

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE ARMY

George Cross hero

... and other stories of
courage under fire in Iraq



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TAKE-TWO COMPANY



ARMY

Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year to all our readers and advertisers

Cover picture

Hero: Tpr Christopher Finney, a teenage soldier serving with the Blues and Royals, has been awarded the George Cross for his actions following a blue-on-blue attack during the war in Iraq. His and many other accounts of gallantry are recounted in Pages 5 to 13.

Picture: Steve Dock



"Always the show-off trend-setter, eh Claus . . . OK, you get the Iraq circuit again"

The new "Canal Zone" clasp was worn by veterans marching past the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. See Pages 17 and 39.



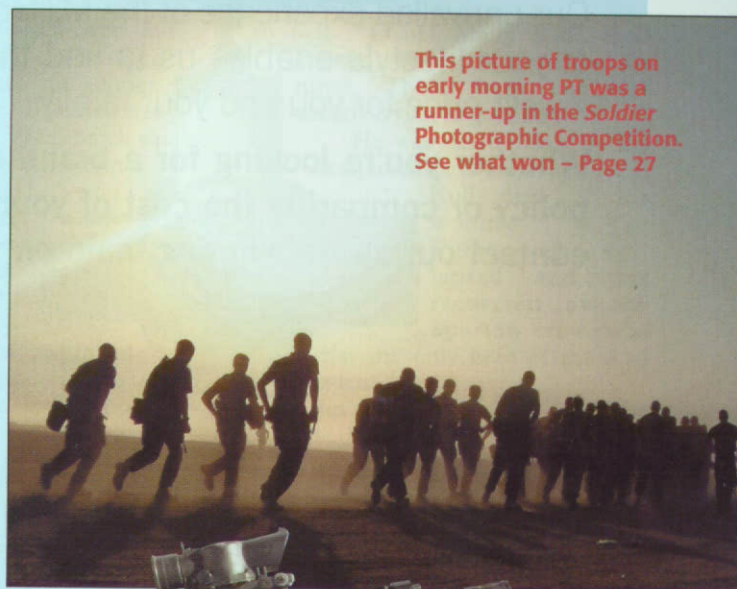
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This picture of troops on early morning PT was a runner-up in the *Soldier* Photographic Competition. See what won - Page 27



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Clear-headed COURAGE

Teenager awarded GC for actions during Iraq blue-on-blue attack

EIGHTEEN-year-old Tpr Christopher Finney of the Blues and Royals returned to a burning vehicle under attack in Iraq to save a colleague, almost died trying to save another, and was composed enough, despite his wounds, to radio for help.

A driver with 2 Troop, D Squadron, Household Cavalry Regiment, Tpr Finney is awarded the George Cross.

While the unit was pushing forward about 25 miles north of Basra, scouting for elements of the Iraqi 6th Armoured Division on March 28, it was attacked by an American A10 tank-buster aircraft.

Tpr Finney told *Soldier*: "I was driving a Scimitar on Route Spear next to the Shatt al-Arab waterway 40km north of Basra. We were running parallel to a small village when we were hit on top. I didn't know what had happened - I thought we were under attack from a rocket-propelled grenade."

In fact, his Scimitar had been hit and set on fire by 30mm cannon shells from

two American A10s. Ammunition began to explode in the turret.

"The commander got out and the gunner, LCoH Al Tudball, was wounded. I started to reverse but backed into the Scimitar behind, which had also been hit."

Tpr Finney found cover but climbed back into the burning Scimitar to rescue the gunner. "I could see that Al Tudball was trapped half out of his hatch so I got him on to the ground and started first aid. His headset was hanging off the side of the turret so I used it to send a report."

Tpr Finney took the wounded gunner to a Royal Engineers Spartan recce vehicle, which had moved up to help as the A10s began another attack. Both men received shrapnel wounds.

Sgt Andrew Sindall RE, attached as a recce sergeant to 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault), provided first

aid and threw red smoke to signal to the A10s that they were attacking friendly vehicles. But he couldn't stop a second attack, during which he was wounded and his Spartan hit. He carried on helping the Scimitar crewmen and got them into the back of his vehicle. He receives the Queen's Gallantry Medal.

Tpr Finney turned to the second Scimitar

to help. "LCoH Matty Hull, their gunner, was still stuck in the turret. There were engineers already trying to get him out."

He was beaten back by the heat, smoke and fumes and LCpl Hull died of his wounds.

Tpr Finney, who collapsed and was recovered by the Spartan crew, was not the only hero of the A10 incident.

An Iraqi tank threatening the evacuation of the wounded was held off by LCoH Mick Flynn in another Scimitar and CoH Dave Telling in a Striker. For 30 minutes, LCoH Flynn drew both

tank and artillery fire while himself firing 140 30mm rounds. Days later, he was in a four-hour battle with five T55s.

LCoH Flynn receives the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross and CoH Telling a Mention in Dispatches.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Brian Burridge, who is knighted for his role in commanding British Forces in Iraq, said:

"This young man, who was only 18 at the time and had been in the Army for less than a year, showed outstanding courage."

The citation speaks of Tpr Finney's "clear-headed courage and devotion to his comrades, which was out of all proportion to his age and experience."

● LCpl Tudball survived his injuries.



Tpr Christopher Finney GC



Left to right: LCoH Mick Flynn CGC, CoH Dave Telling MiD

'He used his dozer blade to plough route through a minefield'

The brief stories of gallantry on these and the following pages are taken from medal citations. They are intended to give a flavour of the courage and determination displayed by British soldiers during the battles that raged across southern Iraq earlier this year. Although our extensive coverage fills nine pages, we have not been able to include pen pictures of all the award-winners.

Sgt Nathan Bell MC

PATHFINDER call-sign A13A arrived at An Nasiriyah as battle was raging for a city in which many US soldiers had been killed. Mistakenly told by an American unit that the way was secure, his Land Rover patrol moved north as night fell.

They attracted rocket, mortar and machine-gun fire as fanatical Saddam Fedayeen militia chased them and blocked their escape.

Sgt Bell, commanding the first of three vehicles, took the patrol off the road 40 miles behind enemy lines and decided to use the night to return along the route they had used. He led the convoy back to the road and, manning the front machine-gun, fired on enemy positions as they engaged him. The patrol was attacked four times as it sped south, sustaining many hits.

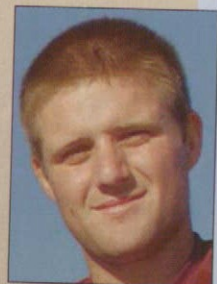
As they neared US Marine lines, Sgt Bell turned on his lights and, at huge personal risk, stood up in the front of his vehicle with his hands up to identify himself. He stayed with the sorely-pressed Marines throughout the following day, passing on information about enemy positions. Before hostilities ceased he had led four more dangerous, isolated patrols.

Lt Toby Rider MC

BOMB disposal officer Lt Toby Rider of 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD) was cited for his outstanding efforts in helping to clear the important North Ramayla Bridge, which had been prepared for demolition by the Iraqi Army.

The dangerous 30-hour mission involved removing more than 200kg of explosives and hundreds of detonators in varying states of decay under cover of darkness.

Lt Rider, who carried out his task under enemy fire from the far bank, was serving with the Joint EOD Group, part of 16 Air Assault Brigade.



Lt Toby Rider MC, RE

Cpl Craig Comber MC

CPL (now Sgt) Craig Comber REME, an armoured recovery mechanic attached to The Queen's Royal Lancers, recovered damaged Challenger 2 tanks and their crews in great danger on at least three occasions.

One rescue was completed under fire, another from the middle of an unmarked mine field.

On another occasion he used the dozer blade on his vehicle to plough a safe route through a minefield to allow the 1st Fusiliers battle-group to maintain the momentum of its advance into Basra.



Cpl Craig Comber MC, REME

Lt Daniel O'Connell MC

DURING the advanced into Basra, Lt Daniel O'Connell, of the Irish Guards, commanded a platoon of Warriors, part of 1 Company, 1st Battalion, Irish Guards, attached to the Scots DG battle-group.

When 1 Coy was ordered to assault an objective centred on the Basra College of Literature, Lt O'Connell's platoon was first into position to assault the centre of the most heavily-defended area of the complex.

He manoeuvred his platoon into position, engaging several enemy bunkers, before dismounting and breaking into the first building.

The speed of his attack reduced the chances of his platoon being engaged by dug-in troops. After supporting the next assaulting platoon, Lt O'Connell remounted and cleared five more buildings, driving his men on and, placing himself in great personal danger, led each clearance himself.

As the light faded, his section – now in a defensive perimeter around the complex – was attacked, losing two men killed and two wounded. Lt O'Connell calmed and steadied his troops, organising the swift extraction of the casualties.

Sgt Mark Heley MC

DURING 21 days of hostilities, there was only one day when Sgt Mark Heley, a patrol commander in the Recce Troop of 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault), and his team of six were not "danger close" to the enemy.

Mounted in unarmoured, stripped-down Land Rovers, they were time and again tasked to accompany fresh infantry patrols to provide engineer-based intelligence for 16 Air Assault Brigade.

On a joint patrol with Sgt Bell's Pathfinders, Sgt Heley provided superb leadership during a running night battle and maintained a constant rate of machine-gun fire to suppress an enemy intent on killing them.

He carried on fighting after being struck in the chest by a round which deflected off his pistol and lodged in his notebook.

The citation says: "Sgt Heley is one of a very rare breed; able to overcome his own fears in spite of the threats around him and yet lead by personal example."



Sgt Mark Heley MC

Lt Simon Farebrother MC

WHILE supporting an engineer recce team in the build-up to the attack on Abu Al Khasib, two armoured vehicles in Lt Simon Farebrother's 2nd Troop, C Squadron, Queen's Dragoon Guards, crossed the bridge to the east of the town under fire.

One vehicle, attempting to evade rocket-propelled grenades, ended up in a ditch.

The troop became very exposed as dawn broke, and the situation worsened when the vehicle shed a track as Lt Farebrother pulled it clear.

During the 30 minutes it took to replace the track, Lt Farebrother got out of his vehicle with his headsets still on to encourage those making the repair, organised the sappers to give cover and gave fire control orders to his gunner, who was working the 30mm and 7.62mm gun systems single-handed.

The 30mm was used to open up "mouse holes" in nearby buildings so the Royal Engineers could enter and clear them and take up fire support positions on the roof. Enemy RPG teams were destroyed during a 45-minute firefight and the bridge secured, opening the way for the attack on Abu Al Khasib.



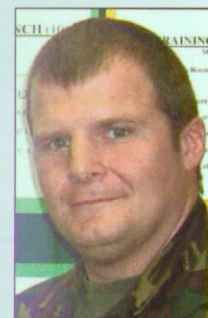
Lt Simon Farebrother MC, QDG

SSgt Richard Johnson MC

SSGT Richard Johnson RE removed demolition charges while exposed to enemy fire on a bridge over the Shatt-al-Basra waterway.

Serving with 32 Engineer Regiment, he and his crew were with the Fusiliers' battle-group trying to secure the crossing.

Despite having no cover when Iraqi forces attacked, he worked on to remove the explosives and make the bridge safe. A citation says he "showed considerable courage, putting himself in danger while giving his crew's safety top priority".



SSgt Richard Johnson MC, RE

Gdsm Anton Branchflower MC

AS a dismounted section of Irish Guardsmen from No 2 Company, 1 IG approached a previously cleared bunker in Basra, they were engaged by machine-gun fire from the position. An Iraqi ran out with a grenade.

All except Gdsm Anton Branchflower, who hit and killed the man, dived for cover as the Iraqi soldier attempted to throw the grenade. It detonated, killing the machine-gunner.

The 19-year-old guardsman had completed recruit training just days before deploying to the Gulf.

Lt Christopher Head MC

UNDER heavy and accurate fire, 10 Platoon of Z Company, First Fusiliers battle-group charged across a bridge over the Shatt-al-Basra waterway in a devastating attack to prevent Iraqi troops trying to blow it up.

Led by Lt Christopher Head, they scattered the demolition party, an action which led to the enemy abandoning the entire position, including revetted tanks, anti-tank guns and dug-in infantry positions.

Over the following 12 hours, Lt Head maintained his toehold on the far bank of the bridge, leading his men against enemy counter-attacks and inspiring them, in the words of the citation, in "a manner that belied his age and experience".

Capt Grant Ingleton MC

CEPT Grant Ingleton replaced his helmet with his maroon beret to encourage his soldiers to return to their guns under heavy Iraqi fire.

Capt Ingleton, battery captain of F (Sphinx) Parachute Battery, 7 Para RHA, was supporting 3 Para south of the North Rumaylah Bridge when I Parachute Battery (Bull's Troop) RHA came under fire 1,000m away and was forced to retire.

As his battery provided covering fire it also came under bombardment and the gunners took cover. Realising I Bty was in the open and vulnerable, Capt Ingleton defiantly put on his beret and walked round the gun position, encouraging his men back to the guns.

During the war, F Bty fired more than 3,500 rounds of 105mm ammunition.

The citation says his "infectious sense of humour and selfless leadership drew the men back to the guns, where they maintained their rate of fire and allowed the other battery to withdraw safely without casualties".

LCpl Scott Robertson MID, left, and LCpl Peter Laing MC

2nd Lt Thomas Orde-Powlett MC

AS commander of a Warrior platoon of 2 Company, 1st Battalion, Irish Guards, part of the Scots DG battle-group, 2nd Lt Thomas Orde-Powlett was directed to clear an enemy position on the eastern flank of a blocking position north of Basra.

He carried out a successful night attack on two bunkers before killing a group of enemy soldiers who attacked with RPGs and small arms.

In a subsequent action in Basra he cleared an enemy position despite his Warrior coming under sustained attack and being hit twice by RPG rounds.

"His sole concern was the completion of his military task, during which he showed a total disregard for his own safety," says a citation of his actions.

LCpl Peter Laing MC

LCpl Scott Robertson MID

SNIPER LCpl Peter Laing of the 1st Battalion, The Black Watch, was one of a group of six covering an assault on Az Zubayr ordered to engage militia seen leaving a pick-up. One was shot at long range and the rest took cover in a building near a mosque.

LCpl Laing realised he could not clear the building with a grenade because an old man had been taken hostage, so he dived into the house and pulled the hostage out.

In the next frantic moments he showed "quite extraordinary bravery and a lack of concern for his own safety" as a grenade was thrown at him and an RPG fired at him. But he managed to push the hostage out of the way and, when fellow sniper LCpl Scott Robertson threw a grenade into the house, moved into position to engage the enemy with sustained automatic fire.



'His company remained in contact for 12 days without relief'

Maj Henry Sugden MC

AFTER initial setbacks on the Al Faw peninsula, Maj Henry Sugden led his armoured reconnaissance vehicles of C Squadron, Queen's Dragoon Guards north into contact with the enemy.

In daylight and on exposed salt flats and raised roads his squadron were at a disadvantage against T55 tanks and armoured personnel carriers in prepared positions.

But he called down air and artillery strikes which destroyed significant numbers of Iraqi tanks and APCs, preventing enemy attempts to outflank his squadron and dismounted troops of 30 Commando RM.

He provided vital information over the next few days and supported an attack on Abu Al Kasib during which two of his vehicles were disabled by enemy fire.

C Company remained in continuous contact with the enemy for 12 days without relief. During a three-week period, says the citation, Maj Sugden "displayed leadership, intelligence and courage of the highest order and in the very best traditions of the light cavalry."

"It is true to say that without his efforts and steadfast support, 3 Commando Brigade could not have achieved its mission."

Capt Oliver Campbell MC

UNDER mortar and rocket fire, Capt Oliver Campbell's light assault platoon pressed on across a vital motorway bridge over the Shatt-al-Basra waterway and gained a foothold on the far side.

Over the next 48 hours he calmly led his platoon from Y Company, 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers in the face of near continuous enemy assaults on the bridgehead.

He was under mortar fire for at least 30 hours during that time and organised his small force to repulse at least three fierce attempts to dislodge them. He also led a fighting patrol which snatched a prisoner from an enemy position.

The citation for his Military Cross says his platoon bore the brunt of Y Company's operations in an extremely demanding period of high-intensity war-fighting.



Capt Oliver Campbell MC, RRF

Cpl John Rose MC

CPL John Rose was providing mortar fire support to the Black Watch battle-group near Az Zubary when the position came under fire from a village half a mile away.

Under fire he pushed his two teams across open ground towards their objective and led a flanking attack. Cpl Rose threw two grenades into the enemy-occupied house and, with another soldier, cleared it, killing two of the enemy.

Immediately afterwards he led an attack on a second building, killing two more enemy soldiers with grenades and small-arms fire.

Cpl Rose then reorganised his section and swept through the village to ensure it was clear of enemy.



Cpl John Rose MC, BW

Maj Richard Taylor DSO

THE lightly armoured Scimitar recce vehicles of D Squadron, Household Cavalry Regiment suffered proportionately the heaviest casualties of any units of 16 Air Assault Brigade.

They were subjected to sustained and accurate artillery fire as the brigade moved into Iraq.

Fighting closed down through the midday heat, the squadron never faltered under Maj Richard Taylor's command, says a citation. He called in

artillery and air support and orchestrated a complex three-dimensional battle, reporting his progress with "model brevity and clarity" as he destroyed, outflanked, captured and drove back Iraqi defenders.

On the way to

Basra, D Squadron held its ground for two days under ferocious attacks by the T55-equipped Al Hakem tank battalion of Iraq's 6th Armoured Division, destroying the battalion and silencing a significant part of the enemy's artillery.

A quarter of the squadron's Scimitars were destroyed.

The citation says that throughout the extended action Maj Taylor was "inspirational, fearless, calm and clear-sighted".



Maj Richard Taylor DSO, LG



Lt Col Mike Riddell-Webster DSO

LT COL Mike Riddell-Webster led the Black Watch battle-group in hard-fought actions, including a successful operation that secured Az Zubayr.

Having taken the town, he coordinated the delivery of humanitarian aid while fighting off enemy counter-attacks and launching a series of raids, one of which provided the catalyst for the fall of Basra.



Lt Col Mike Riddell-Webster DSO, BW

WO2 Rupert Banfield DFC

WO2 Rupert Banfield of 4 Regiment AAC flew combat missions with 3 AAC.

After one patrol during which his helicopters had been fired on he was told two RAF Pumas were evacuating casualties of the blue-on-blue attack on HCR Scimitars by coalition aircraft.

He led his patrol to cover them, flying in poor light close to the ground.

As the Pumas took off with their casualties, an enemy armoured vehicle in the area opened fire. SSgt Banfield ordered one of his aircraft to engage the enemy, resulting in its destruction and the removal of the threat to the evacuation.



WO2 Rupert Banfield DFC, AAC

Capt Richard Cuthill DFC

LYNX pilot Capt Richard Cuthill destroyed main battle tanks, self-propelled guns and towed artillery during a day of intense fighting on the western bank of the Shatt-al-Arab waterway.

He and two Gazelles flew in to support HCR Scimitar recce vehicles in contact with Iraqi T-55s. With visibility obscured by exploding artillery, Capt Cuthill positioned his aircraft so that he could home in on the tank by following the path of tracer rounds fired by the HCR.

He destroyed a self-propelled artillery piece by aiming a missile at its muzzle flash as it fired at him.

It meant he and the Gazelle crews were in direct view of the enemy and constantly exposed to fire.



Capt Richard Cuthill DFC

Capt Timothy Gould QGM

A ROYAL Logistic Corps bomb disposal officer removed by hand unstable M42 bomblets from beneath the body of a mortally injured colleague.

Capt Timothy Gould, a member of the Joint EOD Group, cleared a safe route to SSgt Chris Muir RLC but realised that he could not be moved because he was lying on a number of unexploded bomblets.

Because time was critical if SSgt Muir was to get treatment, Capt Gould took the considerable risk of dealing with the M42 bomblets by hand, a dangerous practice carried out only as a last resort.

Despite his efforts, SSgt Muir died on the scene from his horrific injuries.

Capt Gould later removed for demolition a container of more than 80 bomblets in SSgt Muir's vehicle.

Ultimate sacrifice

TWO soldiers who were killed in action receive posthumous Mentions in Dispatches.

LCpl Barry Stephen of the 1st Battalion, The Black Watch and Fus

Keith Turrington, the 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers were recognised for their gallantry during the fighting in which they died.

LCpl Stephen was killed after he left the safety of an armoured vehicle to provide covering fire for comrades. Fus Turrington fell during an assault on an enemy trench to the north of Basra.

"They and others made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. We must not forget them, their friends and their families," said Air Chief Marshal Sir Brian Burridge.



LCpl Barry Stephen MID



Fus Keith Turrington MID

'He pushed the enemy back, engaging closely for ten hours'

SSgt John Southam MiD

SSGT John Southam, a troop leader with B Sqn QRL, protected an isolated Challenger 2 tank from enemy RPG teams.

He pushed the enemy back, engaging closely for ten hours under fire, advancing within sight of the Iraqi Naval Academy, on which he co-ordinated artillery fire.

Sgt Thomas Rutherford MiD

SGT Thomas Rutherford, Y Coy, First Fusiliers battle-group, led several covert operations and close-target recon patrols into enemy territory.

The manoeuvre support section commander also provided sniper and heavy machine-gun fire to protect Royal Engineers as they opened Kuwait-Iraq border-crossing sites for 7 Armoured Bde.

Capt Paul Whitbread MiD

CAPT Paul Whitbread RHA, a forward observation officer with the Black Watch, was instrumental in co-ordinating several dismounted artillery and helicopter attacks, assisting 7 Armoured Bde's entry into Basra.

In the urban battle which followed, his professional expertise helped reduce collateral damage to the city.

Sgt Scott Shaw MiD

SGT Scott Shaw, joint commander of an assault team tasked to capture a Ba'ath Party officer in a dawn raid in Az Zubayr, was injured by enemy fire, but completed the mission.

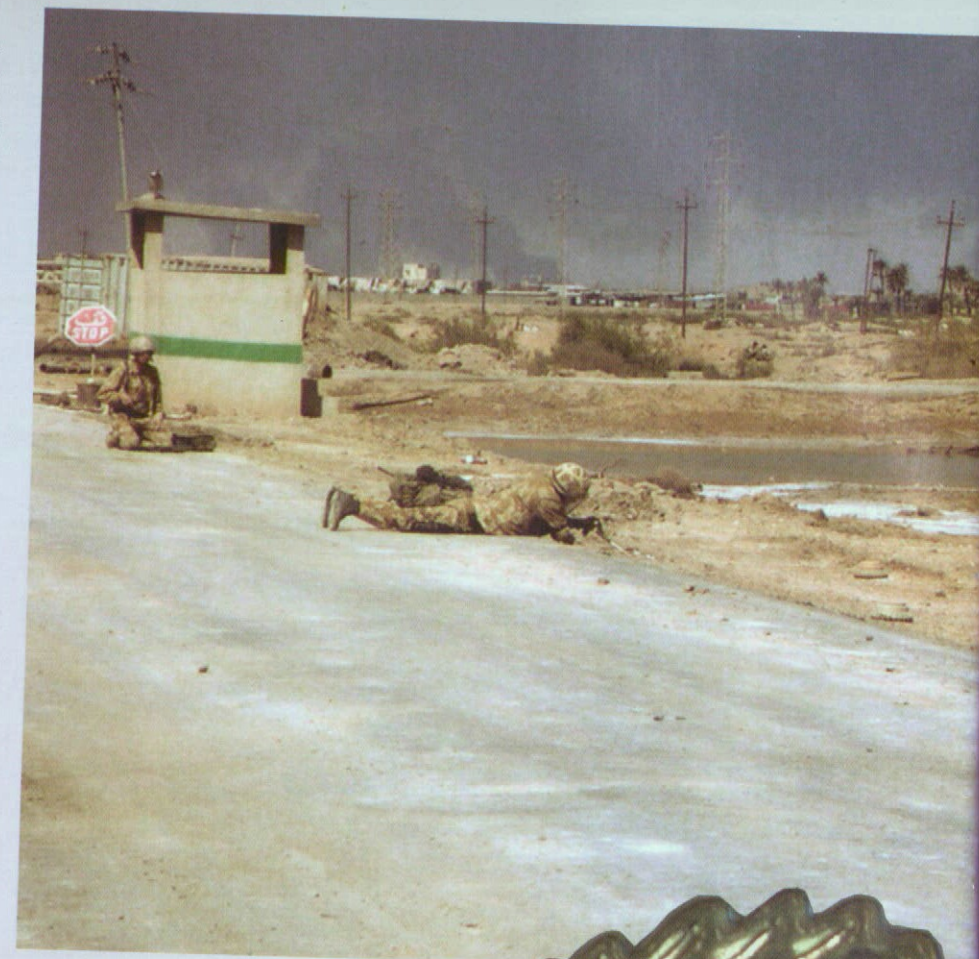


Sgt Scott Shaw MiD

Cpl Thomas Symon MiD

WHEN a missile misfired while he was engaging a target, Milan anti-tank detachment commander Cpl Thomas Symon got out of his Warrior, crossed open ground in view of the enemy and re-loaded his firing post. He engaged the Iraqi anti-aircraft gun at maximum range and destroyed it.

His actions under fire saved his detachment and prevented the effective use of the gun against the remainder of Z Coy, the First Fusiliers battle-group.



Sgt Ashley Curson MiD

SJT Ashley Curson of A Coy, 1 LI, part of the 2 RTR battle-group, led an eight-man patrol into Az Zubayr, where enemy forces were putting up fierce resistance.

The patrol, the first to attempt to dominate the city, was soon in action against larger groups of militia and became involved in a number of firefights. The citation says Sjt Curson played a significant part in defeating the militia in Az Zubayr.

Cpl Justin Simons MiD

RECOVERY mechanic Cpl Justin Simons, C Sqn, Scots DG, worked for several hours in darkness and under attack to recover a damaged Challenger 2 during a 40 Commando RM operation near Abu Al Khasib.



Sgt Ashley Curson MiD

Cpl James Garrett MiD

ARMoured repair and recovery vehicle commander Cpl James Garrett led a dangerous mission to recover a stricken Challenger 2 of C Sqn, Scots DG disabled three miles ahead of friendly lines.

In a difficult operation lasting six hours and carried out in near total darkness and in the face of numerous enemy attacks, Cpl Garrett coordinated the task and covered mechanics working on the ground with machine-gun fire from his turret.

During this time he was exposed in the turret, at considerable risk, from the waist up.



MID



Cpl Phillip Hellicker MiD

A DARING four-man pre-dawn patrol led by Cpl Phillip Hellicker of D Coy, 1 LI into a militia stronghold in a maze of small streets in northern Az Zubayr produced intelligence that led to the company attacking later that day. He returned to lead the break-in, clearing four rooms in the initial objective and saving from serious injury two members of his section when a grenade bounced off a wall and landed at their feet.



Cpl Phillip Hellicker MiD

Maj Andrew Britton MiD

MAJ Andrew Britton led Cyclops Sqn, 2 RTR, through several close-quarter battles, destroying pockets of militia and assisting in the rapid securing of Az Zubayr.



Maj Andrew Britton MiD

LSgt Alan Hanger MiD

SGT Alan Hanger, of No 2 Coy, 1 IG, spotted an enemy soldier who had pretended to be dead picking up an RPG and aiming at a fellow Warrior during the protracted and fiercely-contested battle for the Basra College of Literature complex.

Realising that he risked hitting friendly vehicles and civilians in the area if he used his Warrior armaments, he opened his turret, exposing himself to enemy fire, picked up his rifle and shot the RPG man.

In a separate incident he used his Warrior to shield a soldier shot on foot patrol, again exposing himself to enemy fire to give first aid and get the casualty into the back of the armoured fighting vehicle.

Cpl Peter Brown MiD

CPL Peter Brown RE, an armoured vehicle commander, cleared a route through an obstacle laced with anti-tank mines in a daylight attack on Basra despite sustaining a direct hit on his vehicle.

Cpl J P Hogan MiD

WHEN a QDG Scimitar shed a track on the enemy-held side of an important bridge south-east of Basra, Cpl Hogan, a patrol commander from the Brigade Reconnaissance Force went back across the bridge to provide cover while repairs were made.

He suppressed enemy fire and led a patrol to clear overlooking houses, capturing 19 militiamen and a significant quantity of arms and ammunition. Earlier he had drawn fire on the bridge to allow engineers to clear the bridge of demolition charges.

Sgt David Corbett MiD

SGT David Corbett, a Warrior commander, was part of a mission to rescue survivors of an attack on two British Forces Land Rovers during high-tempo operations against irregulars in and around Az Zubayr.

When his chain gun and 30mm cannon failed during sustained RPG and small-arms attack he fired his rifle and 9mm pistol from his open hatch to protect dismounted troops returning to the vehicle. His courage enabled them to do so without casualties despite a huge weight of enemy fire.

Maj Kevin Burgess MiD

THE treatment provided by senior medical officer Maj Kevin Burgess and his team while under enemy fire saved the life of an Irish Guardsman who had been hit in the chest during an incident in Basra.

Lt Col Hugh Blackman MiD

LT COL Hugh Blackman led the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards battle-group, the last to arrive in Kuwait, across the line of departure with 7th Armoured Brigade in under seven days.

As commanding officer he showed bold action in battle and personally led a series of raids to disrupt the outer defences of Basra. He secured a key crossing over the Shatt-al-Basra and attacked to secure a vital crossroads in the city.



Lt Col Hugh Blackman MiD

'Despite a wound, he returned fire until out of ammo, then evacuated casualties'

WO2 Alec Harvey MiD

WO2 Alec Harvey, battery sergeant major of 7 (Sphinx) Cdo Bty, led a small force mounted in two Land Rovers and armed with LAWs to counter a threat posed by several T-55 tanks to an undefended flank of 3 Commando Brigade during operations on the Al Faw Peninsula.

In poor visibility reduced by a sand storm he set up an ambush 20km from the nearest friendly forces, engaged the tanks with machine-gun fire and called in high explosive which forced the enemy to withdraw.

CoH Richard Gallagher MiD

PATHFINDER callsign A13F, under CoH Richard Gallagher, was the only patrol assigned to watch the American eastern flank in a critical area, deep behind enemy lines. A US elite reconnaissance force had attempted the task, been compromised and hurriedly extracted.

His 12-man patrol, mounted in four Land Rovers and inserted by helicopter, remained undetected for eight days in a heavily-populated area with little cover. He set up an OP between an Iraqi infantry battalion and an artillery battery.

So effectively did he win the support of local people that they protected the patrol and helped coalition forces in subsequent operations.



CoH Richard Gallagher MiD

Cpl Steve Brown MiD

PATHFINDER patrol commander Cpl Steve Brown successfully led four deep reconnaissance missions for 16 Air Assault Brigade.

On one occasion, his 12-man call-sign A13D infiltrated 70km behind enemy lines across almost impassable marshland, the only asset assigned to protect the American eastern flank in that area.

He kept his patrol undetected for eight days and when compromised re-inserted to a new observation post, prepared his patrol for immediate action against three armed men tactically approaching their new position, relocated to another place and boldly stayed on task for a further five days, continuing to report vital intelligence.

LSgt Rodney Holland MiD

ON the advance into Basra, LSgt Rodney Holland's Warrior was attacked by gunmen. Two of his section were killed and he and a colleague injured.

Despite a shoulder wound, LSgt Holland returned fire until he ran out of ammunition then remounted into the platoon commander's vehicle and returned to his section to assist with the security of the area and the evacuation of casualties.

2nd Lt A D Chamberlain MiD

AFTER days under enemy mortar fire south of Abu Al Khasib, 2nd Lt Chamberlain, of C Squadron, QDG, moved his troop forward into battle positions to detect the advance of an enemy counter-attack from Basra.

He held his troop in position as the enemy advanced and maintained a physical screen to protect 3 Commando Brigade units to the south and ensure the squadron achieved its mission.

WO1 Douglas Beattie QCB

DURING an advance on Al Medina and Al Querna, the swift actions and courage of WO1 (RSM) Douglas Beattie, 1 R Irish, in the face of angry and brutal mobs saved the lives of four local people.

Unspeakable events were happening against supporters of the old regime and WO1 Beattie's actions, at great personal risk, signalled to the town that such behaviour was not acceptable.



WO1 Douglas Beattie

Cpl R V Nunn QCB

RMP section commander Cpl Nunn's swift and decisive action in stopping an agitated aid worker from firing an AK47 at an unruly crowd at a food distribution point in Safwan prevented death and injury.

Cpl Carl Lewin QCB

BLOWN 20ft off his Challenger 2 tank during a blue-on-blue cross-boundary fire incident, Cpl Carl Lewin QRL secured the area in the belief that it was an enemy attack and administered first aid to save his injured comrade's life.



Cpl Carl Lewin QCB

Cpl Peter Chilton MiD

ON three occasions Cpl Peter Chilton RE, an armoured vehicle commander, played a leading role during the Scots DG's attacks into Basra city.

His efforts included leading a raid to clear an enemy barricade from a main route into the city and extinguishing an enemy oil trench fire obscuring visibility of enemy positions.

Sgt S D McGrath QCB

SGT S D McGrath, an RMP section commander, calmly dealt with a blue-on-blue attack on a Challenger 2 tank near Az Zubayr, saving at least one life.

He took command of troops of other capbadges to provide first aid for the wounded and secure a landing site for swift medical evacuation. Despite an artillery bombardment and a lack of armour he recovered two bodies from the burning tank hulk and took them to a field hospital.

Operational awards list for Operation Telic: March 19 to April 19, 2003



GC: Tpr C Finney RHG/D.

CMG: Brig A E Whitley CBE, late RE.

CBE: Col P C Marriott OBE, late QRL.

OBE: Lt Col N D Ashmore, RA; Col T T C Collins, late R Irish; Lt Col D R K Francis, RA; Lt Col P A Jones MBE, RLC; Lt Col R J C Maxwell MBE, RLC; Lt Col D J Paterson RRF; Lt Col C M Pope RE; Col J W Shanahan MBE, late RE; Lt Col C L Tickell MBE, RE; Lt Col S P Wolsey, RA.

MBE: Maj P J Arnold RLC; Maj N I Astley RLC; Sig J R Bentley, R Signals; Maj W R Brace BEM, QDG; Maj M Budden RE; Maj D McK Chalmers, R Irish; Maj A Durrant RA; Maj N K Elliott RE; 2nd Lt J E Evans RE; Capt S R Everington QARANC TA; Cpl C A Filmer RLC; Cpl J P Fleming REME; Capt A Forbes, R Signals; Capt A P Foulger RAMC; WO2 P Hartley AGC (SPS); Capt D A McGinnis RE; WO1 A N McKenna RE; Maj P C A Macmullen IG; WO2 J D Mulheran RRF; Lt Col S Pambakian RAMC; Maj C J Parker PWRR.

WO2 M Peters, Kings; Maj K Roberts AGC (RMP); SSgt P J Simpson RLC; SSgt R P M Thomas, Para; Maj M N Tilley RE; WO2 C N Underhill RE; WO1 S Welsh AGC (RMP); Maj J V White RE; Capt M A N Williamson BW.

DSO: Brig G J Binns CBE MC, late PWO; Maj Gen R V Brims CBE, late LI; Lt Col M L Riddell-Webster BW; Maj R C Taylor LG.

CGC: LCoH M J Flynn RHG/D
MC: Sgt N L Bell, Para; Gdsm A L Branchflower IG; Capt C O Campbell RRF; Sgt C G J Comber REME; Lt S T Farebrother QDG; Lt C A Head RRF; Sgt M J Heley RE; Capt G Ingleton RA; SSgt R P T Johnson RE; LCpl P W Laing BW; Lt D C M O'Connell IG; Lt T P A Orde-Powlett IG; Lt T C Rider RE; Cpl J W R Rose BW; Maj H F A Sugden QDG.

DFC: WO2 R St J H Banfield AAC; Capt R T Cuthill AAC.

ARRC: Maj N D Watson QARANC.

QGM: Capt T R Gould RLC; SSgt A W Sindall RE.

Posthumous MiD: LCpl B J Stephen BW; Fus K J Turrington RRF.

MiD: SSgt J P Allcock, Para; Lt Col H H Blackman, Scots DG; Maj A M Britton RTR; Cpl P A Brown RE; Cpl S R Brown, Para; Maj K R Burgess RAMC; 2nd Lt A D Chamberlain QDG; Cpl P J Chilton RE; CSgt D G Corbett RHF; Sjt A D Curson LI; SSgt A E Farmer AAC; CoH R S Gallagher LG; Cpl J E Garrett REME; LSgt A D Hanger, Coldm Gds; WO2 A E Harvey RA; Cpl P J Helliker LI; LCpl D K Higgins, Para; Cpl J P Hogan RE; LSgt R J Holland, Coldm Gds; Sgt S A Hornsby RRF. SSgt D R Hurst QRL; Sgt J D Kearney, R Irish; Sgt A C R Lambert BW; Sgt M McDonnell QDG; Capt C G Morgan RA; Cpl C W D Morton, Para; Capt N J Passmore AAC.

Capt J L Power RA; SSgt R N Power RE; Sgt P A Prest QDG; Pte S Qalobulaa-wasaik- abara BW; Rgr R Reid, R Irish; LCpl D T Ridley LI; LCpl S Robertson BW; Sgt T E Rutherford RRF; Sgt S Shaw BW; Cpl J B Simons REME; WO2 J D Southam QRL; Cpl T Symon, R Anglian; LCoH D J Telling RHG/D; Capt P A Whitbread RA.

QCB: WO1 D R Beattie, R Irish; Cpl C V Lewin QRL; Sgt S D McGrath AGC (RMP); Cpl R V Nunn AGC (RMP).

QCVS: Lt Col J P Ash RLC; Col G T Bald-

win MBE, late QDG; WO2 M W Bates AAC; Capt C N Baylis RLC; Maj C J Bell SG; Maj I R Bell RA; Capt L N Bell RE; Maj J D Billings RTR; Cpl P S Bottom RLC; Lt Col S P W Boyd RE; Lt Col A P Bristow, R Signals; Maj J G Brooking RDG; WO2 M A Bullivant, R Signals; WO2 T Buskie RLC; Lt Col D E Cook OBE, RLC; Brig S P Cowlam CBE, late RLC; Sgt J H Daniel RE; WO2 M L Dawe RAMC; Gnr M J Ellis RA.

Sgt S C Fegan RAMC TA; Capt S Findlay QARANC; Pte G I Ford RLC; Capt A S Garner DWR; WO1 A Goodspeed RLC; Brig A R Gregory, late RA; WO2 A J Hall RRF; Lt Col P D P Hankinson MBE, RTR.

Lt S E Harris RA; Maj S P F Harris RE; WO2 C J Heath, R Signals; Maj G P Hill, Para; Capt T C Holland RA; Maj N F Holman RLC; Sgt R F N Houston AGC (SPS); Lt Col R N Howard RLC; Capt T A P Hubbard, 9/12th LI; Cpl P A E Huty DWR; Capt A G Jenkins, R Signals; Maj C P Kemp, Para.

Pte N C Kenny RLC; WO2 C W Kerr RE; Lt Col M G Lacey RA; Cpl I J Lawson, R Signals; Maj D J Lockey RAMC TA; Maj J C W Maciejewski RGJ; Lt Col S K Macrostie MBE, R Signals; Cfn A L Marshall REME; Sgt J R D McCurry RE; Sgt A B McGoldrick RA; 2nd Lt A P Mackenzie RE; Sgt G Mitcheson, Int Corps; Lt Col D D Noble RLC; WO2 W E J Owers RLC.

Brig J D Page OBE, late Para; WO2 B Palmer, R Signals; Lt J L Pearce DWR; Capt C Prentice RE; Lt Col P A Redwood RLC; WO2 M W Roberts RLC; Capt L Rosie REME; Capt P J Sandle RAMC; WO1 L Sankey REME; WO2 J R Scott REME; WO1 G P Simpkin RLC.

WO2 A J Steward SASC; Capt P J Stoddart MBE, R Signals; Capt D M Stoter, R Signals; Sgt I D Taylor GH; Maj J W Taylor RRF; Maj N H Tuppen, Int Corps; Sgt A L Tyler REME; Maj E J Tyson RA; Capt M R Wilkinson RE; Cpl D E Williams REME; Lt Col G E Wilmshurst-Smith RE; Capt N B Wilson AGC (MPS); SSgt H Winder RAMC; Cpl L Yorke RLC.

For services in connection with Operation Telic

KCB: Lt Gen J G Reith CB CBE, late Para.
CBE: Col D J R Martin MBE, RLC; Brig N H Rollo, late RE.

OBE: Lt Col B W Ballinger RLC; Lt Col S C Bate RA; Lt Col S L Farley RE; Lt Col P A Kellett LI; Lt Col M S Limb RLC TA; Maj R J McNeil RLC; Lt Col B Phillips RAMC; Lt Col M F Richardson, D and D; Lt Col M C H Underhill MBE, RLC.

MBE: Maj C D Allum RTR; Maj P R C Bird, Hldrs; WO1 D J Boswell RLC; Capt I R O Bowers RLC; Maj I P Comerford, Int Corps; Maj P K Harkness, Hldrs; CSgt M J Howard, R Anglian; Maj P J Pettifor REME; Maj R O Slack KRH; WO2 I J Walling, R Signals; Maj H A Watson LD.

US awards to British personnel

Legion of Merit (Degree of Officer): Brig A J Bradshaw OBE, late KRH.

Bronze Star Medal: Capt J K Gable AGC (RMP) TA; Maj A R Mack AGC (ETS).

In addition, the following awards are announced for gallant and distinguished services in Iraq: one OBE, six MCs, two bars to DFC, one DFC and one QGM.



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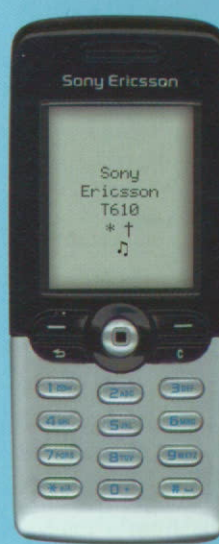
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Dry run: LCpl Cat Hudson, an environmental health specialist based at Umm Qasr, practises her swimming technique while waiting for the pool at Shaibah airfield to be filled up

This is cool

Welfare village set to give troops deployed around Basra a break

IN the searing heat of the Iraqi summer, soldiers could only dream of being able to jump into cold water. Until now, writes **Ray Routledge**.

That fantasy is about to become reality with the eagerly-awaited opening at Shaibah of a new welfare complex, including a 25-metre swimming pool. It is hoped the facility will be operational before Christmas.

Thirty minutes' drive from Basra, Shaibah is to become home to 2,500 soldiers, many moving from the port of Umm Qasr. Included in that number are 500 soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, The

Parachute Regiment, deploying from Meane Barracks, Colchester to replace the 2 Battalion, The Light Infantry and the 1st Battalion, The Royal Green Jackets.

"The site is being upgraded to be our long-term logistic base for Iraq," said Territorial Army officer Maj Gordon Mackenzie, A and SH.

"Because of the harsh conditions we have put a lot of effort into making the base as good a place to live as possible."

The swimming pool, constructed by the Royal Air Force during its time on the site in the 1950s, has been refurbished by 9 Troop, 23 Pioneer Regiment.

Swimmers will be protected from the desert sun by a fine mist of spray over the pool.

In addition to the pool, the welfare village will include a seating area and bar, a supermarket to go with the existing Expeditionary Forces' Institute shop, other retail outlets, a games hall, an internet facility, a cinema and theatre, all air-conditioned. A mobile Pizza Hut already on the site is doing good business.

The complex will be open to all troops in theatre, not just those living at Shaibah.

Soldiers based at the airfield will live in Corimec structures, familiar in the Balkans, rather than the temporary deployable accommodation (TDA) camps constructed for troops based in other parts of southern Iraq.

'Proud' Welsh soldier dies in Basra crash

PTE Ryan Thomas, 18, a soldier in the 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Wales, became the 53rd British Serviceman to die on duty in Iraq when he was killed in a road traffic accident in Basra on November 6.

A statement from the 1st Battalion in theatre described Pte Thomas as a proud Welshman who had carried out his duties "in this unfamiliar and sometimes dangerous environment with a pride and maturity beyond that expected of such a junior soldier".

It concluded: "The tragic loss of such an unique character is sorely felt by colleagues, who valued his professionalism and sense of fun."

Pte Thomas joined The Royal Regiment of Wales in August, having enlisted in the Army straight from school.



Pte Ryan Thomas

Sandhurst driver killed during Cyprus exercise

A ROYAL Logistic Corps soldier has died in an accident during a military exercise in Cyprus.

Pte James Parkinson, 26, a driver with 44 Squadron RLC, which is permanently attached to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, was killed near Episkopi during Exercise Winter Victory.

Pte Parkinson had been driving a four-ton truck in a convoy of six vehicles. When the convoy stopped he dismounted and walked to the rear of the vehicle to lower the tailgate, at which point he was crushed between his own vehicle and the one immediately behind. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

It is not yet known which of the two vehicles began to move. An investigation into the accident is being held. There were no other casualties.



Pizza joint: LCpl Gareth Ogden, left, and SAC Ben Key call in at the fast-food outlet opened at Shaibah village

Assaulting the objective was the easy part ...

... reading orders and calculating the distance were the real challenges!

Reading, writing and the ability to work with numbers are all skills for life that no soldier can afford to be without. For some, however, this is a real challenge.

Can you help?

By volunteering a few hours each week you could help Army personnel to meet that challenge and in the process gain yourself a national qualification. This is available to Link Up supporters at no cost.

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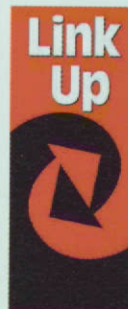
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Canal Zone medal goes on parade

Our medal: Canal Zone veterans Richard Wooley, left, and John Bushnell, centre, pictured with Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith, were among a very proud contingent of Zoners who took part in the Cenotaph parade on Remembrance Sunday, some wearing the new clasp they have been awarded.

Sir Geoffrey, a parliamentary champion of the 1951-54 Canal Zone veterans during their long campaign to receive recognition, was asked to lead the marchers in a bowler hat and carrying a furred umbrella.

Turn to Page 39 for Suez Canal Zone geographical qualification details and a map of the area.

● Arthur Halestrap, 105, a signaller in



the Royal Engineers in 1918, read the Laurence Binyon poem "They shall grow not old" at an Armistice Day ceremony at the Menin Gate at Ypres. He is one of only 26 living Britons known to have served in the First World War.

● The Queen unveiled a £3 million memorial in London's Hyde Park to the

102,000 Australians who died fighting alongside British forces during the First and Second World Wars.

● Remains found in an excavated trench near Ypres have been identified as those of Northumberland Fusilier William Stephen Storey, who was born in 1896.

Picture: Steve Dock

Queen approves Op Veritas medal

A MEDAL for operational service in Afghanistan since September 11, 2001 has been approved by the Queen.

The medal ribbon will have a broad central red stripe, flanked on each side by a stripe of royal blue and a stripe of light blue, with an outer stripe of light brown to reflect the landscape in Afghanistan.

Operations counting towards qualification for the medal include Veritas, Oracle, Landman, Fingal, Jacana, Ramson and Bandog. Qualifying zones and periods of

service for the medal are detailed in DCI JS 126 (published on October 31).

Personnel, including foreign nationals, must have been under the command of the UK Joint Task Force Commander.

Those who qualify for the operational service medal (OSM) by virtue of service within the geographical boundary of Afghanistan will be eligible for a clasp "Afghanistan", for wear with the ribbon, and a silver rosette on the ribbon when only the ribbon is worn.

Money, time lost on Apache introduction

SERIOUS mistakes made by the MoD in introducing the Apache WAH-64 attack helicopter wasted £24 million and meant the aircraft will be two years late coming into service with the Army Air Corps.

The Committee of Public Accounts, which examined the introduction of Apache, said separating the procurement of training and weapons from the prime contract had led to the MoD assuming additional risks and costs, and the approach to acquiring training had led to extra costs of more than £24 million. This meant its introduction had been delayed by two years.

Arrangements for providing spares during its first 30 months of operation were also flawed and the capacity for Apache to have secure voice and data communications with other aircraft and UK ground troops restricted. "Helicopters worth £1.2 billion will sit idle," said the report.

Cramped quarters

FOUR instructors from the Royal School of Military Engineering at Gillingham spent a week living in the bucket of a medium-wheeled tractor as part of an effort by the sappers to raise money for the BBC Children in Need appeal. They also held a penalty shoot-out against Gillingham FC.



Section's last call

SOLDIERS, left, from 7 Flight AAC REME ES section in Brunei marked Remembrance Day with a visit to the cemetery on Labuan Island, Malaysia, resting place of 3,900 Allied Servicemen. The section, the last ES aviation asset in the Far East, is to be replaced by civilian contractors next year.



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Bosnians won over by Rock music



Pied piper: Musn Rebecca Moritz of the Band of The Royal Gibraltar Regiment plays the piccolo to schoolchildren in Mrkonjic Grad.

The Territorial Army musicians, supported by the regimental corps of drums, delighted audiences in Banja Luka, Gradiska, Mostar and Sarajevo during their tour of the Balkans.

Organised as their annual TA camp, the trip was the first by the band to an operational theatre and the first by a formed unit of the Gibraltar Regiment since the Second World War.

A cheque for €1,000, raised at a concert held in St Michael's Cave, Gibraltar, was presented by the band to the Pavarotti Music Centre in Mostar.

Picture: Cpl Simon Pugsley RAF

New face for Stefan

FOUR-year-old Stefan Savic is a new person. The Bosnian youngster, featured in *Soldier* (Sept) after British troops in the Balkans arranged for him to be brought to Britain for major surgery, underwent a 12-hour reconstruction operation at Great Ormond Street Hospital.

Stefan was flown to London as a result of fundraising led by British peacekeeping forces in Bosnia and in particular by SSgt Wayne Ingram and his soldiers of the 9th/12th Royal Lancers.

Born with a rare facial cleft which meant his eyes were too far apart and his nose split by 5cm, Stefan underwent an operation to remove a block of bone from the centre of his face.

His eyes were moved closer together and bone grafts were used to reconstruct his nose and cheek bones. Surgeon David Dunaway, who waived his fee, said: "There are risks attached when operating near the brain, including the risk to Stefan's sight through moving his eye sockets."

"But the surgery has gone extremely well and we are pleased with the results and Stefan's smooth recovery."

The little boy will need more operations



Mission complete: SSgt Wayne Ingram, above, with Stefan after his big operation in London. Inset, Stefan pictured before his surgery in the UK

in the future, but SSgt Ingram, who stood by the family throughout the long operation, said:

"The outcome is everything I would have dreamed of. Stefan's family are over the

moon." An appeal to fund his future surgery has been set up and cheques payable to the Stefan Savic Appeal can be paid into to Lloyds TSB, Cox's & King's Branch, sort code 30-11-75, account number 11259160.

Get in the picture

CLOSING date for the 2003-04 Army Photographic Competition is February 15. Contenders will be judged in early March and the prize-giving is due to take place in London in April. The judges will be looking for pictures with PR potential. Turn to Page 27 for more details.

Directorate bows out

THE Directorate of Military Operations marked the end of more than 150 years service with a dinner at the Royal Hospital Chelsea. The function of DMO, which worked for the Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Operations) and briefed CDS and CGS on military commitments and output, is to be undertaken by three new tri-Service directorates.

Training support

CAPT Mike Farrage RN is the first officer commanding the new tri-Service Defence Centre of Training Support, not the director general as reported in the November issue (Update). Command of the centre, which will be based at RAF Halton, will rotate among the Services.

Bagram watercolour

COPIES of a limited-edition watercolour, "Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan 2001-2002", are available from the UIF shop, 1 Assault Group, Poole, Dorset BH15 4NQ (tel 01202 202392 or fax 01202 668357) at £25 plus p&p. The painting was commissioned from Gordon Rushmore.



Under Big Ben

A digest of what's being said on Army matters in Parliament

No plans to disband battalions

THERE are no plans to disband or amalgamate infantry battalions, Armed Forces Minister Adam Ingram said in a written answer to Parliament on November 3.

"There is a continuing need to assess force structures in order to ensure that we have the balanced, flexible forces needed to meet the full range of operational contingencies," he said. "However, there are currently no plans to disband or amalgamate Army infantry battalions, nor are there plans to reduce the current overall strength of the Army."

The White Paper [due this month] will provide an updated statement of defence policy.

Commonwealth recruits: In the past five years the British Army has recruited 4,375 personnel from Commonwealth countries, rising from 140 in 1998-99 to 1,960 in 2002-03. The number of Fijians recruited in the same period is 1,895.

And I quote . . .

Our experience of Operation Telic has shown that employers are very supportive of the Reserve Forces. Only a very small number of employers have stated that they would not wish to employ reservists. Indeed . . . the Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employers (SaBRE) campaign team continues to be contacted by employers who wish to register as a supportive employer.

— Defence Minister
Ivor Caplin

New recruits: As at July 1 the Armed Forces had a deficit of 6,060 trained personnel — Royal Navy 1,020, Army 4,220, RAF 820.

Cadets: MoD funding for cadet forces in 2003-04 is £80.5 million, less than one per cent of the overall budget.

Breast implants: Forty breast implant operations have been carried out in MoD hospital units on female Service personnel in the past five years, including four this year. The procedures were carried out for clinical reasons, such as breast reconstruction following an accident or cancer treatment.

Bullying: The Royal Military Police investigated 1,686 cases of assault between Jan 1 and Sept 30. Of these, 16 involved an allegation or suspicion of bullying. Disciplinary action was taken in four cases; no further action in seven; and investigations into the remaining five have not been concluded.

Gifts: Equipment gifted to other countries in the past year includes a heavy girder bridge to Bosnia, 44 Challenger 1 tanks to Jordan, mine detectors and ancillary kit to Kenya, six aircraft sunshades (Dutch barns) to Kuwait and the Nicholson 55 training yacht *Adventure* to Russia.

Garlanded Prince meets recruits



Picture: Chris Barker

Floral tribute: The Prince of Wales acknowledges the gift of a garland from Gurkha children at the Infantry Training Centre Catterick during his visit to North Yorkshire. The Prince, who is Colonel-in-Chief of The Parachute Regiment and Royal Gurkha Rifles, and Colonel of the Welsh Guards, met recruits in training for all three regiments.

Gunners put on a capital show



Showtime: Soldiers of The Honourable Artillery Company march in the Lord Mayor's Show. They were among 2,000 military personnel involved in the annual London pageant. The Corps of Drums and Band of the HAC provided music. Also on parade was the gun troop, which fired a salute from the Tower of London for President Bush.

Chefs have golden touch

ARMY chefs rose to the occasion and won 14 best-in-class awards at the Combined Services Culinary Challenge at Sandown Park Racecourse, Surrey. They finished second overall in the competition.

WO2 Marie Halls, Sgt Clive Taylor and Cpl Dave Fegan of 30 Signal Regiment won gold in the Inter-Services open cook-and-serve blue ribbon event. A three-course meal with coffee was prepared and cooked by the two chefs and faultlessly served by WO2 Halls.

Another soldier with the golden touch was novice chef Pte Ben Moussa, 1 Close Support Medical Regiment, who was entered in the junior fish dish class at the last moment and won top marks.

The Princess Royal visited the event and was introduced to the military chefs by the chairman of the judges, John Retallick. She met LCpl John Oliver, of

30 Signal Regiment, whose menu of poached supreme of chicken stuffed with a herb mouselline, caramelised shallots, lime-scented dumplings and a secret recipe for vanilla soufflé won him his heat with a silver award in the Junior Chef of the Year competition.

Army team manager Capt Danny McDermid, the technical training officer at the Army School of Catering, said he was delighted at how the chefs had performed. "The aim is to give as many new people as possible the chance to take part," he said.

"You have to be special to be an Army chef — very adaptable, very robust, and have a passionate love of cooking to keep up standards."

Silver touch: LCpl John Oliver tells the Princess Royal and chairman of judges, John Retallick, how he put his winning dish together, right



Picture: Malcolm Case

IN BRIEF

● A new annual Army military festival is to replace Colchester's traditional garrison county day from next year. The county day, held at Fingringhoe Ranges for the past 18 years, was cancelled this year because so many Colchester-based units had deployed on Operation Telic. Abbey Field will be the venue for the new-look show on July 10.

● Former Light Infantry bugler SSgt Gary Bagley, right, now AGC (SPS), flexed his musical fingers when he reported for duty with the British Defence Liaison Staff in Ottawa. He is pictured sounding *Sunset Retreat* with WO Mark Greatti, bugle major of the Cameron Highlanders, a Canadian militia regiment, at a ceremony to mark the



retirement of British High Commissioner Sir Andrew Burns. The ceremony ended with the Union flag flown over his official residence being lowered and presented to Sir Andrew.

After hours of practice ("and boy, did I need it"), Gary says the two musicians were note-perfect on silver bugles loaned for his tour by the Regimental HQ of the Light Infantry.

Blood brothers



Warm welcome: Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, The Royal Scots at Telford College, Edinburgh, line up for a cuppa offered by food preparation and cooking student Colin Greave after volunteering to give blood on campus. From the top are Pte Tosh MacMillan, LCpl Derrick Macgregor, LCpl David Beattie and LCpl James Lindsay, all instructors on the Army preparation course, which has been running at the college for two years. It also offers an Access to Army course.

The aim of the courses is to enable youngsters to recognise and work towards the skills and abilities which will help them gain entry to the Army.

Austrian tribute to Red Caps

AUSTRIA has honoured the Royal Military Police by using the "four-in-a-jeep" symbol of the International Patrol on its new €20 coin.

The reverse depicts four military policemen in a jeep with the flags of the four nations — USA, USSR, France and Britain — involved in the 1945-55 International Patrol in Vienna at the height of the Cold War. The UK contingent was provided by 105 Provost Company, RMP, British Troops Austria.

Former 105 Provost Coy member Bill Taylor, of Mytchett, Surrey, said: "We feel extremely proud to be represented on this new coin. This is a wonderful honour placed on the Royal Military Police in a year in which it suffered its greatest tragedy in modern times."



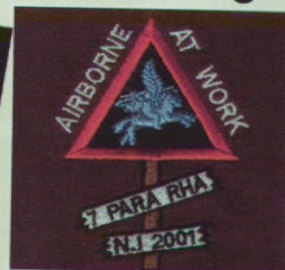
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Wet, wet, wet: Cambrian patrollers make a river crossing during the trek through mid-Wales

Welsh Cavalry on a gold run

JUST two teams out of 81 struck gold in the Welsh mountains during the British Army's toughest patrolling test.

The 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards – the Welsh Cavalry – did their standing in the Principality no harm by winning one of the much-coveted gold medals in the gruelling two-day Cambrian Patrol over the rugged terrain of mid-Wales. The other went to a team entered by the 1st Battalion, The Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment.

Pte Gary Jackson, of 1 RGBW, became a rare double gold winner. He was a member of the battalion's successful 2001 patrol.

A record number of foreign teams included entries from Hungary, Canada, Belgium, Italy, France, Germany, the Czech Republic, Norway and the Netherlands.

QDG patrol commander Lt Nic Sutherland was delighted with his team's performance, especially as some had returned from Iraq. "Being an armoured regiment, it is a very big achievement for us, although

we have a recce role. The change of climate from the desert sands to the Welsh cold was quite something and I had to encourage the young lads towards the end. They responded extremely well to the challenge and I am proud of all of them."

Brig Robert Aitken, Commander of 160 (Wales) Brigade, who was responsible for the Cambrian, said: "The teams that did well were, as ever, those who were proficient at map-reading across all types of terrain by day and night, those who administered themselves efficiently during the exercise, and those who maintained a sense of humour."

In all, two gold medals, 14 silver, 16 bronze and 13 certificates of merit were awarded.

● Cambrian Patrol 2004 will run from Oct 29-Nov 7. A DCI will be published in the New Year. Units can also contact WO1 Brian Pratt, Cambrian Patrol RSM, on (mil) 94351 2280, (civ) 01874 613280 or email cambrianpatrol@milnet.uk.net

Scandinavian bathtime: Members of the Forward Arming and Refuelling Point party of 652 Squadron AAC freshen up *au naturel* during an exercise in Norway.

The first leg for the air party was a five-hour flight to the Royal Norwegian Air Force base at Rygge, including an hour over the waters of the Skaagerak with no land in sight – a first for many in the squadron.



Paper talk

What the Press has been saying

● The biggest change in a defence White Paper next month will come for the part-time soldiers of the Territorial Army, which will be renamed the Army Reserve. Its manpower will be cut from 41,250 to fewer than 30,000 and the old battalion system scrapped in favour of company-sized units that will work with Regular battalions. – *Sunday Times*

● The MoD has ordered a recruitment freeze in preparation for a series of swingeing Treasury cuts. No more recruits will be allowed to join the RA or RAC after the end of the financial year in April. No further offers of employment are to be issued for Full-Time Reserve Service. The MoD said: "We are not turning off recruiting, we are regulating it." – *Sunday Telegraph*

● Gurkhas held prisoner by Japan in the Second World War will be eligible for a payment of £10,000, the Government has said. Claims can also be made by surviving spouses. – *Guardian*

● A Victoria Cross and other gallantry awards won by Maj Gen Daniel Beak on the Western Front fetched a record £178,250 at a Spink auction in London. A commander in the Royal Navy's Drake Battalion at the time, he joined the Army after the First World War, retired as a major general in 1941 and died in Swindon in 1967. – *Daily Mail*

● The Bosnian Serb Government has admitted for the first time that Bosnian Serb forces were responsible for the mass slaughter of Muslims in Srebrenica in July 1995, Europe's worst atrocity since the end of the Second World War. – *Independent*

● The Royal British Legion has stopped supplying pins with its poppies because it fears compensation claims from "injured" members of the public. Some branches are supplying stickers or plastic alternatives in case people accidentally stab themselves with the steel pins. – *Sunday Telegraph*

● Diaries and letters of German soldiers found by an historian are shedding new light on the extraordinary fraternisation with British troops during the First World War. It is a remarkable chronicle of how the two armies often defied their officers to create their own makeshift peace at Christmas 1914. – *Times*



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eDegrees on way

ARMY personnel will be the first students to study a new foundation degree in business and management with **UK eUniversities Worldwide (UKeU)**, the Government-backed company set up to provide online degrees from British universities. Bournemouth and Leeds Metropolitan Universities have joined forces to offer the new course, which will be the Army's first foray into elearning at higher education level. Students range from lance corporal to major and will be sponsored by the Army. Visit www.foundationdegree.org.uk

Contract target

A SOLUTION to the MoD's quest for a **Combined Aerial Target Service (CATS)** has been offered by QinetiQ. A feature of



the bid is the use of proven targets, including the Mirach 100/5, pic-

tured, from Galileo Avionica, the Banshee and Voodoo from Meggitt, and helicopter pop-up targets from Schreiner.

Groovy music

GROOVYCID, the rock band of made up of three British soldiers, has been approached play in Iraq on December 19 in front of 5,000 troops. The band has been signed to an independent record label and is due to release an album in 2004. It also has a Naafi tour lined up for early next year.

Irish in Balkans

SIXTY-four Territorial Army soldiers of **253 (North Irish) Field Ambulance (Volunteers)** will provide medical support and an ambulance service to British and other Nato troops in Bosnia and Kosovo.

The Northern Ireland-based soldiers are drawn from across the Province, with bases in Belfast and Londonderry.

Colchester 'find'

WORK has started to extract materials thought to have been used as chemical training aids during the Second World War and buried on land in **Colchester Garrison**. The mound containing the materials, believed to have been used in chemical warfare training, was discovered by a team investigating the site in preparation for the construction of the new garrison.

Alex is top cadet

CADET RSM Alex Key, right, of Somerset Army Cadet Force (The Light Infantry), is the top ACF cadet in the country. He was presented with his trophy by **Lt Gen John Kiszely** after winning a closely-contested competition at the Cadet Training Centre, Frimley Park. Alex has been awarded a place at Portsmouth University and hopes to join the Army Air Corps.



Fire and manoeuvre: Two candidates tackle a battle run during the junior NCOs' cadre run by the 1st Battalion, The Black Watch at Fallingbowl. Just weeks after the battalion's return from Iraq, 33 soldiers completed the course and **LCpl Duncan Johnstone** was presented with the prize for best overall

student. **LCpl Richard Clark** was the best at PT and the best shot was **LCpl Richard Robertson**.

The course was the first to incorporate the new Command, Leadership and Management scheme, which officially replaces Education for Promotion in January.

Cadets 'took charge' of victim after crash

TWO 15-year-old Army cadets have been awarded commendations for their actions after a fellow pupil was injured in a road traffic accident.

Cadet **LCpls Joanne Bradford** and **Melanie Jennings**, from Shrewsbury, were commended by the General Officer Commanding 5 Division, **Maj Gen Nick Cottam**, at the TA Centre in Copthorne Barracks, Shrewsbury.

The girls used skills learned in the Army Cadet Force to assess the situation, administer first aid and calm the 14-year-old victim until help reached them.

Gen Cottam said: "Despite the large number of adults present, the girls took charge of the situation, administered first aid, prevented the victim from being overcome with shock and stayed with him until the emergency services arrived. Their calm



Picture: Stuart Bingham

Cadets Joanne Bradford, left, and Melanie Jennings with Maj Gen Nick Cottam, GOC 5 Division

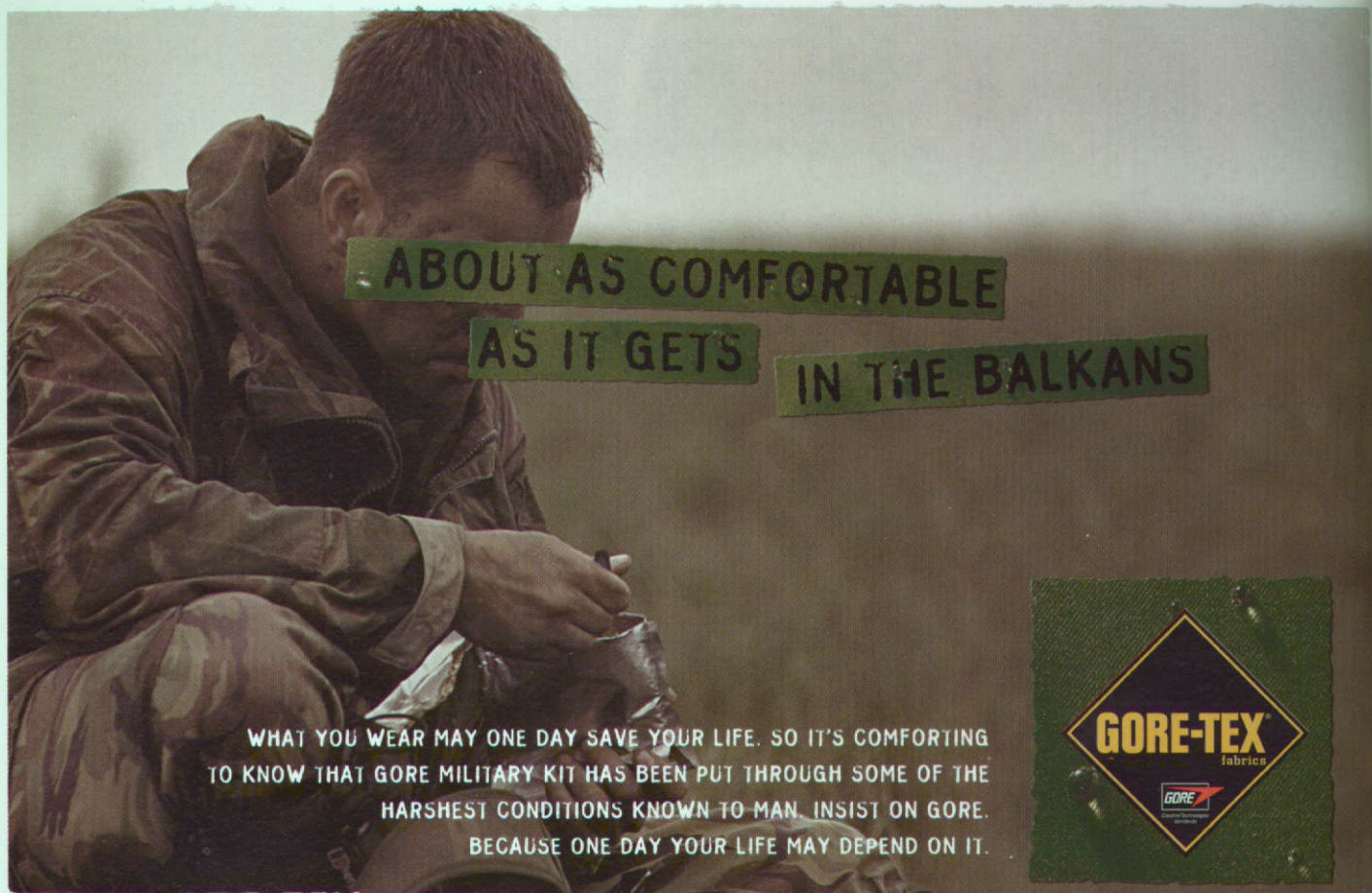
and professional manner prevented panic and alarm from the onlookers and the schoolboy went on to make a full recovery."

Joanne, who is planning to apply for a place at the Army Foundation College, and Melanie have also been praised by the Ambulance Service and received an award from St John Ambulance.

Cavalry's charities


CAPT Anthony Tate, right, Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment, with his dog **Frankie**, re-homed from Wimbledon Greyhound Welfare. The canine charity and East Anglia Children's Hospice were the beneficiaries of an open day held by the HCMR at Bodney Camp in Norfolk. Each received £1,035.





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Fire!

OUR December winner is by LSgt Ray Cox of the Mortar Platoon, Support Company, 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards, who used 12 years of mortar experience to capture this action-packed image on a Nikon Coolpic 2100 digital camera during a night-firing exercise in Kenya.

Weapon systems are difficult to photograph because of the speed of launch. *Soldier* Picture Editor Mike Weston said: "If you use a motordrive you miss the action, so the best way to capture the image is at night when you can open the shutter for a few seconds. It's also helpful to support the camera on a firm surface to avoid a blurred image."

Runners-up were Maj Mark Knight, with a photograph of Cambridgeshire cadets in front of a TA recruitment caravan, and (not shown) Capt Giles Smith, 663 Sqn AAC, with an atmospheric shot of early morning PT in Kuwait.

They will go forward in the *Soldier* competition to be judged for our £250 award, one of the categories in the 2004 Army Photographic Competition.

Send your entries, preferably prints up to A4, to the Chief Photographer (address on Page 3), including a self-addressed envelope for return, or e-mail them to phot@soldiermagazine.co.uk, indicating *Soldier* Photo Comp. Closing date for the January competition was Dec 1 and



Top: Mortar action in Kenya, by LSgt Ray Cox, 1 Gren Gds; and cadets in front of a poster, by Maj Mark Knight

for the February edition – your last chance to enter – **Jan 5.**

Soldier rules apply. Query line: 01252 347357 or Aldershot mil 2357.

Closing date for the 2003-04 Army Photographic Competition is February 15. The prize-giving is due to take place in London in April.

Judges will be looking for pictures with PR potential and the organisers are hoping that there will be many entries from soldiers who took part in operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Balkans and Northern Ireland between January 2003 and January 2004.

The competition is open to all Regular and Territorial Army personnel, staff and cadets of the Combined Cadet Force (Army), Army Cadet Force, University Officers' Training Corps (Army), MoD



civilians and contractors who work for the Army, and dependants.

Send entries to DCC(A), SO2 (P), Room 1/20, Metropole Building, Northumberland Avenue, London WC2N 5BP by February 15. Queries to DCC(A) on (civ) 020 780 78653 or (mil) 9621 78653. See also DCI Army 83/03 or www.army.mod.uk/competitions/apc2003.htm

Christmas hangover can last a whole year

BY the time you read this, your Christmas spending will probably be in full flow.

There are presents to buy... and decorations, cards and postage, food and drink. Then there are all those extra parties and functions to go to, which means more food and drink to pay for, and probably taxi fares as well.

And finally, just when you think that it couldn't get any more expensive, along come the sales. All debt counselling agencies will tell you that January and February are by far and away the busiest times of the year, when many people get their credit and store card bills and wonder how they are ever going to pay them off.

Switch, the debit card company, is forecasting that every person in the United Kingdom will probably spend £868 extra this Christmas... and that's even before we start on the sales.

Some people may end up paying for Christmas for the rest of the year. Little wonder then that this time of year, which is supposed to be the season of goodwill, actually is a time when there is much tension and family feuding. Please enjoy Christmas but do not feel you have to go over the top by splashing out money you can't really afford.

Buying young Shane a computer this Christmas may mean you will be struggling to buy him new shoes in March.

Manage your money



Credit Action Director Keith Tondeur, will be pleased to answer, in confidence, specific questions addressed to the Editor.

If you already know you've blown it, don't wait for the bills to start arriving before you seek help from the Consumer Credit Counselling Service. The quicker you get advice the quicker they can help you make the payments that will get you out of debt.

If you are in the slightest bit worried that you may be facing a problem, give them a ring today on 0800 1381111 or go to the web-site below.

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We're coming home

Ready-for-work programme helps homeless ex-Service people back into jobs

Report: Ray Routledge
Pictures: Graeme Main

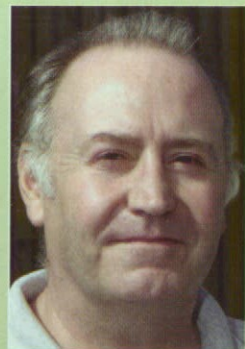
A YEAR ago Paul Preston was sleeping rough on the streets of London.

As usual, the ex-RAF Regiment man was drunk. As he gazed blearily at MoD Main Building from the discomfort of his Whitehall park bench, he screamed abuse at the building.

Today Paul is a changed man. Although still an alcoholic – he always will be – he isn't drinking and has won back his self-esteem and the respect of others. For the first time in years his hopes are not drowning in the bottom of a bottle.

He owes much to Project Compass, an MoD-supported programme which offers help and advice to anyone who has been in the Armed Forces, regardless of age or rank. Under its umbrella, several agencies and charities have been brought together to help homeless ex-Servicemen and women in London. It is hoped the project will eventually extend nationwide.

Homeless people, according to Tom Howat, late of the Adjutant General's Corps and who now heads the homeless programme run by the Training for Life charity, include those living in hostels, temporary accommodation, B&Bs and on the street.



Action: Tom Howat

Training for Life has joined forces with Business Action on Homelessness (BAH), which runs work experience programmes. Funding is provided by the MoD, the Homeless Directorate, Rolls Royce and British Aerospace. Other partners include the Sir Oswald Stall Foundation, SSAFA Forces Help, the Royal British Legion, Coutts Consultancy, Combat Stress, the Ex-Service Action Group on Homelessness, Homebase, and the Regular Forces Employment Agency.

"Our clients have low self-esteem and

lack motivation," said Tom, who spent 20 years in the Army. "I was already running a three-week course that included putting them into a hostel and finding out their problems. That was combined with an activity week designed to get people to achieve something, often for the first time in years.

"We developed an action plan, CVs and looked at training opportunities along with rehab for those with drug or alcohol problems. The ultimate strategy was to move them on into work."

In 2001, Training for Life and BAH put together a work-experience programme for 12 people. Project Compass was born and turned its attention to ex-Service personnel.

Three years ago a quarter of London's homeless were reckoned to be ex-Services, said former Royal Navy officer Patrick Todd, manager of Project Compass. Thanks to a number of initiatives that has dropped to about ten per cent.

"We aimed to identify 30 ex-Service people and lead at least half of them towards paid employment. We aim to produce a template to be adapted on a national basis.

"For many years the problem with the number of ex-Service homeless people was brushed under the carpet," said Patrick. "With the development of the MoD Veterans Agency there has been a change in thinking in all sorts of areas.

"There is a great ignorance about what it is like to be on the street and the needs of those individuals. If you move them to a home, you have ripped them out of their environment. They have their own security living rough and to move them can do more harm than good.

Fighting back: Ex-Servicemen Eric Collymore, left, and Paul Preston



Manager: Patrick Todd

"It is not a matter of grabbing them and ramming them into a job. There is a process that has to be gone through. It is important to help someone rediscover his or her own self-esteem. They have to want to do it."

Why are ex-Servicemen apparently so vulnerable? Some leave because they don't make the grade, or because they have been medically discharged, or because their services are no longer required.

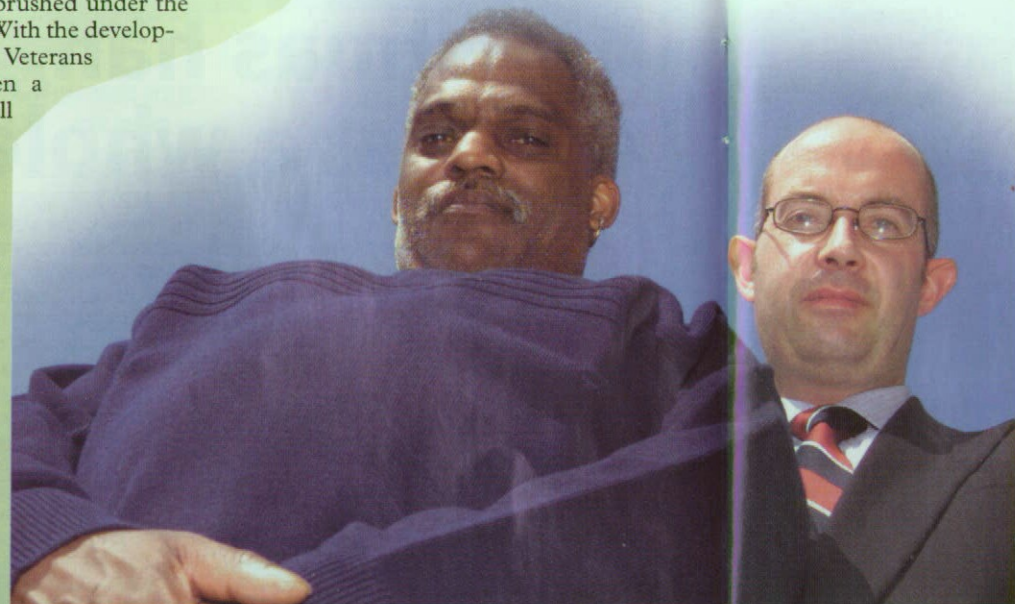
Some come from broken homes so had nowhere to return.

Another reason is post-traumatic stress, which can affect an individual years after the event. "In one London hostel nine out of 42 people are clients of Combat Stress," said Patrick.

It is also a fact that the Service environment can remove an element of independence, so that individuals may become ill-equipped to face the world.

Today's forces are closer to society, he

For many years the problem with the number of ex-Service homeless people was brushed under the carpet



added, so the problem was generally reducing. "The MoD has not sat idly by. It has been looking at how to prevent these people appearing in the future. It set up Spaces [Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the Ex-Services] in Catterick.

"It has been a great success, with more than 800 people passing through its books. It has a hostel in Richmond in Yorkshire with 11 mini-flatlets. A similar scheme is planned for Aldershot."

There is a real determination to make sure former Service personnel down on their luck do not end up living rough on Britain's streets.

■ Spaces: 01748 833797
■ Training for Life: 020 7828 1705
■ Business Action on Homelessness: 0870 600 2482

Drink and drugs destroyed me

... but Project Compass is helping me fight back

PAUL Preston, an alcoholic, heard about the Project Compass initiative while in rehab in Camberwell.

"Towards the end of my service I often turned up late or drunk on duty. When I left I had a series of jobs and was still drinking," he told *Soldier*.

Drugs followed, as did a ten-month prison term for grievous bodily harm, more violence and sleeping rough.

"SSAFA helped me back into a hostel. But I screwed that up too. Drinking took over my life and I was on the street."

Then came Project Compass.

"Now I am in a second stage house

and am about to start an IT course which I hope the RAF will be funding.

"This time last year my battle plan was 'get money, have a drink'. Now I go to the gym, pop into the rehab centre, and attend AA meetings to remind myself where I came from. I have my self-respect back and I have hope."

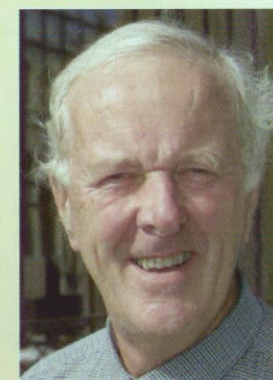
Eric's spiral into debt

ERIC Collymore is instantly likeable. He served in the Royal Artillery and when he left the Army he returned to his parents' home.

In common with his time in the Army, he didn't worry about paying bills – it was done for him. He eventually left home, moving into council accommodation, and finding work as a driver.

"I got myself two credit cards and overspent," he said. "Eventually my outgoings were greater than my income. My bank account was frozen so I couldn't pay the rent and the council took my house from me."

Eric started living in night shelters. He had



Life training: Chris Dick

no home, lost his job and spent his days walking the streets. Project Compass helped him find a hostel place in Limehouse.

"I had myself declared bankrupt and signed up for the Project Compass course. Now I have a bid in with Haig Homes and hope to get permanent accommodation."

Eric is looking at full-time courses and hopes to rebuild his life.

Achilles heel

Chris Dick, Training for Life's assistant director, described accommodation as the Achilles heel of Service personnel.

"If you are disabled or in difficulties you can go to the top of council house waiting lists. For an ex-Serviceman who has nothing dramatically wrong with him, it is very difficult for us to find accommodation.

"If he gets a job but lives in a hostel he will have to move on – but where to? If every London housing association would offer one of their units a year for a single ex-Serviceman, the problem would be cracked. Right now, if you are single, under 50 and employed, you have had it. It is a tragedy."



Three years ago a quarter of London's homeless were reckoned to be ex-Services. Thanks to a number of initiatives that has dropped to about ten per cent

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THE NEW 2004 FREELANDER SPORT



Army's NAVY

Seagoing sailors demonstrate their beach-landing prowess

Pictures: Steve Dock

TROOPS from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC, based at Marchwood in Southampton Water, put on a demonstration of their beach-landing capabilities at Browndown, Gosport.

Using a variety of boats and equipment, the seagoing loggies off-loaded vehicles and supplies onto the Solent beach-head. During the recent conflict in Iraq, soldiers from the regiment took over the badly-damaged southern port of Umm Qasr to deliver everything from ammunition to humanitarian aid.

The unit is fully equipped to run a modern port operation, or land materiel directly onto an unprepared beach if necessary.

The Browndown demonstration, enacted in front of an audience of high-ranking officers, represented a "worst-case scenario", according to 2ic Maj Lyndon Robinson.

Divers surveyed the beach before a patrol secured the area. Trackways were laid to prevent vehicles bogging down in the sand and, finally, trucks, cranes and even a small train were unloaded.



Top: A Land Rover about to beach from a landing craft vehicle and personnel (LCVP)
Above: The RT240 plant vehicle, used to offload ISO containers



Left: Stores are taken off the RFA Sir Percivale and moved ashore on a Mexiflote



Left: The Mexiflote makes its way to the beach to deliver a RT240 plant vehicle
Right: A CASE heavy plant vehicle lays metal decking across the beach



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"There was a quick 'Ho ho ... blooming heck!' and then it disappeared from the radar screen."



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... and a safe Christmas, wherever you may be serving



"Hurry up with those conversions, Hassan ... there's another patrol coming down the street."



"There are lots of goodies in there, son ... but no matter how hard you look, a return to ticket to Brize isn't one of 'em."



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"Keep waving, Osama ... they might still fall for it."

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Alderney's big **BANG**

Ludgershall-based divers put to the test in Channel Island harbour

Report: Karen Moseley
Pictures: Terry Champion

SIX divers from 26 Engineer Regiment based in Ludgershall made their presence felt on the tiny Channel Island of Alderney while combining training with some useful work.

They set off two huge explosions to shatter a large rock lying on the bed of the harbour, helping the harbourmaster by clearing a mooring area of obstacles and correcting massive concrete sinkers that hold buoys in place.

A 5kg charge of plastic explosive was attached to the rock and detonated by means of a string of cordite floated down from a plastic bread basket on the surface.

"Once it was burning you could see from their body language that it was alight," said supervisor Maj Bob "Bubbles" McConnachie.

Maj McConnachie said Alderney offered the perfect opportunity to practise skills. "If you treat this as a newly-cap-

tured harbour you would have the divers clearing booby traps and removing wrecks and obstacles to clear the way for ship-to-shore fuel and water.

"These are skills we should practise a lot more but it is becoming increasingly difficult with the restrictions around the United Kingdom."

The men – there are as yet no female Royal Engineer divers – knew that every move they made in and on the water was being scrutinised. The exercise doubled as their annual diving inspection, with two assessors from Fleet Diving Headquarters on hand to watch technique, safety procedures, teamwork and use of equipment.

Capt Pete Trussler, Inspector of Diving (Army), is responsible for the annual inspection of every diver in the Army. His assessment lasts a minimum of two days and includes a night dive.

"Most military diving is done in nil or poor visibility," he said. "Unlike sport diving, you are making yourself purposefully very heavy as you can't afford to be floating around as you need both hands

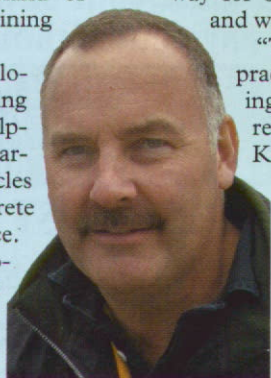


Making waves: RE divers use explosive to shatter a massive rock obstructing anchorages in historic Alderney Harbour

for the job. They don't need to worry about visibility as they do everything by touch – their hands become their eyes."

SSgt Chris Davidson said: "What we are doing here is taking our combat role to an underwater environment."

Sapper divers are used for many tasks, including recovering bodies, underwater demolitions, searches, and recovery of lost stores and buoyancy lifts. The last task was demonstrated in Alderney harbour when air balloons were inflated to lift concrete sinkers into position.



Capt Pete Trussler:
Inspector of Diving



SSgt John Hurst refurbishes the grave of 22-year-old Spr George Onions, who was killed while clearing mines on Alderney at the end of the Second World War.

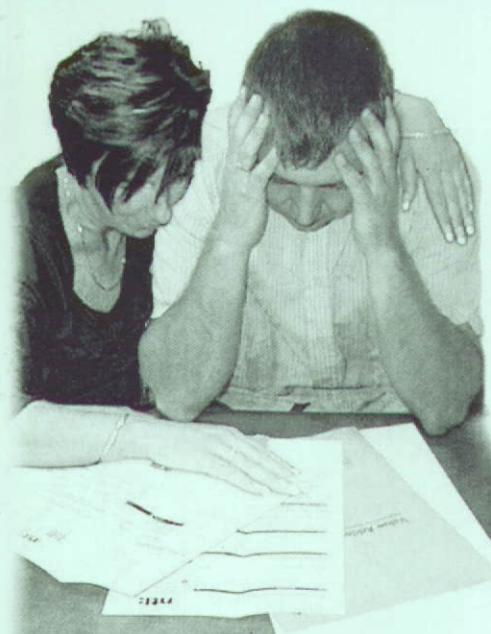
He was serving with 2 Platoon, 259 Field Company when he died in 1945. The diving team also cleaned the graves of two other Royal Engineers found in the same churchyard.



Safety check: Maj Bob McConnachie, left, and SSgt Chris Davidson of 26 Engr Regt

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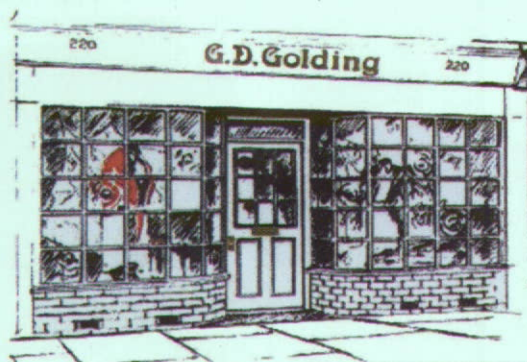
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INTRODUCING Stubby K

Tank crews due to get smaller, carbine version of the SA80

ROYAL Armoured Corps crews are to get a smaller version of the SA80 A2 so that they can get it in and out of their tanks more easily, **writes Ray Routledge.**

After rigorous testing at the Armoured Trials and Development Unit at Bovington, Dorset, 1,412 carbine versions of the SA80 A2 are to be purchased for the Royal Armoured Corps.

Known for the moment as the SA80 K, the carbine was developed because tank crews had difficulty it getting the standard issue rifle in and out of the confined space in their tanks.

From the trigger guard back, the carbine is the standard SA80 A2 but it is at the front end that the difference is noticeable. Six inches have been shaved off the barrel and a pistol grip added.

Staff Cpl John Pass of the Blues and Royals, the trials troop leader at Bovington, pointed out other changes. "The gas parts have been modified

and unlike the rifle, there is no alternative gas setting."

Another obvious feature is the K's forward pistol grip and a Picatinny rail used by many European armies for mounting sights, grenade launchers and aimers.

The carbine will be fitted with a standard sight.

Firing is the same as the regular rifle in both repeat and automatic modes although, unlike its big brother, each K user will get two smaller magazines of 20 rounds and two of 30 rounds instead of the usual four of 30.

Because of its shorter barrel the carbine loses some range, although hits were achieved at 600m during trials.

"This is essentially a short-range weapon effective at 150 to 200m," SCpl Pass said.

Interest in the weapon has been shown by the RAMC, RLC and RE



Small arms: Staff Cpl John Pass shows off the new K carbine, also pictured below

Pictures: Steve Dock

Battlefield mission trials were held jointly with the Infantry Trials and Development Unit in temperature extremes, ranging from the winter cold of Quebec to hot and humid conditions in Brunei and Arizona.

"Typically we put through about 3,000 live rounds per mission and in Arizona it achieved 95 per cent reliability despite having been buried in sand and left to bake in the sun."

The RAC hopes to have the first Ks in service from October next year.

"The reconnaissance regiments are not getting them although all the tank regiments are," said SCpl Pass. "Some regiments will taking on two per tank, others four depending on their operational readiness cycle."

The Royal Army Medical Corps, the Royal Logistic Corps and the Royal Engineers have shown interest in the K.



No snags with new combat waistcoat

TANK crews will be setting new standards in sartorial elegance with the introduction of a combat survival waistcoat.

Designed by Capt Paddy Rhodes, 9/12L, then a WO1 at ATDU, it will replace the cumbersome standard issue webbing, which snags on just about everything inside a tank.

Lt Col Nigel Stafford, 9/12L, commanding the ATDU, said the waistcoat provided what was needed by armoured vehicle crews in one item.

"Everything is there," he said. "Your weapon and ammunition, food and

water, body armour and essential kit. If you are wearing that one piece of equipment you have everything you need to survive for 24 hours."

SCpl John Pass said the new jacket incorporated spaces for personal items such as a torch and included an integral CamelBak hydration system with external mouthpiece and tap.

"The left side includes an interchangeable pouch depending on what weapon the wearer is carrying," said SCpl Pass. "An SA80 user has a rifle pouch to store ammunition magazines. A hand gun user has a pistol pouch to

house both weapon and magazines."

On the right side there is a large pocket for survival kit or rations and more ammunition pockets.

A zip-fastened anti-snap flap will make entry and exit from armoured vehicles much easier. Provision for armoured plates is under review.

The waistcoats went into service earlier this year and are currently being rolled out.



Experience counts

Officers from ranks have to negotiate new RMAS course

Report: Ray Routledge
Pictures: Steve Dock

SANDHURST, long regarded as the spiritual home of the British Army officer, can now lay a positive claim to that distinction with the introduction of a new course.



Maj Lee Drakeley

That's according to Col Tim Weeks, late LI, training colonel at the Royal Military Academy, who said the Late Entry Officers' Course, which started this autumn, represented a significant milestone.

"For the first time every officer in the British Army – Territorial Army, LE and Regular – will have passed through the classrooms and training grounds of the world's premier military academy."

The four-week course is the result of a ten-year series of studies, which concluded that

since LE officers were being given increasingly wider employment opportunities, there was a need for a common education course immediately after they had commissioned.

It is now mandatory for all LE officers.

Maj Lee Drakeley, Para, chief instructor on the course, said: "LE officers have reached their 22-year point, with most finishing as a regimental or battalion RSM. They have huge combined experience. We try to harness that knowledge."

On any LE course there will typically be anything up to 900 years of solid military know-how among the students.

With LE officers moving from regimental sergeant major to captain literally overnight, they have, until now, been expected to get on with it.

Because of the type of people they are, most have done just that. But the Review of Officers' Career Courses study identified that some LE officers were not as well prepared as they could be. With the Army placing more demands on its officers and a widening of opportunities for LE officers, there was a need for the new course.

"Traditionally, LE officers followed a particular career route, from motor transport officer to quartermaster to officer commanding HQ Company or welfare



Capt Mel McCorry

officer. But given their huge experience we are now being more flexible," said Maj Drakeley.

The course focuses on bringing out skills acquired over 20 years' service. "It is also to assist them in the transition from senior NCO to officer."

With 40 students to a course and eight courses a year, 320 LE officers will be passing through the Royal Military Academy every 12 months.

"One of the benefits of locating the course at RMAS is that we cross-fertilise. The LE officers discover that for the year the cadets are here they are not wrapped in cotton wool, but are put through their paces with a tough syllabus."

"They work hard, intellectually and physically. Conversely, the officer cadets see what an LE officer is and gain an appreciation of the vast experience they have at their fingertips."

The four-week course is based around ten training objectives and includes core skills, professional knowledge and the opportunity to put theory into practice. Lecturers lead the students in discussion groups which examine defence, international affairs and war studies.



Lt Ram Pun



Homework: Capt Paul Williams, 3 (UK) Division's families' officer, prepares his brief during an exercise at Sandhurst

'In the past I learned how to do things – now I am learning why'

WHEN *Soldier* visited the course, Late Entry officers were about to embark on a tactical exercise without troops.

Capt Mel McCorry, formerly a WO1 with 21 Signal Regiment, now has a communications job at HQ Defence Communication Services Agency, Corsham.

"I have served for 18 years," he said. "The course is giving me more professional development, management and leadership skills."

"It includes, for example, health and safety at work and why we do what we do. It looks at the wider world through national and international affairs and our role in it, and why we are sent away to do the various tasks and how we fit in with British foreign policy."

"Traditionally LE officers did welfare or families' officers' jobs. I think that will change now. We will be more widely employable when it comes to staff jobs in an HQ."

Lt Ram Pun, a Queen's Gurkha Officer with more than 20 years' service, said: "This course helped me see a wider picture, and has given me a lot of extra knowledge in terms of the whole Army and how it works."

"In the past I learned how to do things – now I am learning why."

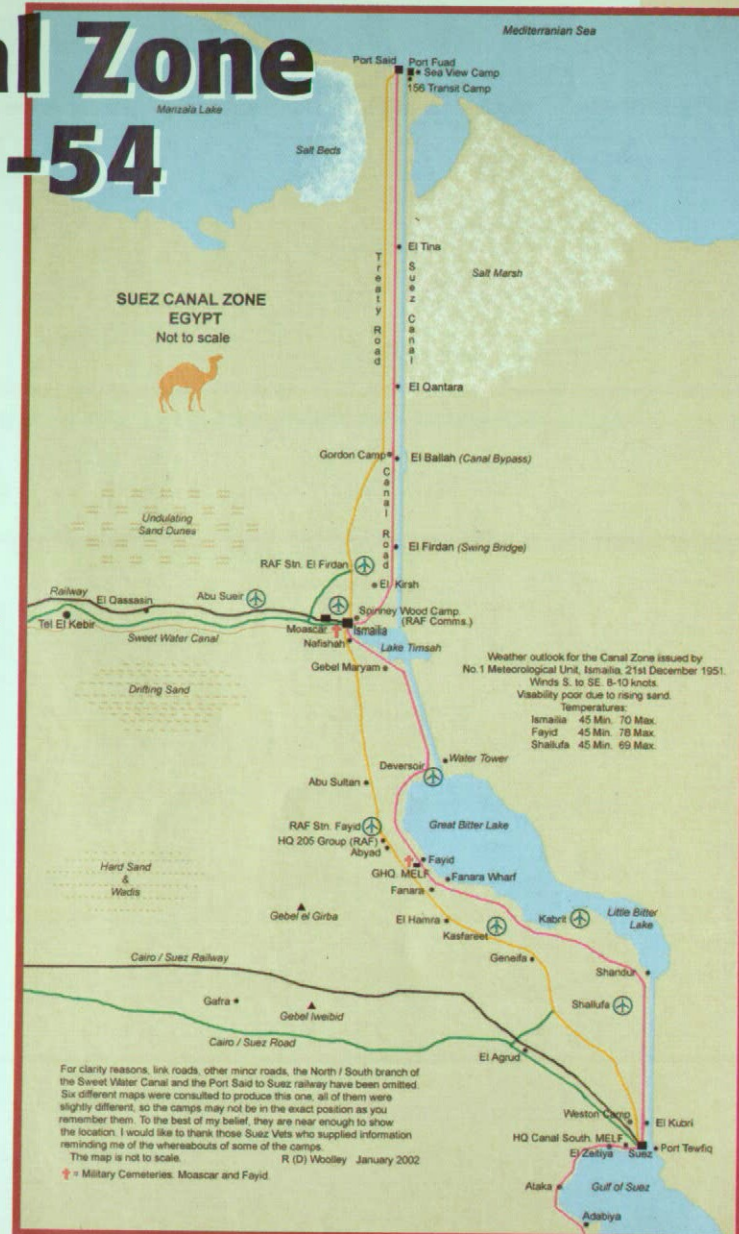
Canal Zone 1951-54

A NUMBER of Suez veterans have asked us to print the precise geographical boundaries being used by the Army Medal Office to determine eligibility for the new Canal Zone clasp.

They are reproduced below, along with a map of the area designed by Dick Woolley.

Applications for the clasp, and the General Service Medal 1918-1962 for those who never received it, should be sent to the Army Medal Office, Government Buildings, Worcester Road, Droitwich WR9 8AU, together with full name, date of birth and Service details such as number, unit on discharge and dates in theatre.

The map is displayed on Dick Woolley's Britain's Small Wars 1945-2001 website, which can be found at <http://britains-smallwars.com>



Geographical boundaries of the Suez Canal Zone

North: The northern boundary of the area is the Mediterranean coast at Port Said between 32° 20' E.

West: This follows the urban boundary of Port Said, then southwards to El-Tina, forming a narrow corridor along the western Canal bank. This corridor is approximately one mile wide at most points but incorporates the "Treaty" and "Canal" roads and all camps along these routes.

The boundary then follows the "Erskine Line", running directly west from El Tina to the Bar el Baqar drain and then SW along this drain and the drain diversion to the edge of the cultivated area of the Nile Delta (near Faqus), continuing as far as El Tawila. From there it runs south to El Abbasa between El Qurein

and El Isdya. From El Abbasa the boundary runs south by east to El Ribiqli then due south to the 30th parallel.

South: The southern boundary runs east along the 30th parallel to the edge of the Gebel Ataka and along the line of the escarpment to Ras Umm Mughera. It then follows the coastline northward through Ras el Adabya and Suez to Port Taufiq.

East: From Port Taufiq the boundary follows the line of the eastern bank of the Canal to the urban boundary of the Port Fouad on the Mediterranean coast. This boundary incorporates installations along the east bank, including the Marine quarantine station near Port Taufiq and the transit camp at Port Fouad.

Eye of the eagle

Air assault brigade troops sharpen up their rapid deployment skills on, and above, home soil

Pictures: Steve Dock

NEARLY 2,500 troops from 16 Air Assault Brigade took part in a major exercise across Southern England as part of the formation's ongoing development.

Exercise Eagle's Eye took in Keevil Airfield and the Salisbury Plain Training Area in Wiltshire, the Air Mounting Centre at South Cerney in Gloucestershire, Kemble Airfield on the Gloucestershire-Wiltshire border, and RAF Lyneham in Wiltshire.

Several hundred vehicles, 16 of them tracked, were deployed in the field as Lynx and Gazelle helicopters from 4 Regiment AAC flew with Chinook, Puma and Merlin helicopters from 18 and 33 Squadrons of the Royal Air Force.

Lyneham supported the exercise with 12 C130 Hercules aircraft and fast jets joined the party during daylight hours.

The large-scale exercise allowed the Brigade to rehearse its procedures for massed parachute operations and rapid deployment to a hostile area.



Action stations (above): Pte Anthony Carr, left, and Pte George McGinney of Support Company, 3 Para Mortars prepare their 81mm mortar for action

High mobility (top right): An RAF Chinook arrives at Keevil Airfield with an underslung Pinzgauer and trailer

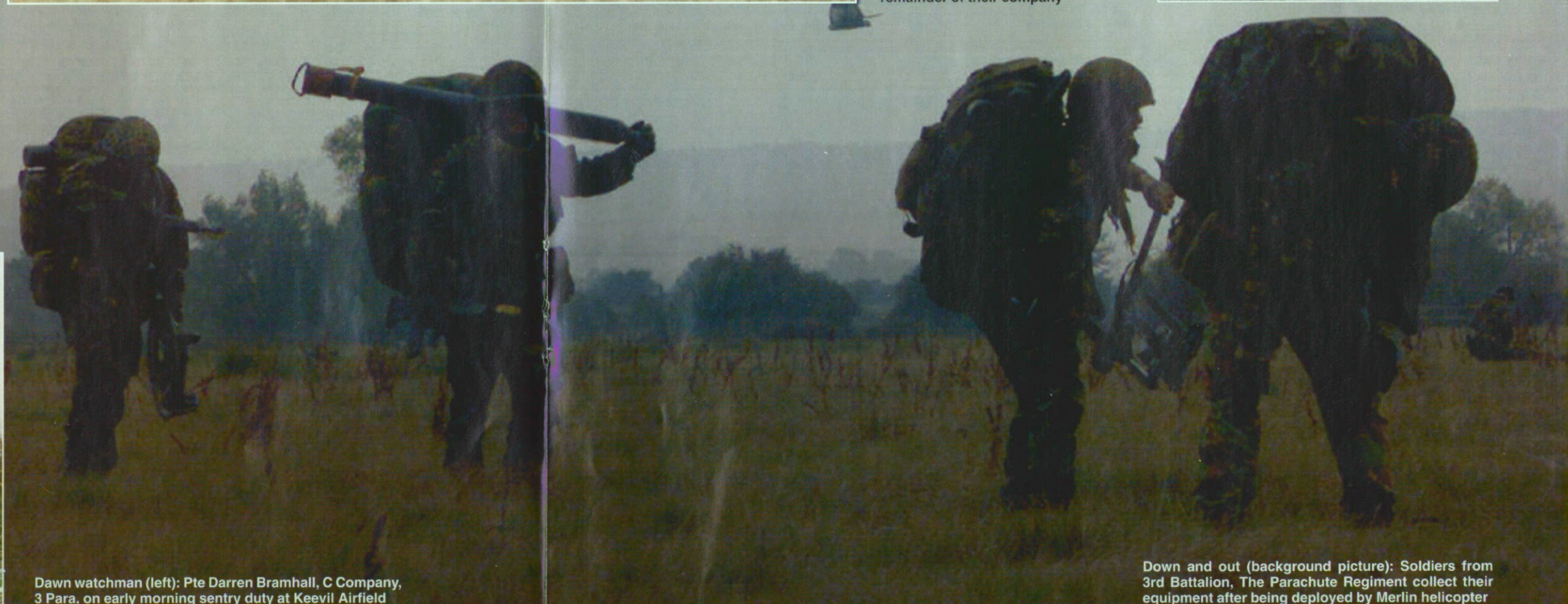
Lying low (left): A member of 3 Para's intelligence cell keeps watch as a Hercules C130 takes off on another sortie

On the move (right): Paratroopers leave the drop zone to rendezvous with the remainder of their company



Dawn watchman (left): Pte Darren Bramhall, C Company, 3 Para, on early morning sentry duty at Keevil Airfield

Down and out (background picture): Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment collect their equipment after being deployed by Merlin helicopter



Another helping of M*A*S*H

Legendary producer and screenwriter has worked with comedy greats but is best known for his work with a certain fictional field hospital in Korea

Interview: Ray Routledge

SCROLL down a credit list of the great names of 20th century American TV and film comedy and the chances are Larry Gelbart has worked with the best of them.

Bob Hope, Mel Brooks, Neil Simon and Woody Allen are among them.

He has written for radio, stage, film and television, but it is his association with arguably the finest of its genre – *MASH* that has earned Gelbart the respect of the world of television comedy.

Alan Alda on Larry Gelbart:

"If something in the script didn't seem to work, Larry would ride over to the stage from his office on a bicycle. He would listen to the problem and then he would do this strange thing.

"He'd stand with his face against the wall and in about 30 seconds a piece of dialogue would come to him. He claimed there was a little old man who actually wrote his stuff and this was how he communicated with him.

"After Larry left *MASH* we missed him, especially those of us who wrote for the show. But the fact is, no matter how long you stand facing the wall, the little old man prefers talking to Larry."

his son was until one of them, a comedian named Danny Thomas, challenged him to prove it.

Larry, still a schoolboy, started writing

jokes for Danny for his *Maxwell House Coffee Time* radio show – and his career had started.

Another strand in the *MASH* genesis was added when, at the age of 18, Larry had to enlist in the US Army.

"I was drafted in 1946 and assigned to an outfit called the Armed Forces Radio Service in Los Angeles," he told *Soldier*. "I was one of the writers of a radio show called *Command Performance*. It featured well-known movie and radio personalities before a live audience. The shows were recorded and distributed to US Service people around the world."

Back in civvy street, Larry joined Bob Hope's team of writers and became involved with his famous overseas tours to entertain troops.

"I was more influenced by going to work for Bob Hope and seeing Service people in action during the Berlin Airlift and the Korean police action than by my own time in the Army."

Larry also worked with Danny Kaye and Sid Caesar, both international stars in the 1950s. "Working with Hope and Caesar was hard work but fun. There were long hours and lots of pressure, but I sure miss those days" he said.

For the next ten years he wrote for, among others, crooner Pat Boone, Red Buttons and Art Carney and alongside Mel Brooks and Woody Allen.

In 1962 Larry's comedy hit *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*, with music by Stephen Sondheim, opened on Broadway and scooped six Tony awards.

Feature films soon followed, including screenplays for *The Notorious Landlady*, starring Jack Lemmon, and *The Thrill Of It All*, with James Garner and Doris Day.

Larry moved to London in 1963 for

'I was more influenced by going to work for Bob Hope and seeing Service people in action during the Berlin Airlift, the Korean police action than by my own time in the Army'

several years before returning to the USA and *MASH*, on which he was to be involved with 97 episodes over four years.

"It all came about after William Self, head of Fox TV in pre-Murdoch times, sold the idea of a series based on the successful feature film," explained Larry. "I

was invited to write the pilot episode by Gene Reynolds, who was the contract producer at Fox TV."

And so a legend of small-screen comedy was born. The series was packed with lovable (and not-so-lovable) characters who were to become household names around the world. Hawkeye Pierce, Trapper John McIntyre, Hot Lips Houlihan, Col Blake, Radar O'Reilly and the weasel-like Frank Burns, played by the late Larry Linville.

"I guess I identified most with Hawkeye, making him a surrogate and highly idealised version of me," said Larry. "On balance I'd say there is a little of me in

every character – both the noble and the foolish."

Groucho Marx's influence on the young Larry can be seen in the *MASH* scripts, especially with Hawkeye.

"It was a great source of pride to me to learn from Groucho how much he loved *MASH*. But Alan Alda, who played Hawkeye, was never very pleased when I told him how much like Groucho he sounded in delivering a certain kind of line. Understandably, he wanted credit as an actor, not a mimic."

Larry eventually left the *MASH* team in

1976. "It was fun to work on. It was also hell and everything in between."

He returned to Broadway with an adaptation of Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, called *Sly Fox* and starring George C Scott. He picked up an Academy Award nomination the following year for *Oh, God*, fea-

turing George Burns and John Denver.

Things did not always go so well. In 1980 he worked on *Rough Cut* but was so disappointed with the final version that he credited himself as

"Francis Burns", presumably a reference to the unloved Frank Burns from *MASH*.

The stage musical *City of Angels* gained him another Tony, followed by an Academy Award nomination for *Tootsie*, starring Dustin Hoffman.

More recently he penned drafts for the movie smash-hit *Chicago*, and *Bedazzled* featuring Liz Hurley.

Looking back on more than 50 years in the business, Larry picked out some of his favourite writers and actors.

"I loved working with Alan Alda, Larry Linville, Gary (Radar O'Reilly) Burghoff, George C Scott, Art Carney and Michael Caine," he said.

"My favourite co-writers were Titus Maccius Plautus, whose work inspired *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, and Ben Jonson (*Volpone*) who were both dead when I adapted their work – and so were their lawyers."

And if he could go back to the start of his career, would he do *MASH* again?

"Absolutely," he said with a grin. "Only slower."

Groucho Marx's influence on the young Larry can be seen in the *MASH* scripts, especially Hawkeye

Win second series on CD

WE have five of the recently released *MASH* Season 2 DVD boxed sets to give away. Available at £29.99, each features 24 episodes. That adds up to a total of ten hours of comedy at the MASH 4077 Field Hospital.

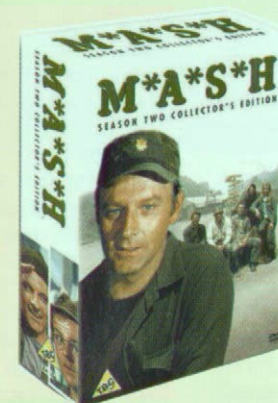
For your chance to win one of the DVD boxed sets, tell us on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope which character replaced Trapper John McIntyre when he left the series?

a) Col Sherman Potter

b) Capt B J Hunnicut
c) Capt Charles Emerson Winchester

Send your answers to *MASH* Series 2 competition, *Soldier*, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2DU.

Winners will be drawn at random from the correct answers received by January 5.



Crazy gang: Alan Alda, third from left, and the rest of the *MASH* cast pose on set

Boxing's Maine man

Ricky 'Hitman' Hatton reflects on the fight he's glad he never had...

Interview: Andy Simms
Pictures: Graeme Main

MANCHESTER fight sensation Ricky Hatton is not accustomed to the concept of ducking opponents.

Since turning professional in September 1997, the 24-year-old star of British boxing has fought and beaten some of the toughest fighters in his weight division, at home and abroad, and boasts an unblemished record of 32 wins from 32 fights, 24 by virtue of knockout.

However, the reigning and undefeated WBU light-welterweight champion of the world, known as the "Hitman" for a ruthless attacking style that centres on a lethal body punch, concedes that there is one group of fighters he is happy never to have traded blows with.

"I remember from my days as an amateur that the British Army always had one of the best boxing teams in the country," explained Hatton, who recently collected the British Boxing Board of Control's boxer of the year award. "Each year the ABA finals would come round and each year the Army team would be there.

"There was never just one soldier in the finals, but a whole crowd of them who had qualified.

"You need a lot of discipline to be a good

boxer and you can not get more disciplined than the guys in the Army, and I guess that was, and still is, what sets them apart.

"All the soldiers were 100 per cent fit and most boxers knew that, even if they boxed really well and perhaps had a bit more talent than the Army lad, they'd be in for a tough fight.

"In boxing, heart and fitness alone can win a fight and all of the soldiers seemed to have loads of both. That's clearly just the way the Army is - they train them hard. I must have been quite fortunate as an amateur because, I am happy to say, I was never drawn against an Army lad."

In truth, the fortune undoubtedly favoured the soldiers spared the smart of the leather gloves of a boxer who won his first national title at the age of 13, boxed for England at 15 and signed a professional contract within weeks of his 18th birthday.

Born and raised on the outskirts of Manchester on the Hattersley Council Estate, which gained notoriety as the one-time home of Moors Murderers Ian Brady and Myra Hindley, Hatton showed signs of sporting prowess from an early

age. However, it was the beautiful game and not the noble art that looked to be his most likely ticket to fame and fortune.

"I'm not really sure where I get my boxing genes from," mused Hatton, whose explosive fighting style mirrors that of his ring idol Roberto Duran. "I come from a footballing family and before me no one in the Hatton family had boxed.

"My dad used to play for Manchester City reserves under Joe Mercer and Malcolm Allison, and my grandad used to play for City's B team just before the Second World War.

"Everyone assumed that I was going to follow in their footsteps, especially as I won a place at Manchester City's school of excellence at 12," he said. "Unfortunately I

was already boxing by then and was out almost every night of the week at different shows."

Boxing commitments inevitably took their toll on the ardent City fan's footballing career and, although impressed with what little they had seen of him, the Maine Road club decided to release Hatton junior at the age of 15.

"I was told that City would keep an eye on me, but them letting me go made my mind up for me as to which sport to pursue," he said. "My parents supported my decision to concentrate on boxing when really, deep down, I think they were a bit gutted that I didn't stick at the football.

"I'm sure they would have liked to have seen me kicking a football about rather than getting punched for a living, but thankfully they supported me as parents do and the way things have gone I'm sure they are very proud of me.

"Although it is clear looking back now that my real talent is in the ring, I often wonder whether I could now be playing for City's first team if I'd taken it all a bit more seriously," he said. "I was only very young and I still had a long way to go, but Jim and Jeff Whitley were in the same intake of players as me and they have both gone on to become pros."

Despite turning his back on a possible career at Manchester City's new home, the "Blue Camp", Hatton still went on to experience what it feels like to hear his name chanted by thousands of adoring fans.

'You can not get more disciplined than the guys in the Army and I guess that was, and still is, what sets them apart'

'Hearing 20,000 people singing your name is worth all the sweat, effort and personal sacrifices'

After winning an ABA light-welterweight title, and with a shot at winning Olympic gold in Sydney still three years away, Hatton signed for premier promoter Frank Warren in 1997 and, under the tutelage of ring-wise coach Billy Graham, burst on to boxing's professional scene in dramatic fashion.

His special qualities were underlined when he travelled to the Mecca of boxing, Madison Square Gardens in New York, for only his second pro bout and defeated home favourite Robert Alvarez. It was an experience that Hatton still rates as one of the best of his career.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that I would get to fight on such a big stage so soon in my career," he said. "There are so many world champions that have not boxed at Madison Square Gardens and yet there was me, 18 years of age and only in my second fight.

"If I had not had another fight from that moment on I would still have had something very special to tell the grandchildren."

Hatton began his belt collection soon after, beating previously undefeated scouser Tommy Peacock in two to claim the vacant Central Area title and stopping Guyana's Dillon Carew for the WBO Intercontinental crown.

He cemented his worldwide reputation in March 2001 when he knocked out Canadian champion Tony Pep to win the vacant WBU world title at Wembley Conference Centre. Despite having an eight-inch reach advantage, Pep, who had previously gone the distance with unbeaten WBC champion Floyd Mayweather,

was put to the canvas three times by the young Brit's ferocious body punches.

"From day one I set out to become a world champion and, even though I always had the self-belief and confidence, it was a truly amazing experience when it finally happened," he said. "Things changed overnight for me when I won that title; it was very strange.

"People who had never bothered with me before began stopping me in the street and asking for my autograph. But being a world champ and having the money and trappings that go with it has not changed me.

"I still live just down the road from where I was born, I'm still at home with my mum and dad, and I still have the same group of mates.

"Having good friends and family around has helped to keep me grounded."

As *Soldier* went to press, Hatton was preparing to make the eleventh defence of his crown against Ben Tackie at the MEN Arena in Manchester on December 13.

Having lost just four fights in 24 and with 15 knockouts to his name, the 30-year-old Ghanaian represents another formidable opponent for Hatton, who insists that he will go one better than Sharmba Mitchell and Kosta Tyszu, who have both been taken the distance by Tackie.

"Obviously I would like to keep one

step ahead of my rivals and knock him out. I'm a knockout fighter and I'll be looking for it," said Hatton, who is relishing the opportunity of fighting on home territory for the twelfth occasion.

"Topping the bill in Manchester and bringing in the same crowds as the likes of Benn, Eubank and Hamed once did is fantastic.

"My fans know that I still live and train in Manchester and so there is always that little bit of an extra buzz when I fight there," he said. "Boxing can be a hard and lonely sport, but the feeling you get when you walk into the ring with 20,000 people singing your name is worth all the sweat, effort and personal sacrifices."

Hatton knows that, if he comes through the contest with another victory to his name, next year could be the biggest of his career as potential showdowns with the world's best 140lb fighters and unification bouts beckon.

"My plan is to close 2003 with an unbeaten record and then focus on next year," he said. "I believe that I will get to face and prove myself against the best in the world and then people will really see what Ricky Hatton is capable of."

◆ Tickets for Hatton's showdown with Ben Tackie can be ordered by calling the Sports Network box office on 01992 550888.

The Hitman at work: Undefeated light-welterweight champion Ricky Hatton prepares for the eleventh defence of his WBU crown against Ben Tackie on December 13





Countdown continues

Athens 2004 – Turin 2006



England's golden boy

ENGLAND boxing captain LCpl Tony Davis (1 RRF) sent a warning of intent to his European rivals ahead of next year's Olympic qualifiers by winning gold at the 24th International Tammer Tournament in Tampere, Finland.

Captaining his country for the second time, the 29-year-old light-heavyweight began the world-ranking tournament in explosive form, amassing an unassailable 21-1 lead over Sweden's Micha Tabouga inside three rounds before being drawn against Frenchman John Dovi in the semi-finals.

Despite the pedigree of his opponent – Dovi won gold at the European Championships two years ago and was a silver-medallist at last year's World Championships – Davis, after a tentative opening round, again dominated proceedings, out-pointing the French number one 13-3.

"I have been reading about Dovi in the boxing press for a number of years and never thought for a moment that I would one day face him in the ring," explained the reigning British champion. "The nature of my win in the opening bout meant that nerves were not really an issue

going into the fight and to beat an opponent of Dovi's calibre is a measure of how far I have come."

Full of confidence, Davis then opened up an early four-point lead against Finland's Jani Rauhala in the competition's final, a deficit which proved vital when a clash of heads left the infantryman sporting a deep cut beneath his left eye.

Concerned by the severity of the gash and following the advice of the ringside doctor, the referee called an end to proceedings with more than a minute of the final round remaining, awarding the Englishman the contest.

"Beating Dovi and going on to win gold represents the highlight of my career," he said. "My heart was in my mouth when the referee stopped the contest because I thought I'd lost. It took a few seconds for me to register that in those circumstances the rules favour the boxer ahead on points."

Davis, pictured left, will now be hoping he can emulate his gold run at the European Championships in Croatia early next year, where a medal of any colour will book him a flight to Athens.



International stars shine at Inter-Services

OLYMPIC hopefuls Capt Alex Burt (AGC) and Lt Andy Nicoll (AAC) helped the Army to win the Inter-Services canoe slalom championships for only the second time in the competition's 26-year history.

Captaining the team in Grandtully, Scotland, Burt led by example, taking gold in the men's K1 and winning the Canadian doubles event alongside Capt Pete Francis (AGC).

Nicoll, Burt's Great Britain teammate, cruised to a comfortable victory in the Canadian singles.

A silver in the women's K1 for SSgt Michaela Barwick (APTC) and a string of other top-three finishes gave the Army an overall 56-point lead over defending champions the Royal Air Force.



Helping hand: Great Britain's canoe slalom team, Lt Andy Nicoll, left, and Capt Alex Burt

Fighting chance

ARMY and Inter-Services judo champion Capt Simon Childs (1 RGBW) hopes that his remarkable return to form on the mats in 2003 will be enough to earn him a shot at Olympic qualification early next year.

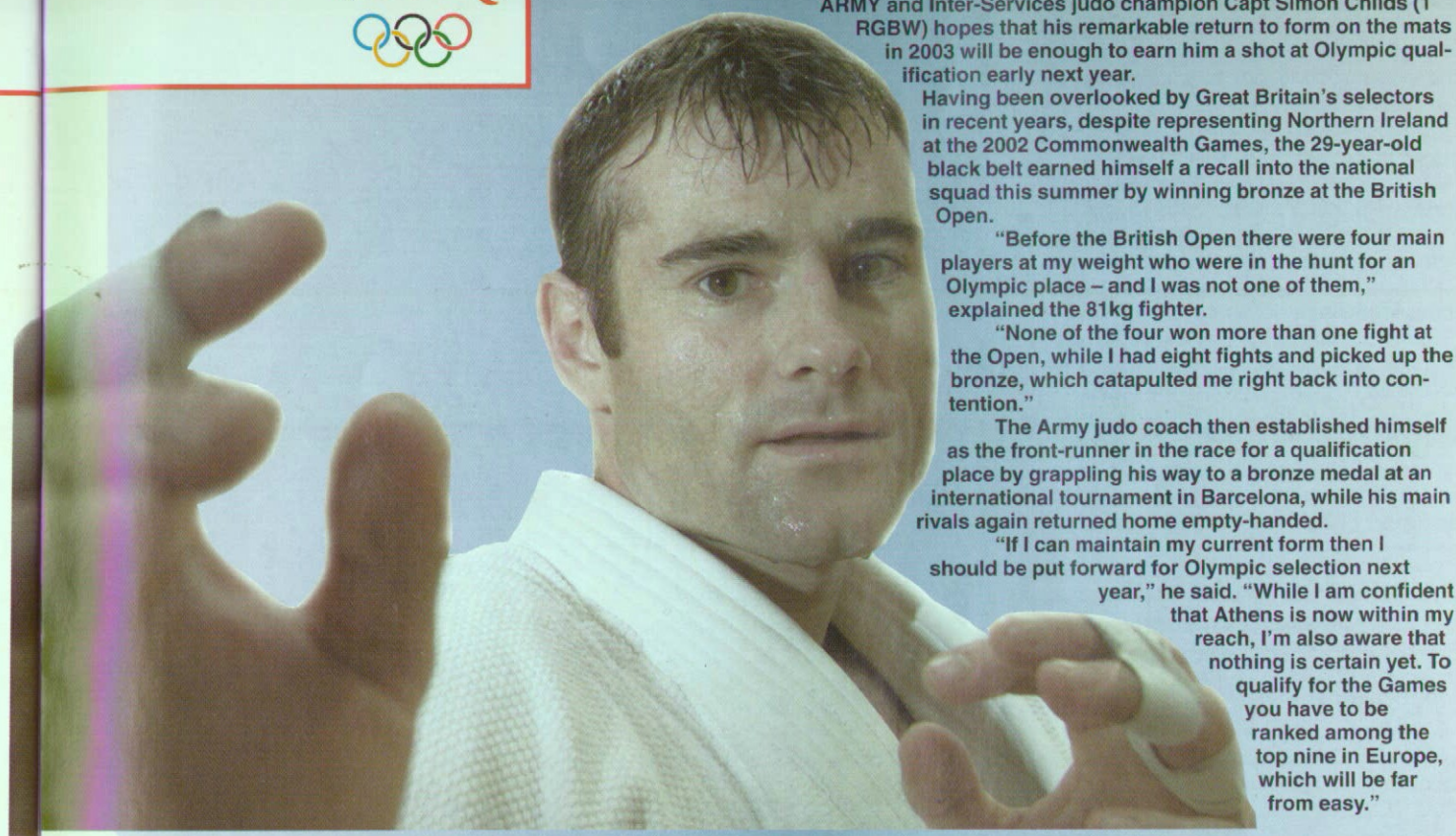
Having been overlooked by Great Britain's selectors in recent years, despite representing Northern Ireland at the 2002 Commonwealth Games, the 29-year-old black belt earned himself a recall into the national squad this summer by winning bronze at the British Open.

"Before the British Open there were four main players at my weight who were in the hunt for an Olympic place – and I was not one of them," explained the 81kg fighter.

"None of the four won more than one fight at the Open, while I had eight fights and picked up the bronze, which catapulted me right back into contention."

The Army judo coach then established himself as the front-runner in the race for a qualification place by grappling his way to a bronze medal at an international tournament in Barcelona, while his main rivals again returned home empty-handed.

"If I can maintain my current form then I should be put forward for Olympic selection next year," he said. "While I am confident that Athens is now within my reach, I'm also aware that nothing is certain yet. To qualify for the Games you have to be ranked among the top nine in Europe, which will be far from easy."



Jackie's powerful ally

BRITISH bobsleigh driver Cpl Jackie Davies (3 UK) Div Sig Regt) has enlisted the help of one of the world's strongest women in an effort to reach the 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Turin, Italy.

Joining Davies on the World Cup circuit this season will be ice sports novice Julie Dunkley, who represented England in the shot putt at last year's Commonwealth Games in Manchester, finishing in seventh. She is currently ranked the fourth strongest woman in the world.

Davies, who as a brakewoman powered Great Britain's number two sled into eleventh place, one ahead of GB 1 team-mates Cheryl Done and Nicola Gautier, in the inaugural women's Olympic bobsleigh event at Salt Lake City last year, believes that the new partnership will prove a medal-winning combination.

"We have been training together for a while and it has been going extremely well," explained Davies. "In this sport it's better to be strong and heavy rather than light as the bobsleigh is a robust object and needs a good, fast getaway."

"Julie obviously has the credentials to help us get off to that good start and I'm looking forward to putting that theory to the test at the British Championships in Winterberg, Germany in January."

"I think that together we have the potential to go all the way to the Olympics."

◆ Anyone interested in sponsoring the pair's quest to qualify for the 2006 Olympics should contact the Army Winter Sports Board on 01252 348582.



Medal-winning formula: Cpl Jackie Davies, left, and Julie Dunkley

SHORTS

Six-ces for Army Lions

PLAYING under the guise of the Lions, a team of Army cricketers came within 14 runs of winning the inaugural Vines International six-a-side tournament in Tangier, Morocco.

Managed by Maj Charlie Clark (RA) and skippered by Maj Adrian Grignon-neau (R Anglian), the soldiers won their group with a fine display of quick-fire cricket before defeating a side featuring former England internationals Norman Cowans and Ed Giddins by two wickets in the semi-finals.

Despite a valiant batting effort in the final against Gloucester Gypsies, a team stuffed with county players, the Lions were left to rue a series of wides and no-balls when they fell tantalisingly short of the target set by their opponents.

♦ **A seven-wicket haul earned Lt Jon Lowe (AAC) the bowler of the tournament award.**

Cyprus competition

ENTRIES for the 20th Akrotiri international floodlit rugby tens tournament, to be held at RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus from May 31 to June 4 2004, are now being taken. Units wishing to take part should complete an application form online at www.arufc.org.uk or contact WO1 Mark Robertson on Cyprus mil 6244. Closing date for applications is January 15.

Master caster

ARMY angler Musn Colin Francis (Hussars and Light Dragoons Band) finished in eighth place at the United Kingdom Surfcasting Federation Masters.

Francis, who was part of the England team that won bronze at the casting world championships in France two years ago, secured his top ten finish with an effort of 231 metres.

Church's big hitter

ARMY scripture reader William Wade (JHQ Church Centre, Rhiendahlen) threw more than 1,500 punches in one hour during a sponsored boxing challenge in aid of the St Francis Special Needs and Portage Trust.

Wade, who has boxed since the age of ten and was an undefeated welterweight while serving with The Royal Irish Rangers, trained for six weeks before his assault on the punchbag and raised more than €500 for the charity which helps children with special needs.

♦ **Anyone who wishes to donate money to the St Francis trust, or simply find out more about what it does, should contact William Wade on mil 94872 2770.**



Bdr Lee Soper, main picture, leads

Baabaas pushed all the way

THE Combined Services-Barbarians Remembrance Day match lived up to expectations, writes **Roger Thompson**.

At the Army Rugby Stadium in Aldershot, the Barbarians dazzled, the Services dug in to repel the onslaught and the crowd of 3,000 was treated to a match where the result clearly mattered.

Nothing "woolly" about this flock of Baabaas...

Fielding seven internationals, the Barbarians shifted the ball with huge ambition and skill. At times mesmerising, their determination to retain possession demonstrated that this was more than an exhibition of high-octane rugby.

Portuguese internationals Luis Pissara (No 9) and Goncalo Malheiro (No 15) were quick and elusive, the latter scoring an excellent try which he converted.

After Dave Pascoe, the Royal Navy scrum-half, landed an early penalty, Canadian international captain Dan Baugh broke the line and cantered 30m to

the posts. When a second try seemed imminent, the home side regrouped and launched a fierce counter-attack to press the Barbarians against their line.

Thereafter the Services gave no ground. The scrums locked horns like rutting stags and both packs rucked fiercely. Peter Taylor, normally of the RAF but this time "cross-dressing" with the Barbarians, was keen to show he owed the Services few favours on the night.

Led into open contact by Scotland international prop Cpl Mattie Stewart (PWRR), the Services successfully bombarded a Barbarians defence too frequently deployed loosely to attack. With hooker Cpl George Kemble (RWF) and former England schoolboy international Cfn Steve Trethewey (REME), he made life uncomfortable for the Baabaas front row. Lock Bdr Lee Soper (7 Para RHA, England Counties), now returned from duty in Iraq, and to his majestic best in

the Combined Services into contact against the Barbarians at Aldershot, and, above, wins clean

the line-out, secured sufficient clean ball off the top for the backs to challenge the Barbarians at the gain line.

With centre Lt Ed Smith (DWR) in belligerent form and winger Cpl Bruno Green (RE) finding top gear with a little

bit of space, what might have been on reputation a procession, was transformed into a vibrant contest. England sevens forward LBdr Andy Dawling (7 Para RHA, No 7) and Fijian international Gdsm Alfred Vakacokovanua (SG, No 8) provided the sort of close formation support that would have done the Red Arrows credit.

Alfred, the Services' man of the match and previously honoured by the Baabaas, plunged into the heart of the Barbarians' defence to generate forward momentum, produced a series of stadium-shuddering tackles and scored the Services' only try.

On the hour either side could have won and when Gnr Gareth Slade-Jones (RA)

arrived as a replacement scrum-half the Services found an extra gear. Slade-Jones, a strong combative runner, sucked in the Barbarians first line of defence, improving the scope for quick hands and flank attacks.

It required three moments of professional acumen from Ben Whetstone (Bedford), Jason Foster (Newport) and Malheiro, and stout defence thereafter, to secure a Barbarians win by 26 points to eight.

On this showing Services rugby remains highly competitive and at the top end of National League One. England sevens international and former Harlequin Capt Howard Graham (AGC (SPS)), working with television sport, said: "Considering the strength of this Barbarians side, the Services stuck to their guns magnificently. They matched the Barbarians in all phases of the game and only three flashes of professional know-how separated the teams at the end."

SHORTS

Flying finish to 2003

AN emphatic win in the final race of the Subaru-sponsored International Flying Fifteen (6m two-crew keelboat) World Championships secured WO2 Brian Campbell-Bottoms (REME) and his teammate Allan Harley first place in the Silver Boat Fleet and runners-up spot in the competition's Classic Division.

More than 100 boats, selected by their national associations, travelled from as far afield as Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and America to race in the high-profile series at Dun Laoghaire, Dublin Bay.

Before his victory in Ireland, Campbell-Bottoms, who was selected for the championships as top silver boat in Great Britain in 2002, had already won the Inland National Silver Championships, the Southern Area Silver Championships and the Silver Travellers Trophy this year.

FIXTURES

Your sporting guide to December...

ATHLETICS: 3-4 Div cross-country championships (Deeput); 10-4 Div cross-country league meeting (Pirbright).

BASKETBALL: 1-5 - Training course (Aldershot); 14 - Founders Cup 1st round: Southampton Bulldogs v Army (Redbridge Comprehensive School).

BOXING: 1 - Western Counties v Army (Bristol); 19 - Scotland v Army (TBC).

CYCLING: 7 - Regional championships (Various); 28 - Macclesfield Super Cross (Macclesfield).

FOOTBALL: 1 - Army v Army Crusaders (Aldershot); 2 - Royal Navy v Army Development (Portsmouth); 5 - REME v AGC (TBC), AMS v AAC (TBC), CA Mus v RE (TBC); 7 - Army v Jersey (Aldershot); 9 - Army v RAF (Aldershot); 12 - Infantry v R Signals (TBC), AMS v RA (TBC), RAC v AGC (TBC), Int Corps v RLC (TBC); 13 - FA County Youth Cup (TBC).

HOCKEY: 7 - Marlborough v Army veterans (Marlborough); 10 - Army U23 v Slough (Uxbridge).

RUGBY LEAGUE: 1 - Challenge Cup 1st round (TBC).

RUGBY UNION: 4-6 - Dubai Sevens tournament (Dubai); 6 - Royal Navy v Army U21 (Portsmouth); 12 - Army women v Police (Aldershot); 13 - Army U21 v Royal Air Force (Aldershot).

TENNIS: 6 - Army women v Frimley (Aldershot); 13 - Army veterans v VCGB (Aldershot).

TUG OF WAR: 7 - National indoor championships (TBC).

WINTER SPORTS: 5-13 - Army novice ice championships (Igls, Austria).

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from
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No 745

How observant are you?

WIN £100!



TEN details have been changed in one of our archive drawings by Frank Finch. Circle the differences in the right-hand image, cut out the whole panel, add your name and address and send it to HOAY 745, Soldier, Ordnance Road, Aldershot,

GU11 2DU by January 5, 2004.

A photocopy is acceptable, but only one entry per person may be submitted.

Do not include anything else in your envelope.

First correct entry drawn after the

closing date will win £100; the second and third will receive £10 gift vouchers. No correspondence of any kind can be entered into.

The names of the winner and runners-up will be announced in the February issue.

Name : (Give initials and rank or title)

Address :

October issue (No 743): First correct entry drawn at random was from Miss G C Barber, EC-CM (IS)/Spt, Ministry of Defence, London, who wins £100. Runners-up Kris Rodinson, of Gainsborough, Lincs and Sgt Steve Burrell, HQ Armd Bde, BFPO 30, receive a £10 gift voucher each. The ten differences were: bottom left-hand corner; No 5's hands, collar and right heel; No 3's hair, shorts and left sock; window, right; top right under board.



Freeze frame

In the camp production of *The Ten Commandments*, the dance troupe had reached the bit where the Red Sea parts for Moses

Write a caption for the photograph, right, published in *Soldier* in February 1952. The best, in the Editor's opinion, will win a prize from our silver logo collection. Usual rules apply, entries to reach us by January 5.



OUR vote from a big entry for the October competition, left, was "What the blue line on the map meant had completely gone from CSgt Bloggs's head" from Sgt Phil Bird, ACIO Strand, London.

There was a variation on the same theme from Andre Chissel, all the way from Auckland, New Zealand.

We also liked "The pay sergeant spent an awful lot of time at the bank" from Arthur W



Charlton of Houghton-le-Spring, Tyne and Wear and "Ah, here we are . . . how to start a Land Rover engine when it is flooded" from W Jones, c/o 3 MGI, 160 (Wales) Brigade, Brecon.

C P Hunt of Bodmin in Cornwall offered "Now, I wonder how Harry Potter would deal with a river crossing", and Maj Ron Goodwin of Paignton suggested another form of divine intervention: "Let me see . . .

Royal Army Chaplains' Department, Page 7 . . . walking on water . . ."

Miss N J Adams of the Old War Office in Whitehall sent in the whimsical "I can't believe I actually found a toilet out here" and Bob Nicholls, senior storeman at 44th (Cinque Ports) Signal Squadron (Volunteers) thought it should be "According to my map this should be the M1. Never mind, prepare to move".

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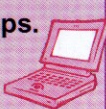
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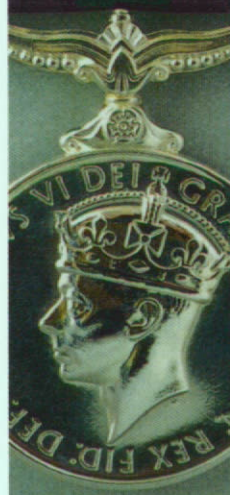
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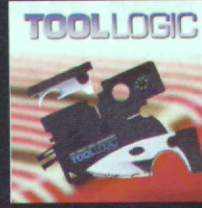
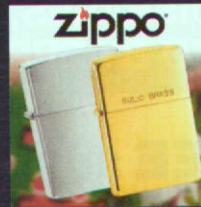
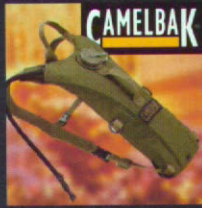
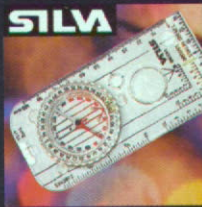
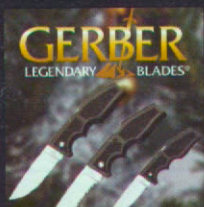
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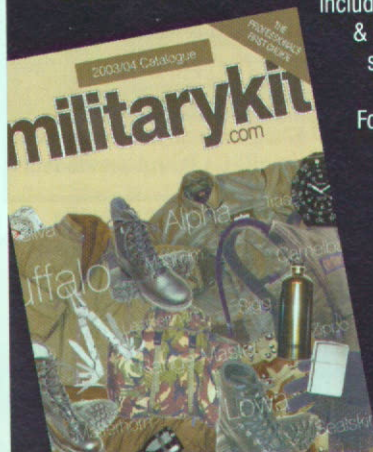


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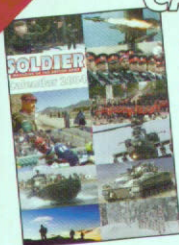
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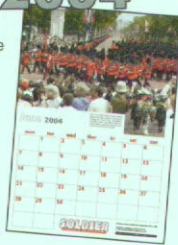


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Alison, (41), 5'5", dark hair and blue eyes. Enjoys reading, writing, DIY, music, films and cats. Seeking female pen pals, any age group. P484

Amy, (18), 5', slim with brown hair and blue eyes. Enjoys reading, shopping, clubs, the cinema and theatre. Seeking lonely single pen pals, 20-30. P485

Jo, (33), red hair and blue eyes. Enjoys reading, computing and eating out. GSOH and lives life to the full. Seeking pen pals, 30-40. P486

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Sean, (24), 6', gorgeous with short dark hair. Enjoys sports, relaxing, socialising, chatting, going on holiday, wining, dining, enjoying life and meeting people. Seeking pen pals, any age group. P488

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Rachel, (32), 5'6", slim with brown hair and green eyes. Recently divorced, exhausted and harassed mum to four boys. Enjoys football, music, cycling, cats and eating chocolate. GSOH and looking for fun male pen pals to correspond with. P490

Laura, (19), 5'5", blonde with blue eyes. Enjoys music, horror films, travel, history and culture. Beauty therapist from Sussex seeking pen pals, 18-30. P491

Tammy, (28), 5'6", slim with long dark hair and green/blue eyes. Film extra, enjoys modelling, the gym, staying in, singing, dancing, clubs, writing letters and karaoke. Seeking pen pals, 24-38, will answer all letters. P492

Yvonne, (45), blonde with blue eyes. Enjoys swimming, walking, keep fit, upholstery, the cinema and pubs. Honest, sincere and thinks laughing is very important, seeking pen pals, 35-50. P493

Michaela, (25), light brown hair and green eyes. Enjoys pubs, music, dancing, watching films, swimming and eating out. Non-smoker seeking pen pals, 25-35. P494

Samantha, (32), 5'4", slim build with blonde hair. Enjoys music, reading, movies, the theatre, travelling and eating out. Positive and easygoing person seeking pen pals, 30-37. P495

Sarah, (23), 5'7", dark hair and green eyes. Enjoys music, films, socialising, writing, driving and having fun. Seeking pen pals, 23-33. P496

Kate, (40), 5'5", medium build with dark hair and eyes. Single mum who enjoys socialising. Seeking pen pals in the Armed Forces, welcome letters from any lonely genuine single lads out there, photo appreciated. P497

Elaine, (43), 5'4", slim with shoulder length brown hair. Enjoys ten-pin bowling, badminton, dancing, horse riding, swimming, music, travel and wildlife. Seeking pen pals, any age group. P498

Jules, (32), 5'1", light brown hair and blue eyes. Enjoys movies, pubs, clubs, socialising and meeting new people. Seeking pen pals, 28-38. P499

Linda, (39), 5'6", long auburn hair and green eyes. Enjoys cooking, travel and horse riding. Seeking non-smoker, medium build, rugby type male pen pals with GSOH, 37-45. P500

Tanya, 5'9" medium length blonde hair and blue eyes. Enjoys watching sports (speedway, football, ice hockey), music, reading, socialising and writing letters. Seeking genuine single male pen pals, 25-35. P501

Dawn, (33), 5'8", single, pretty and fun. Looking for tall dark handsome soldiers to write to, any age group. It's gonna be lonely this Christmas, but not if you write to me. P503

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11 October 2003

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18 October 2003

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1st Place (34 Goals £6,500.00): Cpl MJ Wilson, 4 R Irish, Omagh
4-way tie for 2nd Place (32 Goals, £2,075.00 each): OCdt L Duig, RMCS, Shrivenham; Cpl K Dahig, 1 RWF, Aldershot; LCpl JD Meecham, HQ 16 Air Asslt Bde, Colchester; Sgt TW Paterson, 1 CS Med Regt, Munster
14-way tie for 6th Place (31 Goals, £214.29 each): WO1 D Cooper, Sp Bn HQ ARRC, Rheindahlen; Sgt AJ Davis, 14 Signal Regt (EW), Brawdy; Maj AM Dear, JHC HQ, Wilton; Cpl A Dryland, JCU (NI), Lisburn; LCpl JJJ Garnham, 8 Tpt Regt RLC, Catterick; Sgt DK Horne, 6 Bn REME, Tidworth; WO2 DW Leigh, 1 QLR, BFPO 647; WO2 JG McLaughlin, 1 QLR, BFPO 647; Pte SR Noss, 2 PWRR, BFPO 812; Sgt VL Quinn, ATR Pirbright, Pirbright; Maj FC Sykes, DCI (A) MOD, London; Sgt CJ Velone, HQ 42 (NW) Bde, Preston; Sgt S Wetherill, RMPTS, Chichester; Cpl CNM Wiczorek, 1 RRW, Paderborn

REUNIONS

22 Regiment RA suspended animation parade: Noon, Dec 15, Rapier Barracks. Master Gunner St James's Park to take salute, followed by lunch for former members of regiment. Tickets for parade and lunch from Capt J P Rogers RA, Rapier Bks, Kirton-in-Lindsey, Gainsborough, Lincs DN21 4HZ or tel 01904 668447.

Black Watch Association: Stoke Branch, Burns Night Dance, Jan 24 at Jubilee Hall, Stoke. Details: Frank Bailey, 1 Briarson Ave, Sneyd Green, Stoke on Trent, Staffs ST6 2NG or tel 01782 280912.

22 Regiment RA Royal Salute: The Regiment will fire Royal Salute at Cardiff Castle at noon on Feb 6. Afterwards there will be a buffet lunch for invited guests at the Mansion House. Enquiries to Capt J P Rogers RA (see suspended animation parade at top of column for contact details).

Welsh Gunners RFC v Old Boys, Bedwas

Doing it for Ryan: Cpl Marc Holmes, a member of the Green Howards regimental recruiting team based in Catterick, hands over a large cheque to Marilyn Butterworth of the Dyslexia Institute in Darlington. Marc tapped up colleagues in the regiment for some cash for the charity and collected £700 after his seven-year-old son, Ryan, was found to be dyslexic.



RUFC: Current Welsh Gunners RUFC will play their final match in Bedwas on Feb 7 against an Old Boys XV, kick-off 1300 hours, cash bar. Enquiries to WO2 Aled Owen (for those wishing to represent the Old Boys) on 01904 668507 or Maj Giles Carter on 07929 200197.

RAMC Reunited: For all ex-RAMC and partners at the Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool, Feb 6-9. Sae to M McCran, 132 Nightingale Crescent, Lincoln LN6 0JZ, tel 01522 879307, or e-mail michael.mccran@ntlworld.com

Rapier maintainers: Reunion dinner on Feb 7 in Bailleul Sgts' Mess, Hazebrouck Barracks, Arbofield. Contact SSgt Al Friend on 0118 9763371 or e-mail radarreunion@aol.com

RAMC Association (York): First meeting of new branch, Feb 19 at 1930 in the WOs' and Sgts' mess, Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Strensall, York. Past and present RAMC members in York area invited. Further details from WO1(RSM) Ian Campbell on 01904 442839.

Cyprus Police UK Unit 1955-60: Reunion on Mar 1 at Park Manor Hotel, Northstead Manor Drive, Scarborough YO12 6BB, tel 01723 372080. Ring hotel for dinner and accommodation bookings and quote reference "Allison". Full details available from Frank Cluer on 01372 720398.

19 Regiment (Highland Gunners): All-ranks reunion, March 20 at TA Centre, Northampton. Details from Maj (QM) G C Porter, tel 01980 634230, or WO2 (BSM) Keir, tel 01980 634282. Write to them at 19 Regt RA, Horne Bks, Larkhill, Salisbury SP4 8QU or e-mail reunion19regiment@yahoo.com

RE Gibraltar Weekend 2004: Mar 19-21 celebrating 300 years on the Rock and 200 years since the Garrison Library construction. Concert, parade, reception, gala dinner and farewell supper. First come, first served. Details from WO1 Jack Noble, MES Wks, HQ British Forces, BFPO 52 or tel 00350 55372.

70th Artillery clerks: Reunion dinner at RA Sgts' Mess, Woolwich on Apr 3. Contact WO1 (SSM) A M Tibble AGC (SPS) on tel 01276 412250 or visit www.artyclerks.fsnet.co.uk

8th Artificer Telecomm: Reunion dinner to be held at Bailleul Sgts' Mess, Arbofield on May 14. Seminar followed by meal, limited places. Details from SSgt Roger Millar, 01189 763343 or write to Land Systems Branch, SEAE, Hazebrouck Barracks, Reading RG2 9NH.

Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, Aden Veterans' Society: Thirty-seventh reunion, June 18, at The Bull's Head, Percy Street, Newcastle, Tyne and Wear. Details: Alan (Jonty) Batey, tel 01302 772044 or jonty.rfn@tiscali.co.uk

747 Squad (1960) Royal Marines: Third reunion to be held July 10 at the China Fleet Country Club, Saltash. Anyone wishing to attend contact Harry Briggs 02088 590846 or hbriggs747_rm@hotmail.com

HELP FOR RESEARCHER

Palestine: BBC researcher would like to hear from any readers who served in **Palestine** between 1945 and 1948, or who know of others who served during this period. Any memories that you would like to share would be for research purposes only - all calls and conversations will be treated with strict confidence. Write to Sarah Barton, Room D108, BBC Centre House, 56 Wood Lane, London W12 7SB. Telephone 020 8576 1188 or e-mail sarah.barton@bbc.co.uk

UNIT DISPOSALS

Disbanding: **35 Battery**, part of **22nd Regiment, Royal Artillery**, will disband on March 31. Anyone who has made a presentation to the unit since its re-formation in March 1985 is entitled to reclaim it. Any presentations not reclaimed by Feb 10 will be archived with battery property. Would donors please contact WO2 (BSM) Robbie Draper, 35 Battery, 22 Regiment Royal Artillery, Rapier Barracks, Kirton-in-Lindsey, Gainsborough, Lincs DN21 4HZ or e-mail robbiedraper@hotmail.com

Northern Ireland Veterans' Association (NIVA) is a new organisation created to represent and support veterans and families affected by the Northern Ireland conflict and to be a focal point for those suffering due to service in Northern Ireland. Write to NIVA, c/o The Legacy Project, The Tim Parry and Johnathan Ball Trust, Peace Drive, Warrington, WA5 1HQ or www.nivets.co.uk

SEARCHLINE

Phil Morris, ex-RCT/RLC, who has cancer, has set up a website with information about self-examination and what to do if you are worried. Cancer is on the increase in young men from as young as 14 upwards and can be cured if caught early. Site to support campaign set up by Paul Weller and Steve White (ex-Style Council) at www.checkemlads.com

Maj R G F (Robbie) Mills RA served from 1939 in the UK, the British Liberation Army, North-Western Europe and the TA until his death in 1955. His daughter would love to hear from anyone who knew her father or could provide information about his military service. E-mail nickyhibbin@wanadoo.fr

Peter King, ex-31 Armd Engr Sqn 1972-77, and wife Carole, settled in Osnabrück, are approaching 30th wedding anniversary and Peter's 50th birthday. They seek old friends **Peter Hunt** and **Chris Welsh** to join celebrations. E-mail casishere1752@msn.com

Calling veterans (or their descendants) of 4 Armd

MAIDA Gym in Aldershot was packed out for a Proms Extravaganza featuring the Bands of the Royal Engineers and Royal British Legion, the Rushmoor Concert Band, the Bagshot Band and the Hart Male Voice Choir. Solo performers included Pipe Maj Roy Anderson, now with the Scots Guards Association Band.

Organised by Garrison Sgt Maj Joe Fairbairn, R Signals, it raised more than £7,000 to be split between the Army Benevolent Fund, the Poppy Appeal and Kids Out 2004.



Pilgrimage to Telemark

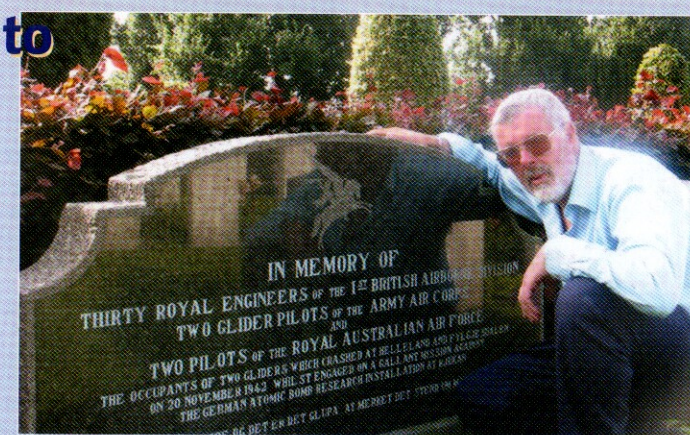
DEN Bray, right, was born three months after his father, **LCpl Frederick Bray RE**, was killed in Norway during the Second World War.

His father died in November 1942 on Operation Freshman, a mission to destroy the German heavy water plant at Ver-mork.

Last year Den noticed in these pages an invitation to attend a ceremony to mark the 60th anniversary of the destruction by British forces of the heavy water manufacturing facility at the Norsk hydro plant at Rjukan in the Telemark area of southern Norway. Production of heavy water was a critical part of the German attempt to build an atomic bomb.

LCpl Bray was a member of a 34-strong air-

borne force dispatched from Scotland in Horsa gliders towed by two Halifax bombers. The gliders crashed in bad weather and the survivors were executed by the Germans. Den put flowers on his father's grave at Stavanger and later travelled to the Vermork power plant to see the site of the subsequent mission immortalised by the 1965 film *The Heroes of Telemark*.



CADET Sgt Maj Jason Grindley, 17, left, of the Warrington Army Cadet Force, received a Certificate of Merit from the Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire, **Col William Bromley-Davenport**,

right, at Fox Barracks, Chester and enlisted in the Regulars the following day. He will join The Queen's Lancashire Regiment.

Certificates for exceptional service were presented to **Sgt Maj Dave Griffiths**, C (Cheshire Yeomanry) Squadron, RLMY, **SSgt Derek Smith**, of 107 (Lancashire and Cheshire) Field Squadron RE (V); and **Maj Ken Farrington**, adventurous training officer for Cheshire ACF.



COMPETITIONS

World War I In Colour DVD/Video set (Oct) Winners: W Wright, Darlington; I Cruttenden, Arbofield; Cpl C Atkinson, BFPO 53; D Kingston, Haywards Heath; R Gilbert, Welwyn Garden City. Answer: November 11.

Frederick Forsyth (Oct) Winners: J McCarthy, Liverpool; D Barton, Edinburgh; G Crandles, Edinburgh; R Oliver, Northern Ireland. Answer: *Avenger*.

Ghost Recon Island Thunder: (Oct) Winners: N Adams, Whitehall; R Wileman, Melbourne; A Palling, Colerne; M Strong, Exeter; G Prince, Camberley. Answer: Ben Affleck, Harrison Ford, Alec Baldwin.

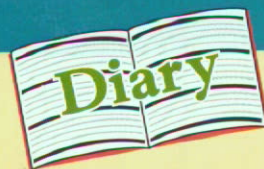
ABF Despatches (Oct): Winner of Thermal Windstoppers top by Gore-Tex is S A Taylor, Wrexham, N Wales.

Useful numbers

Army Benevolent Fund 020 7591 2000; www.armybenfund.org
Army Families Advice Bureau 01722 436569
Army Welfare Service 01722 433456
Army Families Federation 01980 615525; www.aff.org.uk
British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association 020 8590 1124; www.blesma.org.uk
Career Transition Partnership 0207 766 8020 www.ctp.org.uk
Confidential support lines:
 UK 0800 731 4880
 Germany 0800 1827 395
 Cyprus 080 91065
 Bosnia 0800 731 4880
 Others UK 1980 630854
Operations worldwide Paradigm Homelink Access Number *2999@thePINprompt
Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society 01372 841600; www.combatstress.com
Consumer Credit Counselling Service Free

Confidential Helpline 0800 1381111
Family Escort Service 020 7463 9249
Gulf Veterans Association 0191 230 1065 www.gulfveteransassociation.co.uk
Joint Service Housing Advice Office 01722 436575
Mutual Support (Forces Multiple Sclerosis support group) 01666 824709
National Gulf Veterans and Families Association Office (0900-1700) 01482 808730; 24-hour helpline on 01482 833812; www.ngvfa.com
Regular Forces Employment Association 0207 321 2011; www.rfea.org.uk
Royal British Legion's Legionline 0845 7725 725; www.britishlegion.org.uk
RBL Industries Vocational Assessment Centre 01622 717202/718484; www.rbli.co.uk
ESHRA Ex-Service Homes Referral Agency 020 7839 4466 www.eshra.com or eshra@britishlegion.org.uk

St Dunstan's Home for blind ex-Servicemen and women 020 7723 5021; www.st-dunstans.org.uk
SAMA 82 (South Atlantic Medal Association) Falklands conflict veterans 01495 227577 e-mail: densama@aol.com
Samaritans 08457 90 90 90
Service Children's Education 01980 618244
Services Cotswold Centre 01225 810358
SSAFA Forces Help 020 7403 8783; www.ssafo.org.uk
SSAFA Forces Help Housing Advisory Service 01722 436400
Veterans' Agency (includes War Pensions Agency) 0800 169 2277 (from UK); 0044 1253 866043 (from overseas); www.veteransagency.mod.uk
Victim Support Western Europe (SSAFA Forces Help) in Germany 02161 47 2272; from outside Germany 0049 2161 47 2272
WRVS General enquiries 02920 739906; www.wrvs.org.uk



It's our kinda toon

A NEW breed of technically-minded undergraduates are enjoying university life in Newcastle upon Tyne, voted not long ago the world's eighth best city for nightlife.

Newcastle and Southampton Universities were selected from a strong field of academic institutions to pioneer the Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme (DTUS), which finds places for students from Welbeck, the Defence Sixth Form College near Worksop in Nottinghamshire. Both universities already had strong Service links through their military units.



City boys: Near the Millennium Bridge on Newcastle's Quayside are, from left, Trojan Squadron members Hugo McCullough (sponsored by RE), Rob McCaughtrie (sponsored by REME), in-service degree officer Lt Al Robinson, serving with 59 Indep Cdo Sqn RE, and Paul Rawlinson (sponsored by REME)

Newcastle's DTUS unit, Trojan Squadron, is already into its second intake under the scheme. All the students are reading engi-

neering and science-based degrees and will eventually commission from Sandhurst into one of the technical corps.

■ YOU can reserve a copy of a new book on the famous home of the Chelsea In-Pensioners at a special pre-publication price of £30.

"*Royal Hospital Chelsea – The Place and the People*" is due out in March from Third Millennium Publishers as part of a major fund-raising appeal for Sir Christopher Wren's London institution.

The 192-page, heavily-illustrated book, written by architectural historian Dan Cruickshank, will tell the story of the hospital which has provided a home for Service veterans for more than 300 years.

For details, contact the publishers at Farrington House, 105-107 Farrington Street, London EC1R 3BU, tel 020 7837 4004 or e-mail info@tmiltd.com before February 27. For more details about the publication, visit www.tmiltd.com

■ FORMER National Serviceman Brian Allen, who died in January aged 70, has left the bulk of his £1 million estate to **The Suffolk Regiment**. Mr Allen, who amassed a fortune by "dabbling" on the stock market, served in Malaya with the Suffolks. Regimental secretary Col Tony Taylor said the legacy would secure the future of the Suffolk Regiment Museum at Bury St Edmunds.

Mr Allen managed the Bury Free Press before his retirement.

■ **THE Children and Families of Far East Prisoners of War 1941-1945** has launched a joint appeal with the National Memorial Arboretum to fund a permanent building to house the story of the Second World War FEPoWs. Its aim is to complete the project by August 15, 2005, the 60th anniversary of the Japanese surrender. More details on www.cofepow.org.uk

Herford return

FORMER Herford residents returned to camps some had not seen for more than 50 years when members of the UK-based Herford Association visited Germany.

The party, mostly ex-signallers, called on the 1st (UK) Armoured Division Headquarters and Signal Regiment and the 4th, 7th and 20th Armoured Brigade signal squadrons.

With the help of Maj Simon Purser and WO1 (RSM) Andy Baird, the veterans were given access to all the camps they had lived in, guided by members of the Royal Signals. Little trace remains of some of their former barracks.



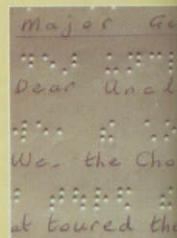
WE don't usually report Long Service and Good Conduct Medal presentations, but felt this one was sufficiently unusual to record. Sgt Paul O'Mara, right, receives his from Lt Col Mike Smith REME, commandant Joint Services Parachute Centre at Netheravon.

Paul, on attachment to the centre as a parachute instructor from 3 Regiment AAC, was handed his medal as the two men plummeted at 120mph 12,000ft above Wiltshire.

Thanks, Uncle David...

MEMBERS of the choir of the Milton Margai School for the Blind in Freetown, Sierra Leone, which has just toured the UK, have sent heartfelt thanks to their "Dear Uncle David".

Assistant Chief of the General Staff Maj Gen David Richards, who attended a concert, received a letter in braille from the pupils, who told him: "We also would like to thank you for taking such an interest in our school and for being so instrumental in the British Forces adopting our school."



Force behind the Forces

FORCES' favourite Nell McAndrew, centre, has her picture taken with Victoria Evans and Tracy Payne of the Yellow Ribbon Foundation during the Flora Light Challenge.

The foundation was started by women with Armed Forces connections who "met" on the iVillage.co.uk community message boards during the Iraq war and offered to support each other. They launched a yellow ribbon campaign to demonstrate their pride in our Servicemen and women and raise money for SSAFA Forces Help.

They are particularly geared up to providing Service families who live away from traditional married quarters patches with support and useful information.

You can find out more by going to www.YellowRibbon.org.uk





Irish in battle of Glenbogle

WHY, you might be wondering, are a bunch of lads from the 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment dressed up in Boer War battle-dress? The answer is that the soldiers, based at Fort George, were making their small-screen debut as extras in the BBC series "Monarch of the Glen".

Without giving too much away, its all to do with a flashback by Glenbogle's man of action, Paul, played by actor Lloyd Owen.

CSgt George Osborne tells us that filming had to stop at one point when a 737 flew overhead into Inverness International Airport. The sound of jet engines rumbling over his carefully prepared 19th century "South African" veld set didn't please the director.

Steve strikes blow for freedom

SGT Steve Timperley of the Military Provost Staff gets his kicks on the roof of Basra's central prison, where he was helping a small team of fellow MPS members to train the new Iraqi Prison Guard Service. Steve, an instructor with the Amateur Martial Arts Association, is now back at work at the Military Corrective Training Centre at Colchester. In his spare time he coached



his Iraqi pupils in the finer techniques of martial arts.

Training of the guards was based on what the British Army teaches its own prison staff – the MPS – at Colchester.

Big demand for pipe band

JOHN Johnstone, right, who lives in the Haig Homes estate at Stenhouse, Edinburgh, after 13 years' service with the 1st Battalion, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and the 4th Royal Tank Regiment, pipes the Royal Navy destroyer HMS *Glasgow* into the city from which it takes its name.

John is a member of the Royal Scots Association Pipe Band, which was formed as a millennium project and which now performs at functions throughout the year. It is based in the old "glasshouse" cells in Old Cavalry Barracks at Redford Barracks, Edinburgh.



Legends of the regiments and corps

53

13th/18th Royal Hussars and Light Dragoons



Famous soldier: Robert Baden-Powell

National treasure

ROBERT Baden-Powell was a cavalry colonel, a dashing wartime leader, a national hero and the founder of the worldwide Scout movement.

His military service is recalled in the museum of the 13th/18th Royal Hussars (Queen Mary's Own) and The Light Dragoons at Cannon Hall near Barnsley in South Yorkshire.

Baden-Powell joined the 13th Hussars in September 1876 and quickly emerged as an excellent shot from either shoulder, a superb horseman, and an accomplished artist, poet and author.

He was promoted in the field to major general for leading the defence of Mafeking during the Boer War but gave up his military life in 1910 to concentrate on his beloved Scouts.

NEW DRUM BANNERS

He retired to Kenya with his wife Olave, head of the Girl Guides, and died at Nyeri on January 8, 1941. Lord Baden-Powell took his last parade on his 80th birthday in 1937, presenting new drum banners to the regiment in Risalpur on the North West Frontier.

● This is the final offering in a feature which has been ever-present on these pages since July 1999. It will be replaced in the New Year by a regular column on modern medals.

Our grateful thanks to the Army Museums Ogilby Trust and all the curators who have contributed to it.

The Museum of the 13th/18 Royal Hussars (Queen Mary's Own) and The Light Dragoons in Cannon Hall, five miles west of Barnsley off the A635, is open April 1-Oct 31 Wed-Fri 1030-1700, weekends noon-1700; Sundays only Nov/Dec/Mar (noon-1600) and closed Jan/Feb. Tel 01226 790 270.

www.armymuseums.org.uk

Retail reconnaissance

Switched on . . .

DIGITAL DESIGN

WISH List is proud to introduce the world's first Liquid Crystal Display Integrated Digital Television (LCD iDTV) . . . the TechView TSL-15T.

Produced by Techsan, a leading manufacturer of satellite, terrestrial set-top boxes and LCD monitors, the 15-inch XGA-resolution LCD with digital tuner is in stores now and is the first of a proposed range of LCD iDTVs; 17-inch, 20-inch, 26-inch, 30-inch and 36-inch models will follow early next year.

The slimline, lightweight design of the screen incorporates a useful carry frame, making it an ideal set for people constantly on the move or for use as a second TV at home.

Powered from a 12-volt power supply or using its universal mains adapter, the TSL-15T's integrated digital tuner means that it can receive *Freeview*, the free digital TV and radio service, through a suitable existing aerial, without the need for a separate receiver.

Freeview currently offers up to 30 digital TV channels and more than 20 digital radio channels, as well as a range of free interactive services.

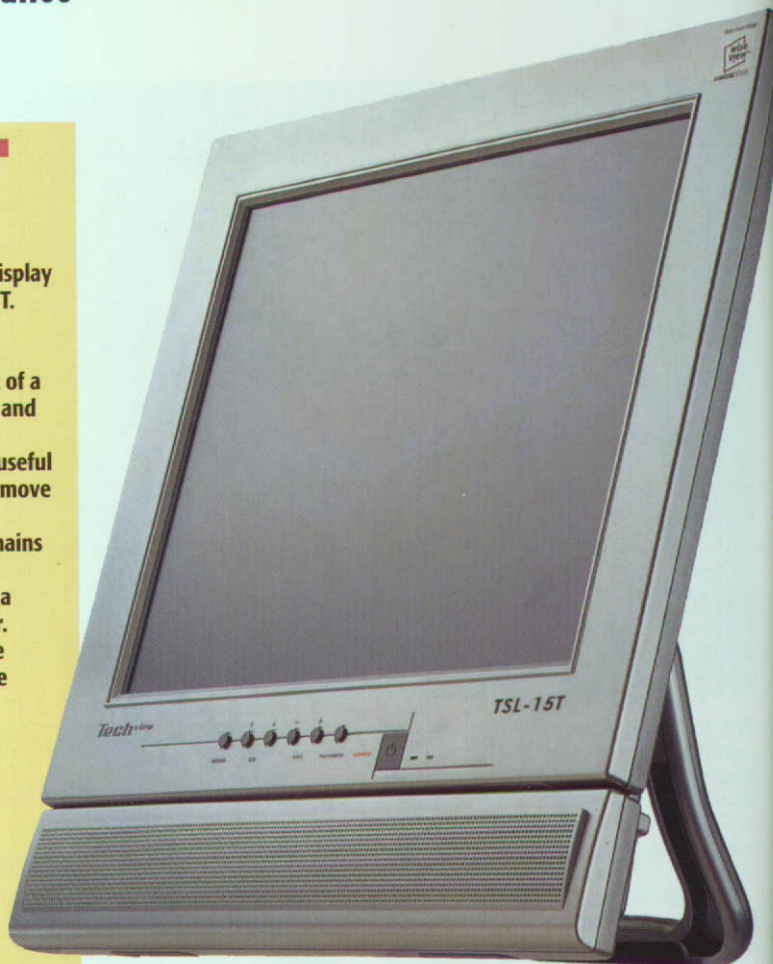
① £649, available from branches of the John Lewis Partnership and other selected electrical stores.

THANKS to Techsan, *Soldier* readers have the opportunity to become one of the first in the world to own a LCD iDTV.

WIN!

For your chance to win a TechView TSL-15T, simply answer the following question:
In which year did the BBC begin regular television transmission?

Winners will be drawn at random from the correct answers received by January 5. Usual rules apply.



Game on . . .

COMMANDOS 3: DESTINATION BERLIN, PC

WITH more accessible gameplay, a greater emphasis on action and a new multiplayer death match mode, this third instalment in Eidos's award-winning tactical strategy series does not disappoint.

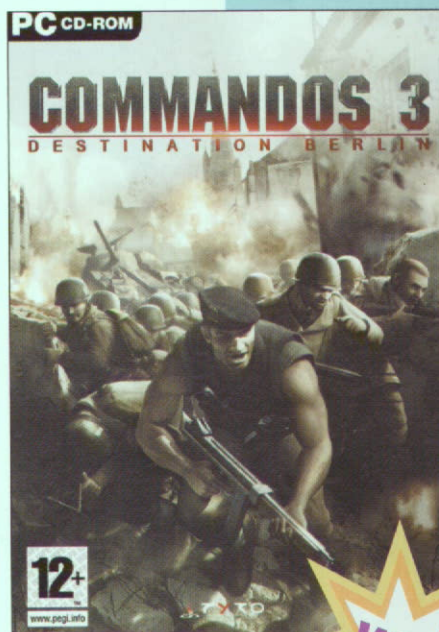
Once again put in command of a team of six crack soldiers, each with their own defined character traits and specialist skills, gamers must plan, march and shoot their way through three different campaigns in *Commandos 3: Destination Berlin*.

The game's action-orientated missions link together to form a strong overall narrative driven by cinematic briefings and will transport players from the Stalingrad battlefields of the Eastern Front to the Gestapo headquarters in Berlin, and the D-Day assault at Omaha Beach.

Aside from the new campaigns, which can be played in any order, the game also features a number of previously unseen combat situations including ambushes, assaults, enemy bombing raids and end-of-level bosses.

The detailed graphics that have become synonymous with the series return, but for the first time it is possible to rotate the environments and zoom right into the action, and then out again, as you play.

VERDICT: A tried-and-tested formula enhanced by the long overdue addition of a multiplayer option. **7/10**



COURTESY of Eidos, *Soldier* has five copies of *Commandos 3: Destination Berlin* for the PC up for grabs.

For your chance to win, simply tell us the colour of the berets traditionally worn by commandos.

Winners will be drawn at random from the correct answers received by January 5.

WIN!

OUT NOW

BYTE-SIZE NEWS

THE University of Wisconsin Madison has filed a lawsuit against Sony and Toshiba, claiming that technology being used in the creation of the PS2's Emotion Engine infringes a patent filed by the education centre in 1986.

University officials are thought to be seeking damages and a halt to the use of the technology in question.

An online computer and video game library, GamesToRent.com, has been set up by former RLC soldier Craig Butler.

For a monthly subscription fee of £12.99 customers can borrow titles for as long as they wish without having to worry about due dates or incurring fines for late returns. Visit www.GamesToRent.com for more information.

ACTIVISION'S big Christmas release, *True Crime: The Streets of LA*, has come under legal fire from an American author who claims that the game's central character is based on one of his creations.

Novelist Robert Crais alleges that *True Crime*'s Nick Kang bears an uncanny resemblance to his literary hero Elvis Cole, an ex-LAPD cop with a penchant for violence and mirrored sunglasses.

CALL OF DUTY, PC

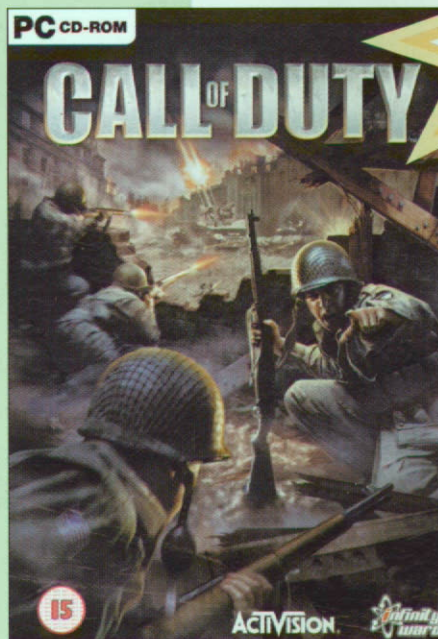
SET on the battlefields of the 20th century's most monumental conflicts, *Call of Duty* is the first game of a new franchise that aims to let players experience the dramatic intensity of war through the eyes of ordinary soldiers.

In this first-person shooter, developed by members of the team who brought *Medal of Honor: Allied Assault* to our screens, gamers assume the role of soldiers from three different sides of the allied forces during the Second World War as they take on the Nazi war machine in pivotal military campaigns.

Stepping into the boots of a US paratrooper, a British commando and a Russian infantryman as they fight through a variety of objectives ranging from full battlefield assaults to search-and-rescue missions, *Call of Duty* transports its characters through realistic environments that have been created from extensive archival research.

An explosive arsenal of authentic weapons, including pistols, machine-guns, sniper rifles and grenades, is also available to choose from as gamers man entrenched positions, plant explosives and complete their fire missions.

The game's advanced artificial intelligence means that a player's squad will act like a trained military unit, laying down



suppressing fire, providing cover fire, coordinating attacks on enemy positions and even pulling wounded comrades from the battle whenever required.

VERDICT: *Call of Duty* – well worth answering. 8/10

WIN!

and brutality of the Second World War.

For your chance to win one of five copies of *Call of Duty* for the PC, simply answer the following question:

Which assault rifle is commonly carried by soldiers in the Russian infantry?

- a) AK-47
- b) SA-80
- c) M16

Send your answers on a postcard to *Call of Duty* competition, Soldier, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2DU.

The winners will be drawn at random from the correct answers received by January 5.

Usual rules apply.

OUT NOW

SOLDIER has teamed up with Activision and Infinity Ward to offer readers the opportunity to experience the



CONFLICT: DESERT STORM II, PS2, XBOX & PC

OUT NOW

THIS sequel to the game that kick-started the squad-based shooter craze two years ago is based loosely on the real events of the 1991 Gulf War and follows the allied endeavours to liberate Kuwait City.

Boasting enhanced graphics, deformable terrains, huge explosions and more fluid movement, *Conflict: Desert Storm II* has embraced the third-person gameplay of its predecessor and applied layer upon layer of polish and advances.

Once again the key to the game is getting your small band of Special Forces soldiers operating as one to complete their missions.

Each squad member has his own area of expertise and once gamers have mastered the intuitive controls and command system, ordering their sniper to take up a good vantage point or their engineer to call in an air strike while keeping a target lit up with a laser designator becomes second nature.

In addition to the vast array of firepower carried by their crack team, gamers can also commandeer a number of vehicles, including 4x4 jeeps and armoured tanks.

However, ensuring that no man is left behind is no easy feat.

The enemy is noticeably more intelligent in *Desert Storm II* and reacts to player's tactics more realistically than before. Hostile soldiers communicate with each other, take cover and implement counter defensive actions.



The fact that most of this intelligent combat now takes place in not only open desert, but in detailed, claustrophobic city settings, adds to the game's tension.

The cooperative multiplayer mode that proved such a hit in the original returns and players can once again rehearse their building clearance drills with a friend, although this time round it is possible to jump to any level.

VERDICT: A true contender for game of the year. 9/10

EXCLUSIVE OFFER

THANKS to our friends at SCI Games, *Soldier* readers can now buy *Conflict: Desert Storm II* for the discounted price of £29.99 (PS2 and Xbox) and £19.99 (PC) – £10 off the title's shop price.

To order, simply complete and return this form.

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Please send me a copy of *Conflict: Desert Storm II* for the:

☐ PS2 ☐ Xbox ☐ PC

Please make cheques/POs payable to *Soldier* and allow 28 days for delivery.

Orders should be returned to: *Soldier* Magazine, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2DU

All items are inclusive of p&p for UK/BFPO. Overseas rates are available on request.

Credit card hotline: 01252 347353



Dramatic stories of extraordinary courage

SINCE 1945 the Victoria Cross has been awarded only 11 times – four in the Korean War, one in the Malaysian confrontation with Indonesia, four to Australians in Vietnam and two during the Falklands War. Six were posthumous. In the same period 372 Congressional Medals of Honor, America's equivalent decoration, have been awarded, which to some reflects the emergence of the US as a world superpower. Bryan Perrett tells the dramatic stories in **For Valour: Victoria Cross and Medal of Honor Battles** (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £20).

Return to Iraq — to face death and injury

AS he described graphically in this magazine in June, John Simpson beat a life ban to return to Iraq during this year's conflict – only to have his left ear shattered and see his translator killed by US friendly fire. In **The Wars Against Saddam: Taking the Hard Road to Baghdad** (Macmillan, £20), the BBC's World Affairs Editor recounts these events and many others from his 20-year experience of Iraq. An audio cassette of the book, read by the author, is also available (Macmillan, £9.99).

Service in Germany: the people's stories

THOUSANDS of *Soldier* readers will testify to the effectiveness of the magazine's contact columns (pp 62-63) in finding people and information. Roy Bainton made good use of the service for **The Long Patrol: The British in Germany Since 1945** (Mainstream, £15.99), which features interviews with and letters from many who have served there. Signed copies are available post-free from the author at 13 West Hill Avenue, Mansfield, NG18 1PQ.

I'm one of the lucky ones

Great survivor talks about life, the Army and his new book

Moving On by Simon Weston (Portrait £16.99).

Interview: Andrea Frazer

FORMER Welsh Guardsman Simon Weston is a true hero for our times.

His irrepressible sense of humour, boundless enthusiasm and engaging personality are addictive; his courage, determination and motivation to succeed, inspirational.

But the Simon Weston of 2003 is a far cry from the young soldier whose life was blown apart when Argentinian planes bombed the British supply ship *RFA Sir Galahad* during the Falklands conflict of 1982.

Many of his friends died in the blast and the fire that followed. Many more were

the pressures of international recognition. Simon's road back to physical, mental and spiritual recovery has been documented via countless radio and television appearances, including six major TV documentaries.

He has enjoyed considerable literary success as the author of two autobiographies, *Walking Tall* and *Going Back*, and two works of military fiction. So why pen a third autobiography? What can Weston's new book *Moving On* add to what has already been written about this remarkable man?

"We've never really talked at any length about what it is I want to do with my life," he said. "Everyone immediately associates me with the Falklands. The Falklands occupied my days 20 years ago, but they don't occupy my days now. It would be lovely if I could put the past behind me."

"The bombing of the *Sir Galahad* was a turning point in my life but it's not somewhere I'm stuck. There are 48 guys from that incident who will always be stuck with the Falklands because they are still buried there."

"I've been in an incinerator and survived. I am one of the lucky ones. The new book is about laying old ghosts to rest, getting closure, and moving on to new challenges."

"Moving on is what my life has been all about. I have never stayed in the past. The past is dead and gone. You can't affect it, you can only deal with the here and the now and try your best to affect the future."

"I want to be remembered as somebody who did, rather than had something done to. It is a positive book, a funny book

and I'd like readers to take away a feeling of hope. I would like them to realise that it's not what happens to you in life that counts – it's what you do about it."

After more than 70 operations to rebuild his face and body, Simon has accomplished a



Simon Weston: "Moving on is what my life has been all about"

injured. Simon, then aged just 21, escaped with appalling burns. He was flown back to the UK, barely alive and unrecognisable even to his immediate family, to face an uphill struggle to rebuild his charred body and his life. Much later he had to learn to cope with

Photograph by Andrea Heselton from book cover designed by Bradbury & Williams

great deal in recent years. His determination to live life with such passion and vigour has inspired millions.

"In the early days after the disaster I was depressed and depressing. I drank myself into a stupor; I nearly took my own life," he said. "But you can't stay in the same rut you once were in. I needed to find something to occupy

● TO have a chance of winning a copy of *Moving On*, by Simon Weston, tell us which Guards regiment he joined:

a) Irish b) Welsh c) Scots d) Coldstream
Answers – on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope – should reach us by January 5. The first two correct responses drawn out of the hat will win the books. Don't forget to include your name and address. Usual rules apply.

done more than some will do in a whole lifetime. I've experienced things that most can only dream of."

Dedicated to helping others, Simon's ethos is about turning the past into a good future and giving people independence, dignity and self-esteem, however old or young they are.

He is active in a number of ventures, including Weston Spirit, a Liverpool-based young people's charity, and the Royal Star and Garter Home for disabled ex-Service-men and women at Richmond, Surrey.

Simon is a successful motivational and inspirational speaker and spends much of his time talking to organisations at home and abroad, including military audiences.

"If I can impart some of the things I've learned along the way, then that's great," he said. "There were so many people who have influenced my life and helped me move on – my family, my friends and my regiment. The Welsh Guards were brilliant."

"They're like a family... we've got this

tremendous bond, friendship and kinship. Even my first commanding officer, Lt Col Charles Guthrie [who went on to become Chief of the Defence Staff and a peer of the realm], coincidentally the first guy to charge me, supports me and my charity work. The Army is still a large part of my life in terms of the comrades and, although I am no longer a

part of it, it's the environment I still feel happiest in. But once you've left, you can't recreate what the Army gives you. Some guys who leave the forces have great trouble assimilating back into civilian street. They expect others to act as Service people would act. It doesn't work. "All you can take with you are the lessons you have learned from the military and try to impose them in the rest of your work life and work ethic. My military training taught me determination, stickability, that 'can-do' attitude, the 'not-if-but-when' approach, and that despite our physical and mental limits there's no such thing as a terminal barrier."

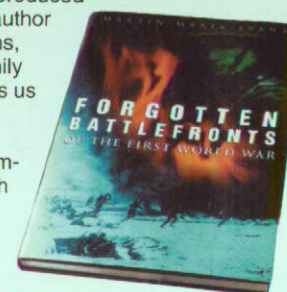
"It gave me an understanding that if a job needs pushing, you have to give it 100 per cent. I've never found anything completely beyond me."

Soldier ordering service

All books mentioned on these pages are available from Helion & Company, who can also supply 14,500 in-print military books and operate a free booksearch; p&p is extra. All major credit/switch cards taken. Please allow up to 28 days for delivery. Helion & Company, 26 Willow Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 1UE, England (tel 0121 705 3393; fax 0121 711 4075). E-mail: books@helion.co.uk Website: <http://www.helion.co.uk>

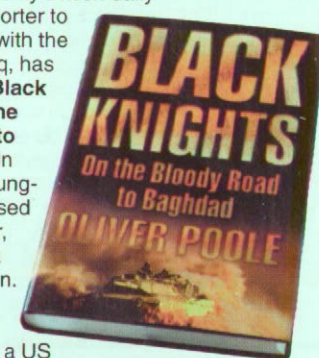
Great War battlefield tour with a difference

IT seems odd that there should be any **Forgotten Battlefronts of the First World War** (Sutton, £25) but in the sumptuously-produced book of this title, author Martin Marix Evans, spurred on by family connections, takes us on a colourful and adventurous battlefield tour-cum-travelogue through some of the less familiar pockets of conflict, such as the beaches of Belgium, the mountains of eastern France, the Italian Alps and the coast of Greece. Archive pictures are complemented by modern colour photographs and maps.



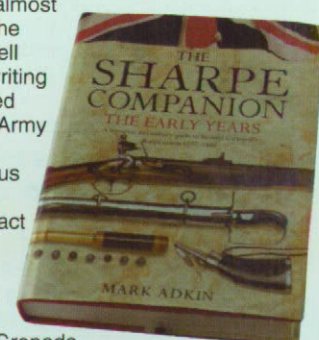
Gung-ho title fulfils promise – and more

YOU can't always tell a book by its cover. Oliver Poole of *The Daily Telegraph*, the only British daily newspaper reporter to be embedded with the US Army in Iraq, has come up with **Black Knights: On the Bloody Road to Baghdad**, but in this case the gung-ho title, embossed on a lurid cover, does not give a false impression. His account of the baptism of fire endured by a US tank company is starkly horrific in places. It is also witty, often laugh-out-loud funny, and spiced with some wonderfully colourful pen-portraits. It is published by HarperCollins at £17.99.



Sharpe focus on a hero's early career

HISTORIAN Mark Adkin, author of **The Sharpe Companion: The Early Years** (HarperCollins, £20), had a military career almost as eventful as the Bernard Cornwell creation he is writing about. He served with the British Army in Germany, Malaya, Mauritius and Aden and later, as a contract officer with the Barbados Defence Force, took part in the US invasion of Grenada. This first volume of the revised and expanded *Companion* focuses on Sharpe's life up to the age of 30, including Trafalgar.



From Beckingham Palace to Deolali

IF you're looking for something unusual to read during the festive season, try *Fame by Chance* – an A-to-Z of places that became famous (or infamous) by a twist of fate, writes Chris Horrocks.

Donough O'Brien's entertaining compilation (*Bene Factum*, softback, £14.99) includes many with military connections such as Suez, Sandhurst, Balacava and Deolali – and quirky examples like Beckingham Palace, residence of Queen Victoria and King David. Posh Spice also crops up in

Andrew Delahunty's *Oxford Dictionary of Nicknames* (£15.99) which has an appendix listing more than 200 British regiments, from the Cheesemongers to the Dirty Shirts.

When in the late 18th century The First Life Guards were accused of being "not gentlemen but cheesemongers", the insult was proudly adopted by the regiment, whose battle-cry at Waterloo was "Come on the Cheeses". The Dirty Shirts were The 101st Foot, who fought in their shirtsleeves during the siege of Delhi in 1857.

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November 2003 **SOLDIER**

Aston *marvellous*

Quality is so high that had the Vanquish been available in Doctor No's era, he would have been driven to change his name to Doctor Yes Please



A HUNDRED . . . 120 . . . 140 mph. The Vanquish gathered pace like a jet fighter, though the guttural exhaust sounded more like the roar of a Spitfire's Merlin engine than a Tornado on re-heat, **writes Syd Taylor.**

Accelerating inexorably, relentlessly, the Aston Martin found its stride. Trees bordering the private test facility became an amorphous green blur and a far-away bend was suddenly on us as the Vanquish reeled in the track ahead.

I wanted to head to the nearest German autobahn but continued on my way, only to encounter the local church warden attired in a dayglo "Speed Camera Volunteer" jacket, waving a palsied arm and pointing a speed gun at us, with a cry of "Begone Satan" on his lips.

James Bond, being licensed to kill, would have blipped the throttle, but I couldn't, more's the pity. This car has all the characteristics of fiction's greatest spy, so it is no surprise the Bond connection is inextricably interwoven with the marque.

The Vanquish is as tailored for Bond usage as the finest Savile Row suit.

It has power, poise, panache and – the killer punch – all wrapped in packaging that's achingly beautiful. The car's detail, the muscular tension in its curves and the way they fit together, is stunning.

This Aston is sufficiently slippery to permit a top speed of over 190 mph, and upper-end acceleration that is hard to equal. The car is powered by a hand-assembled 6.0 litre, 460 bhp V12 engine (with the builder's name on it) driving through a six-speed close-ratio gearbox

Aston Martin Vanquish

Engine: Alloy, twin overhead cam 6.0 litre V12, 460 bhp

Transmission: 6-speed manual. Paddle change. Also auto-shift with electro-hydraulic control

Body: 2-door coupé with 2 seats or 2+2 seats. Extruded aluminium and carbon-fibre bonded monocoque

TECH SPEC

Interior: Connolly leather and Alcantara trim

Suspension: Independent double aluminium wishbones. Coil springs

Brakes: Ventilated cross-drilling discs. Automatic braking system

Performance: Top speed over 190 mph

Price: £164,000

More than anything it is the span of the performance that is so enticing . . .

with fingertip operated Formula One-style paddle controls.

All this is housed in an aluminium and carbon-fibre body hand-built by Newport Pagnell craftsmen. You can have whatever body colour and interior trim takes your fancy and other decisions about specification need to be made, starting with whether you want the car configured as a two-seater or a two-plus-two.

As you step into the Vanquish you are greeted with a wealth of fine materials. Everywhere you look you can see, feel and breathe craftsmanship and an incredible love of detail. The Vanquish's interior blends traditional, classic and modern and is furnished and fitted to the highest standards. You enjoy the excellent position of controls and instruments, which enable the car to be driven with precision.

The thought that goes into some of the accessories would do credit to Q himself. Quality is so high that had the Vanquish been available in Doctor No's era, he would have been driven to change his name to Doctor Yes Please.

It doesn't take long to understand and

feel at ease with the car's extraordinary performance as it works with you and is never intimidating. It's easy to come to grips with the power and know that it can be safely used.

That first unleashing of acceleration is electrifying, but you adjust quickly and thereafter, while always thrilling, it is temptingly usable.

More than anything it is the span of the performance that is so enticing. It's that combination of pace and power that makes the Vanquish so special.

On twisty roads you can swing easily from bend to bend, always with composure and civility.

Supercars of this breeding are rare. The quicker it goes, the better it feels as you escape into a dimension beyond the reach of ordinary fast cars.

Thankfully, the Aston Martin Vanquish is much more than a hedonistic indulgence: perfection and the desire to provide an uncorrupted driving experience are the goals. With this in mind it is easier to accept the £164,000 price for what is simply one of the world's finest cars.

As I returned home on a road beside the Severn near Bridgnorth, two motorcyclists at a café watched me pull in and park and then gave a "thumbs-up" greeting. It had been a good day.

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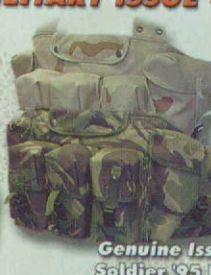
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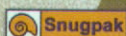


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SOLDIER to soldier

Nothing changes

FOR the British Army, it has been a year of "fire brigade" duty. The big blaze in Korea is out; the persistent blaze in Malaya is isolated, half-stifled but not extinct; in the Kenyan bush the fires are menacing but are being brought under control; in the Canal Zone the coals are still smouldering, puffed occasionally into nasty licks of flame; in Trieste and British Guiana the firemen are standing by with buckets and hose.

SO began the *Soldier to Soldier* column in the December issue of 1953, which suggests that although the locations have changed, the British soldier's operational lot today is as demanding as it was 50 years ago.



For Korea read Iraq; for Malaya, Afghanistan; for Kenya and the Canal Zone and Trieste and British Guiana take your pick from Bosnia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Northern Ireland.

The immediate shape of our defence policy and the forces required to implement it will emerge in the next few weeks when the White Paper is published.

Until then we can take comfort from the Armed Forces Minister's statement (see Page 20), in the form of a written answer placed before Parliament, that the Ministry of Defence has no current plans to disband or amalgamate any infantry battalions, nor, indeed, to reduce the overall strength of the British Army.



Which leaves us once more to wish all Servicemen and women and their families, wherever they may be stationed, and on whatever form of "fire brigade duty" they may be involved in, a happy and (above all) safe Christmas.

Home truths

Sue Bonney

Anyone got a magic wand?

AH, Christmas again! The season of goodwill. And generosity. And humbug. I generally try to be cheery at this season, despite Him Indoors' Scrooge-like mutterings, but this year that may not be so easy, at least as far as the Army is concerned.

It seems the MoD is in money trouble again – tightening belts, cutting costs, and putting policies on hold are with us once more. No geese getting fat here.

It's all down to the roller-coaster ride that is the Defence budget. As everyone out there knows, we have been at war (and peace) lately, and it's costing a fortune. Since it was Government policy to go to war, and Governments presumably expect wars to cost a bit, you might be forgiven for thinking that the Treasury would chip in with the extra cash to help the MoD with its budget.

Not altogether, it seems. According to a recent story in the press, the MoD will be footing the bill for at least some of the kit – because, you see, we would have needed it anyway. Mmm. Good Scrooge-like logic there.

But hang on, perhaps that's not too bad – after all, wasn't there supposed to be an MoD under-spend? (How did they manage that? There was no need for them to go to that trouble, no need at all. I am fairly sure lots of us could have helped them spend what was left over, if only they'd said. Especially those with policies currently on hold through lack of resources which would make life a little better for serving personnel and their families.)

Oh dear, just a minute – according to another recent press story, the MoD has had problems with a few projects, which have now been written off. Well, the money they cost has been written off. Apparently something in the region of £1.7 billion. Makes the £400 million needed for the housing upgrade pale into insignificance, really.

Doesn't help the case for more cash, either. Those calculators must be red-hot – not to mention the Treasury's breath on the back of the MoD's neck. What differ-



A personal view
from Sue Bonney,
Editor of the AFF
Families Journal

ence will these ups and downs make to the policy for people, and all those words about the importance of serving personnel and their welfare in the overall scheme of things?

Ah, Sir Humphrey, where are you when we need you most? You'd explain to us why welfare may not be the target for spending, but that doesn't stop it becoming a target for cuts.

The word down here at the coalface is there is no money for anything. Worse, there is less money for projects already supposedly funded. The inevitable result is that those who do the real work – who even now are all over the world, separated from their families at Christmas, just doing their job at the behest of their Government – will be the ones who experience the real cost of cuts.

Still, it is the season of goodwill and fairy godmothers. Perhaps the Past, Present and Future Ghosts of Options for Change, the Strategic Defence Review and the upcoming Defence White Paper are even now haunting Scrooge's Counting House, and will succeed in bringing a change of heart.

It may yet be turkey and plum pudding instead of bread and cheese. Or modern accommodation for soldiers and their families. Or a bit of help with first-move costs, or compassionate travel for non-UK spouses. Or just a bit of flex in the system? You never know. Anyone got a magic wand?

A Happy Christmas to us all – God Bless Us, Every One.

'The word down here at the coalface is there is no money for anything. Worse, there is less money for projects already supposedly funded'

Out now

The December issue of the AFF Families Journal is out now. Make sure you and your family get your free copy from your unit.





Time out for full-time reserves?

I HAVE been on a Full-Time Reserve Service (FTRS) contract with the Army for 4½ years. I am deployed overseas and have heard from my wife that my regiment has got a replacement for me as of March. I've also heard all FTRS contracts are being terminated as of April. Is this true? – **Name and address supplied.**

DM(A) replies: Where Regular forces are unable to fill posts with Regular soldiers, members of the Volunteer Reserve Forces (Territorial Army and Regular Reserve in the Army's case) may be employed on short-term FTRS contracts. If at the end of that period a Regular soldier is available to fill the post, the reservist returns to the TA or Regular Reserve.

In the past there have been many opportunities for FTRS personnel to extend or find new posts. As manning has improved these opportunities have reduced.

While the numbers on FTRS commitments will decrease as the Army moves towards full manning, there remain several hundred posts which will be filled with FTRS for several years. There is no question of all FTRS contracts being terminated in the near future.

I want partner on next-of-kin form

FOR the seventh year running there was a problem with my next-of-kin nomination when I was called to my unit admin office for the annual ritual of document verification.

I had to explain yet again what I want the Army to do in the event of my death.

Apparently there is no easy way to include my partner on the NOK form. We own a house together and to some extent she is financially dependent on me. I am in Cyprus and she has remained in UK.

This posting, our financial situation and our emotional commitment mean it is important that she is told should any-

Prize letter

thing happen to me. I am told she can't be informed unless I refuse to nominate my next-of-

kin, which means my parents would not be informed. I find this quite upsetting.

All I want is for the Army to inform my parents and my partner of my death... after all, if my parents were separated they would both be contacted. I don't want my parents or my partner having to tell the other at what would be a traumatic time.

Is there a way to include both my partner and my parents on the NOK form and stop the clerks trying to change it every year? – **Cpl Zoe Dawson, Cyprus.**

PS4(A) replies: We are sorry to learn that the correspondent has been prevented from nominating a partner as her emergency contact, especially as new procedures were introduced in December last year.

In recognition of the fact that many soldiers may want someone other than, or in addition to, their next-of-kin to be informed if they become a notifiable casualty, the term "next-of-kin" has been replaced by "emergency

contact", thus allowing partners to be nominated. This is more clearly defined in the change to Casualty Procedures 2000 (Change 2 – D/DPS(A)/28/3 dated 6 Dec 02), which also positions the Army for the development of future administrative systems.

We suggest the correspondent points out the change of terminology to the unit and is permitted to nominate the partner as the emergency contact, and take this opportunity to highlight the change to all your readers.

Why should I lose quarter if my partner moves in?

I AM am divorced with one child and so entitled to live in a married quarter. Why is it that I lose my entitlement to a married quarter if I wish to reside with a partner to whom I am not married? – **Sgt M J Hemstead, BFPO 53.**

PS4(A) replies: Sgt Hemstead is Marital Category 2 and would be entitled to occupy Service Families Accommodation (SFA). Those in category 3 or 4 have no entitlement to SFA.

When living in SFA the Service person has to sign a "licence to occupy", which means they (and family members and any visitors) agree to the terms and conditions of occupa-

tion. When single people occupy SFA – whether entitled or eligible – they are not, for a variety of reasons, allowed to cohabit.

We know this policy is a source of frustration for many unmarried couples and the argument for recognition of unmarried partners tends to centre on accommodation. However, there are implications for

allowances, pensions and the provision of health care for dependants overseas.

The issue is further complicated in overseas stations by the fact that Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA) do not recognise unmarried partners. The Unentitled Working Group is conducting a review into the implications of any change to the policy.

Benefits for single-sex couples

IT has been reported that the Government is proposing to give same-sex couples rights similar to those of heterosexual couples on marriage if they undertake a civil partnership ceremony.

Same-sex couples in the Services are currently treated as single personnel and excluded from benefits received by married couples. Partners receive no financial support in the event of death in-service and if the partner is receiving a monthly pension this is stopped. Will this change?

– **Name and address supplied.**

PS10(A) replies: The final structures for the new Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS) and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) were announced in September (see *Soldier*, Oct).

Provision in both has been made for unmarried partners (heterosexual and same sex). Benefits of the schemes will be extended to unmarried partners who can demonstrate they are in a substantial relationship, including financial interdependency.

There will be a nomination scheme, but a failure to nominate would not necessarily prevent an entitlement.

Be brief ... please

YOUR letters provide a real insight into the issues at the top of your agenda... but please keep them brief.

E-mails MUST include your name and location (not necessarily for publication).

Anonymous letters will be binned. The Editor reserves the right to accept or reject letters, and to edit for length, clarity or style.

PISCATOR

"Your Canal Zone Medal has arrived ..."



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Simple statement would be a bonus

THE Army Pay Statement of Salary and Deductions (AF 09639) includes two boxes outlining the "LSSA qual date" and "Accumulated LSSA service".

Why are there no additional boxes to specify the number of additional Longer Separated Service Allowance (LSSA) qualifying days – and by what date – the

individual must achieve to qualify for his or her next bonus?

This simple measure would let soldiers know exactly where they stand and save over-burdened pay offices from having to field time-consuming questions about LSSA bonuses. – SSgt S Holland, BFPO 543.

The counter on pay statements is merely a record of the accumulated days' separation and is kept so that progression to the middle and higher rates, at 300 and 600 days respectively, can be monitored. The computer programming to support SSgt Holland's suggestion is too complex and so we are currently required to continue the existing manual bonus calculation regime.

The current system of LSSA bonus qualification is difficult to administer and it is anticipated that this will be simplified in the new Joint Personnel Administration era.

SO3 RPA, DSPS(A) replies: SSgt Holland's suggestion is not as simple as it would first appear. Entitlement to LSSA bonuses is calculated during any two-year rolling period, where either 280 or 365 days of accumulated separation has occurred.

This rolling period means that as each month passes, separation that occurred 24 months previously no longer counts towards the bonus. This can have the effect of reducing or increasing the overall amount of separation in the rolling two-year period.

PS...

Int brigade in Iraq

WITH reference to your article detailing troops currently committed to Iraq (Update, Oct), personnel from all the units in 1 Military Intelligence Brigade, including our Territorial Army battalion, have been involved in Iraq from the start of operations. They remain fully committed to current operations there and will remain committed until their specialist capabilities are no longer required. – Name and unit supplied.

Generous patients

IN July I completed my 23rd Nijmegen March, despite approaching 65 years of age and receiving treatment for an injured knee. I wish to thank the generous sponsorship of, among others, 33 and 202 Field Hospital patients and personnel on Op Telic. I have been able to send cheques for £250 to the Army Benevolent Fund, Blesma and the Royal Military Police Central Benevolent Fund. – G Peter Karran, Rhyl, Denbighshire.

Kady wasn't first

WHILE congratulating JUO Kady Leather on her superb achievement in winning the Royal Military Academy Sword of Honour (Diary, Oct), I can assure you she is not the first Welbexian to do so. John Ellicock, who commissioned into the Royal Artillery in July 1967, was. Whether there have been others in the intervening 36 years I do not know, but Welbexians have picked an array of other prizes including a number of Queen's Medals. – Col Dick Wilkinson, Commandant City of London and North East Sector ACF.

I BELIEVE Kady is probably the first female student from Welbeck to be awarded the sword. – Maj S P Stockley RE, Catterick Garrison.

In wrong company 1

WAS I one of many who spotted your deliberate mistake in stating that Nijmegen Company is part of the Coldstream Guards (Page 3, Oct)? It is, of course, part of the Grenadier Guards. – Steve Pengelly, ex-Coldm Gds, Devon.

In wrong company 2

WE were delighted to spot two Military Corrective Training Centre (MCTC) colleagues on Page 21 of the October edition. Sgts Bielby and McCorkindale are shown in front of the Camp Bucca sign. While the article correctly mentions MCTC Colchester, we were dismayed that their unit was given as 174 Provost Company, 4 Regiment RMP.

Whatever their attachment, the two sergeants are members of the Adjutant General's Corps (Military Provost Staff). – Maj M P Biegel GH, Senior Education Officer, MCTC, Colchester.

Why can't I use BFPO mail system?

I AM a Territorial Army officer working in a civilian capacity for the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

Along with nine other British military and ex-military colleagues ranging from a TA colonel to retired junior NCOs, I have enjoyed the privilege of being able to use the BFPO system.

A review of BFPO users in the Balkans has resulted in us being given one month's notice to stop receiving mail. With immediate effect we are not allowed to use the BFPO post office counter services or to post letters.

I appreciate that as civilians we have no entitlement to use the system, but, considering the work we are doing and the fact that between us we have more than 150 years of military service, we feel that the MoD could have been more lenient. The alternatives are to use the expensive, unreliable and slow local postal systems.

Many other military contingents in Kosovo extend the use of their postal systems to their own nationals, regardless of individuals being ex-military or not.

I have been in Kosovo for 2½ years, and some of my colleagues have been here for four, so letters and publications from home are welcome.

The MoD, of course, will incur extra postage costs and delays in any official mail sent to us by our TA units. – **Capt C N Freeland AGC (SPS), Kosovo.**



Brig Peter Maggs, Director Defence Postal and Courier Services, replies:

The MoD provides BFPO services to military and civilian personnel and their dependants deployed overseas in support of defence objectives, including those on operational deployments.

The MoD is not resourced by UK taxpayers to provide mail services for personnel working for other organisations, and entitlement to BFPO services is determined by the status of individuals concerned.

In this case, the individuals are employed by the European Union in support of the UN. Since they have not been deployed by the MoD they are not entitled to a BFPO service. The fact that some are members of the Reserve Forces does not affect their status, as they are not serving in that capacity.

MoD periodically reviews mail services to ensure they are operating correctly, and it was during one such review that it came to light that non-entitled personnel were using the system. Action was taken to halt this, and the individuals concerned were advised they should use the facilities provided by their employer. I understand the UN has its own mails system in place to support them.

I am sorry to disappoint Capt Freeland, but I hope this explains the position.

Joining Regulars cost me £2,000

I RE-ENLISTED on July 3 from Full-Time Reserve Service (FTRS) to Regular service on an open engagement and took a £5 a day drop in pay. Instead of being paid as a lance corporal higher level band 7 I was paid as a LCpl higher level band 5.

I was told by my pay office that this was a mistake which would be rectified.

Ten visits, two official letters of complaint, a letter to Glasgow later and I am told that there is a computer glitch which is yet to be sorted. It must be some glitch.

I have bills to meet and a mortgage and every pay day my marriage is put under

strain as this issue has still not been sorted. It is beyond a joke. I am owed close to £2,000 in back pay despite using the chain of command, which continues to let me, and others, down. – **Name and address supplied.**

● In response to the serious pay issues raised by soldiers in these and previous Talkback columns, and many others received by the magazine, the Directorate Staff and Personnel Support (Army) at Worthy Down is preparing for publication in the magazine an article acknowledging the problems in the pay system and outlining what is being done to resolve them. – **Editor**



SO2 RPA DSPS(A) replies: There is a recognised problem when an individual re-enlists into the Regular Army. This problem will be resolved under a software change which went live last month. It is hoped that all the problems currently being experienced by both re-enlist-

ments and the MPGS will be resolved by March. In the meantime there is a process in place which enables RAOs to manage soldiers' pay problems at unit level and make good any shortfalls. The sender has been given an advance of pay and has had the situation explained to him at length.

Pay error recovered in one lump

IN July I was told that I would receive an LSSA bonus of £1,250 (actually about £890 after tax), which was welcome news after returning from Op Telic.

As the bonus was unexpected I checked with my pay office and was told it was my entitlement. Needless to say I was called into the pay office in October to be told an error had been made. The money has to be paid back and I have arranged to do so in one lump sum as I just want to get it out of the way.

I feel I am paying for their mistake. – **Name and address supplied.**

I RETURNED from Op Telic in early July and my pay advice at the end of that

month showed I was being paid Longer Separated Service Allowance (LSSA).

My admin office assured me it would be stopped. At the end of August I was still being paid LSSA, but was told by the office again that it would be stopped.

At the end of September I was still being paid LSSA. I was then told the LSSA would be stopped and the amounts paid in error would be taken from my October pay in one payment.

The amount paid in error, despite repeated visits to the admin office, is £758.70. As a married man with a family, I would have preferred to repay it in instalments. – **Name and address supplied.**

Bonus is open-and-shut case

I JOINED the Regular Army in November 1997 on an S-Type engagement after service as a TA signaller. I passed my five-year point last November but by January had still not received my five-year bonus. I have been told I am not entitled to it.

I am able to do 12 years in the Regulars, in which I get the same training, postings, pension and pay, so why am I not entitled to the same bonuses? I have pursued this through my chain of command, but no one can give me a reasonable answer. Why am I not entitled? – **Name and address supplied.**



PS10(A) responds: The commitment bonus is a retention measure, which rewards continued service and is paid only to personnel serving on an open engagement. The bonus is paid, in part, for service given and, in part, for service promised in the return of service attached to its receipt. Soldiers who serve on the open engagement are initially committed for four years from the age of 18 and do not have the option to take premature voluntary retirement (PVR). Soldiers who serve on S-Type engagements do not have the four-year commitment and, as part of their terms of service, have the option to apply for PVR on repayment at any time.

THEN AND THEN



25 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, December 1978: Headquarters Catering Group at St Omer Barracks in Aldershot is providing 4½ tonnes of turkey, two tonnes of gammon, more than a tonne of Christmas pud, two tonnes of Christmas cake, 17,500 mince pies, 100 Old English pies, 150 yule log cakes and 6,000 crackers for 18,500 personnel based in the garrison area.

50 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, December 1953: The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, under the command of Lt Col J C Church MC, disembark at Georgetown, capital of British Guiana. They were deployed to relieve The Royal Welch Fusiliers, who were rushed from their base in Jamaica after the constitution of the South American colony had been suspended.

Rules, regs and pay band reviews

I'M tired of seeing soldiers' genuine complaints about money being replied to with quotes from rules and regulations but with nothing actually being done about them. I think members of the Armed Forces, particularly those in Staff and Personnel Support, should keep on writing until something is done.

When Pay 2000 was introduced I heard that a review of pay bands for Adjutant General's Corps personnel was under way. I wait – as we all do – for an update from Regulations for Army Allowances and Charges (RAAC), Manual of Army Pay Duties (MAPD) and other publications. What is happening with this review? – Name and address supplied.



DSPS(A) replies: The Military Clerk Career Employment Group (CEG) is due for a job evaluation (JE) review in 2004. The writer may not be aware that once a trade has been evaluated by the Joint Service Job Evaluation Team (JSJET), a moratorium of five years for further evaluations is placed on that trade.

While the CEG has not changed substantially since the initial assessment for Pay 2000, significant changes are planned for the personnel administrative environment during the period up to 2006.

These changes, most notably the introduction of JPA, will impact on trade/manning structures, job roles and working practices. Preliminary work is underway to identify

future structures and the full impact on personnel administrative trades.

Conducting a JE exercise on our trades as currently structured would provide little benefit in terms of refreshing existing JE data, so it would be extremely unlikely to result in uplift to the higher range, as the information gathered would be largely the same as it was three years ago.

For this reason both Army and RAF trade sponsors have delayed the JE of their respective trades until 2007. Were we to allow the JE re-evaluation exercise originally planned for 2004 to go ahead, we would then not be in a position to re-evaluate our trades to take account of upcoming changes until 2009, two years later than currently planned.

PS...

This is poor form

THE MoD recently updated Army Form 2048, used in the other ranks' confidential reporting system but didn't bother to amend the gender terminology to read "he/she". I know we make up only one per cent of the Army, but as we've been around for some considerable time is it too much to have my gender acknowledged on my annual report? – WO2 Sue Boyes, 5th Regiment, Royal Artillery.

Outdated acronym

AS an ex-Serviceman, I am writing to express my annoyance at the continuing use of the term/acronym "OR" when referring to non-commissioned persons. I find it disparaging and dismissive of the efforts of the largest element of the British Armed Forces. How would officers like to be referred to as "other"? Surely, in the 21st century a more appropriate collective could be used. May I suggest, for the want of a better description, "non-commissioned ranks"? – Name supplied, Winchester.

Haka that wasn't

YOUR brief article about Fijian troops performing the *haka* (Nov) would not be received well in New Zealand. Only the Kiwis perform the *haka* – and damned impressive it is too if you ever have the opportunity to experience one. The Fijian version of the *haka* is called the *cibi*, pronounced "thimbi". – Andre Chissel, New Zealand.

Cold War medal?

NOW that the Canal Zone medal/clasp has been settled, is it not time that Nato issued a Cold War Medal to those who served from 1949 to 1989? As the Kosovo award is in production it would be easy to produce a similar one with a clasp "Cold War 1949-1989". I suggest all who agree write to the Secretary General, c/o Private Office, Nato Office of Information, 1110 Brussels, Belgium. – M P Cocker, Cleveleys, Lancs.

Looking for Les

AS part of research into a documentary about his life, Yorkshire Television are looking for friends or colleagues of Les Dawson from his Army days. Les joined the Army in 1949 and, according to his autobiography, was in the Eighth Tanks at Catterick. He was a trooper in the Queen's Bay 2nd Dragoon Guards at Dale Barracks in Chester, and posted to Germany during National Service.

If you knew Les, please contact me on 0113 222 8565, write to me at the Features Department, Yorkshire Television, Kirkstall Road, Leeds LS3 1JS, or email emily.louth@granadamedia.com. – Emily Louth, Leeds.

Vox pop

The regular feature in which we ask soldiers for their views on an issue

Drilling time

Phase one training is often regarded as one of the toughest periods in a soldier's career. We asked new recruits and instructors at the Army Training Regiment, Winchester, what it's like for the 21st century intake and how things have changed



Sgt Eddie Upham, Int Corps, instructor
Phase one is broadly similar to when I joined in 1996 although I now have more of an insight into the mechanics of the organisation. That was an eye-opener.

Recruits will always be a cross-section of the physically fit and unfit but I don't think levels have deteriorated dramatically since I joined.

One new element to the course is the excellent battlefield tour. It gives them an insight into why discipline is so important. And they get a sense of history and pride in the Army.

Cpl Emma McIntyre, Int Corps, instructor

The course is broadly similar to when I came through in 1998 but there have been big changes to the facilities, which are excellent. Recruits still live in ten-man rooms so they have to learn to get along. I get a huge sense of pride when I see them finally passing out – and with it great job satisfaction.



Capt Ed Lawrence, LD, troop leader

I interview each new recruit when they come in. There is a lot of personal reward in taking civilians off the street, teaching them skills, improving their self-confidence and seeing trained soldiers coming out at the end. The emphasis is to provide them with the skills to pass out, and if that needs more time, then we are here to help them.



Cpl Leigh Ashton, KRH, instructor

The syllabus is more productive than when I came through in 1996. The course is now 12 weeks rather than ten. The improved adventurous training week at

Crowborough in East Sussex gives students excitement and the battlefield tour is popular. Physically, it is still hard and demanding. They leave here almost a soldier – that finishing touch comes with experience.

Cpl Dave Killick, QRH, instructor

When I was here in 1995 I expected it to be like the TV documentaries and *Soldier, Soldier*. In fact, it was much better. Keeping on your toes in lessons and PT became second nature and you had to be on the ball in your rooms in case big brother was watching. NCOs seemed to appear from nowhere. Now I see it from the other side and we definitely keep an eye on them. They have to work as a team and that inspires confidence.



Pte Lucy Holbrook, Int Corps recruit

Training is what I expected and I am getting fitter. I like drill. We work hard as a team. When you are out there performing and it goes well, it makes you feel very good. When things go wrong you get shouted at but you get over it. The instructors are great. They are disciplinarians when they have to be, but they have a sense of humour. They are good people and approachable.

Pte Rachel Morris, RLC recruit

The Army is something I always wanted to do. I was in the Army cadets so had a good idea of what to expect. The physical training is easier than I expected and lectures have been interesting and cover health and hygiene, NBC, and personal finance, telling us how to look after our money. All the instructors are good and I feel they are on our side.



ATpr Dylan Laureau, AAC recruit

I am from South Africa and had two mates who joined. The British Army has a reputation as the best in the world so I thought it was for me. Physically it is easier than I expected although I found it hard to get with the routine of early mornings, block-cleaning and so on. It seems no matter how good you are there is always something to get into trouble over. But once you are up to scratch it becomes easier. So far I love it.



Interviews: Ray Routledge Pictures: Steve Dock



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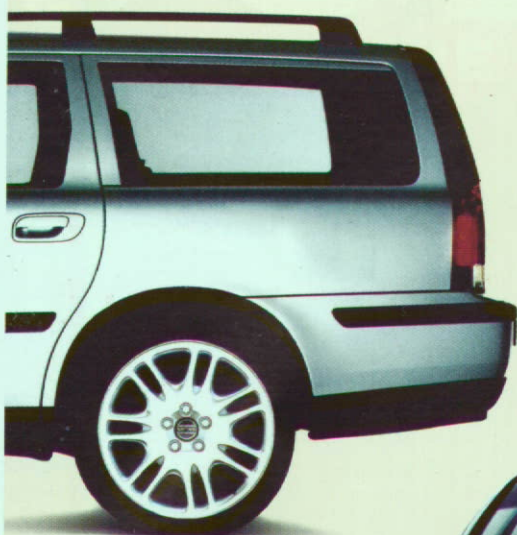
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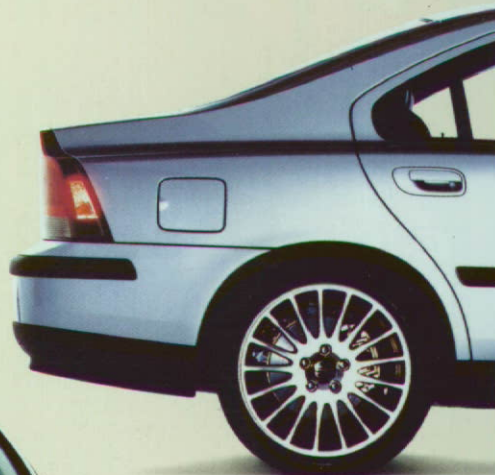
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