

SOLDIER

SEPTEMBER 4, 1989

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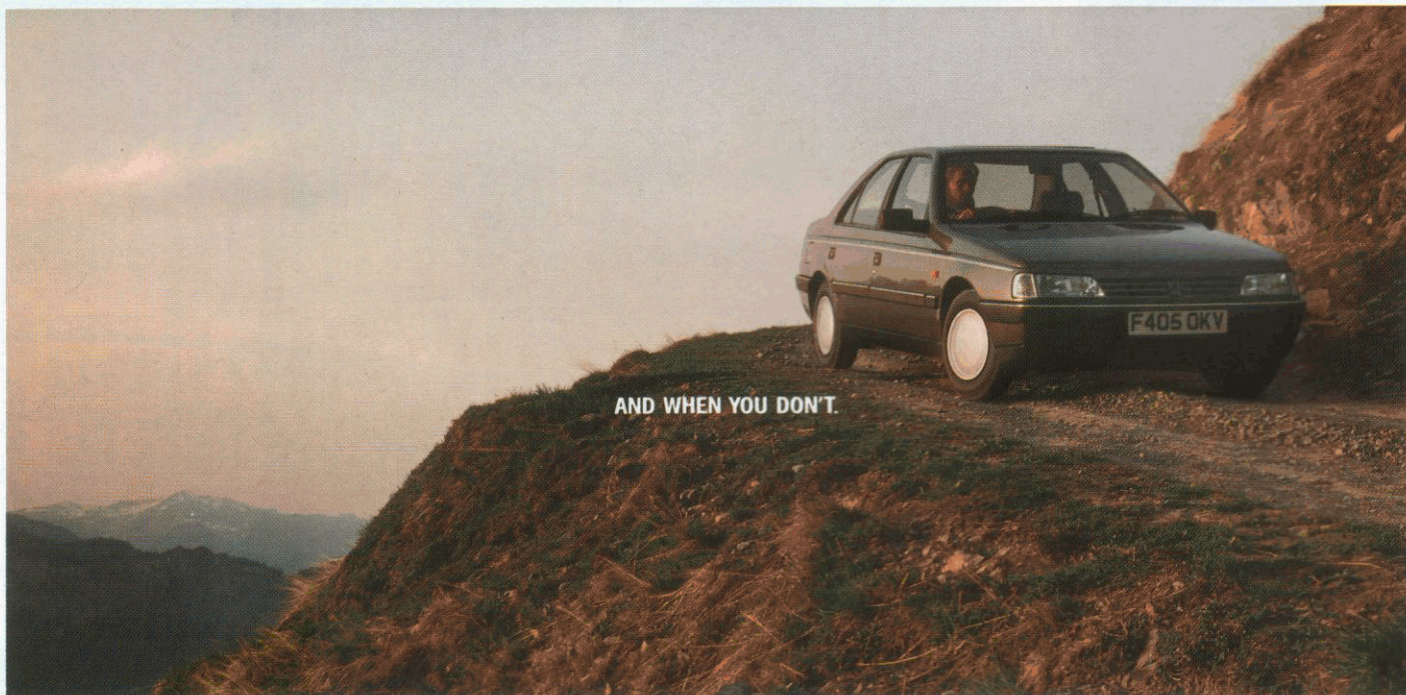
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FRONT COVER: Gen John R Galvin, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, who was Reviewing Officer at the 100th Sovereign's Parade at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, has a word with one of the girls passing out. See story about the Sword of Honour winner on Page 11.

Picture: Mike Weston

SOLDIER

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY
incorporating the Territorial Army magazine



NEXT ISSUE: SOLDIER reports on the 1st/2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles now based at Church Crookham, Hants, where soldiers are pictured polishing a cannon captured in Afghanistan in 1880 and which travels the world with them.

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CONTENTS

4 Letters

5 News

10 People

13 SOLDIER to Soldier

14 Lightweight Lance

17 79 Railway Sqn RCT

22 Wombat

26 British Defender

29 RAC 50th Anniversary

32 Anne Armstrong

35 Naafi Cuppa

36 Books

38 Trumpeters Reunion

39 HOAY competition

41 SOLDIER Mart

48 Sport

50 Nijmegen Marches

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Peace sword for Gurkha base

STAFF of British Gurkhas Nepal, have been awarded a Wilkinson Sword of Peace for their rescue work during the Nepalese earthquake last year.

Swords are awarded each year to units of the three Services judged to have made the most valuable contribution towards establishing good and friendly relations with communities in the UK or overseas.

The severe earthquake which shook

Nepal in August 1988 caused considerable loss of life and widespread damage.

Staff of British Gurkhas Nepal, who are the link with the Brigade of Gurkhas, immediately helped the townspeople recover their dead and injured.

By the end of the first day, at least 450 casualties had been treated at the British Military Hospital. Of the 1,135 injured in the earthquake, 902 were eventually treated

at the Dharan cantonment.

The unit receives the sword because its staff "made an outstanding contribution to furthering the relationship between Britain and Nepal by their response to the earthquake and their dedicated community work and civil aid."

The King of Nepal, visiting the cantonment, said that "the people of Nepal would never forget".

Terrorist victims memorial

A STAINED glass window has been dedicated at All Saints Church, Dortmund, to the memory of two soldiers who were killed in Northern Ireland earlier this year.

LBdr Stephen Cummins of 32 Heavy Regiment RA and Gnr Miles Amos of 5 Heavy Regiment RA, both on a four months tour of duty in Northern Ireland, were killed by a terrorist landmine.

Many soldiers who had served with LBdr

Cummins and Gnr Amos in Dortmund and Northern Ireland were among the congregation of nearly 300 soldiers of the two regiments at the dedication service.

The ornate stained glass window, with the crests of the two soldiers' regiments, the soldiers' names and details of their deaths, also bears the inscription "Do not stand at my grave and cry; I am not there I did not die".

Peak performance

A TEAM of Territorial Army soldiers from South Yorkshire were making absolutely sure they were fit to take part in a mountaineering expedition which will climb Mont Blanc. Months of fitness training and lessons in navigation, survival skills, first aid and rope work culminated in the gruelling ascent of 14 peaks of 3,000ft or more in North Wales during a single weekend.

Mostly drawn from newly formed TA infantry battalion 4 Yorks based in Sheffield, the soldiers aimed also to climb an unnamed and previously unclimbed peak in the Himalayas.

The team is being led by Maj Ted Wilkins, a Regular from Huddersfield, with 2nd Lt Stewart Guillianotti, a TA officer from Sheffield as second in command.

NI tours extended

ROULEMENT tours in Northern Ireland are to be extended from four and a half months to six months.

It will be a progressive change, starting next year, and is designed to create greater stability in Army life.

The longer tours will mean infantry battalions have a longer interval between trips to the Province.

Some units have done more than 10 stints since the troubles began 20 years ago.

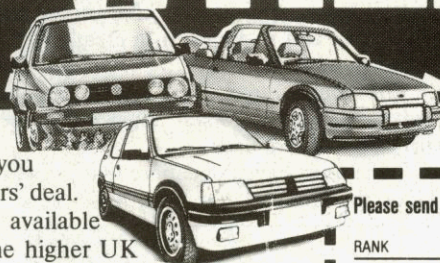


Seven-year-old "soldier" Barry Millard salutes a genuine Irish Guardsman outside Clarence House in London after the Fulham youngster appeared to steal the heart of the Queen Mother. Barry marched up to her, presented her with flowers, then smartly saluted her as she celebrated her 89th birthday with well-wishers outside her home



Gen Sir Brian Kenny, C-in-C BAOR, meets a canine member of the Defence Animal Support Unit at Episkopi, Cyprus during a visit in his capacity as Colonel Commandant of the RAVC

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Brig Bob Riddle, Colonel of the Regiment, hands out traditional roses to company commanders

Roses for '300th' finale

THREE hundred years after the regiment was raised in Edinburgh, The King's Own Scottish Borderers marched through the city under the shadow of the famous castle to bring their tercentenary celebrations to a close.

Appropriately the parade took place on Minden Day, the anniversary of the Battle of Minden when six British infantry battalions defeated 10,000 French cavalry, and as part of the tradition all ranks wore roses in their hats.

The regiment was led along Princes Street by Brig Bob Riddle, Colonel of the Regiment, past a dais where the salute was taken by the regiment's Colonel in Chief, Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester.

Marching behind them were contingents and Colour parties from allied regiments from Australia, Malaysia, Canada, the United States and Sweden.

They in turn were followed by detachments from the Old Comrades' Association of the regiment, marching to the music of the Edinburgh Police Pipe Band.



Pensioner Bud Flanagan, who served four years with the 2nd Battalion KOSB in India, receives a rose from LCpl Raymond Johnston of today's 1st Battalion

Units move in MoD land sale

SEVERAL Army units are involved in plans by MoD to rationalise its development and land holdings in north west London.

The moves will achieve significant savings and better and more secure accommodation for Servicemen, says Mr Michael Neubert, former US of S for the Armed Forces.

No major units will close; they will merely relocate and there will be little reduction in staff levels, although there will be a significant redeployment of jobs.

More than 200 acres of MoD land will be sold to the private sector in areas where building land for residential and light industrial purposes is at a premium, leaving the MoD with a net saving, after rebuilding, of more than £62 million.

Reductions in running costs from the redeployment will bring the total saving over ten years to more than £80 million.

The Army units affected are:

- Whetstone – Headquarters of Postal and Courier Services. Location will close and unit will move to Mill Hill.
- Beavers Lane Camp, Hounslow – home of 621 Company RAOC and minor administrative units. Location will close. The company to move to RAF Northolt and minor units to Cavalry Barracks.
- Cavalry Barracks, Hounslow – Temporary infantry battalion base, and London District Transit Centre. Location will close when central London works programme complete. Transit Centre will move to RAF Uxbridge.
- Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill – Postal and Courier Service barracks with some minor units. Location will close. Minor units move to RAF Northolt. Postal and Courier Depot is "subject to further study".



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Apprentices bull up a Matador

JUNIOR tradesmen at the Army Apprentice College at Chepstow have completely restored a 50-year-old Army lorry and presented it to the National Army Museum.

The vehicle, a Matador truck, first saw service in 1938, and was one of the British Army's first ever general purpose vehicles which could be adapted to a number of uses. In some cases it was fitted with a crane, and

in others used as a troop carrier.

Since last year dozens of young apprentice fitters have spent countless hours of their spare time restoring the Matador to its original condition.

Sergeant's bravery GM

THE bravery of a TA soldier, Sgt Barry Smith, who was shot while tackling armed robbers in London, has been recognised by the award of the George Medal.



Sgt Smith, of 289 Cdo Bty RA (V) heard gun shots while driving in Willesden in 1986, and saw two men attacking security guards outside a bank. They made off on a motor-cycle but collided with a car while Sgt Smith was chasing them.

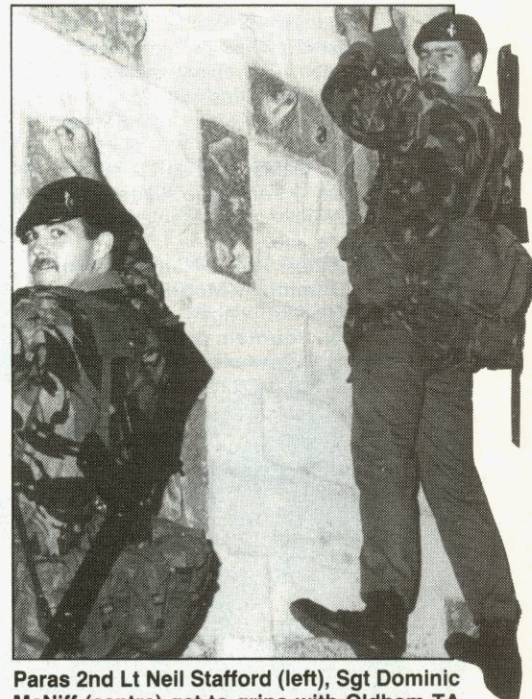
He was shot in the groin and chest while struggling with one of the men but still managed to restrain him, and both men were arrested.

Fighting wall

WHEN soldiers are climbing up the wall of Oldham TA Centre, it's not through frustration - the Centre is heralding a revolution in indoor training with the construction of what is believed to be the first combined indoor climbing wall and urban fighting facade.

The wall, which will be used primarily by TA soldiers from the 4th Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, was the brain child of 4 Para's commanding officer Lt Col Brian Martin.

Originally to have been an ordinary dividing wall as part of a major refurbishment programme of the drill hall, the wall gradually evolved into a combined climbing wall and mock house facade, complete with drain pipes, for practising building assault and house entry techniques.



Paras 2nd Lt Neil Stafford (left), Sgt Dominic McNiff (centre) get to grips with Oldham TA Centre's new climbing wall

Breezy visit

PRINCESS Alexandra, the Light Infantry's Deputy Colonel in Chief, visited breezy Blackpool to see the regiment's 3rd Battalion. Her two hour visit was the first to the battalion for ten years.

Wearing a pink and mauve flowered suit, Princess Alexandra chatted to more than 200 people at the summer fair and in the Officers' Mess.

She took a keen interest in the military equipment demonstrated by the soldiers, watched helicopter drills with a static Puma and even felt the weight of an SA 80 automatic rifle.



This is great fun, LCpl Darren Brooks seems to be saying as he canoes down the River Leine in the Harz mountains of Germany. LCpl Brooks was in a party from HQ 4 Armd Div taking part in annual adventurous training exercises

MOBB

by Mouse



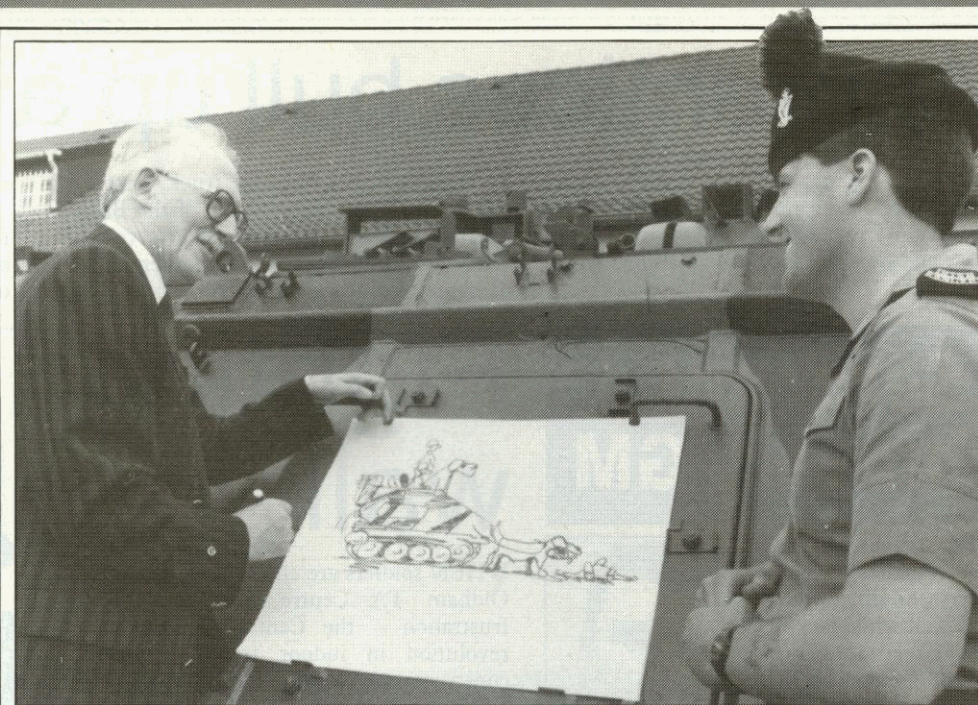
Prize for 4 Para

Three men from B Company, the 4th Battalion The Parachute Regiment did the TA proud when they competed against 30 Regular and Reserve Army teams from Italy, France, Germany and Austria in a tough endurance test in the Alps.

It was the first time the Union Flag had been flown in the Mont Tomba competition, in which entrants have to trek 50 kilometres in 25 hours climbing up to 1,600 metres above sea level.

Twelve teams dropped out but the lads from 4 Para were fourth home and the first Army Reserve team to cross the line.

The Paras, 2nd Lt **Neil Stafford**, Sgt **Dominic McNiff** (picture below-Stafford right) and Pte **Andrew Fountain** trained for the competition in Yorkshire ... though all come from Oldham, Lancs.



R Irish get the picture

Cartoonist **Bill Tidy**, who began his association with the Royal Irish Rangers 20 years ago with a contribution in *Punch*, spent a week with them during their tercentenary celebrations.

He revealed that he began his career while stationed in Japan with the Royal Engineers 30 years ago.

And that his first publication in a Japanese newspaper earned him more than a week's Army pay.

He is seen above at Osnabrück letting Rgr **Richey Mealey** of the Recce Platoon into his secret.

PEOPLE

Farewell fanfare

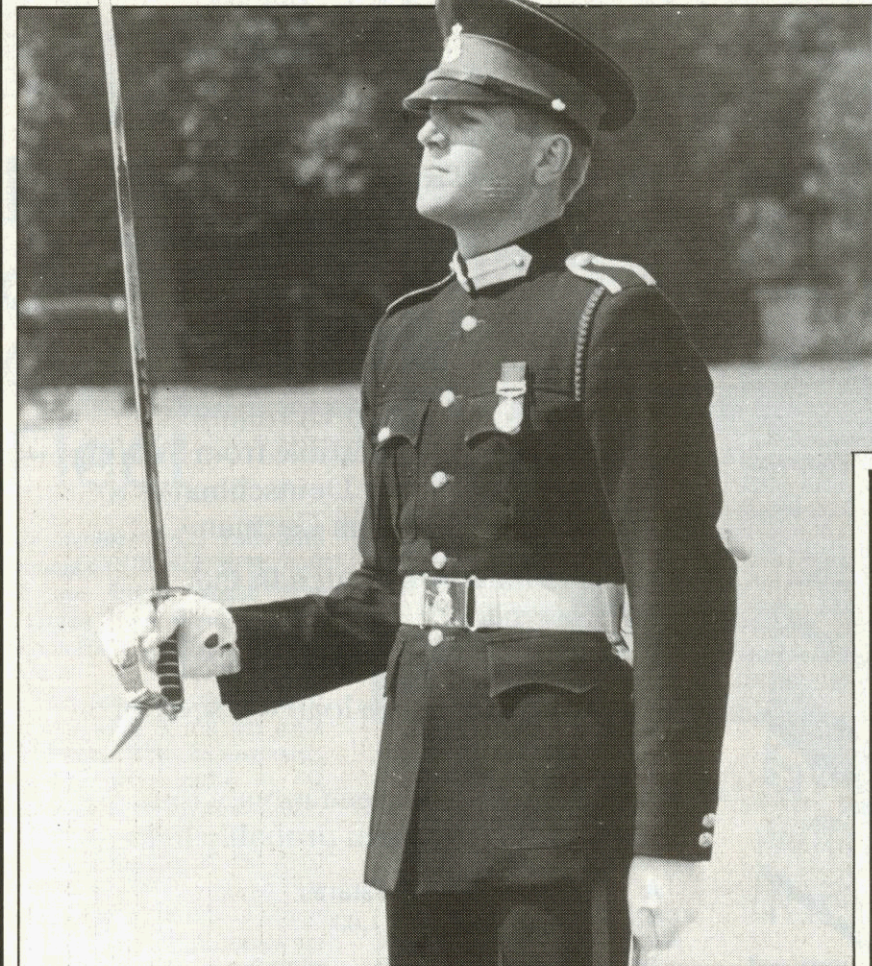
Mr Peter Gough, retiring Mayor of Warminster, Wilts, had the highlights of his life put to music recently by Bandmaster **Phil Shannon** of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Wales.

It was done at the request of the incoming Mayor, Mr **Richard Phillips**, seen right (wearing chain) handing over a framed copy of a special fanfare - which was then duly sounded.

Warminster has a close association with 1 RRW, currently the Demonstration Battalion at the School of Infantry.



From Ranks to Sword of Honour



The 100th Sovereign's Parade, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, was a memorable day for a young man who was once CSM of his school cadets (Wymondham College) and went on to become a corporal in the 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment.

Senior Under Officer **Warwick James Saunders** (25) received the Sword of Honour from the hands of Gen **John R Galvin**, US Army, Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

SUO Saunders, who served five years as a soldier, and comes from Longstanton, Cambs, has been posted to 2 R Anglian in Celle.



Plain Yanks

Two US Army lieutenants joined in Exercise Phantom Bugle, the grand finale of the squadron and company commanders course run by the School of Infantry, Warminster.

Lts **Andrew Vliet** (25) from Hawaii, and **John Nagl**, from Nebraska (above), are both Rhodes Scholars studying for higher degrees at Oxford.

(Cecil Rhodes who helped to open up South Africa funded a scholarship to bring young "colonials" and Americans to study in Britain).

They found their main problem was understanding radio traffic because of the different procedures, accents and speed of transmission. As someone said - it's our common language that separates us!

Going down, down Down Under

Nice work if you can get it. Maj **Roddy Kilpatrick**, RCT (above right) on exchange from BAOR to the Australian Army War Game Centre under Exercise Long Look found himself in New Zealand recently.

The Centre took its computers and

software to South Island to help in a command post exercise.

South Island is noted for its skiing ... Maj Kilpatrick for his enthusiasm for the sport. Could it be that he is pointing out a grid reference to a Kiwi here or checking on the slopes?



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Capt Guy Wallis

Paras dive on German Fleet

Six members of 2 Para who managed to dive on all but two of the First World War German High Fleet lying in Scapa Flow are determined to return.

They want to take a closer look at what is still left since 1918 when, after the surrender, the fleet was scuttled by the Germans as an act of defiance.

Capt Guy Wallis, the team leader, said: "It is the most interesting diving you can ever hope to do in the UK. There is a lot of build up of weed, but you can still make out what the ships were."

"The fascination is in identifying them. They are just immense. All the major battleships have turned turtle

Views expressed in SOLDIER are not necessarily those of the Army or the Ministry of Defence.

SOLDIER to Soldier

Pigeon hitches a lift home

If you're a young pigeon, utterly exhausted and perhaps a little bit lost, what better place to land than at an airfield?

So just such a bird walked into one of 653 Squadron's hangars at Salamanca airfield, near Soest, and eventually flew home to his owner, a German miner living in Gelsenkirchen in the Ruhr - by helicopter.

The pigeon had been missing for two weeks and his owner,



SSgt Paul Nicholls signs over the lost pigeon to pilot Lt Henry Boyle before his flight home to Gelsenkirchen

Herr Jürgen Grabosch, thought he would never see the bird again. But SSgt Paul Nicholls looked after him while the bird's owner was traced, and Lt Henry Boyle and Sgt Mike

Pilgrim restored him to his owner while on a training flight to Wildenrath.

"It's really great how kind those soldiers are," said delighted Herr Grabosch.

because of the silt."

There was a variety of craft to view including battleships, light cruisers, a minelayer, commercial vessels and a torpedo boat.

In the 2 Para party were supervisor Sgt "Yank" Thayer, Ptes Ian Douglas, "Blue" Blumer, Dave Taylor and Wilf Williams, and LCpl Abe Davison. The other supervisor was Sgt Alex Carmichael, R Sigs. The rest of the party were Cpl "Bazz" Hunter, 1 Para, Cpl Nobby Clarke, 3 Para and from Depot Para Bdsman Chris Young and Bdsman Mick Mico.

Swapping winter for worse

Ten British Servicemen will miss the cold and wet misery of the UK winter in 1990-91, swapping it for summer thousands of miles away.

But summer for them at Smith Island in the Antarctic will be cold, hard and sometimes miserable, if at times exciting, picturesque and

perhaps great fun as well.

Members of the Joint Services expedition to Smith Island, the ten Servicemen will find travel around the island mostly by ski, hampered by the heavily encrusted ice layer festooned with crevices. Sheer ice cliffs hug the coastline and mountains climb to the island summit of 6,900ft.

Says CSgt John Kimbrey of HQ Cdo Forces Royal Marines at Mount Wise, Plymouth, who is looking for suitable volunteers: "It needs a total commitment and is not for the fainthearted." Quite so.

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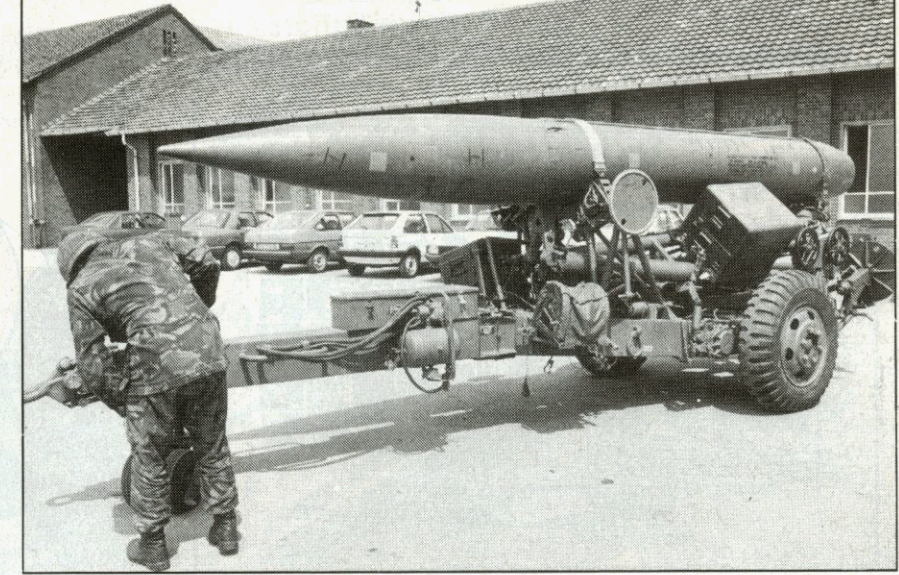
ONE – The lightweight launcher arrives on a lorry and has to be unloaded by crane and dismantled...



TWO – Then the "truss" is taken from the tracked launcher. More heavy lifting for the lads...



THREE – The tricky bit of deciding which bit goes almost over...



FOUR – That's all there is to it, folks. The missile on its lightweight launcher is ready to be towed away

Puzzle corner!

It's the ultimate test of a gunner's patience

THE MOST important vehicle in call sign One Zero Alpha resembles a large tin bath on tracks with a fat someone lying inside (when it is carrying a missile).

On Exercise Xerxes Victory run by 15 Battery RA it was accompanied as normal by two 432 APCs, one a command vehicle the other a reserve-cum-choggy wagon.

The three vehicle convoy was home to Sgt Eric Kirbitson and his crew – Dobbo, Taff, Smudge, Bert, Ginge, Jimmy and Tojo. With it, as required, went "The Bullet".

In an outfit where every troop claims to work harder than the others the truth would appear to be that everyone puts in an equal effort but on exercise the launcher sections are more equal than the rest when it comes to grafting.

For a press-button age there is a surprising amount of muscle power required.

Turning the elevating handles in hot weather is good for the figure and there would be no competition among hall porters for the job of handling the suitcase-like boxes contain-

In the last issue SOLDIER featured 50 Missile Regiment and its tracked launchers. On these pages it looks at the unloved lightweight launcher. Story by **Bill Moore**, pictures by **Mike Weston**.

ing the stabilising fins.

Preparing a launch was a matter of quiet, grunting efficiency, all breath being necessary for the exertion required.

This applied throughout a sweltering day, regardless of attacks by vicious horseflies.

Dusk found 10A temporarily immobilised while Sgt John O'Neill and Cpl Des O'Connor of the REME detachment searched for an electrical fault causing the engine to cut out. (Twelve hours earlier we had seen them solving problems at the field storage site).

It took BSM Kevin Calvesbert to introduce an uneasy note into the proceedings.

It looked, he said, as though they might have to transfer operations to the lightweight launcher.

Sharp intakes of breath... cold stares...

Setting up a lightweight launcher is the ultimate test of a missile gunner's patience.

An eight-tonner drives up with a Chinese puzzle on its back consisting of a mass of hydraulic arms and rods skilfully mixed up between two large wheels.

Using a crane from a loader transporter the section has to take it apart and unload it and then dismount the "truss" (launching frame) of the tracked carrier and put both together.

The end result is a launching frame which can be towed behind a vehicle.

To perform this transfer on a fine day is a challenge; at dusk it is difficult and on a wet night in the middle of a wood frankly damnable.

Great was the relief when Sgt O'Neill gave the thumbs up, Ginge switched on and the engine roared into life.

The fire mission was carried out at sunset from the tracked launcher.

The following morning there was no escape. Exercise play

required it, and the lightweight launcher miracle was performed in a German builder's yard. Happily the light was excellent and the surface flat concrete.

The firing mission was accomplished in the country under the gaze of a curious chicken farmer and two schoolboys.

Bert, a stocky Somerset man whose Dad used to play for West Ham, and whose brother was a sapper, pressed the red firing key.

He explained later that the reason no one shouts "five" during the countdown to a missile launch was because it



Above – The complete works, hitched up and ready to go
Right – Bdr Rick Fahy of 50 Missile Regiment's Special Defence Group which is trained at Brecon and elsewhere to protect Lance from enemy special forces



might be taken for "Fire".
If some of the crew had a preoccupied air as the day wore on it was probably because they were thinking that if they had to take the lightweight launcher to pieces again and restore it to the back of the Bedford they would rather do it in daylight...

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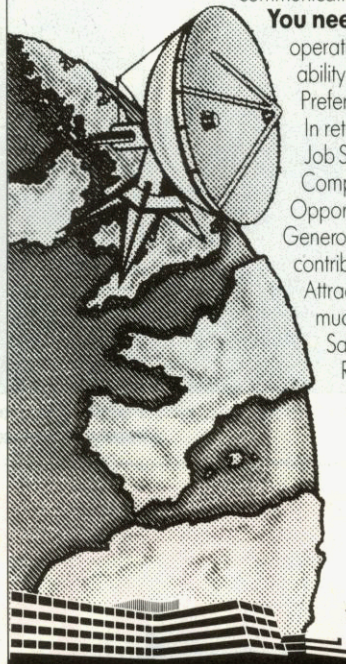
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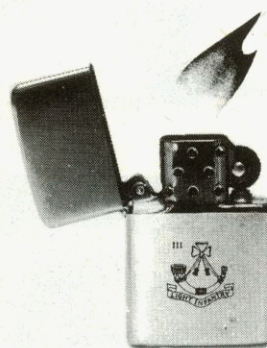
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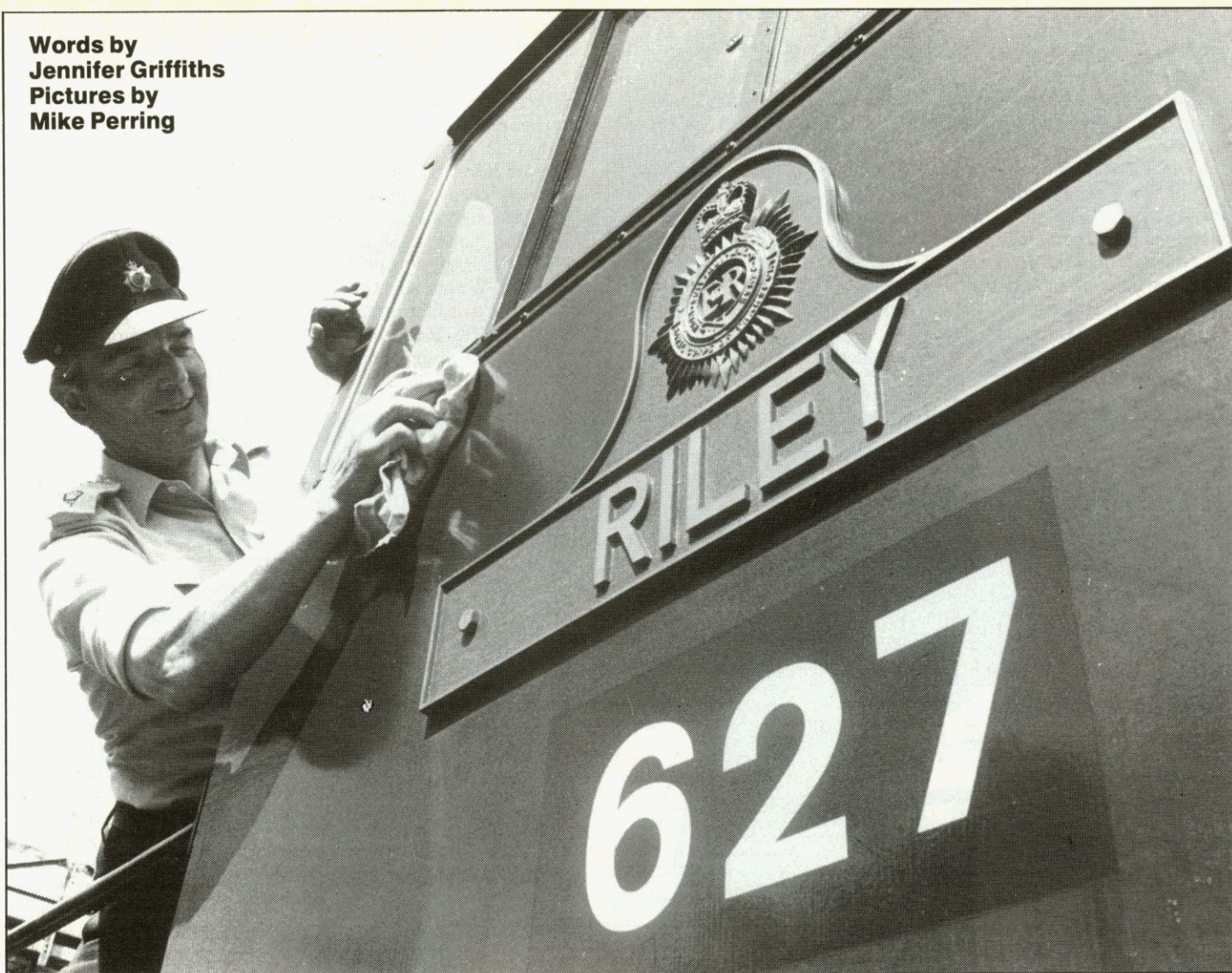
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Words by
Jennifer Griffiths
Pictures by
Mike Perring



A life of Riley? When you have the grand title of *Eisenbahnbetriebsleiter* (it sounds much better than the English Railway Operating Manager), there is no way your job includes polishing the locos! But Maj John Poyntz, officer

commanding 79 Railway Sqn RCT, the holder of the title and a self-confessed railway aficionado, was happy to pose for this picture.

Maj Poyntz has a vast collection of railway memorabilia and has enjoyed a

wide variety of jobs. During his Army career he has been a shunter, a railway signalman, a railway traffic operator, a clerk, a bargee, a navigator, a combat engineer, a hovercraft pilot, a railwayman and a lorry driver

Keeping BAOR on the rails

MAJ John Poyntz, Officer Commanding 79 Railway Squadron, Royal Corps of Transport, rejoices in one of the British Army's grandest titles, *Eisenbahnbetriebsleiter*, and there is just enough room on his office door to squeeze it all in!

The English translation – Railway Operating Manager – sounds comparatively tame.

The squadron, which is actually at about troop strength, is responsible for operating British Army railway installations in West Germany and Belgium in peace and war.

German Federal law insists that someone is appointed to this fine-sounding post and the Commander Transport and Movements BAOR has conferred

red the title on the OC 79 Railway Squadron.

The *Eisenbahnbetriebsleiter* is responsible for all aspects of railway safety, including mechanical and civil engineering matters. He delegates responsibility for all operating matters to Operating Troop, presently commanded by Capt Andy Teithe, and sends crews to their depots for driving and shunting duties.

The squadron's training wing is the only dedicated railway training unit in the

British Army. The squadron is assisted by the Royal Engineers, who maintain the permanent way; REME, who maintain the locos and rolling stock; and the Royal Signals, responsible for communications.

79 Rly Sqn RCT Workshops REME provides all the technical support, including repairs to locos, carriages and wagons, and a mobile recovery service. It employs 15 civilian craftsmen in addition to nine soldiers.

If war broke out, the

squadron would be reinforced by 275 Rly Sqn RCT (V), a sponsored TA unit made up of professional railwaymen in civilian life who train each year in West Germany.

Because of the small numbers involved in providing these services, the squadron depends to a large extent on the Territorial Army for its ability to carry out its war role.

That role has four main aspects.

● To move ammunition from
Turn to next page

Army's railmen look to a brighter future

THERE have been many changes since Maj John Poyntz, OC 79 Railway Squadron, RCT joined the Army as a sapper in 1955 and went straight into railways. For one thing the operation has contracted.

"Not only has the responsibility for railways moved from the Royal Engineers to the Royal Corps of Transport, the whole method of working and philosophy has changed to a

great extent," he explained.

"Steam engines have been replaced by diesel, and we are now far more concerned about radio control, and we no longer have our own signal boxes.

"We have got smaller and smaller, until now our total number of railwaymen, non commissioned men, working on railways is only 21. The complete roll is only 40.

"The future is looking a little

brighter than the immediate past, because the importance of railways as part of the total transport infrastructure in the Army has been accepted.

"There has been investment in new locomotives and rolling stock, and new sidings have been built. We are hopeful that in the not too distant future our numbers will begin to increase to operate and maintain the new equipment.

"We are approaching the time of the demographic trough when there will be a shortage of labour.

"It is not going to be easy for the Army, with the best will in the world, to give us soldiers.

"But we feel we need initially at least another half dozen men to keep the job going properly. Otherwise equipment will begin to break down if it is not properly cared for."



Weichenwarter (Signalman) Theo Maertens sees all is well as driver, LCpl Mac Rollo passes through Monchengladbach-Rheindahlen

Sappers take care of track

PERMANENT way support for BAOR rail is provided by the Railway Superintendent RE, presently Capt Frank Compton, who is attached to the Regional Headquarters of the Property Services Agency.

He commands the two RE warrant officers in charge of the permanent way teams, made up of German civilians, east and west of the Rhine.

The sappers are involved because of the strategic importance of the railway infrastructure. They look after 100 kilometres of track and 200 points.

Their war-time role would be to repair sabotage. Capt Compton said: "The track is very easily destroyed, but with the practice we have throughout the year and on exercise, it is clear that the track can also be very easily repaired.

"Small sabotage incidents can be repaired in an hour and a half. Major bomb damage can be put right in 12 to 15 hours. Peace time standards dictate that we must maintain the track very carefully. Any damaged track is automatically replaced by new, and that can take days or weeks depending on the size of the job, and it can cost a lot of money.

"But, in war, with military labour and with the urgency of the situation, the track is temporarily repaired, enough to get the trains rolling quickly, which is the important thing. That is the reason we exercise in the way we do - making emergency repairs as opposed to peacetime repairs."

Unit has vital ammo role

From Page 17

the base and forward ammunition depots at Bracht and Wulfen. It is their responsibility to move about 80 per cent of 1 (BR) Corps' ammunition during transition to war.

● To move large numbers of personnel from airheads to the reinforcement holding area. Goods vans as well as coaches are used.

● To move vehicles, mainly armour.

● The running and maintenance of BAOR ambulance trains.

The squadron's peacetime responsibility covers a wide area of 22 locations between Olem in Belgium and Berlin -

the distance between London and Edinburgh. Some are very busy. Several are served on an agency basis by German rail.

Ammunition trains and those carrying classified loads must be escorted by a military guard. For this the squadron has six specially equipped vehicles fitted out with beds, cooking, washing and lavatory facilities. These mobile guard rooms can be attached to both ends of trains.

The British Army's most famous train is probably the *Berliner* which runs daily between West Berlin and West Germany.

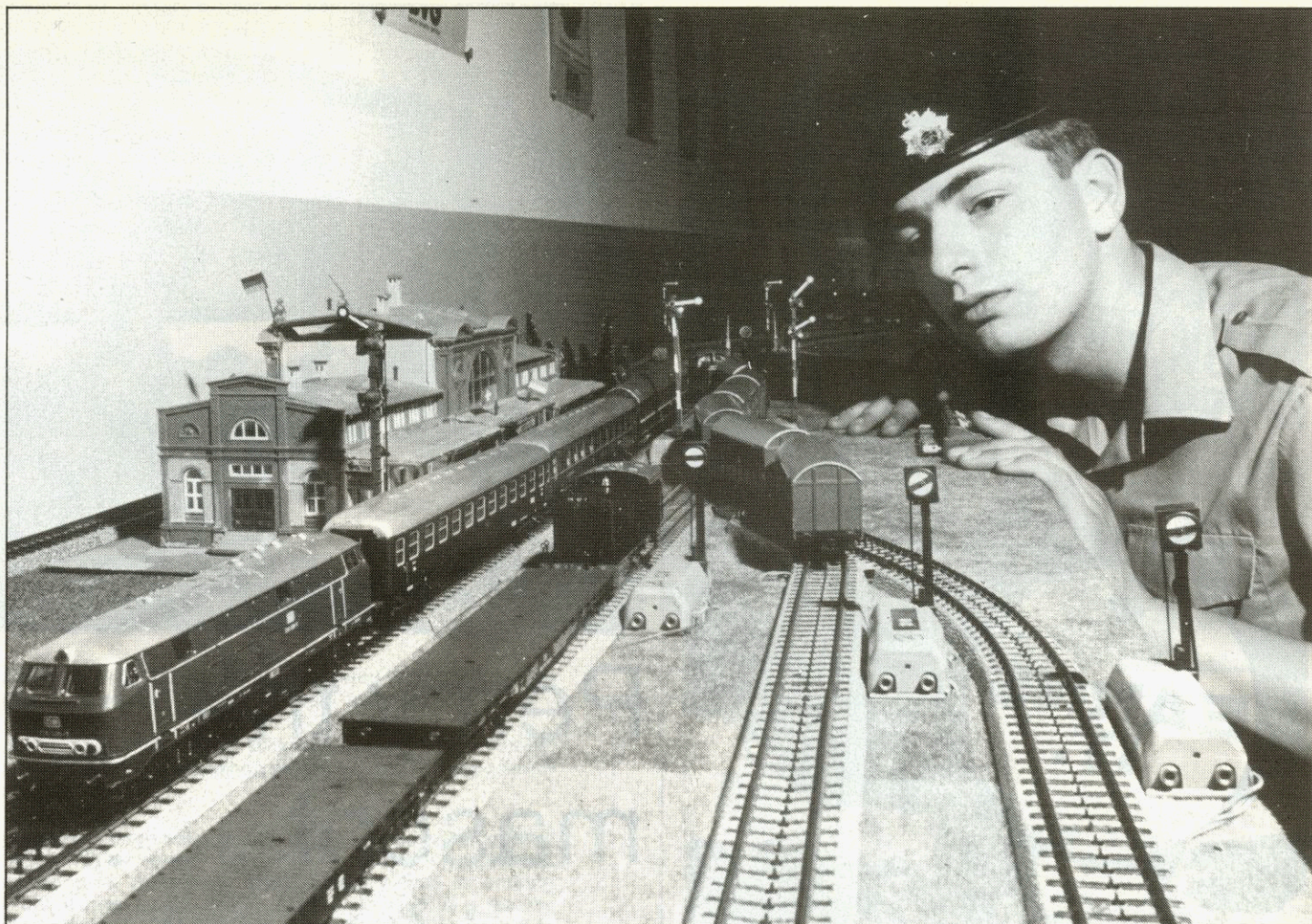
It uses British Army rolling stock as a nucleus, strength-

ened by German civilian rail stock if needed.

It is administered on behalf of 79 Sqn by Berlin based 62 Transport and Movements Sqn, which arranges for the provision of an OC Train, a Russian-speaking military guard, a train conducting warrant officer and a dining car crew.

There is a close liaison with 14 Field Workshop REME for daily maintenance. 79 Sqn keeps a watching brief on servicing and maintenance by regularly sending a team to Berlin to advise and assist.

Accidents do happen and the REME is responsible to 79 Sqn for re-railing.



Dvr Stephen Skinner learns all about German railway signalling from a model in the Training Wing run by 79 Railway Squadron



A Chieftain is loaded over a British Forces ramp wagon during an exercise

Carpet rolled out for Challenger

AN important aspect of the war role of 79 Railway Squadron, RCT would be the movement of vehicles, mainly armour.

This would be done with the standard Army Department warflat, now augmented by 14 new 89-ton bogie flats (for Challenger), and the standard

RIV 'K' series four-wheel flat for wheeled vehicles.

Where no static end loading ramps are available for loading or off-loading, a specially constructed item of rolling stock, the ramp wagon, is used.

This four-wheeler is coupled to the end of a train. When

vehicles are to be loaded or unloaded, a wheel-set is removed and the wagon jacked down. A sleeper carpet is made by laying used sleepers on an adjacent track, to protect the rails and help manoeuvring, and the vehicles are then driven on or off the warflat.

Training centre is unique

THE Training Wing run by 79 Railway Squadron, RCT is unique. It is the only specific railway training centre in the British Army.

It is staffed by two NCO instructors, who run a variety of courses and instruct military railwaymen. The courses include one for emergency crews designed to undertake simple driving and shunting duties under the supervision of railwaymen.

Students are drawn from 68 Sqn, RCT at Rheindahlen and provide a useful back-up in a time of war.

Vehicle loading courses teach the correct loading and restraint of armoured and other vehicles on trains, and students are taught how to use the ramp wagon.

The squadron has a number of civilian crews, often recruited without any railway experience. The Training Wing trains them as drivers or shunters, and re-tests them.



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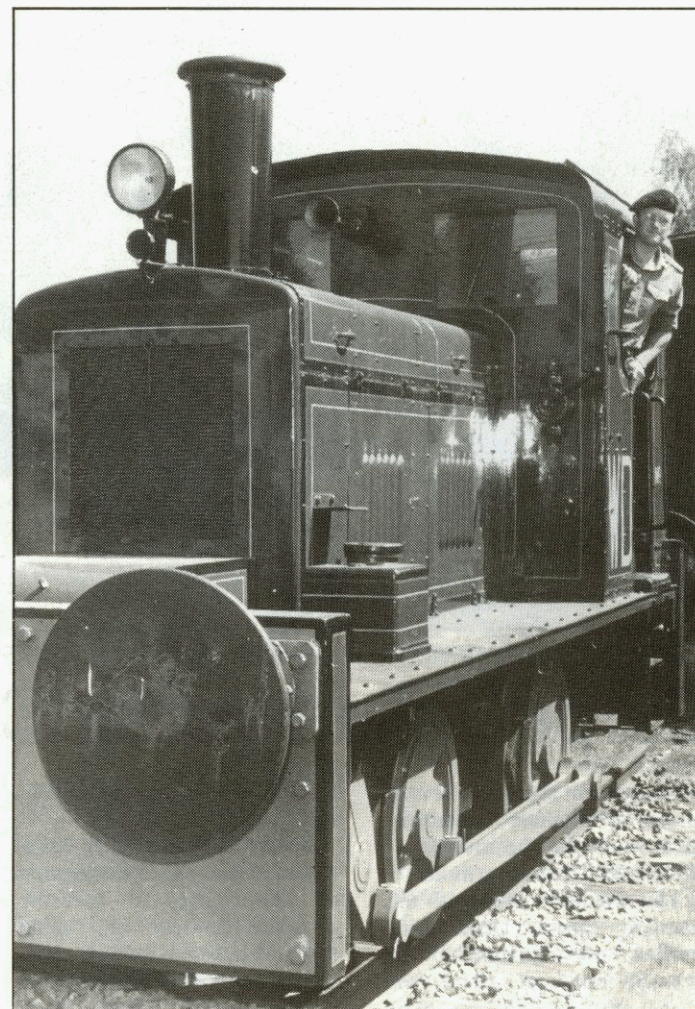


Above left - Cpl Jeremy Fordham seated in a cupola, which gives a complete view of the train from the roof



Above right - LCpl Mark Dickman and Cpl Chris Murphy, both of REME, in a workshop pit, change the brake blocks on a carriage.

Percy the mascot . . . and friends

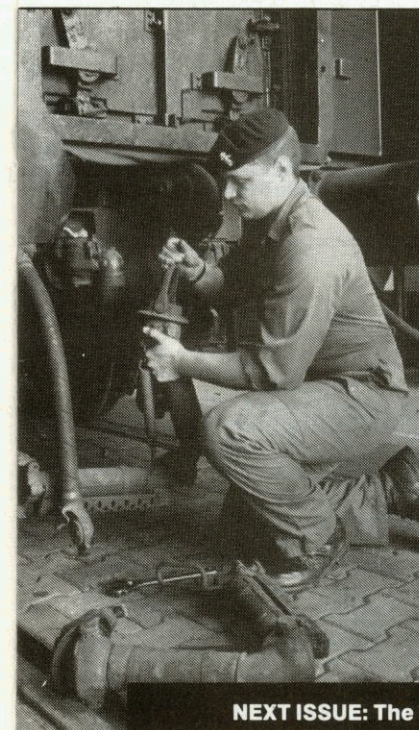
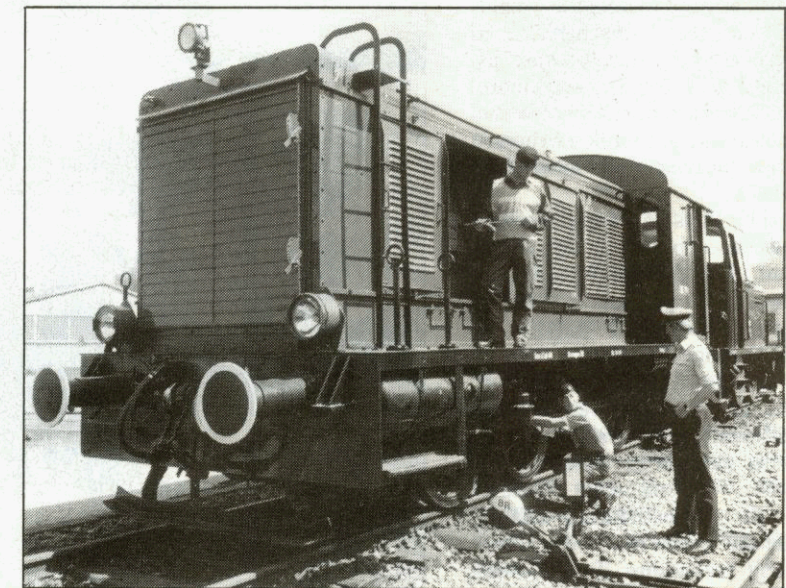


Right - Dvr Hugh Kelly, on the footplate, checks the sump oil with Dvr Colin Bryson, oiling the side rod bearing on the last surviving ex Wehrmacht diesel shunting loco in working order, owned by the British Army. It is used as a reserve loco. Looking on is Maj John Poyntz, OC 79 Railway Sqn RCT

Below right - Shunter, LCpl 'The Gnome' Holmes, switches the points

Below - Cfn Keith Jones changes a steam coupling

Left - Capt Andy Telthe, commander of 79 Sqn RCT Operating Troop on the footplate of Percy, the squadron mascot. The loco, which has been restored, was bought in 1949 having been built specifically for the Ministry of Defence for moving ammunition and freight in the UK. It was taken to BAOR and used until 1970. After restoration it was put on display outside the Training Wing



NEXT ISSUE: The Terriers' railway role

AGEING WOMBAT IS STILL A CRACKER

**SON
OF
BAT**

WOMBAT, which stands for Weapon On Magnesium Battalion Anti-Tank, was derived from the Bat, whose introduction into use by the British Army was reported in SOLDIER's July 1953 issue.

The recoilless anti-tank gun was designed to save the weight of the recoil mechanism, a necessary measure because as tanks grew bigger and more thickly armoured, so the infantry's anti-tank weapons grew heavier and more unwieldy.

The Boys anti-tank rifle was succeeded by the two-pounder gun, then the six-pounder and then the 17-pounder. (The Piat entered the field only as a short-range weapon).

In one respect, gun drill on the Bat, readers were told, was different from drill on any other gun. At no time was the order "Detachment Rear" given – since standing behind the Bat would have been a bad habit to acquire. Instead, the detachment formed up at the side of the weapon.

This was necessary, for firing caused a tongue of flame to leap from the gun and the blast whipped tufts of grass out of the earth behind the weapon!

The blast behind the gun, which came through a vent shaped like a megaphone, balanced the force exerted in front by the gases expelling the shell, thus keeping the gun in place.

Following trials at the Support Weapons Wing, fire control details, tactical use and gun drills were worked out before the first Bat detachment began to train.

It consisted of four members of the 1st Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment, then the Army's demonstration battalion. LCpls Cox and Corke, together with Ptes Gardiner and White were the chosen foursome.

Where are they now, SOLDIER wonders?



Words:
Laurie Manton
Pictures:
Terry Champion

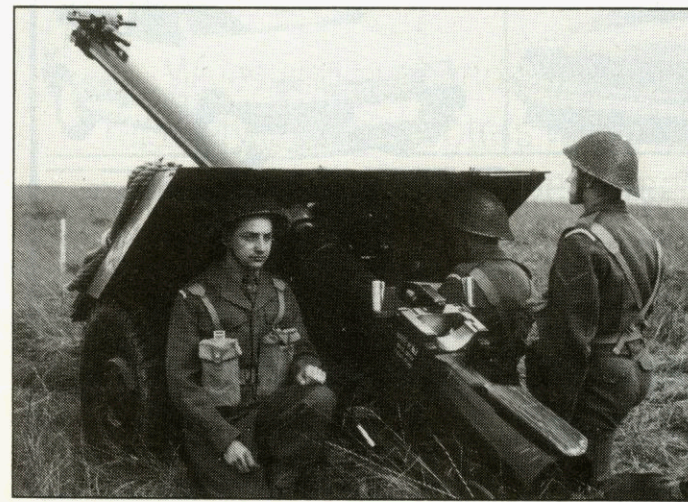
Hang on to your hats. Anti-tank platoon members of 1 LI prepare to fire Wombat at Putlos during the Berlin



Brigade's annual concentration



Right – History in the making, as the British Army's first BAT detachment stand by their gun. The original caption prudently suggested that "standing behind the weapon while firing was something to be avoided!" Left – A clear demonstration of Wombat's awesome hitting power



EXERCISE King's Bugle saw the anti-tank platoons of the 1st Battalion, The King's Regiment and the 1st Battalion, The Light Infantry, normally based in West Berlin, make a rare visit to West Germany for the Berlin Brigade's annual and possibly last Wombat concentration.

SOLDIER joined 1 LI on the range at Putlos where "double ear protection" was the strictly enforced order of the day. A sensible precaution everyone agreed, for the effect of Wombat firing is beyond belief.

About one third of the platoon had fired the gun during pre-Berlin training sessions, but for the remainder it came as a bit of a shock.

Said 1 LI's anti-tank platoon commander, Capt Mike Scarff: "To begin with, it gave us quite a fright. I don't think that anyone who hasn't heard it before or felt the pressure wave can imagine what it's like."

"Being right alongside Wombat as one of the gun crew when it fires can be quite an experience. It is certainly louder and more messy than anything we have done before."

Fortunately both platoons found their training was in the capable hands of QMSI Les Turner, SASC from the Support Weapons Wing at Netheravon.

He is the British Army's last remaining expert on this ageing but enormously lethal weapon, this being his twelfth visit to Putlos.

"It's a cracker," he said, obviously relishing the prospect of firing it again.

During the exercise, the troops practised a variety of techniques firing PRAC (Practice) rounds instead of HESH (High Explosive Squash Head).

So effective is Wombat, had they used HESH it would have knocked the targets back over the skyline. Even so, PRAC rounds did a whole heap of damage to the old tank hulks they were using as hard targets. It was a sobering thought for



Capt Mike Scarff, Anti-Tank Platoon Commander 1 LI

those who took the chance to give the hulks a closer inspection during a lull in the firing.

For one lucky crew there was a rare opportunity to fire Wombat from the back of a Land Rover.

Just one round was fired for demonstration purposes and then only after the REME had inspected the vehicle to ensure it was fit for having Wombat mounted.

Reason for this was the effect the weapon has when fired, tending to pop rivets, split fuel tanks and wreck the steering, such is the shock wave.

Most humorous moment on King's Bugle occurred when Sgt Maj Turner tasked bystanders to scatter grass over a camouflage net concealing a gun pit.

As one, the squaddies gathering grass started bleating like sheep! The task completed, it was suggested they might like to move away from the firing area. "Go and graze over there!" was the order which left the smart alegs feeling ... rather sheepish.

Humour aside, the exercise could prove historic, for Wombat is soon to be phased out in Berlin and replaced by LAW 80. If it happens before the next concentration it will leave the participants of King's Bugle with the honour of having taken part in Berlin Brigade's last Wombat shoot.

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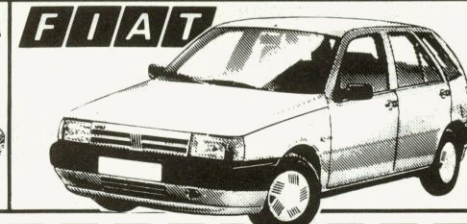
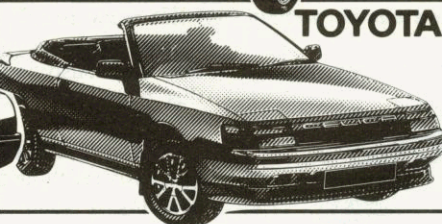
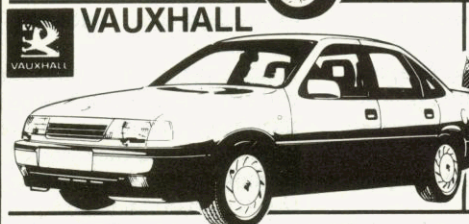
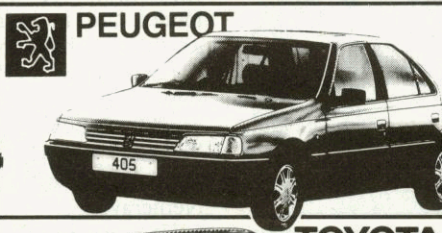
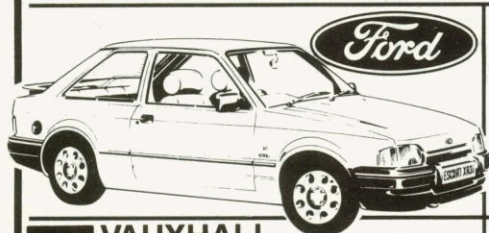
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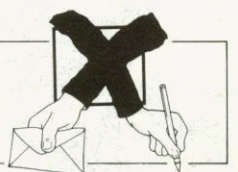
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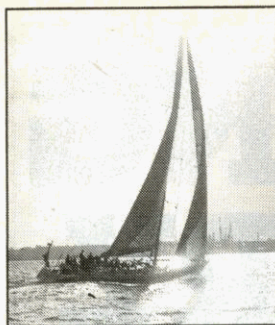
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'SBD' going for gold!



Capt Bristow (right) and Lt Packshaw on deck

32,000 miles only to go

WHATEVER may happen to "SBD" the chances of her losing her way on her 32,000 mile journey are remote.

She is equipped with a global position system (GPS), two satellite navigation systems, Decca and Loran systems.

The vessel also has the Argos French positional system and (for computer buffs) a Toshiba

5100 with a four megabytes memory used for optimising route planning in conjunction with a Furuno fax system.

There is also Skipper Esson's sextant which he has had for

Words: Bill Moore
Pictures: Mike Perring

nearly 20 years and without which he refuses to put to sea.

"One lighting strike could put all the high tech out - at least for a time," he said.

Operating this formidable collection of "comms" is Lt Comdr Colin Watkins who is also the "met" man and tactican. Responsible for the smooth running and repair of the comms is Capt Andy Bristow of the Royal Corps of Signals.

Packed in bags below decks so that to get anywhere the crew have to crawl over them are 30 sails. "SBD" can carry 3,400 square feet of what used to be called canvas but is now of a variety of material concocted by computers which also design the shapes so not a breath of air is wasted. Her spinnaker - the great bellying sail which makes such an impression on spectators - has an area of 2,600 square feet. When surfing - running down a wave - the yacht is expected to reach a speed of 30 knots.

Left: Capt Bristow at work

... with a parrot called Aristotle

THE MOST fearless member of the crew of the Armed Forces entry in the Whitbread round the world race is a parrot called Aristotle.

He is also the least likely to mutiny though he is a master of dumb insolence.

Aristotle may have been produced as a cuddly toy but today, perched just in front of one of the twin steering wheels, he serves as the mascot of the Satquote British Defender, a gleaming 80ft maxi yacht manned by 15 British soldiers, sailors and airmen and owned by international financier Klaus Hebben.

According to the skipper Lt Col Frank Esson, Aristotle covers his eyes whenever "SBD" puts out. And whereas this may be a flight of fancy it is actually true that "at 20 knots his wings flip up and we put the first reef in."

The really significant thing about Aristotle is that he had already sailed 12,000 miles aboard the sleek vessel by the time SOLDIER went aboard three weeks before the race was due to begin on September 2.

This fact alone emphasised the serious attitude adopted by the only crew in the race not composed entirely of professional yachtsmen. Earlier performances have caught the eye of seasoned commentators.

"The French yachting press which can hardly be described as friendly reckon we're in with a chance," said Lt Col Esson. "I suppose we're the dark horses. Wherever we finish no one will be able to say it's not for want of trying. We're putting the work in. All we need is a little bit of luck."

In June "SBD" showed her potential in a major race in the Caribbean finishing slightly more than a minute behind the highly fancied Merit skippered by a crack Swiss maxi yachtsman. She then chased home Merit across the Atlantic in the St Barthelemy-Lorient



Skipper and friend

race coming in third despite a mishap which required her to complete the voyage with an improvised rig.

This achievement by a crew which was in the process of shaking down greatly increased its confidence.

Originally "SBD" was to have had three skippers and three crews but Herr Hebben (44), who once served in the German paratroops, decided to go all out for a win with the best crew available.

Lt Col Esson, who served in

The Parachute Regiment before transferring to the Army Air Corps (he is a senior flying instructor at Middle Wallop) is one of the most experienced skippers in the Services having made the Atlantic crossing eight times and logged 25,000 miles in square-rigged sailing ships. At 49 he is the oldest Serviceman aboard, the youngest being Simon Ling, 20, of the Royal Air Force.

Eight of the 23 strong squad will be permanent members of

the crew, along with two civilians, one an American sailmaker, the other the French yachtsman Serge Guilamou, representing the owner. Relief crew men will be trickled in.

They can expect little comfort during their 32,000 mile voyage. "SBD" - which is sometimes taken to stand for "Silent But Deadly" - is simply a streamlined carbon fibre hull stuffed with sails, ropes, people and electronics.

ABOARD

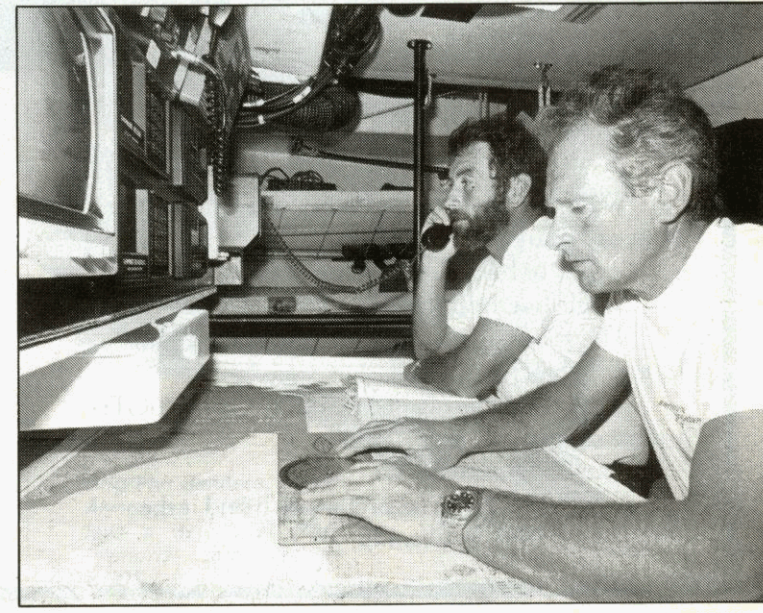
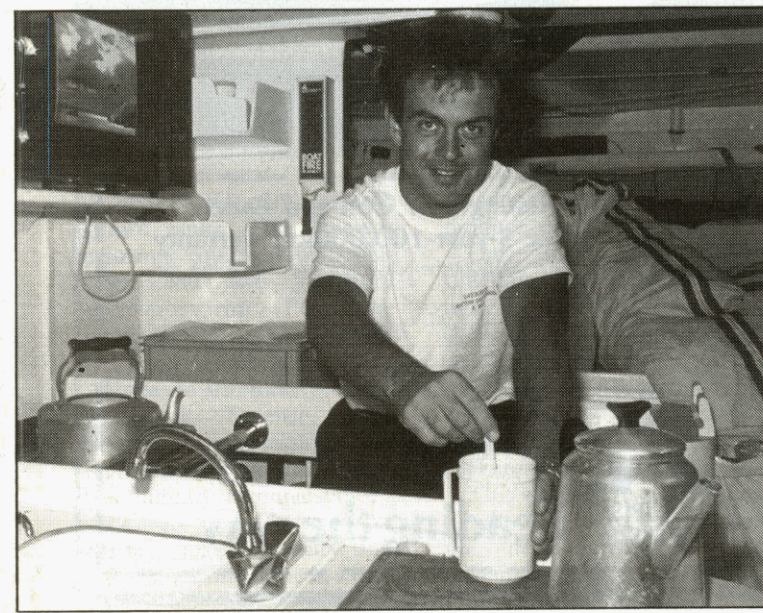
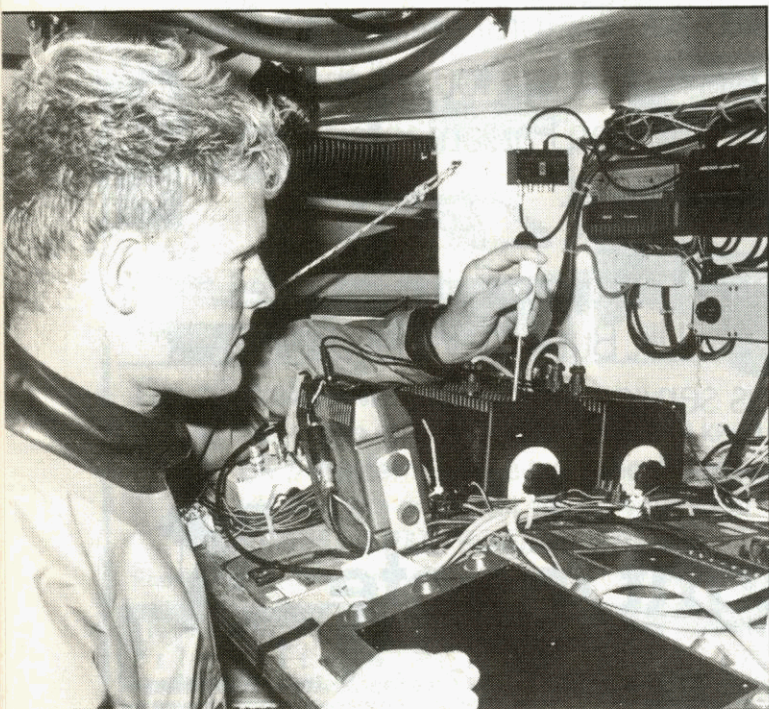
THE CREW: Skipper - Lt Col Frank Esson, AAC; Navigator - Lt Cdr Colin Watkins, RN; watch leader for the whole race Lt John Best, RAF and M. Serge Guilamou.

Other Army members of the crew are Capts Andy Bristow, R Signals; Garfield Smith and Tim Morris, 7 GR; Lts Justin Packshaw 4/7 DG and Nick Bate, 16/5 L; 2nd Lt Richard Nicholson, RHF; Cpl Paul Anderson, RCT; Reserves: WO2 Paul Hutchinson, DWR; Sgt Jan Hoe, RCT.

The total Services squad is made up of ten from the Army, six from the Navy and seven from the RAF.

The squad was chosen from a total of 500 applicants. Satquote British Defender carries a special sail number - K 303. She was given it by Cdr Tony Ashmead, RN, Racing Secretary of the Royal Ocean Racing Club because "there was only one commonality between the three Services when I served and that was the old Lee Enfield rifle - calibre .303 inch."

Lt Col Esson (below) working at the chart table. Next to him is Lt Cdr Watkins, the navigator. Below left: Capt Tim Morris in the galley. On the right of the picture is a bag containing a sail. No room is wasted.



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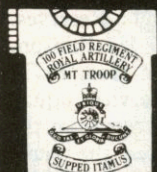
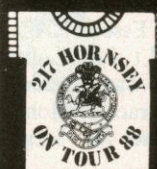
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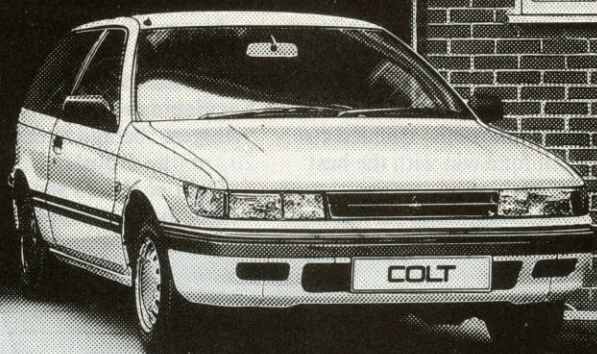
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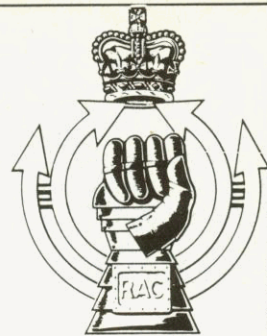
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Leading the way

RAC FIGHTING

FIT AT FIFTY



In its 50th anniversary year, Maj Gen NICK ANSELL, DRAC, pictured left with QOH crew in BAOR, looks at the future in an interview with Bill Moore

IN THE PAST 50 years we have gained and maintained our position as the most powerful direct fire arm in combat and our principal equipment, the tank, has shown that it is the most decisive weapon on the battlefields of the world.

In that time the tank has developed from a simple armoured box on tracks, with a small gun, into a powerful, agile and well-armoured fighting vehicle like Challenger with its 120mm cannon, computerised fire control equipment, Chobham armour and a road speed of 56kph.

In the Second World War the RAC numbered more than 140 regiments in tanks and armoured reconnaissance vehicles. Since then it has served in every continent except Australia.

We now have 17 Regular regiments (19 if you include the Life Guards and the Blues and Royals who, though having the same role and equipment as the RAC, are strictly speaking Household Cavalry) and five yeomanry regiments, part of the Territorial Army.

Even in these post-imperial days we serve in many places; UK, West Germany, Berlin, Cyprus and Belize, and 14 armoured squadrons train in Canada every year.

The RAC not only mans the Army's tanks. Five Regular regiments equipped with Scimitar, and two yeomanry regiments with Fox, are committed to NATO in time of war.

There are also three yeomanry Home Defence recce regiments, who provide district commanders in the UK with all their military reconnaissance.

We are proud to have achieved this anniversary, but it is only one milestone in a long history.

Two men to one tank?

Our youngest regiment, the Royal Tank Regiment, dates from February 1916, but some, including my own old regiment, the 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards, are over 300 years old.

We are very much a collection of regimental families, each with its own traditions and focus of loyalty, so there is no need for a major celebration.

This family atmosphere, this sense of cohesion among small groups of men who know and trust each other, is the bedrock of RAC morale.

The crew of a tank or reconnaissance vehicle must work as a team, each trained in his own skill and confident in his mates. Our close knit regiments, each recruiting from its own home area, are ideal to produce this spirit.

Our future is secure. Chieftain will be replaced by a more modern tank in the 90s – either improved versions of the German Leopard 2 or American M1A1 Abrams, or a development of Challenger designed and produced by Vickers Defence Systems.

This will leave us well poised for the 21st century, and I see the development of new technology providing the RAC with a revolutionary tank after

that, making use of electromagnetic energy and avionics to simplify the crew's workload.

I also see the crews themselves reducing from four to three or even two men in each tank, to reduce size and weight, and to allow for a decreasing national population.

Although I am confident that there will always be a key role for tanks, the future battlefield, the RAC is not blinkered.

Our tradition is one of adaptability, and we are working on producing a new reconnaissance vehicle, and looking towards Long Range TRIGAT, the advanced anti tank missile due in service in the late nineties, as a weapon for the Armoured Corps.

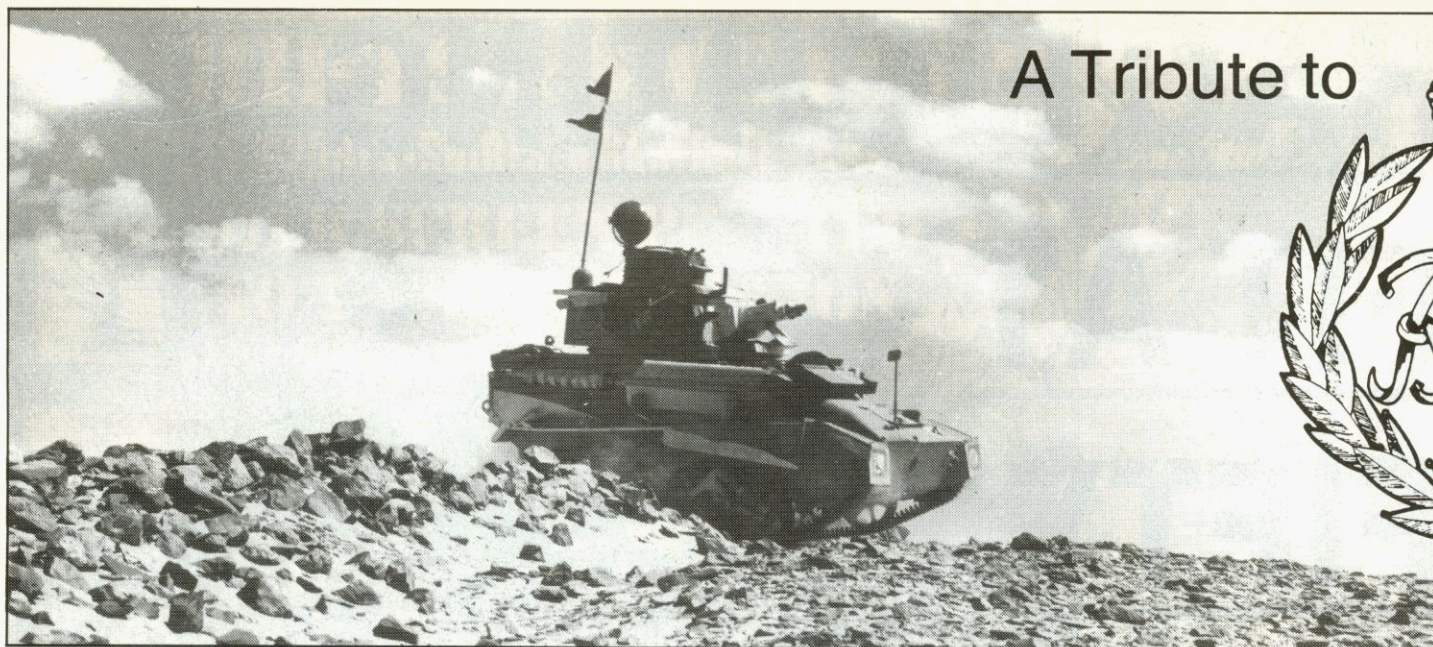
In short we are a corps with a long history of excellence in many fields, and with, I believe, an exciting future ahead of us. It's a good time to be in the RAC!



Brig Phil Sanders, Comd Armoured 1 BR Corps lays a wreath at RAC memorial ceremony in BAOR

A Tribute to

The Originals



Light Mk VI moving over rough ground in the desert



A squadron of the Royal Tank Regiment with Matildas when they were Queens of the Desert

WHEN MATILDA WAS QUEEN

THE ROYAL Armoured Corps was only five months old when Britain declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939 – exactly 50 years ago yesterday by SOLDIER's cover date.

In celebrating its birthday with a cocktail party, adding an extra flourish to the Bovington Battle Day and holding a modest parade in BAOR the RAC can hardly be said to be overdoing things.

For the anniversary is one of the most important in the British military calendar, marking the final acknowledgement that the machine and not the horse is the key to victory in modern war.

The formation of the RAC was announced by Mr Hore-Belisha, Secretary of State for War on April 4, 1939.

It was to consist of a Cavalry

Regular units forming the RAC in 1939

The Originals. The Regular units which formed the RAC in 1939

Cavalry

1st King's Dragoon Guards; The Queen's Bays; 3rd Carabiniers; 4th/7th Dragoon Guards; 5th Inniskilling Dra-

gon Guards; 3rd, 4th, 7th and 8th Hussars; 9th Lancers; 10th and 11th Hussars; 12th Lancers; 13th/18th, 14th/20th and 15th/19th Hussars; 16th/5th and 17th/21st Lancers.

Royal Tank Regiment

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Battalions.

slowest was capable of 15mph, the newest more than 30mph

Infantry (I) tanks came in two sizes – one an 8mph version with a single machine gun was designed to be almost shell proof. The second, the celebrated Matilda, mounted a two-pounder, was equally well protected and capable of 15mph.

All three types took part in furious fighting in France in May 1940.

The Matilda enhanced its reputation at Arras where, during an attack on the SS Totenkopf Division, conventional armour piercing shells proved powerless against it.

It was eventually stopped by 88mm anti-aircraft guns employed in the ground role on the orders of Maj Gen Rommel then commanding the 7th Panzer Division.

Using the same types of tanks in the Middle East the British scored brilliant victories against the Italians.

In June 1941 they suffered a severe set back at Halfaya Pass where Rommel, who had arrived with an armoured force in April, met an attack with 88mm guns. A squadron of Matildas was lost along with their reputation as Queen of the Desert.

Operation Battleaxe was doubly disappointing as a fast new cruiser which made its battlefield debut proved to be mechanically suspect.

Subsequent reverses were attributed to the better armament and armour of the panzers and this theory has persisted.

Later appreciations, notably by Fd Marshal Lord Carver, writing from personal experience, indicate that the Germans used their anti-tank guns more effectively.

That did not prevent the RAC – cavalry, yeomanry and RTR – from playing the lead role in the bewildering dogfight culminating in the relief of Tobruk in December 1941.

Trials and tribulations lay ahead but the articles of "association", tardily formed in 1939, had been sealed in blood.



Up-gunned cruisers with six-pounders (above) appeared in 1942. The fast Crusader arrived in 1941 but frequently needed recovery (below) often under fire



Matilda stranded after losing track – recovery under way

Rare picture of General Montgomery boarding his personal tank (1942/1943) a General Grant. The ladder was specially made as the wartime caption emphasised



Humorists made the most of the transformation of the cavalry which one said had "been rounded up and pressed into tanks or armoured motor cars. They have all the sensations of a saloon bar person in public bar circumstances."

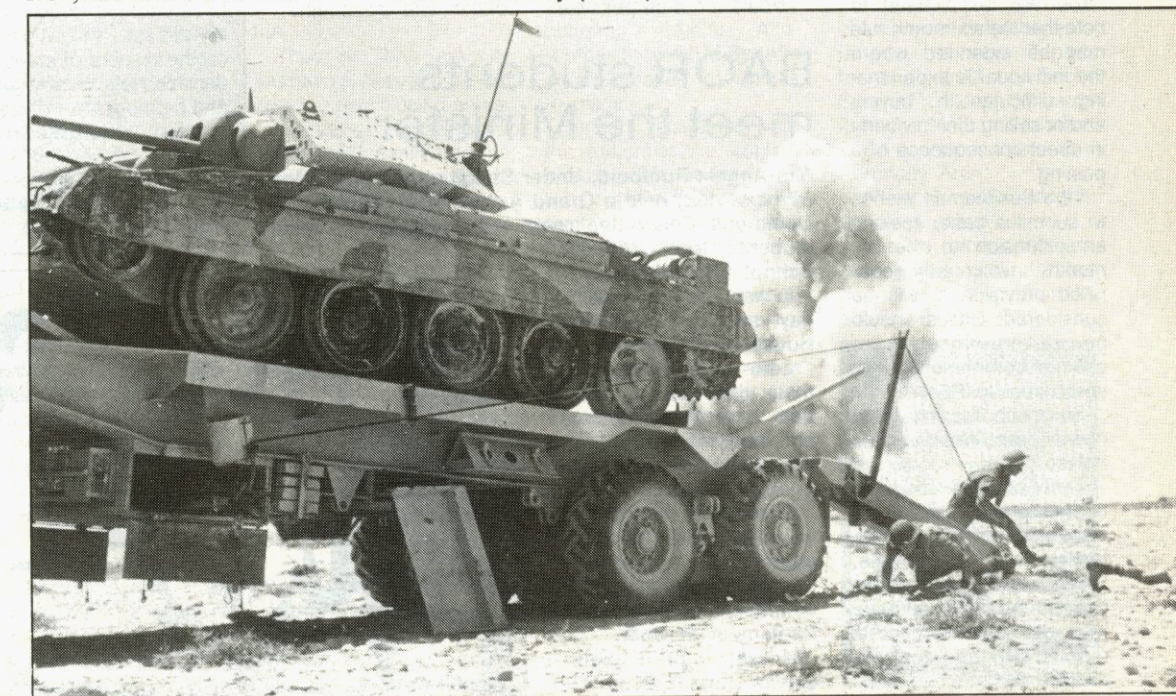
The RTR tended to refer to their new "associates" as "hay burners".

The realities of war swept away any lingering animosities.

The RAC went to war in three main types of tank.

Light Mark VIs, armed with one .5 and one .303 Vickers machine gun, weighed 5½ tons and were capable of more than 30mph.

Cruisers mounted two-pounders as main armament (though some had a 3.7in "mortar" for close support) and weighed 14-15 tons. The



UK test case fails – next stop European Court?

WHERE DO we go from here? After years of fighting for justice for thousands of British Service wives who feel they are being robbed of unemployment benefit a judgment has been delivered.

The result was not what I hoped to hear but at least it gives ammunition for a case to be made to the European Court, the European Parliament or whatever the next appropriate authority may be.

After cases brought by two wives, Judge Bromley, the Chief Social Security Commissioner, who sat

Tribunal sympathetic but . . .

with two other commissioners, said: "... we have in general terms great difficulty in seeing how a claimant who goes abroad for the purposes of accompanying a husband (or wife) posted abroad can bring herself or himself within the description of a person going abroad 'in order to seek employment' as provided (and he quoted the relevant Article 69).

"Similarly we have great difficulty also in seeing how, in general, claimants in the posi-

tion of Service wives who have left their employment in the United Kingdom because of such a posting can satisfy the qualifying conditions of availability . . .

"The members of this tribunal all have considerable sympathy with the position of the claimant in this appeal and those in the accompanying appeals.

"It seems manifestly unsatisfactory that such persons, all of

whom were in employment in this country and all of whom are obliged to give up work in order to accompany their husbands abroad when they were posted abroad in the Service of the Crown, should find it virtually impossible to qualify for a benefit which would otherwise be their entitlement in a period of temporary unemployment.

"We must however apply the law as it stands. Accordingly the appeal fails."

The grounds for turning down the appeal are the old, old story – Mrs S was not on certain days "available to be employed in employed earner's employment".

The case had been argued on behalf of the wives by Mr Martin Rodger of the Free Representation Unit. Mr Guy Sankey represented the adjudicating officers (who originally dealt with the case).

It is left to the adjudicating officers to decide in each case whether or not a wife accompanying her husband abroad meets the requirements for obtaining benefit.

Their decisions differ widely. In the period 1987-8, 1,000 Service wives were awarded three months unemployment benefit but 1,900 were refused.

At the moment 5,000 wives are seeking work in Europe outside the UK and registered with the Pioneer Labour Support Unit, according to an NAO report.

Six months to sell home – MoD is ready to extend

I MENTIONED recently the problems facing Servicemen who find it difficult to sell their houses within the six months during which they are entitled to draw certain allowances.

Some buyers in towns such as Aldershot, aware of the pressure this puts on the seller, have simply waited until the price has come down.

The MoD now tells me: "You will be pleased to note that the six-month rule may be extended where the individual is experiencing difficulty in buying and/or selling their property in direct consequence of a posting.

"If a Serviceman wishes to submit a case, seeking an extension to the six months involuntarily separated provision, it will be considered. Cases should be staffed through the chain of command and not sent direct to PS10."

So much for the good news – from Woolwich it is not so good.

Thirty or more flats have been standing empty there since the last Service family moved out in June.

They present an unhappy picture to an ex corporal who was forced to quit his married quarter recently to avoid eviction.

Because he and his wife are childless and healthy the local authority has no obligation to rehouse them nor to allot them one of the MQs which Woolwich Garrison leases to Greenwich Borough Council.

They cannot move into one as they are reserved for the homeless on the local authority list and the council is not prepared to accept them on their list.

Would it not be possible

to transfer families like the corporal and his wife to leased properties as part of the agreement with the local council?

Could not the MoD make a deal with the local authority that leases are made under the proviso that they help ex Servicemen who have a genuine housing need at the end of their service until they can find an alternative in London and the south?

BAOR students meet the Minister

Mrs Angela Rumbold, Under Secretary for Education (right seated) held a Q and A session in a House of Commons Committee room with a dozen A Level students from Windsor School, Rheindahlen.

It was the climax of a day spent visiting the House of Commons.

Later she referred to their visit during Question Time in the House and said she would look into some of the points raised by them.

The object of the visit was to give A level students an opportunity to visit industry and commerce as well as see Parliament at work.

It was the third Rheindahlen pupils' visit.

Boarding schools rules changing

THERE are to be new safeguards for children at independent boarding schools.

This follows recent publicity surrounding allegations of sexual abuse at a school where the majority of children came from Service families.

Under amendments tabled for the Children's Bill to be debated in October a specific duty will be placed on the owners of independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of children boarding with them.

Local authorities will have a duty to check that this responsibility is

observed and will have powers of inspection.

They will also have a duty to notify the Ministry of Education if they are not satisfied.

The Bill is to be amended to require independent schools with fewer than 50 pupils to register with the local authority whether or not any of their pupils are in local authority care.

I asked for a number of points to be cleared up.

It is clear that the place of residence of a child is what matters so if children are attending a boarding school in Berkshire then the Berkshire authority will be responsible.



WITH FAMILIES IN MIND
Anne Armstrong
Home telephone:
Camberley 29653

Case of the Navy turning a blind eye?

In My View

THE ONLY way the wives of men in the Irish Defence Forces were able to highlight the problem of their husbands' low wages was to threaten to stand for parliament. That brought about a government inquiry.

Britain has an independent pay review body for the Armed Forces but its remit is restricted. It cannot deliberate insurance payments and benefits paid by the Departments of Health and Social Security.

Neither is taken into consideration when assessing a soldier's pay, nor are they considered in assessing LOA or Disturbance Allowances.

As more and more families face financial difficulties the exclusion of these items is important.

Until the early 1970s the MoD was unaware that families faced problems connected with social security.

It was then that I learned wives were having difficulty claiming Family Allowances (now Child Benefit) as they moved from place to place.

Since I raised this with the authorities the problem has been 99 per cent dealt with but a whole range of matters concerning benefits for Service dependants remains unresolved.

What I fail to understand is why the Navy Branch of MoD has the responsibility for playing the lead role in all such matters when very few of their dependants live overseas and therefore do not face the same problems.

Despite this obvious flaw in the system the Navy is responsible for submitting relevant cases to ministers and/or raising them on behalf of individuals.

My request to see the Head of the Pay, Pensions

and Conditions of Service Division was refused at first. It came about only after the intervention of the then Adjutant General.

The Head of the Division told me that DHSS benefits were not high on his list of priorities and that he had not come across cases of people experiencing difficulty in obtaining less-known benefits such as Severe Disablement Allowance.

If, like the Army, the Navy had to concern itself with the problems of 5,000 unemployed wives many of whom have been refused unemployment benefit I feel sure the Navy Board would give the matter greater consideration.

Unlike the Irish wives I feel I can hardly stand for Parliament but I could chain myself to the bollards outside the new Departments of Health and Social Security Offices, 50 yards from the MoD in Whitehall and a quarter of a mile from Admiralty Arch!

After 15 years, drastic action is called for.

Service dependants are only asking to be treated the same as any other UK citizen.

A COMPREHENSIVE guide to war pensions and allowances has been published – DSS leaflet MPL 154 1989. It gives the rates from private to major general for pensions or awards and is available through HIVES, SSAFA offices and BFPOs.



Hong Kong crackshots – members of the wives small bore rifle team of the 1st Battalion The Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment have made a name for themselves while the unit is stationed at Stanley Fort

When a bus driver says no pushchairs

WIVES in BAOR have written to me about the difficulty of taking pushchairs on the MoD bus when, for example, they have to go to the Naafi.

"Sometimes we all have to argue with the driver," says one. "Can you find out what the rules are?"

The MoD informs me that a commonsense approach is required by both parties, but says the buses are there primarily to move troops whose luggage usually goes in a separate vehicle.

Accepting that there is a problem "and that there is no clear-cut answer" the MoD suggests families should obtain baby carriages which fold flat in one piece or one of the smaller pram types which have folding wheels and a detachable carrycot.

Though there are no regulations forbidding the

carriage of prams, drivers do have the authority to refuse to carry pushchairs or prams which in their opinion might constitute a safety hazard.

A suggestion that some seats be removed to make a storage area was unacceptable as all coaches operate each day

to carry children to and from school and are usually full.

They do their amenity journeys in between school opening and closing times.

It is a problem that won't be resolved easily and the alternative appears to be what MoD suggests – buy a collapsible pushchair.

CHANCE FOR CHILDREN

PARENTS may wish to investigate the Assisted Places Scheme, which is designed to help those with academically able children to provide an education suited to their needs, but are unable to afford the fees.

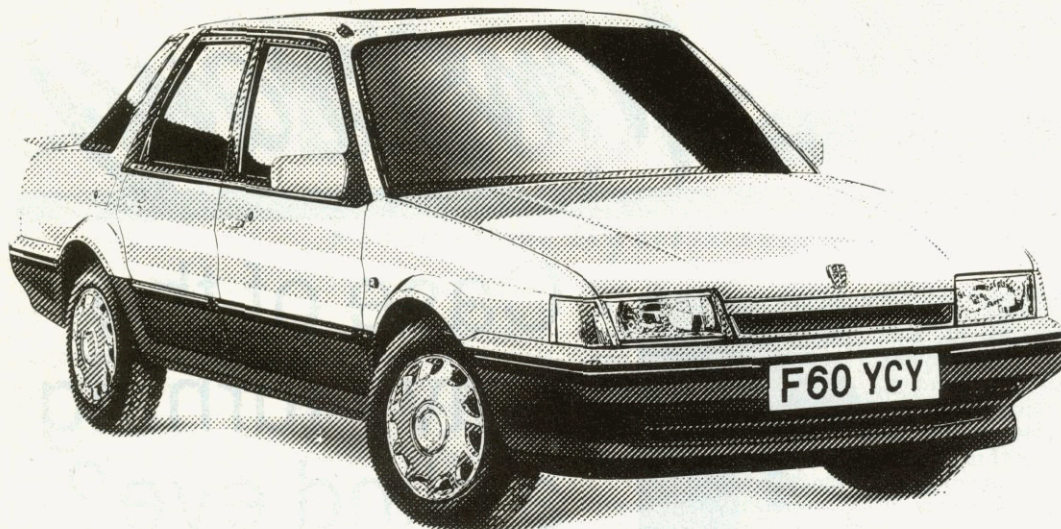
Parents who earn up to £7,584 can receive free places and a sliding scale applies to those who gross from £8,000 to £20,000.

A new list of 280 schools

includes 52 new schools each offering five places a year. Children can take up these places at 11, 12 or 13 years or in their Sixth Form year.

Applications must be made by January for September entry.

A free leaflet is available from National ISIS (Independent Schools Information Service), 56 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6AG.



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MORE LETTERS Security guards are smarter

In response to D J McLeod's letter regarding uniform and in particular the awful number two dress. I agree absolutely with him that the uniforms of yesteryear were far smarter, and much more "military"; I also understand the reason behind our drab uniformity – MONEY!

However, that is not to say that we should always appear in sloppy uniforms. All governments have cash-flow problems, yet the Germans manage to have a smart uniform (didn't they always) and even the French and Americans to a certain extent!

British soldiers have long been the best trained and worst dressed. When I was serving I had the tailor fit belt hooks to my new style No 2 Dress which helped.

As a matter of interest, I am now a shopping centre security guard, and my present uniform is if anything smarter than my old No 2 Dress – P Grant (Ex WO2 CSM), 25 Cross St, Farnborough, Hants GU14 6AB.

Dress non-sense

Isn't it about time we had a standard order of traditional ceremonial dress? We have regiments going on parade in khaki No 2s, the officers in blue No 1s and the band in scarlet full dress!

When most regimental bands have adopted a good imitation of traditional full dress, why are Scottish bandsmen still supplied with non-traditional green doublets, even when some of their drummer colleagues are now in scarlet again?

Would it be beyond the realms of modern technology to produce a not too expensive traditional full dress for all ranks if No 1s and 2s are scrapped? – D Griffin, 3 Tansley Avenue, Leicester.

Naafi blender favours the malty character

Secrets of a good brew



When the Duchess of York visited the Amesbury warehouse, she was presented with a framed copy of this photograph of the Queen Mother, taken in 1943, during a visit to the Naafi training centre, then at Woking in Surrey. A copy hangs in Naafi London headquarters, and another was hung in the office of Bill Payne, tea factory manager for more than 36 years.

THE famed Naafi cuppa has royal approval – the Duchess of York has recalled how as a young girl she used to drink it with a spoonful of sugar as a treat, writes **Jennifer Griffiths**.

Changing tastes such as the advent of the tea bag are reflected by the drop in sales of loose tea, blended and packed in the Naafi tea factory at Amesbury, Wilts.

But tea bag sales go from strength to strength, thanks to the sensitive palate of Bill Payne, divisional buyer of tea and coffee, and tea factory manager for more than 36 years.

"We operate in the London tea auction and in all the overseas markets. Before an auction we ask for samples and study auction catalogues," he explained.

"We buy most of our teas from Africa. Generally, we find they are fresher and much



Maureen Storey, buyer's assistant. Tastes change and the tea bag has long overtaken loose tea in popularity. She is pictured with one of the Naafi's first boxes of 18 bags

brighter and better for our blends. We tend to blend tea that has malty character to it, and we want our liquid with the milk to be nice and bright in the cup."

Tea tasting is such a highly specialised art that if Mr Payne goes down with a cold, he is unable to taste until it has cleared. The night before a tea

tasting session he is careful to avoid strong flavours, such as garlic, because that, too, can affect the tasting.

About 96 per cent of British tea drinkers take it with milk. Mr Payne tastes teas first without milk.

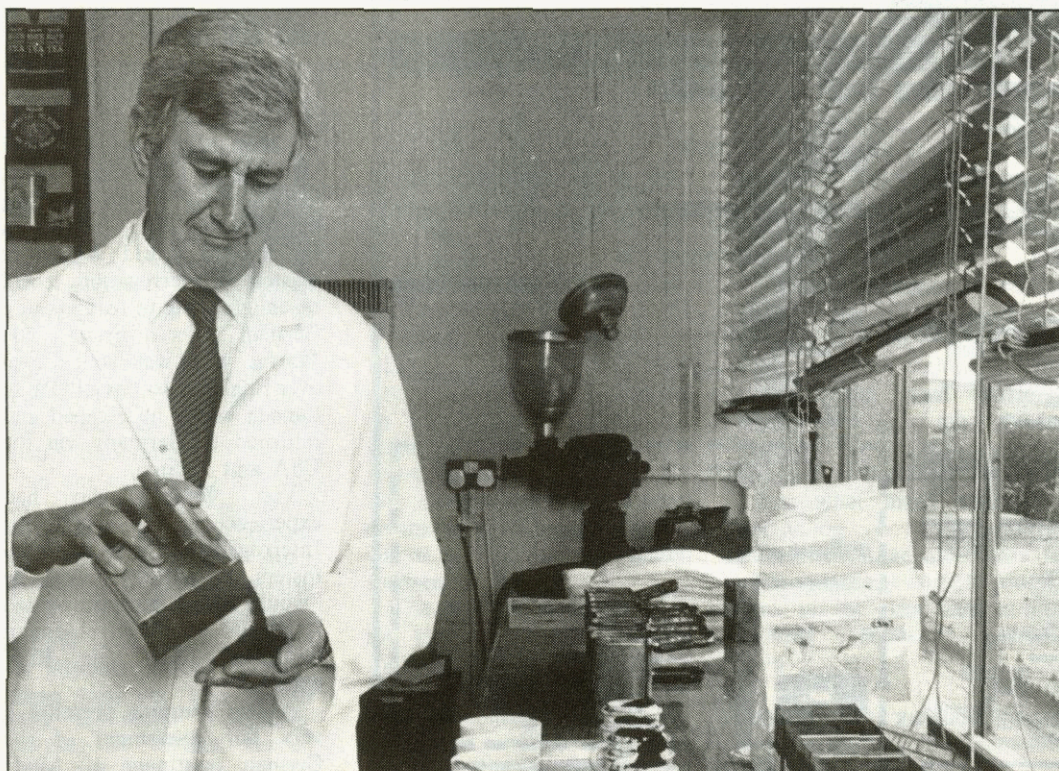
"Then we put a measured amount in the tea to see what affect it has. It gives a better guide to the quality of the tea. We try to get a nice, bright orangey colour to the liquid."

Before making the final choice of tea they will buy, the leaf, and infusion, as well as the liquid, is examined.

Mr Payne said: "As a guide to the quality of tea, the brighter and more coppery the infusion, the better the quality. The darker the poorer."

When the Duchess of York visited the warehouse, she didn't drink any Naafi tea! Alec Clayton, restaurant manager, had been tipped off by Buckingham Palace that infused ginger is her favourite drink.

The Duchess was genuinely surprised when she was offered her favourite brew while other guests drank tea and coffee during a break for refreshments.



Bill Payne (left), divisional buyer, prepares teas for tasting

The Last Days of the Raj by Trevor Royle. The author explores the attitudes and events of the period before the British withdrew from India. Published by Michael Joseph. Price £15.95.

Narrative of the Field Operations Connected with the Zulu War of 1879 prepared in the Intelligence Branch of the War Office. The official history of the Anglo-Zulu wars. Published by Greenhill. Price £16.50.

Warfare in the Ancient World edited by Gen Sir John Hackett. A survey of military systems and their evolution up to the late Roman empire. Published by Sidgwick and Jackson. Price £16.95.

Napoleon's Overseas Army by Rene Chartrand. No 211 in the Men-at-Arms series. Published by Osprey. Price £4.95.

Burma Campaign. The reminiscences of four members of C Squadron, 3rd Carabiniers (Prince of Wales Dragoon Guards). Published by and available from Maj G L Scott Dickens, Enfield, Risbury, near Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 0NW. Price £7.50 inc.

BOOK BRIEFS

Air Defence Systems and Weapons by Christopher Chant. World AAA and SAM systems in the 1990s. Published by Brassey's. Price £59.95.

An Illustrated Companion to the First World War by Anthony Bruce. A guide to every major facet of the Great War with more than 800 entries and 200 photographs and maps. Published by Michael Joseph. Price £19.95.

Great Battles of World War 1 by Anthony Livesey. Colour illustrated book of the First World War, with details of the battles, weapons and uniforms, methods of communication, and the war's major personalities. Published by Michael Joseph. Price £19.95.

German Military Police Units 1939-45. No 213 in the Men-at-Arms Series. Published by Osprey. Price £4.95.

NTC, a Primer of Modern Land Combat by Hans Halberstadt. The NTC stands for the American National Training Centre at Fort Irwin, and the author examines modern land combat. Published by Presidio Press. Price £6.95.

USAREUR, the United States Army in Europe by Michael Skinner. How USAREUR puts its conventional land combat theories into practice. Published by Presidio Press. Price £6.95.

More Poems of the Second World War, the Oasis Selection edited by Victor Selwyn. Poetry by people who were in the Armed Services during 1939-45, the fourth volume of its kind. Published by J M Dent. Price £16.95 hardback, £5.95 paperback.

Red Army. Novel written from the viewpoint of Russians making a surprise attack on West Germany. Published by W H Allen. Price £12.95 hardback, £6.99 softback.

A Dictionary of the Second World War by Elizabeth-Anne Wheal, Stephen Pope and James Taylor. More than 1,600 entries, with maps and photographs, providing a survey of the war. Published by Grafton. Price £25.

Survival manual for the POW

THERE have been a great many escape stories but few in-depth studies of life as a prisoner-of-war. *Stalag Luft III: The Secret Story*, is claimed to be the first comprehensive account of what life was actually like in a Second World War POW camp 90 miles south-west of Berlin which grew to a complex of six compounds holding more than 10,000 prisoners, mainly Allied airmen.

The author, Arthur A Durand, tells of what a prisoner could expect from the moment he was downed by fighter or anti-aircraft fire up to the hardships of the camp's evacuation to the west and ultimate liberation.

It is a story based on interviews with ex prisoners and guards, on published and unpublished memoirs and records, and very largely on a coded history kept by three compound prisoners appointed by the Senior American Officer and smuggled out during the 1945 evacuation.

An early chapter is devoted to Dulag Luft – the interrogation centre for aircrew prisoners near Oberursel at the foot of the Taunus Mountains.

To those of us who have long believed that the Germans in the Second World War were masters of interrogation, it will be enlightening to read about a German flier, Franz von Werra, who was shot down over England, sent as a POW to Canada where he escaped and returned to Germany via the USA and Mexico.

Von Werra, who had experience of the British Air Interrogation Centre at Cockfosters, is reported as saying he "would rather be interrogated by half a dozen German inquisitors than one RAF expert."

Arthur Durand presents a very fair assessment of the German treatment of Allied

Queensman's view of Salerno beach-head

THE Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment's part in the first major Allied assault on the European mainland in 1943 is the subject of *Salerno Remembered* by Geoffrey Curtis, who was the most junior platoon commander in 2/6th Queen's when, as a unit of 56 London Division, they were actively engaged in the establishment of

the Salerno beach-head and the subsequent breakout.

The author is not selfish in his narrative; many recollections are aired of others in the six battalions of the Queen's that were components of 7 Armoured and 56 London Divisions. It is essentially an infantryman's view of the action, but written in the

context of the whole operation.

Maj Fergus Ling, 2ic 2/5th Queen's is responsible for one of the many human touches in the book: "The Beachmaster said 'Good morning, nice day' and the RSM said 'About turn'. Needless to say we had forgotten to carry ashore our two cases of 3 inch mortar bombs which the RSM was

collecting in a dump on the beach."

All manner of unpleasant things can happen in the course of assault landings. For example: "Near disaster struck when the LCI bumped a ship in front and holed the store in the bows destroying the battalion's vital stocks of tea and sugar! But the Navy, co-operative as ever, conjured up fresh supplies."

A Company 2/5th Queen's made a landing which seemed to have no ending. "They waded on in the darkness, but when the banks appeared on either side they realised that they were walking up the bed of the River Tusciano..."

These are some of the lighter recollections of the campaign but, of course, there are many sad memories, such as the short paragraph in the account of Operation Avalanche which was aimed at the seizure of Naples.

"I remember in 2/6th we had a splendid stocky little paratrooper, known to us all just as Freddie, who frequently used to come out on recce patrols with us. He would make contact with the inhabitants in no-man's land or even behind the German lines and pick up information which we would never have obtained. Sadly he was killed while still serving with us in Anzio." Unrecognised by any decoration, we must presume.

To sum up in the author's words "... I hope that this account will fill a gap by drawing on the recollections of those of us who were at Salerno to recapture the smell of battle ... The graves of so many Queensmen in the beautiful war cemetery at Salerno are testimony to the price which was paid, and we will remember them." In this book Geoffrey Curtis has created a very apt memorial. – BJ

Salerno Remembered by Geoffrey Curtis. Published by The Queen's Royal Surrey Regimental Association, and available from The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Museum, Clandon Park, Guildford, Surrey GU4 7RG. Price £8.50 plus 90p postage.

Eyewitness in Zululand by Ian Bennett. Published by Greenhill Books. Price £16.95.

Homeward bound British POWs on a hospital train at the end of the Second World War



prisoners. The Gestapo and SS are subjected to condemnation but the regular camp staff (the "goons") are generally shown as honest and reasonably humane.

The book can be read as a POW survival manual: what to expect from the moment of capture, the interrogation, the life in confinement and how to preserve sanity, not only of oneself but of other prisoners.

For many this depends on the glimmer of optimism associated with attempts at escape but such activities are a small part of POW camp life: sport, theatrical production, study and keeping fit are equally important.

No one can expect to come through a POW experience without scars but it is apparent from this account, albeit concerned with events of nearly half a century ago, that it is possible to lessen the mental and physical damage. – BJ

Stalag Luft III: The Secret Story by Arthur A Durand. Published by William Kimber/Patrick Stephens. Price £12.95.

Zululand wars and no humbug

THE title of Ian Bennett's *Eyewitness in Zululand* is slightly misleading. For though much of the book is concerned with the Zulu War as seen through the eyes of a British soldier, there is a great deal more to it than that.

Maj Gen Julian Thompson of Falklands fame sums it up in a foreword describing the section on the interplay between British, Boer and Bantu as "a marvellously clear potted history of events which still bear on the situation today without any of the humbug of so many modern accounts."

The charm of the accounts of the various campaigns lies in the words of Col Walter Dunne, who fought in South Africa as a young commissary officer and retired as colonel in the Army Service Corps.

Lt Col Bennett discovered his reminiscences in the archives of the Royal Corps of Transport where they had lain for nearly a century, not lost but simply ignored.

The reminiscences cover Dunne's part in the stand at Rorke's Drift, the defeat of the wily old chief Sekukuni (in which 8,000 Swazi warriors fought with spear and shield alongside the redcoats) and the disastrous First Boer War.

But what many will find fascinating is the ingenuity shown by Dunne and others in overcoming the supply problems in the days before the internal combustion engine.

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Picture: Charles Risk, RSA Larkhill

Members of the Fiddlers Club sound off – l to r “Boy” Trumpeters Henshall, Norton, Dobbs, Owen, Bryant and Schofield

Still blowing strong

ANYONE who ever served on a camp where trumpeters were being trained will recall the torture at the beginning of a course, writes **Bill Moore**.

As the days went by the performance improved, then just as they managed to make Reveille as acceptable as it can be the whole darn thing started all over again.

It is comforting to report therefore that at least the training was thorough and perhaps nowhere better than in the Royal Artillery Boys Batteries.

Though the last of them qualified in July 1939 members of a group of ex trumpeters gathered at the Royal Artillery Mess, Larkhill, showed they had forgotten nothing.

They sounded off splendidly for The Master Gunner, St James's Park (Gen Sir Martin Farndale), calling the guests to a buffet supper.

It was the 17th reunion of the Fiddlers Club. Why boy trumpeters were known as such is lost in the mists of time. It may have been that because they were given so little to eat they spent a great deal of time on the fiddle to supplement



First posting. Boy Trumpeters Greenhow (left) and Dobbs at Quetta on the North West Frontier of India. The date: 1930

their rations and pay!

They were also known as “Badgies” but this undoubtedly came from the Indian Army term “Baja wallah” meaning music man.

When all guns were horse-drawn, trumpeters were essential for sounding calls on active service and were required to be good riders as well as musically proficient.

They appeared in many a Victorian campaign and the last known fatal casualty in the field

is believed to have been a Trumpeter Kelly of 10 Mountain Battery who died in England of wounds received in the South African War.

Boys, however, did go to France in 1914 and some had seen action at Mons and Ypres before they were sent home as under age (they were enlisted when between 14 and 15½ years old). One, Trumpeter Waldron of 37 Battery, won the DCM at Le Cateau (Aug 1914) at the age of 16.

Though horse artillery had been phased out in Britain when the Second World War broke out in 1939 the two Boys Batteries (Nos 1 and 2) were still training trumpeters and teaching riding.

Disbanded for a time, they were reformed as a single battery in 1942 with the object of producing “... the future Warrant Officer and Senior NCOs of the Regiment”. Half of them were, in fact, eventually commissioned and two became brigadiers.

The man behind the Fiddlers Club is Maj Joe Dobbs, who followed his father into the RA and joined as a Boy in 1929.

After service in India he went to France with the BEF and was lucky to escape in 1940 as his battery was attached to the 51st Highland Division captured at St Valery.

He returned with the invasion forces and after the German surrender was commissioned and posted to the Far East.

At 75 his bearing and turn-out say a great deal for the system that produced him. Maybe the food wasn't so bad in those days after all.

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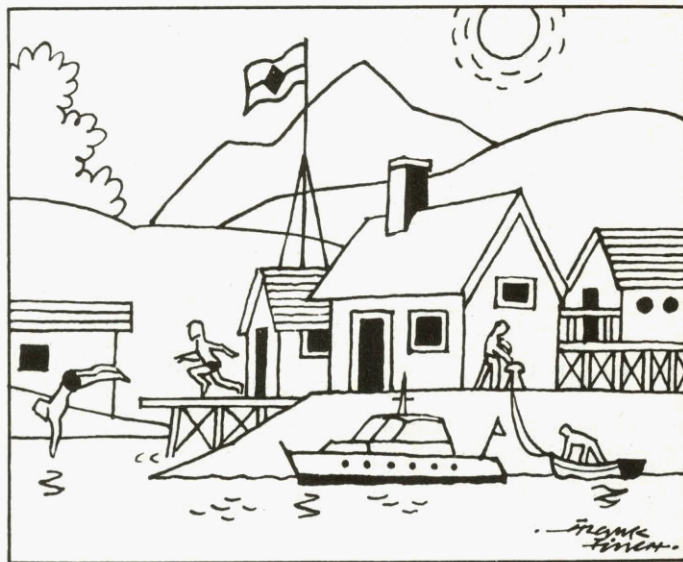
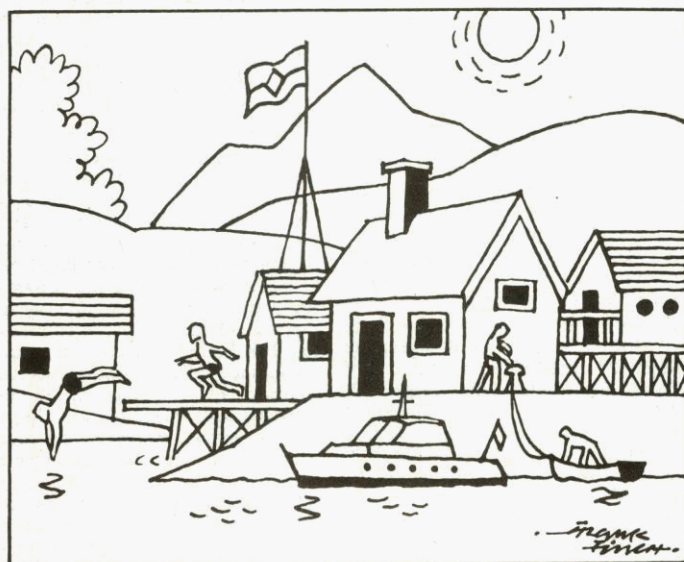
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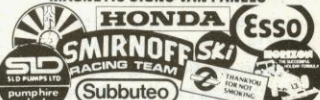
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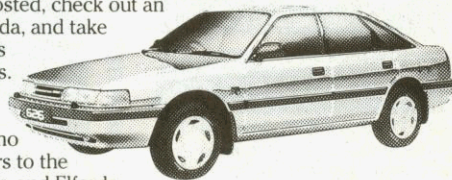


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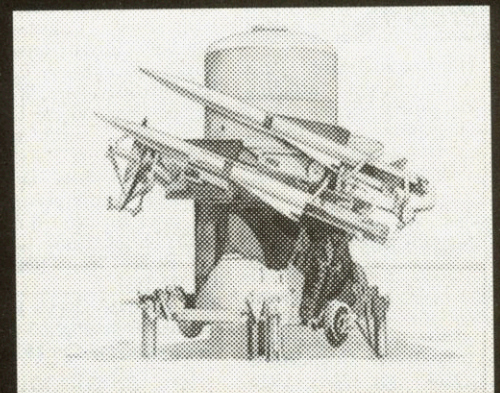
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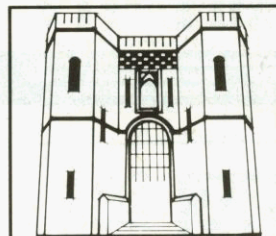
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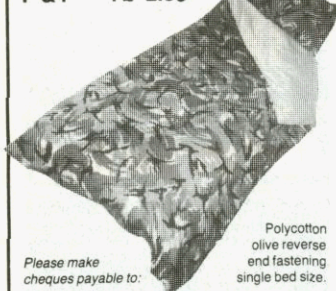
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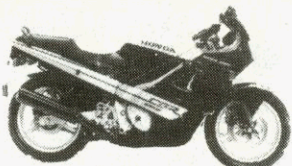
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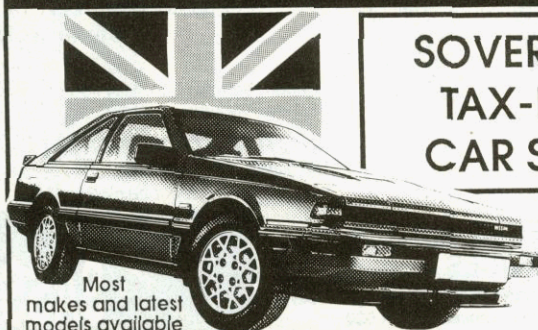
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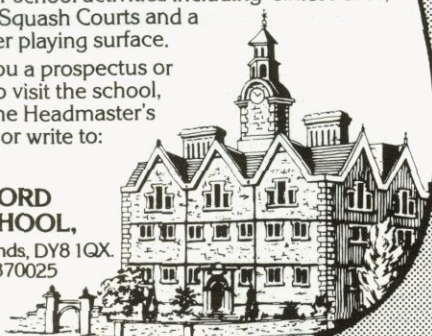
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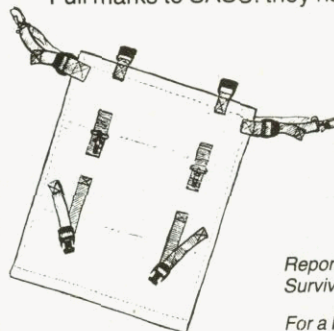
Perhaps the biggest single improvement is fast release black plastic buckles with the standard military nylon strap material. You can click these shut with the roll still partly open and then just pull the strap to tighten.

On the inside are two pieces of nylon, a bit like mini-bashas, which you close in the centre with tape and a fixlock. This completes the package, making a waterproof pouch, closed at both ends. To open, just press the quick release buckle catches and shake.

About the only negative point I can make is that there is no device for attaching a pickhead, as on the original '58 poncho roll. As the NBC kit roll is obviously designed to replace the poncho roll as an NBC kit carrier, this pouch would have been useful.

Full marks to SASS: they have designed a simple, effective solution to one of life's great frustrations. Available in DPM camo or olive drab at £19.95 plus £2.50 p&p from Special Air Sea Services, St George's Works, St George's Quay, Lancaster, Lancs LA1 5QJ.

Oliver Sotherby



Report reprinted from May 1989 "Combat and Survival" Magazine.

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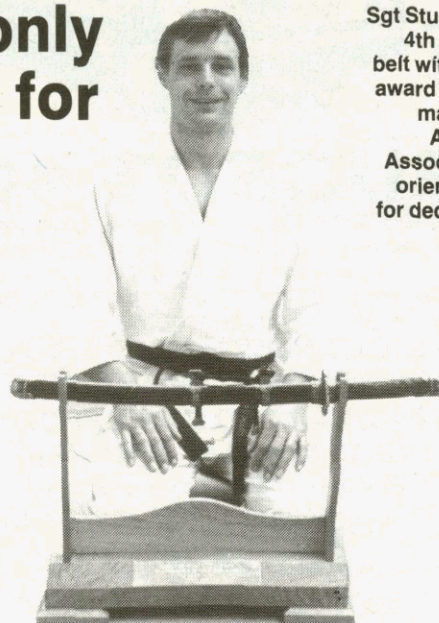
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DEDICATED

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Sgt Stuart Travis, 4th Dan black belt with the first award of its kind made by the Army Judo Association, an oriental sword for dedication to the sport

ARMY judo is about to take a fall.

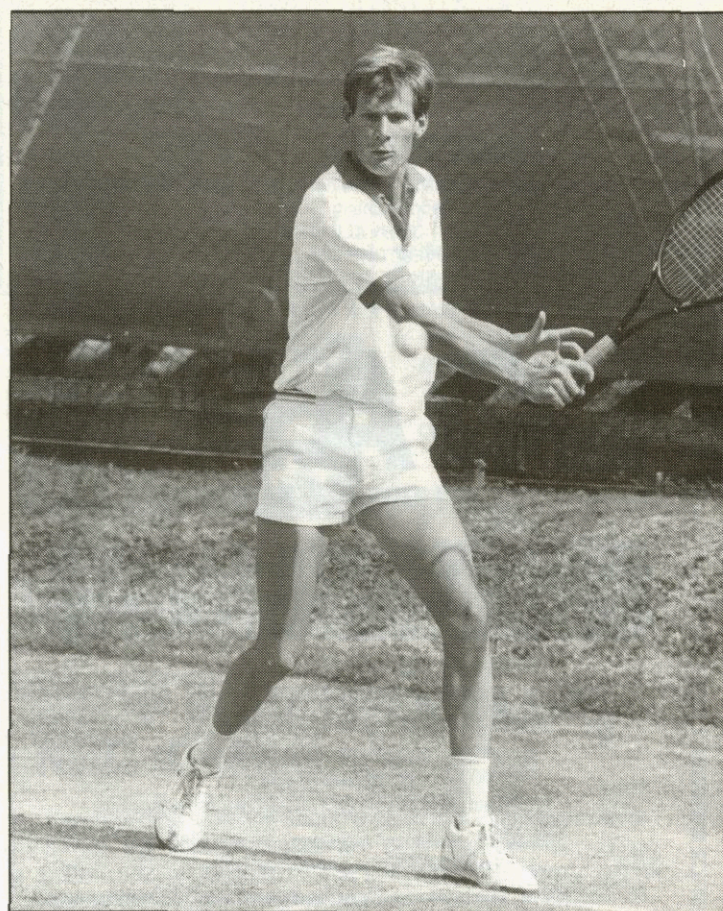
Most of the Royal Pioneer Corps team are leaving the Army, and that, says 4th Dan black belt Sgt Stuart Travis, will be a tremendous loss to the Army team, especially in the Inter Services championships.

"The Pioneers have always been relied upon to win, and this year the Army lost the Inter Service championships for the first time, although the Pioneers won their bouts. So the Army team will probably struggle in the next few years with the loss of the Pioneers."

Every soldier who has been in the RPC squad has won Army medals and quite a few have been Army and Inter Service champions.

The squad are currently giving displays of judo and unarmed combat at some of the country's major shows.

Sgt Travis, the Army's most successful judo exponent ever, is due to be posted to the Army Careers Information Office in Hull. There is speculation every year that he is retiring from judo - "but I will probably be back next year," he says.



Watts makes it six

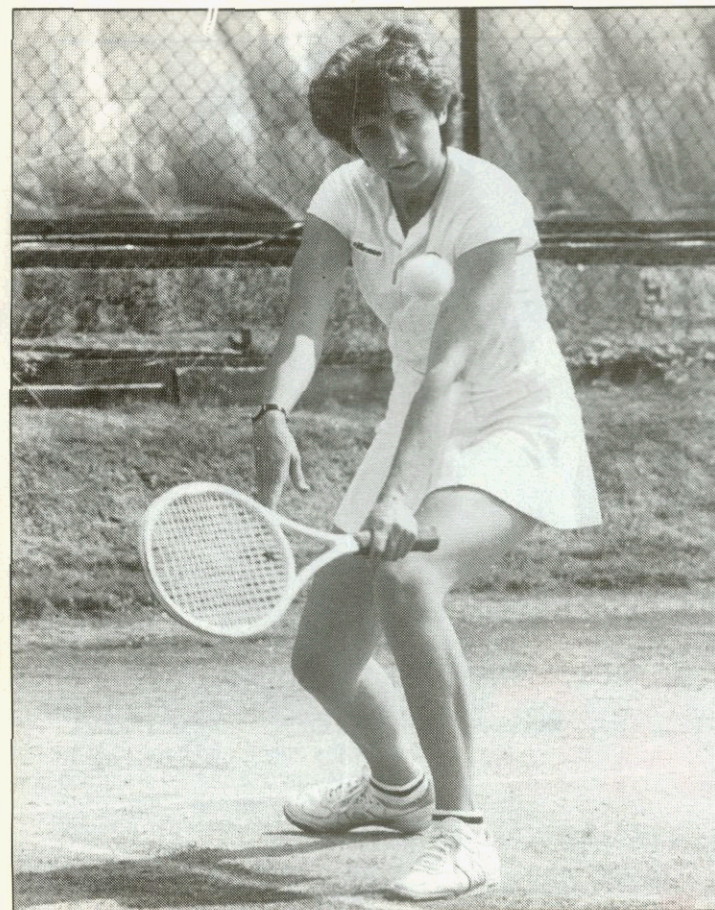
CAPT Nigel Watts, AAC flew skilfully through the Army Lawn Tennis championships at Aldershot, winning four men's events.

The men's singles was once again a battle between Capt Watts and Cpl Eric Simpson, ACC. The pair met in the men's final of the Army Indoor Tournament six months ago, with victory going to Capt Watts - and that was a repeat of the 1988 final!

In the lawn tennis event, Cpl Simpson fought gamely in the final, but Capt Watts was again

the winner by two straight sets 6-3, 6-1. It was the sixth successive year he has won the title.

The same players also featured in the finals of the men's doubles, in which Capt Watts and Lt Col D Hughes, RAEC beat Cpl Simpson and Maj C Braithwaite, and in the mixed doubles where Capt Watts and Maj J Dixon beat Cpl Simpson and Capt Lisa



Lisa bounces back

Richardson in two sets.

Capt Richardson regained the singles title which she lost last year, by beating Cpl Heather McNair 4-6, 6-4, 6-1.

One hundred and twenty players entered the championship, with ages ranging from 17 to 82!

RESULTS:

Mens singles - Capt N Watts, AAC beat Cpl E Simpson, ACC 6-3, 6-1.

Mens doubles - Lt Col D Hughes, RAEC and Capt N Watts, AAC beat Cpl E Simpson,

ACC and Maj C Braithwaite 6-4, 2-6, 6-0.
Inter arms and corps doubles - Lt Col S Pettigrew and Capt N Watts, AAC beat Brig B Reeves and Maj D Hughes, RAEC 6-7, 6-4, 6-4.

Ladies singles - Capt L Richardson beat Cpl H McNair 4-6, 6-4, 6-1.

Ladies doubles - Maj J Dixon and Sgt S Smith beat Capt L Richardson and Cpl H McNair 6-3, 6-2.

Mixed doubles - Capt N Watts and Maj J Dixon beat Cpl E Simpson and Capt L Richardson 7-5, 6-1.

Mens plate - Capt P Frostich, REME beat Cpl S Modest, RCT 6-4, 6-3.

Mens under 21 - Dvr Stevens, RCT beat Cpl Coleman, R Sigs 6-4, 6-3.

Veterans singles - Lt Col V Smith, RA beat Lt Col J A Woodliffe 6-4, 6-3.

Veterans handicap singles - Lt Col R Dennis beat Maj A Hilton 6-4, 6-2.

Veterans doubles - Brig B Reeves and Maj A Hilton beat Maj R Henry and Lt Col B Hopkin.

Ladies plate - Capt Parsons beat SSgt McMahon 6-3, 6-2.

AT LAST!

FOR the first time in 13 years, the Army took top points in the Inter Service men's swimming championships, held at RAF Cranwell, Lincs.

The victory margin was a narrow three points, but was enough to beat the RAF into second place, with the RN trailing more than 30 points further away. The results: Army 89 pts, RAF 86, RN 50.

But the RAF/WRAF had their revenge in water polo and the ladies' swimming championship sections.

INSPIRED

The only word for men like HIM



Kriss Akabusi in action. "If one man was the hero of the day it was Akabusi," said *The Sunday Times*

"AKABUSI, the inspired hero" was how one national newspaper hailed the Army's champion hurdler after WO2 (QMSI) Kriss Akabusi won the 400 metres hurdles and helped the British team to win the relay and so take the Europa Cup.

Akabusi set the scene on the first day of the contest at Gateshead by winning the opening track event, his own 400 metres hurdles, and by the end of the day Britain had taken victory in five of the ten men's events.

Competing against athletes from the Soviet Union and East Germany who normally dominate the meeting, Britain's men were at one time 22 points ahead of East Germany but it was not until the final event, the 4x400 metres relay, that the championship was clinched.

Kriss Akabusi was in the triumphant foursome who won the event, ensuring their visit to Barcelona this month (September) to compete in the World Cup Final. Said the *Sunday Times* after the first day's events: "If any one man was the hero, it was Akabusi."

Lt Tom Thickeness (2 for 32) and Capt Paul Presland (2 for 36) were the most successful Army bowlers.

But on the second day, the RAF beat the Army by 47 runs. One of the RAF openers, Sgt G Lumb, scored a century before being run out and although Capt Andy Taylor took 3 for 50, and Presland 2 for 32, the Army could not reach the RAF total of 255 - 7 and were all out for 209.

The championship was clinched on the final day when the RN beat the RAF by 57 runs, to give the Services one victory each.

RESULTS:

Army 269 for 7, RN 221 for 8; RAF 255 for 7, Army 209; RN 239 for 8, RAF 182.

Kriss - winning smile



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BIG TRIATHLON BOOST

A NEW Army Triathlon Club has been formed, and more than 300 competitors took part in the Army GKN Defence Triathlon Championships held at Cotswold Water Park near Swindon. The distances covered were 1,500m swim in an open lake; 40km cycling and 10km run.

First out of the water in a very fast time of 20 mins 18 secs was LBdr Andy Myers of 7 Para RHA closely followed by

Welsh international LCpl Phil Kibble, RCT, who was followed by Capt Ian Horne, APTC.

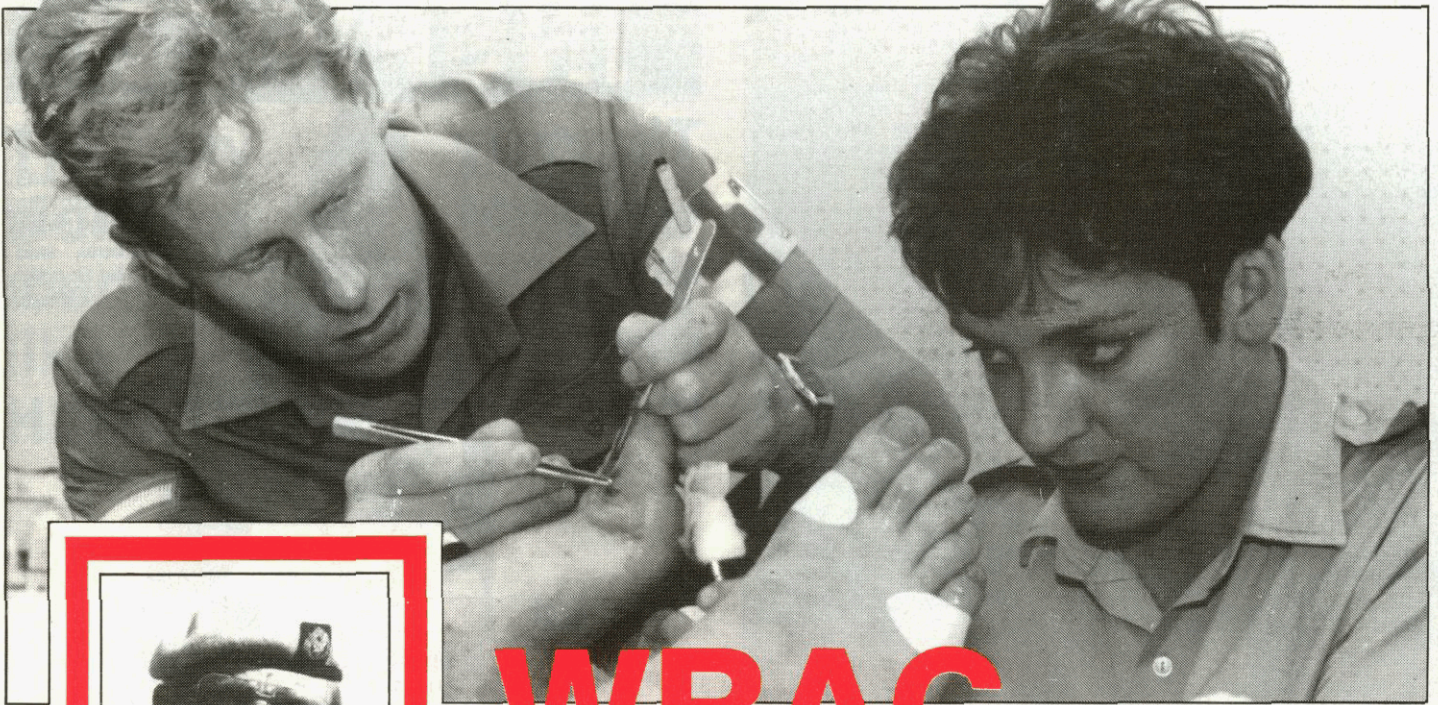
Kibble soon established a lead on the cycle and came into the transition park nearly two minutes ahead, but the fastest bike split was achieved by LBdr Arnell in 1:1:17. Kibble continued to move ahead and came back off the run in a total time of 1:55:09.

7 Para RHA had a strong

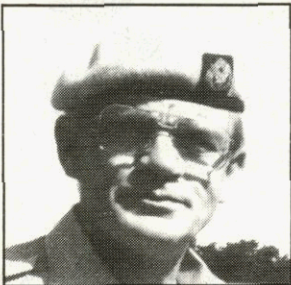
team and won the major units, and 5 AB Bde HQ and Sig Sqn won the minor units with Cpl Gary Smith leading the team home.

The WRAC Centre won the ladies section with Capt Dewhurst first home, followed by WO2 Lynn Higgs.

The old men of the sport event (over 40 vets) was admirably won by Maj (MAA) Barry Lillywhite, APTC in a superb time of 2:07:17.



Two of the "blister busters" – LCpl John Allen of 3 Armd Fd Amb and SAC Helen Johnson from RAF Bruggen – concentrate on a repair



Maj Peter Williams, British contingent commander

WRAC lead

the marchers

THERE are no cups for the winners and no awards for record breaking times in the annual Nijmegen Marches, but for the girls of 29 Company WRAC from Rheindahlen there was the honour of being chosen best military team in the gruelling four-day event.

The WRAC girls were given the title by Maj Peter Williams, British contingent commander, and it resulted in them being invited to lead the entire British

contingent on the final march into Nijmegen.

Their team leader, Lt Sandy Gibbins, was also adjudged "best military leader".

Said Sandy: "It was tremendous. It really was a team thing. We sang the whole way round. We've been training since April, in our own time, in the evenings and at weekends."

Would she enter again next year? After a pause – "Yes,

most definitely."

Almost 1,500 British personnel from the UK and Germany were among the nearly 30,000 marchers from 45 countries in the marches, as well as for the first time a 26-strong team of cadets from the Military Academy in Moscow.

A national military support group accompanies each of the military contingents to Holland.

By far the largest contributors to this support group are

the medical services – the blister busters!

3 Armoured Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps from Sennelager in Germany has provided the medical cover for British military marchers in Nijmegen for the last three years and their experience and expertise in treating the marchers and getting them "back on the road" is invaluable.

Commanding Officer of 3 Armoured Field Ambulance, Lt Col Richard Myles explaining the medical role said: "Our aim is to keep the marchers marching. We cannot cure feet but we are able to repair them sufficiently to enable marchers to get to the next rest area.

"We are here to deal with any medical problem – not just feet," he said, adding with a smile: "I'm a gynaecologist!"

On a more serious note, Lt Col Myles continued: "The Nijmegen Marches do provide invaluable experience for my soldiers. The Field Ambulance has no real peacetime role, except to practise, so this gives the combat medical technician real live training for his operational task in a war situation."

The British Forces acquitted themselves extremely well. Of the 119 teams entered, 106 completed the marches, 89 per cent success, while as individuals 95 per cent of the Service marchers received medals.



These feet were made for walking – but junior leaders from the Royal Artillery were not without their bruises and blisters at the end of a long day's march

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SOLDIER



All eyes on the target as anti-tank platoon members of 1st Battalion, The Light Infantry take part in Berlin Brigade's annual and possibly last Wombat concentration in West Germany.

Picture: Terry Champion