

SOLDIER



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sends
the heavy
metal**

Brize Norton's ace drop-outs

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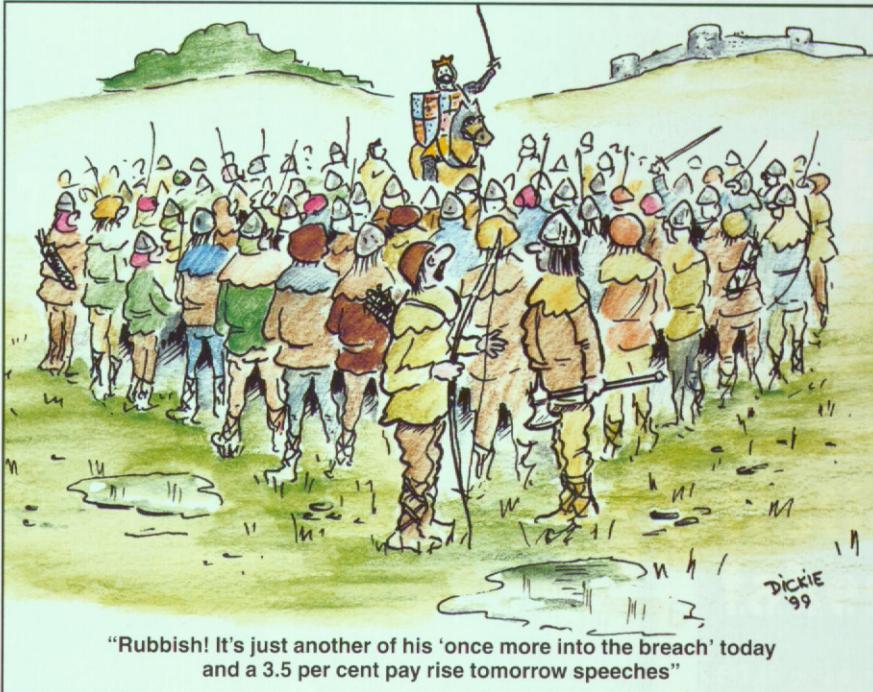


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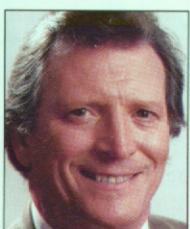


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Joint force: A German soldier, left, and a member of the KORBR standing by in Macedonia
Picture: Capt Jim Gallagher



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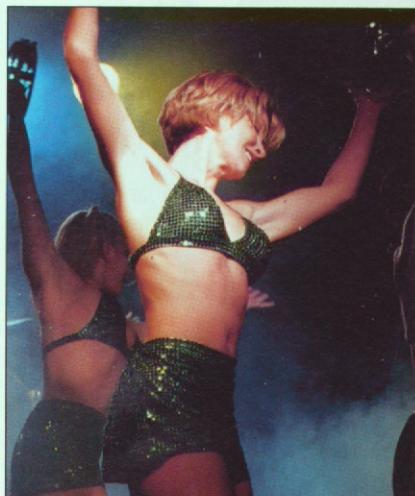
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SOLDIER to soldier

Overstretch and the unplannable

JUST when the Army was on track to take a long-overdue chunk out of its bulging overstretch problem along came Kosovo... which just proves the old adage about military planners having to plan for the unplannable.

With 3,300 extra troops earmarked for those parts of the Service most affected by shortages, namely the Royal Engineers, REME and the Royal Signals, and recruiters hitting their targets for the Regular Army, there was real hope that the perpetual undermanning of the past decade would begin to recede.

That could be undermined by the Government's unequivocal decision to send troops and armour to underpin the possibility of peace in Kosovo (see Page 7).

PEACEKEEPERS

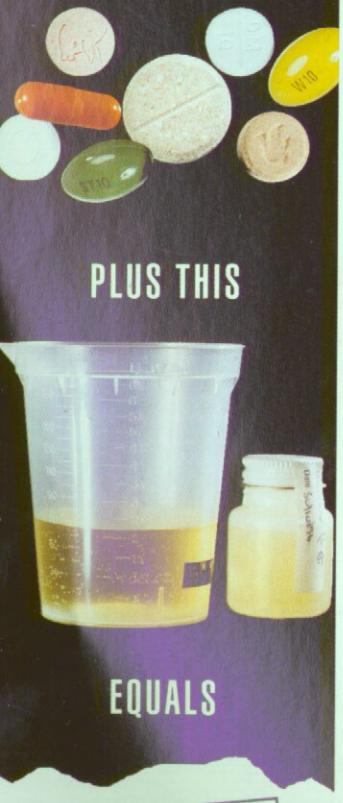
Britain has committed up to 8,000 soldiers to the concept of a NATO-led Kosovo Peace Implementation Force (KFOR). It could bring to about 13,000 the number of UK troops acting as peacekeepers in the Balkans.

Defence Secretary George Robertson told the House: "I can say that if we go ahead with such a deployment, it would clearly have an impact on our forces. Some 27 per cent of the British Army is currently on operations – an historically high figure. That is extremely demanding of the individuals affected by it."

Lord Gilbert, the Procurement Minister, told the Lords on the same day: "This deployment will add to the overstretch in the Army, in particular if we end up deploying of the order of 8,000 men... it will add greatly to the overstretch within the Army."

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Special report

How drugs wrecked my life

Colin Brodie was a soldier... until he was caught in a random drugs test. He was discharged and his life went into freefall, culminating in a long prison sentence for robbery. Now helping campaign against drugs, he wrote this article for *Soldier* from his prison cell.

BEING caught for using drugs in the Army hasn't been a very pleasant experience for me.

On December 15, 1995 I was discharged from the 1st Battalion, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders two months after failing a compulsory drugs test (CDT). After my discharge, my drug use increased so much that the end result is that I am now serving five years in HM Prison Maidstone for armed robbery.

I had used various drugs before joining the Army at 16, although not to any great extent. The physical and mental challenge of training with the Junior Infantry Battalion at Ouston, near Newcastle upon Tyne, kept me occupied and gave me something on which to focus.

I was the first person from my family to join up, which was something special for me, and I had visions of making it to the top.

FRESH START

When I first put on the uniform I saw it as an opportunity to break away from the drug scene in Clydebank, where I grew up, and to make a fresh start in my life.

During the early part of my career in the Army drugs never really played much part. My problems began when my regiment was posted to Germany, where I found myself with money in my pocket, time on my hands and mixing with the wrong crowd. With regular trips to Amsterdam on drug weekends, my ambition began to slip away. By the time I was posted back to the UK six months later I was heavily involved.

In 1994 we were told the battalion was going to West Belfast for six months and I made the decision that, for my own safety and the safety of my mates, drugs would play no part in my life for that tour. I stuck to it and can honestly say those six months were the best I had in the Army.

Being in such a closed environment meant my mates became more like a family and I could not let drugs put their lives at danger.

Back at Folkestone with the battalion I soon slipped into the bad old ways, neglecting fitness, training,



Better times: Colin Brodie



left, with 1 A and SH colleagues on patrol in West Belfast. He avoided drugs during the tour



Campaigner: Colin Brodie aiming for a life without drugs

equipment and everything else. In June that year I took the chance to sign off and leave the Army... the only way out for me. With 12 months to serve, I was posted to Edinburgh, which added to my problems by making it easier for me to see my civilian mates. It was no great surprise that I was caught when the CDT team came to Redford Barracks early one Monday morning. After a heavy weekend on drugs, I knew my time was up.

I'd heard about CDT but up to that point had never really thought it would actually happen to me. At the time, I and the other 21 who were caught all thought of it as a big laugh and an excuse to get out early. If I'd known then what I know now I wouldn't have found it so funny.

Leaving the Army so suddenly with a black cloud over my head created problems of its own in civvy street.

Trying to find work became more and more difficult and I ended up with a dead-end job in an amusement park

back at Folkestone, then lost it after three months because of the drugs and alcohol. Within six months of leaving the Armed Forces I'd started taking heroin (an £80-a-day habit) and getting involved in petty crime.

I was arrested frequently and ended up in court every few weeks.

Within 12 months of leaving the Army I was in prison starting a five-year sentence for armed robbery.

ROCK BOTTOM

It made me realise that I'd hit rock bottom through using drugs and that I would never again be given the opportunities which the Army offered. I have now decided that drugs will play no more part in my life and I have not touched one in more than two years.

Recently I have been working closely with the Army's drug and alcohol awareness unit to try and help new recruits understand the difficulties and problems which can occur through using drugs in the Service. I have given short drug lectures to young soldiers at Army training regiments across the country and appear-

ed in BFBS commercials. It is difficult to stand up in front of people and tell them the mistakes you made, but I feel it is worthwhile as a lot can be learned through my experiences.

If it helps just one person then it will have been worth every bit of effort. Not everyone will end up in prison like myself, but the chances are if you use drugs in the Army you will get caught sooner or later.

When I am released later this year I will no doubt face different problems now I've got a criminal record, but without drugs I feel that I am better prepared to deal with life. I'm hoping that my future outside will involve working with people who face the same problems I did during the time I used drugs.

If you ever come across drugs or are using drugs at the moment, then stop and think.

It only takes a second to think about something which could affect the rest of your life. You only get one shot in the Army so make the most of it. Good luck for the future.

Compulsory testing takes its toll

FOUR years of compulsory drug testing (CDT) in the Army have resulted in a significant drop in detections, a strong indication that the programme has been a significant success.

And the reduction in the numbers of those who fail the test comes in spite of more sophisticated methods of detection, says Maj Tim Saunders, the Army's Staff Officer (Drugs).

REGULAR USERS

A further indication of the effectiveness of the CDT programme is that the number of what Maj Saunders describes as "regular" users of drugs has also dropped dramatically. Interviews with those caught out by CDT reveal that most are occasional rather than habitual users.

While the Army led the way with compulsory drug testing, the Royal Navy joined the programme in April 1997 and the Royal Air Force in November 1998. It is now very much an Armed Forces issue, with drug misuse and military service seen as incompatible.

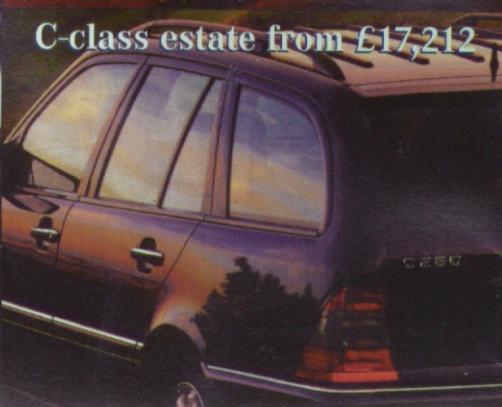
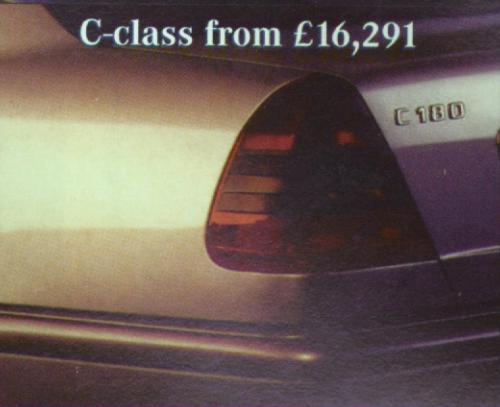
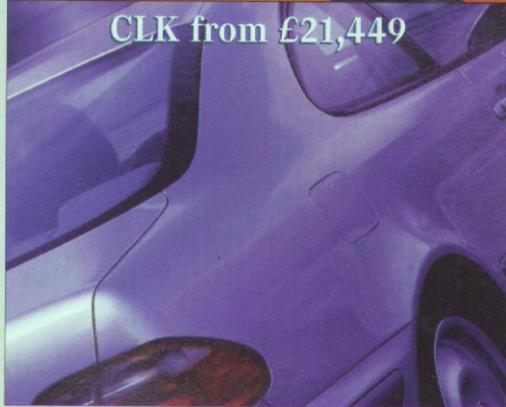
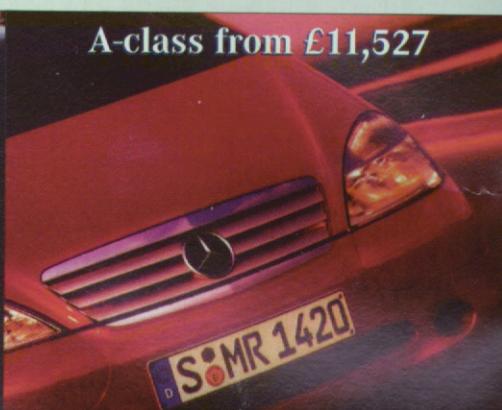
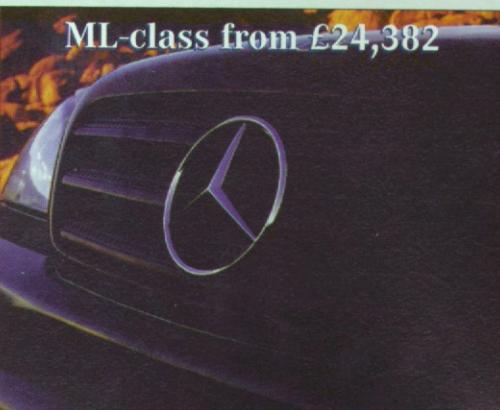
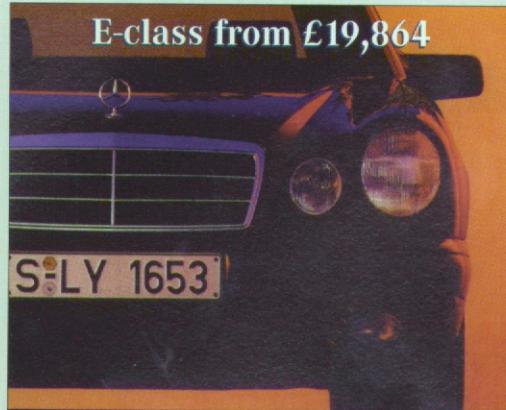
NOT TOLERATED

Drug misuse undermines trust and health and brings soldiers into contact with criminals and with the law. To preserve operational effectiveness, the misuse of drugs in any form is not tolerated in the Army, Royal Navy or RAF.

Service and civilian police forces, compulsory drugs testing, unit vigilance and education are effective counters to the problem.

CDT teams drop in unannounced on British troops in locations all over the world, collecting urine samples from soldiers on exercises and operations as far afield as Bosnia, Brunei and Kenya.

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Brigade stands by for Kosovo

A SQUADRON of Challenger main battle tanks, Warrior fighting vehicles and AS90 self-propelled guns were at sea and heading for Thessaloniki in Greece as this issue was going to press.

Following the British Government's decision to commit up to 8,000 troops to a peace implementation force in Kosovo (KFOR), a King's Royal Hussars battle group was expected to deploy within days to the Balkans under Operation Agricola. A second battle group was due to follow, forming the 4th Armoured Brigade on the ground.

Their departure hinged on the outcome of a compromise being hammered out between the Serb Government and the region's ethnic Albanians at talks in Ramboillet, France. Leading the force is Lt Gen Sir Mike Jackson, Commander HQ ARRC.

An advance party of about 200 soldiers were already in theatre to recce routes and bridges and identify accommodation.

First into theatre would be the KRH battle group under Lt Col Jonathan Powe, with his own regimental HQ, a squadron of tanks, a company of Irish Guards, a company of the 1st Battalion, The King's Own Royal Border Regiment, which is already standing by in Macedonia, and the tactical headquarters of the 4th Armoured Brigade.

AS90 guns were being provided by 88



Picture: Sgt Brian Gamble

Ranging in: Challenger main battle tanks of The Queen's Royal Hussars prepare to fire their guns on the Bergen-Hohne ranges in Germany shortly before they were transported by sea to Thessaloniki in Greece as soldiers of 4 Armoured Brigade prepared to deploy to Kosovo

Battery, 4 Regiment RA, and sapper support by 21 Regiment RE, while RAF Puma helicopters and eight Italy-based Harriers were standing by. Other assets ready to move included elements of 2 Battalion REME, 2 Armoured Field Ambulance and 204 Signal Squadron.

Fourteen Challengers, six AS90s, 27 Warriors, eight Scimitars, 30 light armoured and support vehicles, nearly 30 Royal Engineer and REME specialist vehicles and four armoured ambulances were embarked on the RFAs *Sea Centurion* and *Sea Crusader*.

The second wave into theatre was due to be logistical support for the artillery, engineers, REME and field ambulance, followed by the Irish Guards battle group,

which would consist of a KRH squadron, an Irish Guards company and a company from the The Green Howards. The lion's share of units will be drawn from Germany, with personnel advised to expect a six-month tour.

The major communications effort will be enhanced by 7 and 16 Signal Regiments from Germany and 2 Signal Regiment and 3 (UK) Division HQ and Signal Regiment from the UK.

Some Territorial Army personnel are already involved in the operation and it is anticipated that volunteers from the TA will be sought to relieve undermanning and provide specialist skills.

The mission was spelt out by the Prime
● Turn to Page 19

Battlefield helicopter HQ takes off at Wilton

THE proposed Joint Helicopter Command (JHC) for all battlefield helicopters is to have its headquarters at Wilton, in Wiltshire.

The command, one of the key initiatives arising from the Strategic Defence Review, will form by October 1 and become fully operational by April 2000.

It will comprise 12,000 Servicemen and women and some 350 helicopters. It will also include the Army's new 16 Air Assault Brigade, which consists of Lynx light utility helicopters, and, when it comes into service, the Apache WAH-64



AVM David Niven

attack helicopter. No major relocations as a result of the decision have been announced.

The Defence Secretary, George Robertson said: "Joint operations are increasingly the norm and it makes good sense to bring together, under a single joint organisation, the Royal Navy's Commando helicopters, all operational Army Air

Corps helicopters and the Royal Air Force's support helicopters."

Air Vice Marshal David Niven has been appointed the first commander of the JHC, a post which will be open to officers from all three Services.

High wire act to clear minefield

WHEN SSgt Andrew Hamilton went to the rescue of two motorists injured in a Bosnian minefield he first had to clear a safe area for himself while dangling from a helicopter winch wire in high winds, rain and failing visibility.

Then he prepared an area for his bomb disposal team from 3 Troop, 21 Field Squadron (EOD) RE so that they could clear a path for medics trying to reach the injured civilians.

His team had been scrambled after a car struck a mine near Sipovo in November 1997, an action for which he has now received the Queen's Commendation for Bravery. It was presented to him by the Chief Engineer (Army), Brig Albert Whitley, on a visit to the Defence Diving School at Portsmouth, where SSgt Hamilton is now an instructor.



SSgt Hamilton

People, places, events

Baby Stuart turns in a Command performance

COMBAT medic LCpl Timothy Hemmings RAMC found himself delivering a baby within minutes of arriving for work at the medical centre at HQ Land Command.

"My admin officer, Rosemary Romain, shouted to say there was a woman giving birth in a car outside," he said. With no doctor or nurse on site at the time, LCpl Hemmings, a combat medical technician who has served in Bosnia, was left to his own devices.

Assisted by Rosemary, he made up a delivery bed on the treatment room floor and eight minutes later delivered a healthy, 7lb 12oz son, Stuart, for Sally Macfarlane and her husband, SSgt Ian Macfarlane.

SSgt Macfarlane, serving with 3 Commando Troop attached to 49 Field Squadron of 33 Engineer Regiment,



Bundle of joy: SSgt Ian Macfarlane, left, and his wife Sally pose proudly with new son Stuart, while LCpl Timothy Hemmings and admin officer Rosemary Romain look on

Picture: Capt Jim Gallagher

explained that his wife had started labour early in the morning at their married quarter in Bulford. But their journey to the hospital was delayed by icy roads and the aftermath of two accidents. With a

choice of three routes to Salisbury Hospital, he deliberately drove past HQ Land at Wilton "just in case".

The couple also have a two-year-old son, James.

All aboard RFA Loveboat



Picture: Cpl Gareth Davies RAF

Shipboard romantics: SSgt Jacqueline O'Rourke AGC and PO John Walker of the Royal Navy prepare to tie the knot on the bridge of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel *Fort Grange* moored in Split North Port, Croatia. Presiding over the ceremony on Valentine's Day was Maj Ian Griffiths, OC 7 (UK) Logistic Support Regiment, backed by 30 children from a local school choir. Jacqueline and John met in Cyprus a year ago while serving together with 9 Signal Regiment. After a ten-day honeymoon on the island of Brac, just off Split, the couple were going their separate ways, John to his new unit near Portsmouth, Hants, and Jacqueline to 7 (UK) Log Spt Regt at Divulje Barracks near Split.

Services on target to beat millennium bug

ALL British Army mission-critical systems, including weapons systems, are expected to be Year 2000 compliant by September.

Eradicating the millennium bug in the Armed Forces is now regarded as the most important challenge outside operational activities, with the Defence Procurement Minister, Lord Gilbert, responsible for the day-to-day direction of the project.

The Ministry of Defence has about 30,000 systems that use date and time as some part of their process, making its Year 2000 programme the largest of any of the central Government departments. About half those systems have been found to be susceptible to the millennium bug and about

1,600 are regarded as critical to military operations and essential to MoD business.

Work has been completed on about 60 per cent of the critical systems and is on schedule to achieve the rest before the deadline. Non-essential systems will be fixed after January 1.

Lord Gilbert warned: "Despite the progress that has been made, and I am aware of the effort being put in by many hundreds of staff, there is no room for complacency. Slippage in the programme could affect our ability safely to mount and support military operations, including those in support of the civil authorities in the UK, over the millennium date change period."

IN BRIEF

COLCHESTER-based 24 Airmobile Brigade hosted a two-day conference on military airmobility involving fellow members of NATO's Multinational Division Central rapid reaction force.

The brigade has received the Investors in People award for the way it trains and develops its soldiers and supporting civilian staff.

- Five Royal Artillery regiments and 9 Regiment AAC, who make up the Offensive Support Group of 3 (UK) Division, have received the Investors in People Award. The OSG consists of 1 RHA, 7 Para RHA, 40 Regt RA, 47 Regt RA, 100 Regt (V) and 9 Regt AAC.

- Southampton University Officers'

Families' task force swings into action

A TASK force which will look at the unique concerns of Service families disadvantaged by "following the flag" held its first meeting at the end of January.

As a result of postings at home and abroad, Service dependants have frequently found themselves at the back of the queue for new school places and the attention of doctors and dentists. Spouses frequently have to give up their own jobs to accompany their Service partners.

Now the Service Families Task Force (SFTF), created as part of the Strategic Defence Review's Policy for People, has begun its work of ensuring a better deal on education, welfare and healthcare facilities.

The cross-governmental working group will seek to ensure Armed

Forces families have the same access to support enjoyed by civilians.

The task force is made up of a ministerial working group and a forum of the Service families' associations, both chaired by Armed Forces Minister Doug Henderson.

It will study concerns raised by Service personnel and their dependants to ensure Government policies are co-ordinated to allow for their unique way of life.

Mr Henderson said: "I was heartened by the positive response of other Government departments to the situation of Service families and welcome their commitment to support the Service Families Task Force. This meeting is just the first step in resolving the real concerns that Service families can face."

Nottingham's big guns sign off



Gun ho! The South Notts Hussars signed off with a colossal bang when they bid farewell to their big guns with a final salvo on Salisbury Plain. The Nottingham-based unit, which is to be re-roled to provide war emergency replacements for Regular artillery regiments, fired all 18 of its 155mm field howitzers simultaneously for the last time. The unit is to be re-equipped with 105mm light guns, which it had before the switch to the 155mm in 1992.

Picture: Gareth Griffiths

Training Corps has been awarded the Patrick Trophy as the outstanding unit in Aldershot-based 145 Brigade.

- The Highland Gunners, 19 Regiment RA, will receive the Freedom of Inverness on March 20.

- Soldiers from 1 LI and 2 R Anglian in

Cyprus have been trialling the new Land Rover Wolf before the vehicle is introduced to British Forces on the island.

- Soldiers of the Yorkshire Yeomanry paraded in Pontefract for the last time on February 6. They will be reorganised to form a Light Infantry rifle company as part of the North East Battalion of

Crash rescue earns door gunner a bravery award

THE door gunner on a Lynx helicopter which crashed in 1996 has received a Queen's Commendation for Bravery for ignoring the risk of fire and explosion to free a colleague trapped under a pile of cargo.

LCpl Ronnie McCollgan, pictured, pulled ATpr Steve Sanger from the stricken aircraft after it came down at RAF Stafford during a flight from Aldergrove, Northern Ireland to Stanford. Both men were serving with 655 Squadron based at Aldergrove.



Both are now with 16 Flight at Dhekelia, Cyprus, and ATpr Sanger, who was going on leave when the accident happened, was present when LCpl McCollgan received his commendation from Lt Gen Sir Christopher Wallace, Chief of Joint Operations.

TA launches recruit drive

A HOLOGRAM-like poster, in which a building-site worker carrying a mallet changes into a soldier with an SA80, was unveiled last month as the MoD launched a £3m recruiting campaign for the Territorial Army. Despite recent cuts the TA needs up to 10,000 recruits each year.

The 8ft high posters, devised by Saatchi & Saatchi, employ a system in which one image is superimposed on the other.

The campaign, launched by Armed Forces Minister Doug Henderson and the Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Roger Wheeler, will use TV, radio, newspaper and billboard advertisements to raise the profile of the TA. Gen Wheeler said: "This is a vital step forward for a better-manned, better-equipped and better-trained TA that is in good shape for the 21st century."

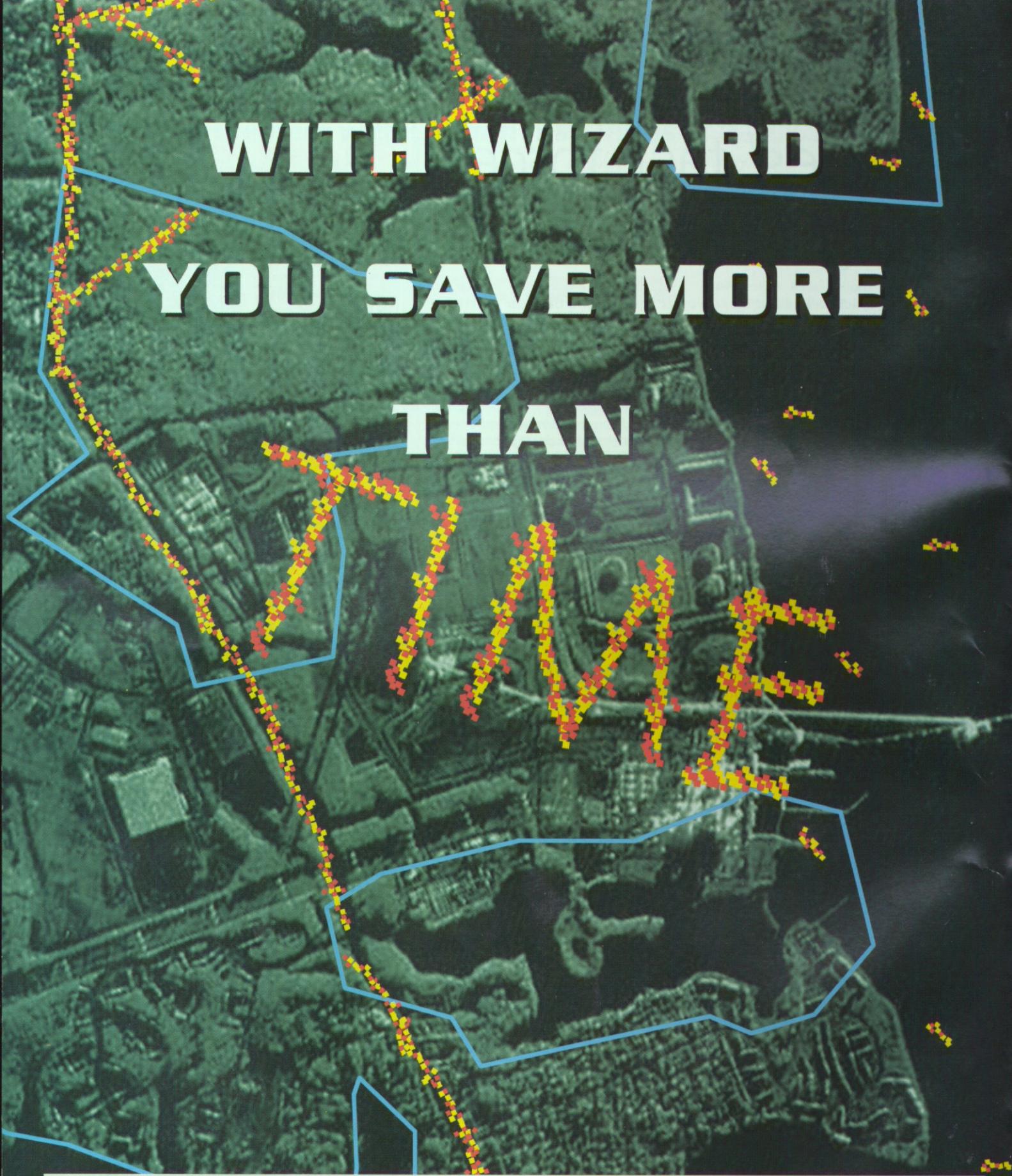
All 350 TA centres in Britain will open their doors to the public on Saturday, March 13.

• A TA Job Shop opened on the Army's web site will give volunteers affected by the cuts ready access to all information about alternative opportunities to serve in the TA, or a switch to reserve units in other Services, the cadets and the Regular Army. Vacancies will be advertised on www.army.mod.uk/ta-jobshop

Gunners to the rescue

SOLDIERS from 47 Regiment RA serving with the United Nations in Cyprus have been thanked by a Turkish commander for helping a commander who accidentally shot himself.

The gunners were on duty at Irish Bridge in UN Sector Two when they heard a shot. Their position is close to a post manned by the Turkish Wolf Regiment's 33rd Battalion. A soldier on guard duty had shot himself in the leg and was going into shock as the British troops arrived.



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NORTHROP GRUMMAN, BRITISH AEROSPACE, COMPUTING DEVICES, GULFSTREAM, L3

People, places, events

Picture: WO2 Pete Bristo



Support: Pte Phillip Kidd, left, and Lt Nick Copperwaite of B Coy, 2 Para in front of a diesel tanker similar to one they helped to uncover during a Customs raid on smugglers

Paras help smash ring of smugglers

SOLDIERS from the 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment have helped Customs and Excise's National Investigation Service officers crack a multi-million pound diesel smuggling operation in Northern Ireland, writes Jill Swift.

The troops, currently deployed in East Tyrone on a six-month tour, were from 2 Para's B Company, commanded by Maj James Bashall. They set up a security cordon around an isolated farmyard location before the Customs conducted a series of simultaneous dawn raids, netting five tankers and a large haul of cash.

Henry Snodden, head of the HM Customs and Excise local intelligence unit, said: "We are extremely grateful for the invaluable assistance provided to our officers by 2 Para during Operation Cosmic.

LAUNDERED FUEL

"It resulted in the arrest of five persons and the seizure of five tankers, 200,000 litres of smuggled, laundered and contaminated fuel, and a substantial sum of cash. The overall investigation involves the evasion of approximately £2m in duty and VAT."

With prices varying by as much as £1 a gallon between the Republic and Northern Ireland, fuel smuggling across the border has become a major problem.

Lt Nick Copperwaite, a platoon commander with B Coy, said: "We were given less than 48 hours' notice that the whole company could be involved with a series of simultaneous dawn raids to support a Customs and Excise operation.

"To ensure the suspects were caught completely off guard and to maintain absolute secrecy, we were kept in the dark about what Customs had planned.

"As far as the majority of the company were concerned, this was just another night-time patrol. It wasn't until we had reached our final rendezvous point and were looking at returning to barracks that we received our real tasking: to provide a ring around the suspect's farmyard property and to ensure no one escaped or entered the area.

"There had been two inches of snow earlier in the day, so by the time we moved into position that night the ground was freezing and the sky was pitch black."

Customs and RUC officers swarmed through the Para positions at dawn and began searching farm buildings. They quickly found tankers full of illegal fuel as well as additional storage facilities in the process of being constructed.

Maj Bashall said: "I am extremely proud of all my soldiers as they continue to demonstrate their professionalism, flexibility and diversity of skill in an operational environment."

Since 1969 when the troubles began, no other unit has completed more tours in Northern Ireland than 2 Para.

● We have been asked to point out that Sgt David Kinsley, killed in a Lynx helicopter crash at Gornji Vakuf in Bosnia, was a REME aircraft technician attached to 4 Regiment AAC.

RMAS mourns death of the Soldier King

THE death of King Hussein of Jordan last month from cancer was a cause for mourning around the world. His loss was felt particularly keenly at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, where a special Order of the Day was issued by the Commandant, Maj Gen Arthur Denaro.

Held there in great affection, he had publicly acknowledged the influence Sandhurst had had on his upbringing and had stated that there was no better training for a king than that offered by the Academy.

Arriving as a cadet at Sandhurst in 1952, the King remained a staunch friend and supporter of the Academy for the rest of his life. He visited RMAS on many occasions and was the Queen's representative at the Sovereign's Parade in April 1981 when his son, Prince Abdullah, now the King of Jordan, passed out.

King Hussein's daughter, Princess Aisha, passed out in 1987, as did Prince Ali in 1994. The King's last visit to Sandhurst was at the beginning of the year to see another of his sons, Prince Hamzah, who started the Commissioning Course on January 4.

The King also represented the Queen at the Sovereign's Parade in April 1993, an occasion on which he told the cadets: "I have always felt that my experience at Sandhurst was one which had the greatest impact on my formative years, and that there was no better training for a king."

He presented the Academy with two magnificent centrepieces in silver and gold, the first a camel and rider and the second a model of the Academy drums. He also founded a prize for the most improved overseas cadet on each course.

DECISION-MAKER

King Hussein joined No 12 Platoon of Inkerman Company in Old College on September 3, 1952 and passed out on February 5, 1953. His company commander said of him at the time: "He shows unusual maturity for his age . . . is level-headed, has a great deal of practical common sense, and makes decisions quickly and simply as if it was natural for him to do so. He has earned on his own merits the respect and affection of the staff and fellow cadets."

Maj Gen Denaro saluted the coffin when he accompanied the Prince of Wales and Prime Minister Tony Blair to King Hussein's state funeral in Amman.



Loss: King Hussein on a visit to Sandhurst

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Royal British Legion videos

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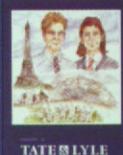
A highly original and entertaining account of Colonel Peter Storie-Pugh's imprisonment in Colditz where he was involved in numerous escapes. This amusing and exciting video is a must for anyone with an interest in the most famous of all POW camps.

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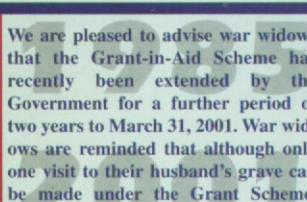
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We are pleased to advise war widows that the Grant-in-Aid Scheme has recently been extended by the Government for a further period of two years to March 31, 2001. War widows are reminded that although only one visit to their husband's grave can be made under the Grant Scheme, they are still welcome to make any further visits, but at the normal full costs.



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People, places, events

Tender moment as Army names naval vessel

Army officers are rarely given the honour of naming a Royal Navy vessel, but it happened to Brig Albert Whitley, Chief Engineer (Army), when he cut the ribbon for the diving tender *Sapper*.

He is pictured, right, with Lt Col Robbie Hall, CO of the Defence Diving School at Horsea Island, Portsmouth, where the *Sapper* will be based. The 20-metre tender will provide a stable platform from which divers can operate. Brig Whitley sprayed the traditional bottle of bubbly over the deck of the former towed-array recovery vessel.

Army and Navy divers have trained together at the purpose-built school since 1995. It has formed a partnership agreement with a civilian training company to generate income by making spare capacity available to sports divers.



Tidworth calling

TEMPORARY radio stations will soon be broadcasting in major military areas around Britain.

Garrison radio will be trialled over an initial eight-month period in Aldershot, Colchester, Caterick and Tidworth, and could lead to permanent stations in the towns.

Each of the garrison towns will have its own dedicated, low-power service for two months, during which audiences – both military and civilian – will be surveyed for their views. The first temporary station will go on air at Tidworth in mid-April.

PERMANENT

If the first phase is a success, the trial will be repeated within a year. The next step could be permanent licences.

British Forces Network, as the test stations will be called, will be managed by the Services Sound and Vision Corporation, which already operates radio stations for forces overseas, in co-operation with the commercial radio company Chiltern Broadcasting Management (CBM).

Garrison radio is not designed to be a profit-making venture, but SSVC's director of radio, Allan Phillips, explained that CBM will help the new

Garrisons to have their own radio stations

stations to compete for listeners in a media environment in which commercial radio is increasingly important. He said: "We will

take what BFBS has done overseas and use the skills and commercial market know-how of CBM to make it work in the UK."

The output will be music and talk, designed to satisfy the tastes and needs of a Service audience which spans a wide age range. "Listeners fall roughly into the 18-to-45 age group," said Allan Phillips, "but we can tailor the output because we know what kind of people listen at different times of the day."

Although the project is aimed primarily at a uniformed audience, civilians will not be ignored.

Garrison radio stations are expected to raise the profile of the Services in local communities.

Whiterock patrolling base becomes a footnote to history

Going, going... Cpl Tim Lake of the 2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment stands guard as contractors begin the demolition of the former Security Forces base at Fort Whiterock in west Belfast. By the summer there will be nothing left of the base which, since 1979, has been perched on the lower slopes of the Black Mountain, overlooking the Falls and the west of the city. The heavily fortified installation, a temporary home for an estimated 7,500 soldiers over the years, was used as a base for troops patrolling nearby republican estates.

Picture: Shane Wilkinson, AIS HQNI



IN BRIEF

A TEAM from the 9th/12th Royal Lancers pulled off a coup during their first visit to the International Austrian Patrol Competition in Linz, returning home with two trophies.

Lt James Campbell-Barnard told Soldier: "It was quite a result as the lads were competi-

ing against 62 other international teams, including soldiers from the Ukrainian special forces."

The competition spanned 24 hours and included shooting with the Austrian-issued rifle, a navigational exercise, grenade-throw-

ing, a night-time patrol and a first-aid battlefield casualty simulation exercise.

The winning team of Royal Lancers was made up of LCpl John Horsley, Cpl Saun Motum, Sgt Shane White and Lt Campbell-Barnard.

Is there anyone here from Liverpool?

It's one thing booking Kid Creole for Bosnia. Quite another making sure he doesn't lose his Coconuts on the way out there. *Soldier* found out how CSE puts a show together

Report: Anthony Stone
Pictures: Mike Weston

THERE IS always a buzz in camp when troops know that a Combined Services Entertainment (CSE) show is coming to town. For troops posted to the Falklands, Bosnia or the Gulf, the big night could be the only live entertainment they are likely to see on their tour.

But although they might have a captive audience, heaven help the acts who don't treat the gigs as if they were Royal Command Performances. The troops can be merciless.

Renate Foster, general manager of Combined Services Entertainment (CSE), the charity which organises the shows, said: "The comedian compère has a tough job. Soldiers take no prisoners. The comedian only has to say two or three things and if they don't get it right they get shouted at: 'Get off, you're rubbish, bring on the girls'."

Many a performer has died the death by a thousand heckles. But if the acts are good and have done their homework, the audience will get behind them like no other.

ORGANISATION

Flying Kid Creole and the Coconuts to Bosnia or The Stranglers to the Falkland Islands and setting up the shows takes a lot of organisation. Sometimes the wheels start rolling a year in advance.

The first thing to realise is that nobody does it for free. That is one of the reasons why you haven't seen the Spice Girls or Catatonia in Bosnia.

Renate said: "The money is a great misconception. All the acts charge commercial rates; it is, after all their livelihood. The singers have their own sound systems with musicians behind them. You are dealing with labour and people are expensive."

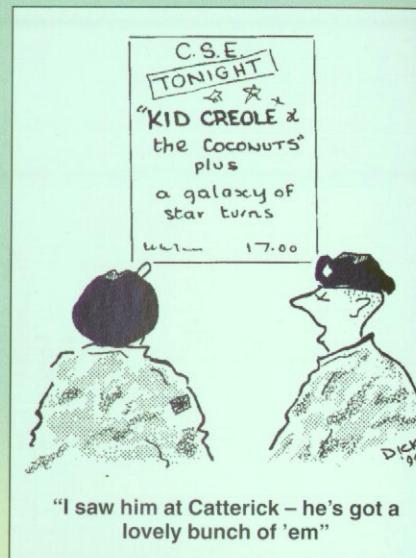
"The Stranglers are a big name and

they love the Falklands, but they have families to placate and if they go home and tell their wives that they did it for peanuts, their spouses are not going to be best pleased. You will never get a band for free but what you do get are advantageous terms."

CSE might not be able to afford top dollar rates but it can still attract class acts through its buying power – a turnover of more than £1m.

Sometimes it can be tricky persuading hoofers and crooners to go to a war zone. This is especially difficult in times of peace when the military does not have a high profile. "A lot of what CSE is about is using its skills and persuasiveness to get bands to go," said Renate. "Most of them love it. But it's like saying you are going on holiday guys, but the hotel is not finished."

Renate, who comes from an Army



family, looks after four territories: the Falklands, Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Germany.

If a command wants to put on a show it has to come up with the cash, then contact is made with Renate. Last year CSE contracted a private company, always on



Blue period: The Kid socks it to them with the help of the Coconuts in Sanski Most

Night the Kid's Nuts turned blue

IT WAS so cold the Kid's Coconuts were turning blue; the bounce had definitely gone out of one of them. But it was the other two who were giving most cause for concern.

BRIEFING

Acts are given a thorough briefing before they leave so they all know what to expect. A tour manager is on hand to iron out any problems. It is impressed on the acts they will be immersed in the Army for 24 hours a day and the artists are expected hang out with the soldiers after the concert. This often proves as much fun as the concert itself.

The standard concert format is to have a top of the bill, a compère, dancers and a speciality act. They need to get along with one another.

"For two weeks they are a family. There is no point having a prima donna at the top of the bill because they have to travel and eat together," said Renate.

Despite its privations, life on the road with the Army has its compensations. "The one thing about going to the Falklands or Bosnia is that it is a unique experience," she said. "The artists are in the Army for two weeks. How else could they get to fly in a Chinook and see in-theatre conditions?"

Sanski Most and they were screaming encouragement, whistling and clapping. But you got the feeling the hottest fantasy these lads were harbouring was to get a three-bar electric heater all to themselves.

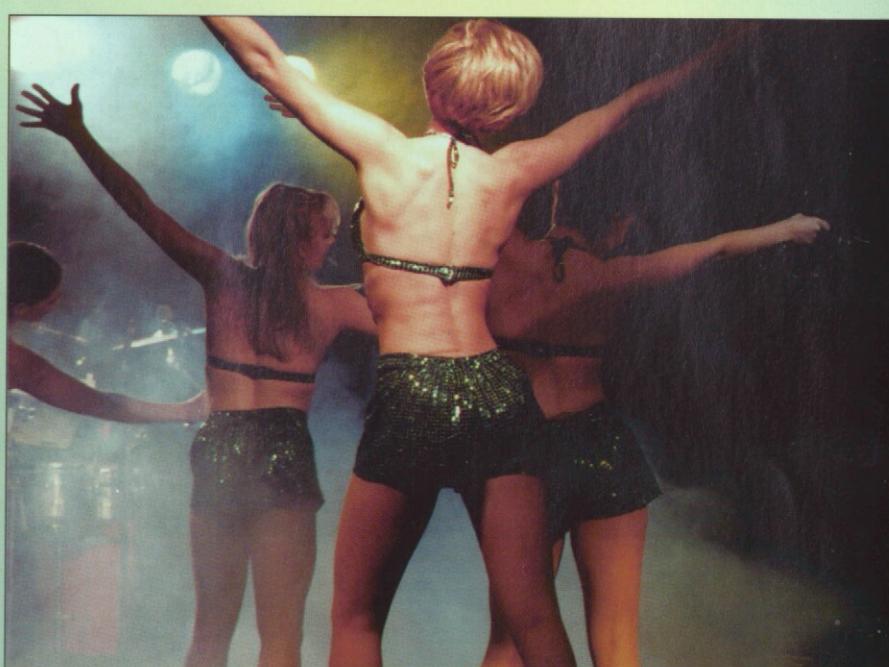
Yet as soon as the music started, the girls underwent a transformation. The Coconuts went on stage and started shaking it all about with the sort of manic motions you find at an Arctic nudist camp.

It was so cold the brass monkeys were seen carrying Bergens full of bostik, welding gear and super-glue. There were more than 100 red-blooded soldiers packed into the disused factory in

Banja Luka. Perhaps it was because it was so unbelievably Baltic that everyone really got into it. The Kid pleaded not to take his Coconuts away and implored Annie that he was not her daddy. The crowd loved it.

And when it was over, faster than you could say "make mine a large anti-freeze", everyone adjourned to the mess. The Coconuts, warmly received by the lads, soon got the colour back in their cheeks, Kid Creole pressed the flesh, photographs were taken and the air filled with backstage banter.

In fact, everyone was chillin'.



Dedication: The girls whip off their outer garments... although it is minus 20C outside

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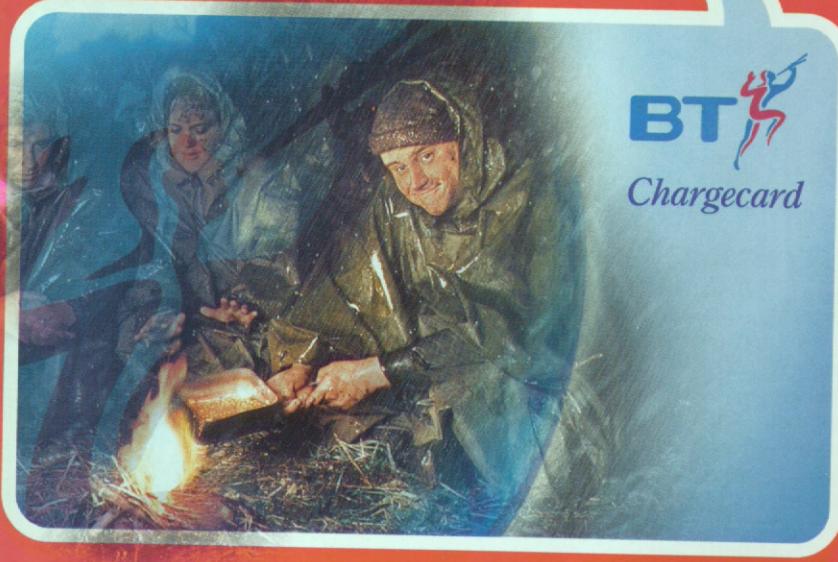
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Second battle of Otterburn

Report: Karen Moseley

IAN SCOTT and Lorimer Farrell have lived in the wild, untamed beauty of Northumberland all their lives. As boys they played on heather-covered moors and fished in icy rivers around the Rede Valley and Otterburn Training Area.

But now, as senior citizens, they feel the centuries-old way of life for local people is being threatened. Not, as one might think, by the Army which trains some 30,000 soldiers on the 58,000-acre Otterburn ranges, but from National Park Authorities who are opposing the Army's plan to improve training facilities.

The first Otterburn public inquiry, which lasted seven months and saw a bitter conflict of interests between the MoD and Northumberland National Park Authority, closed in October 1997.

The Army want to develop OTA so that AS90 self-propelled guns and M28 multi-launch rocket systems (MLRS) can be trained on safely. A decision on the inquiry was expected, but when the Strategic Defence Review was announced, groups who opposed the Army's plans, led by the Council for National Parks, pressed for further investigation, suggesting that new factors such as the withdrawal of troops from Germany and the use of Apache helicopters may affect the Army's original proposals.

The Secretary of State for Environment, Transport and Regions, John Prescott, agreed, and the public inquiry is to re-open on March 23 – much to the fury of Messrs Scott and Farrell.

Lorimer is a founding member, and Ian the secretary of the Association of Rural Communities, which represents some 2,000 local people.

SCANDALOUS WASTE

"The re-opening of the Otterburn inquiry is regarded by the majority of people living and working in the Rede Valley as a scandalous additional waste of taxpayers' and ratepayers' money," Ian explained.

"The Army has always been an excellent neighbour and estate manager, and the environment has never suffered as a result of training. Why should the MoD have to justify itself to 18 quangos who should have no input into the argument about military training and defence mat-



Scandalised: The Army has always been an excellent neighbour, say Ian Scott, left, and Lorimer Farrell

They thought it was all over... but the Otterburn public inquiry is to re-open

ters, and who have little idea of how the countryside operates?

"People here now realise that National Park principles are a threat to the very fabric of rural life."

The two men point out that no allowance appears to have been given to the fact that the training area was in existence long before the National Park came into being. But Vicki Elcote, the director for the London-based Council of National Parks, does not believe this should relieve the Army of its responsibilities as a landlord.

"We are objecting to the proposals as they conflict with conservation and the enjoyment of the park by the public," she said.

"When the increase in troops was decided, training was not looked at in environmental terms. The implications were looked at from the lowest possible local level and we are now looking at it from a national and holistic level."

"The whole plan has totally changed. They now want to bring in the biggest guns with the longest ranges. The good thing about this public inquiry is that

people who might otherwise have been too scared, have been able to voice their concerns."

Project sponsor Lt Col (Retd) Nick Cheesman is gloomy about the prospect of another hearing.

"It is going to be just as adversarial as last time," he predicted. "SDR has not changed our proposals one bit. I think the delay is a great shame because the Otterburn development is urgently needed for the safety of the soldiers."

But as pages and pages of evidence are sifted through, it is business as usual on Otterburn ranges. The commandant, Lt Col Alan Blamire, Royal Scots, is quietly optimistic about the inquiry's decision.

"My future plans are working on the assumption of a favourable outcome," he said. "When the bulldozers start there is going to be a lot of disruption, but we will be ready for it and will micro-manage around the project. We have construction going on all the time at different levels, and actually have a good relationship with Northumberland National Park Authority, which is the planning authority."

"From start to finish the work will probably take about two years. We will have to take the farmers into account as well as the interests of conservationists and the environment."

Up on the ranges, in the freezing mist, infantry soldiers were digging in for another exercise. Life was carrying on, as it has for the last eight decades, on Otterburn Training Area.

Putting national interests to one side

Language no barrier for French-led Extraction Force

Report: Graham Bound

RSM DICK TAYLOR did not know quite what to make of it when he arrived at the headquarters of the Kosovo Extraction Force in Macedonia, fresh from the Royal Tank Regiment at Bovington. Not only was the HQ virtually non-existent, but simply making himself understood among the multi-national force was a major challenge.

With the exception of the Americans and the Canadians, the representatives of the ten national armies involved in this NATO mission spoke English only as a second language – and then sometimes rather shakily.

However, back in early December as the effort to establish the Extraction Force HQ at Kumanovo, some 100km from the capital Skopje, got under way, there was little time to worry about the finer points of conversation. The imperative was to get on with it, ensuring that the essential cells of a working HQ were ready for the arrival of the five national infantry forces which will be the spearhead of operations in Kosovo if the call comes.

Although the French had been appointed the lead nation, they readily admitted that as somewhat unconventional NATO partners and relative newcomers to multinational operations, they had a lot to learn. So in those early weeks, much of the responsibility of organising the HQ fell to the British. RSM Taylor became a linchpin of the effort, involved in far more than his designated security role.

The situation had all the ingredients for misunderstanding and friction, but this had been anticipated. Said RSM Taylor: "It was obvious that we needed to put single national interests to one side, otherwise the HQ would simply not work." A spirit of *entente cordiale* was established at an early stage and, as the extraction force readied itself for operations, any minor problems were smoothed over.

"What surprised me was the way we all got on so well, socially and professionally," said RSM Taylor. "I became involved in all aspects of planning, and, bar the occasional misunderstanding or hold-up, we all pulled together well."

Previously something of a self-con-



Picture: Capt Jim Gallagher

fessed Europhobe, the RSM said he had seen another side of Britain's nearest neighbours – and liked what he saw. The relationship was cemented during a multi-cultural Christmas celebration.

After a dinner at which the menu was as varied as the nations present, a squad of French paratroopers entertained Brits, Canadians, Dutch, Italians, Germans, Americans, Greeks, Turks and Belgians with regimental songs.

BARITONE VOICES

Their polished, deep baritone voices were, the RSM recalled, unlike anything he had heard emanating from their British equivalents.

But Dick Taylor noticed differences between the way the British and their allies do business.

"Triple-hatting", a characteristic of the operationally hard-pressed British, is virtually unknown among the other armies. Most of the contingents dedicated soldiers to even the most routine tasks. A

command post exercise designed to test the force's procedures showed that the HQ was top-heavy.

"It proved," said RSM Taylor, "that we only needed to have the main staff involved."

The most obvious difference between British practice and that of the other nations is the degree to which the British place responsibility on relatively junior-ranking soldiers.

"Some of the jobs we give to a staff sergeant here are being carried out by other countries' majors and lieutenant colonels," said RSM Taylor. "But our soldiers do have much wider experience than most and we can give them responsibilities and just let them get on with it."

The RSM and his opposite number in the French team prove the point. Dick Taylor shares his duties with Capt Jean Pierre Moisset. But although they may have different approaches to the same job, it does get done. Macedonia's *entente cordiale* works.

Same job, different ranks. Britain's RSM Dick Taylor and France's Capt Jean Pierre Moisset demonstrate the *entente cordiale* in Macedonia

Brigade stands by for Kosovo

From Page 7

Minister, Tony Blair, who said in an interview: "These troops are not going to Kosovo to fight the Serbs. They will go to underpin an agreement."

Expanding on the mission statement, Brig David Leakey, Director of Military Operations, told *Soldier*: "We are not going there to pick a fight, but as with any part of the world where there is volatility and political and military uncertainty, the soldiers we send must be prepared to fight,

either to protect themselves, as we had to do from time to time in Bosnia, or to implement on a local basis the terms of whatever agreement may appear from Rambouillet.

"The key is that we will be going in on the basis of strategic consent of the parties and therefore we don't expect to be fighting either the Kosovo Albanians or the Serbs.

"But, as we found in Bosnia, local warlords don't always see it that way, so we have to be prepared to fight."

Overstretch is 'high priority'

WITH the Rambouillet negotiators understood to be working to a three-year time-scale, the British Army's commitment to Kosovo is unlikely to be short-term.

Brig David Leakey, Director Military Operations, told *Soldier* that the UK military contribution would be reduced as soon as possible to lessen the effect of overstretch on the Army.

"We are undertaking a rigorous examination of our commitments in Bosnia to see whether there is any scope for reductions there. It is a high priority of the chain of command to reduce our commitment in order to relieve the overstretch of which we are very well aware."

Brig Leakey said it was MoD policy that soldiers on operations should be able, at public expense, to make regular telephone

calls home. "The practicality is that there won't be enough phones in theatre to provide that facility immediately, and we won't be able to put a system in until we stop playing musical chairs. Our forces will be used flexibly and may not deploy on a garrison basis immediately.

"But we are already in touch with commercial firms who can provide these facilities, particularly those with the flexibility to provide mobile facilities."

Brig Leakey said that not all those on Op Agricola would be stationed in Kosovo. "The line of communication extends from Thessaloniki in Greece, through Macedonia and into Kosovo. There will be a lot of of logisticians, communicators and enablers on that line, just as we have substantial numbers of soldiers in Croatia to support the peacekeeping operation in Bosnia."

Talon Base: monitoring the Balkan powder keg

THE SITUATION in Kosovo is fundamental to peace in the Balkans. We are trying to ensure that this powder keg is not ignited."

The words of Brig David Montgomery, British commander of the Kosovo Verification Mission's Co-ordination Centre, sounded ominous, and grimly summed-up the gravity of Kosovo's dire situation.

In his HQ at Talon Base, Kumanovo, just a few hours drive south of the Yugoslavian province, the brigadier spoke of the "mélange of uniforms" under his command; 130 personnel representing 14 nation-members of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Among them are 17 British Service personnel.



Brig David Montgomery

Together they work to gather and distribute the flood of information that comes out of Kosovo. It is a vital job, but a limited one,

as Brig Montgomery is keen to stress. Talon Base does not control the cease-fire verifiers. Neither can he and his staff order the Kosovo Extraction Force, based nearby, into action. That order can only come from NATO's Southern Command in Italy.

But the Co-ordination Centre is a vital component in the complex mechanism which enables the outside world to monitor what is happening in Kosovo and decide what further action should be taken there.

If either side on the conflict violates the cease-fire agreement, the verifiers immedi-

ately inform Talon Base by radio, telephone or in person. Unarmed verifiers regularly make the difficult journey across the mountainous border into Macedonia to brief the Co-ordination Centre staff.

Talon Base also schedules recce flights over the territory by both piloted NATO aircraft and by remotely-controlled unmanned "drones".

The information gathered is passed to senior NATO commanders and political leaders determine the next move in this infuriatingly complicated international problem.

"We are," said the brigadier, "fighting a battle with information. We are at the tip of the spear. It is an extraordinary international atmosphere here – and yet it works."

Junior ranks, officers to get bigger slice

Military pay bill to rise by almost 3.5 per cent

PRIVATEs on the top scale with two years' service will get a rise of £434 from next month, taking their annual salary to £12,417, writes **John Elliott**.

Their increase is marginally more than the average in a military award in which the overall pay bill will rise by just under 3.5 per cent. Also above the average are trained lance corporals, who will see their annual basic earnings rise by £540 to £15,571.

At the other end of the non-commissioned scale, senior WO1s will get £29,335, a jump of £985.

Junior officers have been awarded a 3.7 per cent rise, which means lieutenants on the top scale get a basic £21,900 (up by £781), and captains £30,832 (£1,088) after six years. Brigadiers will earn £67,448, up by £2,157.

NO STAGING

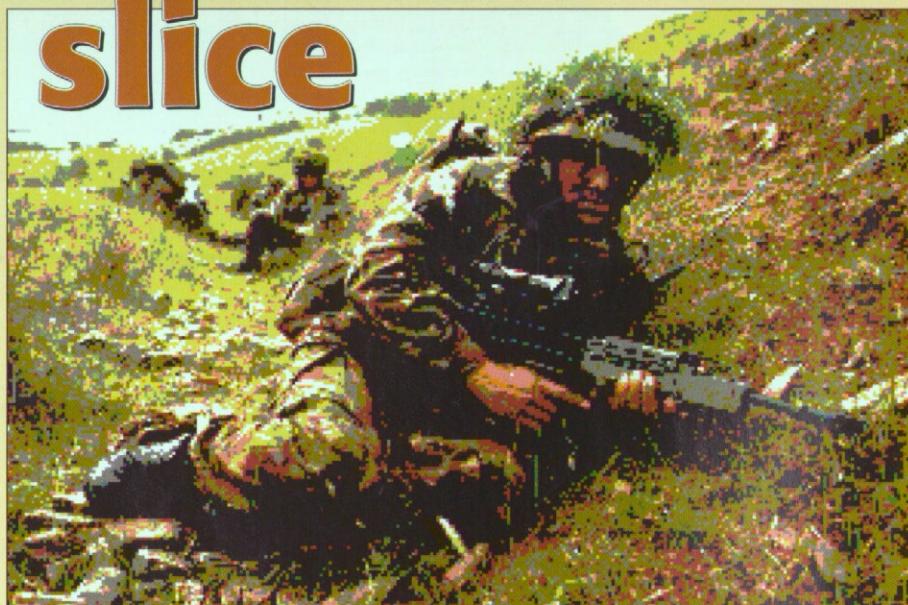
Following condemnation by the independent Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB) last year of the Government's practice of staging three previous pay awards, the 1999 package will be implemented in full on April 1.

The AFPRB report, on which the pay award was based, notes that the two most significant developments during 1998 were the Strategic Defence Review, which committed the Ministry of Defence to full manning and putting people first, and proposals for a new pay structure from April 2000.

PAY 2000

Further work on Pay 2000, which will be underpinned by a new job evaluation system, was necessary "to develop the consistency of approach", say the authors, who looked forward to working with the MoD on the new structure. On the strategic review's commitment to personnel, they comment: "From our extensive direct consultations with Service personnel of all ranks, it is clear that issues affecting quality of life are as important as the quantum of pay and allowances."

They also welcome MoD proposals to rationalise the complex system of additional pay for special duties and skills,



At-a-glance guide to the award

- General increase of 3.5 per cent, with trained privates and lance corporals getting 3.6 per cent and lieutenants and captains 3.7 per cent.
- Pay award will not be staged.
- X-factor unchanged at 12 per cent.
- Service Families Accommodation charges (less water and sewerage charges) up by from 5.5 per cent for best quality senior officers' accommodation to 3.5 per cent for other ranks. Rises range from just under £5.50 a week for senior officers to 34p a week for other ranks in Grade 4 accommodation.
- Single accommodation charges up by an average of 2.6 per cent. For second year running there is no increase for Grade 4 accommodation.
- Length of Service Increases (LSIs) to rise by 3.3 per cent.
- The pension abatement, which reflects the balance of advantage of the Armed Forces' Pension Scheme compared with comparable schemes, will remain unchanged at 7 per cent.
- Food charges to rise by 1.5 per cent, about 35p a week for single personnel. New rates will be £22.61 a week for single personnel, £16.52 for married unaccompanieds.
- The AFPRB recommendations for the pay of medical and dental officers is expected in two to three months.

absorbing many items into the new structure. "It is unfortunate, however, that a review of flying pay has had to be postponed for a further year as a result of the new additional pay proposals," notes the report.

Other wider developments considered by the AFPRB included the introduction in Britain of a national minimum wage, from which the Armed Forces are exempt, and the European Union's working-time regulations which, with important exemptions aimed at maintain-

ing operational effectiveness, do apply.

A survey of hours worked carried out for the AFPRB by the MoD showed little change from the previous year, with an overall average of 49 working hours a week. Average hours worked by the Army were 51.3, by the Royal Navy 50.4 and by the Royal Air Force 43.6. In general hours increased with rank, senior officers working on average five hours a week longer than other ranks.

● *Look out for your detailed pay scales in the next issue.*

Can-do spirit impresses pay body

AFPRB members met and talked to 3,500 military personnel, and some of their wives, on 25 visits to units at home and abroad during 1998.

"We have been immensely impressed with the professionalism of the Armed Forces and the positive way in which they respond to the tasks required of them within constrained manpower resources," says their report. "This commendable 'can-do' approach is, however, accompanied by an increasing deterioration in the quality of life of many Service personnel."

Particular gripes identified by pay body members included:

- the significant number unable to take a full leave allowance;
- the many spending more time away from families;
- the reduction in uniformed numbers resulting in additional secondary duties for those who remain;
- excessive working hours for some groups;
- career and promotion prospects appearing to be poor;
- spouses' career prospects damaged by frequent moves;
- anomalies in the treatment by the Services of married and unmarried partners;
- too large a proportion of accommodation remaining below an acceptable standard.

Senior salaries rise by 3.3 per cent

TOP rates of pay for senior military officers will go up by 3.3 per cent while the highest band for the Chief of the Defence Staff will rise by 4.3 per cent.

The Senior Salaries Review Body found a significant gap between the salary available to CDS and that of his comparators in the Civil Service and the judiciary.

Under the award, which is a transitional arrangement until the proposed introduction of performance-related pay, the upper levels for four-star officers will be £140,284 (CDS), £120,861 (range 7) and £111,208 (range 6). Top rates for lieutenant generals will be £92,676 and £82,991, and for major generals £78,766, £75,740 and £72,827.

History



Friendly foes: The final moments in the fall of Isandhlwana as Zulus, on the anniversary of their great victory, attack the soldiers of the Die Hards battle re-enactment society

Zulus and Welshmen united at Rorke's Drift

ONE HUNDRED and two years ago Britain was reeling from the greatest defeat its imperial Army had ever suffered. At Isandhlwana on the scrubby plains of Natal in South Africa, more than 20,000 Zulu warriors armed only with spears and knives overwhelmed about 2,000 red-coated soldiers, mainly from the predominantly Welsh 24th Regiment of Foot, writes **Graham Bound**.

The humiliation of defeat was mitigated only by the heroic stand of a company of British troops at Rorke's Drift the following day. In the words of the Zulus, they "washed their spears" in British blood, but they did not do so easily. Eleven Victoria Crosses were awarded for action in the two battles; seven of them to soldiers who fought at Rorke's Drift. It remains the highest number of VCs ever awarded for a single action.

RECONCILIATION

However, reconciliation and friendship were on the agenda in late January as 120 officers and men of The Royal Regiment of Wales – successors to the Warwickshire-based 24th Regiment of Foot – returned to South Africa to mark the 120th anniversary of the battles, and meet the descendants of the victorious Zulus.

The commemoration involved solemn remembrance and ceremonial events, band concerts, an enthusiastic re-enactment of a Zulu-British battle, social and sporting activities. They brought together ordinary soldiers and senior dignitaries from both sides in a mood which emphasised the strong friendship and mutual respect which now prevails between them.

At the solemn climax of events, the British paid the highest respect to the Zulus when Fd Marshal Lord Vincent, a former Chief of the Defence Staff, joined descendants of the

native warriors to lay a wreath at the memorial to their fallen. Significantly, the monument took the form of a bravery necklace in the shape of a bull's horns, the feared Zulu battle formation.

Fd Marshal Vincent stood shoulder-to-shoulder with King Goodwill Zwelithini and Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who said the battles had been fought by brave men on both sides.

With the plaintive sound of the *Last Post* floating across what was one a battlefield, the men paid similar respects to British heroes.

MOVING EXPERIENCE

It was an educational and moving experience for the British soldiers who listened to an historian tell them what happened there. Lt Col Iain Chaleton, commanding officer of The Royal Regiment of Wales, which absorbed the 24th Regiment of Foot, said: "When the soldiers heard the story of Rorke's Drift, many were in tears. Many come from the same Welsh villages and have the same names as those who were here."

In a recent years a friendship has grown up between the Welsh regiment and Zulu units in the South African Defence Force, and this was firmly cemented during the visit. Zulu and Welsh soldier took each other on in sport. Appropriately perhaps, this resulted in the British being roundly beaten in football, basketball and most other games.

But to the delight of the British, one Welsh soldier managed to defeat the Zulus in their traditional sport: spear throwing. He was presented with the spear by his smiling hosts and returned to Britain with the trophy.

One hundred and twenty years ago, it was a different story.

Lifeline to homeless

'It's given me back my life'

NIGEL Dick joined The Parachute Regiment at the age of 19. He served twice in Northern Ireland and went to Kenya and Canada on exercise. He thought the world looked an exciting place and wanted some more of it. Full of plans, he left the Army in the summer of 1996.

Soon, though, the ideas slipped from his grasp and, with no savings and no family support, Nigel found that the paving stones of civvy street were very rough and cold. He became homeless and employment was limited to short-term menial work.

SLEEPING ROUGH

By last summer he was sleeping rough in Regent's Park, although he still had a soldier's dignity. Nigel asked the Royal British Legion for help and they put him in touch with Home Base.

He was thrown a lifeline in the form of a flat and plenty of support and advice. Since then, Nigel, now 26, has been working with Nadia Al-Khudhairy to plan for a better future. "Nadia explains things, but I have to do them for myself," he said, casting a grateful glance at the young woman who has guided him. He added: "Home Base has given me my life back."

Nigel has a steady job; not his dream career (he explains with a smile that he is working in a bra factory), but it is good enough for now. He hopes to begin a course in tree surgery and may find himself taking care of the trees in the park where he once slept.

Nigel Dick is not out of the woods yet, but, with Home Base, he is getting there.

Can you help?

At least £1,000 is needed to help every ex-Serviceman or woman enrolled on the Home Base programme. The money is used mainly for grants to cover rent and the essential needs of a person struggling to get back on his or her feet.

If you are involved in the management of charitable funds, particularly those of regiments, please consider making a grant to Home Base.

For more details, contact Stephen Hawkins of Community Housing and Therapy, Bishop Creighton House, 378 Little Rd, London, SW6 7PH (tel: 0171 381 5888)

New charity sets out to help former Service people down on their luck

Report: Graham Bound
Pictures: Mike Weston

EMLYN JONES, a trustee of the Homeless Society, makes his point with a question: "It's all well and good learning how to fall out of an aeroplane and fight for the Army, but what happens next?"

This veteran of many years' work with the homeless and enthusiastic supporter of the new charity, Home Base, claims that too many soldiers who have done their time and even fought for their country are unprepared for life outside the structured environment of the Armed Forces. For them, the answer to his question can be *nothing*. Nothing, that is, except unemployment and homelessness.

It is difficult to accept. After all, the Army makes a real effort to prepare soldiers for new careers and there is the often-heard insistence that skills acquired in uniform are relevant in the outside world. The proof, though, is there on the streets. Experts estimate that as many as 25 per cent of those who sleep in shop doorways once proudly wore the uniforms of the Army, Royal Navy or Royal Air Force.

While they are in the Services, maintains Stephen Hawkins, chief executive of Community Housing and Therapy, one of the Home Base parent organisations, they become used to life at a different pace and within a very rigid hierarchy.

Important social skills may not be adequately developed, leaving many ill-equipped for life in civvy street.

COMRADESHIP

"Some young men and women join up from deprived backgrounds," he explained. "They find a sense of comradeship and support but their problems are still there when they leave the Forces."

Home Base is helping at least a few ex-Service personnel to find shelter and work while learning to cope with the unfamiliar stresses of civilian life. After less than eight months of their trial year, this joint initiative between the Homeless Society, Community Housing and Ther-



Human lifeline: Team leader Nadia Al-Khudhairy and former paratrooper Nigel Dick discuss the challenges of civilian life.

Optimistic: "Something very positive has been created," says Stephen Hawkins, left

apy and Central and Cecil Housing Trust, is proving its worth.

Made possible by funding from the National Lottery, SSAFA Forces Help and the Army Benevolent Fund, Home Base's small staff set themselves the initial task of helping just seven ex-Service personnel, six of whom are former soldiers, back into the mainstream of civilian life. This should soon increase to 12, moving towards the mid-term goal of helping 48 people a year in London, Wiltshire and the Medway towns.

At the sharp end of Home Base's operations is Nadia Al-Khudhairy, a vivacious and infectiously cheerful team leader who supervises a six-month programme for each client. Her first priority



is finding safe and comfortable housing – the home base which gives the charity its name.

Thanks to partners Central and Cecil Housing Trust, this is usually the easy part. Her real work begins with a carefully-planned programme of counselling and supervised self-help, which places on the client the responsibility of finding a job, a permanent home and coping with financial and social responsibilities.

The first clients to complete the programme are now moving on to more independent lives. But according to Emlyn Jones, Home Base cannot achieve total success without major help from the Services themselves.

They have, he suggests, the resources to identify and help those who are vulnerable before they make the great leap to civilian life.

Stephen Hawkins agrees: he says more needs to be done by more people, but he feels that in Home Base, "something very positive has been created".

Forces' Discounts

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CONTINUING our series of extracts from the *Forces' Discounts Brochure*, the booklet that tells you how to save money, this month we look at offers from the world of cars and motoring.

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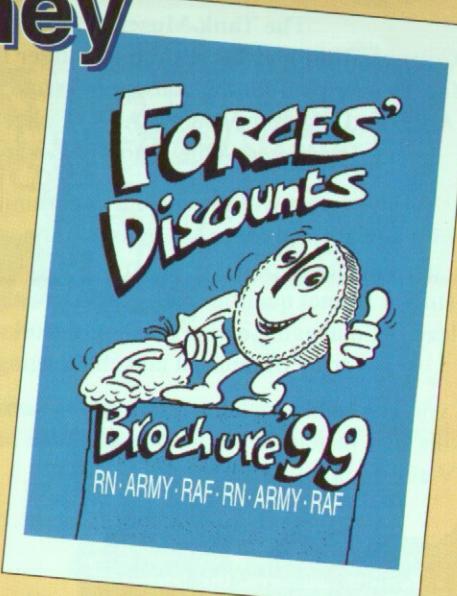
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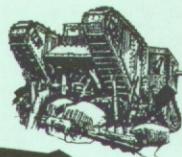
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John Woodward, the Director
The Tank Museum
Bovington, Dorset, BH20 6JG
Tel: 01929 405105 Fax: 01929 405360
Email: director@tankmuseum.co.uk



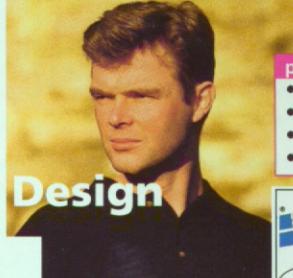
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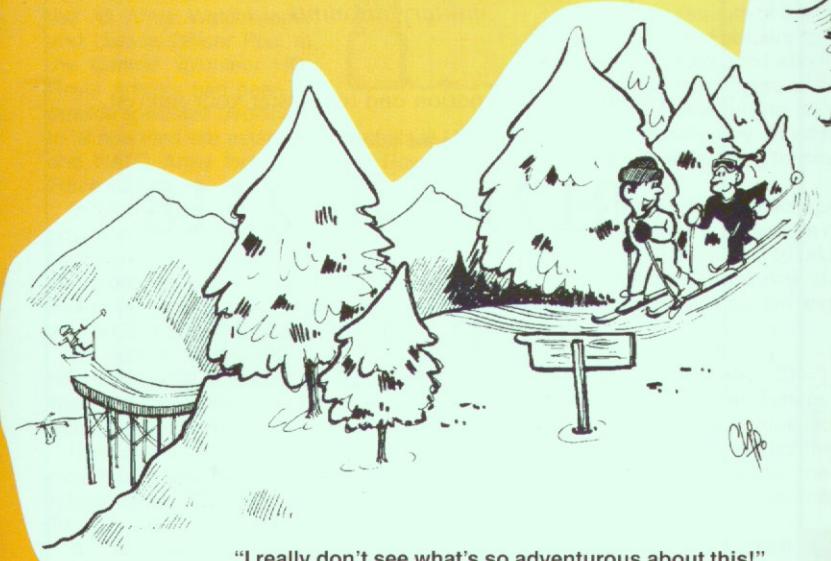


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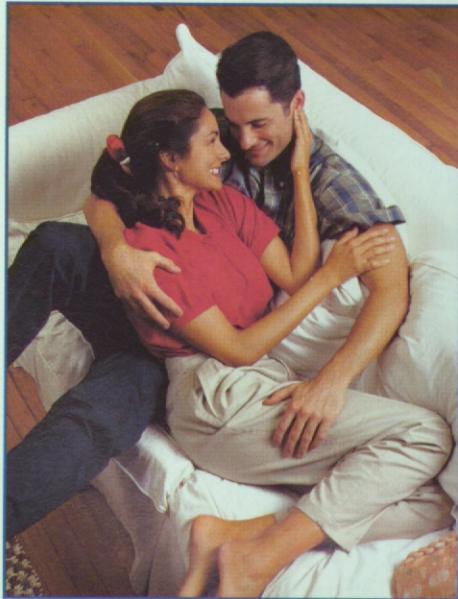


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Bound for sea: Challenger 1 main battle tanks of The King's Royal Hussars start their journey to Thessaloniki, Greece by rail to the German port of Emden, where they were loaded on to the RFA *Sea Centurion*. As well as 14 main battle tanks, military personnel loaded 17 Warrior infantry

armoured fighting vehicles, 34 Scimitar command and reconnaissance vehicles and 27 other armoured vehicles of the Royal Engineers. The deployment was announced in the Commons on February 11 by Defence Secretary George Robertson. (Main story, Page 7.)

TA-wide trawl for ops posts

REFORM of the system which provides Territorial Army specialist officers to fill Regular Army operational posts has resulted in a London unit being cut by half.

In a written answer to Earl Attlee, Defence Minister Lord Gilbert said the role of the All Arms Watchkeeper and Liaison Officer Pool at the Central Volunteer HQ, Royal Artillery had been to provide specialist TA officers to fill specified war establishment posts in UK and NATO Army formations and Royal Air Force squadrons.

In future these officers would form a training pool with no specific war role and their numbers would be cut from 345 to 175. Since January 1995, he said, 52 officers from the pool had served in the former Yugoslavia and six in the Middle East in support of the RAF.

He added: "We expect, as a result of the reform of the TA, to be able to trawl among the Territorial Army as a whole for officers to serve with the Regular Army on operational duties."

Such officers could be drawn from the Technical Intelligence Staff Officer Pool, the Civil Affairs Group and the Media Operations Group.

• The London Irish Rifles will form part of the new London Battalion under TA restructuring plans. The London Battalion, which has



yet to be given a formal name, will have six companies with a total strength of 658 volunteers.

Other points from Parliament:

Army strength: Trained strength of the Regular Army on February 3 was 96,822, compared with the establishment figure of 102,825. Figures for the TA were 54,031 and 59,000, respectively. In addition, 13,751 Regulars were undergoing training.

Anti-tank mines: Where necessary, anti-tank mines will continue to be used in military operations. Work is continuing to find an alternative to anti-personnel landmines "consistent with our obligations under UK and international law".

Lightweight howitzer: The Lightweight Mobile Artillery Weapon System programme, still at an early stage, is expected to involve a mix of systems, including a lightweight 155mm howitzer. On current plans, the howitzer is expected to enter UK service in 2007.

Edinburgh HQ: The estimated initial cost of refurbishing office accommodation at the Headquarters Scottish District in Craigiehall

IN The PRESS

What the papers say

■ Giant rodents, imported from Africa, are being trained to form bomb squads by scientists in Belgium. Some will be taught to locate mines, others will be trained as "suicide squads" to set off the explosives if there is no other way of getting rid of them. — *Express*

■ Sgt Trevor Walker, who lost a leg on UN peacekeeping duties in Bosnia, failed in a court battle for compensation — because there was a war on. He has been given the go-ahead to challenge the ruling in the House of Lords. — *Mirror*

■ A lance corporal in the King's Royal Hussars who suffered brain damage from a head injury during riot training was awarded £1.35m damages in the High Court. Shaun Fowler, 33, from Preston, will never work again because of the accident in 1991. — *Independent*

■ A soldier who had to lift a 22-stone sergeant on exercises ten years ago received £100,000 from the MoD for back pains he has suffered. Michael Carlton, formerly of 7 Para RHA, was medically discharged in 1992. — *Daily Telegraph*

■ The Imperial War Museum is to build a £28.5m northern branch in Manchester. It will open in 2001 on the banks of the city's ship canal in the Trafford area. — *Daily Telegraph*

■ Eton Combined Cadet Force, which includes Prince William, has been invited to exercise in Oman by Sultan Qaboos, who trained at Sandhurst and served with the British Army. — *Daily Mail*

■ Sixteen British Gulf War veterans have tested positive for depleted uranium poisoning in tests carried out in Canada. — *Express*

■ A report by researchers at Cambridge University shows that an Army-run "boot camp" for young offenders at Colchester transformed the lives of many young criminals. — *Mail on Sunday*

● Readers are reminded that views expressed or reported in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Army or the Ministry of Defence.

for when HQ 2 Division relocates from York to Edinburgh is £250,000. A project to rebuild the headquarters in the second half of the next decade would cost £7m.

Women's memorial: If necessary funds were raised for a war memorial to Servicewomen, the Ministry of Defence would be "more than happy" to provide representation at any dedication ceremony. The cost of the memorial would have to be met from private donations or public subscription.

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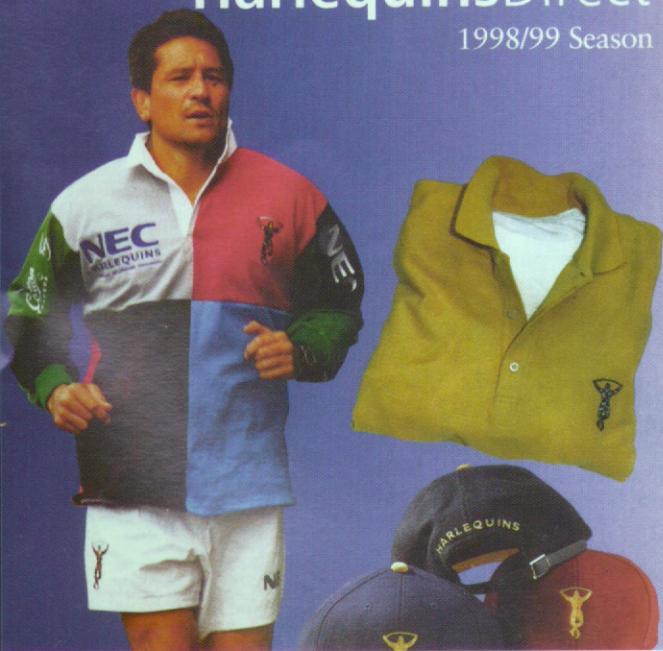
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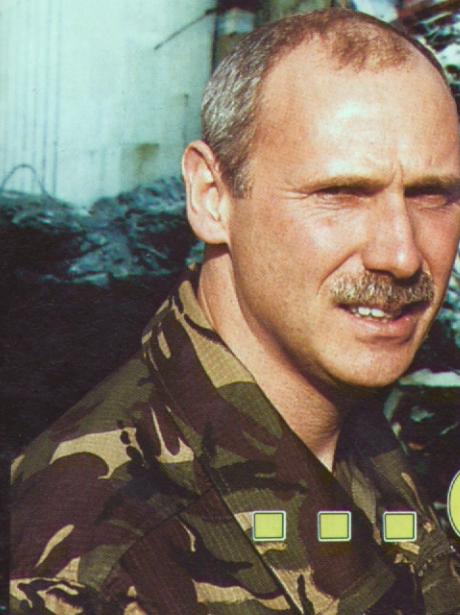
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Dogged...



...determination

Pictures: Simon Gillam - Terry Champion: Main pic and Lucy - Simon Gillam

Canine compassion: Search dog Lucy, right, and her owner WO2 Simon Gillam against a backdrop of the wreckage that was Armenia

COLOMBIA's recent earthquake was the kind of disaster for which WO2 Simon Gillam and Lucy, his border collie search dog, had spent years preparing, **writes Graham Bound**.

The Aldershot-based member of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps is also a volunteer with the rescue charity Rapid UK, and had spent years half-hoping for the call and half-dreading it. When it came, the man and his dog rushed to join an international team of paramedics, tunnellers and body extraction specialists for the long journey to south America.

With the threat of secondary tremors still hanging over them, the team was tasked to search a large section of the virtually levelled town of Armenia, near the epicentre of the quake. The chances of finding people alive beneath the rubble were slim, but the British searchers worked closely with local firemen, who had themselves lost 17 colleagues and most of their equipment.

The pressure was intense, said WO2 Gillam. "People would come up to us and say, 'My father's missing', or 'I can't find my child'. It was constant."

The British team was impressed by the fortitude of the people and by their friendliness. Simon Gillam has poignant memories. "On the first job that we handled, we met a woman who had been badly burned. But she didn't seem to be concerned about that and was just getting on with the business of sorting out what was left of her life."

He dismissed as fiction media stories that he and his colleagues had been shot

When Colombia was struck by a massive earthquake which killed more than 1,000 people, a British soldier and his dog joined the search-and-rescue team on the ground

at by looters. Shots were occasionally heard, but WO2 Gillam believes they were fired by people desperate for food and water. Certainly the British team attracted only friendliness.

Colleagues from Armenia's fire brigade warned the team that they might be in danger if they entered a particularly destitute shanty town. "But we had no trouble at all," said WO2 Gillam. "The locals made it clear that they appreciated us being in the area."

Lucy and Elliott, the other dog on the Rapid UK team, performed well. Trained to discriminate between the scents of living humans, animals and decaying bodies, they nosed among the rubble enthusiastically. But despite the long, hot days spent in what had been Armenia, the team found no survivors.

The search came to an end after nine

days – prematurely in the opinion of WO2 Gillam – when the Colombian Army general in charge of operations decreed that efforts to find survivors should cease. The searchers ignored the order and continued their fruitless search for another day before packing their bags.

Weeks later, back in Aldershot and gazing at the photographs he took in Colombia, WO2 Gillam seemed amazed that he had been able to insulate himself from the worst emotions of the tragedy. "I'd never seen anything like it before," he said. "The stench of bodies under the rubble was overwhelming, but I developed a kind of tunnel vision and focused entirely on the job. Having four legs and a furry body to look after certainly helped."

"I'd like to have come back home and said that Lucy had found a child," he reflected. "But there was always the chance that we would find someone alive, and that was enough."

If the call comes again WO2 Gillam will be heading for the airport, but Lucy will not be going with him. When she emerges from quarantine – a six-month sentence – her work will be limited to searches in Britain. At the age of seven she is no longer in the first flush of youth and the international rescue torch has been passed to her younger kennel mate, and the Gillam family's other pet, Kelly.

Simon Gillam's life continues to be dominated by things canine. Back in uniform, he is working with the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency on another humanitarian project: training dogs to locate mines.

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Farming on a chemical battlefield

Sappers move in after villagers reveal fear of unexploded shells

Report: Capt Benedict Toomey
Pictures: Capt Jim Gallagher

ROUTINE in a small part of the Wiltshire countryside has been temporarily interrupted while soldiers of 49 Field Squadron (EOD) comb fields around Winterbourne Gunner, near Salisbury, looking for unexploded munitions dating from 1916.

More than 300 acres of private farmland and MOD property are being cleared under Operation Abbott.

Although most of the land has been farmed since 1923, the decision to investigate the area was made in 1997 when a farmer asked the Defence Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Warfare Centre (DNBCC) at Winterbourne Gunner to investigate suspicious debris which kept cropping up in his and surrounding fields.

Digging began last November with 49 Fd Sqn leading the way. Target date for completion is May and, with 50 per cent of the acreage already cleared, the explosive ordnance disposal specialists are on schedule.

The land has always been associated with the military. Until the 1930s it was used as a testing ground for chemical agent delivery systems.

Local concerns were focused on the possible effects of a chemical leak on the villages of Winterbourne Gunner and East Gomeldon. With modern ploughs cutting deeper into the soil, the dangers of triggering unexploded bombs or piercing potentially lethal

chemical shells were increased.

Residents provided local knowledge and ground orientation by producing old maps, aerial photographs and historical data that helped the EOD team prepare.

So far, 49 Fd Sqn sappers have removed 570 mostly sand or simulant-filled munitions and 5,000 other items of debris. A small percentage may contain chemical agents. With half the land cleared, the farmer is looking forward to ploughing his former "no man's land" in safety.

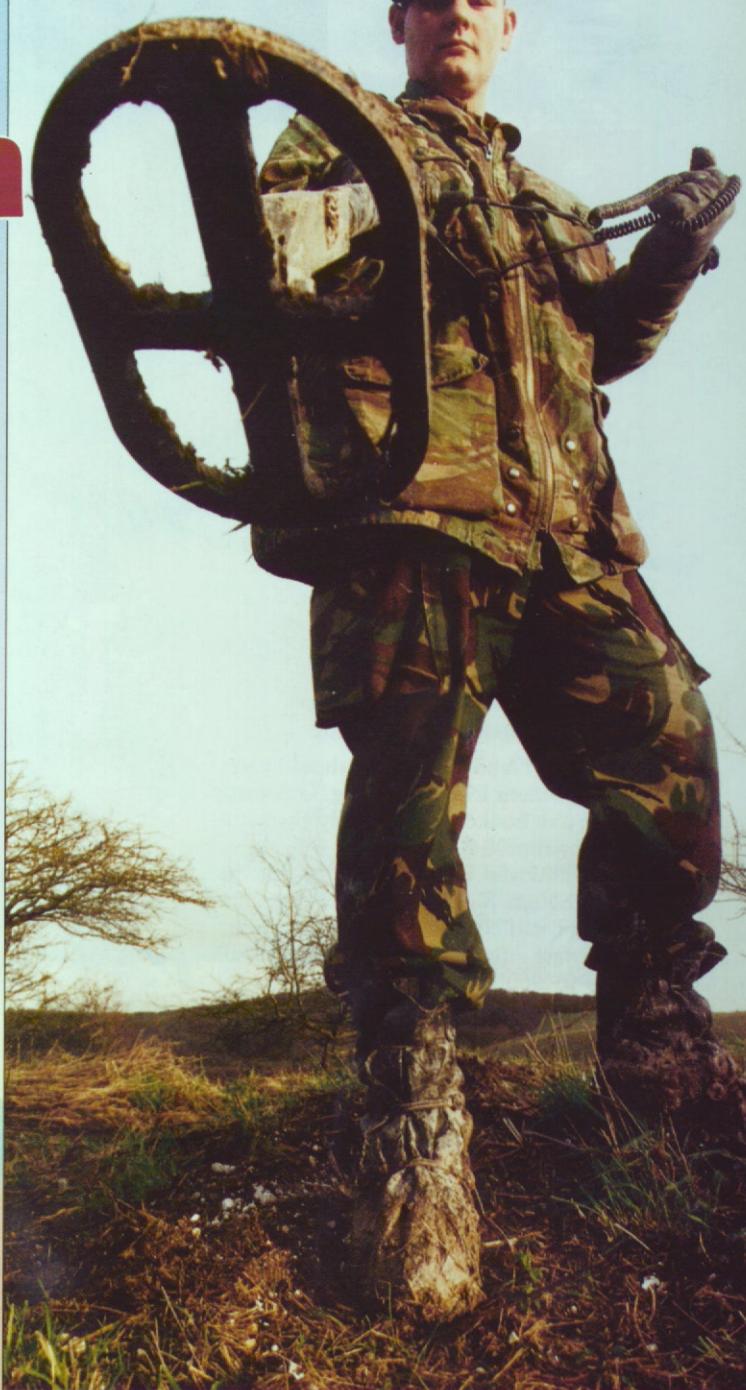
Squadron commander Maj Tim Vaughan said: "Op Abbott is not only challenging

but an opportunity for the soldiers to sharpen their skills when dealing with unexploded chemical weapons."

Once detected, suspicious objects are carefully excavated by plant machinery or spade. The munition is immediately tested for leakage using a chemical agent monitor (CAM). If there is no reading, the object is bagged, labelled and sent for disposal at Porton Down.

On-the-spot medical cover is being provided by Aldershot-based 23 Parachute Field Ambulance.

Although 49 Field Squadron is based at Wimbish, its individual troops cover a much wider Army role. Normally 1 Troop supports 5 Airborne Brigade in Aldershot, 2 Troop supports 3 Commando Brigade in Plymouth, and 3 Troop supports 24 Air Mobile Brigade in Colchester, all in the EOD role.



Harvesting history: Spr Anthony Oldfield with a mine detector



Got it: From left, Sprs John Wilson, Steve Goode and Pete Needham with one of the shells unearthed during Op Abbott

Who dares

Bridled passion

Go away and learn how to play polo, we told our reporter, little knowing that he was going to have so much fun . . .

Report: Anthony Stone
Pictures: Mike Weston

THIS sport is so addictive it should carry a Government health warning. One taste and you're hooked. I've already got withdrawal symptoms.

It is doubtful if my polo pony felt the same, though. She gave me a very peculiar look as I hauled myself out of the saddle for the last time, as if to say: "Just wait till I get you alone in the stables."

If you are a serving soldier of any rank, seize the opportunity to learn how to play. It is a remarkable experience . . . pure adrenalin. Given half a chance the Army will introduce you to most sports, but this is THE SPORT. You don't have to be a brilliant horseman, although it helps, and it is the best way to improve your equestrian skills.

Imagine sitting on top of half a tonne of rippling muscle and sinew. You kick on and the pony rockets forward at a velocity which could give you whiplash. Your mission is to charge across a superbly manicured English lawn to hit an object the size of a cricket ball with a stick. And that is the easy part.

You've got to get to the ball first and the opposition is out to nobble you. It is quite permissible, neigh positively encouraged, to play man and pony before the ball. This is a very physical game. No wonder players wear protective leg guards which look as if they were made from a pair of armadillos stitched together.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let me introduce the instructor, Giles Ormerod, a professional player and an official Hurlingham Polo Association coach. His task was to take the students of Tidworth Polo Course No 29, none of whom had tried the game before, and in three days get them playing a chukka.

We were a fairly mixed bag – two



Not like that, like this: Giles Ormerod, official Hurlingham Polo Association coach, gives a tactics tutorial in the magnificent grounds of Tedworth Park

civilian women, a gunner from 289 Commando Battery, Naval Gunfire Support, RA (V), and your intrepid reporter.

Our instructor said it was not a pre-requisite to be a master horseman. Indeed, he had taught a couple of subalterns who had only been on horseback twice. The other members of the group had certainly ridden before, all of them since childhood, and with varying degrees of frequency since.

KNACKED NAGS

I, on the other hand, had limited experience, mostly gleaned on stable nags in London. Lovely creatures no doubt, but nevertheless the equine equivalent of a Fiat Uno with a dodgy exhaust and 150,000 on the clock. A different experience entirely to your average polo pony, the Ferrari of the horse world.

We assembled on the field and stood on chairs while trying to learn how to stroke the ball. It was difficult enough on a static chair and I could scarcely imagine how difficult it might be on horseback.

Out of the corner of my eye I could see the ponies had been brought out of the stables.

Giles wanted us to familiarise ourselves with our mounts. The correct method is to hold the double reins

Balancing act: Novices are taught how to stand on a chair and hit the ball

in your left hand and the polo stick in your right. The ponies' mouths are very sensitive. Indeed, you hardly need to touch them, the idea being you ride with your legs.

The ponies were wonderfully responsive, unlike the typical riding stables' article which has to be bribed with mints and encouraged by cattle prod to raise more than a bored walk.

Day two was spent practising more stick-and-ball, more riding. Then we had a go at whacking the ball on horseback. It's harder than it looks . . . and it looks desperately hard.

The manager of the Combined Service Polo Club at Tidworth in Wiltshire is John Wright. "It's really about horses," he said. "It is about being in the right spot at least half a second ahead of the opposition. You have to be able to persuade this half-tonne creature to do as it's told."

The affable retired brigadier is infectiously enthusiastic about the benefits of the game. "Polo is a passport to the world," he said. He was probably not overstating the case.

I was told frequently that polo is not a rich man's game. When you actually sus-



pend your preconceived notions about the cost and do some sums, you'll find this is the case.

You can enjoy six months' polo for the price of a two-week skiing holiday. People should not be frightened to have a go.

Obviously it's not as cheap as summer sports such as tennis or cricket. But by comparison, and with all due respect, these are languid trifles. I am fairly sure that in the entire 2,000-year history of polo nobody has ever dropped off for an afternoon snooze in the outfield.

It is not cash that holds this enterprise together. The currency that binds is a love of horses.

On the final day, polo's latest recruits took to the field to play a heart-thumping, adrenalin-pumping chukka. History does not need to record the score. The victory was in the taking part.

At the turn of the century Field Marshal the Duke of Cambridge said: "I consider polo a most suitable game for soldiers, for every quality of which they have need is called into play." He was right.

How the British hijacked Attila's game

THE origins of the game of polo are unknown. Legend relates that Attila the Hun had a team who went with him on his conquests . . . but they were as likely as not to use the opposition's heads as balls. Or worse.

An alternative version can be found in *The Arabian Nights*, which relates that a wise man invented the game for his king as a cure for leprosy.

What is not disputed is that polo is an ancient game. It was probably first played in Egypt on foot as a pagan ritual to promote the growth of crops and the increase of cattle. This association with fertility meant that it was especially practised in the spring.

The sport spread eastwards and was adopted by Persia's expert horsemen.

Polo quickly lost its religious significance and became a secular game encouraged by the authorities, proving helpful in the teaching of horsemanship and development of military skills.

In the 1850s, British planters in Assam took part in local polo matches and in the 1860s British officers in India took to the game, referring to it at first as "hockey on horseback".

Opinions still differ as to who introduced polo to Britain, but the first recorded games in England were played on Hounslow Heath between the regimental teams of the Royal Horse Guards and the 10th Hussars.

Officers rode their military chargers and played with hockey sticks and billiard balls, but soon realised the horses were too big and the balls too heavy. Ponies and willow root balls were imported from India and the games were organised on the original Indian pattern.

What a carry on, Sergeant!

Bad boy Baldwin of *Coronation Street* was once banged up in an Army nick, but he came out smiling

FOR more than 22 years, the aggressive, womanising wide boy Mike Baldwin has been the man most *Coronation Street* fans love to hate, writes Chris Horrocks.

So it's hard to believe that the man who plays him, Johnny Briggs – who has had tough-guy roles in more than 50 films and caroused with the likes of Richard Burton and Peter O'Toole – started as a boy soprano and once wore women's shoes in the Army.

On the other hand it is not too difficult to imagine this screen villain in a vicious fight with a rival sergeant behind the Paderborn guardroom or doing 28 days banged-up in Germany's most notorious Army "nick", incidents described graphically in his entertaining autobiography*.

You can't blame the promising young actor from Battersea if he resented his National Service call-up. It took him away from the Windmill Theatre, where he was working temporarily as a "dresser" to nude showgirls. The garments consisted of a fan and a dressing-gown – and he was paid for it. It was a job "every red-blooded bloke in the land would have fancied".

CATTERICK

When he joined the Royal Armoured Corps at £1 a week in November, 1953 (he had asked for the RASC at Aldershot and was sent to the RAC at Catterick – close) he was so slight at 7st 7lb that the medical officer put him on multi-vitamin pills, which he has taken ever since.

As he readily acknowledges in his book, it was a different Army in those days and despite his MO's concern for his well-being, Briggs soon realised a soldier's life was not his cup of "revolting" tea. First he made the cardinal error of complaining about the food, with predictable results.

But there was worse to come when he discovered that Britain's first X-rated film, *Cosh Boy*, in which he had made his major screen debut as a teenage thug, was being shown in the camp cinema.

Despite sharing a cast list with the beautiful young Joan Collins, Briggs's delinquent screen persona brought him



Picture: Granada Television

Smiling through: The only thing former sergeant Johnny Briggs has in common with his TV character Mike Baldwin is the cheeky grin – the rest is a tribute to his acting skills

ridicule rather than respect. Instead of peer-envy and street-cred, he acquired two unwelcome nicknames – Shirley Temple and Lana Turner – and had the "proverbial" extracted ruthlessly.

Like the title of the famous TV police series that was later to make his name, there was no hiding place. And, unable to escape back to showbusiness, he decided that if he had to stay in the Army, he would use all his innate audacity to make his life as comfortable as possible.

It was like a series of extracts from the

Carry On films in which he was later to appear.

When his feet swelled up inside ill-fitting footwear he was permanently excused boots, parades and guard duty and issued with a pair of the flat, lace-up shoes worn by the Women's Royal Army Corps.

To avoid the rigours of Wednesday afternoon rugby, he volunteered for the regimental snooker team (which was beaten by the Women's Auxiliary Air Force). And, deciding that the "cushy"

Too young to go to war

JOHNNY Briggs's 50 film credits include *633 Squadron*, *The Pathfinders*, three *Carry On* comedies, David Lean's *Oliver Twist*, and the Army comedy, *Light up the Sky*. He has played alongside such great stars as Sir Alec Guinness, Sir Dirk Bogarde and Roger Moore.

His boyish charm almost worked against him in the early 1960s when, years after completing his National Service, he was initially turned down for a role in the naval war epic *Sink the Bismarck!* because he was told he "looked too young to have been in the Forces".

"But I have been a sergeant in the Army," he protested.

The director relented – but Briggs missed out on a role in *The Virgin Soldiers*, Leslie Thomas's story about National Service rookies in Malaya. It would have been perfect casting for him, but he was considered to be... too old.



Film fun: Johnny Briggs, centre, with Victor Maddern, left, and Benny Hill in the Army comedy *Light up the Sky*. As Johnny explains, National Service was not exactly a barrel of laughs

life of an instructor, with its honorary sergeant's stripes, was for him, he put in for courses to teach tank driving, wireless ops, and gunnery. He passed them all.

The next step was to secure himself a pleasant overseas billet. "So I dropped the posting clerk a couple of quid and he promised to send me somewhere hot," he confesses with the cheekily refreshing candour typical of the man.

It was only when he had had all the jabs and was on embarkation leave that he discovered that Benghazi, Libya, while hot, might not be quite the sunshine billet he had hoped for. A few more quid for the posting clerk had him diverted to... Paderborn.

Fifteen months spent roaring over the North German plains with 8th Royal Tank Regiment appealed to Briggs, who would have forsaken showbusiness for motor racing if he had had the chance.

"To be honest, the major exercises in main battle tanks were very exciting when we started blazing away with live ammunition. I loved all that," he says. "The battle schemes also gave me the opportunity to charge across the open countryside in scout cars at break-neck speed, which was right up my street. But the Army wasn't my idea of a career."

That temporary career took a turn for the worse when he fell out with a tough, burly Regular sergeant whom he diplomatically calls "Smith". One day the animosity boiled over into a "brutal, dirty fight" behind the guardroom. The David-and-Goliath encounter ended only when the 5ft 7in Briggs pole-axed his adversary with a kick between the legs.

This was war. "Smith" vowed revenge and had the last laugh when Briggs and a fellow soldier were sentenced to 28 days' detention for "borrowing" a motor cycle to get back to barracks after a boozy night out.

GLASSHOUSE

A spell in the camp glasshouse at the mercy of "Smith" would have been tantamount to signing a death warrant. Johnny says – "and I am not being dramatic". For his own protection, he was allowed to serve his time away from Paderborn.

Sadly for him he was sent to Bielefeld's Army "nick", notorious as one of the toughest in Germany. There, shaven-headed and addressed as a number rather than a name, he spent every day on his hands and knees scrubbing a 50yd-long corridor.

"It was horrendous," he recalls. "The

screws were harder than Smith could ever have dreamed of and we would lie in bed and pray we would break a leg or get appendicitis. Anything to get out and into hospital."

Briggs's life in uniform could only get better. His last National Service posting was to Bovington Camp in Dorset and he recalls he did such a good job as a tank instructor that he was offered substantive rank as a staff sergeant, which he politely declined. A future in theatre, films and TV beckoned.

Mike Baldwin's place in our popular culture as Britain's favourite unlovable rogue is a tribute to the ex-soldier's acting skills. The only thing Briggs and Baldwin have in common is that cheeky grin.

Now 63, Johnny lives in the west Midlands with his wife Christine and their four children. He has two children by a previous marriage and three grandchildren. He plays a lot of golf, and his success has brought him a second home in Florida and a rich fund of star-studded stories about his many friends in showbiz.

Not bad for the once-nameless soldier who scrubbed floors in an Army nick.

***My Autobiography** by Johnny Briggs, with Pat Codd (Blake, £16.99).

Brilliant drop-outs

Soldiers from 47 Air Despatch Squadron, RLC, pride themselves on being able to drop anything, anytime, anywhere. If it fits into an aircraft, 47 AD can deliver it safely

Report: Anthony Stone
Pictures: Terry Champion

WHAT is the strangest request Maj Sean English has had during his time as officer commanding 47 Air Despatch Squadron? You would be surprised. "This chap rang me up a few years ago and said: 'Hey, could you drop a rhinoceros?'"

It transpired that someone had taken a rhinoceros out of Kenya and then had second thoughts and wanted to return it. The reasons for this were never made clear. Although the task was undoubtedly within his squadron's considerable capabilities, Maj English declined the request. The unit usually has more important business to attend to.

RAF Lyneham is home to 47 AD, the only British Army air despatch unit. Maj English explained why the squadron is unique. "We take stores and prepare them for the air drop. We load them on to the aircraft and actually fly with the stores as part of the aircraft. It gives us great flexibility because, essentially, we can take anything, rig it and drop it as long as it fits within the aircraft size and weight limitations.

"Within NATO we are the only people who conduct aerial delivery this way.

"Most other countries have followed something called the airborne rigger concept."

Using this method airborne forces take the load, prepare it and then hand it over to their air force. Maj English said: "If you speak to troops who use the airborne rigger concept, one of the problems they have is they are always slightly twitchy



Golden Dakota: The 47 Air Despatch Squadron's symbol



once they hand it over about how it gets delivered."

Because of the unique way 47 AD is structured, soldiers live and work within an RAF environment. They have a close working relationship with the Joint Air Transport Establishment (JATE) at Brize Norton.

Before an air drop delivery system is put into service, it goes through the procurement cycle and is tested for air-worthiness at Boscombe Down. JATE hands over the trial system to 47 AD, which reserves the right to hold a field trial.

Traditionally, JATE soldiers are supplied by the squadron. They join for a two-year tour and carry out trial development work before returning to the squadron. Their air despatch expertise has been seized upon by the film industry in the past. Usually they provide technical support, but for *A Bridge Too Far*, they did the drops themselves. The squadron's proud symbol is the Golden Dakota, awarded after Arnhem.

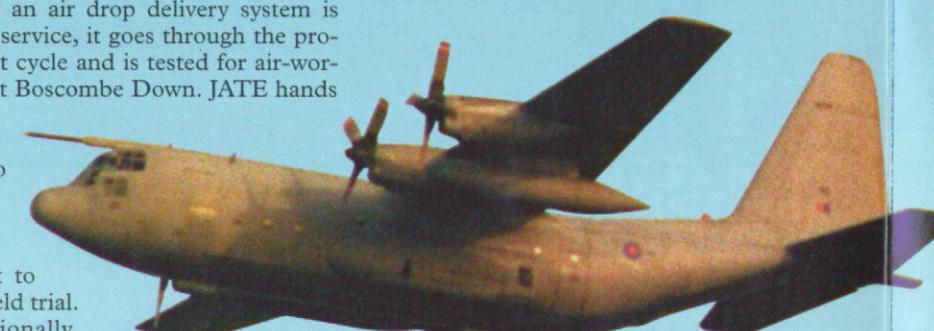
"Many people believe we are part of 5 Brigade," Maj English said. "But we are not under any sort of operational control of the brigade although we work intimately with them to sustain the airborne soldier."

Approximately 40 per cent of the workload is Special Forces-related, ranging from small stores to delivery of 28ft rigid inflatable boats. The squadron is responsible for training 5 AB Brigade and Special Forces on how to rig heavy drop platforms. They check and install them and see them safely out of the aircraft.

The 124-strong squadron, which has

its own quartermaster, is broken down into three troops, two Regular Army and one volunteer. The Regulars are required to provide eight crews, the TA seven.

An AD crew is commanded by a corporal who has a lance corporal as his number two, together with two private soldiers.



The soldiers are some of the best-travelled in the Army. Maj English said: "Because the soldiers are not trickled-posted they are fairly secure in terms of stability, but they do spin around the world tremendously. Currently, the squadron has soldiers in the United States, Alaska, Fiji, Falklands, French Guiana and eastern Europe."

Unsurprisingly, there is no shortage of recruits for the squadron. But standards are high.

"Outside the airborne and Special Forces, we are one of the few units who have the right to pre-select," Maj English said. It is a two-and-a-half day course that tests a soldier, physically, mentally and academically. Anybody can undertake AD assessment from any Service, any cap badge.

"If he or she completes the course and I feel they are of the right quality, they transfer to the Army, which transfers them to the RLC where they undergo driver training," Maj English said.

"The soldier here is a very specific individual. He never says no."

Maj English has been involved with 47 AD for ten years and has seen a phenomenal growth in air drop systems. "The magpies that we are, we don't throw anything away.

"In 1991 in northern Iraq we were dropping things for the Kurds that had never been dropped before. Nothing very exciting, 14ft rolls of tarpaulin, for example. Basically it was down to the corporals to work out how to rig them. They would put the idea to the senior NCOs who would kick it around a bit and then they would develop a rigging scheme.

"We ran out of parachutes very quickly so they took the old war-time, smaller parachutes and put them on flywires that became an in-service system.

"The problem within the aerial delivery world is that you physically cannot fire up the aerial delivery capability unless you have got an airframe to do it."

"So while we can provide the expertise to rig something and drop it, unless the Royal Air Force can fly the aircraft we are redundant.

"That said, providing we have the platform, and if it is military and of a fairly reasonable nature, we will drop anything."

Except rhinoceroses.

Go, go, go: Air despatchers, below, launch their cargo over the drop zone



Mules drop in where donkeys fear to tread

THE first aerial delivery operation was carried out in an attempt to resupply the town of Kut-al-Amara in Mesopotamia in 1917.

The British were pinned down, in what is now Iraq, half-way between Baghdad and Basra, and surrounded by Turks. The re-supply attempt was not altogether successful, mainly because it proved too little, too late.

Maj Sean English, OC 47 AD Sqn, said: "The Royal Flying Corps dropped stores (a total of 16,800lb) from about 15,000ft using blankets as parachute retarders. It was a tremendous effort when one thinks about it now."

GENERAL SLIM

The more tangible history of air despatches dates back to 1941 and 1942 with the raising of the airborne force in western Europe.

"When General Slim took the 14th Army into Burma it was realised they could not get re-supplied in the normal manner," Maj English said.

"The staff went to the Royal Air Force who provided aircraft but not despatchers. The Royal Indian Army Service Corps was approached and they provided soldiers for the back of the aircraft. Having set that precedent the idea was transferred into the western theatre."

BONE-CRUNCHING

General Slim's exploits in Burma are the stuff of legend. Despatchers dropped mules and chickens to troops in the jungle, something never attempted before. To begin with, the technique was not very sophisticated.

"Basically all they did was take a troop of mules and put parachutes on their backs and launch them out of the side of the aircraft. But the mules hit the ground straight-legged and shattered their backs. What they did in the end was to tie the mules' legs underneath their bellies, strap them up and then put the parachutes on."



Force for good

Soldiers are winners for charities

Proving that there is no one better than a soldier for raising money, Servicemen and women have been running, golfing, cycling, swimming and jumping across Britain and abroad for charity

SEVENTY soldiers from Colchester ran 13.5 miles around Mersea Island to raise £1,400 for the Army Benevolent Fund while six other soldiers from the garrison spent 24 hours underwater playing sports and board games as a novel way of raising £2,000 for the RNLI.

They were Capt John Ardrey, Capt Liz Moore, Sgt Steve Green and Sgt Mark Arena of 24 Airmobile Brigade's **Combat Service Support Battalion**, SSgt Tony Lake of 19 Airmobile Fd Amb and Sig Tony Jones of **210 Sig Sqn**.

Pte Philip Sell of 1 R Anglian ran 55 miles non-stop from Brentwood to Colchester in aid of the NSPCC.

Two golf-crazy Colchester soldiers serving with **210 Sig Sqn**, Cpl Gordon Robertson and LCpl Jason Curley, completed a 48-hour golf match to raise money for the ABF.

Colchester was also the destination for eight soldiers from **220 Sig Sqn** at RAF Laarbruch who took part in a quadrathon for Children in Need. They parachuted at Sennelager, cycled from their base in Germany to Colchester, completed a three-mile run and swam 2,000 metres, then cycled back to Laarbruch where they did another three-mile run.

An Executive Stretch weekend run by 8 R Irish raised £3,000 for local charity

Flying Gunner LBdr Darren Bidwell takes to the skies to promote SSAFA Forces Help, which the Royal Artillery motor-cycle display team has adopted as its chosen charity. The riders will carry the logo on their outfits and trucks and make a donation from each of the 40 shows in their annual calendar

Action Cancer. Twenty-four civilian volunteers swapped company cars and city suits for a Puma helicopter, mountain bikes and combats to take part in an escape-and-evasion exercise.

Shaving cream, razors and eight clean-shaven faces raised £200 for the Ulster Cancer Foundation when members of 8 R Irish sacrificed their moustaches in a charity shave.

The ABF, Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal and Camberley's Make-a-Wish Foundation benefited by £1,700 each from the third **Aldershot Garrison** Last Night of the Proms concert, bringing the total for the past three years to £13,277. Garrison Sgt Maj Joe Fairbairn, the

organiser, added his own £50 cheque for a dog rescue charity in memory of the late Maureen Sarjeant, a Garrison HQ clerk who devoted her spare time to the concert.

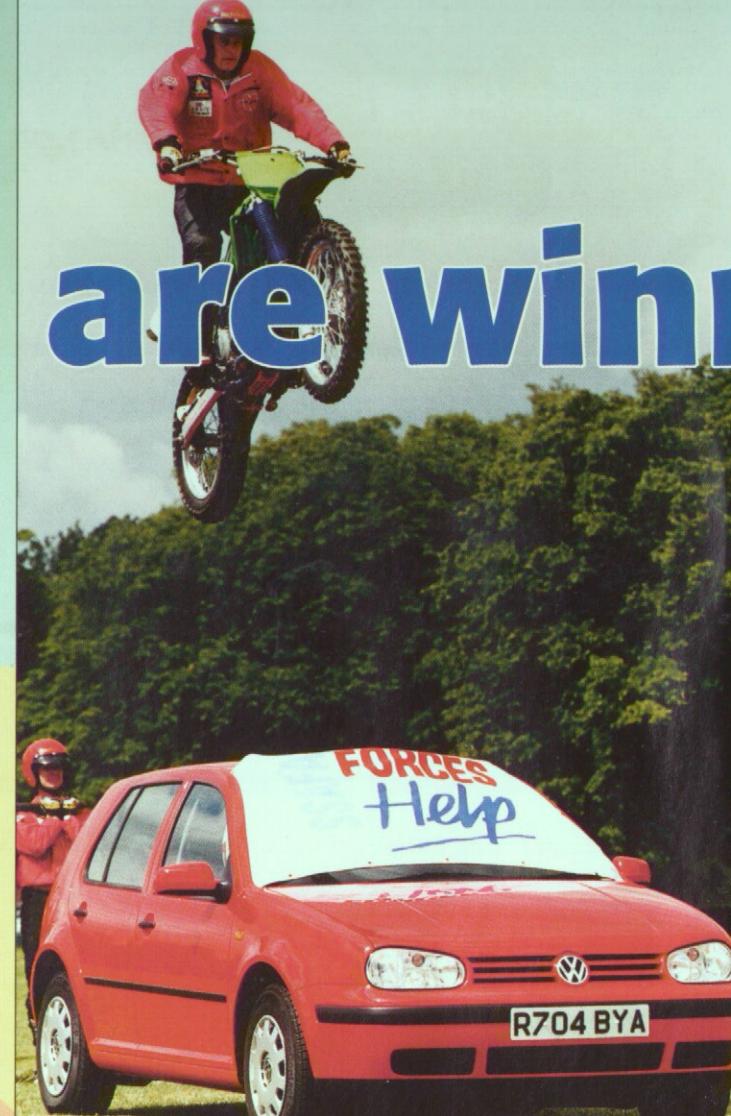
An early-morning swim in the Thames as part of the London Triathlon enabled former Intelligence Corps reservist Clive Booth to raise £1,000 for Combat Stress, the Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society. Clive finished in 1hr 47min.

A marathon relay run across Europe from Rheindahlen to Gibraltar by 12 **Power Troop RE** raised £1,392 for the children's charity Barnardo's.

Maj Ian Marlow, AAC, cycled 502km through some of the most rugged and remote areas of Australia to raise £2,789 for Imperial Cancer Research. The Simpson Desert Cycle Challenge took 47 competitors over 700 sand dunes in harsh winds and temperatures up to 45C.

The Army gave a nine-year-old Cornwall boy with a brain tumour a great day out when soldiers from 1 D and D and the RDG based at Warminster hosted Joe Hirsch and his family after they were asked to make Joe's dream come true by the Children's Wish Foundation.

A relay race organised by members of 20 Armd Workshop, 3 Bn REME, attracted more than 50 teams of four from



Stand easy: The word saddlesore takes on a whole new meaning for the 220 Sig Sqn team who cycled 350 miles for Children in Need. From left to right are Cpl Jason Harris, LCpl Matthew Dawson, LCpl Matthew White, SSgt Mark Sherwood, WO2 Jed Robinson, LCpl Manc Singleton and WO2 Guy Lewendon



WO1 John Frear, right and below, makes a tandem parachute jump for the Macmillan Cancer Relief Fund with WO2 Jim Scarratt. He was one of six members of the Sennelager Training Centre's WOs' and Sgts' Mess who completed a 13,000ft jump and raised £1,015. The event was organised by WO2 Scarratt, chief instructor at the Joint Parachute Centre, Bad Lippspringe



Children of Aldergrove Judo Club, 655 Sqn, 5 Regt AAC present a cheque for £250 to Sister Anne Wright of the Children's Ward, Antrim Hospital. They raised the money during their annual sponsored skills weekend

Woodlands Hospice. Medical support was provided by 208 (L) Fd Hosp (V).
Soldiers all over Britain took part in the nationwide **Jeans for Genes** day, going to work in their favourite denims to raise money for medical research into blood disorders.

A gruelling 220km run in Kenya by ten soldiers from 6 HQ Sqn, 22 Engr Regt

raised almost £900 for the Intensive Care Baby Unit at Odstock Hospital, Salisbury.

Forty-two children suffering from cancer and leukaemia had a fun day out with REME soldiers at 47 Regiment RA, Thorney Island, organised by LCpl John Raymond, whose son James has been diagnosed with the illness. John has

Fancy a challenge?

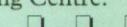
THE gauntlet for four testing physical challenges has been thrown down by three charities. They are:

- The Flora London Marathon on April 18 in aid of Combat Stress, the Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society (tel 0181 543 6333);
- The Three Peaks (Nevis, Snowdon and Scafell Pike) over the weekend June 11-13 in aid of the Neurofibromatosis Association (tel 0181 547 1636, fax 0181 974 5601);
- The Sense Alaskan Wilderness hike from July 15 to mid-August for the National Deafblind and Rubella Association (tel 0171 272 7774, fax 0171 272 6012);
- The Pacific Coast Highway Bike Rides October 15-26 and June 5-16 2000 in aid of the Peper Harow Foundation for emotionally disturbed children (tel 0171 928 7388).

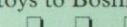
already raised £1,415 for the PIAM Brown Ward at Southampton General Hospital, where James is being treated.



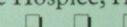
Ten Army skiers from 4 Regiment AAC, Wattisham Airfield, cycled and skied 200km on machines over 24 hours to raise £1,000 for the Bury St Edmunds Adult Training Centre.



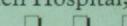
Cuddly toys, stationery and games have been sent to children in Bosnia thanks to the combined efforts of Sgt Brian Kemp, RHA, PC Paul Gleadell, British Transport Police, and Railtrack. PC Gleadell started the appeal and asked Sgt Kemp to help get the toys to Bosnia.



Stars of motor-cycling and mountain biking swapped two wheels for Army tracked vehicles for a day of competition. The vehicles were provided by the Defence School of Transport at Leconfield, and money raised was donated to the Army Benevolent Fund and the Dover House Hospice, Hull.



Cyclists from C (City of London Fusiliers) Company of The London Regiment crossed 14 bridges over the Thames, and raised £1,000 for the Bud Flanagan Ward Amenity Fund of the Royal Marsden Hospital, Surrey.



Students at Welbeck College rowed the equivalent distance of Belfast to Sheffield to raise money for the Peak District Rescue Centre.

Whatever you do for good causes...



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...in direct support

See Page 40 for contribution details

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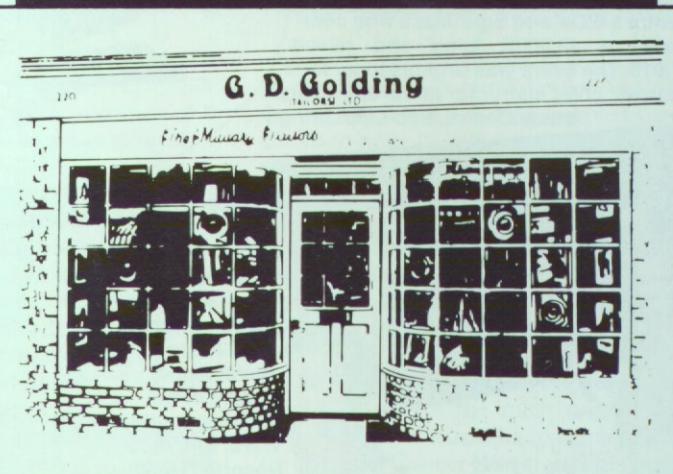
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Maximum Merlin

Long-haul mover takes to the air

MERLIN! Now there's a name to conjure with. Augusta and GKN Westland must be hoping that they have not tempted fate by naming their new medium-lift troop-mover and general utility helicopter after the great magician.

Over the course of its 20 years or more of operational life, the new aircraft designed and built by the Anglo-Italian consortium of GKN Westland and Augusta will be called upon to perform its own special kind of magic.

It would take magical powers indeed to look into the future and say that Merlin will become as legendary as those old war horses, Chinook, Wessex and Sea King, but it looks good. Very good.

LIFT-OFF

The RAF Mk 3 variant of the aircraft, the stable-mate of the Royal Navy model which was introduced to service early last year, lifted off from Westland's Yeovil airfield for the first time on Christmas Eve. The test pilots reported a stunning performance.

Powered by no fewer than three turbines, Merlin Mk 3 can carry payloads in excess of 4,000kg over 1,000km, a range which can be extended dramatically by the use of extra bolt-on fuel tanks and – a revolutionary development for British helicopters – air-to-air refuelling. Topped-up in-flight, Merlin can remain airborne for more than 12 hours. Two 12-hour sorties would take the aircraft to the Middle East, whereas helicopters currently on the RAF inventory would need to be stripped down and transported over the same distance by sea or



transport aircraft. Merlin's ability fits in neatly with the post-SDR doctrine of rapid, short-notice deployment to distant operational theatres.

Payload versatility is another strong feature. Rear-ramp loading, similar to that of the Chinook, enables Merlin to swallow single artillery pieces, Land Rovers and even light strike vehicles. The fuselage's 27.5 cubic metres of cargo space can even double as a mobile operating theatre and is almost perfectly designed for ambulance work.

FAST AND LOW

The sheer bulk of cargo that can be carried should mean that under-slinging will rarely be needed, enabling Merlin to use its advanced avionics to fly safely fast and low.

But, most importantly for the Army, the new aircraft promises a great troop-carrying capability. A normal load could be 24 heavily-equipped troops, but tests have shown that up to 30 soldiers can be loaded in under two minutes and deplaned in under 40 seconds.

Magical statistics

- Air-to-air refuelling capability and ferry tanks giving up to 12 hours endurance;
- Optional gun positions in removable windows give offensive capability;
- Rapid cargo and passenger loading through rear ramp and side cargo doors;
- Under-slung cargo hook linked to computer system enabling crew to calculate flying performance;
- Passive defences warn against enemy missile attack, radar and lasers;
- Low noise signature from three Rolls Royce Turbomeca turbines which give speeds of up to 150 knots, with operations possible in extreme conditions of ice and sand;
- High-survivability due to self-sealing tanks, and planned redundancy of systems.

Diesel conversions

PETROL-driven Combat Reconnaissance (Tracked) battlefield vehicles are being converted to diesel, in accordance with European emissions requirements.

Alvis Vehicles Ltd, manufacturers of the range, which includes Scimitar, Samaritan and Samson, has won a £32 million contract to supply 1,107 conversion kits and convert 200 of the vehicles.

The alterations will also allow the vehicles to run on AVTUR aviation fuel.

READERS WIN PRIZES!

Readers FJ Whitehouse and Sgt D Blannin have won battlefield simulator computer games by Mindscape, offered in our January issue. Their prizes are in the post.

Lightweight web of protection

ROBERT the Bruce admired them and modern-day soldiers may soon do likewise. Thanks to the humble spider, body armour of the future could be four times as effective as equipment now in use.

At an International seminar on ballistic protection in Geneva, delegates from military and law enforcement agencies were told that the Swiss industrial chemical company, Du Pont International, is developing a new generation of fibres which mimic the natural chemistry of spiders' silk.

Spiders' webs absorb energy four times as efficiently as man-made or

other natural materials currently in use, and once the secret of its manufacture has been cracked, it may be possible to make bullet-proof fabrics that offer much greater comfort and protection for less weight and bulk. Scientists reckon the new "biofibre" should be 40 per cent lighter than materials in use today.

Du Pont also claims that the manufacturer of the new material will have less environmental impact.

There is still a lot of work to be done, but experts seem confident. "It will have characteristics which are truly extraordinary," said one.

Presentation team makes major mark

THE high-profile Army Presentation Team (APT), which takes its state-of-the-art show around the country to explain the role and mission of the Service, became the first organisation within the Ministry of Defence to receive the Government's prestigious Charter Mark Award for excellence.

Col Jolyon Jackson, CO APT, and members of his team joined other winners involved in local government, social services, education and health to receive the award at a ceremony in the Queen Elizabeth II Centre, Westminster.

Among those there to congratulate them were Prime Minister Tony Blair, Defence Secretary George Robertson, and the Director of Public Relations (Army), Brig Robert Gordon.

Col Jackson said: "The Army values its links with the community. We are an integral part of society and it is important that people understand the Army's contribution both at home and abroad."

Stringent performance standards have to be met and assessment is by an independent panel of judges.

● Lt Gen Sir Scott Grant, the Quartermaster General, became the most senior student in the history of the Defence Information Technology Management Training Centre at RMCS Shrivenham when he signed up, left, for a course in project management. The two-day PRINCE2 (Projects in Controlled Environments) course covers the role of project board members.

● Is there someone in your community who deserves to "take a bow"? If so, why not nominate him or her for the annual Anne Armstrong Award. The prize, which commemorates the work of the late Anne Armstrong, a tireless campaigner for ordinary soldiers and their families and *Soldier* columnist, is awarded each year by the Army Families Federation in Germany.

That special person might give up spare time to lay on activities in your area, sit on endless committees, organise events, run clubs... or just be ever-willing to lend a helping hand when you need it most.

Entries, giving details of the person and their work, should be sent to the Federation at Block D, Harewood Barracks, Herford Garrison, BFPO 15 before April 30.



BFPO entrepreneur denied a fair share

If you have a problem, write to Cari c/o Soldier, or BFBS, BFPO 786

Dear Cari I tried to sell some shares via a UK stockbroker over the phone, but when I gave a BFPO number I was told they couldn't help because I was based overseas. It seems BFPO numbers are blacklisted when it comes to dealing with banks and so on. — Capt R (Cyprus).



Cari Roberts

Cari replies: I contacted various sources, including the Army Families Advice Bureau, and none had encountered this problem before, but it is possible your stockbroker had a rule not to deal with BFPO clients. If so, my advice would be to change your stockbroker. I would also be interested to hear from anyone else who has been refused a service because they gave a BFPO number.

Dear Cari We want to hire an au pair or nanny but are nervous about doing so. Where can we get good advice? — Mrs C (UK).

Cari replies: Nannies and au pairs are two different categories. If you want to know about employing an au pair in the UK, get hold of the Army Families Advice Bureau factsheet 6/4, which is a good place to start in terms of your rights and obligations. Employing a nanny is a very personal issue. In your position I would talk to as many people as possible. Ask your local SSAFA Forces Help worker for help. Your local Army Families Federation branch

THE e-mail from the officer who couldn't sell his shares was couched in colourful terms along "this is discrimination against Service people" lines. It was tempting for me to ride into battle on the proverbial white charger but, fortunately, wiser heads prevailed. If I could give only one piece of advice, it would be: check out the facts

may also be able to offer advice. Remember you may be posted overseas and, if you want your nanny to go with you, you should check out her — or his — position with your unit. Nannies these days want excellent living conditions and they want to know that they will be taken care of if a medical or social need arises.

If you decide to go ahead, be very clear about what you expect in terms of duties and privileges. Don't rely on first impressions and don't be afraid to define what you expect from them... on and off-duty. Discuss every aspect of your child's life, from discipline to feeding routines. I have seen arguments develop from simple situations such as who decides when the child needs a haircut.

Dear Cari This sounds silly. My wife and I split up amicably and the kids are being really mature about it. But I've run out of places to take them when they stay and the sight of divorced fathers in burger bars is depressing. — Cpl B (UK).

Cari replies: Congratulations on a civilised break-up. You have obviously managed things well between you. Get in touch with the Army Welfare Service Contact House Scheme, which was set up to provide comfortable, affordable accommodation for single and separated Service parents who want somewhere to stay with their children for a few days... or weeks. The former MQs are run by AWS staff who also handle bookings. (They may also be used for leave and family visits.) The WRVS also runs contact centres.

Contact the AFAB at Erskine Barracks, Wilton, Salisbury SP2 0AG (tel 01722 436569, Salisbury Mil 2569).

Cari comments before you get on your high horse. If, after a cool assessment you still think you have a case, then by all means make waves.

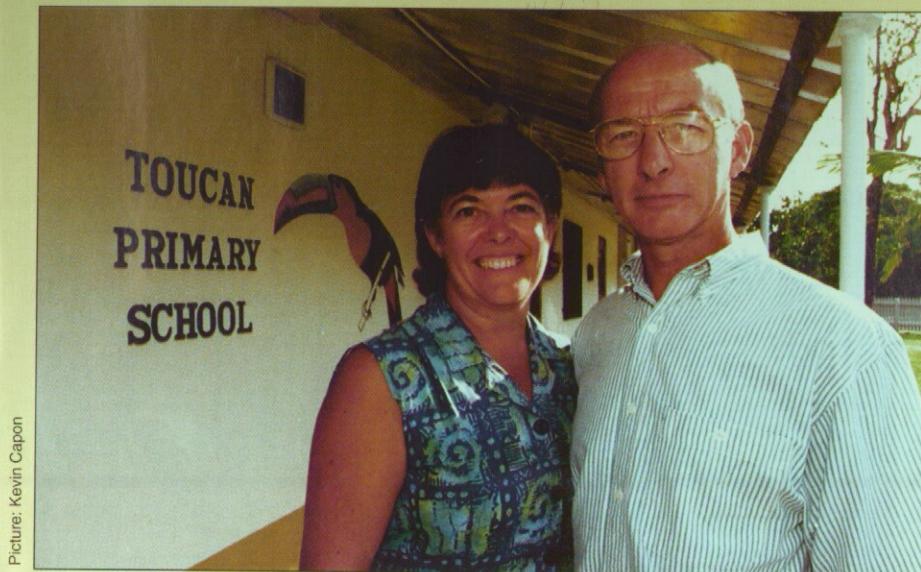
There are many sources for good advice and information, starting with the Army Families Advice Bureau. It has a truly comprehensive database and cheerful, competent and very helpful staff.

BRIEFS

DIARY DATE: A one-day SSAFA Forces Help seminar on **special needs and disability** scheduled for June 9 at Westminster Central Halls, London has been designed for parents with disabled and special needs children, adults with disabilities and their carers, and associated welfare staff. Families will have priority. Details from Christine Pearce, SSAFA Forces Help, 19 Queen Elizabeth Street,

London SE1 2LP (tel 0171 403 8783 or 0171 463 9234).

AT YOUR LEISURE: Naafi has launched a loyalty scheme, the XL Leisure Club, which gives Servicemen and women using the clubs the chance to win trips abroad. For those on the Internet, Naafi has also launched its own web site. It can be found at www.naafi.co.uk



Toucan team: Philip and Barbara Arrandale, commended for their part in the Mitch evacuation

Belize school was in a class of its own when Mitch came a-calling

AFTER cutting a trail of death and devastation across the Caribbean and Central America last October, Hurricane Mitch headed for Belize, threatening the small British Training Support Unit community which lay directly in its path, writes Dennis Barnes.

As the emergency grew, a decision was taken to fly wives and 19 children to Miami to ride out the storm in safety as their soldier fathers remained in Belize to help where they could.

That was the cue for two Service Children's Education teachers, Philip Arrandale, headmaster of the Toucan School in Airport Camp, Belize, and his wife Barbara, to show their mettle. They volunteered to look after the youngsters and, after a harrowing flight, sought refuge on the eighth floor of the Miami Hilton.

There they persuaded hotel staff to let them turn a conference room into a temporary classroom so they could resume lessons. They also hired a big yellow American school bus for outings, turning the evacuation into an educational adven-

ture while worried mothers were left to monitor CNN for the latest news of Mitch as it rushed towards their homes.

In the event, the hurricane plotted a complete circle around Belize, devastating neighbouring countries but leaving the team's base near Belize City unscathed.

Now Philip and Barbara Arrandale have been awarded a commendation by the Adjutant General for their exceptional dedication to duty.

Barbara said: "We thought that we would go home and find there was nothing left, but when you are looking after small children you don't have time to worry about your own problems."

● Toucan School makes an outstanding contribution to the community it serves, according to the Office for Standards in Education. An Ofsted report describes the teaching as "often good and sometimes very good or outstanding".

Nineteen of the 26 pupils are children of British Army Training Support Unit Belize (BATSUB) military personnel.

New moves over those deafened in uniform

EX-SERVICEMEN and women denied war pensions for deafness as a result of rule changes two years ago could have their cases reconsidered in the light of new medical evidence.

As this issue went to press, the Royal British Legion and the Royal National Institute for Deaf People were planning a £20,000 appeal to fund research into the reliability of Government methods of assessing hearing loss.

Recent statistics show that fewer than ten per cent of claimants receive a pension, though only 291 claims out of 5,854 were rejected. The other 5,026 were acknowledged to have suffered hearing loss, but failed to reach the qualifying level at the point of leaving the Services.

90-YEAR-OLD

The Government argues that further hearing loss through ageing is no more than additive and, therefore, not pensionable. To qualify for a pension under current rules, a veteran needs to be as deaf as a person of 90, whose hearing has deteriorated through ageing.

Ian Townsend, secretary general of the Legion, said: "The Legion believes that the overall effect of service disablement should be the basis for determining entitlement to a war pension and that every condition should be compensated appropriately and fairly.

"Recent awards by civilian courts to police officers suffering hearing loss for service-related damage, including the use of firearms, have been very high, and we are seeking the same recognition for war pensioners."

Useful numbers

Army Benevolent Fund 0171 581 8684

Army Families Federation 01980 615525

Confidential support lines:

UK 0800 731 4880

Germany 0131 827 395

Cyprus 080 91065

Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society (Combat Stress) 0181 543 6333

Family Escort Service UK 0171 463 9249; Germany JHQ Mil 2272 or 02161 472272

Gulf Veterans Association 0191 230 1065

RBL's Legionline 0345 725 725

Samaritans 0345 90 90 90

Service Children's Education 01980 618244

Services Cotswold Centre 01225 810358

SSAFA Forces Help 0171 403 8783

Veterans' Advice Unit 08456 020302

War Pensions Agency 01253 858 858

WRVS 01235 442954

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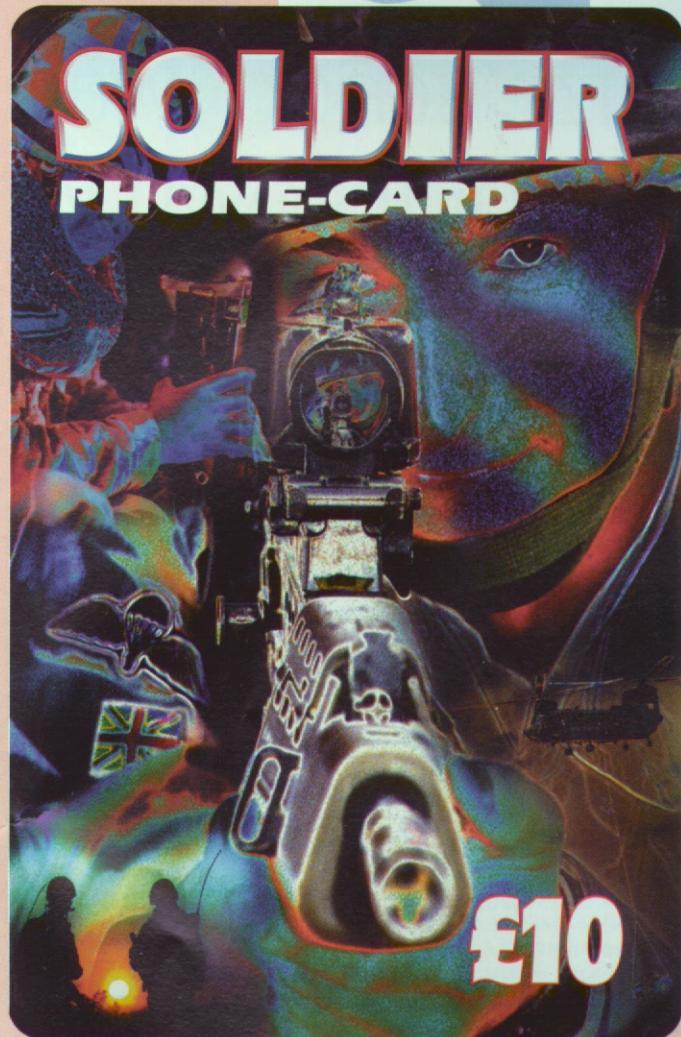
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CROSS-COUNTRY

Shepherd's delight

THE Army cross-country championships produced a classic cat-and-mouse confrontation between last year's winner, Cpl Alan Shepherd (24 Armd Fd Amb), and the 1997 champion, Cpl Andy Arrand (RLC).

At the end of the closely-fought duel it was Shepherd who triumphed and clinched the title for the third time.

The course at Longmoor Training Camp, Hants, had soaked up a fair amount of rain before the race, but the afternoon itself was dry although cold. Over the first two laps of the three-lap course, Arrand took the lead on occasions but with a mile to go Shepherd drew ahead. He crossed the line just four seconds in front of Arrand in a time of 30min 14sec. Both finished nearly two minutes in front of a strong field.

Great Britain international WO2 Rod Finch was at the championships but did not take part because he was resting a slight injury.

Pte Kevin Shepherd was the first junior past the post, finishing in 13th position in 33min 26sec. Capt Steve Lonnens finished 25th and was the first veteran home.

LCpl Nicky Dean (251 Sig Sqn) won the women's competition, finishing just 15 seconds ahead of Capt Lyn Higgs (APTC (ASPT), last year's world over-35 half-marathon champion. SSgt Mel Bailey (Aborfield Garrison) was third.

The first junior woman past the post was Pte Claire Winchurch (RLC), who was fifth overall.

Maj Peter Lyons, secretary of the Army Athletic Association, said: "The field was a little bit stronger than usual with 75 women and 351 men finishing the race. The quality of the runners was very high."

The major units team race was won by 5 Airborne Brigade Logistic Battalion and the minor units by HQ 4 Division.

This year's race was the 30th anniversary of the record number of nine consecutive wins achieved by the 1st Battalion, The Parachute Regiment team, who demolished all before them between 1961 and 1969. Members of the all-conquering 1 Para squad met up at Longmoor for a reunion to mark their extraordinary feat.

Winner: LCpl Nicky Dean

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Cross-country reflections: Cpl Alan Shepherd, right, stalks Cpl Andy Arrand during the Army cross country championships at Longmoor

Picture: Terry Champion

SKY-DIVING

Parachutists get hung up over inclement weather

MOST people would jump at the chance of spending time in sunny California and members of the Royal Engineers Sport Parachute Association are no exception. Exercise Market Star was designed to train novice skydivers and improve those already trained. The plan was ambitious:

take 40 personnel from 26 separate units and two Services, move them halfway round the world and jump. Unfortunately they took British-style conditions with them.

The Californian weather was so disappointing that the exercise moved to Ari-

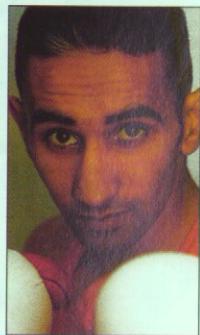
zona, where, after enjoying perfect conditions for a week, they returned to California. The exercise ended with more than 1,400 descents in two weeks and a final 23-man formation skydive. For information on parachute courses contact Sgt Mick Neales on Hawley Mil (726) 3333.

BOXING

Army fighters corner seven Services titles

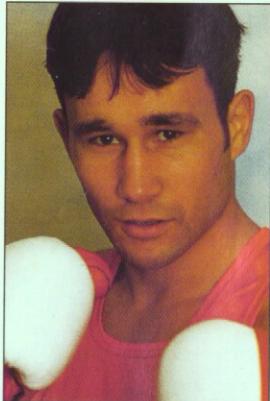
ARMY boxers dominated the Combined Services individual championships in the gym at HMS *Nelson*, Portsmouth, picking up seven titles and again proving their class with some disciplined displays.

The Army's role of honour included light-flyweight champion Pte Naz Sarwar (23 PFA); featherweight Pte "Meatball" Johannesen (1 DWR); lightweight Pte Joe Briggs (1 PWO); light-middleweight Cpl Chris Bessey (RLC); light-welterweight LCpl Steve Parr (2 LI); light-heavyweight LCpl Lee Spare (3 Regt AAC); and middleweight Pte Mark McMahon (1 PWO).



Pte Sarwar

LCpl McMahon

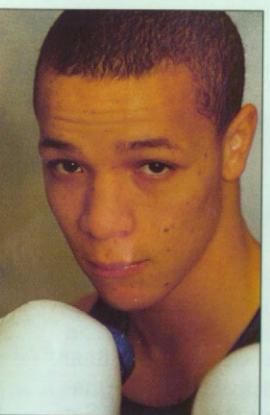


LCpl McMahon
weight and LCpl John Tedford (1 Kings) at super-heavyweight.

Army boxing coaches Sgt Neil McCallum (APTC) and Cpl Ollie Ollerhead (1 Kings) will be looking for even greater success when the Combined Services take on Western Counties in a match which serves as the Amateur Boxing Association of England's quarter-finals.

The Army individual novices championships will be held at the Maida Gym, Aldershot on April 27-29.

Cpl Ollerhead said: "The gym is buzzing. Today's novices are tomorrow's internationals."



Pte Johannesen

SKIING

Old Man of the Hill bows out in style for 35 Engr

A RECORD-equalling fifth successive Princess Marina Trophy victory for 35 Engineer Regiment sent team coach WO2 Tony Mortimore into retirement in considerable style.

After spending the previous two seasons as a "non-playing" coach after sustaining a serious back injury in the Army downhill race, the regiment's Old Man of the Hill declared himself fit to race and earned himself the number two spot in the team.

It was fitting that such a distinguished career should end in record-breaking fashion and the retention of the Marina as the best overall ski unit in the Army.

Other members of the 35 Engr Alpine team were captain Lt Chippy White, Cpl Steve Reece, LCpl Mark Scorgie, LCpl Tristan Barnett, 2nd Lt Phil Grove, LCpl Danny Trusler.

Having beaten close rivals 1 GS Regiment RLC in the divisional championships at Les Contamines in France, the sappers were in good form for the Army championships at Serre Chevalier, where warm, sunny weather and lack of snow meant the artificial snow-making capability of the resort was well tested. It also meant the downhill had to be cancelled.

Competition started with the giant slalom and 35 Engr picked up where they had left off at Les Contamines by taking the team trophy ahead of 1 GS Regt RLC and 4 Regiment AAC. In the slalom that followed, however, the sappers were forced into second place by 4 Regt, with 1 GS third.

The gods finally smiled and snow arrived in time for the Super G, in which 35 Engr had to settle for third behind 4 Regt and 1 GS. Not for the first time, the sappers found themselves up against it in the speed events, a traditional strength of the logies, and a second Super G arranged in lieu of the downhill also went

badly for them. The 35 Engr downhiller had hoped to give their Nordic team a comfortable buffer going into the final biathlon event, but their lead was so slim that the overall championship was decided on the final 30km patrol race.

After terrific performances from both teams only 15 seconds and one dropped shot lay between 35 Engr in first place and 1 GS in second. But it was enough to seal both the Army Nordic championships and the Princess Marina Trophy for that fifth successive year.

Members of the 35 Nordic team, Capt Mike Lewis, Cpl Jason Evans, Spr Charlie Brooks and Spr Geordie Petts, also discovered they had won the Kentish Cup

as Nordic champions, and the coveted Special Air Service Cup as Inter-Service Nordic champions after the Royal Marines, hot favourites for the title, were disqualified for missing a control point.

Second in the Princess Marina Trophy table were 1 GS, with 4 Regt AAC third and the QRD fourth. The QRD were fifth ahead of 28 Engr Regt, 2 Armd Fd Amb and 7 Signal Regt.

Poor snow hits Land Command meeting

A LACK of snow handicapped the Land Command Regular and TA ski championships, which attracted more than 500 skiers to Serre Chevalier in the French Alps and races had to be run early in the morning before the only two courses available were opened to the public. Officials had to lay out courses in the dark.

Winners were:

Alpine combination (Monetier): 1, 4 Regt AAC; 2, 19 Regt RA; 3, 1 BW.

Alpine combination (Villeneuve): 1, HCR; 2, 9/12L; 3, 1 SG.

Nordic combination: 1, QRD; 2, 40 Regt RA; 3, 22 Regt RA.

TA Alpine and Nordic combination: 1, HAC; 2, Liverpool UOTC; 3, 5LI.

Let us sleigh: the Rev Paul Whitehead, a padre with 3 WFR, was easy to spot at the Land Command ski meeting. He painted a cross on his helmet and held a service halfway up the mountain.



Poor snow hits Land Command meeting



Best effort: LCpl Mark Scorgie, 35 Engr Regt, takes part in the giant slalom at Serre Chevalier

Picture: Photofoto

BOBSLEIGH

Para bobsleighers put skids under the junior opposition

INEXPERIENCED bobsleighers proved slippery customers when they took part in the Army novice and junior two-man bobsleigh championships at Igls, near Innsbruck in Austria.

Most of the drivers had only a few hours tuition before they steered their 200kg bobs down the Olympic track.

The brakemen were even less experienced – most of them had never seen a bobsleigh track before the championships began and they had to overcome their understandable nervousness at travelling at speeds up to 70mph down the 1.5 kilometre course.

Drivers who were completely new to

Climbing is on the up

CLIMBING is a gripping sport which is going from strength to strength. The Army championships will be held on May 14 at the Rock Indoor Climbing Centre in Birmingham and all members of the Regular and Territorial Army are welcome. Categories run from novice to expert, and there is also a team event. Contact Sgt Hughes on Warminster Mil (738) 8931.

Rivals squashed

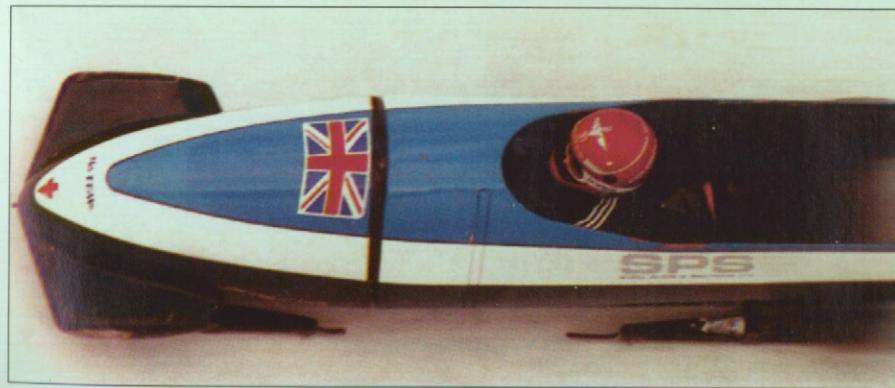
SSGT Gary Clarke (REME) racked up another victory to take the men's open in the Army championships, beating Lt Col Robbie Robinson (RLC) at Winchester Tennis and Squash Club. The women's open went to Lt Karen Wallace (RLC) who overcame WO2 Michelle Quaife (REME) (V).

Army 2, Civil Service 2

THE Army entertained the Civil Service in the annual football fixture on a heavy Military Stadium pitch at Aldershot and shared four goals in a dour struggle, allowing the visitors to retain the trophy. Pte Steve Carter and LCpl Dave Hope got on the scoresheet for the Army.

Diary date

THE Army individual athletic and mini-team championships will be blasting off from the blocks at the Aldershot Military Stadium on June 2.



Round the bend: Cpl Mark Denton and driver Cpl Dennis Hillary, both of the 1st Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, held on to win the Army junior bobsleigh championships at Igls

BRIEF

Play a round for charity

ENTRIES are invited from both individuals and teams to play a round of golf to raise funds for the Royal Star and Garter Home at Richmond. This charity provides the finest nurturing and therapeutic care for disabled ex-Servicemen and women and will be represented by Falklands veteran Simon Weston, a vice-president of the home, who will be joined by other celebrities. Contact events manager Keith Malcolm on 0181 948 8865.

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NETBALL



Picture: Terry Champion

Over to you: RLC B team, playing in red and yellow, take on the Adjutant General's Corps on their way to victory in the Inter-Corps championships at Maida Gym, Aldershot

Sport courts major boost in popularity

ARMY netball is in trouble. Unless interest in the sport and quality playing are revived soon, the last women-only team sport could disappear from the Army, **writes Graham Bound**.

While such traditionally male-dominated games as football and even rugby are attracting a growing female following, netball has been struggling to retain the talent necessary to compete realistically against the other Services. Depressing results at Inter-Service championships speak for themselves: the Army has not won for 11 years.

But the sport's organisers have glimpsed the first signs of what they hope is a revival and are cautiously optimistic that the decline can be halted. Perhaps it can even be turned around.

Capt Jenny Luck, secretary of the Army Netball Association, is positive. The nurse, who played for the BAOR and Army teams from 1986 to 1994, organised the Inter-Corps championships held at the Maida Gym, Aldershot in January. There the Royal Logistic Corps B team emerged victorious following a day of brisk and energetic action.

The players' enthusiasm extended to the Army team selection session the following day and, for the first time in years, the selectors were faced with difficult choices. Twenty-one players were selected from 34 candidates; not bad considering that in 1998 interest in the game was so low that all the triallists were selected for the team.

Jenny Luck was not rash enough to predict victory at the Inter-Service championships in March, but, for the first time in years, there is hope.

WINNING

"These girls are of a standard that could take us towards winning the championship," said the association secretary. "They will have to get their team spirit together, but we have a coach who will bring out the best in them and with self-confidence and good training, they can do it."

• The Army Netball Association always welcomes newcomers to the sport (and those returning to the courts). Any woman interested in netball at any level should call Capt Luck on Ripon Mil (773) 3073.

Win a £109 heart-rate monitor

KEEPING fit to fight is one of the most important goals for soldiers, but sometimes it is difficult to tell if all those runs and exercises are placing too much strain on the body.

A product now on the market, which has been recommended by the University of Bath and the former Olympic decathlete Daley Thompson, can take the guessing out of how your heart is reacting to strenuous exercise.

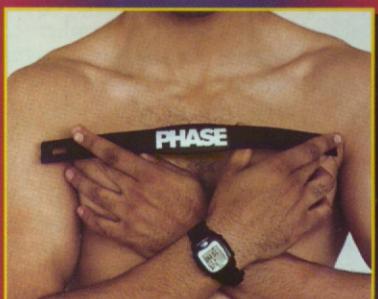
Phase Heartrate watches, which can be worn on the wrist or mounted on a handlebar, monitor the heart-rate by receiving signals from an easily-worn chest transmitter. This means that exercising can be done within a person's "training sensitive zone" so that the training is neither too hard nor easy and can be carried out at the optimum level.

The manufacturers say the watches are ideal for runners, cyclists and those training both outdoors and indoors and in water. They are available in three models, but all have heart-rate monitors, upper and lower alarms, lightweight ECG transmitters, stop-watches, date and time. The Phase 4 model gives calories used during exercise and a countdown timer.

To win a Phase 4 Heartrate watch, consider the following easy multi-choice question and send your answer to Phase Competition, *Soldier Magazine*, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU, to reach us by March 31. Be sure to include your name and address. Sender of the first correct postcard drawn will win the watch. The Editor's decision is final.

QUESTION

Aerobic exercise increases a) fat, b) heart-rate, c) insurance premiums.



Heart: Performance monitoring

RUGBY

No prisoners

Some exciting talent is emerging as the Army builds up to its biggest day at Twickenham

THE Army rugby squad opened its campaign to retain the Willis Corroon Trophy with a satisfying match against a Cambridge University XV bristling with Blues. A narrow loss shielded the fact that the Army scored five tries, writes **Roger Thompson**.

The Army team contains exciting players developing strongly at club and representative level. Rory Greenslade-Jones and Andy Dawling, both 7 Para RHA, are playing with Gloucester and both have accumulated extra tonnage and miles per hour in the summer and early season. Rory scored an exceptional try from centre in the Allied Dunbar Cup watched by millions on television.

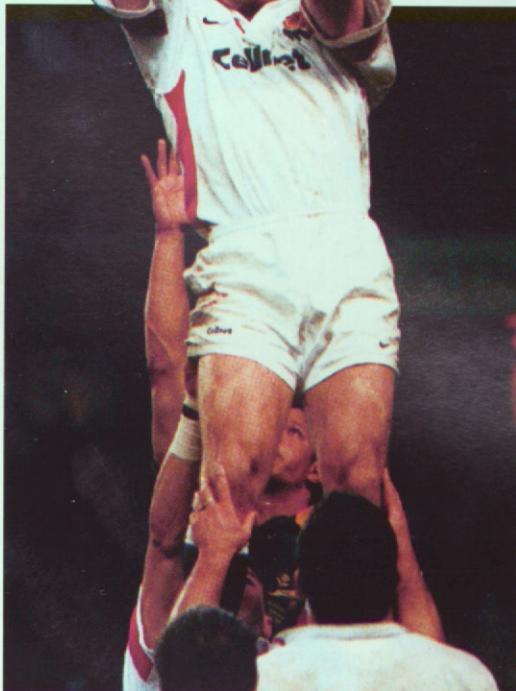
Brian Johnson (R Signals) continues in the England A shirt while Tim Rodber (Green Howards) has re-emerged as a player of awesome presence in the second row for England. Against South Africa his "hit" on the legendary Mark Andrews registered seven on the Richter Scale and caused the battered Springbok to depart the game.

Rob Wainwright (RAMC) and Mattie Stewart (PWRR) are performing strongly with the Murrayfield Mafia. Mattie is nearly fully fit again after summer operations of the medical variety and is looking ahead to the rugby World Cup.

As usual the unknowns of August are muscling into contention at selectors' meetings. Any one of a number could seize the opportunity to play in the Willis Corroon championships.

Rob Kama (RGJ) and Finlay Bibby (DWR) are challenging strongly, while captain Rupert Abernethy (RGR) is undoubtedly clawing his way back to fitness after surgery.

There is a buzz in the Army squad as the newcomers make their case for selection and the established players defend their positions. Regeneration on this scale is very exciting and all will be revealed at



High-handed skills: Tim Rodber raises his game

the Willis Corroon Inter-Services championships.

The final of a national junior rugby event will take place during half-time in the Army-Navy game at Twickenham. The *Daily Telegraph* has joined forces with DFDS Transport Ltd and Sportsmatch, the Government-promoted business sponsorship scheme, to underwrite a nationwide youth initiative for state schools. The

Dates for your diary

March 31: Army v RAF, Pontypridd.
April 24: Army v RN, Twickenham.
Tickets for Twickenham are available from the Secretary of the Army Rugby Union on Aldershot Mil (722) 3573 or for the RAF match from Maj Cullen at Brecon 01874 613431.

ship scheme, to underwrite a nationwide youth initiative for state schools. The

event is being jointly organised by the Army and Royal Navy Rugby Unions, with support from Hampshire and Sussex Rugby Unions.

Army sinks Royal Navy

A strong Army under-21 rugby team took the field against the Royal Navy at Aldershot in the opening encounter of the 1999 Inter-Services tournament, but the phrase "headless chickens" readily comes to mind when trying to describe the first half, writes **Maj (Retd) Tom Wye**.

The home pack dominated the matelots but could not convert pressure into points and the first half whistle blew with the visitors leading by two penalties to one, 6-3. The second half was just as dour, with the Army winning all of their own ball and most of the opposition's but failing to build a safe cushion of points. Eventually they managed to level the scores with a penalty, then employed siege tactics in the visitors' 22-metre area. The Army pack won the ball, committed the defenders and released it for the threequarters to score the only try of the game. With the conversion to follow, the home side ran out winners by 13 points to six.

Champions again

The Army U-21s followed up their win over the Navy by beating the Royal Air Force 9-26 at RAF Halton to claim the Inter-Service championship for the third consecutive year. In a hard game reminiscent of the encounter with the Senior Service, the Army players overcame their now traditional lackadaisical start to beat the home team in all departments, especially where it really counts – up front.

BALLOONING

Airmen's Austrian flight of success

A SEVEN-man team from Wattisham-based 4 Regiment AAC won the best performance trophy at the British ballooning championships in Austria.

Capt Simon de la Billière, who led the successful ballonists, said he was amazed at the regiment's achievement against 46 civilian teams. "We simply did not expect to do so well. We are relatively inexperienced and knew we would be up against tough competition," he said.

While the airmen were doing their stuff in Austria, the regiment's ski team was winning at the Army ski championships in the French Alps. And two Wattisham-based soldiers from 3 Regiment AAC did well at the Inter-Services cresta championships in Switzerland. Capt Justin King finished third in the Army Cup and Maj Mark Betteridge was sixth in the Harlem Trophy against Royal Air Force and Royal Navy competitors.

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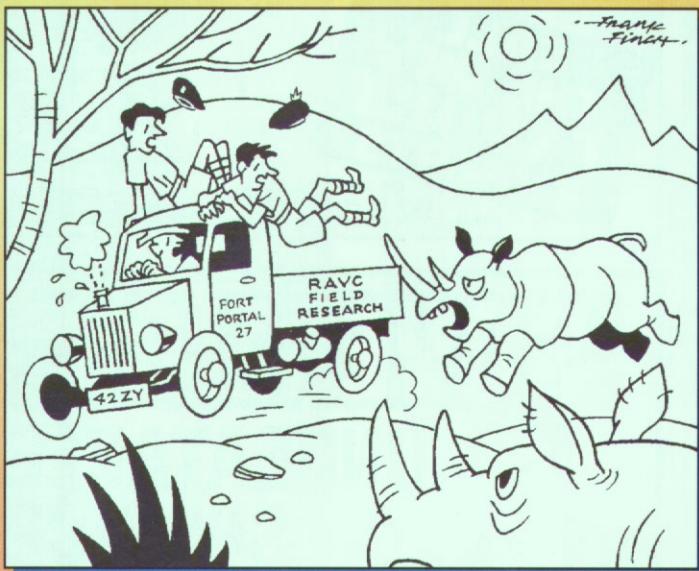
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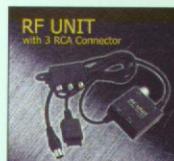


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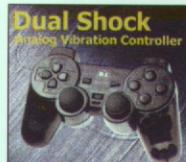
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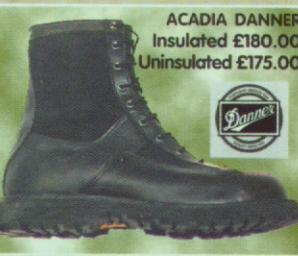
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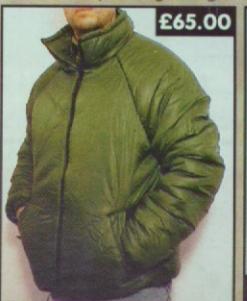
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Richard, tall, slim, fit, outwardly assured but shy. Ex-Regular soldier. Professional with international bank in the City. Interests include the countryside, dogs, MGs, skiing, opera and military history. Preferred age, 25-36. Photo appreciated. **P419**

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Army service medal - a superb die-struck commemorative medal is available in full size and miniature. Send SAE for details and order form to: *Service Commemoratives, P O Box 4, Hinckley, Leics LE10 3ZT.* **04/99**

Second-hand bookshop requires books on all subjects, especially military and history. We collect! *TLON BOOKS, Merton Abbey Mills, Merantum Way, London SW19 2RD. Tel: 0181 540 4371.* **12/99**

Head-dress Badges of the British Army by Kipling & King. The Collector's Bible. Volume One: (1800-1920) £65. Volume Two: (1920-1998) £45. **Post free.** H. L. & P. King, 3 Saxon Croft, Farnham, Surrey GU9 7QB. Tel: 01252 716303. **03/99**

Books for Soldiers - contact the experts. Free catalogue. The Outdoorsman's Bookstore, 27 Monument Industrial Park, Chalgrove, Oxon OX44 7RW. Tel: 01865 400256. Fax: 01865 400257. **12/99**

Military history books. Please send SAE for current catalogue. Free specialist booksearch. *McKenzie, Town End Farm, Brampton, Appleby, Cumbria CA16 6JS. Tel/fax: 017683 51384.* **12/99**

BRITISH ARMY CAP BADGES. Breaking collection. Please send two stamps for list: *84 Merritt Road, Greatstone, New Romney, Kent TN2 8SZ.* **03/99**

Cap badges, regimental ties, blazer badges, medals, insignia. Send £2.00 for list to: *Cairncross (Dept S), 31 Belle Vue Street, Filey, North Yorkshire.* **09/99**

Officer's service dress jacket and trousers. 42" chest, 34" waist - £200. RMP officer's No 1 dress hat - £50. Service dress hat - £50. Sam Browne belt - £100. Call Mike Caseman: 07970 145654. **03/99**

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Military Fine Arts. Britain's leading British military art dealer. Access to all British publishers, artists and dealers. Send £3.50 for Edition 6, 2,500 item catalogue (incl 20+ SAS). Cheques payable to: G Jennings-Bramley, 5 Feversham Road, Salisbury SP1 3PP. Phone: 01722 328523. **12/99**

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Army Cap Badges. Send SAE plus 80p for lists to: Clans and Regiments, 14 Elm Grove, Aldbrough, East Yorkshire HU11 4RQ. Guarantee and generous discounts. **12/99**

UNIFORM POSTCARDS. Scottish regiments, Guards, Cavalry, Infantry, Para, etc. SAE for catalogue and sample: *Geoff White, 19 Rushmoor Lane, Backwell, Bristol BS48 3BN.* **08/99**

Sally, 40, single, a non-smoking, slim, bubbly 40-year-old with own teeth and hair. Loves eating out, walking, music and wine tasting and works as a freight agent at Heathrow Airport. Divorced with own house and own debts. Would like pen pals, 38+ - with a pulse. **P430**

Absolutely urgent. Wanted - LHD vehicles. Any condition. Cash buyer. Tel: 0181-534 4016 or 0181-555 0823. (10am to 10.30pm seven days). **04/99**

CARS

Ann-Marie, 33, 5'7", slim blonde whose interests include working out in the gym, travel and nights in/out. Seeking male, genuine pen pals with GSOH. **P431**

CARS WANTED

Left-hand drive vehicles urgently wanted. Any condition. Cash buyer. Tel: 0181-534 4016 or 0181-555 0823. (10am to 10.30pm) seven days. **12/99**

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Best mobile phone deal in town. No contract. Line rental £7.76pm. Peak time calls only 12p. Call Mark on 0800 741476. **04/99**

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Blue Bonnets, Boers and Biscuits'. Boer war diary of a private in the KOSB, compiled by his granddaughter, Heather Wilson. 67, Cadogan Gardens, London E18 1LY. £8 + 80p p&p. **03/99**

FREE MILITARY CATALOGUES/ books wanted. Will collect. *Attic Books, 3 Marine Road, Hoylake, Wirral L47 2AS. Tel: 0151 632 5365.* **02/99**

Elaine, 29, 5'4", auburn hair. Likes scuba diving, reading, travelling, nights

Anshutz biathlon, small bore rifle, right-handed - £150. Also left-handed with spare stock carrying case, tools - £400. Firearms certificate SY000-270/F. **Also** antique gold Royal Engineers' love brooch - £400. Tel: 01629 640491. **03/99**

BRITISH ARMY CAP BADGES. Breaking collection. Please send two stamps for list: *84 Merritt Road, Greatstone, New Romney, Kent TN2 8SZ.* **03/99**

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British Military cap badges and insignia. Send SAE for lists to: *INKERMAN Badges, PO Box 1022, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 3JQ.* **12/99**

Military badges. Good selection - reasonable prices. Brindle, 2 Short Road, Smethwick B67 6NJ. SAE for list. **06/99**

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British Military cap badges and insignia. Send SAE for lists to: *INKERMAN Badges, PO Box 1022, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 3JQ.* **12/99**

British Military cap badges and insignia. Send SAE for lists to: *INKERMAN Badges, PO Box 1022, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 3JQ.* **12/99**

27-way tie for sixth prize (17 goals, £55.56 each): Cpl JM Annis, 47 Regt RA, Thorney Island; Ssgt SA Benfield, 1 GH, Osnabrück; Maj GK Bibby, APC, Glasgow; Csgt R Black, Lowland (V), Edinburgh; WO2 S Carolan, DI TRG POL (A), Upavon; Cpl MB Garrigan, Warminster Sp Unit; Sgt KG Graham, 47 Regt RA, Thorney Island; Lt Col SP Harris, RMA, Sandhurst; WO1 WF Hatch, HQ SIB RMP, Bulford; WO2 J Hind, HQ Land, Wilton; Sgt PJ Hooker, Army Sch of Catering, Aldershot; Sgt OB Jones, 21 Engr Regt, Osnabrück; WO1 EA Larrard, HQ UKSC (G), Rheindahlen; WO2 JL Little, BATSV Wainwright; Csgt JD Mabb, 1 RGJ, Bulford; Maj PD Manklow, 16 Ftr AAC, Dhekelia; WO2 K Maund, Northumbrian UOTC; Cpl KF McGuinness, HQB Gibraltar; Ssgt AJ Moutray, 24 Regt RLC, Bielefeld; Cpl J Murray, 1 Hldrs, Catterick; Sgt AP Siyver, ATR Pirbright; Lt Col L Smith, HQ Land, Wilton; Ssgt TA Smith, 32 Regt RA, Larkhill; Spr PJ Somers, 22 Engr Regt, Perham Down; Sig SJ Stokes, 1 (UK) ADSR, Herford; Ssgt LM Thomas, HQ 5 Div, Shrewsbury; Sgt DG Tranter, 16 Regt RA, Woolwich. **03/99**

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20-way tie for eighth prize (19 goals, £30 each): WO2 MW Ballaham, 7R Irish; Csgt A J Day, 1 D and D, Wimborne; Pte L Deboer, 1 GH, Osnabrück; Lt Col ER Duncan, HQ NI; Cpl C Dykes, 3 Para, Dover; Sgt GM Field, Royal School of Signals, Blandford; Sgt MF Flynn, ATR Winchester; Col CHB Garraway, MoD, London; LCpl AS Green, 8 Inf Bde Signal Sqn; Sgt GM Hibbert, 16 Ftr AAC, Dhekelia; Cpl AR Hodgson, 14 Sup Regt RLC Dülmen; Cpl A Jackson, 3 Para, Dover; LCpl P Kelly, MoD, London; WO2 GG Kinghorn, HQ DI Trg Pol (A), Upavon; Cpl AL Morgan, 158 Pro Coy RMP, Bulford; Bdr AJ Morris, RA Band, Woolwich; Cfn JP Leebold, 1 Gren Gds, Pirbright; WO1 MD Organ, 1 GS Regt RLC, Göttersloch; Ssgt NN Richardson, DSMRC, Epsom; Ssgt R Russell, 45 Signal Sqn (V), Colchester. **03/99**

20-way tie for ninth prize (20 goals, £600 each): Bdr SW Dawber, 26 Regt RA, Göttersloch; WO2 S Lane, AFCO Stoke-on-Trent; Cpl RW Menzies, 280 (UK) Signal Sqn, Krefeld; Sgt GP Thompson, SEAE, Arborfield. **03/99**

20-way tie for tenth prize (22 goals, £150 each): Maj RG Corbey, RSC Pirbright; Maj NK Elliott, JSCSC, Bracknell; Col JD Fielden, HQ OMG, Andover; Ssgt DC Gibson, HQ Land, Wilton; Cpl SV Hamblin, Royal School of Signals, Blandford; Ssgt C Hewitt, 163 Pro Coy RMP (V), Brighton; Csgt DW Hodgson, 7 R Irish; Cpl SP McNally, 1 SG; Sgt TJ Prosser, 22 Regt RA, Kirton in Lindsey; Maj CBW Stock, RMCS, Shropshire. **03/99**

February 13, 1999

First prize (21 goals, £3,500): WO2 GR Kirk, 101 Regt (V), Newcastle upon Tyne. **03/99**

Second prize (20 goals, £1,700): Lt Col EJ Hunter, School of Logistics, Deepcut. **03/99**

Eight-way tie for third prize (19 goals, £537.50 each): Sgt SP Cavie, 33 Engr Regt (EOD), Wimborne; Sgt JM Dunn, 103 Bn REME (V), Redhill; Pte DG Egan, 2 PWRR, Tidworth; Ssgt KTW Halkett, 1 RGJ, Bulford; WO2 PJ Leebold, 1 Gren Gds, Pirbright; Cpl AL Morgan, 158 Pro Coy RMP, Bulford; Bdr AJ Morris, RA Band, Woolwich; Cfn JP Parker, 4 GS Regt RLC, Abingdon; Sgt R Teasdale, 39 Engr Regt, Cambridge; Cpl J Walsh, HQ 5 AB Bde, Aldershot; Sig MK Whatmough, HQ 19 Mech Bde, Catterick. **03/99**

February 20, 1999

First prize (24 goals, £3,500): Cpl NP Ralton, 2 Trg Regt AAC, Middle Wallop. **03/99**

Four-way tie

Diary

Memorial to Rorke's Drift hero returned to fitting state

... with your help

SOLDIER readers, who contributed at least £150 of the £2,000 donated for the refurbishment of a memorial to Rorke's Drift hero Pte Frederick Hitch VC in Chiswick Cemetery, will be pleased to learn that it was rededicated with due ceremony on January 22, the 120th anniversary of the battle.

Representatives from The Royal Regiment of Wales Old Comrades' Association, supported by drummers, buglers and the goat mascot of the 2nd Battalion watched as Hitch's great-grandson unveiled the monument. The granite helmet, stolen by vandals, has been replaced and lettering re-blacked.

There was a good turn-out from the Cab Drivers' Association and the Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers, who laid a replica of their wreath – a wheel with one spoke missing – originally commissioned for Hitch's funeral in 1913. On leaving the Army he enjoyed a long career as a London cabbie.

Hitch went to South Africa with the 2nd Battalion, 24th Regiment of Foot, later to become the South Wales Borderers, and received the VC for his part in the epic defence of the trading post at Rorke's Drift.

DATES

APRIL

24: British Model Soldier Society annual show, New Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, London, 1030-1600.

MAY

26: Military concert (RA, RDG), Kneller Hall, 2000. Tickets: 0181 898 5533.

29-31: D-Day historic military vehicle show, Denmead, nr Portsmouth (01705 241911).

JUNE

9: Military concert (Queen's Minden, RL, Inns of Court and City Yeomanry), Kneller Hall, 2000. Tickets: 0181 898 5533.

23: Military concert (Coldstream Guards), Kneller Hall, 2000. Tickets: 0181 898 5533.

JULY

7: Military concert (Herts, R Irish), Kneller Hall, 2000. Tickets: 0181 898 5533.

20-Aug 2: Royal Tournament, Earls Court. Ticket office 0171 244 0244.

21: Military concert (Highland and Lowland Bands), Kneller Hall, 2000. Tickets: 0181 898 5533.

23-25: Invicta Military Preservation Society's War and Peace Show, Beltring Hop Farm and Country Park, Kent.

29: Military concert (Music in Youth Summer School, incl ACF), Kneller Hall, 2000. Tickets: 0181 898 5533.

AUGUST

4: Military concert (WG, Queen's Normandy), Kneller Hall, 2000. Tickets: 0181 898 5533.

To include public events in this diary, contact the Editor.

Rorke's stone

A stone memorial to John Robson, a driver at Rorke's Drift, was dedicated at his grave in Woolwich Cemetery on the anniversary of the battle. The ceremony was arranged by 101 (London) Engineer Regiment (EOD) and members of the Woolwich branch of the Royal Engineers Association. Dvr Robson was one of only two Royal Engineers present at the action, the other being his officer commanding, Lt John Chard, whom he served as batman. He was eventually discharged in 1894 after achieving four good conduct badges and was buried in a pauper's grave in 1933.



Lt Col John Gunn, CO 101 Engr Regt, said: "We were proud to be honouring a fellow Royal Engineer, who deserves to have his grave suitably marked."

A date with Kneller

Kneller Hall, Twickenham, has published its list (see Dates below) of summer military band concerts, starting on May 26 with the bands of the Royal Artillery and Royal Dragoon Guards. Advance tickets may be reserved on 0181 898 5533, with prices ranging from a season ticket for £18 to a block of ten or more for £3.50.

Korean War appeal

Scotland's Korean War veterans are appealing for funds to construct a pagoda in Perth in memory of British Servicemen who died during the war.

They need up to £50,000 for the ambitious project and are committed to raising it in time to have the memorial dedicated in July 2001.

Donations of any size, made out to "KVGB Memorial Fund", should be sent to Bob Manning at KVGB, Unit 78, Perth Airport, Perth PH2 6NP. He can be contacted on 01738 553659 if anyone wants further information.

Tiger in the tank

Bovington's Tank Museum has been awarded a National Lottery grant of £96,900 towards the restoration of a German Tiger tank, one of the most formidable weapons of the Second World War. The museum's Tiger is one of only six to survive the war and none has so far been restored to running order.

Highly likely tales from Arborfield

THERE are some cracking good stories – most of them no doubt of a very, very tall persuasion – on a video released by the Arborfield Old Boys' Association.

Take the one about the likely lad whose excuse for being late back to camp was that, while walking from Reading, he had turned his back to the wind to light a cigarette... and had forgotten to turn round again. He discovered his mistake when he arrived back in town... six miles away.

The duty officer was so impressed by an excuse he had not heard before that he let the apprentice get away with it.

Personal reminiscences are mixed with film of the 1997 annual reunion at Arborfield, through which 10,000 boys passed between

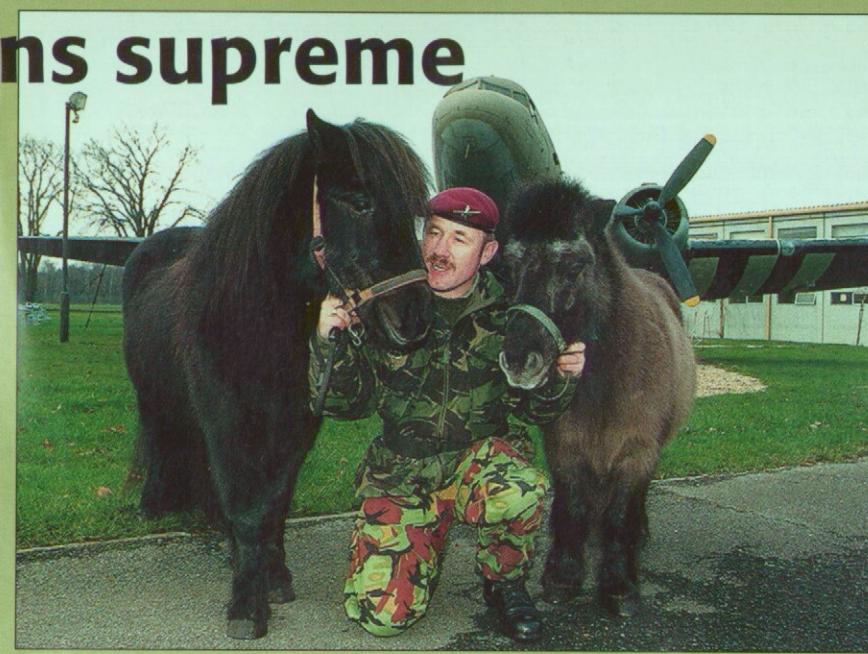
Pegasus 4 reins supreme

Pony whisperer: Cpl Stephen Osborne says soothing words to Pegasus 4, left, the new regimental mascot of The Parachute Regiment. On the right is Falklands, a 14-year-old stablemate who will be his companion. The latest Pegasus, who is based at Browning Barracks in Aldershot, took over officially when he appeared at a passing-out parade at Catterick last month.

Pegasus 3, who reached the rank of full corporal during his years of service, has retired to stables in Dover.

His two-year-old successor was presented to the regiment by Col Ben Arkle, Deputy Colonel Commandant, who in 1950 gave the 1st Battalion its first Pegasus mascot. Each battalion had its own mascot until 1965 when it was decided there would be just one for the whole regiment.

Picture: Aldershot News



His feet didn't touch the ground

Fast workers. Staff at Haverfordwest Army Careers Office reckon they have set a record time for enlisting Glyn Parry... unless you know better. Glyn, right, walked into the careers office on December 15, enlisted in the REME on the 18th after successfully completing the Recruit Selection Centre programme, and started his training at the Army Apprentice College on January 4.



Architecture of conflict

Copies of English Heritage's 24-page brochure *Monuments of War*, which looks at the evaluation and management of 20th century military sites such as pill boxes and anti-tank defences in Britain, are available at no cost from the organisation at PO Box 229, Northampton NN6 9RY (tel 01604 781163, fax 781714). "For the first time we now know how many sites there were, where they were and when they were there. We also know which ones survived," said a Heritage

Bill's gem of an idea

Lt Col (retd) Bill Butt, right, has received the British Army (Germany)'s biggest ever award under the MoD's Gems staff suggestion scheme. His idea for cutting postal costs has earned him £6,000.

Bill, a retired officer working for the Postal and Courier Service in the Logistic Support Branch at HQ United Kingdom Support Command (Germany), devised a system of coloured labels to replace stamps for parcel mail passing through British Forces Post Offices in Germany.

Based on the colours of snooker balls, from white to black, the Butt Label system, as it is now officially known, is expected to save the taxpayer hundreds of thousands of pounds in the long term.

Following a successful trial, Butt Labels are now sold at BFPO counters throughout Germany. Spin-off benefits include less paperwork and speedier counter service.

"With many parcels moving within the BFPO system or to addresses in the UK, the Army's Postal and Courier Service



was doing all the work but getting virtually none of the revenue," he explained.

The DPCS is now considering whether to apply the system worldwide.

was the first tangible evidence they had ever had of their brother since he went missing.

Going out with a bang

No expense will be spared to ensure the 1999 Royal Tournament, the last in its present form, goes off in style. Organisers say the tri-Service spectacular at Earls Court will be the finest ever to mark the 120-year history of the event. It is to be replaced by a "more modern" outdoor event.

Tickets for the pageant, which runs from July 20 to August 2, can be booked on 0171 244 0244. The show will end with "the greatest finale ever" as massed bands, pipes and drums, a choir and all the cast bid farewell against a background of pyrotechnics.

Treasures of the National Army Museum



9



Former NAM staff member Penny Hawtin takes a close look at Captain Siborne's amazing Waterloo model

Not such a one-sided battlefield

CAPT William Siborne's magnificent model of the Battle of Waterloo is one of the museum's most popular exhibits. Covering more than 50 square metres and containing about 75,000 figures, it is a massive achievement.

In 1830, Siborne, a cartographer, obtained approval for his suggestion that a model of the battlefield be constructed. He took leave and conducted an eight-month topographical survey, then followed up with a questionnaire to surviving British officers asking them for precise information about their units at the climax of the battle.

BRITISH VIEW

But because Siborne used only evidence he gathered from British officers, the result is a particularly partisan perspective of the battle, with much of the area occupied by the advancing Prussians excluded.

Whatever its faults, the model is a wonderful achievement and the letters Siborne used in his research constitute an important archive in themselves. A new audio visual display consisting of three short films explains the battle, examines the tactics of the period and tells the story of the model itself.

The model was on display in London from 1838 to 1841 and attracted 100,000 visitors paying a shilling each. Today it can be seen for nothing in the Road to Waterloo Gallery at the National Army Museum in Chelsea.

Bulletin board

Pick up the beat with London Irish Rifles

THE civilian London Irish Rifles Pipes and Drums, located at the Duke of York's Headquarters, Chelsea, is looking for musicians who live within striking distance of London. While the London Irish is part of D Coy, The London Regiment, the pipe band comes under the auspices of the regimen-

tal association and is a civilian band. Established musicians who would like to be considered should contact Maj J M MacLeod, Band President, The London Irish Rifles Pipes and Drums, Duke of York's HQ, King's Road, London SW3 4SA (mobile tel 07979 547 232).

REUNIONS

Army Catering Corps Association: Annual meeting at St Omer Barracks, Aldershot, on March 19. All ex-ACC members invited. Contact Lt Col B S Dyson on 01252 340893/4 or Aldershot mil 722 5893/4.

Glosters, Royal Berkshires, Wiltshires, DERR and RGBW: For details of reunions at Bristol (March 20-21), Devizes (May 22-23), Salisbury (July 10-11), Reading (July 24-25) and 1 RGBW "at home" at Windsor (June 9), see newsletter or call RHQ Gloucester (01452 522682) or RHQ Salisbury (01722 414536).

Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regimental Association (London Branch): AGM and reunion at Victory Services Club, London, on March 26. Details from Veronica Joel Newton on 0181 888 9739. Next meeting on June 25.

4th Battalion, The Cheshire Regiment: Reunion dinner for 4 Bn, its predecessors (4/5 Bn) or successor (4/7 Bn), Port Sunlight, April 16. Ring Geoff Hunt on 0151 645 0434. Also regiment's Suez reunion on May 8 at Dale Barracks, Liverpool Road, Chester. Contact Geoff Hunt as above or J Ball on 0151 608 4524.

260 Signal Squadron (1960s-1970s): Reunion at Loughborough, April 23-24. Contact Roy Andrews on 01227 264551.

138th (City of London) Fd Regt RA Association: Final reunion on April 26 at Victory Services Club, London. Details: Frank Flack, 22 Camberne Way, Hounslow TW5 0PW (tel 0181 570 5267).

201 RCZ Workshop (V): Joint mess reunion for former officers and SNCOs and families in May, Coventry area. Details from R F Smith, 6 St John's Place, Waterloo, Liverpool L22 5NP.

Combat Engineer Training Centre (Germany), now known as Engineer Training and Advisory Team: Official opening of new training ground at Sennelager on May 7 followed by all ranks reunion on May 8. Details from WO1 (SMI) T R Lee QGM on Sennelager Mil 2526 or civil 05254 98 2526, or ET&AT, Normandy Barracks, BFPO 16. Bids for accommodation by April 18.

Light Dragoons (formerly 13/18 H, 15/19 H): Sixth reunion dinner of the Southern Branch will be held at the Victory Services Club,

APPOINTMENTS

Lt Col: R R Davis to RMCS, Sept 20; R O N Evans to HQ DCSA, Oct 5; A E Gillespie to HQ RSA, Mar 1; K Holt to APC, Aug 30; M J Hopkins to A(Man)S, Mar 22; I D R Pickard to HQ BFFI, Apr 28; S D Rowland-Jones to DM(A), Mar 20; H S J Scott to Kuwait Project Office, Apr 14; K B L Simson to HQ RAC, Jan 4; J W Walker to HQ DISC, Nov 30, 1998.

Retirements

Brig: A P M J Naughten, late R Irish, Feb 4.

SEARCHLINE

Anyone with information on **Robert Brown**, born 1899 in Sunderland, served in **Durham Light Infantry** during the First World War and was a POW, is asked to contact his nephew, Patrick Johnson, 16 Devonshire House, Devonshire Road, Bexhill, E Sussex TN40 1AH (tel 01424 222168).

RAF Police Association, formed in 1984, has branches all over the country. Anyone seeking more information should contact the secretary, David Wardell, 40 South Western Crescent, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH14 8RR (tel/fax 01202 747176), or e-mail david-wardell@mcmail.com

Regimental Association 78th Highlanders, Nova Scotia, plans to reconstruct a sergeants' mess and wet canteen in an existing barrack room at the Citadel, a 19th century British fort, and seeks photographs, drawings or descriptions of the furnishings and fittings in a British Army sergeants' mess or standard barrack room of the 1860s when the 78th was stationed at the Citadel. Reply to J M MacLeod, 49 Willow Walk, London N21 1NG.

British Korean War veterans will be on parade at the Aldershot Museum's special events day on June 27. All veterans welcome.

Bonnie Fillier seeks news of former **LCpl Andrew Williams**, who trained in Canada in the 1980s and was with 8 Plt, C Coy, 1 RRW. Replies to 60 Del Ray Cres NE, Calgary Alta, T1Y 6V8, Canada (tel (403) 280 1152), or e-mail mhc-cale@telusplanet.net

Information sought on **Capt John Alfred Mansfield**, possibly Green Howards and later Royal Flying Corps, who served in the First World War. Replies to his son, Rick Mansfield, 1/21 Grange Road, Toorak, Australia 3142.

Mrs J Mitchell seeks an ex-Army friend of her husband, who served with him in Malaya until being badly injured and sent home. The friend was **Dmr Harry Brooks** of 1st Bn, Queen's Royal Regiment, last known home address in Wandsworth. Replies to 48 Griggs Meadow, Dunsfold, Surrey GU8 4ND.

Former mates of **ex-LCpl David "Smudge" Smith**, 1 Sqn RCT, Colchester sought for surprise reunion, in particular **LCpl John "Joe" Brown**, RCT, 16 Fd Amb and **LCpl Dave Hutchinson**, RAMC, and anyone who remembers him from 36 Sqn, 10 Regt (Bielefeld); 16 Fd Amb, MT Tp (Aldershot); MT Tp, 2 Div HQ and Sig Regt (Minden). Replies to Mrs S Smith, 90 Morgan Place, South Reddish, Stockport, Cheshire SK5 7NY.

RETURN OF PRESENTATION ITEMS

The following units have been earmarked for disbandment or amalgamation under the Strategic Defence Review and anyone who has made presentations to them is asked to make contact if they wish the items to be returned:

Disbanding

234 Fd Sqn RE (Air Sp)(V), ring Capt D Jurgens on 01677 423041 ext 7586.

236 Fd Sqn RE (Air Sp)(V), Capt D Chapman, 01309 672161 ext 7461.

237 Fd Sqn RE (Air Sp)(V), Capt J Saunderson, 01343 812121 ext 7163.

B Coy, 4 Para, PSAO on 0151 2640969.

72 Engr Regt (V), 0191 239 6144/6156, or write to RHQ, 72 Engr Regt (V), Napier Armoury, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE8 4HX before May 1.

124 (Lowland) Fd Sqn RE(V) WOs' and Sgts' Mess, ring 01236 424523 or Glasgow Mil 5800, or write to the squadron at Quarry Street, Coatbridge ML5 3PY by Mar 31.

Amalgamating

3 Cheshire (V) will amalgamate with 5/8 Kings. Contact the unit or RHQ Cheshire before May 1 on 01244 327617 or write to The Castle, Chester CH1 2DN.



Invasion objective: The old Pegasus Bridge lies in pieces on the banks of the Caen Canal

Fresh glory for Pegasus Bridge

PEGASUS Bridge, the capture of which was a priority on D-Day, is to be restored in a joint venture with British Airborne Forces and the people of Normandy, writes Karen Moseley.

The old bridge over the Caen Canal was the first objective of the Allied invasion on June 6, 1944, and was captured in a spectacular glider-borne assault by the 6th Airborne Division. Named after the flying horse insignia of the Airborne Forces, Pegasus Bridge bowed to the pressure of increased traffic and was replaced in 1993 by a larger, modern construction. Since then it has been lying derelict in three sections in a storage area 300m away.

There are now plans for it to be reconstructed as the major attraction in a £650,000 memorial park and museum. The Airborne Assault Normandy Trust, based at Browning Barracks, Aldershot, is working with local councils in Normandy to fulfil a promise made to British airborne veterans that the old bridge would be given an honourable and fitting home.

"The capture of Pegasus Bridge and another one close by over the River Orne provided the gateway for the Allies and prevented huge German reinforcements from the east that would have rolled right across the beach landings," explained Lt Col Neville Jackson, a managing trustee.

"It has great significance in British military history. The Airborne Division suffered 4,500 casualties during the cam-

paign and many of the dead are buried at Ranville, within whose boundaries the memorial is to be established."

There has been controversy ever since the bridge was dismantled. The owner of the original museum, Arlette Gondrée-Pritchett, whose father's café overlooking the bridge was the first building to be liberated on D-Day, does not think it should be restored as it no longer has any significance. On the other hand the project has the support of hundreds of veterans' associations as well as the local French communes, the British Embassy in Paris and the Colonel-in-Chief of The Parachute Regiment, the Prince of Wales.

Councils in Normandy have committed around £400,000 to the project. The trust would like it to be a joint venture with Britain and wants to raise another £400,000.

"We're certain the museum could be built without any British money," Lt Col Jackson said. "But we think it's important, psychologically and morally, that it should be supported by British as well as French money."

A British company has offered to level the site at no cost and Royal Engineers are expected to carry out most of the work on restoring the bridge and moving it to its final resting place.

It is hoped the museum will be completed in time for opening on June 6, 2000, the 56th anniversary of D-Day.

● Donations may be sent to The Pegasus Memorial, c/o Airborne Assault Normandy Trust, Parachute Regiment Headquarters, Browning Barracks, Aldershot, Hants, GU11 2BU.

77 Engineer Regiment (V)

'Get-you-in' specialists disbanded

AN all-too-short military career is to end with the imminent disbandment of 77 Engineer Regiment (Volunteers), based at RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire, and its sub-units in the county, at RAF Marham in Norfolk and RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire.

The regiment is the successor to the Territorial Army's airfield damage repair units raised during the Cold War years to support front-line RAF bases in the United Kingdom.

This led to 267 Field Squadron being raised at RAF Waddington and 219 Field Squadron at Coningsby. Subsequently, 77 Engr Regt (V) was formed to provide a focus for units based in the east of England. Its development included a large REME workshop at RAF Woodhall Spa, a satellite to RAF Coningsby.

EXCELLENCE

The units moved to their stations in the 1980s and quickly earned a reputation for excellence, both for the professionalism of their work and the manner in which they bridged the military and civilian communities. In addition to training for their war role, the need to keep trade skills up to date provided opportunities for them to complete tasks in military and civilian environments in the UK and abroad. These ranged from building a helicopter landing pad at Colchester Hospital to constructing a children's play area in Coningsby village.

With the end of the Cold War, the units re-roled to a more general air support role, often described as a "get-you-in" package for the RAF when it deployed to an overseas base and needed accommodation for aircraft and personnel and the rapid construction of bulk fuel installations, explosive storage areas, and other infrastructure.

REGULAR SQUADRONS

The TA sappers were too successful in their new role. As part of the Strategic Defence Review it was announced that they are to be replaced with two new, large Regular Army squadrons. The regiment was declared non-operational with effect from February 1 and will disband on July 1.

In recent years members of 77 Regiment have served in Bosnia, trained throughout the UK, Germany, Cyprus, the Falklands and at RAF Ascension, with which it has special ties.

Most 77 Engr troops and officers hope to soldier on after July 1 and are looking for posts in other units.

The flags of the regiment and 219 Squadron are to be laid up in the parish church at Coningsby.



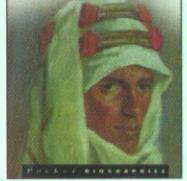
Lawrence of Arabia paid the price of fame

MEDIA hounding of celebrities is nothing new. Consider the unfortunate *Lawrence of Arabia*

(Sutton Pocket Biographies, paperback original, £4.99).

Lawrence of Arabia

JEREMY WILSON



T E Lawrence, who achieved fame through his now-classic book *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, recounting his experiences as the British liaison officer in the Arab revolt of 1916-18 (and romanticised by film-maker David Lean), could not escape attention even after enlisting successively in 1922-23 in the RAF as "J H Ross" and in the Tank Corps at Bovington as Pte "T E Shaw". Near-suicidal, he returned to the RAF and died in a motor-cycle crash in 1935.

Watch this space for SAS of future

SPACECRAFT whisking troops through the stratosphere to insert them in theatre; ground-skimming

vehicles flying at 600km per hour – are these the special forces transports of the future? James D Ladd reports these ideas in an update of his sober and objective history, *SAS Operations: More than Daring* (Robert Hale, £17.99), which

includes assessments of Gulf and Bosnia involvements as well as a Northern Ireland "Peace Postscript" chapter. In the final analysis, he says, the success of operations will depend, as now, on the quality of the soldier on the ground.

Fresh light is cast on the English Civil War

REASSESSMENT of the past is a popular, sometimes unfair, but often necessary preoccupation of current historians.

Stuart Reid, who served in the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, has taken a fresh look at the military history of the English Civil War (1642-51) in *All the King's Armies* (Spellmount, £19.95). Trumpeted as the most detailed work of its kind – and the first

for more than 20 years – it will be devoured by connoisseurs for its erudition and research and enjoyed by lay enthusiasts for its readability.

SAS
OPERATIONS
MORE
THAN
DARING

James D. Ladd

STUART REID
All the King's Armies

A Military History of the English Civil War 1642-51

Soldier who won the Naval CGM

WITH the publication of this register of the CGM 1855-1992, Phil McDermott, compiler of *Conspicuous Gallantry* (Sutton, £24.95 plus £2.50 p&p).



Conspicuous Gallantry Cross
(Crown Copyright, The Royal Mint)

in an operational area, second only in precedence to the Victoria Cross, as were its predecessors.

The register under review contains all the records, full citations, and background notes on both the Naval CGM and the more recently-instituted Air Force CGM holders.

The latter dates back to the Second World War only, being introduced in 1942. For that reason alone, the numbers earned are fewer than for the Army's DCM and Royal Navy's CGM, both of which were instituted during the Crimean War.

Not all recipients were sailors – SSgt Jim Prescott, of

49 (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) Squadron Royal Engi-

neers, was awarded a CGM posthumously for attempting to make safe an unexploded bomb on board HMS *Antelope* during the Falklands War.

Posthumous recognition was extended to all operational awards as recently as 1977. Before then, the choice available was stark – the VC or a Mention in Despatches.

Flt Sgt John Casson, severely wounded while courageously making a second run over his target, coaxed his aircraft back to base, where he died an hour later. Realising Casson's courage did not quite reach VC standard, but that a MID would be derisory, his CO kept the flight sergeant's death a secret until the Sovereign had approved the award.

For *Conspicuous Gallantry* has been well researched – the acknowledgements and bibliography show how thorough was the quest for accuracy. The register is a good buy for anyone interested in reading of the brave deeds of other ranks in the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force who, on occasions, can only have failed to reach the standard required for the VC by a hair's breadth.

The bonus for the buyer is there will be no reason to purchase an updated book – this is it, the complete register of the Naval CGMs from 1855 and Air Force CGMs from 1942, up to the discontinuation of the awards in 1993.

Paperbacks

The Imperial War Museum Book of War Behind Enemy Lines by Julian Thompson. Falklands veteran offers judgements on the value of Special Forces operations, 1940-45. (Pan, £10.)

Memoirs of Lt Gen Sir John Cowley (1905-1993). Vivid recollections by the distinguished Royal Engineer, who won the George Cross for heroism at the Quetta earthquake of 1935. Available at £9 including p&p from his daughter, Mrs Sally-Jane Coode

(to whom cheques should be made payable), at Paddock House, Farleigh Wick, Bradford on Avon, Wilts BA15 2PU.

Atlas of Military Strategy by David G Chandler. Masterly analysis of the art, theory and practice of war, 1618-1878. Packed with facts and maps. (Constable Guide, £12.99.)

The Osprey Militaria Directory & Sourcebook. Military hobbies reference book 1999 edition, from

auctions and books to re-enactment groups and wargaming. £12.99.

Medical Handbook for Walkers and Climbers by Peter Steele. Handy, weatherproof manual, equally useful on a country ramble or a Himalayan exped. (Constable Guide, £12.99.)

Recent additions to the Cassell Military Classics series: *Iron Fist: Classic Armoured Warfare*, by Bryan Perrett; *Kommando:*

German Special Forces of World War Two, by James Lucas; and *The Red Orchestra: The Soviet Spy Network Inside Nazi Europe*, by V E Tarrant. All £5.99.

Lincoln's Unsung Heroes by Philip Katcher. American Civil War through the eyes of the common soldier. (Arms and Armour, £10.99.)

Operation Eichmann by Zvi Aharoni and Wilhelm Dietl (tr Helmut Bogler). Aharoni tracked down the

Nazi henchman in Argentina and smuggled him to Israel to face trial and execution in 1962. (Arms and Armour, £10.99.)

Macks by Bart Vanderveen. Pictorial record of the famous US military vehicles from 1912 to the present, with 600 photographs compiled under the auspices of *Wheels & Tracks* magazine. (After the Battle, £24.95.)

Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives by Penny Summer-

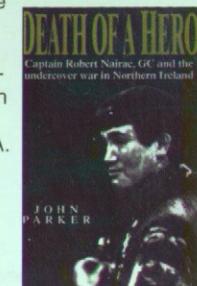
field. Scholarly analysis focusing on women who contributed heroically to the Second World War effort doing male jobs, and women enduring the pressures and privations far from combat. (Manchester University Press, £15.99.)

Battle for Empire by Tom Pocock. Vividly-written story of the Seven Years' War, 1756-63. (Michael O'Mara, £7.99.)

Diary, Words and Poetry compiled by R F Smith. Tribute to his

How and why did Capt Nairac die?

ALMOST 22 years after Capt Robert Nairac, Gren Gds, disappeared in Northern Ireland, few people seem any the wiser about the circumstances other than that he was kidnapped from a South Armagh pub and murdered by the IRA. In an extraordinarily clear and detailed investigation, John Parker attempts to piece together the details in *Death of a Hero* (Metro Books, £17.99) and to discover why the 29-year-old, who was posthumously awarded the George Cross, "stuck his head in the tiger's mouth" while on duty as an intelligence liaison officer with the SAS.



Trench humour from the Royal Norfolks

IN *Thank God and the Infantry* (Sutton, paperback, £12.99), a vividly uncompromising account of the 1st Battalion,

The Royal Norfolk Regiment from D-Day to VE-Day, John Lincoln MC quotes a tough provost sergeant who promised that if he survived he would dig a slit trench at the bottom of his garden to remind himself of his good fortune.

"And any time I'm feeling browned off, brassed off, fed up or hard done by, I'm going to go and sit in it... and I hope it's pissing with rain at the time."

Soldier ordering service
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own words to Driver Clifford Nichols, RASC, a PoW for three years after his capture at Tobruk in 1942. (Stockwell, £6.75.)

Grunts: US Infantry in Vietnam by Christopher J Anderson. Latest in illustrated history series on GIs, their uniforms and equipment. (Greenhill, £7.50.)

Britain's Best Kept Secret by Ted Enever. Story of Ultra's base at Bletchley Park. Sixth reprint.



Colourful: Cigarette-card images shown on the cover of *The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters*

Hard to stub out this ciggy habit

IT IS a strange twist of fate that the "collectability" of one of the marketing devices used to boost the tobacco industry appears to have increased in inverse proportion to the popularity of smoking itself.

The cigarette card was originally just a stiffener for paper packets of the late 19th century but some bright spark in America hit upon the idea of embellishing them with a series of themed images for customers to collect.

The first to achieve the buzz of compiling a full set unwittingly started the hobby of cartophily – or collecting "fag cards", as we used to call them. Other traders such as tea producers have latched on to the idea over the years.

The fascination of this pastime is apparent from the enthusiasm of such collectors as former soldier and cigarette salesman David J Hunter, who spent most of his time in the

Intelligence Corps attached to Headquarters 48 Gurkha Infantry Brigade Group.

In the second of his series of slim but intriguing paperbacks under the generic title "Famous Regiments on Cigarette and Trade Cards" he presents 200 images – uniforms, medals, heroes, colours and insignia – associated with The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment, accompanied by a well-informed text.

It follows last year's volume on The Gordon Highlanders. Others to follow will deal with The Queen's Royal Lancers and Scots Guards and a two-parter is planned on The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. – CH

DOWNLOAD

READERS all over the world are keeping our e-mail line humming. Remember to include your name and address if you want your views to be considered for publication.

In January we asked: is the two-can rule on ops necessary or over-cautious?

In Canada this rule has been in effect for years. It is important to keep your edge when faced with unpredictable courses of action. Murphy's Law – what can happen will happen – comes into effect when on an overseas tour. It is best to be sober so you can react quickly and precisely. – Cadet CWO Matthew Aseltine, 3056 RCACC.

I think that to be a professional soldier you must make sacrifices, particularly on operations. Enjoy your two cans and savour more when you return to Britain. – OCdt Kerr, Universities of London OTC.

As much as I appreciate a soldier's only joy when on operations is to have a drink or two, it doesn't make sense to have too much because it affects fitness to do the job. There is plenty of time to play. – Karen Wakeling (ex-Pte, RLC).

The rule on exercise in Malaya was always two cans (Tiger beer, very strong). The rule is fine provided it applies to all ranks. Knowing the Army, it won't, because there will always be plenty, including spirits, in other messes. – H G Graham-Battersby (ex-RCT), Winchester.

We're not really bothered because here at the Army Foundation College we are all too young to drink! – Sober students.

What's the fuss over Otterburn?

MIGHT I, through *Soldier*, contribute to the Otterburn controversy (see Page 17)? I support the Army, but not for technical reasons outside my province.

I am a dyed-in-the-wool Northumberland product, though descended from County Durham yeoman farming stock, and so might be expected to be prejudiced in favour of the Northumberland National Park Authority. More than once I have foot-slogged around those somewhat barren parts.

I have noticed that the Army's opponents on these occasions follow a pattern, always claiming that significant numbers of members of the public are being denied access to a picturesque area of natural beauty and so being robbed, as it were, of a cultural heritage.

Yet few ever even glance at it. Otterburn moor is bleak and inhospitable, and we only get these controversies when someone suggests moving a stone or two. – R J C Holmes, Newcastle upon Tyne.

SOLDIER welcomes your letters, whether you are an officer or other rank; serving or civvy; nine, 19 or 90. All we ask is that you keep them brief and to the point. We'd prefer them to be typed but if they are handwritten, please put names, addresses and in block capitals (not necessarily for publication). A prize from the *Soldier* gift collection will be awarded each month if we judge that a letter, serious or humorous, merits it. So get writing! Acceptance or rejection of letters is the decision of the Editor, who reserves the right to amend for length, clarity or style. Anonymous letters will not be considered.

Write us a prize letter

Battlefield dive was not the first

I thoroughly enjoyed Dennis Barnes's article on diving in the Dardanelles (Dec). The report was exciting and the photography excellent. My only criticism is that it was definitely not, as claimed, the first underwater tour of the Gallipoli battlefield.

Hameln Garrison Sub Aqua Club, led by me, and another from the United Kingdom led by Capt Gordon Sochon, both carried out similar expeditions in May and June 1995.

Diving into history

From *Soldier*, Jan 22, 1996

The Hameln team were, I believe, the first UK Service people to locate and dive on the *Irresistible* and the trip was reported in *Soldier* (Jan 22, 1996). We divers do like to keep the record straight and by writing to you I trust I have spared the rest of my team who are still serving from suffering the loss of their moment of glory... or being accused of fibbing when they re-tell their tales. – Lt Col Chip Wood (Comdt, 4 Cadet Battalion, RWF), Colwyn Bay.

Let's end age discrimination

I WISH to add my support to the letter (Feb) from SSgt Anderson, a fellow SNCO in the RAMC, who asked why Regulars have to leave at 40 while TA soldiers can continue past 50. As a soldier who joined at 16, I appreciate I signed a contract and will leave the Army at 40 unless I am extended by other means.

But if an adult recruit who joins at the limit of 28 can serve until he is 50, why cast off a soldier with a wealth of experience gained over 22 years and who can pass all the tests?

I know the manning people will say it would cause a log jam, but surely individ-

uals could be put into positions that were once set aside for Long Service soldiers. It would go a long way towards easing the over-stretch we all know and love.

Like SSgt Anderson, we have a TA staff sergeant in Bosnia who is of mature years. I agree that it is hypocritical to discharge a professional Regular soldier and then call up TA troops who volunteer to cover shortfalls in unit orbats. I signed the contract and will leave when told to do so, but soldiers in the future deserve a fairer deal and an end to this discrimination. – SSgt R E Darkin RAMC, 16 UK Fd Amb Gp, Op Palatine, Bosnia.

Why it's the world's finest army

WHEN I joined the Army in 1951 it did not take me long to discover that I had joined the finest democratic/communist party in the world.

My aspirations took me no further than the sergeants' mess and the atmosphere suited me down to the ground. Now long retired after 27 years' experience, I am a happy man. When I go to a reunion I find our shared time has made us all equal – another aspect of the finest army in the world. – Ron Bishop, ex-28th/61st, Stroud, Glos.

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THEN AND THEN



50 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, March 1949

The School of Infantry at Warminster is rather proud of this Heath Robinson brainwave, pictured above. It is an old glider nose mounted on a vehicle to make a commentator's cabin, and from it an instructor from the school provides a loud-speaker narrative for military spectators watching the four-times-a-year battalion attacks on Battlesbury Hill, Salisbury Down.

25 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, March 1974

A military policeman peered out of the rear door of the Land Rover with his sub-machine-gun at the ready. This was Z Cars, Belfast-style, but with a lot more potential for real horror. The Redcap was with an RUC Task Force, set up to deter the spate of sectarian murders racking the city.

New junior college sure to be a winner

IT was of great interest to read about the Army Foundation College (Back to the future, Feb). I served in the then Infantry Boys'/Infantry Junior Leaders' Battalion when the training was a mix of military, education, sport and character-building.

In the past four years I have traced a number of former colleagues, some of whom I served with at Plymouth. I know of a brigadier, several lieutenant colonels (one a chief instructor in the SASC), majors, captains and many senior NCOs and WOs. Others who were at Oswestry are still serving and some on retirement became permanent staff admin officers at

TA training centres. If that isn't a resounding endorsement of the resurrection of the junior leader system I don't know what is. Whoever made the decision to form the AFC should take heart that, on past record, the outcome will be high-calibre officers and NCOs.

Incidentally, I support two former Gurkhas by covenant and am running in the London Marathon on April 18 in support of the Gurkha Welfare Trust. Any cheques, made out to the trust and sent to me, would be much appreciated. – Howard Johnson, 35 Maes-y-Sarn, Pentrych, Cardiff CF4 8QQ (01222 891274).

Rifle Brigade badge was a right eyeful

IN answer to T P O'Connor (PS, Feb), the tradition of wearing the cap badge slightly off left stems from a forerunner of the Royal Green Jackets, the Rifle Brigade. Shortly before amalgamation they were issued with a new cap badge which was so large that, if worn normally, would have covered most of the left side of

the forehead. A slight drift to the left ear was allowed.

On a small editorial point, Green Jackets are always two words, never joined as Greenjackets. Having read *Soldier* for more than 40 years, I think it's spiffing. – D L Owen, Rifle Brigade and RGJ 1957-94, Oerlinghausen, Germany.

PS . . .

Bond of friendship

IT is with tongue in cheek and some trepidation that I ask the question. To whom will the resident RCM at Knightsbridge delegate the task of explaining to our French friends of La Garde Républicaine why all ranks of the Blues and Royals wear an eagle surmounting a block numeral "105" on their left arm in all forms of dress. Perhaps the entente cordiale will take the strain. – F G Collingwood, ex-Royal Dragoon, Rotherhithe, London.

Fare's fair . . .

PAY-As-You-Dine (Jan) . . . I've heard it all! Will soldiers be encouraged to eat when they are hungry or when they have money? Or will it be a plastic card job? Soldiers should not have to pay for food, they pay enough as it is. – R Whittaker (ex-medic and R Irish).

Interwoven history

YOU reviewed a new history of the Royal Corps of Transport (Books, Feb), which was formed in 1794 for the Duke of York's expedition to the Low Countries. During the Second World War I served with the Duke of York's Loyal Suffolk Hussars in Normandy. It is interesting to note that the regiment was raised in 1793 for the same campaign in the Low Countries. I still wear my original cap badge on Normandy veterans' parades. – F Whitehead, Brighton.

Suez medal motion

THOSE comments (Dec) calling for support for a campaign medal for Suez 1951-54 produced a magnificent response. Now Andrew Bennett MP is tabling an early-day motion which other MPs sympathetic to the cause will be asked to sign. The more the merrier, as it shows the depth of feeling on this issue. I ask all Suez vets to make a point of contacting their MPs to urge them to append their monickers to this motion. – W H D Podd, Lowestoft.

NI tribute needed

I fully agree with Ron Bishop (Nov). It is time a memorial was erected to those of the Security Forces who lost their lives in Northern Ireland. As the conflict lasted so many years the total number of dead has never hit home. We must never forget them. – G W Stone, Ryde, Isle of Wight.

Creaming off the tax

IN the road test of the "dual-fuel" Volvo (World of wheels, Feb), Syd Taylor writes of the potential savings of fuel tax on the use of gas. If they produced cars which could run on cream cakes and Mars Bars there would be an immediate 1,000 per cent tax on confectionery. You know from bitter experience we taxpayers never win. – Jerry Davies, ex-RAPC, Anglesey.

Vox pop

The regular feature in which we ask soldiers for their views on an issue

Garrison Radio

If tests being carried out this year are successful, permanent limited-range forces radio stations will be established in Britain's main garrison towns. We asked ten soldiers based in Aldershot if they like the idea.

LCpl Paul Longland, AGC

I think it'll be quite a good idea, because they'll be able to pass on information about what's happening in the area. Obviously a bit more Army talk over the air waves would be good. You don't want it full of adverts. Anything that gives us a heads-up would be good.



Cpl James Walsh, AGC

I'm not sure how the new radio station will fit in, but I do know that when I was overseas BFBS was a great way of letting people know of any sports going on or events for the children. As long as it tells soldiers what they can get from their community, I think it'll get the listeners.

GSM Joe Fairbairn, R Signals

In my opinion it'll be very, very good. Apart from entertainment, it's an ideal way getting information out to the population – not only to the soldiers and their families, but to the local population as well. It'll help to get the community working together. I'd like to hear some chat shows and phone-in shows, so that people can put over their points of view.



Interviews: Graham Bound Pictures: Terry Champion

COMING SOON

Four hand-picked warrant officers are manning a helpline for veterans. Since going "live" last October they have dealt with more than 2,500 enquiries... from an estimated ex-Service community of 15 million. Read about the Veterans' Advice Unit.



Cpl Gail Haines, AGC

I normally listen to the local station, but I'll definitely be listening in to garrison radio just to see what it's like. That's not to say I'll keep listening. I'd like to hear about what's going on in entertainment and sports.



Maj Gill Prowse, REME

I think garrison radio is a great idea and I'm looking forward to the trials. I'd like to hear news that's relevant to the soldiers in the garrison, to their families and to the general

public. I think it'll enhance the passage of information and it can't do any harm to the Army's image, either.

Lt Ben Morris, 7 Para RHA

I think it'll have hard time against the big stations. However, if it's based around Aldershot and gives us information about the area, then maybe it'll work.



Sgt Dave Mitchell, AGC

I was an enforced listener to BFBS in Germany for many years and I'm not really a big fan of commercial style, music-based radio. But I think it could be used as a tool to keep the soldiers and their families



informed. There's a lot of information that doesn't always get down to the troops. I'll be listening out for lively presenters and a larger music play-list than I've heard before on BFBS.

Gnr Scott Mead, 7 Para RHA

It's a good idea but it'll depend on the music and talk. Most soldiers don't want to spend their off-duty time listening to things that are going on in the Army. We want to get away from it sometimes. Travel information for the lads who go home would be useful.

Pte Alison O'Connor, AGC

I think it would be a good idea for wives whose husbands have gone abroad on operations or exercises. If the radio station gets enough information back, it'll keep them in touch with their husbands.



I'll enjoy being able to switch on to something different, something that is appropriate for us. I'd like to hear a mixture of music, local news and sports results.

Sgt Steve Hutchinson, 7 Para RHA

I think it'll be a very good idea. They should bring wives into it, because they're left out a great deal. A radio station would be useful to create a more friendly atmosphere and to help bring wives and families together.



"The Army is a hard world, and sometimes it is kill or be killed. That is what training is all about. After a mistake has been made it is vital to learn from it, and to look quite harshly at the people in command and question whether they should be in command in the future." So says a member of the Training Accident Investigation Team (TAIT) based at Upavon, Wiltshire. Special report.

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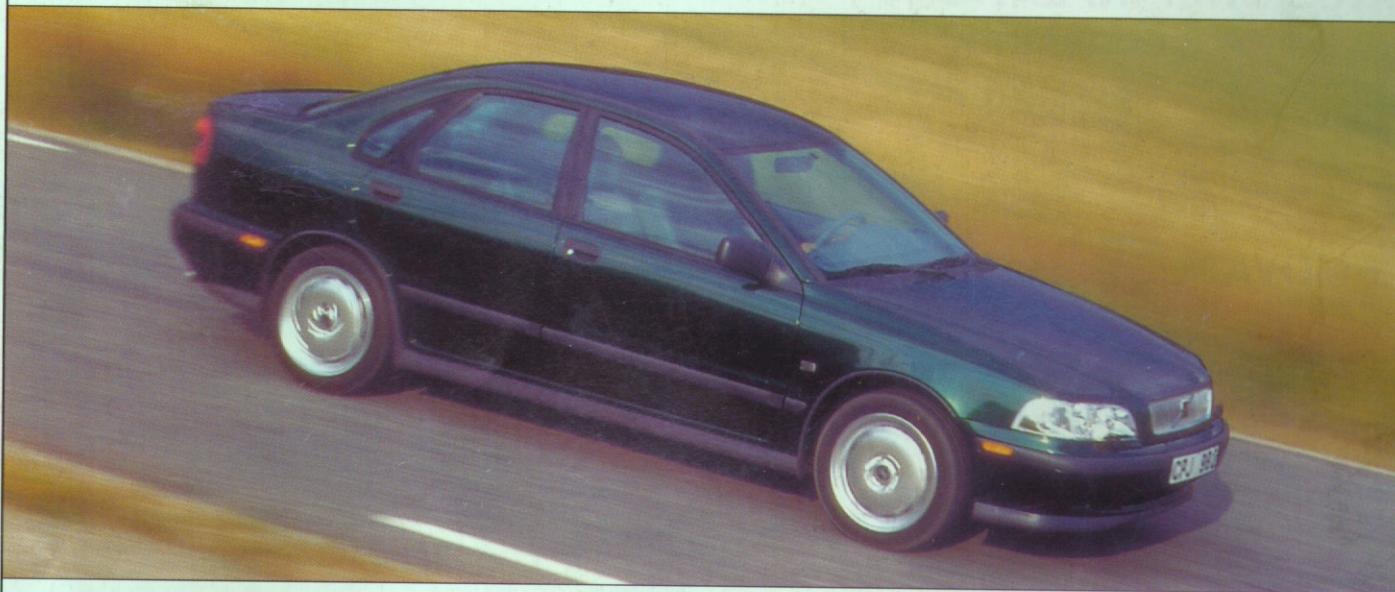
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