

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

November 2000 £2

SOLDIER

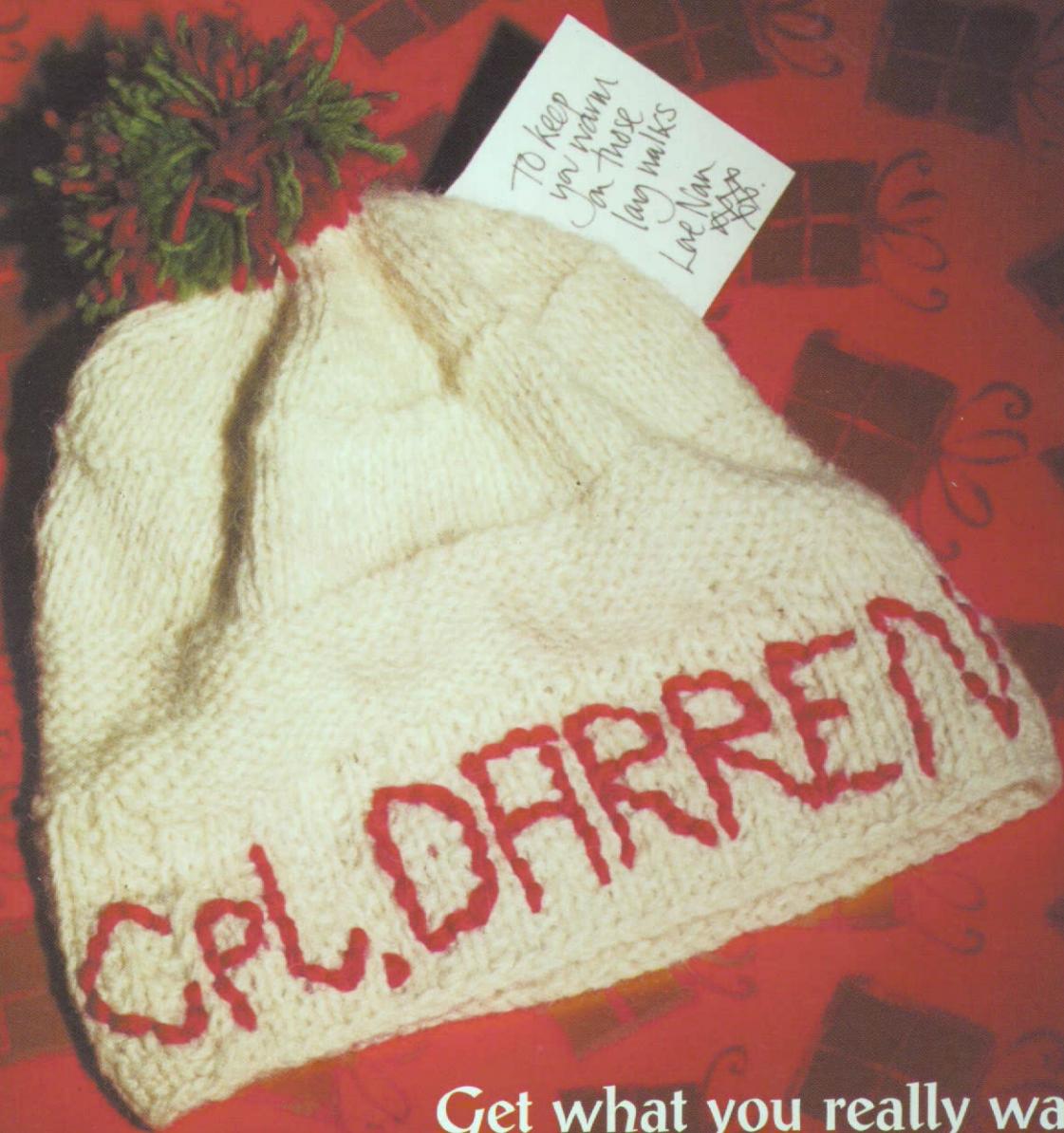
EAGER EAGLES

Battling brigade
at war in Poland

16 Air Assault
spreads its wings

12 Mechanised
gets it together





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'While we were fixing bayonets, the guy on the right lost control of his and stuck it through my hand ... I was bleeding and Monty insisted I fall out'

- Bernard Cribbins
Pages 40-41

'The needless mess-around factor that all ranks have to endure undermines operational effectiveness'

... two Army recruiters come up with their answer to the current retention problem

- Page 70

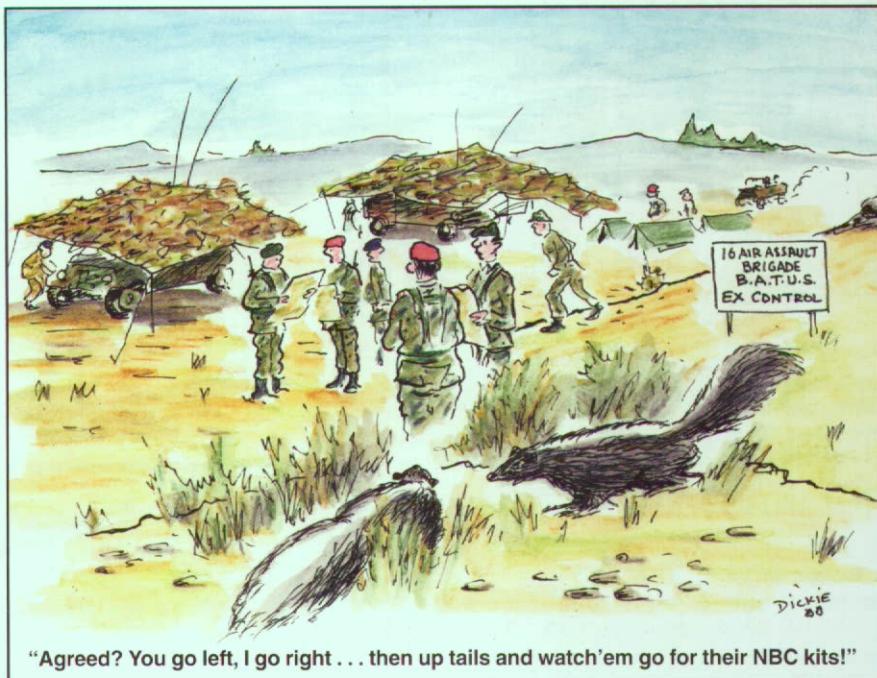


26-27 Cover story

Pte Andrew "Dinga" Bell, 2 RGJ, on guard with his radio pack while his colleagues maintained their vehicles during Exercise Ulan Eagle in Poland.

Picture: Graeme Main

How to contact Soldier
- see Page 74



• 16 Air Assault Brigade lands at BATUS, Canada – Pages 4-5 and 14-15

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SOLDIER
to soldier

ToPaS's got you covered

THE Ministry of Defence's apparent lack of interest in helping soldiers – or civilians – injured on duty by a third party is a bone of contention.

Although many think it blatantly unjust, the fact is that the MoD (in common with other departments) may only pay compensation or involve itself in claims where it has a legal liability to do so.

It has no authority to pay compensation or to fund a legal action on a claimant's behalf.

A new scheme, outlined on Page 11, should redress the balance. ToPaS offers no-cost legal services to MoD personnel injured by a third party while on duty.

It covers a wide range of circumstances, from road traffic accidents to tripping and slipping, injuries caused by contractors, negligence and assault.

The MoD, long seen by its staff as the bad guy in third party injuries, is delighted by ToPaS and will be promoting it widely via DCIs, posters, payslips and on the intranet.

Between the lines

Gen Sir Mike Jackson, C-in-C Land Command, shared his choice of reading matter when he dropped in on Exercise Iron Hawk at the British Army Training Unit Suffield in Alberta, Canada.

Gen Jackson, who has been taking *Soldier* for the past four decades, told our reporter: "I think you have got your tone right, which is not always an easy thing to strike home on."

"I read it avidly, and have done for nearly 40 years. But I am rather older than today's soldiers and I may not represent their views entirely."

"You were voted best in-house magazine this year and that pretty much says it all. My impression is that the boys enjoy it ... it gets well read."

You wouldn't argue with Gen Jackson, would you?

• Iron Hawk – Pages 4-5.

Special report

Iron Hawk sharpens its claws

A revolutionary exercise hosted by the British Army Training Unit Suffield proved a watershed for innovative war games

Report: Anthony Stone
Pictures: Mike Weston

CONSIDERING he was in the middle of a major battle, Maj Gen Richard Dannatt seemed remarkably composed.

He stood in front of the large-scale map on the bird table, left hand in his trouser pocket, feet together at the ankles, almost imperceptibly rocking on the balls of his feet. After digesting the latest intelligence report, he picked up the black phone from the table and issued an order.

Then he returned to silent contemplation of the map.

Outside the headquarters tent of 3 (United Kingdom) Division, the sun was beginning to rise over the snow-dusted prairies of Alberta, Canada, its rays warming the faces and fingers of troops who had spent the night in the field defending key positions.

Their victory or defeat, as well as the immediate fate of thousands of other troops, rested with the tactical decisions being made by Gen Dannatt. Tension in the HQ tent rose along with the throat-tickling dust kicked off the ground by dozens of boots, causing the halogen light to diffuse into an electric orange haze.

Telephone calls were made and received, intelligence reports assessed and map-markers moved.

Once it began, the shooting war was over quickly. The general's manoeuvres had found and fixed the opposing force, putting it in a position where his troops could deliver the coup de grâce. Victory was his and, thanks to digital technology, the defining moments of the battle could be replayed and dissected. There are few places to hide on the prairie... even for a commander.

The battle was the culmination of Exercise Iron Hawk – 15 days of live-firing followed by five days of tactical engagement simulation (TES), leading to a five-day divisional exercise.

Until now the rolling prairies used by the British Army Training Unit Suffield

'We are using the exercise as a testbed for new ideas to do with deep battle... how you get into an enemy's entrails'

(BATUS) have been the backdrop for high-intensity armoured warfare training. This year 3 (UK) Division, nicknamed the Iron Division and the only operational division in the UK, went to Canada with two of the new Joint Rapid Reaction Force Lead Task Forces.

The Lead Aviation Task Force, based around the Lynx anti-tank helicopters of 3 Regiment, Army Air Corps, joined up with infantry, artillery and engineer assets under the command of 16 Air Assault Brigade.

Scimitar and Striker tracked reconnaissance vehicles of the Household Cavalry Regiment played a major part in the Lead Reconnaissance Task Force, which along with infantry, artillery and engineer assets fell under command of 1 Reconnaissance Brigade.

After separate training, the two task forces got together for the final divisional exercise. The programme, designed to test the future possibilities of deploying brigades and task forces onto the prairie, was the first truly



joint Service exercise at BATUS, with helicopters and the RAF's Support Helicopter Force taking part.

It was a huge undertaking involving more than 4,000 soldiers, but the giant stage was more than up to the challenge.

Gen Sir Mike Jackson, Commander-in-Chief Land Command, who, with Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon, visited BATUS during the final stages of Iron Hawk, said: "The training area on the Canadian prairie is larger than all other training areas we have access to put together and there are very few restrictions, thanks to the host government. It offers high-intensity training that can't be done anywhere else."

"Iron Hawk is an expansion of BATUS. We are using avia-

tion in a way that has not been brought in before. It is a different force mix. Gen Jackson described the exercise as a "watershed".

"This, I'm sure, is a pointer to a more innovative use of the facility. We are using the exercise as a testbed for new ideas to do with deep battle... how you get into an enemy's entrails."

One of the men who has helped BATUS move into this new role is Col Hamish Macdonald, who took up his appointment as commander of the training base at the beginning of 1998.

Under his stewardship, a vehicle tracking system capable of plotting the movements, in real time, of Army vehicles on the prairie has been developed. Informa-

tion from Direct Fire Weapons Effect Simulators can also be fed into the system so commanders can see not only where their vehicles are, but whether their crews are "alive" or not.

This clever tracking device had its genesis in a Calgary taxi firm, which used the technology to keep tabs on its vehicles as they touted for business.

"The thing about training in Western Canada," said Col Macdonald, "is that not only is it affordable, but the Canadians are delighted to see us as long as we look after the environment. We can train out here in what is the ultimate military theme park."

Not so long ago, troops who played the enemy on these exercises invariably came



Keeping tabs: The BATUS asset tracking system or BATS monitors the vehicles taking part in the exercise

Ready and able: A Company, 1 R Irish board a Chinook after taking part in a Lynx refuelling exercise. Troops secured the landing pointing and refuelled and rearmed Lynx helicopters in a matter of minutes

in for a good kicking. There was no way they could win. But at BATUS the OPFOR (Opposing Force) doesn't roll over for anyone.

For Iron Hawk, OPFOR was based on 2 Royal Tank Regiment in UK reconnaissance vehicles adapted to present a different enemy silhouette.

Such is the soldierly pride in OPFOR's tactics (practice makes them very tough to beat) that the troops have had t-shirts printed extolling their skills.

On the prairies that were once home to nomadic Indian hunter-gatherers, the AH-64 Apache attack helicopter will swoop down in 2002 and bring a new edge to the Iron Division. Although still undergoing trials at Boscombe Down back in Wiltshire, its mighty presence was felt hovering over the exercise.

Instead, Lynx was used to replicate Apache in a procedural and tactical sense. "We can't pretend Lynx is Apache, otherwise we wouldn't be buying Apache," said Gen Jackson. "That aircraft is a step change in capability."

Apache will be the jewel in 16 Air Assault Brigade's crown. Formed just over a year ago, the brigade has, in the words of Gen Jackson, "come a long way in a very short time".

Brig Peter Wall, the Brigade Commander, said: "There's only a small part of the brigade here, but the bit we have got, that's to say 3 AAC including elements of 1 R Irish, has done extremely well."

"This has been an invaluable exercise and an excellent investment for Land Command. If I had the chance to come back again in a developmental way, bringing more of the brigade and linking the exercise with the training area at Wainwright with more RAF numbers, we would make more progress."

"I'd like to come back here with Lynx and I would certainly like to come back here in a couple of years with Apache to put the system through its paces."

● More pictures – Page 14-15



Excellent investment: Brig Peter Wall looks forward to returning

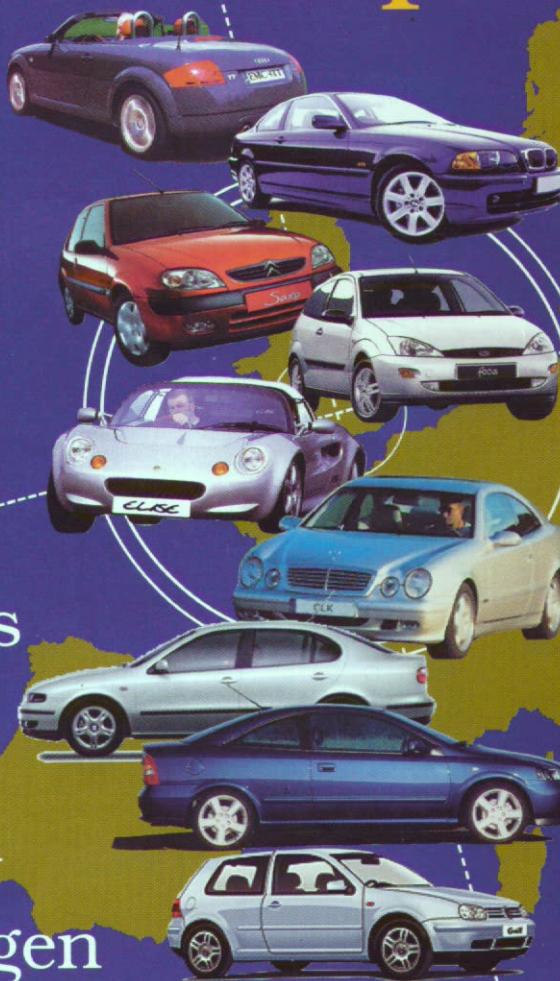
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People, places, events

UN to issue six medals for Africa and Georgia

SIX new United Nations awards are in the process of being issued, although the MoD is reminding British Servicemen and women that neither the medal ribbon nor the medal may be worn until the Queen has given her approval.

Following a number of international operations, all but one of them in Africa,

the UN is in the course of awarding medals for service in the Congo (MONCU), East Timor (UNTAET), East Timor (UNAMET), Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) and Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and Georgia (UNOMIG).

Following the submission of a paper to the Sovereign on the UN Mission in Georgia, the Honours, Awards and Decorations

Committee is waiting on approval. Publication of a Defence Council Instruction (DCI) is expected in the near future.

Before it can begin the process on the five Africa awards, the MoD has to seek information from the UN about the regulations for the Africa medals, which can take anything up to a year.

Coldstream help out as hurricane hammers Belize

COLDSTREAM Guardsmen helped put Belize back on its feet 48 hours after the former British colony narrowly avoided catastrophic damage as a hurricane scythed past.

Soldiers from 7 Company undergoing jungle training in the west of the country were put at the disposal of the Belize government as the population braced itself for Hurricane Keith.

"We were primarily responsible for the distribution of food and essential supplies," said company commander Maj William Tower. "Our main effort was to get supplies to the more extensively damaged areas of the island."

His 140 soldiers handed out thousands of food parcels and later erected tented accommodation for people whose homes had been destroyed.

Although high winds and downpours lashed the north-west coast, which received 26 inches of rain in a single day, the island escaped the worst of the storm as the hurricane veered to within 30 miles of Belize. The only deaths were believed to be seven fishermen caught in small boats in the open sea.

According to CSM Peter Carr, a third



Picture: Sgt Brian Gamble RLC

Helping hand: Gdsm Mick Colborn weighs out rice

of the island's buildings were affected by the gales, the main damage being inflicted on roof tiles and wooden huts.

Helicopters from 25 Flight AAC, based permanently in Belize, and HMS *Cardiff* swept the north-west to search for stranded people and moved men and emergency supplies and equipment to two badly-hit islands off the coast.

IN BRIEF

- Following a massive seven-month charity drive based on the 1st (UK) Armoured Division HQ and Signal Regiment at Herford, Germany and supported by 14th Signal Regiment and 3 DSR, a cheque for nearly £13,500 has been handed over to the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children. Exercise Silver Child III, the brainchild of WO1 (RSM)

Chris Hymas, is run every three years. It culminated in a three-day race from Sutton Coldfield to the hospital, involving soldiers running, cycling, trailer-pushing and, finally, kayaking down the Thames.



- Joggers, left, pass a checkpoint on the 30th Cyprus Walk-about, won for the sixth time by Maj Andy Twell, competing with the Defence Medical Service Training Centre team from Aldershot. There was a record entry for the 90km marathon.

Check us out on the web

OUR new website is up-and-running at www.soldiermagazine.co.uk and contains nearly 50 pages of news, views and useful information. Each month the site will include our top stories, a splash of sports features, a selection of letters from our Mailbag pages and our reunion and searchline listings (giving them a new dimension to our audience).

It will take a month or two for the main search engines to work out that our new site is no longer "under construction", but you can bypass them and go straight to www.soldiermagazine.co.uk. You can also find us at the hotlink on the British Army website at www.army.mod.uk.

Springfield, Bosnia

A NEW heliport facility at Banja Luka Metal Factory has been formally opened by Maj Gen Rick Hillier, Commander Multinational Division (South West). Construction of the site, named "Multinational Springfield Ops" in honour of TV cartoon character Bart Simpson's home town, was completed by elements of 2 Troop, 4 Armoured Engineer Squadron, 21 Engineer Regiment.

People, places, events

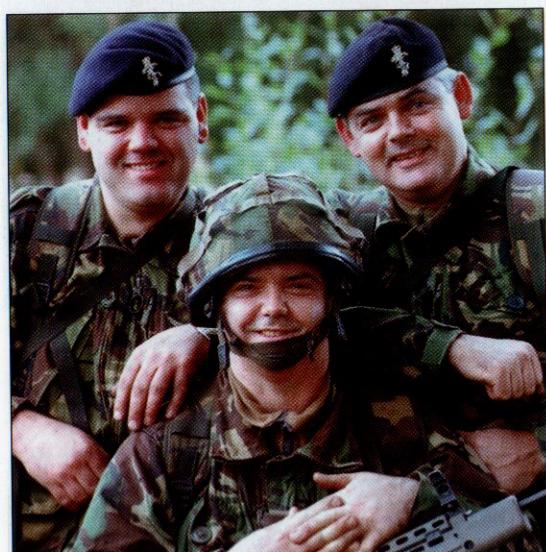
Scotland challenge



Shopping for soldiers: Tourists and bargain-hunters in Edinburgh were stopped in their tracks when a Challenger 2 tank belonging to The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards thundered down Princes Street with Lord Provost Eric Milligan in command. The regiment, based in Germany, was on a recruiting drive in Scotland for the 101 soldiers it needs to form a new squadron.

Picture: Maj Jim Gallagher

Carry on, Sarge



The name sounds familiar: Cpl Billy Scott, centre, has been promoted sergeant... the same rank as brothers Ian, left, and Tom. What makes it even more unusual is that all three TA soldiers are now serving together in Coventry-based 126 Port and Reclamation Company REME (V).

IN BRIEF

● Soldiers from Deepcut and Aldershot are carrying out physiological experiments at high altitude during an expedition to remote Inca ruins and isolated villages in the High Andes. Maj Nic Pratchek is leading a team of ten from 25 Training Support Regiment RLC to conduct experiments into blood pressure and heart rates.

● The Defence Animal Centre at Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, is to be rebuilt under a 25-year contract signed with Realm Services (DAG) Ltd, which runs the centre. A new headquarters building and living accommodation are to be ready by the end of next year under the Private Finance Initiative.

PWO sent to Sierra Leone

MORE Army training teams are to be sent to Sierra Leone to help the West African state's embryonic military force to take on rebels from the Revolutionary United Front.

Replacing the 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment team at Bengema training camp, 25 miles south of Freetown, at the end of last month were men of the 1st Battalion, The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire.

The Royal Irish took over from the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment, which arrived at the bush-surrounded infantry training centre in June as the Royal Marines were withdrawing at the end of Operation Palliser, the Parachute Regiment-led mission to extract British nationals from the crisis-torn country. A further two training teams will be sent to the Sierra Leone.

Announcing the continued British military assistance, Defence Minister Baroness Symons said the package of aid would include equipment support, the offer of officers to fill staff appointments in the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) headquarters, and the provision of an operational-level headquarters to command the UK effort and give high-level operational advice to the Sierra Leone Army.

ACF needs your support

THE Army Cadet Force is looking for adult leaders to act as its officers and NCOs. ACF spokesman Lt Col Martin Newman said: "We need people with enthusiasm, energy and a genuine interest in helping young people to get the most out of life." For details, ring 0800 7799 or visit www.armycadets.com



Clown prince: LCpl Daniel Pincott donned greasepaint to entertain youngsters at the 7th Signal Regiment weekend barbecue in Krefeld, Germany to celebrate the 31st anniversary of the regiment.

Three days of fun began with the barbecue, moved to Burg Linn Castle for a

British country fair, and finished with Ascot Day at the Krefeld Rennbahn, where the racecard included the 7th Signal Regiment Stakes. The celebrations were among the last official functions for commanding officer Lt Col David Jones, who has handed over to Lt Col Jim Richardson.

Picture: Caroline Evans



Touching moment

Pat for the pony: The Queen meets Cruachan, Shetland pony mascot of The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, during a parade to mark the Sovereign's arrival at Balmoral, holiday home of the Royal Family. The Queen, escorted by guard commander Maj James Scott, right, is Colonel-in-Chief of the regiment.

The Pony Major, left, is LCpl Colin McMurray.

For the second year in succession, the Argylls provided the Royal Guard of four officers and 80 soldiers for the three-month Royal stay in Scotland, traditionally taken from the end of July to the middle of October.

While based at Victoria Barracks in Ballater, the Argylls provided a military guard, took part in ceremonial parades, supported the Balmoral estate team and competed locally in mini-Highland games.

Amnesty brings a deadly harvest

SOLDIERS of Burma Company, 1st Battalion, The King's Own Royal Border Regiment ended their tour of Bosnia on a high note, persuading many local people to hand in for destruction a huge hoard of weapons.

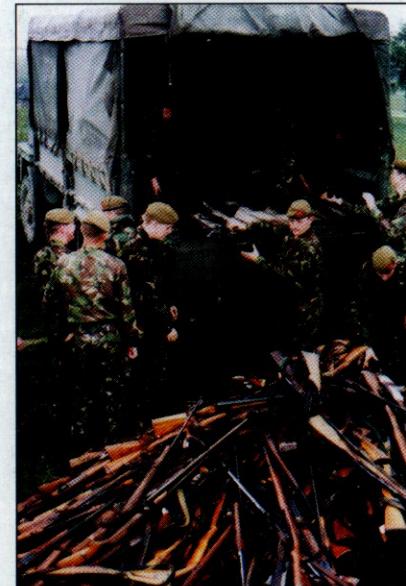
Project Harvest resulted in 569 guns, 7,958 rounds of ammunition, 250 hand and rifle grenades and 68 rocket launchers and explosive devices being surrendered.

Ops officer Capt Matt Walker said the weapons represented the removal of a potential human tragedy from the community.

"To see the number of local people who turned their weapons in to us made us proud of our information campaign. The arms will be destroyed," he said.

Lethal crop: KORBR troops, right, with some of the surrendered weapons

Picture: Cpl Robert Lidstone, Canadian Forces



Return to Arnhem



"Multinationality" in action: Almost 56 years to the day after British airborne troops parachuted on to Ginkelse Heide, near Arnhem, during Operation Market-Garden, Maj Tristan Forster, Para, right, takes part in a joint exercise on the same drop zone with Dutch, German and Belgian paratroopers serving with the Multinational Division (Central) (MND(C)).

They were taking part in an interoperability exercise to establish that the Nato airmobile division's different national elements could use each other's equipment, transport each other's vehicles and refuel each other's aircraft. The exercise involved German and British Tornadoes, Belgian and Dutch F16 Hornets, and Belgian and Dutch C130 Hercules, and was supported by Javelin-equipped 214 Battery, part of 104 Air Defence Regiment RA(V).

By using Belgian harnesses, soldiers from C Company, 2 Para, earned their Belgian "wings". The exercise also provided the setting for the Honourable Artillery Company's annual exercise, for which the HAC's Sabre squadrons were inserted in advance.

Picture: Sgt G Allison



● A memorial garden in the shape of a shamrock, left, has been unveiled at Ballykelly by the Duke of York to honour the 27 soldiers of the 5th (County Londonderry) Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment killed by terrorist action in the past 30 years. He also presented new Colours to the battalion, which is to disband on December 31.

John Gallagher, Paul Fryer, Michael Smy
Robin Davis, Roy Hunt, Tony Steed, James
Kelly, Andrew Knott, George Lamb
Lawrence Perry, Edward Smith, Charles
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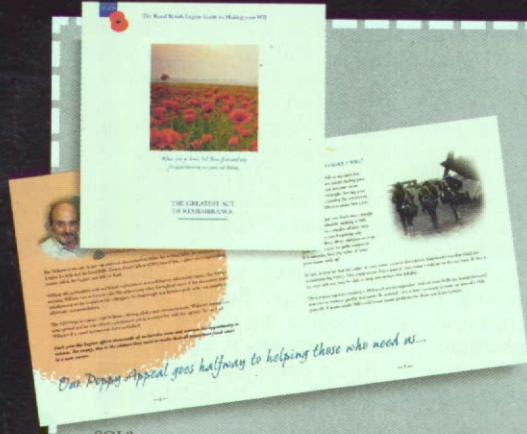
When you wear a poppy in November, it is natural to stop and remember the brave people who sacrificed everything for our freedom.

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The Poppy Appeal only raises half the funds we need each year, so the money we receive from legacies is vital.

The number of people who turn to us for help continues to grow. In fact, British troops are currently serving in 28 conflicts around the world. By remembering the Legion with a gift in your Will, you would not only be paying tribute to all those who gave so much in the past, you would be ensuring that the Legion is there for the people who will need our support in the future.

For a FREE copy of our new Will Guide, please call Perdita Chamberlain on 020 7973 7297. Or, complete the coupon below and return it to: The Royal British Legion, FREEPOST [SW1345], Dept FR, 48 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5YT.



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People, places, events

Now our loyal army of readers can find us online at www.soldiermagazine.co.uk

Servicemen injured on duty will get no-win, no-fee legal assistance

A SCHEME to provide legal help to Service personnel and MoD civil servants injured by third parties while on duty will be widely welcomed.

Under common law, the MoD has no liability in these circumstances, and it is the individual's responsibility to pursue a compensation claim, without any help from the department.

Now, in response to widespread dissatisfaction, a no-win-no-fee legal assistance scheme is to be introduced. ToPaS – Third Party Accident Scheme – as it is to be called, will be operated by Betesh Fox and Company, a firm of solicitors specialising in personal injury claims.

ToPaS, which applies only to the UK at this stage, covers any accident where injury occurs (not small claims), road traffic accidents, tripping and slipping cases, injuries caused by contractors, negligence by third parties and assaults. Claims against the MoD are excluded.

In the event of injury by a third party while on duty, MoD staff – Service or civilian – may contact Betesh Fox to obtain immediate advice and assistance free of charge. Legal costs will be reclaimed as part of the compensation awarded by the insurance company or, if the matter goes to trial, by the courts. If the action is unsuccessful, there will be no charge to the MoD or the individual.

Until a Defence Council Instruction on the scheme is published, anyone wishing to use ToPaS should contact the MoD's Directorate of Claims and Legal on 020 7807 0044.

IN BRIEF

● Following news that the **Bradford & Bingley Building Society** is to be floated on the Stock Exchange at the end of the year, Service account-holders have been reminded that, if they wish to receive windfall shares of about £750, it is their responsibility to ensure their registered address with the society is in a "permitted territory" by December 3. These are the UK, Germany, Hong Kong, France, Australia, New Zealand, Belgium, Canada, Ireland, the Isle of Man, Netherlands, South



Ranging far and wide: Challenger 2 tanks lead a convoy of armoured vehicles along the newly-opened 26.5km southern range road on Salisbury Plain Training Area.

The £13m highway, opened to military traffic by Maj Gen Brian Plummer, Director General Training and Support, follows the southern boundary of Salisbury Plain (West), ending at Westdown Camp. It cuts

through a live-firing area and is not open to the public.

Varying in width from 6m on straight stretches to 12m on bends, and with passing areas every 500m, the road will help to protect fauna, flora and archaeological sites on the chalk downlands and take heavy military traffic away from villages on the edge of the area. Picture: Sgt Richard Dawson

Troops pour in to aid flooded South

AS torrential downpours and devastating flooding brought misery to many parts of Kent and Sussex, soldiers from several units based across the region were on standby to lend a hand.

At Tonbridge, 70 men from the 1st Battalion, The Parachute Regiment worked long, cold and damp hours to shore up the town's defences and help with evacuations.

In nearby Yalding, soldiers helped firemen to rescue and ferry people to safety after the Beult burst its banks, releasing 4ft of water into homes and shops.

"Forty soldiers from 69 (Ghurkha)

Field Squadron RE, part of 36 Engineer Regiment, deployed to an area between Headcorn, Yalding and Tonbridge in four-tonners and Land Rovers, supported by a dive team and boats," said ops officer Capt Gavin Hatcher. They worked around the clock to transport police and civilians and fill sandbags.

The following afternoon 40 soldiers from 20 Field Squadron RE with medium wheeled and combat tractors went on standby at Maidstone as the barge *The Lady of Kent* threatened to break free.

"Despite their enthusiasm, they weren't required to deploy," said Capt Hatcher.

Africa, Spain and the USA. Not on the list are Cyprus, Gibraltar and the Falklands. The registered address can be changed again after the qualifying date.

● Thirteen Army officers and soldiers and 19 Cambridge University Officers' Training Corps cadets have completed an 11,565-mile journey in eight Army Land Rovers from Cambridge to Cape Town. The Déjà Blue expedition was organised to commemorate the

centenary of the Cambridge officer corps battle honour, South Africa 1900-1901, awarded to members of the Cambridge University Rifle Volunteers who served with the Suffolk Regiment during the Boer War.

● Tri-Service staff at the **Joint Arms Control Implementation Group** based at RAF Henlow completed a 60-mile sponsored walk around the Cornish coastal path to raise funds for a children's hospice in Luton.

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People, places, events



Gnr Maria Davis takes the helm of the *Pintail* with instructor Richie Sunderland keeping an eye on things. She was one of 30 members of 26 Regiment RA who swapped their AS90 guns for sailing instruction in the Baltic on board yachts based at the Army's Sail Training Centre at Kiel.

Find us online at www.soldiermagazine.co.uk

Soldier on spot to save neighbours

A SOLDIER on leave in Leicestershire saved two neighbours when fire threatened to sweep through their houses.

Cpl Andrew Whiting AGC was walking to his parents' home late at night when he saw a conifer hedge adjoining the houses in flames. Smoke was seeping into an open bedroom window and he heard a woman coughing.

He hammered at the door until the occupant, a woman suffering from multi-



Cpl Andy Whiting
Picture: Lynn News/Anglia
Newspapers

ple sclerosis, woke up, then did the same with the man next door before calling the fire brigade. The woman had already begun to suffer from inhaling smoke.

Cpl Whiting, a former Coldstream Guardsman, is a Regular serving as chief clerk of Leicester-based C (222 EM) Medical Squadron (V), part of the Territorial Army's 4 GS Medical Regiment. It is thought the hedge was set alight by vandals.

Wives to be asked what they think

ARMY wives – and husbands – are to be given the chance to make known their views on a range of issues which affect their lives.

Topics include stability, mobility, welfare, sources of help, support services, children's schooling, local services, living abroad, and the recognition of unmarried partners.

The Army Families Federation and

SSAFA are sending out a "Changing Attitudes" survey during November to a random selection of serving soldiers, who will be asked to pass them on to their spouses (see Home Truths – Page 45). To find out more, contact the AFF Central Office on 01980 615525 or e-mail us@aff.org.uk or write to the AFF, Trenchard Lines, Upavon, Pewsey, Wilts SN9 6BE.

IN BRIEF

● Gen Sir Charles Guthrie, Chief of the Defence Staff, inspected the first **Gurkha passing-out parade** held at Catterick Garrison since Gurkha training moved from Church Crookham. The first intake of 250 trainees arrived from Nepal in January and moved into the new £7.5m Bhanbhagta Gurung Block.

● WO2 Maxine Colman, AGC, pictured right, the only British Army Servicewoman

serving with Nato in Naples at Headquarters Allied Forces Southern Region, assisted 1st Army Association veterans who attended a service of remembrance in the city to honour their comrades killed during the Second World War.



Four-tier MQ charge system changed

FOLLOWING an audit of every quarter on the Army's living estate, an exercise which resulted in 13,000 Army personnel paying reduced charges last year, changes have been made to the way accommodation charges are calculated.

The changes acknowledge that some accommodation, notably married quarters, falls below an acceptable standard and lay down a system for regular audits.

Alterations to the four-tier grading regulations, said to be "very good news", affect Service family (SFA) and single living accommodation (SLA).

Significant changes include:

- The practice of grading high-cost area family quarters against a reduced scale has stopped and the quarters revaluated against revised scales.

- A four-year audit period for grading has been laid down to ensure that in future the Army's living estate is regularly validated and that the grading is accurate and fair.

- The requirement to inform occupants of potential changes to their accommodation charge has been made more stringent and a more open policy of informing occupants of deficiency points is to be introduced.

- The MoD has recognised that some accommodation, notably family quarters, is below an acceptable standard and a new zero grading has been introduced for permanent purpose-built quarters.

More spaces to sleep

A SCHEME to make sure former Service personnel do not end up sleeping on the streets has been launched in Catterick Garrison.

Funded by the Government's Rough Sleeping Unit, the SPACES (Single Persons Accommodation Centre) project is being run by the English Churches Housing Group in partnership with the MoD. About a quarter of those sleeping rough have a Forces background.

- Troops from 16 Regiment RLC have said farewell to Bicester, their home for more than 50 years, and, after a disbandment parade, joined other units. The regiment, which had had a presence in the town since 1942, served in the Gulf, Bosnia, Northern Ireland and Kosovo. Its demise came as a result of the Strategic Defence Review.

Wagons roll on prairie

Pictures: Mike Weston

"THIS was a big move in anybody's books," said Capt Paul Scannell, RLC, officer commanding transport and movements at BATUS, the man responsible for the logistic side of Exercise Iron Hawk.

Capt Scannell and his team undertook six months' research to find the best way to get more than 600 vehicles plus 70 containers to the railhead at Suffield, Alberta.

The MoD chartered two ships to take the equipment on the ten-day voyage from Marchwood military port, near Southampton, to Montreal.

It was the first time Montreal had been used as a port by the British Army for transporting military kit and trains were specially put together for the move. Canadian railwaymen scoured the US for railcars to make up the 2.7km-long train.

To get the Chinooks in, it was decided to send them by sea to the most westerly point, the port of Churchill on Hudson Bay, which ices over during the winter. From there they flew on to Medicine Hat.

Lynx and Gazelle helicopters were loaded onto massive Antonov transport planes and flown direct to Calgary; troops arrived at the same airport.

With hundreds of vehicles being imported for the exercise, the Canadians wanted to make sure no soil-borne viruses were carried into the country on equipment. Vehicles which failed the test had to be steam-cleaned at the quayside before they could continue.

To speed up the process, Canadian inspectors deployed to the UK to carry out the work before the vehicles set sail, considerably cutting down on delays.



Lob shot: Pte Paul Grimshaw, B Company, 1 QLR, above, throws a grenade during a simulated attack



Big picture: Lt Gee Jenner, left, ops officer of 21 Air Defence Battery, at work with Maj Adrian Palmer from the 16 Air Assault Brigade HQ

Dawn treader: Pte Keiron Malone, 1 QLR, below, tabs across the snow-swept Albertan prairie at first light

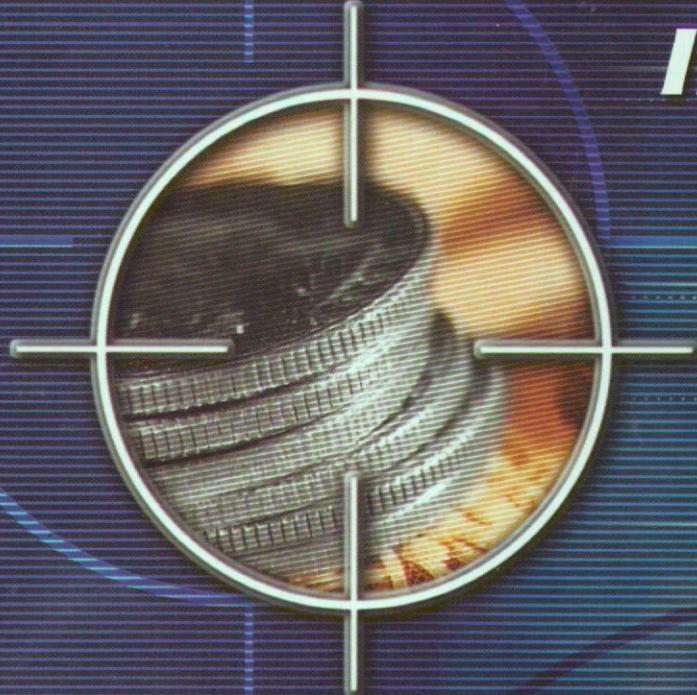


Big gun: Pte Simon Cruise, 1 QLR, shoulders a LAW 80 fitted with Direct Fire Weapons Simulator technology that mimics firing the real thing



Waiting game: Above, ground-crew from 3 Regt AAC, from the left ATpr Lee Harris, LCpl Graham Smith and ATpr David Allan, prepare to board a Chinook

On a roll: Pipe Maj Andrew Wilson, 1 R Irish, left, attached to 16 Air Assault Brigade, bounces across the prairie next to driver Rgr Scott Elder at the wheel of a Weapon Mounted Installation Kit



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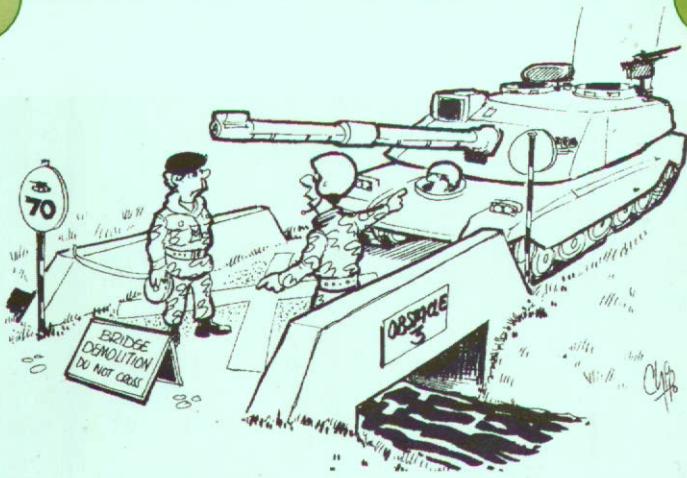
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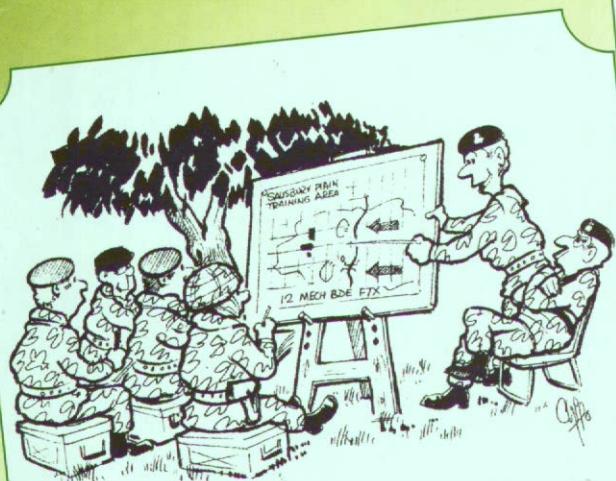
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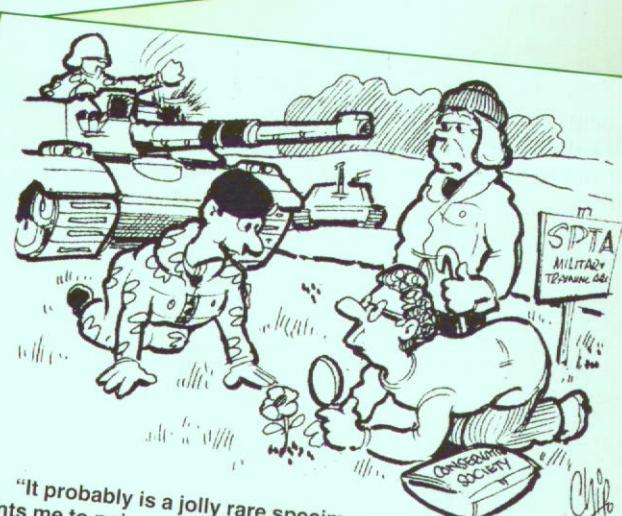
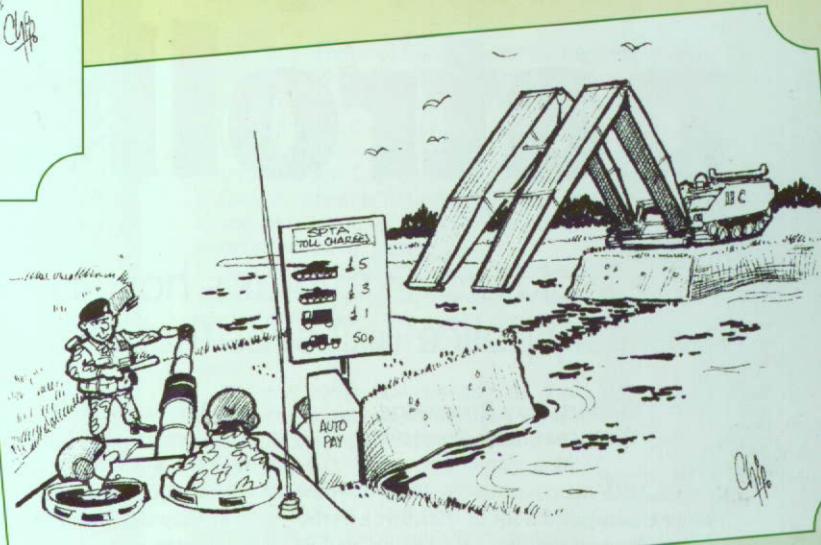
Chuckle with Chip



"If I'm to imagine that this is a smoking crater
I want you to imagine that's a helicopter!"



"For the Guardsmen among you . . . this is part
of the unexplored world beyond Windsor!"



"It probably is a jolly rare specimen . . . but the commander
wants me to point out that if you stay there a minute longer, you, the
fauna, are in danger of being mashed up with it, the flora!"



"Oops? . . . That's all you can say? . . .Oops?"

We're all on the same side . . .

Party-time patrollers

When soldiers hit Cyprus's holiday hot-spots, a military police unit sees that they do it safely

Report: Ray Routledge
Pictures: Mike Weston

OFFICERS attached to the Cyprus Joint Police Unit spend a lot of their time in the island's hottest nightspots... but it's all in the line of duty. Their job is to ensure young soldiers enjoy themselves safely and within the law.

The joint Army-RAF unit has been successful in policing potential flashpoints on the holiday island.

The 74-strong Cyprus Joint Police Unit (CJPU), which has a headquarters at Episkopi, a unit at Dhekelia and a small post at Akrotiri, is appreciated by soldiers and local people alike, especially in the holiday resort of Limassol.

"When we patrol in Limassol, our presence is a major factor in keeping the area peaceful," said

WO1 (RSM) John Richards.

"If we are seen we can prevent potential problems downtown. We police our soldiers and provide liaison between them, the Cypriot police and the public."

Criminal damage, theft, fights, assaults, and road traffic accidents are all grist to their mill, but despite the party atmosphere in Limassol, WO1 Richards says the resort is relatively quiet.

The force draws support from units based on the island - the 1st Battalion, The King's Own Scottish Borderers at Episkopi and the 1st Battalion, The Cheshire Regiment at Dhekelia.

"We'll have someone from 1 KOSB with us on patrol because he can recognise his

off-duty soldiers. But don't get the wrong idea, we are not killjoys. We want people to have a good time, but to do so safely and without causing aggravation."

If they do find trouble, their first job is to defuse the situation, which may mean encouraging the soldier leave the scene in a taxi. Should it be more serious, they gather information and evidence to pass

It is not unknown for a squaddie to end up in a topless bar paying £20 a drink!

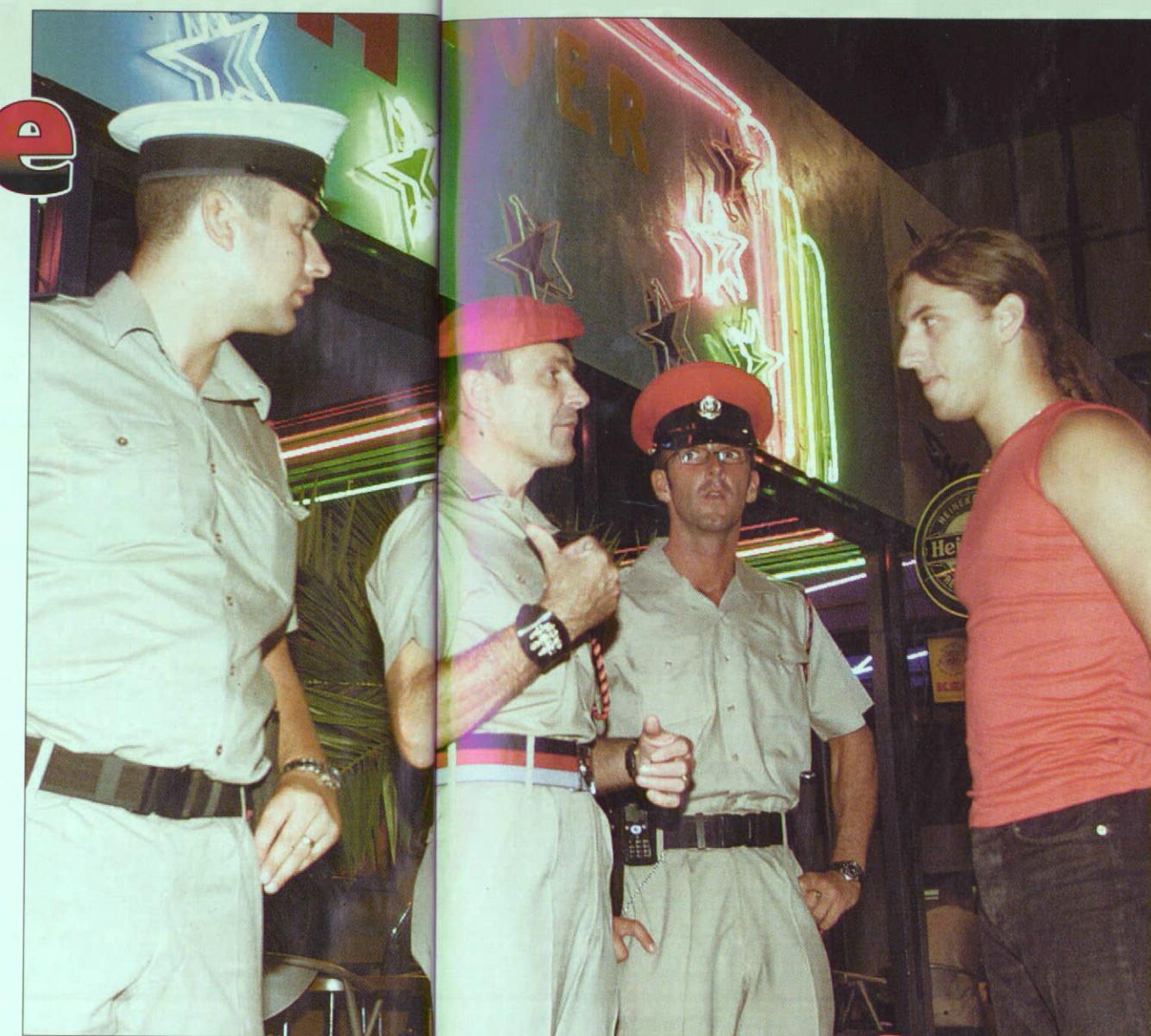
to the appropriate commanding officer.

Most problems are alcohol-related - not surprising at Limassol nightspots where double and treble measures are the norm. People drink quickly because of the heat and get drunk quicker.

Another task for the unit is to warn the less streetwise soldiers of the hazards of letting their hair down. It is not unknown for a drunken squaddie to end up in a topless bar, paying £20 a drink on top of a



Keeping watch: Cpl Scott Fairclough, LCpl Paul Scott, 1 KOSB, and Cpl Mick Leach patrol the noisy streets of Limassol



Customer liaison: From left Cpl Martyn Scott, RSM John Richards and Cpl Jason Bruce ensure everything is in order with Limassol night worker Nick Crystal outside the Car Wash Club

hefty admission fee. Final reckonings of £300 have come as a shock to the system. "We have to abide by British, Cyprus and Sovereign Base Area (SBA) laws," said WO1 Richards, "which can be confusing."

There are also different police forces - the SBA force, the Cypriot force, the military police (including the RAF), and the United Nations police.

"We have to use common sense. Ayia Napa is now the place for young people to holiday and party in the Mediterranean. It is taking over from Ibiza. For soldiers it is largely

an out-of-bounds area, mostly for their own protection, following the problems of the mid-1990s when, after a rape and murder, soldiers were getting beaten up by locals."

The late-night streets of Limassol host one gigantic party and the three military police officers joined on patrol were constantly stopped by bar owners who appreciate what they do.

Nick Crystal, who works at the Car Wash Club, said: "I find the military police essential as part of my job. If there are any problems, I can get advice. They keep a lid on things and make people feel at ease."

Their first-aid skills were called upon recently when a Russian tourist was knocked down and seriously injured and in another incident the police were able to help a drunken British holidaymaker who had fallen off a wall and hurt himself.

They're a helpful bunch.



Stitch-up: Veterinary Capt Pippa Hayes, right, assisted by Cpl Linda Inkpen, completes an operation on a dog at the Cyprus Defence Animal Support Unit

Pet passports at the ready

MUCH to the relief of Service families, the pet passport scheme introduced to allow their pets to return to the UK from Europe and other parts of the world is to be extended to Cyprus next February.

Vets at Episkopi are ready. SSgt Alan Inkpen, a member of the Cyprus Defence Animal Support Unit (CDASU), which is manned by Royal Army Veterinary Corps personnel, told *Soldier* they had been prepared for some time.

"We are doing all the blood samples and micro-chipping so we are ready immediately for the pet passport scheme when Cyprus is included," he said.

"Service dogs are already at the appropriate level and we've been working to this standard for several years."

The capacity to prepare family pets for the scheme is already in place.

The CDASU's main unit at Episkopi and its sub-unit in Dhekelia provide support for the 100 Service animals, including RAF dogs, on the island. All arrive from the tri-Service Defence Animal Centre at Melton Mowbray.

CDASU vet Capt Pippa Hughes said that one of the biggest problems her team faced was caused by snakebites. Every year several dogs, mostly pets, die from bites. Poison put down to destroy vermin also killed pets.

The pet passport scheme which currently applies to 22 countries in Western Europe is to be extended to 15 rabies-free islands, including Ascension, Australia, the Falklands and Cyprus.

To qualify, owners need to get their pets micro-chipped, vaccinated against rabies, and blood-tested by a recognised laboratory. Owners also have to sign a declaration that their pets have not been outside any of the qualifying countries for the previous six months.



Prepared: SSgt Alan Inkpen



Peacekeeper:
WO1 (RSM)
John Richards

Sleeping bags with standards...



...NATO standards

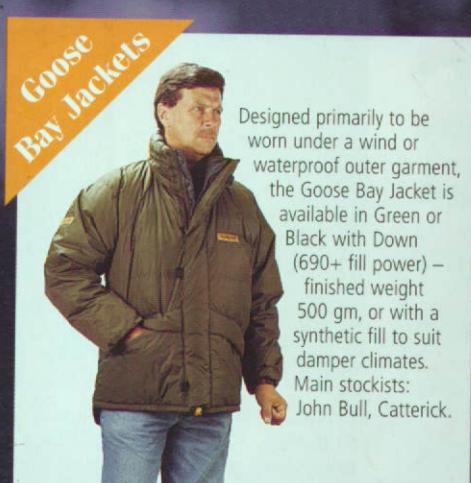
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Green Products from Ajungilak available from: John Bull, Catterick, Expedition Kit Direct, Fulham and all major outdoor retailers

Further information is available from the Ajungilak website: www.ajungilak.co.uk

Adventure island

When it comes to outdoor activities, there are few places better geared for the novice to become an expert than Cyprus

Report: Ray Routledge
Pictures: Mike Weston

CYPRUS is justifiably proud of its adventurous training facilities, which attract customers from far and wide.

Maj Ted Martin, APTC, is commandant of the level four Cyprus Joint Service Adventurous Training Centre, which runs

such activities as parachuting, sub-aqua diving, climbing, off-shore sailing and kayaking.

"The directive from Commander British Forces Cyprus is that all Service personnel will do at least seven days of adventure training at levels two, three or four," he explained.

Level three is expeditionary training on- or off-island (mostly the latter, in locations such as the Red Sea, Jordan, Nepal and India), while four is for instructors.

Most of the centre's instructors are seconded from on-island units for a mini-



Maj Ted Martin

DESPITE the many water-based activities on offer, Maj Ted Martin is concerned about pollution levels in the Mediterranean which is "used as a dumping hole by just about every country that

Everything OK: Sub aqua instructor Maj Harry Marr is on detachment from HQ 3 Division

mum of three months, funded by the parent units, which benefit from getting back an instructor with upgraded skills.

Maj Martin also supports off-island expeditions and receives more than 30 requests a year from units in Germany and the UK wanting to sub-aqua dive and parachute. Kayak expeditions are a more recent option.

"Cyprus is a wonderful place to do adventurous training and we welcome visiting troops," he said.

Almost every activity has generated its own club of enthusiasts and Maj Martin and his team ensure they have the correct equipment, meet health-and-safety standards, and are conforming to the Joint

Service training scheme. Two special clubs, Try Dive and Try Canoe, encourage Servicemen and women and their families to turn up and have a go.

The training centre is recognised by the British Sub Aqua Club and can take absolute beginners all the way to advanced instructor or advanced diver level. Those trying their hand at parachuting can go from novice to free-fall, while first-time canoeists can be guided up to instructor level.

A soldier on a two-year tour in Cyprus can have a lot of fun and leave with civilian-recognised adventurous training qualifications.

What are you waiting for?

borders it". He and many others believe pollution is a major contributor to the demise of marine life and last year organised a sponsored swim to raise funds for the Cyprus Environment

al Protection Association. Maj Martin said factory and ships' oil pollution were a big factor. Sewage added another layer to the problem.

"The Mediterranean is non-tidal and whatever you dump in it stays in it."

Sea of pollution

Ace of brigades

A year after its formation as the Army's sixth deployable brigade, 12 Mechanised has bonded its main elements for the first time

JUST a year after its formation under the Strategic Defence Review, the British Army's sixth and newest deployable brigade is taking its first tentative steps as a cohesive unit. The different elements of 12 Mechanised Brigade were brought together for the first time for a week of activities, education and competition.

A chilly week on Salisbury Plain last month provided the setting for a series of military skill competitions and sporting events involving officers and soldiers from The King's Royal Hussars, the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards, the 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards, the 1st Battalion, The Staffordshire Regiment, 19th Regiment Royal Artillery, 12 Mechanised Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron (228) and 10 Brigade Support Squadron RLC.

A selected media audience ensconced in a heavy bunker on the plain was subjected to an artillery bombardment as the new formation's Challenger 1 tanks, Warriors armoured fighting vehicles, AS90 guns, mortars and assorted anti-tank weapons announced themselves during a short but violent overture.

The King's Royal Hussars, now converting to Challenger 2, will be operating their Challenger 1 tanks for the last time during a swansong exercise on Salisbury Plain later this month.

The bonding began with the strains of Motorhead's *The Ace of Spades* – reflecting the brigade flash – blasting from Tidworth Garrison Theatre as the different units were introduced to 12 Mech Bde and its concept of operations. Cross-briefings and an equipment day included a demonstration of company group attacks by the KRH and 1 Staffords.

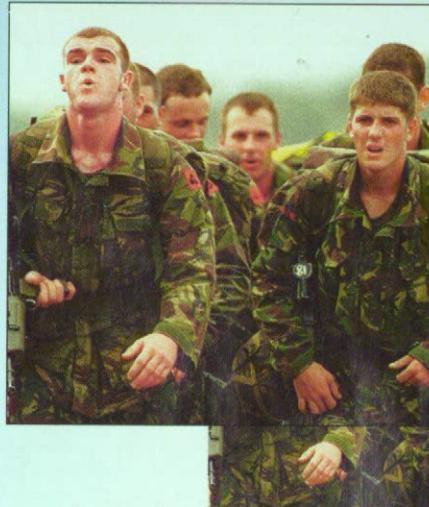
Brigade Commander Brig John Cooper said: "This is the first time that all the units under my command have come together.

Plain thunder:
AS90 guns of
19th Regiment
RA opened up on
a bunker to give a
specially selected
audience a taste of
the brigade's
awesome
firepower

**6 In just over
12 months we
will be trained
and ready for
operations !**



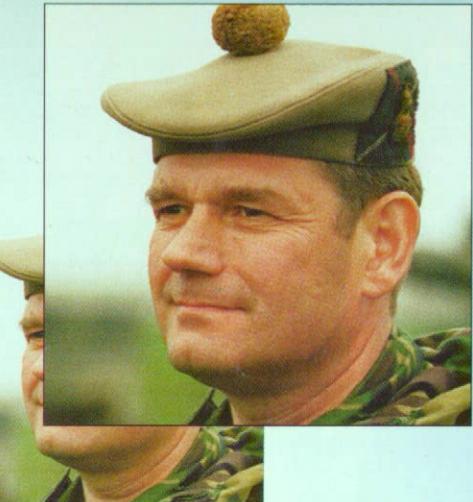
Another day on the range: A team from the Grenadier Guards, winners of the military skills competition, on the march and shoot



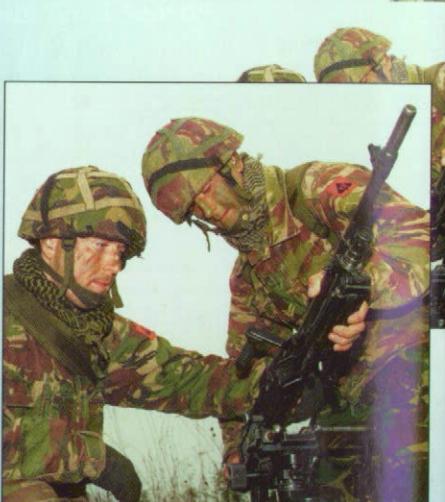
Media target: Lbdr Smudge Smith of 19/5 Battery, 19 Regt RA, prepares to deliver more AS90 shells on to the bunker occupied by visiting media



Developing brigade cohesion: Brig John Cooper, Commander of the new 12 Mech Bde



Covering fire:
Warriors of 1
Staffords
provide solid
support during
the attack on
enemy
positions



Light force: Gdsm Darrall Mills, left, and LCpl Matthew Barry of the Manoeuvre Support Platoon, 1 WG, mount a general purpose machine-gun in the sustained fire role



On the move: A King's Royal Hussars Challenger 1 manoeuvres into position during a demonstration assault by 12 Mechanised Brigade units



Go! LCpl Adrian Rice, 1 Staffords, makes a hasty exit from the rear of his Warrior APC

Pictures: Steve Dock

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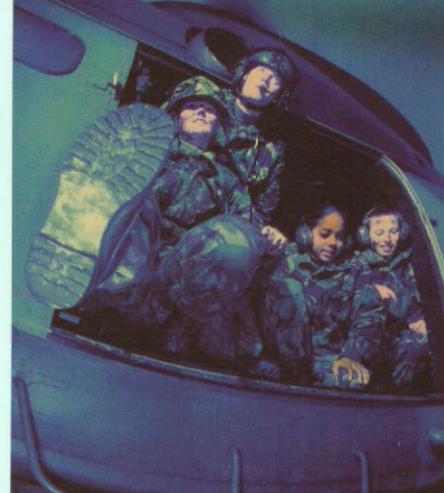
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Modern Dutch master art of personal comms on battlefield

DUTCH troops will be wearing individual radio headsets in the near future as the Royal Netherlands Army takes delivery of 1,500 modular Cobra kits as part of its soldier modernisation programme.

Supplied by Simoco Europe Ltd to operate with the PRP 7301 private mobile radio, the headsets are likely to be worn with the Schuberth helmet in a single-sided configuration with finger pressel and switch box.

They are said to be easy to integrate with standard Nato equipment, with the added advantage that the modular construction allows for rapid repair in the field.

Part of the Arrowhead range from Thomson Racal Defence, the modular



Getting personal: Modular Cobra set, above, and the FIST prototype, left

Cobra has achieved early success in trials in the UK – where it is part of the British Army's FIST (Future Infantry System Technology) programme – and in Australia, where it is already in service.

Under FIST, individual infantrymen will go on operations wearing personal radio microphones in addition to a range of sophisticated digitised sensors designed to boost their fighting capability while keeping the chain of command in touch with what they are

doing and seeing. The FIST package being developed by the Infantry Trials and Development Unit at Warminster includes night vision devices and laser aimers on rifles. Cameras mounted on personal weapons will provide soldiers with helmet-borne visual displays of the battlefield ahead and around them.

Early versions of FIST, on schedule for service by 2008, have been enthusiastically received by troops involved in the trials. One Argyll and Sutherland Highlander who used the kit on Salisbury Plain last year said: "If what we have seen is anything to go by, the final system will be an outstanding success."

Here's one I made earlier . . .

Inventor-colonel's stick-it-together shelter could save the lives of homeless refugees

AN easy-to-build kit invented by Lt Col Francis Hobbs, Gren Gds, is child's play to put up . . . and may attract attention as a refugee shelter in disaster situations.

His Stikafame kits, which use a system of hook-and-loop connectors (better known in the UK as Velcro), canvas or plastic sheets (or mosquito netting), and ecologically-friendly wooden frames, could mean life or death for people left homeless.

The kits, which were commended at the International Inventors Fair in June, are to be test-marketed from January.

Other uses to which they can be put include mobile operating theatres, mini-greenhouses or cold-frames, garden shelters, office screens and children's tunnels or play houses.

BBC1 has asked Lt Col Hobbs to go on Jim Davidson's *Generation Game* with his



Lt Col Hobbs

refugee centre. He will demonstrate how it can be put up in little more than two minutes before letting the game show contestants loose on it.

In 1994 Lt Col Hobbs designed the Measurement of Fighting Power, an Army computer programme for measuring operational capability. He has also patented a universal carrying handle and a card game for learning by rote information such as vocabulary or times tables.

He credits the need for resourcefulness instilled in officers for his inventive talents. "Inventing is easy," he says, "the hard part is identifying the problem."

Before taking up his current post on the Army General Staff at MoD, Lt Col Hobbs was Academy Adjutant at RMA Sandhurst.

More details at Stikafame.com



Good idea: Lt Col Hobbs demonstrates his shelter at an inventors' fair Pictures: Steve Dock

Training in the Soviets' tracks

Huge training area gives 20 Armoured Brigade the space to go to war . . .

Report: Maj Sean Holden
Pictures: Graeme Main and Roger Lortie

UNDER the aimless guns of burst and ruined Soviet tanks the British Army has been back to Poland for large-scale training.

There was no denying the enthusiasm among the 3,000 troops of 20 Armoured Brigade for the work they have done on the fifth Exercise Ulan Eagle. Why? Because it is the full works – Drawsko Pomorskie training ground's 400sq km gives troops the space to do what they have to do.

That is why the Russians, whose military relics – T62 tanks, BTR armoured personnel carriers and Second World War T34s – litter the ground, go there to train against the army whose Challenger 2 tanks growl through the undergrowth.

Space is what Poland gives 20 Brigade . . . space to fill the landscape with the armoured infantry of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Wales and the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Green Jackets, the Challenger 2 tanks of The Queen's Royal Hussars, the AS90 guns and high velocity missiles of 4, 12 and 26 Regiments, Royal Artillery and 3 Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery, the M3 amphibian ferry rigs of the Royal Engineers and all the logistical paraphernalia of a brigade set for battle. There is room for them all at Drawsko Pomorskie.

The exercise began with the practising of basic tactical and organisational skills for the different arms and support groups. As events were stepped up to higher levels the scale of a battle-group on the ground impressed soldiers who, in the more restricted exercises near their bases in Germany or on Salisbury Plain, have to imagine other elements.

While the focus of the fighting action was in the sandy scrubland and forest of the training ground 40km south, 2 Battalion REME worked ceaselessly at the old Russian barracks in Stargard to keep the brigade on its tracks and wheels. Ten kilometres north of the training area the Divisional Support Group managed a railhead where wagons laden with guns, tanks, ammunition and supplies came and went.

"You can't have dynamic war-fighting without dynamic logistics," said the brigade commander, Brig Jeff Cook. "The training here is about understanding the real formations of war, where the going is difficult and where map-reading is challenging."

The brigadier played an unexpected additional role in training the medics by breaking his hand in a fall. Three regimental aid posts were in the first line looking after injuries and dealing with simulated exercise casualties.

The Royal Engineers made the biggest splash of the exercises with their M3 amphibian rigs. Five of the mobile ferries took the plunge in the well-watered terrain.



Squadron move: D Sqn, QRH advances to contact

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Gunner ignites pocket rocket

Report: Anthony Stone
Pictures: Mike Weston

APPEARANCES can be deceptive. They don't call the 660cc Daihatsu Avanzato the "pocket rocket" for nothing. It may deliver only 75bhp, but as every rally-driver knows, it's not the size of your cylinders that counts, it's what you do with them that matters.

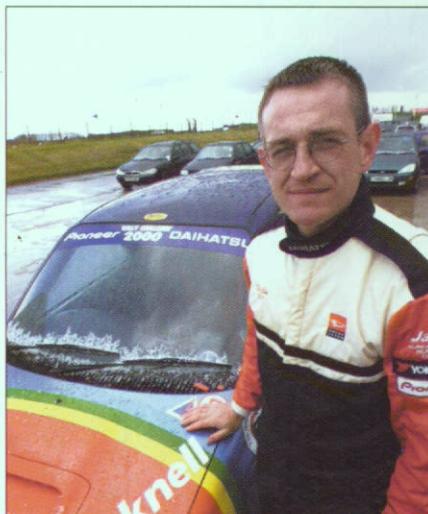
A case in point is the rally team of Sgt Tim Line, 14 Regiment RA, and his civilian driver, Scott Vogl. They have just proved they know exactly what to do with the turbo-charged, 16v box of dynamite that nestles beneath the Daihatsu's bonnet.

The pair won the seven-round Pioneer Daihatsu Challenge and are hoping to pull in enough sponsors to move up a gear and compete in the British Rally Championships next season. "We managed to win with one round to go, which was a fantastic result really," said Tim. "We never finished below second place."

Tim developed his love of motorsport through the British Army Motoring Association. His Army rally career highs have included being selected team captain for the Lex Army rally team and winning the Army navigation championship title twice.

But after six years of competing in rallies with the Army team throughout the United Kingdom, Germany and Iceland,

Army champion rally navigator Sgt Tim Line focuses on world championships



Hot gun: Sgt Tim Line with his Daihatsu

Tim decided the time was right for a fresh challenge. The opportunity came through his old friend WO2 Mark Taylor, AAC, who was the championship co-ordinator for the Daihatsu Challenge.

As luck would have it he was looking for a co-driver to pair up with Scott Vogl. There's an old saying in rally circles that a co-driver won't necessarily win a race, but he (or she) can certainly lose it.

Preparation, concentration and the odd bit of telepathy all play their part in making a successful driving partnership.

In a sport where results are often decided in fractions of seconds, the key to success is the speed through the corners. Drivers need to be short on brake and long on acceleration and the person who makes the difference in shaving off the vital seconds is the co-driver.

"It is a strange relationship," said Tim. "We both have to stay totally focused on our ultimate goal, both inside and outside the car. The turbo-charged, inter-cooled, four-wheel drive Daihatsu is capable of embarrassing far more powerful machines."

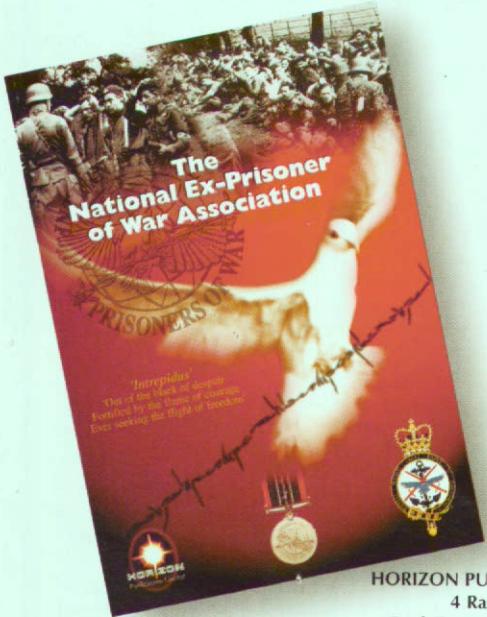
Tim and Scott are working on a three-year plan with the ultimate aim of competing in the world championships.

"I am realistic about our chances," said Tim. "Next year we hope to jump from 75 to 265bhp and we would be fooling ourselves if we thought we would win, but we are looking at it in terms of a learning curve."

● To start rallying, contact Lt Col (Retd) Bob Birrell of the British Army Motoring Association at Leconfield Mil (94775) 5243 or 01904 665243.

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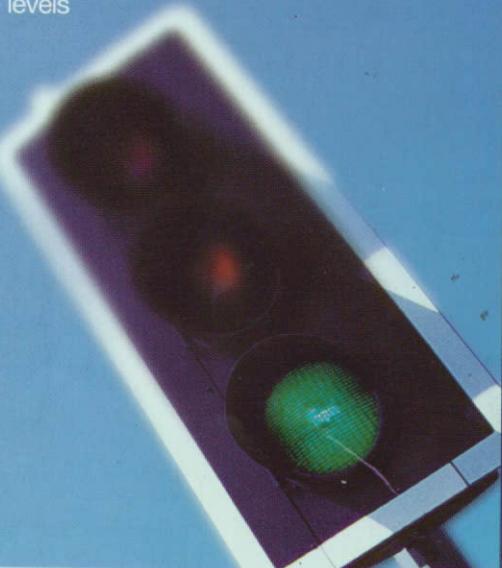
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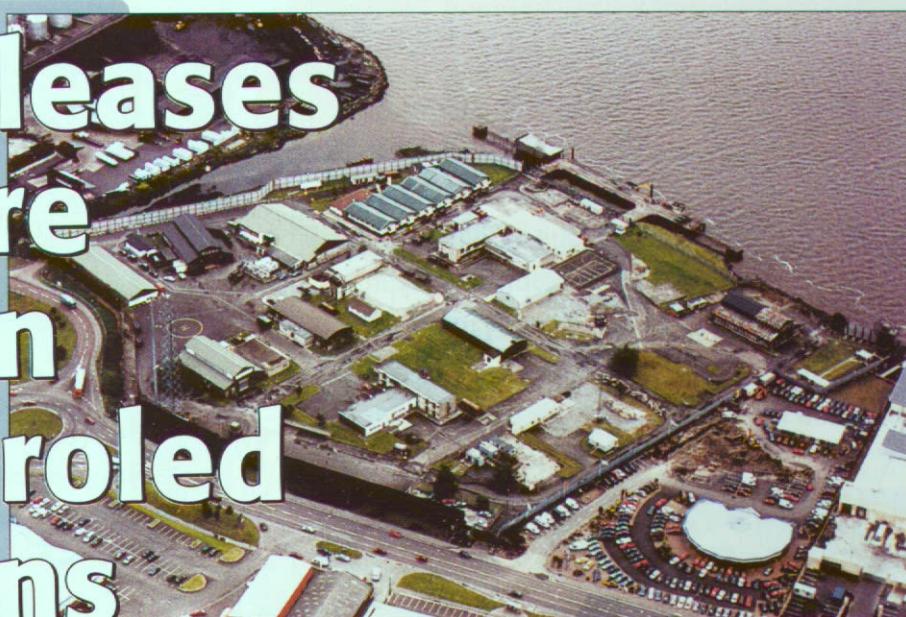


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Army releases two more Northern Ireland-roled battalions



Going: Fort George, Londonderry, now being demolished after nearly 30 years as an Army base. In that time 16 resident battalions have served there

THE Army has announced it hopes to reduce the number of Regular personnel permanently based in Northern Ireland to around 8,000 – the same number as in a comparable mainland garrison – but only after normality returns to the Province, writes Simon Mander.

It follows the recent statement by RUC Chief Constable Sir Ronnie Flanagan that Long Kesh camp and the six bases on the Fermanagh border will be closed and demolished.

Welcoming that news, the Ministry of Defence said the latest reduction in bases continued the progress towards normalisation in the Province.

It revealed a long-term aspiration to cut the number of troops operationally deployed, currently 13,500 and already the lowest figure since 1970, to that of a same-sized garrison in a similar-sized area, such as Yorkshire.

But the reductions will not be made until the police are able to operate without military support.

• The moves represent another important step along the road to normality •

At the time of the Belfast Agreement, the General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland exercised direct command over 18 infantry battalions, all of which were deployed in the Province, 12 on resident and six on emergency tours.

Since then five of the six emergency tour battalions have been rear-based on the mainland to be held in reserve.

Sufficient progress has now been made to allow the permanent release of two of these reserve battalions back to Land Command, making them available for wider defence commitments.

As an overall aspiration, it is hoped that the number of military bases in Northern Ireland will reduce further from the current 64 to no more than 20.

The sequence and speed by which the security forces will achieve this goal depends on the continuing reduction in the terrorist threat and the removal of the tensions caused by sectarianism.

Those set to remain will include major

bases at Lisburn, Aldergrove, Antrim, Holywood, Ballykinler, Portadown, Omagh, Ballykelly and Ballymena, as well as the larger military training areas.

Depending on the security situation, the MoD can also envisage closing and vacating other sites whose location will be important for future development of local communities. These include Ebrington Barracks in Londonderry, Malone Road Barracks in Belfast, Steeple Barracks in Antrim, Killymeal House Camp in Dungannon, the Military Hospital at Musgrave Park, Belfast, Laurel Hill House in Coleraine, and Harmony House in Lisburn.

Lt Gen Sir Hew Pike, GOC Northern Ireland, said: "The moves declared represent another important step along the road to normality. However, they can only be taken or put in place as quickly as the terrorist threat allows.

"This means no definitive time-frame can realistically be given. Overall, and as has always been the case throughout this process, security decisions taken by the Chief Constable and myself remain entirely threat-dependent."

• British gardeners tending war graves in Europe are planning legal action against the Commonwealth War Graves Commission for cutting their income by £6,000 a year. The 77 gardeners refused to strike when the cuts began. – *Daily Telegraph*

• Militant gangs are bullying retired Gurkhas into handing over their pensions. Thugs from the Gurkha Army Ex-Services Organisation (GAESO) target ex-soldiers and their widows when they arrive to collect their cash at the Gurkhas' Kathmandu HQ. – *Mirror*

• RAF and Navy bosses may offer their Top Gun pilots a "golden handcuffs"

IN The PRESS

What the papers say

financial package to stop them quitting for well-paid jobs with civil airlines. The news comes after it was revealed 13 Sea Harrier pilots – almost a third of the Navy's Sea Harrier force – were considering leaving the Service. – *Sun*

• Six former members of the Armed Forces tried by court martial under what they said was an unfair system have had their legal costs, totalling £4,500, paid by the Government. – *Daily Telegraph*

• Huge stocks of fuel are being amassed at defence bases as the Government prepares contingency plans to combat a threatened repeat of last month's fuel blockade. – *Daily Mail*

• A celebrity-backed project to commemorate animals who went to war for Britain in the 20th century is entrenched in artistic squabbles with Westminster City Council. – *Independent*

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Safe as the Rock

Security at one of Army's smaller postings is the responsibility of a home-based unit

Report: Anthony Stone
Pictures: Mike Weston

IF ever there was an example of how well home-basing can work, it is in Gibraltar. Nearly everyone on the Rock knows someone who is serving in the British Army or someone who has, and the result is that the 400-strong regiment has exceptionally strong local ties.

As Maj David Seed, second-in-command of The Royal Gibraltar Regiment, puts it: "Standards of discipline and behaviour here are impeccable, totally brilliant. I cannot remember when there was a serious incident involving the regiment.

"I think it is a wonderful argument for home-basing. This is our home and we are not having a 'run ashore'."

The regiment, which is a fully-integrated part of the infantry, affiliated to the Queen's Division, is a mix of Regular and Territorial Army soldiers in a similar structure to The Royal Irish Regiment.

Primary role of the regiment is to protect the Rock and the nuclear-powered warships and Trident missile submarines which visit the base. The regiment is also involved with ceremonial and has its own band of 15 musicians.

Size isn't everything and the Rock packs a lot into a limited space, opportunities which UK-based Territorial and Regular soldiers take advantage of every year when they visit for low-level training.

It is possible for troops on a particularly energetic exercise to take off from the airfield, parachute into the sea, swim ashore and climb cliffs before embarking on tunnel training.

When possible, soldiers from the regiment are posted away from the Rock. "We like to get people away as often as we can," said Maj Seed.

"We have troops in Northern Ireland at the moment and in Kosovo. What we don't



Changing the guard: Soldiers of The Royal Gibraltar Regiment on patrol outside the official residence of the Governor, C-in-C of the Rock's forces. The residence is one of Gibraltar's oldest buildings

Maj David Seed: Strong argument for home-basing

do is go on operational tours as a unit."

Recruits are tested in Gibraltar before going on to Bassingbourn for phase one training and Catterick for the phase two part.

There are two TA components, a higher-commitment group with 15 days in camp and 12 days' obligatory training throughout the year, and a lower-commitment company for soldiers with previous Regular service, who sign up to six days a year.

The regiment is proud of its sporting achievements, where it has done well in



A brief history of the regiment

THE forefathers of the present regiment were the Gibraltar Volunteer Corps, which was raised in 1915 and served the garrison throughout the First World War. It was disbanded in 1919 and then re-formed in 1939 as the Gibraltar Defence Force.

During the Second World War, Gibraltar was evacuated with all non-essential personnel sent away. Quite a few ended up in Ballymena, Northern Ireland, a fact reflected in the scattering of Irish names in the regiment.

The force was retained after the war to serve as a training establishment for National Service and in 1958 was re-formed into The Gibraltar Regiment.

In 1971 the Queen approved the granting of Colours to the regiment and on the same day it received the Freedom of the City.

In 1991 the regiment took over garrison duties from the then resident battalion, the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Green Jackets. It was re-organised from an artillery battery, an air defence troop and an infantry company into three infantry rifle companies with one headquarters. A second set of Colours was awarded in 1998 and in 1999 the title "Royal" was conferred on it.

infantry hockey and sent a team to the Combined Services rowing championships.

It also boasts some excellent cross-country skiers, taking advantage of its proximity to the Sierra Nevada. "It sounds barking, but the skiing is better than at Aviemore," said Maj Seed.

Soldiers can take advantage of courses run at the tri-Service skills learning centre, where 12 instructors teach a range of subjects relevant to their military students.

● **Tunnel secrets – Page 35**

● **'Better' homes at Episkopi – Page 44**

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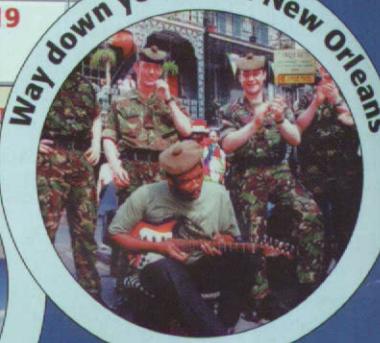
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Secret of the Rock

Under Gibraltar's streets is a honeycomb of tunnels excavated by Army engineers

Report: Anthony Stone

Pictures: Mike Weston

GIBRALTAR is one of the world's great natural fortresses; an impregnable rock that guards the gateway to the Mediterranean. The defences on the outside look impressive, but it's the ones concealed within that for centuries have been the Rock's greatest asset.

Today a number of soldiers from The Royal Gibraltar Regiment are qualified to act as guides and, on their days off, show tourists around this extraordinary defensive network.

In 1782, during the American War of Independence, British Army engineers set about improving on nature. At the time Spain and France were engaged in an all-out attempt to recapture the Rock.

Sgt Maj Ince, a member of the Company of Soldier Artificers, forerunners of the Royal Engineers, suggested a plan to position guns on the northern face of the Rock, an area known as the Notch. His idea was brilliantly simple, but technically difficult. Using crowbars, sledgehammers and gunpowder, 18 men drove a tunnel 25m into the Rock. The tool-marks where they cut into the walls are still clearly visible.

But before they reached the Notch, the fumes generated by the gunpowder threatened to choke the miners. They had to have air so they smashed through to open a vent. As soon as light flooded in and the dust cleared, they realised the position would make an excellent gun embrasure. By the time the Great Siege ended in 1783 the tunnel was 113m long and four guns had been mounted along it.

The excavations were not without hazards. Rockfalls claimed lives and some tunnel guides swear they can feel the temperature drop at the spot where men were buried alive.

After the Great Siege was broken, more chambers and tunnels were added. In one, the President of the United States,



"He thinks it'll attract more tourists"

General Grant, was the guest of honour at a banquet hosted by the Governor of Gibraltar.

During the Second World War, the Royal Engineers added 40km of tunnels to the complex, which the Commander-in-Chief Allied Forces, Gen Dwight Eisenhower, used for his secret headquarters. Here he finalised his plans for the invasion of North Africa in 1942.

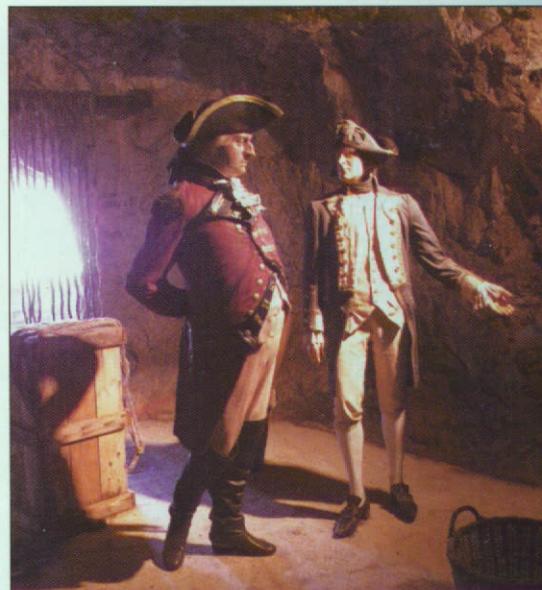
During this time the chambers were put to many purposes, housing a hospital, electricity generator and telephone exchange.

At the height of the war a team of observers volunteered to stay inside the tunnels in the event of Gibraltar falling into enemy hands. Equipped with food and water, they were prepared to stay hidden for years, transmitting information on ship movements through the Straits.

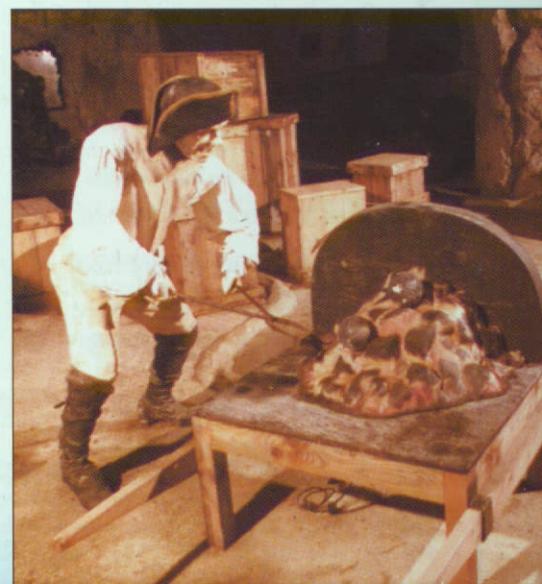
The tunnels are one of the Rock's most fascinating and atmospheric attractions. Even the guides admit to getting a little spooked when they are on their own. Cpl John Hargreaves of the AGC said: "When I walk back through the tunnels alone, it sometimes feels like someone is watching me."



Spooky but historic: In a room off this tunnel, Gen Dwight D Eisenhower planned the invasion of North Africa



Ace in the hole: These waxworks in the tunnels depict, above left, the Governor of Gibraltar at the time of the Great Siege, Gen Elliot, inspecting a gun embrasure, and, below, a soldier warming the chamber during a dinner for President Grant



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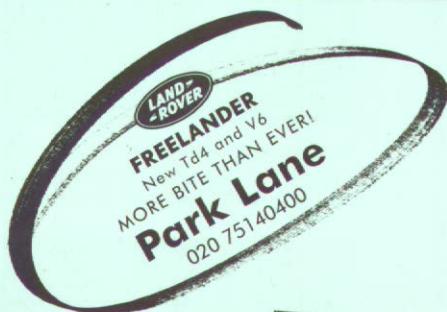
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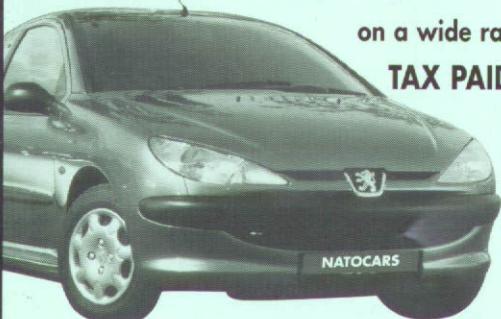


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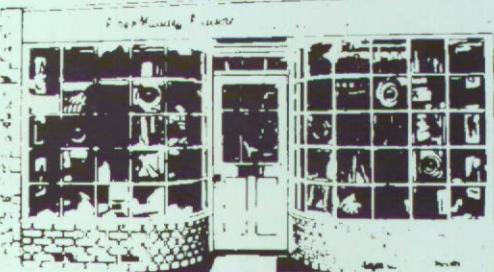
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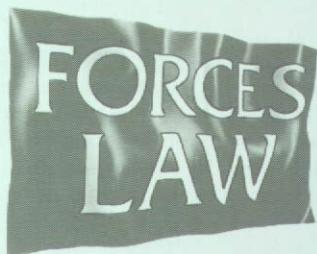
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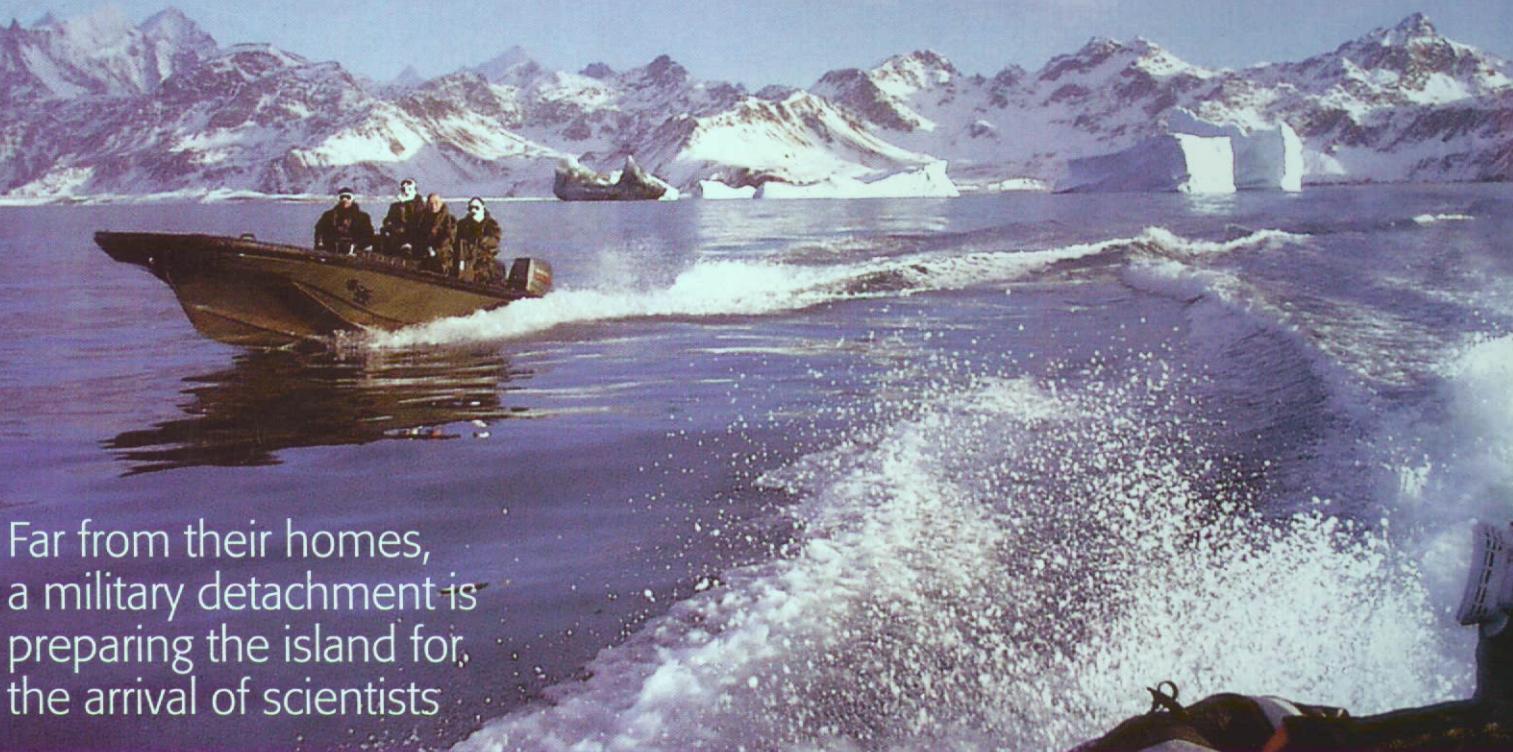
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Life in the freezer



Far from their homes, a military detachment is preparing the island for the arrival of scientists

Ravishing backdrop: Members of the South Georgia detachment get a seaborne view of the Antarctic base from their Rigid Raider craft

Report: Capt Caroline Kirman
Picture: Sgt Mick Lynn

SINCE the 1982 Falklands conflict, sparked by the occupation of South Georgia by Argentina, there has been a military detachment based permanently on the tiny Antarctic island.

This amazing crescent-shaped chunk of 9,000ft-high mountains rises steeply out of the Antarctic ocean, and the sight of its glaciers tumbling into the sea to create huge icebergs is not easily forgotten.

Capt Chris Brogan RE commands the 18-strong military presence on South Georgia. Most of his men are from 33 Engineer Regiment EOD, usually based in the more temperate climes of Wimbish in Essex.

The signals element is part of the Joint Communications Unit Falkland Islands, currently from 3 (UK) Division HQ and Signal Regiment based at Bulford. With expert advice from Sgt George Singer RM, the resident mountain leader, and Sgt Kev Brooks RM, who runs and maintains the fleet of nippy Rigid Raiders, this hand-picked group is employed for very specific skills that allow the detachment to survive in one of the most harsh and

isolated regions of the world. South Georgia is 8,000 miles from the UK, 1,000 miles from mainland Antarctica and 900 miles from the team's re-supply point in the Falklands.

Its main claim to fame is the epic journey that polar explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton made in 1916. He traversed the island in search of help after his ship, the *Endurance*, became trapped in ice floes as

• Their base is 8,000 miles from the UK and 900 miles from its resupply point in the Falklands •

he attempted the first crossing of Antarctica.

Shackleton and five colleagues had sailed 800 miles to South Georgia in a ship's boat before crossing mountains and glaciers without food or shelter in 36-hours to reach a whaling station at Stromness. *Endurance*'s crew was subsequently rescued without a single life lost.

Base at King Edward Point on South Georgia, the military detachment falls under the command of Commander

British Forces, Falkland Islands, Brig Geoff Sheldon. Its focus at present is on preparing the infrastructure for British Antarctic Survey scientists due to return to the island 19 years after the occupation by Argentinian forces. Some of the work has involved specialist teams, but as winter sets in the climate becomes so hostile that the basic day-to-day running of the buildings, re-supply, and assistance to the South Georgia Government is a full-time job.

Fresh supplies of essential stores, equipment and fuel arrive once a month by ship, supplemented by a monthly airdrop from a Falklands-based C130 Hercules.

But the island provides the detachment with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to take advantage of its unique location. Keen mountaineers are in their element, and the spectacular views and experiences of a tour of duty in Antarctica are unlikely to be forgotten.

The island is home to penguins, fur seals and albatross, some not found anywhere else in the world. While maintaining their tough exteriors, members of the detachment have been known to soften in the close proximity of wildlife.

Do you dare to go West?

A tri-Service camp on the rugged and spectacular North Cornwall coast offers a wide range of possibilities for the adventurous

Report: Ray Routledge
Pictures: Steve Dock

NEXT time your unit is looking for a spot of adventure, you could do a lot worse than turn to the West Country. Tucked away on the rugged North Cornish coast is a military establishment covering 925 acres of stunning sea and countryside.

Penhale Training Camp, seven miles from holiday hotspot Newquay, can accommodate up to 659 people of all ranks, yet most of the tri-Service base's summer visitors are from the cadet organisations.

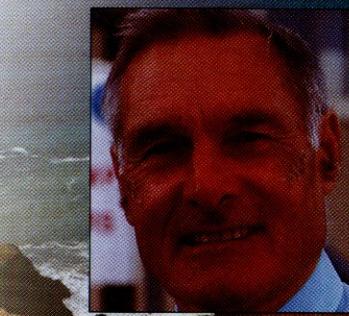
Penhale offers sailing, windsurfing and canoeing facilities, the walking delights of the South West Coastal Path, and the National Bike Trail, which runs along the site of an old 17-mile railway line between Bodmin Moor and Padstow.

Part of the camp has been designated an area of special scientific interest.

Penhale's cliffs offer eight abseil sites up to 60 metres high, each with a facility for two ropes. Although visitors may sunbathe on nearby Perren beach, swimming there is forbidden because of the area's ferocious rip-tides.

The training camp boasts a new 30-metre climbing wall and an aerial slide is scheduled to be constructed soon.

Other available adventurous training activities include climbing, caving, and orienteering, while recreational facilities on offer include pony trekking, gliding, land yachting, clay-pigeon shooting, mountain-biking, golf and quad-biking.



Cliff-hanger: Penhale Training Camp.
Inset: Camp commandant Maj (Retd) Barry Andrews

Our man travelled to Penhale to sample its facilities . . . but let a quad bike get the better of him

WHEN Soldier was invited to Penhale Training Camp to sample the activities on offer, little did writer Ray Routledge know that the potentially dangerous pastimes would prove a doddle, while the fun bit of the visit would turn out to be a rather painful experience.

Camp commandant Barry Andrews, a former major with The Parachute Regiment, began by suggesting Ray try abseiling.

Here's his account of what happened:

It's a good job I've a head for heights, **Ray writes**, so I had no worries about tackling the 50m descent to Perren Bay under the watchful eyes of instructors Sgt Graham Cork, REME, Sgt Alf Tupper, RA and Sgt Eddie Waring, R Signals.

What I didn't expect was how tiring it would be on the shoulders, stretching my arm at 90 degrees and holding the rope in



Jaws: Not quite a shark, but he put up a hell of a fight

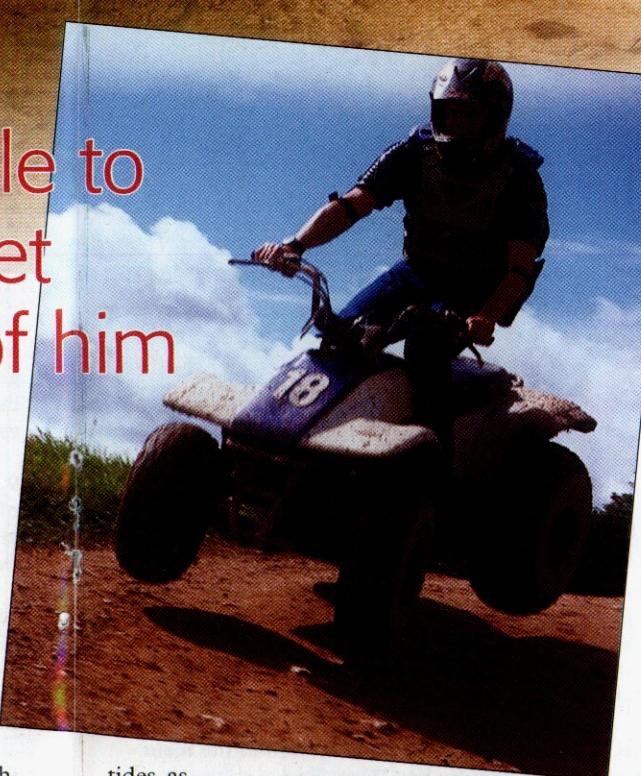
order to make a controlled descent. Barry's words rang in my ears: "There's a lot to think about, arm back is the breaking position; put it in front and the rope can easily slip and the descent becomes a little more rapid."

A few minutes later I was on the beach, only to be asked by our photographer: "Can you do it again? I need some shots from a different angle."

Second time round it was much easier (apart from the slog back up to the top of the cliff). I could get used to this abseiling.

Next on the agenda was shark fishing. "Very popular with the soldiers," said Barry on the drive to Newquay to join the fishing boat *Bounty* and skipper Jim Hoare.

Jim, it turns out, has spent a lifetime fishing these waters and knows the wind and



tides as well as anyone. Unfortunately, he had disappointing news. The sea was just too rough to go out the 16 or so miles we needed to if we were to try for shark, so instead we would go reef fishing four miles from shore.

First, catch your bait: mackerel (landed by the bucketful) before Jim anchored up after consulting a sophisticated, sonar-like



Don't look down: Ray, above, prepares to go over the edge for his first descent to Perren Bay while, left, he is on the quad-bike track riding high before his fall

fish-finder. After two hours of pitching and rolling in driving rain I hooked a couple of pouting, which, for someone who has never attempted this form of fishing in his life, wasn't bad – and no seasickness.

That was the two dangerous parts over – I hadn't fallen down the cliff face and I hadn't drowned at sea.

"You'll love this next bit," said Barry. "We're going quad-biking."

We set off to the ATV Centre outside Truro to collect a 125cc Yamaha quad. Assistant manager Simon Butler told me that accidents were rare and there would be marshals positioned around the course in case of trouble.

The quad is easy to ride . . . children as



Footnote: Although ministered by Lt Ceri Anderson, 208 Fd Hospital, Ray may never play bowls again

young as six use some variants, so this is going to be fun, I thought. The trouble is that the kids who do ride don't have a lot of road sense . . . and on the third circuit, disaster struck.

A youngster who was breaking several Highway Code rules and didn't have a lot of respect for his elders, shunted me into a tyre wall. Michael Schumacher couldn't teach this guy a thing.

I landed painfully, and with a maximum loss of dignity, on my backside. Thankfully my hip was not broken, as the medics at first suspected, only muscle damage to my leg, ankle and pride.

Although I hobbled away from Penhale Training Camp considerably the worse for wear, I'd be happy to go back any time. I'm a risk-taker.

I wonder if Barry and Co could teach me to play bridge?

Carry on Para

One of Britain's favourite actors tells how he survived a Naafi blast – only to be stabbed by a bayonet in front of Field Marshal Montgomery

Interview: Ray Routledge
Main picture: Steve Dock

WHEN genial star of stage and screen Bernard Cribbins signed on for The Parachute Regiment in 1947 he wasn't motivated by duty or glamour. It was to claim the extra half-a-crown a week which went with the job.

Now, more than 50 years later, the man from Oldham looks back on his time in the Army with great affection and admits he was tempted, albeit briefly, to stay in.

Bernard Cribbins volunteered for the Paras following his call-up for National Service in 1947. After completing his basic training he found himself in Aldershot.

"I think there must be a moment for everyone when you think: 'Is this right?' In that second, Jack Marlborough, who looked after us, would shout Go! and before you knew it, you were away," recalls Bernard.

"I did 13 weeks' infantry training and then we went off to Upper Hayford and did eight qualification jumps from a DC3."

After training he was posted to Palestine, where he joined the 3rd Battalion at a tented camp in Azib before moving to Peninsula Barracks in Haifa when the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were amalgamated.

He remembers one incident as though it happened yesterday.

"I was walking to the cookhouse to collect the tea in a big bucket. There was a glow in the sky and I thought how romantic it was . . . sunrise over the Mediterranean. It turned out the Naafi was on fire.

"The problem was that the Naafi was next door to the armoury, which was housed in two wooden huts. The RSM, with a cocked 9mm pistol, had men in



Incredible friendships formed very quickly, but I wanted to get back to being an actor !

their pyjamas and less, getting the ammo out of the huts and stacking it across the road next to the cookhouse.

"We were pulling out boxes of bombs and hand-grenades and mortars. The ceiling caught fire and we stopped and ran. Two minutes later the whole lot went up, shortly followed by the stack we had made. The explosion destroyed the cookhouse and the Naafi."

There was a strange coincidence many years later in 1964 when he returned to Israel to make the film *She*.

"While I was chatting to one of the assistants, Felix, he told me he was in Haifa and was part of the unit that fired the Naafi."

When the Paras returned from Palestine in April 1948, the battalion formed a guard of honour for Field Marshal Montgomery.

"I didn't get to do it all because while we were fixing bayonets, the guy on my right lost control of his and stuck it through my hand," sighed Bernard. "I was bleeding and Montgomery insisted I fall out."

"I was so fed up because we had rehearsed for weeks. What a disaster."

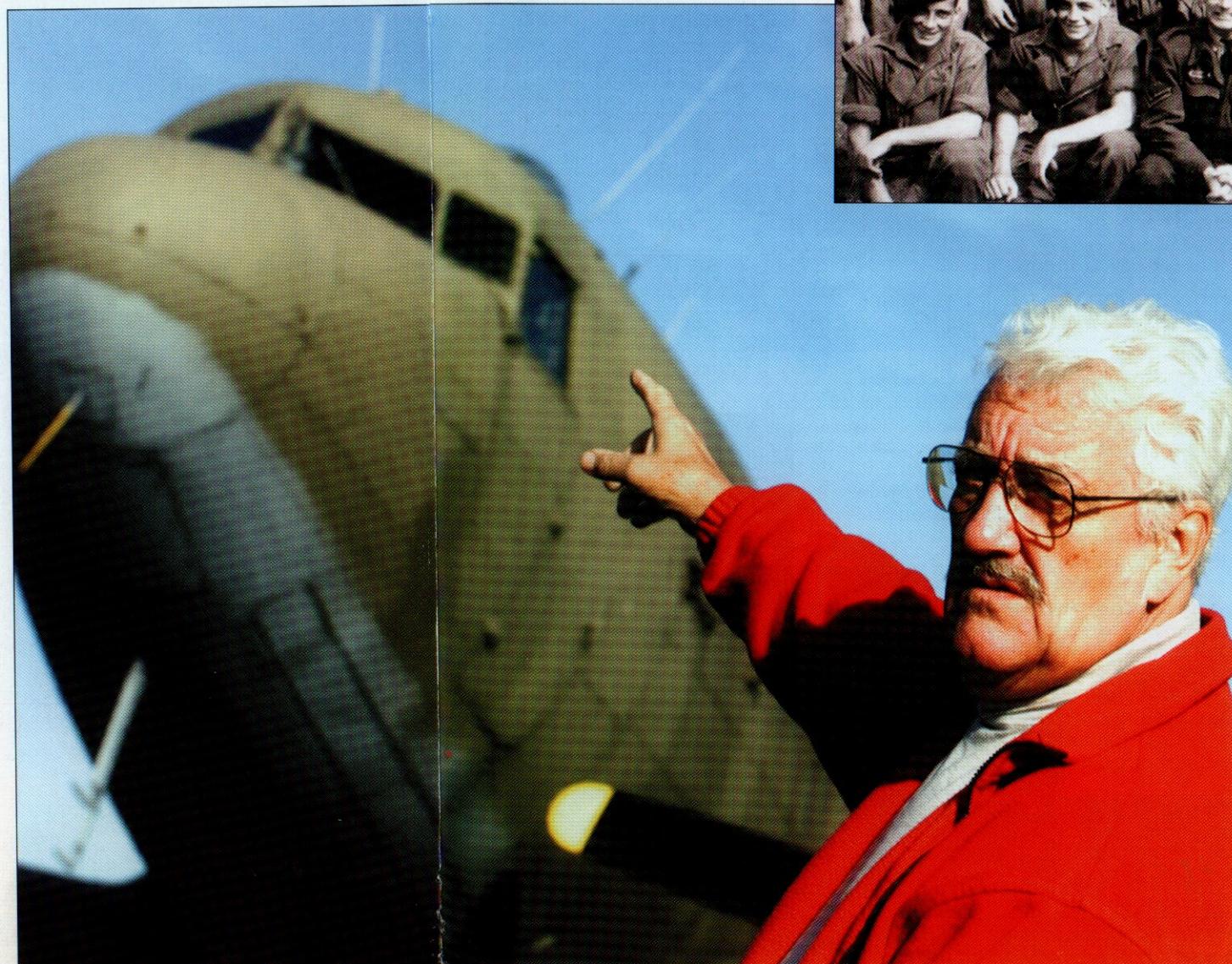
After serving in Germany, Bernard was demobbed in York in 1949.

"Incredible friendships form very quickly in the Army, but I wanted to get back to being an actor. I had done four years in the theatre before joining up."

Bernard's theatrical career began when he was just

14, working as an assistant stage manager and actor at the Colosseum Theatre in Oldham. There, in weekly rep, he took on 50 plays a year and worked with the likes of Dora Bryan and Eric Sykes. "We had to learn a lot of scripts, as you can imagine," he said. "But I think the memory is like a muscle that develops with use."

He married his wife Gillian in 1955, in



a bit of a rush as it turned out. "I got married in the morning, did a matinée and evening performance and then went home to a little bedsit flat in Earls Court," he said.

Bernard's big break arrived in the form of a job in the West End and he has worked there, or in television or films, ever since.

Although he was the voice of *The Wombles*, many youngsters will not be familiar with his recording successes. "I was doing a review in the Fortune Theatre when George Martin, who was with the Parlophone label and who went on to produce the Beatles, arranged to record *Folk-*

song, a very silly piece. We quickly sold 25,000 copies so they came back for more."

Hole in the Ground was next and became a top-ten hit, followed by *Right, Said Fred* and *Gossip Calypso*, written by Trevor Peacock, who has carved a niche for himself as "No-no-no" Jim in the BBC's *The Vicar of Dibley* comedy series.

"They were great fun to do and a side-step from my acting career."

Bernard has made a hatful of films and worked with some of the cinema's biggest stars, including Ursula Andress. "She was a lovely fella," he grinned. There were also films with Peter Sellers, Peter Cushing,

William Holden and David Niven. "*The Railway Children* was good fun and it meant working with Lionel Jeffries, who was always superb."

He also made three Carry On films, the last being *Carry on Columbus*, which he described as a disaster.

Today, Bernard does a lot of work for charities when he is not doing TV commercial voice-overs and commentaries. He is a past president of the Sport Aiding Medical Research for Kids (SPARKS).

Despite his success on film, Bernard prefers working in the theatre. "It's what I know best, it's what I do best," he said.

Asked to name his favourite acting col-



Class of 1947: Bernard Cribbins, back row, second from left, begins two years of National Service during which he served in Palestine

Memories: Bernard, who did eight jumps while in training, admires the Dakota, left, at the Airborne Forces Museum in Aldershot

Cribbins quotes

- 'I volunteered for the Paras. The thing that attracted me was the extra half-a-crown a week.'

- 'I was posted to Schleswig-Holstein in Germany, where I was a stein in a transit camp. I spent most of my time fishing.'

- 'I did my eight qualification jumps at Upper Hayford. I went to Palestine but did no jumps there because of the troubles. And I didn't do any in Germany because of the Berlin airlift. Then I was demobbed.'

- 'I know we had been trained to jump, but it is an unnatural thing to do.'

league, several sprang to mind. "Lionel Jeffries was always good fun; a stunt man named Gerry Crampton; Peter Sellers, who in his early days was a fine character actor; and Ursula Andress, who was charming."

As for his favourite production, he answered without hesitation. "*Guys and Dolls* at the National in about 1983 has to be the favourite. I always say it was like being back in the Paras. There was great spirit, a great sort of pulling together and everyone working to a focused point."

"It was a terrific production . . . it was like being back in the mob."

"It doesn't get better than that."

Images: NI Photo Competition

Nelson touch is victorious

'Newcomer' Bobby sets the photo world alight and fills his garage with smoke in the process

IT must be one of the most unusual and bizarre self-portraits ever created, writes **Chris Horrocks**.

Multiple award-winner Cpl Bobby Nelson set to work on what was to become the Image of the Year (main picture) just weeks before the Northern Ireland Tri-Service Photo Competition was judged.

Using his garage as a studio and Agfa 100 film, he applied green and red gel to two flashes, put on a respirator and photographed himself through another, using his left hand to press the shutter release. But first he decided to add a smoke effect.

"I couldn't get a smoke machine so found some leaves, put them in a metal tin and set fire to them. I didn't set the alarm off but my garage had a bit of smoke damage," he confessed. "But it's all worth while now."

Bobby, who also won awards for the best digital, sport, and colour images, has been an Army professional photographer for only two-and-a-half years, joining the RLC after



Cpl Bobby Nelson

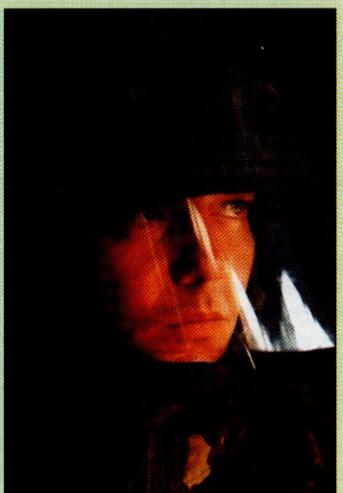
impressing as battalion photographer with The Highlanders.

Eight superb images by SSgt Dave Bridges, RLC earned him the coveted title of NI Professional Photographer of the Year to add to one runner-up and two "highly commended" prizes.

Meanwhile, Amateur Photographer of the Year Capt Sam Potter, RAMC made it a glorious double by also picking up the *Soldier*-sponsored Own Choice award.

Another name frequently cropping up at the Lisburn award ceremony was Sgt Shane Wilkinson, RLC, who, not content with the Mono category award, was runner-up or highly commended in four other classes.

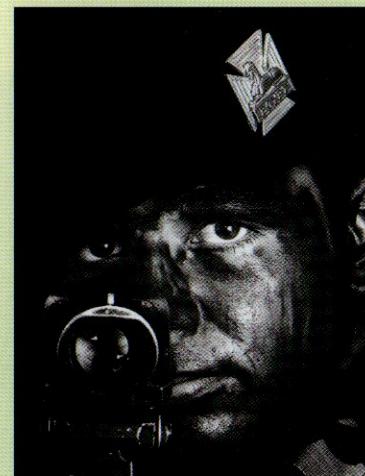
The judges were Linda Salem, of the British Institute of Professional Photographers, Roger Goodwin, Chief Information Officer at HQNI, and Stephen George, Principal Photographer, HQNI. Prizes were presented by Cdr Kevin Broadley RN, Senior Naval Officer, Northern Ireland.



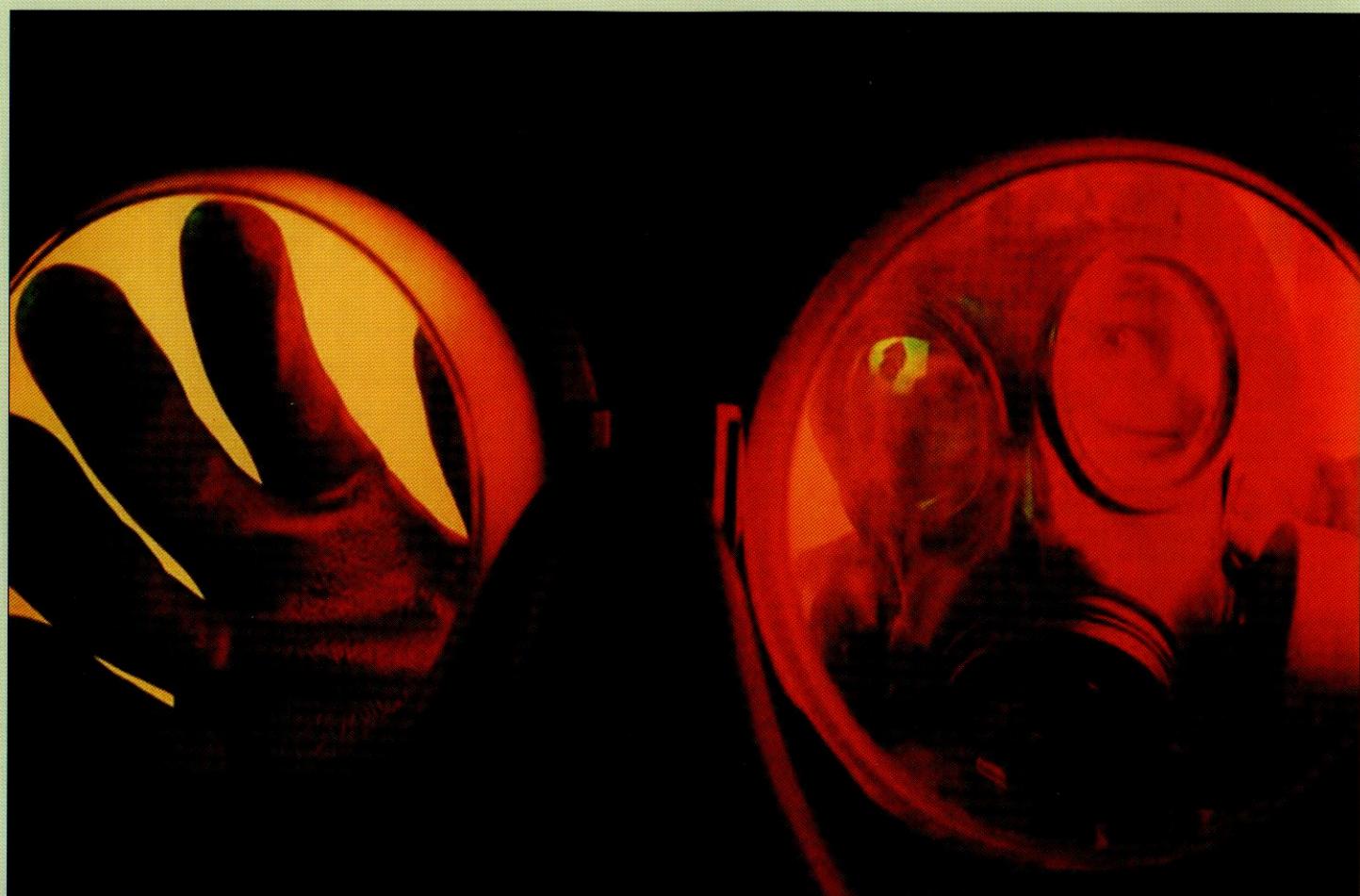
Double take: Best Portrait and Image of Year runner-up was Sgt Trevor Bull's brown study, above



Basketwork: Cpl Bobby Nelson scored from an unusual angle in the Sports Image category, right



Don't shoot until you see . . . Sgt Shane Wilkinson's monochrome hit

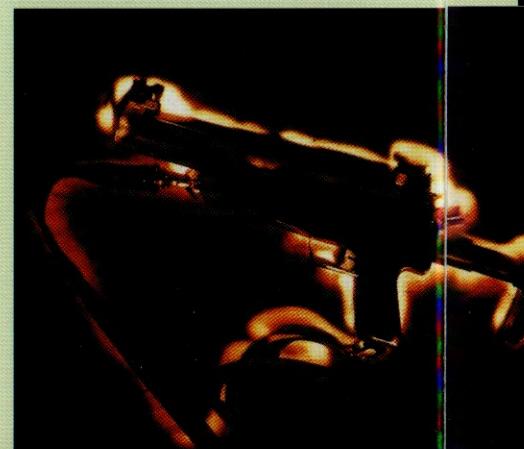


Self-portrait with a difference: Cpl Bobby Nelson's intriguing Image of Year and Best Colour Photo, above

Hotshot: The picture on the left, from top amateur Capt Sam Potter's portfolio, also won the "Own Choice" prize

Net result: The image on the right helped win SSgt Dave Bridges the Professional Photographer of the Year title

Eye-catching: Cpl Nelson's Best Digital Image, below



All the results

Image of the Year (sponsored by GOC NI): Cpl Bobby Nelson, RLC; runner-up, Sgt Trevor Bull, RLC.

Professional Photographer of the Year (Kodak): SSgt Dave Bridges, RLC; runner-up, Sgt Shane Wilkinson, RLC; third place, Cpl Ben Duggan, 1 R Anglian; highly commended, SSgt Jim Hennessey, RLC.

Amateur Photographer of the Year (Fuji): Capt Sam Potter, RAMC; runner-up, LCpl Patrick Vinke-Tuke, 9 RIR.

Best digital image (Photographic Maintenance Services): Cpl Bobby Nelson, RLC; runner-up, Cpl Jim Hennessey, RLC; highly commended, SSgt Dave Bridges and Sgt Shane Wilkinson.

Best sports image (Photo Services): Cpl Bobby Nelson, RLC; runner-up, LCpl Patrick Vinke-Tuke, 9 RIR; highly commended, Sgt Shane Wilkinson, RLC.

Best colour photograph (Agfa): Cpl Bobby Nelson, RLC; runner-up, Cpl Jim Hennessey, RLC; highly commended, LCpl Patrick Vinke-Tuke, 9 RIR.

Best monochrome photograph (Ilford): Sgt Shane Wilkinson, RLC; runner-up, SSgt Dave Bridges, RLC; highly commended, Cpl Rob Leyland, RLC.

Own choice award (Soldier): Capt Sam Potter RAMC; runner-up, Sgt Shane Wilkinson, RLC; third place, Cpl Ben Duggan, 1 R Anglian; highly commended, SSgt Jim Hennessey, RLC.

Best military portrait (KJP): Sgt Trevor Bull RLC; runner-up, Cpl Chris Redford, RLC; highly commended, Capt Dave Chrystal.

Best colour photograph (Agfa): Cpl Bobby Nelson, RLC; runner-up, Cpl Jim Hennessey, RLC; highly commended, LCpl Patrick Vinke-Tuke, 9 RIR.

Best monochrome photograph (Ilford): Sgt Shane Wilkinson, RLC; runner-up, SSgt Dave Bridges, RLC; highly commended, Cpl Rob Leyland, RLC.

Lionheart – pride of Cyprus

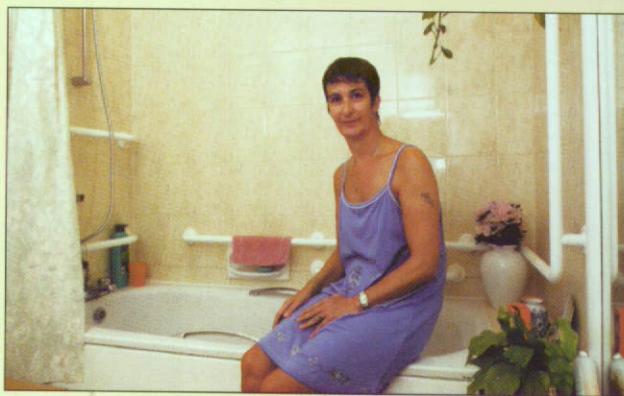
A brave new housing project at Episkopi has proved a winner with Service families

THE Lionheart estate, a showpiece housing development in Cyprus's Western Sovereign Base Area, has proved a huge success with Service families... and for one in particular it is the answer to a prayer, writes Ray Routledge.

Mary Milligan, who is married to LCpl Robert Milligan of the 1st Battalion, The King's Own Scottish Borderers, suffers from osteoarthritis and frequently needs a wheelchair. Until now, Army accommodation has been a real challenge for her.

Mary and her husband are delighted with their new purpose-built bungalow at Episkopi. "The things they've put in have made my life so much easier and I'd like to shake the planner by the hand," she said.

Helpful touches include wider doors to



Home from home: Lionheart village, above, at Episkopi

Room to move: Mary Milligan in her carefully planned bathroom

Pictures: Mike Weston

rails, while the chunky taps have easy-to-grip lever-style handles.

Cupboards and work surfaces are set a little lower than usual to

make life easier for Mary.

"Whoever was involved at the planning stage clearly undertook research to address the problems faced by people with disabilities," she said. "Adapting a house never really works; this is very impressive."

Planning extended to wardrobes with an easy-to-use drop-down hanging facility and outward-opening bathroom doors. The doors, incidentally, have corresponding locks on the outside as well as inside in case of emergencies.

"I've never had anything like this before in Service accommodation," said Mary. "I think there should be more like it. Our next move is to Catterick and the combination of cold weather and lack of facilities there could mean five very miserable years for me."

"I would like them to send people here to show what can be done. Good housing is a great aid to retention."

House is 'ten times better'

TWO of the 120 properties which make up the £12m Lionheart Village housing project at Episkopi have been modified for disabled people.

Most of the properties have three bedrooms while ten houses have four. The plans were a compromise between British and Cypriot design, with basic construction being typically Cypriot, with reinforced concrete used to meet the Cyprus earthquake code.

Shona Hastings, who lives in her new quarter with husband Cpl William Hastings, 1 KOSB, and their children, reckons

the house is "ten times better" than a previous new quarter they lived in.

The Lionheart houses boast solar panels, which means that during the summer months residents don't need to switch on hot water heaters. "The panels provide all the hot water for bathing and washing," said Mrs Hastings. According to her husband, the only thing the house lacked was air-conditioning.

And there's more good news for Service families posted to Cyprus: Lionheart Village is only the first part of a three-phase development.

Useful numbers

Army Benevolent Fund 020 7591 2000

Army Families Advice Bureau 01722 436569

Army Welfare Service 01722 436565

Army Families Federation 01980 615525

British Limbless Ex-Service

Men's Association 020 8590 1124

Confidential support lines:

UK 0800 731 4880

Germany 0800 1827 395

Cyprus 080 91065

Bosnia 0800 731 4880

Others UK 1980 630854

Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society (Combat Stress) 020 8543 6333

Family Escort Service UK 020 7463 9249; Germany JHQ Mil 2272 or 02161 472272

Gulf Families Association 0121 711 3028

Gulf Veterans Association 0191 230 1065

Joint Service Housing Advice

Office 01722 436575

National Gulf Veterans and

Families Association 01482 833812

Regular Forces Employment Association

0207 321 2011

RBL's Legionline 0345 725 725

Samaritans 08457 90 90 90

Service Children's Education 01980 618244

Services Cotswold Centre 01225 810358

SSAFA Forces Help 020 7403 8783

SSAFA Forces Help housing

advisory service 01722 436400

Veterans' Advice Unit 08456 020302

War Pensions Agency 01253 858 858

WRVS 01235 442940

Help us attempt to make change an informed process

I THINK it was the Chinese who gave the world the curse: "May you live in interesting times". We in the Army seem to have been blessed with constant "interesting" change for more years now than I care to think about.

Of course, much of the change has been to the good, and Army Families Federation has been instrumental in bringing some of it about. But I suspect I am not the only person wondering just how far we can, should, or want to go in certain areas.

Last month's Vox pop feature reflected the widely-held mixed feelings about the Human Rights Act and the questions it may begin to raise. Where does an individual's rights stop and Army discipline begin?

Just how far can the Army and its soldiers be seen as ordinary employer and employees and conform to legislation clearly aimed at normal civilian life?

What about such things as entitlement to housing? *Soldier's Mailbag* pages have recently been featuring letters arguing the case for and against entitlement of unmarried partners to Service housing. Do we think unmarried partners should be entitled to quarters? Only when the relationship can be proved to be long-term or when children are involved?

Or should people who want Service housing just bite the bullet and get married? Society has accepted that many people who are not married live together – it happens all the time. So why shouldn't it happen in the Army? And if it does, are there enough quarters to go around?

What about accompanied service? Will the career aspirations of modern spouses and concerns about the continuity of education eventually win against a family's need to be together?

Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon told the *Daily Telegraph* recently that it was an aspiration that units in the Army should have more "home bases" in the UK. I thought we already did, but it seems this plot could pro-



Sue Bonney is editor of the Families Journal

vide the stability many families have asked for by allowing them to stay put, spouses to develop careers and children to stay in one school. It also implies that soldiers would go away without their families for longer periods of time... rather like the Royal Navy.

Does this mean the end of accompanied service and regimental communities, and if so, is that what we want? I seem to remember arguing on this page that what many families wanted was a choice – to stay put in one place when necessary, but to be able to accompany their soldier when they could.

If postings were longer – and three-year postings are one of the desires most commonly expressed to the AFF – this could solve many of the problems caused by frequent moves. But what difference would that make if, during a three-year accompanied posting overseas, your soldier disappears on operational tours at regular and prolonged intervals?

How accompanied is that? Would families in those circumstances prefer to stay put back at UK home base? And if they go, would they prefer to be in quarters or live in their own home, like so many naval families?

The Federation is trying to find out what the Army community thinks about such questions and how life with the Army should be in the future. It has recently published an AFF/SSAFA Changing Attitudes Survey. If you receive a questionnaire, make the most of the opportunity to tell us what you and your spouse think should happen.

Let us know your views via AFF's website at www.aff.org.uk on the discussion and voting pages.

Change, as *Him Indoors* is fond of saying, is a constant – it will always be with us. But we can all try and make it an informed process.

The autumn edition of the *AFF Families Journal* is published this month; have you seen your free copy yet? Make sure you ask for it at your unit.

I suspect I am not the only person wondering how far we can, should or want to go in certain areas

Forces' financial services watchdog launched

A NEW advisory panel has been launched to reassure Service personnel that they are getting financial advice from firms that are aware of the special needs of the Armed Forces.

The Services Insurance and

Investment Advisory Panel (SIIAP) is recognised by the MoD and operates on behalf of Servicemen and women. Chairman of the SIIAP management committee is Keith Frampton of the Warrior Group/Naafi Financial Services.

Pension-share on divorce set to become law

COUPLES who begin divorce proceedings on or after December 1 will have the option to share pension rights as part of their financial settlement under new legislation coming into force on December 1.

Under pension sharing, the pension rights which a qualifying scheme member has accrued are divided in whatever ratio the court considers appropriate.

The system is not compulsory, because it will still be possible to offset pension rights against other assets, such as savings or the marital home, or to use the ear-marking provisions of the Pensions Act 1995 (explained in Joint Service Defence Council Instruction 90/96). More information can be found in booklet *AFPS 1* available from unit admin offices.

Scheme members will have their accrued pension rights calculated to find the cash equivalent (CE) value. A percentage of the CE is then allocated to the former spouse by the court as part of the financial settlement. This "pension credit" will then buy the former spouse pension rights within the Armed Forces Pension Scheme which must remain preserved within the scheme until they become payable to her (or him) when she (or he) turns 60.

If you remarry, your new spouse may be eligible for widow(er)s benefits on your death based on your pension entitlement after the pension-share.

Car-buyers: This form will leave you CoC-a-hoop

If you are about to buy a new car, read on... it could save you a few bob.

European Union states are signed up to the, wait for it, European Community Whole Vehicle Approved Certificate of Conformity (or ECWVTA CoC), a document that allows a "motorised passenger-carrying vehicle, to a maximum of nine seats", registered in one member state to be re-registered in another. Still with us?

Anyway, the CoC won't cost you a bean if you ask for it when you buy the car, but if you do so once it's on the road, the EU recommends car makers charge for the service.

The MG Rover Group asks for £50 for a CoC, the same amount as BMW, Land Rover, Volvo and Jaguar charges £94, as does Mercedes, while Vauxhall will set you back £74, and VW/Audi £58.75.

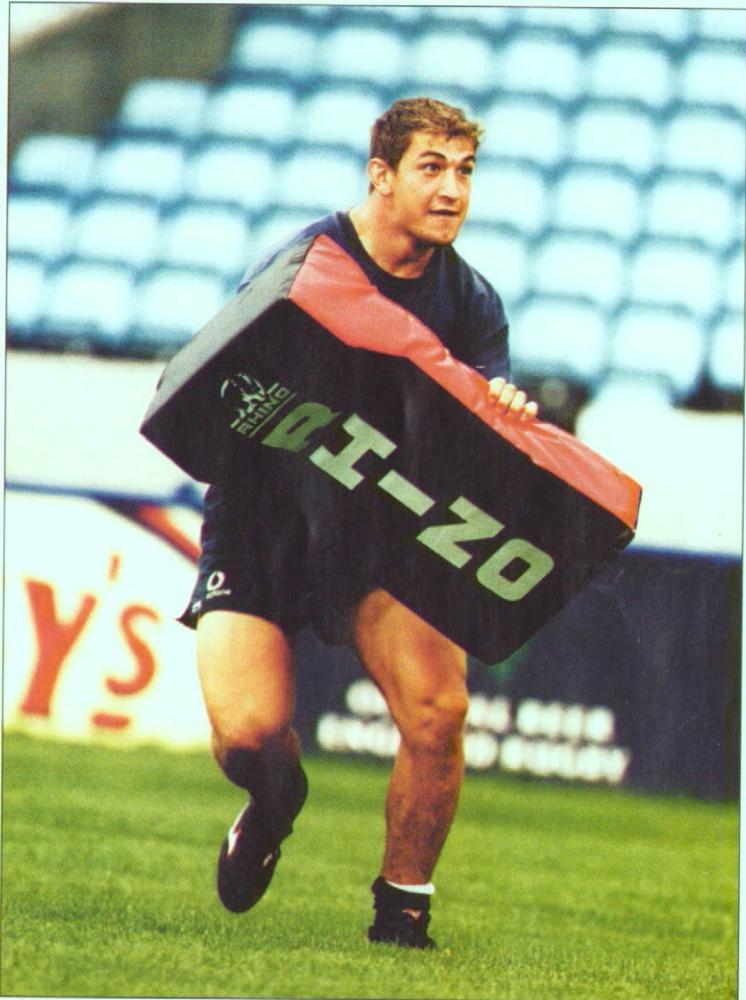
Many Service personnel, apparently, don't know they can avoid the charge altogether by requesting the CoC when they order their new car. They do now.



INTERVIEW: GNR ANDY DAWLING AND LBDR LEE SOPER

RUGBY UNION

Duo's Quins-essential performance



Picture: Harlequins RFU

Padded up: Gnr Andy Dawling (7 Para RHA) braces himself for impact at The Stoop Memorial Ground, Twickenham – the home of Harlequins RFC

Dream becomes a reality for two of the Army's rising stars

PLAYING for a top-flight club alongside some of the biggest names in world rugby has become more than just a pipe dream for 7 (Parachute) Royal Horse Artillery's Gnr Andy Dawling and LBdr Lee Soper.

Careers as professional rugby players are now on the cards for the two burly forwards, who have been signed by rugby union giants NEC Harlequins.

Dawling and Soper joined the star-studded Quins, coached by former New Zealand great Zinzan Brooke and former England scrum-half Richard Hill, on a trial basis during the pre-season and have not looked back since, each notching up a number of first team appearances.

Four months after arriving at the club the pair have, in the words of Quins' general manager Ross Young, become "an integral part of the squad". No mean feat when you consider that the likes of Irish international Keith Wood and Australian David Wilson are among the club's star names.

Flanker Wilson, who has won 74 caps over nine years for the Wallabies, played a major role in taking the World Cup back down under last summer.

For 23-year old Soper the move to Quins, who play their home games at The Stoop, Twickenham, marks a spectacular rise to the top.

"I only really started playing rugby seriously when I was 17," he told *Soldier*. "After college I went to my local club, Truro, and played for their colts side before joining the Army. I then played for my regiment, the Army under 21s and captained the Combined Services under 21s.

"Last season I played for Camberley RFC and also got my first two caps for the Army – and now here I am. It really is a dream come true. I feel like I'm learning a lot here.

• Training with world-class players helps you along so much •

Training with world-class players helps you along so much. I feel stronger, more powerful and my technique in line-outs has improved."

Soper's Army team-mate, Andy Dawling, is no stranger to life in the professional game, having already enjoyed a spell at Gloucester, but the 26-year-old is equally gratified to be associated with one of England's most famous clubs.

"I've played since I was about ten but most of my rugby has been Service rugby," said Dawling.

"Three seasons ago I moved to Newbury and then went on to play for Gloucester and Coventry. I'm delighted to be with the Quins now – everyone wants to compete at the highest level in their sport and I am doing just that."

Now a regular face in the first team squad, Dawling is taking his new-found fame in his stride.

"I certainly do not feel like a star, you go back to the regiment and you soon get bought back down to earth. The lads are all pleased for me and as long as I keep the Quins T-shirts going their way they give me an easy time."

Testament to their motto – "When you play, you play with style" – the Quins are responsible for producing more international players, including 21 England captains, than any other club.

But as far as international aspirations are concerned Dawling, whose accolades include five caps for the Army and two for the Combined Services, is not getting ahead of himself.

"It is everyone's dream to play for their country and I am no different but for the time being I'm concentrating on staying in the Harlequin squad. I have always hoped to play rugby at this level and I am just happy to see how it goes."

◆ **Soldier** has teamed up with NEC Harlequins to offer its readers discounted entry at The Stoop.

Readers purchasing a £10 Jester ticket for either the open north or south stands, or the closed east stand, will receive a second ticket free.

To collect your discounted tickets take a copy of this magazine to the club's box office on matchdays. The offer is valid until December 28.



Star status: LBdr Lee Soper (7 Para RHA), left, talks tactics with Samoan international and new team-mate Tani Fuga during a rare break in training

RESULTS SERVICE

CRICKET: Combined Services (200-8 dec) lost by seven wickets to Sir Paul Getty's XI (201-3).

MCC (191-8 dec) beat Combined Services (84) by 107 runs.

Oxford University (248 and 238-5) drew with Combined Services (284-8 dec and 177-7).

The Combined Services match against Cambridge University was declared a draw after the fixture was abandoned due to rain.

◆ A run of eight straight wins ensured that the Royal Signals Cricket Club finished worthy winners of the Grouse Inter-Corps championships.

FOOTBALL: The Army beat Ryman Premier

League high-flyers Farnborough Town 2-0 with goals from Cpl Bomber Brown and Cfn Craig Wall.

The team extended their 100 per cent record to four games with an 8-1 mauling of Carshalton Athletic.

Wall (2) and Brown (1) were again on the score sheet and were joined by LCpl Simon Bell (2), Cpl Eugene Shannon (2) and Sgt Pete Tagg (1).

Under the watchful eye of new coach WO1 Alan Higgins, the team then picked up their first piece of silverware of the season.

A lone goal from Wall was enough to beat the Metropolitan Police and lift the Grenadier Guards challenge trophy.

◆ The women's team were beaten 4-0 by a

strong Southampton Saints team.

◆ A tense penalty shoot-out decided the annual six-a-side tournament held at Aldershot, 11 Signal Regt beating 9/12th L 7-6.
◆ DCRE beat civilian side, Hyder 6-1.

ROUNDERS: The APTC won the Inter-Corps rounders championships, defeating the Royal Signals in the final.

SHOOTING: WO2 Tony Masters (RA) was awarded the gold jewel in the Army individual clay target championships with a score of 221.

WO2 David Beattie (R Irish) finished three clays behind and Sgt Simon Arbuckle took third with 215.

◆ The Inter-Services long-range small bore

rifle championships were marred by the recent fuel crisis, which prevented the Royal Air Force and Royal Air Force Reserve sides from attending.

The Royal Navy pulled out because of a lack of numbers.

With the Territorial Army offering the only opposition, the Regular Army retained the Gilbert Trophy for the second successive year.

Maj Martin Sinclair (TA) won the Wilkinson Sword in the Inter-Service individual championship with a score of 1966 – an agonising one point short of the record set in 1989. Capt Guy Brewster (TA) beat WO2 John Frame (RLC) to second place by two points.

Sgt Fran Weston (AGC) was presented the

Peter Martin Trophy as the leading woman competitor.

◆ The Royal Air Force took both the centre fire and air pistol titles at this year's Inter-Services target pistol team championships.

The individual championship, introduced for the first time in 1997, was won by LCpl Willy Kennedy (R Irish) with a record score of 1,447 points.

◆ The annual match between the Combined Services and the English Small-bore Shooting Union (ESSU) saw the ESSU again finish on top.

However, the Combined Services will take consolation in the fact that the winning margin was reduced to 85 points from last year's 107.

◆ The Police Athletic Association won their

annual match against the Army, winning all three matches.

◆ The Combined Services match against Great Britain, sponsored by the Joint Services Shooting Committee, produced a clean sweep for the Services side.

Cpl Robert Doak (R Irish) was the highest scoring individual with an aggregate score of 1,725 (ex 1800).

Cdr Peter Flippant (RAF) took the runners-up spot with 1,694, one point ahead of Great Britain's Peter Clark.

TUG OF WAR: Newly-formed 1 Close Support Medical Regiment were crowned women's champions at the Army tug-of-war finals in Larkhill.



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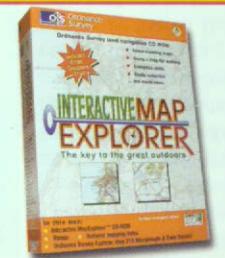
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SAILING

Just plain sailing



FENDING off the challenge of some of Great Britain's best yachtsmen, the Army sailing team claimed ownership of the Royal Docklands Cup.

The raising of the silverware was a fitting climax to an exciting Mumm 30 City Sailing Challenge for the Army team of Cpl Stan Macmillan, Maj Paul Ingram, SSgt Paul Andersen, Maj Ben Archer, Cpl Lloyd Hamilton and Spr Stuart Smith.

Sailing in the heart of London's Docklands, the Army team qualified for the final, and a showdown with the Andersen Consulting crew – skippered by Adrian Stead – ahead of teams from Panasonic and Bloomberg.

With the Andersen team twice penalised by RYA umpire Robin Robertson, the Army took an unassailable two-race lead.

Team skipper Maj Ben Archer (RA) said: "Adrian Stead is the leading yachtsman in the country, having won boat-of-the-series in the last Admirals Cup regatta. To beat him in the final is a scalp to be proud of and one which will be cherished by the Army team for some time."

ROWING



Class act: Col Max Heron, left, and Lt Col Des Norton earn themselves world recognition

Army's vintage performance

LIKE a bottle of fine wine, rowers Col Max Heron and Lt Col Des Norton are getting better with age.

Fresh off the back of winning the open coxless pairs at the Army regatta and the veteran coxless pairs at the Joint Services' regatta, the duo have added a world gold to their list of accolades.

Contesting the FISA World Veteran

Championships in Belgium, Heron and Norton pulled their way to victory in their respective division (over 43), finishing six seconds ahead of the crew in second place.

In the Veteran B event (over 36) they were again in the thick of the action but were denied their second gold by a German crew.

SHORTS

Best foot forward

MORE than 1,000 soldiers completed the Flora London Marathon this year and the Multiple Sclerosis Society is asking for your help to surpass that figure in 2001.

As an official charity to next April's event, the society has guaranteed places for the marathon. If you would like to fill one of them call 0870 2413565.

Medical break-through

FOR the first time in its history the British Army (Germany) major units athletics championships have been won by a medical unit.

The team from 1 (CS) Medical Regiment not only won both the men's and women's competition held in Sennelager but also collected the Viking Trophy for the most accumulated points.

Under the guidance of SSgt Tom Wright the team, comprising 35 athletes from all squadrons of the regiment, dominated the competition despite the presence of strong opposition.

Officers stride ahead

ORIENTEERING is part-and-parcel of military training and so it came as no surprise that six officers from the Adjutant General's Corps were among the front runners in the UK Relay Cup.

The civilian competition was made up of four orienteering relay events staged nation-wide. The team of Maj Nikki Miller (AGC (SPS)), Maj Woo Allen (AGC (ETS)), Maj Bev Walters-Davies (AGC (SPS)), 2nd Lt Sarah Rollins (RAMC) and Maj Gabi Bushell (AGC (SPS)) finished fourth overall.

Irish eyes are smiling

PLAYING their first game on Northern Ireland soil, the Army's under 21 rugby team beat Queen's University Belfast 38-17.

The fixture, hosted by Ballinahinch Rugby Club, was the Army's first match of the season and signalled the beginning of the build-up to the Inter-Service championships.

Read boxes clever

THE Army boxing team began the season in customary style – on the winning side.

Fighting at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in London in aid of the Bud Flanagan Leukaemia Fund, the team contested six bouts and lost just one.

Middleweight LCpl Mark McMahon got his season off to an explosive start, knocking London-based fighter Chris Shobiya out in the first round. And wearing an Army vest for the first time, Gds John Read (1 IG) easily out-pointed his opponent.

GOLF

Teeing up for the cup

ENTRENCHED in history and nostalgia, the Army Golf Challenge Cup is one of the few trophies in sport still awarded for the reason it was originally presented.

And weighing in at around six kilos and standing over one metre tall, the Challenge Cup dwarfs football's FA Cup. In raw material alone it is worth a fortune although its real value lies in its heritage.

The prestigious trophy was first presented to the winners of the Army's inter-unit golf championship in 1904 by a captain in the Highland Light Infantry and, despite a break during the war years, it has been fiercely contested ever since.

The road to lifting the irreplaceable 96-year-old cup is suitably arduous.

After battling through qualifying rounds in their own districts, eight teams, made up of four players and one reserve, won their way through to this year's Serco Defence-sponsored final held at Aldershot's Army Golf Club.

The unforgiving Aldershot course is one of the military's best-kept secrets and

Gunners revel in challenge triumph

provided a challenging last hurdle for the finalists.

Club professional Graham Cowley told *Soldier*: "This is as good as any civilian club. It's a tough course with plenty of hazards and that's why we have so many civilian members."

The eight teams contested a knockout competition, with the two remaining teams drawn against one another in a grand final.

In a very close match 12 Regiment Royal Artillery defeated 1998 and 1999 champions Army Training Regiment Pirbright.

After 18 holes the two sides were level and one player from each side was selected to take part in a



sudden death decider. Playing the course's narrow five-par first hole, Gnr Chris Brewer (RA) reached the green in three shots but missed his putt for birdie and had to settle for par.

CSgt Tam Wilson (ATR) drove into the trees from the tee but managed to recover just short of the green with his third. Despite chipping on to the green he missed his putt to halve the hole, confirming the gunners as champions.

◆ The British Army India Cup was presented to 11 Signal Regiment, who beat 7 R Irish in the plate competition after playing two extra holes.

The Stableford competition, contested by the teams who had not qualified for the championship or plate finals was won convincingly by 8 Transport Regiment RLC with 123 points.

Runners-up were 39 Engineer Regiment on 100 points.

LARKHILL STADIUM

Lights turned on at Larkhill

ARMY and Scottish prop Cpl Mattie Stewart (PWRR) unveiled Larkhill's floodlit rugby ground ahead of a showpiece match between the Royal Artillery and an Army XV, writes Roger Thompson.

The new ground will enable regimental and corps matches to be played under lights so that all rugby players can participate without detriment to the day job.

Equally important, members of the Larkhill Garrison can now support their team on one of the premier playing surfaces in the country and certainly the best in the Army.

This project, masterminded by Lt Col Robbie Campbell, the Army's Director of Rugby, was completed with a grant from the Army Central Fund as part of the Land Millennium Project. It was built in conjunction with a hard hockey pitch and training area.

Lt Col Campbell said: "This was a prototype for other major garrisons. The aim was to make rugby union more widely available to the players, coaches and referees who could not be released during the day".

Rob Dixon, the Scottish international



Picture: Sgt Richard Dawson

Night vision: The Army and Royal Artillery train under the floodlights at the new stadium

referees, who also has a busy civilian job in London, was delighted to officiate, something that would not have been possible earlier in the day.

The match produced some exciting passages of play, with Fijians on both sides creating fire and manoeuvre down the centre.

For the Army, Pte Kite Rawelai (RS), Spr Jim Poli (3 RSME) and LCpl George

Kemble (RWF) showed great early-season form. While for the gunners, Lt Dave Blackburn and Bdr Reilly (26 Regt) attacked remorselessly behind a strong pack. The Army, stretched to the limit, just held on for a 29-23 victory.

The gunners are a very good team and on this showing at their new home will take some holding to a respectable score in the Inter-Corps merit table.

RUGBY LEAGUE



Picture: Steve Dock

Roles reversed: REME upset the form book to end the sappers' monopoly at the top

Perfect REME-dy

THOSE who had money on the favourites will have left the Lawson Cup final with lighter wallets.

After stamping their authority on the Inter-Corps Cup in recent years, Royal Engineers looked odds-on to regain the silverware at the Aldershot final – especially as their opponents were habitual runners-up REME.

But how sweet revenge can be.

True to the form book it was the sappers who made all the early running and within 15 minutes they had breached the REME line.

A further try and conversion suggested that the result was a foregone conclusion, but REME stuck to the task and tries from Cfn Carl Roderick (SEAE) and Cpl

Stu Williams (ATR Pirbright) reduced the deficit to 8-10.

With the second half still in its infancy the sappers extended their lead by six points but, spurred on by man-of-the-match LCpl Ratty Ratcliffe, REME continued to assert pressure of their own.

Their efforts were rewarded on the hour when Cfn Shaun Henley (6 Bn REME) crossed the line and SSgt Mark Walker (5 Bn REME) successfully converted to leave REME just two points adrift.

The scene was set for an upset and Cpl Marcus Noye (ATR Pirbright) became the hero of the hour, stealing down the left flank and crossing the line for a try that earned his side a hard-fought 18-16 victory.

Army in seventh heaven

THE Army have retained the Naafi Inter-Services Rugby League Challenge Cup for the seventh year in succession.

Determined not to loosen their stranglehold, they began the defence with a hard-fought 28-18 win over the Royal Navy at the home of Super League side Hull.

Spr Kevin Sutcliffe (RE) was instrumental in the Army securing the Jack Harrison VC Trophy and was deservedly named man-of-the-match.

The competition moved to RAF Uxbridge where the Army beat the Royal Air Force 22-8 to secure the championship trophy. WO2 Paul Roberts (REME) was man-of-the-match.

◆ Any soldiers who are playing civilian Rugby League at a serious level and want to know more about the Army set-up should contact WO1 Mick Scholes by e-mail on mjsc-holes@aol.com, or by calling: Mil (94659) 3661.

FIXTURES

Your sporting guide to November ...

ANGLING: 1 – Army open championships.

ATHLETICS: 8 – Army cross country relays (Twyford); 15 – AGC cross-country championships (Grantham); 18 – RLC cross country championships (Worthy Down).

BADMINTON: 1-3 – RE championships; 4-5 – AGC championships; 16-18 – Inter-Corps championships (Coleme).

BOXING: 4 – Army v Basingstoke (Basingstoke); 10 – Army Select v NW London (London); 16 – Army charity match v London (Hereford); 17 – Army v SE London (London); 18 – ABA(E) novice quarter-finals (TBC).

CANOEING: 18-19 – Land Command championships (Barnard Castle, Richmondshire).

FOOTBALL: 1 – Army v AFA (Away); 4 – Youth v Devon (Away); 7 – Army v Essex (Aldershot); 14 – Army v Gloucester (Away); 16 – Women v Gloucester (Aldershot); 19 – Youth v Bury Academy (Aldershot); 22 – CS Women v Netherlands (Away); 23 – Youth v AAC Arborfield (Aldershot); U21 v Dorset (Away).

HOCKEY: 2-3 – CS Indoor Tournament (Collingwood).

JUDO: 4 – Army novice and intermediate championships (Aldershot); 25 – Army open (Aldershot).

LAWN TENNIS: 4 – Army men v 45 Club (Aldershot); 25 – Army men v Gerrard's Cross (Aldershot).

MODERN PENTATHLON: 18-19 – Winter pentathlon series (RMAS).

NETBALL: 15 – Inter-Unit competition (Aldershot); Inter-Corps championships (Aldershot); 17-19 – Army squad selection and training (Aldershot).

ROWING: 4 – Men/women fours head (London); 5 – Veteran fours head (London); 18 – Army head (Eton).

RUGBY LEAGUE: 19 – Army v Rochdale Hornets A (Rochdale).

RUGBY UNION: 4-5 – Singapore Sevens; 7 – CS v Barbarians (Gloucester); 22 – Army trial (Aldershot rugby stadium from 9.30am); 26 – Army U21 v Royal Navy; 29 – CS match (opponents to be confirmed).

SQUASH: 2 – Army v Camberley (Aldershot); 3-5 – CS individuals (Aldershot); 6 – Vets v Greenacres 2 (Aldershot); 20-22 – Inter-Corps championships (Aldershot); 29 – Army v Cambridge University (Away).

TENNIS & RACKETS: 12 – Army v Bath and Bristol (Away).

TUG OF WAR: 18-19 – British Army (Germany) annual indoor championships.

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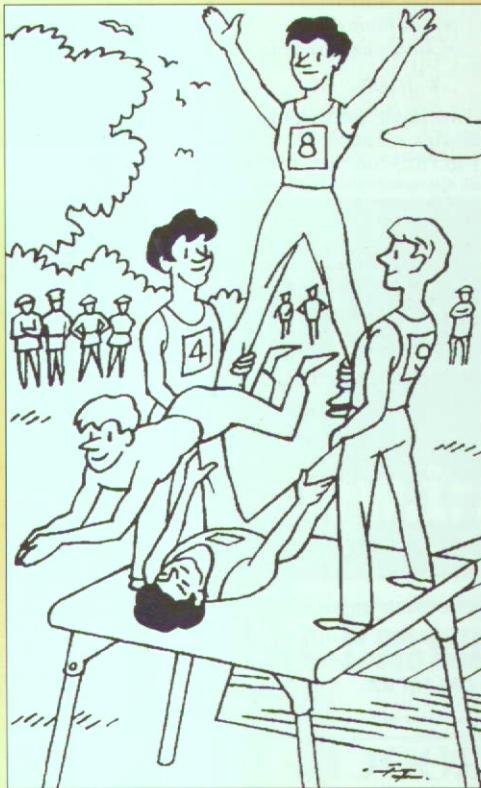
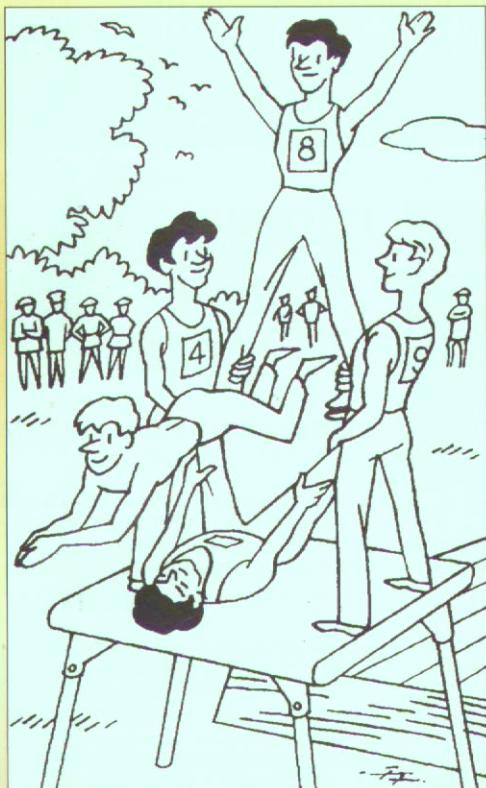
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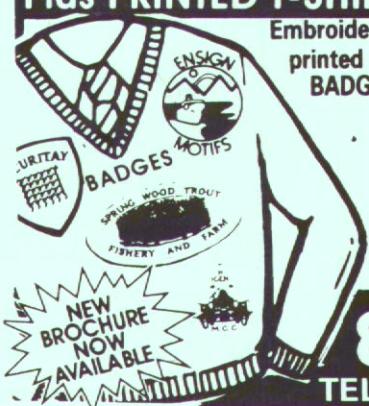


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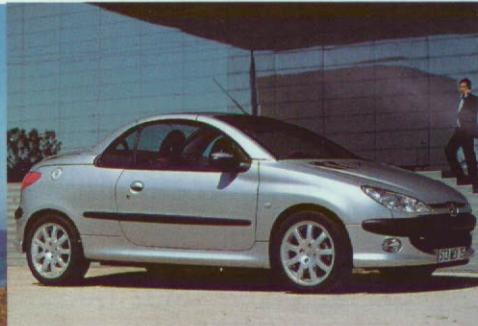
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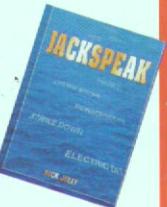
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P782

Anne, mid-40s, 5'6", curvy brunette with blue eyes. Enjoys music, walking, clubbing, travel and dining. Life begins at 40 and looking for pen pals, 40+, to please help me start mine.

P783

Leona, 35, slim blonde. Hobbies include reading, jogging, aerobics, pre-1990s music and classical, and going out. A mum of two who would love replies from soldiers, 30-45, who would like a genuine pen pal.

P784

Joyce, slim, 39-year-old with GSOH. Enjoys keep fit, swimming, the cinema, eating out and a good laugh - a typical Aquarian. Seeking easy-going and good-humoured pen pals, 30-40.

P785

Patricia, Piscean, long blonde hair and brown eyes. Likes socialising, all kinds of music, walking, TV, wine and dining and meeting people from all walks of life. Would like to hear from pen pals, 45+, who are good conversationalists and have a GSOH.

P786

Brenda, 5'3", 35-year-old redhead. A single mum who is interested in all the usual stuff and, of course, writing long letters. Seeking pen pals, 30-40.

P787

Lorraine, 32, 5'8", brown hair and grey eyes. Enjoys cooking, nights in/out, good company, music, keep fit and life. Seeking pen pals, 25+, and will answer all letters. Would appreciate a photo where possible.

P788

Jennifer, 33-year-old, blonde nursery nurse. Enjoys spectator sports, music, animals, the theatre and cinema and would like to write to Servicemen, 30-40, at home or abroad.

P789

Heaven and Angel, 29 and 25, slim redhead and slim blonde respectively. Both swim, do keep fit and love writing. Replies please from any pen pals, 20-40, who enjoy writing.

P790

Julie, 33-year-old blonde with blue eyes. Interests include music, cooking, the cinema, UK travel, reading and generally relaxing. Seeking pen pals, 28-36.

P791

Jackie, 44-year-old, young-looking, slim, attractive blonde. A widow who is happy and fun-loving by nature and enjoys keep fit, swimming, walking, the gym, netball and writing. Replies please from male pen pals, 35-46, with photo.

P792

Lisa, 27, 5'6", long, dark hair, blue/green eyes and GSOH. Enjoys pubs, clubs, the cinema, writing, reading, meeting people, travel and life to the full. Would like to write to anyone, 23+, with GSOH and who enjoys life as much.

P793

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P794

Glenda, bubbly, single, blue-eyed blonde. Second-year student nurse with an honest and caring nature who likes animals, driving, gardening and a wide choice of music. Seeking pen pals, 24-40, to relieve the boredom and spice up my life. All letters will get a reply.

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Tina, 5'9", blue-eyed blonde of fit build. Enjoys pubs and clubs, keep fit, motorbikes and writing to squaddies. Replies please from pen pals, 25-35. GSOH a must.

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ARMY SPORTS LOTTERY RESULTS

SEPTEMBER 16, 2000

Three-way tie for first prize (20 goals, £2,811.11 each): LCpl DG Alexander, Defence School of Tpt, Leconfield; WO2 ILC Briffett, Medical Centre, Gütersloh; Capt NJ Collins, 135 Indep Topo Sqn RE (V), Ewell.

Six-way tie for fourth prize (19 goals, £677.78 each): LCpl AG Annett, 7 R Irish; Brig JBA Bailey, HQ DRA, Larkhill; Tpr AJ Foster, KRH, Tidworth; LCpl Jiwani Pun, 1 RGR, Brunei; Cpl RG Longland, 42 Svy Engr Gp, Hermitage; WO2 G Mazzone, 9 Sup Regt RLC, Chippenham.

Note: Only nine prizes – rule 9 applies.

SEPTEMBER 23, 2000

Four-way tie for first prize (22 goals, £2,425 each): Cpl DM Meggitt, BATUS, Suffield; Lt Col C Miskelly, Army Prosecuting Authority, Uxbridge; Cpl AE O'Conor, 3 CS Med Regt, Catterick; Capt JD Wright, SA Avn, Middle Wallop.

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16-way tie for fifth prize (21 goals, £175 each): Cpl DJ Back, 5 Bn REME, Catterick; SSgt JK Barracough, 39 Engr Regt, Cambridge; Cpl BJ Bates, AGC Centre, Worthy Down; Maj SM Bryce, 7 R Irish; 2Lt WG Calderhead, 1 (UK) ADSR, Herford; Sgt J Driver, HQ AFCENT; Pte N Elliott, HQ NI; SSgt PS Fisher, 253 (NI) Fd Amb (V); Fus LA Godden, 1 RWF, Tern Hill; Cpl CA Heaton, 1 QLR, Catterick; SSgt LJ King, 16 Regt RLC, Bicester; Capt RJ McNeil, RMCS, Shrivenham; Lt SSM O'Neill, 32 Engr Regt, Hohne; Capt SM Pothill, Royal Brunei Armed Forces; LCpl K Watson, 1 RHF, Fort George; Cfn K Wilcox, 1 Regt AAC, Gütersloh.

SEPTEMBER 30, 2000

First prize (£925 goals, £4,500): Cpl G Oliver, BVD Ashchurch.

Four-way tie for second prize (24 goals, £888.89 each): Cpl G Colquhoun, 1 BW, Fallingbostel; LCpl SJ Elkin, 1 Regt AAC, Gütersloh; Pte R Grafton, 27 Tpt Regt RLC, Aldershot; CSgt CG Graham,

1 A and SH, Edinburgh; Lt Col ML Jackson, MOD, London; CoH SR Matthews, HCR, Windsor; Sgt E Perry, 16 Tk Tptr Sqn RLC, Fallingbostel; Cpl MV Porter, UKDSU Heidelberg; SSgt RW Thoresen, 3 CS Regt RLC, Abingdon.

Regt RA, Sennelager; Capt TA Hanks, 4 GS Med Regt, Aldershot; WO1 SJ Kelley, SSO Münster; Cpl DJ Nash, Cyprus Log Unit, RAF Akrotiri; OCdt DM Shepherd, RMCS, Shrivenham.

Note: Only five prizes – rule 9 applies.

OCTOBER 14, 2000

Three-way tie for first prize (26 goals, £2,800 each): SSgt MO Eldridge, 1 RWF, Tern Hill; Sgt DL Mackenzie, HQ AFCENT; Pte P Wain, 1 Staffords, Tidworth.

10-way tie for fourth prize (25 goals, £410 each): Pte B Ashcroft, HQ Lisburn Station; WO2 GD Broughton, 1 MI Coy, Herford; SSgt D Bunting, British Alpine Centre, Sonthofen; Sgt G Harbage-Brown, 243 Signal Sqn, Bulford; SSgt CRA Holcombe, 251 Signal Sqn, Aldershot; LCpl J Kane, 1 A and SH, Edinburgh; Pte E Kevan, 3 R Irish; Maj DE Langford, 42 AEC, Hohne; WO2 WA Pike, Warminster Sp Unit; Maj JB Sales, 32 AEC.



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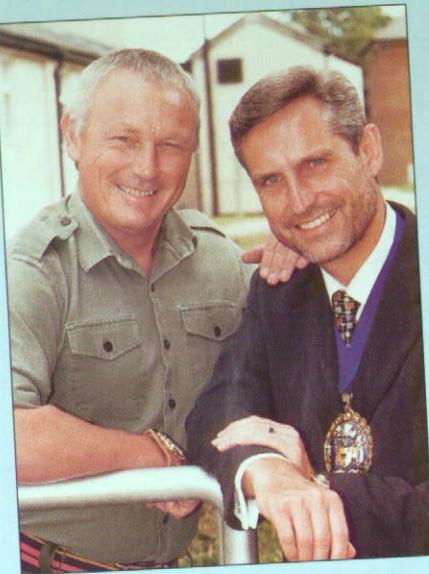
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Fraser's cap stops pocket explosions

MAJ Fraser Macdonald's snag-free safety pin will have come as a relief to everyone who uses distraction grenades... and it earned him an award of £570 under the GEMS scheme for good ideas.

Fraser, pictured, from the Defence Procurement Agency, was responsible for the acquisition of internal security pyrotechnics, including 6,000 distraction grenades. The trouble was the pin had a nasty habit of snagging in pockets. Several rather dodgy attempts were made to beat the problem and Fraser was unable to resolve it through the research agencies or outside competition.

So he devised a small plastic cap which fits over the protruding portion of the pin and asked the MoD to trial it. Perfect solution first time – and at no extra cost. The makers of the grenade now intend to use the cap on all twist-and-pull mechanisms.

GEMS awarded him £320 but, because there had been accidents with the old safety pin, he got an extra £250 for "alleviating risk to human life". DPA's Maj Gen Peter Gilchrist presented the cheque and a GEMS certificate of merit.



Wash-day heroes: WO1 Roger Blisson, left, of 710 Laundry Squadron RLC (V) enjoys a visit from Peter Crane, Master of the Worshipful Company of Launderers, to the unit's headquarters in Grantham.

The specialist laundries, who became members of the London-based guild in 1998, provide cleaning services for the Army all over the world. Their main role is in support of field hospitals, for which they clean up to 2,500kg of washing a day. The unit also provides much-appreciated hot shower facilities.

Picture: Gareth Griffiths

Tribute to Violette

A MUSEUM dedicated to Second World War secret agent **Violette Szabo** has opened in Wormelow, near Hereford. Created by Rosemary Rigby, whose home was used by Violette between wartime operations, the museum was opened by Virginia McKenna, who played the part of Violette in the 1950 film *Carve Her Name With Pride*.

After torture and forced labour, Violette was executed by the Gestapo at Ravensbrück prison in January, 1945. She was just 23 years old.

The museum will be open every Wednesday during the summer and by special appointment at other times. Contact Rosemary Rigby on 01981 540477 for details.

DATES

NOVEMBER

9: Maj Jack Watson MC lectures on the Rhine crossing, Airborne Forces Museum, Aldershot (tickets on 01252 349619).

18: Bugle Call 2000 model show, Pavilion North, Parade Road, Bath, presented by Bristol Area Branch of British Model Soldier Society.

25-26: Birmingham International Tattoo, National Indoor Arena.

Black Watch returns to Crete

A PLAQUE presented by the 2nd Battalion, The Black Watch has been laid by former members of the battalion at the international airport in Heraklion, capital of Crete, to commemorate those who died defending the airport in 1941.

Bill Lark, a piper in 2 BW who went on to serve in Tobruk, India and Burma, played the Black Watch salute, *Garb of Old Gaul*, on the bagpipes and reminded all those present of the part played by the battalion in the Battle of Crete. The names of all who died were read out and a wreath was laid by David Hutton, who, as a corporal in A Company, was wounded and captured while dug-in on high ground overlooking the airport.

Arrangements for the ceremony were made by Sgt Manousos Trevlakis of the Heraklion police, a former Greek paratrooper. His son, Gianni, who is about to join the Greek Army, acted as interpreter.

BRONCO Lane, conqueror of Everest 24 years ago, came up with a novel gift to the National Army Museum after delivering a lecture on military mountaineering. He handed over 15 frostbitten fingers and toes, the high price he paid for scaling Everest with fellow soldier Brummie Stokes on May 16, 1976.

King's Own on world web

THE King's Own Royal Regiment Museum in Market Square, Lancaster is launching *Remember!*, a website which explores the Great War experiences of local men. Designed by schoolteacher Steve Irwin in conjunction with the museum, it is intended for secondary schools as an educational resource. The site – found at <http://cleo.ucsm.ac.uk/content/history/remember> – will also be of interest to those seeking information on the regiment during the First World War.

Musicians on parade

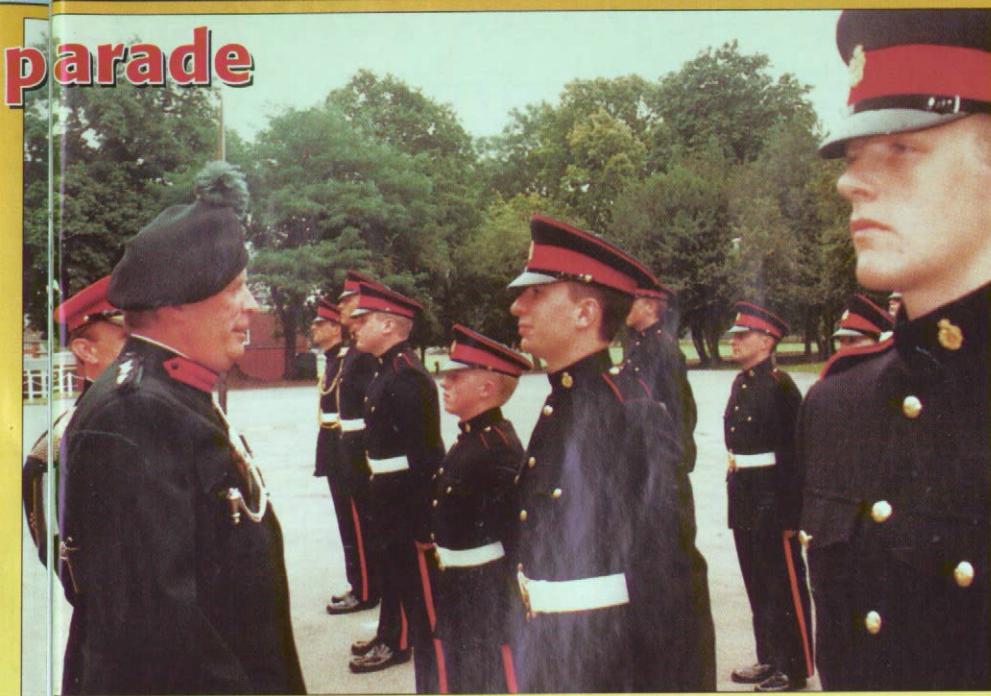
COL Robert Rowe, left, Commandant of the Royal Military School of Music at Kneller Hall, inspects some of the 15 phase-two trainees on their pass-out parade after graduating.

The trainee musicians joined Regular bands for RMSM's successful season of seven outdoor summer concerts, usually playing before audiences of 2,000 or more.

Given their operational role as medical attendants, the graduates now move to the Defence Medical Services Training Centre at Keogh Barracks, Aldershot for a three-week course before joining their regimental and corps bands.

Five of the candidates held music degrees before joining the Army and one, Musn Sinead Maxwell, converted from cornet to oboe, achieving a grade eight with merit in just 12 months. Another, Musn Melanie Parker, will become the first female member of the Band of the Coldstream Guards.

Marching band skills form a large part of the Kneller Hall course, while instrument skills are honed by 17 resident professors.



Hussars' Boer War tribute

VETERANS of the Royal Bucks Hussars Association took part in a Boer War centenary memorial service on Coombe Hill, the highest point of the Chiltern Hills.

They laid wreaths at the imposing Buckinghamshire Boer War Memorial, which overlooks the Vale of Aylesbury and commemorates the lives of all men from the county lost in South Africa.

Wreaths included the Grenadier Guards Association, 1 (Royal Buckinghamshire Yeomanry) Signal Squadron (Special Communications), the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars, the RMP Association, the Royal Green Jackets Association and TA and cadet bodies.

At the exact moment that the Hussars' wreath was being laid in the Chilterns, a second was being placed on the regimental Boer War monument in Johannesburg.

To mark the centenary, a 60-page booklet on the Royal Bucks Hussars at war in South Africa has been published. It is available from Alastair Eaton, 198 Wendover Road, Weston Turville, Aylesbury, Bucks (01296 613238), costs £9 (UK post paid), £9.50 elsewhere, and cheques should be made payable to A R Eaton. All profits will go to the Hussars' welfare fund.

Signallers exercise freedom

ST Tönis-based 280 (UK) Signal Squadron exercised its right to march through the German Stadt of Tönisvorst with drums beating, flags flying and bayonets fixed. The freedom of St Tönis's cobbled streets was granted to the signallers' predecessors, 28 (BR) Signal Regiment, in 1976.



Galaxy of VCs on display at Keogh

FOLLOWING their move from Millbank in London to Keogh Barracks near Aldershot, 22 of the 29 Victoria Crosses won by men of the Royal Army Medical Corps can be seen by the general public for the first time.

They have been found a new home in the Army Medical Services Museum, where security measures have been considerably tightened to protect the priceless collection.

With uniforms and other artefacts belonging to RAMC VC heroes, the medals have pride of place in the Arthur Martin-Leake gallery, named after one of two Army doctors to win a second VC.

Martin-Leake won his first as a surgeon captain during the Boer War and a bar to it in Belgium 12 years later during the opening months of the First World War.

The VC and bar of Capt Noel Chavasse, also of the RAMC, are in the Imperial War Museum in London. The corps' other VCs are in Canada or in private ownership.

The new exhibition, opened by Maj Gen David Jolliffe, Director General AMS, contains a 23rd VC acquired by the museum. According to curator Capt Peter Starling, it was discovered in a casket buried in 1856 by Queen



Medal men: Former RAMC In-Pensioners WO1 Hywel Bissant, SSgt Francis Chippett and WO2 Paddy Hayes were guests of honour at the opening of the new exhibition of Victoria Crosses at the Army Medical Services Museum

Victoria in the foundations of the military hospital at Netley, near Southampton, to mark the start of construction. It also contained a Crimean War campaign medal.

Until recently the VCs had been housed at Millbank, former home of the Royal Army Medical College. Because the family of one of the VC recipients wanted his medal displayed where young RAMC soldiers could see it, moves were already under way to transfer the collection to Keogh Barracks. The museum is open Monday to Friday, 1000 to 1530.

but has been given a new lease of life by the arrival of WO Roy Beale as branch secretary. The standard, laid up at the RMP College at Chichester, has now been recalled to duty.

Redcaps back on parade

Legends of the regiments and corps

17 Gordon Highlanders Museum, Aberdeen



Noted: Harry Lunan, seated, gives Lt Gen Sir Peter Graham, chairman of the museum trust, his old pipes

Harry's pipes sounded on the Somme

PIPER Harry Lunan piped his battalion of Gordon Highlanders over the top at the Battle of the Somme and lived to tell the tale.

After the war he emigrated to Canada, where his enthusiasm for passing on the mysteries of the bagpipes to younger generations made him a popular character.

In 1993, aged 98, he flew to London for the Remembrance Day parade at the Cenotaph and the Festival of Remembrance in the Royal Albert Hall.

PRESENTED

While in the UK Harry visited his home town, Elton in the North-East, and was flown by the regiment to Aberdeen, where he presented his Somme bagpipes to the Gordon Highlanders Museum.

The First World War veteran died not long afterwards but his pipes, described as being "in a good state" are in store in the museum.

Although featured last year in the museum's "Stirring the blood" exhibition on the history of piping in the Gordons, Harry Lunan's bagpipes are not currently on display. The museum says, however, that anyone who has an interest in seeing them may ask the curator to arrange a viewing.

The Gordon Highlanders Museum, St Luke's, Viewfield Road, Aberdeen AB15 7XH is open to the public Tuesdays to Saturdays, 1020 to 1630, Sundays 1330 to 1630, from April to October. Groups or individuals from distant places are welcome by appointment outside the season. Tel 01224 311200 or fax 319323.

To appear in this feature, contact the Editor

Bulletin board

Eye-witness account of the Rhine crossing

● Maj Jack Watson MC, who led A Company of the 13th (Lancashire) Battalion of The Parachute Regiment during 6th Airborne Division's crossing of the Rhine on March 24, 1945, will be giving an eye-witness account of **Operation Varsity** in the Airborne Forces Museum at Aldershot on November 9. Tickets (£6.50) are available from the museum on 01252 349619.

● While visiting the grave of a friend in Leopoldsburg (formerly known as Bourg-Leopold) war cemetery in Belgium, reader Mr Cullen of Wigan, a former private in the RASC, noticed the Sherman Firefly tank mounted on a plinth outside the railway station. He says a tankie of the **Guards Armoured Division** may be proud to know it is still in "service".

● A 40-strong multinational team of arms control inspectors completed the Nijmegen marches. A British quartet from the **Joint Arms Control Implementation Group** based at RAF Henlow was joined by colleagues from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Georgia and the Ukraine, nations which had never previously taken part in the marches.

● WO2 Ewan Hall has received the Uxbridge College Superstar Award from yachtswoman Tracy Edwards after being named the college's top student. Ewan, pictured, who is serving in the Royal Signals, attended evening classes at the Middlesex college for two years to gain distinctions in Higher National Certificates in business and finance. When he leaves the Army next year he has his eye's set on a place at Loughborough University.

● If you live in the Meridian TV area and have a love story you'd care to share, contact Graham on 020 7664 1656 or Mary-Jane on 020 7664 1623. They want to talk to people aged 16 to 100, single or couples, for a new series entitled **The Things We Do for Love**, and are anxious to include the Service community. They say they are looking for stories that are "happy, sad, poignant, fantastic".

● The finishing touch to a new £5 million facility at the Royal Logistic Corps Territorial Army's Grantham home was unveiled by **Brig the Duke of Westminster**. He opened a £1.2 million warrant officers' and sergeants' mess at the Prince William of Gloucester Barracks. It replaces a mess built in 1927 and will cater for about 600 Regular and Territorial Army personnel.



Bomb disposal veterans enjoy 60th anniversary

OLD and bold bomb disposal experts from far and wide gathered at Brompton Barracks in Gillingham, Kent to celebrate the diamond jubilee of the formation of 25 bomb disposal companies during the Second World War.

The units, each of ten or 12 sections and consisting of an officer and 31 men, were authorised on May 25, 1940. Quickly sent into action, they had dealt with 20 bombs by the end of June, 100 by the end of July, 300 by the end of August and 2,000 during the first 20 days of September.

The statistics are staggering. Despite their frantic efforts, that left them with a mere 3,759 bombs to deal with when day dawned on September 21, 1940.

Lt Col (Retd) Eric Wakeling, secretary of the Royal Engineers Bomb Disposal Officers' Club and author of *The Lonely War*, tells us that the 300 officers and 10,000 other ranks who made up the bomb disposal companies

were called to 24,108 bombs between Sept 1940 and July 5 the following year. Thirteen George Crosses, 115 George Medals and 14 MBEs were awarded for bravery which cost the lives of 151 officers and 339 other ranks and more than 200 injured.

During the diamond jubilee celebrations the Bomb Disposal Branch standard was trooped to the garrison church, where Lt Col Graham Gibbs, commanding officer of 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD), and Lt Col Jon Gunn, CO of 101 (City of London) Engineer Regiment (EOD)(V), gave readings. Soldiers from both regiments played a part in arranging and supporting the celebrations.

Among those who travelled some distance to take part were Capt Jack Howett from Canada and former sappers Bert Lawson GM and Bill Matthews from Australia.

To mark the anniversary, a special display was mounted at the RE Museum.

REUNIONS

33 Independent Field Squadron (1974-92): Reunion at 1 RSME Regiment, Brompton Barracks, Chatham, Nov 25. Contact Chris Sturdy on 01634 822279.

Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment (London Branch): Christmas social, Dec 1, Victory Services Club, London. Details from Veronica Joel Newton on 020 8888 9739.

2001

Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise's) Regt Assoc: Scottish branches annual dinner and dance at Normandy Hotel, Renfrew, Feb 23. All former members and friends of regiment invited. Contact secretary J Gaughan, 49 Cartha Crescent, Paisley (tel 0141 8899120) or Lt Col (Retd) J Lauder (0141 884 8483).

Fusiliers band: Third reunion being

SEARCHLINE

Alastair "Dave" Sim seeks news of **Kevin McGuiness** and other members of 11 and 19 Squadrons RCT, part of 4 ADTR and based in Minden, Germany, for a possible reunion. Anyone interested should contact Alastair at 27 Wilkinson Way, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP3 9FD, tel 01442 394940 or by e-mail to alastair.sim@ntlworld.com

Bryan Waller (01273 413604), who completed his National Service in the RMP (1951-1953) and was posted to the **Suez Canal Zone** from Jan 1952 to July 1953, is researching the period and would like to hear from colleagues stationed anywhere in Egypt at the time. He wants to hear from anyone at the battle for the Caracal, Jan 25, 1952, and needs stories, anecdotes, photographs from Aug 1951 up to the departure of troops in 1956. He also urges colleagues to keep petitioning for a medal.

Rodney Travers-Griffin is trying to contact members of 46B, C Company, AAS Chepstow, particularly gun-fitters. He would like to hear from **Fred Crooks**, Cliff Chetwynd, Len

organised for March 3, 2001. Ex-Royal Lancashire, Warwickshire and Royal Regiment of Fusiliers wishing to attend should contact Steve Holt on 07970 185772.

No 4 Company, 3rd Bn, Coldstream Guards (1950-1955): Ninth reunion dinner in Derby on April 7. Details: Harry Westgarth, 49 Rokeye Park, Hull HU4 7QE (01482 503649).

Woolwich and India Wartime Boys' Batteries RA Association: 54th reunion on May 4-5 at RSA Larkhill. Contact Graham Tooley on 01403 822758.

Hunley's Platoon, Kent ACF: Reunion for former officers, instructors and cadets planned for May. Details from Maj C M Riley, Kent ACF, TA Centre, Boxley Road, Maidstone, Kent ME14 2AR.

Hancox and Frank Gazely: Replies to 29 Glen Stewart Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4E 1P6 or teegees@home.com

Tony Currie (0191 4276201) seeks news of old Army friend **John "Geordie" Gardiner**, who was a corporal in the RCT in Duisberg, Germany in June 1979. Previous service with 63 Para Sqn RCT at Aldershot.

Reunion for adult instructors and cadets from **B Company, Avon ACF**, especially **Purdown Detachment**, 1982 onwards, planned. Contact B Company ACF, c/o SSgt J Foster, Horfield TA Centre, Dorian Road, Horfield Common, Horfield, Bristol.

Former Cpl R Pembleton (REME) seeks news of his cousin, **Christopher Ivan Martin Wilson**, who was born in Jamaica in March 1950 and emigrated to New Zealand in 1958. He is believed to have obtained the rank of WO1 in the New Zealand REME. Replies to 174 Nottingham Road, Stapleford, Notts NG9 8AR (0115 9392149).

MUSIC/Gordon Turner

No end of pageantry



DESPITE the sorrow felt when the Royal Tournament came to an end last year, reports of the death of military pageantry have proved premature.

This summer we saw a succession of ceremonial events on Horse Guards Parade, with the Household Division's annual Beating of Retreat and Queen's Birthday Parade (also known as Trooping the Colour) being joined by two special events: the tribute to the Queen Mother, who celebrated her 100th birthday, and the Royal Military Tattoo 2000, a one-off outdoor successor to the Royal Tournament.

Beating Retreat opened with the glorious sound of the State Trumpeters of the Household Cavalry playing a new fanfare, *Millennium*. Another new work for trumpeters and band is *Theme for 2000*. An unusual feature was a number

entitled *Irish Jiggy* performed by three violinists and accompanied by the massed bands. The Corps of Drums and the Pipes and Drums have their own spots, and the finale was the *1812 Overture*, a perennial favourite of audiences if not always of bandsmen. A studio recording titled **Music from Beating Retreat** is available on the Droit Music label (TRCD 202).

Trooping the Colour this year was Number 7 Company, Coldstream Guards, and Lt Col Jonathan Bourne-May commanded the parade for the second year in succession. The 1st Battalion colour was trooped in 1999 and this year No 7 Company trooped that of the 2nd Battalion. Droit has issued a live recording of **Trooping the Colour 2000** (TRCD 201).

Both compact discs are available from Droit Music Ltd, PO Box 2638, Eastbourne, BN20 7HJ (£13 each, including p&p to anywhere in the world, or both CDs for £22).

Sadly neither the Royal Military Tattoo nor the 100th birthday tribute was recorded, but an excellent compilation of music associated with the Queen Mother has been produced by Band-leader Recordings.

The military band programme includes *Knights of the Thistle*, *Elizabeth Tudor*, *Vivat Regina*, *Royal Windsor* and *Royal Birthday*, while the pipes play *Queen Elizabeth* and *Queen Mother*, *Glamis Castle*, *Queen Mother's Welcome to the Mey Games* and *Lillibet's Lullaby*. **In Celebration** (Band-leader BNA 5162) is available from Discurio, 9 Gillingham Street, London SW1V 1HN (price £12 inclusive of UK p&p).



A stroll in the uplands nets £30,000 for Gurkha welfare

Gurkha reivers: Four serving Gurkhas and a former soldier completed the 340km Southern Upland Way from Scotland's most south-westerly point to the North Sea to raise funds for the Gurkha Welfare Trust – and succeeded handsomely. After 8½ days they were able to bank more than £30,000.

Former Royal Hampshire Neil Griffiths, press officer for the Royal British Legion Scotland, pictured front right, was joined by (back, left to right) Rfn Bishwa Anjan Rai (Gurkha Demo Coy, RMA Sandhurst) and Cpl Kalibahadur Yonghang (Gurkha Demo Coy) and Cpl Dhalbahadur Sahi (30 Signal Regt).

Win film of Britain at war

PREVIOUSLY-unseen film footage from archives and individuals throughout the world has been edited by Warner Vision International into **Britain at War in Colour**, a double box-set video released on November 6 (price £19.99).

The follow-up to Warner's acclaimed **The Second World War in Colour**, it depicts events on the home front between 1934 and 1945, both social and political, as well as the battlefield experiences of British servicemen.

In addition to two episodes to be shown on ITV, the video features William Wyler's air war film **Memphis Belle**, first shown in 1944, and 25 minutes of exclusive footage not seen on television.

John Thaw provides the narration to the 163-minute video, which is accompanied by a hard-back book from Carlton Books (£17.99).

Soldier has two double box-sets of **Britain at War in Colour** plus two of the companion books to give away in association with Warner Vision International.

To have a chance of winning, tell us on a postcard or sealed envelope, to reach us by Nov 30:

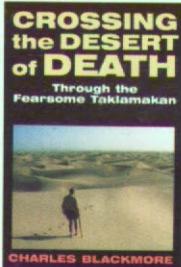
Who was on the throne during the Second World War? a) King George IV
b) King George V c) King George VI

Normal competition rules apply and the Editor's decision is final.



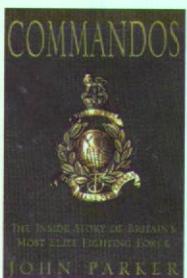
Former Army officer who cheated death

TO the Chinese, the Taklamakan desert, skirted by the Silk Road, was for centuries synonymous with death – those who went in never came out. No traveller had dared to cross the 780 miles of this awesome, egg-shaped waste from end to end until intrepid former British Army major Charles Blackmore and his team did so. They raised £25,000 for charity and he lived to write the book, *Crossing the Desert of Death*, new in paperback from John Murray at £9.99 and originally published in 1995 under the title *The Worst Desert on Earth*.



Commando book tries to patch up an old rift

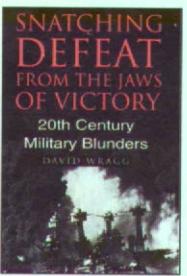
JOHN Parker reminds readers in *Commandos: The Inside Story of Britain's Most Elite Fighting Force* (Headline, £17.99) – a provocative title – that although



they are now part of the Royal Marines they started out as Army units but were "taken over". "It was a contentious issue... with the original Army personnel adamantly and sometimes vehemently reminding the world that they formed as volunteers, not as conscripts or as Regulars," he writes. In his book he attempts to patch up the quarrel by telling the whole story – much of it in the men's own words.

Was Kosovo 1999 another Cyprus?

OH, NO, not another book about military cock-ups. Don't we just love 'em? In the cutely-titled *Snatching Defeat from the Jaws of Victory* (Sutton, £15) David Wragg runs chronologically through 20th century episodes



from Tsushima 1905 to Serbia 1999. The theme is the alleged incompetence of politicians and commanders. Not much new there, then. The Kosovo operation, he argues, was "unnecessary and, quite probably, illegal", and he

compares it with Cyprus, where much smaller United Nations forces have been keeping the peace on the Green Line separating the Greek and Turkish communities for almost 30 years.

Enigma in all its variations

LAST month a £100,000 German Enigma coding machine which had disappeared from Bletchley Park museum in Buckinghamshire turned up in TV presenter Jeremy Paxman's mail, minus a few vital parts.

Whatever the reason for this bizarre means of returning stolen property, the publicity from the incident probably helped educate the few people who did not already know about the machine or about the British codebreaking activities at Bletchley Park in the Second World War.

Robert Harris dramatised the war story in his novel, *Enigma*, recently filmed with Kate Winslet, but a lion's share of the credit for increasing public awareness of the Bletchley operation must go to Michael Smith, whose book *Station X* was accompanied by an extremely popular TV series.

In *The Emperor's Codes*, Smith, who served in the Intelligence Corps for nine years (the dust-jacket describes him as a "latter-day codebreaker") and is now defence correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, widens his canvas. He covers the deciphering and interpretation of codes used by Japan and the role played in this by Bletchley Park, its Far Eastern

IN BRIEF

Mist Over the Rice-Fields By John Shipster. Latterly Commandant British Forces Belize, Col (Retd) Shipster fought with the Indian Regiment in Burma and the Middlesex Regiment in Korea. He won the DSO at the age of 22. This is his story of those two conflicts. (Leo Cooper, £19.95.)

Have You Forgotten Yet? The First World War memoirs of a Coldstream Guards officer, Carlos Paton Blacker MC GM, who was awarded the George

The Emperor's Codes: Bletchley Park and the Breaking of Japan's Secret Ciphers by Michael Smith (Bantam Press, £16.99).

Review: Brian Jewell

outstations, and the American codebreakers whose success is shown to have been over-emphasised.

This comprehensive book reveals the enormous complexity of codebreaking and the diversity of the people involved in it, drawing on recently-released British and Australian archive material as well as the personal recollections of men and women who took part in codebreaking operations.

It counters the popular myth that Bletchley Park was manned by outlandish amateurs, although at one point we are told of two RAF sergeants who took one look at the place and turned tail, thinking they had been posted by mistake to a Services lunatic asylum.

Of course, brilliant eccentrics like Alan Turing did work there, but most were unsung men and women slogging away, day after day, at

what must have been a frustrating task of making sense of seemingly unreadable groups of letters and figures. In the case of Japanese codes there was the additional difficulty of coping with an inscrutable oriental language.

Readers should not be put off by the amount of technical information about codebreaking methods and the cipher machines used. Even if the German Enigma machine is now familiar to most people, few know of the Japanese Type A and B devices. It took a team in Washington 18 months to decode the second version.

Two RAF sergeants turned tail thinking they had been posted to a lunatic asylum

Many characters of widely varying personalities appear in this book but as Smith tells us: "These codebreakers were of

course only the most prominent of the many thousands of men and women who intercepted or decoded Japanese messages during the Second World War.

"The historians estimate that the actions of all these men and women shortened it by two years and the countless lives they must have saved in so doing remain the most fitting testament to their remarkable achievements."

Medal in 1940. Edited by his son, Jon. (Leo Cooper, £25.)

The Armed Forces of Aden 1839-1967 by Cliff Lord and David Birtles. The authors of this 112-page illustrated history are former members of the Corps of Royal Signals. Available from Helion & Company (see ordering panel in facing page for details) at £29.95 plus £3 p&p.

The Irish War: The Military History of a Domestic Conflict by Tony Geraghty. Controversial

account by a former para. (HarperCollins, paperback, £7.99.)

Hope Against History: The Ulster Conflict by Jack Holland. Readable paperback telling concisely the story of the past 30 years. (Coronet, £6.99.)

Salute to the Soldier Poets Vol Two. Illustrated biographies of the famous as well as some of the lesser-known poets of both world wars. (Available direct from *This England*, PO Box 52,

Facts behind the grim headlines

Trouble Spots: The World Atlas of Strategic Information by Andrew Duncan and Michel Opatowski. Sutton, £25.

Review: Chris Horrocks

AS this issue of *Soldier* went to press the hottest hotspot of them all, the Middle East, was being teased back by world diplomacy from the edge of conflagration.

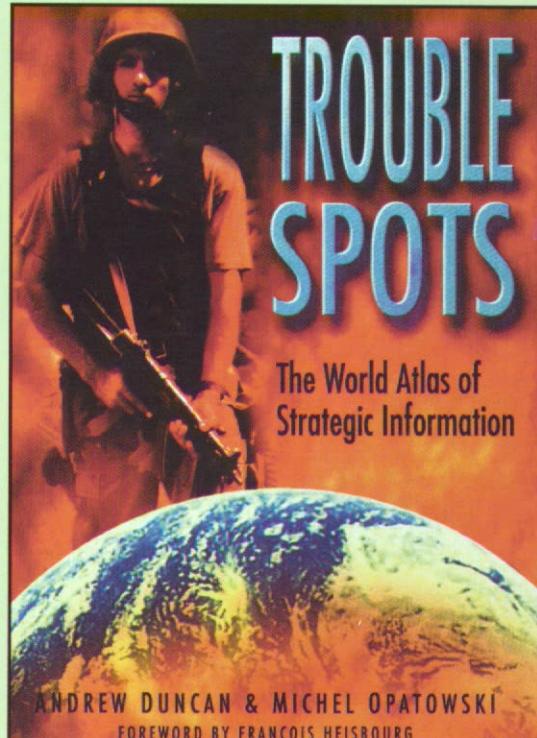
By the time you read this, the recent flare-up between the Israelis and the Palestinians may have been finally extinguished – or may still be threatening regional and world peace.

Trouble Spots, Col Andrew Duncan's informative and glossily produced overview of zones of potential conflict, went to press on June 1, too early to reflect the most recent eruption of hostilities.

But the value of this deeply-researched book is that as well as predicting likely areas of imminent friction, it provides vital background detail to keep you briefed wherever and whenever the flare-ups may occur.

By reading the chapter headed "The Middle East: The World's Most Volatile Region" you will learn most of what you want to know about what is already happening and its causes.

It will tell you, for example,



that regional tensions are triggered not just by national claims but also for environmental reasons such as a shortage of water.

Col Duncan, a former British defence attaché in Tel Aviv, and Opatowski, who is based in Israel and whose superb maps are a useful guide to overall understanding, take an independent, objective and non-critical view of the issues they tackle.

The general reader will appreciate the fact-boxes accompanying the main text.

Many may not be aware that since 1946, more than 19 million people have died as a result of armed conflict: three million of them in the Korean War, two million in

Vietnam, a half a million in the 1980-88 strife between Iran and Iraq, and 1,000 in the Falklands in 1982.

Statistics such as these still have the power to shock. Others have a different effect: you wonder why you are surprised that none of the conflicts that caused those deaths occurred in Australia, New Zealand, or the continent of North America (baring Mexico).

These appear to be the most peaceful areas of the world, though of course, like the United Kingdom, their soldiers have played a distinguished part in major and minor conflicts or peace-keeping missions elsewhere in this troubled world.

Cheltenham GL50 1YQ, price £11 inc p&p.)

Chronology of World War Two by Edward Davidson and Dale Manning. Invaluable day-by-day reference. (Cassell, paperback, £14.99.)

1918: War and Peace by Gregor Dallas. The transition to stability, charted across more than 600 pages from the perspective of five capitals – Berlin, Paris, London, Moscow and Washington. (John Murray, £25.)

Soldier ordering service

All books mentioned on these pages are available from Helion & Company, who can also supply 14,500 in-print military books and operate a free booksearch; p&p is extra. All major credit/switch cards taken. Please allow up to 28 days

for delivery. Postal address: Helion & Company, 26 Willow Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 1UE, UK (tel 0121 705 3393; fax 0121 711 1315).

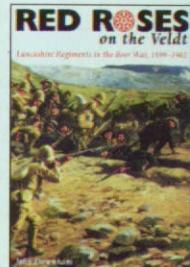
E-mail: books@helion.co.uk
Website: <http://www.helion.co.uk>

Boer War tribute to Lancashire lads

MANY books on the Boer War focus on political, strategic and tactical issues rather than the experience of ordinary soldiers. Lt Col John Downham's

Red Roses on the Veldt

(Carnegie Publishing), draws on first-hand accounts and photographs to tell the dramatic and sometimes humorous story of the Lancashire regiments at battalion level and below. It is available at £17.50 (plus £2.50 p&p) from Regimental Headquarters The Queen's Lancashire Regiment, Fulwood Barracks, Preston, PR8 2AA. All royalties will go to regimental charities.



Gulf War leader's Crazy Horse link

WHAT have Gen Sir Peter de la Billière and Crazy Horse, the Lakota warrior leader of Little Big Horn fame, in common? Answer:

they figure among

almost 6,000

sayings in *The*

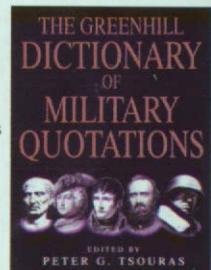
Greenhill

Dictionary of Military Quotations

(edited by Peter G Tsouras, £29.95).

Culled from the past 4,000 years, the words, uttered or written by 800

military figures, fill 500 pages of a new collection military buffs will not be able to keep their hands off for too long. And that 1876 Crazy Horse quote? "Come on, Lakotas! It's a good day to die!"



Interested in medals? This book's for you

IF you're a serious medal collector or just have a passing interest in this fascinating hobby you will want to get hold of a copy of the *Medal Yearbook 2001*

(Token Publishing, paperback, £16.95),

edited by James

Mackay, John W

Mussell and the

editorial team of

Medal News. Its 470

packed pages are not

just a price guide,

more a compre-

hensive handbook to British and

Empire medals, plus much more,

including ribbons in colour. This

year's edition also contains

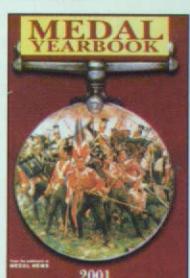
expanded sections dealing with

current Commonwealth

awards, with Australia, New

Zealand, South Africa and India

now included.



Get rid of the mess-around factor to beat the problem of retention

WE would like to voice our concerns as two current Army recruiters. We would also like to point out that this is not a whinge heard throughout the Forces. It is simply the answer to all recruiting problems – as seen by two experienced senior NCOs currently recruiting for the British Army.

Stop worrying about the image and what the public think... nobody cares. The Army sells itself, pay and lifestyle are good, just about every other feature of the Army is fantastic, and most of the population feels the same way about it. Instead of wasting time and money on recruiting drives, we should find ways of improving the quality of life and environment of the soldiers we already have.

We still can't believe the way soldiers are treated and the way careers are miss-managed. We spend so much effort on convincing young men and women that the Army is the best job in the world, only for them to leave a few months later because they have been messed about from pillar to post. It makes us feel we are wasting our time.

All most soldiers want to do is get on with the job. The needless "mess-around" factor that all ranks have to endure undermines operational effectiveness.

We are not saying we should be soft, and we are not saying we should drop standards. These are things that set the British Army apart.

What we are saying is we should look after our men and women because one day we might have to ask them to give up their lives. Let's retain more soldiers rather than increase recruiting. – Sgt Turner and Sgt Denvey, Recruiting Group, North England.

Prize letter

Here's a way to keep all that empty housing stock in good shape

THE letter "In civvy street we'd be classed as wed" (Mailbag, Sept) attracted my attention. I am a 31-year-old single soldier in a steady heterosexual relationship with my fiancée. We are moving to Warminster together in the near future but find rental accommodation too costly at an average of around £390 a month (not including bills) while married quarters cost from about £100 to £180 a month.

I think that if the hierarchy would only discuss the idea of single soldiers in

Army support was not there for me when I needed it

ON July 20 my brother was taken to hospital in England with serious burns following an epileptic fit in the kitchen in which he worked.

I informed the squadron 2iC and was told it would be classed as a compassionate C case, which meant that I had to pay for my own flight home and for a hire car from RAF Brize Norton to Wakefield, where my brother was taken.

My sister informed the compassionate hotline and was told that they would ring the hospital and make a decision as to when or if I could come home, depending on the seriousness of his illness. While at the airport waiting for my flight I was speaking to a colleague who was also flying home on a compassionate C and had been told she didn't have to pay for her flight.

When I reached the hospital I was told the Army had been ringing to find out the condition of my brother. The hospital told me it was not their policy to discuss patients with people over the phone and that they could only give a stock answer – that my brother was critical but stable. As they were unsure why the Army was ringing, they would not release further information.

On July 26, two days after I returned to England, my brother died from his injuries.

I informed my unit of the situation and was told I was booked on a flight to return to Cyprus on August 10. I arrived at the airport for my return journey and was informed that I would have to pay for the flights of both my wife and myself. I would also have to pay for our accommodation in the Gateway Hotel at Brize Norton.

When I returned to Cyprus I found the time I had taken off to be with my family

would be taken from my annual leave. I have received no compassionate time off. Both my mother and sister received the full support of their employers and compassionate time off and I cannot see why the Army is any different.

I am disgusted that at a time when I needed the Army's support it was not there. During this most distressing time, the Army was not there for me.

I feel the system needs to be changed and that all immediate family – mother, father, siblings and partner – should be classed as next-of-kin and given the same priority. – Cpl Simon Dunn, 83 PC Sqn RLC, Dhekelia Garrison, Cyprus.

▲ We have received the following response from the Directorate of Personal Services (Army): "Cpl Dunn's frustration and annoyance are quite understandable, and indeed the whole question of compassionate travel is currently being reviewed.

"The existing rules, however, are quite clear: Category C allows the individual to go to the top of the indulgence passengers' waiting list, paying a substantially reduced fee rather than a full civil air fare. It is available to siblings and also in circumstances when the immediacy of the situation does not attract either Category A or B for the next-of-kin.

"As with all indulgence flights, it is made quite clear that if seats are not available for the return, the individual is liable for meeting the full fare costs. Cpl Dunn was clearly fortunate in getting a return indulgence flight from RAF Brize Norton for both himself and his wife, who, not being a blood relation, did not attract a compassionate category.

"As regards his colleague, it is understood that she was in fact on exercise in Cyprus and was therefore flown home early as a duty passenger.

"Cpl Dunn was entitled to compassionate leave at the discretion of his commanding officer and this has now been adjusted by the unit on his leaver record card." – Editor

long-term relationships being allowed to live in MQs, they would realise that it is profitable and sensible. Instead of having a quarter lying empty they could put a single soldier and his/her partner into the quarter.

This would mean that rent was paid on the property and that it was maintained. This would save the Forces thousands when it came to repairing unoccupied MQs to make them habitable again. – LCpl M S Gibson, Asst Pnrs, 1 KOSB, Episkopi, Cyprus.

THEN AND THEN



50 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, Nov 1950: When the Middlesex Regiment took over a sector of the front line somewhere in Korea from the American Army, Pte Peter Munn, above, was presented with this puppy – named Bob – by GIs who had adopted it. As we went to press British troops in Korea were re-grouping in the area of Seoul after a protracted period of mopping-up isolated North Koreans in the south.

25 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, Nov 1975: Soldiers from the Aldershot-based Training Battalion and Depot, Army Catering Corps carried off first prize in the 15th annual Cambrian March over 70 miles of rough terrain in mid-Wales. Among the 23 teams were six from The Parachute Regiment, two from the Royal Marines and one from the Netherlands Marine Corps. Winners of the two-day event were B Coy, 4 Para (V).

PS...

Uniform response

LIKE Pte Taff Harries ("All monthly quotas... and no trousers", Mailbag, Sept) I too have been told there is no chance of getting some of my worn Combat 95 uniform changed. What annoys me is the shrug I get from civilian stores personnel who have no idea what it means for us to be told by our RSM to get our threadbare trousers or jackets exchanged.

Half the people I work with are walking around with patches in their uniforms as they cannot get new ones.

Another thing that puzzles me is why 100 per cent of military staff working in clothing stores have uniforms that are in tiptop condition. – Corporal (name supplied), Lisburn, Northern Ireland.

First C17 jumpers

YOUR article on the Dixie gunners (Sept) was incorrect. The first British formed unit to jump out of the C17 was 148 Forward Observation Commando Battery, 29 Commando Regiment RA. We carried out a jump in July 1997 while on Exercise Burmese Chase, an exchange exercise with the 2nd Anglico US Marines on DZ Falcon at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. – Bdr Warren Jackson, Royal Artillery.

Cherry-picking ...

I READ with interest the item (Aug) about the presenting of the Guidon to The King's Royal Hussars, described as the Cherrypickers, at Tidworth. The regiment famous for the name "Cherrypickers", and for the crimson trousers and brown beret, was the 11th Hussars (Prince Albert's Own), and not, with all due respect to the regiments, the Royal Hussars or KRH. However, it is good (written somewhat grudgingly) that regimental customs and traditions are taken into amalgamated regiments so they are not lost forever. I was part of the parade when the 11th Hussars received their Guidon at Höhne Garrison, Germany, in the mid-Sixties. Extremely proud Cherrypickers we all were. – Lawson Kent, Truro, Cornwall.

Dangerous piles?

I MUST take issue with the unsafe practice shown in your article "Warrior to warrior" (June). One caption talks of the dangers of tampering with unexploded munitions while the other shows a sapper from 49 Field Squadron (EOD) doing just that... handling a pile of blind shells. During my service we taught that a blind must never be touched or moved, but must be destroyed by placing an explosive charge close to it, but not touching.

Perhaps I am over-reacting and procedures have changed since I left the Service, or is it that Royal Engineers are explosion-proof? – Maj (Retd) A G Luckhurst, Sevenoaks, Kent.

Stop moaning and get on with the job

AS two serving SNCOs in the infantry, we have read with amusement some of the letters from rear-echelon soldiers complaining about trivial matters.

Although we understand and appreciate the various roles they have, why do so many non-infantry have to make such a fuss over nothing when the majority of infantrymen can complete their tasks in difficult circumstances with a minimum of fuss?

It seems that so many people want the Army to revolve around them – for example, the allocation of quarters to single

soldiers, not enough combat clothing to go around, the non-issue of medals for various theatres, entitlement to allowances and so on. The list is endless.

The Army is the way it is for good reason. If we were to open the floodgates for everyone and give everyone everything they wanted, it would become anarchy. These people signed on the dotted line and should accept their lot. Let's get on with it and stop whingeing for the sake of it. – Sgt M L Field, PWO, LSgt D Skinner, SG, 3 Battalion, Infantry Training Centre, Catterick.

Mail us!

SOLDIER welcomes your letters, whether you are an officer or other rank; serving or clivvy; nine, 19 or 90. All we ask is that you keep them brief and to the point. We'd prefer them to be typed but if they are handwritten, please put names, addresses and in block capitals (not necessarily for publication). A prize from the *Soldier* gift collection will be awarded each month if we judge that a letter, serious or humorous, merits it. Acceptance or rejection of letters is the decision of the Editor, who reserves the right to amend for length, clarity or style. Anonymous letters will not be considered.

Fairer way over LSSA

IN response to the letter from Maj Christmas ("How Soldier Smith could be £2,000 better off", Aug), I believe the point the author of the original letter was trying to raise was that a soldier could have more than 400 days' accumulated LSSA days on his pay statement and still not receive one bonus.

Maj Christmas's point about Smith's first absence becoming "effectively ruled out" has caused some confusion among soldiers I administer. The rules state that if a soldier does not have the required LSSA day in the two years, the first period of LSSA is deducted and the next period added on, and not ignored, as Maj Christmas implies.

After speaking to colleagues, I believe a fairer system would be to drop the stipulation to complete the 280/365 days within a prescribed limit. This would then not detract from paying a bonus to compensate for excessive separation, which is after all what the AT and AT+ bonus was. – Cpl J W Harding, UAO, 3 Bn REME, Paderborn.

Expensive toiletries

I AM currently serving a six-month tour in the Balkans and, after visiting a number of foreign PXs (or the equivalent), I am shocked at the low standards and high prices of our own EFI. Why are such items as toiletries (obviously a necessity) as expensive if not more so than in the UK? Does the EFI have a monopoly on British camps? – Cpl Williams, Podujevo, Kosovo.

That was my AS90

YOUR caption to a photograph of an AS90 gun (Page 13, Oct) states that it was from 127 Battery. Actually it is from 159 Battery. I'm not complaining... just thought you might like to know. – Bdr Partridge (crew commander), 159 Bty, 26th Regiment RA, Gütersloh.

In support of No 2s

WE totally agree with the letter from Cpl Parsons and LCpl Beard ("No 2s are best on parade", Sept). Regular inspections should be done because if a special parade was to come up, we need to make sure in plenty of time that every soldier's No 2 dress still fits and is in good repair. – Pte Helen Bailey and Pte Becky Goodwin, 5 GS Medical Regiment, Preston.

Deserved bonus

IN reply to Cpl Orr ("Tax-free incentive to re-enlist would be good idea", Sept), as a TA soldier with 22 years, averaging more than 80 days a year, I do get a tax-free bounty. But it will never come close to compensating me for the pension that I will never receive even though if all my days were added up they would equate to several years' service, especially as I intend to do another 11 years before I call it a day. On the whole, I think we've earned our bonus. – Sgt Gardner, 207 Field Hospital, Manchester.

Warrant ruling is unfair to my son

MY wife left me recently for someone else and shortly after that I moved to Northern Ireland. Due to the housing problems here we decided that it would be easier for our son if he stayed with his mother so he could have a more settled life.

On arriving at my new unit, I confirmed my new marital status as separated and was informed I was entitled to seven annual warrants, of which four can be terminal. I left the orderly room quite content, but then found out something that really confused me.

People I work with who are voluntarily separated receive Married Unaccompanied Separation Allowance and are entitled to 12 terminal warrants a year. To add insult to injury, as of October 10 they are also entitled to welfare phone cards.

Anyone who is separated but looks after their child or children is entitled to 12 warrants a year. Why, after being separated involuntarily, am I being discriminated against? If I want to see my son after my warrants have been used I will have to pay

for the journey. If someone who is voluntarily unaccompanied wishes to see their child or children, not only do they have extra money to pay for the trip, but they get extra warrants.

Surely I and others in the same position have the same rights to see our families even though we are no longer married. If not, the voluntarily unaccompanied should have the same entitlements as us. – Sgt I Curzon, NIEW, Aldergrove.

▲ Sgt Curzon's confusion is well understood, PS4 informs us. The reason he is not entitled to the same number of warrants as an unaccompanied soldier is because a recent complicated ruling under the Sex Discrimination Act forces the Army to treat a soldier who is separated from his wife as though he were single. Sadly, the fact that he has a son he quite naturally wants to see as often as possible does not entitle him to more warrants than a single soldier. PS4 adds that, compared with those in every other theatre, he is particularly well off for travel entitlements and has the same telephone card allowance as a soldier whose family is on the mainland. – Editor

Separation bonus was never tax-free

The following letter has been received from Personal Services (10):

IN the September prize letter ("Taxing problem takes shine off reward pay"), WO1 Broadfoot raised concerns over the level of taxation incurred when receiving the Longer Separated Service Allowance (Accumulated Turbulence) – LSSA(AT) – bonuses.

While we have sympathy with the points he makes, we regret we are unable to resolve them.

LSSA was introduced to support and improve retention by providing a form of recognition for Service personnel, whether married or single, who were considered to have suffered excessive turbulence due to service away from their normal duty station. LSSA(AT), in common with all pay and many allowances, is subject to income tax at rates directed by the Chancellor.

The MoD has no influence over this policy and our liability is laid out in the Income and Corporation Tax Act 1988.

We are therefore unable to introduce the new bonuses tax-free. This was made clear when they were introduced.

We are able to publish only gross rates for all pay and allowances because the level of tax liability differs for each individual. In general, the majority of soldiers on the lower income tax rate would attract a tax liability of 24 per cent (ie £240), moving up to a maximum of 40 per cent (or £400) for those whose income before the allowance puts them above the threshold for the highest rate of tax.

WO1 Broadfoot says he was debited £456 for his LSSA(AT) bonus, which appears very high and certainly warrants investigation through his regimental admin office.

On an upbeat note, recent visits to the Balkans and other theatres confirm LSSA(AT) and LSSA(AT+) have been welcomed positively. As at the beginning of September, 6,029 individuals had received LSSA(AT), of which 1,407 had received LSSA(AT+).

Freeze-frame



"The officer's exaggerations made his new recruits want to puke"

Write your own funny caption for the photograph above, first published in *Soldier* in July 1954. The best, in the opinion of the Editor, will win a prize from our silver collection bearing the Army logo. Usual competition rules apply and entries should reach us by November 30.



Winner of our September freeze-frame (left) is LCpl Blaney (1 RRW, BFPO 22) with "Yes Sir... your horse is definitely a male". While we also liked "Is that what you meant by 'you have to have balls to be in the Army', Sir?" from Adrian Vickers of MNCP, 259 Signal Squadron, Episkopi, Cyprus, we drew the line at "A military interpretation of jumping over planks" from Peter Granger, STS4(MW), Middle Wallop. Whatever can he mean?

These pay problems are not supposed to happen

SINCE deploying on Op Agricola 4 in August I and my colleagues – from the OC down – have been subjected to a number of pay problems relating to LSSA, CILCOT, accommodation and food charges. While I admit some if not all these errors were initiated by my unit admin office in the form of a UNICOM data burst to the Army Personnel Centre in Glasgow that didn't actually get there, what is being done about it?

I thought this sort of thing wasn't supposed to happen. As managers of soldiers' welfare, we are told not to mess up pay, mail and rations, especially while on tour. I believe we generally do our best to prevent this, so why don't the agencies that work for us? – WO2

(TQMS) T Gibson, 8 Armd Engr Sqn, 26 Engr Regt, Op Agricola 4.

▲ *Worthy Down tells us the regiment has confirmed that all its members, bar one or two individuals, have been paid correctly, with all food and accommodation charges refunded and allowances paid by the end of September. It says that for WO2 Gibson to have had a pay statement in his hand by mid-September, the regimental admin officer, who deployed with the main body on August 18, would have had to have processed the entire regiment and transmitted all data by September 5 to meet the pay run deadline on September 7. This would be reliant on the mail service.* – *Editor*

PS...

Phoning home...

I HAD the pleasure of being posted to AFCENT, Holland between 1993 and 1995, working with the International Military Police. Personnel from one of the nations involved, namely the Americans, were able to ring home to the USA using the military operator, giving their social security number and a password or number. The phone bill was then taken out of their monthly salary.

Serving in south Armagh, Northern Ireland, there have been times when the free BT phone cards have run out. I am fortunate to have an account with First Telecom that charges a better rate than BT. Has a system like that used by the Americans ever been tried by the MoD? – Cpl Toon, AGC(RMP), Newtownhamilton.

Kyrenia VC grave

DURING a holiday in Kyrenia, Cyprus my wife and I found the British cemetery and explored it. We came across four graves of Black Watch personnel and one from the Army Hospital Corps: Sgt McGaw VC and Ptes McDonald, Barrie and Marr of the BW and Pte S Troubridge, AHC, who died in Sept and Oct 1878.

Can anyone shed any light on these soldiers and what campaign they were on? We have photographs of the headstones should anyone want one. – Sean McQuinn, 24 Meadow Road, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs WR11 5YE or e-mail to seanmcquinn@hotmail.com

▲ Sgt Samuel McGaw won his Victoria Cross at the Battle of Amoafu in January 1874 during the Ashanti War in West Africa. He died from "heat apoplexy" – what we know as heatstroke – while on a march to Camp Chilflik Pasha, near Larnaca. He, and presumably the others, were members of the garrison at Larnaca. – *Editor*

Infantry opinions

WHY is your Vox Pop feature not more concerned with the opinions of infantry battalions? A glance at past issues will show that the proportion of soldiers in infantry interviewed is way below the ratio of infantry to other arms. – Capt J Fieldhouse, HQ 3 Inf Bde, Northern Ireland.

▲ *The infantry never stays in one place long enough to be interviewed. You are always on exercise or operations. That's our excuse and we're sticking to it.* – *Editor*

Wives on prairie

ON Page 11 (Sept) you state in an article about the High Velocity Missile at BATUS: "Another first was the group of wives taken onto the prairie to watch their husbands at work." This is incorrect, as in June 1997 my wife and five others went with the then RSM, Martin Gardiner, onto the prairie to watch what we do for a living. – Sgt P M Witts, 4 Regt AAC Wksp REME, Wattisham Airfield.

Vox pop

The regular feature in which we ask soldiers for their views on an issue

Sgt Dave Stevenson, RGJ

Definitely not. They are a distraction and can't do their jobs. If they are captured they will be in extreme physical danger. It would be very demoralising. And what about defecating drills. I can't see a bloke holding a bottle for them. Infantry soldier is a man's job and should be left to the men. It's no place for women. Equal rights is fair enough, but there are some jobs they just can't do.



LBdr Donna Welch, 22 Regt RA

If we are doing the same jobs and getting paid the same as men, then why not. At the end of the day that's what I joined up for, I don't want to be stuck in

an office. I can't see any particular problems now there are injections to control periods and other ways around it.

Pte Phil Ord, 1 KORBR

If they can physically do it then no problem, but otherwise you would end up carrying them. Close proximity in the field would not work.



LBdr Joe McLean, 40 Regt RA

The family unit is the most important thing in the world. I think women have a responsibility to be mothers and to raise children. I would not like to think of my mother or sister fighting at the front,



Should women fight in the front line?

The Defence Secretary has said women should be allowed to fight in the front line unless senior officers can prove operational effectiveness would suffer. We asked troops in Canada what they thought

especially when it is unnecessary to do so. It's not the place to be.

Pte Marc Coldrick, 1 QLR

They are equal to us, they can do jobs like us and are as capable as men, if not better. The only problem I can see is if they get shot. If they are injured men will rush to help them. Men are soft when it comes to women.



WO2 Charlie Ellis, LD

I am amazed that it has not happened already. I would be very surprised if it has not happened in the next three years. If they want to do it, are up to the job and don't hinder the guys, I could not care less.

LCpl Barnie Barnes, 2 RTR

If your friends get captured you worry about them. If it's a woman you can imagine the stress for the boys. I am in two minds about it. The tanks are a boy thing... big toys for big boys. Changing tracks can be physically hard.



Interviews: Anthony Stone Pictures: Mike Weston

Cpl Jason Styles, 9/12th L

Of all the women I have met in the Services I think I have met only two who could do a man's job. But if they want to and they can, then go for it. But I don't think it will be many and I don't think it will last.



LCpl Katherine Robinson, 3 (CS) Regt RLC

I think they should if they can get through the training and are robust enough. Women are not as physically strong as men – but how hard do you have to be to hold a rifle?



Cpl Andy Pumford, 9/12 L

If they can do it then yes. But they would have to have the same fitness as the guys to gain their respect.



Pte Claire Taylor, 3 (CS) Regt RLC

They did not know it would work when they brought women into the Army and they won't know if having women in the front line works until they try it. If it works, it works. If it does not they will have learned.



Sgt Darren Pagett, 9/12th L

Only a certain number of women would be able to do it. Blokes would spend more time helping the women than doing their own jobs.



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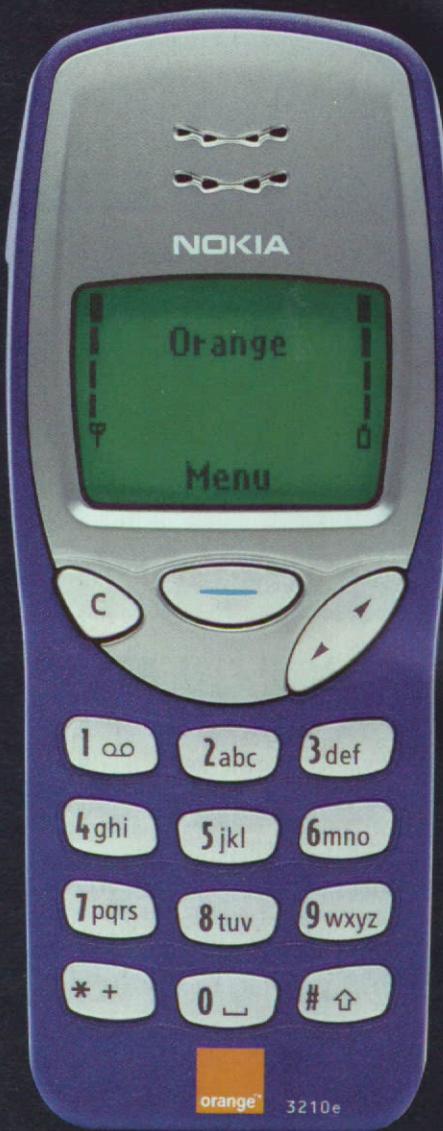
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