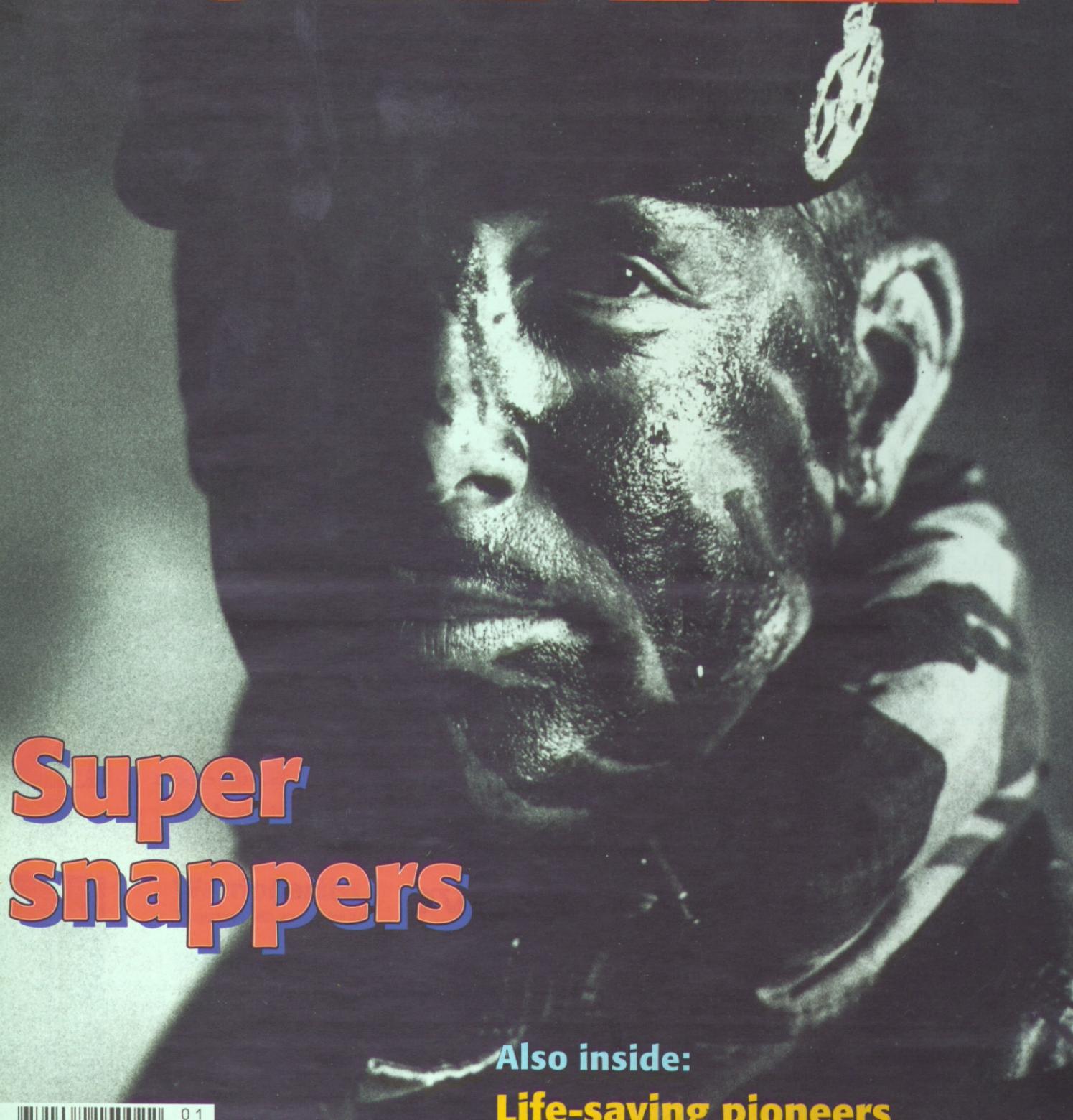


MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY January 1999 £1.60

PAY 2000:  
FIRST DETAILS

# SOLDIER



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**How the Army buys its kit**  
**Two-can rule: your views**



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## 36-37 COVER STORY

Sgt Shane Wilkinson, Media Ops, HQ 3 Division, won the National Army Museum-sponsored monochrome section of the Army Photographic Competition with this striking portrait of a camouflaged soldier. The judges described the picture as "standing out in a section in which there has been a vast improvement since last year".

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# SOLDIER to soldier

## Bye-bye butterscotch

THE voice of the people  
has been heard – and  
taken heed of.

Butterscotch sauce  
has been given the  
heave-ho from ration  
packs while apple  
dumplings will in future  
be swamped in good  
old-fashioned custard.

This culinary break-  
through was achieved  
after several people  
interviewed for our Vox  
pop feature on rations  
(January 1998) made it  
clear that butterscotch  
was their least favourite  
item on offer.

Among the kinder  
comments we reported  
were these: "Every one of  
my men left the pudding  
in butterscotch sauce",  
"I tried it and it is vile",  
and "Get rid of butter-  
scotch sauce . . .".

Maj Chris Russell  
RLC, of the Directorate  
of Food Services Man-  
agement, said the end  
for the sauce was in  
sight, but existing stocks  
would have to be used  
up. So butterscotch  
haters be aware. They  
feature in menus F and  
C . . .

To find out what sol-  
diers think of the two-  
can rule – turn to Page  
70.

## PAY 2000

THE independent  
Armed Forces Pay  
Review Body (AFPRB)  
has for several years  
advocated the need for a  
more flexible pay  
system. The introduc-  
tion of Pay 2000 (see  
Page 7) on April 1 next  
year promises to address  
that need.

Meanwhile, the work  
of the AFPRB goes on.  
As it prepares to make  
its recommendations for  
1999 to the Govern-  
ment, *Soldier* has been to  
see how it goes about its  
business. Read about it  
in the next issue.

# Reducing the trauma

Report: Karen Moseley

*It is a normal day at the Accident and Emergency Department of Frimley Park Hospital, the largest of three MoD hospital units in which military medical and nursing staff work alongside civilians.*

*The waiting room is half-full of patients who may need stitches or have a limb x-rayed. Some are in the treatment rooms before being sent home or into a hospital ward.*

*Without warning a priority message comes through on the radio from one of the three county ambulance services which feed the hospital. There has been a road traffic accident and a number of seriously injured patients are on their way. Immediately a coded "333" message is sent out on all relevant bleepers and the Trauma Team swings into action.*

*Within minutes surgeons, anaesthetists, radiographers and accident and emergency (A&E) staff have assembled at the resuscitation room and are fastening on colour-coded lead-lined tabards which have their roles clearly written on front and back.*

FRIMLEY Park's pioneering trauma team is led by Lt Col Tim Hodgetts, A&E consultant and speciality adviser in A&E medicine to the Defence Secondary Care Agency. The procedure described above is followed by hospitals up and down the country, but what makes Frimley Park unique is that in October 1997 it established a "clinical effectiveness" programme for the seriously injured, known as the Major Trauma Project.

It is presently the only project of its kind in the country and has been funded for an initial two years by the Defence Secondary Care Agency. Its aim is to fully record the management of seriously injured patients from the time they were injured to the time they were discharged from hospital.

Shockingly, a report by the Royal Col-

A recent report revealed that a large number of deaths following serious accidents could have been avoided. Pioneering work by military medical staff at the Frimley Park unit could help reduce those numbers

lege of Surgeons as far back as ten years ago said that 40 per cent of all pre-hospital trauma deaths and 20 per cent of hospital trauma deaths were avoidable. Many of the reasons were easily treatable, such as blood loss or lack of oxygen. These surveys have been repeated since then and

compiles the Trauma Registry. Capt Helen Parkhouse, Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps, collects all the information, from the "mechanism" of the injury by talking to the ambulance crews,

through the emergency care and finally to the treatment on the ward until discharge.

"Once all the information has been collected from all of this data we are able to flag up performance indicators and see where things may or may not be working," she explained.

"A lot of it is time-based, for instance, how long it took to get to the scanner or time taken to the operating theatre. We set rigid standards and if necessary have to explain why those standards are not reached."

But Lt Col Hodgetts, who has published more

than 12 medical text books and is a Professor of Emergency Medicine and Trauma at Surrey University, knows that keeping records is not enough, and as well as the administrative side, places great emphasis on education and clinical care.

Every four to six weeks he holds an hour-long trauma clinical case conference to which he invites everyone connected with the care of A&E patients, such as ambulance, BASICS doctors (doctors voluntarily on call to assist at accidents), intensive care nurses, surgeons, anaesthetists, and physiotherapists. "It is



Trauma Team ready for action at Frimley Park Hospital, Surrey: Left to right, Rosie Freeman, radiographer; Pte Rhys Coleman, combat medical technician; Capt Carol Rogers QARANC, nurse; Capt Chris Porter, A&E doctor; Capt Helen Parkhouse, trauma co-ordinator; Lt Col Tim Hodgetts, A&E consultant; Nick Hardcastle, resuscitation training officer; and Pte Carl Woodcock, combat medical technician

one of the most recent conclusions was that up to 70 per cent of hospital deaths were still avoidable.

"We still have a huge problem, but we can see the problems very easily and we have started to address them," said Lt Col Hodgetts.

It was considered vital to collect as much data as possible on trauma cases, following them through from beginning to end, analysing the treatments and results and learning from them.

One of the ways to achieve this was to appoint a trauma nurse co-ordinator who



In action: The Trauma Team pictured during an actual emergency at Frimley Park Hospital

important that we all learn from each other," he said. "We look at different cases which have been dealt with and discuss what should happen and then I tell them what did happen. I pick out typical cases where things might not have gone according to plan. Any decisions made are published in our monthly trauma report which helps us to see points for improvement."

Lt Col Hodgetts also runs one-day trauma programmes for doctors and nurses, and twice a year organises regional seminars for the Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.

On the clinical side, Capt Parkhouse visits the wards daily and picks up the information she needs. This is particularly important with patients who have multiple injuries and are being dealt with by a number of different departments in the hospital. If patients have been transferred to other hospitals she keeps in regular contact by telephone and fax, charting their progress until they are discharged.

The project was originally designed to audit patients coming into Frimley Park, but was extended in April to cover the

British military field hospital in Sipovo, Bosnia, and is in the process of being extended to Northern Ireland and the Falkland Islands. The staff there fill in the data forms and send them back to Capt Parkhouse for analysis.

"The military medical staff in Bosnia have found it very useful and there has been a huge feedback," said Lt Col Hodgetts. "If you look after a patient and then send them off how do you know if you have done the right thing? It's easy to feel isolated out there so to have improvements suggested in a supportive way is very useful."

## UP-TO-DATE

Ambulance staff also appreciate follow-up information on the patients they have brought in. Col Hodgetts has organised a notice and feedback board for them, which gives any information they may need and contains a box where they can request details about a particular patient and whether the treatment they initially gave was correct.

The A&E department at Frimley Park contains the latest most up-to-date life-saving equipment in the world. The

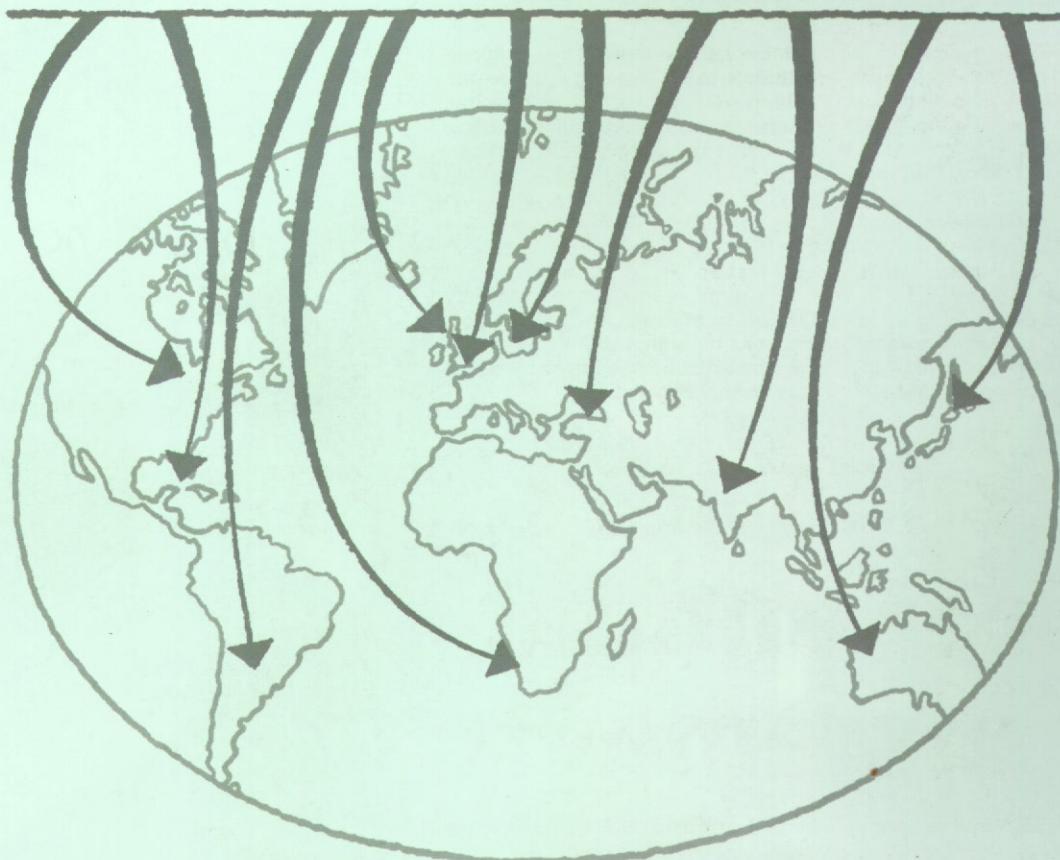
resuscitation room can deal with five seriously injured patients at one time, with an X-ray on a gantry that can move over three beds. The staff wear lead-lined tabards so they do not have to leave the room while X-rays are being taken. Even the shelves are colour-coded – red at the top meaning the patient is a priority, orange next meaning the patient must be seen within ten minutes, down through yellow and green to blue.

Lt Col Hodgetts has also set up a major incident storeroom which is used if there is a disaster such as a major rail or air crash. It contains more coloured tabards, signposts, sets of waterproof clothing and chemical suits, helmets, boots, and – something he learnt from the Army – comfort bags which hold practical accessories such as food and drink.

Although funded by the Defence Secondary Care Agency, the Major Trauma Project benefits the whole hospital, military and civilian patients alike.

Lt Col Hodgetts now hopes that the pioneering work they are carrying out will start to bring down the alarming numbers of avoidable deaths after serious accidents.

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**SH01**

# People, places, events

## REME in poisoning scare

REME HELICOPTER maintenance crews involved in a month-long exercise were admitted to hospital for tests following a suspected case of accidental poisoning.

None of the soldiers from 72 Company, 7th Battalion REME suffered serious illness and all were released from hospital within 48 hours. However, the cause of their illness remains a mystery.

The soldiers were working in a closed hangar at a non-operational Royal Air Force base at Hullavington, near Chippenham, when one of their

number fell ill with what was originally thought to be carbon monoxide poisoning. He was rushed to hospital, where doctors discounted carbon monoxide but were unable to determine the cause of the soldier's illness. Forty-three others who had been working in the hanger were also examined and kept in hospital for observation.

Investigating Health and Safety Executive officials are considering the possibility that the incident may have been caused by fumes from solvents or helicopter fuel.

## Pay 2000 set to deliver annual pay increments

SOLDIERS will be able to earn annual pay increments in the same way as officers under the biggest overhaul of Services' pay systems since the introduction of the Military Salary in 1971.

Under the new arrangement some soldiers will earn more. No one will lose money and pensions will be unaffected.

Pay 2000, as the new system will be known, has been approved by the Government and will come into effect on April 1 next year. Designed to sweep away many of the complex and inflexible aspects of the current pay regime, it is based on a new job-evaluation system specially designed for the Services.

All jobs in all three Services, from private soldier to the Chief of the Defence Staff, will be measured against the new system in preparation for Pay 2000.

All soldiers will become eligible for annual pay increments in the same way as officers are now. Pay bands will be replaced by two pay ranges at each

soldier rank and, at least for the time being, one range at each officer rank up to brigadier.

Separate arrangements are being drawn up for officers of two-star rank and above, who will be paid according to individual responsibilities.

Pay 2000 acknowledges that senior and more experienced soldiers in one rank may be "worth" more than a junior and untried soldier in the next rank up.

### OVERLAP

Accordingly, pay ranges may overlap between ranks so that, in each trade, the highest paid in one rank may receive more than the lowest paid in the next rank up.

A categorical assurance has been given that no individual will lose money when the new system is brought in. There has also been an assurance that pensions will not be affected.

Final details of the system are still being worked out by the MoD and further announcements are expected in February.

## Sapper crushed in Bosnia accident

SPR Stephen Stewart (25), of 8 Armd Eng Sqn, 22 Engr Regt, was crushed to death by two armoured vehicles while on duty in Mrkonjic Grad, Bosnia, last month. The accident is being investigated by the RMP. He was the fourth British SFOR soldier to die during 1998.

LCpl Kevin Bell, 3 Bn REME, LCpl Jason Lawrence, 5 Fd Amb, and LCpl Tammy Gill, 5 Fd Amb, were killed in traffic accidents. Spr Stewart's death brings British fatalities from all three Services in Bosnia to 48 since LCpl Wayne Edwards was shot in January 1998.



King's Own Royal Border Regiment soldiers prepare to load their Warrior vehicles at Marchwood military port prior to the battle group's deployment to Macedonia

Picture credit: Jim Gallagher

## Macedonia battalion deploys to support Kosovo observers

THREE hundred and eighty British soldiers were due to deploy to Macedonia as this edition went to press.

The troops, from the 1st Battalion, The King's Own Border Regiment, but including elements from the 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment and the 1st Battalion, The Highlanders, were preparing to join a multi-national NATO force standing-by to extract unarmed peace observers from Kosovo should the delicate cease-fire there break down.

Between 150 and 200 of the unarmed and non-uniformed observers are British, and a significant proportion of them are military or former military personnel.

### 'INSURANCE POLICY'

Under the terms of the agreement hammered out between Belgrade and American envoy Richard Holbrook, the Serbs are responsible for the safety of the observers. However, according to a Ministry of Defence spokesman, the armed force in Macedonia will be "an insurance policy" equipped to rescue the observers from Kosovo in extremis.

The KORBR battlegroup, most of which is normally based in Catterick, will be equipped with Warrior infantry fighting vehicles.

An advance party of sappers from 20 Field Squadron RE, signallers and logistic specialists from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC, flew to Macedonia ten days before Christmas.

• Fifty soldiers ranked from staff sergeant to lieutenant colonel are in the Kosovo mission, which is led by Maj Gen John Drewienkiewicz.

# People, places, events

## Chefs return with culinary World Cup

THREE Army chefs were members of a Combined Services catering team which helped itself to a generous slice of medals in one of the world's most prestigious cooking competitions.

WO1 Stephen Welsh, Sgt Darren Lee and SSgt Billy Barrie joined colleagues from the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force at Expogast '98 in Luxembourg, where the team won nine gold medals, ten silver medals and three bronzes.

The team also became world champions in the kitchen and larder preparation section, and achieved third place in the pastry and hot kitchen categories, the latter involving cooking for 80 people in a mobile field kitchen.

Expogast, generally recognised as the "World Cup" of cooking, is staged every four years and attracts the cream of the world's military and civilian cooks. Among the countries represented this year were the USA, Canada, South Africa, Australia and Israel.



The heat is on: Army chef SSgt Billy Barrie helps the Combined Services culinary team to victory

## Welsh Cavalry at double



Twin brothers Paul, left, and Simon Jones, both corporals with the 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards at Catterick, returned home to Merthyr Tydfil to join SSgt Gillian Collins, centre, at the opening of the town's new recruiting office in Bethesda Street. Eight years ago Gillian signed up the twins at the old town centre recruiting office, which was closed a few years ago.



Picture: Cpl Darren Hillier, Australian Army

Getting to nose you: Sgt Yubahadur Gurung of C Company, 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles, gets acquainted with local residents of the Billabong Sanctuary in Townsville, Queensland. He was one of 140 soldiers from the Brunei-based battalion in Australia to exercise with the 2nd Battalion, The

Royal Australian Regiment on the High Range Training Area. The Gurkhas spent their free time visiting the Great Barrier Reef Aquarium, the reef itself and the koala sanctuary. Maj Peter Bullock, OC C Coy, described the area as "very different" from the jungle environment they were used to in Brunei.

## Tri-Service logistic HQ in the pipeline

FOLLOWING the announcement in the Strategic Defence Review that all defence logistics were to be drawn under a single command, six "Tiger" teams have been formed to tackle the most important issues.

Although the name of the new organisation has not yet been decided, Gen Sir Sam Cowan will take over as Chief of Defence Logistics (CDL) on April 1. His headquarters will be based in MoD Main Building until a CDL HQ becomes available.

Creating the CDL organisation is the largest logistic restructuring exercise in the UK, with a total of 44,000 personnel affected. Logistics has £23 billion worth of assets and an annual

budget of £4.6 billion. An implementation team has been set up to put the plans into action. Under its auspices, six study teams, known as "Tiger" teams, made up of staff from the Quartermaster General, Chief of Fleet Support and Air Member for Logistics, have been formed to tackle the most important issues.

These include CAPITAL/Resource Accounting, Information Systems, Business Process, Defence Munitions Directorate, Lean Support Chain strategy and Unification of Defence Fuels. Aim of the project is to create a single defence logistics organisation which will bring together joint support for combat forces.

### IN BRIEF

- A Letter of Intent cementing closer defence relations between Britain and France was signed at St Malo last month by Defence Secretary George Robertson and Alain Richard, his French counterpart, on board HMS *Birmingham*.

- Three hundred troops of 19 Regiment RA have returned to Colchester after six months in Cyprus's Buffer Zone

with the United Nations peacekeeping force. Also back in the UK is the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas, which returned to its base at Church Crookham, Hampshire after a four-month spell as the roster band with British Forces Cyprus.

- The Princess Royal, Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Logistic Corps, visited 24 Airmobile Brigade's Combat Service

## Doctor wins achievement accolade

CAPT Jaishan Mahan received the coveted Asian Success and Innovations Award for young achievers at the annual Asian Awards Ceremony at the National Exhibition Centre last month.

Accepted for a medical cadetship sponsored by the RAMC, he studied at Leicester University and is now a senior house officer

in the Accident and Emergency Department at Frimley Park Hospital, Surrey. He hopes to be posted to a parachute field ambulance unit.

A keen mountaineer, Capt Mahan (25) has climbed in Africa, South America and Russia and will take part in Army expeditions to the Himalayas in 1999 and South Georgia in 2000.



## Shot in arm for medical services

A MAJOR shake-up of the Armed Forces medical services has been signalled by the investment of £140 million over the next four years to help with staff and equipment shortages.

A centre of excellence – for medical research, new ideas in battlefield back up and top-class training – is to be established as soon as possible. The Centre of Defence Medicine, as it will be known, will probably be integrated with a major NHS teaching hospital.

Haslar, the main Service hospital since 1994, will close, but the Government, in its report, *Defence Medical Services – A Strategy for the Future*, has promised that new facilities replacing it "will be at least as good as the best at Haslar".

Wherever the Army is on operations, soldiers will be backed up by two 200-bed primary casualty receiving ships. Medical facilities on the Royal Fleet Auxiliary *Argus* will be upgraded during her refit in 2000. An extra air evacuation flight will be created by 2001 and three new ambulance squadrons formed by 2005.

Eight hundred beds in four field hospitals will be brought up to higher readiness and manned with Army Reserves. A major recruiting campaign was being launched at Christmas to recruit medical talent into the Regular Forces and Reserves.

Further measures to reduce overstretch will include converting the

field hospital in Sipovo, Bosnia, into a shared multi-national facility with the Dutch and Belgians.

MoD hospital units (MDHUs) at Derriford, Frimley Park and Peterborough will continue with military and civilian staff working alongside each other. In July 1999, acute in-patient services will move to a new, purpose-built MDHU wing at the Friarage Hospital, Northallerton. The Defence Secondary Care Agency

● Turn to Page 31

## TA gunners to retain strength

THE review of proposed changes to the Territorial Army published in our December issue stated that the TA component of the Royal Artillery was to be reduced from nine regiments to five. In fact the TA's artillery strength will remain at its current level of seven regiments.

However, the make-up of this force will change slightly. Its conventional gun-equipped regiments will be reduced from two to one while missile-equipped regiments will increase from three to four.

Unchanged will be one observation regiment and one equipped with the Multi-Launch Rocket System.

TA artillery units will remain committed to NATO's Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Force.

## Here comes the infantry!



My heroes: Wendy Wright, top, celebrates with, from left, Ptes Bradley Pollard, Paul Jepson and Glynn Hudson after the three soldiers from B Company, 2nd Battalion, The Light Infantry had foiled bag-snatching yobs in Sunderland. The soldiers were driving back to their temporary base at Whitburn Camp when they saw single-mum Wendy chasing three men who had snatched her bag containing £130 in benefit payments. While other passing drivers ignored the situation, the soldiers, who were in the area on a two-week recruiting drive, collared the culprits, recovered the bag and made sure Wendy got home safely.

Picture: Northeast Press Ltd, Sunderland Echo

## Cosford's class act



Picture perfect: The Army's four newest professional snappers pass out from the Joint School of Photography at RAF Cosford at the end of their 27-week course. The four, who transfer to the RLC Photographic Trade, are, from left, Cpl Gordon Allison (formerly Scots Guards), Cpl Teresa Pickin (REME), Cpl Stu McKenzie (RMP) and LCpl Bobby Nelson (1 Hdr). The school welcomes serious enquiries from interested soldiers. Army's top photographers – see centre pages.

Picture: Sgt Giles Penfound RLC

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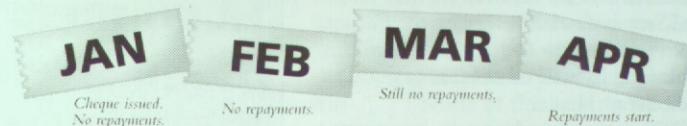
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# People, places, events



Picture: Terry Champion

Vision of the future? Ptes Tracey Ankinson and John Webb tuck in at Vision 2000

## Revolution on way in messes

PIZZA parlours, pasta shops and pubs could become familiar in Army dining rooms.

As part of a new concept by Naafi called Vision 2000, junior ranks' messes could also feature high street names such as Burger King and Harry Ramsden's. The idea would completely change the way soldiers are fed in the 21st century.

Following the introduction of a Pay As You Dine (PAYD) scheme, tills would accept smart cards rather than cash and could even add up the calorific value of each meal and print it on the customer's receipt.

Naafi came up with the concept after the Strategic Defence Review identified a need to look at ways to improve life in the Armed Forces. A demonstration of what was on offer was put on during a Catering Study Period by the Royal Logistic Corps at St Omer Barracks, Aldershot.

"This has been spoken about for many years, but everyone has had their own ideas of what it would be like," said Simon Harris, Naafi's business director. "This sort of thing is what soldiers go out and spend their money on when they are not in their messes. Bright signs and promotional material will change the whole feel of soldiers' dining rooms and make them look like a 'food theatre'".

Salad bars and dessert trolleys would rub shoulders with big-pan cooking and well-known brand foods, which would be sold by Naafi Support Ser-

vices staff under strict franchise rules.

Naafi says its aim is to create a "village centre" at every base, including a Spar shop and pub, offering convenience, choice and quality.

As yet, no decision has been made to implement PAYD and the system is the subject of a tri-Service study within the MoD.

In another development, the standby of keeping tinned food as a reserve for soldiers on operations is being phased out. As much fresh food as possible is to be the order of the day.

### FRESH RATIONS

"Ambient rations" will allow soldiers in the field to eat fresh eggs, bread, meat and vegetables as well as packets and tins of branded foods.

Thirty-day menu cycles using fresh food will be sent out to help inexperienced chefs, while allowing experienced ones to improvise.

Supplies will be delivered to troops on operational duty in places such as Bosnia on a regular basis by Booker, the MoD food supply contractor.

Food will be cooked operationally on a modular field cooking system using avtur, a diesel-type fuel used in aircraft. The small solid-boxed modules have an internal flame and a hot-plate on top.

Ten-man ration packs are to be scrapped, but 24-hour "rat packs", with different menus for Halal and Hindu recipes and hot and cold climates, will remain.

## Arts society keen to attract talent from other ranks

THERE were no paintings with elephant dung or bemused-looking animals preserved in formaldehyde. The subject matter for exhibits in this year's Army Arts Exhibition was more traditional, writes Karen Moseley.

Oils, watercolours, sculptures and craftwork by 37 members of the Army Arts Society (AAS) were on show in the Medieval Hall, Salisbury.

Few of the subjects on display were military and the winner of the Linda Kitson Prize for the best amateur was Heather Lewis for her painting, *The Myth of St Brendan's Well*.

Membership of the Army Arts Society is open to all serving and retired personnel, their spouses and children over 18. It was formed by Linda and Lady Kitson in 1982 and now has a membership of more than 230. The society, which holds regular exhibitions in Salisbury, Lisburn, Herford, Osnabrück and Rheindahlen, is keen for junior ranks and NCOs to join.

### 'AMAZING TALENT'

Chairman Nicola Irwin said: "It is a great society if you have painted or sculpted and not had a way of exposing your work. It is amazing how much talent there is in the Armed Forces and it is a great shame we do not have any other ranks as members."

Professional artist Alix Baker thinks she has become an "endangered species".

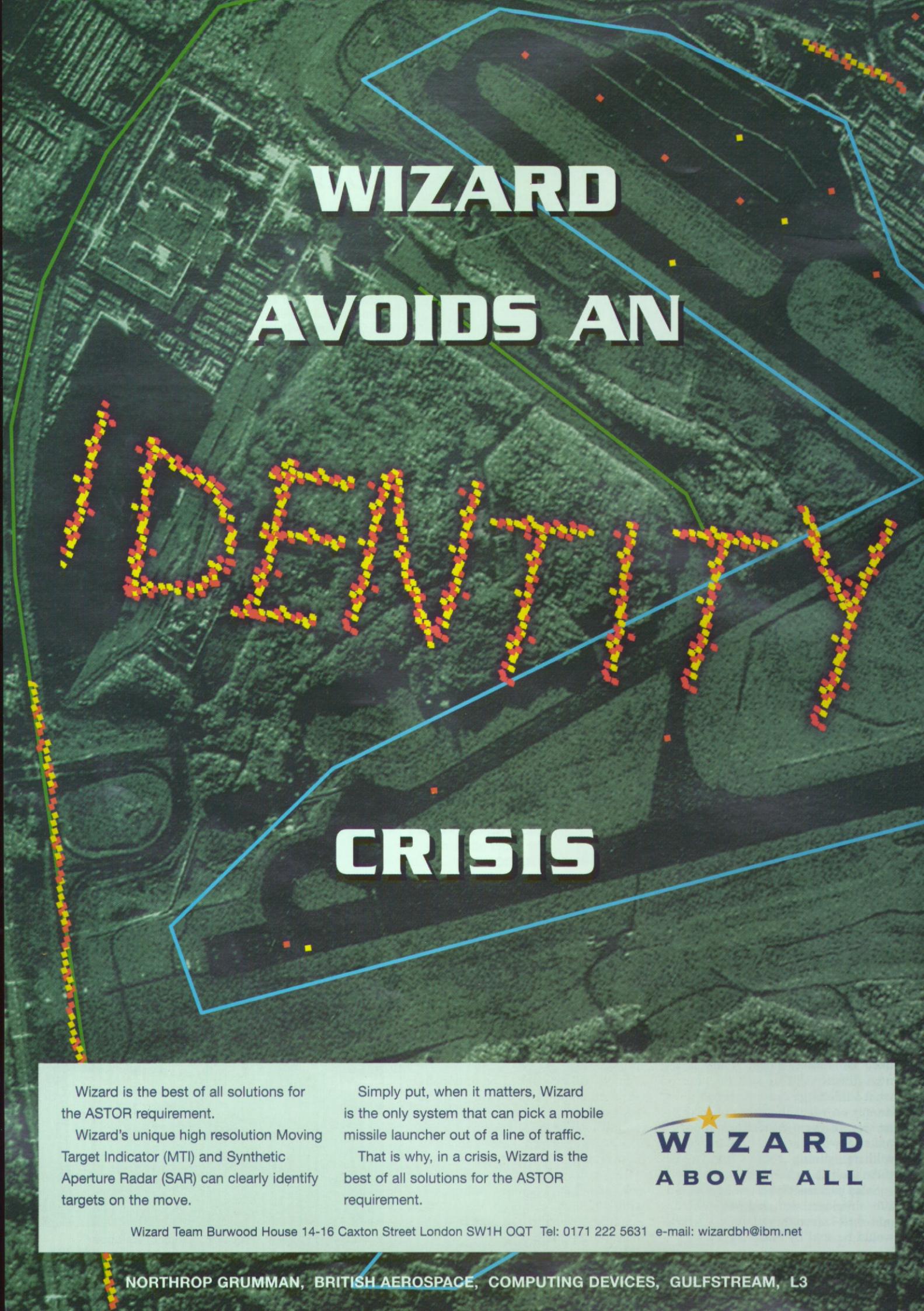
"There are very few military artists left in the country who paint regimental uniformed figures," she explained. "Amalgamations have made it harder and people don't have budgets for them any longer."

You can contact the Army Arts Society through honorary secretary Maj Mervyn Colenso-Jones on 01672 810868.



Picture: Terry Champion

Endangered species: Alix Baker, painter of uniforms



# WIZARD AVOIDS AN

## CRISIS

Wizard is the best of all solutions for the ASTOR requirement.

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NORTHROP GRUMMAN, BRITISH AEROSPACE, COMPUTING DEVICES, GULFSTREAM, L3

# Thunderflash to retire with a bang

ONE of the Army's smallest and noisiest bits of ordnance, the famous Thunderflash explosive simulator, is to retire after more than half a century of distinguished military service.

A more cost-effective and reliable pyrotechnic is being introduced, saving the taxpayer more than £250,000 a year. Designed to simulate the noise and smoke of the battlefield, millions of the ageing Mark VIII Thunderflashes have been used to train troops since 1947.

Its replacement, the Battle Noise Simulator (BNS), incorporates modern design and engineering techniques to produce the same effects, but with a smaller, safer pyrotechnic charge. The device itself is similar in shape to the Thunderflash but a third smaller than the old Mk VIII. A more effi-

cient "striking" system will greatly improve reliability in all climates.

Stocks of Thunderflash are expected to fizzle out during 1999.

The contract for the BNS has been negotiated by the MoD's Procurement Executive at Abbey Wood near Bristol, featured on Pages 21-23.

Under a five-year contract, Pains Wessex Ltd will supply the MoD with 277,500 each year. Most will be of the hand-initiated type, although a number of the new, electrically-initiated version will be included.

Project manager Adrian Smithson said that although the Thunderflash had given good service for many years, it had become increasingly difficult to get some of its component materials.

## Chertsey showcase will replace BAEE event

THE biennial MoD-sponsored Royal Navy and British Army Equipment Exhibition is to make way for a new showcase event to be staged at Chertsey, Surrey from September 14-17.

Defence Systems and Equipment International (DSEI) is expected to attract more than 700 companies, making it the largest integrated defence show in Europe.

It will be organised by Spearhead Exhibitions Ltd, who have signed a Letter of Understanding with the MoD. The new project will also replace two smaller Spearhead ventures, the International Maritime Defence Exhibition (IMDEX) and Battlefield Systems International (BSI). A programme of ships' visits will centre on London's Docklands.

the British Army's training ranges in Canada, will be able to track the movements of every soldier and vehicle in a battlegroup via the small, personal radio transmitters linked to a GPS.

The system will "know" immediately a unit enters a simulated minefield or an area being "shelled" and will work out the effects and radio this information to troops on the ground.

## Super simulators on the way

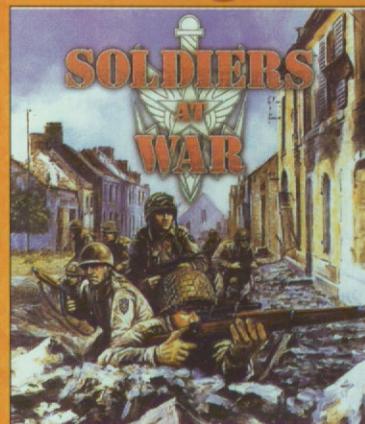
Thousands of soldiers will be equipped with their own individual Global Positioning Systems (GPS) as part of an advanced new training system ordered by the Procurement Executive.

The Area Weapons Effects Simulator (AWES), pictured right, will use advanced data and satellite links to simulate indirect-fire weapons such as artillery, rockets, mines and NBC agents. It uses eye-safe lasers and sensors to replicate the effects of direct-fire weapons such as tank guns and rifles and will supplement the existing Direct Fire Weapon Simulator (DFWES) system introduced in 1994.

Computerised central command posts, one on Salisbury Plain and one on



## Win a game!



We've got two red-hot computer games to give away. The Windows-95 compatible *Soldiers at War*, see above, and *Panzer Commander* from the Mindscape stable have easy-to-read instructions and many different missions. They can be played solo, by several warriors on a network or via the internet.

*Soldiers at War* offers players the chance to produce and edit their own missions. *Tank Commander* is advertised as the most comprehensive Second World War tank simulator ever produced. Go for it.

Just answer this question:  
**What is the name of Britain's latest main battle tank?**

Entries to Games Competition, on a postcard to *Soldier* by February 1. If you have a preference for the prize, mark your entry "Soldiers" or "Panzer".

The first two correct answers out of the hat win and our decision is final.

Find our address on Page 70.

## Beating the Bug

THE MoD is on target to beat the Millennium Bug, according to Defence Secretary George Robertson.

A comprehensive rectification programme is under way to prevent the year 2000 computer problem affecting Britain's Armed Forces.

Key points in the programme are:

- The nuclear deterrent has been thoroughly checked;
- All RAF aircraft will be safe to fly;
- Computer systems on RN ships and submarines are being assessed;
- All mission-critical systems in the Army will be ready by September.

● GKN Defence, maker of the AAC's Apache WAH-64, has merged with vehicles specialist Alvis to create a major new international force in the military and security market.

● COMBAT Soldier 95, the Army's combat clothing system, has won the award of Millennium Product for the Defence Clothing and Textiles Agency which developed it.

● Orchard Communications of Somerset has won the contract to develop a CD-ROM computer-based trainer for gunners using a virtual AS90 on a virtual battlefield.

# Retrospect

# Year of the Strategic Defence Review

## January

A BOMB disposal team from 21 Field Squadron (EOD) RE rescues two American civilians from a minefield in Bosnia and Herzegovina-based 1 Regiment, Royal Military Police receives the Wilkinson Sword of Peace for outstanding achievements in community relations – in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The United Kingdom Mine Information and Training Centre at RSME Minley Manor, Surrey, becomes fully operational.

Men of the 1st Battalion, The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment say farewell to Paderborn after six years stationed in Germany. They will move to Battlesbury Barracks, Warminster. After almost 20 years training and advising the Belize Defence Force, the British Loan Service Team Belize disbands.

Cpl Sean Ollson and Dean Ward, both of The Parachute Regiment, win Britain her first Winter Olympics medal for 34 years when their bobsleigh finishes third in the four-man event at Nagano, Japan.

## February

Staged rises in military pay have deprived Service personnel of a substantial proportion of their recommended salary and damaged pensions of those who retired between stages, says the 27th report of the Armed Forces Pay Review Body. The Government approves a basic increase averaging 3.75 per cent for 1998 ... staged on April 1 and December 1. The first Challenger 2 tanks are delivered by sea to The Royal Scots Dragoons Guards, based at Fallingbostel. The Defence Postal and Courier Service Agency issues a first-day cover in aid of the Diana, Princess of Wales national memorial fund.

Army bomb disposal expert WO2 Aminul Islam RLC is awarded the George Medal for making safe two IRA bombs on the M6 near Walsall in April, 1997. A troop of Royal Engineers is deployed to Kuwait as a new crisis develops in the Gulf. Military action against Iraq appears likely. The crisis is resolved.

## March

With the backing of the Commission for Racial Equality, the Household Division launches an initiative to recruit more black and Asian soldiers. A high-tech smart card that could replace the traditional "dog tag" identity discs is being trialled. It can be "swiped" through a computer reader to access up-dated medical records. Women boxers take part for

the first time in an Army competition during the RLC championships at Aldershot.

Suez veterans collect tens of thousands of signatures for a petition to the Commons calling for official medal recognition for Suez Canal Zone service in the early 1950s.



February: Scots DG receive their Challenger 2s

## April

New gender-neutral physical assessments – known as Physical Selection Standards (Recruits) or PSS(R)s – are introduced for potential soldiers as the number of Army jobs open to women increases from 47 per cent to 70 per cent. The Commission for Racial Equality lifts the threat of enforcing a Non-Discrimination Notice on the Army and the Service launches a major £2½ million advertising campaign to put its equal opportunities message across.

Regular and Territorial Army soldiers all over the country turn out to assist emergency services as floods hit the United Kingdom over Easter. In moves to enhance the careers of Late Entry officers, soldiers promoted from the ranks will be commissioned as captains rather than lieutenants and allowed to serve longer.

The Army's award-winning web site is revamped. Troops make the first crossing of the River Severn by military ferries during a large-scale exercise. WO1 John Foran makes military history when he is appointed the divisional sergeant major of Bulford-based 3rd (United

Kingdom) Division in a year-long trial. The Army beats the Royal Navy 36-22 at Twickenham and goes on to retain the Inter-Services rugby championship with victory over the RAF.

## May

Troops stationed in the Brunei Garrison learn to live with the pall of smoke covering vast areas of the region as forest fires burn out of control. Air purifiers are installed in homes, air conditioners upgraded and school playtime suspended. Soldier wins a Gold Award as the best internal magazine in Britain. The competition, run by the British Association of Communicators in Business, is the biggest in Europe.

The remains of three First World War soldiers are buried with full military honours near their final battlefield at Monchy-le-Preux in northern France. All 13th Royal Fusiliers, they are believed to have died during the Battle of Arras in April 1917. The remains of an unknown British soldier killed in the Korean War are buried at Pusan in South Korea. The remains were handed over by North Korea in 1995 but defied identification.

The Army's next generation of armoured utility vehicles is to be developed and built under a joint European initiative. GKN Defence will provide the British element of the Multi-Role Armoured Vehicle (MRAV), expected to be in service during 2005.

Work starts at the Combined Arms Training Centre, Warminster, on the world's biggest battlefield simulator system, known as Combined Arms Tactical Trainers (CATT), while the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards at Fallingbostel, Germany, become the first armoured regiment to receive the dramatically new and potent Challenger 2 main battle tank.

## June

British troops serving with SFOR in

Bosnia capture another indicted war criminal, the eighth detained so far by the peacekeepers. Capt Sundee Dhillon, a 28-year-old doctor with 23 Parachute Field Ambulance, climbs Everest to become the youngest Briton to scale the seven highest mountains on the seven continents. In the same week, Tpr Edward Grylls (23) becomes the youngest Briton to reach the top of Everest. It is announced that the Duchess of Kent's Military Hospital at Catterick is to close. Service in-patients will be cared for by the NHS.

## July

The long-awaited Strategic Defence Review can be summed up in three words: capability, flexibility and stability. Although little actual detail is announced, the Army learns that it is to get an extra 3,300 soldiers to ease overstretch, and



"A stripe and rear details may be a 1998 highlight for you mate, but Macedonia for Christmas says 'Roll on 1999' to me"

that re-shaped armoured and mechanised brigades will contribute to improved mobility of forces. There will be a sixth deployable brigade and three regiments – 2,500 troops and "some tanks" – will return from Germany to the UK. An "air cavalry" brigade will include Apache and The Parachute Regiment. The Territorial Army will shrink from 56,000 to 40,000.

Troops deployed to support the RUC keep the peace during a potentially explosive marching season confrontation by Orangemen at Drumcree win widespread praise for their determination, courage and restraint.

Britain is to collaborate with the United States to develop a battlefield reconnaissance vehicle titled TRACER. The Army wins the Inter-Service cricket tourna-

ment in Portsmouth to retain the championship.

## August

Soldiers help in the immediate aftermath of massive explosions at the US Embassy in Nairobi, where 247 lives are lost, and Omagh, Northern Ireland, where 28 are killed by a terrorist bomb. In Cyprus, 13 officers' quarters in Episkopi Garrison and Air House, the official residence of Commander British Forces, are destroyed by out-of-control bush fires.

Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment jump into Albania during a Partnership for Peace exercise. More women than ever – 15,777 – are serving in the three Services, according to the latest figures. A large proportion of them, 7,471 to be exact, are in the Army. Army boxer Cpl Chris Bessey, 27 Tpt Regt RLC, wins a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games in Malaysia.

## September

Scots Guardsmen Mark Wright and James Fisher are released from their life sentences for the shooting of a Belfast teenager. Troops from the 1st Battalion, The Staffordshire Regiment returned to Woodbourne RUC station on September 12 to end 29 years of routine armed patrolling on the streets of Belfast. Routine patrolling has also ceased in Londonderry town centre. More than 5,500 troops and 500 armoured vehicles from 4th Armoured Brigade deployed to Poland on Exercise Ulan Eagle.

It is announced that the 1999 Royal Tournament will be the last in its traditional form. It is to be replaced by a more modern outdoor event. The replacement for the old C130K Hercules transport aircraft beloved of airborne forces is unveiled at Farnborough International Air Show. It is a new Hercules, the C130J, described by Lockheed Martin as a revolutionary new aircraft. The recently discovered remains of three soldiers killed at Arnhem in 1944 are buried with full military honours at Oosterbeek.

## October

Troop levels are reduced in Northern Ireland with the return to their mainland bases of 39 Regiment RA and the 1st Battalion, The Highlanders. Fifty British soldiers fly to Kosovo as part of a European mission to oversee a peaceful



January: 1 D and D say goodbye to Paderborn

settlement between the Serbs and Kosovar Albanians. It is announced that Britain's military detachment on South Georgia is to be withdrawn in 2000.

## November

Military uniforms are seen on Britain's streets from the first time in decades as, the rules are relaxed in response to the reduced level of terrorist threat. The two Scots Guards released from life sentences in Northern Ireland, Gds Jim Fisher and Mark Wright, are told they may resume their military careers. The Army takes part in many ceremonies to mark the 80th anniversary of the Armistice. The Territorial Army will be cut to 41,200 under restructuring plans announced by the Government. Its 33 infantry battalions are to be reduced to 15. Suez Canal Zone veterans are told their petition for a medal to mark service in the early 1950s has been unsuccessful.

## December

Soldiers from the Catterick-based 1st Battalion, The King's Own Royal Border Regiment, reinforced by elements of the 1st Battalion, The Highlanders and the 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment, deploy to Macedonia as part of the NATO multi-national extraction force for Kosovo. Britain signs an agreement with France allowing for better co-operation in crisis management and military operations.

A £140-million boost for the Armed Forces medical services over the next four years is announced. It includes the establishment of a centre of excellence – for medical research, new ideas in battlefield back up and top-class training – and more medical facilities for soldiers on operations. These include two 200-bed primary casualty receiving ships and three new ambulance squadrons. Haslar, the main Service hospital, is to close.

# Bloody harvest waits for reaper

Civil war left Bosnia with a lethal legacy of landmines. British soldiers are among those who have to learn to live with them

Reports: Anthony Stone  
Pictures: Mike Weston

IN the fields of Bosnia they have planted the seeds of a bloody harvest. Up to a million mines lay scattered over the ravaged land and experts estimate it could take 50 years to clear them.

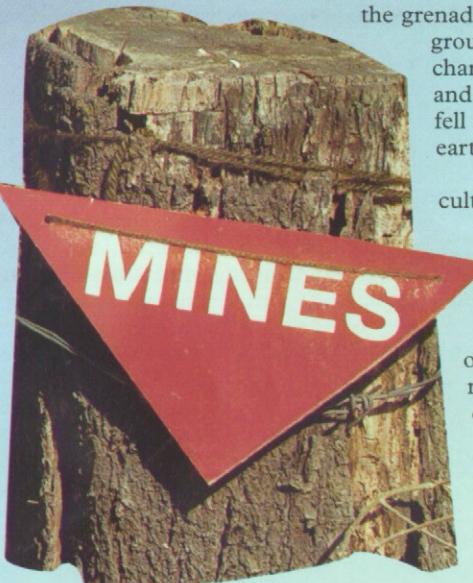
It is the first message they drum into soldiers new to theatre. The Army wants everybody to leave Bosnia with the same number of limbs with which they arrived. So the message from the start is loud and clear. Never, ever go off the hard surface of the road.

Mine awareness is one of the big themes for SFOR troops in Bosnia. The British Army takes the threat very seriously. All troops new to theatre undergo a mine briefing which covers the different types of device, how to avoid them and what to do if you find yourself in a minefield.

Troops from all sides in the three-way civil war left behind mines when they retreated, but few maps were made of the exact locations. And the devices were often left in a hurry. If a family had been ethnically cleansed from their house they might leave behind a welcome present for the new occupier. These were often do-it-yourself booby traps concocted out of wire and one of the many hand grenades readily available during the war.

## TRIP WIRES

One of the most deadly mines to be found in Bosnia is the PROM-1 anti-personnel device. About the size of a beer can, it is detonated by trip wires or by downward pressure on the prongs. When triggered, the explosive part jumps into the air and detonates between chest and groin. The outer casing shatters and

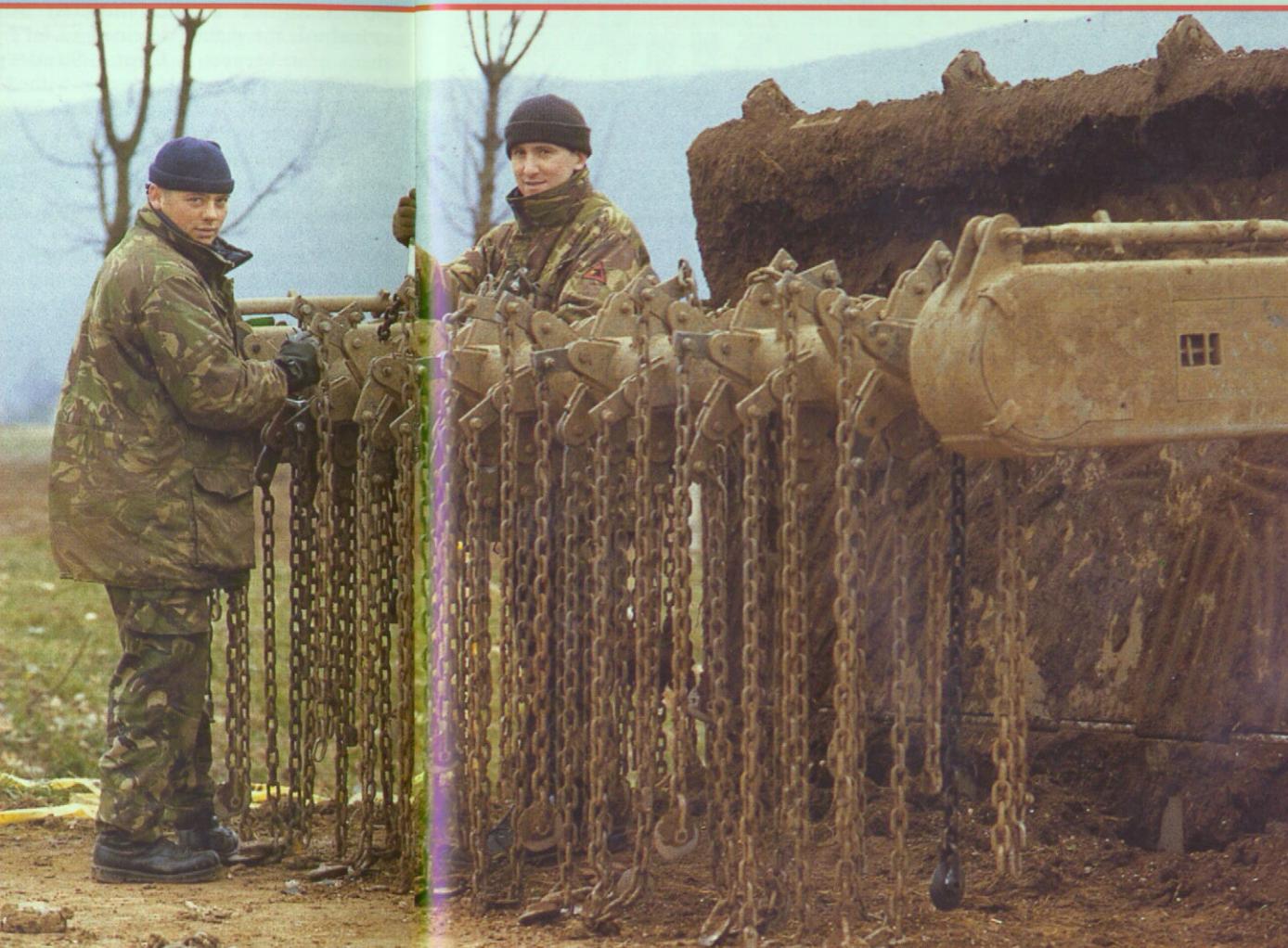


scythes through anything in its path. It is lethal up to 50m and hazardous up to 100m.

The luckiest man in Bosnia was the soldier who broke the cardinal rule and went off the road. He trod on a PROM-1 and the grenade popped out of the ground. But the main charge failed to go off and the mine casing fell harmlessly back to earth.

Mines are very difficult to spot but there are a few basic precautions soldiers can take. High on the list are:

- Be suspicious of gravel and dirt roads, road shoulders and ditches;
- Avoid abandoned buildings and equipment;
- Never walk into uncared-for fields and forests;
- And the golden rule – NEVER GO OFF THE ROAD.

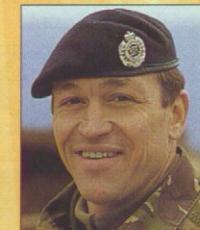


Spot check: Spr Tal Talbot, left, and Spr Chris Fennell inspect the flails

"Out here the killer is the PROM-1, the anti-personnel shrapnel mine which jumps up and sends out shrapnel at waist height. They work predominantly on trip wires which the Aardvark cuts through. You know for sure that once this machine has been through an area there aren't any more PROMS. We always do a second search."

"If we come up against a tree we put a chain around it and pull it out. That means that at no time do soldiers have to tread on the ground."

This mighty 350 brake horsepower machine weighs 13.5 tonnes and has a top speed of 12kph. It was introduced in 1986 and since then has been used in Iraq, Angola and Mozambique.



SSgt Jim Ross

Aardvark boasts an exemplary record. "There has never been an operator injured or any recorded casualties in an area where the machine has cleared the ground," SSgt Ross said.

It works by reversing into a suspected minefield with the flail rotating. Its two-man crew sits three metres behind the blast plate and is further protected by a second, inner capsule.

## SAFEST JOB?

That is the theory. To hear SSgt Ross talk you would think he had one of the safest jobs in Bosnia.

"If we hit an anti-personnel mine, it would not disturb the machine. All you would see is a puff of smoke. We took it over four anti-tank mines at the Glamoc ranges and it didn't even lose a chain."

The SFOR headquarters project was scheduled to last ten days and clear 30,000 square metres. The first people are expected to relocate from other bases in Sarajevo by March.

For Support Troop it was just another job. But it was a task, like countless others performed by British SFOR troops, that is slowly helping Bosnia to get back on its feet.

SSgt Ross said: "The Dayton Agreement makes it quite clear that the people who should pick up the mines are the forces who put them down. What we are doing here is to create a safe working environment for SFOR troops by removing the threat."

# Aardvark clears the killing fields

SSGT Jim Ross makes it clear he does not have a death-wish. "I have the same confidence in this mine-clearing equipment as a Para has in his parachute," he said.

That is reassuring because his day in the office involves driving through minefields in a deliberate attempt to detonate the lethal devices.

When the ground had to be cleared for a new headquarters in Sarajevo for NATO's Stabilisation Force (SFOR) SSgt Ross was the man they sent for. His Aardvark section, Support Troop, 8 Armoured Engineer Squadron, part of 36 Engineer Regiment, was only too happy to oblige.

"It's the type of job I have always done, I enjoy the challenge and my family is happy that I am busy. We know exactly

what we are doing and it probably sounds a lot worse than it actually is.

"None of us has a death wish and we can walk away from this tour knowing that we have done something positive for the country."

Despite operating Aardvark in Bosnia for two years, the British Army has sustained neither casualties nor damage to the machinery.

Aardvark is a brilliantly simple and effective purpose-built piece of kit. It looks a bit like a tractor with flails at one end comprising 72 chains on a three-metre rotor arm which spins around 2,000 times a minute, striking the ground about 264 times every second.

"We excavate the ground to a depth of

20cm, picking the earth up and throwing it into the air," said SSgt Ross. "If there are any mines there we will hit them. The Aardvark clears a path and we set up a flail pattern of overlaps and keep going until we have covered the whole area."

## SNIFTER DOGS

Once Aardvark's job is done a second team goes in for a further check. It can be made up of sniffer dogs and their handlers or Explosive Ordnance Disposal experts who will check areas around borders or around big trees where the Aardvark cannot be used.

The new SFOR headquarters is being built 200m from what was the front-line in Sarajevo. Soldier caught up with SSgt

Ross midway through the clearing operation.

"Our information leads us to believe this was a Serb command position. That means it is not mined, but because of the Bosnian war there could have been indiscriminate scattering of anti-personnel mines around it and that is why we are doing this operation."

"It's just belts and braces. We have had cattle grazing on this land and children playing football."

The what-if scenarios are horrific.

SSgt Ross pointed to a spot about 50m away. "There is a heavy wood line and bushes and barbed wire entanglements. If we are going to find any anti-personnel mines, that is where they will be."

## The lads who have it all mapped out

DEEP inside the headquarters of the British-led Multi-National Division (South West), Sgt Paddy Carroll RE was hunched over a map table, putting finishing touches to a project.

"Map supply is basically the reason we are here," he said. "Nobody moves unless they have a map, be it a road map or a mine map. Nobody leaves this place without one of these."

You would have to be certifiable if you did. Bosnia is not the sort of place you would want to get lost. Winter temperatures plummet to minus 20C and the poorly-maintained roads are notoriously unfor-giving.

Sgt Carroll of Geographic Troop said: "We supply geographical sup-

port to the division and also any civilian organisations attached to the head-  
quarters which need paper maps, printed products and spe-  
cialist projects such as maps showing the location of mines. There are 48 mine maps for the MND (SW) area, all of which are updated by the troop."

Information is collated from many dif-  
ferent sources. Some of it comes from geographical data which is scanned and stored on computer as digital reference material.



Sgt Paddy Carroll

"Tacisys (tactical information system)

## It starts from here

DALMAR warehouse complex lies a few kilometres from the Croatian coast and looks a fairly unprepossessing building. But its lacklustre appearance belies the central role it plays in SFOR's peacekeeping mission in Bosnia.

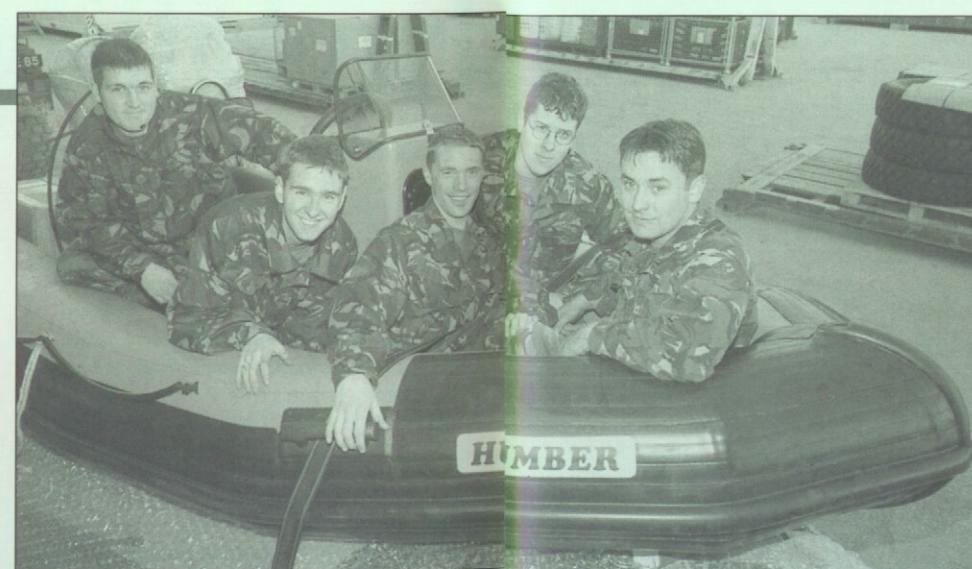
Lt Vikki Sercombe, 68 Squadron 7 (UK) Logistic Regiment RLC, said: "Dalmar is the central distribution point for Bosnia. We have about 100 people in the squadron and we load and unload supplies for up-country. It could be anything."

Supplies arrive in articulated lorries

from Germany and the United Kingdom and are sorted for their onward destinations. Soldiers do a six-month tour and work a six-day week.

The work is not glamorous, but it is obviously vital.

And when the soldiers are not up to their eyes in supplies, they try to keep their hand in with adventurous training. When *Soldier* visited the squadron, it had just taken delivery of an inflatable dinghy. The loggers have plenty of opportunity for watersports as the Adriatic remains warm even in the winter months.



Adventurous crew: From left, Pte Andy Palmer, Pte Gaz Halstead, Pte TJ Jones, Pte Alex Kellock and Pte Dave Strand try out the new training craft for use at their base in the Dalmar warehouse complex



Point to point: Gnr Darryl Ansell takes command of his section during the 1 RHA leadership course high in the Manaca mountain ranges

## Plucky Darryl's fowl deed

IF YOU think today's soldiers are not as tough as their predecessors, the lads of B Battery, 1 Royal Horse Artillery would beg to differ.

During their six-month tour of Bosnia a lucky few were chosen to go on a lance bombardier's leadership course high in the Manaca mountain ranges. Even by Bosnian standards the weather was unseasonably cold, with night-time temperatures dropping to minus 20C.

But it was not only the elements that proved testing. Soldiers had a crash



OC Lt Rob Snape-Johnson

course in culinary fieldcraft. Gnr Darryl Ansell was given a chicken and told to look after it overnight. The next day he had to cook it.

"We cleaned and boiled it and it tasted all right," he explained.

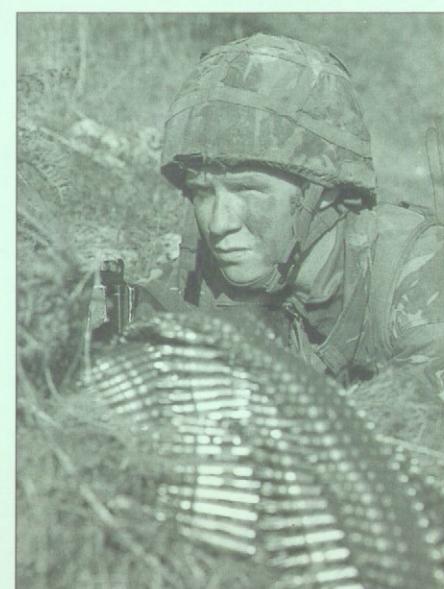
OC Lt Rob Snape-Johnson explained what the course was hoping to achieve. "What we are trying to develop are leadership qualities that are prerequisites for a junior NCO in the regiment. What we are looking for is commitment and effort, being able to lead under pressure, and being able to motivate themselves and others."

"This means being proactive and not waiting for someone to tell them to do something but having the initiative to get on with it themselves."

Back in the UK, similar courses usually run for two weeks with a period in barracks and a final exercise. Lt Snape-Johnson said: "We have opted for three weeks in the field and we are teaching soldiers something more practical. They are learning how to live in the field out of their bergens."

The soldiers were kept busy arranging patrols, securing their positions and arranging ambushes.

Gnr Ansell said the previous night the troop had successfully organised a night-time "attack" on an SFOR unit of Czech troops. "They were completely surprised



Perimeter guard: Gnr Stephen Savage takes his turn securing the camp, armed with a general purpose machine-gun

and they did not know what hit them."

Lt Snape-Johnson said the men had proved themselves in a difficult environment.

"This is a training course, not a testing course. As long as they put in 100 per cent commitment then we can live with people making mistakes and not getting it 100 per cent correct."



More stories from Bosnia in the February issue will include how the Army copes with appalling roads, a night out with Kid Creole and the Coconuts, and a patrol in Prozor. See also Vox pop on Page 70 of this issue.

# A-class Act



The Mercedes-Benz A-class is in a class of its own - its totally adaptable. The innovative design allows a flexible seating arrangement within the spacious interior although the A-class has compact exterior dimensions.

The A-class is the most affordable Mercedes-Benz yet and with our special tax free prices plus military discount it is even more affordable.



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Cars available left/right hand drive with UK specification.

# Feature

Purchasing the right equipment for the Army is a multi-million pound business. Staff at the Procurement Executive also know lives could depend on decisions they make

Report: Karen Moseley  
Pictures: Terry Champion

WHEN the MoD's Procurement Executive at Abbey Wood, Bristol, was built it was decided that good design need not cost more than bad.

The result is a building complex unlike any other belonging to the MoD. The four "neighbourhoods" with their sweeping lines of white stone and glass are surrounded by landscaped gardens with a lake and fountains. Walking through the glazed "streets" brings to mind ships under sail, with stairways designed in the shape of prows and covered with sail-shaped awnings.

So spectacular is the result that the Abbey Wood site has won a number of architectural and environmental awards, including the Marché International des Professionnels de l'Immobilier award for the best office building in Europe and the British Council for Offices award for best out-of-town development.

But Abbey Wood was not planned just to look good. There was a serious financial reason behind the futuristic and dramatic design features. Before 1995, Procurement Executive (PE) staff worked at 15 office sites scattered about London, Bath, Portland and Portsmouth. Not only was this inefficient, but many of the buildings were of poor quality and expensive to run.

Abbey Wood was built with "value engineering" in mind. It meant that every aspect had to provide value for money and a good work environment. For example, the glass-covered walkways give an additional 6,000 square metres of usable space while saving in construction costs



## Smart way ahead for procurement

and improved energy efficiency. The lake is not simply there to look attractive; it provides a cheap and efficient security barrier and the landscaping with trees and shrubs costs less to maintain than grass.

The thinking that went into designing Abbey Wood mirrors the Smart Procurement Initiative that governs £50 billion-worth of defence equipment programmes planned for Britain's Armed Forces. This means buying the right equipment at the right time and at the best value for money.

It is a subject very close to the heart of Defence Secretary George Robertson, who introduced the Smart Procurement Initiative in the Strategic Defence Review. With it, he said, he wanted to revolutionise the way the MoD did business by bringing in the best of the private sector's expertise in project and procurement

● Turn to next page

**Maj Gordon Rae, Royal Scots, left, Light Logistic Vehicles Dept and Maj Bob Wells, REME, Integrated Logistic Support Manager**

They are procuring All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) which have been designed to go across snow, desert, rough ground and steep hills, and even in some cases, swim.

"We are negotiating with an overseas firm at the moment and hope to let the contract next year," said Maj Rae. "It starts with a prototype being built and user trials are carried out by the Royal Marines and Infantry Trials and Development Unit."

Maj Wells produces specifications so that all support is in place for maintenance and repairs.

Other projects range from quad bikes to the All-terrain Mobile Platform.

## Maj Andrew Shilton, RLC, Project Officer for NBC and Pyrotechnics

Maj Shilton has been working on the procurement of the Integrated Biological Detection System, a multi-million pound project. Much of his time is spent with technical experts at Porton Down and Winterbourne Gunner.

"When the Gulf War started there was a serious shortfall in our ability to detect the use of biological weapons," he explained. "As an operational expedient we installed some lab-type equipment into some one-



tonne Land Rovers during Op Granby.

"Work has now started on IBDF, a new and extremely complex system which is almost ready. When it comes, detection equipment inside a four-tonne vehicle will be deployed with a force to detect and warn of a biological attack.

When it comes into service it will be issued to the joint NBC unit forming at RAF Honington."

Another area he is responsible for is providing advice on chemical hardening in the design of new equipment. Chemical hardening is achieved through the choice of a suitable design and materials so that chemical warfare agents cannot become trapped in cracks and crevices. Equipment must be suitable for decontamination. It is also important to build equipment with materials that will not absorb chemical warfare agents.

# Way ahead

● From Page 21

management. He told the CBI conference that the National Audit Office report into defence procurement had become a "notorious catalogue of delay and cost increase". MoD's internal reports made equally sorry reading.

"These cost overruns and delays are an insult to the taxpayers of Britain; I personally feel offended by the waste that they cause. But they are also a headache for our Armed Forces who have to make do and mend very old equipment while they are waiting for new kit to arrive," he said.

"It is not simply a matter of inconvenience; lives are put at risk if our personnel are forced to go into dangerous situations with outdated or inadequate equipment."

The PE is the biggest purchaser of manufactured goods in this country. At any one time the 6,000 staff are managing more than 13,000 contracts ranging from the purchase of Trident submarines to small spare parts for a field radio.

Many of the PE's Army personnel work in Directorate General Land Systems (DGLS), where most of the Army's equipment needs are met. There were more than 700 land systems projects in progress last year and contracts worth some £900 million were negotiated.

Maj Gen David Jenkins, Director General Land Systems, does not under-estimate how vital the work carried out by PE is. "The job here is very important because we have to meet the operational requirements of the Army in Bosnia, Northern Ireland and elsewhere," he said.

## Maj Elaine Roberts, REME, Field Artillery Weapons Systems

Maj Roberts is carrying out a feasibility study into an Indirect Fire Precision Attack (IFPA) system which aims to provide the British Army with a long-range precision attack capability in excess of 60 km.

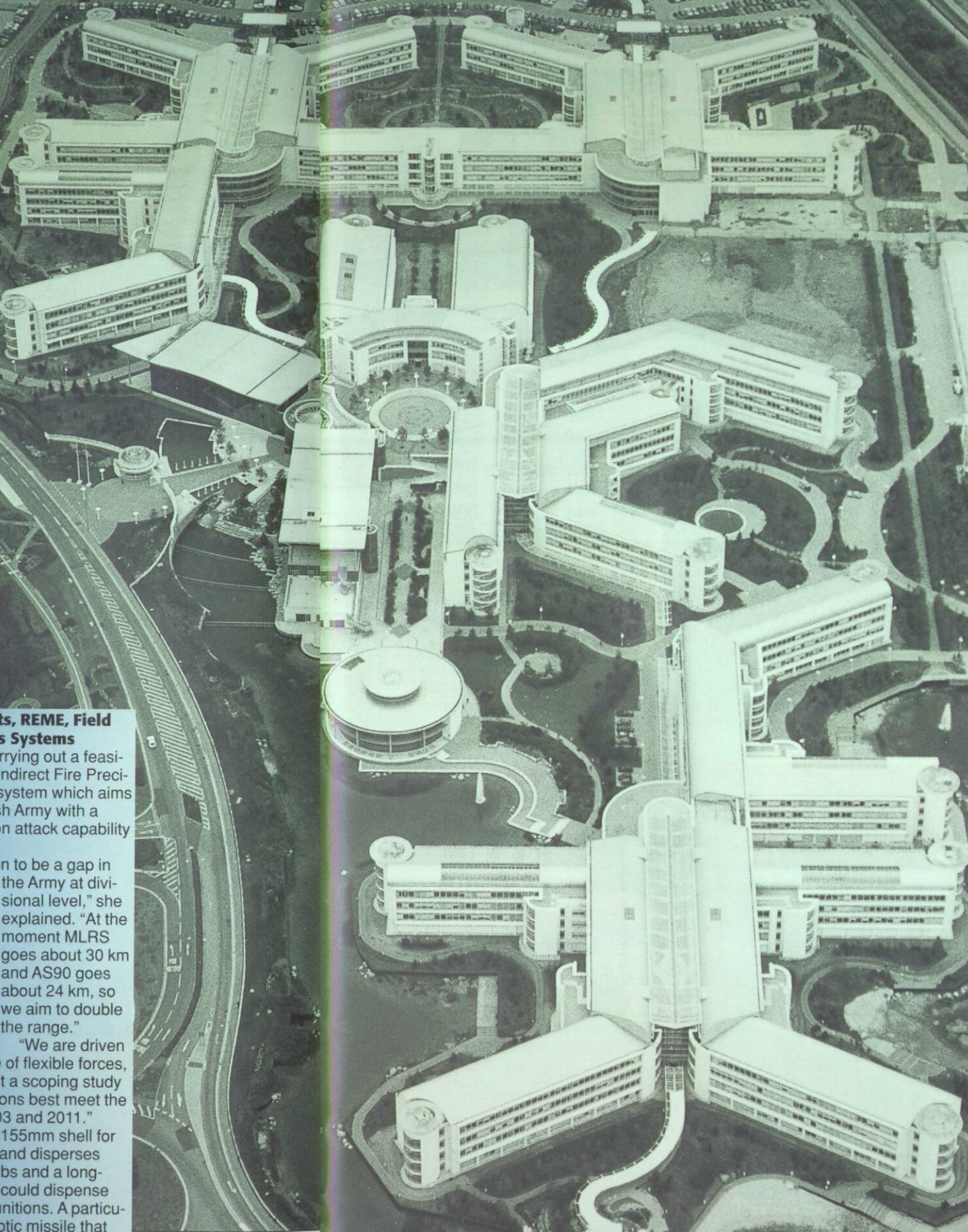
"It is currently seen to be a gap in the Army at divisional level," she explained. "At the moment MLRS goes about 30 km and AS90 goes about 24 km, so we aim to double the range."

"We are driven by the new doctrine of flexible forces, and are carrying out a scoping study to see which munitions best meet the needs between 2003 and 2011."

Options include a 155mm shell for AS90 which bursts and disperses high-explosive bombs and a long-range rocket which could dispense anti-armour sub-munitions. A particular need is a fibre optic missile that can be aimed with precision at a discreet high-value target.

Reconnaissance  
A r m o u r e d  
Combat Equipment Requirement. This joint UK-US project will represent a huge advance over the Army's present reconnaissance vehicles when it comes into service in about ten years' time.

Artillery Systems is responsible for the AS90 self-propelled howitzer, a major



Abbey Wood's showpiece 8-acre site, which features 11 office buildings, a library and nursery, has won a number of awards

upgrade to the current Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) and projects such as Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAVs) and the multi-national Counter Battery Radar (COBRA). This highly sensitive radar is designed to spot incoming shells, rockets and mortar bombs and quickly compute where they have come from.

Engineering and Light Weapons Sys-

tems covers a wide range of projects across all infantry weapons from mortars to sniper rifles and from general engineering to bridging equipment.

Combat Support Systems is pioneering a ground-breaking concept with its Private Finance Initiative (PFI) project in which civilian drivers of heavy vehicles could become sponsored reservists. It

## Maj Nigel Stafford, 9th/12th Royal Lancers, Unmanned Air Vehicles project

Maj Stafford and colleague Maj Tony Potter RA are part of a five-strong team tasked with procuring two small, unmanned aircraft which contain cameras and can fly above forces on the ground and show them what is ahead.

Project Sender is looking at an aircraft which will be able to fly a range of about 30km, and Project Spectator will be a larger and more complex version capable of travelling 150km. It will support Armoured, Infantry peace-keeping forces.

"I am responsible for liaising with industry and for developing a technical database about systems already on the market," Maj Stafford said. "I've written to 140 companies in 14 countries, and we shall probably put the smaller system to tender next year and invite companies to respond."

means that in a conflict the drivers would put on uniforms and become soldiers. The department deals with new tank transporters and a fleet of thousands of cargo trucks, as well as other vehicles for all three services. There is also a plan for several thousand diesel-engined off-road motor cycles for Army despatch riders.

Special Projects has the critically important task of supporting British security services in their counter-terrorism roles. It has been looking at an integrated communications system for security forces in Northern Ireland and equipment for Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), such as the latest system of the small remote-controlled vehicle Wheebarrow.

Many of the projects being dealt with are not due to be seen by soldiers for a good few years yet. But the work of the DGLS also involves quick responses for urgent operational requirements from units deployed in the world's trouble spots. The PE recently invited tenders from ten companies for a Theatre-Wide Area Communications Network (TWACN) for the Joint Rapid Reaction Force. This will provide the additional communications infrastructure required to support UK deployed forces.

Procurement may have had a bad name in the past but with the government's determination to revolutionise the way the MoD does business, and the depth of knowledge and expertise at Abbey Wood, buying equipment for Army in the 21st century could indeed be the "smart" way ahead.



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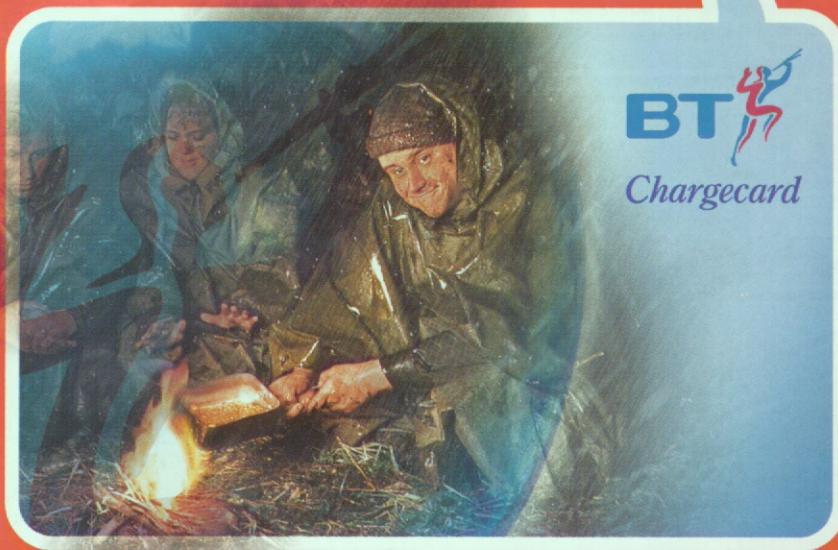


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# Brush wars

Military artist with a distinctive style has also passed his P Company training

Report: Karen Moseley

WARRIOR-artist is an unusual job description, but that is how Capt Scott Kirkwood, late of the Australian Army Reserve and now a member of a Royal Artillery TA regiment, describes himself.

Having trained and worked as an architect, his love of portraiture and military subjects finally won out and three years ago he switched to being a full-time military artist.

His latest work, *The Boys of the Old Brigade*, a study of two Chelsea Pensioners laughing and chatting, has been presented as a gift to the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. Capt Kirkwood has also handed over the printing rights of the painting to the Royal British Legion to raise money for the Poppy Appeal. A limited edition of 600 signed prints, if sold out, could raise £25,000 for the charity.

"I was catching a train from Woking to Waterloo and saw an ex-Serviceman selling poppies," Capt Kirkwood said. "When I returned five-and-a-half hours later he was still there and I thought if he could do that I ought to do something to help as well."

## OLD SOLDIERS

He contacted Brig Kim Ross, adjutant of the Royal Hospital, who requested the two old soldiers to sit for the painting. Arthur Davies and Gareth Evans were great friends when they served together in The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment many years ago. After being reunited at the hospital they are now almost inseparable.

"Chelsea Hospital is the only hospital in the world where you need to take a medical to get in, so I was very keen for that positive atmosphere to show through in the painting," the artist explained.

The subject matter is different from the pictures Capt Kirkwood usually paints. Those which have been commissioned by regiments show soldiers in action, usually



"100 at 30", above, was commissioned by 100 Regt RA(V) to commemorate its 30th anniversary

Warrior-artist: Capt Scott Kirkwood, left

"The Boys of the Old Brigade": Arthur Davies and Gareth Evans caught on canvas, below



operating highly technical machinery. The emphasis on light and shade and use of limited colour gives the paintings dramatic effect.

"I try to get a sense of drama, but not schoolboy heroics," he said. "I don't like the *Boys' Own* approach to conflict."

His method of creating a picture is always the same. He starts with pencil sketches and takes a number of photographs to make sure of the detail. These are then combined to make several line and wash sketches which are enlarged by

photocopying and sent to the client for selection.

"Soldiers are bears for detail and will always point out anything wrong," he said. "If you are a slave to a photograph it shows and if you stick to a sketch you don't get the technical detail right."

He is extremely disciplined about colour and, of the 12 water-colours on his palette, paints with only three. These

he builds up in thin washes, using up to 20 to 30 layers for particularly dark shades. He never uses white, achieving it by either leaving the paper blank or using a round-tipped scalpel to scrape away the colour.

His first major commission was for the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards early in 1997, when they invited him to join them in Bosnia to produce six large water-colours. The finished paintings were delivered in June and he donated his sketchbook to the regiment to be auctioned for charity.

Last May, Capt Kirkwood, who has completed P Company training, was awarded his parachute wings. He began a Short Service Voluntary Commission with 26 Regiment RA in Bosnia, and although carrying out a demanding military job, had the opportunity to record material and sketches in his spare time.

He returned to Bosnia at the beginning of November for a three-month tour.

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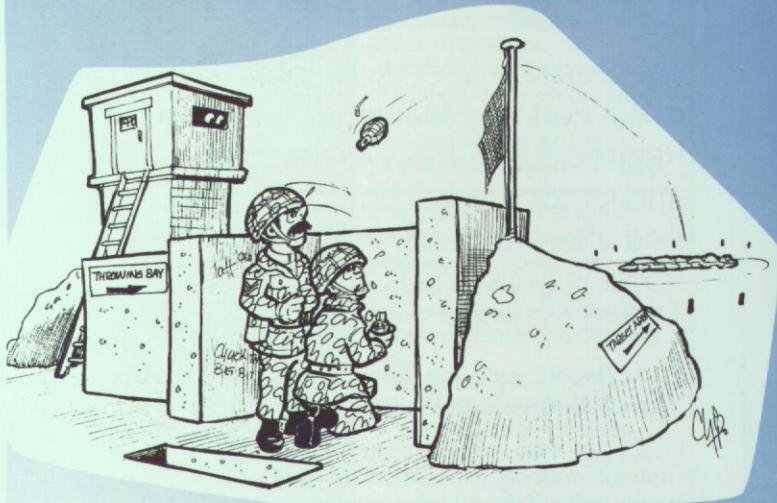
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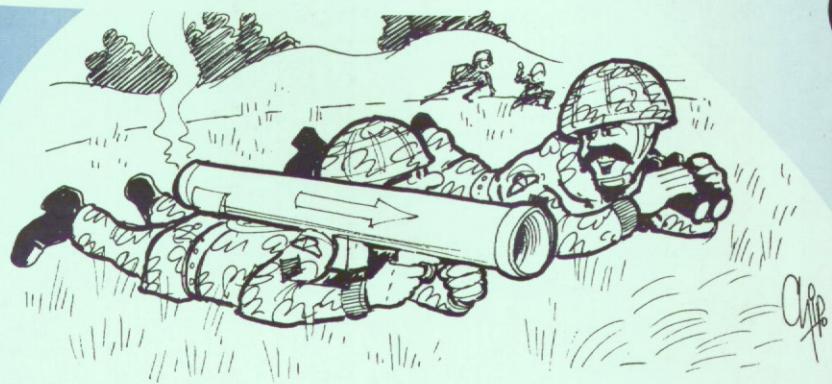
# Chuckle with Chip



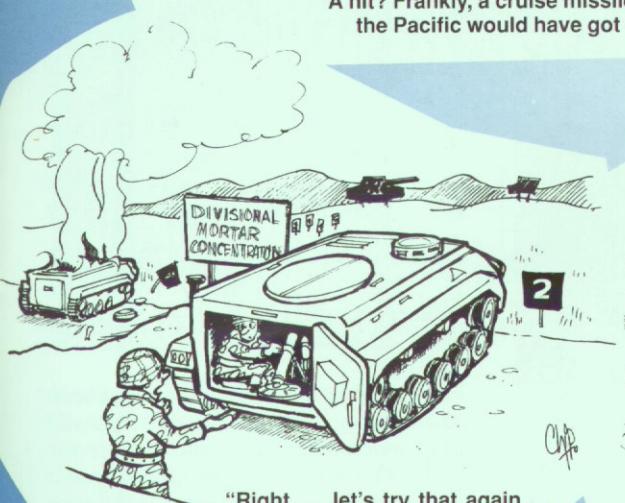
"Mum did the packing, I take it?"



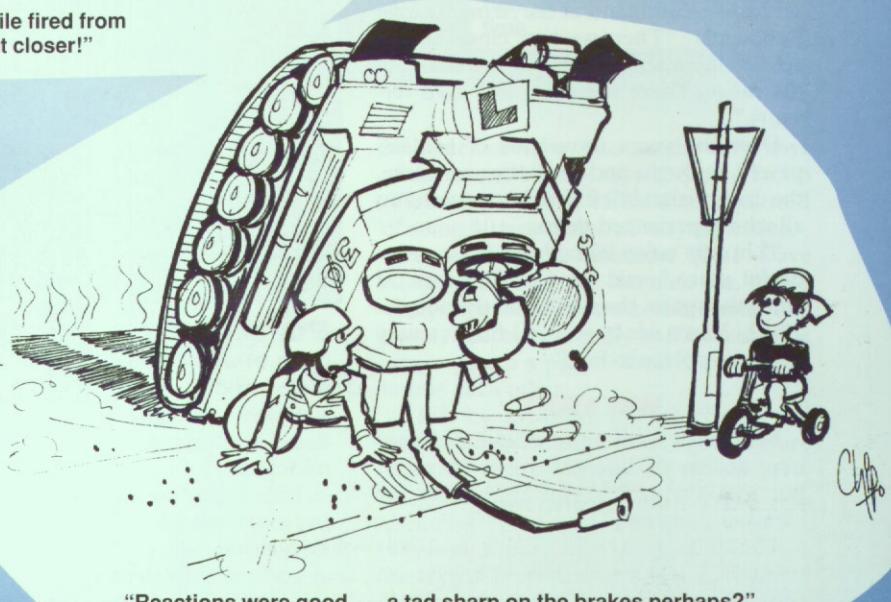
## Caution: Soldiers under training



"A hit? Frankly, a cruise missile fired from the Pacific would have got closer!"



"Right... let's try that again... hatch open, then fire!"



"Reactions were good... a tad sharp on the brakes perhaps?"

# Splendid isolation

The Benbecula detachment of 17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC has weighed anchor for the last time. And after 40 years, the Royal Signals unit is also poised to beat a retreat

Report: Anthony Stone  
Pictures: Terry Champion

IT IS the most remote posting in the United Kingdom... a place where there are no traffic lights or roundabouts, and no excuse for being late for work.

For more than 40 years troops have been stationed on Benbecula, the Outer Hebrides, but now the last are packing up their kit and preparing to leave.

Seven soldiers of the maritime detachment of 17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC returned to their base at Marchwood, near Southampton last month. And by April the eight-strong detachment from 242 Signal Squadron will also have left.

The only military remaining will be key personnel working with the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency (DERA), which took over the running of the range from the Royal Artillery in April.

"Heyday of the range was in the 1970s," said Lt Col Crawford Stoddart, second-in-command at the Army base on Benbecula. "Then we had close to 300 soldiers here and a brigadier commanded the range. There were also 200 civil servants."

Over the years thousands of soldiers passed through, and for better or worse, the craggy islands left firm impressions on all who experienced them.

"I hugely enjoy being here, it is a wonderful place," said Lt Col Stoddart. "I enjoy the space, the peace and the people. The horizons are large and I find it a very rewarding place to live."

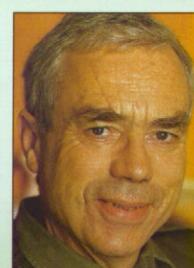
## WET STUFF

Benbecula is certainly unique. Eskimos have dozens of different words for snow, but the islanders would beat them for variations on "rain".

The landscape is wild and bleak; almost tree-less. The wind could be charged with GBH. Even indoors Benbecula's inhabitants cannot escape. Close the door and it is as if you have suddenly developed a bad



Final Signals: SSgt John "Smudge" Smith (left) takes in the view with WO1 Dave Alexander



Lt Col Crawford Stoddart

case of tinnitus, although the whistling in your ears is only the wind whipping against the windows.

But the other side of the coin is miles of clean beaches, stunning wildlife and summer evenings that stretch past midnight.

The Hebridean weather is changeable. Indeed, it seems to be undergoing a permanent mid-life crisis, with four seasons in one day quite normal.

Visibility over the lochs and sea changes faster than you can say "rescue". Benbecula's Coast Guard, incidentally, doesn't

have a boat, so it was fortunate the maritime troop was still on the island a few months ago when troop commander SSgt Andy Smith responded to a knock on the door.

"It was about 9.30 in the evening and the Coast Guard wanted to know if we could rescue some guys on the Monachs, which are a small group of islands," he said.

"A party of seven radio hams had been taken out by a local teacher so they could listen to radio signals from all over the world. The trip went well until he went back to collect them. Then the steering failed and the propeller hit a rock."

"The weather was pretty bad, it was pitch black and we didn't have radar. The Monachs have a seal colony and a lighthouse and quite a severe coastline

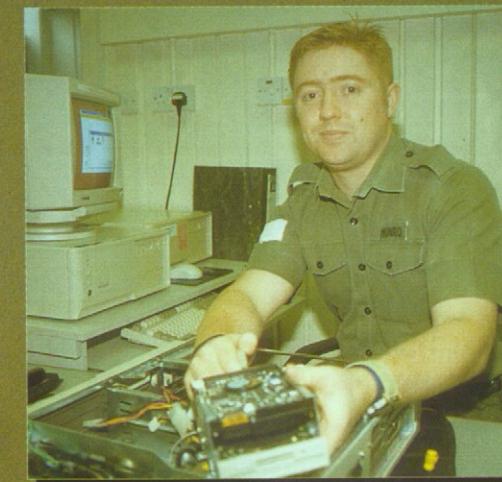


Bon voyage: Cpl Dave Hughes, Pte John Thain, LCpl Billy Burton, LCpl Andy Chambers, Cpl Lawrence Watson and SSgt Andy Smith of 17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC

because of the rocks. We had to rescue them in a force six with a sea state of about five which is about two-metre waves. It was quite daunting."

When the detachment was not rescuing people from the Atlantic, which was a rare occurrence, the soldiers got on with their real job.

SSgt Smith said: "Our main role was to control craft entering the range. If a vessel



Testing, testing: Sgt Steve Munro at work

## Farewell to St Kilda

AT its peak the Benbecula signal troop included a five-man detachment based on the island of St Kilda.

Britain's most isolated group of islands, it lies on the edge of the continental shelf, a further 42 miles into the Atlantic.

A Gaelic equivalent of "drop dead" roughly translates to "I wish you were on St Kilda".

Purpose of the signal detachment was to provide communications support for Royal Artillery personnel maintaining the surveillance and tracking radar.

The gunners kept tabs on missiles launched from Benbecula. The island's range, established in 1957, was perfect, providing a secluded location for the Ministry of Defence to test rockets and missiles.

St Kilda, now a World Heritage Site, boasts the highest cliffs in Britain at 1,300ft and the highest stac at 627ft. It has remained uninhabited since 1930 when the small island population conceded victory to the isolation and harsh conditions and was evacuated at its own request.

Since the hand-over of the range from the Royal Artillery to DERA, the last remaining permanent Royal Signals technician has been removed, to be replaced by a fortnightly maintenance visit by helicopter.

By March 31 the colours of the Corps of Royal Signals will have been lowered from the Hebridean skyline for the last time.

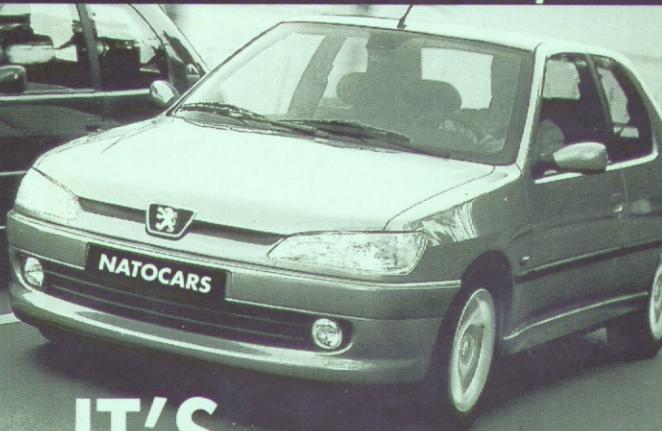
Hebrides stretches back to the early days of the range. At its peak, 632 Signal Troop (Hebrides) as it was called then, consisted of some 40 personnel, of varying trades.

Signal troop commander WO1 Dave Alexander will be the last man out. "It's a completely different pace of life here. The people are very friendly and because the range is such a part of local life everyone knows each other."

"It'll be me who will be closing the doors and switching off the lights. We are planning to have a beating retreat ceremony and we would like to invite ex-members of the troop to attend."

"Most of us will be sad to leave, it is quite a unique place and the most remote single troop in the United Kingdom. On Benbecula, we are so close to home and yet in many ways, so far away."

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# From Westminster to Wapping

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

## Phoenix takes to the skies

PHOENIX, the Army's new surveillance and target acquisition system, has entered operational service.

The news was given in a written answer by Defence Under-Secretary John Spellor, who said the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) had undergone "very successful" conversion training by 32 and 39 Regiments Royal Artillery and had performed well in exercises.

"Phoenix enters service with a proven track record," he told MPs. "When deliveries have been completed, the Royal Artillery will be equipped with a system which will substantially increase the Army's capability to locate and destroy targets well behind enemy lines with indirect fire systems."

Comprising an aircraft with a launcher vehicle and a ground control station, Phoenix is one of the most advanced systems of its kind in the world. Computer software on board the aircraft is controlled by the operator on the ground.

The aerial vehicle is fitted with thermal imaging cameras which send instant pictures back to the control station, allowing commanders to see what is happening "over the horizon" from a height of about 8,000ft.

On return, the aircraft has to land on its back on an airbag to avoid being damaged.

Two Royal Artillery regiments will have batteries of Phoenix, with each holding enough stocks to maintain an operational capability 24 hours a day.

**Veterans phone in:** In its first two months the MoD Veterans' Advice Unit, which opened in October, took 1,500 telephone calls on its 08456 02 03 02 number. Enquiries increased steadily, the largest number concerning pensions, employment, the provision of medals and information about the unit itself.

Other subjects covered included home care and housing, Falklands and Gulf war issues, the tracing of relatives, and war graves and historical records.

Since the launch, more than 90,000 leaflets publicising the unit have been sent out to ex-Service organisations and charities, DSS B benefit offices, the War Pensions Agency and Citizens' Advice Bureaux.

### Other points from Parliament:

**Pregnancy pay-outs:** Compensation payments to Servicewomen who left the Armed

Forces because of pregnancy so far total more than £60m. The pay-outs reached their peak during 1994-95, when the figure was £35.6m. This financial year (to November 30, 1998) the total stands at just over £520,000.

**Scottish ceremony:** Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and the 1st Battalion, The Black Watch are likely to take part in the opening ceremony of the Scottish Parliament.

**Cadet forces:** Strength of the Army Cadet Force at March 31, 1998 (the last audit point) was 40,773, and the Combined Cadet Force 39,460.



**Flashback to February 1994:** The then Phoenix Military Team which conducted trials on the battlefield surveillance and target acquisition system at Larkhill

## Shot in arm for defence medicine

### ● From Page 9

will be given responsibility for hospital care for Service personnel across the country.

This, the report says, will "enable personnel to be treated locally rather than making costly and time-consuming jour-

## IN The PRESS

What the papers say

□ Britain has now overtaken France to become Europe's most powerful military nation after Russia, according to a new study. It puts Britain's conventional forces fourth in the world, behind those of America, China and Russia. — *Daily Telegraph*

□ In what researchers describe as a breakthrough in "smart clothing", the United States Army has come up with a processor-driven, networked, satellite-linked T-shirt, woven from a mixture of cotton, fibre-optic threads and miniature sensors. It is designed to alert battlefield controllers when pierced by a bullet or some other lethal force. — *Times*

□ British campaigners are to fight on for damages over wartime maltreatment by Japan despite the rejection of their claim by the Tokyo District Court. — *Daily Telegraph*

□ The Army Recruiting Group has been highly commended in the *FT Business Web Site of the Year* awards. — *Financial Times*

□ A trooper was hurled from his horse during a royal procession. Onlookers gasped in horror as the animal reared up and fell on the soldier after kicking the Queen's carriage. — *Mirror*

□ Sticky foam and anti-personnel nets may soon join the traditional armoury of British troops. And stun-guns and high-powered microwave weapons are being actively considered. — *Sunday Telegraph*

□ Homosexuals and lesbians thrown out of the Armed Forces will be able to claim millions of pounds in sex harassment damages after a landmark legal decision by a Croydon industrial tribunal. — *Daily Mail*

□ British Army tank transporters operating in the front line of combat could have civilian drivers under a contract to be considered by ministers in the next few weeks. — *Financial Times*

● Readers are reminded that views expressed or reported in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Army or the Ministry of Defence.

neys to military facilities". The report places a greater focus on people issues such as recruitment and retention. To this end, a new two-star Chief of Staff with the necessary business skills, and one-star directors of personnel and training, will be appointed.

Who dares . . .

# Take the brakes off and *go for it!*

Our writer had a bash at the giant slalom with the British Ladies' Army Ski Team . . . and lived to tell the tale

Report: Graham Bound  
Pictures: Mike Weston

RATHER like Capt Smith standing on the bridge of the *Titanic*, I knew that I was going down, and there was very little I could do about it.

Gazing down the blue ice run of the giant slalom course from the rarefied air 12,000ft above Switzerland, I wished that I could take someone with me; preferably the entire Army women's ski team, who had spent long hours preparing me for this moment. Perhaps wedged between them I would stay on my feet while weaving in and out of the poles. And if it didn't work? . . . Well, what a way to go.

How had I got into this? As if in an old movie, everything went wavy as my memory slipped back to the office where I had taken a call from Maj Paul Ford, manager of the British Ladies' Army Ski Team (BLAST), just a week earlier . . .

## LOTS OF FUN

"It's serious training," said the chipper voice coming out of the telephone. "But it's lots of fun, so why not come out to Zermatt and give it a try?" The man with the best job in the British Army was convincing. The girls would be enjoying the high life and I could be a beast among the beauties.

Why not, indeed. I'd been skiing before. I knew how to snow-plough into a *glühwein* station for refuelling, and in a few days spent with some charming girls, developing my skills should be a doddle.

And at first, up there in the clear mountain air and pristine snow, it was. My pride would not allow me to admit it, but I was relieved when Paul placed me with the novices, the girls – 2nd Lt Jess Norman, Capt Debs Nightingale, Capt Rachel Harvey and 2nd Lt Jo Nissen – who were not going to be competing at an inter-Service level this winter but still had their eyes on the big goal. Meanwhile they had bags of bubbly enthusiasm and good humour to share.

Capt Ingrid Rolland, REME (V), a prize-winning skier until she seriously

damaged a leg, had already been coaching them for several days when I arrived, but didn't seem to mind my late start. Perhaps she thought my antics would be a welcome diversion.

Early on that first day I fell in (literally) behind Jess, Debs, Rachel and Jo as Ingrid gave us her pep talk. Soberingly, she reminded us that we were in very select company on these high, out-of-season



In line: The BLAST beauties (plus one beast) prepare for another day of instruction  
This is how you do it: Instructor Capt Ingrid Rolland, left, slaloms with style

slopes. Around us were the national teams of France, Norway and the United States, their Lycra-clad bodies rocketing down the slalom courses at apparently suicidal speeds. These pros ski all year, following the snow around the world.

"Do try and look good, in case they're watching," Ingrid implored. Perhaps she read my mind, because she looked at me and smiled wanly in a way which seemed to say: "Well, just do your best."

This small bundle of energy and authority led us up and down the slopes, as we repeatedly practised the particular skills needed for the giant slalom. With the flags further apart than in the ordinary event, the giant version enables wider turns and much greater speed and acceleration.

## LOW BUM

"Keep the hips and bum low," insisted Ingrid, folding herself down into a seemingly impossible "z" shape. We were also instructed to keep our skis further apart than in normal skiing: it makes leaning into fast turns a little easier. Switching weight instantly and smoothly from one leg to the other in rhythmic changes of direction is also important. But most worrying of all, our coach urged us to "point into the fall line" as much as possible. In other words, go straight down.

These were tall orders for me, and as we practised snaking down the slopes behind Ingrid, I tried to position myself at the

back of the pack where I hoped to attract least attention. Whatever I did with my bum and hips were best kept to myself, I reasoned. But the girls weren't having that. This friendly bunch constantly pushed me towards the front and made feel a part of the team.

This was pretty generous, considering, and it helped. My inept (although gradually improving) efforts earned yells of "go for it, Grazza!" (Jess decided that I needed a sporting moniker) and bursts of laughter.

And so, after a day-and-a-half of practice, I found myself crouched in the start

**BLAST** are always looking for new trainees. If you are a woman soldier with some skiing experience call Maj Paul Ford on (mil) 737 2213 or (mobile) 0973 397575.

Ready for the off: Our man receives some last-minute tips



gate of Paul Ford's slalom course. I tried to remember everything I had been taught, but, above all, this advice from Paul rang in my ears: "Take the brakes off and go for it."

I wanted to, but couldn't. I wasted a good five seconds building up speed but by the first set of sticks and flags had gained some momentum. I went into a sort-of-crouch, pushed down on my left ski and followed through with the right. I tried to straighten up a little and face the fall line, but was going hopelessly wide. When I came back on track I hit the ruts and ridges left by other skiers. The rest of the descent took place in a whirl of flailing skis and sticks and a cloud of powder snow.

"Oh well," I thought, lying there flat on my back. "They had their laugh." Ingrid swished to a stop alongside me and was quick to explain what I had done wrong. Apart from being far too cautious and ignoring most of the rules, I had tried to go around the poles the wrong way. Rather than following the carved-out route of the others, I was bouncing across it.

There was one more chance to get it right and suddenly this seemed very important to me. It wasn't just that the girls were watching, but some other flashy and professional-looking national team were waiting for the course. "I'll show 'em," I thought.

## LESS DAUNTING

I didn't, but this time I threw myself at the course with some enthusiasm. I was far from low enough, and God only knew what my bum was doing. But I held myself in the fall-line for longer than seemed safe and flags swished past me. As I neared the bottom I heard the laughter and cheers of the BLAST girls.

With what little panache I could muster, I pulled off a tight swerve, scraping to a halt alongside them . . . and fell over.

The cruel truth is that I'm never going to make a speed skier. I'm not even sure I want to be one. But I shall happily go back to occasional holiday skiing with some new skills to show off. A few years ago, though, it might well have been a different story.

My advice to slightly younger skiers? If you have the chance to race-train, seize it. As they say on the slalom slopes: "Take the brakes off and go for it."

# Training area: the world

Interview: Graham Bound  
Portraits: Terry Champion

RECENT demand for pith-helmeted and barrel-chested leaders to take expeditions into dark, disease-ridden jungles, across parched deserts and down crocodile-infested rivers has been somewhat limited.

"Well, it's all pointless, innit?" say the cynics from in front of their computer games. "These days we can read about it and see it on telly."

Well, maybe, but who takes the cameras to these places and who writes the books? Col John Blashford-Snell, late RE, for one. This senior ex-sapper, fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, showman, adventurer, explorer and humanitarian is living proof that the spirit of heroic British exploration lives on – and may even be doing rather well.

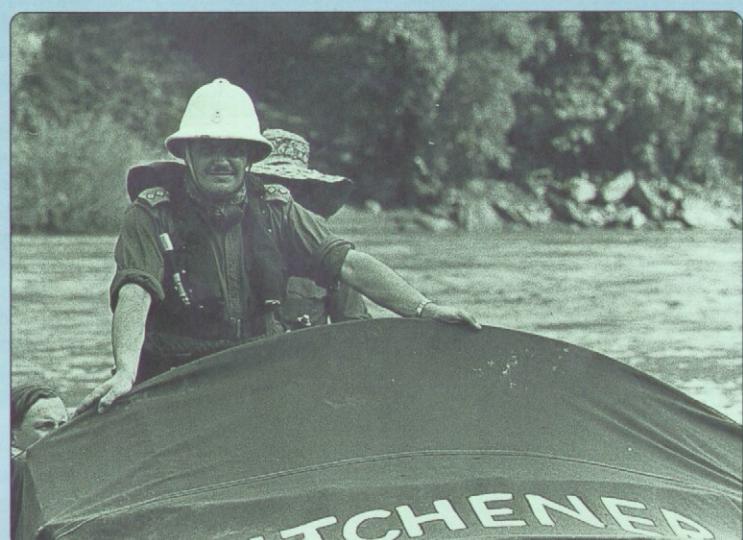
Blashers, as the tabloids were quick to christen the colonel when he began exercising his remarkable ability to attract publicity, was always drawn to adventure. But it was not until 1962, while he was an instructor at Sandhurst, that his aptitude for conceiving and organising expeditions was harnessed.

The commandant, deciding to install him as OC Adventurous Training, told the young captain: "Your job is about getting as many of these little buggers overseas as possible for the benefit of their character and with the least possible detriment to the Empire."

By the end of that day the Academy Sergeant Major had set John up in his first expedition HQ, a smelly boot room with a table and a chair. The ASM pinned a large map of the world to the wall and wrote beneath it in big capital letters: TRAINING AREA.

For the next few years John Blashford-Snell took the words of his commanding officer and ASM to heart, sending groups of officer cadets to all points of the compass on relatively small-scale adventures. They climbed peaks, crossed deserts, dived beneath the sea. "It was great training in self-reliance," reflects Blashford-

'Adventurer and Discoverer of Lost Civilisations' ... as a job description it does not seem to hold much promise for the future, but Col Blashers begs to differ



From the archives: A pith-helmeted Capt John Blashford-Snell on the Nile

Snell. "We tried to give them tasks that served someone well." It was useful for the OC Adventurous Training, too. He led or took part in as many expeditions as possible, all the while perfecting the arts of planning, leadership and financing,

**Your job is about getting as many of these little buggers overseas as possible for the benefit of their character and with the least possible detriment to the Empire'**

ready for the really big projects that lived at the back of his mind.

Had it not been for his corps, the Royal Engineers, they may have remained there. But the sappers were, and are still, a giant organisation by Army standards, and found it possible to lose an officer to unconventional activities.

This did not seem unreasonable to Blashford-Snell. "After all", he said, "I

was doing the kind of things that sappers are supposed to be good at: blazing trails and getting around obstacles. They just told me to keep on going, keep on going."

He did, and by 1968 Blashers and his exploration-mad friends were ready to take on journeys of real discovery, adventures comparable with those of his Victorian hero, Henry Morton Stanley.

Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia invited a tri-Service team to travel down the previously un-navigated Blue Nile, charting the river and the land on either side. Blashford-Snell was to lead the adventure, which nearly cost the team their lives. Paddling specially-designed rubber rafts (and virtually inventing the sport of white-water rafting en route) they discovered the locals were not friendly. Perhaps the British Servicemen and their few Ethiopian Army guides were confused with roving tax officials. Whatever the reason, they were attacked with gusto.

Blashford-Snell looks back on the Nile trip with a sense of excitement, but clearly regrets that some of their attackers died. "It was a pity because if only we had been able to communicate with them we might have stopped it."

He did try. When their riverside camp came under attack, the big man in the white pith helmet grabbed a loud hailer and boomed out in pidgin Ethiopian that he had come in peace and wanted to be friends. The attackers briefly ceased firing presumably taken back by the absurdity of the situation, enabling most of the team to scramble into their boats. But when a bullet smacked into the ground

between his legs, Blashers knew that dialogue was pointless. He ran for it, throwing himself into a raft as more bullets spat into the river. Later, at another camp, Blashford-Snell awoke to the hear the sentry shouting: "Here they come!" He fired a flare and in its light saw the beach swarming with attackers. One was chasing a captain of the Green Howards with a sword, apparently intent on decapitating him. "Someone fired a .45 pistol," recalls Blashers, "and hit the bloke at very short range. He stopped and fell dead.

Then someone, an Australian, I think, opened up with a pump-action shotgun. At close range it was a devastating weapon."

Remarkably, the only member of the expedition injured was Chris Bonington, later to achieve fame as a mountaineer. He was hit by a rock, which the locals aimed with rather more accuracy than they did their rifles.

Back in Addis Ababa the group met the Emperor and were concerned about how he might view the fire-fights. They need not have worried. Haile Selassie asked how many Ethiopians had been killed. "Very few, Your Imperial Majesty," replied the expedition leader. "Oh," said the Emperor, "I did not know the British Army were such bad shots."

## DARIEN GAP

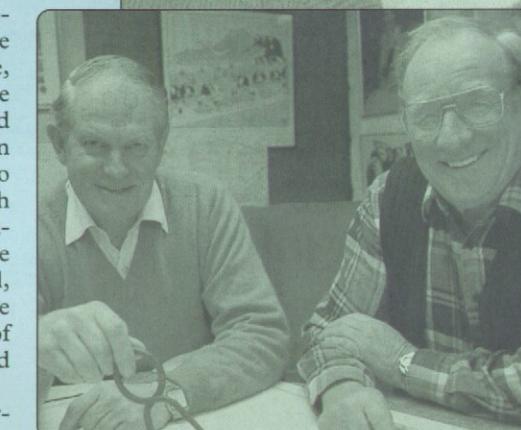
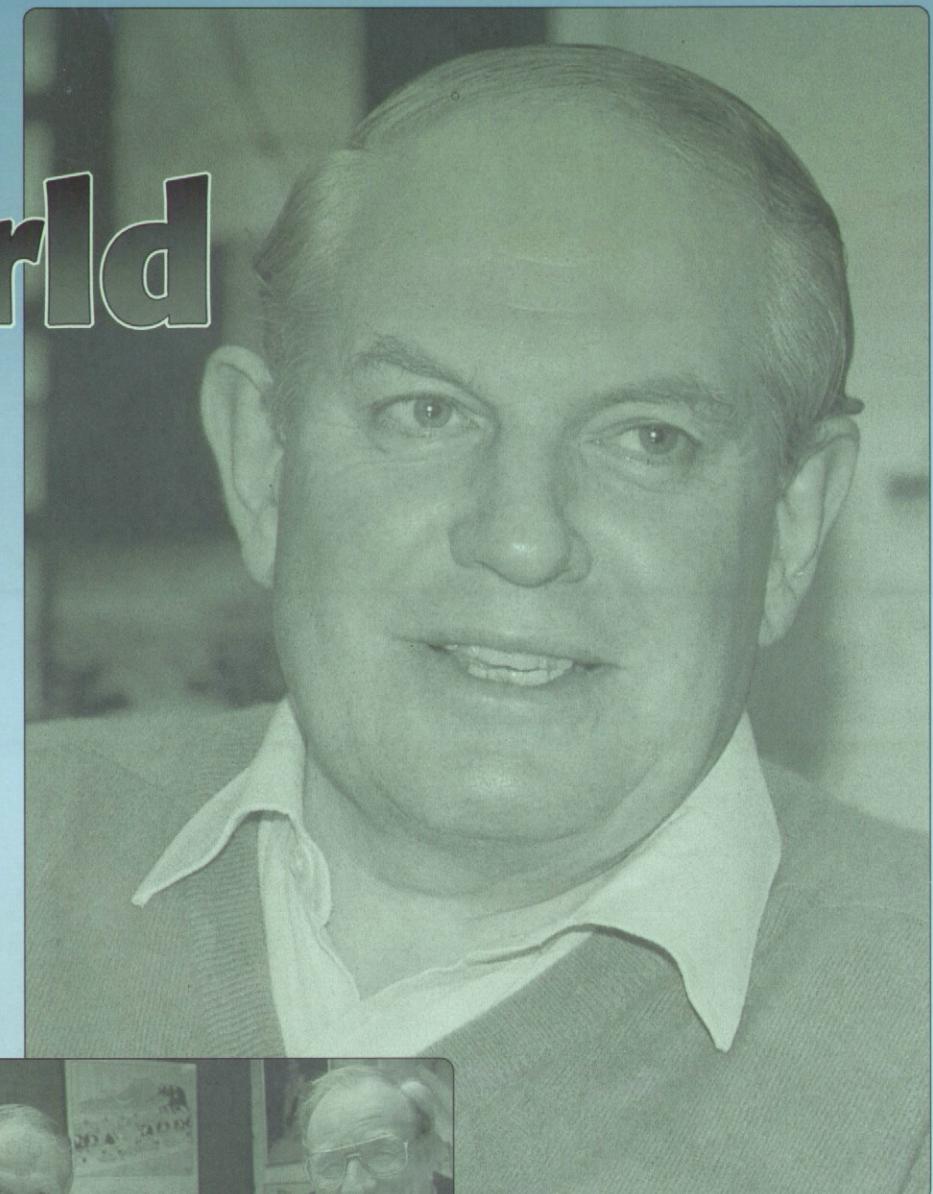
In the 30 years since the Blue Nile, John Blashford-Snell has built up an unmatched catalogue of adventures and long-term youth development schemes. There were more journeys of real pioneering value, such as the first crossing of the Darien Gap between Central and South America, and the navigation of the Zaire River from source to sea. There have been the youth enterprises, most notably Operations Drake and Raleigh. The latter, now Raleigh International, continues to introduce adventure and worth while tasks to the lives of thousands of young men and women.

Blashers shows no sign of slowing. Neither does Jim Masters, his old Army friend and right-hand man on many an expedition. At 62 and 71 respectively, Blashers and Jim still work together, enjoying the partnership they first discovered when the former was a rash young subaltern and the latter an experienced troop sergeant during the Cyprus crisis in the 1950s.

At "Expedition Base", a scattering of farm buildings surrounding Blashford-Snell's West Country farmhouse, the two greying but fit-looking men seemed to prove the theory held by so many women – that men never really grow up.

Bent low over a vast hand-drawn and

heavily-annotated map of the Parana and Paraguay rivers, which connect Brazil, Bolivia, Uruguay, Paraguay and Argentina, they were planning the Kota Mama expedition, which later this year will take scientists, Army doctors and archaeolo-



No stopping: John Blashford-Snell, above, is still planning major expeditions

the familiar image of the brash Blashers is a contrived mask, a supremely useful tool to gain the support he needs but no more. His involvement in inner-city work is hardly known at all, and yet when the planning of Kota Mama allows, he is busy raising millions of pounds for Starting Point, a planned centre for disadvantaged youth in Liverpool.

Jim Masters confirmed that there is a deeply private and compassionate side to Blashers that does not need or enjoy publicity. "He's not here, so I can say it," confided the older man when his friend was briefly out of the room making coffee. "I respect him enormously because he's a kind man. He does things for people quietly and without publicity."

You do not have to look far to see why Blashford-Snell wants to do so much for deprived young people. His hero, Stanley, started life as an urchin on the streets of Glasgow but went on to greatness because a benefactor had faith in him.

Blashers wants to create many Stanleys. "They just need that kick-start," he says with evident conviction. "Then they'll make their own way."

Their kick-start is adventure.

# Brian goes one better

Rise in quality has judges singing the praises of Army photographers

A YEAR ago he was the contender. Twelve months on he is the undisputed champ.

Sgt Brian Gamble's portfolio of six images won him the coveted title of Army professional photographer of the year in the most keenly contested Army Photographic Competition for years, writes John Elliott.

Many of his professional colleagues were at the National Army Museum in Chelsea to applaud as he received the trophy from Brig Robert Gordon, Director Public Relations (Army), one of three judges.

After finishing runner-up last year, Brian paid close attention to the judges' comments . . . and it paid off. "I was also helped by a move to 1 Division Media Ops at Herford in Germany, where there is a lot more scope than I had when I was at HQ Northern Ireland," he said. "I was able to get a bit of everything into my portfolio, including tanks."

Ironically, after winning last year's Joint Services competition organised by HQNI, Brian was runner-up in this year's event.

## HIGH STANDARD

Ray Lowe, chairman of the British Institute of Professional Photography (BIPP) qualifications committee and one of the judges, spoke enthusiastically of the high standard of entries, which he said was "far in excess of

1997". He and fellow judge Martin Keene, Head of Pictures at the Press Association, had also been struck by the overall quality of the 400-plus entries submitted by 65 professionals and amateurs.

The amateur title went to Maj James Anderson, whose last job as leader of an HQ Land Command mobile news team took him to assignments all over the world in the company of some of the Army's best snappers.

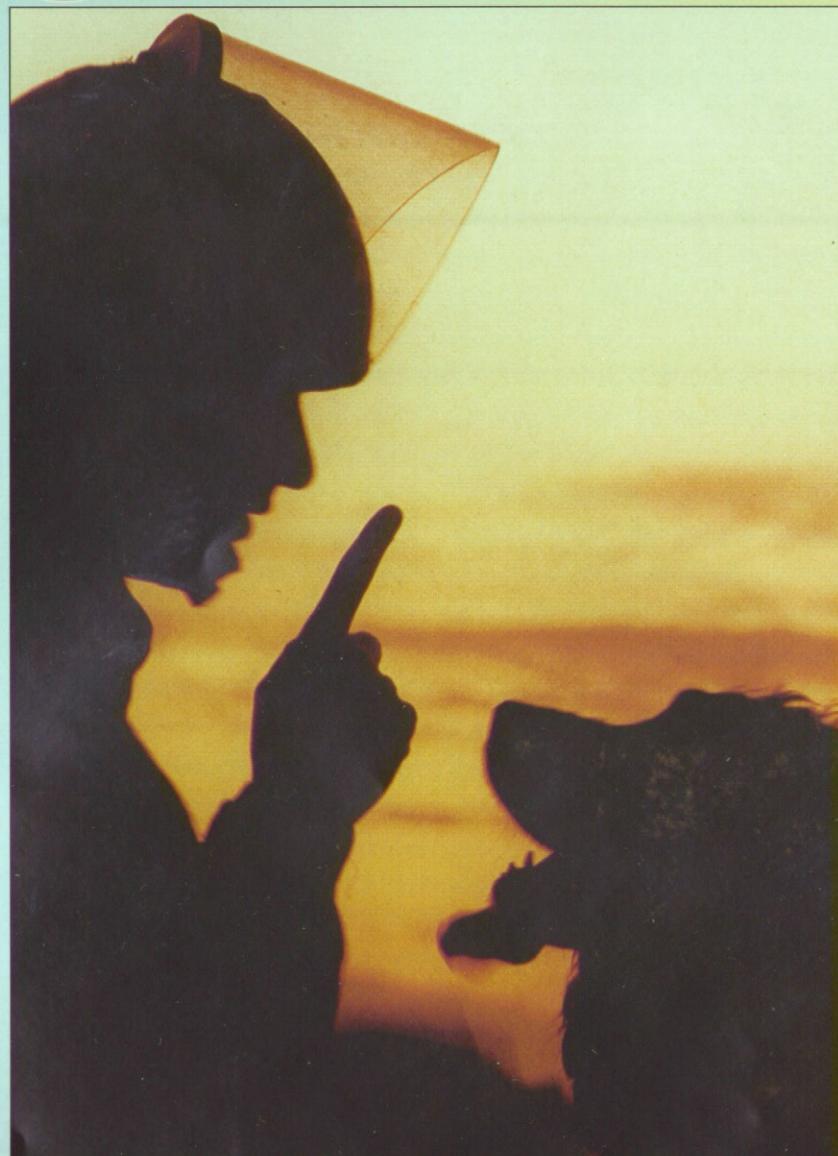
One of them, former RLC warrant officer Kevin Capon, was thwarted from defending his 1997 Photographer of the Year title when his portfolio was mislaid.



Didn't he do well: Hldr Matthew Warren

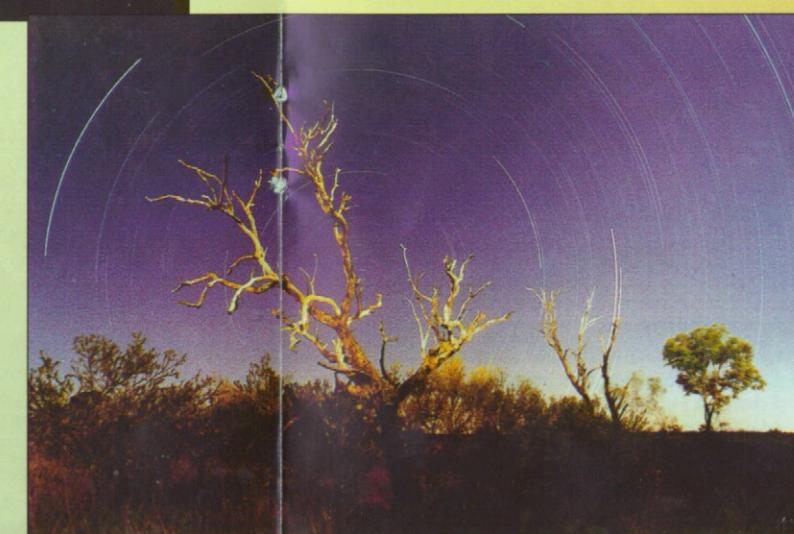


Top shot: Sgt Brian Gamble



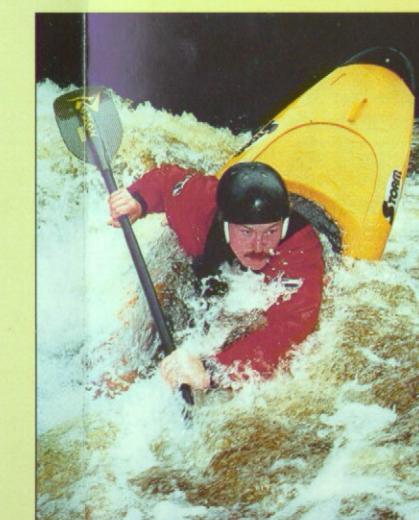
Best portfolio: Dog and handler, left, by Sgt Brian Gamble

Own choice: Sky's the limit, right, by Sgt Giles Penfound



Best sport: Red Devils, above, by LCpl Craig Hughes

Best amateur: Water sports, left, by Maj James Anderson



Winning team: back row, from left, are LCpl Angel Moreno, Chris Barker, WO2 Pete Bristo, judge Ray Lowe, Capt Chris North, WO2 Chris Young; front, Cpl Steve Taylor, Maj Nigel Appleton, Sgt Brian Gamble and Sgt Giles Penfound

## Army Photographic Competition 1998

Army professional photographer of the year (Sponsored by Method Publishing): Sgt Brian Gamble, Media Ops, HQ 1 UK Armd Div; runner-up, Chris Barker, Media Ops, HQ 2 Div.

Army amateur photographer of the year (Fuji and SSVC): Maj James Anderson, SHTC; runner-up, Maj Nigel Appleton, DTMX; highly commended, Cpl Steve Taylor, 2 Para.

Monochrome (National Army Museum): Sgt Shane

Wilkinson, Media Ops, HQ 3 Div; runner-up, WO2 Pete Bristo, HQNI.

Sport/adventurous training (Grosvenor TV): LCpl Craig Hughes, Red Devils; runner-up, Cpl Steve Taylor, 2 Para; highly commended, Cpl Alastair Allen, Media Ops, Cyprus.

Digital image (Image Data Systems, Gilroy Corporate Communications Ltd): LCpl Angel Moreno, HQNI; runner-up, WO2 Chris Young, DISCU; highly commended, Cpl Steve Taylor, 2 Para.

Own choice (Nikon, Soldier): Sgt Giles Penfound, JSOP; runner-up, Sgt Brian Gamble, Media Ops, 1 UK Armd Div.

Best Army PR image (Consolidated Communications): Capt Chris North, Media Ops, HQ 2 Div; runner-up, WO2 Pete Bristo, HQNI.

Best overall colour: WO2 Pete Bristo, HQNI; runner-up, Hldr Matthew Warren, 1 Hldrs; highly commended, Sgt Giles Penfound, JSOP.

SSAFA's escort service offers helping hand to families, but not to schoolchildren

FOLLOWING a piece in Cari Roberts's column on the escorting of children (Oct), SSAFA Forces Help has asked us to clarify what its Family Escort Service has to offer.

It is not the welfare organisation's policy to escort children travelling to and from boarding school nor to escort unaccompanied children.

The service is there for the benefit of Service families and dependents travelling to, from and within the United Kingdom and is intended to help those with compassionate needs and those travelling with young children and luggage, who would find negotiating public transport systems difficult.

#### NATIONWIDE

It is a nationwide service and its escort volunteers will meet clients wherever necessary, usually at airports, main-line stations and ferry terminals.

All the family escorts are volunteers who give their time freely and use their own cars when appropriate. They are drawn from SSAFA Forces Help branches or in-Service committees throughout the UK.

Although the service is usually free to families and dependents, clients are asked to check first. SSAFA says that it will always try to help those in need at short notice, but escorts need as much advance warning as possible.

To contact the Family Escort Service in the UK ring 0171 463 9249; or in Germany contact the Information Office on JHQ Mil ext 2272 or 02161 472272. The service is co-ordinated from SSAFA Forces Help's Central Office in London.

#### In brief

RECRUITS from the Army Training Regiment, Pirbright, gave up a weekend to help the charity Crisis prepare a festive shelter for London's homeless. They set up the centre in a warehouse at Dulwich

# Dental block

If you would like to share a problem, write to Cari c/o Soldier, or BFBS, BFPO 786.

**Dear Cari,** Something ought to be done about the situation with dentists. We've just moved and, yet again, we can't get a dentist. Army families really should be made a special case. – Mrs A (UK).

**Cari replies:** This is a problem I've heard about a lot and not just from Army families. Now that we are all more mobile many families are being sent around the UK and overseas with their companies. The Army Families Federation (AFF) is, I know, looking into it. I'm sure it would be glad to hear your story and to offer advice for your area. If you have an NHS dentist, my advice is visit him or her every six months for a check-up and stay with the practice, even if you have to travel, until you can find a new one. Do contact your local AFF representative and let them know about your situation.

**Dear Cari,** I am very interested in welfare issues and hear that I could train to be an Army welfare worker. Where can I get more information? – Sgt T (BFG).

**Cari replies:** You can do one of two things: get in touch with the Army Families Advice Bureau, which has issued Fact sheet 8/12A

*It used to be that Army families were unusual in the way in which they moved around the world with their families.*

*Things have changed a lot in the 20 years I have been working in this area. Welfare provision*

*has become a priority and many of the problems have been addressed. There are now many sources of help where there used to be very few and many more channels of communication. Problems do remain, though, which affect Service*



Cari Roberts

*people as well as the families of civilian sons the move. The Army Families Federation has been working with the National Council of Women – an influential body which discusses a wide variety of issues which*

*affect women and their families. This is, I think, an encouraging sign of things to come. Once Army families stop regarding themselves as outside the rest of the population things can only get even better.*

● Cari Roberts presents Counterpoint on BFBS Radio

containing all the details, or write to the Chief Clerk, HQ AWS, Erskine Barracks, Wilton, Salisbury, Wilts SP2 0AG.

The AWS telephone number is Salisbury Military (733) ext 2565. The office can also help if you would like to visit an Army welfare worker in post to find out more about what they do. If you wanted to apply for training this year you need to get your application to the Army Personnel Centre, Glasgow by April 30.

**Dear Cari,** We may be posted abroad in the near future and our four-year-old daughter has learning difficulties. I am worried about her schooling. I've heard lots of different stories from people in the same situation. – Mrs B (UK).

**Cari replies:** There are a number of sources of advice. You might like to start with the Army Families Advice Bureau. Ask for Factsheet 5/5 – *Children with special educational needs*. It outlines the main agencies with which you will be dealing. You could also get in touch with Service Children's Education at HQ SCE(UK) on 01980 618 244 and you should make

contact with SSAFA Forces Help who can offer a lot of helpful advice. Do talk to the Army Families Federation, too. They have been working very hard to get the problems surrounding the statementing of Service children sorted out. Some families are experiencing difficulties when they move from one area before the process is fully completed. I know they are keen to gather information and have made great strides with getting the problem recognised.

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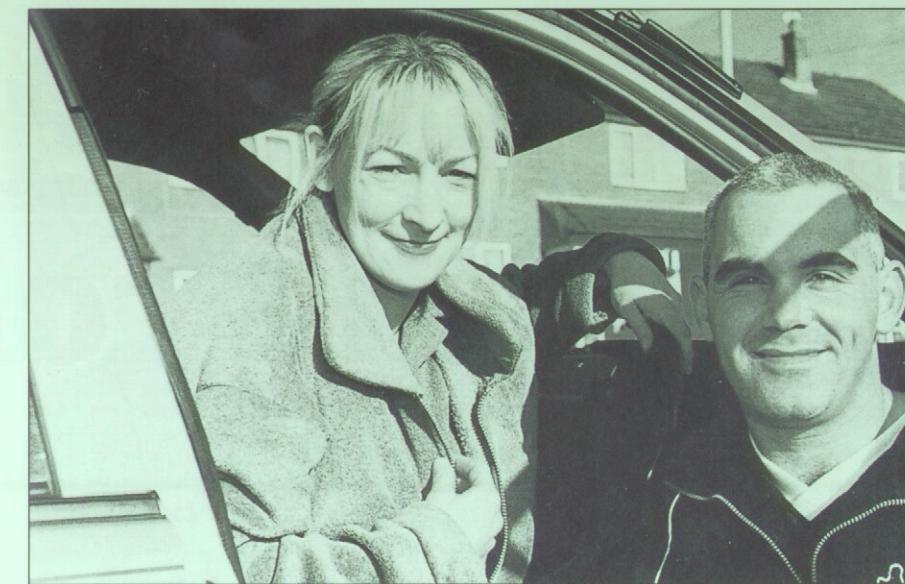
*affect women and their families. This is, I think, an encouraging sign of things to come. Once Army families stop regarding themselves as outside the rest of the population things can only get even better.*

● Cari Roberts presents Counterpoint on BFBS Radio

pay a former rifleman, Sean Hogg (27), £350,000 for knee injuries caused when a helicopter crashed in Ulster while trying to avoid a flock of birds.

● From July, acute in-patient services will transfer from the Duchess of Kent Hospital,

Catterick, to a new, purpose-built wing of the Friarage Hospital at Northallerton. The new MoD hospital unit will be staffed by military doctors and their teams currently based at DHK under a partnership between the Defence Secondary Care Agency and Northallerton Health Services NHS Trust.



**Sitting pretty:** Andrea McManus passed her driving test after taking lessons from Cpl Simon Roberts, right, of the 1st Battalion, The Queen's Lancashire Regiment based in Omagh, Northern Ireland.

The CO, Lt Col David James, came up with the idea of setting up a driving school on camp to help give wives accompanying their husbands a bit more independence. Simon – Taff to his mates – was the ideal choice because he had previously prepared soldiers for their HGV licences.

So popular were his part-time lessons that he is now teaching full-time. He also makes sure his pupils know how to maintain their vehicles by checking oil and tyre pressures.

"It's brilliant," said Andrea. "It has given me a lot more independence and my husband is chuffed to bits."

# Yvonne's a friend in the Falklands

SSAFA Forces Help social worker Yvonne Janson is providing a listening ear to Servicemen and women a long way from home. She has been sent to the Falkland Islands for six months to assess the need for a full-time presence in the military garrison at Mount Pleasant.

The 600 Army, 900 Royal Air Force and 100 Royal Navy personnel deployed to the remote South Atlantic outpost have access to a padre and the WRVS, but until now there has been no trained social worker for them to turn to.

Delays in getting post, the high cost of telephone calls, and the sheer distance from families, can make ordinary situations more difficult. "The Falklands are a very long way from home," said Yvonne,

"something demonstrated each time the Tristar takes off and the main link with the rest of the world is cut off."

It is the first time SSAFA Forces Help has provided a social work service for unaccompanied personnel. If it turns into a permanent post it will be funded jointly by the three Services.

"Having a social worker here would mean more support for personnel with making important links back home, being reassured that progress is being made there, as well as the opportunity to offload themselves," she said.

There are social workers in military communities in Germany, Cyprus and Gibraltar, as well as Northern Ireland and the mainland United Kingdom.



Friend: Yvonne Janson

sonnel ate six million cans of baked beans and 12 million frozen sausages during that time.

● The box office for the 1999 Royal Tournament, the last in its present form, is now open. Bookings for the show, from July 20 to August 2, can be made on 0171 244 0244.

# Battle to beat sexism and racism hots up

UNDER measures designed to challenge racist and sexist attitudes in the Army, an equal opportunities training unit has visited 70 major and more than 100 minor units.

While the Tri-Service Equal Opportunities Training Centre opened at Shrewsbury to offer five-day courses to advisers, all military personnel will be expected to attend mandatory sessions on equal opportunities (EO) and ethnic monitoring.

The initiatives are part of a three-pronged attack adopted by the Army last year. Goals include making the Service more representative of society and tightening up complaints procedures.

Latest figures show the Army is on target to sign up two per cent of its recruits from non-white communities, rising by one per cent a year to five per cent of the annual intake.

#### TEAM OF ROLE MODELS

An ethnic minority recruiting team of black and Asian soldiers is spreading the message and an initiative developed in Brent last year nearly doubled the number of enlistments from Greater London. It is to be used in other parts of the country.

Women now make up seven per cent of the Army and 14 per cent of recruits.

Every unit now has an equal opportunities adviser and the Armed Forces Act has been amended to give every soldier the right to appeal to an employment tribunal if they believe they have been sexually or racially discriminated against or harassed.

Other safeguards include the establishment of an equal opportunities inquiry team and a confidential support line (see Useful numbers below).

#### Useful numbers

Army Benevolent Fund 0171 581 8684

Army Families Federation 01980 615525

Confidential support lines:

UK 0800 731 4880

Germany 0131 827 395

Cyprus 080 91065

Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society (Combat Stress) 0181 543 6333

Family Escort Service UK 0171 463 9249;

Germany JHQ Mil 2272 or 02161 472272

Gulf Veterans Association 0191 230 1065

RBL's Legionline 0345 725 725

Samaritans 0345 90 90 90

Service Children's Education 01980 612844

Services Cotswold Centre 01225 810358

SSAFA Forces Help 0171 403 8783

Veterans' Advice Unit 08456 020302

War Pensions Agency 01253 858 858

WRVS 01235 442954

## New assize system streamlines courts martial

EARLY indications suggest the Army's recently-introduced assize system of administering courts martial has been a resounding success.

Since it was introduced in the United Kingdom on June 1 (followed by Germany on August 31), more cases have been listed than previously possible, better use has been made of court time and there has been a significant reduction in the number of officers required to sit as members of trials.

The flexibility of the new system has allowed the Courts-Martial Administration Office (CMAO) to re-list trials much more quickly than in the past. Where previously this may have been three to four months ahead, this has been reduced to four to six weeks.

### STAND-ALONE

Until June, courts martial were traditionally convened and administered as stand-alone trials, each having its own set of members. The Army's disciplinary chain of command remained involved in the process, acting as the CMAO's representatives in court, a practice seen as contrary to the spirit of new legislation sponsored by European Community human resources.

It was decided to set up eight courts martial centres in the UK, Northern Ireland and Germany, manned by CMAO staff – the clerks of court – with courts sitting for two to three working weeks and having cases listed to them as assize sessions. Since the change, 131 trials have been held in the UK, 65 in Germany, and clerks have worked hard to develop close working relationships with all involved – judge advocates, prosecutors from the Army Prosecution Authority, defence counsels and the accused's units.

One spin-off is that a more professional image is being presented to the outside world. Opportunities are also available to develop court management further with the introduction of witness and victim support schemes, complementing those already run by the Royal Military Police.

## Feature

# Security vetters come in from the cold

Personal vetting can be unsettling. Now a new breed of vetter is bringing a more friendly face to this most probing of processes

Report: Graham Bound  
Pictures: Terry Champion

FOR many years they were Whitehall's men in black, shadowy figures working to keep government secrets safe from blackmailers, spies and plain old-fashioned blabber-mouths. The security vetters seemed to slip into the real world only when it was necessary to poke around in the most private recesses of an employee's life.

Their image fitted the spirit of those tense times perfectly, but as the old threat from the East came tumbling down even the most die-hard Cold War warriors accepted that change was inevitable. It began in April last year with the re-launch of the three separate Services' vetting organisations as a single, modern agency.

Now, with plans already announced to move them away from the grey anonymity of Whitehall to bright new offices in York, the "spycatchers" are coming in from the cold. Stored in their basement, along with three-quarters of a million personal files, is their shadowy cloak, revealing staff so surprisingly normal that they tend to communicate with the buzz-words of marketing and public relations.

### NEW ETHOS

According to Michael Wilson, the youngish retired Army officer who is the DVA's first chief executive, the vetters' new-found image came from the new ethos of government. "Becoming an agency meant becoming more business-like," he explained. Fluent in marketing-speak, he added: "It involved knowing what the people for whom we work actually want and encouraging those who are the subject of our work to confide in us."

No surprise, then, that within weeks of



Michael Wilson, chief executive: "Often the first indication that you had failed came when people stopped talking to you"

its creation the new agency commissioned some carefully-targeted market research. "Clients" and "subjects" seemed to welcome the chance to give their opinions. It quickly emerged that although the majority recognised the need for vetting, most disliked the sense of secrecy which surrounded the process and, almost without exception, they complained about the length of time the process could take.

Previously, acknowledged Michael Wilson, it could take up to six months to get the green light. "And often the first indication that you had failed came when people stopped talking to you."

Today's new friendly vetters have set out to give their "clients" and "subjects" what they want... and early signs are that they are achieving this. Feed-back is

being introduced and subjects should soon notice a significant reduction in the time it takes to complete security checks.

The goal is to provide lower-level security checking (SC) – that required by most staff – well within today's normal six-week period. Michael Wilson believes that electronic storage of defence and security records, the "on-line" availability of credit checks and improved facilities for the agency in York mean that it may soon be possible to complete basic vetting "while you wait".

Clearance for the much smaller number of staff who need "DV" – developed vetting – to top-secret level will take longer because field officers need to conduct detailed interviews with subjects and character referees who may be widely dis-



Field officer Brian Bridges, right, interviews one of the 60 staff he will vet this year

persed around the country or even overseas. But Michael Wilson insisted that the typical six months taken to complete checks at this level should be reduced "by an order of magnitude".

The chief vetter laughed heartily at the memory of the way it was, as if considering a time decades rather than just a few years ago: "Are you or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party? So what! And did your sister ever visit Bulgaria? Well, what does that matter?"

It seems the day of the old-style interrogation is also over. Although probing interviews with subjects will always be the first and most essential stage of vetting at DV level, only those with a really guilty secret need to worry about the process.

Evidently, not a jot. But he cautioned that it would be foolish to think the old threats have not been replaced with new ones. There are still countries and organisations which would like access to Britain's secrets, and industrial espionage is a growing threat. Foreign industries competing with British suppliers in the highly lucrative defence market can benefit greatly from having a look behind the closed doors of MoD.

And, crucially, the new spies will still

We bet you didn't know these facts about the DVA

- Every year approximately 8,000 defence staff are vetted.

- Most civilian and military staff are cleared to the lower "SC" (secret) level. Far fewer are given "DV" (developed vetting) clearance, permitting top-secret access.

- The terms "positive vetting" and "enhanced positive vetting" are no longer used.

- For SC clearance neither subjects nor character referees are normally interviewed but records which may be held by MoD, the security services, the police and credit agencies are checked.

- DV clearance involves interviews with the subject and three or more character referees as well as the routine checks required at SC level.

- Each of the 130 field investigating officers will handle up to six cases at a time, screening around 60 staff in a year.

- Army staff make up 25 per cent of the DVA's work, but soldiers require vetting only if they are employed by "sensitive" units such as the Intelligence Corps.

- Some staff may be vetted only once every ten years, but younger people facing frequent changes in their jobs are vetted more often.

it is to protect the country. If we know everything we need to know about an employee, even the things that they are less than proud of, then there is less chance of them coming under pressure."

Things "they are less than proud of" may include sexual matters. Extra-marital affairs may once have routinely triggered alarm bells, but such matters are now considered to be largely a person's own business. The same goes for homosexuality. Nevertheless, being open and honest can remove any threat of blackmail.

No one can sensibly argue that vetting is enjoyable, but in the new spirit of the times it does not need to be the preserve of the paranoid, littered with traps into which normally decent people will fall. "We really just want to establish staff are sensible and reliable people," said Brian Bridges. "That's all."

One wonders what John le Carré might think about the new vetters, because Smiley's people they ain't.

## RUGBY

# Barbarians run amok

Combined Services 20  
Barbarians 51

THE Barbarians spent the morning hedge-hopping in an RAF Chinook between Portsmouth and Tidworth and then clanking their way across Salisbury Plain in armoured vehicles, courtesy of The Royal Dragoon Guards. It was to be hoped the attempt to nobble the enemy would, at the very least, leave the Barbarian players a little unwell, writes **Roger Thompson**.

But they emerged from their Services experience positively bubbling and could talk of nothing else.

Indeed, they went on bubbling into the evening and scored nine tries against the Combined Services in a match that produced a feast of rugby.

Both scratch sides showed considerable ingenuity and skill, with the professional players ultimately winning a contest which was, for large passages of play, more even than the score suggests.

The Barbarians, captained by the mercurial Dave Scully (of World Cup Sevens fame) chose a side with 11 internationals, the stars of the night being Gareth Wyatt (Pontypridd and Wales) and Taumalolo, the Ebbw Vale and Tonga fly half. Wyatt scored four tries as



Break-out: CS find a way through Baa-baa's line

the Barbarians ran the ball fast and wide from the opening minute. By half-time the visitors had established a 3-24 lead.

The Services, without the six internationals on World Cup duty or injured, stuck to their guns. As might be expected in such a fluid game, the Services scored tries through their backs, Capt Howard Graham and Gnr Rory Greenslade-Jones. Graham kicked a penalty and a conversion.

With ten minutes to go the score was 20-41, which would have been a fair full-time reflection of the ebb and flow.

The tide, however, came in fully in the last few minutes as Wyatt again fizzed down the left wing and under the posts for his final try.

The Remembrance Day match, sponsored by Lambert Fenchurch, is now a regular fixture for the Tuesday nearest Armistice Day.



Up for it: Combined Services players raise their game in line-out action with the Barbarians

Pictures: Mike Weston

## SHORTS

### Big is best, but only just

QUEENS Avenue, Aldershot may not have the ambience of the West Stand car park at Twickenham on an international day, but seldom could there have been a better game of rugby played at the home of the British Army than when the Under-21 side took on Surrey's Under-21s, writes **Tom Wye**.

When the two teams ran on to the pitch one could have been excused for thinking that Surrey had eaten the whole county's supply of Shredded Wheat – they were huge. Before the first whistle blew it was obvious the smaller Army team would have to play out of their skins to contain the giants visiting Hampshire for the day. This was the game of the season and everybody, including the opposition thought the Army side had performed well enough to have won. The final score was 36-28, but it was the visitors who were most relieved when the referee called a halt.

### Close, but no cigar

IT was the same old story for the Army's Under-21 rugby side when they took on a formidable Kent team at the home of the Royal Engineers at Chatham and were beaten 13-24. Kent fielded a physical side with a heavy pack but the Army more than held their own in the tight. It was the second and third phases which caused the problems and allowed Kent to score. This was yet another game the Army could have won, and the visitors were generous to admit during the post-match dinner that had the game gone on for a further ten minutes they would have lost it. That has been the story of every Army Under-21 game this season.

### Road to success

ARMY basketball players have an extra bounce in their stride after landing £5,000 sponsorship from Eddie Stobart International. The road haulage firm has a long association with the Army and is under contract with the MoD to carry food and supplies across Europe to support soldiers in Bosnia.

Last season the Army men's team won all the Services' championships and the premier amateur tournament in the country, the Caister championships. The women's team also won the Combined Services title and the Bracknell international tournament.

A new Army basketball facility being built at Grantham is scheduled to be ready in time to host the Inter-Services championships in March.

## SQUASH

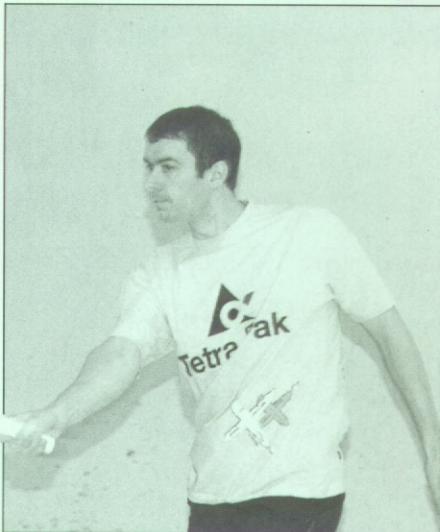
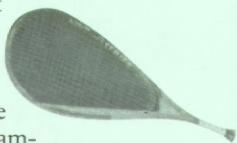
# Hot-shot victory

LT COL Robbie Robinson guided the RLC to victory in the Inter-Corps squash championships at Winchester. More than 130 Servicemen and women in 20 teams took part in 114 matches and 570 rubbers in the space of three days.

Maj (Retd) Rupert Ross-Hurst, secretary of the Army Squash Rackets Association, said: "The championships next year will again be at Winchester. However the millennium championships will be the opener for our new squash centre at Aldershot."

"There is no better way to christen the venue than for this super festival of squash to be played there. Perhaps someone will knock the RLC off the perch."

SSgt Gary Clarke (REME) won the Combined Services individual squash championships at HMS *Temeraire*,



Winning ways: SSgt Gary Clarke

Portsmouth. The other individual champions were: women's open, WO2 Michelle Quaife (REME (V)); U-25, Cfn Lenny Westover (SEAE).

## Runners raise cups of joy



Picture: Jim Gallagher

Leading runners at the annual cross-country championships of the Adjutant General's Corps at Worthy Down have something to celebrate after receiving their trophies from WO2 Rod Finch, who represented the United Kingdom in the 5,000 metres at the 1998 European championships, when he came 15th.

From left to right are WO1 Dave Eccles,

from the Joint Arms Control Implementation Group, men's veterans' champion; Cpl Louise Bunch, Army Training Regiment Winchester, women's senior champion; WO2 Rod Finch, attached to 7 Para RHA; Pte Jenny Hodgins, AGC Centre Worthy Down, women's junior champion; and WO2 Paul Buckley, attached to 7 Para RHA, the men's senior champion.

## SHORTS

### Defeat avenged

THE Royal Navy avenged last season's defeat by the Army at Plymouth with a storming performance in the South West Counties football championship at Aldershot. The Royal Navy contingent may have felt a little embarrassed at the 4-1 scoreline – only the second time in 60 years the Army has conceded four goals to the RN – but they did their best not to show it.

In their opening game in the South West tournament, the Army thrashed Hampshire 6-0.

● Honours were even in the annual fixture between the Army and the TA at Aldershot, with the final score 1-1.

### Naafi's £25,000 boost

NAAFI has again supplied the goods, this time for women's football in the Services. Over the next five years, Naafi is to sponsor the sport with a donation of £25,000 to help develop the first women's Inter-Services tournament a and Combined Services structure.

● The Army women's squad travelled to Lancing to tackle Sussex in the South West Counties Championship but were comprehensively beaten 12-2 by a much more experienced side.

### Royal reward

STUDENTS from the Army School of Education received a royal reward for their efforts in winning the Services team prize in the Building Industry Windsor half-marathon. They were presented with their prize by the Duke of Edinburgh. The team, nicknamed The Zoomers, was made up of students on the potential officer development course based at the Adjutant General's Corps Centre, Worthy Down.

### World beaters

AN EIGHT-man team from 29 Cdo Regt RA knocked 15 minutes off the world record for a military marathon. Carrying 40lb of kit and wearing T-shirts, denims and boots, they cruised home in a time of 4hr 19min.

### Strike force

THE Army ten-pin bowling championships will take place on February 26-28 at the Merrion Centre, Leeds. Serving personnel, dependants, members of the TA and veterans are eligible. Entry forms are available from Cpl Passfield on Marchwood Mil (727) 8336.



Seconds out: Sgt Neil McCallum

## Boxing coach squares up to challenge

THE man whose job it is to create a new squad for the millennium is a former international with more than 20 years' ring experience.

Sgt Neil McCallum told *Soldier* he started boxing as a civilian in 1978 at the age of 11.

"In 1983 I joined the Royal Corps of Transport as a junior leader. My Army boxing career started when I entered the junior championships and won. I was coached by Mick Gannon, who did so much for Army boxing."

McCallum was Combined Services' champion four times at flyweight and twice at bantamweight. He also reached the English semi-finals of the Amateur Boxing Association championships and was selected for England. "I never lost in an England vest," he said.

### BARCELONA

McCallum was in the squad for the Barcelona Olympics in 1992, but in the end Britain did not send anyone from his weight division.

"It was always my career ambition that when I retired from boxing I would join the PT corps to gain experience and then become the Army boxing coach."

The training regime is demanding, with a mix of technical skills and physical work.

"We get a lot of people saying that boxers have it easy," McCallum said. "They think squad members go away for six or seven months and all they do is box. I say to them 'come here for a week and you will soon want to get back to your own battalion'."

# Hungry hearts have appetites for victory

They may be novices, but the new faces in the Army squad have the potential to be tomorrow's champs

Report: Anthony Stone

WHEN former international boxer Sgt Neil McCallum quit the ring, he had two ambitions. The first was to become the Army boxing coach and the second was to build a new squad for the millennium.

The Army Sport Control Board has granted him his first wish and now he is working hard to accomplish the second.

Sgt McCallum has a clean canvas on which to paint the big picture.

"With the exception of Gdsm Kevin Short for Wales and Cpl Chris Bessey for England, all the internationals who were here last year have gone. They are either out of the Army or are concentrating on their Army careers," McCallum told *Soldier* at the Maida Gym, Aldershot.

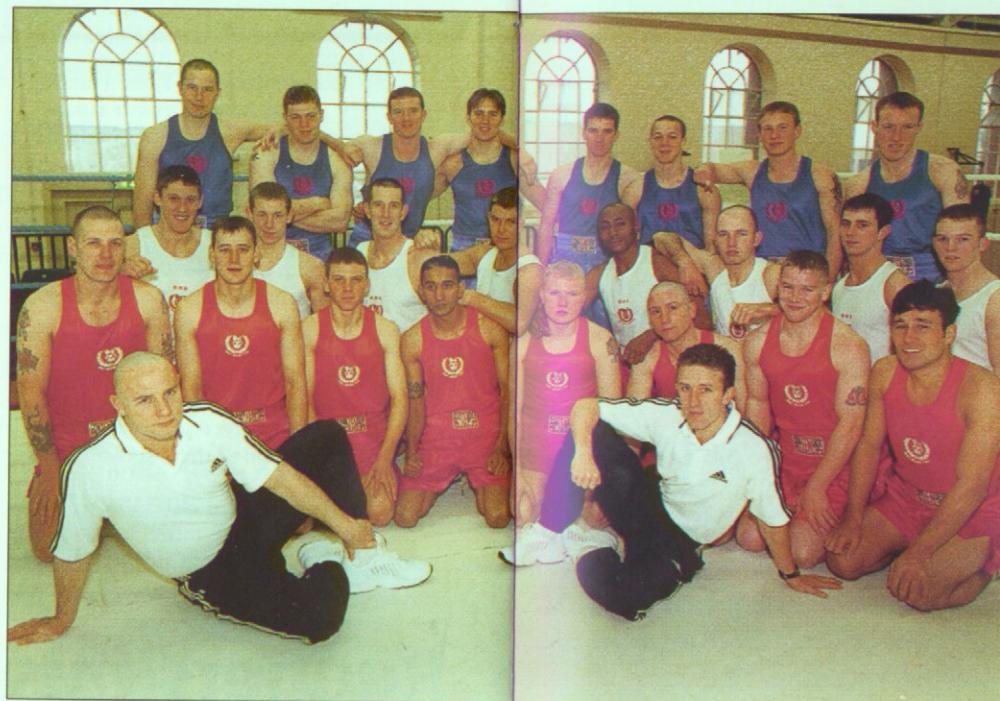
Army boxing is in the final rounds of a spectacularly successful era. Bessey has just won the Commonwealth light-middleweight title and Short is rated just behind him in the Great Britain rankings. This winning formula has been, to a large extent, the legacy of former coach Mick Gannon and his successors.

### SCOUTING

Now the hard work of finding new champions has begun. McCallum, a grade one referee, does not wait for talent to walk through the doors... he spends a lot of time out scouting.

"If you are boxing for your regiment you might have a lot of potential, but if no one sees you, you are not going to progress," he said.

"My main ambition now is to get the novice championships sorted. Within the next three years I want to have every boxer who comes out of the blue corner to be from the Army novice championships. We will not have ABA champions or captains of England or people going to the Commonwealth Games until we have these people coming through."



New boys: front row, left to right, assistant coach Cpl Olly Ollerhead (1 Kings), coach Sgt Neil McCallum (APTC).

Second row: Gdsm Elliot Dutton (1 Gren Gds), LCpl Lee Spare (3 Regt AAC), Pte Joe Briggs (1 PWO), Pte Naz Sarwar (23 PFA), Pte Danny Reynolds (1 PWO), Spr Ian Goodwin (22 Eng Regt) Pte Frankie Kerr (A and SH), LCpl Mark McMahon (1 PWO).

Third row: Pte Joe Brammer (2 Para), Pte Steve Parr (2 LI), LCpl Eddie Kahlow (1 RHA)

PWRR), LCpl John Tedford (1 Kings), LCpl Davey Phillips (2 Para), LBdr Jimmy McCallion (47 Regt RA), Pte Lav Lavery (1 Cheshire), Pte Danny Castle (1 R Anglican). Back row: ATPR Lee Potter (3 Regt AAC), LCpl Jimmy Swindells (1 PWRR), Pte Matt Hannan (1 DWR), Pte Frosty Frost (27 Regt RLC) Pte Riddler Paisley (27 Regt RLC). Pte Meatball Johannson (1 DWR), LCpl Woody Woodgate (RLC), LBdr John Iliffe (7 Para RHA)

Pictures: Mike Weston

At the moment there are 25 boxers in the squad, but the figure goes up and down as soldiers fail to make the grade and return to their units and others come in.

"There are a lot of new faces," said McCallum. "That is why the standard of Army boxing at the moment is at novice level. In my time they were mostly open class boxers, virtually all of them internationals."

"Most of these lads have not been in the Army team before. I'm the new coach with new ideas so this is a great opportunity because the lads are not set in other coaches' ways."

"All these lads are willing to learn and keen and eager to be champions. They are hungry for it and they have some excellent

role models to look up to." Foremost among these is Chris Bessey. In an age when professional boxing has often brought the sport into disrepute, the Royal Logistic Corps corporal epitomises the skills of a classic era.

"If you want to win championships you have to box like Bessey. He has a very upright style, a very English style. He hits but doesn't get hit. That's the whole object of boxing."

McCallum believes boxing has an important contribution to make to the Army and sport in general.

"It teaches the lads to control aggression and gets them working as a team. It makes them more disciplined, fitter and prouder soldiers," he said.

### Mixed fortunes dog Redcoat's adventures



Picture: Beken

ARMY yacht *Redcoat*, crewed by soldiers from the 1st Battalion, The King's Regiment, put up a highly creditable performance in the Cowes-Falmouth-Lisbon race. The 11 crewmen took their Sigma 38 to second place in its class in the first leg of the race, and the boat was the fourth of its class across the line at Lisbon.

A second Army boat, *Longbow*, joined the second leg of the race and finished

fifth in class. The trip home was not so straightforward. Crews were changed in Lisbon and the return voyages were intended to be opportunities for more leisurely adventurous training.

But both yachts were seriously damaged in a storm while crossing the Bay of Biscay and were forced to run for the shelter of the Spanish coast where repairs were carried out.

# 'Sword' sails west to make up lost time

THANKS to a start seriously delayed by storm damage and a leaking hull, the Army's round-the-world racing yacht *Broadsword*, trailed behind the other two Nicholson 55 boats as they crossed the Atlantic to Antigua.

But the Army crew's grim determination to make up for lost time and an imaginative and bold tactical gamble from their skipper Pete Battley enabled *Broadsword* to close the gap considerably.

The normal route to the Caribbean involves an initial south-westerly course towards the Canaries and Cape Verde Islands before turning west and picking up the trade winds. As Army race organiser Capt John Broadley explained it, the skipper "cut off the biggest corner in the world" by turning west well before the islands. The gamble paid off when

favourable winds were found, and *Broadsword* reduced its distance from the other two boats from around 800 miles to 400 miles.

But the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy boats still enjoyed their head start, duelling with each other for much of the crossing. Early on December 9 the Navy's *Adventure* crossed the line in Antigua. The Royal Air Force's *Racer* followed just a few hours later. *Broadsword* was expected to finish several days later.

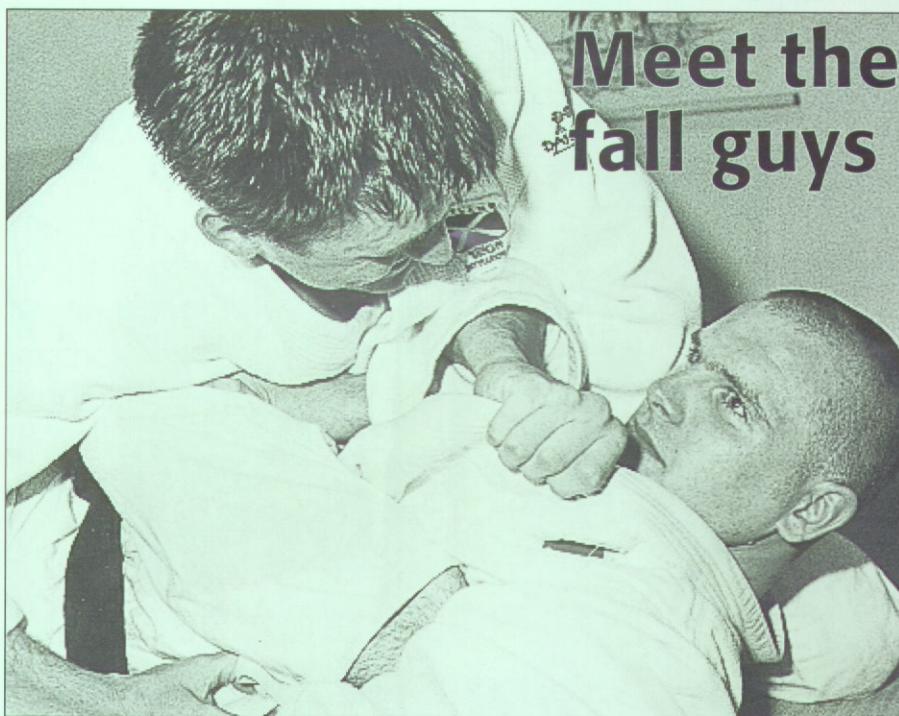
Visit the website at [www.jsastc.org](http://www.jsastc.org) for the latest on the Services' most ambitious ever sailing race.

As *Soldier* went to press, plans were in hand for the start of the next leg of the race to Panama on December 29. This time Army sailors are hoping for a trouble-free start and a real stab at victory.

# Sport

## JUDO

Picture: HOBF Gibraltar



## Meet the fall guys

Cpl John MacDonald of The King's Own Scottish Borderers nails Cpl Alex Perkis (5 AB Bde) to the mat during the Army judo squad tour to Gibraltar. The tour aimed to foster links between Service judo and the Gibraltar Judo Federation, and also with Spanish clubs. The Army hopes to plan similar trips in future.

Results of the Army novice team and individual judo championships at Aldershot: team championships, 22 Regt RA;

individual under 66kg, Gnr Shane Clash (22 Regt RA); under 73kg, Cfn Mark Joynes (SEAE); under 81kg, LCpl Ian Barke (5 Regt AAC); under 90kg, LCpl Dean Alderton (22 Regt RA); novice women's individual champion, Gnr Helen Taylor (32 Regt RA); intermediate individual under 66kg, LCpl Derek Gibb (1 KOSB); under 73kg, Cfn Mark Joynes (SEAE); under 81kg, Pte Daniel Tullet (3 Para); under 90kg, LCpl Daniel Mitchell (2 PWRR).

## JUDO

# Top drivers put fizz in Magnum Spirit

THE best drivers in the Army had a chance to show what they could do when they took part in Exercise Magnum Spirit 98. Organised by the British Army Motorising Association and hosted by 21 Engineer Regiment, the exercise is in its 20th year and is the Army's premier driver training event.

The action took place near Osnabrück, Germany and attracted 180 entrants in two-man crews. Above all a military exercise, Magnum Spirit fielded Army and Royal Air Force teams from the Regulars and the Reserves. It also attracted Danish Army competitors for the first time for many years, along with military teams from Germany and the Netherlands.

Far from being a rally, Magnum Spirit was a searching test of driving and navigating skills over several hundred kilometres. Among the leading lights contesting

the top trophies was Sgt Tim Line (14 Regt RA), a runner-up in 1997. He and team-mate LCpl Paddy Neill (14 Sig Regt) picked up the overall first prize. WO2 John Bibby and Capt Ian Licence, both REME and based in Cyprus, took the second expert prize.

Contestants were put through their paces in a series of on- and off-road trials, including day and night navigation phases over 200km circuits around Osnabrück, as well as cross-country orienteering and command tasks on the rugged Achmer training area.

Among the command tests facing drivers was the water-torture event, calling for a steady hand and ultra-careful driving as crews inched their way round a bumpy track holding a tray of water out of the window, with points lost for every drop spilled.

## SHORTS

### Crusaders cut down

TWO goals each from LCpl Dave Hope and Cfn Craig Wall were enough for the Army to overcome a dogged performance from the officers' football club, the Crusaders, at the Military Stadium, Aldershot. Crusaders manager Maj Kevin Clarke could field a squad of only 12 players and the superior fitness of the Army side reduced the second half to almost one-way traffic. Clarke made some superb saves to keep the score down to 4-0.

### Top of the world

TWO soldiers have joined the big guns in the world powerlifting championships by winning gold medals. LBdr Mike McDermot (14 Regiment RA) and SSgt Steve Grey (APTC, attached 39 Regiment RA), represented Great Britain in the championships held in Graz, Austria.

McDermot won the 52kg class of the open powerlifting events, which includes all three disciplines of squat, bench press and deadlift. Grey lifted 16 stone to win the world bench press title in the 56kg category.

### Loggies take to slopes

ONE of the most popular military ski championships of the year will take place from February 6 to 20 in Ruhpolding, the site of the German national biathlon stadium. The RLC championships are expected to attract more than 350 competitors from 30 regiments across the corps.

There will be Nordic and Alpine events, culminating in a gruelling 20km patrol race. The championships will be sponsored by BAX Global.

### Tug of war goes indoors

THE Army indoor tug of war championships at Aldershot were dominated by 4 R Irish, who swept the board, with 26 Regt RA runners-up in each weight division. Maj (Retd) Dick Field, secretary of Army tug of war, said: "It was very encouraging to see the new lads from 1 RSME giving their all. I predict a bright future for them in the years to come."

There are a few remaining places for the Combined Services Tug of War Association coaches' and judges' courses from March 12 to 14 at Tidworth. Contact Joe Flowers on Tidworth Mil (748) 2067.

### Half-marathon date

The 1999 Army half-marathon championships will be run within the Fleet half marathon on March 21.

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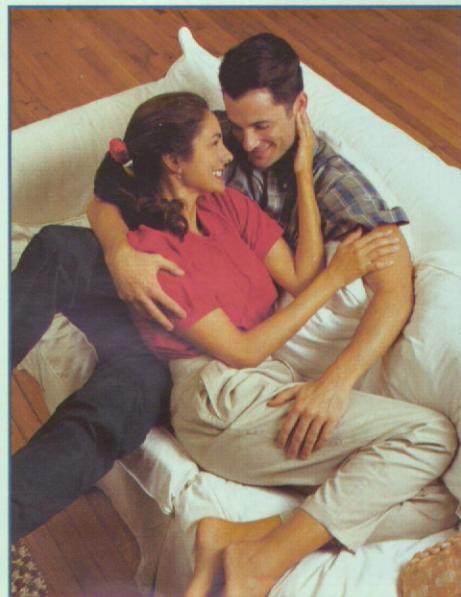


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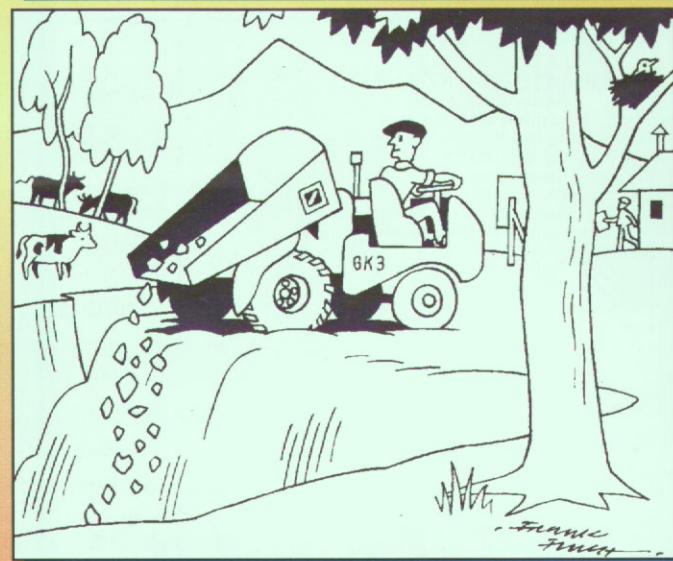
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Frank Finch has made ten changes in detail to one of his drawings taken from our archive. Circle the differences in the lower image, cut out the whole panel, add your name and address and send to HOAY 686, Soldier, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, GU11 2DU by January 29.

*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 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)

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No 684 (Nov 98): First correct entry drawn was from Mrs S Wood, 2 Bn REME, BFPO 38, who wins £100. Runners-up Mr J Wood, of Richmond, N Yorks, and Mr Victor Palmer, of Welling, Kent, each receive a £10 gift voucher. The ten differences were: right-hand window; woman's hat; car seat and running board; soldier's ear, sleeve; top left corner, "G" and coin return of weighing machine; top brick in wall.



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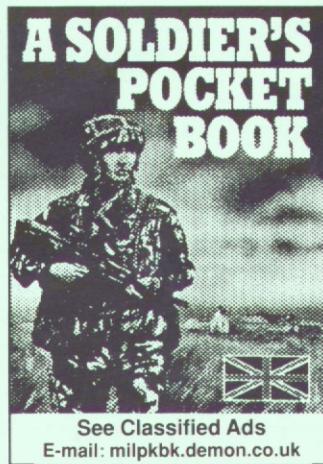
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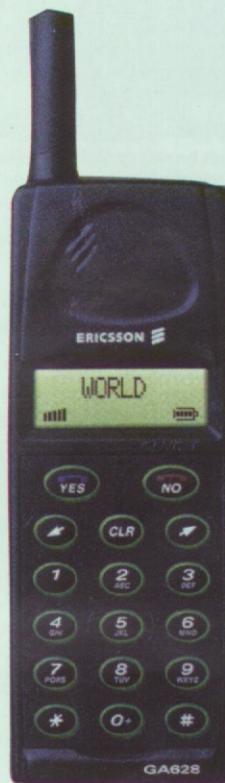
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## PEN PALS

**REPLIES.** To reply to a pen pal, write a letter and send it to *Soldier Magazine* at the address below. The box number **must be CLEARLY written in the TOP LEFT CORNER** of the envelope. Your envelope must be no larger than 8" x 4" and should contain only a letter plus a photograph if requested. Replies received more than three months after the cover date and **large, heavy, or poorly addressed envelopes** will not be forwarded.

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

**Tan, 5'8", a 22-year-old,** blue-eyed blonde. Interests include music, pubs and clubs, watching sport, reading and writing. Will reply to all letters from male soldier pen pals. **P376**

**Karen, 5'2", medium build,** green eyes and a very outgoing personality. Enjoys music, comedy, dancing, walking and watching rugby and boxing. Seeking male, soldier pen pals, 40-50ish, at home or abroad. **P377**

**Angie, 4'11", a slim, 32-year-old** blonde with brown eyes. Enjoys music, aerobics, swimming, pubs, socialising, writing, reading, the cinema and travel. Seeking pen pals of any age who are genuine and honest and have GSOH. **P378**

**Nikki and Karen, 38/33, 5'4"5",** blonde/mousey hair respectively. Both are single mums who like to swim and enjoy cosy nights in, eating out and going for long walks. Seeking male pen pals. **P379**

**Karen, 29, 5'9",** slim build and blue eyes. Enjoys having a laugh and her hobbies include keeping fit, swimming, walking and going to the pub. Seeking pen pals, 25-35. **P380**

**Jackie, 5'8", a blonde** air stewardess in her thirties who enjoys travel, socialising, clubbing and walks in the country. Requires an officer and gentleman for correspondence and will answer all letters. Photo appreciated. **P381**

**Sarah, 29, 5'6", medium build** and blonde hair. A non-smoking, divorced mother of one. Enjoys country pubs, family life, nights in/out and children. Dislikes smoking. Would like to hear from pen pals, 29-36. Photo appreciated. **P384**

**Louise, 28, 5'8", brown hair,** hazel eyes and cuddly. Likes painting and drawing, music, reading (fantasy and horror), watching rugby and all things weird and wonderful. Looking for witty and interesting correspondence from pen pals, 30+. **P385**

**Military history books.** Please send SAE for current catalogue. Free specialist booksearch. *McKenzie, Town End Farm, Brampton, Appleby, Cumbria CA16 6JS*. Tel/fax: 017683 513884. **12/98**

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**Victoria, an outgoing, caring, independent and divorced professional** who likes swimming and days and occasional nights out. Would like to hear from tall, genuine Servicemen, 40+, with big personality and GSOH. **P387**

**Books for Soldiers** – contact the experts. Free catalogue. *The Outdoorsman's Bookstore, 27 Monument Industrial Park, Chalgrove, Oxon OX44 7RW*. Tel: 01865 400256. Fax: 01865 400257. **01/99**

**Christine, 30, 5'3",** an attractive, single blonde with GSOH. Enjoys the outdoors, pubs and clubs, socialising, driving and swimming. Seeking confident, professional soldier pen pals, 30+. **P388**

**Louise, 26, 5'11"** with blonde/auburn hair. Interests include reading, walking, films, going to the cinema and motor sports. Would like to hear from pen pals, 24-35. GSOH essential. **P389**

**Carol, 30, 5'5", blonde,** blue/grey eyes. An animal lover and all round fun-loving person who likes eating and drinking out and swimming. Seeking male pen pals, 29-34, who must have GSOH and enjoy going out. **P390**

**Karen, 29, 5'9",** slim build and blue eyes. Enjoys having a laugh and her hobbies include keeping fit, swimming, walking and going to the pub. Seeking pen pals, 25-35. **P380**

**Nikki and Karen, 38/33, 5'4"5",** blonde/mousey hair respectively. Both are single mums who like to swim and enjoy cosy nights in, eating out and going for long walks. Seeking male pen pals. **P379**

**Karen, 29, 5'9",** slim build and blue eyes. Enjoys having a laugh and her hobbies include keeping fit, swimming, walking and going to the pub. Seeking pen pals, 25-35. **P380**

**Jo, 28, 5'5",** fair hair and green/grey eyes. Interests include horse riding, running, socialising, swimming and enjoys having a good laugh. Would like to hear from male pen pals, 25-33, with no ties and GSOH. **P391**

**Rosemarie, 5'6", brown hair** and blue eyes. Interests include visiting the theatre, listening to music, dancing and walking. Seeking pen pals, 30-50. All letters will be answered. **P392**

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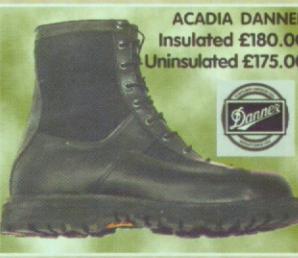
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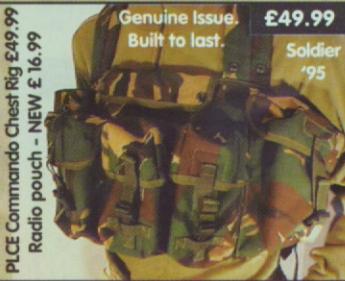
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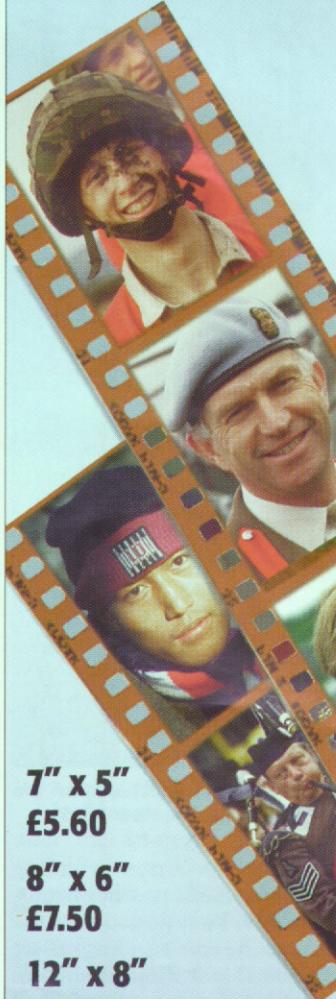




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## Download ...

WE have received many e-mail responses to our Vox pop feature via the *Soldier* page on the Army web site. To be considered for publication, they must include a name and address. Here are some that did:

### Is it important to remember those who fell in the First World War?

I'm delighted to see young folk supporting remembrance. As a retired officer still serving HM I feel strongly that those who died serving Queen and country deserve more than just a headstone. – **I A Milne, Head Courts Martial Admin Office, Upavon.**

I remember with pride not just those who laid down their lives in the world wars but friends and colleagues who died in Northern Ireland, Kuwait and the Falklands. Let's broaden the scope of our remembrance. – **Kerrie Mackey (née Hughes, ex-WRAC), Washington DC.**

Most of your interviewees consider Remembrance Day as applying to the two world wars. In South Africa our services are for all our fallen, including those in Lesotho recently. – **Lt Col E J Watson, SA Air Force.**

My father fought in the First World War and insisted we would never see its like again. I am glad he was correct. We must remember. – **John Dingwall, chairman Parachute Regimental Association, Lothian, Scotland.**

Without remembering them we are forgetting why we are here today. – **Sgt Peter Cuthbert, 2 RGBW, Swindon.**

I have a video, *British Military Pageantry*, which has a section on Remembrance Day and now realise how neglectful we have been in paying tribute to our war dead. Our Memorial Day is just another day off for Government workers. I served with the US Marines in Korea. – **Jim Beebe, Illinois, USA.**

Let us never forget those who gave us the freedom we take for granted. – **K J Johnson, ex-WO, Royal Anglian Regiment.**

Other e-mails supporting the need for remembrance came from Lt Col (Retd) **John Howes** RAMC; **Trevor Lindley** (Gordons, 1960-66); Cpl **Nicholas Eley**, Somerset ACF; Under Officer **James Langham**, Derbyshire Cadet Battalion, WFR; **Julianne Mulholland**, London; **L Lionel**, Bordeaux, France; Sgt **Jon Matye**, US Marine Corps; **Michael Gillard**, US Army Reserve, Indiana, USA; **James Blake**, Massachusetts, USA; **SSgt Mark J Stewart**, New Albany, USA; **Greg Jacobs**, West Hartford, USA; **Senior Airman Steven A Tipton**, Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, USA; **Jonathan Boston** (Queen's Regiment 1969-78), California, USA; **Ian Sawers** (ex-Cpl RE), Orlando, USA; **Alex Elliott**, Arizona, USA; **Charles E Hunter**, pilot, National Guard, Virginia, USA; Cdt **C W O Asetline**, Royal Canadian ACC; **James Tennant**, Ontario.

**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. So get writing!

• 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.

## Why commuting was such bitter experience for me

I HAVE followed your correspondence on commuting with interest. I retired from the Army in 1956 with the rank of WO2 after 24 years' service.

As a staff instructor at Balham Drill Hall, I was living in married quarters in Hackbridge, Surrey, but could not obtain alternative accommodation for my wife and three children on leaving the Army.

I applied to commute some of my pension as a deposit for a house and, after an examination by several doctors at Millbank to ensure I would live long enough

to repay the debt, I was granted £300, to be stopped at ten shillings a week out of my pension.

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Where did they get the idea that you pay the money back only until you are 55? I am 87 now and still repaying the money. After two bad experiences, I'm afraid I don't have much faith in the ex-Service welfare organisations. – **P S Barnard, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 2BH.**

## Matchless proof of 'scopic forks'

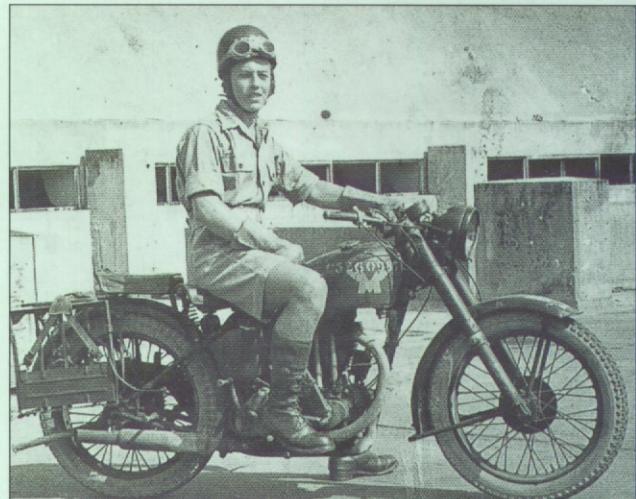
I AM afraid Capt J F Mapstone (Nov) is wrong to state the first Matchless motor-cycle models with telescopic forks were manufactured in 1949.

As a dispatch rider attached to the Eighth Army headquarters in Venice in 1945, I was issued with one which already had several thousand miles on the clock.

We also trained with these models in 1944 when stationed in Hadrian's Camp near Carlisle.

Although they were not as common as the solid-fork models of the BSA and Royal Enfield marks, they were frequently seen in Italy. It is possible, albeit unlikely, that some even saw service in the desert war.

My photograph (see above) was taken in September 1945 on the roof of our billets in Venice. It was the first building on the right as you entered Venice from the Causeway. – **Ted Gibson, ex-RASC, Great Sutton, South Wirral.**



Forked version: Ted Gibson pictured on his Matchless on the roof of his Eighth Army billet in Venice in September 1945

CAPT Mapstone is not correct in writing that the 350cc Matchless was not manufactured until 1949. I was posted to be the driver-batman to the commanding officer of a Detail Issue Depot being formed in the summer of 1943 and we were issued with two of these bikes.

As I was the only person who could ride a motor cycle, I had the pleasant duty of running both of them in.

Details of the Matchless Lightweight G3/L 350cc OHV (with Teledraulic front forks) are given in *Army Transport 1939-1945*, edited by David Fletcher of the Tank Museum.

The Matchless G3/L photographed in this book appears to have been posed in the middle of a road junction, a strange setting for an official photograph. – **W Gordon Hornsby, North Shields, Tyne and Wear.**

### Write us a prize letter

## THEN AND THEN



### 50 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, January 1949 A picture which tells better than words the kind of campaign which is being waged in Malaya. Troops watch as a terrorist hide-out goes up in flames during Operation Rugger to clear suspected Communist terrorists from the Muar-Lenga area of Johore.

### 25 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, January 1973 Maj John Blashford-Snell RE, leader of the British Trans-Americas Expedition, which successfully crossed the Darien Gap last year, was nominated to represent the Army at the Men of the Year luncheon in London. (See *My Army*, Pages 34-35)

# A long time away from home front

YOUR correspondent R J Shears (Nov) may like to obtain a copy of *Soldier* dated January 24, 1994, in which I gave details of a Pte Nobby Clarke who, in the early 1920s, returned home after 33 years' continuous service overseas.

Also of Spr Percy Heatherton who, when I left him in Ceylon in 1943, was serving his 18th year of continuous overseas service.

In February 1939, my contingent of Royal Engineers arrived in Ceylon for a three-year tour of duty. When hostilities started, a General Order of the Day

informed us we could expect to serve ten years overseas before repatriation. Many gunners on the island had already served three years in other colonies and were well into their second three-year tour.

In August 1944 in the Indian Army, my division was carrying out combined operations in Deolali when the term, which had been reduced to seven years the previous year, was suddenly reduced to five. I literally crossed the road to the transit centre and, on the following day, was on board a ship of a homeward-bound convoy. — John V Lewis, Longfield, Kent.

## I was untaxed by years of overseas service . . .

CONCERNING R J Shears's letter on length of service overseas, I claim no records but offer my own details for information.

After two-plus years as a regimental boy — at the other end of Ordnance Road from where *Soldier* is located — and young soldier, my adult Regular service began on my 18th birthday, Sept 27, 1956, and concluded on Nov 7, 1978. I served in West Germany, Hong Kong and South Korea between Feb 57 and March 61

and, following 2½ years at the War Office, served successively in Hong Kong, Singapore, West Berlin, with NATO at Naples and with the British Embassy in Bucharest between Feb 64 and June 74.

Of my adult Regular service of 22 years and one month I spent 14 years and five months with overseas units and would like to take this opportunity of offering to all who paid UK taxes during this period my undying gratitude. — Iain Leggatt, ex-RASC and RAOC, Carnoustie.

PS . . .

## Last National . . .

FURTHER to Sheila Mitchell's letter (Last of his kind, Dec), I can just beat her husband's 38-year unbroken career starting with National Service. I was called up for National Service and joined the Grenadier Guards on March 16, 1960, then became a Regular, serving with the regiment until Sept 1, 1987 before becoming PSAO of A (London Scottish) Company, The London Regiment. I retire on June 30, having served 39 years and 106 days, the last 18½ years as a captain. — Capt T S Nolan, A (London Scottish) Coy, Horseferry Road, London.

## . . . Serviceman

I JOINED the RASC as a National Serviceman in August 1960 and, having served a Short Service Commission and later a Regular Commission in both RASC and RCT, have been a uniformed Army Careers Officer since 1992, badged RLC since 1993. I retire on August 30 after 39 years, three weeks and five days . . . and I only joined to do two years.

There will soon come a day when the last of us hangs up his uniform. It would be of interest if the Army Personnel Centre could identify in each of the possible categories (those with continuous uniformed service and those who had a break but returned to uniform) who are the last in the line. The day when the last National Service soldier hands in his ID card should not go unrecorded. — Lt Col C D Taylor, Army Careers Officer, Norwich.

## What's in a name?

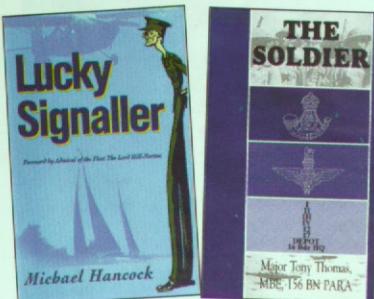
THE readers who wrote (Nov) about Army chefs/cooks reminded me of a story. This is the polite version. In the mess at breakfast on morning, the orderly officer thundered: "Who called the cook a prat?" A voice from somewhere in the crowded mess retorted: "Who called the prat a cook?" — A Sheldon, Nottingham.

## In active retirement

RE the letter (Nov) headed "Active retired", it has always amused me that Part II of the Army List, which lists officers in receipt of Retired Pay, is titled "Non-Effective Officers in receipt of Retired Pay". Possibly some, while active, were non-effective also, although drawing full pay. Is this known as downsizing? — Alan Brocklehurst, Penarth, South Glamorgan.

## Border-line decision

THE photograph of Sgt Sharon Potts (Vox pop, Nov) shows her wearing the cap badge of The King's Own Royal Border Regiment (KORBR), not The King's Own Scottish Borderers (KOSB) as stated. Your feature on Victorian Christmas cards (Greetings from yesteryear, Dec) includes a card depicting two soldiers of the Royal Artillery, not the Army Service Corps. The left-hand figure has a red stripe on his trousers and the ASC wore white. — R E Thomas, ex-RWF, Cardiff.



## Reluctant para's tale

HERE is a round-up of some recent self-published books:

**The Soldier** by Maj Tony Thomas. Story of a 40-year career from early days in the Durham Light Infantry to life as a "reluctant" para, taking him to Arnhem among many other places before retiring to run the Guide Dogs for the Blind. (Pentland Press, Soham, Ely, CB7 5BA; softback, £9.50.)

**Lucky Signaller** by Michael Hancock. Autobiographical account of a long and varied career which took the author all over the world before his retirement as a major general. The index reads like a military *Who's Who*. (Book Guild, Lewes, E Sussex; hardback, £15.95.)

**For the Duration** by Gordon Nisbett. Recollections of life as a conscript in North Africa, Italy and Palestine, 1941-46, written as a tribute both to the 1st British Infantry Division and to the officers and men of the First Reconnaissance Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps, with whom he served. (Pentland Press, hardback, £14.95.)

**Bishop Oliver: Letters and Reminiscences** by John Green-Wilkinson. Following war service with the 60th Rifles (KRRC) the author's brother, Francis Oliver Green-Wilkinson, became Bishop of Northern Rhodesia and latterly Archbishop of Central Africa when he was killed in a 1970 car accident. (Paperback, available at £12 inc UK postage from the author at 5 Edgar Villas, Edgar Road, Winchester SO23 9TP; add £2 per copy for overseas postings.)

**Corners of My Mind** by Peter Macdonald. Anecdotally entertaining, if sometimes charmingly indiscreet, memoirs of a retired brigadier's 32 years in the Army. (Petmac Publications, 50 The Pines, Woodside, Hazelwood Road, Bristol, BS9 1QD; paperback, £6.95.)

Duke of York's Royal Military School drummers, Dover Beach... a study from *This Man's Army*, a slightly eccentric book of black and white portraits by Martin Figura.

Figura's subjects, formally posed in familiar surroundings – officers' mess, barrack room, gymnasium, married quarters, parade square – provide a fresh and unusual look at otherwise ordinary situations.

Martin Figura joined the RAPC as a junior soldier, rose to the rank of warrant officer by the age of 30 and eventually left with a Regular commission. He is now a freelance photographer.

*This Man's Army* is available from Dewi Lewis Publishing, 8 Broomfield Road, Heaton Moore, Stockport SK4 1RD, price £12.95.



## Ghosts in khaki

TINSELTOWN has always rewritten history. In recent years Hollywood has had a crack at both Scottish and Irish legends and Steven Spielberg has given us an all-American D-Day.

Now Charles Whiting has tackled the Yanks at their own game. He has examined the Battle of the Bulge of December 1944 to show that not only did a British field marshal run it for the Americans, but that 90,000 British soldiers held the vital last-ditch defence before the German attack – a whole British corps which conveniently disappeared from the US history books.

Indeed as soon Montgomery heard the Germans had broken through in the Ardennes on December 26, 1944, he took charge of the northern flank.

Without recourse to Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander, Monty grabbed control of the US 9th and 1st Armies and started directing their operations. It would be exactly two-and-a-half days before Eisenhower was aware of what was going on and then he caused an unholy row among his own generals by revealing he had appointed Monty to command in the north.

The result was that Patton, leading the US 3rd Army still under American Command, was given the

**The Battle of the Bulge: Britain's Untold Story** by Charles Whiting (Sutton, £19.99).

task of liberating the "Battered Bastards of Bastogne". The US 101st Airborne Division was supposedly trapped in the Belgian city of that name. In truth it was basically a propaganda exercise – Bastogne was never really surrounded.

Monty did more. He whistled up his reserves, mainly from Horrocks's XXX Corps, all five divisions of infantry and armour, and placed them in a blocking position on the River Meuse.

While the Americans were still fumbling and in some cases retreating three weeks after the German offensive had started, Monty's men went into action in the snow-bound hills of the Ardennes in a battle never before recorded.

It was tough going. The armour was unable to support the infantry due to the weather, the Germans were dug in and the attackers were short of food, ammo and clothing. But

not courage. The 12th Parachute Battalion, for instance, attacked at the village of Bure and suffered 30 per cent casualties in a single day.

The 1st Bn, East Lancs, on the other end of the line, were so badly hit after 48 hours of combat that survivors had to be pulled out and re-formed. The 53rd Welsh Division had to absorb 4,000 teenage replacements after the fighting.

None of this was revealed at the time because the battle had become a political issue. It had to go down in history as an *American* battle that the average GI could be proud of having won.

Today there are monuments to the great US soldiers of those days throughout Belgium, but none to the British – save that remote cemetery on the hillside with the graves of 18-year-olds dead before they had begun to live. As Monty himself wrote somewhat cynically later – "the less said about this battle, the better".

Whiting, using new sources and eyewitness accounts, has told an exciting and important story, detailing a British involvement in a battle, turning the British participation in the Battle of the Bulge from a footnote into a famous contribution.

Tinseltown had better watch out if we ever have another movie on the Bulge. – CS

### 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 professional military booksearch.

Helion & Company, 26 Willow Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 1UE, England (tel 0121 705 3393; fax 0121 711 1315).

E-mail address: [books@helion.co.uk](mailto:books@helion.co.uk)  
Website: <http://www.helion.co.uk>

# How the Army has changed in 99 years

ASKED by an expert to identify the three major changes which have transformed the British Army since 1900, most of us would get the first two right, but the third might come as a surprise.

Fd Marshal Lord Carver has lived through 83 of those years and is categorical. First, he writes in this major one-volume history, the Army is now much more professional across the ranks; secondly, technology has revolutionised its weapons, communications and transport.

Thirdly – and this is where (rightly or wrongly) many might not have attached similar significance – “women now serve alongside men almost everywhere”.

The author's point is underlined when you consider that well over 7,000 women now serve in the British Army (compared with the relatively small numbers of the Army Nursing Service in 1900) and that the range of Army posts now open to both sexes is greater than ever.

A descendant of the Duke of Wellington, this Second World War tank officer who commanded an armoured brigade at the age of 29 and rose to become Chief of the Defence Staff is quick to point out that despite these great human and scientific changes, some things stay the same.

He adds: “... a pattern remains, originating in the 17th and 18th centuries, primarily in the cavalry and infantry, of a tribal regimental system, even though the



Two members of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service in Italy in the Second World War, one of many illustrations in *Britain's Army in the 20th Century*. As the author notes, in September, 1939 the Army's female strength (ATS, QAIMNS and TA) was 22,801. By 1943 the figure had increased tenfold

Picture: Imperial War Museum

**Britain's Army in the 20th Century** by Fd Marshal Lord Carver in association with the Imperial War Museum (Macmillan, £30).

names of the regiments have changed and changed again ever since they were, in both arms, known only by numbers. In spite of this devotion to the past, the army has managed, not without difficulty and resistance at times, to adapt itself to new technologies.”

Lord Carver's sweeping history is an object lesson in lucid writing and second to none as a clear chronicle of events, though it will disappoint those who may have expected a series of trenchant observations on the big issues. (For example, the book was completed before the results of the 1997-98 Strategic Defence Review were announced.)

Here and there, however, passing comments provide exceptions to the rule. Haig, he says, “convinced he had the support of a very Scottish deity”, persisted doggedly with hopeless tactics. But he retained the confidence of his men and was judged harshly.

Lord Carver has taken pains to ensure that his choice of eye-witness records, mined from the rich seam of the Imperial War Museum's documentary archive, are all previously unpublished. He has also drawn extensively on the museum's collections of photographs and artworks, and there are 16 maps.

If anyone is looking for an authoritative, clearly-written, well-illustrated, no-nonsense British Army history from the Boer War to Bosnia, then this is it. – CH

## Code-breakers tell the Bletchley story

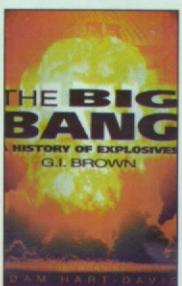
ROBERT HARRIS made a cracking good thriller out of it in *Enigma*. Now journalist Michael Smith, a former member of the Int Corps, has researched official files and talked to survivors to tell the factual inside story of Bletchley Park, the wartime code-breaking centre, in *Station X*



(Channel 4 Books, £14.99), published later this month in advance of a spring TV series. The Buckinghamshire mansion was where hand-picked men and women broke the German codes and built the world's first programmable computer.

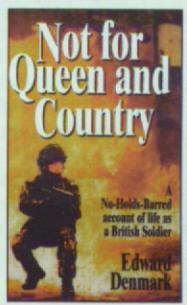
## Cleric's invention no flash in the pan

BY today's standards, the Rev Alexander Forsyth might seem an unconventional country cleric: he liked wildfowling, working in his Aberdeenshire smithy and tinkering with explosives. He did not shoot many birds because they flew off when they saw the flash from his flint, so he designed the percussion system, adopted by the British Army in 1839. This story and others, from the invention of gunpowder to nuclear fusion, are told in G I Brown's informative and entertaining *The Big Bang: A History of Explosives* (Sutton, £19.99).



## Raw reality of one gunner's life

MANY will be uncomfortable with the sentiments behind the title *Not for Queen and Country* (Pharaoh Press, paperback, £6.99). They reflect the heartfelt conviction of Edward Denmark, formerly with 12 Regiment RA, that high principles are all very well, but when you are facing raw action in the Falklands War and Northern Ireland, you are fighting for survival rather than any nobler ideal. He should know, and the stark narrative pulls no punches.



# Bulletin board

## Adventurous training now welcomed in 136 countries

NEARLY 550 overseas expeditions were mounted last year under the Army's adventurous training programme. They involved 8,344 personnel in countries as far afield as Peru, Thailand, the Ukraine and Micronesia.

According to the Army Adventurous Training Compendium, 136 countries now welcome expeditions. Last year more than 6,500 personnel from all three Services, half of

them from the Army, gained leadership qualifications in adventurous training.

Activities covered include offshore sailing, sub-aqua diving, kayaking and canoeing, caving, mountaineering, trekking, rock climbing, alpine and nordic skiing, freefall paragliding, hang gliding and paragliding.

Formally recognised in 1971, adventurous training is enthusiastically encouraged by the

Army as a means of developing physical fitness, moral courage, initiative, powers of endurance and inter-dependence through challenging pursuits.

Units planning expeditions can find a mass of information in the AT compendium, AGAI Vol 1, Chapter 11, JSP 419, DCIs or by contacting their regimental adventurous training officer.



**Sounds good:** Musicians from the Military Band of the South Notts Hussars serenade Ypres veteran William Bowmar on his 100th birthday. Mr Bowmar fought with the Royal Artillery Regiment at Passchendaele, Ypres and Arras, where he was gassed. Pictured with him at his home near Nottingham are, from left, Bdr Frank Verhees, LBdr Dave Whitham, WO2 Trevor Calton, Bdsm Linton Allen, LBdr Barry Mousley and Bdsm Andrew Sharpe.

### SEARCHLINE

Were you a National Serviceman called up on May 5, 1960 to **The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment** at Topsham Barracks, Exeter? If so, get in touch with Dave Houghton on 01234 261632 for details of a reunion in April.

Cheam and Outer London (South) Branch of the **Italy Star Association 1943-45** is anxious to contact Italy veterans in its area. It organises regular meetings and regular pilgrimages to Italy, the next in September. Ring Roy Quinton on 0181 241 0275 (fax 0181 669 5520) for details. Veterans in other areas who wish to join the branch should ring 01425 614884.

Information sought on **154 WETC "Knostrop"** training camp for Army cadets at Leeds. Former cadets who attended the camp during the period 1950-70 are asked to contact E Janssen, Zelkstraat 9, B-3545 Halen, Belgium, e-mail [annelies.janssen@skynet.be](mailto:annelies.janssen@skynet.be)

**Mayotte Island:** French doctoral student wishes to trace anyone who served in Mayotte-Pamanzi in the Comores during the Second World War, particularly **5 and 6 King's African Rifles** and **2, 3, 4 and 7 Northern Rhodesian Regiment**. Replies to Miss I Denis, 4 Rue F G Lorca, 45400 Fleury-Les-Aubrais, France.

W W Hannam seeks career details and family background of **Lt Col P H (Richard) Burbury**, CO South Lancs Regt, killed in action at 0745

on D-Day, June 6, 1944, at landing beach Queen Red while attacking an 88mm gun emplacement. He was commissioned into the DCLI in 1925 and served in India with the 1st Bn until 1937. Also served on staff in Palestine where he was mentioned in dispatches. Replies to Postboys, Sedlescombe, nr Battle, E Sussex TN33 0QF.

Nearly 200 former staff and pupils of the **Royal Naval School, Tal Handaq, Malta** attended a recent reunion at Oxford. If you would like to be included in the next gathering, planned for 2001, or just want to contact old friends, contact Viv Daly on 01752 894846 or e-mail [VivDaly@my-email.co.uk](mailto:VivDaly@my-email.co.uk)

Dr Julian Lamb seeks anyone who can fill in details of **Range Rover ELA 830J** used at Boscombe Down between 1970-85, during which it covered 136,000 miles. The third production Range Rover built, it was used for prototype trials as a rapid-response ambulance. The conversion was not deemed suitable and ELA 830J, the only one of its kind to be built, was sold to the MoD. Replies to 1447 Warwick Road, Knowle, Solihull, West Midlands B93 9LU (tel 01564 771321).

Former members of the **Band of the Royal Signals** who wish to attend a reunion are asked to contact Dr John Smith, The Old Rectory, 27 Weasenham Road, Gt Massingham, Norfolk PE32 2EY.

### REUNIONS

**Joint Service Mountain Training Wing, Twyn:** Former members of staff who have not been notified of the close-down reunion on March 6 should contact JSMTW on 01654 710371 or Twyn Mil 8628.

**RAMC/RADC WOs and Sgts Past and Present Dinner Club:** Annual dinner and reunion on May 8 at Fort Blockhouse (formerly HMS *Dolphin*), Gosport. Details from WO1 (RSM) R Murdy RAMC, Hon Sec, DMS Training Centre, Keogh Barracks, Ash Vale, nr Aldershot, Hants GU12 5RQ.

**50 Missile Club RA:** Annual reunion at Britannia Hotel, Stockport on May 8-9, with church parade to dedicate the standard. Details from A J Todd on 01387 262378. Membership enquiries to the secretary at 9 The Grove, Heathhall, Dumfries DG1 1TN.

**Mortar Platoon, 1 RGJ:** Reunion planned for July, to be incorporated in Greenjacket weekend at Winchester. Contact Vince Wellington on 0181 286 1253 (evenings).

**Korean War:** International reunion for Korean War veterans will take place in London on July 18-23 to mark the 50th anniversary of the eve of the conflict. Veterans in the UK and abroad should contact their local BKVA or KVA branch secretary or the BKVA organising office at 38 Spring Street, London W2 1JA (tel +44 (0) 171 224 9069 or fax +44 (0) 171 224 9061).

**JSMTW(S):** Reunion planned for September, date and venue to be confirmed. Details from Ann Baldwin on 01667 452513 or Ella Wood on 01667 455589.

**Boys Squadron RAC:** Reunion planned for Oct 2 in Birmingham. Contact Charlie Welchman on 01929 553466 for details.

**Arborfield Army Apprentices, Intakes 50A and 50B:** Former apprentices interested in a reunion planned for Oct 2000 should contact Clem Clements on 01604 712128 or Tom Lennox on 01423 865225.

### A and SH messes to close

Following SDR, 7th/8th (Volunteer) Battalion, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise's), formerly 3/51 Highland, will amalgamate with 3rd Battalion, The Black Watch and 3rd Battalion, The Highlanders. Individuals or organisations who have presented items to the Officers' Mess or WOs' and Sgts' Mess and who would like them returned, or have a preference in their disposal, should contact the unit by Jan 31. Write to Battalion HQ, 7/8 A and SH, TA Centre, Forthside, Stirling FK7 7RR or telephone 0131 310 8203.



Command performance: Jermaine Jaques, 18, explains a command task to an apparently unconvinced Prince of Wales while the royal visitor was watching ethnic recruits and potential recruits being put through their paces at the Army Training Regiment, Pirbright. The Prince was accompanied by Maj Gen Evelyn Webb-Carter, whose Household Division has been at the forefront of efforts to attract more soldiers from the ethnic minorities. A few days later it was announced that Prince Charles, pictured in the rank of colonel, had been promoted major general on his 50th birthday

Picture: Chris Fletcher

## Greenfinches pay tribute to fallen

GUEST of honour at a 25th anniversary dinner for Greenfinches at Mahon Barracks, Portadown was Brig H J P Baxter, who chose the famous radio nickname for the first women to enlist in the Ulster Defence Regiment in September 1973. He was the commanding officer at the time.

Organised by two Greenfinches, WO2 Lorraine Hughes and WO2 Barbara Wilson, the dinner paid tribute to four of their number – Ptes Eva Martin and Margaret Hearst, LCpl Jean Liggett and Cpl Heather Kerrigan – who were killed by terrorist action.

● A new portrait of Gen Sir Michael Walker by the Cambridge-based artist Anthony Tyley has been completed for the 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment. Gen Walker, now C-in-C Land Command, joined the regiment in 1966 and later commanded the 1st Battalion.

● The airstrip on the Isle of Mull off Scotland's West Coast has a posh new brass plaque to record the fact that it was constructed in 1965 by 15 Field Park

Squadron RE. The strip has been a veritable lifeline for the island. In the past 33 years more than 400 medical evacuations – on average, about one a month – have been made from it to the mainland.

● Junction Six Industrial Park at Witton, Birmingham is the rather unusual location for a new tribute to a long-dead First World War hero. Arthur "Titch" Vickers, who died in 1944 and is buried in an unmarked grave in Witton Cemetery, won the VC during the Battle of Loos while serving with the Royal Warwickshires. To mark the 80th anniversary of the Armistice, the developers of the industrial park have erected a plaque in Titch's memory on the site of the former GEC Factory where he once worked.

● Readers who were interested in Pamela M Caunt's first guide to military "sweethearts" will be interested to learn she has published a second guide to the collectable jewellery. Priced £6.95 plus £1.50 p & p, it is available from the author at Collectors' Books, 69 Mildmay Park, London N1 4NB.

## Veterans' alliance takes off

FAREHAM in Hampshire recently opened the first local branch of an organisation which in a remarkably short time has grown to represent thousands of former National Servicemen.

Birmingham is expected to form the second branch and others are likely to follow all over the country.

Alan Tizzard, chairman and secretary of the National Service Veterans Alliance (NSVA), says interest in the body is increasing by the day. His postman dreads any mention of the NSVA on television or radio because it quickly translates into a bulging mailbag. So heavy has been the response that at times his local Post Office has had to make special deliveries to Mr Tizzard's south London home.

The alliance is open to anyone who was called up between the end of hostilities in 1945 and the end of National Service in 1963. Its primary objectives include campaigning to:

- Gain formal recognition for its members' contribution in the form of a medal approved by the Queen;
- Obtain compensation for those suffering as a result of their service;
- Lobby for the erection of memorials to National Service dead;
- Establish exhibits in museums;
- Win the right to march as a contingent at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday.

### MEDAL ISSUE

But the burning issue is the award of an official medal to mark National Service. Some years ago a commercial deal was struck by the Royal British Legion, and so far nearly £180,000 has been raised for the Poppy Appeal through the sale of its commemorative medal.

However, veterans are not allowed to wear it alongside campaign medals or on Legion parades. Alan Tizzard says the issue is the one that unites veterans in the UK and elsewhere. Support for the cause comes from as far afield as Australia and New Zealand, Canada and the USA, Europe and Africa.

A national reunion is being planned in London early in the new year. If you want to register or find out more, contact Alan Tizzard c/o NSVA, Robin Cottage, 220 Kingsground, Eltham, London SE9 5EW (0181 859 8378) ... and he would be grateful if you would enclose a stamped, addressed envelope. It might not help the postman, but it would make the overworked secretary's life a whole lot easier.

# Diary

## All pretence swept aside

HONESTY is obviously the best policy, so hats off to Granada Defence Services for the wording of a recent circular to the occupants of quarters within Sandhurst Station.

A letter to householders notifying them of their annual chimney-cleaning visit stated: "To complete the job with as much *inconvenience* to yourselves as possible we have detailed a programme which allots a morning or afternoon date . . . for your chimney to be swept."

Can't say they weren't warned.

*Elders do know better, occasionally. Maj Patrick Farrelly, serving at HQ Provost Marshal at Upavon, and daughter Bridgit both started undergraduate degrees in geography four years ago. He has just been awarded a first by Birbeck College, she a 2.2 by Aberdeen University. Bridgit, 23, now plans to join the Army. Maj Farrelly left school with one A Level, in geography, and commissioned into The Parachute Regiment in 1972.*

Discussions are being held on re-locating the Jerome Gatehouse Collection of military music to Brecon. The extensive treasure trove of band music, programmes and literature is currently filling every nook and cranny in the Newport home of Jerome's widow, Anne.

Soldiers from Walsall-based 143 Plant Squadron took their heavy engineering and earth-moving equipment to the National Arboretum site at Alrewas, Staffordshire to get the project back on schedule for its millennium deadline. The TA sappers, who have been involved on the site since 1996, were called in to complete drainage work which had been delayed by heavy rainfall during the summer.

### DATES

#### FEBRUARY

6: Royal salute by The King's Troop RHA, Hyde Park, 1200; HAC at Tower of London to mark Queen's accession.

#### JULY

20-Aug 2: Royal Tournament, Earls Court. 23-25: Invicta Military Preservation Society's War and Peace Show, Beltring Hop Farm and Country Park, Kent.

● To include public events in this diary, contact the Editor.



Celebrating: Royal Military Policewomen Capt Jan Waring, left, Sgt Laura Ashworth, centre, and Sgt Shirley Shufflebottom travelled to Cologne to mark the 75th anniversary of the employment of policewomen in North Rhine Westphalia. The trio, all serving with Rheindahlen-based 101 Provost Company, were official guests of the European Network of Policewomen.

*Col John Swanston from Putney was invested as an Officer of the Order of St John at a ceremony in the historic Grand Priory Church, Clerkenwell, London. He was presented with the insignia by the Lord Prior of the Order, Lord Vestey. Each award is approved by the Queen.*

More than 700 white posts marking the boundary between the Sovereign Base Areas and the Republic of Cyprus have come under scrutiny during an annual survey by a 23-strong group from 19 Specialist Team Royal Engineers.

The sappers, who are usually based near Newbury, had to check 284 posts in the Western area and 500 in the Eastern, replacing missing markers and repairing any that were broken. The posts have to be visible and in line. Co-ordinator WO2 Paul Varley said the job had taken five weeks to complete.

Soldiers from 7 Signal Regiment at Mönchengladbach, led by SSgt Archie Gemmel and Sgt Steve Easter, played a big part in the annual St Martin's Day parade and bonfire held at Bradbury Barracks. They wrapped and handed out sweets to thousands of children.

*Col Philip Mixer from 212 Field Hospital (V) acted as medical escort during a Royal British Legion pilgrimage to Cyprus. One widow in the party visited for the first time the buffer zone grave of her late husband, a fighter pilot who crashed in the 1950s.*

## Honneured by France

FIRST World War veteran Gerald Harper, 99, stood proudly to attention as the Legion d'Honneur was pinned on his chest by Col Michel Perdon, French Military Attaché, during a ceremony at Coventry.

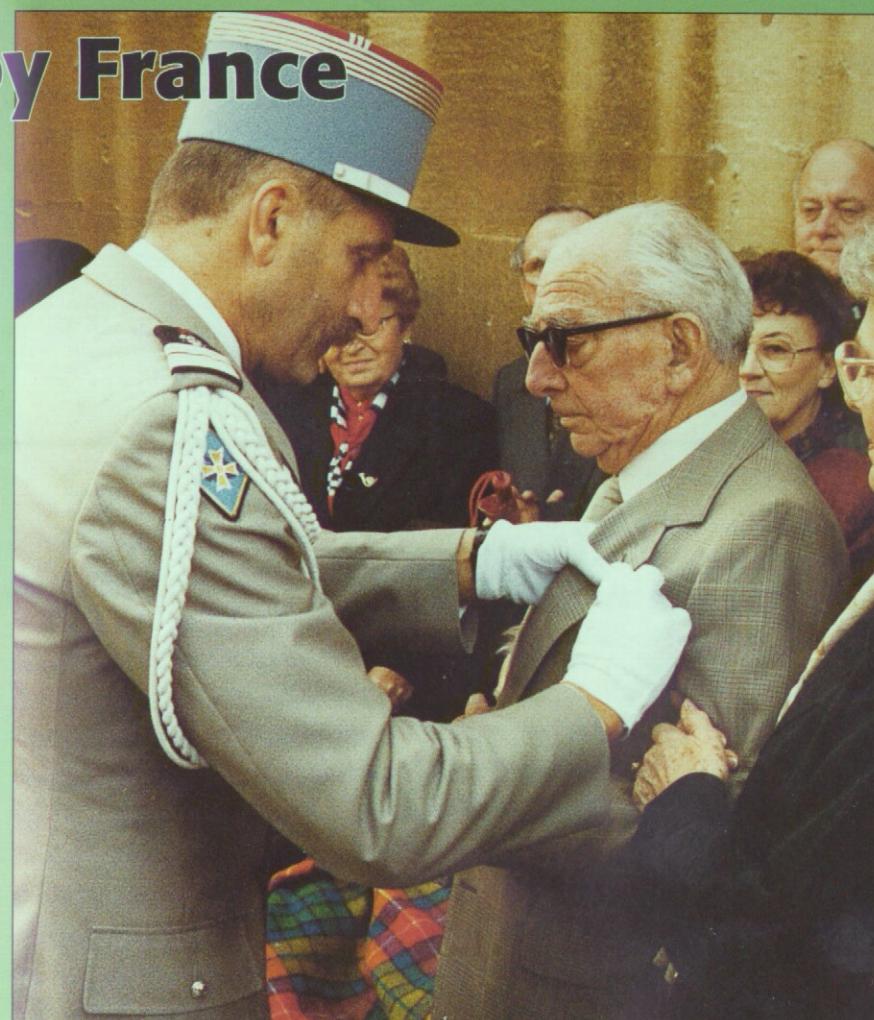
Gerald, who served with the 5th Royal Berkshires, won the Military Medal during the battle for Meault on the banks of the River Ancre.

He regularly volunteered to patrol no man's land, but later revealed that this brave action was not entirely altruistic. He had realised the German gunners knew precisely where the British trenches were and regularly lobbed shells into them with considerable accuracy.

Gerald reasoned that if he had little idea of where he was in no man's land, the enemy wouldn't either.

He was one of three 1914-18 soldiers to receive France's first ranking order at a ceremony in Coventry's Holy Trinity Church. It followed the French Government's decision to honour the surviving veterans of the Western Front as a mark of respect on the 80th anniversary of the Armistice.

Gerald was back in the thick of it during the Second World War, when he co-ordinated rescue teams in Birmingham and Coventry after every air raid. His experience was invaluable in making bomb-damaged buildings safe for rescuers searching for survivors.



Proud: Gerald Harper, right, receives his Legion d'Honneur from Col Michel Perdon

## Super sapper

Maj Matthew Tresidder RE, pictured, has received the annual Staff Corps Prize from Gen Sir Roger Wheeler, Chief of the General Staff, at the RLC HQ Officers' Mess at Deepcut.

The prestigious award was made at the annual dinner of the Engineer and Logistic Staff Corps, an influential network which provides skilled engineers and experts to advise the MoD.

Maj Tresidder was singled out for the prize for his "sustained contribution to engineering and logistics" as officer commanding 6 HQ Squadron RE, part of Tidworth-based 22 Engineer Regiment.

Although not organised, manned or trained to do so, his squadron constructed a complex 40m-long bridge while on exercise in Kenya, built dormitories and staff accommodation for two schools, engineered two airstrips and four water holes, and repaired roads and bridges damaged by flooding.



## VC book is testimony to courage of crippled author

DAVID Harvey's much-delayed blockbuster on the winners of the Victoria Cross – *Monuments to Courage* – is due to be published in March. The author was badly injured by a drunken driver while walking in France in 1992.

Originally planned for release in 1993, the A4-size book, which runs to nearly 800 pages, will be available as a two-volume boxed set weighing a handy 10lb. It contains more than 6,000 photographs to accompany chronological coverage of each of the 1,351 recipients of the VC, the

1918. It is available in softback at £7.95 from the Centre for Continuing Education, The University, London Road, Reading RG1 5AQ (cheques payable to The University of Reading).

Also available is a re-print of the first volume, *Responding to the Call* (1914-15 and the Battle of Loos), priced £4.95. Add £1 p&p for one volume, £1.50 for two.

Treasures of the National Army Museum



7

## Great military bloomers

"I HAD a pair of khaki silk bloomers that I could hold under my chin and they reached below by knees," Pte A Allen, Yorks ATS, is reported to have said on receiving her uniform and kit issue in 1940.

The British Army, having little experience of intimate female apparel, sought advice from the QMAAC and the Women's Royal Air Force Old Comrades' Association in 1939. A wool-and-cotton vest, plus panties, brassière and knickers to match the uniform, were suggested . . . and readily agreed to by the War Office.

### AUTHORISED

At her request, patterns were sent to Princess Mary, the Princess Royal, who approved them, adding that she would be willing to wear the garments herself.

By 1949 there were 14 items of female underwear on the Army's Scales of Clothing.

But the following decade found a greater variety of underwear than ever before in the shops, at affordable prices, the result of which was that most Servicewomen preferred to buy their own. Issue items were phased out.

These articles of underwear are on display in *The Right to Serve* exhibition at the National Army Museum in Chelsea.

# Vox pop

The regular feature in which we ask soldiers for their views on an issue

## Carrying the can

Tours in Bosnia and Northern Ireland can mean curbs on drinking. Usually the "two-can rule" applies – soldiers can drink no more than two beers a day and spirits are banned. A necessary precaution or excessively cautious? We asked 11 soldiers.

### Gnr Andrew Parnaby, 1 RHA

(on operations in Bosnia)

**It's got to be done because you have to set a standard. We are here on a peacekeeping mission and if you are called upon to do something and you have had more than two cans you might not be up to the task.**



### Sgt Dave King, RLC

On operational tours I think the rule is a good thing. It keeps everyone sane. In Bosnia I was in a mobile team and we did a lot of driving. You never knew when you were going to be called out so we couldn't really drink.



### Sgt Darren Batcup, RLC

I've experienced it in Northern Ireland. I think there has to be a limit, although I find it a bit hypocritical because officers and senior NCOs preach it most but

pay least attention to it.



### Pte Donna Harrison, RLC

The rule didn't affect me in Bosnia because I was based in Split, and there, it was OK as long as you didn't drink too much. I'm not a big



drinker anyway, but I don't think the rules should apply to everyone; just to younger people who can't handle it.

### LCpl Alan Thorburn, 1 KOSB

(serving in Bosnia) I agree with the rule because there are circumstances in which we could be called on suddenly. But there should be some leeway when we are not on duty.



### LCpl Mark Meacham, RLC

If you are in a situation where things could start suddenly, then there should be a no-can rule. But in Northern Ireland, as it is at the moment, there's no need for it. I've been to Northern Ireland four times, twice during a cease-fire, but the rule was still applied.



### Cpl Jon Burnside, RLC

I've been on operational tours where it has been enforced only if there has been trouble. I don't like it when it's applied – two beers to last two to three hours is a bit difficult. It's like being treated as a kid. Most people know when to stop.

### Lt Louise Burt, AGC

(serving in Bosnia) Soldiers have the opportunity away from theatre to have a few drinks. I think many people use the two-can rule as an opportunity to get fitter.



### Pte Darren Dickens, 1 WFR

(serving in Bosnia) The two-can rule is a good thing because if anything happens you are ready for it.



### Sgt Donna Green, RLC

I can see the reason why they do it. If you have a lot of youngsters who will abuse alcohol, then you have got to apply it. But if an operational tour is relaxed, then the rules should be flexible.



**Pte Perry Hayward, 1 WFR**  
(serving in Bosnia) Two cans should be enough because you are always knackered anyway. It's not like you are going to go out and party.

Interviews: Graham Bound and Anthony Stone Pictures: Mike Weston

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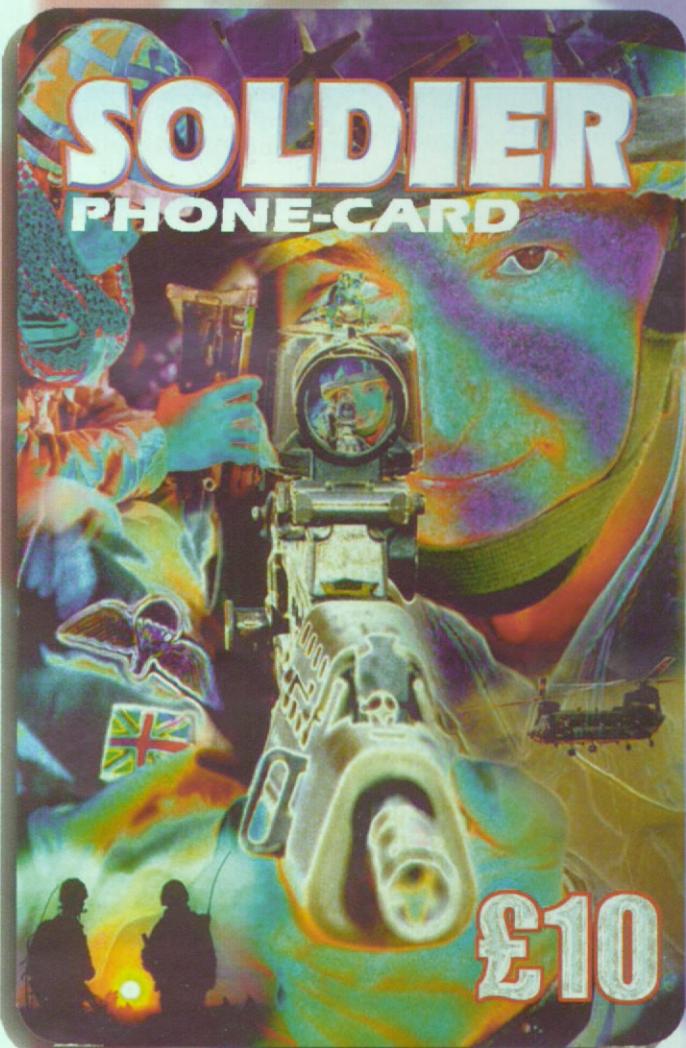
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