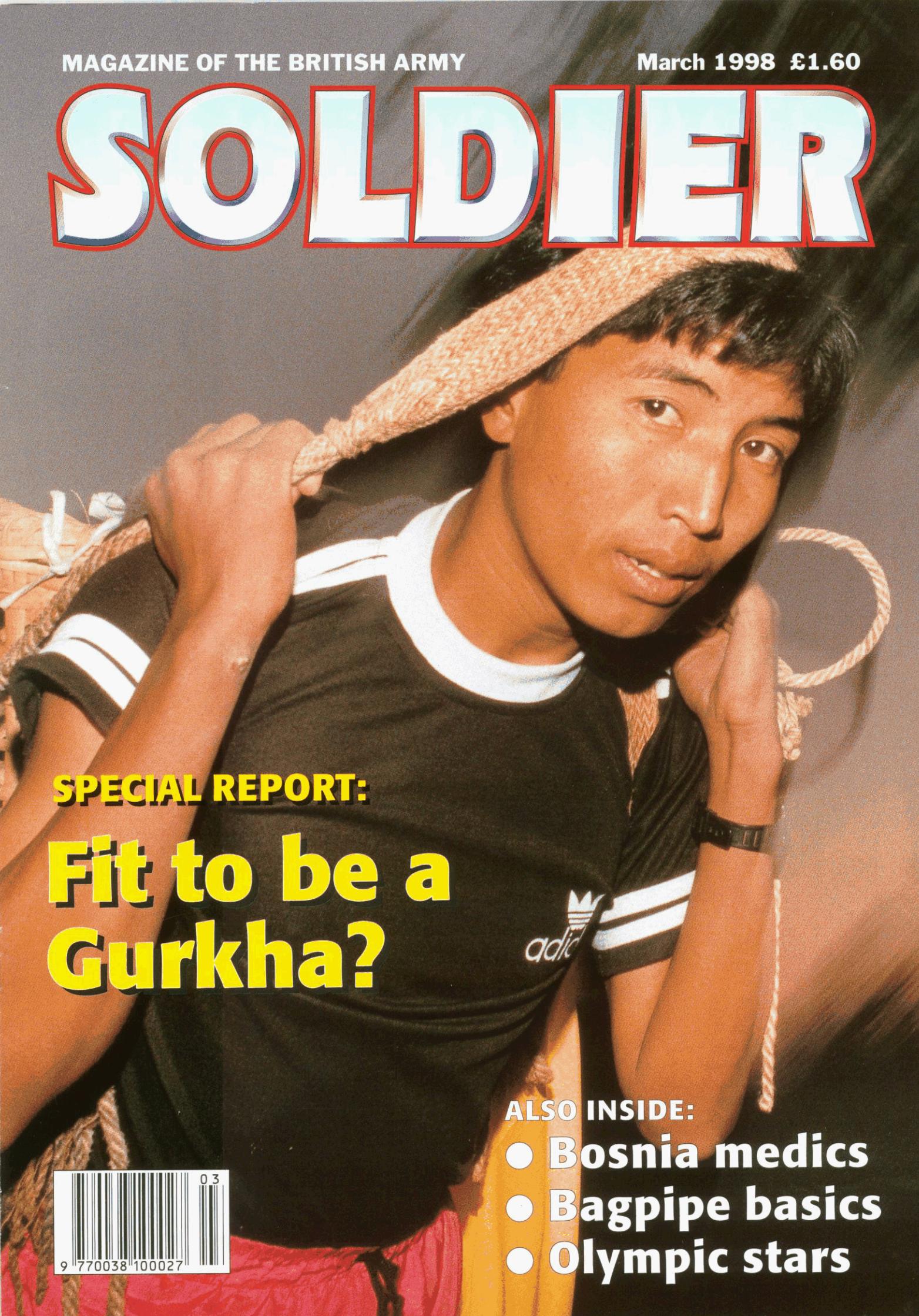


MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

March 1998 £1.60

SOLDIER

A large, bold title 'SOLDIER' is positioned at the top of the cover. Below it is a photograph of a young man with dark hair, wearing a black t-shirt with white stripes on the shoulders and a small 'adidas' logo, and a traditional Gurkha shako. He is climbing a rope, with his hands gripping it and his body angled upwards. The background is dark and out of focus.

SPECIAL REPORT:

Fit to be a Gurkha?

ALSO INSIDE:

- **Bosnia medics**
- **Bagpipe basics**
- **Olympic stars**



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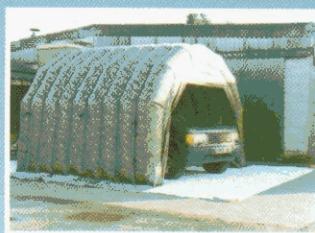


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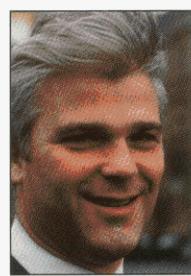




Founded 1945
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Army School of
Bagpipe Music:
Pages 20-21



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MP: Page 23



George Forty:
Pages 30-31



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Operating in the front
line . . . or anywhere else



32-35 COVER STORY

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SOLDIER
to soldier

Pay system
for review?

A PRIORITY of the independent Armed Forces Pay Review Body is the introduction by MoD of a new pay system which is fairer, simpler and more flexible, which better recognises skills and experience . . . and which shakes off some of the rigid links between rank and pay.

The latest AFPRB report (see Page 5) says analysis of 1,600 jobs ranging from private to brigadier has shown considerable overlaps in job weight at different ranks . . . "indeed," it comments, "the same job weight may span three ranks".

Thus people doing jobs of similar weight, but in different ranks, are receiving different rates of pay.

"Clearly the new pay system will need to address this anomaly," say the authors of the report.

They note that, on average, soldiers worked 51.4 hours a week in 1996-7, the highest figure for several years. Teeth arms worked significantly more hours on average than others and, in general, working hours increased with rank, officers putting in three hours a week longer than other ranks.

STATE OF FITNESS

IT is a curious contradiction. Potential recruits from Nepal, one of the poorest countries in the world, can run a BFT in 9½ minutes and take a dash up a mountain with 75lb on their backs in their stride (see Pages 32-35). Many of their British contemporaries cannot run the BFT in 10½ minutes and require "increased pre-training" to reach the required standard.

An indictment on the health of a "first world" country?

People, places, events

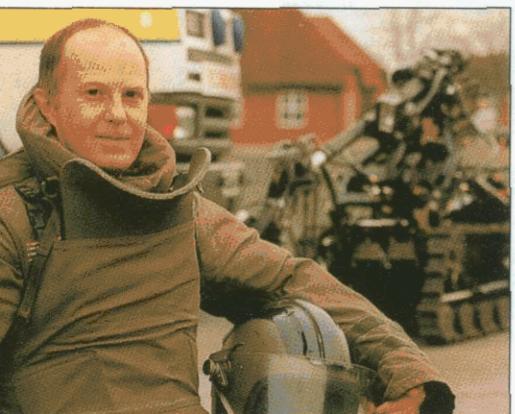
GM for M6 hero

ARMY bomb disposal expert WO2 Aminul Islam RLC, who has been awarded the George Medal for "decisive, brave and professional actions" when he made safe two IRA bombs without wearing protective equipment, is a reluctant hero.

"I feel extremely honoured and quite humble to get the award, but I was just doing what I have been trained for," he told *Soldier*.

"The most difficult part was trying to make sense of it all – there was just so much going on. I was just one part of the whole operation. I can't say whether it was the hardest job I have ever done, but it was probably the most high-profile."

The bombs had been concealed in scaffolding underneath an arch on the M6 motorway at Junction 9 near Walsall in April 1997. To reach the devices, WO2 Islam had to remove his protective suit and helmet. He was not able to deploy the



George Medal: WO2 Aminul Islam RLC

remote technology usually used by his team and so put himself at great personal risk.

"It was very cold, and I had to borrow someone's jacket," he recalled. "I was also very scared and nervous and I thought that if I fell I would look really stupid. But training takes over in the end. Your mind becomes completely focused on what you are doing."

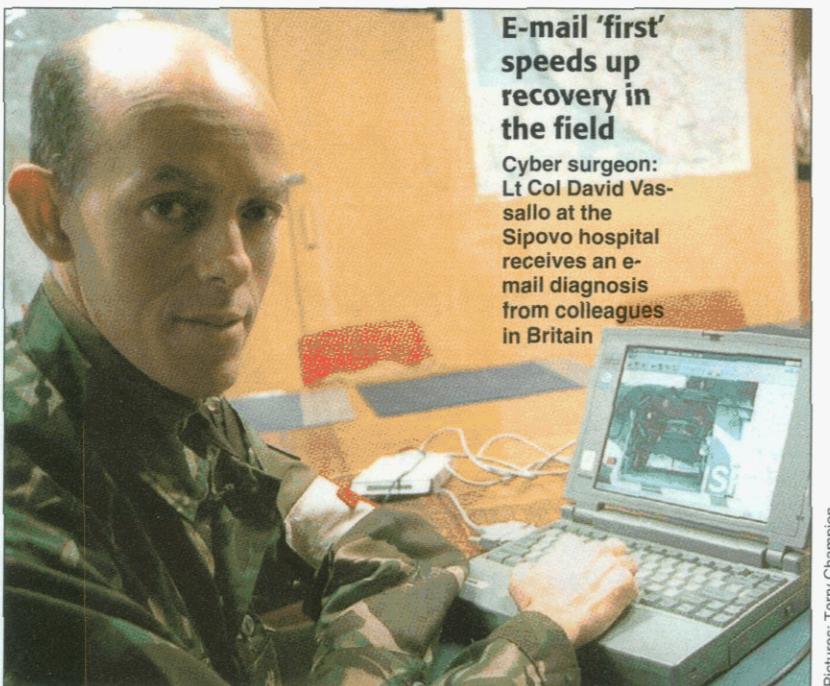
The first device was a fully-primed blast bomb containing high explosive, and the second, which had partially functioned, was in an unknown and unstable state.

The George Medal is awarded for conspicuous gallantry in a non-operational setting.

"The decisive, brave and professional actions of WO Islam, undertaken at great personal risk, were in the best traditions of the Service," the citation read. "He correctly assessed that the bomb had been placed by PIRA and knew that if it exploded whilst he was on the scaffolding he was likely to have been killed. His performance was exemplary throughout the operation and his advice was sought repeatedly by the police and others."

"WO Islam displayed remarkable fortitude and technical skill throughout the operation and was responsible for preventing a terrorist group from achieving success against a high-profile, nationally important target."

WO2 Islam (38) is married with three children.



E-mail 'first' speeds up recovery in the field

Cyber surgeon: Lt Col David Vassallo at the Sipovo hospital receives an e-mail diagnosis from colleagues in Britain

Pictures: Terry Champion

Troops given dose of Internet 'telemedicine'

DOCTORS serving with the British military field hospital at Sipovo, Bosnia, have pioneered the first Army medical unit use of the Internet to diagnose illness among troops.

There had been an outbreak of skin rashes among soldiers in Sipovo, but without a resident dermatologist the Army doctors who staff the hospital were unable to determine exactly what was causing the problem.

Since then, telemedicine has also helped in the treatment of complicated fractures. Consultants at Haslar were able to inspect e-mailed x-rays from Sipovo and advise on treatment.

Lt Col David Vassallo, an Army surgeon at the Sipovo field hospital, established the link and was the first doctor to put it to clinical use. He hopes the new technology will be introduced to all isolated medical outposts, but stressed that the innovation is unlikely to lead to a reduction in the number of doctors posted to field hospitals.

Telemedicine has, said Lt Col Vassallo, arrived at an appropriate time in the history of Army medicine.

"This is the centenary year of the Royal Army Medical Corps and while we are celebrating the past it shows that we are also looking forward and utilising 21st century technology."

• Medics in Bosnia – Pages 13-15

IN BRIEF

LETTERS of intent were exchanged between Defence Secretary George Robertson and Dr Joris Voorhoeve, Netherlands' Minister for Defence, at Tedworth House, Tidworth. The aim was to strengthen and formalise relations between the two countries' armies, which already work in closely as part of the NATO Stabilisation Force in Bosnia. There will be more joint training pro-

grammes to enhance their capabilities for future joint operations.

• The Lowland Gunners – 40 Regiment, Royal Artillery – have returned to their base at Bergen-Hohne, Germany, after a six-month posting to Bosnia. More than 500 men, vehicles and equipment, including AS90 self-propelled guns and Warrior armoured fighting vehicles,

Junior ranks get biggest slice of third staged rise

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 new report of the Armed Forces Pay Review Body.

The 27th report*, which has been accepted in full by the Government, says AFPRB members found "widespread anger at the Government's decision last year to stage their pay award for the second time in two years."

"This deprived military personnel of a substantial proportion of their recommended annual salaries and is permanently damaging to the pensions of those who retire between stages."

The AFPRB urged that the 1998 award should not be staged and said its recommendations were based on the assumption that they would not be.

In the event, the Armed Forces are to receive a basic pay increase averaging 3.75 per cent, with the rises staged on April 1 and December 1. In a measure to tackle manpower shortages, trained privates and lance corporals Class 3 are to receive the biggest rise, of 4.2 per cent.

Key AFPRB recommendations include an increase in committal bonuses paid at the eight-year point to £2,500 and no change in the X Factor, which remains at 12 per cent.

Accommodation charges will go up by an average of 2.7 per cent (compared with 4 per cent in 1997) depending on the grade of the housing.

Single accommodation charges will also rise by 2.7 per cent.

Food charges are to rise by 1.5 per cent (3.3 per cent last year) on April 1.

Additional pay and allowances,

including parachute and diving pay and Longer Separated Service Allowance (LSSA) will rise by 3.75 per cent and will be staged. Length of Service Increases (LSI) will also rise by 3.75 per cent and be staged.

More than 2,000 Servicemen and women were interviewed by teams from the independent pay body, which visited units worldwide. Its recommendation that the most generous increases should go to privates and lance corporals was in recognition of manpower shortages among junior other ranks, "and because there is evidence that their pay has slipped behind that of their civilian counterparts".

On charges levied on military personnel, the report says the pay body aims to ensure these were broadly similar to costs incurred by comparable civilian households.

On housing it warns: "We are concerned about the poor quality of much military accommodation and in particular that targets for improvement may be slipping. As a result, lesser increases are recommended for poorer-quality housing."

Looking to the future, the AFPRB identifies the development of a new pay structure as a key issue facing the MoD. "The need for a more flexible and equitable pay system is overwhelming and without it the Armed Services will find it increasingly difficult to meet the aspirations of their personnel."

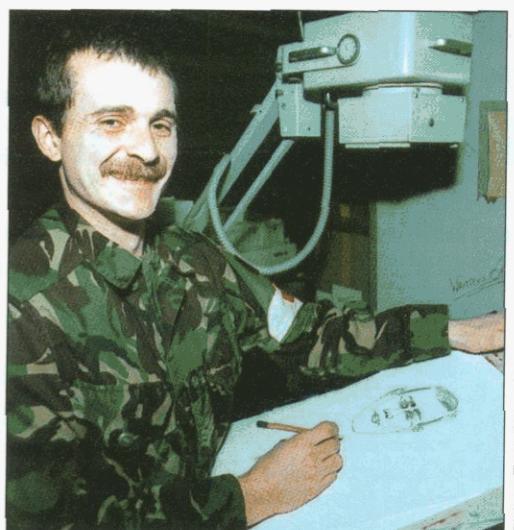
"Dissatisfaction among Servicemen and women with the equity or robustness of the pay system will eventually be expressed through demands for changes to pay levels."

*Review Body on Armed Forces Pay, 27th Report 1998, published by The Stationery Office, £7.20.



Brig Tony Raper, MoD's operational requirement sponsor, with the first of a new generation of British military satellites which soon afterwards blasted into space from Cape Canaveral in Florida. The Skynet 4D satellite will provide secure communications to British forces almost anywhere in the world. Brig Raper said: "This launch is very timely in assisting with our much-needed defence capability."

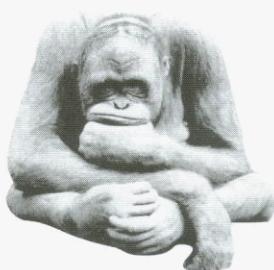
Drawn to his subjects



Picture: Terry Champion

SSgt Andy Hickie, a radiographer at the British field hospital in Sipovo, Bosnia, has been using his skills as a caricaturist to raise smiles . . . and money. He charges staff and patients £1.50 for the privilege of having their features exaggerated on paper and donates the proceeds to a charity working to relieve the symptoms of neurofibromatosis, from which his seven-year-old son Edward suffers. Andy, whose drawings have raised several hundred pounds, is about to return to 22 Fd Hosp, Aldershot. He would like to hear from families affected by the illness and can be contacted on 01252 348961 after March 15.

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People, places, events

Forces' postal tribute to late Princess

Julie Shortland (left) and Cpl Jayne Dixon, who work in the philatelic bureau of the Defence Postal and Courier Services Agency at Mill Hill, London, show off the special Diana, Princess of Wales first-day cover produced by the bureau. Interest in the cover, which will benefit the national memorial fund set up in the Princess's name, has been exceptional.

"Orders are piling up quicker than expected," said Ann Davidson for the agency. "We are really pleased and hope they continue to flood in."

An initial print run of 5,000 is expected to be repeated to meet demand.

The BFPO covers feature the set of five



Picture: Mike Weston

Diana stamps issued by the Post Office last month and cost £3.95 each, with a minimum of £2 from every sale promised to the memorial fund.

They are available from all British Forces Post Offices or from the Philatelic Officer (DC), Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill, London NW17 1PX.

Cheques should be made payable to DPCSA Enterprise Fund.

Around the Houses

A summary of Defence topics from Westminster

Heroes' names are 'tarnished'

"THEIR NAME liveth for evermore" was the bold inscription on the brass plate containing names of 35 men from the Southampton area who died in the First World War.

However, former Home Office minister David Maclean told the Commons, with some irony: "It was found a few months ago lying tarnished and rusty in a scrapyard."

Introducing a Bill aimed at closing loopholes in the law on the preservation of war memorials, Mr Maclean said the pressure group Friends of War Memorials had "disturbing documented evidence" that hundreds are in a state of disrepair or neglect while others had ceased to exist.

The Bill will be given a second reading next month.

Other points from Parliament:

❑ Warrant officers are to be included on the panel of three sitting as judges at courts martial trying other ranks. Armed Forces Minister John Reid said legislation would be amended to this effect in the next Armed Forces Bill in three years' time.

❑ Target percentage of new recruits from ethnic minorities will be two per cent for each Service in 1998-99, rising annually to reach five per cent by April 2002.

❑ Latvia and Lithuania are to follow the UK model for NCO and officer training, while Estonia and Slovenia are considering doing so and Romania has decided to adopt the UK operational staff training system.

Defence Procurement Minister Lord Gilbert said British military assistance, with specialist teams, had "reinforced the reputation of our armed forces". The Government saw defence diplomacy as an important and growing task.

❑ Studies carried out by the National Radiological Protection Board had proved that the Christmas Island nuclear tests in the 1950s and 1960s had not had a detectable effect on expectation of life or on the risk of developing cancer or other fatal diseases of those taking part, Defence Minister John Spellar said. (See Reviews, Page 64.)

❑ Under a £650m, 30-year contract, a private consortium formed by GKN Westland and McDonnell Douglas is to provide ground-based training for the Army's new Apache attack helicopter.

❑ Sponsored reserves are being considered as part of the Strategic Defence Review, but no decision has yet been made.

New tests extend jobs for women

NINE gender-free measurements of physical potential are to be introduced at Army recruiting selection centres on April 1 as the Service opens up more jobs to women.

The new tests – known as Physical Selection Standards (Recruits), or PSS(R) – coincide with a huge increase, from 47 per cent to 70 per cent, in the number of posts open to women. Only the Household Cavalry, Royal Armoured Corps and Infantry remain closed on the grounds of operational effectiveness.

As well as the new gender-free assessments tailored to a specific career employment group, all recruits must pass a new output test at the end of Phase 1 of their basic training.

Output tests, which require different levels for different cap badges, have been established after wide consultation with the Arms and Service directors. The Director of Training Policy is currently producing training objectives for a revised physical training syllabus to support the increased emphasis on strength and muscular endurance training.

Headquarters, Army Training and Recruiting Agency is developing a policy

for the management of candidates at risk of failing and a clear audit trail so that selection centre grading details for every candidate, as well as output tests from Phase 1 training establishments, are recorded for future scrutiny.

There is also a requirement for further studies, including an in-Service validation of PSS(R), and trials at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Additional PSS(R) equipment and manpower for recruiting assessment centres are being obtained and the recruiting group is developing a computer programme for calculating a recruit's physical potential against the needs of the Army's career employment groups.

Top energy savers

CATERING Troop of 2 Signal Regiment at York took the top trophy in the Land Command catering energy efficiency awards. Runner-up was the 160 Provost Company RMP catering department at Aldershot and certificates of merit went to the catering departments of ATR Winchester, 38 Engineer Regiment and 19 Air Mobile Field Ambulance.

The awards are sponsored by British Gas and Logistics Support Food Services.

People, places, events



Picture: Mike Weston

Capt Malcolm Russell tends a simulated casualty at the launch of SWIFT - South Wiltshire Intervention for Trauma

Doctor on call - in his spare time

AMID the twisted metal and carnage of a road traffic accident a doctor in a blue helmet climbs over car seats and crouches next to a badly-injured passenger.

He assesses the situation and is briefed by the paramedics who have carried out preliminary treatment. Before the patient goes into shock or loses too much blood the doctor stabilises him. A stretcher is placed under him and a waiting ambulance, blue light flashing and siren wailing, takes him to hospital.

It is a situation in which Army doctor Capt Malcolm Russell RAMC has found himself 55 times since last May. He was at each incident voluntarily . . . his attendances were not part of his normal duties as a doctor at the Royal Hospital Haslar or subsequently senior house officer at Salisbury's Odstock Hospital.

Capt Russell was working for a charity called BASICS - the British Association for Immediate Care. Working independently with the ambulance services in Hampshire and then Wiltshire, he was on call during his spare time to attend accidents where there was a need for a doctor to carry out treatment which could not be done by paramedics.

He has now played a key role in setting up a similar scheme in Wiltshire called SWIFT - South Wiltshire Intervention for Trauma - a registered charity affiliated to BASICS.

Although Capt Russell helped launch the scheme, it was the brainchild of two other Army doctors, Lt Col David Morgan-Jones and Lt Col Robin Cordell. Both were posted before it could get off the ground so Capt Russell took up the chal-

lenge. He has now been posted to Episkopi, Cyprus. Six doctors make up the SWIFT team, but with his departure there is an urgent need for more - both military and civilian - to join.

Capt Russell, who served with 24 Armd Fd Amb in Bosnia and was RMO for the 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, says the scheme has much to offer.

"Roadside medicine could equate to that on a battlefield," he said. "You have to resuscitate, stabilise and move the patient under similar stress. An Army doctor can be deployed at short notice so we have to be up to speed in trauma management.

"I see this as a way of maintaining skills to offer the best possible service to soldiers. I've seen more serious injury during the past year than in the rest of my Army career."

Gunners return to old haunts

GUNNERS from 26 Regiment RA have returned to Bosnia for the second time in 18 months - with 15 soldiers from the Royal New Zealand Artillery. Nearly a third of the regiment deployed on Op Resolute in December 1995. 159 (Colenso) Battery is based in Sanski Most and 16 Battery (Sandhams Company) near Glamoc. They return to Guttersloh in June.

IN BRIEF

FIVE officers from Gütersloh-based 2 Close Support Regiment RLC joined German officers - some from the former East German Armed Forces - in an Anglo-German Friendship Seminar at the Academy of the Bundeswehr at Strausberg, 40km outside Berlin.

- Army officers from Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia visiting the British Army in Wales to develop inspection skills under a European security co-operation treaty met soldiers from 1 RWF at Chepstow and called on the Infantry Training Centre and HQ 160 (Wales) Brigade at Brecon.

Black Rats' short notice with JRDF

OSNABRUCK-based 4th Armoured Brigade, the Black Rats, has a new role as the training brigade to Britain's Joint Rapid Deployment Force. By the end of the year its 2,000 troops will be ready to move anywhere in the world at six days' notice.

Spearheading the effort will be the lead armoured battlegroup, based for the first six months on the 1st Battalion, The Green Howards. It will be supported by C Squadron, The Queen's Royal Lancers, an AS90 battery, sappers, aviation, logistic, medical and other assets. In July the QRL

will take the lead role for three months, supported by a company from the Green Howards.

Finally, Münster-based The King's Royal Hussars will link up with the 1st Battalion, Irish Guards, newly arrived in Germany.

Sea trip for Challenger

EIGHT new Challenger II tanks, the first to be delivered to the Army, travelled from Marchwood military port to Antwerp on RFA Sir Tristram. They were on their way to the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards at Fallingbostel.



Picture: Mike Hawley, Aldershot News

Getting the hang of it: desert trekker Lt Peter Manley with Wacker and Tabitha

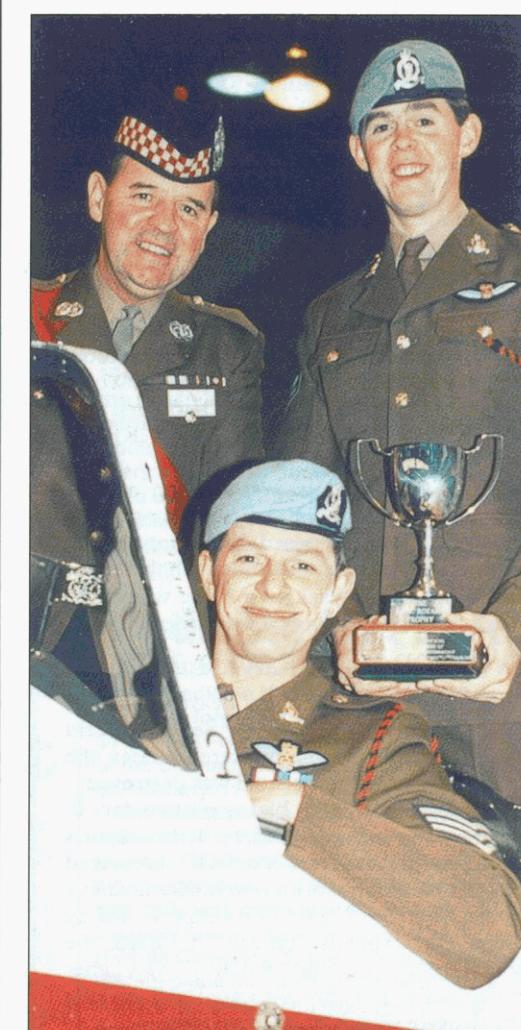
Sapper gets the hump for charity

WACKER and Tabitha were, to say the least, a little confused. After years of carrying small children around Marwell Zoo, the two camels suddenly found full-grown soldiers on their backs - to say nothing of all the cameras rolling and clicking away at them.

But it was all in a good cause. Four Royal Engineers from the Combat Engineer School at Minley and a Territorial Army doctor from The Parachute Regiment were in training for a

- A £300 million contract to provide the Armed Forces with improved pay, pension and admin services has gone to Electronic Data Systems (Defence) Ltd. In partnership with the Armed Forces Pay and Personnel Administration Agency, it will run for up to 12 years.

Dad's winged wonders



Proud father WO2 Chick Stubberfield, Army Careers Officer at Stirling, has seen a second son win the coveted Army "flying wings". Sgt Ricky Stubberfield AGC followed the example of younger brother Bryan, a corporal with 1 Regiment Army Air Corps in Gütersloh, by becoming an Army pilot. He was one of the last to train on the Chipmunk T10, which went out of service last April after nearly 40 years.

The brothers both won the Brian Beggs Trophy, awarded to the student who achieves the best standards of flying, captaincy and airmanship during the basic rotary wing phase of the Army Pilot's Course. Ricky (pictured at the controls of a Chipmunk at the School of Army Aviation, Middle Wallop) is to join 5 Regiment AAC as a Gazelle pilot before converting to Lynx. Behind him are his proud father and brother.

Terry nabs bag-snatcher

When Sgt Terry McIntyre, R Signals, (right) intervened in a mugging over the Christmas holiday the last thing he expected was a bravery award from his general. Terry was leaving a pub in his home town of Scarborough after a quiet drink with his father when he saw a woman screaming on the ground and a man running away with her handbag.

Terry, currently serving in Bosnia, gave chase. "I told him to throw the bag away and I would let him go," he said. "Which he did, but I chased and caught him and held him down until the police arrived."

He was presented with the General's Commendation at Banja Luka by Brig Peter Pearson.

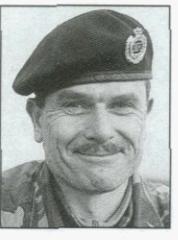


Picture: Stuart Bingham

People, places, events

Bosnia bomb team saved water supply

SGT Anthony Seccombe of 33 Engineer Regiment has received the Queen's Commendation for Bravery for his part in leading a four-man team which neutralised a 500lb bomb during a gruelling six-day operation in Bosnia.



Sgt Seccombe

Sgt Seccombe, based at Carver Barracks, Wimbish, showed extraordinary courage in defusing the Second World War British bomb in 1996. It had been discovered in the centre of Bosanska Krupa, near the region's major water main.

The EOD team excavated earth around the bomb to reach the delicate fuse mechanism and then supervised its loading on to a vehicle which had to be guided along 4km of badly pot-holed track to a place where the bomb could be detonated for a safe distance.

Weekend went with a bang

CITIZENS of Chippenham heaved a sigh of relief when an unexploded Second World War German bomb discovered under the planned site of a new school was destroyed.

A thousand of them had spent two days in emergency accommodation after experts from 33 Engineer Regiment EOD discovered one of the bombs was a potentially unstable 500kg "Fat Boy". The EOD experts, led by Capt Pete Shields, quickly de-fused the smaller bomb but the "Fat Boy" had penetrated nose first into saturated soil making the delicate work almost impossible.

After a weekend of careful work, the team destroyed the bomb in a controlled detonation. The explosion, channelled upwards through a shaft dug to reach the bomb, broke only a few windows in nearby houses.

(See Mailbag, Page 62)

Paul finds his feet in the Royal Signals

Homeless Paul Fenton (pictured) was living in hostels in Leeds a few months ago. Now he has passed basic training and is going on to a career in the Royal Signals.



Paul's story attracted national media attention and reporters were present at Bassingbourn for his passing-out parade before he moves on to specialised training at the Royal School of Signals, Blandford.

Sgt Fenton did well during his initial training, achieving some of the best marks in his troop of 44 soldiers for shooting and physical training. But his major achievement was closer to home. The 21-year-old has been reunited with his parents.



Picture: Terry Champion

All eyes look out to sea, but the radar tracker and Rapier missile launcher were following another, as yet unseen object. Without warning, a Tornado jet roared overhead, proving dramatically that the human ear cannot pick up the sound of an aircraft until it is too late, and that Rapier missiles can actually blow an aircraft out of the sky before it can be seen with the human eye. The demonstration was given by 47 Regiment RA on Thorney Island to 80 officers attending an air flank study day.

Rapier, Javelin and the latest high-velocity missiles were demonstrated in enemy and friendly environments by naval and RAF fast jets and helicopters of 9 Regiment AAC.

MCTC Colchester boot camp to close

THE YOUNG offenders' boot camp set up within the Military Corrective Training Centre (MCTC) at Colchester is to close at the end of this month because of cost.

Lt Col Julian Crowe SG, commandant of the MCTC, was appointed governor of the Young Offenders Institute when it opened in February 1997. He has been supported by a deputy governor and eight prison officers from HM Prison Service, and a company sergeant major and ten senior NCOs from the Military Police.

It was intended that Colchester YOI would operate on a pilot basis for one year. It cost £1.2 million and the Government has decided it does not represent value for money.

The unit, which was described in an official report as a "highly successful" experiment, is housed within the wire of the MCTC in its own block. Known as B Company, it can take a maximum of 38 inmates and is classified as a category D establishment, housing only inmates suitable for open conditions.

The Board of Visitors' annual report said: "The use of military and prison staff in the same establishment is a unique situation, but the Board of Visi-

tors can confirm that it works very effectively in Colchester.

"The experiment of joint military and prison service management has been extremely successful, all are very experienced in man-management and in the practice of handling difficult and complex prisoners and situations."



Beware: heavy plant crossing

Next time you need to move a few shrubs, call in WO1 Ian Stubbs (pictured) and his men from the Combat Engineer School at Minley, Surrey. They proved themselves to be dab hands when 1,000 shrubs had to be transported across 26 metres of water to the Serpent Island in London's Hyde Park.

First they built a bridge to the island - in record time - then helped carry the plants across in less than four hours.

Fourteen sappers laid the general support bridge in just 29min 30sec, beating their record by six minutes and raising more than £3,000 for Sport Aiding Medical Research for Kids (SPARKS) in the process. Vickers, who make the Army's new high-tech, state-of-the-art automotive bridge-launching equipment, had promised the sappers a £100 donation to charity for every minute under the hour that they took to complete the job.



What the papers have been saying

Cool Britannia, or what . . .

"AS we sped off I was looking behind me at the van and the terrorists when Pte X stopped at some red traffic lights. I said: 'What are you doing?' and he said: 'Well, I've got enough points on my licence already and I don't want any more.'" - *Birmingham Mail* (1 RRF soldier describing a terrorist ambush in Londonderry)

□ The Army is to ease its ban on people with visible tattoos after discovering that many women wear small designs between the thumb and forefinger. - *Times*

□ In a letter to the newspaper, former Adjutant General Gen Sir Michael Rose warned of a potential "arms to Iraq" scandal and said that action in the Gulf could produce a "boomerang effect", with equipment sold irresponsibly to other nations being used against British troops. - *Daily Telegraph*

□ A shell-shocked soldier executed for desertion during the First World War has been honoured. Pte Henry MacDonald was traumatised when he was buried by an explosion on the Somme, then shot after trying to make his way home to Yorkshire. Bradford Council has added his name to a roll of honour. - *Daily Mail*

□ MoD scientists are developing the world's first electric rifle which is controlled by a computer, has a switch for a trigger and a spark plug for a hammer. - *Sunday Times*

□ Emperor Akihito is to join the Queen in a wreath-laying ceremony at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier during his state visit in May in a further gesture of atonement for Japan's wartime atrocities. - *Daily Telegraph*

□ Financial controls over the Army's pay system broke down completely in the eight years up to 1996, with no proper tracking of £50 billion of payments, the National Audit Office said. - *Financial Times*

□ Sgt Trevor Walker RE, who lost a leg while on UN duties in Bosnia, is not entitled to compensation from the MoD, the High Court ruled. Sgt Walker's right leg was amputated above the knee after he was hit by tank fire in May 1995. He was given leave to appeal on grounds that his case raised issues of public importance which could affect other Service personnel in similar situations. - *Times*

□ Plans to erect memorial plaques to Lord Kitchener in his home village in the west of Ireland have met opposition because, say protesters, he was a cruel Army commander and his father was a cruel landlord. - *Times*

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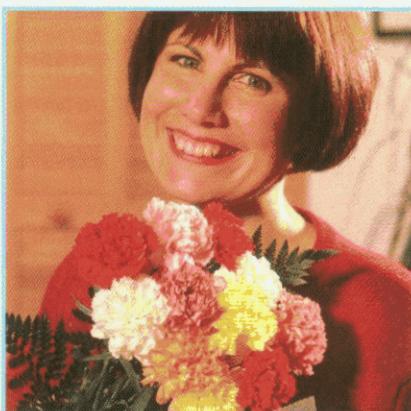
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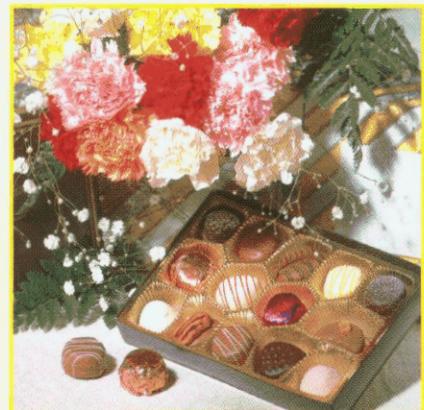
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Bosnia briefing

Field medics provide reassuring service to SFOR... and the local community

Report: Graham Bound
Pictures: Terry Champion

BOSNIA is now relatively peaceful. But there remain some very real threats to the multinational troops of the NATO Stabilisation Force (SFOR), which includes a 5,500-strong British contingent in Sector South West.

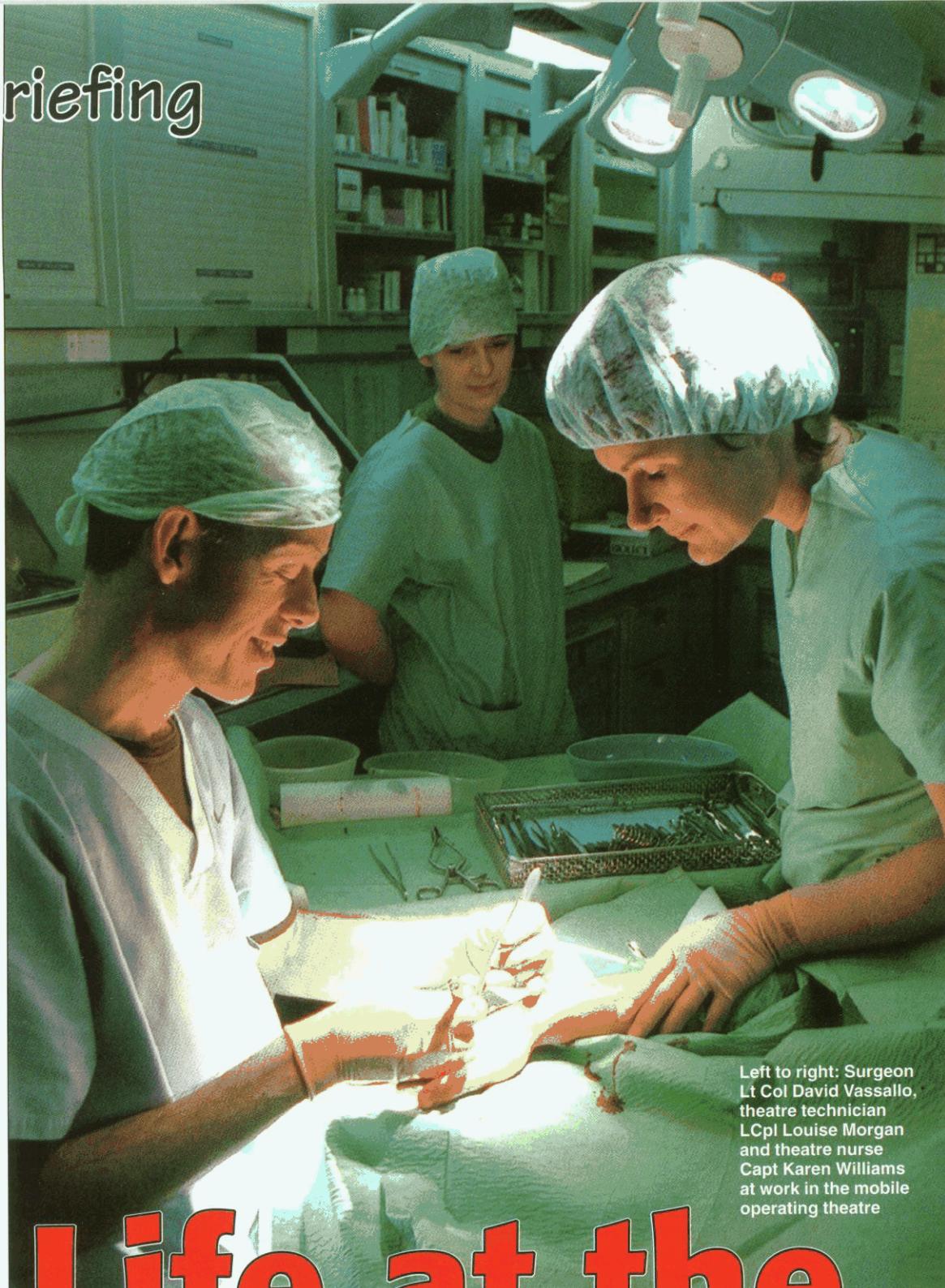
Intensive air movements, minefields and unexploded ammunition – even the daily need to drive on Bosnia's treacherous roads – conspire to make this part of the Balkans, quite simply, a dangerous place to be.

Reassuringly for soldiers deployed there, the Army has not scrimped on its medical backup. It has contributed a major hospital, smaller treatment centres and an extensive ambulance service to SFOR.

From the field hospital in Sipovo, two hours' drive from sector headquarters in Banja Luka, Lt Col Mick French RAMC directs operations. The system, he says, works on a hub-and-spoke principle.

"This hospital is the hub, and projecting out from it are 11 detachments, usually co-located with Military Police sections and other units. They give first aid, assess situations and use their ambulances to get casualties to us. With them in the team, we can respond to any emergency in any SFOR unit in our sector – or even in the local community."

Making the hub and spokes into an effective and smoothly-turning wheel are RAMC and QARANC personnel from Catterick-based 24 Armoured Field Ambulance and a squadron of specialist staff from 22 Field Hospital at Aldershot.



Left to right: Surgeon Lt Col David Vassallo, theatre technician LCpl Louise Morgan and theatre nurse Capt Karen Williams at work in the mobile operating theatre

Life at the sharp end

Think of TV's long-running *MASH* series (minus some of the more outrageous antics, perhaps) and one has a reasonable idea of the Sipovo base. But unlike the more famous Korean War establishment, the British tents are not located in the icy open air. The medics moved into a huge clothing factory which

employed many of the citizens of this predominantly Serb area before the civil war wrecked lives and the economy.

On the huge expanse of the shop floor are housed the unit's tented wards, labs and other facilities. Wards normally allow for 18 beds, increasing rapidly to 40 in an

● Turn to next page

Bosnia briefing

At the sharp end

● From Page 13

emergency. The Sipovo hospital is definitely a make-do affair, but it also has some highly sophisticated assets. On the helipad 50m from the factory is a Royal Navy Sea King helicopter; its crew at permanent readiness to mount a rescue mission to any part of Bosnia.

Equally important, is the self-contained operating theatre and intensive care unit (see Kitstop on Page 39).

As in any hospital, staff plan for unexpected events which could push them to the limit, but keep busy with smaller incidents and routine illness. Road accidents bring in a steady flow of patients. During 1997, there were 470 such incidents in the area, affecting all SFOR nationalities, causing two deaths and 74 injuries.

MINES

Remarkably (and everyone touches wood when they say this) mines have caused no injuries among the British contingent, thanks, in large part, to the Royal Engineers' mine awareness programme. Local people have not escaped so lightly; recently two Bosnians stood on anti-personnel mines and were rushed to Sipovo for surgery.

They were among many local people who have been treated at the hospital. It is a service that nurses and doctors are happy to provide, but they shake their heads in despair when faced with the ethnic loyalties which shape Bosnian lives even in illness.

In late January, when thick snow had made roads almost impassable, an elderly Muslim man suffering from abdominal pains was taken to a British outstation. The doctor there said the man needed hospital treatment and suggested a nearby Croat establishment.

The old man refused. He had lost a son and a son-in-law during fighting with the Croats and was too scared to go into their territory. It took a convoy of vehicles, led by a snow plough, more than four hours to drive the old man to Sipovo for treatment.

GORY INJURIES

Senior Nursing Officer Capt Allison McCourt spoke of gory injuries, reminders of the violent and often lawless nature of Bosnia. Unbelievably, many such injuries are explained as self-inflicted.

"We had one person with a slit throat. Fortunately the jugular had not been cut, but he will never speak again." Another had a huge splinter of wood deeply embedded in his head and still another had been stabbed. "We failed to see how they could have done these things to

themselves," said the nurse, smiling wryly. "Better not to know, perhaps."

The British medics also help local people by donating supplies to the area hospital. Blood stocks are normally replaced when they still have a week or more of shelf-life left, so the old stock is passed on. Lab technician Sgt Paul Lund took one batch of blood to Banja Luka, where he was shocked by what he found. "Facilities are very bad indeed," he said. "We are so much better off and we consider that we only have the basics."

DILEMMA

The 13,000 or so Bosnians in the Sipovo area need all the help they can get. But the British medics do not want them to become dependent on the hospital. "The dilemma is that we want to help, but they have to stand on their own feet. And we won't be around for ever," explained Lt Col French.

In Bosnia, however, there is a strong sense of living for today. One elderly Serb woman who had been admitted for surgery clearly had no thought for the grander scheme of things. Mrs Plavsic smiled broadly at the nurse, and said through an interpreter: "The people here are so polite and kind."

Her son, who had driven his mother the 15km from their village, was asked how he felt about British military help. He displayed the stony, suspicious expression typical of many Serb men. "My people are satisfied," he said grimly. As emotional outbursts go, it was not much... but at least it seemed sincere.



Thousands of feet up in the Bosnian mountains, the Steep Slope

Recovery team of 24 Armoured Field Ambulance practise their skills. The team, based at Kupres, is on constant standby.

SFOR drivers are made aware of the risks on the mountain roads – and off them. A vehicle could leave the road and come to rest in a minefield. In such a case, the rescuers would work closely with EOD teams



Staff of 24 Armoured Field Ambulance carefully move a Czech soldier, seriously injured in the Hip helicopter crash, into the military field hospital at Sipovo

This time it was for real

THEY had all learned the drill, practised it and practised it again; always hoping that it would never be needed. But on January 8, the rehearsals were over. A helicopter laden with troops had crashed, and there were casualties.

The staff of 24 Armoured Field Ambulance and 22 Field Hospital suddenly had to put their major disaster plan into action.

The day had begun as any other, with a string of minor operations for the surgeons to perform. But in mid-morning, the duty ops room officer, Capt Vickie Jacques, took a radio message from the field ambulance detachment at Banja Luka which had her reaching for the disaster plan. A Russian-built Hip helicopter, operated by the Czech Army, had suffered tail rotor failure seconds after take-off and crashed. There were 16 Czechs on board plus one British liaison officer.

The incident occurred two hours' drive away. Initially, everything depended on the small team of combat medical technicians, mainly junior NCOs, who made up the Banja Luka medical detachment. The aircraft's rotor blades had ripped through radio antennae as it dived to the ground, knocking out the Czechs' own communications. Only the medics were able to communicate with Sipovo and only they were available to give any kind of medical treatment.

At the hospital, staff immediately began clearing wards of routine cases and the resuscitation room and operating theatre were prepared.

Sipovo's dedicated Sea King helicopter ambulance was scrambled. Loaded with a medical crew and kit, it took off for the

Czech base. By the time reinforcements reached the scene, the combat medics had stabilised the seriously injured and helped the walking wounded to safety. Later, the Sipovo hospital's CO, Lt Col Mick French, was in no doubt about the value of their work. "These young medics quite simply ensured that the injured reached us alive," he said.

Several of the Czechs were in a critical condition. Later it emerged that one had broken his spine and only the correct use of a neck brace had saved him from paralysis.

As three British helicopters ferried the injured to Sipovo, the field hospital, especially the resuscitation room and operating theatre, became scenes of frantic but well-managed activity.

By the end of the day, it was obvious that the hospital and ambulance crews had won. Ten Czechs, including the pilot and the one British soldier, had emerged with only minor injuries and most were already back on their feet. Six Czechs were seriously injured but out of danger and one Czech, the co-pilot, was still in a critical condition. All were ready for repatriation within a few days.

For Capt Allison McCourt, the senior nursing officer, it had been one of the most demanding days of her career, but her satisfaction was as profound as the victims' gratitude. "No matter how much we told the Czechs that we were just doing our job, they just went on expressing their thanks," she said.

To Capt David Hill, another nurse, the endless practices had proved their worth.

"In the end, we did OK," he said. Sixteen Czechs and a Briton would agree.

● In next month's Bosnia briefing: RMPs in Op Plunder and 9/12 Lancers work with aid agencies

Icelanders do their bit for NATO



BRITISH medics at the headquarters in Banja Luka have been reinforced by medical staff from Iceland. Two Icelandic women, Erla Sveinsdottir and Thorun Jonsdottir, doctor and nurse respectively, are spending six months with the men and women of 24 Armoured Field Ambulance at their dispersed aid stations, adding their country's small-scale but significant contribution to SFOR.

Although working in a military environment, both women are civilians – as is every other citizen of NATO's mid-Atlantic member state.

Iceland hosts an important American base but the country has no armed forces of its own. Nevertheless, to show its support for the Bosnian peace effort, the government recruited civilian medical staff to leave their regular hospital jobs, undergo five weeks of intensive training in England, and then be posted to Bosnia for six months.

Icelandic nurse Thorun Jonsdottir and doctor Erla Sveinsdottir with "patient" Pte Andrew Mellor, a Territorial Army combat medic, in the medical centre at Banja Luka

(At the same time, 30 Reykjavik policemen were seconded to the international police team which is re-structuring and re-training the Bosnian police force.)

The Icelanders have been given the ranks of captain, and wear standard British-issue uniforms for the duration of their attachment to 24 Fd Amb. "This caused a bit of trouble at first," said Thorun, speaking in the excellent English which is her third language.

"We started out breaking a lot of rules, such as not saluting or wearing berets and, as we had no rank badges, very few people realised that we were honorary officers. It wasn't a lot of fun being shouted at but now everyone is very understanding."

Unlike most other personnel at British bases in Bosnia, the Icelanders do not have to carry weapons. "The British soldiers protect us," said Erla. "We don't go anywhere without an armed soldier."

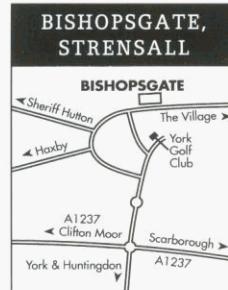


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Exercise report

Paras chill out in a really cold war

... and try to develop a taste for raw caribou meat in a frozen corner of Canada

Report: Jill Swift

Pictures: Chris Fletcher

GOOSE Bay sits in a little-known part of the north-eastern corner of North America, virtually unpopulated and more than 500km from the nearest city.

Snow-covered and forbidding, and with a coastline locked in ice for much of the year, it is one of the most remote places on Earth.

It was there that 120 soldiers from Aldershot-based 5 Airborne Brigade joined forces with 11 Squadron, RAF Regiment for a week of arctic training on Exercise Frozen Crane.

After a 2,800-mile flight from the UK, the troopers were to have parachuted straight on to the surface of a vast frozen lake. But fiercely gusting winds and temperatures dropping to minus 59C changed that.

Exercise organiser Flt Lt Greg Birchill said: "This was the lowest-ever recorded temperature at Gosling Lake and we were

warned that exposed flesh would freeze in one minute. Despite this, the first of several parachute drops was completed successfully less than 24 hours later."

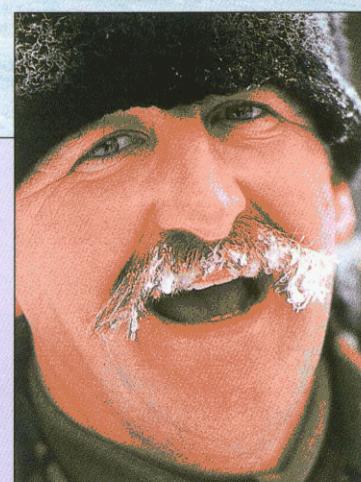
Only a handful of those taking part from the RAF Regiment and the minor units of 5 Airborne Brigade, including 23 Parachute Field Ambulance, 216 (Para) Signal Squadron, the Household Cavalry Regiment and Gurkha members, had previous experience of dropping in such conditions.

LCpl Robert Poppe, from 5 AB, said: "This is probably the best and easiest parachuting I've ever done. To begin with you're always a bit apprehensive at not knowing exactly what to expect, and this was no exception. But the landing was amazingly soft in all that snow."

Capt Jim Convery, from HQ 5 AB, discovered that the lake was covered with pack-ice 5ft thick. "The generous coating of freshly-fallen snow meant it felt like you were landing on a feather duvet. You only began to feel just how cold it was when you started to pack your 'chute away," he said.

For 47 and 70 Squadrons, which look after the Hercules aircraft based at Lyneham in Wiltshire, the parachuting was only one aspect of Frozen Crane. The Royal Air Force runs the exercise to train its crews in arctic flying and in navigational difficulties when flying at low levels over featureless terrain. Canadian Air Force Base Goose Bay is one of the main low-level flight training centres for NATO countries.

When they were not parachuting, the British troops were put through their paces by the Canadian



Cushioned: Paratroopers make a soft landing on snow-covered Gosling Lake

Ice man: Maj Geoff Weighell (left) manages a frosty grin at minus 30C

Rangers, experts in arctic survival. They were shown how to build fires, improvise shelters using just foliage and snow, and to

fish through thick ice. Lesson one was how to bore a small hole through the ice, lesson two how to prevent fishing line from freezing within seconds of being pulled from the water.

With a touch of beginners' luck, fishing holes were soon surrounded by fresh trout, tom cod and smelt, although the Rangers' subsequent variation on a *sushi* theme was not to everyone's taste. One soldier described the raw fish as "horrible". And, he added with feeling, the raw caribou meat had little flavour.

Time was made for adventurous training, during which some took the opportunity to improve both their cross-country and downhill skiing techniques. Skidoos – high-performance snowmobiles – were also a big attraction. A team from 23 Para Fd Amb mounted a two-day cross-country expedition.

Maj Geoff Weighell, the senior officer from 5 Airborne Brigade, said: "We carried out a number of successful parachute drops without injury and, as an added bonus, everyone had the chance to experience Arctic survival and various forms of skiing. It has been a huge success and I am sure people will be queuing up to return next year."



Frozen fish fingers: LCoH Ian Hogarth of the Household Cavalry Regiment manages to hook a smelt through 3ft-thick ice on the Churchill River

The remedy is in their hands

Report: Chris Kinsville-Heyne

EARLY in the 1991 FA Cup Final Paul Gascoigne, wearing the white shirt of Tottenham Hotspur, launched himself into a wild tackle on a Nottingham Forest player.

Within 24 hours most of the English-speaking world, who had previously called a knee strain just that, had a new term to juggle with: "anterior cruciate ligament".

Remedial instructors (RIs) at the United Kingdom Support Command (Germany) Rehabilitation Unit at Princess Royal Barracks, Gütersloh, have seen their fair share of "Gazza knees" over the past few years. Forty per cent of their patients carry knee or lower-limb injuries of one sort or another, caused mainly by football, rugby or squash.

Former remedial gymnast-turned-physiotherapist, and OC Rehab Unit, Capt Chris Shannon explained: "Our two remedial instructors look after 30 residential patients and a good deal more day-patients. The most common injuries are to knee, foot, ankle and back. Sport also throws up its share of shoulder injuries.

"At Rehab we see more lower-limb patients than anything. They have resulted from playing sports, Army exercises or car and motor-cycle accidents."

EARLY TREATMENT

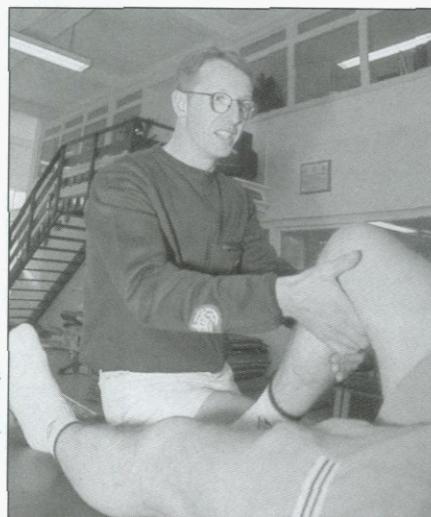
Every garrison in Germany has its own physiotherapists so the first stage of rehabilitation is carried out locally. In the United Kingdom this important early treatment is given at Headley Court, near Chessington.

"A guy with a broken ankle," said Capt Shannon, "is handled in the physio department, with the local physiotherapist liaising with local gymnasium staff if necessary. Most physio departments have their own small gym equipped with at least a treadmill, a cycle and a rowing machine.

"That way local rehabilitation takes patients to a stage when they need something further. That's when they come to us. We aim to get them fully fit and return them to their regiments."

Protocols used in Germany and the exercise programmes the remedial instructors employ on the gym floor are

'Gazza knees' cause no strain to Army's RIs at Gütersloh and Headley Court



Gütersloh: WO2 Mark Lewis at work

identical, or very similar, to those used at Headley Court.

With a staff of about 190, Headley Court provides a full residential rehabilitation programme, as well as limited provision for out-patients. The 85-acre estate went tri-Service in August 1997.

The rehabilitation team comprises specialist medical officers, nurses, remedial instructors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, a clinical psychologist, social worker, technicians, support staff and, most important of all, the patients.

RAF Headley Court is the home of the Defence Services Medical Rehabilitation Centre. It is the only such centre for all three Armed Services, and civilian employees of the MoD, run by the Forces.

It is also home to the Joint Services School of Remedial Instructors, commanded by Maj Alan File.

"The qualified PTI, when he transfers into the Army Physical Training Corps during his course at the PT school, does an exercise therapy module," he explained. "It was developed to qualify PTIs to conduct rehab for injuries expected from the Gulf War. Some PTIs were trained to be rehabilitation instructors."

Everyone joining the APTC goes through the four-week therapy module, which gives a fairly good idea whether an individual has the ability to do exercise therapy. The candidate must have expressed the desire to become an RI.

A suitability interview is held at Headley Court and hopefuls sit an anatomy, physiology and kinesiology paper. Kinesiology is the study of the movement of the body.

JUDGEMENTS

"RIs will be making judgements throughout their careers," said Maj File. "The RI works on the shop floor, with other senior RIs supervising what is happening, with senior physiotherapists, occupational therapists and senior consultants giving them advice during clinics. When RIs move on to an Army training regiment, for example, they will be on their own apart from the medical officer."

WO2 (QMSI) Tom Scarr explained: "The students are gathered in the examination room drawing muscle lines on their partners to show an understanding of the locations of muscle groups and how they work. This provides a practical understanding of kinesiology."

SSgt Trevor Bowman has been a PTI for 12 years. "My job was keeping the Light Dragoons in Hohne fit to fight," he said. "Getting them back on their feet, this is the logical progression. The understanding of the complications at this level is tremendous."

Once qualified, RIs are responsible for a "class" and specific treatment. Class names for patients reflect their stage and initial area of treatment: Early and Inter - Knees, Legs, and Spines, Upper Limbs, Medicals and Lates. Patients being treated for Upper Limbs could be suffering anything from pain in a finger to a serious shoulder problem. Some could be chronic. They could include amputees or men with lacerated tendons.

Flight Lt Ron Bain, OC Remedial



Headley Court: Sgt Robbo Robson RM receives the attention of (from left) WO2 (QMSI) Tom Scarr, Sgt Reg Bray, and Sgt Ian Lawton RM

Squadron, pointed out eight patients playing croquet on the neatly-mown lawn in front of the magnificent manor house.

"Gymnastics and recreational therapy are the treatments used to give the patients their mobility. The people who devised the treatments were called remedial gymnasts.

The idea was to take patients' minds off the fact they were receiving therapy.

COMBAT CROQUET

"So a lawn sport, such as croquet, enables them to use their hands and shoulders in a functional manner but in a recreational activity. It becomes quite competitive, in fact, 'combat croquet' breaks out every now and then..."

Upstairs in Neuro Rehab, Sqn Ldr Maureen White presided over the ward dedicated to patients with traumatic brain injuries and other neurological problems.

"Road traffic accidents and assaults account for some but the majority of the 19 patients here now are being treated for injuries sustained while on operational duty," she said.

"If they were injured in Bosnia, for example, they would be treated in Bosnia first, then transferred to Haslar, and possibly flown to a hospital near their

home. They are sent to us when they have recovered and need rehabilitation.

"We are the only specialist unit. We decide if a soldier can return to work in his unit and carry on his service."

As patients progress they are integrated into remedial classes to promote their fitness and the staff will liaise with the RIs about exercise and improvements.

Discovering an electrician, a metal-worker, a rigger, a safety equipper and a ground support engineer in the bowels of Headley Court comes as a surprise until they explain their presence.

"We do a lot of modification to shoes," explained RAF Chief Tech Dean Gunn. "And back supports are made-to-measure. That allows a recovered patient to drive or sit at a desk in greater comfort,

● The 30-week RI course covers: Anatomy and physiology; clinical conditions; kinesiology; exercise and recreational therapy; clinical anatomy; applied physiology; directed study; unit sports; external lecturers; assessments; clinical detachments; administration; and practical examinations.

so the Services get their money back in production terms. The rigger and ground support engineer have designed a tower structure which can be set at any height to simulate a work situation and assess mobility and flexibility."

The occupational therapist can then see if a patient is able to work for 30 minutes with his arms extended, which helps the final assessment before signing the patient off, fit for work.

PEACE AND WAR

Brig Robin Garnett is the Director of Defence Rehabilitation and the commander of DSMRC. "We have a need to rehabilitate people in peacetime and wartime," he said. "The NHS simply would not be able to cope with the numbers of people needing rehabilitation if there was a maximum deployment of available personnel. So we need to retain that skill."

"The PTIs as a breed have a personality that make them very good at group motivation. We give them a six-month training course in medical aspects of orthopaedic rehabilitation."

What makes Headley Court unique is that it is based upon the activities of the remedial instructors.

Pipes that stir the blood

Report: Graham Bound
Pictures: Terry Champion

HIGH on the parapets of Edinburgh Castle, out of sight, but certainly not out of earshot, is the Army's smallest unit: The School of Bagpipe Music.

In a building specially funded by Scottish Heritage and presented to the school in 1995, a select few musicians are trained to the highest level of Gaelic musicianship. As graduates and pipe majors, they become the men who, more than any others, symbolise the proud tradition of the Scottish regiments.

Already NCOs and experienced band musicians, the students – never more than eight at a time – are selected on merit to be tutored by the Director of Army Bagpipe Music, Maj Gavin Stoddart, and his deputy, the Army's senior Pipe Major, WO1 Bruce Hitchings.

The two master pipers conduct their students through an intensive programme of one-on-one teaching and study, at the end of which the newly-qualified pipers can play their instruments to the highest international standard. They can also compose marches or laments to commemorate episodes in their regiment's history and answer correctly virtually any question on the history of Scottish music.

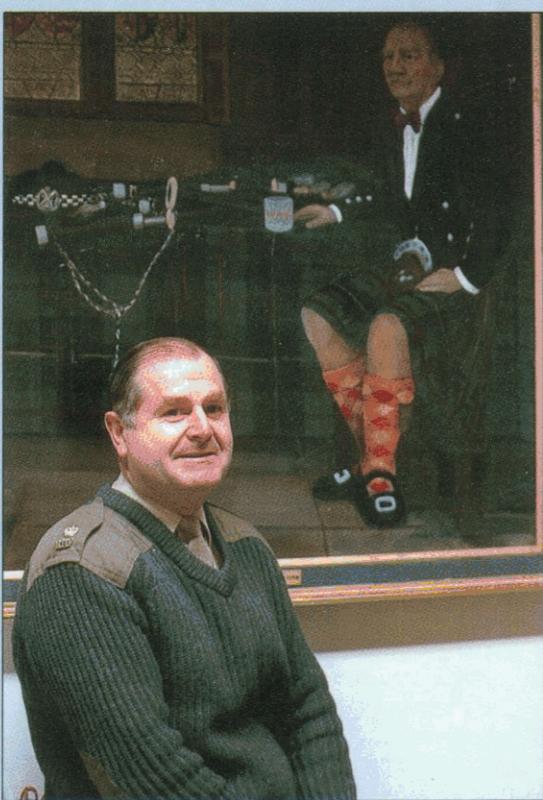
HARD PRACTICE

These are the shared goals for any group of students, but it takes 28 weeks of study and hard practice to achieve them. In the meantime, visitors to the school may be struck by the discordant sound of eight practice chanters apparently playing eight different tunes. The students, each absorbed in his own music, are deeply involved in the solo practice which makes up a large part of each day.

Maj Stoddart does not seem to notice and certainly does not mind – not surprising considering his piping pedigree. His father, Pipe Major George Stoddart, was the Lowland Brigade Pipe Major for 11 years, taking part in every Edinburgh Military Tattoo during that time, and becoming the original "lone piper".

Gavin followed in his late father's footsteps, also becoming a lone piper, and is now the tattoo's musical director. He always remembers his father's advice and passes it on to his students: "Never let your pipes out

For generations the Scottish regiments' pipers have inspired their comrades and terrified their enemies. Keeping the piper's skills alive is the business of the Army School of Bagpipe Music



Director of Army Bagpipe Music Maj Gavin Stoddart beneath a portrait of his father, Pipe Major George Stoddart, who was the original "lone piper".



The Army's senior Pipe Major, WO1 Bruce Hitchings, (facing camera), leads students playing chanters

from his pipes. Sitting in his office beneath a huge oil portrait of his late father, Maj Stoddart smiled at the story and reflected on his work.

"We get a wonderful sense of satisfaction from taking these guys through the course," he said as WO1 Hitchings nodded agreement.

"A student will come here knowing very little, but by the end of the course he plays before a committee of military and civilian judges and we see this great look of pleasure on his face. To bring out the best in a man in just seven months is quite an achievement – for student and teacher."

By the time the students face the committee, they must be able to play one hour of music together, half an hour alone, and have composed at least one piece of music. During the course, they are tested weekly and are expected to spend at least three hours every evening studying the theory and history of bagpipe music.

The tough training regime does not appear to deter applicants, particular from overseas. The school has, said Maj Stoddart, "become known as the mecca of piping, and we have people making their way here from all over the world, either to enrol as students or to seek our advice about improving their own army music".

Links have been established with many countries which have no obvious connection at all with the traditions of piping. They include Jordan

The school often receives invitations to send pipers overseas and these visits are encouraged. "Pipers are good ambassadors," said the major. He or WO1 Hitchings visit Pakistan, which has a strong tradition of piping, almost every year. Such visits are relatively normal, but even they were astonished at the invitation to give a Burns Night performance in Kurdistan.

Beyond Price

The skirling pipes may never again lead men into battle, but Gavin Stoddart insists that his school, his students and the tradition they are maintaining, are beyond price. He explains simply: "The pipes are directly related to morale. They stir the blood and make you feel part of something great. How can you put a price on that?"

That love of tradition shines in the eyes of the students as they blow earnestly into their chanters and think of the day when they too may step into the spotlight on the castle parapet, to thrill the crowd below with the haunting sound of the pipes.

Right – Student pipers LCpl Andrew Johnstone of the Scots Guards and LCpl Paul Colville of The Black Watch play at Edinburgh Castle

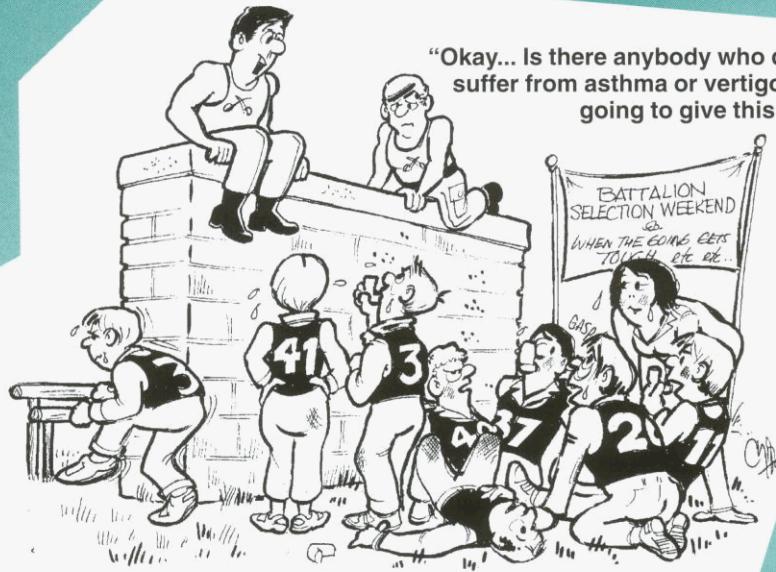


Chuckle with chip

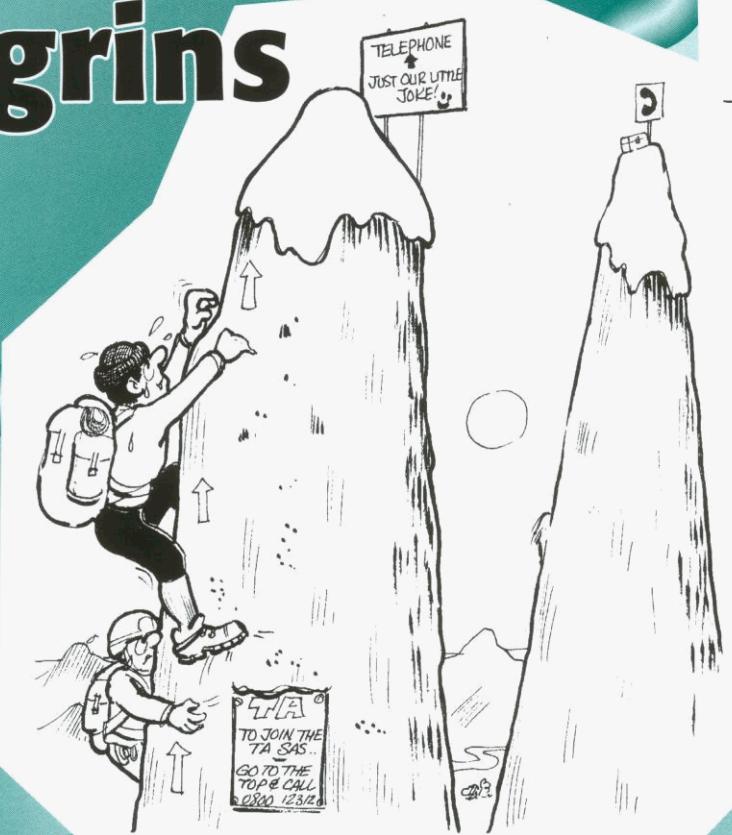
"Well... Was reading Bravo Two Zero – twice – sufficient preparation?"



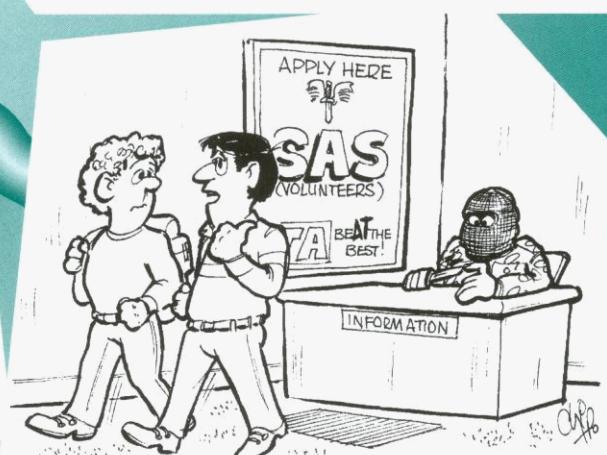
"Okay... Is there anybody who doesn't suffer from asthma or vertigo who's going to give this a go?"



Who dares ... grins



"A little something extra for the weekend sir?"



"He said that if he told me, he'd have to kill me!"

Focus on a Terrier-MP

'Those who selected me knew that I would disappear on exercise every now and again and it was a cost that they would have to pay'

Interview: Graham Bound
Pictures: Terry Champion

THE HOUSE of Commons is home to men and women from a bewildering variety of professions. In the chamber, the tea rooms and the bars lurk doctors, teachers, pilots, bankers and, of course, more lawyers than one could shake an order paper at. But there is just one serving soldier.

Elected to Parliament for the first time in May last year, Conservative MP Desmond Swayne regularly exchanges his parliamentary uniform of grey pinstripes and brogues for the camouflage and assault boots of the Army.

As a major in the Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry, and the OC of A Squadron based at Stourbridge in the West Midlands, the MP for New Forest West is responsible for three recce troops and one HQ troop; around 78 men and women. The tools of their trade are stripped-down Land Rovers; the lightly-armed eyes and ears of a battle group.

The job demands at least one weekend a month as well as the annual exercise in the field. The 41-year-old politician admits that these responsibilities make heavy demands on him, but there was never really a choice between the Army and Westminster.

"When I was selected as a candidate, I made it clear that I had a commitment to the TA, and that I wanted to keep it up," he said, betraying some of the pugnacity that is just as useful in politics as it is in the Army. "Those who selected me knew that I would disappear on exercise every now and again and it was a cost that they would have to pay."

He insists that his lot is not any different to those of most TA soldiers. "Lots of my men and women are expected to work shifts and overtime at weekends, and they all have to fight to get away."

But none of them have to risk the notorious wrath of a chief whip if the Army impinges too far on party duties. Maj Swayne admits that there have been moments when conflicting demands seemed too much.

"I remember driving up the M40 at the start of a weekend to join my unit, leaving a young family behind yet again. I turned the car around and headed back home,



Desmond Swayne MP on exercise with the Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry

Soldier with the Commons touch

but I realised this was the moment of decision. If I went home, I'd never go out for the Army again. So I turned the car around again, and I haven't looked back."

Since then, he has more often than not enjoyed the days and night in the field. "It's so refreshing, having been in Parliament all week, to get away and be in command and under command. Then when I get back to Westminster, I'm ready for a completely different kind of challenge."

What about the possibility of giving other politicians that refreshing experience and, along the way, letting them have an insight into the way the TA works? "A good idea," says Maj Swayne. For years there has been a scheme by which MPs can spend a week or two of their recess with units from all three regular Services but he suggests the TA could also host the politicians.

Perhaps the experience of one MP is enough for the Yeomanry? Not necessarily. Desmond Swayne insists that, even though politicians are not the most popular group in society as a whole, there is no prejudice against him. He is just another TA soldier.

He does, however, admit to taking a

back seat when the troops are brewing up and conversation turns to politics. "I'd rather talk about something else. It's a bit like a doctor going to a party. Someone is bound to say, 'I've got this nasty rash...'"

Like all soldiers, the MP has had his ups and downs. The deepest down of them all was shortly before he was elected to Parliament, on exercise in the Kielder Forest.

"I woke up in the middle of a pitch black night with the need to go for a 'shovel recce'. So I left my weapon in my sleeping bag, and went about 50 yards into the forest. I did the business but then became disoriented, and wandered through the forest for four hours. Eventually I stumbled into another squadron's HQ. I didn't know the password, I'd left my weapon behind, and, basically, I'd broken every rule. They never let me forget it."

Desmond Swayne accepts that he will find it difficult to gain the qualifications needed for further promotion. "I'm probably going to reach my sell-by date pretty shortly," he says rather sadly.

But, with the politician's typical glint in his eye, he adds, "until then, I'll get the most I possibly can out of the TA."

Unit spotlight

Pick a sport ...any sport

Bulford PT school can give you the skills... but don't forget the fitness

Report: Karen Moseley

VIRTUALLY gone are the days when getting soldiers fit meant physical jerks at the crack of dawn on a freezing parade ground. Science has taken over.

Today's Servicemen and women are much more likely to be seen in gyms and swimming pools, building up their strength with plyometrics, multi-stage fitness tests, boxercise and aquarobics.

The Land Command (UK) School of Physical and Recreational Training at Bulford prides itself on keeping up with the latest trends in fitness and training.

Nearly 2,000 students a year presently take advantage of the 142 courses run by the school. The commandant, Maj Tony Allen, said the establishment was often oversubscribed for places but would soon be able to accommodate a further 500 applicants.

"We don't have a lack of students coming through, but we do want to get the message through to the young soldiers in the barrack room," he said.

The message is that qualifications, both military and civilian, and skills can be gained at the school in a number of recreational sports approved by the Army.

These include football, volleyball, diving, hockey, tennis, swimming, martial arts and squash. A wide range of ability is catered for, and soldiers – and their dependants if there is enough room – can start from scratch or learn to become an instructor or coach in a sport of their choice.

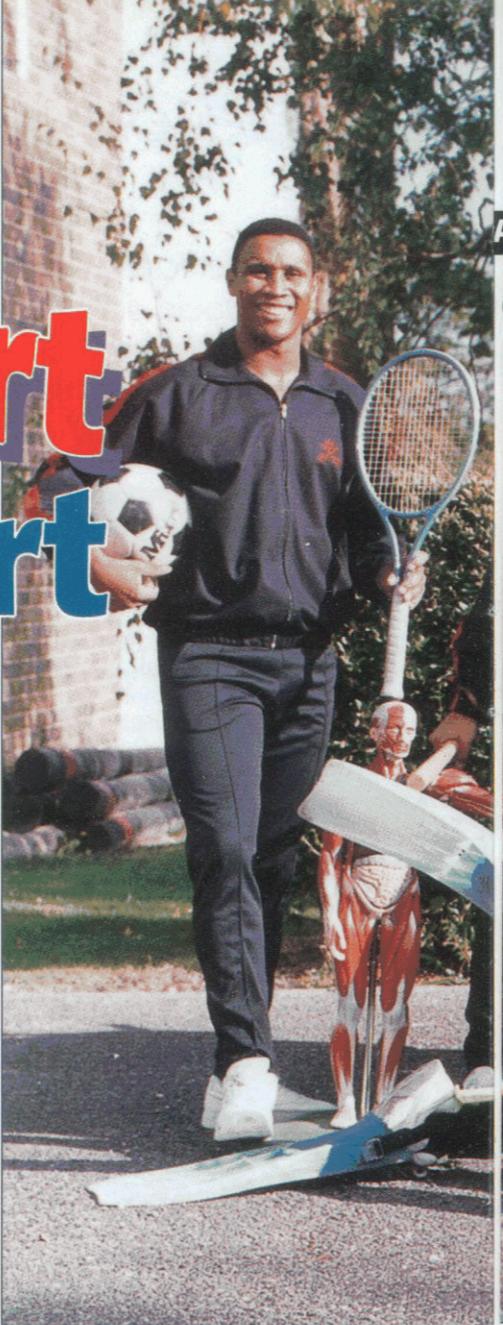
The school is the only place in the country to train Territorial Army PTIs on two ten-day courses. They do not need to have had any previous experience, but must be fit. Maj Allen had no qualms about sending three potential PTIs home after just three days on the last course because they were not up to scratch.

Restraint and Arrest courses give instruction in the 27 movements of self-defence, ranging from basic holds to arrest and immobilisation, unarmed defence tactics, defence with a stick, and how to use pressure-points effectively.



Body management in the gym. SSgt Sheila Strickland watches Cpl Steve Ash, RLC, on the sit-up machine

Main picture: Jim Fuller



Above – If the kit fits: instructors at the school demonstrate their range of sports



Lower picture: Mike Weston



The school has its own 30.5-metre swimming pool in which Amateur Swimming Association, Royal Life Saving Society and British Sub-Aqua Club qualifications are gained.

There is a well-equipped gym, two lecture theatres, two football pitches and

three indoor tennis courts. The fitness suite is used for Football Association-approved sports injuries courses as well as body management courses – the most popular run by the school. The multi-gym and technogym equipment are state-of-the-art and students are encouraged to

wear heart-rate monitors while exercising. "This tends to be the way the Army is going," said SSgt Eric Simpson APTC, one of seven instructors at the Bulford school. "We no longer take people out and thrash them until they drop. We now use heart-rate monitors and have our stu-

ents working in their correct training zones. This is the most effective way of getting people fit."

Most of the courses last five days, from Monday to Friday, and accommodation is available at Ward Barracks for up to 80 people at a time. The school will soon be introducing three one-week courses a year for the Royal Military College of Science at Shrivenham, with the aim of qualifying up to 250 students in basic coaching qualifications.

"Sport is going to have a higher profile in the Army and this school is the ideal place to produce instructors in different sports," said Maj Allen. "Sport is also an important retention factor – people enjoy it... and they also stay fit."

PAX+ on notice as MoD seeks better deal for the Services

A NOTICE of termination has been served on PAX+, the highly successful voluntary personal accident insurance scheme sponsored by the MoD.

Announcing the decision, Armed Forces Minister Dr John Reid said his department was under an obligation to act in the best interests of Service personnel and would use its corporate influence to ensure they got the best possible deal.

PAX+ was brought in by underwriters AON/AIG after the Gulf War. There are now other schemes available which claim to provide better benefits and the MoD believes that it is obliged to examine them.

• Seamless transfer

The two-year notice period took effect on January 1, clearing the way for a replacement package to be introduced on January 1, 2000. In line with European Union law, an open competition is to be mounted to examine alternative schemes.

Meanwhile, the MoD's policy on personal accident insurance remains unchanged: it continues to encourage personnel to seek cover, although the decision is purely voluntary. The department will insist on a seamless transfer of cover for individual policy holders.

PAX+ was introduced to meet soldiers' needs for a voluntary method of enhancing death and injury benefits provided by the Armed Forces Pension Scheme. It meant troops could insure themselves against mishap on operations, exercises, adventurous training and sport as well as during off-duty hours.

London hospitals sign up

PRIMARY health care of Service personnel working in London is to be provided by Guy's and St Thomas's Hospital Trust in partnership with the MoD.

The Baird Health Centre at St Thomas's was opened by Lt Gen Sir James Baird, a former Director General RAMC, after whom it is named, and his cousin, Air Marshal John Baird, the present Surgeon General of the Forces.

A staff of 26, headed by five civilian doctors and two military dental officers, one of whom is the officer commanding, will provide medical and dental care for



This athletic Army family raised more than £1,500 for the Diana, Princess of Wales's Memorial Fund... by going nowhere fast.

Sgt Maj Martin Payne, a physical training instructor with Armagh-based 8 R Irish, his wife Tanya, and their children, Sophie and Ben, joined forces to log up the equivalent distance of the English Channel on rowing machines and climb the height of Mount Everest on aerobic step machines.

Extra warrants fall foul of law

THE additional travel warrant entitlement, which helps Army personnel to visit children of a previous marriage, has been withdrawn following legal advice.

Loss of the entitlement on remarriage

was ruled to be in breach of the Sex Discrimination Act. After wide consultation, the MoD "reluctantly concluded that the only viable course of action" was to withdraw the additional warrants, with effect from March 1.

Cessation of the entitlement, says the MoD, applies not only to those based within the United Kingdom, but also to divorced or separated personnel stationed abroad whose children are currently entitled to visit the overseas location at public expense.

'I'm just left to do everything'

Ask Cari ...

Cari's column looks at separation and the effect that it has on Service families. If you think Cari can help you, write to her in confidence, at BFBS, BFPO 786 or c/o Soldier

Dear Cari, IT seems so unfair. My husband keeps having to go away and I'm left to get on with everything. I have to sort out the kids and get repairs done and pay bills... When he gets home he doesn't ask me about how I am. He just says nothing and goes out with his mates. – **Mrs G (UK).**

Cari replies: It sounds as though you feel resentful because your husband doesn't seem to be grateful for your efforts at home. It certainly seems as though he could be a lot more sensitive. Soldiers form a bond with their "mates" in a way that no one except another soldier can understand. They face all sorts of hazards together and you can't switch off that kind of friendship at a moment's notice.

Welcome him home, give him a meal and let him go out and get it out of his system. When the time is right, though, do talk to him about how you feel. Marriage is a partnership and sometimes the work isn't shared evenly. You should feel proud of yourself for keeping the family together and for providing a

Other issues

AN OFSTED inspection of the 217-pupil **Episkopi Primary School, Cyprus** – run by Service Children's Education – concludes that the quality of education provided is "consistently good", that the school is well led, effectively managed, has a strong and distinctive ethos and well-developed links with the community.

The smaller **Ayios Nikolaos Primary School**, situated close to the Green Line, is praised for attainment above national expectations in core subjects, good leadership and a positive attitude among its 167 mainly Army and RAF children. The inspector's report noted "many drawbacks" in the accommodation, uneven play areas and found surrounding steps, gulleys and channels to be potentially dangerous. Major building work is currently going on.

Fifty-seven acres of **Caterham Barracks**,

secure environment for your children. You would probably feel slightly better if your husband could be persuaded to recognise the efforts you've made. He might agree to setting aside a special family day every time he gets back from being away.

If, the moment he comes through the door, you list all the crises you've coped with he will feel that all his hardships have been under-valued by you and you will both feel resentful.

Dear Cari, MY husband was away for nearly a year with only a few breaks in between. While he was away I moved house (he got posted but was away when we were supposed to move). Although I was ill, I set up the new house, which had to have a lot of repairs, and all he said when he got back was had I found a garage yet because the car needed servicing. – **Mrs R (BFG).**

Cari replies: It is probably no great comfort but you are not alone. I have heard this kind of thing many times before and, when I was an Army wife, saw it happen many times. The



Cari Roberts

seriousness of the situation depends on how much contact you have had while he has been away. If you have exchanged lots of letters and talked on the telephone this may be a question of your feeling undervalued. If, as I suspect, you have not had much contact it may indicate a more serious situation. Try to talk to him about how you feel. If he continues to be distant and reluctant to open up you might consider contacting your nearest branch of RELATE. You don't have to see them as a couple.

You can talk through your feelings with someone who is not involved in the environment and who can help you work out how you really feel about this

Soldiers on separation: Vox pop, Page 70

marriage. You must start with your husband, though, because if he hasn't volunteered for the constant courses, duties and exercises he may be feeling tired and empty. If he is going to continue to be sent away and you want to stay married I suggest you create a life for yourself. Take up a distance learning course and study for a qualification or offer your services to a local volunteer

WE hear a lot about how difficult it is to be an Army wife – or, indeed an Army husband – these days and certainly the frequent separation demanded by duty can place great pressures on any relationship. There are, however, many positive reasons for living within the Army community. These days, with distance learning, it might be an opportunity to

Cari comments:

enhance professional qualifications or begin a degree. There are many chances to offer your time as a volunteer. In my opinion far too much energy is expended trying to make women who choose to create and maintain a stable home for their family feel guilty because they are

group. If you do that you will feel that you are benefiting from the partnership too.

Dear Cari, WHEN my husband gets back we never get on. I get things just the way I want them in the house and he comes in and messes everything up. He's so bossy with the kids. He says I let them get away with too much. I used to look forward to him coming back but now I wish he'd stay away. – **Mrs K (BFG).**

Cari replies: I suspect the reason that your husband is bossy with the kids is that he feels left out. You have done such a good job of keeping the family going while he is away that he feels that he has no part of it. When he goes away try to keep him in touch with family matters by letter or telephone.

And don't build up any unrealistic expectations about him coming home. Resign yourself to the disruption of your routine when he returns and talk to him about how you feel. Building a family shouldn't be a power game about who's in charge. It should be about sharing and both you and your husband need to accept that. Try to focus on what you value most about each other and about the life you have chosen.

not running a multi-national corporation or earning huge amounts of money. No venture is worthier of praise than the maintenance of a secure and happy home, wherever the family happens to be, and whoever does it deserves to be thanked even at the end of a long, cold exercise when all you want to do is go out with your mates.

Useful numbers

Army Benevolent Fund 0171 581 8684

Army Families Federation 01980 615525

Gulf Veterans Association 0191 230 1065

National Gulf Veterans and

Families Association 0181 376 2144

Confidential support line:

UK 0800 731 4880

Germany 0800 1827 393

Cyprus 080 91065

Samaritans 0345 90 90 90

Service Children's Education 01980 618244

Services Cotswold Centre 01225 810358

SSAFA Forces Help 0171 403 8783

WRVS 01235 442954

The Benefits Agency is to relaunch four signed and subtitled videos for the **deaf and hard of hearing**. They are entitled *Out of Work* (DSV3), *Cash help while you are working* (DSV4), *Sickness and disability* (DSV5) and *Retirement and widowhood* (DSV6). A guide to social security benefits has also been updated on audio cassette for the **blind and partially sighted**. Copies can be obtained from Talking Newspaper Enterprises on 01435 862737.

The Benefits Agency has become even more "plugged in" to the Internet. Its 1,000 pages on the DSS website receive 30,000 "hits" a week. It can be found at <http://www.dss.gov.uk>

Diary note: The 1998 **National Franchise Exhibition**, the biggest in the country, takes place at Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre from October 2 to 4.

NEW PLAYGROUND: An Army task-force from 57 Training Squadron RE, part of 3 RSME, build an adventure playground in less than three days at Parsonage Farm Infant and nursery school at Cove, Farnborough, Hants.

Who dares . . .

All for one

Report: Chris Kinsville-Heyne
Pictures: Terry Champion

SWEAT was stinging my eyes. The sword in my opponent's hand appeared more blurred than usual. My lightweight foil felt as though it weighed a ton and my aching legs were taking the easy way out and turning to jelly. Just great.

My opponent suddenly lunged towards me and the covered point of his blade slammed into my now undefended chest. A second hit against me. One more and I was history. I had to start scoring hits . . . and I had to start now.

Twenty of us had gathered at the Army School of Physical Training at Aldershot to attend the five-day Army fencing novice course and the final day's competition was under way.

Red carpet covered the polished floor of Henslow Hall where previous generations of Army fencing champions had lunged and parried their way to glory. The walls were heavy with memorabilia and the rafted ceiling held the scrolls of champions dating back to the turn of the century.

Experts say that fencing ranks equal to boxing as a fighting sport, for it teaches the science of close combat and all the qualities that go with it: co-ordination of mind and body and the arts of deception, of parrying, of striking at the least expected moment while exposing the minimum of the body to attack.

Former Army and Combined Services fencing champion, now professional coach, 36-year-old Steve Davey was leading the course and had started the day in the usual manner - stretching exercises for warming-up every group of muscles in the body.

No amount of warming-up, however, could prepare us for the mind-numbing pain of stepping backwards and forwards in the crouched "on guard" position for seemingly hours on end. Thigh and calf muscles screamed in unison.

Earlier, we had gone through the basics with Steve, including the grip: using the forefinger and thumb of the sword hand, allowing the handle to lay across the palm aided by the last three fingers. At first it felt unusual but there were other things to worry about. He stood beside me as I



Coach Steve Davey (right) shows Chris K-H the correct grip

You do have to be aware that your body is going to be put under a lot of stress. It is a dynamic sport. Very aerobic and incredibly explosive.

"When you get to the stage of SSgt James Williams, who fenced in Atlanta at the Olympics, he really is an athlete. But it is still a great sport for getting people back into fitness.

Steve started 19 years ago in Scotland. "I got the bug. Within the first year I

No amount of warming-up could prepare us for the mind-numbing pain of stepping backwards and forwards in the crouched 'on guard' position for hours. Muscles screamed in unison

tried, unsuccessfully, to keep LCpl Mark Woods (HCR), my sparring partner, from coming into contact with the area between my neck and waist, the "kill zone".

"Push yourself forward with your back foot, and push back with the front foot," said Steve. "Don't shuffle, keep your balance, front foot straight, rear foot at 90 degrees. The hand moves first, the body after. Don't rush in. Be confident."

I shuffled about, in an unbalanced sort of way, with every muscle in my body as tight as a drum and my foil in totally the wrong place. Unsurprisingly, Mark was scoring a hit every time he attacked, which was most of the time.

Eventually, Steve called for a rest period. "Relax your shoulders, elbow in, foil in line, small moves, parry, riposte, lunge." He made it look easy and stylish.

Fencing is not a sport that can be taken up light-heartedly. It is very demanding.

fenced for Scotland Schools and when I joined the Army I was awarded my colours within days."

The concept that fencing is for people who want to pounce around is totally false. It is not élitist, as a casual glance at a recent picture of top British Olympic fencers will show. Pierre Harper, a down-to-earth cockney from Hackney, fenced at Seoul and Barcelona while he was a Royal Engineer.

The number of fencers in the UK is increasing and schools and colleges are flocking back to the sport. Another reason is that fencing is inexpensive compared with other sports. For instance, water-skiers will pay £400 for one ski. That sum would easily equip a top fencer for an international competition. A beginner can get started for under £100.

"Senior NCOs and other ranks make up the majority of students on this course," said Steve. "They have taken the instructions on board that much quicker. It's down to being fitter and more co-ordinated. It is a pleasure to teach them and there are a couple who are naturals."

Capt Anna Luedicke from 24 Airmobile Brigade Combat Service Support Battalion was keeping a watchful eye on a bout between two novices. But the 28-year-old officer admits her fencing over the past four years has been sporadic.

"I wanted to do something like judo, something dynamic, something with controlled aggression. Yes, I enjoy team sports but I also wanted a skilful individual sport which was a little arm unusual," she said.

She watched a novice lunge and hit his target with speed and power. "Because of my operational commitments I haven't fenced as regularly as I would like, so this course has been really useful. There are a lot of complete beginners on it plus a few

of us who have some experience. "But it's good to get back to basics because sometimes you can become over-confident. If you get used to just fighting then you don't get a chance to hone your basic skills."

The bout had ended with a flurry of attacks. As they shook ungloved hands they were both breathing heavily.

One of the novices was 21-year-old Cpl Steve McIntosh from 70 Aircraft Workshops REME at Middle Wallop.

"Of all the pictures of fencers you see, you never see them sweating buckets. This is a serious workout, especially for the legs. I held an épée for the first time two days ago," he said. "This course has been excellent. Our new platoon commander is a pentathlete and he organised this for us. It is something new and different." He picked up his mask and sword. "We hope to keep fencing back at the unit," he added.

Meanwhile, I had to try to salvage something from my own bout. A blade whistled past my left side, bringing me rapidly back to the present. It was no use looking for any clue in his eyes: the black mesh hid everything. I just hoped he was as tired as I was.

Our blades slammed together, mine trying to push his out of position. Like lightning, he came back at me. But I had listened to Steve. Feint, a clock-wise riposte and straighten the arm. A hit.

My euphoria was short-lived. Before you could say "Errol Flynn", it was over. His lunge was totally unexpected and the speed of it left me gasping for breath.

I had lost but in doing so I had gained a healthy respect for anyone who can stand their ground for five minutes and combine the style and grace of Nureyev with the power and aggression of Mike Tyson. I'm hooked.



So, you want to know more about Army fencing?

First you should contact the secretary of the Army Fencing Union (AFU), Maj Nick Makin, on Fort Halstead Mil (767) 4538 or fax (767) 6025. He can give you details of Army courses, clubs and competitions throughout the UK. For more information on civilian fencing in the UK contact: The British Fencing Association, No 1 Barons Gate, Rothschild Road, London, W4 5HT (0181 742 3032).

Forty's 40 books

Interview: Karen Moseley
Pictures: Mike Weston

THE FIRST thing you notice when walking into George and Anne Forty's house are the books. They cover the walls from ceiling to floor and are piled high on desks and tables in nearly every room.

More than 40 of them have been written by George himself (he has lost count of exactly how many), and there are at least three more in the pipeline. He is one of the world's most prolific writers of military books, ranging from Patton's Third Army to a handbook on the Japanese Army of the Second World War.

He has written three books jointly with Anne, his wife of 44 years. Their latest, *Women War Heroines*, tells the extraordinary stories of women who, usually masquerading as men, fought in battles on sea and land over the centuries.

An ex-Royal Tank Regiment officer of 32 years, George is now one of the foremost authorities on armoured vehicles. This knowledge was helped by running the Tank Museum at Bovington for 13 years – an enterprise he and Anne managed to turn into one of the most successful museums in the world, with a quarter of a million people visiting a year.

Although George celebrated his 70th birthday last year, he still retains the enthusiasm and energy that enabled him to start writing, help bring up four sons and hold down a full-time career in the Army all at the same time. Most people would be delighted to just have one book published, but George says the secret is never to write on spec, always to work to a contract. His next big project is a book on the occupation of the Channel Islands.

His love of the written word was always there, and as part of the first intake at Sandhurst in January 1947, he won the military history prize. He actually joined the Army the day the Japanese stopped fighting in the Second World War, and remembers "having a marvellous time" spending VJ-Day in a Bristol pub. He spent a year at Oxford University on the short course that was bought in because of the war.

"It was a wonderful time to be in the Army, especially if you enjoyed sports," he said. "Every day after lunch you could play any sport you liked – but you paid for it, you were not allowed to drink or smoke."

Former curator of the Tank Museum at Bovington has written so many military books he has lost count



Some of Forty's 40 or so books

He was sent to Korea with his regiment, 1 RTR, in 1952, and was wounded at the Battle of the Hook when part of his heel was shot away. He was in hospital in Japan for three months before being flown home, and the following year he married Anne.

There followed an idyllic few years in London where he commanded 42 RTR, a TA unit, which met in the drill hall opposite the railway station at Clapham Junction. The family, however, was split up when George was sent to Aden and

then Borneo for an 18-month unaccompanied tour.

"Eighteen months is a very long time," George said. "People moan like drains these days when they are away for six months – they have no idea."

"I think the Army has changed for the better in that respect, although from a professional soldiering point of view it is just as good as ever. It's the same as it always was: if you wanted it to be easy you shouldn't have joined."

Postings in Germany were followed by staff college and two tours at the tactics school in Lulworth. By this time he was starting to stretch his literary muscles by writing columns for women's magazines, stories for 12- to 14-year-olds in northern regional newspapers, and children's stories and poetry for comics such as *Look & Learn* and *Bimbo*.

"I used to get up at about 5.30 and start writing first thing in the morning, as well as evenings and weekends," he said. "I started a picture script for a comic about an armoured car squadron stationed in a Beau Geste-type fort in the desert, but sadly it never got off the ground."

He did however find his forte in non-fiction. His first book, *Desert Rats at War*, was published in 1975, and became the first of a series of 12 "At War" books commissioned by an agent. George finally took the plunge and at 50 retired from the Army as a lieutenant colonel to write full-time.

"We went back up to Yorkshire and it was enormous fun," he remembered. "Anne and I wrote a book together called *They Also Serve* about people who followed the Army around – anyone from wives and teachers to dentists and entertainers, going right back to Hadrian's Wall through the American Civil War up to the present day. We managed to get Harry Secombe to write the foreword."

It was during that time they heard that the job of curator for the Tank Museum at Bovington was vacant and it seemed an

irresistible opportunity. George applied for the job and before long found himself working with Lt Col Ken Hill, the assistant curator, who used to play prop forward in the same rugby team in which George played hooker.

"He was the biggest man in the team and I was the smallest," George laughed. "We made a great double act."

Anne joined the team to work as the display manager. "It was wonderful working together, having had all the separation in the past, and I had sworn I would not go off by myself again," he said.

"When I took the Tank Museum over it was non-paying and very much for the experts; there was no restaurant, a tiny shop and nothing for the family.

"I commercialised it and built it up to be one of the best military vehicle museums in the country."

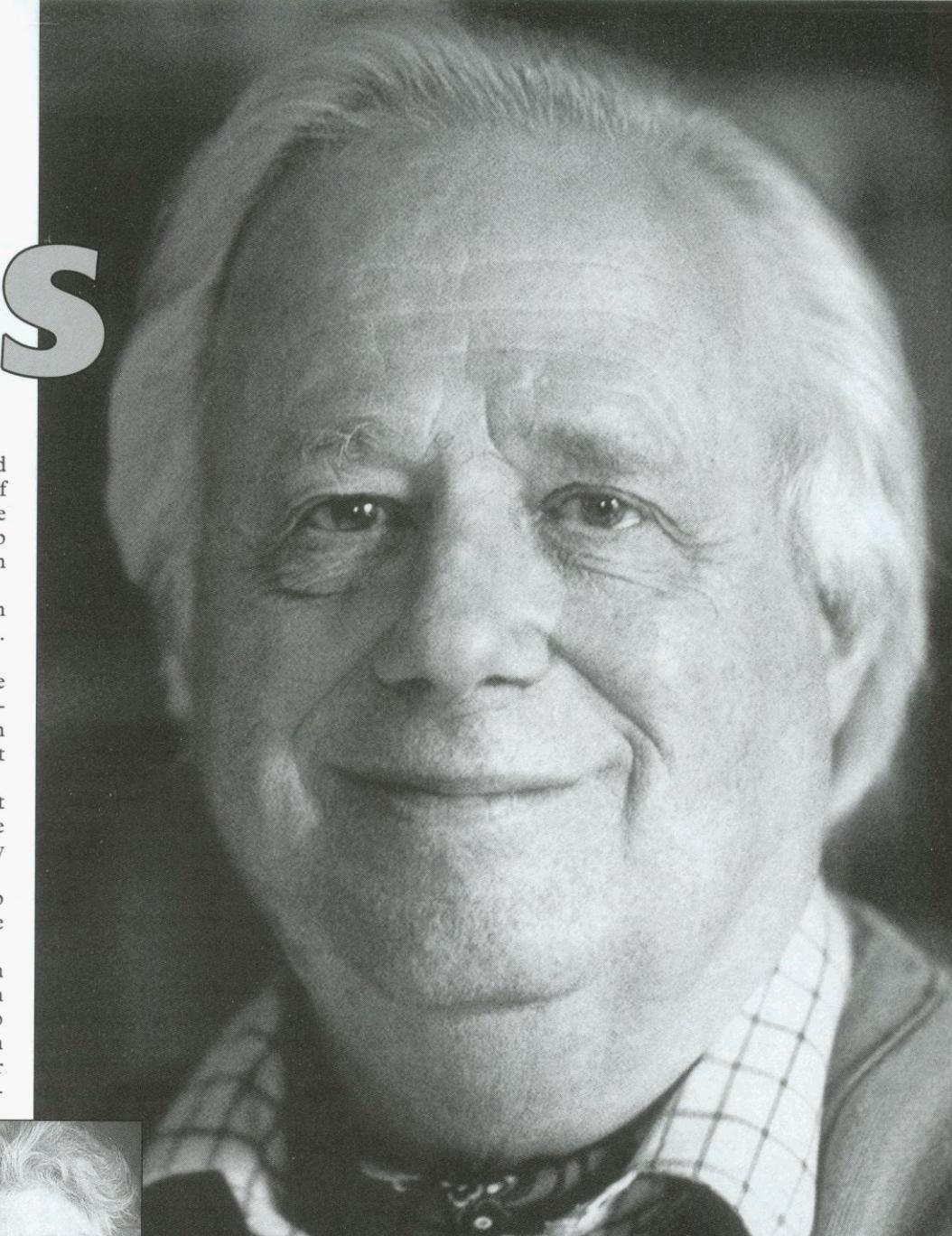
George and Anne between them quadrupled the size of the museum with three new hangars, started another shop which sold gifts and would keep women happy while men were climbing over tanks, a room about Lawrence of Arabia, who had lived locally, and a costume gallery. They also added a new library and cinema, and started a restaurant with decent china and good food.

"It was a way of life, not just a job," George said. "We really enjoyed it and we were fortunate because we had lots of people working for us who were husbands and wives and family-orientated."

During all this time he kept on writing. His sons had started getting their own books published and one of their daughters-in-law had produced a work on renaissance artists. In the typical way of parents, George and Anne are more proud of their offspring's achievements than their own.

After 13 years running the museum at Bovington, George retired and returned to writing full-time at their picture-postcard thatched cottage in Dorset.

Women War Heroines was a subject in which both he and his wife, who is a keen historian, were interested. "It is amazing, looking back in history, how many women fought in wars . . . civil wars especially. They fell into certain categories: those who wanted sheer adventure, others who followed loved ones as drummers or cabin



George Forty (above) and his wife Anne (left) enjoy retirement with each other – and hundreds of books, at least 40 of which he has written, three with her

boys, and obviously had people looking out for them, and some women who never gave their real identity away and went to great lengths to hide it, even going so far in some cases to taking musket balls out of their own legs."

Some did get away with it. The infamous Maj Gen Barrie, an inspector of hospitals during the Crimean War, carried on the subterfuge to the end. "He" was found to be a "she" only after she had been laid out at death. Not only that, but somewhere along the line she had even had a child.

Despite writing the book about women's heroic deeds in battle, George personally finds it hard to think of women today on the front line. "It's probably a bit stupid of me because they will always be there," he said, "But I don't think it's right they should bear arms or that there should be mixed tank crews. I think it might worry men considerably having

the possibility of women being killed beside them. But I suppose in 50 years time people will wonder what all the hang-ups were about, but there is still something that worries me about it all."

He admits his books sell to a limited audience, although a number of them have been re-issued. *Patton's Third Army* sold very well in America. He has tried his hand at writing a novel, but although he was pleased with the plot he feels he cannot write dialogue.

"Anne says it sounds like something out of *Boy's Own Paper*," he said ruefully.

But the books with George and Anne Forty's names on them will still keep appearing and no doubt the massive collection of volumes in their house will continue to grow, despite the pact they have made with each other not to go into any more bookshops.

● **Women War Heroines** by George and Anne Forty is published by Arms & Armour, at £18.99. See also Reviews, Page 64.

From hill boys to fighting men

Report: Karen Moseley
Pictures: Mike Weston

THEY had come from the hills of Nepal in their hundreds. Teenage boys and young men wanting to join the Brigade of Gurkhas, with hopes and dreams of foreign travel, a decent salary and possible glory... if they were good enough.

On a cool fresh morning in the camp of Pokhara in the west of Nepal, they were beginning the first stage of central selection which would either make those dreams come true or send them back with dashed hopes to their villages and towns.

Temple bells could be heard in the distance as they stood motionless in their platoons on the camp recreation field waiting for orders. In the distance, outlined clearly against the blue sky, the mountains of the Annapurna range in the Western Himalayas rose up, sparkling with snow, to provide a stunningly beautiful backdrop.

Thousands of their fellow potential recruits had already failed the hill selections by not measuring up to the physical standards of age, weight, height and fitness. These successful candidates would now have to go through nearly three weeks of physically and mentally exhausting tests to see if they would make the final group of 181 needed for the British Army this year.

For the previous six months 67 Galwallahs - ex-senior Gurkha NCOs - had been scouring the hills looking for raw

Renowned around the world as the "bravest of the brave", Gurkhas go through a tough selection process to become part of the élite brigade. *Soldier* headed for the hills of Nepal to watch the recruitment programme that would produce this year's intake



material. Those they wanted had to fulfil certain criteria - aged 17 to 22, measure at least 5ft 2in in height, weigh at least 7st 12lb, be medically sound and have reached a certain level of education.



The genuine hill boys shine in the *doko*, but British recruits would be stunned if they were asked to compete in this muscle-wrenching race, carrying 75lb of stones in a basket up a steep 4.2km course

In the autumn the candidates were told to report for hill selection at a number of central points. At this stage there were 30 hopefuls for every one place available. By the time those who were not fit or academic enough had been discarded, there were still 730 young men competing for 321 places in the Brigade of Gurkhas and the Singapore Police.

Pokhara is conveniently situated almost at the centre of Nepal, to the west of the capital, Kathmandu. Those from the east of the country gathered at the old Gurkha base of Dharan and were bussed to Pokhara, others made their own way, some walking for miles. What for many was the most important test in their lives had begun.

"They come here with great aspirations and high hopes," Lt Col Nigel Wylie Carrick, the deputy recruiting officer at Pokhara said. "I have got to whittle them

down, in what I suppose you could call one giant filtration system, in as fair a manner as possible - and what is vitally important is that everyone sees it to be fair."

Before the fitness tests were carried out each potential recruit had to go through a medical. Surprisingly, considering the physical lives they have led, many failed because of high blood pressure, hypertension and heart murmurs. These failures led to the first rejections.

After the medical each platoon was ordered to line up again, fully dressed with their bags packed. It was then carefully explained to them that some had not passed the medical, but that if they followed instructions about medication, it was possible they could return the following year - as long

as they were still within the age range. The numbers of those who had failed were called out and they walked out of the ranks and stood to one side, disappointment, sometimes despair, etched on their faces.

Every candidate had already sat education tests in English grammar and maths. Those who were in the "educated group" were earmarked for the Queen's Gurkha Signals or The Queen's Gurkha Engineers and also had to do a comprehension test.

British recruits would recognise the first physical test, the Basic Fitness Test (BFT), but would be stunned if they were asked to do the second - the *doko* race. This sinew-straining, muscle-wrenching race is run up a steep 4.2km course carrying the Nepalese

basket, the *doko*, which is packed with 75lb of stones.

The conical-shaped *doko* is carried on the back with the strap around the forehead. It may look uncomfortable, but in the hills small boys, sometimes with only their stick-like legs showing underneath, can be seen carrying huge bundles in the same way.

Only those who have passed the BFT in nine-and-a-half minutes - a minute faster than the qualifying time for British soldiers - are allowed to continue to compete in the *doko* race. Lt Col Wylie Carrick is only too aware that any one of the failed candidates could be trained to reach the required time, but such is the enormous wealth of talent available, he can afford to set high standards.

"There is no point in sending the weaker ones on the *doko* race," he

● Turn to next page



Fair: Lt Col Nigel Wylie Carrick



NEPAL

Gurkha recruits

• From Page 33

GURKHAS were first recruited by the British in 1815 when the British East India Company struck a deal with the King of Nepal to recruit hill men into the Indian Army. During bitter battles against each other in the previous two years, British and Gurkha soldiers had each built up a deep respect for the other side. The hill tribes make up about ten per cent of the population of the country and originated from Mongolia and Tibet.

In 1948, after Indian independence, four of the ten Gurkha infantry regiments were transferred from the Indian Army to the British Army. The Gurkha battalions were originally stationed in Malaya with a line of communications in India. Recruiting was not always supported by the government of Nepal, and there was a time when recruits had to be smuggled out of the country to depots in India. In 1960 the Nepalese government authorised the establishment of camps in Nepal.

One camp was opened in Dharan, east Nepal and another at Paklihawa in the west. Both were linked to railheads in India. When direct air trooping to Nepal was introduced in 1972 using RAF aircraft, the transit camp moved from Calcutta to Kathmandu. With the establishment of road and air links between Kathmandu and Pokhara in 1978, the western base moved to Pokhara. In 1989 the Gurkhas withdrew from Dharan, closed the BMH and the HQ moved to collocate with the transit centre in Kathmandu.

INDIAN ARMY

Many of the terms and conditions of service of the brigade are still governed by a tripartite agreement between Britain, Nepal and India which was signed in 1947. The basic pay and pensions of the Gurkha soldiers is tied to that of Indian Army Gurkhas and the Nepal Army.

British Gurkhas, however, earn more: they are paid allowances to enable them to maintain a reasonable standard of living in the country in which they are serving. With effect from last July, under new terms and conditions, these allowances were standardised for Gurkhas worldwide and they now receive a "universal addition" which brings their salaries broadly into line with British soldiers.

The economy of Nepal is heavily subsidised and current estimates are that around 50 per cent of the national budget is provided by foreign aid. A substantial amount of this – approximately £41 million – comes as a direct result of the only significant export – its fighting men.

Before the medical – young men keep warm during their wait. Failure can lead to despair

explained. "It is not a boasting test – everyone in the hills carries these *dokos* – but in it the genuine hill boy will shine, so those who did not do so well in the BFT will have a better chance in that.

"It is a perfectly fair test, but we don't usually reject people for the *doko*. It is a way for them to show determination, stamina, and ability to do hard work without collapsing by the wayside."

The race takes place at dawn, and while it was still dark the young men walked by torchlight in single file down to the start point in a steep gorge. Each one knew he had to complete the course in under 37½ minutes, and although tensions were running high there was still the soft murmur of friendly banter and laughter as they prepared themselves.

They moved up the hill at a speed which would have been impressive without carrying anything on their backs. Breathing was ragged towards the top, but there was no faltering and every one completed the course. A short rest was allowed before the *dokos* were picked up and yet again carried back down the hill and up the gorge on the other side back to the camp ...

Until this point the tests had been purely objective. All results were put down in order of merit and a line drawn at the pass mark. Those below failed and those above went on to the subjective phase.

"We do not send them away empty-handed," the 2iC of British Gurkhas



Cpl Lalit Gurung, the 1992 Queen's Medal winner at Bisley, explains the next stage of the selection process to candidates at Pokhara Camp. For some, what follows will be a dream come true

Pokhara, Capt Gez Strickland, pointed out. "They get paid for the time they have been here, they get a free medical, good food and, in most cases, have had a good experience. Many, if they are still young enough, will try again."

During all this time the applicants were

being looked at closely by the Gurkha section commanders and a pattern was beginning to emerge. The initiative tests and interviews which were to follow would reinforce those impressions before a final decision was made.

They were looking for the qualities which make Gurkhas renowned as some of the best fighting men in the world. The unique place they hold in the British Army was summed up by Col Sandy Blackett, Commander British Gurkhas Nepal and the British Defence Attaché.

"The Gurkhas are different from British soldiers, and those differences become strengths when the two are put together. British and Gurkha soldiers always get on well. I think one of the main strengths of the Gurkhas is that they are natural gentlemen – friendly, cheerful – they enjoy being soldiers and are committed to the British Army."

The seven initiative tests were carried out around the camp, and during that time the section commanders, Capt Strickland and the recruit conducting officer, Capt Spiro Marcandonatos, observed how they reacted to different situations.

"They are looked at to see whether their manner is surly, happy, willing. Do



Dual role: Col Sandy Blackett

Force, which has carried on the tradition of having a Gurkha contingent since British involvement in the country.

Those selected were issued with clothing and uniform in preparation for moving to the UK via Kathmandu. For some it was the first time they had seen an aircraft close at hand, let alone travelled in one.

The recruiting staff are confident that their process selects the very best from the vast numbers of potential candidates. It is

worth noting that in the six years from 1990 to 1995 only three recruits failed to pass their basic training, which compares with an average failure rate of approximately 30 per cent for British recruits.

It is a curious success story, especially in this day and age of political correctness and cynicism. Many of the new recruits have come from immense poverty and life in the hills is desperately harsh.

During the paddy season they are up at 4.30 each morning working on the back-breaking hillsides and food is scarce. They live in extremes of temperatures with no national health service or unemployment benefit. There is little industry, few roads and no public housing.

For a young man, joining the Gurkhas means a chance to leave this behind and earn more money for his family than he would ever been able to had he stayed in the hills.

Despite the hardship, the sense of family is very strong, and when they join the Brigade of Gurkhas this loyalty and devotion extends to their battalion.

The 181 young men who finally made it were embarking on a journey which would take them thousands of miles from their homes, but for each of them the dream had come true.



Nepal - land of mountains and hospitality

...and recruiting ground for Britain's Gurkha soldiers

NEPAL, the home of the Gurkhas and birthplace of Lord Buddha, is not a big country - it's about the same size as England - but has the largest mountains on earth, **writes Karen Moseley**.

Most Gurkhas come from the foothills of the mighty Himalayas, which run along the north of the country from east to west and range from 5,000ft to 15,000ft. The hills are dissected by deep valleys flooded by fast-flowing rivers swollen with snows from the mountains. The natural divisions caused by these rivers, valleys and hills have led to the development of separate tribes, many with their own unique language.

HARSH LIFE

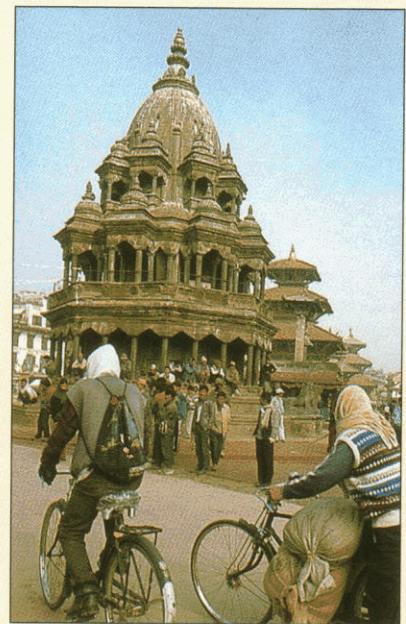
Life in the villages of this beautiful but impoverished country is harsh, and people have to cope with extremes of temperature and no national health service, public housing or unemployment benefit. Despite this its people are renowned for their courtesy, hospitality and friendliness.

The main centres of population are Kathmandu, the capital city, which has a population of about one million; Pokhara, to the west of Kathmandu, which is now the recruiting centre for the Brigade of Gurkhas and the headquarters of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme in Nepal; and Dharan to the east, once home to a Gurkha headquarters and British military hospital.

Pictures: Mike Weston



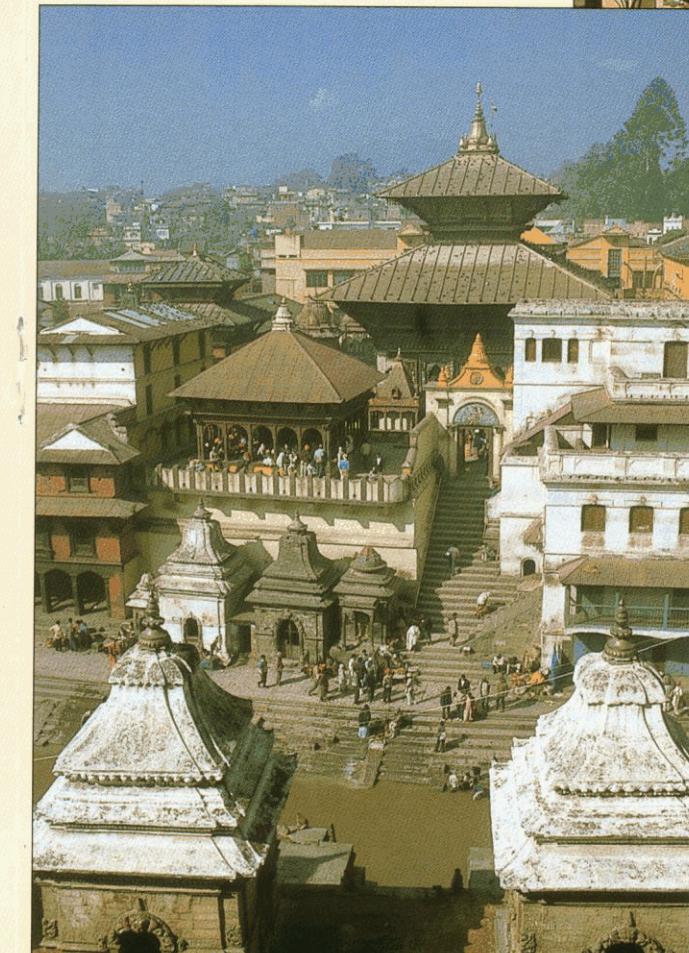
Above - The headquarters of British Gurkhas Nepal is the first stop for new recruits in the British Army



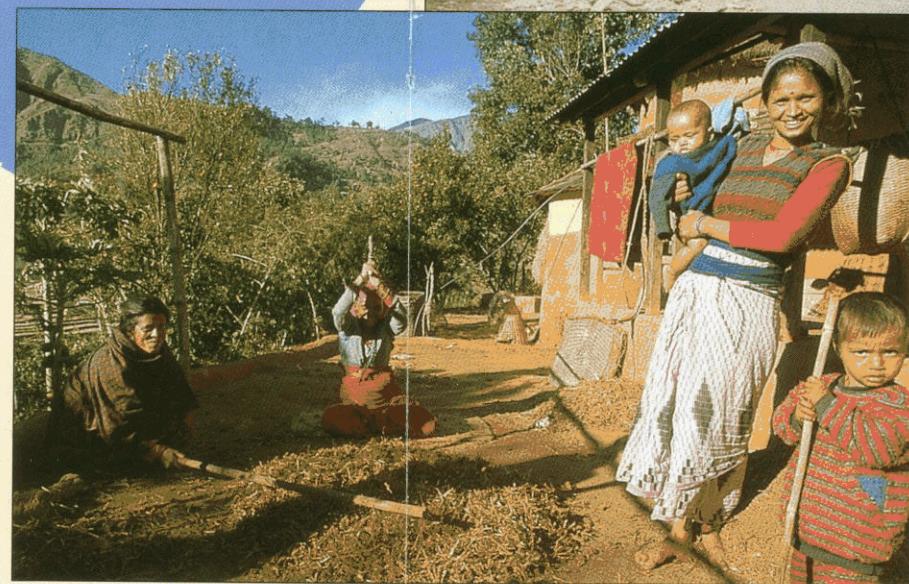
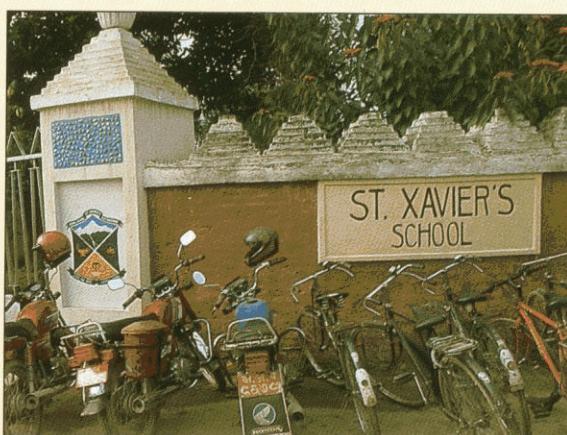
Left - Pashupatinath temple in Kathmandu is one of the most sacred Hindu temples in the world



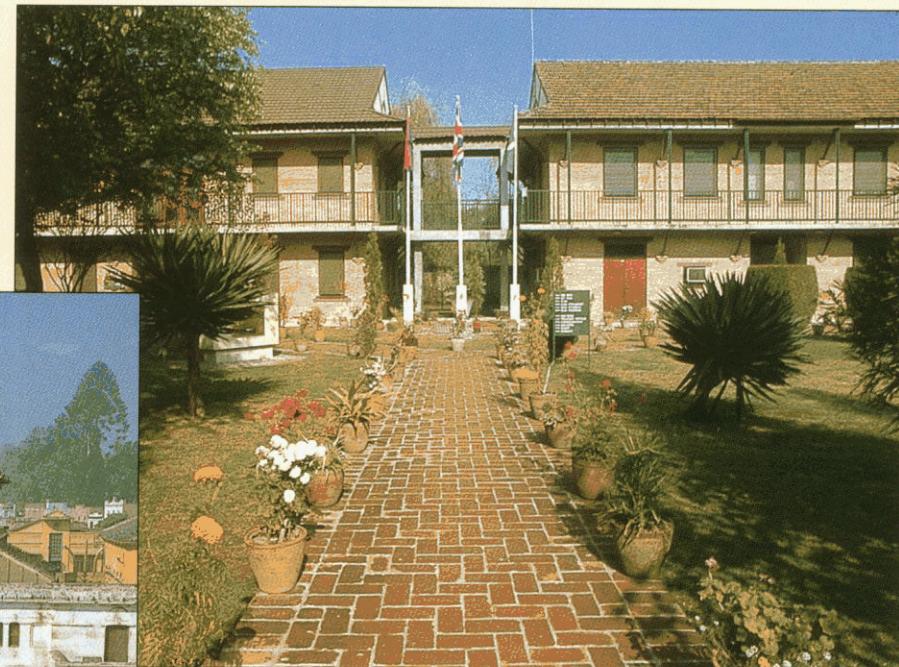
Terraced paddy fields of West Nepal provide the main source of food and employment in the hills



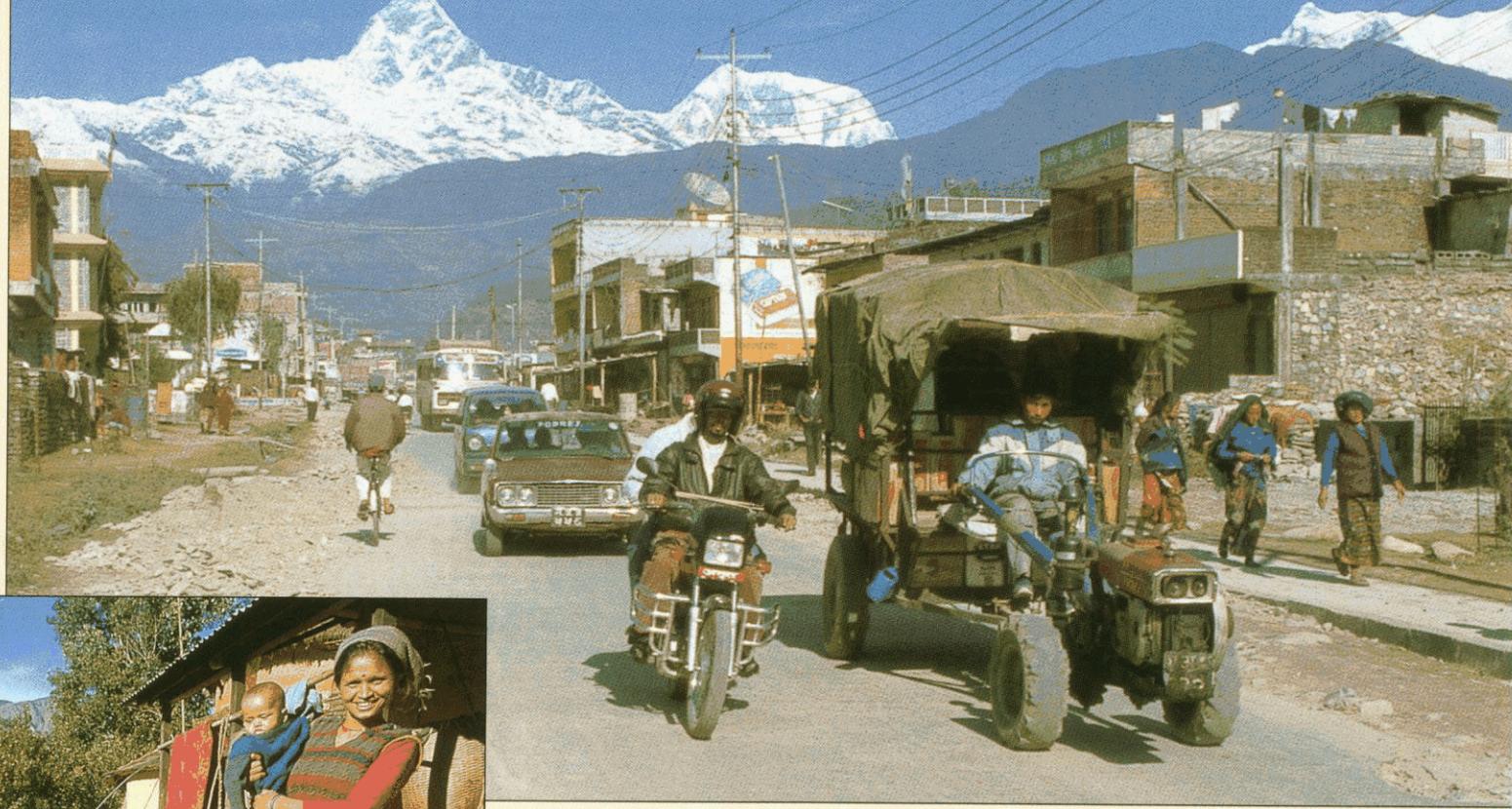
Right - Some Gurkha officers were educated St Xavier's School in Kathmandu



Traditional methods of farming still exist in hill villages - the main recruiting areas for the Gurkhas



Headquarters British Gurkhas Nepal is an oasis of calm in the hustle and bustle of the capital Kathmandu, with its population of about a million



The needle point of Machapuchre, the sacred mountain in the Annapurna range of the Himalayas, forms the backdrop to the town of Pokhara, the recruiting centre for the Brigade of Gurkhas and the headquarters of the Gurkha Welfare Scheme in Nepal

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D13

'Stretch' ambulance on a roll

THE ARMY is taking delivery of a new Land Rover-based battlefield ambulance. The first of 775 vehicles, each valued at around £40,000, are now being distributed to the School of Electrical and

Mechanical Engineering, Royal Engineers bomb disposal units, The Parachute Regiment and the SAS.

Equipped with an improved diesel engine, the XD130 vehicle is based on a 130in chassis, rather than the standard 110 chassis of the utility Defenders in general use.

Land Rover says the enlarged wheelbase gives the ambulance, with its large box-like body, a greater degree of stability. Improved versatility is also a feature. The body allows users to fit it for six seated cas-

ualties, four stretchers or a combination of both.

From the points of view of doctors, nurses and medics, the XD130 is a major step forward. Increased size makes it possible to carry more equipment, as well as giving more elbow room for the trauma teams. The priority for ambulance crews will continue to be the rapid movement of casualties to treatment centres, but with the XD 130 it should be possible to administer a greater degree of care en route.

Actual fittings will depend on deployment, but piped oxygen and defibrillation equipment are just two options.



The Defender XD Military Ambulance in action

Reports: Graham Bound

Have theatre, will travel

MILITARY surgery capabilities are moving several steps closer to conventional medicine with the arrival on the scene of a highly portable and self-sufficient theatre and intensive care system.

The modular kit, now in almost daily use with British units in Bosnia and Croatia, was designed and manufactured by the French company Giat Industries.

Each of the systems comprises an operating theatre, resuscitation and intensive care room, and a service module. The components are interconnected, with the service unit providing independent air conditioning (filtered against biological and chemical warfare), oxygen, electricity and water.

Giat's watchword has been portability. The units have been designed around the standard ISO shipping container, and they are robust enough to be transported quickly and easily by land, sea or air.

The company says (and operational use in Bosnia has proved) that a trained crew can have the modules up and ready for the surgeons and nurses in two hours. British crews have been known to do the job in

Catterick corporal wins GPS system

OUR January competition to win a Pioneer hand-held global positioning system (GPS) had a huge response.

We asked the name of the route between two oceans discovered by Ferdinand Magellan in the 16th century – and the name of the oceans. The answer: the Strait of Magellan, linking the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

First correct entry drawn after the closing date was from Cpl D McLoughlin, of Belton Park, Catterick, who wins the prize generously provided by Magellan Systems International.

The Giat modular surgical theatre



just 30 minutes. Despite their £1 million price tag, the surgery, resuscitation and intensive care kits have proved popular. The Ministry of Defence has bought two, for use in the first instance with field hospitals in Bosnia and Croatia.

The mobile unit based at the field hospital in the Bosnian town of Sipovo was put to a severe test in early January when 16 casualties from a crashed Czech heli-

copter were successfully treated within a few hours (see Page 15). Others have been

bought by the French Army, the Russians and the Brazilians. The Brazilians use theirs to support troops involved in anti-narcotics operations in remote parts of the Amazonian jungle.

The mobile operating theatres greatly enhance any field unit's capabilities, but no one claims that they can replace conventional hospitals.

However, it is comforting to know that when conflict or natural disaster strike, and normal systems cannot cope, a modern operating theatre can, quite literally, be dropped into the area in hours.

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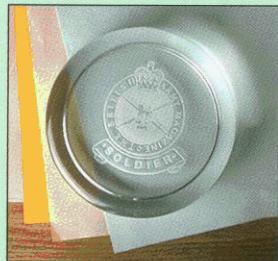
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Picture special

Rock Music from the Normandy Band

Pictures: Cpl Kevin Jones RAF

THE NORMANDY Band of the Queen's Division played in what must be one of the world's most impressive natural concert halls during a recent visit to Gibraltar.

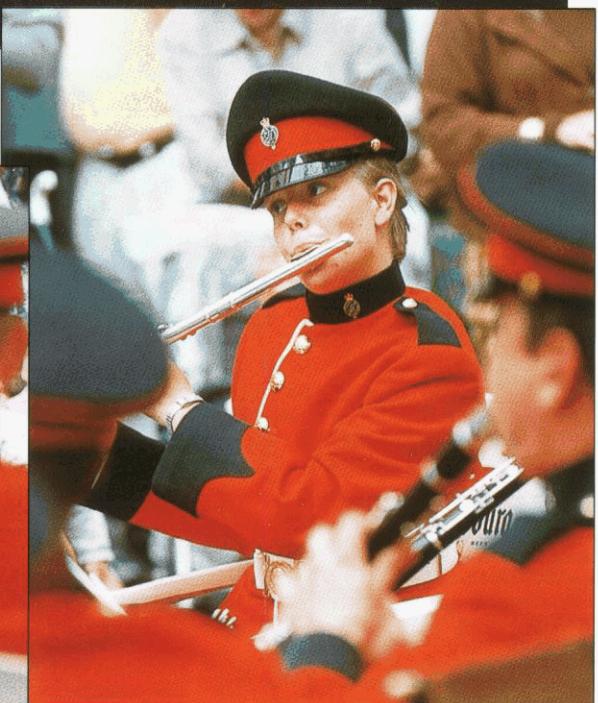
The military bandsmen delighted the Gibraltarians when they joined local musicians to play in St Michael's Cave, a huge grotto deep within the Rock, for one of several concerts staged during the band's tour.

The band also held an open-air concert in the town centre, played at the Remembrance Service in Trafalgar Cemetery and added an extra dash of colour and sound at the regular Ceremony of the Keys in the presence of Governor Sir Richard Luce.

With its sister band, the Minden, the Normandy Band was formed in 1994 to provide music for The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and The Royal Anglian Regiment.

The band also recently visited Bosnia.

Top right: Deep within the Rock. St Michael's Cave was filled with the sound of the Normandy Band, the Gibraltar Regiment Band and the Rooke Volunteer Band



Normandy Band flautist Musn Bonny Griffin



Director of Music, Capt Jim Taylor, conducts during a concert in Gibraltar's Piazza

An exciting panorama of military glory

MILITARY museums have long shed their image of dusty keepers of a distant past and have admirably improved their ability to compete as places of interest in the fast-moving, computer-led 1990s, **writes Sheila Little.**

They offer a varied and fascinating panorama of military derring-do and a heritage steeped in glory, an experience which will surely win over even the most electronic-minded Nintendo-weaned child of our



age. And not in the outdated tradition of museums where vis-

itor notices always seemed to begin with "Please do not . . ." but in a modern, exciting, sophisticated and very often hands-on way, with excellent facilities.

The museums listed on these pages are an indication of the range of militaria, memorabilia and equipment on display to the public.

If you would like to know more, please contact them direct on the telephone numbers shown.

Cheshire

Cheshire Military Museum

Open 10am - 5pm seven days except 22 Dec - 2 Jan.
Last entry 4.30pm
Special Art & Sudan exhibition for 1998.
The Castle, Chester CH1 2DN
Telephone: (01244) 327617
Small charge & disabled access

Cornwall

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Tel: 01208 72810
Adults: £2 Children: 50p

Dorset

THE MILITARY MUSEUM OF DEVON & DORSET

The Keep, Bridport Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1RN Tel: 01305 264066
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*Open Mon to Sat 0930 to 1700hrs
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Essex

The Essex Regiment Museum

Oaklands Park, Moulsham Street, Chelmsford. Tel: (01254) 353066
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25 April - 28 June
This exhibition tells the story of the civilian soldiers of Essex from the Militiaman of the 1700s to the TA girl of the 1990s, marking the 90th anniversary of the re-organisation of part-timers as Territorial troops in 1908.

*Open: Mon-Sat 10am - 5pm Sun 2 - 5pm
Closed 10 April 1998 (Good Friday)*

Admission Free. Parking Free

Hampshire

AIRBORNE FORCES MUSEUM

Browning Barracks
Aldershot, Hants GU11 2BU
Telephone: 01252 349619

See the largest collection of Airborne weapons and equipment ever put together. The history of The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces from their formation in 1940 to the present day.

*Open Mon to Sun 1000 - 1630.
Last admission 1545.
Special group visits can be made by prior arrangement.
Admission:
Adults £2.50. Children, senior citizens, serving / ex-members £1.00
Groups by arrangement please.*

RAMC HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Keogh Barracks, Ash Vale, Aldershot, Hants GU12 5RQ. Tel: 01252 340212

The museum tells the story of the medical care of the Army from the formation of the Standing Army in 1660 until the present day. Also an ambulance display and the Corps Memorial Chapel.

*Open Monday to Friday: 0830 - 1530
W/E & evenings by arrangement.
Groups welcome.*

The Royal Green Jackets Museum

Peninsula Barracks,
Romsey Road, Winchester
SO23 8TS Tel: 01962 828549

Open: Mon-Sat 1000-1300 & 1400-1700. Sundays 12-4pm.
Open all year except 14 days at Christmas.

QARANC MUSEUM

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*Keogh Barracks, Ash Vale, Aldershot, Hants GU12 5RQ Tel: 01252 340230
Collocated with RAMC Museum*

The King's Royal Hussars Museum in Winchester

Peninsula Barracks, Winchester,
Hampshire SO23 8TS
Telephone: (01962) 828539

Open: Tues - Fri 10am - 4pm
Sat & Sun
Closed Mondays
(unless Bank Holiday then 12 - 4pm)



ARMY PHYSICAL TRAINING CORPS MUSEUM

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GU11 2LB Tel: 01252 347168

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Museum will be closed while major refurbishment takes place to adjacent buildings during periods in February - October 1998. Please ring for specific details.



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Fulwood Bks, Preston, Lancs PR2 8AA.
Telephone: 01772 260362
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by appointment

THE FUSILIERS REGIMENTAL MUSEUM LANCASHIRE

Discover the history of this famous
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Wellington Barracks, Bolton Rd, Bury BL2 2PL
Telephone: 0161 764 2208

London

Apsley House

The Wellington Museum
Tel: 0171 499 5676

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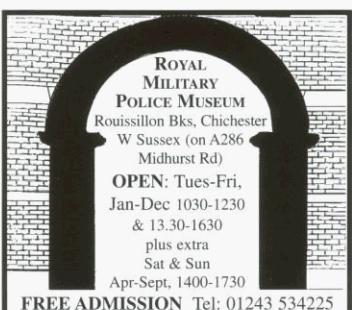
Surrey



The Royal Logistic Corps Museum

Deepcut, Camberley, Surrey
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West Sussex



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Apr-Sept, 1400-1730
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Sport

RUGBY

A show not to be missed

THE Army senior XV is warming up to tackle the Royal Navy at Twickenham on April 25 and the Royal Air Force at Gloucester on May 13, writes Roger Thompson.

The men in red will go into both matches as the current Inter-Service champions, but are taking nothing for granted.

Before their Twickenham encounter, however, the Army players were rounding off their preparations with fixtures against Cambridge University, Blackheath and the Territorial Army last month, followed by what is expected to be the core of the Inter-Services team for the very testing games against London Scottish on March 17, Gloucester on March 25 and Bath on April 8.

The Army

Place: Twickenham
Time: April 25, 3pm
Event: Army v Royal Navy

expects a crowd of more than 30,000 for the Navy game, one of the largest sporting gatherings of the day in the United Kingdom.

Barring injury, the Army intends to field its four international representatives, Capt Tim Rodber (Green Howards, England and the British Lions), Maj Rob Wainwright (RAMC, Scotland and the Lions), Cpl Matt Stewart (PWRR and Scotland) and Lt Brian Johnson (R Signals and England A).

In addition, the XV will contain a meld of experienced players, including Lt Rob

Abernethy (RGR and Newbury) and Capt Howard Graham (ATR Pirbright and Reading) as well as exciting new players emerging from the Army's very successful Under 21 set-up to challenge established positions in the team.

Spr Bruno Green (3 RSME) and Fus George Kemble (RWF) are showing great promise.

The side will again be skippered by Maj Julian Brammer (RE) from hooker.

Many corps and regiments will be running their own gatherings in the "Army village" on the west car park at Twickenham on April 25. They will also be arranging transport and their own regimental and corps bar facilities for what promises to be the biggest Army rugby reunion of all time.

Don't miss it.



fantastic prizes in the Army Rugby Union prize draw.
Answer the following question

CAPT TIM RODBER IS A MEMBER OF WHICH REGIMENT?
1. The Royal Green Jackets 2. The Green Howards 3. The Parachute



* Two return tickets on Eurostar
* Two tickets (main stand) to Army v Royal Navy match at Twickenham on Saturday, April 25
* Lunch for two at "Invincibles" Restaurant, Twickenham

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* Two tickets (main stand) to Army v Royal Navy match at Twickenham on Saturday, April 25
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* One Army Rugby Union rugby shirt



* Two tickets (main stand) to Army v Royal Navy match at Twickenham on Saturday, April 25
* One Army Rugby Union rugby shirt
* One Army Rugby Union baseball cap



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Answer: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Please indicate (✓) which of the following categories apply:

Regular Army TA Ex-Services Other

Send to:

Army Rugby Union Competition, *Soldier Magazine*, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2DU to arrive no later than **March 16, 1998**. The first three correct entries to be drawn will win the prizes. Winners will be notified and the results published in *Soldier*. The Managing Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. A photocopy of this form is acceptable.

WOMEN'S RUGBY



Picture: Mike Weston

Action from the first game to be played between the Army (red jerseys) and the British Police: 2nd Lt Julia Robinson, a Welsh international, contests a line-out at Bulford with Det Con Gillian Jew

Matelots mauled in opener

Royal Navy 7, Army 32

CONDITIONS were ideal at Burnaby Road, Portsmouth for fast, running rugby when the Royal Navy played hosts to the Army in the opening game of the Inter-Services Under-21 championship, **writes Tom Wye**.

And the Army took full advantage with a resounding 7-32 victory.

For the first time this season, the young soldiers had their first choice XV on the park, despite a round of fiercely-contested corps merit table and Army Cup games the previous week.

As usual, the pace of the game was frenetic. Neither side gave nor asked for quarter and nobody took prisoners. The

Nicked by the Police

Army Women 0, British Police 17

THE inaugural meeting of the two sides produced a 17-0 win for the British Police after a keenly-fought first half which finished pointless.

British Police had the majority of possession due to the greater size of their forwards but the Army defence remained intact thanks to some aggressive tackling, notably by Capt Kath Palmer and Sig Jackie Davies.

In the second half British Police scored three tries through Kerry Ogden of Northumberland, Karen Parker of Durham and Sally Hamer of Humberside and a

conversion from Sue Webb (Avon and Somerset). Maj Sue Ellis, from Chick-sands, captained the Army and led the charge during the last ten minutes in search of that elusive try. Although the Army dominated, the police held out.

Susie Appelby, the England A scrum half, unfortunately fractured her leg during the game and may miss the World Cup tournament.

The Army women's XV is searching for new players and coach WO2 Ian Neil would be pleased to hear from any currently involved in club rugby. He can be contacted on Worthy Down Mil 2630.

UNDER-21 RUGBY

Young guns bring down spirited RAF

Army 28, RAF 18

DESPITE the distraction of exercises, exams and injuries, which reduced their preparations to a single training session, the Army defended their Under-21 rugby crown with a 28-28 victory over a spirited Royal Air Force side at Aldershot, **writes Tom Wye**.

The final scoreline does not really do credit to the Army's efforts as the home team ran in three tries while the visitors had to settle for six penalties.

The first half hour was a dour kicking competition which the RAF won by three pots to one. The home side looked menacing when they attacked and some clever inter-play between forwards and the half-backs allowed fiery little scrum half Spr Richards to outflank the defence and touch down.

Two RAF penalties put them back in front until the Army scored a superbly taken pushover try, claimed by the entire pack, to lead 16-15.

There was some brave and determined defending at the restart as the flyers pulled out all the stops. At times the red line was as thin as that at Balaclava, but the result was the same... they did not pass.

ATpr Woodhouse and 2nd Lt Hill added two more good tries and Pt Maddox kicked a conversion to add to the two penalties he landed in the first half, against a solitary penalty in reply from the airmen.

So the Army collected the Inter-Services Challenge Cup and the RAF v Army Shield, and will be expecting their pre-eminence in the competition to be reflected in the composition of the Combined Services selections.

Last year the Army won the championship but, to their surprise, provided only four players to the Services' side, while twice that number were selected from the team that took the wooden spoon.

Sport

IN BRIEF

Coach with winning ways

WO Steve Powley, serving with HQ 2 (South East) Brigade at Sir John Moore Barracks, Shorncliffe, has been named as sports personality of 1997 by a Kent newspaper group. Steve was appointed player-coach of Folkestone Rugby Club in 1996 and won promotion for the club to Kent Division 1 in his first season. Folkestone are unbeaten this winter and well on course for promotion to London South East 3. Meanwhile, Steve has been selected to complete the RFU's senior club coaches award course.

Calling all motor-cyclists ...

SERVING and former members of the Armed Services and MoD civil servants keen on motor-cycling will be interested to learn that the newly-formed Services Motor Cycle Club caters for riders of all skill levels and their machines. Contact Maj Nigel Coole on RAF Innsworth ext 6434 (civ 01452 712612 ext 6434) or write to him at HQ AFPA, RAF Innsworth, Gloucester, Glos GL3 1HW.

AGC triathlon: he's your man

THE AGC has appointed Sgt Tony Henderson as the corps triathlon representative. He can be contacted at London District Provost Company RMP on 763 5129 or civ 0171 414 5129.

Quiksilva team in training

ARMY skydivers Maj Dave Tyler (RLC), Capt Sara Laughton (REME), LCpl Wayne Thomas (1 RGJ), Pte Jason Baxter (1 PWO) and cameraman LBdr Bill Morris (7 Para RHA) have formed a four-way formation sky-diving team called Quiksilva which will compete in the 1998 World Cup competition in Portugal in September. The team, which trained in California over Christmas, has several more training weekends planned. For more information about Quiksilva, contact Maj Tyler at JSCSC, Bracknell.

Hameln's all-round sports

WINNERS of the Howlett Trophy for best overall major units sports and individual results were 35 Engineer Regiment. The Hameln-based sappers had victories in Army skiing, BA(G) weightlifting and divisional basketball, cricket and volleyball.

MAKE A NOTE OF IT

April 28-30:

Army individual boxing championships (novice grade 3, 2 and 1), Aldershot.

June 17:

Army inter-unit athletics, Aldershot.

June 22:

Army individual and mini team athletic championships, Aldershot.

July 18-19:

Army sprint and marathon canoe racing championships, River Wye, Monmouth.

FOOTBALL

Tidworth triumph

Army 5, Gloucestershire 1

JUST 48 hours after a six-goal thrashing by Civil Service the Army produced some superb soccer to overcome Gloucestershire in an important South West Counties Championship match at the Tidworth Oval, writes **Derrick Bly**.

The game was barely five minutes old when the home side got their noses in front. A long cross from Pte Lee Badrock was stabbed in by LCpl David Hope. But Gloucestershire levelled when goalkeeper SSgt Nigel Wiscombe, back from Cyprus, failed to clear his lines from a back pass and was lobbed from 25 yards. Wiscombe atoned with two crucial saves before a county own-goal sent the Army into the break a goal to the good.

Cpl John Wills, Pte Derek Rhoddan and Cpl Paul Alford all scored in the second half of what developed into an excellent Army performance.

Civil Service 6, Army 2

A lack-lustre Army side gave the Civil Service little to worry about as they retained the Civil Service Trophy at Dukes Meadow, Chiswick.

A seven-week lay-off by the Army squad was reflected in the 6-2 defeat, leaving

coach QMSI Duncan Russell very little time to dust away the cobwebs before his team's important match against Gloucestershire.

The Army opened brightly enough against the Civil Service but found themselves three goals down before Pte Derek Rhoddan pulled one back just before the break. Cpl John Wills tucked away the Army's second, but by then Civil Service had five in the bag, with a sixth to follow.

Combined Services 0, Ryman League 3

SSgt John Scott and WO2 Alan Higgins were in the starting line against the Ryman League in a warm-up for the Kentish Cup games against Belgium (March 31) and the Netherlands on April 28.

BADMINTON

Super sappers

THE Royal Engineers won the inter-corps badminton championships, beating the Royal Signals 5-4 in a thrilling final at Arborfield. In the semi-finals, the signallers accounted for AG Corps in another close match while the sappers beat the Infantry 6-3.

SQUASH

Gary assumes mantle

THERE was an action replay in the final of the Army squash championships at Winchester when SSgt Gary Clarke (REME) retained his open title.

For the second year in succession Clarke beat Army squash legend Maj Robbie Robinson (RLC), who was, incredibly, contesting his 20th consecutive final. It was Clarke's fifth open title.

Other finalists were:

Women's open: SSgt M Quaife (AGC) beat Cpl J Horobin (RLC).

Men's classic plate: SSgt S Humphries (R Signals) beat Sgt D Gallagher (R Signals).

Super plate: Brig A Leakey (late RTR) beat Lt C Jackson (R Signals).

Second-round plate: SSgt P O'Donnell

(APTC) beat Maj S Gray (RLC).

Men's plate: Sgt J Costello (APTC) beat Gdsm R Beckett (Coldm Gds).

Women's plate: Sgt M Barwick (APTC).

Men's over 45: WO2 B Featherstone (AGC) beat Capt (Retd) M Mooney.

Men's over 40: Maj I Mellor (APTC) beat Maj S Gray (RLC).

Men's over 35: Maj R Robinson (RLC) beat WO2 (QMSI) A Perger (APTC).

Men's under 25: Lt I Chance (R Anglian) beat Gdsm R Beckett (Coldm Gds).

Doubles: Mr Batt and Cpl C Webb (RE).

The Army had a clean sweep against Wiltshire, beating the county 4-1 at senior level, 4-1 at A team level, and 4-1 in a veterans' match.

CROSS COUNTRY



A long and windy road at Longmoor: Sgt Craig McBurney (563) from 1 LI finished 97th

International call-up for in-form Shepherd

CPL Alan Shepherd (24 Armd Fd Amb) won the Army cross-country title over a fast, firm course on a cold, sunny afternoon at Longmoor Training Camp, finishing more than half a minute ahead of second-placed Sgt Kenny Butler (5 ABde Log Bn).

Shepherd, whose unit is currently in Bosnia, shrugged off a field of more than 300 runners to confirm the form that earned him another Great Britain vest in an international cross country match in Belgium later in the month.

Great packing by Butler's colleagues saw Sgt Martin Kilbey and WO2 Ray Keeney finish third and fourth and Capt Steve Weetman seventh, virtually guaranteeing the major units' team prize for the 5 Airborne loggies.

Their eighth and final scoring runner finished in 77th place, putting them well ahead of BAD Kineton, who took second place in the major units' competition. Third were 7 (Para) RHA.

Cpl Andy Arrand, the 1997 champion and one of the heroes of last year's historic cross-country win over the RAF, was ruled out of the reckoning by injury. Based with 99 PC Sqn RLC at RAF Bruggen in Germany, Arrand will also be missing

from the Inter-Services line-up. The 1997 victory was only the second over the RAF.

Fifth in the senior men's race was Cpl Darren Hale (24 Armd Fd Amb), the current Army marathon champion. Unfortunately, he is about to leave the Service and will not be in the Army team which will compete in the London Marathon.

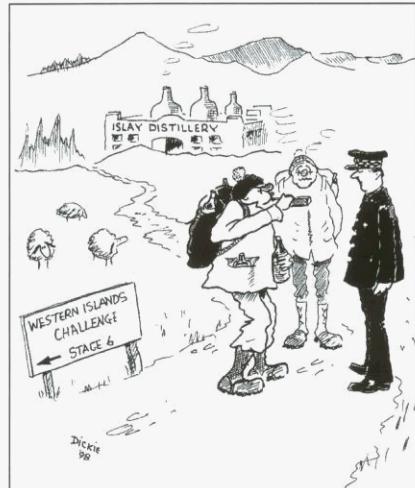
First place in the minor rankings went to 216 Para Sig Sqn, who finished ahead of HQ 4 Division and ATR Bassingbourn.

Best of the junior teams was Training Regiment and Depot RLC, who held off SEME Bordon and Depot R Irish. OCdt Richard Lawes from Sandhurst was the first junior, finishing in 26th place.

Capt Steve Lonnens, from Kineton, was 22nd, the first veteran across the line, while the AGC Centre took the veteran team honours.

Dental hygienist SSgt Mel Bailey (SEME Bordon) won the women's race, which attracted nearly 100 runners, ten seconds in front of Sgt Sue Sharpe (Arborfield Garrison), with defending champion Capt Lynn Higgs (HQ Aldershot Garrison) close behind in third. Higgs was also first veteran. RMA Sandhurst won the team race ahead of HQ Aldershot Garrison and 16 Regt RA.

RUNNING WILD



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IF you think you're hard, the organisers of the Western Isles Challenge cordially invite you to take part in a small diversion they are planning this summer.

Their relay race for teams of four – plus back-up team – will cover more than 200 miles of Europe's most testing terrain and 50 miles of sea canoeing. First staged four years ago, the event, from May 6-8, will also include 20,000ft of ascent.

It runs from the Isle of Barra in the south to the Butt of Lewis in the north of the Outer Hebrides chain, the most northerly point in Europe. Mountains, bogs, sand, lochs and sea, feature largely in some of the finest unspoiled landscapes to be found.

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There will be a limit of 45 teams and preference will be given to teams with at least one woman as an active member. Organisers caution that entrants need to be fit, well-organised and competent. An ability to navigate yourself over rough terrain, possibly in seriously awful weather, is also considered essential.

For details contact Ian Callaghan on 44(0) 1859 550238 or on website www.wichallenge.prestel.co.uk

Desert marathon

A desert endurance marathon is being staged in Dubai from March 18-24 as the opening event of the United Nations World Peace Games. Details from North Star Expeditions at 00971 4 328702, fax 00971 4 328703; e-mail norstar@emirates.net.ae or Euan Air, 43/1 Sutcliffe Road, Anniesland, Glasgow G13 1DD (0141 950 6085 pm).

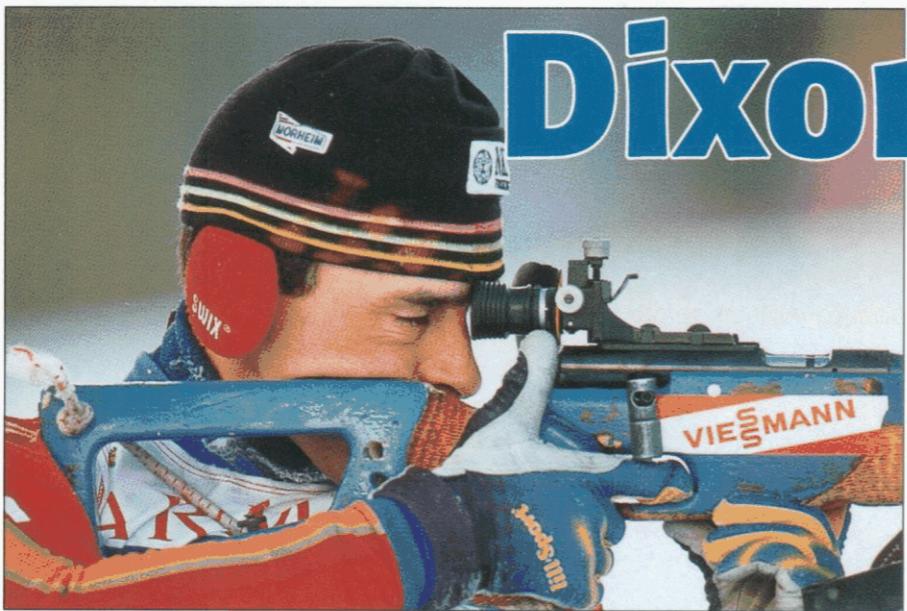
In-form Sklenar rises to the top

THE cream of the Army's Nordic skiers converged on Germany's national biathlon centre at Ruhpolding for the 50th British Army, Inter-Services and British national Nordic championships, writes **George Attard-Manche**.

Fus Lee Edwards (1 RHF) piped 28 teams, including skiers from the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force, Argentina, Australia and the Bundeswehr, into the centre. Snow held off until the last moment, but conditions were perfect on day one for the 10km biathlon sprint.

Despite a fall and two missed targets, Cpl Jason Sklenar (35 Engr Regt), the 1992 Olympic skier, was at his best, winning by ten seconds from LCpl Wayne Kennan (QRH), who did brilliantly to beat World Cup squad member Mne Craig Haslam (45 Cdo). Pte Barry Webb and Gnr Christopher Causer from 3 RHA took first and second in the junior race.

The women's 7.5km biathlon sprint was won, as expected, by Lynn Marie Cranage, who had just failed to make Australia's Olympic squad. British national



A study in concentration: Sgt Mike Dixon, on target for his fifth Winter Olympics

and Army winner was LCpl Victoria Gray (24 Armd Fd Amb), with Cpl Karen Baker (21 Log Sp Regt) in second. Both are in the Army team.

Gen Sir Michael Walker, C-in-C Land, and Lord Moynihan, president of the new British Biathlon Union, visited the slopes on the second day, which featured the Army 7.5km biathlon relay and a floodlit 1km BBU relay.

The 4 x 7.5 counts towards the overall Princess Marina Cup and all the Army teams were keyed up for it. Sgt Mike Dixon, soon to compete in his fifth Winter Olympics, was in the strong 35 Engr Regt team, while 2 RTR had Cpl Mark Gee, also selected for Nagano.

Gee was up against Sklenar on the first leg, but the sapper maintained his superb form to give 35 Engr a lead they never relinquished.

The tankies were edged into third place

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Hameln sappers retain Princess Marina Cup

FINAL week of the Army Nordic championships featured four cross country events: four main contenders contesting the 10km pursuit, the 15km, the 4 x 10km relay and the 30km patrol race.

To the fore in the Inter-Services SAS Cup event were 45 Cdo RM for the Royal Navy, 35 Engr Regt, 1 GS Regt RLC and 3 RHA, all of which had a chance of winning the military combination for the Kentish Cup.

Hameln-based 35 Engr were well in the lead for the coveted Princess Marina Cup and duly retained it when they became the champion skiing unit of the British Army for the third year in succession as the 1 GS

Regt challenge fell away. Three infantry battalions competed, with 1 D and D and the Green Howards finishing in the top ten. Sixth in the Princess Marina were 2 Armd Fd Amb, the first minor unit to enter for many years and the first medical unit ever.

LCpl Walker (1 GS Regt RLC) won the Army Nordic championship, Tpr Wood (1 RTR) the junior title, and Green Howards LCpl Grainge and Pte Wright the novice and junior novice Nordic titles.

The gruelling patrol race, the final event of the championships, was won by 45 Cdo despite several alarms. Their speed on skis kept them ahead of 35 Engr despite some

WINTER OLYMPICS - NAGANO, JAPAN

Dixon's nap hand

Mike competes in his fifth Winter Olympics

SGT Mike Dixon, based at Hameln with 35 Engineer Regiment, carried the Union flag at the head of the Great Britain team which took part in the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan.

The honour marked his fifth successive Winter Olympics, a remarkable achievement which he shares with Alpine downhill Graham Bell. It is a record unlikely ever to be bettered by a British skier.

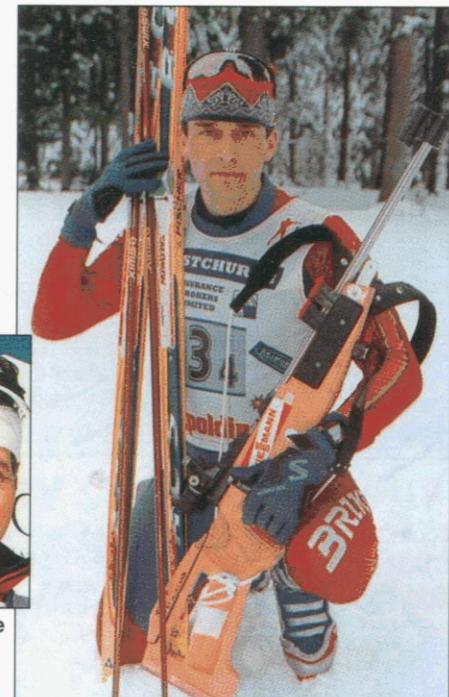
Dixon, from Fort William, was again competing for Britain in the biathlon, widely acknowledged to be one of the most physically demanding of sports.

He broke off from his high-altitude training to join his regimental team at the British national and Army biathlon championships at Ruhpolding in Germany, where 35 Engr Regt won the 7.5km biathlon sprint relay.

He was 12th in the Albertville Olympics in 1992.

Another soldier to be selected for the GB biathlon team was 2 RTR's Cpl Mark Gee.

There was strong military interest in the bobsleigh, in which three members of The Parachute Regiment and two Royal Marines were leading the British chal-



Olympian extraordinary: Sgt Mike Dixon

Picture: WO2 Ian Dunning



Flying paras: bobsleighters LCpl Eric Sekwalor and Cpl Sean Olsson

LAND COMMAND

QRH in lead at Monetier

TWENTY-FOUR unit teams made up of 124 skiers took part in the Land Command (UK) downhill championships at Monetier in the Serre Chevalier valley. Heavy snowfalls brought the competition to a premature end but the only race not completed was the individual slalom. Team slalom results were used to decide individual medals.

The ever-strong QRH won three team races, although a rare mistake from LCpl Skidmore allowed the HCR to take the honours in the team slalom. The third team prizes were spread between 5 Airborne Brigade Log Bn, Sheffield UOTC and 5 LI (V).

Skidmore won the individual combination prize, narrowly beating SSgt Geordie Dryden, who secured his 15th Army team selection. Third was OCdt Guy Westmacott (Northumbria UOTC), who skied brilliantly to squeeze out some well-established skiers, including Army captain Capt Dicky Determeyer.

The UOTC provided fierce competition, and as well as Westmacott, OCdt Smith (Liverpool) and JUO Vickers and OCdt Booker (both Sheffield), qualified for the Army meeting. Only Smith was able to take up the invitation, increasing his student loan to do so.

The Army women's team was well led by Capt Di Liddell, who skied aggressively to finish ninth in the Alpine combination.

C-in-C's award went to LCpl Chris Grainger (78 Engr Regt (V)) for his fortitude, cheerfulness and sportsmanship over the past six years. He powered his way into the top 100 of the final seed list.

OCdts Cullinan, Hewitt, Kitching and Matheson from RMA Sandhurst upset well-established teams from 2 Regt AAC, 4 Regt AAC and the Irish Guards by winning the team slalom and finishing third in the team giant slalom.

Individual races

Giant slalom and super G: 1, LCpl Skidmore (QRH); 2, SSgt Dryden (QRH); 3, OCdt Westmacott (Northumbria UOTC).

Slalom: 1, Capt Fox-Pitt (HCR); Capt Determeyer (LD); 3, Cpl Hutchinson (8 Regt (RLC)).

Downhill: 1, LCpl Skidmore; 2, SSgt Dryden; 3, Cpl Cooper (QRH).

Individual combination

1, LCpl Skidmore; 2, SSgt Dryden; 3, OCdt Westmacott; 4, Cpl Cooper; 5, Capt Determeyer; 6, LCpl Tate (HCR); 7, Cpl Hutchinson; 8, Capt Fox-Pitt; 9, Capt Liddell; 10, LCpl Roberts (5 AB Log Bn).

Divisional winners

2 Div: 5 Regt RA. 3 Div: 1, QRH; 2, HCR. 5 Div: 1, 5 LI (V); 2, 1 RWF.

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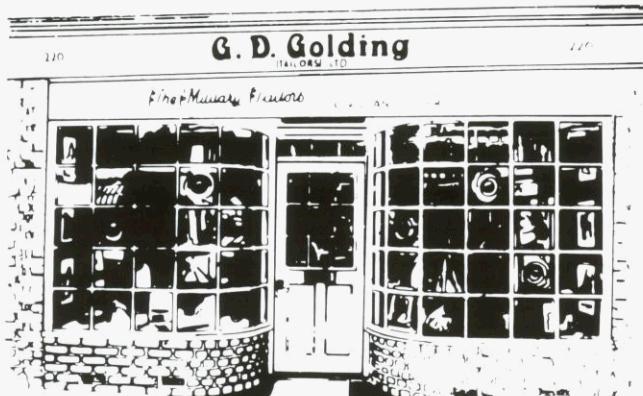
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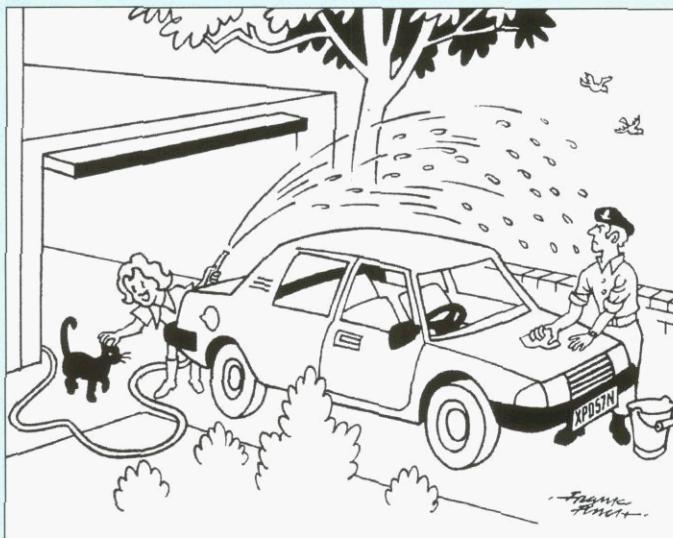
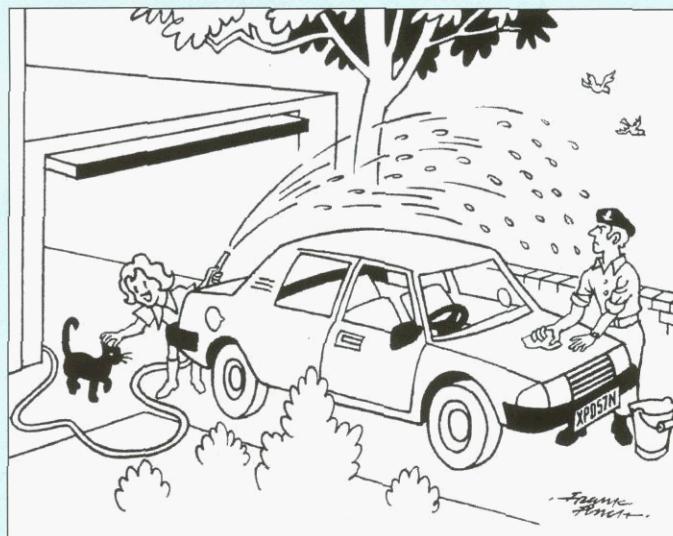
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Frank Finch has made ten changes in detail to one of his drawings. Circle the ten differences in the lower image, cut out the whole panel, add your name and address and send to HOAY 676, Soldier, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, GU11 2DU by April 3.

For those who do not wish to cut their magazine, a photocopy is now acceptable, but only

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Competition No 674 (January issue): First correct entry drawn was from Mr D Purnell, of Newport, Gwent, who wins £100. Runners-up are Mrs A Strachan, of Portlethen, Aberdeen, and Mrs E Walton, of Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, who each receive a £10 gift voucher. The ten differences were: roof slats; C in CIVIC; door lintel; cactus; Calamity Jane's hat; saddle; horse's mane; shopping-bag handle; jug in store window; twig on sidewalk.



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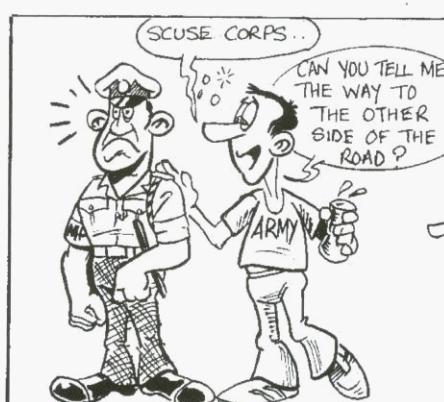
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REPLIES. To reply to a pen pal, write a letter and send it to *Soldier Magazine* at the address below. The box number must be **CLEARLY written in the TOP LEFT CORNER** of the envelope. Your envelope must be no larger than 8" x 4" and should contain 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.**

You Tarzan - Me Jane! Free-spirited, happy and resourceful female (40's), GSOH and non-smoker. Interests include photography, travel (especially safaris), animals and traditional Irish music. Seeks kindred spirit to write to. **P197**

03/98

Ashleigh, 25, 5'2", blue-eyed blonde who loves animals, enjoys reading, socialising, clubs, pubs and the cinema. Seeking non-smoking pen pals of any age. **P198**

03/98

Jane, 40, 5'2", with brown collar-length hair, quite out-going and bubbly. Works in community care. Enjoys music, reading and is seeking pen pals at home and overseas. **P199**

03/98

Rita, 31, 5'4", petite build and of Asian origin. A special constable with a law degree whose interests include jogging, jujitsu and the gym. Seeking male officers to correspond with. **P200**

03/98

Gary, 30, 5'5", average build and looks, enjoys keeping fit, camping, dining out and the outdoor life. Seeking female Regular soldiers, 18-35, at home or abroad. **P188**

03/98

Michelle, 27, 5'6", with blue/green eyes, long, blonde hair and slim build. Interests include swimming, keeping fit, the cinema and pubs. Seeking pen pals, 28-33, with GSOH and similar interests. Please include a photo. **P189**

03/98

Sue, a 'Juno-esque' 42-year-old, attractive divorcee (no children). Enjoys laughing, cooking, entertaining, swimming, music, films and writing letters. Seeking the impossible - a genuine, warm, honest, warrior male pen pal, 30+. **P190**

03/98

Julia, 21, 5'2", slim blonde with blue eyes. Single mum who enjoys keeping fit, dancing and socialising. Qualified hairdresser and studying hotel receptionist's course. Seeking male pen pals, 24-35. Photo appreciated. **P191**

03/98

Carole, 27, 5'2", brown hair and green eyes. Interested in the cinema, socialising, line dancing, music and travelling. Seeking pen pals, 25-30, with GSOH. **P192**

03/98

Sue, 49, 5'7", a slim divorcee with honey blonde hair. Enjoys music, dancing, aerobics, racketball and romance. A self-employed artist who is seeking tall, caring, romantic and sporty, male pen pals, 40-55. **P193**

03/98

Irene, 33, 5'4", with dark brown hair, hazel eyes and GSOH. Enjoys ten-pin bowling, the cinema, music and walking. Scottish lady who would love to correspond with male pen pals, 32-39. **P194**

03/98

Jane, 31, 5'6", slim build with blonde hair and hazel eyes. Likes nightclubs, socialising and keeping fit. Seeking male pen pals, 30-40. **P195**

03/98

Steven, 25, 5'10", with medium build and dark hair. Interests include photography, running, creative writing and cycling. Seeking female pen pals, 20-30, with GSOH. **P196**

03/98

Sarah, 26, 5'7", with dark brown, curly hair and brown eyes. Likes most music but as a single mum with young son doesn't have much time for hobbies. Seeking pen pals, 25-36. **P201**

03/98

Rosie, 28, 5'8", with brown hair and blue eyes. Likes all sorts of music, the cinema, going out and eating out. Seeking pen pals, 25-30. Will reply to all letters. **P202**

03/98

Denise, 37, 5'4", with brown hair and eyes. A single mum with one little boy (4). Interests include cooking, reading, walking, keeping pets, gardening and DIY. Would like pen pals, 35-40. **P203**

03/98

Prince Charming, 35, 6', fit, athletic and creative non-smoker with green eyes. Lovely castle and own coach. Seeks attractive Cinderella to fill glass slipper abandoned at ball. Hobbies - water polo and horse-riding. **P204**

03/98

Karen, 26, 5'6", bubbly personality and medium build. Enjoys the cinema, photography, travel and eating out. Looking for genuine pen pals, 25-35. Photo appreciated. **P205**

03/98

Lynne, 29, 5'4", medium build with brown hair and hazel eyes. Independent and single, works for security firm. Enjoys keep fit, most outdoor activities and socialising. Seeking pen pals, 28-36. **P206**

03/98

Paula, 37, 5'4", slim with long hair and green eyes. Divorced. Likes British films (Trainspotting), reading, aerobics, psychology and writing. Seeking pen pals, 35-39, preferably stationed in Bosnia. **P207**

03/98

Daryl, 30, 5'5", tall and well-mannered. Likes good fun and enjoys swimming, walking, reading, parties, the cinema and military music. Seeking pen pals, 30-40. **P208**

03/98

Kaz, 5'8", with medium build and blonde hair. Enjoys a wide variety of interests and hobbies. Due to ill health has lots of free time. Seeking pen pals, 30-45. **P209**

03/98

BOOKS

O Valiant Heart - My book has been well received - it is the memoirs of my late husband, Capt GM Peach, who served 30 years in the Army, 24 in the Life Guards and 8 in the Inns of Court. To date, I have sold 410 books to relatives and Army colleagues. It is in 112 public libraries, 34 military museums, Sandhurst Military Academy, Household Cavalry Museum, City of Westminster Archives and Local History, London Corporation and the Tory Bookshop in Central Office, London. As I still have a surplus of unsold books, plus the fact that I will be 82 this month, I hope that I may be able to "sit back and rest on my laurels". The book is reasonably priced at £5 plus £3 postage. Any prospective purchaser would be greatly appreciated. Constance S Peach, 4 Watermill Court, Bath Road, Wolverhampton RG7 5RD.

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ARMY SPORTS LOTTERY RESULTS

January 3, 1998

First prize (24 goals, £3,000): Bdr P Cobb, 7 Para RHA, Aldershot.

Two-way tie for second prize (23 goals, £1,350 each): SSgt A Adams, 11 Signal Regt, Blandford; Maj IRM Saker, QDG, Sennelager.

Six-way tie for fourth prize (22 goals, £383.33 each): Sgt E Crossland, 2 RRF, Celle; WO1 PD Kinlan, 251 Flt Amb (V), Sunderland; WO1 WR Lindsay, HCR, Windsor; Sgt J Mackay, 30 Signal Regt, Bramcote; LCpl ME Pigott, 3 RHA, Topcliffe; LCpl S Skidmore, QRF, Catterick.

13-way tie for sixth prize (20 goals, £76.92 each): SSgt CA Boggan, 34 Flt Hosp, Strencott; Brig WO Cook, HQ LAND, Wilton; Sgt A Coughlan, 280 (UK) Signal Sqn, Krefeld; Csgt SJ Dutton, Warminster Sp Unit; Cpl KJ Gascoigne, Duchess of Kent Hosp, Catterick; SSgt DJ Griffiths, 16 Regt RA, Woolwich; Capt PF Lannon, 1 WFR, Tidworth; Bdr DG Lawson, 3 RHA, Topcliffe; Sgt JS Moore, 9 R Irish, Antrim; Maj M Nesbitt, ATR Pirbright; Sgt SC Purchon, 26 Regt RA, Gütersloh; Capt MA Ryan, MOD AMD, Ash Vale; Cpl VE Wainwright, KRH, Münster.

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Three-way tie for third prize (21 goals, £800 each): LCpl AS Gibson, 2 RTR, Fallingbostel; Sgt GJ Hall, 115 Pro Coy RMP, Herford; LCpl DJ McIntosh, 721 EOD Sqn RLC, Chilwell.

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January 10, 1998

Two-way tie for first prize (25 goals, £2,300 each): Sgt A Farrow, 4/5 GH (V), Middlesbrough; Sgt SML Samuel, 30 Signal Regt, Bramcote.

Seven-way tie for third prize (24 goals, £485.71 each): Sgt SM Adamson,

39 Regt RA, Newcastle upon Tyne; Sgt P Burgen, School of Logistics, Deepcut; LCpl GJ Dunsmore, 1 RTR, Paderborn; Pte JC McSeveney, 2 LI, Belfast; Sgt PS Mullen, 216 Para Signal Sqn, Aldershot; WO2 DR Osborne, HQ ARRC, Rheindahlen; Capt MF Thompson, 1 RHF, Fallingbostel.

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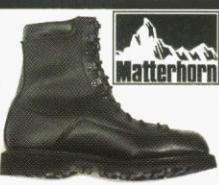
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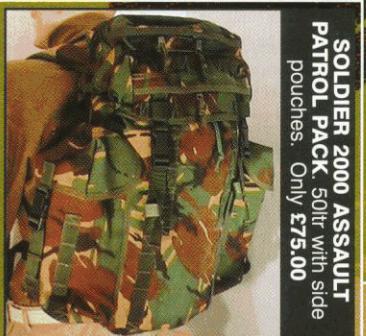
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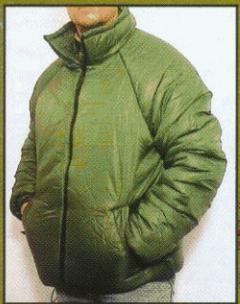
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VERY occasionally there are moments when you have to sit back and consider, from the heart rather than the head, where the crazy pace of motor technology is leading us, writes **Syd Taylor**.

While mammoth engines of prodigious output are undeniably blood-tingling, anyone with a touch of sophistication knows you don't need massive power, with its attendant weight penalties, to create an impressive car. With the Puma, Ford has underlined this indelibly.

Adhering to the principle that no matter how dynamically capable a car may be, initial attraction is always a reaction to visual stimulation, so Ford have given the new Puma beautifully clean lines and contemporary curves to make a fascinating mélange of shapes: you can almost visualise creative hands sketching the car. This masterpiece of design and styling just shrieks for attention. It is striking yet balanced, its low and wide, slightly aggressive, stance signalling its sporty character. There's an unmistakable message of quality and close inspection reveals tight panel gaps and a thick, even and glossy paint finish. Quality of design has been matched by the highest standards of manufacture and the Puma displays excellent precision in every department.

Stepping inside via large, wide-opening doors, you see sporty seats covered in quality fabric which keep you firmly in place during the hardest cornering.

The whole interior is so carefully sculpted that it is a surprise to discover that this coupé is a four-seater, combining its breathtaking lines and sparkling performance with everyday practicality. There are individual seats for four adults and a generous-sized boot for luggage. The designers have even combined the sweeping lines with good headroom for rear passengers.

Behind the wheel the Puma signals its sporting intent. The crucial relationship between seat and pedals is perfect. Instrumentation – white dials and green illumination – is easily monitored through the leather-covered sports steering-wheel which fits snugly in your hands. The spherical, machined-aluminium gear knob falls readily to hand, matching the satin aluminium-finished trim used on the dash and door. Essential switches are within easy reach and the whole cockpit

focuses on the precise needs of a driver who appreciates the subtle responsiveness of a true sports car. The Puma not only looks the part, but feels it.

There's only one Puma model, with one specification level. You get power steering, four-channel anti-lock brakes and brake-activated traction control, driver's airbag, central locking with infrared remote double locking and a

Ford Puma: Tech Spec

ENGINE 4-cylinder, 1679 cc DOHC with variable camshaft timing, 125 PS at 6300 rpm.

TRANSMISSION 5-speed manual FWD.

STEERING Variable-rate rack-and-pinion with power assistance.

BRAKES Discs front, drums rear, ABS and low-speed traction control.

KERB WEIGHT 1039kg.

SIZE (cm) Length 398, width 167, height 134.

PERFORMANCE Max speed 126 mph; 0-60 mph in 8.8 sec.

MPG Urban 29.1, extra-urban 46.3.

PRICE £14,550 on-the-road.



perimeter alarm, electric windows and mirrors, power height adjustment for the driver's seat and a quality radio/CD audio system.

A Puma driver can't fail to enjoy the quality of the engine. Dynamism and refined engineering are perfectly resolved in the new 1.7 litre Zetec E engine with its fully-variable cam timing. Impressive as

alive that the car responds instantly to commands. You tackle

corners in true sports-car style. The clear communication between car and driver is electrifying. Powerful and responsive brakes as well as ample reserves of road-holding and grip add to the feeling of reassurance. Everything about the Puma gels to enable you to drive tidily and quickly with little effort and lots of enjoyment – and that, after all, is what you are promised by the style and looks.

With a crowd-pulling presence to match more exotic vehicles, the beguiling little Puma is probably the most accomplished car in its class. It is the answer to an enthusiast's dreams, offering a spirit of involvement and undiluted motoring pleasure rare among vehicles of any type. Indeed, when you consider its package of performance, comfort and driving pleasure, its on-the-road price of £14,550 makes it look like one of motoring's great bargains.

Sporty Puma just shrieks for attention

the statistics in our Tech Spec panel are, they give little indication of how satisfactorily the exceptional power-plant applies its performance, forging forward with enthusiasm and adapting to all driving demands. Acceleration is razor-sharp and super-smooth and you can't help but push it to the maximum, utilising the power through the five-speed gearbox, its light and fast change working with superb mechanical fluidity.

It's when you're out on the open road that the Puma really comes into its own. Steering is wonderfully weighted and so

We welcome questions and answers

RSM with MC

Q: WHY is
RSM F Miller
named on the
Thiepval
Memorial as
holder of the
Military Cross

when it was for officers only? – Maj P R Corden PWRR (Feb).

A: A Royal Warrant dated December 28, 1914 was published in the London Gazette on January 1, 1915 establishing the MC, which could be awarded to officers of the rank of captain and below, and to both classes of warrant officer.

During the First World War, 1,102 warrant officers were awarded the MC. Five first bars were awarded and one second bar.

RSM Frederick Miller's award was gazetted on August 19, 1916, "For consistent gallantry and good work, notably when bringing up ammunition and rations over ground constantly swept by shell fire".

He was one of 24 WOs in the 1st Battalion, The King's Liverpool Regiment to receive the MC.

If Maj Corden is interested I could supply him with a full list of WO MC winners and copies of the Royal Warrants from the London Gazette. – John Woodhouse, 91 Gathurst Road, Orrell, Wigan, Lancs, WN5 8QJ.

● Other letters were received from L O'Brien, of Penarth, S Glamorgan; Hugh L King, of Farnham, Surrey; Megan C Robertson, of Crewe, Cheshire; D Watson, of Biggleswade, Beds; Edward Kelly, of Dover, Kent; G Ewens, of Morden, Surrey; Maj R E B Morris, of New Malden, Surrey; D Purnell, of Newport, Gwent; S R H Cocking, of Farnborough, Hants; and A F Brocklehurst, of Penarth, S Glamorgan.

L Brady, writing from Athens, added that more than 37,000 MCs were awarded during the First World War, about 350 between the wars, about 10,000 during the Second World War and well over 600 since.

Operation Eagle

Q: DOES anyone have further details of Operation Eagle in 1945, in which Polish prisoners-of-war and refugees were repatriated from Germany in convoys of three-tonners? – G A Noon (Feb).

A: I WAS one of the drivers involved. We operated from Hamburg to Stettin, including the overnight stop at Wunster-Hausen. On a bar across the front of our three-tonners we carried the sign "EAGLE OP EA" F W Palfrey (ex-Cpl, 508 Coy RASC), 73A Little Garies, Ilford, Essex, IG6 1HS.



Prize letter

German nurse's UXB bombshell

EVERY time a German Second World War bomb is made safe as in Essex (*Soldier*, Dec) and Chippenham in February I am reminded of my time as a German Red Cross nurse working in a makeshift hospital between March and June, 1945.

One patient, an undergraduate, told me he had had to work in a munitions factory but since he did not believe in the war and killing people, he never put the "tinder" or ignitor into the bombs, filling them instead with sand. Eventually he was

found out and put into the nearby concentration camp. I wonder if that man, from southern Germany, ever told his story to the bomb disposal experts, and whether he is still alive. He would be very happy to know that "his" bombs were always made safe without loss of life.

My husband never wanted me to tell this story, but now I am a widow I want to get it off my chest. I wish all bomb disposal experts well. – Mrs Ursula Riseborough, Abingdon, Oxon.

Durable woolly-pully just goes on and on

A WHILE ago I read in the national press that the Ministry of Defence intended to drop the woolly pully sweater in favour of a shapeless "blouson".

I have heard nothing about this since and so I hope this ill-considered proposal has been consigned to the dustbin.

I write as a long-term civilian wearer of the woolly pully. This garment has proved indispensable to me in my many outdoor activities, as well as saving me a fortune in heating bills at home.

It is durable, elegant, comfortable and can never go out of fashion – the best of British, which is why it has been copied all

over the world. Please don't change it. – Dr Aidan Rankin, London WC1.

● Maj Sally Cadec, of the Defence Clothing and Textiles Agency at Bicester, tells *Soldier* that it was never intended to introduce a shapeless "blouson".

Two years ago, she said, it was decided to replace the jersey heavy wool sweater (JHW) with the jersey universal (JU) flat-weave version, which some soldiers are now wearing in barracks. Subsequent problems with the new design, however, resulted in a reversal of that decision, so the woolly-pully remains and will be the garment to be worn for the foreseeable future.

Veterans launch campaign

DERBY and District Ex-Services Association, formed in January 1996, comprises 24 individual organisations.

At our annual meeting in January, 1997 it was decided that we should pursue matters which we feel have not received sympathetic treatment from previous governments or urgently need reviewing.

These include war widows' pensions and Forces family pensions; pay of British PoW medical staff who had "protected personnel" status in the Second World War; compensation for British PoWs interned by the Japanese; and the Government proposal to cut benefit levels for ex-Service personnel.

In order to achieve any positive results

we feel it is essential for a department of veterans' affairs to be introduced with a minister having overall control and responsibility.

The Ministry of Defence has confirmed that this needs careful consideration and it will be looking into it in some detail.

At the same time, Baroness Hollis at the DSS confirms that she will only consider it further if it has the full support of all ex-Service organisations.

It is obvious, therefore, that national support will be needed and this is what we in Derby are seeking.

We have so far contacted three combined ex-Service associations similar to ours – at Chesterfield, Eastbourne and Sheffield – and we would be most grateful for contact with others who have sympathy with our campaign.

All this will cost you is a second-class stamp or a short telephone call. Replies, please, to me. – Arthur Langley, Chairman, Derby and District Ex-Services Association, 3 Appian Way, Alvaston, Derby, DE24 0TG (tel: 01332 753705).

Write us a prize letter

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 (see Page 40) 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.

BIRD'S EYE-VIEW



"You must have misread the small print, laddies."

Bagpipe school—see Pages 20-21

Army marches on its wallet

IT WAS interesting to read the "My Army" interview with Bernard Cornwall (Feb) in which he said he wishes he had been in the Army but didn't want to join the Pay Corps.

We all like to have a little smile over the Pay Corps. It's like mention of Watford or Wigan. However, an Army marches on its wallet and just because a bloke can work out 3.9 per cent of £12.59 doesn't also mean he can't lay you out with a nicely timed left hook.

Boxing was one sport given prominence in my time in the corps and it

Soldiers air their views in Vox Pop — Page 70

was not without its honourable achievements in the ring. Another sport was bull and you could cut your finger on the creases and shave in your toecaps. The biggest joke of all was that you did a full day's work (no lying on beds reading *Reveille*) and then you went out to crunch the tarmac and pound the roads in full rig.

But let the smiles continue because the efficiency and smartness of that corps is one of the Army's best-kept secrets. — Jerry Davies (Pay Corps and HAC), Anglesey.

Ins and outs of rank insignia

MAY I comment on information included in the "Questions of Rank" feature (Jan) which I do not believe to be correct?

In January 1902 officers up to the rank of lieutenant colonel wore rank insignia on the cuff, of a rather peculiar design known as Crow's Foot style. This proved unpopular and in November of the same year was replaced by two new styles. This system also included colonels.

Officers, other than in Scottish regiments, wore a slashed French cuff displaying rank insignia vertically on the panel and having from one to four drab laces around the cuff.

Scottish officers wore a gauntlet-style cuff with one to four drab laces along the top and with rank insignia, horizontally, at the base.

In 1917 this system became optional

due mainly to economy, though the explanation offered by the author may have been a consideration. The wearing of rank insignia on the shoulder straps quickly became predominant. The sleeve rank insignia was finally abolished in 1920. — Lt Cdr W M Thornton RNR, Southall, Middx.

● Hugh Howton, the series author, responds that Lt Cdr Thornton may have partly misread what he wrote. "I did not say that this forearm insignia was introduced during the First World War but that it was in use at this time," he writes.

"The point I made was that conspicuous badges of rank on the forearm (not just the cuff) made officers targets for snipers. Lt Cdr Thornton concedes this 'may have been a consideration' but their optional removal in 1917 was 'due mainly to economy'. I know which is the more convincing reason."

PS . . .

Penalised – 'for dying too soon'

A FEW years ago I claimed and received my late father's war medals from the Army Medal Office at Droitwich.

As he was an SSM WO1 who joined up in 1925, I felt sure he should also have been entitled to the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, but was told that because he was killed in the run-up to El Alamein in 1942 he was about eight months short of the qualifying period. Had he been a wartime call-up rather than a Regular he would have been eligible because war years counted as double service.

So it appears that my father was unfairly penalised for dying for his country before his service time – and for being a Regular. — David Taylor, Canterbury, Kent.

Medicine Hat link

A FURTHER link between the Canadian city of Medicine Hat and the UK (Mailbag, Dec) was forged when the RAF established 34 Service Flying Training School as part of the Commonwealth Air Training Scheme in February, 1941.

The results of the pilot training were evident in the following years when Bomber Command was able to mount nightly operations of 900-1,000 aircraft, tragically with correspondingly high casualty rates. The Air Force plot in Hillside Cemetery by the airfield is the final resting place for some of the instructors and trainee pilots who were part of this programme — RAF 41, RCAF 5, RNZAF 1. We should remember those who remained and honour their memory. — Charles Hampson, Brentwood, Essex.

Piped ashore

TO CALL the late Col Mad Jack Churchill a "character" (Dec) is an understatement. The last time we in 2 SS Bde Sig Troop saw him as the CO of No 1 Army Cdo was on a raid on the island of Brac, off the Dalmatian coast. He was on a hilltop playing his bagpipes before being wounded and taken prisoner. No 2 Cdo went back the next night to rescue him but, realising his importance, the Germans had shipped him to the mainland.

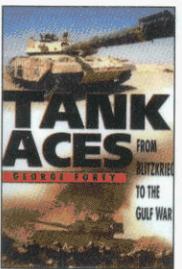
The Army Commando Brigade was disbanded in 1946 and our OCA membership is diminishing, but we will leave a wonderful record and contribution to British military history. — L R Addison, Branston, Lincoln.

Church ammo

I READ with interest of the Millennium Windows at Tidworth Garrison Catholic Church (Jan) commemorating those who died in postwar conflicts. Many readers will note that the Canal Zone was the only conflict which did not warrant a medal. This might be a small piece of ammunition for those campaigning for an award. — J Hogan (Suez veteran), Hornchurch, Essex.

Warriors who led from the front

A successful tank commander is only as good as his gunner, loader/operator and driver. Nevertheless George Forty, who makes this point in *Tank Aces: From Blitzkrieg to the Gulf War*, has singled out 26 of the best – British, German, American, Indian and Pakistani.



From *Blitzkrieg to the Gulf War*, has singled out 26 of the best – British, German, American, Indian and Pakistani.

His pack of aces culminates in Brig (now Maj Gen) Patrick Cordingley, Commander 7th Armoured Brigade (the Desert Rats) in the Gulf. Apart from those in the Second World War, tank battlefields covered include Korea, Vietnam, and the Indo-Pakistani and Arab-Israeli conflicts. The large-format hardback, illustrated with photographs and new maps, is published by Sutton at £19.99.

Invalids shored up our defences

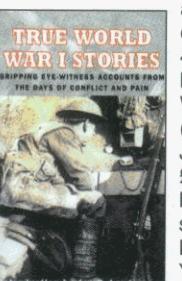
FOR almost 200 years until the 1860s, old soldiers described variously as "meritorious" and

"maimed and decrepit" formed the Invalid Companies and Veteran Battalions which garrisoned coastal forts and castles at home and reinforced unhealthy stations abroad. As Michael Mann points out in his engrossing histo-

ry *The Veterans* (Michael Russell Publishing, Norwich, hardback, £18.95) they often deserved better after serving their country so well.

Eye-witnesses in the trenches

LIFE in the trenches is invariably most vividly conveyed by the soldiers' own accounts, 60 of which are included in date order in the 425-page paperback *True World War 1 Stories* (Robinson, ed Jon E Lewis, £6.99). Read here of the personal horrors of Loos, Mons, Ypres and the Somme; of the first gas attack; of a 17-year-old at Gallipoli; of cavalry veterans and tank pioneers; of the despair of prisoners-of-war; and of the conflicts at sea and in the air.



Testing times on Christmas Island

WITHIN weeks the European Court of Human Rights is due to announce its decision concerning two veterans of the British nuclear tests which took place in Australia and the Pacific in the 1950s and early 1960s.

Last November the veterans, representing many others who are ill, had their pleas to be compensated for the effects of radiation referred to the Court in Strasbourg by the European Commission of Human Rights.

Jim Haggas, who witnessed five tests on Christmas Island as a National Serviceman with 38 Corps Engineer Regiment, is happily in good health.

As he relates his experiences in 1958 in this book his easy, readable style, laced with typical Army humour, has a strong appeal. But his "fearful fascination" with the deadly seriousness of the mission is never far from the surface and he questions the morality of nuclear tests themselves and the involvement of young National Servicemen.

His narrative is at its most telling when he describes the tests themselves, particularly Grapple "Y" in April, 1958. With 30 seconds to detonation his party of witnesses,



The author, Jim Haggas

and cover their eyes during the countdown.

At plus 15, told that they could turn round and look, they saw a giant orange ball of fire. "The ground shook and the ominous noise rumbled on around as the blast wave hit us. Those who had unwittingly stood up struggled to keep their feet and some were felled by the violence of this man-made storm... With the blast came the heat wave, the most frightening effect of all..."

The top of the mushroom cloud

eventually broke away in the prevailing breeze, carrying, they hoped, any radiation away from the island and out over the Pacific.

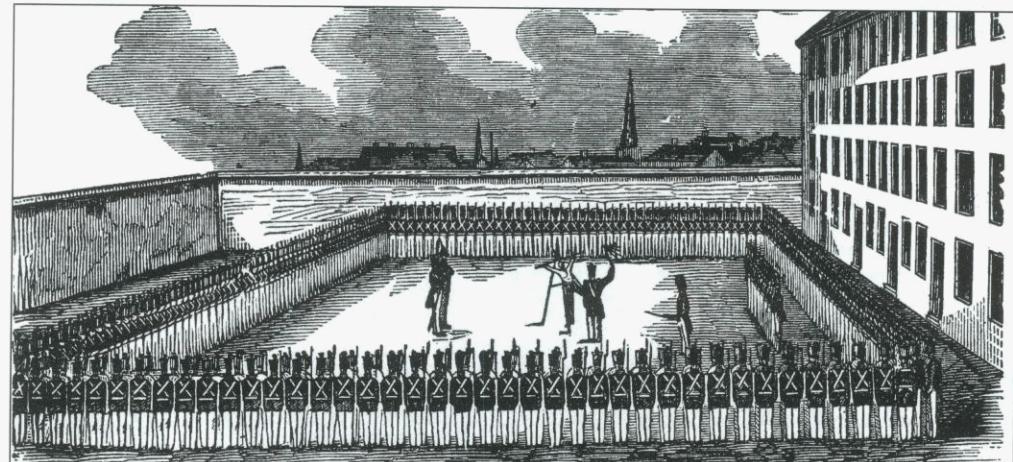
"We learned later that by some quirk in the weather or possibly because of some miscalculation, a dark cloud caused by the weapon had passed over the port area.

"Shortly afterwards there was a heavy local rain-storm which, it was claimed, brought down contaminated material previously sucked up by the explosion, on to unprotected Servicemen and other personnel on duty there."

In his final chapter the author, now 66, describes awful symptoms suffered by some who, as he puts it, enjoy the "privilege of membership" of the British Nuclear Test Veterans' Association, and asks some searching questions.

"Unlike the soldier on active service on the battlefield," he says, "these veterans fought a deadly, unseen enemy without knowledge, warning, arms, or protection. Many continue to fight bravely to this day and every day."

Meanwhile, Jim Haggas and others who have been spared "daily give silent thanks for health of body and mind". – CH



The harshness of Army life at the time of the Peninsular and Waterloo campaigns is shown in this illustration from a facsimile edition of *The Military Adventures of Charles O'Neil*, published by the Spellmount Library of Military History in hardback at £19.95. One of six woodcuts reproduced in this lively memoir, it shows the hapless author receiving 300 lashes for refusing to attend a church parade

Churchill and Hitler: gentleman v amateur

TWO EVENTS in 1899 were destined to affect the course of history in the 20th century: Winston Churchill, then aged 15 and at school at Harrow, decided he wanted to be a soldier, and Adolf Hitler was born.

But why yet another book about these two men of destiny?

It seems the motive of the

author, Maj Gen John Strawson, former Chief of Staff, UK Land Forces, is as much a matter of personal association as a desire to provide a comparison of the two characters.

Both Churchill and Strawson served in the 4th Queen's

understood the business of war and with reason!

"After all, what other Prime Minister... had fought on the North-West Frontier, charged at Omdurman, stood on the bloodied heights of Spion Kop, commanded a battalion in the trenches, been First Lord of the Admiralty (twice), Secretary for Munitions and for War and Air, voraciously studied the technicalities of ships, aircraft and guns, thought, written and debated about war for nearly half a century?"

By comparison, Hitler was an amateur at the art of making war, and he showed it, particularly at Stalingrad.

The two never met – but what if...?

John Strawson speculates that the Nazi leader "would have realised that the British politician was not, as he subsequently described him, 'a superannuated drunkard supported by Jewish gold'."

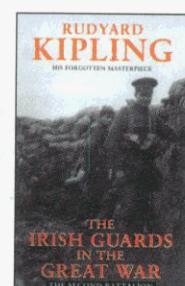
Churchill "would almost certainly have been repelled by Hitler's fanaticism, arrogance and coarseness, always supposing that the interview would not have been abruptly terminated by the Führer flying into a rage at one of Churchill's wise remarks or shafts of wit". – BJ

Did private armies 'pay' their way?

TRAWLING through museum archives, Maj Gen Julian Thompson RM has made good use of first-hand reports to tell the story of special forces in action, from the desert to Burma, 1940-45, in *The Imperial War Museum Book of War Behind Enemy Lines* (Sidgwick & Jackson/IWM, hardback, £25). Among units covered are the Long Range Desert Group, the Special Air Service, the Chindits, Popski's Private Army and the Jedburgh teams. With the benefit of hindsight the Falklands War veteran uses a hard-nosed, 1990s "return-on-investment" yardstick to judge the value of these heroic operations.

Volume completes monumental work

THROUGH an agony of "bloody sweat" and tears, Rudyard Kipling published his First World



THE IRISH GUARDS IN THE GREAT WAR

War history of the Irish Guards in 1923 not as a commercial enterprise but as a monument in words to his only son John, who died at the age of 18 at Loos.

The Irish Guards in the Great War: The Second Battalion (Spellmount, hardback, £24.95) completes a "forgotten masterpiece" made all the more poignant by knowing that the author died 56 years before his son's grave was discovered in 1992.

This Bonaparte is value for money

IN HIS 1978 study of Napoleon, the eminent historian Correlli Barnett stripped away the legend and glamour to show the man warts and all, with political domination his ambition and luck on the side of his frequently slapdash generalship. Now

Bonaparte has been published in well-illustrated, high-quality paperback form in the Wordsworth Military Library series. At £4.99 for 224 large-format pages, it represents excellent value.

The Jew who took the battle back to Germany

A BLURB on the cover of *Striking Back – A Jewish Commando's War Against the Nazis* by Peter Masters. Greenhill Books, hardback, £16.99.

Striking Back – A Jewish Commando's War Against the Nazis by Peter Masters. Greenhill Books, hardback, £16.99.

Eventually he was permitted to volunteer for the Army and was posted to the Pioneer Corps, the only one open to enemy aliens. For two years he unloaded railway wagons, repaired roads and tested Bailey bridges.

When his chance to "do his bit" came he joined 10 Inter-

Allied Commando, a special unit of Norwegians, Belgians, Dutch, Poles and Yugoslavs. It included 3 Troop, which comprised "friendly enemy aliens"... Germans, Austrians and Hungarians.

They had three things in common: they were all refugees from the Nazis, most were Jewish, and all spoke fluent German.

From the moment the author joined 3 Tp, life was a mix of adventure and danger.

He got through training in time to take part in the D-Day landings. As his commando advanced into Normandy, Masters, by now a corporal, was told to reconnoitre the village of Bénouville and call for a surrender. He survived the ensuing battle and went on to others in Holland before crossing the Rhine.

Offered a commission, he accepted and chose to join the Oxf and Bucks LI because of his deep admiration of their courage at Pegasus Bridge. After the war, aged just 24, he went to art school and won Britain's first, he claims, Fulbright Scholarship to the USA, where he began a career as a graphic artist and TV producer. Now in his seventies, he lives in Bethesda, Maryland. He will soon have to dig even deeper into the memories that fill this book – because the screen rights to the book have been bought by a film company. – JM

Bulletin board

REUNIONS

Army Catering Corps Association: Annual meeting will take place at the Army School of Catering RLC, St Omer Barracks, Aldershot, at 1330 on March 20. Contact: Lt Col (Retd) B S Dyson on 01252 340893/4.

Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment: Reunions planned at Cheltenham and Gloucester, March 21-22; Devizes, June 6-7; Salisbury, July 4-5; Reading, July 25-26. Details for all four from RHQ, Custom House, Gloucester GL1 2HE.

669 Squadron, AAC: Annual Coyote dinner takes place on April 23. Contact Sgt Dave Bentley or Sgt Pete McCarthy on Colchester (765) 8481, civ 01449 728481 or 728473, or at 660 Sqn, 4 Regt AAC, Wattisham Airfield, Ipswich IP7 7RA.

22nd (Cheshire) Regiment, Suez reunion: Reunion for all who served with 1st Battalion at Suez, 1951-54, and wives at Dale Barracks, Liverpool Road, Chester on April 25. Tickets from G U Hunt, 6 Winstanley Road, New Ferry, Wirral L62 1AP (tel 0151 645 0434) or J G Ball, 18 Downing Close, Prenton, Birkenhead, Wirral L43 5XQ (0151 608 4524).

138th (City of London) Fd Regt RA Association: Reunion on April 27 at Victory Services Club, London. Details: Frank Flack, 22 Camberne Way, Hounslow, Middx TW5 0PW (tel 0181 570 5267).

Army Dog Unit RAVC, Northern Ireland: To mark the 25th anniversary of the unit's formation, a memorial to personnel killed and injured while serving with the unit will be dedicated on May 1. Former members interested in attending should contact the OC, ADU RAVC NI, BFPO 802 or telephone 01504 721335.

59 Independent Commando Squadron RE: Reunion scheduled at RMB Chivenor, North Devon, May 8-10. Contact Admin Officer, Capt I Sinclair RE on RMB Chivenor Mil 7603 or civ 01271 857603 or write to him at 59 Indep Cdo Sqn, RMB Chivenor, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 4AZ.

201 RCZ REME: Joint mess reunion at Cheshford Grange Hotel, Kenilworth, Warwick, May 15-16. Enquiries to Maj Ron Smith, 6 St John's Place, Waterloo, Liverpool (tel 0151 928 4493).

APPOINTMENTS

Maj Gen Angus Ramsay to be Commander British Forces Cyprus and Administrator Sovereign Base Areas, Jan 16.

Lt Col: R I Braithwaite RE - To APC, Apr 1; A Brown RE - To IMS Brussels, Mar 17; Hon A J C Campbell, Hldrs - To HQ SFOR, Mar 18; H N S Colborn, R Sigs - To HQ ARRC, Mar 23; N A Clissitt RA - To DPR(A), Mar 30; V C M Frazer RLC - To DMSD(A), Mar 23; R G Ginn RLC - To HQ SFOR, Mar 16; R E Harrold, R Anglian - To JSCSC, July 20; C D Langford RLC - To HQ 1 (UK) Armd Div, Mar 5; T J B Sinclair RA - To APC, Apr 14; R M Thurston, R Sigs - To ACDS(OR) Land, Mar 9; R P H Vickers, Scots DG - To HQ 3 (UK) Div, Apr 16; B E Wearing AGC - To HQ PSC North, Mar 30.

Hovercraft Society reunion at East Cowes, Isle of Wight, on May 16 for all who have operated craft from single-seaters to the giant SRN 4. Details: Brian Russell, 24 Jellicoe Avenue, Gosport PO12 2PE (01705 584371).

5th King's No 2 T Force OCA plans a visit to Germany, May 19-28, including civic receptions at Goslar im Harz (May 20) and Bad Nenndorf (May 22). For details contact K V G Moore, The Granary, Church Road, Bacton, Norwich NR12 0JP (tel/fax 01692 651086).

Nation Ex-Services Association: First national reunion at Blackpool, June 5-9. For details write to NESA, Stockport SK1 3ER.

Royal Signals, Malta and Libya 1959-65: Reunion planned Sept. Including National Service and WRAC. Contact Roy Andrews, Moorings, 7 The Heath, South Tankerton, Whitstable, Kent CT5 3HJ.

20 Field Squadron

RE: 150th anniversary reunion weekend, Sept 5-6 at Maidstone. Former 20 Fd Sqn members should send sae for an application form to WO2 (SSM) K Hatley RE, Kangaroo 150, 20 Fd Sqn, 36 Engr Regt, Invicta Park, Maidstone, Kent ME14 12NA (tel 01622 767227).

Mountain Rescue Council

which has been ably supported by military mountain specialists over the years, holds its annual conference and exhibition at the University of Wales, Bangor on Sept 11-13. Details from Mick Randall on 01407 741193 or by e-mail on anath666@aol.com

Permanent Staff Belize 1984-87: Interested in a reunion in Chester on Oct 10? Contact Ron Goodwin, 4 Hurlestone Close, Mickle Trafford, Chester CH2 4DX. Please send sae.

12th Battalion, Devonshire Regiment (Airborne) Branch: 52nd reunion on Oct 10 at the Devon Hotel, Exeter By-Pass, Matford, Exeter (details from Ada Follett on 01392 874596).

Infantry Boys/Junior Leaders Battalion: 4th annual reunion dinner for former boys/junior leaders who served at Tuxford, Harrogate, Plymouth, Oswestry, on Oct 17 at 5 RGJ Training Centre, Milton Keynes. Details: sae to Howard Johnson, 35 Maes-y-Sarn, Pentrech, Cardiff CF4 8QQ or call 01222 891274.

A three-day reunion for all who served during the emergency years in **Malaya and Borneo** is being arranged in Toronto, Canada for the spring or summer 2000. Includes veterans from New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, Nepal, Singapore and Malaya and UK. Details: Malaya Reunion 2000, 205 Carrick Avenue, Keswick, Ontario, Canada L4P 3N7, tel 905 476 9369, fax 905 476 3728 or e-mail on fusilier@ils.net

SEARCHLINE

12th Battalion, Devonshire Regiment (Airborne) Branch is organising a coach trip to Normandy, June 4-11. Open to all. (details from Ada Follett on 01392 874596).

Cigarettes: BBC seeks former soldiers with wartime experience who smoked, had responsibility for distributing cigarettes or with anecdotes on tobacco and war. Strict confidence assured. Contact Martin Small, BBC TV, White City, Wood Lane, London W12 7TS (0181 752 7873).

Arborfield apprentices, intakes 50A and 50B, sought for reunion. Contact Clem Clements on 01604 712128 or Tom Lennox on 01428 865225.

Gnr Marcus Ream has two First World War Victory Medals which he is anxious to return to the families of their rightful owners. They were awarded to **9571 Pte H C Matthews, R Hamps and 3184 Pte G P Blake RAMC.**

Contact Gnr Ream at Royal Artillery Support Troop, A (Vehicle) Sqn, RAC Centre, Allenby Barracks, Bovington, Dorset until March 31 when he will be at C Battery, 3 RHA, Alanbrooke Barracks, Topcliffe, N Yorks.



Detail from a signed, limited edition print of Cambridge Military Hospital commissioned by Rushmoor Borough Council to raise funds for clubs and organisations involved in twinning ventures.

The drawings – there is also one of Farnborough Hill Convent – are the work of well-known local artist Peter Richardson.

Limited to 500 each, costs range from £17.50 for an A3 print to £25 and £38.50 depending on mounts. There is a ten per cent discount when both are ordered.

Details from Joy Savastano, Rushmoor Twinning, 100 Manor Park Drive, Yateley, Hants GU46 6JH (tel 01252 877971).

7538 or e-mail on rdf@dial.pipex.com

The Re-enactment and Living History Society requires a **bugle major, buglers and military musicians** for the 95th rifle regiment of its Napoleonic Association. Details from the Band President on 01737 360561.

Fred Wilson-Taylor has renamed his "old pals" finder website. Clubs, organisations and associations are welcome to take freebie space on <http://www.service-pals.clara.net>. He can also be contacted on 01524 416994.

Local historian researching liberation of south-eastern Holland near **Maas River**, Sept 1944 to Feb 1945, seeks memories, photographs of Allied soldiers who took part, in particular veterans of **11th Armoured Division** and **15th Scottish Division**. Replies to Hugo Levels, Ulensvaaren 47, 6086 GC Neer, Holland.

Laurence K Moore is researching the wartime career of **Capt K F (Ken) Patton MC RAMC** and would like to hear from anyone who knew or served with him. His postings included 4 and 125 Fd Regts RA (1940-41), Buffs (Nov 41), 12 Fd Amb (42), 12 RL (42-43), 226 Fd Amb (44), 3 Coldm Gds (May-June 44), HQ East Anglian Dist. Replies to 42 Parker Road Beacon Park, Plymouth, Devon PL2 3ED.

Questions of rank

Captain's link with Romans

IN THE latest part of *Soldier's* series on insignia and ranks, we continue our journey through the pecking order:

Major is the lowest field rank. A major may be second in command of a unit commanded by a lieutenant-colonel; command a squadron of Royal Armoured Corps, battery of artillery, infantry company or equivalent; or be a grade two staff officer.

Captain comes via old French "capitaine" from the Latin *capitanus*, a chief or headman (*caput* is Latin for head). He stands at the head of others and leads them. The role is equivalent to a Roman centurion, who commanded 100 men.

Lieutenant is from the French *lieu* – place and *tenant* – holding, that is one taking the place of another or an officer who acts for a superior. There is a royal appointment of Lord Lieutenant, introduced in the 16th century with responsibility of raising militia in his county. This power reverted back to the Crown in 1871. Today the duties are largely ceremonial.

Second lieutenant is the lowest commissioned rank. There used to be an ensign in the infantry and dragoons (who carried the ensign or colour) and cornet in the cavalry (who held the standard or guidon). Both these were changed to second lieutenant in 1871.

Warrant officer is one who holds rank by warrant, as distinct from officers who hold theirs by commission from the Queen.

Sergeant can also be spelt with a 'j' – serjeant. There is a sergeant (or serjeant)-at-arms who is an officer of the Houses of Parliament, charged with enforcing the commands of both Houses and arresting offenders. "Serjeant" was once the title of members of a superior order of barristers, from which common law judges were chosen. Serjeant Buzfuz was the overbearing barrister who prosecuted Samuel Pickwick in the Charles Dickens novel. It is interesting to note variants of sergeant's stripes in other armies: the Russian sergeant has three straight stripes across his shoulder board while a sergeant in the Irish Army has a double chevron looking like an inverted 'W'. The colour sergeant in the British Army was so named because it was his duty to attend the regimental colours on ceremonial occasions. – **Hugh Howton**

● More ranks in the next issue



Lt Col Iain Cholerton reads a citation at Chiswick after laying a wreath on the grave of Pte Frederick Hitch VC to commemorate the 119th anniversary of the Battle of Rorke's Drift

RRW honours soldier who fired the first shot at Rorke's Drift

THE MOST famous battle honour of The Royal Regiment of Wales was invoked when a wreath was laid on the grave of Pte Frederick Hitch VC to commemorate the 119th anniversary of the celebrated action at Rorke's Drift.

Lt Col Iain Cholerton, CO 1 RRW, the goat major, the regimental mascot and a private soldier were present for the ceremony at Chiswick Old Cemetery, where Pte Hitch, who became a London cabbie on leaving the Army, was buried on his death in 1913.

Hitch joined the 2nd 24th Regiment of Foot (whose direct descendants are the RRW) in 1877, was sent to South Africa and found himself among other members of his company left to defend the drift on the border with Natal while Lord Chelmsford invaded Zululand. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions in the defence of Rorke's Drift, where he fired the first shot against an overwhelming Zulu army.

He was shot in the shoulder during the battle and invalided out of the Army on his return to Britain.

Lt Col Cholerton hopes that by increasing public awareness, money can be raised to restore Hitch's grave, vandalised by thieves last year. Also at the wreath-laying were members of the Royal British Legion and Fullers Brewery, who have donated £500 towards the restoration.

Readers wishing to contribute should send cheques, payable to Hitch VC Restoration Fund, to Paul Lynch of the

Legion's Chiswick branch c/o Room C113, BBC Woodlands, 80 Wood Land, London W12 0TT.

● Actor Michael Caine, who played Lt Bromhead in *Zulu*, the film depiction of the battle of Rorke's Drift, has been invited to join the RRW on a battlefield tour to mark next year's 120th anniversary of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift.

Plans are afoot for 100 Regular and TA members of the regiment to be hosted by an affiliated regiment, 121 South African Infantry Battalion, spend a night at the mission station and take part in adventurous training.

RWF remembers

MORE than 50 years after D-Day and the battle for Normandy, the Royal Welch Fusiliers are to unveil a memorial to men of the regiment who lost their lives during the summer of 1944.

Three Royal Welch battalions, the 4th, 6th and 7th, landed in France with the 53rd (Welsh) Division. By the time the Germans had been driven out of Normandy at the end of August, the battalions had lost 240 men killed. It is to their memory that the memorial at Evrecy, south-west of Caen, is to be unveiled and dedicated on July 17.

Relatives of those who died and veterans of the three battalions who wish to know more about the ceremony, or anyone who would like to contribute towards the cost of the memorial, should contact the Regimental Headquarters at Hightown Barracks, Wrexham LL13 8RD (01978 264521).

Concert time at Star and Garter

THE Royal Star and Garter Home in Richmond has arranged a series of prestigious concerts during 1998. Acclaimed piano soloist Richard Greenwood is to give a recital on April 1 and, following the popularity of last year's summer concert, another is to be staged on June 21 in the home's beautiful terrace garden overlooking the Thames.

It will feature a Band of the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall. In July, the Star and Garter will be welcoming back Cantanti Camerati, and the final concert will feature a Glenn Miller Band. Details and reservations from Tom Lunt or Alistair Holmes on 0181 948 8865.

All proceeds help support the disabled ex-Servicemen and women who live at the home.

What do you think of the Army Video Diary dated Autumn 1997? Brig Robert Gordon, the Army's Director Public Relations, has asked for feedback on its popularity, availability and usefulness, as well as suggestions for improvements. Brig Gordon also reveals that he is keen to use NCOs and soldiers as presenters and interviewers in future video diaries. Volunteers, one pace forward.

DATES

APRIL

25: British Model Soldier Society annual show, New Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, Holborn, London (0181 590 7812).

27: Lecture by Mr J Wolton on working with Dutch Resistance, Airborne Forces Museum, Aldershot (01252 349619).

MAY

10: Combined Cavalry Old Comrades parade and memorial service, 1100 hours at Cavalry Memorial, Hyde Park (0171 414 5233).

23,24,25: Solent Military Vehicle Preservation Club show, Inhams Lane, Denmead, nr Waterlooville, Hants.

JUNE

2: 41-gun royal salute by King's Troop RHA, Hyde Park, 1200 hours, and 62-gun royal salute by HAC, Tower of London, 1300, to mark anniversary of the Coronation.

3-4: Floodlit Beating Retreat by Massed Bands of the Household Division, Horse Guards Parade, 2130 hours (tickets on 0171 414 2271 from March 1).

9-11: Beating Retreat by Massed Bands of Royal Artillery, Horse Guards Parade (details: 0181 781 3032).

13: Queen's Birthday Parade (Trooping the Colour); Colonel's Review, June 6; Major General's Review, May 30 (ticket applications, on 0891 505 453, close Feb 28).

JULY

21-Aug 2: Royal Tournament, Earls Court (tickets (£5) 0171 244 0244).

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

Fleabag puts her puppies in safe hands

USED as it is to provide safe havens for refugees, the United Nations has rarely been asked to extend its arm of protection to . . . a family of dogs. But that is what happened when Fleabag marched her litter of eight puppies into a hole under the watchful eyes of men of the 1st Royal Tank Regiment manning UN Observation Post 83 in Cyprus's buffer zone.

"They just appeared from nowhere," said Tpr Steve Ross from G Sqn. "Fleabag seemed to like the way that we kept the other wild dogs away from her puppies. Now they are older, she often comes on patrol with us and keeps the wild dogs away herself . . . it's a great partnership."

While her puppies have been promised to families on both sides of the buffer zone



Tpr Steve Ross (left) and Cpl Jimmy McGarr with Fleabag and one of her puppies at their UN observation post in Cyprus

when they are weaned, the tankies are hoping Fleabag will remain on UN duty.

The regiment deployed to Cyprus at the beginning of December and is due to return to Paderborn in June.

50 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, March 1948

BOAR HUNT

Since 1945, when Germans were forbidden to carry arms, the wild boar population of Germany has multiplied almost unchecked. Today British troops strive to restore the balance in organised hunts in the forests where Goering used to range after pig, foxes and deer. It makes a good day's sport even when the game is elusive.

25 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, March 1973

MEET MISS KOSB

Here's one reason why the men of the 1st Battalion, The King's Own Scottish Borderers will be eager to get home from their current tour of duty in Northern Ireland. Waiting for them in Scotland is shapely Susan Mathieson, their pin-up, pictured above.



CHARITY does begin at home. The Army Benevolent Fund tells us that recent donations from units and serving soldiers in the southern region include:

- £4,228 from Capt James Sunderland RLC, who organised a two-day motor-sport event at Abingdon;

- £1,000 from Capt Jason Butler REME as a result of the Exercise Enduring Help 24-hour team cross-country motor-cycle event at Bordon;

- £1,400 from Maj Iain McKend and a team from 60 Squadron RLC who cycled from Land's End to John O'Groats;

Taff's Jordan medal becomes a reality

... with a bit of help from King Hussein

JUST over a year ago we reported in these pages the efforts of ex-sapper Taff Harris to have a medal struck for British soldiers involved in the Jordanian crisis of 1958.

Taff, who served with 1 Troop, 23 Field Squadron RE, was one of many who believed that they were given a raw deal when their request for a campaign medal was ignored.

After announcing his intention to have one struck privately, he was inundated with requests and has so far sold nearly 600 to veterans ranging from brigadiers to privates. Proceeds go to SSAFA Forces Help.

"King Hussein of Jordan approved the medal and graciously gave permission for us to use his portrait on the obverse face," said Taff. "In fact, His Majesty is very involved with the medal and I am keeping him informed of the situation.

"All of us are extremely grateful to King Hussein for what he has done to make the medal a reality."

The former Royal Engineer and his wife Diana spent a week in Jordan as guests of the monarch.

In a letter to Taff, the king wrote: "The old soldiers gave outstanding service to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan." He clearly includes Royal Navy and Royal Air Force personnel in this statement, says Taff.

In the summer of '58, more than 2,000 men of the 16th Independent Parachute Brigade (minus 1 Para which remained in Cyprus) and attached units flew to Amman as tension flared in the desert.

Later, Royal Air Force Hawker Hunters were flown in, a naval presence was established and The Cameronians deployed from East Africa.



Diana and Taff Harris with framed letters received from King Hussein of Jordan and Taff's collection of insignia from his days in the Army



Jordan Service Medal: obverse (left) and reverse



Picture: Martin Cavaney Photography

When the crisis was resolved, King Hussein offered to issue a medal to all British Servicemen involved, an overture which, says Taff, was "turned down by top brass to the great anger of us all".

To add insult to injury, many later discovered that, because of their time in Jordan, they had failed to qualify for the Cyprus General Service Medal.

Such was the interest in Taff's project that he had many approaches from men who had served in Jordan between 1948 and 1957. As a result, two medals have been struck, one specifically to mark the 1958 crisis, the other for more general service. They are identical except for the date.

Cost of the basic medal is £25 and an application for those eligible is available from G E Harris, 124 Haven Park Crescent, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire SA61 1DS (tel 01437 768668).

• £1,750 from two band concerts organised by Aldershot Garrison Sergeant Major WO1 (GSM) Joe Fairbairn on behalf of Service and civilian charities;

• £943 from Maj Julian Free RA and two colleagues at HQ Quartermaster General, Andover, raised during their drive from

Norway's North Cape to Spain's Cape Tarifa in the Cape-to-Cape Challenge; • £431 from Capt Jeff Tidman, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Army Cadet Force and a team of cadets and adults who completed the Three Peaks Challenge.

To help the ABF, ring 0171 581 8684.

Finally . . .

VISCOUNT Gen William Slim, "Uncle Bill" to the men he led against the Japanese in Burma during the Second World War, topped a poll of military commanders published in *Focus*, the national science magazine. He finished ahead of the Duke of Wellington and Rommel, who were joint second, with Nelson fourth and Napoleon fifth.

Next, in order, were Georgi Zhukov (Stalin's second-in-command), Lettow-Vorbeck (First World War German general in East Africa), the Duke of Marlborough, Alexander the Great and American Civil War leader Ulysses S Grant.

Perhaps *Soldier* readers have their own ideas of who should be in the all-time 1st XI (or ten) of military leaders . . .

Falklands veteran **Simon Weston** has agreed to take part in the Lapland Trek in September to raise funds for the Royal Star and Garter Home at Richmond. The four-day trek covers 100km of wilderness inside the Arctic Circle. There's also a 435km bike ride for those seeking an even more physical challenge. Ring the Star and Garter on 0181 940 1351 for details.

● Star concerts – previous page.

A new brochure from St Dunstan's reminds us that the organisation still cares for ex-Service people blinded in the Second World War as well as practically every conflict since, including the Gulf and Northern Ireland. St Dunstan's, which receives no direct Government funding, also administers the Diana Gubbay Trust for the Blind, which assists ex-Service personnel whose blindness is not attributable to service. Details: 0171 723 5021.

Some sets of a limited edition cover featuring **The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery** are available from Fourpenny Post, 30 Dinsdale Avenue, Wallsend, Newcastle upon Tyne NE28 9JD (tel 0191 262 8844).

Q: What do you do with a load of unwanted T-shirts? A: Contact the British Army, which will find a good home for them. When spring-cleaning staff at the Thakeston brewery visitor centre at Marsham, North Yorkshire, found more than 500 old promotional T-shirts and sweatshirts, they passed them to LCpl Darren Bryce, serving with 2 Battalion, REME in Split. He offered to distribute them to Bosnian orphanages and families in need of clothing. And the best of British to them.

Army chaplain Peter Vickers is running in the Flora London Marathon on April 26 to raise money for a United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel health project. So what's special, you might ask? Just that Padre Peter of the RACRHD suffered a stroke 19 months ago and was for a time confined to a wheelchair. After treatment at BMH Rinteln he was transferred to the Royal Hospital Haslar, then placed under the garrison physiotherapist at Aldershot. Following a spell at RAF Headley Court he started running his way back to fitness. Peter can be contacted on Aldershot Mil (722) 3161 or by writing to him at the Army School of Catering at Aldershot.

Vox Pop

The regular feature in which we ask soldiers for their views on an issue of the moment

Separation

How do soldiers cope with overseas postings? And are they expected to spend too long away from home? We asked 11 soldiers serving in Bosnia for their opinions.

Cpl Vicky Quilter RAMC

I handle separation by just getting on with work. I'm a PTI as well as a dental nurse and I haven't got too much time to sit around and think about things. My family is used to the overseas tours because my brother is in The Parachute Regiment.



Gnr Alan Etherington RA

It's my fourth operational tour. The first three were OK but now I've met a girl and got engaged. She wants to get married, but not while I'm in the Army because she can't cope with the separation.



LCpl Neil Egan REME

It's more of a problem for the married guys. I went to boarding school as a kid so I got used to being away from home at an early age. I don't mind at all being out here for six months.



LCpl Clive Robertson RE

It is getting harder because, with the big cutbacks and the increased commitments, the tours are coming around more quickly. It is increasingly hard on families. The Army could give a lot more help to wives and girlfriends who are left in the UK.

Gnr Paul Dibbens RA

It's never been a problem for me. But six months is a bit too long to be away; I'd say four months is about right. Some things have improved. I was in the Army before, and in those days we got just one week's leave in a six-month tour. Now we get two.



LCpl Garry Wraith RAMC

When you are back home on R and R, you have to make the best of it, spending as much time as possible with the family. But really this is something that I've got used to and



so has the wife. The Army does expect a lot of you, but you have to be up to their expectations or you are in the wrong job.

Lt Garry New RAMC

I cope with it by throwing myself into my work. Your colleagues become rather like a surrogate family. You talk to them about things that you would normally

share with your family. Back home, my wife has her job and the dogs to look after, so separation is not a problem for her.

WO2 Pat Gibson QARANC

I cope with it pretty well because it is something you know you have to do. My husband was with 1 Para, so this way of life is something we have both got used to. Last time I was out here he was away as well, but now I've left him at home. He seems to be coping.



WO2 Paul Carnell RAMC

My family do not like it. There is no doubt that my wife is lonely, but she keeps busy and



we've not been counting off the days. Operational tours are not suited to married people.

When I was single it was great, but now I have different priorities.



LCpl Iain Swift RAMC

I've signed off because of separation. In five years I've been sent on

five operational tours and it has got too much. I actually leave the Army in April because I have a new baby boy and I want to see him growing up.

Pte Denise Hodgkinson RAMC

This is my first tour. The separation isn't made any easier by the fact that the phones are hardly ever working. But



you've just got to get on with it, really. It is only six months, after all, and we do get our R and R.

Interviews: Graham Bound Pictures: Terry Champion

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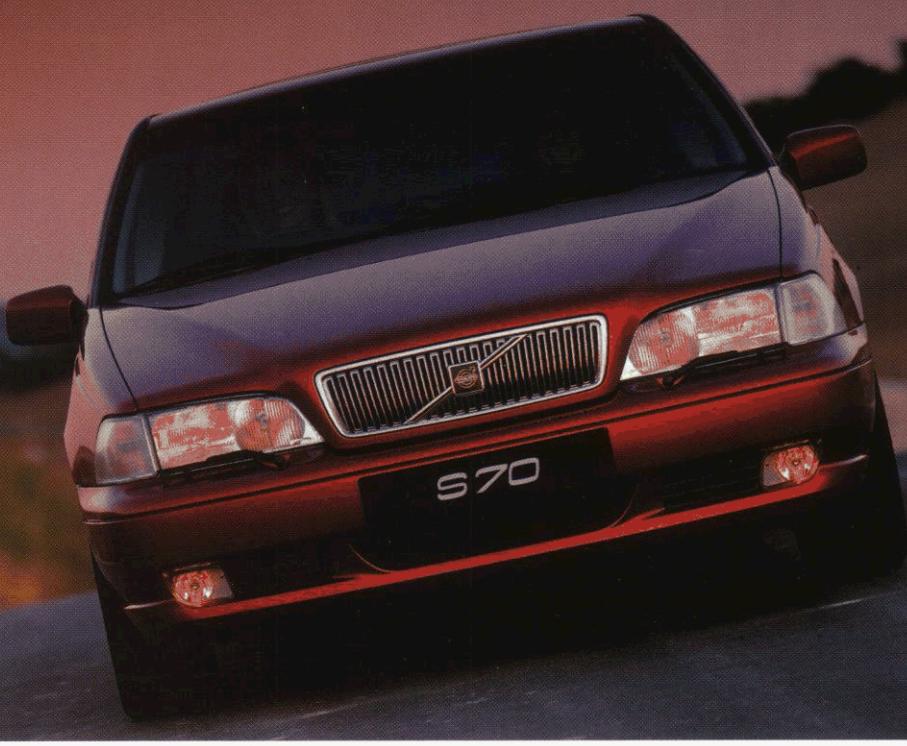
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COMING SOON

- Your 1998 pay scales, allowances and charges ... in detail.
- Special reports from Bosnia: with the RMPs and the 9th/12th Lancers.
- Caring for old soldiers: MoD-backed charity trust has Gurkha pensioners' welfare at heart.
- Past glories, future promise: Greenwich's Royal Artillery Museum shapes up.
- Open wide: "teeth" arms in business at RADC detachment in Germany
- Back to school: Duke of York's military heritage

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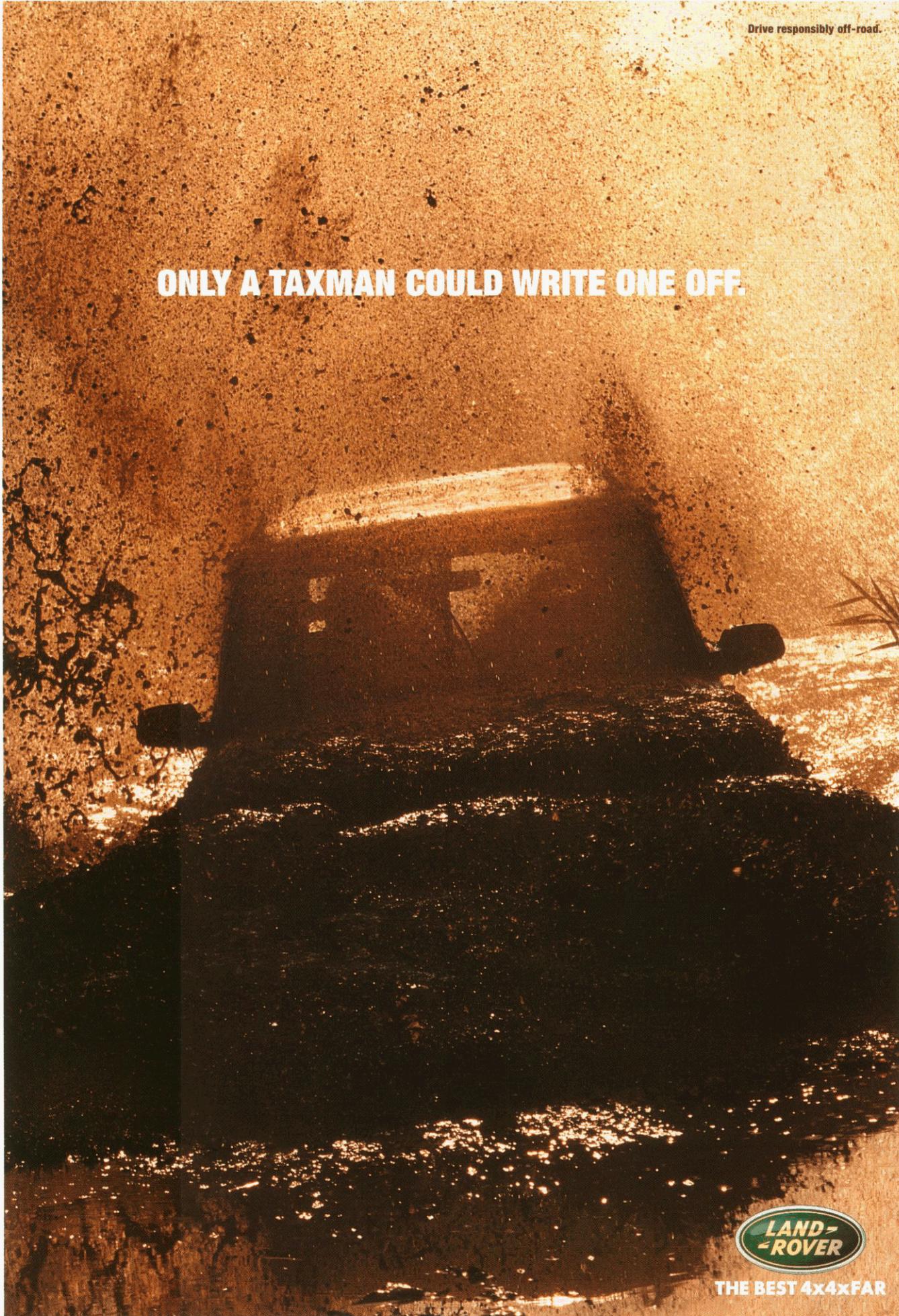
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