

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

December 2001 £2

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Contact list: Page 78



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Picture: SAC Darren Smith

Picture: Mike Weston



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Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year to all our readers and advertisers

Package that didn't get through

Oman special facilities were welcomed by those who benefited, but many did not.

Report: Ray Routledge
Pictures: Graeme Main

TROOPS in Oman for Exercise Saif Sareea 2 expected some restrictions on the operational welfare package (OWP) put together for them, but many told *Soldier* that they were surprised at just how limited their options were in the desert.

While those based at Camps South and Sha'afa enjoyed e-blueys (electronic mail), 20 minutes of phone calls home a week and other benefits, front-line units who endured the harshest conditions handed back thousands of hours of unused phone cards.

Their soldiers will recall weeks of no contact with home and few comforts. For them, phones hardly existed.

Pte Kim Gustar, RDG, explained why it had been particularly tough on families. "The media gave people at home the wrong message, implying we would all be sent to Afghanistan. It caused families a lot of worry. We were on exercise, that's all. But we could not contact them to tell them everything was all right."

Lt Col Nick Millen, RDG, said the lack of phones was one symptom of how the OWP had failed troops in the front line.

"We were realistic and knew that we were not going to have access to the welfare package in the same way as soldiers at Camp South. All of them were doing an important job and we could not function without them, but the only reason they were there was to support us."

"Everyone tells me what a massive success OWP was, but it certainly wasn't if you were in the desert."

"It was made very clear to us before we came out that local overseas allowance (LOA) was not going to be paid to our soldiers in Oman because the OWP was going to be provided."

He said the package, while an excellent measure for those on ops in the Balkans, where soldiers were fairly static, had not worked for front-line troops in Oman.

Lt Col Millen acknowledged that because of his regiment's location, it was

THE FULL WORKS

TROOPS were issued with an *aide-memoire* giving details of the welfare package available. It included:

- Forces' aerogrammes (blueys)
- E-blueys
- E-mail at static locations
- 20 minutes of phone calls a week
- Newspapers
- Library book pack
- BFBS radio, TV, video

recorders and videotapes

- CSE show
- EFI
- Fitness equipment for anyone deployed for more than four months
- Operational stand-down (OSD) for those deployed for more than one month and less than four months
- Local exercise leave (LEL) for all in theatre for more than four months.

Saif Sareea round-up – Pages 17-23

and that had an effect on morale."

Pte Christian Button, RDG, said: "My girlfriend posted eight letters and I didn't see one. My family was concerned that I might be sent to Afghanistan and I had no way of reassuring them that I was not."

Irish Guardsmen told a similar story. Lt Barney Smyth said that by the end of the exercise his soldiers had completed 56 days in the desert with just two days' operational stand-downs.

"The welfare package didn't go according to plan," he said. "The soldiers opted to go to hotels but, although they were of a similar price, they were of varying standard and some didn't have bars. Everyone had been looking forward to it. We had been out there for the best part of a month, living rough, and it was a great disappointment."

"One would hope that in future a little more care will be put into choosing hotels."

"We are front-line soldiers and everyone understands that we have to rough it more than the rear echelon. That's a fact of life, but when the guys do get some down-time, I believe they should receive the same privileges."

● Army Welfare Service feature – Page 27

Calling card: Cpl "JJ" Johnson of The Royal Green Jackets' Milton Keynes-based Territorial Army E Company

Welfare access was responsibility of unit commanders in the field

THERE was a robust counter-attack from Permanent Joint Headquarters at Northwood when *Soldier* asked for comment on criticisms of the welfare package provided for troops in Oman.

Brig Max Kerley told us that the expeditionary and austere nature of Saif Sareea had been stressed well ahead of the exercise in a briefing to senior officers.

Commanders had been told that in a war-fighting scenario it would not be possible to deliver all elements of the operational welfare package during tactical training periods. It was the responsibility of the chain of command – commanders in the field – to manage access of troops to centres with good welfare facilities as well as the expectations of those troops so that they did not expect to have everything delivered to them on a plate.

"There has to be a recognition that the nature of military operations and training places restrictions on the delivery of the OWP," said Brig Kerley. "For example, a Portakabin full of welfare telephones cannot be moved around the battlefield, and units do not have the generator capacity to be able to have all elements of the OWP available all the time."

He said there was also the question of whether a CO would want all the welfare facilities provided in a tactical situation.

"The decision was made to provide welfare facilities centrally so that when troops had a break from training they could have reasonable access to good facilities. Ensuring that the troops were indeed given access to these centralised facilities is a chain of command responsibility," he said.

Mail delivery affected by attack on New York

ON specific criticisms raised by *Soldier*, PJHQ responded:

● The facility to print e-blueys was available in-theatre from mid-June. We were not told what arrangements units made to inform their families that this new facility would be available.

● There were problems with delivery of mail, and the events of September 11 created significant difficulties for all organisations moving items by air. This was outside the control of the Forces' mail system.

● On the hotels used during operational stand-down (OSD) periods, it must be remembered that Oman is not a major tourist destination and choice was limited. Those selected were of good standard, although one did not have its own bar facilities. Arrangements were made for personnel to have access to bars in other hotels.

The fact that the Irish Guards spent 56 days in the desert and had only two days of OSD was an in-theatre command decision and should not be used as a criticism of the operational welfare package.

● The Saif Sareea package cost about £10 million and difficult financial decisions had to be made. The pragmatic decision was to centralise most welfare resources to give better access to the majority without requiring further financial constraints on the valuable training that took place.

LOA was never an option for desert exercise

LOCAL Overseas Allowance (LOA) was never an option for troops on Saif Sareea 2. Designed to cover additional costs of living overseas, it was not relevant for personnel on an exercise, said Brig Kerley.

Because there were no additional costs of living, the payment of LOA could not be justified.

Neither was it the correct mechanism by which to provide welfare support, he said. In the desert, where there was no infrastructure, it could provide nothing. "The OWP helps to maintain operational effectiveness by mitigating the

degradation of personal performance. No amount of LOA could achieve that."

The OWP is designed to be delivered in phases, with more elements becoming available the longer the mission goes on. An exception was made for Saif Sareea 2, which was given the full works because some of the force had been in Oman for six months or more.

Although most of those taking part were in theatre for only two months, they benefited from elements to which they were not strictly entitled. These included the concert featuring Geri Halliwell.

Boots were red-hot issue

BOOTS were a serious concern for many soldiers in Oman.

LCpl Andrew Clark of 30 Signal Regiment was wearing standard-issue black boots when he took part in the first battle for Miqrat airstrip.

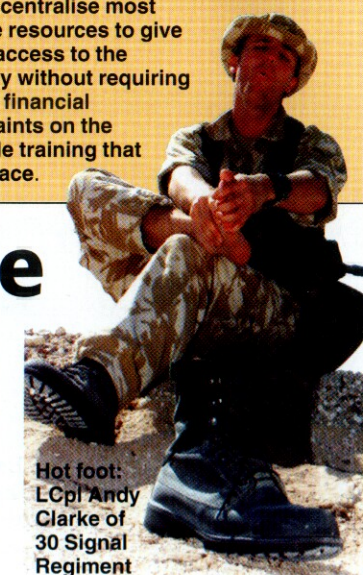
"I wasn't issued with desert boots and my feet have been absolutely red-hot," he said. "I just have to take my boots off at

every opportunity. In some ways, the boot is the most important bit of kit I've got. A lot of the lads bought their own desert boots and bergens."

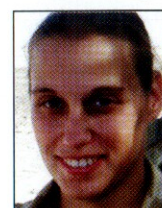
"If you used an Army-issue sleeping bag out here, you would be affected by the heat, so a lot bought their own bags, which were more convenient and comfortable and less bulky."

Buying boots wasn't restricted to soldiers. "I bought mine," said Lt Col Millen, "and 90 per cent of my soldiers bought their own because they were told they weren't being issued."

"We were eventually issued with a boot – a lounge boot which quickly fell to pieces and didn't come bigger than a size nine."



Hot foot: LCpl Andy Clarke of 30 Signal Regiment



Pte Kim Gustar

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Our man in Pakistan spells out the task

BRIG Johnny Torrens-Spence, former commanding officer of The Royal Dragoon Guards and now Defence Attaché to the British High Commission in Islamabad, is under no illusions about what faces troops in Afghanistan, writes **Lt Col Robin Hodges**.

"Much of Pakistan is hot, flat desert, but the North-West Frontier, which bor-

ders Afghanistan, is very different," he said in Islamabad. "The terrain is dramatically difficult to operate in.

"The mountains are high and steep, and there are lots of them. The valleys are deep, with tracks carved out of the sides and which are constantly washed away by mud or rock falls. There are only two roads into Kabul and one man with explosives

could close either. Logistically the country is among the world's most demanding.

"The Afghans are fit, resilient and used to operating on light scales in very difficult terrain. The land is inhospitable and unstable, with earth tremors recorded every 30 seconds. There is continual movement of the rock and buildings regularly collapse as the ground shakes," he said.

Waiting for the green light

Troops on reduced notice to deploy

Report: Soldier staff and Lt Col Robin Hodges in Islamabad

AN advance party of UK military personnel, including Royal Marines, is deployed at Bagram airfield in Afghanistan to assess its safety for wider use, such as the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Although the UK Joint Rapid Reaction Force is on reduced notice to move, as *Soldier* went to press no decision had been taken to deploy larger UK forces. Possible tasks would include supporting the United Nations and humanitarian agencies. There was no intention to deploy troops in offensive operations against the Taliban.

Units on stand-by included elements of 3 Commando and 16 Air Assault Brigades. The men of 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, 45 Commando Royal Marines, and a range of supporting assets such as Royal Air Force air transport, support helicopters, engineers, logistic teams and explosive ordnance disposal experts were ready to move at short notice, while 40 Cdo RM remained at high readiness.

More than 100 Gurkhas who have reinforced 2 Para since 1996 were retained to give their support during the crisis. The

Gurkhas had been due to leave the battalion and return to their parent unit, The Royal Gurkha Rifles, at locations around the world.

During the past month 118 reservists were called out and reported for duty as a result of the terrorist attacks of September 11. Other reservists are supporting operations in locations including the Balkans and Sierra Leone.

A Civil Affairs Group team from Minley Manor near Camberley, Surrey, led by Maj Graeme Olley AGC(ETS), has been in Islamabad since October to establish a Coalition Humanitarian Liaison Centre.

The team has worked closely with the

humanitarian agencies. "The job is all about relationships – persuading the non-government organisations that the coalition is about more than bombing Afghanistan," explained Maj Andrew Whelan RRF, of the Minley team.

"The humanitarian community was well established in Afghanistan before the bombing began and when they re-enter Afghanistan they will require our specialist expertise," said Maj Mike Dejamette, US Army.

Their work will be vital to help make the countryside safe again by providing details for the clearance of bombs and missiles deployed against the Taliban.



Air control: Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment on West Freugh airfield, near Stranraer, during a 16 Air Assault Brigade exercise in Scotland last month

Picture: Mark Owens

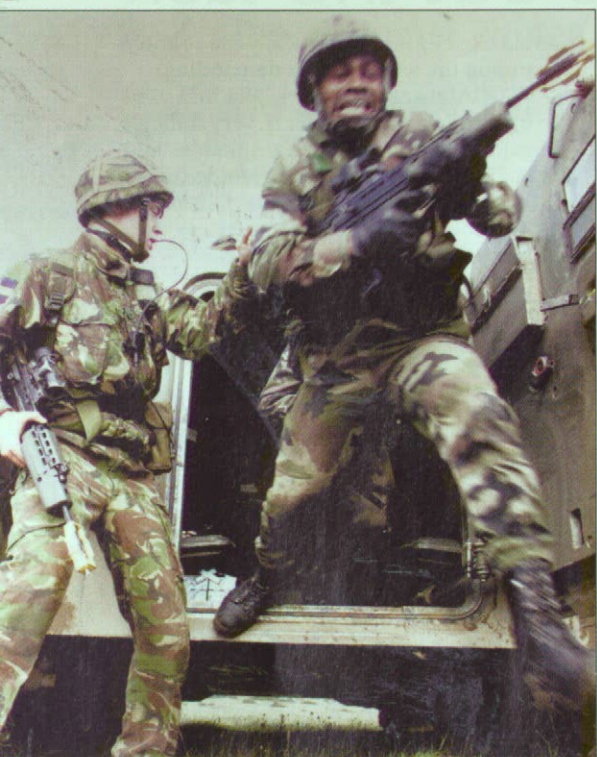


On the spot: From left are Civil Affairs Group members Majs Andrew Whelan RRF and Graeme Olley AGC(ETS), CSgt David Ibbotson IG and Maj Mike Dejamette, US Army

Picture: Robin Hodges

US Army's 96th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) from Fort Bragg and together they have been tasked to assist the

Allez! Allez! Allez!



Entente cordiale: Pte Andy Walker, left, of 7 Platoon, C Coy, 1 PWRR, waves Sgt Chief Jean-Louis Narayanin of the French 1er Régiment d'Infanterie out of a Warrior on Salisbury Plain. Jean-Louis was one of 85 French soldiers on an exchange visit to the UK. Last month 100 PWRR soldiers travelled to France.

Picture: Steve Dock

Skyline serenade



Blowing in the wind: Saxophonist Victoria King (16), a pupil at Wellington Academy, Greenock, plays for Bandmaster WO1 Craig Hallatt of the Scottish Division's Lowland Band during a two-day "look at life" workshop put on at the school by the military musicians.

Picture: Mark Owens



Picture: Mark Owens

All systems go: As a Harrier GR7 jump-jet comes in to land, SSgt Paul Douthwaite of 71 Engineer Regiment (V), backed by Sabre reconnaissance vehicles of The Queen's Own Yeomanry, protects the landing pad built by his regiment at Machrihanish Airfield near Campbeltown in Argyll. The action took place during Exercise Highland Harrier

Scottish brigade advances to battle

CAMPBELTOWN, on the tip of Scotland's "nose", had not seen anything like it for many a year.

Roaring armour, marching infantry and the skirl of the pipes signalled an invasion, albeit one that was warmly welcomed. It was the Fighting 51st on manoeuvres in the biggest exercise to take place in the UK this year.

About 1,400 troops and 200 vehicles from Territorial Army units in the north of Scotland took part in the 51st Highland Brigade's triennial military concentration on the Kintyre peninsula. The two-week exercise, Highland Harrier, was based at Machrihanish airfield, one of the longest runways in Europe.

Units were put through their paces in a series of scenarios aimed initially at sub-unit level and developing into a combined arms battle-group operation.

RAF Harrier jump-jets and Tornados bombers played a variety of friendly and enemy roles. Units involved included 51 Highland Regiment (V), the Scottish Transport Regiment RLC (V), 71 Engineer Regiment (V), 225 Field Ambulance (V), The Queen's Own Yeomanry, 3 Flight AAC (V), RMP elements, 205 Field Hospital (V), 1st Battalion, The Royal Highland Fusiliers and 52 Signal Squadron (V).



Leading role: 2nd Lt Jennifer Young of 71 Engr Regt Wksp REME on Highland Harrier lance (V), The Queen's Own Yeomanry, 3 Flight AAC (V), RMP elements, 205 Field Hospital (V), 1st Battalion, The Royal Highland Fusiliers and 52 Signal Squadron (V).

IN BRIEF

● Pay 2000 arrangements for Army doctors, dentists, vets, chaplains and Reserve Forces are to go before the Armed Forces Pay Review Body as part of the new pay round and, once agreed, will be in place by November next year. It was considered too complex and risky a change to transfer all Service pay to the system on the same day

in April this year. It is intended that reserve forces' pay should reflect the arrangements now in place for Regular personnel.

● The Prince of Wales has launched a guide to help prevent homeless ex-Servicemen from being forced into sleeping rough on the streets. Accompanied by Dr Lewis Moonie, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Loise Casey, head of the Government's Rough Sleepers Unit, Prince Charles listened to first-hand experiences of former Servicemen who had been sleeping rough on the streets.

Shell collectors

Cyprus sappers make range a safer place

BRITISH sappers have blown-up shells and mortar rounds on Cyprus's beautiful Akamas peninsula in a month-long operation.

Royal Engineers, Royal Navy divers and civilians played a part in the clean-up on the firing range. During Operation Upraise 80 people lived in a tented base at Invicta Camp while clearing the training debris. Among them were 62 sappers of 21 Field Squadron (EOD), 20 naval divers and nine civil servants.

Troop commander Lt Corinne Ford, of 21 Fd Sqn, explained the meticulous work involved dividing the area into "boxes", which were scanned for buried metallic objects. The biggest find was an eight-inch naval shell.

Maj Nick Elliott, OC 21 Fd Sqn, who led the operation, said a survey of the 1,400-hectare range was completed.

"We will use this information to work closely with the Cypriot authorities to ensure the Akamas can be turned into a national forest park which will be a safe and environmentally-friendly place for people to enjoy," said Maj Elliott.

● Fourteen sapper surveyors from 13 Geographical Squadron, reinforced by four from 135 Independent Geographical Squadron, are working in some of



First time lucky: Spr Brian Blowe discovered an unexploded 81mm mortar bomb

Picture: Julie Timbrell

the most sensitive parts of Cyprus to ensure the Sovereign Base Areas are clearly and accurately marked.

Their task of checking the 774 white boundary posts has taken them very close to the Greek-Turkish dividing line.

Loggy expedition blazes trail to remotest Siberia

TWENTY-THREE members of the Royal Logistic Corps, an Army doctor, a medic and a Royal Artillery climbing instructor have completed a ground-breaking expedition in north-east Siberia.

The RLC millennium project, which was delayed until agreement could be reached with Russia, took the Army climbers, members of Glencoe Mountain Rescue Team and a scientist to the barren and largely unclimbed Cherkiy mountain



Flagged-up: Summit party

range just south of the Arctic Circle. The party was joined by 40 members of the elite Russian Emergencies Ministry.

Climbers from both the camps reached the summit of Mount Pobeda, at over 3,000m the highest peak in the range, during the three-week expedition.

The high-profile trip, which was supported by the Royal Geographical Society, has opened the door to more British Army exploration in Russia.

nied by Dr Lewis Moonie, Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Loise Casey, head of the Government's Rough Sleepers Unit, Prince Charles listened to first-hand experiences of former Servicemen who had been sleeping rough on the streets.

● It is hoped that a song composed for

Remembrance Day by Maj Charles Turner of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and sung by members of the battalion will go on release next year. Proceeds from the recording, a blend of rock and military music, will benefit the Royal British Legion. It can be heard by logging on to the Army website at www.army.co.uk

Beauty and beasts



Gunner girls: Blackpool beauty queens Natalie James, left, Heidi Cliff, centre, and Karen Jean-Cookson turned the tables on the lads of 3/29 Corunna Battery of 4th Regiment RA during a visit to Cyprus. Nine gunners, attached to 12th Regiment RA on a six-month United Nations tour in Nicosia, paraded in front of the Blackpool beauties in uniform, evening attire and swimwear. Costumes included a bunny girl outfit and a gas mask worn as a G-string. LBdr Nick Gash-Welby, who won the "Mr Corunna" competition, put his triumph down to the fact that "the rest were amateurs".

The girls' trip to the Mediterranean island came about because Blackpool is a traditional recruiting area for 12 Regiment.

Picture: SAC Ritchie Smith

● About 6,000 people from 20 countries enjoyed a UN Day organised by 12 Regt in Nicosia. Maj Nick Martin, the 2iC, said the family day had taken four months to plan.

● Larkhill-based 32nd Regiment RA deploys this month to Cyprus on a six-month tour of duty.

Capital company



City folk: Soldiers of the Honourable Artillery Company, which recruits extensively from the City of London, salute the new Lord Mayor during the annual show. The HAC provided two patrols for the parade and its gun troop mounted the ceremonial saluting battery at the Tower of London.

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Spanner in the works: SSgt Doc Holliday, left, Sgt Lee Downham, centre, and Cpl Tim Sexton show the form that got them onto an international *Scrapheap Challenge* Picture: Steve Dock

TV Scrapheap trio aids crash victims

REME soldiers representing Britain in a Christmas special of Channel 4's *Scrapheap Challenge* programme being shot in the USA helped victims of a road traffic accident before calmly returning to the filming.

With American participants unwilling to get involved, the three British Servicemen gave first aid until medical help arrived.

They were taking part in an international version of the programme, during which they competed against a US team of Lockheed Martin engineers and top Russian brains from Moscow University.

SSgt Doc Holliday, a vehicle artificer, metalsmith Sgt Lee Downham and vehicle mechanic Cpl Tim Sexton – all from Tidworth-based 22 Engineer Regiment Workshops – saw off a challenge from a Royal Marines entry to win the chance to spend ten days in California, courtesy of the TV company.

The British Bulldogs, as they were called, had to construct a vehicle in which they could race across salt flats, do a rock-climb and cross a lake. In temperatures reaching 130 degrees F, the soldiers had to

wear safety gear and helmets for up to ten hours a day. "The American team took it upon themselves to host us and they were brilliant," said Sgt Downham.

On the final day of filming, the bus carrying the teams and production crew came across a car crash, and the British soldiers were the only ones willing to help.

"There was no one else on the scene and the Americans wouldn't assist," said Cpl Sexton. "They were pretty stunned by our actions, probably because of the American legal system and medical liability, but that was the last thing on our minds," added Sgt Downham. "We may have saved lives."

Soon afterwards medical and fire crews arrived and took over. "They couldn't believe we could do what we did then get back on to the bus and get on with the job in hand," said Cpl Sexton. "They had forgotten that not only are we trained to kill people, but also to save life, too."

● Who won? We can reveal that the result was in the balance until the final two minutes. To find out, watch the 1½-hour programme on December 23.

Wainwright crash victim returns to battalion

A SOLDIER who was critically injured when an Army Land Rover overturned on Wainwright training area in Alberta, Canada, in August has returned to his unit after a long haul back to fitness.

Rfn Steve Green, RGJ, sustained serious head injuries in the accident, in which Royal Engineer Spr Adam Williams was similarly injured and four other soldiers were hurt.

Spr Williams has also returned to his unit, 32 Engineer Regiment, currently based at Hohne.

His life and that of Rfn Green were saved by the prompt actions of soldiers at the scene and the lightning response of the Royal Green Jacket battle-group helicopter, which arrived on the scene three minutes after the first report of the accident. The injured soldiers were treated by the Wainwright hospital medical team and the battle-group doctor before being moved to the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton.

Rfn Green, who has expressed his thanks to all those involved in his astonishing recovery, is being closely monitored by medical staff and colleagues and is receiving help for the severe memory loss from which he suffers.



Back: Rfn Steve Green

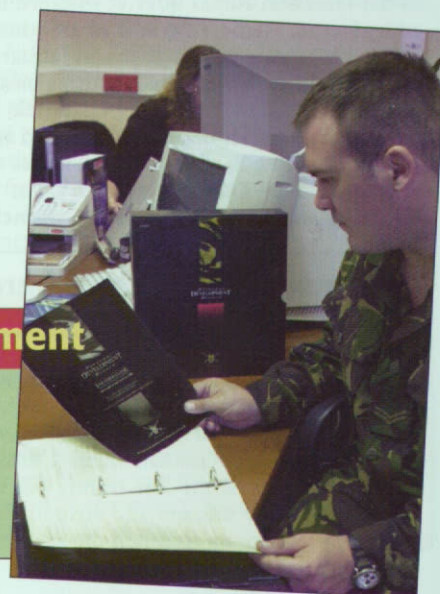
Bucket of money

CPLs Alan Ridout and Michael Eastwood of the Civil Engineering Wing of the Royal School of Military Engineering at Chatham spent 168 hours in the bucket of a tractor to raise money for the BBC Children in Need Appeal. They collected more than £8,000.

Your guide to personal development

POPULAR demand for an easy-to-read practical guide to the Personal Development Record (PDR) issued last year to every Regular and Territorial Army soldier has resulted in the publication of a short booklet.

The guide, shown here by Cpl Steve Davies, HQ Adjutant General, will be issued to everyone in the next few weeks. It answers the most frequently asked questions.



Sisters-in-arms



Double value: Sisters **Andrea**, left, (16) and **Emma Willis** (17) from County Durham enlisted on the same day at Bishop Auckland Army Careers Information Office. They are pictured with senior recruiter **WO Tony Masters**, centre, and **Sgt Mac McGlyn**. Andrea has her heart set on joining the REME to train as a vehicle mechanic while Emma wants to become a driver in the Royal Logistic Corps. Picture: The Northern Echo

More accolades for Soldier – see Page 71

Fanfare for Army's new radio station

TO the sound of trumpeters from the locally-based Band of The Parachute Regiment, Colchester Garrison Radio was due to launch itself on the airwaves on December 5 as the latest station to cater for a military community in the United Kingdom.

Broadcasting on 107FM initially from temporary studios, it will switch to 1350AM at the beginning of January and move into a permanent home at the Naafi Spar shop in Holmfield Road, Colchester.

The third Army station to go on air, it follows Catterick and Bulford, which opened earlier this year. Aldershot, the final station in the Garrison Radio quartet masterminded by former Radio 1 DJ and BFBS presenter Mark Page, is due to go live in January.

● Gurkha Garrison Radio, broadcasting in Nepali, was launched in Catterick last month. The service has been described as "a wonderful thing for UK-based Gurkha soldiers" by Maj David Whitfield from the Gurkha Language Wing at ITC Catterick.

Reichswald dead remembered

LT Col Bertie Polley, commanding officer of Support Battalion, HQ ARRC, laid a wreath on Remembrance Day in Reichswald Forest War Cemetery, the largest Commonwealth cemetery of either world war. Between Kleve and Gennap on the German-Dutch border, it is the last resting place of more than 7,500 soldiers and airmen. Officers from 12 nations attended the service.

ARMY families can take advantage of a 40 per cent discount for the evening performances at the Olympia International Show Jumping Championships at Earls Court on December 19 and 20. The programme includes dis-

Just the ticket to Olympia show

plays by Cossacks from the Ukraine and the Westphalian state stallions.

Savings range from nearly £12 off a top-priced ticket of £34.50 to an £11 seat for just £6.60.

There are seven price-categories to suit all pockets.

Call the Olympia box office on 0870 733 0733 and quote "Olympia" to claim your discount. There is a booking fee of 75p a ticket.

Eight hurt in North Belfast

Troops face barrages of 100 petrol bombs

EIGHT soldiers were hurt over a period of seven weeks during serious public disorder disturbances in North Belfast.

Most suffered concussion after being struck by concrete blocks, and one soldier from B Company, 1st Battalion, The Royal Welch Fusiliers was seriously injured in the upper leg by a pipe-bomb thrown during night-time disturbances. He is reported to be making a good recovery.

Much of the trouble was concentrated on sectarian hot-spots, particularly in the Ardoyne and Tiger's Bay areas. Troops were deployed during the day to assist police ensuring safe passage of Catholic children to the Holy Cross

School in the face of loyalist protests. At night, soldiers were regularly deployed on to the streets to help restore calm during civil unrest between nationalists and loyalists.

They were frequently attacked by sectarian mobs ranging from 30 to 200.

Barrages of up to 100 petrol bombs a night, plus fireworks, blast bombs and low-velocity shots were aimed at troops from the 1st Battalion, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders; the 1st Battalion, Scots Guards; the 1st Battalion, The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment; the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards and the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment.

Pension is being paid for child of soldier killed in Sierra Leone

THE MoD has confirmed that an *ex gratia* payment was made to Anna Homs, whose long-term partner, Bdr Brad Tinnion, died during an operation to free hostages in Sierra Leone in September last year.

She revealed to the media that she had been offered £250,000.

The MoD said the payment, which is not a pension, reflected the exceptional circumstances of the case: that the death occurred in service, the length of the relationship, the birth of a child, and Ms Homs's parental responsibilities.

The Armed Forces Pension Scheme does not pay widows' benefits to unmarried partners and Ms Homs did not meet the War Pension Scheme criteria for an unmarried war widow's pension. Both schemes will, however, pay a pension for the child until she is 17 or completes full-time education.

● In line with the policy of successive governments, any changes made as a result of an ongoing review of Armed Forces pensions and compensation provision are unlikely to be retrospective due to the huge costs involved.



Home comforts: Sapper tradesmen from 32 Engr Regt Gp take a break from rebuilding a house in Jukliani in eastern Kosovo. They made two houses habitable for the winter

Sappers face up to Kosovo challenges

BRITISH sappers serving with 32 Engineer Regiment Group in Kosovo have been helping local people put their lives and communities back together.

A section under Cpl Bob Beston moved into tents in the Serbian village of Jukliani in the east of the country to help returnees rebuild their homes.

Meanwhile, HQ Squadron, given the task of training the engineering element of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), a civil protection force of about 500 men mostly from the former Kosovan Army, took on a local project.

Led by instructor Sgt Jim Clark, a team of KPC engineers reconstructed a wooden road bridge that was the only

vehicle access to a village of 500 people.

Caravica quarry, 17km west of Pristina, was taken over by 65 Field Support Squadron. A major task for them was providing material for a new ammunition depot. Because local contractors are barred from holding explosives, sappers do all the drilling and blasting.

The squadron's resources troop converted two containers into air-conditioned dog kennels and fabricated the full-size silhouette of an armoured vehicle to prove it could be transported through a local rail tunnel.

Gundolph Lines, the Royal Engineers' Pristina base, now boasts a reliable satellite system serving ten private booths from which soldiers can make 20 minutes of free phone calls home every week. Three internet terminals, also free, offer access to the worldwide web.

A luxury in the lines is a launderette where soldiers can drop off dirty garments in the morning and collect them cleaned and pressed in the evening. Facilities will be extended next year when a café, sauna and cable digital TV are installed.

● Of the 46 students who began a four-week junior NCOs' cadre course run by the 32 Engr Regt Gp in Pristina, 34 passed out and 12 were promoted.



On parade: Maj Gen Evelyn Webb-Carter, left, Colonel of The Duke of Wellington's Regiment, presents UN medals for their tour of duty in Kosovo to soldiers of Osnabrück-based 1 DWR at Sennelager Training Area

Medics in action



Helping hands: British Army medics stabilise a "casualty" during Blue Light, a mass exercise played out by the United Kingdom's battle-group in Bosnia. "Its main intent was to assess the immediate reaction of the battle-group in providing first aid and on-scene command-and-control," said Maj Charlie Charleston, the HQ Multi-National Division (South West) staff officer for medical operations. The exercise also tested MND(SW)'s incident response team – which includes a signaller, sappers and an OED expert to help out in case of a mine threat – in dealing with a major incident.

Super shell to extend reach of the gunners

A £9 million assessment phase contract competition to provide the Army's next generation of guided rockets and shells has been awarded to BAE Systems.

Under the Indirect Fire Precision Attack (IFPA) project, the Royal Artillery will have the ability to hit targets with pinpoint accuracy at ranges up to 150km, five times that of its existing systems. IFPA is one of several major projects for new guns, ammunition and missiles designed to give the Army a dramatically increased range and punch.

IN BRIEF

● Rfn Miguel Calderon, pictured, of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Green Jackets, flew from his base in Germany to Birmingham to receive a national award for his work with the Prince's Trust. The Prince of Wales joined sports and entertainment stars for the event.



● Staff of HQ Multi-national Division Central (Airmobile) flew from their Rheindahlen base to Sevilla in Spain to take part in the Eurocorps exercise Cobra 2001. The British, Dutch, Belgian and German

force was expected to return to Germany late last month.

● Ministry of Defence civil servants from across the UK were given a taste of military life in Aldershot. As the guests of 2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, they dug trenches, took part in ambush drills

and rode in Sabre armoured recce vehicles.

● Soldiers from 39 Regiment RA, most drawn from 57 (Bhurtpore) Battery, received Kosovo Medals at a parade at their Harlow Hill base in Newcastle. The gunners operated Phoenix unmanned reconnaissance aircraft during their first operational tour in the Balkans.

● Soldiers of The Queen's Lancashire Regiment received the freedom of the Borough of Pendle in East Lancashire last month. They marched from the Municipal Hall in Colne to the strains of the King's Division Normandy Band and the regiment's Corps of Drums. Regimental Colonel Brig Geoff Sheldon took the salute.

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Oarsome trip: D Company members of the Territorial Army's King's and Cheshire Regiment get to grips with white-water rafting in the Rocky Mountains during a training camp in Alberta, Canada. The part-timers, from Manchester and Liverpool, were instructed by soldiers from B (Mountain Warfare) Company, 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. The military phase of the visit was cut short by the terrorist attacks of September 11 on New York and Washington, after which 3 PPCLI was put on four hours' notice to move.

TA sets out to raise fitness of the nation

A FITNESS challenge has been issued by the Territorial Army to raise its profile.

A TV campaign entitled Time to Get FitTA is poised to cash in on the nation's tradition for setting itself good resolutions to mark the New Year.

The message will be that among the most positive changes people can make to their lives is to get physically fit... and the best way to do that is join the TA.

A user-friendly, step-by-step guide will be made available to members of the public and a special website will provide

on-line support. To get started, call 0845 6025000 for a fitness pack, or log on to a dedicated website at www.getfitta.co.uk

Anyone who completes the 12-week programme should be able to pass the TA's annual fitness test. It begins with an initial self-assessment to ensure people start at an appropriate level of physical activity.

Chindits swap Cyprus for Falklands

SOLDIERS from Chindit Company, 1st Battalion, The King's Own Royal Border Regiment based in Cyprus packed early for Christmas. They are spending it in the Falkland Islands at the start of a four-month tour in the South Atlantic.

Ship ahoy: Cfn Rob Motherwell, Cfn George Tabeart and LCpl Mick Jones, all members of REME Workshop, 17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC, on board the *Jolly Blue Twigg* pirate galleon, pictured right, which they put up in the playground of Marchwood Church of England Infant School. The design of the ship, a Millennium project, was approved by shipwrights at Marchwood, where it was built under the supervision of SSgt David Monaghan, whose daughter attends the school. Picture: Steve Dock



Paper talk

What the Press has been saying

● A £300 million computer system in the MoD has had to be overhauled after a series of problems that could have led to delayed payments to British Armed Forces. – *Times*

● An IRA decision to give its terrorist members a campaign medal was met with outrage. Provo chiefs are to mint thousands of gongs to dish out to their rank-and-file to commemorate their involvement in the "war" against Britain. – *Sun*

● The maritime graves of 21 warships in waters around the United Kingdom are to be given special protection to prevent divers from plundering the wrecks. – *Times*

● The skeleton of a young British soldier has been uncovered by Egyptian archaeologists on Nelson Island, about 11 miles off Alexandria. The soldier was part of Nelson's force that fought and defeated Napoleon in Egypt in 1798. – *Times*

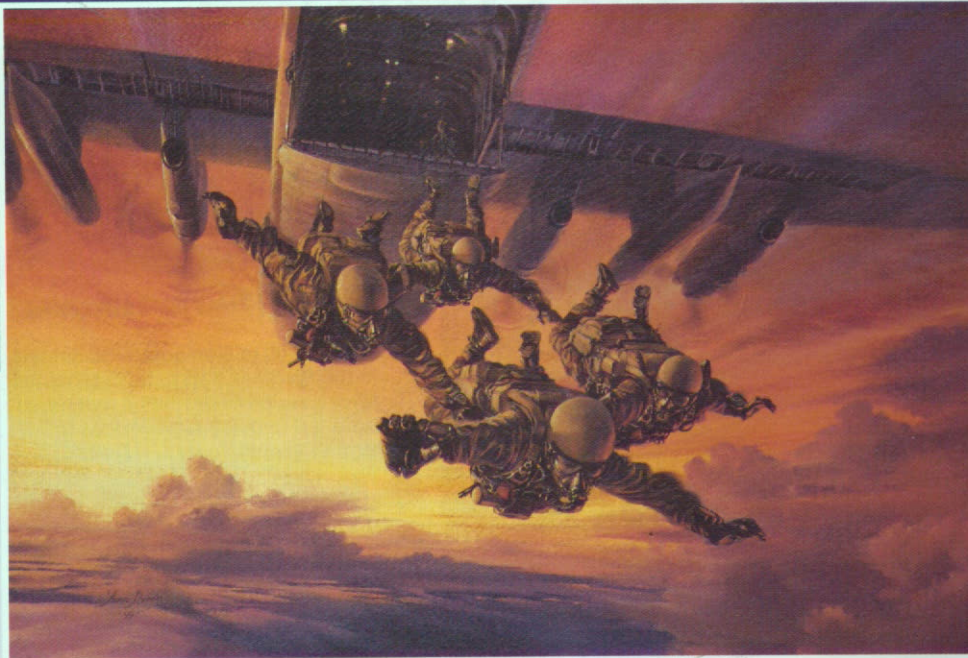
● Watchdogs have banned a mobile phone text message for the first time. From the computer games giant Eidos, it said: "Please report to your local army recruitment centre immediately for your 2nd tour of duty." An ex-Serviceman, who feared it was a real call-up because of the war on terrorism, complained to the Advertising Standards Authority, which backed him. – *Mirror*

● Thousands of war graves from the battle of the Somme, including some belonging to British soldiers, may have to be moved after the French Government chose a site at Chaulnes in Picardy to build a third international airport for Paris. – *Times*

● The European Union must develop a full military force able to project power around the world, Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon told EU defence ministers in Brussels. – *Daily Telegraph*

Falklands War 20

War stories: If you took part in the Falklands War, *Soldier* would like to hear from you. Tell us in no more than 150 words your most vivid recollection and we'll include it in a special feature to mark the 20th anniversary next year. Let us have your story, a photograph and full details of yourself and your unit, by January 31.



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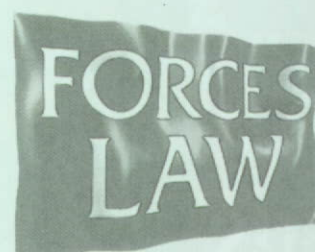
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Picture: WO2 Pete Bristo



Challenger challenged

Stories were rife about Challenger 2 main battle tanks struggling to cope with desert conditions in Oman. The problem was an air-filter

Report: Ray Routledge

DID Challenger 2 break down frequently as a result of sand and dust in Oman as the papers claimed? The honest answer is yes. Could something have been done about it before the exercise – well, maybe.

Costing £2.5 million each, Challenger 2 main battle-tanks are among the British

Army's most high-profile and formidable war machines.

Lt Col Nick Millen, CO of The Royal Dragoon Guards and commander of the RDG battle-group during Saif Sareea 2, acknowledged that Challenger 2 had suffered major problems with air-filters – something that had been identified before the exercise began – and their supply.

“Challenger 2 is a fantastic tank and it has delivered throughout the year in Poland in temperatures down to minus 20C, and in Canada in conditions in the mid-40Cs,” he said.

Yet the warning signs of the problems they would face in Oman were signposted in Canada by a dramatic rise in the use of

● **Turn to next page**

Challenger challenged

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air-filters. "Our Challengers were not designed for these temperatures and for the dusty environment.

"Experts had been saying for at least a year that air-filter use out here was going to be significantly greater than in North-West Europe and that there was a requirement to front-load a lot of air-filters, in other words have them in theatre before they were needed."

In Oman the RDG used air-filters at a rate of one every 70 to 150km. At £1,350 a time, that's expensive mileage.

"Once the filter pops, the vehicle stops. You then get into the business of how do you bring another filter forward," said Lt Col Millen.

He was not convinced about the efficiency of "just-in-time" logistics, under which spares are made available at the moment they are required.

"It does not work if you are talking about strategic-level deployment with real problems of distance, terrain, aeroplanes breaking down, even enemy action.

"I am contracted to provide combat power and I was not able to do so because, in spite of the best efforts of the logisticians, of all ranks, on the ground, the logistic flow did not get to us. We had massive frustrations."

At first the problem was the availability of filters in the desert. That overcome, the Royal Logistic Corps and RDG had the difficulty of getting them to the tanks where they were needed. The availability problem was finally overcome by front-loading filters on to any vehicle within the battle-group that could carry them.

So what actually caused the problems and why did the Omanis, who also use

Challenger 2, not experience identical difficulties?

"The problem is that dust caused the filters to clog earlier than they would do under normal North-West European conditions, which is what the tank was designed for," explained Lt Col Millen. "The filtration system has been under more pressure here than anywhere else.

"We have done a lot of work with Vickers, who had representative Steve Butterworth in Oman. He is an ex-Army man and he did a storming job."

They discovered that although the Omanis used the same filter there were fundamental differences in the design of their tanks.

Put simply, the Omani Challengers, being designed for the desert, had longer "skirts" which kept most of the dust to the side of the hull. The short skirts of the British tanks had the opposite effect.

But there was one more significant difference. Omani tanks have two extraction fans at the rear of the vehicle which draw dust out of the engine and filtration system. This solution, inevitably, is not without penalty.

Despite problems with supply and use of filters, Lt Col Millen felt Saif Sareea had been a valuable exercise. "We have learned a lot," he said. "Saif Sareea has been an awesome experience, a once-in-a-career opportunity. My generation was the last to experience the big field training exercises in Germany, so today there is an almost universal lack of experience in operating in anything other than at battle-group level.

"Saif Sareea has given a massive opportunity to generate experience across generations of soldiers at what training at formation level is like and it has been hugely valuable.

"We have learned a huge amount about manoeuvre in a manner I could not have imagined. It has provided us with a fantastic opportunity at the end of our training year to put into practice all the ideas we have been working on. Despite our problems, it has been a top exercise."



Picture: Graeme Main

'We have learned a lot. Saif Sareea has been an awesome experience, a once-in-a-career opportunity'

Lt Col Nick Millen RDG

Battle honours: From top left, clockwise, IG Warriors attack a Royal Marine position; a Chinook brings in RM reinforcements; Royal Marine Ben Morris goes on the offensive; Spr Andrew Ostolski launches a smoke grenade watched by Spr Craig Richings



Battle of Miqratt airfield

Two-hour firefight for a key location proved to be one of the high points of the exercise in Oman

Report: Ray Routledge
Pictures: Graeme Main

THEY came in an hour after dawn in Sea King helicopters.

Landing in a cloud of dust at the end of the runway at Miqratt airstrip, enemy forces from the fictional state of Alawham (in reality Royal Marine commandos) sprang from their helicopters to be met by

light fire from a scratch detachment of friendly forces dug in to defend the site.

Earlier, during the night, soldiers from the Pioneer Corps had discovered lightly-manned Alawham observation posts on a nearby ridge and "neutralised" them.

A few hours later and within minutes of the Sea Kings depositing their fighting cargoes, Alawham Chinooks disgorged more crack commandos... and the battle

for the airstrip was on. After a firefight lasting a couple of hours, and in the face of brave resistance, the Marines won the day – first blood to Alawham.

Capt Sean Nield RA, from the allied forces wasn't downhearted by defeat. On the contrary, given the nature of his command, he was positively upbeat.

"There had been a problem providing an enemy for the Royal Marines," he

explained. "For them to get value from their training it was essential that we provide an enemy force, so we gathered 71 people from different corps and regiments at 24 hours' notice."

Many of the defenders were plucked from a stand-down period and had never worked together before. Despite being called back into action they were in good

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Front-line females

WHATEVER the outcome of the controversy about women in the front line, the small band of defenders at the first battle for Miqrat's airstrip included two among their ranks.

Cpl Lucy Mason from 30 Signal Regiment and Sig Rachel Allen from 21 Signal Regiment volunteered to take part at less than 24 hours' notice and found themselves serving as front-line infantry.

"We are not really trained for it," said Cpl Mason, "although we do the odd battle-camp. But I enjoyed it. We knew basically what to do."

Asked if women should be allowed into the front line as soldiers, Sig Allen responded: "I think if a woman is fit enough and proved herself in the right ways, then OK, but I don't think generally we are physically strong enough."

"I think most women would not want to do it anyway."

"But in the heat of battle I don't think it would matter what the sex of the soldier was. We are professional and would get on with our jobs."

The Marines who finally overran the position were amazed to discover two women soldiers among the small force that had denied their best efforts for nearly two hours.



Girl power: Cpl Lucy Mason and Sig Rachel Allen surprised the Marines



Attack: Soldiers from the Irish Guards prepare to attack Royal Marines' positions

Miqrat airfield

● From Page 19

spirits and had the advantage of the Marines not knowing they were there.

"We had a deception plan that seemed to work quite well," said Capt Nield.

One of those involved in the fighting was Maj Kim Bailes, RLC, who volunteered for this part of the proceedings. He had been working in the exercise control team when he got the call. "It's been the best part of the exercise. It shows what you can do when you get a scratch team together and I think even the Marines would admit we took them by surprise."

Sprts Simon Stone and Andrew Ostolski of 39 Engineer Regiment flew to Oman in June to build and maintain the camps. They were also pulled back from the stand-down period to take part.

After 48 hours the Royal Marines were well dug-in against an expected allied counter-attack. But Challenger 2 tanks from the Royal Dragoon Guards and Warrior infantry fighting vehicles from the 1st Battalion, Irish Guards smashed into their defences, forcing them back and away from the airstrip.

The Marines, desperate to hold their positions, out of ammunition and with adrenalin pumping, took to throwing stones at the Warriors in a vain attempt to stave off the inevitable.

As suddenly as it started, the battle was over and the airstrip re-taken. A sense of quiet satisfaction prevailed among the friendly force.

Gdsm Mickey Banner, IG, gulped down a well-earned bottle of water and said: "We've been out here for almost two months building up to this."

He looked at his SA80 and shook his head. "It isn't equipped for desert warfare. I had several stoppages, yet back in Germany it works perfectly." Like everyone else, he is no doubt looking forward to the arrival of the A2, which has proven so reliable in the desert and in every environment in which it has been tested.

Warrior commander Lt Barney Smythe, IG, said: "We are low on ammunition and it all got a bit crazy out there. It doesn't help when the enemy is wearing the same kit as you. But it was terrific fun for the guys to get out and have a crack at the Marines."

Heat and dust

A quick look at three units and their work during the exercise

Report: Ray Routledge
Pictures: Graeme Main

Aid station

"THE main illnesses here have been caused by heat and dehydration," said LCpl Malcolm Yeo of Aldershot-based 4 General Support Medical Regiment as he began again on the endless task of cleaning the hospital tent.

LCpl Yeo and Ptes Marissa Collom and Martin McKenna had been in Oman for four-and-a-half months when *Soldier* caught up with them deep in the desert.

They were running a medical aid station (actually a 12ft square tent), which was backed up by a larger facility at Camp Sha'afa, a couple of hundred kilometres away.

"It is a harsh environment and along with dehydration we've treated things like sweat rashes, fungal infections and a lot of skin complaints," he said.

Flu, curiously, was also on the sick list. "There were rumours that everyone had gone down with it but that wasn't the case," said LCpl Yeo.

There had been serious inci-

dents, including fatal road traffic accidents and a soldier diving into the shallow end of a swimming pool. He had been lucky to escape paralysis.

Liaison with Omani hospitals had been very good, according to Pte Collom. "I spent a lot of time up north at Seeb, so if I had any problems I could liaise with the military hospital there, where the level of care is excellent," she said.

A familiar tale of problems with the desert environment emerged. "A lot of our equipment is packaged and sterile until we have to use it, but sand was still a nightmare for the job," said LCpl Yeo. "It was hard to keep the centre clean."

For him, the exercise had been really worthwhile. "Working in a field unit as we do, we don't get to do much medical work. But when you're out on the ground and running medical centres in trauma teams, you learn many of the real medical skills. There's no substitute for that."



Desert hospital: LCpl Malcolm Yeo and Pte Marissa Collom practise their medical skills on colleague Pte Martin McKenna

Engineers

DESPITE the problems faced by Challenger 2 and its air-filters, the large-scale bridge-builders and other heavy plant equipment used by soldiers from 7 HQ Squadron, 21 Engineer Regiment functioned well, although the machinery needed a heavy maintenance programme to keep it ticking over smoothly.

Where there were problems, they were again mostly associated with dust.

"The kit has been good despite the conditions," reported SSgt Andy Kay. "Some of the vehicles had trouble with the terrain and dust has been the main problem."

"We came with the equipment package we would normally have in mainland Europe," added Cpl Paul Wilson, who had been impressed by equipment used by the Royal Marines.

"Some of their vehicles are designed for use in water and have their filters and exhausts elevated to keep them above the waterline," he said. "That worked for dust, too. Filters on our Land Rovers are behind the wheels, where the dust kicks up and can cause trouble."

"A lot of the lads went down with stomach bugs, but we have had good, full medical support," added SSgt Kay.

Two killed on roads in Oman

TWO soldiers were killed in separate road traffic accidents in Oman.

Sig Robert Grattan (18), a single man with 1 Armoured Division Signal Regiment based at Herford, died and four colleagues were injured in one accident during Saif Sareea.

In another incident, Cpl Kevin Collum RLC (29), serving with the Royal Marines Logistic Regiment, part of 3 Commando Brigade, was killed. Cpl Collum, from Barnstaple, joined when he was 16. He leaves a wife and two children.

Let's have more big manoeuvres

LARGE-scale international exercises such as Saif Sareea should be undertaken more frequently, reckons Brig Simon Mayall, Chief of Staff at the Combined Joint Force HQ in Oman.

"If we don't, we will lose track of our core business as war-fighters and the psychological and physical demands of operating at this scale," he told *Soldier* in an exclusive interview at exercise control in Camp Sha'afa.

"We do this about once every ten years but we have got to find the time and resources to do it on a much more regular basis."

He added that war games on the scale of Saif Sareea 2 were once commonplace.

"It was something we took for granted during the Cold War, when we had big exercises every year and major exercises every three or four years. They became second nature to us."

"By focusing for perfectly good reasons on places like the Balkans, we have a generation of officers who didn't grow up in the Cold War and who have lost war-fighting as a core function, as well as experience of the sheer intensity and demands of those types of operations."

He said Oman had been the perfect environment in which to exercise. The Middle East was a part of the world in which Britain could be called upon to fight because of its treaty obligations. Having spent three years in Oman it is a part of the world he knows well. He speaks Arabic and admires its people.

He said the Omanis got as much as the British from Saif Sareea. "The whole business of operational-level planning is new to the Omanis. So they have to get to grips with it and they have learned fast. It has been successful."



'Saif Sareea was a resounding success'

Brig Simon Mayall



Under fire: LCpl Paul Boys, left, and Pte Daniel Savage during a section attack exercise

Cyprus troops get a taste for the desert

More British soldiers experience conflict in hostile environment

TROOPS on Exercise Saif Sareea 2 have not been the only ones to experience the rugged nature of warfighting in a desert region. Cyprus-based Arnhem Company Group from the 1st Battalion, The King's Own Royal Border Regiment have completed a battle camp in Jordan.

For their five-week exercise – ironically dubbed Golden Sands – the 150 KORBR troops found themselves living in a tented camp in a bleak, barren, dusty and windy desert, subjected daily to sandstorms that scoured their way through kit and clothing. Arnhem Company was reinforced by the mortar and anti-tank platoon and support elements.

The soldiers, who exercised extensively with Jordanian troops, adapted to the harsh environment with enthusiasm and humour, for which their reward was a three-day adventurous training break of walking, climbing and snorkelling based at Aqaba on Jordan's south coast.

During the final two weeks the troops returned to the desert for a firepower



Dust-up: Pte Nick Scholts poses for the camera oblivious to a fast-approaching dust storm, although he was well prepared

demonstration and live-firing that tested them to the limit. As they returned to Cyprus the widely-held view in the company was that they had learned a great deal about fighting in the desert and were well prepared should they become involved in events far to the east of them.

The workshops

FOR soldiers of 21 Engineer Regiment REME Workshops the change in working hours caused the biggest shake-up.

"On an exercise in Europe, we could work 18 to 20 hours a day for a few days at least, but out here it was impossible," explained the OC, Capt Ian Comerford. "It is just too hot, so 1200 to 1600 was our down-time when we did nothing."

There was a price to pay for the midday nap – he and his men had to work at night, although even then conditions dictated work patterns.

"Generally we worked for about 20 minutes followed by a ten-minute break because of the temperatures."

The engineers dreaded the frequent "dust devils", swirling winds that collect grit in mini-tornadoes, because of the effect they had on engine hygiene.

Capt Comerford said morale among the soldiers had been very good. "If they hadn't joined the Army, I wonder what would they have done this year?" he asked. "We've been to Poland, Canada, and now Oman. That's not bad, is it?"

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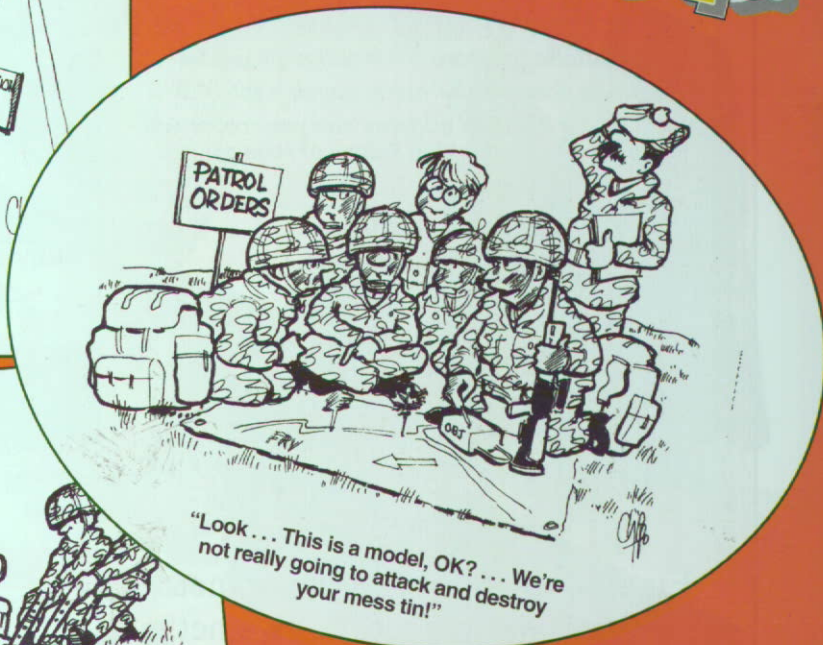
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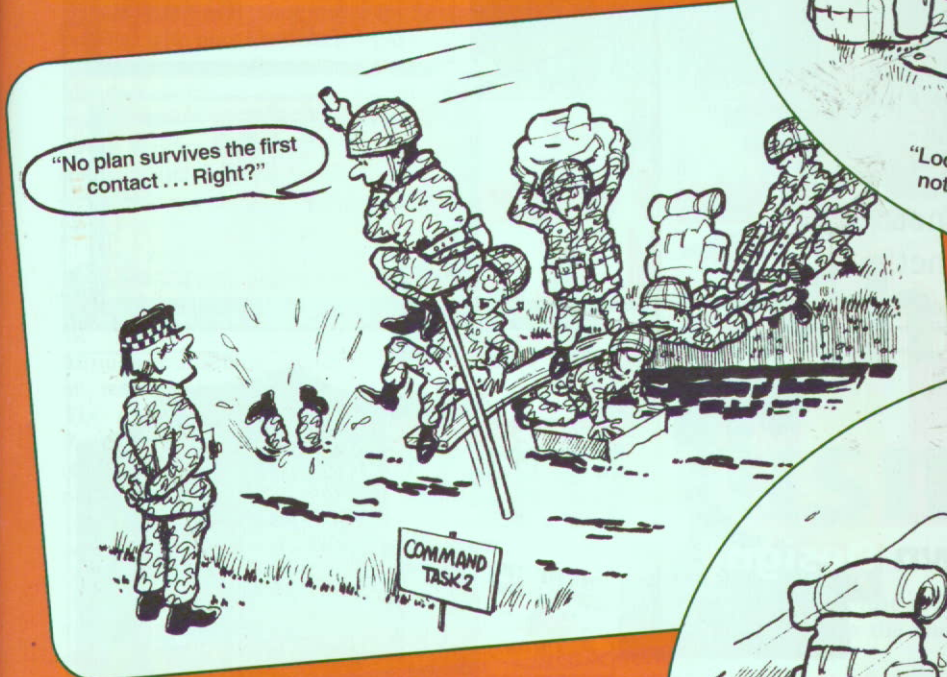
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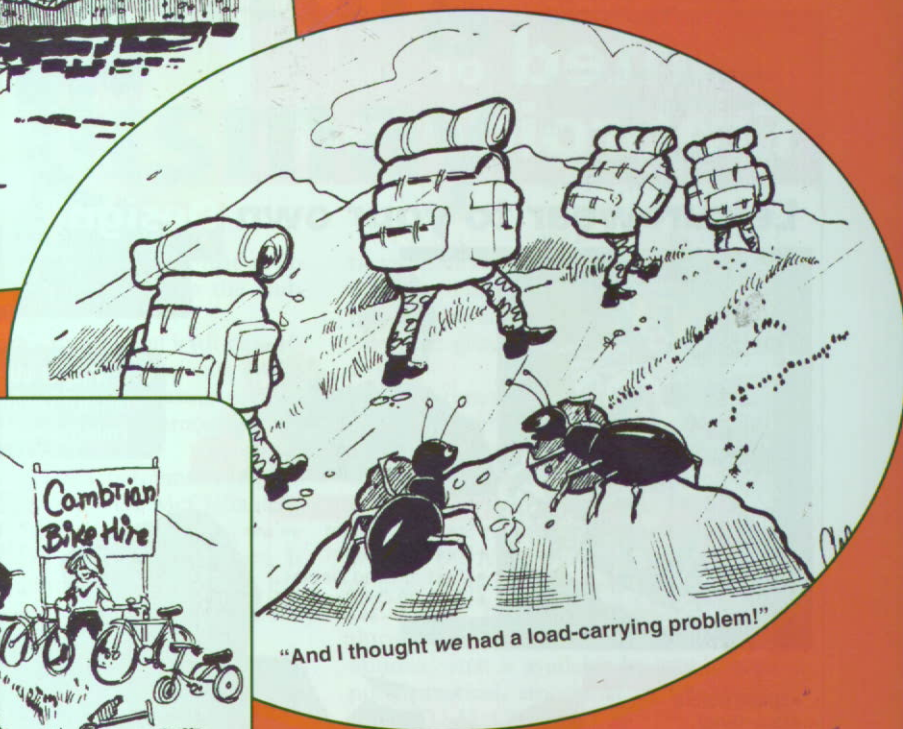
"So, apart from the jerrycan and the shovel, was there anything else of military interest out there?"



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Christmas is coming and with it the busiest time for the Army Welfare Service

Report: Anthony Stone
Picture: Steve Dock

AS far as happy holidays go, this Christmas is going to be a turkey for some families. Ropy relationships, too much 40 per cent proof festive spirit and a sledge-load of credit-card debt would be enough to make even Good King Wenceslas get on the phone to the Samaritans.

The situation is made worse for Service families who may have been separated for months and who find themselves thrust together at one of the most socially pressurised times of year. According to the Army Welfare Service (AWS), the aftermath of the holiday season is the time when soldiers are most likely to need support.

The welfare service is there for soldiers and their families and helps deal with all sorts of problems through counselling, advice or referral to specialists. The number one concern for soldiers, be they married or not, is relationship problems.

WO2 Alan McClelland, a senior Army Welfare Worker (AWW), based at Aldershot, said: "Any time there is prolonged separation we know we are going to get a rash of relationship problems."

"Christmas is particularly difficult because the pressures of parties, drinking and finances all come together. People often save up their relationship problems and think somehow if they can just get through Christmas because of the kids things will get better."

Sgt Lesa McKinney, cap-badged – as are all AWS staff – to the AGC (SPS), said often the problems start when deployments end.

"When couples get back together after spending time apart it can be almost like starting over," she said.

"Partners who have coped on their own for six months suddenly find their other half is back taking control over everything to do with the house and that can be quite stressful."

"Service personnel get very wrapped up in their jobs and forget that their



Help at hand: The team of WO2 Alan McClelland, Chris Blagbrough, Sgt Lesa McKinney and Carole Gee

Let nothing you dismay

to improved retention. The other main areas the welfare service become involved with revolve around health worries, depression, legal services, domestic

violence and child protection.

Cases of domestic violence and marital breakdown are no higher than for the same age group in society generally, said Chris.

"Sometimes what people use us for is to explore how they feel about a situation, so they can see the wood for the trees. We help them realise what is going on and help them to help themselves."

But if a relationship does go pear-shaped, the AWS will work with couples or individuals to try to resolve difficulties. "If it does break down we run them through advice on benefits, housing options, what is available by way of support, practical, emotional or whatever," said WO2 McClelland.

AWS staff continually upgrade their skills, said Carol Gee, AWS information manager, which makes them very marketable when they leave the Army.

"They do an initial six months' training which is then followed by developmental training such as a Relate course," she said. "It is a very worthwhile career to embark on and one that transfers well to civvy street."

Welfare info is available through the Army website on www.army.mod.uk

partners may have carried out just as an important role by bringing up the children or working."

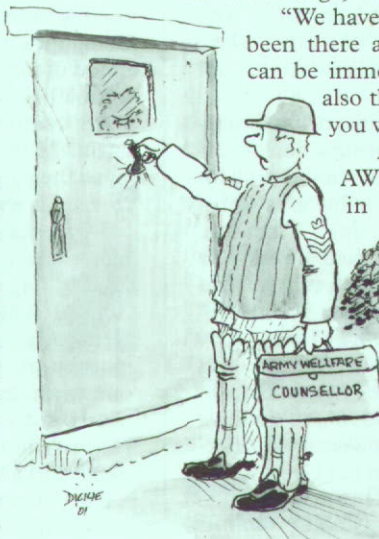
Unit welfare officers deal with run-of-the-mill problems but refer clients to the AWS when more complex issues such as domestic violence or child protection are involved.

Being serving soldiers themselves gives AWWs an edge, said WO2 McClelland.

"We have done the tours, we've been there and got the T-shirt. It can be immensely frustrating, but also the most rewarding job you will ever do."

All but four of the 72 AWWs based at locations in the UK, Northern Ireland, Cyprus and Germany are serving soldiers who range in rank from sergeant to WO1.

Chris Blagbrough, the Chief Personal Support Officer, stressed the importance of a sound welfare system





We will remember: Pte Harry Wilkinson of the Lancashire Fusiliers is laid to rest in Ypres

Fusilier finally rests in peace

PTE Harry Wilkinson was 29 when he was killed during a night attack on a German position on the Ypres Salient in northern France.

For the next 86 years the body of the Lancashire Fusilier lay under the mud until a farmer chose to plough a field for the first time since 1914.

Beside his skeleton were fragments of uniform and, unusually, his identity tag, along with a pipe and a water bottle.

These were the clues that enabled the factory worker from Bury to be identified and finally laid to rest with full military honours attended by the family he never knew.

The job of helping to identify soldiers' remains falls to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission – and MoD staff based at Upavon who can call upon the skills of a professor of forensic anthropology to examine bones for clues as to age, height and build.

Other detective methods involve scouring regimental diaries, MoD archives, pensions branches, electoral and parish registers and the Army historical branch.



Honoured: Pte Wilkinson

One of the main difficulties in tracing relatives of the fallen of the Great War is that most of the soldiers were unmarried. Where they only had sisters and these have married or the family moved away, the trail goes cold. The last resort is to put an appeal in the local paper.

Once a set of remains has been identified the soldier receives a funeral with full military honours conducted by his regiment – or that into which the original has been amalgamated. The ceremony still takes place even if relatives are not traced.

Pte Wilkinson was awarded three posthumous medals which were worn at his graveside by his great-grandson, Jay Wilkinson.

The nine-year-old watched proudly as the remains of his distant relative was finally laid to rest at Prowse Point Military Cemetery, just south of Ypres.

Pte Wilkinson's name was heard again later at a ceremony at the Menin Gate to mark the 25,000th sounding of the Last Post. As part of the anniversary a different Serviceman killed in the Great War is to be honoured each day for a year. Pte Wilkinson was the first.

Till the boys come home

Great War Veterans remember the songs that took them to hell and back again

Report: Anthony Stone
Picture: Mike Weston

WHEN they heard the singing, the schoolboys stopped playing by the great naval guns in front of the Imperial War Museum and turned towards the open first-floor window from where the voices carried on the autumn breeze.

Most of the tunes were instantly recognisable, familiar favourites such as *Keep The Home Fires Burning* and *It's a Long Way to Tipperary*. But not every song evoked such rose-tinted bonhomie. *If You Were the Only Bosche in the Trench* conjured up a grotesque world of violence and nightmares.

One of the voices singing along belonged to Doug Roberts, a 101-year-old veteran of the Great War. He had been invited, with five other survivors from the First World War, to a concert party to launch a book about soldiers' songs of the period.

The men who had kept their spirits up by singing through the mud and the blood of the most terrifying battles of the 1914-1918 conflict were joined in song once again. More than 80 years have passed since the guns fell silent, but the shocking memories are forever only a melody away.

Doug was so keen to join up that like many others he lied about his age (he was just 17). He served with the Royal Sussex Artillery and later with the Royal East Kent Regiment. Six close mates made the journey to France with Doug, but only one came back with him. Doug, too, so nearly did not return from the Somme. He was shot in the groin and hand and nearly lost a leg when he was hit by a shell.

Max Arthur, the author of *When This Bloody War Is Over*, subtitled *Soldiers'*



Songster: Doug Roberts



How happy I shall be: First World War veterans launch into *When This Bloody War Is Over*

Songs of the First World War, compiled the book because he thought there was a real risk the lyrics might be lost to future generations. Many of the most popular songs were parodies of music hall favourites, with the words changed to reflect the harsh realities of life at the front. Singing was a way for soldiers to assert their ordinary humanity in the face of extraordinary inhumanity.

It was time for another song.

A few voices began *Hanging on the Old Barbed Wire*, but one by one they trailed off, leaving a plaintive tenor voice to sing "If you want to find the old battalion I know where there are, I know where they are, I know where they are. They're hanging on the old barbed wire."

When his old comrades began to sing, Albert "Smiler" Marshall's eyes became more focused. His lips mouthed the words, but no sound came out.

Smiler was born 103 years ago. He joined the Essex Yeomanry as a cavalryman and lost his trigger finger in action. After convalescing, he joined the Machine Gun Corps, before eventual-

ly re-enlisting in the cavalry. He is the last known British soldier to raise a sword in battle.

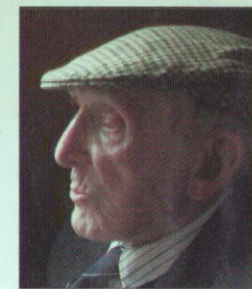
Max Arthur said: "Smiler is the perfect embodiment of all this book stands for. It's about joy, it's about how to overcome the most appalling brutality, about grievous, perpetual loss, and about carnage."

Sitting beside Smiler was Jack Davis, who joined the Army in 1914. At 106, Jack is a veterans' veteran. The author said: "He fought in most of the vicious and horrifying battles of that war. He is here today, quiet, but that was one of the qualities that made these men, and which got them through these battles – the ability to endure with silence."

A final song was guaranteed to get the old boys animated. To the tune of *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* they sang "When this bloody war is over, No more soldiering for me. When I get my civvy clothes on, Oh, how happy I shall be! No more going to the trenches, No more asking for a pass. You can tell the Sergeant Major To stick his passes up his ****".

It might be more than 80 years ago, but they all remembered the words to that one.

■ *When This Bloody War Is Over* (Piatkus, £12.99)



Quiet man: Jack Davis

He didn't get heckled in his old job

A former commanding officer finds his feet in the Commons

STANDING in front of 600 people to make a speech would be a daunting prospect for most people, writes Ray Roulledge.

But perhaps not quite so fraught when, as the commanding officer of an infantry battalion, you have regularly addressed your men.

Instead of soldiers, Patrick Mercer, elected as Conservative MP for Newark and Retford at the last election, now has fellow members for an audience. As a former CO of the 1st Battalion, The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment, he might be expected to take it all in his stride.

He admits that his battalion audiences, unlike MPs, tended not to heckle him. But he is grateful for his Army background, which has helped him to gain an appointment on the high-profile Defence Select Committee despite his inexperience in the Commons.

The WFR was considered the Mercer family regiment when he joined from school. "I managed to miss every war going because I was always in Northern Ireland," he told *Soldier* on the terrace of the House of Commons, overlooking the Thames.

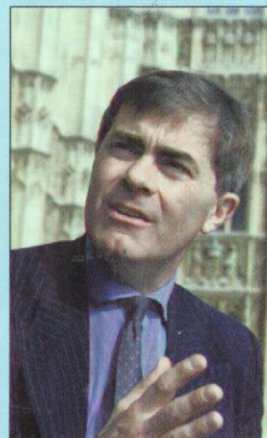
"I spent the best two years of my Army career as a company commander in Northern Ireland, then the regiment went to Cyprus. I went to Lisburn for two of the worst years," he recalled.

He was in command of the 1 WFR from 1996 to 1999, leading the battalion on a tour to Bosnia during that period. Promoted colonel, Patrick Mercer took up a staff job at the Army Training and Recruiting Agency (ATRA) at Upavon before quitting the Army in 1999 to join Radio 4's *Today* programme as its defence correspondent. He also wrote regularly on defence topics for the *Daily Telegraph*.

He says of the election in June, when he picked up the second biggest Tory swing in the country: "I was extremely lucky getting picked up by the Conservative Party and to get the nomination for a seat that was winnable."

As for his political ambitions: "I want to serve Newark and Retford to the best of my ability. I would like to be seen as a fair and competent constituency MP," he said.

● Are you ex-Army with a second career that would be inspiring to those about to leave? If so, drop us a line or send an e-mail to rroulledge@soldiermagazine.co.uk



On the terrace: Patrick Mercer MP
Picture: Steve Dock

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Invisible enemy

British military advisers are in the front line of South Africa's battle against HIV/Aids

HIV/Aids is the single biggest killer of South Africans. By 2010 it will have taken the lives of about six million people, writes Sqn Ldr Pippa Ward.

According to researchers 40 per cent of deaths last year of South Africans aged 15 to 49 were due to Aids.

The epidemic has an impact on every part of society, not least the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), whose soldiers, sailors and airmen are at risk and whose ranks of potential recruits are under threat from the epidemic.

A small British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT), which has been in South Africa since the end of apartheid to develop and harmonise the Rainbow nation's defence forces, has been given the green light to continue until 2003 with an expanded role. Part of that is a new emphasis on developing a SANDF expeditionary capability to support peace operations beyond the borders of South Africa.

A BMATT health team working closely with SANDF and other agencies to coordinate efforts to combat Aids and educate the population has become involved with one particular project.

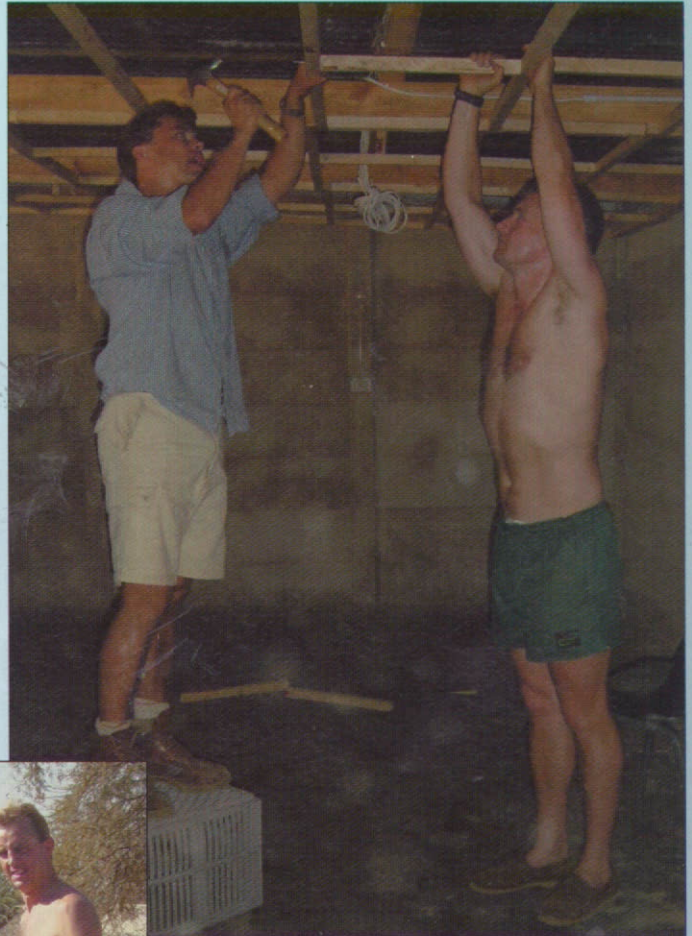
Through the Hope and Homes for Children (UK) charity, BMATT (SA) has linked up with the British High Commission in Pretoria to support a community-based initiative called the Moretele Sunrise Project. It is the vision of a 36-year-old nurse, Judith "Mpho" Sebanyoni, who was concerned at the way her local hospital discharged terminally ill patients without community support.

Mpho gave up a full-time post at the hospital at Temba, less than one hour's drive from Pretoria, to launch the project in August 1997. Her mission was to provide non-judgmental nursing care, delivered with love and warmth, to terminally ill AIDS and cancer patients.

She heads a programme aimed at about 80 villages inhabited by 400,000 people, half of whom could be HIV positive.

Mpho's aspiration is a hospice-type centre, to be used as a focal point. She wants each village to have its own support group trained in home-based care. High Commission staff had worked with Mpho

If there has been no effective intervention by 2010 there will be a threefold increase in deaths among children aged one to five ... and population growth will be halted by the epidemic



What Friends are for: Maj Jasper de Quincy-Adams, QDG, and Maj Rupert Whitelegge, A and SH, above, work on the care room

Pictures: BMATT South Africa



Tidy trio: Brig Gordon Hughes, Comd BMATT, Sqn Ldr Pippa Ward, RAF, and Lt Col Tim Barrett, KORBR, left, pictured during work on the Moretele hospice site

for more than four years, and in July BMATT joined forces to establish a working group called Friends of Moretele.

First project for the "friends" was to help Mpho set up a four-bed room in which her team could provide 24-hour care for patients in the final stages of illness, allowing them to die with dignity and supporting their families.

Portable cabins provided by the High Commission were the focus of the friends' efforts. Volunteers spent a day painting the windows and doors while others created two vegetable plots outside and planted seeds.

What was to be the care room had been used as a store for donated equipment, so another team sorted out what was needed

before a fourth team of DIY experts moved in to convert the care unit.

With more working days planned, it is hoped the unit, with bathroom, toilet and furnishings, will soon be ready.

Next phase of the project will be to help Mpho develop village support centres in the Temba area, educate people on Aids and support patients and families.

Human desire to deny the enormity of the crisis is compounded by the fact that infected individuals can look healthy for years. Yet 90 per cent of those infected may be unaware they are at risk.

Mpho's inspiration, with help from the High Commission and the men and women of the British military team, will go a small way to helping. In a country blighted by HIV/Aids, every little helps.

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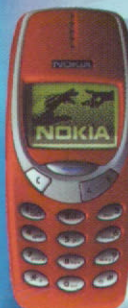
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Woodsmen: A University Officers' Training Corps team makes its way through mid-Wales

Mind game

Annual military patrol challenge tests soldiers' mental strength as well as physical condition

Report: David Webb
Pictures: Stuart Bingham

WHO said our lads weren't up to a challenge? The Cambrian Patrol, internationally acknowledged to be one of the toughest exercises on the military calendar, has just attracted the largest entry in its 42-year history.

One hundred eight-man (plus a few women) teams took part in the mind and muscle-sapping yomp across the Cambrian mountains of mid-Wales. Foreign interest was provided by patrols from Canada, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and team of airborne soldiers from the USA. A Royal Air Force Regiment team completed the British element.

Patrollers had to complete a 48-hour, 55-km mission over some of the most

inhospitable terrain the Welsh have to offer. On the way they were constantly tested and evaluated, tasks including infiltration and recce of enemy-held positions, swimming a reservoir with kit, an NBC "incident", an ambush and a debrief.

Four teams did well enough to earn the coveted gold medals (scores are assessed on the points scored over the various sections): Support Company, 3 Para; 1 RGBW, 63 Squadron, RAF Regiment, and the mountain-trained soldiers from Italy's Brigata Alpina Julia.

Twenty silver medals were awarded, 14 bronzes and 31 certificates of merit.

Bristol University Officers' Training Corps entered two teams – one led by 2nd Lt Caroline Thomas – and both gained silver medals at the first time of asking.

"The hardest part was the sleep deprivation," said Caroline. "I managed one hour's sleep over the two days. There were some low points, but morale in the team remained high throughout."

Lt Tiziano Diamanti of the Brigata Alpina Julia team, who was also taking part for the first time, said: "The Cambrian Patrol is very highly regarded by Italian soldiers, particularly our Alpini mountain troops, who have been successful in previous years."



Foggy outlook: Although the patrol was blessed by good weather, fog tested the teams' navigation skills

● Next year's Cambrian Patrol is from October 25 to November 3. Look out for a DCI in the New Year or contact the patrol office at Brecon on 94351 2280 or civ 01874 613280



MORE questions and answers from
CGS's Territorial Army Briefing Team

AGE LIMITS

Q As people tend to join the TA later in life than they would the Regular Army, could the upper age limits for promotion, courses and end of service be more flexible, and linked to length of service rather than age?

A It is possible for upper age limits to be administered flexibly. TA Regulations give discretion to the chain of command, with the authority of the Army Personnel Centre (APC), to allow people to serve beyond the upper age for their rank and corps. Soldiers of talent and potential should not therefore be forced to retire merely on the grounds of age.

Age limits also apply to some important career courses and, as there is considerable competition for places on them, those who are over the age limit for the course are bound to have one extra hurdle to jump.

It is important that there should be some control over age limits as otherwise the TA would become an ever more ageing organisation. This would lead to a lack of career progression and make it unattractive to the young people we want to encourage to join.

That said, Regular Army officers are now on a length of service-based career and age-based regulations are being examined throughout the MoD. There is a possibility that the merits of a length-of-service system may be recognised across the board, weighted by medical and physical fitness.

ITD TEST STANDARDS

Q Why are TA test standards for Individual Training Directives (ITD) different from the Regular Army? Now that more TA soldiers are serving alongside the Regulars, should not the tests be the same?

A The main reason for having different standards in the TA is that there is only a limited amount of training time. Achieving the Regular Army standard would take up too much of the training programme and would leave little time for more varied activities and for collective training. This in turn might drive soldiers out of the TA and make it less attractive to our potential recruits.

The majority of the TA is now on readiness states greater than R5, which means a warning time of at least 30 days. There is therefore plenty of time for TA soldiers to get up to the required standard if there were any widespread mobilisation.

Those individuals who are mobilised, or volunteer for operations, will be keen, of course, to use their warning time to raise their fitness levels in order to cope with the Regular Army ITD levels! These will be tested at the Reserves Training and Mobilisation Centre prior to deployment.

Pot luck changed my life

He is the doyen of TV chefs . . . lively, funny and a bit naughty. He also likes a glass of wine or three. Before all that, he was an officer in tanks

TALK about TV chefs and a Keith Floyd anecdote is sure to crop up. And no wonder, he's been a household name for 20 years, writes Ray Routledge.

In addition to his undisputed talent for cooking and showmanship, this larger-than-life West Countryman is an author, businessman, lover of good times, and all-round hale-and hearty sort of a chap.

But did you know he was once in the Regular Army? All is revealed in his autobiography *Out Of the Frying Pan* (HarperCollins, £16.99), in which he pulls no punches about his time in uniform – good and bad.

He claims he joined because of a film. "I sat spellbound in front of the great Stanley Baker and Michael Caine in *Zulu*," he recounts. "The following day, without a thought and with what must have been irritating self-confidence, I bounced into the recruiting office in Colston Avenue, Bristol and volunteered myself for a short-service commission."

It was the early Sixties and young Keith had been working at the *Bristol Evening Post*. He had already discovered a love of good food and fine wine, which was to be both his undoing and his salvation. "At the age of 17 I was eating beyond my means. Nothing has changed," he reveals.

His Army career started badly when he fell asleep on the train north and arrived at Catterick Garrison hours late to join other recruits.

"Next morning dawned like Pearl Harbour," he recalls. "The day exploded into a frenzy of form-filling, kit-collecting, hair-cutting, medicals, and quick-fire instructions which left us exhausted. No longer civilians yet absolutely not soldiers."

In the eight weeks of basic training that followed, there was intense pressure on Recruit Floyd to excel so that he would merit selection for the Potential Officer troop and a commission. "The challenge was essential and I took it head-on," he



Bon viveur: Floyd, centre, during a trip to Bosnia several years ago. With him is a local chef, right, and a British Army caterer, left

writes. He did make the grade on to the course for potential officers, and promptly asked to join the 11th Hussars (because, he says, he liked the uniform and the aura of the romantic and gallant officer on his charger).

On the course he was to come under the wing of Sgt Linneker, RTR, later to become his troop sergeant.

He recalls Lt William Bale, Cpl MacIver Jones (uncannily like Sgt Wilson from *Dad's Army*) and Corporal of Horse Higgins, a 6ft 3in, moustachioed NCO from the Royal Horse Guards.

I will address you as Sir because that is the tradition of the British Army, not because I have any respect for you

— What CoH Clarke told Floyd

"He had a voice that could strike you rigid at 400 yards, and he clenched a highly-polished pace-stick. 'Gentlemen, my name is Corporal of Horse Clark. You will address me as Staff. I will address you as Sir, simply because that is the tradition

of the British Army, not because I have any respect for any one of you.'"

After an incident in which he got an empty magazine and a full one mixed up and blew a hole in his bed, Keith was punished with 28 days' restriction of privileges. It was to be the first of many capers.

Eventually he was called for interview to explain his choice of regiment.

"I realised I did not have what was required for the 11th Hussars, to wit the ability to ride, to play polo, or indeed, cover my mess bills. I realised I would be more comfortable in an ultra-professional, modern-day regiment." So he joined the 3rd Royal Tank Regiment

at Fallingbowl.

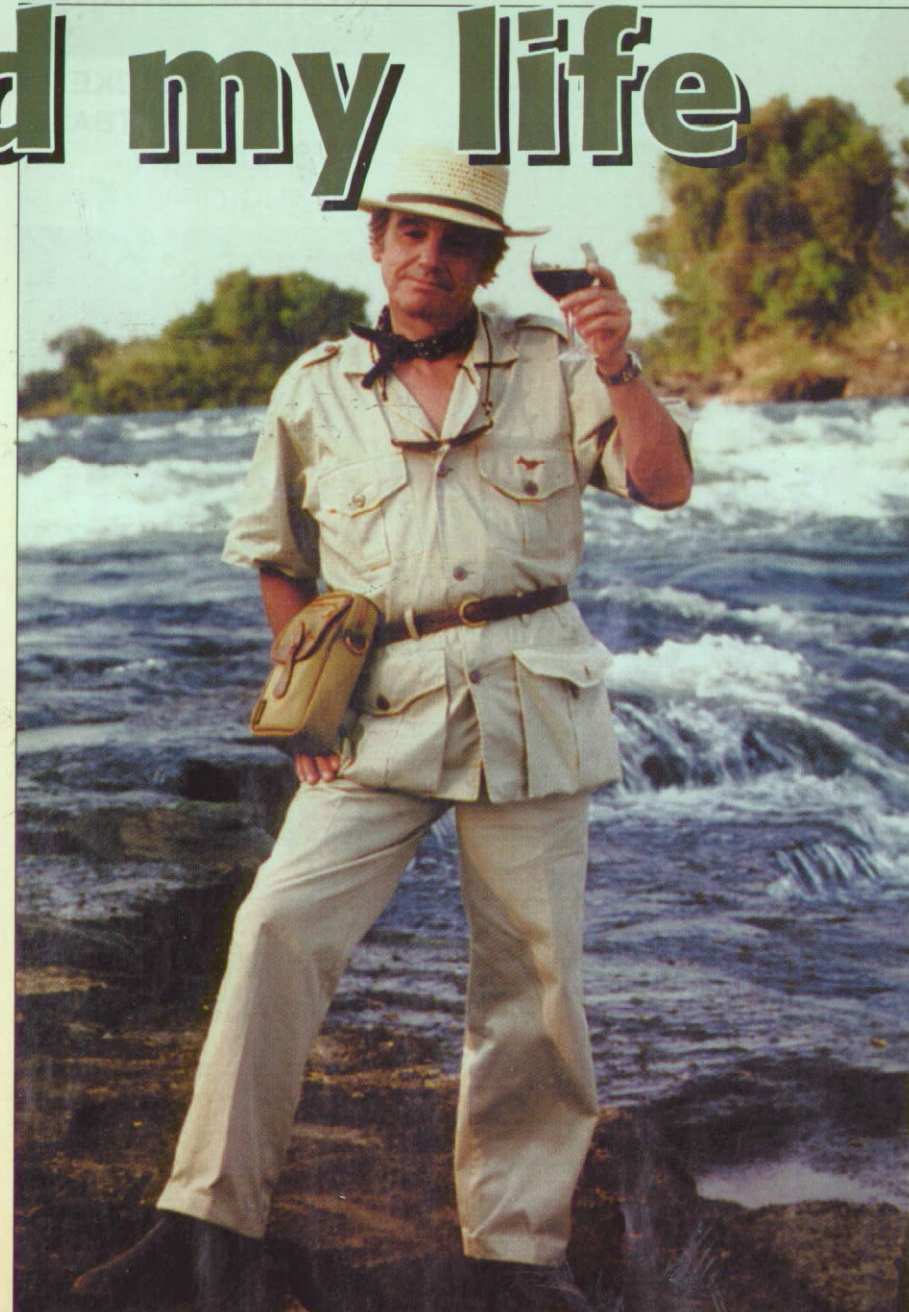
His first weeks in the 3 RTR mess revolved around him being the butt of a succession of practical jokes and, after a summer of training, he was sent to Bovington. There his love of the good life resurfaced and he spent as much time as he could in a casino and nightclub in nearby Bournemouth.

His return to Germany as the newest subaltern meant he was given the job of messing member, arranging menus and functions. "For most officers, this was the most unpopular chore, to me it was a god-send," he recalls. "My enthusiasm for hurtling around Luneburg Heath in noisy, uncomfortable and cramped Centurion tanks was waning fast and I threw myself into my new role with ostentatious vigour. I was spending more time in the kitchens than on the tank park and at the same time I was tiring of the restrictions of Army life."

"It was a sad time because I had worked so hard to get my commission and yet I found regimental life just too dull."

"To cut a long story short, I had something of a nervous breakdown, brought on not only by frustration and boredom, but also by acute financial pressure: then as now, I lived beyond my means. In many ways the lifestyle was just too good."

After months in hospital, Keith left the Army and turned his attention and talent to his first love – food. Not just eating it,



Cool dude: Keith Floyd raises a glass during a break in filming on the banks of the Zambesi

but the pleasures of preparing it. His first job was as an assistant vegetable cook in a Bristol hotel. By the late 1960s he had established a reputation in Bristol as a chef, with innovative food that brought customers back again and again.

Over the next few years he opened (and closed) a number of restaurants around the West Country. He became a wine-importer and sailed around the Mediterranean. One day David Pritchard, who worked for the BBC in Plymouth, approached him about recording a programme on cooking fish.

Their plan was that they would travel around the West Country and cook locally what was caught locally. Strapped for cash as usual, Keith agreed and became an instant success. His easy-going

manner, chatting to the cameraman and director in a conspiracy with his audience, yet concentrating on the food while enjoying a glass or two, proved a winner.

He was now a full-blown TV celebrity. Countless books and TV series later (the newest offering, *Floyd's India*, is on Channel 5, and an accompanying book at £15.99 is published by HarperCollins), Keith has settled in Spain with his wife Tess and a houseful of pets.

He recalls his Army days with affection, particularly the friends he made. "I think I only joined the Army for the initial challenge, although on slightly mature reflection it did a great deal for me as an individual. I met some extremely good people, some of whom remain my closest friends to this day."



Go for it: A soldier, above, of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment on his way to the range during 12 Mechanized Brigade's march-and-shoot competition at Ash Ranges, Aldershot. Below, a team from the 1st Battalion, The Staffordshire Regiment completes the watermanship test during the eight-mile cross-country event.

Pictures: Steve Dock



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Shape of things to come: WO2 (QMSI) Lea Bates demonstrates FIST technology – an SA80 A2 fitted with a dual waveband sight and 40mm grenade launcher

Picture: Steve Dock

FIST comes step closer to reality

Tenders to be invited early next year

TECHNOLOGY designed to make dismounted infantry soldiers more effective in close combat has passed its first test.

The FIST – Future Integrated Soldier Technology – project has received initial approval after a four-year demonstration programme, putting the agenda on a formal footing and clearing the way for troops to receive the equipment by the end of the decade.

Based on the most advanced digitization and miniaturization technology, FIST is designed to put the soldier into the front line in a suite of integrated equipment giving him massive advantages in navigation, surveillance and target acquisition, survivability and communications.

It will allow commanders to see what their troops are seeing via rifle-mounted cameras and backpack computer processors, while a head-up display in front of the soldier's eyes and a helmet-mounted personal radio will make vital information

instantly available to him in the heat of battle.

Lt Col Dave Stewart, FIST project manager at Abbey Wood, told the Defence Procurement Agency journal *Preview*: "We now have the authority and funding to progress to the next phase, that of issuing the invitation to tender for the three-year assessment programme."

Those invitations will be sent to four potential prime contractors – BAE Systems, Marconi, Raytheon and Thales – early next year and bids are expected back in the spring. The contract is likely to be awarded towards the end of next year.

FIST will have to integrate with 50 or more established, emerging or future projects, dovetailing into a hi-tech world of information technology.

Hardware for trials at company level is expected by 2005 and a demonstration phase will begin in 2006, leading to manufacture and delivery in late 2009.

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To have a chance of winning one of the five pairs of boots, just tell us on a postcard the name of the military leader who gave his name to footwear beloved of comedians, farmers, serious gardeners and all who have to work in muddy, wet conditions.

Was it:

a) Montgomery; b) Wellington; c) Eisenhower; d) Mao Tse Tung?

Your entry, which must include your name, address and shoe size, should reach us by January 3.

Winners will receive their boots direct from Magnum. Usual competition rules apply.

A BATTLEFIELD ambulance which will allow casualties to be treated under armour and increase the chances of survival is to be added to the Army's fleet of Multi-Role Armoured Vehicles (MRV) under development. It is expected that the UK will buy more than 150.

● With 18 Apache helicopters delivered by the end of the year, 41 next year and 64 in 2003, a full task force capability is planned for early 2005.

● Collaboration on the UK-USA Tracer – Tactical Reconnaissance Armoured Combat Equipment Requirement – programme is to end with the current definition phase. Both

nations have decided to pursue changing requirements for their recce fleets. The US is moving to lighter, more deployable

forces with greater lethality and survivability, while the UK wants commonality across a range of armoured vehicles rather than a single variant.

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Watching brief

Sappers dismantle Northern Ireland surveillance towers

Report: Andrea Frazer
Pictures: Cpl Paul Faith
and Stephen George

FOUR military installations, three of them in South Armagh, have been taken down by the Army as Northern Ireland takes another step towards normalisation. It's the latest in a long line of measures begun in 1995 which has seen 42 military bases and installations already closed or demolished in the province.

Royal Engineers got to work on the observation tower on Sturgan Mountain (Romeo One-One), a tower on Camlough Mountain (Romeo One-Three), a super-sangar at Newtownhamilton Police Station and Magherafelt Army Base. The steel and concrete structures dotted across ten hilltop sites along the border have been the most visible symbols of the Army's presence in South Armagh.

As the towers went up in the mid-1980s, the murder rate went down, even at a time when IRA gangs in South Armagh were at their most vicious. Prior to their erection there had been 19 fatal attacks against the security forces in the Crossmaglen and Forkhill areas resulting in 84 deaths. Since their installation there have been nine fatal attacks resulting in 24 deaths.

The demolition task has fallen to sappers from 33 Field Squadron, the same squadron tasked with their construction more than a decade ago. Follow-up work will be conducted by 53 Fd Squadron.

Work on Romeo One-Three and Romeo One-One involved the removal of the sangars and dismantling of the scaffold towers. Up to 300 tonnes of equipment will have to be flown off the mountains. At Romeo One-One the sangar was airlifted by Chinook before engineers began work to return the location to a greenfield site.

The 1st Battalion, The King's Own Scottish Borderers, halfway through their six-month tour, have been providing infantry support to the Royal Engineers.

Lt Col Mark Castle, 1 KOSB, said: "The Jocks are doing an excellent job in difficult circumstances. It is an interesting balancing act. We are assisting with the Government's moves towards normalisation but at the same time we are very con-

Lift-off: 53 Fd Sqn under command of Lt Henryk Pietrzak, pictured on top of the tower, right, with help from an RAF Chinook, lift the sangar from Romeo One-One atop Sturgan Mountain



Sparkling job: A sapper from 4 Troop, 33 Squadron, above, uses cutting equipment to prepare the Sangar on Sturgan Mountain for removal

scious there's a potential for an increased terrorist threat from splinter groups."

South Armagh has always been a notoriously dangerous operational posting for soldiers. The area has claimed the lives of 127 members of the security forces (98 soldiers and 29 policemen) during the course of the Troubles. Since 1989, one in five of all soldiers killed in Northern Ireland was killed in South Armagh, an area representing a small fraction of the Province's geographical area.

As the recent moves begin to alter the South Armagh landscape, the local atmosphere is changing too. NCOs who have experienced previous postings to the area notice continuing improvements. Helmets have generally been replaced by

berets when soldiers go on patrol and on the streets troops are experiencing more positive interactions with the community.

The threat from dissident republicans remains. Actions by the police outside security force bases in South Armagh, even if involving a single officer, still require the protection of a minimum of 12 soldiers. Helicopters remain the only form of transport, as the threat is deemed too high to permit movement by road. In May Bessbrook base was attacked by a mortar which failed to detonate.



Daz dazzles the judges

Air Force's Darren is a four-times winner at Province's premier event for snappers

Top man: SAC Darren "Daz" Smith with his nap hand of certificates

DON'T say it too loudly, but the hand Lt Gen Alistair Irwin, GOC Northern Ireland, shook most frequently at the Province's photographic awards ceremony belonged to the Royal Air Force, writes John Elliott.

Step forward Senior Aircraftsman Darren Smith, based at RAF Aldergrove. Daz won four categories in all, starting with the Professional Photographer of the Year title.

He was soon back in front of Gen Irwin to pick up certificates for the best military portrait, the best sport or adventurous training photograph and the Northern Ireland image of the year.

Pushing Daz hard for the top spot was Sgt Rob Leyland RLC, who also works at RAF Aldergrove, in the Colour Processing Centre. There was some consolation for him when his portrait of a tattooed man won him a cheque for £125 in the Soldier-sponsored own choice category. Last year Rob was a runner-up in the monochrome category and he also featured among the 1999 finalists.



Soldier winner: Sgt Rob Leyland

Master Photographer WO2 Karl Andrews, who helped put the competition together, said: "It was good to see all three Services get involved in a friendly way. The standard was generally high, and I was particularly impressed with the portfolio section, professional and amateur, specially from the RAF."

"Photographers in Northern Ireland should start thinking now about next year's competition, the details of which should be announced in the New Year."

LCpl Patrick Vinke-Tuke of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment went one better than he did last year, producing an outstanding portfolio to win the top amateur accolade.



Mono-crown: SSgt Dave Bridges took the black-and-white image title with this entry, above



Skin-deep: Sgt Rob Leyland's photo of Wolverhampton tattoo artist John Winsor, right, won him the Own Choice category, sponsored by Soldier

Best monochrome photograph was taken by SSgt Dave Bridges, HQNI; best colour by Steven George, HQNI's long-serving principal photographer; and the best digital image was taken by Sgt Dave Berkon RLC of the Army Information Section at HQNI. Dave was also runner-up in the Soldier-sponsored own choice section.

Other sections were sponsored by

Kodak, Fuji, Ilford, AGFA, Calumet, Photo Services, Photo Maintenance and the General Officer Commanding.

About 150 submissions were considered by the three judges, Lt Col Leo Callow, CO Depot Royal Irish; David Cordner, regional chairman of the British Institute of Professional Photographers; and Flt Lt Mark Brown RAF, OC Imagery RIGC (NI) at Aldergrove.



Triple whammy: The picture above from SAC Darren Smith's winning Professional Photographer of the Year portfolio took the best military portrait and image of the year titles

Hanging on: Another first for SAC Darren Smith, this time in the sport and adventurous training category, right

Two's company: The best digital image, by Sgt Dave Berkon (who was also a runner-up in the Soldier-sponsored section), below

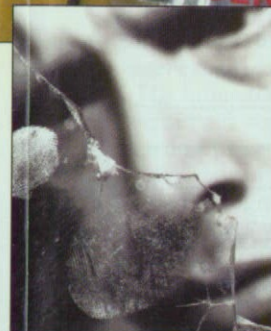


Watchtower at sunset: Maj Frank Moran, 1 WFR, was judged runner-up in the best colour photograph section with this atmospheric entry



If the cap fits: Best colour photograph, above, by Stephen George, principal photographer, HQNI

Sharp image: A second place in the monochrome section for SAC Darren Smith with this shot, left



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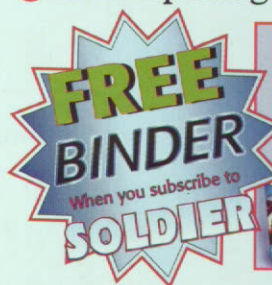


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Dusky visitor: Col Sgt Nigel Hicks's atmospheric picture of a Lynx flying in Northern Ireland

Night flight

Another winner qualifies for Army contest

IT is already clear that there is no shortage of talent among the ranks of the Army's amateur photographers.

This is the third month of *Soldier's* special contest to promote the Army Photographic Competition, and already we have seen several entries which would grace any professional portfolio.

Latest of our winners – and so guaranteed an entry in the *Soldier*-sponsored category of the worldwide British Army competition – is Col Sgt Nigel Hicks, Coldm Gds. His picture of a Lynx helicopter at dusk caught our judges' eye for several reasons. It was taken in South Armagh as the aircraft came in to lift-off troops manning the watchtower site.

Mike Weston, our chief photographer, reckoned timing was crucial in setting up the picture. Anticipating that dry snow would be blown up by the downdraft from the Lynx's rotors, adding to the atmospheric tension of the setting sun, Nigel caught the moment perfectly.

His immediate reward is a £25 photographic gift voucher, plus the chance to pick up a prize to the value of £250 in the *Soldier*-sponsored section of the British Army Photographic Competition.

Our judges were also drawn to entries from LCpl Lee Blanchard, taken during Exercise Maple Hunter, of a 881 Squadron AAC pilot in his cockpit; Celia

Mannings's photo of 21 Signal Regiment wives firing SA80 during a fun day; and LSgt Bushby's picture of LCOH Baz Harrington, HCR, instructing students in patrolling techniques at the Army Foundation College at Harrogate.

Closing date for our January competition is **December 3**, and for February – your last chance to enter – it's **January 9**.

Remember, it is open to any reader who is not a professional photographer. Send your entries, preferably prints up to 10x8in depicting any aspect of Army life, to the Chief Photographer, *Soldier*, Parsons House, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2DU. Include a self-addressed envelope if you want your photos returned. Alternatively, you can e-mail them to mweston@soldiermagazine.co.uk, indicating "*Soldier* Phot Comp" in the subject box.

Entries for the British Army Photographic Competition, which closes on **February 8**, will be welcomed from dependants as well as serving and retired Regular Army, TA, cadets and Army-employed civilians.

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

SOLDIER
PHOTOGRAPHIC
COMPETITION

Manage your money



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

What do you really want for Christmas?

I AM aware that although Christmas is a time for families, many will have husbands, wives, partners, sons and daughters, nephews and nieces deployed overseas. Separation at this time is hard enough without the uncertainties that abound in the aftermath of September 11.

Advertisers will urge us to spend, tempting us into "retail therapy". We often feel better when buying nice things for the children and family. It seems to me that this is a good time to put relationships first.

What practical things can we do to have a good Christmas? For a start, we can plan and we can share costs with extended family and friends. It's even harder than usual to make sound decisions at this emotional time of the year. Can we have a good time without spending a fortune and sliding further into debt?

The current international situation could actually help us look at our priorities. As I wrote last month, it takes planning, honest talking, courage and an inner conviction that relationships are more important than what we spend.

How was it for you?

In the last column, I encouraged you to do a Christmas budget. How did you get on? By now, I guess you will have sent all your Christmas cards. Did you spend more or less than intended? Did the presents list help? What about travel and catering costs? Have you got a plan for shopping within your budget? You spend less if you take a list to the shops and don't buy anything that's not on the list.

Try using cash or cheques for purchases. Those of us who use credit cards spend up to 30 per cent more than those who go to the shops armed with cash.

Dreaded statements

Monitor your spending against the budget and you may have a pleasant surprise... no nasty feelings about what happens in January when the dreaded statements arrive.

I hope that this year is different, and that those who struggled with money through 2001 have a good Christmas without getting into increased debt.

Don't be tempted by Christmas Eve bargains and pre-Christmas sales unless you have a budget figure in mind, and a list.

Resist taking out credit or buying on credit. Try not to take on or increase your credit liabilities (debt, by another name).

Don't feel alone. Keep in touch with friends and family. If you want someone outside to talk to, call the Helpline. A counsellor will spend time with you and talk through your worries.

On behalf of Credit Action, I hope you have a peaceful and enjoyable Christmas.

0800 591084

Mr Snowboarding

From failed skier to prince of the piste

Report: Andy Simms

CREDITED as the man who introduced snowboarding to the snow-peaked mountains of Scotland, Tony Brown has made a handsome living out of the sport he loves.

With a board strapped to his feet he has competed against some of the world's finest riders, taught pop stars how to board, and his book, *World Snowboard Guide*, has sold more than 48,000 copies.

But Brown, who served as a driver with 7 Tank Transport Regiment in the late 1970s and early 1980s, has not always felt at home on the piste.

When the skiing skills of his regiment were put to the test during Exercise Snow Queen in 1980, Brown stood out from the crowd for all the wrong reasons.

"At the end of the exercise the officer in charge wrote a report saying that I would never make a skier, not in a million years," recounted Brown. "I really took a hammering in that report."

"I lived in the Highlands at the time, the biggest ski area in Britain, so during leave I went home and tried skiing again, but that officer was right - I just couldn't ski."

After completing three tours of Northern Ireland, Brown left the Army in 1982 with the words of the reporting officer still fresh in his mind.

"I went on a holiday to Europe that year and was determined to learn how to ski so that I could go back and stick two fingers up at all those who had mocked me," he said. "But when I was in Austria I saw a guy with a snowboard and was immediately side-tracked."

"No one back in the UK was doing it. I tried it, discovered it was easy and found it an instant buzz."

The enduring love affair had begun, but not everyone back home in Scotland shared Brown's enthusiasm for the largely unknown sport.

"I experienced a lot of negativity during those early days. Skiers were constantly telling me that they did not want me on their slopes," he said. "The *Daily Mail* even ran an article with the headline 'Ban this killer craze'."

Times have certainly changed. Brown arrived for our interview after spending the day promoting the *World Snowboard Guide* (WSG) at the Ski and Snowboard Show - an international trade show sponsored by none other than the *Daily Mail*.

Now 40, Brown has worked tirelessly over the past two decades to raise the profile of the sport within the UK.

In 1989 he opened the UK's first snowboard shop, the Snowboard Academy in Aviemore, and also had a hand in setting-up Board Wise and the Snowboard Asylum - two leading snowboard chains.



Driving force: Tony Brown pictured during one of his three tours of Northern Ireland

A disdain for the retail industry encouraged Brown to pursue his dream of compiling a guide to snowboarding resorts, a full-time job which has enabled him and his board to travel the world, and also led to a number of celebrity encounters.

"When I was researching the first book I became involved with *Board Stupid*, a snowboarding programme on Channel Four," he explained.

"They had organised for a number of pop stars to appear on the show but had nobody to teach them how to board, so I offered to lend a hand."

Among his star students was chart-topper Gabrielle. "Half of them had never seen snow, let alone a snowboard," he said. "But Gabrielle was great. As soon as she got on the snow she lost her showbiz bravado and had a great time. Snow is a great leveller. Celebrities fall over, bruise and get wet like the rest of us."

Once ranked as a top ten British rider, Brown made a conscious decision to quit the race scene at an early age.

And despite the fact that the sport's top riders can now earn salaries comparable to those of Premiership footballers, Brown has no regrets.

"I never really took competitions seriously and once turned up for a grand slalom event and used a colander and duck tape instead of a helmet," he said. "I came last but got the biggest applause of the day and for me that is what snowboarding is all about - having fun."

"I have never thought twice about my decision to quit boarding competitively and besides, working on the WSG series is a great job and I am doing something that no one else in the world is."

◆ The 2002 Army snowboarding championships will be held between January 21 and 26 at Neustift, Austria. Open to boarders of all abilities, the competition will feature slalom, giant slalom and border cross events.

For more information contact Lt Alex Benn by post at 21 Engineer Regiment, Quebec Barracks, BFPO 36 or by calling 94866 2338.

Totally awesome prize

SOLDIER has joined forces with Tony Brown, the publisher/author of the *World Snowboard Guide*, to offer readers a prize worth more than £400.

Not only have we got six signed copies of the 2002 WSG to giveaway, but we are also putting a stylish snowboard from A-Boards up for grabs.

For your chance to win a Vantage-design snowboard complete with K2 V6 bindings, pictured right, simply answer the following question:

Where are the 2002 Army snowboarding championships being held?

- a) Australia
- b) Austria
- c) Antarctica

Five runners-up will each receive a signed copy of the *World Snowboard Guide*.

Your entry, which must include your name, address, shoe size, height and weight, should reach us by January 3.

Winners will be drawn at random from the correct answers received. Usual competition rules apply.



Picture: F Ducasse (A-Boards)

SHORTS

Howzat happened?

THE Army is desperately short of cricket umpires to take charge of inter-unit and inter-corps matches.

A falling number of qualified officials serving with the Army means that relatively expensive civilian umpires are having to be used instead.

Those who believe that they have the ability to assess a situation calmly, quickly and accurately are invited to attend one of next year's training courses (March 4-8 and October 7-12). For further information contact Maj Cornwell on Mil 94321 8343 or 01980 678343.

RMA's prime big guns

THE England Cricket National Academy squad reported to the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst for six days of concentrated coaching.

Under the tutelage of Australian wicket-keeping legend Rodney Marsh,

England's young stars underwent psychometric testing and analysis, team-building, and command tasks – similar to those completed by the Army's young commanders.

Marsh's aim is to develop a base of players who, in a few years, will be good enough to give the Test selectors a healthy problem.

◆ Sandhurst's secure facilities are

also being used by England's Rugby Union squad.

England players like Newcastle's Jonny Wilkinson (pictured left) will spend a number of days training at Sandhurst throughout the season.

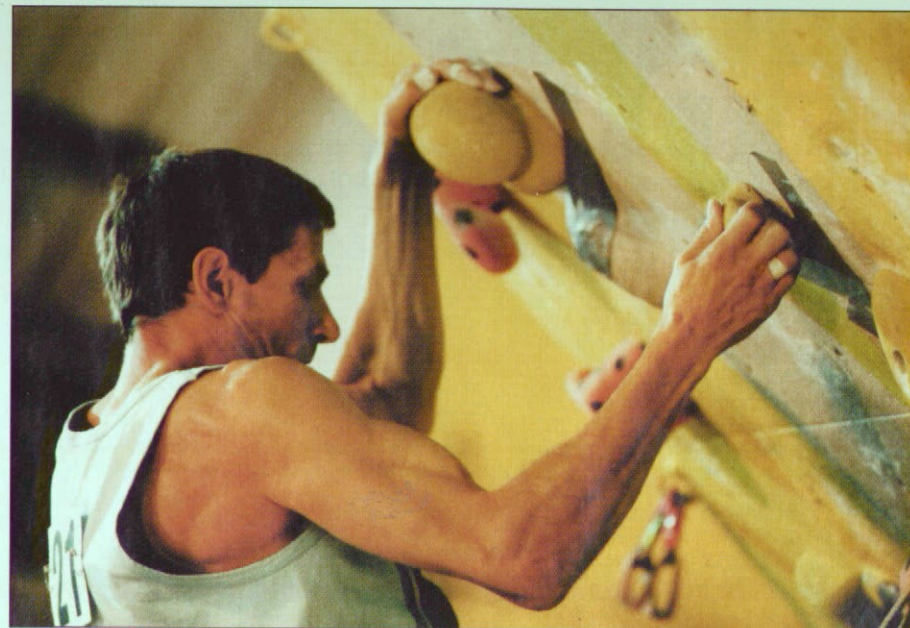
Combination unlocked

THE Combined Services rugby team were defeated 15-26 by the Romanian national side at Portsmouth.

The Services initially promised much, with the pack more than holding its own in the strong wind, but the backs too frequently failed to make any impression on a Romanian line who were quick into the tackle.

The Romanian cause was not helped by a referee whose interpretation of the game differed markedly from their own.

When the visiting backs were given the slightest room they were too quick-witted for the home side and ran in four almost unopposed tries, one from under their own posts.



Hanging on to the leaders: Capt Graham Carter (Army) settles for third place in Sheffield

Unbeaten at the top

Climbers defend Inter-Services title

THE Army preserved its 100-per cent record in the Inter-Services sports climbing championships by winning both team titles on offer at Sheffield's Foundry Climbing Centre.

Sponsored by Cotswold Essential Outdoor, Edelweiss Ropes, High Places and HB Climbing Equipment, the event marked a second successive double for the Army.

Having won both the open and under-25 titles at the inaugural Inter-Services championships last year, the Army dis-

pelled any talk of "beginner's luck" by reclaiming ownership of the two trophies.

Royal Navy climbing champion Mne Martin Hallett proved the only thorn in the Army's side – beating Capt Steve Blake to the individual open title.

◆ **Full results: Open championship** – 1, Mne Martin Hallett (Navy); 2, Capt Steve Blake (Army); 3, Capt Graham Carter (Army). **Best woman** – 14, Capt Leanne Callaghan (Army). **Best veteran** – 4, WO1 Mike Smith (Army). **Best super veteran** – Capt Steve Blake (Army). **Best team** – Army.

U25 championship – 1, 2nd Lt Graham Clarke (Army); 2, OCdt Tom Odling (Army); 3, OCdt Daniel Shepherd (Army). **Best woman** – Musn Sandra Jones (Navy). **Best team** – Army.

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

ATHLETICS: Inter-Services cross-country championships, men's – 1, Army (WO2 Rod Finch (AGC Centre)); 2, RAF; 3, RN. **Women's** – 1, Army (Cpl Sophie Morris (3 (UK) Div)); 2, RN; 3, RAF. **Junior men's** – 1, Army (Cfn Thomas Byrne (SEME)); 2, RAF. **Veteran men's** – 1, RAF; 2, RN; 3, Army.

Account@nt Online Army cross-country relay championships, veteran men's – 1, SSgt Wright (3 DSR); 2, Maj Wood (HQ 4 Div). **Veteran women's** – 1, SSgt Sharp (ATFC). **Junior men's** – 1, Cfn Reay (SEME); 2, JS Sanchez (AFC Harrogate). **Junior women's** – 1, OCdt Shaw (RMCS); 2, OCdt Finn (RMCS). **Senior women's** – 1, Cpl Dean (11 Sig Regt); 2, SSgt Sharp (ATFC). **Senior men's** – 1, WO2 Butler (RLC); 2, Pte Hinch (RLC).

FOOTBALL: Metropolitan Police 4 Army 0; Amateur Football Alliance 1 Army 1; Army 1 Woking 7.

Massey Trophy – AGC 3 AAC 0; RAC 3 Infantry 6; APTC 1 RE 4; REME 4 Int Corps 0; REME 2 Infantry 2; RLC 4 AMS 2; RAC 0 APTC 3; RLC 4 AGC 0; AAC 0 Int Corps 3; RE 7 Infantry 0.

Pricewaterhouse Cooper league – REME 1 AGC 8; Int Corps 1 RLC; AMS 2 R Signals 4; REME 0 R Signals 4 (void match, R Signals awarded victory); RA 3 Int Corps 3.

MARTIAL ARTS: Army championships. Karate competition: Individual kumite, senior men's – 1, Spr Neil Martin (RE); 2, Capt Ian Rennie (QARANC); 3, Spr Dave Fisk (RE). **Junior men's** – 1, WO2 Trevor Wallis (RLC); 2, Sgt Andy Howarth (RA); 3, LCpl Jitendra Shakya (RGR). **Women's** – 1,

All conquering

Infantry turn rivals inside and out

THERE will be no room for stockings on Maj Jo Edmonds's mantelpiece this Christmas.

After leading the Infantry hockey team to three major titles during the course of the year, any previously unoccupied space in the team manager's home will have been filled by silverware.

Edmonds (RGBW) had his first taste of glory in April when his team, skippered by Scotland international Capt Richard Forsyth (KOSB), won the Army outdoor championships at Aldershot.

The infantrymen then proved that whatever they could do outdoors they could do just as well under a roof – taking the Army indoor championships at Larkhill by storm.

England's Capt Johnny Evennett (2 LI) was in inspirational form throughout the tournament and, alongside team-mates Pte Lee Callow and Pte John Townsend (both 2 PWRR), terrorised the opposition's defences.

At the back Pte Wayne Masters (3 Para) orchestrated the play, producing endless blocking tackles and feeding the goal-hungry forwards with measured passes.

After finishing top of their group and beating the Royal Artillery 10-2 in the semi-final, the Infantry battled hard to record an 8-6 victory over finalists REME.

"Specific praise should go to Capt Neil Bellamy (1 LI), who's energy in midfield allowed us to dominate most of our matches," said proud boss Edmonds. "He is a highly underrated player and should have been picked up nationally for his



Picture: Steve Dock

Star performance: Capt Neil Bellamy (1 LI)

ability to control the play and find gaps in the enemy defences."

Victory at Tidworth qualified the Infantry, and beaten finalists REME, for the Inter-Command and Inter-Services indoor tournament at HMS Collingwood.

With a hat-trick of titles now in sight the Infantry needed few words of motivation from Edmonds, and after beating Royal Air Force and Royal Navy representative sides they were once again paired off against REME in a major final, this time running out 8-3 winners.

Edmonds will now be hoping his treble winners can extend their successful habit to the indoor southern championships in Exeter later this month.

FOOTBALL TABLES

MASSEY TROPHY

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
RE	3	3	0	0	12	9
RLC	4	2	1	1	5	7
APTC	3	2	0	1	1	6
REME	2	1	1	0	4	4
AAC	4	1	1	2	1	4
Infantry	4	1	1	2	-5	4
R Signals	1	1	0	0	1	3
AGC	2	1	0	1	-1	3
Int Corps	2	1	0	1	-1	3
RA	0	0	0	0	0	0
RAC	2	0	0	2	-6	0
AMS	3	0	0	3	-11	0

* Results up to and including November 16

WOMEN'S INTER-CORPS CUP

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

* Results up to and including November 16

FIXTURES

Your sporting guide to December...

ANGLING: 1 – Inter-Services shore championships (TBC); 5 – Army fur and feather (TBC).

ATHLETICS: 5 – 4 Div cross-country championships (Deeput); 8 – Army v Cambridge Tetrathlon (RMAS).

BASKETBALL: 1-9 – SHAPE championships (Belgium).

BOXING: 1 – ABA (England) novice semi-finals (TBC); 3 – Western Counties v Army (Bristol); 6 – London v Army (Royal Garden Hotel, London); 13 – Combined Services charity show (Marriott Hotel, London); 15 – ABA (England) novice finals (TBC).

CANOEING: 1-2 – Inter-Corps wild-water racing championships (Llangollen, Wales).

FOOTBALL: 1 – Army Youth v Army Crusaders FC (Aldershot); 2 – Army v TA (Aldershot); 7 – RLC v RAC (Deeput); REME v AGC (Arborfield); AMS v RA (Mytchett); Int Corps v APTC (Chicksands); 10 – Army v Army Crusaders FC (Aldershot); 14 – RAC v AGC (Tidworth); Infantry v R Signals (Pirbright).

JUDO: 2 – British closed championships (Gateshead).

TENNIS: 1 – Jesters v Army (Pangbourne).

TUG OF WAR: 2 – National indoor championships (Huddersfield); 5 – Army indoor championships (Aldershot); 7 – Inter-Services indoor championships (Aldershot).

Gnr Diane Kelly (RA); 2, Pte Diane Dudley (RLC).

Individual kata, senior men's – 1, Spr Fisk; 2, Spr Martin; 3, WO1 Terry Stevens (REME). **Junior men's** – Sgt Howarth; WO2 Wallis.

Taekwondo competition: Individual sparring, senior men's – 1, Cpl Darren Morgan (R Anglian); 2, Spr Steve Tonkin (RE). **Junior men's** – 1, Cpl Dave O'Farrell (PWRR); 2, LCpl Croy (REME); 3, SSgt Paul Tyson (REME). **Women's** – Pte Dudley (RLC); 2, Sgt Lorraine Stace (RLC); 3, LCpl Creagh (RLC).

Individual patterns, open category event – 1, LCpl Croy; 2, LCpl Sayer; 3, SSgt Tyson. **Women's** – 1, Sgt Stace; 2, LCpl Creagh.

Weapons kata – 1, Capt Rennie; 2, WO1 Stevens; 3, Sgt Howarth.

Kendo competition – 1, Spr Fisk; 2, CSgt Zeffert (D and D).

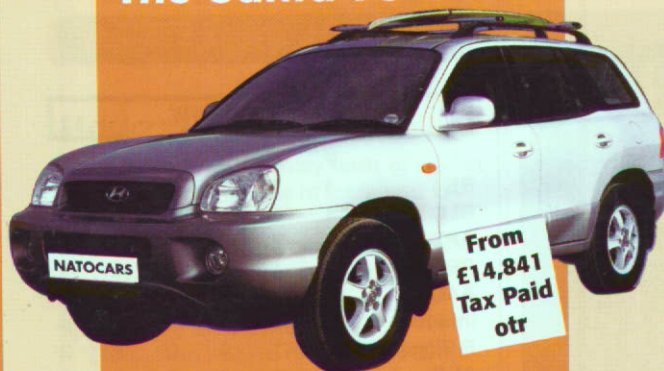
RUGBY UNION: Combined Services 14 Barbarians 18; Combined Services 15 Romania 26.

SHOOTING: 100-bird English Sporting Championship, class A – 1, Capt Daryl White (RGJ); 2, Bdr Paul Sadler (RA); 3, WO2 Stuart Ferguson (RE). **Class B** – 1, SSgt Shuggy Hughes (RLC). **Class C** – SSgt Wayne Long (REME). **Class D** – Pte Halliday (R Irish).

Army inter unit clay target championship winners: High gun – Lt Irwin Adair (R Irish). **Class A** – Bdr Simon Craggs (RA). **Class B** – Capt Paul Rabbidge (REME). **Class D** – Sgt Tony Smith (RLC).

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Picture: Roger Thompson

Man of the moment: Pte Emosi Naisaramaki (1 RS) was rewarded with a place in the Fijian World Cup squad after impressing in Dubai

Emosi caps it in Dubai

THE EUREST-sponsored Army Sevens team ended the season on a high note by winning the International Club Tournament in Dubai, **writes Roger Thompson.**

The "magnificent seven", who have already won the Safari Sevens in Nairobi, the Welsh Cwmtawe Saithiau in Swansea and the Middlesex Sevens at Twickenham, acclimatised to the 40C temperature in time to beat a star-studded International Samurai side 14-7 and set up a semi-final clash against Fiji.

The story as to how Fiji arrived in this particular competition would be better written by J K Rowling, for the semi-final that followed was pure magic.

Led superbly by skipper Capt Howard Graham (AGC), the Army played an intense team game against a Fiji side unaccustomed to facing their own style of attack. Two sides using the whole of the pitch were bound to leave the sort of space which suited the audacious and favoured the brave.

Pte Emosi Naisaramaki of 1 RS

attacked off either foot, while Pte Kite Rawali, Pte Bul Bulumakau (both 1 RS) and Pte Sekove Nakanacagi (RLC) "boshed" through tired defenders to set up further attacks.

Graham, an old sevens head on even older legs, cemented the strategy under intense pressure, and Naisaramaki fed left and right, and right and left, to leave a trail of defenders in his slipstream. Waves of applause and chants of "Army" from the crowd drove tired legs and parched lungs on.

At full time, with tries from Pte Saula Roko (RGBW), Naisaramaki and Gdsm Alfred Vakacokovanua (1 SG), and conversions by Graham, the match was tied at 19 points apiece.

Cue a period of sudden death that lasted just 60 seconds. Furious end-to-end rugby hardly gave spectators time to draw breath until, during an Army attack, the New Zealand referee's whistle indicated a penalty to the Army – which in sevens is a drop kick.

Brave men turned their heads and to the kicker, Pte Epeli Qolikibua, the posts

must have appeared almost out of reach. But with the crowd hushed, a "nae fuss" and a lazy swing of the boot, the Royal Scotsman stroked the ball between the posts to record a 22-19 victory.

In comparison the final was a relatively straightforward affair, with the Army beating a QSG Invitation side 40-28 in front of a 10,000-strong crowd.

Modern Arabia is not a place stuck with too much convention, and for once it was the good news that travelled fast.

Based on the outstanding performance against his own national team in the semi-final, Naisaramaki was selected to join the Fiji sevens squad at the World Cup in Durban, South Africa.

Naisaramaki's Army team-mate, Roko, was named as a reserve for the Fiji squad. Mention must also go to some of the team's British-born contingent. One man in particular was instrumental in the Army's success – Gnr Andy Dawling (7 Para RHA), who "dogged" magnificently to set up attacking balls throughout.

This particular dog certainly had his day in Dubai.

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Dell-boy's new job

Former Southampton midfielder swaps professional football for life in the Army

Interview: Andy Simms

"WHO is the best footballer I have ever played alongside? That's a toughie," mused Army and Combined Services midfielder Pte Neal Bartlett (2 PWRR).

The 26-year-old could be forgiven for taking time to ponder. Having graced the Premiership with Southampton FC and played top-flight football in Sweden, the infantry soldier has a higher calibre of old team-mates to recall than most.

Born in Southampton, Bartlett grew up playing schoolboy football for the South Coast club and was offered an apprenticeship with them in 1991.

"I always loved the game but never really understood that you could make a living from it back then," he explained. "I just loved playing and used to put in just as much effort down at the local park as I would playing for my county – that's just the sort of lad I was."

His enthusiasm for the game did not go unnoticed by Ian Branfoot, the Saints manager at the time, and Bartlett soon found himself sharing a dressing-room with the likes of Matt Le Tissier.

"I knew that Branfoot liked me as a player and I had a sneaking suspicion that it would only be a matter of time before I was picked for the first team," he said. "I made my debut as a substitute against Manchester City when I was 17 and was lucky enough to impress during the few minutes I was on – Ian just kept with me after that."

Despite his youth, Bartlett made the transition from apprentice to full professional with little fuss.

"As an apprentice you are heavily involved in the club. Being with the first-team players and sharing banter with them was nothing new," he said. "Match days were a little bit strange at first but I never suffered from nerves."

"I have always had a lot of self-confidence when it comes to playing football – that is when I am at my best and when I feel most at ease."

There were certainly no signs of nerves during his full home debut at the Dell against Swindon.

"We won 5-1 and I set up Le Tissier's first of the game after about 20 minutes and Jeff Kenna for the third."

"The gaffer took me off with about ten minutes to go so that I could get my standing ovation. Looking at everyone clapping at the Milton End is a moment I will never forget."

In total Bartlett made 23 appearances for the Saints, playing against the likes of Manchester United, Leeds United and Wimbledon.

His departure from the Dell came about shortly after the arrival of Alan Ball as manager.

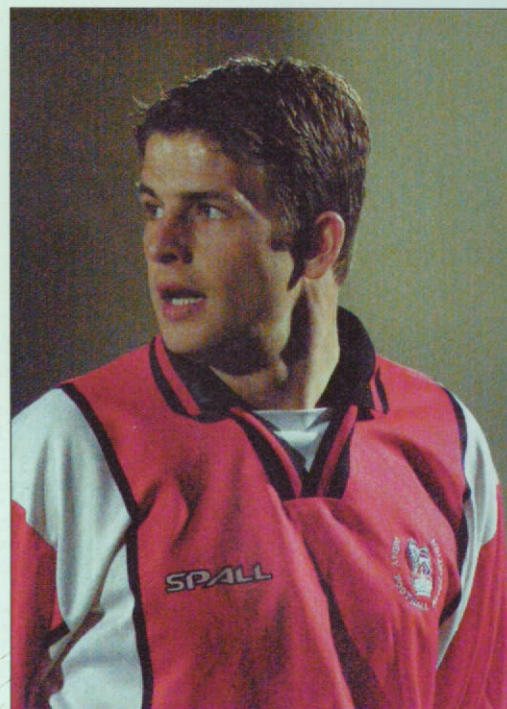
"I didn't fit into Alan Ball's plans. He was a good coach and I did learn a lot from him but when a new gaffer comes in he has new plans, new ideas and some of the lads, including me, did not feature in them."

Rather than joining another English club, Bartlett took up a lucrative one-season contract with Swedish side IFK Gothenburg.

"Moving to Sweden gave me a great opportunity to learn the foreign game. The football is a lot slower out there but technically they are excellent," he said.

He returned to the English game the following year and enjoyed spells with Swansea and Hereford before returning to Southampton as a community officer in 1997.

"It was great to go back to Saints in a



Picture: Graeme Main

Still red and white: Bartlett in Army colours

coaching role but the money was not brilliant," he said. "I had just got married and was looking for some stability." And so, following in the footsteps of his grandfather, he joined the British Army.

It is a new career path he has stuck with despite being approached by Division 2 side Port Vale during the close season.

"Why change something that isn't broken? I am enjoying my life. I wake up in the mornings looking forward to going to work," he said. "It would have to be one hell of a great deal to make me risk losing everything the Army has given me."

And there is also no question of the father-of-one missing his football. His passing prowess is currently being put to good use by his unit, his corps, the Army, the Combined Services and Dr Martens Premier Division side Bath City FC.

So who is the best player Pte Bartlett has played alongside?

"It is hard to single out just one player. As a midfielder I would certainly put Le Tissier up there just for his sheer invention."

"But I would also say Cpl Joe Collins, who plays for the Army – I think he is an exceptional player," he said. "And another player that I am honoured to say I have played alongside is my Infantry team-mate CSgt Johnny Greechan."

"I have played against some good lads at football league level and out in Sweden but the bloke is just unbelievable. He is a very, very intelligent player. I love playing with him; he makes playing the game so easy."



Picture: Southern Daily Echo

Saintly figure: Pte Neal Bartlett (2 PWRR)

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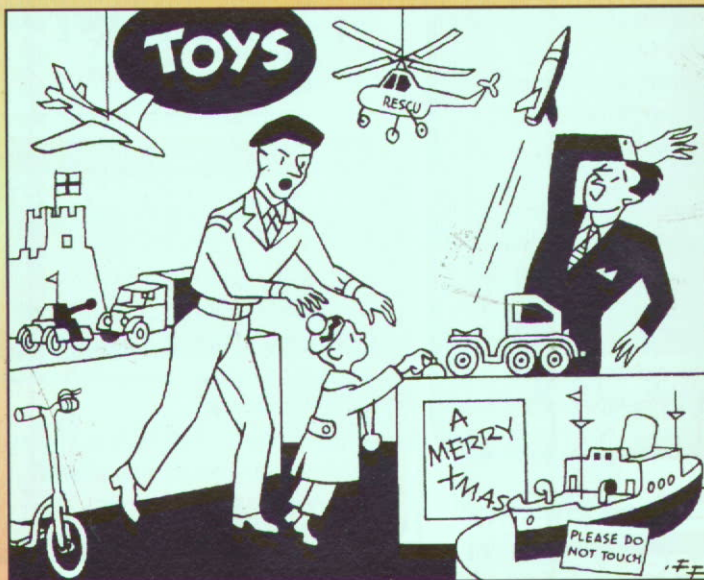
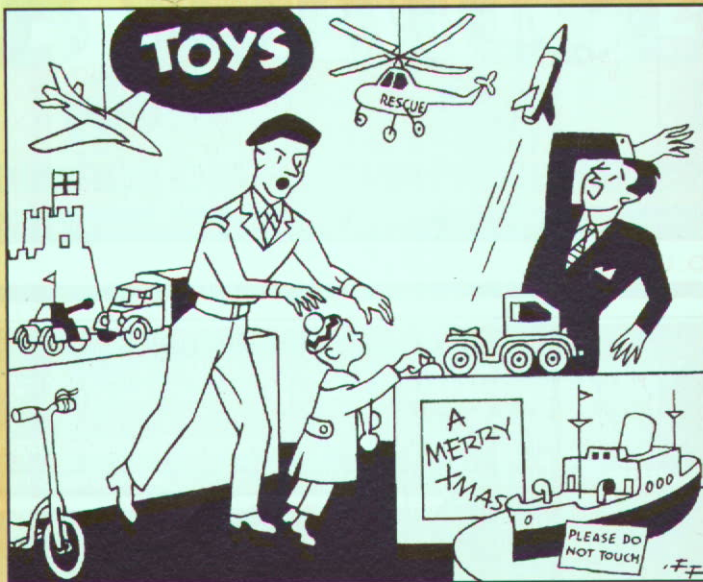
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No 721



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Do not include anything else in your envelope.

First correct entry drawn

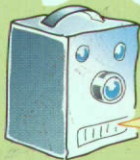
after the closing date will win £100; the second and third will receive £10 gift vouchers. No correspondence of any kind can be entered into.

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

Name : (Give initials and rank or title)

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October issue (No 719): First correct entry drawn was from SSgt K Wilson, of HQ ARRC, Rheindahlen, who wins £100. Runners-up Ms A Whitney, of Doncaster, Yorks and Mr Madhukar Lama, MoD civilian, British Gurkhas Kathmandu, each win a £10 gift voucher. The ten differences were: leaves, top left; hackle and pace stick, left; water droplet; door knob; watering-can handle; soldier's epaulette; officer's sleeve; dog's tail; figure in window.



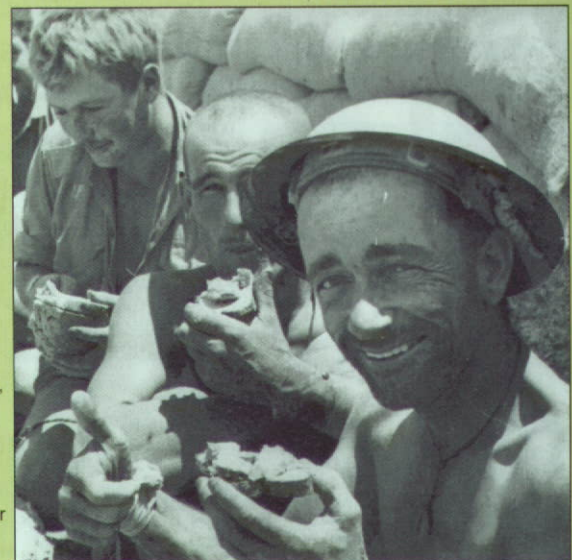
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FUNNIEST caption for the October competition (left) was, in our opinion, "Atomic Kittens' visit to Oman was well overdue" from LCpl P Duffy, Anti-Tank Platoon, 1 WG, Aldershot. He gets the prize. Honourable mentions for John Mills of South Wonston, Winchester with "After spending £70 on her new hair-do, Emma was not wearing a hat . . . RSM or no RSM!", and ex-cadet Howard



Blackmore, of Dunchurch, Rugby, with "Phew! Can't they speed up the

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Marlene, 39-year-old, 5'2", slim blonde with blue eyes. Enjoys walking, dancing and travelling. Seeking pen pals who enjoy life and would like a friend, 35-45. P977

Penny, 30-year-old, 5'8" black hair and green eyes. Enjoys music, art, painting, drawing, reading, cooking and history. Seeking pen pals, any age. P978

Lily, 42-year-old, 5'8", dark brown hair and blue eyes. Bubbly and outgoing who enjoys pubs, clubs, dining in or out and socialising. Seeking male pen pals, 30-50, photo appreciated. P979

Amanda, 38-year-old, 5'9". Interests include English literature, reading, classical music, nature, art, jazz and enjoys horseback riding, travelling, long walks and the country life. Seeking pen pals, 40-58. P980

Zoe, 29-year-old, 5'6", slim blonde with green eyes. Enjoys keeping fit, dancing, swimming, drinking and further education. Seeking pen pals who enjoy life and having fun, 29-40. P982

Shirin, 27-year-old, 5'4", slim with long dark hair and green eyes. Enjoys drinking, climbing, having fun, travelling, work (sometimes) and languages. Young professional seeking correspondence, 20+. P983

Janet, 26-year-old, 5', slim with long light hair. Enjoys drinking, socialising, trying to keep fit, holidays, travel and having fun. Young professional wanting to swap stories, 20+. P984

Tina, 41-year-old, 5'3", blonde with medium-length hair and green eyes. Enjoys gym, pubs, travelling and scuba diving. Divorced with one teenage son and generally enjoys life to the full. Would like to hear from kind, genuine male pen pals, 35+. P985

Ruth, 34-year-old, 5'7" short brown hair and hazel eyes. Enjoys football, most sports, computer, watching movies, socialising with friends, travelling and music. Single and looking for pen pals, 28-40. P986

Charlotte, 23-year-old, 5'7" brown hair and green eyes. Enjoys gym, reading, socialising with friends. Fun-loving and caring, seeking pen pals, 20+. P987

Yvonne, blonde who needs cheering up, are you up to it? GSOH, loves socialising, travelling and going to the gym. Would like to hear from sincere and honest pen pals, 40+. P988

Diane, 27-year-old, 5'4" black hair and brown eyes. Enjoys swimming, writing, reading, walking, going out and having fun, quiet nights in and varied music. No time wasters need apply, photos preferred, genuine honest pen pals with similar interests, 25-35. P989

Carole, 45-year-old, 5'4", medium build with dark hair. Enjoys listening to music, eating out, trying to learn to use a computer and reading. Divorced with two teenage children. Seeking pen pals, any age. P990

Emma, 18-year-old, 5'7", blonde with big brown eyes. Good sense of humour, party animal who enjoys life to the full. Would like to hear from similar fun-loving pen pals 19-25, sick of country bumpkin mentality, photo appreciated but not essential. P991

Real life Bridget Jones, 30-ish, slim, full of good intentions, but often misunderstood. Seeks honest male pen pals, any age. P992

Carol, 37-year-old, 5'2" short brown hair with brown eyes. Enjoys darts, socialising, reading, writing and loves a good action movie. Divorced, a smoker, romantic and has a GSOH. Would love to write to pen pals with a good sense of humour, any age. P993

Sandra, 35-year-old, 5'3" fair with blue eyes. Enjoys travel, going on cruises, gym, pubs and clubs. Seeking pen pals, 25-45. P994

Sue, 40-year-old, 5'3", brunette with brown eyes. Enjoys pubs, clubs, travelling, aerobics, eating out, cinema, bowling and walking. Seeks soldiers at home and abroad to write to for friendship, 38-41. P995

Mel, 26-year-old, Lancashire lass who has a good job, own house and car. Enjoys socialising with friends and the cinema. Looking to meet new friends and have some fun. Seeking pen pals, any age. P996

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NOTICES

CHY-1161C

Charity Commission

Reference: SJH/96942/CD(T)

The 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles Regimental Trust

The charity commission proposes to make a scheme to amend the trusts of this charity.

A copy of the draft scheme may be seen at The Gurkha Museum, Peninsula Barracks, Romsey Road, Winchester, SO23 8TS or can be obtained by sending a large stamped (41p or 1st class mail, 33p for 2nd class mail) self addressed envelope to PO Box 314, Woking GU24 9FA, quoting the above reference.

Comments or representations can be made within one month from today.

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The 4th Division Trust Scheme is currently being displayed on the notice board in the entrance to Headquarters 4th Division.

Any questions regarding the scheme should be directed to the Secretary of the Trust Lt Col SJ Westlake AGC (SPS) on Aldershot Military (94222) Ext. 2000.

Closure of Army Training Regiment Glencorse

During the summer of 2002 the Army Training Regiment Glencorse will draw down with closure later that year.

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12/01

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October 27 2001

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23-way tie for 3rd Place (23 Goals £300.00 each): Capt RJ Anderton-Brown, HQ 12 Mech Bde, Aldershot; SSgt RJ Campbell, Project UNICOM, Worthy Down; Capt JEM Carey-Hughes, KRRH, Tidworth; Pte J Courtman, 1 RRV, Paderborn; Pte AL Davies, QRL, Osnabruck; Capt JJ De Quincey-Adams, BMATT South Africa, BFPO 747; Capt P De Rouffignac, HQ 1 (UK) Arm Div, Herford; SSgt AC Galloway, SEME, Bordon; Lt RA Gibbs, HCR, Windsor; LCpl SW Hall, 1 RGBW, Ballykelly; WO1 G Hynds, RAC Centre, Bovington; Sgt AP Johnson, 3 Bn REME, Paderborn; Cpl MR McCarroll, HQ Hereford Garrison; Sgt DS McFaul, 59 Indep Cdo Sqn RE, Chivenor; Sig JD Meecham, 216 Signal Sqn, Colchester; Sgt DM Meikleham, 7 Tpt Regt RLC, Bielefeld; Lt JC Mosely, 2 CS Regt RLC, Gutersloh; Capt DM Oak, HQ 42 (NW) Bde, Preston; Bdr WE Ray, 40 Regt RA, Thirsk; WO2 NT Russ, 26 Regt RA, Gutersloh; LCpl ED Scott, HQ ARRC, Rheindahlen; WO1 LD Sharpe, AAC Band, Middle Wallop; LCpl L Turner, 7 Tpt Regt RLC, Bielefeld

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Congo

QCVS – Col S Caraffi MBE, late RTR; Lt Col T V Myatt, QRH.

● Sgt Clifton Lea and LCpl Jamie Partridge, both PWRR, were awarded their Mentions in Dispatches (see list above) for decisive leadership and bravery in an incident on the night of December 19 last year. Their patrol bumped into a large ethnic Albanian armed group attempting to smuggle weapons, communication equipment, ammunition and explosives into Serbia. A citation said both men acted instinctively and courageously and, by so doing, overcame a numerically superior and heavily-armed force.

THE present Earl Haig has seen for the first time the original poppy, pictured, laid on the then new Cenotaph by his father on November 11, 1921. Field Marshal Earl Haig began the tradition of hand-made poppies to raise funds for poor First World War veterans.



Gorazde on the record

A NEWLY-released double CD tells the story of how British UN peacekeepers kept warring factions apart in the "safe haven" of Gorazde during the 1992-95 Bosnian war.

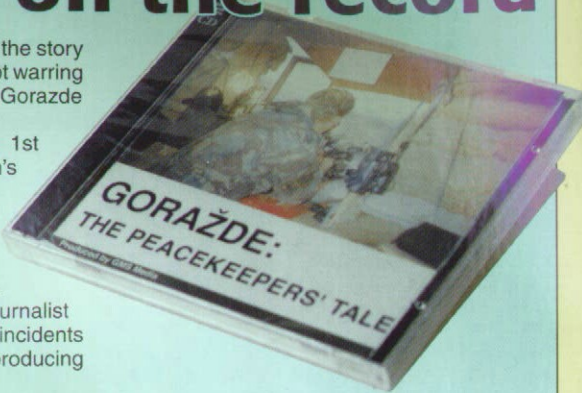
Lightly-armed troops from the 1st Battalion, The Duke of Wellington's Regiment and the 1st Battalion, The Royal Welch Fusiliers were trapped in the besieged town with no secure route for food, fuel or ammunition and no safe way out.

Through extensive interviews journalist Gillian Sandford covers all the key incidents during 18 months' peacekeeping, producing a valuable oral history.

For your chance to win one of six copies of the CD answer the following question.

In which year did The Duke of Wellington's Regiment enter Gorazde?
a) 1993, b) 1994, c) 1995

Send your answers on a postcard to "Gorazde Competition", Soldier, Ordnance



Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2 DU, to reach us by January 3.

● **Gorazde: The Peacekeepers' Tale** is for sale from www.gmsmedia.co.uk or by mail order at £10.99 (including p&p for UK and BFPO orders).

✦ AN English Heritage blue plaque was unveiled last month at 19 Abercromby Square, Liverpool, the boyhood home of double Victoria Cross winner **Capt Noel Chavasse** RAMC.

✦ SEVENTY-nine veterans of **The Staffordshire Regimental Association** paraded in Wayne's Keep British Military Cemetery in Nicosia during a nostalgic visit to Cyprus.

Six of their colleagues were buried there while on active service with the Staffords in the late 1950s. As the cemetery now falls within the UN buffer zone separating Greek Cypriot and Turkish ends of the divided island, relatives and friends wishing to visit graves must get special permission to do so.

The South Staffordshire veterans were joined by members of the Royal British Legion's Limassol branch and blue-beretted soldiers serving with the 12 Regiment RA group attached to UN Forces Cyprus.

✦ THERE'S still time to include your war story – tall, bawdy or otherwise – in the Royal Star and Garter Home's time capsule. As reported in the June issue of *Soldier*, for the modest fee of £10 – which will help the home – you can have a story and photograph put in

Plaque marks boyhood home of Chavasse VC

cold storage to be opened by the Imperial War Museum 100 years later. To find out more, go to www.OdysseyTimeship.com or ring Tony Maher on 020 8439 8114.

✦ A MILLENNIUM print commissioned from leading military artist David Rowlands by **101 (Northumbrian) Regiment RA (V)** is available from the unit. Depicting all aspects of the history of the Royal Artillery, the print can be obtained from Maj S Boulter, 101 (N) Regt RA (V), Napier Armoury, Alexandra Road, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE8 4HX (tel 0191 2396137). It is priced £35 unframed plus £5 p&p (UK/BFPO only). A limited number of signed prints are available at £75.

✦ Family, friends and military colleagues gathered last month at **Musgrave Park Hospital Military Wing** in Belfast to remember those killed and injured when a terrorist bomb was detonated there ten years ago. WO2 (CSM) Phil Cross RAMC and Dvr Craig Pantry RCT died in the atrocity on November 2, 1991.

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDALS

Household Cavalry – WO1 R A Valentine, LG.

RAC – WO1 K A Bradley, RDG; WO1 A G Brace, QRH; WO2 S M Knott, QRH; SSgt R E Bath, QRH.

RA – WO2 M Abbott; WO2 K P Fewkes; WO2 P J Higham; SSgt J Deans; SSgt R C Millar.

RE – WO1 T S Bridges; WO2 S J Currie; WO2 R Findlay; WO2 S F Morris; Sgt A C Bromley.

R Signals – WO1 P Fleming; SSgt M J Emmott; SSgt G Walker.

Guards Division – WO1 R Smith, Gren Gds; WO1 R Convery, SG; WO1 D Fleming, SG.

Scottish Division – WO2 S A McDonald, RS; WO2 A Rose, RS; WO2 K C Steele, RS; WO1 G Cruickshanks, BW; WO2 C G Graham, A and SH.

Queen's Division – SSgt M Parkin, RRF;

WO1 G J Goodchild, R Anglian; SSgt A H Bokenham, R Anglian.

King's Division – SSgt P Fishwick, QLR.

Light Division – WO1 (now Capt) P T Hill, LI; SSgt A S Watson, RGJ.

R Irish – WO1 M W Baalham.

RLC – WO1 G M Clarke; WO1 D R Dixon; WO1 R S Fletcher; WO1 D S Green; WO2 S D Cooke.

RAMC – WO1 I D Campbell; WO2 W E Callaghan.

REME – WO1 S Flanagan; SSgt V J R Stone.

AGC – WO1 M P Davies, (SPS); WO1 R M Testi, (SPS); WO1 G Thompson, (SPS); WO2 A G Spinks, (SPS); WO1 J Cadman, (RMP); WO1 J B Kay, (RMP).

RAVC – WO1 A D Pedlar.

SASC – WO2 R J Higgs.

APTC – WO2 M Usher.

SEARCHLINE

Comrades sought of **ex-Lancer Wiloughby Jardine Hill**, from Whitby, N Yorks, rescued at Dunkirk by **French frigate St Cecilia**. Contact granddaughter C Bell, 9 New Road, Hanworth, Middx TW13 6TG or cheryldbell@aol.com

LCpl Eddie Davies, 1 R Anglian, late 1970s-early 1980s, is asked to contact **Derek "Chappy" Chapman**, now WO2 in Australian Military Police, 6 Claridge Court, Huntfield Heights, S Australia 5163, tel 0061 883263720 or e-mail chapmanfamily1@bigpond.com

2 Bn, Royal Scots Fusiliers who took part in Sicily landings on July 10, 1943, sought. Also details of sinking of **Hospital Ship Talamba**, on which **Maj Vincent McNeil Cooke MC** was lost. Contact Ian Cooke, Men-an-Tol Studio, Bos-ullow, Newbridge, Penzance, TR20 8NR, ian@menantolstudio.freeserve.co.uk

Operation Cold Cross 1982-83 Antarctic team members interested in reunion planned for Nov 2002 should contact Ollie Allerhead, Guartel Ltd, 16 Alliance Court, Alliance Road, London, W3 0RB, ollieallerhead@aol.com or Mark Wills at mark.wills@ubs.com

Jamaican **Cpl Bob Chin, MT Platoon, 1 Bn, The Loyal Regt, (North Lancers) 1966**, also **1 Kings**, is asked to contact Jim Peters through his daughter Lena on 01748 835565 or 07787 382531.

Keith and Robin Shortlands, ex-pupils of **Barnes School in India**, also ex-Army late 1960s early 1970s, sought by Leonard Kerr. Tel 01204 411481 or lbkerr67@hotmail.com

Anyone with photos or film of **1962 Edinburgh Military Tattoo Drill Team, Infantry Junior Leaders' Battalion** please contact Bryan Roberts broberts@wobbly44.freeserve.co.uk or visit www.wobbly44.freeserve.co.uk

Ray Knight of New South Wales is seeking father and son **2655856 Francis W Daw**, CQMS 2 Coldm Gds and **Somerset LI** and **23968603 Francis G Daw**, LSgt, 1 Coldm Gds. Replies to 31 Government Road, Sussex Inlet South, NSW Australia 2540, tel 0061 2 4441 1765.

Norman Holland requires information on **4th Durham Survey Regiment RA, B Bty, Flash Spotting**. Contact jrmrocket@yahoo.com

Friends and colleagues of the late **Cpl Darren John Davies AGC**, who left the Army two years ago, are asked to contact his sister

Dawn Gaynor at Willow Cottage, Nursery Lane, Ascot, Berks SL5 8PY or e-mail dawn_gaynor@pictel.com

Brian Donechy would like to hear from former **1st Battalion, Highland Light Infantry**, especially **1950-52**. Write to 21 Foundry Lane, Whitby, Ontario L1 1M5, Canada.

Website created for **Junior Leaders' Royal Signals, Denbury Camp**. Information from tonygask@yahoo.co.uk

M Frederick (Freddy), ex-1 RGJ, seeks Mark F and any other lads from B Coy who were in Osnabruck. Phone 0049 160 220 8855 or e-mail bfrede6494@aol.com

Jo Day ex-14 Sig Regt 1996-97, transferred to REME, married name may be Davidson, sought by old friend Cpl Lisa Waugh, JSSU, BFPO 59 or e-mail waughs@cytanet.co.cy

Sam Wait seeks Gran Canaria adventurous training sailor Steph, serving with or attached to Royal Artillery. Write to 43 East Wyld Road, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 0RP or e-mail samwait@thebeach36.fsnet.co.uk

Perce Warsop, ex-4 Flt AAC 1967-70, would like to hear from old colleagues, particularly for reunions. Contact phly36@hotmail.com

Geoff (Taffy) Bannister, ex-RAOC, and any other former mates, are asked to contact Bob (Jock) Ritchie at bob@ritchie66.fsnet.co.uk

Frank Vinton, ex-Gren Gds 1956-59, seeks old friends via karen.vinton@ntlworld.com

Pete Watts, ex-5 Armd Wksp, Soest 1983-89; is getting married and wishes to invite former mates he has lost touch with. Contact him at petesuewatts@aol.com

Ex-55 The Residency Gunners, 26 Royal Regiment RA. For details of forthcoming events contact SSgt Steve Turnbull, MTWO, 26 Regt RA, Mansergh Bks, Gutersloh, BFPO 113 or steveturnbull2087@hotmail.com

Troopship Asturias burial at sea, July 29, 1957: Anyone with a photograph of this event is asked to contact J R Sumner, 2 Ripon Close, Great Eccleston, Preston, Lancs PR3 0UY.

Video sought of **Intake 199/85 (June 13, 1986)** RCT passing-out, Buller Barracks, Aldershot. Contact g.mclennan@ntlworld.com

REUNIONS

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

35 Battery RA Foundation Day: 237th anniversary to be celebrated Feb 22-23 at Rapier Barracks, Kirtlington-Lindsey. Contact WO2 (BSM) Lavis MBE on 01904 668469.

4 Coy, 3 Bn, Coldstream Guards (1950-55): 11th reunion dinner, Derby, Apr 13. Contact Harry Westgarth, 49 Rokeby Park, Hull HU4 7QE, e-mail harry@westgarth.karoo.co.uk or ring 01482 503649.

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

APTC Association (SW Branch): Reunion to be held Feb 1 at the Gables Inn, Fairfield, Gloucestershire. Details from Bob Marshall 01747860207.

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

KORBR's double celebration

● The Cyprus-based **1st Battalion, The King's Own Royal Border Regiment** is preparing to receive its new Regimental Colours and mark its 300th birthday during a regimental weekend at Happy Valley, British Forces Episkopi, in April.

ASSISTANCE TO AUTHORS

Researcher seeks ex-Servicemen with first-hand accounts of fighting for **Calais in 1940** by Royal Green Jackets and other battalions, Royal Marines, 3 RTR and artillery batteries. He would also like to hear from families with diaries, photographs or artefacts relating to the action. Contact Tom Buck at 20 St Paul's Crescent, Oxford OX2 9AG, tel 01865 248828 (home) or 07974 950778 (mobile).

Personal stories, photos sought from anyone who has worked with **FV430 series**, including **Abbott**, for new book. Contact Bob Griffin, 158 Fieldcourt Gardens, Quedgeley, Gloucester GL2 4UA, tel 01452 883088 (night), tel/fax 01452 543358, rob@rgriffin42.fsnet.co.uk

Useful numbers

Army Benevolent Fund 020 7591 2000

Army Families Advice Bureau 01722 436569

Army Welfare Service 01722 436565

Army Families Federation 01980 615525

British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association 020 8590 1124

Confidential support lines:

UK 0800 731 4880

Germany 0800 1827 395

Cyprus 080 91065

Bosnia 0800 731 4880

Others UK 1980 630854

Operations worldwide Paradigm Homelink

Access Number *2999@thePINprompt

Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society

(Combat Stress) 01372 841617

Family Escort Service 020 7463 9249

Gulf Families Association 0121 711 3028

Gulf Veterans Association 0191 230 1065

Joint Service Housing Advice Office 01722 436575

National Gulf Veterans and Families

Association (0900-1700) 01482 833812; 24-

hour helpline 01482 808730

Regular Forces Employment Association

0207 321 2011

RBL's Legionline 0845 7725 725

RBL Industries 01622 717202/718484

St Dunstan's Home for blind ex-Servicemen

and women 020 7723 5021

Samaritans 08457 90 90 90

Service Children's Education 01980

618244

Services Cotswold Centre 01225 810358

SSAFA Forces Help 020 7403 8783

SSAFA Forces Help Housing Advisory

Service 01722 436400

Veterans' Advice Unit 08456 020302

Victim Support Western Europe (SSAFA

Forces Help) in Germany 02161 47 2272;

from outside Germany 0049 2161 47 2272

War Pensions Agency 0800 169 2277 (from

UK); 0044 1253 866043 (from overseas)

WRVS 01235 442940

DATES

FEBRUARY

6: Royal gun salutes to mark anniversary of Queen's Accession. Hyde Park, noon (41-gun); Tower of London, 1300 (62-gun).

APRIL

22: Queen's Birthday gun salutes. Hyde Park, noon (41-gun); Tower of London, 1300 (62-gun).

JUNE

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

AUGUST

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

○ Carol Vorderman, pictured, has joined forces with Thames Valley Police and the Royal Air Force to help children and parents avoid chatroom stalkers. The Chat Safe initiative aims to encourage chatroom users to take a few simple steps to avoid contact with paedophiles who use the net to lure youngsters into meeting them. To find out more, Service families can log on to www.thamesvalley.police.uk/chatsafe



○ TERRITORIAL Army officer Maj David Reynolds has raised more than £1,500 for blind children after running in the London Marathon earlier this year. A reservist with The Parachute Regiment and currently serving in the Media Operations Group (Volunteers), David was one of more than 80 TA and Regular soldiers on the marathon who between them collected about £90,000 for charity. "Make no mistake about it," he said, "the marathon is hard work. But it is worth the effort to help children who have sadly lost their sight or been born blind."

○ TAKE a bow TA soldier Sgt Keith Harrison of Blackburn's 93 Signal Squadron. At a ceremony in the Officers' Mess of 42 (North West) Brigade in Fulwood Barracks, Preston, he received one of only two Lord Lieutenant's Certificates to be presented in Lancashire during the year. The citation said Keith's work was "truly outstanding" and that he had shown "an extraordinary commitment to the unit".

Line-backers boost Swanage rail



On track: Top to bottom are Sig Mike Goddard, Sig Peanut Ueale and Sig Graham Collins, all members of 11 Signal Regiment

Picture: Steve Dock

THE Army's long-running support of the Swanage railway project in Dorset was continued when 25 volunteers gave up an autumnal week to take on a variety of tasks on the line.

Ever since RSM Frank Roberts, R Signals, became involved with the railway 16 years ago, military teams have been aiding and abetting the project under Exercise Topham Hat (named after the Fat Controller in the *Thomas the Tank Engine* books).

Most of the volunteers were from the Royal Signals at Blandford and Blandford. They laid down communications cable and put up telegraph poles on a section of the six-mile track from Swanage to Norden. Over the years, many signallers have joined the Swanage Railway support group.

Steam engines run along the line, now one of the area's most popular tourist attractions. Originally engineered more than 120 years ago, the stretch of track was abandoned by British Rail in the 1970s.

Tally-ho for Geedon

MEET Geedon Cartouche, cavalryman and rebel, pictured. He is a cartoon character dreamed up by the Dorset branch of the Household Cavalry Association to raise a smile and, hopefully, a few bob for charity.

To coincide with its 20th anniversary, the Dorset branch published a book of stories about the "ordinary bloke and anti-hero". **Geedon - The Works**, a 96-page softback, is available from John Triggs, 4 Shelley Road Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH12 2DE.

The price is £6.50 (including p&p in the UK and EU) and proceeds will go to the East Holton Driving Centre at Wareham, Dorset, where disable people get a chance to work with horses.

Some familiarity with the ways and workings of the Household Cavalry - not to say its sense of humour - would be an advantage when reading Geedon's adventures.



Gunner officers on the run

A SEVEN-man team from the **Young Officers' Branch** at the Royal School of Artillery ran the final 73-mile leg of the Clic (Cancer and Leukaemia in Childhood) charity marathon. Their section of the long haul from John o'Groat's to Land's End took them from Looe in Cornwall to the tip of Cornwall and raised more than £1,225 for the charity.

● A curry lunch for 200 resulted in £4,035 being raised for the **Gurkha Welfare Trust**. The lunch, in the WO's and Sergeants' Mess of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles, was the work of WO2 Jitbahadur Gurung, who has some experience in the field. Five years ago he handed over £2,800 to the trust after arranging a similar event.

Green Howards' cover story

IT'S official: the newsletter of the **Green Howards Regimental Museum** in Richmond, North Yorkshire, has been voted the best in the country - for the

Record of ultimate sacrifice

EVERY type of memorial, from community crosses to gardens and hospitals, is covered in the Imperial War Museum's new database and archive, the **UK National Inventory of War Memorials**.

Hundreds of volunteers visited sites to photograph and record how communities remembered their war dead. Others searched local archives to complete the picture. About 45,000 records are now on the computer database, accessible to the public in the museum reading room in Lambeth Road, London, and administered by the museum and English Heritage.

Items on the database range from the plaque dedicated to the 173 people killed at Bethnal Green underground station during an air raid on March 3, 1943 to a memorial stone to a monkey called Jacko who died of fright in a Zeppelin attack in 1917.

The War Memorials Handbook, by Stephen Croad, gives guidance on conservation and how to use the inventory as an information source. It is available from the IWM shop, price £4.99.

www.iwm.org.uk

Memorial gates' work begins

WORK has begun on a set of £1 million-plus memorial gates to commemorate the nearly five million men and women of the Indian sub-continent, Africa and the Caribbean who volunteered to serve with Britain's Armed Forces during the First and Second World Wars.

A ceremonial sod-cutting marked the first stage in the work on Constitutional Hill, close to Buckingham Palace. The Millennium Commission has given a grant of £912,500 towards the cost of the project, but at least another £250,000 is needed.

● Donations to the Memorial Gates Trust, a registered charity, may be sent to 6/7 Great Newport Street, London WC2H 7JA.



Picture: Chris Fletcher



What a trouper: Arnhem veteran John Roberts, above, realises a lifetime ambition by accompanying the Band of The Parachute Regiment on the spoons. He joined them at the annual commemorative jump by veterans and soldiers of 4 Para at Ginkel Heath, the drop zone where John and his colleagues began their ill-fated attempt to capture the Rhine bridge at Arnhem.

Pictured, left, are the 11 veterans - the oldest of them 82 - who jumped from a vintage Dakota aircraft at 10,000ft to recreate their historic drop.

Barb's international recipe book causes a bit of a stir

MORE than £5,000 has so far been raised for the **Army Benevolent Fund** by the publication of a cook-book compiled by a US military exchange officer.

International Flavours was the idea of Maj Barb Gregory, pictured, US Army, who is based at the Adjutant General's Corps headquarters at Worthy Down, near Winchester.

Maj Gregory, who launched her book at the ABF's annual "Early Early" Christmas Fair in Tidworth, persuaded fellow American and other foreign exchange and liaison personnel to submit their favourite



Picture: Steve Dock

recipes. She said it was "a way of thanking my British Army colleagues for their hospitality and generosity and to raise funds for the ABF".

Gen Sir Jeremy Mackenzie, chairman of the Army Benevolent Fund, said: "The proceeds from the book, which has been selling fast, will provide support, via the ABF, to soldiers, ex-soldiers and their families when they find themselves in need."

● The recipes range from a Korean stir fry to traditional English casseroles. If you would like a copy, call the ABF central office on 0207 591 2058. It costs £5 plus £1 p&p.

Key appointment

GEN Sir Roger Wheeler has been installed as the new Constable of the Tower of London. The former Chief of the General Staff received the keys to the Tower from the Lord Chamberlain, witnessed by the Yeoman Warders and a guard of honour provided by soldiers of The Royal Irish Regiment, Royal Fusiliers and the Honorable Artillery Company.

And finally...

AFTER 44 years in uniform (49 if you include his time at the Duke of York's Royal Military School), **Capt Jack Frost**, right, has retired. He joined in 1957 and went to 21 Signal Regiment in Germany via the Army Apprentice College in Harrogate. After P Company, he served in 216 Parachute Signal Squadron and was in Cyprus as a warrant officer with 9 Signal Regiment during the Yom Kippur War and the Turkish invasion in 1974. Since 1982 Mike has been with 63 Signal Squadron (Reserves) at Thorney Island, serving under nine commanding officers.



Legends of the regiments and corps

30 Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum



Much-flawed hero: Thomas Lane and the VC presented at Shanghai in 1862

VC that wasn't

PTE Thomas Lane of the 67th Regiment (later to become The Hampshire Regiment) was born to trouble.

One of eight holders of the Victoria Cross to be erased from the register for desertion or a felony, this son of Cork won his VC at the Taku Forts in 1860 and died in South Africa (he is buried at Kimberley) nearly 30 years later after a chequered military career.

His age was variously recorded as 45, 47, 54 and 58, but the real mystery he left behind was TWO crosses, both now in The Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum in Winchester.

A DRINK PROBLEM

The problem was that the wild Irishman was "addicted to drink" and liable to desert, which he did several times, most notoriously from Landrey's Light Horse in South Africa in 1881 (along with his horse and rifle).

When efforts to find him failed (partly because he was in Pretoria Gaol for pulling down a flag), Queen Victoria signed a warrant removing him from the VC register. The Army cancelled his pension and demanded the return of the medal.

To cut a long and fascinating story short, GOC South Africa dispatched, in the absence of the real thing, one of his local stock of VCs, appropriately inscribed, back to the United Kingdom. It is believed that Lane never actually saw this medal but he would probably be delighted to learn that its existence caused years of confusion in the lucrative world of the VC auction room.

The Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum, Serle's House, Southgate Street, Winchester (tel 01962 863658), is open all year Mon-Fri, 1100-1530; weekends, holidays, noon-1600. Closed for two weeks at Christmas, New Year. Admission free.

Game on . . .

WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE? – 2ND EDITION, PC, PSX & PS2

OUT NOW

WHEREAS *Bob the Builder* stunned many by snatching the coveted Christmas number one spot last year, few were surprised when *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* (WWTBAM) enjoyed the same prosperity in the gaming charts.

Riding on the popularity of what has become Britain's most successful quiz show, the game found its way into the stockings of children and adults alike.

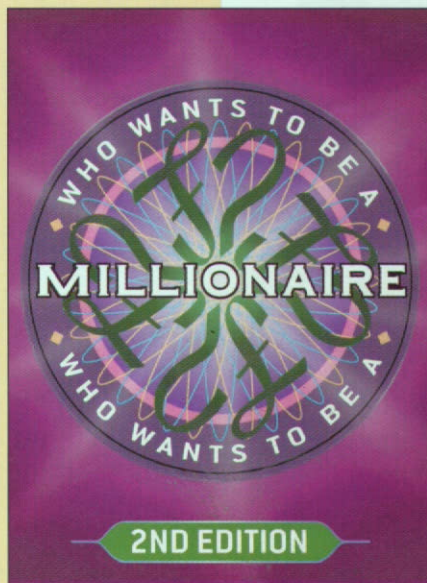
And although the game featured all the key-ingredients of the hit-show, WWTBAM proved to be something of a disappointment and many gamers had cast it aside before the final turkey sandwich had been consumed.

Complaints centred around the frequency at which the game's 1,000 questions were repeated. The random nature of this process meant that players could encounter the same questions on consecutive turns.

Great if you were playing for real money but a tad frustrating when you are at home competing against friends and loved ones.

Cue the arrival of WWTBAM? 2nd Edition. Available on PC, PlayStation and PlayStation 2, the 2nd Edition sports a new save game option which ensures that questions are not repeated until they have all been asked.

All formats feature more than 1,000 new questions written by the question-masters of



the show and thanks to the save-game feature, repeat questions have all but been eliminated. A simple but effective solution.

As with its predecessor, the game remains loyal to the format of the television programme with "fastest finger first", "ask the audience", "phone a friend" and "50:50" all featured.

The use of music and sound effects from the show, combined with the now legendary voice of its host Chris Tarrant, helps to recreate the television experience.

Chris asks the questions, gives answers and offers comment throughout the game, adding to the tension.

And in addition to all the features available on other platforms, the PlayStation 2 version actually puts players face-to-face with a virtual Chris Tarrant.

Fully lip-sync-ed, the 3D Chris hosts the show just as he would do on television. There is also a real-time 3D studio audience, which makes the hotseat experience even more realistic.

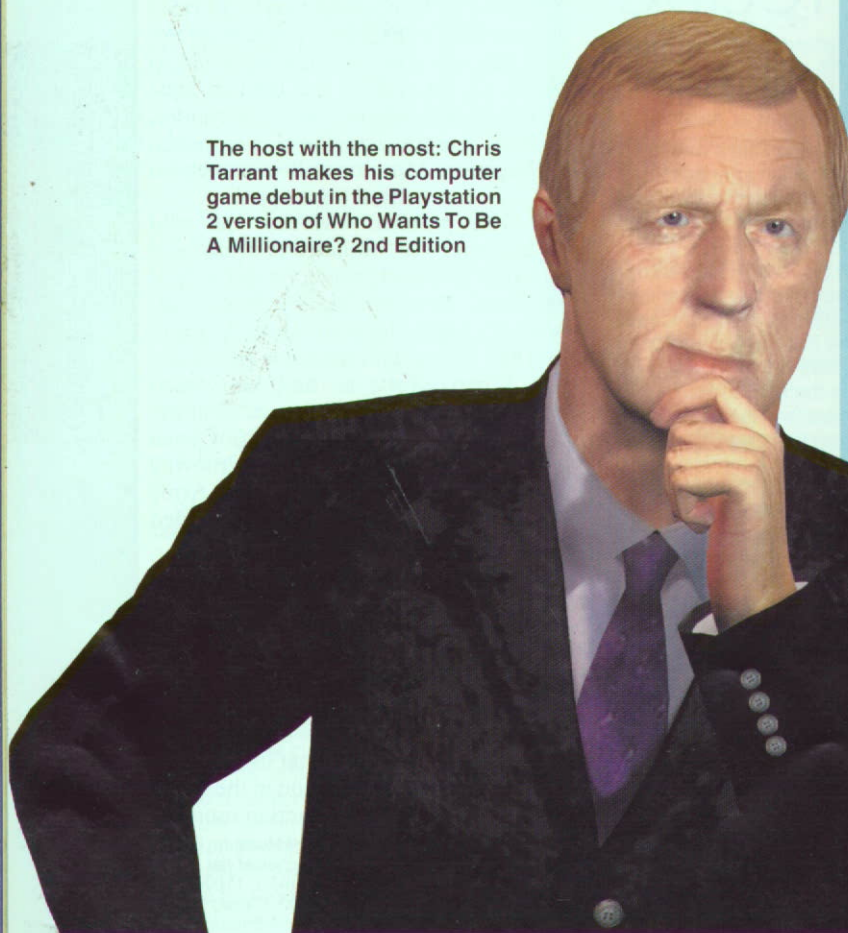
A statement endorsed by the man himself. "One of the things I love about *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* is that as a family you can shout at it, scream at it and have a laugh about it," said Tarrant.

"The new computer games, especially the PlayStation 2 version, are so realistic that they really do give people the chance to experience what it is like to be sat opposite me in the studio."

VERDICT: Having addressed the shortcomings of the original game, Eidos Interactive can bank on another hit this Christmas. Denied a perfect ten only by the virtual nature of the game's prize money.

9/10

The host with the most: Chris Tarrant makes his computer game debut in the Playstation 2 version of *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* 2nd Edition



Win . . . Win . . . Win . . . Win

SOLDIER has joined forces with Eidos Interactive to offer readers the opportunity to play for a virtual fortune.

For your chance to win one of ten copies of *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* 2nd Edition for the PlayStation, simply answer the following questions:

"You're now just two questions away from scooping a *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* prize. You've used all three life-lines but you have nothing to lose by playing this next question . . ."

Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? is screened on which terrestrial television channel?

a) BBC 1; b) BBC 2; c) ITV d) Channel 4

"Congratulations, you're now just one correct answer away from taking home a copy of the game. But remember if you get this next question wrong you leave with nothing . . ."

Tamzin Outhwaite is set to appear in which new BBC drama?

a) Red Cap; b) Red Coat; c) Red Rum; d) Little Red Riding Hood

Send your answers on a postcard to Eidos Interactive competition, *Soldier*, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants, GU11 2DU.

The winners will be drawn at random from the correct answers received by January 3. Usual rules apply.

FIFA 2002, PC, PSX & PS2

THERE are few certainties in life, but one thing you can be sure of is that Electronic Arts will release an update to their best-selling FIFA series in time for Christmas.

And true to tradition FIFA 2002 looks set to play the opposition off the park during this festive season.

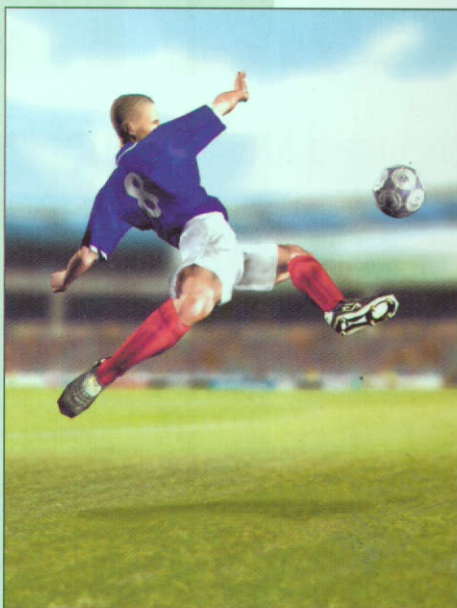
The game offers more licensed leagues, teams and competitions than any other game on the market, allowing players to select from more than 75 national sides and teams from the world's top leagues – including the English Premiership, German Bundesliga and Spanish Premier League.

Players also have the opportunity to help guide their national side through the 2002 World Cup qualifiers – although emulating David Beckham's last-minute free-kick against Greece will take some practice.

As well as sporting the lavish graphics and slick commentary of its predecessors, FIFA 2002 features an innovative passing system that gives users greater control of the action.

Gamers can now find a breaking forward with a perfect 40-yard ball into space, embarrass the Arsenal defence with cunning one-twos, or fool Fabian Bathez with deep swerving crosses.

Tackling is another aspect of the gameplay that has been reinvented, with the timing

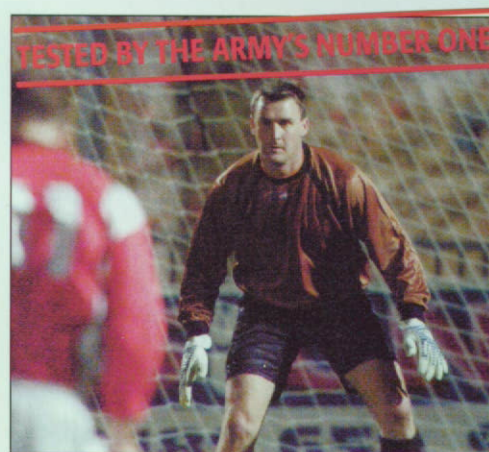


and angle of the challenge determining its success or reaction of the referee.

Getting to grips with the game's controls can take some time but is a challenge made easier by a customizable controller, which presents users with the chance to program buttons to their liking.

SOLDIER'S VERDICT: Adds new meaning to the expression "the beautiful game". **9/10**

OUT NOW



Army and Combined Services goalkeeper
SSgt Daisy May (APTC)

"Although the graphics and sound were excellent, I found the PC version very difficult to play – especially when using the keyboard to control the action. During nine games I only managed to score twice and I think one of those was an own goal, but maybe that's just because the goalkeepers are so good."

GRAPHICS: 9/10

SOUND: 9/10

REALISM: 8/10

PLAYABILITY: 6/10

OVERALL RATING: 7/10



MX RIDER, PS2

FOR the first time on a next generation console, gamers can experience all three disciplines of dirt biking.

MX Rider, the latest offering from the Infogrames stable, features moto-cross, super-cross and freestyle events, and is fully licensed by the Federation Internationale Motorcyclisme (FIM).

Based on real-life FIM racing circuits, the game's tracks are brilliantly detailed and react to the elements, throwing up clouds of dust or splashes of mud depend-

ing on the weather conditions.

Freestyle riding provides the most enjoyable aspect of MX Rider's gameplay, with six fantasy arenas in which players can test their riding skills. There are more than 30 motion-captured death-defying stunts, as well as slide turns, wheelies, endos and air handling to master.

With a plethora of in-game options, MX Rider will keep racing fans occupied for a considerable length of time.

VERDICT: Guaranteed to kick-start your PS2 into life. **7/10**

OUT NOW

F1 2001, PS2 & PC

WINNING a grand prix is no mean feat – just ask Jenson Button – and Electronic Art's latest edition to their F1 series is almost as difficult as the real thing.

The game's advanced artificial intelligence means that players race against opponents who want to win as badly as they do. Every driver on the track will fight, battle and react to maintain their current position, while constantly looking for the next opportunity to overtake.

Fast, detailed and unrivalled.

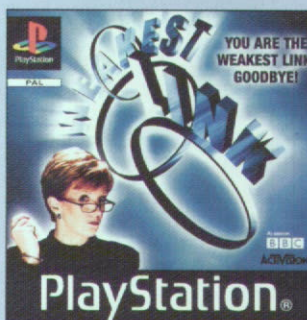
VERDICT: The Michael Schumacher of driving simulators. A worthy champion. **8/10**



OUT NOW

WEAKEST LINK, PC, PSX & PS2

OUT NOW



VERDICT: Like her or loathe her, Anne Robinson is set to take the gaming market by storm. The Weakest Link? ... far from it. **9/10**

TIPPED to become the biggest-selling computer game in history, The Weakest Link allows gamers to experience the acid-tongue of Anne Robinson from the safety of their own living room.

The game follows the same format as the television programme and up to seven people can play at once – simply by passing the game controls around the group.

Anne's cyber debut boasts a library of 100,000 questions compared with the 1,000 offered by quiz show rival Who Wants To Be A Millionaire.

How the bear trap was baited in Afghanistan

AFTER the events of September 11, Afghanistan, *The Bear Trap* (Leo Cooper, £12.95), sold out in hardback, reputedly bought up by US Military Intelligence. The story of the defeat of Soviet Russia's forces by the Mujahedin, who in turn paved the way for the Taliban, is now re-published in paperback and describes in detail the terrain over which the war was fought, the training that was needed and how the Mujahedin carried out ambushes, assassinations, raids and rocket attacks. The work is authoritative; co-author Mohammed Yousaf was effectively the Mujahedin's commander-in-chief.

Strategy behind Nato's Kosovo victory revealed

FORMER Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, Gen Wesley K Clark describes for the first time the context within which he made the strategic decisions during the Kosovo conflict of 1999. This was a modern war, limited in scope, measured in effect, complex in execution and fought under the glare of worldwide media. It may have been short in duration, but was a harbinger of the new realities of fighting and planning. In *Waging Modern War* (Public Affairs, £19.99), Clark offers a blueprint for how modern militaries must adapt to the challenges of a new era.

Wall had to fall before invasion

AFTER Hitler called off the invasion of Britain in 1940, he immediately ordered by secret edict the building of the Atlantic Wall. The Todt Organisation, which used slave labour, was entrusted with the monumental task of constructing the steel and concrete fortresses spread over 1,500 miles of coastlines across Denmark, Holland, Belgium and France. Hitler personally designed the layout of each fortress and selected its commanders. The crucial history of how they were overcome is told in Patrick Delaforce's *Smashing the Atlantic Wall, The Destruction of Hitler's Coastal Fortresses* (Cassell, £20).

Nice men don't win wars

A revised life of arguably our greatest 20th century general has courted controversy

Interview: Ray Routledge
Picture: Graeme Main

WHEN Nigel Hamilton published the first volume of his revised life of Bernard Montgomery, *The Full Monty*, he knew he was walking into a minefield of controversy.

In this version, Hamilton, who knew Monty for many years and has been his biographer for more than two decades, claims that the general was a repressed homosexual.

The author won the Whitbread Prize for the original three-volume official life – so why only now examine the man's sexuality?

"I felt I couldn't tackle this before," Hamilton said. "The law on homosexuality changed in 1967 and I was writing in 1977 but gays were still not permitted in the British Army."

"As official biographer I was given unique access to all his private papers and documents and interviewed his family and staff but at that stage in our cultural history I felt it was the wrong moment to raise the question of his sexuality."

"My real concern in the 1980s, when the original was published, was that his military reputation was getting trashed. More writers were coming forward who disliked him because of his rudeness or his arrogance, and of course he could be that way. But being arrogant doesn't make you a bad general. Oxford don Bill Williams once remarked:

'Nice men don't win wars'. 'My agenda as a military historian was to re-establish his claim to military greatness as the most professional British commander of the Second World War and possibly the 20th century.'

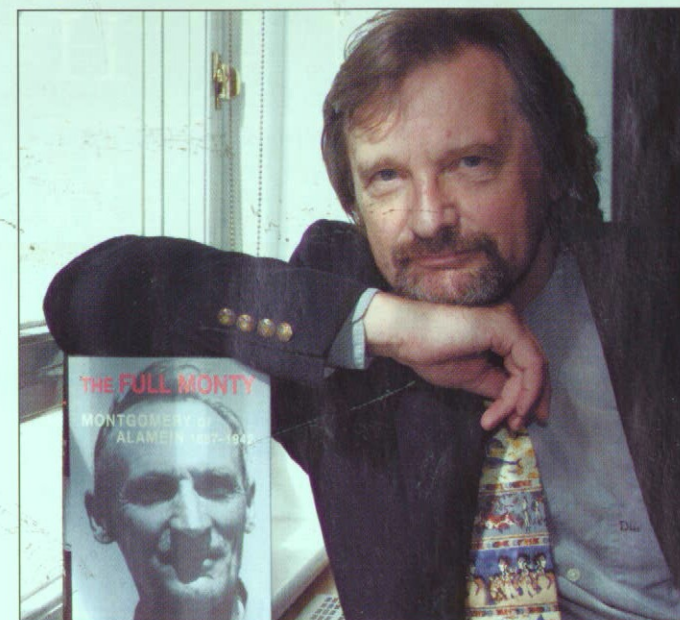
Hamilton was 11 when he first met Monty. His father, Denis, was a Territorial battalion commander at D-Day who at Nijmegen won the DSO – personally presented to him by Monty. Later, as editor of the *Sunday Times*, Sir Denis Hamilton published, controversially, Monty's memoirs.

"Monty invited us to his home in Hampshire and I got to know him very well," said Nigel Hamilton. "He was very lonely. His wife had died some years before and we would stay during the holidays."

It is this insight into Monty the man, along with his encyclopedic knowledge of Monty the general, that leads Hamilton to his conclusions about Monty's sexuality.

"I think it is important to distinguish between an active homosexual and homosexual in terms of one's orientation. When I say that Monty was a repressed homosexual and that almost his entire orientation was towards young men that doesn't mean he was against women," Hamilton admits that he has no evidence that Monty was ever a practising homosexual.

"He was such a disciplined person that this was something he would not give way to. I am interested if that repression of his sexual-



Copy signed by author is great prize

We have a copy of *The Full Monty*, signed by the author, left, to give away as a prize. To be in with a chance of winning simply answer the following question:

In which year was Bernard Montgomery born?

Answers on a postcard marked "Monty Competition" should be sent to *Soldier* by January 3. Usual rules apply.

ity was why he became a revolutionary commander." Monty was genuinely interested in people, according to Hamilton. "A bastard on one hand and a genius on the other. He had always been wonderfully kind and concerned about me and I think I can explain some of the contradictions in his nature."

Monty's great achievement at El Alamein, he said, was that he made his men realise not only that history depended on them but that they could win.

"Monty had to create that sense of confidence between himself and the ordinary sol-

diers. In the original book I traced that as a military development.

"Now, 20 years later, I think we shouldn't be shy or ashamed that within that development was something quite revolutionary in the British Army where his approach to command was actually based on his love of his men. In that sense I thought I'd retell the story in terms of that bond. Sexuality shouldn't be an issue."

Nigel Hamilton lives in the USA, where he is researching the life of Bill Clinton. Now that should make interesting reading...

Elite unit spearheaded advance into Germany

THERE were only 790 men of 52nd (Lowland) Divisional Reconnaissance Regiment RAC when they began their long, bloody journey into the heart of the Third Reich, but between them they garnered more than 50 honours and awards. Carl Shilleto, the grandson of one of the men who was there, tells the story for the first time in *The Fighting Fifty-Second Recce* (Eskdale Publishing, £14.99). He follows the unit's journey as it crossed the Rhine and swept on to the German plain for an all-out assault on Bremen and final victory.

Real-life drama is confirmed as classic

AUTHOR and journalist Alastair Borthwick served as an intelligence officer with the 5th Battalion, The Seaforth Highlanders in the Second World War. Soon after it ended he published a limited-edition, eye-witness account of the unit's actions between El Alamein and the Elbe. In 1994, already highly-acclaimed but by then out of print, it was re-published as *Battalion*, commended by *Soldier* for its remarkable depiction of front-line action. Now this sharp, powerful, brilliantly-observed real-life drama has its classic status reaffirmed with its reissue by Bâton Wicks as a quality, illustrated paperback at £12.99. We repeat, it is well worth a read.

Tanks captured in black and white

SINCE they first rumbled onto the battlefield in 1916, tanks have proved a heavyweight presence in war. Lt Col George Forty's richly illustrated *The Royal Tank Regiment, A Pictorial History 1916-2001* (Halsgrove, £24.95) gives an entertaining overview of the tankies' progression from overcoming the stalemate of trench warfare to the establishment of the tank as a dominant factor in the land battle. A prolific author, Forty has also just published *Battle of Crete* (Ian Allan, £24.99) in commemoration of its 60th anniversary using many previously unpublished first-hand accounts and photographs.

Let's just stick to the undeniable facts about this soldier's soldier

NIGEL Hamilton observes in this remarkable biography of Britain's greatest 20th century general: "War is often society's ritualistic way of imposing order on the chaos of existence." This seems true of Bernard Law Montgomery's life – not that it was so chaotic in the conventional sense. His domineering mother saw to that.

This 900-page book deals with Monty's life up to Alamein. The account of this pivotal victory and its overall strategic plan is comprehensive in the extreme. It is as if those first 55 years were a preparation for it.

Oddly, throughout the action we are given only glimpses of Monty himself, sleeping in his caravan, taking meals in his open-air mess and making his occasional changes of plan, for even this self-confident – indeed, arrogant – commander was not above recognising the need to correct miscalcula-

The Full Monty: Montgomery of Alamein, 1887-1942 by Nigel Hamilton (Allen Lane, £25).

Review: Brian Jewell

tions, which he often attributed to others.

There are examples of Monty's capacity for making enemies: even Churchill's approval of Monty as commander of the Eighth Army was given reluctantly. Montgomery certainly found no role models in British senior officers and he must have been very certain of himself to cause such clashes when it could have been far easier for his career to fit in with the establishment. Monty did it his way, a characteristic he shared with his biographer, who also pours scorn on other generals as well as historians.

It is well known that Montgomery habitually cut out experienced "dead wood" in his

commands in favour of young and adventurous staff subordinates. Not everyone will agree with Hamilton's assertions that this discrimination was due to Monty's sexuality. The author comes close to declaring him a homosexual, but throughout the book the word "homosocial" is preferred.

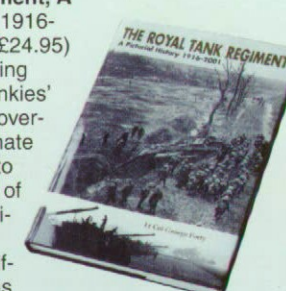
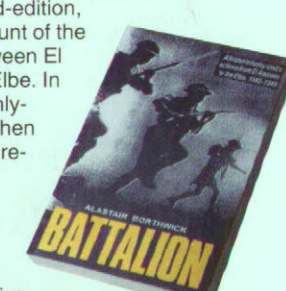
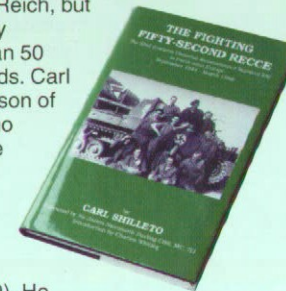
Other reviewers have homed-in on this aspect of the book but here it is preferred to consider it of lesser importance and stick to the indisputable facts.

Monty was commissioned in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment in 1908. Life outside the army took second place, apart from his admiration of his mother and love for two ladies, both named Betty – the young Betty Anderson who turned him down and Betty Carver, a widow with two sons to whom he was married in 1927 and who became the mother of his son, David. She died in 1937

from septicaemia following an insect bite and Monty was devastated.

His outstanding success as the favourite general of the British public as well as that of the soldiers in the Second World War is well summed up by Hamilton: "As Churchill had in 1940 found the key to popular anti-fascist support in appealing to a deep-seated national historic pride, so Monty had... cut the vital latchway to English military motivation by treating war as a modern educational and management experience, inspiring pride and positive motivation."

The second volume of this spectacular biography, covering Montgomery's career after Alamein and life after retirement is due out next year. It will be interesting to see how Hamilton handles Monty's worst misjudgement – at Arnhem – and his undiplomatic association with the Americans.

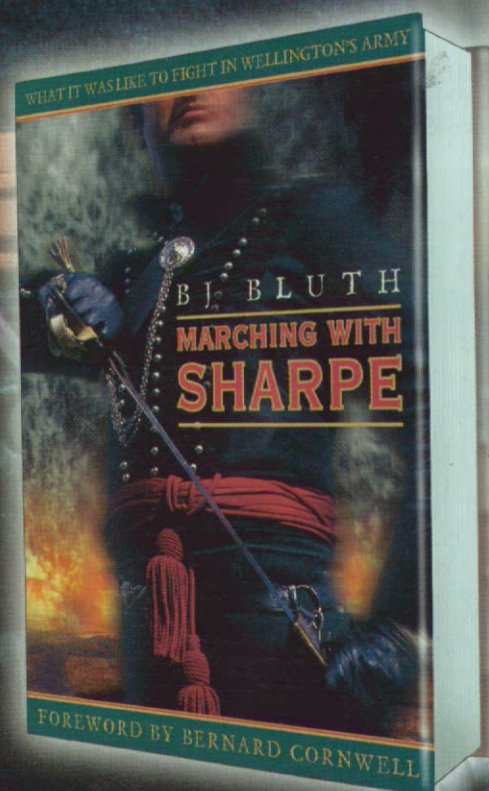


'A fascinating insight into the world of the
British soldier in the age of Waterloo'

B J BLUTH

MARCHING WITH SHARPE

FOREWORD BY
BERNARD CORNWELL



Published
3rd December 2001
£19.99 Hardback

www.fireandwater.com

Left holding the baby

Private McBain went into battle with a babe-in-arms – or rather in his knapsack

Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard: The History of The Royal Scots by Lt Col R H Paterson

Review: Oliver Lindsay

AMONG the many battle honours awarded to The Royal Scots was Malplaquet, on the Franco-Belgian border.

It was there in 1709 that the regiment had the curious distinction of numbering among its "family" perhaps the the oldest, and almost certainly the youngest souls ever to take to the battlefield.

Malplaquet, the last of Marlborough's great victories, was also one of his bloodiest, leaving 6,500 of his troops dead and 14,000 wounded in one day. But this did not frighten off William Hiseland, who



War baby: Pte McBain goes into battle with his baby in his knapsack, from a display at The Royal Scots Museum in Edinburgh

took part at the age of 89. It seems to have been too much, however, for the wife of one Private McBain. She abandoned him there, leaving him with their three-week-old baby, who remained in his knapsack throughout the battle.

These are among the many stories told

in this remarkable history of Britain's oldest infantry regiment, which extends to well over 1,000 pages in two volumes, with 83 maps and more than 400 illustrations, some in colour.

But why the title? The regiment's nickname arose in about 1643 when the expression "Pontius Pilate's Bodyguard" was used disparagingly by an officer of the French Picardy Regiment who claimed that members of the regiment had been asleep at their posts.

It evoked the following haughty response: "You must be mistaken, sir; for had we really been the Guards of Pontius Pilate and done duty at the Sepulchre, the Holy Body had never left it."

Lt Col Paterson paints a brilliant picture of each campaign. His exceptional history deserves to be widely read. Copies are available from RHQ The Royal Scots, The Castle, Edinburgh, EH1 2YT for £85 for the two volumes.

*Col Oliver Lindsay is Editor of *The Guards Magazine*.

IN BRIEF

A Thousand Hills by Tom Mullarkey. Story of a British Army major's visionary plan to rebuild Rwanda after the civil war. A review will appear in the New Year. (Ballintava Books, £15.99.)

The Cold War by Lawrence Freedman. Evocatively illustrated summary of events between 1945 and 1989. (Cassell History of Warfare series, £25.)

The New Jackals by Simon Reeve. Study of bin Laden's organisation. (Carlton, paperback, £7.99.)

Warrior Race by Lawrence James. This sweeping, 860-page history of the British at war will be reviewed in the New Year. (Little, Brown, £25.)

Portsmouth in Defence of the Realm by John Sadden. A key naval base for centuries, Portsmouth also had a large Army garrison and was a major embarkation point for D-Day. Profusely illustrated, with an informative text. (Phillimore, £16.99.)

The Suffolks in Malaya by Len Spicer. No-frills account of the 1st Battalion's 1949-53 part in the Emergency. All proceeds to the Regimental Association and the Poppy Day Appeal. £6 from the author, 11 Overton Way, Orton Waterville, Peterborough, Cambs PE2 5HF.

Arnhem by A D Harvey and **Gettysburg** by Hugh Bicheno. Re-examinations of two famous battles, the first titles in Cassell's Fields of Battle series, edited by Richard Holmes. (£14.99 each.)

Soldier Sahibs by Charles Allen. Much acclaimed story of the men who made the North-West Frontier includes a historical perspective of Afghanistan. (Abacus, paperback, £8.99.)

Rain of Lead by Ian Bennett. Story of Potchefstroom in the South African wars. To be reviewed in the New Year. (Greenhill, £17.95.)

Unfinest Hour by Brendan Simms. Argues that the Bosnian war could have been shortened. (Allen Lane, £18.99.)

Stand by your Beds! By David Findlay Clark. Amusing RAF National Service experiences. (Cualann Press, paperback, £13.99.)

Heroes of the Hour by Bryan Perrett. Includes Lt Walter Hamilton VC, who died fighting a Kabul mob in the 1870s and took 600 of them with him. (Cassell, £19.99.)

Decisive Battles of the Western World by J F C Fuller. British armoured warfare pioneer's classic 1954 trilogy, reissued. (Cassell, £20 each.)

(Leo Cooper, paperback, £14.95.)

The Italian in the ATS by Nella Voss-Del Mar. Diary of a Jewish refugee from Mussolini's Fascism who was the only Italian serving in the British Army. (Stockwell, paperback, £7.50.)

Tommy Goes to War by Malcolm Brown, in association with the Imperial War Museum. Soldier's-eye view of the Western Front, first published in 1978. (Tempus, paperback, £12.99.)

The Battle of Hurtgen Forest, Ardennes: The Secret War and Decision at St Vith, by Charles Whiting. Volumes 4, 5 and 6 of nine-volume Siegfried Line series. (Spellmount, £16.99.)

The Korean War by Brian Catchpole. Authoritative and vivid account of the conflict. (Robinson, paperback, £7.99.)

A Tour of the Bulge Battlefield by William C C Cavanagh. Well illustrated guide. (Leo Cooper, paperback, £14.95.)

Battle of the Bulge by Napier Crookenden. Illustrated analysis back in print after 20 years. (Ian Allen, £19.99.)

Waterloo winners

WINNERS of the two copies of *The Waterloo Companion* drawn at random from correct entries for our October competition were Mrs J Day, of Cottingham, Humberside, and Mrs T White, RHQ, 17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC, Marchwood.

The island from which Napoleon Bonaparte escaped in 1815 was Elba (not, as many thought, St Helena – which was where he died).

Soldier ordering service

All books mentioned on these pages are available from Helion & Company, who can also supply 14,500 in-print military books and operate a free booksearch; p&p is extra. All major credit/switch cards taken. Please allow up to 28 days for delivery. Helion & Company, 26 Willow Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 1UE, England (tel 0121 705 3393; fax 0121 711 4075). E-mail: books@helion.co.uk Website: <http://www.helion.co.uk>

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SOLDIER to soldier

Talking turkey

CHRISTMAS can be the best of times. Unfortunately, it can also be the worst of times.

For Service families separated by months of operational necessity, the sudden "togetherness" can squeeze to the surface all manner of stresses and strains in a relationship.

The uniformed partner may forget that in his (or her) enforced absence, his/her other half has been running the show quite adequately, thank you.

"Any time there is prolonged separation we know we are going to get a rash of relationship problems," says one of the Army's specially-trained welfare workers (see Page 27). And Christmas is particularly difficult.

This year there could be an addition uncertainty to add to the tensions. Afghanistan.



As this edition went to press, we had no clear idea of whether units on stand-by might be heading to the unforgiving battlefields north of the Khyber Pass. Nor was their mission, should there be one, clearly defined.

In these circumstances, as Sue Bonney points out in her column on this page, Christmas may be a daunting – perhaps even a frightening – prospect for those anticipating the imminent departure of a loved-one.

Our hopes for a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year will be all the more heartfelt for that.

Accolades for Soldier

A feature on Penhale Training Camp in north Cornwall, written by Ray Routledge and with photographs by Steve Dock, won the News and Feature Writing category at the South-West Region of the British Association of Communicators in Business awards ceremony in Bristol. It appeared in November last year.

The March 2001 issue was also a winner in the internal magazines section... the 20th national or regional award won by *Soldier* since it switched to monthly publication four years ago.

Home truths

Sue Bonney

For many it will be a case of 'absent friends'

Daunting prospect for families this Christmas

AS I may have said before in this column, I like Christmas.

I don't mean the mad hype, or the equally mad shopping, or the frenetic cooking, or the over-eating, or all those films on telly that you can't find time to watch.

I mean the feeling. It has stuck with me since my childhood. There's a certain magic about it to me – the anticipation and the preparation, especially decorating the tree, and choosing presents for loved ones.

I suppose it's the thought of giving others a bit of happiness, and hopefully finding some yourself. The Christmas spirit, in fact.

But Christmas may be a rather daunting prospect for many Service families this year. As we go to press, troops are on stand-by for Afghanistan (or on their way there), while many others are already on operations around the world.

Separation is never easy, but Christmas is always the worst. I hope it will help those families to know that others are thinking of them, especially a lady in Kent who wrote to the Army Families Federation recently.

The widow of a soldier who served for 24 years, she is now over 80 and "knows what it's like to be married to someone in the Army". She was in the ATS during the Second World War.

She wanted to send her thoughts and prayers to all the families while their soldiers are away. "You are not alone – we are all thinking about you."

I have a huge admiration for that lady's generation, my parents' generation. They went through two world wars, plus Korea, many losing people they loved, facing fear and catastrophe and extremely dark days. Yet they came through it all, and it seems to



Sue Bonney is
Editor of the AFF
Families Journal

me they retained their values and their dignity, their belief in service and good manners and care for each other.

Her letter demonstrates that care – "I would so love to do something to help".

It's a very different world now from the one that generation sacrificed so much to defend. We have so much more than they did, and have not had to face too many major threats to our generally comfortable way

of life. But in the last few months we have had to face the possibility of things not being as safe and secure as we thought they were, and the prospect of taking action.

It seems to me that one of the most positive reactions to these recent events has been the care and concern for others – for those in New York, for the ordinary people of Afghanistan – and the overriding concern in general to do the right thing. So perhaps our generation is not so different and is rising, as they did, to a difficult challenge.

That lady's letter touched us all, and I'll be printing it in the next *AF Journal* so that her thoughts can be read and appreciated by Army families around the world.

In these days of professional armed forces, most of the community can only stand on the sidelines of any action and watch it all on television news. But that doesn't mean they are not involved, and are not concerned for Service personnel and their families.

If you are separated from your soldier this Christmas, I hope you still manage to find the warmth of Christmas spirit with family and friends.

We will all be thinking of you... and your soldier.

Christmas may be a rather daunting prospect for many Service families this year. Troops are on stand-by for Afghanistan (or on their way), while others are already on operations



Compassionate system worked for me

I WOULD like to dispel any fears soldiers may have about compassionate cases in the Army, especially when deployed on distant tours.

While I was on Saif Sareea 2 my father was taken seriously ill. My mother notified the Army through the compassionate system, which immediately (within 30 minutes)

contacted me in the middle of the desert. An hour later I was on my way to Thumrait airport, where a plane was held for me and another compassionate case. It took off straight away and landed at Brize Norton eight hours later. A car and driver were waiting to take me to the hospital 230 miles away.

From notification of my father's illness to arrival at the hospital took just 15 hours. I saw my father before he died, which was of great comfort to me and my family. On behalf of my family and myself I cannot thank the compassionate system enough for getting me home in time. – Cpl A J Feenan, 28 Engr Regt Wksp REME.

Mess rules help to maintain discipline

WHILE I can sympathise with the strong sentiments in the letter from the corporal barred from her husband's mess (Mail, Oct) and the dig at regimental sergeant majors to "get up to date as this is not good for morale", RSMs have to consider morale, efficiency and wider discipline issues of all mess members, not just one or two individuals who may seem penalised by rules that are there for a reason.

I speak with 27 years' service, as an ex-RSM, squadron sergeant major, president of a divisional mess committee, a sergeants' mess member for 15 years, more recently as a unit welfare officer and now as supervising officer of a sergeants' mess.

The sergeants' mess is an exclusive institution with many years of tradition, in which warrant officers and senior NCOs can relax and socialise without having their social life observed (or enjoyed) by officers or junior ranks.

I do not believe in an automatic right for serving spouses of non-mess status to attend functions. Similar rules apply in corporals' clubs and officers' messes.

If the mess member and his/her non-mess status spouse are serving in different units – as they are in this instance – it can be argued that the privacy case for exclusion is weakened and a request to attend a function could be put to members for a vote at a mess meeting.

The provision of messes and rules regarding their status have been developed over many years to help prevent

familiarity between officers, senior NCOs and junior ranks so that in training and during operations discipline is enforced without the social, welfare and moral dilemmas and confusion we face today.

Many changes adopted by the Armed Forces – willingly or unwillingly – under the guise of equal opportunities or political and social correctness have been absorbed at the expense of operational effectiveness at individual, sub-unit and unit level. Should we now get rid of separate messes?

So, back to the corporal in Germany, not allowed in her husband's mess. I see no problem with her accompanying him to functions as long as all his fellow mess members have had a chance to agree to this. Has her husband asked his RSM to put it to the vote at a mess meeting? If this fails, work hard, get good reports and quickly join him as a mess member.

Meanwhile, she should ban him from attending functions without her! – **Capt G G A Reith, R Signals, Glasgow.**

My husband was uncomplaining

MORE bleating in the ranks because someone doesn't get their own way. This serving soldier should understand the rank structure and the rules and expectations which come with them. I imagine her husband has already written to his RSM. If his request has been denied she should accept it and earn her own place in the mess.

Some messes do accept junior serving spouses and that is the right of any RSM, but she should understand that she is a soldier first and foremost and a wife or mother second. I did 12 years myself but my case was the opposite – my husband was junior to me. Funny really, he did not complain once. – **Name and address supplied.**

Some junior spouses are allowed in

I REFER to the letter from the corporal barred from her husband's mess (Oct).

A physical training instructor staff sergeant in my battalion was married to a corporal in the AGC(SPS) and she was allowed to attend mess functions at Dreghorn Barracks, Edinburgh, with her husband.

He didn't attend corporals' mess functions at Glencorse, probably because he was a "beastly" PTI rather than because he was a staff sergeant.

At my next unit one of my female corporals attended functions with her staff sergeant (later WO2) husband based in London.

I also knew of a female lance corporal clerk who was put up in the mess when her civilian husband visited as he had officer status through his job in the Civil Service. – **Name and address supplied.**

Today's Nintendo generation is scapegoat for the Army

THE Army's recruiting problems are increasingly blamed on the "Nintendo generation", which seems to me to be a convenient scapegoat for the Army not being able to cope with changes in society.

Teenagers have never had it so good with regard to choice of careers and edu-

cational opportunities and unless the Army can adapt quickly it will have recruiting and retention problems for the next decade at least.

I'm 22 but feel I had more responsibility and was treated with more respect when I was in the Army Cadet Force. The

Army needs to be proactive about change, not react to each issue as it crops up.

I am now at a crossroads: do I stay and hope things improve or leave the Army and seek my future elsewhere? – **Spr C Bullock, 14 GEO Squadron RE, Monchengladbach.**

PISCATOR



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Let's ensure it's not just our uniform that's green

AS a serving soldier of eight years I believe in saving the Army money and am also aware of the Army's "Train Green" policy. However, shouldn't the Army have a "Live Green" policy?

I have ideas that could save the Army money and help the environment (and they would be very good public relations, if nothing else).

Recycling: Paper, pallets, scrap metal, glass, cans, plastic . . . all these things are recyclable. Instead of paying to dispose of this waste let's recycle it and get some money back.

Batteries: Why doesn't the MoD invest in re-chargable torch batteries? I'm

sure this would reduce theft and an enormous bill which must run into six figures.

Timer light/heater switches: Most accommodation blocks have push-taps and eco-toilets but we could still improve our energy efficiency policy.

A green awareness campaign or a green competition would help families make more of an effort. Recycling centres on family estates – with the revenue being ploughed back to improve garrison facilities – would make people more eager to do their bit. It would also work in barracks.

Let's lead, let's make the difference. – LBdr David Wilkinson.

OFFICER or other rank; serving or civvy . . . Soldier welcomes your letters. Please keep them brief and to the point. If not e-mailed, we'd prefer them to be typed but if they are handwritten, put names, addresses and in block capitals (not necessarily for publication). A prize from our gift collection will be awarded each month if we judge that a letter merits it. Acceptance or rejection of letters is the decision of the Editor, who reserves the right to amend for length, clarity or style. Anonymous letters will not be considered.

Mail
us!

PS . . .

Gay support is good

I'D like to reply to the WO2 W McLean ("Does gay support group conceal a hidden agenda?", Oct). I suppose he opposes Section 28 as well.

As a lesbian within the Army, I have many civilian friends who are gay and provide me with the support I need. However, what about the man/woman who isn't as lucky as I am. I think the support group is a great idea. Being gay within the Army is hard enough and there are so many other reasons why the Army cannot retain its personnel, so why make someone's sexuality another one of those issues. – Cpl (name and address supplied) Catterick Garrison.

No wedding plans

IN reply to the letter (Oct) about needing a quarter for a baby, I am pregnant and my boyfriend and I are both in the Army but not ready to get married. I don't agree with getting married just so we can get a house together. If everyone did so for that reason we would have a lot of welfare problems. I am considering leaving the Service for that reason. It does not seem like they give you much choice. – Pt Helen Bailey, 5 GS Med Regt, Preston.

Medals for 'juniors'

WITH reference to the item about golden jubilee celebrations planned for Portsmouth (Oct). Are those "junior personnel" that the Queen is so keen to meet the same men and women who will be denied the award of the medal because of the ridiculous five years' service rule? – Mr B Hodges, Hill Head, Hants.

Spot the squaddie

ON the subject of sideburns (Mail, Aug), though I agree that discipline has to be maintained, I fail to see how a couple of centimetres of hair can bring the Army into disrepute. If a female soldier can swan around with a peroxide blond hair-do, why can't a male soldier be allowed a little more hair down the side of his face?

During the 1970s, squaddies were encouraged to grow more fashionable hair due to the terrorist threat at that time (you only need to look at unit photographs). As current trends in the UK feature short hair with sideburns, is there any reason why we insist on rules which ensure that everyone can spot the squaddie (big bag, short hair, no sideys)? – LCpl W R Evans, 14 Geo Sq RE, Monchengladbach.

Every dog has . . .

I HAVE just read the letter from Cpl West (Oct) regarding an allowance for his pet dog's travelling expenses to Cyprus. My first reaction was to look at the date in case it was April Fool's Day. – Wayne Tucker, Gutersloh, Germany.



Double, double reason to buy

I AM a married soldier with two sets of twins aged ten and seven. I have five years left to complete my full 22 years.

Due to the age of my eldest twins, I decided to buy my own home in the area in which I wish to settle on leaving the Army. This move is to enable my children to attend one school for the most important secondary stage of their education, leading up to their exams.

Why am I not entitled to removals or disturbance allowances to assist my move? Conversely, at the expense of my children's educational stability, if I kept them with me I would receive both allowances twice more over the next five years. – **Name and address supplied.**

▲ *Relocation aids such as disturbance allowance and provision of removals services are provided to compensate for the costs generated by the level of mobility the Army requires of its personnel for Service reasons. Soldier has been told. When a move is initiated by personal choice, the Army does not have the same obligations or responsibilities – and in this case the intended move appears to fall into this category.*

Provisions are made for those nearing the end of their service, including Final Tour of Duty (RAACs, Ch 9, Sec 4) and Over 37 (Sec 3), which allow for publicly-funded removals to private addresses. Where a move to a private address coincides with a posting order, removals and associated allowances may be applicable. Unit admin office staff will be able to advise. – Editor

Still waiting for Glasgow's reply

WHY is it that my second child has gone unnoticed for nearly three years as far as my LOA (local overseas allowance) is concerned? I have tried to rectify this problem for the past five months, only to be told by my admin office that I will have to "wait for Glasgow to sort it out".

I realise I should have sorted it out sooner, but this is no excuse for those who look after soldiers' and families' welfare. – **LCpl J Tunstill, Paderborn.**

▲ *LCpl Tunstill will be pleased to hear, we've been told, that he should soon receive a credit of £560 from the Army Personnel Centre in Glasgow in respect of LOA for his second child. It is up to officers and soldiers to make their admin office aware of changes in their personal circumstances and to ensure their records are up-to-date.*

When LCpl Tunstill informed his RAO that he had two children – 18 months after the birth of the second child – this was transmitted to Glasgow via UNICOM in June. For some reason the original notification was not received by the APC and so no LOA could be paid for a child about which no details were held. That's now been corrected. – Editor

WO2s' pension point is not representative

A PENSION payable after 22 years' service for other ranks is 31.833 per cent of representative pay.

Prior to Pay 2000, representative pay for a warrant officer class 2 was set as the mid-point between Band 5 and Band 6 rates of pay, with the inclusion of an increment for 18 years' service. All seemed fair enough.

I was astonished to discover that representative pay for WO2s under Pay 2000 is set at the mid-point between the higher and lower bands at level 5 of the SSgt/WO2 range, which is the entry point for WO2 and, therefore, the lowest rate a WO2 could be paid.

This rate cannot be representative, because to be granted a full pension in any rank the individual must be paid in

that rank for at least two years within the last five years of service. It therefore follows that the lowest level that should have been used is level 7, which would give a pension of around £9,719 as opposed to the rate of £9,312 currently payable.

Obviously to use a truly representative rate would cost more money, but surely all of this should have been taken into account when changing the system?

I am aware that a full review of pensions is under way but I think in the meantime that those who are leaving now after many years of loyal service should receive a fair deal. – **WO2 (SQMS) G S Martin, AGC (SPS), Regimental Administrative Office, 2 Battalion REME, Fallingbowl.**

Soldiers DO have right to express an opinion

I agree with SSgt O'Brien (Oct) that there has been non-stop moaning over Pay 2000. However, most people have that right because the system isn't fair. As for his idea of spending more money on "less bulky tentage", this would be a waste of money. As far as I'm concerned, the only time I go near an Army tent is when the squadron is having a barbecue. The money would be better spent on adequate accommodation or clothing. – **Cpl S Davis, B Coy, ATR Winchester.**

SOLDIERS expressing their opinions about Pay 2000 are not whining. They, like me, feel their opinion matters and the perceived loss of earnings is emotive.

Anyone who says we should shut up because we joined for adventure is either on the high pay band or indifferent to the fact that fellow soldiers are losing out. I admit that when I joined the Army it was for more than just money, but priorities change and earnings become a driving force. SSgt O'Brien will give those who hold the purse strings the message that they got Pay 2000 right. As most of us know, they got it wrong. – **WO2 M W Eynon, 16 Regt RA, Woolwich.**

Very hard to explain why my gunners are paid less

AS a soldier in the Royal Artillery I would like to say to Fus Strickland ("Infantry's vital role," Oct) that infantry soldiers don't win battles by themselves. Other arms and corps play an important part too.

He shouldn't fool himself into thinking that the Brecon course is reason enough for a higher pay band. Non-infanterers attend this course and pass and he may be embarrassed to learn that my predecessor came top of an advance course there.

I agree with SSgt O'Brien ("Stop the moaning", Oct) that we are all volunteers and can leave. However, we all volunteered under the terms and conditions of the day and, according to our interests, accepted the careers offered to us. No one expected the goalposts to be moved.

Surely it would be better to investigate the areas of concern rather than ignore

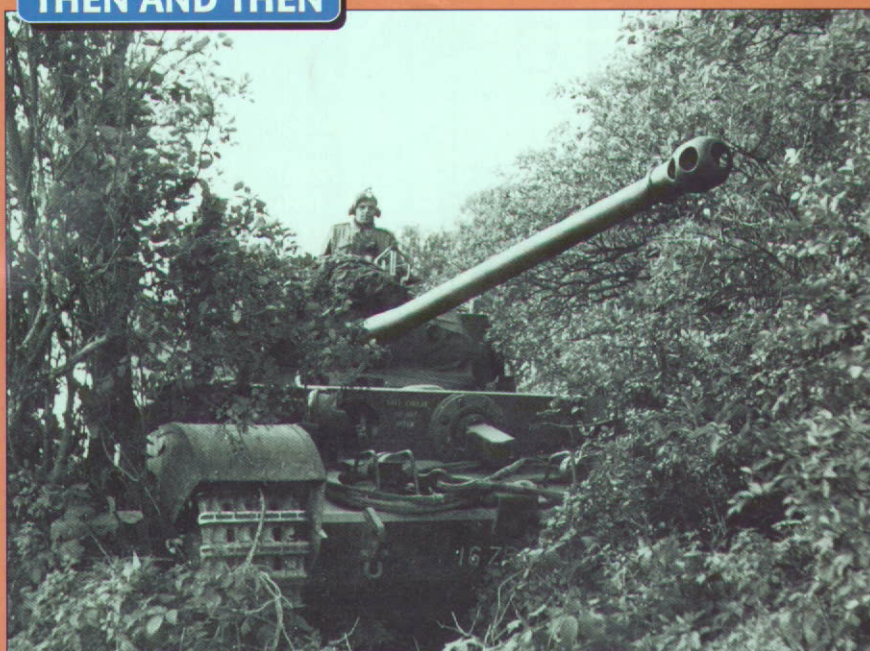
them and allow soldiers to vote with their feet. Am I being cynical to suggest that the infantry pay banding may have something to do with trying to combat their troubled retention figures?

Artillery soldiers are paid less than their infantry counterparts yet they are often called upon to fulfil infantry roles. More than 100 of my soldiers recently returned from Macedonia and Northern Ireland, and the regiment is among those earmarked for possible operations in Afghanistan.

I personally find it difficult to explain the rationale for the pay disparity to my soldiers, and I understand why they moan.

Pay 2000 is a contentious initiative, which needs adjustment. It will continue to be debated in many a barrack block and mess. – **WO1 (RSM) S N Commander, 7 Para RHA, Aldershot.**

THEN AND THEN



25 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, December 1976: The Grant's whisky piping championships, now regarded as the greatest overall test in the solo piping world, have been won by Glasgow-born Pipe Major Angus MacDonald, who is pipe major of the Guards Depot at Pirbright. He is also the holder of the Bratach Gorm (Blue Banner) and the Gold Banner.

50 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, December 1951: A Comet tank, pictured, of the 6th Royal Tank Regiment lies up in wooded country on the Wiltshire border during the biggest exercise in Britain since the Second World War and the first in peacetime England. A complete armoured division involving 50,000 troops and 12,000 vehicles manoeuvred over four counties.

Not all pregnant women are built like matchsticks

MY maternity uniform was ordered in the middle of September. As my Combat 95 was starting to get a bit uncomfortable, I borrowed a pair of trousers, two shirts and a cardigan from a girl who had recently had her baby.

When my uniform arrived at the beginning of October I took one look at it and told the Quartermaster's Department there was no way it would fit me.

The uniform I had borrowed was 96cm and I had been sent a size 88cm. I was told to give the new uniform to the soldier I had borrowed off and keep the larger-sized borrowed items for my use.

How can they use a chest measurement

to decide the size of maternity wear? I'm 5ft 4in, size 12, with an average-sized bust and am going to deliver a bigger-than-average baby. Going by the uniforms they provide, Bicester seems to think we're all built like matchsticks and have 5lb babies.

We have to put up with men's sizes in Combat 95 so the least they can do is ensure that during pregnancy women soldiers are comfortable. — **Cpl Pender, 32 Regiment RA, Larkhill.**

▲ The Defence Clothing and Textiles Project team, to which we have forwarded a copy of Cpl Pender's letter, responded to similar views carried in the Mail pages of the June issue. — **Editor**

Why it's a good idea for single soldiers to be allowed to occupy empty quarters

LAST year I asked the Station Staff Office, in writing, if I could be considered for an unoccupied quarter, only to be refused because I am single. If I lived in the UK I could choose to live in a private property, but in Germany it is more difficult.

There are a number of empty flats in the area which will deteriorate if not properly maintained. Why can't single soldiers live in them? I

appreciate you could have everyone asking for one, but surely criteria could be set, based on age, conduct and length of service.

It would also give those in long-term relationships a chance to get to know each other better before committing to marriage and so reduce the divorce rate. Come on, give us a chance. — **Cpl J Wright, AGC (SPS), 1 IG, Munster.**

PS . . .

He's in for a shock

I FEEL compelled to respond to the letter from LCpl Lewin ("Unmarried, but we'll need a quarter for a baby", Oct). It is bad enough that some people feel the need to marry in order to "get out of the block"; how much worse the situation would be if people realised that by having a child they could just as easily obtain the right for a quarter.

It seems bizarre that LCpl Lewin is "not ready for marriage" but thinks he is ready to bring up a child. Marriages can easily be ended these days, but once a parent you are one for life. I think someone is in for a big shock when his bundle of joy arrives. — **Mrs S Blyth, Wilton.**

Angry Marines

I HAVE to vent my anger at the unjust decision to award the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal only to full-time soldiers with five years' service. I believe all who have completed phase two training should get it. I was a serving Royal Marine when the Silver Jubilee Medal was issued and only five people in my commando unit received it. This caused resentment and disgust in the ranks. Men who had served in Aden, Borneo and Sarawak weren't considered. — **A W Bond, ex-WO2 RM, Deal, Kent.**

Lifetime in uniform

ON the occasion of Her Majesty's Silver Jubilee in 1977, the distribution of medals was confined in the British Army to three medals per battalion, which went to the CO, adjutant or RSM and a chosen soldier. I understand the Golden Jubilee Medal will be given only to serving personnel with five or more years' service.

This disregards many men and women who served in the Armed Forces throughout her reign in active and peace-keeping roles in conflicts all over the world. Those of us who were in uniform in 1977 did not get the same opportunity to receive a medal as those serving today.

Having served in the Army for 25 years protecting Queen and country I feel that dispensation should be given to people like myself who made the Services their lifelong career. — **J A Pinkerton, London.**

Focus on the Canal

YOUR article on the Suez Canal Zone crisis (Oct) featuring Charles and Doris Golder drew attention to our uphill struggle to get a gong for this service. To live under the threat of terrorism puts a strain on everybody in the theatre from the lowliest cook and bottle-washer to the general, and this should be recognised by Dr Moonie when he is deciding whether to give us our medal. Perhaps the unfortunate events in America underline this point. — **Len Oliver, ex-LF, Colchester, Essex.**

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Let's rehabilitate those drug users

I AGREE with the no-drugs policy in the Services, but believe we should be looking beyond administrative discharges for those tested positive. It is now socially acceptable to take drugs and 90 per cent of teenagers have tried them or are using them according to one recent magazine survey.

Yet if you drink to excess you find yourself on a drink management course. The Army could extend this into a drug rehabilitation programme. Would it not be a better option to rehabilitate rather than discharge personnel who might have made a mistake but are not otherwise bad

people? There are some in the system not worth taking the time and effort, but we have a duty to help younger soldiers rather than washing our hands of them.

Instead of giving them a chance to be thrown out of the Forces (an easy way out for some) rehabilitation would make them think twice about taking drugs. The programme would be hard-hitting to deter misuse.

People caught out by CDT could be sent to rehabilitation centres to work as assistants so they could see for themselves the damage drugs do to people. – **Sgt G Graham, 3 Platoon, 1 RHF.**

Melted boots should tell the true story

I WAS interested to read Brig Kerley's reply to a letter enquiring about the issue of desert boots for Saif Sareea 2 ("Why haven't we got desert boots?", Sept). His compelling argument about the temperatures in Oman at this time of year sadly did not stand up to the reality of searing upper 40sC endured by personnel in theatre.

Dismayed by the lack of suitable boots and hats, I bought my own, which I could afford, although I know many soldiers could not, and sadly they suffered as a result. They are understandably unimpressed, although I expect the numbers of melted black boots exchanged in the coming months will speak for them much better than I ever could.

Why are we not told that the only reason essential kit was not issued is a lack of money, and that no matter how effective we are, we can only be made less so by inappropriate equipment. – **Capt D J Thornton AAC, CSDC, Blandford Camp.**

Put onus on soldiers

LIKE Cpl Lawson, I am not a superhuman fitness machine but keep myself in shape and regularly run half-marathons and other events. Unfortunately there are an increasing number of unfit soldiers who at times make me embarrassed to call myself a fellow Serviceman.

I would like to see his suggestion ("It's time to link fitness with salary", Oct) taken a step further. Why not review the ITD (Individual Training Directive) system and select a handful of subjects that are directly related to soldiering, such as the subjects taught as part of Common Military Training (Recruits).

Personnel would feel the onus back on them to be fit to take part in operations at

short notice and competent in the things that keep us all alive on the battlefield. Surely this was the idea of ITDs in the first place.

I work as a platoon sergeant at the Army Technical Foundation College, Arborfield and often the only way to get recruits to reach the required standard of knowledge is to keep testing them until they realise they need to revise and practice in their own time.

The odd conversation about "green" subjects over Naafi break or in the office is a surprisingly effective form of revision and would see the end of soldiers who are perceived as being too keen. – **Sgt Rob Allen, B Company, ATFC Arborfield.**

Cutting remarks about letter on fitness

IN response to Cpl Lawson's letter, I also feel strongly that a soldier who is not up to his job should take a pay cut. As a junior commander, it is Cpl Lawson's job to motivate, encourage, train and discipline the ranks under his command. It is obvious that he is not carrying out his role correctly and therefore he should look forward to his pay cut in the near future. – **LCpl M Blackman, 26 Engineer Regiment, Ludgershall.**

My shopping trip fell foul of discrimination against Army

I AM tired of being discriminated against because I am in the Army. The problem is mainly with finance companies, which seem to think that if you're in the Army you won't keep up your repayments.

Here are a couple of examples: I was out shopping with my wife on leave from Northern Ireland and wanted to buy a mobile phone. Everything was sorted until I gave my BFPO address, at which point the very young "sales adviser" told me that I couldn't have the particular phone in question without a letter from my commanding officer.

CAR SALE OFF

On another occasion I paid the deposit on a car, the garage confirmed that the vehicle was ready for collection and all I had to do was provide them with two forms of ID. I assumed my driving licence and Forces ID card would be sufficient, but I should have known better.

As soon as the salesman saw I was in the Army the sale was off, because their policy was not to give finance to serving personnel.

As a 27-year-old married lance corporal I would like to think that I can be trusted with my own finances. Besides which, just what has my CO got to do with which mobile phone I use?

ANIMAL SHELTER

It's not just the finance companies, though. I once went to an animal shelter to get a dog as a pet, which cost me £55. For their records, the shelter asked for my address and, on seeing it, demanded a letter from my CO. They refused to let us take the dog, even though by this time it was in the car, ready to accompany us to its new home.

People I know have even been refused a mortgage because they are members of the Armed Forces. I feel this is wrong and that finance companies should be told not to discriminate against the Armed Services. – **LCpl Collins, Northern Ireland.**

● Has anyone else been a victim of retail discrimination because you are in the Army? If you have, we would like to hear from you. Remember to include the name of the outlet or service provider and how you believe you were discriminated against. – Editor

Vox pop

The regular feature in which we ask soldiers for their views on an issue

It's a trade-off

Sig Kevin Downey,
16 Sig Regt,
Banja Luka

A union could be beneficial. We would have someone to speak for us on trades as our pay band is poor and I am better qualified than a BT technician. He would receive a lot more than I would if he were to come out here and do the job I am doing. We need someone to speak for us.



Cpl Steve Kerrigan,
111 Pro Coy RMP,
Banja Luka

It might be difficult because there are so many unions with different requirements and different agendas. I see no call for a union; it does not need a union to put things right. It might cause more



problems than it would solve.

LCpl Dave Diesel,
AGC(SPS), att
RMP, Banja Luka

We could have a union or something similar. The only place I can presently view an opinion is in something like *Soldier* magazine, so there should be a recognised outside body to deal with issues.



Capt George Sale,
2 RGJ,
Mrkonjic Grad

A bad idea. The Army should not be modelled on large industrial organisations. The way we operate is through a chain of command and if you bring a trade union into it you are effectively undermining that chain of command. And that is the only thing that makes it work in a war-fighting situation. You would be pulling the rug out from under the feet of the commanders.



Capt Karen Banks,
7 Tpt Regt RLC,
Banja Luka

Trade unions – no. We already have an Army of barrack-room lawyers who restrict and inhibit the way in which we work. To introduce people to formalise that process would



just bring us all to a standstill. We have a chain of command, with ways to address matters. You don't need an outside entity to do that for you.

Cpl Jimmy Greaves,
2 RGJ,
Banja Luka

Trade unions – no way. The moment we do that, the British Army – the best in the world – would disappear because discipline would go. We've gone far enough already with the human rights laws.



Maj 'PJ' Price-James,
AGC (SBS),
Banja Luka

I believe that other nations see the British Army as the best in the world. If you bring in trade unions I think it would be detrimental to our standing. Things would go downhill and undermine the chain of command.



Rfn Zeb McKinnon,
2 RGJ, Banja Luka

A trade union could be a good thing. People in higher command can't always see things through our eyes so a representative to put things up the chain of command would be a good thing.



Interviews: Ray Routledge Pictures: Mike Weston



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