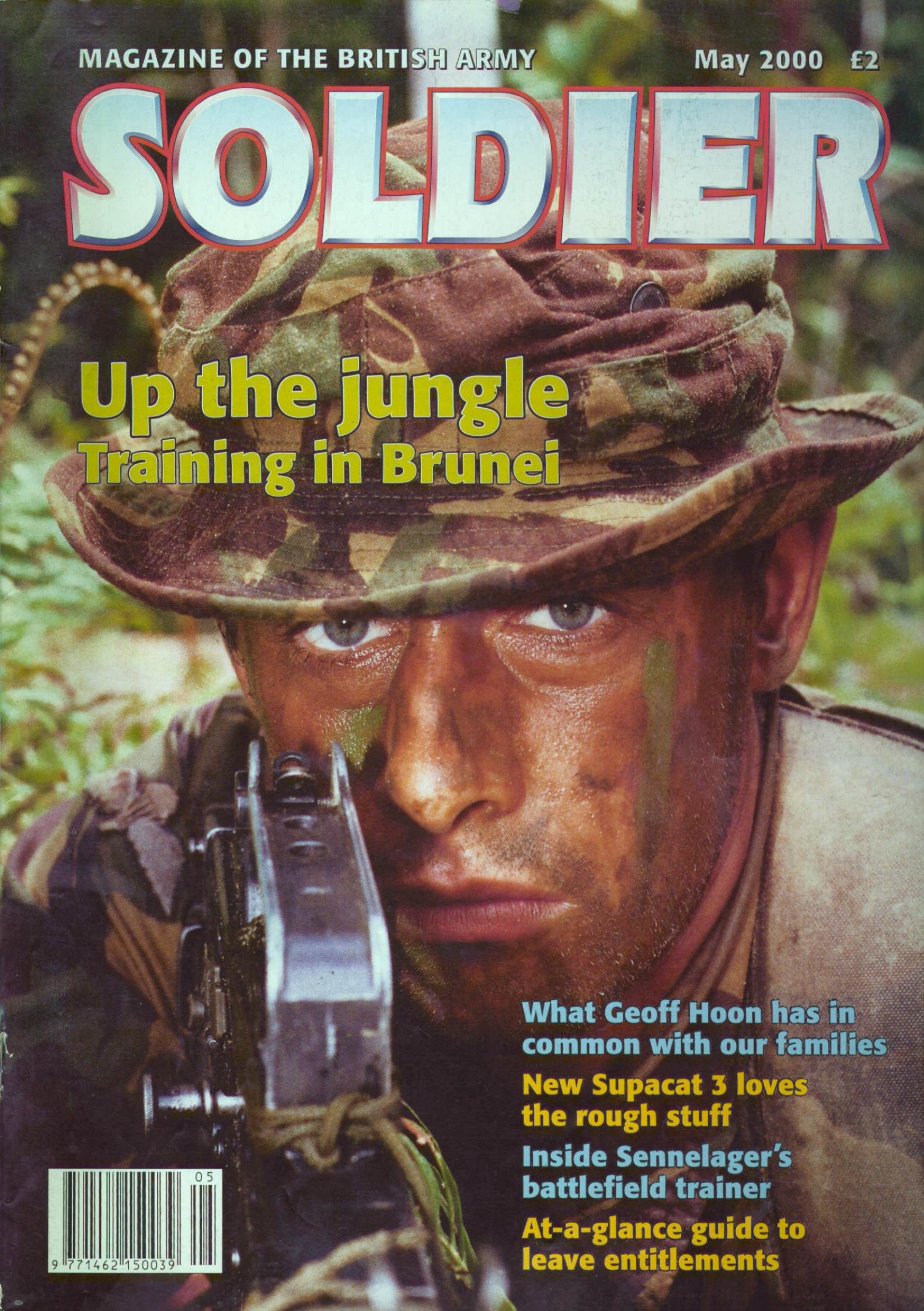


MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

May 2000 £2

SOLDIER



**Up the jungle
Training in Brunei**

**What Geoff Hoon has in
common with our families**

**New Supacat 3 loves
the rough stuff**

**Inside Sennelager's
battlefield trainer**

**At-a-glance guide to
leave entitlements**





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... an Army spouse wonders about the future of accompanied service ... as in, does it have one
- Sue Bonney tells more Home Truths
- Page 45

● Is it a bike? Is it a car? We test the zany but rapid Westfield Megablade
- Page 54

Driver's thanks from a prison in Macedonia
- Mailbag, Page 74

RLC chefs serving in Kosovo and Macedonia have raised the spirits of a British man arrested after a road traffic accident near Skopje



18 Cover story

Hot worker: Sgt Jason Crane, Para, concentrates on what is ahead of him as he begins the gruelling instructors' course at the Jungle Warfare Wing in Brunei. The school is the tri-Service centre of excellence for soldiers learning to fight – and stay alive – in jungle conditions

Picture: Graeme Main

How to contact Soldier
- see Page 78



● It's a jungle out there – see Pages 18-21

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SOLDIER
to soldier

Inspiring soldiers to fight

WHAT is the spirit that inspires troops to fight?

A new booklet from the Adjutant General's headquarters looks for an answer by identifying six qualities which form the foundation of an effective fighting force.

In *Values and Standards of the British Army*, a copy of which has been issued to every soldier, the keystones are said to be **selfless commitment** (put others before yourself); **courage** (face up to danger and do what is right); **discipline** (maintain the highest standards, so that others can rely on you); **integrity** (earn the respect and trust of your comrades); **loyalty** (be faithful to your comrades and your duty); and **respect for others** (treat others with decency at all times).

CONSTANT QUALITIES

In a changing world – and a changing Army – these values are constant.

Overriding aim of *Values and Standards* is to ensure the Army remains at the highest level of operational effectiveness.

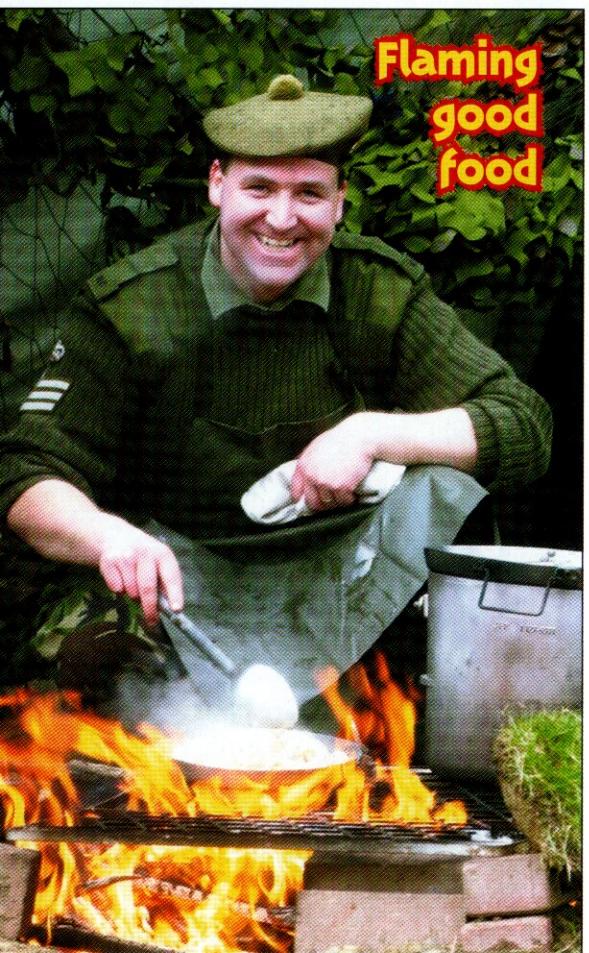
Writing in a foreword as Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Roger Wheeler says: "Your comrades, your commanders and ultimately the nation will depend on your courage, loyalty and commitment.

SELF-DISCIPLINE

"They will rely on you to maintain the highest standards of professionalism and self-discipline at all times. In short they must trust you and you need to trust them."

This two-way obligation, he writes, forms "a covenant between the Army and its soldiers". It is an unwritten, unbreakable "bond of identity, loyalty and responsibility for each other".

It is also timeless. *Values and Standards* would strike a chord with any group of British soldiers in history.



Flambé tonight? SSgt Ruaraidh MacKinnon, captain of the 51st Highland Regiment team which won the 2 Division Combat Caterer competition at Otterburn training area, Northumberland. What's cooking in his improvised field kitchen? Some rather aromatic garlic mushrooms. Picture: Chris Barker

Rocky's dream flight



Going up: Five-year-old **Rocky Redman**, who suffers from leukaemia, was treated to a flight in an Army Gazelle helicopter at Dishforth Airfield in North Yorkshire. Rocky, from Woodthorpe, York, and his mother, **Pauline**, were the guests of 9 Regiment, Army Air Corps. Picture: Chris Barker

Picture: Chris Barker

Death Star zapped in makeover

FROM Kosovo to Colchester, the British Army has a long tradition of personalising the names of places in which soldiers serve.

More than 8,000 miles from home, the Falkland Islands Garrison is keeping its hand in with some inventive names for streets signs around the sprawling Mount Pleasant Airport complex.

Motorists on the islands, of which there are not many, might feel the need to check their rear-view mirror and the speedometer as they drive down Letsby Avenue, home of the Royal Military Police unit.

The largely unemployed crime reporter on the Falklands newspaper, *The Penguin News*, must be waiting in hope of being able to report that a miscreant has been apprehended on that particular stretch of road.

A few minutes away, RAF personnel can be found in the environs of Upanda Way. Depending on who you



Who lives here? In the Falklands, the Royal Military Police appropriately find themselves in Letsby Avenue, the airport is off Upanda Way and soldiers take concerns over their money to Payus Place

listen to, this sign was chosen by the RAF as the most appropriate address for the military airport, or, as an ironic dig at the fact that flights are more often than not delayed in the winter because of foul weather.

Administration offices are not generally noted for their humour, but garrison clerks who deal with allowances and money-related issues raise the odd



smile as they go about their business in Payus Place.

The Mount Pleasant Complex itself has undergone something of a makeover recently. Previously known affectionately as "Death Star", the facility boasts one of the longest covered walkways in the world featuring a complicated layout on different levels.

A lack of imagination had resulted in



accommodation blocks being given such homely names as "F Block" and "38 Facility", titles taken from reference points on the architect's drawings.

This has now all changed with the place renamed "The Village" and accommodation blocks named after places in the UK: for example, Southampton, Salisbury, Glasgow and Belfast.

Changes to the complex were complete

when students from Duncan of Jordanstone College, part of Dundee University, helped with artwork for the corridors themselves.

Berets are no longer worn inside and saluting in the corridor has also ceased.

The overall feeling is far less like an institution and more like a home. Even if the home has a whopping great corridor.

● More from the Falklands in June issue

Grand Old Duke's home will raise £94m for MoD

SALE of the Duke of York's Headquarters in London to Cadogan Estates will bring in an initial £66 million to fund front-line military capability, the Ministry of Defence has announced.

The MoD will vacate about half the Chelsea site, which is used mainly as a headquarters for the Territorial Army, leasing back the remainder until 2003, when further receipts will bring the total raised from the sale to £94 million.

Located in the fashionable King's Road, the headquarters has been a focal point for the Army in the heart of one of

London's most desirable – and exclusive – neighbourhoods. The MoD will also retain a smaller enclave to provide a continuing cadet and selected Territorial Army presence beyond March of that year. The sale is the latest and largest of land disposals following a rationalisation of MoD estate holdings in the capital.

Sale of surplus Defence land and properties, including the Duke of York's, brought in almost £290 million in the last financial year.

The property, once the "country"

home of the Grand Old Duke of York, son of George III and C-in-C of the British Army in 1801, was transferred to the War Department in 1912 to be converted into a headquarters for the newly-formed Territorial Force of the County of London.

Britain's most famous athletes of the first half of the 1900s – Lord Burghley, Arthur Wint, Roger Bannister, Chris Chataway, Chris Brasher and Gordon Pirie – trained on a running track around the tree-fringed lawn in front of the main building.

Army snappers' deadline date

WITH the event going from strength to strength in recent years, professional and amateur snappers are being encouraged to get their entries for the 2000 Army Photographic Competition in by the closing date of September 1.

Winners will win thousands of pounds in cash and equipment across 11 sponsored categories, *Soldier* among them. Main classes are for the Army Professional Photographer of the Year – currently Maj Jim Gallagher of HQ Land Media Ops – and the amateur equivalent.

Judging will be held during October, and the prizes will be presented at the National Army Museum.

Details from Army Photographic Competition, Room 0364, MoD, Main Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB (tel 020 7218 1508 or mil 9621 81508).

We're going home



Packing up: Yorkshire soldiers **Pte Lewis Dingley**, left, **Pte Adrian Mills**, centre, and **Pte Darren Brown** of the 1st Battalion, The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire, tidy up as the battalion prepared for its return to Chester after a five-month tour of duty in Northern Ireland. As reported in the last issue of *Soldier*, 1 PWO was withdrawn early from Belfast following the latest security assessment by the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

The departure of 1 PWO, who remain on standby for duty in the Province, means there are now fewer than 14,000 troops in Northern Ireland.

IN BRIEF

● The Light Infantry and Royal Green Jackets held a seminar at Sir John Moore Barracks, Winchester designed to launch the Light Division's millennium recruiting strategy. It was attended by 150 personnel ranging from privates and riflemen to Lt Gen Sir John Deverell, Colonel Commandant of the Light Division.

● Soldiers of 56 Signal Squadron (V) were given the Freedom of Eastbourne last month. They will mark it with a parade through the East Sussex seaside town later in the year.

● Members of the Parachute Regiment Association (Wales) and representatives

from the Airborne Forces held a dedication service at Brecon Cathedral, followed by a parade led by the Pipes and Drums of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Regiment.

● The MoD has launched consultations on a proposal that three-quarters of the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency

(DERA) be turned into a private sector company to be floated as soon as next year, with the Government retaining a stake.

● SSVC has been told by MoD that it will be the preferred supplier of radio and TV services to British troops overseas when the present contract ends in March next year.

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SECOND EDITION OUT NOW

The Spring edition features:

The Job

1RRW Framework Patrols in Bosnia (Regular & TA)

Main Feature

"Instructors To Be" The ITG Instructors School for Phase 1 training staff at ATR Litchfield

Kitbag

A comparison of UK personal kit & equipment with SFOR allies

Plus

Ex Snowshoe, Ex Volta Tiger, round up of recent Army Sport and much more

The Competition

To win a mountain bike and other Army-branded merchandise please answer the following questions:

- Which unit does our intrepid lumberjack belong to?
- Who left the pub to recruit for the Army?
- Who soaked SFOR?

Answers to the following questions should be sent to:

CC1 Competition, C/O SO3 DCC(A).
Rm 0368, MOD Main Building,
Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB

Entries must be received by 1st June 2000



ARMY

www.army.mod.uk

People, places, events

Ash trees will be tribute to troops killed in Ulster

A grove of 719 ash trees – one for each British soldier killed by terrorists in Northern Ireland – is to be planted in the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

To pay for it, a £35,000 appeal has been launched and a timetable set for planting in late October. Appeals director David Childs hopes that the grove will be dedicated on November 11. "This would give the whole project an added significance," he said. "We would make this year's

November 11 Armistice Day service a Northern Ireland commemorative day at the site."

To each tree will be attached a plaque recording one of the 719 names, along with the soldier's regiment, date of death and age. There has already been a popular response to the project, with many small donations received from individuals in Northern Ireland itself. Mr Childs said he was approaching regimental secretaries

of Irish units to offer them the opportunity to contribute. Each tree in the grove will cost about £50.

Donations should be made to the National Memorial Arboretum Appeal (NI), PO Box 10, Tisbury, Wilts SP3 6TH.

● It is hoped that the Irish Infantry Grove of trees native to Ireland at the NMA, being dedicated on May 6, will become a focus for recognition of all Irish soldiers who have served, or serve, in the British Army.

Future UN ops may count towards ACSM

SERVICE towards the Operational Service Medal, which will replace the issue of clasps to the General Service Medal (1962) for future operations, is to count towards the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal.

Service Chiefs of Staff and Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon have agreed that, in future, service in multinational operations that results in the issue of multi-national medals (such as United Nations and Nato awards) which the Sovereign approves for wear, may count towards the ACSM.

But the ruling will apply only to new multi-national operations.

The inclusion of retrospective and ongoing service was considered in great detail by the Ministry of Defence, but the difficulties were said by all three Services to be insurmountable.

Service towards multinational campaign medals will not automatically count towards the ACSM and each operation will be judged on its merits, in particular for the rigour and degree of danger involved.

The Accumulated Campaign Service Medal, introduced in January 1994, is currently awarded for aggregated service since August 14, 1969 in those the-

atres where the GSM 1962 with clasp has been awarded.

Those theatres are Northern Ireland (August 14, 1969 to a date to be decided); Dhofar (October 1, 1969 to September 30 1976); Lebanon (February 7, 1983 to March 9, 1984); mine clearance, Gulf of Suez (August 15, 1984 to October 15, 1984); Gulf (November 17, 1986 to February 28, 1989); Kuwait (March 8, 1991 to September 30, 1991); Northern Iraq and Southern Turkey (April 6, 1991 to 17 July 17, 1991); and Air Operations Iraq (September 19, 1991 to a date to be decided).

AMENDED

Conditions for the award of the ACSM are contained in Annex K to Chapter 68 of Army General Administration Instructions (AGAI), Vol 3. The chapter will be amended to recognise the change of conditions at the first instance that an operational service medal, or service towards a multi-national medal, is counted towards the ACSM.

The GSM 1962 is still issued for two ongoing operations, the clasp "Northern Ireland" and the clasp "Air Operations Iraq".

IN BRIEF

● Twenty Army chaplains who ran 2,000-mile relay through Israel and the Sinai Desert – a mile for every year since the birth of Christ – to raise £100,000 for charity presented cheques to SSAFA Forces Help and Biblelands, a non-denominational Christian organisation operating in the Middle East, at the Armed Forces' Chaplaincy Centre, Hants.

● The 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment has moved into Meeanee Barracks, Colchester. It is the first time in the regiment's 60-year history that one of its battalions has been based in the Essex town.



● Media star and former soldier Kriss Akabusi meets presenter Cpl Tim Sealey, centre, and control desk backroom-boy Sgt Rob Lester during an Army Presentation Team show at Dulwich College.

Rescuing Ratchet

A SICK puppy rescued by British troops serving in Kosovo could be on her way to the UK after the soldiers appealed for £2,000 to pay for her quarantine.

Ratchet, who is idolised within the unit, was "acquired" by soldiers serving with REME Workshop, 19 Regiment RA at



In safe hands: Rescued Ratchet with Lt Nick Doyle

Podujevo in Kosovo and nursed back to health. With people in the area unable to feed themselves properly, it was likely that the puppy would have starved to death or been killed.

But her life was again under threat when the Workshop had to move location to a multinational centralised area from which animals were banned. Lt Nick Doyle, 2iC of the unit, feared Ratchet would not survive a night outside the camp. He said dogs were treated as vermin in the area because all were strays. The puppy's next home is hoped to be the family farm of one of the soldiers serving with the REME Workshop. Donations can be sent to Lt Doyle, REME Workshop, Op Agricola 3, BFPO 559.

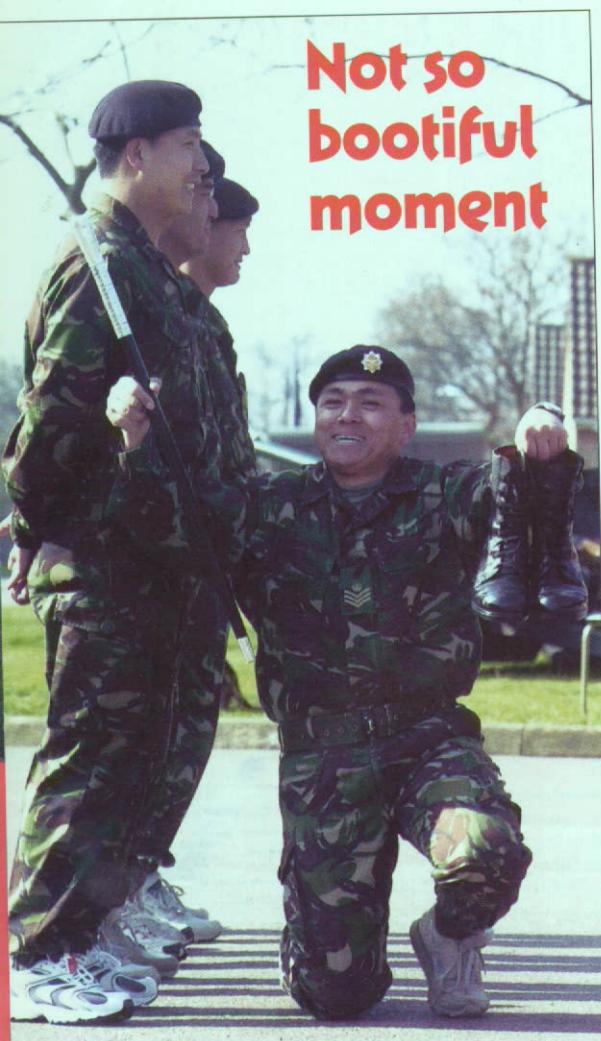
Mortar attack fails

A failed mortar attack on the police station at Rosley, close to the Irish border, was the latest incident in a new campaign by dissident republican terrorists in Northern Ireland. It followed a blast at Ebrington Barracks, Londonderry, which damaged a guardhouse. No one was hurt in either incident.

The Belfast roulement battalion, 1 PWRR, has returned to its home base in Chester.

People, places, events

Not so bootiful moment



My kingdom for a boot: SSgt Shobhaman Golay, of the Queen's Own Gurkha Transport Squadron based at Roman Barracks, Colchester, despairs at the thought of parading in trainers instead of his highly-polished boots. The 100 or so soldiers of 28 Squadron paid £1 each to shed their usual footwear on National UK Trainer Day. The money will go to the Imperial Cancer Research Fund.

Picture: Chris Fletcher



American knight: Gen Wesley K Clark, US Army, is pictured with the Chief of the Defence Staff, Gen Sir Charles Guthrie, right, after he was appointed an Honorary Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. The award, made by Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon on behalf of the Queen, was in recognition of Gen Clark's role as Nato's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and his leadership of multinational forces, including British troops, in Bosnia and Kosovo. A citation says Gen Clark was "ever mindful of those in the front line and was as careful as he was with his own nation's forces not to risk British forces unnecessarily".

Road crash victims dragged from M20

A SOLDIER who pulled two road crash victims from the middle of a busy motorway and gave them first aid has received a bravery award.

Cpl Paul Robertson, of 1st Battalion, The Royal Scots, was driving behind a scooter on the M20 at Farningham, Kent when it was struck by a car, throwing rider and pillion passenger into the road.

Cpl Robertson stopped his car and dragged the riders to the central reservation.

Traffic was still moving fast and the scooter was immediately run over by two vehicles, including an articulated lorry.

He gave first aid to the injured and helped paramedics when they arrived. Despite Cpl Robertson's quick intervention and attempts to save her, the pillion passenger died of her injuries.

Kent police recognised his actions by awarding him a certificate of merit for his courage and professionalism at the crash scene.

The citation reads: "Had the riders been left in the carriage way it is inevitable that they would have been run over. Cpl Robertson's actions almost certainly saved the life of the rider and prevented further injuries to the passenger.

"His quick thinking in assessing the situation and courage in removing the riders from danger is a great credit to both himself and his regiment."

Cpl Robertson said the award was a complete surprise. "It was totally out of the blue - I never expected any recognition from the incident.

"The casualties had to be removed from the carriageway immediately and that was the only thing on my mind."



Merit: Cpl Paul Robertson

Nina's dinner date ended in attempt to save a life

MUSN Nina Wilcox, a phase two training recruit at the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, Twickenham, has received a rarely-awarded police commendation for attempting to save the life of a dying woman.

In September last year Musn Wilcox was having a meal in a restaurant when a man ran in to ask for help for his wife who was seriously ill in a car outside. She immediately offered to help, found the woman was not breathing and took action to revive her. Using first-aid techniques learned during her phase one military training, she gave mouth-to-mouth resuscitation for several minutes until members of the police and London Ambulance Service arrived to take over, then remained on the scene to help relatives. The woman died on the way to hospital.



Musn Nina Wilcox

A policeman said of Musn Wilcox's actions: "She displayed excellent leadership qualities, taking control as required."

Following her music course at Kneller Hall, Musn Wilcox will go on to the Defence Medical Services Training Centre near Aldershot to complete the medical assistant training undertaken by all Regular Army musicians as part of their operational role.

IN BRIEF

- Twenty soldiers and two Gazelle helicopters from Wattisham-based 4 Regiment AAC have left for Kosovo. Based in Pristina for six months, they will provide airborne reconnaissance for Nato troops in the area.
- Soldiers of the Cyprus Defence Animal Support Unit have been visited by

their Honorary Colonel Commandant, Maj Gen Jonathan Hall.

- Six British Army Pipes and Drums bands joined a cast of thousands as the Edinburgh Military Tattoo moved for the first time in its 50-year history to Wellington, New Zealand for that country's major Festi-



Laughing cavaliers: The Duke of Edinburgh raises a smile on the face of an officer cadet during the Sovereign's Parade at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst on April 14. Prince Philip, in his rank of field marshal, was the Sovereign's representative and reviewing officer as 145 of the 645 officer cadets on parade received their commissions.

Among the 19 women to commission

was OC Alice Kealy, daughter of Capt Mike Kealy, Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment, who won a DSO while serving with the SAS in Oman. He had inherited a sword – carried by Alice on the parade – from his father, Col John Kealy, Queen's Regiment, who in 1943 won an immediate DSO at Salerno.

Her stepfather is Maj Gen Arthur Denaro, the Commandant of RMAS.

Sappers die in Foyle accident

TWO members of the Royal Engineers assisting the Royal Navy in Northern Ireland died as the result of an accident during a routine boarding operation in Lough Foyle. A third member of the boarding party, also a Royal Engineer, was flown to hospital but later discharged.

The two men who died, both serving with Ripon-based 38 Engineer Regiment, were Cpl Jeremy James Goulder

(31), a married man with two young children, and Spr Joeil Colsten nai Valuruua (23).

An Army spokesman said: "The circumstances of this tragic accident will be the subject of a thorough investigation."

● Cpl Andrew Thompson (30), of 201 Field Hospital, suffered fatal injuries in what is believed to be a weapon malfunction at a skill-at-arms meeting at Wathgill Ranges, Catterick.

Soldiers wanted for Sierra Leone mission

VOLUNTEERS ranging from sergeant to colonel are needed to fill 90 loan service posts in the British-led Military Advisory and Training Team Sierra Leone based at Freetown.

The team has a three-year mission to help Sierra Leone rebuild its armed forces after years of vicious civil war.

Most tours will be for 12 months, single or married unaccompanied, but there are also some two-year and six-month posts. To find out more, contact your personnel branch or ring the MATT SL (Freetown) MoD office on 0621 86459 (fax 9621 89737) or 020 7121 86459 (fax 020 7121 86459).

val 2000 pageant. Musicians performed in the shadow of a scale replica of Edinburgh Castle.

● Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon has handed over 66 surplus military vehicles to two de-mining charities, the HALO Trust and the Mines Advisory Group.

OPERATIONAL HONOURS

CBE for man who led signallers in Kosovo

BRIG Robin Baxter has been appointed CBE for outstanding command of 1 Signal Brigade in Kosovo. His brigade provided all communications from HQ KFOR down to the multinational brigades and up to the theatre HQ and the air component.

One of his most challenging tasks was designing and supervising the procurement of a commercial communications capability so that his signallers could be withdrawn when HQ ARRC left the theatre.

A citation says he displayed superb planning and led the brigade with a professionalism and coolness which instilled confidence in his subordinates.

Among the operational honours list approved by the Queen there is an MBE for Padre Kingsley Joyce, RACD, who acted as Commander KFOR's liaison officer with the Serb Orthodox Church. The chaplain worked in dangerous isolation to represent the views of the church, the only body to maintain any influence over frightened and demoralised civilians in Kosovo.

Former Yugoslavia

(For the period, April 1 - Sept 30, 1999)

CBE: Brig R Baxter, late R Signals; Brig R M Wilde, late RRF.

OBE: Lt Col P G Cox, RLC; Lt Col W G Cubitt, IG; Lt Col J R Everard, QRL; Lt Col S A Fordham MBE, R Irish; Lt Col P H Gullan MBE, MC, Para; Lt Col P C Marriott, QRL, Lt Col T P Watton MBE, AGC(RMP).

MBE: Maj S G Fovargue, GH; WO1 K J Grantham QGM, RE; Rev K R Joyce, RACD; Maj A G Rogers, RA.

Mid: LSgt S R Chilton, Coldm Gds; LCoH S A McMullen, RHDG; Cpl D P Stewart, R Irish.

QCB: WO1 A Gardner, IG; Sgt G A Kerr, RHF; CSgt E J McDonnell, R Irish.

QCVS: Maj J G Adkins, QRL; Brig J B A Bailey MBE, ACD, later RA; Lt Col M D Blagbrough, Cheshire; Maj N F G Brehaut, RLC; Maj S T W Bridge MBE, KRH; Col S J S Cameron, late REME; Lt Col N T Campbell, RHF; Maj C B B Clee, RHDG; Maj C A Craig-Harvey, IG; Cpl G R Curtis, AGC(SPS); WO2 C Darroch, REME; Maj E A Davis, R Signals; Lt Col R R Davis MBE, RE; Cpl J T Endersby, Int Corps; Col P F Everson OBE, late Int Corps; Cpl M E Grason, REME; Sgt K F Green, Int Corps; Capt P T Green, RE; Maj G B Hills, REME; Maj N Illic QGM, LI; Sgt R S O'Farrell, R Irish; Lt Col M V Pemberton, RAMC; SSgt D L Pickett, Int Corps; Maj Gen A P Ridgway CBE, late RTR; WO2 T P Scott, RE; WO2 C R Shrives, R Signals; Brig K Skempton CBE, late Cheshire; Lt Col I G Tritton MBE, RWF; Maj E J Wooldridge, AGC(RMP).

Ops Turner/Basilica
(UK support and humanitarian assistance to the worsening civil war in Sierra Leone)

MBE: WO2 D R Thomas, AGC(RMP).

Miscellaneous

QCB: Capt J S Summons, RLC.



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People, places, events

Picture: Chris Fletcher



Still going strong: Gnr Mark Cain gives the thumbs-up as he and his colleagues in the 47 Regiment RA heavy team – they had to carry 35lb packs – reach the halfway stage of the 12th annual 26.2-mile Bataan Death March in the searing heat of New Mexico's White Sands Missile Range. Twenty-one members

of the regiment celebrated earning gold medals after winning the two main categories of the memorial competition, held annually to commemorate the 20,000 captured US Servicemen who perished at the hands of the Japanese on a forced march in the Bataan region of the Philippines in 1942.

Light Brigade charge again for RMT 2000

TWO HUNDRED horses will charge across Horse Guards Parade this summer in a spectacular nightly re-enactment of the charge of the Light Brigade.

The pageant will be one of the many highlights of the two-hour Royal Military Tattoo 2000 – a one-off replacement for the Royal Tournament – from July 10 to 15. Theme of the high-profile event will be a celebration of 1,000 years of military history. RMT 2000 is the Armed Forces' flagship celebration of the millennium.

Organisers hope the sponsored show will raise about £300,000 for the three principal Service charities, including the Army Benevolent Fund.

Lasers, acoustics, fireworks and the

largest mobile video screen in the world will augment a flypast, free-fall parachute display, military bands and, for the first time on Horse Guards, the dynamic musical drive of The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery.

More than 13,000 seats will be available on each of the six nights, with ticket prices ranging from £20 to £50 a seat.

Seats for a preview evening on Sunday, July 9 can be bought by Servicemen and women, their families and veterans. They will cost £6 and £10. Calls to the ticket box office on 0870 241 0301 cost 60p. More information is available on the website www.rmt2000.mod.uk; e-mails to enquiries@rmt2000.mod.uk

Light entertainment



It's Steps! Members of the Winchester-based **Band of the Light Division** play the first engagement of their tour of Kosovo outside the National Theatre in Pristina. The musicians braved a late snowstorm to entertain an appreciative audience on the steps of the theatre, playing tunes ranging from traditional military marches to the *Star Wars* theme.

The musicians were in Kosovo in their operational role as medical assistants with Preston-based 5 (UK) Medical Group. They used the concert to launch a health-awareness campaign among the people of Pristina, handing out leaflets to hundreds of civilians gathered in the city's Mother Theresa Street.

It was the last performance conducted by **Capt Graham Jones**, above centre, the band's director of music for the past three years.

Terriers take Courage

THREE hundred Territorial Army soldiers in 40 unit teams from Greater London took part in the annual Courage Trophy military skills competition and Courage Best Shield for mixed teams on Longmoor training area, Hants.

IN BRIEF

● A 14-man British Armed Services expedition of 14 has left the UK for Nepal where it will split into two teams attempting to scale Mt Kanchenjunga, the third-highest mountain in the world, and Ramtang Peak, unclimbed for 70 years. Maj Andy Edington RE, one of four British Army climbers on the expedition, will lead the Ramtang party. If it is successful, the Kanchenjunga team will become only the second British expedition to achieve the summit via the south-west face of the mountain.

● Armed Forces Minister John Spellar signalled the MoD's commitment to Bath when he opened the headquarters of the new **Defence Logistics Organisation** at Ensleigh.

● Conservation efforts at **Castlemartin Range** in Pembrokeshire have been recognised by an award from the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales.

● Eleven gunners based with **47th Regi-**

ment RA in Hampshire have become the first in the country to achieve National Traineeships in Communications. The programme was funded by Wiltshire and Swindon Training and Enterprise Council.

● The people of Market Drayton turned out in force when the town granted its Freedom to **The Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry**, successor to the Shropshire Yeomanry, which has links with the town going back 200 years.

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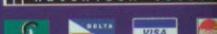


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People, places, events



Picture: Chris Barker

Fair exchange: 15 (NE) Brigade's flag is raised in place of the 2 Div flag at Imphal Barracks

HQ 2 Division's farewell to York

TO the strains of the Normandy Band of the Queen's Division, the crossed-keys flag of the Army's 2nd Division was lowered at Imphal Barracks in York while the merlin flag of 15 (North East) Brigade was raised.

In a major change to the Army's structure in the UK, Maj Gen Robert Gordon, GOC 2 Div, has transferred his headquarters to Edinburgh. To mark the move, he took the salute at a handing-over ceremony in Imphal Barracks and inspected a guard of honour provided by 2 Signal Regiment. The division has been based in York in its present form since 1995.

Responsibility for York Garrison continues with Brig Alan Deed.

Meanwhile, HQ Army Medical Services TA, based at Imphal Barracks, has been targeted for expansion as a new national centre of excellence and 2 Signal Regiment is to be joined at the barracks by 150 Gurkhas serving with the new 246 Signal Squadron. Also making its home at Imphal Barracks will be the Defence Vetting Agency, which is to concentrate its resources in York.

HQ 15 (NE) Bde, which remains in York, is the UK's largest TA brigade with nearly 20,000 troops, civilians and cadets.

TAVRAs change their title to become RFCAs

THE old Territorial Army and Volunteer Reserve Associations (TAVRA) title changed on April 1, to be replaced by Reserve Forces and Cadet Association (RFCA). Eastern Wessex TAVRA, which had responsibility for the Isle of Wight,

Hampshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, became the Eastern Wessex RFCA and on September 1 will also assume responsibility for West Sussex, Surrey and Kent, when it will be re-titled to become South East RFCA.

IN BRIEF

- A parade and flag-raising ceremony at Swinton Barracks, Perham Down, Hants, marked the re-formation of 26 Engineer Regiment, which was disbanded six years ago. The new regiment, which was reviewed by the Engineer-in-Chief (Army), Brig Albert Whitley, consists of a regimental HQ, 8 Armoured Engineer Squadron and 38 HQ Squadron. It will be brought up to full strength in due

course when 30 Field Squadron RE re-forms.

- Two new Royal Military Police regiments have formed to provide direct RMP operational support to logistic brigades based in London and Scotland. They are 4 Regiment RMP (supporting 101 Log Bde, with RHQ at Tulse Hill, London, and companies at Donington and West Bromwich) and 5 Regiment

AAC workshop pushed hard in Bradwell Bowl

A TEAM from 5 Regiment AAC Workshop REME won the annual Bradwell Bowl competition for REME military skills in Northern Ireland.

Mrs Pam Bradwell, widow of WO1 (ASM) Jim Bradwell, who died in 1996 when terrorists bombed Thiepval Barracks at Lisburn, and in whose memory the competition is held, attended with her children and presented prizes. The event was hosted by 5 Regt Wksp at Ballykinler.

Twelve teams from all over the Province took part, some fielding exclusively REME teams, others a mixture of REME, RE and RLC. Two TA units, 40 Signal Regt 9V Wksp and 152 Amb Regt (V) LAD, also entered.

The 5 Regt AAC team was pushed hard throughout the two-day event by 25 RE Regt Wksp, Northern Ireland CSS Battalion Wksp and Armagh Station Wksp.

A bowl of Scouse



Tasty! WO2 (SQMS) Alan McCurry, of The King's Cheshire Regiment, introduces Chinese tourists Chen Zhao and Jingjiry Li to the delights of scouse, Liverpool's culinary gift to the nation. The regiment cooked 50 gallons of the regional stew in the centre of Liverpool and gave away bowls of it in return for a £1 donation to the Alder Hey Rocking Horse Appeal. The TA soldiers also hope their gigantic stew-pot will get them into the Guinness Book of Records. Picture: Roy Bevan

RMP (102 Log Bde, with RHQ at Livingston, Scotland, and companies at Rheindahlen and Stockton-on-Tees).

- The National War Museum of Scotland was formally opened by the Princess Royal in Edinburgh Castle. It follows a two-year refurbishment of the former Scottish United Services Museum.

I know what you're going through

We share a common bond, the Defence Ministry's top man tells Service families

Report: Chris Horrocks

GEOFF HOON is an outdoor type. He likes football, cricket and running and if he had had longer in the Falklands recently he would have spent some time walking, exploring what he calls "some pretty remarkable scenery".

He is also a family man, but his job, when not away on duty, keeps him in London for four or five days a week... and his wife and children live 180 miles up the M1.

Which is why Mr Hoon, Secretary of State for Defence since last October, feels he shares a common bond with the men and women whose lives he affects every time he makes a decision.

That decision could be about modifying the SA80, sending certain troops to Kosovo and withdrawing others, or dispatching a mercy mission to Mozambique. But they all involve people.

"What I have been saying consistently since I got the job is that our most important asset, what we value most of all, are the Service men and women, people who have *really* gone out of their way to help the country," he said in an interview in his office at the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall.

RAPID ROTATION

"We have responded to that – not only in terms of reducing commitments so they are not facing the kind of rapid rotation that a number of them complained to me about when I first started to meet them.

"We were able to do something on separation allowances, which I have been told was extremely well received.

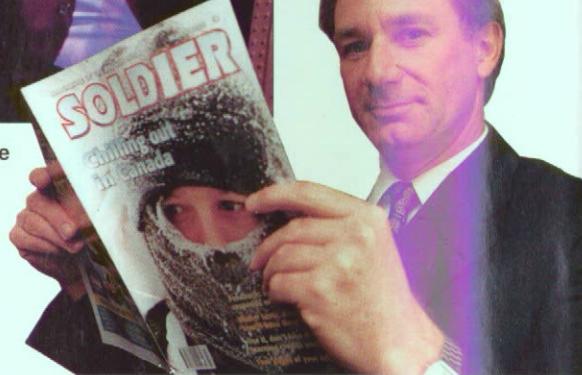
"Equally we have been able to implement in full the recommendations of the Armed Forces Pay Review Body. This again makes a real difference to people's ability to justify to their families what they do... because one of the things I face in my life since I live away from home for four or five days a week is whether it's worth it.

"I know that Service people spend far more time away from home than I do but, all of them have to justify, at home, the impact it has on normal family life.



Picture: Cpl John Skillen

Thumbs up: Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon was one of the first passengers in the Army's new WAH-64 Apache attack helicopter when it rolled off the production line at Yeovil on March 15. Earlier, Maj Yori Griffiths AAC gave him a pilot's-eye view, left



Picture: Mike Weston

Under siege? Not me!

THE question was direct: "Do you feel under siege from the Press?"

Some sections of the media had been giving the MoD a hard time in the weeks preceding the interview. The criticism included sniping about supposed financial cutbacks and allegedly poorly-equipped soldiers. "Do I look under siege?"

Mr Hoon retorted, laughing. "I have to say I regard that as part of the territory and the things I have to do aren't anything like as demanding as what I ask other people to do on behalf of the country and the Government, so I live with that.

"I do wish that we were given a fairer press as far as some of these issues

are concerned and that, frankly, they would report more accurately what's going on.

"But as someone once said, a politician complaining about the media is rather like a ship's captain complaining about the sea. That's what you live with and I'm robust enough to respond in kind."

Normal family life isn't having somebody being regularly away from home – that causes enormous strains and stresses."

On this human level Geoff Hoon sees the MoD's job – and his in particular – as making sure that the consequences of those pressures on family life are minimised.

As examples he quoted measures, resulting from the Strategic Defence Review, aimed at easing arrangements for schooling, medical and dental facilities and ensuring that disruption to family life

caused by postings is reduced to a minimum.

"My guess, through the normal experience of living away from home, is that the problems arise in those difficult telephone conversations where something has gone wrong at home and yet you are miles away and not able to do anything about it at the time.

"I have some sympathy for that and I want us to be able to address those problems so that when you call home you are having a conversation in which you're not

dwelling on the problems but can talk about the good things."

He agreed that the effect of a high level of commitments on personal and family life had been a great cause of concern for soldiers and the major reason they left.

But force levels in places such as the Balkans were being reduced, with the result that the number of soldiers on operations, recovering from them or training for them – as high as 47 per cent in the middle of last year – would reduce to 30 per cent or lower this year.

"So we've sorted out the question of commitments and we ought to be able to get back to a rather more regular pattern of existence."

And what about people joining up?

"There isn't a problem about recruiting," he said. "It is actually going extraordinarily well. The Navy and RAF were doing well already but the real success story is the Army. But we have been addressing the real problem – retention. Again those numbers are coming good, so I am really pleased."

Family pride of ex-caDET

Although he has no personal Service experience, apart from three years in the Army cadets at school, Geoff Hoon's sergeant-major grandfather was Mentioned in Dispatches in the 1914-18 war and he was also "enormously proud" of his father, who volunteered on his 18th birthday to fight in the Second World War, despite having a reserved occupation as a railwayman.

Separate Services, similar conditions

JOINTERY – the sharing of operations, facilities and training across the Armed Forces – will not result in a breakdown of the fundamental principle of three separate Services, Mr Hoon said.

"I don't think I can foresee a time when that would happen because of the very strong and proud traditions that exist in the Armed Forces."

"But it does mean that we have to start addressing some of the Service conditions variations. When you get people from three Services together in a joint force, the talk turns to the very different conditions under which they operate."

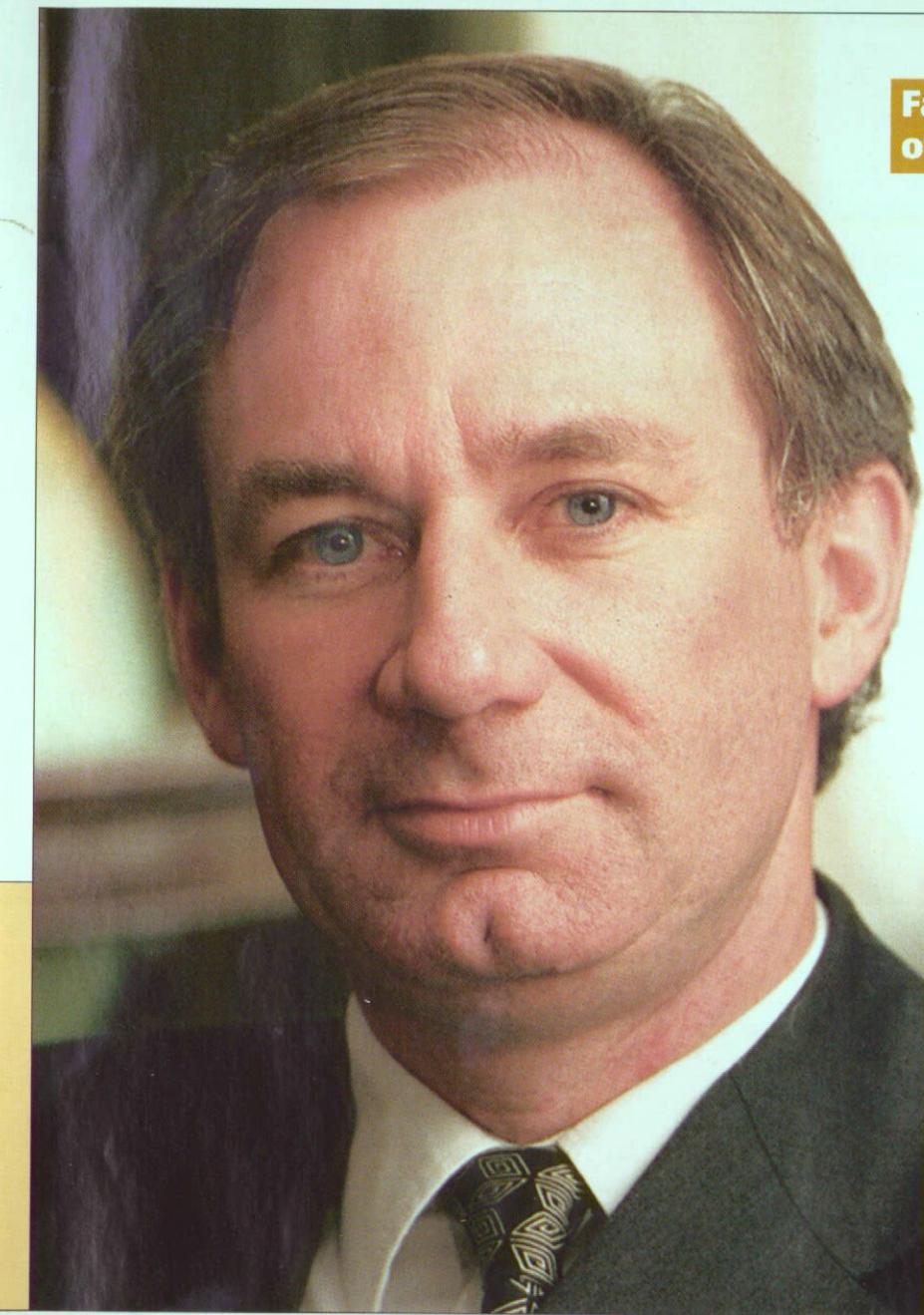
"So I think there will be an evolution towards greater consistency but without in any way breaking down the fundamental principle of the three Services."

But as more facilities were shared, would there not be a need for fewer training establishments?

"Well, I'm not making any pronouncements on that today, but certainly the more the training, the exercising and then the deployments are done jointly, the more sensible that is."

It made sense, he said, to train and educate personnel together for joint tasks. It was part of a change of culture taking place in the MoD following the Strategic Defence Review.

"But I'm not making any comment on particular establishments at this stage because that is not for the moment on the agenda."



Picture: Mike Weston



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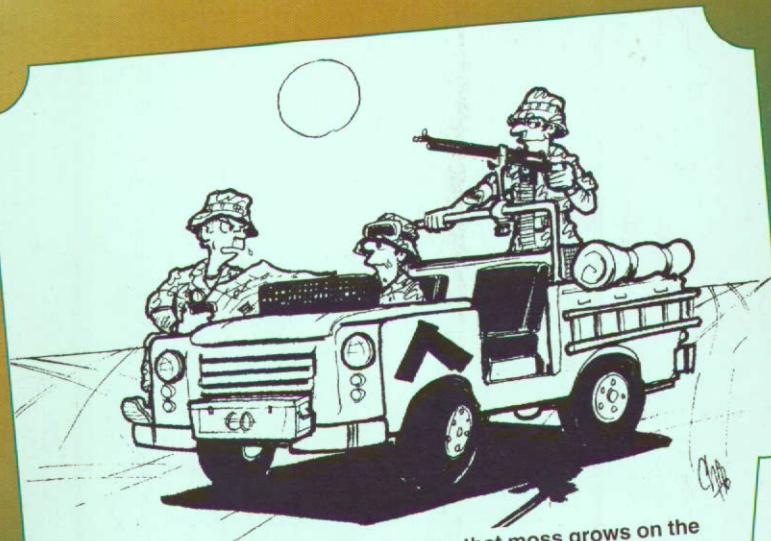
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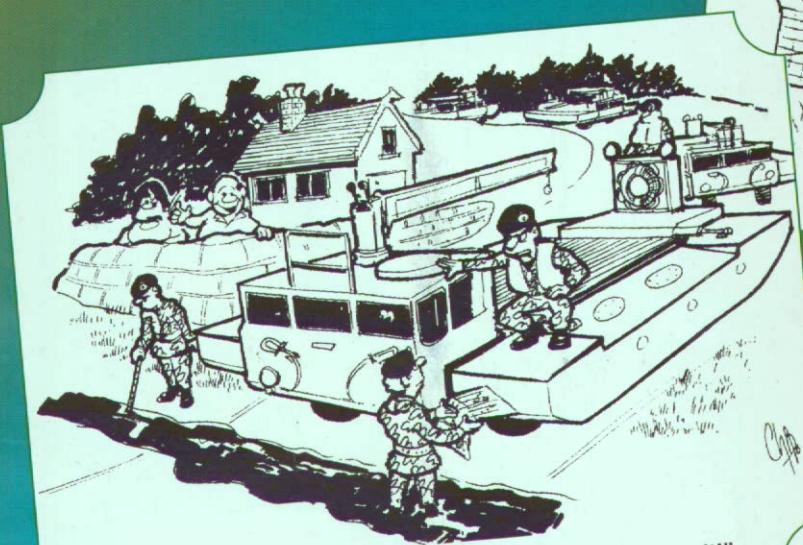
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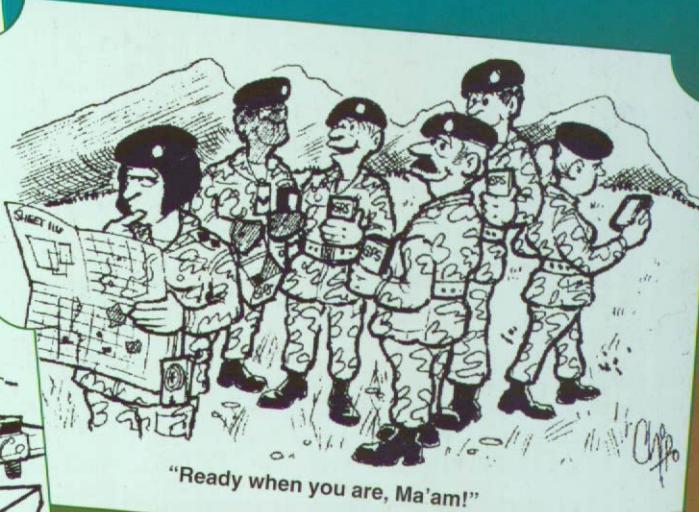
Chuckle with Chip



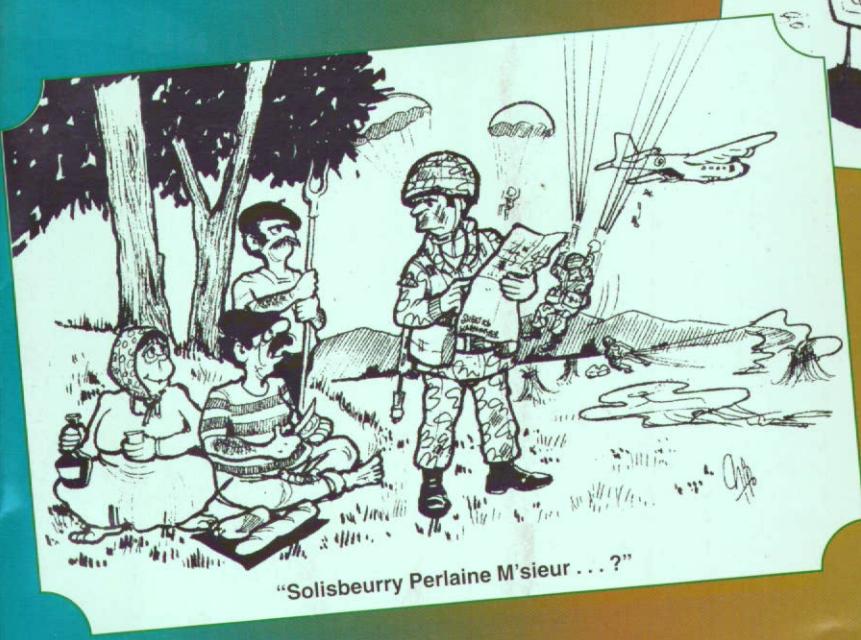
"Frankly, Evans . . . reminding me that moss grows on the north side of trees isn't all that helpful right now!"



"Well, it would look bigger through a magnifier, wouldn't it!"



"Ready when you are, Ma'am!"



"Solisbeury Perlaine M'sieur . . . ?"



Lost causes

It's a jungle out there

The British Army trains instructors in jungle warfare in the toughest classroom in the world

Words: Anthony Stone
Pictures: Graeme Main

IT is an unforgiving place. Disease, death and despair await the unprepared. Nature's greenhouse, the primary jungle, was never the Garden of Eden.

Temperatures hover around 100F and humidity about the 95 per cent mark. In the jungle, a 500m patrol can take hours. At times it feels as if you are walking through treacle with an elephant on your back.

In one of the most hostile environments known to man, the Jungle Warfare Wing (JWW) School of Infantry conducts its training school.

Located in Brunei on the island of Borneo, supported by the Brunei Garrison, the JWW trains jungle warfare instructors for the Field Army. It is the tri-Service centre of excellence and the author of all jungle warfare doctrine up to battalion level. It advises units deploying on exercises in tropical regions such as Belize, Kenya and Jamaica.

The officer commanding, Maj Russell Combe, KOSB, said: "The physical demands of climate and terrain require the highest standards of personal skills and physical fitness. Sound navigation, signals and fieldcraft, weapon handling and patrolling skills are at a premium.

"The nature of many of today's operations places considerable responsibility on junior commanders, and the jungle is a superb environment in which to develop leadership and resources."

Lessons learned can be applied to other theatres and will make infantrymen better soldiers.

The flagship JWW course is the Jungle Warfare Instructors' Course, run three times a year. Each eight-week course takes 62 students, usually from corporals to captains. It culminates in a 14-day final exercise in a combined arms setting. It is during this course that students learn about the three main hazards. Surprisingly, venomous snakes, scorpions and deadly spiders do not make the hit list.

The main threat is from the trees themselves. Once termites have eaten through trunks and branches, they rot. As soon as it rains (as it does, often) the wood fills with water, becomes too heavy and snaps.

Maj Nick Borton RHF, one of the instructors on the course, said: "You hear it periodically throughout the jungle as the trees come crashing down. Some of them are 6ft wide."

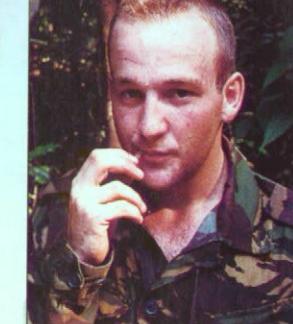
It underlines the importance of checking overhead, especially when looking for a place to sleep. As the soil supports growth to only about 12 inches below the surface, roots grow out, not down. So if one tree falls it can start a domino effect.

FLASH FLOODS

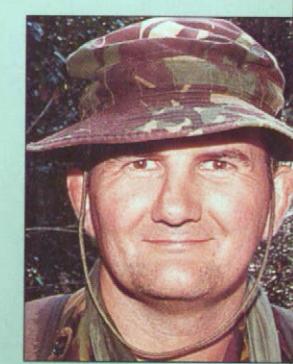
Another danger is flash floods which can strike with the stealth of the SAS. London has about 25 inches of rain a year; in South East Asia, and Brunei in particular, 180 inches are not uncommon.

But by far the biggest hazard is the one which constantly surrounds the unwary, sapping strength like a giant leech. Heat and humidity, the deadly duo, are the jungle's pall-bearers.

"If you don't take precautions and drink when you are not thirsty, you will keel over," said Maj Simon Fuller, Royal



Munchies: Lt Jamie Murray, 2 RGR, above, tastes a jungle snack



In charge: Maj Russell Combe, a leading authority on jungle warfare



Marines, a course instructor and 2iC of JWW. "The key is not to feel thirsty, because as soon as you do it is probably too late. You should drink all the time."

Instructors tell students to take at least five litres of water a day while acclimatising. By their final exercise, students could be down to three litres.

Despite the privations, courses are always over-subscribed. LCpl Rodge

Webb, RGBW, a student, said: "The instructors' course is essential for someone who has not been in the jungle before and it is very hard work. You start sweating even before you start walking. You have got to keep your wits about you."

The course comprises individual and section skill packages with a nine-day exercise, and a platoon and company phase culminating in a two-week final

exercise. In all students spend 25 nights in the jungle.

At the end of it, officers and SNCOs may complete a three-day Water Safety Officer (Basic) course which allows those who qualify to plan and conduct river crossings and inland boat exercises.

Also run by JWW is the more advanced Jungle Warfare Tracking Instructors' Course, a five-week masterclass for stu-

Water relief: Cpl John Becker, 1st Battalion, The Royal Green Jackets, demonstrates a way of catching rainwater. Dehydration can be a killer

dents with previous experience. It progresses from individual tracking to tracking patrols in a combat environment.

"Military tracking is a greatly undervalued skill that proved its worth during confrontations in Malaya and Borneo," said Maj Combe. "It's mentally demanding and successful students need to achieve an impressive level of proficiency."

Once a good tracker is on your trail, you can't lose him. The things the instructors can determine, simply by looking at the ground, would put the Lone Ranger and Tonto to shame. By picking up the clues left by patrols it is possible to determine direction, numbers and even what sort of kit they might be carrying. A skilled tracker can even tell if he is following a man or a woman (this is a variation on the theme of leaving the toilet seat up).

NO SHORTAGE

These courses are tough, but there is no shortage of students wanting to sign up.

"Our core business remains producing jungle warfare instructors," said Maj Combe. "These excellent courses are run in the context of a well-informed, up-to-date and high-profile jungle warfare training facility, which is recognised internationally as a centre of excellence."

JWW is also responsible for doctrine, and its experts produce pamphlets on aspects of jungle warfare.

"The infantry's aspiration is that JWW should be a world-leading jungle warfare school recognised globally by other countries who train in this form of conflict," said Maj Combe.

Through its courses, library and doctrine cell, JWW aims to stay top of the jungle-fighting tree.

Nights where time crawls

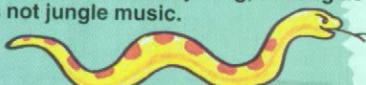
YOU go to bed soon after it gets dark in the jungle. That doesn't mean you go to sleep, it just gives you more time to lie in your hammock and listen to the wildlife.

It DOES get pretty wild. The Hollywood version has Tarzan kipping down in his tree-house, lulled by crickets and the odd bull-frog. In reality it is nothing so tranquil.

The jungle is incredibly noisy. At times it sounds as if you are standing on the hard shoulder of the M25 in rush-hour. So much of the noise sounds industrial that it is hard to imagine it is made by insects.

Something out there in the black, black night, makes a noise like an articulated lorry reversing. Another insect with more legs than a centipedes' rugby team does a startling impression of a chainsaw.

Some old hands suggest taking a personal stereo to drown out the noise. You can listen to anything, so long as it is not jungle music.



Most of the wildlife is nocturnal, including the snakes, which is worth remembering if you have to get up in the night to answer a call of nature. Standard snake advice is "if it stands, move away". It is either poisonous and thinks it can have you, or blind, and will lash out if you step on it.

Your other bedfellows might be scorpions, which really have a sting in their tails. Every morning boots have to be shaken out and equipment checked. And don't sit in the hollows of trees as that's where scorpions tend to go, especially when it rains.



Centipedes also carry serious firepower. If you get bitten on the face or the neck you could develop breathing problems. The same goes for hornets. One man may have no reaction at all, another could be on his back within 30 minutes.

The jungle is an environment in which a scratch can turn septic within hours.

Jungle Warfare Wing 2iC, Maj Simon Fuller, RM, said: "Everything is wet the whole time. You have to look after yourself for longer to stay effective for longer. Personal admin is vital, getting a wash when you can, and changing out of wet kit when you can. Minor cuts need to be kept covered and kept clean."

You need to spend a lot of time making sure your feet are in good condition and crouch-rot is a real problem. Which is why Tarzan wears a loin-cloth... so he can keep his nuts jungle-fresh.

When the balloon goes up

Faster than you can say snakebite, Army Air Corps crews are ready to evacuate British soldiers from the Bruneian jungle

Words: Anthony Stone
Pictures: Graeme Main

THEY found him at the foot of the gully. The soldier was in a bad way, having broken both legs as he crashed through the trees on the way down; he was bleeding heavily and dehydrated.

The medic's assessment confirmed what the section commander already knew - this man would die unless they could get him to hospital fast.

But more than 60 miles of primary jungle lay between the casualty and the intensive care unit. At most, he had two hours to live. The section commander, a lance corporal, got on the radio and made the call.

His emergency signal to scramble one of the three Bell 212 helicopters sitting on the pad at Brunei Garrison came through just after 1000. Operated by 7 Flight AAC, the aerial workhorses sit ready 24-hours a day, waiting to go into action.

AIRBORNE

Within minutes Capt Andrew Lamb was airborne, heading east away from the thin coastal strip and out over the vast expanse of tropical jungle. With the South China Sea behind it and the ocean of green in front, the Bell 212 hummed like an oversized tropical insect as it ate its way through the skies.

Back on the ground, the casualty was losing consciousness. The medic found a vein and put a drip in his arm to replace fluids, but things were not looking good.

The commander had other problems. Looking up all he could see were trees: there was nowhere for the helicopter to land.

Getting the casualty to the nearest helicopter landing point was the priority, or failing that, to find a winch-hole in the jungle canopy. The fastest way to get the dying man there would be to carry him out over the shoulder. But because of his injuries and the drip, it was not an option.

A stretcher was improvised using two poles, cut by machete, and inserted into a hammock. With the medic holding the drip, the party made its way to higher ground.

The device that was going to save the casualty's life came out of a cylinder

about the size of two beer tankards welded together. Unless you knew the trick, you'd be stumped to guess how some crystals, a long cord and a couple of pieces of coloured material could possibly work magic.

The solution was to add water. Classroom chemistry resulted in a reaction that produced hydrogen gas, which in turn filled the marker balloon.

Overhead, above the jungle canopy, the orange balloon bobbed around like a lifebuoy. Capt Lamb found the marker easier to spot than a crocodile in a paddling pool. Its job done, the balloon was yanked down and punctured with a machete. With visual contact established, Capt Lamb swung the helicopter round, while winch-operator LCpl Nick Symonds made ready.

His colleague, Cpl Ian Clayton, was already on the skids and the next moment was dangling above the patrol, controlling his descent through radio contact with the pilot.

"Winching down nice and straight, no problems," Cpl Clayton told Capt Lamb. "Height and position still good."

On the ground, Cpl Clayton disconnected himself from the harness and handed over to the medic the emergency stretcher he had brought with him.

While this was going on, the helicopter swung right and circled.

"If we hover overhead we would create too much downwash on the casualty," explained Capt Lamb. It could bring a tree down on top of them.

Now the harness was lowered for the second time and Cpl Clayton was winched up with the stretcher case into the belly of the Bell.

Mission accomplished, the helicopter headed for home, where, after a hot shower, the "casualty" made a full recovery. It was only an exercise, but it is because soldiers and aircrew practise



Stretcher case: Cpl Ian Clayton, above, keeps in radio contact with the pilot as he and the casualty are winched up to the helicopter

Ready and waiting: Maj Bill Scarratt, left, on the pad with a Bell 212

this evacuation technique so diligently that when they do it for real, they do it right.

Maj Bill Scarratt, officer commanding 7 Flt, said: "The bottom line is no one

can go into the jungle without a helicopter.

If soldiers have a problem we ask them to go to landing point, but if they are

too far out we ask them to cut some kind of winch hole."

In the jungle, the canopy can be as high as 200ft and two of 7 Flight's three helicopters are fitted with winches capable of

dropping 250ft. Generally the flight can expect between 45-50 casevac's a year and in 1999 there were 15 P1s (Priority One, requiring evacuation to hospital within two hours).

It's a job that calls for some serious flying, sometimes at night, in thunder and in torrential rain. The downpours have the force of an anvil. If you fly into them you get hammered.

Maj Scarratt said: "When you are flying in goggles in driving, thundery rain, trying to get to an isolated landing point,



Almost there: A helping hand reaches out to assist Cpl Ian Clayton with his casualty

it gets very, very interesting.

"People associate a sunshine tour with doing a lot of sunbathing and not much flying, but we probably fly more hours per pilot than anyone in the AAC. We fly almost 100 hours a month in support of the garrison. That's 1,200 hours a year, which is a lot of hours for a flight."

"Our main job here is three-fold. To provide a 24-hour casevac standby to get an aircraft to anywhere in Brunei if we get a P1, to support the garrison and the resident battalion and Jungle Warfare Wing, and to support visiting exercises."

All the helicopters are owned by Bristows, but are military-registered and leased to the Army. A team of 32 military staff work on the flight, plus three Bristow engineers. Four pilots and four aircrew ensure the machines get where they need to go.

Over the years 7 Flight have been to some hot spots, none more so than recently when asked to fight forest fires using a water-filled Bambi bucket to douse the flames. It was just another day in the office for the Army Air Corps boys.

There is an old jungle warfare maxim that says the jungle is neutral. But if you are going into the toughest survival environment on earth, knowing 7 Flight is at the ready tips the odds in your favour.



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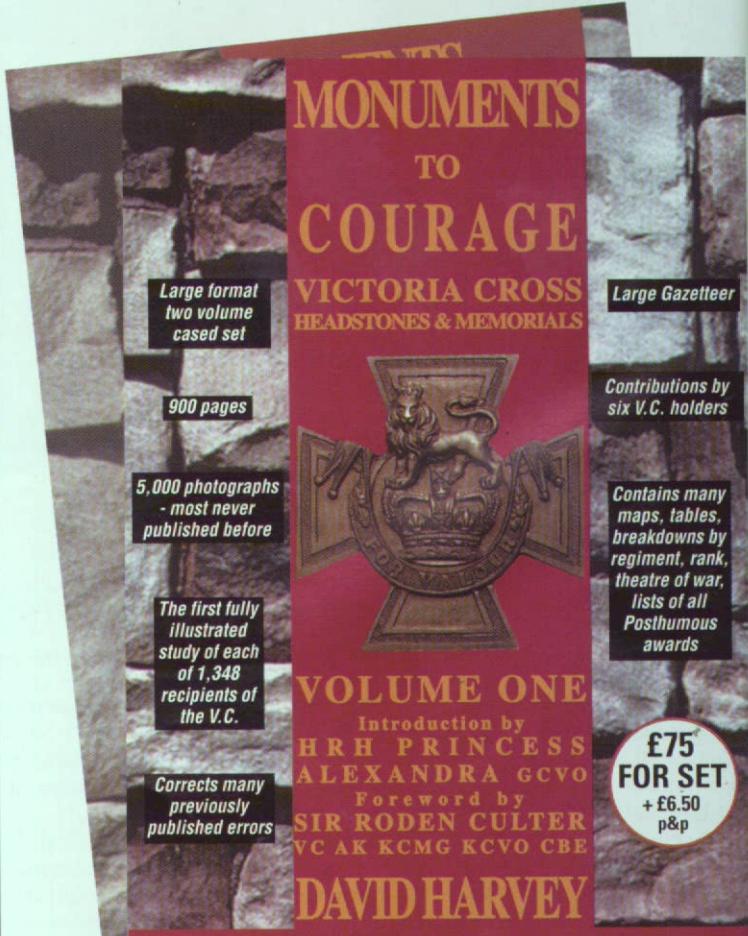
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Campaigns

No thanks, I've given it up.... maybe

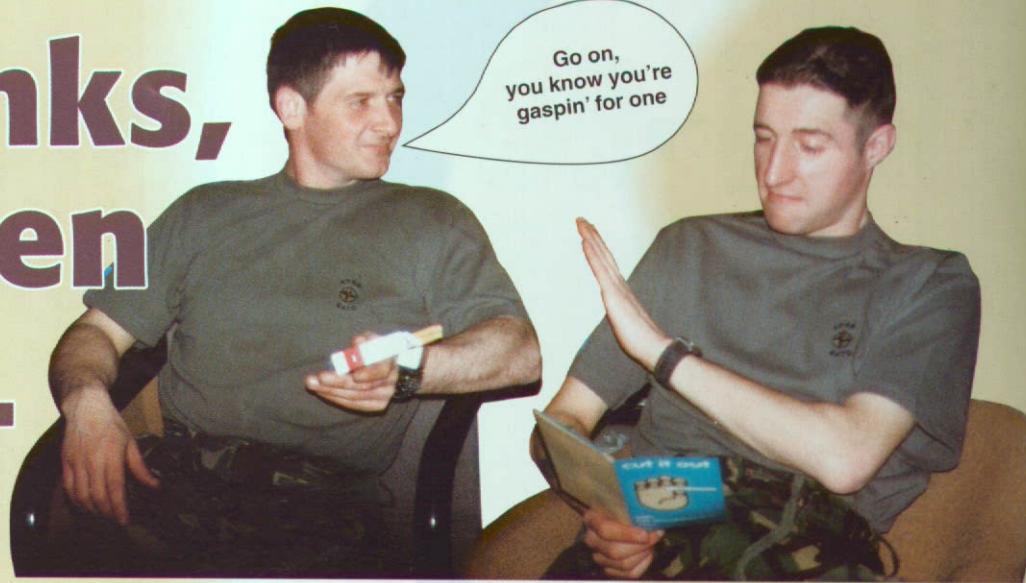
How effective was Army No Smoking Day? We asked the Highland Gunners

GIANT filter-tips, exhortations to lead a fitter, fuller life, and lurid descriptions of the potential damage to one's internal organs, sexual prowess, physical attractiveness and athletic endurance... all played their part in the Army No Smoking Day campaign on March 8, **writes John Elliott**.

But did it have any effect? We asked the Highland Gunners – 19 Regiment, Royal Artillery – to tell us whether the campaign had actually achieved what it set out to do: persuade anyone to kick the weed into touch.

Behind the gunners' efforts was a man with fitness very much on his mind – unit physical training instructor Sgt Gareth Evans APTC. With the regiment spread far and wide, he had his work cut out. Having converted from the 105mm light gun to AS90, 19 Regiment has units deployed in Bosnia (28/143 Battery) and Kosovo (19/5 Battery), with 13 (HQ) Battery split between both the theatres of operation and the bulk of the headquarters in Pristina.

Minding the shop back in Colchester, the regiment's home base, is a rear party. In all, the gunners were split across 16 distant locations at home and abroad on No Smoking Day, ranging from the icy Balkans to the almost equally cold Arbroath in Scotland, venue for



No thanks: LBdr Rob O'Readan, left, and Toby Telford (1 RHA), above, in Bosnia

Blow this for a lark: From left, Sgt Graham Thorne, LBdr John Collins, LBdr Oz Watson and Bdr Jim Doe, below



a visit by the regimental recruiting team.

Sgt Evans's telephone was red-hot as he made call after call to the scattered locations, cajoling his 433 officers and soldiers – nearly half of whom are smokers – into giving up.

And he had his successes. At the last reckoning, three of his rear party – LBdr Ronnie Wilson, LCpl Jane Cowell and Bdr Jimmy Fraser – had not succumbed.

In all, about 60 members of the regiment said they would attempt to give up. "But I think it will be very hard for some of the lads in Bosnia and Kosovo to stick to it," said Sgt Evans. "The cold and bore-

dom will make it difficult. It would have been easier if they had been in Colchester."

Campaign organiser Maj Ricky Bhabuta was delighted with the preliminary feedback from No Smoking Day.

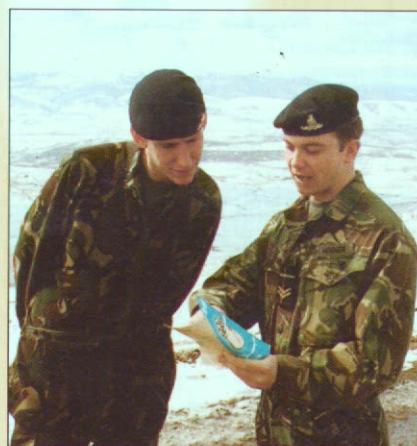


Sgt Gareth Evans

"An evaluation into the effectiveness of the campaign is under way and although the uptake was variable, we have had positive responses from as far afield as Kosovo and Germany, and many TA and cadet units," he said.

With the Army delegated as a region in the National Quit-and-Win competition starting this month, a soldier has a real chance to win £1,000.

Details about Quit-and-Win can be found on the web at www.no-smoking-day.org.uk or your local medical centre.



Cold comfort: Gnr Plug Reilly, left, and Bdr Jack Horner in a wintry Bosnia

Hi-tech route to battlefield control

Sennelager's Combat Manoeuvres Simulation Centre is not short of customers for its specialist training facility. *Soldier* watched the 1st Battalion, The Green Howards being put through its paces

Report: Ray Routledge
Pictures: Steve Dock

IN the confusion of a battlefield one element – the accurate passing of information and orders – must be right or all else is put in jeopardy.

Improving the command-and-control skills so vital to soldiers – and testing them – is specialised work. And that is precisely the task of the state-of-the-art Combat Manoeuvres Simulation Centre (CMSC) at Sennelager.

Its experienced staff take battle-groups and brigades under their wing and look closely at their battle-winning (or losing) command-and-control drills and procedures. Staff have at their disposal the Army's only simulator capable of making real-time, three-dimensional, line-of-sight calculations

Maj Bill Willmott, SO2 at CMSC, explained how it works: "The visiting unit arrives on a Monday and is given a set of orders relating to a piece of ground. Today's simulation covers ground about 10km south-west of here. An enemy force will attack and the unit has to defend the area."

"The soldiers will work out their objective and their battle plan. On Tuesday



Maj Bill Willmott



Eavesdropping: LCpl Nick Robson, front, and Sig Paul Calvert monitor the exercise communication network

You never know who's listening

LATEST addition to the CMSC is the Communication Security Training Team, which provides Comsec support to units within 1 (UK) Armoured Division in Germany.

SSgt Jason Phillips said the team's role during the simulation phase was to monitor the battle-groups's communication security.

"For example, it would be a breach for a transmission to last more than 20 seconds. Also, they have to watch what they

say because they must not give clues to the enemy."

"At the end of the exercise we give a report on good and bad points," he said. "The system we use allows us to digitally record what went on so if there is a dispute, it is all on the hard drive."

Just how well were the Green Howards doing?

"They have been very good. Their use of battle codes is very slick."

Well, that's one tick in the box.

they go and look at the actual ground they will fight over, confirm their orders and discuss their tactics, so by Tuesday evening their plans are squared away and they are ready to fight the battle."

By Wednesday, battle-group command is located in a mock-up HQ called the "factory", receiving reports and listening to how the battle is flowing from controllers in a nearby computer room.

The controllers, representing gunners, sappers, recce squadrons and many other elements of a battle-group, see a computer-generated battle and can move assets around.

The enemy works to a predetermined plan under the control of Sgt Maj Martin Derbyshire, Int Corps, who is highly experienced in battle-group computer simulations.

Controllers send in their reports of contact, informing commanders in the "factory" of their element of the battle, based on information received. The factory HQ does not have access to the computer screens depicting the battle and has to rely on reports from the controllers. The HQ has to pass orders back through the controllers if it wants to deploy soldiers and equipment.



Lt Col Patrick Roberts, CO of the 1st Battalion, The Green Howards, which has now come to the end of its tour in Germany, explained the value of the simulation. "There are many lessons to be drawn from this training. Facilities are excellent and the system provides real engagement simulations. It is very good procedural training."

"We want to make sure that the dissemination of orders is done properly and in the slickest and easiest way."

"They are assessed in an open way and if we see things going wrong we will attempt to put them right there and then."

The computers provide accurate feedback about each performance – what went right and wrong – so there can be no



Lt Col Patrick Roberts



Battlefield progress: The 1 GH artillery crew in their mock-up Warrior at CMSC, Sennelager. From left, Gnr Steven Chinery, Sgt Paul Swallow, Gnr Mike Aldore and Bdr John Knight

Battle plans: CMSC masterminds Maj Mark Winston-Davis, left, and his predecessor, Maj Tom Mouat, review how The Green Howards contingent is coping in the battle scenario

take on an armoured infantry role. Capt Liz Seymour, who was playing the part of the battle-group engineer, said that if the exercise was being staged on the ground, vehicles would be positioned just as they were in the simulation. "Apart from the rain and mud it's the same."

Although the Green Howards were fighting a battle, there were no right and no wrong answers, said Maj Willmott. "We are not here to judge their tactics, but the way they work out and issue their orders and their drills and procedures. This is command and staff training."

"We want to make sure that the dissemination of orders is done properly and in the slickest and easiest way."

"They are assessed in an open way and if we see things going wrong we will attempt to put them right there and then."

The computers provide accurate feedback about each performance – what went right and wrong – so there can be no



Capt Liz Seymour



Col Steve Hodder

dispute and the visiting "students" can take the data away to help improve performance.

It was clear that soldiers leaving the simulation did so having learned something. While Col Steve Hodder, who is in charge of CMSC, acknowledges that the simulation is not a 100 per cent substitute for field exercises, nevertheless, he points out that the centre – unlike field exercises – inflicts no damage on the countryside and saves on fuel bills.

"Simulation helps to prepare for field training," he said. "You still have to go out and get muddy, dirty, wet and cold to get that sense of realism."

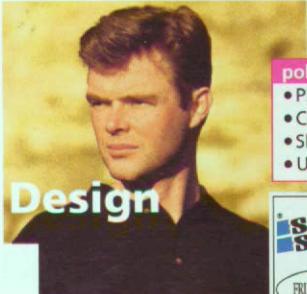
He also explained that CMSC is widening its customer base. "We are taking on a wider variety of training and have had German and Czech brigades coming through."

"We are also looking at getting involved in higher formation training and providing a basis for ARRC-level exercises."

That should be worth seeing.

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Sappers rise to occasion in rainforest

RE millennium expedition blazes a treetop trail for jungle boffins

Report: Capt Benedict Toomey
Pictures: Cpl John Skillen

AS dawn breaks over the Danum valley in Sabah, eastern Malaysia, 57 British sappers prepare for a hot and humid day in the jungle.

Their mission – Exercise Pelopor Finn – is an unusual one... to cut a 12km ecological trail into the isolated rainforest to allow scientists to study the unique tropical flora and fauna.

Led by Capt Mark Workman, the soldiers from 25 Engineer Regiment in Northern Ireland, are all members of a Royal Engineers millennium expedition.

They are also in the jungle to build two treetop towers at the Danum Valley field centre, from which the scientists will carry out research into the canopy of the

jungle. The Danum Valley is one of the last bastions of pristine tropical rainforest in Sabah as well as being one of the world's tallest.

Planning Pelopor (Malaysian for trail) Finn was a labour of love for Capt Workman, who was born and brought up in the country.

The 12km trail in Tawau Hills Park was cleared from sea level to 2,000ft through virgin rainforest. The sappers had to create steps using logs so they could climb the frequently muddy trail.

The observation towers were constructed 120ft up 200ft-plus dipterocarp trees, requiring the sappers to wear harnesses, brush up on their rope techniques and push any fear of heights into the background.

PHENOMENAL

"I thought the trees would be similar to those in the UK," said Cpl Ian Ridsdale. "But the dipterocarp is phenomenal. We are working 120ft above the ground, hanging from a rope, so there is nothing to hold on to or push against."

Platforms are constructed on the ground, then hoisted high up in the canopy and fitted together.

LCpl Andrew Everett, a lumberjack in Argyllshire before joining the Army, was the senior chainsaw operator, responsible for clearing trees and deadfall from the route. It took up to five hours to clear 100m.

Given the element of danger in the work, and the risk of accidental machete injuries, the soldiers had to maintain good jungle disciplines and personal hygiene. Nearest vehicle track was a six-hour tab away while helicopter cover provided by the Malaysian Army ceased at 1600 hours every day.



Grin and pare it: Ex-lumberjack LCpl Andrew Everett branches out



Trunk call: LCpl Ian Ridsdale and LCpl Gary Ashton carry out measurements 120ft up a 210ft tree

Charged - with excellence

Royal Military Police officers have unique responsibilities, especially in the field. The intensity of their training leaves little to chance, as we found out in Chichester

Report: Ray Routledge
Pictures: Ash Amliwala

IT must be suicide. The parked car's engine is running and the hosepipe connected to its exhaust trails ominously through a small chink in the window. Clearly there is a body inside the vehicle.

A distressing scene. Well, yes and no. If it were real it would be tragic.

This time it is not. We are watching a small part of the intense training through which scene-of-crime officers (SOCOs) are put at the Royal Military Police Training School at Roussillon Barracks near Chichester in West Sussex. The rural sur-

Here's how you earn that stripe

STUDENTS who arrive at Chichester straight from phase one training and find themselves in Operations Training Company under Maj Stephen Russell, deserve all they get... rapid promotion to lance corporal.

The 21-week course for 32 students is led by a platoon commander, a sergeant and three corporals, and the pace never lets up.

Candidates face five weeks of special-to-arm training, including NBC, a first-aid refresher and weapons training on the use of the 9mm Browning pistol.

They spend two weeks on signals, a week on exercise at Longmoor and then return to the school to brush up on basic investigation skills, police work and investigative interview techniques. Environmental training is followed by three weeks running simulated shifts in the so-called 140 Training Provost Company.

It is as if they were working in an MP environment in a unit, complete with a desk sergeant, interview rooms and computer access. They investigate thefts, criminal damage and incidents of assault, all the while being assessed and marked.

Then there's driver-training - all students must gain a trailer license and be competent to drive a Land Rover cross-country and at night.

They leave as lance corporals class three... and they deserve it.

roundings are deceptive. From these pleasant acres emerges a small but highly-effective corps of élite soldiers - the Army's very own lawmen and women.

Under the command of Lt Col Kevin Bacon, the school trains military police for the Army and Royal Marines, specialist regimental police and Military Police Guard Service.

Sixty-two military and 40 civilian staff conduct 48 new-start, refresher and promotion courses and last year trained 848 students, producing more than 250 new RMPs. The centre also welcomes foreign students and recent arrivals have come from Israel, Pakistan and South Africa.

But the priority is clear. "We only have one real customer, the Provost Marshal Army," said Lt Col Bacon.

He said many of those embarking on their phase two courses, the lowest level at the school, come straight from phase one training at the Army Training Regiments.

LEAVE AS NCO

Phase two training at the school is a 21-week military police course and is the only one in the Army where the graduating student leaves as an NCO.

The school places high demands on soldiers and training is rigorous to ensure they reach the necessary standard.

Studies are similar to those a civilian policeman would undertake, including basic statement writing, how to deal with a traffic accident, and breaking up a fight. There are also areas specific to soldiers.

They have to learn about operations and how military police work in a war zone in support of the rest of the Army. Then there is their peacetime role, which is more akin to bobby-on-the-beat work.

The school undertakes all continuation training throughout an RMP's career. He - or she (28 per cent of students are female) - may return to West Sussex to learn more advanced investigation techniques, including close-protection training. RMPs regularly support the Royal and Diplomatic Protection Squad and protect diplomats overseas.

Another aspect of military policing is provided by the Special Investigation



Dusting down: WO2 Jane Lord, left, checks for prints



Para provosts: RMP supporting the Parachute Regiment, right, have to train to go wherever the unit is sent

Learning curve: Military police are trained to a standard which enables them to retain authority in any type of investigation, including murder. Below, Cpl Jeff Morgan supervises training in investigative techniques



Police record: Sgt John Lovell takes photographic evidence at the scene of a crime



police work. The standard of evidence demanded is extremely high and our officers have to meet that standard.

"We don't want people who just obey orders. We demand high-calibre students capable of working on their own initiative and of taking decisions."

Maj Ambrose said military police are trained to a standard which allows them to retain authority in any type of investigation, from murder downward. Jurisdiction, however, depends on whether an officer is serving in the UK or overseas.

"In the UK, including Northern Ireland, an incident with a soldier - and always with a civilian - would normally be taken up by the civilian police although they often invite us to render assistance," he explained.

"It's different overseas. In Germany, for instance, there is something called the States of Forces Agreement, which gives

the German authorities the right to hand over jurisdiction for any criminal offence involving an off-duty or on-duty soldier or a dependant.

"Even if the offense takes place outside the barracks against a German civilian, often the jurisdiction is retained by the British military authorities. Each case is treated individually and the decision is made by the German officials. Even when they do retain jurisdiction, they often ask us to undertake the investigation."

"It all comes back to this place and the quality of training we offer and the calibre of the students. Because of our often very long lines of communication in the field, our junior NCOs in uniform and our SIB have to be able to think on their feet. They need the depth of training they receive."

The high standard and quality of that training is the envy of many a county police force.

This cat's so happy to get its paws wet

Introducing 16 Air Assault Brigade's new rough, tough off-road platform

Report: John Elliott
Pictures: Steve Dock

IN common with every other self-regarding feline, it is powerful for its size, low-slung and extremely agile, it purrs when idling, and it is capable of an unexpected turn of speed. There the fluffy, pussy-cat comparisons end, because Supacat 3 – 16 Air Assault Brigade's rugged new go-anywhere, all-terrain, air-portable, kit carrier – is not a thing of beauty.

It does, however, get the job done. Reckoned by its designers to be "soldier-proof", Supacat 3 is the ultimate no frills, high performance off-road vehicle, as BBC 1's *Top Gear* presenter Tiff Needell found out when the Defence Procurement Agency (DPA) arranged for him to test one at Long Valley near Aldershot.

FASTER

The Mk 3 is faster (top speed 40mph) than its predecessor as well as more powerful, which means it can cope with a heavier payload. The new Supacat can pack an impressive 1.6 tons of equipment on its back and pull another 4.5 tonnes distributed over three trailers. An added advantage is the self-loading nature of the trailers.

Designed by Supacat and built by Alvis Vehicles Ltd at Telford, the Mk 3 is powered by a lively 1.9-litre VW turbo-diesel engine.

The whole package can be dropped from an aircraft to give airborne forces instant mobility on the ground. As paratroopers taking part in the liberation of Kosovo quickly demonstrated, Supacat is amenable to having machine-guns bolted on to it as and when the need arises. That



Off-road test: Tiff Needell from BBC TV's *Top Gear* programme pushes Supacat 3 to the limit on rough ground at Long Valley, Aldershot

Drivers will find they can turn the six-wheeled vehicle on a handkerchief using two forms of steering. If the Ackerman system (think bike-like handlebars) can't do the job, the driver can make a skid turn by engaging one set of wheels separately to change course rapidly in much the same way as a tank commander uses his tracks to manoeuvre.

The six very low-pressure tyres, inflated to only 5psi, mean the vehicle can perform a soft-shoe shuffle across virtually any surface, including mud. It might have been a life-saver if it had been available to rescuers working in flood-hit Mozambique recently.

Fifty-five Mk 3s have been bought by the MoD under a contract worth about £5 million and the first are due to be delivered to 16 Air Assault Brigade at Colchester this month. The vehicle will be used by both The Parachute Regiment and the Royal Marines.

turns it into a cat with claws. It can climb steeper slopes (up to 45-degree inclines) than earlier versions and – unlike its four-legged feline cousins – is happy to take to the water with an outboard motor fitted for propulsion.

"We're very proud of Supacat 3," said DPA spokesman Jeremy Greaves. "It looks identical to earlier versions but a lot of work has gone into making improvements and our soldiers can have absolute confidence in it. We reckon the Mk 3's virtually soldier-proof."

Slap it on!



NEXT time you have a moan about the British summer, consider this fact: the UK's death rate from skin cancer is double Australia's. Why? Because Aussies are far better educated about the dangers of exposure to the sun.

Scary? You bet. In 1997 nearly 2,000 people in Britain died from skin cancer, while Oz, despite a much hotter climate, records about 1,000 in an average year.

While there's no such thing as a safe suntan, you can spend time in the sun without damaging your skin... by splashing on a reputable sunscreen.

The damage from dangerous UV rays is cumulative. It's a bit like putting money in a bank... you keep topping up the balance until payback time – in the form of cancer. Yet if everyone used a high SPF sunscreen regularly, at least until the age of 18, the number of people getting melanoma could be reduced by 70 per cent.

ISSUED BY MOD

Soldiers deployed in hot climates are particularly vulnerable, which is why sun cream is issued by the MoD. The three main lines of defence against burning are to keep out of the sun; wear sensible clothing; or use a correctly-applied sunscreen.

All skin cancer is treatable if diagnosed and acted upon in time. Here's a seven-point check list if you become concerned about any darker, pigmented patch on your skin:

- Does it itch or is sensation altered over the patch?
- Is its diameter 1cm or larger?
- Is its size increasing?
- Is its border irregular in shape?
- Does the density of black and brown colour vary within the patch?
- Is the patch inflamed?
- Is there bleeding or crusting?

If you answer yes to three or more of those questions, go and see your doctor.

WIN SOME FACTOR 15

We've got 24 bottles of Delph factor 15 sunscreen (as issued by the MoD) plus 24 bottles of after-sun cream to give away.

To have a chance of winning a set, tell us on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope how many Australians die of skin cancer every year:

a, 100; b, 500; c, 1,000

Post your answer to Sunscreen Competition, *Soldier*, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2DU to reach us by May 31. Usual competition rules apply. We'll send the first 24 correct entries a bottle of Delph factor 15 and a bottle of Delph after-sun.



Eye in the sky to hunt for mines

THIS is the revolutionary airship-borne radar system conceived to help in the international battle to rid the world of unwanted landmines.

● The Mineseeker project is based on a radar developed by the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency (DERA) and a low-flying "air platform" made by The Lightship Group (TLG).

● Sir Richard Branson, who has thrown his energy behind the research programme, is looking for big commercial sponsors.

● As reported in last month's Books pages the airships will glide over contaminated areas to locate mines.

Gateway to internet puts MoD on world wide web

THE MoD will be able to make full use of the internet following the introduction of a secure electronic communications service by BT Defence, working in partnership with the Defence Communication Services Agency (DCSA).

Through BT's Internet Gateway Service, the MoD can access the internet, allowing it to utilise the world wide web and other information resources in the knowledge that built-in system safeguards and protection mechanisms are in place. Until now, the lack of an effective "firewall" has prevented the MoD from enjoying the business benefits of accessing the internet.

● A stab-resistant material known as Kevlar Comfort AS 299 has been developed by DuPont. It is claimed to combine protection against knives and other sharp weapons with low weight and good flexibility. DuPont says the new material will allow body armour manufacturers to introduce stab-resistant vests which can be worn comfortably for extended periods.

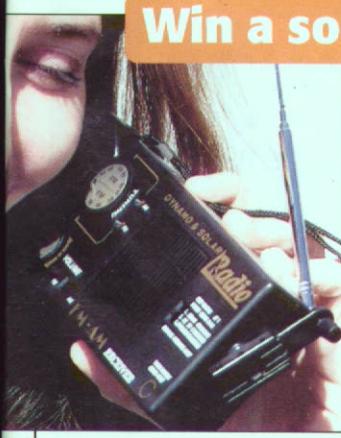
Win a solar-powered radio-torch

AN FM-AM radio-flashlight with four different power sources sounds like a good idea if your batteries are always running out just as the football results come on. *Soldier*, in association with BCB, has five rechargeable dynamo and solar radio-torches to give away. Each worth £36, the radios can be powered by sunlight, mains electricity, normal type AA batteries or by using a handle to crank up the dynamo. To have a chance of winning one, tell us on a postcard or sealed envelope how many ways you can power the radio:

a, 3; b, 4; c, 5

Address your postcard to Radio Competition at *Soldier*, to reach us by May 31. Usual competition rules apply.

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TA's big day

THEY came in their tens of thousands, bursting through the doors of Territorial Army centres the length and breadth of the United Kingdom.

The second TA open day – on Saturday, March 25 – smashed the previous year's figures, with attendance up by 83 per cent to 57,383 at nearly 350 centres, and enquiries about a career in the reserves topping 4,900, a 99 per cent jump on last year.

Events ranged from very large multi-regimental displays to demonstrations put on by company-strength units. Main attractions varied from centre to centre, with members of the public being given the chance to see, touch and try on equipment, shoot on indoor ranges and tuck into Army-style stews, barbecues and burgers-and-chips.



Thanks, Dad: Ten-year-old Nathan is shown over a Milan by his father, Sgt Maj Terry Abrams, when the Queen's Royal Surrey Company, 3rd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment opened its doors at its Farnham TA Centre headquarters

Picture: Mike Weston



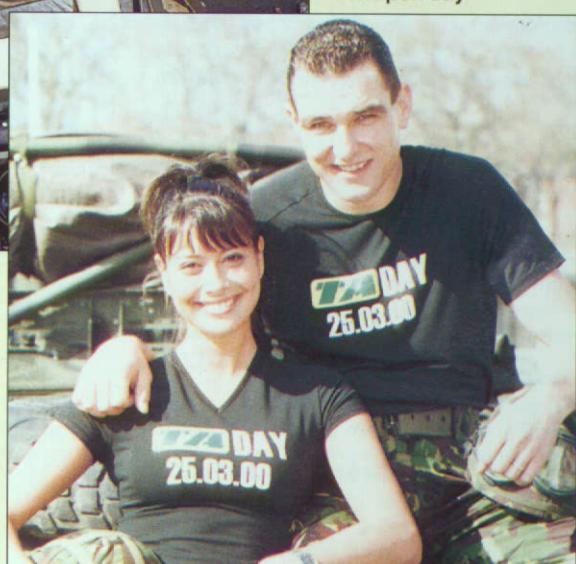
Salute to the Territorial Army: Camouflaged *High Road* star Shonagh Price, above, gets fell in with the Glasgow gunners of 207 Battery, part of 105 Regiment Royal Artillery (Volunteers), during her visit to their headquarters to publicise national TA day

Picture: Mark Owens



Future Warrior: Pte Luke Miller, of 1 PWRR with ten-year-old Josephine Hopper of Farnham, above. Her father is in the Royal Air Force but she says she would like to join the Army. Luke, a Regular soldier, supported the 3 PWRR open day at Farnham TA Centre with a Warrior infantry fighting vehicle belonging to the 1st Battalion

Picture: Mike Weston





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1997/1998.
1998/1999.
1999/2000.

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From Westminster to Wapping

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

Operations troops cut to 27 per cent

IN LINE with reducing international obligations, the proportion of the trained Army now committed to operations has been cut to 27 per cent, Armed Forces Minister John Spellor told MPs.

Speaking in a debate on Armed Forces personnel on April 13, he said measures were being taken to ease tour intervals further.

"We recognise there is overstretch," he said, "which is why we are taking measures such as this to ameliorate the problem – not solve it, because there is a substantial underlying problem facing us and other armed forces."

"We also need to look to the future to see how we can involve the reserve forces more and retain our training."

He emphasised the need to keep up sophisticated and challenging training to maintain the ability to conduct high-intensity war-fighting operations.

Troops on operations were unable to do this, he said, but "we cannot afford to relax standards".

Mr Spellor quoted measures already announced to encourage people to stay in the forces and said 25,000 people had joined the Services in the past 12 months – 96 per cent of the year's target. Of those, 3,000 were women.

Salisbury MP Robert Key commented that an "especially worrying" consequence of undermanning and overstretch was the rising divorce-rate in marriages where at least one spouse was in the Services, including the Territorial Army.

Among statistics he quoted was a rise from 1.8 to 2 per cent in divorces in the Army since 1990, compared with a fall in the civilian population from 1.25 to 1.07 per cent.

Crawley MP Laura Moffatt, a relatively new member of the Defence Select Committee, paid tribute to the forces. She said: "I have



been bowled over by the efficiency and pleasantness of our Service personnel – and by how tough they can be when the chips are down. It is a lesson for us all."

In answer to criticisms of some Service accommodation, Defence Minister Dr Lewis Moonie said: "I visited some

single living accommodation yesterday, which was not the worst by any means, but I am well aware of the problems with which single soldiers have to contend. I assure the House that I shall deal with them as quickly as possible.

"We are trying to reduce turbulence for personnel and their families in the Army, and I intend to give further direction on that point to the Defence Housing Executive and through the chain of command."

● A new order, effective until March 31, 2001, has been made under the Reserve Forces Act 1996 to allow call-out of reserve volunteers to support operations in the Balkans and Iraq region. Since Nato operations started in former Yugoslavia, reserves have provided

about ten per cent of total UK manpower in theatre.

Other points from Parliament:

Taster days: The Ministry of Defence is to offer work-experience for young women in a range of jobs across the Services not traditionally seen as being easily open to them.

"These 'Taster days' will show the exciting opportunities that are available," said Armed Forces Minister John Spellor. "We promote the brightest and best regardless of gender and women are now reaching the most senior ranks. Very few organisations can match our recruitment of one woman in every five management posts."

Memorial garden protected: A memorial garden attached to Serle's House, Winchester, commemorating the lives of members of the Hampshire Regiment, will be legally protected when the Grade 2 listed building is sold. The sale follows a study of regimental HQs and museums in the city. Those now in the house will move to Upper Barracks.

Salerno pardon denied: A plea by Aberdeen South MP Anne Begg for a free pardon for 191 soldiers who took part in the largest wartime mutiny in British military history – at Salerno, Italy, in September, 1943 – was rejected by Armed Forces Minister John Spellor during a Commons debate.

Army numbers: Strength of the UK trained Army on February 1 was 96,607, an increase of 147 over the figure for March 1999.

Cadet figures: According to latest statistics, total strength of the UK Army Cadet Forces is 42,550. The three ACF contingents with most members are Humberside and S Yorkshire (17,079); Yorkshire North and West (14,016); and Leicestershire and Northamptonshire (13,051).

● Army chiefs are examining secret plans to raise money by closing Aldershot, moving thousands of soldiers to new bases in the Highlands. The report suggests huge sums could be made by closing the traditional home of the British Army, where land prices have spiralled. – *Sunday Times*

● The Royal Military Tattoo 2000 on Horse Guards in July has hit a hitch. Organisers had not realised that July is the season of love, as far as the pelicans next door in St James's Park are concerned. Bird experts are being consulted to ensure the sound of low-level flypasts and artillery barrages won't put the pelicans off their stride. – *Daily Telegraph*



● SAS squads have snatched 12 of the 18 indicted war criminals seized by Nato peacekeepers in Bosnia since 1997 and UN prosecutors fear that unless other nations, most crucially France, reverse their policy on detentions, further progress will be seriously hampered. – *Sunday Telegraph*

● A "secret" garden, forgotten for years behind the security perimeter of Britain's biggest military base, has been opened to the public. The Army has created a mile-long path around the 42-acre former training area in the heart of Catterick Garrison. Foxglove Covert is one of the finest examples of willow carr in northern England. – *The Times*

● A Royal Engineer who lost a leg on United Nations peacekeeping duties in Bonia had a claim for compensation rejected in a test case appeal in the House of Lords. Sgt Trevor Walker's right leg was amputated above the knee after a Serbian tank shelled his accommodation block. – *Daily Telegraph*

They're looking after the folks back home

When soldiers deploy to the Balkans, many leave families behind. We investigate who looks after the welfare of those who wait

Report: Ray Routledge
Pictures: Steve Dock

"BE Prepared" may be the motto of the Scout movement, but when The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards at Fallingbostel heard they were to spend six months in Kosovo, they did the right thing and prepared soldiers – and their families – for the deployment.

Brig Richard Shirreff, Commander 7 Armoured Brigade places great importance on looking after families.

"We are extremely lucky to have such high-calibre people to send on operations, and to have the support of their families," he said. "We must make sure dependants are looked after while their loved ones are away."

Soldiers and families belonging to the 7th Armoured Brigade were given as much information as possible and a Kosovo information booklet was pro-



Reassuring families:
Capt Andy Stuart

duced. It included useful phone numbers, do's and don'ts, and information about the history of the Balkans.

Desert Rats flying to Kosovo departed knowing that their families would be well looked after. Scots DG families' officer Capt Andy Stuart said his team offered a total support package. "We are here to ensure the well-being and welfare of families is maintained," he said.

With 1,080 families at Fallingbostel and another 30 in the UK, he recognised that communication was vital in providing reassurance and reducing stress.

His team has set up an internet site to help people keep in touch. "Initially it will be used to send electronic blueys," Capt Stuart explained. "Our long-term aspiration is to improve communications so the guys can send letters and photographs on a daily basis.

"We also hope to have a small video



Training aids: SSgt Gerry McFarlane, Scots DG discusses a course pamphlet with Naomi Smith

connection on the system so they can actually see and speak to each other at the same time."

Help and advice will be available for those not yet computer-literate. The intention is to make the Families' Office,

with its access to the internet site, a hub of social events. The centre includes an education wing and families are encouraged to sign up for classes.

But the centre's main focus will still be on welfare and social issues. While the

regiment is in Kosovo, staff will be available every morning to help with problems.

The building also houses a crèche facility, a hairdressing salon, a travel agent – usually worked off its feet towards the end of a tour – and a restaurant used for evening functions.

Capt Stuart said: "We want to encourage wives to come into the centre so they can talk to other people, drop the children off for a couple of hours and take a break.

"They can come here for everything – to ask questions or to sort out problems. We want to take the worry away from families left behind. I want people to become involved."

HOSPITAL VISITS

Capt Stuart hopes to encourage volunteers to take part in hospital visits and to look after neighbour's children in times of crisis.

Social activities will not be neglected. Two mini-buses and a coach are available for shopping trips to Bremen and Hamburg, and families have access to a yacht club.

"We provide the club with a piper for some of their functions, and they allow us to use some of the club's facilities, including sailing to Denmark."

Capt Stuart said there was a conscience behind his planning. "It's called my wife," he said with a grin. "She has told me of some of the problems she and my family face when I'm away and those problems apply to everyone else."

Life's a laugh

– with Doug Baker



"Join the Army if you must, son, but be good. No fighting."



"Yes, but apart from having seen Saving Private Ryan, have you any Army experience?"



"I don't like the way your hair is standing at ease!"



Well prepared: Brig Richard Shirreff leads the "Red Rats" in Kosovo

Balkan challenge for Desert Rats

THE Desert Rats are renowned for their tenacity and bravery in fighting against all odds.

So when Brig Richard Shirreff led 7 Armoured Brigade, with their distinctive red shoulder flash, into their KFOR tour in Kosovo this spring, he took with him the capability to fight if he had to. More specifically, he was equipped to deter any effort to undermine the peace agreement.

In Kosovo, HQ 7 Armd Bde is supported by its own signals squadron, The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, the

2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, a large element of 32 Engineer Regiment, 19 Regiment, Royal Artillery, 24 Armoured Field Ambulance from Catterick, and 111 Provost Company, as well as other elements of the multinational brigade.

His mission was to build on foundations laid by his predecessors from 19 Armoured Brigade.

"The situation has changed since last summer and will continue to change in what is a dynamic and unpredictable place."

He set out clearly what he hopes to achieve with 7 Armd Bde. "Maintaining security is on-going and requires careful handling, particularly to ensure everyone complies with the undertaking.

"There is plenty of scope in Kosovo for fighting. It is not as war-weary as Bosnia was at the time of Dayton but there will be elements in Kosovo that will have a go at their former enemies across the border. There is still a lot of hatred."

Brig Shirreff said: "I know 19 Brigade did an immense

amount of work to enable the aid agencies to work and to maintain a handle in villages where there are problems." His troops would continue that work.

The core elements of 7 Armd Bde had a vigorous training year in 1999 but their philosophy is that they are a wartime brigade prepared to take anything thrown at them. Not that they are without means to throw things back.

The brigade now has Challenger 2 – "probably the best tank in the world" in the opinion of Brig Shirreff.

The brigadier was looking forward to working with the Czechs in Kosovo, an anticipation shared by Capt Jason Gray, 207 Signal Squadron's ops officer.

"I have worked with the Czechs before and am looking forward to doing so again," he said. "They are a superb, professional outfit."

He has no doubt that the brigade will do its job, with distinction. "We wear the red Desert Rat flash with pride and it is recognised everywhere."

No one doubts that.

From Korea to Countdown

Korean War veteran Bill Tidy has enjoyed a 40-year career as a cartoonist, humorist and radio and TV personality. And he has fond memories of his time in the Army

Interview: Ray Routledge
Picture: Steve Dock

THE first thing you notice about Bill Tidy is the twinkle in his eye. It's there as a result of years of viewing the world from a slightly different and altogether more amusing angle than most of us.

Yet few people know that this amiable scouser is a Korean War veteran.

"For me personally, there were no heroics in Korea," recalled the cartoonist as he sat in his studio in rural Derbyshire. "Korea was fondly known as the Forgotten War – and I think it still is."

As a young man of 20, Sgt Bill Tidy found himself stationed at Pusan, operating in movements and shipping. He loved his time in the Army but volunteered for Korea only because of an unwelcome posting to Germany.

"I served for three years as a short-term Regular, earning 42 shillings a week instead of 28. I thought that as I wasn't doing anything I might as well get the extra 14 shillings," he said. "I enjoyed it. It was tremendous."

Bill started at Malvern, then Chatham and Gillingham and describes the period as one of the happiest times of his life. "I

regret never being posted to a field regiment and ended up in movements. I love the engineers ... they are the best of the lot."

Bill moved from Gillingham to Bad Oeynhausen in Germany and hated it. "I volunteered for Korea just to get away from that place," he recalled with a grin.

Transport to the Far East was by sea and Bill departed from his home town of Liverpool for a transit camp in Japan.

"The food was magic, the weather was beautiful, the cherry blossom was out – it was like an operetta starring 500 men with boots on."

While in Japan Bill sold his first cartoon to a local English-language newspaper. Little did he know that this "bit of fun" would eventually become his career. Then he was packed off to Korea.

"A lot of my mates went up the line to Seoul but I stayed in Pusan," he said. "I did nothing exceptional in Korea."

TONS OF UNDERWEAR

Bill recalled a funny incident on his return trip. "We took a ship to Singapore, where in those days you could buy underwear for next to nothing. We bought tons of it to take home."

"Then I was told I was to return by air, which I didn't want to do with all that clothing. At the airport my bag was too heavy so I turned it out to meet the weight limit and every taxi driver in the district helped himself to my underwear."

On his return to the UK, Bill left the Army and, rather than going into a shipping office in Liverpool, where he had worked before his service, joined an advertising agency.

"It was awful, but it taught me what a lot of guys who go to art school don't learn – how to use



Christmas mirth: Bill illustrated the Army Benevolent Fund greeting card used by *Soldier* during the 1999 festive season

space." Bill did attend a night-school art class once, but went away disappointed.

"They said all the best-looking girls were there but I must have missed them. They looked like a selection of front-row forwards."

While at the agency, Bill met an artist who sold cartoons, which prompted him to have a go himself. He was soon selling his own to magazines such as *Picturegoer*.

He quit the agency and was soon con-

tributing material to the *Daily Mirror*, the point at which his career took off. At one time he had six cartoon strips running simultaneously. They included *The Cloggies* in *Private Eye* and the *Fosdyke Saga*, which enjoyed success for 15 years in the *Mirror* before being dropped by Robert Maxwell.

"He didn't know what it was about," chuckled Bill.

Bill's humour, love of life and keen

sporting enthusiasm (he supports Everton Football Club) led to his participation in fund-raising charity cricket matches with the Lord's Taverners.

"It's like being part of a privileged club," he said. "It has given me immense pleasure. As a complete amateur, when you play cricket at this level you know you are going to be reduced to the level of a prat when you go out to face professionals. All you can do is your best. Drop a



Artist at work: Cartoonist Bill Tidy, left, prepares another humorous picture at his studio in the Derbyshire countryside, and above comments on a 'topical' Army issue

Bill has not forgotten his Army roots and continues to work for all three services, particularly the Army Benevolent Fund

catch or bowl hopelessly and the crowd bellows abuse. Some of the amateurs, like Sir Tim Rice and Rory Bremner, are actually quite good. Sportsmen from other games tend to be OK – Russell Osman, the former England footballer, is a good cricketer."

When not being bowled out for a low score, Bill can be found at matches scribbling away on his cartoon pad, selling them to raise money for charity.

"Everyone who works for a charity doesn't realise how they get sucked in until only their feet are sticking out," he smiled. "You don't think about it."

WORKING HARD

Bill is working as hard as ever but lives quietly with Rosa, his wife of 40 years, in the countryside. He takes in cricket at Nottinghamshire and football at Derby County.

Despite his success as a cartoonist, scriptwriter and TV panellist on shows like *Countdown*, Bill has not forgotten his Army roots and continues to work for all three services, particularly the Army Benevolent Fund. He admires the professionalism of today's soldiers.

"I read today of the dreadful things that happen to civilians in Kosovo and Bosnia, the wickedness of it all," he said.

"It would be all too easy to feel superior or because you have a uniform on and the people are hungry and frightened. It speaks volumes for our soldiers that 99.9 per cent of them behave properly."

It was a heart-felt compliment from one old soldier to thousands of others who serve in today's Army.

Sea, sand and snow in Cyprus

Woolwich gunners enjoy preview of soldiering in the Mediterranean

SNOW-capped mountain tops, vineyard valleys and crystal-clear coastlines were the backdrop for a Lion Sun exercise in Cyprus put to good use by the gunners of 16 Regiment, Royal Artillery while the UK was still in the grip of winter.

During their six weeks in the Mediterranean, the Woolwich-based gunners took part in leadership courses for junior ranks, live-firing drills, escape-and-evasion tactics and beach-landing training to prepare for an intensive five-day exercise.

During their spare time, 13 members of 4 Troop Workshop helped a local charity, painting and decorating wards at a home for the disabled run by the Theotokos Foundation.

Although the training was robust, Lion Sun was not all work for 16 Regiment. The gunners had the chance of a two-day trip to Israel, followed by adventurous training which gave them a rare opportunity to divide their time between skiing on water or snow. The

unusual combination is possible on the island, where warm beaches are a short drive away from the Troodos Mountains.

Lt Col Paul Lane, the CO, said: "I'm delighted with the way things went. The leadership courses in particular worked well."

Training for the beach landings was given by Marchwood-based 417 Marine Troop, part of 17 Marine and Port Regiment. The troop is on a two-year posting to Cyprus.

For many of the gunners the chance of a beach landing was the highlight of the exercise. They "hit the beach" in high-speed boats and landing craft before storming coastal cliffs under fire.

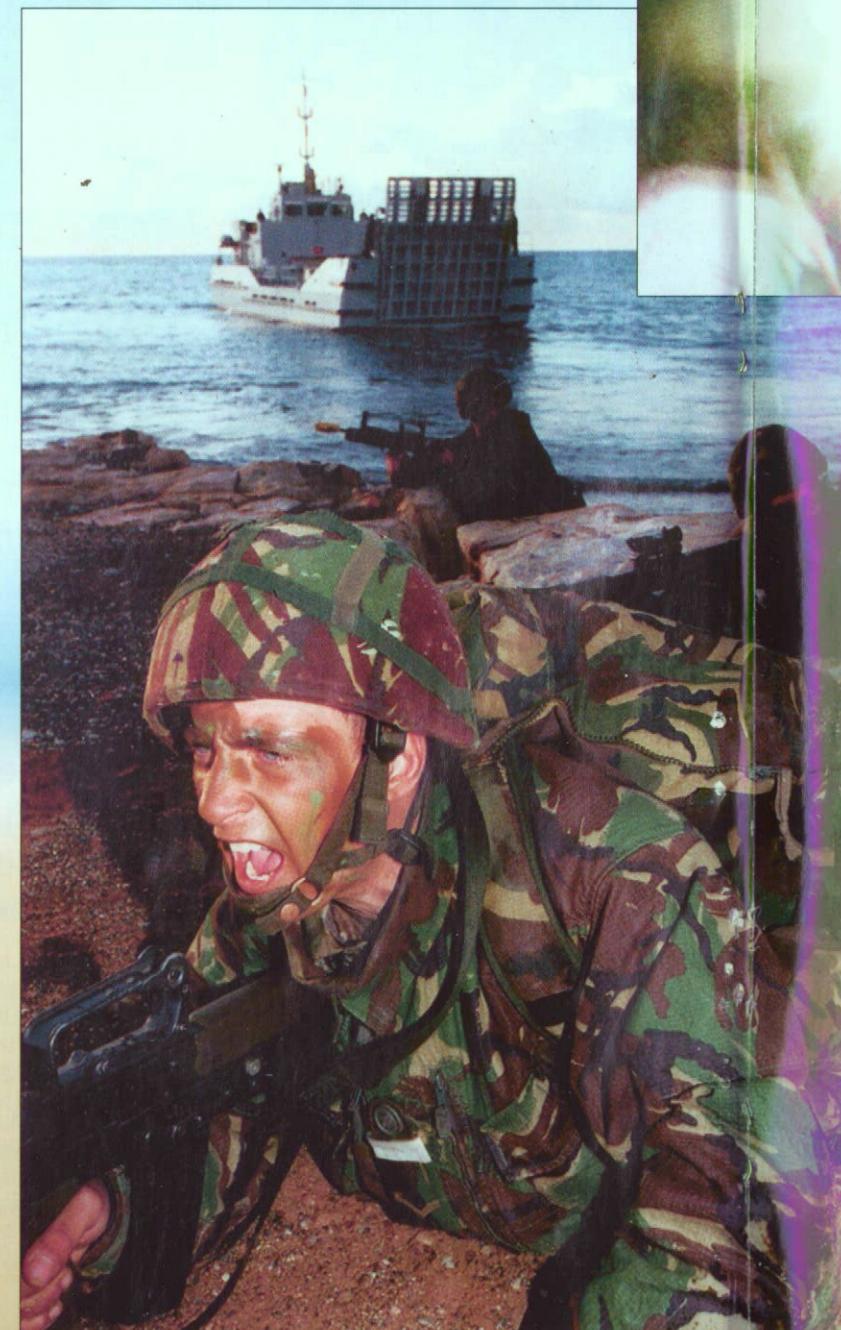
Now back home, 16 Regt will soon start training for its return to Cyprus in June at the start of a six-month UN tour, when its soldiers will patrol the Green Line buffer zone which separates Greek Cypriots in the south from the Turkish-occupied north.



It's all go: A bombardier, above, from 16 Regiment RA takes part in leadership training and assessment during an exercise in Cyprus

Advance to contact: Gunners, right, get to grips with the enemy during a beach landing phase of Exercise Lion Sun

Now for something a bit different: For many soldiers of 19 Regiment, below, the chance to "hit the beach" was a highlight of their six weeks of exercises and training in Cyprus



Ski-time in the Med? Gnr Stuart Nugent, above, attempts to keep upright during his first session on skis. The Troodos Mountains provided a major adventurous training opportunity for 19 Regiment RA personnel taking part in Exercise Lion Sun



Aiming for the top: LBdr Heidi Cochrane, above, had her sights set on promotion during a junior ranks' leadership course in Cyprus



Surf's up: Gnr Simon Harris takes the plunge at dinghy sailing

Pictures: Maj Jim Gallagher

For this job, get past the Gaoler

Officially, they are the Yeoman Warders of Her Majesty's Royal Palace and Fortress the Tower of London and members of the Queen's Bodyguard of the Yeoman Guard Extraordinary. To the rest of us, they are just plain Beefeaters

Report: Ray Routledge
Pictures: Mike Weston

JOHN Keohane loved being a soldier. His proud record of 27 years in the Royal Signals is testament to that. The big question for him was, what was he going to do next?

The answer was simple: become a Yeoman Warder – a Beefeater to you and me – at the Tower of London.

John, who left the Army as a WO2 in 1991, recalls how he went about it: "I read about the job in Queen's Regulations and there was also an article about being a Yeoman Warder in the corps magazine. I realised I could fulfil the requirements and, because my wife's parents lived in London, it seemed a logical move."

He is one of 39 Yeoman Warders working under the authority of a Chief Yeoman Warder and a Yeoman Gaoler, all of whom live at the Tower. They keep watch at the Tower alongside soldiers detailed from the same regiments that guard Buckingham Palace and St James's Palace.

WO1 Allen Preston, who completed 24 years' Army service in the REME, is using his resettlement period as a probationer. He is in good company, having joined three other former REME Yeoman Warders at the Tower.

ENJOYING IT

"I am thoroughly enjoying it," he said. "I had an interest in military history and served with six different infantry battalions during my Army career, the last being The Royal Regiment of Wales."

"I have moved into a two-bedroom apartment within the Tower and I've been to St James's Palace."

Like most new arrivals on probation, Allen had no formal qualifications in history. In common with all the others, he was allocated a mentor, one of the senior Yeoman Warders. Now Allen is learning the history in the traditional Yeoman Warder fashion . . . it is being passed on from one man to the next in the form of the "The Tower Story".



Distinguished prisoner: Yeoman Warder John Keohane, above, talks to visitors about the imprisonment of Sir Thomas More



Proud to serve: The White Tower, main picture, with, from left, Ray Sanders-Crook, Allan Preston and Richard Sands



Inscription: Yeoman Warder Crawford Butler, far right, with 400 year old graffiti in the Beauchamp Tower

To have a chance of becoming a Yeoman Warder, applicants must be former senior warrant officers with a minimum 22 years' service, be between 40 and 55 years of age, have been awarded the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal and had a recommendation from their last commanding officer.

Candidates have to complete a selection procedure, including passing a board. Successful applicants are offered a year's probation subject to there being a vacancy. The retirement age is 60.

Yeoman Warders are also expected to know a great deal of the history of London.

Probationers are eventually examined by the Yeoman Gaoler and, if successful, face a final test in front of the resident governor. If they pass, the new Yeoman Warder is then allowed to lead groups of visitors on guided tours.

Beefeaters get a long weekend in every four, and their working hours are arranged to suit Tower opening times,

which are shorter in winter than in summer.

Their two uniforms, instantly recognised the world over, were described by former WO2 Crawford Butler, who spent 22 years with the Royal Hussars.

"The red one dates back to 1485 and is used for state ceremonial occasions. It is heavy and cumbersome and can be uncomfortable, especially in the summer. It is also expensive.

"In 1858, a cheaper everyday uniform



was introduced – the blue-and-red one. It comes in three different thicknesses and is very comfortable."

We found Crawford, a Yeoman Warder for ten years, in the Beauchamp Tower, where political prisoners of high status were kept in the 15th and 16th centuries. These VIP guests often lived in some comfort and evidence of their imprisonment is visible from the graffiti they left behind. Some even employed stone masons to make the carvings for them.

● Yeoman Warder VC – Pages 70-71

Just what is the Tower of London?

THE original part of what was once a royal palace – the White Tower – is the oldest medieval building in London. Its construction, as both a fortress and a residence, is thought to have begun in 1078.

While the exterior has been much altered over the centuries, the Tower is still a massive and impressive building.

A royal residence for many hundreds of years, it later housed political prisoners including Anne Boleyn, Lady Jane Grey, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Thomas More, Guy Fawkes and Rudolf Hess, Hitler's deputy. But don't look for traditional-style dungeons, there aren't any.

The Tower is rich in attractions: the Crown Jewels and a collection of weapons from the Royal Armouries; the museum of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and Traitors' Gate; and the Bloody Tower and Tower Green (where Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard were beheaded).

Guidebooks are available to visitors in seven languages, so communication is not a problem.

And look out for the famous ravens, associated with the Tower for 900 years.



Look out for

Gun salutes: June 2 and 10; August 4. Ceremony of the Constable's Dues: May 12, June 24, September 9, October 14.

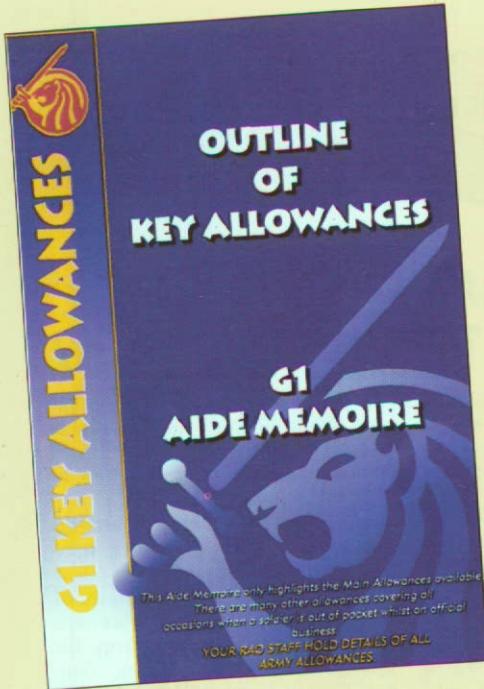
Royal Armouries Millennium Exhibition: to December.

States parades: May 28 and December 17.

Shakespeare at the Tower: May 27-June 4. Great Crown Jewels Robbery: October 21-29.

King's Medieval Christmas: December 27-31.

For more details contact the Tower of London on 020 7680 9004.



Soldier's spread on key allowances (March) generated a terrific amount of interest and an ongoing debate in the Mailbag pages. Every Land Command unit should be getting copies of the new *Outline of Key Allowances and Adding Value* leaflets produced by the GI department at HQ Land. If you haven't seen a copy of the at-a-glance guides, contact your admin office which can obtain more from the Chief Clerk, GI HQ Land on 94331 3311.

Useful numbers

Army Benevolent Fund 020 7591 2000

Army Families Advice Bureau 01722 436569

Army Welfare Service 01722 436565

Army Families Federation 01980 615525

British Limbless Ex-Service

Men's Association 020 8590 1124

Confidential support lines:

UK 0800 731 4880

Germany 0800 1827 395

Cyprus 080 91065

Bosnia 0800 731 4880

Others UK 1980 630854

Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society (Combat Stress) 020 8543 6333

Family Escort Service UK 020 7463 9249; Germany JHQ Mil 2272 or 02161 472272

Gulf Families Association 0121 711 3028

Gulf Veterans Association 0191 230 1065

Joint Service Housing Advice

Office 01722 436575

National Gulf Veterans and Families Association 01482 833812

Regular Forces Employment Association 0207 321 2011

RBL's Legionline 0345 725 725

Samaritans 0345 90 90 90

Service Children's Education 01980 618244

Services Cotswold Centre 01225 810358

SSAFA Forces Help 020 7403 8783

SSAFA Forces Help housing advisory service 01722 436400

Veterans' Advice Unit 08456 020302

War Pensions Agency 01253 858 858

WRVS 01235 442940

It's your time . . . so take it

Do you know your leave entitlement? If not, here's a quick guide to what's what

ANNUAL leave . . . don't you just love it. Blue skies, warm seas, white beaches, cold beers. That'll do for starters. But do you get the chance to take it?

Army policy is that every soldier should be able to take 30 working days of annual leave every year, plus public holidays, except where operational priorities make it impossible.

If you can't use it up, you may seek permission to carry forward up to 15 working days' (three weeks') outstanding leave to the following year. You are also, incidentally, entitled to a full explanation if, for Service reasons, you have to postpone or cancel leave, or are recalled from your holidays.

Here are ten top tips on Service leave:

Terminal leave – It's for those of you who leave at the end of your engagement, to enable you to use your last weeks of service to seek employment and to resettle your families. The period of leave is calculated on length of service . . . you get one day for each month served up to a maximum of 28 calendar days.

Maternity leave – Servicewomen who become pregnant are entitled to **Statutory Maternity Leave (SML)**.

Those who return to duty may take **Occupational Maternity Absence** in addition to SML. But be warned, the rules are very complicated, so seek advice.

Parental leave – All Servicemen and women whose child was born after Dec 15, 1999 may take up to 20 working days of unpaid leave until the child reaches the age of five. This will affect your pension date.

Post Operational Tour Leave (POTL)

Everyone returning from operational tours of six months will be granted 20 working days (four weeks) of post-tour leave. Commanders may increase this by allowing the use of days from the annual allowance. For tours longer or shorter than six months, leave will be granted in proportion to the tour length.

And that's not all, folks. There are other types of leave to which you might be entitled, but you will have to check first with your regimental admin office (RAO):

Relocation leave – It replaced Embarkation and Disembarkation Leave last year and is for when you're posted between theatres (UK, NW Europe and the rest of the world) on non-operational tours. Amounts vary, depending on the duration of your posting overseas – either ten or five working days.

Inter-tour leave – Yours if you serve two tours of duty, of at least two years' duration each, one after the other, outside NW Europe. But it will vary depending on personal circumstances.

Re-engagement leave – Pay attention if you are on a Notice Engagement and have not given notice on reaching the 11- and 17-year point of service. For those who joined before March 21, 1999. Qualify and you get 20 working days of leave.

Sick leave – This is in addition to annual leave granted for convalescence after a period of illness – or when it is preferable to in-patient treatment. It's to help you make a full recovery.

Compassionate leave – Up to 28 days so you can be absent from your duty in compassionate circumstances, such as the death or serious illness of a next-of-kin.

DOMCOL leave – If you were resident outside the UK or Irish Republic immediately before you enlisted and have registered with the MoD, DOMCOL leave will enable you to visit next-of-kin in your country of origin.

Lost leave survey

- Nearly 7,000 leave survey forms will be sent to regimental admin offices soon to be completed on randomly-selected individuals. It's all part of a drive by MoD to learn more about Army leave patterns, and in particular how much leave is "lost" because individuals cannot take it.
- The Armed Forces Pay Review Body, on whose report the Government bases the annual military salary, charges and allowances, is considering the implications of financial compensation for lost leave.

least two years' duration each, one after the other, outside NW Europe. But it will vary depending on personal circumstances.

Getting you home – Pay attention if you are on a Notice Engagement and have not given notice on reaching the 11- and 17-year point of service. For those who joined before March 21, 1999. Qualify and you get 20 working days of leave.

- If you serve in the UK you will get free **Get You Home (GYH) leave travel warrants**.

All ranks with less than three years' service are eligible for three a year. **Corporals and below** with more than three but less than nine years' service get one Early Years (EY) and, if entitled, three Stability Assistance (SA) warrants. Eligible **sergeants and above** with more than three but less than nine years' service get three SA warrants – as do all ranks with more than nine years' service.

If you are serving overseas, leave travel depends on where you are.

Has accompanied service a future?

NO ONE can say the Army hasn't recognised the need to change its culture in response to changes in society, but it may be a while before it acknowledges just how much modern attitudes among soldiers and their spouses may affect it in the future.

In our new "Debate" column in the spring edition of the *AFF's Families Journal*, available now through your unit (so ask for one if you haven't already seen one!), an Army spouse wonders about the future of accompanied service... as in: "Does it have one?"

Travelling around when you and/or your children are young is OK on the whole – but most marriages reach a point where the spouse wants a proper job or career, the children need to stay at school and the family has to think about permanent housing, which these days normally requires two incomes.

PORTABLE CAREER

You are not likely to achieve this while moving from posting to posting every two or three years unless you have a portable career and are happy with the idea (and cost) of boarding school.

And what if your soldier is usually absent, as has been the case lately for one wife who told me: "Accompanied? Who's accompanied? He's always miles away. Why should I live in a shed [sorry DHE, but that was the word she used] in the middle of nowhere, miles from the nearest job, not to mention my family, just to see him occasionally?"

And not only does the family miss the soldier, the soldier can feel he or she is missing out on the family and playing an active role in their upbringing. Yet if peacekeeping is to be the Army's main role in the future, separation will remain



Sue Bonney is Editor of the *Army Families Journal*, quarterly magazine of the Army Families Federation

a fact of life. That particular family left the Army, and the retention figures would seem to suggest that they are not alone in deciding to put family life before an Army career.

A recent Continuous Attitude Survey revealed strong feelings about the effect of Army life on families, with satisfaction in this area at an all-time low.

In order to hang on to the 30-plus, more experienced soldiers with growing families and spouses who have their own career aspirations, the Army may have to become more flexible, adapting its needs to match theirs. Instead of accompanying their soldiers around the world, families may wish to be given the choice to stay put and live in and around garrisons in the UK, in quarters or their own homes, with their soldiers posted in and out on six-month tours. Some are already doing this – while unrecognised "partners" have always done it.

Accompanied service suits a lot of people, particularly those with young marriages and overseas postings. But it also demands a great deal of the families involved, especially these days when individual aspirations and expectations are high. Following the flag may not suit everyone all of the time and the Army should have policies in place which allow families of all ages to make a choice when necessary – and which actively support that choice.

• If you have strong feelings about any aspect of Army family life, or questions you would like to put directly to the policy-makers whose decisions affect your life, join the debate at *AFF's Conference 2000* in London on May 26. Tickets on 01980 615525.

You can e-mail the *AFF* on armyfamiliesfed.centraloffice@virgin.net

Task force wins loans change

CHILDREN of Servicemen and women based overseas have become eligible to apply for student loans in the UK under new rules announced by Armed Forces Minister John Spellor.

The change in the Education (Student Support) Regulations, introduced by the Department for Education and Employment, follows close consultation with the

Service Families Task Force (SFTF). The revised rules exempt dependants of Service personnel from having to be resident in the UK for three years before they can apply for a student loan. The change also removes the requirement for children born abroad to produce a passport rather than their Forces Birth Certificate when applying for a loan.

Joined-up training review to go ahead

A NEED for all MoD personnel – uniformed and civilian – to work and train together is the focus behind a major review of individual training and education given the green light by Armed Forces Minister John Spellor.

The Defence Training Review (DTR), regarded as unfinished business from the Strategic Defence Review, is seen as an chance to achieve more effective preparation for joint operations and to ensure that training and education are better integrated across the Services and better focused on operational, corporate and people needs.

DTR, which acknowledges the importance of the single-Service ethos, is considering how elements of joint training and education should be introduced at appropriate points in an individual's career.

REVIEW TEAM

Col Robin Field-Smith, Col Ben Barry and Lt Col David Lawson are the Army members of a joint Service-Civil Service DTR team led by Vice-Admiral Jonathon Band.

Col Field-Smith said: "A key activity this summer will be a series of interviews with other ranks. We want to know what soldiers think about their training and education needs and how they would like these to be met in the future.

"For example, do people want more provided over the internet, or not? Do soldiers want properly transferable and recognised civilian qualifications based on the training and skills they gain during their careers, or do they simply want to obtain a qualification just before they leave?

"And do people feel that sufficient interest is being taken in their personal development needs, rather than what the Army requires them to learn? Above all, we need to know what the Army – not just the chain of command – thinks."

Hey... it's Hameln RBL

HAMELN branch of the Royal British Legion, formed nine years ago, has opened new offices on the upper floor of Block 20, Gordon Barracks. Col Simon Reed, Deputy Commander 20 Armoured Brigade, cut the ribbon and unveiled a plaque to mark the transformation of the former German Army hay store.

On the world wide web

TWO interesting new web sites to look out for. The HQ Northern Ireland site – at <http://www.army.mod.uk/norireland> – is designed for the military community and includes a welfare section which should be of interest to soldiers and their dependants.

Look for the British Army of the Rhine at <http://homestead.com/BAORIndex20.html>. It's put together by WO1 (ASM) Pete Feeney at MSG(G), BFPO 39.

SHORTS



Club house ready

ATHLETES and visitors wishing to celebrate victory or reflect on defeat at the Aldershot Military Stadium can do so in a splendid new facility.

A club house, officially opened by Maj Gen Simon Lytle, pictured above, at an informal ceremony, is set to become the focal point of sporting life in the area.

"We have been rebuilding the sporting real estate of Aldershot for the past four years," explained Maj Gen Lytle.

"We needed a central facility for entertainment and hospitality and the Army Central Fund gave us £300,000 to refurbish the old rundown premises."

The work has taken just two years from concept to completion and included waterproofing the building, constructing new kitchens and upgrading the reception and bar areas.

Sure-footed Rangers

MEMBERS of the Army bobsleigh team, two of whom won Great Britain's only medal in the last Winter Olympic Games in Nagano, get behind their sponsor at an end-of-season photoshoot at the Military Stadium, Aldershot.

Ford loaned the team two Ford Ranger pick-ups, which were ideally suited to moving the team's kit around the bobsleigh tracks of Europe.

Lt Col Steve Rowland-Jones (AAC), secretary of Army bobsleighing and director of the British Bobsleigh Association, said: "We had some huge snowfalls when we were competing in Innsbruck but the Rangers were quite superb, giving us the ability to move up and down the track when other vehicles were unable to go anywhere."

Pictured above, back, from left are Cpl Neil Scarisbrick (RTR), Olympic bronze medal winners Cpl Dean Ward (Para) and Sgt Sean Olson (Para), with Lt Col Rowland Jones and Ford's Mike Duncomber in front.

HOCKEY

Sappers engineer victory

Storming end to season as minors beat majors in Warrior Army Cup and soldiers dominate Inter-Services

THEY will be talking about this final for years to come. The never-say-die spirit of minor unit 42 Survey Engineer Group RE managed to silence the big guns of 7 Para RHA at Aldershot in the major unit competition – this year renamed the Warrior Army Cup.

It was a fitting final meeting to the Army hockey season, which also saw the semi-finals and finals of the minor unit competition and the women's Inter-unit tournament.

In the minor units, Upavon Support Unit, last year's losers – whose team included the Adjutant General, Gen Sir Alex Harley – beat 42 Topo Sqn RE to reach the final. ATR Bassingbourn, lead by Lt Paul Tapp (RA), reached the final by beating MDH Frimley.

The major and women's winners go on to compete against their RAF and RN counterparts on June 9 at Portsmouth to decide the unit champions of the Services.

■ The Army men's teams had a clean sweep of wins in the Inter-Services championships at Portsmouth, sponsored by Naafi. Particularly satisfying were the senior's 3-2 and 4-2 wins over the RAF and RN respectively.

The women's side had bagged a series of good results in the build-up and so were disappointed to go down 2-0 to the RAF in their first game. But they bounced back the next day to beat the Royal Navy 4-0 to finish as runners-up in the tournament.

But the best was kept for last. Having dispatched 8 R Irish 3-2, 7 Para RHA played last year's minor unit champions, 42 Survey Engineer Group RE, who walloped 16 Signal Regiment 5-0 in the other semi-final of the major unit competition.

Both teams were well drilled, collectively skilful and fit. The gunners took the lead with an early goal from their commanding officer, Lt Col Mark Banham, until recently a Combined Services and Army player.

But then it was the turn of the engi-



Oh yes! Jubilation on the faces of the sappers as they score the winner in the closely-fought duel against 7 Para RHA

onships at Haslemere on May 13 and 14, which follows the Inter-Corps tournament at Aldershot on May 3-5.

■ Capt Ivan Steen, in his last few months in the Army, was named the Inter-Services player of the tournament.

Inter-Services results

Seniors: RAF 6, RN 1; Army 3, RAF 2; RN 2, Army 4. **Women:** Army 0, RAF 2; RN 0, RAF 4; RN 0, Army 4. **U23:** RAF 1, RN 4; Army 5, RAF 0; RN 3, Army 5. **Veterans:** RAF 1, RN 1; Army 6, RAF 0; RN 1, Army 1.



Vintage stuff: Army veteran captain Maj John Stuart gives the RAF the slip in the 6-0 rout

SHORTS

Jump at the opportunity

MENCAP is calling for adventurous people to take to the skies and combine the thrill of a lifetime with the chance to help a good cause.

The Mencap Parachuting Scheme 2000 aims to recruit 600 jumpers and raise £70,000 to help children and adults with learning disabilities.

Jumps are free to anyone raising at least £260 for the static line jump or £330 for the tandem skydive.

For details, phone 0645 777 779 or email events@mencap.org.uk

Hunt for 20 triathletes

ATHLETES are needed to take part in this year's London triathlon on October 1 to raise cash for the Royal British Legion. Twenty places have been secured and triathletes will have to part with a £25 deposit and raise a minimum of £500 in sponsorship.

Two distances are being run, the Olympic (1,500m swim, 40km cycle and 10km run) and a sprint (750m swim, 20km cycle and 5km run). For details, call Natalie on 0171 973 7285.

Veterans on back foot

YOUNG guns of the Army badminton team proved too strong for their predecessors when the two sides met at the Prince William of Gloucester Barracks, Grantham. Former staff sergeant George Frith said: "The aim of the matches was to reunite former pals and give invaluable match practise for the current team before the Inter-Services tournament."

The Army side beat the veterans by 16 points to nine.

Sports complex opens

SOLDIERS at Wattisham Airfield, Suffolk, are now able to use some of the best facilities available to the Army following the opening of a £1.5m sports centre. Facilities include a 25m swimming pool and a two-storey sports hall with badminton and squash courts and areas for hockey, football, basketball, netball, volleyball and cricket. The pool has facilities for pilot escape training and a sauna and solarium.

Anyone for free tennis?

A REMINDER that the Aldershot (Army) Tennis Centre's outdoor courts are free of charge to military personnel. Coaching can be provided. Telephone 01252 343 138.



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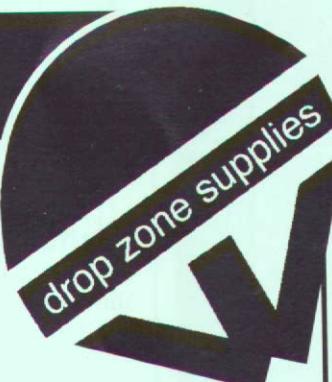
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BOXING

Howards end as champions

BOXERS from the 1st Battalion, The Green Howards returned to Warminster victorious after defeating the 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment in the Army novice Grade 3 finals at Aldershot.

Winning the title for the first time, the Green Howards claimed the championship by six bouts to three.

First contest of the evening was at bantamweight, with Pte Macca Macdonald (GH) given a unanimous decision over Pte Keith Gibson. Macdonald's performance also earned him the best boxer of the evening title.

The featherweight contest was evenly matched in all three rounds, with Pte Tommy Myers (GH) eventually getting a majority decision over Pte Greaves.

In the lightweight bout LCpl Dogger Doughty (GH) stopped Pte Easton in the second round and LCpl Robbo Robinson earned a unanimous decision in the light-welter division over Pte Johnson.

Bout number five was a light-middle

contest which went to the wire. Despite being given a warning in the last round LCpl Johnson was awarded a majority decision over LCpl Rogers. The boxing centre erupted as the Green Howards were crowned champions with four more bouts to go.

The next three matches saw fierce performances from 2 Para and some devastating punching. At middleweight, Pte Spencer beat LCpl Gardener, light-heavyweight Pte Loates beat LCpl Goodridge and heavyweight Sgt Chris Oakes stopped Pte Smith, all in the first round.

Final bout of the evening, with the score 5-3 in favour of the Green Howards, was a welterweight contest in which Pte Martini Cronin (GH) showed his class and was awarded a unanimous decision over Pte Danny Field.

■ A report and pictures of the Army individual championships will appear in the next issue.



Picture: Steve Dock

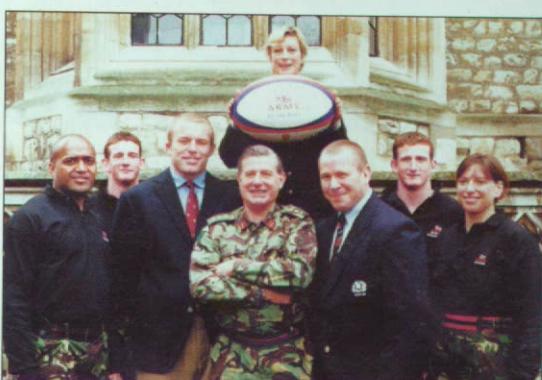
Up close: Heavyweight Pte Jones, (7 Tpt Regt), left, lands a right on his way to beating Pte Hobbs (6 Supp Regt) in the RLC championships at Travers Barracks, Aldershot. A total of 52 boxers took part, with 2 Close Support Regiment emerging as the corps champions

SHORTS

Magnificent seven

SOME of the Army's best players were on hand for the launch of a three-year sponsorship of the world's largest youth rugby tournament, the National Schools Sevens. The Army has plans to develop the tournament and widen its appeal to encourage greater support. It also announced the introduction of four Army National Schools Sevens grants of £1,000 each.

Pictured from left: Pte Kitty Bavadra (RS), Gds Chris Scarf (WG), Capt Tim Rodber (GH), Chief of the General Staff Gen Sir Roger Wheeler, Cpl Mattie Stewart (PWRR), Gdsm David Scarf (WG) and 2nd Lt Julia Robinson (AGC (RMP)). Above is tournament organiser Rose Tanner.



Cup battles poised

THE Army finished runners-up to the RAF in the Inter-Services football championships on goal difference, writes **Derrick Bly**.

Both Army and Royal Air Force won their matches against the Royal Navy and then fought out a goalless draw against each other at RAF Uxbridge, leaving the RAF champions and winners of the Constantinople Cup by virtue of their 4-0 victory over the Navy against the Army's one-goal success.

The Army provided seven of the 12-man squad for the Combined Services in their opening fixture in the Kentish Cup against the Belgian Armed Forces at Wavre in Belgium. The Services were good value for their 1-1 draw and now entertain the Netherlands Armed Forces at the Military Stadium, Aldershot.

In the Massey Trophy, the Infantry are in pole position with 24 points from ten games and a goal difference of 26 against 15. In second place are the Royal Logistic Corps on 20 points and the Adjutant General's Corps on 17 points. The Royal Artillery and Royal Signals could both reach 24 points but they still have to play each other.

The competition is evenly balanced, with the Infantry, gunners and signallers all in with a chance of winning.

SHORTS

Sportsman of the year

MARKSMAN Maj Peter Underhill (D and D) is the Combined Services sportsman of the year. The award recognises a discipline which, after athletics, is the Services' second most successful sporting activity in terms of medals at international level.



The small-bore specialist, pictured, has been one of the top individuals for years and this season won the Army and Inter-Services individual small-bore championship (for the Wilkinson Sword) and The Marquess of Salisbury Cup in the national championships at Bisley.

He captained the England small-bore team at the Commonwealth Games in Malaysia in 1998 and because of his success in that role has just returned from managing the England team at the Commonwealth Shooting Federation championships and the Oceanic Games.

Opposition floored

ARMY judo squad players floored the opposition at the Combined Services competition at RAF Cosford. The soldiers swept the board to win the Pretoria Volunteer Officers' Cup in the group competition and four out of seven titles in the major individual competitions.



Pte Gary Sudron (Army Foundation College, Harrogate) won gold in the 60kg while LCpl John Harris (2 PWRR) took the bronze. LCpl Roger Woods (36 Engr Regt) achieved gold in the 66kg class.

In the 90kg, the gold medal went to OCdt Simon Childs (RMA Sandhurst), silver was won by Cpl Trevor Wain (ITC Catterick) and bronze by Pte Daniel Tullet (DST).

Spr Andrew Limbrick (9 Para Sqn RE) and Cpl Gary Tagg (28 Engr Regt) fought their way to gold and silver respectively in the 100kg class.

In the women's open competition, Cpl Cathy Burgess (3 Div Sig Regt) and LCpl Natalie Mordin (14 Sig Regt) clinched silver and bronze. Cpl Tagg and team manager Maj Joff Williams (RLC) took silver and bronze in the veterans' open competition.

RUGBY

Close-quarter courage

Royal Air Force 11, Army 13

ALFRED Hitchcock wrote the script, perversely in Chapter Two, stacking the odds heavily against the "goodies", writes Roger Thompson.

The underdogs in light blue were given hope and almost rode their luck to what must have seemed like an infinite winning post. Indeed it was only in the final quarter, faced with adversity and not a little provocation, that the Army asserted themselves sufficiently to win by the thinnest of margins.

Certainly the Royal Air Force, with a man up, failed to seize the initiative, their experienced and heavy forwards first overheating and then running out of fuel.

While the Army pack battled superbly to gain control in the close-quarter battle, Lt Dan Coen (RE) kicked the penalties which mattered and spiralled morale-sapping punts deep into the corners of the RAF defence.

Winning his first cap, Coen had an astute match. He placed two difficult penalties and converted Chris Budgen's 70th-minute try for the Army to take the lead.

BULLOCKING

As so often this season, Budgen (RWF) had finished off the last five metres to the try line after a bullocking, battering, blood-and-thunder passage of play.

While still 11-6 points down, wave after wave of red shirts slammed into the light blue defence with such confidence and assured ball retention that it might have seemed to border on group arrogance.

The message was clear – it would come – and it did and, most importantly, in the manner of Plan A prescribed in training. Patience, irresistible power and yet

more patience. The Army had many attacking options but it stuck to the close-quarter battle until, for the RAF, courage was simply not enough and they ran out of gas.

The Army pack was well motivated throughout by new skipper Peter Curtis (R Signals) who led his men up to the wire, where they regrouped and then punched their way through.

POWERPACK

Captain Curtis's magnificent seven were surprisingly good considering they were able to muster only seven caps between them before the match.

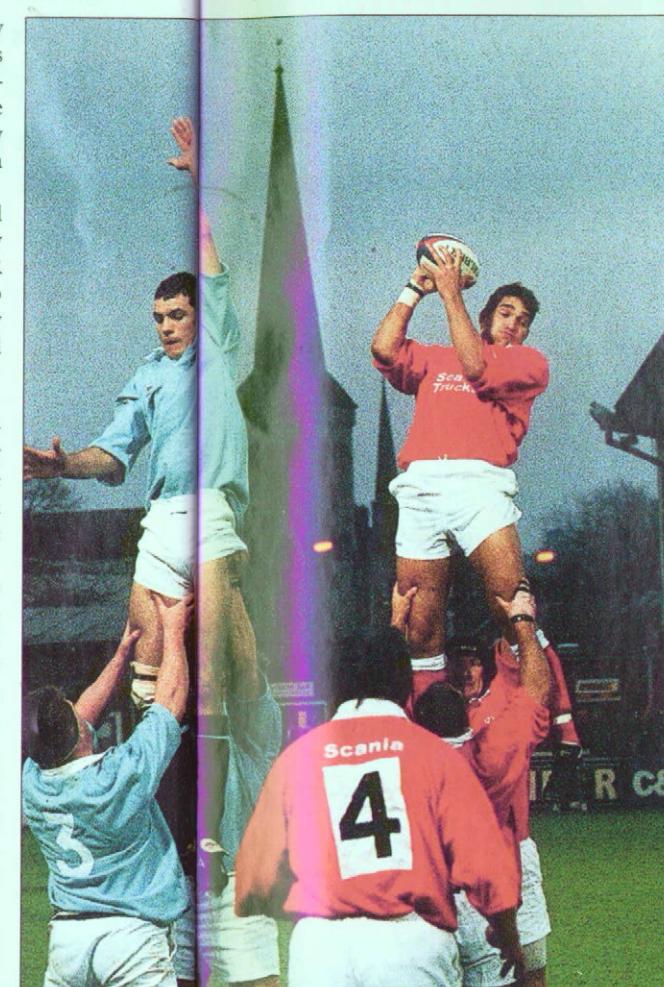
The new caps, Steve Trethewey (REME), Tristan D'Cunha (RLC) and Lee Soper (RHA), an easily irritated youngster, deserve an accolade for their commitment at close quarters.

The rest were not much older, with Dwane Cadwaller, Ben Hughes and Liam McCormick brimming with enterprise and vigour.

And Finlay Bibby (DWR), in his first match as the number one hooker, the sagacious Julian Brammer having retired, had a storming game in both the tight and loose.

The backs initially had to tackle like trains to combat the perpetual overlap, none more so than Kite Bavadra (R Signals) who became, with distinction, the first Fijian to win a cap since Tom Waquabaca of the Dukes in 1963.

That is not to say their mind set was defensive. Direct running and swift passing almost saw Howard Graham in at the corner. The Army Man of the Match was Mal Roberts (RLC) for his security under the high



Helping hands: Lee Soper (7RHA) takes the line-out ball cleanly



Break-out: Howard Graham (AGC) supported by Andy Sengler (RE)

Pictures: Roger Thompson

RALLYING

Lotta throttle

THERE was a winning start for the Lex-Army rally team of LBdr Jim Clark (RA) and co-driver WO1 Simon Nock (RLC) when they came first in their class in the Vauxhall Rally of Wales.

The military team, consisting of six crews, was selected from units across the Army. This was the first round of the six-event Combined Services rally championships and saw crews push their Land Rover Defender 90s to the limit.



Round the bend: A roaring start in the CS championships

The vehicles, which are used for normal military transport when not thrashing about the countryside on rally duties, are standard Service-issue diesel-powered versions. The only modification made for competition driving is the addition of obligatory safety equipment.

Maj Alan Paramore (RLC) manages the

CANOEING

Team avoids Easter rush

THERE was one sure way of avoiding traffic jams in central London over the Easter holiday and still ending up in the heart of the capital.

As *Soldier* was going to press, paddlers were attempting the Devizes to Westminster race, a muscle-busting distance of 125 miles, along the Kennet and Avon canal to the River Thames and Westminster Bridge.

Every year since the race began 50 years ago, the Royal Engineers have gathered novice paddlers at the beginning of February for a ten-week training camp, this year based at Hermitage near Newbury.

Apart from the coach, Cpl Kev Vaughan, and Spr Jim Lewis (both 22 Engr Regt) and Cpl Guy Blake (33 EOD) the other members of the team had not paddled before.



Reflecting on the race: Cpl Kevin Vaughan, front, and Spr Jim Lewis, practise at Aldermaston

Picture: Mike Weston

In the early hours of Good Friday the crews started at Devizes in Wiltshire and aimed to finish some 20 hours later.

The opposition from the race has traditionally been from the Royal Marines. But this year a strong team from The Parachute Regiment was also competing, along with canoeists from civilian clubs, including Maidstone, Richmond and entries from Belgium and Germany.

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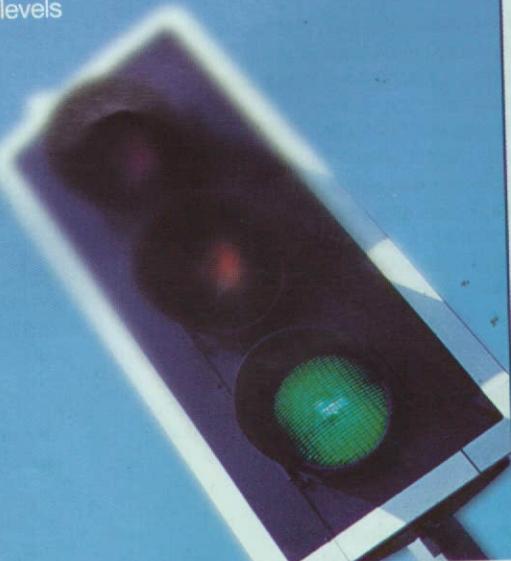
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Jump to it: Cpl Jason Musty rides out at the British Racing School, Newmarket – the leading supplier of training for National Hunt amateurs

Soldier riding high

YOU could say that infantryman Cpl Jason Musty has the bit between his teeth. His dream of riding in next year's Alvis Grand Military Cup at Sandown is that much closer after completing a course at the British Racing School, Newmarket.

This stepping-stone paves the way for his amateur National Hunt licence, a requirement for all jockeys who aspire to lifting the 160-year-old trophy.

A rider for more than 27 years (he started when he was two), Musty's quiet assurance may well see him surprise horsemen from traditional riding regiments in his quest for glory.

Musty, who is on the gym staff of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment, grew up with horses and has been able to continue his interest throughout his career.

"Wherever I have been posted around the world – Hong Kong, Canada, Cyprus – I have been lucky enough to get rides in," he said.

"I have tried cross-country, polo, and Western riding, but nothing compares with the thrill of jumping at speed over fences. Once you have got control of your horse, a half-tonne of muscle, the adrenalin rush is wonderful."

It can be a dangerous business and Musty has had his share of spills, but his PTI training has saved him from serious

injury. In fact he has never broken a bone.

"Nine times out of ten when you come off you are relaxed anyway. It's when you know you are about to come off that you tense-up and run the risk of injury."

The Alvis Grand Military Gold Cup, historically known as the soldier's meeting, is open to amateur riders who are members of the Services. Horses in the race must be owned by the Services.

The Queen Mother has been the patron since 1970 and her horses have won the race five times for her regiment, the 9th/12th Royal Lancers (Prince of Wales's).

Brig Christopher Price, no slouch himself when it comes to riding in the most prestigious event in military racing (15 appearances, two victories) is now involved with nurturing fresh Army racing talent.

"What I try to do is encourage young people to ride in races, the emphasis

being on military races. It is great fun. We try to get individuals through the British Racing School courses, which are funded partly from the proceeds of the Army point-to-point in January at Larkhill."

The British Racing School has more than 50 horses, all-weather gallops and specialist facilities to provide the best training available, all set in beautiful Suffolk countryside.

It represents a great opportunity for soldiers to develop their riding skills so soldiers not from a mounted regiment should not be put you off from applying.

"At the end of the day we hope they become competent enough to ride as jockeys in the Grand Military meeting, which carries a lot of kudos," said Brig Price.

"The more people I can encourage outside of the traditional horse units the better."

Brig Price can be contacted on 0207 305 2780.



Horse sense: Cpl Jason Musty

Sharp shooter

Is it a bike? Is it a car? Whichever, this Blade is at the cutting edge

WHEN cars and bikes meet on the highway the paramedics often follow close behind, writes **Syd Taylor**.

However, a more conventional blending of the best aspects of bike and car design can make a really exciting combination, resulting in a new beginning.

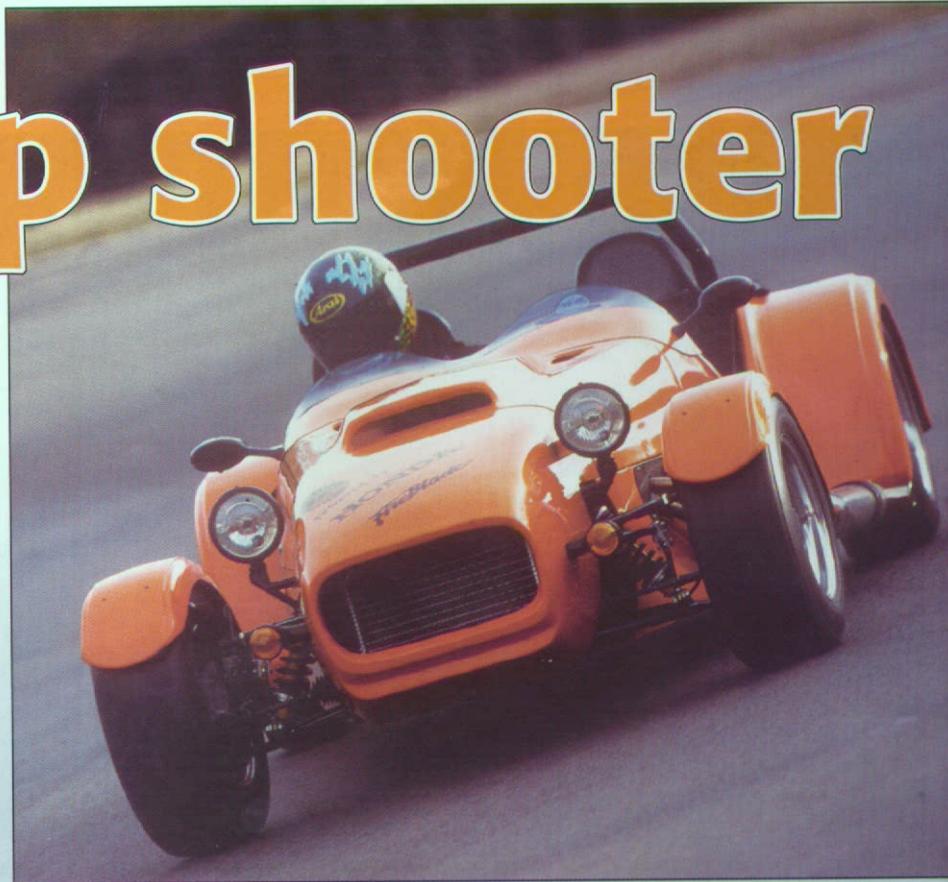
Which is what happened when, with a mix of clever ideas from Chris Smith and his team at Westfield Sports Cars in Kingswinford, near Dudley, and someone else's engine, one of the most exciting cars for years was born.

Their challenge was to compress as much fun as possible into the smallest possible package. The answer was a Westfield Megablade: a zany combination of minimalist retro-style sports car and a superbike engine, guaranteed to rescue anyone drifting into boredom.

Mechanically it's a simple car which can be supplied built for £14,000 or as a kit for around £11,000. You can even buy the basic "Mega" starter kit costing £2,950 for the SEi version, which uses double wishbone suspension front and rear and disc-brakes all round. All the additional parts needed can be sourced secondhand and you use just DIY tools.

The chassis is a tubular spaceframe and an evolution of their lightweight race chassis with extra bracing and detachable engine mounting frame. In it sits the Honda CBR 900 RR Fireblade engine of either 893cc or 918cc, producing up to 125bhp and able to give a performance that is quicker than the Rover V8-engined Westfield Seight. (If you're wild enough you might want to wait for the Hayabusa-engined version – the Megabusa.)

Bodywork is lightweight glass-fibre with a superb gel coat finish, augmented



On a roll: the zany, attention-grabbing Westfield Megablade . . . a sports car with passion

by a crafted stainless steel exhaust system. Seats are one-piece carbon fibre with no padding and you're secured by a full race harness: there's the added security of a sturdy roll bar. Once settled in you forget you are a human addition to the cockpit.

When it comes to driving, performance and handling form the hardcore of interest about the Megablade, giving you a raw and blustery experience of real "seat-of-the-pants" driving.

SCREAMING

Starting procedure is elementary. You just flick the ignition switch to "on", press the starter button and the motor fires up. Gears are sequential and operated electronically by F1-style buttons on the wheel. These activate a powerful solenoid which "cog-swaps" so fast that it's easy to keep the motor screaming in the powerband. There's a conventional-looking gear-lever on the transmission tunnel which also operates the solenoid, but the buttons are better. Reverse is an impre-

cise process which needs practice, but development is in progress.

Once under way, the fun starts. Squeeze the throttle and the tacho needle whips round the dial in an instant. Suddenly the exhaust note develops a harder edge, washing through your senses to make you forget the air hissing round your helmet. Towards the limit the wail becomes a scream – a noise that only a Superbike engine can make on full song.

Push hard and acceleration is the kind that will flatten your eyeballs as you hurtle to 60mph in a tad over four seconds and on to a max of around 130mph.

The power, however, is not the only joy of the Megablade. The way in which it behaves when adhesion is challenged is entrancing as it forgives the inevitable mistakes by providing real safety margins of roadholding and powerful braking. To get the best from this car you must have confidence in its ultimate capability even if you never reach the limits.

It's as nimble a sports-car as ever graced the twisting tarmac of rural Shropshire, where stability and handling proved to be beyond reproach. To drive the Megablade along twisty hilly roads is to feel good in your heart and to know the real passion of driving – even though a force ten gale whirls around the low scuttled cockpit which leaves you unprotected from flying debris. Helmet or goggles are essential.

Whether or not I would want to buy it for road use, I know not – but use it, play with it, bask in its reflected glory? You bet I would!

On yer scooter...

AFTER years in limbo, scooters are creeping back into fashion and the Armed Forces Scooter Club has been formed to cater for like-minded enthusiasts. It succeeds the oddly-named The Pokey Pink Thing, a military scooter club which folded some time ago.

The new club, which can be contacted by writing to BFPO 47, has 53 members, including ex-Service men and women. It

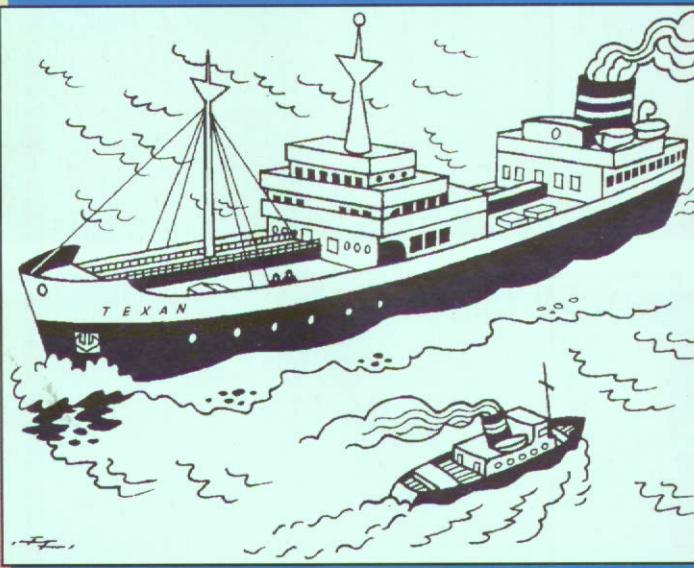
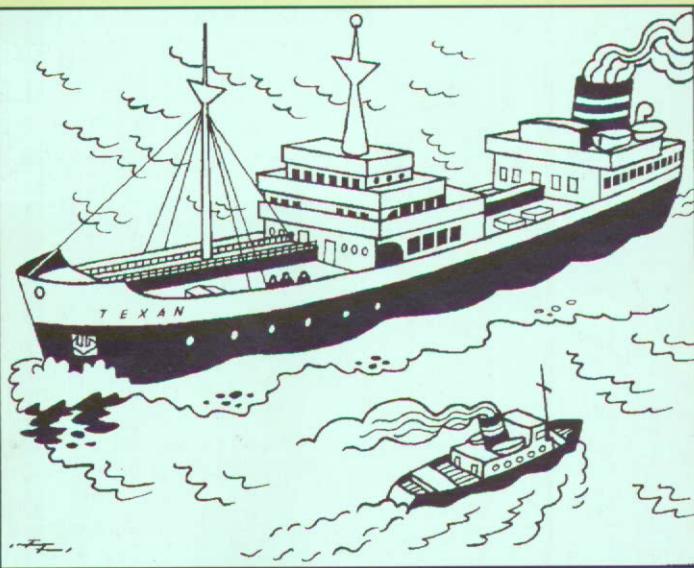


is sponsored by Armandos Scooters of Sheffield and can offer discounts and technical advice on older models.

There's also a free monthly newsletter for members, with news of events in the UK and Germany. Scooters enjoyed their golden years during the 1950s and 1960s when Vespa and Lambretta outsold all other motor-cycle rivals.

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Frank Finch has made ten changes in detail to one of his drawings taken from our archive. Circle the differences in the lower image, cut out the whole panel, add your name and address and send to HOAY 702, Soldier, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, GU11 2DU by May 31.

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

Do not include anything else in your envelope.

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

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

Name : (Give initials and rank or title)

Address :

March competition (No 700): First correct entry drawn was from WO2 G Patey, of MSTS, DE ATSA Chertsey, who wins £100. Runners-up Mrs L Lawson, of Bassingbourn, Herts, and LCpl G Ryder, of Blandford Camp, Dorset, each receive a £10 gift voucher. The ten differences were: Creases in goalkeeper's jersey, studs in right boot, shadow on pitch; spectator's beret; shouting spectator's arm; striker's sock and right boot; dog's tail; collar and sleeve of player on right.

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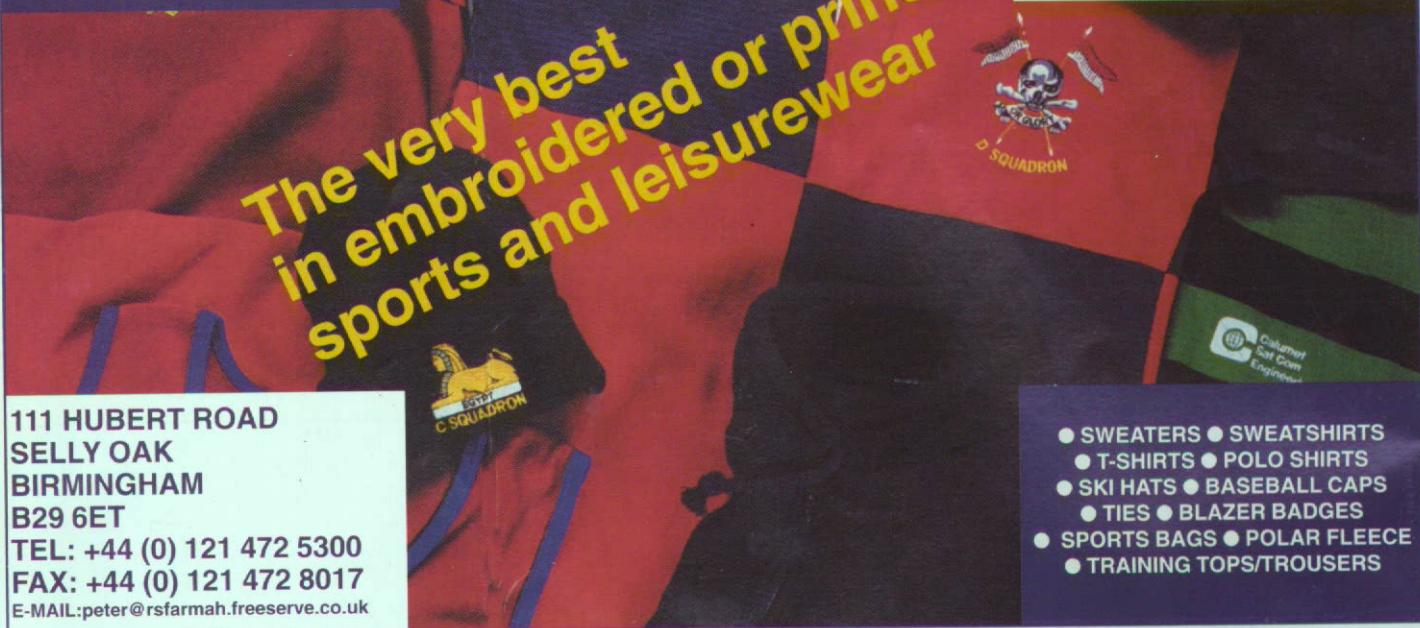


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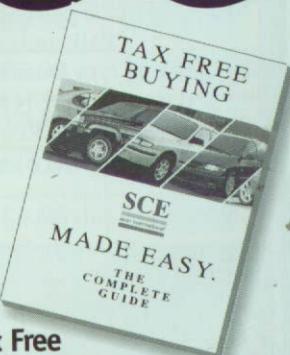
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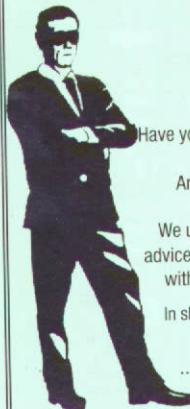


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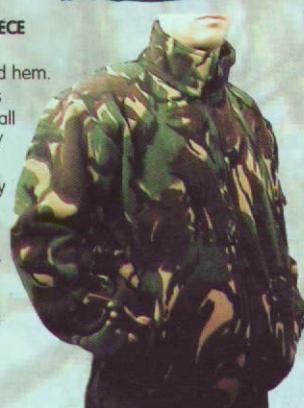
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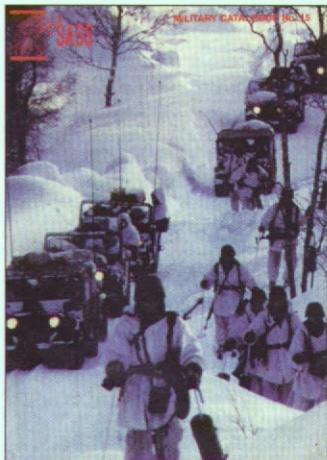
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REUNIONS

GUNNER PULL 2000 23/24 June at Larkhill

The Royal Artillery Tug of War Club Reunion 2000 will take place at Larkhill on Sat 24 June, 2000

For further details contact
WO2 (RQMS) J Gracie
16 Regt RA,
Royal Artillery Barracks
Woolwich SE18 4BB
Woolwich M1 3S5
Email GracieJohn316@aol.com

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Competition winners

The winners of the London International Tattoo 2000 and Soldier fleece competitions, (March issue) were:

Tattoo - LCpl Thomas, BFPO 47; N Backhouse, Liversedge; C Fowler Grantham; Mrs E Walton, Gateshead; Mr JP Warren, Walsall; RD White, Bicester; Mr D Kay, Crawley; AG Croucher, Winchester; JG Handley, Wetherby; G Stoltz, Germany.

Fleece - Mr H Hutchings, Portchester; J Brunskill, Co Durham; Mr N Dawson, Ripon; Col JP Edmonson-Jones, West Sussex; SSgt Hollywood, BFPO 26; Mr R McSpadden, Portsmouth; R Whittaker, Burnley; Mr P Thomas, Neath; Mrs P Dannatt, Aldershot; Miss K. Down, Southend-on-Sea; WO2 J Fidler, BFPO 551; Mr M Sullivan, York; Mr J Malpas, London; Mr D Kay, Crawley; Mr TH Evans, Stevenage; Mr E Haynes, York; RD White, Bicester; AC King, Isle of Wight; Mr S Bates, Dover; Mr P Amans, London.

ARMY SPORTS LOTTERY RESULTS

MARCH 25, 2000

Three-way tie for first prize (20 goals, £2,600 each): WO1 CM Hardwidge, 14 Signal Regt (EW); Brawdy; Capt KA Sorungbe, 1 GS Regt RLC, Gütersloh; Capt CM Vaudin, 19 Mech Bde Sig Sqn, Catterick.

55-way tie for fourth prize (19 goals, £63.64 each): WO2 PD Andrews, 16 Regt RLC, Bicester; Cpl CE Leek, 2 Signal Regt, York; Sgt JE Anyon, AFCO Liverpool; Tpr GJL Luscombe, QDG, Catterick; Sgt RJ Atherton, 7 Signal Regt, Krefeld; WO2 BD McLaughlin, SSO Gütersloh; Sgt SM Bateyman, ITC Warminster; Maj NP Metcalfe, PJHQ, Northwood; Pte D Bolton, Army Foundation College, Harrogate; Capt SR Miller, 1 RGJ; Pte AJ Bromley, 1 QLR, Catterick; LCpl SR Moore, 1 IG, Münster; Maj (name withheld), HQ Hereford Garrison; Sgt JS Morton, ATR Winchester; Capt MA Charles, 35 Engr Regt, Paderborn; SSgt A Mullinder, Tyne Tees, Durham; Musn BE Cleworth, R Signals Band, Blandford; Sgt RE Oldham, Veh Depot, Ashchurch; LCpl SLR Cooke, 2 RRF, Celle; Cpl MJ Overton, 3 RSME Regt, Minley; LCpl GY Craig, Dental Centre Preston; Capt PJ Pain, 1 RHA, Tidworth; Cpl MR Cubby, 2 RGJ, Paderborn; Capt MA Percy, 1 BW, Fort George; Sgt WD Dalton, 1 GS Regt RLC, Gütersloh; LCpl RA Perry, 2 RTR, Fallingbostel; Pte JL Davies, QDG, Catterick; SSgt GB Philips, DPA, Abbey Wood; LBdr CA Donohue, 12 Regt RA, Sennelager; Cpl J Ratcliffe, 2 Regt RMP; LCpl WL Ellerington, 2 LI, Bulford; Cpl KH Riddings, QDG.

Catterick; Pte JM Evans, ITC Catterick; LCpl SD Shield, 1 WG, London; CSgt BL Fleming, 1 R Irish, Canterbury; Maj PR Stannett, PJHQ, Northwood; Sgt AC Franks, 2 RTR, Fallingbostel; Maj RD Stappley, HQ UKSC (G), Rheindahlen; SSgt JM Glass, 47 AD Sqn RLC, Lyneham; Spr ML Starkey, 32 Engr Regt, Hohne; LCpl L Gregory, HQ N1; LCpl (name withheld), HQ Hereford Garrison; Cpl JPE Grover, 1 BW, Fort George; Sgt DNE Trevor, 5 Regt AAC, Aldergrove; Cpl S Heath, 1 PWRR, Tidworth; Bdr P Walker, 4 Regt RA, Osnabrück; Capt CS James, QDG, Catterick; Maj MJ Williams, HQ Land, Wilton; Lt Col JD Keeling, ATR Pirbright; LCpl MJ Woods, HCMR, London; Cpl CJ Kempton, DMS Trg Centre, Ash Vale; Cpl AO Wordsworth, 1 GS Regt RLC, Gütersloh; Cpl MF Kingshott, 2 PWRR, Tidworth; Pte PJ Klein, 1 Para, Aldershot; WO2 ID Young, HQ MND (C), Rheindahlen.

APRIL 1, 2000

Six-way tie for first prize (26 goals, £1,766.67 each): SSgt JG Bethell, 36 Engr Regt, Maidstone; Sgt ERR Ellis, 3 CS Regt RLC, Abingdon; Tpr JJ French, QDG, Catterick; SSgt R Gray, 25 Engr Regt; Sgt B Kelly, 2 CS Regt RLC, Gütersloh; Pte DA McCutcheon, 1 LI, Edinburgh.

10 way tie for seventh prize (25 goals, £100 each): Capt CJM Brown, ITC Catterick; Pte SA Davison, HQ Land, Wilton; LCpl W Fellows, 63 Trg Sp Sqn RE, Minley; Cpl CN Fishwick, 2 Bn REME, Fallingbostel; Lt KM Grant, Royal Hosp Haslar, Gosport; Tpr KR Palmer, QRL, Osnabrück; Cpl JD

Rose, Cyprus Log Unit RAF Akrotiri; Maj RJB Spencer, MOD, London; Sgt M Spyres, KRH, Tidworth; Sgt G Wills, 2 RTR, Fallingbostel.

APRIL 8, 2000

First prize (23 goals, £4,300): LBdr J Hughes, 1 RHA, Tidworth

Six-way tie for second prize (22 goals, £1,216.67 each): Cpl RJ Farnell, 150 Pro Coy RMP, Catterick; Maj EF Glover, DALS, Upavon; Cpl N Hesleton, 14 Signal Regt (EW), Brawdy; Cpl J R Lee, 9 Regt AAC, Dishforth; WO2 M R Nelson, Londons; Bdr D P Smith, 14 Regt RA, Larkhill.

Note: Only seven prizes this week. Rule nine applies.

IMPORTANT NOTICE. Prize money has increased yet again! The weekly pool is now £11,600 with a nominal first prize of £4,300.

APRIL 15, 2000

Two-way tie for first prize (24 goals, £3,200): CSgt JJMCA Alexander; SSgt ST Laverie, JSU Ayios Nikolaos.

13-way tie for third prize (23 goals, £400 each): LCpl SN Baron, 22 Engr Regt, Perham Down; Capt PJ Blakesley, 1 KORBR, Catterick; Cpl PL Craster, 7 Bn REME, Wattonsham; WO1 SA Crossland, HQ Brunei Garrison; Sgt GW Ford, 1 IG, Münster; Sgt NG Hambleton, HQ Dhekelia Garrison; LBdr VS Kirkpatrick, 3 RHA, Hohne; Capt PP Rabbidge, HQ Land, Wilton; Pte J Reece, 6 Sup Regt, RLC, Gütersloh; Maj S Ridd, JSCSC, Bracknell; Sgt J Tebbutt, 6 Bn REME, Tidworth; Capt CH Thrower, ATR Pirbright; Capt MJ Wall, Londons.

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DATES

MAY
7: Victorian Military Fair, Victory Services Club, London W2.
20-21: JHQ Summer Show 2000, Rheindahlen, Germany.
25: Capture of Merville Battery, a lecture by Lt Col B H Otway DSO, Airborne Forces Museum, Aldershot (01252 349619).
27-28: London International Tattoo 2000, Wembley Arena.
27-28: Overlord 2000 Historic Military Vehicle Show, Denmead, nr Portsmouth (023 9224 1911).
31: Kneller Hall summer concert (Minden, Normandy Bands, Queen's Div; Band of Para Regt), 8pm (gates open 6pm). Tickets £4 on night. Advance sales for minimum booking of ten. Details on 020 8898 5533 or ticket hotline 020 8744 8646.

JUNE

11: Royal British Legion drum-head service and parade, Leighton-cum-Minshull-Vernon, nr Crewe, 01270 257092.
14: Kneller Hall concert (SG, AGC Bands). See May 31.
15: HQ 3(UK) Div Beating Retreat, Tidworth Polo Ground, gates open 1700, in aid of Army Benevolent Fund. Military bands, corps of drums, White Helmets, parachute display, static displays. Free to public.
17: 21st Nato Music Festival, Bökelbergstadion, Mönchengladbach in aid of international refugee fund.
17: Oxon & Bucks Millennium Tattoo, Thame (01189 723717).
28: Kneller Hall concert (Band of Coldm Gds, Waterloo Band of King's Div). See May 31.

JULY

Weekends: Horse Guards, Whitehall open, free, 10.30-4 (020 7414 2360).
8-9: Parachute Spectacular, Southsea Common, Hants.
10-15: Royal Military Tattoo 2000, Horse Guards Parade, in aid of principal Service charities.
12: Kneller Hall concert (Band of Royal Signals). See May 31.
20: Harmony 2000 Young Musicians, Kneller Hall. Entrance £1. See May 31.

26: Kneller Hall summer concert (Bands of RLC and REME). For details, see May 31.

AUGUST

9: Kneller Hall summer concert (Bands of RA and AAC). For details, see May 31.

SEPTEMBER

5-10: Middle Wallop International Air Show (tickets 0115 912 9196; www.mwias.com)
12-16: Royal Hospital, Chelsea Son et Lumière 2000 - Men in Scarlet (020 7881 5308/9).

NOVEMBER

25-26: Birmingham International Tattoo, National Indoor Arena.

Lions, Bisons get it together on Brive visit

WITH the ever-looming introduction of a Euro-Corps, HQ Land has been encouraging infantry regiments of the British Army to twin with French regiments. Latest to take the plunge is the 1st Battalion, The King's Own Royal Border Regiment based at Catterick.

CO Lt Col Mike Griffiths, WO1 (RSM) Marc Stevenson and interpreter Lt Nick Mackenzie took the plunge on a first visit to 126th Infantry Regiment, a motorised infantry unit based at Brive, with which they are now affiliated. *Les Bisons*, as the 126th is known, is made up of 60 per cent professional soldiers, 40 per cent conscripts.

The 1 KORBR delegation was treated like kings and given an impressive demonstration of the Brive regiment's highly professional capabilities. There was even a chance for the visitors to try 126th's Famas rifle, with lasers and night-vision goggles, the 12.7mm sniper rifle, and the ERYX anti-tank missile.

They found that the language difference was not a problem and that they had many compatible working practices. Now the Lions of the KORBR are looking forward to a strong working relationship with the French Bisons.

What's that you're wearing?

TERRITORIAL Army office Capt Andy McArthur has a pretty unusual combination of medals, although they are unlikely to be unique. The Midlothian-based BT engineer was one of the last TA officers to be awarded both the Territorial Decoration and the Efficiency Medal before they made way a year ago for the Volunteer Reserve Service Medal.

Andy, who is Captain Ops Training at Irvine-based 251 (Ayrshire) Transport Squadron RLC (V), part of the Scottish Transport Regiment, said: "Relatively few TA officers hold both the Decoration and the efficiency medal for their soldier service. I've thoroughly enjoyed my time in the TA so far and have already started the clock ticking for my third medal." Andy, who enlisted in 1972, was commissioned from sergeant into the TA RCT, and had already achieved his soldier's efficiency medal.

Its aims are to uphold loyalty to the crown, foster *esprit de corps* among those who have served in the British Army, serve the social and welfare needs of members, uphold the traditions of the British Army and support Army charities.

Want to know more about it? Write to the British Army Association, PO Box 660, Bexleyheath, Kent DA7 4XN.



On parade: The Queen Mother with Brig Roberts, right, and her equerry, Capt William de Rouet, IG

Picture: Capt Roy Bevan

Waynes ceremony

• Soldiers of 1 Staffords serving with the United Nations in Cyprus laid wreaths at Waynes Keep Cemetery in honour of four members of the South Staffordshire Regiment buried there. Ptes R Banks, W H Ausprey, C K Hewitt and C A Ingram died on the island while the battalion was garrisoned there between 1955 and 1957, spending much time on patrol to counter frequent street disturbances.

Ernie, pictured, right, joined the 2nd Battalion, Seaforth in 1915 and was discharged in 1926. He played the French horn in the military band and was a musician of some repute.

Picture: Mike Weston

Seaforth's Ernie plays to music of time

LONDON members of The Seaforth Highlanders Regimental Association held a very special lunch at the Union Jack Club in March to celebrate the 100th birthday of one of their number, Ernie Lawson.

Ernie, pictured, right, joined the 2nd Battalion, Seaforth in 1915 and was discharged in 1926. He played the French horn in the military band and was a musician of some repute.

Picture: Mike Weston



Legends of the regiments and corps

11 Airborne Forces Museum, Aldershot



The steel helmet taken by Cpl Williamson at Bruneval

Steel helmet was taken at Bruneval

THE Parachute Regiment earned its first battle honour at Bruneval on France's Channel coast during the night of February 27, 1942.

Operation Biting was led by Maj Johnny Frost, in command of C Company, 2nd Battalion and those attached to it. Their task was to capture the radar site at Bruneval, so that technicians could get their hands on key components of the German radar system, codenamed Wurtzburg, and return them for examination by British scientists.

The picture below was taken on board a gunboat after the mission. Cpl F Williamson is showing off a German helmet trophy to Gp Capt P Prichard RAF, who flew a Whitley bomber on the raid. Cpl Williamson kept the helmet until his death, after which it was passed to the Airborne Forces Museum at Aldershot, where it is now on display, see picture above.



Picture: Nigel Howard

Ancestral voices: Dame Judi Dench with husband Michael Williams (centre), writer John Miller (left) and other cast members Martin Jarvis, Paul Moriarty and Michael Pennington at a reception held at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea to preview a sound and light show of military history, *Men in Scarlet*, to be held there in September as part of the Thames Millennium Festival

Brian Kenny, who initiated the project, Sir Denis Thatcher, and show writer and producer John Miller.

The event, which will benefit the hospital, will take place nightly between September 12 and 16. Tickets, at £22.50 (covered) and £17.50 are bookable on 020 7881 5308/5309.

• Website: www.chelseapensioner.org.uk



It's all yours: The sappers have retained the pace stick which comes with the regimental sergeant major's post at Army Training Regiment Bassingbourn. WO1 Keith Lowerson, left, handed over the reins

to WO1 John Roberts after two years as Bassingbourn's RSM. Keith, now Capt Lowerson, moved on receiving his commission to 1 Royal School of Military Engineering, Chatham, as a troop commander.



Airborne Forces Museum, Browning Barracks, Aldershot is open seven days a week, 10am-4.30pm (last admission 3.45pm). Check weekend times on 01252 349619. Shop 01252 310304.

To appear in this feature, contact the Editor

Bulletin board

Warwickshires' story on the Western Front

▲ Look out for the interestingly-titled *Seek Glory, Now Keep Glory*, said to be the first book to deal specifically with the 1st Battalion, The Royal Warwickshire Regiment during the First World War. It includes the story of "the two colonels", Lt Col Mainwaring and Lt Col Elkington, who were alleged to have agreed the surrender of their troops to save the town of St Quentin from destruction and were dismissed the Army despite the fact that they and most of their men escaped. Written by John Ashby, it is due out this month and is available (price £26.95) from Helion & Co (contact details on Books pages).

▲ Master Airloadmaster Alexander Bain RAF has written to thank *Soldier* readers for supporting No 10 Squadron's "Soldiers' Tales" flown and signed covers. About £2,300 was raised for local and national charities.

▲ A bomb disposal exercise picture (March, Page 13) showed Spr Adedamola Aditoro of 101 (London) Engineer Regiment (EOD) (V) but was captioned as Lt Andrew Clarke. As Ade has had his moment of glory in the magazine, step forward the real Andrew Clarke, pictured right.



▲ The 4th Cadet Battalion, The Royal Welch Fusiliers is organising a Royal Tournament-style **North Wales Millennium Youth Services Tattoo** in Eirias Park, Colwyn Bay on Sept 22-24. Many of the 350-plus performers will be Army, air and sea cadets, but there will also be Regular and reserve forces involvement, bands and parachute displays. If any standard bearers wish to take part, they should fax the tattoo office on 01745 583794.

▲ Padre John Hooley's eight-year "marathon ministry" at Bordon Garrison has ended... and with it his 19 years in the Army. John, right, served in Germany and the UK, and was mentioned in despatches for valuable service in Northern Ireland. As well as being the Bordon Garrison chaplain, he also ran St George's Church for RAF Oakhanger and was involved with other units. His work in the garrison included a very successful five-year period as officer-in-charge of SEME football.



Picture: The News, Portsmouth



Band on the web

If you want to know more about the 35-strong Band of The Parachute Regiment, visit its impressive website, masterminded by band member LCpl Ian Ambrose. Ian is developing a freelance business as a website designer.

Up and running for the past six months, the site gives a glimpse of the musical range of the band, which supports the regiment with a variety of ensembles as well as performing in the Service and civilian communities.

Visit the band at www.paraband.org.uk

● Capt Chris Berry, an Army vet serving at the Defence Animal Centre at Melton Mowbray, has created a "chuff chart" to help him count down to important dates such as leave, family birthdays and postings. It proved so popular with his colleagues that he has put it on the internet. Interested? You can find it at www.chuffchart.co.uk

REUNIONS

Middlesex Regiment: Annual Remembrance service, St Paul's Cathedral, May 13, followed by reunion at the Victory (Services) Club. Members of regiment and families welcome. Details from Ron Morris, 38 Traps Lane, New Malden, Surrey KT3 4SA (tel 020 8949 7605).

Combined Cavalry Old Comrades Association: Annual service, parade, Cavalry Memorial, Hyde Park, London, May 14. Assemble Broad Walk East 1030. To mark millennium, all standards, guidons of Regular cavalry and yeomanry regiments will be on parade together for the first time. Details on 01344 778255.

WOs' and Sgts' Mess, 7 Para RHA: Airborne reunion weekend, May 26-28. Past and present 7 Para RHA soldiers welcome. Contact WO2 Bates, G Para Bty, 7 Para RHA, Lille Barracks, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2NG (tel 01252 347529 or mil 94222 2529).

Queen's Royal Regiment: Anyone badged Queens - Regular, National Service or TA - welcome to reunion on May 27 at Farnham Drill Hall, Surrey. Ring Stuart Browning on 01483 892474 or Ian Chatfield on 01483 429425.

2nd Coldstream Guards (Malaya): Return in June via Kuala Lumpur, Tapah, Cameron Highlands, Ipoh, Penang, Singapore. Details

Omagh tribute to 1 QLR

Pte Paul McNamara, left, and Pte Chris Makinson show off the remarkable commemorative plaque presented to soldiers of the 1st Battalion, The Queen's Lancashire Regiment at the end of their 2½-year tour in Omagh, Northern Ireland. The marble tablet is a rare gesture from the community and reflects the way the battalion dealt with the aftermath of the Omagh bomb and its repercussions. The plaque has been given pride-of-place in the battalion headquarters at its new barracks in Catterick.

Omagh has a largely nationalist population and the plaque was said by observers to be unique in the history of British Army involvement in Northern Ireland.

from Reg Counsell, 76 Bradley Road, Patchway, Bristol BS4 5HR (tel 01179 699667).

Arborfield Apprentices, Intakes 50A, 50B: Reunion at Arborfield, June. Clem Clements (01604 712128), Tom Lennox (01423 865225).

12 Bn, Devonshire Regt/6th Airborne Div: Visit to Ranville, June 3-7, for unveiling of monument to 6th Airborne Div. Contact Mrs Ada Follett, Rosemount, Exmouth Road, Exton, nr Exeter, Devon EX3 0PQ (tel 01392 874596).

Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regt: Annual reunion, Pitchcroft Racecourse, Worcester, June 17, celebrating 50th anniversaries of Freedom of Worcester and dedication of memorial to those who died in Malaya 1950-53. Details from RHQ on 01905 354359.

Armourers' Association: Annual reunion at Victory (Services) Club, London, June 17. Details from Chris Dennis on 01905 755334.

Cheshire Regiment Association: Reunion 2000 to be held in Blackpool, June 23-26 and **Mons Reunion** in Chester on Sept 3. Ring Capt A W Hughes on 01244 327617 or e-mail him at postmaster@rhqcheshire.u-net.com

Windsor School, Germany 1953-83: Grand

Men from Tower mark Boer War VC

Pomp and ceremony: This was the scene, left, at St Stephen's Church, Chipping Barnet, when (see Diary, April) a new headstone was laid on the grave of Yeoman Warder Albert Curtis VC, who won his Victoria Cross with the East Surreys in the Boer War. From left to right are Resident Governor of the Tower of London Maj Gen Geoffrey Field, Constable of the Tower Fd Marshal Lord Inge, Chief Warder Hugh Thompson (ex-RAOC), Lt Col E C T Wilson VC of the Queen's Royal Surreys, Canon Christine Farrington (a distant relative of Albert Curtis), the Rev Paul Abram, Col Stuart Archer of the VC and GC Association, standard bearer Joe Hubble, the Mayor of Barnet and Yeoman Warders Nick Thompson (ex-RAOC), Colin Smith (ex-RAF), Steve Frogatt (ex-RM), John Keohane (ex-R Signals) and Victor Lucas (ex-RS).

Picture: Yeoman Warder I R Bellis

Gavin's in tune with 5 R Irish

MELODIC, haunting sounds wafting across the wide open spaces of Ballykelly station had many poor souls totally perplexed, Maj Don Campbell of 5 R Irish tells us. Then the penny dropped... it was WO1 (SSM) Gavin Morgan RLC, a highly competent saxophone player who recently recorded a CD with the renowned Tom Brown. All proceeds from the CD will go to the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. Gavin, from Deepcut, was sponsored by 8 Infantry Brigade to instruct and test on CQMS and basic storeman courses.



SEARCHLINE

Mrs Doris James seeks information about her late husband's regimental service and war experiences. Anyone who served with **7882410 Sgt David Edwin James RAC** in the Royal Tank Corps from 1931 until his transfer to the reserve in 1946 is asked to contact WO2 (RQMS) S Cullen, RWxY, Allenby Barracks, Bovington Camp, nr Wareham, Dorset BH20 6JA (tel 01929 403508). Sgt James, who came from Wareham, served with 2 Bn, was posted to 1 Armd Div and served with BEF in France from May 23 to June 17, 1940. He was awarded the Africa Star with Eighth Army clasp and also the Italy Star.

Were you in the **Naples area, March 1945?** Family seeks any information about the accident or incident which resulted in fatal injuries to **Sqn Sgt Maj C Watson, 51 RTR**. He was stationed at Nola, nr Caserta, at 5 Bn General Reinforcement Training Depot. Replies to D J Salter, 71 Common Road, Claygate, Esher, Surrey KT10 0HU (tel 01372 464479).

Members of **B3 to B2 Staff Clerk Course** at FETC Nee Soon, Singapore 1966-67 sought for reunion. Course photo shows, among others, Taff Jenkins, Hugh Montgomerie, Bob Ginger, Paddy Elliott, Barry Campbell and Jan Bradley. Details to Hugh Montgomerie, DTMO, Wing Barracks, Bulford Camp, Salisbury SP4 9LS (tel 01980 672285).

Can anyone recall four very tall brothers, born in the 1940s, whose surname was **Musket** (or similar) and who served in the same regiment in the 1960s. Their father was Russian, their mother English. There were also two younger, civilian brothers, Bruce and John. Contact Linda Bishop on 01493 441736.

Author researching book on British involvement in **Cyprus** in 20th century would be interested in anecdotes and stories from anyone who served on the island. Replies to Mark Simmons, Rowan Oak, 5 Eddystone Rise, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 3DQ.

History, details, anecdotes sought of **Aden Special Police Force**, circa 1967. Replies to A Clay, 36 Littlegreen Road, Woodthorpe, Nottingham NG5 4LN.

Whereabouts, news sought of **Richard Clark**, who from 1975-78 worked on a First World War research project as a postgraduate student in the Sociology Department of Lancaster University. Replies to Eric Richards, 41 Redstone Farm Road, Birmingham B28 9NU (tel/fax 0121 777 3016).

PRIZE-WINNER

Traser watch (Feb): SSgt A Fowler, Welfare Office, 7 Battalion REME, Wattisham Airfield. Answer: 100 metres.

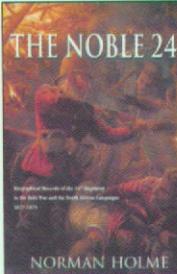
APPOINTMENTS

Maj Gen P Gilchrist, late RTR, is appointed Colonel Commandant Royal Armoured Corps in succession to Maj Gen D J M Jenkins, April 7.

Brig T Cross, late RLC, to be Director General Defence Logistic Support in the rank of major general, autumn 2000, vice Maj Gen A W Lyons.

More about the men who fought the Zulus

TWENTY years ago Norman Holme published his research on soldiers of the 24th Regiment

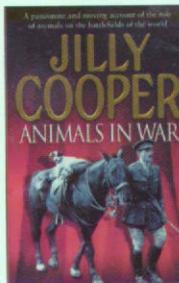


who fought at Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift. In *The Noble 24* (Savannah) he has extended his search to cover the lives of 2,500 soldiers listed on the regiment's medal roll for the South African 1877-79 campaigns. This

384-page hardback, with illustrations from regimental archives, is available from the SWB Museum, The Barracks, Brecon LD3 7EB, price £38.50, inc UK p&p, or e-mail swb@rrw.org.uk

How man exposed his best friends to battle

JILLY COOPER, subject of *Soldier's My Army* feature in the April issue, has reissued *Animals in*

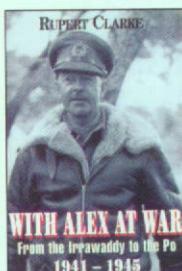


War (Corgi, £6.99) in paperback to coincide with the launch of the Animals in War Memorial Fund, an appeal for a permanent site in London.

A bestseller in 1983, the book is a record of courage, intelligence, devotion and resilience by animals caught up in war. It is also a record of man's inhumanity to animals. Among the countless examples of bravery, look for the story of GI Joe, an American pigeon who saved 100 British lives in Italy, and Rob, a mongrel who made 20 parachute jumps with the SAS.

Alexander of Tunis at close quarters

SIR RUPERT CLARKE, author of *With Alex At War: From the Irrawaddy to the Po 1941-1945* (Leo



Cooper, £19.95) was ADC and personal assistant to Field Marshal Earl Alexander of Tunis in the dark days of early 1941. He spent the following four years at the side of "Alex", sharing in the withdrawal from Burma, the conquest

of North Africa, the invasion of Sicily, the deadly slog through Italy and the morass of Greece. Clarke, who returned to his native Australia after serving with the Irish Guards, is uniquely placed to write about one of Britain's greatest military commanders.

Psychology of the Highlander

Review by military author Philip Haythornthwaite*

A VETERAN of Waterloo remarked that such was the publicity following the efforts of the Highland regiments in the battle that it would "convince the good people of England that John Bull and Pat were little better than spectators".

This is not surprising as the Highlander possesses both a legendary romanticism and a distinctive appearance.

The origin of this extraordinary reputation is explored in Stuart Reid's excellent book. It concentrates on the Highland soldier of the 17th and 18th centuries, the origin of their costume and weaponry and an examination of them in action from Montrose through the Jacobite Rebellions up to their first enrolment in the British Army.

The tactic which most characterises the Highlander in this period is the Highland Charge, less a show of bravado or a lack of discipline than a

Highlander by Stuart Reid. (Military Illustrated Books, £18.99.)



Fearsome: Soldier of the 43rd of Foot, The Black Watch, 1743, painted by Graham Turner

method of quickly overcoming an enemy possessed of superior firepower.

This intimidating rush with

brandished swords, like the later bayonet-charge, had an overpowering psychological effect. Such subjects are explored in the text, supported by pertinent illustrations, many in colour, including contemporary line-drawings and modern reconstructions.

A useful appendix details the Highland regiments of the British Army formed up to and during the Napoleonic Wars. By that time, the unique clan element of the Highland regiment was more tradition than fact. Indeed, as the author states, the last true Highland Charge was at Quebec in 1759.

As a chronicle of the origin and early service of the Highlanders, of the factors which made them unique and initiated a reputation which still endures today, this work can be recommended without reservation.

* Philip Haythornthwaite is the author of many well-regarded military history books, including *The Napoleonic Sourcebook* and *Wellington's Armies*.

IN BRIEF

Fire in the Night by John Bierman and Colin Smith. Subtitled *Wingate of Burma, Ethiopia and Zion*, this is a candid account of Orde Wingate, to some an innovative military genius, to others greatly overrated, and to a few, completely mad. (Macmillan, £20.)

Three new titles from the *Images of England* series: *Aldershot* compiled by Ian Maine and Jim White from the photographic archives of Aldershot Military Museum; *The King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry 1857-1968* compiled by Malcolm K Johnson from the regimental and

other archives; and *Soldiers of Shropshire* compiled by Peter Duckers for the Shropshire Regimental Museum, of which he is curator. (Tempus, each £9.99.)

From the Manchester University Press's Studies in Imperialism series: *The South African War Reappraised*, edited by Donal Lowry (£16.99 sb, £49.50 hb) and *Guardians of Empire: The armed forces of the colonial powers c. 1700-1964* edited by David Killingray and David Omissi (£47.50 hardback).

A Collector's Guide to Third Reich Militaria by Robin Lumsden

Soldier ordering service

All books mentioned on these pages are available from Helion & Company, who can also supply 14,500 in-print military books and operate a free booksearch; p&p is extra. All major credit/switch cards taken. Please allow up to 28 days

for delivery. Postal address: Helion & Company, 26 Willow Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 1UE, UK (tel 0121 705 3393; fax 0121 711 1315).

E-mail: books@helion.co.uk
Website: <http://www.helion.co.uk>

and *Detecting the Fakes* by the same author. Revised, reprinted guides on the same subject. (Ian Allan, both £12.99.)

The Devil's Tinderbox: Dresden 1945 by Alexander McKee. Re-issued to coincide with the 55th anniversary of the bombing of Dresden. The late author had a distinguished career as an writer of books on war and military history but won wider fame for discovering the remains of Henry VIII's warship *Mary Rose* on the bed of the Solent. (Souvenir Press, £12.99.)

The Adventures of a Romantic by Bernard Jay. Story of a farmer's boy turned Grenadier Guardsman, English teacher in Venezuela and property developer in Malvern and Cheltenham. (Bernard Jay in association with Logaston Press, £9.95.)



Shipping out under fire: This re-creation of the seaborne retreat, part of Charles Condall's painting *The Withdrawal from Dunkirk* (Imperial War Museum), is used on the cover of Patrick Wilson's book

How Dunkirk saved Army

SIXTY years ago this month the British Army was shattered. Its equipment lay about the scrapheap that was Dunkirk.

Even the most pessimistic German soldier who entered the port of Dunkirk on June 4, 1940, nine days after the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force began, could hardly have imagined the war was to last another five years or that the Nazis would be the ultimate losers.

In this account, which doubles-up as a useful battlefield guide, Patrick Wilson tells concisely the full story of what he describes as "a disastrous military setback, but not a defeat".

In his foreword, Maj Gen Charles Ramsay, whose admiral father was naval commander of the Dunkirk operation and Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief at D-Day four years later, writes: "Without Dunkirk, it is likely that the British Army might never have reconstituted itself sufficiently for the ultimate return

Dunkirk: From Disaster to Deliverance by Patrick Wilson. (Leo Cooper, Pen & Sword Books: Battleground Europe paperback, £9.95.)

to the Continent, quite apart from the political consequences that the loss of the BEF might have precipitated."

The Allies had been totally unprepared for the German war machine. On April 4, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain predicted that "Hitler had missed the bus"; five days later German troops invaded Denmark and Norway and in France and Belgium it took only 14 days for Guderian's panzers to bring the Allied armies to their knees.

Between the giving of the order on the evening of May 26, 1940 and dawn on June 4, the evacuation from what we know as Dunkirk was in fact from a coastal area with a perimeter 25 miles wide and up to eight miles deep and included Belgian beaches at La Panne and Bray Dunes.

The ordeals of those being dive-bombed as they waited

on the beaches to be taken off by ships after wading out into the sea, or off the improvised pier of trucks at La Panne and from the mole at Dunkirk, are graphically covered.

It is popular to recall the blunders that led to Dunkirk, but the period was also the making of several careers, including those of Brooke, Alexander, Montgomery and Horrocks.

Despite the size of the operations – 338,226 men were evacuated – there was a nasty after-taste with the French, seeking a scapegoat for their country's defeat, feeling abandoned and embittered.

Admittedly, 30,000 French soldiers were left behind, but more than 102,000 of the 123,000 French troops rescued were lifted off by a British sea force which included many small civilian craft and which paid a heavy price.

This book's many contemporary photographs go a long way towards making it a standard work on a watershed in British military history. – BJ

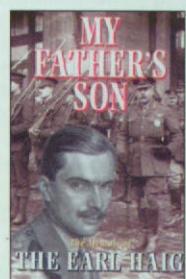
Tribute to gallant Sherwood Foresters

CLIFF Housley spent five years compiling this exhaustively-researched testament to the gallantry of his former regiment. Now assistant curator at the regimental museum in Nottingham Castle (and the regimental historian) he has collected between the covers of this large format and beautifully-produced 200-page volume the definitive record of **British Gallantry Awards: The Sherwood Foresters 1854-1970** (Miliquest, £24). It is available from bookstores or direct from 83 Draycott Road, Sawley, Long Eaton, Nottingham NG10 3BL (add £4 p&p).



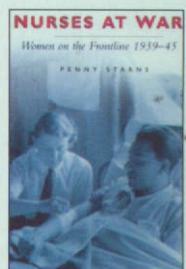
Colditz story of current Earl Haig

HISTORY has, on the whole, not been kind to the memory of Field Marshal Lord Haig, architect of so many costly victories – and defeats – during the 1914-18 war. His only son, nine at the time of his father's death, served as an officer in the Royal Scots Greys during the Second World War. Captured in North Africa, he was held on Hitler's orders in Colditz. **My Father's Son** (Pen & Sword, £19.95) is the memoir of the current Earl Haig. A noted artist, he returned to run the family estate in the Borders – and assume his father's place at many events related to the Great War.



Overdue testimony to nurses under fire

BASED on the BBC Radio 4 documentary *Frontline Females, Nurses at War: Women on the Frontline 1939-45* (Sutton, £19.99) focuses on women who served close to the enemy during the Second World War. Author Penny Starns uses vivid eyewitness testimonies to illustrate how nurses in the front lines of every theatre of war suffered the same deprivations – bombing, torture and imprisonment – as their male counterparts. More than 3,000 of their number died as a result of the controversial decision to allow them to serve at the front.



I've got the support of straight guys

THANK God for the new ruling on homosexuals in the Armed Forces. As a gay soldier I have many straight friends in the Army who are very supportive and relaxed about having a gay friend in the group.

I support "coming out" but agree it could become ugly if you just told a complete stranger, something no gay person would do in this environment or any other.

Homophobes should remember that there is no choice in being homosexual. Greater understanding of the issue may change people's way of thinking.

Having friends who are cool with this issue is amazing. Many of my straight mates find it easy to talk to me about personal worries and some women find it comfortable being around gay guys. We are all human and there is no "normal" or perfect, just people's beliefs. – **Pte H, Aldershot** (name and address supplied).

I AM in agreement with the letter "Honesty is best for gay soldiers" (April). I have been a soldier for the past four years, which just shows how easy it is to get on with the job without threatening your colleagues.

I've never had any trouble with workmates even thinking I am gay. I'm not as open as the soldier who wrote to you. – **LCpl I, Germany** (name and address supplied).

Grass doesn't look so green from my side

I WAS interested in recent letters comparing the pay of Army and civilian drivers. During my 22 years in REME I had the impression civilians had better pay and conditions, better training, and employers who valued them and treated them with respect. The reality, as I discovered after leaving the Army aged 40, is not the case.

In the Army you have to put up with a lot of things, but that has to be balanced against the benefits of Service life. The wages are reasonable for what you do and facilities for training and education are first-class.

I have had several jobs since leaving and suffered the stress of redundancy and unemployment at the age of 50.

None of the jobs I have had as a civilian have paid me what I was earning as a soldier and the management style has been a great disappointment.

If I had a relative in the Army now, my advice to him or her would be: Get as much as you can from the Army in training and education to prepare for your second career as a civilian and make the most of the facilities for sport and adventurous training. You only get one innings in life, so enjoy it while you can. – **G W McKie, Wigston, Leics.**

Thanks for helping jailed driver

ON reading *Soldier* in Petrovac camp I realised that I may be able to thank through you members of the British Army. My brother, Rick Hudson, was a SFOR/KFOR civilian driver for several years but, eight months ago, was arrested in Macedonia after an accident while delivering supplies.

He is still in prison and may spend another two years in Skopje gaol. Individual soldiers have been wonderful. All the RLC chefs serving in Kosovo and Macedonia, particularly Sgt Mac who has just

returned to Germany, have kept my brother's morale up at a very unpleasant time by giving food parcels for delivery by his friend. It has let Rick know he has not been forgotten.

I'd also like to thank the Military Police and interpreter, names unknown, who helped find Rick when he was first arrested, and all the soldiers who were so kind to me when I visited the Balkans. – **Frances Hudson, c/o Rick Hudson Appeal Fund, 52 Hillside, Findern, Derby DE65 6AW** (tel 01283 703233).

Learning credit falls far short of my fees

LETTERS in Mailbag (March) raised two issues. As a soldier taking an Open University course I am entitled to only £175 a year under the Standard Learning Credits (SLC) scheme according to your feature on key allowances (March). This means that for a six-year course I will receive only £1,050 of the £4,000 fees.

If the MoD really supports Service personnel improving their level of education, why not allow the unclaimed surplus of £30.6 million to be used to pay the full costs of educational courses costing more than the SLC annual grant?

Alternatively, the terms of SLC could be amended to allow personnel to accumulate SLC grants so an individual could "save" towards more expensive courses, thus providing a suitable reward for long service and an aid to retention.

Secondly, how long will it be before

Prize letter

single soldiers resort to legal action to receive equal treatment and benefits? The

MoD appears to be taking the same course as it did over pregnant Servicewomen and homosexuals – hoping it will not have to pay out substantial amounts by simply ignoring such inequalities as those outlined in the Mailbag pages.

The moral dilemma for single soldiers is that by suing their employers they know they reduce funds available for the very improvements they wish to see. However, civil servants in control of the Armed Forces' budget at the highest level are unlikely to act, apparently, without the prompting of radical action.

I believe ministers should "bite the bullet" and invest in single Service personnel before they are forced to do so, at greater cost, by legal action. – **WO2 Helen Carter, Int Corps, Command and Staff Trainer (North), Catterick Garrison.**

▲ We put WO2 Carter's point about Standard Learning Credits (SLC) to HQ Land and were told: *The Army is fully committed to personal development and devotes considerable resources in this area annually at many different levels, from basic literacy skills to university courses. The Learning Forces Initiative will soon be introducing an enhanced version of SLC, which will go some way towards meeting WO2 Carter's requirement.*

Details are still being worked out, *but Enhanced Learning Credits are intended to partner Service personnel saving towards more expensive courses, such as those offered by the Open University. There will still be a requirement for individual contributions, but the total amount of money available will be far more than the £175 limit under SLC.

WO2 Carter should also consider discussing her course funding with her local Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), which will be keen to promote individual investment in further education.

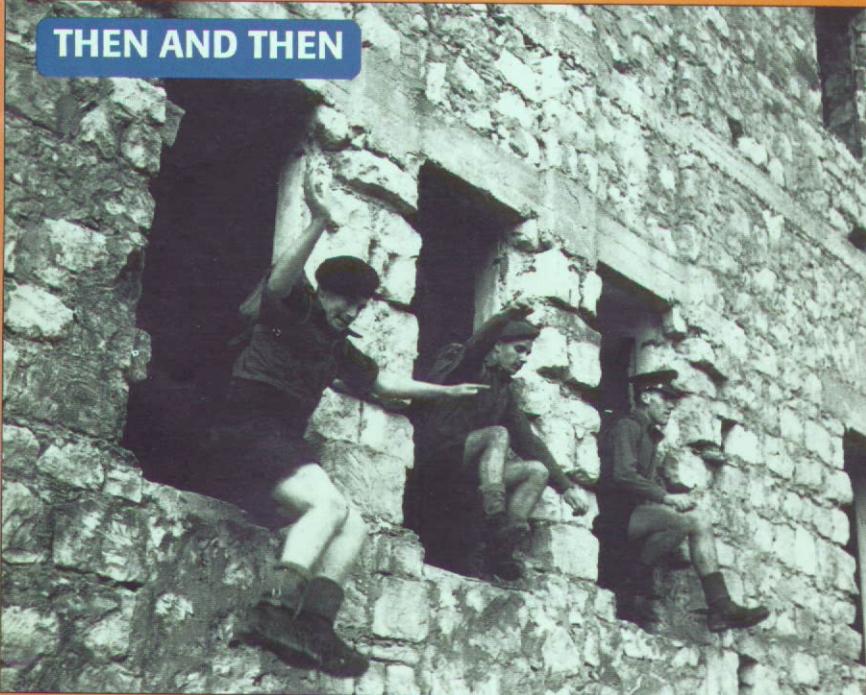
Pte Peter turns up



I HAVE news of Pte Peter Penguin, the absconding Falkland Islands mascot (April). He has been seen with my battalion, sunbathing on a beach in Cyprus [see picture]. He is well, although his cap badge and belt have changed, and he now has a bit of a tan.

Well done on another April 1 scam . . . I think! – **Maj Ron Goodwin, 22nd (Cheshire) Regiment.**

THEN AND THEN



50 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, May 1950: Next to the former Fascist headquarters at Battisti in the Cyrenaican Jebel is the empty shell of a hotel never completed by the Italians. British troops occupying North Africa use it as an obstacle course for physical tests, above. Later they run nine miles to Cyrene.

25 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, May 1975: Five hundred men of the 1st Bn, The Royal Highland Fusiliers spearheaded the attack on the bags of accumulated rubbish during the tenth week of Glasgow's bin-men strike, which has left the city seething with rotting mountains of rat-infested garbage.

Promotion gaps in guard service

YOU published a letter (April) in which a Military Provost Guard Service soldier suggested personnel who enlisted during the MPGS pilot scheme were finding it increasingly difficult to gain promotion.

I can assure that soldier, and your readers, that there are excellent opportunities for promotion in the MPGS for both those currently serving and for those joining the service; particularly for the next few years as the scheme expands rapidly to meet new armed guarding commitments.

The regulations for all soldiers' promotion, laid down in Queen's Regulations for the Army, apply equally to the MPGS

as they do to general service personnel. However, the pool of manpower established under the pilot scheme has proved to be insufficient to generate the number of soldiers qualified to fill NCO vacancies at new sites.

Due to this exceptional circumstance, and where there proves to be insufficient numbers of serving MPGS personnel qualified and selected for promotion, there will be opportunities for those enlisting in the MPGS who have gained the necessary qualifications in their previous service to achieve accelerated promotion. — Lt Col R W Warren, HQ Provost Marshal (Army), Upavon.

SOLDIER welcomes your letters, whether you are an officer or other rank; serving or civvy; nine, 19 or 90. All we ask is that you keep them brief and to the point. We'd prefer them to be typed but if they are handwritten, please put names, addresses and in block capitals (not necessarily for publication). A prize from the *Soldier* gift collection will be awarded each month if we judge that a letter, serious or humorous, merits it. Acceptance or rejection of letters is the decision of the Editor, who reserves the right to amend for length, clarity or style. Anonymous letters will not be considered.

Mail us!

PS...

Give us a break...

I READ with interest the Vox pop article on smoking (Feb) and was particularly impressed with the information that "some people have taken up smoking because they were allowed designated smoke breaks".

We should applaud the cunning of the leaders who laid this ingenious trap. If they can entice squaddies into taking up smoking, there are surely any number of other traps which can be easily set.

I suggest we immediately introduce "course preparation" breaks, "family maintenance" breaks and "reporting back as instructed" breaks. Some poor fools are bound to be taken in. The scope is endless and commanders at all levels should be encouraged to come up with further ideas. — Capt J P Getty, Regimental Admin Office, 1 Green Howards.

Let's stop moaning

AFTER reading *Soldier* for quite a few years, it saddens me to see some of the letters published lately. A classic example was Cpl S McGill's on the wearing of sideburns (March). People forget we are part of a disciplined organisation that prides itself on being the best in the world. I find it hard to understand why so many have the nerve to complain about such trivia.

I am not saying we should be like robots (flexibility is one of the British Army's keys to success), but if soldiers want long hair and sideburns — where will it stop? — they should consider transferring to civvy street and let the rest of us crack on. I understand that the Army has to change with society, but where do we draw the line? Let's concentrate on soldiering. — Cpl D Fraser, SEAE, Arborfield.

CCF's low priority

HAVING been a member of the Combined Cadet Force for nearly five years, I was amazed to learn recently that cadets are placed 14th in a priorities' list for the Armed Forces. I feel this is abominable considering the CCF's aim to encourage its members to become officers in the Armed Forces. — Cpl Lewis Mawhinney, Form Five, Royal Belfast Academical Institution CCF, Antrim, Northern Ireland.

Far-reaching appeal

I WANT to thank you for placing an appeal for me in your Searchline column. It worked. A friend of Andrew Williams saw it and phoned him and he in turn contacted me. — Bonnie Fillier, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

My long service

MAY I add my pennyworth to the current debate and ask if my 42 years' continuous service in the TA is a record? I have just retired from the HAC Band and await the fifth clasp to my long-service medal. — Ex-Csgt Ian Hancock, Braintree, Essex.

Posting left me to cope on my own

I AM the wife of a sergeant in the Royal Artillery. Two years ago the Army moved us as a family back to England from Germany because of my and my son's health problems.

It was felt this would create a more stable base from which we could be treated. Due to NHS waiting lists, it is only in the past six months that I have begun to receive treatment, and now the Army has decided my husband should return to his former unit in North Yorkshire.

A year ago he applied to remain with the regiment he has been with for two years or to transfer to a regiment eight miles away so we could stay together as a family and I and my son could continue with our treatments. Glasgow weren't interested, so I am now acting as mother and father to my children and have been left to cope with my illness alone.

I have put up with a lot and have had enough of being treated like a second-class citizen.

The Army probably thinks that by paying my husband an extra £71.30 a month for travelling expenses they are doing us a favour. This is meant to pay for my husband to return from Yorkshire to his family in Wiltshire two weekends a month. Does anyone know a method of travel that gets you from Yorkshire to Wiltshire for £35.65 return? My husband may as well be on an operational tour. – Mrs C Carter, Upavon, Pewsey, Wilts.

Living-in cost me £300 more than married colleagues

I recently sat through a lecture on equal opportunities and was told there was no discrimination between married and single soldiers. I beg to differ.

A subject which keeps coming up, with no real answers, is the over-37 package. I live in the WOs' and Sgts' mess and, being single, pay full accommodation and food charges, while my married counterparts get free accommodation and reduced food rates to help them set up homes for their families.

Is the Army saying that, come the end of my 22 years, it doesn't care if I have nowhere to live?

I recently sold my house in an area in which I will not be living when I leave the Service. While I had the house I had to live in the mess on posting and was paying more than £300 a month more than a married man over 37. Can someone explain how this is not discrimination against a single soldier? I can't see it. – SSgt G L G Lavis, 9 Regt AAC Wksp, North Yorkshire.

Not a lot of help with buying our own home

I THOUGHT the Army was in favour of individuals buying their own homes, but my wife and I have found this not to be the case. We decided to buy so our son would have secure schooling and we would have our own home.

We saw the house we wanted and went for it. I approached my pay office for financial help, only to find out I was too young at 30 to be considered and would qualify when I was 35. I went away dismayed – especially on reading that the age differs depending which Service you are with. If I was in the Royal Navy, I would be considered at 21. Why? Do naval personnel mature quicker than us squaddies?

We bought the house anyway but when the time came to move from our quarter found I was not entitled to claim disturbance allowance or removals because I was in the same post. I'm not entitled to

▲ Soldier received the following response from Headquarters Land Command:

Recompense in Lieu of Relocation (RILOR) is intended to assist with the costs of daily travel between a Serviceman's private residence and his place of duty. It is based on the actual distance travelled, less a personal contribution of nine miles each way. However, there are occasions when an individual may not be eligible to claim. Such as:

1. If you have, or will, claim a refund of expenses related to house purchase in relation to your current tour of duty you are not eligible to claim RILOR as well.

2. If you have moved to a private residence for personal reasons during a tour of duty, you will only be entitled to RILOR at the mileage you claimed before the move. If no RILOR or

Recompense in Lieu of Relocation (RILOR) either. – Cpl D Watkins, Cat Plt, DCU, MPH, Lisburn.

FURTHER to your key allowances story (March), and having had no joy with my pay office, maybe you could tell me what I'm entitled to. I'm a married soldier with my own house (and mortgage) outside my garrison area, so pay about £200 a month for petrol to travel to work.

For some strange reason, I'm entitled to no financial help whatsoever, according to the pay staff. This also applies to Motor Mileage Allowance (MMA), on which the pay staff all have their own ideas about what we are entitled to.

It seems that all claims that go through our pay office get sent back to the company offices with "Refused" stamped on them. – Name and address supplied.

Residence to Place of Duty (RPOD) was claimed at the previous residence, there is no entitlement to RILOR at the new residence.

3. As there is a personal contribution of nine miles each way for all RILOR claims, if you live nine miles or less from your duty station, your entitlement will be zero miles.

Your regimental admin office (RAO) staff will be able to clarify the reason for non-entitlement and your officer commanding and RAO should be able to address your concerns about the advice on all allowances, and in particular the reasons for refusal. A leaflet just sent to all Land units outlines key allowances and should help you with your entitlements.

RAO staff should be able to provide a pro-forma attached to all returned and refused claims indicating the reasons for rejection.

Haven in Cotswolds

MAY I reply to Michelle Wickens's very genuine concerns ("No quarter given is hard on family", March) and at the same time make a plug for this unique facility.

The Services Cotswold Centre is a tri-Service asset able to provide short-term accommodation for any Service family in need of housing, for whatever reason. Mrs Wickens would, therefore, have been very welcome to stay here while awaiting housing in Northern Ireland.

During 1999 more than 320 families used this excellent facility for transit accommodation, many of them in similar situations to your correspondent. Overall, we looked after well over 600 families during the year.

The accommodation consists of self-catering chalets and modernised flats, all centrally-heated and fully equipped,

including such necessities as fridges and freezers. On the secure, 25-acre site there is a primary school, playgroup, medical centre, library, launderette, tavern bar and amenities centre. The modest rent of £7 per family per day, all in, includes fuel and light charges and regular exchange of bed linen.

It is the availability of this kind of facility, run for the convenience and benefit of Service families, that proves that where it counts the MoD is a very caring employer. We are delighted to welcome families, at very short notice if need be, and a telephone call or fax is all it takes to confirm accommodation (tel: mil 94382 4521 (fax 4529) or civ 01225 810358 (fax 816918).

– Lt Col (Retd) Peter Druitt, commandant, Services Cotswold Centre, Neston, Corsham, Wilts.

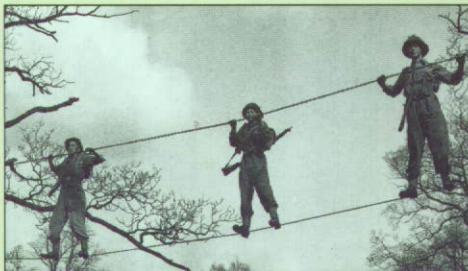
Freeze-frame



"Unfortunately, the 1st Loamshires were half-canned again . . ."

Write your own funny caption for this photograph, first published in *Soldier* in February 1950. The best, in the opinion of the Editor, will win a silver-plated book-clock bearing the Army logo. Usual competition rules apply and entries should reach us by May 31.

There were so many great entries for the March freeze-frame competition, right, we were hard-pressed to pick a winner. Cpl Tam Millsip, HQ ARRC, Tpt/Sup, BFPO 40 eventually got a narrow majority verdict for "I'm not sure if this flossing idea will catch on", but there were honourable mentions in despatches for "Somehow I can never see this line-dancing taking off" from WO2 G Bates of 216 T/T Tpt Sqn RLC(V) at Tynemouth; "If the reception on the CO's TV is so bad, why doesn't he get a normal aerial like everyone else" from Maj Jeremy Turner-Bridger, Cold Gds, and all at Army Management Consultancy Services (Germany); and the rather cheeky "So what time does she normally get out of the bath" from SSgt Steve Lloyd at the Army Medical Directorate, Keogh Barracks, Aldershot. Sorry we couldn't send you all a prize.



More truths about those Kosovo tents

MAY I respond to issues raised by soldiers in the special report (March) on the improved tented camps (ITC) in Kosovo.

Dripping water: It appears from Tpr Ceely's comments that he was living in a Rubb building, which has an exposed aluminium foil liner. The water that drips through is condensation. For future buys, we had already planned to replace it with the insulation provided in ITC GS tentage. Rubb shelters were never intended for use as sleeping accommodation.

Draughty doorways: The Mk 2 sections are redesigned with zips. These could not be introduced in the 12 x 12 because of the time-frame, but will become the new standard. Further developments are planned, but are dependent

on funding. Incidentally, the tents shown in your photographs are the Mk 1 version. The Mk 2 is better and is being introduced on a replacement basis.

Cots: We expected some breakage in cots because the only item available in the time scale was a camping, Far East version. The performance specification now written is for a more durable item, which is being sponsored with MoD money.

Heating: The heating-insulation package provided had no practical trial verification, but we are pleased that it appears to have been successful. Nevertheless, this needs further support before it can be generally introduced. — I Halliday, Defence Clothing and Textiles Agency, Caversfield, Bicester.

PS . . .

Deciding factors

TWO factors are behind the Army's retention problems: poor morale because of overstretch and the fact that some soldiers have to stoop to claiming benefits to make enough to earn a living. I've served for nine years and enjoyed 90 per cent of my time in the Army, but I cannot see a solution to the manpower crisis until these two issues are addressed. — Pte Graham, 8 Tpt Regt RLC, Catterick.

East Timor medal

WHILE I was in East Timor, attached to A Coy, 2 RGR, Commander British Forces stated that an Interfer Medal would be awarded. On my return to my Germany-based unit I contacted the medal office, who said they had heard of no such medal, either from our government or any other. Did they change their minds? — Cpl R Balmer, AGC (RMP), 110 Pro Coy, Sen-lager.

▲ The Australian Government has announced that it is issuing a medal for service in East Timor. — Editor.

Travel allowances

IN response to C Berry (March), who was told he was no longer entitled to Motor Mileage Allowance (MMA) because he had completed nine years' service and was single, married soldiers who have served nine years do not qualify for travel expenses either. Although I've served 11 years, I still have parents to visit. As they are getting older, they love to see my family and me more than ever. The only bonus for married soldiers is that your spouse is entitled to two travel allowances when you are away on a six-month tour. On a recent R and R from Kosovo I returned to the UK on a chartered MoD flight that wasn't even half full. Why waste so much money? Better management could mean improved benefits at the fighting end. — Mick Smith, Kosovo.

SF deserve a medal

MEMBERS of the Special Forces should receive a medal to recognise all the theatres of operation in which they serve. — Colin Goodwin, St Ives, Cambs.

Regiment not rifles

I HAVE just received a copy of your excellent magazine, which I enjoy immensely, but thought I would draw your attention to a slight error on Page 7 of the January edition, in which you mention the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Rifles.

There are no rifle regiments in the Australian Army, so it should have read Royal Australian Regiment (usually abbreviated to RAR). I pass my copy to a friend, who passes it on to another friend — all of us having served in the British Army during the Second World War. — George Hogben, Seaford, Victoria, Australia.

Vox pop

The regular feature in which we ask soldiers for their views on an issue

Sgt Colin Phair, RLC

What we gain in experience and training as port operators is second to none. There would be no problem getting any civilian job in a port environment.



Cpl Shaun Nixon, RLC

There should be a qualifications officer attached to every training wing... something to make sure you leave with civilian qualifications.



Cpl Jill Ewing, AGC

I think the Army has improved over the past five years. On most courses now you have the chance of NVQs. You can claim £175 a year for education but I don't think that is made clear enough to people.



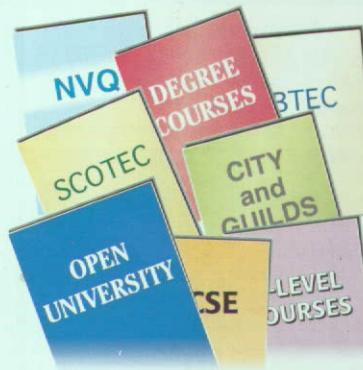
Cpl Tracey Roscoe, AGC (RMP)

The Army is becoming more aware of civilian qualifications, but it is down to individuals to think about their futures and not the Army's responsibility. The Army educates you while you are in, but it can't set you up for civvy street.



Sgt John Batts, 206 Signal Sqn

Everyone who leaves the Army should have a qualification that is recognised in civvy street, something like a BTEC or NVQ, just to say "I've done it".



Cpl Robert Dryden, 202 Signal Sqn

I don't think commanders do enough to push us to get qualifications.



WO2 Ogre Hamilton, 33 Engr Regt

We are made to get civilian qualifications, whether we like it or not.



Pte Daniel Pressey, 23 Pioneer Regt

I had to pay £80 to get my Army qualifications transferred to the civilian equivalents, which I am not happy about.



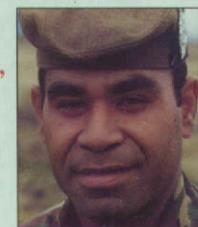
Pte Robert Arnott, KOSB

As a private soldier I don't think we get enough opportunities to gain civvy qualifications. It's OK once you move up the promotion ladder. Resettlement should start after three years.



Cpl Mark Allen, RLC

Now I am a corporal I am looking at what other qualifications I can transfer that would be recognised outside the Army.



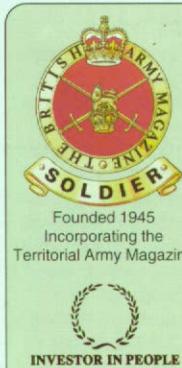
Pte Tevita Tuitubou, KOSB

I am not too worried as when I finish I am going back to Fiji to look after my farm.



Cpl Martyn Carroll, RLC

If you are doing something that you can use in civvy street you should be allowed to do the full qualification, not just to the level where the Army is satisfied.



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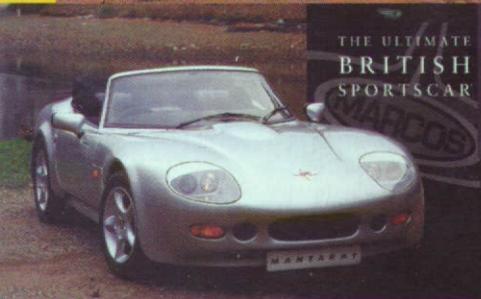


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