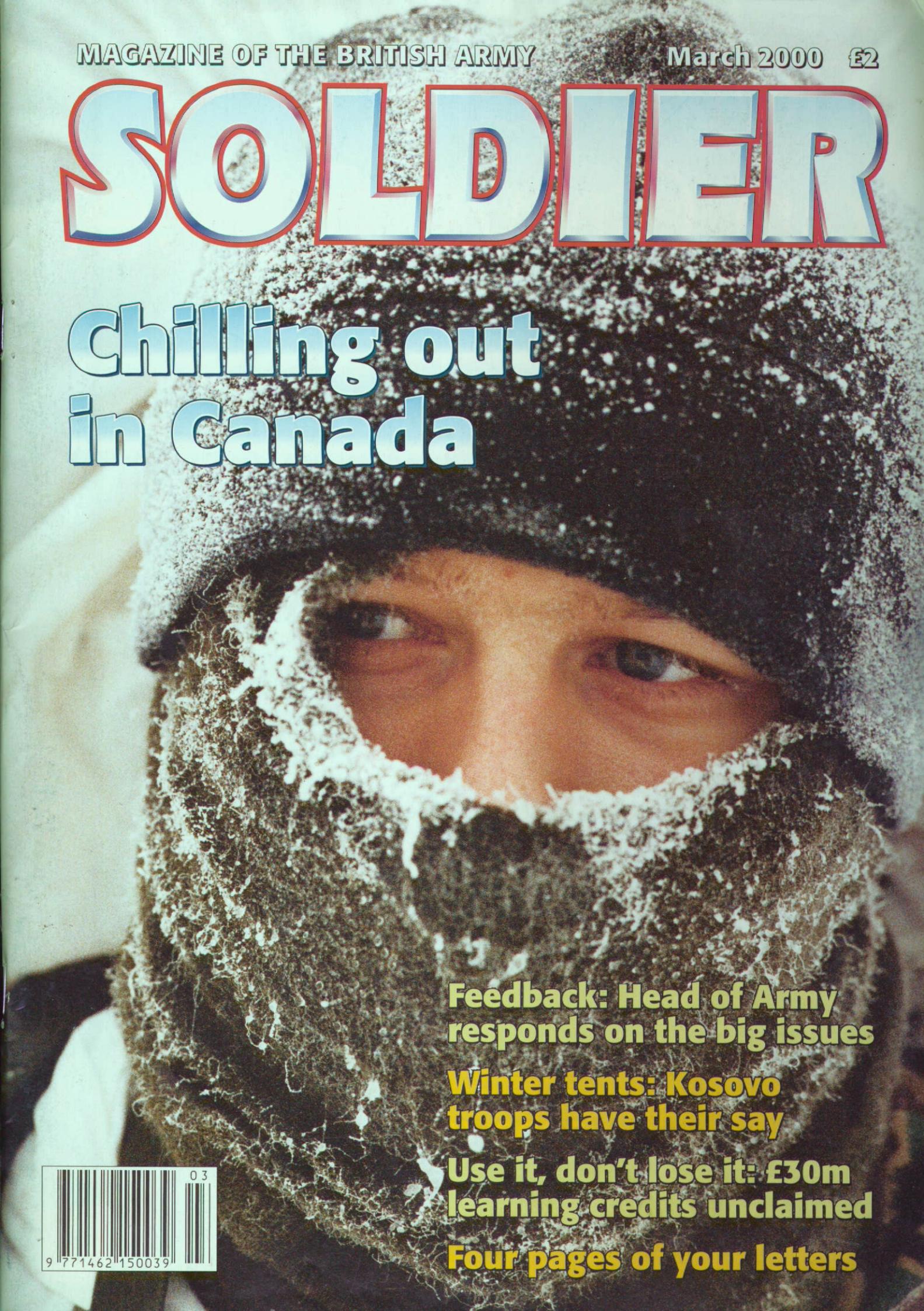


MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

March 2000 £2

SOLDIER

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**Winter tents: Kosovo
troops have their say**

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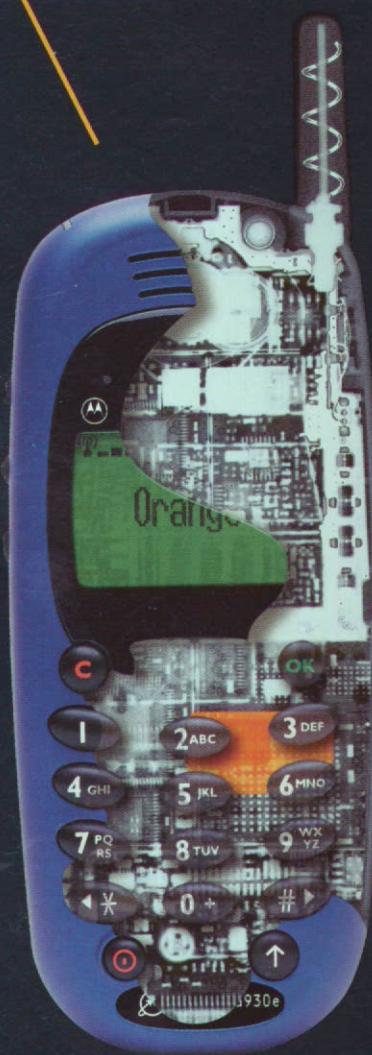
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... going overseas to support your soldier in serving his/her country is not viewed as any entitlement to retain your residency in the UK. Nice one, eh?

- Sue Bonney tells more Home Truths
- Page 45

● Introducing...
Soldier's top ten
books - Page 73

Making allowances - Page 28-29

Learning credits worth more than £30 million are waiting to be claimed by Service men and women. Plus top tips on the allowances available to you. Remember - use 'em, don't lose 'em

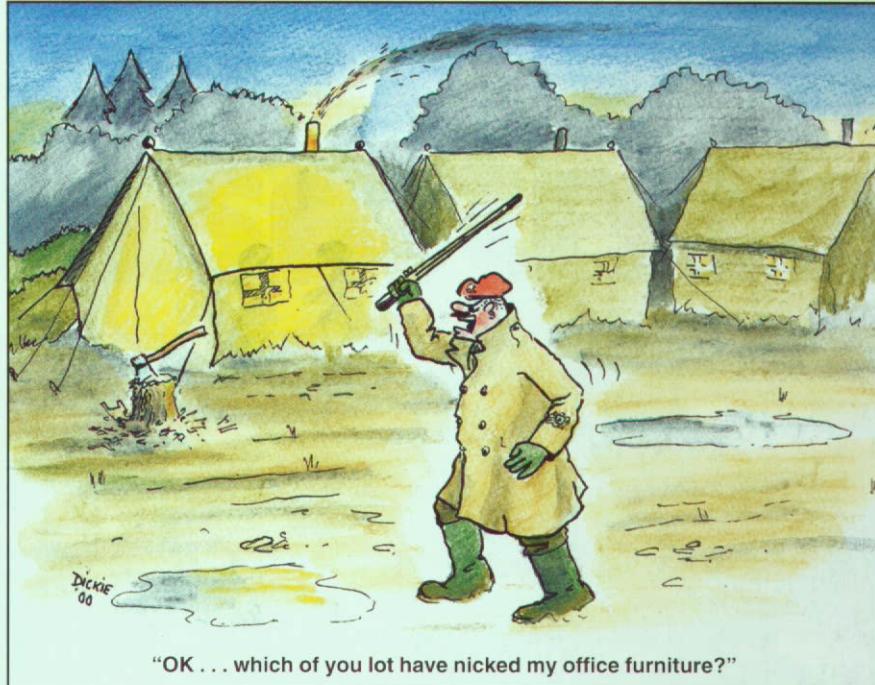


14 Cover story

It ain't 'alf cold, mum: Cpl Thomas Kellie of C Company, 1st Battalion, The Royal Scots wraps up well to beat the cold in the Canadian Rockies during the inaugural Exercise Snowshoe, a new six-week winter training package in Alberta.

Picture: Chris Fletcher

How to contact Soldier
- see Page 78



● Tented camps in Kosovo - Pages 4-5

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SOLDIER
to soldier

Don't be
seen and
not heard

OK, so it's not a perfect world... and we won't ever pretend that it is. But what this issue of *Soldier* reflects loud and clear is the Army's determination at the highest level to make life better for its own personnel. Starting with those things that most irritate soldiers and their families.

Over the past few months the Chief of the General Staff has been asking you, via his briefing team, to tell him what you like and don't like about today's Army. On the centre pages he responds in his own words - and pledges to keep that channel of communication wide open.

Elsewhere in this issue we draw attention to the many allowances to which soldiers are entitled - but which they don't always claim. There is an acknowledgement that sometimes soldiers (usually young ones) are not sufficiently briefed on what they can claim. Coming your way soon should be a personal copy of a leaflet spelling it out. Use it... don't lose it.

BIG MAILBAG

A key to improving your lot is effective, two-way communication, which is why we are delighted so many of you feel able to express your views in our Mailbag section, this month increased for the first time to four pages. Be in no doubt... your opinions are read by the movers and the shakers. Although the wheels of change may grind awfully slowly, we are assured that, on a whole range of issues concerning your conditions of service and the welfare of your families, progress is being made.

If it is not, make sure you tell CGS's Briefing Team, or write to us, or - if you are a dependant - tell the Army Families Federation, which has unique access to a ministerial task force. In the modern Army you don't have to be seen and not heard.

The truth about those tents

Tented camps for soldiers deployed in the severe Kosovo winter have come in for a lot of flak in the British media. *Soldier* went to see what they are really like

Report: Ray Routledge
Pictures: Mike Weston

WINTER temperatures in Kosovo have plunged at times to a lung-numbing minus 29C. Not the ideal environment, you might think, in which to pitch a tent. Yet many British soldiers deployed there have found themselves doing just that.

As news filtered back to the UK that winterised quarters were months behind schedule and that troops were having to make do under canvas, their "plight" was highlighted in the media and questions were asked in Parliament.

A *Soldier* team spent several days sharing those quarters in Kosovo and found they had little in common with the tents used by families for camping weekends in the New Forest. We noted at several locations how well troops had adapted to the conditions. Instead of hearing a torrent of whingeing we watched soldiers getting on with it without complaint.

Hundreds of troops at Brigade HQ in Pristina live in tents, as do many more in Podujevo, an hour's drive away.

Podujevo was home to soldiers of The Queen's Dragoon Guards, who, before their departure last month, had been waiting to move into new temporary field accommodation (TFA). They had had to



Impressed: Lt Col Patrick Andrews



use a hotel as their HQ, and if that sounds a cushy number, the reality was rather different.

The Ritz it is not. The building is cold and draughty and power and water supplies are frequently interrupted. In fact, so uncomfortable is it that soldiers living in tents at the boundary crossings into Serbia reckoned they had the better deal.

Commanding officer Lt Col Patrick Andrews expressed disappointment at the delay in the handover of TFA quarters but recognised it was a longer-term solution.

"Because of the delays to the TFA we had to look at accommodation over the winter period," he said. "We worked on factories and other sites to make them habitable, and the improved tentage camp (ITC) was made available. ITC is a massive step in the right direction and an improvement on what we've had in the past, particularly given the extreme weather conditions."

He added: "I've been impressed by the work everyone has put into this tour after the disappointments over accommodation. Everyone can get some professional satisfaction for what they have done and be proud of their part in ensuring the



security and quality of life of the Kosovo people has been changed for the better."

Visiting a TFA construction site at the disused Podujevo Airport, RSM John Smith said 11 Fd Sqn sappers had completed their task on time, but that the delay by the contractors in completing the work had not caused any undue problems with operational or day-to-day running of the battle-group.

"We were well prepared," he said. "When it became apparent that the TFA

Tpr David Finlay, RDG

I can't complain. When it's freezing outside, it's warm inside.

There's power for light, we can watch TV and we have constant hot water in the showers.

Tpr Wayne Hughes, QDG

I would like to see proper beds here.

Tpr Dave Ceely, QDG

Considering the outside temperatures, it's OK.

Our sleeping tent is a bit cramped, but that's only to be expected. It could be improved: the silver foil insulation can get torn and if it does, water can drip through. I suggest another layer be inserted between the foil and the outer canvas.

Lcpl Dave Armstrong, QDG

Considering where we are, at the top of a mountain, I think the tents are brilliant. It gets so hot the boys sleep on top of their doss bags.

Sgt Robert Jones, QDG

I have been in tented accommodation in three locations here and think it's fine, although the doorways could be improved. In the Gulf we had doors with inner and outer zips, which would cut the draughts.

Lcpl Craighton Davies, QDG

My only complaint is that TV reception can be poor in bad weather and I would like to see permanent beds here rather than the cots, which break easily.

The view from Kosovo

Lt Matthew Perriss QDG
I'd say the accommodation in Kosovo from my experience has been excellent. There are occasions when the electricity goes off, but that is only to be expected in a country that has the sort of infrastructure problems Kosovo has got. Our support teams work really hard to



ensure that breakdowns are kept to a minimum. The US Army could not cope with the sort of pressures that we are put under. Although it is a bit spartan to say so, I believe that living a bit closer to the wind makes us a more effective fighting force.

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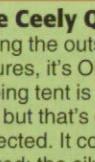
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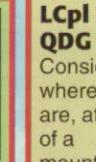


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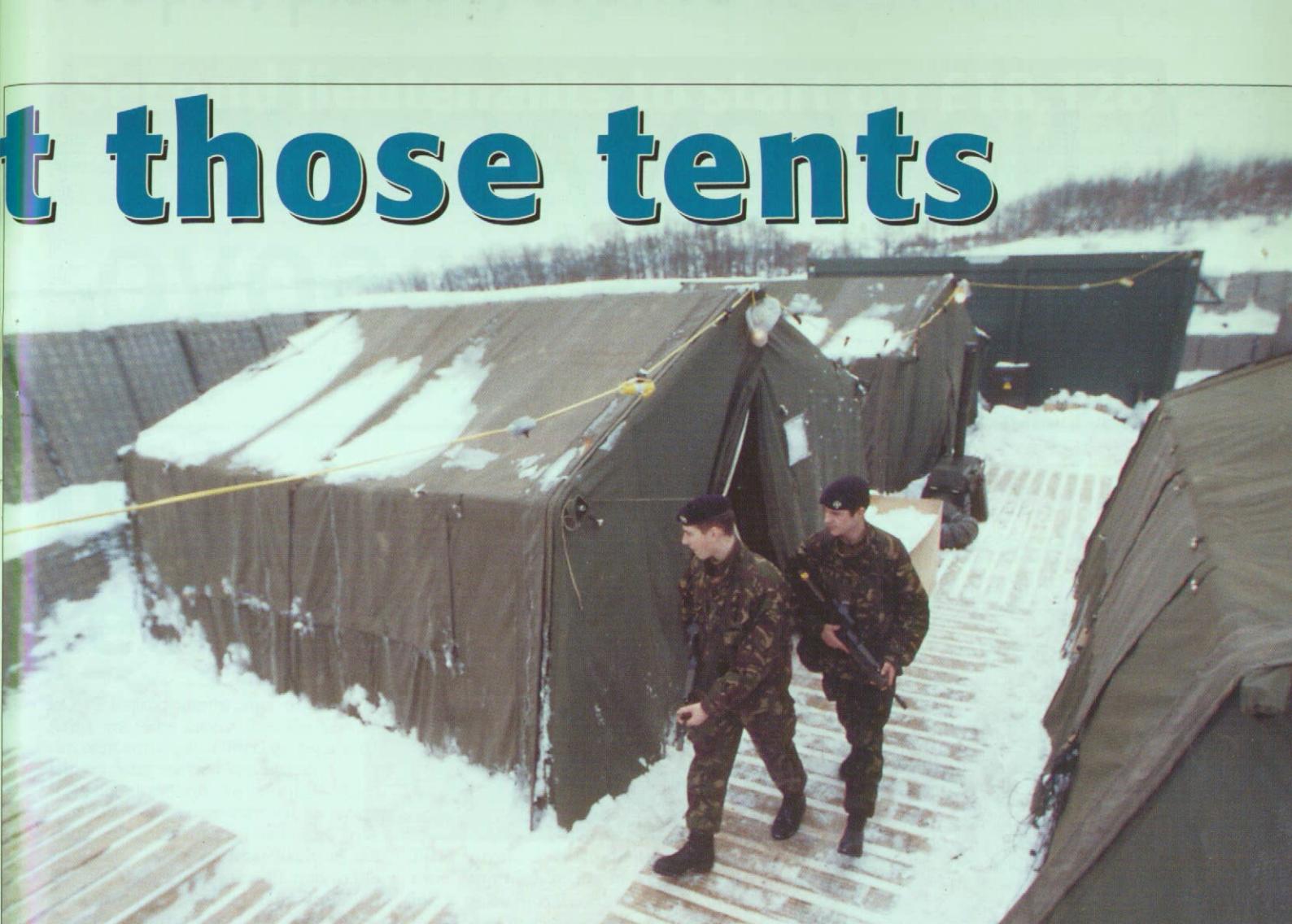
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Home sweet home: Snug inside and freezing outside, main pictures, for soldiers deployed at a Kosovo-Serbia boundary crossing point north-east of Podujevo

Coming soon: New temporary field accommodation, left, taking shape near Podujevo

would not be completed before the onset of cold weather, everyone rebuilt, refurbished and winterised the tented accommodation."

This included inserting thermal linings into the tents and providing hot-air ventilation. It meant "campers" could maintain indoor temperatures of 18C (64F) for example, when it was minus 30C outside.

Porous heavy-duty flooring let water drain away, while duckboard walkways

outside allowed for safe, easy and reasonably mud-free movement.

At a crossing into Serbia high in the snow-covered mountains north-east of Podujevo, Lt Piers Cavell, QDG, and 20 soldiers lived in an improved tented camp. Stationed at the crossing for up to two weeks at a time, he and his soldiers had their own cookhouse, a mini-gymnasium, a place to watch TV, and a shower unit and washroom with hot water.

Everything was run on diesel-powered generators and the portaloos were emptied every day or second day.

"The sappers and support services have done a marvellous job in helping us," he said.

Sgt John Crompton summed up the feeling towards the tents. "When the boys

are on patrol they know there is going to be nice warm place for them to return to."

The battle-group's 920 soldiers covered a large rural area bounded by high mountains in the north-east of Kosovo. A recce troop was based in the north while a squadron in the metal factory in Podujevo had responsibility for two gates on the Kosovo-Serbia boundary. An attached 180-strong Czech recce unit covered much of the boundary.

Other units in the area included 127/17 (Dragon) Battery, 26 Regiment RA; 11 Field Squadron, 38 Engineer Regiment; and Royal Military Police. In all, 29 cap badges were represented.

● Chilly test for RS – Pages 14-15.

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SCANIA DEFENCE SERVICES
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People, places, events

Second lieutenants to start on £18,126

ALL ranks are to receive a basic pay rise of at least 3.3 per cent from April 1 following the Government's acceptance in full of the Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB) for 2000.

Privates, lance corporals, lieutenants and captains are to get slightly more – a rise of 3.8 per cent. The AFPRB's recommendation that the pay of second lieutenants be increased to £18,126 a year to allow the Services to compete for graduate recruits was also accepted.

Also going up is the X-factor – by one per cent for those currently receiving 12 per cent – to reflect the increased disadvantage of Service life compared with that in the civilian sector.

But for personnel getting the an X-factor of

Government agrees basic military pay rises ranging from 3.3 to 3.8 per cent

five per cent, the rate will remain unchanged.

With the exception of payments for work of an objectional nature and work in unpleasant conditions (both hiked by 3.3 per cent), additional rates of pay will increase by one per cent.

BASIC RENT INCREASES

The review body recommended basic rent increases ranging from 5.3 per cent for senior officers to 3.3 per cent for other ranks in the biggest and best accommodation. Increases for poor-quality quarters are proportionately lower, with no increase at all for the worst

housing. Single accommodation charges are set to go up by 3.3 per cent for Grade 1 quarters, reducing to no change for those living in the lowest Grade 4. The largest increase, for senior officers, is just over £1 a week.

Water and sewage charges for all Service family quarters will rise from between £226 and £256 to between £234 and £263 a year, and annual water charges for single accommodation will increase to £80.

Garage rental will go up by 3.3 per cent to £180 a year.

Increases in rates of basic pay for members of the Reserve Forces will broadly mirror those recommended for Regular soldiers.

● Full details will appear in due course

Higher grade of recruit targeted

LOWER-grade applicants to join the Army are to be deferred so the Service can concentrate its efforts on recruiting and training the best youngsters.

Although recruiting numbers have shown a steady upward turn in recent years, a significant proportion of "risk candidates" – those least likely to get through their tough introduction to life in uniform – has seen many dropping out of recruit training. Last year nearly 4,000 quit at this point.

A large number of low-grade recruits and the extra time NCOs have had to spend trying to get them up to standard has had a knock-on effect, with higher-grade candidates also returning prematurely to civilian life.

In an attempt to reverse this process and ensure Army recruiting targets are met, the Army Training and Recruiting Agency (ATRA) has introduced new measures aimed at minimising the risk of failure and raising the standard of recruits without reducing the numbers being posted into the Field Army.

Measures include deferring enlistment of lower-grade applicants and introducing an additional element of selection into the Army Foundation Scheme. Although fewer recruits will begin basic training, the Field Army's

targets should still be met by soldiers trained to the required standard.

So far this year, and even before the new measures have been brought in, 1,000 more recruits than last year have joined their regiments and corps.

In a further boost to manning the Field Army, a "just-enough, just-in-time" approach to Phase 2 skills training is to be introduced to cut the time lost before recruits join their first unit. It will ensure soldiers are fully-qualified for their first appointment in the Field Army and allow them to acquire further skills as and when required.

MULTI-SKILL APPROACH

Some soldiers spend up to 18 months on Phase 2 training before reporting to their first unit. This traditional "just-in-case" approach to multi-skill training has resulted in increasingly long courses and a consequent "skill-fade" before the soldier is posted.

Some need to be multi-skilled before their first posting, while many others do not.

Sappers, for example, are required to be both combat engineers and have a construction engineer trade. In other arms and services, additional skills may be required only for a particular posting or deployment.

To Nepal with love



Blooming: Theatre sister Jane Beard from Fleet turned to the Gurkhas for help after volunteering to help at an ear surgery camp in Nepal. She had to find £500 for her air fare so contacted the 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles at nearby Church Crookham. The Gurkhas promptly donated £1 each – presenting her with a cheque for £550 – and arranged for her to be given a Hindu blessing by their battalion priest. Jane was garlanded, given a traditional farewell and wished a safe journey by soldiers and their wives. Picture: Graeme Main

IN BRIEF

● Cpl Lee Clegg of The Parachute Regiment, imprisoned for life in 1993 for shooting a joyrider who sped through a vehicle checkpoint in Belfast, has won a nine-year battle to clear his name.

● The MoD has welcomed a report by the National Audit Office on accepting equipment

off-contract and into service. It showed that in most cases the MoD had achieved a satisfactory outcome. Shortfalls identified in the report are being tackled under the Smart Procurement initiative.

● Royal Military Tattoo 2000 concessionary tickets priced at £6 and £10 for Service

personnel, their families and veterans are available for the preview evening on July 9. Ticket enquiries to 0870 241 0301.

● Maj Gen Peter Grant Peterkin, the new GOC 5 Division, paid his first visit to Tidworth and Bulford to familiarise himself with 43 (Wessex) Brigade and the garrison HQs.

People, dogs, places, events

Tara has her day



Kennel maid: The London Irish Rifles, a company within the Territorial Army's London Regiment, have given a first public outing to ten-month-old **Tara III**, their first Irish wolfhound mascot since the Second World War. Among those watching the parade was Dennis Mulqueen, 85, handler of the original Tara, who was once fined a day's biscuits for stealing a chicken. Her charge sheet is still in the possession of the London Irish, who have a new home in Flodden Road, Camberwell.

Like father, like son



Reunited: Twenty-year-old Pte Thomas Jeffries, right, of Bulford-based 2nd Battalion, The Light Infantry, is reunited with his father, ex-soldier **Kevin**, after appearing on the BBC TV series *Soldiers To Be*. Thomas had lost touch with his father, a former warrant officer in the Royal Artillery, after his parents divorced seven years ago. Kevin, who discovered after the programme was broadcast that Thomas was based just a few miles from where he lived, had been unaware his son had followed his footsteps into the Army.

Going home is not so terrible for Ivan

IVAN, family pet of Munster-based Cpl Colin Binge, King's Royal Hussars, was the first Service dog to benefit from Britain's new rabies regulations.

He was due to return to the UK via the Channel Tunnel on February 28, the first day of a trial which will signal, for those who can meet stringent requirements, the end of the six-month quarantine period so unpopular with Army families based abroad.

Sennelager-based Army vet Capt Stephen Butterton said RAVC staff had been especially busy since Christmas checking documentation of Army families hoping to return to the UK with their pets. "It should make life a lot easier for families

based here in Germany and I am confident it will go well."

He said Army vets had been busy doing blood tests since August and had so far processed more than 200 pets.

He emphasised the importance of pet owners having the correct documentation, including a signed declaration that their animal was free of ticks and worms. If in doubt, Army families in Germany should first ring the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Pets Helpline on 0044 (0)870 2411710; or visit their website at www.maff.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/



On guard: A Green Jacket escorts distraught Kosovar Albanians in Kosovska Mitrovica Picture: Wendy Sumerell

Their arrival was seen as a breakthrough by both ethnic groups, which appear to have faith in the even-handed approach adopted by British soldiers in Kosovo. Greenjackets were cheered by Albanians as they patrolled the streets.

Although the patrolling was fairly routine, British troops came under fire on a number of occasions and twice returned fire. The 2 RGJ reinforcements were due to return to Pristina as this edition went to press.

IN BRIEF

- Defence Secretary Geoffrey Hoon and his American opposite number, William Cohen, have signed a declaration of principles designed to improve defence equipment and industrial co-operation between the UK and the US.

- Prince Felipe de Borbón y Grecia, heir

to the Spanish throne, looked behind the scenes at the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment's Hyde Park Barracks in London last month.

- Gurkha trainees welcomed Gen Sir Sam Cowan, Commandant Brigade of Gurkhas, to their purpose-built new home at



Last hurrah: A snow-covered Challenger 1 of the QDG patrols the Kosovo-Serbia boundary. Now the Scots DG and their Challenger 2s have taken over Picture: Mike Weston

New Challenger faces real thing

CHALLENGER 1, the British Army's main battle tank since 1983, has completed its final operational tour.

And its much-heralded replacement – Challenger 2 – has begun its first.

Challenger 1 saw its final tour out with The Queen's Dragoon Guards, part of 19 Mechanised Brigade, based at Podujevo in Kosovo. The QDG's battle tanks became a familiar sight while patrolling up to the boundary with Serbia.

Brigade assets included HQ and Signals, 5 Regiment RA, 38 Engineer Regiment, the 1st Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment, a squadron from 8 Regiment RLC, the Armoured Field Ambulance, and other support units.

Relieving 19 Brigade at the end of last month were units of 7 Armoured Brigade, whose Royal Scots Dragoon Guards were soon patrolling in their new Challenger 2s, the famous red Desert Rat brigade badge prominent on their livery. Joining the Scots DG – the

first armoured regiment to be equipped with Challenger 2 – were the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, 31 Engineer Regiment, 19 Regiment RA and essential support services.

Challenger 1, developed from the Centurion-Chieftain line, was originally planned for service with the Iranian Army.

After the Iranian revolution, the project was taken over by the British Army and the Challenger 1, which went into service in 1983, was the final result.

FINEST HOUR

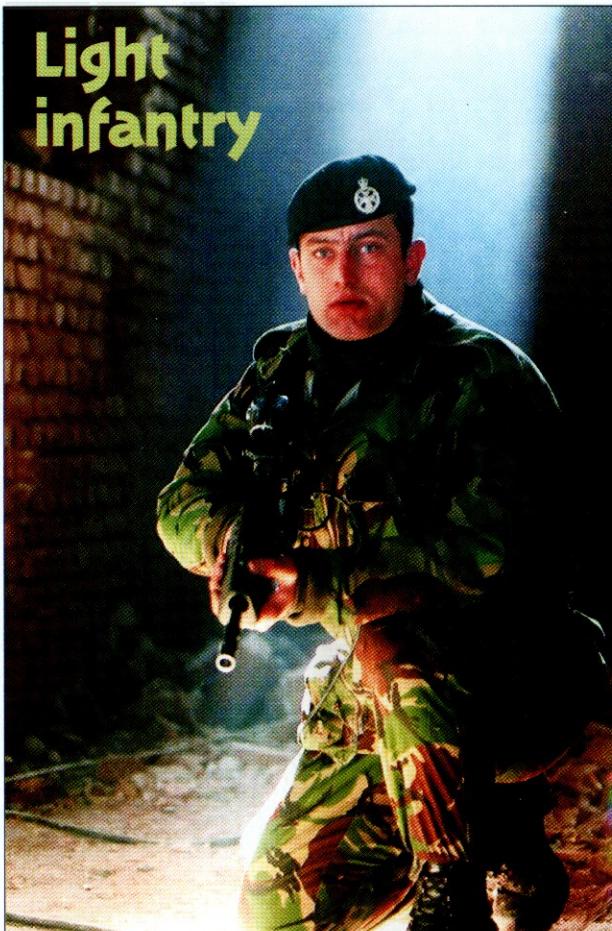
Its finest hour arrived when the tanks of 7 and 4 Brigades broke through to Kuwait City during the Gulf War.

Although the hull is based on its predecessor, Challenger 2 boasts more than 150 improvements, resulting in a tank offering greatly enhanced reliability, a totally redesigned turret, better weapons and defence, and a new engine management system.



• Richard Hendron, left, from Ealing, is off to Africa with the Army as one of its Operation Kenya winners. Richard, 19, is on his way after answering questions on the Army and passing a selection test at ATR Pirbright, Surrey.

Catterick last month for the formal opening of the £7.5m Bhanbhagta Gurung Block, named after a Gurkha rifleman who won the Victoria Cross in 1945. Training for Gurkha soldiers recently moved to North Yorkshire from Church Crookham in Hampshire.



In the frame: Rfn Vinny Coupe of 2 RGJ is caught in a shaft of dusty sunlight filtering into the ruins of a Serbian church in the centre of Pristina, Kosovo. Picture: Cpl Jon Molyneux

Who's a brave boy?



Don't medal with me: British Army tracker dog **Max**, a six-year-old German shepherd, has been awarded the Nato medal and a special citation for service in Kosovo following a six-month tour of duty in the Balkans. Also receiving a medal at their base at Sennelager was Max's handler, Cpl **Steve Edgeler**, also pictured. Dog and handler are members of 1 Defence Animal Support Unit.

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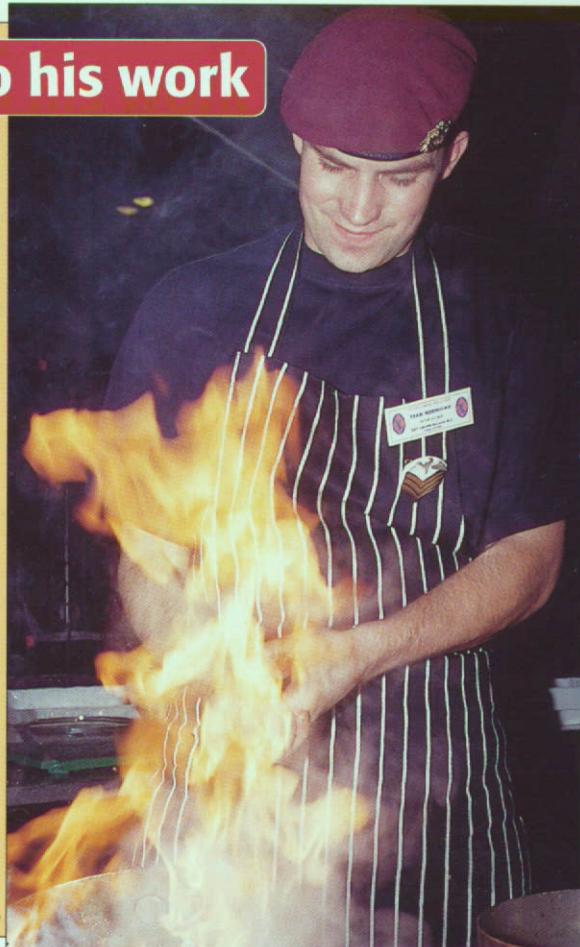
People, places, events

Warming to his work

SGT Callum McLeod, a member of a scratch team entered by Headquarters 145 (Home Counties) Brigade, flambées a pan of mushrooms during Field 2000 at Earls Court. The competition, involving the cream of Service chefs in ten teams, was staged during the international food and catering Hotelympia 2000 exhibition. Cooking on standard RAF field catering equipment, Service chefs produced à la carte restaurant dishes which were eaten by 100 fee-paying customers.

The HQ 145 Bde team, calling themselves the Roe-bucks, took part at the last minute after another entry dropped out. Winners of the competition were Catering Support Regiment RLC from Grantham. Other Army entries included the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, 47 Regiment RA, 4 General Support Regiment RLC and 27 Transport Regiment RLC.

Picture: Graeme Main



Don't forget... March 8 is Army No Smoking Day

Cyprus medics assist Troodos crash victims

ARMY medics and firemen in Cyprus were among the first emergency services to arrive at the scene of a coach accident in which six passengers died.

When Cpl Jim Harvey QARANC, the duty medic, and a Defence Fire Services (DFS) appliance under Leading Firefighter Costas Polycarpou reached the site of the crash near Platres in the Troodos Mountains they found casualties strewn across the road over a distance of 100m.

The small coach, containing 36 people, had come to rest on its side after colliding with a concrete crash barrier and sliding

down the road. Working with civil emergency services, they helped to extricate casualties from the wreckage and rushed a seriously injured casualty to hospital in Limassol, 32km away.

As the light faded, thermal imaging equipment carried on the DFS fire engine was used to search the surrounding area for missing passengers.

Medical teams at the Princess Mary Hospital stood by to assist, as did 84 Squadron RAF at Akrotiri. Six passengers died at the scene and three more were badly hurt.

IN BRIEF

- David Roberts, who has held senior posts in the Welsh Office and National Health Service, will head the British Forces Germany Health Service from April 3.
- Soldier, in common with 97 per cent of units in the MoD, has received Investors in People accreditation.

- Senior US Army staff officers from the Friedberg-based 1st (US) Armoured Division

visited 7 Armoured Brigade at Sennelager. They were hosted by Maj Gen Reddy Watt, Commander 1 (UK) Armoured Division. The US brigade is due to follow the Desert Rats into Kosovo in June and were eager to learn how 7 Armd Bde were preparing for the peace-keeping deployment.



US plans major Korean War 50th programme

A SERIES of major events to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Korean War is to be held in the United States, starting with a national memorial day concert on May 30 in Washington and running on until July, 2003.

British veterans of the conflict who fought with US troops or supported them are invited to contact Clive Evans at Downton House, Valley Road, Tarrant Keynston, Blandford, Dorset DT11 9JE (tel/fax 01258 455379) or Lt Col Fisher or Lt Col King at the Department of Defense, 50th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Committee, 1213 Jefferson Davis Hwy, Suite 702, Arlington, VA22202-4303 (tel (703) 604 0823; fax (703) 604 0833).

Dishing out medals



Picture: Chris Fletcher

On a plate: The new occupants of Howe Barracks on the outskirts of Canterbury paraded to receive medals for service in Kosovo. Soldiers serving with the 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment, then based at Catterick, spent four months in the Balkans as part of the initial Nato-led Kosovo Protection Force (KFOR) under Lt Gen Sir Mike Jackson. The battalion later moved south to Kent as part of the new Colchester-based 16 (Air Assault) Brigade.

- Australian part-time soldier Maj Justin Bessell, left, is spending a year with Leicester-based 222 Field Ambulance while working as a surgeon at the city's general hospital. He is hoping weekends spent with 222's combat ambulance crews will prepare him for a tour of duty with the Australian Army's 2 Field Hospital in East Timor next year.

Picture: Gareth Griffiths

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People, places, events



Great to be here: Soldiers from the 1 PWRR Corps of Pipes and Drums newly-arrived at their barracks close to Salisbury Plain. From left to right are Drummers James Smith, Jason Mancey-Jones, Malcolm Shotton, Neil Bromage, Stephen Tallon and Mark Stevens

PWRR battalions link at Tidworth

BOTH Regular battalions of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment are based in Tidworth following the arrival in Wiltshire of 650 soldiers of the 1st Battalion.

Previously based at Canterbury, 1 PWRR has moved to the edge of Salisbury Plain on a six-year posting. Its sister battalion, the 2nd, has been stationed at Tidworth for more than 12 years.

The relocation coincides with 1 PWRR equipping with Warrior infantry fighting vehicles for the first time. It is now preparing to deploy to Kosovo in August for six months.



Real challenge: Lt Col Stephen Kilpatrick

Lt Col Stephen Kilpatrick, CO 1 PWRR, said: "It is going to be a real challenge changing from the air-landed role which we did for five years with 5 Airborne Brigade to the armoured infantry role. It will probably take us four or five months to get used to the idea and think of ourselves as an armoured battalion.

"We are delighted to be in Tidworth and it is nice to have everything on our doorstep. The soldiers are really looking forward to working with Warrior and we have some time to prepare before going to Kosovo."

IN BRIEF

• An appeal for relatives of a soldier who died more than 80 years ago has been launched by the MoD. It follows identification of the remains of 22/1306 Pte George Nugent of the 22nd Battalion (Tyneside Scottish), Northumberland Fusiliers, who is believed to have died on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, July 1, 1916. His remains were found near Lochnagar Crater, La Boiselle, France.

• Two thousand officers and soldiers of The Parachute Regiment and senior members of the Armed Forces who have served with Airborne Forces since their inception in 1940 took part in a special service at St Paul's Cathedral. The service combined a celebration of the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of Christ with thanksgiving for the 60th anniversary of Airborne Forces.

Docklands alert



Gently does it: Lt Andrew Clarke, right, of 101 (London) Engineer Regiment (EOD) (V) measures the tail fin of a dummy unexploded bomb in the Docklands area during Exercise Make Safe. Territorial Army EOD officers tackled bombs in several key locations in and around the capital. Picture: Capt Jim Gallagher

Building bridges



Driving force: German MP Sylvia Bonitz, whose constituency is Hameln, is given a driving lesson on an M3 bridging rig by Spr Christopher Downey during a visit to Hameln-based 28 Engineer Regiment. She later manoeuvred the M3 on the River Weser.

Royal Scots chill out

Colchester soldiers discover the hard way that winter in Canadian Rockies focuses the mind

Report: Simon Smith
Pictures: Chris Fletcher

A HARDY band of Scottish troops have put their winter warfare skills to the test in temperatures of minus 32C in the shadow of the Canadian Rockies.

Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) were the first to sample Exercise Snowshoe, a new six-week training package staged throughout the province of Alberta.

Experts from the Canadian Army were



Ready for the off: First steps in cross-country skiing

drafted in to teach 110 troops the specialist arts of surviving and fighting in extreme winter weather. The troops, from the battalion's A Company, were taught ski mountaineering and ski touring, how to build improvised shelters and how to tow toboggans.

Exercise Snowshoe was centred around Camp Wainwright, but was rounded off with a week of adventurous training in the picturesque foothills of the Rockies.

Company commander Maj George Lowder said the conditions proved a tough test. "This type of training was completely new to us – we were the first British troops to try this exercise, so it was a very steep learning curve."

"But the enthusiasm of the soldiers was tremendous, because it was so different from the normal infantry training we are used to. We had no knowledge base to fall back on, but I'm impressed with how the troops tackled the challenge."

Snowshoe also proved to be a learning experience for the Canadian instructors, who had never before been so heavily involved in a British exercise.

Sgt Kim Wyszynski said the Colchester-based troops seemed keen to learn and adapted to the conditions well.

"Learning to survive in these temperatures is a skill in itself," he said. "Without the knowledge it is impossible to fight



Snow road: Troops of 1 RS get to grips with military cross-country skiing in Alberta. They learned to live and fight in the very hostile environment

effectively. But they picked up the basics and should now be able to fit in their infantry skills around that to become efficient in winter warfare.

FALLING OVER

"Skiing lessons were particularly enjoyable as we had the whole range of abilities. There was plenty of falling over at first, but overall everyone performed well."

Despite the harsh conditions, Snowshoe got the thumbs up from the troops. Sgt Stephen McGrory said: "I have some experience of skiing but this training was

totally different. Overcoming the cold made things so much more difficult, and fighting in those conditions would be a hard job. But winter warfare is an excellent skill to have . . . I just hope I don't have to use it for real."

Cpl Thomas Kellie said: "We began to enjoy the exercise more as we gradually got used to the cold. This was the first time I had tried skiing and it's a lot harder than I thought."

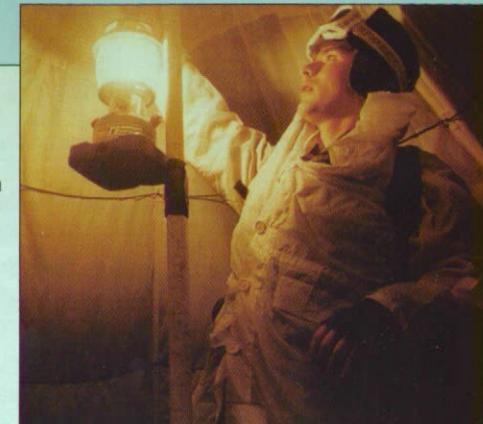
LCpl Barry Fraser, a battalion medic, did not have to call on his skills. "Apart from a couple of minor cold-related

injuries, I had a relatively quiet time," he said.

In a message to other British Army units lined up to tackle Snowshoe, Maj Lowder said: "It is a super opportunity to train junior commanders in low-level leadership and command-and-control in a testing environment.

"There is also a chance for the soldiers to thoroughly enjoy all aspects of the exercise, including adventure training and in-country stand-down. It has considerable value in terms of recruitment and retention."

Blowing hot and cold: Pte John Edmond, a battalion piper, tries a tune at minus 32C



Night light: Capt Ross Hunter, right, prepares to camp out on a freezing night at Fort Wainwright



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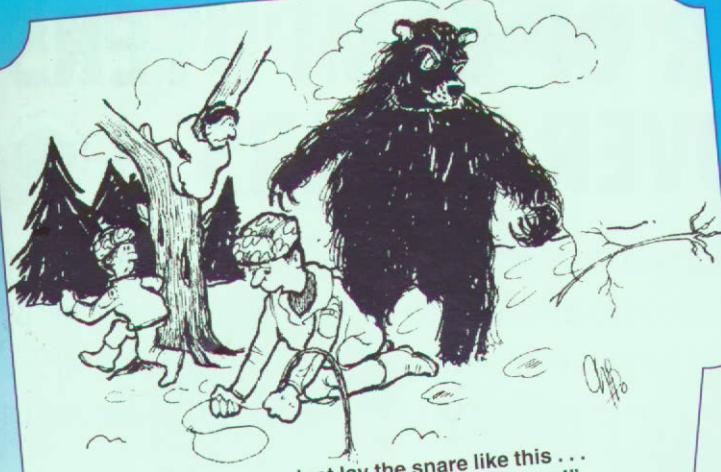


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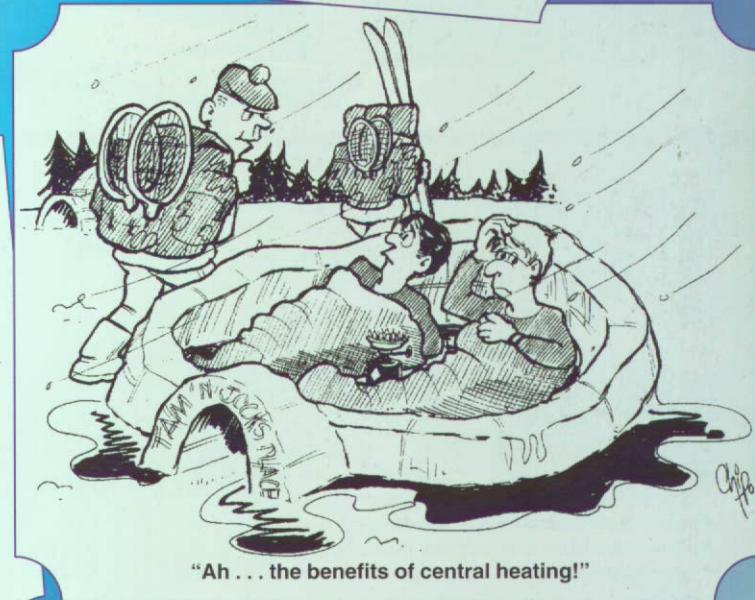
Chuckle with Chip



"Then you just lay the snare like this... and wait for your next meal to arrive!"

Capers in the cold

(With apologies to the Royal Scots in Canada)



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Return to Ladysmith



Healing the wounds of Wagon Hill

A hundred years ago the Boers and the British killed each other at Ladysmith. When 40 officers and NCOs of the Devon and Dorsets visited the South African town for the centenary, they received a far more friendly welcome

Report: Graham Bound
Pictures: Mike Weston

"DEVONS, can you do it?" Standing atop Wagon Hill at one end of the fortified ridge above Ladysmith, 40 of today's soldiers, the regimental descendants of those who fought here, imagined the desperation with which that challenge had been issued.

For almost 12 hours the exhausted colonel of the Imperial Light Horse had been leading his men, along with a small number of Royal Engineers, Gordon Highlanders, King's Royal Rifles and naval gunners, in a desperate attempt to hold off a savage Boer attack.

Now 1 Devons had arrived, and, by God, he needed them.

Most of the Boers had been driven off, but 250 determined enemy were holding the edge of the small plateau and it

Lt Col Jon Watson, left, Col A J Jordaan, centre, and Regimental Colonel Maj Gen Bryan Dutton meet on the ground their forebears once fought over 100 years ago

seemed they were about to take it. If they did, they would pour fire down into Ladysmith and, almost certainly, capture the town.

"We'll give it a go," replied Lt Col Park, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, The Devonshire Regiment, who had speed-marched under the baking sun from their own positions four miles away. His words may sound like feigned nonchalance, but looking at his ragged troops, the colonel's doubts must have been all too real.

The action that followed was impetuous, almost suicidal. A sudden change in the weather, typical of the time of year even today, gave the British the chance they needed. Storm clouds suddenly unleashed vicious hail, rain, thunder and lightning. With the weather driving into Boer faces, the troops had their chance

● Turn to Page 20

Battle turned by cold steel

From Page 19

and Lt Col Park ordered an immediate charge.

There had been no time for planning or reconnaissance. Three companies of Devons, 180 men (companies were smaller in those days) simply charged at the Boer positions, firing their Enfields and with bayonets fixed.

The Boers, most of whom were from the battle-tested and tough Harrismith Commando, were only briefly hampered by the weather, and quickly began pouring accurate Mauser fire into the British. Seventeen Devons fell dead and another 34 were injured, some to die later.

It may have been the sight of approach-

ing bayonets which turned the tide – the Boers had a particular abhorrence of cold steel. Legend has it that one of their leaders attempted to rally his men with a cry of “Ti Got!” (To God!). This was met with a negative response in Afrikaans, roughly translated as “I’m out of here!”

The Boers were pushed back, but those on the flanks continued sniping at the Devons. Desperate for supporting fire from the nearby Imperial Light Horse, Lt James Masterson dashed across the open plateau to request it, despite being hit in both legs. In so doing he won the regiment’s first Victoria Cross.

When the fighting died down, there were more than 400 Boer and British bodies on the ridge, the dreadful residue of a bloody day.

Standing on the stony, barren and surprisingly small battlefield across which a previous generation of men from their towns and villages had charged, the visiting officers and NCOs asked themselves if they would have been able to do the same. It was awe-inspiring.

HALF-STARVED

As the battlefield guides, 1 D and D’s Maj Tim Saunders and local historian Brian Kaighin, reminded them, the Devons of 1900 were ragged, suffering from disease and half-starved after three months of siege. So great was their suffering that when, two months later, Ladysmith was eventually relieved by Gen Buller’s forces, the Devons were formally granted “permission to collapse”.

Standing near the point where Digby-Jones stopped the rout, Capt Quaite held his colleagues enthralled as he told the story of the engineer hero.

Infantrymen who were helping the sappers to build the gun pits had left their weapons some distance away while they laboured and were caught virtually defenceless when the Boers began their night attack.

The British began a rapid retreat but Digby-Jones had other ideas. Brandishing a pistol, he ordered the men to recover their rifles and fight. They did so and held the Boers off long enough for reinforcements to arrive.

Digby-Jones led several similar desperate defences as the day wore on, finally meeting the charismatic leader of the Boer commando, De Villiers, in a fatal engagement. Truth is that no one knows exactly what happened, but many believe that the two men shot each other dead.



Rendezvous with history: Capt Peter Quaite RE returned to a site of sapper glory



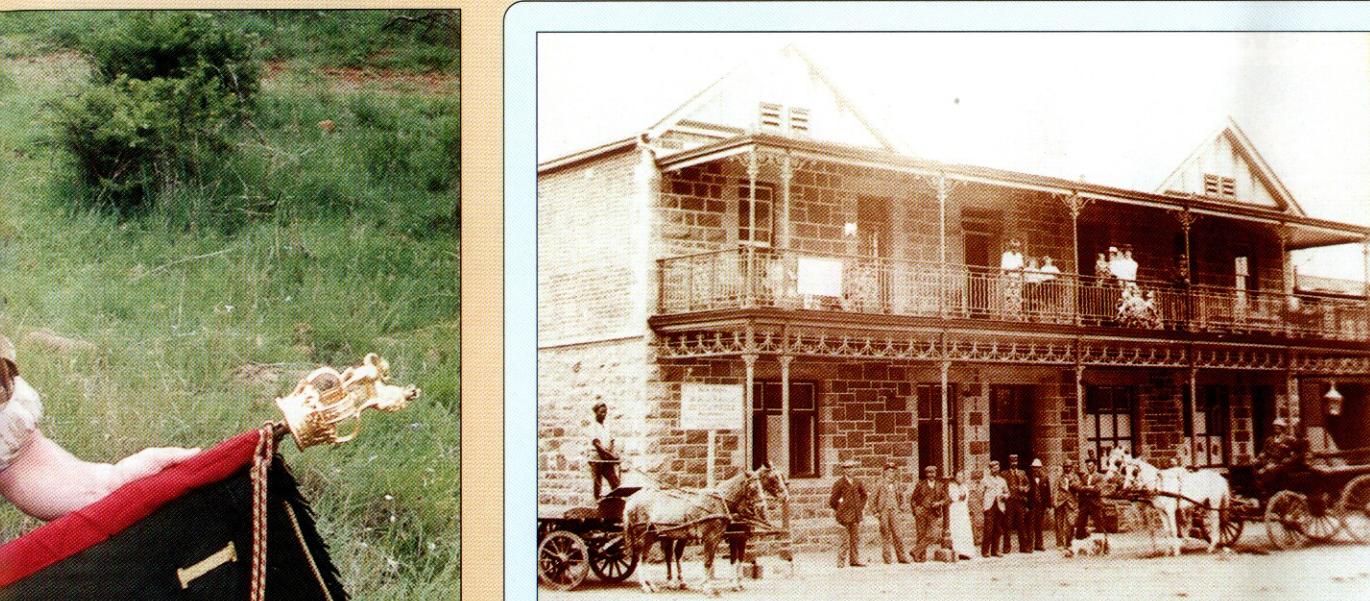
Going home: With Ladysmith battle honours present, the D and D colours returned to Wagon Hill

the leader of a unit which still treasures a Boer flag stained with Boer blood from Wagon Hill.

That evening, during a combined officers’ and sergeants’ mess dinner at the Royal Hotel in Ladysmith, the wounds of Wagon Hill were healed.

Maj Gen Bryan Dutton, Colonel of the British regiment, spoke first. “Poignancy is,” he said, “an inadequate word for the occasion.” He spoke of the forebears of today’s Harrismith Commando presenting the Devons with a formidable task and expressed an “abiding respect for those Boer soldiers”.

“We have come to understand what brave men did,” said the general. “They fought with commitment and courage and we pay respects to both sides.”



Watering-hole for war reporters: Ladysmith’s historic Royal Hotel as it was in 1900

Siege hotel is venue for a reconciliation

HEROIC hotels are part of the fabric of any besieged city or town. During the siege of Sarajevo, the world’s journalists and United Nations staff made for the Holiday Inn. In Stanley during the Falklands War, it was the Upland Goose.

Back in 1900, when about 11,000 British and Imperial troops, the Devons among them, held off the Boers, Ladysmith’s Royal Hotel provided a little oasis of civilisation. Teacups rattled from the shell fire but the residents still dressed for dinner.

The Royal, opened in 1880, became popular among the many war correspondents. It was the perfect front-line base. You could be out with the troops in the morning and back in the lounge having a spot of tiffin by four. When Gen Redvers Buller broke through to relieve the town, he, too, stayed there.

PERFECT SETTING

A hundred years on, the Royal was the perfect setting for the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment’s Wagon Hill dinner; an historic event during which the British soldiers met and made friends with their one-time enemies.

But the D and Ds were lucky that the hotel survived to the year 2000. One corner of the building was blown away by a shell from a Boer “Long Tom”, and in a fluke incident, a shell entered through the corrugated iron roof and bounced down the main



To brave men: Maj Gen Bryan Dutton leads a toast to Boer and Brit heroes

staircase before exiting by the main door and blowing the legs off one of the town’s most eccentric residents, a Dr Starke.

The physician, who had become trapped in Ladysmith while visiting the area to research a book on local birds, died a little later. It is said that his last words were “look after my cat”.

These days the Royal is little changed. It is rather bigger and the rooms have colour TVs, but the slightly worn colonial atmosphere remains.

And Dr Starke is not forgotten. A small brass plaque on the front doorstep marks the spot where the unfortunate medic met his destiny.

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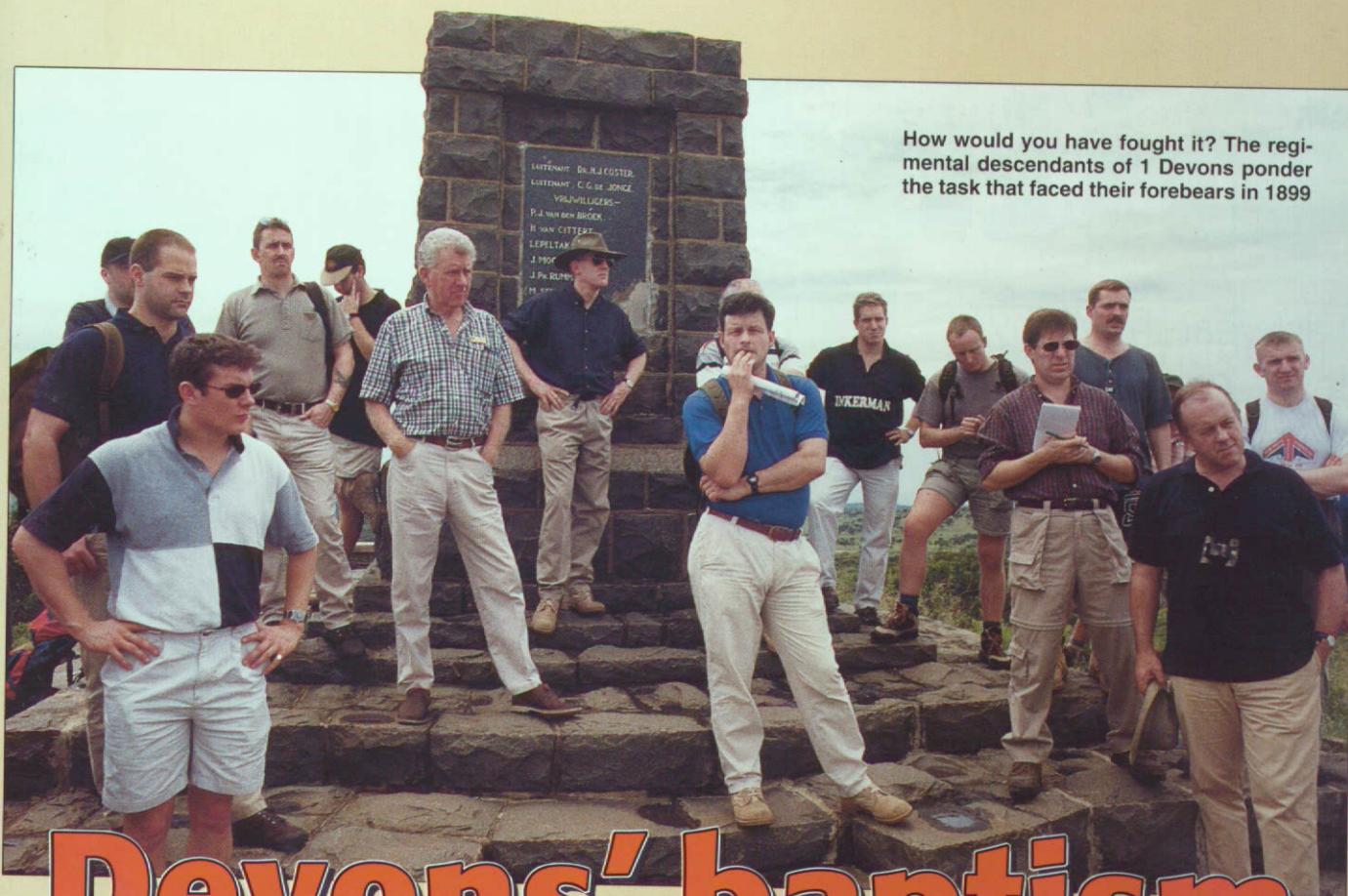
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Return to Ladysmith



How would you have fought it? The regimental descendants of 1 Devons ponder the task that faced their forebears in 1899

Devons' baptism of fire

THE DEVONS first came under Boer fire about ten miles outside Ladysmith in the days before the siege. Eight companies had been ordered to "fix" the enemy, who held two low hills dominating the railway line and other approaches to Ladysmith.

Fought with the Manchester Regiment, the Gordon Highlanders and the 5th Dragoons, the battle of Elandslaagte was swift and successful, and for the Devons, at least, virtually bloodless. It began in the middle of the afternoon and was all over by dusk.

The battle was notable for several reasons. It was one of the first engagements in which British soldiers broke from their rigid tradition of advancing in close order. Knowing that Boer marksmen were waiting for just such an opportunity, the soldiers were ordered to advance in open order, making use of what little cover was available.

It was one of the last occasions when cavalry used their lances in action. As the Boers retreated, the 5th Dragoons were ordered to attack. They charged among the fleeing men, skewering many with their lances.

The tactic seems barbaric now, but in those days it was an accepted method of fighting. Nevertheless, deploying the lancers was a serious public relations gaffe. The Boers were horrified and so was much of the rest of the world. Sympathy for the British cause suffered badly.

Standing at the memorial on top of the

Elandslaagte hills, the D and D's CO, Lt Col Jon Watson, asked his men how, with the benefit of hindsight, they would have taken the feature. "Do it at night," came the unanimous answer. It was true: troops

in those days seemed to have an aversion to fighting in the dark, although later on, during the siege, they would mount night raids on Boer guns.

And there were other suggestions: indirect fire, deception, infiltration, cut off the lines of retreat . . .

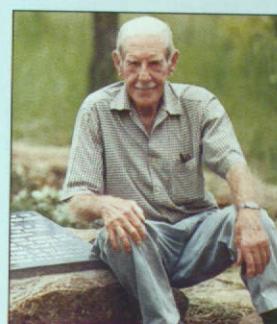
Never mind: they won, and they learned lessons. Elandslaagte and the other battles of the Boer War taught the Army much about modern warfare – information that would be put to use in the First World War.

Memories of Elandslaagte

NO ONE living today at Elandslaagte can remember the battle that took place there. But one elderly man, ex-Senator Charles Henderson, pictured right, knows all about the impact that the Boer invasion of Natal had on his family.

"There will be no war," said Natal's President, but Charles's father did not believe it. He rounded up his cattle and drove them into Ladysmith to sell.

He had hardly gone before the German Legion (a group of Boer sympathisers) arrived on the farm. The foreigners killed an ox, dug up some vegetables, and



were just about to eat when a message arrived saying that a train carrying whisky and food had been captured nearby.

Alcohol seemed to dilute the animosity, and that night

the German Legion, local British farmers and workers from the nearby coal mines, drank and laughed into the early hours. They sang each other's national anthems and toasted Queen and Kaiser. "It was a strange occasion," recalled Charles Henderson. "A few days later they were killing each other."

Charles's father spent the next few years fighting with the British and endured much of the siege in Ladysmith.

"We repeated the party to mark the 100th anniversary," Charles recalled. "But we didn't get quite so legless."

Instructors go back to basics

Last year the Army lost a quarter of its recruits during basic training. Now the instructors are being sent to trainer school

Report: Anthony Stone
Pictures: Graeme Main

EVERY soldier remembers basic training, some more fondly than others. Maj Peter Kennedy is unlikely to forget his.

"My platoon sergeant punched me for smiling and knocked a tooth out. He punched me just after the corporal had hit me with his rifle butt. I stood to attention."

That parade ground assault happened more than 20 years ago. It was wrong then and it is wrong now, but it would be naive to believe such incidents no longer happened.

Beastings and physical abuse might be rarer than central heating in Kosovo, but it's not what people join the Army for. Such behaviour is ALWAYS totally unacceptable. The Army admits problems exist and is committed to doing something about them.

RIGHT AND WRONG

The Initial Training Group Instructor School in Lichfield, Staffordshire, was set up last year to train the soldiers who train the recruits. The officer-in-charge has first-hand experience of the right way and the wrong way to treat soldiers-to-be. Step forward Maj Kennedy.

Some regiments and corps, such as the Guards, the Paras and the Royal Engineers, already carried out their own recruit instructor training, but this is the first all-Army training camp for potential recruit instructors.

"The vast majority of instructors training recruits are doing a very good job," said Maj Kennedy. "We want to make them even better and more consistent. We put considerable effort into helping students who are struggling, just as we'd expect them to help recruits."

Losing recruits is an expensive busi-



New deal: Maj Peter Kennedy, above left, and WO1 Brian Pratt greet potential instructors

Grid reference: Sgt Steve Parsons, 1 Cheshire, left, CSGt Robert Stoddart, 1 Hldrs, and SSgt Steve MacLaren, RS, brush up their map-reading skills

All together: Halfway through the five-mile training run, right, at the end of the course's first week. Potential instructors need a high level of fitness

ness. Last year 16,000 started basic training and about 12,000 completed the course. Many of those who left were "risk" candidates – young men and women who were too immature, physically or mentally, to make it in uniform. Others were of high quality but decided Army life was just not for them.

From April initial selection will be even more rigorous, weeding out the "risks" so instructors can spend more time on the

stronger candidates. "Young people join up with promises of a career that offers education, adventure, challenge, excitement, travel and comradeship," said Maj Kennedy. "We have got this incredible organisation with a reputation of being one of the best armies in the world. Yet 4,000 people left last year even before they had finished their training." Finding out why and doing something about it is the school's job.

If a recruit quits after giving his best shot, satisfied that the instructors were firm but fair, he will do so with a positive attitude. He might even give the Army another go the following year.

"If on the other hand, he says 'I was boasted, I couldn't do anything right, they were negative and bloody awful, and I am not going to go back', he probably won't," said Maj Kennedy. "And the 20 people he talks to will be put off joining."

Lichfield is setting new standards in instructor training. Feedback from the school's customers, five Army training regiments and two junior entry colleges, has been positive.

The key is something Maj Kennedy calls "experiential learning". It is best summed up with the phrase: "Tell me and



I shall forget, show me and I will remember, let me do it and I will understand."

What this means is that the instructors go back to basics and are treated as if they have just joined up. They live in recruit accommodation, eat in the cookhouse and march around camp. If they make mistakes or are late on parade, they may find themselves doing press-ups.

"We tell them that if they don't like the way they are being treated to think about their recruits," said Maj Kennedy. "We say: 'If you don't want to be awarded ten press-ups and made to look stupid for a

minor problem, then whenever a recruit makes a mistake, don't immediately think of punishing him. There might be a good reason for it. Think about how you would feel in that position.'"

It is the same thinking behind making instructors do out-of-hours training. Out of the blue they are given ten minutes' drill in the dark. Instructors soon get the message that unauthorised training tires out the recruits.

Recently there have been several TV programmes showing life in the raw for recruits. The best-known, the BBC's *Soldier*

Qualities needed for ideal trainers

■ Instructors should remember their own training. Was there a particular corporal who inspired them? That should be the role model to follow.

■ Similarly, if there was an instructor who was remembered for being a complete idiot, think what made him like that and try to avoid the same mistakes.

■ It is important that instructors are firm but fair, but with no hint of friendliness.

■ While instructors need to be approachable, too much familiarity can breed contempt. A balance must be struck.

■ Instructors must be professional. Their own standards must be very high at all times.

■ They must demand the right standard of recruits – neither too high nor too low.

■ Instructors need to be flexible, not in the standards required but in how to achieve those standards.

■ They must show a human face, so recruits can go to them with problems, believing that they will understand.

To Be, caused uproar when corporals were filmed swearing at recruits.

That is an aspect of basic training that has been jumped upon at Lichfield. "If you scream and shout at recruits they will just think what a complete idiot you are and switch off. And it switches their parents off even more," said Maj Kennedy.

"The policy is no gratuitous swearing, although we accept that people do swear. We swear because we passionately believe in what we are doing and saying."

"We believe that is acceptable. Otherwise some corporals could not open their mouths at all. What we do say is, don't swear in every sentence."

The instructor school is not about making recruit-training soft. Students who doubt that are soon convinced by the pace of the five-mile run towards the end of the first week.

Times change and with them the methods of moulding a new generation of soldiers. But it is the methods that have changed, not the standards. The end result is the same as it always has been... the best-trained and most professional Army in the world.



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On target, off road

Lex-Army rally team revs up for the new motoring season and puts fun back into driver training

Words: Anthony Stone
Pictures: Steve Dock

ARMY training should be fun, said Lt Col Bob Birrell, executive secretary of the British Army Motoring Association, his voice almost drowned out by the sound of excited engines.

Drivers and navigators competing for a place on the Lex-Army rally team took his advice to heart and had to fight hard not to break into wide grins as they belted round the course at a test track in Bagshot, Surrey.

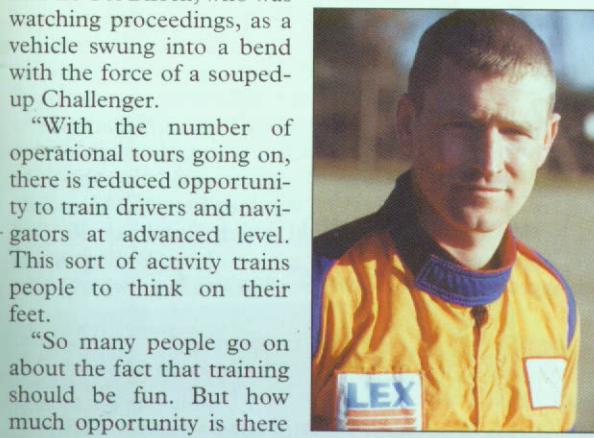
"This is continuation advanced training for drivers and vehicle commanders," said Lt Col Birrell, who was watching proceedings, as a vehicle swung into a bend with the force of a souped-up Challenger.

"With the number of operational tours going on, there is reduced opportunity to train drivers and navigators at advanced level. This sort of activity trains people to think on their feet."

"So many people go on about the fact that training should be fun. But how much opportunity is there for real 'fun training' when everyone is so busy?"

"These are the sort of vehicles we go to war in and these are the vehicles we train in. We won't be going to war in a rally car."

Through safe and skilled driving and cross-country events, the BAMA provides a competitive environment in which soldiers can extract the most from their vehicles. Conditions on the test track imitated



Captain: Cpl Mark Simmons

poorly-maintained surfaces commonly found in Bosnia and there was a similar lack of street signs. Navigators have to stay switched on, as a momentary lapse in concentration could result in the ultimate off-road experience.

Selected from the best, the Lex-Army team comprises six crews chosen from the three Services who regularly take part in the BAMA night-navigation exercise championships.

The 12 rounds of this are held in the United Kingdom and Germany and attract up to 120 vehicles. The emphasis is on driving and maintenance skills as well as accurate navigation over difficult terrain, all to a controlled timescale.

The vehicles belong to the crews' own units and are available for normal military duties. They are mechanically identical, the 1.7-tonne Land Rover Defender being powered by the standard diesel engine. The only exceptions are the competition-related safety modifications, such as the roll-cage, harnesses, fire suppressant systems and intercoms that are necessary to

compete in the Lex-Army rally events.

Team manager, Maj Alan Paramore, RLC, who as a driver dominated Army rallying throughout the 1990s, said: "What the Defenders may lack in outright speed they more than compensate for in reliability and stamina."

The Lex-Army rally team is gearing up for the first event of the season, the Vauxhall Rally of Wales, which is also the first round of the Mobil One British Rally Championships.

NEWCOMERS

In recent years the event has proved to be a steep learning curve for the newcomers. This year's team captain, Cpl Mark Simmons, from the Defence School of Transport, Leconfield, finished last season with a win on top of the world at Rally Reykjavik and is hoping to continue where he left off in Wales.

The squad is hoping for a repeat of last season's success which saw the team honoured with Mobil Oil's Best Turned-Out Team Award in the British Open Rally championship. To win this they saw off challengers from professional manufacturers with million-pound budgets.

This year's team will be just as classily turned-out, the driving and navigation just as professional. And, no doubt, the fun factor will be just as high.

Key allowances

Top tips on what you can claim

Disturbance Allowance

To help with incidental expenses when you move on posting. Available for moves from one home to another for married and some single personnel.

▲ Top tip: Some singles are entitled if they live out... and it's worth £824.

House sale and purchase refund of legal expenses

Aims to reimburse some of your legal and associated costs of the combined sale and purchase of a principal private residence on posting.

▲ Top tip: Also applies to letting management fees, worth up to £5,000.

Boarding School Allowance (BSA)

Provides some of the funding to assist with continuity of children's education at approved fee-paying schools.

School Children's Visits (SCV)

To assist with travel costs associated with visiting children away at school.

Longer Separated Service Allowance (LSSA)

Provides some compensation for the disadvantages of separation. Available to married and single personnel.

▲ Top tip: If you have had LSSA for more than 260 days in a two-year period you will receive a recently-boosted LSSA bonus of £1,000 and a further £1,000 when you reach 365 days.

Married Unaccompanied Service Allowance (MUSA)

Compensates for the disadvantages of serving permanently outside the theatre in which your family lives (but cannot be claimed concurrently with LSSA, GYH(P) or GYH(D)).

Insurance Allowance

A refund of transit insurance costs for your belongings when you move them on an authorised move on posting or detachment (including operations) which does not attract Disturbance Allowance.

Missed Meals Payment (MMP)

Claim if you pay food charges and for duty reasons are unable to obtain a meal from Service sources and have paid to eat elsewhere.

▲ Top tip: You can claim up to £3.73 a day if you live in and miss meals for duty reasons.

Refund of Food and Accommodation (F&A) Charges

If you pay standard F&A charges and are away on field conditions on ops, exercises or adventurous training for more than two days, your charges will be refunded.



It's your money, so use it... or lose it

For one reason or another soldiers are failing to claim all the allowances to which they are entitled. It's an omission which can have a major impact on the pocket

Report: John Elliott
Pictures: Steve Dock

SOLDIERS are turning their backs on millions of pounds worth of expenses to which they are entitled, and the reason is a mixture of ignorance and apathy.

For example, many young soldiers, it seems, simply do not know that when they are away from their duty station for more than five hours and are not provided with meals they may claim a subsistence allowance. Yet the Daily Rate of Subsistence Allowance means they can put in for £4.25 (for over five hours), rising to £9.30 if they are away for over ten hours and £13.55 for more than 12 hours (if they had an 0700 start).

Some of what goes unclaimed is down

to soldiers not reckoning it is worth the hassle of filling in forms, according to Maj Leona Jones of HQ Land G1. "If someone is away from base only occasionally they may not bother to put in a claim. But it all adds up. Some young soldiers are not fully briefed on what they can claim."

Her branch hopes to rectify that by making sure every soldier and officer has his or her own copy of a new pamphlet outlining the key allowances. And the message is: If you don't know, ask your regimental admin staff. They can provide details and rates.

It is estimated that more than £30 million – a staggering amount – is available via Standard Learning Credits to Service men and women taking external courses and exams. Every one may claw back up to 80 per cent of course fees, up to a maximum of £175 a year. Whether you are reading for an Open University degree or going to night school to learn how to become a part-time aromatherapist, there are funds available to you. Yet Maj Jones says only 2.6 per cent of soldiers claimed Standard Learning Credits in 1999.

While many allowances are automatic, those that are not attract an uneven response – which means that some soldiers are substantially better off than others. One, it seems, which causes some confusion, is the (take a deep breath) House Sale and Purchase Refund of Legal Expenses allowance, which also



Joanna passes go and collects

You own property: Cpl Joanna Jenkins AGC(SPS) sold her home at Larkhill, where she was involved in phase two training with 24 Battery RA, and bought a new property at Calne, Wiltshire following a posting to RAF Lyneham.

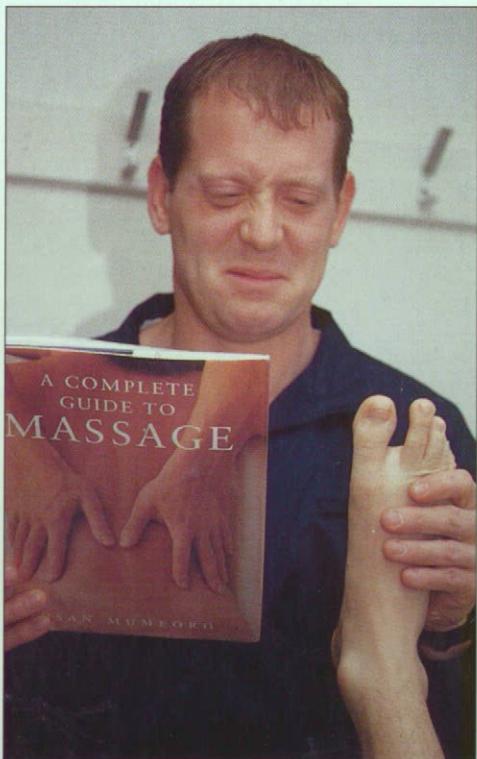
She immediately claimed Disturbance Allowance, removals and a refund of legal fees incurred over the sale of her house and the new purchase, which all added up to a very handy £5,000.

Cpl Jenkins, who makes a point of knowing what allowances are available to her, said: "We should make sure more people know exactly what they are entitled to."

She was delighted that her move did not cost her a penny.

Andy takes credit for being in touch

Hands on: Cpl Andy George RMP, below, who works in the gym at the Royal Military Police Training School at Chichester, is doing a course in massage and hopes to specialise in sports massage when he eventually leaves the Army. He is doing the diploma course at Chichester's College of Arts, Science and Technology. At the end of the ten-month package he will emerge with a professional qualification. Total cost of the course was £156, of which the Army paid £96 under the Standard Learning Credits scheme.



There's more...

Daily Rate of Subsistence Allowance (DRSA)

Payable when you are absent on duty for more than five, ten or 12 hours from your permanent duty station and are not fed from Service sources.

▲ Top tip: If you are away for more than five hours you can claim £4.25, ten hours £9.30, 12 hours (before 0700) £13.55.

Nightly Rates of Subsistence Allowance (NRSA)

Payable when you are absent on duty from your permanent duty station overnight and where Service accommodation is not provided for you.

▲ Top tip: If you have to stay overnight in a hotel on duty you can claim Essential Expenditure (EE) and Personal Incidental Expenses (PIE) worth £20.20 a night in the UK. If you don't claim, you lose it.

Essential Expenditure (EE)

Payable in conjunction with NRSA for additional costs incurred for every 24-hour period you are absent from your permanent station within the UK.

Personal Incidental Expenses (PIE)

This can be claimed per night in addition to NRSA.

Mess Incidental Allowance (MIE)

This can be claimed per night for the first 30 nights of detached duty in the UK when accommodated in a mess or barracks.

And how about these?

Residence to Place of Duty (RPOD)

Daily travel expenses may be refunded from your military accommodation to your place of duty.

▲ Top tip: You can claim 6.4p a mile if you ride to work on a bike. One happy squadie who does a few miles a day claimed £40 in time for Christmas. It all adds up.

Recompence in Lieu of Relocation (RILOR)

Daily travel expenses may be refunded from your private accommodation to your place of duty. Cannot be claimed if you have received a refund of legal fees for house purchase.

Motor Mileage Allowance (MMA)

Paid to assist with travel costs when use of a private vehicle is authorised on duty journeys. Rates differ for duty and leave travel.

▲ Top tip: You can claim an extra 2p a mile for each passenger on a duty journey. Don't laugh, it quickly adds up to quite a few pints-worth if you take your mate to work every day.

▲ Top tip: You can claim tax relief on the difference of your MMA (20.6p a mile) and the Inland Revenue-approved allowance (63p a mile) if you use your vehicle for work or duty travel. You may also be able to claim some of your HP-car loan back against your car.

Get-You-Home (GYH) Allowance

Intended to help you to travel to your family, duty station or own home when posted or detached away.

Standard Learning Credits (SLC)

You are entitled to claim a partial refund of any fees paid to civilian bodies for education or exams. Maximum refund is 80 per cent of fees up to a maximum £175 a year. See also Page 10.

▲ Top tip: There is £30.6 million available and unclaimed.

Over 37 Provision

If you are married, you may opt to serve unaccompanied at age 37 or over and receive separation benefits. This will affect your entitlement to the Boarding School Allowance.

Cyprus tour starts well

The sunshine ambassadors

After years of home service in the United Kingdom, the soldiers of 1 KOSB are enjoying their challenging Mediterranean posting

Report and pictures: Peter Foster

SOLDIERS from the 1st Battalion, The King's Own Scottish Borderers have got the sun on their backs for the first time in a decade.

After ten years based at their UK home in Edinburgh or in Northern Ireland – they are now in Cyprus.

Preparations and training came before deployment in the form of team-building and exercises. And the Jocks can look forward to live-fire exercises in Jordan and a short deployment to the south Atlantic to keep the regiment on its toes and in a high state of readiness.

Now, several months into the two-year posting, Episkopi Garrison commander Col Anthony Beattie is delighted with the way the Scots have settled in.

"They came well aware of all the difficulties the island has and they face a busy

tour," he said. "So far they have met every challenge head on. I have nothing but admiration for them. They are excellent ambassadors."

Lt Col Andrew Mackay, CO 1 KOSB, is equally complimentary about the work and enthusiasm of his soldiers.

"The regiment has earned a lot of respect from local people," he said. "It is the first overseas posting for many of the soldiers, but they have done us proud."

Lt Col Mackay said the posting had the benefit of bringing the soldiers closer together. In Edinburgh they would all disperse to their homes at the end of the day, while on tour they eat, live and work together, making for an improved understanding which is evident when they are exercising or

training together.

Families are an important element of

the deployment and the KOSB has 231 to look after in Cyprus. They are soon to move to new accommodation near the garrison HQ.

But it is not all warm-weather work for the soldiers, with three- and four-month deployments successively for A and B Companies to Mount Pleasant in the Falklands.

The regiment, which dates from 1689 when it was known as the Edinburgh Regiment, enjoys a proud history. It became the KOSB in 1887.

It is said that an army is run by its NCOs. During the Gallipoli landings in April 1915 it came true for the KOSB when the entire complement of officers was killed in action.

Last words on the regiment and the Cyprus posting come from Pte Kev Lorimer.

"This is a great regiment," he said. "The opportunities are endless, but don't sit back and expect it all to happen. You have to go out and grab them with both hands. It's what you want it to be."



Complimentary: Lt Col Andrew Mackay, CO



All in a lather: Field hygiene by Piper Michael Hogarth of the Pipes and Drums

Clean-up: Pte Gary Simpson, left, and Pte John Foley take time out during their NCO cadre in the hills around Episkopi



DEFENCE
FORCE



1 KOSB

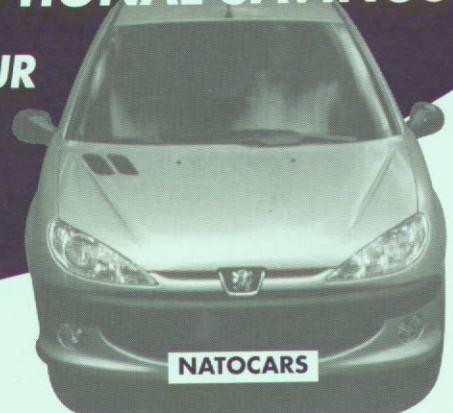
First post: Pte Dominic Taddei, a graduate of the Army Foundation College at Harrogate, on stag at the missile site at Troodos



Watchful: Pte Brian Renwick, B Coy KOSB checks the perimeter of the missile site at Troodos

Land lubber: Csgt Derek Jewiss, platoon commander assault pioneers, loves towing but is not keen on the water

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Power to the platoon

Britain's spearhead forces are to have a potent, long-range rifle described in trials as 'user-friendly'

Report: John Elliott
Pictures: Steve Dock

AFTER a worldwide trial in extreme conditions, the Army has bought 90 Accuracy International L115A1 rifles which will greatly extend the effectiveness of troops on the ground beyond the range of their SA80 rifles and light-support weapons.

The long-range, large-calibre Super Magnum, which fires a .338 round capable of disabling soft targets at a range of 1,500m, will be issued to Joint Rapid Deployment Force spearhead units and used at platoon level by the units' best shots.

It is seen as a major asset immediately available to the platoon commander who finds himself requiring a tad more muscle and who might otherwise have to call on heavy armour or mortars for supporting fire.

Although it has a single-shot bolt action and is described by its makers as a sniper rifle, the L115A1 is not intended for the traditional lone operator. It is more likely to be used as a defensive weapon in situations in which indiscriminate fire would be unacceptable.

In peacekeeping and stabilisation situations such as Kosovo and the Balkans, where ground patrols need to be sufficiently well armed to protect themselves and provide deterrence, mortar and tank fire support is unlikely to be appropriate.

"It a very fine rifle and we are very pleased with it," said Maj Andrew Macdonald PWRR, of the Small Arms Section at the Infantry Trials and Development Unit, Warminster.

"It had to convince us that it had a 70 per cent chance of hitting the frontal

aspect of a Land Rover at 1,500m – that's seven out of ten shots on target – and it will. And there's enough energy in the round to do disabling damage at that range."

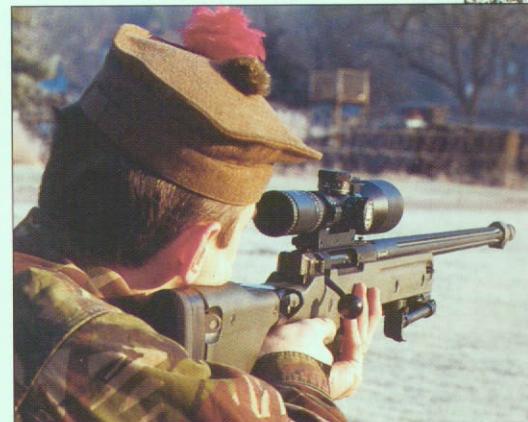
The new rifle, for which ball, armour-piercing and armour-piercing incendiary rounds (the "flash" of which indicates a hit at extreme range) are available, has demonstrated that it can penetrate brickwork and steel plating to a depth of 30mm.

During extensive trials, marksmen concentrated on a battle range of 800m, man-sized targets out to 1,200m and vehicles at 1,500m.

Soldiers who have fired the weapon describe it as "comfortable" and "user-friendly". That means, apparently, that the beast delivers little of the shoulder-numbing recoil sometimes associated with larger-calibre rifles.

A Schmidt und Bender 3-12x50 sniper telescope ensures the L115A1 is accurate at very long range while a sophisticated Simrad 200 series night sight

Light 'n easy: The L115A1 with stock detached, below



Rock steady: Pte Neil McDonald, 1 BW, a small arms trials assistant at the Infantry Trials and Development Unit, shows off the new L115A1 rifle from shoulder and bipod

British-made Accuracy International Super Magnum emerged as the victor after being pitted in a heated battle against the French Hecate .5 calibre and America's Barrett .5 calibre.

Before the decision to buy it was made, infantry teams led by the Warminster-based Small Arms Section fired the competing rifles in environments as different as freezing Alaska (in temperatures down to minus 30C), the baking desert sands of Kuwait, Brunei's steamy jungles and the rolling and temperate, heather-covered hills of Otterburn, Northumberland.

Keeping vehicles ever ready

Want a motor, guv? The Land Vehicle Holding Unit at Ashchurch has fields full of them

Report: Ray Routledge
Pictures: Steve Dock

WE'RE not talking Hertz here, but with nearly 3,000 vehicles worth £65 million, we could be. That's the impressive inventory of a temporary military unit based at Ashchurch near Tewkesbury.

Although the Land Vehicle Holding Unit (LVHU) was set up with a lifespan of one year following the reformation of the Territorial Army, its activities have widened and it could now have a longer-term future.

Established by the amalgamation of 629 and 944 Vehicle Troops of 6 and 9 Regiments RLC, the unit has 59 soldiers who are guests on the site of the civilian-run Defence Storage and Distribution Agency.

Their job is to receive, inspect, maintain and issue TA surplus vehicles on behalf of HQ Land Command and to run a holding-point for vehicles in limbo between the closing or re-tasking of Terrier units.

It was recognised that the reformation of the TA would mean that some units would disappear, others would be larger

or smaller and others formed," said Capt Chris Bowler, officer commanding.

Things have moved on, however. As well as acting as a holding-point, the LVHU does everything a vehicle specialist unit would do in a field depot, including maintenance, preparation and repair. Its staff ensure that all the vehicles they issue are roadworthy, presentable and possess a complete manifest of kit.

Although the receipt and issue of the vehicles to and from TA units is under way, the LVHU has found itself with another customer.

URGENT NEED

"HQ Land Command call on the vehicles here. They can be prepared quickly and issued to a new unit to meet an urgent need," said Capt Bowler. "When the East Timor deployment started we had a call for a Wolf Land Rover to be delivered to Lyneham at 0900 the following day.

"A vehicle was selected, worked on and delivered on time and three days later driven off a Hercules in northern Australia."

The unit also provided non-specialist vehicles for the new Joint NBC Regiment



Line up: LCpl Andy Keohane inspects the motor cycle park

at Honington, meaning the LVHU was not working to its primary task in supplying a TA unit.

This new "strategic" role could potentially extend the life of the LVHU indefinitely.

As well as maintaining vehicles to safety standards, the unit has a role in keeping up appearances by internal and external painting. Some vehicles require unusual communication systems and, while the unit does not hold radios, it ensures batteries and wiring harnesses are up to spec.

"We have seen some outrageous

Dirty dozen are happy in their work

CHANGING the oil on a DROPS vehicle can be a rather mucky business. In fact, working in an inspection pit in any garage has been known to attract the odd smudge of grime on skin and overalls. It goes with the territory.

So the Dirty Dozen is an accurately descriptive title for the 12 REME specialists employed at the LVHU as full-time reserve service (FTRS). WO1 (ASM) Mal Lockett reckons it is the largest FTRS contingent anywhere in military service.

Tasked to refurbish 600 vehicles during their tour year, the Dirty Dozen has completed 450 so far. And they are attempting to have some of their number deployed to Split. "It would

help them during surges and give our soldiers overseas experience," said WO1 Lockett.

He is proud of the efforts of his team.

"Turn-around time in the unit is fast. For instance, we made a Foden recovery vehicle available in three days," he said. "Units tend to come to us for items they can't get through the usual system."

"Our operation is supposed to end in the spring, but we don't know if it is to be extended. We would all be happy to stay on for an extra year."



Proud: WO1 Mal Lockett

The LVHU itself could not function without Terriers in the form of 12 TA REME soldiers signed-on for a year as full-time Regulars. "They are a valuable asset," said Capt Bowler. "If I didn't have them I would not have a fitter section. They have mixed very well and are treated like Regulars."

The unit also gets help from the vehicle specialists of 142 Supply Squadron (V) and 101 REME Bn (V).

In addition to its ubiquitous Land Rovers – there are 650 of them in one field alone – the unit's manifest includes 75 tracked Sabre recce vehicles, Samaritans, DROPS lorries, various trucks, medium-wheeled tractors, hundreds of motor cycles and other equipment. Each type requires its own special attention.

SPECIAL CARE

The Sabres, for example, which are awaiting conversion to diesel engines, require special care to preserve the sights, guns and turret mechanisms.

Every vehicle gets a regular check-over to prevent it deteriorating.

During a visit to Ashchurch by Maj Gen Peter Chambers, DCOS Land, Capt Bowler explained that the unit was providing value for money.

"These vehicles are assets to the Army. If they were allowed to deteriorate, their value would drop dramatically, to the extent that the Army might sell them off and have to buy replacements. As long as we can keep them in good condition we are providing a valuable service."

Hertz would approve.



Tighten up: Cfn Robert Manchester, above, puts an expert spanner in the works

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Phone home: call-back can cut your costs

CALL-BACK services provided by telephone companies can cut substantially the cost of phoning home for soldiers based overseas, Armed Forces Minister John Spellar said in a written answer.

He cited Belize (standard £2 per minute cut to 41p); Cyprus (33p, or 28p off-peak, cut to 17p); and the Falklands (99p, or 80p off-peak, cut to 59p on a limited service basis).

New comms net frees soldiers: A new communications system for Kosovo and Bosnia announced by Mr Spellar will relieve hard-pressed UK signallers. The £20 million contract with BAE Systems will free 260 Royal Signals soldiers from Balkans commitments by the end of this year. About 150 will return from Bosnia and Kosovo and others preparing for deployment will not need to go.

Expected to be in place by the autumn, the new network will provide modern voice, data and fax links within the UK-led Multinational Divisions and back to the UK.

PVR: In 1999, Premature Voluntary Retirement applications were received from 7,963 members of the Regular Army. Normally, a quarter of soldier PVR applications are withdrawn subsequently.

Medical shortfalls: Despite a current 42 per cent shortfall in nursing staff and 28 per cent in doctors, the Defence Medical Services have to date met all their operational commitments, Government spokesman Lord Burlison said last month.

Baroness Cox had asked whether the Services were able to provide appropriate health-



care now and in the event of future conflict. Among those expressing concern about the DMS in a 90-minute debate were Fd Marshals Lord Carver and Lord Bramall.

Lord Burlison said that retention of trained and experienced personnel was the main problem. Although

it would take time, measures were in place to ensure high-quality medical support for the Armed Forces continued.

● On December 1, 1999 there were 174 accredited medical consultants in the regular DMS against an operational requirement of 443.

Making life easier: Starting this summer, an e-commerce system is set to revolutionise the way the Ministry of Defence buys goods and services. The Defence Electronic Commerce Service (DECS) will handle logistics transactions worth billions. New electronic messaging systems, on-line catalogues of products and automatic transactions will transform what is now a largely paper-based system. For lower-value items a corporate charge-card system will enable card-holders to buy everything from office stationery to vehicle parts.

Female recruits: In the 12 months up to December 1, 1999, a total of 3,258 women were recruited into the Armed Forces – 13 per cent of the intake.

Gulf illnesses: The Government has rejected Royal British Legion calls for a public inquiry into Gulf veterans' illnesses.

TA redundancies: A total of 449 Non-Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS) posts have been

● American armed forces, still struggling to clarify their policy on homosexuals, have started mandatory courses in "sensitivity training" to rid their ranks of homophobic harassment – an admission that the existing policy of "don't ask, don't tell and don't harass" is poorly understood. – *The Times*

● Scientists from the Royal Society are to conduct an independent investigation into the dangers of depleted uranium, amid growing evidence that use of the material in shells and missiles is a cause of Gulf War syndrome

and has led to an increase in cancers among those in close contact with the weapons. – *Independent*

● The Armed Services face a rebellion by the normally ultra-loyal families of Servicemen, who

say the Ministry of Defence has broken a promise to refurbish their homes. A representative body also claims the MoD raided the £470 million Service quarters upgrade fund, set up under the previous government, to pay for the Kosovo operation. – *Independent on Sunday*

● Former SAS soldiers are training social security fraud investigators in surveillance techniques as part of a Government move against benefits cheats. – *Daily Telegraph*

● More than £1 million worth of French frozen chickens have been ordered for Britain's Armed Forces. The poultry will be served in messes over the next year because they are cheaper than UK produce. – *Mail on Sunday*

● The number of black and Asian soldiers in the Household Division has soared, thanks to a "zero tolerance" policy on racism. Sixty-three ethnic soldiers now guard the Queen. There were seven three years ago. – *Sun*



Bulldog spirit: Taking their inspiration from Churchill, veterans of the Suez Canal Zone emergency in the early 1950s parade in Parliament Square in the latest round of their never-say-die campaign to achieve medal recognition. Ollie Oliver, Pete Newton, Tom Radford, Robin Thorne, Chas Golder, David Powis, Cyril Blackburn and Danny Newport filed off to confer with MPs Andrew Bennett and John Healey. On March 23 they are due to meet Defence Under-Secretary Dr Lewis Moonie, successor to Peter Kilfoyle, who resigned in January.

Picture: Steve Docks

removed from the Territorial Army as a result of the Strategic Defence Review, the Armed Forces Minister said. While some job-holders are being found other posts, 321 NRPS had been made redundant by February 1 at a cost of about £8.8 million.

Catering for all: Worldwide supply of food to the Armed Forces will be handled from April 1 by a new tri-Service Defence Catering Group (DGC) based in Ensleigh, Bath, subject to consultation with unions. More than half its 65 staff will be civilians.

It wasn't to be for this soldier

Twenty years ago, a young, opinionated musician surprised many of his mates by joining the Army

Interview: Anthony Stone

UP to nine million people a week in Britain tuned in to the second series of the BBC1 documentary *Soldiers To Be* to watch a platoon of new recruits slog their way through basic training. It was gripping stuff, helped by the fact that the programme-makers found the perfect been-there-done-that narrator to do the voice-over.

Many will remember Billy Bragg for his political campaigning in the late 1980s when the singer popped up everywhere and told us to vote Labour. More recently he has been heard guest-presenting Johnny Walker's Saturday show on Radio 2 and fronting TV music programmes.

Now 40, married and a father, he continues to make records that speak to the heart and takes every opportunity to put his political message across.

On the face of it, the idea of Billy Bragg in an Army uniform is as about as likely as David Beckham wearing a pair of M&S Y-fronts. The story of how Bragg came to enlist and his brief Army experience have informed some of his best songs.

SUBCONSCIOUS VIBES

"I was working as a painter and decorator in west London and every day on the way to the tube walked past the Army recruiting office," he said. "Subconsciously I was getting a bit of a vibe from it."

Billy was at a crossroads. He recalled the advice of his careers master at school in Barking, Essex. His job prospects, he had been told, were not limitless. He was sure he did not want to work at the Ford plant in Dagenham, which to his mind left only three options: the Army, Royal Navy or the Royal Air Force.

"I think in the early 1980s the Army was a great sponge for working-class lads who did not feel they had many prospects apart from going to work in the local factory or down a pit," he said.

"I was standing on a stepladder getting paint in my face and thought, 'Sod this, I am not doing this all my life'. I went into



Billy Bragg: "... it was down to me and another guy who would be the best recruit."

the Army Careers and Information Office in Acton and signed on."

He told his recruiters he wished to drive tanks and didn't want to go to Northern Ireland as he didn't believe in what the British Government was doing there.

So, at 23 – the oldest person in his intake – the man who had once been a punk rocker joined The Queen's Royal Irish Hussars. This chimed in with family history as Billy's father had been a tank driver in India during the Second World War – circumstances which also gave Billy a love of Rudyard Kipling, whom his father was fond of quoting.

"I took him at his word and worked my hardest at everything, to the extent that it was down to me and another guy who would be best recruit. But it just was not for me. I really had a go at it. That's why I

towards a career in the Royal Armoured Corps. But it was not to be and he asked for premature voluntary release at the end of basic training.

"I twigged that it was not really for me. A lot of guys left in that first week. The sergeant said, 'What you see in the first week is not really the Army. Do the whole thing and if you still want to leave at the end of it I will sign your papers, no problem.'

"I took him at his word and worked my hardest at everything, to the extent that it was down to me and another guy who would be best recruit. But it just was not for me. I really had a go at it. That's why I

Why I joined up

"I did not join up out of the blue. Reagan and Thatcher had just been elected and they were stoking up the Cold War again. Tito had just died, Solidarity was going off. I read *The Third World War* by Gen Sir John Hackett and really thought it was going to happen."

"Did I want to be sitting on my arse in east London when it went off, or did I want to be sitting in my tank on the West German plain?"

My intake

"I try my hardest to remember what my sergeant said and I remember the guys I went through basic training with. They were a lovely bunch of whom I have only good memories. I saw them turning from a spotty rabble into a real crew."

Homosexuality

"Homosexuality is obviously different, but it is not communicable, it's not as if you can catch it by talking to someone. Attitudes in the Army lag behind attitudes in society by ten to 15 years."

was very concerned about setting the right tone for *Soldiers To Be*."

Janet Harris, the series co-producer, explained the decision to ask Billy to do the voice-over. "When we showed him the rough cuts he really knew what these young men and women were going through."

"I think the film reminded him of his own experiences."

Because it didn't work out for Billy in the Army, it would have been easy for him to have left with a chip on his shoulder. "One of the things my sergeant said when I left was, 'Whatever you do when you get back to civvy street, don't become anti-

squaddie. Just remember these are just ordinary guys.'

"You know, I have very strong political beliefs but I have never allowed myself to stereotype squaddies. I have always tried to remember that."

Billy's inside-track meant he could spot the recruits who were not going to make it in *Soldiers To Be*.

"Some were clearly there because they had run out of things to do, crashing through various options like a cannonball through a cornfield. It was clear that they weren't going to survive it. There were clearly other guys who had gone in and it changed their attitudes to life and motivated them."

While Billy was doing his basic training it gradually occurred to him what he really wanted to do with his life and, in a way, the Army helped him to achieve it.

"It was not having the opportunity to play guitar, write songs and appear on stage that made me realise what I really wanted," he said.

RAISED EYEBROWS

"I have never made a huge thing about being in the Army but I thought from the beginning of my musical career I should be honest and let people know. It was difficult enough having admitted it to go and play in Belfast, where it raised a few eyebrows."

"I have always tried to stress that people who join the Army don't do so just to kill people. They join for many different reasons, and that is what I have tried to make people understand."

Since Billy's day, the Army has undergone a sea change in attitudes to behaviour and discrimination, something he welcomes.

"The Army is an over-macho profession by its nature. My experience was that very few of the young men who I went through basic training with had ever met anyone who was gay and had no experience of gay culture. And it was the same for people of colour."

"I am Billy Bragg and I have my own personal agenda. My feeling about changing the world is to communicate to as many people as I can my own ideas, which is why it is important for me to talk to *Soldier*. I realise that you don't often interview people from my point of view."

"My involvement with *Soldiers To Be* will hopefully have drawn people in to watch the programme and then perhaps they will get a different perspective about soldiers being ordinary lads and lasses."

Brothers in arms

BILLY'S song *Tender Comrade* examined the emotional bonding between soldiers, which allows one to feel he could die for another on the battlefield.

"There is a bonding there that is much deeper between males than in normal society," he said. "It has nothing to do with homosexuality. It is a much deeper experience than you ever get in civvy street."

"You look at old soldiers, particularly those who have been in combat, and you understand that they have such a deep bond."

Tender Comrade

by Billy Bragg

What will you do when the war is over,
tender comrade?

When we lay down our weary guns,
When we return home to our wives and
families

And look into the eyes of our sons?
What will you say of the bond we had,
tender comrade?

Will you say that we were brave
As the shells fell all around us,
Or that we wept and cried for our mothers
And cursed our fathers
For forgetting that all men are brothers?

Will you say that we were heroes,
Or that fear of dying among strangers
Tore our innocence and false shame
away?

And from that moment on deep in my heart
I knew
That I would only give my life for love.

Brothers-in-arms in each other's arms
Was the only time that I was not afraid.
What will you do when the war is over,
tender comrade,
When we cast off these khaki clothes and
go our separate ways?
What will you say of the bond we had,
Tender comrade?



Why I'm listening to you

SOME of you will have already come into contact with my newly-formed briefing team. Its purpose is to get round the Army and families, to tell you how I see the Army developing, to listen to your views and report them directly back to me.

The team has now completed its first five-week tour and here are some of the main points that it reported. I have made it clear that dealing with this feedback is to be given the highest priority. Action is already under way on some points, such as modernising the rules for livers-in. Others will be looked at once the team has visited more places and I have heard from more of you.

I am determined that we will see progress on as many of these issues as possible. *Soldier* will keep you informed of what is happening.

Roger Wheeler

General Sir Roger Wheeler
GCB CBE ADC Gen
Chief of the General Staff



FEEDback

Buildings

 ● We can't make the place look nice because the plaster is falling down and no money is being spent on it.
● Why do the Army and Royal Air Force have different standards of accommodation?
● The accommodation is that bad that soldiers are only paying for fuel and lighting.

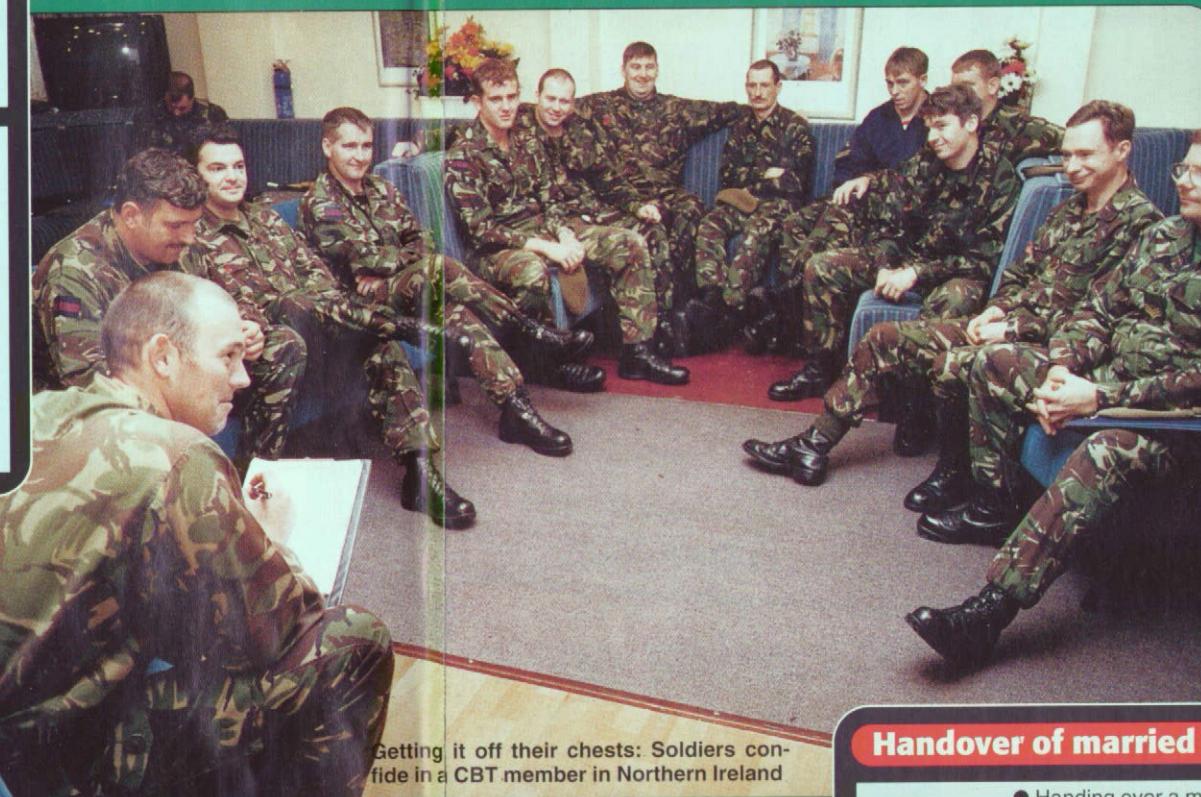
 "I know how frustrating this is for many of you. We are spending huge amounts on the military estate but the annual bill for PROP-MAN (property management) alone is massive. It's a constant battle but it's not all gloom.

"We are ploughing millions into improving the infrastructure and in building new barracks in places like Aldershot and Tidworth. The rebuild of Colchester Garrison will also make a radical difference. Now that we've got the ball rolling though, we must build up this momentum. We can then start to close the gap on the other two Services."

Overseas training exercises

 ● Why are we cancelling the best things such as overseas training exercises (OTXs)? Cut the Regular Army Assistance Table tasks and the mundane exercises at home.
● OTXs are good when placed into the programme in a joined-up way, not straight after Bosnia and Kosovo.
● OTXs are fast becoming our last chance of travel. They are great value, too.

"A few OTXs were cancelled last year, partly to relieve the pressure on units, but this was a temporary measure. This year there will be about 128 OTXs in 26 countries, including a new cold-weather training exercise in Wainwright, Canada (see Pages 14-15). The message, therefore, is that OTXs are here to stay."



Getting it off their chests: Soldiers confide in a CBT member in Northern Ireland

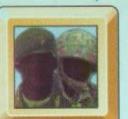
Single soldiers' lifestyles

 ● Why can't we have beer and our partners in the block when married soldiers do as they wish in their married quarters?
● The Army is very Victorian about its approach to single soldiers.
● A hotel doesn't pay for a TV licence in every room, so why do we?

"There will always be a need for rules when people are sharing accommodation but we should avoid them becoming overly restrictive or old-fashioned. I agree that we should have a fresh look at this."

"Regarding TV licences, a good point. We will pursue the licensing authorities to see if they will agree to the Army being treated in the same way that it treats hotels. In the meantime, so that everyone knows exactly where they stand, the precise rules will be explained to units."

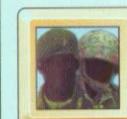
Commitments

 ● Because of commitments the pace of life is too busy.
● Operational tours are great but we always have to return to the same places. Bosnia was good the first time but not the second and third.
● The busy programme needs to be looked at if we are to seriously address the retention problem.

"I know this has become a major issue for a lot of you – and also for our families, but of course we must never forget the fact that we exist for operations. That's why the country has an army. But there is a balance to be struck and there must be sufficient time for other things, such as courses, leave and sport.

"That's why we made large cuts in the numbers deployed on operations such as in Bosnia. In December it was also announced that there would be improvements to the Longer Separated Service Allowance (LSSA) and the introduction of a lump sum for those that are most heavily committed. I'm delighted that we got this through. It is proper recognition of the excellent work we are doing."

Service beyond 22-years

 ● An 18-year-old joining the Army leaves at 40 but a 27-year-old leaves at 49. So what has age to do with serving beyond 22 years?
● A career beyond 22 years would be achievable for selective posts with built-in checks and balances.
● Why release someone with all that experience?

"I agree. This has concerned me throughout my career. We lose too many good people. There is, of course, a limit to what can be done. A large chunk of Army jobs are for young people. Promotion blockages also need to be avoided. I am convinced, though, that improvements are possible. In the short term, greater continuance is the answer – a 17 per cent increase last year. In the longer term an overhaul of the soldier career structure is required which is a priority."

Handover of married quarters

 ● Handing over a married quarter is too stressful. The Army needs to modernise its procedures.
● The Paderborn trial should now be spread across the Army.
● The use of contractors should be an option but the standard must be monitored frequently.

"I absolutely agree. I am only surprised that the present system has managed to survive this long! The procedures need to be modernised and the recent trial in Paderborn points to the way we should be heading. Because of its importance, this matter is being dealt with at the tri-Service level and the Army is pressing hard to get things moving and I am determined that we will keep the pressure on."

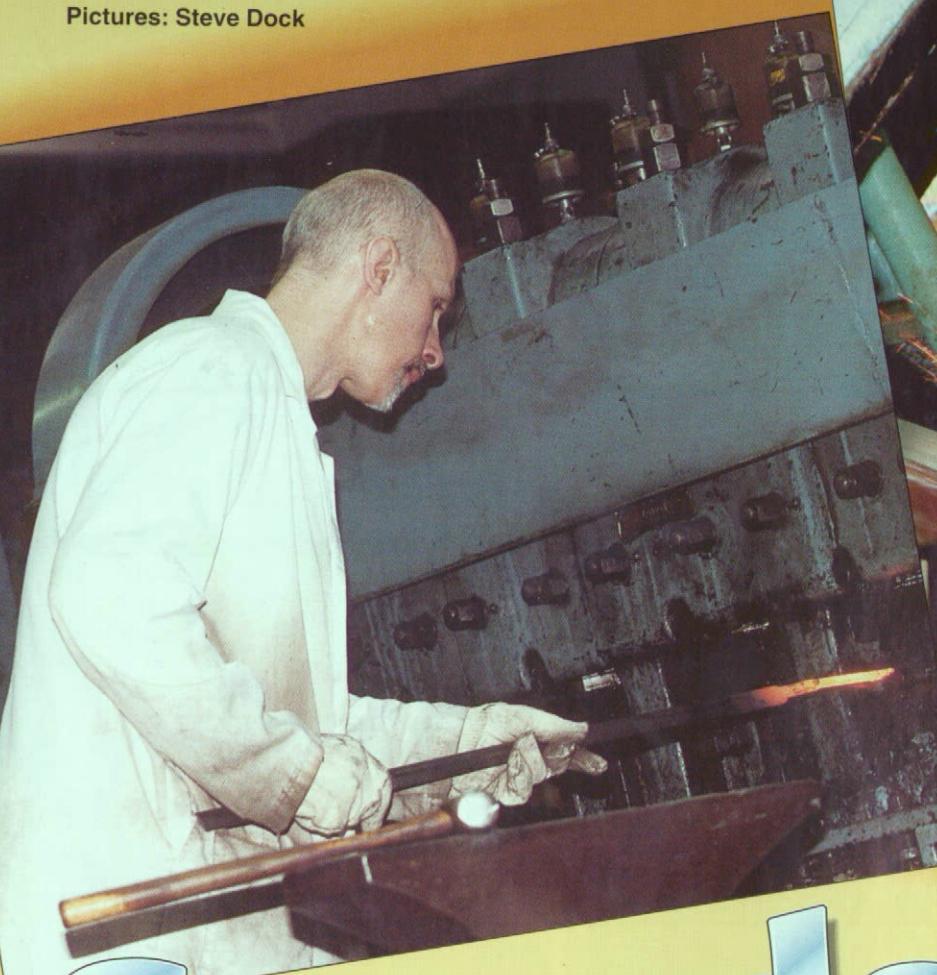
CBT's next tour dates

Mar 13-17: Southern England
Mar 20-24: Wales and Midlands
Mar 27-31: Northern Ireland
Apr 3-7: Scotland and Northern England
Apr 10-14: Germany

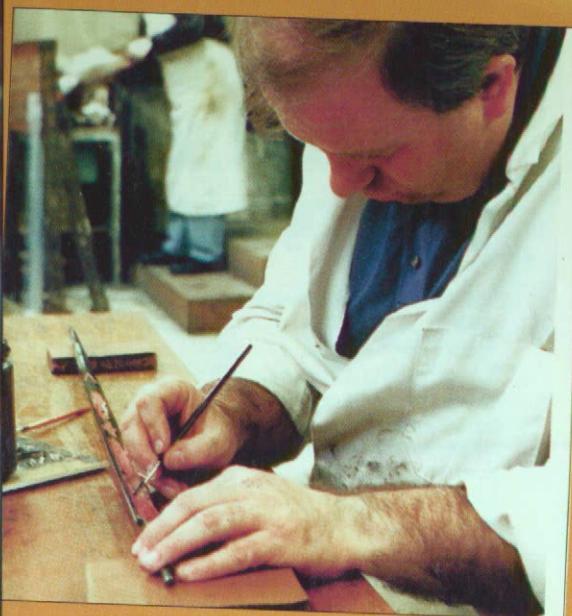
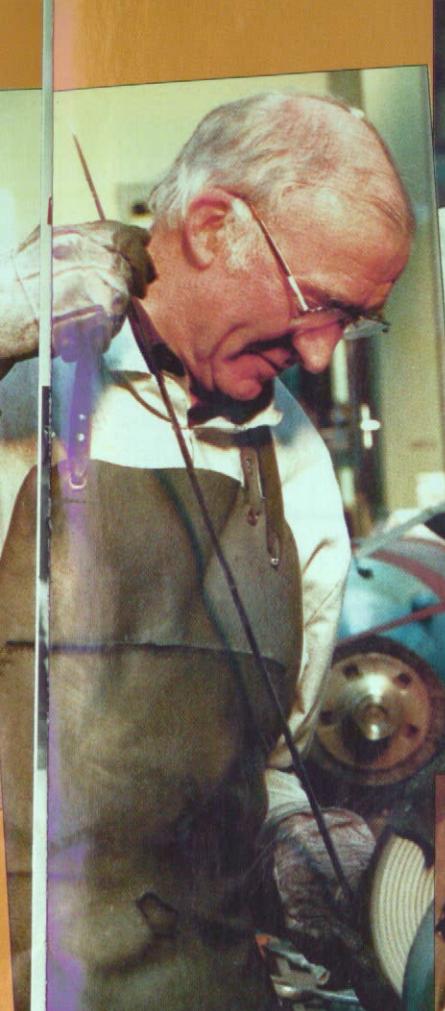
CGS Briefing Team:
E mail: apt.mod@btinternet.com
Phone: Military 94261 5309
Civil 01276 417009

Images

Pictures: Steve Dock



Hand-crafted: Billets of steel are heated and hammered to the correct thickness and length, by Derek Brooks, left, while Carl Bandle, above, shapes, edges and points the blades



Craftsmen: Ray Humphries, above, undertakes the painstaking process of etching the blade, while Phil Black, above left, starts forming the hilt

Swordsmen

Semper Qualitas Suprema – Always the Finest Quality – but for military swords, what else would you expect?

"ALWAYS the finest quality" – the words that appear on the armorial bearings of the Wilkinson Sword Company – would also make an appropriate motto for the military recipients of the beautiful and much-coveted objects which emerge from a factory on an otherwise unexceptional industrial estate in Acton, west London.

As ceremonial weapons fit to grace Britain's most splendid pageants, military blades do not come cheap. An infantry sword, by no means the most expensive, costs £595, and a scabbard more than £200.

Soldier photographer Steve Dock visited the Wilkinson Sword-makers to see how

modern craftsmen engage in an art almost as old as warfare.

For more than 200 years, the Wilkinson Sword Company – originally its employees were makers of guns – has been renowned for craftsmanship. Indeed, it has held Royal Warrants as gun or sword manufacturer to the Sovereign since 1804.

While millions of men know the company more for the razor blades which glide across pre-breakfast stubble every morning, the company continues to produce highly-crafted ceremonial swords.

They are cherished by kings, princes and military personnel across the world. As well as serving the UK, Wilkinson swords



Cherished mementoes: Some of the superb blades to be found in the Wilkinson Sword museum



Cherished mementoes: Some of the superb blades to be found in the Wilkinson Sword museum

are in demand in Australia, New Zealand, the Oman and Brunei.

It is the only company to make swords to MoD specifications. Sheffield high-carbon steel, specially smelted and roll-forged to

heat-treated, and at every stage have to pass through stringent tests to establish their integrity.

In the next process, they are polished to mirror-smoothness before the customer's pattern and insignia is etched into each blade with acid. The correct pattern of hilt is fitted and each is given a unique serial number.

Hilts are usually made from pressed and formed steel. Often they have unusual patterns to meet a customer's particular requirements. In the case of the British Army this would require the regimental crest and a mark of the sovereign.

Grips are hand-crafted, some in unusual finishes such as shark skin, and bound



Nearly there: The intricately formed hilt, pommel and blade are finally assembled, above

On parade: Tpr Simon Allwood of 2 Troop, Blues and Royals, right, shows off the ceremonial blade in its appropriate setting

with gold- or silver-plated copper wire.

Precious stones and ornamentation are sometimes fitted, while scabbard and scabbard mounts receive no less attention.

It is a painstaking process which can take anything up to 12 weeks. As you can see from the evidence of these photographs, it is time well spent.

For further information, contact Wilkinson Sword Limited, The Sword Centre, 19/21 Brunel Road, London, W3 7UH (tel 0181 749 1061), or visit the website on www.wilkinson-swords.com

A word in your ear

I'm fed up with it all

Cari Roberts answers your questions

Dear Cari I'm not really depressed, just fed up. Things are getting on top of me, we've had a lot of moves and my husband has been away a lot. I feel I'm in a rut. – Wife in UK



Cari replies: There's a lot of information and help for the clinically depressed but not a lot for those who just feel a bit low, yet feeling fed-up can become a habit. You need to put something back into your life that's just for you. Forget the family and do something you've always wanted to do – exercise class or language lesson – anything which awakes an interest. If you have to pay for a baby-sitter regard it as an investment in your emotional well-being. You can't go on giving out love without topping up your reserves of energy.

Dear Cari Our children go to a great school and I'm happy with the way they have settled. I'd like to help them with the new maths but don't want to be seen as a fussy mother. Will their teacher think I'm criticising if I go and ask how I can help? – Mother, BFG

Cari replies: Teachers receive lots of criticism but not much praise, so send them a note telling them how happy you and your children are with the school and asking if you could get some advice on the best way to support their work. Their homework will have been tailored to their needs, so don't rush ahead. You could help by making sure they have a quiet place in which to complete homework. You might also consider volunteering to help out in the school (but not, may I suggest, in your children's classes).

Cari comments

This is a time of year when everyone has a tendency to feel fed up. People will often tell you to "take your mind off yourself and do something for others".

That's all very well but, if you're the one who is constantly having to look after others in the family, it'll just be one more obligation.

In a recent interview Dr Anthony Clare, the renowned psychiatrist, said one of the keys to happiness was having a passion. If you've got the winter blues don't punish yourself, find something you've always wanted to do.

If you've got a novel way of beating the blues, do let me know.

Me? I'm off to tap-dancing classes.



First in: Mrs Mandy Lewer and Buster were among the first families to move into new married quarters in Episkopi. She and her husband, Sgt Frank Lewers of 259 Signal Squadron, and children Shannon (8) and Ryan (7) are delighted with their new home in Lion Village. "It's our seventh quarter and it is so lovely. We will be here for 2½

years and it is going to be great." Their quarter is the first of 120 under construction on the estate. The first phase of 46 consists of four four-bedroom properties, 40 with three bedrooms and two designed for families with special needs.

Garrison Commander Col Anthony Beattie handed Mrs Lewer the keys ... and a bouquet.

Useful numbers

Army Benevolent Fund 020 7591 2000

Army Families Advice Bureau 01722 436569

Army Welfare Service 01722 436565

Army Families Federation 01980 615525

British Limbless Ex-Service

Men's Association 020 8590 1124

Confidential support lines:

UK 0800 731 4880

Germany 0800 1827 395

Cyprus 0800 91065

Bosnia 0800 731 4880

Others UK 1980 630854

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

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

Gulf Families Association 0121 711 3028

Gulf Veterans Association 0191 230 1065

Joint Service Housing Advice

Office 01722 436575

National Gulf Veterans and

Families Association 01482 833812

Why the Revenue treats us as aliens

MRS Craddock's letter to *Soldier* (Mailbag, Feb) about being refused credit highlights an issue familiar to the Army Families Federation. Credit refusal is one of several disadvantages families face because they follow soldiers around.

Living overseas can affect your entitlement to a lot of things – credit, ISAs, state benefits – and all because after one tax year abroad Service families are considered to be not permanently resident.

For instance, if you return from Cyprus and start working in the United Kingdom, you will receive a *billet doux* from the Inland Revenue asking why, as an alien, you are seeking work in this country and just how long you plan to stay. As there is no box marked "Service spouse" to tick on this charming form, the natural response of most spouses is to get angry, not to mention insulted.

But going overseas to support your soldier in serving his/her country is not viewed as any entitlement to retain your residency in the UK. Nice one, eh?

The issue of residency is just one of many AFF is now able to raise with the Service Families Task Force (SFTF), a creation of the Strategic Defence Review. This isn't a bunch of spouses in combat gear and cam cream – though the thought does have a certain appeal.

In fact, the task force consists of serving officers from all three Services and MoD civil servants, and is headed by the Armed Forces Minister, John Spellor.

Regulations that adversely affect us are often drawn up by other Government departments unaware of the problems caused by our moving around.



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



AFF and the other Service families associations raise such concerns with task force members, who then talk to their opposite numbers in other departments. The good news is they have had some success in getting things changed for our benefit. For example, rules governing student loans have been amended and the schools admissions Code of Practice now includes direct references to the treatment of Service families.

Great stuff – but there are issues still to solve, including schools admissions at reception class level, special needs

provision and credit refusals. There are many pitfalls for Service families attempting to get credit: finance companies not recognising BFPO addresses, families moving to an address previously black-listed, and being a "tenant" because you live in Service housing.

In an interview for the spring edition of *Army Families Journal*, John Spellor told me he was keen to talk to finance companies to put our case, and the task force is looking into this. Perhaps there will soon be better news for Mrs Craddock.

In the meantime, AFF continues to raise your concerns, inside and outside the Army. We've a new logo (left) and a new-look magazine, but our job remains the same, to change attitudes and improve the quality of life for Service families.

The spring 2000 edition of the federation's journal for families is published in mid-March and should reach units by the end of the month. There's a free copy for every Army family so make sure you get yours.

Your views sought on discipline bill

SERVICE personnel have been invited to comment on the Armed Forces (Discipline) Bill currently going through Parliament, which acknowledges that Service personnel will need, and should have, legal assistance and representation to help ensure they are soundly advised and their rights properly observed.

Main provisions of the Bill are to increase the rights and protections of Service personnel being interviewed by military police; to provide an effective system of releasing on bail those charged pending trial, or detaining them pending trial, with the decision ultimately being made by a judicial officer; and to provide a system of appeals from decisions made on commanding officers' orders to a new court set up for the purpose.

Forces Law, the Forces Legal Network, which is hoping to reverse a proposal that legal aid funding be withdrawn from overseas personnel, can be contacted at 21A New Street, Salisbury SP1 2PH (tel 01722 340043).

IN BRIEF

- The Guild of St Helena and SSAFA Forces Help has organised two **holidays for children** with disabilities and special needs, at Fairthorne Manor, Southampton, from Aug 7-11 and at the Calvert Trust, Kielder, Northumberland, from Aug 19-26. Service dependants aged eight to 14 are eligible. Details from Christine Pearce on 0171 463 9234 by May 12.

- Clinical services at the **Royal Hospital Haslar** are being integrated with those from the Portsmouth Hospitals Trust and patients who attend or have attended Haslar may in future be treated by the trust. Service personnel medical records will remain within the medical records department at Haslar.

- The Royal British Legion's **Gulf War Veterans Branch**, consisting of 200 veterans and family members, has appealed to the Prime Minister for an independent public inquiry into Gulf War illnesses.

- Cable and Wireless donated 3,000 £5 phone cards to Service personnel in the Falklands over the Christmas period, with a discount on 1,500 more, resulting in 20 minutes of free call-time for all deployed in the islands.

- The **Career Transition Partnership's** new website was up and running from midnight on March 1, a development the organisation sees as a major breakthrough in communications for Service leavers. It offers many one-click links to external websites ranging from Service magazines and associations to search engines and employment sites. Webmaster Martyn Prince would welcome comments and criticism. Visit it at www.ctp.org.uk

Regular Forces Employment Association
0207 321 2011
RBL's Legionline 0345 725 725
Samaritans 0345 90 90 90
Service Children's Education 01980 618244
Services Cotswold Centre 01225 810358
SSAFA Forces Help 020 7403 8783
SSAFA Forces Help housing advisory service 01722 436400
Veterans' Advice Unit 08456 020302
War Pensions Agency 01253 858 858
WRVS 01235 442940

School of culture

CHILDREN aged three to 12 attending the British Section of the AFCENT International School at Brunssum, Holland "grow in their international awareness and understanding" through contact with pupils and teachers from other countries, says an Ofsted report. Teaching is said to be "often good, very good or excellent". The inspector said the school made a very strong and distinctive contribution to the pupils' cultural development.

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Bike with attitude

Love it or hate it, this bad, brazen, easy-rider just oozes character

THERE'S nothing subtle about a Harley Davidson Sportster, writes **Syd Taylor**. Thick-wristed heavy metal bristling with macho appeal and a minimalist spirit embodies the original concept of motorcycling.

Escapist and liberating, the Sportster – first introduced in 1957 – is the quintessential Harley to project a positive aspect of freedom and independence which is exactly the sort of image the manufacturers intend: but to the typical committed Harley rider, freedom and independence aren't just potent imagery – they're real.

Essentially, what sets a Harley Sportster apart is its attitude, its promise, its demeanour – intangibles that arouse, invigorate and enliven far more than any cold performance figures or specifications will ever convey.

Devoid of glitz and baubles, the Sportster's brazen styling sets the ball rolling. Even though it's the entry-level Harley at only £4,995, it's a bad, black bike with lots of character: a bike in which the V-twin engine is dominant; not just visually, but spiritually.

CONTRAST

In contrast with some lithesome race replicas with their Lester Pigott riding positions and anodyne power packs, the Harley Sportster Custom which I tested – costing extra over the basic Sportster – was a welcome change. It's an easy bike to ride with that comfy saddle, straight drag bars with risers and laid-back riding position coupled with forward Highway pegs which take a little time to get used to.

Even when you have to make journeys deep into the conurbation, negotiating bottlenecks and taking in roads definitely not on any Tourist Board recommended route, the stable and manoeuvrable Harley allows brisk progress.

You quickly appreciate the lack of shoulder, arm and wrist tension that accompanies a racier riding position and you are rewarded with a relaxing ride. The key to rapid progress on this Harley is to sit back and make the most of the bike's low centre of gravity. Bimbling along country lanes or ripping past lines of cars, you're the archetypal Easy Rider.



Harley-Davidson Sportster 883

Tech Spec

Engine: 883cc OHV V-twin (carburettor); torque 65 Nm at 4100 rpm (standard tune).

Transmission: five gears; final drive by Kevlar reinforced belt.

Brakes: Single discs front and rear.

The Sportster's 883cc Evolution V-twin engine is a monumental piece of motorcycling sculpture. Basic and simple in its design and totally understressed, it's easy to see that this bullet-proof unit – with maintenance-free hydraulic lifters – will last forever.

Developing 50 BHP, it's not overly powerful, but the power spread is so broad that you get steam train pull from low revs to haul you up and away to around 110 mph. You never need to overuse the five-speed gearbox with its new internals – which is a pity, since it's now so pleasant in operation and the whole transmission is smooth and snatch-free, thanks in part to the belt final drive.

For the 2000 model year, all Sportsters use an up-graded crank with a pressed-in crankpin for smoother running. Despite the addition of a Screamin' Eagle carb and exhaust pipes to liberate maybe another 12 bhp, the test bike proved to be much smoother than other Evo-engined Harleys I've used.

In fact it positively welcomed being revved hard – but care must be exercised when doing so. With those Screamin' Eagle pipes the deep corrugated exhaust note is enough to frighten the citizens of suburbia and – when in the country – send horses running in their fields.

Generally, the handling characteristics are good, but of course it is foolish to start drawing comparisons with the latest offerings from Italy and Japan, because that's not what a Harley is all about.

BARE BONES

Frame and cycle parts are bare bones and the suspension is set up for comfort. There's rock-steady straight-line performance, but getting your line right through the bends assumes a new importance on a Harley – particularly when the roads are wet – but you soon get used to it. Brakes give plenty of feel and are powerful and well modulated and for 2000 all bikes will be equipped with new four-pot callipers on the single discs.

When you ride a Harley Davidson Sportster there's no escaping the fact that you're riding something completely different: two minutes in the saddle will tell you that. It's a bike with a large disrespect for sensible sterile motor-cycling that you will either love or hate – but either way, there's no denying that it oozes character.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Defiant Army exits with all guns blazing

THE Army's fairy-tale with the Challenge Cup came to a painful but exhilarating end at Rochdale's Spotland Stadium, writes Steve Tranter.

A 66-6 scoreline flattered to deceive as the Army went down with all guns blazing in a tough and uncompromising third-round tie.

With key players missing at hooker and stand-off, the Army struggled to settle in the early part of the game and after sustained attacking from the home side, Rochdale took the advantage.

Second row Chris McKinney went over to score, with man-of-the-match Dane Dorahay converting.

The Army came back when LCpl Steve Fox (R Signals) converted a penalty. Moments later the Army crossed the Rochdale line for an easy try after a well-worked move from the base of the scrum, loose forward Sgt Dave Clark (R Signals) gleefully accepting the ball from stand-off Sgt Andy Sanger (RE).

That joy was short-lived, though, and the Army were then put to the sword by a rampant Rochdale side.

POSSESSION

Although the Army never gave up, the Hornets scored five tries in a 25-minute spell, which gave the visitors a mountain to climb by half-time.

Tackling as though their lives depended on it, the Army went out in determined mood in the second-half. Led by captain Sgt Wayne Braddock (R Signals), the Servicemen made Rochdale fight for every bit of possession and ground.

It was a testament to the spirit of the team that Rochdale fans stood and applauded as the Army left the field.

The team enjoy a short break before the season starts on March 29 with their first match in defence of the Scottish Courage Cup against the Civil Service. They are also looking forward to defending the Inter-Services Challenge Cup later on in the season.

Players are emerging thick and fast in pursuit of an Army shirt and the competition looks fierce as the squad seeks to improve on what has been the most exceptional year to date.

If you think you have got what it takes, contact Capt Paul Wright on Harrogate Mil 4359.

SKIING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Oldies still

Some of them would have you believe they are older than the mountains they ski down. But Army Alpiners are still No 1

DESPITE missing some of their strongest competitors, the Army dominated the Inter-Services Alpine ski championships at St Moritz, Switzerland.

It gives a measure of the strength and depth of the squad that the Army walked away with the top prizes even though the millennium had cluttered the fixture list and the Inter-Services clashed with the Army championships.

The men's team was forced to pull four veterans out of retirement for the competition.

A delighted team captain, Capt Sacha Zvegintsov (AAC), said: "Four guys came out of retirement to ski in the team. They had not trained as much as we usually do before this event, but they had vast experience."

He paid tribute to head coach SSgt Andy Brown (R Signals), the oldest man in the team. "Andy put in a very good

result in the giant slalom. He was first in the Army team in 1984 and has not skied in the squad since 1997.

"WO2 Chris 'Kipper' Knight (RLC) also did well coming out of retirement."

Zvegintsov, who skied for Great Britain before joining the Army, took second place in the individual Army, Royal Navy and RAF Challenge Cup with a win in the slalom, two seconds and a third.

Several of the veterans drew attention to their advancing years by hobbling on walking sticks to collect their awards at the presentation ceremony.

There were no age problems for the women's team. The squad which won the Wilkinson Sword was young and relatively inexperienced. Team captain Capt Lucy Combes (RAMC) said: "In my first year as captain, and probably my last year in the team, it was my aim to win. It is a dream come true."

"With five new members out of seven in the squad we were lacking in experience, but it turned out to be a particularly strong team."

The event was given an international flavour by the participation of skiers from



Slippery customer: LCpl Adam Senior (2 Battalion REME), makes the downhill run look easy during the 1 (UK) Armoured Division ski championships at Les Contamines Montjoie



SHORTS

cut the ice



First: Lt Kate Simmonds (R Sigs) shows winning form in the giant slalom at the Inter-Services

Switzerland, Italy, Romania, Slovenia and Australia. As in previous years the British disabled ski team took part.

■ Nine units represented by 40 skiers and 24 snowboarders attended the Royal Signals Alpine ski training camp and championships at Zell am See, Austria.

Cpl Tony Orange (16 Signal Regt) won the men's Alpine combination title, Lt Fiona Stewart (14 Signal Regt (EW)) won the women's Alpine combination title and 16 Signal Regt won all the team awards.

Cpl Ross Pierson took the honours in the snowboarding – the first time the event had been included in the camp.

■ The Army snowboarding championships at Neustift in Austria, sponsored by Eastern Motor Company, saw 80 soldiers take part from Germany and UK. The competition followed the Inter-Services, during which the Army team was beaten into third place. Cpl Wayne Dyche (Army Apprentice College) was named best individual and Cpl Andrew Moore (4 Field Ambulance) finished fifth.

Dyche retained his title, with Cpl Ross Pierson (21 Sig Regt) gliding into second and Cpl Gareth Reid (RMP) third.

■ The snow was hard and fast for the 1 (UK) Armoured Division ski champi-

Football final No 100

THE 100th major units Army Cup Final takes place on Wednesday, April 26 at the Military Stadium, Aldershot. As *Soldier* went to press, 23 teams were battling for a place.

■ THE Army and Civil Service put on a superb spectacle at Chiswick as the civilians retained the Civil Service Trophy with a slightly flattering 3-1 scoreline.

■ DESPITE having a two-goal advantage, the Combined Services surrendered their lead against the Ryman League at Basingstoke Town's Camrose Ground. The 2-2 scoreline was a fair reflection on the 90 minutes and halted the Army's run of five consecutive defeats at the hands of the league.

■ A Football Association XI's semi-professionals proved more than an adequate test for a weakened Combined Services side at Worcester City Football Club, where they triumphed 3-0.

■ SUSSEX handed out a 5-0 drubbing to the Army at the Military Stadium, Aldershot, a result which meant the home side relinquished their grip on the South West Counties championship trophy.

It's a first for charity

OCDT Jenny Hands is running the Flora London Marathon for the Army Benevolent Fund and is hoping readers will sponsor her. Despite never having run a marathon before, she hopes to raise about £800. OCDT Hands can be emailed at hands.j.a@rmcs.cranfield.ac.uk

Triathletes go for glory



SSGT Dave Butters (SEME) and Sgt Sonia Hurst (APTC), pictured, have qualified for the International Triathlon Union world age group championships in Perth, Australia next month.

The superfit athletes, both based at SEME Bordon, hope for glory in the gruelling event which requires excellence in swimming, cycling and running. Hurst has been the Army women's champion for the past six years and was second in the Inter-Services.

SHORTS

Making a fist of it

MEMBERS of the Army Martial Arts Association struck success when they took part in the Gakushuin international karate championships at Bielefeld, Germany, hosted by 7 Transport Regiment RLC.

The championships were open to Army and civilian clubs in Germany and assessed competitors on their technical skills (kata) and fighting ability (kumite).

The British Army squad managed a clean sweep at senior level with Cpl Tony Cashmore (RE) winning the senior kata and kumite events and the squad and the squad taking the team kumite title.



Say argh! Sgt Sal Webster, left, takes on LCpl Andy Jeffrey

Swimmers make waves

EIGHTEEN members of the Army swimming squad plunged into a two-week training camp in Episkopi Garrison and sunk the hopes of the Cyprus-based Army team when they took them on in a competition.

The mixed squad was coached daily for four hours by Mrs Rosa Gallop and team manager WO1 (Cdr) Jay Roberts (RLC) and covered a distance of more than 50km in the water.



Sea change: ATpr Anne Canham, left, LCpl Naomi Wilson and Cfn Helen Livingstone take time out during training in Cyprus

Hockey to the corps

CURRENT holders of the Inter-Corps (Germany) hockey tournament, REME, are organising this year's event which takes place over three days from March 6 at Osnabrück.

BOXING

Everyone's a winner

When 1 and 2 Para stepped into the ring, there was more than boxing skill on display

NO wonder boxing comes in for so much stick. In the middle of the panto season, Manchester staged its own farce when Tyson demolished Julius Francis inside two rounds, **writes Anthony Stone**.

It was far too one-sided to be dignified with the tag "boxing match". This was more a case of legalised GBH, with punters paying top dollar to see what happens when a hungry fighter hears the dinner bell.

The "action" had nothing to do with sport and everything to do with pay-per-view revenue and advertising. It was obvious after the first exchange who would come out on top, but the ref felt duty-bound to let the beating continue until Francis was knocked semi-conscious.

Not surprisingly, anyone fed such a diet of dross would see little worth preserving in boxing. But if, on the other hand, they had been in Aldershot just five nights earlier, they could have seen a real boxing contest which showcased the very best qualities of the sport.

DECORUM

The occasion was the quarter-finals of the grade three novice inter-unit boxing competition between the 1st and 2nd Battalions of The Parachute Regiment.

Talk about a local derby; more than 1,000 people crammed into Maida Gym to see an extremely close contest which went down to the wire. Even though it was an incredibly intense occasion, the boxers conducted themselves with the sort of decorum that would have earned the Marquess of Queensberry a dukedom.

Quite obviously the boxers had come to fight. Personal and regimental honour were at stake and everyone gave their heart and soul. The commitment was 100 per cent, but not at the expense of some classy boxing, especially at the lighter weights.

A high standard of refereeing protected the boxers from unnecessary punishment while keeping the action flowing at a furious pace. It was always aggressive but never vicious. This cauldron of a contest



Picture: Graeme Main

Close quarters: Pte Darren Bushby, right, on his way to a win over Pte Billy Hickman

was brought to boiling point by the noise of the crowd. Hundreds of pairs of lungs tried to raise the roof by shouting, cheering, clapping and stomping.

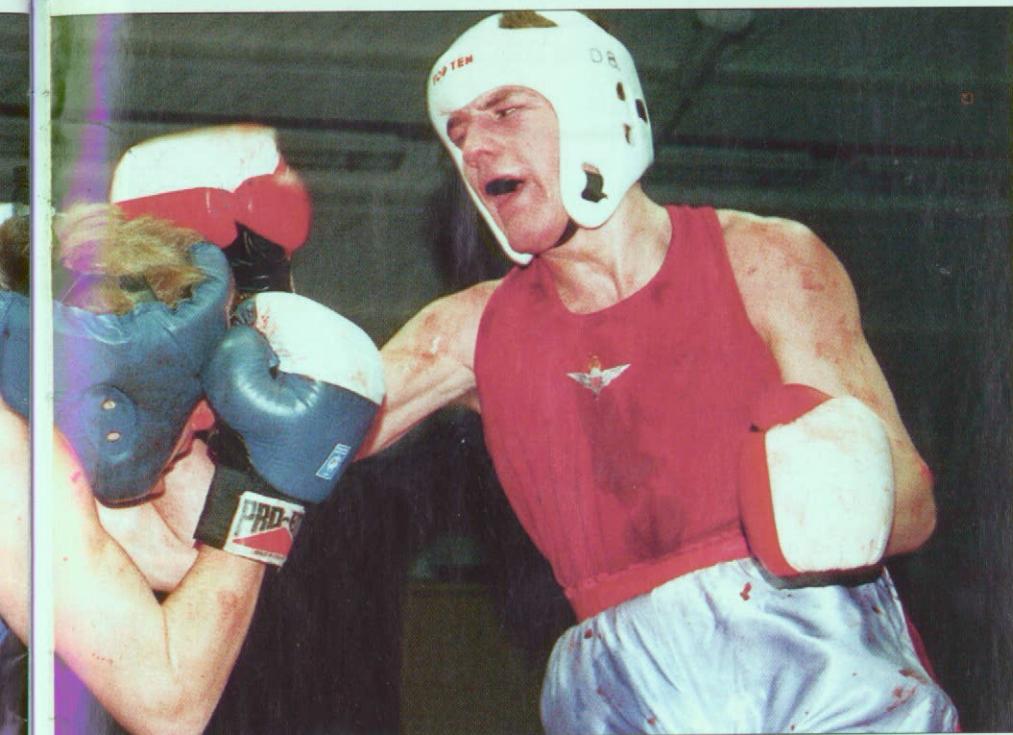
There was, of course, no hint of unsporting behaviour from the smartly turned-out paras, who could have taught the fans at Wimbledon's centre court a thing or two about etiquette. When the master of ceremonies, the RSM, blew his whistle for silence, you could have heard a gumshield drop.

CONGRATULATIONS

After every bout the winners and losers went to the opposite corner to congratulate their opponent. This was sport at its purest. What stuck in the mind was not the winning, and certainly not the taking apart.

It was the fact that these soldiers came together, gave their all, and produced an occasion with more magic than a dozen professional contests. When Tyson beat Francis it was a narrow decision as to who was the biggest loser. Tyson, Francis or the punters.

In Aldershot, everyone went home from the Maida Gym feeling like a winner.



Bubbles's hopes burst by Oakes

A CRUNCHING right hook thrown by Sgt Chris Oakes of 2 Para in the third round of his heavyweight contest against Pte James "Bubbles" Rutherford changed the course of the evening. Trailing by three bouts to four, the 2nd Battalion could not afford another defeat, and Rutherford had fought back from a standing count in the first round to threaten just that.

Oakes looked the stronger but was frustrated by the 1 Para man's straighter punches, which earned him the second round and had him shading the third until that devastating hook left the referee no option but to stop the contest.

It was a terrific comeback by 2 Para, who needed to win the last three bouts to progress to a semi-final reckoning against Northern Ireland-based 1 R Anglian.

Pte Danny Field duly made it 5-4 with

a unanimous points decision in a frantic deciding welterweight contest.

Bantamweights Ptes Keith Gibson (2 Para) and Pte Andrew Martin set the tone for the evening with a pulsating contest which could have gone either way. Gibson got the nod on a narrow majority decision, and with it the best boxer award. Martin's consolation was the best runner-up prize, presented to him in the ring by British heavyweight champion Julius Francis.

Other results (1 Para names first): Featherweight – Pte A Bonnally beat Pte L Easton, pts, u; light – Pte N Brett lost to Pte J Greaves, pts, u; light-welter – Pte D Bushby beat Pte B Hickman, pts, u; light-middle – Pte C McCash beat Pte P Shacklady, pts, m; middle – Pte W Snow beat LCpl G Smurthwaite, pts, m; light-heavy, Pte N Connolly lost to Pte S Loates, rsc 1; welter – Pte E Raymond lost to Pte D Field, pts, u.

SHORTS

Basketball bonanza

A TEAM from HQ ARRC/Sp Bn won the British Army (Germany) women's inter-unit basketball championships at JHQ. They beat 1 (UK) Armoured Division and Signal Regiment 17-3 and are looking forward to this month's Army championships in Grantham.

Slashers cut a dash

BATTALION rugby bounced back with a vengeance following a lay-off due to operational commitments, when The Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment took a squad of 30 on a tour of South Africa.

The Slashers played four hard games, winning two and losing two. The trip culminated in a 21-12 victory over Cape Town's oldest club, Hamiltons RFC.

Still taking the strain

TUG-OF-WAR international Maj Keith Layton (RAMC) is still taking the strain 27 years after picking up the sport.

In the winter season he trains with British Aircraft Corporation, one of the leading English indoor teams. The club's main weight class is 680kg, in which they are English, United Kingdom and world champions, and the squad is now in training to defend the titles.



Saddle up for Crimea

FRIENDS of Russian Children, a UK-based charity formed in 1993 to ease the plight of badly burned children in Russia, is looking for 50 adventurers to cycle 300km through the hills and former battlefields of the Crimea along the Black Sea coast. The event takes place from October 4-12 and Emma has more details on 01303 261 300.

This is not a wind-up

FANCY trekking across 100km of the Namib Desert in Namibia for the Mines Advisory Group charity? If you do, you will share the experience with clockwork radio inventor Trevor Baylis and actress Amanda Redman. Find out more by contacting The Big Event Company, 31 Morris Road, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 2AT. Telephone 01273 480048 or e-mail bigeco@aol.com

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High life pays off

Shepherd delighted with performance after altitude training

ONE of the strongest fields for years produced outstanding performances at the Army team and individual cross-country championships at Deepcut.

Right from the start LCpl Sophie Morris (R Sigs), fresh from altitude training in South Africa with the Army team, posted her intent by forging an unassailable lead. She won the six-kilometre women's race by 150 metres.

The strength of world veteran half-marathon champion Capt Lynn Higgs (APTC) told on the hills as she secured the runner-up slot ahead of last year's champion, and this year's bronze medallist, LCpl Nicky Dean.

The Army women have a formidable outfit for their defence of the Inter-Services title on the same course on March 3.

Team honours were won by 11 Signal Regiment, with Aldershot Garrison and RMAS filling the minor places.

The men's race was run over 9.6 km, with last year's champion, Cpl Alan Shepherd (RAMC), dominating from the start and winning by 53 seconds.

Uphill battle:
LCpl Sophie Morris

After his third consecutive Army cross-country title, Shepherd said: "I'm really pleased, I love this event and can't wait for the Inter-Services. Altitude training certainly works for me."

LBdr Joe Foreshew (RHA) reproduced form similar to his pre-Army England junior years by stretching his long legs on the flat for an 11-second advantage over third-placed SSgt Craig McBurney (1 LI).

The only man in the field able to give Shepherd a race was England representa-



Chase is on: More than 450 athletes in one of the strongest fields for years set out

tive Sgt Andy Arrand (RLC), who was nursing a bad back and ran tentatively to finish a "mere 4th".

Most improved athlete during the last 12 months was Sgt Rod Leach (APTC). He astonished all in South Africa with his 100-miles-a-week schedule and impressed with holding second place for a large part of the race. He eventually finished seventh, a tantalising 23 seconds outside the medals.

Other individual honours went to outstanding prospect Sig Tom Grady (R Sigs) in the junior category and a third consecutive win for Capt Steve Lonn.



Front-runner: Cpl Alan Shepherd's pace destroyed the field

(RLC) in the veterans' category. All four individual titles and seven of the top ten in the men's race clearly reaped the benefits of the three-week altitude training camp in South Africa.

With the full physiological benefits not expected until two weeks after their return and lasting up to six weeks, expectations are high for Army success in the Inter-Services match.

Major unit team honours went to a resurgent 1 Para led by their trainer LCpl Jim Aspell; their second scorer, Pte Dave Stevens, is another one for the future, having already broken 15min for 5,000 metres as an 18-year-old.

Second were 3 UK Division HQ and Signal Regiment, and third 13 Air Assault Brigades.

The minor unit championships were dominated by Army relay champions Training Regiment and Depot RLC, ahead of divisional winners HQ 4 Division and third-placed UKSUS SHAPE.

The junior team title went to 11 Signal Regiment ahead of Army School of Catering and ITC Catterick.

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

Do not include anything else in your envelope.

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

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

Name : (Give initials and rank or title)

Address:

January competition (No 698): First correct entry drawn was from Mr R Steward, of Sidmouth, who wins £100. Runners-up were Mrs C Farmer of SEAE Arborfield Garrison and Mr L G Gray, of Ramsgate, who each receive a £10 gift voucher. The ten differences were: barracks windows; centre soldier's hand and skate; left-hand soldier's scarf; water droplets; basketball net on hut; tree branches; sergeant's epaulette and sleeve; lines on ice.



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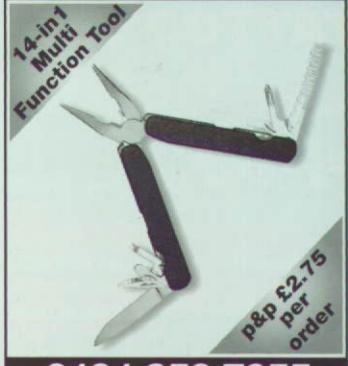
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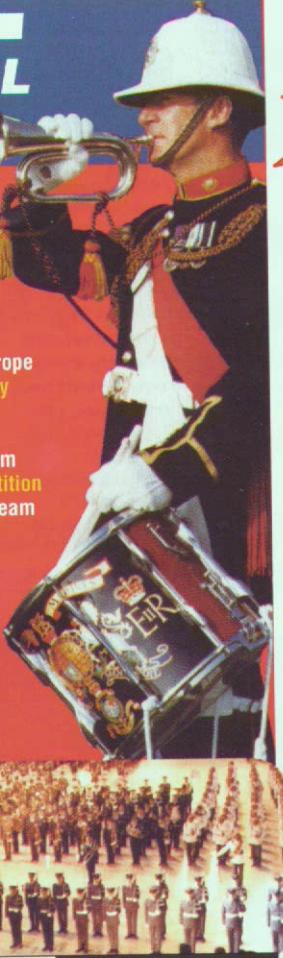
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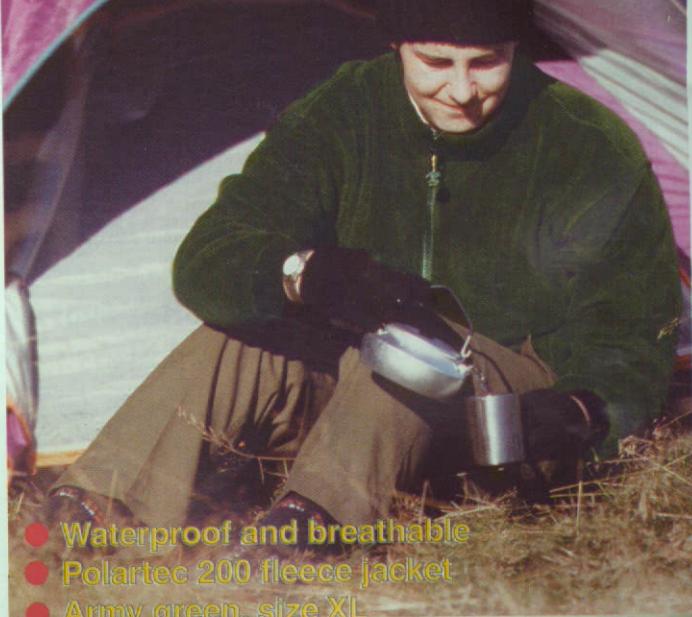
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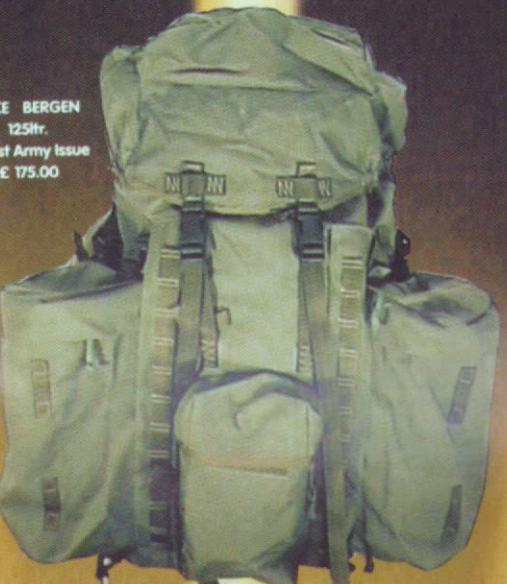
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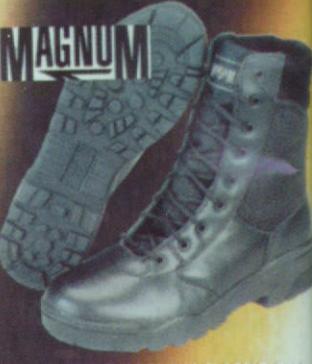
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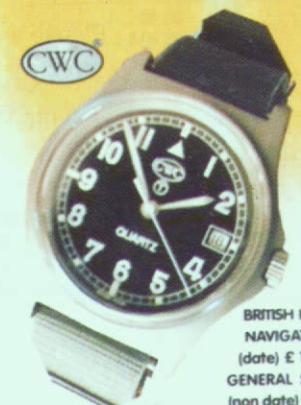
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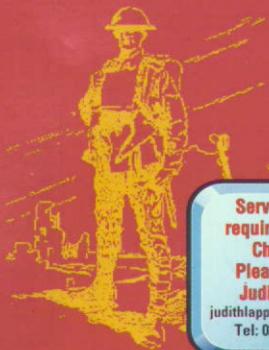


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TO ADVERTISE FOR A PEN PAL.
Please send for details enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: **Soldier Magazine, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2DU.**

Louise, 19, 5'3", brown hair and brown eyes. Enjoys swimming, tennis, socialising, clubbing and travelling. Would like to hear from caring soldiers with GSOH serving worldwide and will reply to all letters. Photo appreciated. **P636**

Male officer - sincere, slim, tall non-smoker in late 30s, new Oxford. Enjoys walking, dogs, skiing, cooking, music, classic cars, history. Photo appreciated. Looking forward to your letter. **P637**

Antonietta, 29-year-old Italian, brown-eyed blonde. Bubbly, non-smoking civil servant who enjoys listening to music, pubbing and clubbing, reading horoscopes, eating out and going to the cinema. Seeking pen pals, 30-36. **P638**

Elizabeth, slim, attractive and intelligent 27-year-old with VGSOH. Interests include pubs/clubs, dancing, most types of music (especially Madonna), the cinema and eating out. Replies and photo please from pen pals, 25-35. **P639**

Cheryl, 40, slim, attractive classy lady with great personality would like to write to a Prince Charming with similar interests (keep fit and diet, socialising, films and holidays). Age sought, 32-45. **P640**

Beverley, 5'7", 31, brown hair and blue eyes. A single, working mum with own home and car who enjoys reading, music, eating out, socialising, the cinema, nightclubs and pubs. Would like to hear from pen pals, 29-36. **P641**

Hayley, 5'4", 30, dark hair and dark eyes with VGSOH. Single mum to three-year-old daughter and enjoys general knowledge quizzes and Formula 1 racing. Replies please from those 30-40. **P642**

Elissa, 34-year-old nurse with fair hair and blue/green eyes. Enjoys reading, writing letters, travelling (abroad and in the UK), aerobics, listening to music and socialising. Seeking letters from pen pals, 30-40, and will reply to all. **P643**

Julie, 27, blue-eyed blonde with cuddly build and bubbly personality. A non-smoker who likes pubs, clubs, eating out and the cinema and would like to hear from reliable pen pals, 25+. **P644**

Carol, 5', 31-year-old slim, attractive, green-eyed blonde. A fun-loving, single hairdresser who enjoys pubs, clubs, eating out and foreign holidays. Seeking replies from single pen pals, 27-35. **P645**

Attention! Lynn, 39, 5'3", bubbly, brown hair, brown eyes, fun personality and out-going nature. Enjoys clubbing, travel, reading, walking and knitting. Single pen pals sought, especially Geordie/Irish soldiers, 33-45. Photo if possible. **P646**

Jacqueline, 39, single, shy, sensitive, single mother of three. Enjoys reading, knitting, walking, the cinema, gardening, eating out, cooking, tapestry, nights in and having a laugh. Would like replies from pen pals in their 30s and 40s. **P647**

Jackie, 40, 5'2", Irish, with an independent professional career. Enjoys live music, traditional pubs, country life, the arts, boxing and reading. Seeking genuine pen pals, 38-50. **P648**

Loyal lady, classy, articulate, independent, 41. Enjoys socialising, travel, the cinema, candlelight dinners. Would like to correspond with reliable, mature officer. 30+. **P649**

Jane, 41, attractive with brown hair and blue eyes. Likes to read, write letters, enter competitions, cook and keep fit. Seeking male soldiers, 36-50, as pen pals. **P650**

Karen, 30-year-old, single, Man U fan with brown eyes and brown hair. Likes playing on the Playstation and PC, ten-pin bowling, music, the cinema and puzzle competitions. Seeking pen pals, 26+. **P651**

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NOTICES

Charity Commission

CHARITY:

The Army Roman Catholic Trust

REFERENCE: 1051643 / 113288

The Charity Commission proposes to make a Scheme to amend the trusts of this charity. A copy of the draft Scheme can be seen at the Ministry of Defence (Chaplains) Army, Trenchard Lines, Upavon, Pewsey, Wiltshire from February 29 to March 21 2000 or can be obtained by sending a stamped, addressed envelope to the Charity Commission, Woodfield House, Tangier, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4BL, quoting the above reference. Comments or representations can be made within one month from today.

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04/00

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Charity Commission

CHY-1161D

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WALES

REFERENCE: EN/78168/AFC1

The Charity Commission has made a Scheme to amend the trusts of these charities. A copy can be seen for the next month at The Royal Regiment of Wales (24th/41st Foot) Regimental Headquarters, The Barracks, Cardiff CF4 3YE or can be obtained by sending a stamped, addressed envelope to The Charity Commission, Woodfield House, Tangier, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4BL, quoting the above reference.

CHARITY: The Gurkha Museum
REFERENCE: 272426 / 105790

The Charity Commission proposes to make a Scheme for this charity. (A Scheme is a legal document made by the Charity Commission to replace, amend or add to the trusts of a charity.) A copy of the draft Scheme can be seen at The Gurkha Museum, Peninsula Barracks, Romsey Road, Winchester SO23 8TS or a copy can be obtained by sending a stamped, addressed envelope to The Charity Commission, Woodfield House, Tangier, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4BL quoting the above reference number. Comments or representations on these proposals can be made in writing to the Charity Commission within one month from the date of this notice.

Date: March 1, 2000

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ARMY SPORTS LOTTERY RESULTS

JANUARY 22, 2000

First prize (23 goals, £4,100): WO2 PWH Armstrong, HQ N1.

19-way tie for second prize (22 goals, £363.16 each): WO2 AS Baird, Exeter UOTC; Sgt IS Bewick, MOD London; Sgt CA Bruce, HQ N1; SSgt P Dean, Sp Bn HQ ARRC, Rheindahlen; Cpl D Firth, 1 BW, Fort George; LCpl B Fox, 2 RTR, Fallingbostel; LCpl C Fraser, 2 RTR, Fallingbostel; SSgt M S Gibbons, 4 Fd Amb, Aldershot; Lt Col D C N Giles, HQ 1 (UK) Armd Div, Herford; Pte SW Hall, 1 RGBW, Colchester; SSgt S Holland, RMP CPU, Longmoor; Cpl MJ Howard, 4 R Irish; WO2 C D Howitt, HQ Land, Wilton; Pte JE Jacques, 1 PWRR, Tidworth; Cpl MI Morgan, 14 Indep Topo Sqn RE, Mönchengladbach; Maj MN Munday, JSCSC, Bracknell; Pte S Singh, 3 Armd Fd Amb, Senninger; LCpl R Townsley, HQ Woolwich Garrison; Maj MJS Urch, HQ QMG, Andover.

JANUARY 29, 2000

25-way tie for first prize (19 goals, £440 each): Sgt SN Baker, 32 Engr Regt, Hohne; Spr JL Butler, 1 RSME Regt, Chatham; Maj SP Casey, 7 Sqn GL Sect, Odiham; Maj A Dear, SEME, Bordon; Maj MDC Devlin, MOD, London; WO2 AD Downes, 600 Signal Tp, Corsham; Spr NA Fassam, 42 Svy Engr Gp, Hermitage; LCpl CW Hassell, 99 PC Sqn RLC, Rheindahlen; Cpl RB Hibberd, BATU, Suffield; Sgt MG Jehu, 1 GS Regt RLC, Gütersloh; Sgt SP Johnson, 111 Pro Coy RMP, Hohne; Maj RG Lewis, JSCSC, Bracknell; Cpl GL Lukins, QDG, Catterick; Sgt JA Mackay, 249 Signal Sqn, Bulford; Cpl SJ Martin, 6 Sup Regt RLC,

Gütersloh; Maj JW McCulloch, ATDU, Bovington; Cpl IP Navin, HQ 43 (Wx) Bde, Bulford; SSgt J Richardson, 14 Sup Regt RLC, Dülmen; Cpl A Rollett, 1 LI, Edinburgh; Capt PT Smith, 10 Tp Regt RLC, Colchester; Capt HC Smith, QDG, Catterick; Pte AH Watkins, 1 KORBR, Catterick; Sjt IA Whincup, 2 LI, Bulford; SSgt WRD Wilson, 1 RSME Regt, Chatham; Lt RE Windsor, 2 LI, Bulford.

FEBRUARY 5, 2000

Four-way tie for first prize (20 goals, £2,225 each): Cpl SJ Hay, Army Dog Unit N1; Sig MJ Hogarth, 1 (UK) ADSR, Herford; Capt SJ Shephard, 7 Para RHA, Aldershot; Lt NKG Tomlin, 1 BW, Fort George.

25-way tie for fifth prize (19 goals, £96 each): Cfn RP Berryman, 3 CS Regt RLC, Abingdon; Tpr CDR Ramsden, HCMR, London; Tpr JA Burnett, 2 RTR, Fallingbostel; LCpl D Rees, 47 AD Sqn RLC, Lyneham; Maj M Chambers, DERA, Chertsey; LCpl DS Sardesai, 33 Engr Regt (EOD), Wimbish; Sgt JJ Dowding, 3 (UK) Div Signal Regt, Bulford; Cpl GL Smith, 4 Regt RA, Osnabrück; Maj C Dowie, JSSU Digby; Sgt AR Stafford, 2 Bn REME, Fallingbostel; Cpl KL Edwards, 7 Para RHA, Aldershot; WO2 G Strachan, SA Avn, Middle Wallop; Capt SN Gadd, 22 Engr Regt, Andover; Cpl RP Swindle, Army Foundation College, Harrogate; Cpl JFC Green, HQ 3 (UK) Div, Bulford; Sgt MC Jones, Sp Bn HQ ARRC, Rheindahlen; WO2 SJ Tate, 26 Regt RA, Gütersloh; Cpl SRM Kermath, UKDSU Heidelberg; WO2 CAB Von-Roretz, 2 Trg Regt, AAC, Middle Wallop; Cpl MJ Langley, ATR Winchester; WO2

RJW Malt, 21 Signal Regt (AS), Colerne; Sgt CJ Walker, 150 Pro Coy RMP, Catterick; Cpl A Moore, 4 Fd Amb, Aldershot; Lt Col VA Wellington, 34 Fd Hosp, Strensall; Sgt PA Murray, 35 Engr Regt, Paderborn.

Due to continuing increase in ticket sales, the weekly prize money has risen to £11,300 with a top prize of £4,200.

FEBRUARY 12, 2000

Two-way tie for first prize (20 goals, £3,150 each): Maj GA Evans, ITC Wales, Brecon; Cpl SA Simpson, 2 Regt RMP.

25-way tie for fifth prize (19 goals, £3,200 each): Sgt PL Brindle, 1 Regt AAC, Gütersloh; Tpr KE Burn, The Light Dragoons, Hohne; Cpl C Dixon, APDO N1; Maj B Ferguson, RHQ R Irish; Maj RB Foster, HQ BFB Gibraltar; LCpl ZM Grimshaw, 1 GS Regt RLC, Gütersloh; Cpl SSA Henderson, ITC Catterick; WO2 PJ Jones, RAC Gunnery School, Lulworth; Cpl JM Kerr, 1 Bn REME, Osnabrück; Spr MJ Lanwarne, 42 Svy Engr Gp, Hermitage; Cpl JE Lynn, 2 LI, Bulford; SSgt M Mould, Sp Bn HQ ARRC, Rheindahlen; SSgt DG Parker, 32 Engr Regt, Hohne; SSgt J Provan, 9 Sup Regt RLC, Chippenham; WO2 PF Quilliam, 3 RSME Regt, Minley; Sgt LJ Robinson, 7 Signal Regt, Krefeld; LCpl MS Saw, 623 Veh Tp, Mönchengladbach; Cpl PG Searle, 47 Regt RA, Thorney Island; SSgt (name withheld), PATA, Hereford; SSgt EL Simpson, ATR Winchester; CSgt Slater, ATR Pirbright; Capt LA Tilley, 2 Regt RMP; Maj AGL Troulan, 35 Engr Regt, Paderborn; Capt LA White, Army Foundation College, Harrogate; CSgt J Woods, KCR, Liverpool.

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Change of faces at QRL

WO1 (RSM) Tony Stirling, left, has taken over as Regimental Sergeant Major of The Queen's Royal Lancers in succession to the newly-commissioned Capt Mark Davies, right, who has moved on to new duties in the regiment.



Bigger, better JHQ show

Organisers of Rheindahlen's **JHQ Summer Show 2000** over the weekend May 20-21 promise a cracking programme of modern military skills and displays, massed bands, pipes and drums... plus a demonstration of a

slightly more old-fashioned way of going to war. For the first time at JHQ, the Knights of Arkley will be reproducing the thrills and splendour of the jousting tournaments of medieval England.

A feature of the weekend will be a country fair, exporting to Germany the best of British clothes, food and entertainment, including morris dancers and sheep dog demonstrations.

RAOC view of Palestine

RAOC veterans of the British Mandate in Palestine may be interested in *Palestine Scrapbook*, a quarterly journal compiled from the memories of those who served there 50 years ago. The 16-page, A4 publication is packed with anecdotes, letters and long-forgotten photographs of those who were there.

For a free sample copy and details of how to join the Palestine Scrapbook Circle, contact editor Eric Lowe, Windgather Cottage, 20 Treloar Road, Hayling Island, Hants PO11 9SE (tel or fax 023 9246 7181) or e-mail him on diandrew@isys.ca

DATES

APRIL

29: British Model Soldier Society annual show, New Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, Holborn, London, 10.30-6.

MAY

7: Victorian Military Fair, Victory Services Club, Seymour Street, London W2.

20-21: JHQ Summer Show 2000, Rheindahlen, Germany.

27-28: London International Tattoo 2000, Wembley Arena.

27-28: Overlord 2000 Historic Military Vehicle Show, Denmead, near Portsmouth (enquiries 023 9224 1911).

JUNE

17: Oxon & Bucks Millennium Tattoo, Thame (01189 723717).

JULY

8-9: Parachute Spectacular, Southsea Common, Hants.

10-15: Royal Military Tattoo 2000, Horse Guards Parade, in aid of principal Service charities.

SEPTEMBER

5-10: Middle Wallop International Air Show (information/ticket hotline 0115 912 9196; website www.mwias.com)

To include public events, contact the Editor.

Legionnaires honour Isle of Wight comrade

IN a unique gesture, a detachment from the élite French Foreign Legion attended the Isle of Wight funeral of Andrew Nisbet, a locally-educated man who became a highly-decorated member of the Legion and who was killed in a car accident in France in December.

The funeral was also attended by former Legionnaires from all over the United Kingdom.

Andrew Nisbet, 35, who died on the day he received news that he had been promoted, lived in the Nîmes area. A funeral service with full military honours was held in France before his burial at St Edmund's Church, Wootton, where the Legion detachment, under the command of a senior officer, acted as pallbearers.

It is thought to be the first time a Legion guard has performed the ceremony in the UK.

Mr Nisbet saw active service in Africa and the Balkans. He was cited for bravery and won the Croix de la Valeur Militaire. An expert in ballistics and rifle design, he had recently formed an élite cadre of snipers within the Legion.



Double value: William Rigby, front right, enlists into the Guards Division at the Army Careers Information Office at Tunbridge Wells a month after his twin brother, John, pictured left, walked through the same doors to join The Parachute Regiment. Between them is Lt Col Rod Jennings, Army Careers Officer for Kent, and behind him is Sgt Mel Collins, flanked by the twins' parents. William will be joining John at the Army Foundation College, Harrogate.

Guardian of Deerolt gate

An AFV 432 armoured vehicle is to be "unveiled" at the entrance to Deerolt Camp in County Durham on April 25. The former military establishment – occupied by the Army for the best part of 200 years – is now a prison for young offenders. Deerolt's military history dates back to 1803 and ended in 1972. The AFV 432 was donated by the Quartermaster General following promptings by local historian Frank Smith.

Help me to honour our veterans, says campaign founder

Michael Lyons is a man with a mission... to ensure that First World War veterans who have outlived relatives and friends are buried with honour. He needs volunteers to join him in his work with the **First World War Veteran Campaign**, which he has founded. Michael, who is chairman of the Royal British Legion Branch at New Addington, Croydon, and of the local branch of Age Concern, was touched

Blue is the

Sgt Stuart Parker gives scale to one of three sundials constructed as a millennium-marking project by the Royal Engineers. The sundials, built from blue engineering bricks and blue-dyed mortar, can be seen outside the RE Museum in Chatham, at the Millennium Village in Greenwich and in Blackfriars on the north bank of the Thames.

Stuart is serving with Ripon-based 51 Field Squadron (Air Assault) RE, one of many units which contributed to the building effort.

Deep reinforced concrete foundations were put in to ensure the sundials would last for the next 1,000 years. Sapper builders were invited to the three unveiling ceremonies, during which time capsules containing details of the project and the names of every member of the corps were placed in the constructions.

And as a reminder of their contribution, every sapper who worked on the sundials received a silver-plated trowel.

colour of time



Sound the trumpets

New contest will sustain link with Sovereign

IN an effort to sustain a musical tradition which dates back to the 17th century, the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment has been encouraging soldiers to take up the trumpet.

LCpl of Horse Gilbert Wheeler, Trumpet Major of The Life Guards, assisted by Trumpet Corporal LCpl Michael Walters, has been teaching established musicians and newcomers how to play the *Royal Salute* and other calls such as *Fall-in the Officers and General Parade*.

Their efforts culminated in the first of what will become an annual competition, inaugurated by commanding officer Lt Col Mark Ridley, to find the best musician.

Winner of a silver state trumpet trophy – and the honour of playing on the Queen's Birthday Parade – was Tpr David Edmond of the Blues and Royals.

It has become increasingly difficult for the regiment to attract trumpeters to continue a tradition which goes back at least as far as May 1660, when Charles II was escorted into London by three troops of Life Guards, kettle drummers and trumpeters. It was the start of



Top trumpeter: Tpr David Edmond receives his silver trumpet from Col Sandy Blackett, Director CAMUS and Commandant Royal School of Military Music, Kneller Hall

a long association between the Sovereign and trumpeters of the Household Cavalry.

These days their chief duty is to play a salute when passing Buckingham Palace on the daily Queen's Life Guard, an event witnessed by hundreds of thousands of tourists each year.

Taff's old Jordan brigade comes up trumps... again

Veterans who bought the Jordan Service Medal will be interested to learn that they donated £3,613 to the King Hussein Memorial Fund, which will be used by Queen Noor Al Hussein to support children's charities in Jordan.

The medal was personally endorsed by King Hussein following an approach by former sapper Taff Harris, a veteran of 1 Troop, 23 Field Squadron RE. He was one of more than 2,000 troops of the 16th Independent Parachute Brigade who flew to Amman in 1958 as crisis flared in the desert kingdom.

Annoyed that their campaign was never recognised by a medal, the veterans commissioned their own, featuring the head of the late and much-lamented monarch.

Taff wrote to all who had bought the medal and asked for a donation to memorial fund. He says the response was superb and included a battered £2 postal order attached to a sheet from an exercise book with the following message: "Sorry I'm late. I've just come out of a drug abuse course and am homeless and out of work. As soon as I get a job I will send you more for those children in Jordan."

Legends of the regiments and corps

9 Royal Green Jackets Museum Winchester



Big picture: the Waterloo diorama in the RGJ Museum

Model flank attack led to Boney's rout

WHEN Napoleon escaped from exile on the island of Elba to lead his army to the decisive battle of the war at Waterloo, the 52nd Light Infantry found itself brigaded with the 95th and 71st and started the day in reserve.

They moved forward to resist successive attacks by French cavalry and their position was crucial when Bonaparte launched his Imperial Guard in a final stroke against the centre of the British line.

GENERAL'S STUDY

The French were halted by the fire of Molland's Brigade of Guards and, as they faltered, Sir John Colborne led the 52nd in a charge against their flank which turned their advance into disorderly retreat and swept the French Army away with it.

In the Waterloo room at the Royal Green Jackets Museum is a model of the battlefield with more than 20,000 soldiers and horses and a sound-and-light commentary describing the action.

A key identifies the regiments of five armies and the many authentic incidents, great and small, are depicted. On one wall hang the portraits of some of the distinguished officers of the 52nd and 95th who took part. Other cases are filled with objects connected with the battle. The model measures an imposing 26ft by 13ft.

The Royal Green Jackets Museum in Peninsular Barracks, Romsey Road, Winchester (tel 01962 828549) is open Mon to Sat, 1000-1300 and 1400-1700 and on Sundays from 1200 to 1600. Admission for adults is £2, for senior citizens and children £1, and for groups of ten or more £1.25.

Bulletin board

Noted . . .

▲ PEGASUS Bridge – the original version – was placed on a memorial site close to the Caen Canal last month. The bridge, which was the first objective of the Allied invasion of Normandy in June 1944, was replaced by a bigger, grander version a few years ago. Since then it has lain unheralded in a field beside the canal. The Prince of Wales, Colonel-in-Chief of The Parachute Regiment, is to open the memorial site, complete with new museum to the British 6th Airborne Division, on June 4.

▲ CLOSING date for the 2000 Reserve Forces photographic competition is December 31. Details can be obtained from Maj Peter Clarke, RFC4/NELC, Duke of Yorks HQ, London SW3 4SS.

▲ CARDIFF chef Andy Collingwood, left, appeared on Croatian TV after he volunteered for regular service in Split. Andy, a catering manager in civilian life, is also a sergeant in 203 (Welsh) Field Hospital (V). Having started as 2iC of the catering department in Split, Andy was appointed master chef of the officers' mess for the remainder of his six-month tour in the Balkans.



REUNIONS

Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment: Back Badge reunion weekend, March 25-26. AGM and reunion, Cheltenham Town Hall, 1800, Mar 25; service, Gloucester Cathedral and luncheon, Mar 26. Send see for details to RHQ, Custom House, Gloucester GL1 2HE.

F Para Battery, 7 Para RHA: Ahmed Khel reunion weekend, April 7-8. Contact 2nd Lt Briffa or Sgt Tye on Aldershot Mil 2516 for reunion details.

Army Guild of Bellringers: Annual meeting and spring outing in the City of London on April 8, starting at 0950 outside Bank Underground Station. First tower is St Lawrence, Jewry, EC2. New members welcome. Names to Barry Sexton on 01483 474669.

1st,4th,7th Royal Tank Regiments: Annual reunion on April 28-30 at St John's Swallow

APPOINTMENTS

The Duke of Westminster has been appointed to the staff of HQ AG as Brigadier (Territorial Army), Jan 1.

Brigadiers: J B A Bailey to be Director HQ DRA, Feb 1; D R Bill to be Brigadier General Staff HQ Land, Jan 21; M A C Hughes to be Dir Army R&P, Jan 13; M N E Speller to be Asst Div Comd 3 (UK) Div, Jan 17; R M M Sykes to be Chief Fire Co-ordination, HQ ARRC, Jan 17.

Colonels: I D Cholerton to be Asst Dir DI RA, Jan 18; R Davenport to be Dep Comd HQ 11 Sig Bde, Jan 17; C F Hicks to be Dep Comd BMM Kuwait, Jan 12; P C Marsh to be Director Command Efficiency Unit, Jan 31; D McLay to be COS HQ R Signals, Feb 2; A C Mieville to be Dep Comd 12 Mech Bde/Dep Gar Comd HQ Aldershot Gar, Jan 22.



Warriors ancient and modern: Flanked by the stone effigy of an ancient knight, young soldiers fill Salisbury Cathedral during the Millennium Service, one of many held throughout the United Kingdom, Germany, Cyprus and the Falkland Islands to mark the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of Christ.

Aden history on the way

ADEN veterans take note: a yawning gap in military history is about to be filled with a 144-page book covering the entire period of British rule from 1839 to 1967 – but you need to get in early.

The Armed Forces of Aden 1839-1967, by Cliff Lord and David Birtles, is being published at £29.95 in a strictly limited edition of 500 individually numbered hardback copies.

They will be available next month from Helion & Company, 26 Willow Road, Solihull, W Midlands, B91 1UE (0121 705 3393; e-mail, books@helion.co.uk).

Military Survey Branch REA, 1 Majorca Avenue, Andover, Hants SP10 1JW.

Guards Association of New South Wales: Annual reunion, March 11-18, 2001 at Bowral, NSW, Australia. Details: John Fallows, 1/25 Dalley Street, Bondi Junction, Sydney NSW 2022.

61st Light Regiment RA: Second reunion planned for May 18-19, 2001 at Cranfield University. Contact David Drinkwater, Camusfearna, Birchmoss, Echt, Westhill, Aberdeenshire AB32 6XL (tel 01330 860351). Korean War mortar gunners welcome.

Military Survey Branch, RE Association: Major reunion planned at Hermitage on Aug 26. Details from Alan Gordon, Hon Sec,

Lieutenant Colonels: A Amber LI – to DMO, Dec 13; N M B Barnard AGC(RMP) – to HQ UKSC(G), Feb 21; M D Blagbrough, Cheshire – to MA/CDS, Feb 21; C C S Booth LI – to JHQ South, Feb 22; J A Bowden RE – to JSCSC, Nov 29; P C Brook RLC – to HQ ARRC, Oct 11; E D Brown RGBW – to DASD, Jan 31; D S Bruce DWR – to JSCSC, Nov 29; S Caraffi RTR – to PJHQ (UK), Feb 21; R C L Clifford RDG – to IMS Brussels, Nov 29; J C Douglas, R Irish – to MLO Harare, Nov 29; F D F Drury, R Irish – to MWC, Feb 14; C J Finch, Para – to ACDS (OR) LAND, Feb 1; A Flavell, Para – to RASU, Jan 17; I P Graham REME – to BLO France, Apr 10; J C Hardy LI – to SRSG UNMIL, Jan 7; I G Hitchcock RE – to HQ SFOR, Nov 24.

A D Hutchison, Gren Gds – to HQ DGTS, May 2; J A F Howard KRH – to HQ RG, Mar 20; J R Ibbotson, Para – to HQ Land, Apr 3; R

M Iron KORBR – to JSCSC, Feb 28; A D Johnston RHF – to JMC Kampala, Nov 29; P D Jones PWO – to HQ SACLANT, Aug 20; D M Lampshire RLC – to HQ ARRC, Feb 28; D N Macgregor-Smith, A and SH – to HQ BF Cyprus, May 15; C J Martindill AGC(ETS) – to SHAPE, Feb 28; N Moore REME – to BLO Germany, Oct 28; N A Murdoch AGC – to AFPAA, Dec 13; M C Neate RA – to JSCSC, May 2; J K R Porter RRF – to Warminster Sp Unit, Mar 13; A H Pryce PWRR – to ACDS(OR) Land, Apr 1.

M J Shearman QLR – to APT, Mar 20; D J Shouesmith RLC – to JDCC, June 26; J R M Stanton KOSB – to HQ AG, Nov 15; J I S Stevenson RS – to JSCSC, Jan 3; R D Symonds R Signals – to BMLO Freetown, Dec 12; A J Tabor LD – to JSCSC, Jan 17; G W C Waddell RA – to MONUC, Nov 29; M R Walton MC RA – to COMBRITCON UNTAET, Nov 29;

Picture: Sgt Richard Dawson RLC

Fine stuff from Welsh Terriers

THE Royal Welsh Regiment came into being last year with the cuts and amalgamations made in the Territorial Army. The Territorial Army Band of Wales (RRW) became part of the new regiment and have recently cut its first disc, titled *The Goat Majors* (DOYEN CD 099).

Although it is described as the regimental band, would-be purchasers should be aware that this is in fact a Territorial Army brass band, not a regimental military band.

The first part is devoted to marches and march-type pieces and the second is well-varied concert material. Their programme includes, among others, *The Goat Majors* (especially composed for this recording), *Cornish Cavalier*, *Le Rêve Passé*, *Bally Castle Bay*, *Caerphilly Castle*, *Let's Face The Music and Dance*, *My Grandfather's Clock*, and *Cwm Rhondda*. A very fine performance and an excellent recording.

One of the famous names to disappear with the TA cuts was the **Band of The Royal Gloucestershire Hussars**. A few months before disbanded they recorded a

programme of concert music which included tunes from the film *Titanic*, *Greensleeves*, *Linden Lea*, *Tin Pan Alley*, *The Archers* (theme tune), several solos and the four regimental marches of The Royal Wessex Yeomanry. What a pity such a fine band has had to go. (DROIT Music TRCD 994).

Back with the Regular Army, the **Band of the Coldstream Guards** seems to spend much of its free time in the recording studio and has here produced a programme entitled *Marches for the Connoisseur* (Bandleader CD BNA 5152) – a fine collection of 23 good parade marches from Europe and USA. Among the lesser-known works are *The Peacemaker* (Lotter), *British Eighth* (Elliot), *Young Courageous* (Lovell), *The Liberators* (Charles Ancliffe) and finally *Europe United* (Zehle).

Also on the Bandleader label is the **Band of the Irish Guards** playing *Marches of the Two World Wars* (Bandleader CD BNA 5156). It's a good collection of parade



marches, even if most have already appeared on compact disc.

Six of the 22 are by Kenneth Alford and two by his younger brother, Leo Stanley. The programme ends appropriately with *American Legion* and Bidgood's *The British Legion*, wrongly titled here as *The Royal British Legion*: the "Legion" has been granted the royal title, the march remains the same.

As can be seen from track listing of *Marches of the Two World Wars*, the Irish Guards programme consists in the main of marches that most collectors will already have on disc, but there are a few rarities and all-in-all this is a wonderful collection. I was particularly pleased to see *Flying Fortress March* and *Guadalcanal* included.

A nice balance between cornets and euphonium in the former. The band produces a good solid sound and generally speaking the balance is good with dynamics and style convincing.

● A version of this review appeared in the January issue.

SEARCHLINE

SOE: Independent documentary production company making a four-part series for the BBC on the Special Operations Executive (SOE) seeks first-hand advice, information. Call Dominic Sutherland on 0171 482 7027.

Historian working on research project about Jewish libraries looted by the Nazis in **Austria** and their partial return after 1945 seeks information from former members of the **British occupation army**, especially **Maj J F Hayward**, who was stationed in Klagenfurt from Aug 1945 until Feb 1946, **Maj R A "Ras" Skelton** and **Maj T H Brooke**. Contact Dr Evelyn Adunka, Deinhardsteingasse 18/9, 1160 Vienna, Austria (tel/fax 43 1 485 83 86).

R Brown seeks news of **11423307 Driver Fred Wilkinson**, E Troop, 44 Battery, 13 Anti-Tank Regt RA, MEF, with who he served in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders during the Second World War in Africa, Italy, Palestine

M N Whyte, Int Corps – to JSCSC, Dec 2; P P Winchcombe RLC – to D Log Planning (A), May 2.

P A Astle, Cheshire – to DOC, Apr 10; J N Baird, Para – to HQ Land, Apr 25; R K G Dutton RA – to FLS, June 26; A A Ewell, R Signals – to DCSA EMS, Dec 17; A R Fairclough AGC – to SAAS, Feb 2; M E Faulkner RLC – to DPCS, May 7; R A L Gilchrist BW – to HQ 2 Div, Jan 24; A M Green RLC – to HQ Land, Oct 6; D A Gruncell, R Signals – to AD Info, Jan 31; G H Hony RGBW – to HQ MNB(C), Jan 31; R F Jammes RTR – to HQ ARRC, Feb 4; D T F Jukes AGC – to AGC Trg Gp, Jan 14; R C Mantell GH – to Eurocorps; H W McMahon RLC – to HQ Land, Apr 10.

N P Metcalfe, R Signals – to PJHQ (UK), Jan 10; P H K Miller REME – to HQ RM, Apr 24; N D Morrison RLC – to HQ 2 Div, Feb 7; G

and Egypt. Replies to 51 Coltsfoot Close, Amesbury, Wilts SP4 7NP (tel 01980 624303).

George B Crawford, 3440 Parkridge Cir, Canton, OH 44718-3146, USA, wants to know why he was told in the 1950s that he was not eligible for a Defence Medal despite serving 909 days in the Army and Home Guard during the Second World War. He was subsequently informed that the requirement was three years and wonders if there was any protest at this decision in the years 1948 to 1952.

Scottish Weekend at the castle in Alden Biesen, Belgium over the weekend Sept 9-10 will include Belgian pipe band championships, Highland Games and Scottish and Irish music. Details on www.scottish-weekend.com

Korean War 50th anniversary: Photographic display, parade, march past and special events, Queens Avenue, Aldershot, on June 25.

M Moynan KOSB – to HQ ARRC, Feb 15; M A D Newman PWRR – to BMM Kuwait, Jan 26; G P R Norton, Gren Gds – to JSCSC, May 2; P A Robson RWF – to DEP, Feb 21; A Schumacher KORBR – to BMM Kuwait, Nov 15; M P Shapland RTR – to PJHQ(UK), Mar 13; R A Sharp, R Signals – to HQ Land, Jan 16; A H Simon RLC – to HQ DLO, Jan 24; O D A Smith, Cheshire – to BATT Kenya, Mar 18; G M Smith R Signals – to JHC, Jan 10; C Wakerley, R Signals – to PJHQ(UK), Mar 6; S P Wallis, R Signals – to APC, Dec 15; D V Watson PWRR – to RHQ AFNORTH, Jan 19; J A H Welch RE – to HQ RSME, Dec 13; R P Winser RGJ – to HQ AMF(L), Apr 3.

Retirement

Colonels: S C H Ashworth, late WFR, Jan 14; M I Keun, late RTR, Jan 21; A J Reed Screen, late RE, Jan 21.

Lawson Kent seeks photos of **Centurion** main battle tanks, AVREs, ARVs, particularly AVREs in the Gulf conflict. Expenses refunded. Replies to 129 Moresk Road, Truro, Cornwall TR1 1BP (tel 01872 241128 or 07887 873973).

Calling **Maj (Retd) Tim Morris**, ex-7 GR, former OC GDC Brecon, 1994. If you would like information regarding Capt (QGO) (Retd) Tanka Bahadur Limbu, 10 GR/RGR, 2iC GDC Brecon 1994, please contact Howard Johnson, 35 Maes-y-Sam Pentrich, Cardiff CF15 9QQ or tel 02920 891274.

PRIZE-WINNERS

Two tickets to the Royal Military Tattoo 2000 (tickets) (January issue): Miss Paula Newman, South Shields, Tyne and Wear. Answer: The King's Troop RHA.

Three copies of Dark Destroyer by Nigel Benn (Jan): Gds Pigott, 2 Coy, 1 Coldm Gds, BFPO 811; LCpl Spare, Army Boxing Team, Aldershot; LCpl McMahon, Army Boxing Team, Aldershot. Answer: Disc jockey.

Pair of Millennium Dome tickets (Jan): Mrs Sudha Rai, Camberley. Answer: Dec 31, 2000.

Pocket survival kit (Jan): Pat Crossland, Primary Management, Uniacke Barracks, Harrogate. Answer: 13 items.

Traser map reader (Jan): Cpl M Turnbull, 160 Pro Coy RMP, Aldershot. Answer: Tritium gas.

TWI/Carlton Television are currently producing *Britain at War*, the follow-up series to *The Second World War in Colour*, and seek urgently any colour film/home movies, home or abroad taken between 1930 and 1950, also diaries. Replies to Kyla Thorogood, 0181 233 5887 or e-mail kthorogood@imgworld.com

Collection to rank with the greatest

AS the first soldier to be denied promotion to field marshal on appointment to Chief of the

Defence Staff, Gen Sir Charles Guthrie, in his foreword to *The British Field Marshals 1736-1997*, is the first to register his approval of Dr Tony Heathcote's "inspired idea to bring all the holders of this coveted rank together in one book". He also

observes that this "fascinating and invaluable" biographical dictionary (Leo Cooper, £25), is in no way a dry reference work, its necessary detail being "greatly enlivened by anecdotes". Guaranteed to be well-thumbed.

Opening a window on 5,000 years of war

THE mere act of lifting open the cover of *The Timechart of Military History*, produced by Worth Press Ltd for a remarkably reasonable £17.99, is likely to

lead to many hours of absorbed study for warfare historians of all ages and at all levels. The large-format book covers 1,000 wars and 2,000 battles spanning 5,000 years – from Qadesh (the first recorded conflict) to the Balkans. It uses flow-charts, maps and illustrations and features analyses of great commanders.

Fresh insight into SOE Polish mission

FORMER Polish soldier Antoni Pospieszalski reveals in his foreword to *Operation Freston* that he learned more about the SOE mission from this well-

researched 90-page paperback than he ever did as one of the five agents parachuted into occupied Poland in 1944 to contact resistance leaders. This remarkable story of misplaced trust and unwavering loyalty is

available to *Soldier* readers at a discounted price of £5.50, inc UK p&p, direct from the author, Jeffrey Bines, at The Willows, 5 Barnard Close, Newport, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 3QE.

Sorry spectacle of costly errors

Great Military Blunders by Geoffrey Regan. (Channel 4 Books, £18.99.)



Gen Sir Michael Rose: 'Nato lacked moral courage in Kosovo' he says in the book

Kosovo, which he declares a "dismal failure".

Gen Rose, former commander of UN forces in Bosnia, pinpoints a collective weakness in the Atlantic alliance in the latter conflict.

"Ten thousand people were brutally slaughtered and a million people were driven from their homes because

Nato didn't have the moral courage to commit troops to the ground to stop these awful events from happening," he says.

Regan, in his series of indictments, cites failure of technology itself, as in last year's bombing of the Chinese embassy; poor leadership (Gen Redvers Buller in the Boer War); bad planning (the US hostage rescue attempt in Iran); underestimating the enemy (the fall of Singapore); hubris and nemesis (Montgomery and Arnhem); and politics (America's paranoiac-driven invasion of Grenada).

Lord Randolph Churchill, whose hero-villain son Winston does not escape Regan's wrath (for his Greek adventure), famously said that all great men make mistakes. The best motive for making a spectacle of the deadly serious business of military blunders would be to show how we have learned from them.

This treatment at least shows why they happened and, with its concise and well-illustrated narrative peppered with incisive quotes and sardonic asides, presents the whole sorry business in a palatable package. – CH

IN BRIEF

Beyond the Bamboo Screen compiled by Tom McGowran. Paperback compilation of the experiences of Scottish prisoners-of-war under the Japanese, in the form of extracts from association newsletters and other sources. (Cualann Press, 6 Corbach Drive, Dunfermline KY12 7XG; normal price £9.99, but £7.50 to former Far East PoWs.)

Two additions to Greenhill Books' GI Series: *The Fall of Fortress Europe* (From the Battle of the Bulge to the Crossing of the Rhine) and *Hell on Wheels* (The Men of the US Armored Forces, 1918 to the Present). Both by Christopher J Anderson and both in paperback at £7.50. Illustra-

tions from all 18 titles in this series, totalling more than 2,000 (250 in colour) have been indexed on the publisher's website, www.greenhillbooks.com

British Army 2000. Many superb colour plates illustrate this well-sponsored compendium of the history and antecedents of the 58 regiments and corps. Sales enquiries to the Army Benevolent Fund (to whom all proceeds go), 41 Queen's Gate, South Kensington, London SW7 5HR (0207 591 2000).

The Train Now Standing in Nomansland by Larry Harris. Former BBC correspondent's third time travel fantasy for young

readers tells the story of an incident at Cambrai in 1917 involving a requisitioned steam locomotive. (The Cartoon Cave, PO Box 5257, Oakham, Rutland; paperback, £5.99.)

Perhaps They Left Us Up There by Harold L Lake. Training in England and fighting in north Africa and Italy with the 166th (Newfoundland) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery. (Harry Cuff Publications Ltd, St John's, Newfoundland, paperback, C\$16.95.)

1939: The Alliance That Never Was and the Coming of World War II by Michael J. Carley. Analysis of the failure of negotiations between Britain, France and

Russia. (Ivan R Dee, Chicago; National Book Network, Richmond, Surrey; £20.99.)

In the Ranks of the CIV by Erskine Childers. Facsimile edition of 1901 account of the Boer War experiences of the House of Commons clerk who went on to write *Riddle of the Sands* and was later executed by a firing squad for being a member of Sinn Fein. (Spellmount, £19.95.)

First three titles in the new Spellmount Classics paperback series: *Thoughts on War* by B H Liddell Hart (£16.95), *Sedgemoor 1685* by David G Chandler (£14.95), and *The Massacre of Glencoe* by John Buchan (£9.99).

SOLDIER Top ten

Soldier, in association with Helion & Company, launches another new feature in these pages – the ten best-selling books reviewed or mentioned in the magazine. Helion has compiled the first list from its sales figures over the past 12 months. The chart will be updated in the next few months.

1 Operation Deliberate Force by Tim Ripley. The UN and Nato campaign in Bosnia, 1995. Reviewed in December but has already sold three times as many as any other title. Publisher, CIDSS.

2 Guards VC by Dilip Sarkar. Heroism of 1st Guards Brigade, 1939-40. (Ramrod.)

3 Challenger Squadron by Simon Dunstan. Our main battle tanks in the Gulf, before and since. (Crowood.)

4 True Stories of the Paras by Robin Hunter. The Red Devils at war. (Virgin.)

5 Nine Battles to Stanley by Nicholas van der Bijl. Written from first-hand experience. (Leo Cooper.)

6 All the King's Men by Nigel McCrery. Gallipoli tragedy, dramatised on TV with David Jason. (Pocket Books.)

7 Battleaxe Division by Ken Ford. Story of 78th Division, 1942-45. (Sutton.)

8 Gideon's Spies by Gordon Thomas. Secrets of Mossad, the Israeli Intelligence Service. (Macmillan.)

9 Collecting Anodised Cap Badges by Peter Taylor. How to spot the fakes. (Leo Cooper.)

10 The Irish Regiments 1683-1999 by R G Harris, revised by Brig H R G Wilson. Second edition of standard work. (Spellmount.)

Soldier ordering service

All books mentioned on these pages are available from Helion & Company, who can also supply 14,500 in-print military books and operate a free booksearch; p&p is extra. All major credit/switch cards taken. Please allow up to 28 days for delivery. Postal address: Helion & Company, 26 Willow Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 1UE, UK (tel 0121 705 3393; fax 0121 711 1315). E-mail: books@helion.co.uk Website: <http://www.helion.co.uk>



Wild Geese gather: Despite its small muster, Blake's commando (before MacBride took over command) had at least 28 officers, 11 of whom are pictured here, probably behind Pepworth

Hill outside Ladysmith. Blake is centre in the white jacket and MacBride on the right with revolver and rifle. An illustration taken from *MacBride's Brigade*, by Donal P McCracken

Wild-goose chase across the veld

MacBride's Brigade: Irish Commandos in the Anglo-Boer War by Donal P McCracken (Four Courts Press, Dublin, £19.95).

behind as "bitterenders", mostly joining the Johannesburg commando of Gen Viljoen, but it was the end of the brigade.

John Blake died in January 1907 in a gas-filled room in New York. John MacBride survived until 1916 when he was court-martialled and executed in Dublin after the Irish National uprising, for being a traitor in the Boer War.

McCracken sums up the impact on Irish politics of the albeit small intervention in South Africa when he writes that "it galvanized nationalist Ireland, dragging it out of its lethargy. It reunited the Irish parliamentary party and gave new hope and enthusiasm to the advanced nationalist.

"But the dramatic events of the second decade of the century leading to the establishment of the Irish Free State eclipsed for many, and especially many later historians, the memory of the brigade and the Irish pro-Boer fever it had engendered." – BJ

My free flight was journey too far . . .

I HAD the misfortune to receive a free return flight from Germany to the UK over Christmas. The flight home to Glasgow was fine but the return was a nightmare.

Two days before my return I checked the flight details and noticed what I thought was an error: depart RAF Brize Norton 1310, arrive Hanover 1930 – long enough for a stop-over in Cyprus. How right I nearly was!

Complete with luggage I left at 6am, via rail from Ayr to Glasgow, Glasgow to Preston and Preston to Oxford, and by bus to Brize Norton (all free, courtesy of a rail warrant). At the check-in desk I was told my flight details were correct and that I would be flying to Hanover . . . via Glasgow.

After an enchanting night at the Gateway Hotel (courtesy of Mr and Mrs Taxpayer), I began the journey back to Glasgow, eventually reaching Hohne at 2200, 40 hours after I had left home (and those queuing for the Millennium Dome thought they had a problem). A movements clerk told me she had tried to load at least 50 others at Glasgow.

What annoys me is the fact that no one told me. If I had known this farce was going to happen, I would quite happily have paid BA to take me. What a waste of money and a prime example of mismanagement. – **LCpl A Campbell, 32 Engr Regt, Wksp REME, Campbell Barracks, Hohne.**

Singlies treated as second-class

AFTER nearly 20 years in the Army, 16 as a married soldier, I had become complacent to the complaints of single colleagues. Until, that is, I tried to buy a TV and video from our local SSVC shop.

I was offered a six-month interest-free credit loan until the assistant asked me for a married quarters address. Being single, I couldn't give one. When she asked me for a UK address, I submitted my parents' as I do not own property. This was no use to the finance company and the assistant told me that she could help me no further.

With singlies given second priority on "sunny" postings, a raw deal on moving their own furniture, differences in allowances, not being able to name a long-term girlfriend as next-of-kin, nor qualify for compassionate assistance, the disparity between married and single soldiers is too great. – **WO2 (SQMS) Ian Addison, Catering Dept, QRH, Sennelager.**

AFTER nearly 12 years in the Royal Signals I have a month to go. One of my reasons for leaving is the attitude towards singlies. On returning from leave recently I was told that because I had completed more than nine years' man service and am single, I was no longer entitled to Motor Mileage Allowance (MMA). An officer told me: "If you don't like it, get married". – **C Berry, Edinburgh.**

Gay partners will have an advantage

I AM writing about the decision to let gays into the Armed Forces. Like many, I am appalled that the selfish actions of a few people who knew the rules before joining have brought about such a change. What concerns me is that the decision infringes the rights of heterosexuals serving in the forces.

My unit, like most, has a standing order prohibiting male access to female accommodation – and vice versa – which causes all sorts of problems for personnel wishing to spend time on their own with their partners. It's a rule I have fallen foul of, resulting in a £200 fine. Yet it is now acceptable for someone who is gay to spend time in the same accommodation with his or her partner.

Another concern of mine, shared by

many, is that I don't want to share accommodation with gay people. Surely single soldiers' accommodation should now be segregated into four: heterosexual males, heterosexual females, gay males and gay females. Personnel should declare their sexuality, giving everyone the option to shower at a different time and preventing a camp mafia from giving preferential treatment on duty rosters, reports and disciplinary matters.

These issues should be addressed quickly if the Army wishes to retain personnel who share my views. Many of my fellow junior NCOs have expressed their intention to sign off at their 12-year point because of this decision. – **LCpl John Clarke, Radio Troop, 75 Sqn, 4 GS Regt, Dalton Barracks, Abingdon.**

Meanwhile, a 'side' issue . . .

THE MoD's policy on the employment of homosexuals in the Armed Forces has recently changed, yet I can still be reprimanded for something as trivial as the length of my sideburns, even though they are neat and tidy.

Is the length of sideburns subject to official Army policy? If so, then it is not Armed Forces policy as sideburns are allowed in the Royal Navy. The Armed Forces are increasingly being geared

towards joint service, yet there seems to be one rule for one and one rule for another.

Surely it is about time it was appreciated that in today's modern Army, with today's retention problems, being told every five minutes that your sideburns are too long does not help at all. – **Cpl S McGill, Optronics Section, Airfield Sp Flt, Joint Forces Logistical Unit, Mount Pleasant, Falkland Islands.**

Let down by decision to put a time limit on savings scheme

THE MoD has decided that due to the demise of Mortgage Interest Relief at Source (MIRAS), the Services Home Savings Scheme (SHSS) will be terminated (Soldier, Feb). I accept the justification for doing so but am perplexed at why MoD has imposed a time limit of five years in which the scheme must be utilised in order to benefit from the Home Savings Allowance (HSA).

The only previous time-frame imposed was an officer's retirement date or a Serviceman's discharge date. There will be those who will now be forced either to use the scheme before they intended or face not benefiting from the HSA if they do not buy a property within five years.

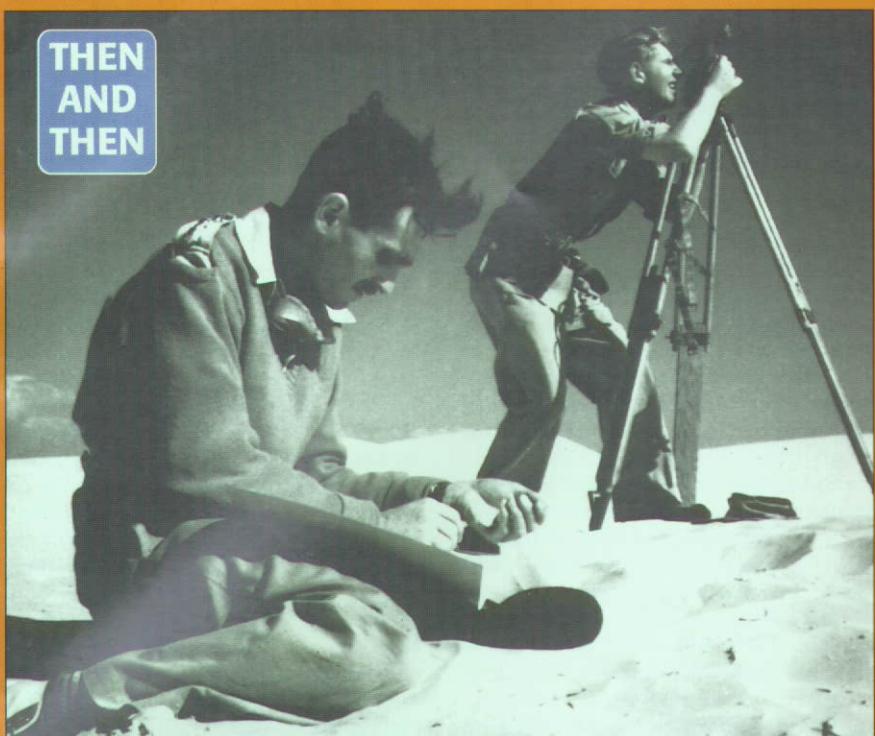
Had I known a time limit was to be set, I would have got out long ago and looked for an attractive commercial savings

scheme. I feel let down by this restriction as I had no intention of buying a property until my discharge date of November 2008, at which time I planned to utilise the SHSS and benefit from the HSA. – **SSgt P A Moran, AGC(SPS), British Defence Liaison Staff, Ottawa.**

Brigade aid in Kosovo

DURING a visit to Kosovo to collect material for a painting of 19 Mechanised Brigade, I noticed that KFOR soldiers seemed to be doing work that should have been undertaken by aid agencies. From what I've also seen in Bosnia, this seems to be par for the course. A shame soldiers don't get the kudos (and the money) for this work. – **Anne Came, S Devon.**

THEN
AND
THEN



50 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, March 1950: While Capt A L King-Harman takes his theodolite reading on the stars, Capt C S Wallis-King checks the reading time with a stop watch. They are members of a Coldstream Guards unit on six hours' notice to make long-range rescue sorties into the Libyan Desert in the event of an aircraft going down.

25 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, March 1975: Queues of lonely wives standing in the rain outside telephone kiosks waiting to speak to their soldier-husbands in Belfast are a thing of the past in Colchester Garrison, here a telephone centre allows wives and children to wait for calls in comfort, have a cup of tea or coffee and watch TV.

No quarter given is hard on family

I AND our 18-month-old son have been in England since October 23, staying temporarily at my mother's house, while my husband waited to report for duty in Northern Ireland on January 2.

I was upset that we could not accompany him to Aldergrove and we didn't even go on to the housing list until January 2. Now there's a three-to-four month waiting list.

Everyone knows there are not enough quarters at Aldergrove and I'm angry that nothing has been done to rectify this. On top of that we don't get any special

allowance towards the cost of my living at my Mum's (or a flat) until quarters become available. I am paying £50 a week for food, gas, electricity and rent, and my mother's rent has risen because we are living here.

I was not allowed to stay on at my last quarter in Brunei because they needed it for another family being posted in. I think the MoD needs to do something about the housing problem because I know many families are fed up with being messed around. — **Michelle Wickens, Throckley, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.**

SOLDIER welcomes your letters, whether you are an officer or other rank; serving or civvy; nine, 19 or 90. All we ask is that you keep them brief and to the point. We'd prefer them to be typed but if they are handwritten, please put names, addresses and in block capitals (not necessarily for publication). A prize from the *Soldier* gift collection will be awarded each month if we judge that a letter, serious or humorous, merits it. Acceptance or rejection of letters is the decision of the Editor, who reserves the right to amend for length, clarity or style. Anonymous letters will not be considered.

Mail us!

We have been inundated with letters in recent months, so if yours has not appeared, sincere apologies. Please keep them coming. Two more pages of *Mailbag* appear overleaf.

PS...

Deliver me from ...

WHEN I attempted to obtain a delivery through the new VIP (Value Independent Purchasing) system, the telesales person told me my order would be delivered to the nearest Regular unit. This is the equivalent of the George and Dragon ordering beer at one end of town and the brewery delivering it to the Red Lion at the other. The person who made the contract agreed on central delivery points, my nearest being Chelsea Barracks, a ten-mile round trip (half a day in London-speak). The TA and its diverse needs have been ignored again. — Capt Chris Mears, PSAO, C (City of London Fusiliers) Coy, London Regt, Balham High Road, London.

Not a patch in sight

AFTER reading your No Smoking Day story (Feb), I decided to give quitting a whirl. But I've discovered that our new Naafi doesn't stock aids to quitting, such as gum or nicotine patches. I was told that when stocked in the past they "didn't exactly fly off the shelf", so the store wasn't bothering again. Does something have to sell out in five minutes to make it worth stocking? — LCpl C McEvoy, A Sqn, LD, Hohne.

Layer of ignorance

WHILE on ops with the much-improved clothing, I heard an RSM tell a junior corporal that the fleece he was wearing was an undergarment which was not to be worn as a jacket, and to take it off. The new 95 kit issue is an excellent layer system. I am sure the idea is that if you are hot you start with the outside layer and work inwards to adjust to the working temperature. I wish I'd had time to explain to the RSM we're in the year 2000, not 1900. Perhaps you can do so for me. — Sgt (name, address supplied), Kosovo.

Oh no he's not!

WO1 (RSM) Norman Walker isn't the longest-serving warrant officer in the Army (Diary, Dec). His 37 years are beaten by my husband, WO1 Jim Sherville, who has just signed on again and is in his 40th year of continuous service with the Scots DG. He started on Dec 6, 1960 as a boy soldier and is currently with the Army Technical Support Agency at Chertsey, Surrey. — Pauline Sherville, Newark, Notts.

Standards bearers

READING Vox pop (Setting standards, Nov), I learned that British soldiers are expected to change their standards to match those of the civilian sector. As a Dutch police officer stationed in Kosovo I meet British Army personnel every day under different circumstances. Always they show their professional standards, including patience and politeness, and are a fine example for civilians everywhere, including Kosovo. — Police Supt Nick C Watershoot, Pristina.

What a medal muddle this is!

THE response by Lt Col Vere Nicoll ("GSM is about to be overtaken by events", Jan) exposes the muddle within the MoD regarding awards of medals of all sorts.

Lt Col Vere Nicoll indicates that a total of six "campaign" medals from four separate agencies have been issued to cover service in the Balkans in the past decade. The whole messy business might best have been covered by a single British award of real standing. It is not too late to issue such a medal and allow others to be held as keepsakes along the lines of the Saudi and Kuwaiti medals for the Gulf conflict.

PS12(A) suggests that only one medal is issued to cover each campaign. There are two medals for Korea (one British and one UN) and two general service medals for Brunei 1962.

Importantly it can be argued that the Accumulated Service Medal is a second award for those reaching a certain amount of time on active service, for which another medal has already been awarded. The different ribbon, attached to the original medal and clasps, might have served equally well.

INADEQUATE

One reason behind the ASM is the inadequacy of marking active service with the existing Campaign Service Medal having been in issue for 37 years and having gone through more than a dozen clasps.

With the new Operational Service Medal, it might be appropriate to continue the principle of clasps for small actions not warranting their own award but to issue a new medal after, say, four campaigns. The alternative of a new ribbon for each action will be a chestful of medals akin to our American cousins.

MoD has also been unable to agree a long service award for its officers because it cannot cope with the problem of any element of "good conduct" which might deprive some commissioned ranks of the medal – yet every other country manages it and some of our finest sergeant majors don't have an LS and GCM because of events in their reckless youth.

Finally, it is interesting to note that while the BEM has gone, the OBE and CBE remain. Perish the thought that there is vested interest in the higher echelons. – **Wing Cdr Colin Cummings, Yelvertoft, Northants.**

• Col Tinson's book "Medals Will Be Worn" (Books, Dec) is yet more confirmation that whenever anomalies are discussed, the omission of one for service in the Suez Canal Zone 1951-54 always gets a mention. Something went wrong with the system. – **W H D Podd, Lowestoft.**

MOD RESPONDS TO THE GREAT 'WHY ARE WE TAXED ON OPS' DEBATE

Facts say you ARE better off

CPL Jerry Winfield (Mailbag, January) is unconvinced by our arguments, published in the November edition of *Soldier*, that British troops are better off paying taxes when on operations.

He raises some interesting points and maintains that US soldiers receive the same wages as their British counterparts – wrong!

British soldiers are better paid than our American cousins, and here are the monthly salary figures to prove it: US Pte \$888-\$959 per month, UK Pte \$1,215-\$2,161, thus the British soldier may earn more than double that of a US private in basic pay.

In Cpl Winfield's case, his basic pay may be between \$2,035-\$2,701 a month, some \$849-\$1,216 a month more than an American corporal. These comparisons are made using an exchange rate of US \$1.53 to £1.

It is worth noting too, that we have not

included any British length-of-service increments in our figures.

Cpl Winfield is quite correct when he says that we did not mention other benefits paid to US soldiers on operational tours.

No we did not, but then we did not mention the benefits paid to or received by British soldiers either.

HIDDEN BENEFITS

They include Longer Separated Service Allowance (LSSA) at £4.29 a day lower rate, £5.90 a day middle rate, £8.04 higher rate; free food and single accommodation while on deployment; 14 days' R&R per six months' tour; one month's additional post operational tour leave; 20 minutes' free telephone calls a week; free aerogrammes; free family travel warrants; free provision of national daily newspapers; free CSE shows and so on.

Yes, the Americans (other ranks only) receive Foreign Duty Pay, but then

British other ranks and officers both receive the X factor at 12 per cent of basic pay, irrespective of whether or not they are serving in an operational theatre – a much better deal, particularly as it counts towards our pensions.

Speaking of which, the British Armed Forces pension is one of the best in the world . . . immediate, non-contributory and index-linked from age 55. A lot of civilians, let alone other foreign armed forces, would give their eye teeth to be a member of such a pension scheme.

KNOCK-ON EFFECT

The point we made regarding the payment of tax and the knock-on effect on daily pay was quite genuine. The British Forces are very well served by the Armed Forces Pay Review Body – an independent group of people who give up their time to serve on the body and who recommend our levels of pay to the Government of the day.

The AFPRB takes evidence from the whole of our remuneration packages when assessing their annual recommendation, and the payment of tax forms a part of their calculation.

The bottom line is this: believe it or not, the British Serviceman is better off paying tax on operations.

Meanwhile, we have secured further improvements to our financial conditions of service since our article appeared; details of the latest enhancements to LSSA announced by Defence Secretary Geoffrey Hoon appeared in the February issue of *Soldier*.

Enhancements include the lowering of qualifying service from three years to 18 months and the payment of £1,000 bonuses to those who have experienced excessive turbulence.

Convinced yet? The facts suggest you should be. – **Maj Debs Kershaw, DPS(A), MoD, London.**

PS . . .

We're both vital

MY letter (Closure of our ACIO would be a disaster, Jan) gave the impression that I did not think troops in Kosovo merited new accommodation. That is far from the truth. What Pte Baird (Replacing our freezing tents should be a priority, Feb) needs to understand is that if recruiting offices close, enlistments will go down resulting in fewer troops on the ground, which would guarantee him more unaccompanied tours in places such as Bosnia. Money should be spent keeping troops happy because our best source of recruiting is word of mouth from serving soldiers on leave . . . but we also need recruiting offices for applicants to go into. – **SSgt Ann Ford, ACIO Horden, Co Durham.**

Smoking out truth

IS there a cunning plot behind the reports (Feb) on the new Joint NBC Regiment becoming operational and Army No Smoking Day on March 8? Will the Fuchs and PBDA vehicles be used to hunt down nicotine-crazed soldiers sneaking off for a quick drag? – **R A Hamilton, Southport.**

Scots Guards visit

I thoroughly enjoyed your story on the three Guards regiments in Northern Ireland (Jan). Members of the Glasgow Branch of the Scots Guards Association visited the 1st Battalion at Ballykinler last year and had a wonderful time. We were also given a good insight into the Guards on peacekeeping duties and our thanks must go to Lt Col J C Stewart, the CO, for his permission to visit the battalion, and to RSM Ronnie Convery for his invitation. – **Jimmy Middleton, ex-Scots Guards 1944-48, Glasgow.**

Watercolour rifle

The watercolour by Joan Wanklyn (D-Day for Hertfordshire Yeomanry, Books, Dec) shows infantry armed with SMLE and appropriate long bayonet. Troops engaged in that action carried the Lee-Enfield Mk IV with either the short screw-driver blade bayonet or the improved short fluted blade bayonet. – **Islwyn E Howe, Bristol.**

That Para picture

IN response to criticism (PS, Nov) of the photograph of 10 Para's final parade, it is unfortunate that someone who voices his opinions about a photograph with such vitriol could not have directed his energy to a campaign to save the battalion. Officers and men of 10 Para (V) were advised not to speak to the media, but the author, with his background and civilian status, could have been a great benefit. Did he, while moaning about a picture we in the battalion were pleased with, bother to generate any media coverage for the veterans? – **Maj D Reynolds, Para (V), Media Ops Gp.**

Army drivers' pay doesn't sound like such a bad deal

IN reply to Cpl AGC (SPS) (Mailbag, Feb) concerning the difference in pay between Service and civilian drivers, I am the transport officer of a static squadron in which civilians work alongside soldiers. There is no distinction between their duties: both go on annual battle camps and do duty driver and other mundane tasks. My civilian drivers are paid £186.08 a week, boosted by inner-London pay to £220.10. They might make £260 while employed as duty driver, which happens every six to eight weeks. The corporal is paid £351.75, while a Class 1 Band 1 gets £261.45 for doing the same work. So stop moaning and get on with the job you volunteered for. PS: Can you inform me where my drivers can earn £420 a week? – **G A Stevens, MTO, 238 (London) Signal Squadron, Chelsea Barracks, London.**

Mounting cost of court mounting those medals

OVER the past three years I have deployed on three tours, giving me three different medals. I had each of them court mounted (CM), a simple matter which never fails to open a can of worms. I turn to *Soldier* to seek clarification.

Material Regulations (Mat Regs) state a soldier must pay for court mounting . . . fair enough. My concern is the varying costs charged by tailoring facilities, not only Army-wide, but within the same garrison. Who accounts/audits the vast sums collected for CM, which authority

Freeze frame

Write a funny caption for this photograph, first published in *Soldier* in 1954. The best, in the opinion of the Editor, will win a silver-plated book-clock bearing the Army logo. Usual competition rules apply and entries should reach us by March 31.



You wrote Wheelbarrow off well before its time

YOUR report "Groundhog has its day" (Kitstop, Feb) said Bison and Groundhog, the remote-controlled EOD vehicles, had been brought into service in Kosovo because Wheelbarrow could not cope with the rough terrain. I can categorically state that this is untrue.

As a member of one of the RLC EOD teams attached to the Royal Engineers in Kosovo, I can confirm our Wheelbarrow never had a problem with terrain-crossing on any of its operational tasks.

In fact, Wheelbarrow was the only

remote-controlled vehicle to complete a rough terrain assault course built by the RE. After their failed attempt, Bison and Groundhog were sent for repair and, to the best of my knowledge, were never deployed on an operational task.

I believe that, at £130.00 each – for the basic model – the reason the Royal Engineers do not have Wheelbarrow, and an IEDD capability beyond battlefield clearance of military booby traps, is one of cost. – **Sgt Malcolm Quigley, 11 EOD Regiment RLC.**

Vox pop

The regular feature in which we ask soldiers for their views on an issue

LCpl David Johnston, 4 Armd Engr Sqn

Some allowances are fair, but LOA in Germany is getting lower and is reaching a ridiculous level. As a single soldier I picked up about £90 last month, which restricts the amount of time we can spend in the community because we can't afford to go out. Having said that, we do get petrol vouchers, so fuel is cheap... about a third of UK prices.



Cpl Paul Bowdler, 4 Armd Engr Sqn

Information about allowances is sometimes hard to get because the admin office staff have limited knowledge themselves. I find the Motor Mileage Allowance (MMA) confusing. I can claim mileage from Dover to my home in Chester, and from Chester to Dover, but I still have to make the journey from Calais to Osnabrück and can't claim for that.



Spr Rob Green, 4 Armd Engr Sqn

The Longer Separated Service Allowance (LSSA) – the bonus paid whenever you are away from your "home" – is really good. But LOA is a joke. The cost of living in Germany is high and we get £2.33 a day extra. LOA does not give soldiers an incentive to come to Germany. Receiving information about allowances is haphazard and usually via the grapevine.



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Spr Rob McGurk, 7 HQ Sqn



There is always room for improvement, but generally the allowances are fair. I don't feel we get sufficient information prior to coming on a tour because most of the

entitlements I have heard about have come through hearsay. We could do with a formal briefing on allowances.

Spr Robert Elton, 4 Armd Engr Sqn



Most of the allowances are fair although the LOA is low, because we have suffered due to the strong pound. It should be reviewed, as it is simply not enough. It has declined over the last few years. LSSR is the best allowance and

I think we get plenty of information and help with filling-in forms.

LCpl George Paterson, 7 HQ Sqn

There isn't much difference between the allowance I was being paid in Kosovo and that in Germany, yet our Nato colleagues seem to be doing a lot better than us financially, even though we are doing the same job. When it comes to identifying allowances the chief clerk is very helpful.



Spr Neil MacDonald, 7 HQ Sqn



Because I hadn't been in for three years, I missed out on some allowances when I served in Kosovo. That is wrong when I am doing the same job as someone else, facing the same dangers and the same discomforts.

In those circumstances we should all be treated equally.

Interviews: Ray Routledge Pictures: Steve Dock

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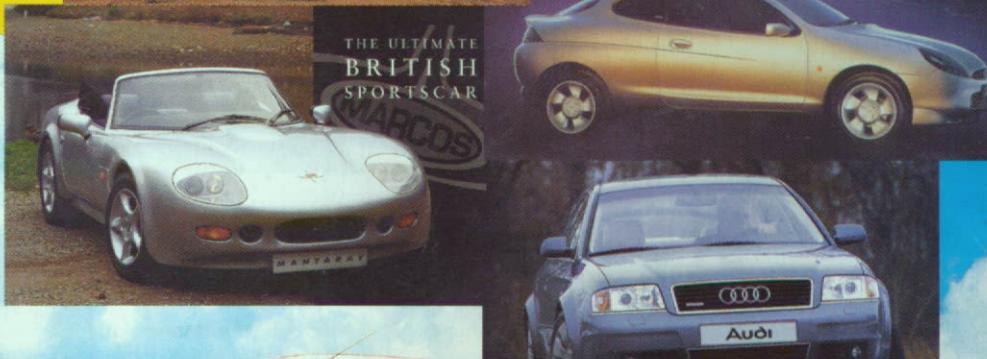
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