out last seasons winners 71 Engr Regt 4-2 so this was going to test for 154. One that they came through by the smallest 1-0 margin.

It was a tight final with a single extra time goal separating the teams with 154 RLC becoming the 86th winner of this historic trophy. They will now represent the Army Reserve against 1 Yorks, the winners of the Army Challenge Cup, in the Army FA Super Cup Final, which will be played at the Military Stadium Aldershot on Sun 8th Oct 2017.

The final event in the Army Reserve calendar is the 6-A-Side held over an August weekend in Grantham. A record 34 teams (27 mens, 7 women's) completed in the largest gathering of British Army Reservist for a sporting event in 2017.

This is an exciting time to be involved with one of the teams that represent the Army Reserve. Both team have set dates for trial weekend. The women will be in Aldershot 30 Sep – 01 Oct 17 and the men will be at the same venue 4-5 Nov 2017.



Interested players should speak to their Unit Football Officers in the first instance or email [resfootball@ascb.uk.com](mailto:resfootball@ascb.uk.com)

## Army FA Coaching Courses 2017/18

The Army FA run a number of FA Coaching Courses throughout the season.

For more details see our website [www.armyfa.com](http://www.armyfa.com) – from here click on the 'Coaching Tab'

Alternatively contact Gill Jones at the Army FA office on: 01252 787071 or by email to [gill.jones@armyfa.com](mailto:gill.jones@armyfa.com)





## ARMY UNDER 23 REVIEW 16-17 - WRITTEN BY WO2 SELLERS

After the previous years dramatic victory in the Inter Services (IS) the brief from Head Coach Capt Paul Dale was let's win it again playing high risk expansive football but without the added pressure of having to win by 4 clear goals in the last match!

The development week was held in early October at the excellent FDC facilities in Aldershot. 25 players gathered to be put through their paces to see if they could earn a place in the squad for 2016/17. A mixture of classroom lessons alongside very detailed coaching sessions on the 'grass' were delivered by Head Coach Dale and his staff. Everything was geared towards retaining the IS and to develop the players in order for them to hopefully progress into the Senior Squad. The practical sessions slowly built up the layers of complexity so patterns of play could be interpreted and re-produced in games throughout the season. During theory work players were given group and individual tasks based on tactical situations. This would develop them in how to problem solve, work as a team as well as putting them out of their comfort zone as they were expected to brief the squad on what they had learnt each day. They were developing not only as footballers but as leaders and soldiers as well.

Capt Dales style of play and philosophy was quickly bought into by the players and by the time the first friendly took place

against an excellent Tooting and Mitcham side (Ryman South League champions) the patterns worked on throughout the week started to take shape. Unfortunately a 4-1 defeat showed areas to still work on but plenty of positives to go forward with. The game was also filmed so that it could be analysed at the next training session and help the players improve.

Doncaster Rovers under 23s were next up and excellent relations were forged after their squad and management team stayed overnight at Gibraltar Bks. Special mention to our Trainer SSgt Dan Bishop (APTC) who took them on team building tasks prior to the match the next day. On the morning of the match the Doncaster coaching staff (with over a thousand professional games between them) were suitably impressed with the video analysis and classroom work conducted by Coach Dale and by the technical standard of the Army players. The Army scored early on with a well taken goal from LCpl Jack South but the 3-1 defeat at the Mil Stadium didn't tell the story. The lads more than matched their professional counterparts and 2 late goals were lapses in mental toughness and concentration rather than good play from the opposition.

2 matches were scheduled for November against Ash United and Barnsley under 23s. The focus for Trg after the last match was

on Defending and this encounter more than resembled an IS match. The team clicked and came away with an outstanding 6 nil victory including a superb free kick from LCpl Liam Laidler along with braces from Tpr Johnno Johnson and Cfn Sean Thomson. Unfortunately due to bad weather the Barnsley match had to be cancelled.

After the Christmas break the next 2 fixtures in January were against a talented Tooting and Mitcham under 21 side and Bristol Rovers under 23s. Several new players were welcomed into the Squad as players were lost to injury/operational commitments. Several players made their debuts in a close 3-2 defeat to Tooting and Mitcham at Aldershot but the positives were the amount of chances the team created and a goal for Gnr Sam Dunne with a header from a well-rehearsed set piece and a debut goal for Airtpr Tewkesbury. Our next match against Bristol Rovers was cancelled at the last moment so the Head Coach used the 2 days to reinforce our patterns of play at Gibraltar Bks, Minley.

February would see the IS finally upon us and first up were the RAF up in Cosford. The staff and team met on the Saturday at League 2 leaders Doncaster Rovers as guests at their league match v Morecombe. Building on excellent relations from earlier in the season we were given corporate seats and





## U23's

at HT introduced to the crowd where the lads were given a standing ovation as they walked around the pitch. The next day the squad met at MOD Stafford and had a light Trg session before sharing a team meal later in the day. The next 3 days saw the lads worked hard on honing our style of play ready for Wednesdays match which would see 7 players make their IS debuts. We knew the RAF would be physical and direct, relying on the quick counter attack and despite the awful pitch the lads stuck to our philosophy of high risk football playing out from the back, creating several chances, particularly in the first half. The 2nd half saw more opportunities come and go for both sides and just as it looked like a draw was on the cards up popped the RAF substitute to ghost in unmarked at the far post to win it in the last few minutes.

This now meant we had to beat the Navy at Aldershot the following week to stand any chance of retaining the IS. Trg went well again at the FDC with players reminded of the need to concentrate and focus for 90 minutes. After the obligatory team photo the day before the Navy match a late afternoon health spa was booked for some team bonding and relaxation at Farnborough Village hotel. On match day a downpour of rain saturated the pitch which meant players would need to judge the run of ball. After 10 minutes the Navy football mistimed his tackle and the Ref gave him a straight red. This seemed to inspire the Navy and knocked the Army out of its stride as they raced into a 2 nil lead, just before haltime LCpl Liam Laidler pulled a goal back to give the Army renewed hope. The Army came out the 2nd half and equalised through Sig Jack May and now looked the better team with the Navy beginning to buckle under the pressure. Just as it looked like we would go onto to win it the Navy broke and a defensive error allowed them to take the lead. This was compounded further when another mistimed tackle resulted in a red card for Army Skipper LCpl Rob Ridley (RE). As the Army searched for an equaliser the Navy exploited gaps at the back and scored again to win the match 4-2 and ended up as IS champions.

Although bitterly disappointed with the result and after an address from Team Manager Lt Col Campbell Moffatt who said the team would learn from defeat the team showed



excellent camaraderie and enjoyed an end of season meal in Guildford. Special mention to LCpl Charlie Gale who was voted the Player of the Season and to Sig Jack May and Pte Sean Woolley who both represented the Senior

Side during the season. The future is bright as the experience will give the younger players confidence as the squad looks to regain the IS next season.





## Bosnia in Herzegovina

# FIRST EVER TRIALS FOR FEMALES

As a reservist soldier I was very grateful to receive the phone call from Major Sandra Hodgson to ask if I wanted to travel to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to assist with the first ever Women's Football trials. A fantastic opportunity and not one to be missed.

We landed in Sarajevo I was amazed how small the airport was. We were collected by Nella from the British Embassy in Sarajevo, she was responsible for all of our administration and getting us there so it was great to see a friendly face.

As we travelled the clear signs of a distant war were still present with bullet mark still scarring the buildings we drove by, Maj Hodgson was amazed at how different it all looked since her last time here just after the war.

The camp we arrived at was a basic training unit guarded by one soldier and several dogs. Here we met the team, headed up by Lieutenant Almira Spahic. Currently the Team manager and coach, a fully qualified UEFA referee who's brain child it was to bring this all together. It was evident that what we experience back in the UK and the support we receive and way we are viewed is not mirrored the same here, Getting the trials together had been a huge step forward which made us even more determined to make it a huge success.

The training pitch was in a great location and the weather was hot. Equipment and timings were handed out and in a short briefing and we were encouraged to plan the rest of the weeks sessions, this we did and delivered two sessions a day with a large break over midday to avoid the soaring temperatures. Major Hodgson still managed to ensure we got an hours PT in during this time, much to my delight! We delivered progressional practices and games to try and assess and develop the players. Their desire to learn and enthusiasm was evident from the start. They wanted



to make this a success and were grateful for the investment that had been made for them. All delivery was translated which was a new experience for me but one I very much thrived on, as the week progressed it was clear that their English was much better than our Bosnian

It was interesting to observe the interest around the camp that was generated with their male counterparts gathering around the outskirts of the pitches to observe. Lt Almeria explained that things like the trials she was running just don't normally happen, it would have been the first time some of the girls that were there had ever been in a large group contact with other female soldiers, they normally work in isolation or ones and twos in male company's. This again seemed to make them all more determined to work hard and prove this to be a success. Each day the team grew with confidence and the atmosphere relaxed.

We were grateful to the Defence Attaché Lieutenant Colonel Paul Marshall MBE

RLC to be accommodated in the centre of Sarajevo and as such in the evenings we were fortunate to experience the sites of the beautiful and quaint city of Sarajevo, a multi-cultural city with a real vibe. We attended a historical walking tour and I was amazed at the history and just how beautiful and scenic the place as.

The week sadly came to an end, training was complete and we were happy with the progress the squad had made, we received many compliments and thanks for our contribution. This team has a great future and determined leader in Lieutenant Almira Spahic. They demonstrated passion and a will to succeed and have a positive path ahead. I will always remember this experience and the opportunity offered, and I am grateful that I was involved in allowing the female soldier's of BiH to establish what I am sure in the future will be a strong and successful team.







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# Women's Head Coach overview – W02

## Scribe – SSgt Mike “Robbo” Robinson (REME)

The 2016-17 season for the Army Ladies proved to be another successful season. The team were Southern Counties Cup Competition Winners adding more trophies to the collection.



This is now my second season as the head coach and I am pleased to say that we have begun the new season the way we finished last season. Pre-season preparation was very encouraging with a strong representation across all Corps and again many new players wanting to compete. I can say that as head coach the standard of young players coming to trials is forever improving and impressive, making squad selection very competitive and extremely difficult for my staff and I; a very good position to be in.

To ensure trials were both competitive and challenging for the Ladies; and allow my team and I to really see them in action; there were two games arranged against two strong Women's Premier League teams – QPR and AFC Wimbledon. The first game was against QPR, a well-established team. Most players got the opportunity to trial and with a really good performance and an impressive result of 6-0. The second game was to be played against AFC Wimbledon, another excellent test for the players. Those players that didn't start or feature in the first game were given this opportunity to trial and again another very impressive performance and convincing result 5-1. These games provided a great insight to the standard of football expected at Army level and all were able to deal with its demands.

The Southern Counties Cup (SCC) competition consists of us, Kent, Middlesex and Sussex. Our first match was against Middlesex. The game started quite open with our first effort coming within 7 minutes this sparked a frenzy of efforts, with both teams coming close. The deadlock was broken on the 36th minute. Middlesex levelled the score within 20 minutes of the second half and we showed great resilience and took the lead back within 5 minutes. The game finished in a 2-1 victory.

The next game was a very prestigious event and a privilege to be a part of the celebrations. It was the Game of Remembrance, which involve us playing our German counter parts – Bundeswehr. This was to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the Battle of the Somme. Our match was staged at the home of the England national teams at St Georges Park. Indeed it was played on the same pitch England trained on prior to the recent World Cup qualifier versus Scotland. The game was played in great spirits in the auspicious occasion with some excellent



# “Mags” McAteer (AAC)

## Season with being crowned the Southern Counties

football on display. We did come out victorious with a 3-1 victory after the game we supported our male counterparts at SkyBet Championship Burton Albion's Pirelli Stadium, sponsored by CAE (UK). We were then invited on to the pitch to be presented with medals by the United and England Legend Sir Bobby Charlton CBE.

The New Year started like last season, with the game against Sussex called off due to a frozen pitch. In February we played our next SCC against Kent and we were dominant right from the start. We capitalised on our chances and went in at half time 3-0. The performance was solid and professional from the start till the final whistle, never resting on their laurels.

We go into the IS in excellent form and with a 100% record playing 5 winning 5 scoring 20 and only conceding 3, and in a strong position to win the SSC which we haven't done since 2009, with the final game against Sussex. Heading into the IS, we like every Service struggling to get players available due to operational commitments, but what this season has demonstrated is that we DO have strength and depth everywhere in a young and capable squad. They know what is expected of them and must go out in both games wearing the cross swords with pride. Unfortunately we were unable to defend the IS for the 9th consecutive year however we never lost a game, we were unable to get a victory we deserved. We will come back stronger next year and strive to win back the IS.

The Southern Counties competition was still to play for with one remaining fixture left. If we win the final game then we will win the competition, we went into the game with a slight advantage as it was our home fixture. We had a good strong squad to select the

starting 11, with all the girls demonstrating all the hard work they have put in to the season, with the hurt from not retaining the IS they wanted to prove that they could win this competition.

The game got underway and what a great final game, we were playing some great football and deservedly went in to the lead. We were sitting comfortable with a 3-0 advantage, however in the last few minutes we switched off and allowed them to score 2 late goals. We managed to hold our nerve and saw out the game ending with a score line of 3-2. This result sealed our place as winners of the Southern Counties competition league winners.





# ARMY REFEREES - 2016/17 SEASON



Army refereeing continues to develop impressively. The Army is classed as a County by the FA and all our officials are integrated into the refereeing pyramid to ensure that all are treated equally and have the same opportunities to progress and develop. There are over 250 registered officials across all levels of refereeing from unit football to the Premier League.

This season 80 persons (including 5 females) qualified as Army officials and this allows Army football to operate successfully at all levels from Unit games to Tri Service matches. Junior officials are developed by a combination of assessments and mentoring. As knowledge is gained, they are invited to become part of an academy that identifies talent and offer the opportunity to then promote and officiate more challenging games. Most gain experience on civilian leagues and many progress to a standard beyond which the Army has to offer; this is challenging and rewarding in equal measures.

Some of the Army referee achievements this season include:

**WO2 Halliday (RAPTC)** was voted the Army Official of the year. He had another fantastic season and was an Assistant at the Hull City v Manchester Utd EFL League Cup Semi Final in January 2017.

In September 2016, **Sgt Declan Ford (REME)** and **Capt Steve Finch (RLC)** were appointed as Assistant Referees for the English Football League One fixture between Millwall and Walsall.

**CSgt Chris Bonnar (Scots)** officiated at the Homeless World Cup in Glasgow organised by Street Soccer who help socially disadvantaged and homeless adults amongst a variety of support systems. 64 teams representing 52 countries across six continents were involved.

On Sunday 7th May 2017, **Capt Stephen Finch (RLC)** was an Assistant referee at the FA Sunday Cup Final at Sheffield Utd.

The Army Cup Final was refereed by **Cpl Declan O'Shea (REME)**. At the age of 26, he is possibly the youngest ever to officiate this prestigious game and he finished an excellent season by being promoted to Level 3 (National League)

Numbers of officials within the Reserves are increasing and this is very encouraging. More games are being played and this requires more officials, opportunities are opening to support football in the Reserves. **Cpl Phil Trask, 167 Regt RLC**, refereed the Army Reserve Cup Final. He started refereeing in 1992 and officiated his final match at the tender age of 51.

**LCpl Holly Gayler (RSigs)** was an assistant on the Cavalry Cup Semi Final and was the first Military female to officiate at this stage of the competition.

The Army referees finished the season with their Annual Awards Evening which was held at the Military Academy, Sandhurst. We are grateful to our sponsors Mood and to special guest Stuart Attwell, FA Premier League Referee. Presentations were made to:

**Sgt Craig Jinks (RSigs)** as the referee who has made most significant contribution to Army Football during the season.

**LCpl Michael Blake (RE)** as the newcomer showing the most potential and commitment.

Unit Football is very well supported and almost all games have at least a referee appointed to every match. This is a tremendous achievement and congratulations go to all the area committees that make this happen; it is a thankless task.

Opportunities to qualify as an Army FA official are available and dates for the 2017/18 Referee courses have been confirmed as follows:

- 4-7 September (Aldershot)
- 13-16 November (Catterick)
- 22-25 January (Aldershot)
- 19-22 March (Stafford)

For more information visit: <http://www.armyfa.com/refs/basic-courses>

For most of us, the chance of playing on the Premier League stage has gone but the opportunity to officiate there certainly exists; who knows, it could be you.

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# Army Football Development Headquarter Sixes Tournament

(Maj Jim Fallon)

### Introduction

The inaugural Headquarter Sixes Tournament took place on a Wednesday afternoon late in June 2017. The idea for the Tournament was conceived by the Army Football Development team to provide players assigned in Headquarter establishments and outside of Regimental leagues, with an opportunity to compete in an organised football event.

Army Football Development seeks to progress the game for all, be it playing, coaching or supporting and organising the beautiful game. Some great football was certainly played in this Tournament which brought together twelve Headquarter teams from across the UK. Footballers young and... more mature, from Corps level to the infrequent participant, came together to make for a very competitive and enjoyable event.

### Tournament Format

The format for the Tournament randomly arranged twelve Headquarter teams into two groups of six. The first group put together Headquarter teams from Home Command (HC), 3 (UK) Division, 11, 12 and 160 Brigades, along with a team from the Military Provost Service. The second group pitched teams together from Headquarters Field Army, Army Recruiting and Training Division (ARTD), 1 (UK) Division, London District, 101 (Log) Brigade, and Regimental Headquarters REME.

The initial stage encompassed each team playing five games against the other teams in their group in a league format. After all of the group games were played the lower placed team in each group played off for the Plate, with the Field Army team winning out against 160 Brigade. The two top teams from each group then played each other in semi-finals where ARTD beat HC, and 12 Brigade came out on top against RHQ REME. The fact that all games were closely fought, indicated the spread of talent, as well as youth and experience, across all of the teams. HQ ARTD had played strongly throughout the tournament and after four hours of competitive football, deservedly won the title as this first Headquarter Sixes tournament winners.



### Tournament Rules and Futsal

Tournament teams were allowed six players on the pitch with two substitutes for each 10 minute game. To maximise playing time for all, some of the rules of the sport of Futsal were incorporated to ensure the ball was in play for the majority of time for each game. Equally important for Army Football Development, incorporating some of the futsal arrangements allowed players to focus more on their technique as the games were consistently played at a fast pace.

Futsal is a game closely linked to football though its humble origins are traced to South America in the 1930s. Closer to home futsal might be likened to 'street football' where the hard and fast surface requires players to hone the technique for control of the ball. The Headquarter Tournament had no offside restriction, roll on/off substitutions, kick-ins rather than throw-ins, and restrictions on back passes to goalkeepers. The effect of the rules were well managed by referees and all teams, and ensured all games were fast paced and exciting with end to end attacking.

### Further Development

The aim of the Headquarter Sixes tournament was achieved in delivering opportunities for all ability levels to play the game. Army Football Development is keen to identify and support a network of volunteers for the

organisation of more similar tournaments delivered regionally. Furthermore, the Headquarter Tournament may have highlighted how participating teams may have benefitted from incorporating a non-playing coach. Having a team coach may have given players more guidance and opportunities to exploit in games. The Army Football Development Officer, Steve Stone, delivers a range of coaching courses at the Army Football Development Centre in Aldershot; details of such courses are constantly updated on the Army FA for those who may like to give something back to the game they play, through coaching others.

### The Future

The Headquarter Sixes Tournament proved a great success with the willingness of so many players to travel to Aldershot from as far as Brecon, York, Colchester and many other locations in between. Along with the players, the referees and support staff from AGC Recruiting and the Army FA, as well as many spectators who came to support their Headquarter teams, gave this inaugural event a very firm foundation to grow in the future. The next Headquarter Sixes Tournament is already scheduled for Wednesday 20 June 2018; the Army Football Development team hope to see you all there.





# ARMY OFFICERS FOOTBALL (Crusaders)



Andy Campbell receiving the West London Veterans League Division One Champions Trophy June 2017

Army Crusaders is the Army Officer Corps' representative football team. Formed in 1922 it consists of a First Team and a Veterans (Over 35s) Team. The current President is Brig Steve Vickery late R SIGNALS, the Chairman is Col Colin Francis OBE late RLC and the Secretary Maj Andy Campbell R SIGNALS.

The First Team play 12 – 16 games each season with home matches at the Aldershot Military Stadium; all games are deemed friendly against a range of teams including RAF ICARUS, RMAS and Army Reserve.

The Veterans play in the over 40s West London Veterans League (WLVFL) which provides 16 games along with another 8 traditional friendly fixtures such as HAC, RAF ICARUS and UK

Members of Parliament. Hence a strong and large squad is required to cater for age related injuries and family commitments. All home games are played at RMAS (on a Sun afternoon) with away games mostly in Surrey / Hants / W London.

A combined First / Veterans team have also been ever present at the Liverpool Ramblers Easter Tournament held in Formby / Crosby each year; last winning the tournament in 2007.

A short resume of the season for both sides follows.

## FIRST TEAM

A season of major change for the Crusaders First XI as a relatively young team with several new faces together with a change of management with Maj Ali Beard taking the reins from the retiring Steve Pugh.

Despite these changes the team showed promise early on but suffered several narrow defeats prior to Christmas with goals (and a keeper) often hard to come by. Post Christmas and with a central core of players established, the team switched to a 3-5-2 formation, partly from lack of defenders and an abundance of midfielders. This formation took one game to bed in with a 5-3 loss to the Army Veterans, before a 4-1 victory against the Defence Academy. Promising, now if only we can find that keeper!

To look forward, the First XI are aiming to switch from their traditional opposition to venture out into Defence Engagement and recruiting. Fixtures with Universities and UOTCs are being scheduled as the Crusaders take on a recruiting role against competitive but more realistic opposition.

## VETERANS TEAM

After the disappointment of relegation to the WLVFL Division One in 2016 the Crusaders Veterans were able to bounce immediately back to the Premier as Champions with a season of free scoring football despite the usual challenges of raising a side for weekend football. And all this without any parachute payment!

To be honest there is a vast difference in standard between the 2 Divisions so we will need to recruit more just over 40 year olds in order to maintain our Premier status.

Lastly, a plea for everyone involved in unit and representative football. If you have Officers playing "The Soldiers Game" then inform them that Army Crusaders are fit and well and always in need of support. Any officer, of any age interested in getting involved should approach the Crusaders FC Secretary who will be able to provide further details and registration information.

## AT THE DOUBLE



LCpl Waring has become the first person to win the Army Challenge Cup & Navy Cup.

He featured for Cdo Log Regt RM FC (CLR) in the Navy Cup as they defeated HMNB Davenport in Plymouth.

It was a thrilling game to watch with plenty of action and great football from both teams. LCpl Waring wasn't in the starting 11 for the final but did come on in the 2nd half with 20 minutes to play, but when he did he injected more pace which enabled CLR to score the 3rd goal to ensure CLR won the Navy Cup.

LCpl Waring is a current and regular Corps footballer for the RLC and has represented the Army U23 in the 2016/17 season. He also won the Army Cup in 2014/15 season with 7 Regt RLC and won the Navy Cup with Cdo Log Regt Royal Marines within the 2016/17 season.

LCpl Waring holding the Army Cup & Navy Cup.





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# ANNUAL AWARDS 2017

The Army FA Awards Evening was held in Aldershot on 25 May 2017. Hosted by our President, Chief of the General Staff- General Sir Nicholas Carter KCB CBE DSO ADC - we were delighted to welcome our guest, former England international Brian Talbot. 100 people attended covering all factions of Army football in what had been a successful season on and off the pitch. Also presenting the awards were Vice Presidents Lt General Nick Pope CBE (DCGS), Lt General Tim Radford CB, DSO, OBE and Army Sergeant Major WO1 Glenn Haughton.



*General Sir Nicholas Carter presenting award to lead Sponsor Tim Gibson*

The evening commenced with recognition of a new three year sponsorship agreement with FUJITSU who have become our new headline sponsor. Our President made a presentation to Fujitsu representative Tim Gibson.

Covering all aspects of the wide ranging activity of Army Football the following presentations and awards were then made:

Sgt Craig Jinks (Royal Signals) received the Dobsons Trophy. This is for the Army Referee who made "the most significant contribution during the course of the season".

The Women's Inter Unit League based in UK North was won by DM(G) whilst UAV Regt won the inaugural Inter Unit Cup. Receiving the award on their behalf was Lou Banton.

The Army Football North Mens Division, played in a joint services league, was 21 Engineer Regiment. The Army Midlands was divided into the East/West and the winners were 4 AAC and 1 Signal Regt.

Army Scotland Winners were Scots Dragoon Guards where WO2 Chart and SSgt McCall collected the trophy.

There were seven leagues and 54 teams involved in the Army Southern Leagues during 2016/17 divided into three regions. The Southern League winners were Western: 11 Signal Regiment and Eastern: 1 RSME. The Central winners were 1 Grenadier Guards. Capt Ty Bearder was the representative collecting the award. The Southern Cup Winners were Minor units: 47 RA whilst 11 Signal Regiment won the Major Units Final.

Sgt Lee Barber and Cpl Tony Johnston received the BA (G) Cup on behalf of winners 1PWRR.



## Annual Awards 2017



*Lt Gen Nick Pope presents the Cup to Tracey Montgomery - Winners Women's Corps League (RLC)*

*Brian Talbot presents Managers player award to Cpl Mandy Kidd*



*Brian Talbot presents Players player award to Cpl Zoe Stewart*

*CGS and Steve Cotter*



*CGS and Gary Burton*

*CGS presents Vic Baker (Trinity) recognition of sponsorship award*



Corps Football both male and female had a vibrant and extremely competitive Inter Corps League and Cup Competitions. 13 Corps Teams divided into two leagues played in the Men's Massey League and Woolwich Cup and seven teams were involved in the Women's Inter Corps league and Edwards Cup competition. Cpl Zoe Stewart received the Edwards Challenge Cup for the AGC Womens team whilst Tracey Anne Montgomery represented the Womens Corps League winners RLC.

For the men the Woolwich Cup was won by Royal Engineers. Spr Dan Stoneman collected the trophy whilst Head Coach Capt Sean Birchall and WO1 Ellis Langford collected the Massey Division One trophy for the third successive season. Capt Jimmy Blair represented the Infantry, winners of Massey Division 2.

The following Player of the Season Awards for representative football were made:

Reserves	Spr Darren Bogle
U23	LCpl Charlie Gale
Managers Player of the season Women	Cpl Mandy Kidd
Players Player of the season Women	Cpl Zoe Stewart
Men's Player of The season	Cpl Calum Wilkinson

The winners of the Army FA Challenge Cup were 1 Yorkshire Regiment who were represented by Sgt Steven Rowe and LCpl Darren Clarke

Focussing on a successful representative football season the following presentations were also made:

Major Danny Proctor and WO2 Mags McAteer collected the Men and Womens Southern Counties Cup respectively whilst Cpl Callum Wilkinson collected the Mens Inter Services Trophy for a second successive season.

In recognition of services to the Army Football Association the President made notable presentations. Maj Steve Cotter is stepping down from his involvement in Army football. In recent times he has been Head Coach of the Army Reserve team but he initially started out in 1978 and has served SEME and REME before coaching the Army team. He was also involved in four Army Cup Finals. Major Gary Burton received a Life Time Achievement Award. Upon ending his time in the Army Major Burton served Army Refereeing for 25 years in a distinguished career that saw him officiate in all Service competitions, representing the Combined Services at the Kentish Cup in Belgium and, the pinnacle for all Army Referees, refereeing the Army Challenge Cup Final in 2008. Major Steve Dridge was awarded the Volunteer of the Year award for his contribution to Army Womens football. Stepping down from his role after a decade Major Dridge has been a calming and influential presence as the Womens representative team have thrived during his period involved. Unable to be present on the evening Major Dridge was represented by Lt Col Alison Curnow.

The presentations concluded with recognition to the retiring Vic Baker at Trinity Insurance who has been a stalwart of supporting Army Womens football for many years.

Guest speaker Talbot spoke passionately about his time in football. Currently Chief Scout and Assistant Director of Football Operations at Fulham he covered his notable career which included winning the FA Cup Final in successive seasons at Ipswich Town and Arsenal respectively; fitting as this successful Awards evening was held just two days before the 2017 FA Cup Final, also won by Arsenal!

We were also pleased to welcome Karl Mitchell from The Woodland Trust and Daniel Routt from the National Football Museum to The Army Awards Dinner.

This summer the Army FA are pleased to be involved with the Woodland Trust, Football Supporters Federation and National Football Museum's new initiative "For Club and Country" which aim to create lasting living memorials to footballers who made the ultimate sacrifice in World War 1.

For more information on the "For Club and Country" and the Woodlands Trust please visit:


<https://www.forclubandcountry.org.uk/>



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1. The last obstacle on this year's course was the Inflatable dartboard, another new addition for AFARS2017. After the session the participants congregate around the dartboard for a picture before being handed back to the club.

2. The team is comprised of members from different areas of football ranging through: Players, Coaches & Referees.

3. The participants have the opportunity to beat the 'keeper'. They're unaware that neither of the team are an actual keeper but it gives them great pride to put the ball in the back of the net.

4. Agility cones are a new addition this year and ensures that for the participants to get the best possible time they must stay nimble on their toes.

5. The creative skills of the media liaison are not just limited to the roadshow staff as can be seen here from a session at Blackburn Rovers FC

6. The participants are given a target to shoot for at the start for the inflatable goal, this puts their shooting skills to the test.

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Credit - LCpl P. Dobson (RSigs)

# ARMY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION ROADSHOW 2017

## BY CPL DOBSON – 14 SIGNAL REGIMENT

Not many children can say they've undertaken training by the British Army over the summer holidays but some returning to their studies in September will be able to brag about such a feat and have 'goodies' to back up their claims.

The Army football roadshow travels the country for two weeks over the school summer holidays linking in with various professional football club; including former Premier league champions Leicester and Arsenal, to tie in with their summer soccer schools and activity camps. This year the team was active between the 29th of July and the 11th of August, and this year marks the 5th year the roadshow team has made waves amongst the communities they've visited with many participants having stayed in touch via social media so that they may visit when the roadshow returns to their local club!

The team is comprised of players, coaches, referees and a media liaison that combine their skills to provide a bespoke mixture of footballing and military activities for the participants. The results of which are then viewable on Facebook (Fb.com/ArmyFootballAssociation). The sessions go down a treat with the participants of all ages as when they arrive they are given a scenario, with a military reason for all of the obstacles, speed poles being landmines, mannequins being guards etc.

It is the aim of the roadshow to engage with children and young persons between the ages of 4 & 21 in order to bridge the gap between the various communities through the shared mutual interest in football. Across the 5 years that the roadshow has been running the team has upheld the FA's message and agenda of supporting football at the grass roots level by visiting some of the more impoverished communities spread around the UK whilst operating in housing estates and community centers.



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Some of the schemes that the roadshow team has worked with include:

- a. School Holiday Football Schools. These courses are created and ran by the footballing in the community departments and host up to approx 300 children aged between 4 & 18 years old.
- b. Kicks Projects. Working with young persons aged between 12 & 21, these participants are from areas where anti-social behavior is rife. These sessions are run on the evenings and weekends and reward participants during the session to reinforce more desirable behavioral attitudes outside their supervision.
- c. National Citizenship Scheme (NCS). The NCS offers young persons aged between 15 & 17 the opportunity to test themselves in various scenarios throughout a residential period. During the period where the roadshow team works with them they treat the participants to a taste of military life through PT and are on hand to answer any questions that they may have.

During these sessions the outlay is as follows:

- a. Army warm-up. To minimize and mitigate the chances of injuries the warm up is taken by an Army PT instructor. During the warm up the participants are reminded to keep their arms unfolded, hands off hips and out of pockets otherwise they are awarded press-ups.
- b. Pairs and group activities. Fun but physical games such as the Hare & the Hound are played. This reinforces the competitive spirit amongst the participants as if they are to lose they are awarded press ups.
- c. The Army challenge assault course. The participants are then run through the course after receiving a demo and a test run before going through whilst being assessed by time or points. The winner then has the option to choose a forfeit for the losers.
- d. Coaching. Depending on the age range of the participants some can receive coaching on the key areas where they struggled on the challenge assault course and get to have another run through before the group progresses to the next stage.
- e. Small sided games. Officiated by a FA qualified Referee, these games are played between the team and the participants depending on the age range. During some of these games the Army coaches have spotted some serious talent in young players and have highlighted their skills to their community workers that represent the club.
- f. Prizes. All the participants are gifted a gizzet bag with Army branded goods ranging from pencils and stress balls to Referee packs. They are thanked for their hard work and participation before one final group photo and are then back under the control of their community coaches.

This year's roadshow has been yet another success gauging from the public's response from when the team have gone into these locations with some of the participants having attended last year or have heard about us from friends or community staff. The media output on social platforms has seen yet another rise in numbers as the roadshow has grown with many parents having got in touch from previous years wanting to bring their children again this year.

7. AFARS brings a wealth of skills to the communities they visit. Over the years the team makeup has remained more or less the same which adds to the cohesion and enthusiasm of the experience.

8. WO1 K. Haley ((SSI) RAPT) (Pictured) brings his skills to the roadshow, not only as a seasoned player at Army level, but also as a PT instructor.

9. The sessions run on any day of the week, in any conditions that are thrown at us. Sessions are catered for the elements which remain enjoyable to the participants.

10. Testing their ball control skills the speed poles proves a valuable test for the participant as they are forced to go at their speed, too fast and they lose control of the ball or collide with a pole. During the course the obstacles are designated with a real life element. The speed poles being landmines. Contact with a landmine results in press ups.

11. Participants at the former Premier League Champions Leicester City session were amazed that they got to meet a 'real life General'. Major General G I Mitchell MBE was on hand to chat to and meet the participants and also to hand out gizzets.

12. SSgt D. Tuck (R.SIGS) (Pictured) leads a warm-up at Burton Albion. The participants are thrust into a military 'environment' to enable an authentic experience from the moment the session begins.

13. This year's roadshow kicked off at Bristol Rovers' open day. The team had the chance to catch up with LBdr Tom Broadbent (RA) who had signed for their first team after a chance of a lifetime trial with the club.

14. The team have the chance at Bolton to rub shoulders with the wider general public who get very enthusiastic with the inflatable goal on match day. This year saw Bolton take on Leeds Utd.

15. The first obstacle on the challenge assault course is the Camnet crawl. This launches the participant into what they would consider to be an authentic feel Army situation. The emphasis is to keep low and crawl through the obstacle as fast as possible.

16. The team employs the skills of a photographer who doubles as a media liaison for the roadshow. It is his responsibility to promote the roadshow and communicate with the community members of where the roadshow visits.

17. The creative skills of the media liaison are not just limited to the roadshow staff as can be seen here from a session at Blackburn Rovers FC

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# Army Masters Strike Gold in Auckland

The World Masters Games takes place every 4 years and is the largest multi-discipline participatory sporting event in the world. The Army Masters football team had never before competed in the Games but in April 2017 a squad of 23 made the epic 32-hour journey to Auckland, returning 12 days later as Gold Medal winners.

To kick off the Games, 20,000 athletes from over 90 countries representing 28 sports assembled at Eden Park, home of the All Blacks, for a spectacular opening ceremony. The football contingent, at over 2,000 strong, was the largest in the Games and the Army side were competing in the Men's 30+ age category. However, the organisers had combined the 30+ and 35+ groups into a single league which resulted in a punishing schedule of seven, 60-minute matches in nine days.

The opening fixture versus Australian side Leichhardt Tigers was played in humid conditions and having spent most of the 36 hour acclimatisation period sampling the hospitality of Auckland, the Army initially struggled to stamp their authority on the game. However, an opportunist goal from Cpl Kev Rookes (RLC) just before half time set them on their way and after dominating the second half the game was eventually sealed in the 59th minute when Rookes was again on hand to score his, and the team's, second.

Match two was against Century United, one of the pre-tournament favourites. On a hot, sunny afternoon the Army dominated possession as the opposition sat back but it was not until the second half that Rookes once again broke the deadlock, this time with a strike from outside the box. This forced the Kiwis to chase the game and they missed a golden opportunity to equalise before WO2 Maik Biggs (RLC) cut inside

from the right and fired the ball past the keeper in the dying seconds.

The third game against an undefeated Rangitoto United side containing several former NZ internationals provided an even sterner test. The Army came out of the blocks at a blistering pace, with the midfield trio of Griffiths (RE), Hayes (AGC) and Rookes all outstanding, but they had to wait until midway through the second half for the breakthrough as Cpl Robbie Storrie (RE) swivelled to fire home from close range. As legs started to tire, Rangitoto came back into the game but they rarely threatened the Army goal as SSgt Barry Rizza (R Sigs) expertly marshalled the defence. The 1-0 victory proved to be one of the highlights of the tournament, although a shoulder injury to Griffiths was to rule him out of the remainder of the competition.

Game four against US side Olympic Club kicked off at 0900 on a warm, sunny day but unfortunately the Army side was unable to replicate the intensity of the previous match. Olympic, a quick, skilful team with several former MLS players, dictated the play for much of the game, creating several good chances before finally scoring midway through the second half. Biggs came close for the Army but ultimately the 1-0 margin of defeat could have been far worse.

The penultimate group game against another Kiwi side, Braveheart United, saw several enforced changes due to injury, testing the depth of the squad. Chances came and went and it looked like it might be a frustrating evening for the Army until Sgt Nick Brough (RLC) popped up in the 50th minute to slot in the ball at the far post. SSgt Dave Mavin (REME) then rifled in a second to put the game beyond doubt.

The final group game, and the Gold Medal match in the 30+ age category, was against the NZ Defence Force. A sizeable crowd witnessed a commanding Army performance, the opposition being unable to cope with the side's passing game when in possession and high pressing game when out of possession. Brough gave the Army the lead on 15 minutes followed by two goals from Storrie, the first a cool finish following crisp interplay around the box. Biggs made it 4-0 half way through the second half and shortly after SSgt Gary Adamson (RLC) fired in another. NZDF pulled back a consolation goal to give the home crowd something to cheer about but Capt Matt Spruce (RAMC) replied in the closing minutes to make the final score 6-1.

The final football match of the Games saw the Army, winners of the 30+ age category, again pitted against Olympic Club, winners of the 35+ category, in the impressive QBE stadium. With no medal at stake this was an opportunity for the Army to restore the balance after the earlier defeat but it was not to be and with so many injuries it ultimately proved 'a match too far'. Olympic again dominated possession, establishing a 2-0 lead by half time, and although the Army created two excellent opportunities to bring the game back into reach the opposition netted twice more to run out 4-0 winners.

While defeat in the final match was disappointing, it did not take the gloss off what had been an outstanding team effort in the competition and an excellent tour overall. Particular thanks must go to Tour Manager, Maj Richie Bell and Head Coach, Capt Sean Birchnall for all their efforts.

The next World Masters Games takes place in Japan in 2021...and the Army Masters intend to be there!





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## 2016/17 SEASON – ARMY FA SOUTHERN LEAGUE

The 2016/17 season commenced with 70 teams entering 8 leagues, the introduction of a fixture list which was, in the main, well adhered to resulting in more games being played than in previous seasons. The Major and Minor unit League Cups had a total of 63 teams entering and the Regional Six-A-Side Competition saw 32 male teams enter with 4 qualifying for the Army Six-A-Side Competition.

### League.

The Army FA Southern League structure was split into 3 sub-regions and included London district with the champions being as follows:

- a. Central Premier - 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards.
- b. Central Division 1 - Army Aviation Centre.
- c. Western Premier - 11th Signal Regt (to retain the trophy for the 4th time).
- d. Western Division 1 - 1st Battalion RIFLES.
- e. Western Division 2 - 4 RLC.
- f. Western Division 3 - 4 Battalion Military Intelligence.
- g. Eastern Premier - 1 RSME Regt.

Of particular note was 11th Signal Regt who secured a fourth successive league win; in the Central Divisions, the premier league was won by the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards who had the perfect season played 5 won 5. The inaugural Eastern Division (that was made up of LONDIST teams and teams in the Kent area) was won by 1 RSME Regt, the Chatham based club who also had a 100% record.

### Six-A-Side Competition.

The 2016/17 season culminated in the Six-A-Side competition that was held on Queen's Avenue, Aldershot on 24 May 2017. 32 male teams entered with 4 qualifying for the Army Six-A-Side Competition, these were:

- a. Winners - 1 RIFLES.
- b. Runners-up - 8 Bn REME
- c. Unit League Champions - 1st Battalion The Grenadier Guards.
- d. Unit League Runners Up - 11 Signals Regiment

### League Cup.

The Army FA Southern League Cup was in 2 parts; Major and Minor Units. Units competed against one another throughout the season culminating in the finals that were held on 12 April 2017 at the Aldershot Military Stadium.

### Minor Unit Final.

The Minor Unit final was played between 47 Regt RA and RMA. 47 Regt RA experienced a tough semi-final fixture against a strong 1AAC side (Army Challenge Cup finalists), narrowly beating them in order to progress to the final. RMA had an equally tough fixture defeating Upavon Station in the other semi-final, to thoroughly deserve their place in the final. The final was a tight affair until 47 Regt RA broke the deadlock and then started to control the game finishing 3-0 victors.



### Major Unit Final.

The Major Unit Final saw RTR face the in-form and flying 11 Signals Regiment who defeated Army Champions 1 YORKS in the semi-final. RTR defeated the experienced 6Bn REME side in order to book their place in the final. A gutsy performance from 1 RTR was not enough to match the professional display from 11 Signals Regiment who ran out the overall winners.



### Unit League Champions.

This inaugural event to identify the Army Unit League Champions was introduced and it was played from a semi-final to determine the overall UK South Unit League Champions. The competition comprised of 11 Signals Regiment, 8 Trg Bn REME, 1 RSME and 1st Bn Grenadier Guards. After two fiercely fought semi-finals, the final was played between 1st Bn Grenadier Guards and 11 Signals Regiment. The Grenadier Guards were 3-0 at half time after a dominant first half. 11 Signals then controlled the second half bringing the game back to 3-2 and had a few chances towards the end of the game to bring it equal including hitting the bar and having penalty appeals turned down. The Grenadier Guards managed to hold on and were crowned the UK South Unit League Champions who will now progress to represent the region against UK Midlands in the semi-final of the Army Unit League Champions. The other semi-final will be played between UK North and UK Scotland with the final of the competition taking place at Aldershot Military Stadium on Wednesday 6 September 2017.



### Conclusion.

The Soldiers Game is flourishing in the UK South area, it is being played by more teams than in recent memory and more matches are being fulfilled. The 2017/18 season commences in September 2017 where there is every opportunity to build on the successes that have been achieved.



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Colonel David Jones presenting a new football kit to the homeless living at Trident Reach Charity hostel



## Army Football Supports Homeless in Birmingham

Colonel David Jones, Deputy Commander [Reserves] 8 Engineer Brigade has been putting his energies and efforts supporting the setting up of a homeless men's football team in the centre of Birmingham, with the help of Army Football.

Homeless men, including ex-rough sleepers, living within a Trident Reach Charity hostel have shown a real interest to play football and scientists have found that playing football can significantly improve the health of homeless and other socially disadvantaged groups.

As Chairman of Army Reserve Football and Board member of the Army FA Colonel Jones was able to access a full football strip and balls to support the men with their football initiative and even played against the homeless team in their first ever game. Colonel Jones said that "it has been privilege to enable the team and I believe that society has got a responsibility towards our homeless and socially disadvantaged the reason I got involved".

Rob Evans Washington Court Manager [Trident Reach Charity] says "Colonel Jones has been an inspiration in providing support for homeless men in real need and allowed an opportunity for them to have fun, social way to improve their physical capacity and health profile. We also know that peer pressure of team sport will hopefully generate the determination that the men need to stay off the streets, stop taking drugs and alcohol, so providing a chance for them to transform their lives".



Trident Reach Homeless Football Team preparing for their first ever game.



Colonel David Jones presenting a new football kit to the homeless living at Trident Reach Charity hostel



# ROYAL ARMY PHYSICAL TRAINING CORPS FOOTBALL CLUB THAILAND OVERSEAS SPORTS TOUR – 26TH APRIL – 11TH MAY 2017

The Royal Army Physical Training Corps Football Club (RAPTC FC) visited Thailand over the period 26 Apr – 11 May 17. 22 players (including management team) played three competitive fixtures, conducted six training sessions, delivered three coaching clinics and took part in numerous cultural visits (including an elephant safari).

All matches and training sessions took place at the Thanyapura Health and Wellbeing Resort in Phuket with the coaching clinics being delivered at local schools and orphanages. The RAPTC FC won all three matches quite convincingly with 27 goals scored and just two conceded.

The Overseas Sports Visit gave the manager (WO1 Haley) an opportunity to focus on setting the team up in a formation and system that will give them an identity, and allow them to play in a way that improves the technical ability of each player whilst building good relationships throughout the team. The main focus of the tour was football and preparing the team for the 2017/18 season.

The opposition for the first two matches was local football clubs based in the Phuket area whereas the final match pitched the RAPTC FC against a number of ex-serving soldiers and local Thai footballers. The facilities provided at the Thanyapura Health and Wellbeing Resort where first class; excellent pitches and changing areas maximized the output. From the pre-match meal to the post match recovery, no stone was left unturned.

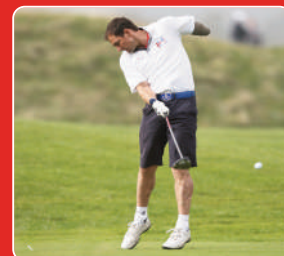






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To apply, complete and return JS Form JPA E015, available through your local Gymnasium, Unit Admin Office or our Website.



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