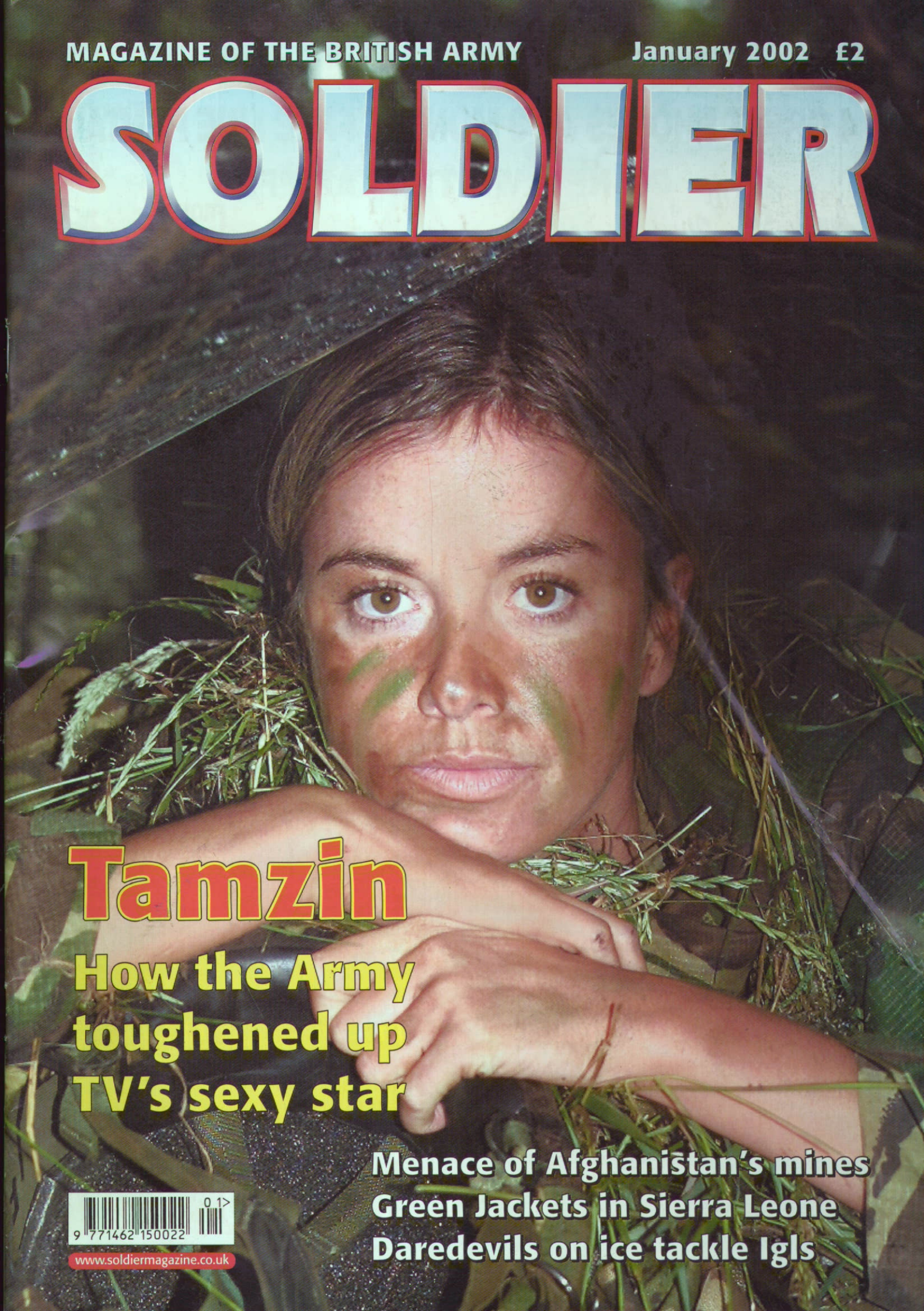


MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

January 2002 £2

SOLDIER



Tamzin

How the Army
toughened up
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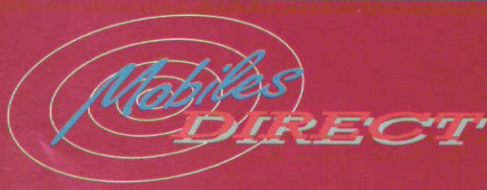
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"I must admit it's not a mine-detecting method the British Army has considered."

● Sappers stand by for mines role in Afghanistan – Pages 4-5

In this issue

... of your award-winning magazine

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Bar work to bar-racks: *EastEnders'* favourite barmaid Tamzin Outhwaite is to star on BBC TV as a sergeant in the Army's Special Investigation Branch.

Picture: Mike Weston



Mystery murals: Do you know who painted these murals of Sixties pop stars? If you do, RAMC Millbank's new owners would like to hear from you. – Page 27

Win £30 waterproof socks – Page 37

Learning fast

Novice winter sportsmen were shown how to bobsleigh, skeleton and luge at the Army's ice camp at Innsbruck, Austria

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Another winning entry in *Soldier's* competition for amateur photographers – Page 43

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Silent killers lie in wait

British soldiers preparing to deploy to Afghanistan, one of the most heavily-mined countries on earth, have been told what to expect

Report: Anthony Stone
Pictures: Steve Dock
and Graeme Main

WHATEVER tasks British soldiers may be asked to carry out in Afghanistan, they will have to work surrounded by mines. The United Nations puts the figure at ten million – two million anti-tank and the rest anti-personnel, making this land-locked, mountainous country one of the most dangerous places on earth.

Rae McGrath, a former soldier, Nobel peace prize co-laureate and an expert on the mine problem in Afghanistan, thinks talk about numbers is meaningless.

"It is a massive problem and if someone wants to know how many mines there are in Afghanistan – the answer is two."

Just two?

"No, too bloody many."

The mines menace has already injured a Royal Engineer deployed at Bagram airbase.

McGrath, who spent 18 years in the British Army as a recovery mechanic in the REME, said: "When I was in the Army nobody ever spoke of what happens after a war. The idea of mines as a problem would never have been raised as an issue."

This thinking has been revised. He first saw the extent of the Afghanistan problem while working for the UN in 1989.

"The scope of the problem is huge. Over ten years the Soviets set out to deny the mujahedin support from the community, hitting irrigation systems and fields. Militias would lay mines over huge areas, including farmland."

Before the Soviet invasion, Afghanistan, one of the poorest countries in the world, was self-sufficient in food. Today farmers can expect a bloody harvest if they return to their fields. The ground is littered with bounding fragmentation mines, pressure mines, butterfly mines, unexploded cluster-bombs and the anti-tank variety. Their low metallic content makes them virtually undetectable.

McGrath said: "Mines will be there forever because they are not biodegradable. I can't think of a single country I have been



Lethal legacy: Former REME soldier Rae McGrath is an acknowledged expert on the mine menace

'The ground is littered with fragmentation, pressure and butterfly mines, and unexploded cluster-bombs'

to where I have not found a British Mark VII anti-tank mine – and they still work."

Britain has pledged millions of pounds to help deal with the problem and is a signatory to the Ottawa Treaty, which bans the use, production, trade, transfer and stock-piling of anti-personnel landmines.

The job of minimising potential casualties falls to soldiers such as Capt Alex Eade of the Mine Information and Training Centre. MITC, part of the Battlefield Engineering Wing at the Combat Engineer School, was set up in 1997 to prepare military units and civilian organisations before they leave for mine-affected countries.

Briefings do not cover how to defuse or

remove mines, but concentrate on how to recognise and keep away from danger. Thousands of troops on standby for Afghanistan have had the briefings.

"For us Afghanistan is quite a defining moment because it is probably the most heavily mined country in the world," Capt Eades told *Soldier*, hours before deploying to Islamabad, Pakistan. "We have produced a recognition guide and every soldier who deploys to Afghanistan should have one in their top pocket. Should soldiers come across a landmine or a piece of ordnance they can look it up."

In Pakistan, Capt Eade's job will be to brief the de-mining agencies who withdrew from Afghanistan during the war and to see what the situation is like on the ground (see story opposite).

"I'll be looking at the whole overarching mines action programme to see if the military can provide assistance in any way. It is similar to how we work in Bosnia and Kosovo, where engineer warrant officers are attached to mine action centres to give support."

The mines teams will be busy. Experts estimate virtually every piece of military ordnance that has ever been manufactured has been deployed at some stage in Afghanistan – landmines, missiles and bombs.

Sgt Mark Livingstone and the men of 9 Parachute Squadron, Royal Engineers, have been among the men to benefit from the mines awareness briefings. If they are deployed, they will be at the sharp end with the Paras in 16 Air Assault Brigade.

"When The Parachute Regiment battalion of 16 Air Assault Brigade goes away, a troop of engineers goes with them," said Sgt Livingstone, who spent a successful summer with 2 Para in Macedonia collecting weapons during Operation Essential Harvest.

"In Afghanistan we could be tasked with anything from putting up the show-ers to helping them on the ground."

For the Army, Afghanistan presents two distinct landmine and unexploded ordnance problems: operational and humanitarian. In the former, engineers clear routes to allow soldiers through. At its most basic, proving a route can mean



Notice to move: Spr Smudger Smith leads the way ahead of Spr Paul Greenwood as the two practise drills. Both are serving with 9 Para Sqn RE and would normally work with visors down

driving a mine-hardened vehicle along it. If the driver doesn't get blown up, the route is proved.

Of course that doesn't mean the route is clear of mines – just that the first vehicle down didn't hit anything.

Humanitarian de-mining by contrast is very slow and involved, with de-miners painstakingly prodding every inch of

ground to ensure there is no threat. In military terms, mines laid in Afghanistan have proved devastatingly effective. But it is a double-edged sword. As Rae McGrath says: "Once you have used a mine, it stops being a weapon of war and becomes a weapon against peace."

● Read Rae McGrath's story in next month's edition of *Soldier*.

Bombing raids increase level of difficulty

BEFORE the coalition began operations in support of the anti-Taliban forces, 4,800 de-miners were already at work, supported by millions of dollars of international funding, writes Lt Col Robin Hodges in Islamabad.

By the end of 2000 vast areas of Afghanistan were still mine-affected despite 11 years' work by up to 17 non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Coalition operations against the Taliban have added to the challenge facing the de-miners who will have to survey the new minefields laid in 2001 and deal with unexploded coalition bombs.

The Mine Action Programme Afghanistan (MAPA) asked the coalition for assistance with training NGO instructors and for information about the threat caused by bombs.

Capt Alex Eade RE from the Mine Information Training Centre was deployed to Pakistan to provide exactly that kind of advice and training.

"The NGOs are contracted to clear an area of all metal objects to a depth of 200mm," he explained. "The most efficient way to deal with mines, which may have almost no metal in them, can be with a flail-tank which beats the ground, but it does a lot of damage."

"Farmers often prefer to take their chance and continue to cultivate the land which has to be cleared painstakingly slowly by hand, but the human cost has been high, with between 150-300 civilian casualties a month."

Capt Eade, one of three coalition EOD specialists deployed to Pakistan, is working to provide details of air strikes, mine information and how to avoid booby-traps.

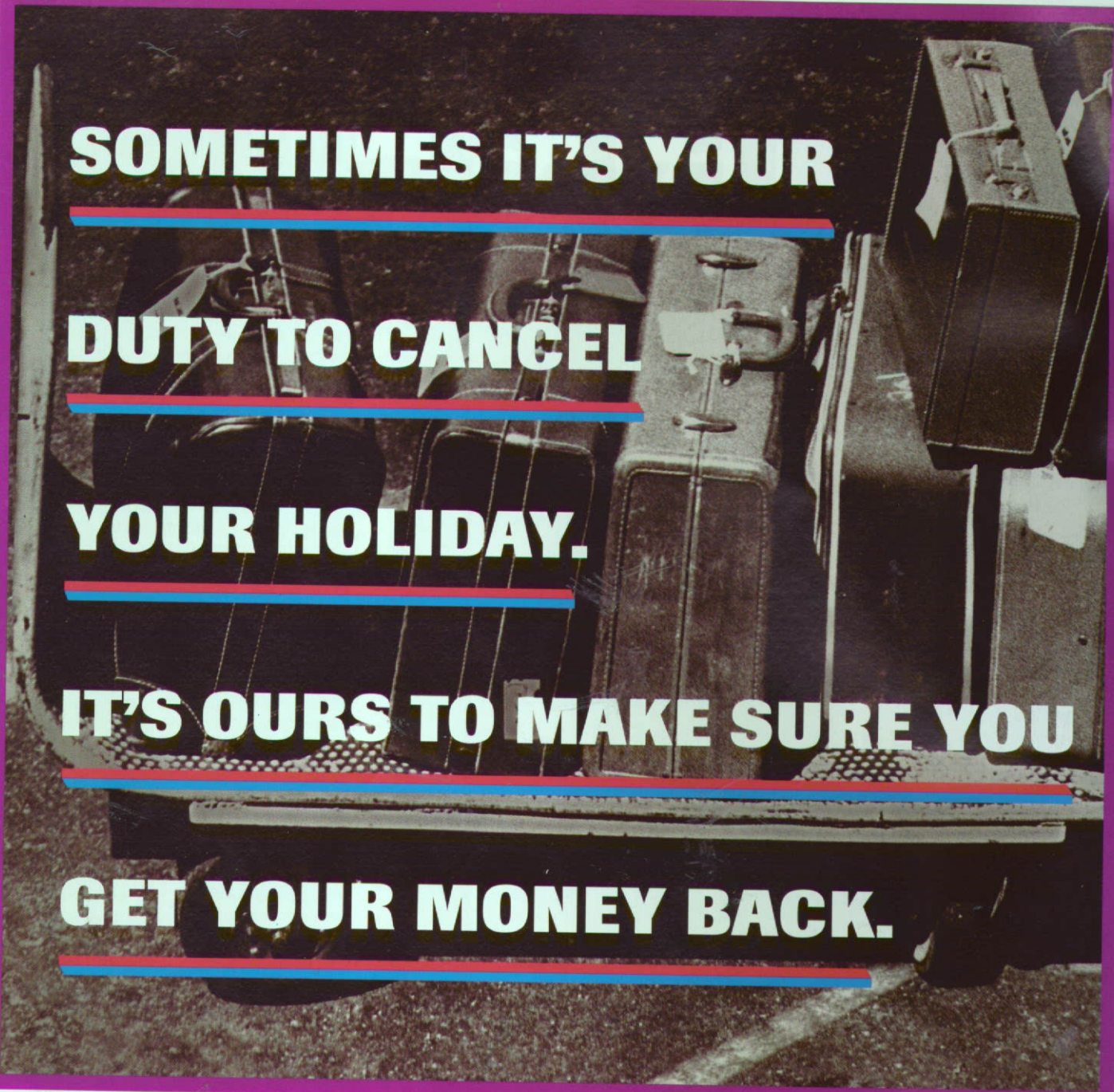
"The coalition has been very open with its information and the various agencies have everything they need from the UK. But it does not mean that everything is straightforward," he said.

"At Kabul airport there are two holes in the runway indicating two unexploded bombs. Even though the de-miners have dug up large areas of the airfield looking for the missing bombs, which can travel some distance underground, they have not been found."

"Part of the advice we give is based on our judgement. In this case, it is a reasonable operational risk to consider that the bombs are unlikely now to explode and just to fill in the holes and begin to use the airfield for humanitarian flights."



Capt Alex Eade



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Watching brief: The Press information centre at Bagram airfield is manned by Sgt Maj Raymond Cordell, left, and Capt Jimmy Cummings of the US Army's 49th Public Affairs Detachment (Airborne) from the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

The sign above their desk says: "To tell a soldier's story you have to fight by his side."

Around them, the base is protected by troops from the US Army's 10th Mountain Division and Britain's 40 Commando RM.

"They are doing a tough job," said Sgt Maj Cordell.



Night flight to Bagram

Report, pictures from Lt Col Robin Hodges at Bagram, Afghanistan

MILITARY flights to Bagram airfield land at night. Walking in single file in pitch darkness from the unlit runway, new arrivals are struck by an infinite night sky in which millions of stars puncture the velvet blackness.

Their first view in the morning is spectacular as the sun paints the surrounding mountains pink. The second impression is of row after row of destroyed aircraft on the airfield.



Incoming: Personnel at Bagram airfield unload stores

Bagram is home to small numbers of British, American, Jordanian and Northern Alliance soldiers. The coalition troops have secured the runway and the least badly damaged hangars for use as a hub for the distribution of humanitarian aid to the area north of Kabul.

Northern Alliance fighters are holding the valley in which Bagram lies and which they captured after one of the fiercest ground battles of the war in Afghanistan. Evidence of battle is all around, from the shattered skeletons of

Soviet-era barracks to the smaller craters in the runway made by mortars. Cartridge cases lie everywhere.

The area is contaminated with mines and every few hours the calm of the valley is shattered by a massive explosion as an EOD team clears more of the deadly harvest.

Afghans scavenge the airport for metal and the multitude of destroyed vehicles shrink as parts are stripped for scrap or recycling.

Britain ready to play lead role in Afghanistan – Prime Minister

- Royal Marines at Bagram
- Six British troops injured

AS this issue went to press, Prime Minister Tony Blair again indicated that Britain was prepared in principle to play a leading role in any security force required for Kabul, but no decision has been taken by the Government.

At a press conference with US Secretary of State Colin Powell, he said: "We have made it clear throughout that once the military campaign has achieved its main objectives, and we are certainly in the course of doing that now, that it is vitally important that we maintain the political and the humanitarian tracks.

"And we have indicated, in principle, a willingness to play a leading role in any UN-mandated force to provide stability in Afghanistan."

At present Royal Marines from 40 Commando are reinforcing US Army mountain-trained troops to protect Bagram airfield, where a reconnaissance party of UK military personnel landed several weeks ago. Equipment is being flown in at night.

It was from there that the Royal Air Force flew out Northern Alliance delegates attending a UN-sponsored conference in Bonn.

So far six British troops have been injured during operations, the most recent being a Royal Engineer who suffered serious wounds in a mine incident at Bagram.

Sword of Peace



Point made: Pte Emma Jackson, a member of 22 Field Hospital's Clinical Squadron, proudly displays the special Wilkinson Sword of Peace presented to the Aldershot-based medical unit for its work in Bosnia and Kosovo during 2000.

The award was made to commanding officer Lt Col Martin Bricknell by Armed Forces Minister Adam Ingram during a parade at 22 Field Hospital's Thornhill Barracks. The hospital was responsible for providing medical facilities for Service personnel at a multi-national medical unit in Sipovo, Bosnia, and at the Reynolds Hospital in Pristina, Kosovo.

Nearly 700 Regular and reserve medical staff from all three Services were rotated through the Balkans during the year.

Picture: Steve Dock

Uniform approach



Fashion army: Artist Lucy Bennett, left, used Dad's uniform to inspire an exhibition in London last month. The images of women in uniform owed much to her father, Col Anthony Bennett, later RA, who served 37 years, most recently with 7 (Para) RHA and 29 Cdo Regt RA. He retired as deputy Military Secretary.



A2 takes on the world

On target: Members of the British Army combat shooting team, equipped with the new SA80 A2, line up for the camera at Bisley after winning the coveted Commander-in-Chief's Trophy at the Australian Army skill-at-arms meeting in Brisbane. It was the modified rifle's first outing in international competition. Teams from eight nations took part. Coach Maj Tony Bexon said the A2 had fired more than 21,000 rounds in nine days without a stoppage. The team also won the trophy on its last outing to Australia in 1999.

Picture: Chris Fletcher

New SDR chapter to follow attacks

BRITAIN'S ability to engage an enemy at long range will be addressed in a new chapter of the Government's Strategic Defence Review opened in the light of the terrorist attacks of September 11.

In a speech in London last month, Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon said the MoD had set itself the task of assessing whether the attacks on New York and Washington "represented a fundamental change in the strategic context, and if so, how serious a change".

He said: "The action we are taking in Afghanistan is largely possible because of work done in the Strategic Defence Review. The United Kingdom is well placed to take on international terrorism and other asymmetric threats."

He wanted to ensure that the Armed Forces had the right structures and equipment to enable them to fight "today's



Review: Geoff Hoon

and tomorrow's campaigns" as well as five, ten and 20 years into the future. "For the future, what we need are flexible forces configured to be able to deal with many different scenarios," he said.

The "new chapter" of SDR will assess the impact of September 11, attempt to understand the causes of terrorism, consider the threats posed, and evaluate homeland defence and the role of British forces abroad.

"Military doctrine suggests that, in principle, it is often better to seek to engage the enemy at longer range, before the enemy gets the opportunity to mount an attack," said Mr Hoon. "This is more effective and it has a deterrent effect. We must, therefore, continue to be free to deploy significant forces overseas rapidly."

IN BRIEF

● Cpl David Fegan, pictured, of 30 Signal Regiment, won the Senior Chef of the Year title at the Combined Services catering competition at Sandown Park. And with 1 Signal Regiment and Rhine Garrison taking the field cookery category, the Army team walked away with



the Inter-Services crown. Cpl Jonnie Lui of 1 R Anglian received a bronze award in the senior section, while the title of junior chef of the year was won by Pte Stephen Roberts, 22 Engr Regt.

Army asked to accept medal with dignity

THE Army has been urged to accept the qualification criteria for the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal with gratitude and dignity.

A message sent to all commanders says the 100,000 or so medals which will be awarded to the Army are "very good news indeed" and calls on individuals to look forward to wearing the medal with pride.

"It is by far the largest award of a commemorative medal and we in the Army are extremely fortunate to receive such a large allocation," says the message.

It is stressed that the medal is not for operational service, but simply a commemorative award for loyalty and effectiveness.

The basic qualifying period of five years' loyal and effective service as at February 6 applies to all categories: Regular and Territorial Army, The Royal Irish Regiment (Home Service Part Time), Full-Time Reserve Service, Non-Regular Permanent Staff, Military Provost Guard Service, cadet officers and cadet adult instructors.

The five years' service qualification also applies to members of the emergency services - police, fire and ambulance, coastguard, RNLI and mountain rescue - who are to receive the medal.

The medal is to be worn on the left breast, immediately after UK operational service medals, including UN and Nato medals, and in date order with all other coronation or jubilee medals. Neither the medal, miniature or medal ribbon may be worn until entitlement has been confirmed by the



On its way: Jubilee medal

Army Medal Office. The first day the medal and miniature may be worn is June 4. The ribbon may not be worn before February 7.

Although unnamed, each medal will be delivered in a sealed box bearing the name and details of the recipient, who will have to sign for it.

To be eligible, personnel must have completed 1,826 days' service (five full calendar years) and have been properly enlisted, not just attested, before February 7, 1997.

Non-effective service will not count and neither will periods of detention and absence without leave. Broken service can count if it is aggregated with other forms of eligible service to make a total of five years' qualifying service.

Official UK loan and exchange service does count. Reserves who have completed five annual bounty-earning training years and were properly enlisted will receive the medal, as will cadet officers and adult instructors who have a total of five training years' service.

Medals intended for individuals who die after February 6 will be awarded to the next-of-kin.

Precise qualification details appear in a Defence Council Instruction (DCI) to be published soon.

● Orders for miniatures are being taken by the Royal Mint. Quantities up to 49 cost £9.50 each, including VAT but excluding p&p. Discounts are available for larger quantities. Orders, which will be sent out in February, can be made to the Royal Mint on 01443 623456 or fax 01443 623330 or by e-mail to jubmin@royalmint.gov.uk

● Bermuda Regiment's eligibility - Page 15

At the double, Sirs!



Mirror image: Twins Junior Under-Officers Anthony, front, and Christopher Hellier led their respective platoons on the Sovereign's Parade at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst on December 14. The twins, claimed to be Sandhurst's first in 151 years, passed out in front of the Princess Royal. Anthony is joining the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles and Christopher the 1st Battalion, The Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment.

Picture: Graeme Main

Welcome sounds



Bugle call: Princess Alexandra is welcomed to the officers' mess of the 1st Battalion, The Light Infantry by the regimental buglers. The battalion hosted its Deputy Colonel-in-Chief and her husband, Sir Angus Ogilvy, during a visit to its Dregthorn Barracks base in Edinburgh. The royal party was accompanied by Gen Sir John Deverell, Colonel of the regiment.

Picture: Mark Owens

● LBdr Sean Maher, right, of 105 Regiment RA, polishes a 105mm light gun at the renaming of the regiment's Edinburgh-based Headquarters Battery. It is now known as 218 (City of Edinburgh) Headquarters Battery.

Picture: Mark Owens



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		Total	17,850.11	13,526.81	15,427.28	12,463.65	13,339.49	11,453.31	11,458.73	10,497.34
9.7% APR	£5,000	Monthly	107.22	81.25	129.44	104.58	186.09	159.77	478.32	438.19
		Total	9,006.40	6,825.09	7,766.23	6,274.24	6,698.89	5,751.70	5,739.78	5,258.21
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Britain and USA to develop new missile

A NEW multi-purpose missile which can be launched from both ground and air is to be jointly developed by the MoD and US Department of Defense.

The two countries have committed £40 million to the concept and technology demonstration phase of the common missile programme and the UK is expected to decide late next year whether to go ahead.

If it is ordered, deliveries of the missile could be expected by 2008, followed by a production run of 73,000, shared between the UK and USA, over 16 years.

"The common missile programme pre-

sents a major opportunity for the Armed Forces to meet future battlefield needs at a dramatically reduced cost," said Procurement Minister Lord Bach. "In particular, the Joint Rapid Reaction Force would benefit from a slimmed-down support chain, enabling the force to be airlifted into action even more quickly than at present."

The initial phase will assess the practicalities of a single weapon capable of being used on different platforms against a wide range of targets. It would be compatible with existing missile systems such as TOW and Hellfire, but with new capabilities.

Army units invited to summer's big party

ARMY bases and individual units are being urged to take part in a nationwide summer party on June 3 to mark the Queen's 50 years on the throne.

In particular, the organisers want units – Regular and Territorial – to become involved in a network of beacons which will radiate across Britain after the Queen lights the first one in London at 2240 on the night of the 3rd.

Plans are being made to unite communities in celebrations throughout the "Jubilee Weekend" from June 1-4. Street parties and beacons are expected to feature in all parts of the UK, the Channel Islands and the Commonwealth.

The chain of bonfires and beacons will be similar to that which marked the millennium, when more than 1,400 blazed across Britain.

A Defence Council Instruction has "strongly encouraged" Army units in the UK and overseas to take part in the party. "This could be by holding internal events or involving the local community," it states.

Advice on how to build a bonfire or obtain a beacon brazier can be obtained from the Golden Jubilee Summer Party, PO Box 4320, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 8YF, tel 01725 516456, fax 01725 516268, or by e-mailing info@goldenjubileesummerparty.co.uk

Scotland's cavalry 'recruits' new squadron

D SQUADRON, The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, is back in business – in double-quick time.

Brig Graham Binns, commander of 7th Armoured Brigade, presented the pipe banner of the re-formed squadron to Maj Dougie Allen, the squadron leader, at a re-formation parade at Wessex Barracks, Falling-bowl.

Before the tank squadron, disbanded in 1995 under the Options for Change defence review, could be re-raised, more than 80 new soldiers had to be recruited by the regiment in a major initiative throughout Scotland.

The Scots DG, Scotland's senior regiment and only cavalry unit, is on course to reach full Manning during 2002, three or four years ahead of original predictions. Its Scotland 2000 recruiting drive included taking a Challenger 2 tank down Princes Street in Edinburgh, and through a drive-in McDonald's in Glasgow's Eastergate.

More recently, a Scots DG Challenger, deployed by landing craft, was seen for the first time in the Highlands and islands. Eighty-five soldiers are now in training.



Back in business: Brig Graham Binns, left, presents the pipe banner to Maj Dougie Allen, with piper Cpl Chris Reid looking on

Jet-setters should apply here

BBC TV has made a special appeal for Service families to put themselves forward for a new series of its Saturday night **Jetset** National Lottery show, hosted by Eamonn Holmes.

The general knowledge quiz allows

contestants to win a luxurious lifestyle in exotic locations around the world.

Applicants, who must be aged 18 or over, are asked to call 0900 111 44 61 (calls cost a maximum of 60p) or e-mail their address to jet.set@bbc.co.uk.

SSAFA siblings' holiday

SSAFA-Forces Help's **siblings' holiday** 2002 will take place at YMCA Fairthorne Manor, near Southampton, from June 2 to 8. It is for Service children aged eight to 12 who are the sibling of a child with special needs or disabilities. Applications, to Heidi Dudley on 020 7463 9234 or heidi.d@ssafa.org.uk, should reach her by January 18.

Costly lie-in

RECRUITS with 86 Squadron, part of 25 Training Support Regiment RLC at Deepcut, Surrey, were served breakfast in bed by their officers – at a price. The Monday morning lie-in raised £1,500 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Cadets' new ties

EIGHT of Essex's 34 Army Cadet Force detachments re-badged to The Parachute Regiment last month at a parade hosted at Meeanee Barracks, Colchester by 2 Para. They were previously affiliated to the Royal Anglians and Royal Signals.

Glider back in shape

A HOTSPUR glider used to train pilots for raids on Arnhem and in Sicily during the Second World War has been unveiled by Prince Michael of Kent at the **Museum of Army Flying** at Middle Wallop, Hants. Following six years of careful re-building, it is believed to be the world's only fully-restored example.



Under Big Ben

A digest of what's being said on Army matters in Parliament

Torch illuminates menace of mines

THE Government aims to have 2,000 pyrotechnic torches for destroying anti-personnel and anti-tank mines with minimal collateral damage and improved safety in military use by early this year.

Defence Under-Secretary Dr Lewis Moonie told MPs the MoD's mine detection research programme was also looking at ground-penetrating radar, polarised thermal imaging and metal detection.

DU: No depleted uranium ammunition has been used in Afghanistan, Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon said in a written answer. In the event of its use, appropriate guidelines would be issued to ensure the already low risks to health were minimised.

War on terror: The Government is looking at ways of increasing the contribution of the Territorial Army in the light of the September 11 attacks. Options include the role of the TA in providing assistance to the civil community in an emergency.

And I quote...

Despite in-depth searches of the MoD archive, no evidence has been found to substantiate the allegation that volunteers were recruited under the pretext they were attending Porton Down for common cold research. Porton Down has never conducted work on the common cold. **— Dr Lewis Moonie**

Number-crunching: The Regular Army, excluding Gurkhas and R Irish, numbered 96,255 on November 1, of which 86,296 were fully deployable. An additional 7,042 were deployable with some limitations.

◆ Soldiers absent without leave (AWOL) up to December 31, 2000 numbered 1,917.

◆ On October 1 there were 812 full-time reserve service (FTRS) personnel.

◆ There are 160 officers and 1,535 other ranks from the Commonwealth in the Army and 22 officers and 195 ORs from the Republic of Ireland.

Race complaint: Ten formal complaints of racial discrimination were made by soldiers in the 12 months up to October.

Drugs tests: Latest figures show 75,152 personnel were tested for drugs and 527 soldiers – 0.7 per cent – tested positive.

Jubilee Medal: The cost of awarding the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal to those with five years' service on February 6 is £3.8 million. An extra £1.8 million would be needed to include everyone serving on that date.

Apache pilots: Sixteen AAC pilots are training in the USA to fly the Apache AH-64A at a cost of £3.15 million. They will convert in the UK to the Apache AH Mk1 model 1.

Ferry to Ryde is EOD target

Bomb disposal out in force on South Coast

A 300lb car bomb in Portsmouth Naval Base and a device on the Isle of Wight ferry were among more than 130 incidents attended by 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD), the Army's specialist bomb disposal unit based at Wimbish near Saffron Walden.

But the citizens of the South Coast port were never in danger. The EOD sappers were in town to rehearse their wartime role on the annual Exercise High Impact.

More than 20 bomb disposal teams were subjected to realistic and highly-demanding tests in an exercise stretching from Poole to Portsmouth. Saboteurs placed devices in the naval base, on railway lines and cross-Channel ferries, in a

civic centre and a grain store, in multi-storey car-parks, and on underwater targets in the Royal Navy's home base. Sgt Tay Taylor was called in to disarm a device on the open car deck of the *St Clare*, Wightlink's flagship Isle of Wight ferry.

Capt Corinne Foad, who led a 12-strong team searching a housing estate, found a booby-trap constructed out of two anti-tank mines.

The exercise began with a week-long "warm-up" phase on Wyke Regis training area before hotting up as operators were sent to defuse devices at a variety of locations along the South Coast. It ended with a week of infantry training at Sennybridge.

In wartime, 33 Engr Regt is assigned to 1 (UK) Armoured Division and 3 (UK) Division. It has detachments involved in peace support operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, the Falklands, Macedonia and Sierra Leone and, until recently, East Timor.



In control: Lt Corinne Foad of 33 Engr Regt EOD prepares a controlled explosion

Three KOSB soldiers hurt at Crossmaglen

THREE soldiers sustained minor injuries when missiles and petrol bombs were thrown at Crossmaglen police station in south Armagh.

Two soldiers from the 1st Battalion, The King's Own Scottish Borderers received what were described as "slight" injuries and a third from the 1st Battalion, The Royal Highland Fusiliers was

treated for smoke inhalation and minor burns. Twenty-one police officers were injured during the disorder.

A crowd of about 100 had earlier attacked the Creevekeeran watchtower site and the nearby Drummackavall facility before turning their attention to the Crossmaglen police station.

Four protesters were arrested.

IN BRIEF

● Sixty-nine soldiers from 246 Gurkha Signal Squadron officially joined 2 Signal Regiment in York last month. Brig Andrew Farquhar, Commander 15 (North East) Brigade, presented Maj Julius Caesar, the OC, with a triangular guidon in dark blue, with a red band across the centre bearing the number of the new squadron.

● Soldiers, airmen and Royal Marines from the Defence School of Transport at Leconfield hauled a 17-tonne fire engine the length of a runway to raise more than £600 for 14-year-old Jon-Paul Walker, who suffers from muscular dystrophy.

● Brig David Santa-Olalla was inducted

Royal Howard



By appointment: King Harald V of Norway, left, accompanied by Maj Jason Wright, in a Warrior armoured fighting vehicle during his visit to the 1st Battalion, The Green Howards on Salisbury Plain. The King, who is the regiment's Colonel-in-Chief, watched the battalion, which forms the Warminster-based Land Warfare Training Centre Battle Group, demonstrating an attack. He was shown vehicles and equipment and met officers and soldiers responsible for combined arms training. Picture: Steve Dock

Scots' tribute to New York victims

THREE months after the attacks of September 11, soldiers of the Scots Guards led a memorial service for the victims of atrocities in New York and Washington.

Drawn from the regimental recruiting team base in Edinburgh Castle, the soldiers paraded with the Stars and Stripes, Union Flag and the Saltire, pictured right, at a special service in Charlotte Street, Edinburgh.

Scotland's First Minister, Jack McConnell, and the American Consul General, Liane Dorsey, attended the service, at which



LSgt Brian Heriot, also Scots Guards, played the bagpipes. Picture: Mark Owens

Slovak adventure



In touch: Cpl Anne Fair, a signaller from the Dumfries KOSB Detachment of 52nd Lowland Regiment, keeps tabs on teams during an exercise based on a former Soviet Army camp on a training area in central Slovakia.

Three hundred Territorials from the 52nd, augmented by soldiers from the 1st Battalion, The Light Infantry, City of Edinburgh Universities Officers' Training Corps and 170 Provost Company RMP, took part in Exercise Slovak Express under the Partnership for Peace programme.

Camp Slavia, where the exercise was based, is in an area dotted with the remains of Soviet occupation – derelict barracks and hangars and the reinforced bunkers which once housed a Cold War arsenal of tanks and weaponry.

The brigade trained with Slovak soldiers during the two-week trip. Picture: Mark Owens

Highland greeting



Suits you, Sir: Brig Alastair Duncan, left, the new Director of Infantry, meets Cpl John Taylor during his first visit to the 1st Battalion, The Highlanders at Redford Barracks in Edinburgh. Picture: Mark Owens

as the 208th Deputy Constable of Dover Castle last month in the Great Hall of Constable's Tower. The outgoing Deputy Constable, Brig Trevor Minter, has retired from the Army.

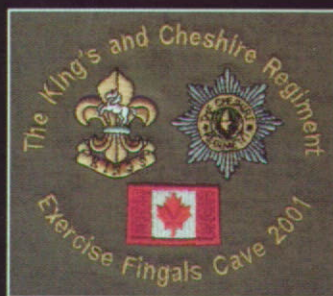
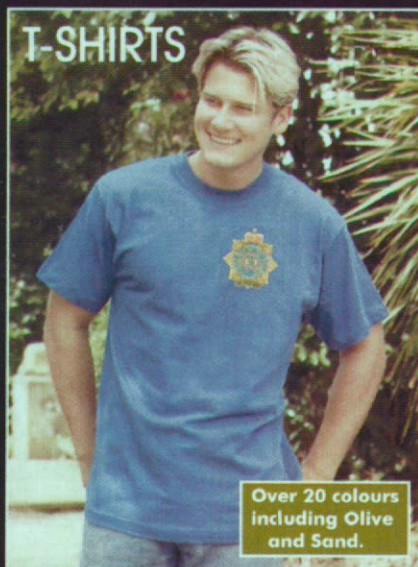


● Capt Dave Neal, pictured, left, welcomed his son, Pte Matthew Neal, to the Aldershot-based 2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. Currently the Army's high-

readiness group (Spearhead), the battalion will move to Tern Hill, Staffs, in July.

● HQ Land is to provide on-line IT training for its new recruits via a "live" instructor who will offer advice and help by directing them to drop-down menus and icons. Training can be done wherever there is an intranet connection.

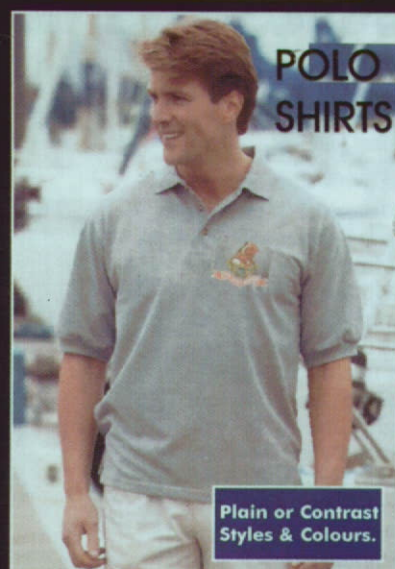
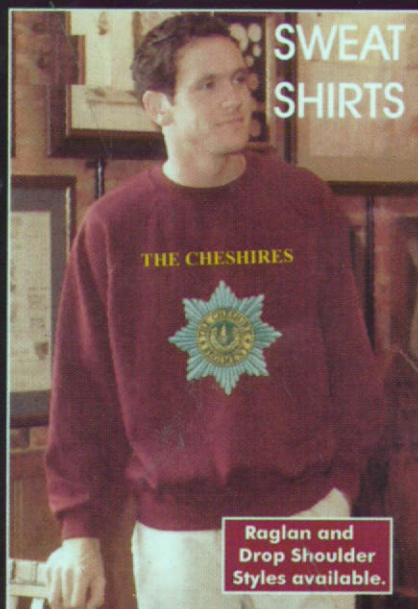
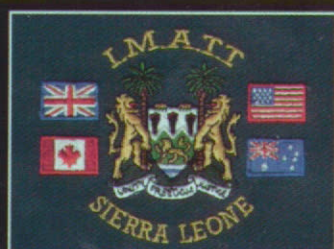
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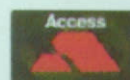
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In memory: LCpl Tom Mayhew and LCpl Ross Smith of 9 Parachute Squadron RE unveil a memorial plaque to a colleague on Montgomery Lines at Aldershot. The plaque, which features a stone brought back from the Balkans by the squadron, commemorates Spr Ian Collins, who was killed in Macedonia last August. Earlier, LCpl Micky Rawson, a close friend of Ian, presented a kneeler on behalf of 9 Para Sqn to the Royal Garrison Church, Aldershot.

Bermuda joins the Army brotherhood

A SECOND overseas military unit joined the British Army "family" when The Bermuda Regiment was presented with a corps warrant by the Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Mike Walker.

Admission will allow Bermudian troops on more training courses as well as larger operations, including UN peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. It will also allow Bermudian soldiers to receive British decorations and awards such as the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal.

The only other overseas regiment to be admitted, on the authority of the Monarch, is The Royal Regiment of Gibraltar.

The largely symbolic corps warrant, handed over at a ceremony attended by the



island's governor and civic leaders, gives the regiment closer affiliation with British units. The award signalled the culmination of a process started in 1996 when the then commanding officer, Lt Col David Burch, began negotiations with the MoD.

"It can be said that we're going from being a stepbrother to a brother," said Capt William White, the adjutant.

● Bermudian soldiers will be eligible for the Golden Jubilee Medal, if their Prime Minister approves. The MoD has already given its consent, but the Government of Bermuda is expected to submit a formal request before the Queen authorises the release of the medal.

Write-off

A money-saving offline writing facility has been launched by BFPO to complement its e-bluey service. Service personnel can find out how to use it by using the links at www.bfpo.org.uk



CSgt Brian Polson, left, of 1 Hldrs, looks on as the final intake on the School Leavers Scheme (North) march off to Basingbourn following closure of their training camp at ATR Glencorse, home to junior soldiers in Scotland since Brian joined up in 1979.

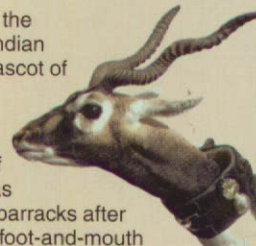
Picture: Mark Owens

Paper talk

What the Press has been saying

● The RAF's three largest air bases – including two at the centre of the war against terrorism – face the threat of closure in a major cost-cutting exercise ordered by the Treasury. RAF Lyneham, RAF Brize Norton and RAF St Mawgan have been put on notice. – *Mail on Sunday*

● Bobby, the blackbuck Indian antelope mascot of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, has returned to barracks after six months' foot-and-mouth quarantine in the Tower of London. – *Sunday Telegraph*



● Alvis, the defence group, is in talks with the MoD to supply an "environmentally friendly" armoured car. It runs on rubber tracks to minimise noise, has lower fuel consumption and lower emissions. It can also run silently on batteries for several hours. – *Sunday Telegraph*

● Three former Chiefs of the Defence Staff and the widow of Colonel "H" Jones VC have written to the newspaper accusing the Government of selling the Armed Forces short on retirement. – *Daily Telegraph*

● Five men were jailed for kicking to death Cpl Derek Osbourne, a member of the British Army bobsleigh team, outside a nightclub in Innsbruck, Austria. – *Daily Express*

● Tessa Jowell, the culture secretary, has angered the MoD by refusing to extend the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal to holders of the Victoria Cross and George Medal at a cost of only £1,000. – *Guardian*

● Swiss voters have shied away from abolishing their country's large army. Switzerland is committed to neutrality and has not been attacked for 500 years, but maintains a force of 360,000 – larger than most Nato armies, including Britain. – *Times*

● Two shows for British troops on exercise in Oman by Geri Halliwell cost the MoD a total of £550,055. Reports that Miss Halliwell charged large sums have surprised other stars who pride themselves on performing for troops for much less than they would usually receive. – *Daily Telegraph*

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Changing rooms

with a grenade

Wiltshire hosts Nato instructors learning a vital battlefield skill

Report: Maj Liam Webber
Pictures: Cpl Jim Elmer

"ROOM CLEAR!" ... or should that be "zimmer frei!" ... or perhaps "chambre vide!"?

It could have been all three languages when Copehill Down on Salisbury Plain hosted a Nato Fighting In Built-Up Areas (FIBUA) instructors' course.

While the action takes place in English, a lot of thinking – and cursing – takes place in foreign tongues. The two-week course is run by the British Army's Urban Operations Wing at Copehill Down.

Capt Andy Hughes, Kings, of the directing staff, explained: "Two weeks is a relatively short time, so the course is intensive. It does assume a basic knowledge of FIBUA skills on the part of the students. We are training the trainer."

Students have only a few days to get up to speed with the SA80 rifle, British vernacular ... and the Wiltshire weather. "I am from Milan, North Italy," said WO1 Ronalto Daretti, "so the weather here is not so different from home. But I have bought a Snugpack jacket to keep warm."

While British tactics are the common standard for training, they do not vary much between Nato members and there are many common standards to ensure multi-national operations run smoothly.

Capt Hughes said: "The American airborne guys showed us a new technique for room-clearing when they were last here. They call it 'butts and nuts'. They work in four-man teams, with each man holding the shoulder of the man in front.

"The front man leads the team into the room and they clear it by firing into all likely areas of cover. They drop off the last man in the chain and then shuffle into the next room and do the same. The idea is to minimise blue-on-blue casualties, but it does slow things down."

Students experience all-arms aspects of battle, with armour from Salisbury Plain demonstration units taking part in frenetic exercises around the village. Tanks, artillery pieces and armoured sapper vehicles are planned into the battle-runs, although playing with "big boys' toys" is not without its hazards.

"Communications are critical," said Capt Hughes. "You've got to be sure which building the tank is about to fire

on. With friendly troops swarming all over what is essentially a 360-degree battlefield blue-on-blues are all too easy."

Small Arms Weapon Effect Simulator kit is used extensively, so there can be little doubt when kills have been achieved. A well-placed sniper can decimate a unit lurking too long in the open.

Evacuation drills are an important element of the training and soldiers find there is no substitute for brute strength when it comes to removing a wounded "oppo" from the line of fire.

For Sjt Andy Ansell, RGJ, opposed entry to a building is not new. A member of the TA, Andy is a bailiff in the Milton Keynes area. "I suppose the main difference is that here we're not encouraged to leave with the furniture or TV," he commented.

Capt Hughes reckons fighting in built-up areas is a skill that can never be overlooked: "All conflicts will have some form of it, even if it's clearing a two-room hut in the jungle. Techniques remain the same. Key aspects will always be speed, aggression and communications.

"And it is a battle fought and won by junior commanders and their soldiers."



Right direction: Capt Andy Hughes, above, and soldiers from Nato armies experience the fog of war in Wiltshire, main picture

Welcome to the real Army

Royal Green Jackets begin the next phase of the rehabilitation of a West African nation's former rebel soldiers

Report: Dennis Barnes Pictures: Cpl Mark Ballantyne

SOLDIERS from the 1st Battalion, The Royal Green Jackets have been experiencing Sierra Leone's sweltering humidity at the start of the next phase of Britain's crucial military assistance to the war-damaged West African state's national army.

Following the success of a series of short-term training teams which have been in Africa since a British task force restored order there in 2000, the Royal Green Jackets are putting in place the first military reintegration programme (MRP1).

"It's another stage in the process of getting this war-torn country back on its feet," said CSgt John Coles. His battalion's mission is to push the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) further towards normality. Under a process known as disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, former rebels are being encouraged to hand in their weapons to UN soldiers in return for a bounty.

Sgt David Atwill said: "The bribe is to offer as much food as they can eat to get them in.

If you have been holed up in the jungle for some time it is a powerful attraction."

The volunteers are given a choice: enter a civilian programme and train to be an artisan or remain with the SLA and train at Benguema military camp. Before that happens, the former rebels are assessed by a tribunal whose members include RGJ personnel to examine literacy and military skills.

The Green Jackets have been looking at up to 500 potential soldiers a week. The MRP concentrates on officers and men of the SLA training their own soldiers, while their British instructors stand at their shoulders. Sgt Lee Jones commented that at first it had been a bit like a ventriloquist working with a dummy.

As the ten-week programme picks up pace, the British trainers slip more and more into the background, leaving the SLA's soldiers, NCO and officers to

stand on their own feet.

At Benguema barracks the Green Jacket troops have moved into purpose-built accommodation, while the wooden boards across which personnel had to move between tents have long gone.

While the buildings have stood up to heavy rainfall, the drains have yet to be sorted out properly.

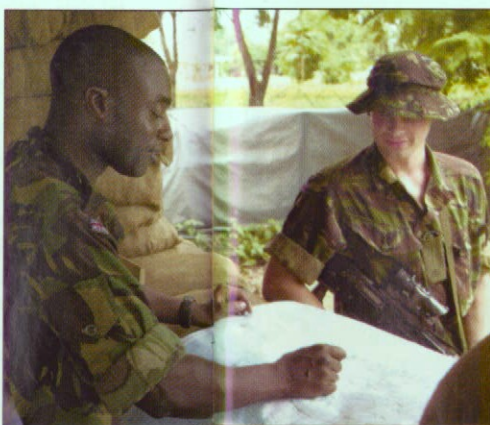
Potential officers selected from the ranks of the volunteers face a "commissioning" course run by the Green Jackets, who teach basic leadership and tactics.

A mock attack at an old palm wine refinery was watched by hundreds of local people, who were impressed by the belligerent if somewhat unorthodox defence put up by the demonstration troop, who cheered and sang as they were finally overwhelmed.

The British soldiers are also responsible for force protection, a quick-reaction

Attacking option: SLA soldiers on an officers' commissioning course are put through their paces by 1 RGJ instructors, above

We're here: Guard commander Cpl Richard Horrabin, left, discusses the plan with Rfn Ian Jack before setting out on a patrol



capability and for patrolling the area in weapon-bearing Land Rovers. For many of them, the chance to get out and meet people has given the greatest satisfaction.

Maj Adam Ashmead-Bartlett said: "This is a huge responsibility from which all will benefit. Our men have to encourage and nurture Sierra Leone Army recruits much more than we would back home, but if it will give this country better soldiers and more stability, then it will have been worthwhile."



Recovered: Personnel from the RFA *Sir Geraint* and 17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC ease wreckage from a UN helicopter out of Man of War Bay and on to a Mexeflote platform

Marchwood's soldier-sailors recover crashed helicopter

A DETACHMENT of soldiers from Marchwood, near Southampton, led the painstaking search for a United Nations helicopter which crashed with all seven crew and passengers into the sea off Freetown harbour in Sierra Leone.

Men from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC teamed up with UN personnel to find the Russian-made Hip helicopter. Mexeflote landing vessel navigator LCpl Bob Wilson and Pte Daniel Callus were members of a Marchwood detachment ferrying military vehicles and equipment between Lungi airport and Freetown.

"When the helicopter crashed," said Pte Callus, "it was on a short routine flight in Man of War Bay, near Freetown harbour, so the United Nations asked if we could help."

The sea-going loggies attached a side-

scan sonar to the rear of their craft and began a meticulous search of the bay.

Cpl Dean McLeish, the coxswain, said: "After two weeks of searching, we found the wreck in 20m of water and just 200 yards from the Cape Sierra lighthouse."

The whole operation was carried out under a remorselessly hot sun.

"People were getting anxious after two weeks and wanted to bury their friends. It was a great relief to find it. It wasn't easy, but we kept at it," said Cpl McLeish.

Using the Mexeflote as a platform for a mobile crane, and with Ukrainian divers attaching straps to the pieces, the wreckage was slowly lifted by air bags, manhandled on board and carefully laid out on the deck of the Mexeflote.

The operation was led by the chief officer of the replenishment ship RFA *Sir Geraint*.

On guard: A Royal Green Jacket outside the battalion headquarters

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Apache pilot

The first in an occasional feature on what soldiers wear to do their job. We start with the highly-specialised world of the Apache Longbow WAH-64 helicopter pilot

The load-carrying jerkin – LCJ to those in the trade – holds equipment such as Global Positioning System (GPS), first-aid, water, locating beacon, flares and survival equipment. These items can be varied to suit the operational environment

The integrated helmet is fitted with a visor and microphone. Below the microphone is a lip-light (switched on by the pilot applying pressure with his lips), which allows him to see around the cockpit in the dark. In the sides of the helmet are sensors which detect the pilot's head movements.

Full title of the state-of-the-art headgear is Integrated Helmet and Display Sight System – IHADSS for short.



This view of the helmet shows the Display Sight System which provides the pilot with flight symbology, targeting information and forward-looking infra-red for night-flying video images



Pilots carry a J knife, inset, to help them escape from a crashed aircraft. They also have a short-term air supply system which contains one minute's worth of air to aid escape from a submerged aircraft

Our "model" is WO2 Paul Mason, AAC, who trained as an Apache attack helicopter Mk 1 pilot at Fort Rucker in Alabama, USA, and is currently a flying instructor at the Attack Helicopter Training Unit, part of the School of Army Aviation, at Middle Wallop in Hampshire. Depending on his mission, he would be armed with a 9mm pistol, HK 53 or SA80 rifle.



Apache pilots use a mission planning system, above. Operational information such as map coordinates, frequencies, target location and weapon loads are fed into the aircraft's processors via a data transfer cartridge. This allows the pilot to become airborne within minutes

Army's 'Beatles' stage a comeback



Double-take: Shades of Blue, then and now – left to right in both pictures, Roger Pollard, Mike Trehwella, Fred Bowes (with the 1967 trophy, right, at the group's reunion) and Howie Dutton

But the chart-breaking group's reunion is for one night only

IT WAS 1967 and the Beatles sensation was still sweeping the nation, writes Chris Horrocks.

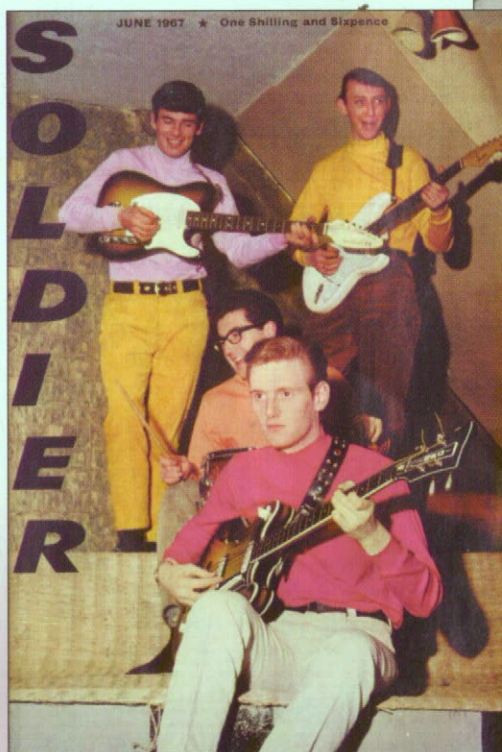
So many rock bands had sprung up in the wake of the Fab Four that the Army had decided to hold its own "beat group" competition, and when the grand final was held at London's Playhouse Theatre the judges included top DJs David Jacobs, Keith Fordyce and Barry Alldis.

The winners – Shades of Blue, formed two years previously by four young soldiers serving with 20 Armoured Brigade in Germany – looked all set to become celebrities in their own right.

As well as a trophy, their prize included an appearance at a show in aid of the Army Benevolent Fund in front of Princess Alexandra and her husband, Mr Angus Ogilvy. The group shared the bill at London's Victoria Palace with the likes of Harry Secombe and Rolf Harris.

They made the front cover of *Soldier* but things began to really take off when they were "signed up" by the new Major Minor record label. They attended a glittering launch party at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in the company of Tony Blackburn, Jimmy Savile and Stuart Henry.

Their self-penned debut single, *Coplington* and *Watchmaker*, crept into the lower reaches of the charts. The only snag was that for legal reasons they had to change their name because a group called Shades of Blue already existed in Ameri-



You bet: *Soldier* took a gamble on Shades of Blue winning the Army's Beat Group Competition by choosing them for the front cover of the June, 1967 edition before the finals were held

ca. So on the record label they became Persimmon's Peculiar Shades – a typical late-Sixties title dreamt up by the label's owner Philip Sullivan.

Fame and fortune seemed to be beckoning for Tpr Howie Dutton, Sig Mike Trehwella, LCpl Roger "Polly" Pollard and Cpl Fred Bowes ... so whatever happened to these likely lads?



Mike, ex-R Signals, now a 54-year-old videographer whose two sons are musicians, lives in Boldon Colliery, Tyne & Wear; Howie (57), ex-AAC att 3 RTR is now a head physio, still living in Germany; Fred (57), ex-RAOC, a retired major, is still working for the Army as an accommodation officer in Cyprus; and Roger (54), ex-RAOC, is now an area manager for Michelin, living in Preston.

Mike, who took three months to get the quartet together for the first time since their Army days, told *Soldier* that when they finally met again for the first time in 32 years at a South Shields hotel, the intervening years just fell away "as if we had just walked out of the door and come back in again".

And he explained the real reason why they hadn't followed the Beatles to the top of the musical tree.

"Once we had returned to our units after winning the competition the Army wouldn't let us go back to the UK to promote the record," he said.

"And they wouldn't let us leave to pursue a musical career. We were split up and sent to different parts of Germany to stop us rehearsing."

Perhaps that's why, as far as the competition was concerned, for once the Beatles did not go on ...

I married a pop diva . . .

Fusiliers' wives find their wild side in a bid for chart success

Report: Andy Simms
Pictures: Graeme Main

TWO soldiers from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers are fast discovering that being married to a pop diva is not quite as glamorous as it sounds.

When WO2 Mark Webster and Fus Gary Raine endorsed their wives' decision to form pop-cover duet *Wild 'N' Wicked*, they probably had visions of escorting them to celebrity parties and film premieres.

However, their respective spouses, Katie and Laura, had very different jobs in mind for the doting husbands.

Every successful pop-group needs a minder and *Wild 'N' Wicked*, who recently played at the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess at St George's Barracks in North Luffenham, are no exception to the rule.

Unfortunately for Mark, the only kind of minder currently required by the duo is a child-minder.

And so while the self-confessed "queens of karaoke" are busy entertaining



"I can assure you there's a perfectly sound explanation, Mrs Eccles."

audiences at pubs, clubs and hotels with renditions of HearSay's *Pure and Simple* and Geri Halliwell's *It's Raining Men*, Mark is left at home with his and Katie's

Supporters: Left, Gary delivers Katie and Laura to a concert at the Sergeants' Mess at St George's Barracks in North Luffenham, while Mark is left at home with children Jamie, Matthew and Kimberley



three children, Jamie (9), Matthew (7) and Kimberley (5). But despite his baby-sitting duties Mark remains fully behind *Wild 'N' Wicked's* quest for chart success.

"I have always known that Katie has loved singing and am happy that she is giving it a go," he said. "A lot of the soldiers from the regiment have now heard her sing and everyone keeps congratulating me on the sound of her voice."

Gary's support is also being put to good use by the wannabe stars, who came up with the name *Wild 'N' Wicked* over a bottle of alcopop WKD.

Neither Katie (33) or Laura (22), who have been performing together since April of last year, hold a driving licence, so they rely on Gary to transport them to and from gigs.

An arrangement that, like Mark's child-minding, is not without its problems.

"Both Mark and Gary have just started a six-month tour of Northern Ireland," explained Katie. "Which means that we are having to turn some bookings down."

◆ For more information on the band, and how to book a performance, visit *Wild 'N' Wicked's* website at www.katiwebster.co.uk

Anyone can join the paras.



When soldiers see action they could be only a split second away from joining the ranks of the disabled. Of course, the chances are it won't happen to you, but somewhere, a soldier reading this may stop a bullet. Whether you know them or not they would surely have your sympathy. But there's something else you can give, something more tangible. A donation.

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Wall of silence: A young Cat Stevens (or is it?) stares out from an empty room in the former Royal Army Medical College at Millbank, London

Millbank murals' military mystery

DESPITE several months of speculation about who painted them and why, the new owners of the former Royal Army Medical College at Millbank on the Thames are no wiser to the identity of the mystery artist or artists, **writes John Elliott.**

Giant murals of chart-toppers from more than a quarter of a century ago – Beatle Paul McCartney is one of them – cover all four walls of a common-room in a former barracks block that had been under lock and key for many years.

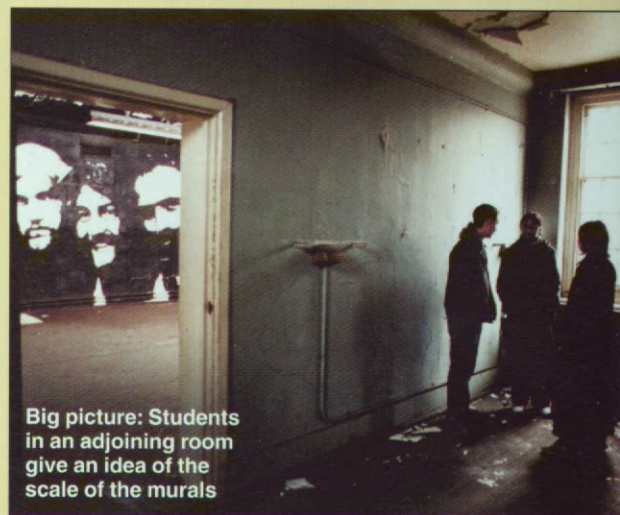
Soon to become the home of the Chelsea College of Art and Design, the murals have attracted considerable attention among the ranks of Millbank's new owners. "We believe they were painted by soldiers at the barracks about

30 years ago," said Michael Benson, Director of Communications at the London Institute. "We are eager to find out who exactly painted them and to identify all the pop stars depicted."

"This striking collection of pop art is fascinating."

The former RAMC site, which overlooks the Thames on London's Millbank, will become the permanent home of the Chelsea College of Art and Design from next year. Close to Tate Britain, the location's altered role will help to create a thriving new arts quarter in the capital.

If you know who painted the murals, ring, write to or e-mail the Editor at jelliott@soldiermagazine.co.uk. Other contact details appear on Page 78.



Big picture: Students in an adjoining room give an idea of the scale of the murals

Ready for the worst-case scenario

Porton Down's scientists don't just protect soldiers and civilians from plague and pestilence. They also develop life-saving battlefield surgery techniques and equipment

Report: Anthony Stone
Pictures: Mike Weston

SOLDIERS will have reason to thank Porton Down scientists if research into a new surface finish proves successful. The coating, which repels oils as well as water, could mean the end of the old NBC suit and lead to the development of lighter, more flexible options.

Matt Chinn, technical manager in charge of protection and decontamination, said: "This finish could be applied to all manner of things – tentage, webbing, rucksacks, anything – the scope is endless."

Equipment would be placed in a chamber and the protective coating applied in vapour form. This allows the chemicals to get into all the nooks and crannies, like zip openings and stitching, which are the usual weak spots on protective kit. The research is looking very positive, the latest in a series of ingenious inventions and applications designed to give British troops the edge.

Scientists at the defence establishment, now known as Dstl Porton Down, may work with the stuff of nightmares, but they are not troubled by sleepless nights.

"People are frightened by fear of the unknown," said Dr Rick Hall, the technical director at the centre, tucked away in the Wiltshire countryside. "What we are about is understanding the problem."

If the United Kingdom or her Armed Forces come under biological or chemical attack, soldiers' and civilians' lives will depend on the work of the 800 staff at Porton Down.

It's been a busy time for the staff. Public concern in the UK following the anthrax attacks in the United States is high and scientists are routinely asked to test suspect packages.

"I am not trying to underplay it,



In their element: Dr Rick Hall, left, and Dr Stephen Coulson, scientists at Dstl Porton Down

anthrax is an horrific weapon," said Dr Hall. "You could inhale a lethal dose totally without knowing it, but it's very easy to be too frightened."

Porton scientists have been shedding light on the dark world of chemical and biological defence since the first laboratory huts went up in 1916. Then gas warfare, which the Germans introduced to



In at the finish: A coating, which repels oils as well as water, could give British troops the edge in a crisis

the Western Front the previous year, was in its infancy. Scientists concentrated on how best to protect troops in the trenches and how to retaliate in kind.

This focus continued until 1956 when the UK unilaterally pulled back from the offensive side of chemical and biological weapons. Since then it has existed solely to provide the UK and its Armed Forces

with effective protection if chemical and biological weapons are used against them.

Some of the work carried out is secret, but much of it is not, and regularly appears in scientific journals.

The scientists' field of excellence extends beyond the confines of test tubes in their quest to protect soldiers. Researchers evaluate what happens when troops use equipment such as bomb disposal suits and flak jackets. They don't design the kit, but investigate what happens to soldiers who do and suggest improvements.

They examine ways to improve battlefield surgery techniques – what can be done with limited facilities and expertise to give casualties the best chance of survival.

An emergency solution may be to literally staple soldiers back together until medics can get to work. The best way to develop research sometimes involves using animals.

"We do not do it lightly and only where it is necessary. We are proud of what we have achieved so far," Dr Hall said.

Since 1990 the establishment's role has been expanded to take in terrorist threats. The Home Office and Cabinet Office has the main responsibility for dealing with domestic terrorism, but Porton Down is

an essential part of the response. Working with the intelligence services, scientists attempt to define the problem and give an assessment of the hazard. They do this by attempting to answer a series of questions.

For example, what materials can a country or terrorists use? Can they be produced in militarily significant quantities? If they can, what are their toxicological and physical properties? Can they be stored, stockpiled and disseminated? And most importantly, what would be the consequences if they were used in a particular scenario?

The distilled answer to all these questions enables the Government to define its policy in terms of biological and chemical defence. It also helps scientists determine exactly what sensors need to detect, in what concentration, and how quickly.

"We don't seek to provide our Armed Forces with 100 per cent protection against everything," Dr Hall said. "That would be possible, but you would have to put them in a goldfish bowl and they would not be able to do their job."

A balance is struck between providing the level of protection soldiers need with how much it will reduce their operational effectiveness.

"Biological weapons have not been used on any significant scale for a very long time and our job is to make sure the UK Armed Forces are appropriately prepared to continue to operate if they are."



Fire mission: Soldiers from Gibraltar, right, try their hand with the Moroccan Army's AK47 rifles during a session on the range. Their hosts, who use very direct methods of attack, adapted to British tactics for joint exercises



Best of order: Platoon commander 2nd Lt David King reorganises his troops after a section attack, left. The soldier nearest him is LCpl Nathan Cruz

Thirsty work: Pte Junior Valverde, below, replaces lost liquid

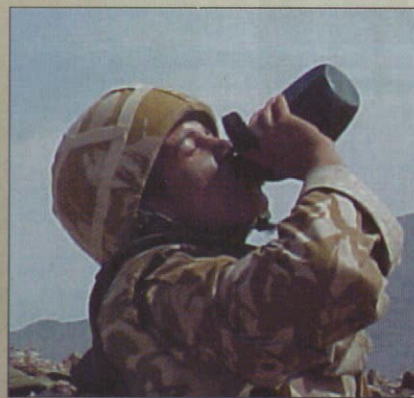
From Rock to a hard place

Moroccan Sahara puts the men from Gibraltar G Company to test

TROOPS from Gibraltar returned to familiar territory for an exercise with the spearhead unit of the Moroccan Army.

For the second year in a row, soldiers serving with The Royal Gibraltar Regiment's G Company joined forces with the 2ème Brigade d'Infanterie de Parachutistes (2 BIP) to develop their conventional war-fighting skills in a demanding environment.

Morocco's extremes provide an ideal



training area for infantry units. The unforgiving sands of the Sahara lie just a few miles from the freezing, snow-capped peaks of the High Atlas mountains. Ram Ram training area, near the southern city of Marrakesh, is somewhere between the two extremes. Although the terrain is mountainous and difficult to move across, the heat is that of the Sahara.

The Gibraltarians found the local unit hard-working, hospitable (they gave up the best quarters for their guests), and trained to an utterly different doctrine. But despite the differences – of which language was the most obvious – many mutual lessons were learned. G Coy found the Moroccan soldiers preferred a more direct approach to attacks, firing as they moved and peppering the enemy with automatic fire. To avoid confusion, the Moroccans adopted British tactics during extensive field-firing packages.

Communications were helped by two G Coy privates who speak Arabic and were consequently run off their feet as interpreters.

Plans are already being made for the Royal Gibraltar Regiment to make use of other training areas in the High Atlas mountains next year.



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Mother of all expeditions

Soldiers tackle South America's toughest terrain

Pictures: Patricio Crooker

AN expedition led by Col John Blashford-Snell, including more than 20 soldiers, has battled its way along steep, slippery trails and across 15,000ft peaks in some of South America's most inhospitable terrain in the latest phase of an ambitious programme.

The explorers who completed the third phase of the five-year Kota Mama expedition have faced torrential rain, temperatures of about 95F and razor-sharp bamboo that has cut deep gashes in their skin. Swarms of fierce bees were attracted by the salt in their sweat and one expedition member, WO2 Craig Halford, was stung more than 50 times. Snakes were a constant danger.

The aim was to sail across the South American river network to prove that the ancient indigenous people used reed boats to navigate the waterways for trade and exploration. Kota Mama means

Mother of the Lake in the language of the Bolivian Aymara Indians who built the expedition's reed boats.

After a demanding trek to a remote archaeological site deep in the Andes foothills, sappers carried out engineering tasks to improve trails and survey the site.

Royal Army Veterinary Corps personnel looked after the mules used to supply the advance camps and soldiers from Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps and the Intelligence Corps became involved in humanitarian projects.

During the latter phases, the expedition used a trimaran raft of an ancient reed boat design, built on Lake Titicaca, to navigate several tributaries before reaching the the mouth of the Amazon.

The greatest challenge was passing through the series of rapids that impede the Amazon as it runs along the Bolivian and Brazilian border. Initially, things went



Wet and wild: Spr Matt Pickup, 9 Para Sqn RE and crew tackle the Madeira Rapids on the Brazilian border. Main picture: The Kota Mama 3 flagship heads downriver

well, with the flagship, Kota Mama 3, running several rapids that were Grade 4 in size.

Lt Drew Craig, 135 Independent Geographic Squadron RE(V), said: "Unfortunately the river was not so ready to give up its reputation as a difficult and rarely navigated course. The raft was swallowed by the rapid and sustained considerable damage. Thankfully the crew fared better than the boat and the 15-strong crew, including ten Royal Engineers, made it safely to shore."

After a voyage of some 4,500 kilometres the expedition, run by the Scientific Exploration Society, reached its final destination at the Atlantic port of Belem. You can follow the progress of the expedition on <http://www.kotamama.com/>

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Everest
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Desert mission: Tpr Sudhir Patel, left, and LCpl Anthony Cottage were members of the Royal Yeomanry force protection troop during a Joint NBC Regiment exercise in Kuwait

Yeomen fit in fast on NBC business

IN an exercise given added edge by the war on terrorism and the anthrax scare in America, Britain's Joint Nuclear Biological and Chemical Regiment exercised in Egypt with American and local troops.

Fifty Territorial Army soldiers were integrated into the regiment in a rehearsal of their mobilised role. During the final stage of the the multi-national Exercise

Bright Star, the troops lived in their vehicles in the desert.

Soldiers of A (Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry) Squadron, led by Maj Dominic Guinness, built on experience gained during four years as the Defence NBC Regiment, manning Fuchs vehicles, decontamination systems and squadron headquarters as specialist reinforcements.

At the end of the exercise the TA soldiers were invited to wear the "crossed retorts" shoulder-flash of the Joint NBC Regiment.

Meanwhile, soldiers of W (Westminster Dragoons) Sqn, under Maj Ben Shepherd-Smith, deployed to Kuwait to provide force protection for the Joint NBC Regiment on a mission rehearsal exercise. They were also awarded the coveted shoulder-flashes.

Lt Col Miles Wade, CO Royal Yeomanry, said the Middle East exercises had dispelled the perception that a barrier existed between the TA and Regular Army. He said higher training standards had been achieved than if his soldiers had trained in isolation.

● Challenger 2 reserve soldiers from Royal Yeomanry squadrons sharpened their skills on King's Royal Hussars training equipment at Tidworth before taking part in a two-week exercise on Salisbury Plain. Some yeomen acted as tank gunners.

TA participation in armoured battle-group exercises in Germany, Poland and Canada is being considered.



Signed up: Lt Col Chris Deverell, CO Joint NBC Regiment, right, presents a crossed retorts flash to Maj Dominic Guinness of A Sqn, The Royal Yeomanry, during an NBC exercise in the desert

FEED back

Direct line: Gen Sir Mike Walker, right, Chief of the General Staff, gets the latest feedback from his briefing team. Seated are Lt Col Robert Sutcliffe, left, who led the TA team, and Lt Col Stephen Kilpatrick PWRR. Behind them are Cpl Mark Lindsay RE and WO2 (CSM) Mick Owen, Gren Gds. Since the picture was taken, Lt Col Sutcliffe has handed over the TA reins to Lt Col Iain Macdonald, Hldrs.



CGS's Briefing Team's autumn tour was its largest so far, taking in Cyprus, Kosovo, Northern Ireland and mainland UK. The executive summary, complete with CGS's comments, will be distributed to units in January. Here are a few of the questions you asked.

Licensed for operations

Q Why are we still paying for TV licences while on operations?

A You ought not to be. If you hold a licence for a TV that will not be used at all for the duration of the tour, you can claim a refund through PO Box 410, TV Licensing, Bristol, BS98 1TL. Refunds can only be claimed for whole quarters (three months).

Christmas is a moving time

Q The battalion deployed to Northern Ireland two years ago in December. Now we are moving – again before Christmas. Why can't we move in the summer?

A CGS's intention is that when units move they do so with as little disruption to families as possible. There are constraints, not least operational tours and the barrack plot. An added complication in Northern Ireland is the marching season, which requires a high availability of units ready to deploy. While unhelpful, the move has been timed for genuine operational reasons.

Bountiful pensions

Q Since I was paid a bounty at the five- and eight-year points, will this come off my pension?

A The short answer is no. You are referring to the Financial Retention Incentives (FRIs) payable at the five- and eight-year points, and currently worth £3,000 and £2,500 before tax. They do not affect your pension.

From Albert Square to Barrack Square

TV's sexiest barmaid swaps the Queen Vic for Queen and country

Interview: Andy Simms
Pictures: Mike Weston

STANDING to attention on the drill square of the Army's Reserve Training and Mobilisation Centre (RTMC) at Chilwell in Nottingham, Tamzin Outhwaite cuts the image of a model recruit.

But then after more than three years of playing Melanie in the BBC's hit soap opera *EastEnders*, the 31-year-old actress is accustomed to the finer points of square-bashing – albeit of a very different kind.

Albert Square has seen more prize fights than New York's Madison Square Gardens and Tamzin's time in Walford has not passed without incident. In comparison with working behind the bar of the Queen Vic, marrying Steve Owen, and being kidnapped by Dan Sullivan, getting bawled at by an RSM must seem positively serene.

However, drill practice was just one aspect of the military training completed by the *EastEnders* star at RTMC before filming began on *Red Cap*, the BBC's new drama about the Army's Special Investigation Branch.

In the one-off special scheduled to be shown this month, Tamzin plays Sgt Jo McDonagh, the unit's newest plain-clothed recruit, who joins the SIB from the Close Protection Unit.

"As soon as I saw the script I wanted the



Tamzin: "You realise how dedicated soldiers are"

part," explained Tamzin, who was voted sexiest female soap star again recently. "I was really keen to take on a different role from Mel and in many ways Jo is the complete opposite.

"Mel is a strong woman but she also has a very feminine side. She is quite glamorous and always has her lip-gloss and loop earrings on," she said.

"Jo is more masculine and pretty tough. She isn't a hard bitch but she knows when to stick up for herself. She is also very unvain and likes to be in the thick of things."

Determined to give a good account of herself in her first major role since springing to fame in *EastEnders*, Tamzin decided that a stint in uniform would be the best preparation for playing a military detective.

"I am having to learn about the military from scratch," Tamzin conceded to *Soldier* midway through her week of training. "Apart from some promotional work for the TA, before I arrived at RTMC I had never even met anybody from the armed services and the only preconceptions I had were based on what I had seen on television.

"The first thing that hits home about being in the Army is all the rules and regulations. Who you call sir, who you salute and when you wear your beret were all things that I just didn't have a clue about.

"You don't get a list of rules when you start – you find them out for yourself by getting shouted at."

Shadowed by SSgt Morvern Sayer (RMP), a real-life Army SIB operative, the actress had no star-treatment during her short secondment with the Army.

Her days were filled with lessons in unarmed combat, 9mm pistol firing, drill, saluting and driver

training, and at night there was no luxurious hotel room to escape to.

"Although I did not expect to be pampered, I had hoped that people here would go out of their way to make things a bit easier for me," she confessed. "But there has been no let-up and I have been really put through my paces – it makes you realise exactly how dedicated soldiers are to serving their country.

"It can feel like you are cut off from the outside world, especially when you get back to your barracks and you are all alone in a single bed with just your blankets and sheets for company.

"When the press arrived to interview me I thought 'at last, a bit of normality', and for me to think that the press is normality suggests that I am very long way from home.

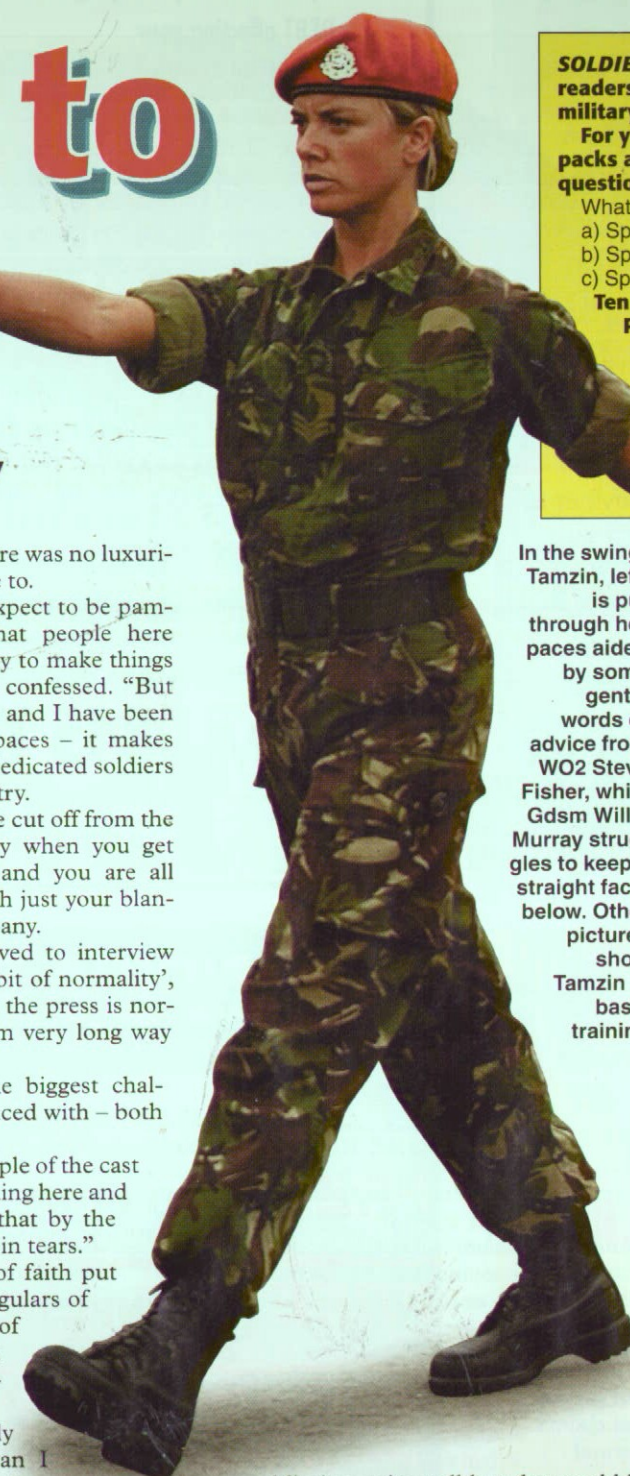
"This is definitely the biggest challenge I have ever been faced with – both mentally and physically.

"I had a bet with a couple of the cast of *EastEnders* before coming here and one of them predicted that by the second night I would be in tears."

But despite the lack of faith put in her by some of the regulars of the Queen Vic, a lack of sleep and aching joints, the former dancer remained dry-eyed.

"I am probably physically fitter than I have been for a long time and that has helped. I went on holiday before coming here and spent the whole week doing sit-ups and press-ups," she said.

"I would say that I am taking to



In the swing: Tamzin, left, is put through her paces aided by some gentle words of advice from WO2 Steve Fisher, while Gdsm Willie Murray struggles to keep a straight face, below. Other pictures show Tamzin in basic training

I could probably last the distance but my admiration for those who do, and have, is sky high. It is your strength of character that gets you

through situations like that, and hopefully I am not too spoilt yet to be able to cope with it.

"The experience has certainly toughened me up though, especially with regard to male humour – you can't be too sensitive around soldiers because it comes thick and fast from these boys."

Now a sure-shot with a pistol and fully fluent in Army slang, Tamzin hopes that her first-hand research will shine through in *Red Cap*, which was filmed on location in Germany.

"I am under a certain amount of pressure with this project because it is my first since *EastEnders*," she said. "I am well aware that there is a danger of being type-cast but I am hoping that as I have only been in *EastEnders* for three years that people will not always see me as Mel.

"I am sure that a lot of fear exists among soap stars that if they are on telly four times a week then the public will never accept them in any other role."

However, Tamzin is quick to point out that her involvement with projects like *Red Cap* does not mean she is ready to turn her back on the Square.

"I love being in *EastEnders*," she said. "And I will definitely be there until at least April, then who knows – I'd like to try my hand at everything."

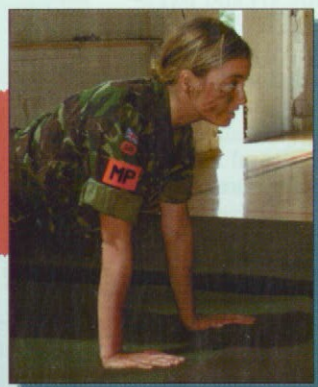
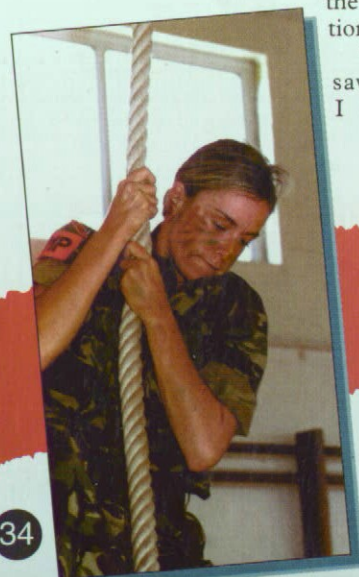
SOLDIER has joined forces with the BBC to offer readers the opportunity to get their hands on some military goodies.

For your chance to win one of five excellent patrol packs and a T-shirt, simply answer the following question:

- What does SIB stand for?
a) Special Intelligence Bureau
b) Special Investigation Branch
c) Special Intelligence Branch

Ten runners-up will each receive an Army T-shirt. Post your answers, marked *Soldier Red Cap* competition, to Natalie Orringe, Rowland Communications, 83-89 Whitfield Street, London W1A 4XA.

The winners will be drawn at random from the correct answers received by January 31. Usual competition rules apply.



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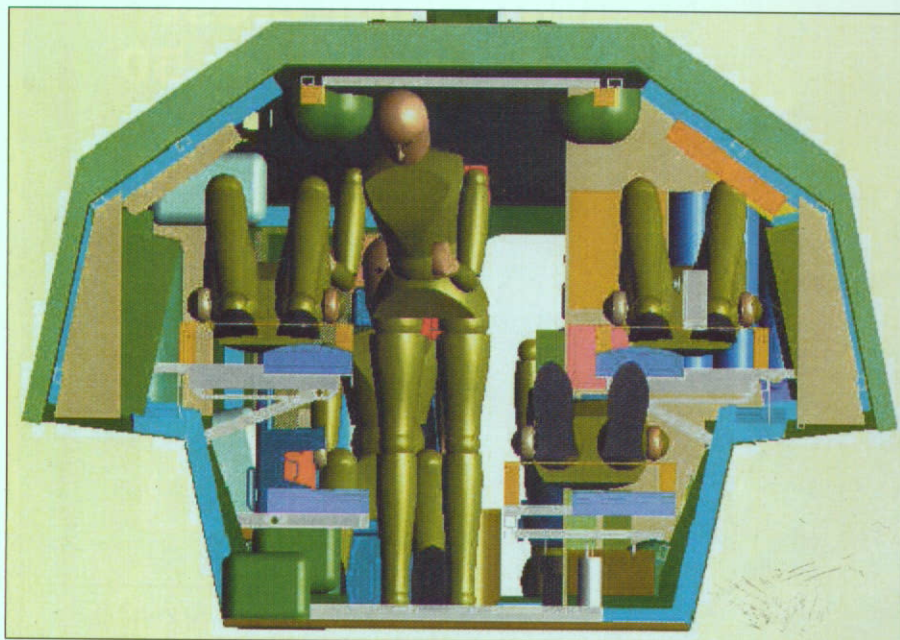
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Safe haven: Computer-generated drawing of the interior of the new battlefield ambulance

Sanctuary in armour

Battlefield ambulance will offer increased chances of survival

A NEW generation of armoured ambulances designed to deliver the earliest possible medical care to soldiers wounded on the battlefield is taking shape on the drawing board, **writes John Elliott.**

The Armoured Treatment and Evacuation Vehicle (ATEV) is a variant of the Multi-Role Armoured Vehicle (MRAV) being developed in a joint initiative by Germany, the Netherlands and the UK. The first prototypes are expected to be

completed this year. British requirements based on the design will include vehicles in the personnel carrier and command post roles as well as the ambulance.

Other uses could include armoured mortar carrier, communications platform and an anti-tank platoon role. In all, the British Army could end up with as many as 1,000 MRAV vehicles.

The ATEV variant, of which the UK is expected to buy up to 150, was added to the MRAV core programme by the UK and the Netherlands, which will develop it jointly. It will accommodate six seated or three stretcher casualties or a combination of both. Its armoured hull and high roof will allow medics to treat the wounded on the battlefield, greatly increasing chances of survival.

It is intended to replace most of the Army's ageing FV432, CVT(T) Sultan and Saxon GWR ambulance vehicles and will be in service for much of the first half of this century.

In common with other MRAV versions, the ambulance will boast as standard a nuclear, biological and chemical warfare defensive system, air-conditioning and a higher level of protection than armoured personnel carriers currently in use.



Weaponised version: A mock-up of an MRAV in armoured personnel carrier incarnation



Satisfied user: Cpl Lee Winter was kept dry by the longer-length SealSkinz socks

Put a sock in it to stay dry

WE'VE got six pairs of SealSkinz's new longer, lighter waterproof socks to give away. Following the success of the original mid-length sock, the company listened to feedback from users and came up with an improved version.

The new Long Light sock, manufactured in King's Lynn, Norfolk, reaches above the top of the combat boot, effectively eliminating water penetration and keeping the lower leg and feet dry in the wettest environment.

We asked Cpl Lee Winter of 9 Para Sqdn RE to try a pair during a particularly soggy exercise on the Aldershot training area. He was impressed.

"The main advantage," he told us, "is that you can wear them as socks rather than over a pair of ordinary socks, so they are comfortable to tab in. They kept my feet dry all day even though I was wearing jungle boots in wet and muddy conditions. I give them the thumbs-up."

The stretchy Long Lights reach to just below the knee, making them suitable for a range of extreme activities demanding waterproof, breathable protection.

To give yourself a chance of winning a pair of £30 SealSkinz Long Light socks, tell us on a postcard the name of the Antarctic penguin population's only predator. Is it a

- a) rubber seal b) leopard seal
c) seal of approval?

Mark your postcard "SealSkinz competition" and include your name, address and shoe size. Answers to reach us by February 1. Usual rules apply. To find out more about the sock, call SealSkinz on 01553 622030 or visit www.sealskinz.com

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Oldest sapper in town

Fred Moore, Britain's oldest man at 109, looks back on his First World War days with the Territorials

Interview: Ray Routledge
Picture: Steve Dock

HE may be 109 years old and the oldest man in Britain, but Fred Moore's mind is as sharp as ever. And he showed that age is no barrier to humour as he recalled his life and Army exploits at his New Milton retirement home on the edge of the New Forest.

Fred, who lived in his own home until he was 106, still enjoys a good time. For his last birthday he was joined by his 82-year-old daughter and 92-year-old sister as they enjoyed a personal appearance by musicians from the Chatham-based Band of the Royal Engineers. It was a fitting tribute to Britain's longest-lived sapper.

"I was a London boy and grew up near Tower Bridge," he said. "One of my earliest memories was of them tying my hand behind my back at school because I was left-handed. It was to make me use my right. It didn't work, though."

As was usual at the time, Fred left school when he was 14 and went to work (for the equivalent of about 12.5p a week) for a brass finishing firm before landing a position as an electrical engineer at Amalgamated Newspapers.

But he wanted some excitement.

Still going strong: former searchlight specialist Fred Moore



"I joined the Territorials with the London Electrical Engineers but had difficulty at first because they said I was too small.

"But I got in in the end and enjoyed the excitement of going away at weekends."

At the outbreak of the First World War, despite applying for full-time service, Fred remained a Territorial because his job was considered to be vital to the war effort. His classification did not stop him continuing with his volunteer duties, which involved manning searchlights on the coast to deter enemy attack from the sea.

He worked on improving the rather inadequate searchlights and after the war joined a team of scientists in Westminster.

He believes the First World War was avoidable.

"Looking back, I realise how badly our country had been led. Our leaders either lacked the brains or the foresight to realise

that with an understanding with our cousins in Germany, the awful and unnecessary carnage could have been avoided."

So what does he reckon is the secret of his long life?

"Keeping the mind active," he said, unequivocally. Alongside his telegram collection from the Queen, his flat houses several water-colours, testimony to his love of art and something he has been able to indulge in since his retirement in 1960.

"I painted Fd Marshal Montgomery once and sent the picture to the Ministry of Defence, where it was exhibited," he said proudly.

"I have enjoyed my life, it has been good to me."

And a final word about his far-off Service days. "It's a silly business, war. No one gains really. As for the Territorial Army, I came out as a corporal - I was too small to be anything else."

QUEEN Victoria was on the throne in the year Fred Moore was born. **William Gladstone** became Prime Minister for the fourth time, **Sunderland** were champions of the Football League and **West Bromwich Albion** defeated **Aston Villa** 3-0 in the final of the FA Cup.

James (Gentleman Jim) J Corbett beat **John L Sullivan** to become heavyweight boxing

That was 1892, that was

champion of the world. England's **cricketers** toured Australia and lost the series 2-1 (nothing new, then, in 1892), although they did beat **South Africa** in a one-off test in Cape Town.

Harold Hilton won the **Open Golf Championships** at Muirfield and the game of netball was first

played. England won Rugby Union's **Grand Slam** without conceding a point.

Arthur Conan Doyle's stories were published as *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, while **Rudyard Kipling's** *Barrack Room Ballads* and *Soldiers Three* went to press.

In Leeds, **Buffalo Bill's** Wild West Show was packing them in. **J R R Tolkien**, creator of *Lord of the Rings* (just released as a blockbuster film) took his first breath in South Africa.

Also born in 1892 was a man who was to become the scourge of British fighter pilots in the First World War, **Manfred Albrecht Freiherr von Richthofen**, otherwise known as the Red Baron.

Snapshots of life on Long Look: Left, from top – Sgt Rod Robb, 2 PWRR, meets the legendary All Blacks winger Jonah Lomu while attached to 2/1 RNZIR at Burnham Military Camp, near Christchurch in New Zealand;

Sgt Les Wallwork, right, from 156 Pro Coy RMP, based in Chichester, gets to grips with a croc while attached to 1 MP Coy in Townsville, Australia;

Lt Gordon Wills, of 1 Mech Bde HQ and Signal Squadron, was introduced to Maori customs while with 3 Signal Regiment at Burnham Military Camp in New Zealand;

Cpl Steve Birchall, left, 14 Sig Regt (EW) and SSgt Paul Youd, 16 Sig Regt, visited Ayers Rock while serving with 7 Sig Regt (EW) near Brisbane;

Sgt Mark Bailey, left, 2 Para, and Lt Russell Newmarch, 2 R Anglian, found themselves fund-raising for war widows in Sydney on Legacy Day



Here are two of Cpl Jim Elmer's images of Service life in Australia. He came across LCpl Travis Zomer, left, while the soldier from Perth, Western Australia, was taking part in an obstacle course competition run by the 3rd Brigade

Spr Cameron Elliott and sniffer dog Xena, right, a team from the Explosives Disposal Combat Engineer Regiment, were demonstrating their skills to guests from the Defence Industry Division during an open day at Canberra

Jim takes a long look at Aussies

... and the Mobile News Team photographer likes what he sees

IMAGINE yourself standing under a scorching Sydney sun staring up at the instantly-recognisable opera house ... wearing full Combat 95s.

No, you're not having a bad fashion day – this is Exercise Long Look, the annual opportunity for more than 100 British Servicemen and women to swap jobs with an Australian counterpart for four months. It renews the close links between the two countries and is a fantastic opportunity to develop one heck of a social life.

Cpl Jim Elmer, an RLC photographer with the Mobile News Team at HQ Land Command, was one of last year's lucky participants.

Jim, who has covered military operations in

Sierra Leone and Macedonia, spent his four months travelling between Sydney, Canberra and Townsville, savouring the differences and capturing the moment on camera. "I was excited when I was offered the chance to go on Long Look," he said. "I wanted to see Australia and I was hoping to get some good pictures of what soldiers do in the outback."

"It was interesting to see another nation working in the same trade as me and how their practices compare with ours."

Although the equipment was the same, Australian training varied hugely. Jim explained: "We have to do a seven-month course before we

can become photographers. In Australia, soldiers can transfer to the PR Corps and learn on the job. They never get real qualifications. They do some PR photography, but not on the same scale as us, and they are not as proactive as we are."

"My best job was on exercise areas while



Capital visit: Cpl Jim Elmer outside Parliament House in Canberra

troops were training to go to East Timor. Australian soldiers don't have the same scope for travel as we do. If people living in Sydney join the army, they can find themselves based there for their entire career."

Jim reckoned the quarters offered to Australian soldiers would make British personnel jealous. "It was really good everywhere, and all en suite. I was the first person to use new accommodation in one camp and the fridge had a welcome note on the front and a six-pack of beer inside."

But Long Look isn't all about work, and Jim revelled in the chance to take in the sights. "Sydney was my favourite place. The quality of life is so good and the people are just so relaxed. Everyone I met was really helpful and couldn't do enough for me." Any chance of a second look?

● Long Look is open to personnel from all arms and services, from corporals to captains. More than 100 exchanges to Australia and New Zealand last for four months from mid-May to mid-September and applications must be made through the chain of command.



This scooter's a hoot

Stylish lightweight fills every commuting function admirably

SCOOTER sales continue to rise at an unprecedented rate – so much so that any entrepreneur who imports a load from Timbuktu and sticks his own transfers on is assured of sales success, writes Syd Taylor.

Franchises are given to anyone with a shed and a set of spanners, and when these “chocolate metal” products disintegrate before your eyes and engines melt down in warm weather, you begin to wish you had bought a quality product.

One of the best-established scooter manufacturers is Peugeot and one of the best-known models is the Speedfight 2. It's the dream “scoot” of popstars and teenagers won over by superb styling (drilled alloy plates on the footboards, a split headlight which looks like two and a funky rear spoiler) and the realisation that Peugeot is a reassuringly familiar name – their two-wheel heritage dating to 1902.

The Speedfight 2 is Britain's best selling scooter and it's not hard to see why: well-built, good performance, proper handling, reliability – and it looks a million dollars.

With the need to make a ten-mile trip into the heart of the city in rush hour, I had decisions to make. Should I take the 3.0-litre V6 test car and sit imperiously like a dyspeptic bank manager chewing on his Rennies after the previous night's golf club dinner – fuming in a never-ending queue – or Honda's Blackbird (a cruise missile which can accelerate to warp-speed in an instant but is not suited to nipping in and out of traffic)?

Neither. I took the bright orange-and-blue Speedfight 2 to whisk me past the mayhem, which it did with aplomb, nipping through gaps that would have challenged a cyclist and defied the Blackbird.

Accelerating away from the lights, leaving Mondeo Man behind, was easy. No need here for traffic news – just twist and go on one of the best jam-busters around.

The reality was that my journey took



Peugeot Speedfight 2 100

Tech Spec

Engine 100cc Single cylinder, two-stroke
Transmission Constantly variable. No gear-changing
Chassis Tubular
Body Plastic panels

Suspension Front: Single arm NSA fork. Rear: Single shock absorber
Brakes Front: 180mm disc. Rear: 180mm disc
Tyres Front: 120/70.12.

Rear: 140/70.12
Price £1,999 (limited editions about £50 more).

less than half the time it usually takes by car and (this was a surprise) it was 15 per cent quicker than on the Blackbird.

I dodged youths on micro-scooters but didn't remonstrate with them because we “scooter-rooters” must show a united front. I parked on a bit of land inaccessible to cars, locked my helmet under the seat, squeezed my one-piece waterproof suit next to it and secured the Speedfight to a hitching rail by the expandable boa cable lock which slides neatly in and out of the back of the scooter.

‘Accelerating away from the lights, leaving Mondeo Man behind, was easy’

This scooter offers the best security in the business. With a coded key immobiliser too, you can be fairly sure it will be there when you get back. Physical security is important because it's not difficult to lift a scooter into a van.

On test was the model powered by the 100cc air-cooled, two-stroke single, a motor that revs willingly. I was amazed at just how nippy it is (I'm not a lightweight). Top speed is around 60mph, but more importantly you zip up to 50mph faster than most cars, so you're always ahead of the pack.

Pick-up is sharp, take-off quick and, of course, there's no time-wasting gear-changing to worry about. It's easier than riding a pushbike, and that makes for safe travel because all you need to devote your

concentration to is the traffic around you.

You get stability, comfort, zest and good handling from a Speedfight, which are key ingredients. The precision handling and good manoeuvrability must, in part, be thanks to the single-arm front fork, which minimises drive under the hard braking of which the Speedfight 2 is capable. Front and rear discs ensure you can stop on a sixpence.

The Speedfight is head-and-shoulders above the rest in the style stakes, thanks to Gallic design flair. The pulsar blue-and-orange of the test bike is stunning.

It fulfils every function admirably, with a likely 100mpg, a comfortable ride and enough space under the seat for a helmet and waterproofs.

When you consider what it can save you in fuel/train/bus fares, it makes sense at £1,999. Prices start at £1,674 for the 50cc (which will appeal to the teenage market), while for serious commuting, I would go for the 100cc version, maybe one of those limited editions in stunning World Rally Championship livery.

Whichever model you consider, you're assured of several things. First, in this fast-forward, fast-food age, it's just the job for keeping to schedule. And when you get there you'll park easily. But most of all, your journey will be fun.

A word of warning. Scooters are fairly complex machines so established dealers are really the best places to buy from.

Celia's cover-ed girl



Hidden beauty: This delightful portrait of Sarah Bull taking part in a 21 Signal Regiment wives' fun day at Colerne wins Celia Mannings the top spot in *Soldier's* January contest to promote the Army Photographic Competition.

Celia, whose husband is in the Army, wins a £25 photographic gift voucher and a guaranteed entry in the *Soldier*-sponsored category of the worldwide Army competition, which carries a prize of £250 for the winner.

Mike Weston, our chief photographer, said: "Careful use of flash on a cammed-up face always brings a picture to life. Coupled with the

SOLDIER PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

spontaneous expression, it helps to make this photograph stand out from the crowd."

Just for the record, Celia reckons that Sarah's vivid camouflage – certain to draw attention

to herself against any background – was a good illustration of how not to do it.

Closing date for the final *Soldier* competition, the winner of which will appear in the February issue, is January 9. Send your entries to the Chief Photographer (with a sae if you want them returned), or e-mail them to mweston@soldiermagazine.co.uk, indicating "Soldier Phot Comp" in the subject box.

Brand leaders back Army's top snappers

LEADING names in the industry have signed up to support the Army Photographic Competition, entries for which close on February 8.

Joining *Soldier* as main sponsors of the prestige annual event are Olympus, who are putting up prizes worth £1,000 for the best digital entries; Fuji (£1,250), who are backing the Professional Photographer of the Year category; Dixons (£1,250), the amateur competition; Agfa (£1,000), best overall photograph; and SSV

(£1,000), the best unit photograph award.

Entries will be welcomed from dependants as well as serving and retired Regular Army, TA, cadets and Army-employed civilians.

For more details, visit the Army website on www.army.mod.uk/apc2001.htm or obtain entry forms and details from your unit admin officers, the nearest media ops staff, DCI Army 80/1 (July 27), or the DCC(A) competition desk on 020 7218 1508 (ATN 9621 81508).

Manage your money



David Mapes is Assistant Director of Credit Action and will be pleased to answer specific questions addressed to the Editor. These will be treated in confidence.

I want a new car and I want it now

I WANT a new car. And, in the words of Chris de Burgh, "I want it, and I want it now. I want it and I just can't wait..."

I was talking to regimental admin officers at Worthy Down and it appears that cars are a major factor for many soldiers in debt.

Temptation is greater for those posted abroad and exposed to lower prices, tax benefits and easy loans. Difficulties seem to arise when postings come to an end – and with them those extra payments.

Let's buy a better model and turn a quick buck back in the UK, where the car could fetch more than the purchase price.

I was told of young soldiers who didn't have driving licences buying new cars, and of married men doing so before discussing it with their partner. Of people buying from the nearest showroom and not getting a good deal. Of people not being able to keep up payments on loans once they returned to the UK because their pay was reduced when allowances were stopped.

Some key principles

If you need a car to do your job, does it have to be a new Mercedes? Can you afford it... with actual money? If you are spending cash you tend to limit what you buy. And it's not so easy to fall for a sales pitch. Men are more susceptible to being "talked up" than women, so set a budget (that word again), buy with what you've got in the bank and – men – take your wife/partner with you.

Use credit only when you have to. Borrowing costs money. A £10,000 loan over five years at 13 per cent APR could cost you £18,348 with insurance and £13,566 without. A second-hand car may be a good investment while you save for the new one.

Beware of the type of loan you take out. Hire purchase (HP) is widely available, but with HP you don't own the car until you've paid the final instalment.

Get into arrears and you can see the car re-possessed and end up with a debt that represents the balance of the loan plus the shortfall when the car doesn't fetch as much as hoped at auction. And, because you don't own the car until the last payment, it's not yours to sell. Think twice about HP.

Do your homework

Doing your homework before you buy can save stress and anxiety in the future. It can also be fun taking the short-listed candidates out for a test drive.

Resist taking out a loan

It makes sense not to take on or increase credit liabilities (debt, by another name). Save now and buy later.

If you want to talk...

Talk it through with family and friends. They may have ideas and experience you can learn from. If you want advice, call our HelpLine (see number below). A counsellor will spend time with you and talk through your decisions or worries.

0800 591084



Cool runnings: The Army's novice ice camp, held over two one-week courses at Igls, in Austria, offered soldiers the opportunity to experience the thrills and spills of driving a skeleton (left), luge (centre) or two-man bobsleigh (right)

Gone in 60 seconds...

Thrill-seeking soldiers experience the ultimate rush in Austria

Report: Andy Simms
Pictures: Graeme Main

"If anyone tells you that they are not feeling nervous, or that the adrenalin is not pumping at the start of the track, then they are either lying or just plain crazy," Lt Col Matt Perkin (KORBR) said with a reassuring smile as I took my seat behind him in the back of a two-man bobsleigh.

"Are you ready?" he asked.
"Yes," I lied, secretly hoping that the man I was entrusting with my personal safety was neither nervous nor plain crazy.

"Enjoy the ride – it will only last a minute."

Fifty-eight seconds to be precise... and what a ride. Reaching speeds of more than 80mph with only a thin metal-shell separating me from the on-rushing ice-walls of an Olympic bobsleigh run is one minute of my life that I will never forget.

However, the rush I experienced

during my debut run as a bobsleigh brakeman will have been far exceeded by those taking part in the Army's Banner Business Supplies and Sports Match-sponsored novice ice camp at Igls, Austria.

Held over two one-week courses, the ice camp introduced more than 60 novices to winter sports' three ice disciplines – bobsleigh, skeleton and luge.

"There is only one real method of teaching all three of the ice sports," explained Lt Col Perkin, secretary of Army bobsleigh. "Instructors can speak to the novices until they are blue in the face, but the bottom line is that when we put them on the ice they are going to get down to the end. There is no getting off."

"It takes a lot of courage and bottle to go down the track for the first time."

This sink-or-swim style of teaching sounds daunting and can be bruising, but the camp, which is open to civil-

ians as well as military personnel, has no difficulties in attracting volunteers.

"You do need to have courage, determination and the ability to think clearly under pressure on a skeleton," admitted Maj Peter McClellan (RE) about a sport which involves competitors tackling the course head-first on a 4ft-sled.

"A skeleton can travel at up to 85mph on the right track and with the right person steering, and when your nose is just six-inches from the ice it is a massive buzz."

"You are in fear of your own safety and you have to overcome that and focus on the task ahead."

"But these are attributes that relate to Army life in general and so we find that most soldiers adapt to the sport very quickly."

The luge is widely regarded as the most dangerous of the three ice sports and for that reason novices are introduced at a more gradual pace.

"On a luge you travel feet first,

which makes your body more prone to injury if you do crash," said Capt Adam Johnstone (REME). "We start novices further down the track and work our way to the top as their confidence grows. But it is well worth the wait – luge is the best roller-coaster you will ever find."

Aside from encouraging soldiers to try their hand at a different sport, the camp, the only British-run event of its kind, aims to help produce future international competitors and Olympians.

Lt Col Perkin believes the Army has a wealth of talent just waiting to be uncovered. "Because there is a relatively small number of people involved with ice sports, those who come on these camps and prove they have what it takes could find themselves graduating through the ranks very quickly."

"It is not uncommon for a novice to progress to the international stage within the space of a year or two."

◆ Anyone interested in future ice-events should contact Lt Col Matt Perkin on Mil 94261 2916 or 01276 412916.

A need for speed

Bobsleigh

Capt Richard Rolls, 1 IG

I have done a cresta run before so I half-knew what to expect from this camp. That said, it is always daunting coming to a different track.

I cannot explain how it feels to travel down that track – all I can say is that it is the biggest adrenalin rush I have ever found.

LCpl Stuart Langer, QRH

I love the speed of the sport and the exertions it puts on your body. I crashed during my first run, which made me respect the track a bit more but it certainly did not put me off.

Luge

Pte Matthew Duncan, 2 LI

I was offered the opportunity to come

to the ice camp by my platoon commander and although I'd never done anything like this before I jumped at the chance.

The attraction of the sport is the rush you get from speeding down a corridor of ice while trying to remember all the turns so that you don't come flying off. It is fairly easy to pick up and once you've got to grips with how to steer the luge there's no stopping you.

Skeleton

Sgt Donna Reeve, 1 GS Regt RLC

The first time I saw a skeleton-bob flying round a track I thought "no way", but had a go regardless. For me the appeal of the sport is the feeling of being in sole control of your own destiny as you travel down the track.

Getting to the bottom knowing that you have travelled a mile in a minute is the greatest feeling in the world.

Gunning for the girls

Army's number one lends treble-winners a safe pair of hands

Report: Andy Simms

"It's nice to think that I played a part in Arsenal winning the FA Cup last season," announced SSgt Dean "Daisy" May (APTC) proudly.

Quite an admission for an ardent West Ham supporter to make, but the Army and Combined Services goalkeeper has a vested interest in the Gunners after being appointed as goalkeeping coach to Arsenal Ladies at the start of last season.

"Three years ago UEFA introduced a special goalkeeping coaching licence," explained May. "I managed to get myself on the first course at Lillehall with goalkeeping legends such as Peter Bonetti, Gary Bailey and Steve Ogrizovic."

"I was about the third person in this country to pass the course and to this date I think there are only eight people with the qualification."

Having acquired the highly sought-after certificate, May was advised by former Tottenham Hotspur star and England goalkeeping coach Ray Clemence to seek employment at a professional club.

"I followed Ray's advice, but being in the Army meant that any coaching work had to be done during the evenings," he said. "Not being able to work days meant that men's football was out of the question, so women's football seemed the logical answer."

"I put my CV out to a few clubs and Arsenal came straight back to me, telling me not to speak to anybody else and asking me to start straight away."

"Arsenal Ladies are the top women's side in this country and I wasn't going to let my loyalty to the



Picture: Stuart MacFarlane/Arsenal Football Club

In safe hands: Arsenal and Republic of Ireland goalie Emma Byrne lifts the FA Cup



Picture: Steve Dock

Keep up: SSgt Daisy May (APTC) puts Arsenal's Marieanne Spacey through her paces

Hammers get in the way of an opportunity like that."

His decision to switch allegiances from East to North London certainly paid dividends for Arsenal Ladies, who finished the 2001/2002 season as FA Cup, League Cup and National League winners – a treble completed only once before, by Arsenal back in 1993.

The Gunner's 1-0 victory over Fulham in the final of the FA Cup at Selhurst Park was a particularly sweet moment for May.

Having protected their early one-goal advantage for most of the match, Arsenal looked to have thrown Fulham a lifeline when they conceded a late penalty.

Cue an acrobatic save from Arsenal and Republic of Ireland goalkeeper Emma Byrne.

"It was hard not to feel part of the girls' success that day," he said. "To see a goalkeeper I had trained make a save in the FA Cup final was fantastic."

Arsenal's success earned them a place

in the first UEFA Women's Cup this season, and in turn May was rewarded for his efforts with a promotion.

"This season I have progressed from being goalkeeper coach for the first team and the rest of the club's academy to also being the under-14 coach and a member of the first team's fitness staff."

And despite his new commitments, the 34-year-old is not yet ready to call it a day for his own playing career.

"It's a well-known fact that most goalkeepers improve with age and I think that is true of my own game," he added. "The more coaching I do, the better keeper I think I am becoming."

"I'm certainly not ready to hang up my gloves. I've made 92 appearances for the Army to date and at the very least would like to pass the 100-mark."

"It would also be nice to win the Inter-Services championships with the Army. We've come so close in recent years and hopefully my turn to be on the winning side will come."

SHORTS

Harrogate's charity ball

A CHARITY rugby match between AFC Harrogate and Harrogate Fire Station raised more than £1,400 for the families of the fire fighters who died during the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in New York.

Palmer's catch of the day

THE Army fly fishing team, the Soldier Palmers, celebrated their first victory in the Inter-Services championships since 1988 at Rutland Water.

Captained by CSgt Alan Ward (1 Regt RA), right, the 14-strong team reeled in a total catch of 180lb 3oz, beating fierce rivals the RAF by more than 30lb.

The Palmers' success marked the end of a ten-year reign of dominance in the competition by the RAF.

Tpr Wayne Jones (QDG) finished top rod of the day with an individual haul of 25lb 5oz.



FOOTBALL TABLES

MASSEY TROPHY

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
RLC	6	4	1	1	14	13
RE	3	3	0	0	12	9
APTC	5	3	0	2	1	9
Infantry	5	2	1	2	-3	7
RA	2	2	0	0	10	6
R Signals	2	2	0	0	6	6
REME	3	1	2	0	4	5
AAC	4	1	1	2	1	4
AGC	4	1	1	2	-6	4
Int Corps	4	1	1	2	-5	3
AMS	4	0	0	4	-15	0
RAC	4	0	0	4	-19	0

* Results up to and including December 7

WOMEN'S INTER-CORPS CUP

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
R Signals	2	2	0	0	6	6
AGC	1	1	0	0	7	3
RLC	1	1	0	0	3	3
RA	1	0	1	0	0	1
Int Corps	2	0	1	1	-3	1
AMS	1	0	0	1	-2	0
REME	2	0	0	2	-11	0

* Results up to and including December 7

RESULTS SERVICE ... RESULTS SERVICE ... RESULTS SERVICE ... RESULTS SERVICE ...

ATHLETICS: Karrimore International mountain marathon, elite section – 8, Lt Col Duncan Francis (7 Para RHA) and Lt Col Robert Herring (RLC).

CANOEING: Army slalom championships. Men's kayak (K1) champion – 2nd Lt Alex Burt (AGC). Men's Canadian singles (C1) champion – 2nd Lt Andy Nicoll (AAC). Canadian doubles (C2) champions – 2nd Lt Burt and 2nd Lt Nicoll. Women's champion – 2nd Lt Celia Catton (RA). Veteran's champion – Maj Paul Hepworth (RLC). Inter-Services slalom championships, K1 team winners – Army. C1 team winners – Army. C2 team winners – Army. Overall champions – RAF.

EQUESTRIAN: Army and Royal Artillery Hunter trials, Alenia Marconi novice

trophy winners – SSgt Fisher and SSgt Elliot (both King's Troop RHA). **EDS Pairs event** – SSgt Fisher and SSgt Elliot. **Cummins intermediate event** – 2nd Lt Adams (14 Regt RA).

Uniformed Services show jumping competition (hosted by HAC) – 5, Reserve Forces Association (Capt Sherri Took (101 Regiment, RA (V)), Maj Caroline Wilkinson (RLC), Capt Pete Melville (QOY) and OCdt Vicki Owen (101 Regiment, RA (V))); 6, Geordie Gunners (Sgt Tricia Thompson, LBdr Angie Durkan, Gnr Mark Hardy and Gnr Jill Ruddick (all 101 Regiment, RA (V))).

FOOTBALL: Middlesex 2 Army 1; Army 2 TA 0.

Massey Trophy – R Signals 5 AGC 0;

APTC 0 RLC 2; RAC 0 RA 6; Int Corps 2 Infantry 4; REME 2 AGC 2; RLC 7 RAC 0; AMS 0 RA 4; Int Corps 3 APTC 5.

RUGBY UNION: Army U21 27 Royal Navy U21 7; Army Development Squad 12 Harlequins 40.

SKELETON: Europa Cup, Winterberg – 5, Pte Stuart Hayden (17 Port & Maritime Regt); 9, Bdr AJ Sutherland (3 RHA); 42, Matt Legge (6 Supply Regt). **Women's** – 15, Sgt Donna Reeve (1 GS Regt, RLC).

Europa Cup, Igls – 12, Pte Hayden; 19, Bdr Sutherland; 41, Legge. **Women's** – 20, Sgt Reeve.

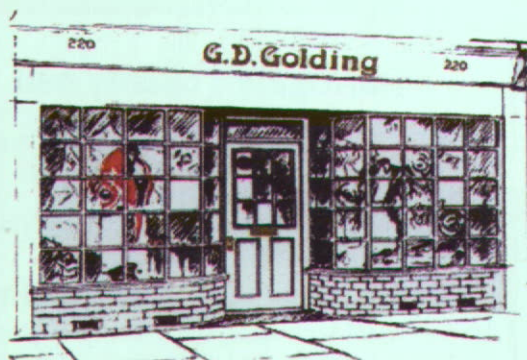
TUG OF WAR: SFOR inter-unit indoor tug of war champions – 127 Dragon Battery RA.



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Saint marches on

Army and Combined Services midfielder aims to resurrect her international career

Report: Andy Simms
Picture: Graeme Main

DESPITE being hard in the tackle, not unlike her footballing hero Stuart Pearce, LCpl Alex Cottier (27 Transport Regiment RLC) could do little to shackle a rampant Arsenal Ladies FC.

Playing for the first time at St Mary's Stadium, Southampton Saints WFC were outclassed by last season's treble winners and failed to find top gear in the new multi-million pound ground – a characteristic that has left their male counterparts flirting with relegation from the Premiership.

The Gunners, last season's treble winners and favourites to lift the AXA-sponsored Women's Premier League trophy for a second successive year, punished the home side accordingly, scoring three unanswered goals and claiming all three league points.

At the final whistle Cottier looked suitably crestfallen and conceded to *Soldier* that her task of confining the Arsenal midfield had been "like chasing ghosts".

But despite the disappointment of defeat, the Army and Combined Services captain was happy to be back in a Saints shirt after a long lay-off with injury.

"This is only my second game of the season and my personal aim this year is just to play and keep injury-free," she explained. "I have had a niggling injury to my right knee for a while now that has made it difficult to both train and play. But hopefully I am now getting back to full fitness."

A fully-fit Cottier will be a valuable asset to both Saints, the Army, and the Combined Services. At the age of 27, the midfielder is one of the most experienced players in the women's game and a haul of winners' medals and five international caps is testament to her skills with a ball at her feet.

A Liverpool fan, she was introduced to football at an early age by her brother during "kick-a-rounds in the back garden", but the loggie had to wait until the age of 17 before pursuing her passion more seriously.

"I was never really given the opportunity to play football as a youngster, but as soon as I learned how to drive I took



Premiership clash: LCpl Alex Cottier (27 Tpt Regt RLC), centre, battles for the ball during Southampton Saints' 3-0 defeat by Arsenal Ladies at St Mary's Stadium, Southampton

myself down to my nearest women's club, Brighton and Hove Albion," she said. "When I first started playing for Brighton I never imagined that I would go on to represent my country – and to be honest I did not even think I would win anything. That was my sole dream then – to win a trophy."

It was an ambition that Cottier realised three years later when she left the South Coast club for Croydon.

During a prosperous five-year spell with the South London side Cottier won the Women's Premier League three times, the FA Cup twice, and finished on the losing side in two League Cup finals.

Club success brought with it a call-up to the national squad.

"My five appearances for England are without doubt the highlights of my career," she said. "There is nothing better than stepping out on to the pitch in an England shirt and singing the national anthem – that is what every footballer dreams about."

Cottier's decision to join the Army in

1998 prompted a quick succession of transfers that took her from Croydon to Southampton, from there to Arsenal, and then back to Southampton.

And although Cottier is now older than most of her Premiership contemporaries, she believes that the day that she hangs up her boots is still a long way off.

"I will continue to play as long as my body lets me, and with the support that the Army gives me I see no reason why I can't continue playing into my thirties," she said.

"And the one thing that I want to do before I retire is to play for England again."

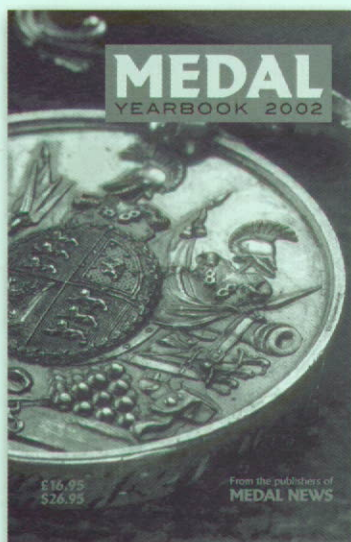
"I feel that my international career was cut short for a number of reasons – not least because of injury. I would like to retire from international football and the league game when I say so and not when an injury, or doctor, is telling me to," she added. "The England team are doing well at the moment but I hope that I will get another chance and not be overlooked because of my age."

"I would love to get the chance to play in a World Cup."

‘There is nothing better than stepping on to the pitch in an England shirt’

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Picture: Roger Thompson

Hard-hitting: Capt Finlay Bibby (DWR) gives Hampshire schoolchildren a lesson in tackling

Teacher training

THE Army's senior rugby squad went back to basics when they hosted 250 aspiring young players from Hampshire, Berkshire and Surrey schools at the Army Rugby Stadium in Aldershot.

Divided into 20 groups, the 11-to-14-year-olds were coached by experienced Army players in the arts of passing, tackling, kicking and general fitness.

The levels of enthusiasm and expertise were high, with each pack competing strongly to win the top group accolade.

Maj Andy Hickling, the Army's head coach, said: "This was not a recruiting gimmick, it was a genuine effort to put

something back into rugby at a time when the Army had a few moments to spare.

"We are grateful that our sponsor Sodexho provided this opportunity for the youngsters to develop new skills – some showed real talent," he said. "It also gave me an opportunity to see how my players reacted when faced with a class of 14-year-olds.

"It gave them something to think about and I was amazed what natural coaches we have in our midst.

"We will now be seeking to fast-track a number of players through the formal RFU coaching system."

Coxless pair's Midas touch

THE Army veteran coxless pair of Col Max Heron and Lt Col Des Norton capped another successful season by winning gold at the FISA Masters Regatta in Montreal, Canada.

Racing over the 1976 Olympic course, the Midas Press-sponsored pair pulled their way to victory in the Veteran C division (over 43), finishing

five seconds ahead of the American crew in second.

The victory marked the end of a second unbeaten season at Veteran C status for Heron and Norton, who won the open coxless pairs at the Army Regatta, the veteran coxless pairs at the Joint Services Regatta and the coxless pairs at the Henley Veteran Regatta.

FIXTURES

Your sporting guide to January...

BASKETBALL: 18 – Army v Reading (Aldershot).

BOBSLEIGH: 13-20 – Novice and junior championships (Igls, Austria).

BOXING: 17 – BA(G) Major Unit finals (TBC); 23-24 – Combined Services individual championships (HMS Nelson).

CANOEING: 12-13 – Army wild-water racing championships (River Dee, Llangollen, Wales).

CLIMBING: 19 – Army championships (JSMTCI).

EQUITATION: 12 – Army point-to-point (Larkhill); RA point-to-point (Larkhill).

FENCING: 19-20 – Open championship (Aldershot).

FOOTBALL: 11 – AAC v RE (Middle Wallop); 13 – RLC v TA (Deepcut); 16 – Army v Fire Service (Catterick); 18 – RAC v REME (Tidworth); AAC v APTC (Middle Wallop); RA v Infantry (Woolwich); RLC v RE (Deepcut); 20 – Army Youth v Berks & Bucks Senior Schools (TBC); 25 – Int Corps v R Signals (Chicksands); REME v APTC (Arborfield); AMS v AGC (Mytchett); 28 – Army U21s v Hampshire (Aldershot); 29 – Army Women v BA(G) Women (TBC); 31 – Civil Service v Army (Chiswick), Army Women v Dorset Women (TBC).

JUDO: 19 – Army novice championships (Aldershot).

LAWN TENNIS: 19 – Army Women v Bourne Club (Aldershot).

MODERN PENTATHLON: 19 – Army v RMAS v Oxbridge (Sandhurst).

RUGBY UNION: 23 – Oxford v Army (Away).

SHINTY: 5 – Edinburgh East Lothian v The Highlanders (Away); 12 – Glenorchy v The Highlanders (Away); 26 – St Andrews University v The Highlanders (Away).

SNOWBOARDING: 21-26 – Army championships (Neustift, Austria).

SQUASH: 20 – Army v Wiltshire (Moonrakers); 30-31 – Army individual championships (Aldershot).

WINTER SPORTS: 12-22 – Land ski championships, (Monetier, France); 1 (UK) Armd Div Ski Championships (Les Contamines, France); 17 – Army (Novice) Cresta Championships (St Moritz, France); 24 – Army Cresta Championships (St Moritz); 24-31 – Army Alpine Championships (Serre Chevalier, France); Army/National/Inter-Services Nordic Championships (Ruhpolding, Germany); 31 – Inter-Services Cresta Championships (St Moritz).

CONTACT US

SOLDIER'S sports desk welcomes your sports stories, results and opinions.

Write to: Andy Simms, Sports Editor, *Soldier*, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2DU or e-mail him at asimms@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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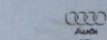


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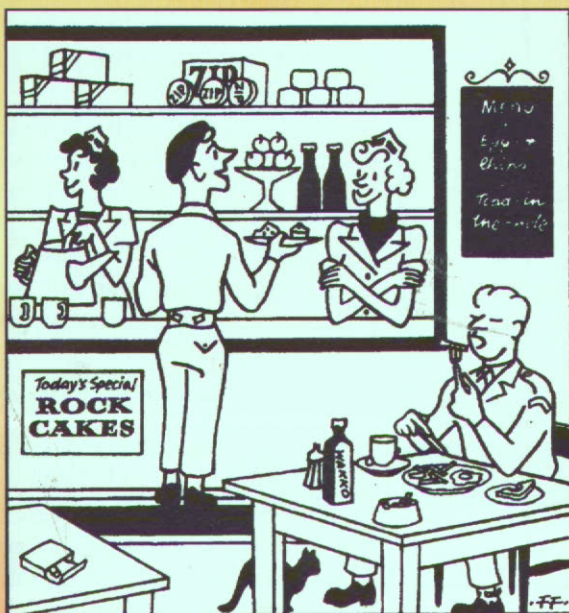
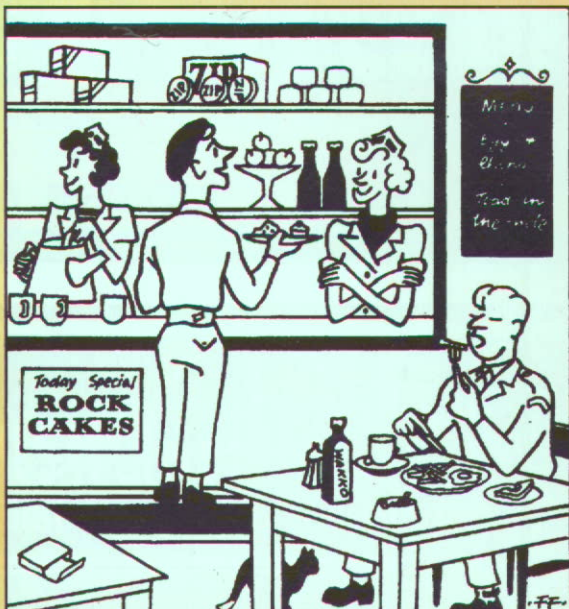
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after the closing date will win £100; the second and third will receive £10 gift vouchers. No correspondence of any kind can be entered into.

The names of the winner and runners-up will be announced in the March 2002 issue.

Name: (Give initials and rank or title)

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November competition (No 720): First correct entry drawn was from A M Charlesworth, Staff Superintendent, House of Lords, who wins £100. Runners-up Roberta Duffin (aged 10), of London NW9, and Mrs G Reid, of Leven, Fife, receive a £10 gift voucher each. The ten differences were: luggage rail; "Port" and stack in Dudley Port poster; outline of window; fence; window strap; first soldier's buckle; second soldier's chocolate bar; third soldier's tie; paper under seat.



Freeze frame

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Write your own funny caption for the photograph, right, first published in *Soldier* in the Fifties. The best, in the Editor's opinion, will win a prize from our silver logo collection. Usual rules apply and entries should reach us by January 7.



THERE were some great captions for the November competition (left). The prize, by a narrow margin, goes to Colchester-based Cpl B Feasby of 156 Pro Coy RMP with: "Bob's trip to collect the local newspaper got more and more difficult the closer he got to the front line".

We also liked "Due to cutbacks, the sergeants' mess lounge area seemed less appealing" from Sgt M



McChesney, 2 Tp, HQ Sqn, 2 Sig Regt. Worthy mentions for "I don't think much of this books on-line scheme" from Graham Drew of the Army School of Ammunition and, on the same theme, "www.online.co.uk" from WO2 (ACQMS) from 1 RRW LAD REME in Kosovo. "Just can't put

this Harry Potter book down" was submitted by 12-year-old Tristan Edge of Rose, near Truro.

No prize, either, for military equipment recognition expert LCpl Gartell of 35 HQ Sqn, 3 CS Regt RLC, for his suggestion: "Wow... look at the size of the bazookas on that".

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Paulette, (40), tall blonde. Enjoys swimming, dancing, travel, DIY, gardening, music, TV, reading and the countryside. Seeking pen pals of any age. P997

Rachel, 5'3" with long brown hair and dark eyes. Spanish looks but British-born. Enjoys spending time with her mates, shopping, clubbing and socialising. Once graduated hopes to travel abroad. Seeking pen pals of any age. P998

Denise, (35+), blonde with hazel eyes. Enjoys swimming, pubs, clubs, flying and travelling. Lives life to the full, divorced and owns her own hairdressing business, ex-forces. Seeking pen pals of any age. P999

Sam, (39), 5'4", medium build with brown hair, female. Enjoys motor sports, swimming, socialising and driving. Looking for friendship only and a good laugh, 33-45. P001

Caroline, (42), 5'3", cuddly blonde with blue eyes. Enjoys reading, travelling, theatre and the cinema. Seeking pen pals smokers or non-smokers, 40-45. P002

Tracey, (17), 5'3". Enjoys clubs and socialising. Seeking pen pals, 17-24 P002

Carolann, (28), 5'11", slim with long black hair and brown eyes. Enjoys reading, movies, music, football and socialising with her friends. Seeking pen pals 28 and over. P004

Donna, (28), 5'8" with long brown hair and brown eyes. Enjoys going out, socialising and nights in. Single mum seeking pen pals, 28-38. P005

Tracy, (29), 5'8" with long brown curly hair and brown eyes. Enjoys wining, dining, horse riding, football (watching only), walking and pretending not to be too old to be a party animal. Seeking genuine pen pals 25-40 with GSOH to enjoy corresponding with. P006

Helen, (31), 5'2" with dark hair and green eyes. Enjoys socialising, keeping fit, travelling, reading, having lots of fun and enjoying life to the full. Looking for friendship, 25+. P007

Sheila, (39), 5'6" with blonde hair and blue eyes. Enjoys meeting new people and her job. Divorced with three brilliant children, a chatterbox with a good sense of humour. Seeking pen pals, 35-45. P009

Kerry, (29), 5'4" with blonde hair and blue eyes. Enjoys music, cinema, reading and socialising. A mum with a four-year-old child. Seeking pen pals, 25-35. P010

Julie, (40), 5'4" with brown hair and blue eyes. Enjoys cinema, badminton, walking, WWI history and having fun. Seeking pen pals, 40-45. P011

Paula, (38), 5 ft. with short highlighted hair and brown eyes. Honest, caring and loves her dogs. Enjoys reading and going to pubs. Would like to hear from pen pals 35-45 who are honest and genuine. P012

Annie, tall, Irish, Dublin-based blonde beauty therapist with green eyes and a great smile. Enjoys theatre, cinema, travel, swimming and music. Seeking pen pals, 37-48. P013

Janet, 29-year-old, 5'9" with dark blonde hair and blue eyes. Enjoys walking, going out and evenings in or out. Seeking pen pals of any age. P014

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NOTICES

CHY-1161D

**Charity Commission
Reference: LB-205780-AFC
South Wales Borderers and
Monmouthshire Regimental
Museum Trust (No.273858)**

The charity commission proposes to make a scheme to amend the trusts of this charity. A copy can be seen for the next month at: South Wales Borderers Museum, The Barracks Brecon, Powys LD3 7EB 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.

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November 03 2001

2-way tie for 1st Place (25 Goals £3900.00 each): Cpl S Heath, 1 PWRR, Tidworth; Sig GM Hitchings, 15 Signal Regt, Lisburn.

15-way tie for 3rd Place (24 Goals £460.00 each): LCpl CS Bale, 4 Regt AAC, Wattisham; Sgt CJ Betts, 32 Engr Regt, Hohnhe; LCpl WJ Buckley, 1 RS, Ballykelly; WO2 AH Colderley, 14 Regt RA, Larkhill; Cpl NM Dean, 11 Signal Regt, Blandford; SSgt SP Floyd, 6 Sup Regt RLC, Dulmen; Pte STA Fry, Army Foundation College, Harrogate; Maj DG Hannant, HQ RLC TA, Grantham; CSgt Karamprasad Gurung, 1 RGR, Brunel; ID Laughland, 25 Trg Sp Regt RLC, Deepcut; Spr DL Mitchell, 14 Geo Sqn RE, Monchengladbach; LCpl IA Osborne, 39 Engr Regt, Cambridge; Sgt JJ Sewell, 4 Regt AAC, Wattisham; Sgt DT Webster, London District Pro Coy RMP; Sgt PM Witts, 4 Regt AAC, Wattisham.

November 10 2001

5-way tie for 1st Place (19 Goals £2480.00 each): Cpl JTC Evans, HQ 2 (SE) Bde, Shorncliffe; Sgt PD Hounsell, 8 Inf Bde Sig Sqn, Londonderry; Sgt PJC Reeve, 15 Signal Regt, Lisburn; WO2 L Skuse, JACIG; Capt CR Woodley, HQ DRLC, Deepcut.

28-way tie for 3rd Place (18 Goals £82.14 each): Cpl WC Bennett, 1 BW, Fallingbommel; ATpr S Boardman, 4 Regt AAC, Wattisham; Sgt DJ Brodie, JSSU Digby; SSgt D Cronshaw, 16 Regt RA, Woolwich; Cpl RJ Evans, 11 Signal Regt, Blandford; LCpl AD Fedrick, 1 RGBW, Ballykelly; SSgt SL Fisher, 25 Engr Regt, Antrim; SSgt PJ Green, 30 Signal Regt, Bramcote; Pte AJ Grimes, AAAU, Aldergrove; Sgt KG Grove, 39 Regt RA, Newcastle upon Tyne; Capt NP Harrison, HCMR; Maj DGH Hunter, 2 R Anglian; Tpr JS Hurst, RDG, Munster; SSgt AH Johnston, AFCC Peterborough; Gnr RE Jones, 7 Para RHA, Aldershot; Sgt SM Joy, 32 Regt RA, Bulford; Cpl JP Kitson, 1 RRF, Celle; Sgt R Kivlin, 93 Pet Sqn RLC, West Moors; Maj JA Lamb, LD, Swanton Morley; LCpl S Mcfadden, 7 R Irish, Belfast; LCpl DA Mills, 7 Tpt Regt RLC, Bielefeld; Maj SE Murrisson, HQ DMTD, Ash Vale; Col LA Relp, 200 Signal Sqn, Sennelager; LCpl AP Roche, 28 Engr Regt, Hameln; Capt N Serle, 1 KORBR, Episkopi; Cpl T Severs, 1 R Anglian, Pirbright; Cpl NJ Thompson, HQ NI, Lisburn; Cpl P

Walker, 3 RSME Regt, Minley.

November 17 2001

2-way tie for 1st Place (24 Goals £3962.50 each): Tpr CW Gaw, RDG, Munster; Cpl DJ Morrison, 2 RTR, Fallingbommel.

6-way tie for 3rd Place (23 Goals £1129.17 each): SSgt SD Ambler, 4 Bn REME, Bordon; WO2 NG Coulthard, AMF (L) CSS Bn, Bulford; Maj PT Fuller, HQ NI, Lisburn; Sgt T Gager, Gibraltar Regt; LCpl A Holmes, APC, Glasgow; Maj RT Keppel-Compton, 17 Port & Mar Regt. Only 8 prizes this week. Rule 9 applies.

November 24 2001

4-way tie for 1st Place (25 Goals £2825.00 each): WO2 B Baker, 3 RHA, Hohnhe; Capt T Hodgson, 5 Regt RA, Catterick; Sgt DH Ritchie, 7 Air Asslt Bn REME, Wattisham; ATpr JD Siddall, 1 Regt AAC, Gutersloh.

7-way tie for 5th Place (24 Goals £485.71 each): Sgt A Castle, 14 Regt RA, Larkhill; Cpl JC Duff, 35 Engr Regt, Paderborn; Sgt P Harling, 4 GS Regt RLC 33 Sqn, Abingdon; LCpl DS McLaughlin, QRL, Osnabruck; Cpl D Prime, 132 Avn Sup Unit RLC, Wattisham; LCpl LWE Thomas, Camp Comdt (AD), London; Pte J Wells, Army Foundation College, Harrogate.

December 01 2001

3-way tie for 1st Place (19 Goals £3266.67 each): Sgt CM Brice, SEME, Bordon; Sgt M Healer, 32 Engr Regt, Hohnhe; LCpl MA Jones, 17 Port & Mar Regt.

18-way tie for 4th Place (18 Goals £272.22 each): Pte KV Bavadra, 1 RS, Ballykelly; Cpl G Baxendale, 35 Engr Regt, Paderborn; Capt EWT Beck, 5 Trg Regt RLC, Grantham; Cpl SM Brown, KRH, Tidworth; Cpl CJ Burton, 1 Regt AAC, Gutersloh; SSgt DA Clark, 5 Regt RA, Catterick; Cpl MJ Evans, Camp Comdt (AD); Cpl MS Fairweather, 39 Engr Regt, Cambridge; Sgt DJ Fisher, HQ MND (C), Rheindahlen; LCpl GR Hull, QRH, Sennelager; Cpl SJ Lange, 32 Engr Regt, Hohnhe; Pte RM Marlow, Army Foundation College, Harrogate; Fus NJ Neale, 1 RWF, Tern Hill; Cpl RP Reid, 200 Signal Sqn, Sennelager; Sgt AJ Roe, 1 RHA, Tidworth; Sgt P Rosendale, HQ NI, Lisburn; LCpl MJ Saunders, 2 RTR, Fallingbommel; Cpl TP Whybrow, 9 Regt AAC, Dishforth.

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REUNIONS

I am looking for John (surname unknown) who was in the Corps of Royal Engineers. He was at Chatham in May or June 1979 and came from Birmingham. While in Chatham, he drank in any Army and Navy pub. Any information please call Vanessa on 07971 356470. 01/02

All enquiries to: The Photographic Department. Tel: 01252 347351 Fax: 01252 347351 E-mail: srobinson@soldiermagazine.co.uk

REUNIONS

16/5 Lancers and 17/21 Lancers: Aliwal dinner-dance for QRL members past, present and attached. Telford Town Golf and Country Club, Jan 26. Details on 01952 632928.

APTC Association (SW Branch): Reunion to be held on Feb 1 at The Gables Inn, Fairfield, Gloucestershire. Details from Bob Marshall on 01747 860207.

26 Regiment RA: Reunion planned for Mar 1-3 at Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. Phone Brian Henderson 01933 381955 or e-mail him at brian.henderson22assn@tinyworld.co.uk

Kent School, Hostert Germany: Former pupils and staff interested in a reunion to be held on Mar 15 at Center Parcs, Nottingham, should contact Jane Braithwaite, Bldg 247, Rm 127, RAF Innsworth Gloucestershire GL3 1EZ or kentschoolreunion@hotmail.com

Radio Troop 76 Sqn RCT: Reunion on Apr 6 at Maindy Barracks, Cardiff. Accommodation can be arranged. Past and present members welcome. Register with SSgt Mohammed, RSI, 16 CSMR, Goojerat Bks, Colchester. 01206 782763 or at airborne5ab@aol.com

254 (City of Cambridge) Fd Amb (V): Reunion on Apr 6 at Cambridge. Details from WO1(RSM) M Paver RAMC 01223 215299.

68 Artillery clerks: Reunion and association dinner, RA Sgts' Mess, Woolwich, Apr 6. Full details from WO1(SSM) A M Tibble ACG (SPS), 01276 412250 (Mil 94621 2250).

Royal Anglian Regimental Association, Colchester Branch: Inaugural meeting on Apr 10 at TA Centre, Circular Road. Details from Maj Bob Potter on 01206 782165.

260 Signal Squadron (SAM): Reunion and dinner-dance at the Ramada Jarvis Loughborough Hotel, Leicestershire, on Apr 12-14, on the 25th anniversary of the disbandment of the 260 Sqn, formed in 1968 from 654 and 655 Signal Troops (SAM). Ex-members should visit www.260sigsqnsam.abelgratis.co.uk or contact Roy Andrews on 01227 264551 or at roy.pat.andrews@ic24.net

207 Signal Squadron: A summer reunion is being planned for those who served with this unit during the 1980s. Please contact Paddy Somerville at paddy16x24@yahoo.com

Ludgershall Medical Equipment Depot (AMED, DMED, MSA): Reunion planned for Sept. Contact Charlie Mason at Lanville, Grange Road, Ellesmere, Shropshire SY12 9DJ or phone 01691 622300.

Army Apprentices' Schools Taunton and Harrogate (Group 1948 B) and 117 Party, No 1 Training Regiment, Malvern 1951: Reunion to be held in the autumn. Contact Phil Tavenor 01903 506493, Dave Chidgey 01634 233070 or Jim McGuigan 01698 264193.

ASSISTANCE TO AUTHORS

Malayan Emergency 1948-60: Researcher would like to hear from anyone who was involved in the Malayan Emergency willing to share anecdotes. Replies by e-mail to shahaz@attglobal.net



Together again: From left are George, John, Lord Mayor David Hudson, Ronnie and Robert

Haven't seen you for ages

FOUR brothers, three of whom were soldiers during the Second World War, were together for the first time for 63 years at a reunion organised by SSAFA-Forces Help in Leeds.

All four are now in their eighties. **Ronald Syson**, told his SSAFA-Forces Help visitor in Leeds that he had not seen his elder brother, Burma veteran **George Syson**, a Royal Signaller who fought with the Chindits under Orde Wingate, since the beginning of the war.

Ronald had served in The Durham Light

Infantry, and was also attached to The Black Watch and the Royal Pioneer Corps.

The Services' charity tracked down George in Blackpool; **John**, at 80 the youngest of the four, and a former DLI member and sergeant in the Home Guard, to Durham; and **Robert**, who served for 33 years in the Royal Navy and retired as a chief petty officer in 1967, to Gosport in Hampshire.

The reunion was hosted by the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Cllr David Hudson.

SSAFA to host seminar on special needs

A SEMINAR for Service families on special needs and disability is being arranged by SSAFA-Forces Help in London in April.

Speakers will include people involved with postings and personnel matters from all three Services as well as representatives from the Government's families' task force.

Also there will be speakers from the Service Children's Education, Defence Housing Executive and British Forces Germany Health Service. National charities and support organisations are expected to set up exhibitions and be available to offer advice and information.

Families will be given priority at the seminar, to be held at London House, Mecklenburgh Square, in central London on April 17, but the event is also open to staff working for the welfare of Service families.

Organisers are keen that families with a disabled member should be encouraged and supported by their unit to attend. Accommodation can be arranged. They are also keen to attract families from Western Europe and Cyprus.

Application forms and information about accommodation from Heidi Dudley, SSAFA-Forces Help, Special Needs and Disability Adviser, 19 Queen Elizabeth Street, London SE1 2LP (tel 020 7463 9234).

Strathcona's Horse on the March, a painting by Sir Alfred Munnings, has been acquired by the National Army Museum in Chelsea.

Munnings, an English artist, lived with the Canadian Cavalry Brigade as its official war artist on the Western Front during the First World War and many of his works from the period are in Canada.

Jenny Spencer-Smith, head of fine and decorative art, said the museum was delighted that a rare opportunity had enabled them to acquire the piece. "This painting is important to us," she said, "as it depicts not only British cavalry but also Commonwealth forces playing a part in the First World War, and it evokes an aspect of military history that was drawing to a close even as the painting was completed."

It depicts horses and riders trotting through a bleak, muddy landscape, conveying something of the awful conditions endured throughout the war.

The National Art Collections Fund, a charity, assisted the museum to buy the painting for the nation at a hammer price of £62,000.

● Munnings, who died in 1959, was excluded from active service following the loss of an eye in an accident. He specialised in equestrian portraits after the war, was knighted in 1944 and was president of the Royal Academy for five years.

Royal Wessex Yeomanry soldiers led by Cpl Dave Sellars trekked from St Ives to Penzance along the South West coastal path to raise money for charity. The Territorial Army team completed the walk in 18 hours and raised £2,000.

SEARCHLINE

Walther Reginald Cooch, ex-1 Airborne Div, served in Drammen, Norway 1945, sought by Aida Finserasen. Replies to Hans Ole Rian, N-7125 Vanvikan, Norway or e-mail him at ho.rian@online.no

Ex-55 The Residency Gunners, 26 Royal Regiment RA. For details of forthcoming events contact SSgt Steve Turnbull, MTWO, 26 Regt RA, Mansergh Bks, BFPO 113 or steve Turnbull2087@hotmail.com

Former colleague Richard (Taff) Davies would like to re-establish contact with **John Lane** and **Mick Littler**, ex-160 Para Provo. Replies to him at 24 Cwrt Lafant, Trallwn, Swansea SA7 9WR or phone 01792 796619.

Andrew Hannay, ex-13/18 Hussars 1979, is asked to contact John Stokes on 01733 742265 or johnj@stokes10.freemove.co.uk

Claire Langhard seeks information on **John Charles Barber**, who was in Switzerland in 1944 as an escapee or PoW. Replies by e-mail to missellanghard@datacomm.ch

Tony Cresswell, Glasgow, joined up 1985-6 is sought by old friend D Kelly. Replies by e-mail to deborahkellyok@tiscali.co.uk

Calling "Y" **Service personnel**, past and present. Former 1, 2 and 3 Wireless Regiments, 9, 13 and 14 Signal Regiments, Comms & Sy Gp(UK), RAF Digby, HMS Mercury, 223, 224, 225 and 226 Signals Sqns; ex-Bletchley Park, Beaumanor Hall or Rothamstead Manor, invited to join Royal British Legion Garats Hay Branch. Membership details from Bob White, The Old Manse, 211 Forest Road, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 3SP. Tel/fax 01530 834271 or bentleywhite@supanet.com

Gary Vernon, **Eddie Middle**, **Terry Collins** and **Ian Young** (APTC), who were all at Army Apprentices' College in the 1980s, are sought by I K Taylor, 2 Porthleven Road, Sutton Park, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 6BG or by e-mail to ikt1966@aol.com

Ex-Nutbeem Coy, RAMC Apprentices' College 1983, especially **Ian Turner** and **Mark Whitehouse**, sought, also a copy of the company photograph. Ring Craig Wilson on 01663 742413 or 07970358952.

Lisa Stewart, ex-QARANC, is keen to catch up with lost friends from **Vitez, Bosnia, 1993**. Ring 0131 255 3811 or lisaloo@hotmail.com

David Brown (Bassingbourne, March 1999) seeks **Mark Parker** (PWRR). Contact him at happytwinkle.star@btopenworld.com

Bill Tremlin, ex-652 Sqn AOP RA, Detmold 1955-58, is searching for old gunner mates **Boner Jones** from Luton, **Terry Stevens**, from Petersfield and **Jimmy Young** from Bognor Regis. Replies to 32 Rockford Court, Stapleford, Notts, NG9 8LD.

John Davis, ex-518 Coy RPC, Bicester (1980-88), would like to contact others who served then. E-mail borojohn@ntlworld.com

Eric Cavinder, ex-2 Bn Grenadier Guards (1967-76). Old comrades sought for surprise party for Eric planned by daughter. Write to Samantha Cavinder, 138 Goldbeater's Grove, Edgeware, Middx HA8 9DT or e-mail her at sam_cav9@hotmail.com

Any information regarding **Pte John Jenkins RAOC**, who died in Egypt in June 1947 aged 20 to Bandsman Kelvin, Band of the Welsh Guards, Chelsea Barracks, London SW3.

Tina James, ex-42 (Survey) Engineer Regiment, who left the Army in 1996, is sought by Donna McDonald and Liz Reid. Ring 01225

All-out war declared at BATUS

THERE'S never been anything like it at the Workshop REME at BATUS, the British Army Training Unit at Suffield in Canada.

When WO2 (AQMS) Shae Gilbert issued a "Robot Wars" challenge, he knew he was onto a good thing. Six sections took advantage of a quiet period between the busy training season and the even busier winter rehabilitation programme to design and build their contenders for the war games.

The optronics hangar was turned into an arena, with grandstand seating behind a 10ft-fence, theatrical lighting and sound



Contenders: The Bodgem Dodgem, left; The Pack Rat, below; and blazing action from the Robot Wars "battlefield" in the optronics hangar at BATUS, right

effects provided by Richard Hutchinson of BFBS Canada.

Victory went to Sgt Pete Haynes's A and G Section, with B Line second. Col Simon Caraffi, Commander BATUS, presented the prizes.



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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 (0900-1700) 01482 833812; 24-hour helpline 01482 808730

Regular Forces Employment Association
0207 321 2011

RBL's Legionline 0845 7725 725

RBL Industries 01622 717202/718484

St Dunstan's Home for blind ex-Servicemen

and women 020 7723 5021

Samaritans 08457 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

Victim Support Western Europe (SSAFA

Forces Help) in Germany 02161 47 2272;

from outside Germany 0049 2161 47 2272

War Pensions Agency 0800 169 2277 (from UK); 0044 1253 866043 (from overseas)

WRVS 01235 442940

DATES

FEBRUARY

6: Royal gun salutes to mark 50th anniversary of Accession. Hyde Park, noon (41-gun); Tower of London, 1300 (62-gun).
21: Queen's Hall, Edinburgh, concert for SSAFA-Forces Help, 0131 668 2019 (see below).

APRIL

20: British Model Soldier Society annual show, New Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, Holborn, London, 1030.
22: Queen's Birthday gun salutes. Hyde Park, noon (41-gun); Tower of London, 1300 (62-gun).

MAY

19: British Model Soldier Society national collection day at Hatfield House, Herts.

JUNE

1: Trooping the Colour, Major General's Review, Horse Guards. Tickets: 020 7414 2479.
8: Trooping the Colour, Colonel's Review, 020 7414 2479.
15: Queen's Birthday Parade. Ticket ballot information on 09068 663344.

AUGUST

2-24: Edinburgh Military Tattoo, www.edintattoo.co.uk

● The Duke of Wellington's Regiment has broken new ground by producing a high-quality CD Rom for recruitment and information purposes. The fruits of an 18-month collaboration with the Multimedia Centre in Warminster, it features 45 minutes of video footage, hundreds of pages of photographs and sections covering history, organisation, training, career opportunities and sport and adventurous training. It will go into training establishments and school libraries.

● Maj Alasdair Hutton, the "voice" of the Edinburgh Tattoo, is to present a "Songs from the Shows" evening in Queen's Hall, Edinburgh on February 21 in aid of SSAFA-Forces Help, the only charity nominated by the Queen to be officially associated with her golden jubilee. Tickets for the show will cost £8 (with concessions at £5) and are available from the Queen's Hall box office (Mon-Sat 1000-1700) hotline on 0131 668 2019.



Promoted in the field... by the Prime Minister

It isn't every day you are promoted, and certainly not by the Prime Minister.

So Pte Gareth Rahman has a special reason to remember the moment he received his

lance corporal's stripe (see picture, left). It happened while Gareth, an Adjutant General's Corps clerk serving with Perham Down-based 22 Engineer Regiment, was on exer-

cise in Oman. He knew he was in line to be promoted, but he had no idea that Tony Blair would do the honours during his brief visit to units involved on Saif Sareea 2.

The welfare lady, the chef and the camel spider

IT was a case of the biter bitten when Services welfare officer Brenda Drummond ventured into the Omani desert with Osnabrück-based 21 Engineer Regiment.

The only SWO in the area during Exercise Saif Sareea 2, Brenda, right, found herself promoted to Assistant No 2 in the cookhouse on three days of the week, where she worked with chef Sgt David Askwith, chef LCpl Ian "Smudge" Smith, and Assistant No 1 Pte Ase Delailomaloma.

All went well until Smudge showed the WRVS lady his "pet", a dreaded camel spider, which he was keeping in the bottom of a water bottle.

As soon as Smudge's back was turned, Brenda took the law into her own hands and boiled the offending beast... much to the fury of its fond owner. Little did Brenda imagine that natural retribution was to follow. In the early hours of the next

morning she was woken by a feeling of movement on her throat. Realising what it was, she remained stock still as the hand-sized spider, which had invaded her sleeping bag, moved to her left shoulder, then down her arm. It stopped on her elbow and bit her.

"The sensation was a bit like a bad bee sting," recalled Brenda, who took herself off to the medics at first light. They removed a large, leaking, mustard-coloured blister on her elbow and dressed the wound. The victim made a rapid recovery.

"Smudge got the last laugh, I suppose," she acknowledged. "During my time in the Omani desert I worked in many capacities, gaining more experience and, of course, had the best opportunity to meet most of the soldiers.

"Oh, and please tell everyone that I really do love pets." Well, most of them, anyway.

Falklands in sharp focus

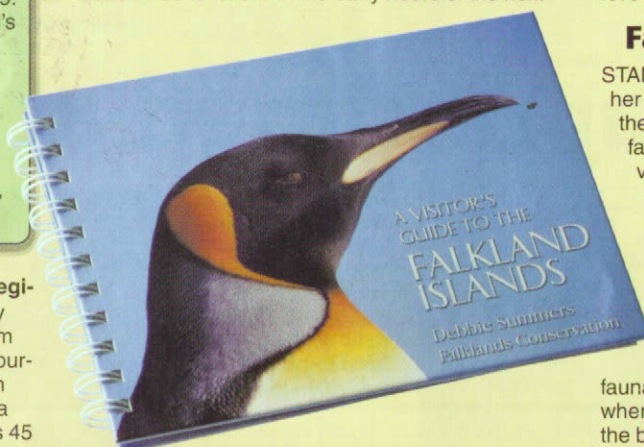
STANLEY-born Debbie Summers has brought out her guide to the islands with immaculate timing. In the next few months the number of visitors to the far-flung South Atlantic outpost will soar as Servicemen and their families fly out to mark the 20th anniversary of the Falklands War.

Published by the Falklands Conservation charity, *A Visitor's Guide to the Falkland Islands* is a colourful and fact-packed 112 pages of ring-bound information. Small enough to fit into a cagoule pocket, the book provides an at-a-glance yet comprehensive pointer to all that's there: flora, fauna, fish and fowl - what they look like and where best to find them (there's even a checklist at the back so you can mark off your *Chloephaga rubidiceps* and your *Calidris fuscicollis* as you see them (that's a ruddy-headed goose and white-rumped sandpiper to you and me).

If you want to read up about the Falklands before you go, Debbie has thoughtfully included a glossary of further reading. You might also find helpful a list of words in vogue: a "chay" is a mate or friend (derived from the Spanish "ché", and a vehicle stuck in soft ground is said to be "bogged".

There are colour photos and maps of interesting sites, with historical and geographical notes and do's and don'ts. Don't smoke on Steeple Jason Island because of the high fire risk to the world's largest black-browed albatross - or *Diomedea melanophris* - colony (there are 157,000 of them).

We are told the guide will not be widely available at bookshops outside the Falklands. It costs £11 incl p&p and can be ordered from Falklands Conservation, 1 Princes Avenue, Finchley, London N3 2DA (cheques for Falklands Conservation) or credit card payment. It is also available from the website at www.falklandsconservation.com



Patton's days in New Forest

TWENTY million tourists visit the New Forest each year, many unaware of the vital role the area played in the Second World War.

The Forest was a vast base and training camp for men, vehicles and equipment in the run-up to D-Day. Large country estates were requisitioned. One was host to Gen George Patton and another housed the entire peacetime contents of the great liner *Queen Mary* during her service as a troopship.

Archive footage discovered four years ago led Patrick Kempe and Flying Films to make *The New Forest at War*, an hour-long social documentary launched at the Beaulieu Estate in Hampshire - itself a wartime training school for agents of the Special Operations Executive.

The video is available at £14.99 plus £1.75 p&p direct from Mr Kempe at 71, Carisbrooke Court, New Milton, Hampshire BH25 5UE. Cheques should be made out to Flying Films.



Crime scene: Sgt David Askwith and Pte Ase Delailomaloma in the 21 Engr Regt cookhouse in which Brenda Drummond worked and, inset, a grieving LCpl Ian "Smudge" Smith

Why David was drawn to desert



DON'T be surprised if in the next few months sketches or paintings from Saif Sareea 2 appear in a mess near you. Because Bristol-based artist David Rowlands, whose military work was featured in *Soldier* a year ago (Dec 2000), was in Oman on an international commission.

A veteran of the Gulf War and the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo, David was invited by PJHQ Northwood to work on sketches, some of which were presented to commanders of the Sultan of Oman's Forces at the end of the exercise. David's work included



David Rowlands

received by the Omanis," he said.

"Their soldiers were very friendly and helpful, and the visit was a great success."

Now, armed with a series of working drawings and photographs from Saif Sareea, David is hoping they will generate more commissions.

Back in his Bristol studio he is hard at work on a canvas depicting the presentation of Colours to The Highlanders.

New Zealand court martial finds a home in Aldershot

ALDERSHOT'S Court Marshal Centre was turned into a little corner of New Zealand during a recent military trial there. A 16-strong team from the land of the Silver Fern, including a district court judge, prosecutor and defence lawyer, were in Hampshire for a case involving a New Zealand Army officer accused of an offence which took place in Bosnia in

August 2000. Because it was not practical to fly witnesses from the Balkans to New Zealand, the court flew to the Balkans... and to Britain. No one can remember it happening before.

Media ops officer Maj Kendall Langston, who escorted the legal team, told *Soldier* the fact that the court was in the UK at the same time as the All Blacks was purely coincidental.

Legends of the regiments and corps

30 King's Own Royal Border Regiment



Silver VC: Pte Byrne's unique medal

Cross of courage

PTE Charles Byrne of the 34th Foot was awarded a DCM for gallantry in the assault on the Russian defences at Sebastopol on June 7, 1855... but he was later to receive a second and unique commendation for his action.

Badly wounded during the attack, he was found unconscious on the battlefield, clutching a dead Russian soldier by the throat. Byrne had throttled the man after being shot sideways through the eyes, wounded by a ball which had struck his jaw and broken it, then lodged in the back of his neck.

For good measure, he had the Russian's sword stuck in his forearm.

EMBEDDED IN

When Queen Victoria was told Byrne's story while visiting wounded men at Netley Military Hospital near Southampton, she was so impressed by his bravery that she ordered the bullet, which had been removed from his throat, to be set in a silver Maltese cross bearing his name, regiment and the date of the action. The "Silver VC" can be seen in Carlisle Castle.

Byrne, who was discharged as a result of his wounds, became a customs officer before his injuries lead to blindness. He became one of the first to learn braille and then teach blind people to read and write at the Royal Institute for the Blind. Pte Byrne died in London in 1884.

The Border Regiment and King's Own Royal Border Regiment Museum in the Inner Ward of Carlisle Castle is open Apr-Sept 0930-1800 Mon-Sun; Oct 1000-1700 Mon-Sun; Nov-Mar 1000-1600 Mon-Sun, closed Dec 24-26 and Jan 1. Admission is included in entry charge to the castle. Contact curator on 01228 532774, e-mail rhq@kingsownborder.demon.co.uk, website www.armymuseums.org.uk

Retail reconnaissance

Dream on . . .



FLYING WITHOUT WINGS

SNOWBOARDING, skateboarding and surfing have a new extreme-sports rival – dirtsurfing.

Invented by a group of Australians desperate to recreate the thrill of riding on surf and snow, the dirtsurfer is made up of an aircraft-grade aluminium frame attached to two BMX-style tyres.

As with other riding disciplines, the dirtsurfer is piloted in an upright position and shares the same requirement of good balance.

There is no easy learning curve to controlling the dirtsurfer and riders will have to employ the same tactics as other boarders – have a go, fall off, and repeat until you can stay on.

Like skateboarding, the rider steers the surfer by asserting pressure with the feet and shifting the balance of the body.

A clever braking system and lots of grip keep the rider from meeting the ground chin-first and stops the dirtsurfer travelling another 100 yards if dismounted prematurely.

After mastering how to stay vertical, even hardened skaters will testify that the surfer is faster than a board, and is considerably quicker when going downhill on concrete or tarmac.

And unlike a skateboard, going off-road is not a problem. The larger wheels mean that the dirtsurfer is just at home on grassland or mud tracks.

① £274.95, from www.firebox.com (0870 2414289).

Switched on . . .

HIDE AND PEEK

THE Covert Cam, below, is a fully-operational wireless colour video camera with audio.

Ideal to capture *Big Brother*-style moments, the camera can be linked to a television or VCR and can operate 30m away from its receiver.

Sporting a compact design and weighing just 185g, the Covert Cam can be easily disguised and concealed.

① £150, from www.gadgetshop.com (0800 7838343).



COMMAND THE AIRWAVES

THIS voice-activated remote-control can recognise up to 54 commands and has the ability to identify four different voices.

Used with any remote-controlled television or video, it can perform a multitude of tasks with one single voice command.

The controller's autosearch function will automatically find the right code for it to work on your equipment.

① £70, from www.gadgetshop.com (0800 7838343).



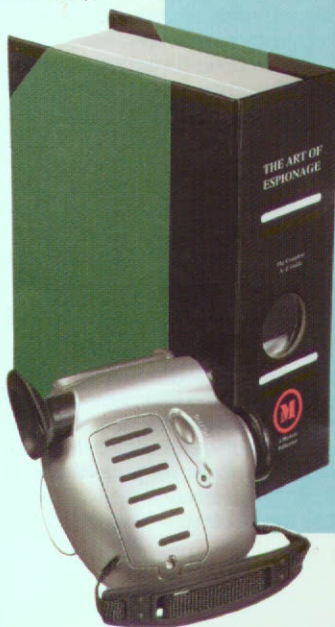
WATCH THIS SPACE

THE Casio WQV-3 Colour Wrist Camera's 25,344-pixel colour sensor makes it possible to capture up to 80 full-colour digital images that can then be downloaded to your PC.

The built-in 20mm x 20mm grayscale monochrome LCD panel acts as both the viewfinder and an on-the-spot playback monitor.

An infra-red receiving unit and graphics package are supplied with the camera.

① £229.95, from www.firebox.com (0870 2414289).



Game on . . .

OPERATION FLASHPOINT – GOLD EDITION, PC

CODEMASTERS have applied the Midas touch to their transatlantic best-seller *Operation Flashpoint* and released an essential upgrade pack for strategists.

Operation Flashpoint: Gold Edition contains the latest version of the Cold War simulator, which allows players to command not just soldiers, but also land, sea and air vehicles.

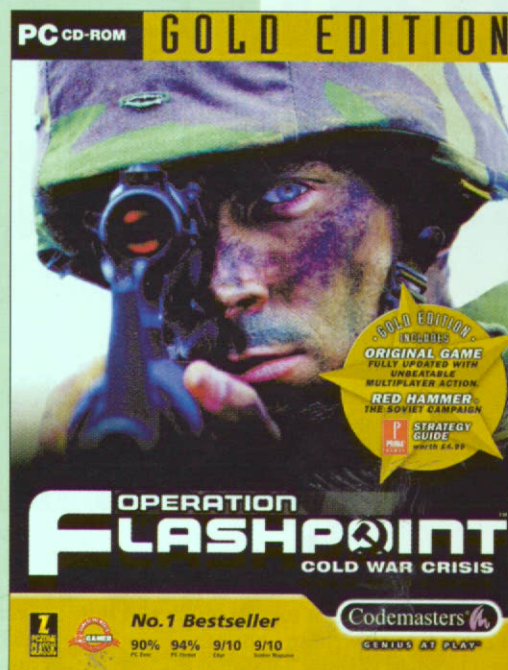
It features all of the additional vehicles, weapons and missions made available since the game's European launch, along with enhanced multi-player functionality and many code updates.

The *Gold Edition* set also includes an extra disc containing the recently released *Red Hammer: The Soviet Campaign*.

Red Hammer is an entirely new 20-mission campaign, which allows players to fight as part of the Soviet force. With a new central character, Dmitri Lukin, new Russian-accented voices and fresh-cut scenes, it is a must-have for *Flashpoint* fans.

No soldier would be fully-equipped without a survival handbook and so the *Gold Edition*, priced at £34.99, also contains a 64-page *Operation Flashpoint Prima Strategy Guide*, focusing on the Cold War classic.

For gamers who already own a copy



of *Operation Flashpoint*, a total upgrade pack titled *Operation Flashpoint Gold Upgrade* has been launched for £9.99.

VERDICT: In this case, all that glitters is gold. Still the best conflict simulator on the market. **9/10**

OUT NOW

MISSION BRIEF

Your mission, if you choose to accept it, is to recover one of five *Operation Flashpoint Gold Edition* survival kits.

The kits, which contain a copy of the game; a rucksack; torch and multi-tool set; *Flashpoint* t-shirt; and *Flashpoint* action watch, are currently being held under close guard by the *Soldier* editorial team.

To stand a chance of recovering the bounty you must correctly answer the following question:

What is the title given to the new 20-mission campaign featured in *Operation Flashpoint – Gold Edition*?

a) Red Herring; b) Red Robin; c) Red Hammer

Send your answer on a postcard to *Operation Flashpoint* competition, *Soldier*, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants, GU11 2DU.

The winners will be drawn at random from the correct answers received by February 1. Usual rules of engagement apply.

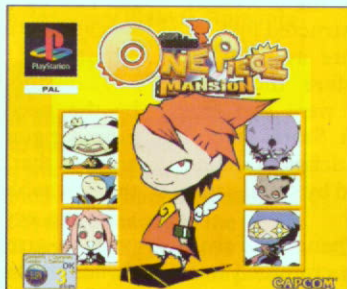
ONE-PIECE MANSION, PSX

OUT NOW

IN this original puzzle game players take the role of a mansion manager and must strive to make as much money and build as many rooms as possible.

But in order to achieve this goal, gamers must keep a crazy assortment of tenants happy by correctly situating them next to each other and keeping them out of trouble.

If a resident gets too stressed, they will leave the mansion without paying outstanding rent, but if they are happy, occupancy will grow, allowing the player to

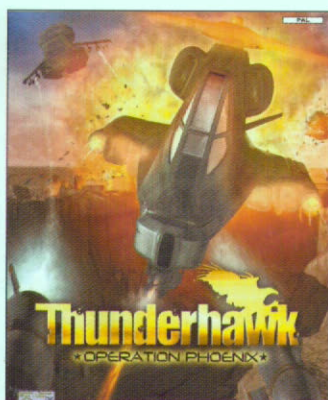


build a larger mansion. Identifying who make good neighbours is harder than you might think.

VERDICT: Good old-fashioned fun and addictive gameplay. **8/10**

OPERATION THUNDERHAWK, PS2

OUT NOW



EIDOS Interactive's *Thunderhawk: Operation Phoenix* is an arcade-style shooter that puts players inside the cockpit of a gunship.

As pilots, gamers face 15-varied missions set across the globe. Simulated airborne warning and control systems are featured, providing the player with real-time tactical updates. Levels of additional support also include infantry and tank battalions, and air units, all of which add to a realistic battlefield experience.

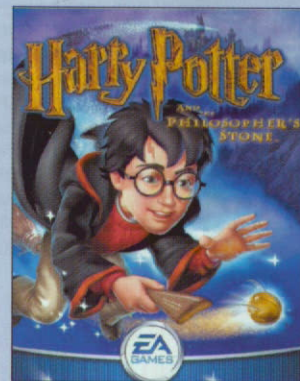
VERDICT: Trigger-happy action. **8/10**

HARRY POTTER, PC & PSX

OUT NOW

IT had to happen. He's already the star of four books, his own movie and now Harry Potter is making his debut in the gaming charts.

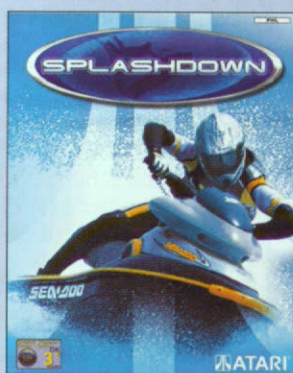
Based on the book and film of the same name, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* features extensive platform-style gameplay within the surroundings of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The game allows players to experience a series of challenges inspired by the pen of J K Rowling, including a roller-coaster ride through Gringotts and a high-speed flying-broomstick chase.



VERDICT: Worth fighting the kids for a go. **7/10**

SPLASHDOWN, PS2

OUT NOW



SPORTING amazing visuals yet to be seen on the PS2, such as real-time water effects based on hydronamics, *Splashdown* is a slick arcade-style racer.

This pick-up-and-play title from Infogrames puts gamers in control of a *Sea-Doo* (jet-ski) capable of performing amazing gravity-defying stunts.

Gamers can hone their backward flips, jumps and mid-air rolls on the game's 18 race circuits, which are set in locations ranging from Hawaii to Nice.

VERDICT: Wet and wild. **9/10**

Cheap, easy to use, deadly: the AK47

THE AK47 is possibly the most influential weapon in the history of small arms and has had a devastating impact since it first appeared in 1947. Just two years later, Mikhail Kalashnikov's design was accepted as the standard Soviet Army rifle and the rest is bloody history. The reasons for its success are simple: it is cheap to make, lethal in combat and easy to use. Its durability, even when left uncleaned, is extraordinary. It can be buried in mud, snow or sand, dug up, and still fire. **Weapons of War: The AK47** by Chris McNab (Spellmount, £14.99) examines how its qualities have helped change the balance of world power.

In Flanders' fields the poppies blow

BY New Year's Day 1916 fighting on the Western Front had cost some two million lives. Twelve months on, the tally had doubled for negligible territorial gains. **Attrition, The Great War on the Western Front - 1916** by Robin Neillands (Robson Books, £18.95) tells the story of one year, two battles and several million men. The author examines the actions of the principal commanders as they sought to find a way through the grinding impasse of trench warfare. Many ingrained myths are explored - that Haig was a monster, that the planning was faulty, that the battle achieved nothing.

Tanks were buoyed up by Royal Navy

IF the Army had had its way in 1915 no tanks would have been rolled out of British factories in the First World War. Military indifference to the need for the weapon caused it to be secretly designed by the Royal Navy on Winston Churchill's initiative. John Glanfield sheds new light on the pioneers in **The Devil's Chariots: The Birth and Secret Battles of the First Tank** (Sutton, £25). This intensely researched work explores the activities of the tank's visionaries and builders and their battles to produce the weapon in spite of scepticism from the establishment.

Rain, heat and hunger

British besieged in a tiny Transvaal fort for 95 days

A Rain of Lead: The Siege and Surrender of the British at Potchefstroom by Ian Bennett (Greenhill Books, £18.99)

Review: Brian Jewell

FOR most of us the Boer War means the conflict that began in South Africa in 1899, because we have been told so much about it. Less has been written about the First Boer War (1880-81), but Col Bennett's remarkably well-researched account of an operation hitherto neglected by historians helps to clarify why the clash between the Boers and British occurred and how the war differed from the events of 19 years later.

What makes the siege at Potchefstroom, the old Boer capital of the Transvaal, so unusual is that the besiegers occupied the town while, outside its limits, the defenders were isolated in a hastily constructed fort.

Because only 17 days were available to complete the structure before the siege began, the earthwork walls were two feet short of the recommended 6ft. Stores of food had to be used to bolster the defences. Some of it perished or was destroyed by small-arms fire.

Two hundred troops and a handful of civilians, including women, were crammed into an area about the size of a tennis court.

Heavily outnumbered by the Boers in the town and short of rations and water, they also had to endure debilitating heat and the wettest summer in living memory, sheltered only by a few bullet-holed tents.

The defenders held out under constant fire for 95 days (hence the book's title) and when they inevitably surrendered more than a third of the British force had been killed, wounded or had died from disease.

Ian Bennett offers great insight into South African life in general and the active service conditions of soldiers.

For instance, besides tinned meat and vegetables and other iron rations such as hard-tack biscuits, their diet included a strange substance known as erbwurst, a cheap sausage with a long shelf-life, made of peas and chopped smoked meat.

Developed by the Germans in the Franco-Prussian War and tried by the British in the Zulu conflict, it was not popular with the

troops and unless properly boiled often caused diarrhoea.

Bennett paints an intriguing picture of the interesting if somewhat shady Commandant Pieter Edward Raaff, court messenger and field cornet at Potchefstroom, who was of Boer descent but appointed by the British.

Before the Boers occupied the town Raaff reassured the anxious population: "If and when they come I shall be standing under the tree by the bridge with a large pot in my hand. We shall fire one cannon and I shall strike the pot with a single blow with a stick. All the Boers will flee and that will be the end of the affair."

When Gen Pieter Cronje and his Boers arrived there was no sign of Raaff, his pot or his stick. Whether he knew of the Boer's intentions is not clear but he subsequently fell foul of Cronje, was taken prisoner and was at one time sentenced to death for being a traitor.

Throughout the siege Cronje was obsessed by the need to capture the British nine-pounder guns at the fort and was constantly anxious that they should not be spiked when the inevitable capitulation came.

In the event, the First Boer War ended with an armistice - and the guns were returned to the British. The real irony was that the British commander did not learn of the March 6 truce until March 18 and surrender terms were not agreed until March 21.

IN BRIEF

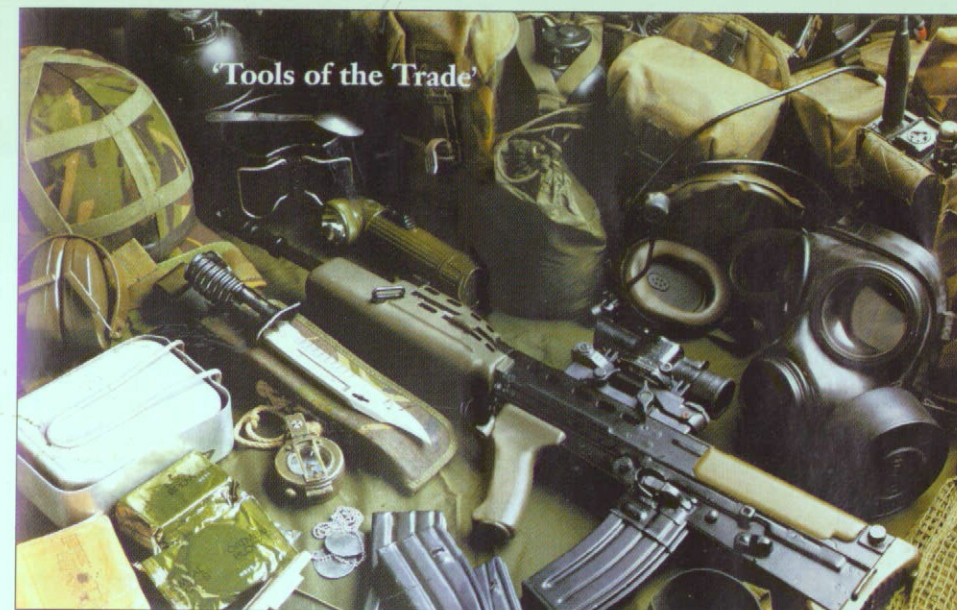
Wolfe by Stuart Reid. Young general's influence on the British Army. (Spellmount, £20.)

Scots Guard: On the Western Front, 1915-1918 by Wilfrid Ewart. Autobiographical experiences, first published in 1934. (Strong Oak Press, Stevenage, paperback, £11.95.)

Success of a General by Brian L Kieran. Gen John French and the relief of Kimberley. (Token, paperback, £19.95.)

Interrogations by Richard Overy. Recollections of Nazi war criminals taken from interviews before the Nuremberg trials. (Allen Lane/ Penguin, £25.)

Rorke's Drift 1879 by Edmund Yorke. Anatomy of the epic siege. (Tempus, paperback, £15.99.)



Competition conquerors

THREE *Soldier* readers receive a copy of *Invasion* by Dan Cruickshank following the random draw from correct entries to our November competition.

They are Mrs S Thornton, of Colchester, David Williams, of Cwmbran, and Rfn R P Dunn, of Headington, Oxford.

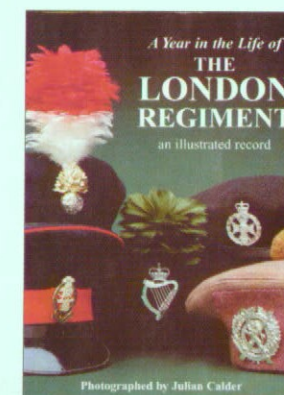
We asked which military leader last conquered England and were prepared to accept the following variations - the Duke of Normandy; William, Duke of Normandy; William of Normandy; or (as he became known) William the Conqueror.

ABOVE and right are two of Julian Calder's many photographs in the lavish book *A Year in the Life of the London Regiment* (Calder Walker, £24.99), a marvellous collector's piece with accompanying words written mainly by its officers. Calder created his illustrated record by photographing training courses and manoeuvres from Salisbury Plain to Romania and visiting TA centres all over London for formal and informal events.

His illustrations also pay tribute to the regiment's companies, which have retained their distinctive cap badges despite successive changes in the 1990s and whose charities will benefit equally from sales profits.

Copies can be ordered at the reduced price of £19.99 (plus

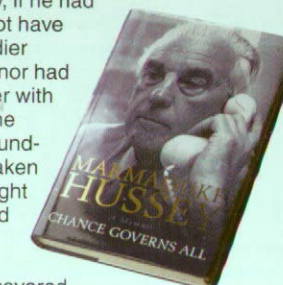
Sumptuous snapshot



£3.95 p&p for one, £6.50 for two and £6.95 for three or more) from Calder Walker Associates (to whom cheques are payable), PO Box 60, London SW15 5WS.

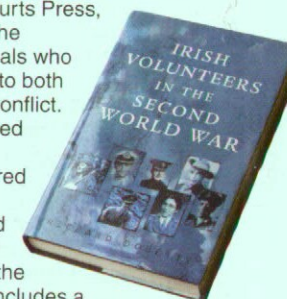
Grand old Duke led 10,000 men

A SIMPLE twist of fate resulted in Marmaduke Hussey missing a rugby match in December 1942. **Chance Governs All, A Memoir** (Macmillan, £20) explains why, if he had played, he may not have joined the Grenadier Guards at Anzio, nor had a fateful encounter with a German machine gunner. Badly wounded, "Dukie" was taken captive, had his right leg amputated and left for dead in a prisoner-of-war camp. How he recovered, became an executive at *The Times* and ran the BBC is told in this cracking autobiography. An odds-on winner.



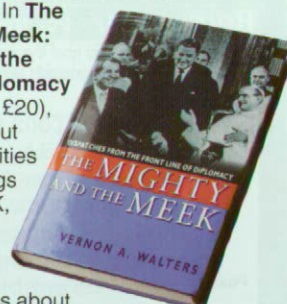
When volunteers went off to war

THIS companion (and concluding) volume to *Irish Men and Women in the Second World War*, **Irish Volunteers in the Second World War** by Richard Doherty (Four Courts Press, £19.65) looks at the disparate individuals who lent their support to both sides during the conflict. Irish soldiers served alongside British soldiers in armoured regiments, the Royal Artillery and on merchant ships throughout the world. The book includes a chapter on Hitler's Irish Allies, including the propagandist William Joyce, better known as Lord Haw Haw. Others, such as the writer Samuel Beckett, fought with the resistance movements in occupied countries.



Conversations with mighty and meek

VERNON Walters, a former US soldier, diplomat and deputy director of the CIA, has plenty to say about the movers and shakers he has met over the past 50 years. In **The Mighty and The Meek: Dispatches from the Front Line of Diplomacy** (St Ermin's Press, £20), he reminisces about the great personalities he has had dealings with, including JFK, Churchill, Montgomery and Thatcher. He also provides anecdotes about some lesser known figures including his Aunt Ethel and a London taxi driver. Entertaining and informative, it reads like a *Who's Who* of the 20th century.



The Half-Ton Military Land Rover. Illustrated study of the air-portable Lightweights. (Veloce Publishing, £25.)

Modern Military Rifles by John Walter and **Military Transport: Trucks and Transporters** by T J O'Malley, first published 1995. (Greenhill Military Manuals series, £14.95 each.)

A Testimony to Courage: The Regimental History of The Ulster Defence Regiment, by John Potter. This important new history of the largest, most operationally committed, and arguably most controversial regiment in the recent history of the British Army will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue. (Pen & Sword, £25.)

Servants of Evil by Bob Carruthers (general editor, Simon Trewin). Second World War from

the German side, to accompany a TV series. (Carlton, £16.99.)

March or Die by Philip D Chinnery. First-hand accounts of the Burma Campaign, first published in 1997. (Airlife Classic, paperback, £9.99.)

The British: A Photographic Journey by Nick Danziger. Photo-journalist's quirky, monochromatic look at the nation includes a section on the Army. (HarperCollins, £24.99.)

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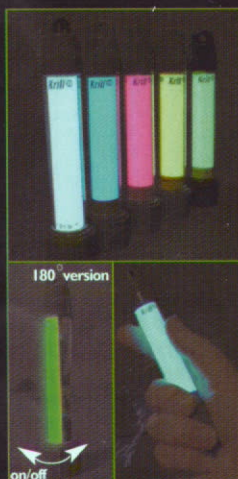


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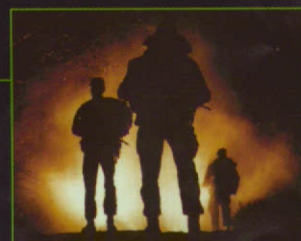
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SOLDIER to soldier

Winning the peace

CONFIRMATION of the size of the job facing those who will be charged with bringing peace to the warrior tribes of Afghanistan comes from a military contact based at Bagram airfield, outside Kabul.

He sent us the following observation on the education system in Afghanistan. It appears in a document drawn up by an officer of the Coalition Information Service in Islamabad.

"One of the projects we met with was very concerned about the militarisation of the education system (exclusively for boys, of course), which they felt added to the prevailing culture of violence. They wanted to make sure that the next generation was brought up in peace.

♦ ♦ ♦

"One of the problems they highlighted was text books. Maths books, for example, apparently have problems such as: 'My father killed three Russians, my uncle killed four Russians. How many Russians were killed in all?'"

It is a world far removed from the *Janet and John go to the Seaside* approach to education.

If and when British troops are sent to the area they will respect the differences, as they have cultures under other foreign skies.

♦ ♦ ♦

Green Jackets in Sierra Leone value the security patrols which take them outside their training base because of the contact they give them with local communities (see Pages 18-19).

In the Balkans, the willingness of British troops to get to know the people they are protecting – and to give up their own time to become involved with their hardships – has long been a major factor in the "hearts and minds" campaign which underwrites every peacekeeping mission.

Afghanistan's population, which has more experience of war than of peace, may be harder to win over.

Home truths

Sue Bonney

Tosh or not, I'd like your views

HERE we go again, into the bright shiny New Year, full of resolve and optimism. We can all have our hopes and dreams for 2002 . . . until the diet or willpower fails.

I look forward to this column triggering responses from you this year, as it did in 2001, usually when someone out there thinks I am talking total tosh. This is just what we columnists like, of course – proof that someone actually reads our carefully-crafted words, tosh or not!

First off the bat for 2002 is WO2 Jones on the highly-charged issue of partners (see Mail). He objects to my supposed comment that if you want a quarter, you should get married (not quite what I said, but never mind). The Army Families Federation has heard from a number of couples like WO2 Jones and his partner who don't wish to get married but do wish to be together on postings, particularly overseas.

I suspect the argument will run and run. What the MoD has to decide is not whether to recognise partners, but how far that recognition should go, especially with regard to housing.

● I suppose we could also hope for more accurate coverage of Service life in the national media in 2002, or at least an improvement on such stories as the one in the *Mail on Sunday* purporting to be outraged because the MoD had decided not to pay for boarding school "extras". The paper would have the public believe the MoD had been cheerfully paying out for the extra activities of Service children at boarding schools, including music and horse-riding lessons. We wish.

I seem to remember among those Boarding School Allowance forms a whole list of extras that the MoD would not pay for. In fact, they pay only for individual activities which would normally be provided free by state schools. Hardly a new policy meriting outrage. But then the story, despite its supposed sympathy for the Service person concerned, was geared to get its readers wondering why they, the taxpayers, should be forking out to keep our kids in perceived luxury.



Sue Bonney is
Editor of the AFF
Families Journal

Never let the truth get in the way of a good story.

How nice it would be to see an article on the fact that Service personnel also pay tax, and rent for our accommodation, and Council Tax wherever we are in the world (sometimes twice), and that, were it not for moving around at the behest of the Service, many of us wouldn't contemplate boarding schools for our kids.

We are also supposed to find alternative accommodation outside the family home for any of our children over 18 who don't go on to further education, but that's another story.

● My own little dream for 2002 is at last achieving the efficient and speedy delivery of the *AFF Families' Journal* to every unit and its families worldwide. You might think that should be happening already, but it's an incredibly complex business.

For all sorts of reasons, most of which are banknotes, we can only deliver to units via a distribution system which can take some time. I occasionally dwell in a fantasy land where the *AFF* is delivered by post to the quarter door in a personally-addressed envelope.

Sadly, we are a long way from that in the UK and could never do it for families overseas. But we could get the *AFF* to you faster and more consistently if there was a generous benefactor out there with cash to donate to a worthy cause.

In the meantime we rely on the support and goodwill of units and welfare officers to get the magazine to their families.

lies. Because they know their families, and the *AFF*, are worth it.

● Some things about 2002 are already certain, including the AFF Germany Conference in Herford on January 31 (book now) and the worldwide AFF Conference 2002 in London on July 4. You've even got a new picture of me (see above). What more could you ask for?

You can check out the AFF website at www.aff.org.uk for more details on the AFF Germany Conference and AFF Conference 2002, and for all the latest news and info from AFF.

**Mail**

WRITE TO: SOLDIER, ORDNANCE ROAD, ALDERSHOT, HANTS GU11 2DU
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Why I'm so grateful to Officers' Association

I WAS an officer in the 2nd Battalion, The Light Infantry for approximately ten years, during which time I saw service in several countries and had a wonderful career.

In 2000, aged 45, I contracted familial motor neurone disease, which is terminal. This meant that I was rapidly losing mobility and needed help to adjust my home and move around with some inde-

pendence. Where was I to turn? I tried my local authority and other public-funded bodies which were long on promises but short on action.

I called SSAFA-Forces Help, and they put me in touch with the Officers' Association. This began a train of events that has helped me and my family to a degree I would not have thought possible.

The Officers' Association has helped

me to adapt my bathroom for invalid use and given me an electric wheelchair so that I may enjoy being independent for as much of the day as possible.

I would like your readers to know that the Army looks after everyone who has served them, not only those killed or wounded in operations, but also simple people like me. – **Charles Anderson, Ardeley, Hertfordshire.**

My partner and I have a strong case for quarter

I recently applied for a quarter. The main points in my application were that my relationship with Miss X is eight years old; that over the past eight years I have served in Brunei (she worked for Shell, which supplied accommodation), Wattisham (where we owned our own house), Cyprus (where we rented accommodation at our own expense); and that I have been offered three years' continuance and we find ourselves homeless in Hampshire.

Having taken the financial hit for housing over the past eight years with no assis-

tance from the Services, I am applying for a quarter. To buy a house in such a high-cost area for the sake of three years is not an option.

Prize letter

My application was rejected by all four Defence Housing Executive areas in Hampshire, even when watered down to an application for a surplus quarter.

The MoD is currently in a position to state what it feels is a long-term relationship and allocate quarters accordingly. Once my, or any other, claim is taken to the civil court, as it will be shortly – and

upheld – the time for stipulating who can and who can't have a quarter will be gone and the floodgates will open. Once a precedent is set it will be taken out of the MoD's hands.

The comment that if you want a quarter you should get married, made by the Editor of the *Families Journal* in your September issue (Talkback), is unacceptable. The MoD is responsible for enough divorces already without creating several thousand more by backing couples into a corner. – **WO2(AQMS) Jones, ABD, STS4, Middle Wallop, Hants.**

▲ PS4(A) responds:

The MoD is well aware of the issues raised in WO2 Jones's letter. The current departmental policy, which uses marital status as the determinant for certain benefits and entitlements, is consistent with the policies of many other authorities, at home and abroad.

However, the prevailing social trend in soci-

ety at large is towards an increase in non-married and cohabiting unions. All three Services are involved in work to examine the extent to which unmarried people living in partnerships should receive benefits similar to those received by married couples.

The work taking place is not out of political correctness but to compile more factual and

authoritative information than is available. Current evidence is largely anecdotal and not altogether clear. It should provide a clearer understanding of the problem, if one exists.

Society at large, including members of the Armed Forces and their families, have strong views on this topic and any change of policy needs to be considered fully.

There's a lot between nothing and everything

I WANT to respond on the issue of partners (Vox pop, Nov). I have had a relationship for more than eight years with a British soldier.

I am Dutch and living in the Netherlands. We are not married and I don't want to marry him while he is serving in the Army. As we are not married the Army doesn't acknowledge me as his partner. He is 30 years old and living in Germany in single living accommodation, so I'm not allowed to stay overnight.

We have been through a lot together – postings to England, tours to the Falkland

Islands, Kosovo, Belize, Northern Ireland and recently Oman.

It took until this year for me to appear on his records as his next-of-kin, and I hope that if anything were to happen to him the Army would contact me. I don't want all the privileges that married people have, but there is a lot between nothing and everything.

Why can't the Army have more respect for long-term relationships and allow me to be more a part of his Army life. – **Noreen de Boer, Delft, The Netherlands.**

Our medal allocation was short – by one

FIFTY years ago I was the pay sergeant at the Embarkation Establishment (UK) at Dover. I suppose that these days it would be known as EMBESTUK. I imagine also that it is now a housing estate or industrial park.

To mark the Queen's coronation there was a small allocation of Coronation Medals for distribution within the unit. My name was on the list as a recipient but, alas, at the bottom. When the medals arrived, we were one short – so I didn't get one.

Would it not now be fair for me to be at the top of someone's list for the Golden Jubilee Medal? – **Alex Diamant, Leicester.**

PISCATOR



"He says he can conjure up those reserve forces you have been on about"

This is an important year for the Army Benevolent Fund. Not only is it the jubilee year of the ABF's patron, the Queen, but it is also the 20th anniversary of the Falklands conflict. The ABF – and the members of the Army family which it supports – need your help, now more than ever. If you would like to assist the ABF in any way, please call 020 7591 2000.



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They refused my claim for lost family holiday

I HAVE just returned from Op Bessemer where I was attached to 13 Air Assault Support Regiment RLC. The problem I hope you can help me with is that I was a day into my leave when I was recalled back to my unit.

I had, of course, by then paid for my family holiday.

While on operation we were told by our

▲ PS4(A) responds:

The key to this question is whether the corporal was informed by his unit of his commitment to Op Bessemer and the likelihood, no matter how remote, of his recall from leave if his deployment dates changed. If this was the case he has been treated fairly as he effectively booked a holiday at his own risk.

The Regulations for Army Allowances and Charges (RAACs), Ch 15, Sect 11, state that

then pay office that if anyone had lost money due to being recalled, they could claim it all when they got back.

On my return I put a claim into my unit pay office, supported by receipts, but was told I could not claim. In fact, all I could claim was mileage for my return journey.

Which pay office is right? – Cpl RLC, name and address supplied.

a full refund of holiday expenses will only be considered where legitimate expenditure has been incurred in association with a planned holiday in anticipation of or during authorised leave which is then cancelled or curtailed for unforeseen Service reasons.

He should seek advice from his unit admin office. Insurance against such eventualities is available and soldiers are strongly urged to take this precaution when booking holidays.

OFFICER or other rank; serving or civvy... Soldier welcomes your letters. Please keep them brief and to the point. If not e-mailed, we'd prefer them to be typed but if they are handwritten, put names, addresses and in block capitals (not necessarily for publication). A prize from the our gift collection will be awarded each month if we judge that a letter merits it. Acceptance or rejection of letters is the decision of the Editor, who reserves the right to amend for length, clarity or style. Anonymous letters will not be considered.

Mail
us!

PS...

Payment to partner

I HAVE served in the QARANC for nearly seven years, five of which I have been married. I considered myself fortunate that the Army has always been there for me and my family. I am not normally given to writing letters, but felt the need to voice a concern over the staggering sum given by the MoD to the girlfriend of the soldier killed in Sierra Leone.

If I were killed in action, my wife, whom I was happy to commit to, and my two children, would be unlikely to get anywhere near the £250,000 offered to her.

I sympathise with her in her loss and agree that their child should be cared for, but surely if she wished to have the benefits entitled to a Serviceman's wife, she should have become a Serviceman's wife. – Cpl S Field, QARANC, Gosport.

● The exceptional circumstances of the MoD's ex gratia payment to Anna Hornsby were outlined in Page 12 of the December issue of Soldier. – Editor

Stop honking...

I WRITE in response to the two letters (Nov) concerning the financial implications of being a sergeants' mess member. Both reek of selfishness instead of selfless commitment. The Army is founded on teamwork. Mess membership is based on promotion to sergeant, so attaining membership of a professional and committed team.

Honking about mess bills is not a new sport, however it concerns me that it is being done in public. Being compelled to support the team is certainly no new sport either. Opting out of the Tesco Christmas Club is fine, but then we don't send checkout girls to fight wars.

If you want to opt out, I'm certain your RSM will be able to arrange it with the CO. For every complainer there will be ten volunteers to take your place, who will gladly pay their way. – C Dickson, RSM, 9 Supply Regt RLC.

Another fine mess

AS an ex-WO1 RAPC and AGC(SPS), I was interested in the calculations of the SNCO in the letter regarding mess bills.

Over £2,000 a year is more than £175 a month. I would be very interested in the name of the mess concerned as the members must enjoy a tremendous social life. – D B Nicholson, Gateshead.

A matter of status

I FOUND myself in an argument about the standing of Army Cadet Force officers. The old soldiers who say they "only hold a Lord Lieutenant's commission" should be invited to put their money down, loser to buy a round in the mess, and an ACF officer asked to produce his commission documents. – Ronald R Miles, ex-Coldm Gds, Capt TA (Retd), Bury.



Naafi's response was just not a proper answer

THE response from Naafi to Capt Geering's query ("EFI camcorder is £160 more than VAT-free model", Nov) should not have been published.

It did not attempt to answer the question. The things it mentions are old hat to anyone who has spent more than a year in the Army. A member of the organisation should be able to answer specific questions about specific products. They set the price and know how much it cost. This lack of response can only lead to suspicions of profiteering, despite the good job that EFI endeavour to perform at grass-roots level. It has done Naafi's front-line employees a disservice. – **Maj Mike Burke, SO2 IDT(A), Upavon.**

WHY is it that when Naafi management addresses a question in any of the Forces' magazines, they never answer it (Mail, Nov)?

I'd like to know why items such as Le Creuset pots and pans and car stereos are sold in EFI shops in operational theatres? Having just returned from Kosovo I have not met a single person who needed them on tour. Should EFI not be concentrating on items soldiers need on a daily basis at a competitive price instead of being an outlet for stock that is hard to shift elsewhere?

Instead of our Servicemen and women having to go to other nations' shops for their needs, why not listen to the customer. No doubt the answer will babble on about good points without answering the question. – **WO1(ASM) O'Connor, Fallingbostal.**

▲ Naafi responds:

EFI plays a critical role in supporting Forces personnel by providing items and services that ensure a good quality of life in difficult operational areas. Despite its unique position supplying items to HM Forces around the world, EFI sells less than £8 million of electrical items a year. This small volume of sales means we do not obtain the large-value discounts that the electrical wholesalers enjoy.

Our turnover probably represents only one month's trading by a large electrical retailer such as Dixons and so our cost price is significantly different. In addition to higher cost prices, EFI must also include the costs of the risk of supplying and managing EFIs overseas. These significant factors must be taken into account in our pricing.

The item queried by Capt Geering was a model close to 12 months old, which may explain the lower cost from the catalogue retailer. We understand that there is an increasingly competitive market for electrical goods and that it is easier than ever to order through catalogues or the internet. This gives Forces personnel an alternative for many goods that may also be available in our shops.

Naafi's purpose is to provide facilities and services at the best price in conditions that commercial retailers do not access. Profit from EFI and the Naval Canteen Service is returned to the Forces in the form of a dividend. Naafi continues to be committed to serving the Forces wherever they are deployed.

We didn't deserve refusal over visit to grandparents

I AM writing to try and clarify what "eligible" means with reference to the transfer of leave warrants.

I am serving in Northern Ireland and as a separated Serviceman (marital status 3) am entitled to seven annual warrants. My two children also live in Northern Ireland and I wanted to take them to see their grandparents at half-term.

The Army Pay and Documentation Office Northern Ireland (APDO(NI)) Leave and Travel Brief, Para 17c (Aug 00) states: "All eligible personnel may also transfer warrants to children of the Serviceman's or spouse's former marriage. For this purpose, the child is defined at RAAC paragraphs 05.056c-e. If the children travel together, only one warrant need be surrendered."

Believing myself to be eligible I applied for the flights, only to be told two weeks before I was due to fly that I was not entitled to transfer my warrants because I am

not married. Seeking clarification, I went to the Leave Cell, APDO(NI).

A senior NCO there told me that in his opinion I wasn't eligible because I am single, so do not have family warrants to transfer. If I read the relevant paragraph correctly, I am only transferring one warrant. He did explain that if I were to re-marry, then I would be eligible to transfer a warrant.

If this is correct, I and other Servicemen in this position are being discriminated against because we are not married. It should not matter whether we are single or married. If we have children from a former marriage the system should allow us to visit them and/or take them to visit grandparents who live on the United Kingdom mainland.

I had to find £230 for tickets for the children – a lot of money when I'm paying maintenance. – **SSgt D Mudway 15 Signal Regiment, Northern Ireland.**

▲ PS4(A) responds:

This is a complex area within the allowances package. After due consideration, in consultation with HQNI, PS4(A) has determined that SSgt Mudway may be eligible to transfer warrants to which he is entitled to his family – as defined at paragraph 05.056 of the Regulations for Army Allowances and Charges (RAAC).

The intention of the relevant regulations is to enable the Serviceman to be reunited with

his family and as SSgt Mudway's family is already in Northern Ireland he has no recognised need to transfer his warrants to be with them. However, the lack of short-stay contact housing and the restrictions in using hotel accommodation in the province make it exceptionally difficult for the children of divorced parents in single living accommodation to visit them. Therefore, HQNI has exceptionally agreed to reconsider SSgt Mudway's case.

There's no ban on our joining trade unions

REFERENCE last month's Vox pop on the subject of trade unions, I have been in the Army since 1963 and ever since I can remember soldiers have been able to join, or be a member of a trade union. As an example, take military bandmen.

In your article the question posed was: "Should the idea of joining a union be extended to the British Army?" Unfortunately, the majority of soldiers asked the question either did not understand it, or your reporter did not make himself clear.

Most of the answers were in the negative and gave the impression that the question posed was: "Should trade unions be allowed to represent their members who serve in the British Army?" – a completely different question. – **WO2 C P Ireson, NBCD Cell, HQ 1 (UK) Armd Div, Herford.**

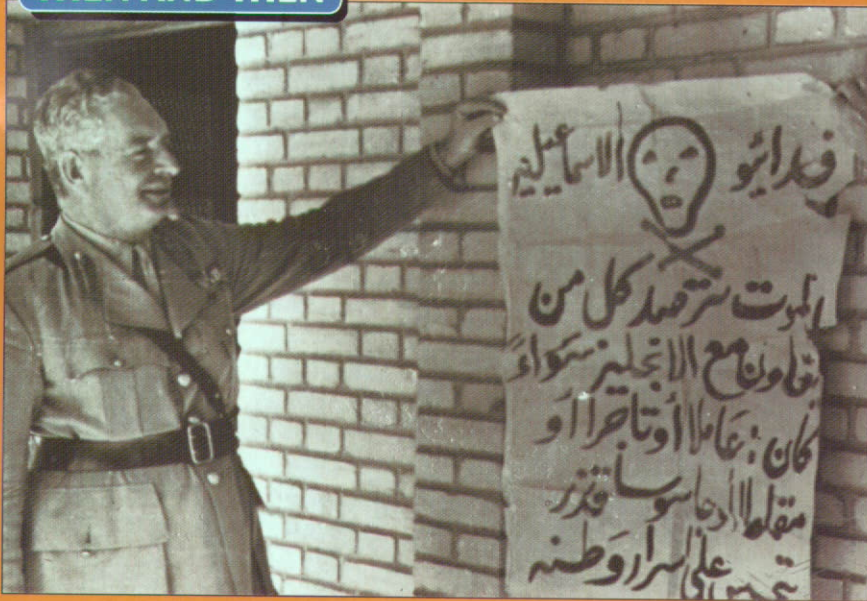
Why do Army's working hours vary so much?

CAN anyone tell me why normal working hours vary so much throughout the Army? While on a course recently I got into a conversation on the subject and it soon became apparent that the working day varies greatly between one battalion and another.

My battalion works from 0800 to 1700 Monday to Thursday and finishes at 1230 on a Friday. With an hour off for lunch, that's 40 hours a week. But most other UK-based battalions, including our sister unit, work 0830 to 1630, with a 1230 finish on Fridays and 1½ hours for lunch – a total of 32½ hours.

I know I get paid 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and I don't mind working 24/7 on ops or exercises, but at home I'd like to work the same hours as others. – **Name supplied, 2 R Anglian.**

THEN AND THEN



25 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, January 1977: The Army will not be getting a full-time social work service or longer tours of duty designed to cut down stress in Service families, as recommended by the Spencer Report on Army Welfare. Army chiefs agree that the welfare system the Army offers needs improvement but do not agree with solutions put forward by the report.

50 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, January 1952: Lt Gen Sir George Erskine, above, who commands British troops in Egypt, looks at a poster on a wall in Ismailia. It threatens death to anyone who works for the British. Soldiers in the Suez Canal Zone are living behind barbed wire and running the gauntlet of snipers, jam-pot grenades, tin-can bombs and wire booby-traps.

Regs got in way of constructive reply

I WOULD like to comment on the negative reply given to the private who wanted to transfer to the RMP ("Driving offence blights my career", Nov).

It is so easy to push someone aside by reeling off regulations (probably drawn up before the Second World War) without addressing the main point raised. In this case the RLC private – who seemed keen and motivated and wished to transfer – was refused because of an offence that would probably not make the CO's desk.

I know most regulations serve us well, but also realise that many others hinder the smooth running of the Army.

To those asked to respond to such letters, I respectfully request that before you put pen to paper you find out what point the author is trying to make or is aggrieved about and then reply. Before you quote regulations, ask yourself if the author has a valid point and could the regulations be changed? Could it benefit others and possibly help the Army as a whole?

This is not a personal attack on the Provost Marshal, merely a way of trying to underline that the majority of those

required to reply to letters seem to find it easier to quote regulations and be done with it. – WO2 K P Palmer, AGC (SPS), Thirsk.

Surrey's police force might offer him a job

I AM a former Serviceman, having served in the Coldstream Guards and RMP Special Investigations Branch before joining Surrey Police, in which I am currently serving as an inspector at Guildford.

I know of the frustration of having a minor conviction; mine prevented me from joining the civil police for nearly ten years.

My advice to the RLC private in Northern Ireland would be, if his heart is set on a police career, to consider applying to join Surrey Police, where minor, non-criminal offences would be taken into consideration together with his skills, abilities and potential, in any decision to offer him an appointment. – Richard H Lawn, Inspector, Guildford Division.

PS . . .

Monty's men reply

AS one of Monty's men, let me protest against Mr Hamilton's *The Full Monty* (Books, Dec). Two decades ago Mr Hamilton produced a fine biography of Fd Marshal Montgomery. Now he's allowed himself to have it re-published under that cheap title. Add a bit of sex (homosexual) and we've got a winner, the PR feather merchants must have thought.

But Mr Hamilton, who had enviable access to Montgomery and his sources, does "the Master" no favour with this barely-revised biography. Not only does he cheapen Montgomery, but he also cheapens the millions of men (and women) of all nations and races who served under him. We didn't do our bit all those years ago to make a few bob for Mr Hamilton and his publisher. – Charles Whiting (ex-Tpr, 52nd Recce Regt), York.

(● Charles Whiting, who served in the Second World War, is Britain's most prolific military author, with more than 250 books to his credit, including the current Siegfried Line series.)

THE author and publisher of this book are bad enough, but you also disgust me by printing such rubbish and helping them receive recognition and profit. Monty was a brave man and a great soldier and leader. He is still an inspiration to our Armed Forces engaged in conflict. – Sgt R J Cooney, MPGS, Kineton.

● The interview reported the views of the author; we carried an objective review on the same page. – Editor

Kinnegar's curfew

IT was about time the Kinnegar Pong was highlighted (Sept). I was happy with Col Duncan's reply but feel he did not give an ample response to the issues of accommodation and the curfew.

Take the curfew. Single soldiers living at Palace Barracks who work in Kinnegar are not affected by this draconian measure. How can anyone keep up a relationship with a local civilian when we have to be in at a ridiculous time every night?

As for privacy, give us some MDF and we could do it ourselves.

Kinnegar could be an excellent posting but little things let it down: block inspections two or three times a week, remedial PT at 1930 hours twice a week and the lack of recreational facilities. – Pte A Finlay, NICSS, Northern Ireland.

The right form

IN response to Cpl Wright's letter ("Why it's a good idea for single soldiers to be allowed to occupy empty quarters", Dec), writing to the Station Staff Office (SSO) is not the way to get a quarter. Before blaming the SSO, he needs to get the right form from his unit welfare office and go through the correct procedure to find out if he is eligible. I am a housing rep in Germany and have had no complaints. – LCpl Blaney, 1 RRW, Paderborn.

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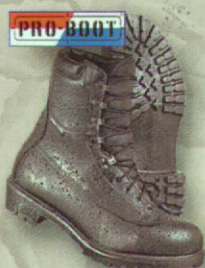
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TALKBACK

IF you took part in the Falklands War, Soldier would like to hear from you.

Tell us in no more than 150 words your

most vivid recollection and we'll include it in a special feature to mark the 20th anniversary.

Let us have your story, a photograph and full

details of yourself and your unit, by January 31. Write to the Editor at the above address or send an e-mail to jelliott@soldiermagazine.co.uk

When did 22-year career turn into a 20-year job?

DURING my 22 years' (and then some) service in the Army I have seen many changes.

There was that massive pay rise in the Seventies; the retention bonus paid to new members of the New Army (the younger ones, I mean); Longer Separated Service Allowance (were we not separated all those years ago?); and the removal of rail warrants.

Pay 2000 is discriminating against older, longer-serving personnel by holding length of service in disregard.

Now for the party piece: you cannot now get promoted in your last two years in service. Whoever makes up the rules should ask themselves one question: how many soldiers at the ten-, 12- and 14-year points are now questioning the point in staying.

We all aspired to reach regimental sergeant major (or whatever is appropriate to our corps or regiment), but this directive tells us, in effect, to give up. So

can anyone tell me when the 22-year career turned into a 20-year job, notwithstanding the MoD's apparent dispensation to ride roughshod over the older members of the Armed Forces and ignore European employment directives?

Or do the Armed Forces pick and chose the directives they intend to implement to please the minority?

Us "oldies" do a good job too, or is it that our experience and capabilities are just not worth bothering about?

I may be mature – some might say old – and smell of cabbage, but no more so than Chiefs of the Defence Staff promoted at the ripe old age of 50-plus.

I, like many others, signed a 22-year contract, and am not in line for promotion. I write this letter on behalf of those who are. Perhaps we should have joined the Royal Navy, judging by all the boats we seem to have missed. – **Sgt T Scott, 3 Regt Wksp, AAC Wattisham.**

Retention is the Army's problem, not recruiting

IN response to Spr Bullock's letter ("Today's Nintendo generation is scapegoat for the Army", Dec), in which he berates us for blaming our recruiting problems on young people, I can from a well-informed position let everyone know that there is no problem recruiting people into the Army.

In fact, over the past five years we have recruited the equivalent of half the current strength of the British Army.

Whether he intended to or not, this young man showed us all exactly where the problem lies – in keeping the young men and women we have already recruited.

At the age of 22 Spr Bullock is pondering whether to stay or go. How many more young soldiers are there like him, one has to wonder?

Whether it is, as Spr Bullock states, that he and his fellow soldiers are treat-

ed with no respect, or whether he is moaning because he hasn't grasped the opportunity to take part in the fantastic activities available to young soldiers in Germany, is neither here nor there.

The point is that we cannot retain the soldiers we have. This, of course, places an extra burden on us – the recruiters – to make up the shortfall, hence the perceived recruiting problem.

I would like to add that I do not believe we are any worse off than any civilian organisation when it comes to turnover of manpower. People come and go. It's a fact of life.

Many will leave happily and some will be disgruntled. Let's get away from the culture of blame and get on with managing the organisation which we belong to. – **WO2 RE Bath, Armed Forces Careers and Information Office, Sunderland.**

Let's follow the Kiwis' changed attitude to Suez

I SEE Dr Moonie, the Minister for Veterans, has regurgitated the same old arguments and half-truths with regard to a medal for Suez (Update, Nov).

This is on the same page as the announcement that the Sultan of Oman's 30th Anniversary Medal (for being on loan/contract on November 17, 2000) may be worn at all times (together with five other earlier Sultan's Commemorative Medals).

Although I am sure our Government's stock answer will be that what Commonwealth countries do is their affair, I think the comments of the New Zealand Minister of Veterans' Affairs, Mark Burton, as reported in *Royal New Zealand Returned Services Association Review*, dated August 2001, needs attention in Whitehall.

REVIEWED

New Zealand has reviewed its medals, both for future campaigns and past ones. The *Review* reports Mr Burton as saying: "During the 1956 Suez conflict HMNZS *Royalist* was temporarily attached to the Royal Navy's Mediterranean Fleet and for several days was part of the British invasion fleet until she was withdrawn from the operational area.

"Participation by British forces in the Suez campaign was recognised and medals were sent to New Zealand, but were never issued to the crew of *Royalist* and were subsequently disposed of.

"It is clear that the New Zealand Government of the day did not wish to recognise participation in this widely-criticised military operation.

OVERLOOKED

"This overlooked the primary reason for granting medals – to recognise the service of individuals involved in an operation. The *Royalist* ship's company will now be offered the New Zealand General Service Medal with clasp 'Near East'. Regulations are being drafted for this award and the medal will be available for issue by the end of the year."

The former attitude of the New Zealand Government, not surprisingly, exactly mirrors that of Whitehall.

Where the circumstances might embarrass the Government, medals are not given: Dunkirk (defeat); Arctic convoys (helping the Soviets); Bomber Command (indiscriminate bombing of civilians); Greece post-war (interference in internal affairs); and the Canal Zone, where the Foreign Office in particular boomed.

It is high time Whitehall noted the new attitude of the New Zealand Government, which reflects similar sentiments expressed by Canada and Australia and which I am sure most soldiers and ex-soldiers share. – **Lt Col (Retd) Ashley Tinson, Fleet, Hants.**

Vox pop

The regular feature in which we ask soldiers for their views on an issue

Comfort zone

Whether on exercise on Salisbury Plain, bobsleighbing in Austria or on an operational tour of Kosovo, personal insurance is the responsibility of the individual. We asked soldiers taking part in the novice ice camp at Igls, Austria, who they thought should be picking up the tab

Lt Rob Singleton (1 KORBR)

The responsibility for insurance should be shared by both parties in sport. Because you are on duty the MoD should be responsible to a certain degree, but I don't think there is any harm in having your own insurance as well – especially as that covers you to go away recreationally.



LCpl Phillip Kent (2 LD)

It works both ways. I don't feel hard-done-by for having to pay out of my own pocket for something like the ice camp, but the Army should definitely pick up the tab if you are sent into battle.



Capt Paula Graham (RAMC attached to 2 RTR)

I believe that adventurous training is there to promote the spirit of adventure in troops and therefore the Army should help out with insurance.



Sig Amy Rhodes (R Signals)

The Army should pay for our insurance when doing sports like this because we are here representing the Army. I don't think soldiers are given enough advice about insurance when out on exercise. We are just thrown out there and told to do it.



Pte Matthew Duncan (2 LD)

In terms of sport I think the cost of insurance should be split evenly between the individual and the Army. Looking at the wider picture, I have my own life insurance and PAX, so if anything did happen to



me I know I am covered. Soldiers don't receive enough information about insurance – you are given the bare minimum.

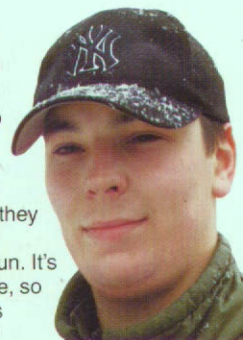
2nd Lt Caroline Zelaya (222 Sig Sqn, 3 (UK) DSR)

It would be good to see the Army picking up the tab because insurance can be something of a deterrent. Some soldiers don't have much money and can't be bothered with the hassle of insurance – if it was all just done for them you would have a lot more people volunteering for adventurous training and extreme sports. When recruits are in training they do get PAX and Abacus coming to talk to them about insurance, and financial advisers are available at all times. The advice is there but not all of them take it. It is easy to do nothing and a lot of soldiers just don't bother, especially for operational tours.



Pte Skye Deacon (1 WFR)

We are lucky to get the opportunity to do some of the things we do in the Army. Not many people in civvy street can say they have been down an Olympic bobsleigh run. It's a chance of a lifetime, so I have no complaints about picking up my own insurance. Even when I'm out on exercise I am happy to pay.



Capt Harry Pugh (144 Para Med Sqn (V))

I am TA and most of what I do is funded anyway so I have no objection to picking up my insurance for something like bobsleighbing.

In a conflict situation I would like to think that if I died for my country then the Government would pick up the tab.

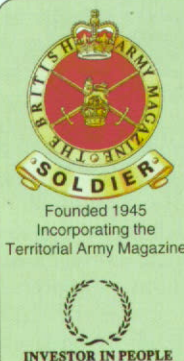


Lt Tim Cait (1 WFR)

For extreme sports it should be the responsibility of the individual. It is not that expensive and it is very reassuring.



Interviews: Andy Simms Pictures: Graeme Main



SOLDIER, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2DU
Distribution and enquiries: 01252 347353 (or Aldershot mil (94222) 2353)

Fax 347358 (2358)

E-mail:
mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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Managing Editor Chris Horrocks 01252 347355
(Aldershot military ((9)4222) 2355)
Editor John Elliott 347356 (Aldershot mil 2356)
Assistant Editors Anthony Stone 340462 (5462),
Ray Routledge 340753 (5753),
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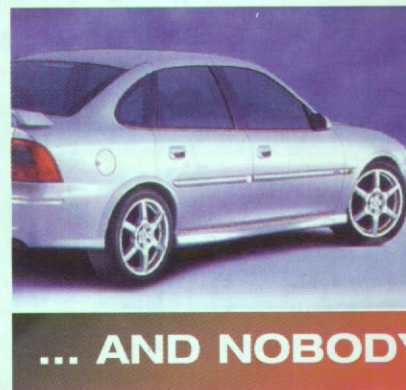
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