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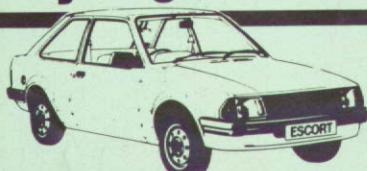


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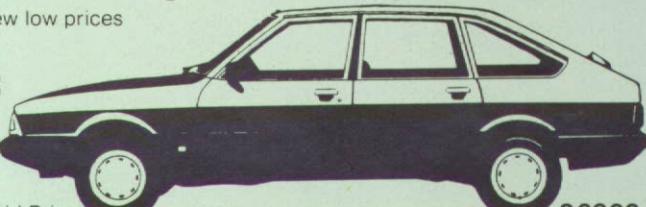
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Her face a study of concentration, a young member of the Women's Royal Army Corps gets some voluntary rifle practice at a summer camp. Now the WRAC are to get compulsory weapon training for self defence. Story — page 5.

Picture by Doug Pratt



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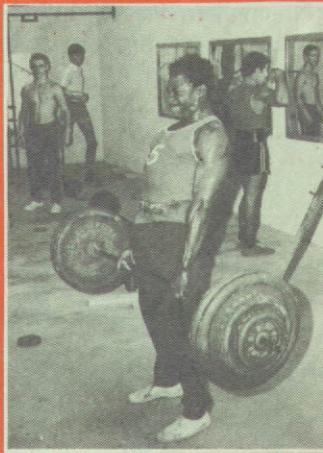
BACK COVER

Members of the All Arms Pre Parachute Selection Course grit their teeth in the Stretcher Race, a back-breaking seven mile slog across country. Read all about the course in a feature on page 22.

Picture by Doug Pratt



43 A young rifleman out-muscles Britain's top bodybuilders.



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Editor: BOB HOOPER (Ext 2585)

Deputy Editor: JOHN WALTON (Ext 2586)

Feature Writer: GRAHAM SMITH (Ext 2590)

Art Editor: JOHN RUSHWORTH (Ext 2589)

Picture Editor: LESLIE A WIGGS (Ext 2584)

Photographers: DOUG PRATT,
PAUL R G HALEY, ANDY BURRIDGE (Ext 2584)

Advertising/Circulation: Mrs C WILKINSON (Ext 2592/2587)

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The go-ahead for British Service women to carry arms marks a major milestone in WRAC history. GRAHAM SMITH got some random reactions from members of the Corps.



WRACs' SIGHTS ON SELF DEFENCE

THE WOMEN'S ROYAL ARMY CORPS — motto: Gentle in Manner, Strong in Deed — has come on a long way since its formation exactly 32 years ago from its sister forerunners of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps set up in 1917.

Re-named the Queen Mary's Auxiliary Army Corps a year later and then formed up as the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1938, the girls in khaki have served vigilantly through two World Wars.

Through the subsequent years of improved technology and know-how the WRAC have acquired many of the skills, and taken on many of the jobs, that were hitherto only performed by men. But until very recently there was one important male military preserve from which our skirted soldiers were excluded — they were not allowed to carry guns.

Now, that has been changed, for the girls have had their sights firmly fixed by the Government to fall in line with those of servicewomen in six Nato countries. They are to get training in the use of firearms — notably the Sterling sub-machine gun and the Browning 9mm pistol — for limited self-defence on bases in emergencies.

The move follows the 1980 Statement of Defence Estimates when Mr Francis Pym, the Secretary of State for Defence, announced that if the fullest use were to be made of women in the Services it might be necessary to revise the traditional attitude to allowing them to bear arms.

After all, women in the Nato forces of Belgium, Denmark, France, Canada, the Netherlands and the USA are already training in similar programmes.

In Britain, however, training will be given to limited numbers and will be compulsory in the WRAC, except for those who have 'genuine objections' to arms training.

The role for the WRAC is seen in areas where armed soldiers might be needed elsewhere, such as communications centres in BAOR. Arming women, it is felt, will achieve greater flexibility of personnel deployment but Servicewomen will not be armed in Northern Ireland.

Left: Aden 1966. Girl on range with Sterling.

And the girls themselves . . . how do they view the prospect of packing a hip-borne holstered pistol or the possibility, however remote, of strafing a potential human target with the tried and tested Sterling?

SOLDIER sought the random, unrehearsed views of ten such girls from a cross-section of the WRAC who may, or may not, be called upon to carry out the proposed weapon training.

Overall, the WRAC girls we spoke to think they could shoot to kill, if they had to — but only just. All drew the line at having to kill a terrorist-inspired pre-teenage guerrilla in defending a home base.

The dectet of WRAC girls, all based at Aldershot, were asked to imagine two hypothetical scenarios. In the first, three armed infiltrators suddenly come bursting through the door of the installation they are defending, confronting them with split-second deadly purpose. In the second, a lesser possibility, a fresh-faced, 12-year-old youngster stands in that same doorway, his arm arched back, ready to lob a grenade into their startled midst.

Assuming that they would be the first person to be confronted, be the closest to an SMG or a pistol, and, alone, have the initial responsibility for nerve-twitching reaction, how do the girls think they would handle either of these situations? Would they panic . . . fire blindly . . . freeze . . . or surrender?



"I would defend myself"

Private Jo Starczewski, an 18-year-old orderly room clerk wasn't entirely sure: "If I had to shoot, I suppose I would. If it was him, me, her or whoever, I suppose I would shoot them on instinct. I would defend myself but I hope that the case will never arise of being faced with a situation where I am going to have to kill someone because, at one point or another, I might just back down."

She added: "I once handled a pistol on exercise and, quite honestly, it frightened me. I wasn't expecting the noise to be quite so loud. I don't think I could shoot a 12-year-old boy."

The self-preservation theme was echoed by Sergeant Beryl Jones, a PTI, who said: "If it was between him, or them, or me, I think I would be able to shoot them."

She was not so positive about the grenade-gripping boy. "I would try to wound him or talk him out of it," she mused.

Hopefully, time for talk would be on her side!

And the three men? "I would only open fire if they opened fire," she smiled. "I would wait for them to do it first because they might not see me."

Cook Noelle Hutchings, 25, was indecisive. She said: "If I had to shoot someone . . . well, I don't know. Guns don't frighten me though I've never fired one. I think that if it was a case of my mates getting killed then I would have to shoot to kill. I might possibly lose my nerve but perhaps I wouldn't if my mates were in danger."

Pledges of no panic . . . no surrender came from diminutive Private Viva Rose, a 20-year-old stewardess in the Garrison Officers' Mess. "I can't really say I could kill someone but I suppose it's either my life or theirs," she offered. "I would shoot to injure but could not shoot to kill, not even the boy with the hand grenade. But if he were over 16, I think I could. People like that know what they are doing."

"I don't think I would panic and I don't think I would surrender. I am quite stubborn about things like that. Yes, I could shoot but it would have to be a quick look and a bang."

Another promise of stalwartness came from 22-year-old Driver Davina Mills. "To be honest I don't think I could shoot someone and I am not sure I could kill. And I haven't got the heart to kill the boy. I love children. But I don't think I'd lose my nerve if it came to the crunch. I would not panic or surrender."

Her likely courage further emerged. "I think my MT training has helped me to keep calm in certain situations. I've fired a 9mm pistol and I am not frightened by the noise. Yes, I think you could, perhaps, rely on me."



"I couldn't kill anyone"

Lance-Corporal Alison McClelland, 18, a Royal Signals clerk was quite clear of her standpoint on the issue.

"I couldn't kill anyone — no way! I can't even hold a gun properly. I would keep thinking to myself that the armed intruder has a wife and children at home waiting for him," she declared.

"I think I would refuse to carry a gun. I didn't join the Army to carry a gun and I don't think girls are built for them anyway although I have done Battle Camp training with competitive shooting on the ranges. Guns are heavy. I won't do the training — I shall object."

Royal Signals data telegraphist, Lance-Corporal 'Dee' Riley, 27, thinks the training of the WRAC in firearms handling is long

overdue and says she could shoot an intruder.

"To me, it's quite simply either me or them. I would shoot them. As for the boy, I would shoot at his arm. Someone older, I might shoot to kill."

She takes the concept of weapon training seriously for her khaki-skirted sorority. "You should know exactly how to fire an SMG or pistol and not be frightened by it. You've got to be able to give back-up for your male colleagues in a defensive situation."



"Women in the Army have got to be able to defend themselves"

That back-up for soldier colleagues was also in the mind of Staff Sergeant Win Carnegie, 41, a CQMS, who has been in the Army for 18 years and has also served in Northern Ireland.

"In a defensive situation I think I could shoot but I wouldn't really know until I am faced with the situation. As for the boy, I would try to distract him or talk him out of it because he is so young and doesn't really know what he is doing. I cannot bring myself to shoot a child let alone kill him."

Win went on: "On the whole, I think women in the Army have got to be able to defend themselves in the situations suggested on bases in emergencies and be capable of standing by their male counterparts."

One of these 'counterparts', she relates, when told about women taking on weapon training and asked his opinion, simply imparted that he would 'cross his fingers'.

Equally forthright, Win suggested: "I don't think many WRAC girls will like the idea of having lethal firearms in their hands. But they will have to go to their conscience and live with it."



"I would stay calm — then go to pieces afterwards"

Maternal instincts and a tough upbringing have shaped the attitudes of 21-year-old admin assistant Private Stefanie Humphrey who says she could probably kill an intruder in the SOLDIER scenario.

"I was brought up in a very hard world, in the West Midlands, amongst racialism and stuff like that and I think I could turn my hand to shoot someone," she says. "I think one would remain absolutely calm or hysterical in such a situation. I would stay calm — and then go to pieces afterwards when no-one could see me."

And what of the boy with the fragmenting 'pineapple', an unwelcome donation which would detonate within seconds?

"Well, I think I would try to maim him. I don't think I could kill him. I might even try to talk him out of it. Children are so much more malleable than adults . . . but these are my maternal instincts coming out," she grinned.



"I would certainly not get gun happy"

Switchboard operator, Private Lesley Davies, 21 — "I couldn't hurt a flea" — is another subscriber to personal survival.

"It's an in-born instinct. No-one wants to die and if it's a question of living — him or me — then I would probably shoot. And I would expect all my female colleagues to do the same," she said seriously.

And what would she do about the menacing boy? "I think I would shoot to hit him first but I would only use the gun if I had to. I think I am mature enough to know when to use it. I would certainly not get gun-happy."

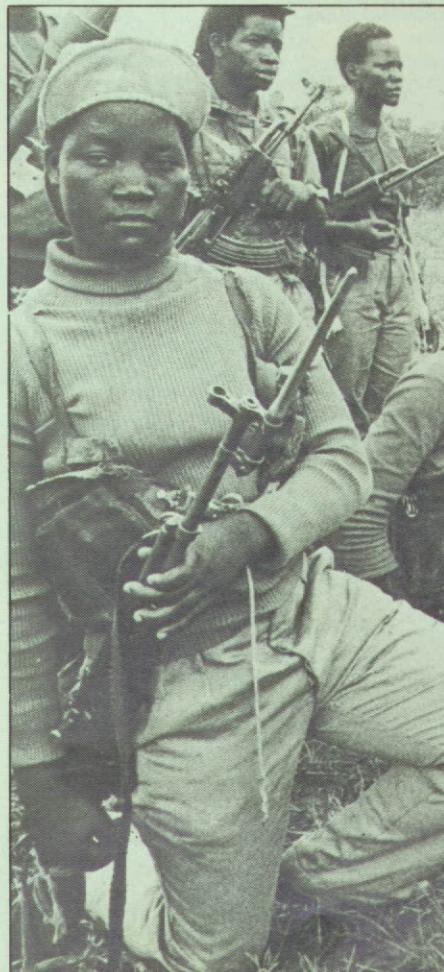
Lesley endorses the idea of weapon training for the WRAC for use in defensive emergencies as envisaged by the Government.

She has already fired the SMG and her verdict: "It's easy to handle and to shoot."

It is not likely that the WRAC girls will be trained to use the standard SLR which is, for them, heavy and has a sharp recoil action. Nor will the women carry firearms at all times and neither will they be used in combat roles.

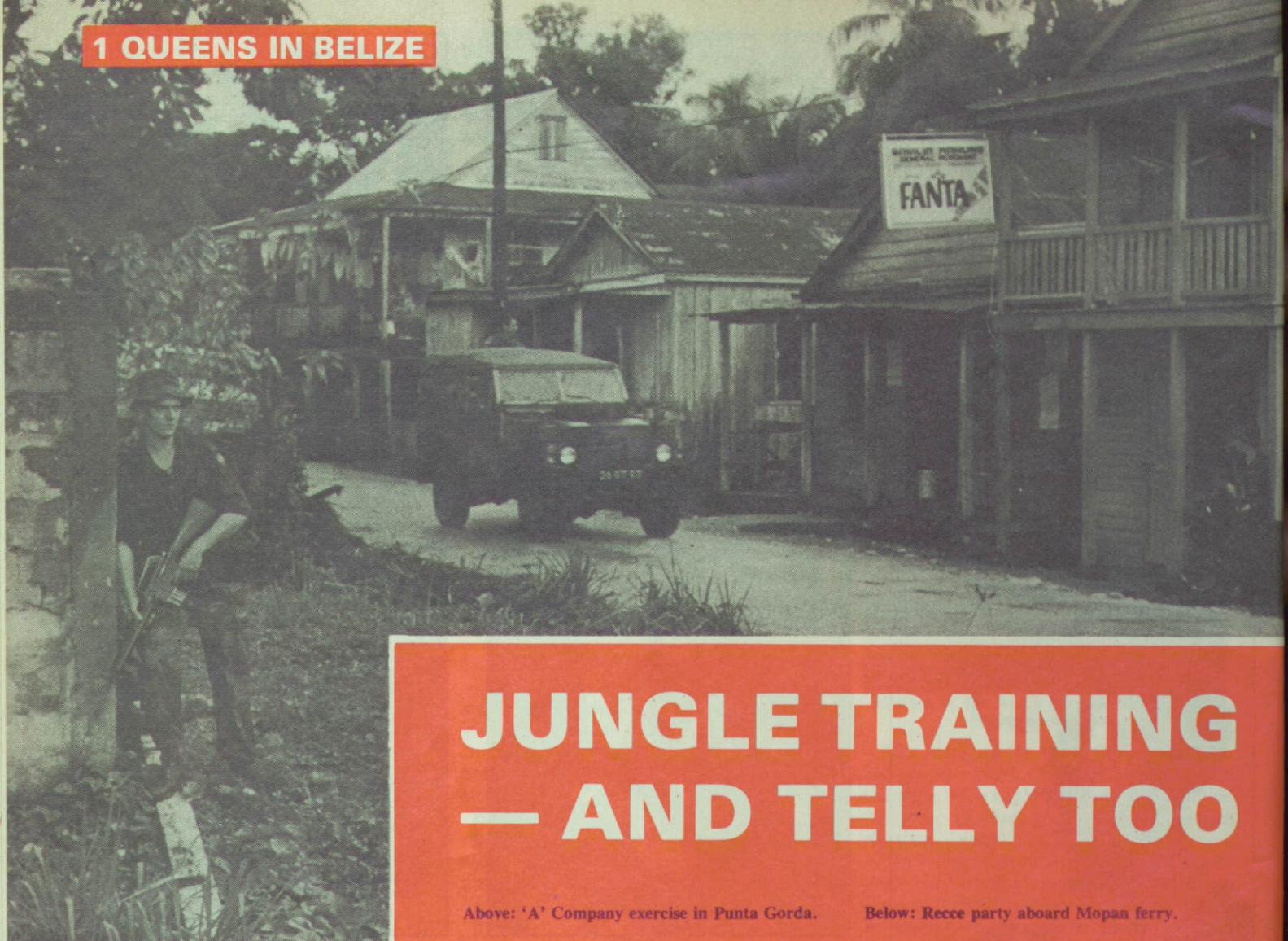
As Mr Francis Pym concluded there is now a "readiness to accept limited change" hence the decision that Servicewomen can be trained in the use of firearms for defensive purposes.

Women carrying arms are already a familiar sight. Clockwise from top left: female Israeli trooper leading patrol; Belgian military policewoman; girl soldier in the American army; Patriotic Front woman combatant in Rhodesia.



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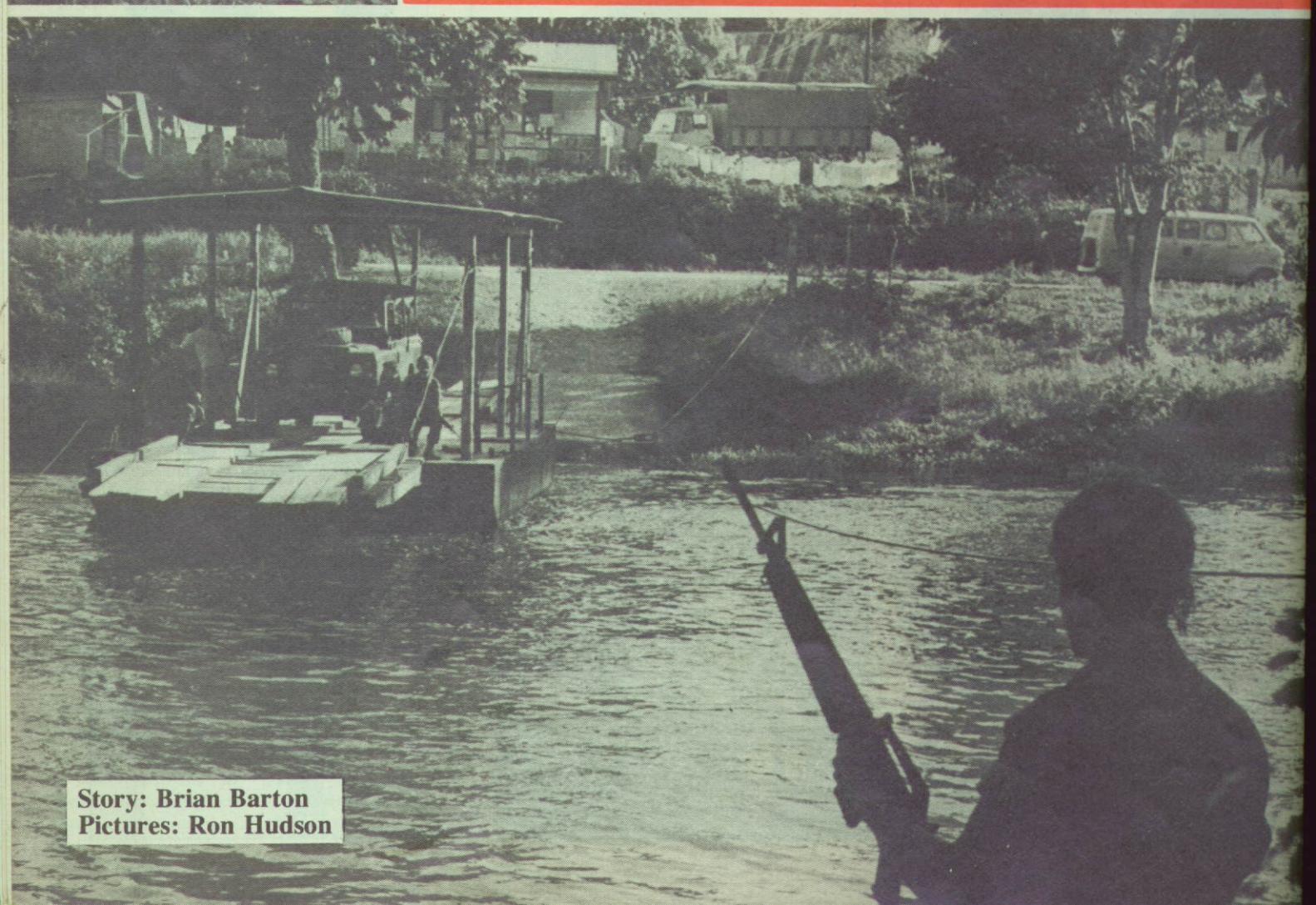
1 QUEENS IN BELIZE



JUNGLE TRAINING — AND TELLY TOO

Above: 'A' Company exercise in Punta Gorda.

Below: Recce party aboard Mopan ferry.



Story: Brian Barton
Pictures: Ron Hudson

TELEVISION ARRIVED IN BELIZE in time for Christmas — which was not bad going for a country without a TV service. The achievement was made possible by video cassettes and a lot of financial self-help.

The 1st Battalion The Queen's Regiment, from Howe Barracks, Canterbury, had made the 5,660 mile journey to Central America in October for a six-month tour as the Belize Force infantry, and were able to run TV programmes from Christmas Eve onwards — the first time that the 'box' had been seen in Belize.

A decision was made by the Belize Force, headquartered at Airport Camp, to borrow £20,000 from the Army Welfare Fund repayable at under £1 a head a month for each force member. Main components of the force, in addition to 1 Queens, are the Chestnut Troop RHA, a Royal Hussars squadron, an Army Air Corps Gazelle Flight, RAF Harriers, Puma helicopters and RAF Regiment.

Twenty-one TV sets and the rest of the equipment were brought for the various messes and a video cassette delivery service organised via the British Forces Broadcasting Service for canned BBC and ITV programmes.

But there is no Coronation Street in the jungle for 1 Queens. Platoon by platoon they are being put through the Jungle Training Centre at Guacamallo Bridge — an area which, according to old hands, contains the worst jungle in the world. Gurkhas, knowledgeable about jungles, say it is the thickest they have ever seen.

Lieutenant-Colonel David Dickens, CO of 1 Queens, about 520 strong, explained that as a battalion which latterly spent four-and-a-half years in Werl with Rhine Army, they had not encountered jungle conditions since the Malayan Emergency and had no residue of jungle experience. For many of their young soldiers it was the first time overseas and jungle fighting had to be learned from scratch.

The soldiers see very little of the actual Jungle Training Centre — a collection of atap huts — but an awful lot of the Belizean jungle.

The Army Air Corps' detachment, or flight, in Belize consists of four Gazelle helicopters and three pilots. OC, Major Jeremy Wheeler said: 'That makes us lucky in having a spare aircraft but on the other hand we could accommodate another pilot.'

Their main task is airborne reconnaissance, but the pilots are also trained as forward air controllers working with the RAF Harriers directing the jets to their targets. They also control the RHA guns and the mortars of 1 Queens.

The OC does an eighteen-month tour and his pilots and air-crewmen four months. 'In that four months,' said Major Wheeler, 'they fly 200-250 hours which is considerably more than in most UK units.'

Pictured are Major Wheeler, right, Sgt. Frank Lewis, centre and Lance-Corporal Paul Roberts.



Above: Brothers, Duncan (left) and Rod Smith show what well-dressed jungle fighter is wearing.

Colonel Dickens said: "The key to successful jungle training is rapid acclimatisation through fitness, and the process started back in Canterbury with lots of running. Fitness training has continued in Belize with three-mile runs for everyone at 6am."

The first jungle lesson taught is *not* to hack your way through the green screen with a machete unless you want to be exhausted in minutes in the 90 degree plus temperatures with humidity up to 100 per cent. Another lesson is to avoid the 'bastard' tree — an unpopular resident covered in long needle-like thorns which tend to cause festering wounds if you get a handful.

The soldiers are taught to lose their natural fear of the jungle and survive in it. They build bashas and learn that water snails, iguana, armadillos, porcupines, snakes and even parrots can be epicurean feasts to a hungry man. There are also the vines which pour sweet water when cut.

They also discover that the jungle is not festooned with snakes or hock deep with six-inch hairy tarantula spiders and scor-

pions. You can go for days in the jungle and see nothing more except soldiers. But the 'nasties' are there, and young soldiers are taught that the way to deal with the highly poisonous fer-de-lance or yellow jaw and the boa constrictor, should they chance on one, is to leave it strictly alone.

After two weeks in the jungle the soldiers emerge saturated with sweat, covered in insect bites, stinking like farm animals and generally 'knackered'.

The CO's scattered command finds 'B' Company at Airport Camp, 'A' Company 210 miles due south at Rideau Camp near coastal Punta Gorda, and 'C' Company at Holdfast Camp, near inland San Ignacio, 73 miles south-west of Belize City. With their supporting RHA guns and Royal Hussars' Scorpions and Scimitars, they form Battle Groups North and South — there to counter any threat from neighbouring Guatemala whose long-standing claims on Belize are

continued on page 11



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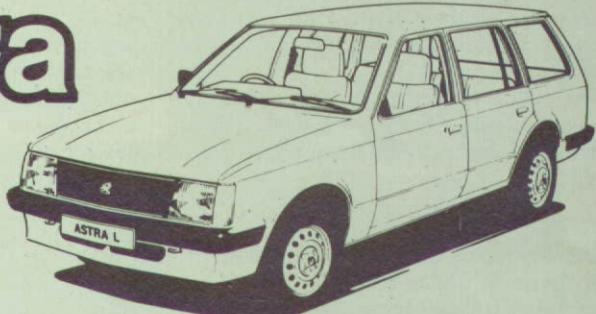
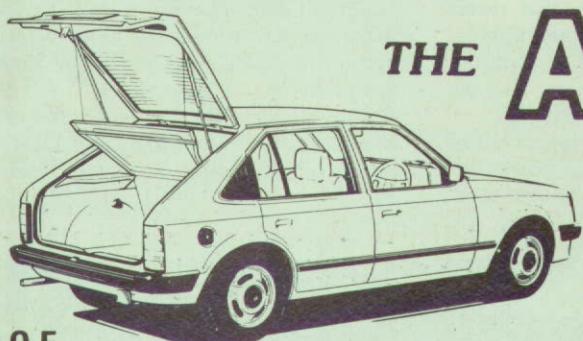
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being thrashed out by the politicians with full independence the aim for Belize within a year or so.

Colonel Dickens, who commands from Rideau, was busy over Christmas. He went 'nationwide' and visited every man in his battalion by helicopter.

Two NCOs with travellers' tales to tell in the mess will be Colour Sergeant Jim Pyper, aged 32, and Sergeant Rick Malam, 25, who volunteered for two weeks on the eleven-by-seven mile island of Montserrat on the other side of the Caribbean between Antigua and Guadeloupe. The 65-strong Defence Force there, equipped with Lee Enfield .303 rifles, two Brens and three Webley revolvers, had requested help with their training — and 1 Queens obliged. Jim and Rick were put on a plane for Miami and island hopped the rest of the way.

Another one-off invitation came 1 Queens' way from Columbia, 1,000 miles south of Belize on the South American mainland. In December they commemorated the 150th anniversary of Simon Bolivar's death and they sought British representation because British troops helped Bolivar wrest power from the Spanish. Major Rod Arnold, Second-in-Command of 1 Queens, together with Lieutenant Nick Keys and ten others, were given the job and they flew to Santa Marta to take part in a parade and act as ambassadors.

Not all 1 Queens' families were separated at Christmas. Some wives flew to Miami to



Major 'Rocky' Hitchcock, OC of 'B' Company, 1 Queens, who is doing a project on snakes during his Belize tour, is pictured with one of his collection — a 5ft-long tropical diamond-backed rattlesnake and not recommended as a pet. Highly venomous, it now reclines in a jar of formaldehyde and will return to Canterbury with the battalion. It was run over on Belize's Western Highway but was still alive when examined and had to be formally dispatched. Another of Major Hitchcock's collection, which he later released, was a harmless 2ft tree snake which he went to a party with wrapped round his arm. Said Major Hitchcock: "People remarked that it looked very realistic."

rendezvous with their husbands. Others were lucky with RAF indulgence flights on the weekly VC10 to Belize and stayed in hotels with their menfolk.

Belize is a perfect jumping-off place for the more glamorous Caribbean names and not a few soldiers will have seen Acapulco, Mexico City, California, Spanish Honduras and perhaps some of the Caribbean islands in the sun by the time April and Canterbury come round again.



Below: Capt Alasdair Goulden played uncle to 126 kids at party on national holiday.

Above: Sgt Maj Bob Jones runs R and R courses for 1 Queens at Placentia leisure centre.



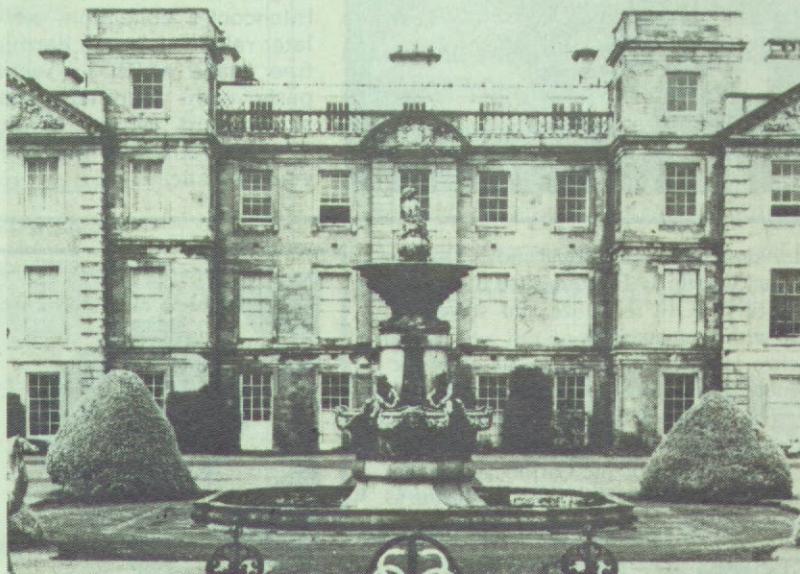
The first nursing sister to be posted to Belize Force HQ's medical centre is Major Sheila McCauley, Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps, who went to the force from Princess Alexandra's Hospital, RAF Wroughton, where she was surgical ward sister.

She said: "The posting was something of an experiment for a four-month period. Everything has worked out well, however, and I shall recommend that it continues with a succession of nursing sisters coming out. I'm enjoying the experience tremendously."

A Londoner now living in Eastbourne, Sheila trained as a SRN at King's College Hospital and joined the QA eight years ago. She once spent four months in New Zealand on an exchange and had a tour at Rinteln in Germany.

The eight-bed APC medical centre, better described as a mini-hospital, which can accommodate more patients if pushed, is considered one of the best equipped for its size in Central America. It has a £17,000 X-ray unit, a new operating theatre, a laboratory, a waiting room for 20 patients, two consulting rooms and the ward. It cost a quarter of a million pounds.

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And apart from some adventure training plus Cadet corps training, the syllabus is little different from that of a first-class school.

There's plenty of sport too. As well as school games, he can go sailing, rock climbing and orienteering.

And as you can see from the photograph, Welbeck is an old stately home which is set in beautiful grounds.

Applicants for the entry starting in January 1982 must have been born between 1st November 1964 and 1st April 1966. The closing date for applications is 1st May 1981. For the September 1983 entry the birth dates must be between 1st July 1965 and 1st April 1967 with the closing date for applications being 15th December 1981.

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THE DECISION that Servicewomen are to be trained to use arms for defensive purposes has been generally applauded both inside and outside the Armed Forces.

As Brigadier Eileen Nolan, former Director of the Women's Royal Army Corps and now its Deputy Controller Commandant, commented: "It seems to me to be absolutely in line with sensible modern day thinking and also brings us into line with other Nato countries."

Ten years ago perhaps the decision might have raised a few eyebrows. Today, apart from a token flurry of press interest, the news has caused hardly a ripple.

But if the sight of gun-toting girl guerrillas in Rhodesia or combat-clad Miss World contenders from Israel has already prepared the public for the sight of women bearing arms, the decision is nevertheless an important one for the Women's Royal Army Corps and for the Army as a whole.

The range of peacetime duties undertaken by the WRAC continues to grow, with new trades being taken on board all the time. But in the event of war our women soldiers know they may need other military skills too — including being able to defend themselves and installations made vulnerable by troop deployments to the combat zone.

Preparing women for such a role has nothing to do with Womens Lib or burning bras. It has everything to do with the sensible and efficient use of resources and a recognition that women are just as determined, resourceful and resilient as men in defending themselves and their country.

That old misogynist John Knox may have thundered against 'the monstrous regiment of women' four centuries ago. Had he been alive today he would no doubt, like us, have been proud — and grateful — to have them on his side.

★

THE SUBJECT of WRAC arms training brings to mind the story of the General visiting a WRAC detachment who was anxious to find out what female soldiers thought of carrying guns. Rounding on one particularly well-endowed member of the Corps he

SOLDIER to Soldier

demanded: "Could you kill a man. Well, could you?"

"I think so, sir," came the reply, "given about three weeks!"

★

PROOF, IF proof were needed, that the youthful spirit of adventure still burns brightly, was supplied in full measure by Operation Drake, the two year expedition by the brigantine *Eye of the Wind* which has celebrated the great sailor's circumnavigation of the globe.

It involved over 400 young explorers from Britain and 26 other countries — together with scientists and archaeologists — in a series of ten expeditions through some of the world's remotest jungles, deserts and mountains.

And supporting them in these great adventures were professionals from the Services, including over 150 Army personnel and the expedition's leader, Lieutenant-Colonel John Blashford-Snell.

For much of the time too, it was the Army who provided the Operation's only link with civilisation. A small team from 30 Signal Regiment at Blandford provided a round-the-clock radio lifeline for the whole of the two years — a major factor in the expedition's safe and successful completion.

The adventures of those who took part were heady wine indeed. In Panama, they surveyed a sunken treasure ship and excavated a lost city; in Papua New Guinea they met a stone-age tribe who had never set eyes on a white man before and stalked swamps for the world's longest lizards; in Kenya they unearthed ancient settlements.

And they did extensive community work too — conducting medical surveys, marking nature trails, helping hurricane victims in Fiji, building cattle dips for African tribesmen and even — as our own SOLDIER team reported a year ago — finding a 50 million ton coalfield in Papua New Guinea.

More than 60,000 youngsters applied for places on Operation Drake and now an Operation Drake Fellowship is to be set up to encourage and train young people to undertake their own expeditions.

As Drake himself once wrote: "There must be a beginning of any great matter but the continuing unto the end until it be thoroughly finished yields the true glory."

He would surely have been delighted to see his words so faithfully echoed in the project bearing his name, for it was not only a grand design in its conception but supremely well carried out.

★

A THREAT from outer space has led to improved facilities for Servicemen in Germany. Nightly, soldiers are manning the barricades against the alien beings — but while they face certain defeat, their rout is indirectly helping them to have better social facilities.

What we are talking about, of course, are 'Space Invaders' — those ubiquitous machines which apparently appeal to the Serviceman's sense of challenge in combat. Together with more traditional items such as juke boxes and pin tables — as well as Anglicised versions of American pool tables — they ensured a massive jump in Naafi club funds last year.

Some £275,000 was paid into club improvement funds in 1979-80 — an 80 per cent increase on the previous year's figures. The club improvement funds are made up entirely of revenue from amusement machines. And they can be spent on anything which will improve club facilities or decor.

There are already no less than 2000 machines of the 'Space Invader' or similar type installed in Naafi clubs in the United Kingdom and Rhine Army — and Naafi is constantly adding to and updating the range. It all seems a far cry from shove 'apenny and cribbage.'



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"It's way past closing time, Manuel — play 'The Last Post'!"

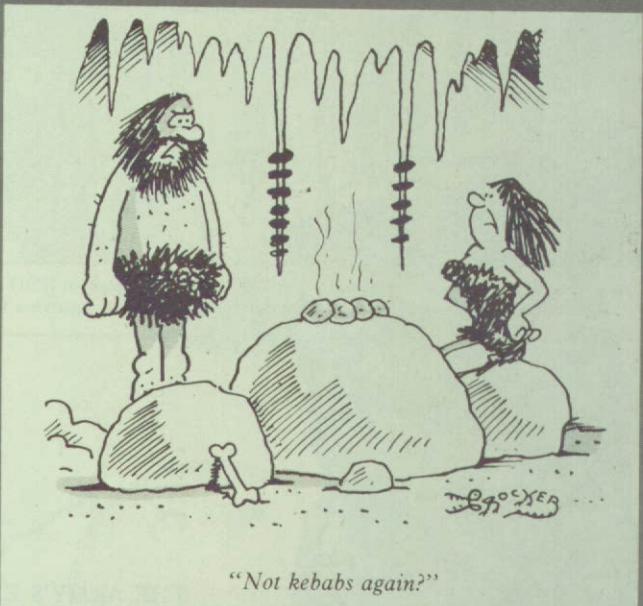


"He's used to a goodnight kiss."

Humour



"You mean I've actually appeared on radar?"



"Not kebabs again?"



"Karen's daddy is only a corporal — and she stays up until nine o'clock."

Once Belfast's premier hotel 'The GCH' became home to thousands of British soldiers. Now the Army has pulled out — but before it did so Graham Smith took a last look round.

GOODBYE GRAND CENTRAL

THE ARMY'S EIGHT-YEAR ASSOCIATION with Belfast's Grand Central Hotel, simply known as 'The GCH' to more than 12,000 soldiers on city patrols who lived in it as their operational home among bomb-blasted streets, has come to an end with an almost whispered farewell.

Belfast's most revered hotel once patronised by the showbiz famous, officially opened and closed — twice — a survivor of at least three nearby terrorist bomb explosions, victim of a careless £20,000 fire and subsequently 'face-lifted' in decor several times by the Army, is being handed over to its owners at the close of the current lease.

Six flights of stairs battered by DMS boots in the high-ceilinged 170-bedroomed hotel are silent. So, too, the busy kitchens with extrovert cooks, steaming bains-marie and bubbling pots . . . the back street reception area leading from a sentry sangar with its oft-shoved and kicked heavy plastic flexi-doors . . . and the vibrating basement rumblings of the 20-year-old oil-fired central heating system lovingly likened by many there to the Queen Mary's boiler-room.

In all, some 460 'Jocks' had been accommodated in the GCH, thus securing themselves a niche in regimental annals as the last unit to have been there. It was never determined though if there was a Kilroy among their number!

During their short-tour period in the

The last 'guests' to book out in quantity on an overcast, drizzling November morning were men from the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, of the distinctive grey berets, who were to return earlier than planned to their barracks at Paderborn, West Germany.

With them went the last of the pouting, posturing pin-ups who had tirelessly looked down from distempered walls to beguile their admirers with smouldering smiles and titillating charms.

Chairs, tables, carpets, beds, mattresses, maps and all the sundry equipment that make up the daily operational needs of a resident city centre roulement regiment were loaded into four-tonners and 40-foot containers for transit by civilian means. Also included in the move out, which was mounted from the sorting office yard of the old post office next door, were 4000 MT spares.

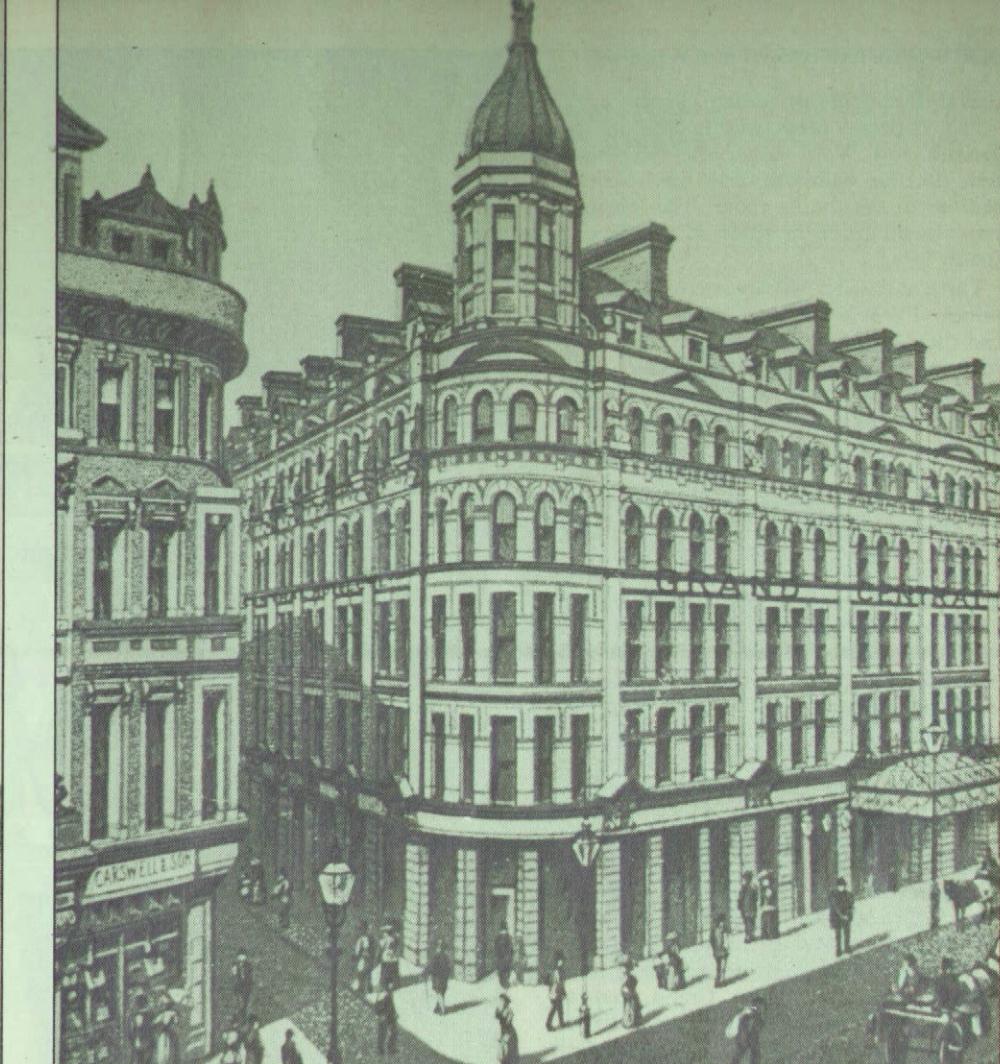
Ulster capital they had been patrolling in Land Rovers, carrying out guard duties and manning a number of static observation posts. Besides this, they provided a back-up force for the Crumlin Gaol.

Like any other closing-down operation it was a case of 'everything must go' — right down to threadbare stair carpet well beyond the care of brush or vacuum cleaner.

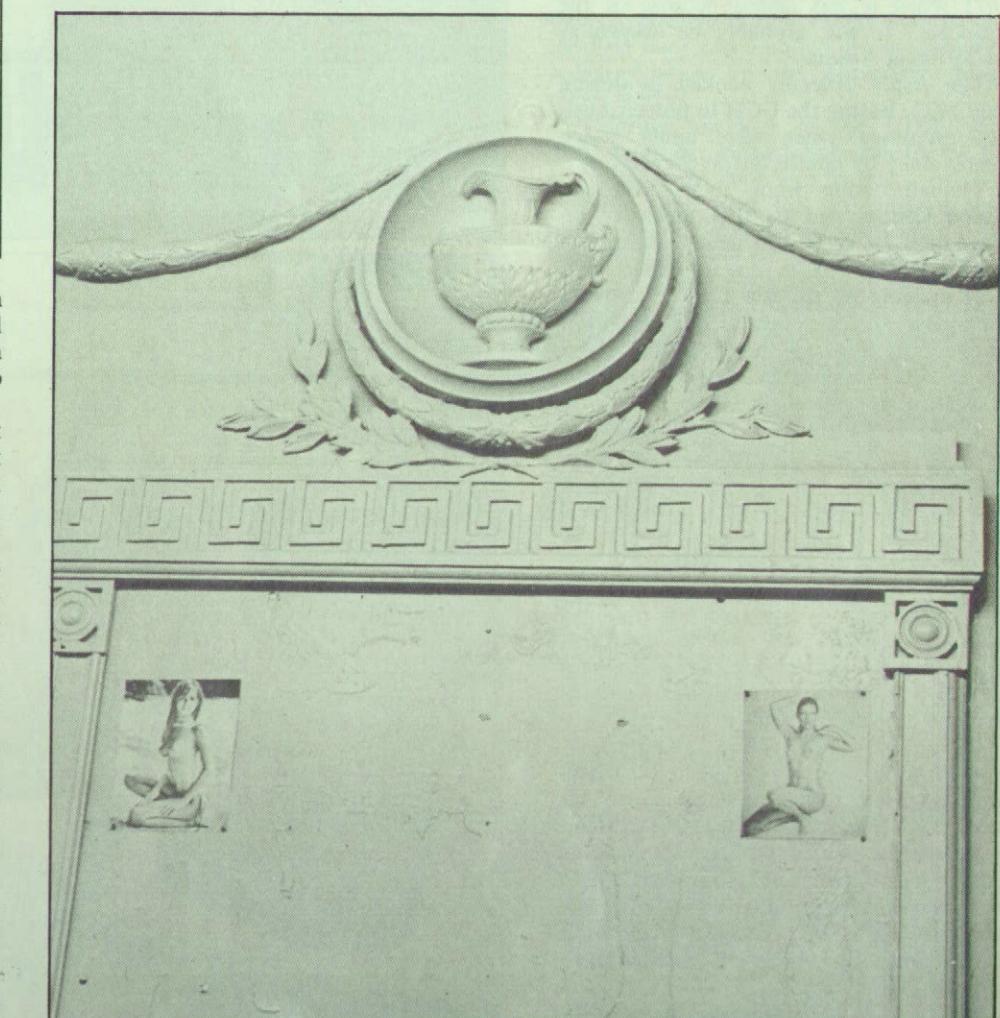
GCH's last 'hotel manager', Capt 'Q' Dave Roberts, said: "It has been run like a ship here with people coming and going all the time. Feeding 350 men a day was a mammoth task in itself. Not only the outgoing unit but those who have been here before have each tried to improve the decor of the GCH in their own way."

The fighting men may be gone but the £25,000 oil-fired central heating put in twenty years ago still rumbles on, at a low heat, by request of the owners, the Belfast Estate Company Limited.

Comfort over the years for the lads patrolling the bomb-battered city streets was not forgotten in the former four-star luxury of the GCH described 70 years ago as a 'gigan-



Left and above: Outside the GCH looks the same as 70 years ago — but main entrance has gone.
Below: Soldiers added plenty of decorative touches of their own to the interior walls.



Pictures: Doug Pratt

Right: Soldiers turn removal men in pull-out.

tic and thoroughly up-to-date caravansary'. The Officers' Mess was housed in the Harland and Wolff suite, the Sergeants' Mess in the ballroom and the soldiers' facilities in the dining room. The 'choggie shop' found pride of place in the Smoke Room.

Three national newspapers provided eight welfare TV sets and two video recorders. And there were three sets of films to choose from on screen seven nights a week.

Deceptively, sport was not overlooked either in Ulster's erstwhile premier hotel. It had two squash courts, a multi-gym, and even a sauna.

The walls of the adjacent old post office provided an ad hoc circuit training facility too . . . all 1½ miles of it!

In 1976, a 400-lb bomb which detonated in a post office van in the nearby sorting office yard failed to crumble the spirit of the GCH. The shock, however, rocked the 88-year-old structure leaving the floor between the second and third storeys somewhat askew.

Captain Roberts again: "It's no good playing snooker in that part of the building!"

Quietly, over recent weeks, the process of 'de-militarising' the hotel has been going on involving the resident 33 Field Squadron, RE, from Antrim and the Property Services Agency (PSA) who have been clearing the sangars, removing the rocket screens and taking down the fencing in Berry Street.

Now, sadly, the name Grand Central Hotel will likely disappear from current promulgation save in the books of the reference library and in the memories of the 120 staff who worked there up until October 1971 when it was closed because of the 'troubles'. It will probably be known as 12-26 Royal Avenue.

The Army officially booked in during July 1972, leasing the GCH to protect business premises which were under attack almost daily by bombs left in parked cars.

Though dating from about 1892 the Grand Central had its first extensive redecoration by some 150 men working flat out for four months in time for a March 31, 1927 opening by the late Lord Craigavon, then Viscount Craigavon of Stormont. (Ten years earlier, the GCH had been taken over by the Government as a hostel for the Womens Army Auxiliary Corps).

In the Twenties the city's national daily newspaper, commenting on just one of the facilities of the Grand Central prior to its opening commented: "A special feature will be the provision of morning coffee in the Smoke Room, a handsome apartment very comfortably furnished, in which the fragrant beverage will be served hot from the machines installed in a corner of the room. The carpets in all the rooms are of the most luxurious character, soft to the tread and the patterns are very pleasant to the eye."

Unknowing of the future situation forty years on, the same report said of the bedrooms — from 7s 6d for a single and 18s for a double — in the same preamble: "The bedrooms are cosy, all installed with hot and cold water, have bell pushes and light switches within easy range of the pillow and are restful in aspect. A victim of insomnia should find a certain cure in such an environment."



Right: Bedroom scene familiar to thousands.

Right: Staircase looks in surprisingly good shape after hammering by 12,000 pairs of boots.

The then modern technology of the telephone has a mention in the same columns, thus: "Post Office lines are available so that business men can get into telegraphic communication without having to leave their rooms."

Many from the glittering world of showbiz have stayed at the Grand Central Hotel where, in the Twenties, a dinner-dance cost 8s 6d a head.

Stars like Gene Autrey (minus horse) . . . Bob Hope . . . Gracie Fields . . . Merle Oberon . . . Cary Grant . . . Mary Pickford . . . Gigli . . . Paul Robeson . . . the Beatles . . . and the Rolling Stones. And boxers, too, like Primo Carnera . . . Jimmy Wilde . . . and Benny Lynch.

The latest celebrity to sleep in a star suite was 22-year-old Shoana Kennedy, from Kirkintilloch . . . Miss Royal Scots Dragoon Guards!

The hotel was badly damaged by a fire in 1969 when £20,000 damage was caused. Some 150 guests were getting dressed for dinner, 18 of them later being taken to hospital with seven of them detained. At about the same time a workman was getting ready to take his 'tea break' . . . leaving, unattended, his blazing blow lamp! At least, that is one well-informed local theory.

Alas, after 44 years of comparative prosperity, in July 1971, the Grand Central closed its famous Royal Avenue doors because of substantial financial losses — around £10,000 a week — and the fall-off in trade resulting from urban terrorism.

Crockery, ice buckets, silver plated cutlery in original wrappings, lobster picks, silver salvers, toothpick stands and the vast wine cellar stocks all came under the auctioneer's busy gavel.

The Welsh Guards moved in during July 1972.

And what of GCH's future?

It is estimated by 47-year-old Mr Angus McDonnell, managing agent for the prop-

Below: Royal Scots Dragoon Guards ready to go.



erty, that the hotel is worth, in Ulster vernacular, at least a 'big note' — about one million pounds.

"The Army has looked after the property remarkably well, it is fair to say. I was very surprised to see such a homely barracks. People thought the Army would leave it in a shambles. They've added quite a lot to it," said Mr McDonnell.

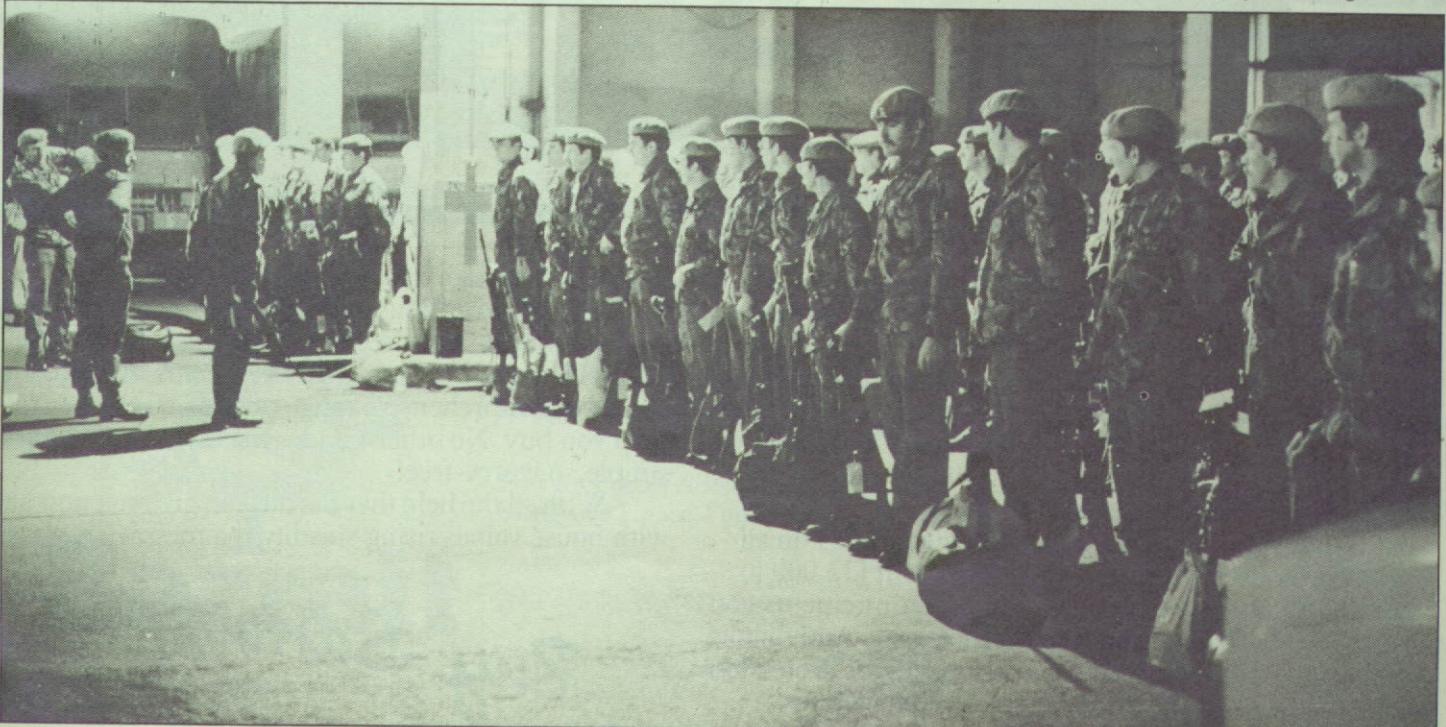
He added: "I don't think there is any possibility of it continuing as an hotel and there is certainly no indication that the site will be re-developed in the foreseeable future. It's early days yet. I don't know if the city planning department will have any thoughts on it though it's no secret to say

that they have grandiose plans for this whole area."

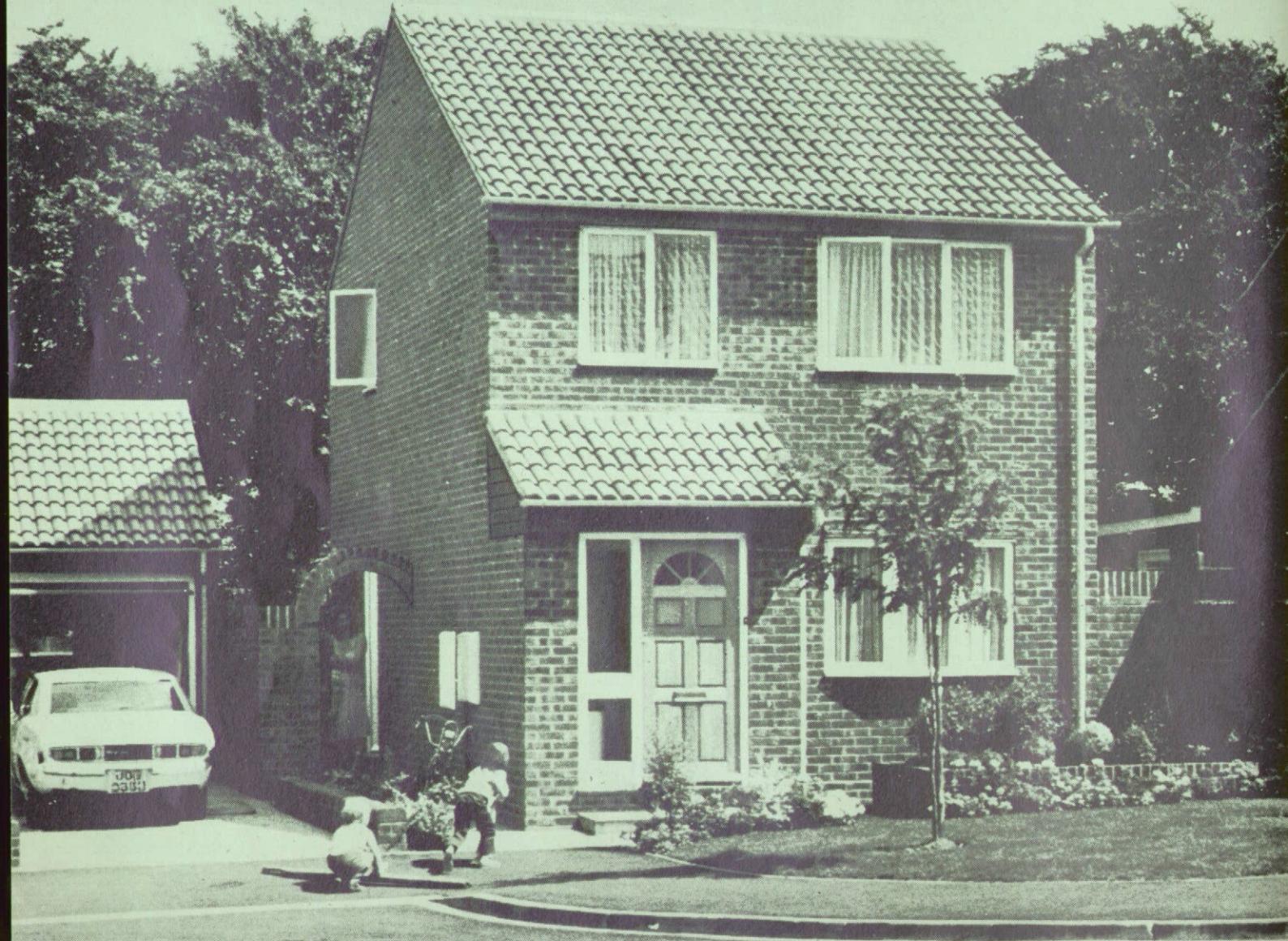
Mr McDonnell, too, has some ideas of his own for the GCH — like blueprints which show up to ten shop units on the ground floor, a possible central exhibition area on the first floor and a club with likely office accommodation on the remaining three upper storeys.

A former member of the UDR, Mr McDonnell has himself stayed in the GCH and slept above the boiler house.

"You could hear the rumbling of the central heating system and smell the oil. It was just like being on the Liverpool boat," he recalled, with Irish eyes smiling. ●



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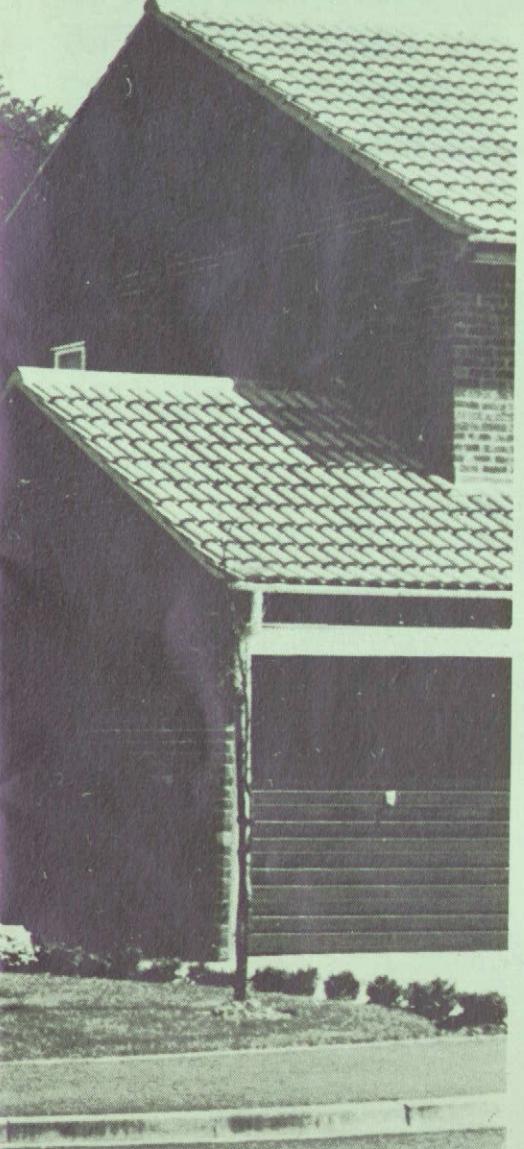
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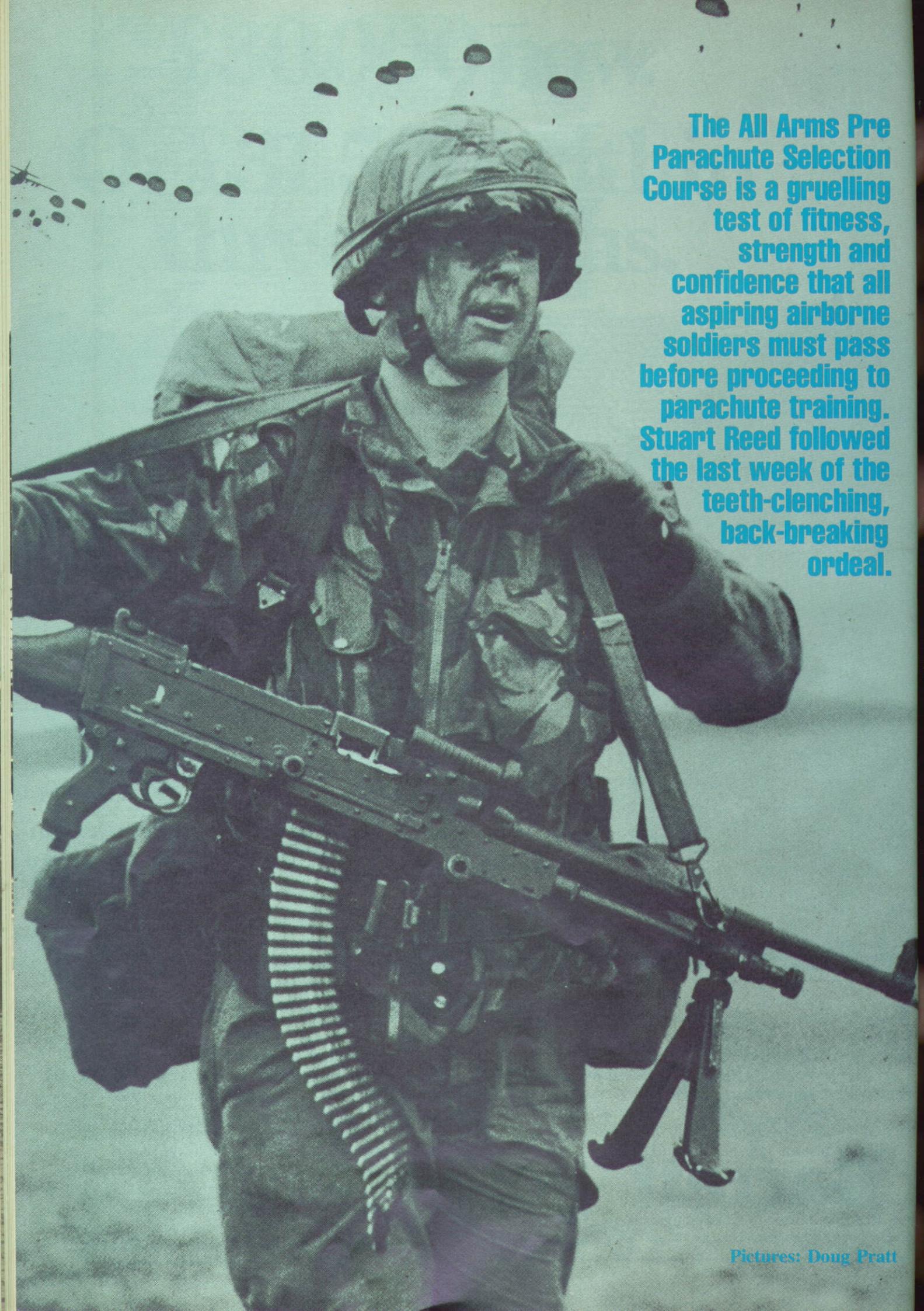
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Stoke-on-Trent—Larkwood	21,750
Tattenhall—Millbrook Pk	53,450
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The All Arms Pre Parachute Selection Course is a gruelling test of fitness, strength and confidence that all aspiring airborne soldiers must pass before proceeding to parachute training. Stuart Reed followed the last week of the teeth-clenching, back-breaking ordeal.

Wanna Be a Para?

“... They are first all volunteers and are then toughened by hard physical training. ... Their duty lies in the van of battle. They have the highest standard in all things”.

THE WORDS ARE THOSE OF 'MONTY' in World War Two but the qualities and standards required of airborne soldiers remain the same today. Their role is two-fold: to operate in support of Nato and in North West Europe and to carry out limited operations in support of British foreign policy.

Though the Parachute Regiment is the backbone of the Airborne Forces, specialists from other regiments have a vital support role in any airborne operation, — cooks, signallers, gunners, engineers, medical assistants and so on.

For those who are recommended by their regiments and allowed to volunteer, the All Arms Pre Parachute Selection Course is the gate through which all airborne soldiers must pass before going on to actual parachute training at RAF Brize Norton.

The Pre Parachute Selection Course winnows the wheat from the chaff, saving the Army from mis-spending money on further training for those who are not suitable. It also ensures that the high qualities required of the airborne soldier — courage, fitness, stamina and professionalism — are maintained.

PPS is certainly one of the toughest courses that any soldier, British or otherwise, can undergo. Whether it is tougher than the Royal Marines 'Tarzan Course' is a matter of academic discussion. Behind the plain, military words of PPS Selection Training Review, November 1979 there lies a nerve racking and teeth clenching experience.

Ten Mile Battle March: “... A 10 mile test to be completed in under 2 hours with the full load of Bergen and rifle ...” (Review of Pre Parachute Selection and Training, Nov 79)

Staff Sergeant Instructor Crabbe is soon to leave Depot Para to tone up the Commando Engineers Squadron. It is therefore his last 10 mile battle march. He stresses the importance of every man completing the course in a good time. The All Arms Course listen attentively, the pale November sunshine giving their faces a jaundiced look. Everyone from Captain McGimpsey, OC Parachute Selection, downward, is carrying a 30 pound rucksack. The course also carry SLRs and full webbing pouches making a

total weight of 45lbs. Several NCOs of Depot Para have volunteered to join the march merely to keep in trim and encourage anyone who dares to straggle.

SSI Crabbe barks an order or two and the whole column quick marches off, arms swinging. The pace is a cracking one. Within seconds they have crossed the football field and are passing under the A325. After 400 yards they are doubling along a stony lane, penetrating the Army Training Area. Notices warn the public not to touch dangerous objects. (Does this include SSI Crabbe?)

There is no talking. Everyone is sweating — little everglades form under armpits and on the backs of the soldiers' camouflage wind-proofs. Some are already feeling the pace. A lanky gunner stumbles to his knees and is lashed to his feet by Corporal McCourt's acid tongue.

The relentless, alternate, quick marching and running goes on. The Paras call it 'tabbing'. All the while the staff goad or cajole at full volume. It is physically harder for them as they run up and down the column driving the others on. The on-course officers come in for a lot of stick — more is expected from them and they know it.

Tanks under trial in Long Valley have churned the ground into a calf-deep mud custard. For over a mile it sucks greedily at the soldiers' boots, devouring their energy. Sergeant Major McNally attempts to divert their minds by remarking that it is perfect 'tabbing' weather and they are all on a wonderful holiday at public expense. A few smile wryly — most are too busy keeping their feet to notice.

At last the quagmire gives way to a steep stony incline but they're doubling again. The steep hill stretches the column out over a quarter of a mile. At the rear, fuchsia-faced, Captain McGimpsey and Sergeant Smith yell to the stragglers to catch up.

Over the ridge, as they plunge down the rock-strewn track, one man sprains his ankle badly and Corporal Peka, the medic, rushes keenly to the rescue. At the bottom a wide water jump claims a few runners. They flounder in the icy, yellow ochre and struggle out soaked to the skin. One RCT soldier looks about to jack it in. West Indies born Sergeant Registe harangues him — and he carries on.

Lofty Flagstaff Hill is a killer but for those who keep up front there is a fleeting

Below: Off on the ten mile battle march.

rest, a mouthful of water and a splendid view of the Surrey/Hampshire borders. Now the column is racing on down an almost sheer scarp face into another swampy valley. Ceasar's Camp, Hungry Hill, Ravine Head — the names come and go in quick succession as the 'Hobnail Express' rushes by.

All at once SSI Crabbe roars that this is the last hill of the last mile. At this stage the course will believe anything — but it's true. The front runners turn sharp right into a clearing where two Land Rovers, one an ambulance, and a Bedford four ton truck are parked.

Sergeant Major McNally produces a clipboard and logs each man's course number and time. The fastest time is one hour forty minutes. The first few home have started the week well with a whole ten points. The delicious aroma of 'Airborne Hash' drifts from the back of the four tonner . . .

Stretcher Race: “... 4 men, with 8 men in reserve, carry a stretcher with a simulated casualty . . . over 7 miles of cross country. The present course has a suggested time of 75 minutes”.

Sergeant Major McNally has been firework happy during the night, letting off Schermuly flares and gleefully lobbing thunder-flashes around the recently dug trenches in the clearing.

He knows that he must keep the course members under pressure so at 2000 hours he sends them out in patrols on a map reading exercise which will take them to several landmarks over a seven mile course.

All in all the would-be airborne soldiers have had very little sleep. At first light they are brusquely woken with another couple of thunderflashes. There is a cup of tea for everyone but no breakfast yet. The trenches, dug twelve hours before, are filled in again.

At 0800 a stretcher race is about to begin. Each stretcher is made from a rectangle of scaffolding poles with metal girders added to bring it up to the weight of a man. The course and Parachute Regiment are split into 3 teams, 12 men to a team, with four men stretcher bearing at any one time.

They line up for a mass start in the clearing. Staff Sergeant Crabbe lights a thunderflash to signal the start. As the explosion reverberates around the clearing the teams are off at the double, cheering wildly as they surge forward towards the exit

continued on page 24





Above: Instructors spur on stretcher party. road. Their enthusiasm and early morning energy soon wanes as they steam along the rugged gullies and pathways towards Long Valley and Flagstaff Hill once more.

The stretchers are torture on the shoulders. The shorter men tend to fare badly as the weight slopes down to their corner but the taller soldiers take a more steady weight which tires them out, especially on the flat.

The climb up Flagstaff Hill is a nightmare. Thighs are on fire and shoulders are burning from the stretchers' buffeting. The instructors, as always, charge along bellowing encouragement or insult — anything to keep the troops moving.

Down the far side of Hungry Hill one stretcher team is quite unable to stop and they plunge headlong into a thicket of trees

Below: Showing how to tackle Confidence Test.



at the bottom, the stretcher taking the men with it. The instructors are screaming like madmen.

The course ends with a 1000 yard dash along a metalled road to where the vehicles are parked. Several of the All Arms Course have collapsed during this gruelling event and some have been brought back by the Land Rover ambulance. Wincing with pain they hobble to join their comrades.

SSI Crabbe sees they are suffering from sense of humour failure. He berates a young officer for a poor performance and tells him to switch on — or else. He wisecracks the others into smiling. After each man has given his name and number and the scores and times have been logged, breakfast is served. Egg, tomatoes, fried bread and hot, sweet tea never tasted so good

Confidence Test: " . . . To see if the soldier can control his fear of heights sufficiently to carry out simple tasks whilst under mental pressure".

The All Arms Course are panting and mud spattered. They have just completed a two mile steeple chase in less than 18 minutes. Its icy water jumps and muddy ravines have left their knees trembling.

Sergeant Major McNally has them doubled over to the nearby trainaism. Several students look on awestruck as a smartly dressed Corporal PTI, Corporal Livesey, shins up the 30 foot scramble net to the very top of this giant climbing frame.

He stands on the shuffle bars and, with arms outstretched, recites his name and number. Next he shuffles along the bars, still standing upright, touches his toes and then shins down to the next level to cross a series of monkey bars and narrow planks over a few one step jumps before leaping some 10 feet to punch through a scramble net and return to ground level.

One by one the airborne candidates follow suit. Most gulp down their fear as they teeter along the cat walks. The instructors urge them on as they swing across gaps on ropes, crawl along taut parallel wires and clamber around like trainee gibbons.

One luckless soldier plunges through the scramble net legs akimbo. His shout is heard some distance away. Another baulks at the jump into the taut net. He has already done this jump badly once and is sent back for another try. He is quite unable to overcome his fear to complete the second go.

SSI Crabbe brings him down to earth and

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takes him to one side for private encouragement. He goes up and fluffs it again. Captain McGimpsey speaks to him, this time out of earshot of the rest. The luckless soldier still cannot bring himself to jump. The Regimental Colonel, who is watching training, breaks off to take the soldier to one side. What he says no-one knows, but the man shins up the net and jumps without hesitation. Presumably this is why the Colonel is a colonel.

As the All Arms Course place their feet on terra firma once again, some have actually enjoyed it. But for most it is merely another ordeal to be endured. . . .

Milling: ' . . . A rough and tumble version of boxing . . . 2 candidates of equal size in a ring using 16 oz boxing gloves over a one minute duration'.

At 0800 it is cold in the gymnasium. The All Arms Course are wearing red PT vests, shorts and plimsolls. They sit cross-legged in a row facing their opponents drawn from Recruit Company of the Parachute Regiment. A boxing ring with padded sides has been made from crash mats and vaulting horses. There are gaps at two of the corners. Four pairs of 16 oz boxing gloves lie on the floor in readiness.

SSI Crabbe briefs the contestants; his instructions spiced with Army patter. He points out that it is a test of courage and controlled aggression.

The bell goes and the first pair charge into the boxing ring. No time is wasted on body blows. One of the fighters is an amateur boxer but it makes no difference. He goes down under a welter of face punches. The course cheer wildly. He's up in a flash only to be slugged again. The bell saves him and he staggers out of the ring, one eye rapidly closing.



Above: Sixty seconds aggression in the ring.

In go the next pair, arms flailing like windmills. The recruits yell encouragement as their man forces his enemy to turn and cover. SSI Crabbe bellows for him to stand and fight. Trapped between twin evils, the engineer returns to face the recruit and forces a well-earned draw. A massive gunner is given a hard fight by a brutal looking recruit. He only just wins.

Soon all the fights are over and no-one is sorry. One soldier has a black eye, another is bleeding from the nose. The scores are totted up and the All Arms Course are declared the winners. Both teams cheer sportily and Sergeant Major McNally presents the course with a pennant of the Parachute Regiment Colours.

Below: Assault Course. It aint arf wet mum!



Assault Course: ' . . . three circuits of the obstacles wearing webbing with a bogey time of 7½ minutes'.

The sun is shining through the trees less than a mile away from Browning Barracks in Aldershot. It creates a dappled effect on the faces of the All Arms Course as they receive their briefing from Staff Sergeant Crabbe on what is expected of them during the assault course. None of the obstacles is terrifyingly difficult but the seven-and-a-half minutes allowed for three circuits makes for an exhausting ordeal.

Once again the course are being pitted against their rivals, the recruits. Both the recruits and the All Arms Course are wearing parachute jumping helmets. Each man has his course number painted boldly on it.

The course members are first away and SSI Crabbe sets the stop watch going. The first hazard is a wooden wall about six feet high. The men must leap up and roll over the top keeping their profiles as low as possible against the upper edge. Next comes a couple of knee high bars which are jumped with ease despite pools of muddy water to hinder progress.

A series of scaffolding rungs take the soldiers up to a height of 15 feet. Then they must reach out and slide down a fireman's pole taking care to land with both feet apart and knees bent to minimise the shock on the spinal column.

They plunge on through the leaf strewn path down to another ramp which takes them over a pair of airborne jumps and on to a water jump. Now it is all uphill, the slow gradient being broken by two dry ditches each about six feet wide. At the top of the climb is a ramp ending in a water jump and two parallel logs, one above the other, three feet and seven feet off the ground. Jumping from the logs they plunge into yet another mud bath. The final obstacle is another ramp and water jump.

By the time the All Arms Course have done the circuit they are well and truly 'whacked' and they form a ragged line after having their times logged. They are covered in mud and tiny water droplets drip from inside their helmets down their faces. Some can hardly control their breath and stand with chests heaving.

continued on page 27

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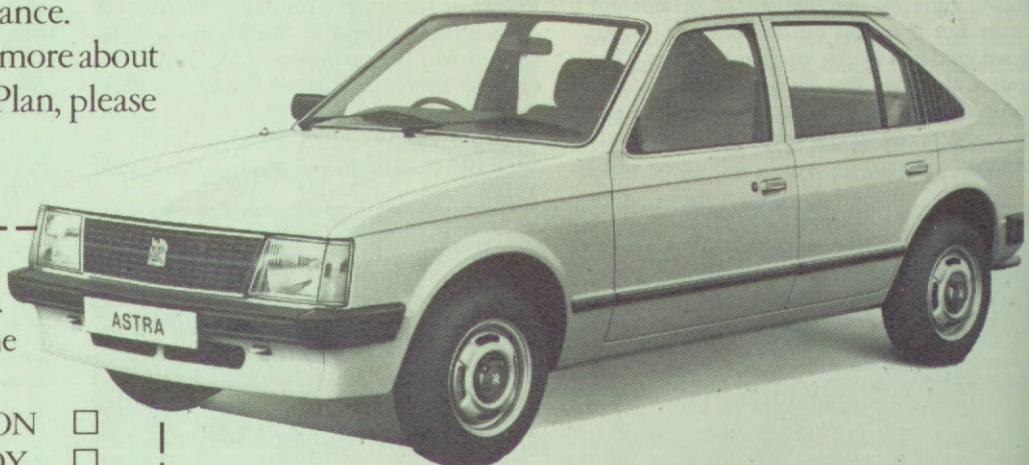
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Now it's the turn of the recruits. The Depot CO appears on the scene bringing with him two high ranking officers from the Portuguese Army. They watch with great interest but keep at a safe distance so that their impeccably tailored, light grey uniforms do not get splashed with mud as the soldiers rush past.

Soon it is over and the times are compared. The All Arms Course has won on points again. A cheer goes up and Captain McGimpsey presents the pennant to their representative. The CO's visitors seem most impressed as they pick their way over the muddy ground towards a waiting staff car ...

South Downs March: " . . . An assessment of their stamina and determination".

The South Downs Way near Midhurst and Petersfield runs along the top of the chalky escarpment of the South Downs rising in parts to over 700 feet above sea level. Occasionally the scarp face is gashed by steep sided valleys dipping several hundred feet taking the prehistoric track with it.

As the men leave the coach which has brought them from Aldershot to a country lane in deepest Sussex, they shoulder their packs and fall in. Sergeant Major McNally explains that the 15 mile section chosen for the Pre Parachute Selection course must be completed in two-and-a-half hours. He stresses the need for each man to 'hang in' and keep going at all costs.

SSI Crabbe leads off for the first half of the march. The initial pace is very brisk indeed but without the breakneck urgency of the 10 miler. The weather is perfect. A deep blue sky dotted with fleecy white clouds crowns the beauty of rural Sussex in the autumn. Overnight rain makes the going soft over the first two uphill miles leading to the crest of the escarpment. The men are fighting for breath as they reach the top.

Regimental Sergeant Major Lewis has come along just for the hell of it. He is a huge man. Like most of the senior ranks present he has done some 'tabbing' in his time. The senior ranks stride out with experienced gaits. It won't be too long before they are pushing 40 with 20 years service behind them but they could still speed-march most of the younger soldiers into the ground.

The terrain is no respecter of persons and, despite the shouts of the staff, the column is beginning to string out over a half a mile. On the slopes of the minor valleys, as the track switches back up and down, the chalky soil is as slippery as axle grease. Where the land levels out, the tractor ruts in the lanes are filled with murky water which soon has everyone's boots squelching. Flecks of mud dot the soldiers windproof clothes. At the seven mile mark, at the top of a grindingly long and steep climb, one of the Land Rovers is parked with a tea urn. For those who have kept up with Staff Sergeant Crabbe there is time for a quick sip of sweet Army tea, but the later arrivals have no time to stop.

Sergeant Smith is now taking the lead and with youthful keenness steps up the pace. Sergeant Major McNally stays up front with him and SSI Crabbe joins Sergeant Registe in the arduous task of encouraging the 'tail-end-Charlies'.

A concrete spot height at the top of

Beacon Hill proclaims that it is 794 feet above sea level. There is a breathtaking view of the valley of the River Rother on the way up. Past the spot height the land falls away sharply.

The front runners bound down the springy turf almost unable to stop. They veer left, climbing again towards the last stretch. After what seems an age the last hill levels out and the track leads down again through apple orchards.

As the route turns left on to a minor metalled road it is obvious that the troops are on the home straight. The last few hundred yards on the road leading downhill to a small pub in the village of North Moulton are performed with the utmost speed.

Soldiers who have run with teeth-gritting, dogged determination now break into a hell-for-leather dash. Once across the line, their name, number and time is logged by Sergeant Major McNally. He sends the first few men back to the top of the incline to cheer the rest on as they come into view. Soon everyone has made it and has changed out of sweat soaked vests into dry clothing. The last test has been completed.

There is time for a quick drink before the pub closes and for a brief moment the gulf between staff and course is narrowed to virtual non-existence. Sergeant Major McNally and RSM Lewis talk of the early days of the Parachute Regiment and previous selection tests. They agree that today's tests are as hard as ever but more scientifically monitored.

Packed lunches of cheese sandwiches, biscuits, sausage rolls and crisps are dished out and although most complain that this is somewhat unexciting fare, little is wasted.

The coach arrives and they pile on for the journey back to Aldershot. The heaters are on in the coach and after a few miles most people are nodding off to sleep . . .

Below: WO2 McNally, Capt McGimpsey check scores.



The Selection: " . . . The aim of PPS is to test courage, military aptitude, fitness, endurance and determination under conditions of stress to assess whether an individual has the ability to serve with Airborne Forces".

Sergeant Major McNally's office is crowded. Captain McGimpsey sits on the window sill, arms folded. The rest, Sergeant Major McNally, SSI Crabbe, Sergeant Registe and Sergeant Smith, are seated around one desk. Its top is covered with score sheets and coffee cups. The atmosphere is relaxed.

The individual scores and qualities of the various potential airborne soldiers are discussed with a thoroughness stemming from three weeks close scrutiny of the people involved. The course had begun with 36 men, but by the start of the third week the numbers had dwindled to 15 through injury or ineptitude. Of these, only 11 survived the final week. Twisted ankles, pulled ligaments and lack of determination eliminated the others.

Of the remaining 11 there is only one further failure — a soldier over 30 who, although showing tremendous guts, simply did not have the stamina to see the job through.

The points are re-examined and an Army Catering Corps cook is pronounced top student. It is the first time a 'bean slinger' has claimed this honour. Several of the 'students' have only just scraped through but they are younger men who will develop their potential in the years to come.

The discussion goes backwards and forwards until everyone has had his say. With a gesture of finality Sergeant Major McNally closes the book and after a lull in the conversation the talk turns to Chelsea FC's prospects, the intricacies of house purchase and a forthcoming darts match. A new course is due to start in two weeks time . . .

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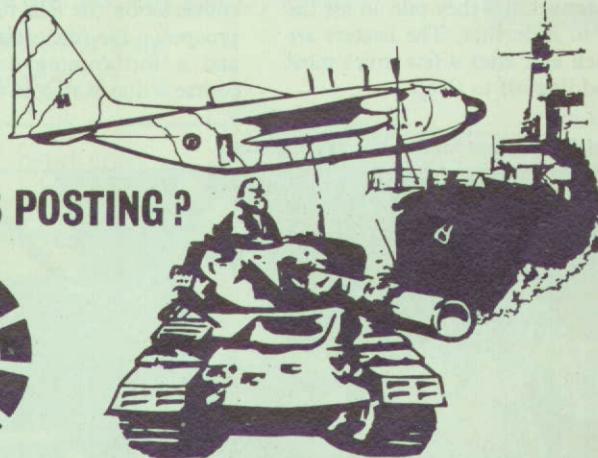


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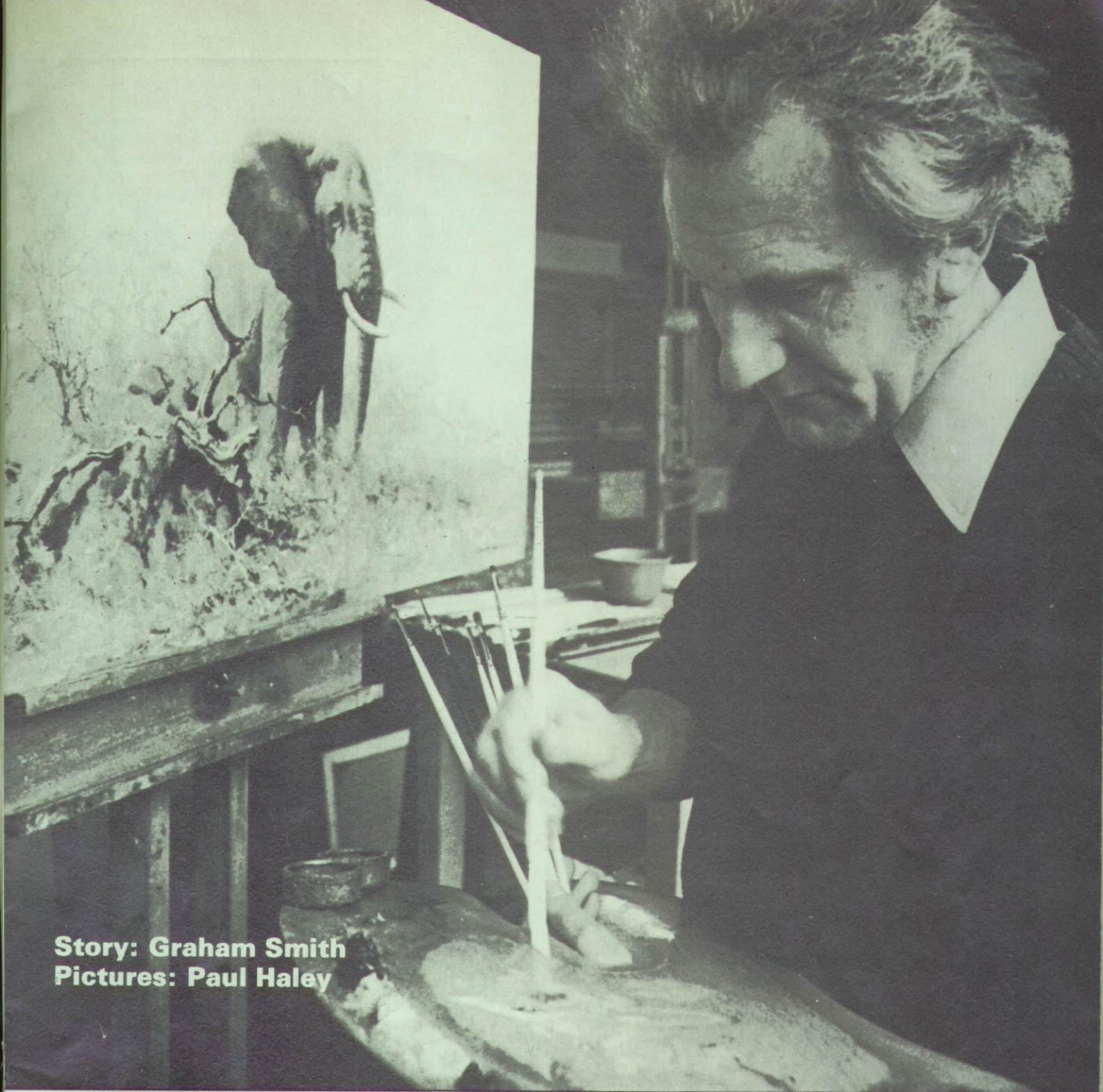


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David Shepherd's meticulous eye for detail has made him one of our most sought-after wildlife and military painters . . .

THE ART OF BRUSH WARFARE

DAVID SHEPHERD, ACCLAIMED WORLD-WIDE for his paintings of African wildlife, particularly elephants, has such a peerless reputation as a military artist that the shock-squad SAS asked him to portray for posterity the storming of the Iranian Embassy within two hours of it being dramatically enacted 'live' on the nation's TV screens on a hitherto rather somnolent Sunday evening last summer.

He was honoured to accept the commission and will do it with zeal . . . in about 18 months time.

Such is the power, the respect and, inevitably, the earning power commanded through the palette of this multi-talented artist who is solidly booked on painting commissions for the next two years.

Above: David Shepherd works on elephant study — commission for a Japanese car firm!

David Shepherd is among an elite handful of military artists. At 49 he already has some 2000 paintings to his credit, many of them with Army themes which hang with pride in messes and military museums at home and abroad.

His eye for detail and skilful brushwork has won him such a high reputation with the Army that, in the past, Army Air Corps Scout 'choppers' have dropped into the grounds of his 16-acre home, a magnificent half-timbered 16th-century Elizabethan farmhouse in Surrey, for afternoon tea while homeward bound from training exercises.

David has painted every type of aircraft
continued on page 30



flown by the AAC and he, in turn, has a great deal of admiration for the Corps.

A genteel, dedicated and determined man by any standards, David Shepherd has had less pleasant encounters when pursuing his art with the Army.

He has been spat on by a covey of "evil-looking" women in Northern Ireland and inadvertently met a leader of the Provisional IRA and two of his henchmen.

David is "nutty" about World War Two, declares that in all the world the inner area of Arabia leaves him with the "greatest and most lasting impression for its sheer beauty and remoteness", and has "an unbounded enthusiasm for the Army".

All this from a man who as a schoolboy found the war "madly exciting" yet later deliberately foiled the medical authorities seeking his presence for National Service in 1948.

"I bunged hay up my nose to make me sneeze," he now confesses with a wry grin, "although I did, in fact, suffer from hay fever. I didn't want to spend two years in the Army when I was on the brink of a career".

David, fresh from Stowe School, Buckinghamshire, progressed from what he terms "a rather nervous little boy leading the usual sheltered middle-class life never really wanting anything" to yearning — at 19 — for a job as a game warden in Kenya.

Above: The Dhala Convoy, beginning of David's own road to recognition as a military painter.

In the event it was an ambition that he was never to fulfil, but he did go to Kenya and worked there on a coffee plantation.

Throughout his youth — and afterwards — David never lost his fascination for the wartime days. "I am absolutely nutty about World War Two," he admits. "I was inspired as a schoolboy. This is probably why I have a feeling for those years which have given me the enthusiasm to paint so many pictures for the Services".

His paintings for the Services started with an invitation to visit Aden by the C-in-C British Forces Arabian Peninsula who had already seen some of his work.

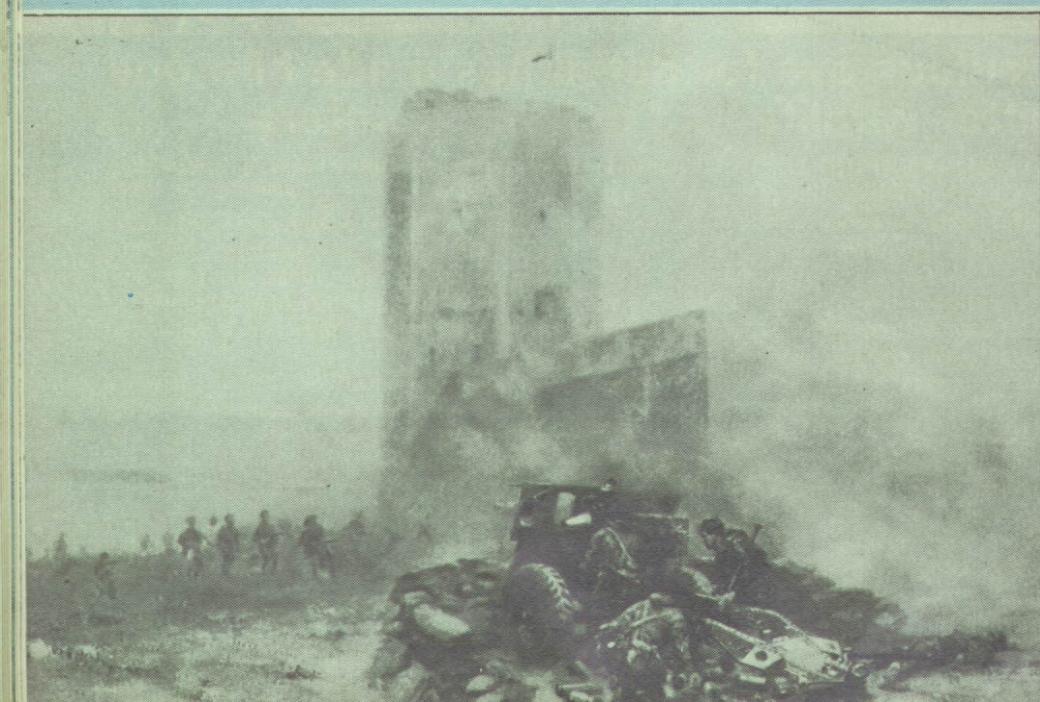
In surroundings little changed since biblical times, David was to launch himself on the road to fame as a military artist thanks to another road — an ancient trade route from Aden, through an escarpment, to a village called Dhala.

The road, he thinks, was built before World War Two by the Royal Engineers and had been brought up to the standards of modern metalled arteries just before the Army pulled out of the Protectorate in 1967.

And so it was, in 1960, that the energetic, sensitive Shepherd went up on what was known as the 'Dhala Convoy' into the Radfan, taken there by The Blues and Royals.

There was, said the Army, a certain amount of risk. A visiting major — fresh from the UK but sceptical about the dangers — had earlier been shot in the leg by

Left: Action at Mirbat. Leader of charging mob who re-enacted the scene was a former sergeant in the Federal Regular Army. Years before, he had actually been leading the attack for real.



dissident tribesmen. He returned to Aden convinced — but on a stretcher.

Supplies were ferried up by three-tonners. Officers travelled in Land Rovers. A Ferret scout car acted as escort.

David recalls: "We set off at 0530 to reach Dhala by nightfall, though the distance was a mere 90 miles. The Blues and Royals had offered to take me there after seeing some of my sketches and photographs from previous assignments. It was one of the most exciting and memorable journeys I have ever done. Dhala was an incredible mud building village."

"At that time, tribesmen from across the border in the Yemen were causing trouble with the local population and the British by taking pot shots at all and sundry and rolling boulders down on to vehicles climbing the pass."

But undaunted by his experiences in the sun-scorched setting, David took his photographs and made several sketches.

A small picture recording on canvas David's impressions of the journey was bought by The Blues and Royals, his escorts for the bone-jolting trip.

But for a major work he wanted to paint of the episode — it was a different story. Someone had told him that, by tradition and accepted custom, The Blues and Royals had 'stacks of money'. As it transpired though, they were not interested. £90 was considered too much!

Undismayed, David took a matter-of-fact attitude. The work would earn him further commissions for his talents.

However, the Arabs — now the Federal Regular Army in Aden — were interested in buying the painting *But*, could the Royals be turned into Arabs? If so, they would buy.

David readily obliged. British trousers were cut to shorts. Land Rover registration numbers were changed. Troops took on a deeper hue and donned Arab head-dress. Accepted, the painting hung for several years in the Arab officers' mess.

In 1967, three weeks before the British pull-out from Aden, a senior British officer phoned David and suggested that the picture should be 'acquired' and brought back to England, lest the Arabs set fire to the mess.

"It was a bloody cheek to take back what did not belong to us", David now reminisces, "If the Arabs wanted to burn down their mess it was their business."

The painting now hangs somewhere in Warminster.

"If commissioned now, the same painting would cost £1500", David said in his studio where he gains atmospheric inspiration from the stereo output of Mahler and the Beatles.

David takes his artistry in oils to the highest standards of detail.

"Clearly one must have enthusiasm for whatever one paints and I think this enthusiastic approach to the subject appeals to the Services. They want, above all, technical accuracy. Only when they are satisfied on this count will they look at the subject to see if it satisfies them as a painting to hang on the wall. In working to satisfy both these requirements, I have not only made some of my greatest friends among Service personnel but, at the same time, have had some of the most exciting experiences."

One of those experiences resulted from a 1st Bn Green Howards commission to portray what was termed the 'utter boredom,

filth and greyness' of an Ardoyne foot patrol.

Escorted by a Parachute Regiment foot patrol with an Armoured Personnel Carrier, or 'pig', for added ease of operation, David set about his researches with camera and sketch pad. He was soon surrounded by 15 "evil-looking" women who tongue-lashed him with obscene abuse, accusing him of being with the Special Branch. He politely told them he was an artist. They persisted with their theory.

"I lost my temper," David recalls. "I was not going to be talked to like that."

The women could not understand why he needed such a strong-arm escort.

By now determined to get his picture, David moved deeper into the Ardoyne, his camera shutter clicking at will. Three scruffy men in jaded jeans approached him and asked him to leave — repeatedly!

"I thought they were just yobs. I refused. Threats followed and the Paras stepped into the rescue. The yobs turned out to be the leader of the Ardoyne Provisional IRA, his lieutenant and a man who

continued on page 33



Above: The artist mixes paint on his palette.



Above: VCP, Forkill. In back of car, unseen here, an alleged relative of Capt Nairac's killer.

Below: An Ardoyne foot patrol. White-haired woman is said to be 'Dutch' Doherty's mother.



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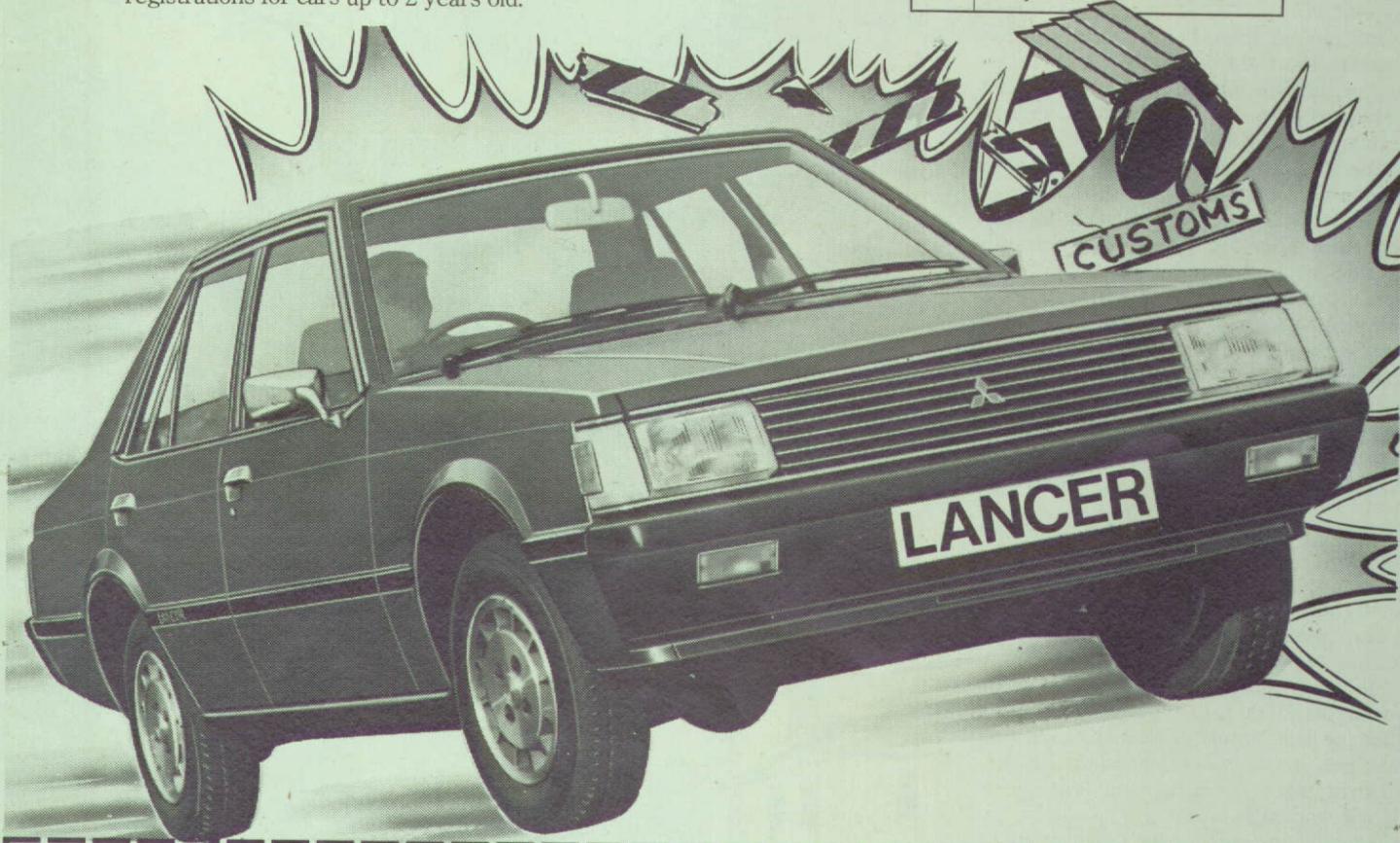
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6	Datsun	7.5
7	VW	8.6
8	Opel	9.6
9	Ford	10.1
10	Audi	10.2
11	BMW	10.6
12	Renault	11.4
13	Fiat	13.8
14	Talbot	14.9
15	Volvo	16.7
16	Peugeot	17.7
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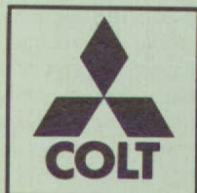
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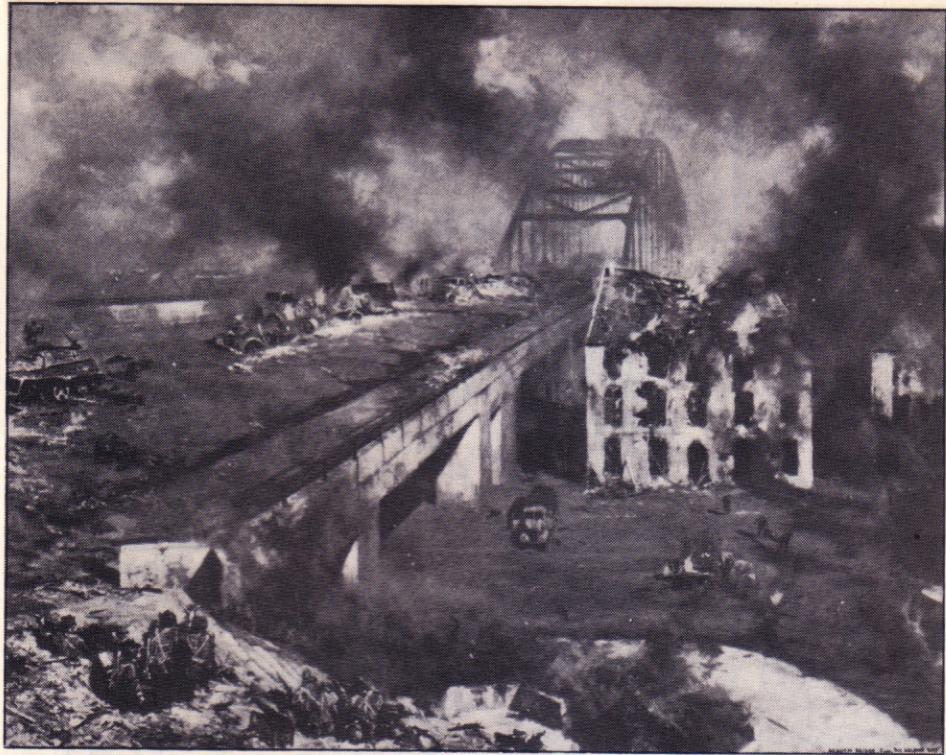
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was known to have killed at least three British soldiers," said David.

Half-an-hour later he was having a cup of tea in the Para Regiment Mess feeling "queazy".

David added: "However, it was all worth it. It had given me an insight into what life is like in Northern Ireland for the British Army and had increased my already unbounded admiration for the troops a thousandfold. I honestly believe no other army in the world would do such a job and do it so well."

Another anecdote stems from the Army Air Corps at Middle Wallop, one of his earliest clients who, when told that a final painting was ready for collection, blandly asked: "You don't want to drive all the way up here, do you?"

A training exercise was organised and 20 minutes later, after a Scout touched down in his well-tended grounds, painter and product in oils embarked for the VIP luncheon occasion back at base.

Meanwhile, a couple of generals, an

Below: The crossroads at Oosterbeek. Realism was helped by faded photos found in an attic.

Above: The Bridge at Arnhem on second day at 5pm with knocked-out German truck beneath it.

admiral and other 'top brass' had arrived from London — by car.

"After lunch and brandy and cigars in the ante-room my ego was happily inflated when a junior officer, in earshot of the generals and the admiral, loudly announced: 'Your helicopter is waiting, sir'.

"The aforesaid gentlemen, who were super chaps, had to go back to London in their dreary staff cars and there I was with a helicopter lift," chuckled David.

One of his biggest challenges, he says, was to paint the battle of Arnhem. He has painted two large detailed canvases of this tragic operation and, in the cause of realistic research, went on two organised annual pilgrimages there.

"The whole town has left a very vivid impression on me. After the tremendous amount of research I have undertaken, I almost feel as if I had been at the bridgehead myself in 1944," he says.

His first painting of the actual bridge, portrayed the precise moment of 5 pm on the second day when the 2nd Battalion, the

Parachute Regiment, were defending the ramparts of the bridge. There was house-to-house fighting across and under the approaches.

At exactly 1700 hours an RAF Mosquito flew over the bridge at 3000 feet just as a German column of trucks and tanks were crossing over it. The column was consequently 'brewed up' by the waiting Paras.

"We enlarged the photograph taken by the Mosquito and an amazing amount of detail came to light that had perhaps not been previously deciphered," said David. "What had just been a blur, for example, turned out to be a knocked-out German truck below the bridge. Through a magnifying glass we saw the driver was hanging dead from the cab, head on the ground and feet still trapped inside. So all of this detail went into the finished picture."

His second painting of Arnhem was 'The Cauldron' — the carnage at the crossroads in the nearby village of Oosterbeek. The Harteistein Hotel was the final perimeter into which the British were forced in the last stages of the battle.

A German half-track, flying a white flag, approached. The senior German officer came up to General 'Shan' Hackett and a deal was struck. The wounded would be moved out and the war continued afterwards.

"It was, I suppose, one of the last moments of chivalry in modern warfare, and it was a great honour for me to record this scene," says David.

Some faded photographs, dusted off from their forgotten haven in a Dutch lady's attic and taken by her husband who had literally walked out into the middle of the battle to take pictures with his box Brownie, gave David the vital accuracy he so desperately needed for that scene at Oosterbeek.

The prints showed the lamp standards and tram-cable pylons — all long gone — and an old car.

David affirms: "I believe you have got to get the detail correct. I simply pour film out of the camera on to potential painting subjects. I spend a lot of time in research, preferring to take my own pictures. I read military histories, too, with the help of pencil marks in the margins of passages of particular interest made by the people commissioning the paintings."

He turns down, incidentally, five out of every six commissions.

David added about Arnhem: "Those two places are the most evocative places for me. They are still finding bodies as they dig for gas mains. Every beech tree is dead and riddled with shellbursts from the pasting the place got. Personally I'm a coward. I don't like blood and guts and all that shooting but I've had some fabulous times with the Army."

One of those memorable times which thoroughly disproves the cowardice self-assessment happened in Aden at a heavily guarded, sand-bagged house, a veritable checkpoint fortress.

David — "my professionalism tends to get the better of me" — wanted a grandstand view and stood up on the emplacement in full view.

The CO of the 1st Bn, Parachute Regiment of the time, yelled: "I wish to God that bloody artist would get his bloody head down. He's going to get it blown off!"



CYPRUS

A £200,000 SCHEME to provide hot water for all the barracks and messes in Cyprus will pay for itself in five years by the savings it will make on existing electric and oil fired heating. The new system uses a natural resource which exists in abundance in Cyprus — sunshine.

The solar heating plan for the barracks and messes has already been approved and was due to have been carried out this winter in order to start operation next summer. But, due to the spending moratorium, the start has been delayed.

The question of solar heating for Cyprus has been under study for some time — many civilian properties on the island already have systems. Trial installations have been erected on married quarters at both Episkopi and Dhekelia and proved its worth.

But the main difficulty about putting a system into married quarters is that the beneficiaries would be the occupants rather than the taxpayers. The financial watchdogs feel that the occupant, who will be saving on fuel bills, should make some sort of contribution to offset the capital costs. And, until a solution is found to this, a scheme for quarters is unlikely to get the green light.

But with still rising fuel prices the PSA in Cyprus produced some figures which showed that capital cost could be recovered in savings in about five years. And the scheme for hot water for messes and barracks would directly benefit the taxpayer.

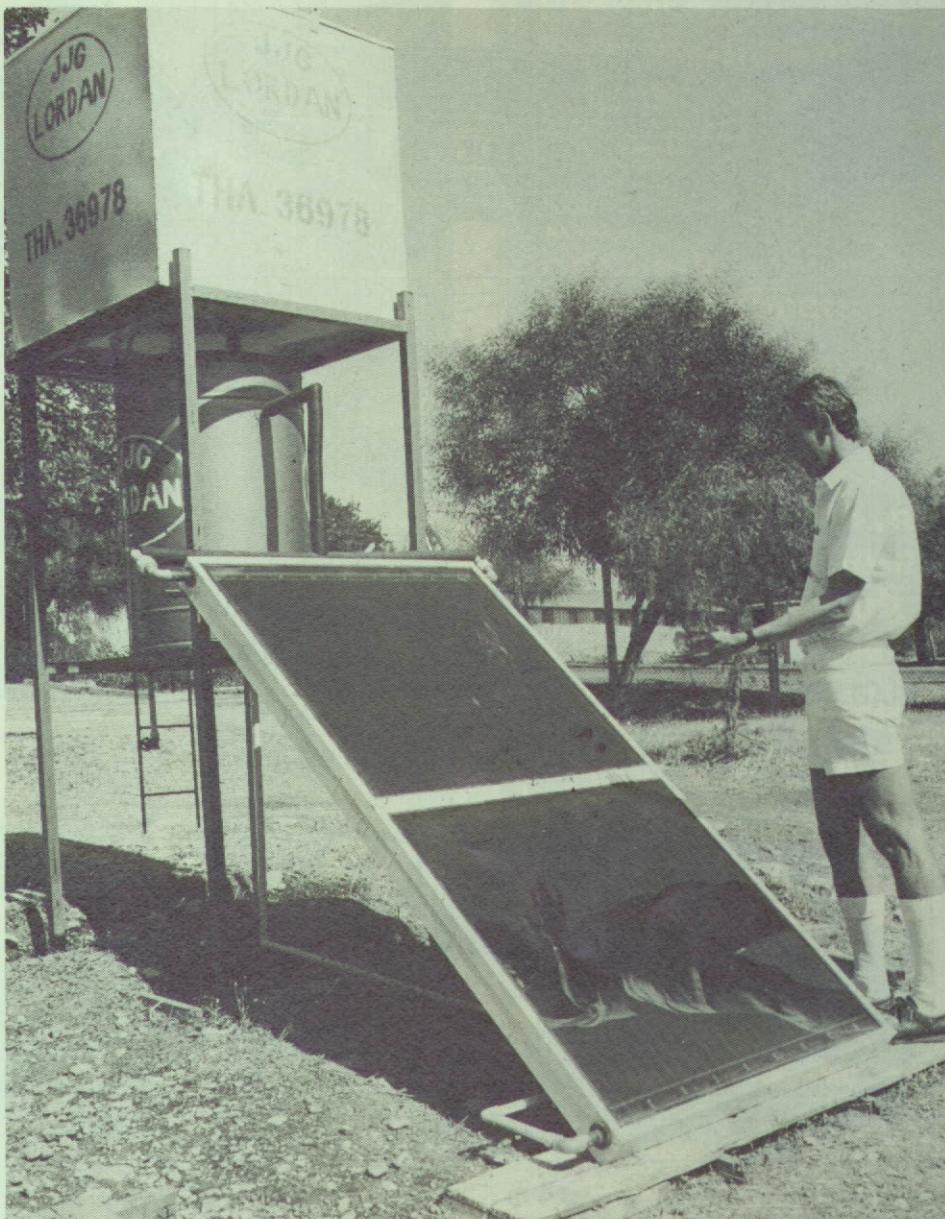
Existing systems will be retained as a back-up for the rare overcast day between May and October and also for use in the Cyprus winter. But solar heating systems in Cyprus have other advantages over those in UK besides that of more sunlight.

Corrosion problems are not the same as at home and there will be no need to fill the pipes of the solar panel with anti-freeze during the winter.

Major Derrick Tims, a Royal Engineers officer working for the PSA as part of the solar heating team, says that the price of fuel has risen by 60 per cent since the team produced its statistics while the price of solar panels has remained stationary due to increased production and competition.

So the savings will be even more than when the scheme was first put forward. Estimated cash savings per year for just the barracks and messes were then worked out at £35,000. If the scheme was extended to

Sunny days to light up Treasury hearts



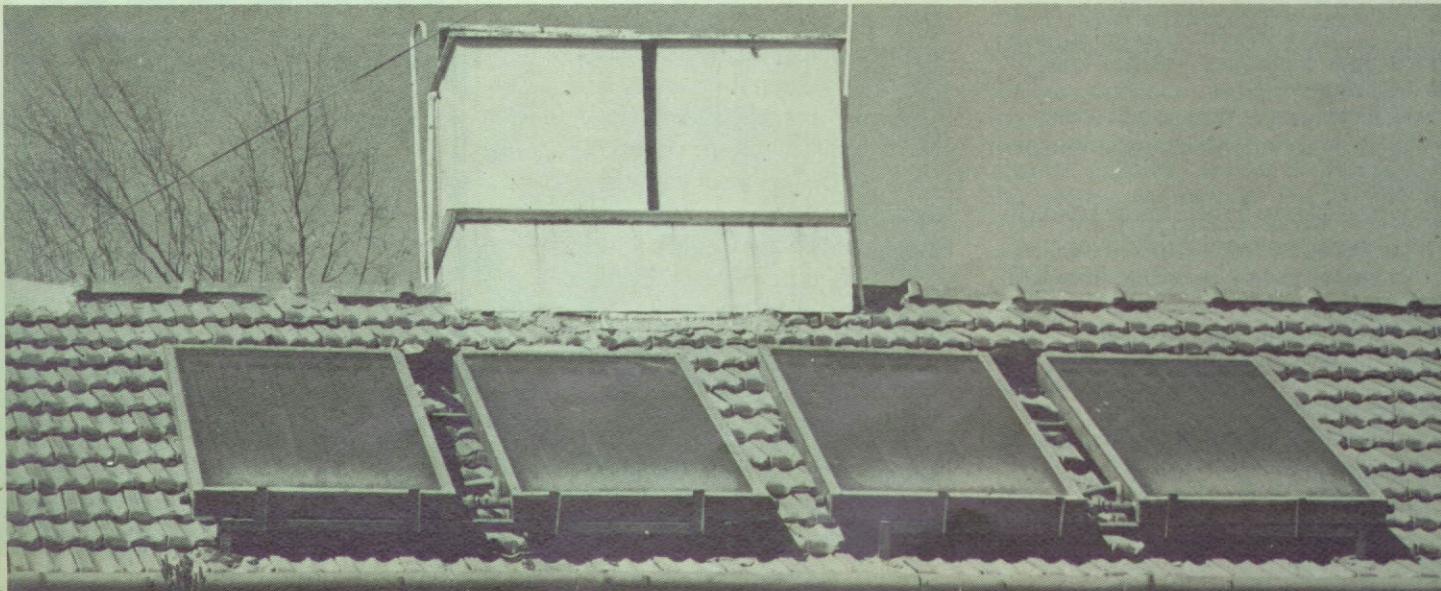
Above: Harry Thompson with experimental unit.

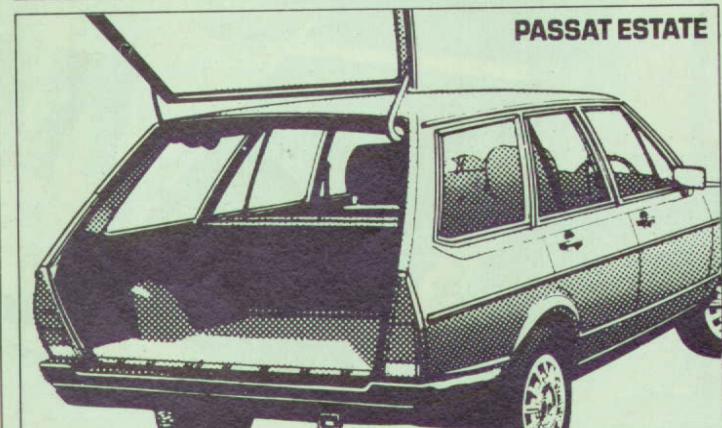
Below: In situ — panels and water storage tank.

married quarters there would be an even bigger saving — equal to 7346 megawatts of electricity annually or about £150,000.

Added to the other fuel economies which are being implemented by PSA in Cyprus

(an estimated saving of £100,000 during the current financial year) the team are confident that when the sun shines on the two sovereign base areas in future it will bring pleasure to the custodians of the nation's purse back in England as well as to our Servicemen and their families on the island.





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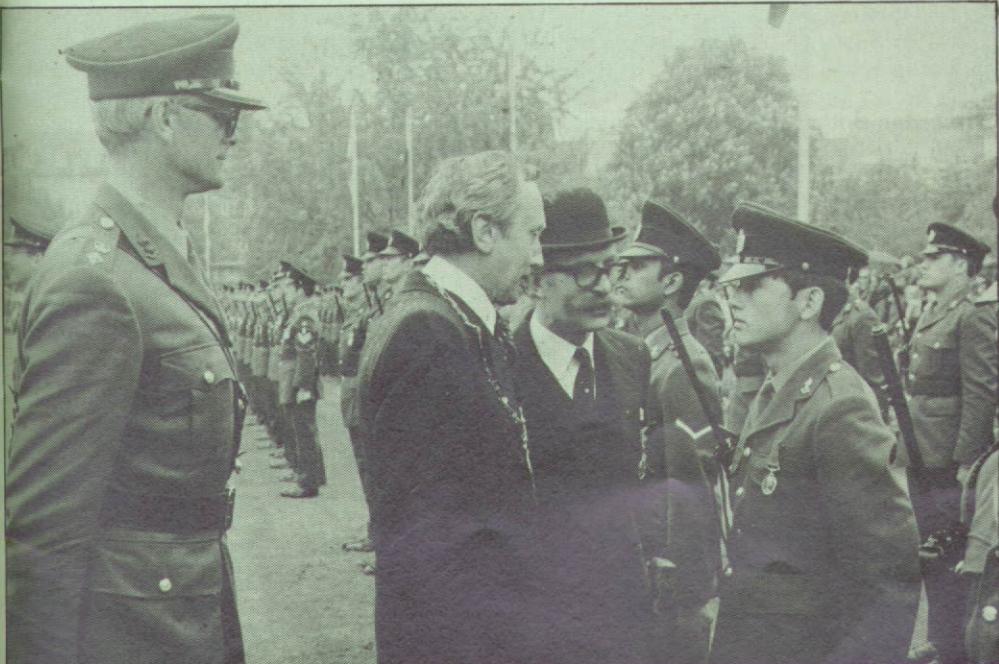
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Above: John Augar with Hamelin's other celebrated persuader, the Pied Piper.

Below: With Oberburgermeister at Freedom Parade — a British tradition transplanted.



An outstanding feature of last year's massive Exercise Spearpoint was the co-operation of local German civilians — a triumph for our Services Liaison Officers who skilfully smoothed the way. Graham Smith went to meet one of them and find out more about his difficult and delicate role.

HAMELIN'S FRIENDLY PERSUADER

JOHN AUGAR, the Army's 'Mr Fixit' in Hamelin, is probably the third best-known personality in the 60,000-strong West German town — after its Oberburgermeister and its traditional Pied Piper, that is.

Not a bad claim to fame for this 52-year-old Services' Liaison Officer who once arranged for two Freedom of the City ceremonies for the British military within ten months on his 'patch' and, on a less formal and speedier occasion, had the seat of his trousers torn out by a deliberately unleashed snarling German shepherd dog!

Services' Liaison Officer in Hamelin since 1974, John is one of a dozen such men within BAOR whose terms of day-to-day reference are varied but clear cut.

These include negotiating with local German authorities about the provision of training areas, exercise rights, accommodation and other associated matters; ensuring that the authorities provide the Forces with the support and facilities they require 'to carry out their military mission'; making sure that the Forces, for their part, understand their 'obligation to pay due regard to German interests'; giving advice on protocol matters, discipline, sporting activities, PR and press liaison; and encouraging Anglo-German relations.

Seven of the hard-worked SLOs are located in North Rhine Westphalia, the rest in Lower Saxony where John's particular 'parish' extends over seven counties — an area about the size of East Anglia — and

continued on page 38



Above: Discussing beet damage with farmer.

through which, each year, he motors about 15,000 miles on his differing quests.

His area of defined responsibility lies south of Hanover, takes in most of the Harz Mountains, a lot of the River Weser and the Lower Saxony area encroaching on the fenced IGB (Inner German Border).

Exercise Spearpoint raged partly in his area as part of Crusader 80, the biggest and best troop manoeuvres seen since the last war. And not a single complaint was filed by his 'parishioners'.

"Germans show restrained understanding. They know it's not a game," says John. "Our fundamental role here is a serious one and we, the SLOs, are not here primarily to promote international brotherhood. But exercising is important and many of our civilian counterparts can know little about it."

In the run-up months to the advent of Crusader and its active scenario on the fertile, North German Plain, John spent most of his time in what he terms as a "determined information campaign" in Hamelin and all across his area which became a nodal point in the whole exercise.

"I set out particularly to spread the word to all and sundry, explaining to them what would happen. It's the element of surprise that the general public does not like. The fury generated is as much by surprise as by

noise. If people are told what is going to happen then they feel involved. It certainly had the desired effect on this town. Not one single complaint was received."

A special private briefing on Spearpoint was held in Hamelin HQ and given by its Garrison Commander, Brigadier David Swinburn, to the Mayor, his Town Clerk and the head of the Office of Public Order (Ordnungsamt).

In 1979 a total of 287 exercises were held in four of John's seven counties. In the six years he has been in post, John has been attached to a dozen field training exercises.

Life for the SLO, though, is no bed of roses. It is more likely to be centred in a muddy field of beet or potatoes.

"On exercise, some of the farmers are not over-pleased about the damage prospects. They will try to keep us off their land by blocking tracks or waving shotguns about," he recalls. "That is where the SLO comes in. He goes along to persuade them that we are both on the same side."

He added: "For instance, on a 20 Brigade exercise I had been called in to ask for access somewhere. I started discussions with the displeased farmer who suddenly slipped the leash of his German shepherd dog. I set off fairly quickly for my waiting '1800' staff car but not quick enough. The dog tore the seat of my trousers. I've not covered 100 metres in 10.2 seconds since!"

Yet there are people who happily co-

operate with British troops on exercise. Like the forester who loaned the use of standing timber... so that a troop of 54-ton Chieftains could crash through it as part of a test.

Another forester also obliged. An engineer group from the UK needed to practise route denial techniques which meant blowing down trees. It was explained to the forester that this would be followed by a route clearance exercise and he was all the happier when the troop left... bequeathing him a neatly-stacked pile of timber.

In both instances, John had concluded the arrangements in his role of SLO.

He said: "It never ceases to amaze me what the Germans allow us to do on their private land. The British soldier is, in most cases, bloody marvellous. He'll help an old lady on a farm, for example, to unblock the upstairs loo. Quite a difference from the popular, perverted view of the brutal, licentious soldiery. Behaviour of the British troops is, in the main, an absolute model."

Which is more than can be said for some German farmers, one of whom was personally observed by John to be actively 'improving' on the tracks of a long-gone APC with his own tractor.

Their gaze suddenly met. "He looked rather embarrassed," is all John will say.

But he did add, wryly: "We are told there is a community of German farmers who would as soon have damage claim money rather than a harvest.

"I am only interested in the political and psychological effects of damage and not concerned with the actual claims. That is a matter for the Claims Commission. I seem to have something of a cavalier image. I don't creep around the Germans begging — I go to them with lots of confidence."

British troops do occasionally cause irritations, mostly arising from over-zealous pursuit of duty with locals being taken into temporary, if temperamental, custody.

John says of this: "Of course, we all get a bit security conscious at times and trained soldiers, especially those who have served in Northern Ireland, are probably absolutely right to have their suspicions. Incidents like this are usually worked out satisfactorily. But we are not here to criticise, we are here to make things work."

The sixth successive SLO in Weser-side Hamelin, he says: "When I arrived here I was receiving ten to twelve complaints a week about the military. This year I've only had three. I have turned it from a problem town to one with an atmosphere of a happy relationship between the military and the local residents."

His claims appear to have substance, too, in the town which still jealously guards its seven centuries of Pied Piper tradition. (The present personification of the legend has held the job for 20 years).

It was a case of calling in 'Mr Fixit' when a motor vessel became wedged for seven hours on the edge of a weir, an event which attracted a sizeable bank-side following. Local sappers, summoned by John, came to the rescue in a 20-minute operation.

In the Jubilee Year of '77, he persuaded Hamelin's civic elders to grant the Freedom of the Town to the Corps of Royal Engineers. Such a ceremony is not a German tradition.

"I had to explain about Cromwell and our Civil War," John outlined. "I pointed out that this has become an honour and symbol

of friendship in England. There are a great number of German people who envy British tradition. The Freedom was granted. I arranged another on similar lines for the British Military Hospital at Rinteln — my second in ten months."

John's office is situated in Bindon Barracks, built in 1897, and current home of 28 Amphibious Engineer Regiment.

The office 'equipment' that he takes out into the field comprises an elderly black attaché case — 'acquired' from a former Civil Service employment — and a folding, two-piece battle board for exercise purposes. Sixty per cent of his negotiating is done in German.

"I'm nobody's Heine or Schiller but I know enough German to do my job," he cracks modestly, having at one time studied the language for six years.

Another part of his various duties involves the serving of legal documents on members of the British Forces such as court payments reminders, court orders, summonses, distress warrants and the like.

Of this he points out: "I am not a lawyer but I can very often help a fellow who has had a brush with the local law. I can tell him what to do."

Civically, Oberburgermeister Dr Walter Dieter Kock, in his modern Mayor's parlour, put his point of view. "Citizens and organisations in Hamelin are always ready to approach the SLO if they have questions or problems. Herr Augar is indispensable."

John, joined the TAVR on leaving the Army and retired as a lieutenant-colonel in 1977. His last TA appointment was leading the Movement Control Liaison Team with the German Army at German Territorial Command North which involved participation in exercises like WINTEX.

He has chosen to make some study of forestry and agriculture locally. "A little apparent expertise goes a long way in negotiating exercises and dealing with difficulties such as farmers and foresters. The ability to make simple differentiation between fields of young winter barley and wheat and pasture can be convincing, even more so, the ability to tell pine from larch from fir from spruce," he says.



Above: A knowledge of forestry is a great help. I love the job, I am totally dedicated and get enormous job satisfaction."

Even so, he does manage to get away from it all now and again — usually by game hunting and playing the organ.

He is a qualified Hunting Instructor and Examiner with the American Forces in Germany.

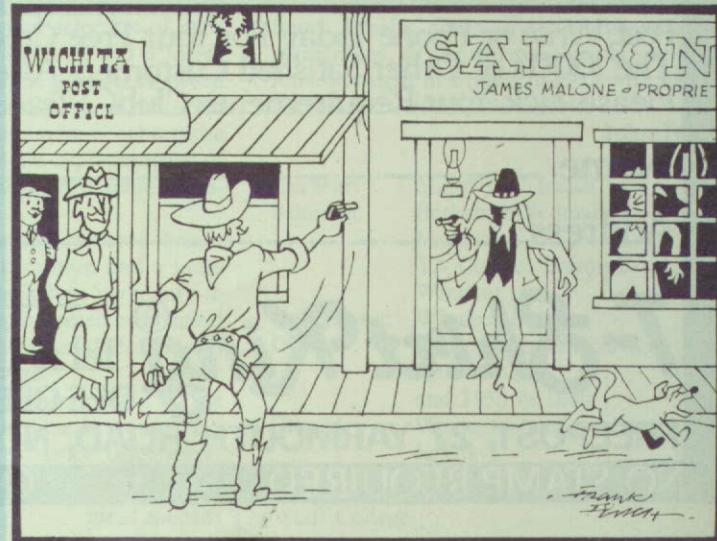
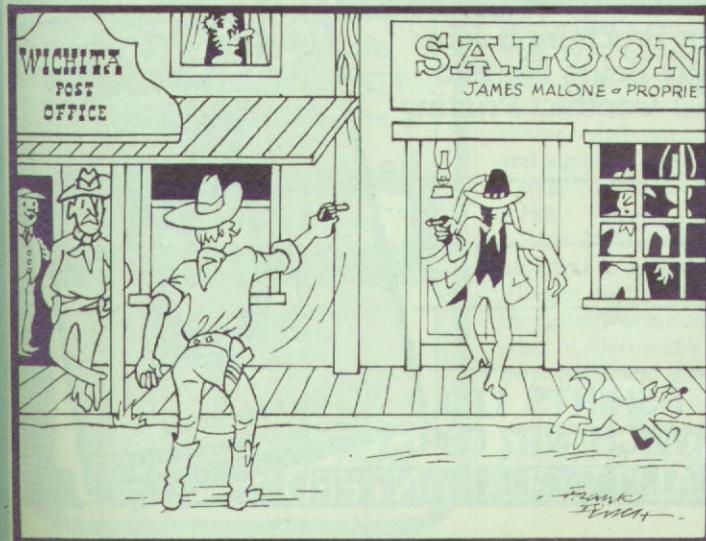
"German shooting is not a sport — it's a science," he explains. "It involves long courses which include the history of hunting, its laws, recognition and classification of game, animal diseases, dog training and bird-spotting."

The US Army in Europe (USAREUR) allows members of the American Association of Gun Clubs to attend residential courses and lectures at Berchtesgarten, the former 'Eagles Nest' of war-time fame.

But John aims to retire to a small Cambridgeshire village where he has a family home with a half-acre attached.

Like another well-known Hamelin figure, he does, it appears, want to leave on a musical note. "I have a vague wish to teach the organ in retirement," he grinned. ●

How observant are you?



These two pictures look alike but they differ in ten details. Look at them carefully. If you cannot spot the differences turn to page 51.

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MILITARY MUSEUMS

THE BERKSHIRE YEOMANRY



THIS SMALL MUSEUM has been set up in a room in the Berkshire Yeomanry headquarters on the edge of Windsor Great Park. Some of the exhibits go back to the 18th century, among them a commission dated 1798 signed by George III. Quaintly worded, it was granted to William Payne to serve without pay in a troop of cavalry for the protection of Maidenhead "in case of any emergency . . . but not to take rank in our army." A thick leather-bound notebook relating to the Hungerford Cavalry bearing the date 1790 and two ink-written muster rolls of 1831 and 1837 also attract attention.

Uniforms are varied, among them a Berkshire Yeomanry officer's frock coat (1880) and a colonel's full dress jacket, black trousers with red piping, silver epaulettes and boots (1911). Other items of dress worth noting are a walking out cape of 1880, a riding cloak (1900), a soldier's shell jacket, an officer's full dress tunic, a mess jacket and a pair of Wellington boots — all of 1853.

Headgear is fairly varied and includes an officer's pill-box hat and side cap, a khaki SD cap with badge as worn between 1908 and 1939, an officer's forage cap of 1936, a field officer's cap, a good selection of caps from 1918 to the present day and a handsome white-plumed black helmet. A sword belt with silver and red sling, a mid-19th century shabraque, an undress sabretache and a guidon crossbelt are representative of a small collection of sword and sabre accessories.

Two 1850 kettle drums coloured bright blue and in splendid condition and a brass trumpet used by the Berkshire Yeomanry in the Great War are complemented by a varied array of silver and a few examples of crested mess plates and glassware.

A useful record of the part played by the regiment in World War One is set out in a collection of magazines, price threepence,

Above: Berkshire & Westminster Dragoons collar badge.

each entitled *Berkshire and the War*. Other exhibits include Royal Artillery and Berkshire Yeomanry badges carved in wood and a selection of 1900-08 buttons as well as a tin of 'The Soldier's Friend' button polish of First World War vintage, a die seal of 1908 and a carrier pigeon message case.

Reminders of the fighting in Palestine are a tespic, or prayer beads, taken from a Turkish soldier's kit bag, a Turkish shell fuse and a propaganda leaflet dropped over Turkish lines extolling the good conditions enjoyed by prisoners in a camp near Cairo.

Moving on to World War Two, a well preserved silk escape map issued to British forces in Malaya, a Japanese sword and a Japanese flag taken from a building in Ipoh by the Berkshire Yeomanry in 1945 are typical of a group of exhibits from this period.

A pair of dress spurs, gauntlets, a full dress sword belt of the last century, brass spurs of the same period and a Berkshire and Westminster Dragoons stable belt are typical of another cluster of miscellaneous items. Finally, there are two rather strange mementoes in the form of a pair of fish knives bought in France in 1918 with handles fashioned from rifle bullets.

John Jesse

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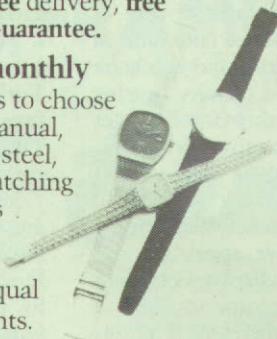
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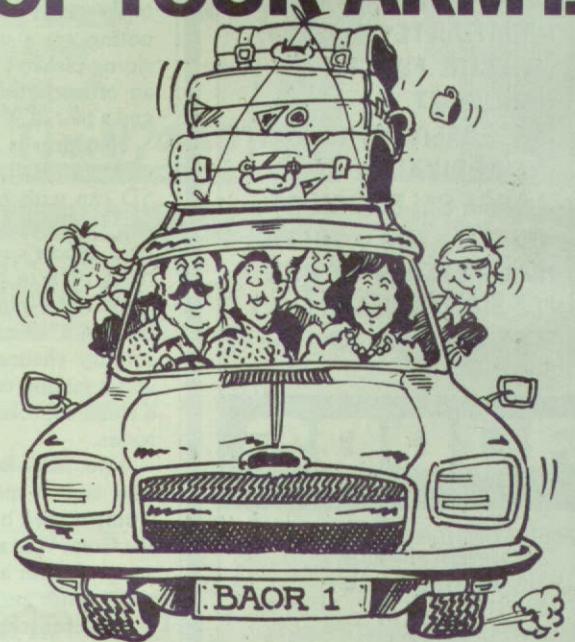
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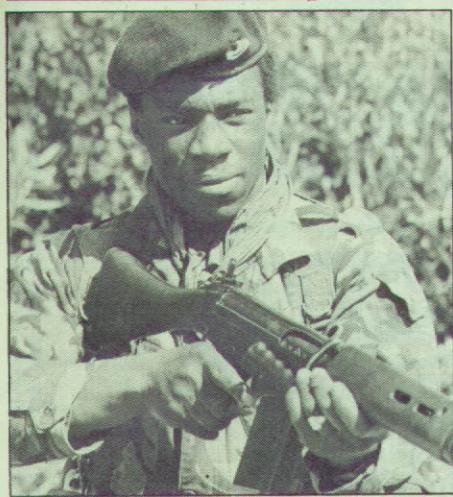


PHOTO: DAVE EVANS

THE ARMY'S BODY BEAUTIFUL

DRESSED IN HIS COMBAT CLOTHES

Ramsford Smith is just an ordinary looking bloke. He stands only 5ft 6ins in his Army socks weighs 11stone 5lbs and is a rifleman with the 3rd Battalion, The Light Infantry.

But in the evenings, when his day's soldiering in Cyprus is done, Ramsford heads for a local gymnasium in Cyprus where he carries out the strenuous training which has just won him the British national under-21 title in competitions organised by the International Body Builders' Union.

Ramsford, known as 'Randy' to his 3LI mates, comes from Wolverhampton and has been in the Army for two years. He began bodybuilding a few months before he joined up and in the last 18 months has notched up titles galore — West Midlands, Yorkshire, northern and national under-18 — before his latest triumph against 12 other beefcakes in the Floral Pavilion at New Brighton.

His battalion are pretty proud of his achievements — but soldiering always has to come first and Ramsford has had to pay his own fare back to Britain on occasions so that he can compete.

"I'm one of the lucky people in bodybuilding in that I don't have to drink extra milk or eat extra steak — which would be difficult in the Army," he says. "I just cram

in what food I can."

Five nights a week he cadges a lift down into Limassol where he gives himself an exacting workout of weightlifting and exercises. He could use the battalion's own gymnasium but doesn't.

"I'd rather be with other bodybuilders such as the local ones in Limassol. You lose your concentration in training when people keep walking in and out of the gym.

"I really train myself hard. I have to graft much more than those back in England in ordinary nine-to-five jobs."

Bodybuilding competitors always appear before the judges without the glistening sheen which is regarded as the hallmark of the sport. They then put on their posing trunks and after oiling up (Ramsford uses ordinary baby oil), pose for the audience.

As an amateur, Ramsford Smith admits that the rewards for his unusual hobby are confined to trophies and fame. Next year he has a number of options open to him — to defend his title, to move up to the senior or 'Mr' class or to take part in a new international under-21 competition.

Whatever he decides, those 'in the know' predict a great future in the bodybuilding world for the quietly spoken, reggae-loving rifleman with the pocket Atlas physique.





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TS8

On record

'Men of The Hills' (Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas; Bugles of 1st Bn 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkhas) (Conductor: Major H C R Bently; Bugle Major; Damarbahadur Gurung) It never ceases to amaze me, as a musician, how African, Indian, and other Eastern races manage to imitate, and often emulate, the Europeans at their own game. I wonder how we would cope with an Indian raga or a Nepalese folk song. Here these charming men place themselves, in the words of one of their songs, firmly in the temple of my heart — captivated, charmed, and a devotee for ever. The record is a marvel, representing as it does all that has been best (and there has been a tragic amount of worst) in the influences the colonial British have had on remote cultures. It is the record which has given me most pleasure in my exactly ten years of SOLDIER reviews. I had wondered how to celebrate my decade; to ask the Editor for a dinner, or perhaps a free supply of vitriol? No, I'll settle for the return of this disc after his staff have photographed the sleeve.

Damn me if the Little Men don't give six wonderful songs, nearly all composed by the brothers Rai who belong to the band, then give us all a salutary lesson in how to play European bugle marches — in tune, restrained, precise and, unkindest cut of all *Abide With Me* and *Last Post*

as if the Hindu gods had died on a cross in deepest Down Ampney. I always did think it a mistake to teach the Aussies cricket.

The bugle marches are *Men of the Hills* (Bently), *Little Bugler* (Duthoit), *Sambre et Meuse*, *Secunderabad* (McKenna), *Silver Bugles* (Neville), plus *Moorhouse's High on a Hill* and *Grundman's March Winds*. The songs with guitar, flute, tabala, madala, tom tom and tambourine accompaniment bear intriguing titles like *Shirt on my chest and sickle at my waist*, *Total Ruin* (a cautionary tale about drink and gambling), *In the temple of my heart*, and *Listen my sweetheart*.

From Major Bently, c/o 1/2 Gurkha Rifles, Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Church Crookham Hants £3.99

year for re-hashes of the same old war horses played at varying speeds — Gunners slow, Guards medium, Light Division fast.

Major Patch, in spite of the limitations, has put together a very fine selection of music beautifully played and recorded, which can be accepted as a



The MASSED BANDS of the ROYAL REGIMENT OF ARTILLERY

normal programme if you except the *1812 Overture* and of course *Sunset*, more or less obligatory on these occasions. *Cockney Cocktail* is the sort of medley that goes down well with the tourist element, and another medley *Parade of the Nations* is obviously aimed in the same direction. The theme from *Guns of Navarone*, *Trumpet Prelude*, Rimsky Korsakov's fine *Procession of the Nobles*, Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*, Henry Mancini's *Swing March* and Verdi's *Slaves Chorus* stand cheek by jowl with no apparent unease, while a 'Selection of Regimental Marches, Canters and Trots' serves as incidental music for the King's Troop display.

Not to be passed over as just another tattoo disc. No effects, no guns, no crowd noises, merely a good programme well played.

From RA Band, Woolwich, SE18, £3.99 plus p&p.

'On the March' (Band of the Black Watch Royal Highland Regiment) (Conductor: Bandmaster N M Rogerson) (DR 22)

The sleeve notes promise that this is the first disc in an anthology of some of the world's finest marches. And about time too. Now that a few small and ambitious companies are making headway they should realize that the 'anthology' is what it's all about, for collectors will always collect, and if a few favourites are included in each volume then the casual buyer is attracted. And having found, say, volume six in a shop how much more likely that the buyer will want the other five and any that follow.

Volume one has just about the right balance as starters, but may we hope that by volume fourteen we shall get the full flood of great European marches almost unknown to the general public here. Haydn and Beethoven both wrote fine examples; then there are trumpet marches, bugle marches, troops, funeral marches, drum and fife marches — for all of which we have just the bands to give them correct and characteristic performance. It's the conductors I'm worried about. A march needs as much characterisation as does a Mozart symphony, and Mr Rogerson and his band do a fine job of it here. Even so a march like *National Emblem* needs more characterisation still, with its first section (pomp and circumstance), second edition (exaggerated dynamics and knowing wink), and the glorious trio tune all outrageous oompah.

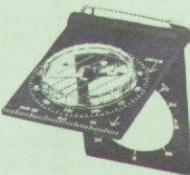
Scottish Emblem (Ellis); *Our Director* (Bigelow); *My Regiment* (Blankenburg); *HM Jollies*; *Great Little Army* (Alford); *Steadfast and True* (Teike); *Imperial Echoes* (Safroni); *National Emblem* (Bagley); *Gardes du Corps* (Hall); *Bayerischer Defiliermarsch* (Scherzer); *The Contemptibles* (Stanley); *Sarafand* (Willcocks); *Stars and Stripes for Ever* (Sousa).

From Black Watch, BFPO 106. £3.99 plus p&p.

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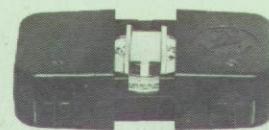
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BOOKS

Call-up story

'Called Up — A National Service Scrapbook' (George Forty)
Fall in the middle-aged, for a touch of nostalgia.

Colonel Forty has put together a picture book of life in the Army between 1948 and 1963 full of memories for those who served in those days, whether as conscripts or regulars. Here are call-up day and short-back-and-sides, battledress, bull, bed-spaces, passing-out parades, trade training, exercises, NAAFI, Sandes Homes, sport, troopships and overseas postings — Malaya, Cyprus, Aden, Korea, Germany among others — and, of course, demob. About the only thing missing that springs to mind is the week-end roadside line-up of young National Servicemen trying to hitch a lift home to Mum.

They are good pictures, many from the files of SOLDIER, and they recall a period almost unparalleled in the Army's history, when there was conscription in peace-time (the only other time was the few months before World War Two when the very first men to be called up in peace-time were known as Militiamen).

National Service was fraught with difficulties, but it can now be looked back upon with pride, both by the Army and by the young men who served before returning to civilian life. Not all were lucky enough to do that. In the trouble-spots of the period, Colonel Forty recalls, 395 were killed in action — "too young to vote but old enough to kill and be killed".

Ian Allan, Shepperton, TW17 8AS, £8.95 RLE

In the war zone

'The Thirty Years War' (Herbert Langer)

The British part in the Thirty Years War, which brought devastation to Germany between 1618 and 1648, was small. For all that, one aspect of it features in the first sentence of Professor Langer's introduction: It was said that English troops, appearing in Europe in 1619-20, brought with them the custom of smoking American tobacco, which spread irresistibly throughout war-torn Central Europe.

His is rather that kind of book, not a history of campaigns but a survey of life in the war zone along with an account of progress in science, the arts and politics. The author, Czech-born and now a professor in an East German university, takes a swipe or two at "bourgeois historians" for their view of the "national poverty" of Germany (which he does not define) and for calling the Thirty Years a religious war. One contradiction of the latter was the 20-year alliance between Catholic France and the Protestant Netherlands and Sweden. He is all for the peasants in their ordeals, and all against the soldier whom he

accuses of more assaults on the peasants than on the enemy.

One remarkable figure to emerge from the war was Wallenstein, to whose rise and fall the author rightly gives considerable attention. He raised and financed regiments, got his emperor into his debt, became commander-in-chief of all the troops of the Holy Roman Empire, and collected vast estates along with titles and rights of taxation and coin minting. Besides being such a man of business, he was a brilliant commander, though he was finally beaten at Lutzen by another genius, King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden.

This book is noteworthy for its illustrations, well selected, excellently reproduced and of great interest.

Blandford, Robert Rogers House, New Orchard, Poole, BH15 1LU, £19.95 RLE

Good calibre

'Military Small Arms Ammunition of the World, 1945-1980' (P Labbett)

At last a book dealing with the many different types and calibres of small arms ammunition. Books on rifles, pistols, submachine-guns and machine-guns usually include references to the relevant ammunition, but this is claimed to be the first volume dealing exclusively with small arms ammunition, its origin and development. There is a country-by-country register of producers and users, and details of packaging and code marks. This volume, which is right up to date, is well illustrated and should be a useful reference book for all firearms enthusiasts.

Arms & Armour Press, 2-6 Hampstead High Street, London NW3 1QQ, £8.95 GRH

New perspective

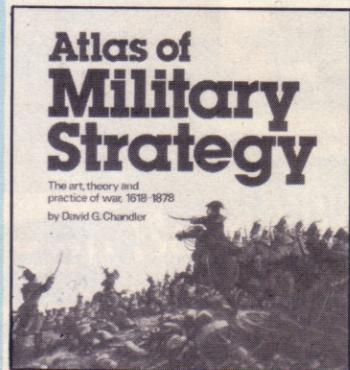
'Atlas of Military Strategy 1618-1878' (David Chandler)

David Chandler is no newcomer to the study of nineteenth century military history, and in this his latest work he attempts to put "the era of 'horse and musket' warfare into a new perspective". This is something of a mammoth task, since the period 1618-1878 includes some of the most famous conflicts in world history, the Napoleonic Wars and American Civil War amongst them, and saw the 'art' of war develop from the days of horse and pike to the threshold of modern battle. The pendulum swung full circle, from the near-total wars of religion during the seventeenth century, to the more limited conflicts of the eighteenth century, and back again to the multi-national slogging matches in the aftermath of the French Revolution. Empires rose and fell. The power of Islamic Turkey was checked and then declined, while Russia stretched into Europe, and Britain and France into the Third World. One of today's greatest powers, America, was born after a bloody struggle for independence and turned in on itself before attaining maturity.

To cover such a vast panorama, Mr Chandler has adopted an atlas approach, considering each area chronologically. The causes and course of each campaign are described

in concise but telling resumés, and the principal campaigns and major battles are shown in map form. There are over two hundred maps in all and, considering the complexity of some of the actions they represent, they are commendably clear and easy to follow. As the great commanders of the period appear on the scene — Marlborough, Frederick the Great, Napoleon, Wellington, Lee Grant — so their military capabilities and contributions are assessed. Innovations in tactics, organisation or technical improvements in weaponry are also considered diagrammatically, so that, for example, the advantages of the Gribeauval Artillery System are clearly set out before we start into the Napoleonic Wars. In addition to the maps, there are some attractive black-and-white illustrations which further serve to enhance the text.

Arms and Armour Press, Lionel Leventhal Limited, 2-6 Hampstead High Street, London NW3 1QQ, £16.50 IJK



19-day drama

'On the Banks of the Suez' (Avraham (Bren) Adan)

A highly interesting account of the Yom Kippur War, written by one of the Israeli generals commanding an armoured division on the Southern Front. His division helped to hold the Egyptian enemy when Israel was taken by surprise, then fought towards the canal and subsequently on both banks from north to south until an armistice was imposed. By then the 3rd Egyptian Army was encircled. The 19 days of fighting, against an enemy three times as strong, is related with dramatic effect, with full understanding of military strategy and tactics, and with day to day knowledge of the orders issued, the movement of troops, their achievements and frustrations, their courage and morale.

There were disagreements among generals, delay in mobilisation, congestion on the lines of advance, a vast horde to overcome and more casualties and reverses than in previous conflicts. The close contact that 'Bren' Adan had with his troops and the intimacies so natural in a small force, indeed in a small nation of close-knit people, enabled the author to produce a volume that not only closely follows the war through, but also produces pen pictures of individuals of all ranks and reminiscences of earlier conflicts.

General Adan also illustrates how modern surface-to-air missiles inhibited the air force and how the increasingly effective armoury of anti-tank weapons is capable of curtailing the mobility of armour. He still

has great faith in the tank but believes its future success will depend upon reduction in weight and size and even in the possibility of moving it tactically by helicopter.

Arms & Armour Press, 2-6 Hampstead High Street, London NW3 1QQ, £9.95 GRH

Vast research

'The Almanac of World Military Power' (Colonel T N Dupuy)

This is the fourth edition of Colonel Dupuy's *Almanac of World Military Power*, and it remains the most comprehensive analysis of the military capabilities of every significant nation in the world today available to the general reader. Colonel Dupuy takes us through the world region by region, giving us break-downs of the military geography, strategic significance and regional alliances of each area; these are then further broken down into highly detailed surveys of the military potential of individual countries.

The extent of the author's research is phenomenal — thirty-five new countries have been added to the list since the last edition alone, and the essays on many of the older nations, including the People's Republic of China, have been completely rewritten so as to provide the most up to date analysis. Each country is mapped, and its national statistics offered — everything from total population to the personnel, organisation, major equipment and reserves of the armed forces, from fuel production and power output to defense structure and politico-military policy.

Some of the entries are quaint. The King of Swaziland, for example, has 4000 traditionally armed Swazi Warriors at his disposal, while the Republic of the Gambia has no proper army at all. Others are simply terrifying; the USSR has approximately 1600 ICBMs, ranging in yields up to 25 megatons. Colonel Dupuy regards it as following "a generally expansionist policy".

A detailed glossary expands on the weaponry descriptions in the text, and there are listings of the wars, revolutions and coups in each area up to and including the invasion of Afghanistan.

An extraordinarily comprehensive work, and one which no student of the balance of power can do without. Jane's Publishing Co, Macdonald and Jane's Publishing Group Ltd, Paulton House, 8 Shepherdess Walk, London N1 7LW, £25.00 IJK

Tasty drop

'A Drop Too Many' (Major General John Frost)

A fine book. Written by the one man whose testimony on the airborne attack at Arnhem has long been awaited. John Frost commanded the 2nd Battalion Parachute Regiment whose job was to take the bridge over the Rhine and hold it for 24 hours until the arrival of XXX British Corps. They never arrived and the Parachutists, on light scales of ammunition, equipment and rations, held on for three days before being overwhelmed.

There has been much criticism of Montgomery's decision to include Arnhem bridge in his plan and it has been dramatised as 'A Bridge Too Far'. The author has his own criticisms of the arrangements but in no way criticises Monty for his ambitious plan. The title of this book *A Drop Too Many* refers to the men who were with him surrounded at the bridge — for them it ended in death or imprisonment and therefore was that one drop too many.

Wisely the author has not confined the book to Arnhem (just to get at the critics) but has outlined his own career from the time of his pre-war attachment to the Iraq Levies. He was into parachuting almost from the start and the evolution of the 1st Parachute Brigade — especially his 2nd Battalion — reflects the aspirations and the frustrations of this new type of soldiering. The first parachute raid at Bruneval is given in detail; North Africa, where the 2nd Battalion fought mostly as infantry, shows their toughness, ability and adaptability; Sicily reflects their great usefulness and also their vulnerability when transported by pilots inexperienced in the airborne infantry role. There were lessons to be learned all the way. And at Arnhem, while the Red Berets were expert, those who sent them were still learning.

Cassell Ltd, 35 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4SG, £8.95

GRH

Last chapter

'The Devonshire Regiment' (Lieut Col. J K Windeatt, OBE)

Here ends the history of the Devonshire Regiment; this being a record of its activities in peace and 'brush fire' operations from 1945 to 1958 when it amalgamated with the Dorsets to become the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment. During these last 13 years, after the end of World War Two, the 1st Battalion took part in active operations against the communist terrorists in Malaya from 1948 to 1950 and against the Mau Mau in Kenya from 1953 to 1955. It was also in North Africa from 1952 to 1953 in readiness to safeguard British lives and property in Egypt when General Neguib deposed King Farouk and was later ousted by Colonel Nasser. Based on Derna, the battalion several times sailed to Tobruk to begin the march into Egypt but was eventually withdrawn without action being required.

Much of the volume is necessarily of special interest to those who served in the regiment but there are still lessons to be learned by serving soldiers in the first hand accounts of engagements and operations that occupied the Devons during those 13 years.

RHQ, Devonshire and Dorset Regiment, Wyvern Barracks, Exeter, £4.50 plus 50p postage.

GRH

Fine innings

'Cricketer Militant' (Gerald Howat) Soldier, cricketer and cleric. A biography — but mainly this book is about the cricketer. Jack Parsons was selected to play for Warwickshire

County 1st Eleven in 1910 when, as a 20-year-old, he had scored 200 for the 2nd Eleven against Worcestershire 2nds. In World War One he was to serve in the ranks with the Warwickshire Yeomanry in Gallipoli and then to be commissioned into the Worcestershire Yeomanry. With them he fought in Palestine where he won the Military Cross in a daring cavalry charge from which he was one of the only two survivors of his squadron.

Later he transferred to the Indian Army and in 1923 sailed for England and became a professional cricketer for Warwickshire. He several times just missed being picked for England and was certainly among the top players of his day. In 25 years in first class cricket his batting average was 35.89 and he scored 17,874 runs. His bowling average was 29.39, his best year showing 21 wickets for 241 runs.

He was ordained in 1929 but continued to play and when war came again in 1939 he became a chaplain in the Army. As Vicar of Liskeard, Cornwall in 1946 he had his sword, together with one captured from a Turk in the charge in Palestine, converted into a ploughshare. He ploughed with it and sowed corn. From the resulting crop, bread was baked which he uses in a communion service. Jack Parsons never played for England but at 90 he has had a long innings as a soldier, cricketer and cleric.

North Moreton Press, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 9BA, £5.00 plus 50p postage

GRH

Militant mice

'The Charge of the Mouse Brigade' (Bernard Stone and Tony Ross)

This is a little piece of whimsy in which a parody of Tennyson is set in a war between cats and mice. The publicity claims it is a book for children as well as adults, especially those interested in military history and models, and the miniature paintings show authentic reproductions of the army uniforms of the (Crimean) day. The pictures are very nice, but whether uniform buffs will be happy with the miniaturisation, or children appreciate the authenticity, is doubtful. As for the text, it will need a lot of explanation to children. Expensive.

Turret Books, 43 Floral St, Covent Garden, London WC2E 9DW, £2.25 or £15.00 in signed, limited edition with sheet music for the poem.

RLE

Grim chronicle

'The Soviet War Machine' (Editor: Ray Bonds)

The tremendous military build-up over the past decade by the Soviet Union has radically transformed what was once a continental force into a military machine of global capabilities which can effectively support the foreign policy of the Kremlin from the Caribbean to Afghanistan.

Coming at a time of increasing tension between East and West this detailed and exhaustive work examines and evaluates the strength of the Red Army, Navy and Air Force. Every significant weapon, missile, combat aircraft, tank and

warship down to firearms, grenades and logistic services is carefully analysed and assessed by experts. Action photographs, many in full colour, information charts and tables, illustrations of weapons and glimpses of manoeuvres are supported by an informative text to make this book at once a most useful reference and an awesome chronicle of military might. In short, it is as it describes itself — an illustrated encyclopaedia of Soviet strategy, tactics and weapons.

A chapter on the rise of Soviet Communism leads to an historic section concentrating on the expansion of the Red Army. This is followed by



surveys of all three services with weapons, warships and aircraft pictured and described to give a clear picture of Soviet military strength. Of particular interest is a fairly lengthy account of modern Soviet ground forces followed by a supporting chapter on army weaponry.

Strategic rockets and missiles are also reviewed while a short but nonetheless comprehensive section deals with uniforms and badges of rank. The forces of the Warsaw Pact round off a work notable for its detailed observation and overall clarity.

Salamander Books Ltd, 27 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3AF, £7.95.

JFP

Cook's tour

'Chow — A Cook's Tour of Military Food' (Paul Dickson)

The Soya Link, a sausage said to be stuffed with pork as well as the unlovely bean, was considered by British soldiers on whom it was inflicted in World War Two to be America's greatest contribution to the enemy war effort. Now here is a book about American service food with a whole chapter devoted to 'World War II — The Wealth of Rations' and not a mention of the Soya Link. Can it be that it is now classified? To hide America's shame, perhaps? Or to conceal development by the CIA for use in World War Three?

A fairly honourable mention in the World War Two chapter goes to Spam which, like bully beef, offended not so much by quality as by quantity. General Eisenhower wrote to Spam's makers after the war, "I believe I can still officially forgive you your only sin — sending us too much of it".

There are worse horrors than Spam in this book: Zapped Ham — irradiated, to make it keep, and as

served to Apollo space-craft crews; non-melting butter; tips for castaways — "two groups of jungle insects form a nourishing food source, termites and beetle grubs" and "avoid polar bear livers, they are poisonous"; and the appalling news that 'serious' military research-and-development money is being spent on mobile burger stands and fast food lines.

Less gruesome are the lesson from a Sundae School, hints (from 1900) on how to buy a good cigar, and the recipe for the unappetisingly named slumgullion which turns out to be a very ordinary meat and vegetable stew. On the whole, this book is more entertaining than mouth-watering.

When nearly 4000 American servicemen took part in a food preference survey of 378 items in 1973 and 1974, top of the favourites were milk, grilled steak and eggs to order. Bottom were fried parsnips, skimmed milk and buttermilk. The list contained three non-existent dishes, for control purposes — "Funistrada," "Buttered Ermal" and "Braised Trake" — and all three were in the running, albeit in the last 50. One might wonder where Shadow Soup, that economical dish from the American Civil War, might have finished had it been entered. The recipe goes: "Get a large kettle of water boiling, hang a chicken so that its shadow falls on the water, boil the shadow for 30 minutes, add salt and pepper and serve."

Plume Books, New American Library, 1301 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY, 10019, \$6.95

RLE

Legendary feats

'Leopard — The Story of my Horse' (Colonel Sir Michael Ansell)

Once started it is almost impossible to put down this delightful story of Colonel Sir Michael Ansell's famous horse, Leopard. It tells how this great horse, sired by a thoroughbred, was bought, skinny and underfed, from a tinker on the road near York and was trained by the author to become a show jumper of renown, a steeplechase winner, a hunter and a horse of literally quite exceptional qualities.

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Not only is this the story of Leopard, it is also the story of his owner, Mike Ansell, who always rode him and who was blinded in World War Two yet has done so much for Show Jumping as we know it today. It tells of the wonderful affinity between horse, rider and groom and, as Prince Charles writes in his foreword: "Not only is this a touching story of the relationship that can grow between a man and his horse, but it is also a fascinating and nostalgic insight into the life of a cavalry regiment between the two World Wars."

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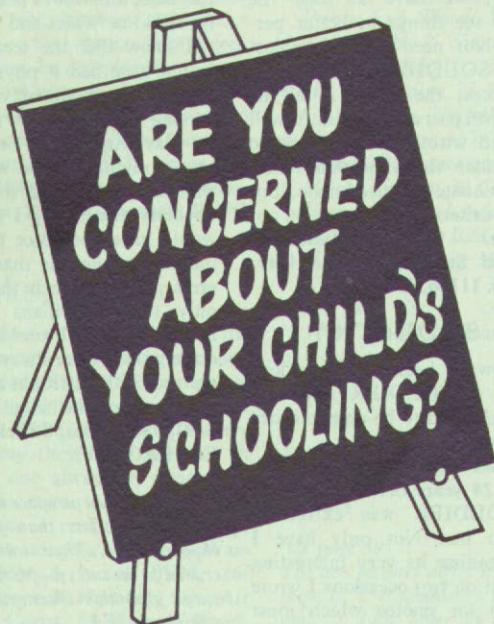
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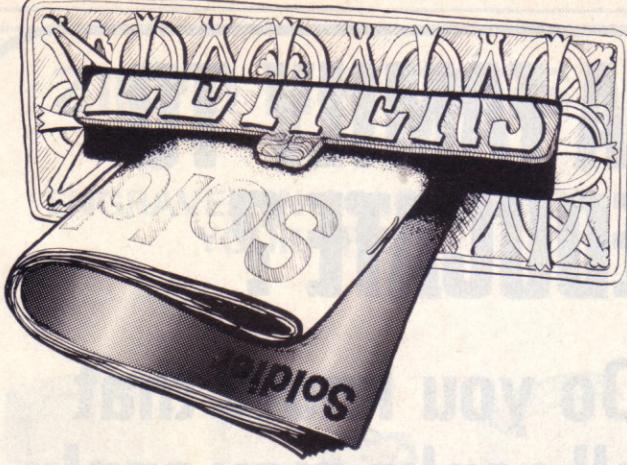
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Naming medals

I wonder what the views of SOLDIER readers are on the subject of medals, especially unnamed campaign medals of the 1939-45 war.

Unless a Serviceman or woman was awarded a Gallantry or Long Service medal there is no possibility of discovering anything about an individual or the arm in which they served. For example, I have a group of medals (purchased from a second-hand shop) comprising 39-45 Star, Africa Star with 8th Army bar, Italy Star, War and Defence medal plus what I am told is an unofficial medal for Dunkirk. They are all apparently genuine but bear no name. To me this is a sorry state of affairs because it is obvious the owner of these medals was an old soldier, forgotten — possibly now dead — with once treasured medals sold off through lack of interest. Now, had these been named with regiment or arm or service upon the campaign stars, they would have found an honoured place in a museum or private collection, to remind others that 'these medals belonged to a living soul.'

I would encourage any ex-Serviceman who is the holder of unnamed medals to set the record straight right away by having them named with his regiment, ship, squadron or whatever.

I hope this letter will encourage others to air their views on what I

consider a very important matter that cannot wait until the last war generation have passed on and all trace of their deeds passed with them. — Eric Williams, Tyn Cwm, Lords Lane, Bradwell, Gt Yarmouth, Norfolk, NR31 8PA.

Generation gap

Having enlisted in 1943, served 31 years and purchased (operative word) SOLDIER since its inception, I am not only one of those who should read the magazine more slowly — Mr Fletcher's letter, October — but, must push the page further away in order to do so. It follows therefore, that with regard to its contents, it is the articles that deal with my period of service that interest me most and the remainder, to the extent that they reflect subsequent changes and events.

This raises that evergreen, the disparity of interests between generations. Tradition is not in general deemed as anachronistic as many suppose; although its vitality can be blunted by mindless and repetitive application. I recall that as a young recruit, however, I failed to appreciate the old soldiers' tales of grim experience that occurred before I was born. Nor was I inspired by their persistent insistence that, by comparison, my generation had it cushy. We may have had it differently and been 'poor excuses for soldiers' but, as one soon discovered, a bullet is a bullet is a bullet and unpleasant experience is not improved by better conditions; indeed, the accompanying shock is probably worsened for it. Now things have so progressed and

the nature of our times such, that today's idiot, of which — to quote a well-known RSM — some village is being deprived, is with remarkable frequency tomorrow's hero.

For those of us who are now in the back seat, the situation is not without advantage; we have at least the chance to see things in better perspective. Nor need contact be lost for, as SOLDIER successfully demonstrates, the Army in all its aspects, both past and present, is well represented within its pages. Some may consider the allocation either disproportionate or inadequate, but surely the criterion is progression not preference? — Gerald E Mansfield, 34-19 33rd St, Long Island City, New York 11106, USA.

Loyal supporter

I have always been a tremendous supporter of SOLDIER Magazine and am delighted to be able to order it on a personal basis.

Whilst serving in the Army, which I did for 24 years before leaving in 1974, SOLDIER was extremely helpful to me. Not only have I enjoyed reading its very interesting articles but on two occasions I wrote and asked for photos which must have taken quite a bit of research. Each time you provided me with an excellent selection.

I just felt I wanted to mention this. SOLDIER is for the soldier and I know does many other helpful services, apart from publishing a magazine. — Peter Bartlett, 1718 Needlewood Lane, Orlando, Flo 32808, USA.

Thanks for the testimonial, Mr Bartlett. We are always pleased to help when we can. — Ed.

What about us?

After reading the November issue's reports on both the UK and BAOR phases of 'Crusader 80' I found it annoying that no mention was made of the part the supporting services played in the exercise.

There was lots of mention of infantry running about moors, and tanks thundering across plains, but what about the men who make that possible — the RAOC who supplied the rations, POL and ammunition, the RCT who transported it and the REME who kept the vehicles going?

Our lads were on their feet virtually 20 to 21 hours a day and with the rest of 8 Field Force Maintenance we

travelled nearly the length of England from Otterburn to Tidworth, with locations at Norfolk and Shepton Mallet on the way. At one stage, out of a unit strength of 67 men, we had 22 men on location to keep the supplies going as the rest of the unit had been sent out to perform tasks as far afield as Wales and Devon.

I know that the teeth arm units would have had it physically harder and that both yourselves and other serving soldiers know the part that we play. And some, on reading the above, might say: 'So what, does he think that they had it harder than anybody else?' No, I don't, but it would have been nice to have some mention of the role that the support arms played towards the exercise, if only to let civilians reading the magazine know. I would like to say in closing that I have always appreciated the way SOLDIER has always served in supporting the image of the Army. — Cpl J E Lunn, 8 Field Force Ord Coy RAOC (V).

Sorry if pressure on space meant that our coverage did less than justice to the support units. Their role was indeed crucial to the success of Crusader 80 and we're glad this letter puts the record straight. — Ed.

Cuckoo spotting

As Major General Hick's ADC it is with a certain amount of amusement that I have watched and read the correspondence concerning his dress in your July, October and December issues.

I would like to suggest that rather as *The Times* appears to be the forum for contenders claiming to have heard the first cuckoo, perhaps your magazine should act similarly for those who claim to have spotted the first incorrectly dressed General of the year! — Capt A G W Sinclair, Coldm Gds, ADC to GOC, HQ North West District, Fulwood Bks, Fulwood, Preston, Lancs.

Friendship group

Between October 1944 and February 1945, during the Allied armies' push toward the Rhine, very bitter fighting occurred in the Linnich/Geilenkirchen area of Western Germany roughly bounded by the rivers Rur, Wurm and Inde.

On the German side, the main units involved were the 9th and 10th Panzer Divisions. The Allied troops were mainly Americans from the 84th Armoured Division, (Railsplitters), but some British units were also involved. These are believed to have come from the Dorsetshire and Worcestershire Regiments and from the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.

A number of German veterans have formed a 'Friendship Group' with the aim of fostering contact between the German and Allied troops who took part in the fighting. Contact has already been established with the American veterans and their representatives have attended the last two annual reunions of the group. So far, no contact has been made with the British elements.

At last year's reunion, held in October, a memorial dedicated to the dead of both German and Allied

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armies was unveiled. The memorial consists of a ten-ton block of stone from the nearby Eifel mountains, on which are fixed copper plaques bearing the insignia of the various German and American units. Still missing are those of the British. It is hoped that some of the men who formed those units may read this letter and contact the group so that the 'circle of reconciliation' can be completed.

Interested persons should write to Herr Hans Baltus, 47 Mittelstr., 5133 Gangelt-Langbroich, West Germany or telephone 02454-5072 (from UK 01-049-2454-5072). — **WOJJ Quinn, Sgts Mess, RAF Wildenrath, BFPO 42.**

Thanks, 2LI

On behalf of all the members of the Air Training Corps, who attended Summer camps at RAF Gibraltar last year, I should like to thank all the members of the 2nd Light Infantry for the way they made our stay in Gibraltar one always to remember. The enthusiasm in the way they worked was a credit to the Army. Thank you lads, once again. — **Warrant Officer A Nixon BEM, 16f (Wood Green & Hornsey) Sqn, Air Training Corps, 58 Walpole Road, Downhills, London, N17 6BL.**

Competition

Our Competition 267 'The Squatters' pulled in a bumper entry although quite a few people got it wrong.

Correct answers were: A/15, B/9, C/8, D/2, E/6, F/5, G/1, H/13, J/10, K/11, L/4 (The Hooks), M/14, N/3, O/12, P/7.

Prizewinners:

- 1 **Mrs. O. Arnold, 41 Venning Road, Arborfield, Reading, Berks.**
- 2 **Mr. M. Edmerson, 27 High St., Princes End, Tipton, W. Midlands.**
- 3 **WOI (AS) K. Smith, 19 Fd Regt RA, LAD REME, BFPO 20.**
- 4 **Mr. N. Medler, 27 Stanley Road, Gt Yarmouth, Norfolk.**
- 5 **Mr. A. Gahan, 157 Crescent Road, Crumpsall, Manchester.**
- 6 **Mr. D. Galvin, 30 Clivedon Road, Highams Park, London, E4 9RN.**
- 7 **Sgt. A. Ellis, RAOC, AE Sec, MODUK (Army), Main Building, Whitehall.**
- 8 **Mr. B. Corrott, c/o Delmaines, 37-39 Blockball Road, Folkestone, Kent.**

How observant are you?

(see page 39)

The two pictures differ in the following respects: 1 Postmaster's waistcoat buttons. 2 Last letter of OFFICE. 3 Moustache of man on post office veranda. 4 Right end of post office window sill. 5 Stripes on holster of nearest gunman. 6 Wick of lamp in saloon doorway. 7 Mouth of man in saloon window. 8 Belt studs of nearest gunman. 9 Right boot of gunman leaving saloon. 10 Tuft of grass in gutter outside post office.

Collectors' corner

Collectors' Corner is a free service to readers and entries should be as brief as possible. Publication cannot be guaranteed and will depend on space available. **SOLDIER** cannot accept any responsibility for the quality or availability of goods offered for sale or exchange. Any transaction arising from this column is a matter for the parties concerned.

W Nicholls, 27 Lea House, 69 Woodview Drive, Birmingham, B15 2HE. Wants officers' mess jacket, Indian Army Medical Service vgc, complete buttons, lapel badges, major's crowns. Exchange for Indian Army badges pre-war.

Mr A J Billingsley, 2 Locombe Place, Wotton-Under Edge, Glos. IMMS member requires deleted LP records, including: 'Bandstand Spectacular' — Grenadier Guards Band, 'The Gay and Gallant' — Gordon Highlanders Band, plus any by Royal Warwickshire Fusiliers. Would like to hear from fellow enthusiasts interested in exchanging or buying other military band LPs.

Mr A C Tebbutt, 33 Creffield Road, Ealing, London. Has volunteer cap badges, 1st VB Sussex, 2nd VB Wiltshire; 3rd VB Bedfordshire. Wants to swap the three for any two of the following: 1st East Surrey, 1st Essex, 1st Wiltshire, 1st Norfolk, 1st and 2nd Loyal North Lancs. Will purchase, but has no VBs for sale. Also has cavalry

cap badges, QVC and KC only, if interested.

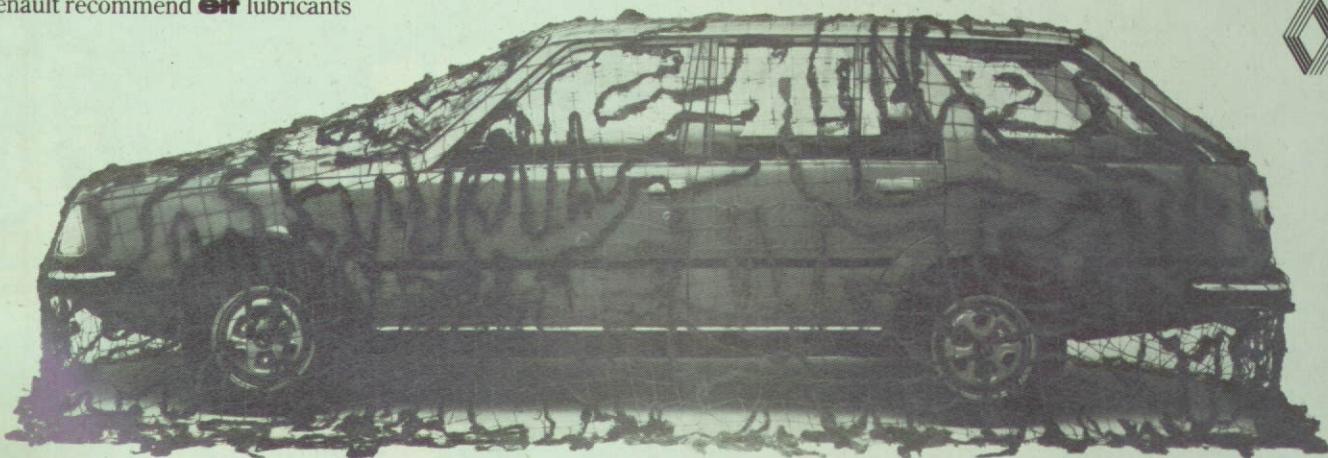
Mr J A Scott, 5 Cliffe Crescent, Riddlesden, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD20 5LB. Wants to buy or exchange following back nos of **SOLDIER**. Complete volumes of years 1945-1961. 1962 Mar Apr May Jul; all 1964-65; 1966 Feb; 1971 Jan Feb Aug, 1972 Jun Sep Oct; 1973 Jan Feb Apr May Jun Aug Nov Dec; 1974 Jun Aug Sep Oct Nov. Also wants US medals and US Forces magazines to buy or exchange. All letters answered.

Capt Anthony Runza, PO Box 140, New Milford, NJ 07646, USA. Seeks size 38W No 1 Dress blue pants willing to sell or trade. Contact by phone or send postcard with phone no. Will reimburse. Also needs late 40s, WWII, and SOs uniforms and equipment (for RE enactment group); Black Watch officer's kilt in 38/40", hose, OSD tunic, stable belts for Watch also EM kilts in good order; Glengennys, bonnets and tam o'shanters. Will trade or pay well for the right item. Tel: 201 282 2533.

Davreux — Ch Bruxelles 78-7500 Tournei, Belgium. Wants to purchase or exchange postcards and photos with military uniforms.

R W Basurto, 217 Somerset Place, Lompoc, California 93436, USA. Wants worldwide military insignia and prison staff insignia.

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Story: John Walton



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It is also the home of Europe's last private army — The Atholl Highlanders — bodyguard to the Duke of Atholl, whose estate sprawls over 148,000 acres around Blair Castle, the family seat for more than 700 years.

The Atholl Highlanders (it was spelt Athole in those days) were first raised in 1839 by Lord Glenlyon, later to become the sixth Duke. Consisting at that time of four officers, a sergeant-major, two sergeants, four corporals, four pipers, 56 privates and two

Top: Atholl Highlanders parade at Blair Castle.

Left: Duke of Atholl inspects his own regiment.

orderlies, they first accompanied him as his bodyguard to the Eglinton Tournament in that year.

Their uniform borrowed much from Atholl military tradition and has changed little since then. It comprises a blue jacket, kilt and plaid of Atholl tartan, red and white hose, white goatskin sporrans, brogues and Glengarry bonnets.

In 1842 Queen Victoria and Prince Albert visited nearby Dunkeld and in honour of the visit the strength of the Highlanders was increased to ten officers, five sergeants, four pipers and 140 rank and file. And the following year the numbers went up again.

In September 1845, exactly a century after the Jacobite rebellion in which the Atholl forces had been on the losing side, they received Colours from Queen Victoria — a unique gesture to a private army.

During the Crimean War the Duke offered the services of the Atholl Highlanders to Lord Palmerston for home duty — but the offer was not taken up. Since that time there has never been any suggestion that they should be called up as a unit for war, but many also serve with the Territorial Army.

By the time of the sixth Duke's death in 1864 three companies were armed with Enfield rifles and the fourth with 'Brown Bess' muskets. Two years later more Enfields were bought to make all four companies alike. In 1903 these were replaced by 200 Lee-Metfords, which are still used and are kept in the Castle armoury.

Over the years the Atholl Highlanders provided Guards of Honour for many distinguished visitors to Blair Castle including Emperor Hirohito of Japan when he was Crown Prince back in 1921.

And from time to time they undertook guard duties outside their own area, the last big occasion before the Second World War being in 1931 at Edinburgh Castle when the eighth Duke received some Culloden battle Colours for the Scottish National Military and Naval Museum.

But in general, the period from the outbreak of the First World War until the accession of the present tenth Duke in 1957, was one in which the Highlanders were practically dormant.

When SOLDIER last visited Blair Castle — back in 1957 — there had been no promotions for 40 years and the last recruit, apart from an odd piper or two, had joined back in 1935.

In 1966 the Duke began recruiting again and the first annual parade was held at the Castle. Seven new soldiers were taken in at that time and more followed, bringing the strength up to the current figure of about 50.

One of those new recruits was Jimmy Stewart, the current Regimental Sergeant-Major. He had joined the Duke as head guide in the summer and gillie in the winter after an unusual Service career.

Jimmy joined the TA Fife and Forfar Yeomanry in 1933 as a trooper. Four years later he joined the RAF and obtained a wartime commission. In 1946 he went back to civilian life but joined the Royal Auxiliary Air Force as a gunner and later sergeant-major.

In 1952 it was back into the Services — as a gunner with the Royal Artillery. "I'm not rank conscious," he says. He ended his Army

It was a cold and frosty morning as Regimental Sergeant-Major Jimmy Stewart and Blair Castle administrator, Mr Alastair Munro, went out to the old Victorian cannon standing at the front of the Castle.

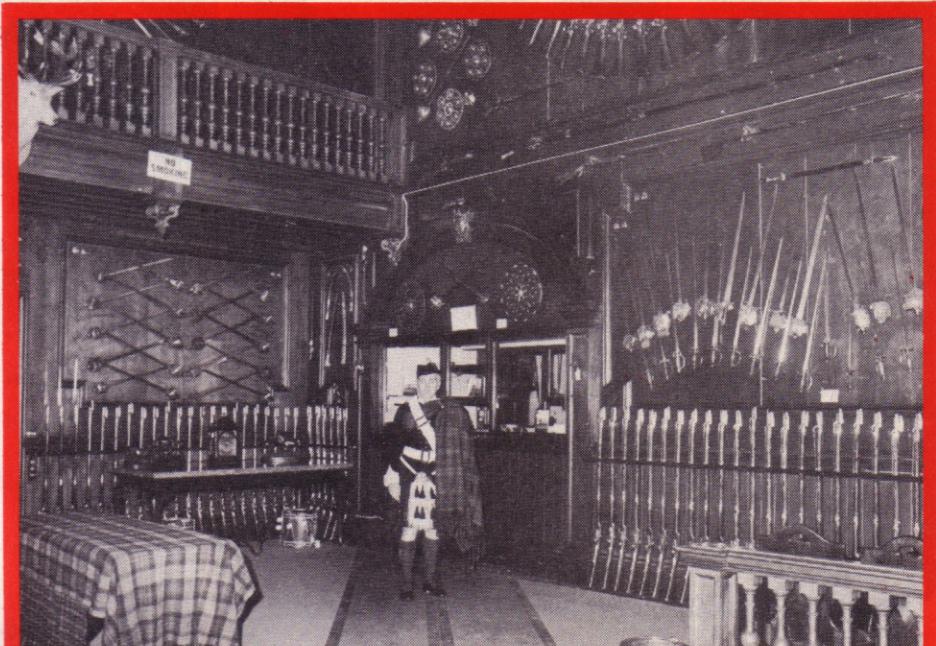
Their mission was to fire the relic. Armed with one-and-a-half pounds of black powder they were to try the cannon out to see if the Highlanders could use it on ceremonial occasions.

But things did not go entirely according to plan. Recalls Mr Munro: "There was a most beautiful bang followed by the tinkle of glass from all over the Castle — we had broken 14 windows!"

The faces of Mr Stewart and Mr Munro were not only red from the cold that day — for the former had spent most of his Service career with guns and Mr Munro was a former instructor at the Royal School of Artillery. But, with a slightly smaller charge, the gun has been fired successfully by the Highlanders on a number of occasions since then.



Above: Estate worker and Atholl Highlander Dave McLeod with RSM Stewart (right) and cannon.



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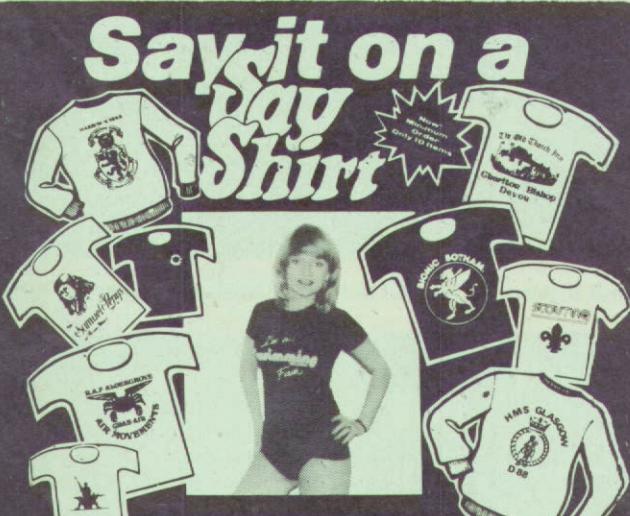
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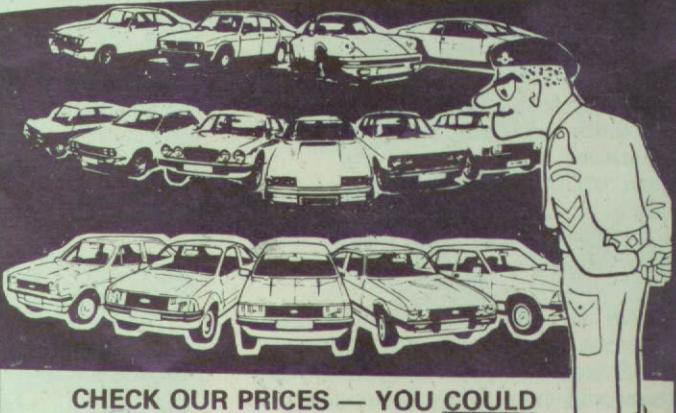
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The tournament which led to the formation of the Atholl Highlanders was staged at Eglintoun (sic) Castle on 28 August 1839. More than 80,000 people were in the spectator galleries and a large number of them were in medieval dress.

But in the best traditions of British weather, rain almost 'stopped play'. Umbrellas marred the feudal scene and a considerable amount of the ceremonial procession had to be omitted.

However, several courses of jousting were run with the home competitor, the Earl of Eglintoun emerging as best knight of the day — after breaking two spears in combat with the Marquess of Waterford.

The banquet and ball planned for the first evening was also washed out — the two giant marquees being flooded. On the second day no action was possible at all. But more jousting and the banquet and ball finally took place on a third day. Eventual cost to Lord Eglintoun was estimated at £40,000 — equal to several million pounds at 1981 prices.

service in 1965 as a permanent sergeant instructor with the part-time Lovat Scouts.

There have only been five sergeant-majors since the Atholl Highlanders were formed and Jimmy Stewart is conscious of the long tradition. But he has no wish to emulate the most famous, Donald McBeth, who served in that capacity for 55 years!

To be an officer in the Atholl Highlanders one has to be of the landed gentry. The men are farmworkers and tenants on the estate or have an Atholl connection. For instance there are three policemen not living on the estate who are still Highlanders — two were former residents who moved away and the third the local bobby who got posted.

Says Jimmy: "You cannot run this unit like in the Regular Army — you cannot bawl and shout. But the men do have self discipline. When you are doing a parade right from the moment you say 'Shun' there is no nonsense."

Uniforms are all provided although the original stock has now become somewhat depleted. At present the Highlanders are hoping to buy some surplus Ministry of Defence jackets but kilts are proving a problem.

Says castle administrator, Mr Alastair Munro: "We are looking for someone who can do this type of tailoring for us. Our prob-

lem is that our orders would be smallish ones and we have not been able to find anyone to do it for us."

In recent years, in addition to the estate parade (which draws about 2000 people each May) the Highlanders have marched through Edinburgh, been to the Braemar Games and taken part in the Isle of Man Millennium — the island once belonged to the Atholl family.

This year there will be a special treat for those prepared to pay for it. A new scheme is to be started for periods when the Castle is not open to the public.

Visitors by appointment will be able to tour the Castle privately. They will be met by an Atholl Highlander in uniform who will show them round and tell them of the regiment and its traditions. And they will get their own special concert by a piper.

The Atholl Highlanders may be a private army but there has been no criticism of them in that role since 1925 when MP Mr Horatio Bottomley was slapped down in the House of Commons.

For their role today is to serve as a permanent reminder of the history and traditions of that part of Scotland. In the words of that Commons reply they are "a picturesque and popular relic of bygone days". And that means a lot in a country with so much national pride.

Below: Fixing RSM's plaid to go out on parade.

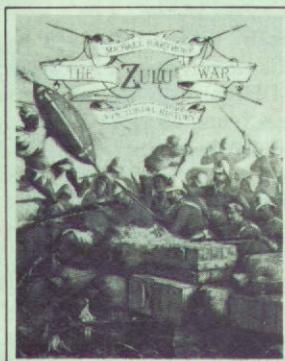
Below: Stalking the antler lined corridors.





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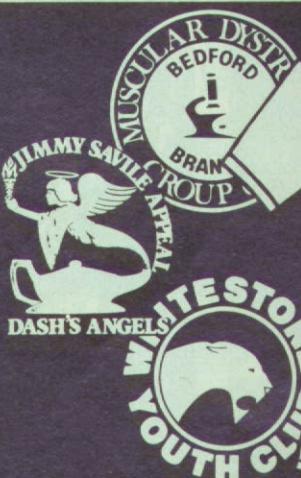
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PUMPKIN PIE

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Second, the unusual names of the coins of the state: gold gongs, silver tangs and copper tings. Twelve copper tings balance one silver tang and twenty of these make one golden gong. The copper tings are further sub-divided into four and these small coins are known as little copper tings.

The pumpkin section at the State's annual produce show always attracts special attention, for the Biggun of Horti invariably provides the prizes for the five heaviest pumpkins and his wife, the Bigguness, presents them.

This year the first prize was thirty-two silver tangs and each of the other prizes was only two tangs less than the prize above it.

The Biggun makes it a rule to give as first prize a number of tangs equivalent to the average weight in pounds of all the pumpkins entered. The second prize is made according to the same rule — only this time the heaviest pumpkin is not included. The third prize excludes the two heaviest. And so on.

Horti had an unusually dry summer last year, so there were only seven entries and the pumpkins weighed less than usual. What was the weight of each of the prize pumpkins? And how many golden gongs did the Biggun subscribe for prizes?

The closing date for the competition is Monday 6 April. The answers and winners' names will appear in the June '81 SOLDIER. More than one entry can be submitted but each must be accompanied by a 'Competition 271' label. Winners will be drawn by lots from correct entries. Entries using OHMS envelopes or pre-paid labels will be disqualified.

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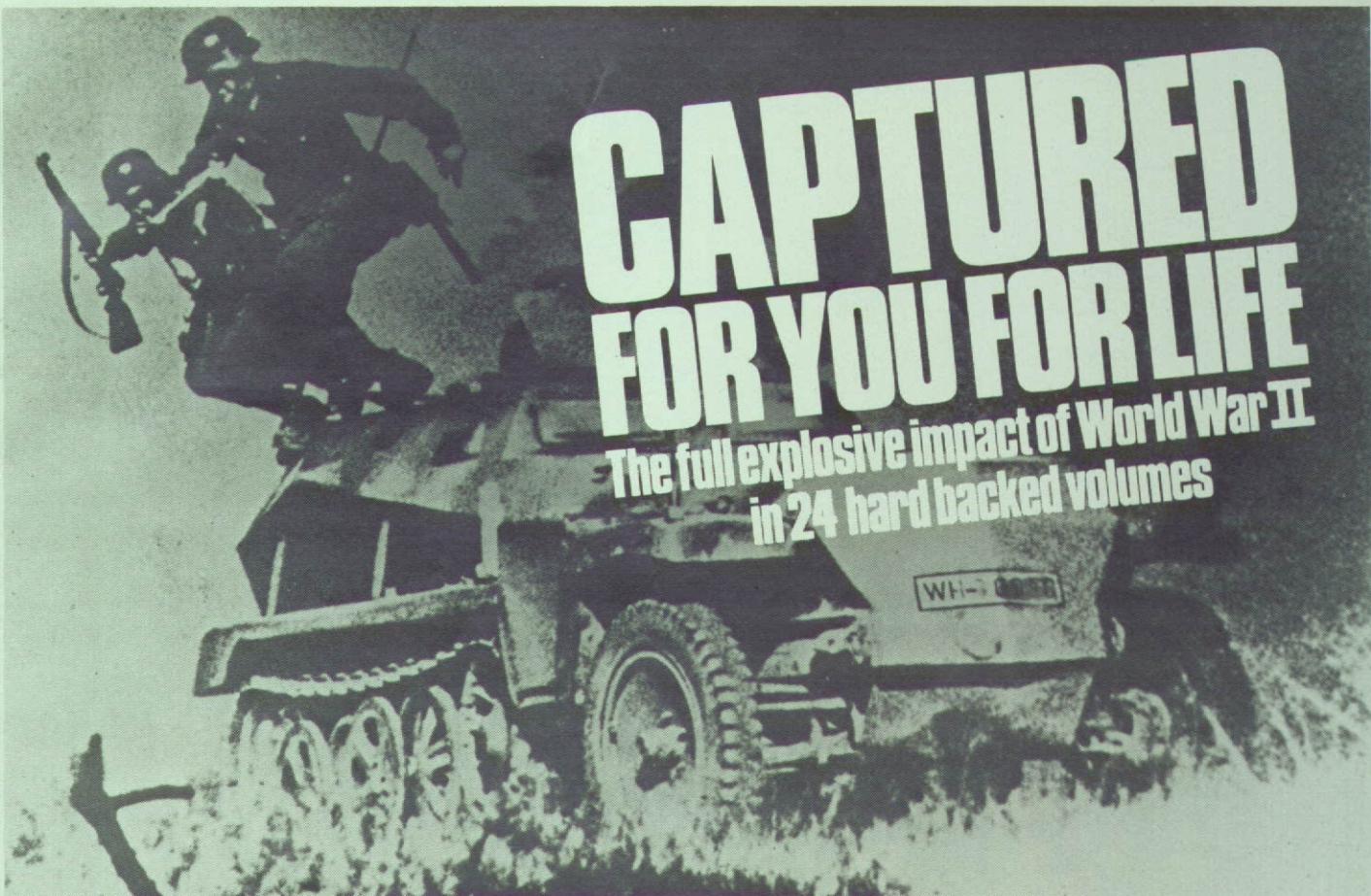
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