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It may be Christmas but in Ulster the grim war of attrition goes on.

Against a festive backdrop in Belfast, a young soldier on foot patrol maintains his vigilance.

Picture by Doug Pratt



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Captain Bob Birrell at Brands Hatch behind the wheel of his Formula Super Vee racing car. You can read more about Bob in our special feature on page 32.

Picture by Andy Burridge



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TANKIES 'TAB'

TO KEEP THE PEACE



THERE IS A WHIFF OF WORLD WAR ONE in the word 'salient' used to describe the bulge in the border between Northern Ireland and Eire near the little town of Castlederg where the Province protrudes into the Republic. But the World War One connotation is not inappropriate at the moment since the Castlederg Salient is the responsibility of 2nd Royal Tank Regiment — a unit born in the horror of the Somme.

Now, more than half a century on, a different sort of war is being waged; the secret, stealthy war of the terrorist punctuated with bloody incidents. To combat this, the 'tankies' have had to step down from their vehicles to 'tab' on foot and master some of the skills of infantrymen for the duration of their 18-month tour of duty based — many with their families — at Lisanelly Barracks, Omagh.

The Castlederg Salient is thought of as the most active area of operations for the regiment. 'Badger' Squadron Commander Major Malcolm Johnson told SOLDIER: "In my opinion this is the nastiest of our areas. It is always tense here being so close to the

Seemingly incessant rain drenches a check point.



Left: Chatting to the locals is all part of getting to know an area.

Above: Trooper Terry Neale is 'tail-end Charlie' on a foot patrol in Castlederg.

Story: Mike Starke

border."

He explained that the main problem was that there are so many roads leading into Castlederg — colloquially known simply as 'The Derg' — which give access within minutes to the border with Eire for terrorists fleeing after bomb attacks.

For 'The Derg' itself has — to quote Major Johnson — been "bombed to hell" in the past. And 2RTR are determined this will not happen again.

Castlederg is a sullen little town; its streets standing like rows of broken teeth where the bombers' work has reduced buildings to rubble. "It's a small place, but a lot happens here", said a soldier on foot patrol and the tension came vividly to life as a door was slammed with a bang mere yards away and everybody — soldiers and civilians — jumped.

One troop is stationed in 'The Derg' — co-located with the Royal Ulster Constabulary in their cramped police station — while the other two troops in the squadron allocated to the area are a short distance away in the Rockwood Ulster Defence Regiment Headquarters (2RTR shares its area of Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh with 4th and 6th Battalions of the UDR).

It is from Rockwood that the 'tankies' mount mobile patrols of those winding country roads to set up random vehicle check points and pop in to houses and shops to make their presence felt among the community. Staff-Sergeant Chris Ransom, leading one such patrol commented: "The main thing is to build up their confidence in us."

While the patrol's Land-Rovers stopped to disgorge soldiers to flag down vehicles ("What you're looking for is the 'right' sort of bloke . . . you can spot them straight off when you see them", said S/Sgt Ransom) other members of the patrol knocked on doors to get to know the people on their 'patch'.

Chirpy Cockney — the regiment is recruited from London and the Home Counties — mingled with the flat tones of the Ulster accent. Women's anxious faces peered round doors to be asked "Who's your husband, love? What's his name? When was he born?"

Pictures: Doug Pratt

"Oh, I don't know."

"Well, don't you buy him a birthday present?"

"No. We don't do that sort of thing."

"Got any children?"

"Yes. Five."

"What are their names?"

"Oh, I can't stand here answering your questions."

The door shuts. The soldier says: "I don't blame them really. I wouldn't like being questioned on my own doorstep like that. But on the other hand, they should realise it's got to be done — they've had ten years to get used to it now."

The patrol moves on. Cows chew the cud contentedly in fields bounded by lush hedges. All seems peaceful. And yet each hedge could hide a gunman or a massive dose of explosive to blow the patrol to smithereens.

Only a few days before some 300 lbs of

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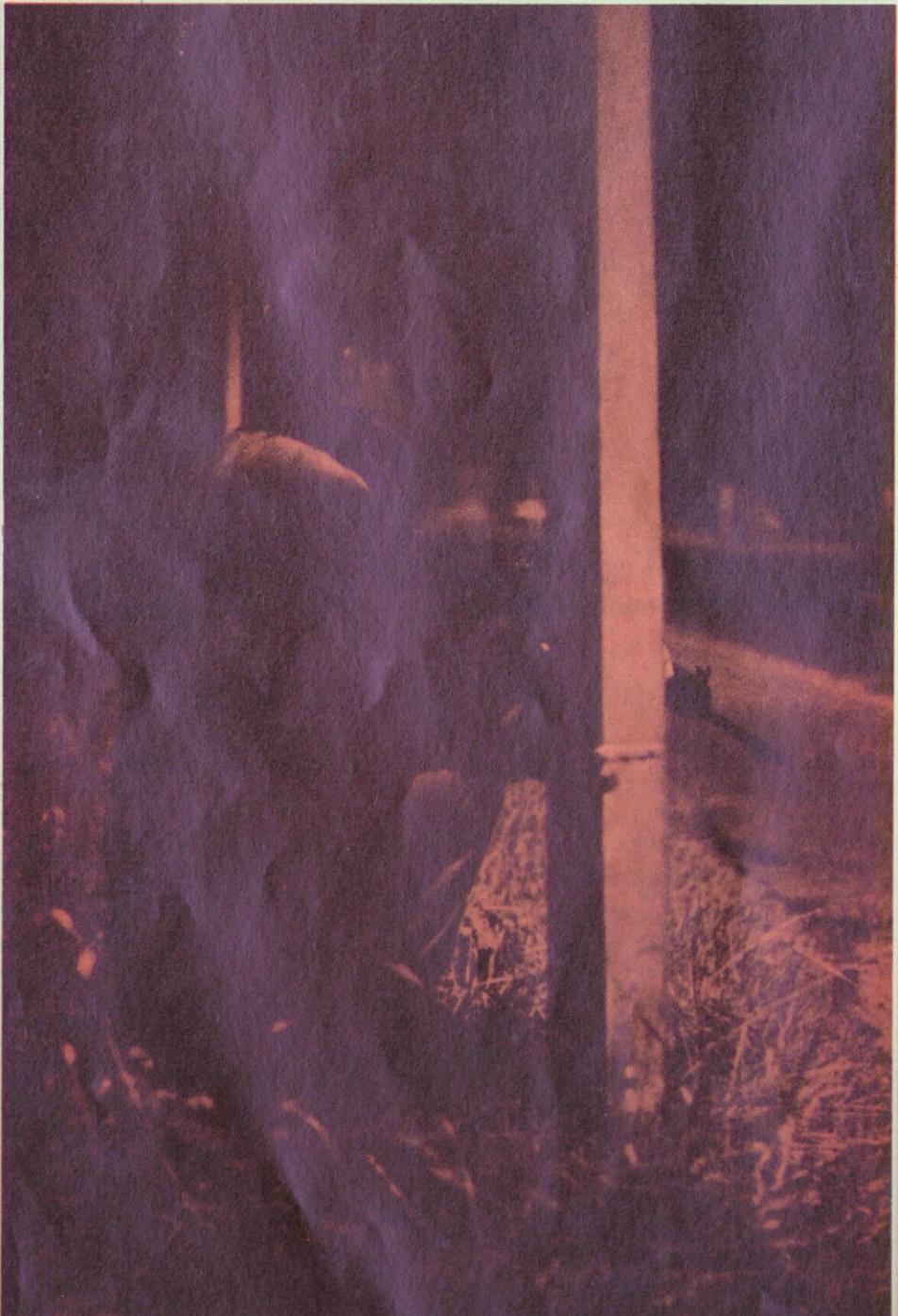
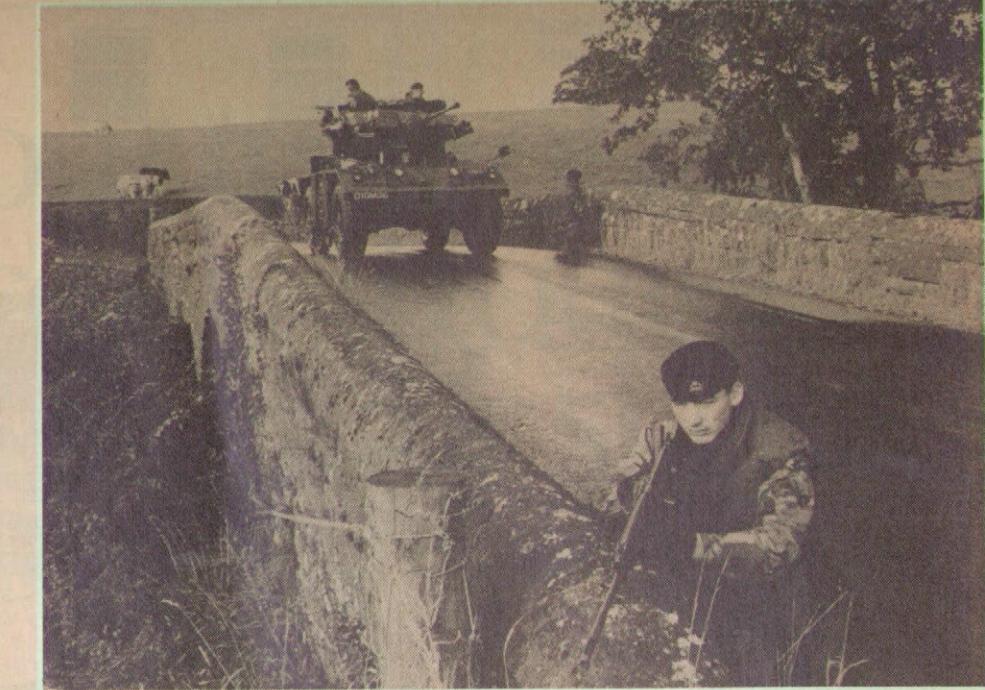
There is a champion among the dog troop at Lisanelly Barracks in the form of Corporal Ian Jackson. For he and his dog 'Hobo' carried off the top prizes at this year's Army Dog Trials at Melton Mowbray after only working together since May.

The novice corporal and his dog won the best guard dog award, the best military team award and came sixth overall in a field of 24 taking part.

Each team had to prove their ability at apprehending intruders in day and night conditions as well as demonstrating the dog's agility and obedience.

Corporal Jackson was especially proud to receive a tankard to go with the military team award from the hands of the famous Western novelist J T Edson — himself an ex-member of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps. Said Corporal Jackson: "He is one of my favourite authors and it was an extra thrill to get my trophy from him."

Three-year-old Hobo and handler Jackson put their skills into practice around Lisanelly Barracks on guard dog patrols to deter intruders. And they pass on their prizewinning expertise to the other teams in the troop to ensure the security of the camp.

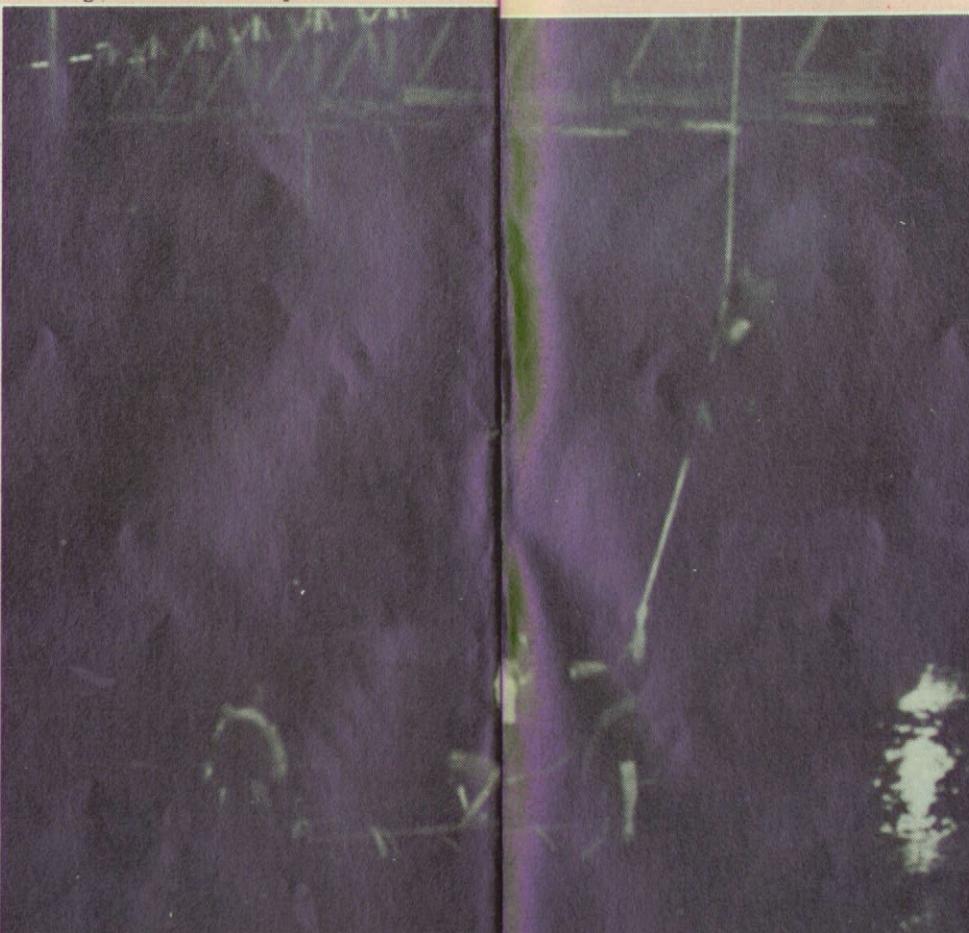


explosive had been discovered in a culvert mine, undoubtedly meant for a 2RTR patrol.

But 'The Derg' is not the only area the regiment keeps its eyes and ears on. ("This is very much an 'int' war", they say) another squadron is deployed around Enniskillen with assistance from a Company group from 40 Commando, Royal Marines, and a troop from 1st Royal Tank Regiment and one from 45 Field Regiment, Royal Artillery. With something over 400 men, 2RTR would be overstretched without these other troops under command to look after their widespread area which covers two Divisions of the

Left: Night time patrol around Omagh.

Below: In the chill of dawn a cadre course brave a freezing river on a leadership test.



Right: Fox on patrol in Omagh town centre.

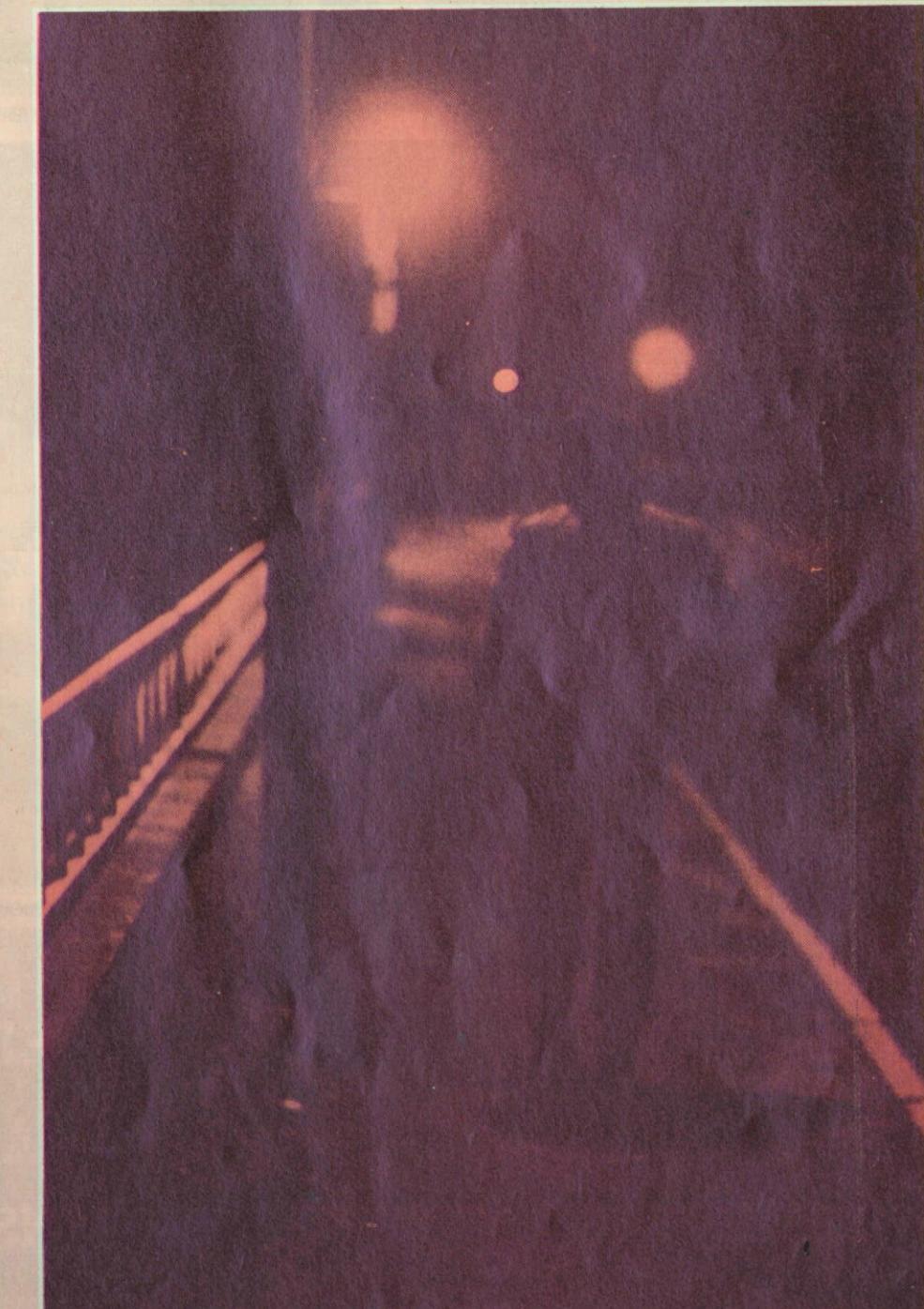
Below right: Foot patrol in Omagh.

Royal Ulster Constabulary's field of operations.

Back in Omagh, at Lisanelly Barracks, one sabre squadron has been kept — on rotation — 'off ops', taking leave, doing courses and keeping up with normal administrative tasks. Another patrols the area around the town.

This is all soon to change as the monthly rotation of squadrons will be given up in favour of long term assignments to the various areas on 'the patch'. This will enable

continued on page 10



continued from page 9

soldiers to become more familiar with those areas and thus be better equipped to counter the terrorist threat.

Back at camp 'Nero' Squadron runs the support elements to keep the sabre squadrons working in the field. Incidentally, the squadron titles: Nero, Ajax, Badger and Cyclops echo down the ages the World War One phonetic alphabet.

Normally, the regiment fulfils an armoured reconnaissance role in Germany with Fox armoured vehicles armed with the Rarden Gun plus Scimitar (similarly armed) and Scorpion as tracked vehicles. Armoured Personnel Carriers (AFV 432s) carry the Headquarters elements.

But in Northern Ireland, there are no tracked vehicles and Fox has only a limited use — it is too cumbersome for many of the winding country roads — so Macralon-plated Land-Rovers are the vehicles the 'tankies' have had to get used to.

On call as well are a large number of covert civilian vehicles which prove something of a headache for the Light Aid Detachment of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers with some 60 types of vehicles — civilian and military — to maintain.

And as for the Quartermaster's store — "We're the boots and socks department" quipped RQMS Cyril Whatling. For the soldiers of 2RTR — as tankie troopers — are more used to wearing out tracks and tyres than shoe leather!

But as every military historian knows, an army marches on its stomach and the ration roll for 2RTR and its attached sub-units varies between 590 and 700 men.

The catering for the hungry mouths is under the direction of Warrant Officer 2 Dave Smith of the Army Catering Corps who has no less than 28 cooks to man his Omagh cookhouse and 13 other kitchens throughout the area all of which are open 24 hours a day.

WO2 Smith has to travel 240 miles by road whenever he does his 'rounds' of the out-station kitchens to see that everything is spick and span.

His weekly 'shopping list' includes a staggering 5,000 eggs, 500 lbs of sausages, 1,600 lbs of meat, 1,000 loaves of bread and 60 cwt of potatoes.

With families in tow, the regiment has to provide enough to keep them happy given the restrictions in force in Northern Ireland for troops. True, the regiment's 'civilian' element is free to come and go as it pleases, but in practice, wives, sons and daughters stay on the camp as a rule. Children do go to local schools though and the regiment's second-in-command Major Brian Trueman says: "There has never been a deliberate IRA threat to families so we feel families can lead a relatively normal life here — and they do."

Even so, sporting facilities locally are not used as much as they might be elsewhere and the unit's 'muscle factory' under Sergeant Instructor Mick Gregge, Army Physical Training Corps, is at full stretch during school holidays — and beyond: "Some 60 per cent of our time is spent providing facilities for families and civilians," he claimed. And this includes local sports teams and even handicapped folk.

It adds up to an all round effort for the unit during its 18 month tour of duty to keep the peace and try to restore some normality to the perpetually troubled Province of Northern Ireland.



A mobile patrol uses a Fox armoured vehicle in Castlederg.



RQMS Cyril Whatling of 'boots and socks department' — 'tankies' are not used to 'tabbing' on foot!



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For some people, working in a prison is the last job they'd ever do. But for people who work in the Prison Service it's a full and satisfying career for which they are uniquely qualified. They devote their working lives to it, working hard to acquire the skills and experience it needs.

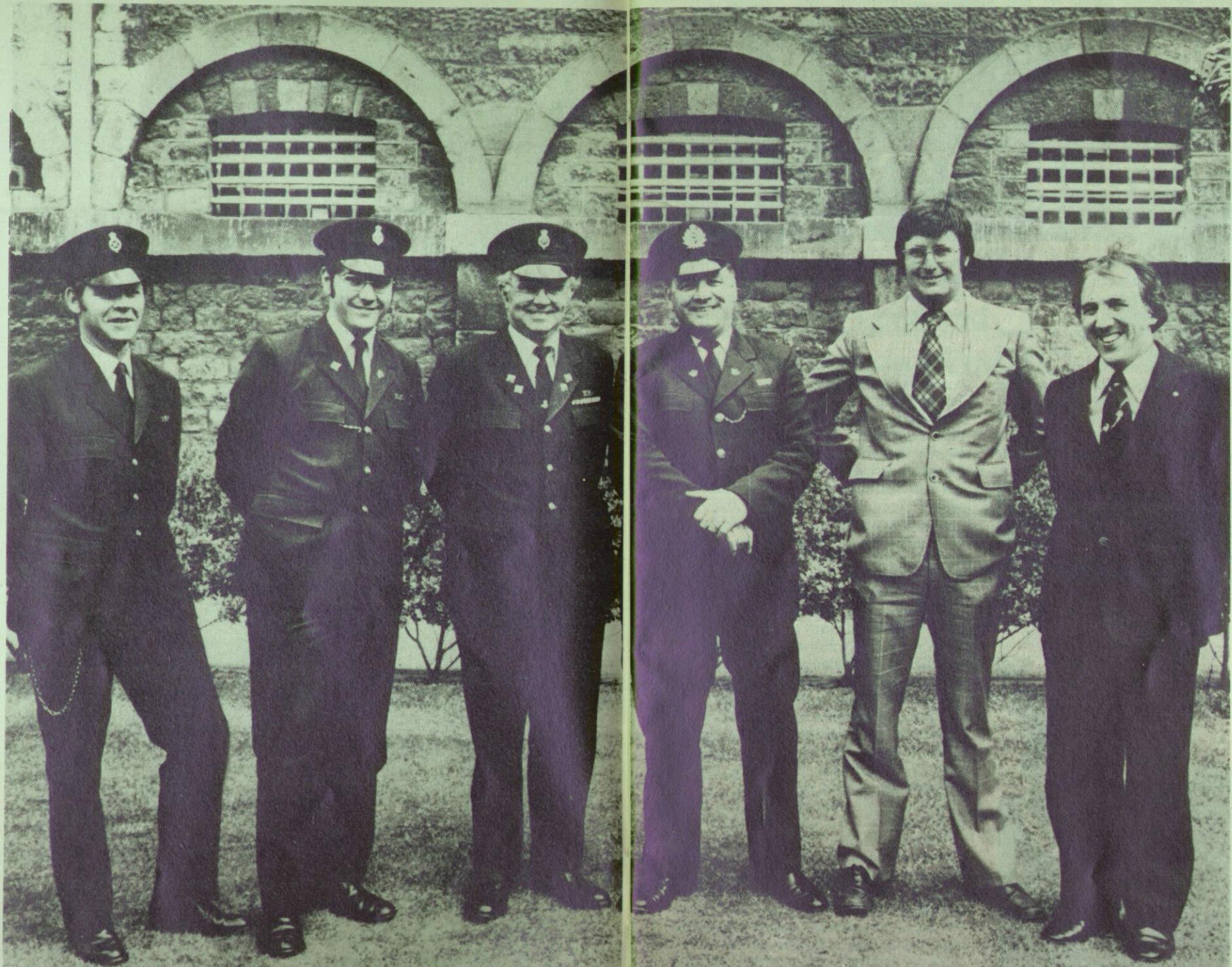
The benefits of experience

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Is prison the last resort?



Prison Officer P. TAMPLIN joined the Service nearly 5 years ago, after 12 years in the RAF. He's just taken his promotion examination, and intends to make a career of the Prison Service. He lives, with his wife and three children, about 2 miles from the prison where he works.

Senior Officer R. PEARCE, 30, was a clerk, and always wanted to join the Prison Service. He started as soon as he could, at 21 in 1971. He's been a Senior Officer for 5 years, and has been Principal for 2 years. He's worked in closed training prisons, remand centres and borstals. He's married with two children.

Principal Officer S. SNEAD is 51, joined the Prison Service in 1962 after 10 years with a local Fire Service. He was a Senior Officer for 5 years, and has been Principal for 2 years. He's worked in closed training prisons, remand centres and borstals. He's married with two children.

Chief Officer A. RENDLE joined the Prison Service in 1953 as a Trades Officer. He's been a Chief Officer for two years, and is now Chief Officer II at a closed training prison. (There are two grades of Chief Officer.) He's served in most types of establishments including top security prisons, remand centres and borstals. He's married with two children.

Assistant Governor M. DOWSETT, 33, joined the Prison Service from the Merchant Navy. He was a Prison Officer for three years, before passing the AG examination. He's been Assistant Governor in 1960; was made a Deputy Governor in 1970 and promoted to Governor grade 2 in 1975 (there are three Governor grades). He's now 50, married with 3 children and 5 grandchildren.

Governor P. TIMMS joined the Prison Service twenty seven years ago. He was a tradesman and joined as a Trades Officer, sat the AG examination and became an Assistant Governor in 1960; was made a Deputy Governor in 1970 and promoted to Governor grade 2 in 1975 (there are three Governor grades). He's now 50, married with 3 children and 5 grandchildren.

The road to Governor

A Prison Officer with real ambition can also reach the rank of Governor. More than a third of Prison Governors today started as Prison Officers.

It's not easy and not everyone makes it. But the opportunities are there.

Not every Prison Officer is suitable for promotion to the highest ranks. And, as in all jobs, not everyone wants it. But the Prison Service today needs a wide range of abilities, and officers at all levels can make valuable contributions to this difficult, necessary job.

This is one of a series of advertisements about the Prison Service today. If you would like copies of the whole series, together with further information, send the coupon to Home Office, Freepost, London SW1E 5BR. (No stamp needed.)

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A STORY FOR CHRISTMAS . . .



JOE AND MARY COME TO TOWN

OLD JOE never had been able to get the hang of Value Added Tax. He was a carpenter, not a computer, he would reply to stilted official demands for returns that made regular appearances on his doormat in the remote Ulster village where he lived.

The latest one was in an urgent shade of red. That stirred the old man into action. He was not intimidated by the vividly printed jargon that hinted at veiled threats to take action against him. But he genuinely wanted to get things sorted out. He had no particular

desire to cheat the 'VATman'. And besides, he was spending far too much good working time puzzling over the forms he could never understand enough to fill in.

So he decided to drive to Belfast to "beard the lion in his den", as he put it, and sort out his tax problems once and for all.

This was a decision not lightly taken by the old craftsman. Several factors urged him not to make the journey. There was the car, for a start . . . and a start was something it made only reluctantly on these chill December

mornings in the damp Irish countryside. Would it make it all the way to Belfast and back? He'd be stuck without it with his wife wanting it urgently any day now for the baby.

And that was the main thing that bothered him.

For, old as he was, Joe was shortly to become a father for the first time in his life. The thing was, he'd married late — a number of villagers, some his close friends, had jeered behind their hands at him as a "daft old goat" for wedding young Mary. And she came in for her fair share of ribaldry too ("Sure it can't be for *money* she's married the old chippy.")

But the couple were contented enough with each other's company not to heed the gossips' barbs and they both looked forward to the birth of their first child which — quite frankly — neither of them expected.

Joe thought long and hard about what to do for the best and finally concluded that he'd better take Mary with him rather than leave her alone and unaided in their remote cottage. Sure, the old jalopy might peg out on the way, but at least they'd be together and he could lend a hand if the baby started. Hadn't he helped his neighbours with countless calves at birth? And he meant no offence, only reassurance as he put this to Mary to persuade her to come with him.

Of course, other dangers lurked unvoiced in the dark recesses of his mind. The menace of the terrorist who stalked the gaunt city streets loomed in the old man's mind's eye. He had kept the taint of bigotry and hatred out of his own gentle life. But now he was taking the beings he cherished most into the very lair of the beasts he had kept at bay in his own quiet corner of the Province.

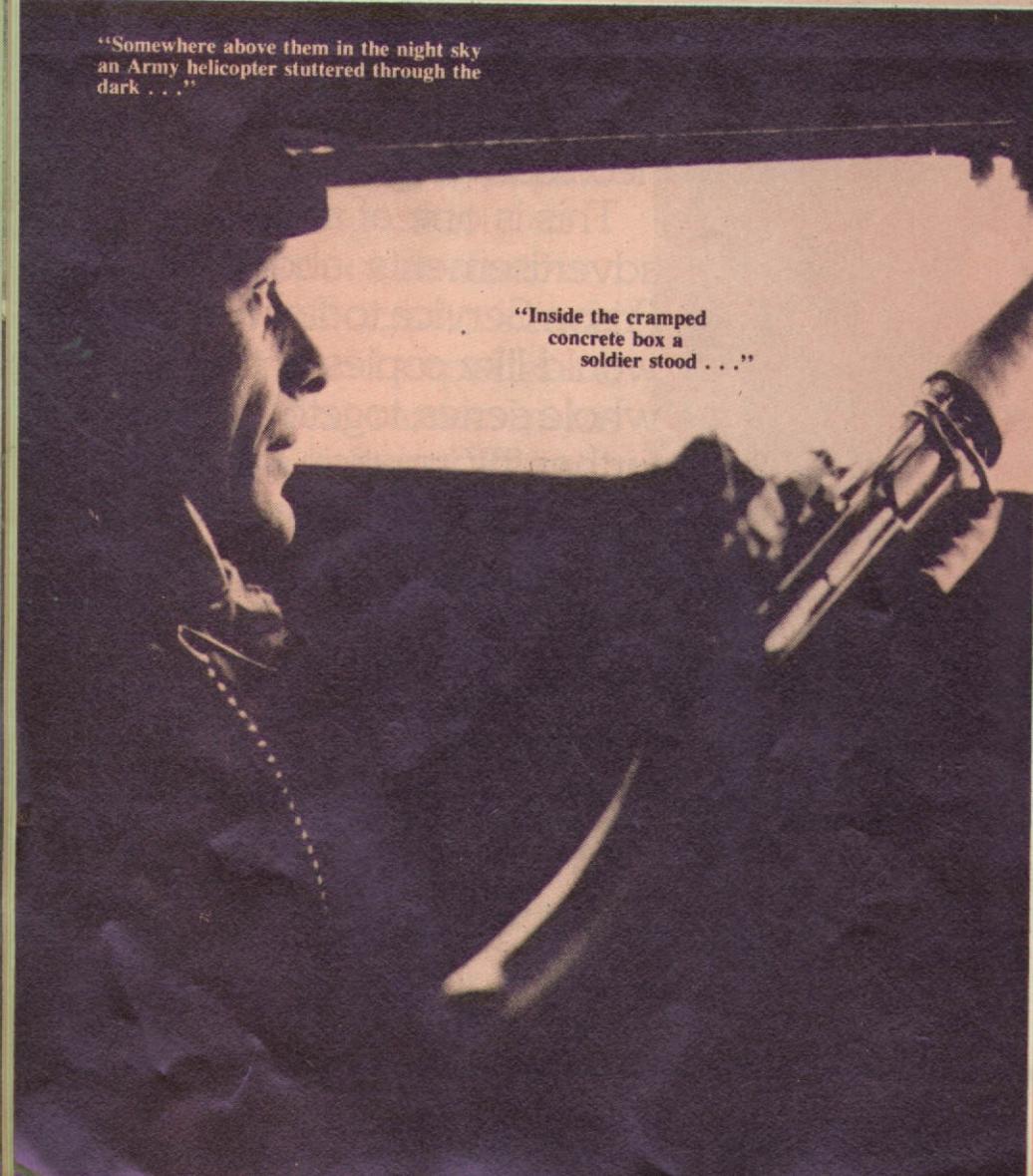
He did not discuss these darker fears with Mary and she was content enough to go to Belfast with him. Big as she was with the child she was carrying, she was determined to go window-shopping at least in the big department stores (even though the tempting luxuries offered were beyond her slender means).

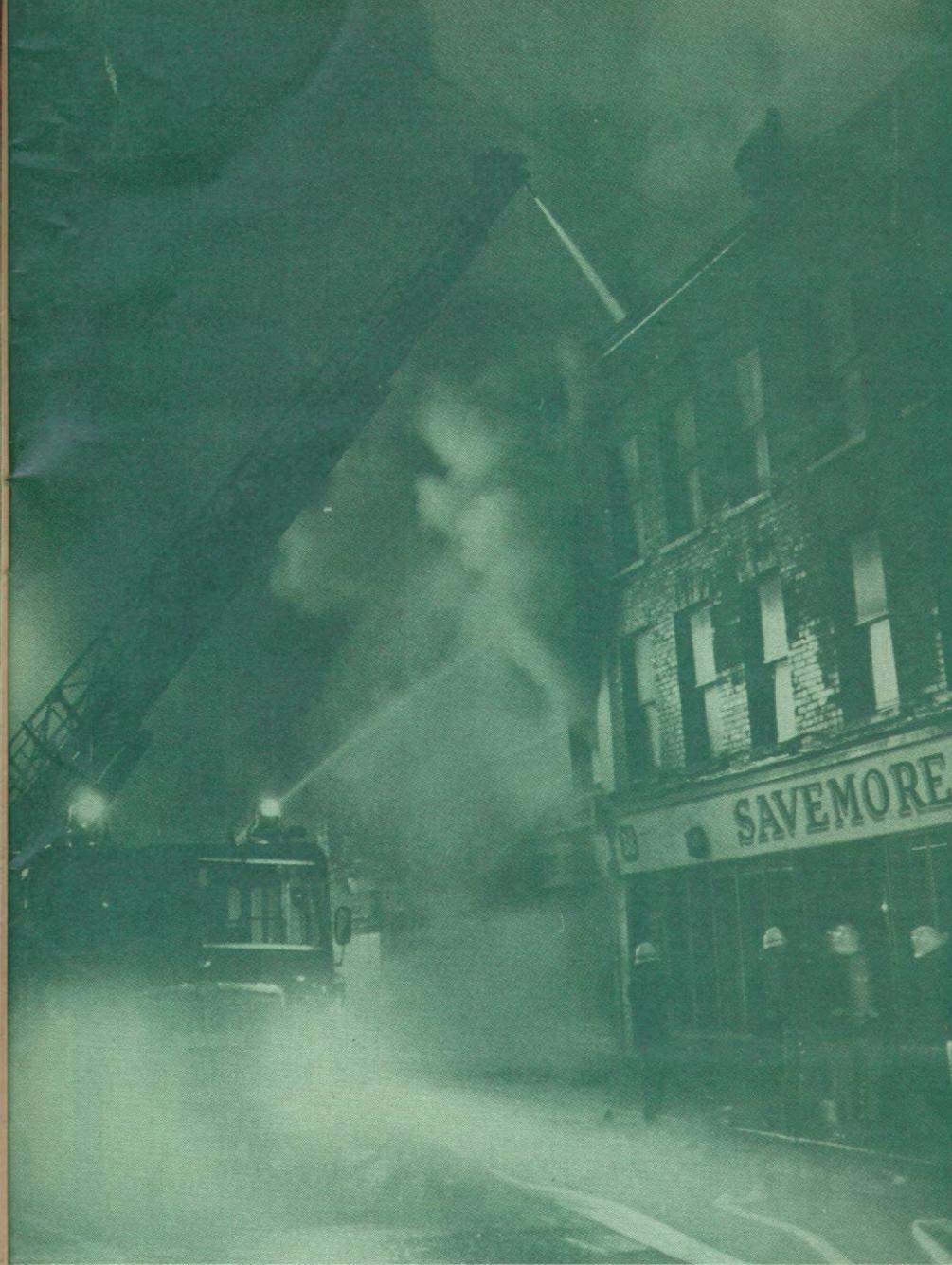
She little knew that events would rob her of the treat.

The drive to Belfast was more or less uneventful. Of course, Joe had to get his neighbour — two miles away! — to come and give him a push to start. But that was nothing

"Somewhere above them in the night sky
an Army helicopter stuttered through the
dark . . ."

"Inside the cramped
concrete box a
soldier stood . . ."





... His cries played a mournful descant to the echoing siren of a fire engine."

unusual. And with the petrol gauge not working, the fuel ran out and Joe had to walk miles across country to borrow an old tin can and get a gallon from a garage.

This was no major inconvenience to the mild-mannered old man. But it did mean the journey took considerably longer than expected and the sun (if sun there was behind the drizzle-drenched clouds) had long since set when he reached the outskirts of Belfast.

He marvelled at the deserted buildings, their windows bricked and boarded up like blinded eyes, but was jolted out of his reverie by the bump in the road slowing him down for an Army check point.

He never travelled far from home by car. But even so, after more than ten years he knew the form and went through the motions of identifying himself and opening his car for searching by the young men in the dappled combat clothes that reminded him of the colours of the woodland behind his home.

Of more concern to him now than the minor inconvenience of the vehicle check point was the need to find somewhere to sleep for the night. Confused in the evening bustle of the city, with slick limousines hooting their impatience at his old car's hesitant progress, he had no idea where to look first.

Then the broad sweep of a hotel approach road seemed to funnel him up to the gold-fish bowl front of a large modern block, still bearing the scars of the bombers' grisly work.

"Looks a mite expensive, love. But I'll give it a crack."

He stretched his stiffened limbs from their cramped position behind the wheel of his ancient automobile and walked into the carpeted foyer to the reception desk.

"... No, I'm sorry, sir. There's not a room to be had. As a matter of fact the last single and double room went a few moments ago to three oriental gentlemen come to Queen's University for some research or other."

Joe turned away and went back outside, trading the air conditioned warmth of the plush hotel for the wintry chill outside. He shrugged 'no luck' through the steamed-up window of his car to his wife's questioning eyes before climbing back into the driving seat to continue his quest.

It seemed hours he spent steering up and down streets, peering into beery bar-rooms and finding none to accommodate him. "Time was," bellowed a festive drinker in the Shankill Road, shouting to make himself heard above the hubbub of the pub,

"Time was you could start at the top of this road having a drink in every bar and you wouldn't get half way down before you fell down! Now there's so many closed and blown up . . ."

It was the same story everywhere — no room, no vacancies and from voices haunted with fear after a decade of mindless violence: "Sure, what do you want a room for at this time of night when all decent folk are abed?"

Somewhere above them in the night sky an Army helicopter stuttered through the dark and they marvelled at the brilliant spotlight that bathed the streets below in light.

As they watched, Joe felt his wife's grip tighten on his arm: "Joe! It's started!"

There was no time to be lost and the old man revved the old car's engine to screaming pitch in his anxiety and ground the aged gears into jolting movement. A hospital. There must be a hospital. He'd heard of a big one where casualties of the crazy urban war went. Where wounded soldiers lay side by side with injured terrorists, united in the pain and destruction of each other.

"Joe, you'll have to stop."

Desperately he looked for refuge. A slit-eyed Army sangar loomed through the night and gleamed, wet with drizzle, in his headlights. Joe braked hard and threw open the car door. He heard a rifle bolt click, half muffled by the thick concrete. "Don't shoot. I need your help."

Inside the cramped concrete box a soldier stood, weapon ready, at the lookout hole. A comrade dozed on a folding camp bed on the floor at his feet.

"My wife . . . the bed there . . . quick." Joe stuttered through his explanation and the soldier was quickly on his radio getting medical help. He calmed the wild-eyed father to be and comforted the wife he had helped into his meagre refuge.

Sleepy-eyed, his colleague lent a hand. But soon the two soldiers' attention was distracted from the little human drama being enacted behind them as the disembodied radio voice crackled a warning: "Three men approaching from east of your location."

Overhead the helicopter rotors thrashed the air and the searchlight's beam stabbed the street in front of the sangar.

"It's a boy!" the medic shouted above the din to Joe.

"They're all three carrying something, corporal."

"Everything'll be fine, love. He's got a fine pair of lungs on him."

"That's far enough. State your business."

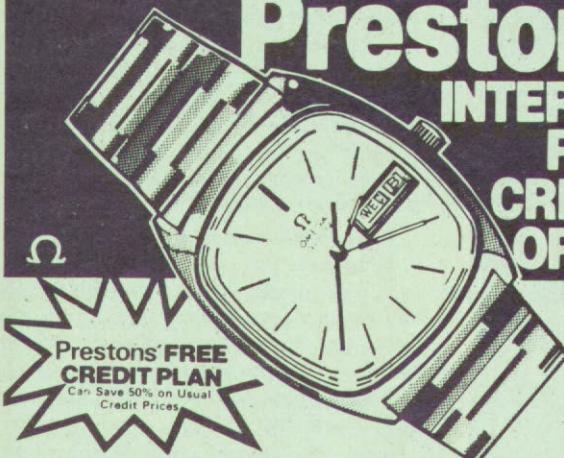
"We've just brought some Christmas gifts for the lads . . . just a few things."

The three newcomers were motioned forward and as they reached the sangar entrance the first began: "It's only a few bob we've collected and some . . ."

He saw the newborn baby now cradled in his tired mother's arms: "Will you look at this, lads." The three faces peered round the narrow concrete doorway wide-eyed: "Sure, perhaps the lads wouldn't mind if this time the gifts went to this worthy little cause."

The soldiers motioned assent and the parcels were handed to Joe and Mary. And they all wished the infant peace in his time. But he woke with a start in his mother's arms as a distant blast shook the sangar walls and his cries played a mournful descant to the echoing siren of a fire engine.

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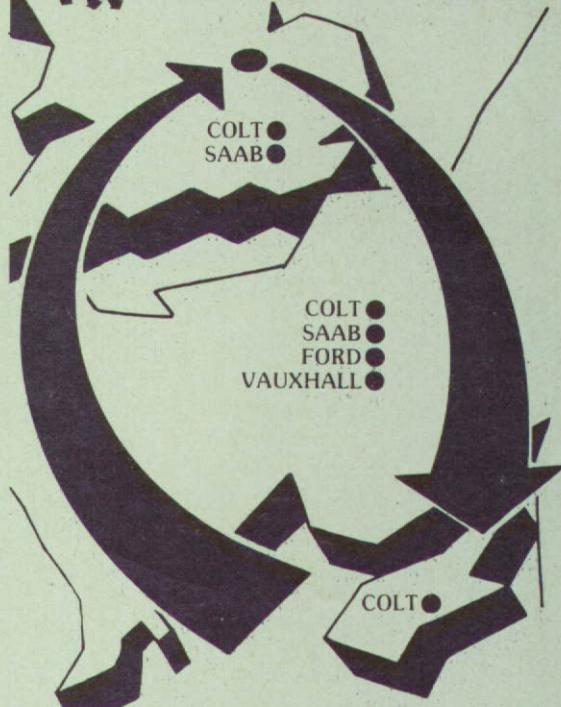
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NAIAD SNIFFS OUT DEADLY DANGER

A BREAKTHROUGH in the field of chemical defence has been unveiled by the Ministry of Defence in the form of a squat, olive-drab box that could mean the difference between life and death to Nato troops on a European battlefield.

At a special demonstration at the Defence Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Centre on Salisbury Plain, the ministry boffins and experts from Thorn Automation proudly took the wraps off NAIAD — Nerve Agent Immobilised enzyme Alarm and Detector.

Not much bigger than the modern generation of back-packed military radios, NAIAD can be carried by a man or mounted in fight-

Left: A sinister mushroom cloud plumes skywards over Salisbury Plain. Happily only a simulation for Ex Vapour Chase.

ing vehicles. It provides an automatic alarm system which continuously 'sniffs' the atmosphere and can rapidly detect the presence of nerve agent vapour or aerosol.

NAIAD gives flashing light visual warnings and a high-pitched klaxon tone. A remote alarm unit can be attached to the main detector and operated up to 500 metres from it. This allows NAIAD to be placed well upwind of troops thus allowing a few more precious seconds to don protective clothing.

And this clothing is another field where Britain boasts to lead. A new range of NBC ('Noddy'), protective overall suits has been developed, lighter and more comfortable than the old style and now produced in disruptive pattern — like standard combat clothing — rather than the previous grey-green.

Multi-million pound orders for these suits have already come from the United States and Dutch armed forces.

All the latest equipments were being put through their paces on Salisbury Plain by some 250 soldiers of The Royal Green Jackets on the sardonically dubbed Exercise Vapour Chase.

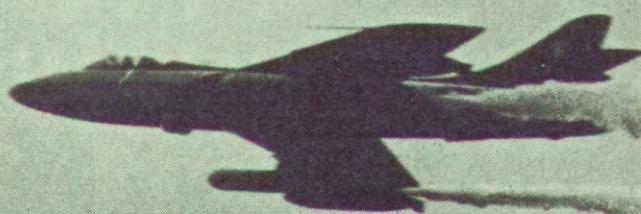
NBC Centre Deputy Commandant, Wing Commander Jerry Wilson, explained: "The idea of the exercise is for the equipment to get the 'good housekeeping' award from the soldiers."

In other words, to see if it fulfilled Thorn Automation's promise that NAIAD was rugged enough to be 'soldier-proof' but sensitive enough to operate effectively. Operation proved simplicity itself with a pre-packed chemical detector tank that merely slots into place in the back of the machine together

continued over

Story: Mike Starke

Pictures: Paddy Timmons



with a 12-hour rechargeable battery to provide power. Then, at the flip of a switch, NAIAD was ready to 'sniff' out deadly nerve vapours or even Hydrogen Cyanide, a so-called blood agent that is one of the older generation of chemical weapons but just as deadly.

The timely introduction of NAIAD and the new generation of 'Noddy' suits comes in a period of growing concern about Soviet potential to mount an NBC offensive. It is known that they have specialist troops and equipment committed solely to NBC warfare, and that they have stockpiles of a number of types of chemical agents which can be delivered by the same array of munitions that can carry high explosives.

The older type of agents include the blood

agents, already mentioned, blister agents which incapacitate the victims very painfully, choking agents such as phosgene and, finally, the more modern nerve agents developed in Germany in the late thirties. The latter are colourless and odourless and just a few drops can rapidly bring incapacity and ultimately death as the nervous system is chemically disrupted. A lethal dose can be inhaled in ten seconds.

So more than a decade of research and development at the Chemical Defence Establishment, Porton Down, has led to the NAIAD machine — now in commercial production at Thorn Automation — to counteract the hideous threat of nerve gas to troops in the field, although as some have ruefully remarked, civilians in the 'line of fire' do not

A Hawker Hunter screams low overhead simulating a deadly spray of nerve gas with water.

get the benefit of either warning or protection.

Ministry officials remained tight-lipped on details of policy and potential but Wing-Commander Wilson defined the threat in terms of a simple equation, that it equalled Capabilities plus Intentions. Although there is some information on capabilities, knowledge of intention of the Soviet authorities with regard to the use — or not — of NBC weapons is a greyer area.

"We can only make reasoned assumptions and conclusions," the Wing-Commander summed up. And this is clearly what brought NAIAD into being.

In the foreground NAIAD is displayed by soldiers in the new NBC suits while their colleagues behind wear the old suits.



INTO BATTLE BY COMPUTER

Story: Doug McArthur

A £25 MILLION production contract has catapulted the British Army's traditional battlefield command and control systems into a world-beating technological age.

The contract is for a military version of 'Wavell', the world's first in-service Automatic Data Processing System, claimed to be a generation ahead of equipment being developed by the United States and Germany and far in advance of the Soviet Union.

Wavell, named after Field Marshal Earl Wavell, was trialled by 2nd Armoured Division in Rhine Army with 19,000 men on the ground in an off-the-shelf form. This was called Wavell 1, and it so impressed the sceptical staff officers using it that they enthusiastically supported the development of Wavell II, in a more rugged, compact, soldier-proof mode.

Now Plessey who produced the prototype stage 1 have been awarded the £25 million contract for stage II.

At first it was feared that the sheer volume of intelligence collecting, plus the time necessary to evaluate it would, under the present system, leave commanders with insufficient time to successfully plan operations. But Wavell sorts out and absorbs intelligence material, then checks and collates it.

Initially the concept of feeding high-level intelligence into the system and then calling it up by keyboard on a TV screen did not appeal to the staff officers of the division. But now the whole staff acknowledges that the computer makes their work 'a hundred times quicker' than writing everything down, then circulating to all concerned in corps and field force headquarters.

"On a recent exercise I was based at corps headquarters where the corps staff were using Wavell for 2 Division information and manual methods for the remaining divisions and field forces," said Lieutenant-Colonel Ron Burnett, trials co-ordinator.

"In one cell a watchkeeper spent the whole morning on the Bruin telephone updating his locations board. The afternoon was spent



updating his combat strength board ready for the commanders evening conference.

"When I compared the figures from that cell with those of an identical board in an adjacent cell there were significant differences. In a third cell some of the figures differed from the other two.

"Unfortunately this was not unique and highlights the problem of manual procedures. The end products were not credible — despite the lengthy telephone calls.

"On the other hand the 2 Division data was identical at each command level from task force through to corps. If it was wrong the error had been put in by the originator because there were no middlemen.

"The updating of a new headquarters prior to change of command can be a lengthy process using manual methods, which can dictate the actual change of command timings if the new headquarters is not up to date. We found that with Wavell we required two telephone calls, one to the new HQ to ask if its Wavell equipment was working and the second to our own Wavell vehicle to confirm that there was no data being queued for the new HQ.

"Before we had Wavell, we had no clear idea what automatic data processing could do for us. The requirement had been specified by an earlier generation of staff officers and the end product does not suit all tastes.

"We had to combat and overcome human reactions which varied from the sceptical staff officer, through the technical signallers — who thought it would give them more work — to the civilian engineers who were not used to a military environment. Happily all this is behind us. We have been able to adapt Wavell to our methods of working and are now able to contribute knowledgeably to the planning of stage 2 and beyond."

By the early 1980s the network will spread from corps headquarters, through divisions to field forces and then perhaps even battalions, with the forward computers carried in armoured personnel carriers. Details of troop

A typical wheeled headquarters staff cell vehicle with Wavell's visual display unit showing data.

sizes and locations and intelligence reports can be keyboarded into the system and will then be available throughout the corps on all computer screens within seconds.

This means that commanders can base their decision on information only minutes old.

Wavell II will link up with the Army's projected computerised communications system, Ptarmigan.

At each headquarters the installation comprises a computer, operating and memory stores, visual display units, communications links interface devices and facilities for the overall management of the system. A data link will provide for instantaneous distribution of information between headquarters. A contingency plan exists at all levels enabling command to be retained should an active headquarters be destroyed or a change of command location become necessary.

The information available for staff use is shown in a series of formats on visual display units. An associated keyboard and printer allows data to be manipulated with the minimum of effort and copies taken as and when required as an aid to fall back procedures. The formats are used to display operations data such as orders of battle, locations summary or reserved areas of ground, intelligence data such as contact reports, unit information or combat strengths and general formats used to transmit information.

New or amended data automatically changes all other related formats and, where appropriate, self-generates new information.

The staff's verdict is summed up by General Sir William Scotter, Commander Northern Army Group: "Although only first generation, the Wavell battlefield ADP system has already demonstrated its potential value on the modern battlefield and I eagerly await its full introduction into 1st (BR) Corps".

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December is traditionally a month for taking stock, for looking back on the highlights and disappointments of the past eleven months and totting up the year's final balance sheet.

For the Army, 1979 must be seen as a good year. Emerging with flying colours and public acclaim from its unwanted rôle as snow clearers, oil tanker drivers and ambulance men in a winter of industrial discontent, it found its reward in spring with a long-overdue pay rise. And there was a further boost to its morale from the new administration with another award restoring full pay comparability immediately.

The Territorial Army too received a boost. Not only did it shed its unwieldy and unpopular 'Volunteer Reserve' tag, but the increase in tax-free bounties, new minimum engagement terms and promise of more overseas training held out strong hopes among the terriers of reducing turnover and gaining more bite.

On the wider front, the Government's pledge to increase defence spending despite the gloomy economic climate came as further encouragement to the Army that its future health and strength remained a top priority.

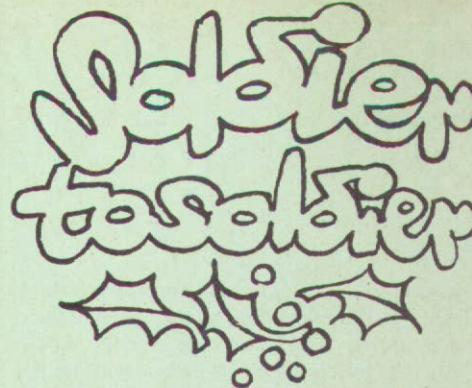
Of course 1979 has not all been glad tidings. Northern Ireland continues to cast a grim shadow with the tenth anniversary of the security forces' presence there gruesomely 'celebrated' in the massacre at Warrenpoint. Over 300 troops have now lost their lives in Ulster and still the peace they seek to defend is no nearer realisation.

SOLDIER's front cover this month is dedicated to all those forces who will be spending this Christmas on duty in the troubled province — a timely reminder, we hope, that amid the fun and festivity the terrorists' bombs and bullets are never far away and vigilance must never slacken. We wish all our troops there — and indeed our readers everywhere — a Happy Christmas and a New Year more peaceful than the old.

★

Alaudable 86 teams — an all-time record — set off on the gruelling two-day Cyprus Walkabout this year. And 23 of those teams came from overseas to take part. The aim of Headquarters Land Forces Cyprus in setting the annual contests is to provide a test of teamwork and physical endurance combined with map-reading skill. The 60-mile course takes competitors high up into the Troodos Mountains and back. Even to finish is an achievement to be proud of, let alone being first team home and winning the elegant silver boot trophy.

But veteran Walkabout Watchers have expressed a fear that the creeping disease of 'shamateurism', which seems to infect more and more sporting events nowadays, is creeping into their beloved Cyprus trek. Naturally, a marathon of this duration over rugged terrain and in blistering heat must be approached sensibly. But there is concern that the fun may be going out of this traditionally



happy event and that the eyes of more and more teams are becoming steelier and steelier with the glint of competitiveness.

The uniquely British trait of believing that 'the game's the thing', that it's better to have played and lost than never played at all, may seem quaint in this day and age of anabolic steroids and million pound transfer fees. But it would be a pity if this traditional attitude was lost from such a major event as the Cyprus Walkabout.

★

The modern Army is justifiably proud of its record of finding the right man for the right job and — if the Army List of officers is anything to go by — some names seem to fit as well. Leading the way, we found Brigadier Attack, ably supported by the Royal Artillery's Captain Cannon who had three other namesakes serving, one a lady. Also to the fore was the Royal Tank Regiment's Captain Bangham and the Royal Corps of Transport's Major Gunn. But perhaps more appropriate to that corps we spotted Major Carr. Leading the band was Director of Music, Captain Beat and following behind were two Marches. And in the parade to please the RSM were six Bulls. There were four Majors (two of whom hold the rank already) and — it cannot be denied — four Cowards (none of whom are, we are sure!) Bringing up the rear, in keeping with this month's festive season, we discovered Major Friendship, Captain Makepeace and — of course — Captain Christmas!

★

Gibraltar, which features in this month's issue with the story about the return of Redcaps to the Rock, has been sadly neglected by the airlines. For instance, there are no flights at all on Mondays and British Servicemen and their families eagerly awaiting the arrival of English newspapers have to do without on that day.

In 1977 Exchange Travel, the Hastings based holiday company, decided to introduce holiday charter flights to Gibraltar. Next year they expect to run more than 286 Air Europe flights.

SOLDIER's team, which visited the Rock recently, travelled courtesy of Exchange Travel and report that a hot meal was provided on the outward leg and that, most important of all, there was plenty of leg room for their six foot plus frames. Now a winter timetable has been intro-

duced with daytime flights every Monday and Thursday. These leave Gatwick at 8.10 am with a return from Gibraltar at 12.45.

The flights — by Air Europe's Boeing 737-200 aircraft — are priced at £47, £53, £69 or £95 according to season. A hot breakfast is provided on the outward leg and a hot meal with complimentary wine on the return. There are no refuelling stops and baggage allowances are the same as on scheduled flights. Prices are subject to fuel surcharges according to aviation fuel costs.

Exchange Travel also offers three and four night exclusive holidays on the Rock from £66 — which they say are ideal for relatives visiting Servicemen stationed there. There are also special through fares from Newcastle, Manchester and Jersey via Gatwick.

★

Readers who follow our sister publication SOLDIER NEWS will already have met the lovely Rosella and know that SOLDIER is now marketing its very own T-shirts. In white cotton with our SOLDIER symbol in red, the shirts are already being snapped up eagerly. And now we're offering SOLDIER sweatshirts too. In denim colour, made of hard wearing cotton/viscose/polyester mixture with brushed inner lining, they're just the gear for that early morning jog!



T-shirts and sweatshirts are available in four adult sizes — Small (32-34"), Medium (34-36"), Large (38-40") and Extra large (42-44") — and children's sizes ranging from 24-30". Prices, including postage and packing, are: T-shirts £1.95 (adult) £1.50 (child) Sweatshirts £4.95 (adult) £4.20 (child). Orders should be addressed to SOLDIER (Dept S), Ordinance Road, Aldershot, Hants, GU11 2DU with cheques, postal orders and international money orders expressed in sterling and made payable to Command Cashier UKLF. But please, if you want your shirts before Christmas, make sure you let us have your order at least two days before the Post Office's last Christmas parcel post dates.

THE ART OF BEING MONTY'S COUSIN

WHILE MONTY'S MILITARY MIND methodically planned the downfall of the Desert Fox — Rommell — in the Western Desert in World War Two, one of his unsung relatives was among the Desert Rats he commanded, recording the events for posterity in watercolour.

For David Thomas — whose paternal great-grandfather was Monty's grandfather — served as a sergeant in 74th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, in the 8th Army: "I never met him," said ex-Sergeant Thomas, "But I saw him occasionally out there." He remembers him as a 'soldier's soldier' — keen on communication of information to the troops and hard on any officer who failed to keep his men informed of what was going on.

Mr Thomas's paintings of wartime scenes formed part of his recent first-ever exhibition of paintings in Chelsea, but his work is dominated by studies of London which he has known and loved for most of his 63 years.

He is fulsomely described as 'London's

Canalotto' although his paintings have a vibrant stillness of their own that make them very much 'Thomases' and keenly sought after by purchasers — which is why he has never before been able to gather together enough of his works to form an exhibition.

Proud of the artistry which shines through his work, he describes his career as follows: "I was the youngest and probably the most idle student at the Chelsea School of Art. Forty years on, a horrible war, four wives, three sons, two stepsons and a perforated ulcer later — I still paint.

"I am not famous and know that I shall never be considered an 'old master.' But I am a professional. I know my job."

Although dismissing some of his early work as that of a young man, he mourns losing part of his wartime collection when an Army lorry caught fire in Europe after D-Day. "Luckily, I wasn't in it too!"

A pacifist before the war, he became an air raid warden but then joined the Army in 1941

after a tussle with his conscience when he realised Hitler was — in his words — "a monster".

He served with his regiment in North Africa, Sicily and then in Europe. He never lost his abhorrence of war but maintains that "on the whole, our hands were clean" as a force fighting the evil of Hitler's Nazism.

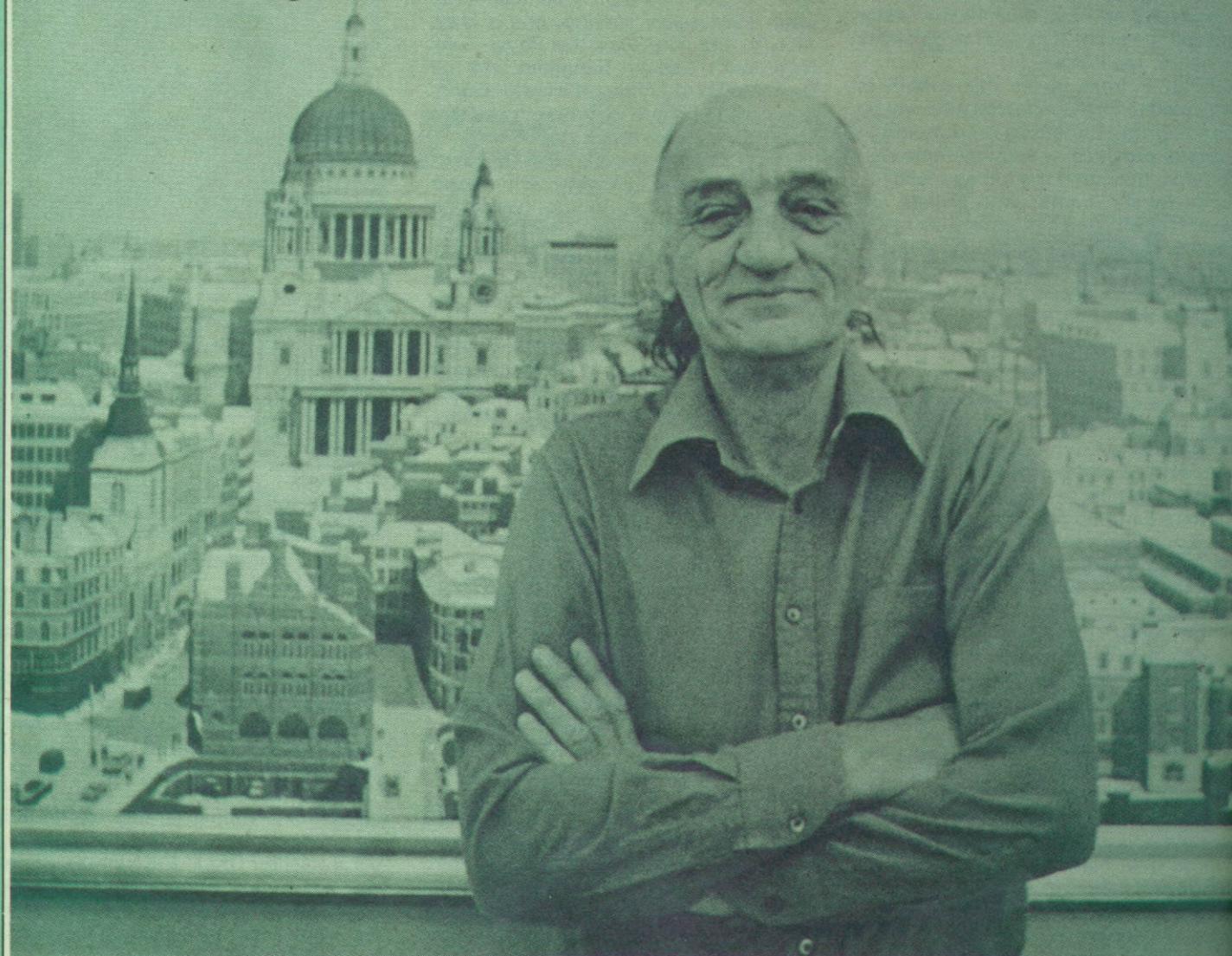
Of the Western Desert campaign he said: "This was the last battlefield where the old rules of battle seemed to apply. We only fought in the early morning and late afternoon when it was cooler and when we were swimming on a beach and the Germans were swimming just round the corner, neither ever shot at the other."

An artist rather than a soldier, Mr Thomas left the Army in 1946 and returned to the profession of painting he has clearly mastered over the years of war and peace.

Below: Mr Thomas with one of his superbly detailed London scenes.

Story: Mike Starke

Picture: Andy Burridge



After a
15 year absence

REDCAPS BACK ON THE ROCK



Story: John Walton Pictures: Les Wiggs

FOR 15 YEARS after the closure of 224 Provost Company, Royal Military Police in 1963 there were no military policemen in Gibraltar — despite an Army presence of an infantry battalion and a number of minor units.

Then in September 1978 Sgt Bill McCrorie arrived from Edinburgh. His task — to set up a detachment of Redcaps. And now once again the military police have become a familiar sight around the Rock.

The reason for the Redcaps' recall was not just to improve discipline among soldiers in the Rock's narrow streets and multitudinous

bars. It was also to help them.

Captain Martin Somervell, staff captain A responsible for discipline, takes up the story: "When the Provost Marshal came on a visit he took one look at the situation and saw a clear need for a detachment of military police.

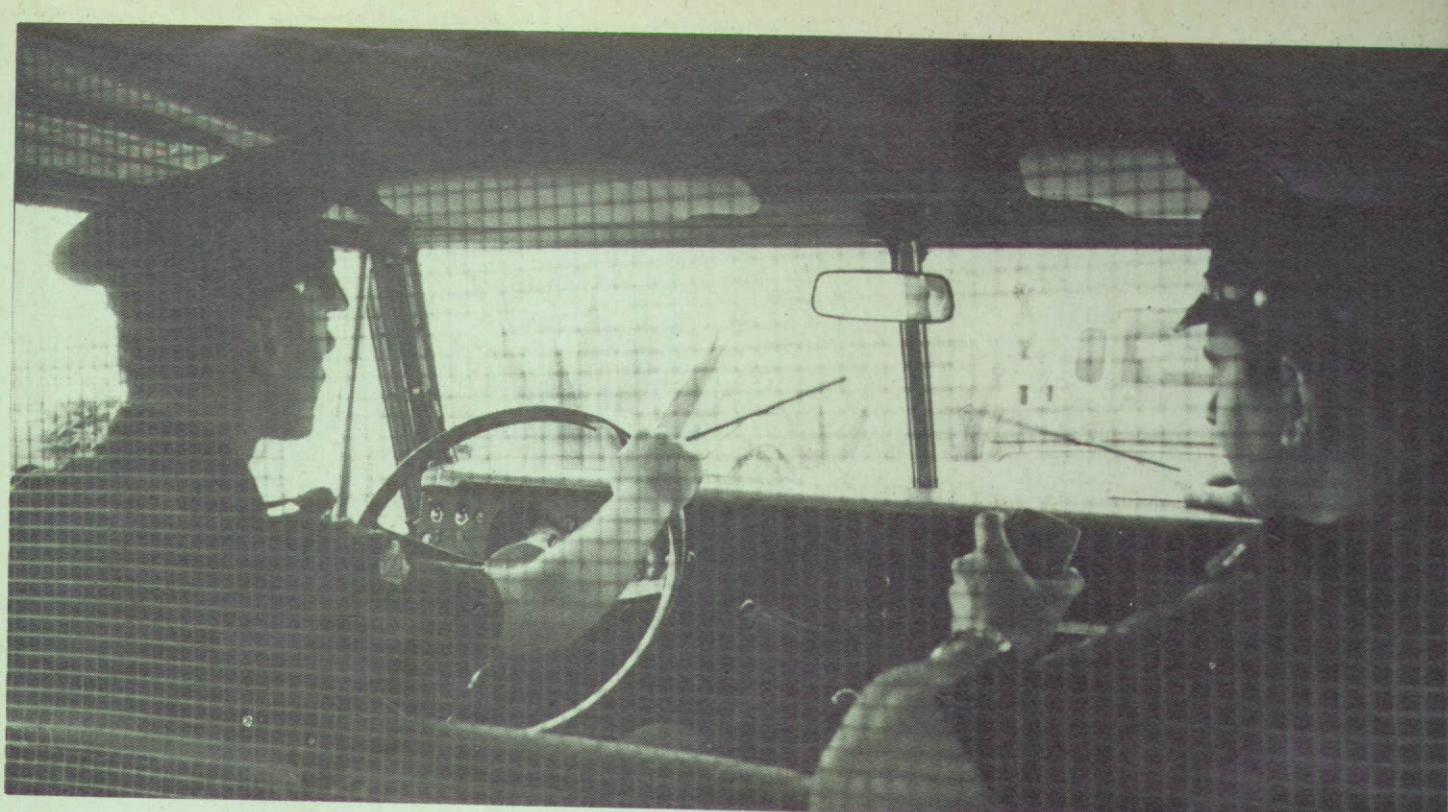
"What he saw was a small town with some 300 or more drinking establishments, bars which are open for 18 hours a day, little television and not particularly good sports facilities. A few soldiers were getting drunk with the inevitable consequences."

A sergeant and three corporals were deemed to be sufficient to set up the detachment and give a 24 hour coverage. At the same time a good working relationship had to be established with the civilian police forces on the Rock and minor offenders would be handed over to Army discipline.

Sergeant McCrorie arrived at the end of September 1978 and found a situation which he describes as "challenging".

In the first three months after the Redcaps arrived the number of civilian court appear-

continued on page 24



Above: Culprit's eye view of military police on patrol in their special Land-Rover.



Left: Giant waves lash the shore as Sgt Bill McCrorie and Cpl John Fitzpatrick pound beat.

ances by soldiers on the Rock declined by 75 per cent. The number of cases handed over to the military authorities increased and discipline in the town improved dramatically.

This was not achieved without a lot of hard work. Indeed Sgt McCrorie and his three corporals, (augmented by two others on attachment from United Kingdom companies), are working anything up to 90 hours a week.

Says Warrant Officer 2 Sydney Armstrong, who is one of only two detectives of the Special Investigation Branch to command a uniformed detachment (the other one is in Belize): "They have become owls — most of their work is at night. There are enough drinking establishments in Gibraltar to allow for a different one for every day of the year and there are only two hours a day, between four and six in the morning, when you cannot buy a drink."

Sergeant McCrorie walked the streets of Gibraltar a lot in those early days — getting to know the potential trouble spots and eventually he drew up a list of three beats in town which covered every bar in which there was likely to be trouble. In addition beats were started which covered the married quarters estates — where there had been trouble from prowlers and washing line thieves.

Much of the work is preventive. The Redcaps enjoy a good relationship with local bar owners and although they do not go 'bar busting' they are often called in. Very often soldiers who have not committed any offence but are slightly under the weather are taken back to barracks before they can get themselves into trouble.

The Redcaps work closely not only with the Gibraltarian police but also with their Navy and Air Force counterparts. When the Fleet is in they have their busiest time — with their specially custom-built Land-Rover ferrying off the more over exuberant.

Others, who are arrested by the civilian police are either released or bailed into mili-



Above: Corporal 'Badger' Guy takes down details of a charge from a Gibraltar police sergeant.

Right: "I don't like the fuzz." Gibraltar ape rejects a friendly approach from a Redcap.

tary police custody. But generally only offences against the person or property now come before the civilian courts and very few soldiers now return to the UK with criminal records.

Recently two of the Redcaps, Corporals Dave Burgess and 'Erroll' Flynn, were called upon to rescue a man who had climbed up the sheer rock face and subsequently fallen. As they struggled down with the man, a Scottish civilian, he began to fight them — and he ended up serving a month in the local gaol.

There are lighter incidents. Sgt McCrorie recalls seeing a man walking down the road wearing a large cardboard box with two eyeholes in it. The wearer, a sailor, confessed that he had been picked up so many times in Gibraltar, that he was in disguise!

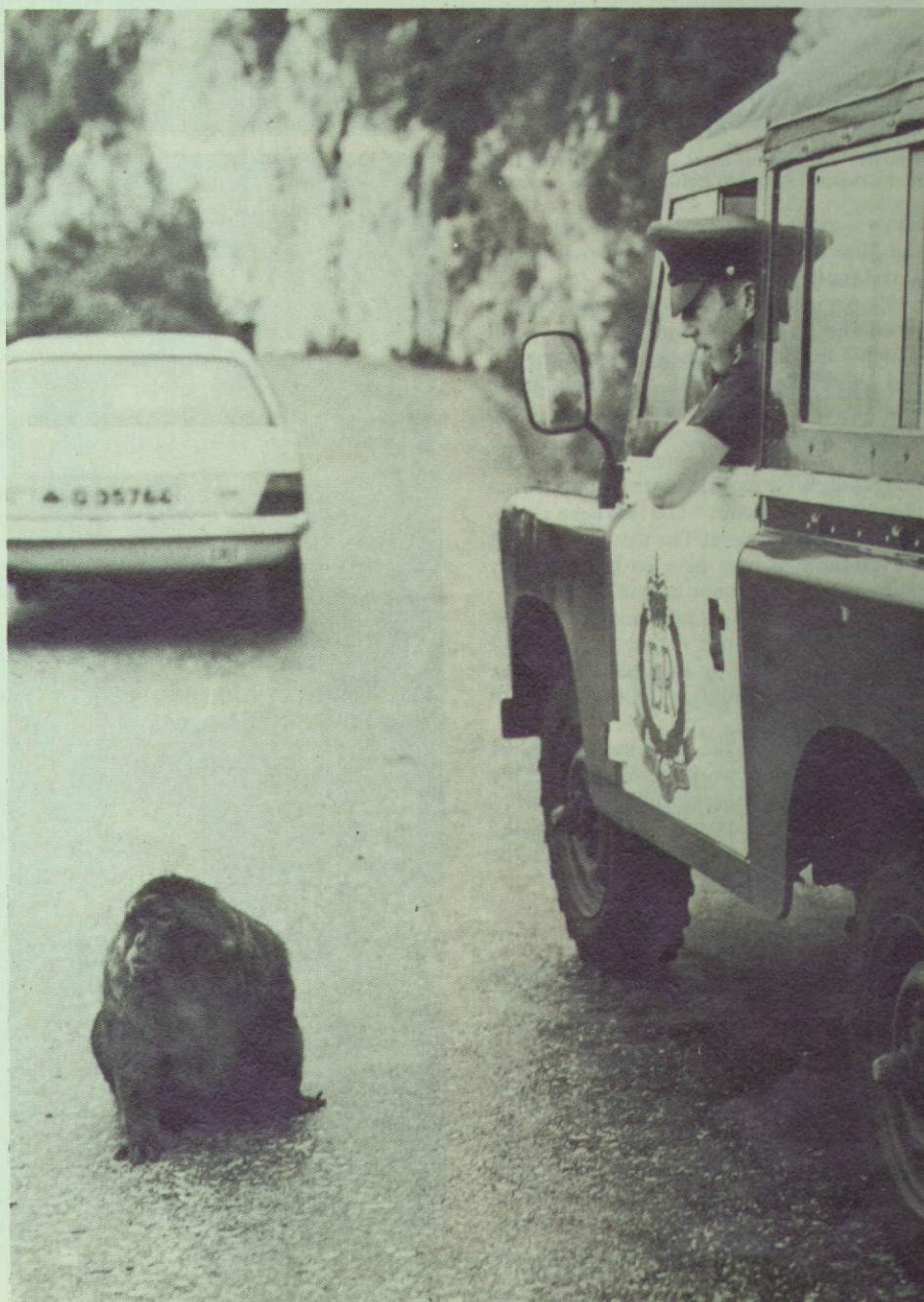
At first some soldiers resented the appearance of the policemen on the Rock. But, says Sgt McCrorie, by the time they came to the end of their tour the Redcaps were being approached by soldiers seeking their help because a friend had been arrested by the civilian police — "that was tremendously rewarding for me".

The corporals live in a flat and with help from the Chevrons Fund and the Provost Marshal they have made it into a real home complete with its own bar — 'The Plod Inn'.

The postings for the corporals were initially on a six months basis but these are now changing to two years and married men will be accompanied.

In those six months you learn a lot according to Corporal John Fitzpatrick over from 158 Company, Bulford: "I'd advise anyone to apply for a posting like this. You meet up with practically every type of incident here. You have to take responsibility and if you are wrong you carry the can and make sure you don't do it again."

Lots of TA units visit the Rock on exercise and Sgt McCrorie gives them all a lecture on do's and don'ts in Gibraltar. "We



continued on page 26



Above: 'They're all night owls.' Corporal Guy and Corporal Brendan Laffan on mobile patrol.

don't want them to leave anyone behind in the Moorish Castle (the local prison)" says Syd Armstrong.

Mr Armstrong noticed the biggest change when the uniformed police arrived. Until then his special investigation branch section had consisted of three or four including a local man, Sergeant Louis Linares of the Gibraltar Security Police.

Now as the uniformed presence has increased, WO2 Armstrong finds he is a completely one man band. "The lads have a completely different task. The minute you put the uniform on you have to be a military policeman. You cannot be half and half."

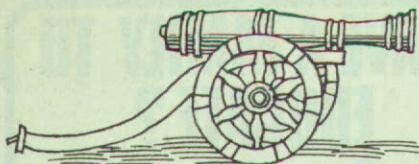
Now a bid is in for a permanent establishment of six uniformed corporals. Says Syd Armstrong: "They do as much work here with five blokes as a unit in UK might do with 35."

The Redcaps on the Rock see themselves as trail blazers. By working those incredibly long hours they have already worked wonders in their first year — and earned the respect of both soldiers and civilians on the rocky outpost.



Back in the days when the Royal Military Police were on Gibraltar in numbers they even had a mounted section. And during the famous Ceremony of the Keys the senior RMP officer used to be in attendance on the Governor of Gibraltar.

In October Sgt Bill McCrorie was the first of the new military policemen to attend the Governor, General Sir William Jackson, in a revival of the custom.



BESIDES THE BASIC material covering the two World Wars — already dealt with in the two previous articles — the Imperial War Museum has several important reference sections.

The department of art, for example, houses some 10,000 paintings and drawings as well as many fine sculptures. There are outstanding works such as Paul Nash's 'The Menin Road' and a large oil by Sir Stanley Spencer of wounded soldiers at a dressing station in Macedonia while drawings by Muirhead Bone and portraits by Francis Dodd all contribute to a rare collection. Although the art work produced in the second World War is on a smaller scale, there are several fine pieces — notably a group of works by Graham Sutherland, Henry Moore and John Piper. Other World War Two artists represented include Feliks Topolski, Dame Laura Knight and Sir Thomas Monnington. In the Print Room more than 5000 water colours can be studied while a fascinating archive of war artists' letters supports the art collection.

Of the museum's international collection of more than 50,000 posters, both Allied and German, about 3000 are normally available for viewing. They cover such topics as war propaganda, the status of women, economic warfare, working conditions, the administration of occupied territories and civil defence. The majority are British, the best known example being the famous picture of Lord

Kitchener with finger accusingly pointing above the legend 'Your Country Needs You.' The museum possesses the original drawing for this poster by Alfred Leete.

The Department of Film began as a collection of the official films made by British cameramen in World War One. One of the oldest film archives in the world it includes documentaries of the battle of the Somme and the battle of Arras. The Second World War saw a massive expansion of the film library, the major part of which can be classed as a national heritage of the greatest value. There is also a fine collection of German documentary and feature films of a strongly propaganda nature, an almost complete set of Soviet war newsreels covering the period 1941-44 and the famous American propaganda series 'Why We Fight.' Included in the library's vast holding of more than 40 million feet of film there is a rare between-the-wars sequence of Lawrence of Arabia as Aircraftsman Shaw in the RAF.

Another department is responsible for a collection of over five million photographs and negatives dealing with warfare in the 20th century. Pictures taken by official photographers attached to both the Allied and Axis forces provide detailed coverage of the main operations in which British and Commonwealth troops took part. While the bulk of this huge collection inevitably relates to the two World Wars there are also sections dealing with the Korean War and the

emergencies in Malaya, Kenya, Cyprus and elsewhere.

An entire section serves as a repository for documentary records of all types relating to warfare in the 20th century. These fall into two main groups — captured German material and British private papers. Among the former the most significant group consists of microfilm copies of the records of Albert Speer's Ministry of Armaments and of the German Air Ministry, microfilmed documents relating to German administration of occupied territories including the Channel Islands and records of the major war crimes trials.

A national reference library holds a collection of over 100,000 books, 25,000 pamphlets, 15,000 periodicals and thousands of maps and technical drawings with a book-lined reading room located in the central dome of the museum building. Yet another section, the department of sound records, collects and preserves all kinds of historical sound documents which have a bearing on 20th century warfare. It includes recordings made during or immediately after the events to which they relate, interviews with service personnel and civilians covering a wide range of subjects and various other recordings from sound effects to poetry readings.

Educational services, public film shows and a wide range of publications are all part of the many facilities offered by this great museum which concentrates on every aspect of the two greatest wars in history.

John Jesse

Refreshments: From the museum's 'Ole Bill' cafe.

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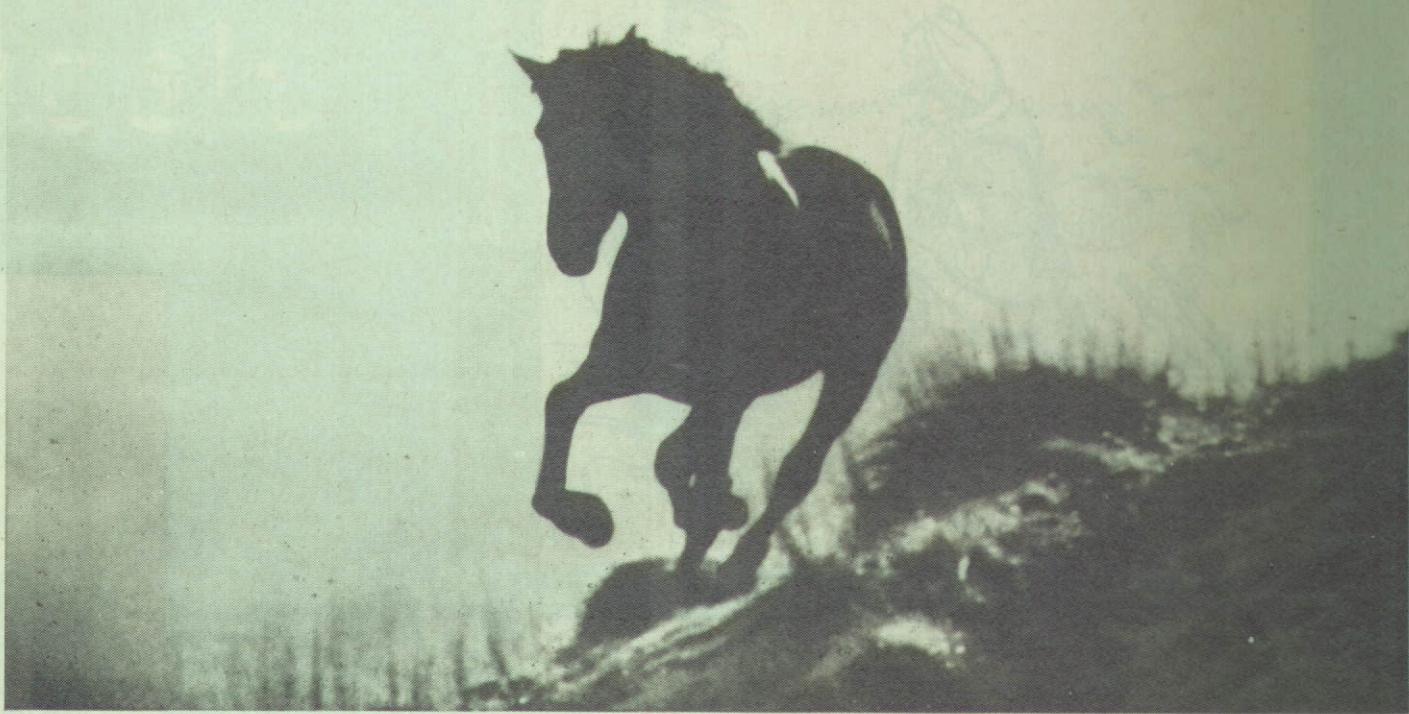
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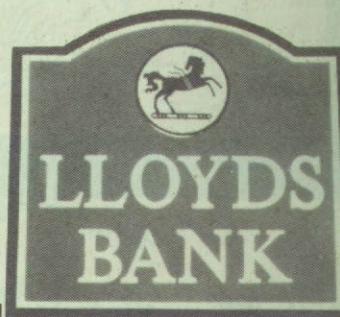
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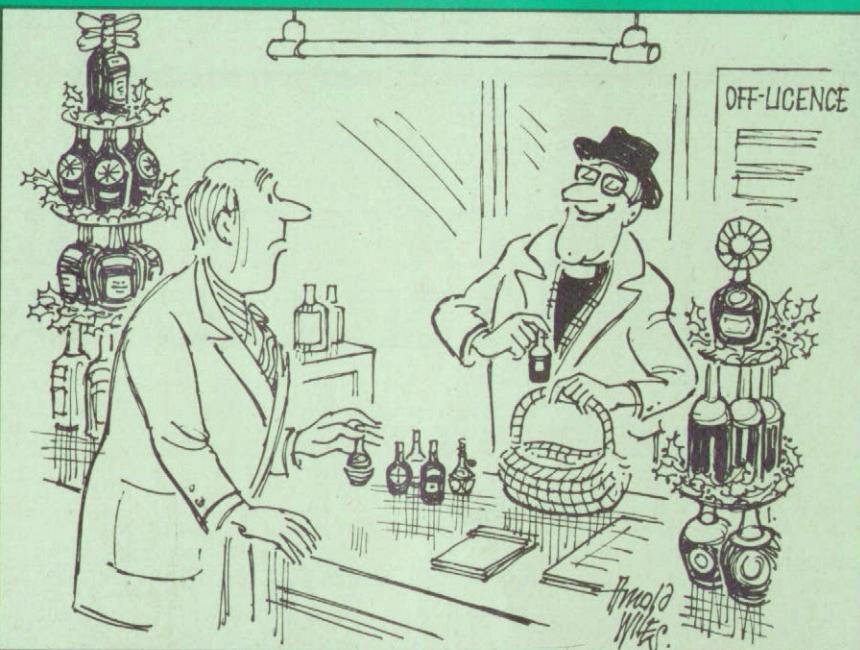
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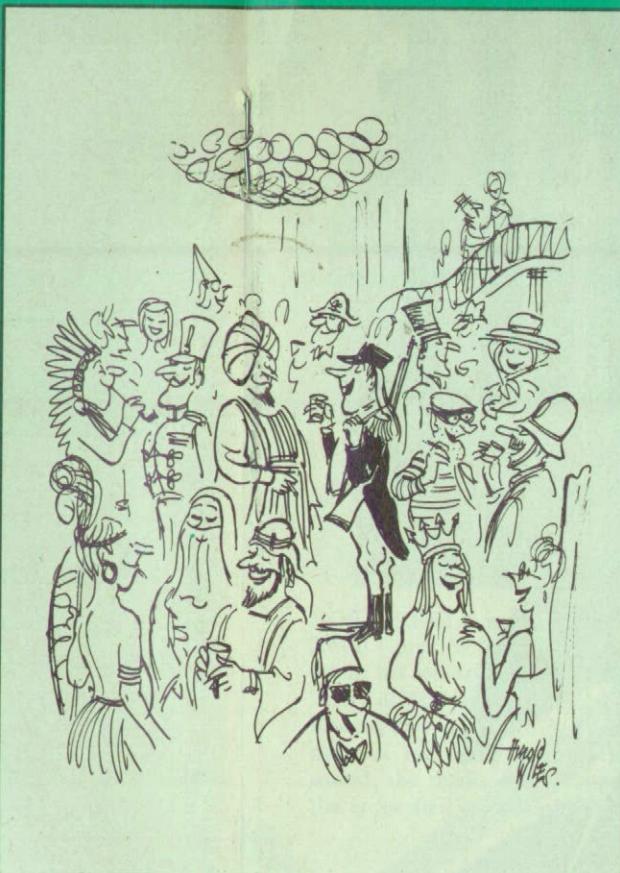


"I am not averse to intoxicating liquors during the festive season — in moderation, that is"



"My Edwin is a good lad. He always breaks out to see his mum at Christmas"

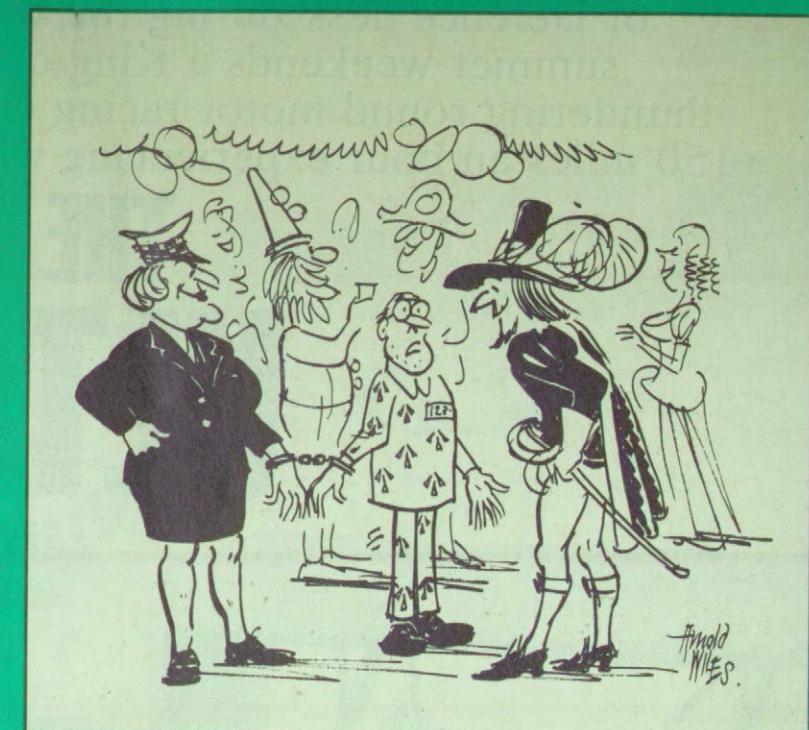
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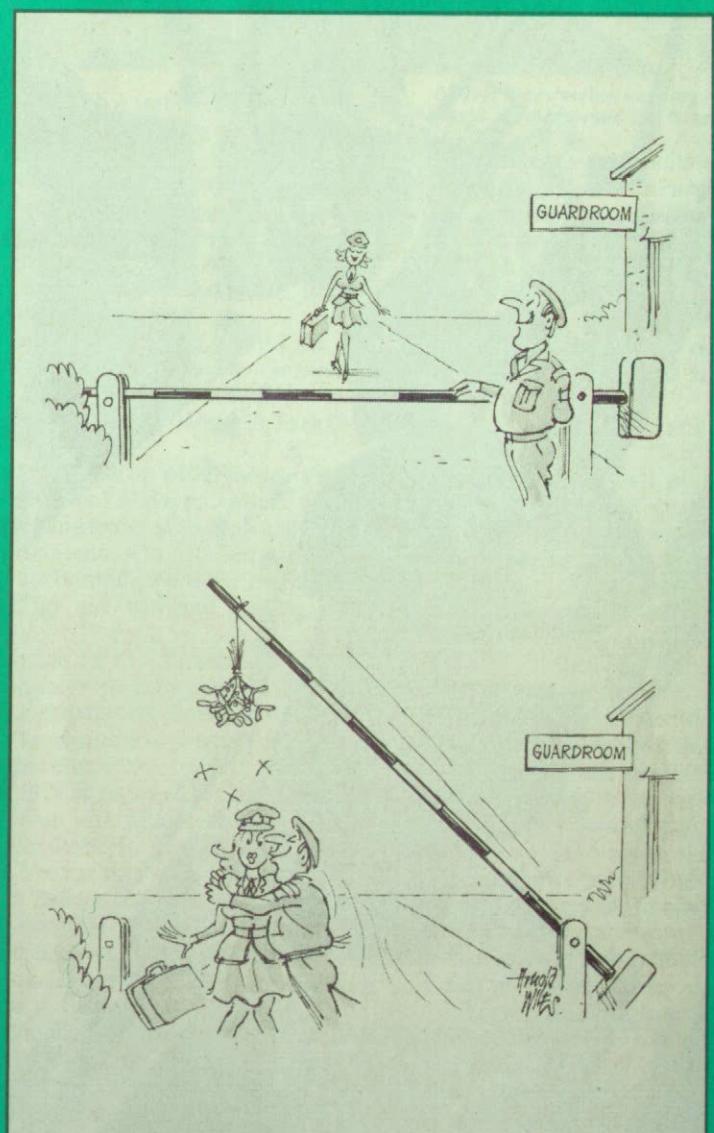
"I only came to forget the wife for an hour or two"



"Absent friends!"



"The first fancy dress party the missus and me attend in years and look at the outfits she picks!"



Meet Bob Birrell, an Army captain at a Ministry of Defence desk during the week, but on summer weekends a King of Speed — thundering round motor racing circuits at up to 150 miles an hour experiencing what he calls ...

THE ULTIMATE THRILL



Bob Birrell gets ready for blast-off.

BOB BIRRELL is a most unusual man for a Royal Corps of Transport captain about to attain his majority. For him the usual RCT world of Foden and Bedford trucks, Land-Rovers and staff cars is exchanged during most of his spare time for the speed and sound, the thrills and spills, the fumes and the enthralled crowds of motor racing.

At present Bob is stationed with the Directorate of Army Recruiting at Lansdowne House in London so his normal transport role has been temporarily put aside anyway. But this season, racing a specially designed Formula Super Vee car he owns jointly with a captain in the Army Air Corps, Bob Birrell finished in the prize money every time he actually completed a race.

Bob first started racing when he was stationed in Northern Ireland in less troubled times — back in the late sixties. He won his first single-seater race at Mondello Park there in 1969.

He followed this up with two years racing in Singapore and Malaysia, where he took part in the Singapore, Malaysian and Penang Grand Prix events. On his return to Britain he took up Formula Ford for two seasons, notching up one win and gaining many places.

Then it was off to a secondment in Oman — and the only race during this two year spell was a race through the desert "using everything on four wheels — I won with the colonel's Land-Rover".

In late 1976 he returned to Catterick where he teamed up with helicopter pilot, Captain Ben Taylor-Roberts. Sharing a Supernova Formula Vee car they both raced with some success in Britain and on the Continent.

This year Ben Taylor-Roberts did not drive as he had retired from the Army. However, he has now rejoined and next year both men hope to share the driving again.

While he was stationed at Catterick Bob generated a lot of interest from soldiers in 60 Squadron RCT. They helped him to run and maintain the car and he took some of them to Germany at his own expense to watch him compete against Continental drivers.

Above: Stopwatches working as Bob Birrell times David Harper round the Brands Hatch circuit.

This year's car, built and designed by Aiden Jones, a former Formula One engineer and constructor, uses the latest in 'ground effect' aerodynamic principles and has a highly modified Volkswagen Scirocco engine giving about 180 brake horse power. On the tight track at Brands Hatch top speed was about 130 mph but Bob recalled that at the famous Nurburgring he had touched more than 150.

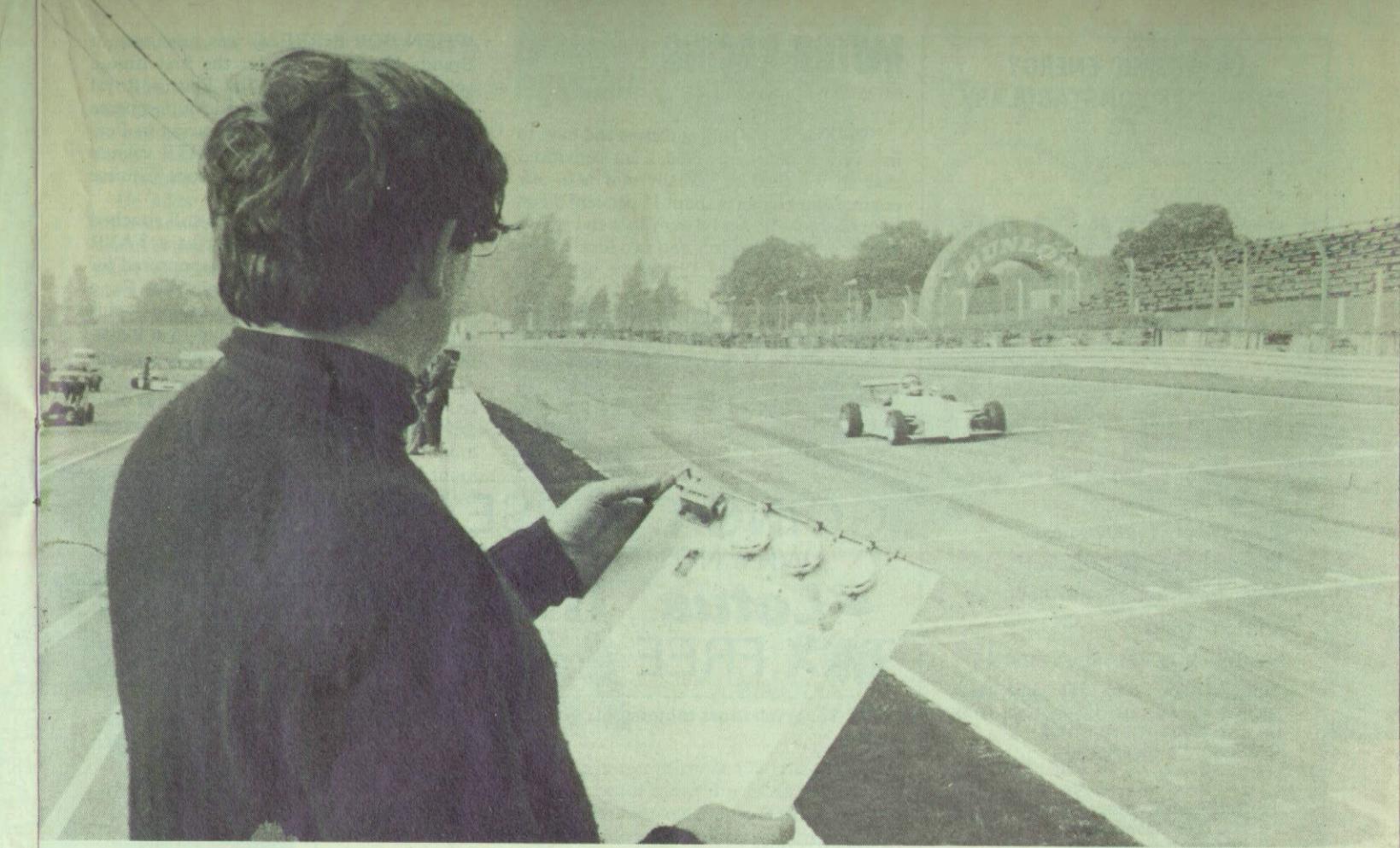
What is it like to race at those kind of speeds? Says Bob: "It's very difficult to describe. It must be a bit like freefall parachuting — it is the ultimate thrill. Especially when we are driving with large Union Jacks on top against the Germans, the Austrians and the Scandinavians in front of perhaps 150,000 people. That definitely gets the adrenalin going and you go a little faster.

"You just don't think about the possibility of having an accident. By the time the race comes up you are so wound up with what you are doing you have no thought of anything else. The only time you think about accidents is when you have to pay the bills afterwards."

The cost of owning and running a racing car adds up to thousands of pounds a year and the £800 prize money Bob won this season does not go very far to offset it. The team is still looking for a sponsor and despite past lack of interest Bob is hoping that the Royal Corps of Transport may assist.

"There's always a tremendous amount of interest shown by soldiers and from the recruiting point of view youngsters are always coming up and asking me about the Army's involvement. It's a shame that the military won't involve themselves more.

continued on page 34



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MOTOR RACING

continued

"We bear all the cost ourselves and have to live very frugal lives. And I am convinced that all we need to actually win is a new engine. Our engine is about 15 per cent down in brake horse power on our rivals and yet we have still had two thirds and two fourths this year. If we could get £3,500 we would be winning races.

"We make do with second hand tyres and other second hand stuff but if we cannot get some sort of cash backing next year I don't know how much longer we can carry on. When the cupboard is bare we shall just have to stop."

WHEN BOB BIRRELL was practising at Brands Hatch he met for the first time a young ex-lieutenant in the Fourth Royal Tank Regiment, who has made quite a name for himself in his first year's racing in Formula Ford in a car painted in RTR colours and carrying the regiments' famous 'Chinese Eyes' to ward off evil spirits.

David Harper, who is 25, is still attached to the Royal Tank Regiment as a TAVR officer and this season he was sponsored for his racing by the four tank regiments. For a beginner he had an excellent season — his highest placing being 2nd out of 16 at Inglinton and with other positions including 7th and 9th out of about 70 drivers.

David works in stockbroking but aims eventually to move up to Formula 3 racing —

in which case he says his job would have to go.

"Ideally my proper progression would be to Formula 3 but at 25 I am young enough to do another season in Formula Ford — preferably with a new car and a more competitive engine."

He adds: "When I was in the Army I entered downhill ski races and this was very useful in that it takes exactly the same kind of mind and reactions with timing and judgement being so important in both."

Team manager, Major Jeremy Rawlings, was full of praise after David had taken Bob Birrell's car for a few practice laps round Brands Hatch.

"I believe he is of above average ability and has the potential to do very well. This season, on a lot of occasions he has been a lot more competent than people who have had more time to practise and who may be in their third or fourth season."

The sponsorship, by ordinary members of the four tank regiments and not from public funds, has generated a tremendous amount of interest at race meetings. And if the race circuit has been in one of the regiments' recruiting areas they have often laid on a recruiting display where the car is parked up between races. At Brands Hatch, for instance, the Second provided a caravan and a Fox and at Inglinton, near Edinburgh the Fourth produced a Scorpion and their Pipes and Drums.

But it's a costly business — eight races cost the team £2,487 this year — and with hopes



Other drivers chat to David Harper after his try out of Bob Birrell's car.

who would like to be associated with the Royal Tank Regiments' efforts to help an ex-officer who also happens to be a promising racing driver.



Bob Birrell steams along in his Super Vee.

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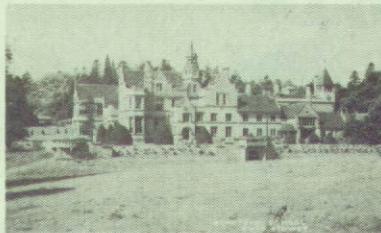
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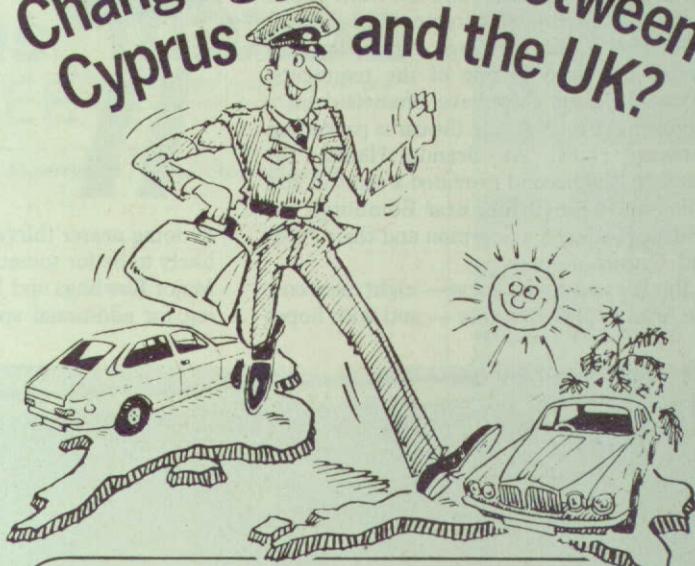


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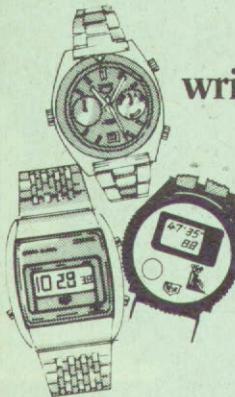
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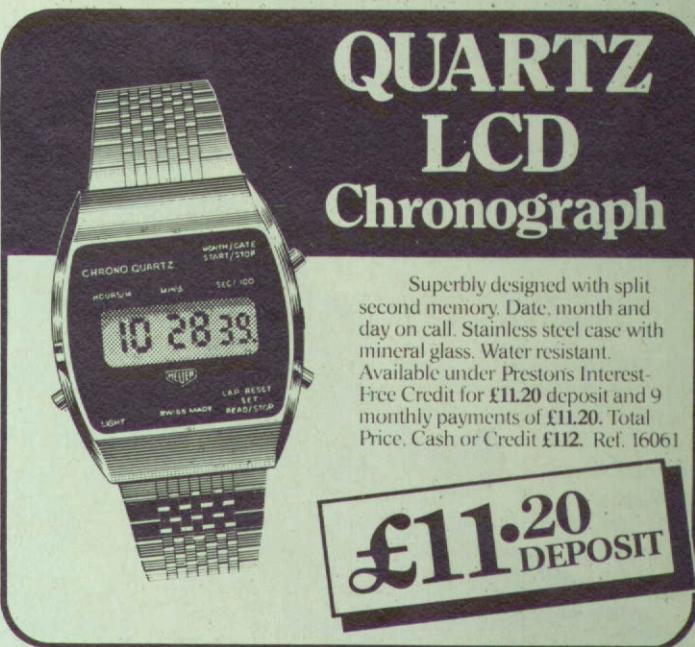


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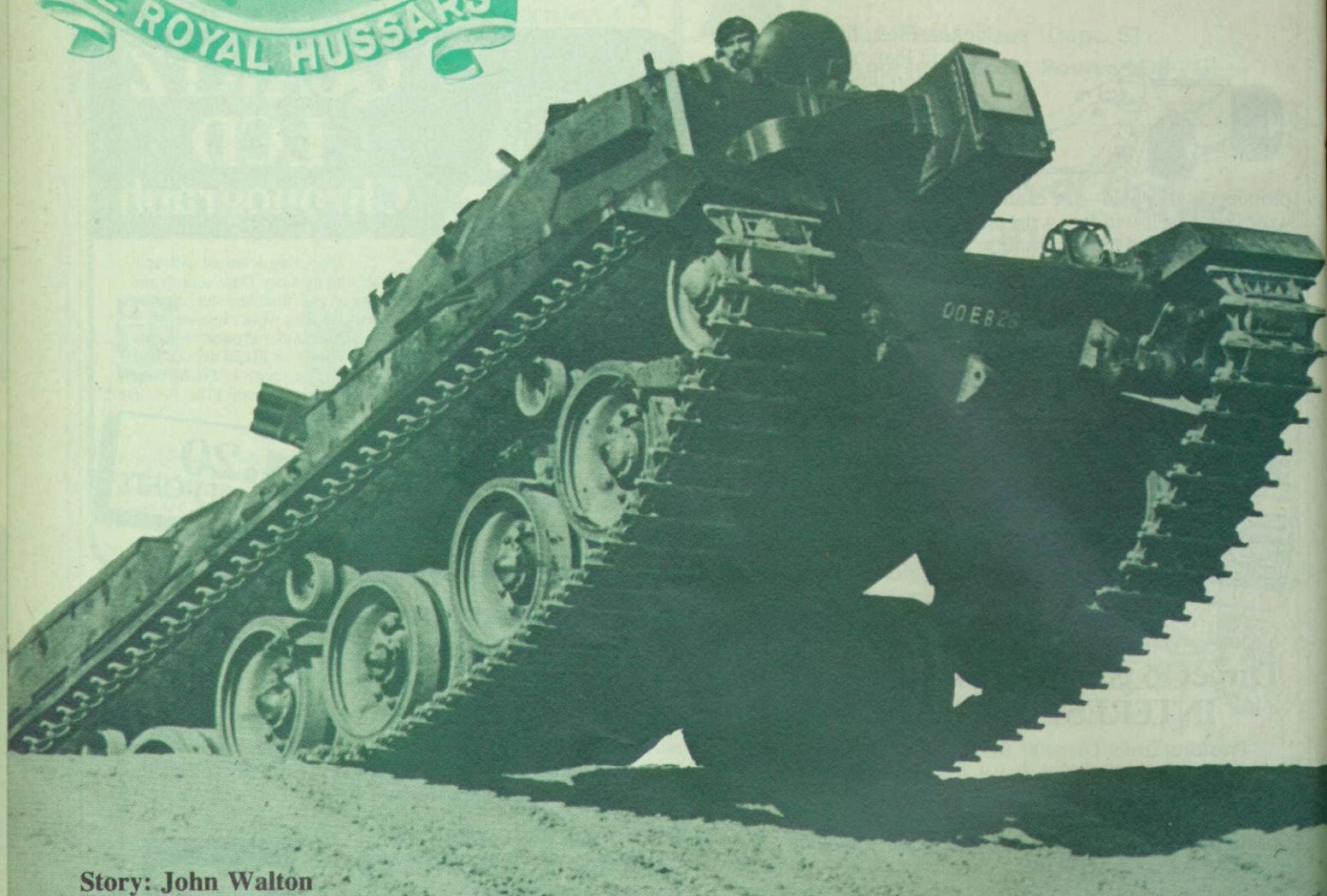
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TEN YEARS AFTER
TWO REGIMENTS MERGED

'WE ARE UNITED' SAY THE ROYAL HUSSARS



Story: John Walton
Pictures: Les Wiggs

JUST TEN YEARS AGO with the Army's re-organisation and amalgamations nearing completion, two famous Hussars regiments came together to form a new regiment — the Royal Hussars (Prince of Wales's Own).

In 1969 those mergers were still causing a lot of problems in certain parts of the Army. But for the officers and men of the 10th Royal Hussars and the 11th Hussars things went more smoothly.

The current commanding officer of the Royal Hussars, Lieutenant-Colonel E M Westropp, remembers it all clearly: "One of the things which helped it to work was that we were in the last package of four regiments to be amalgamated and the writing had been on the wall for five or six years. Each regiment assumed it would be with the other because of our numerical proximity and because we had got on well before.

"Inevitably there were minor frictions but it's amazing how few they were. Most of the resistance came from the old comrades at the

time but what we tried to do was to be as amalgamated as possible — even to the extent of amalgamating the old comrades associations. This was one of the best things we could have done.

"We had committees to decide which traditions were significant and worth adhering to and which ones had come in for no good reason. We didn't want to end up with a hotch-potch of hundreds of traditions and we tried to get the best of both and preserve them throughout the regiment."

The first three-and-a-half years of the new regiment were spent in Tidworth, followed by six years in Germany. Earlier this year the Royal Hussars returned to England for a two year stint at Catterick as the Royal Armoured Corps Training Regiment.

Says Lieutenant-Colonel Westropp: "It's a welcome break because everybody is doing something completely different. For the sergeants and corporals there is a greater sense of responsibility in that they have their

own training equipments and troops to run and are looked up to by the recruits. And this even appeals to the troopers, who are called 'staff' by the young recruits."

The Royal Armoured Corps Training Regiment trains all adult recruits for the 17 regiments of the Royal Armoured Corps. Every recruit does seven weeks basic military training followed by specialised training in driving, gunnery or signals. About 800 recruits a year pass through the gates at Cambrai Barracks in Catterick in anything from 30 to 60 intakes and there is, on average, a passing out parade every fortnight.

The centre also provides basic military training for Army Air Corps recruits, a certain amount of trade training for trained soldiers and specialised trade training for Household Cavalry recruits.

There are also special courses for potential officers in the Royal Armoured Corps. These last for ten weeks, including two weeks basic military training, but it is stressed that the



course is not designed to coach people to pass the Regular Commissions Board. The idea is to bring out the potential of school leavers who may be lacking self confidence.

The potential officers, from all sorts of backgrounds, learn a lot about current affairs, visit civilian industry and engage in special research projects. Some of these have a local flavour (ie the history of Yorkshire Cricket Club or the Stockton-Darlington Railway) and others an international dimension (such as the Yom Kippur War). There are also a number of three day briefings for

people about to go before the Regular Commissions Board.

Every fortnight the gunnery wing receives 18 or 20 recruits, who are divided into crews for Chieftain tanks or for Scorpion and Scimitar combat reconnaissance vehicles. They spend four weeks learning how to fire the guns in simulators then move out to the ranges at Warcop and put their newly acquired skills into practice.

The recruits also learn a lot about identifying armoured fighting vehicles and how to see at night. They spend a dozen periods of



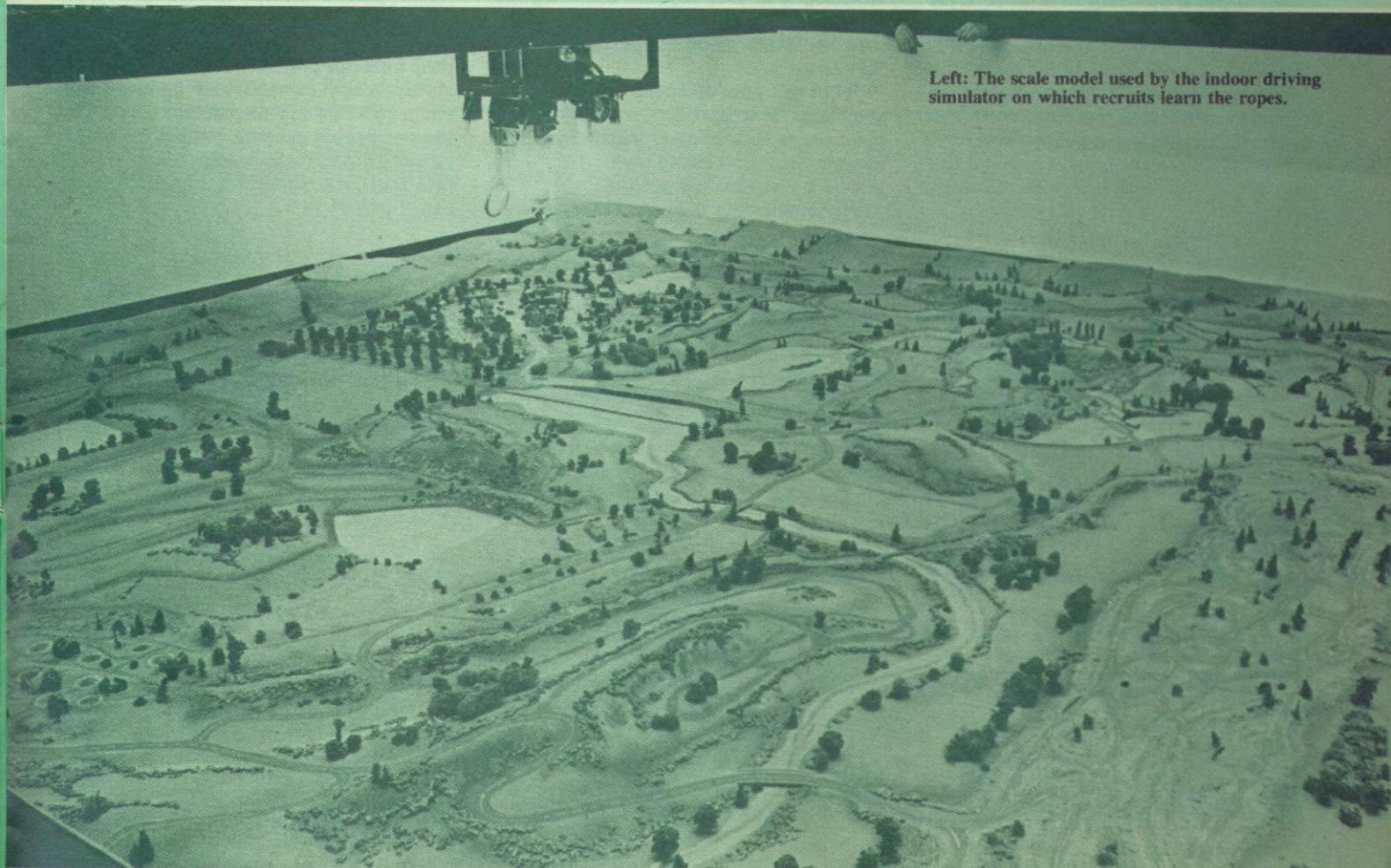
Above: Mess souvenir — hoof of 'Ronald', charger ridden by Cardigan at Balaklava.

Left: A Scorpion and a Chieftain get ready for the four-and-a-half mile driving circuit.

40 minutes identifying slides of tanks, some Nato and some Warsaw Pact; in the turmoil of a battlefield it is vitally important to recognise your own side.

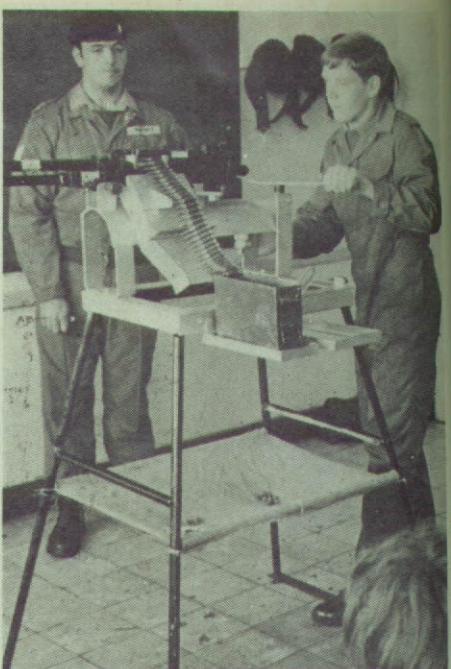
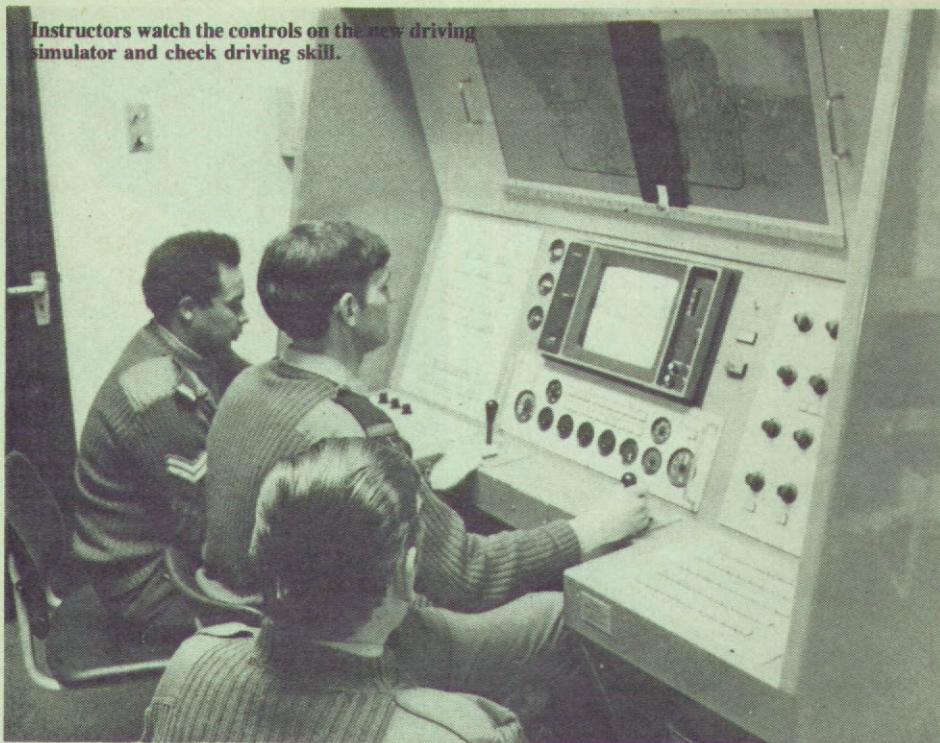
Gunnery instructor, Sergeant Peter Wilkins, told SOLDIER: "It's quite rewarding to see six people coming through who haven't got a clue about tanks and to watch them leave, in most cases, with a reasonable standard of knowledge."

For the driver recruits there are four driving simulators, two for Chieftains and two for the smaller vehicles. Sitting in a driving



Left: The scale model used by the indoor driving simulator on which recruits learn the ropes.

Instructors watch the controls on the new driving simulator and check driving skill.



Above: Machine gun stoppage drills in gunnery.

compartment identical to the 'real thing,' the students face a screen on which are projected actual ground conditions, including all the obstacles they might find. They experience daylight and night-time driving, encounter sudden knife-edge drops in the terrain, and are accompanied throughout by the actual vehicle sound.

The instructors can insert all sorts of malfunctions and the computer controlled simulator can also play back to show the student where he made a mistake. In fact he will probably know long before that — because a change of gear at the wrong time will send the cabin lurching in just the same way as in a real tank and he can end up with bruises as well as embarrassment.

The simulators are likely to be in use up to 80 hours a week when the bitter north east winters set in. But there is also an all-weather driving circuit outside some four-and-a-half miles long, which provides all the obstacles for real.

Training for 17 different regiments has some interesting side lights. For instance, there are 17 different hats available in the clothing stores and the training regiment's shop boasts the biggest stock of lines in the Army — with a turnover approaching £9000 a year.

Reveille, Mess Call and Last Post are a tradition which persists. And the recruits develop hearty appetites in the bracing Yorkshire air.

Master chef, Warrant Officer 2 Geoff Goulding, finds he needs more food than for an average unit. But they need educating into eating the different varieties of food which they are likely to encounter during their Service careers.

"Nine times out of ten a lad comes in here and has never seen a curry, so we try to ring the changes with a few Oriental dishes and educate them into eating them. They'd eat chips for breakfast if you let them."

Those chips are usually smothered with

brown or tomato sauce and one-gallon dispensers of each stand on the food counter. WO 2 Goulding reports that they have to be replaced daily — often after only one meal.

Captain Peter Gillett, who runs the technical quartermaster side, finds some obvious differences to when the regiment was in Germany. Learner drivers use far more brake bands and brake pads for instance. And the simulators are so new that parts have to be ordered direct from the manufacturers rather than through the conventional Army system.

In two years time the Royal Hussars or 'Cherrypickers' (a name they acquired for an action in an orchard during the Peninsular War) will be returning to Germany to take up their front line positions. After ten years it is mostly senior captains and upwards and senior NCO's who remember the old days of two regiments. And even for them it is only a memory. As their commanding officer declares: "The regiment has a definite identity of its own now."

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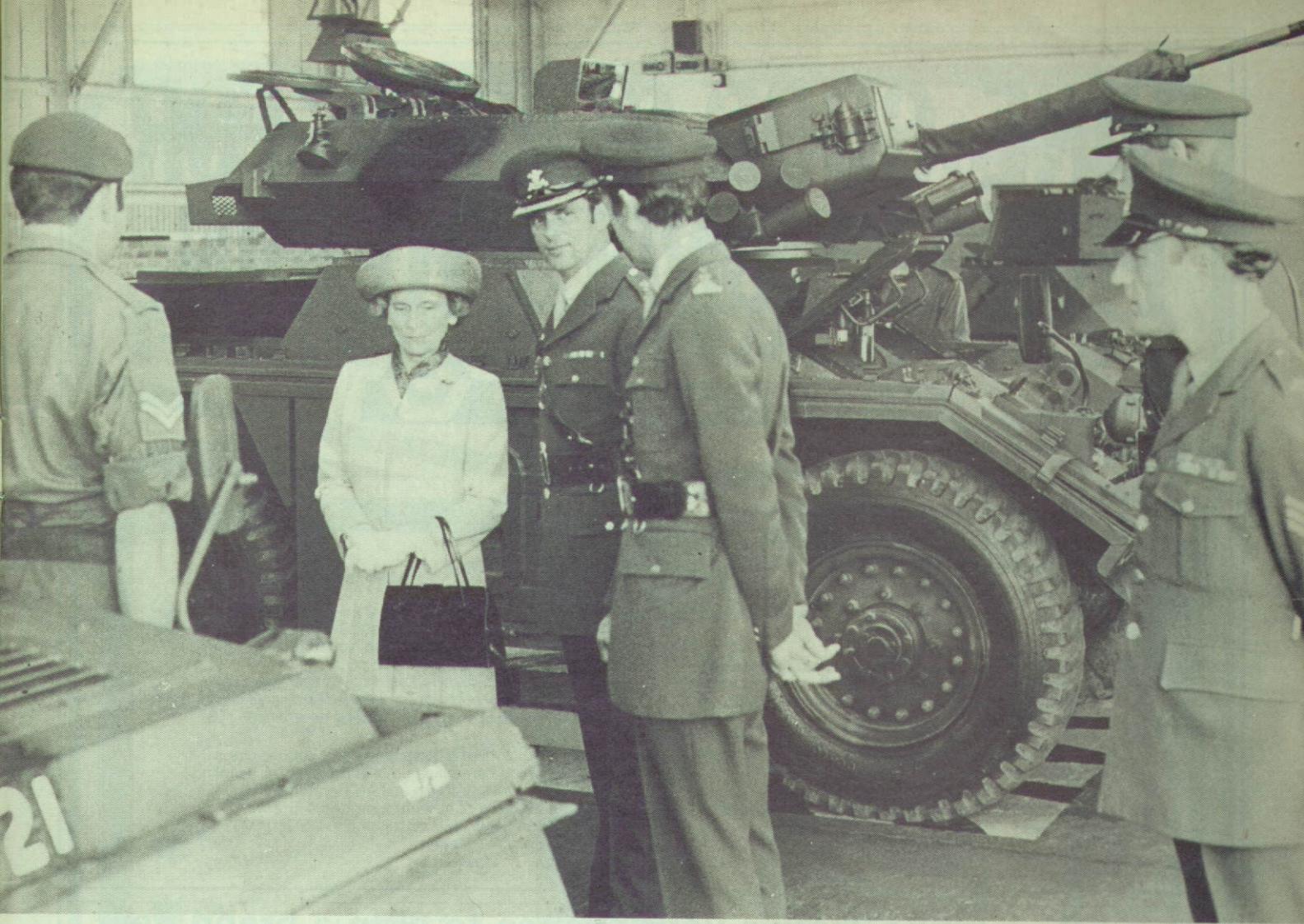
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Ten years ago when the new regiment was formed at Tidworth the inspecting officer was Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester, whose husband was Colonel-in-Chief of the 10th Hussars and had actually served with both former

regiments. This autumn, to celebrate the tenth anniversary, Princess Alice, the Royal Hussars' Colonel-in-Chief, went to Catterick to inspect a passing out parade.

During her visit, Princess Alice, who

arrived by helicopter, visited and chatted to families, saw vehicles in the tank park and lunched in the Officers' Mess. She also presented two Long Service and Good Conduct Medals.



Cavalry regiments have a reputation for hunting and shooting. And this year the Royal Hussars looked after 60 pheasants for the Catterick Garrison Shoot. Major Julian Turner, one of the officers who visited the hideaway to feed them, used to whistle to tell the pheasants that he had arrived. And he confessed: "I've got very attached to them. In fact I'm rather glad that I've been posted before the season starts and won't have to shoot them."

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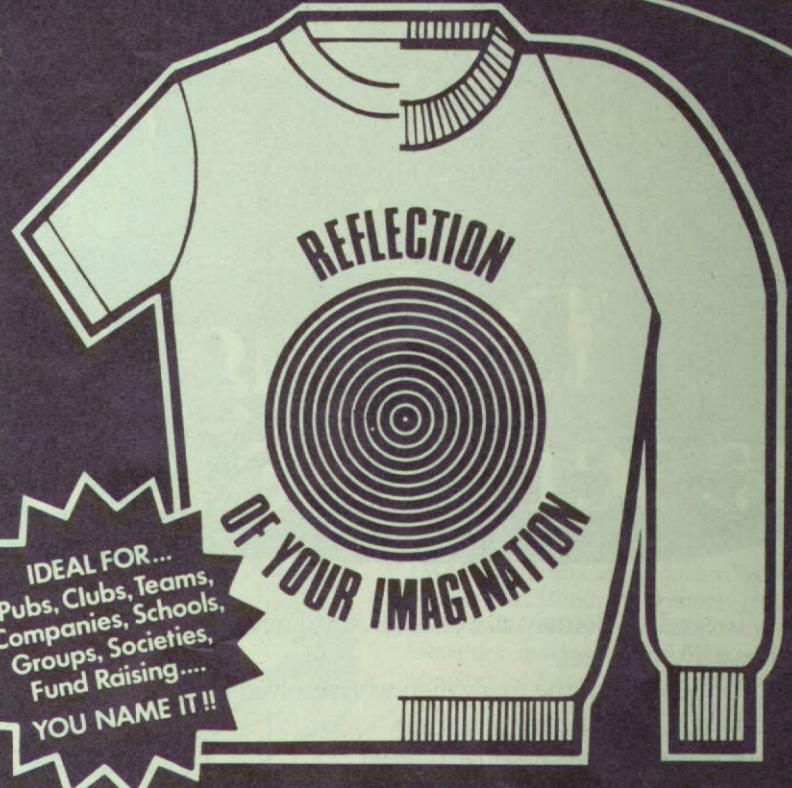
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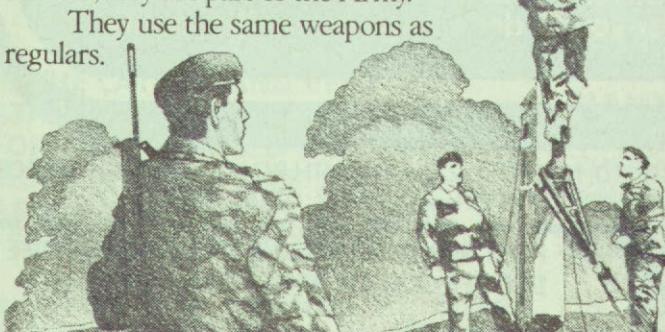
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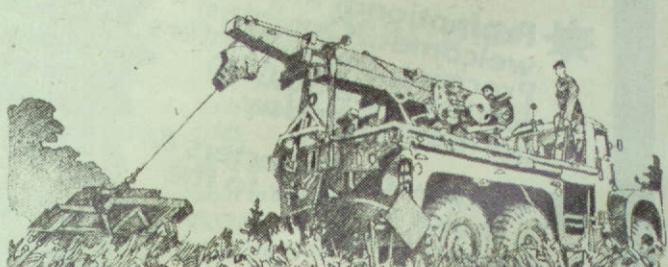
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Story: Doug McArthur UK Pictures: Les Wiggs

On exercise in the centre of England, or at war in the centre of Europe, these Redcaps

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IMAGINE A divisional move in Germany in time of war. Hundreds of supply trucks plus tanks and artillery moving in one direction, casualties moving in the other. This is a scenario for a traffic jam of mammoth proportions if somebody does not know where all that traffic is at all times

. . . . Which is why a merchant banker, a store detective and a civil policeman worked through a wet blustery night in the quiet country roads of Shropshire.

The three are all members of the Territorial Army's 116 Provost Company, Royal Military Police, which, apart from the regiment serving in Northern Ireland, is the largest Redcap unit in the army — Regular or TA.

The unit's job is traffic control in the rear area of 1st (BR) Corps in Rhine Army with the two Regular companies, 110 and 113. But whereas the Regulars are based on the spot, the TA Redcaps can only get out to Germany to practise their role once every two years although as many of the unit as possible go out on secondment. This is why they were on exercise in Shropshire, doing exactly what would be required of them in war — signing and maintaining routes, guarding against sabotage, nuclear fall-out monitoring, and keeping up normal discipline in the rear area.

continued over

Top: Cpl Powell from the Cardiff detachment route signing while on exercise in Germany.

Left: L/Cpl Eddie Gaudie checks the ambulance convoy out of the field hospital location.



"We sign the routes, then maintain and control them," said Commanding Officer Major Roger Brumhill, "and if that sounds simple, then it's not. We must ensure deployment and movement by priority and make sure that every vehicle gets to its destination at the right time, so that weapons and ammo and all the other things needed at the war can get through."

"What we are talking about is the movement of hundreds of vehicles in perhaps a 100 square kilometre area. And don't forget that the enemy is bound to be in there as well, trying to disrupt us, cause confusion and bring the whole system to a grinding halt."

On the Shropshire exercise, Exercise Green Octopus, the part-time Redcaps had to lay down main supply routes for convoys of simulated casualties from a field hospital at Leeke to a rear hospital set up 25 miles away in an old wartime munitions bunker at Swynnerton. An enemy — Royal Marine Reserves — complicated things by acting as saboteurs, which meant that the routes had to be constantly patrolled and checked to ensure that 'tac signs' were not altered or removed.

The medics were largely from 207 (Man-

chester) and 208 (Liverpool) General Hospitals, RAMC (V) with their supporting units.

Each unit of the RMP company is highly mobile and self-contained in vehicle patrols, with communications a high priority. At critical points — like cross-roads or junctions — traffic posts are set up with a staff movement table. These TPs are there not only to ensure smooth flow, but to log each vehicle through, to guard against sabotage or hijack and to make sure that wagons do not enter the next phase of road at the wrong time.

For instance, if a convoy of trucks was allowed through too early, say, before a convoy of tanks had passed through, the snarl-up could take many hours to untangle. So this means that harbour areas have to be recce'd for convoys to laager in until they are allowed to move on.

This 'signposting' may be the company's main role but it is certainly not the only one. Because 116 is the only Redcap unit in a wide area — it takes in West Bromwich, Manchester and Cardiff, with another detachment starting in the New Year in Coventry — it is in regular demand for normal military policing duties.

"We are always sending people out on

Above: O group. Major Brumhill (glasses) hears about the enemy's action against the convoy.

attachment," said Major Brumhill. "In fact with the shortage of Regular Military Police we are in such big demand that the only limiting factor is the guys' time. And especially with today's security problems we do find ourselves called on to do static police work a lot."

"Although we spend as much time as possible on operational training we found that a lot of our people did join to be policemen, so they quite enjoy our static role. And the experience of the civil police in our ranks comes in very handy. Essentially they are soldiers first, but with the ability to perform the provost role in a hostile situation."

As in war, so it was on the medic's Exercise Green Octopus. Before any ambulance could move, the route had to be signposted, which is why the part-time Redcaps deployed during the night to get everything ready. And of course, on the Sunday, long after everyone else had packed up and gone home, the company was still there, clearing up their TPs and tac signs unconsciously proving their corp's unofficial motto: 'First in, Last out.'

Here's a bumper Christmas quiz to get you thinking after all that turkey and pud. And to give it an extra festive flavour we've added a special Christmas bonus — a first prize of £25. No need to write out the answers in full. Just send us the letters of the alphabet that you think represent the right solutions (e.g. 1b 2a etc.). And if you're not sure of them all — have a guess. We promise to check every entry and award prizes to the highest correct — but not necessarily all correct — scores. Only if there are ties will we draw to decide winners.

The competition is open to all readers at home or overseas and the closing date is Monday 4 February. The answers and winners' names will appear in the April SOLDIER. More than one entry can be submitted but each must be accompanied by a 'Competition 257' label. Entries using OHMS envelopes or pre-paid labels will be disqualified.

Send your answers by postcard or letter with the Competition 257 label from this page and your name and address to:

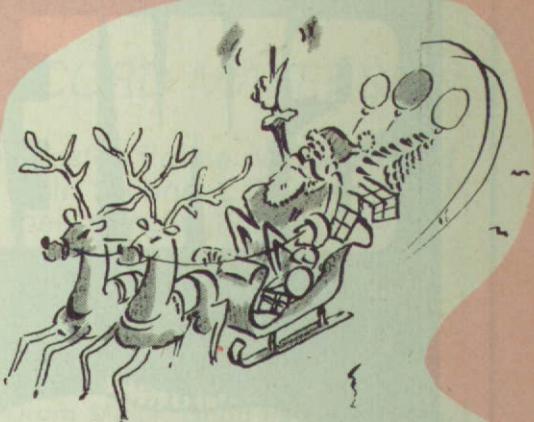
Editor
SOLDIER
Ordnance Road
Aldershot
Hants
GU11 2DU

TRUE OR FALSE (Mark 'a' for true, 'b' for false)

- 1 A gillaroo and a porbeagle are both kinds of dog **b**
- 2 A roucou is a type of bird **b**
- 3 Puck is a form of cattle disease **a**
- 4 More than 75 per cent of the earth's surface is covered by sea **a**
- 5 Cardamom is a kind of spice **a**
- 6 Britain's highest village is in Cumbria **a**
- 7 Cambridge University is the oldest university in Britain **a**
- 8 A parang is a form of eastern dress **b**
- 9 Bluchers are a type of footwear **a**
- 10 Asuncion is the capital of Paraguay **a**
- 11 The maximum possible break at Snooker is 155 **a**
- 12 A harquebus is a musical instrument **b**
- 13 A gadwall is a type of duck **a**
- 14 The world's oldest army is the Swiss Guard in Vatican City **a**
- 15 A New Zealander has never won the British Open golf championship **b**

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- 6-7 Two books
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ARMY ABC

- 31 The present Secretary of State for Defence is? a) Humphrey Atkins b) Roy Mason c) Francis Pym
- 32 The Chief of the General Staff is? a) Sir Roland Gibbs b) Sir Edwin Bramall of Sir Harry Tuzo
- 33 Where do the Gurkhas come from? a) Tibet b) Indonesia c) Nepal
- 34 What was the code name of Montgomery's plan involving bridges and a parachute drop, to end the war in a few weeks? a) Operation Market Garden b) Operation Mulberry c) Operation Bridgehead
- 35 The Army's firefighting operation during the firemen's strike of 1978 was ...? a) Operation Goddess b) Operation Noah c) Opération Burberry
- 36 Is a Tow a kind of ...? a) vehicle b) missile c) gun
- 37 Which rank wears two pipes and a crown? a) Lieutenant Colonel b) Colonel c) Brigadier
- 38 Which rank wears a crown and crossed sword? a) Brigadier b) Major General c) Lieutenant General
- 39 Is a Striker a form of ...? a) helicopter b) missile c) missile carrier
- 40 What is the calibre of the British Infantry rifle in the NATO rifle stakes? a) 4.85 mm b) 4.80 mm c) 4.75 mm
- 41 The Royal Wessex Rangers appear in which TV series? a) The Professionals b) Spearhead c) The Regiment
- 42 'Honi soit qui mal y pense' is the motto of which of these regiments? a) 15th/19th King's Royal Hussars b) 9th/12th Royal Lancers c) Royal Tank Regiment
- 43 Which of these regiments has a billy goat as its mascot? a) The Royal Irish Rangers b) Royal Regiment of Wales c) Scots Dragoon Guards
- 44 When was the last engagement in which British soldiers went into action in red coats? a) 1885 b) 1896 c) 1902
- 45 In which year did conscription end in the UK? a) 1959 b) 1960 c) 1961

ODD MEN OUT

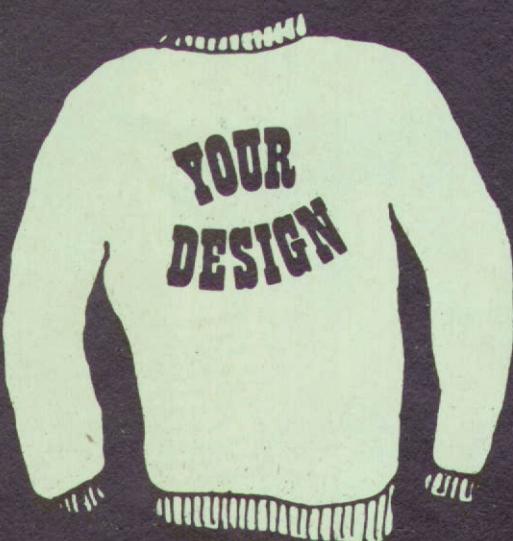
In each of the following categories there is one name that does not belong.

- 16 Units of currency: a) leu b) colon c) sucro d) drachm e) kyat
- 17 Capital cities: a) Edinburgh b) Blantyre c) Tripoli d) Delhi e) Conakry
- 18 Ancient Wonders of the World: a) Hanging Gardens of Babylon b) The Statue of Jupiter Olympus c) The Colosseum d) The Pharos of Alexandria e) The tomb of Mausolus
- 19 Cinque ports: a) Hastings b) Hythe c) Dover d) Dymchurch e) Sandwich
- 20 Lakes: a) McKinley b) Athabasca c) Winnipeg d) Superior e) Titicaca
- 21 Volcanoes: a) Ararat b) Vesuvius c) Etna d) Stromboli e) Cotopaxi
- 22 Rivers: a) Mekong b) Asama c) Volga d) Murray e) Euphrates
- 23 Ship canals: a) Manchester b) Gota c) Panama d) Kiel e) Sulevern
- 24 Imperial units of weight: a) dram b) grain c) quintal d) cental e) hundredweight
- 25 Presidents of the USA: a) Henry Petham b) Grover Cleveland c) Gerald Ford d) Ulysses Grant e) James Monroe
- 26 British prime ministers: a) Arthur Balfour b) George Grenville c) James Keir Hardie d) Benjamin Disraeli e) Spencer Perceval
- 27 Wimbledon tennis champions: a) Bjorn Borg b) Ashley Cooper c) Jan Kodesz d) Ken Rosewall e) Rod Laver
- 28 English First Division football grounds: a) Old Trafford b) The Dell c) The Victoria Ground d) Hillsborough e) Carrow Road
- 29 Stringed musical instruments: a) viol b) celesta c) balalaika d) lute e) sitar
- 30 Types of dance: a) cadenza b) galliard c) veleta d) pavan e) gavotte

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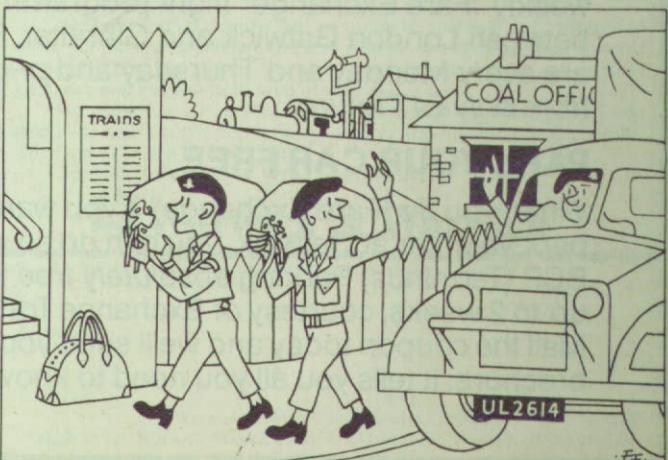
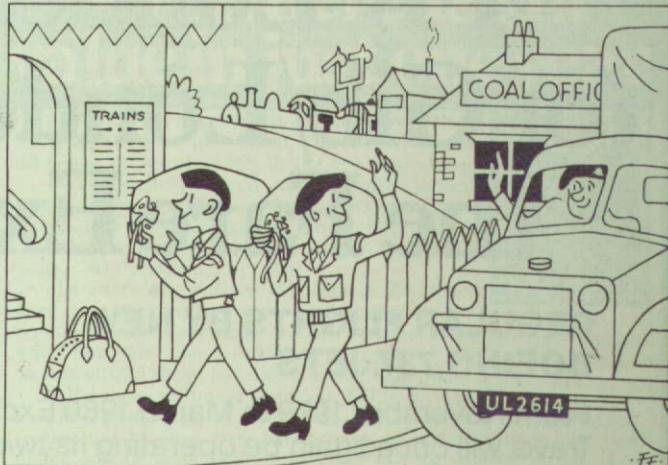
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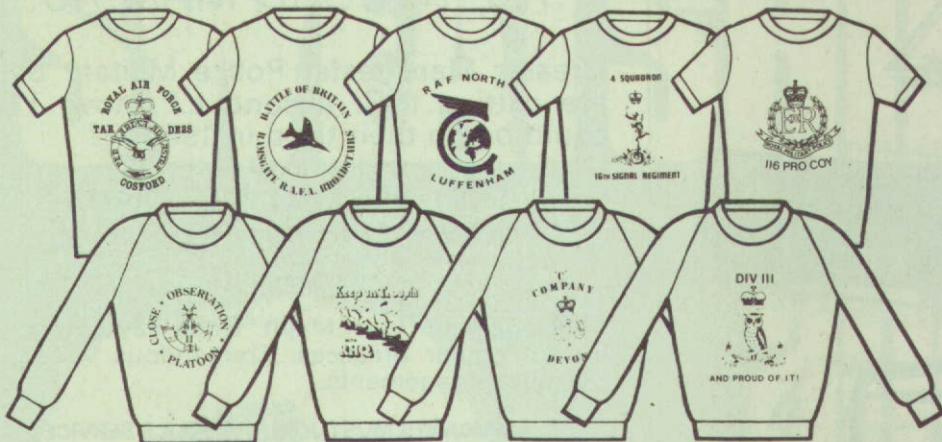
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Letters



'Confused thinking' on BFTs

The article on Basic Fitness Tests (SOLDIER-to-Soldier, October) indicates a misunderstanding of the purpose and nature of the tests, and some confused thinking on exercise physiology.

Basic Fitness Tests do not replace any form of Fitness Training. The Tests were designed as "across the whole Army, simple to administer, minimum standard tests of soldierly physical fitness to be passed twice a year". Nor was it designed to replace special to arm fitness training.

A twelve minute run is a universally accepted test of stamina. Longer tests at lower work rates merely confirm the findings of twelve minute tests and are frankly a waste of time. Many other factors were considered during the extensive validation conducted by the Army Personnel Research Establishment and the Army School of Physical Training, and the findings were fully endorsed by the Director of Army Health and Research.

The longer duration of the Basic Fitness Test and the inclusion of the "squaddied" Part One merely reduce the influence of "athleticism", but their effect in practice improves the performance for the best effort in Part Two, and this serves our purpose. I must make it clear that the length or duration of a test need have little relevance to the amount of training required to pass it. However, only those at the lower end of the fitness spectrum need train for the BFT.

There will never be unanimity of view amongst a large number of experts, and the APTC of which I am Commandant is no exception, but you may rest assured that the Basic Fitness Test, in its context in modern conditions, has been thoroughly validated. There is no doubt in my mind that the Basic Fitness Test has to date been an unqualified success and that the overall standard of fitness in the Army has improved considerably since its introduction. — Brigadier A A Fielder, Inspector of Physical and Adventurous Training, (Army).

Simple means of assessment

With regard to the criticism of the recently introduced Basic Fitness Test, I find it regrettable that such one sided opinions are published since the BFT is not a means of getting soldiers fit — it is a *basic* fitness test.

Of course stamina matters, and a little more research by your staff would reveal that in addition to the BFT other tests suitable to particular Arms or Services have been, or are in the process of being, introduced. We in the Infantry have an eight mile Combat Fitness Test in full equipment.

The point lies in your last paragraph. The BFT was never intended to replace general fitness training and sport in the unit. It is a very simple means of assessing a unit's minimum level of fitness at any one time.

From my personal experience all soldiers can pass the test providing they are not too fat and do not overdo drinking and smoking. A little determination also helps. Of those who

took the test in the last year some 95 per cent passed. I find the arrival of my monthly bank statement far more injurious to the state of my heart than a gentle run of one and a half miles in eleven and a half minutes! — Lt Col W J MacWilliam, Kings, HQ 1st British Corps, BFPO 39.

Fit to fight

Your comments on the Basic Fitness Test (October SOLDIER-to-Soldier) contain certain inaccuracies. Firstly, the BFT is not "a simple series of athletic exercises to assess a soldier's fitness". You obviously have this confused with the APFA test. Secondly, it is not — as the misinformed soldier thinks — "a mile in ten minutes or so". It is, in fact, a timed (according to age) run and walk over three miles.

I would respectfully suggest that you and the cardiac concern lobby read the pamphlet 'Fit to Fight', code number 71082. From it you would

learn that BFT, CFT and APFA tests have been devised to inform commanders of the level of fitness in their unit and are only a part of the overall fitness policy and not an end in themselves. — Captain R J Wiseman RWF, Depot, The Prince of Wales's Division, Cwrt-y-Gollen, Crickhowell, Powys.

Not so hot?

Having just read your article on Loan Service in Kuwait (October) I can only assume it was written by a man. As a mere housewife I would like to put the other side of the story.

Having just returned from Kuwait after spending two years there, I agree that it is nice to have the sun and above-average money tax free. However, there are many frustrations — especially for the woman. We lived in a large flat but for the first two months there was only one air conditioner working out of four, which was no joke. The flat needed many repairs, some of which had been reported over the five previous years. It was a common occurrence to look from the kitchen window and see the sewer overflowing. Granted, some flats for the British were very nice — but these were for officers only.

Social life was hard to find and to try and join a sea club impossible. One had to get on to the civilian net to gain entry for rugby and the like. There was a mess but, for the majority, visiting it involved a fifty mile round trip which, with the suicidal driving of the Arabs, took the gilt off going so far. On more than one occasion I drove on my own only to be harassed by other drivers and pushed off the road. It was not a happy feeling wondering whether one would arrive at a destination in one piece.

Personally, I feel that Kuwait was vastly overrated in your article. If it was meant to be a recruiting campaign, let us have all the facts. Peace of mind is worth more than money can buy. — Mrs Jean Crisford, 8 Alanbrooke Road, Larkhill, Salisbury, Wilts.

A/T memories

I was particularly interested to read the article in your October issue on the Army Apprentices' College at Chepstow. Things have obviously changed somewhat since a bleak January day in 1935 when I arrived there as newly enlisted B2688 A/T P J Moyser aged fourteen and a half.

Coming from an old Army family — my grandfather John Herbert Moyser was a CSM in the Royal Engineers and won the DCM in the Boer War, and my father a BQMS in the Royal Artillery — I had some idea what to expect, but nevertheless the strict routine came as a severe shock being very different from that of today. Had the Donaldson rules applied then, the School would have emptied in double quick time. I am sure I was not alone in crying myself to sleep on those dark winter nights during which time we ticked off not only the days but the hours to 'big pay day', the day when we would go on our first fortnight's leave.

Our first six weeks or so consisted of 'square bashing', PE and school during the day, and kit and room

inspections every weekday evening. Promptly at 21.30 hours we stood by our beds while that exalted being, the A/T corporal in charge of the hut, examined us in the minutest detail. Woe betide anyone if the shine on his boots and bedspace did not match the glitter of his equipment brasses (138 of them, if I remember rightly on the old style 1908 webbing equipment).

We were kept busy all right, doubling from gym to barrack room with only a few minutes to change from denims to drill order. And the weekends gave us only a slight respite. Church parade, from which only Roman Catholics and fatigue men were excused, involved furious 'sweating' all Saturday evening. I can't remember what time we paraded on Sunday morning for the 1100 hours service, but it must have been early for we were inspected by the A/T wing sergeant, the adult wing sergeant, the company commander and finally the Adjutant and CO — in that order. The sermon came as a blessed time of relaxation during which we often fell asleep.

Our pay was, I believe, about eleven pence a day of which we were allowed to draw only two shillings per week. About six pence of this went on cleaning materials, white and khaki blanco (filthy stuff), 'Kiwi' polish, the only brand good enough, and soap etc. The remainder was inevitably spent on 'wads' at the NAAFI to supplement our frugal diet.

In our first week much food was wasted, particularly the ever recurring nauseous 'sea pie' which appeared to consist of a little meat and much gristle and sinew in a watery fluid, covered by a pallid blanket of half-cooked pastry. After that first week, however, every scrap of food disappeared down our ever hungry gullets. I survived with the aid of a fortnightly parcel from home which usually contained a fruit cake. I kept it securely locked in my barrack box. I could write a small book about the various malpractices which resulted in the boy NCOs and their friends getting more than their share of food and we recruits getting just enough to keep body and soul together.

I swear our huts had not been altered since the time when they had housed prisoners of war in World War One. My bed was just inside the hut door, under which was a large gap through which howled every southwesterly gale from straight up the Bristol Channel. In winter we were perpetually cold going to bed in most of our clothes. The central fire place seldom heated the hut adequately and, in any case, the coal allowance was so meagre as to allow the fire to be lit for only a couple of hours each evening. The coal in the coal store in 'B' company lines was whitewashed over behind its broken glass topped twelve foot wall to deter pilferers. But regularly, frozen A/Ts scaled its summit undaunted to add a little illegal warmth to their icy abode.

In the morning, reveille was at some unearthly hour and there was a frantic rush to be first at the 'ablutions'. Many a winter's morning I have broken the ice in the wash basin before washing and shaving in near freezing water. But human beings are immensely adaptable and in any case we products of the great depression



"Did you get permission to grow that pony tail Bennett . . . ?"

were tough. We survived and thereafter were undeterred by all the privations of service in World War Two.

Our trade training, three years in those days, took place in the old shipyard where I became an instrument mechanic skilled in just about every trade after courses in fitting, turning, tin and copper smithing, woodworking and electrical work. These skills have stood me in good stead all my life but never more than when, as a young lance-corporal, I was in charge of the IM's shop at Kings Bastion in Gibraltar, where we boasted we could repair anything from an officer's watch to a large Ruston diesel engine, often making our own spare parts.

We arrived at Chepstow a thin, weedy, inadequately clothed mob of fourteen-year-olds and left, still on the thin side, but as fit and as smart a set of seventeen or eighteen-year-olds as you could meet anywhere, ready to join our corps to undergo a shortened recruit training at our regimental depots. As 'Ex-boys' we had a tradition of intelligence, smartness and toughness which gave us that little extra which others did not have. Those of us who survived Dunkirk and were not incarcerated in Singapore, went on to form the backbone of our corps, many reaching warrant and commissioned rank. I became almost certainly the youngest ever staff-sergeant mechanist RE at the age of just twenty-one — and eventually retired as a major in 1961. Others, I believe, did even better than I, and remember, promotion from the ranks in those days of prejudice was far more difficult than it is now.

When I retired I became a teacher, not surprising I suppose as I always seemed to end up in training and instructing roles in the Service. Here my military background has helped me immensely in dealing with today's less-than-lovable fifteen and sixteen-year-olds and on one occasion in disposing of a live rifle grenade found in a less able pupil's desk.

I am now Head of Mathematics at a large Surrey comprehensive school endeavouring to give my pupils a better academic education than that which I received. Perhaps my greatest sorrow is that so few of my pupils choose a service career. Nevertheless I do a little bit of recruiting now and then. At the end of term I often manage a discussion period with my charges. "What shall I talk about?" I ask, and year by year comes the response, "About when you was in the war, sir". "How many Germans did you kill, sir?" They are dis-

pointed when I say that, as far as I know, I never killed anyone, but a lively discussion always ensues.

After reading your article at least I can assure them that today's apprentice tradesman 'Never had it so good!' — P J Moyser, Major RE (Retd), 49 Summersbury Drive, Shalford, Guildford, Surrey.

would they please write to me including a stamped addressed envelope and I will send them details of our objectives and an enrolment form, if eligible. — Graham A Granville, President and Acting National Secretary, The National Association of Korean War Veterans, 200 Bath Road, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 4PT.

hearing from them. — Wayne Colwell, Curator, National Historic Parks, 2630 Sheffield Road, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 1G2.

Taking issue

As an ex-Regular, I must take issue with David Lazell's article 'An education for life' (October). I was in 'A' Block, Clayton Barracks (7 Coy RASC) during 1938-39 and Regular NCOs had to pass exams both pre and post war.

In the RASC you could not drive an ambulance without some service and qualification, and you had to be able to ride a motor cycle among other things to become a lance corporal. You could rise to CGMS on your second class education but all WO2s had to have their first class ACE in whatever 'mob'.

As a sergeant clerk on the RASC supply side you had to obtain your first class ACE and no doubt this applied in some other trades and corps as well. A man could be acting WO2 but if he was without substantive rank and got posted — down he came! I eventually got my first class (and still have it actually) but never got beyond sergeant because I cannot do maths. I obtained mine on Method of Instruction. 'Tough old Regulars' indeed! They must have known about ranks and qualifications.

I was an A/CSM and A/RSM (usually while my mates were on leave) in Egypt during 1952-55 and was sixth senior sergeant in the RASC in 1958. I must have been one of the most 'senior ranks' of that rank in the Army having 'made' sergeant in 1946.

Now I am a deputy standard bearer in the Royal British Legion — local, acting and unpaid. I may come to Bulle and Clayton next year — and to 'A' block! — R J Shears, 51 Norwood Road, Leicester.

Postal cover

Christ's College, Finchley, Combined Cadet Force celebrates its 75th Anniversary this year. The Unit was first formed in 1904 as a Rifle Club and held its first camp at Bisley.

To mark the occasion a Commemorative Postal Cover has been issued and 2000 copies were carried by relay teams of cadets the 38 miles from Bisley to Finchley. The covers were then handed over to Captain S Macfarlane RE from HQ Army Postal and Courier Services, Mill Hill for cancelling with a unique BFPS hand-stamp (No 1904), the first time such a cover has been issued by a CCF unit.

The envelope, postmarked 17th October 1979, depicts cadets in the uniforms of the 1904 Rifle Club and 1979 No 2 Dress on either side of the school tower. There is a limited issue of 2000 covers with 200 of these signed by two prominent ex-cadets of the Corps; Sir James Paterson Ross BT KCVO (CCF 1906-12) and Brigadier Brian Kennett CBE (CCF 1909-16).

Each envelope contains a short history of the Corps and its Regimental Association of ex-cadets together with biographical notes on the signatories in the signed covers. These collectors' items are now available at 60p for the unsigned and £2.00 for the signed versions. All proceeds will go towards the cadet unit at Christ's College. — Brian Fuller, Hon Secretary, Cenarian Regimental Association, Manorside, High Street, Grendon Underwood, Bucks, HP18 0SU.

No co-operation

Having been connected with the Regular Army for many years and with the Army Cadet Force for the past four years, I find it a very sorry state of affairs that there is little or no co-operation between the two.

On the one hand you have a potential body of future soldiers lacking many of the essentials in training and uniform, on the other a surplus of equipment, used but of sufficiently good quality for cadet use, being wasted and written off. Access to such equipment could boost the recruitment of these potential soldiers and enable them to receive a higher standard of training. Can nothing be done to improve liaison between the two, so that with a little co-operation both would ultimately benefit? — Mrs Grace Thurgood, 15 Council Terrace, Chard, Somerset.

Where's Tom?

May I use your magazine to try and trace an old friend of mine who I have not seen since 1940? We both served at that time in the 52nd Foot Oxford and Bucks LI in 'A' Coy in India. His name is Tom Oliver from London — what part of London I do not know. Tom was heavyweight boxing champion of 'A' Coy and also the battalion, and must now be about sixty four. — Maurice Giles, c/o Royal Alexandra Hospital, Marine Drive, Rhyl, Clwyd, LL18 3AS.

Fort Rodd Hill

Fort Rodd Hill was an important component of the Victoria/Esquimalt defence system on Canada's west coast from the 1890s to 1956. In 1962 the Fort was declared a national historic park and a long range restoration programme is underway. The restored structures will require a wide variety of information and artifacts to equip them correctly. At the moment we are interested in trying to acquire any of the following:

Depression range finder, artillery, Watkin 1A or similar; clinometer, artillery, large, Watkin Mk 1 #1; projector, 90 cm, MKL, defence electric light (circa 1900-1930); engine/dynamo, Hornsby-Ackroyd, 25 hp (circa 1900); machine gun, Vickers, .303 inch Mk 1 (circa WWII); machine gun, Maxim, .303 inch (circa WWI) with field and/or parapet mount; ordnance, QF, 40 mm Mk 1 (Bofors circa WWII); copies of production drawings for Ordnance, BL, 6-inch Mk VI on carriage, disappearing, 6-inch Mk IV; information regarding military kitchens circa 1900; photos, restored sites, etc.

Should any reader have suggestions, leads or any other ideas concerning the whereabouts of any of the above, I would greatly appreciate

India medal

I refer to earlier correspondence in your magazine concerning the statement that a man had to serve on the North West Frontier of India to qualify for one or more of the several different 'Indian General Service' medals.

These medals cover the whole period in which the British Army served on the Indian Frontier in the numerous 'little wars' or operations, and were recognised by the issue of a bar if one already possessed a medal. I possess the bar 'Malabar' for operations in southern India (now Kerala I believe) in 1921-22. Actually, the campaign was known as the Malabar Rebellion because it was only the Moplah population who rebelled and were killing the Hindus.

The units entitled to the bar 'Malabar 1921-22' were as follows: six platoons of an Irish battalion (name unknown) who were on detachment at Malapuram in a regular barracks and were very soon replaced by the 2nd Dorsets and later by a battalion of the Suffolk Regiment. Probably a battery of RFA would also be entitled because they were brought in at the beginning of the campaign, but as they were confined mostly to the roads they were

continued on page 55

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If you would like a chat with one of our police careers advisers, why not give us a ring on 01-725 4237.



THE METROPOLITAN POLICE

LETTERS

continued

replaced by No 10 Pack Bty (Mountain Artillery).

The Indian troops comprised 2/8th and 2/9th Gurkha Rifles and some Gharwal Rifles and 2/70th Burmese Rifles, a company of the 'Sappers and Miners' equivalent to our own REs and, finally, No 3 Section (4 cars) of 8th Armoured Car Company, Royal Tank Corps from Lahore.

I served with this section of four double-turreted 50 HP Austin Armoured Cars. We were restricted to the roads but kept up patrols 22 hours out of each 24 a day. The countryside (about the size of Wales) consisted largely of small hills of bananas and coconuts with odd patches of jungle, mainly bamboo. All the low lying ground was paddy fields and there were also large afforested areas of teak and mahogany. It was very difficult terrain for operations and highly vulnerable to ambush.

This is a very sketchy account but I hope it establishes the units entitled to the 'Indian General Service' 1908 with bar Malabar 1921-22. — A H Dall, 33 Trafalgar Road, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1QE.

Competition

Competition 253 — What are they? — proved a lot tougher than we expected. In fact only four readers got it right so there are no book prizes this month. Main problem items were the sixpence (No 1) which several took to be an old 2/- piece, and the bulldog clip (No 5) variously described as a magnified fly head or a knife cutting through beetroot! Correct answers

were: 1 sixpence. 2 door lock. 3 light bulb. 4 golf ball. 5 bulldog clip. 6 stapler. 7 aerosol nozzle. 8 felt tip pen. 9 ballpoint pen. 10 fingerprint.

Prizewinners:

- 1 Mrs E D Gault, 27 St Francis Way, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR30 1LJ.
- 2 WO2 E R Osborne RCT, TPT/MOV, HQ NWDIST, Fulwood Barracks, Preston, Lancs.
- 3 Mr D Stock, Wood Lodge, Sundridge Avenue, Bromley, Kent BR1 2QD.
- 4 24054018 Sgt Davidson, ACC Att 2 Royal Anglian Regt, BFPO 45.

How observant are you

(see page 49)

The two pictures differ in the following respects: 1 Style of 'n' in 'TRAIN'. 2 Number of dots on hold-all. 3 Cap badge on left hand soldier. 4 Right cuff of left hand soldier. 5 Lorry driver's left eyebrow. 6 Size of window at back of lorry. 7 Radiator cap. 8 Position of signal gantry. 9 Smoke from signal box chimney. 10 Notch in one signal arm.

Reunions

Fiddlers Club Reunion at Larkhill 1980: date is no longer 6/7 June. The Reunion will now be held 1/2nd August.

Collectors' Corner

D E Langley, c/o Main Meteorological Office, HQ RAF Germany, BFPO 40 — Collects British brass shoulder

titles, particularly infantry, and has recently become interested in button sticks. Would be glad to buy or swap shoulder titles, and buy button sticks. Mainly interested in all the various badges worn on the arms by the Army for rank, appointment, trade, qualification, and skill-at-arms and wants particularly: Piper, physical training instructor, A and B trades, ammunition trades, all the old cavalry trades and skills such as rough rider, plus anything pre-dating 1940. Would expect to pay several pounds for older items.

Garth W E Adamson, 10 Newton Terrace, Bishophill, York, YO1 1HE — Always wants military models and toys, ie armoured fighting vehicles, guns, transport, searchlights etc plus all types of soldiers. Items of any make, nationality or period purchased. Books, postcards and photos of the genuine article also required.

D M Thorogood, 69 Tylney Road, Bromley, Kent, BR1 2RS — Has for sale DPM Camo jacket, size 4, unissued, and hood to match. DPM Camo jacket and trousers, size 1, grade 1. Send for details.

Chris Viner, 61 Otterburn Close, Hulme, Manchester 15 — Would like to hear from anyone selling any airborne wings or insignia. Also after 1 pair American GI boots (flat soles) size 9-1/2.

G A Jenkinson, 85 Great St James, Belleville, Ontario, Canada, K8N 3J3 — Seeks GSMS Malay bar, all issues to Para, RM, Gurkhas, AAC. Has various worldwide militaria for trade. Also seeks unit histories on GSM service. DPM UK Camo wanted — will trade or buy.

Christoph-Ernst Kredel, 2 Hamburg 76, Allenstrasse 4, West Germany — Looking for illustrations of rank — insignias of Iraq, Libya, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Papua-New Guinea (with rank-names in vernacular/transcription).

C P D Greylings, 28 Dacombe Drive, Chiswick, Salisbury, Zimbabwe Rhodesia — Offers complete set of Rhodesian medals (miniature set). There are 34 medals in the set which includes the GCV Grand Cross of Valour (one recipient). The set is presented in a leather case with velvet lining. Only a limited edition of 500 sets were made. There are 27 medals of 98 per cent pure silver, 5 bronze and 2 Cupro nickel (24 carat gold plated). A certificate to authenticate it comes with the set, and a book which describes each medal. An offer of £2800 or more will be accepted.

Col Bishop, Box 99, Engadine, NSW 2233, Australia — Wants to contact an old friend Colour Sgt Robert 'Jake' Stirling. In 1976 he was with 41 Commando, Military Police section at St Francis Rowan in Floriana, Malta. Please contact at above address.

Walt Barrington, 25 Gardner St, Salford, Lancs — For exchange, 1st VB Manchester cap badge for 2 VB Loyal North Lancashire cap badge. Also for sale officers pre 1900 WBC Yorkshire Regt, Oxford LI, also Liverpool pals H/M Sil cap. Offers.

P E A Hall, 1030 Harrow Road, Wembley, Middx, HA0 2QT — Has for sale at a reasonable price a quantity of official Imperial War Museum photographs approx 4" x 6" in new condition, of pre 1938 Royal Signals cap and veils, RA Coastal and field guns, LI boat renders. List supplied, please send SAE.

Peter Heims, Tilt Corner, Stoke Road, Cobham, Surrey — Wants to buy or borrow 35mm slides of Paratroop training and jumping.

Mr J T Doran, 4 The Cottages, Common Lane, King's Langley, Hertfordshire — Wants a copy of 'Surgeon at War'.

Carlo Walter, PO Box 2824, 83 Landshut, West Germany — Wants to exchange a WWII Africa corps helmet in very good condition for Rhodesian or South African current daggers or cap badges. Also welcomes contact with collectors of the above mentioned items and collectors of worldwide para wings — especially from South America and Chile.

D Edwards, Cornerbays, Clos Ffordd Isa, Prestatyn, Clwyd, LL19 8SP — Is researching into a little-known field of military badge collecting, namely that of Trade, Qualification and Skill-at-arms badges. Would be interested to hear from anyone who has any of these, particularly the older or rarer items, who wish to sell, exchange or even loan them for photographic purposes. Has a large number of regimental cap badges he would be willing to trade. Also seeking old copies of Clothing Regulations and photos of soldiers wearing trade and skill-at-arms badges.

C Scott, Queens Walk, Silver Street, Milverton, Taunton, Somerset — Requires Air Force cap badges from Nato member countries. Still requires: Belgium, Canada, France, Greece, Italy, Fed Republic of Germany, Norway, Turkey, Netherlands and Portugal. Is willing to exchange British Artillery cap badges. Also requires following cap badges: SBS — Special Boat Service (red and blue enamel badge); RSR — Raiding Support Regiment (allied to above), this badge believed to be 1945 era.

Bjorn Marttusson, Skravlingsv 27, 852 54 Sundsvall, Sweden — Wishes to buy old copies of SOLDIER Magazine. 1952 Mar, Jul; 1949 Dec; 1948 Jan, Feb, Mar; 1947, 1946, 1945 all copies wanted. Also interested in complete (bound) volumes of mentioned years. Has for exchange 1951 Jan, Sep, Nov.

R H Brennan, 13 Gibson Road, Paignton, Devon — Has for sale, SOLDIER Magazine 1965-8, including bound volumes.

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Books

War from above

'Out of the Sky' (Michael Hickey)

"Five thousand balloons, capable of raising two men each, could not cost more than five ships of the line . . . ten thousand men descending from the clouds might . . . do an infinite deal of mischief before a force could be brought together to repel them." So wrote Benjamin Franklin a few weeks after two Frenchmen had made the first free flight in a hot air balloon in 1783. His vision took a century and a half to come true, when 'airborne' began to take its place in the military dictionary as meaning use of the air by an army, including now parachuting, air observation, glider-landings and helicopter operations.

Like Franklin, Hitler appreciated the air's possibilities of novelty and surprise and encouraged the development of the German airborne forces. After the contribution of his parachutists and glider-borne troops to his 1940 triumphs, he thought secretly, says Colonel Hickey, that counter-measures would depreciate their use. After his near-miss victory in Crete in 1941, he told his airborne commander, "The day of the paratroop is over." He is not right yet.

Colonel Hickey agrees that the day of the 'conventional' mass parachute drop has gone, but says there are situations, as the French and Belgians have discovered, outside Nato and on its flanks where the moral effect of parachute delivery is enormous.

In what his publishers describe as the first comprehensive history of airborne warfare, the author brings together the strands that link the early observation balloons and reconnaissance aeroplanes to the sophisticated, offensive helicopters of today. It is a story that is fascinating, not least for the great amount of pioneering that has developed this ever-changing arm. Britons can take a fair share of the credit for it, from the Royal Artillery officers who formed their own flying club in the 1930s to develop air observation posts in spite of the War Office, to the War Office itself for showing enthusiasm for the helicopter from the start.

Mills and Boon, 17-19 Foley Street, London W1A 1DR, £7.50 RLE

Early warning

'British Intelligence in the Second World War' (F H Hinsley)

British Intelligence warned the troops in Greece on 4 April 1941 that the Germans would probably attack that country the following day. The invaders postponed zero hour by one day

and British Intelligence passed on the new date: at 0434 on April 5 they informed commands that hostilities would begin at 0530 April 6. At 0015 on April 6 they notified that the time had been postponed to 0600. Such precise and valuable information was possible only because of the breaking of the codes used by the German's Enigma machine — believed by them to be foolproof.

But this was only one of very many aspects of Intelligence. The battle of Matapan on March 28 was brought about by the piecing together of many items, including the sighting, by a flying-boat from Malta, of Italian warships steering towards Crete. Admiral Cunningham got his Mediterranean Fleet to sea to surprise and defeat the Italian Navy, which never again was a menace in force.

This book is only Volume One of a vast and complex subject and deals with the influence of British Intelligence on strategy and operations during the war. It is an official history and has entailed exhaustive research; the authors being given free access to official documents, even some that will not be available to the public for many years.

But be warned. It is a mass of abbreviations: SIGHT, CIC, DMI, GC and CS, JIC, SIME, etc, etc. Like a code of their own they are in mass formation on every page.

Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 49 High Holborn, London WC1V 6HB, £10 GRH

The British Army Today and Tomorrow



Colonel H.C.B. Rogers, OBE

There are scores of pictures, many of them official, and thanks to the book's large format they have the not too common virtue of being reproduced big enough to ensure nothing is lost in the printing. Though they have mostly been obviously picked for detail of equipment, many have dramatic value too, particularly those from Northern Ireland.

The helicopter sets the author speculating. He sees it today as playing the role of light cavalry to the Chieftain tank's heavy cavalry. Light cavalry, in its day, put on weight and became indistinguishable from the heavy. Perhaps, says Colonel Rogers, the helicopter, too, may become 'heavy cavalry'.

He looks critically at the current brigadeless armoured division in which task forces have to be formed before tasks are identified because the divisional commander cannot command without them. He thinks in the future the division may have smaller units but more of them. Thus an armoured regiment might have three sabre squadrons of three troops each (as against today's four and four) and be permanently associated with a similarly reduced mechanised battalion to form a battle-group when needed. This arrangement might lead to a return of the brigade.

Unlike some writers, Colonel Rogers does not take the comfortable view that Nato's numerical inferiority in Europe might be compensated for by the advantage of fighting a defensive battle against conventional attack. He sees the Warsaw Pact, having the aggressor's initiative, able to concentrate swiftly at chosen points on a wide front and achieving local superiority of 20 or 30 to one in four or five separate thrusts to break through Nato defences.

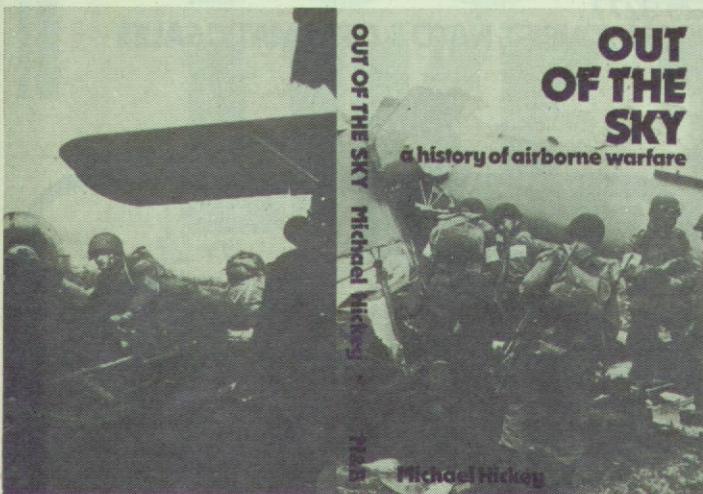
Ian Allan, Shepperton TW17 8AS, £7.95 RLE

Hitler's pictures

'Hitler: The Pictorial Documentary of his Life' (John Toland)

Mr Toland describes this as a supplement to a biography of Hitler he has previously published. Certainly the pictures could add interest to a biography. They include some paintings and drawings by Hitler himself. His mistress, Eva Braun, contributes some snaps whose informality makes up somewhat for their lack of technique and there are more professional pictures of Hitler's private life as well as the public one.

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The British Army Today & Tomorrow

H. C. B. Rogers

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