

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

January 2001 £2

SOLDIER

MEN OF THE MOUNTAINS

New role for Fusiliers

EOD nightmare
in Sierra Leone

British general
leading Euro
Force planning



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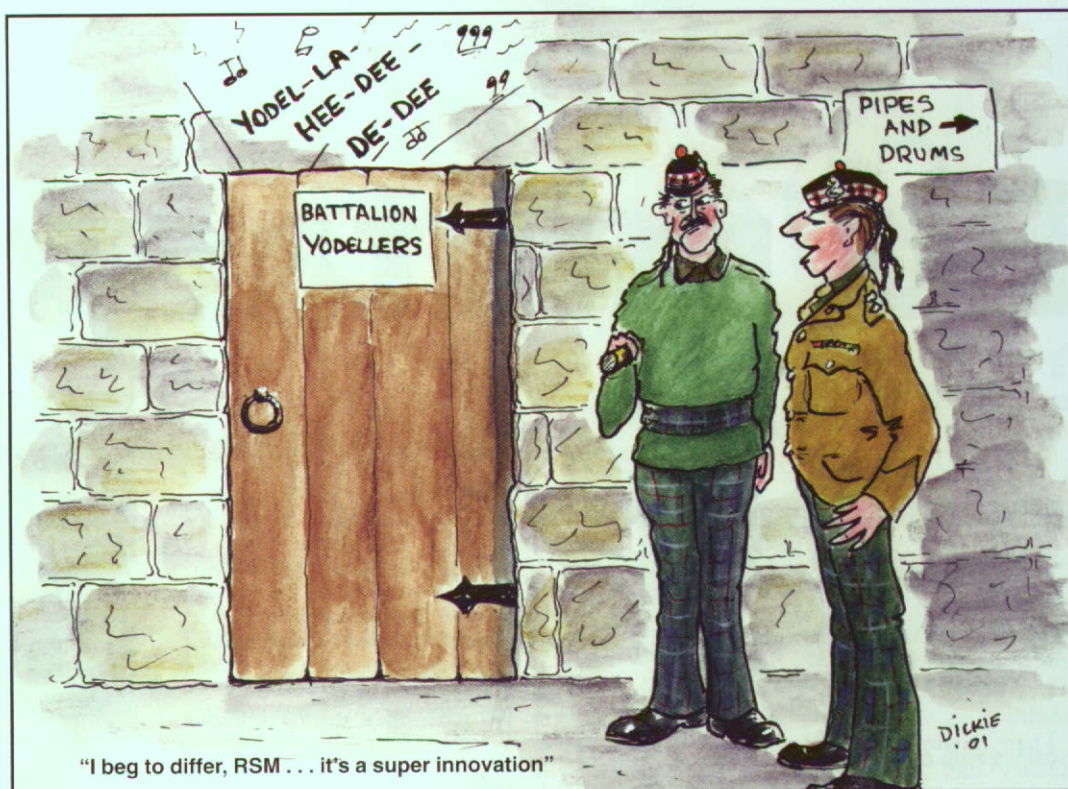


ARMY

Soldier Magazine,
Parsons House,
Ordnance Road,
Aldershot,
Hampshire, GU11 2DU.

Tel 01252 347353

Contact list: Page 70



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In this issue

We've given your award-winning magazine a new look for the new year... see Page 7



16-17 Cover story

Going up: Maj Alan Whitelaw, 2ic 1 RHF, on the Karwendel, overlooking Mittenwald in Bavaria. The battalion has a new mountain environment role

Picture: Steve Dock



Win a pair of £190 Danner Olympic boots just like Steve's

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Special report



A British major general has led a small team at the heart of the process to 'design' a military capability for the European Union

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Should British soldiers learn a foreign language?

EU military capability

A small military staff team, led by a British major general, has been at the heart of the process to design a military capability for Europe up to corps-level operations

A SMALL team under British Maj Gen Graham Messervy-Whiting set out last year to design a European Union military capability.

Their mission was to develop an EU military staff with an initial operating capacity by early 2001 and a full capability by late 2001.

They also had to draw together all aspects of the functions, size, shape, procedures and support requirements of the EU military staff.

Put simply, their brief was to design a staff capability to assist the EU Council to exercise the political control and strategic direction of what are known as Petersberg-type operations.

They fall into five main categories, on a potentially worldwide basis:

- Evacuation (normally of non-military personnel);
- Disaster relief;
- Humanitarian assistance;
- Traditional peacekeeping;
- Other types of peace-support operations.

The EU military staff will not be involved in operational-level planning. That will normally be done by national headquarters (such as PJHQ North-

wood) or by multinational HQs (such as Nato's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE)).

With 100 personnel, the EU military staff will be about half the size of Nato's international equivalent, and will include about ten from the British Armed Forces, drawn from all three Services.

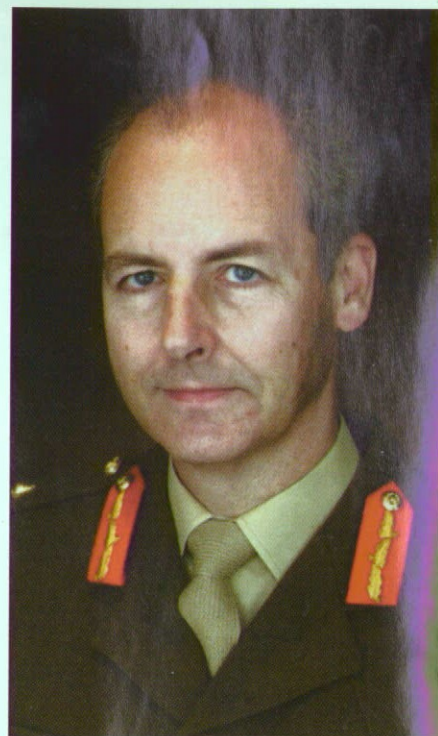
It will not compete with Nato, which would be involved in different types of operations in different places.

Working with experts from the member states and Nato, Gen Messervy-Whiting's team looked at different scenarios within the framework of Petersberg tasks to define the generic forces required to cope with them.

The general structure of what is known as the Helsinki Headline Catalogue (HHC) includes capabilities in:

- Land, sea, and air;
- Strategic transport;
- Command, control, communications, and intelligence;
- Reconnaissance and surveillance in the operational area.

Next step was for member states to make initial offers of force contributions. These were collected on a database, the Helsinki Force Catalogue (HFC), and



Front man: Maj Gen Graham Messervy-Whiting, pictured, was selected in March last year by European Union Secretary General Dr Javier Solana to head the European Union's interim military staff

compared with the Headline Catalogue.

At a conference on November 20, Defence Ministers made their official offers of forces. There were no big sur-

Helsinki goal set 2003 deadline

AT a summit in Helsinki a year ago, EU member states committed themselves to what became known as the Helsinki Headline Goal.

They set themselves a deadline of 2003 to be able to deploy rapidly and sustain forces capable of the full range of Petersberg tasks in operations up to corps-level (up to 15 brigades or 50,000-60,000 troops).

These forces would be militarily self-sustaining with the necessary command, control and intelligence capabilities, logistics, other combat

support services, and air and naval elements as required.

They would be able to deploy in full at this level within 60 days, and within this timescale be able to provide smaller rapid-response elements available and deployable at very high states of readiness.

They would have to be able to sustain a deployment for at least one year, a stipulation which would require a pool of deployable units – and supporting elements – at lower readiness to provide replacements for the initial forces.

prises; most were roughly along the lines of the provisional offers which were made previously.

For land forces, the EU team said it would probably need a total reservoir of about 21 brigades of all types to carry out the full range of Petersberg operations. Member states actually offered a pool of about 23.

Britain, as reported in *Soldier* (Dec), has made up to 12,500 troops available in addition to 18 warships and up to 72 combat aircraft.

Topics which remain to be tackled in more detail include sustainability, readiness, and logistic requirements.

Another challenge will be to fill shortfalls, mainly in the strategic area (strategic sea and air transport, strategic intelligence collection assets, command and control assets) as well as in the tactical

field, which includes combat search-and-rescue, suppression of enemy air defence, precision-guided munitions to limit collateral damage at the upper end of the Petersberg spectrum, and medical capabilities for humanitarian operations at the other end.

Members also presented a list of national and multinational plans and projects which may help fill some of the gaps.

Work will go on to identify other ways to plug the holes, such as refining national contributions, contracting from commercial sources and turning to Nato assets and capabilities.

Although the European Union should be able to conduct the full range of Petersberg tasks by its target date of 2003, a number of capabilities, both in quality and quantity, need to be improved to fully achieve the intent of the Headline Goal.

What?
When?
How?

Quick questions, short answers

Are we creating a European Army?

No. It's a menu of quick-reaction forces from which we could draw for a particular Petersberg-type operation.

Is the EU going to be a competitor to Nato?

No. The EU will be using only a well-defined set of quick-reaction forces to do mainly different sorts of things in different sorts of places.

Will there be additional exercise commitments?

Not as far as troops on the ground are concerned. There will be some additional exercises over the next few years but these will be mainly to practise ambassadors and generals in crisis-management procedures.

Existing and planned national exercises involving troops may also be adapted to take account of an EU dimension.

Will we all have to speak a foreign language?

No. Inside our units, we will all be using our mother tongues.

Will we lose our cap badges?

No. As in Nato, we may well wear EU name badges in headquarters and EU shoulder flashes, in due course, in the field.

Did you know?

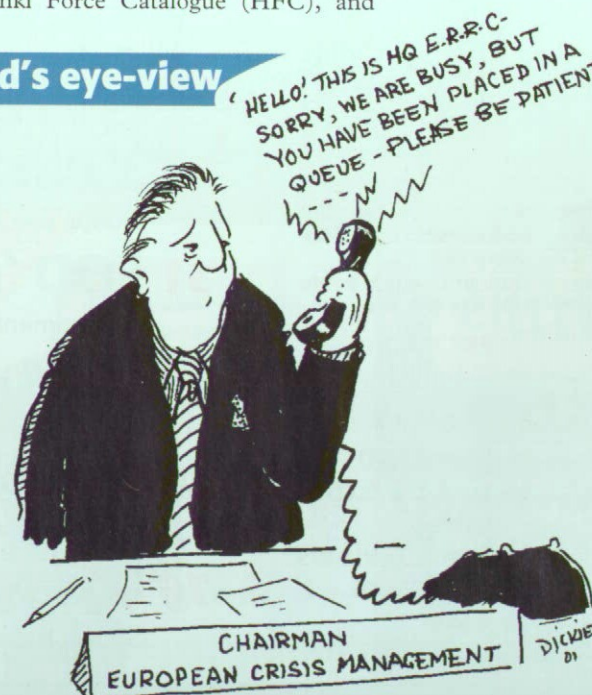
The main institutions of the EU are the:

- European Council
- The Council, supported by the Secretary General/High Representative (currently Dr Javier Solana, former Secretary General of Nato) and his team
- Commission
- European Parliament
- Court of Auditors
- Court of Justice

The European Council is the highest body in the EU and consists of heads of state or government of the member states and the President of the Commission. Normally, it meets at the end of each six-monthly presidency.

The Council is the EU's decision-making body.

Bird's eye-view



As Chip sees it - Page 19

How does the US feel about the EU's military plans?

BILL COHEN, Defense Secretary in the outgoing administration, has made clear his fundamental support for the European Defence initiative.

Speaking in Brussels, he said he wanted it done in a way that strengthened Nato.

Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon responded: "We are determined to strengthen the European pillar of the Alliance in order to strengthen Nato as a whole. This is in the interests of Nato, of Europe and of the United Kingdom."

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New year, new look

WE have made a few changes in this issue of *Soldier*, freshening-up the design and re-grouping some of the content into colour-coded sections.

Our new Update section, from this page to Page 15, brings you up to speed on the news that's important to you, illustrated with the month's best photographs. We also continue keep you in the picture on what is being said and written about the Army in Parliament and the press, now in two separate columns – Under Big Ben and Paper Talk.

TALKBACK

Our editorial comment, *Soldier* to soldier, moves from Page 3 to a new Talkback section (Pages 67-70), where it joins Home Truths from Sue Bonney; the soldiers' opinion survey, Vox pop; and your letters.

We have added to our armoury of incisive cartoonists by recruiting the popular Piscator, who takes up a new slot (Page 67) on the Mail pages in association with an Army Benevolent Fund competition.

COMPETITIONS

Meanwhile, Freeze-frame, our challenge to humorous caption-writers, moves to a new Competitions page (Page 45) which it shares with Frank Finch's ever-popular £100 teaser, How Observant Are You?

The *Soldier* Sport section (Pages 38-43) continues to bring you by far the best and most comprehensive Army coverage; Update Extra (Pages 56-59) includes the Diary and Museum features, as well as an expanded Bulletin Board; and Books and Wheels join up to kick off a new Leisure section (Pages 61-63).

The aim is to make the magazine voted the best in its class in Britain in 2000 even more reader-friendly in 2001. Happy New Year!



Picture: Sgt Richard Dawson RLC

Farewell: The Army's last Challenger 1 main battle tank leaves the Tidworth camp of The King's Royal Hussars on its way to Marchwood Military Port, from where it will be shipped to Jordan. The tank entered service in 1983 during the height of the Cold War and

quickly became the heavyweight workhorse of the British Army of the Rhine. It proved itself to be a battie-winner in the Gulf in 1991, provided reassurance to British troops in the Balkans and spearheaded Nato's entry into Kosovo. The KRH is to convert to Challenger 2.

Courts-martial role for WOs in new Bill

CHANGES to the procedures for the trial and punishment of offences under the Service Discipline Acts are proposed in the Armed Forces Bill outlined in the Queen's Speech.

They include extending the scope for dealing summarily with offences allegedly committed by officers and extending eligibility for courts-martial membership to warrant officers.

Main purpose of the Bill is to renew the Army and Air Force Acts 1955 and the Naval Discipline Act 1957 for a further five years, but the five-yearly Bill also gives Parliament an opportunity to update Services' legislation.

Proposals in the Bill, which would bring Service procedures more closely into line with those in the civilian system, include allowing the Attorney General to ask a higher court to review court martial sentences that seem too lenient, a process already available in respect of crown court sentences; clarifying the powers of Service

courts to compel the production of evidence or the attendance of witnesses; and creating a power for Service courts to make orders as to costs.

Also significant will be the establishment of procedures for the exercise of powers of entry and seizure in the course of investigations under the Service Discipline Acts.

Other changes under the Bill will include allowing warrant officers to sit on courts-martial, where the accused is of subordinate rank; introducing powers to allow testing for alcohol or drugs after accidents in Service environments; and seeking secondary legislation which would help Service procedures to keep in step with future, relevant changes in the civilian criminal justice system.

Another main change will be an extension of the jurisdiction of the MoD Police to increase their ability to assist the civilian police. Following a First Reading in December, it is hoped the Bill will become law later this year.

● Parliamentary digest – Page 12

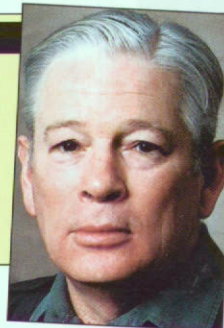
IN BRIEF

● Marshal Igor Sergeyev, the Russian Defence Minister, and Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon signed a programme of co-operation during the marshal's visit to the UK.

● Marconi has been chosen as the preferred supplier for the Army's **Bowman** personal role radio, which, to speed delivery, has

been separated from the main Bowman requirement. The radio should be in service by the end of the year.

● Lt Gen Alistair Irwin, late Black Watch, right, succeeded Lt Gen Sir Hew Pike as General



Officer Commanding Northern Ireland on December 6. Gen Pike has retired after 40 years' service.

● Sappers from 516 Specialist Team RE, based at Chilwell, provided fuel to keep the RAF airborne during an exercise in Cyprus.

Corimec blaze highlights fire hazard facing Bosnia troops

A FIREMAN, below, kicks in the door of a Corimec unit, similar to those used by Servicemen in the Balkans as temporary accommodation, during a safety trial at Banja Luka, Bosnia.



Three recent fire incidents at the Banja Luka Metal Factory base used by the British-led Multinational Division (South West) had convinced Col Simon Hall, Deputy Commander British Forces, that the demonstration was essential. It took just six minutes for the Corimec to become a cauldron of heat and poisonous smoke, highlighting the need for urgent action if a fire is discovered.

John Simons, Fire Services Assistant Divisional Officer at Banja Luka, said a number of incidents in England had involved polyurethane foam panels, of which Corimecs are constructed. None of the units in use by British forces in the Balkans had been fire-tested.

"We tried to convey the dangers that exist if a Corimec catches fire," he said. "Particularly from the thick, toxic smoke, which will kill you if you inhale it."

He said the smoke detector would sound 30 seconds after the fire had started. "If you respond quickly enough you will survive. Get out and get the fire brigade out, and make sure everyone in close proximity to the fire has been warned," he said.

Driving force . . .



Hotseat: Defence Secretary **Geoff Hoon** samples the driving seat of a Challenger 2 of Senelager-based The Queen's Royal Hussars during a visit to Germany. Picture: Sgt Giles Penfound

Swords of honour mark British Army's humanitarian effort in Balkans



Picture: Steve Dock

Take one: Maj Mark Baines, R Signals, and members of 101 Logistic Brigade HQ and Signal Squadron, parade at Aldershot with the Wilkinson Sword of Peace special award presented to them in recognition of their humanitarian work among refugees during the early stages

of the Kosovo crisis. The presentation was made to Maj Baines, officer commanding the squadron, by Procurement Minister Baroness Symons.

Brig Malcolm Wood, commander 101 Log Brigade, said the unit's efforts had prevented an even greater catastrophe.



Picture: North News, Middlesbrough

Take two: Lt Col Mike Griffiths, commanding officer of The 1st Battalion, The King's Own Royal Border Regiment, proudly displays the two Wilkinson Swords of Peace which the battalion has won during a presentation parade at Boulton Barracks at Catterick. The unprecedented second

award to 1 KORBR, announced in *Soldier* (October), was in recognition of its work in Macedonia during the refugee crisis in 1999. Lt Col Griffiths said the Sword of Peace was a fitting tribute to the efforts of his soldiers. The battalion has recently returned from another tour in the Balkans.

Services could get rail compensation

SERVICE personnel whose travel has been disrupted by the current difficulties on UK railways may be able to claim compensation for the MoD.

Claims should be submitted by travel co-ordinators to the rail operating companies if they failed to provide a service during the exceptional disruption between October 15 and November 11.

Claims outside that period may also be valid. Claims should always be made if first-class seats are not available for individuals holding first-class tickets.

Successful claims will be credited to units. Details are set out in DCI Gen 117/00. For further advice, contact the Defence Transport and Movements Agency on Andover Mil (94391) 5464.

Posted? Have an extra day off on the Army

IN A move designed to reduce the turbulence faced by Army families moving between theatres, eligibility for a day's relocation leave has been extended to personnel posted within the UK, with effect from January 1. It will be an automatic part of posting orders, so that all personnel – including singles – will report on a Tuesday.

The relocation day, which will not be deducted from the individual's annual leave allowance, is regarded as a mandatory minimum, although commanders have discretion to grant additional leave.

IN BRIEF

- A specialist tri-Service team from the Joint Air Transport Evaluation Unit (JATEU), RAF Brize Norton, helped recover a Royal Navy Merlin helicopter which crashed into the sea near the Isle of Skye in October. Parts of the fuselage had been washed ashore onto a small island inaccessible to anything other than a helicopter.

- Six soldiers from York-based 2 Signal Regiment at Imphal Barracks completed eight basic physical fitness assessment tests in 24 hours to raise £1,000 for MENCAP, one of the Lord Mayor of York's chosen charities.

- A £100 million contract for the Cor-

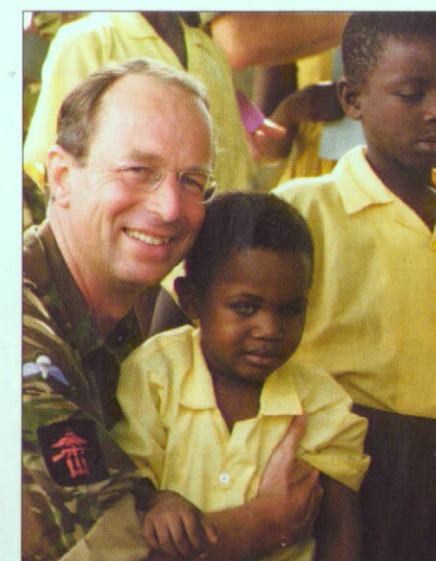
Sierra Leone commander befriends blind children

BRIG David Richards, commander of British Forces in Sierra Leone, has visited the Milton Magrai School for the Blind, close to defence headquarters in Freetown.

Brig Richards has shown a keen interest in supporting the school, which provides education for more than 100 children born blind or blinded by Sierra Leone's civil war.

The school, which teaches its pupils to read and type in brail, is in urgent need of support to continue its work.

Meanwhile, the number of British troops in the country is being reduced from more than 600 to about 400 (see Parliamentary column, Page 12).



Support: Brig Richards Picture: Sgt Shaun Lewis

CENSUS: Contact numbers for jobs with the national census on April 29 are 0845 306 2001 for England and Wales, and 0131 314 4279 or 4324 for Scotland.

morant advanced communications network has been awarded to Nortel Networks GPS(D) of Newport, Wales.

The air transportable system will be used by the Joint Rapid Reaction Force for command and control over Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force units deployed anywhere in the world.

- Gen Sir Mike Jackson, C-in-C Land Command, has congratulated the Services following the training of 1,000 Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force personnel to drive civilian tankers in the eight weeks before an anticipated fuel strike in November. As the threat of action receded, the military stood down.

Have case, will travel

Another in our series looking at what occupies TA soldiers when they're not in uniform

STORIES highlighting the number of illegal immigrants and asylum seekers entering Britain are a staple diet of the media, writes **Ray Routledge**.

So what happens to those who have to be repatriated? Jenny Smith, a major in the Territorial Army, knows part of the story because in civvy street she escorts them back to where they came from.

Maj Smith joined the TA in 1990. She served in the Gulf in her professional capacity as a nurse, and later with 220 Field Ambulance in Maidstone, before transferring to the training team at Shorncliffe, near Folkestone, where she works as an instructor. She found time to serve in Bosnia for nine months during 1999, working with media ops units in Split and Banja Luka.

Her civvy nursing career took an upward turn when she moved out of the operating theatre to work in air ambulances, flying injured and ill British holidaymakers home from all over the world.

Caught by the travel bug, she changed careers and has for the past four years flown the globe for a small Aldershot-based company with a Home Office contract to escort detainees for repatriation.

Things can move fast so she has to be ready to fly at two hours' notice.

"Most of those we escort are illegal immigrants or failed asylum-seekers," she explained. "They've arrived in the UK to claim asylum but the tribunals have found against them. Illegal immigrants are usually those who have arrived with false passports."

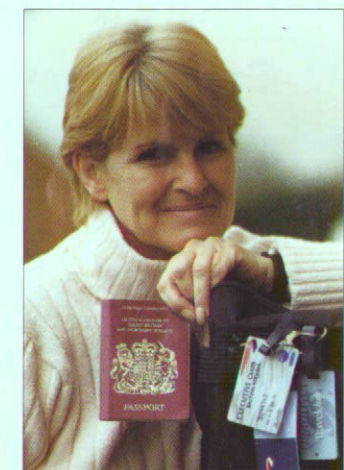
Whatever the reason for repatriation, when detainees are returned home they have to be escorted by at least two people. "Often we arrive in a country, hand over the person, and depending on the flight plans, fly straight back on the same aircraft," she said.

The job is not without its difficulties. Spitting, biting and verbal abuse come with the territory and she is trained in control and restraint.

"We like to try to build a rapport with people first. We are there to help them, not to cause them bother. The TA training helps, particularly in talking to people and controlling situations. And my medical background helps, too."

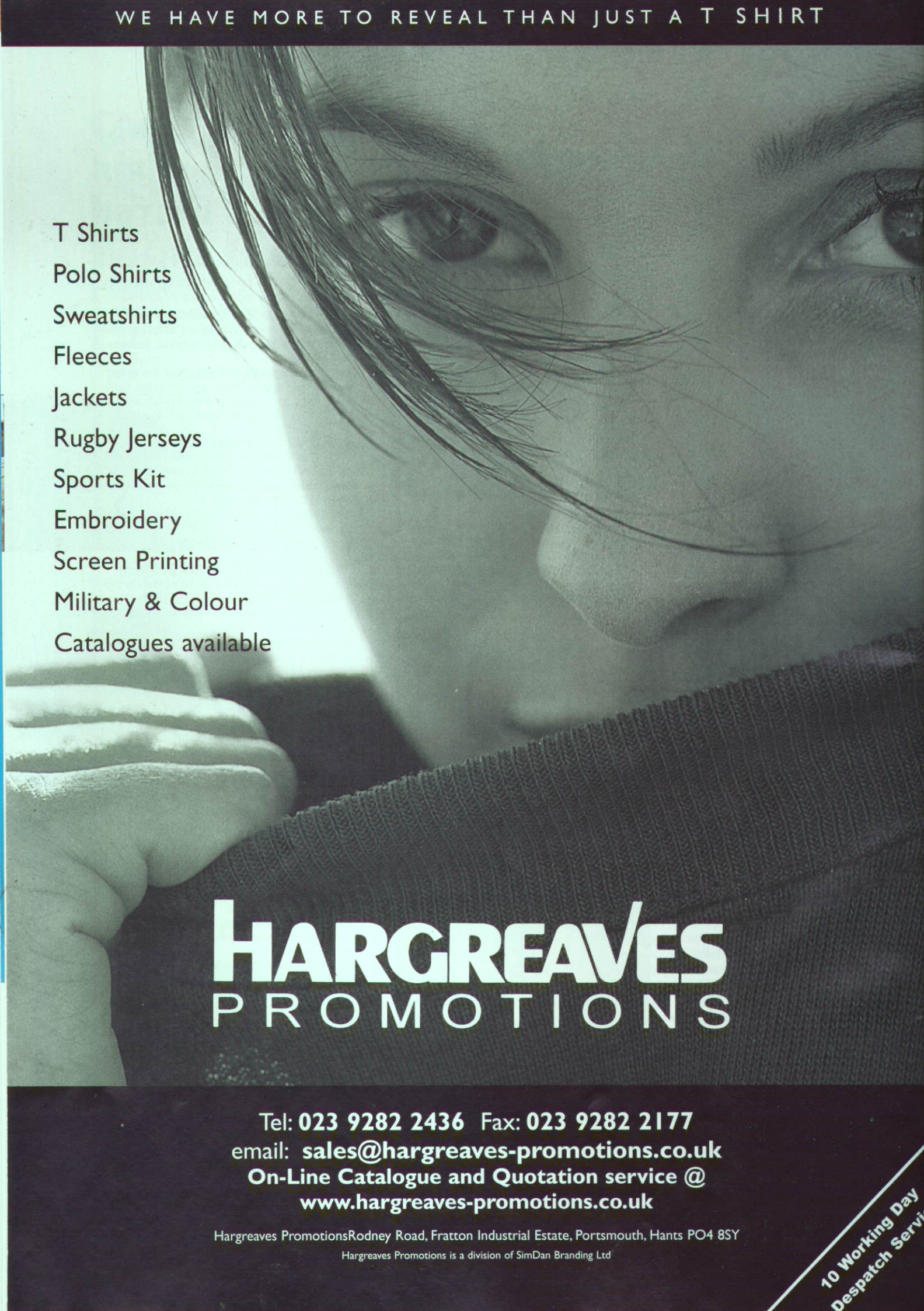
As for her future in the TA, she's content to stay put. "I am really happy and plan to finish my career with the training team," she said.

Calling TA soldiers: If you have an unusual civvy job we'd like to hear from you.



Ready for the off: Maj Jenny Smith

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10 Working Day
Despatch Service

**Lee's richer ...
and healthier**



Picture: Steve Dock

It's worth giving up: Capt Lee Hendricks receives a cheque for £1,000 from Doreen McIntyre, chief executive of the national No Smoking Day campaign. He was entered in the Army's no-smoking drive last March by his fiancée, Liz, and succeeded in quitting completely.

Liz gave up at the same time and the couple used the money to pay for their wed-

ding in Sri Lanka just before Christmas. The "Quit and Win" campaign is held every two years, so the next one will be run on March 14, 2002. It will build on the success of the 2000 push.

Any units who would like details of the Army's No Smoking Day 2001 should get in touch with Lt Col Ricky Bhabutta on Aldershot Mil (94222) 5337 or civ 01252 340337.

Bulford honours Kiwi connection

AN annual march-and-shoot competition staged by a Bulford-based unit keeps alive the memory of Kiwi soldiers stationed in the area during the First World War.

Troops from 249 Signal Squadron (Allied Command Europe Mobile Land Force) compete for the Kiwi Trophy, a wood carving of the bird presented to the squadron by the New Zealand Army in 1981.

A giant outline of a kiwi cut into the chalky side of a hill above Bulford Camp is maintained by soldiers from 249 Squadron.

Traditionally the trophy is awarded to the winner by a member of the New Zealand High Commission, and this year the Defence Attaché, Brig Rick Ottoway, did the honours. While in Bulford he col-



On target: Winning time for Cpl Shaun Keightley

lected a few pieces of chalk from the hillside kiwi to take home with him. "I suspect my grandfather was one of the soldiers who chipped away at it all those years ago," he said.

His grandfather, Pte Richard Finn, of the 1st Battalion, The Canterbury Regiment, was based there at the end of the war.

Every member of the squadron has to compete, tabbing 22km with a 30lb pack and firing ten shots on the range. Each dropped shot

invokes a time penalty. Heavy rain had made the course hard-going. Cpl Shaun Keightley REME, from the squadron's light aid detachment, finished in 2hr 30min 27sec to win the coveted kiwi. Although not the fastest, he made up time by hitting the target with every shot.

Utility sappers show versatility

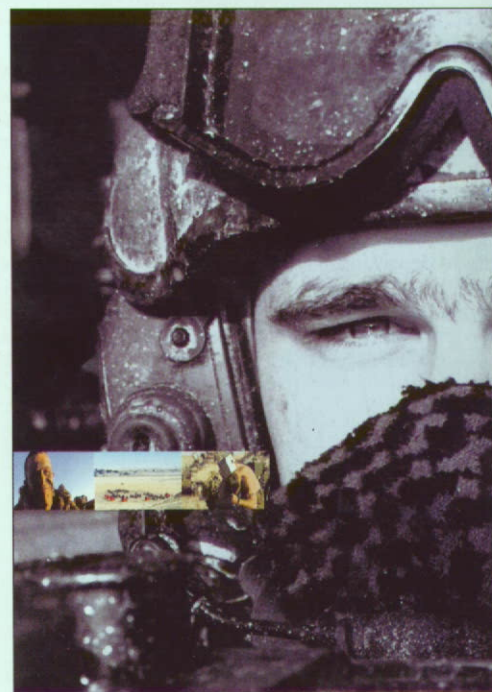
UTILITIES specialists recruited from industry refurbished a pipeline, removed redundant fuel tanks and made improvements to a sullage plant in Gibraltar during their first technical training camp.

The 22 Territorial Army soldiers, all serving with the newly-formed 509 Specialist Team Royal Engineers Utilities – 509 STRE Uty for short – work for major UK companies involved in oil, gas, water, power generation and engineering.

Tasks facing 509 include the design and build of a 250m-lift permanent water supply to an observation post and electrical upgrading work for the United Nations in Cyprus.

● A two-man team from 1 KOSB won Cyprus's Exercise Trackmaster 2000 driving and navigation event in competition with 14 other Service entries.

Here comes Charlie ...



One to watch: Units should by now have received the latest **Charlie Charlie One** video, which features Exercise Iron Eagle at BATUS, Canada, three Paras involved in the rescue of hostages in Sierra Leone, plus a round-up of Army sport and news.

And there is also a competition to win an Army mountain bike by answering three questions arising from the video. Answers have to be with SO3 DCC(A), Room 0368, MoD Main Building, London SW1A 2HB by February 28. Your answers may also be posted on the **Charlie Charlie One** page of the Army website, found at www.army.mod.uk



Under Big Ben

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

Drive to upgrade families' housing

IN its drive to modernise Service families' accommodation in the UK, the Defence Housing Executive is on target to complete 30,000 upgrades to standard 1 at a cost of about £68 million this financial year.

The DHE aims to bring most of its core housing stock up to the standard required within five years, and Defence Under-Secretary Dr Lewis Moonie said he would strive to accelerate this programme.

"I have recently seen accommodation in some barracks in which I was ashamed to think of our Armed Forces personnel being housed," he told MPs.

● See DHE update in the next issue

Flood aid: Between October 30 and November 14, members of the Armed Forces from 60 units provided help for flood victims across the United Kingdom.

Porton Down: The MoD intends to approach "with openness and a commitment to dialogue" claims of Porton Down volunteers who say their participation in nuclear and biological testing left them in ill-health. Any information which may be of help to the volunteers will be made available and full co-operation will be given to an ongoing Wiltshire Police inquiry into trials.

Medical Services: The MoD has joined forces with the NHS to help bolster recruitment into the Defence Medical Services.

Dr Moonie said: "A joint steering group has been established by the MoD and the Department of Health, with the Scottish Executive and the Wales Office also represented. Its work includes matters such as future manpower planning and the recruiting of reserve medical personnel."

Sierra Leone: The number of British Service personnel deployed in Sierra Leone will be significantly reduced when the current hand-over from the joint task force HQ to 1 Mechanized Brigade HQ is complete. The figure is expected to fall from 600 to just over 400.

Fewer positive: In a written answer, Armed Forces Minister John Spellar said 522 Army personnel, and not the 580 he first stated, tested positive for controlled drugs between January and mid-October last year.

Mine expense: The Defence Evaluation and Research Agency (DERA) has spent about £13 million on mine detection techniques over the past six years. There are three applied research technology demonstrators: the Advanced Hand-Held Mine Detector (AHMD), the Mine Detection, Neutralisation and Route-Marking System (MINDER), and the Remote Minefield Detection System (REMIDS).

Warrior fleet put on go-slow after drive-line failure

FOLLOWING several track drive-line failures, restrictions have been imposed on units using the Army's Warrior infantry fighting vehicles.

They include a ban on Warrior movements on public roads except for direct crossings and a maximum speed limit of 30kph, reduced to 5kph when the vehicles are close to dismounted troops. Special care has to be taken in route-selection and visual checks by REME specialists are having to be made every 250km.

The failures, which have resulted in total loss of power and braking to the left-hand track, do not appear to be related to usage. While work goes on to establish a cause, the procurement of a new drive-line is being investigated.

It is estimated that it would take four months to produce, followed by a four-month fitting period. In operational



Picture: Steve Dock

Restrictions: Army's Warrior infantry fighting vehicle areas the restrictions are for guidance only, and the vehicle will continue to be used at the discretion of commanders.

The Warrior, which is armed with a 30mm Rarden cannon, has been regarded as an outstanding success since it replaced the Army's FV432 fleet during the 1990s, winning its spurs during the Gulf War and giving British troops protection against mines and small-arms fire during the early years of the crisis in Bosnia.

Students dig Army

● The British Army marched into seventh place in a list of the top 100 graduate employers published by *The Times*. The Royal Navy was 45th and the Royal Air Force 33rd. Most of those ahead of the Army were big hitters in the City, while Coca-Cola brought up the rear in 100th place.

Tidworth Staffords

● SIX hundred soldiers of the 1st Battalion, The Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's) have moved into Moolton Barracks, Tidworth, from their previous base at Tern Hill in Shropshire. The Staffords, part of 12 Mechanized Brigade, are converting to an armoured infantry role with Warrior.

TV show wants soldiers for £1m South China Sea castaway show

SERVING and ex-Service personnel are being invited to audition for a TV show that intends to maroon 16 "castaways" on an uninhabited island in the South China Sea and let them compete against each other. The winner will walk away with £1 million. *Survivor* will demand physical

and mental toughness, with the competitors expected to catch their own food, build their own shelter and create order in their own society.

To apply, visit the website www.itv-survivor.co.uk, but you will need to hurry because entries close on January 5.

IN BRIEF

● In an unusual church service, Alder-shot-based 12 Mechanized Brigade was dedicated to God in the Royal Garrison Church of All Saints. To mark the occasion, Brig John Cooper, the brigade commander, presented a new Common Worship Service Book to the senior brigade chaplain, the Rev Peter Vickers.



January 2001 SOLDIER



Helping hands: Cpl Calum Macleod, left, and CSM Steven Hardcastle of the 1st Battalion, The King's Own Scottish Borderers, currently based in Cyprus, put a seriously injured Bedouin child on the road to recovery during a four-week exercise in Jordan.

They were flagged down in the desert about 100 miles south of Amman by a

family whose baby had suffered crippling leg burns which had become infected, threatening the child's life. The two KOSB soldiers gave first aid and dressed the wound, then returned repeatedly to the Bedouin campsite over the following two weeks to encourage the infant's recovery and leave dressings for the family to use.

Picture: Cpl Julie Timbrell

Londoners on peace mission dodge bears

MORE than 300 part-time soldiers from London on a two-week charm offensive in Romania had to learn to cope with potentially dangerous wild bears while on exercise.

A feature of the areas where they exercised are bear-infested mountains and guards had to be posted to watch out for them and for wolves.

The British troops were warned of the threat posed by bears and told how to deal with them. One soldier returned to his basha to find it had been ripped to pieces, his rations eaten and his sleeping bag removed. He later saw a bear dragging it into the forest.

The Territorial Army personnel of The London Regiment attracted huge interest as they completed a programme of diplomatic and local visits designed

to establish links and build on Europe's peace initiatives in former Eastern Bloc countries.

The Londoners also took advantage of Romania's first-class military facilities, including realistic battle training in the east of the country. Good relationships were forged as the Londoners tried out Romanian Army weapons, armoured vehicles and tanks.

Their musicians were treated like pop stars when they toured eastern Romania and Bucharest, drawing large audiences for public concerts and visits to schools and hospitals.

Lt Col Nigel Easton, commanding officer of the regiment, said: "This visit was all about cooperation for peace. We were eager to come here and were made very welcome by everyone we met."

● During its first six-week deployment in Kosovo, the Mineseeker Airship, pictured left, surveyed 30 mine sites in all parts of the country. It produced 60 hours of video and 500 still photos for analysis by the UN Mine Action Co-ordination Centre in Pristina.

● A policy which meets the full range of

military insurance needs, including replacement of military kit on a new for old basis, has been launched by Wilsons, part of the Hogg Robinson group. The Right Dress Advantage package covers accidental damage worldwide as well as household goods and personal effects and clothing. Additional features include travel cover.

Wiltshire alert



To you: Soldiers based at Tidworth and Bulford move hundreds of sandbags to protect houses in the area after days of heavy rain raised the prospect of serious flooding along the Bourne and Avon rivers. Troops were called out to defend properties at Tidworth, Shipton Bellinger and Cholderton, filling sandbags around the clock and pumping out houses.

SSgt Ashley Fuller of 22 Engineer Regiment, which controlled the operation, said the troops had filled 2,000 sandbags. Picture: Sgt Richard Dawson

Quality starts here



Going up: Maj Gen Tim Sullivan, GOC 4th Division, joins Kier Build Ltd managing director Roger Sallis to unveil the foundation stone of New Mons Barracks, a £40-million development off Queens Avenue in the centre of Aldershot Garrison. Scheduled to be ready by the end of May 2002, it will probably house a mechanized battalion. The new buildings, which will feature much-needed quality living accommodation for single soldiers, will be constructed on the site of the former Mons Barracks.

Picture: Graeme Main

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Goodbye to all that: Another chapter in Northern Ireland's military history closed with the departure of the last soldier from the former Army base at Long Kesh Camp. RQMS (WO2) Eric Burnett of the 1st Battalion, The Highlanders, currently attached to the 9th Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment, locks the gates for the final time before handing over the keys to civilian contractors. Demolition of the Army base, near the former Maze prison, has begun.

Sappers' cross is tribute to cardinal

SAPPERS from Cambridge-based 48 Field Squadron (Air Support) constructed a Millennium Cross on the piazza outside Westminster Cathedral.

The engineers used a crane to erect the six-ton cross, a memorial to the late Cardinal Basil Hume, in three days. Measuring 50ft in height, the cross was a millennium creation inspired by Cardinal Hume.

It will stand outside Westminster Cathedral for the next two years before being moved to a permanent site.

Maj Stuart Morgan, officer commanding 48 Field Squadron, said: "The cross is made of solid steel, clad in English oak. It's a wonderful edifice and it was a great honour for the squadron to be involved in its construction."

All fired up

First with the latest: Sgt Chris Chadwick, pictured left, was one of a party of six members of The Royal Yeomanry to become the first Territorial Army soldiers to fire Challenger 2 as part of their training to become reserve gunners and loaders for the six Regular Challenger 2 regiments. The part-timers, from C (KSY) Squadron in Croydon and S (SRY) Squadron in Nottingham, and led by regimental 2ic Maj Guy Bonser, completed the training with C and D Squadrons of The Queen's Royal Lancers at Hohnes Ranges.



Oxford's royal opening

THE Queen has opened Falklands House, the new £2.6 million home for officer cadets of the Royal Navy Unit, Officers' Training Corps and the University Air Squadron at Oxford University. Escorted by the commanding officer, Lt Col Alexander Matheson, she met many of the cadets who will use the joint Service facility, the only one of its kind in the country.

Paper talk

What the Press has been saying

● A tenth of Britain's Servicemen, the equivalent of 20 Army battalions, are unfit for frontline duty amid a crisis in the Defence Medical Services, according to MoD statistics. — *Daily Telegraph*

● Since 1998 the MoD has paid out more than £20 million in compensation to 191 members of the Armed Forces, more than £1,500 a year for each doctor employed in the Defence Medical Services. The total has trebled since 1997 and is now six times higher than in the National Health Service, which last year paid out £2,000 per doctor. — *Observer*

● A leaked MoD policy document details a new offensive against domestic attacks. It follows criticism that the Forces have not taken the problem seriously. — *Sunday Telegraph*

● Prince William is to be asked to join the Welsh Guards after winning the respect of the regiment's soldiers during a jungle training course in Belize. — *Mail on Sunday*

● Nearly 500 Communist spies penetrated British and Nato forces in Germany during the 1980s, newly-discovered documents have revealed. — *Daily Mail*

● Awarding up to 200,000 civil servants with a medal to mark the Queen's forthcoming golden jubilee, to be handed out in 2002, has caused such controversy that the Home Office, which is masterminding the celebrations, is having second thoughts. — *Independent on Sunday*

● Under MoD proposals, the Army's training area at Warcop, Cumbria, will effectively be closed to the public for much of the year and the grazing rights of local commoners revoked, ending a farming tradition that dates back to the mid-18th century. — *Independent on Sunday*

● Gurkha soldiers who survived the horrors of Japanese PoW camps are being denied Government compensation worth £10,000 each. The Defence ministry has made it clear the Gurkhas were technically Indian Army units at the time. — *Mirror*

● British peacekeeping soldiers face a second bleak winter in Kosovo as temperatures plummet to minus 15C and the UN-administered province grapples with severe shortages of electrical power and water. — *Times*

● Hard-up Palace guards are illegally working as part-time bouncers and bodyguards to make ends meet. Others are driving cabs and some have been forced to sell valuables to buy essentials. — *Sun*

Men of the mountain

Light infantry battalions with an environmental specialisation are no longer a concept... they are with us now. Which is why soldiers of 1 RHF have been to the mountains

Report: Ray Routledge
Pictures: Steve Dock

A SOLDIER grits his teeth as his fingers claw across solid rock, seeking a handhold. He hauls himself upwards as the already bitter cold of an oncoming Alpine winter seeks out his hands and face.

Adventurous training? No. This is warfare training, part of a new way of doing business for one part of the British Army.

Evidence of a different role for a light infantry battalion was to be found in southern Bavaria during the autumn as soldiers from the Inverness-based 1st Battalion, The Royal Highland Fusiliers took to the mountains around the German town of Mittenwald, a few miles from the Austrian border.

Their change of role comes after several years based in Fallingbommel, from where the battalion made four operational tours to the Balkans and spent a season at the British Army Training Unit, Suffield (BATU) in Canada.

Now 1 RHF has been tasked as the Army's "difficult and arduous terrain specialists"... and that means mountains. Preliminary training opened a new chapter in Anglo-German co-operation, culminating in Exercise Mittenwald Mountaineer, during which 130 men of the RHF were hosted by Mittenwald-based 233 Battalion of the German Gebirgs Jaeger, recognised masters of mountain warfare.

RHF skills were honed on the Alpine slopes of the Karwendel range, under the helpful tutelage of *berg fñhers*, or

- Mittenwald lies on the road from Munich to Innsbruck, just inside the German border. Popular with tourists both in summer and winter, it a garrison town for mountain troops with three barracks built in 1935, two in the valley, and the winter combat school on the Luttensee.
- Mittenwald stands beneath the Karwendel, an 18km chain of mountain peaks rising to 2,385m.
- The nearby winter ski resort of Garmisch-Partenkirchen hosted the 1936 Winter Olympic Games and boasts Germany's highest mountain, the Zugspitze.

mountain leaders, from the German unit.

Every soldier was given individual coaching in the use of specialised equipment and personal safety.

The battalion's new mountain role was welcomed by the commanding officer, Lt Col Davey Kirk.

"About a year ago the Director of Infantry had an aspiration for tagging light-role battalions with an environmental specialisation. There would be experts in the jungle, experts in the desert, and in our case, experts in the mountains."

With its new focus, 1 RHF has become the 1st (UK) Division's manoeuvre support environmental specialists in mountain warfare.

As the concept was new, there were no training guidelines for the fusiliers, so they designed their own and set their own objectives in a package they hope to hand on to future mountain warfare-designated units.

"The structure is based on three levels of expertise in the battalion," explained Lt



Rock face: Fus Robert McBride, left, and Fus Steven Christie search for handholds during their mountain warfare training in Bavaria

Col Kirk. "We have ten infantry mountain instructors (IMIs); 40 infantry mountain leaders (IMLs) and 100 infantry mountain soldiers (IMS) who trained in the Scottish Highlands."

Under the conversion package, 40 IMLs went through a four-week mountain course in Scotland, including a week at the Joint Services Mountain Training Wing at Ballachulish. Officers and senior NCOs spent a study week in the Torridon Hills.

There is a long way to go. For now Lt Col Kirk has only eight IMLs. "What I would really like to have is eight *berg fñher* equivalents. They would become the nucleus of our mountain warfare capability.

"Mountain training is not just about technique, it's about experience. You have to experience the terrain in different types of weather conditions."

The tactical aspiration is for the battalion to have a support company, three rifle companies and a specialist high mountain platoon to undertake the initial climb,

putting in fixed lines, ropes and pulleys. The rifle companies, in harness, would follow, every soldier clipping himself to the fixed lines and hauling himself into position for the assault.

While the company commander would generate a tactical plan, it could be an experienced mountaineer corporal who

Austrians, as well as from the mountain rescue teams at RAF Kinloss, the Joint Services Mountain Training Centre, and the British Alpine Centre in Bavaria," he said.

"Collectively we now think of ourselves as a mountain battalion."

The role offers potential for exchanges. "Three officers and senior NCOs completed their military mountain guides course with the Austrian Army and a major is learning French before joining the 27th Chasser Alpins in Annecy in the French Alps for eight months."

The battalion has places on an Austrian Army exercise in April and is hosting a company from the German Army at Inverness as well as a French Army platoon. An RHF company will be spending time with the French.

"In two years we should have a very solid, experienced base and I think we will be able to undertake an impressive battalion exercise," said Lt Col Kirk.

"We are in the business of delivering a military capability and we are taking it seriously."

If you saw them on the side of an Alpine mountain, you won't doubt that for a second.

6 Many of his soldiers were natural rock monkeys, others more nervous 9

would make the decision over the terrain and the route.

At evening debriefs during the exercise, junior NCOs were encouraged to put their views forward. Everyone was learning. It is a new culture and "think mountain battalion" was being hammered home.

Lt Col Kirk said many of his soldiers were natural rock monkeys, others more nervous. "When we identify the nervous ones we go to work on their confidence."

"We have had tremendous assistance from the Germans, the French and the



Mountain leader: Lt Col Davey Kirk faces a fresh challenge

Snow patrol: Fus Billy Semple treks through the snow and ice of the Bavarian Alps



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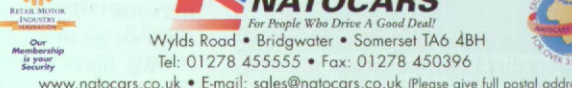


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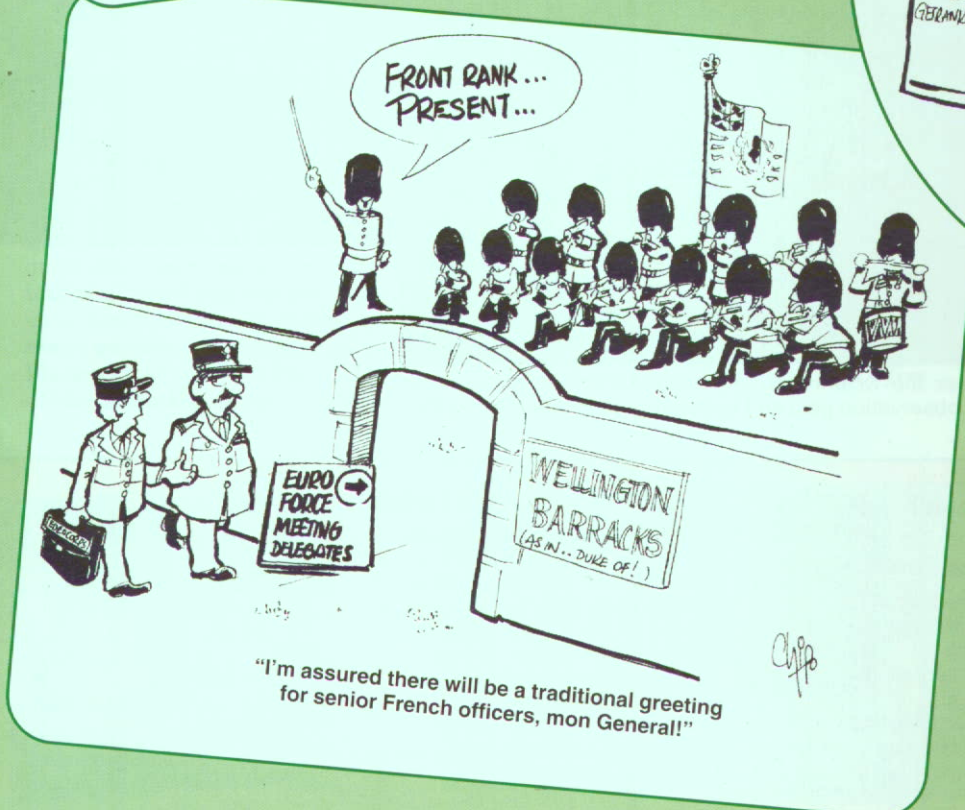
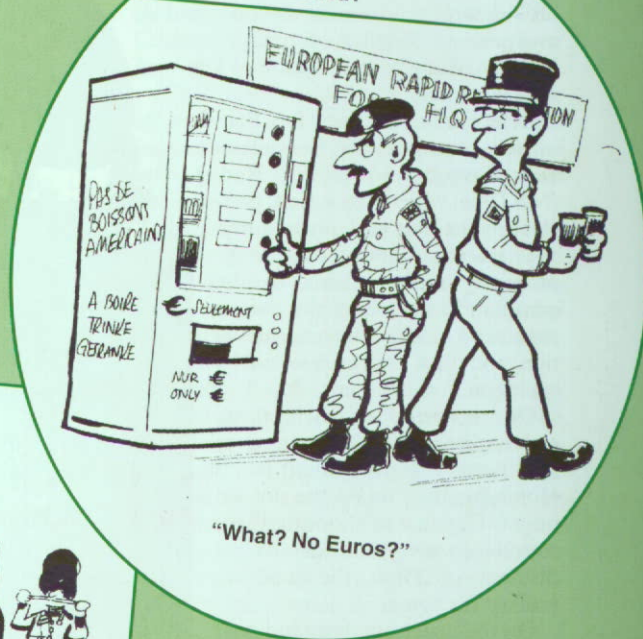
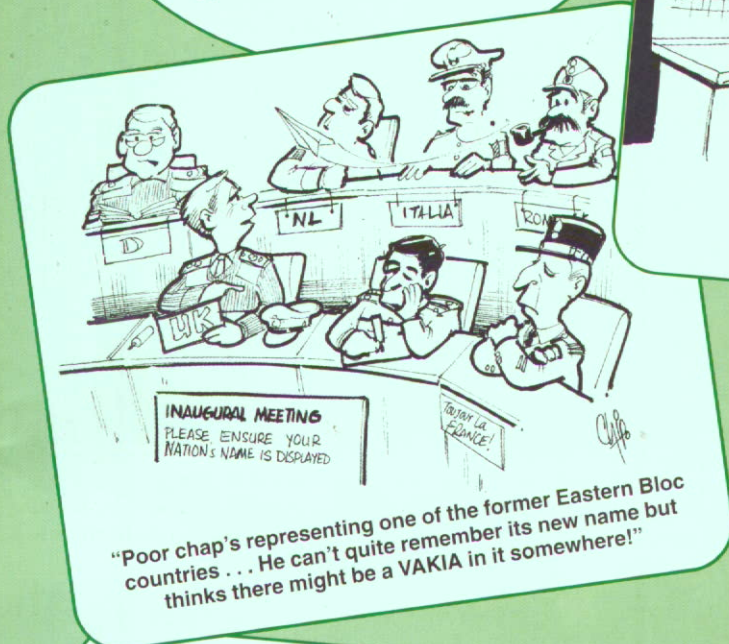
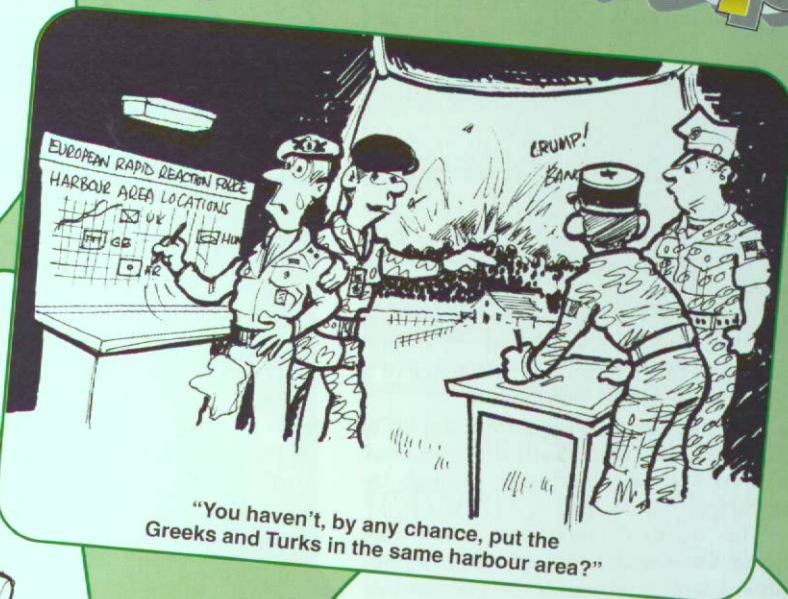
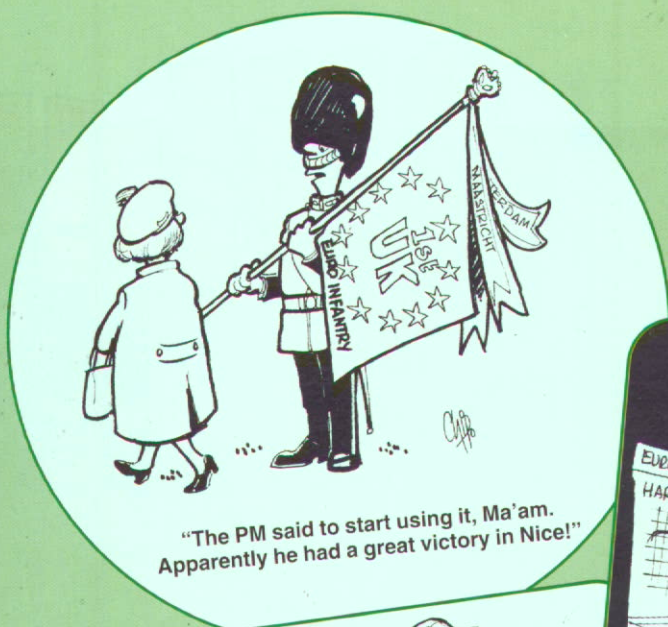
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Chuckle with Chip



We're all
in this
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Fire! Avfyra! Tuli!*

Gunners forge European alliances on foreign soil

Report: Andy Simms
Pictures: Mike Weston

CLOAKED by the undulating terrain and a low, heavy mist, the enemy stronghold is no sitting duck. The chance of a precise strike looks improbable.

From their vantage-point on the lip of the valley, observation officers from three nations scan the landscape through binoculars.

The weather conditions hinder the allied force and failed efforts to spot the enemy produce a disappointed murmur of English, Swedish and Finnish. But this is no game of Chinese whispers.

A few minutes later the British-owned Man-portable Surveillance and Target Acquisition Radar (MSTAR) whirs into action, penetrating the mist and pin-pointing the enemy. Coordinates are promptly radioed back to the command post where the data is processed into the bearing, elevation and fuse charge needed by each gun in the battery.

On reception of their firing orders three AS90s belonging to L/N Battery, 1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery fix on the unseen target. Capable of shooting three rounds in ten seconds over a distance of 25km, the guns are primed for firing.

On the order of command post officer Lt Oliver Richardson (1 RHA), the three five-man crews send a barrage of shells raining down on an enemy bunker

already weakened by mortar fire from English, Swedish and Finnish platoons. Mission accomplished.

The very nature of 1 RHA's five-month tour in Kosovo meant that the ability to work in a multinational environment was a necessity.

As part of the British-lead Multinational Brigade's (MNB) Offensive Support Group (OSG), the 1 RHA gunners found themselves working alongside soldiers from across the globe.

Had the uneasy peace in Kosovo subsided, the gunners, as the MNB's only gun battery in the-

atre, would have supplied vital fire support to their foreign allies. It was with this in mind that 1 RHA led a multinational firing exercise at Krivolac in Macedonia.

After two days of live-firing, Maj Glen Burn said: "This exercise proves the multinational firing capabilities within the OSG in Kosovo."

"On the exercise we had five firing units from three nations, guns from 1 RHA, 81mm mortars from 45 Commando Royal Marines, the 1st Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and 120mm mortars from Finland and Sweden.

"The idea was to ascertain whether observers from each nation could direct fire using British firing procedures and English as a base language," he said.

"I am pleased to report that we encountered no technical, procedural or communication problems at all. Language has certainly not been an issue. We are lucky that the whole of KFOR are bound by English and that it is the language we are told we must work from. The Swedes' and Finns' standard of English is extremely good."

Interestingly, the exercise marked something of a rarity for the Finnish mortar platoons, which



Whatever the weather: Britain's MSTAR stands above a fog bound observation post and succeeds where binoculars failed



Fingers on the trigger: Front to back, LBdr Jim Stubbs, Lt Olly Richardson and Bdr Paul Turner issue the firing orders

On the move: One of L/N Battery's self-propelled AS90s manoeuvres into position at Krivolac ranges, Macedonia

operation, so 90 per cent of our time has been spent in an infantry role, patrolling and providing security in the Podujevo area north of Pristina," said battery commander Maj Richard Heath.

"It has been good to come to Macedonia and take on our more usual role. As gunners an exercise such as this gets us back to doing what we know best."

* *Avfyra* - fire (Swedish); *Tuli* - fire (Finnish).

had not fired outside their homeland since 1944. For 1 RHA, on the other hand, it represented a welcome busman's holiday.

"We are in Kosovo on a peace support



Oscar performance: LBdr Graeme Ashmore plays at being a wounded Albanian

Gunners careering forward in Kosovo

A VOLLEY of gunfire and grenades pepper the side of an Albanian patrol vehicle. Caught off-guard by the Serbian ambush, its four-man crew suffer heavy injuries.

The ferocity of the attack throws one man off the track and into a minefield. His colleagues lie scattered around their vehicle, all injured and all in need of urgent medical attention.

Alerted by the sound of contact a nearby patrol of gunners from 1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery arrives on the scene. In his haste to attend the injured one of the patrol walks straight into the minefield. . . the casualties now number five.

Luckily for the injured gunner it is a mistake he will live to learn from. The casualties and minefield are staged and represent the first-aid section of a lance bombardier leadership course held at Zlatare Ranges near Pristina.

Keen not to stagnate the careers of their gunners while on tour, 1 RHA offered 31 soldiers the chance to prove their command, first aid and nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) warfare skills.

Course instructor Lt Flo Burrows told *Soldier*: "The course is usually held over five weeks but because we are in operational theatre it is squeezed into a three-week window."

"There are certain things we cannot do because we are in Kosovo. For example, we cannot do escape and evasion because of force protection issues which prohibit individual soldiers from going off alone."

"Apart from that, soldiers can expect everything they would from a course back in the UK. A course like this depends heavily on time and commitment but it is something that we will always try to accommodate during an operational tour."

As others see us

Pte Eino Leino, Finbat

It has been fun working with the British and we have learned a lot. I have not found the language barrier a problem but there are some guys who do not speak English who have found it difficult.

I have had a few problems understanding the Scottish and people with strong accents, but we get by.

Pte Daniel Strom, Swebat

It is interesting to see the British Army work - they are very professional.

Communicating has not been a problem because English is very easy to learn.



Cpt Anssi Munkki, Finbat

We have enjoyed working with the British on this exercise and in Kosovo. The co-operation has been very good and everyone in the Finnish force feels that they have learned a lot working alongside a professional army.

Most of our forces are reservists so we are not as professional and skilled as the British.

Sgt Asa Westman, Swebat

The language is a big problem for me. My English is not very good so I rely on my signalman.



Sgt Timo Ylivakeri, Finbat

There have been no problems whatsoever; they do things slightly different to us but it is easy to pick up. Sometimes it is hard to understand the people from up north - I can only understand about 20 per cent of what they say.

It would be a really nice idea if some of the British could speak Finnish but I do not think that will happen. I have not met any British who speak Finnish.

1st Lt Johan Gustausson, Swebat

There are some differences in our firing systems but we get on fine. I believe it is a good learning experience but I do not think the British learn as much as we do.

The British do not need to speak Swedish but they should speak a lot slower and clearer. They have a strange habit of shortening words.



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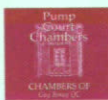
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Family fortunes



Meet the family: Left to right, Bdr John Curtis, Sgt Gary Hutchinson and LBdr Andy Tough try to commit the children's names to memory

Report: Andy Simms
Picture: Mike Weston

RAISING 16 children is a tough job by anyone's standards. Doing it with next to no money and in a country still scarred by the ravages of war is near impossible.

Yet that is the harsh reality facing Xhafer Berisha and his wife, who live in the provincial village of Godishnjak, Kosovo.

Unique only by the size of his family, Xhafer's circumstances are all too familiar to the 11 members of 1st Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery posted at the Luyzane Information Post (LIP), on the outskirts of Podujevo.

LIP commander Sgt Gary Hutchinson said: "The post has become a drop-in centre for anyone in need of help, whether it be a dispute over land or a request for building provisions – we have become the villagers' first port-of-call.

"We have built up a level of trust with the local people through our patrols of the area. We know everyone and everyone knows us."

It was while on patrol that 1 RHA first encountered Xhafer and his own small

Mountain villagers pay LIP service to the efforts of gunners

army. "When I first met Xhafer his family were living in what amounted to nothing more than a mud hut," said Bdr John Curtis. "It was an appalling sight, I have never seen anything like it. His family were living in third-world conditions."

Civil aid agencies have done much to help resettle Albanians forced from their homes during the war but resources and time are limited.

From the main roads aid agencies can spot those in need with ease but 2km up into the hills you reach a region where much of the fighting took place. It is here that whole villages were destroyed and where Xhafer is now attempting to raise his family. But the dirt tracks and uneven terrain mean that these pockets of settlements most in need of help are inaccessible to the agency trucks.

Liaising with organisations such as European Perspective, Mother Teresa

and World Vision, 1 RHA has proved a vital lifeline to people like Xhafer. Bdr Curtis said: "European Perspective supplied Xhafer with all the materials he needed to build a new house but it was his responsibility to collect it from Podujevo, which is around 16km from his home.

"He had no transport and nobody but his kids to help him so we managed to get hold of a few vehicles and brought it here for him."

Communicating through one of the LIP's translators, Ganimete Hasani, Xhafer told *Soldier*: "John has been excellent to me, he is a good man and God will always be with him. He has helped me to build my house, he has brought us clothes, a tractor and brought a doctor to see my baby. We will never forget this man."

When reminded that Bdr Curtis would shortly be finishing his tour and returning to England, Xhafer broke down in tears. "He has done so much for us – we will miss him."

But ever the reluctant hero, Bdr Curtis placed a hand on Xhafer's shoulder and replied: "Tell him I was just doing my job and that next time I see him I will have some more clothes for them."

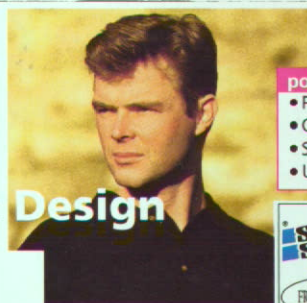
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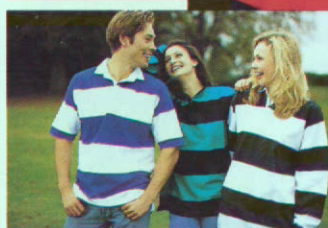
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If the collar fits ...

What sort of person wants to become an Army chaplain? We asked padres passing through their training centre in north Hampshire

Report: Ray Routledge
Pictures: Steve Dock

AMPORT House, a splendid Victorian building nestling in the quiet north Hampshire countryside, attracts visitors from all over Britain. They want to see its formal gardens, laid out in 1926.

What many of them don't know is that Amport House is also the home of the Armed Forces' Chaplaincy Centre, a tri-Service training establishment for Regular, reserve and cadet chaplains.

It also provides instruction for Service personnel on moral and ethical issues.

On the same site is the multi-denominational Royal Army Chaplains' Department, which moved to rural Hampshire after vacating Bagshot Park, now the Surrey home of the Earl and Countess of Wessex.

Why do priests exchange civilian parishes for the challenge of an Army chaplaincy? Ben Abeledo, a former soldier in the Spanish

Army, attempted to answer the question.

"I was in the Spanish Parachute Regiment and was brought up in the Catholic faith," he explained. "During my time in the Spanish Army something didn't seem quite right and a colleague shared the gospels with me. Everything seemed to drop into context."

How Ben became a minister in the Church of Scotland is another story, but he now feels equipped to help other soldiers. "I want to give something back."

Proving you are never too old is Andy McCafferty, who has re-enlisted as a chaplain at the age of 50. "I joined the Army as a boy in the Junior Leaders' Regiment and went into the Military Police,"



Amport House: Tranquillity before the rigours of Army life

he recalled. "I left when I was 30 and joined the civil police, where I spent 20 years. My wife was in the Army and my youngest daughter is serving now."

"I thought I was too old to be a military chaplain and was surprised and pleased to be accepted."

Peter Robbins, an administrator at the centre,

said that among skills the chaplains learn are listening, dealing with bereavement, and family dynamics. The centre also has to embrace a number of faiths and denominations.

Military padres need a certain amount of practical training, including map-reading, first aid, how to use a radio, vehicle maintenance, vehicle camouflage and living in the field.

Physical fitness is important . . . and they need to know enough about weapons to disarm them.

Yet the process after a chaplain

joins the Army is almost the reverse of that for officers.

"They come here for a four-week introduction course, then go to their unit, then go on to Sandhurst," said Peter Robbins. "We want to mould them as chaplains first. We are non-combatants, we never carry weapons and we have a different sort of job from everyone else."

John Durrant, who was about to join The Devon-

shire and Dorset Regiment, explained one of the differences between working in a parish and in an Army unit: "Parish life tends to be dominated by elderly people, so opportunities to work with young people are unusual," he said.

"People have the idea that we are here to support military aims and objectives and maybe in some ways, indirectly, we do that, but that is not what we are about."

"We are here to look after the soldiers in our pastoral care."

**Fitness is important
... and they need
to know enough
about weapons to
disarm them ...**

- Army padres should, ideally, be under 34 years of age and have served at least one curacy or an equivalent.

- Chaplains normally take a short-service commission with the chance to opt for a regular commission later.

- The RACHD's 150 chaplains are divided into two branches: Chaplains of the Roman Catholic Church administered by the Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain; and Chaplains of the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, Methodists, Baptists and United Reformed Churches administered by the Chaplain General.

- Although there are no barriers to women clergy serving in the Army, there are as yet no female chaplains.



Partners in crime:
From the top are
Andy McCafferty,
Mike Parker, John
Durrant, Ben Abeledo
and Chris Groucock

Paving the way to P2K

Ensuring soldiers get their due when Pay 2000 is introduced in April is a mammoth task. We spoke to the AGC (SPS) specialists who are working hard to make it happen

Report: Ray Routledge
Pictures: Steve Dock

THERE is one piece of paper that every soldier is guaranteed to read every time it's published – his or her pay statement.

Responsibility for ensuring it arrives on time and is as accurate as possible falls on the Worthy Down-based Staff and Personnel Support (SPS) Branch of the Adjutant General's Corps.

Staff serving at its headquarters a few miles north of Winchester are split into two teams, one dealing with pay, including Pay 2000 (P2K), allowances and pensions for all Army personnel; the other handling person-

nel issues for the 4,500 SPS members deployed worldwide. They also examine IT systems and future strategies.

"Our biggest issue at the moment is the introduction of P2K," said Brig Val Batchelor, Director SPS Branch. "Soldiers and officers had to be transferred to a new data system because the old one was complex and inflexible."



Providing interface:
Brig Val Batchelor

"This has now been completed by the Armed Forces Pay and Administration Agency (AFPAA), which looks after all three Services. We provide the interface between the agency and the Field Army."

To ensure a smooth transition at local level, Worthy Down has been preparing handbooks and training modules for SPS regimental administration officers (RAOs) and their staff in the run-up to the introduction of P2K.

Brig Batchelor's teams will be on the road until March, ensuring that RAO personnel are ready to deliver P2K when it is brought in for most of the Regular Army in April.

The scheme will see some soldiers earning more, but no one will receive less than they are at present.

Because of the additional workload, the unit has increased its staff in areas requiring special attention, for example the Territorial Army, the Gurkhas and the Royal Irish Regiment, which will form part of the later phases of P2K.

Brig Batchelor said: "There has been a massive amount of work going on to get the new system in."



Homework: SSgt Angie Warner, chief clerk, prepares handbooks designed to enable a smooth change to P2K

Putting pay people on the right lines

MAJ Lucy Norris's job is to make sure everyone working with the RAOs – military or civilian – is properly trained to use the new system. This includes knowing the rules, clerical procedures and transition arrangements.

Although soldiers' P2K pay slips will look slightly dif-

ferent from the old ones, no one will lose out; indeed, the majority will benefit. Maj Norris said: "P2K calculations are based on trade and how long people have served in rank, what qualifications they have, and their performance. Rates of pay will depend on all those factors."



Reconciling data: SSgt Maggie Gardiner faces the huge challenge of correcting the anomalies

Record-breaking effort

ONE of the biggest tasks during the build-up to P2K has been what is known in the trade as "personnel data reconciliation".

While data contained on the Record of Service (ROS) is broadly accurate, errors have built up over the years. They have to be corrected.

WO1 Andrea Denham, the team leader, said that to ensure accuracy, 15 data fields within UNICOM, the Army's unit computer system, had had to be

reconciled with the AFPAA's mainframe computer.

"For years they have run along together but often were not synchronised and it is our job to help units achieve this. It is quite challenging."

SSgt Maggie Gardiner said: "Reconciliation is vital. It's a mammoth task but people are doing their damndest to get it right. There have been anomalies and everyone has done everything possible to correct them."



No change to pensions

WILL the advent of P2K make a difference to pensions? According to pensions expert WO2 Kev Kent, pictured left, it should not.

He added that if someone has a concern or a question, it should not be directed to Worthy Down. "If someone has a query over pensions, they should ask their RAO," he said.



Warm greeting: Fijians at Catterick perform the haka

Pictures: Graeme Main

Fijians follow in fathers' footsteps

A British Army career has never been more popular for islanders

FIJIANS can't get enough of the British Army. Ever since the first recruiting adverts appeared in the *Fijian Times* 40 years ago, the Pacific islanders have been proud to serve the Queen, writes Anthony Stone.

Recruitment received a further boost when a Fijian military band performed at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo a couple of years ago. Several stayed on to join The Royal Scots and things have snowballed.

At a recent combat infantrymen's course passing out at Catterick, almost half those on parade were Fijians. Recruits end up across the divisions, but some of the most popular postings include The Royal Irish Regiment, The Black Watch, The Royal Scots and the Scots Guards.

Personal recommendation is the Army's best recruiting tool and Fijians are a PR man's dream. Rgr Sakenasa Rakaria, R Irish, told *Soldier*: "My cousin is in the Scots Guards. He told me there was a bright future in the British Army."

"Most of us are thinking of staying in for as long as possible."

A journey that begins in Fiji and

ends at Canterbury via Pirbright, Ballymena and Catterick can be a bit of a culture shock, especially as some of the recruits have never before been away from their island. "This is my first time in England and I like it," said Rgr Sitiveni Bolei, R Irish.

Rgr Kolinio Vukeiono, in the same regiment, said: "I've got a friend in the Scots Guards and he told me about the British Army. I would recommend my friends join up if they could."

Rgr Bolalailai, in the same regiment, said: "I wanted to travel and this is my first time from Fiji. The food is OK but I miss home cooking. I'm proud to be here. The weather is no problem for me because I worked in an open gold mine on top of a mountain for four years."

The diverse mix at Catterick has led to some interesting cultural exchanges. Irish Rangers can now perform a competent haka.

Lt Col Nick Sim, PWRR, commanding the 2nd Battalion, The Infantry Training Centre Catterick, congratulated the new infantrymen at their passing-out parade.

"Every soldier who has become a trained infantryman is embarking on a career that will allow him to progress to whatever rank his talents will permit, in an environment that is entirely free from prejudice and discrimination."



Lt Col Nick Sim

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A soldier's lot...

Army goes under the hammer

Military memorabilia raises £20,000-plus

HUNDREDS of military enthusiasts helped to raise more than £20,000 for the Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) when artefacts gathered from every regiment and corps in the British Army went under the auctioneer's hammer at Catterick.

The auction was conducted by Rodney Tennant, of Tennants of Leyburn, and one of the highlights was the sale of two silver coasters which realised £700. A Shropshire Yeomanry helmet dated 1885 fetched £700 and a signed book on British field marshals raised £460.

Six trainees from **25 Support Regiment RLC** completed a non-stop run from Edinburgh to Deepcut, Surrey, in aid of the Blackwater Valley branch of the Alzheimer's Society.

The team members ran the equivalent of a marathon a day to complete the 600-mile trip. In just four days they raised more than £1,500.

Members of **70 (EY) Signal Squadron** raised £1,100 for the Royal British Legion by completing the Nijmegen Marches.

More than 100 members of Belfast's emergency and security forces took part in a fundraising challenge in aid of the city's Marie Curie Centre.

Money raised from the event, which included an assault course and pyjama swimathon, will be used to enhance the comfort of patients at the centre. The exercise was organised

by the **7th Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment**.

When the staff at **British Forces Post Office, London** decided to hold a "dress-down" day in aid of children with genetic disorders the dress code was very clear – jeans for genes day.

Each member of staff who donned denims donated £1, raising a total of £280 for Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital.

Staff and volunteers at the **Army Personnel Centre** in Glasgow raised £223 from a "brew-up" day and raffle.

Despite having a lot on their plate, chefs working for the UK Combat Service Support Battalion in Sipovo, Bosnia still found time to help raise funds to buy toys for a local kindergarten.

The chefs from **2 Close Support Regiment RLC, 1 Battalion REME** and **1 Close Support Medical Regiment RAMC** made DM800 from selling birthday cakes.

Soldiers from 7th Signal Regiment took part in the Krefeld-to-Pristina marathon to help raise funds for the rebuilding of Vragolia School in Kosovo.

The **Band of The Life Guards** played for a fleet of Hackney carriage drivers on route to Disneyland Paris with 150 children suffering from debilitating illnesses and terminal conditions.

The band entertained the drivers, organisers and children as they prepared to depart for the Continent from Canary Wharf, London.

Troops from **16 Air Assault Brigade** and **216 Signal Squadron** ran the 14 miles around Mersea Island in aid of the Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Trust.

Volunteers from **14 Independent Topographic Squadron RE** took part in a charity truck pull and raised more than DM1,000 for the Poppy Appeal.

Two teams of ten completed the 2km tow of



By land, air and sea: Members of the Transport and Movements Squadron in Cyprus raised more than £6,000 for two local hospitals by completing a 100km run, 124km bike ride and arduous paddle along the coast line.

Picture: Cpl Teresa Pickin

a four-tonne truck around Ayrshire Barracks in Monchengladbach.

Goose Green veteran Ron Turner completed a 72-mile trek across the Falkland Islands in his wheelchair in aid of the South Atlantic Medal Association. The former Para completed the journey from Port San Carlos to Stanley in four days.

Members of **Equipment Support Squadron REME** raised DM700 for RNLI and the North Devon Children's Hospice by raffling off a helicopter tour of Kosovo.



Blooming marvellous: Sig Nicky Lowe, left, and LCpl Nicky Ainscough, right, won the prize for best fancy dress at the 7th Signal Regiment charity fun run. In total the event raised DM1,060 for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal



When in America . . .

Paras get to grips with US weapons, but give field rations the thumbs-down

Report: Simon Smith
Pictures: Stuart Bingham

BRITISH Paras went native while dropping from the eastern skies of America during an intensive twinning exercise with the US Army.

The 120 Colchester-based soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment fired US Army weapons, dropped under US parachutes from American aircraft and ate American field rations during the three-week Exercise Full Moon in North Carolina.

They also tackled one of America's toughest assault courses, which included a 40ft river drop and 70ft death slide.

Maj Peter Turpie, OC B Coy, which provided most of the personnel, said Full Moon had been a tough, enjoyable test.

"We have a lot in common with American airborne soldiers, but they have different aircraft, different parachutes and

different weapons. Low-level tactics also differ, but mainly because they have so many more assets at their disposal."

The Paras enjoyed a four-day break during which some travelled to Washington, others to New York and Florida.

Full Moon culminated in a complete field training exercise with US soldiers from 3-505 Parachute Infantry Regiment and involving the versatile Black Hawk helicopter. The Paras earned American wings, which they will wear on their uniforms alongside the British version.

Pte Simon Handlin said: "Using the American M4 and M249 was a great experience. They are easy to handle and lighter than the SA80. And jumping out of the C-17 is completely different from the Hercules. They are much bigger and have been specifically built for paratroopers."

But he gave the field rations a big thumbs-down. "They are nowhere near as tasty as ours and there is no facility to make a cup of tea or coffee. I don't think I could survive in the field for long with just American rations."

In a reciprocal visit, 3 Para's C Coy played host to 120 American soldiers who used British weapons and equipment and jumped from a Hercules on to training areas in Kent and Norfolk.

Night attack: Paras drop using US 'chutes. Inset: Pte Mark Jones uses the American M249 machine-gun on a Fort Bragg range

New appeal focuses on Katrice Lee, missing for 19 years

NINETEEN years after the disappearance of two-year-old Katrice Lee from a Naafi shop complex at Schloss Neuhaus, a suburb of Paderborn, Germany, the Royal Military Police have issued an "age progression" photograph of how she might look today.

Encouraged by the response from appeals on *Crimewatch UK*, BFBS and in the German media, the RMP would like to hear from anyone who was in the Paderborn-Sennelager area on Saturday, November 1981, or who worked in the Schloss Neuhaus Naafi.

They would also like to speak to anyone married to someone working in the area, and relatives and friends of anyone serving in the area unable to come forward at the time.

Katrice was last seen at 1110 on Nov 28, 1981 while shopping with her mother,

Sharon, and aunt, Wendy. It was her second birthday. Her father, SSgt Richard Lee, of the 15th/19th King's Royal Hussars, was waiting for his wife and daughter outside the food hall. A search began within two minutes of her running down a shopping aisle and disappearing.

Despite extensive efforts by the RMP and the German civil police, she was never found.

Her parents believed Katrice was snatched by someone wanting a child substitute, but several reported sightings came to nothing and the police suspect she was murdered soon after her abduction.

On the anniversary of what would be Katrice's 21st birthday, the RMP Special Investigation Branch has opened a major incident room at HQ Eastern Region SIB RMP (G) at Bielefeld. They can be contacted via the nearest police station, the BFG Crime Line (0800 184 2222) or UK Free-phone 0800 085 2213. All information will be treated in confidence.



Then and now? Katrice, above, as she was at the time of her disappearance and, below, how she might look today



SIERRA
LEONE

Blown away

Army makes safe
ammo dump that
put thousands of
lives in jeopardy

Report: Anthony Stone

THERE are moments of great tension in the lives of bomb disposal experts. But nothing had prepared Maj Jim Convery for what lay behind the door of the Murray Town ammunition depot.

Sparks flew off the bottom of the rusty shed entrance when the officer commanding 821 Squadron, 11 EOD Regiment RLC pushed it open.

This was not good. Inside was enough ammunition, nitroglycerine, grenades and mines to blow up a large part of Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone. There were five sheds in all, each with its own unstable cargo. Maj Convery estimated there were about 1,000 tonnes of ammunition in one place, slap-bang in the middle of a residential area.

Behind the door of one shed, 7,000kg of commercial explosives was being used as a doorstep. If you have ever wondered how EOD specialists go about clearing that sort of situation, Maj Convery passes on a tip. "Just do it very slowly," he says.

"The best way we could dispose of the unserviceable stuff, about eight tonnes in the end, was to cart it along the one good road and set up a demolition area on the beach."

The team could not risk transporting the explosives through the pot-holed streets of Freetown. Even if they had taken it into the jungle, they would not have been able to secure the area and risked locals walking off with the weapons for their scrap-metal value.

Maj Convery's five-man team found the sheds were Aladdin's caves of rusting rocket-propelled grenades, nuzzling up to Chinese mortar rounds and ammunition.



Stack of trouble: Enough explosives to take out a large part of Freetown balances precariously against a wall in one of the sheds

Picture: Graeme Main



Slowly does it: A relieved Maj Jim Convery

'Blind' Belugas: Too dangerous to move, they had to be destroyed where they were

To create a bit of extra room someone had helpfully put the fuses back into the anti-tank mines. Those who entered the rooms had to watch where they stepped.

"We were just horrified by what we saw so we put a block on any British troops going into the area," said Maj Convery.

Had it gone off, the dump would have destroyed everything within a 5km radius. The order was issued to evacuate 3,000 people who lived nearby, and the team got to work.

"It was a nightmare – a catastrophic incident waiting to happen," said Maj Convery. "Blind mortar rounds were sitting on stacks of ammunition. All they needed was a knock or for them to fall off and it would start the whole process off."

But that was not the only thing they had to contend with. Hiding between crates were deadly spiders and snakes. The shed was not the place to receive a nasty shock resulting in sudden movement.



The ammunition technicians did not intend to blow the lot up. The Sierra Leone government needed the weapons to fight the rebels.

"We looked over the stuff," said Maj Convery. "If it was really pretty bad or 'blind' ammunition that had been fired, but had not functioned, we would put it to one side for disposal."

From 1,000 tonnes of ammunition they detonated about ten tonnes.

"From the point of view of the team – a captain and four seniors – a job like that is superb," said Maj Convery. "It's like doing bomb disposal in Northern Ireland. Professionally it is a very good thing to do as they were using their skills to the maximum."

When all the serviceable ammunition had been removed they were left with 40 blind Belugas – a type of cluster bomblet. They were too dangerous to move so had to be blown up where they were.

The team stripped down the shed piece by piece so it could be rebuilt later, before the mines were detonated.

**6,700kg of explosives was
being used as a doorstep?**

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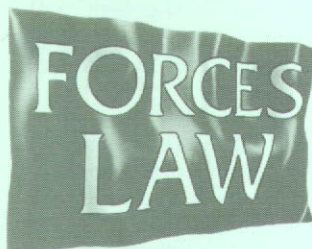
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'Super-gun' would deliver 100-mile knockout punch

RESEARCHERS at the Defence Procurement Agency are looking at technology that would enable the Royal Artillery to reach the furthest boundary of the battlefield – about 93 miles (150km).

Its current heavy capability is based on the self-propelled AS90 and the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), both of which have a range of about 20 miles.

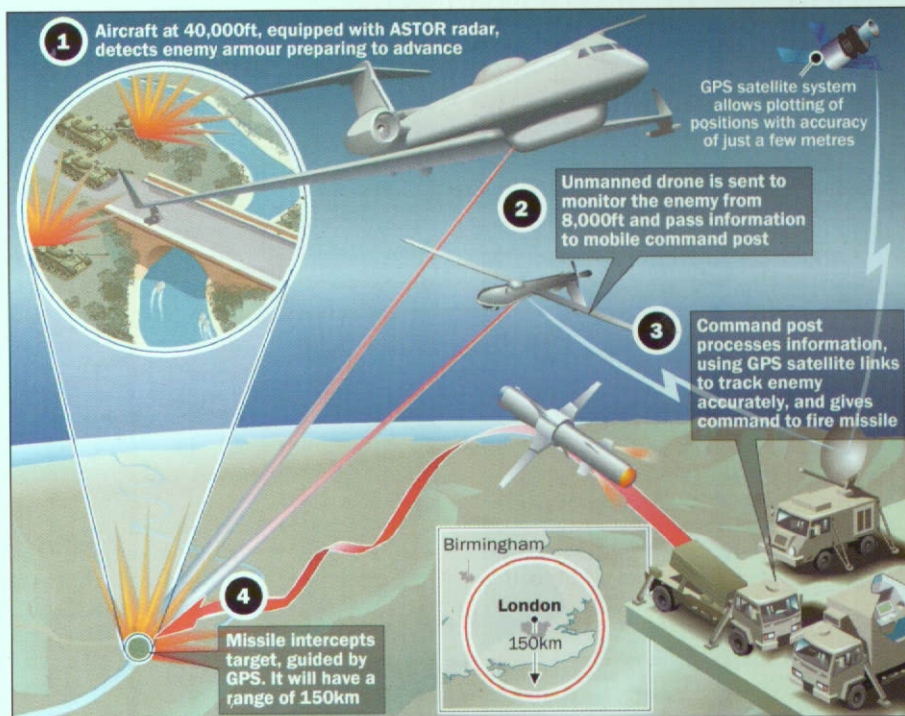
As first reported in *Soldier* in September 1999, a project team is looking at a two-phase schedule, expected to cost several hundred million pounds, over the next 15 years.

The first phase, over the next six to ten years, would develop a guided rocket with a 37-mile (60km) range. Researchers will be looking at fibre-optic guided missiles and sensor-fuzed weapons (SFM).

The rocket could be fired from the back of a lorry and linked to its launcher by fibre-optic thread that would play out as it approached its target. An operator would be able to "see" through sensors in the rocket's nose and direct it to the target.

SFMs could be fired by missile or delivered by artillery shell over a target area. Once enemy armour had been recognised within lethal range, the weapon would detonate an explosively formed projectile, punching through the vehicle's armour.

In the second phase, the range would be extended to 93 miles. Since this is too far for a fly-by-wire method, researchers envisage the rocket, with pop-up fins,



Longer reach: How the new missile system would be effective to a range of nearly 100 miles

would be guided all the way to its target by satellite. The 93-mile range version is not expected to be in service until 2015.

The Indirect Fire Precision Attack Programme project leader, Maj Greg Cole, told *Preview*, the journal of the Defence

Procurement Agency: "The aim is to provide the land commander with an on-call long-range precision strike capability. This capability will exploit the new surveillance and targeting capabilities that MoD is acquiring."

Win a pair of Danner boots worth £190

WHEN Danner asked us to test their Olympic boot, we reckoned the man for the job was photographer Steve Dock, a former Regular soldier with 22 years service behind him and a long and intimate knowledge of Army footwear, marching for the use of.

Steve happily shelved his well-worn combat highs and took the Olympics on assignments to Sennybridge, Salisbury Plain and Bavaria (where he is pictured, right, using them to negotiate a friendly Alp).

"I gave them a good test in water and muck and they held up very well," said Steve. "They were comfortable and I did not get my feet wet at all. They have a good grip for climbing and walking on slippery surfaces and importantly they kept my feet nice and toasty."

Steve was delighted to discover that the Olympic boot, which sells for £190 or more and has been approved by the US Marine Corps, didn't need much wearing-in. Those first steps provided blister-free bliss.

Danner has been making boots for more

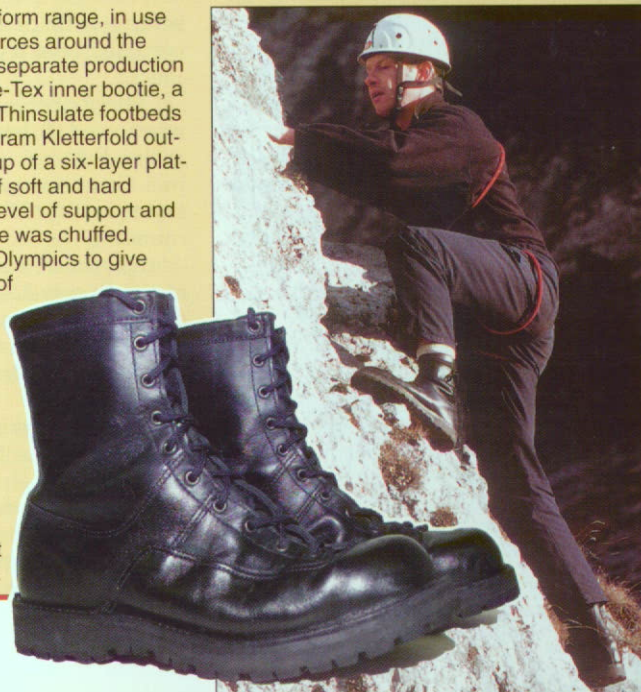
than 65 years and its Uniform range, in use with military and police forces around the world, goes through 250 separate production stages. All feature a Gore-Tex inner bootie, a unique stitching system, Thinsulate footbeds for warmth and tough Vibram Kletterfold outsoles. The sole is made up of a six-layer platform in alternate layers of soft and hard material, offering a high level of support and comfort. No wonder Steve was chuffed.

We've got one pair of Olympics to give away. To have a chance of winning them, tell us on a postcard, to reach us by February 2:

What sort of footbed is used in the Danner Uniform range?

a) Fatsulate b) Thinsulate c) Mediumsulate

Include your name, address and boot size. The first correct entry out of the hat wins the boots.



Honours even for the Doc

There can't be too many people who have been awarded medals by both sides in the same war. This is the story of one who has

By Ray Routledge

LIKE most former Servicemen, Rick Jolly wears his medals with pride. But even the most casual observer will notice that one is a little unusual.

It was awarded for service during the Falklands War . . . by Argentina. If you think that's unusual, please note that he has permission from the Queen to wear it.

Rick Jolly was born in Hong Kong, the son of a gunner in the Colony's Voluntary Defence Corps and former prisoner of the Japanese, and a mother who was an Auxiliary Yeomanry ambulance driver.

Schooled in the Far East and England, he went to medical school at Bart's in London, where he qualified in 1969. While he was working as

a houseman, a senior doctor suggested he take a look at the Royal Naval Reserve.

"I enjoyed it but found it a bit stiff and formal," he recalled. Nevertheless, he joined full-time as a Royal Navy doctor. "Then I tried the Royal Marines and right from the start I loved it.

"What I liked about them – and the Paras, with whom I worked closely for many years – was that officers and men were required to do the same training. In fact, the officers were expected to do it a little bit faster and further."

He became medical officer to 42 Commando RM, then deployed in north Belfast. Their neighbours there were the men of the 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, with whom he built a strong friendship.

Belfast at the time, he found, could be brutal.

"No textbook can prepare you for the aftermath of a bomb," he said, "nor how the sounds and smell can impact on you when you arrive to help. I was interested in the forensic effect of munitions so two or three times a week I'd go to the morgue and take pictures and use them to train my own battlefield first-aid teams in 42 Commando. It became known as Doc Jolly's Horror Show.

"It sounds gruesome, but a battlefield first-aider can't be trained to deal with

bullet wounds unless he knows what a bullet wound looks like.

"Whatever the problems in Northern Ireland, I've got no doubt at all, to paraphrase the Duke of Wellington, that the battles of the Falklands were won on the streets of Belfast.

"Young NCOs had been given enormous responsibility early in their careers and it proved itself in the Falklands. When an officer fell, the NCOs carried on, in marked contrast to the Argentinians.

"In 1982 we were plucked out of our pre-Easter leave and told to prepare to go to the Falklands. With the rank of acting

The battles of the Falklands were won on the streets of Belfast

surgeon commander, I went on an advance party on the ss *Canberra*, and because of previous friendships, it didn't take more than ten seconds to establish a working relationship with 3 Para.

"On the voyage south we considered that if the Argentinians were defeated, we would have to look after their casualties.

His medical unit installed itself in an abandoned refrigeration plant near San Carlos Water, where they were bombed three days later, leaving five killed and several badly wounded.

"During the battle for Goose Green they brought in the gunner from a Marine helicopter that had been shot down. The crew had been trying to save Lt Col "H" Jones.

"The gunner lost a leg and mangled the other, and I had to certify his pilot, Richard Nunn, dead. Richard was my best friend in the Royal Marines. I also had to certify "H" dead, killed by a single round."

Argentinian casualties began to arrive at the British hospital unit as the battle raged. The medics managed to nurse back to life an enemy soldier who had lost an eye and a leg. He became a favourite on the ward.

"I was sad when I heard that he had been killed in a bus accident in 1984," said Dr Jolly.

In just three frantic weeks the team treated more than 700 British wounded as well as 300 Argentinians.

"People have asked me what would



Doubling up: Dr Rick Jolly, who has worked alongside the Army in Belfast and the Falklands, shows off the "OBE" the Argentinians awarded him

In print

Several of Dr Rick Jolly's books have been reissued. *For Campaign Service* (Red and Green Books, £7.95) tells the story of 43 Commando Royal Marines and Royal Army Ordnance Corps EOD teams out to foil an IRA plot in 1972.

Jackspeak (FoSAMA, £9.95) is an hilarious guide to the vivid slang used in the Royal Navy, while *In Confidence* (FoSAMA, £9.95) lists nearly 600 unintentionally funny comments taken from personal reports on Service men and women.

Orders to Palamanando Publishing, PO Box 42, Torpoint, Cornwall.

happen if you had two badly wounded men, one Argentinian, the other British. Who do you treat first?

"The reply is simple: the one who is most severely wounded."

After the war, Rick Jolly was made OBE and went back to general service with the Fleet Air Arm before retiring in 1996 in the rank of acting surgeon captain.

He went to work for the South Atlantic Medal Association (SAMA), becoming its first chairman, and is now president. In 1999 he went back to sea as a Merchant Navy doctor on the cruise ship *Saga Rose*, and he lectures occasionally at the Staff College and RMA Sandhurst.

Now aged 54, he lives in semi-retirement in Cornwall, where he writes and from where he is planning a 20th anniversary trip to the Falklands in 2002. It will involve SAMA and dozens of former soldiers with whom he is in almost daily contact.

So why did his former enemy decorate this British Serviceman?

"In 1974 I served in HMS *Hermes* with the Prince of Wales while he was a heli-

copter pilot," he explained. "He asked me if I would go with him to Buenos Aires last March and I agreed.

"Before we left I compiled a list of the Argentinians we had operated on and sent it to a journalist in Buenos Aires saying I'd like to know what happened to them.

"We had a wonderful visit. The people were very kind and on the last day I was summoned to the Palace of Foreign Relations. There the Foreign Minister read out a citation for humanitarian kindness to Argentinian citizens during the war of 1982 and I was awarded their equivalent of the OBE.

"Outside the room was a queue of wounded veterans who had been through my hospital at San Carlos Water. It was very moving. I laid a wreath to the fallen, a gesture that the Argentinians appreciated.

"So I now have two OBEs effectively for the same work in the same war."

Q AND A

Continuing the occasional series in which the Army's experts answer some of the most-asked questions put to CGS's Briefing Team

TV LICENCES Why do we have to buy TV licences for every set in camp – why can't we be treated like hotels and get reduced rates?

ANSWER We are up against the law on this one and have to follow the same rules as people living in university halls of residence. Basically, if you share a room you only need one licence no matter how many TVs there are, and if you live in your own room you also need one licence.

You also need to know that you can claim refunds if you are deployed on operations.

The rules are set by the BBC TV Licence Management Unit (TVLMU), which carried out a review in 1999 and concluded that the Armed Forces were responsible for £3 million of unpaid licence fees – so we are not enormously popular. As a result of pressure from MoD, the TVLMU has appointed a Forces' liaison officer whose job it is to consider the issue of licensing in the Armed Forces to liaise with us and have open discussions.

NEWS Why do we always hear about things that affect us from the newspapers or TV rather than hearing it from the chain of command?

ANSWER There are a number of reasons – not all to do with incompetence.

TV stations – and even the newspapers – are often quicker than the chain of command. We do try to warn people off, when relevant, ahead of announcements – but don't always get the information or clearance to release it in time.

We are often victims of leaks or blunders. Quite often, what appears in the newspapers was not intended for publication, but journalists are very good at getting people to say too much.

We all read the papers or watch TV, so there are times when information is deliberately passed to you using these means.

Advance notice of something can lead to a leak that reduces the desired effect of an announcement – often by a Government minister. As a result of past experience, some people are reluctant to allow anyone else to steal their thunder.

Don't always believe what you read in the papers.

Remember that while you may hear something on the TV first, you often get the truth – perhaps a day or so later – from someone who knows what they are talking about.



Key role for gatekeepers

Soldiers from PWRR police main route in and out of Serbia

Report: Andy Simms
Pictures: Mike Weston

FUELLED by several glasses of slivovic, a group of Albanians recover their stash of AK70s and head off toward the Kosovo-Serbia boundary.

Desperate to rile the Serb military police stationed inside the 5km safety zone that separates the two provinces, they fire 40 rounds in the general direction of Serbia.

Disappointed their actions have not prompted a return of fire, they head back towards their homes – blissfully unaware that their actions have been tracked by a patrol from the 1st Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.

A short distance from the boundary the car carrying the perpetrators is stopped, the driver and passengers are arrested and their weapons are confiscated.

“One of the main problems on the boundary has been with the Kosovar Albanians,” said Capt Giles Francke, operations officer for the battle-group. “We know that a lot of them still have weapons hidden away and that they sometimes fire them. However, in such cases those responsible are found and their weapons are taken from them.”

One of the main focuses of 1 PWRR's tour in Kosovo is gate three, located north of Podujevo on the provincial boundary. “Being in command of gate three puts us in the shop window,” said Capt Francke. “The gate represents the fastest route from Belgrade to Pristina and attracts a large volume of people crossing the boundary.”

Flanked by two watch towers and manned by armed soldiers and a team of translators, gate three is a hive of activity. Passing across the boundary without the necessary documents is impossible.

“We have not had any trouble here,” said LCpl Richard Edwards (C Coy, 1 PWRR). “The busiest days we have are when a prisoner is released. Large crowds turn up to meet them but they are always well behaved and wait patiently.”



Visual deterrent: A Challenger 2 manned by B Squadron, Queen's Royal Hussars (part of the PWRR battle-group) patrols the boundary



Flyover: A Warrior from Y Coy, 1 PWRR, above, passes over gate three while LCpl Richard Edwards (C Coy, 1 PWRR) watches the main road from Belgrade into Kosovo

Making a splash: Pte Robin Hall (Y Coy 1, PWRR), right, negotiates a Warrior through the Kosovan countryside

Ready for action: Cpl Steve Munns, right, scouts ahead of a Warrior commanded by LCpl Shaun Wildgoose



On foot: Left to right, above, Cpl Steve Munns, Gdsm Willie Murray, Pte Mark Nicholson and Pte Gavin Rolfe patrol a village close to the VJ trail – the name given to the route used by Serb forces to enter Kosovo during the war

Eagle-eyed: Lt Dom Sweny (1 PWRR), left, scans the exclusion zone beyond gate three from his observation post on the boundary between Kosovo and Serbia

BOXING



Flying the flag: Pte Steven Briggs (1 PWO) celebrates victory after a flawless first appearance in an England vest

Picture: Graeme Main

Swinging for England

Private debuts on international stage

THERE was nothing tentative about Pte Steven Briggs's first steps on to the international boxing stage, writes **Andy Simms**.

With the assured confidence of a seasoned professional Briggs (1 PWO) made light work of America's William Webb in London's Hilton Hotel ring, out-pointing the pre-fight favourite 21-6.

It was a mature display by someone fighting in an England vest and in front of television cameras for the first time, and one made all the more impressive by the circumstances surrounding his call-up to the national squad.

In-form Briggs has been on the fringe of the England set-up for some time but it was an injury to regimental and Army boxing team-mate LCpl Mark McMahon (1 PWO) that finally gave him his chance.

When a hapless McMahon picked up a

wrist injury at a club match in Croydon, Army coach SSgt Neil McCallum was approached by England manager Ian Irwin about a possible replacement for the light-middleweight contest.

Despite normally fighting at welter-weight, Briggs's name was put forward by McCallum and after much contemplation it was accepted – giving Briggs just 24 hours to ready himself for the fight.

But if Briggs lacked preparation time it did not show in the ring against the heavier Webb. Indeed, testament to the 21-6 scoreline, he looked a class above his opponent. In an Olympic bout Webb would have been stopped by the referee as soon as Briggs had amassed a 15-point lead.

"I always knew I would get my chance to pull on an England vest but I did not think it would happen at light-middleweight," said Briggs.

"In a way the late decision for me to fight helped. I felt physically ready and if I had had more time I no doubt would have

been more nervous. When the referee raised my arm at the end of the fight it was the best moment of my boxing career – it was a truly amazing feeling and one I will never forget."

Briggs's victory helped England to record a 5-2 win over America.

■ **Round up: Army beat Bridport ABC 3-1** – Wins for Pte Mark Thompson, Pte Spence Evans and LCpl Mark McMahon secured team victory. LCpl Neil Robinson lost a points decision to Paul Stewart.

Army beat East London 5-4 – Performance of the night belonged to light-heavyweight LCpl Ian Dilkes who floored stocky Pole Andre Pickalkiewkz in the second round. Gnr Alastair Morrison stopped his opponent inside the opening round and Pte Darryn Bushbye, LCpl Lee Morris and Gdsm John Read all won on points.

Cpl Nathan Dorrian was forced to retire from his bout with Chris Bensten after a clash of heads left him with a cut below the eye. Gnr Stefan Symes and Pte Nigel Brett both lost on points.

MODERN PENTATHLON

Bernie's Angels

Olympic stars are the toast of Sandhurst

LIFE as a military courier during the 1800s was no easy vocation – particularly if you held the esteemed position of King's Messenger, writes **Andy Simms**.

Equipped with pistol and rapier for protection, a typical day for the King's courier would begin on horseback with a journey through hostile territory.

Along the way it was not uncommon for the messenger to have to duel with his rapier, use his pistol, swim a river and run through woods to reach his goal.

It is the combination of the disciplines used by these couriers that provided the concept behind the modern pentathlon. The sport – which features equestrian, fencing, shooting, swimming and running events – was first introduced at the 1912 Olympics as a test of military skills.

Last year marked another milestone in the sports history with the women's event featuring in an Olympic Games for the first time.

And although the Army did not have anyone in Sydney for the modern pentathlon, it did play a role in bolstering Great Britain's medal tally.

Olympic gold medallist Stephanie Cook and bronze medallist Kate Allenby both trained at the Army modern pen-

tathlon centre at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst before the Games.

The two hot-shots captured the imagination of the British public with their sporting exploits Down Under.

Lying in eighth place after four-events, Cook began the 3,000m run 49 seconds behind leader American Emma DeRiel and 44 seconds behind second-placed team mate Allenby.

With DeRiel heading towards Olympic gold, Cook emerged with a devastating burst, first passing Allenby and then leader DeRiel with just 300m to go.

"Athletes like Stephanie and Kate come to Sandhurst because they know that the

Army always strives for perfection," said Army pentathlon coach SSgt Bernie Moss (REME), pictured above.

"The centre here is ideal for modern pentathlon training because we have all the necessary facilities

on site. We have riding at the stables, an indoor shooting range, a swimming pool, a gym and undulating ground to run on."

Model performers: Olympic medallists Stephanie Cook, left, and Kate Allenby



WOMEN'S HOCKEY

Championship run continues

Army win the silverware for the third year running

THE Army women's hockey team is fast becoming the Manchester United of Services hockey.

Indeed, it is a comparison that the Royal Navy or Royal Air Force are unlikely to challenge after the Army picked up their third successive Inter-Services indoor hockey title at Portsmouth.

Under the watchful eye of coach WO1 Jeff Day (RLC) the team made a stunning start to the tournament, scoring in the opening seconds of their clash with the RAF through Maj Jan Waring (RMP), who smashed home a penalty corner.

Spurred on by their early success the Army surged forward and ran riot against a downtrodden RAF side.

Capt Claire Phillips (REME), Sgt Camps Campling (AGC), Cfn Claire

Ryding (REME) and Cpl Tracy Hoffman (R Signals) all found the back of the net to take the final score to 9-1.

Determined not to fall victim to the same fate as their RAF counterparts, the Royal Navy adopted defensive tactics in an attempt to restrict the free-scoring Army women.

Although there were few chances in the game, the Army still managed to score four unanswered goals.

SHORTS

Army rivals quashed

IT was another good year for the Army squash team at the Combined Services individual championships.

WO2 Gary Clarke (men's open champion), Lt Karen Banks (women's champion) and Lt Col Robbie Robinson (veteran's champion) all retained their titles. Pte Michael Grehan added to the Army honours with a win in the under-25 competition.

Quins' last gasp winner

GUNNERS from 7 (Parachute) Royal Horse Artillery came within seconds of claiming the scalp of Premiership rugby giants NEC Harlequins.



The match, which attracted a large crowd at Aldershot's rugby stadium and raised more than £1,500 for Children in Need, was decided in the final minute by the boot of Quins' Ed Jennings.

The England under-19s star clinched a 16-14 victory for the professional-side with a well-struck penalty kick from 40 yards.

The decisive score followed a spirited second-half fight-back by the gunners, who turned around a 13-point deficit with tries from Gnr Andy Dawling and Gnr Martin Lacer. Gnr Derek Jang kicked both conver-

sions. With a number of top-class players on display, including Gloucester's Gnr Rory Greenslade-Jones (pictured above), 7 RHA gave a good account of themselves.

Royal seal of approval

THE Duke of Edinburgh has awarded Exercise Saratoga Crossroads, a joint Services expedition to Bikini Atoll, the runner-up place in his prize for the British Sub-Aqua Club.

Maj Andy Reid, OC of 32 Army Education Centre, Northern Ireland, led the team and was presented with the award at Buckingham Palace.

The intrepid explorer's next high profile trip will be to St Paul Island, Nova Scotia, in August 2001. Maj Reid discovered the bell from the sailing ship *Clymene*, dated 1861, while on holiday on the remote, uninhabited island.

Expedition Minerva Sovereign will survey the wreck from a view to returning the bell to Workington in Cumbria where it is thought to have been made.

RUGBY UNION

One try for me Argentina . . .

. . . but England pay dispute shadows Services' showpiece

FEW cried for Argentina when they defeated the Combined Services 44-7 at Portsmouth, writes Roger Thompson.

It was a muted victory, the attending press corps being caught, like a rabbit in the headlights, by the England team's pay strike. Interviews, quotes and projections all focused on the possible cancellation of the Twickenham international. The Services' thunder was well and truly stolen before a ball had been kicked.

At Burnaby Road, despite a flotilla of groundsmen swabbing the decks, the pitch was deep in water. The flags stood stiffly to attention in a thumping gale and the weather was firmly in command.

Some wise folk shivering in the stand murmured "cancellation" but 8,000 miles is a long way to come for warm beer and cucumber sandwiches.

In the levelling conditions the Services started nervously and then temporarily went downhill. Facing the situation squarely both sides initially engaged in aerial ping-pong. The Services' ball held up high and motionless in the wind while the Argentinians repeatedly kicked from beyond the half-way line back into the Services' 22.

From one such long ball, and a major Services' fumble in the third minute, the Argentinian hooker was allowed to dive home beneath the posts.

For the remainder of the half the home pack provided a solid platform and secured a measure of parity without ever being in the driving seat.

LBdr Lee Soper (7 (Para) RHA) had an exceptional match in the line-out but, playing against the elements, it was unfair to ask the backs for miracles – especially for the ten minutes that Gnr Andy Dawling (7 (Para) RHA) spent in the sin bin. The extra load caused by Dawling's absence created cracks in the defence at the end of the first half that were never to be papered over in the second.

The teams turned around with the Pumas leading 17-0 and any hopes of a Services comeback evaporated when team skipper Capt Howard Graham (AGC) was forced to leave the field for medical attention.

With the centre pairing disrupted, the Services failed to use the wind to their advantage. In contrast, the Pumas started



Challenging times: Gnr Andy Dawling (7 (Para) RHA) attempts to stop a Puma attack

a series of mass attacks into the wind – playing handsomely expansive rugby in the conditions. The Puma forwards provided an exhibition of flowing, powerful rugby for extended periods while their backs flipped forward across the saturated mud.

The Services forayed briefly into attacking positions and from one such line-out Soper burst through to feed Flt Lt Howard Parr (RAF) who scored under the posts. Lt Dan Coen (RE) converted.

As a Rotherham player, Parr's pedigree is well known and both the Army and Navy should beware his skills and pace in the Willis Championship next year.

The final result did not match the Services' aspirations, but to be fair Argentina fielded 14 full internationals and had just narrowly lost to the Springboks. Indeed, England only managed to beat them 19-0. In such context this was probably a better-than-average performance from a scratch Services side – but arguably it should have been better.

Picture: Graeme Main

SHORTS

Guards at the forefront

THE Royal Dragoon Guards beat off strong competition to win the Royal Armoured Corps golf championships at the Army golf club in Sennelager. The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards took second place and The Queen's Royal Hussars third.

REME bounce to title

AT the end of five days of fierce competition REME were crowned Army Inter-Corps basketball champions.

The Eddie Stobart-sponsored tournament also brought silverware for the AGC (women's champions) and Royal Signals (B league champions).

Very best in eye care

ARMY eye surgeon Capt Gerry Clare (RAMC) completed the New York City marathon in 4hr 26min and raised more than £1,000 for the Royal National Institute for the Blind.

Foundations for success

THE Army's under-18 rugby league squad began preparations for their forthcoming tour of France with a game against Leeds's Notre Dame School at the Army Foundation College in Harrogate. The visitors ran out 22-8 winners.

Reeled in by England

FORCE eight onshore winds at the European shore angling championships at Domburg, Netherlands did little to weather the spirits of Cpl Mike Bowden (REME).

Having entered the competition as an individual, Bowden was approached by an under-strength England open team and asked to represent his country. Returned to a full compliment of five, the team finished third in the open championships. In the individual competition Bowden finished 15th.

Anyone interested in sea-angling should contact Monchengladbach Mil 2224 or LCpl Dave Garvin on Dulmen Mil 2335.

CONTACT US

Do you think the England rugby players were right to strike over pay or should honour be reason enough to play for your country?

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

Acceptance or rejection of copy is the decision of the Sports Editor, who reserves the right to amend for length, clarity or style.

Scrum on down

Your chance to win a signed Quins shirt

SOLDIER has teamed up with NEC Harlequins to offer rugby fans a priceless keepsake. For your chance to win a Quins rugby shirt signed by the team, simply answer the following question:

Which current Quins player won the World Cup with Australia last year?

- a) Zinzan Brooke
- b) David Wilson
- c) Will Greenwood

Send your answers on a postcard to Quins Competition, Soldier, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants, GU11 2DU.

The winner will be drawn at random from the correct answers received by February 1.



SAILING



Picture: Graeme Main

Hold on: Cpl Gordon Barrett (REME), left, and LCpl Carl Lerpiniene, right, brave strong winds aboard one of the Army's racing dinghies

Alive on the ocean wave

Soldiers conquer Southampton Water

THOSE who shun adventure, have a dislike for breakneck speeds and are scared of a little water should avert their attention now – Southampton Water is not the place for you.

However, those willing to put their sea legs to the test in pursuit of an exciting pastime should arrange a visit to the Land Command Sailing Centre at Netley.

Situated in Hampshire's picturesque Royal Victoria Country Park, the Army-owned centre represents the first port of call for anyone interested in dinghy sailing or powerboating. Kitted out with its own fleet of vessels – which range from basic

dinghies to high-performance racers – and with two full-time instructors, the centre caters for complete beginners through to experienced sailors.

Southampton Water provides a safe but challenging classroom for students. Chief instructor Clive Grant told *Soldier*: "This is an ideal place for sailing and a perfect place to teach. Although the waters are tidal we can launch boats almost all day.

"We have the home of ocean racing (the Hamble) in one direction and the Isle of Wight in the other – the whole place is geared towards sailing."

Recognised by the Royal Yachting Association, the courses run from Monday to Friday and begin on dry land under the watchful eye of Grant and Sig Mark Langhorne (R Signals). However, the real lessons are learnt on the wet stuff

and although help is always close by students are encouraged to get out there and test the water.

The number of sailors in the Army is on the increase but it is Netley's powerboat courses that are flooded with subscribers.

With top speeds of up to 40 knots, the appeal of power-boating to thrill-seekers is clear but there is more to the courses than handling a boat at speed.

"The Army needs qualified powerboat handlers for its adventurous training camps in places like Brac, Cyprus, Belize and Brunei," said Grant.

"We not only teach people how to drive the boats but also how to assist other boats and pull people from the water safely."

■ For more information on the courses on offer contact 02380 457242.

RESULTS SERVICE

BADMINTON: The Army badminton team's tour to Brunei got off on the right foot with a 9-2 win over hosts 1 RGR.

A 10-1 defeat to the Brunei Shell Recreation Centre followed but the team returned to winning ways for their encounter with Kuala Belait B (10-1).

The team finished the tour on a high note by beating a very strong Kuala Belait A team 7-4.

FOOTBALL: The Combined Services women's side were beaten 4-1 by a strong London Ladies representative XI in their first fixture of the season.

RUGBY LEAGUE: Soldiers from 39 Engineer Regiment demonstrated their sporting prowess by beating rugby league rivals the Coventry Bears 4-0 in an exhibition match

organised to kick off the Rugby League World Cup.

Held at the birthplace of the sport, Rugby School, the match was decided by a try from Sgt John Geddis.

RUGBY UNION: The Army U21s cruised to a 70-6 win over the Royal Navy U21s at the Army Rugby Stadium, Aldershot.

NETBALL



Picture: Andy Aitken

Safety net: Capt Emily Perrett (RLC) attempts to block Sgt Rachel Gibbons's path to goal

Tidworth and Bulford's net gain

THE Army's top netball teams converged at the Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre to compete for the much sought-after title of Army Inter-Unit champions.

Competition favourites Rhine Army Support Unit began well but saw their claim on the title evaporate when they were beaten by eventual finalists 27 Regi-

ment RLC and Tidworth and Bulford Garrison. A closely contested final saw Tidworth and Bulford Garrison emerge as champions.

■ If you are interested in playing netball for your regiment, corps or the Army contact Capt Andrea Luck on Aldershot Mil 3784.

RUGBY LEAGUE



In full flight: Pte "Gibbo" Gibbons mounts a counter-attack for 1 RRW Picture: Chris Atkins

Welsh victory puts Stag party on hold

BRITISH Forces Germany's first rugby league season ended in jubilation for 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Wales, who recorded a convincing 48-18 victory in their Challenge Cup final clash against the Sennelager Stags.

With a half-time lead of 18-8, the Welsh always had control of a game officiated by Super League referee John Connolly.

Second-half tries from Pte "Gibbo" Gibbons, Pte Chris Jones, Pte Tim Rees, Pte Keith Urch and LCpl Tav Rees put the result beyond any doubt. The guest of honour, Wigan Warriors' Mick Cassidy, named 1 RRW's LCpl Kev Maddox as the man-of-the-match.

The 1st Battalion, The Duke of Wellington's Regiment won the plate competition, defeating 16 Signal Regiment 12-6.

■ Anyone interested in taking part in rugby league in Germany should contact Capt Brian Stow on Paderborn Mil 3707 or SSgt Gary Norman on Fallingbomstel Mil 2240.

FIXTURES

Your sporting guide to January . . .

ATHLETICS: 17 - 5 Div cross-country championships (Larkhill).

BADMINTON: 15-16 - 5 Div championships (Colerne).

BASKETBALL: 30-Feb 1 - 4 Div Inter-Unit championships.

BOBSLEIGH: 9-14 - British championships (Winterberg, Germany); 29-Feb 4 - Army championships (Igls, Austria).

BOXING: 11 - British Army (Germany) novice grade three team final (BA(G) unit venue); 17-18 - Combined Services individual championships (RAF Uxbridge).

CANOEING: 13-14 - Army championships (Llangollen).

CRESTA: 25 - Army championships (St Moritz, France).

EQUITATION: 13 - Army point-to-point championships (Larkhill); 29 - RA point-to-point championships (Larkhill).

FENCING: 20-21 - Aldershot open (Aldershot).

FOOTBALL: 6 - Youth v Somerset (Away); 12 - Completion of all Challenge Cup and Minor-Units Cup third round ties; 14 - Youth v Berkshire Schools (Aldershot), TA v RLC (Deepcut); 17 - Army v Fire Service (Away); 20 - Youth v Gwent (Aldershot); 24 - Women v Prison Services (Away); 30 - Combined Services v FA (Away).

HOCKEY: 6-7 - Indoor tournament (Birmingham).

LAWN TENNIS: 20 - Army women v Bourne Club (Aldershot); 27 - Army v Metropolitan Police (Aldershot).

LUGE: 29-Feb 4 - Army championships (Igls, Austria).

MODERN PENTATHLON: 20-21 - Winter pentathlon series (RMAS).

RUGBY LEAGUE: 16-21 - Army under-18 tour (Paris); Challenge Cup, third round (TBA).

RUGBY UNION: 10 - Army A v TBC (Aldershot); 17 - Army v Army A (Aldershot); 24 - Army v Oxford (Aldershot).

SKELETON: 9-13 - Army championships (Winterberg, Germany).

SKI BIKE: 20-21 - Army championships.

SNOWBOARDING: 6-13 - Army Medical Services championships; 13-20 - Army championships (Stubai Glacier, Austria).

SQUASH: 11 - Army v Magnet Leisure (Away); 15 - Vets v Axis 1 (Away); 12-14 - Army tour of Newcastle; 17 - Army v Oxford University (Iffley Road); 24-26 - Army championships (Aldershot); 25 - Army v Runnymede (Aldershot); 29 - Combined Services ladies v Hampshire, Vets v Reflex Fitness 1 (Aldershot).

TENNIS AND RACKETS: 21 - Army v TR Association (Queen's).

WINTER SPORTS: 13-23 - Nordic and Alpine Land Div championships (Monetier, Villeneuve, France); Nordic and Alpine 1 (UK) Armd Div championships (Les Contamines, France); 24-Feb 8 - Alpine Army championships (Serre Chevalier, France), Nordic Army/National/Inter-Services championships (Ruhpolding, Germany).

Got a date for the diary? E-mail your fixtures to fixtures@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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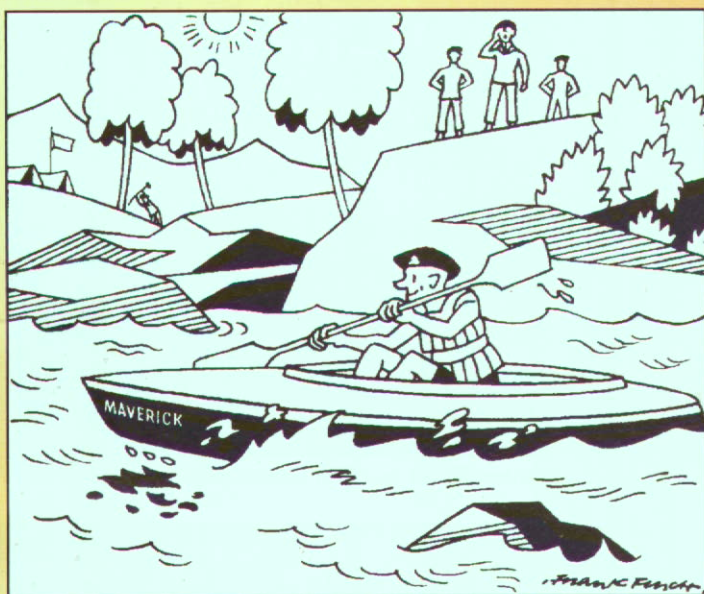
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No 710



How observant are you?

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Frank Finch has made ten changes in detail to one of his drawings taken from our archive. Circle the differences in the lower image, cut out the whole panel, add your name and address and send to HOAY 710, Soldier, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, GU11 2DU by January 31.

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

Do not include anything else in your envelope.

First correct entry drawn after the closing date will

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

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

Name : (Give initials and rank or title)

Address :

November competition (No 708): First correct entry drawn was from Mr I Reid, of Leven, Fife, who wins £100. Runners-up Mr K Sharp, of Breaston, Derbyshire and Mr B Meadows, of Edgbaston, Birmingham, receive a £10 voucher each. The ten differences were: birds; tree shape; second soldier from left; No 8's singlet; No 4's arm and fingers; diving gymnast's back and trouser leg; table hinge; lines on platform.



Freeze frame

"These turkey drummers smell bootiful"

Write your own funny caption for the photograph, right, first published in *Soldier* in May 1952. The best, in the opinion of the Editor, will win a prize from our silver collection bearing the Army logo. *Soldier's* usual competition rules apply and entries should reach us by January 31.

Winner of the November competition (right) is LCpl Bate, of Wattisham-based HQ Sqn, 4 Regt AAC, with the horribly un-PC "The ever under-recruited and rather short-lived Royal Army Suicide Corps goes through a dry run before being issued with pistols". Runner-up is AT Iddon, Scott Troop, 263(H) Sig Sqn, Arborfield, with "Recruit trainers always went back to basics: 'Here is where you insert food'."



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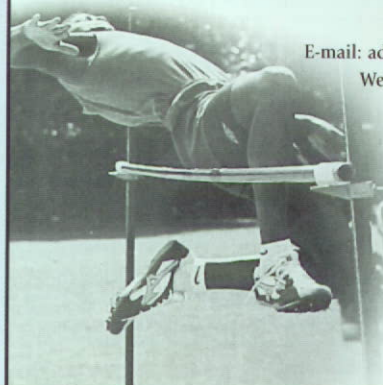
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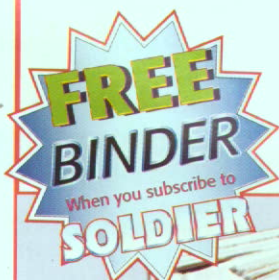
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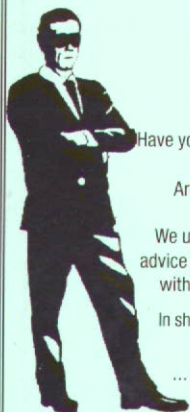
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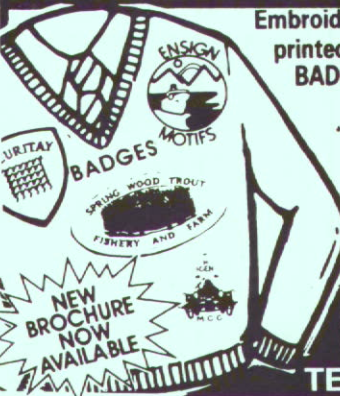


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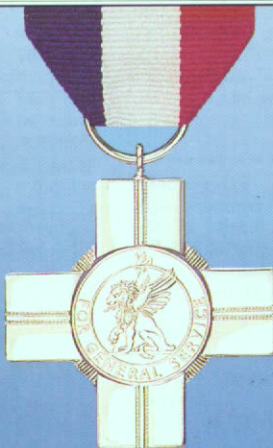
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Jenny, 38-year-old, blonde teacher. Enjoys the theatre and cinema, music, walking, reading and visiting places of interest. Shy but friendly and would like to hear from kind, honest, genuine pen pals, 35-45. P819

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Fiona, 28, 5'8", black hair and green/grey eyes. Enjoys box-aerobics, going to the gym, socialising, swimming and travelling. Seeking pens pals, 24+. P816

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CHARITY: The Cambridge Fund for Old and Disabled Soldiers / William Woodman Charity for Soldiers
REFERENCE: 245807/191679

The Charity Commission proposes to make a Scheme to amend the trusts of this charity. A copy of the draft Scheme can be seen at Enford Parish Church Notice Board, Enford, Nr Pewsey, Wilts or can be obtained by sending a stamped, addressed envelope to The Charity Commission, Woodfield House, Tangier, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4BL, quoting the above reference. Comments or representations can be made within one month from today.

CHY-1161D

CHARITY: The 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles Regimental Trust
REFERENCE: 257895/162145

The Charity Commission has made a Scheme to amend the trusts of this charity. A copy can be seen for the next month at The Gurkha Museum, Peninsula Barracks, Romsey Road, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 8TS or can be obtained by sending a stamped, addressed envelope to Armed Forces Charities, Woodfield House, Tangier, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4BL, quoting the above reference.

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CHARITY: The Devonshire & Dorset Regimental Homes Charity; The Devonshire & Dorset Regimental Chattels Charity
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16-way tie for fourth prize (23 goals, £256.25 each): LCpl BS Austin, HQ Inf Bde; LCpl Birbahadur Bala, 10 Tpt Regt RLC, Colchester; Pte ME Brothwell, 16 Tk Tptr Sqn RLC, Fallingbowl; LBdr AJ Dudley, 29 Cdo Regt RA, Plymouth; Sgt GA Elson, ITC Catterick; CSgt JE Evans, Gibraltar Regt; SSgt PI King, 19 Tk Tptr Sqn RLC, Bulford; Cpl CM Leslie, 170 Pro Coy RMP, Edinburgh; Sgt PG Morgan, 7 Tpt Regt RLC, Bielefeld; LCpl PD Murphy, 1 Regt AAC, Gutersloh; LCpl SRJ Stirling, 9 R Irish; Pte CASynnot, Army personnel Centre, Glasgow; LCpl K Watson, 1 RHF, Fort George; Lt Col DS White, Med Sup Agency, Ludgershall; LCpl ST Wightman, 42 Svy Engr Gp, Hermitage.

DECEMBER 2, 2000

21-way tie for first prize (23 goals, £609.52 each): WO2 D Bowen, 7 Air Asslt Bn REME, Wattisham; Sgt WL Brown, AFCCO Chesterfield; LSgt AP Camidge, 1 Coldm Gds, Windsor; SSgt S Cunningham, 721 EOD Sqn RLC, Ashchurch; Sgt J Garbutt, Army Foundation College, Harrogate; SSgt NT Hill, UNFICYP, Nicosia; LCpl MJ Hopkins, 23 Pnr Regt RLC, Bicester; LCpl M Jones, 5 Regt RA, Catterick; Sgt R Kane, ATR Basingbourn; Sig EM Lawton, 1 Mech Bde Signal Sqn, Tidworth; LCpl (name withheld), 264 Signal Sqn, Hereford; Cpl C McGarry, 1 GS Regt RLC, Gutersloh; Sgt MJ McGill, 1 LI, Edinburgh; Maj JB McMenemy, HQ Land, Netheravon; Sgt BA Meredith, HQ Land, Wiltshire; Tpr PW Richards, QRH, Sennelager; WO2 JG Scott, SEAE, Arborfield; Cpl CN Simpson, 1 DWR, Osnabrück; Cpl RL Whiting, CJPU, Episkopi; Lt Col GS Wright, DG D&D, Upavon; Cpl HA Youd, QRL, Osnabrück.

Prize money up again! Owing to increased ticket sales prize money rose to £12,800 per week, effective December 1, with a top prize of £4,600.

DECEMBER 9, 2000

First prize (27 goals, £4,600): Pte ZS Sharif, 27 Tpt Regt RLC, Aldershot.
Four-way tie for second prize (26 goals, £1,600 each): Gdsm PM Dent, 1 Gren Gds, Pirbright; Capt S Hill, 1 RRW, Paderborn; WO2 BC Love, 4 R Irish; WO1 BL Seymour, HQ UKSC (G), Rheindahlen.

Ten-way tie for sixth prize (25 goals, £180 each): LCpl NC Ashton, 46 NI Wksp REME; Capt DAP Asquith, 721 EOD Sqn RLC, Chilwell; Cpl JC Goodege, ATR Pirbright; Tpr JD Hopkin, QRL, Osnabrück; LCpl JC Lawson, 1 RWF, Tern Hill; LCpl DA Leonard, 62 Cyprus Sp Sqn RE, Dhekelia; Tpr P Reynolds, Scots DG, Fallingbowl; Tpr MD Sherwood, RAC Centre, Bovington; Sgt DB Turner, 1 RHF, Fort George; Pte RL Wall, 1 DWR, Osnabrück.

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New Changi museum needs help of veterans

SINGAPORE is seeking contributions of stories and memorabilia from British veterans to add to the collection in Changi Chapel and Museum, which commemorates more than 7,000 Allied soldiers interned in Changi Prison during the Japanese occupation.

Since it was established in 1988, the Changi Chapel and Museum has been visited regularly by former PoWs and their families. One of the most famous artefacts in the museum is the "Changi Cross", a 50cm brass cross of St George fashioned from spent ammunition casings by SSgt Harry Stogden RAOC for Rev Eric Cordingly, the PoWs' chaplain.

The chapel is to be dedicated and the museum opened on February 15, the 59th anniversary of the fall of Singapore.

For more information, or to attend the opening ceremony, contact Ms Kok Yul Chin, Changi Chapel and Museum Committee, 1 Orchard Spring Lane, Singapore 247729, tel (65) 8323816, or e-mail at yulchin@stb.com.sg

INSPIRED by his grandfather's service with the Indian Army's Mahratta Light Infantry during the First World War, MoD civil servant **Stewart Tuckniss** began designing decorative statues depicting Indian and African soldiers from the British colonial period.

So far he has completed 17 designs in period uniform. The 4ft-high figures, one of which is pictured, left, are hand-carved and painted by craftsmen in West Africa. Examples can be seen in the Imperial War Museum. Stewart, who can be reached at www.colonialsoldier.co.uk, has also done one-off regimental carvings.

TERRITORIAL Army members of Walsall-based **143 Plant Squadron** have been re-excavating a railway cutting at Lawley Common to allow steam trains to use the line once more. The TA specialists, who operate some of the Army's largest earth-moving and construction equipment, joined forces with the Telford Horsehay Steam Trust to reinstate the protected rail corridor between Wellington and the Dronbridge Gorge World Heritage Site.

Capt Vic Parsons said: "It's a challenging project but a worthwhile one. We are only too pleased to have been able to help the steam trust." His unit has fitted the work into its training schedule.

The long-term project could take up to three years to complete.

Free e-blueys cover world of operations

SINCE it was introduced a year ago, BFPO's free e-bluey facility for the families and friends of Service personnel on operational duty overseas has been used to transmit tens of thousands of one-page letters via the internet.

There is no limit to the number of times the service, which is free of charge to BFPO addresses, can be used.

E-blueys offer complete confidentiality and rapid delivery. The sender types in his or her letter before sending it via the internet to an operational BFPO number on a central server in the UK. E-blueys destined for a specific theatre's BFPO number are down-loaded on to a laptop computer, which sends them to a special printer. The printer types the message and automatically places it in a sealed envelope for onward delivery.

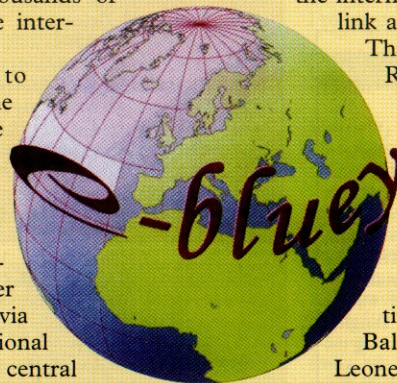
At no point on its electronic journey

into the sealed envelope can the contents of the letter be read.

Access to e-blueys is simple. To create a letter, go to www.bfpo.org.uk on the internet and click the e-bluey link at the top of the screen.

This will take you into the RelayOne site. Simply follow the instructions, which will allow you to type in a message of up to about 250 words. It is as simple as that. BFPO numbers exist for several locations under Operations Palatine and Agricola in the Balkans, Basilica (Sierra Leone), Jural (Saudi Arabia) and Bolton (Kuwait). There are

also numbers for Nicosia in Cyprus, six bases in the Falkland Islands and 15 Northern Ireland locations. Occasional technical difficulties have meant e-bluey sites overseas going temporarily out of action. For more details, check with your local British Forces Post Office.



STAR TURN: Recruiter Sgt Dave Lawrence, Gren Gds, who works in the Armed Forces Careers Office in Milton Keynes, found himself in the limelight when he was asked to switch on the Christmas lights at an old peo-

ples' home in the town. Many of the residents are ex-Service personnel who served in the Second World War. Dave, who has been in regular contact with the home, took two Grenadier drummers in full regalia with him.

SEARCHLINE

Defence Storage and Distribution Agency (Germany) (DSDA(G)) is compiling a display of British Army uniforms past and present. The display will be available for loan to units for open days, fetes across Germany. If anyone has old items, the agency would be grateful for a donation or loan. Help with packaging and carriage offered and donors will be credited in the exhibit captions. Contact Lt Col Malcolm Ingram, Director DSDA(G), BFPO 44, or e-mail at contractor6@bfgnet.de or tel 0049 2594 9622257.

Members of **75th AT Regt RA** and **11th Hussars** who took part in the fighting around Steyerberg (Nienburg area) in April 1945 are asked to contact Herr Jens Mastnak, Neues Berg Strasse 9, 31619 Bienen, bei Hannover, Germany.

Mike Blakeley, who joined the Army Apprentices College ACC in 1981 and completed initial training with **Scarlsbrick Platoon, A Coy** before posting to **29 Cdo RA** in 1983 (also served with 170 Provost Coy RMP, 1985-88) wishes to hear from old comrades by e-mail at mike@blakeley5.freemove.co.uk

Robert (Rab) Rowan, formerly **15 Fd Sp Sqn RE**, Claro Bks, Ripon (1978) is looking for Cpl

Mellville (Tommo) Thompson, also from 15 Fd Sqn, married to Melanie, two daughters Melantha and Melvina. Replies to 2 Rowantree Road, Mayfield, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 5ER (0131 660 5707).

Information sought on the whereabouts of **Ian Patrick Hurley** who served as a lieutenant colonel with **The Queen's Lancashire Regiment** in June 1976. Contact Mrs Jean Ames, 24 Cotton Close, Leicester LE4 7SW.

Ted Kelly, formerly **48 Field Squadron RE** at Hameln and Nienburg 1950-52, is trying to find out what became of his pal **Raymond Scott** from Blyth in Northumberland, who served in the same unit. Ted believes Ray was posted to Korea 1952-53 and may have been killed there. If any old sappers from 48 Fd Sqn can help, they are asked to contact Ted at 42 Odo Rd, Dover, Kent, CT17 0DW or tel 01304 210482.

Steve Eastwood is seeking photographs/information about his late father, **Sgt Roy Eastwood**, who was with a corps of drums and who died three years ago. Steve is interested in any details, and particularly of the time his father served in Northern Ireland. Replies to lindasteve@seastwood85.fsnet.co.uk



Rueben's return

EIGHTY-TWO years after he was severely wounded while serving with South Wales Borderers at Bapaume in one of the final battles of the First World War, Rueben Heywood paid an emotional visit to the regimental museum at Brecon.

Now 101, Rueben was joined at the museum by Cpl Carl Sturdy, left, and LCpl Michael Hunt of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Wales, who are based at the Infantry Training Centre, Wales, at Brecon. The RRW was formed on the amalgamation of the old South Wales Borderers and Welch Regiment in June 1969.

Rueben enlisted with the 10th (Service) Battalion, South Wales Borderers in July 1918 in Belgium and was wounded in the legs at Bapaume three months later. During the Second World War he served in the Home Guard.

Picture: Dragon News and Picture Agency



Remembering: 2nd Lt Damian Bailey, the most-recently commissioned officer to join the 1st Battalion, The Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's) in their new home in Mooltan Barracks, Tidworth, pays his respects at the graveside of a former member of the regiment buried in Tidworth Military Cemetery.

● The cadet corps at **Stonyhurst College**, Lancs, has marked its 100th anniversary. The school lists seven VCs among its former pupils.

● Twenty youngsters from **Normanby and Stockton Road Detachments** of Cleveland Army Cadet Force raised £500 for the Childline charity by walking from their Normanby base to Captain Cook's memorial, a three-hour hike.

REUNIONS

39 Armoured Engineer Squadron: Ex-members welcome to attend re-formation parade in February. Informal function to follow, accommodation available. Details from: WO2 (SSM) Eddie Thompson, 39 Armd Engr Sqn, 32 Engr Regt, BFPO 30.

G Coy (London Scottish), 1/51 Highland Volunteers: Annual dinner on Feb 23. Details from Mark Ormiston on 020 8569 7287 or www.gcompany.org.uk

Nil Desperandum 2001, 5 Field Squadron RE: Reunion for all serving and non-serving former members of the squadron on March 10 at Swinton Barracks, Perham Down. Contact WO2 (SSM) G Irvine RE, 5 Fd Sqn RE, 22 Engr Regt, Swinton Bks, Perham Down, Tidworth, Hants, SP11 9QL (civ 01980 603552; mil 94342 3552).

Poacher 2001: Reunion on March 17 at Spalding, Lincolnshire, for members and partners, past and present, Royal Lincolnshire Regiment, East Anglian Regiment, Royal Anglian Regiment, including 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Battalions, TA battalions and attached personnel. Contact Trevor Snell, 29 St Thomas's Road, Spalding, Lincs (01775 762847) or Brian Willoughby on 01775 724843 (office hours).

4 (SH) Sqn, 21 Signal Regiment (AS): Ten-year Op Granby reunion to be held in Bath in March or April. Contact Sgt Fardy at 101 Log Bde HQ and Sig Sqn (261), Buller Barracks, Aldershot GU11 2BX (Aldershot Mil 94222 3888 or 3749) or Sgt Parkes, Rover Group, 39 Inf Bde HQ and Sig Sqn, BFPO 801 or e-mail sfardy@yahoo.co.uk

12 Regiment RA: Reunion dinner on April 7 at RA Officers' Mess, Woolwich for past and present officers. If you do not receive details by Jan 31, contact Lt R I Taylor RA, TC T (Shah Sujah's Troop), HQ Bty, 12 Regt RA, Dempsey Barracks, Sennelager, BFPO 16.

260 Signal Squadron (SAM): Reunion on

April 27-28 at the County Hotel, Southend. Contact R F Andrews, 7 The Heath, South Tarkenton, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 3HJ (01227 264551).

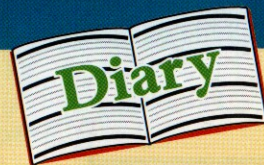
British Korean Veterans: Parade, service at St Patrick's Barracks, Ballymena, April 29 to mark 50th anniversary of Battle of the Imjin by 29th Independent Infantry Brigade Group. Organisers seek anyone who served with: 1 RNF; 1 Glosters; 1 RUR; 8 KRIH; C Sqn 7, RTR; 45 Fd Regt RA; 11 (Sphinx) LAA Bty, RA; 170 Mortar Bty, RA; 55 Fd Engr Sqn RE; 29 Ind Inf Bde Sig Sqn; 57 Coy ASC; 26 Fd Amb RAMC; 29 Ord Fd Pk RAOC; 29 Mob Laundry and Bath Unit RAOC; 10 Inf Wksp REME; 29 LAD REME; 249 Gen HQ Pro Coy RMP; 904 Fd Sec Sec, Int Corps; 104 Air Phot Int Section; 208 Fd Cash Office RAPC; or their regimental associations. Details from Maj R J Walker, The Regimental Office, 5 Waring Street, Belfast BT1 2EW (028 9023 2086).

50th Missile Club RA: Reunion at Quality Hotel, Hull, May 26. Details: A J Todd on 01387 262378 or TODD.A.J@ic24.net or 9 The Grove, Heathhall, Dumfries, Scotland DG1 1TN.

Intake 3/78, Army Apprentices College, Army Catering Corps (1978-80): Reunion planned for around Sept 12. Past and present members invited to contact either WO1 Ian Cheeseman, DCWO, Log Sp Bn, HQ Armd Div, BFPO 1 (mil 94882 3262; civ 0049 05221 289829) or WO1 Steve Gooder, FSWO(S), Log Sp Bn, HQ 145 (HC) Bde, Cavans Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2LQ (tel 94222 2720, civ 01252 347720).

Coldstream Guards: Reunion in October for all who served in Aden with the 2nd Battalion (1964-65). Details: Peter Horsfall, 222 Leigh Hunt Drive, London N14 6DS.

2nd Battalion, The Green Howards: Reunion planned for Darlington area, April 2002. Contact Maj J Riodan on 01609 773678 or Tom Herron on 01912 679576.



Forging ahead: LCpl Danny Bennett RAVC shows off his smithy-ing skills at the Army's annual competition for farriers at the Defence Animal Centre, Melton Mowbray. The three-day contest revolved around skills need for making and fitting horseshoes.

Picture: Graeme Main

George's old tank is centre of attention

FORMER Sgt George Dring came face-to-face with his Second World War Sherman tank for the first time in 57 years when he visited the Imperial War Museum at Duxford.

The Sherman – named Akilla – is the key exhibit in a new £1 million display at the museum's land warfare centre.

Clambering on to the tank took 84-year-old George, pictured far right, a little longer than when he landed with the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry on D-Day.

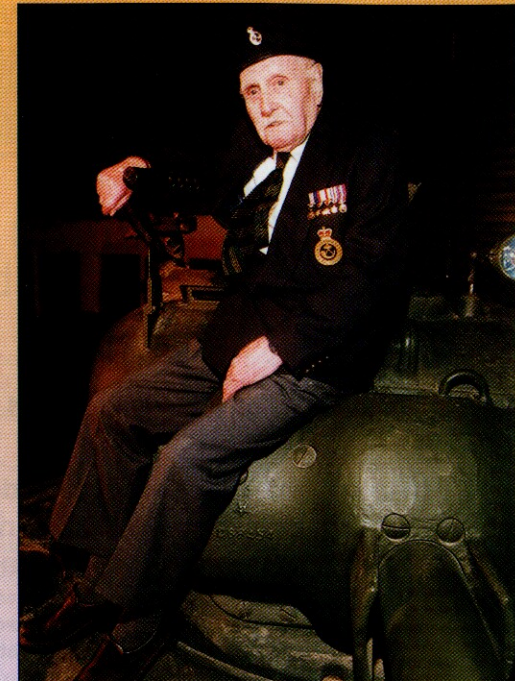
"It looks a lot bigger than it used to," he said at Duxford. "It was our home while we fought

through North Africa and Europe."

He was in action at El Alamein and won two Military Medals during the war. After many narrow escapes (life expectancy of tank crews at the time was measured in weeks), fate caught up with George at Geilkirchen in November 1944. He was hit in the arm and chest while walking across open ground.

The old photograph shows George, extreme left, sitting on Akilla with crew members Tpr Hodkin, Tpr Bennett, Cpl Gould and Tpr Denton, standing.

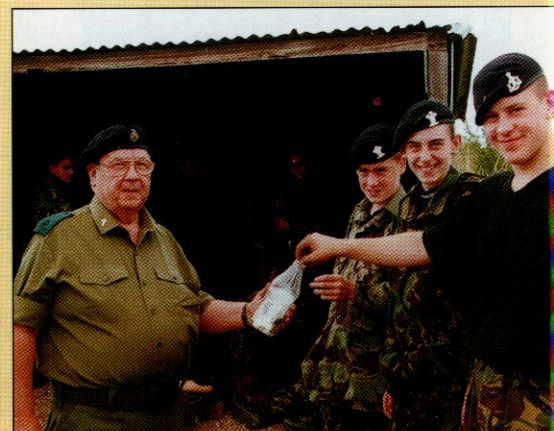
The Nottinghamshire tank regiment suffered 827 casualties during the war.



Fun and games in Chelsea

Special activity events coming up at the **National Army Museum** include a Zulu weekend (February 3-4) featuring Rorke's Drift and Isandlwana; a chance to "meet" British tommies of First World War vintage (March 3) and find out how they lived; and an opportunity to watch archers in action during a Bowmen of England weekend (April 7-8).

You've got to hand it to Joe



That takes bottle: Padre Joe Rooney has hung up his cassock after 14 years as chaplain to the Gwent Army Cadet Force. His last official duty was a cadet camp in the Midlands.

Padre Joe, left, and his "fines" bottle became a familiar sight to the cadets, who were invited to make small contributions to charity for crimes ranging from swearing to fooling about.

He raised more than £1,000 for good causes such as Christian Aid and the Kosovo appeal and his most recent donation was to the Marie Curie Trust in memory of Col Tom Buckthought, commandant of the Gwent ACF for 16 years, who died last year.

Pictured with Padre Joe are, from left, Cadets Alex Dex, Zara Beech and LCpl Daniel Mason, whose "crime" was to nod off during a lesson.

Picture and story: Doug McArthur



Remembering: Bomb disposal operators from 58 Field Squadron (EOD), part of 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD), were joined by former members of the regiment for a tour of the memorials to Royal Engineers EOD operators killed on operations in Bosnia. A service was held at each and wreaths were laid. Main picture is of the memorial at Gornji Vakuf to Spr Barry Nicholas, the first to fall in August 1994. Inset shows the memorial to Cpl Pete Bradley, who was killed in September 1999. The tour began at Vitez, where Cpl Barney Warburton died in May 1995.

THREE videos have been released on the tenth anniversary of the operation to liberate Kuwait. Watch out for **The Gulf War** (£19.99), an uncut, 240-minute documentary based on the much-acclaimed BBC Television series. It has been re-released by DD Video.



Also issued by DD are two new videos, **Desert Storm – Thunder in the Gulf** (£12.99), the story

of the air war, and **Gulf Air War** (£5.99), which looks at the first weeks of the conflict from the pilot's point of view.

All three are available from good video shops or by mail order from DD Video, Unit 1, Pool Bank Business Park, High Street, Tarvin, Chester CH3 8JH. Include £1.75 per cassette for p.p. There is also a credit card hotline on 01829 741490.

Disasters of the Great War and Disasters in the Air, two titles from DD's Military Blunders series, can be obtained from the same sources.

See our February issue for a Gulf War anniversary special

Legends of the regiments and corps

19 The Green Howards Museum, Richmond



Snuff said: This silver ram's head snuff mull graced the table in the 5th West York Militia officers' mess

Snuff box is not to be sneezed at

TAKING snuff was once as widespread a habit as smoking is today and no officers' mess would have been complete without a silver receptacle for the finely-ground tobacco. Some boxes incorporated intricate designs, others were novelty items.

But few could hold a match to the magnificent example pictured above, which, although slightly cumbersome when passed around with the port and cigars, would certainly have been a talking point. To ease its passage around the dinner table, the ram's head mull was fitted with castors.

PAWS FOR THOUGHT

Snuff was spooned onto the back of the hand using a monkey's paw.

The piece originally belonged to the 5th West York Militia, which became the 3rd Battalion, The Green Howards in 1882. It is one of the treasures on view at the Richmond museum, home to a collection spanning three centuries of travel, campaigning and war by The Green Howards.

Uniforms on display include rare examples from 1768 alongside more than 3,000 medals and decorations. Pride of place in the medal room belong to the regiment's 18 Victoria and George Crosses.

The Green Howards Regimental Museum, Trinity Church Square, Richmond, North Yorkshire DL10 4QN (01748 822133). Closed Dec to Jan.

To appear in this feature, contact the Editor

DATES

APRIL
29: Victorian Military Fair, Victory Services Club, Seymour Street, London W2, 1000-1630.
JUNE
2: Major General's Review (Trooping the Colour).
9: Colonel's Review (Trooping the Colour).
16: Queen's Birthday Parade, Horse Guards.

Capital performance: Soldiers from 101 (City of London) Engineering Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), pictured above, were among Service units from all over London taking part in the Lord Mayor's Show. The main feature of their float was a mock-up of St Paul's Cathedral, mounted on a flatbed lorry, to commemorate the saving of the famous landmark by bomb disposal experts during the 1940 Blitz. A smoke generator added a touch of Second World War "special effects" to the display.

Lt Andrew Clarke, far left, said: "It's good we have commemorated the 60th anniversary of the saving of St Paul's, which is such an important part of the history of the city."

More than 80 floats and 6,000 people, stretching over 2½ miles, took part in the annual pageant.

ALDERSHOT-based 22 Field Hospital RAMC has achieved a clean sweep of health and safety and energy efficiency awards. During the past 12 months the unit's kitchen staff secured a "five-star" grading for the second consecutive year and the hospital became the first military unit in Aldershot to receive a full health and safety audit, and the first military unit to be awarded a European healthy workplace trophy. Now 22 Fd Hosp has learnt that it has won the 4 Division energy efficiency award.

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Classy distinction

Good-looking, so refined – and, wouldn't you know, with ESP this intelligent Mercedes almost knows what's going on in your mind

MERCEDES' new C Class looks terrific. Indeed, such is the age in which we live, many will be attracted by the looks alone, writes Syd Taylor.

The shape is generic Mercedes, yet there's a design freshness and originality that makes it distinctive compared with rivals – and it is the most aerodynamically efficient saloon in its sector. It reflects the look of Mercedes flagship S Class, which some say is the world's best motor car.

Despite the sleekness the new model is bigger inside than its predecessor, with more shoulder-room for all and slightly more knee-room for rear occupants.

It is designed to meet all current and foreseeable crash regulations and offers a new level of occupant safety, giving you front, side and now "window" airbags to reduce the risk of head injuries. The two front airbags even inflate in two stages, depending on the severity of impact.

One hopes these systems will never come into play, thanks to accident prevention systems like ABS, Brake Assist and ESP – not the psychic sort, but the Electronic Stability Programme which detects if the car is straying from set parameters and acts accordingly by braking wheels or reducing engine torque in an almost imperceptible way.

To keep you out of trouble of another kind you can opt for "Speedtronic", which limits speed to whatever you set – very useful in these days of Big Brother. It's overridden in an emergency.

Driver or passenger, your comfort is assured on supremely supportive seats with power adjustment for the front two.

You sit in a pollution-free climate, controlled automatically and separately for each side of the car – bringing S Class comfort to the C Class.

The steering wheel – which also houses controls for the audio system, phone and navigation system if fitted – rises, falls and telescopes while the seat adjustment allows it to travel near and far.

One thing a C Class driver can't fail to notice is the excellence of the engines, which range from a two-litre normally-aspirated four-cylinder to a 3.2 litre V6.

There's a 163 bhp Kompressor (super-charged) two-litre four-cylinder, which is

‘Quiet and smooth as glass, it delivers serious thrust’

predicted to be the most popular choice, and there are two turbo-diesels – a four-cylinder 2.2-litre and a five-cylinder 2.7-litre. I tried a Kompressor version and by way of real contrast, a 2.2-turbo diesel. Both engines are leaders in their fields.

The Kompressor engine responds with alacrity to a squeeze of the throttle. Quiet and smooth as glass, with not a peak or trough in its wide powerband, it delivers serious thrust whenever you need it. There's an easy eagerness that is rare in four-cylinder engines and whatever the revs, it demonstrates its zest with unchanging civility. The effortless delivery will see you reaching 62 mph in 9.7 seconds in the automatic version (a six-speed manual is standard) and take you on to a

top speed of more than 140 mph, while overall fuel consumption averages more than 30 mpg. The 2.2-litre turbo-diesel also makes its mark with some surprisingly similar qualities to the Kompressor engine. There's a real willingness to work and it is remarkably quiet and refined.

Performance in abundance is there too, and with even more torque than the Kompressor, there's serious thrust from as low as 1800 rpm. There's actually not much difference in performance between the two versions and interestingly the diesel with automatic is faster than the Kompressor and gives you ten more miles to the gallon into the bargain.

The new six-speed manual gearbox is standard across the range, except for the 3.2 litre V6 – but it's well worth having the five-speed automatic, which can be overridden manually by just nudging the lever to the left or right to change up or down. On all types of roads the new C Class feels serene, yet it's clearly a keen driver's car in all important aspects – especially the informative steering, which is now rack-and-pinion.

You need only a mile or two to really appreciate the refinement of the suspension, which gives outstanding grace and poise. It's particularly satisfying to sweep through a series of bends, knowing that you have enough grip and stopping power to keep you out of trouble.

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C Class: Comfortable, charming, capable

How Korea soldier beat the censors

IN a censored letter home, a British soldier captured in the Korean War wrote: "Tell the family

that we are being well-fed and well-treated... and most of all don't forget to tell it to the Marines." In other words, it wasn't true. Cyril Cunningham, former scientific adviser to the MoD Prisoner-of-War Intelligence

Organisation, has at last exposed the truth about the systematic mistreatment by the communists of British and Allied PoWs in the 1950s conflict. His book, **No Mercy, No Leniency** (Leo Cooper, £19.95) is an important addition to our knowledge on the subject.

Monmouthshires were singled out in 1914

SUCH was the standard of training and readiness of the 2nd Battalion, The Monmouthshire

Regiment that it was the first Territorial unit to be given responsibility for a sector of the line in November 1914. In 1919 it was the only Territorial battalion to march in Germany.

Out Since 14, by John Dixon (Old Bakehouse

Publications, Abertillery), tells of the courage, endurance and self-sacrifice of these men. It is available from the South Wales Borders and Monmouthshire Regiment Museum, The Barracks, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7EB, price £24.95 plus £3.05 p&p (tel 01874 613310; e-mail: swb@rrw.org.uk).

Ordinary citizen's view of Falklands

WHEN Argentina invaded the Falklands in 1982 Frank Schofield kept a daily diary. The result was a

book completed in 1983 but published only now, on the recommendation of former governor Sir Rex Hunt, who says in his foreword to **The Falklands Watcher** (Brewin Books, paperback, £12.95): "I do not agree with all

he says, but he is absolutely right on the basic issue: Britain must continue to provide a credible defence for as long as the Falkland Islanders remain British."

Seriously, this is fun

IN THIS glossy and entertaining memoir, former Irish Guards officer turned PR guru Donough O'Brien has almost turned the society diarist's stock-in-trade of gossip name-dropping into an art form.

Billed as part biographical (of his father), part autobiographical, the book could easily have been sub-titled "Anecdotes of the rich and famous" — a highly marketable commodity in an age when celebrities regularly make front-page news.

So many names are dropped that O'Brien, in his engaging way, felt it necessary to provide a five-page list of principal characters "in order of appearance" — and they're big pages.

Joanna Lumley, one of the "cast", rightly says in her foreword that the book is full of "politicians and painters; roy-

Fringe Benefits by Donough O'Brien (Bene Factum, £20).

Review: Chris Horrocks

alty, rascals and racing drivers; dancers and dictators; heroes and horrors; stars, singers and spies. It's seriously good fun".

The list includes soldiers — among them three field marshals, plus assorted officers and senior NCOs.

Donough's four years in the Army are recorded anecdotally and with obvious affection in a section which vies for entertainment value with his amusing and nostalgic evocation of the Swingin' London of the Sixties, with its models, film stars, Beatles, Rolling Stones... and scandals.

Both are combined in a story about Secretary of State for War and former brigadier

John Profumo, whose famous exit from public life has since been redeemed by his selfless charity work in the East End.

On an official visit to Belfast, Profumo asked legendary Irish Guards recruiter Sgt John Kenny: "Could you persuade me to join up?" Came the reply: "Well, I don't know, sir. You see, you've got the O at the wrong end of your name."

Donough's father, Toby, was a *Daily Telegraph* journalist who doubled-up as an anti-Nazi propagandist in the late 1930s, going on to work for the Conservative Party as one of the original political "spin-doctors".

He later became the doyen of PR consultants, an achievement which made him the butt of satirical sketches by Peter Cook and Dudley Moore at London's Establishment Club.

O'Brien junior obviously inherited his father's flair. Shortly after leaving the Army, he provided the words for a photographic portrait of

FRINGE BENEFITS

THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE BEAUTIFUL... AND THE O'BRIENS



DONOUGH O'BRIEN
INCLUDING PHOTOGRAPHS BY
PATRICK LICHFIELD & JOHN J. GREEN
FOREWORD BY JOANNA LUMLEY

the Brigade of Guards by his flatmate, former Grenadier Patrick Lichfield. The pictures were published in news-

Sharing out the Fringe Benefits

IN association with the publishers we have two copies of *Fringe Benefits* to give away. All you have to do is answer the question below on a postcard containing your name and address and send it to Fringe Benefits, *Soldier*, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2DU by January 31. First two correct entries drawn at random win the books. Usual *Soldier* competition rules apply.

Question: In which Guards regiment did Lord Lichfield serve?

papers and magazines around the world and some can be seen in this book. There is also a rare sighting of a few of

John d Green's "Birds of Britain" (not the feathered variety, and rare because the photographer's book was

printed in only one edition, making it a collector's item).

Donough, now managing director of the UK arm of a communications consultancy, relates a colourful life (viewed, in his words, "on the fringe") in bite-sized chunks, each a nugget of amusement, liberally and glossily illustrated with pictures of the cast.

Modern students of social shifts may be amused by one of the best stories in the book — the tale of a Grenadier company commander serving in Egypt who was conducting a punishment parade when the sergeant reported that two guardsmen had been found in the same bed.

Asked to account for himself, one of the offenders said: "I thank you, sir, for leave to speak, but I'm a homosexual."

The company commander misheard him and, thinking he had said "homesick", replied in an understanding way: "Well, we all are, out here, from time to time."

Soldier ordering service

All books mentioned on these pages are available from Helion & Company, who can also supply 14,500 in-print military books and operate a free booksearch; p&p is extra. All major credit/switch cards taken. Please allow up to 28 days for delivery. Postal address: Helion & Company, 26 Willow Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 1UE, UK (tel 0121 705 3393; fax 0121 711 1315).

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Tam Dalyell, Gulf War Syndrome campaigner

GULF War Syndrome, the sinking of the Belgrano, the Westland affair and Porton Down are some of the issues on which Tam Dalyell has campaigned relentlessly in his 40 years as a maverick Labour MP. The old Etonian soccer fan, descendant of a notorious 17th century general, admits to a hard time as a National Service trooper in the Royal Scots Greys, giving him a "hide like a rhinoceros" which stood him in good stead as a politician. His story is told in Russell Galbraith's excellent biography, **Inside Outside: The Man They Can't Gag** (Mainstream, £15.99).

Great War PoWs who lived to tell

IN military history terms **Prisoners of the Kaiser** (Leo Cooper, £16.95) is pure gold.

Sub-titled "The Last PoWs of the Great War", it relates the first-hand experiences, some grim, some funny, but always poignant, of those remaining of the 170,000 British soldiers taken captive by the Germans.

Author Richard Van Emde performed a great service by specialising in gathering eye-witness accounts from survivors of the "lost generation" and this book accompanies last year's Channel 4 TV documentary. If you missed it first time round, catch the repeat.

National Service in the Emergency

MANY old soldiers today regard themselves as being part of a long-forgotten Army — the squaddies who fought the Communists in the hazardous jungles of Malaya half a century ago. Les Ives, who served with the Green Howards as a National Serviceman from 1949 to 1951, has helped put that right with **A Musket for the King**, which paints a vivid picture of service in the Emergency. It is available, at £6 plus £1.30 p&p, only from the author at 7 Elm Close, Bishopsmead, Tavistock, Devon PL19 9AP.

IN BRIEF

The Mammoth Book of Endurance and Adventure edited by Jon E Lewis. Col John Blashford-Snell, Sir Ranulph Fiennes, John Ridgway and Chay Blyth are prominent in this collection of real-life escapades. (Robinson paperback, £7.99.)

Cassell's Foreign Words and Phrases edited by Adrian Room. You always wanted to know what a pickelhaube was, didn't you? Well, it's a spiked German helmet. All those weird words explained. (Cassell, £20.)

Kesseling by Kenneth Macksey. Reissue of a 1978 portrait of the German strategist. (Greenhill Military Paperback, £12.95.)

1939 by Michael Jabara Carley. American's reappraisal of why Britain, France and the Soviet Union failed to produce an alliance against Nazi Germany. (House of Stratus, £16.99.)

Great Military Blunders by Geoffrey Regan. Glossily illustrated paperback of the TV series. (Channel 4 Books, £10.99.)

The Diary of a Cavalry Officer 1809-15 by Lt Col William Tomkinson. Reissue, in the Spellmount Library of Military History, of the 1894 Peninsular and Waterloo Campaigns classic (£24.95).

The SS: A History, 1919-45 by Robert Lewis Koehl. This studious insight into the organisation involved in the mass murder of Jews, homosexuals and gypsies also deals with the military campaigns of the Waffen-SS. (Tempus, £25.)

Germany's Secret Weapons in World War II by Roger Ford. Illustrated survey covers aircraft, rockets, missiles, guns, tanks, submarines, torpedoes and NBC weapons. (Spellmount, £18.95.)

Fighting the Invasion edited by David C Isby. German Army commanders' accounts of the events leading up to D-Day. (Greenhill, £19.95.)

Jihad! The Secret War in Afghanistan by Tom Carew. Former British soldier tells of combat action against the Soviet Spetsnaz and Afghan mercenaries and a West-sponsored training camp for Mujahideen in Pakistan. (Mainstream, £16.99.)

Zhukov's Greatest Defeat by David M Clantz. The "forgotten" catastrophe — Operation Mars, west of Moscow, 1942 — which cost the Red Army an estimated 335,000 men dead, wounded or missing, plus 1,600 tanks. (Ian Allan, £29.99.)

Leadership in Conflict 1914-18 by Matthew Hughes and Matthew Seligmann. Distinguished authorities discuss the powerful

personalities whose decisions sometimes led to carnage. (Leo Cooper, £25.)

Flags of our Fathers by James Bradley with Ron Powers. The real story of the six American flag-raisers shown in the legendary photograph taken at Iwo Jima. One of them was Bradley's father. (Pimlico paperback, £10.)

Napoleon's Cavalry and its Leaders by David Johnson. New edition of the 1978 work by a former member of the Welsh Guards and North Staffordshire Regiment. (Spellmount, £18.95.)

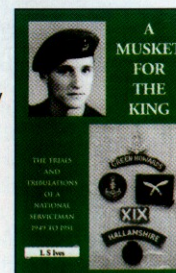
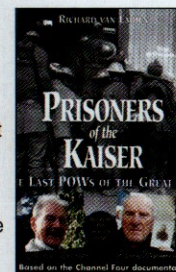
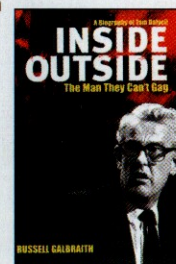
Napoleon: The Man Who Shaped Europe by Ben Weider with Emile Guegen. Weider, who wrote the million-selling *The Murder of Napoleon*, contends in this biography that the Emperor has been unjustly vilified. (Spellmount, £14.95.)

The Lines of Torres Vedras by John Grehan. Examines in detail the role of the fortress which is described as the cornerstone of Wellington's Peninsular War strategy. (Spellmount, £20.)

Warfare by John Harclerode. In the light of the recent *Kursk* submarine tragedy, this scholarly study linked to the TV science series *Equinox* includes a timely examination of the state of the Russian military. (Channel 4 Books, £12.99.)

Battle Group! by James Lucas. Story of German Kampfgruppen action in the Second World War, reissued in the Cassell Military Paperbacks series (£5.99.)

Hitler's Sky Warriors by Christopher Ailsby. German paratroop actions in the Second World War. Many photographs, some never before published. (Spellmount, £18.99.)





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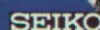
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SOLDIER to soldier

Keep that 'feedback' coming . . .

THERE's an old saying about soldiers: "If they are not moaning, it's time to worry." So writes a contributor to our letters pages – now titled simply Mail – in this new Talkback section.

Another correspondent (who wins our prize letter award) says he would rather have a moaning soldier in the ranks than a moaning ex-soldier in civvy street. He also suggests that if it wasn't for all that moaning, British soldiers would still be kitted out with puttees and Lee Enfield rifles.

♦ ♦ ♦

While he may be stretching the point, there is no doubt that the Army is responding to the feedback (or moaning, if you will) it gets from a variety of sources, including CGS's Briefing Team, attitude studies and (dare we say it) *Soldier*.

An up-to-the-minute example lies behind the report on Page 8 of the Army's decision to give every soldier – married or single – an extra day's relocation leave on posting between theatres in the UK. It is a concession made to ease the turbulence faced by soldiers and their families.

Entirely due to your efforts, the letters columns in this magazine have become a vibrant forum of debate across the spectrum of Army life. Keep 'em coming . . .

♦ ♦ ♦

Here's a summary of what the European Union's newly-agreed defence capability will mean to the average soldier: It isn't a European Army and it is not in competition with Nato.

It will not involve additional exercise commitments (existing national FTXs will be adapted to take account of the EU dimension), and you won't have to learn a foreign language . . . or lose your beloved cap badge.

Who says? The British officer who has pulled the whole thing together from his office in Brussels.

Home truths

Sue Bonney

That community thing is really down to all of us

THE start of 2001 sees us at the Army Families Federation working through the responses to our Changing Attitudes Survey and spouses' views on their life with the Army – as it is and as they would like it to be.

There are as many views as questionnaires in some matters, but on one issue there has been an interesting consensus . . . people want to feel part of a community. Many commented especially on the lack of welcome or even acknowledgement of their arrival at a unit or patch, and of perceived exclusion because of rank or cap badge.

However, I can't help wondering how many of those who want more of a community are actually willing to do something about it.

Where I live, the same small number of people organises the various community events throughout the year, which the rest of the village attends and enjoys. But ask for more volunteers to help out, and there is a deafening silence.

It's the same on every Army patch. In the bad old, good old days you started helping out because you were the "wife of" with not a lot of choice in the matter and ended up feeling part of a community that you genuinely cared about.

Events were organised and supported, newcomers were welcomed with a plant and brief introduction to the area, concerns and ideas were expressed and acted upon – and people with problems knew who they could approach for help. This still happens, of course, but much more rarely, especially in the UK. So much so, an official "welcome" organisation is being set up to take the place of what once happened as a matter of course.

At a communications forum I attended recently, a very experienced worker with families in a large Army garrison expressed the view that the community



Sue Bonney is
Editor of the AFF
Families Journal

he knew was apathetic and cynical. Now, cynicism can be healthy (not believing all you hear, taking things with a pinch of salt, believing it when it happens) but it can also devalue genuine effort and intent.

As for apathy, the very separate and self-involved lives we all seem to lead these days do not help. We are all just too busy . . . isn't that our excuse?

Or "It's not my problem"; or "Who's going to listen to me?"; or "Good idea, but I just haven't got the time to help. Someone else will take it on".

Can we really not be bothered? Especially when the next family with a problem could be our own. We might wish then that we had taken part.

Meanwhile, the lack of numbers at community gatherings, the Chief of the General Staff's Briefing Team's family briefings, or Defence Housing Executive family consultative groups, discourages those who bother to put them on and gives the powers-that-be the perfect excuse not to hold any more.

It would appear to be "Apathy rules, who cares?"

Thanks to social change, the "wife of" is long gone and rightly no longer obliged to take part – but we are a poorer community because of it. In these PC days, where the individual is king (oops, sorry . . . or queen), community is up against it.

Yet we all need each other at times, especially in the Services, and there is nothing more rewarding than achieving something positive for the general good, and for ourselves.

If you want your community back, don't leave it to others – take action and work together. Respond to invitations to comment or communicate. Demonstrate your concern. Or one day in this brave new century our community, such as it is, will become extinct.

'I can't help wondering how many of those who want more of a community are actually willing to do something about it'



Front line argument rages on

I READ "Should women fight in the front line" (Vox pop, Nov) with great interest and wonder if we need to be asking such a sexist, provocative question, let alone publishing offensive, ill-educated opinions.

On Sgt Stevenson's assertion that women "can't do their jobs", the same question was asked ten years ago about women becoming mechanics. We are now getting our first female artificer through Bordon.

With reference to his point about defecation in the field, if a man cannot hold a bottle for a woman he is the one who shouldn't be in the front line. I am sure women who train for special duties in Northern Ireland would enlighten us on how to cope.

He also commented on physical abuse if captured. Most men would find this just as distressing as women.

It's instinctive for a male to want to protect a female, but if he is a professional, should this affect him to the point of poor performance? Most women are not as physically strong as most men, but I am sure there are men who wouldn't like to race Kelly Holmes or hold a conversation with Germaine Greer.

If you can't cope with the way the Army employs women, get out. — **Cpl Moore, 13 Air Assault Support Regt RLC.**

DO women only want equal rights when it suits them? In response to views expressed in Vox pop (Nov), males have to complete a fitness run in 8min 30sec to earn 100 points, while females have to do it in 10min 30sec. If men have to work 20 per cent faster to get the same result as women, should they be paid 20 per cent more?

It's the same for the combat fitness test, in which women have to carry less weight. Will men in infantry sections have to carry more ammo? Not very equal, is it? — **Sgt W D Saunders, 32 Engr Regt Wksp, Hohne.**

ANY woman who thinks real soldiering is about being hard enough to carry a rifle should think again. Some women may be up to the task, but not with that attitude. — **LCpl A Wood, 1 RRRW, Germany.**

● Further letters on this subject have been held over for the February edition

Moaning soldier is better than a whingeing civvy

AS a rear-echelon soldier serving on yet another tour with our illustrious infantry in Kosovo, I'd like to respond to Sgt Field and LSgt Skinner ("Stop moaning and get on with the job", Nov).

If it wasn't for our so-called moaning the British infantryman would still be running round in puttees, armed with a Lee Enfield. "Lump it or get on with it" is the attitude that got us into our poor state of retention.

Prize letter

That style of man-management was acceptable when we joined up, but as senior ranks we now have to move with the times. There are plenty of moaning soldiers, but I would rather have a moaning rear-echelon soldier in the Army than an ex-infantryman in civvy street telling his mates how shabbily he was treated by his senior NCOs.

Let's lead our troops with respect and dignity . . . and maybe they will see us in the same light. — **Sgt R Van-son, 1 PWRR LAD REME, Kosovo.**

SGT Field and LSgt Skinner make the point that non-infantry soldiers complain more than contemporaries in other arms.

In 17 years I have served with infantry (two separate battalions), cavalry, tanks, artillery, engineers and transport, as well as with a detachment serving with the Royal Air Force, and I can safely say that they all moan equally, especially about clothing, medals and entitlements.

There's an old saying about soldiers: "If they are not moaning, it's time to worry". We are all on the same team. Soldiers are soldiers whatever the cap badge. Besides, aren't they whingeing about whingers? — **Sgt Gary Marsh, 3 RSME Wksp REME, Camberley.**

THEIR letter refers to other arms and services as "rear-echelon soldiers". Having served alongside some fine infantry units during my time as an instructor at RMA Sandhurst and at Warminster, it is rare to read such a reference to other arms.

I wouldn't have perceived much of an echelon system on the modern battlefield, the difference between front line and rear line being seamless. There have not been many operations when the "rear echelon" has not been involved.

There is a difference between whingeing and looking after the welfare of a modern force. Improvements in retention are testament to this positive approach. — **WO1 (Royal Artillery Sergeant Major) C Broadfoot, RHQ, London.**

THIS attitude is the reason hundreds of skilled, well-trained soldiers are leaving the Army. — **Michael Ingledeew, ex-Cpl REME (since May), Middlesbrough.**

THE perception that you should accept shortcomings on the basis that you "signed on the dotted line" perpetrates the myth that the military should accept poor service as the norm.

That this style of management may be prevalent among those responsible for recruits is more worrying than any non-payment of allowances.

The authors have every reason to expect the highest standards of administration from those who support them and should not defend criticism of its shortcomings when standards fall; to excuse them on the basis that in serving the country they are to be expected belongs to a long-gone era. — **K Redfearn (ex-WO2 Royal Artillery), FSST(UK), Larkhill.**

Sailors get earlier crack at housing incentive

THE Long Service Advance of Pay (LSAP) scheme permits up to £8,500 to be borrowed to assist Service personnel to enter the housing market and/or to help meet housing needs arising from changing Service or domestic circumstances.

The advance is recoverable, interest-free, over a period of ten years at a rate of ten per cent a year starting two years after the initial advance.

Qualifying criteria, procedures to be followed and details regarding exemptions are explained in the Enclosure 1 to D/SP Pol 1c/30/6/10 Revision Tri-Service Regulations for LSAP dated March

26, 1999. Unfortunately, the qualifying criteria differ between the Services.

Within the Army and Royal Air Force applicants must wait until they are 35, while in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines the applicant may apply from age 23. The reason, according to the regimental admin office, is the differing terms of service between the Services. In this era of "purliness", this is surely in contradiction to our equal opportunities policy. Is this likely to change in the future? — **Maj R Dunne RLC, 51 Port Squadron, 17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC, Marchwood.**

PISCATOR



Question time: What is a Centurion?

A: A new type of car? B: A breed of hamster? C: A tank

Answers on a postcard please to: ABF *Soldier* Competition, 41 Queen's Gate, South Kensington, London SW7 5HR. First ten picked entries will win a Piscator Bugler Boy keyring and a Tommy Atkins fridge magnet! (no name and address, no prize!) All entries will be entered into the ABF Grand Prize Draw.



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Here are two good reasons for a moan

IN response to "Stop moaning and get on with the job" (Mailbag, Nov), I would like to make the following points:

Allocation of married quarters to single soldiers – The Army is an equal opportunities employer, which means the Army will not discriminate against anyone. Not letting a soldier/officer live in an otherwise empty married quarter because they are single is not fair or equal.

How about moving all pads out of MQs

and letting them find their own accommodation (or shack up in a barrack block), and see how fair that is?

Not enough combat clothing to go around – It's the Army's responsibility to provide its employees with suitable clothing, so instead of putting up with it, complain. Your RSM wouldn't like to see his guys and gals on parade with shabby clothing. – LCpl A J Fiddes, Dental Centre, Omagh, Northern Ireland.

SOLDIER welcomes your letters, whether you are an officer or other rank; serving or civvy; nine, 19 or 90. All we ask is that you keep them brief and to the point. We'd prefer them to be typed but if they are handwritten, please put names, addresses and in block capitals (not necessarily for publication). A prize from the *Soldier* gift collection will be awarded each month if we judge that a letter, serious or humorous, merits it. Acceptance or rejection of letters is the decision of the Editor, who reserves the right to amend for length, clarity or style. Anonymous letters will not be considered.

Mail us!

PS...

Treat Act with care

I HAVE been involved with the Army – Regular, TA and now Army Cadet Force – since 1968. Having read the comments about the new Human Rights Act (Vox pop, Oct), I think it should not be allowed to interfere or dilute discipline, and this should be made plain to potential recruits, the government of the day and the European Union. In my day barrack-room lawyers would try to use legislation to their own benefit.

If the Act means soldiers get a better deal from the Army and are treated with the respect they deserve, but does not undermine the good name of our Armed Forces, it will be a good thing for the Army. – CSM Brian Yardley, Yorks N and W Army Cadet Force, Halifax.

Incentive to quit?

RETENTION bonuses are taxed but still give soldiers a nice lump sum at their three-, five- and/or eight-year points. Lucky them. I've noticed that personnel are banking the bonuses and giving notice the day after signing for the eight-year one. This gives them a nest-egg for when they start in civvy street. Yet there are no cash incentives for those of us who just missed out by enlisting during 1990. – Sgt D Ross AGC(SPS), Academy Admin, Office RMA Sandhurst.

Boots for the use of

PLEASE help. My 15-year-old son wants to join the REME and his school options are focused on the Army. He has been in the cadets since he was 13 and adores it.

But he is 6ft 2in tall with size 15 feet and I have been unable to find Army boots to fit him. He has missed parades and detachment weekends because he is not properly kitted out. Where can we get a pair of size 15s? – Mrs S Childs, 16 Park Avenue, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 1DR.

EU force guarantee

IN principle I am not against the formation of a European force. But as a former WO1 I am concerned that the rights of Service personnel are guaranteed when serving with this force. If a soldier is seriously injured and medically boarded out, is his pension guaranteed? – Capt T P O'Connor, Cheshire Army Cadet Force.

Pressure group

I WOULD be grateful if you could help us through your pages make reserve soldiers aware of an important issue should they be injured while serving. If they cannot prove negligence by the MoD and lose their civilian jobs through injury, they will not be compensated and receive only a pension. We are campaigning for change. – R T Houston, Injured Reserve Soldiers Action Group, 21 Holbeck Avenue, Marton, Blackpool FY4 4LS (tel 01253 440502) or tommyhouston@hotmail.com



Mobilisation was made so very easy

I AM one of a few hundred reservists serving in Kosovo and came on this tour after responding to one of many requests from the Territorial Army and Reserves (Manning) office to mobilise.

I'd like to point out that I did not ring up and ask to come to the Balkans. I'm happy in civilian life (good job, nice house, car, motor cycle... just got engaged), I don't need the money and I'm not in the Territorial Army.

I mobilised because I wanted to help out. The process is superb – you chose if and when you want to mobilise, and for how long and then attend the Reserves Training and Mobilisation Centre in Nottingham.

EXCELLENT STAFF

I was apprehensive about being thrown into green kit again, but it was good. You do about two weeks' revision training (bearing in mind you are already a trained soldier), and are led gently by the excellent staff. There is an absence of the "arse about" factor you can encounter in the Army and the whole process is well planned and run.

The attitude of the lads in the regiments I have worked with has been superb (they poke fun at us but on the whole appreciate us being here).

My only problems have been with pay, brought about by being taken on and off the strength of RTMC, Scots DG and 1 PWRR in a very short time. All has been resolved, except for LSSA separation allowance, which one office told me I qualify for, another that I do not. After 18 months in the Balkans in three years I should have earned about 500 LSSA days since December 1997. No bonuses? Can't be right.

Still, keep up the good work, RTMC staff.
– Pte P Rice RAMC, 1 PWRR, Kosovo.

Compassion cell pulled out stops

I AM writing in response to Cpl Dunn's letter "Army support was not there for me when I needed it" (Nov). I would like to reassure readers that the compassionate system operated by the Army is second to none.

While on an operational tour of Bosnia in 1997 I was waiting for a flight back to Bosnia from Split on the "Bos Bus", having just completed the adventurous training package on Brac.

I called my mother to ask how my father was (he had been diagnosed with cancer prior to my departure to Bosnia) and was told he had been admitted to hospital. I told my squadron 2ic in Bosnia that my father's condition had worsened and he advised me to have my mother contact the compassionate recall number.

Within 30 minutes I received a call from an officer in Banja Luka, advising me that if I could get to Split airport immediately I would be flown home on the next available flight.

So, armed with a small day sack, shorts, flip-flops, sleeveless rugby shirt but no passport, I was transported by Land Rover to Split, where I was driven down the runway to a waiting Hercules that had been delayed for my arrival. As I was ushered on to the already crammed aircraft there were some strange looks from the other passengers. At that point even my mother didn't know I was on my way.

At Lyneham the aircraft stopped short before making its long taxi to the dispersal

area so that I could alight and be whisked off in a waiting car provided by the Royal Air Force. At 0100 British time I found myself back in my home town... just six hours after speaking to my mother.

I was fortunate to have the assistance of the RAF and to be operationally deployed, but I do feel my story highlights the way that, once the cogs have been set in motion, the machine runs very smoothly. I hope this sets some soldiers' minds at rest. – **Sgt Iain Ross, Army Careers Information Office, Ipswich.**

WHILE I have the utmost sympathy for Cpl Dunn, the system could not have worked more smoothly for me. While I was serving on Op Agricola 4 my father suffered a heart attack.

My wife rang the compassionate hotline and, following checks with the hospital, they contacted my unit. My journey home was organised by the evening of the Sunday my father went into hospital.

I was sent home by the fastest means possible, flown to Manchester and taken by taxi to Crewe, arriving at the hospital before 1500 on the following afternoon.

All involved – my workmates, my unit, the movements cell in Macedonia – were superb. All I had to do was pack.

Thankfully, my father is recovering and I am back in Podujevo. I'd like to thank everyone involved for their help and understanding. – **SSgt Steve Copeland, 1 PWRR LAD REME, Podujevo.**

Your support helped us survive

A YEAR ago my fiancée Ina gave birth to our second daughter, Shannon. I had not long been promoted to lance corporal and Ina and I were three months away from being married. I was as happy as I've ever been.

Shannon was born with a number of major organ and bone defects, she had only one lung and her kidneys were not working properly. Her spine was deformed and her left hand missing.

My family and I were devastated, even more so when the doctors told us we might need to turn off her life support machine.

My wife and I were driving to Bremen, a 234km return trip, every day or spending hours at the four different hospitals in Hamburg, Bremen and Soltau she was transferred to in the first three weeks. Last November Ina and I and our parents spent

more than DM12,000 (about £3,835) on travel alone. The stress was unimaginable and the cost crippling.

At this point, Ina and I received both financial and legal assistance from SSAFA's Anne MacKintosh, the Red Cross, Capt Allan Mellor (32 Engr Regt's families' officer), and SSgt Tosh Simpkin, 32's regimental admin officer.

HARDEST SIX WEEKS

They helped us through the hardest six weeks of our lives. We were helped and comforted at all times by so many people that it is difficult to thank them all.

Visits by Capt Mellor and Sgt Neil Webster from the families' office, SSAFA and the Red Cross at home and in the hospitals made us realise that when we needed help the Army really was a big family ready and willing to help all its members, regardless of rank or time served.

The Royal Engineers Association, the Army Benevolent Fund and the Royal British Legion have provided invaluable financial assistance, leaving no stone uncovered in their efforts to help us. Without their continued support and that of my regiment, my commanding officer, Lt Col Barry Le Grys, the families office, pay office and wives' club, I believe we would not have been able to handle the stress.

Dr Hinz of the Links DerWeser Hospital in Bremen was great, as were SSgt Simpkin and my immediate boss, Cpl Michael Binns.

Shannon has had a second major heart operation and requires two more, plus many others, but we are as positive as we can be, knowing the support is there when we need it. We cannot thank you all enough. – **LCpl Peter O'Smotherly and family, 32 Engineer Regiment, Hohn.**

50 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, Jan 1951: "Right hand down a bit" ... the Army Mechanical Transport School at Bordon, Hants, puts a class of learner drivers through their paces.



THEN
AND
THEN

From *Soldier*,
Jan 1976:
Genevieve

25 YEARS AGO

Alexander, who was the 300th and last baby to be born in the British Military Hospital, Changi, poses with proud mother and nurse. From a feature on Singapore as the British Army said farewell to the island state after more than 150 years as colonial force and Commonwealth friend.



If you want a quarter, make the commitment

LCPL Gibson suggests married quarters for single serving soldiers ("Here's a way to keep all that empty housing stock in good shape", Nov). He's living in cloud-cuckoo-land.

The reason behind Service quarters and their allocation is simple ... they are there for married soldiers. The rules are in place for good reasons. Housing problems are bad enough for families as it is. While there might be abundant houses at one post, at the next there might only be enough to go round for those who are married.

How would he feel if a family with children was not housed because a single soldier and his girlfriend had occupied the last available quarter? Unless you are married you might not understand the extent of the problems this would cause.

An earlier letter, "In civvy street we'd be classed as wed" (Sept), which he quotes, is actually wrong, as he would find out if he sought advice from a solicitor. But we are not in civvy street, we're in

the Army and every person who joins up is aware of the housing and accommodation charges when they enlist.

If unmarried couples are granted housing, the situation would explode. How many other single serving soldiers would come forward to demand quarters? The problem would go through the roof.

We've had to make sacrifices to get the privileges we have as married people serving in the Army. Stop whingeing and make the commitment. — **SSgt Perry and Sgt Towers, ACIO York.**

We are here to support Regular medics

I FIND it hard to see Maj McAuley's point of view ("We are not helping full-time medics", Oct). The Regulars have recruiting problems but there are other reasons for this. Regular Army nurses are paid very competitive rates compared with civilian nurses, so what more can the Army do? The nurses the TA attracts are mature, well-qualified and have families.

PS...

Already in the club

I LIKED the photo of the 123 Combat Supply bikers (Oct) and read that they might be starting up a motor cycle club. Fortunately, that isn't necessary as there is already a well-established Services Motor Cycle Club. The SMCC caters for serving and retired members of all three Services and the MoD Civil Service. It has been going for years and has nearly 150 members in the UK and abroad. Anyone interested should contact WO1 Andy Humphreys, D Sp Ops 4a, DLO, Bldg 300/2, Monxton Road, Andover SP11 8HT. — Maj Nigel Coole, OC IT Wing, Sch of Employment Trg, Worthy Down.

Just the tonic...

YOUR quiz "Who wants to run the Army?" (Dec) gave the impression that potential officers should know they should add gin to tonic when making a G and T. All good Sandhurst officers will tell you that it is the tonic that should be added to the gin. — Capt W E Dunlop, 1 D and D, Northern Ireland.

No comparison

I WISH to respond to Lt Col Hamilton's letter (Oct) concerning a medal for National Servicemen. Whether or not these soldiers deserve a medal is a matter of opinion, but to compare the aggregated service of a two-year conscript with that of the Territorial Army volunteer is simply ridiculous.

The TA soldier earns his or her medal through continuous voluntary dedication and efficiency over many years, and at the expense of weekends, evenings and, in most cases, annual holidays. Increasingly he or she runs the risk of prejudice in the workplace, and those in positions of authority are committed to hours of unpaid administration work at home.

The newly-instituted Volunteer Reserve Service Medal is the descendant of the old (and cherished) Territorial Decoration and the Territorial Efficiency Medal. These in turn replaced the volunteer and yeomanry medals created in the 1890s and which predate National Service by half a century.

How can this tradition of rewarding volunteers for their service be an insult to National Servicemen? — Lt Col D A Mathias RLC(V), commanding 165 Port Regiment RLC(V), Grantham, Lincs.

Joining the Regulars for them would be much harder than a short-service engagement. And what about child care?

It is the job of the Territorial Army to support the Regulars. Army Medical Services has worked on the 60 per cent reserves, 40 per cent Regulars principal for years. — **LCpl John Waddington RAMC TA, Nottingham.**

Vox pop

The regular feature in which we ask soldiers for their views on an issue

Euro lingo

As a 60,000-strong European rapid reaction force came a step closer to reality, we asked troops deployed in Kosovo whether there was a case for the British soldier to learn more foreign languages

Pte Mark Nicholson, 1 PWRR

English is accepted as an international language and most of the units from other countries speak it. I feel English is the universal language that everyone should use.



Fus Phillip Marsh, RRF attached to 1 PWRR

I was in Germany for four-and-a-half years and I tried my best to pick up the language. I think it is ignorant to work alongside people from other nations and not try to speak their language. Soldiers should be sent away on three-month learning excursions so that they could then work as interpreters instead of having to use one.

Cpl Simon Hewer, 1 PWRR

There is scope for soldiers to go on basic language courses before we go on tour abroad. However, most of the countries speak English so it is not really a major problem.



Gnr Richard Boswell, 1 RHA

There is definitely a case for the Army to be multilingual because we are always working with different nations. There aren't enough foreign-speaking soldiers. Most recruits learn French or German at school but most of them don't really take it in - I know, I didn't.

LCpl Luke Knight, B Squadron, QRH

I don't think there is a case for us to be multilingual at all. We are the British Army and we should speak English. Most nations get taught English at school and there is no way we could learn all the European languages.



2nd Lt Angus Newby Grant, 1 RHA



Fortunately for us it seems that most of the other nations we come across speak English to a better degree than we can speak their languages. Language courses could be good for the Army,

but as it is we all seem to get on fine speaking English.

Pte Rob Hirst, 1 PWRR

I think we should try a bit harder. We are a bit ignorant when it comes to speaking other languages. We seem to have the attitude that we are English and everyone else should speak our language.



Gnr Lee Fisher, 1 RHA

If we work alongside other nations then we should try to speak their language, there should be effort from both sides. However, there is not a lot of time available to train people. We've got more important things to learn, so it would have to come second to everything else.



Sgt Rob McCreedy, 1 RHA

Being able to speak other languages would certainly not be a bad thing for the Army. There are quite a few people in the forces who do speak foreign languages, but that is down to their schooling.



LCpl Shaun Woodhouse, 1 PWRR

The English language is one of the most widely spoken so I do not think we need to learn other languages. You can get by on English alone.



Sgt Paul Hammill, 1 PWRR

Languages are the downfall of a lot of our troops. Most of the other countries speak English and I see no reason why we shouldn't be able to speak more foreign languages. We should have individuals in platoons learning different languages so that across the board we have at least the majority of European languages covered.

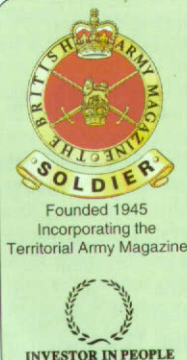


Pte Paul Burnett, 1 PWRR



I find that all the foreign units I have come in contact with have English as their second language. I do not think we should be multilingual because where do you draw the line? We would have to learn the lot.

Interviews: Andy Simms Pictures: Mike Weston



SOLDIER, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2DU
Distribution and general enquiries: 01252 347353 (or Aldershot mil 2353)

Fax 347358 (2358)

E-mail: solmag@btinternet.com

Visit our website on
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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), Andy Simms (Sport) 347362 (2362)
Art Editor Les Gwyer 347169 (2169)
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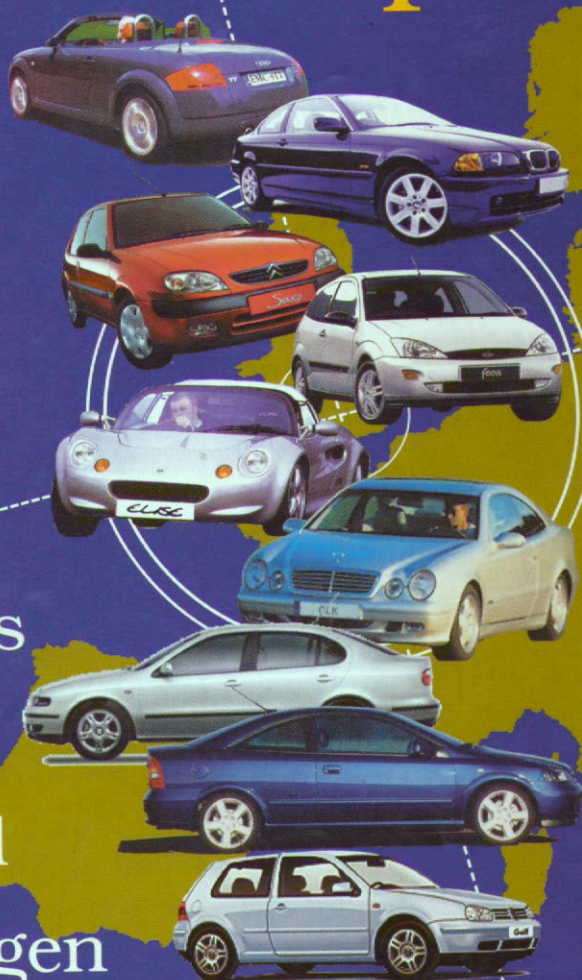
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