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The Lourdes experience

Life on the Green Line

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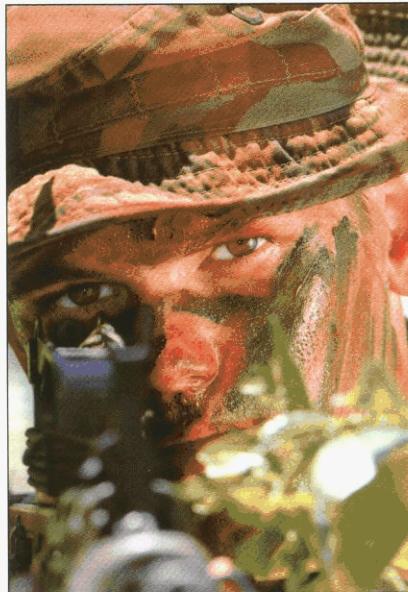
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SOLDIER to soldier

Haunting tale of defeat

FEW parts of the globe could have been unaffected by the World Cup taking place in France . . . and Horse Guards Parade, the epicentre of British military pageantry, was not immune.

Pipers and drummers involved in the Royal Artillery Sunset ceremony on June 10 had a tricky situation to contend with.

It was the little matter of Scotland's opening game against Brazil. While most of the rest of the civilised world would be glued to TV screen or radio, the musicians taking part in the Sunset ceremony would be leaving Wellington Barracks for the march down Birdcage Walk to Horseguards . . . with no way of knowing the final result.

LAMENT

Except, that is, one piper. Sgt Chris Lindsay, of 104 Royal Artillery (South Wales) Regiment, was to play the solemn lone piper's lament at the end of the hour-long ceremony. And he had to sit in an Admiralty office until it was time for him to perform. An office, naturally, with a TV set.

A plot was hatched in the Sergeants' Mess at Woolwich Garrison the night before. If Scotland lost, Chris would play the scheduled *Sleep, Dearie, Sleep*; if they drew, he would play *The Mist Covered Mountains*; and if they managed to pull off a surprise win, it was to be *The Haunting*.

Sadly, an own goal late in the game undermined a spirited tartan performance in Paris, with the result that the Sunset ceremony programme in London remained unchanged, but not unaffected, by events across the Channel.

Prayer and party time

Reports: Karen Moseley
Pictures: Terry Champion

BAREFOOT, carrying their boots and socks, two uniformed British soldiers walked uphill along a stony path with hundreds of other pilgrims.

SSgt John Riley and Bdr Dave Sumner, of 26 Regiment, Royal Artillery, from Gutersloh, were taking part in the 40th International Military Pilgrimage which has been visiting the small French town of Lourdes at the foot of the Pyrenees since 1958.

They were among 300 British soldiers and dependants, including Gen Sir Charles Guthrie, Chief of the Defence Staff, and Lady Guthrie, who joined 18,000 soldiers from all over the world to pray for peace. They gathered at the place where apparitions of Christ's mother, Mary, appeared to 14-year-old Bernadette Soubirous 140 years ago. Since then pilgrims and the sick have been going to Lourdes to take the waters and pray at the grotto where the visions took place.

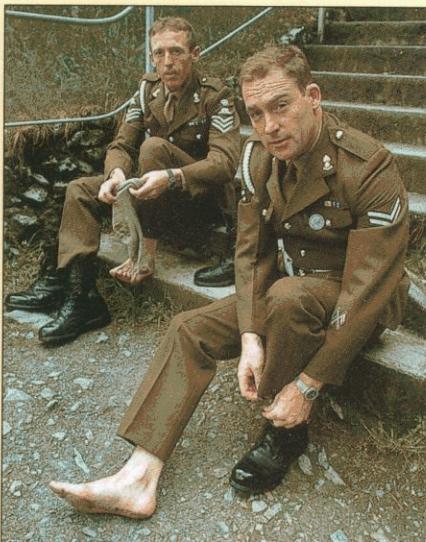
AFTER DARK

There were church services and parades during the day, but after dark the town was taken over by thousands of soldiers of all nationalities who partied through the night. The "blues" of cadets from Sandhurst and the Service dress and Sam Brownes of the British officers and soldiers mixed with the feathered hats and black uniforms of the Italians, the dramatic cloaks of the Croatians, the brightly-coloured costumes of the Vatican Guard and the more subdued hues of the French, American and German Armies.

The Band of the Hussars and Light Dragoons from Munster, scarlet caps clashing with the pink flowers of the horse chestnut trees lining the river, had the crowds cheering as they led the British contingent through the streets.

A highlight of the weekend was the massive torchlight procession. The glow of a hundred thousand candles dimmed lights from surrounding streets and hotels as people wound their way through the town into the open arena in front of the basilica. Some of the sick were pushed in

The International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes is not just prayer, incense and healing. Those taking part are encouraged to eat, drink and make merry as well



Act of faith: SSgt John Riley (left) and Bdr Dave Sumner lace their boots after walking the Stations of the Cross in bare feet

wheelchairs or on stretchers by volunteer British soldiers.

"The value of Lourdes is it teaches soldiers that being spiritual does not mean doom and gloom, it can be extremely enjoyable," said the Rt Rev Francis Walmsley, Catholic Bishop of the Forces. "The last thing you can say about Lourdes is that it is 'churchy'. The soldiers can go to the bars, sing, dance, kiss the girls and say their prayers at the same time."

"I first came on the military pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1961. Afterwards I was asked if I had seen any miracles, and I said

'Yes, 25,000 of them'. When you get 25,000 troops from all over the world enjoying themselves with plenty of beer and wine, and no punch-ups, you have 25,000 miracles."

It was the fifth time SSgt Riley had walked the 14 Stations of the Cross in bare feet since he first went to Lourdes in 1990. The one-kilometre walk follows tableaux of life-size bronze figures showing the different stages of Christ's journey to Calvary, and tells the story from Mary's point of view.

"This is my penance and a little bit of punishment for times throughout the year when I may have been selfish," he explained. "It's not to make a statement, it's for myself."

"Everyone goes away from Lourdes with something special. People see the tacky shops and come to have a good time. But when you go down to the grotto at two in the morning it's then you see what it's all about."

"The camaraderie among the different nations is brilliant. Rank doesn't matter, politics are left behind, and you bump into the same people each year."

It was not just Catholics who felt that Lourdes was worth experiencing. Gnr David May had joined the pilgrimage for the first time and said it did not matter that he was Anglican.

"It's been brilliant, I've really enjoyed it," he said. "It's not often you get people from countries all around the world getting together for the same reason. Everyone is so happy, there are no quarrels, you just walk down the street and people come and say hello and shake your hand."

LCpl Wendy Maher, RLC, went to Lourdes for a personal reason. Her older brother Sean was 15 when he became ill with cancer and doctors gave him a year to live. Through the Catholic church in Liverpool he was sent to Lourdes and



Vigil of faith: A hundred thousand candles illuminate Lourdes

went into the baths that hold the water from the river next to the grotto, which many people believe has healing powers.

Today, eleven years later, he is working in a bank. But he refuses to have a check-up and is still terrified he is going to die. LCpl Maher said that her whole family lost their faith when Sean became ill.

"When I was in Bosnia I had a lot of time to think and started going back to church," she said. "My family don't know I have my faith back, but I truly, truly, 100 per cent believe that Sean is cured because of Lourdes. I have asked Our Lady to tell Sean he should go to the hospital to be checked so that he can get on with his life."

"The Stations of the Cross really got to me. I cried for the rest of the day. I've been into the baths on Sean's behalf, and will take away lots of love and hope from here. I want to come back on my own."

It was a time for thought and reflection for Lt Tim Hawkins of 7 Regiment RLC. Three young female soldiers from his troop were killed in a recent car acci-

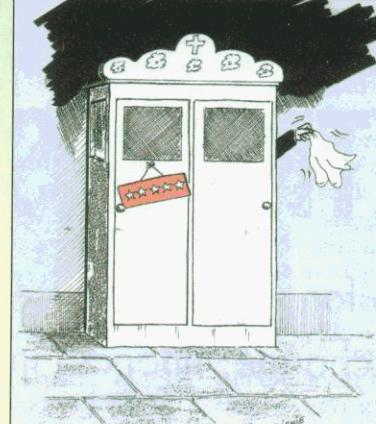
dent in France when returning to England for a basketball match.

"At that time I was expected to lead and there was very little time for emotion," he said. "I had to look after the parents of a girl in a coma, and people looked to me for strength. During the Stations of the Cross I had tears in my eyes and I have thought about them more in the past few days than at any time since. It's given me a chance to grieve."

Michael McBride, a retired sergeant working for the Defence Communications Services Agency, bought a paschal candle from St John's Church in Gutersloh, which was lit at the grotto.

"It is not an overnight thing, but everyone who comes here changes," he said. "If you come looking for answers you won't find them because they are already within yourself, but Lourdes points you in the right direction."

"The main thing you learn here is humility. You see the sick – people not just sick in body, but in mind as well, people who have been marginalised. I have had



young soldiers from a fit, healthy environment totally overwhelmed by seeing people in wheelchairs, young and old."

It was the fifth visit to Lourdes for Gen Sir Charles Guthrie, who converted to Catholicism ten years ago. He said he thought the place provided a focus for Catholics in the Armed Forces and that religion played an enduring part in Ser-

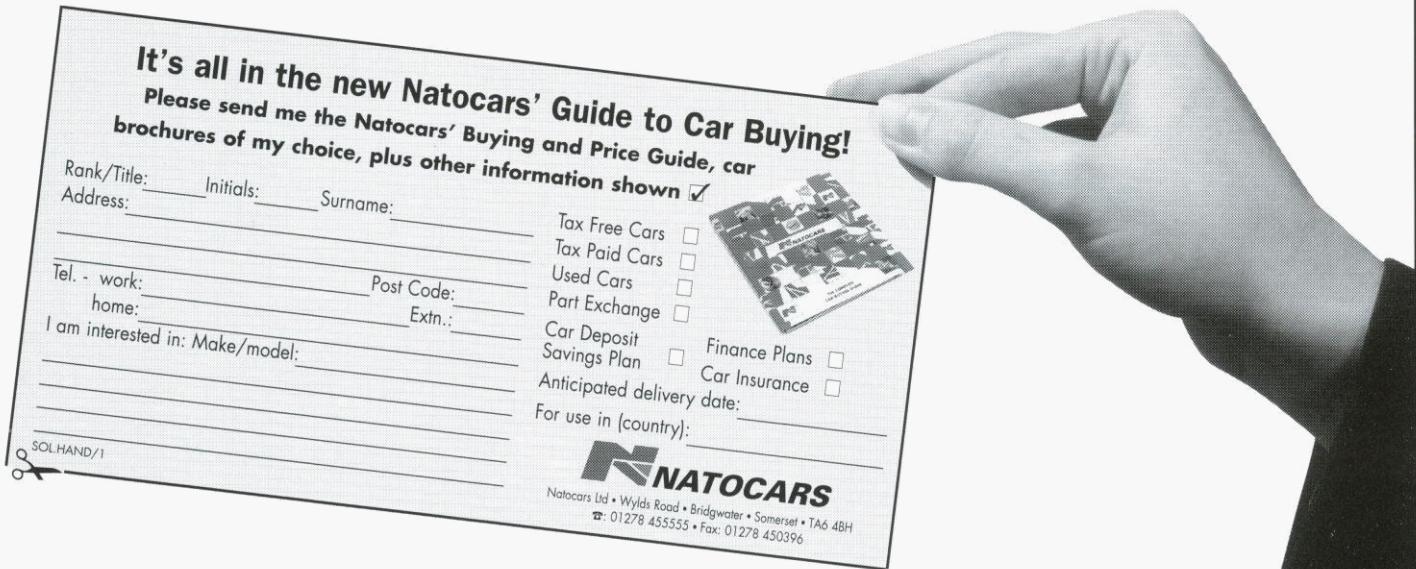
vice life. "Religion is not just for good people," he said.

"Every saint has had a past and every sinner has a future. I think religion is a very personal matter, and you can be a good soldier and citizen without being religious. Lourdes is a spiritual place, and it's good for one to come and visit."

The military pilgrimage was started by the French who invited members of the German Armed Forces to Lourdes on the centenary of the apparitions as an act of reconciliation after the Second World War. It was so successful that it was held annually and grew into an international event.

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Special report

Onward Christian soldiers: The British military pilgrims were cheered and applauded as they marched through the crowded streets of Lourdes

Army's first married RC priest is ordained

WITH HIS modern haircut, trendy sunglasses and open, forthright manner, the Rev Gosnell is not everyone's idea of a typical Catholic priest. Neither is the fact that he is married with two sons.

But during the opening Mass of the International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes, surrounded by chaplains from the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force, Nicholas Gosnell was ordained as the first married Catholic deacon in the Armed Forces by the Rt Rev Francis Walmsley, Catholic Bishop of the Forces.

The ceremony took place two weeks before he was ordained as a Catholic priest by Cardinal Basil Hume in Westminster Cathedral.

Rev Gosnell had been an Anglican clergyman since 1989 and it was in 1992 that he started exploring the possibility of becoming a Catholic priest. The Bishop's Conference of England and Wales makes an assessment for Church of England priests to enter the Catholic Church, but the final decision rests with the Pope. Rev Gosnell was granted the necessary dispensation in December 1997.

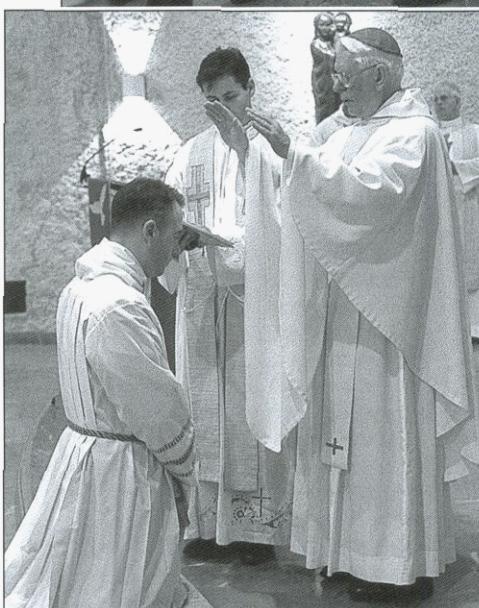
Last year he became the Officiating Chaplain (RC) for the Army Training Regiment, Pirbright, the Resident Battal-

A YOUNG British soldier horrifically injured during the First World War became one of the best-known "miracles" of Lourdes.

Jack Traynor was mown down by machine-gun fire at Gallipoli in 1915. He was wounded in the head and chest, and a bullet lodged in his collar bone, severing nerves and paralysing the arm.

An operation on his skull to stop epileptic fits triggered by his injury left him with an open hole, so a silver plate was inserted to shield the brain. His body was a mass of sores, his legs partially paralysed and nearly every organ in his body impaired.

Returning to his wife and children in Liverpool, he was determined to visit Lourdes, which he did in 1923, despite being told that



Solemn vows: Rev Nicholas Gosnell is ordained as deacon of the Catholic Church by The Rt Rev Francis Walmsley, Catholic Bishop of the Forces

chaplain. He joined the TA as a chaplain when he entered the Anglican Church.

His wife Alison, and two sons, Matthew and Jonathan, have also been received into the Catholic Church. Alison is being trained as a Eucharistic minister, his older son reads during the services and his younger son is an altar boy.

"I suppose people do find it intriguing and I don't know whether the novelty of having a married Catholic priest will wear off," Rev Gosnell said after the ceremony. "It was not a quantum leap but a gradual process. I began to realise that what I was teaching was very much in line with the Catholic Church. I have not really changed anything except my ecclesiastical allegiance.

"Becoming a Catholic was like coming to the end of a long journey – like coming home."

Next day three doctors found he could walk, had recovered the use of his right arm, the epilepsy had gone and the metal plate in his head had disappeared.

The news spread from Lourdes to Liverpool, and by the time Jack Traynor arrived at Lime Street Station thousands of people were there to meet him.

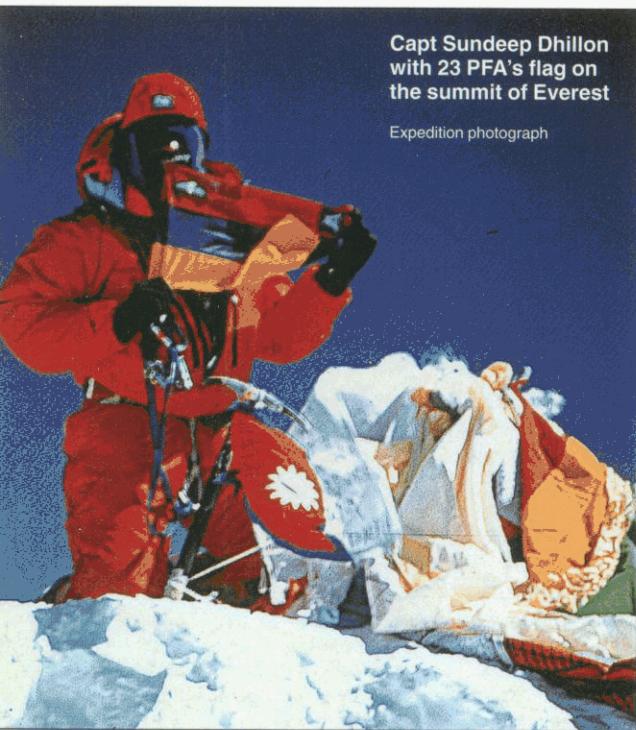
Jack Traynor set up a successful coal and haulage business and joined his employees lifting sacks of coal weighing 200lb. He and his wife had three more children after the cure. He returned to Lourdes every year until his death to work as a brancardier (voluntary stretcher bearer). He finally died of a hernia which was in no way related to the wounds he received.

Jack's miracle

he would probably die on the journey. Jack had several haemorrhages and epileptic fits, but on the second day, after bathing in water from the Grotto spring, the fits stopped. As he was blessed by the Archbishop of Rheims later in the day his right arm, useless since 1915, "was violently agitated. I burst its bandages and blessed myself for the first time in years."

Thought to be hysterical, he was sedated but that night ran the 300 yards to the Grotto, the first time he had moved by himself for eight years.

People, places, events



Capt Sundeep Dhillon with 23 PFA's flag on the summit of Everest
Expedition photograph

Seventh heaven

CAPT Sundeep Dhillon, a doctor with Aldershot-based 23 Parachute Field Ambulance, has become the youngest person to climb the seven highest mountains on the seven continents.

Capt Dhillon (28), who has tackled a continent a year since joining the British Army, completed his final summit, Mount Everest, after ten weeks in Nepal preparing for the climb.

"It still hasn't sunk in," he said on his return. "When I reached the top of Everest it was so cold and windy all I could think about was taking some photos and getting back home and warm again."

Capt Dhillon climbed Mount McKinley in Alaska in 1991 and followed up with Elbrus in Russia, Vinson in Antarctica, Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Jaya (formerly Carstensz Pyramid) in Indonesia and Aconcagua in Argentina.

Trp Edward Grylls (23), pictured below, succeeded in his attempt to become the youngest Briton to conquer Everest when he and Territorial Army officer Lt Neil Laughton, a former Royal Marine, reached the summit on May 26. Other members of the successful expedition, which was raising funds for SSAFA, were Trp Mick Crosswaite and Capt Geoffrey Stanford, Gren Gds.



Bad weather dogged the climbers, who made it to the top just before the arrival of an early monsoon which threatened to bury their tents and equipment in deep snow.

Last year Trp Grylls, son of former Tory MP Sir Michael Grylls, became the youngest Briton to climb the notoriously difficult Ama Dablam peak in the Himalayas.

CATT helps Army sharpen its claws

WORK started last month on the world's biggest battlefield simulator system, which will cover an area the size of two football pitches at Warminster.

The £180 million Combined Arms Tactical Trainers (CATT) simulators, designed to look like the interiors of armoured vehicles such as Challenger, Warrior and Scimitar, will allow more than 400 soldiers using 80 linked computers to fight virtual battles across a 100 sq km computer-generated landscape.

It will be possible to link the Warminster trainer with a sister facility being constructed at Sennelager. The system, built by Lockheed Martin and overseen by the Ministry of Defence's Procurement Executive, is scheduled to be up and running by the year 2000.

CATT will allow crews to climb into a tank simulator, view an impressively realistic computer-generated world through the vehicle periscope, and fight a battle with a virtual foe.

As much realism as possible is built into CATT. For example, engines will overheat if left to idle for too long, repairs will be needed if vehicles are

damaged, and supplies will have to be found if the battle group is to keep on fighting.

Mobile infantry commanders can disembark from an armoured vehicle simulator and climb into a linked, dismounted infantry simulator to continue the battle "on foot". Players will be able to exercise within the site or between the UK and German sites.

Each CATT system will contain 25 Challenger, 33 Warrior, eight Scimitar, eight infantry and ten generic simulators.

Maj Tim Knox, who is heavily involved in the project, said: "CATT will provide an exceptionally good medium to meet training objectives, although it will not remove the requirement for the Army to carry out live training."



Brig Brian Plummer, commander of the Combined Arms Training Centre at Warminster, on the site of the CATT

Divers find stolen kit in murky waters

OPERATION Lodestar's Theatre Diving Response Team was tasked to recover Army property stolen from North Port on the Croatian coast, near Split, and abandoned in the dangerously polluted waters of the dock.

The divers, part of the 35 Engineer Regimental Group, had to use spe-

cialist equipment because the water at North Port is contaminated by raw sewage. A mountain of general waste was floating on the water and analysis found traces of hepatitis A, B and C.

Despite poor visibility, the divers found the equipment in deep seabed mud on the third day of their search.

IN BRIEF

TROOPS from Colchester-based 24 Airborne Brigade spent four days last month at Wattisham Airfield undergoing firefighting training in readiness for threatened strike action by Essex firemen. They and 31 Green Goddess vehicles will be on standby at 14 temporary stations throughout the county.

● Soldiers from Aldershot's 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment parachuted alongside Ukrainian and Polish

paras during Exercise Cossack Steppe 98 in Hampshire and Norfolk. The tri-lateral exercise built on the success of 2 Para's visit to Ukraine last autumn.

● Troops from 19 Regiment RA at Colchester have begun a six-month tour with the United Nations in Cyprus.

● Defence Secretary George Robertson watched the symbolic destruction of 1,000 anti-personnel mines at Casterley



In the memory: Former dog handler LCpl Darren Swift, who lost both legs when a terrorist bomb exploded inside North Howard Street Mill in north Belfast in 1991, remembers colleague and friend Geordie O'Neill, who was killed in the incident. He was attending a memorial service at Shackleton Barracks, Ballykelly to mark the 25th anniversary of the Army Dog Unit. Darren's dog Troy survived the North Howard Street Mill explosion and has been his constant companion ever since.

Eighth indicted war criminal detained

BRITISH troops involved in snatching an indicted war criminal in Bosnia have been praised by Defence Secretary George Robertson.

In a joint statement with Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, Mr Robertson said: "We congratulate British SFOR forces in Bosnia on their action to detain Milojica Kos in Banja Luka."

Kos was a shift commander at Omarska Camp. The indictment issued by the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague charged that his subordinates regularly and openly killed, raped, tortured, beat and humiliated prisoners.

"Eight people indicted for war crimes have now been detained in Bosnia by SFOR," said the statement.

"Seven of these detentions have taken place in the British-commanded

sector and involved British forces, either directly or in support. A further 15 indictees have surrendered voluntarily to the tribunal."

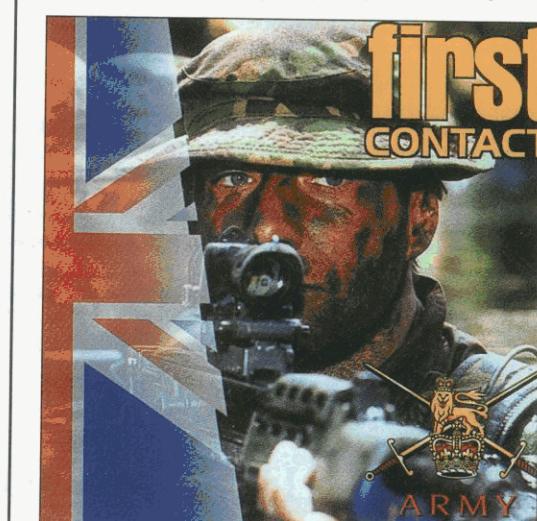
Game, set and match to Banja Luka orphans

ORPHANS in Banja Luka, northern Bosnia, have a volleyball court and tennis playground, thanks to the plant section of Combat Support Troop based in Gornji Vakuf.

The section is part of 44 Headquarters Squadron, 35 Engineer Regimental Group.

A five-man team of sappers led by LCpl Taff Watts and using heavy plant lived at the orphanage while flattening ground for the play areas.

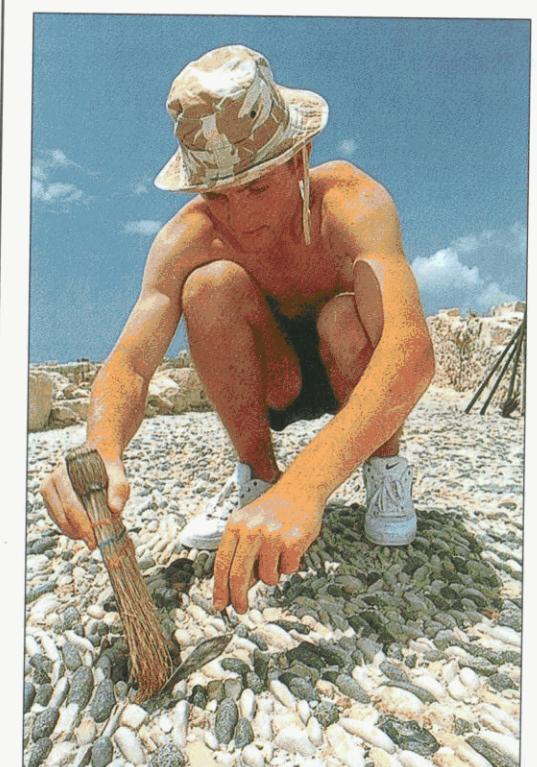
CD-ROM shows the way



The British Army's first interactive CD-ROM, targeted at the young computer player, was launched by Armed Forces Minister John Reid at the end of May. *First Contact* starts with four basic training challenges involving weapon assembly, map-reading, first aid and rank recognition, after which players can move on to a survival game, provide relief to a hurricane-hit island, lead a platoon attack or command a brigade.

"We have developed some very impressive 3D simulations for the CD," said Brig Robert Gordon, the Army's Director of Public Relations, "and we are sure they will prove very useful in the next generation of computer-based training programmes for our future soldiers. It is certainly the way ahead."

Brushing up on history



Pte Chris Pickles helps to excavate an area of the ancient site at Curium, near Episkopi Garrison in Cyprus's Western Sovereign Base Area. Chris is serving on the island with the 1st Battalion, The Light Infantry's Support Company anti-tank platoon. Troops have uncovered artefacts and shifted rubble and soil.

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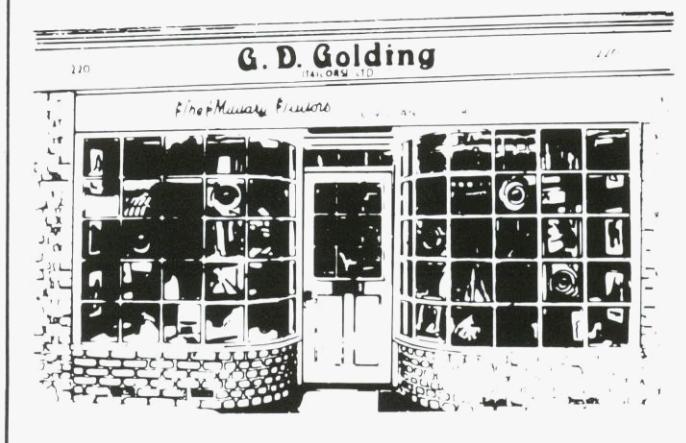
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People, places, events

Airmobiles exercise in Belgium

TROOPS from Colchester-based 24 Airmobile Brigade joined colleagues from the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium for a two-week, Dutch-led exercise in Belgium involving more than 2,000 soldiers.

Artful Issue was the latest in a series of annual exercises which started in 1994 on the formation of the Multi-National Division Central, the rapid reaction force which supports NATO.

Brigade units involved in Artful Issue included the Combat Service Support Battalion, the 1st Battalion, The Royal Scots, and a handful of staff from brigade HQ. Helicopter support was provided by 3 Regiment AAC.

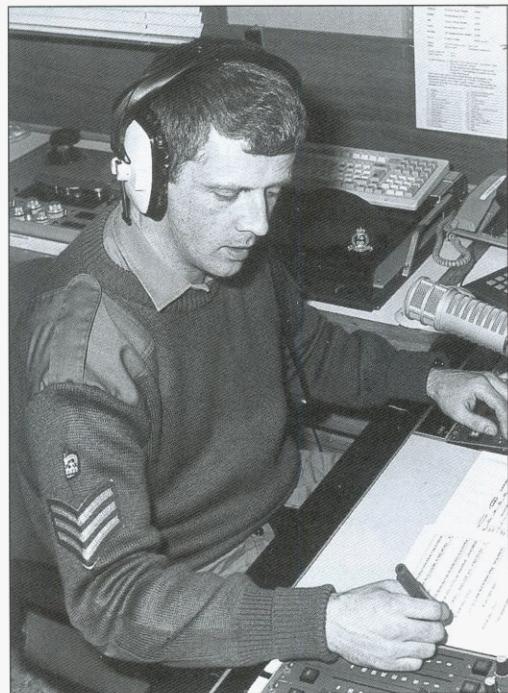


Picture: Roger Tutt

Bloody good show

Get an armful of that! Blood Transfusion Service attendant Debbie Collier soon had her hands full when soldiers from 23 Pioneer Regiment RLC at Bicester responded to a national appeal for donors. "I can't believe the response we've had," said Debbie. "It's brilliant... and we ended up with more than 12 gallons of blood."

Bob's in the groove



Superintendent Clerk SSgt Bob McConnell AGC (SP) is music to the ears of staff at HQ British Forces Falkland Islands. In his spare time he has been taken on as a part-time disc jockey by BFBS at Mount Pleasant. After hours of training by station manager Dusty Miller, Bob was allowed loose on the airwaves to present a regular Sunday music and chat programme.

New college: symbol of tri-Service ethos

SECRETARY of State for Defence George Robertson has highlighted the vital importance of joint-Service training, pointing to the building of a new tri-Service staff college as a "tangible symbol" of the Government's commitment to this principle.

Mr Robertson was speaking on June 18 during a turf-turning ceremony marking the start of work on the new staff college at Watchfield in Oxfordshire, which, upon completion in September 2000, will train up to 2,000 potential commanders a year in military skills ranging from peace-keeping to high-intensity warfare.

The Secretary of State said: "To ensure that the habit of tri-Service integrated operations become ingrained and that Services instinctively think in terms of joint opera-

tions, we need to organise our training, planning and support operations on as integrated a basis as possible.

"It is difficult to conceive of huge operations where single Services would act on their own. Such operations have to be planned for and that's why integrated training is so important."

Mr Robertson went on to say that the staff college will also have a role to play in the area of "defence diplomacy". A significant number of foreign Servicemen and women will study there, helping to develop, as the Secretary of State put it, "bridge-building and conflict prevention".

The Watchfield college is the first MoD project to be entirely financed and operated by the private sector, under an arrangement which should save £2m a year.

More talk time... and it SFOR you

MOST soldiers serving with the NATO Stabilisation Force (SFOR) in Bosnia are being issued with free welfare telephone cards from July.

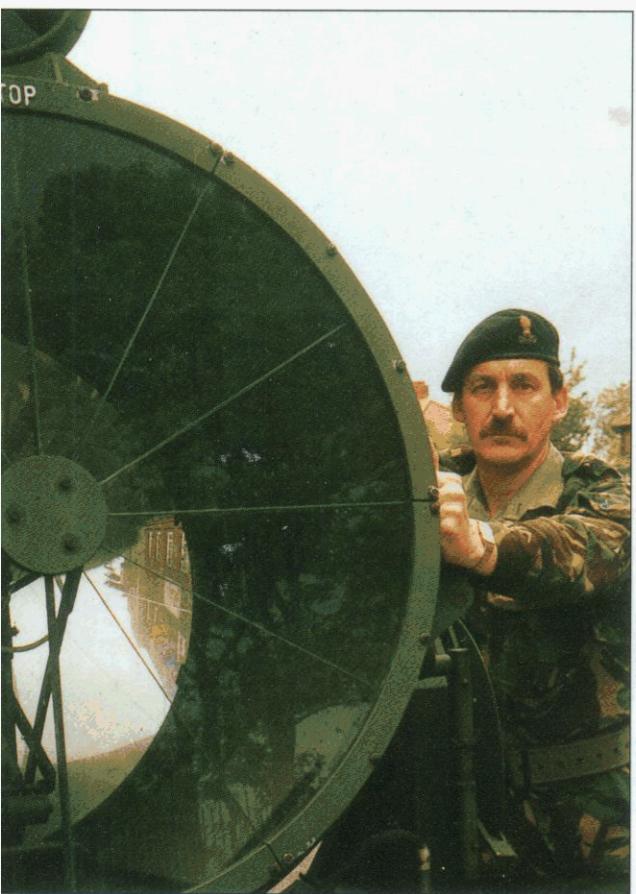
The system will benefit about 90 per cent of personnel serving on Operation Lodestar who have access to NAI welfare telephone facilities. It is based on "talk time" and will replace the current Welfare Telephone Allowance (WTA) of £22 a

month. UK-based personnel will receive two 18-minute cards (36 minutes per calendar month) while those based in Germany will get two 17-minute cards.

The scheme gives an increase in air time of about ten per cent. Those without NAI phones will continue to receive a ten-minute welfare telephone call every week on a military telephone or WTA.

People, places, events

Light duties for Phil



Capt Phil Webb, quartermaster of Heston-based 220 (Searchlight) Field Squadron (EOD) RE (V), stands beside one of the ten searchlights used during the annual Beating Retreat ceremony on Horse Guards Parade in London. Although the squadron's modern role is to provide bomb disposal skills as part of 101 (London) Engineer Regiment (EOD) RE (V), it retains the searchlight capability passed on from its origins in 1947 as 873 Movement Light Squadron.

THEY will be remembered: A memorial is to be dedicated to 32 soldiers of The Welch Regiment killed during the Korean War. The ceremony, on July 26 in the regimental chapel at Llandaff Cathedral, Cardiff, will coincide with the annual regimental reunion service.

Shooting honours fall for 170 Sqn

OUTRIGHT winners of the UKSK(G) skill-at-arms meeting at Kohima range on Haltem Training Area were 170 Squadron, Support Battalion ARRC, with 14 Indep Topo Sqn RE and HQ TSC(G) second and third.

The topo squadron won the LSW team championship, 14 Sqn Sp Bn triumphed in the team rifle competition and 170 Sqn, Sp Bn ARRC won the gruelling fire team match. In the individual matches, Pte Robertson (99 PC Sqn) took the LSW honours and Cpl Turpin (170 Sqn) held his nerve to win the rifle match.

HQ TSC(G) beat 252 Sig Sqn, 16 Sig Regt in the final of the falling plate match.

Fusiliers praised in rail disaster

WHEN Germany suffered its worst train crash since the Second World War, troops from a nearby British base were among the first to help survivors. They worked shoulder-to-shoulder with civilian rescue services and received warm thanks.

More than 100 passengers died and many were injured when a Hamburg-Munich express, travelling at high speed, ran into a bridge, compressing carriages into a heap of wreckage.

The crash occurred on June 3 near the small town of Eschede, just 12km from the British Army's Celle base, home to the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

Led by their medical officer, 20 combat medical technicians and soldiers were deployed to the crash site, where they joined the first German rescue workers on the scene.

FULL FORCE

They removed injured passengers from wreckage, gave first aid and man-handled heavy rescue plant around the site. The fusiliers worked for more than an hour before the full force of civilian fire, police and medical crews arrived to relieve them.

Among the 2 RRF team was CSgt Phil Forsyth, who described the scene vividly in an interview with reporters. "Train carriages were piled up on top of each other and the bridge had collapsed," he said. "It was completely silent. Nobody could have walked away from that. Every casualty was either unconscious or dead."

HQ 7 Armoured Brigade was alerted



State duty

The Emperor of Japan, escorted by the Duke of Edinburgh, inspects men of the 1st Battalion, Coldstream Guards on Horse Guards Parade during the official welcome at the start of his State Visit, for which 1,000 troops were on duty in London

ed and responded by placing the facilities of 1 Armoured Field Ambulance on standby. Helicopter crews from 1 Regiment AAC and 32 Engineer Regiment, equipped with heavy lifting gear, also prepared to move at short notice. But rapid deployment of German emergency workers and helicopters meant that the British assets were stood-down.

The 2 RRF soldiers were praised by Fire Chief Werner Baekeberg for their "quick and spontaneous reactions".

A doctor also expressed his thanks "to colleagues from the Bundeswehr and the British Army", another comment quoted throughout Germany.

The Army's part was also widely reported outside the country. Soldiers were interviewed by newspapers, radio and television stations, including ITN, Sky and CNN. The Media Ops branch at HQ 1 Armd Div handled more than 130 Press calls.

Aardvark clears way for French

WORK can begin on an extension to a French Army camp close to the former military airport at Sarajevo thanks to British sappers and their Aardvark de-mining vehicles.

Two of the highly specialised machines spent three weeks meticulously ploughing over the area to clear hidden explosives.

"The French found more than 200 mines in the area," reported Lt Al Budinger, Support Troop Commander, "but we found only a few buried ones. It was definitely worth the cost."

The vehicles, from Hohne-based

Flying visitor



The Prince of Wales meets some new arrivals while chatting to Army families during his visit to 5 Regiment, Army Air Corps at RAF Aldergrove in Northern Ireland

Watchman's last parade



Watchman III, mascot of The Staffordshire Regiment, died suddenly last month at the Burton-on-Trent home of his handler.

One of the most photographed animals in the country, the nine-year-old Staffordshire bull terrier played a high-profile part in the regiment's successful campaign to retain its independence from threat of merger with The Cheshire Regiment in 1993.

A familiar figure to children in the Midlands, he attended every official function of the 1st and 3rd Battalions. Given the rank of sergeant, Watchman III was expected to be buried with military honours.

Kings of the Rock



Husband and wife **Brian and Dianne King**, both corporals serving in 208 (Liverpool) Field Hospital (V), have just spent two weeks on the unit's annual camp in Gibraltar. It is the first time they have served abroad together since their wedding two years ago.

IN BRIEF

SOLDIERS from the 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment commemorated their fallen on the 16th anniversary of the Battle of Goose Green last month. Following the ceremony at Aldershot Military Cemetery, 2 Para's Colours were laid at the drumhead altar.

● The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers has joined forces with Rathbone Community Industry and Northumberland Training

and Enterprise Council to offer five-day residential skills courses for youngsters.

● Naafi's first mobile refreshment unit opened at Split, Croatia to serve troops deployed there. The purpose-built, self-contained unit is manned by the Expeditionary Force Institutes - Naafi's uniformed branch - and serves fast foods including hot dogs, pizzas, hamburgers and sandwiches.

● Members of 220 Signal Squadron from RAF Laarbruch in Germany joined Belgian and French troops on a ceremonial parade at Kortrijk in Belgium to mark the historic battle of the River Lys just outside the city in May 1940.

● London Zoo's tigers have had their home redecorated by soldiers of the new assault pioneer platoon of 2 PWRR. The battalion is known as The Tigers.

● Regular Army champions at the 143 (West Midlands) Brigade annual skill-at-arms meeting were Bramcote-based 30 Signal Regiment, while 5 RRF from Coventry won the Territorial Army championship.

London Regiment results at the London District Rifle Association Meeting included best unit, winners of the TA Major Unit Trophy and best individual young soldier, Pte Ibrahim Tural.

Exercise report

Hurricane Force

3 Div's big-gun manoeuvres on Salisbury Plain

Report: Graham Bound

Pictures: Mike Weston

IN THE biggest exercise of its type scheduled for 1998, Salisbury Plain echoed to the sound of 36 big guns for 11 long days in mid-May.

Exercise Iron Hurricane brought together almost 1,500 soldiers from the Royal Artillery and support units, representing the bulk of 3 (UK) Division's considerable artillery assets.

Deploying and re-deploying across the plain, the troops and their big guns – 16 AS90 self-propelled 155mm weapons and 20 L118 105mm light guns – developed the exercise from individual unit night manoeuvres and helicopter operations, to the final ground-shaking and deafening simultaneous firing of artillery pieces. For scale and impact, Iron Hurricane was aptly named.

Although primarily designed as a major training event for the artillery units of 3 (UK) Div, Iron Hurricane also gave the gunners an opportunity to work with small units such as 29 Commando Regiment and 26 Italian gunners of 132 Ariete Regiment. The Italians, based in the north of their country, are closely linked with 3 (UK) Div.

The 11 days and nights in the field were also an ideal opportunity to sophisticated communications and control equipment, much of it relatively new. In the hands of forward control units, batteries and mobile command posts, battlefield radar, lasers, computers and digital and conventional radios were put to some demanding tests.

POIGNANCY

Adding a note of poignancy to Iron Hurricane was the knowledge that this was the last time all three regiments of the Royal Horse Artillery, 1, 3 and 7 (Para), will be able to exercise together for a while. Soon afterwards, 3 RHA began preparing for its move to Germany.

The value of Iron Hurricane differed according to the roles and vantage point of the units involved. Capt Ian Mullin of 29 Cdo Regt, wearing the green beret of the Royal Marines and the cap badge of the Royal Artillery, stressed that for his men it had been a vital opportunity to use



Shouldering the burden: LBdr Jason Oie (above) defends a gun position with Javelin. Forward control: Using MSTAR battlefield radar, Maj Mike Elvis (above right) tracks targets and brings in 60 rounds from AS90 (main picture)

the new Battlefield Artillery Target Engagement System (BATES), which uses burst transmissions to communicate between OPs and gun batteries.

He described BATES as complex. However, after almost two months of training, Iron Hurricane gave his battery of four light guns "the opportunity to make it work".

Elsewhere on the plain, men of 47 Regiment (Air Defence) RA, armed with Javelin shoulder-launched missiles, protected the guns. High point for LBdr Jason Oie and LBdr James McCallion was the chance to mount a simulated attack on their own position from an Army Lynx helicopter. The pilot's-eye view of their location was, they agreed, a chilling education. "If it had been for real," said LBdr Oie, "there would have been a few sharp intakes of breath on both sides."

Watching on the final two days was Col



Col Francavilla:
"best experience"

Luigi Francavilla of the Ariete Regiment. He said both armies used similar weapons, but battlefield communications and target acquisition equipment was different. The colonel was pleased that experts were now considering ways to make the equipment compatible.

Nevertheless, the Italians worked closely with British gunners as forward observers and fire controllers. Col Francavilla said: "My people say this is the best experience they have had."

And perhaps one of the hardest. SSgt John McDonald of N Battery, equipped with AS90, smiled through his fatigue and looked back on the demanding cycle endured by the AS90 crews . . . "the breach creatures".

"We've had some very long days and nights," said Staff McDonald. "Last night, for example, we covered about 25 miles, including a re-plen." But as the Hurricane reached its conclusion, any pent-up frustrations were released when, along with 36 other big guns, N Battery fired volley after volley of high explosive shells. Satisfying indeed!

UN sets standard of tolerance

Report: Graham Bound
Pictures: Mike Weston

THE SMALL world of international peacekeeping is a place in which soldiers soon learn to accept the unusual, sometimes even the downright bizarre.

Any one of the potential global hot-spots policed by United Nations troops can easily throw up examples: such as in Bosnia, where Malaysian troops, fresh from tropical south-east Asia, shiver as they man snow-covered mountain observation posts. Elsewhere, eastern Europeans, once protectors of the Communist bloc, stand shoulder-to-shoulder with their erstwhile NATO enemies.

But few are stranger than this: in Cyprus, where 1,200 UN troops keep the heavily-armed Greek and Turkish factions apart, British soldiers, specifically men from the 1st Royal Tank Regiment, are commanded by an Argentine general. And he served in the Falklands War.

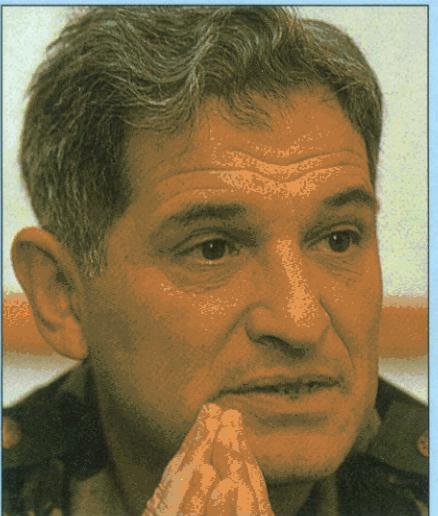
BELLIGERENT ROLE

Sixteen years ago the UN's Force Commander, Maj Gen Evergisto de Vergara had a far more belligerent role. He and British troops, very similar to those he now commands, were pitched against each other across a few hundred miles of cold South Atlantic ocean in a bloody war. Now, remarkably, the British patrol with soldiers from Argentina and accept orders from a one-time enemy.

A veteran peace-keeper with tours in the Middle East and Croatia under his belt, the man from Tucuman in northern Argentina can, of course, see the irony, but he seems to relish it. He believes this example of international co-operation in spite of historic differences is, if anything, a shining illustration of what can be achieved in countries like Cyprus if the principle of tolerance is applied.

The 52-year-old general is, of course, first and foremost an Argentine officer. Thanks to the blue-and-white flag and photographs of his president, which alternate with mementoes of other national armies on the walls of his office, there can be no doubt about this. But he is careful to hide any national feelings he has. Never-

Soldier meets the Argentine general who commands British troops



Maj Gen de Vergara, Force Commander: "Some people are poisoned by history"

theless, Gen de Vergara says the war is not a taboo subject: both Argentines and British will compare their experiences of the Falklands, but do so as professional soldiers, without personal animosity.

If pressed, he explains (in perfect, if heavily accented, English) his feelings about the war, in which he was a major commanding a logistic unit on the Argentine coast, and how this relates to his work with the British Army today.

Although an effervescent and easily-smiling man, the general assumes a deeply-sober expression. "We were enemies in 1982 and we both have people buried in the islands. In that way they have become brothers. It was a clean, open war and now, because of that, we can work together. I am very proud of my British soldiers."

On a personal level this goodwill is most obvious in an excellent working relation-

ship which the general enjoys with his Chief of Staff, Col Ian Talbot. He describes the British officer as "my very dear friend and an outstanding human being".

The Force Commander also has generous words for the men of the 1st Royal Tank Regiment who are responsible for one entire sector of the Green Line and the buffer zone. They also make up a major component of the company-strength Mobile Force Reserve based at the now disused Nicosia airport.

Within this rapid reaction force, representatives of the four main national forces – Austrian, Hungarian, Argentine and British – are totally integrated, living and working together at every level.

English is the workaday language, and although not all troops are confident speakers, they get by with what Gen de Vergara describes as "UN English . . . understanding half, guessing the rest".

PROUD MAN

The commander of UN forces is proud of all of the men under his control, whether they be from the four main forces or the much smaller contingents from Brazil, Uruguay, Canada, Ireland, Slovenia and Finland. He is also highly sympathetic about the challenges they face. Peacekeeping, he points out, demands different ways of thinking and practices from those usually instilled in soldiers.

"Most of my soldiers are only 18 or 19 and we have to tell them to change their way of thinking," he says. "They have to know how to moderate and tolerate – and that requirement is not only applied to the forces opposing each other, but among themselves too. The recipe for happiness is to tolerate."

Considering his own origins, the general could be speaking from personal experience when he reflects on the emotions that still threaten the peace of Cyprus. "Some people," he reflects rather sadly, "are poisoned by history and they can't get rid of that heritage."

He believes the example of "his" soldiers is important. With conviction, he says: "When people can create peace among themselves, then they also spread peace outside".



Quick off the mark: Multi-national and quick reaction. British, Hungarian, Austrian and British troops of the Mobile Reserve Force

Total integration in the rapid reaction force

WHEN tension reached breaking-point in Dherinia on the Green Line during 1996, Greek Cypriot protesters stormed a Turkish post. In the subsequent riot, a Greek civilian was shot dead trying to remove a flag and two British soldiers attempting to calm the situation were wounded.

The incident showed vividly that if UN forces are to prevent tensions escalating into violence

in the future, they need a strong and versatile rapid-reaction force. So the Mobile Force Reserve (MFR) was born, and with it the most shining example of the UN's ability to operate a totally integrated and affectionate multinational force.

Based at the UN HQ at Nicosia's airport (which has not received an aircraft, other than military helicopters, since the war of 1974) and answering directly to the Force commander, Maj Gen Evergisto de Vergara, the company-strength force is made up of 53 British troops, 33 Argentines, ten Austrians and nine Hungarians. Elsewhere on the Green Line each national contin-

gent is responsible for a sector, but troops in the MFR mix at every level. Each of the four platoons has representatives of all four nations.

The UN's rapid-reaction force is modelled on a British company, and, perhaps for that reason it is commanded by Maj Eddie Large of 1 RTR. His second-in-command is an Argentine soldier, and the four platoon commanders are Argentine, Austrian and British. Responsibility for transport lies with the Argentines, who operate *Tactica* lightly-armoured personnel carriers and several Bell helicopters.

Lt Stuart Pringle of the MFR admitted

that such total integration can make some aspects of day-to-day life unusual. Communications are on obvious difficulty and he admits that there can at times be "a kind of Chinese Whispers effect". But he adds, "it makes life interesting."

The MFR trains regularly in crowd-control techniques and constantly hones its degree of readiness. The proud boast of this cosmopolitan force is that it can deploy more than half its strength to almost any point on the Green Line within two hours. The entire company could be deployed a short time later.

Relations between the national groups is excellent, particularly between the Argentines and the British. Stuart Pringle does not mince his words: "They're the nicest, most hospitable bunch you could expect to meet."

WO2 Daniel Cuellar has a similar warmth for his British comrades. "It's been a pleasure to work with them," he says, "because they have such respect for us."

Tankies on the Green Line

Robust, not provocative

THE 1st Royal Tank Regiment arrived on the Cypriot Green Line, which has divided the island and its people since the war of 1974, in early December last year.

Fresh from the high-intensity armoured warfare training which had preoccupied them for much of 1997, they not only abandoned their traditional vehicles for an infantry role, but also had to develop the entirely different mind-set required for UN peace-keeping.

There was also the sobering reality that the Cypriot political and military scenes were more tense than they had been for many years

CHALLENGE

"It was quite a challenge for us," explained Lt James Grimshaw, the battalion's ops info officer at battalion HQ in Wolsey Barracks, a once opulent building which now crumbles gently like most other structures in the overgrown and ghostly buffer zone. "We had to put most of our training to one side and think in terms of being robust but not provocative."

This four-word phrase is often quoted in Cypriot UN circles. It sums up the approach to the two armies which gaze suspiciously at each other across the buffer zone, in places little more than ten metres wide. In essence it means that the UN troops can, and will, stand their ground and issue instructions to opposing forces ("Opfor" in UN-speak) on both sides if one or the other indulges in aggressive or inflammatory behaviour. UN forces have the authority, technically recognised by both sides, to police the area and even remove defences if one side or the other moves to



Ever vigilant: Tpr Robert McClymont watches over the buffer zone

cases of determined sniping; rather accidental discharges, or the reactions of nervous sentries.

change the fragile *status quo* which has prevailed since the fighting stopped in 1974.

For 1 RTR, tasked with controlling Sector 2 of the Green Line – by far busiest part because so much of it lies within Nicosia – the increased level of tension meant stepping up the frequency of patrols through the ghostly abandoned ribbon of roads and buildings in Nicosia and in the wider swathe of countryside outside the city. It also meant acting even more quickly than usual to defuse dangerous situations. "Robust" was, again, the key word.

UN troops know from experience that any failure to demonstrate authority will encourage one side or the other to make further moves, an escalation which can dangerously increase tension.

"Each side is as bad as the other. They both try to push it," said Lt Col David Eccles as he stood before a large scale map covering every square metre of the Green Line.

"We might have four or five incidents of verbal abuse, stone-throwing or moving forward into the buffer zone in a day."

Far more seriously, both sides will shoot at each other, sometimes as frequently as once a week. Lt Col Eccles hastens to point out that these are rarely if ever

The men of 1 RTR must react quickly, cajoling, persuading, finger-wagging, and calling in whatever goodwill exists between the relevant side and the UN. Usually they get their way through persuasion, but occasionally a show of determined force is needed. Smiles and chat can give way to curt orders. The UN has that authority.

Recently British soldiers had to move in force to dismantle a new observation post (OP) which the Turkish had assembled from oil drums filled with sand. The Turkish OC was instructed to move them. When he refused, a few dozen UN soldiers moved swiftly to do the job for him. In spite of protests, the drums were emptied of sand and returned to a base behind the Turkish Cypriot lines.

In a land where not losing face is so important even rusting drums have to be returned to their owners.

MUTUAL HATRED

Col Eccles and his men are constantly amazed at the degree of mutual hatred and aggressive resourcefulness shown by both sides. Neither misses a chance to exploit a new weapon or trick. Recently both the Turks and the Greeks have been acquiring laser "pens" and aiming the potentially blinding beams into the eyes of men on the opposite side of the zone.



Ghost town: British UN troops have stepped-up patrols of Nicosia's buffer zone



Nice to see you: Smiles for the soldiers of 1 RTR at the Kyrenia home for mentally and physically handicapped children

The "weapons" are regularly confiscated by British troops, but they know that it is only a matter of time before some other device is aimed across the divide.

Meanwhile diplomacy is the weapon of choice for 1 RTR. Officers and NCOs meet regularly with their counterparts in both the Greek and Turkish forces in an effort to establish trust and friendship. Often meetings take place over meals. It helps confidence-building that many senior officers on both sides have experience of working internationally, and can, to a certain extent, disassociate themselves from the emotions of the dispute.

WATCHING

Working relations on the ground can also be good. Perched atop an abandoned building, behind the blue-painted shelter that clearly identifies it as a UN OP, Tpr Robert McClymont looked up from the telescope which he had trained on a Greek or Turkish position. He acknowledged the shouts of some uniformed Turks in their OP about 50 metres away and smiled. "They want to know what we're doing. They're just watching us watching them. We've all got used to each other now."

But when the friendly contacts are over, everyone returns to their respective posi-

tions, as they have done for 24 years. From their words and actions it seems evident that both Turks and Greeks genuinely fear an attack by the other.

In this tense atmosphere, the blue-capped British troops and their international colleagues, the human buffers, patrol and watch. Armed and vigilant, they are robust but not provocative.

Soldiers' gift of smiles

MANY Cypriots on both sides of the heavily-fortified Green Line are grateful to the nations who have policed this militarised zone over the years. But for a few special groups of people on both sides of this artificial border, the presence of British peace-keepers is particularly welcome.

They are the staff and residents of two homes for mentally and physically disabled young people.

Led by WO2 Alan Woods, a dedicated band of soldiers have been making full use of their unique right to go to-and-fro across the Green Line, taking supplies, support and friendship to homes located in both the Greek and Turkish zones.

Soldier visited the home in Kyrenia in the Turkish-controlled zone, where men from 1 RTR had transformed drab dormitories by decorating them with huge, colourful cartoon characters. They had also bought and installed sophisticated physiotherapy equipment to help the youngsters develop limb co-ordination and strength.

WO2 Woods and his colleagues raised 2,000 Cypriot pounds for each of the homes, while wives back home in Germany supported them by collecting clothes, toys and any other items that might make life easier for the youngsters.

The pleasure that these good deeds have brought the children is obvious in the way they react to the arrival of the UN Land Rovers. Children surround the soldiers, competing for attention.

Alan Woods admits that he and his friends rarely get as much work done as they would like. After a few hours of carpentry, plastering and painting, they usually end up playing with the children. But he knows the children thrive on this kind of attention.

The residents and staff of these homes will be sorry to see 1 RTR go, but the good work is likely to continue. The replacement unit, 19 Regiment RA, has already indicated that it will continue to help the children, and, most importantly, at least one of the local armies is now also lending a hand. Turkish Cypriot engineers are building a new school room at the Kyrenia home.

● More from Cyprus next month



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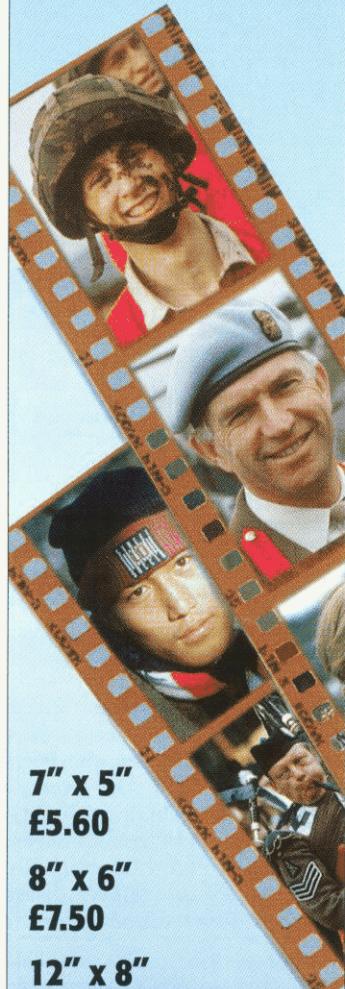
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Rumbled in the jungle

Grenadier Guards' dream hotel in Jamaica was open to the stars . . .

**Report: Capt James Anderson
Pictures: WO2 Pete Bristo**

EVERYONE dreams of winning an expenses-paid trip to the West Indies . . . but for soldiers from the 1st Battalion, The Grenadier Guards the dream came true – almost.

One hundred and twenty soldiers deployed to Jamaica to take part in Exercise Red Stripe. Spaces were at a premium so, in a unique twist, most had to earn their slot by competing in a military skills competition organised by the commanding officer.

Winners were 2 Platoon, The Queen's Company, 12 Platoon, The Inkerman Company and the Recce Platoon.

LSgt Robert Williams summed up the mood: "I think that this was the competition to win. It certainly beats going to the Brecons in Wales."

Although the location was exotic, Red Stripe was designed to teach military skills in a jungle environment. There was also time for community projects and sport.

Maj George Norton said: "My aim was to give the soldiers the finest exercise they had ever been on, not just in military training but many other activities as well."

Jamaica conjures up images of golden beaches, palm trees and sun, but the composite company quickly learned that more than three-quarters of the island is covered in dense jungle. And it was there that the soldiers spent much of their time.

They were taught basic survival skills,

such as ways of finding food in the jungle, and how to remain healthy in an environment in which even minor cuts can quickly become infected. Heat, high humidity and the threat of a mosquito-borne virus added to the potential threats.

They also had to learn to fight in the jungle, where poor visibility means engagements are frenetic, lasting only a few moments as a huge

ly woman and laying a concrete path to improve access for wheelchairs to Port Antonio's hospital. "It's been a bit like working on a chain-gang," joked LCpl Craig Flinham. "The good thing is that you know that our work is going to be appreciated by the locals."

Guardsmen took part in adventurous training, with plenty of opportunities to try diving, snorkelling and water-skiing. For some there was a climb to the summit of the Blue Mountain, Jamaica's highest peak.

But there was one element of the trip which did not go according to rumour control. Word quickly

spread that the exercise was to be located in a hotel with two pools and a jacuzzi.

It was based on fact . . . except the hotel had been abandoned for the past 20 years and the pools had long since crumbled.

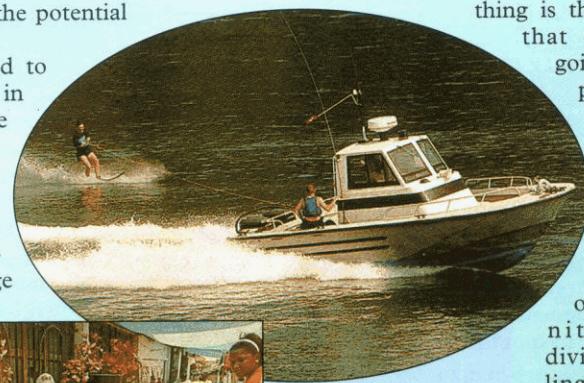
Four weeks of training were followed by four days of R and R . . . and the dream of a Caribbean holiday, albeit a brief one, finally came true.



Water sports: LCpl Peter Downes and Gdsm Adam Smith, both of Inkerman Company



Time out: Soldiers, above, try their hand at water sports during an adventure training package



Food store: Grenadier Guardsmen, left, barter for food in a local market. WO2 Jordan is on the right

weight of fire is directed at close range.

"Ranges in the jungle are much shorter than the guys were used to," said WO2 (QMSI) Paul Redding. "Targets can be as close as 5m and it is quick reactions and sheer weight of fire that provide the winning formula."

Community projects tackled by the Grenadier Guardsmen included rebuilding the storm-damaged home of an elder-

A time to indulge

Confidence and self-esteem are fragile qualities which need to be nurtured in any environment, and especially in the Services. If you would like to share a problem or offer advice of your own, write to Cari c/o Soldier, or BFBS, BFPO 786.

Dear Cari, WE ARE returning to the UK for our last posting. I would like to return to work but don't think I have anything to offer. I was a secretary once but am now out of touch with working life. I don't know much about computers and the adverts ask for skills I've never heard of. – Mrs A (Cyprus).

Cari replies: Are you sure you want to return to the same environment? Office culture may have changed since you last worked in one, so do some research. Many are now highly specialised, which is why you see a variety of skills required.

Narrow your targets. You will have dealt with your children's schools, so might fancy becoming a school secretary. Do you have a particular interest or ability, such as finance? Once you've identified your target, find out all you can about it from people who work in the same environment and from adverts. You'll be able to spot the most frequently required skills.

Talk to agencies supplying temporary secretaries. Some offer free training. You might consider professional career guidance. Some advisers offer aptitude tests which suggest avenues you might not have thought of. You should also talk to the Army Families Federation, who can help with training in computer skills and qualifications. Good luck.

Other issues

THE number of MoD passengers arriving at airheads with baggage in excess of their entitlement appears to be on the increase and poses significant problems for movements staff. A new DCI on **baggage allowances** is in the course of issue.

Views are being sought on extending the **welfare package** available to soldiers on operational tours such as Bosnia to troops on non-operational temporary detached duty

Dear Cari, MY husband is away a lot and I get very lonely. He says I should get out more and go to clubs or get to know our neighbours. But I don't have much confidence and find it very difficult going to places where I don't know anyone. Everyone else seems to have done a lot more than me. – Mrs H (BFG).

Cari replies: I know exactly how you feel. It took a great deal of effort for me to learn the skills of self-confidence – and it is a skill. Almost everyone is daunted by the prospect of going into a room full of strangers. One trick is to ask people about themselves. We like talking about ourselves, so you can't go far wrong. A successful conversation is one in which you do little talking...



Cari Roberts

moving home to cope with. Things are improving and I am getting back on my feet, but I want to make a new start because I feel boring and worn out. My friends and my husband say I'm not, but that's how I feel. We are going to a friend's wedding in the autumn and it is my 40th birthday soon afterwards. I want to look good and feel good instead of being the one everyone feels sorry for. – Mrs R (UK).

Cari replies: From reading your letter in full I know that you have had a truly dreadful time so, first of all, you must allow yourself to feel worn out. You've been very strong for everyone else and now it's your turn to look after yourself. There are two books which you might read. One is *Self Esteem* by Gael Lindenfield, published by Thorsons (paperback, price £5.99), the other *Fabulous in a Fortnight* by Monica Grenfell, published by Pan Books (paperback, £7.99).

The latter is great fun and covers diet, exercise and self-esteem, and it works.

You have a target to aim for in the wedding and your birthday celebrations. More than anything else, you must tell yourself that you've done very well to get through the bad times and that you've given a lot of yourself to your family.

By looking after yourself now you are re-charging your batteries and this will benefit them as well as you. In other words, this isn't self-indulgence... it is necessary.

Dear Cari, I HAVE had a difficult year with marriage problems (now improved), family bereavements and

Confidence and self-esteem are fragile qualities. A chance remark, a thoughtless act or casual neglect can destroy them. While we all have to take responsibility for our own lives we could all be a bit more sensitive about the needs of others.

We assume that everyone else has the rule book for life while we've been handed the one with a vital page missing.

Cari comments:

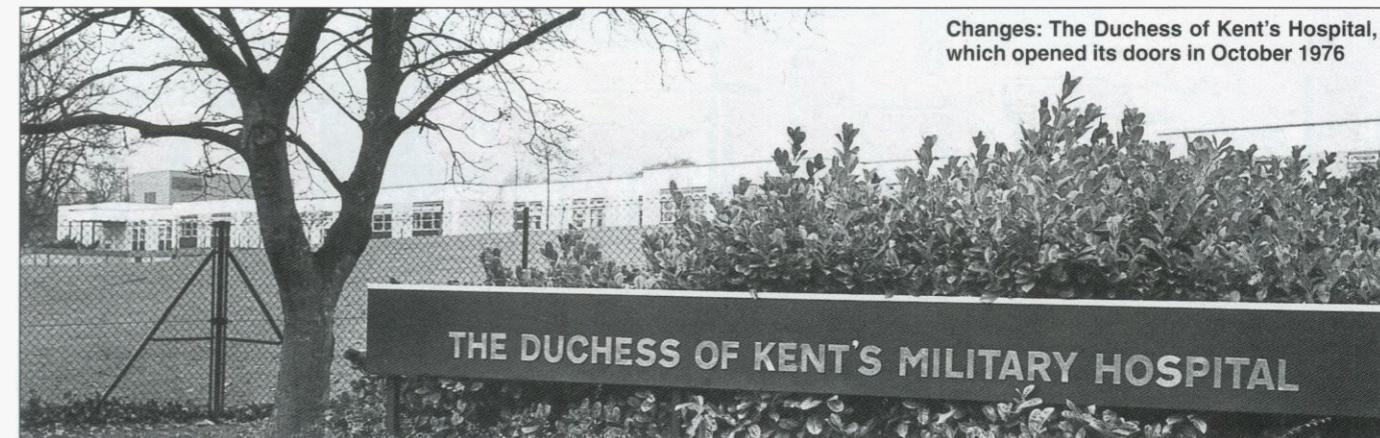
In the old days the informal support structure of Army life helped to make people feel part of the community, whether they liked it or not. These days we are more isolated, socially as well as geographically. The next time you see someone alone at a party, or your new neighbour, take the first step and say hello. They might be a potential new friend.

overseas for more than four months. This would include temporary staff at BATUS, BATLSK, BATSUB and BATSUW.

The 1998 version of the **Family Credit Adviser's Briefing** booklet is available from the Family Credit Helpline on 01253 500050 or Benefits Agency offices. It contains the most up-to-date information on benefits available to working families with children. Orders for the 1998 Benefits Agency catalogue

should be faxed to 0123 252 6121, or write to GPA Interface, Rosepark House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 3NR.

Armed Forces personnel who have served in Germany or are still serving can claim a special discount at the **Hotel Harzburger Hof** in Bad Harzburg, which between 1945 and 1955 was familiar to thousands of troops as BAOR Leave Centre No 4. An ideal location for excursions into the Harz Mountains, the



Changes: The Duchess of Kent's Hospital, which opened its doors in October 1976

Duchess of Kent's to close its wards

A DECLINE in the number of patients using the Duchess of Kent's Hospital at Catterick is behind the decision to end the treatment of in-patients and make changes to public services provided by the hospital. Alternative arrangements are being made for NHS and Service patients.

The future of the hospital has been in question for a number of years.

Brig Kim Stephens, the hospital commander, said: "This is not the end of services from Catterick. We expect that local NHS trusts will continue to treat civilian and military patients from the present site, and we shall work closely with them to safeguard public healthcare.

"However, the number of patients we treat at the Duchess of Kent is falling and do not justify the level of services on offer. That is not good for our training needs and, in the long term, it is not good for the people of North Yorkshire."

Referrals to the Duchess of Kent's Hospital (DKH) have fallen over a number of years, primarily because the military clinicians are from time to time, and sometimes at short notice, required on front-line operations in places such as Bosnia.

Such absences are a cause of concern to referring GPs, who turn elsewhere for treatments.

Options for the hospital ranged from

immediate closure to no change. Neither extreme was favoured, with more than half those who responded to the North Yorkshire Health Authority endorsing a proposed collaboration with the NHS to continue providing health care services at the hospital.

Measures to be taken by the Defence Secondary Care Agency (DSCA) include:

- In-patient care at the DKH, for Service patients, to be provided under contract by a local NHS trust for an interim period of three years

- Continued provision from DKH of a minor injuries unit, medical reception station and outpatient services, to be provided to Service and NHS patients for a three-year interim period in conjunction with the NHS

- A core group of DSCA personnel to be located as a small unit within a local NHS trust to provide military inputs in secondary care for Service personnel, and to form the staffing basis of any future MoD hospital unit in the North

- DKH to close to further in-patients once these services are working properly

- A review of secondary care requirements in the North of England and Scotland to inform future plans for military hospital services in the North

- Defence Services Psychiatric Centre to remain at DKH for foreseeable future.

hotel has good access from the autobahns and Eurostar. The address is Hotel Harzburger Hof, Kurhausstrasse 23, 38667 Bad Harzburg, Germany (tel 0049 5322 7820).

Royal British Legion Insurance Services entered the specialised arena of non-public funds insurance with the launch of Inforce on June 8. The policy is designed to provide comprehensive cover for individual units of the Armed Forces.

The **British Breast Cancer Campaign** is looking for volunteers to make collections or raise funds during breast cancer awareness month in October. If you can help contact Viv Bass on 0171 404 3955.

Pupils at **Lister Primary School**, Herford, Germany are exceeding national expectations in all areas of learning by the age of five, says a report by the Office for Standards in Education. They are also mature and well-motivated.

Ex-soldier Colin joins business big shots

THERE is life after the Army, and Colin Clayton is just the man to prove it. So popular has

become his laser clay pigeon shooting enterprise that he has just received the top honour in the 1997 Warrington Business Success Awards.

Colin (pictured) left the 14th/20th Hussars as a warrant officer in the redundancies of 1992. After 22 years in the Army he bought a laser shoot and went into business, travelling all over Britain and Germany to promote it at military shows and unit events and for corporate entertainment.

Now based at Warrington, Colin's Lasersport has received a seal of approval from local business leaders. He has broadened his appeal by supplying entertainment packages.

This year he has been signed up to do 15 military summer balls, to some of which he is returning for the fourth or fifth year. Regular clients include The Cheshire Regiment, The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire, RMA Sandhurst, the 3rd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery and the School of Signals at Blandford.

Laser shooting can be played by up to five people aiming at the same target. It is completely safe, with the "shotguns" firing harmless infra-red beams.



Juggling jobs

Kentigern House in Glasgow now deals with every aspect of a soldier's life from the moment he joins until he leaves – and beyond

Report: Karen Moseley
Pictures: Terry Champion

THE BUSHY-eyebrowed portrait staring sternly over the Manning and Career Management offices at the Army Personnel Centre (APC) in Glasgow is fitting.

Fd Marshal Sir William Robertson joined the 16th (The Queen's) Lancers in 1877 and is the only soldier in the Army's history to have served in every rank from private to field marshal. The village tailor's son would have approved of what the modern Army is doing for soldiers today.

Before the APC was set up at Kentigern House in 1996 with the Military Secretary at its head, the management of soldiers' careers was dealt with at 11 separate manning offices at five locations.

"This meant there was little scope for co-ordination and standardisation," said Maj Niall Archibald, of the Manning and Career Management Support Division. "Soldiers' issues were behind the curve as officers' careers had always been dealt with together. We wanted to give the same standard of care to soldiers."

Now soldiers and officers are dealt with side by side in nine divisions responsible for each of the main cap badges – Royal Armoured Corps and Army Air Corps, Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers, Royal Signals and Intelligence Corps, Infantry, Royal Logistic Corps, Army Medical Services, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and Adjutant General's Corps.

The fourth and fifth floors of Kentigern House – a futuristic-looking building described by locals as "a pyramid with the top chopped off" – are occupied by military personnel and civil servants dealing with issues which will directly affect the lives of all soldiers and officers.

Each officer and soldier wing is run by a

lieutenant colonel, assisted by a number of SO2s and retired officers. A senior NCO provides administrative expertise for the division and the whole undertaking is supported by civilian administrative officers.

It is here that the vast juggling act takes place of slotting the right people into the right jobs, posting people to places that fit in with their career development and personal circumstances, and preparing detailed documentation for promotion boards.

WO2 (SQMS) Vince Young works in support of the Soldier's Wing of the RAC/AAC division.

"We are here to provide a service to the soldier," he said. "So, for example, if a trooper has a problem his unit can contact us here and we will try to sort it out.

"Maybe his wife has given birth to a child with special needs and his regiment is about to move to Germany. He can put a request through to stay in the area and we will try to help him – we've been very successful in this."

"It is pointless to send a soldier to Germany if his wife or children need medical care in Britain because he would not be able to work properly. The welfare of the soldier is always taken into consideration."

A tap on the computer keys will bring up a soldier's full record of service, with details such as his date of birth, marital status, next of kin, all the courses he has been on with the grades achieved, and all confidential report gradings.

WO2 Young's division, like the other cap badges, is usually contacted by the adjutant, chief clerk or SSM of a regiment.

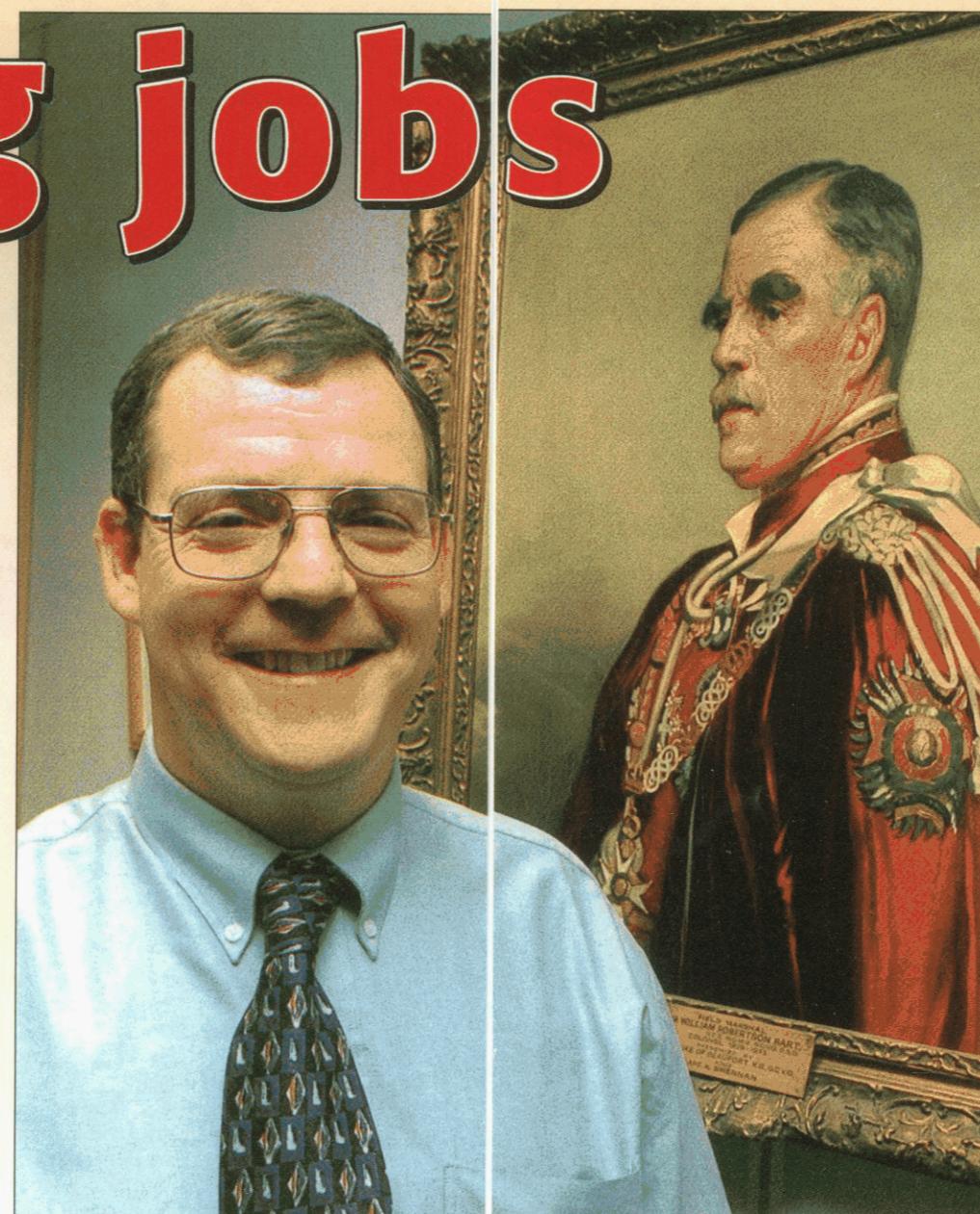
"If it comes to keeping a good soldier in the Army or losing him, a phone call is not a problem," WO2 Young said.

"I get phone calls all the time and if I can't give an answer I can always put them

ACROSS the road and around the corner from Kentigern House is a separate department dealing with TA Reserves and Manning. It is here that volunteers are organised to fill-in empty slots usually taken by Regulars.

Between 500 to 700 TA and Reserve soldiers are serving in Bosnia at the moment, but Maj John Carroll, AGC (SPS), who runs the department, said it was becoming increasingly difficult to find people to go there.

"There are now ten mobilisations a year to Bosnia," he explained. "For every job we need to fill-in we used to have to send out eight letters – now we are having to send out 15."



in touch with someone who can."

The Military Secretary, Maj Gen David Burden, has designated 1998 as The Year of Soldier Career Management. A Soldier Forum has been set up at the APC which consists of all the SO1s who head the Soldier Wings and representatives from Director Manning (Army) and the Personnel, Pay and Pension Administration – the department in the APC responsible for maintaining the records of service.

The Forum looks at the best ways to improve the management and development of careers to the benefit of the Army and the individual. Matters such as protecting career structures and including assessments of potential and performance in a confidential report system are also being looked at.

Each division goes on road shows, visiting the appropriate regiments. Briefings on career profiles and management are given as well as information on available future postings. "We will try to visit a regi-

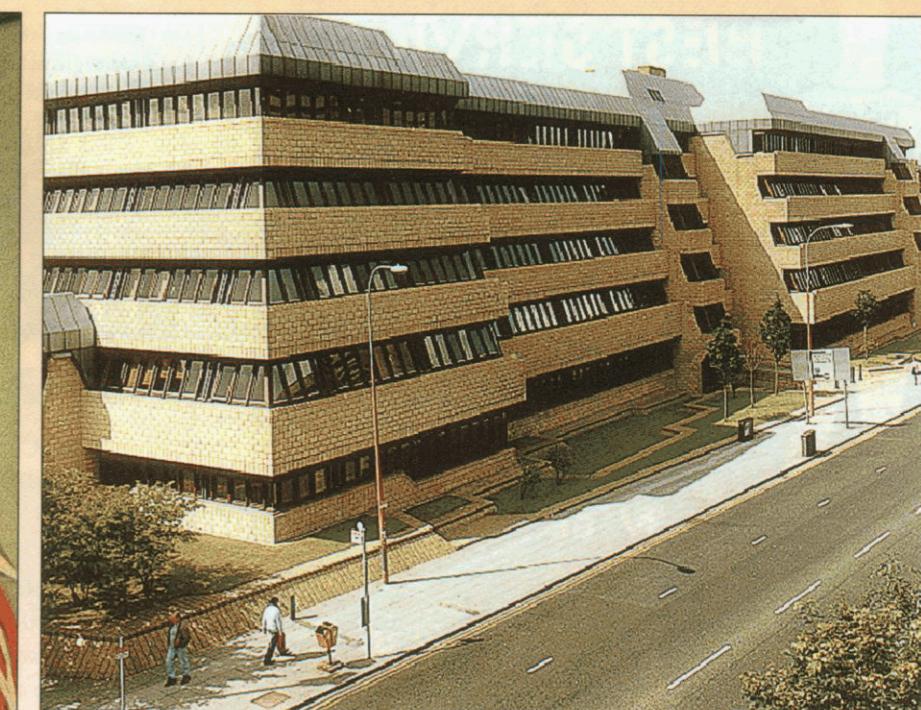
ment at least once a year," said Maj Stuart Thomson, a retired officer who looks after soldiers from the Royal Artillery.

"We discuss manning matters with the CO and give presentations to the sergeants' mess on manning problems. This year we have started to give presentations to bombardiers as well."

"The quality is high at the top so they need guidance to get on the right courses. These presentations are also given to officers so they have an idea of how their soldiers' careers are going."

Promotions obviously play an important part in career planning, and promotion boards take place regularly at the APC. Maj (Retd) Tom Giboney looks after the manning and promotions for the Royal Irish and Parachute Regiments.

"There are three candidates for every promotion," he said. "On our next board there are 128 candidates – each one will have a file and at least five confidential reports will be looked at. Five lieutenant



"Pyramid with the top chopped off": Kentigern House in Glasgow, above

Role model: WO2 Vince Young, left, with the portrait of Fd Marshal Sir William Robertson, the only soldier to have served in every rank from private upwards

For every soldier there is a file: Maj Stuart Thomson, right, with just a few of them



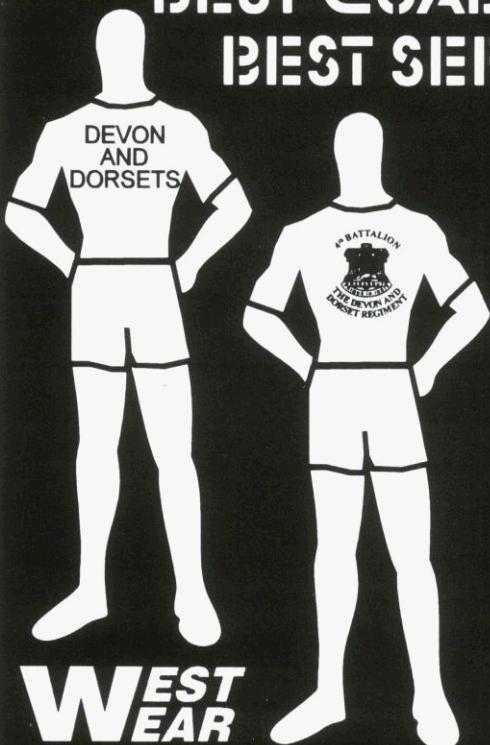
colonels from outside their division will be locked away and will go entirely on what has been written by the initiating officers and COs.

It means that a young soldier joining at 16 could have his or her career and promotions to RSM, commissioning as an officer, and finally pension, all dealt with under one roof.

A few eyebrows were raised when it was first decided that the APC would move to Glasgow, but it is now seen as an unqualified success. Most of the civil servants have been employed locally and the military feel the city offers them everything it needs.

For Maj Archibald, of The Royal Highland Fusiliers, the choice of the city was a good one. He pointed out the inscription on the cenotaph in Glasgow's George's Square which says that out of the 8,854,465 personnel raised in the First World War to fight for the Empire, more than 200,000 belonged to Glasgow.

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Time off

Discovering Chester

City's rich military history is readily accessible... in the company of a Roman centurion

Report: Graham Bound
Pictures: Terry Champion
and Chester City Council

ON THE face of it the little city of Chester, chocolate-box pretty and peacefully tucked away in the north-west of England, is an unlikely place to find a concentration of military history. But Cheshire's county town has been home for several of Britain's most richly traditional fighting units and boasts tangible evidence of the conquests and conflicts which have shaped Britain over 2,000 years.

It was the Romans who put the town on the map. Their *Fortress Deva* was established in the first century AD behind thick stone fortifications which have survived warfare and weather to become the most complete city wall in Britain.

ROMAN REMINDERS

From here the 20th Roman Legion saluted forth, controlling the northernmost region of their empire. But eventually they slammed the gates shut behind them for the last time and made the long trek back to Rome. Fortunately for us, they left behind some vivid reminders of their tenure, including the remains of an opulent villa which, in a delicious clash of cultures, is now located within a *Spud-u-Like* fast food shop.

It's enough to make a Roman wince, but the city council is very grateful for its Latin past. From June to September, council staff dress in the uniforms of Roman soldiers to guide visitors around the city walls, pointing out such features as the largest amphitheatre in Britain and the Dewa Roman Experience, where, thanks to audio-visual equipment, visitors can "experience" the life of an ordinary Roman squaddie on a posting which would make six months in Bosnia look like a Sunday-school picnic.

Chester's famous walls were also put to good use in the middle ages, when the Vikings poured ashore nearby. To their

surprise, they found that Alfred the Great's indomitable daughter Aethelreda (perhaps the original battleaxe) was spoiling for a fight. More often than not, she and her soldiers drove the Vikings back across the North Sea.

During the Civil War the locals sided with the King, which they probably came to regret. Chester was besieged by Cromwell's forces from 1643 to 1646 and eventually surrendered.

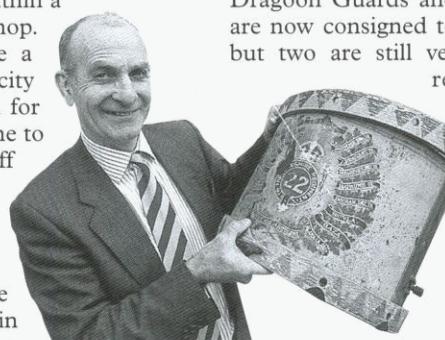
Charles I himself watched from the town's battlements as his men were defeated at nearby Rowton Moor.

A visit to the Cheshire Military Museum, a short stroll from the city wall, is a must. Here an impressive collection of soldiering hardware brings the military story right up to date. The museum concentrates on four local regiments. Two – the 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards and 3rd Carabiniers – are now consigned to the history books, but two are still very much alive and recruiting in Chester. They are the

Cheshire Yeomanry, a TA light reconnaissance unit, and the 22nd Cheshire Regiment, The Cheshire.

Today many people think of the Cheshire in connection with Bosnia, but the regiment has fought all over the world, including the Battle of the Boyne, the American War of Independence, and, of course, the First World War, during which the regiment raised 38 battalions and won two VCs.

The Yeomanry tableau is particularly impressive. Complete with life-size horse



Returned: Curator of Cheshire Military Museum, Maj John Ellis, with the drum which came home after 56 years



Colourful: Chester, above, is full of character and military history

Youngster, right, acts the part

and rider, it portrays a squadron fighting in what many historians believe was the last mounted cavalry engagement. Posted to Syria in 1940, the soldiers engaged a force of mounted Vichy French cavalry.

But some of the most fascinating stories emerge from the most humble artefacts. Such an object is a small and battered side drum.

It had been abandoned at Dunkirk where the Cheshire fought a rearguard action. A French farmer kept it for 56 years before trying to contact the rightful owners. Eventually, news of the drum reached the museum's curator, Maj John Ellis, who immediately arranged for it to come home and for the Frenchmen to receive the regiment's warmest thanks.

Look, too, for the small exhibit honouring an old Inniskilling Dragoon soldier and one of Britain's favourite heroes, Capt Lawrence Oates, the Antarctic explorer.

Military history buffs planning to visit the city might be advised to keep the captain's famous words in mind. They may be some time...



Postcard from the South Atlantic

Sapper detachment garrisons remote outpost on Shackleton's island of mountains and glaciers

Report: Capt Phil Carter RAMC

AS South Georgia is probably the most isolated British military base on the planet it is not surprising that the troops who garrison it, and who spend between four and six months living there, quickly make friends with the local population.

This process does not take long as only four civilians live on the remote

Antarctic island, 850 miles of storm-tossed sea south-east of the Falklands. Two-legged neighbours are augmented by thriving seal and penguin populations, with some of the seals living close enough to the military base to keep half the garrison awake at night with their roaring.

The island has had a British garrison since it was invaded by Argentina in

1982. And the South Georgia Logistic Support Detachment currently deployed on the remote outpost consists of sappers from 69 Gurkha Field Squadron, supported by personnel from the Royal Signals, Royal Army Medical Corps and the Royal Marines.

Regular patrolling across the island's mountainous terrain often takes the soldiers close to, and sometimes on to, the

huge rolling glaciers that permanently cover 80 per cent of the island. Last December, detachment personnel retraced Sir Ernest Shackleton's epic 1916 life-or-death dash across the interior of South Georgia.

Led by the detachment's Royal Marines mountain leader and joined by members of the ship's company of HMS *Endurance*, the patrol successfully crossed the island slightly quicker than Shackleton, helped by modern clothing and equipment.

While out on the ground, patrols are supported by the unit's fast rigid raiding

craft, high-powered boats which skim across the sheltered waters of Cumberland Bay to deploy men and equipment to otherwise inaccessible areas. The boats are also vital in the detachment's other role of supporting the island's civil authority, and regularly assist the fisheries officer to board foreign fishing vessels and cruise ships.

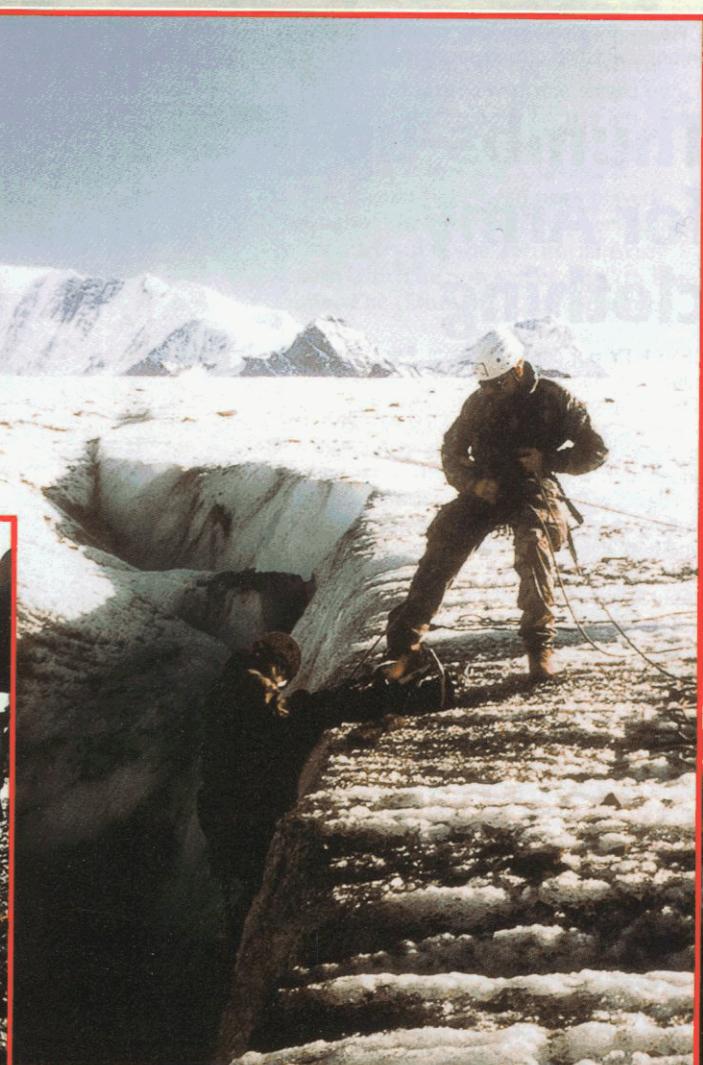
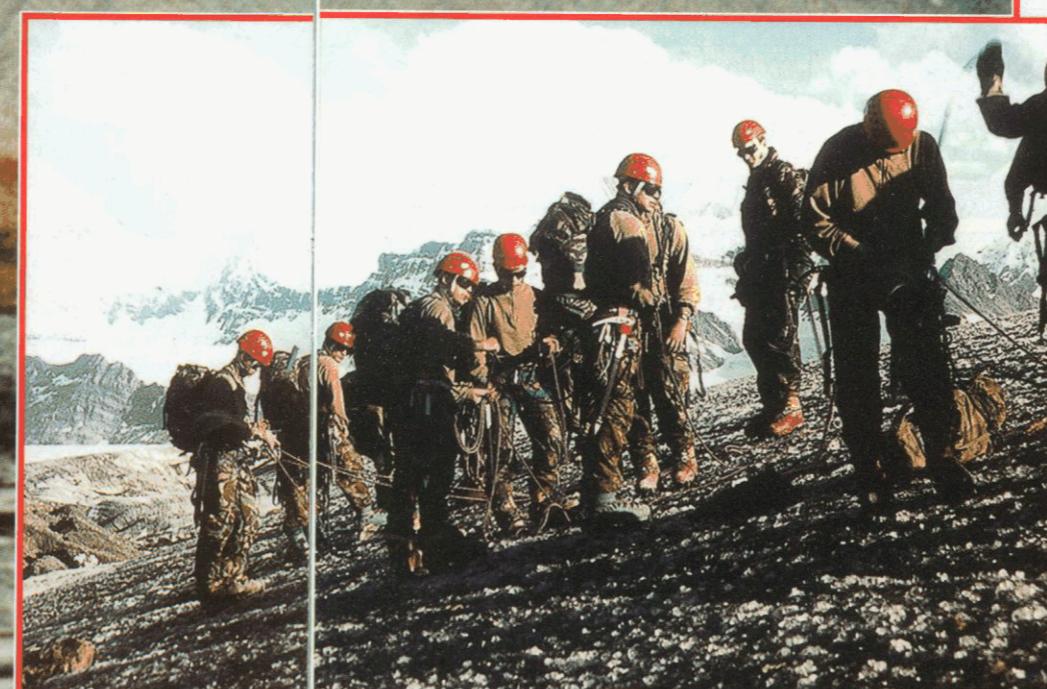
As winter approaches, foot patrolling becomes more difficult, but with a little refresher ski training, the detachment should be as mobile through the long winter months as it is during the Antarctic summer.



Winter scene: Seals live close enough to the base to disturb sleep with their roaring



Summer scene: Penguins soak up the sun on the beach in front of the base



Descending: Sappers, above, learn to cope with the harsh environment of a remote and inhospitable island in the South Antarctic Togetherness: Roped together, sappers from 69 Gurkha Field Squadron, left, traverse a glacier in the footsteps of Shackleton

From Westminster to Wapping

A monthly digest of what's being said in Parliament and the Press

Minister's hint on TA changes

ARMED FORCES Minister John Reid has hinted at a "complex set of changes" for the Territorial Army as a result of the Strategic Defence Review.

Shrewsbury and Atcham MP Paul Marsden had asked on what basis decisions were being taken about which TA battalions would continue.

In a written reply, Dr Reid said: "Our prime aim is to structure the TA in a way that will be relevant and usable in the operational circumstances we foresee.

"But we wish to take account of the valuable economic contribution made by . . . units in their local community."

He emphasised the importance of building on units' existing strong social links with their



communities and with cadets; of building on enthusiasm for voluntary service; of the availability of training facilities; and of the need for close working between TA units and the Regular Army.

"Within these constraints we aim to preserve as wide a presence as possible for the TA across the country.

"It may take some months after our first announcements to reach final decisions on what may be a complex set of changes."

In a Commons debate on the Territorial Army in May, Dr Reid said the review had shown a particular need for such specialists as signallers, drivers, artillery men and women, military police, intelligence and survey teams.

Thumbs-up for Army clothing

SEVENTY per cent of soldiers think the quality of their normal working dress is "OK" or "good", according to a survey.

Almost as many gave the thumbs-up to their combat clothing and personal equipment.

The figures were given in a Commons written answer to MP Andrew George, who had asked how the MoD monitored what Servicemen and women thought about their issued clothing.

In a letter, Mr Michael Roycroft, chief executive of the Defence Clothing and Textile Agency (DCTA), said soldiers were regularly asked their views on clothing in surveys carried out by the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency.

He said the DCTA encouraged those who found fault with clothing to submit defect reports, but added that over the past three years there had been only 187 complaints from 408,000 "customers".

Macedonia exercise: British troops will take part in a NATO Partnership for Peace exer-



Approval: Clothing is "OK", say most soldiers

cise, codenamed Cooperative Best Effort 98, in Macedonia in September.

International exhibition: A new event open to international companies is to replace the Royal Navy and British Army Equipment Exhibition from September next year.

The exhibition, to be organised by a professional company every two years at a venue still to be decided, will be called Defence Systems and Equipment International.

Facts and figures

THE NUMBER of women serving in the Army on April 1, 1998 was 7,432 (6.8 per cent), of whom 1,172 were officers and 6,260 other ranks.

On April 1 more than 43,000 UK Armed Forces personnel were stationed over-

seas in countries including Algeria, Bosnia, Brunei, Canada, Cyprus, Germany, Kuwait, the Falklands and the USA. The figures include those attached to embassies, on exercise, on loan or exchange postings and training overseas personnel.



● Ministers have rejected proposals to cut the Territorial Army to under 10,000 troops as part of the Strategic Defence Review. – *Daily Telegraph*

● NATO foreign ministers warned President Milosevic that the alliance was ready to send troops to Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to prevent the conflict in the Serbian province of Kosovo from spilling over the border. – *Times*

● Britain is planning the biggest airlift since the Second World War because of mounting fears over war in Cyprus. Civilian and RAF planes, supported by the Royal Navy and an Army brigade are earmarked to airlift holidaymakers from the hotspot that is now the Government's chief foreign concern. – *Sunday Times*

● The Army has beaten a chronic staff crisis with a two-thirds rise in recruitment. – *Sun*

● After decades of being kept in their kitchens, Greek women have been given compulsory marching orders by their Government. Athens wants to enlist all women between the ages of 18 and 50 for two weeks of military training every year. – *Daily Express*

● British soldiers in Bosnia are to climb out of their armoured vehicles and on to mountain bikes in an effort to build trust with the often hostile populace. Up to ten bikes are to be delivered to gunners of 159 Battery RA in an experiment. – *Sunday Telegraph*

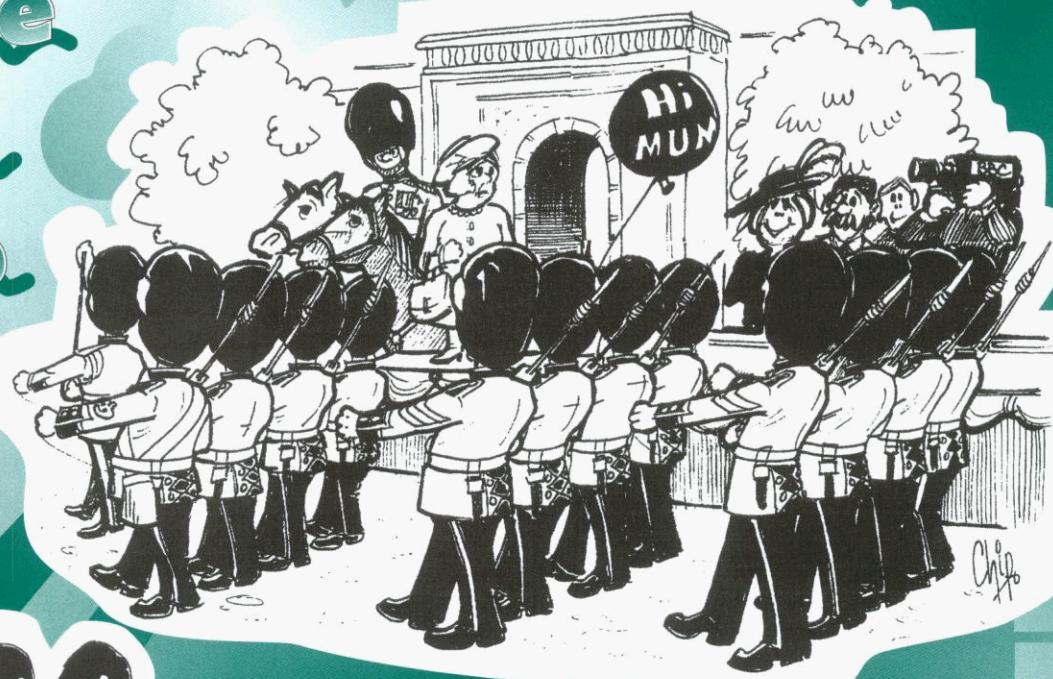
● Swiss scientists are developing a method of using cockroaches to detect land mines. – *Daily Mail*

● British veterans of nuclear tests in the Pacific in the 1950s who say their health was destroyed by the blasts had their hopes of compensation dashed by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. – *Times*

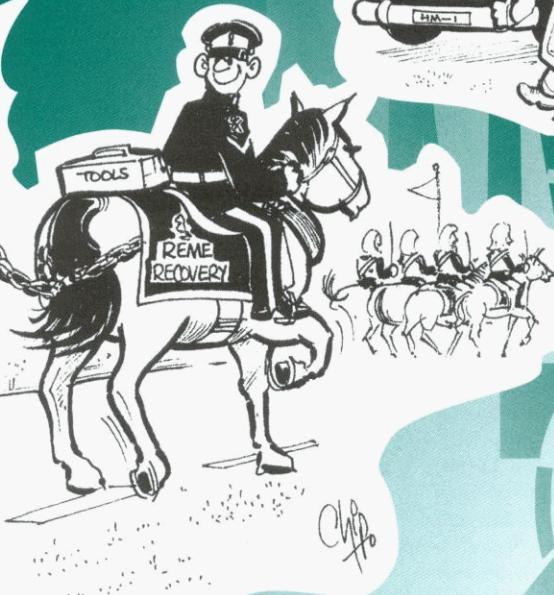
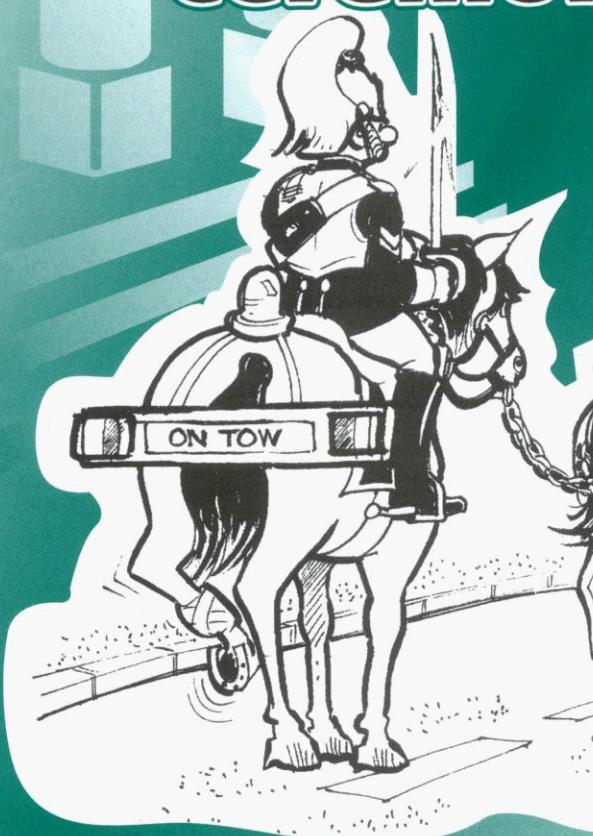
● In the first four months of this year, 132 members of Russia's armed forces committed suicide, according to new statistics which offer stark evidence of the crisis affecting the country's military. – *Times*

● Prime Minister Tony Blair gave qualified hope to thousands of former Japanese prisoners-of-war by promising a fresh legal review of whether Britain can claim £14,000 each in compensation for their wartime suffering. – *Guardian*

Chuckle with Chip.



A touch of ceremony



Who dares . . .

DIVE! DIVE! DIVE!

Ever watched those Jacques Cousteau films and thought: "I fancy a bit of that"? Well, our reporter did, so talking him into diving with the experts at the Joint Services Adventurous Training Centre in Dhekelia, Cyprus wasn't difficult

Report: Graham Bound
Pictures: Mike Weston

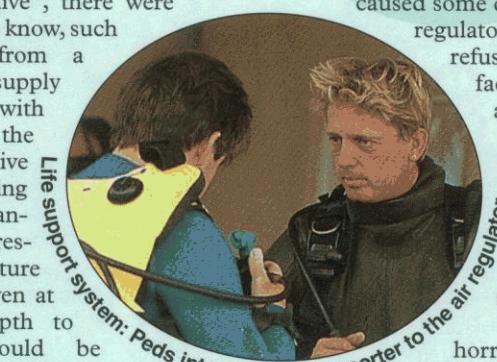
"I KNOW what the mask and snorkel are for," I said. "But why are we carrying a couple of bags of salt-and-vinegar crisps?"

The question was directed to dive leader Paul Pedley (Peds as he's known to everyone at the centre), an ex-soldier who learned to dive in Cyprus and then returned as a civilian instructor. "They're going to get a bit soggy aren't they?"

"You'll see," said Peds mysteriously.

"My first mystery of the deep," I thought . . . a modest one perhaps, but even that smug amphibian Cousteau, who had got me into all this, had to start somewhere. Today Walker's Crisps, tomorrow Atlantis.

Peds had other things on his mind, like teaching me the basics of a potentially dangerous sport. Even though this was to be just a "try-dive", there were



Life support system: Peds introduces our reporter to the air regulator

drills I needed to know, such as breathing from a "buddy's" air supply (you always dive with a "buddy") and the absolute imperative of never holding your breath (changes in water pressure can rupture inflated lungs even at the modest depth to which we would be diving).

I mentioned these horrors to Peds as we liberally applied the baby powder and dragged on our neoprene suits. He didn't exactly laugh, but it was clear that he thought I was over-reacting.

"No need to worry about much of that," he said. "This is a try-dive and we're only going four metres down and it's going to be fun. It is potentially dangerous, but all those things only become a real risk when you go really deep. One day, maybe, but not today. You just worry

First up in this scare-yourself-out-of-scuba book was "the bends", the dreaded

condition, known to every schoolboy, caused by rushing to the surface, Polaris missile-like, without periodic decompression stops *en route*.

Then, intriguingly, there was "rapture of the deep". I wondered if this was what more nudish divers mean when they put stickers on their cars saying "Divers do it deeply." Apparently not. Rapture also goes by the name of nitrogen narcosis, the feeling similar to drunkenness which can be brought on by lingering too long at depths below 30 metres.

Legend has it that "the narcs" has caused some divers to offer their air regulators to the fishes, or refuse to return to the surface even though their air is running out. In such cases, I wondered if a large squid appears on the scene saying: "Come along now, sir, haven't you got some land to go to?"

I mentioned these horrors to Peds as we liberally applied the baby powder

and dragged on our neoprene suits. He didn't exactly laugh, but it was clear that he thought I was over-reacting.

We ran through the more important words and phrases in the diver's sign



Going, going, gone: First steps in scuba diving

about the crisps." This was reassuring and I concentrated on Peds's brief shore-side introduction to my all-important kit, the life-support system.

The hefty weight belt was to give me the downward motion I needed and struck me as a little ironic. I had been fighting to lose weight and here I was putting ten kilos, almost the exact amount that I had lost, back on to my waist.

Next came the jacket-like buoyancy compensation device (BCD), tank, hoses and breathing regulators.

I commented that, out of the water, the tank was remarkably heavy. "Never call it a 'tank,'" said Peds. I had touched on a raw nerve. "Those were the things I used to drive when I was a soldier. These are cylinders, and yes, they are heavy because they have the equivalent pressure of 23 atmospheres in them."

We ran through the more important words and phrases in the diver's sign



You too can dive!

If you are fit and can swim to a reasonable standard, scuba diving may be for you. If you are in Cyprus, contact the Joint Services Adventurous Training Centre in Dhekelia on military 780 98435 4406. Not lucky enough to be in Cyprus? Well, the Joint Services Sub Aqua Diving Centre at Fort Bovisand, Plymouth can advise on training available at other bases around Britain and overseas. Contact them on 01752 405573.

Some very bad parking: Instructor and student

and noticed that he was rooting around in a pocket of his dry suit, obviously looking for something. He produced a bag - the salt and vinegar crisps!

He ripped it open and passed it to me. Just for a moment I thought he had flipped. But then I realised the crisps were for the fish, and they knew it. I was surrounded by the slippery little creatures in a piranha-style feeding frenzy that brought them banging into the glass of my mask and slipping between my body and my air hose. To be hand-feeding crisps to a hundred fish is an experience I will not forget in a hurry.

I realised why divers are so enthusiastic about their sport. It wasn't just the crisps, of course. It was the freedom, the weightlessness, the beauty and the surprising feeling of safety.

Even so, diving isn't for everyone. As Peds succinctly put it, "breathing under water isn't natural". But I found it totally exhilarating.

I plan to build on my experience with a novice diver's course, enabling me to dive to 20 metres. Eventually, perhaps, I will be able to explore the sunken wreck of the 12,000-tonne ferry *Zenobia*, which lies in relatively shallow water just off Larnaca.

I am told that braver divers can swim into *Zenobia*'s restaurant. But I won't bother asking for salt-and-vinegar crisps. There's been a bit of a run on them.

My Army: MURRAY WALKER

Still in the fast lane

Interview: John Elliott
Main picture: Terry Champion

HALF a lifetime ago Murray Walker was involved in a race that was to decide the fate of a large chunk of Europe. Fifty-three years later he is still involved in a race, one that brings the excitement and glamour of Formula One to millions of people around the world.

Murray Walker, 74 years young, lives his life at a pace that would test the stamina of a man half his age. When his high-speed, hyper-enthusiastic commentary on the 1998 Silverstone British Grand Prix rips into households all over country, it will be just one stop on a supercharged 14-nation roadshow that kick-started in April and climaxes in November.

His is indisputably the voice of motor-racing, as surely as John Arlott's was of cricket... totally committed to the sport, passionate about its traditions and its heroes, hugely enthusiastic and with a deep knowledge of what makes it tick.

Murray – it does not seem presumptuous to use his first name within minutes of meeting him – says he never takes a backward glance, which is perhaps why his Second World War service is not widely known. Aged 19, he volunteered to go into tanks. It was 1942 and Britain was fighting for her life. After training at Bovington he went to Sandhurst, where he was commissioned as a second lieutenant. His passing-out parade was inspected by Gen Dwight D Eisenhower.

Sandhurst

"I felt, and still do," he says, "privileged to have been through Sandhurst."

Because he had volunteered, he was allowed to nominate his regiment, which is how 2nd Lt G M Walker came to join the Royal Scots Greys and their Sherman tanks in Holland during the hard winter of 1944. He believes it is because he fought with the Greys that he survived.

"When I joined, a chap called Tony Bonham [Maj Sir Anthony Bonham], who was my squadron leader, told me I would be going into Sgt Cameron's troop. He said: 'You've been to Sandhurst and think you know it all, and perhaps you do. But war is a practical business and Jock Cameron was with us in Palestine, with the Eighth Army in North Africa, Sicily and the Italy invasion, and he's forgotten more than you'll ever know.'

"When he's satisfied that you are capable of running a troop, you'll be given one." "There were tank regiment troops – and I'm not saying this in any denigratory

Voice of Formula One took part in epic dash to the Baltic to save Denmark from Soviet Union

way – that were thrown together and had insufficient training and little experience. They suffered heavy casualties.

"I tagged along and watched what Sgt Cameron did. Lovely chap... and I eventually got my own troop."

His enthusiasm for all things technical is never far from the surface. Initially assigned to a recce troop, which operated in small, rubber-tracked American Honey tanks, he moved on to Shermans with Wright Whirlwind engines... "and then we were given Shermans with Chrysler diesel engines, which were fabulous".

From Holland, the Greys fought the by now retreating Germans back across the Rhine to their own border and beyond. He saw fierce action on a regular basis – he recalls Nijmegen and Tilburg, Venlo, Hochwald, the Rhine crossing in mid-March 1945, Bremen and Udem – which he recalls as "unpleasant".

"The whole bloody place was on fire and the Germans were scuttling about all over the place firing at us."



Tank soldier: the young Murray Walker, photographed in late March 1945, around the time of the "unpleasant" battle for Udem

Of the Germans defending Udem, Lt Col R M P Carver wrote in *Second to None*, his history of the Greys: "They were well supported by artillery, the intensity and activity of enemy artillery fire being the greatest experienced by the regiment since the days of the beachhead in Normandy." Unpleasant, indeed.

It was not far from there that the young Murray Walker returned from patrol one day to find his father – one of the greatest motor-cycle champions of his generation – working as a war correspondent.

Memories, vivid in the telling, flow from him in no particular sequence, a bit like his unique, high-octane, famously accident-prone F1 commentary style.

"It's all blurred together: there was one particularly unpleasant [that word again] thing at Bremen when we engaged a unit of absolutely fanatical young German marines. But I wasn't even wounded. I must have led a charmed life."

With the German Army in full retreat,

the Royal Scots Greys embarked on what has been described as one of the most spirited dashes in the history of warfare.

Their mission, which was to have an immense impact on post-war Europe, was to reach the Baltic before the advancing Russians, so denying them "the sticky-up bit" ... Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark.

The Greys and the 1st Canadian Parachute Regiment raced 60 miles from Luneburg in eight hours to liberate Wismar, reaching it on May 2, just hours ahead of the Russians.

"We were concerned about getting as far east as we could. We were going hell-for-leather and it was quite incredible in the closing stages because when we got beyond Bremen it was full pursuit and there wasn't much fighting."

"The Germans had virtually given in and we were often on the same road going one way while they were going in the opposite direction. There was no animosity; they knew what their priority was – to get away from the Russians."

"The first Russian I saw was a soldier sitting on a captured BMW motor-cycle outfit, with an officer sitting on the high pillion behind him and a woman soldier in the sidecar. We did the shaking hands and grinning at each other bit."

The Allies shared a victory parade in Wismar on May 11, 1945, although the fraternisation was uneasy. Russian soldiers broke into a German V2 base outside Wismar to steal rocket fuel... to drink.

Balked of further progress to the north and west, the Soviets built an enormous roadblock to the east of Wismar – the first fold in the Iron Curtain and perhaps the first shot fired in the Cold War.

Murray Walker served with the Royal Scots Greys until 1946, when a falling-out with the commanding officer resulted in his being posted to the British Armoured Fighting Vehicles School at Belsen as technical adjutant in the rank of captain. Reluctant to talk about the episode, he

says only that with hindsight he must have been "a pain in the arse" to the CO, and admits to charging about the lines on motor cycles (he had started a regimental club and was building them with the fitters), "having the odd conversation with German women, and occasionally becoming inebriated in the mess".

The officer who facilitated his move was the then 29-year-old Brig Mike Carver, commander of the 4th Armoured Brigade and later to become Chief of the Defence Staff and a field marshal.

"A bloody fantastic man," is how Murray remembers Lord Carver. "We would be sitting in our tanks, all battened down, when there would be a thundering on the turret, and you'd open the flaps and there would be Mike Carver standing on the tank looking down on you. He was God as far as I was concerned."

Murray left the Army in 1947 to join Dunlop's advertising department. In his spare time he began commentating on motor sports for BBC radio and television. He moved to Aspro, raced motor cycles ("I wasn't good enough to make a living out of it"), and was head-hunted by McCann Erikson, one of the world's largest advertising agencies.

Odd broadcast

In 1959, he joined Masius Wynne Williams, becoming a "fairly big shareholder" as it underwent a series of mergers which created Britain's largest agency – "bigger than J Walter Thompson or Saatchi and Saatchi". After a hugely successful career, he retired in 1982 at the age of 59½ and thought he might have the odd broadcast "to keep me going and stop me working in the garden".

If only he had known.

An appearance on *This Is Your Life* brought an invitation from The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, within whom the Greys were amalgamated, to visit them and their new Challenger 2s at Fallingbostel.

"Of course I would love to go but the Grand Prix season is just about to start [Murray was due to fly to Australia a few days after giving this interview at his beautiful home in Hampshire] and I have to walk on a knife edge between meeting all my commitments and making an occasional guest appearance at home."

"They have kindly invited my wife, Elizabeth, as well."

Which opens up the unlikely possibility of Britain's most potent tank working its way into a breathless Murray Walker F1 commentary... shades of that heroic sprint to the Baltic more than 50 years ago.

Racing man: Murray Walker with memorabilia which lines the study in his Hampshire home



Town of faith and hope

Lourdes, a place of miracles, draws the sick, sad and hopeful in their millions

Report: Karen Moseley
Pictures: Terry Champion

TUCKED away at the foot of the Pyrenees, Lourdes, 150 years ago, was a typical, unremarkable small French village on a fast-flowing river, overlooked by an imposing castle.

But on Thursday, February 11, 1858 an event happened which was to make Lourdes one of the most famous places in the world. Fourteen-year-old Bernadette Soubirous was sent by her impoverished parents to hunt for firewood by the edge of the river. The former prison cell where the family was living was cold and damp.

APPARITION

While she was walking in front of a small cave she saw an apparition of a woman dressed in white. The apparition remained silent, but a week later spoke to the girl and asked her to go to the small grotto every day for a fortnight. During the series of apparitions that followed, the Lady told Bernadette she wanted people to go to Lourdes in procession, to pray and to do penance.

The people came – in their millions – when it was realised that the woman Bernadette saw was a vision of Jesus's mother, Mary. Miraculous and well-documented cures have taken place over the years when sick people bathed in the waters from the spring which appeared at the same time as the apparitions.

BASILICA

The pink roses which flowered for the first time during that February 140 years ago still frame the grotto on top of which a huge basilica, consisting of three churches, was built. This now forms the heart of the religious area.

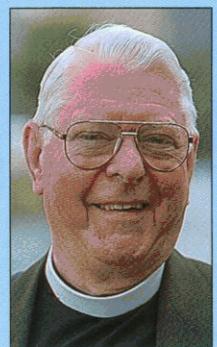
Today the town is full of hotels, churches and souvenir shops. But shortly these impressions fade into the background and the images which remain are of people, young, old, dying, sick, sad or well, coming to a place of hope.



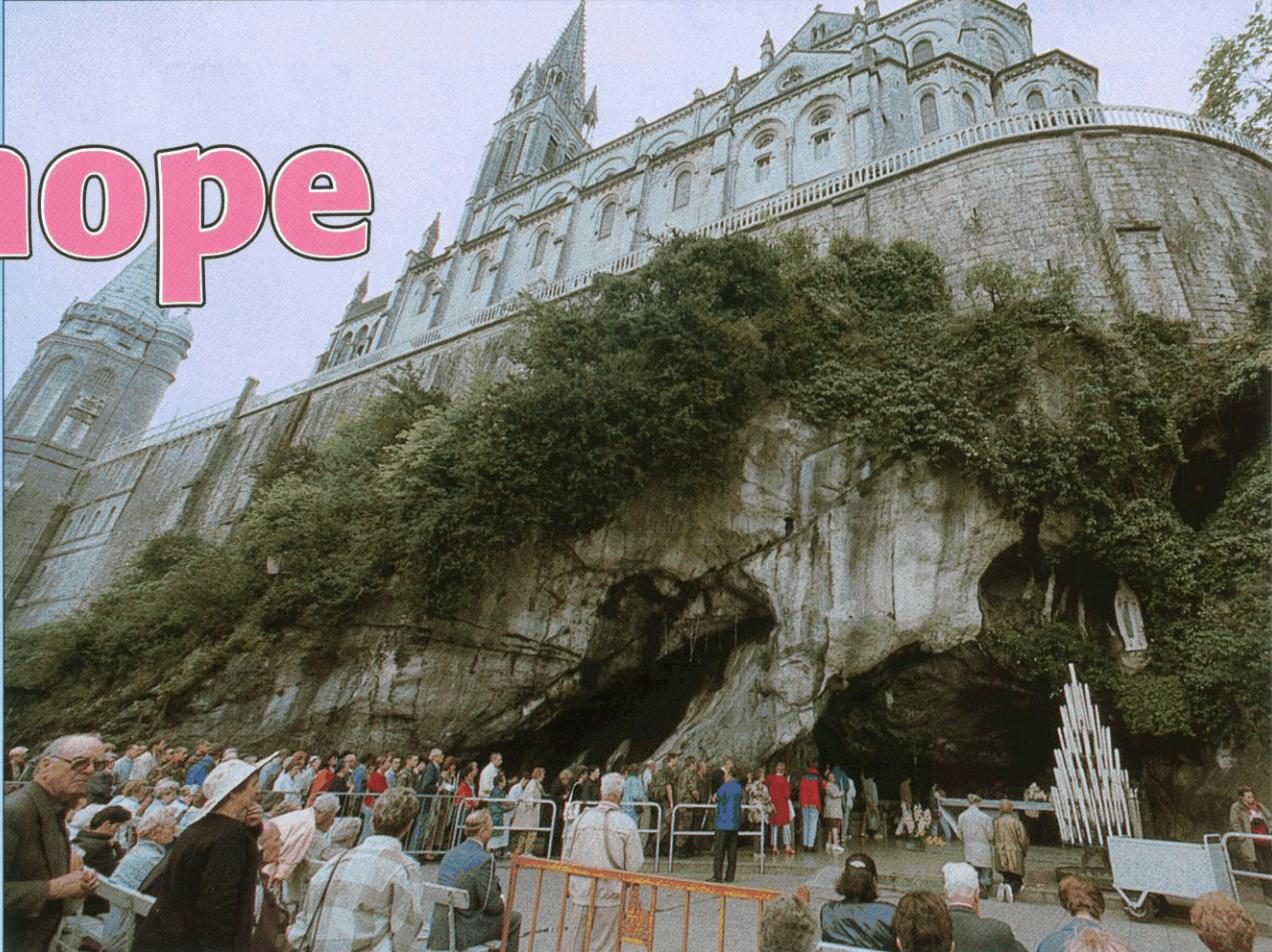
Epicentre: The grotto, above, where apparitions of Mary appeared to Bernadette, is visited by millions of people each year



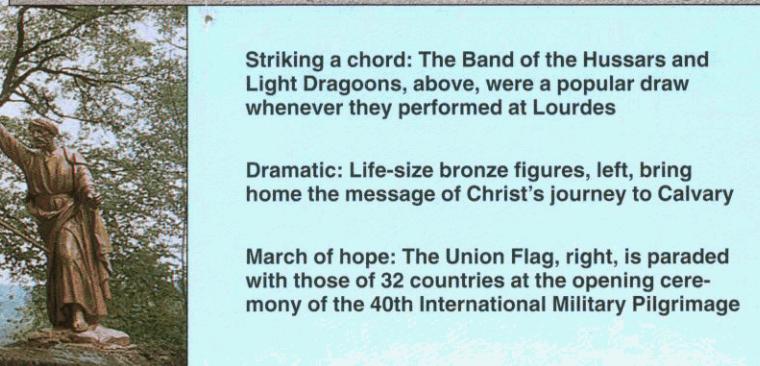
Priority: The sick and infirm, right, always take first place in Lourdes



"The last thing you can say about Lourdes is that it is 'churchy':": The Rt Rev Francis Walmesley, above, Catholic Bishop of the Forces



Striking a chord: The Band of the Hussars and Light Dragoons, above, were a popular draw whenever they performed at Lourdes



Dramatic: Life-size bronze figures, left, bring home the message of Christ's journey to Calvary

Impressive: Three churches form the basilica, above, which has been built on top of the grotto where Mary appeared to Bernadette



Bright and brash: Commercialism in the shops, right, is kept well away from the religious areas



March of hope: The Union Flag, right, is paraded with those of 32 countries at the opening ceremony of the 40th International Military Pilgrimage

Twelve years of jungle-bashing

Emergency in Malaya cost lives of 500 soldiers

FIFTY years ago the Malayan Communist Party began a campaign of terror that was to draw 50,000 British troops from 38 regiments into an emergency which lasted 12 testing years, writes John Elliott.

Commonwealth troops were soon engaged in a cat-and-mouse war fought in jungle, swamp and rubber plantation.

When the Japanese occupied Malaya during the Second World War they treated the Chinese population brutally, driving them into the jungle to join the Communist-inspired Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA), which then enjoyed active British support.

In June 1948 the Communists, having failed by political means to wreck the Federation Agreement on which the constitution was based, mobilised the MPAJA Old Comrades' Association and returned to the jungle. A State of Emergency was declared on June 16, 1948 following the murder of three European managers on a rubber estate near Sungai Siput.

At the time there were 11 infantry battalions in Malaya, three of them British and six Gurkha. Two years later, with terrorist incidents rife, Lt Gen Sir Harold Briggs was appointed Director of Operations and began a process of resettling the Chinese rural population in protected villages, gradually severing the contact between the terrorists and local communities.

Gen Sir Gerald Templer took over in 1952 and under his dynamic leadership the tide was turned. By 1954 there were 22 infantry battalions in Malaya and the terrorists were on the run. By 1957 the Emergency was virtually over, with Malaya becoming an independent member of the Commonwealth at the end of August that year. The State of Emergency was ended on July 31, 1960.

By then Commonwealth losses amounted to more than 500 Servicemen killed and nearly 1,000 wounded, with 7,000 terrorists dead, 3,000 wounded and another 3,000 in captivity. Civilian casualties amounted to 3,000 killed or missing.

It was a campaign which proved again how adaptable and inventive the British soldier is.

The King's Own Scottish Borderers, for example, went into battle floating silently down a river on inflated tyres; the Queen's Royal Regiment paddled to a terrorist camp

in dug-out canoes; troops cycled 20 miles to capture a bandit; the Devons went into action by train, concealed under tarpaulins in steel wagons; and a gunner officer, according to *Soldier* at the time, took a bow and arrows on patrol. Men of 22 Special Air Service pioneered a way to parachute safely through the jungle canopy and spent months in the field.

Gunners of 26 Field Regiment RA, stationed in Malaya when the emergency broke out, operated as infantry for more than three years, killing 100 terrorists and destroying 127 camps. The 4th Queen's Own Hussars, hastily dispatched in June 1948 with the 2nd Guards Brigade and No 2 Company RASC, carried out a dual role in their armoured cars and on foot. The Grenadiers, Coldstream and Scots Guards between them captured more than 250 terrorists.

The 1st Battalion, The Suffolk Regiment notched up 199 bandit casualties, covered more than two million miles on patrol in 2½ years and wore out 15,000 pairs of boots. The 1st Battalion, The Hampshire Regiment took part in 69 operations in eight months.

One of the toughest operations was carried out by the Royal Scots Fusiliers, who searched the mountains near the Thailand border for terrorists and their supply dumps.

The following major Commonwealth units served in Malaya from 1948 to 1960:

Royal Artillery – 2, 25, 26 and 48 Field Regiments; 1 Singapore Regt RA; 105 Fd Bty, Royal Australian Artillery.

Royal Armoured Corps – King's Dragoon Guards; 4, 11, 13/18 and 15/19 Hussars; 12 Lancers.

Infantry – Grenadier, Coldstream and Scots Guards; Queen's, Royal Lincolns, Devons, Suffolks, Somerset Light Infantry, West Yorks, East Yorks, Green Howards, Royal Scots Fusiliers, Cheshire, RWF, South Wales Borderers, KOSB, Cameronians, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, Worcestershires, Royal Hampshire, Foresters, Loyals, Royal West Kent, KOYLI, Wilts, Manchester, Seaforth, Gordons, 22 SAS, Rifle Brigade, Parachute Regt, Gurkha Rifles (eight battalions). King's African Rifles. Northern Rhodesia Regt and Rhodesian African Rifles. Fiji Infantry Regt. Royal Australian Regt. New Zealand Regt. Singapore Infantry Regt.

CIOR looks at modern role for reserves

THE part reserve forces play in a post-Cold War world will be one of many subjects discussed during the 50th anniversary of the Summer Congress of the Interallied Confederation of Reserve Officers (CIOR), writes Karen Moseley.

The conference will take place in Brighton from July 13-17.

The Confederation, currently headed by Britain and presided over by Brig Michael Browne, a High Court judge, exists to bring together a "multi-national, militarily aware, highly-motivated group of influential reserve officers".

Col Christopher Newbould, of the CIOR 98 Project Team HQ at Land Command, said the conference would discuss a number of issues relevant to the role of reserve forces today, particularly in relation to the collapse of the Iron Curtain.

TODAY'S ROLE

"It will be looking where that role is no longer clear-cut and there is no distinct threat to identify," he said.

"There will be healthy interaction between the different representatives taking part. There is a lot of interest from other countries in the way we in Britain do business, particularly from Partnership for Peace countries.

"There is no better proof of a democratic society than having military people trained voluntarily, living in the community and posing no threat to society. We take these things for granted."

The Confederation of Interallied Reserve Medical Officers will assemble at Brighton at the same time. The theme this year will be "Blood Supply in War".

A military competition, involving 300 young officers from NATO and Eastern Europe, will take place at Aldershot between July 14-16. It will take the form of a Reserve Forces' "Olympics", with competitors taking part in shooting, orienteering, swimming, obstacle courses, first aid and military skills events.



Jungle business: A *Soldier* photograph of a British soldier on patrol in Malaya

Soldiers dressed to kill

Report: Anthony Stone

THE soldiers were told to take off their uniforms, led to the assault course and shot. Some of them were shot more than once. They were the ones who couldn't stop grinning.

But then fashion photography is a funny old business. And these "models" were new to the game.

In a break from their usual duties, soldiers attached to the School of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering at Bordon were asked to sport the latest designer combat gear for a fashion spread in *GQ Magazine*'s October edition.

GQ, the style bible of the fashion cognoscenti, approached the Army for help in setting up the feature. The Army provided the backdrop and the clothes horses.

The combat look is hot at the moment and according to Jo Levin, *GQ* fashion director, it's going to get hotter.

"Utility clothing has always been in fashion with young guys," she told *Soldier*. "They have always gone to army surplus



Picture: Mike Weston

Sartorial sappers: What the fashion-conscious will be wearing into battle this season

stores. The clothes are hard-wearing, comfortable and look good."

Jo wanted soldiers to model the gear because realism is the ultra-chic look in the fashion world at the moment. "When men look at magazines they relate to real

guys doing their thing," she said.

So could the guys cut it on the catwalks of Paris and Milan?

"Well they're great characters," she said diplomatically. "Who knows? Watch this space."



In the bag: The Packington

New opening for photo-bag

IT'S seen action in some of the toughest spots in the world. For more than 20 years photographers and travellers have used Billingham bags to carry their valuable equipment safely.

Now the firm has reintroduced the Packington, a Billingham classic from the 1970s, following interest sparked by Michael Palin's world travel series on BBC television.

The bag is made from top-grain leather and waterproof canvas, uses zippers across all the pockets and carries a removable waist strap to deter thieves.

Priced at £124, the Packington is available from photographic retailers. Call Billingham on 01384 482828 for a colour brochure.

Dump trucks roll out

THE Royal Engineers are to take delivery of a new generation of self-loading dumper trucks which will fulfil both peacetime and battlefield roles.

The 121 Volvo trucks will have a versatile role, from handling the distribution of general cargo in peacetime to supplying frontline construction operators on the battlefield.

Designed by engineers at Volvo's plant at Irvine in south-west Scotland, where the trucks will also be built, the all-wheel drive six-wheeler is based on the heavy-

duty FL12 tipper model which has been developed to meet the precise needs of the military.

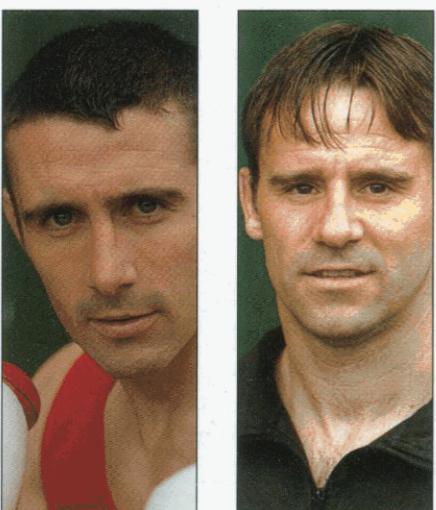
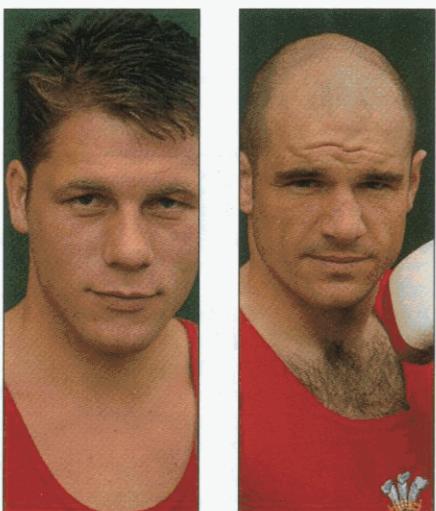
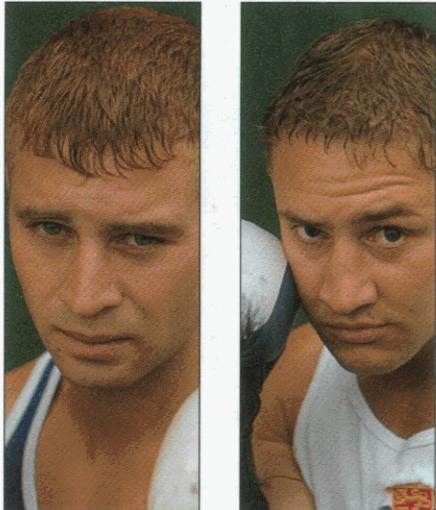
Specification of the 4.3m wheelbase truck which, ready for service, can carry 12.8 tonnes or six NATO pallets, includes the Volvo D12A340 turbocharged diesel engine, an eight-tonne front axle and a 20-tonne rear bogie.

The Royal Engineers will start taking delivery in October with completion by May 1999. The order is worth approximately £13m.



Clean start: The self-loading dumper truck has been designed to meet military needs

BOXING



Seconds out: From the top, left to right: Fus Darren Williams and Pte Kevin Bennett; Cpl Chris Bessey and Gdsm Kevin Short; Cpl Vinny Powell and SSgt Andy Edwards

Hit squad on target

THEY call him "The Boss". For five years SSgt Andy Edwards has coached Army boxers, creating one of the most formidable stables of Service pugilists for generations, writes Anthony Stone.

Edwards has one last dream before he moves on. He's planning to land a knock-out performance for his team at the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur in September. The smart money is on his boys seeing him out with a bang.

The squad comprises featherweight Fus Darren Williams (1 RRF), light-welterweight Pte Kevin Bennett (7 Tpt Regt RLC), light-middleweight Cpl Chris Bessey (27 Transport Regt RLC), light-middleweight Gdsm Kevin Short (1 WG)

"The prospects for medals are good. Chris has just beaten the world military champion, we have got no big worries, all the preparation is done."

— SSgt Andy Edwards

and light-welterweight Cpl Vinny Powell (36 Engr Regt).

"This will be my last big one," Edwards told *Soldier* in a break from training at the Army Boxing Centre at Aldershot.

"But I've planned for this. What we've got now with these people has taken three years to come to fruition. It's taken three years of planning.

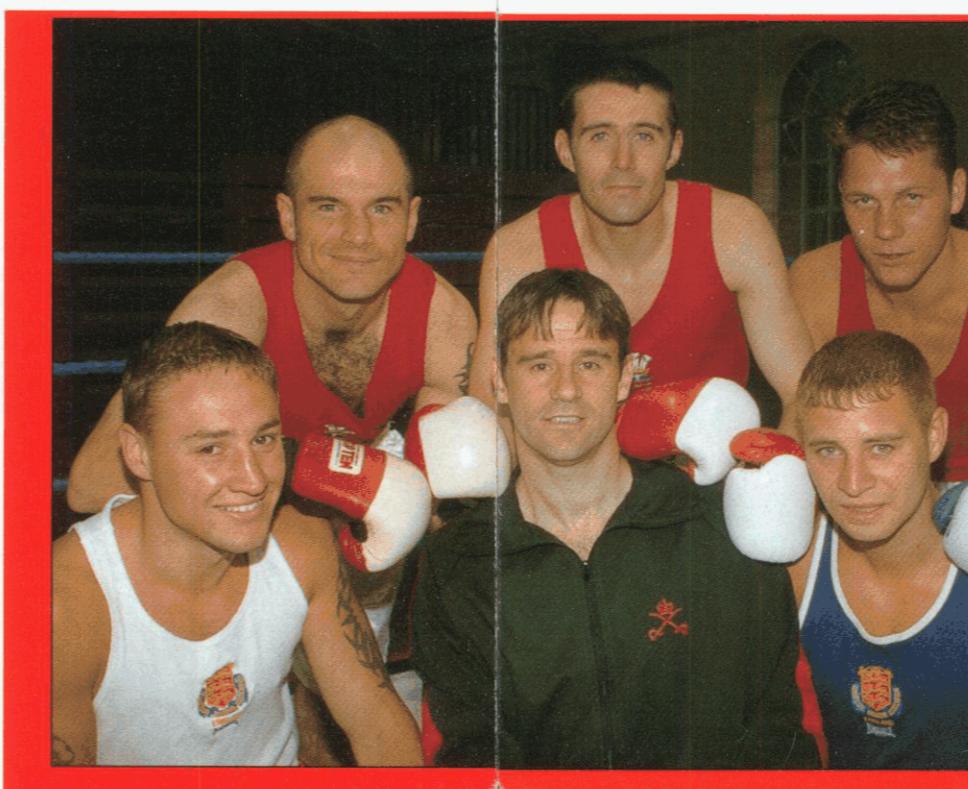
"Chris (Bessey) has just won a bronze in the Europeans. The European championships has got to be one of the hardest competitions in the world now."

Bessey, the ultimate competitor with four ABA titles under his belt, agrees. The break-up of the former Soviet Union has meant it is much harder to qualify for the competition.

"I think the European Championships are now probably the third hardest after the Olympics and the World," he said.

Although Bessey has a healthy respect for his opposition, particularly the Canadians, Australians and the African nations, he is full of confidence. A boxer at the top of his trade. His trainer exudes

The Army has always prided itself on its boxing prowess. But this year something extra special is taking shape at the Army Boxing Centre at Aldershot. In September at the Commonwealth Games these boys are going to shake-up the world



Heavy hitters: SSgt Edwards (front centre) together with arguably the finest collection of Army boxing talent for a generation. The squad has Commonwealth glory in its sights

the same self-assurance. "The prospects for medals are good," Edwards said. "Chris has just beaten the world military champion, we have got no big worries, all the preparation is done."

Army boxing has always been strong, and for well over a decade soldiers have been sweeping all before them. But success on the international stage is only the most visible manifestation of the quality of the entire structure of Army boxing.

"It's the depth," said Edwards. "What I basically put it down to is the commit-

ment of the commanding officers releasing the soldiers. If they did not release the soldiers then this would not exist.

"These boxers (the A team) stay with me all year. They're here all the time. You might say it is a privilege to get that but they do put in a lot of work".

What "a lot of work" translates to is about 40 hours of training a week, including video analysis and competition watching. These lads are very, very fit.

Edwards said: "The A team, who are the internationals, can do as much as they

do because the B team, who the COs release, helps support them. The A team don't have to box domestically, only in the championships.

"So if I've got a team match, say, I would not use my top boys because I would not need to. The B team can come in. The B team supports the internationals."

Edwards is keen that all the Army boxers benefit from the high-profile success of the Commonwealth squad.

"In reality, although Chris is the leading light of the team it is not just about him. He is the flag-waver. But you've got Kevin Short behind him who is rated number two in the country. Chris just beat Kevin

Although Bessey has a healthy respect for his opposition, particularly the Canadians, Australians and the African nations, he is full of confidence

in the European championships, but only just.

"Then there's Micky Barker just straight in behind him. Then you fall down two weights and Darren (Williams) is number one in the country at featherweight (57kg) and Vinny Powell is number one at light-welter (63.5kg). The talent is there. The lads coming up are just as good."

The stage is set, the homework has been done and now the pressure builds. Edwards empathises with his charges, but he knows when the bell goes, the boys are on their own.

"It's human nature to fight," he said. "But this is fighting with rules which is harder to do. Any idiot can stand down the town throwing punches, thinking he's a dead brave man."

Andy shrugs with contempt. That's not courage. Then he nods in the direction of Bessey.

"But when you climb through those ropes the pressure must be immense on these kids. Immense."

SQUASH

Legend scores title honour

MAJ Robbie Robinson has been made an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in recognition of his tremendous contribution to squash. This season also saw him voted RLC Sports Personality of the Year. Maj Robinson's playing record is unlikely to ever be surpassed.

Maj Robinson has been the RAOC/RLC number one since 1971. He has played in every Army championship since 1976, reaching the final 19 times and winning the championship 14 times.

He represented England in 1979 and represented Hong Kong from 1987 to 1989. He was also crowned British Amateur Champion in 1988 and the World Masters Over-40 runner-up in 1993. He has been the Combined Services Champion seven times since its inception in 1983.

CANOEING

Fast-water event a big challenge

THIS year's 1998 Land Command canoe slalom championships took place on the river Teifi at Llandysul in South Wales. The demanding course set the scene for the hardest-contested men's open kayak event for many years.

SSgt Andy Dobson (2 Signal Sqn (V)) in his final Land Command event before retirement was hungry to win, but had to be satisfied with third place.

Sgt Tony Harris (5 Regt RA) had been training hard all season to challenge the title holder, Lt Pete Francis AGC (AAC Arborfield). On the day Pete's training regime came to the fore and he retained his title with an 18-second lead.

The unit team trophy was retained by 5 Regt RA, Maj Paul Hepworth RLC (AS of Cat) retained the Canadian Singles title and the Canadian Doubles title with Maj Colin Calderwood RA (ATR Pirbright). The women's event was won by LBdr Lawrence (16 Regt RA).



Men's K1 winner

Sport

PROFILE

Man for all season

AN OUTSTANDING performance from Sgt "Tosh" Williams during the 97/98 football season has been capped with an award for overall excellence. Tosh, pictured, of 1st Bn 22nd Cheshire Regt, was named Army Player of the Year.

He joined the battalion in June 1984 while it was stationed in Hong Kong.

Football has always played a major part of his life. From the age of ten he represented the Wirral, from 14 the county and at 16 played open-age football for Vauxhall Motors. He also attended a trial for Manchester City when he was only 13.

His military playing career has been equally impressive. Tosh has played unit-level football since his arrival, no mean feat as the Cheshires have won the Infantry cup four times (they were runners up this season), the BAOR Infantry Cup once, and have been the NI cup winners for the two seasons of their present tour in the province.

As well as battalion football, Tosh has won Colours for the Army and the Combined Services.

Much of his spare time is spent following his passion for football. He has actively involved himself in civilian clubs in all his postings, playing for Caernarfon Town (semi-pro), Germania Waesrode, Cambridge City, Hollywell Town and GM Vauxhall (semi-pro).

Cutting edges

A dozen top blades will be going through to the Tri-Service competition following success in the 1998 Army Fencing Championships at the Combat Engineering School, Gibraltar Barracks, Hawley. More than 50 competitors took part in the three-day event, which was open to all arms, with both male and female soldiers taking part in team and individual bouts.

Chairman of the Army Fencing Union, Col Neil Sutherland OBE, pictured, who has been fencing for 32 years, was among those who have qualified for the Tri-Service competition.



Skiers get skates on for new world record

SOME might say soldiers from 158 (R Anglian) Regt RLC (V), the Scottish Tpt Regiment (V) and 1 GS Regiment have been going downhill for years, but that didn't stop them from establishing a Guinness World Record in the sport of roller skiing.

Roller skiing is a method of off-snow training used by cross-country skiers and until now there has never been a record. The RLC took up the challenge and set a formidable benchmark for others to follow.

Support was enlisted from the Corps' best cross-country skiers, past and pre-

sent. The team assembled at the now disused RAF Alconbury near Huntingdon and consisted of Cpt "Two Horns" Tinning, Cpl "Rain Dance" Simpson (Scot Tpt Reg) Cpl "One Arm" Adamson (Scot Tpt Reg) and LCpl Nobby Walker (1 GS). Reserves were Pte "Gumbo" Reed (1GS) and LCpl "Half Ask" Waring (158 R Anglian) Regt RLC (V).

Despite injuries and bad weather the team triumphed, covering 303.9 miles within the permitted time. Nearly £2,000 was raised for SSAFA and the Imperial Cancer Research Fund.



On a roll: Soldiers from the Royal Logistic Corps who set the formidable record

MOTOR CYCLING

Pushed to the limit

SO YOU think you're a good cross-country motor cyclist, writes **Capt Jason Butler**. Now put yourself on a motorbike not designed for endurance work, add a 7km off-track wooded circuit. Imagine it's dark and raining.

The only light is your headlight, your team has already ridden non-stop for 12 hours and there's still 12 hours left to push. Still think you're good?

That was the challenge facing military riders during Exercise Enduring Help. A military motor cyclist has to be able to complete his mission, even when tired in these demanding conditions.

Challenging conditions help train sol-

diers hard so that it makes the fighting easier.

Riders from 31 teams (Regular and Territorial, British and International) took part in the gruelling exercise.

They took part not only for the training value, but also to raise funds. A total of £6,600 was generated to be split between Childline and military charities.

The exercise was organised by Cpt Jason Butler (HQ 15 Bde) and WO2 Graham Gorse (47 Regt RA).

The winning team from 5 Airborne Logistic Battalion completed 121 laps (874km), equivalent to riding from London to Aberdeen without roads.



TENNIS



Call customer: Tennis umpire Capt Andy Main prepares for the grass courts of SW19

Andy's second service

CAPT Andy Main will be swapping his green uniform for a Wimbledon tennis championship blazer when he umpires his first grand slam tournament this month.

The officer, who keeps the Army fed, watered, fuelled and transported as a member of the Royal Logistic Corps, works at the headquarters of 143 (West Midlands) Brigade at Copthorne Barracks, Shrewsbury.

He started umpiring after his own game went off the boil. "When I started losing in the first or second rounds of tennis tournaments, I realised I ought to start looking for another area in which I could still be involved at a high level. I was introduced to umpiring and haven't looked back since."

A member of the British Tennis

Umpires' Association, Andy has umpired many professional stars in tournaments around the country. But Wimbledon, he readily concedes, is different.

"It is the whole ambience of the place, without doubt it is the holy grail of tennis," he told *Soldier*. "Whether you are a tennis player or ground staff, just being there is the whole thing."

But it is not all fun in the sun, according to Andy.

"It is incredibly hard work. At the end of the day you are physically and mentally quite shattered."

"You can't afford to get it wrong, you've really got to concentrate hard. You can be umpiring in a big match but you miss it because you can't get involved in the same way as the crowd."

FOOTBALL

Jubilant cup that cheers

ARMY champions 3rd Battalion REME, based at Paderborn in Germany, have won the 1998 Naafi Jubilee Cup. The competition challenges the winners of the Royal Navy Cup, the Army Challenge Cup and the RAF Challenge Trophy to find the overall champion.

Victory is decided by the number of goals scored



Top scorers: The victorious 3rd Battalion REME team

rather than by games won.

The Army team won their two matches 2-0 and 2-1 against their Navy and RAF counterparts respectively.

Star of the tournament was the Army's Sgt Shane Smith, who was awarded man of the match in both games.

SHORTS

Quartet on song

A TEAM from Colchester Garrison has swum, canoed, cycled and run to success at the annual European and Army quadrathlon championships.

The contest at the Army's training base at Bassingbourn, Hertfordshire, was open to Army and civilian teams. It was on a relay basis with each team member completing a different discipline.

The quartet of Cpl Shawn Bailey, Cpl Bren Reese, Cpl Andy Patterson and WO Lawrence Johnson beat 20 teams including tough competition from Czechoslovakia, Germany and Spain, and now stands a chance of qualifying for the world championships in Ibiza in September.

Whistle-blower honoured

A SOLDIER who has been blowing the whistle on his rugby-playing colleagues for the past 18 months has been awarded a top sporting honour.

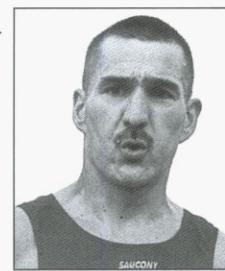
RQMS Tony Merone has been named Army Rugby Referee of the Year, less than two seasons after hanging up his playing boots and picking up a whistle.

He was presented with the award by the Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Roger Wheeler, at an end-of-season dinner held at Reading University.

The former tight-head prop played throughout his Regular Army service and formed a team in the Territorial Army unit in which he now serves, the 7th Battalion, The (Durham) Light Infantry.

Tough get going

WO 2 Stuart Dinwoodie, pictured, of 157 Regt RLC (V) scored an outstanding victory at the Army duathlon championships held at Worcester. The distances for the event consisted of a four-mile run, followed by a 16-mile cycle and a two-mile run. The event, the first of the season, attracted a high standard of competition, including athletes who have represented Great Britain at the World Championships.



Triple challenge

ARE you up for the 1998 London triathlon? This year's gruelling triple-decker has been recognised by the International Triathlon Union as one of the few world-class events in which points earned count towards eligibility for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Up to 300 teams are being invited to start on September 20 with relay team members each completing one stage of the race, which comprises a 1500m swim, a 40km cycle race and a 10km run in rapid succession.

Sport

CRICKET

St George runs into a bit of form

ARMY and Combined Services skipper Capt Chris St George led from the front as the Services won their first two representative cricket matches of the season against strong opposition.

His undefeated 67 against the Earl of Arundel's XI ensured that SAC Mark Bray's superb 137 was a winning effort, while knocks of 97 and 65 not out against the England Under 19 side at Vine Lane put the Servicemen on the road to a second fine victory.

Another face familiar in military cricketing circles made the first impact at Arundel, former Army captain Richard Greatorex scoring his by now customary century in a first-wicket stand of 223 with Tim O'Gorman (118), of Derbyshire.

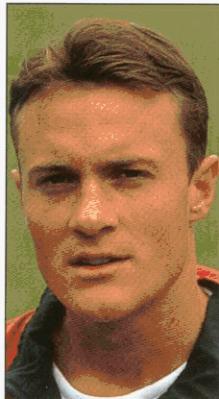
Greatorex's declaration was on the generous side as he left the Services 48 overs to score 281, which they did with an over and six wickets to spare.

Earl of Arundel's XI 280-2 (R Greatorex 130, T O'Gorman 118). **Combined Services** 284-4 (SAC M Bray 137, Capt C St George 67 not, Sgt G Lumb 51). Services won by 6 wickets.

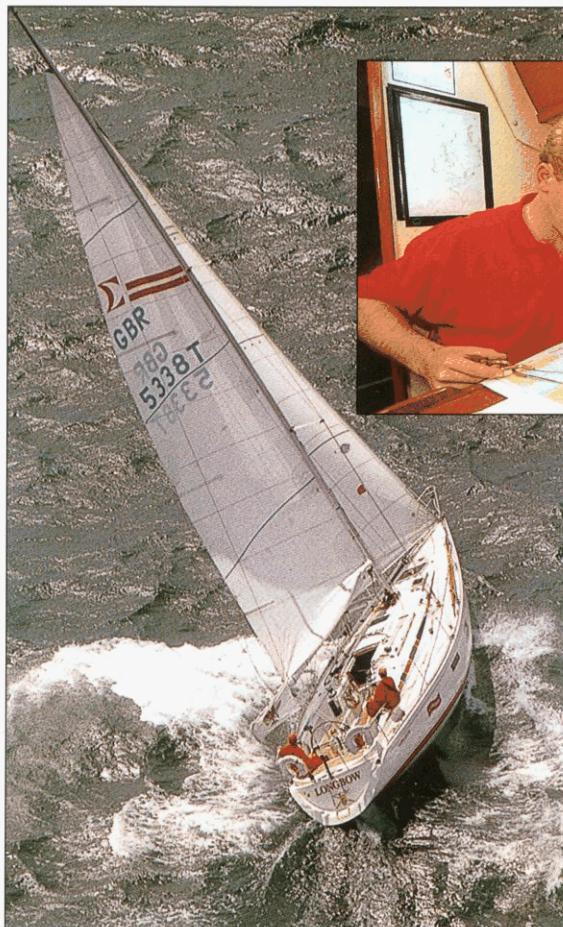
First innings in the two-day NAYC England Under-19 game were limited to 55 overs, with the youngsters going in first and being restricted to 236-4. Services responded with 240-3 in 53 overs, with Mark Bray (RAF) hitting another hundred and St George running himself out three short of his own ton in pursuit of a declaration total.

England U-19 were not positive enough in their second innings and underestimated the Servicemen's ability to chase a total. An excellent win was achieved with three overs remaining and St George still at the crease.

England U-19 236-4 dec (55 overs) and 259-8 dec (75 overs). **Combined Services** 240-3 dec (55 overs) (SAC M Bray 112, Capt C St George 97) and 256-3 (55 overs) (Sgt G Lumb 82, Capt C St George 65 not, SAC M Bray 66). Services won by 7 wickets.



Capt Chris St George



TRIATHLON

Palace honour for cycling, swimming, running Stacy

WORLD class triathlete Cpl Stacy Robinson joined Britain's leading young athletes at Buckingham Palace last month for a reception held to recognise all levels of sporting achievement.

Robinson, currently serving as a physical training instructor at the Central Engineer Park at Long Marston, near Stratford-upon-Avon, has represented Great Britain at triathlon and duathlon events since 1993. He has competed for GB at five world championships, in New Zealand, Manchester, Italy, Switzerland and Spain.

He has also competed for the Army since 1991 and is the Service's top triathlon competitor, in which athletes have to swim 1,500m, cycle 40km and run 10km.

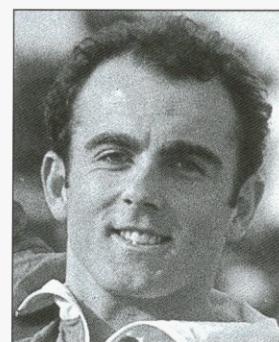
To help him develop his potential, the Army allowed Robinson to spend a year as a full-time athlete at its centre of excellence at Arborfield, and he transferred from the Royal Engineers to

the APTC. Robinson's next target is the world long-course triathlon championships in Japan in September, when he will be involved a 3,000m swim, 106km cycle ride and a 23km run.

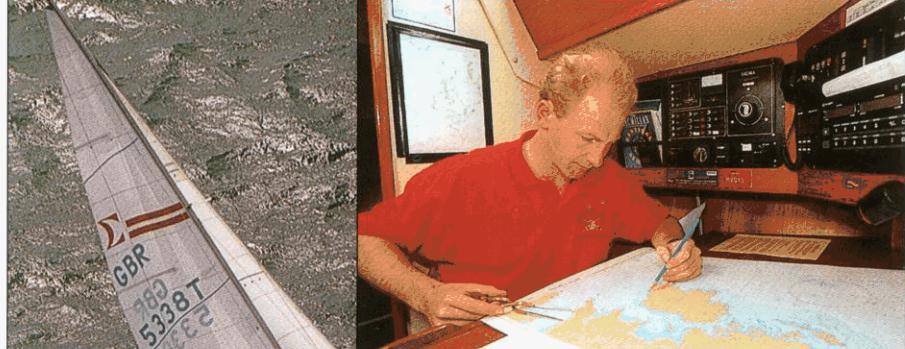
The Defence Research Agency in Farnborough helped to developed a light-weight racing bike using a new composite metal which was stronger, lighter and more flexible than anything else on the market.

• Kelly Holmes, the British middle distance runner, was made MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list announced last month.

Holmes, one of the finest athletes to compete in British Army colours, left the service last October to concentrate on her athletics career. While in uniform she broke two British track records, including the 1,500m, and ran in the Atlanta Olympic Games.



Cpl Stacy Robinson



On course: Maj Nick Fenton (QDG) checks his maps, above, before the start of the Round Britain and Ireland Race. He and Capt Hugh Martin (Scots DG) took part in the Army-sponsored *Longbow*, left, a 38ft yacht and the only Service entry in the 2,000-mile race.

The Scottish Division's **Golden Lions** freefall parachute team took the first three places in the individual accuracy competition at the Scottish national championships at Strathallan, and second and third places in the team canopy formation competition.

Picture: WO2 Pete Bristol

Treasures of the National Army Museum

FLORENCE Nightingale's lantern, Sam Browne's belt and standard-issue Second World War women's underwear are as much a part of our national heritage as they are of the military environments from which they came.

What they have in common are

places of honour at the National Army Museum in Chelsea, home to some of the country's finest military treasures.

In the first of a 12-part series on unusual artefacts in the museum, we bone up on the skeleton of Marengo, Napoleon's favourite charger.



1 Marengo: Small charger for the Little Emperor

NAPOLEON'S favourite charger was a grey, pure-bred Arabian stallion. Named after one of his victories, Marengo was portrayed by artists such as Meissonier as a rather imposing animal, so visitors to the National Army Museum are often surprised at how small the skeleton is.

However, Napoleon, no giant himself, probably found Marengo an ideal size at 14.1 hands. Moreover, this case of artistic licence was probably well-advised; one could hardly portray such a powerful emperor mounted on a pony!

Many myths surround Marengo and his illustrious career. One such story claims that he was bred in Ireland and that Napoleon asked for an Irish horse but warned that it should not be too large.



Napoleon: no giant
Engraving by T Johnson from painting by Pajest, 1813

ROMANTIC

The story continues: "In order to evade the English blockade, the chosen horse was swum five miles out to sea at dead of night to a waiting French frigate." As romantic as this story sounds it is more likely that Marengo was obtained in Egypt by Napoleon in 1799.

By whatever means Marengo came into the emperor's possession, he soon became a true favourite and remained so for 15 years. He was not Napoleon's sole mount during this time but is believed to have been ridden by him during the Battle of Waterloo.

Marengo was captured after the emperor's defeat at Waterloo, taken to London and put on public display in Piccadilly. Later he was sold to Lt Gen J J W Angerstein, and put to stud near Newmarket. When the horse died the skeleton was articulated by Surgeon Wilmott of the London Hospital and presented to the Royal United Services Institute. When that museum was obliged to close,



Marengo's skeleton ... minus two hooves

much of its collection, including Marengo's remains, was transferred to the National Army Museum. However, the museum has only two of the horse's hooves: one is believed to have been kept at Weeting Park, where Marengo died; the other was made into a snuff-box which is now in the guardroom at St James's Palace.

● Next month: Florence Nightingale's lantern

Why the Iron Duke said neigh

THE Duke of Wellington also had a favourite charger, called Copenhagen, who carried him safely throughout the Battle of Waterloo. The Royal United Services Institute, having set up Marengo's skeleton, thought it would be fitting for Copenhagen's skeleton to be displayed alongside that of Marengo in its museum. However, its application to the Iron Duke for permission to retrieve the bones of his famous horse was curtly refused.

Model armies

The Road To Waterloo gallery at the National Army Museum, which currently houses Marengo, tells the story of the British Army during the Napoleonic Wars.

It includes a huge model of the Battle of Waterloo, made by Capt Siborne in the 1830s. He wrote to surviving British officers who had served at Waterloo asking for information about their regiments' positions and from the 700 replies he received he constructed a 420 sq ft model depicting the battle at about 7pm on the day. Built on a ground scale of 9ft to the mile, the model contains an estimated 70,000 tiny figures.

Admission to the museum, in Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea, is free. It is open from 1000 to 1730 every day except January 1, Good Friday, early May bank holiday and December 24-26.

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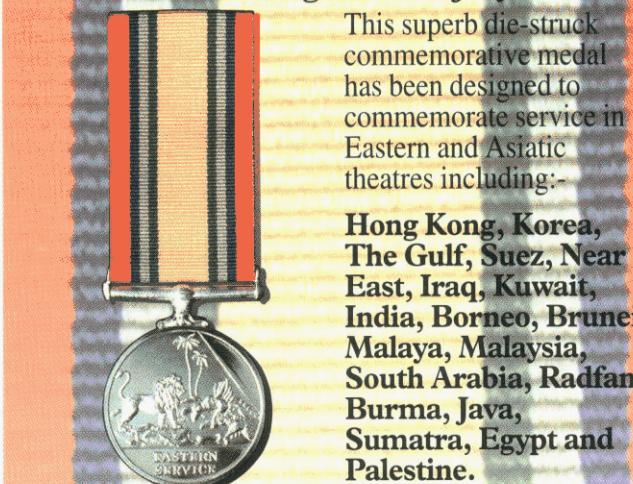
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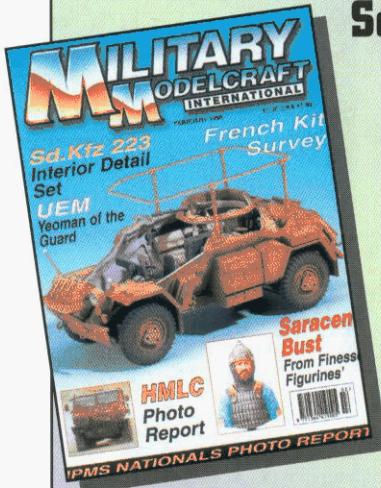
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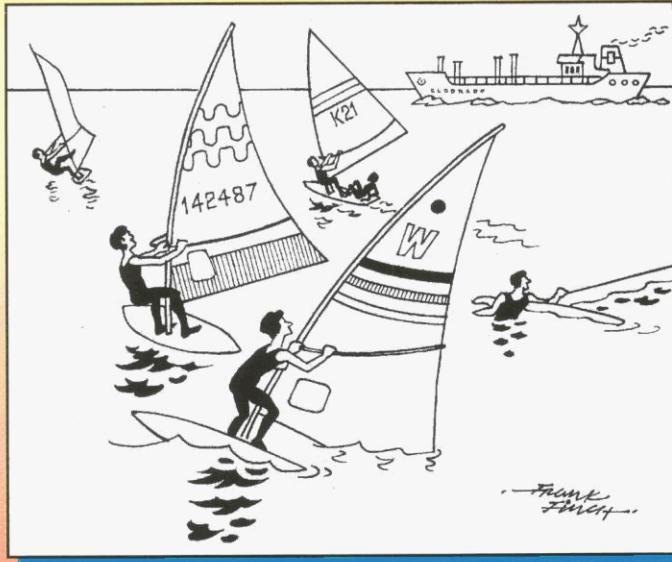
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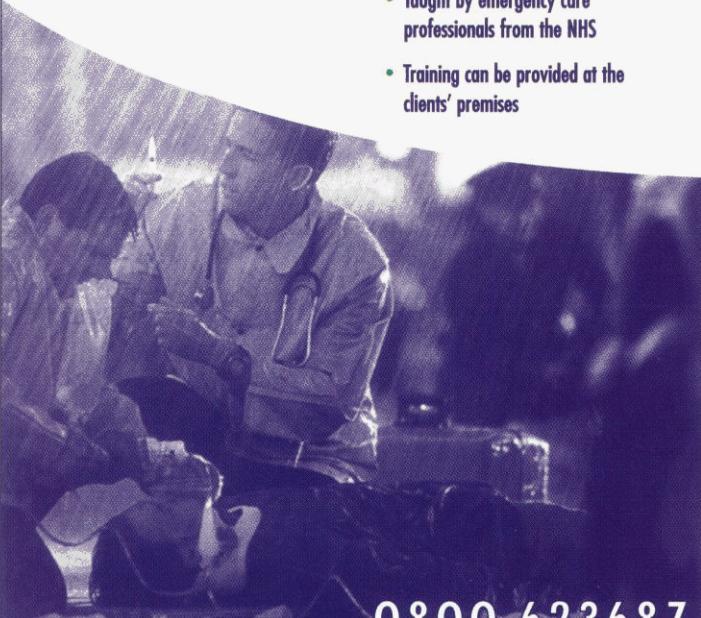
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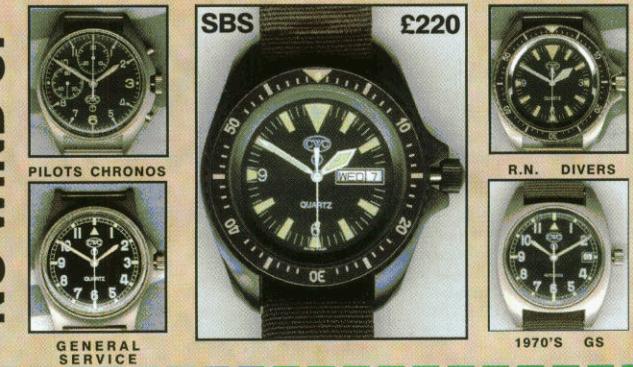


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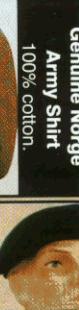
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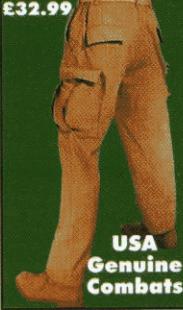
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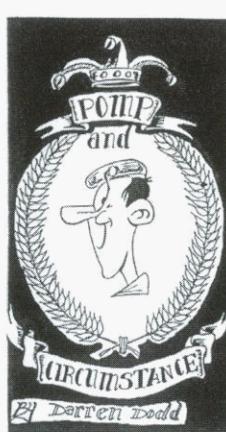
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ARMY SPORTS LOTTERY RESULTS

MAY 23, 1998

First prize (528 runs, £3,200): Capt ATG Ravera, 238 Sqn RLC (V), Bootle.
Second prize (515 runs, £1,600): Cpl PDR Heron, HQ AFCENT.
Third prize (505 runs, £1,200): SSgt S King, 5 Signal Regt.
Fourth prize (499 runs, £900): LCpl AD Knox-Johnston, 32 Engr Regt, Hohne.

Fifth prize (494 runs, £600): CSgt AD Williams, 3 Cheshire (V), Chester.
Sixth prize (490 runs, £400): LCpl DA Miller, KRH, Münster.

Seventh prize (484 runs, £300): Sgt AM Robinson, QOY, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Eighth prize (474 runs, £200): Sgt CCD Owen, HQ PSCNORTH, Norway.

Ninth prize (471 runs, £100): WO2 Stott, 24 Airmob Bde Coss Bn, Colchester.

MAY 30, 1998

First prize (272 runs, £3,200): Cpl (name withheld), HQ Hereford Garrison.

Second prize (269 runs, £1,600): Capt RH Carter, 1 RGJ, Bulford.

Third prize (265 runs, £1,200): WO2 KR Scott, HQ 3 (UK) Div, Bulford.

Fourth prize (259 runs, £900): Sgt PA Duff, Royal School of Signals, Blandford.

Fifth prize (255 runs, £600): WO2 CJ Palmer, 53 Port Sp Sqn, Marchwood.

Sixth prize (252 runs, £400): WO2 AP Nixon, Falkland Islands Admin Unit.

Seventh prize (247 runs, £300): Cpl AR Dunlop, 1 RRF.

Eighth prize (242 runs, £200): Cfn AC Ferris, SEAE, Arborfield.

Ninth prize (241 runs, £100): LCpl DW Northover, HQ Dhekelia Garrison.

JUNE 6, 1998

First prize (392 runs, £3,200): Sig SM Johnston, 21 Signal Regt (AS), Colchester.

Second prize (389 runs, £1,600): Cpl ORE Morrison, 3 Armd Fd Amb, Sennelager.

Third prize (384 runs, £1,200): WO2 IN McFadyen, 7/8 A & SH (V), Stirling.

Fourth prize (384 runs, £900): Maj JF Knopp, ITC Catterick.

Fifth prize (368 runs, £600): Cpl M Errington, 1 QLR.

Sixth prize (367 runs, £400): Capt RW Durrant, 25 Engr Regt.

Seventh prize (365 runs, £250): Maj PR King, School of Logistics, Deepcut; WO2 MW Panther, HQ London District.

Ninth prize (362 runs, £100): WO2 DW Brown, 71 Engr Regt (V), Glasgow.

JUNE 13, 1998

First prize (240 runs, £3,200): Lt JL Shelby-James, DMS Trg Centre, Ash Vale.

Second prize (239 runs, £1,600): Brig AS Ritchie, HQRA 3 (UK) Div, Bulford.

Third prize (232 runs, £1,200): Cpl JB Keen, Colchester Sy Sect.

Fourth prize (228 runs, £900): SSgt S Powell, HQ Episkopi Garrison.

Fifth prize (227 runs, £600): Sgt MW Bates, 3 Regt AAC, Wattisham.

Sixth prize (223 runs, £400): LCpl DRG Grant, 2 RRF, Celle.

Seventh prize (222 runs, £300): Cpl MA Partington, 9 Signal Regt, Ayios Nikolaos.

Eighth prize (220 runs, £200): Sgt VF Carnell, 4 Regt RA, Osnabrück.

Ninth prize (216 runs, £100): LCpl RAG Halloran, 2 RRF, Celle.

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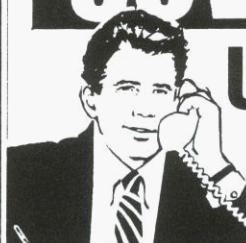
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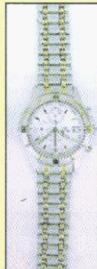
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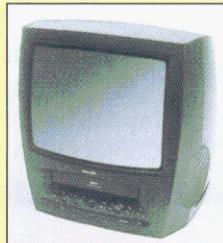
A great way to shop, *Soldier Magazine* offers its readers the chance to buy superb products at special prices. There is something for all the family from well-known suppliers such as Philips, Canon, Sekonda, Le Creuset, Denby and many more. With all items delivered direct to your door, shopping couldn't be easier.

Here is this month's selection of products along with the special Readers' Club prices



Sekonda gents' quartz analogue date watch. Two-tone chrome-gold case and link strap, white dial.

Readers' Club Price £49.99



Philips 14in colour TV/Video combi with on screen display and remote control.

Readers' Club Price £269.99



Falcon Stealth mountain bike (men's and ladies'), black steel frame, Shimano TY15 gears

Readers' Club Price £99.99

Canon Sure Shot AF-10 compact camera kit comes complete with built-in flash, a Kodak film roll and camera case

Readers' Club Price £53.99



Arnold Palmer "Axiom" golf clubs, 3 woods, 9 oversized irons, cavity-backed for superb control, steel shafts.

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To order or for more information simply contact the

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All prices include delivery to nominated address.

Please allow 28 days (max) for delivery.

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WEISE WESTWARD CORDURA MOTOR-CYCLE JACKET



Soldier Magazine has teamed up with Fowlers Motorcycles to give you the chance to win a Weise Westward Cordura motor-cycle jacket, normally retailing at £149.99.

The hard-wearing and waterproof combination of Cordura 550D and "hydratech" coating make our star prize a must for the discerning motorcyclist.

Fowlers Motorcycles is currently the second largest dealership in the UK, with eight branches and ten franchises. A family-run business, the Fowlers Riders Club brings together like minded people who share an enthusiasm for motor cycles. It is open to all and more information can be obtained by calling 0117 9770466.

To enter the competition, simply answer the question below and return the coupon to:

Fowlers Competition, *Soldier Magazine*, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2DU, to arrive no later than July 31, 1998.

What is the name of the Royal Signals' motor-cycle display team?

The first correct answer to be drawn will win the prize. The winner will be notified and the result will be published in *Soldier*. The Managing Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. A photocopy of this form is acceptable.

Answer:.....

Name:.....

Address:.....

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Sunshine superbike

RAIN was universal and a thick robe of it swept from hill to hill. Thunder rumbled in the distance and between the muffled roars the downpour pressed on my sodden leathers, writes **Syd Taylor**.

Scorning the discomfort I travelled for pleasure alone: on Honda's new VFR 800 Fi the rain was just a lively companion as my heart sang. Ride this bike and whatever the weather, the sun seems to be shining.

Regarded by many as the best all-round motor cycle in the world, the previous Honda VFR 750 set standards which were hard to beat, yet the latest version of the VFR has succeeded admirably in reaching new heights, strengthening the model's secret powers of intoxication. Honda has done it again.

Just what makes the VFR this good? It's because it offers a combination of virtues which few rivals can approach. Looking wonderful, with perfect paint and an array of cast and forged aluminium parts, it is supremely well-engineered and comfortable, with outstanding handling and performance that make it a joy to ride.

WHY CHANGE?

So why, you ask, have they changed it? The answer must simply be that Honda wisely recognises that no bike is unimprovable.

The big news with the latest VFR is the liquid-cooled 781 cc, 16-valve DOHC 90° V-4 motor which is virtually the same engine that was used in the World Superbike-winning RC45 model in 1997.

It's definitely a sporting engine, but it



Road test: Honda VFR 800 Fi

ENGINE Liquid-cooled 16-valve DOHC 90° V-4 781 cc. Electronic direct fuel injection. Maximum power, 110 PS / 10,500 rpm. Maximum torque, 8.4 kg-m/8,500 rpm.
TRANSMISSION Six-speed.

Tech Spec

FINAL DRIVE 'O'-ring chain.
SEAT HEIGHT 805 mm.
WHEELS Aluminium: Front, six-spoke; rear, five-spoke.
BRAKES Front, dual discs,

three-piston callipers; rear, single disc, three-piston callipers.

TYRES Front, 120/70 ZR17; rear, 180/55 ZR17.

WEIGHT 208 kg.
PRICE £8,675

offers docility and dominance totally without ceremony, going through its paces with magnificent ease: it's mellow when you want, ferocious if you dare.

A VFR is a motor cycle on which to go very fast for a very long way and with the slick gearbox with six perfectly-chosen ratios, this is a bike quick enough to leave most others for dead. It's such a good engine that you seldom feel it is having to exert itself to do anything demanded and given the top speed of nearly 160 mph, this certainly ratifies the definition of the mark of a true aristocrat as "displaying effortless superiority".

The riding position is just about perfect and levels of comfort and equipment are worthy of the highest praise, with comprehensive cockpit instrumentation using digital displays to show fuel level, coolant temperature, mileage and time.

The attractively sleek and aerodynamically efficient bodywork gives improved protection, thanks in part to a cleverly-designed central vent that directs air under the screen to raise the height of the airstream hitting the rider at speed, so there's very little buffeting when cruising fast on motorways. Respectably high

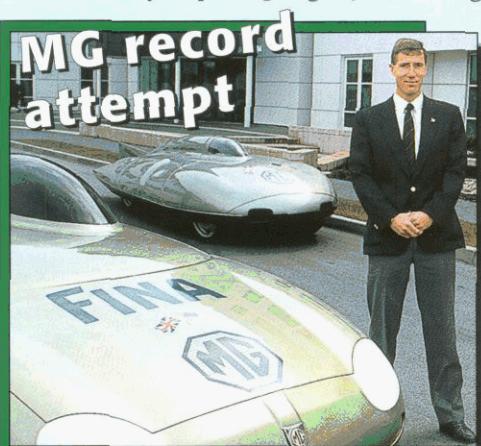
speeds are combined with reasonable fuel consumption, giving a non-stop range of around 150 miles.

The VFR handles particularly well in all conditions. The latest crop of superbikes, with hairline steering and absolute sensitivity, demands hair-trigger reactions, making them more suited to a race-track than as performance bikes for the road.

EXEMPLARY SAFETY

The new VFR, by contrast, does not subject the rider to this kind of stress, for on this Honda you can complete your journey at ease, at considerable speed and in exemplary safety. Along with the good handling and imperturbable mechanical stamina comes the reassurance of dependable powerful braking using Honda's Dual Combined Brake System, which simultaneously engages both front and rear brakes.

A searching analysis of factors involved in real – as opposed to illusory – motorcycle performance soon makes you realise that this VFR is hard to equal and on an urgent trip on give-and-take roads across Shropshire it maintained its equanimity so well that I doubt it could have been bettered by the latest race replicas. To me that is the real measure of a "performance" motor cycle.



PLANS are under way to beat Phil Hill's 1959 MG speed record at the 50th Bonneville Speedweek festivities in Utah, USA, next month.

The MG-derived car will be driven by "the fastest man on earth" – Andy Green, pictured, who achieved an astonishing 763.035 mph with Thrust SSC last year. Hill's record stands at 254.91 mph.

Confusion in ranks over medals order

I HAVE often complained to the BBC and ITV companies when they depict Servicemen and police officers wearing their ribbons in the wrong order.

Imagine my surprise, then, to see two corporals pictured in your magazine (June) wearing their medals incorrectly.

The Central Chancery of the Orders of Knighthood has announced that campaign medals should be worn by date of campaign, so the Gulf Medal (1990-91) should be worn before the NATO Medal (1994 onwards).

One corporal is pictured wearing them the other way round. Another is shown wearing the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal (ACSM) before the NATO Medal.

The ACSM should be worn immediately before the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal – that is, after any campaign, Jubilee, or Meritorious Service medals. – **C J Allen MISM, Wakefield, Yorks.**

THE modern British soldier tends to wear more medals than he did ten years

55 years ago, we were the FIRST into Europe

I WRITE on behalf of the 2,650 members of the Italy Star Association 1943-45 seeking to draw attention to the forthcoming 55th anniversary of the landings in Sicily on July 10, 1943.

This association is particularly anxious to record the fact that what is commonly now known as the "Second Front" actually took place in France some 11 months after we had entered Europe via Sicily. By then we had followed that up with landings on mainland Italy at Reggio, Taranto and Salerno and had fought towards Rome with the establishment of the notorious Anzio beachhead.

Despite efforts to dislodge us, we were certainly the curtain-raiser to the eventual conquest of Europe.

We seek to remind people that we had entered Rome two days before the first troops landed in France and by that time casualties had been horrendous.

Winston Churchill had always described Italy as "the soft underbelly of Europe". Great leader though he was, he was so wrong in this regard.

We have always felt that when the land-

ago. A regiment I served with recently in the former Yugoslavia has troopers marching around on parades wearing five medals.

Military tailors these days need to be a little more up to date with the order of wear for medals.

The last thing a Serviceman should expect when he picks up his hard-earned medals from the QM's is for them to be mounted incorrectly.

I strongly recommend every QM in the British Army to buy a copy of *The Medal Yearbook** for its tailor as it contains a complete listing of the Order of Precedence for medals. This would result in our Armed Forces being properly dressed on parades in future. – **Colin Hole (Dorset Yeomanry), Taunton, Somerset.**

● Colin Hole also referred to Soldier pictures showing medals being worn incorrectly, as did Alan Brocklehurst, of Penarth, S Glamorgan.

*The Medal Yearbook, Token Publishing Ltd, 1 Orchard House, Duchy Road, Heathpark, Honiton, Devon, EX14 8YD, softback, £12.95.

ings took place in France, the Italian campaign was relegated to the back pages in the Press, with scarce reference to the continuing fighting there.

Several divisions were withdrawn from Italy to France, leaving us with depleted forces to continue the fight against a well-disciplined and determined enemy.

The 49,254 men who died and who are buried in Italy deserve to have their memory recorded on this anniversary. We emphasise that in no way do we seek to minimise the sacrifices of comrades who fought in France, or of those in the campaign in the Far East who have always described themselves as the "Forgotten Army". The VJ commemoration ceremonies put that into perspective when due honour was paid to the 14th Army.

We now ask that on this 55th anniversary we are accorded the same recognition because without doubt we can justifiably claim that *we were the first in Europe*. – **Maurice Cheadle, (National Chairman and Founder, Italy Star Association 1943-45), Barton-on-Sea, Hants.**

Write us a prize letter

HOT under the collar? Want to take issue on a serious topic? Need to settle a difference of opinion on a burning question? Or do you just want to share a good story with thousands of other readers around the world?

As ever, *Soldier* welcomes your letters, whether you are an officer or other rank; serving or civvy; 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 and addresses in block capitals (not necessarily for publication).

A prize from *Soldier's* new gift collection (see Page 48) will be awarded each month if we judge that a letter, serious or humorous, merits it. So get writing!

● 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.

'Smouldering' grievance of Canal Zone veterans

YOUR article "20,000 support Suez Medal plea to minister" (May) was a very good summing-up of the efforts of the Canal Zone veterans' delegation to Parliament on March 19 to try to achieve recognition for service there, 1951-54.

What it did not show, however, was:

● Col Pip Newton's chipping away to rectify this anomaly for some 30 years. His scholarly appraisals of the situation, with those of Brig Stuart Ryder, have attracted wide acclaim and support for the cause in high places.

On the day, his submission provided the ruck for fellow delegates to hang their coats upon.

● Cyril Blackburn's tireless searchings into Public Record Office files – proving beyond all doubt we were on "active service" and the case for the medal has never been considered by the Honours and Decorations Committee. This added greatly to the claim.

● Tom and Bernice Radford's hard work on the petition. (Tom returned early from a holiday in Hong Kong to play his part in the proceedings).

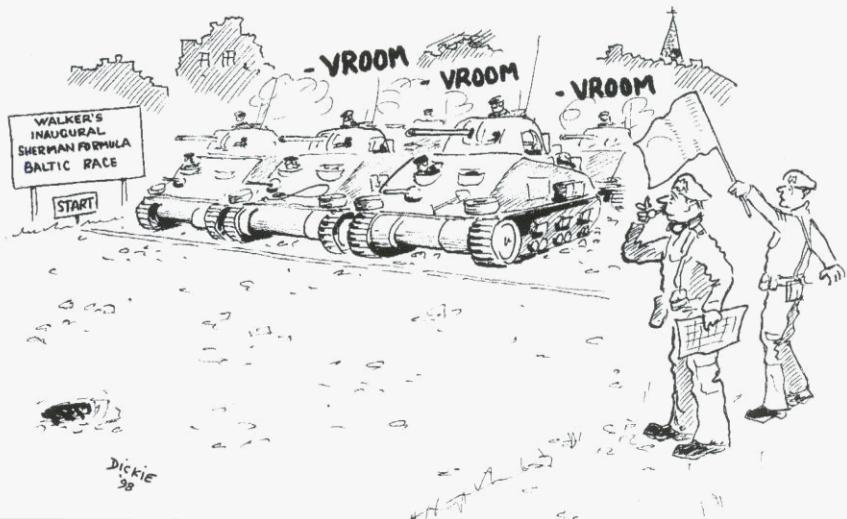
● Len Oliver's and Pete Newton's unfailing support and sheer persistence in keeping the issue alive.

● Without Danny Davenport we would all still be running around in circles doing our own thing.

Danny convinced his MP, over some months I would add, of the rightness of our cause and why he should help us to do something about this smouldering grievance – **Chas Golder, Bolton, Lancs.**

Prize letter

BIRD'S EYE-VIEW



Murray Walker interview – Pages 34-35

Men who started a khaki revolution

THIS YEAR marks the 150th anniversary of the introduction of the khaki uniform – clearly a significant event in military history.

Too frequently forgotten, however, are its joint innovators, Hodson and Lumsden – and the important role played by Hodson's brother.

In 1848 Lt W Hodson, as second in command to Lt H Lumsden, was given responsibility to equip the recently-formed Corps of Guides in India, which meant he chose the regiment's uniform and liaised with his brother in England, the Rev George Hodson, to send rifles, Prussian-style helmets, and all the cloth required for uniforms.

Both Hodson and Lumsden agreed the colour of the cloth should be khaki, or "drab", which would be comfortable to

wear and "make them invisible in a land of dust".

As a result Hodson and Lumsden had the joint distinction – 150 years ago – of being the first officers to equip a regiment dressed in khaki (which is Urdu for "dust" or "dusty"). After commanding the Corps of Guides, the by now Maj Hodson went on to form his own regiment (Hodson's Horse) in 1857 and again chose khaki for his uniform.

By 1885 all the Army in India had followed suit and 15 years later the entire British military changed to KD (khaki drill) to fight the Boer War.

Khaki has since, of course, been used by armies throughout the world, something of which the British and Indian military can be justly proud – **Selwyn Hodson-Pressinger, London SW1.**

Story to waise a laugh

WHEN I served in tanks we had more than our fair share of unworldly officers, some of whom looked too young to be made troopers, so they had to be commissioned.

Our troop was paraded to be taught the slow march, beginning, if I remember rightly, by our being brought to attention followed by the order "Left leg, raise . . . lower", then "Right leg, raise . . . lower."

We were going on to the next stage when a YO intervened, thanked our

sergeant and said he would take over.

In an affected voice he shouted: "Left leg, waise . . . lower. Right leg, waise." At this point he looked down the line to ensure thighs were parallel to the ground and noticed two together . . . being a slight confusion of left and right.

Reacting quickly to the situation as a born leader does, he came out with: "Who's that silly arse with both legs waised?" – **W H D Podd, Lowestoft, Suffolk.**

PS . . .

That's my boy!

ON the subject of the "mystery drummer" pictured with members of The Royal Irish Regiment (May) . . . that's my boy!

My son, Tony Edwards, is in the Pipes and Drums of the Queen's Royal Hussars, formerly the Queen's Royal Irish Hussars, (not the Queen's Own and Royal Irish Hussars as stated by Gen Sir Patrick Howard-Dobson in June). – B J Edwards (ex-Royal Air Force), Littlehampton, W Sussex.

Forces' advantage

SURELY the property purchased in 1972 (with the assistance of the £1,000 commuted) should be a much bigger asset, even pro rata, than the pension loss claimed by Kenneth Wilson (June).

I was in a similar situation ten years earlier and can only praise the advantage offered to long-serving members of the Armed Forces. – Richard A Steward (late IEME/REME), Sidmouth, Devon.

Owmanyonusisus?

YOUR letter on the Home Guard from L R Swindale (May) does not help me much in establishing how many still exist. In Mid-langs vernacular, "Owmanyonusisus?"

Their lot was poorly equipped with brooms and mops. Perhaps his OC had taken too literally Churchill's thunderings that Jerry should be swept back into the sea, with the remnants being mopped up. – H D Pickles, Blackburn, Lancs.

Not Coldstream's year

IN 1907 the Colour Party for Trooping the Colour was found by 1st Battalion, Irish Guards rather than the Coldstream Guards (May), whose 1st Battalion in fact trooped their Colour on June 27, 1908.

In 1908, unusually, four divisions of the 1st Life Guards paraded – plus the Mounted Band. I assume the model-maker found time to complete only two divisions! – Martin Everett, British Model Society.

Severn crossing

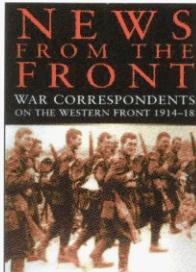
YOU REFER (May) to "a first crossing of the River Severn by military ferries" in an exercise. Part of our boat training in No 1 Training Regt RE based at Malvern Wells, Worcestershire, was carried out at Upton on Severn in 1949. Not a major crossing, but the river was crossed. – K Williams (ex-RE and Special Forces), Scottish Veterans' Residence, Whitefoord House, Edinburgh.

Shaky pedestal . . .

CONGRATULATIONS on being named as the top internal magazine by the British Association of Communicators in Business. I agree wholeheartedly with the judge's praise. I do have one minor criticism. In your May issue you describe Lt R J Baxter as AAC. He is in fact REME, attached to the AAC. – Lt Col P V Noakes REME, Directorate General of Equipment Support (Army), HQ QMG, Andover.

It was all kept quiet on Western Front...

IT IS widely accepted now that had the public known at the time the full horror of the First World

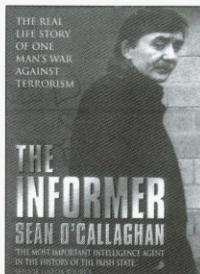


War killing fields, the war would have ended much earlier. That it didn't is due in part to a cynical collusion between the Press and the British GHQ in a propaganda

exercise designed to enhance the British position. Martin J Farrar tells the story in awesome detail in *News from the Front: War Correspondents on the Western Front 1914-18* (Sutton Publishing, hardback, £19.99).

Ex-IRA terrorist who helped turn the tide

IRA man Sean O'Callaghan saw the error of his ways in 1979 and for the next nine years coura-

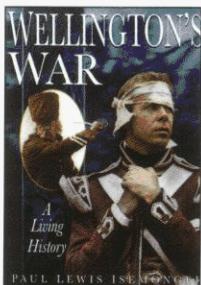


geously aided the anti-terrorist cause from within the organisation. In 1988 he was jailed for 539 years for his earlier wrongdoings but two years ago was

given a royal pardon. With his life under constant threat, he continues to seek to atone for his past and most of the royalties from his illuminating book *The Informer* (Bantam Press, hardback, £16.99) will go towards projects benefiting the cause of peace in Northern Ireland.

Napoleonic battles brought to the page

A VISUAL appreciation of warfare during the Napoleonic period can be gained just by



turning the pages of *Wellington's War: A Living History*, in which more than 200 re-enactment photographs by Paul Lewis Isemonger give a taste of the realism and atmosphere of battle. The paperback, published by Sutton at £9.99, also covers wider military and social matters, with sections on weapons and tactics, uniforms and insignia, life in camp and at sea, food and pastimes and medical treatment.

and atmosphere of battle. The paperback, published by Sutton at £9.99, also covers wider military and social matters, with sections on weapons and tactics, uniforms and insignia, life in camp and at sea, food and pastimes and medical treatment.

The Imperfect Spy: Hero or scoundrel?

FOLLOWING in father's footsteps is generally considered an acceptable, and possibly desirable, ambition for most sons. It's the "good enough for dad, good enough for me" syndrome.

But when dad is a conniving rogue, womaniser, double-crosser, saboteur and spy, what right-thinking lad would want to tread a similar path?

To some small extent the son in this instance, Geoffrey Elliott, now a retired merchant banker, did follow where his father trod in that he, too, joined the Intelligence Corps and learned Russian and several other languages.

Like father, like son? Not quite – for that was about all they had in common. Elliott senior was an enigma, whose outwardly respectable business career cloaked some very shady activities.

Maj Kavan Elliott dropped "blind" into Serbia on a Special Operations Executive mission in 1942, was captured as a British spy, spent much of the war in a Nazi prison camp, and was expelled from Hungary in 1949. But was this

I Spy – The Secret Life of a British Agent by Geoffrey Elliott, and **Counterfeit Spies** by Nigel West. Both published in hardback under the St Ermin's Press imprint of Little, Brown at £18.99.



Enigma: Maj Kavan Elliott

man a hero... or a scoundrel?

While on his own business travels, Elliott junior set out to find the truth. In *I Spy – The Secret Life of a British Agent*, completed after his retirement, he follows the trail left by the father he hardly knew, who died in 1977 aged 69.

The quest takes him to the

Balkans, Siberia and Jamaica, in some cases to the very men who had captured his father in Yugoslavia, imprisoned him in Germany and expelled him from Hungary.

It also leads to a complex tale of two families and a bevy of beautiful mistresses associated with the man the author calls the "Imperfect Spy".

It is difficult, if not impossible, for the average reader to know whether claims made by so-called secret agents are true or false.

Who is to say? Nigel West, the pen-name of Rupert Allason, the former Tory MP, does with a deal of authority by slamming into phoney stories. An acknowledged expert on security matters, he digs deep into the realms of spying in *Counterfeit Spies – Genuine or Bogus?*

West sets out to debunk a number of people who claimed to be wartime secret agents (Elliott is not among them, it should be said), unmasking them as fantasists, hoaxers and fraudsters.

Right or wrong, his book is a good read. – JM

In brief

A History of the Peninsular War, Vol VIII by John A Hall. Biographical dictionary of British officers killed and wounded, 1808-1814, contains more than 3,000 entries in 640 pages. Greenhill Books, hardback, £35.

The Autobiography of an Ordinary Person: A Spiritual Progress by Graham C Jenkins. Brother of the former Bishop of Durham tells in great detail of his National Service as a gunner officer, 1947-49, including Palestine and the Canal Zone. Avon Books, hardback, £17.95.

Antar: The FV12000 Series in British Army Service by Pat Ware. Second in a large-format paperback series of in-

depth military and commercial vehicle profiles. From Warehouse Publications, Croydon, £16.50 (£18 o/seas) inc p&p.

America's Special Forces by David Bohrer. Weapons, missions and training of the SEALs, Green Berets, Rangers and Delta Force. Motorbooks International, paperback, £12.95.

Courcelette, Somme by Paul Reed, and **Hill 60, Ypres** by Nigel Cave. Latest in the Leo Cooper Battleground Europe paperback guide series, £9.95 each.

Wilfrith Elstob VC DSO MC by Robert Bonner. First of a series on the 23 VCs of The King's Liverpool and The Man-

chester Regt, now the King's Regt. The glossy, 33-page, soft-cover publication costs £9.75 plus £1 p&p from RHQ(I) The King's Regt, Ardwick Green, Manchester M12 6HD, or from booksellers.

A Time for War: The United States and Vietnam, 1941-1975 by Robert D Schulzinger. Billed as the first major, full-length history of the conflict to be based on primary sources. Oxford University Press, hardback, £19.99.

Germany's Spies and Saboteurs by David Allen Johnson. Describes the work of the Abwehr in infiltrating the Allies in the Second World War. Motorbooks International, paperback, £12.95.



Seriously funny: Sometimes there is no better way to convey an earnest message than with humour – preferably visual.

Dave Barrett, who served 26 years with the REME, achieves this admirably in *Bassingbourn – The Book*. His 80 Giles-style cartoons depict subjects from the 12-week training programme of the Army Training Regiment Bassingbourn from the recruits' arrival to their departure to the phase two training centres. The idea is to help

give new recruits a less forbidding view of the course ahead of them and point out the pitfalls.

The witty captions, supplied by Capts Matt Bazeley and Nick Priestley, include, for the above: "Football . . . a means of demonstrating strength, balance, speed, fitness, a left hook and your snogging technique."

The landscape-format paperback is available from the PRI, Bassingbourn Barracks, Royston, Herts SG8 5LX, price £4.99, plus £1.60 p&p.

RWF: Almost all you ever wanted to know

MANY years of labour by Maj Peter Kirby, founder and first curator of the Regimental Museum and Archives in Caernarfon Castle, have produced this latest volume of information on what must be one of the Army's best-documented regiments.

It is as comprehensive a record as possible of all officers known to have received Regular commissions in The Royal Welch Fusiliers from its foundation in 1689 to the outbreak of the Great War.

Alphabetically arranged and indexed over 140 pages, the work contains information on more than 1,500 officers, giving career histories, places and dates of birth, family connections, and orders, decorations and medals.

Documented here are records of the great and good: Brig Arthur Lowry Cole, for example, scion of an illustrious military family, killed

Officers of the Royal Welch Fusiliers, 16th March 1689 - 4th August 1914, compiled by Maj E L Kirby. Available from Regimental Headquarters, The Royal Welch Fusiliers, Hightown Barracks, Wrexham, Clwyd, price £48.50, inc p&p (cheques made out to Maj E L Kirby).

while in command of a brigade in 1915; Henry Ellis, who served with the regiment throughout the Peninsular War and who died while in command at Waterloo; and Luke O'Connor VC, who rose from private soldier to major general.

Listed also are the not so great: simple men like Capt Henry Hickman of Kilmore, County Clare, or young Ensign le Maitre, who died of fever in the West Indies.

Remarkable tales are told of bravery and suffering. John Hill, for example, one of whose descendants is serving with the regiment today,

"underwent two surgical operations to overcome damage he received when his horse fell on him at Nivelle.

"He . . . was present at Waterloo, where his horse was killed and when in the front line of the square a splinter of bone (someone else's) was driven into his right eyeball. He had two splinters of stone in his cheek. He also received a bullet wound in the left of his jaw and a half pound iron grape shot entered his left breast . . ."

Somehow, Hill survived until 1835, having been present at every battle at that time commemorated on the Regimental Colour except Minden.

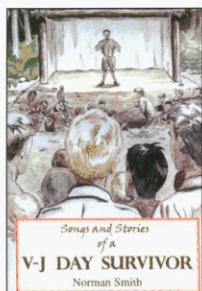
The book is without doubt a labour of love but, that said, it will be enormously useful to military historians, whether amateur or professional, as well as to medal collectors and genealogists. – JPR

Songs that lightened their darkest days

WE have heard much recently, and rightly so, of the horrors suffered by prisoners of the Japanese in the Second World War. While not making light of these, in

Songs and Stories of a VJ-Day Survivor Norman Smith tells another side of the story, of the PoW camp

shows devised with great ingenuity to try to maintain morale. Published by Stockwell (Ilfracombe) in paperback at £5.99, this unusual book includes actual songs and entertainments performed in those dark days.

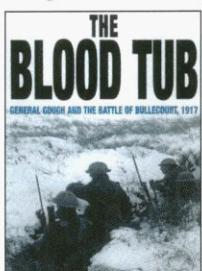


Bloody Bullecourt's legacy reassessed

IN *The Blood Tub*, military historian Jonathan Walker makes the case for elevating Bullecourt, 1917, to

a position of notoriety among the bloodiest encounters of the First World War, claiming as it did the lives of thousands of Australians, Londoners and Yorkshiremen. He also re-examines the role of the much-maligned Gen

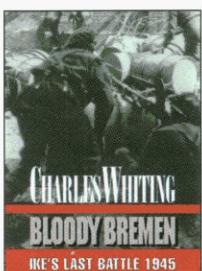
"Thruster" Gough, who the Aussies blamed for their most tragic death-toll of the war. This well-researched and thorough account is published by Spellmount in hardback at £19.95.



Gripping account of squabbling at top

CHARLES Whiting's 200-plus military books (Leo Kessler is one of his pen-names) have sold more than four million copies in the UK alone. His latest factual work, *Bloody Bremen: Ike's Last Battle 1945* (Leo Cooper, hardback, £19.95),

grips the reader with a tale of squabbling among the top brass in the last few weeks of the Second World War. The author, who was at Bremen as a young infantryman, will feature soon in the *Soldier "My Army"* series of interviews.



Bulletin board

Picture: Mike Weston



Treasured symbol: The Queen's Truncheon, borne by Truncheon Jemadar Lt (QGO) Lokbahadur Pun, is marched off the parade ground at Church Crookham during a ceremony of Beating Retreat to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Brigade of Gurkhas on

January 1, 1948. Following Indian Independence in 1947, four regiments, each of two battalions, were selected for transfer to the British Army as The Gurkha Regiment. The title of Brigade was adopted the following year under Royal Warrant. Gurkhas have been loyal to the British Crown since 1815.

REUNIONS

King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery: All ranks reunion, July 15, at the Kent County Showground at Deitling, near Maidstone. Includes displays and guided tours of Troop. Return coach from St John's Wood. For details, costs and booking form send sae marked "Reunion" to The King's Troop RHA, Ordnance Hill, St John's Wood, London NW8 6PT.

Palestine remembered: Bath Abbey service and parade, July 19. All welcome, whether you served there or wish to represent friends or family. Details from C Burr, 89 Wessex Road, Yeovil BA21 3 LP (01935 421722).

54 Engr Sp and Amb Sqn RCT: Next reunion takes place on Aug 15 in Tennis Hall, Lubbecke, Germany. Entrance by ticket. Contact Mac MacMillan on 0049 5741 12967 or Baz Buckle on 0049 5741 40261.

Staffordshire Regiment: Annual reunion on Sept 12 at Whittington Barracks, Lichfield. Details from RHQ, The Staffordshire Regiment, Whittington Barracks, Lichfield, Staffs WS14 9PY (sae please).

APPOINTMENTS

Brigadier: I D T McGill – To Director OCE J6 HQ Land, May 28.

Colonel: G M S Shipley – To BLO EW/CIS (USA), June 7.

Lieutenant-Colonels: N C Best RA – To RA Range Hebrides, July 13; J J Bethell REME – To DGES(A), Aug 31; J Dryburgh, R Signals – To SHAPE, Feb 22; B W George

Coldstream Guards (pre-1949): A reunion for those who joined the regiment before 1949 is to be held at Windsor on Sept 25. For details send sae to Peter Horsfall, 222 Leigh Hunt Drive, Southgate, London N14 6DS.

4th Regiment RA: All ranks reunion, Royal Hotel, Walsall, Oct 3. Details from Pete Lazell on 0171 341 5278 or 01902 570942.

Combined Irish Regiments OCA: Quarterly meeting and AGM, Oct 3, in London. Membership details on receipt of sae at 51 Fakenham Road, Beetley, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 4BT. Serving members heartily welcome.

20 Regiment RA: Reunion planned for weekend Nov 14-15 at Devizes, Wilts. Details from R (Geordie) Graham, 60 St Mary's Grove, Nailsea, near Bristol BS48 4NJ (01275 852781).

6 Boys Training Regiment, Royal Signals, Beverley (1950-55): Reunion of ex-boys to be held in Beverley or York in year 2000. Ring Ray Toyne on 01904 765137 or Tony Hull on 01202 770261.

REME – To HQ ATRA, Aug 17; J R M Palmer KRH – To JSCSC, Aug 3; M W L Theobald RGR – To BLO Germany, Sept 21.

Retirements

Colonels: S J Durnford, late RAMC, May 31; S N L Fogden, late AAC, May 31; N J Holland, late REME, June 1; R A Wright, late R Signals, June 5.

SEARCHLINE

Arborfield apprentices (Intakes 50A and 50B) reunion. Ring Clem Clements on 01604 712128 or Tom Lennox on 01428 865225.

Ex-Pompadour would like to contact members of **3 R Anglian** (1971-73), B, Support and Command Cos, particularly Dmr Carl Rathzel. Stationed Alanbrooke Barracks, Paderborn, Belfast and Londonderry. Replies to Garry F Muir, 9 Aitken Road, Kilnhurst, Mexborough, S Yorks S64 5UB (tel 01709 571492).

Next **RAF and Defence Fire Service Association** reunion in October. Details from Bob Feather, Co-ordinator North, Bank House, Railway Cottages, Station Road, Bolton Percy, York YO23 7AP (01904 744375).

Windsor School, Hamm (1953-1983) ex-pupils, staff and anyone connected with the school sought for regular reunions and newsletter. Contact Mrs Gill Walker, Lyndale, Nations Hill, King's Worthy, Hants SO23 7QY. She would also like to know if there is a society for former pupils of **Slim School, Malaya**.

Have you ever marched ten miles on a broken leg? Or mysteriously found strength you never knew you had? Or been injured yet carried someone to safety? Television researcher for BBC's **Mysteries** programme would like to hear your amazing stories. Call Helen in confidence on 0181 752 7000 or fax on 0181 752 5677. No obligation to take part.

A free Lost Trails website for finding ex-members of the Services has been opened by John Gray (ex-RAMC corporal). It also deals with the history of the RAMC and can be found at <http://www.BArmy.co.uk>

Author wishes to hear from BEF members who had contact with **Varian Fry** in the Marseilles area during 1940-41. Fry smuggled out 300 or so soldiers as well as many intellectuals, writers, artists and scientists fleeing from the Gestapo. Write to Andy Marino, F/262 Finchley Road, London NW3 7AA (tel 0171 431 4898, fax 0171 431 7636).

Author and member of Military Vehicle Trust seeks details, photos, literature, Service and contract details which might be useful for a book on **motor cycles** used in the Armed Forces. Contact C J Orchard, 14 St Margarets Gardens, Melksham, Wilts SN12 7BT.

Ian D Gordon, 6 William Street, Queens Park, Nairn, IV12 5DS seeks news of Piper **P Hart**, HQ Coy, 2nd Seaforths and **Johnnie Duboiswaski**, who served at Elgin, Morayshire, and anyone who served with **Jack Macrae** in 501 London Scottish Engineers.

Granada Television's **You've Been Framed** programme wants clips for its next series. It pays £250 a clip (ideally on VHS) and will not broadcast without all the participants' permission. Send clips and a brief letter to Louise Wilcockson, FREEPOST, You've Been Framed (no stamp necessary).

Military collector Danny Burt has a uniform which belonged to the late **Col S G Paine**, Royal Marines, and would like to hear from anyone who served with him. Replies to 26 Wonnacotts Road, Okehampton, Devon EX20 1LX.



War on neglect: Louise Thompson (9), above, at Edgware War Memorial with examples of rescued rolls of honour

Names on a memorial: Louise's great-great grandfather, Pte Roderick Thompson, centre top, with comrades of the 20th (Tyneside Scottish) Bn, Northumberland Fusiliers. He was among more than 57,000 British killed on the first day of the Somme, July 1, 1916

Louise's big day

JULY 1, 1998 was marked down as a very special day in nine-year-old Louise Thompson's diary.

On the 82nd anniversary of the fateful first day of the 1916 Battle of the Somme, on which her great-great grandfather, Pte Roderick Thompson, died, she had an appointment in Whitehall to lay a living laurel on the Cenotaph in a ceremony attended by Countess Mountbatten of Burma.

Presented to her by Chelsea Royal Hospital In-Pensioner Sgt Eric Skentlebury, the laurel was to be blessed in a service attended by dozens of other schoolchildren to mark Friends of War Memorials (FOWM) Founder's Day.

The charity, founded by ex-Royal

● 34 (Northern) Signal Regiment (V) has become the first Signals unit to achieve Investor in People (IIP) accreditation.

● Teresa Gorman, MP for Billericay, visited the 6th Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment (V) for an open evening at Chelmsford.

● Twelve TA Royal Military Policemen from



Marine Ian Davidson to protect and rescue neglected and abandoned war memorials, will have a stand at the Royal Tournament between July 21 and August 2.

On show will be several examples of rolls of honour rescued by Mr Davidson and others from vandalism or from falling into the hands of private collectors and scrap dealers.

Southampton-based 163 Provost Company RMP toured Alderney and its 14 forts on bikes during a three-day visit to the Channel isle.

● More than 350 TA soldiers from 6 R Anglian, 202 Battery RA and Cambridge University OTC took on enemy troops from I RGR during Exercise Viking Storm at Thetford, East Anglia.

Catford TA sappers do their bit for returning ospreys

ON a lake somewhere in the south of England a breeding pair of ospreys may be sitting pretty . . . thanks to the Territorial Army sappers of 223 Headquarters Squadron, part of 101 (London) Engineer Regiment (EOD).

The Catford-based engineers put their training to good use by constructing a nesting site for the rare birds of prey which have been seen in the area for the first time since before the First World War. The last pair were said to have been shot by a landowner who believed the birds had eaten his trout. In recent years ospreys have been seen again over the lake, but failed to nest.

It is hoped a platform built by the sappers in the middle of the lake will encourage the ospreys to settle. It would be the most southerly nesting site in England.

The present landowner had tried various unsuccessful designs to tempt the ospreys before calling in the TA.

A team of 12 from 223 Sqn sunk a 9m tree into a small island in the middle of the lake and later added a platform.

Cpl Andy Paterson said: "It felt good to be doing a worthwhile conservation job and to be giving something back to the community. It was brilliant training as an engineering task using the skills that we have been taught."

The site of the new nesting platform is being kept a secret to protect the birds.

One of the team said: "We could tell you where it is . . . but then we would have to feed you to the ospreys."



Bird man: Cpl Andy Paterson, who wove the nesting platform

Diary And...

LT COL (Retd) Don Smith has become the first Briton, civilian or military, to receive the Larnaca Medal, effectively the Freedom of the Cypriot town. Don (pictured), who is

retiring as station staff officer from Dhekelia Garrison after 47 years' service, was honoured for raising thousands of pounds for charity in the island and for fostering good relations between the Greek Cypriot community and British Forces. The contribution of Don's wife, Peggy, was also recognised by Mayor George Lycourgos during a ceremony in Larnaca Town Hall.



Still in Cyprus, more than 1,200 people filed into the ancient Curium amphitheatre to listen to the Band and Bugles of The Light Division, the Bugles of the 1st Battalion, The Light Infantry and the Pipes and Drums of the 1st Royal Tank Regiment. The concert raised money for the Army Benevolent Fund.

Colours of the four battalions of **The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers** and the unique "Drummer's Colour", which dates back to the Battle of Wilhelmstadt in 1762, were paraded when the regiment marked the 50th anniversary of being granted the Freedom of Newcastle upon Tyne. After a service in the Cathedral Church of St Nicholas, the regiment marched through the city, with the salute taken by the Lord Mayor and the Duke of Northumberland, Honorary Colonel of the 6th (Northumberland) Battalion.

The Prince of Wales has agreed to extend his patronage of the Ulysses Trust for five more years. The trust exists to help challenging expeditions and adventurous training for Reserve Forces and cadets. It can be contacted on 0171 589 5466, fax 0171 584 4447.

LCpl Colin Ashton of C (City of London Fusiliers) Company, The London Regiment presented Lech Walesa with a regimental tie which the ex-president of Poland promised to wear every St George's Day, regimental day of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. Colin volunteered to drive Lech Walesa during a visit to London to raise funds for Polish flood victims.

DATES

JULY

5: Royal Military Academy Sandhurst open day, 1000-1700. Includes Red Devils, Gurkha martial arts and kukri dance and guard dog display, plus corps stands, sport and craft fair.
19: Aldershot Military Museum "Music and Muskets" day, from 1330 (details on 01252 314598).

21-Aug 2: Royal Tournament, Earls Court. Tickets: 0171 244 0244.

AUGUST

29-31: Military Vehicle Trust's fifth classic mil-

Animal buff(er)s, that's the tankies

SINCE their arrival in Cyprus last December on a six-month United Nations tour, soldiers of the 1st Royal Tank Regiment have been struck by the amount and variety of wildlife – excluding feral cats and dogs – in the Buffer Zone which they patrol.

Because of the UN presence, indigenous game flourishes as nowhere else on the island, with chukar, pheasant, wild duck, snipe, woodcock, foxes, hares and rabbits all resident in the British-controlled Sector 2. Dogs and cats are an occasional nuisance to peacekeepers trying to sleep or run through the BZ.

At the outset of their tour, soldiers from A Squadron were quickly made familiar with the Cypriot love of hunting when they encountered sportsmen who had illegally entered the BZ in search of quarry.

The Green Line patrolled by 1 RTR between opposing Turkish forces and Greek Cypriot National Guard varies from open farmland to shelled-out streets and shops in the old city area of Nicosia. Throughout most of Sector 2 – the tankies' area of responsibility – wildlife enjoys a familiar benefit from its close association with the British Army.

Military training areas, at least in Britain, are veritable safari parks, where flora and fauna can live largely undisturbed by man despite the odd whiz bang and company assault. While Cyprus's BZ is unique, the beneficial impact of a British military presence on local wildlife is much the same as it is on Salisbury Plain, Otterburn, Lulworth and Warcop.

The island's national bird is

the chukar – known to the British as the chuckor because of its distinctive "chuck-kor" call. Similar in appearance to the red-legged or French partridge, it has virtually disappeared from many parts of Cyprus because of over-hunting. Maj Iain Laver, OC A Squadron, commented: "While the UN is an inadvertent conservationist, we are actually doing the people of Cyprus an enormous service in safeguarding their natural and national heritage."

Meanwhile the regiment, which recruits from Scotland, Liverpool and the North-West of England, was last month preparing to hand over its duties to the next roulement regiment.

● **Cyprus special feature – Pages 16-19**



Place of angels: When WO1 Jimmy Betts (left) completed his appointment as regimental sergeant major of Gateshead's 72 Engineer Regiment (Volunteers), he decided that the spectacular Angel of the North sculpture should witness the formal hand-over of the RSM's pace stick to WO1 John Furness.

John, a local man from just up the road in Ashington, Northumberland, had recently finished a tour as SSM at Minley, Surrey, and was delighted to be posted back to the North-East with the region's only sapper regiment.

THE Duke of York (pictured), patron designate of the Army Rifle Association, has made a private visit to its headquarters at Bisley to acquaint himself with the organisation's target shooting disciplines.

Escorted by ARA secretary Col (Retd) Paddy Chambers, Prince Andrew, who is familiar with Service shooting at skill-at-arms meetings, is to take over as patron of the ARA from the Queen before the end of the year.



Picture: Terry Champion

itary vehicle show, Tilbury Fort, Essex.

SEPTEMBER

5-6: Berwick Military Tattoo, Berwick upon Tweed, in aid of Service charities. Tickets on 01289 307427, credit cards 01289 307113.

NOVEMBER

20-21: Army Arts Society annual exhibition, Medieval Hall, Salisbury.

● To include public events in this diary, contact the Editor.

Who's a cuddly mascot?

Regimental wolfhound Brian Boru, right, was a centre of attention when 100 teenagers from all over Northern Ireland enjoyed an action-packed weekend of boats, helicopters and sport at the Army's Ballykinler Training Centre. The weekend was organised by the 8th Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment, based in Armagh and Tyrone.

Farewell to the Chief

SOLDIERS of the Royal Engineers based at Minley said farewell to the Engineer-in-Chief in May when Brig Ian McGill left the Army's senior sapper appointment to take up duties with NATO peace-keeping forces in Bosnia.

Before flying away after a rousing send-off from Gibraltar Barracks, Brig McGill handed over his role temporarily to Col Steve Sherry.



50 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, July 1948

MAN-SNATCH!

Towards the end of last year, the American Army announced that it had carried out a "man-snatch" and *Soldier* can now give the exclusive story of experiments that were made in Britain in 1945. It was thought then that the idea would be operationally useful in Burma and the Pacific, but the Japanese war was over before it had been developed.

The neatest way of picking up a man is by helicopter, but helicopters are still in their early stages and, until they are developed, the Services thought it would be a good thing to have a method of making a man-snatch with fixed-wing aircraft.

First volunteer at the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough was Capt P J Lee-Warner, from SEAC. Estimated chances of a fatal accident were one in 50.

25 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, July 1973

THICKER HIDES

After months of hush-hush strengthening work in Army workshops throughout the UK the 500 "pigs" of Northern Ireland now have thicker hides. As a result of this operation, soldiers patrolling Ulster streets in "pigs" (one-ton armoured personnel carriers) now have improved protection against IRA weapons.

... finally

AMONG all the many thousands of words written about last month's State visit of the Emperor of Japan to Britain, and the angry reaction of former Far East prisoners-of-war, few stories caught the imagination as did an incident recounted in *The Times*.

Reporting on the Emperor's appearance at Cardiff Castle, the newspaper noted that Monica Yabsley, 72, arrived to protest wearing on her lapel the labour camp badge of her late husband, Ray, bearing his prison number, 12813.

The story went on: "It was spotted by another veteran, Glyn Thomas, 76, from Neath. 'Good God,' Mr Thomas exclaimed, 'I was 12812. I remember Ray well.' The couple, who had never met, exchanged hugs, a few tears and memories of a prison camp in Java to which 1,000 men were assigned and from which only 270 survived."

Looney Tooney: Lifelong Newcastle United supporter SSgt Mick Thornton (pictured) condemned himself to

wearing the red-and-white stripes of arch rivals Sunderland as a result of a heat-of-the-moment promise. Coach to the 201 (Northern)

Field Hospital (V) women's tug of war squad, the Regular Army

NCO spurred on his losing team in a competition at Aldershot by promising to wear a Sunderland strip if they won . . . which they did.



Solihull School Combined Cadet Force celebrated its centenary with a parade inspected by Vice Admiral Michael Gretton. Music was provided by the Normandy Band of the Queen's Division. Army units represented on the day included the Royal Engineers, 30 Signal Regiment, the REME, 202 Field Hospital (V) and 5 Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

Ex-RCT officer Eddie Bell, SSAFA Forces Help's man in Hartlepool, has spent two years collecting the names of the town's war dead since the end of the 1914-18 conflict. Now the Town Council is backing a plan to have them honoured on a memorial.

Kaped Kingsmen

THAT British military uniforms still have a profound affect on ordinary men and women in the streets was born out by recent Keeping the Army in the Public Eye (KAPE) tours in Moss Side, Manchester and Liverpool's Toxteth area.

The 1st Battalion, The King's Regiment, which recruits exclusively in the two cities, returned not long ago to Wootton Barracks, Preston from, among other duties, a two-year stint in Cyprus. It reports that the KAPE tours, led by Maj Gary Deakin, were hugely successful, attracting considerable interest among hundreds of young people and raising the Army's profile in large ethnic communities.

Airlift stamped in the memory

FIFTY years ago Berlin became the centre of world attention – and the possible spark for Armageddon – when the Soviet Union attempted to drive the Western Allies out of the city.

That they failed was due to the Berlin Airlift, an extraordinary operation which changed the course of history.

As the Soviets tightened their grip on the city's road, rail and canal routes, it became apparent that Berlin's people – including its British garrison – would have to be supplied by air . . . or starve. Operation Knicker involved mainly British Dakotas flying in food and other essentials to prevent the city being abandoned to the Russians.

The mainly-Royal Air Force operation lasted from August 4, 1948 until October 6 the following year.

Between the end of June 1948 and August 1, 1949, 266,600 sorties were flown, supplying more than two million tons of coal, food, fuel and military supplies to a population of 2.2 million.

To mark the anniversary, the Defence Postal and Courier Services Agency has issued a commemorative cover, available after June 26 from all BFPO Counters or the Philatelic Bureau, Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill, London NW7 1PX. The commemorative covers cost £3.50 each and cheques or postal orders should be made payable to HMG 2158.

Vox Pop

The regular feature in which we ask soldiers for their views on an issue

How do you feel about the Army's image on Cyprus?

Recently Cyprus and the British Army have been in the news for all the wrong reasons. The Army's response to the trouble has been to impose tight controls on the garrison. But what do ordinary Service-men and women think about this problem. We asked soldiers serving on the island.

Pte Kevin Slater, 1 LI

It's just one or two soldiers but all the battalions get blamed. Most of the younger locals are OK and we get on with them. But if there is any trouble, we jump in a taxi and go. We just want to enjoy the year that remains for us on the island.



Pte Jamie Peacock, 2 R Anglian

We are getting blamed for something we didn't do. However, I can understand that there need to be curfews from time to time, as a lot of the locals do tend to expect us to be all the same. However, they are beginning to notice that this regiment has behaved well. We haven't had any trouble.

Cpl Ian Brindle, REME

It's difficult, because any minor incident can be blown out of proportion. Soldiers need to realise that when they are out and about they can't make fools of themselves. We need to be seen clearly as doing the job that we are paid to do; any bad press that we get is bad for the



Army. But incidents are isolated, and it is one or two idiots who need educating.

LCpl John Brickley, 1 LI

Our image is not fair. People think we are causing trouble all the time, but we are not. I don't like the way we are portrayed, because actually we are pretty responsible. We do go out together, but while most of the guys will drink, a few will stay sober to sort out any trouble.



Sgt John Campbell, AGC

The situation affects us in the form of restrictions. They are well-intended, and they don't affect me too much because I'm married. But the situation here is similar wherever you go. It's usually because of soldiers not understanding locals and vice versa and it's compounded by the press who are after stories.

LCpl Ken Tuckey, RLC

Many civvies don't like us, but the majority of us take the blame for the offensive behaviour of one or two. Even if the trouble involves visiting ships, we take the rap for it. But in spite of it all, I get on OK with the Cypriots.



LCpl Jim Cooley, 2 R Anglian

My experience down town is that the locals have taken to our regiment better than they have done to others. We haven't had any trouble. We feel that if we treat the locals right, then we tend to get



the same back. We're under a curfew, but it doesn't bother me because I'm not a big drinker. It does bother me, though, that one person who is not in the unit can mess it up for everyone. That needs looking at.

Pte Stephen Gillespie, 2 R Anglian

The Army fits in quite well with the locals. We build things and give them jobs. The Cypriots seem very friendly to us. If a unit or regiment gets into trouble, it should be that unit which is punished. Otherwise it's not fair.



Lt Nick Faint, 2 R Anglian

I've had a lot of dealings with the Cypriots and they are very obliging and ready to help. I understand the Commander British Forces' position on curfews and at the moment the curfews are OK. But if they go on too long then it may be disheartening for the troops.



Cpl John Wilsher, RLC

It does affect us, especially if you want to use your time off to go somewhere and, for example, stay in a good hotel. We're under the spotlight and as soldiers we stick out. But we do our best, dressing well and being polite to the locals. We do try not to upset anyone.



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