

SOLDIER

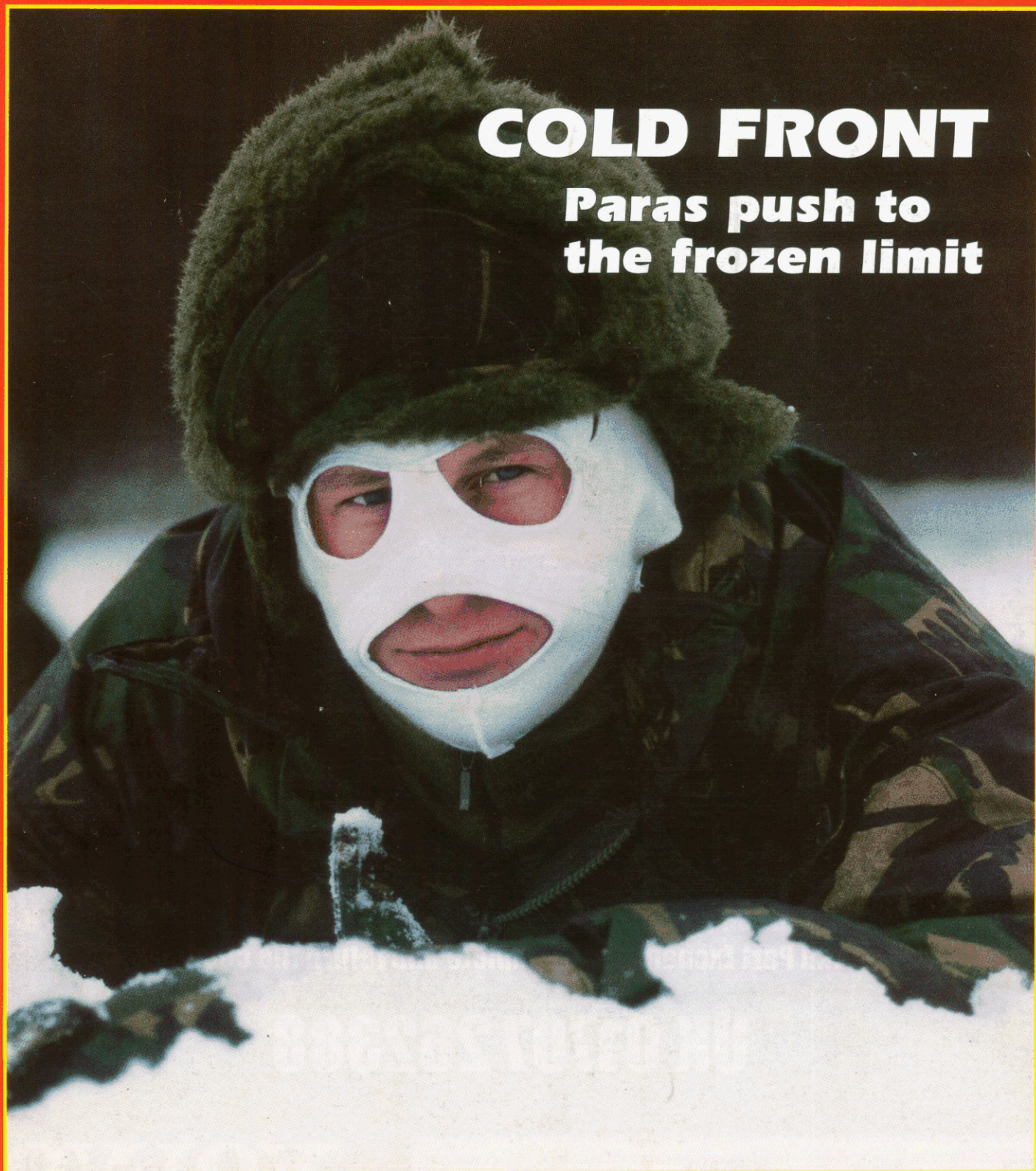
FORTNIGHTLY MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

FEBRUARY 3 1997

80p

COLD FRONT

**Paras push to
the frozen limit**



**Kelly's back
on fast track**

**Beating drum
for the Army**

**Terriers on
terror volcano**

**Recruiters are
a class act**

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February 3, 1997 Vol 53/3

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Picture: Chris Fletcher

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Michelle finds Mr Write

LCpl Simon Russell proved he was made of the write stuff when he wooed and won girlfriend Michelle Weller.

He literally swept her off her feet... with a deluge of love letters from Bosnia. Michelle received up to six a day as Simon bombarded her with 1,200 blueys during his six-month tour with the Blues and Royals.

Letter No 611 contained his proposal of marriage, and 23-year-old Michelle was quick to accept.

Now Simon, a chef in the Royal Logistic Corps, and his fiancée are to tie the knot on February 8 before moving into a married quarter at Salisbury.

He revealed that he spent up to three hours a day writing to Michelle.

Simon's massive mail marathon did not cost him a penny. The "bluey" airmail forms issued to soldiers deployed abroad on operations cost nothing to post.



Picture: Bruce Seabrook/Dragon

New deal on home loans

FIRST the bad news: the Services Preferential Mortgage Scheme set up by the National and Provincial Building Society is to be terminated on February 28. But the good news is that the Ministry of Defence hopes to have a replacement arrangement up and running by April 1.

Since it was introduced in October 1991, mortgages at favourable rates have been enjoyed by thousands of Service personnel.

The preferential arrangement is particularly attractive because the building society undertook to honour it for the term of the mortgage: the discount did not depend on the borrower remaining in the Armed Forces. Under the soon-to-end scheme, any full-time member of the Services is eligible to apply for a mortgage with a discount against the standard variable rate for the lifetime of the mortgage, or a fixed rate of 6.25 per cent until September 3 1998, followed by

0.5 per cent discount against the standard variable rate for the lifetime of the mortgage.

Abbey National plc, which took over the N and P and has been administering the scheme since August, has given the MoD notice that it will end on the last day of February. Servicemen and women already benefiting from the original arrangement will not be affected by the decision.

The society has also guaranteed that for existing clients the current discount options will remain in force for the full term of their mortgages.

There is still time to take advantage of the old scheme. New clients may apply to join

as long as they do so before the end of February.

Uptake, although initially good, levelled off, and there are now just over 4,500 in the scheme with loans totalling about £203 million.

The MoD is in the process of re-tendering for a replacement scheme. Several financial institutions have already shown an interest.

This will mean that there will be a month when personnel in the Armed Forces will not have access to a preferential scheme, but it is hoped this inconvenience will be balanced by the potential benefits of a new and extremely competitive mortgage product.

How To Buy A



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Plymouth gunners on global odyssey

GUNNERS from 29 Commando Regiment RA have set out on an eight-month odyssey around the world.

Ninety of the Plymouth-based soldiers are involved in the Royal Navy task force which will visit a dozen countries on Exercise Ocean Wave.

Highlight of the ambitious deployment for the Commando Gunners is likely to be six weeks of intensive exercises and live firings with the South African Defence Force.

The soldiers are all members of 8 (Alma) Commando Battery RA. They will man six of the regiment's 105mm light guns in support of elements of 3 Commando Brigade embarked with the task force.

Battery commander Maj Adrian Rafferty said: "Everyone is excited to have this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It will give us excellent training in places we would not normally visit.

"South Africa, along with tough exercises in Brunei and the Philippines, will provide a testing, interesting environment."

The guns were loaded on to the *Sir Geraint*, a logistic landing ship, at Marchwood Military Port before personnel and stores set sail for Sicily, Djibouti, the Gulf and India before going on to the Far East.

EXERCISE HARDFALL

Meanwhile, nearly 500 soldiers serving with the Dover-based 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment flew to central Norway to train in Arctic conditions. Most made an initial drop from eight Hercules aircraft on to a frozen lake.

They were due to take part with other British troops in Exercise Hardfall before moving north for Adventure Express, a NATO exercise involving about 20,000 soldiers.

The paras' immediate programme involved learning to ski and survival techniques.



Picture: Mike Weston

Maj Gen Martin White with the Blackadder insignia inspired by a Gulf War letter from his daughter

Cunning loggies adopt black adder

FICTION became fact outside the headquarters of 27 Regiment RLC in Aldershot when a flag embossed with a squiggly black serpent was raised for the first time.

The theme from BBC TV's *Blackadder* series, played by Bugler Steve Craig, confirmed its origins.

A black adder shoulder flash was first adopted by support troops in the Gulf War after their commander, Col (now Maj Gen) Martin White was given the idea by his daughter, who hoped he had a "cunning

plan" to use against the Iraqi army.

The catchphrase, made famous by the Baldrick character in the television series, found its mark among Col White's soldiers in the British Force Maintenance Area, and the little adder quickly wormed its way into their affections.

Now it has been formally, and proudly, adopted by the Combat Service Support Group based at Buller Barracks. Flurries of snow did their best to add a surreal flavour to the occasion as the

adder-bearing flag was raised for the first time on January 9. A guard of honour from 604 Signal Troop kept appropriately straight faces under the command of Maj Paul Gorford.

Maj Gen White, now the Director General Royal Logistic Corps, is delighted that the insignia has been reintroduced for the formation.

In Britain, the Combat Service Support Group has 38 units in peace, rising to 214 in war. It includes elements from R Signals, RLC, RAMC, RE, REME and the AGC (RMP).



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It's the South Downs Walker

AS THE Hong Kong-based Queen's Gurkha Signals celebrated regaining the Trailwalker title in a time of 13hr 28min, plans were being made to "export" the event to the South Downs.

Sig Danbir Limbu, Sig Nareshkumar Rai, Sig Tirtha Rai and Sig Devbahadur Sherpa were only ten minutes short of the course record over the 100km MacLehose Trail, one of the toughest events in Hong Kong's sporting calendar.

The soldiers' commanding officer, Lt Col Jeremy Ellis, who ran the last few stages with his team, said their win was a fitting farewell tribute.

"We've been associated with Trailwalker for many years, both in the organisation of the event and in taking part. What better way to bow out than with this terrific win."

Hot on their heels were the Queen's Own Gurkha Transport Detachment, who finished second in a time of 13hr



Triumphant members of the Queen's Gurkha Signals Trailwalker team

54min. Drivers Gurpalbahadur Gurung, Balbahadur Limbu, Nirkaji Gurung and Mehendra Budha Magar pushed the signallers hard in an attempt to repeat last year's success as the first military team across the line.

"We knew we could beat the record as we had already achieved it in training," said

Sig Devbahadur Sherpa. "It was disappointing to miss it."

The Gurkha Signallers were fortunate to have Sig Tirtha Rai, a Trailwalker veteran of two previous winning teams.

There are plans to import an event similar to Trailwalker to the United Kingdom. It would be held along the South Downs Way.

Exact route and distance has yet to be agreed, but Maj Gavin Grant, 30 Signal Regiment, who was in Hong Kong to monitor Trailwalker, is confident it will take place in June or July with Army support.

"The 100km trek along the MacLehose Trail has raised millions of dollars for the Gurkha Welfare Trust and so we're keen to keep that money coming in," he said. "The obvious way to do it is to start up Trailwalker in the UK."

"The Queen's Gurkha Signals had a long association with the Hong Kong event, so organising something like this should not be a problem."

"What we are looking for is support from the military and civilians. There should be plenty of people keen to participate and we would be more than happy to hear from them."

For further details write to Trailwalker, 30 Sig Regt, Bramcote, Nuneaton CV11 6QN (fax 01455 222585).

Promoted – by the Secretary of State

TWO REME soldiers serving in the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) in Bosnia will not forget a quick visit to the area by Defence Secretary Michael Portillo and Procurement Minister James Arbuthnot.

They were minding their own business at the former bus depot in Mrkonjic Grad, where they repair and service the Challenger tanks and Scimitar armoured vehicles of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, when the were both promoted "in the field" by Mr Portillo.

Cpl Dave Joyce received his sergeant's stripes from the Secretary of State, while a dumb-founded Cfn Derrie Daniels was summoned from inside an armoured personnel carrier to be presented with his lance corporal's stripes.

FALLINGBOSTEL

Both men are attached to the Scots DG, normally based in Fallingbommel, Germany.

The whistle-stop tour last month had to be altered at the last minute because of the weather. Mr Portillo called on British troops serving with the German-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR), the reduced formation which succeeded the Peace Implementation Force (IFOR) on December 20.

He met members of the Household Cavalry Regiment, the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, and 1st Battalion, The Green Howards. He also spoke to members of the Royal Engineers and support units including the RMP.

The new stabilisation force, although heavily armed, is half the size of its predecessor. Troop levels are to be reviewed after six months.



Plain hard work: Gen Sir Michael Rose, the Adjutant General, strides out during his nine-mile fun run from Upavon to Tidworth. More than 131 soldiers and civilians, many of them based at Trenchard Lines, completed the run, which was devised by Gen Rose and which is to become an annual event. The Adjutant General crossed the line in a time of 1hr 10min.

He said those taking part were setting an example. It was important that in times of heavy operational commitments the Army did not lose sight of the role of sport in character and leadership development.

End of era at Arborfield college

INTAKE 95A, the final contingent of REME apprentices to complete their two-year course, has passed out of the Army Apprentices College at Arborfield.

To mark the occasion, the young soldiers marched from Hazebrourck Barracks for the last time with their path lined

by colleagues. The tribute marked both the end of their apprenticeship and the end of an era for the college.

In future the Army Apprentices College will run an eight-month foundation course for apprentices to the REME and the Royal Signals, who will be joined in due course by RE and

RLC apprentices. They will go on to complete their training at each corps' specialist establishment.

During their time at Arborfield, the members of Intake 95A studied military skills, leadership, technical studies and vehicle mechanics, the last remaining trade at the college.

Around the Houses

A summary of Defence topics from Westminster

Recruiting on way to its target

ARMY recruiting has reached 86 per cent of its target so far this financial year, Armed Forces Minister Nicholas Soames said in the Commons.

This compared with 95 per cent for the RAF, while the Royal Marines had recruited 100 per cent of their target for officers and 87 per cent for marines.

Answering questions on manpower on January 14, the minister mentioned five regiments he said were currently overstretched – The Duke of Wellington's Regiment, The King's Regiment, The Green Howards, The Light Dragoons and the 2nd Royal Tank Regiment.

"The problem is not found throughout the Army, but in certain specified and difficult areas and we are doing our best to ensure that those matters are dealt with expeditiously," he said.

Later Mr Soames said a decision was due shortly on the timing of new arrangements for Junior Leaders.

He said the quality of NCOs in the Services depended largely on the "extraordinarily successful" junior leaders regiments and everyone regretted they no longer existed.

More than 1,700 vocational qualifications were gained in the Army between April and September last year.

In a written answer on January 13 Mr Soames said that "all Army personnel are to be given the maximum opportunity throughout their careers to gain VQs and other forms of professional recognition for their workplace skills, knowledge and experience."

"The process of mapping Army trades and skills against the national vocational standards is progressing well."

He added: "It is anticipated that schemes offering appropriate qualifications will be available to most Army personnel within two years."

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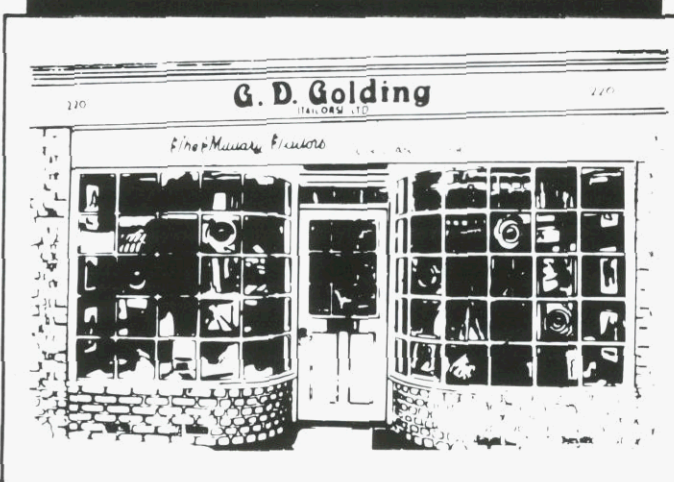
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Münster thrills to concert of note

A MUSICAL spectacular laid on by hundreds of Army musicians in Münster was an outstanding success, attracting 6,700 people and raising more than DM100,000 (about £38,226) for charities in Germany and the United Kingdom.

Two performances of the annual British Military Music Show in the Halle Münsterland were complete sell-outs. Organised by HQ 4 Armoured Brigade and Headquarters External Affairs Division UKSC (G), the concerts involved 11 military bands.

Guest appearances were made by the 76th US Army Band from Weisbaden, the Irish Band from Dublin, and the Bundeswehr Heeresmusikorp 100, a German Army band from Münster.

Highlights included the massed bands of the Queen's Division, made up of the Minden and Normandy Bands from Osnabrück and Catterick; the combined bands of the Dragoon Guards, Hussars and Light Dragoons,



Bugles of the 2nd Battalion, The Light Infantry perform for a sell-out audience at the Halle Münsterland

from Paderborn and Münster; the Light Division Band from Winchester, accompanied by the bugles of 2 LI; the Corps of Drums of the Coldstream Guards; the Pipes and Drums of the Scottish Transport Regiment from Dunfermline; and

the Pipes and Drums of The Royal Highland Fusiliers.

Musical director was Capt David Cresswell.

All 400 musicians took part in the finale which ended in Handel's *Fireworks Music*. The salute on the gala night was

taken by Gen Sir Roger Wheeler, Commander-in-Chief Land.

Background support for the show and the visiting bands was provided by No 3 Company, Coldstream Guards under Maj Jamie Blackett.

Tigers on parade in Copenhagen for royal jubilee

FIFTY soldiers drawn from the four battalions of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment took part in a parade in Copenhagen to celebrate the silver jubilee of Queen Margrethe II, the regiment's Allied Colonel-in-Chief.

Lt Gen Sir Anthony Denison-Smith, Colonel of the PWRR, also attended.

Invited by the Royal Danish Household, the Tigers were the only troops not from Denmark to take part in the January 15 parade.

Every regiment and unit in the Danish Armed Forces was represented.

The PWRR contingent was made up from soldiers of the 1st Battalion based at Canter-

bury, the 2nd serving at Omagh in Northern Ireland, and the Territorial Army battalions, the 5th and 6/7th from Canterbury and Horsham.

After they had been inspected by the Queen and her son, the Prince Consort, the British soldiers attended a royal reception in the town hall.

They were hosted during their three-day stay by the Royal Danish Life Guards.

MAJ Richard Gilroy RLC received an award as the best student on the Information Systems Project Management course at Shrivenham. The course provides an in-depth study into the management of computer projects in the MoD.



Eight members of The Gibraltar Regiment prepare to pull a 25-pounder gun to commemorate the removal and destruction of the enemy guns in the "Great Sortie" of 1781 when a party of infantry, sappers and more than 100 gunners crossed 1,000 yards of no-man's-land to spike the guns of the besieging Spanish Army



Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, The Staffordshire Regiment are inspected by the Duke of York in Hong Kong, where they are on a five-month tour. Prince Andrew, who is Colonel-in-Chief of the regiment, took the salute at the Staffords' annual Ferozeshah Parade held to commemorate their main battle honour. The battalion is due to return to the United Kingdom in February. Behind the Duke is Lt Col Jim Tanner, CO 1 Staffords

Diggers' good turn for newts

RECENT recruits to the ranks of 223 (London) Headquarters Squadron (EOD) (V) got to grips with nature – and the unit's digging plant – during training weekends at Pippingford Park training area in East Sussex.

At the same time that they were learning to use the squadron's three new JCB 808 mini-excavators, they were doing their bit for the environment, restoring ponds thought to be among the last breeding grounds for rare varieties of crested newt and dragonfly.

Part of 101 (London) Engineer Regiment (EOD) (V), the Territorial Army bomb disposal regiment, 223 is collocated with the RHQ at Catford, London. Commanded by Maj Peter Baron, it began recruiting a year ago and now has nearly 40 men and women on its strength.

Role of the squadron is to provide heavy plant support to 101's field units on bomb disposal tasks.

A breached dam required attention and another pond needed a drainage overflow system. Working in near-freez-

ing water, the recruits completed the tasks under SSgt David Inman.

Lt Col Robert Murfin, CO 101 Engr Regt, said: "These weekends are an ideal opportunity to combine effective training and useful conservation work. I'm pleased both have been so successful."

The squadron is still trying to attract ex-Regular soldiers living in the Catford area. Anyone interested in finding out more about the unit should ring 0181-698 5573.



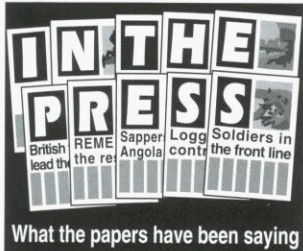
Pond excavators: From left are Spr Adit Osman, Spr Hannah Collins and SSgt Chris Hinton of 223 (London) HQ Squadron (EOD) (V)

ABRO wins £400m deal

ARMY Base Repair Organisation (ABRO) Colchester has won a major contract to repair the Army's vehicles and equipment.

Competition for the £400-million contract pitted the in-house workforce against industry.

ABRO's group of workshops will have its headquarters at Warminster, overseeing a force of about 900. It will provide repair support for more than a million items of equipment, ranging from tanks to binoculars, for all three Services.



Change of mind on Gurkha families?

THE Government looks likely to allow Gurkha soldiers to bring their families to Britain after cross-party pressure at Westminster. – *Times*

□ President Clinton has launched a fresh effort to root out causes of Gulf War illness. – *Guardian*

□ Hundreds of European mercenaries, including former British soldiers, are massing in eastern Zaire to mount a counter-offensive against the Rwandan-backed rebels, according to French news reports. – *Times*

□ Generals and top military officials have been asked to take a close look at their walls in an attempt to locate nearly 200 works of art missing from the MoD since the war. – *Daily Telegraph*

□ The Royal British Legion is to demand that the Government withdraws tough new rules on war-deafness pensions. – *Guardian*

□ After years of anglophone sniggering, the élite French Special Force, *Commandos de Recherche et d'Action en Profondeur* (CRAP) has changed its name to the *Groupeement de Commandos Parachutistes* (GCP). – *Daily Telegraph*

Naafi turns the corner

NAAFI boosted its turnover by £11.4m to £411.1m after previous losses. The reversal of its fortunes was achieved despite further reductions in the size of the Armed Forces and worldwide deployments by large numbers of troops.

Despite the strong trading performance, Naafi declared an overall loss of £5.1m in its annual report and accounts for the year ended April 27, 1996.

Right time, right placement

SINCE I wrote about the role of job placements in the process of resettlement I've had letters asking for more information.

In my BFBS *Counterpoint* programme we profiled the work of one woman who helps ex-Army people and those planning to leave. She puts them through a series of tests and interviews, identifies strengths and weaknesses and suggests areas of work which might suit the person.

Then she finds a placement where the person can actually do a job for a limited period of time.

The advantages of this process are many. Perhaps the most significant is that anyone going through it has those invaluable qualifications – recent experience in a civilian environment and up-to-date civilian references.

Of course, all this has to be paid for, but two people we spoke to thought it had been well worth it. In one man's case the consultant had suggested an area of work

that he hadn't even considered.

We talked to a consultant recommended by Henry Hawlesley of the Ex-Services Resettlement Group, and she certainly seemed to know what she was talking about, but she is not the only person working in the field.

As with any service provided there will be people who are more effective than the others. If you would like to know more about job placements I suggest that you get in touch with Henry Hawlesley at SSAFA HQ at 19, Queen Elizabeth Street, London SE1 2LP.

You can also send him a letter at my office at BFBS, BFPO 786. Mark it c/o Cari Roberts.

□ □ □

Most Service people are in-

involved in sporting activities and the opportunities for achieving excellence are many.

Perhaps it is for this reason that their services are in demand as members of civilian sporting teams either as participants or as trainers and administrators.

A problem arises when money changes hands. If a Service person is rewarded for being part of a sporting team or event, even if it is during leave or time off, then it could be regarded as accepting temporary employment. With or without permission, people could find themselves in trouble if their sporting obligations clash with Service duties or their work begins to suffer.

What starts out as a simple promise to help train a civilian team might escalate into a time-

consuming and exhausting off-duty life.

Then there is the matter of leave. Successful sportsmen and women may find that they need more and more time off to travel to competitions, and they may find themselves applying for unpaid absence in increasing amounts. This will ultimately have an impact on the way in which their superiors view their attitude to their career.

Insurance is another area that needs to be looked at with care. The MOD will not accept responsibility for injury, loss or damage sustained by a Service person who is taking part in sport outside official duties.

I've yet to hear from anyone who has run into difficulties while being involved in civilian sport, but if you have a cautionary tale do let me know.

● Cari Roberts presents *Counterpoint* on BFBS radio. Write to her at BFBS, BFPO 786; c/o *Soldier*.



Cari's column

Howards' way puts the spotlight on women

ONE OF the first things which retired major Roger Chapman did when he was called in to give a complete revamp to the Green Howards Museum in Richmond, Yorkshire, was to create a rather special section, writes Phil Wilcox.

Now, to complement other innovations such as interactive touch-screen video and CD-ROM, he has introduced a fascinating display on "Ladies, Wives and Women of the Regiment."

Research had established that, although 40 per cent of the visitors to the museum were females over the age of 50 or 60, there was not enough specifically aimed at women, said Roger.

"We felt that, while telling the story of the regiment, it was essential to bring in the social side: people had no idea that, in the past, women went off to war with their husbands," he pointed out.

That is why, on the middle floor of the museum's small, but well-packed, home in a converted 12th century church, the contrasting stories of Margaret Kerwin, Corinne Gardner, Thelma Curtis and Penny McIntosh are featured.

Wife of a private, Margaret Kerwin was one of six in the regiment who accompanied their spouses through the hardships of the Crimea, washing the soldiers' clothes, cooking and acting as nurses.

Corinne, a youthful member of

the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) at the time, was the model for a recruiting poster – featured in her exhibit – painted by a war artist in 1941 when the ATS was suffering from a serious shortage of volunteers.

Questions in the House of Commons about the promotion of a "glamour girl" image led to the posters being withdrawn. (She subsequently married a Green Howards officer and is now divorced).

The display on her fellow ATS member, Thelma Curtis – who joined up at the Richmond depot, later marrying Sgt Bill Curtis, one-time RSM of the Howards' 1st Battalion – is made up of personal memorabilia and photographs.

"We found lots of pictures in the archives of women wearing the Green Howards uniform: it makes the displays much more human," said Roger Chapman.

"People are television-educated these days. Our problem is to get the right balance between using technology and the more traditional methods of display."

Fourth member of the quartet is Penny McIntosh, wife of museum curator and regimental secretary Lt Col (Retd) Neil McIntosh.

Commissioned in 1957, he served for 30 years in locations from Belfast to Taunton and Oslo before "retiring on the Friday and starting in the museum on the Monday."

Penny's story, again replete with souvenirs and illustrations, depicts the life of an officer's wife over the years.

A tally of 24 houses around the world and five different schools for her children by the time they were ten years old effectively highlights the difficulties faced by Army families.

Elsewhere in the museum, which, said Roger, enjoys an excellent relationship with the local community, the Green Howards' "300 years of unbroken service to the British crown" are amply covered.

More than 3,000 medals and decorations – including 18 VCs and three George Crosses awarded to members of the regiment – vie for attention with examples of uniform and head-dresses of its Regular, militia and volunteer battalions.

On the ground floor, next to the portrait of Brig Tom Collins, who directed the formation and devel-

opment of the original museum from 1934, is a sign.

It reads something along the lines of: "This museum is a record of, and a tribute to, those many men and women who, over a period of 300 years, have maintained the high standard of service in peace and war expected of the Green Howards."

Now Corinne, Thelma and Penny can add their names to the roll of luminaries such as Mrs Leonard MacNally, née Frances L'Anson – the famous "Sweet Lass of Richmond Hill", captured for all time in one of the regimental marches – and Queen Alexandra, the regiment's first Colonel-in-Chief (in 1914), and first lady to be granted that distinction in the British Army.

Right: Presenting the regimental cup at the races: one of the less-demanding tasks of a CO's wife, as portrayed in Penny McIntosh's exhibit



Lt Col (Retd) Neil McIntosh, curator of the Green Howards Museum



Happy family: Sgt Dave Hamer AGC, the staff support assistant in 7 Signal Regiment, Krefeld, with his wife Kathryn and daughter Shannon after being presented with the NATO IFOR medal for his eight months' service with the regiment in former Yugoslavia

A change of CAST

EXIT the community administrative and supporting team, the backbone of HIVEs both in British Forces Germany and the United Kingdom, and until last month known as CAST.

Enter what will in future be called the HIVE Support Team.

And, taking centre stage as from January 28, a new logo for HIVE BFG itself, which has retained its original name.

The new image was launched in JHQ Rheindahlen by Maj Gen Christopher Drewry, GOC HQ

UKSC (G) and Lady Walker, a founding member of Detmold HIVE ten years ago and now president of HIVEs throughout Germany and the UK.

At the time *Soldier* went to press, the new logo – which will be seen outside all HIVEs throughout BFG – was a closely-guarded secret, but rumour has it that the bees have buzzed their last, to be replaced by a "smart honeycomb design."

Each HIVE Support Team is responsible for recruitment, admin-

istration, training and funding, resulting in the HIVEs offering a professional service.

And, as one supporter said: "despite the 'new look', the same welcome and help and advice will always be offered to visitors."

● More than DM 5,500 was raised by HIVEs in BFG taking part in "the world's greatest coffee morning." A cheque was presented to June Creighton, Health Promotion Officer for the Health Alliance, on behalf of the Cancer Relief Macmillan Fund.

Anyone for Russian?

MANCHESTER's City College is providing one-month resettlement courses for people leaving the Services and wanting to learn, or improve, their Russian in order to work with or live in the former Soviet Union.

Organised in conjunction with the college's partners Rusistika, the course is run by experienced Russian teachers at the University of St Petersburg.

Details from Cath Pick on 0161-957 8605.

Winter warmers

TWO philanthropic ladies from Dorchester have followed up their charitable gesture of a few years ago – when they sent parcels to soldiers during the Gulf War – by conjuring up some warm togs for British soldiers currently suffering the wet and miserable Balkans winter.

Joan Bamlet and Maureen Whale handed over hand-knitted mittens, scarves and balaclavas, made by themselves and other local women, to a Bovington-based Royal Armoured Corps unit for shipment to Bosnia.

Accepting the gift on behalf of his regiment was Sgt Chris Teesdale QDG, who was instrumental in getting the project underway.

Another consignment – bound for the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards – was presented by Joan and Maureen to Lt Col Silas Suchanek KRH, commanding officer of the Armoured Trials and Development Unit, and Cpl Chris Mills RDG, who is taking on a Bosnian tour.

People of merit

A DOUBLE presentation of Civilian Meritorious Certificates was made at the British Forces Health Complex Wegburg to local employees Sandra Nevin and Ian Steele by Health Alliance chief executive Bob Wilcox.



Gurkha garland

Wearing traditional colourful garlands, Maj **Silajit Gurung**, believed to be the longest-serving member of the Brigade of Gurkhas, is seen at his retirement ceremony – involving all of Queen's Gurkha Signals – before he was towed out of the Prince of Wales Barracks in Hong Kong.

Maj Gurung joined the brigade as a boy soldier at the age of 14 and was commissioned in 1986.

A decade later, it was the turn of Lt **Rajendramen Gurung** (inset), also of the Queen's Gurkha Signals, to be commissioned. Doing the honours at Lo Wu Ranges, Hong Kong, was Brig **Mervyn Lee**, Colonel of the Regiment.



Derek's the boy for toys

Cpl **Derek Blackburn**'s one-man effort in arranging for toys to be sent to Bosnia for distribution to local schools and kindergartens was responded to with a vengeance.

Based with 1 Armoured Field Ambulance Medical Centre at Gornji Vakuf, Derek wrote an appeal to a Scottish daily newspaper.

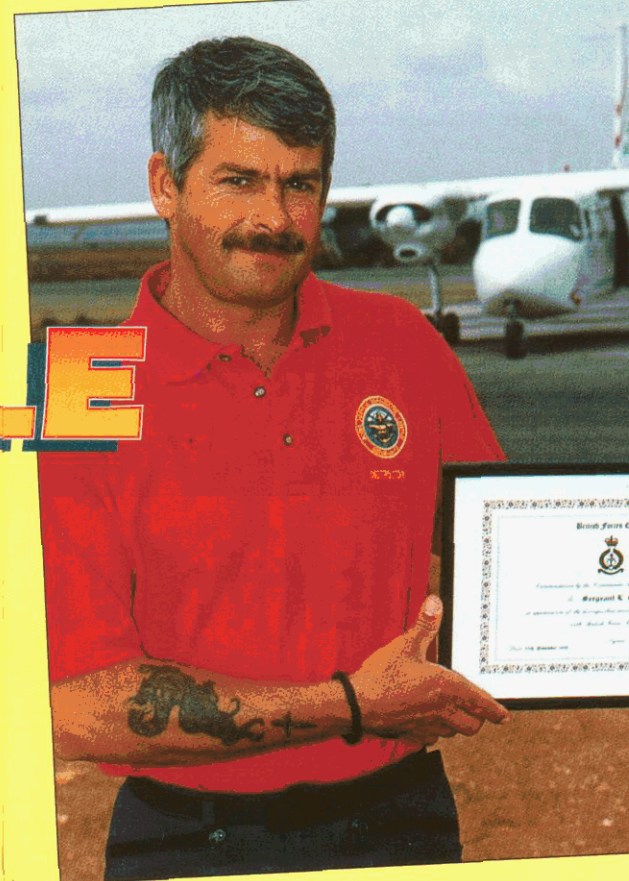
This resulted in his having to arrange for the collection of **three** articulated lorry-loads of toys, games and stationery, as well as the shipping of the lorries into the country.



For Westminster, read midlands

Taking over from Col **Mike Evans** (left) as Deputy Commander of 143 (West Midlands) Brigade is the **Duke of Westminster**.

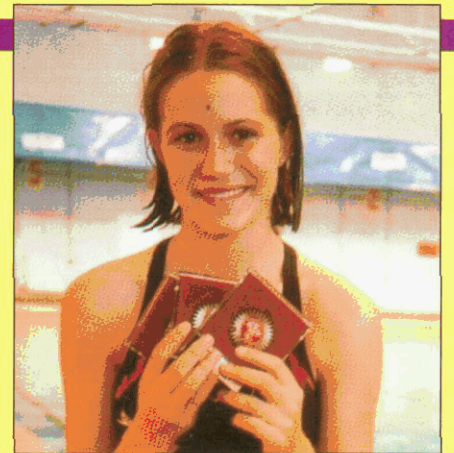
A colonel in the Territorial Army, the duke says he intends to play a full part in the Shrewsbury-based brigade's military activities.



CADETS CAN "DEEP END" ON GEMMA!

Star turn at the Army Cadet Force national swimming championships held at RAF St Athan, Cardiff, was 14-year-old **Gemma Eardley** of Dyfed ACF.

Not only did she make a clean sweep in the girls' races, winning her county colours in four different events, she went on to win her Welsh colours – for the fourth time!



PEOPLE

Courage recognised...

The bravery of four soldiers serving in Cyprus, London and Northern Ireland has been acknowledged. Sgt **Les Carroll**, 7 Parachute Regiment Royal Horse Artillery (main picture), displays the commendation from the Commander British Forces Cyprus, awarded to him after he had saved the life of a local parachutist by giving him first aid after an uncontrolled landing. Sgt Carroll was attached as an instructor to the Cyprus Joint Service Adventurous Training Centre.

Seen above with Gdsm **Kenneth Smith** (left) and Gdsm **Neal Harris**, both F Coy, Scots Guards, is the **Duke of Kent**, who presented them with certificates of commendation from the Royal Humane Society. They had rescued the passengers from a car which had crashed at high speed near St James's Palace in London, where they were on duty, and administered first aid.

Receiving a General Officer Commanding Commendation from Col **Andrew Meek**, Commandant Infantry Training

Centre Wales, was Pte **Stuart Adler**, 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Wales. When he and a colleague were involved in a serious road accident in Northern Ireland in 1995, Andrew – now based at ITC Wales – managed to release the more seriously-injured soldier seconds before the vehicle dropped over a parapet and exploded in a ball of flame.

INFANTRY TRAINING CENTRE WALES



Battery Pride

Holding the BP Trophy – the National Artillery Association's top prize – for the best air defence artillery battery in the 1996 competition is a delighted Maj **Richard Wilson**, Battery Commander of Newport-based 211 (South Wales) Battery.

He had good reason to be pleased: not only had the trophy "come home" to the battery after 11 years, but the battery also won the Taurus Trophy for aircraft recognition and was runner-up in the Shorts Trophy for Javelin missile firing.

All 12 air defence batteries participated in the competition, held over three weekends in the Nescliffe training area and nearby airfields.





Kids' stuff: Sgt Kelly Holmes has an increasingly important liaison role with school children

Back on track

SGT Kelly Holmes is taking the first tentative steps back to racing following the injury which turned her dreams of Olympic gold into a nightmare of pain and heart-break.

In her first competitive outing since Atlanta, a 10km road race at Hastings last month, she finished well ahead of the field in a new course record of 34min 54sec.

Sgt Kelly Holmes talks to Laurie Manton

Last summer, sporting enthusiasts around the world were moved by the courage of the Adjutant General's Corps sergeant who ignored a severe leg injury to battle her way into the finals of the 800 and 1,500 metres at the Games.

She sustained a stress fracture which was diagnosed only when she attended a pre-Olympic training camp in Tallahassee.

"I developed a bruise on my leg two days before flying out and thought I had banged it.

"Next day, I had my best training session ever and was in great shape, except for a slight discomfort in the leg.

"It was a major blow to my morale and confidence, and I couldn't train for the whole ten days leading up to the Olympics.

"I don't know how I got the injury. I didn't over-train because I had been ill for two weeks and pulled out of two races the Monday before because of a chest infection."

Some observers thought she was mad to even think about competing at Atlanta.

"When you have trained so long for something that you want so badly, the last thing you are going to do is pull out," she said.

"The Olympics only come round every four years. I got two World Championship medals the previous year and I was in the best form of my life. I believed I was good enough to win a medal.

"In the 800m I lost the bronze by just a tenth of a second. I was happy with my performance, because, tactically, it was one of the best races I have ever run, but it was obvious my sharpness had gone."

Kelly still cherished medal hopes for the 1,500m after finishing second in her heat and winning her semi-final. Following the 800m final she had been having pain-killing injections in her lower left leg to numb the pain.

"It was agony and I felt pretty low. From being confident of winning a gold medal to wondering if I would even make the start line was a horrible feeling. I was in tears."

Minutes before the 1,500m final, she was given an injection which numbed the nerves in her leg.

"I couldn't feel my foot. It felt like a slab of meat. It was hopeless," she said.

Kelly led from the gun, but had nothing left for the last 200m. She virtually walked across the line in 11th place before limping off the track on crutches and in tears.

It was a setback that left her heartbroken. She endured two months in plaster and was forced to stop running for the rest of the season.

In a gradual return to training this winter she began with a series of endurance runs, hill sprints and recovery work involving 15 successive 200m runs with 30-second rests between each.

When *Soldier* interviewed her last month, she was preparing for her comeback race at Hastings, which was to end in triumph. Her major ambition this year is to win the World Championships in Athens in August.

"I believe it will be one of my last chances to make a major breakthrough and I have always said I want to be the best in the world.

"I'd like to get away for a long period of warm-weather training so that I can escape the demands of being a well-known athlete. I have a carefully-prepared programme, with my first race in South Africa in April. I will be taking part in my first grand prix meeting in Rome on June 5 before starting my build-up for Athens."

Will she aim for both 800 and 1,500m at the World Championships?

"I might. It is quite difficult to choose because I haven't really got a favourite event. I have won more medals at 1500m, but my 800m times have always been very good, and I don't think I have reached my best at either distance.

"Whichever I choose, you can be sure that I will be giving it all I've got to try to secure the gold medal."



I want to stay in the Army and be the best

TWICE an English Schools athletics champion, Sgt Kelly Holmes joined the Army in 1988 and promptly gave up running to concentrate on her military career.

She had wanted to be a physical training instructor, but there were no vacancies so she ended up as a driver in the Women's Royal Army Corps.

In 1989, when the Army learned about her athletic prowess, she was persuaded to compete again and promptly won the Inter-Services 1,500m title.

But her heart wasn't really in it and she did little training in that and the next two seasons. There was no disguising her natural ability, however, and the not-very-fit Holmes captured the Army 200, 400 and 800m titles in 1991.

After completing a nine-month training course at the Army School of Physical Training in Aldershot, she passed out as a fully-fledged PTI.

Kelly earned her first Great Britain vest in 1992 and, in the same year, watched the 1992 Olympic Games on television. She vowed to take her sport seriously.

The following season she won the British 800m title and two international grand prix events and was selected for the

World Championships, where she reached the semi-final.

"It made me think that if I got to the World Championships on very limited training, what could I achieve if I trained seriously?" said Kelly.

Obviously inspired, she won the 1994 Commonwealth Games 1,500m title, became a double British champion, and took the 1,500m silver and 800m bronze medals in the 1995 World event at Gothenburg.

Last year started so well for her. She took the Army and Inter-Service cross-country championships and was British champion at 800m and 1,500m. Her selection for the Atlanta Olympics was a formality.

Her success quickly brought her recognition far beyond athletics. Appearances on top television programmes such as *A Question of Sport* and *They Think It's All Over* have confirmed her celebrity status.

Now a member of the Adjutant General's Corps, Sgt Holmes is a role model for Army sport. She is employed as a roving

ambassador, visiting schools, universities and civilian organisations to talk about her career in the Army and its effect on her life.

Kelly makes great efforts to get the message across to people that "we are just ordinary human beings doing a professional job.

"I talk to the kids in school whose perception of the Army is that it is all fighting and wars. I soon change that and tell them what jobs are available and what they can get out of an Army career."

'The Army has been very supportive to me over the past couple of years'

Kelly gets fan mail from all ages and walks of life. "Many want to join the Army or become a PTI," she said.

One woman wrote that before she saw Kelly at the Olympics she had had no energy and little time for her children. Kelly had inspired her to get out and find herself a job. She now had more time for the kids and was enjoying life.

Kelly recently took on a new challenge – to use her international experience to spur Army athletes to greater success, gain the

Army recognition within the Amateur Athletics Association and seek commercial sponsorship for the team.

"It's a brilliant sport and there is something in it for everyone, so we are trying to get more people actively involved," she said.

Mentally and physically, a top-class athlete cannot cope with the pressures of training and international competition without help.

"The Army has been very supportive to me over the past couple of years. Natural ability only goes so far. You have to work very, very hard at the level I am at now.

"I have worked very hard in the Army... but there have been critics. They don't see me out on the road in the snow, rain and chilling winds," she pointed out.

Kelly says she has no plans to leave the Army.

"I will be 27 at the start of the season, and reckon I have another four years left at the top. I like being in the Army and it has given me the self-respect and discipline needed to be a champion.

"This year I am determined to achieve my goal, to be the best runner in the world. I don't want to be an also-ran. I want to be the best."



Christopher Collins with an example of his work: an old brass drum from the Coldstream Guards which he was emblazoning for a presentation. Modern drums are usually made of wood and plastic, with tension rods instead of rope and rod

Beating the drum for the Army

TALavera, Corunna, Imphal and . . . the Falkland Islands.

For the best part of 30 years, heraldic artist Christopher Collins has been playing his part in ensuring that British Army battle honours – old and new – are given the importance they merit.

Not only that, but, far from being hidden away from the public gaze in an officers' or sergeants' mess, his "mini-masterpieces" are frequently on view to thousands of people.

Take the annual spectacles of Trooping the Colour or the Edinburgh Tattoo, for example.

As the bands march with characteristic precision across Horse Guards Parade or the Castle Esplanade, a closer inspection will reveal Christopher's handiwork.

"I have emblazoned the drums of every Regular regiment in the British Army," said the former Grenadier Guardsman, "and I believe I am the only remaining full-time specialist in this field."

A freelance, the bulk of his work is for

Report: Phil Wilcox

Aldershot military music instrument makers George Potter & Co.

"They send the shell of the drum to me, sprayed in the facing colour, then, for newly-formed regiments such as, for example, the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire, it is really down to me to design the heraldry, getting as much detail as possible onto the drum."

Using the Army List to obtain information on honours, and any of the large collection of books – ranging from *The Boer War to Balaclava* and *Head Dress Badges of the British Army* – which fill the shelves around him, he makes an appropriate design and submits it to the regiment for approval.

"Once agreed, that will be the 'bible' for the future, and those will be the colours," explained Christopher, whose own military background includes a father who was also in the Grenadier Guards, a brother and uncle who were in the 11th Hussars and

grandfathers who served throughout the First World War in the RASC and the Sussex Yeomanry.

The first stage for him after a design has been approved is to prepare a pounce – a pattern similar to that used for embroidery, pin-pricked with hundreds of holes, to act as a permanent guide – by placing tracing paper over the original design and chalking over the pattern.

"All the varnishing and assembly of the drums is done at Potters, but they leave the records to me. I have books and books of pounces (five drums for the Scots Guards, January 1930 and so on) dating back to the late 1920s.

"If anything were to happen to them, there are no other copies: when I die, I hope all my records will go to Potters or the National Army Museum."

Working in the converted garage of his suburban home, frequently for 15 hours a day, Christopher first paints the colours on the drums, followed by the arms, using oil paints containing a rapid drier.



All his own work: Drums always play an important role in Britain's most prestigious parade – the Trooping of the Colour

"You've got to be good at painting animals, because you would be surprised what an awful lot of them are used in the arms of British regiments," he said.

"My worst nightmare is amalgamations, with all the relevant battle honours to be included: if a regiment subsequently has a further amalgamation, I suppose battles will preclude heraldry. That is why I get most pleasure out of preparing drums for the Guards and Scottish regiments, who tend to have fewer battle honours, and therefore there is more room to be colourful!"

Next, gold or silver leaf is painstakingly applied ("If you make a mistake, you've got a problem") and after this has dried the final stage is the lettering.

"It is very, very labour-intensive," Christopher said, "but you get remarkably quick at it. Emblazoning a set of six drums for, say, the Coldstream Guards will take approximately 20 hours per drum. When I first started, it would take me forever."

He is scathing about the growing trend

of simply placing pre-prepared transfers on drums.

"Where is the skill in that? Nothing can compare to the satisfaction of painting designs on a drum from scratch, or, when a drum has seen better days, restoring it for somewhere like the PWRR's drum display at the Dover Museum, matching the colours which someone else prepared years ago. What will be on the market next – printed colours?"

Drums are something in which regiments and corps have a deep pride, said Mr Collins. They are used as an altar at drum-head services, for all to see their battle honours and distinctions.

When he has completed a drum – duly signed and dated – each is photographed and recorded in a book.

Commissions include orders for the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, the Royal Irish Regiment, the King's Own Scottish Borderers and the Royal Regiment of Wales.

Territorial Army and overseas military

units also make up a fair proportion of his customers. Recently, in one of his more complicated challenges, he had to paint the Swedish Royal Arms, with chains around them, and a list of battle honours and 20 mottoes – all in Swedish.

"Business is going very well, with the new band formations within the Army, and trophy drums for farewell presentations," he said.

"The five years which I spent with the Grenadiers shaped the rest of my life and gave me the discipline I need when I am working on my own."

Christopher Collins can afford a wry smile as he recalls how things have progressed since his first tentative order all those years ago – a single drum for a retired officer from the Royal West African Frontier Force.

"When I first started, I was adding Korea to the battle honours and thought that was it. Then came the Falklands and the latest addition – the Gulf. I wonder what will be added in the future."

Earn the honour

IS IT not about time a separate cap badge was issued for the Army Cadet Force?

We know that before we can wear certain cap badges we must earn the right. Yet some ACF adult instructors, NCOs and officers who have not even served in our Armed Forces are allowed, willy nilly, to wear cap badges of elite regiments and corps.

Locally we see "Parachute Regiment, Army Air Corps" worn; some even go so far as to wear wings.

It is really irritating after serving as a Regular to see these people with no service "elevated" to high ranks because they work in certain jobs. — **David G Marriott, Birkenhead, Wirral.**

Tiptoe through the litter

IN YOUR "50 Years Ago" column (Jan 6) you mentioned the fish-and-chip shop opened by the British Army in Trieste in 1947.

Early in 1945, anyone passing through Bruges and hearing *Tiptoe Through the Tulips* being played on the carillon in the Grand Square would have seen a mobile fish-and-chip shop.

There was no prohibition on eating from the paper and, sadly, the beautiful square was covered in discarded greasy newspapers.

We queued for half an hour before being served and they were fast running out of potatoes. — **George Lewis, Llanstadwell, Pembrokeshire.**

Lack of discipline 'appalling'

YOU reported on your "People" page (Dec 9) that a potential infantry recruit was given a second chance to take the ten-minute, one-and-a-half mile run which formed part of his physical test because of a "foolishly heavy" intake of lager the night before.

I am appalled that a young lad straight out of school and going for what amounts to a



Initials mean 'thanks, mate'

MEMBERS of the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars Yeomanry Comrades Association agree with the views expressed by WO2 Hurst (Dec 9) about Territorial decorations.

We have long thought it an anomaly that possession of the Territorial Decoration entitles you to the letters TD, while a similar privilege is denied to holders of the Territorial Medal.

Some years ago I wrote to Mrs Thatcher asking that in such cases ORs should be

granted the same rights as officers. The civil servant who replied on her behalf stated that officers were given this distinction because of the great responsibilities they had held, although in my view possession of a "decoration" rather than a "medal" already implied this.

His letter also gave the impression that, as members of my regiment had been awarded the North Africa Star, we should be content with this.

This was a mandarin's typical *non sequitur*: we were querying an award for long service rather than where that service was given. In view of Mr Major's aim of a classless society, perhaps we would receive more support from him.

Meanwhile I shall address those qualified as TD or TM. The latter, if queried, stands for "Thanks, mate". — **J I Frapwell TM (Hon Sec, Royal Gloucestershire Hussars Yeomanry Comrades Association), Chippenham, Wilts**

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

IN A back number of *Soldier* from 1982 I bought recently, an article about military pub signs caught my attention as they are an interest of mine.

The article mentioned the General Napier at Redhill but not the one in Brighton; the Bugle at Reading but not the Battle in the same town; and the Rifleman at Ewell.

Also missing were the VC pub names — the Victoria Cross at Parkstone in Poole, Dorset and those named after John Brunt at Paddock Wood, Kent and L Robinson RAF at Harrow Weald, Middlesex.

Most important, CSM Stan Hollis of 6 Green Howards, the only man to win a VC on D-Day, had a pub named after him in Middlesbrough, Yorks, but it was pulled down to make way for a motorway. Shame — you would think they would have routed the road round the pub. — **H Fieldhouse (ex 2/4 Royal Lincolnshire Regt and 7 Green Howards, 1942-46), Brighton.**



Left – The ascent team takes a break at 4,600 metres. Left to right, LCpl Malcolm Jones, team guide Roberto, Pte Chris Green and Cpl John Warburton. When the soldiers descended ten hours later, they sprinted across the rock field on which they are standing to avoid flying boulders from above

Below – A plume of smoke rises above Volcan Sangay

Face to face with The Frightener

THREE Army climbers braved a barrage of rocks and lava debris to reach the summit of one of the world's highest and most active volcanoes.

The soldiers, from Liverpool-based 156 (North West) Transport Regiment (Volunteers), stretched themselves to the limit in Ecuador to conquer the 17,160ft Volcan Sangay, which was erupting violently every five minutes.

Expedition leader Capt Noel Fessey told *Soldier* the peak had a fearsome reputation.

"Even its name hints at the danger. *Sangay* means 'The Frightener'. The climb fully tests the bottle of anyone who attempts it. All of us agreed it was the hardest thing we had ever done in our lives."

DEADLY SHOWER

In 1976, an Army lieutenant and freelance photographer were killed when a recce party for a proposed Army expedition on the mountain was showered with hot volcanic rocks. The climbers were knocked from their footholds on the snow and slid 1,500ft down the mountainside.

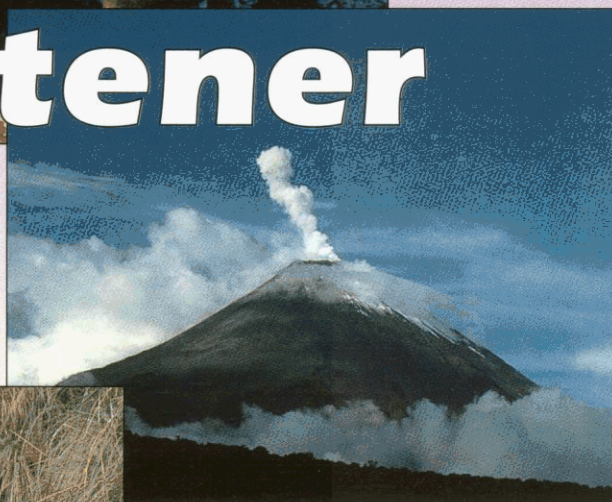
Maj Paul Cooke, 10 GR, who was one of four others injured, received the George Medal for keeping the survivors alive for five days until rescuers arrived.

The latest expedition faced similar dangers. Rocks from the unstable debris field were hurled down the slope at intervals, sometimes bouncing 8ft into the air.

Capt Fessey and his three comrades, Cpl John Warburton, LCpl Malcolm Jones and Pte John Lindon, were able to side-step the crashing debris until several dozen rocks came down at once.

"I couldn't avoid them all and could see I was going to be hit," said Capt Fessey. "I stepped to the right and turned sideways on, and it struck me a glancing blow on the

Below – Cpl John Warburton and Pte Chris Green negotiate the Rio Yanayacu system on day three of the trek in. It was exhausting work negotiating a morass of bogs



arm. If it had hit me in the chest, I would have been killed."

Pte Lindon was forced to retire from the summit attempt when he was caught in a landslide and fell 50ft.

Capt Malcolm Simpson, a qualified jungle warfare instructor who, with Pte Chris Green, looked after the expedition's base camp, likened conditions to climbing a two-kilometre high coal heap which continually gives way underfoot.

The soldiers had trekked for four days through jungle to reach their base camp

site. Large parts of the route had to be cleared by machete.

At times, the climbers followed ridges above the jungle canopy or struggled through vast bogs of cloying mud.

The summit party had to negotiate the three miles from base camp to the start of the climb at two o'clock in the morning to guarantee good conditions for the ascent.

They used head-mounted torches to light their way along 100ft high mud ridges only a foot wide in places.

The team spent 30 minutes on the summit, just 30 yards from the active crater, which was erupting so noisily that they had heard it three days' trek away.

Every five minutes or so it discharged clouds of gas and steam through a ten-metre wide hole. When the team left the summit, they descended at a run until they had cleared the debris field.

"It sounded like a jet flying overhead," said Capt Fessey, who has led other Army and commercial expeditions to South America.

"The whole mountain shook with the eruptions. I have to admit that, if I hadn't promised my commanding officer the expedition would succeed, I would have given up long before we reached the top..."



SSgt Benny Bennet and Sgt Chris Barnes take it in turns to act as recruiter during an interviewing tutorial

Training the Army's young ambassadors

MOVING HISTORY

The Army School of Recruiting (ASR) was originally established at Woolwich in 1961 to train the senior ranks who would man the ACIOs throughout the country.

National Service was about to end and at that time the Army was not perceived as a popular career for young people.

Recruiters, therefore, needed to be properly motivated and trained to achieve the aim of keeping the new all-Regular Army up to strength. Courses for others associated with recruiting, selection and liaison duties were gradually added to the school's prospectus.

In 1984, the establishment moved to Sutton Coldfield where it was collocated with the Army Personnel Selection Centre. The latter unit was disbanded in 1990, leaving ASR as the sole occupant of a very large barracks.

There it remained until 1993, when the ASR was transferred to Bovington, taking over the top two floors of the old Military Studies block at Stanley Barracks when the Junior Leaders Regiment RAC was disbanded.

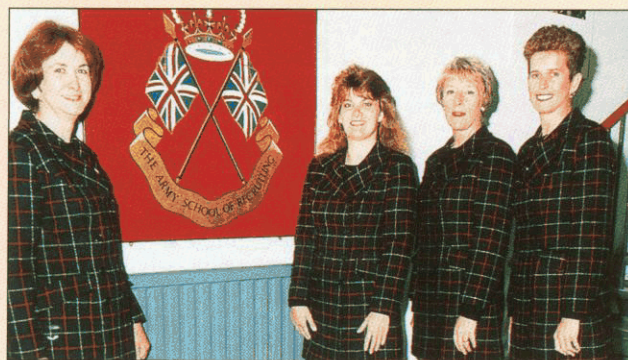
With a staff of 12 soldiers plus five civilians who give administrative support, the school trains 1,000 students a year from all ranks. About 300 become Regular recruiters or recruiting and liaison officers.

IF THE Army's recruiters had a pound for every time a potential soldier asked to join the King's Own Fusiliers, they would all be rich.

The fictitious regiment of the television drama series, *Soldier Soldier*, has certainly raised the profile of the Army as a prospective career. However, it still does not equal the achievements of those friendly ambassadors of recruiting – the soldiers who work in Army Careers Information Offices.

In the past, the Army's Regular recruiters were drawn from the ranks of long-serving senior NCOs in their last two years of service. No longer in the prime of fitness, despite their undoubted qualities and experience they did not necessarily present the ideal image for an organisation aiming to attract top-class young men and women.

Now the average Army recruiter is in his twenties.



Even the Orderly Room staff maintain the corporate image. Christine Comber, Susie Cannon, Jean Taylor and Karen Bragger show off their new uniforms

So who "recruits" – and trains – the recruiters themselves?

Since 1993 the Army School of Recruiting has occupied the top two floors of a block in Stanley Barracks, Bovington, where the aim is to teach these young ambassadors to make sure that what the Army offers in terms of a quality career is projected effectively.

"We take the hyped-up soldier fresh from operations in Bosnia or Northern Ireland and make him more user-friendly," said the school's commandant, Lt Col Martin Scrase, QLR.

"When soldiers arrive, they are still shouting down the telephone, as they do, answering calls with 'Sar'nt Mason. Saaah!'"

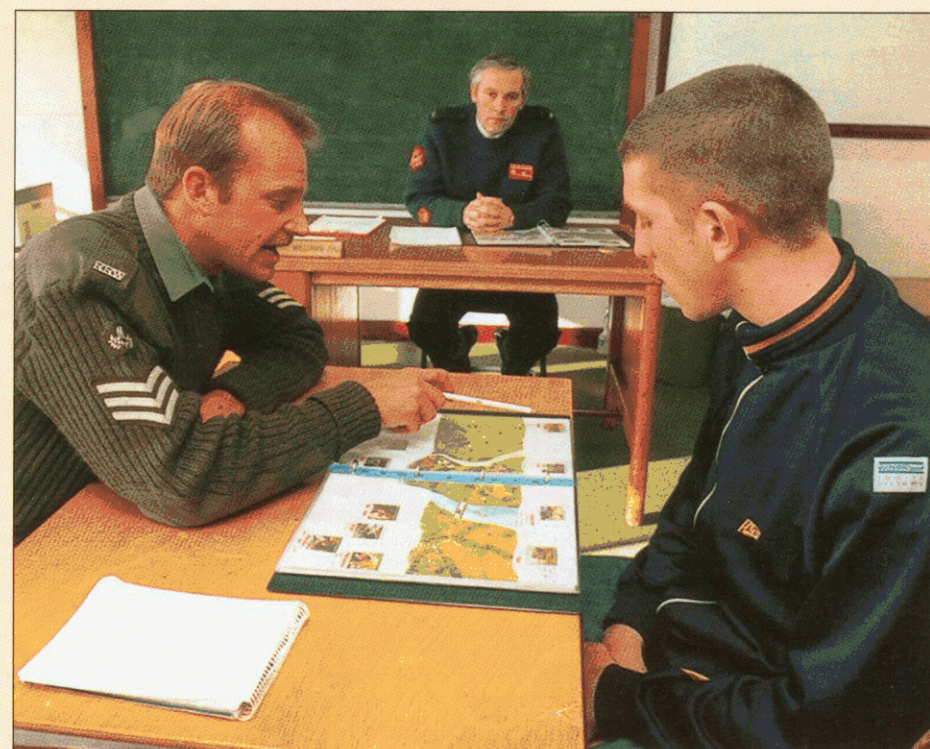
"We aim to make them warm, approachable and caring professional soldiers who will pick up a phone and say, for example, 'Hi! This is Sgt William Mason at the Preston Army Careers Information Office. How can I help you?'"

Today's "recruiting consultants" are the right age to relate to the youngsters they are talking to and are probably from similar backgrounds and environments. They are taught to counsel, test and process potential recruits.

"Half of our training year is taken up with half-a-dozen or more Regular recruiters' courses," said Col Scrase.



Above – Times past. The Commandant, Lt Col Martin Scrase, Maj Michael Whistler and WO1 Luigi Smith hold up an Edwardian enamelled recruiting sign. Note that the sign was recycled when George V acceded to the throne



Left – WO2 Rick Williams (centre) assesses Sgt Neil Presley who is practising his recruiting skills on Pte Jez Marland

1st Battalion, The Light Infantry and I'd like to thank you for letting me come in to talk to you today."

Successful students are offered National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in supervisory management and information technology, with the possibility of an NVQ in employment consultancy at a later date.

"ACIOs are not just recruiting offices," said Col Scrase. "There is so much more. The Army is part of our national heritage. In many cases, the offices are the only connection with the military that large urban areas have."

"So if a veteran loses his medals he goes in for assistance, as does a mother who hasn't heard lately from her son serving in Bosnia."

Things have obviously changed a lot since the Army School of Recruiting was first established at Connaught Barracks, Woolwich in 1961.

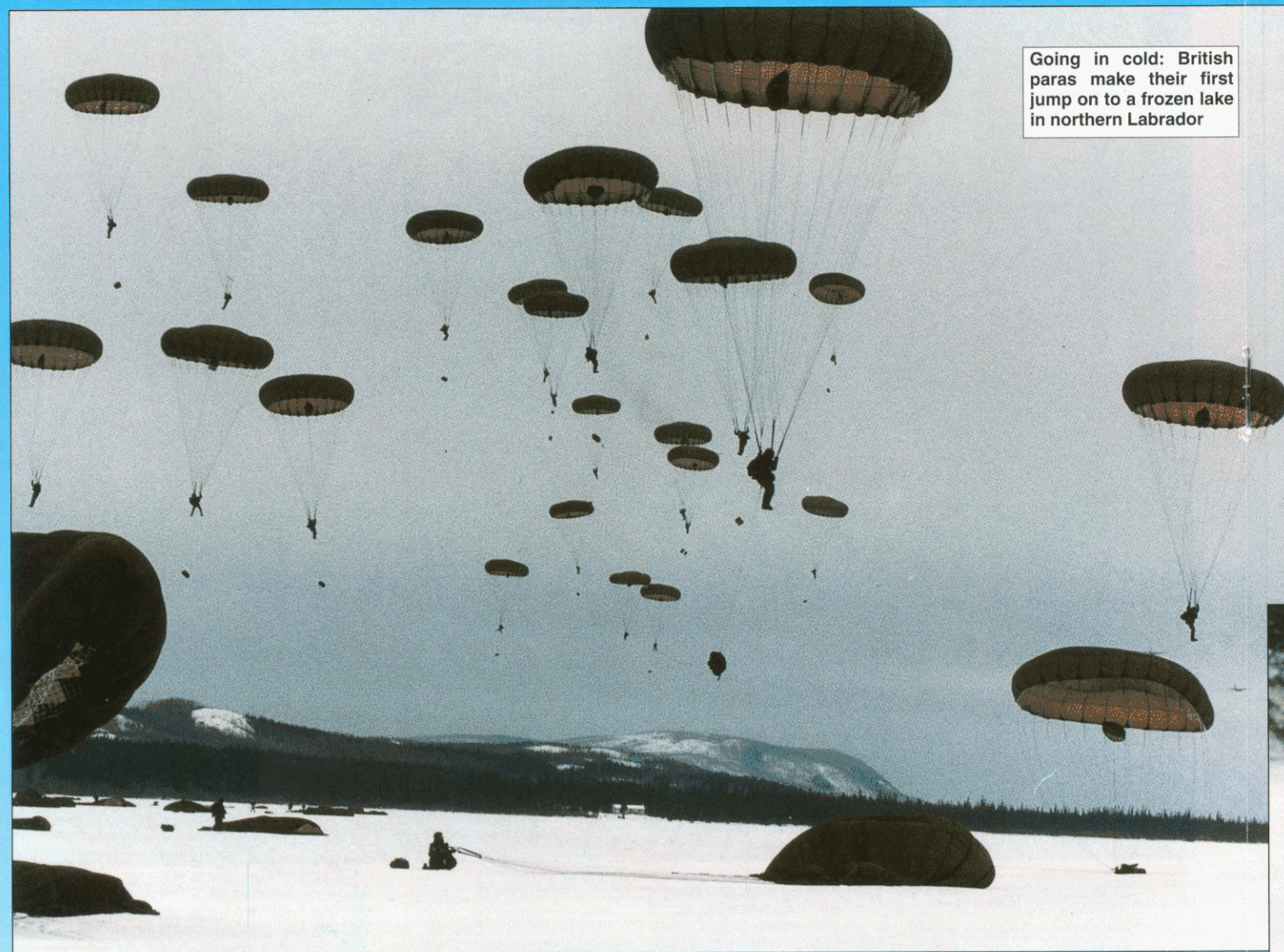
Fashions and hair styles were so different and wigs to disguise an off-duty soldier's cropped hair could be bought from the Naafi. Col Scrase, who himself enlisted that year, admits to having bought one himself – through an advertisement in *Soldier*.

"The first fortnight of the six-week course is spent at the Army Careers Information Office (ACIO) to which they will be posted in order to make themselves familiar with the environment in which they will be working."

It is hard work. Students progress through a series of training modules including interviewing skills, equal oppor-

tunities, ethnic awareness and information technology. They also have to learn about advertising, marketing and dealing with the media.

Public speaking is another skill to be learned. It is important to talk to a class of schoolchildren, for example, in the appropriate way – along the lines of "Hello. My name is Sgt William Edwards from the

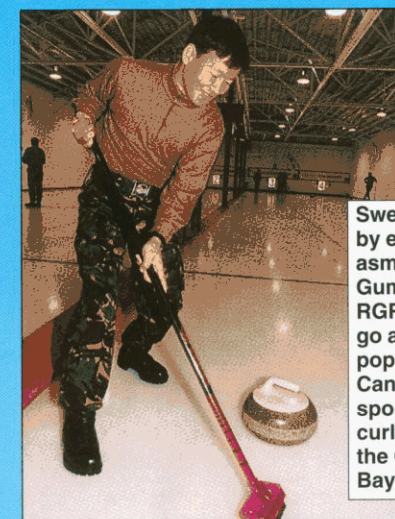


Going in cold: British paras make their first jump on to a frozen lake in northern Labrador



Above – Snow scene: An RAF crewman gets a first glimpse of the frozen environment as he prepares for the initial insertion on to Gosling Lake

Below – Fast track: soldiers on Exercise Frozen Griffin discovered that snowmobiles were an exciting way to cross the icy terrain of Goose Bay



Swept away by enthusiasm: LCpl Gum Pun, 1 RGR, has a go at the popular Canadian sport of curling on the Goose Bay rink



Instant fish fingers: From left to right, SSgt Richard Needham, WO Dave Rollins and Cpl Alan Hammond put their survival training to good use. Line freezes within seconds of being pulled from the water

Paras jump into the icy unknown

MOST people were still sleeping off their New Year celebrations when paratroopers from Britain's Joint Rapid Deployment Force were soaring towards the icy wastes of Northern Canada on Exercise Frozen Griffin, the first time the Army had jumped in the Arctic region of Goose Bay.

Led by Aldershot-based 216 Parachute Signal Squadron, 130 airborne troops spent ten hours cramped inside a trio of Hercules aircraft flying 2,500 miles across the North Atlantic before parachuting straight on to a vast frozen lake.

As well as being one of the first major JRDF exercises, Frozen Griffin was also the first time British Army units had parachuted this far north, where January temperatures routinely plummet to a breathtaking minus 70C.

Even though the troops were all highly experienced, drawn from units including 216 Para Sig Sqn, 23 Para Field Ambulance RAMC, the 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Regiment, 5 Airborne Logistic Battalion, the 4th and 10th Battalions of The Parachute Regiment, and the Royal Marines, none had dropped before in Arctic conditions.



Sgt Andy Scott contends with temperatures of minus 35 C on Gosling Lake in northern Labrador. Behind him is Sgt Steve Jones

Maj Olly Halstead, OC 216 Sqn, said: "The RAF carry out this exercise to help train their flight crews in Arctic flying. We were offered the chance to be the lead unit on the exercise and thought it would be a

superb opportunity to train in Arctic conditions, something we have never done before.

"The main part of the exercise for us was the strategic insertion on to Gosling Lake. We dropped from 800ft on to the surface of the lake, which was covered in 3ft-deep ice.

"Before we left, there was some apprehension about what to expect from the conditions. No one had done this before, so overcoming that factor was more of a challenge and ultimately more satisfying than the actual jump."

In fact, the area around the jump zone at RAF Goose Bay was undergoing positively warm conditions for the time of the year... even in the 120-knot slipstream of the Hercules the temperature only got down to minus 50, with the ground temperature a balmy minus 23.

SSgt Karl Weaver of 216 Sqn said: "We were kitted out in all the gear because we expected it to be so cold, but to be honest, once we jumped we didn't really notice it. I think that was down to all the adrenalin flowing.

"It was a relief to get out of the plane. We

**Report: Jason Impey
Pictures: Chris Fletcher**

had been on board for a long time and the last two hours had been at low level, which is like being on a giant roller-coaster.

"We had been apprehensive of the cold – at really low temperatures even your eyeballs can freeze – and we just didn't know what it was going to be like.

"It has been a good exercise. I think we all learned a lot, not just about parachuting in extreme cold, but survival techniques and skiing, which were a bonus."

Despite the unfamiliar conditions and the fact that the low-level parachutes used travel at 17ft a second, there was only one minor ankle injury during the entire exercise. A foot of snow helped to cushion the landings.

RSM Neil Turnbull of 216 Sqn added: "We were well covered up for the first jump, but found we were actually over-dressed. It was cold in the slipstream, but we were only in the air for 30 or 40 seconds. There were so many things to do in the air that I didn't feel the cold. Actually, it felt quite warm."

The RAF completed a series of parachute drops over the 300ft-deep lake before freezing rain forced the cancellation of the final few flights of the week-long exercise.

Maj Halstead said: "Even with the bad weather we carried out the strategic insert and 95 per cent of the para-trained troops did an Arctic descent. An additional bonus was that everyone experienced Arctic survival training and various forms of skiing.

"We practised procedures we just don't get the chance to carry out in temperate climates such as those in the United Kingdom. All in all, it was a great start to the year."

When the RAF were grounded there was plenty of adventurous training laid on for the soldiers. In addition to downhill and cross-country skiing, there was a chance for troops to try their hands at curling and to drive snowmobiles, as effective as motorbikes on skis.

LCpl Neil Allcock, a mechanic with 216, described the wait for the first jump as "a bit nerve-wracking". He said the view from the



Maj Olly Halstead, OC 216 (Para) Sig Sqn

air had been brilliant. "Last year we exercised in Cyprus, which was very hot, so this sort of counterbalanced things."

Canadian Rangers, experts in Arctic survival, put the troops through their paces, teaching them to fish for trout through holes in the ice and to build shelters from trees, snow and ice.

One of the harder fishing lessons was in how to reel in line which froze solid a few seconds after it was pulled from the water.

Troops were warned against over-dressing before becoming involved in physical activity. Even when temperatures were as low as minus 20 it was possible for individuals to suffer from heat exhaustion, hard to believe in a region where breathing too quickly through the nose can result in the nasal passages freezing together.

Maj Halstead summed up Frozen Griffin. "It went very well. It was carried out in a challenging environment and it taught all of us many lessons.

"We managed to get our parachute training done and a lot more besides. It has been a key part in our preparation for Exercise Pegasus Strike, which will be our major exercise later this year."

Proud to the end – members of the Hong Kong Military Service Corps on the march at their disbandment parade



Garrison says thanks – and farewell

TRIBUTE was paid to the Hong Kong Military Service Corps when the Garrison bade farewell to this unique part of the British Army at a formal disbandment parade at Stonecutters Island.

The parade of more than 270 Hong Kong Chinese soldiers from the corps was

inspected by the Governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten. Also attending were the Adjutant General, Gen Sir Michael Rose, and the Commander British Forces Hong Kong, Maj Gen Bryan Dutton.

Offering the corps the thanks of the whole community, Governor Patten said: "The many different regiments in the British Army that have passed through Hong Kong over the years know how much they have owed to your support, your professionalism and your friendship."

Commenting on the "outstanding" service which would not be forgotten, Mr Patten added: "You have helped to build and preserve the peace, dignity and decency of this city."

"You have set an example by your conduct, in which you and the community can take pride."

Earlier the Governor performed the traditional eye-dotting ceremony for the Lion

Dance Team's final performance, which began the proceedings.

As well as the Lion and Dragon Dance, the parade included motor-cycle display teams, men from Dragon Company, guard dog teams from the Defence Animal Support Unit and Royal Military Police.

The Governor's inspection of the troops was followed by a poignant moment as the HKMSC flag was lowered for the last time.

FLAG BLESSED

The flag was blessed by the senior chaplain, the Rev Christopher Cook, and the Ven Shiu Kun, of the Hong Kong Buddhist Association, before being paraded through the ranks and handed over into the safe keeping of the Hong Kong Soldiers' Association.

Stonecutters Island has been home to the HKMSC for the past 12 years. With origins dating back to the 1880s, the corps is believed to be the last locally-raised Regular force in the British Army.

After the first phase of redundancies last year the corps, once 1,400-strong, was reduced to about 500 officers and men. It will finally disband on March 31, with a few men serving right up until the transfer three months later.



Paul Blakemore at his great uncle's grave

PRIVATE Paul Blakemore has discovered a poignant link with his family's past – 11,500 miles from home, writes Dennis Cassidy.

The 28-year-old soldier knew nothing of his Great Uncle Ernest when he was posted to Hong Kong with the 1st Battalion The Staffordshire Regiment, now based at Stonecutters Island.

He stumbled on the grave of the former soldier – who died in a Japanese prison camp – while doing sentry duty at a war memorial in Sai Wan.

He phoned home to tell his grandmother, Mrs Daisy Palmer, that he has become the first member of the family to pay tribute at her brother's final resting place.

"It was amazing," said Pte Blakemore. "I had only heard about Uncle Ernest a couple of weeks earlier when I wrote home to tell my dad I'd been on a battlefield tour. He sent me a letter telling me my gran's brother had died out here at the end of the war and she was upset because none of the family had been able to pay their last respects."

"He said it would be marvellous if I could find the grave and perhaps send her a picture. I went round a couple of cemeteries in Hong Kong but could find no trace so I asked the other lads to keep an eye out for me as they moved around the islands."

"I had almost given up hope when we were asked to do sentry duty at a Canadian war memorial in Sai Wan and as we walked past the lines of headstones my mate, LCpl Graham Cox, suddenly shouted: 'Hey, Blakemore, I think I have found your uncle.'"

"It was a tremendous moment. I just wanted to jump for joy. Then I read the simple inscription '7623063 Private E N Blakemore, Royal Army Ordnance Corps 19th March 1945, age 25' and I was choked with emotion."

"Great Uncle Ernest was three years younger than me when he died after three years as a prisoner of the Japanese. I thought what a terrible waste of a young life and I knew how my gran must have felt losing a brother like that."

Back home in Pelsall, near Walsall, Staffs, 74-year-old Mrs Palmer said: "This

A sister's prayer is answered – 11,500 miles away

is the best present I could ever have. I was 18 when our Ernest went off to the war and I was very close to him. He spent his 22nd birthday on a troopship and was taken prisoner almost as soon as they landed."

"For years we just knew he was missing and had no idea whether he was alive or dead. Then we learned he was in a Japanese prison camp on Formosa."

"They eventually let him write home but each time it was just 28 words on a postcard. I remember his last one. It was after VE day and he said 'One down – one to go.' Just another few weeks, but he never lived to see VJ day. His liver gave out."

"The fact that he was buried, all alone, so far away from home made it even harder for all of us. I prayed that some member of the family would one day visit his grave, but with Hong Kong going back to the Chinese this year I thought this would never happen."

Maj Gen Bryan Dutton, Commander British Forces Hong Kong, had more good news for Mrs Palmer.

He said: "I have spoken to my successor, Gen Liu Zhenwu of the People's Liberation Army, and been assured that Ernest Blakemore's grave and those of other Commonwealth war dead will be looked after and respected after the handover on June 30."



Governor Chris Patten inspects the parade. Left – in an act symbolic of the disbandment of a proud corps, the HKMSC flag is lowered for the last time

Hong Kong hymn books are going for a song . . .

LOOKING for a chapel organ in perfect working order? How about an altar, or a couple of hundred hymn books?

All these items, and more, must go as part of the great Hong Kong Garrison Drawdown Sale.

Holy Trinity Church in the Prince of Wales Barracks (formerly HMS Tamar) will close down with the rest of the garrison, leaving chaplain Christopher Cooke with a problem of disposing of its contents.

"Ecclesiastical items are in abundance in the UK, after the various closures of garrisons," said the Rev Cooke, who is something of an expert, having closed down churches in Soltau, Munsterlager and Verden, Germany.

"As the Holy Trinity began its life as a Navy chapel, many of the artefacts have a naval connection."



Rev Christopher Cooke

Currently overlooking the busy roads of Central District are three stained-glass windows depicting

scenes of Tamar, while covering almost an entire wall of the church is a 20ft wrought-iron frieze of ships in high seas.

"Items such as these will be repatriated to Plymouth," he said, "whereas those of a general nature are being gifted to local churches in Hong Kong."

Unusually, the Holy Trinity Chapel is not consecrated. The Rev Cooke explained why. "It is quite difficult to de-consecrate a church," he said. "Therefore as Service life is quite transient, particularly with the various drawdowns, we don't as a rule consecrate military churches. Instead we hold a Service of Dedication."

Final plans for the hand-over of the church have not yet been decided but the Rev Cooke hopes to hold the last service, appropriately, on May 25 - Trinity Sunday.

50 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, February 1947

COALED SHOULDER

Miners passed a vote of no confidence in the appointment of Gen Sir Reade Godwin-Austen, the man who relieved Tobruk, to the chairmanship of the South-Western Division of the National Coal Board. When his troops broke through to the beleaguered North African garrison, Gen Godwin-Austen signalled Gen Auchinleck: "Tobruk is as relieved as I am."

25 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, February 1972

GURKHAS GUARD QUEEN

For the first time in their 157 years of service with the British Army, Gurkha soldiers are carrying out Public Duties in London. Men of the 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles, in the United Kingdom on an 18-month tour of duty, took over from the Grenadier Guards at Buckingham Palace, St James's Palace and the Tower of London.

DATES

APRIL

26: British Model Soldier Society annual show, New Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, Holborn, London.

JULY

15-27: Royal Tournament, Earls Court. Tickets on 0171 244-0244.

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

Lost and found . . .

A wedding ring, inscribed with a woman's name and date, has been found in a white glove at the former Harrogate Army Apprentice College. It is believed to belong to a soldier in the band at the college. If it is yours, contact Helen Petty, 13 St John's Grove, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG1 3AQ (tel 01423 522339).

Commando march

A MARCH from Achnacarry, war-time training ground of the commandos, to Roosendaal in the Netherlands is to be staged to mark the 55th anniversary of the Dutch Commando Corps. It will culminate in a reunion on March 22 at the Special Forces base at Roosendaal in North Brabant.

Participants, all former commandos, will cover the 745 miles from the Highlands to Holland at the rate of about 31 miles a day. The marchers, aged 25 to 65, will set out from Spean Bridge on February 26.

VW chooses BFBS

WHEN German car giant VW wanted a photograph to accompany the world-wide advertising launch of its new Passat model, the British Forces Broadcasting Service was given a boost.

The car radio had to be on for the interior "shoot" in a Düsseldorf studio, but the only signal that would penetrate the walls was . . . BFBS. Which is why "BFBS 1" appears on the radio LED display in VW's expensive new advertising package.

German soldier's tribute boosts Monty statue fund

SUPPORT for Portsmouth's plan to honour Fd Marshal Bernard Montgomery has come from an unexpected quarter - a serving German soldier.

Joachim Goritz, based at Hameln, learned in *Soldier* of the £40,000 appeal to put up a statue to the wartime leader.

He said he was a long-time admirer of the "best-known soldier" of the Second World War and sent a donation of 20 Deutschmarks, about £7.

In a letter he said: "I would like to make a small donation to this statue. It is not much, but this small amount is given from the heart for this great warrior in Africa."

"I revere this great soldier. I always put him on a par with our best soldier, Fd Marshal Erwin Rommel."

The city council plans to put up the larger-than-life statue in the grounds of the D-Day Museum at Southsea.

Monty, a one-time garrison commander in Portsmouth, helped plot the Normandy landings from Southwick House, just outside the city. Towards the end of the war he launched *Soldier* for his army in Europe.

A freeman of the city and President of Portsmouth Football Club, he died in 1975.

As part of the appeal a separate statue of a typical campaign soldier is also planned as a tribute to wartime veterans.

So far about £16,000 has been raised. Cheques should be sent to the Monty Statue Appeal, c/o Col Bill Stevens, Portsmouth City Council, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth PO1 2AL.

Everest charity run is height of achievement

ENTRIES close on March 31 for one of the world's toughest - certainly the highest - marathon.

The sixth Everest event, due to take place in November, starts in Kathmandu with a trekking holiday so that competitors can become acclimatised. The actual race is mostly downhill (although there are some vicious uphill sections), starting near Everest Base Camp at 17,000ft (5,184m) and ending at Namche Bazaar, nearly 6,000ft further down the mountain.

Lack of oxygen at altitude and extreme cold are two problems not normally confronted by marathon runners.

Held every two years since 1987, the Everest race is a charity

event which supports health and education projects in rural Nepal. The five previous races, which attracted military runners, raised more than £150,000.

A group will be leaving London on November 3 and returning on the last day of the month. Cost, including flight, is £1,825. For those arranging their own flights, the cost is £1,350.

Entries are limited to 65 places and competitors should have some experience of off-road running and long-distance racing.

Details and entry forms from race director Diana Penny Sherpani, Bufo Ventures Ltd, 3 Elim Grove, Windermere LA23 2JN (tel/fax 01539 445445).

Craigiehall has place in history

AN illustrated booklet called *Craigiehall - The story of a fine Scots Country House* has been produced "in-house" by Army Headquarters, Scotland, which is located in the 300-year-old residence.

Copies of the publication, available for a donation of £5, can be obtained by writing to The Camp Commandant, Army HQ, Craigiehall, Edinburgh EH30 9TN. All proceeds will be given to the Army Benevolent Fund in Scotland.

The booklet, written by Maj Colin Innes, late Black Watch, takes the story of Craigiehall from its creation by Sir William Bruce for the 2nd Earl, later 1st Marquess, of Annandale, between 1698 and 1699. In fact, the history of the place stretches back to the 12th century.

Infamous visitors include Rudolf Hess, who signed the surrender of German forces in Norway at Craigiehall in May 1945, and President Idi Amin of Uganda in 1970.

OMGC still on course

OLEN Military Golf Club at Emblem in Belgium is alive and well . . . and keen to expand. Maj Henry Jones, the station commander, writes to reassure ex-members that OMGC is still a going concern within the confines of Olen Golf Club, now privately owned.

The new owners are keen to extend to an 18-hole course and are about to produce a prospectus. In the meantime, they want to trace founder members, indeed any former members, who might be able to provide historical background on the course.

Any information, text or photographs would be gratefully received by Maj Jones RLC c/o UK Mov and Liaison Staff (Low Countries), BFBO 21.

REUNIONS

APTC Association functions: **SW Branch** at Falfield, near Gloucester, Feb 7 (details: Bob Marshall, 01747 860207); **NW Branch** at Blackpool, March 14 (Jim Blackley, 0151 9285102); **Eastern Branch** on April 4 (Frank Turmel, 01473 785291); **NE (York) Branch**, May 16 (Rocky Holling, 01226 207046); **SE Branch**, Aldershot, May 31 (Steve Monk, 01252 834274).

5 Kings/2 T Force mini regional reunions planned in Feb, Mar and April; visit to Germany-Denmark, May. Annual meeting scheduled



Russian about: What's the connection between Russia's General Alexander Lebed and *Soldier*? The answer is TV journalist Vladimir Titov (right), who called on the magazine's offices in Aldershot during a visit to the Britain to study the media on a course organised by the BBC World Service. Vladimir, editor of the *Business Russia* television programme, was a parliamentary aide to the former Security Minister. While at *Soldier* he took the opportunity to look at Red Army pictures in our photo archive, guided by librarian Gerard Sutton.

SEARCHLINE

Memories of **National Servicemen** of all ranks sought for BBC Radio 2 documentary to be broadcast on April 8. Contact Sarah Newman on 0171-794 1247.

Ex-members of **7/9 Royal Scots (1939-41)** and **52nd (Lowland) Division Reconnaissance Regiment (1941-46)** sought. Also information on either regiment and anyone who recalls **Tpr Bernard Shilleto**, A Sqn medic. Contact Carl Shilleto, 17 Wheatlands Grove, Acomb, York YO2 5NQ.

RMP Association (Birmingham Central Branch) reunions held on first Saturday of every month at Birmingham United Servicemen's Club, Cough Street, 1230. Details from branch secretary David John

Holdsworth, 103 Eddish Road, Kitts Green, Birmingham B33 9RN (tel 0121 628 5388).

562 Bde Sp Sqn RLC (V) 50th anniversary reunion, May. Formerly titled 562 Sqn RCT (V), 562 Para Sqn RCT (V) and 562 Para Sqn RASC (V). Details: WO2 (SSM) T Ritchie, 562 Bde Sp Sqn RLC (V), TA Centre, Horn Lane, Acton, London W3 9HA (tel 0181-992 5601).

Bill Fleckney, 14 Buckland Path, Buckland, Portsmouth PO2 7DB wishes to contact **LCpl Roberts** from Miles Platting in Manchester area, who was at 20 PCT, Boyce Barracks, Crookham, Aldershot in June 1943.

Hereford Cadet Battalion will be

St George's School, Kowloon, Hong Kong China "handover" reunion for staff, colleagues and friends at National Army Museum, Chelsea, on July 26. Apply: Una Taylor, 6 Cricklebeck, Heelands, Milton Keynes MK13 7PY.

The **Canadian ATS Association** is holding an annual reunion in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada on September 12-14. Details from Marnie Chamberlain, 26 Dunraven Avenue, St Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2M 6A7. Please reply by March 1.

Campaign gets royal support

FRIENDS of War Memorials, the fast-growing organisation which started as a one-man crusade, has received a message of support from the Queen Mother.

The organisation, which aims to protect and preserve memorials, received the news in a letter from Clarence House.

Founder Ian Davidson told *Soldier* that the Queen Mother was "in sympathy" with the objects of FOWM and wished to be informed of developments.

Two other distinguished women, Countess Mountbatten of Burma and the sculptress Josefina de Vasconcellos, have become patrons. Winston Churchill MP is president.

Miss de Vasconcellos, 92, who is repairing her Heroes' Shrine at Aldershot, is also designing "the first and last peace memorial for the world". It will show four child victims of war, one at each point of a horizontal cross.

Meanwhile, under a new Memorial Watch scheme, anyone witnessing vandalism to a cenotaph should telephone Crimestoppers Anonymous on 0800 555 111.

celebrating 50 years of the Light Infantry in the county this summer. Anyone interested is asked to send sae to OC Hereford Cadet Battalion, Harold Street, Hereford HR1 2QX.

Ray Taylor is trying to contact members of **Intake 1956B, Army Apprentice School, Harrogate**, particularly plumbers and electricians of A Company, including Colin Thomas, Johnny Woods, Bob Brooks, Don Taylor and Pot Scott. Ring 01925 602039 (home), 01925 636519 (office).

Local historians researching liberation of **Maas river area** of south-east Holland, **Oct 1944-Feb 1945**, seek veterans from artillery units operating there, in particular **3rd, 8th, and 9th Army Groups RA**, several field and medium regiments, and a few heavy regiments RA. Diaries, accounts, experiences and photographs wanted. Replies to Hugo Levels, Ulensvaaren 47, 6286 GC Neer, Holland.

Notes, letters, photographs and experiences of British soldiers who fought or were stationed in **Lemförde, Lower Saxony** between April 1945 and July 1948 are sought for an archive being created in the town. Replies to Samtgemeinde, Altes Amt Lemförde, zH Herrn Mastnak, Bahnhofstr 10a, 49442 Lemförde, Germany.

Staggering! It's cash in the can for Split loggies

WHEN SSgt Steve Williams of 64 Petroleum Squadron, 6 Supply Regiment RLC came up with the idea of shifting jerricans to raise money for Great Ormond Street Hospital, his fellow soldiers cannot have had any idea what they were letting themselves in for.

Based at the Army petroleum depot at Split, Croatia, Steve worked out a plan to see how many cans could be carried over a 50-metre course by a team of six people, working in pairs, over 24 hours.

The end result was staggering (in more senses than one!).

SSgt Williams, LCpl Kev Beal and Ptes Johnathan Bingham, Phil Hunt, Christine Jay and Darren Smith took it in turns to move 7,239 jerricans. Total weight carried was 318,516 kg and a distance of 230 km was covered in the process.

Each pair carried for ten minutes and rested for 20 throughout the first 15 hours. These times were changed to 20 minutes' carry and 40 minutes' rest

when it was found to be taking longer to get the soldiers' stiffening muscles going again after each break.

Commercial sponsorship and a "guess the number moved" competition raised £1,763 for the hospital.



Ptes Phil Hunt and Darren Smith, LCpl Kevin Beal, SSgt Steve Williams and Ptes Christine Jay and Johnathan Bingham rest their feet after lifting more than 144 tons of jerricans in 24-hours

Detainees take busman's holiday to help children

DETAINEES and staff at the Military Corrective Training Centre in Colchester pooled their energies to raise about £3,700 in one of a number of Army events for the BBC Children in Need appeal.

More than 2,000 km were covered in a sponsored cycle and row in the gymnasium which realised £1,043.

The remainder was achieved by enthusiastic detainees pulling an open-top double decker bus round the married quarters estate and an associated car boot sale and prize draw.

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The same charity benefited when 20 members of the 2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment took part in a 24-hour sponsored run, cycle and row at Lisanelly Barracks, Omagh.

Egged on by PT instructor, Sgt Russ Reid, the soldiers covered more than 1,100 km using running, cycling and rowing machines in the unit gymnasium.

They raised more than £1,000 for Children in Need.

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Shrewsbury-based 143



SSgt Andy Paterson and Sgt Paul Chesters from 39 Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron handed over almost £1,800 towards the creation of a "multi-

sensory" room at a home for young adults with severe mental disabilities at Lisburn. The money raised by the brigade, in an "It's a Knockout" competition

involving brigade units, the RUC and the Prison Service, helped purchase fibre-optic lighting, super-soft furnishings and scented oil-burners.

(West Midlands) Brigade totted-up £805 for the Army Benevolent Fund at a reception in Birmingham.

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Thirty-one officer cadets from 4 Platoon, Ypres Company of the Royal Military

Academy, Sandhurst pulled a 105mm pack howitzer around Battersea Park to make the Royal British Legion's Earl Haig Fund £3,423 better off.

In a separate effort, 6 Platoon of the same company collected £2,000 for Children in

Need after running 106 miles along the South Downs Way from Beachy Head to Winchester - carrying Pudsey Bear.

□ □ □

Two Army signallers who took part in the European Ironman triathlon champi-

onships raised more than £1,000 towards a special wheelchair for Cheryl Mullin-Ingham, the daughter of WO2 (RQMS) Bob Ingham.

SSgt Andy Baird (39 Sig Regt) and WO1 (RSM) Mick Boyle (38 Sig Regt) completed a four-kilometre swim, cycled 180 km and ran a full marathon in 12 and 14 hours respectively.

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Military and civilian staff at the Ballykinler Army Camp "walked away" with £3,000 from a sponsored "yomp" in County Down and promptly donated it to Children in Need.

The intrepid marchers collected more than £600 of the final total in donations from passing motorists.

□ □ □

Eighteen Cornish TA Light Infantrymen constructed a 200m section of pathway on a nature trail in the Scilly Islands.

The community assistance project by 6 (Somerset and Cornwall) LI (V) involved clearing 80 tonnes of brambles and hedges.



Colleagues serving with Aldershot-based 22 Field Hospital rallied to the aid of Cpl Richard Nicholls, who suffered a major head injury when his motor

cycle hit a tree. Not expected to live, he defied the odds and survived, but still requires intensive physiotherapy and other treatment in order to

restore his independence. Friends and colleagues serving in Bosnia with IFOR raised more than £1,400 for Richard and his family.

CHEQUE-OUT

Music meant money for Aldershot Garrison when a "Last Night of the Proms" spectacular raised £3,000 for three charities. Here Garrison Sgt Major, WO1 Joe Fairbairn (front, centre) hands over cheques for £1,000 each to Nichola Green of Aldershot's Grange School and Don Fleet of The Royal British Legion. A third cheque for the same amount was presented to the Army Benevolent Fund earlier.



Cyclists from the Defence Medical Services Training Centre who pedalled from Plymouth to Keogh Barracks, Aldershot, raised £4,000 in sponsorships to defray expenses faced by Cpl

Michael Hayton and wife, Liesl, whose 18-month-old daughter faces a liver transplant. The amount included a generous donation from Carlton Television, producer of the popular

TV series, *Soldier Soldier*, which is filmed at the barracks. Another element is the cash raised at various fund-raising events held at the Trafalgar public house in Aldershot.

This would make as great a film as *Zulu*



A private soldier of the 2nd Battalion, Highland Light Infantry charges into action. One of the many detailed drawings of troops and their equipment by Douglas N Anderson which illustrate *The Frontier Ablaze*

SAS wife shoots from the lip . . .

IN *Biting the Bullet - Married to the SAS*, Jenny Simpson tells of the ups and downs of this particular breed of Army wife.

As she tells it the story is - or was when her husband was in the regiment - a constant mix of worry, happiness, sadness, quarrelling, loving, drinking and, among other things, becoming competent with a Browning automatic.

She describes how, at the regiment's suggestion, she and other wives were taught to use the 9mm gun on the regimental firing range.

The idea was to provide the women with training for self-protection, but the course collapsed when high authority heard about the scheme.

She suggests there was official concern that, because of

Biting the Bullet - Married to the SAS by Jenny Simpson. HarperCollins, hardback, £15.99.

the high percentage of marriages breaking down in the regiment, "one or two disgruntled wives might go home and shoot their husbands once they had learned how to handle a gun".

While this little story, like others in this book - such as the time she and her husband were banned from the sergeants' mess - attract attention, the sum total is a collection of mildly interesting anecdotes.

Referring to the spate of SAS books, she defends their publication on the grounds that the men "love and respect the regiment above all else". - JM

THERE are few authors who can describe military actions in such detail with so few and such imaginative words bringing distant scenes so vividly to life as Michael Barthorp.

The Frontier Ablaze: The North-West Frontier Rising 1897-98 is yet another example of the expertise of this retired officer and descendant of a long line of military ancestors, including one who served in this particular operation.

In addition to such a feast of words are 122 marvellous photographs and sketches, many from the author's own collection. Others are from military historians such as Maj A G Harfield and from regimental museums, many of which have not been previously published.

There are eight excellent

full-page coloured illustrations of Pathan warriors and British and Indian officers and soldiers by the respected military artist Douglas N Anderson.

In June 1897 the ambush of a British-officered column by Mada Khel Waziris marked the outbreak of the greatest Indian frontier war fought by the British Raj.

Encouraged by their mullahs (priests), nearly all the Pathan tribes, mustering some 50,000 warriors, rose as one across 200 miles of some of the worst campaigning country on earth. All were proud, independent and skilled mountain fighters, many armed with modern rifles, who, according to Gen Sir Andrew Skeen, were "probably the finest individual fighters in the East, really formidable enemies, to despise whom means real trouble".

WHY should a professional bodyguard be prepared to move into the path of an assassin's bullet or knife so saving the target victim from injury or death?

Author Richard O'Connor poses this question in *Bodyguards - The World of VIP Protection*, but fails to come up with a satisfactory answer.

He suggests a number of reasons why the human shield should position himself (or herself) between the VIP and the assassin, including patriotism, friendship and money, but it seems he couldn't get corroboration

from those at the sharp end of the protection business that these were major factors for taking the job.

Possibly fanaticism could be another reason for a bodyguard to risk death to guard a beloved leader. After all, many crazed assassins have achieved their mission by destroying themselves as well as their victim.

So why not meet like with like?

Whatever the motive for doing the job there are now many people around, including ex-soldiers, who can offer personal and property protection to those who can afford to pay for their services.

Stopping a bullet for duty, devotion and cash

The security of high-profile British figures, including members of the Royal Family, is a major daily operation and the author goes into some detail as to how this is achieved.

But he suggests that, when the future King of England allegedly tells a Spanish journalist: "If your name is on the bullet, there is nothing you can do about it," their job is not made any easier.

An ironic note about the illustrations. In back cover photographs VIPs' bodyguards have their eyes blacked out. So ineffective is this silly disguise that it is dispensed with in the same pictures inside. - JM

Bodyguards - The World of VIP Protection by Richard O'Connor. Cassell, £16.99.

The Frontier Ablaze: The North-West Frontier Rising 1897-98 by Michael Barthorp. Window & Greene, hardback, £35.

In the face of such a formidable foe the frontier fighting found out the best and worst of man and battalion as there could be no shrinking from responsibility in the face of the fanatical hordes of Pathan warriors urged on by their mullahs, in some cases overwhelming and annihilating small garrisons or cut-off groups.

Even larger forces had difficulty in surviving, such as the fort at Chakdra, where six British officers and 240 Indian soldiers held out against 14,000 Pathan tribesmen for nearly a week until relieved by a force from Malakand, which had also

been under siege. Barthorp rightly compares this epic defence to Rorke's Drift in 1879, where 11 VCs were awarded, whereas only two DSOs and seven Indian Orders of Merit (Indian soldiers were not eligible at that time for the VC) were awarded for Chakdra.

It is to be hoped that this book will make Chakdra more renowned; this epic would make as good a film as *Zulu*.

There are moving accounts of individual bravery, of which the most poignant was that of Lt Col Houghton, 36th Sikhs, at Shinkamar Pass when he went to the rescue of the remnants of two companies of 2 KOYLI with his adjutant and a few of his Sikhs who were soon killed, only Houghton and two KOYLI soldiers remaining.

He told them to fix bayonets, saying: "We'll shoot away the ammunition we've got and then show them how British soldiers die."

Houghton and one soldier were killed. The other got away to tell the tale of how one of the most outstanding and admired figures of the whole campaign had died in the very last action of the Pathan Revolt.

This is a story of derring-do, of survival against overwhelming odds, of hardship, fear, fatigue, killing marches on which men died from heat, cold and exhaustion as well as enemy action, and above all of great valour.

This is yet another excellent book from the Barthorp stable which will inspire both military and civilian readers. - PSN



Second lieutenant, 2nd Battalion, Oxfordshire Light Infantry. A drawing by Douglas N Anderson

War in the Atlantic and the Irish dimension

POLITICAL division of Ireland in 1922 gave rise to far-reaching consequences, none more so than in 1940-41 when Britain's fate and the validity of Eire's neutrality hung in the balance.

For *The Storm Passed By*, Trevor Allen has drawn on much previously unpublished material from Irish, British and German archives, resulting in an assessment which will be new to students of the period.

Although mainly concerned with the U-boat and aerial threat to Britain's (and Eire's) maritime lifeline, the author has not neglected the effects of the Battle of the Atlantic: the defence of Ulster, German air raids on the Province and Eire, Eire's role of neutrality, the IRA, and the German agents.

As Trevor Allen says: "Ireland's significance in the early days of the Battle of the Atlantic was assured once the Germans had, for tactical and logistic reasons, chosen to wage it in the North West Approaches. The North Chan-

The Storm Passed By: Ireland and the Battle of the Atlantic 1940-41 by Trevor Allen. Irish Academic Press, hardback, £17.50.

nel became the focal point for all the ocean-going traffic upon which Britain depended for survival". The war at sea was a recapitulation of the submarine menace of the First World War, with the added complication of the use of aircraft co-operating with U-boats and in mine-laying.

The book is a formidable chronicle of losses in terms of life and ships.

In January 1941 the Germans began to concentrate air raids on Britain's ports. If the people of Ulster had thought they were sufficiently far away from Luftwaffe bases to avoid damage, they were mistaken. Belfast suffered devastating attacks; nor did Dublin and Derry escape unscathed, although the Eire raids were probably the results of navigation error. The anti-aircraft defences of Ulster were barely

adequate and guns and equipment were chronically scarce. Resources of the 102nd Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, and 175 and 176 Anti-Aircraft Batteries were stretched to the limit.

Defence of Northern Ireland was at various times allocated to the 53rd (Welsh) and 61st Divisions, and in March 1941 the 5th Division was hurriedly dispatched to Larne to reinforce the Army presence.

This move caused some consternation in the south, it being seen as a reminder that the seizure of ports and naval bases vacated pre-war was an option that the British still retained.

Britain believed neutrality would favour Germany, but the converse was nearer the truth.

The Irish were in a cleft stick after the fall of France in 1940, faced with a dual threat of invasion. "In the north the British had formulated a plan to march south either to oppose a German landing or to forestall one." The second threat came from the Germans massed on the French coast.

But the Irish showed more sympathy to the British cause and by the end of the war all pretence of impartiality had vanished. Allied airmen who had crashed in Eire were taken to the border and quietly released. German airmen were interned without exception.

The problem posed by the IRA took on a new dimension, although in fact the IRA's contribution to the Nazi effort never amounted to anything.

The number of German agents who operated in Ireland remains obscure. The most colourful was Ernest Weber-Drohl, who had worked in Ireland in the 1920s as a circus strong man. Arriving in January 1940, apparently to deliver money to the IRA, he was under constant police surveillance for about a year, then arrested and interned.

Its wide coverage puts *The Storm Passed By* among the best books available about Eire and Northern Ireland in a vital 12-month period of the Second World War. - BJ

A 13-part postcard series on the new regiments and corps of the British Army of the 1990s

THE PRINCESS OF WALES'S ROYAL REGIMENT (QUEEN'S AND ROYAL HAMPSHIRE)

THE Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (Queen's and Royal Hampshire) came into being on September 9, 1992 on the amalgamation of The Queen's Regiment and The Royal Hampshire Regiment.

Many famous British Army titles live on in the new regiment through the PWRR's immediate predecessors. The Queen's Regiment, formed in 1966, embodies six former county regiments of the South East: The Queen's Royal Regiment, The Buffs, The East Surrey Regiment, The Royal Sussex Regiment, The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment and The Middlesex Regiment.

The Hampshire Regiment was formed in 1881 from the 37th (North Hampshire Regiment) and the 67th (South Hampshire Regiment), with the distinction "Royal" conferred in 1946.

PWRR soldiers wear the Tiger badge of the Royal Hampshire on the left sleeve. It was authorised by King George IV in 1826 when the 67th (South Hampshire Regiment) returned to England



after 21 years of active service in India. The badge explains the regimental nickname, "The Tigers".

Housed in Dover Castle, the regimental museum includes a chronological exhibition of the history of the 56

Victoria Crosses awarded to members of the forebear regiments.

The postcard illustrated above was reproduced from a watercolour painting by William R Younghusband. It depicts:

- Soldier: Combat dress.
- Parachutist of the 'Tigers' regimental freefall display team trailing the regimental flag.
- Drummer: Full dress.
- Background: Dover Castle.

For details of this and other postcards depicting regiments and corps of the British Army, send SAE to: Geoff White Ltd., 19, Rushmoor Lane, Backwell, Bristol, BS19 3JA.



Evacuation vessels

Q: What were the names of the two vessels which evacuated the 1st Kensingtons from Cherbourg on June 17, 1940? (C Harris, Dec 9).

A: Page 26 of John Sadler's book *The Fourth Service* (Robert Hale, 1994), an account of the Merchant Navy in the Second World War, may give Mr Harris the information he seeks.

Where would the Services have been without the MN? Yet even today those who served therein are refused membership of RBL branches.

The Defence Medal was withheld from those who served in the MN except where other service was proved.

The MN endured the longest battle, from September 3 1939 to September 2, 1945, losing 46.3

per cent of its officers and ratings in death by the enemy. This battle was of course the Battle of the Atlantic and other seas. Imagine how many would have died had the percentage applied to the RN, Army and RAF. — **M P Cocker, Lieut RNR (Retd), Cleveleys, Lancs.**

Military numbers

Q: Further to the correspondence on this subject, I enlisted in June 1946 and my Service Number was 14194092. On many occasions when asked for details this for some reason was referred to as a "dead man's number". I never found out why. Can anyone help me? — **W Stone, Ryde, Isle of Wight.**

TA Efficiency Medal

Q: CAN ANYONE explain the qualifications for the Efficiency Medal (Territorial)? I completed six years in the TA after enlisting in August, 1940.

Now I am told the qualification is voluntary, efficient and continuous service of 12 years; I have also been told that wartime service was reckonable at double rate.

Soldiers with wartime service should at least be on a par with those who have served with the Territorials in peacetime. — **F O'Toole (ex-Airborne soldier), Bexleyheath, Kent.**

Suez Medal

Q: Having been following with

interest the letters regarding the lack of a Suez Canal Zone medal, I read in the *News of the World* (Dec 15) that one veteran was issued with a General Service Medal with the clasp "Near East". Can someone shed light on this? — **K Gannon (ex-Cpl RE and Suez veteran), Shirley, Southampton.**

For the record . . .

Medics' VCs

FURTHER to the RAMC VCs correspondence, Ian S Hallows's book *Regiments and Corps of the British Army*, the RAMC is credited with 17.

They are: Rorke's Drift (1879), one; Majuba (1881), one; Burma (1889 and 1894), two; S African War (1899-1902), four; First World War, eight; Second World War, one.

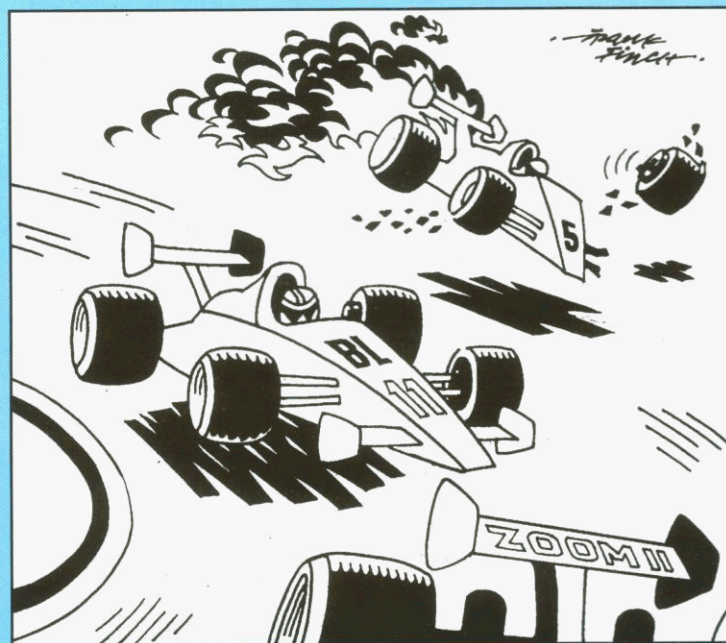
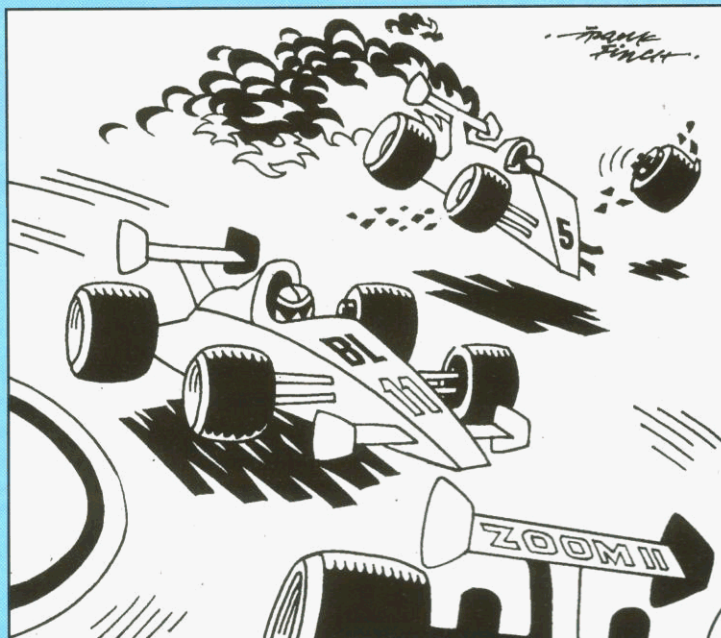
However the total is technically only 13 as the RAMC was not formed as such until 1898, from two units, the Medical Staff and Medical Staff Corps. Of the total are two VCs and Bar: extremely brave men have

served in this fine unit.

Also, the book lists the Royal Artillery as having 62 VCs; the Royal Engineers 46; the KRRC 20; The Rifle Brigade 24; South Wales Borderers 22; Lancashire Fusiliers 19; Royal Fusiliers 19. — **W T Astley, Oswestry, Shropshire.**

Rorke's Drift VC

I am sorry about my naming of the regiment at Rorke's Drift and the date error (Howard Johnson, Dec 9), but as Ned Kelly, the Australian bush ranger, said just before he was hanged in 1880: "Such is life". — **Edward Kelly, Dover, Kent.**



COMPETITION 654

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else in your envelope. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. The first correct entries drawn will be the winners. No correspondence of any kind can be entered into.

The names of the winner of the £50 first prize and two runners-up (awarded book prizes) will be announced in the March 17 issue.

Name : (Give initials and rank or title)

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Competition No 651 (Dec 9 issue): First correct entry drawn was from Mr K Davis, of Peterborough, Northants, who wins £50. Book prizes go to Mr Geoff C Riley, of Sefton, Lancs, and LCpl K Parker, of Reading, Berks. The ten differences were: footwear of far-left man; chin and sleeve of man third from left; tail of left-hand dog; right-hand torch smoke (top); drinking man's hair; rim of tankard on bench; point of lower lance in board; sleeping man's collar; pattern of right-hand shield on wall.



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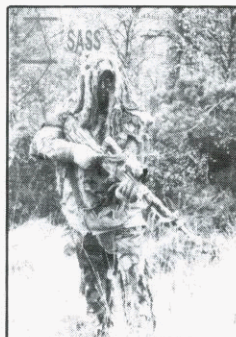
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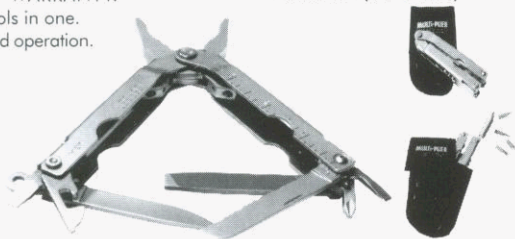
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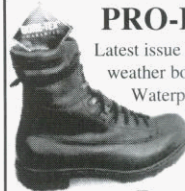


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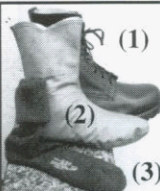
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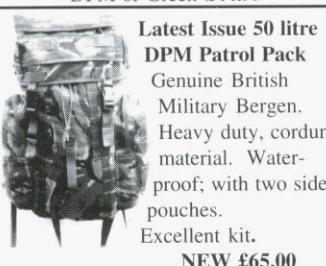
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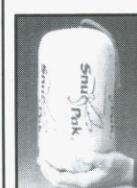
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Eight-way tie for fifth prize (21 goals, £125 each): Cpl S Dodworth, HCR, Windsor; Cpl AT Gill, 3 CS Regt RLC, Abingdon; LCpl PB Hughes, Scots DG, BFPO 38; Cpl SP Jennings, HQ Brunei Garrison, BFPO 11; WO2 L Kelly, 28UK) Signal Sqn, BFPO 35; Cpl CE Leek, 2 Signal Regt, York; Pte IJ Robertson, 9 Sup Regt RLC, Chippingham; WO1 WD Taylor, Royal School of Signals, Blandford.

DECEMBER 28, 1996

Four-way tie for first prize (22 goals, £1250 each): Cpl AJ Dolman, 1 SME Regt, Chatham; WO2 D Hetherington, 12 Sup Regt RLC, BFPO 44; Cpl S Voyse, 238 Signal Sqn, London; LCpl ME Whittan, RMA, Sandhurst.

14-way tie for fifth prize (21 goals, £71.43 each): Capt RC Brown, Engr Regt, BFPO 36; Capt AA Cameron, 3 Hldrs (V), Elgin; Sgt SSG Fenton, Gren Gds, BFPO 805; Sgt SJ Harvey, 2 RGJ, BFPO 806; Bdr I Hoggan, 16 Regt RA, Woolwich; Lt Col GA James, Bowman Mil Team, Blandford; LSgt J Lee, 1 SG, Windsor; Sgt J McInnes, AFCO, Edinburgh; LCpl DJ Morphy, 22 Engr Regt, Perham Down; Maj SW Norman, BDLS, Australia; LCpl NJ Prescott, 4 Regt AAC, Wattisham; LCpl SC Robinson, 36 Engr Regt, Maidstone; Col ARM Smith, HQ RLC TA, Grantham; Maj L Wood, 2 Signal Regt, York.

JANUARY 4, 1997

Four-way tie for first prize (20 goals, £1,250

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JANUARY 11, 1997

First prize (20 goals, £2,500 each): Cpl TR Dale, 1 King's Own Border, Catterick.

Nine-way tie for second prize (19 goals, £388.89 each): SSgt SR Baylis, 3 (UK) Div HQ & Signal Regt, Bulford; Cpl C Briggs, 3 CS Regt RLC, Abingdon; WO1 ST Farmer, 1 Regt AAC, BFPO 47; Sgt GV Fitchie, 1BW, Fort George; WO2 P Hart, Cyprus Logistic Unit, BFPO 57; WO2 JW Jaggs, 3 Bn REME, BFPO 22; Sgt RA Rich, 1 D and D, BFPO 22; Lt J Wilson, Royal School of Artillery, Larkhill; WO2 SM Wilson, 1 PWRR, Canterbury.

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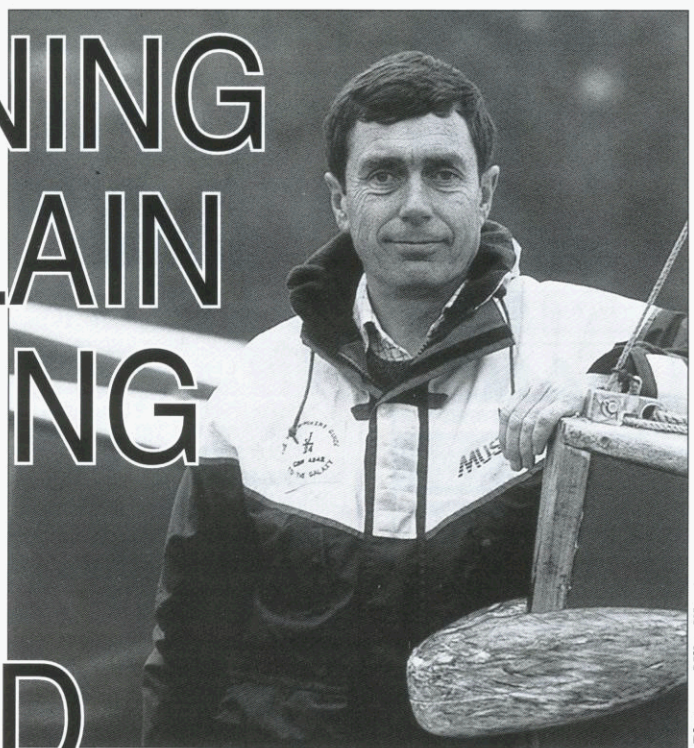
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WINNING IS PLAIN SAILING FOR DAVID



Picture: Mike Weston

Maj David Ellis, pictured at Hawley Lake in Surrey

IT COULD rightly be claimed that Maj David Ellis's much-garlanded Army sailing career got off to a flying start.

"I learned to sail in Singapore – courtesy of the Royal Air Force – on my first posting in the Army when I was 17," he told *Soldier*. "The RAF have been regretting it ever since!"

Latest of a lengthy list of water-based triumphs for David – OC Aldershot-based 251 Signals Squadron – were the Autumn Cup and Floral Cup in the J24 national championships during the past 12 months.

To other team successes over the years can be added UK solo achievements such as being Army dinghy sailing champion on several occasions, Army keelboat champion, single-handed champion for both the Army and Services in the Laser class and – in Germany – dinghy and single-handed champion.

"I'm lucky enough to have done everything from dinghy sailing to acting as mate on somewhat larger craft in the Caribbean and Mediterranean," said David.

The toughest part, he admitted, has been keeping his Army career going (he came up through the ranks) while trying to progress in sailing.

"It takes a lot of dedication if you want to do it, and sacrifices have to be made in many areas."

To compensate for that, the most satisfying aspect of competitive sailing is in

having a good team, working together in a reliable boat.

His two constant team members over the past year were Sgt Phil Hawkins RLC and fellow signaller Cpl Phil Lever, with others coming mainly from the Royal Signals.

Memorable escapades for David over the years – if one discounts the infamous occasion when he "misaid" a member of the crew (on shore) in Miami – include a regatta in France when the boat began to disintegrate

SPORTING PROFILE

when its main halyard broke.

Another involved an almost literally hair-raising event in the United States when he and the crew encountered torrential rain during a competition.

Using a common practice, they dropped anchor and sails and placed a metal spinaker pole over the side of the boat to act as a lightning conductor – only to have a huge blue static charge crackle below decks...

And what are the qualities required if someone wants to get into the Army sailing team?

"It needs someone who is prepared to go away and raise their standard by sailing against civilians – otherwise they will never get started," said Maj Ellis.

"Ideally, they also need to be a lot nearer 17 years old, rather than 27 – the age I was when I was sailing my Laser

every weekend for two years before I made my 'quantum leap' into competition – which was far too late."

He and his fellow crew members made an unsuccessful attempt at the trials for the Atlanta Olympics – finishing fifth out of 13 contenders for the single place allocated, a result of insufficient preparation time.

"We were very fortunate to receive backing from, among others, the Army Sailing Association, the Royal Signals and RLC Yacht Clubs, and the UKLF Trustees who gave us an interest-free loan," David Ellis said. "I am grateful to everyone who gave assistance."

Temporarily barred by his medical adviser from setting foot on any boat (he is on crutches after undergoing a scar tissue operation), he nonetheless has plans, apart from getting fully fit.

"I hope to take part in a French regatta at Easter, and then there are the world team championships in Argentina later in the year."

David, one of whose former passions is sports cars – but admits that, although he has owned an MGB of one sort or another since 1974, would rather drive his Granada these days – also has longer-term plans.

"I might just turn up for the next Olympic trials, in the Soling which I own, otherwise I'll sell it."

Anyone want to buy a lovingly preserved MGB V8, complete with its own boat? – PBW



Members of the ATR Pirbright motor-cycle club show off their bikes at Alexander Barracks. Pictured, fourth left, is the officer-in-charge of motor cycling, Maj Andy Welsh

PIRBRIGHT SPEED MERCHANTS HAVE LIFT-OFF

THE ATR Pirbright motor-cycle club, formed in the autumn, is going from strength to strength.

Three members took part in the club's first competition, an Enduro race at Longmoor, which involved riding motor cycles across a series of cross-country stages.

LSgt Dinger Bell, Sgt Jonah Jones and Bdr Adey Knotts earned themselves gold, silver

and bronze class medals, respectively, for their efforts after completing a gruelling 30km cross-country course against the clock, before riding in four special stages covering a total of 120km.

The club was formed after a group of motor-cycling enthusiasts at the Army Training Regiment decided to attend the British round of the World Super-bikes competition at

Donnington. Under Maj Andy Welsh the club offers a driver-training school, an off-road training wing and a competition team.

It has more than 20 members, backed by local business MOTAG Southern Ltd, whose director, Graham Kershaw, trained seven soldiers to be instructors.

With two 125 cc motor cycles available, the driver

school offers training from the compulsory basic test to a full test. Its prices are considerably cheaper than comparable civilian schools.

Off-road training is co-ordinated by LSgt Bell and Sgt Jones.

A four-acre site was provided to make an off-road track for the riders. The club's motto, "Don't Bottle the Throttle", has proved difficult for a few riders who find getting airborne over some of the bumps does not come naturally.

Keith's in a hurry . . . but cyclists lose their way

IT HAS been a year of mixed fortunes for Army cyclists within the sport's various disciplines, but one rider, LCpl Keith Murray, almost single-handedly re-wrote most of the Inter-Service time-trialling record books.

In addition to winning the hill climb and best all-rounder titles, Murray won the ten, 25 and 50-mile time trial championships and set new records at 25 and 50 miles and 12 hours.

He also set a new Army and Inter-Service record average speed, 25.952 mph, over the 50-mile, 100-mile and 12-hour distances and was a member of the winning Army team that broke the Inter-Service 25-mile team record.

Also performing well has been WO2 Chris Biggs, who qualified for a certificate in the British Best All-Rounder competition with a creditable 1hr 56min 19sec in the 50-mile time trial, as well as recording a fast 21min 25sec over ten miles.

The Army Cycle Racing Team (ACRT) had a disappointing season.

Despite the Army having an abundance of talented riders, the problem, as always, was one of availability, of resolving unit commitments against

individual needs to train, rest and race. Only one win was recorded by the ACRT, made up of the best eight road racers, from which a racing team of three to six riders is selected for specific events.

Team manager Maj Mike Dunford said his riders realised that they could not compete on the national stage unless they were virtually in full-time training throughout the year.

Last season saw the impact of open class racing in the UK, with the distinction between professional and amateur riders no longer recognised within the sport. As a result, standards rose significantly.

"The team did not really gel together and there was disappointment when it could not compete in early season stage races. The riders became disenchanted by the standards required to compete successfully in open class racing," said Maj Dunford.

There have also been changes in cyclo-cross, with the British Cyclo-Cross Association asking event organisers to produce flatter, faster, more rideable courses to enable riders to compete on a more equal basis against their continental counterparts.

Trio in the frame for '98 Olympics

THREE soldiers were part of a Great Britain biathlon team which put in a great effort at the fourth World Cup meeting at Oberhof, Germany to keep them on course for 1998 Winter Olympics.

"Our aim this season is to qualify at least two athletes and a relay team for the Olympics and to improve on last year's ranking in the Nations Cup competition," said team manager Lt Tim David (RM).

With Cpl Jason Sklenar (35 Engr Regt) already holding an Olympic qualifying result, it was left to his regimental team mate, Olympic veteran Sgt Michael Dixon, to pull out all the stops in the 10km sprint race and finish 31st in a world-class field of 103 skiers from 25 countries.

He left eight previous Olympic medal winners in his wake and, despite one penalty loop, his time was only 6.8 per cent behind the top three racers. It was good enough to qualify him for next year's Games.

"Dixon has already taken part in four Olympics, and this



Sgt Michael Dixon and Jason Sklenar (on bonnet) with their British biathlon team mates

fifth appearance will be a British record in the sport which will be hard to beat," said Lt David.

The top 60 finishers in the 10km sprint qualified for a new event in biathlon, the 12.5km pursuit race with four shoots. Skiers start in the order in which they finished the sprint and with the same difference.

Dixon set off in 31st place in an even more illustrious field, kept his place on the first 2.5km leg and, with a clean shoot, looked set to improve on his position. But he had a bad fall off the track which broke his boot binding, damaged his rifle and left him dazed. He struggled on, finishing 52nd.

Sean is best of British

CPL Sean Olsson justified his selection as the GB number one racer in the two and four-man bobsleigh when he won both national titles at the British championships in Winterberg, Germany.

Partnered by Jason Wing in the two-man event, the flying Para beat off a strong challenge from the runners-up, Cpl Graham Richardson (RAF) and Cpl Dean Ward (2 Para).

Olsson won again in the four-man event, this time partnered by Ward and two civilians.

Two Army teams took silver and bronze in the women's race. SSgt Sandra Robson and 2nd Lt Gillian Tilson (both 2 GS Regt) were second fastest, with 2nd Lt Leigh Roberts (1 GS Regt) and 2nd Lt Claire Thrower (10 Regt RLC) less than two seconds behind.

Olsson and his team mates are entered for the European and World championships at St Moritz.

He has competed in the last two Olympics, finishing eighth two years ago in Lillehammer, and is currently ranked fifth in the world.

The British skeleton championships at La Plagne, France saw the pre-race favourite Sgt



Cpl Sean Olsson and Jason Wing start their winning run in the British bobsleigh championships

Roch Rochester (40 Fd Regt RA) suffering from the aftermath of flu.

He was soundly beaten over two runs by Kristian Bromley of British Aerospace Defence.

There was better luck for the Army in the women's championships with Cpls Sarah Smith, Miranda Mortimer and Kerry Ross respectively filling the top three slots.

DELROY'S THE BOY

A FORMER British boxing champion reckons Territorial Army training will help put him back on top.

Welterweight Lonsdale Belt winner Delroy Bryan had dreamed of joining the Army since he began boxing at the age of 11.

Now he is looking for fresh glory at light heavyweight, and hopes service with The South Notts Hussars will help sharpen his attitude in the ring.

In his first "contest" in combats he proved he was still the best. After two weeks of gruelling exercises he was named top recruit at the Royal School of Artillery.

Capt Bob Privett said: "Gnr Bryan's a phenomenon. He

beat more than 40 of the country's best young TA recruits to win his award.

"His next job will be to lick our soldiers into shape once he has passed his physical training instructor exams."

Bryan (29) plans to fit his part-time soldiering around a rigorous professional boxing training regime.

He said: "I am very hungry for a national title at my new weight and I am ready to take on anyone to get it.

"To be the best you've got to be totally focused, disciplined



Former British welterweight champion Delroy Bryan mixes ring craft with military discipline

and confident and that is just what the Territorial Army teaches you to be. Every young person who wants to achieve something in life should think of joining up."

Delroy's duties with 307 (South Notts Hussars) Battery Royal Artillery will include learning how to fire the six giant 155mm howitzers

which give the unit its punch.

The TA sports star will also become an ambassador for the unit, working with schools and youth teams around the country.

Anyone for softball?

WO Tim Bennett (REME) is looking for volunteers to form a mixed Army softball team.

The sport is similar to baseball, although the ball is larger and pitched with an underhand delivery.

"There are thriving softball leagues in London and Bristol, with games throughout the summer," said WO2 Bennett. "Mixed teams usually consist of five men and five women, and hand-eye co-ordination, a sense of timing and speed of foot is much more important than sheer strength."

Details from WO2 (AQMS) T Bennett, TSG (DTS1.5), ATSA, Chobham Lane, Chertsey KT16 0EE. Telephone Chertsey Mil 5509.

IN BRIEF

Army backs cadet sport

THE Army is sponsoring Army Cadet Force sport for the first time as part of a determined effort to promote the development of sport.

Trustees of the Army Central Fund have made a grant of £30,000 to the ACF Sport Board. Spread over three years, it will be used to buy equipment and clothing, as well as helping to stage major annual ACF sporting events.

● A new sports pavilion at Shackleton Barracks in Ballykelly, Northern Ireland has been dedicated to the memory of Maj Chris Docherty PWO, who was killed in the Chinook helicopter crash on the Mull of Kintyre in 1994.

● Naafi sponsored the annual RAC Nordic ski championship at Hochfilzen, Austria for the sixth year in succession. A £3,000 donation helped fund the event which attracted more than 200 participants.

● Britain's two Olympic hopefuls, Sgt Keith Yendell (REME) and LCpl Andrew Harries (RE), finished a creditable 28th and 39th in the first World Cup luge event in Lillehammer, Norway.

● Southampton Football Club have signed former Army goalkeeper Maiki Taylor for £500,000. The German-born player left the Army last season and had been playing for Barnet.



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WHEN soldiers from 1st Battalion, The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters sent home an SOS on behalf of a school at Krupa in central Bosnia they found plenty of willing help.

Badly damaged in the fighting, the school was refurbished through British Government aid but needed to be re-equipped. Classroom furniture, including desks, blackboards and easels were collected by local firms and education authorities in the regiment's recruiting area and delivered to the school.

The operation was co-ordinated by Peter Hogben of the WFR Regimental Association.

Headmaster Duka Vukovic (centre, rear), said Bosnia-Link was a "tremendous gesture" for his 450 pupils, who are aged between seven and 15. With him and children of the school are Lt Stuart Glenn, Pte Darren Hogben and Maj Nigel Smith. More Caring Army stories - Pages 28-29



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