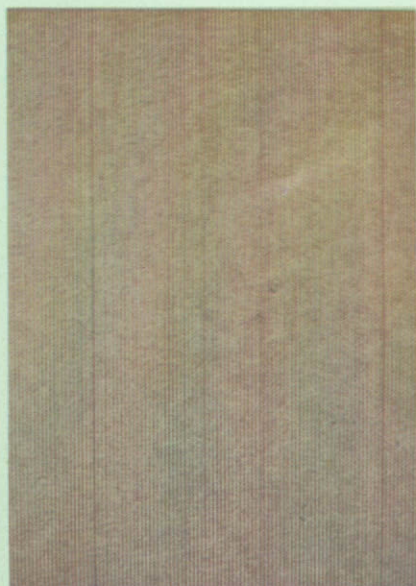


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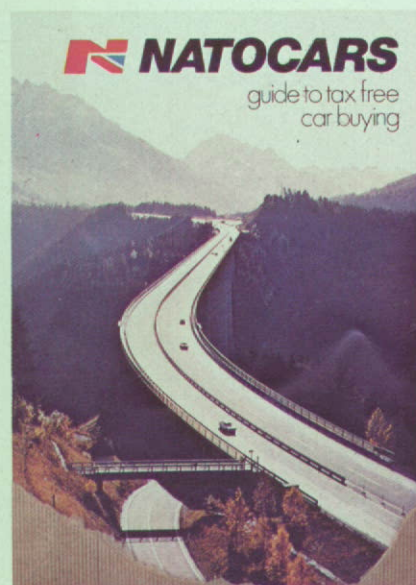




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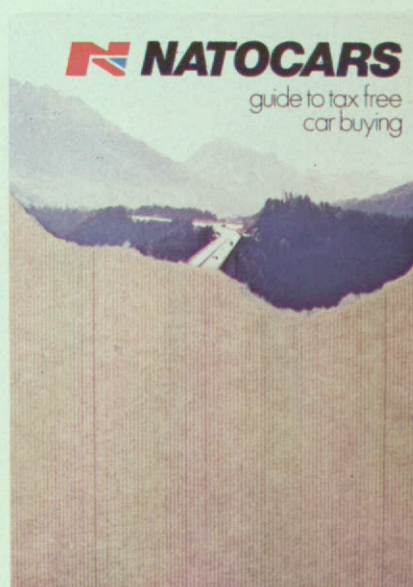
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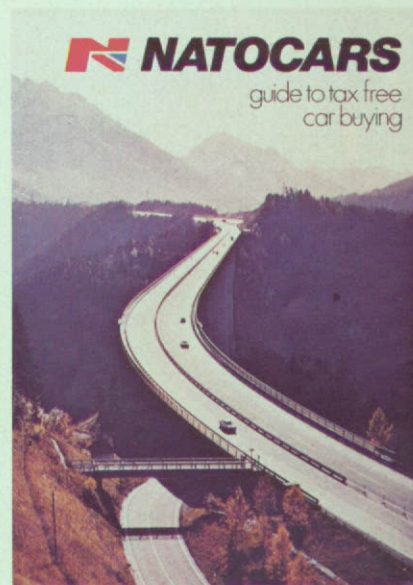
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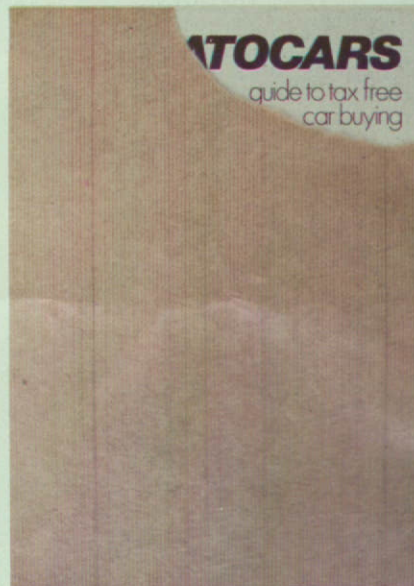
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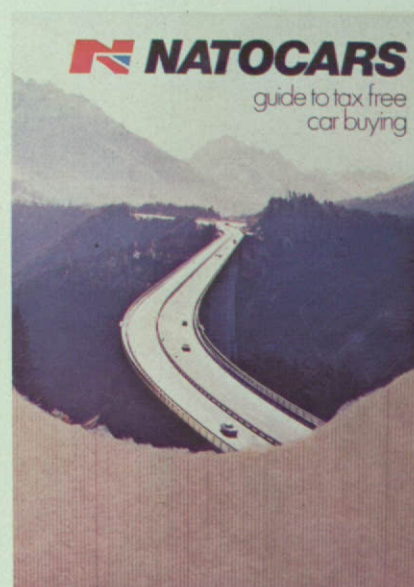
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CONTENTS

Volume 37 No. 1

FEATURE ARTICLES

- 6 King's Troop RHA
- 13 Bicester's backroom boys
- 21 Packing up the kitbag again
- 26 School for pipers
- 30 Soldiers on the sea
- 35 New home for Gloucester pride
- 39 Taking the lid off 'compo'
- 43 They also serve ...
- 47 Return to the Raj
- 53 One 'o' clock gun

FRONT COVER

Men of The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery, fire a 41-gun salute in Hyde Park to mark the visit of the King and Queen of Nepal. A feature on The Troop appears on page 6.
Picture by Doug Pratt.

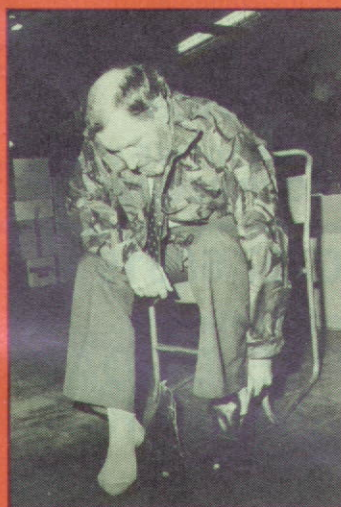


REGULAR FEATURES

- 11 SOLDIER-to-Soldier
- 17 How Observant Are You?
- 25 Humour
- 37 Military Museums: The Guards Depot
- 45 Record reviews
- 51 Book reviews
- 54 Letters
- 55 Reunions
- 55 Collectors' Corner
- 57 Prize competition

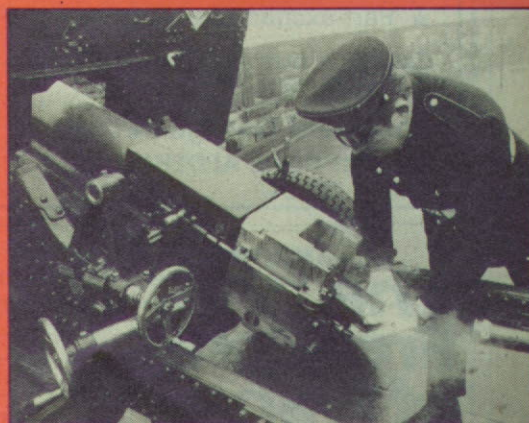
BACK COVER

A more mundane view of The King's Troop at work. Lance Bombardier Graham Butt mends a riding boot in the repair shop at St John's Wood.
Picture by Doug Pratt.



21 Yesterday's soldiers pack up their kitbags again.

53 SOLDIER meets the man who's never late for lunch.



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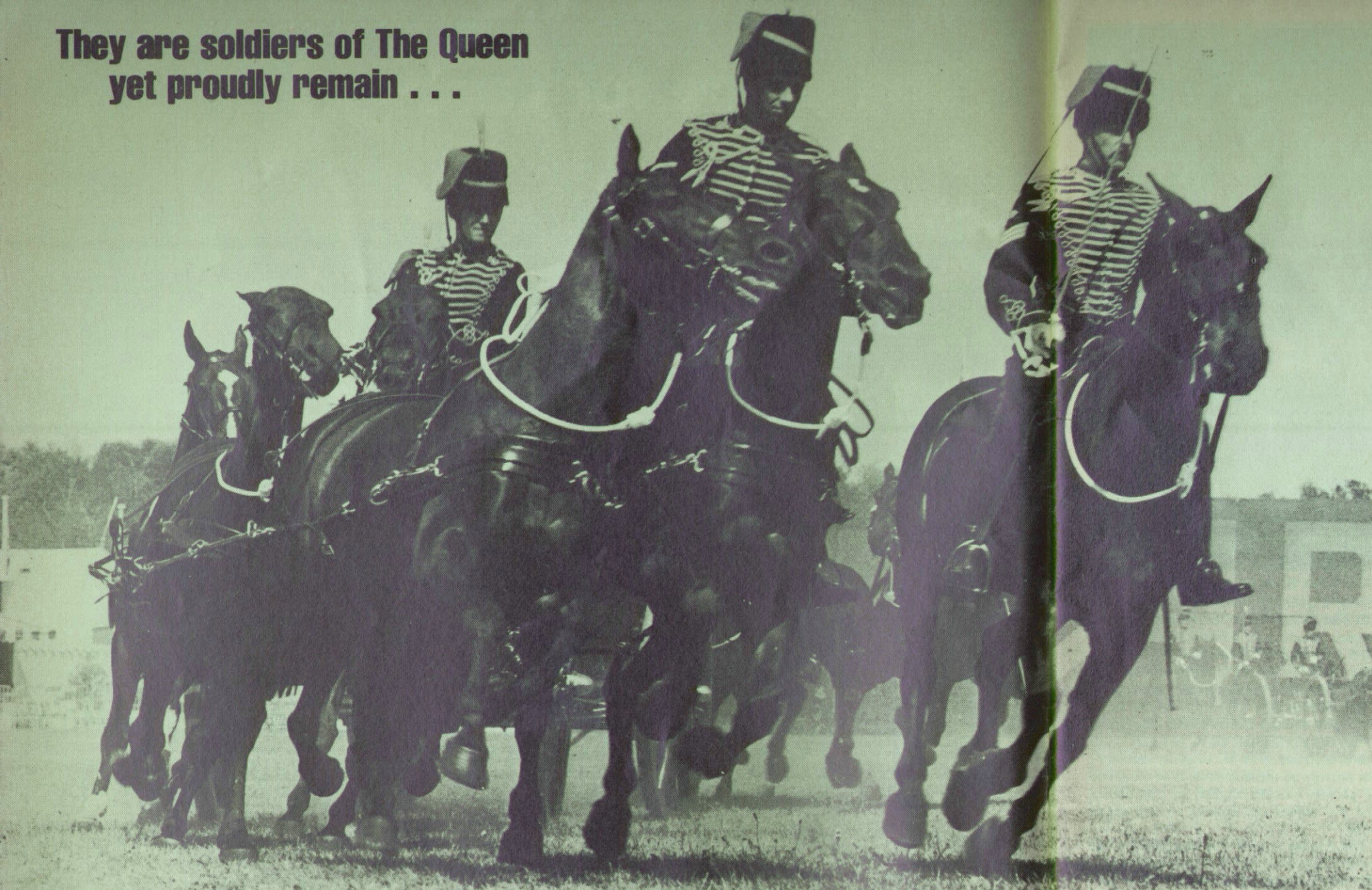
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THE KING'S TROOP, Royal Horse Artillery, is the unrivalled master of the 41-gun Royal Salute, turns out the highly-skilled heroes of the hair-raising high speed Musical Drive and can count among its elite equitant ranks a young soldier whose father was a Ukrainian Cossack and another whose great-grandfather served with the Polish Lancers.

The 200-strong Troop with its seven grooms, half-dozen farriers and four saddlers is housed in a modern barracks complex in London's fashionable St John's Wood, a likely beneficiary of some of the

pageantry associated with The Troop, there are, literally, horses for courses.

Once a year, the Army buys 15 horses or re-mounts for The Troop — unbroken horses which will be trained for future use. The purchase is superintended by the Commandant of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps Training Centre at Melton Mowbray and the CO of The Troop, Major Robert Symonds.

Captain Nick Cowdery, 31, Adjutant of The Troop since August 1978 explained: "The horses are extremely versatile and can be used both in harness to pull a gun and

ALL THE KING'S MEN

best kept rose gardens in NW 8 — thanks to the dawn exercise each day by any of The Troop's 111 horses clattering through quiet nearby Regency-style streets!

And it's been like that for most of the years since 1804 at The Wood when, in those formative years, 300 cattle grazed in meadows near St John's Wood Farm as horses and riders from the Brigade of Artillery moved in from St James's Park. Six years later, the whole Brigade moved there into small barracks which were later to be vacated for several years at the end of the Napoleonic Wars.

Today, The King's Troop performs its duties as part of the Household Troops from new barracks occupied in April 1972. The old barracks were demolished in 1969.

The unique highly-trained Troop with its 13-pounder QF (Quick Firing) field guns towed by teams of six troop horses is called upon to fire Royal Salutes — eight of them last year — in Hyde Park or Royal Windsor Park on Royal anniversaries and State occasions. It also 'finds' or carries out the duties of The Queen's Life Guard in Whitehall for three weeks in the autumn.

Other functions that regularly fall to The Troop include ceremonies and shows such as Remembrance Sunday, The Lord Mayor's Show, the Queen's Birthday Parade, Royal Windsor Horse Show, the State Opening of Parliament, The Royal Show at Stoneleigh, The Royal Bath and West Show, Aldershot Army Display and, of course, the Royal Tournament at Earls Court.

And, in keeping with all the pomp and

individually for such activities as show-jumping, eventing and hunting."

Distinctively, the troop horses have no manes. These are 'hogged' or shorn, a tradition going back to the First World War when such sturdy steeds had not only their manes removed but half their tails as well to cheat the Flanders mud.

These horses can be expected to serve with The Troop for ten years or so before facing potential retirement at the age of 16.

Once at The Wood, their training has to be carried out with great care until they can take their place with confidence on parade.

The horses which, six-at-a-time, haul 70-year-old, 1½-ton field guns at speeds of up to 25 mph round Royal Parks and arenas at home and abroad are bought at an age 'off four and rising five'.

By tradition, too, their sections give them names starting with the surname initial of the current CO of The Troop. This year it is 'S' after Major Symonds. Furthermore, each horse has its Service number branded on its front hooves and its Troop number on a rear hoof.

As for the officers of The Troop, they straddle huge chargers like 13-year-old Dr Sebastian who, at 16.3 hands high, was once short-listed for the 1974 three-day event world championships.

Most of the chargers are named after characters drawn from books by Robert Smith Surtees (1805-54), the author of *Jorrock's Jaunts and Jollities* and other humorous sporting works. The chargers have names like Mustymugs, Muleygrubs, Samuel Strong and Billy Rough'un.

Big horses, it seems, need a lot of attention and these magnificent mounts take 75 minutes to groom, on average, from 'picking out' the feet to bedding down.

Four times a day without fail, two calls — the second five minutes after the first — tell the hungry horses in their stalls it is time for water and 'feed up'.

They nuzzle into pounds of oats, bran,

continued on page 8

Story: Graham Smith

Left: Pictures show The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery at Aldershot Army Display.



Above: Time for the steed's regular exercise.

maize flakes, linseed, molasses and, naturally, plentiful hay supplies.

All of this builds up their strength for their various equine duties at home and overseas and the technicalities of the Musical Drive which has been seen and enjoyed by countless thousands in Canada, Germany, Denmark, Holland, France, Italy and Belgium.

Highlight of the 16-manoeuvre Musical Drive is the 'scissors' or cross-over routine which involves a split-second separation in distance between flying guns and snorting horses traversing each other at 25 miles-an-hour across the arena.

Accidents, alas, do happen — but not often. The commonest is the turning over of a gun as an exuberant team of troop horses towing a 13-pounder corners too quickly on a slippery surface.

"If a wheel breaks and disintegrates with spokes hurtling towards the spectators it can be quite horrifying," said Captain Cowdery, a cool character himself having been a former Para with over 60 jumps to his credit.

Less dangerous and almost as exciting to the eye is the Double Circle, a routine inspired and 'borrowed' from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

When it is performing for the pleasure of the public The Troop's day is a full and rigorous one.

They work from 5.30 in the morning and, if there is a show the next day, often do not 'hit the hay' themselves until midnight. A Salute usually involves 53 mounted men, 71 horses, six dismounted men and the six guns with attached limbers which are said to be insured for £53,000 apiece and date from 1904 to 1915.

Before The Troop takes its rightful pride of place in front of its al fresco onlookers, preparations behind the scenes are many and methodical.

In the harness rooms at The Wood, for

instance, the leather and steelwork are assiduously polished or 'bliffed'.

The steelwork, much of it dating back many years, is not made from stainless steel. A finger mark can tarnish its lustrous appearance. Rain positively encourages and fosters red rust.

Even so, The Troop likes to keep its traditional spit-and-polish pride very much in evidence.

Captain Cowdery confirmed: "When the harness comes back absolutely 'minging' the men in the Sections respond with their own type of sparkle to restore it all to showpiece standards."

The horses, too, have to be maintained in every sense. The resident farriers shoe up to ten horses a day and get through 200 horse shoes (bought at a special trade discount price of nearly £2 a set) during a week. Each horse takes about 45 minutes to shoe.

Lance Bombardier Eddie Crossley, who



Above: L/Bdr Eddie Crossley, qualified farrier, became a qualified farrier after three years with The Troop, said: "In the height of the summer season our horses' shoes last for about a fortnight. Civilian horses, however, make theirs do for six to eight weeks."

The farriers' establishment, where pints of perspiration are lost daily, is just yards away from another institution at The Wood — the Riding School, all of 184 feet long. There, instruction is 'all done by mirrors', Flat mirrors on the wall show how the riders are getting on and angled mirrors reflect how the horses are moving in the sandy arena.

The Riding School was designed by the Royal Engineers and work completed in July 1825 for a grand total of £5,712 4s 9d.

And the links with the past are still housed in the QM stores, too. Like some full dress tunics cut to fit men of five-foot-

Below: Gunner Robert Abel makes up horse feed.





Above: Scene in the King's Troop tack room. five with 38-inch chests and made by the now defunct Royal Army Clothing Factory at Pimlico — in 1913! Present day full dress tunics are said to cost £110.

Most of the officers who serve in The Troop will have had previous experience on horses, some more than others, and they all attend the RAVC Training Centre before joining.

They graduate as equitation instructors and are qualified to teach. A large number of NCOs also attend the same course.

Soldiers arrive at The Troop with differing levels of knowledge and experience of horses before they find themselves riding on ceremonial parades.

The training period each year is from October to March during which time practice takes place for ceremonial parades and the Musical Drive. The 'show season' covers most of the summer from May to September with the rest of the year given to individual riding instruction, training new horses and fitting in leave for the men.

Captain Cowdery explained: "It's a very busy year and each day's routine is a very full one, starting with morning exercise of about an hour-and-a-half around the streets of London. Throughout the day horses must be groomed, fed and watered. Harness must be cleaned and polished and ready for use at very short notice.

Below: Constant practice is required to meet the high standards achieved with the guns.

"Horses need attention 24 hours a day and their needs are given first priority. No officer or soldier would think of having a drink or taking a short rest before the horses had been turned in, watered and fed and given a hay net."

Soldiers are posted between operational regiments and The Troop in the interests of the Service or on a volunteer basis. Even during their service with The Troop they are trained in an operational role and would be ready to fulfill it without any delay.

Their operational training starts in January and includes rifle shooting on the ranges, gunnery training at Larkhill and map reading which, last year, was included in visits to three section camps in Wales, Cornwall and Somerset.

As Captain Cowdery was quick to stress: "We take our other role very seriously."

They also take the appointment of recruits to The Troop equally seriously. "We like to look at them before they join us or before they even go to their nearest recruiting office," said Captain Cowdery. "We send them a rail warrant and they spend five or six days with us. We then assess them. We see if we like them and, equally important, if they like us."

On parade with the guns — they fire once every ten seconds during a 41-gun Salute — The Horse Artillery takes its place at the right of the line of the British Army, and marches at the head of any column of troops.

The King's Troop was formed after the war at the express wish of King George VI. A letter was published on 18 December, 1945 giving notice that a Horse Artillery Battery was to be reformed in London to fire Royal Salutes and to take part in other ceremonies of State.

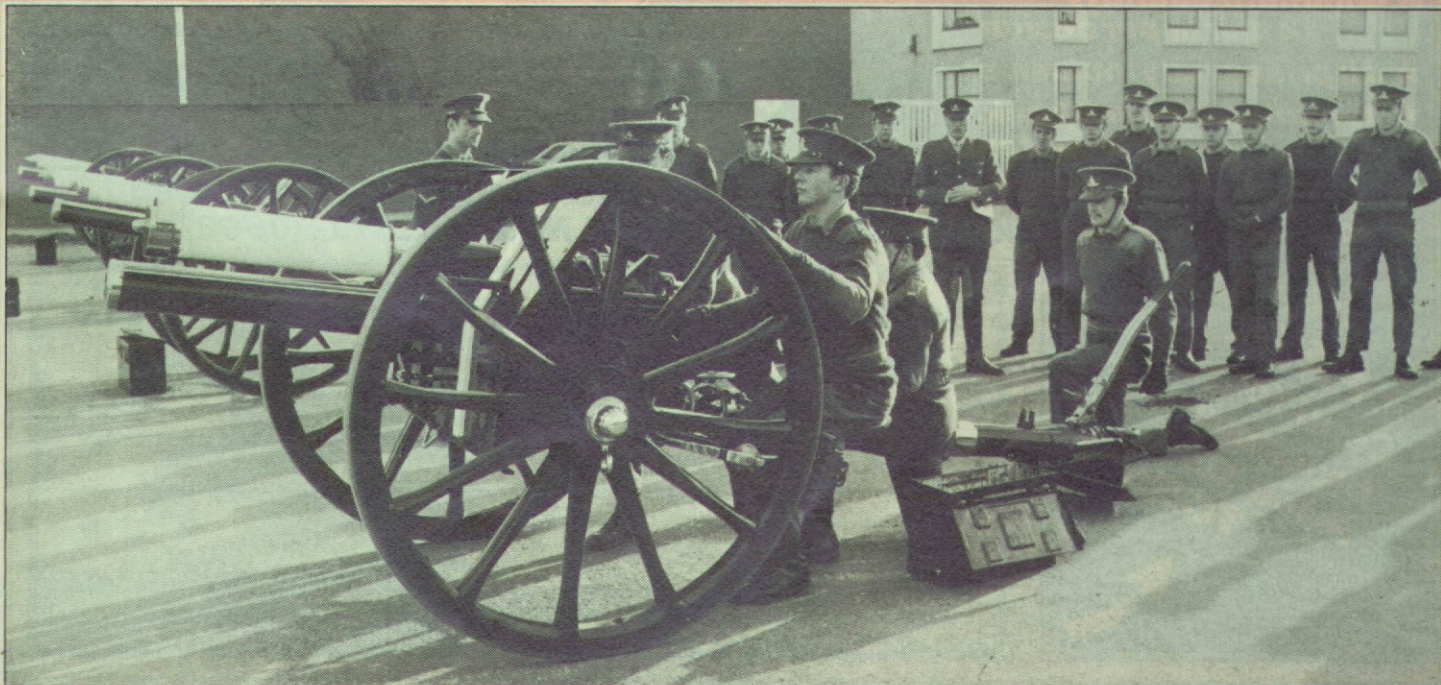
This Battery became known as The Riding Troop and took its name and crest from the old Riding Establishment which had been disbanded in 1938. The Troop was officially formed on 31 March, 1946.

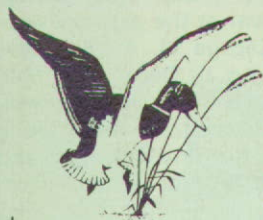
The initial training was done at Shoeburyness and all the old skills and techniques had to be re-learned with the help of officers, NCOs and soldiers who had served in Horse Artillery batteries. On 15 May, 1946, the Troop moved into the barracks at St John's Wood and the Riding Troop fired its first salute in Hyde Park on 13 June, 1946, on the occasion of the King's official birthday.

The Troop was re-named The King's Troop on 24 October, 1947 when the King inspected it at St John's Wood and, with a spontaneous gesture, crossed out the word 'Riding' in the visitor's book and substituted 'King's', ordering that, in future, it should be known as The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery.

Its name was not changed even when the Queen came to the throne because it was her express wish that the word 'King' should remain in memory of her father who had shown so much interest in The Troop.

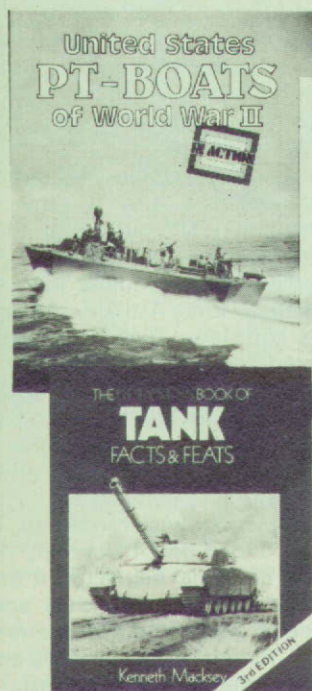
Regimental pride plays a big part in the life of the King's Troop but there is certainly a lot of 'horse sense' in the way it carries out its duties.



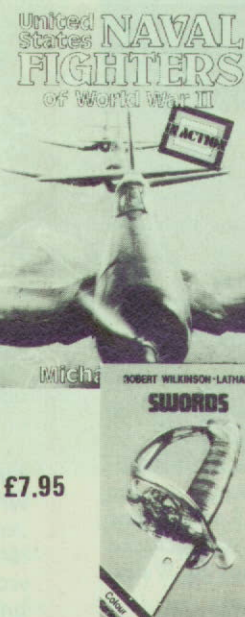


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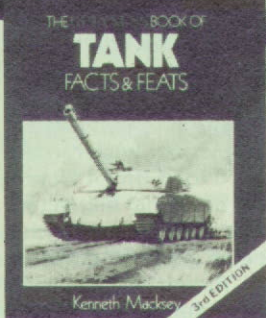


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SOLDIER to Soldier

Despite all the gloom and doom that has accompanied the new decade, for the Army, at least, the Eighties have begun on a note of positive progress and achievement.

Economic problems have never been far from the headlines and the Army, like everyone else, has had to do its share of belt-tightening. But amidst all the restrictions and shortages, there have been some shining, often contrasting, triumphs — crystallised in the quiet commonsense of the tiny monitoring force in Rhodesia and the swift, sudden ferocity of the SAS at the Iranian Embassy siege.

1980 was also the year of Crusader, Britain's biggest-ever peacetime exercise and a massively searching examination of our ability to fight a war in Europe with a minimum of warning. The lessons learned in those few short weeks will be pondered for a long while yet. But the over-riding message to emerge from Crusader is that our soldiers — reserves and regulars alike — are in 'good nick' and that our potency as part of Nato's deterrent forces is reassuringly credible.

1980 brought other encouragements too: the promise of the new Challenger tank and Military Combat Vehicle; the huge contract for the new Pirmigan battlefield communications system; further troop withdrawals from Northern Ireland; and a continued upswing in recruitment and retention figures.

While the economic barometer continues to fall, there are clearly going to be chilly times ahead for all of us in 1981. And like every other organisation with demands on the battered public purse, the Army will not get everything it needs or wants to meet all its aspirations.

But amidst all the uncertainties that lie ahead, one thing remains comfortably sure. Whatever storms face us in the future, our Army will remain a force to be counted on — and reckoned with

— and a friend to all those who seek to preserve and protect the world's fragile peace.



The war has now been over for more than 35 years. But the brutal, Seig Heiling German soldiers still haf vays of making people talk. And the bucktoothed, slant eyed Japanese troops still end up on the receiving end of British bayonets.

All this happens in the pages of comics. But now the Independent Broadcasting Authority has decided that these old stereotypes must not be allowed to continue. In its new rules for advertising the IBA says no commercials for toys, games or comics 'may feature wartime enmity with particular nations'.

No more Huns, Jerries or Nasty Nips on the air. Presumably even battles like the Norman or Roman conquests would also be excluded. It all sounds as if the IBA is taking a very large sledgehammer to crack a very small nut. Children's playground war games today still heavily feature Nazis being routed by the British — and the watering down of the odd television commercial is unlikely to achieve what 35 years of peace and co-operation has failed to change.



From the land of ooh-la-la comes the astonishing news that there might soon be a detachment of female parachutists to follow France's Red Berets into action.

The idea comes from no less a personage than President Giscard d'Estaing, who said he did not envisage the women paras fighting but they could add a 'humanitarian dimension' to combat.

He said they could provide medical aid to casualties and could help to cope with civilians stranded in the thick of the battleground. Like us the French tend to concentrate their women soldiers in such skills as transport, clerical and communications — although they do have a woman general.

There are no signs of the British Army following suit. Said a WRAC spokesman: "We tend to keep our feet on the ground." Except, of course, for those WRAC girls who volunteer to go on parachuting courses for fun.



While the majority of Service families undoubtedly leave their married quarters in the state in which they found them, there's always the odd one who doesn't.

Two interesting tales were recounted to us the other day. In one case a soldier was vacating a quarter when the authorities spotted a series of circular holes cut in each of the ground floor internal walls. The soldier's explanation — he was a model railway fanatic and had cut the holes to make tunnels for a system which stretched throughout the house!

Another house was found to have no internal doors. The enterprising tenant had removed them in order to make extra MFO boxes for his effects!



ANew Year's resolution for SOLDIER's editorial staff — to try to avoid the little mistakes which sometimes creep into our pages. Last month photographer Doug Pratt was the ungrateful recipient of a lot of leg pulling when the typographical gremlins transmuted his name on a story to 'Rona' Pratt!

And a New Year's Resolution for some of our readers (peppery colonels and the like) — be a little more forbearing when you find those mistakes that we aren't going to make!



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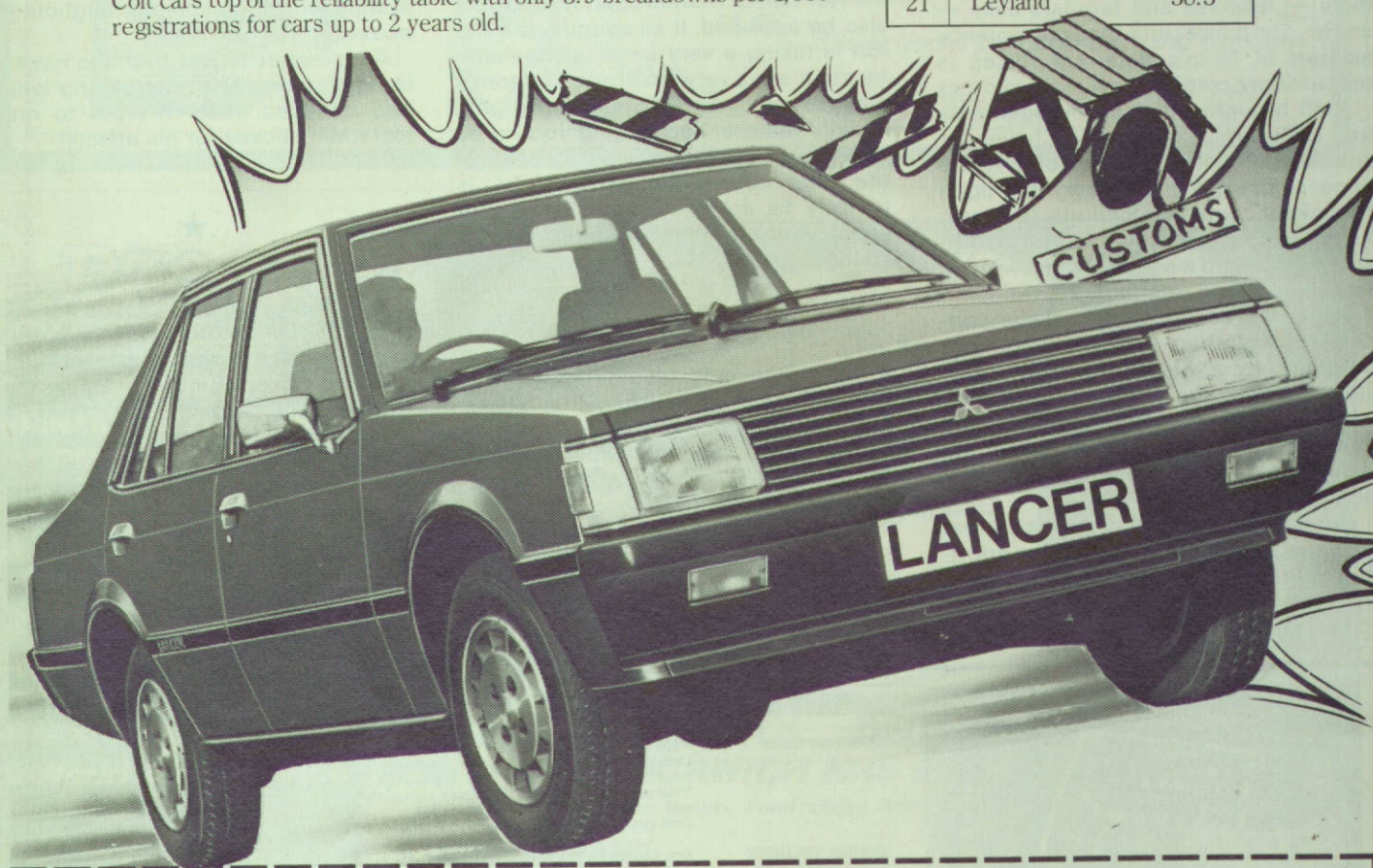
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5	Toyota	7.3
6	Datsun	7.5
7	VW	8.6
8	Opel	9.6
9	Ford	10.1
10	Audi	10.2
11	BMW	10.6
12	Renault	11.4
13	Fiat	13.8
14	Talbot	14.9
15	Volvo	16.7
16	Peugeot	17.7
17	Citröen	17.9
18	Alfa Romeo	22.5
19	Porsche	22.7
20	Lada	29.9
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AS COD CHILWELL PHASES OUT

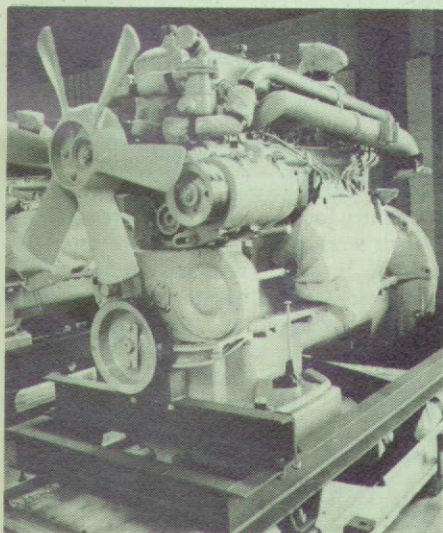
Big things in store for Bicester

NEARLY TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO the Roman legions used the area as a depot and headquarters. But those early soldiers would have been amazed to see what the modern British Army has created at Bicester—a labyrinth of warehouses and sheds incorporating the latest in mechanical handling equipment and storage systems and all served by its own railway line.

Even SOLDIER was surprised by the size and complexity of the operations at COD Bicester. A full day visit by our team proved completely inadequate and a return trip had to be arranged before we could get the in-depth look we required.

Bicester's latest military incarnation began at the height of the Second World War when it was discovered that the existing Central Ordnance Depots lacked the capacity for the preparations which were being made for the return to the European mainland.

Bicester depot was created to support worldwide operations and to store the lend-lease materials pouring in from the United



Above: Engine for Chieftain ready for despatch.

Right: Transferring dangerous chemicals from a damaged vessel by pump in hazardous stores shed.



Story: John Walton

States in preparation for D-Day. Its facilities were dispersed over large areas to lessen the target for conventional bombing attacks.

Since the war the depot has had a variety of roles such as bulk storage in support of other depots, vehicle storage and as a mobilisation centre for RAOC units. However, as the Army's stores complexes have been rationalised over the years it has grown considerably in importance.

It was in the early 1960s that the depot started to evolve towards its present role and the process is still continuing. For some time now, stores from COD Chilwell have been finding their way to Bicester as well as COD Donnington and this will continue until the closure of Chilwell in 1982.

Bicester employs something like 1800 people—about 500 of them military personnel and the remainder local civilians. But a series of graphs in the headquarters offices shows some very revealing trends. While the number of issues from Bicester has gone up and up over the years the number of people actually employed has gone steadily down.

It's all to do with automation. There has been a big capital investment in mechanical handling equipment over the years and now there are more stores, stacked better and higher, that can be retrieved and sent on their way faster and more efficiently—but without the same amount of manual labour.

Each year just over one million issued vouchers emanate from Bicester. They cover about 60,000 line items ranging in size from something smaller than a box of matches to something which would fill a container.

But for those who complain that items still take a long time to arrive, it should be explained that Bicester, like the other depots, operates on a priority system. Double red classification means immediate action. Red means four hours to get it on its way. So routine non-urgent items are bound to take a little longer.

And it is difficult to predict the demand for any one item—even over a period of time. Said Major David Warnes: "We have very little control over the number of issue vouchers which are going to be required at any one time. Or the amount of space that is going to be required. We don't know when the Army is going to demand something or when we are going to be issued with something. For instance there was recently a release of metric tools and our sheds were full of them."

Of course attempts are made to predict ahead. Every year there is a big jump in demand as the German exercise season gets underway—and another when the units return and have worn out various items. And special operations like that in Rhodesia also require a lot of intensive work.

The daily average of issues throughout the year is 4500 but at certain times it can go as high as 8000. It is admitted that rushes do pose problems and that while the modernisation programme was being carried out efficiency did suffer temporarily. But now the RAOC is confident it has overcome these snags and that peak efficiency is round the corner. The civilians who work at the depot currently earn an extra £23 a week efficiency bonus.

Clothing demands have risen by five per cent each year for the last decade. This has gone hand in hand with a dramatic improvement in the standard of Army



clothing—particularly in the realm of waterproofing.

The whole Bicester complex embraces three sub-depots and the system is served by some 47 miles of railway line. Each day the 'whistlestop' train goes off on a circuit embracing 12 stopping points at various sheds.

It sets off with empty wagons plus the chocolate and gold painted coach which serves as a travelling office for the stores checkers. Each day is set aside for certain districts so that when the train returns in the afternoon it will be loaded with stores for those areas.

The Bicester military railway system connects up with the British Rail network and the handover to BR takes place each morning. The rest of the items which have been collected go to road containers for the Continent or for depots in the UK not served by the rail system.

Much of the rolling stock at Bicester has seen a good many years of service. There are wagons dating back to the First World War while the 'office' coach was made in 1923 and came to Bicester from Bramley. But the locomotives are modern and up to date. At the time that British Rail phased out steam trains the Army followed suit.

The actual storage today involves stacking up, in some cases, to a height of 27 feet with collections and deliveries by high lift trucks. In one shed there might be mountains of tyres, in another stacks of clothing, in a third heavy metal bars. The actual method of storage varies but in each case it is the automated handling and retrieval which takes priority.

The most dangerous building in the entire complex is that used for hazardous stores such as highly inflammable items, poisons and corrosives. Many of these have to be kept apart from each other because of the danger of interaction. Here the Bicester men have killed two birds with one stone—their stores of barbed wire are used as buffers.

In the hazardous stores shed the doors are kept open at all times and eyewash is available every few yards in case of accidents. No heating is allowed in the winter—the work-

Above: Old gas masks awaiting their face lift. ers agree that it is better to be chilly than dead or injured.

Packing these items requires the expert touch. In many cases special protective clothing and face masks have to be worn. And different regulations have to be observed according to whether stores are being sent by sea or air.

Everyone has to be on their mettle all the time—and that includes the depot fire brigade who have a fire practice in the hazardous stores shed every week. They practice removing people from the building while wearing their breathing apparatus.

Another huge shed takes in half the voucher issues of the whole depot. Racking stands 16 feet high and covers 44,000 different miscellaneous items—none of them numerous enough to be put in pallets.

Items which are required are picked out, wrapped in cling film and then sent along a magnetic memory distribution conveyor belt. This has chutes for all of the main distribution outlets—Colchester, Hong Kong, Cyprus and so on. The operator presses the required number and when the item reaches the correct chute it is automatically diverted.

Repair work often has to be carried out at Bicester before items can go back into store to be issued again. This is particularly applicable to tentage and other textiles such as sleeping bags.

When tents are returned they are first put on a gantry for a light test which reveals any holes or weak spots. This year Bicester has seen a lot of returned tents from Zimbabwe—still covered with red African dust and having put in some hard service.

Said Lance-Corporal Peter Westwood, one of the mixed military-civilian tentage repair staff: "The tents were mostly threadbare so they had probably had some punishment. We have found dead lizards in them and messages from Fijian soldiers who wanted us to write to them."

"But the biggest enemy we face in canvas is fungi. There is not a great deal you can do once it has set in. We have to set the tent aside and get rid of it because if we put it



Above: Ceremonial uniforms are lovingly packed.

Left: Hermes lift truck shows off its strength.



anywhere near a brand new canvas it will spread."

Tents which can be repaired are mostly done by sewing machine but some are mended by old fashioned sailmakers' darn. New vents and windows can be inserted and the final result is a tent which is once more fully serviceable.

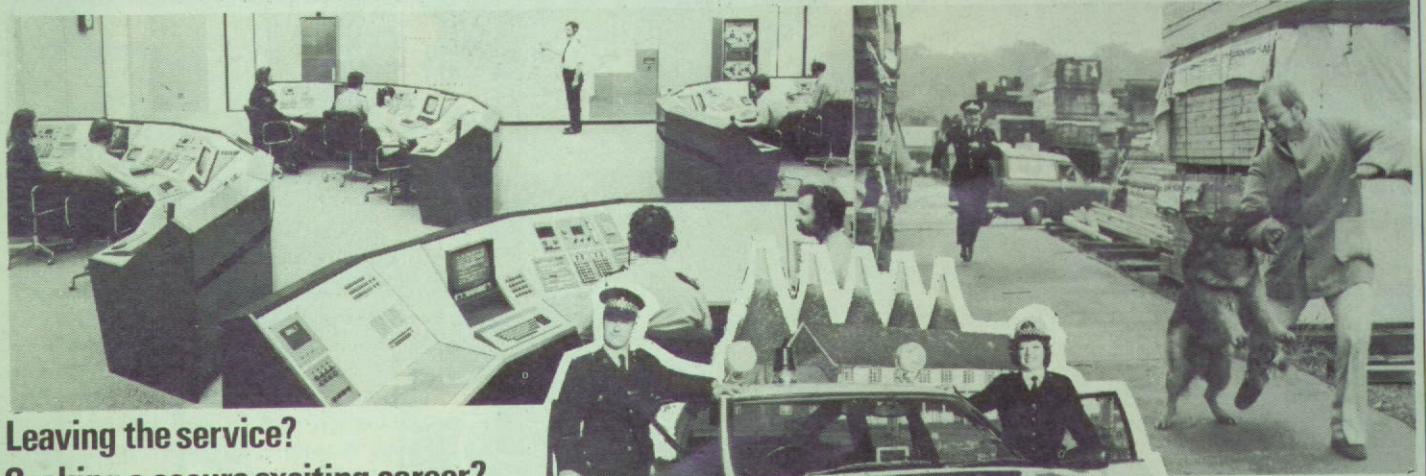
There is another section at Bicester which renovates gas masks. The masks, often with their glass broken, are taken apart and each component tested. The parts are first put into a washing machine with soap and disinfectant because, as supervisor Mrs Sybil Colbourne says: "they are in a really vile state."

Then they are inspected for holes and tested on an air bag machine. And, finally, the assembled product is tested once again. It's reckoned to be very cost effective against the cost of buying a new mask and the end result is just as efficient. The section also tries to do the same thing with life jackets but there the success rate is not very high as most are perished from contact with sea water.

Everyone has heard the hoary chestnuts about Army stores containing Crimean War equipment but while one depot retains such things as buttons for disbanded regiments (they might be reformed one day) anything else which becomes obsolete goes into the regular sales held at Bicester.

continued on page 17

TOMORROWS CAREER FOR TODAY'S SERVICEMEN



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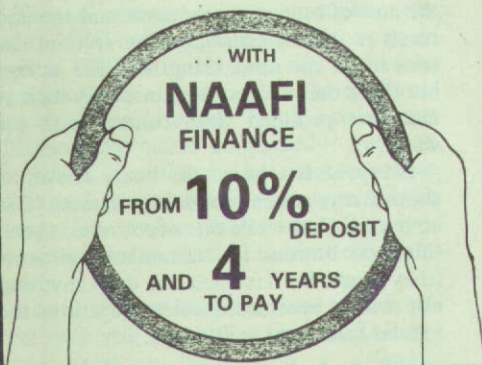
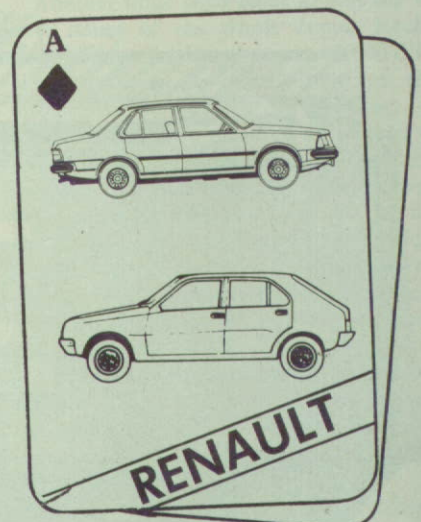
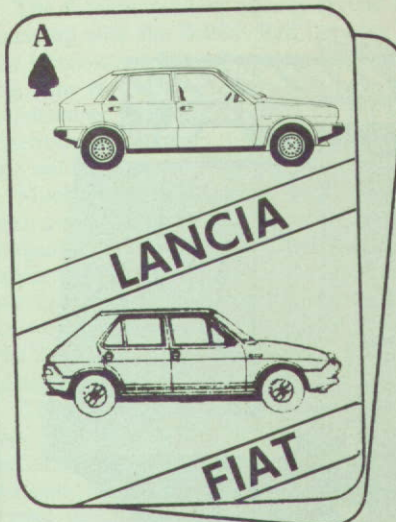
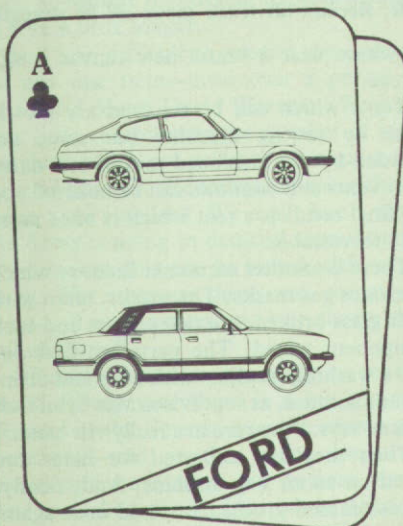
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Left: The railway's travelling office coach.



Most of the items are in large lots so tend to be sold to dealers rather than the general public; a typical lot might be 12 beds or 20 to 30 chairs. Currently the RAF is replacing its furniture and the existing stocks eventually find their way to the Bicester sale room.

The sales take place four times a year and realise £250,000 a time. And what is being sold can vary from iron girders down to 40,000 Army greatcoats stripped of their military insignia and buttons.

Says Mr Peter Barnard, in charge of disposals: "Most of it is obsolete but although it is all surplus to requirements a lot of it is in very good condition. Only recently we had some radio valves which had been packed in 1944 and had never been used."

"If the Army has a ceiling price on repairing something it comes down here. It might be that the buyer will find it worthwhile to make the repair while the Army would not."

The Fair Value operation, which will lead to the closing of COD Chilwell, is the biggest Army stores re-organisation since World War Two. To make space for the new items (mostly bulky and slow to be issued) buildings at Bicester have had to be virtually torn apart with new roofing, flooring and lighting.

The new racking and binning systems, new mechanical handling equipment and modern conveyor systems add up to a £3 million project in terms of equipment with a similar amount being spent on works services.

It all represents an enormous operation to keep the Army supplied. And at the same time those 500 soldiers who work at Bicester have shadow commitments in a fighting role. A considerable proportion of them took part in the recent Crusader exercise and they are never allowed to forget that while places such as Bicester play a vital backstage role in both war and peace, there would be an equally important frontline part for them to play in any European war.

Left: MFO boxes stacked flat for later assembly.

How observant are you?

These two pictures look alike but they differ in ten details. Look at them carefully. If you cannot spot the differences turn to page 55.



A color photograph of a two-story brick house with a tiled roof. A white car is parked in the driveway on the left. Two children are playing in the front yard near a small tree. The house has multiple windows with white frames and a central front door with a small arched window.

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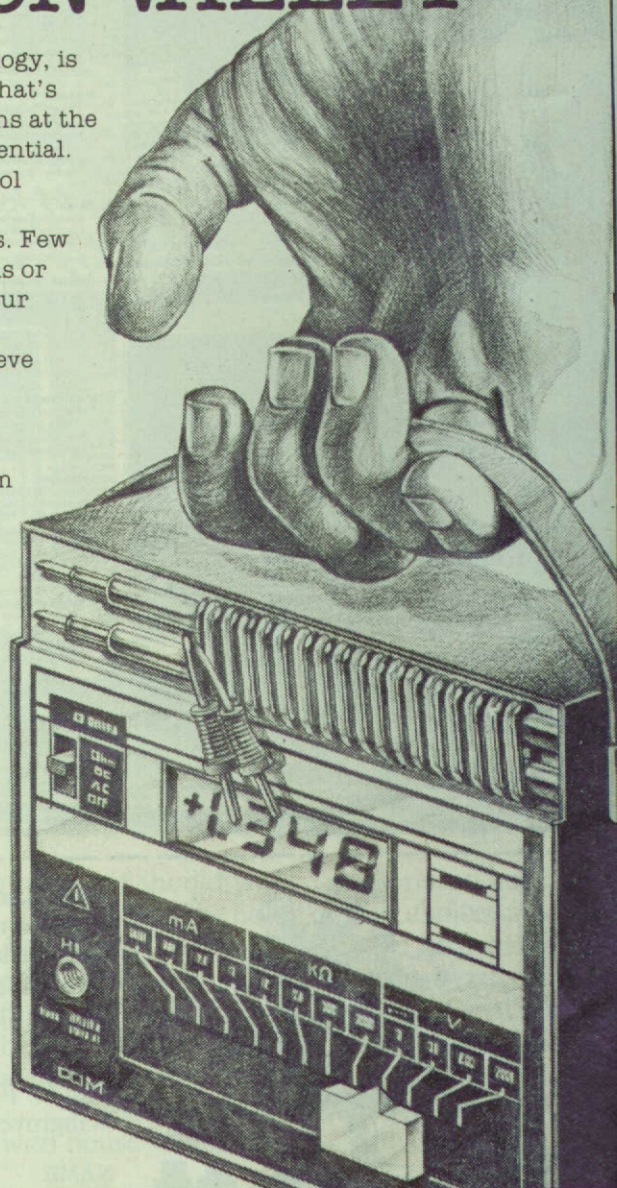
Your role will give you full scope to develop good working relationships with site management. And apart from using diagnostics to PCB level, you'll be our customer trainer - our refresher courses will keep you abreast of new developments.

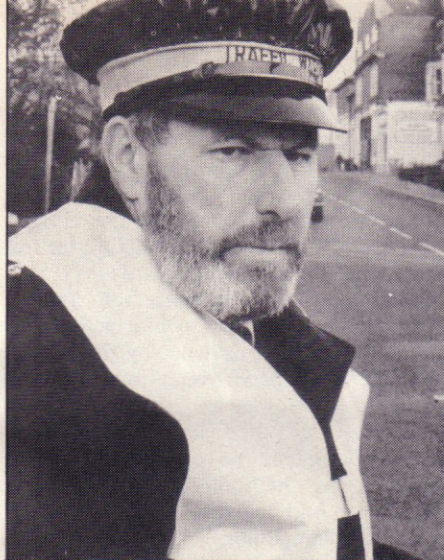
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Thousands of Regular Army Reservists drew their kit recently under new plans to cut mobilisation time should a defence emergency arise. Remembering the old wartime song SOLDIER followed two modern day namesakes who were . . .

answering the call

ALDERSHOT TRAFFIC WARDEN (No 56) Mr 'Taff' Jones, ex Royal Army Medical Corps, joined the Army again at Pirbright for a special call-up offer he could hardly refuse as 23505428 Corporal Jones, TJ. Just two hours later he was 'discharged' wearing a broad grin, toting a kitbag crammed with personal issue clothing and the richer for his visit by seven crisp 'tenners' — his 'fee' less tax, for reporting in.

Taff, now 47, and a former Medical Assistant, was one of an estimated 50,000 Regular Army Reservists who responded with ingrained military precision and sense of duty to the long-planned call-up at 23 centres nationwide.

On a day of their choice, spread over a three-week period, they were being summoned back to the military fold as part of an operation planned to halve the time needed to mobilise reserves in a defence emergency.

The mobilisation plan affected all those

who had left the Army in the previous nine years, including the luckless ones who had bought themselves out!

To cut down the time expended on travel, documentation and the handing out of kit, they reported to Kit Issuing Centres (KICs) sited near their homes, instead of to their particular regimental depots.

The reservists will keep their kit at home, and report in personally with it once a year for a fitness check. At the same time they may also have a limited amount of up-dated training and their mobilisation employment role assessed.

For Taff Jones the pilgrimage to Pirbright had begun in the biting cold of Aldershot High Street where he stepped aboard the 0903 hours bus (six minutes late) for the half-hour, 76 pence ride to the revered Guards Depot.

"I sometimes miss the Army life and its special atmosphere, you know," confided a suddenly nostalgic Taff who, with two col-

leagues, daily pounds 12 miles of Aldershot pavements and is inured to occasional blasts of abuse from offending — and offensive — motorists in the bustling garrison town.

Before signing-on in 1957, Taff had been down the Welsh mines at the age of 15 as one of the last Bevan Boys trainees at the coalface.

In the airy Pirbright gym-cum-KIC reception hall, he sipped a mouthful of welcome, complimentary tea from a plastic cup and mused: "I was rather hoping to see more of my mates from the RAMC here this morning."

Those mates, he surmised, could have come from some of the 280 medics whom he knew had been discharged after completing, like himself, 22-year engagements.

Taff, who came out of the Army 18 months earlier, had expected to see colleagues from somewhere along a line of service which took him to Aden, Kenya,

continued on page 22



'This is the Army, Mr Jones
No private rooms or telephones
You've had your breakfast in bed before
But you won't get it there any more'

Top left: Traffic Warden Taff in his workaday hat and (above) trying on headgear at Pirbright.

Germany and Aldershot itself. But it was not to be his lucky day for personal reminiscences.

The disappointment soon abated though and Taff, clutching his 'papers' old and new, was obviously looking forward to drawing his £144 worth of kit — just like in the old days of more than two decades ago.

But first, there was personal and pay documentation to be carried out, a new photograph complete with service number to be taken for the official album and a 17-minute colour video film explaining the object of the day's exercise to be dutifully viewed from the comfort of a canvas chair.

Taff patiently took his turn at each — then it was time to be kitted out. He was directed to the QM's clothing emporium, an austere-looking Aladdin's Cave of countless,

stacked cardboard boxes, many of them teasing and tempting with higgledy-piggledy pairs of DMS boots awaiting new owners with drill-squad-trained old feet.

The khaki-clad KIC clothing dispensers, masters of their calling, claimed it was taking, on average, 55 minutes to process a reservist from start to finish.

It was expected that around 150 of them would turn up each day for fitting-out and financial reward.

Taff looked through the 13 sizes of SD hats on trestle tables and chose himself one of six-and-seven-eighths.

Next, he drew a small, white kitbag, its neck haltered by yellow string, into which was stuffed his combat kit, shirt, tie, pullover, puttees, socks, cap comforter, gym shoes and other sundry items.

His feet slipped comfortably into a pair of Medium Nine DMS boots.

Soon would come the moment he had been savouring in the single-decker bus as it plied its way past the hedgerows of Hampshire and into stockbroker belt Surrey . . . taking personal possession of the taxable grant of £100 plus, of course, £1.52 for his travelling expenses that day.

Seven 'tenners', left over from tax at source, were doled out to him across the table by the paymaster who, by the end of the day, was to hand over a total of some £12,000.

And the fate of the £70? "The wife and I will have half each," he volunteered. "I'll be spending my half on some gardening equipment. And the wife . . . well, she'll spend it on something."



Above: First a quick check on measurements . . .



Above: . . . and march off £70 richer.



Below: . . . then it's time to draw the kit . . .

Below: What the well-dressed soldier needs.

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LOST THROUGH YOUR OWN NEGLIGENCE.
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SHOULD NOT BE WORN OTHER THAN ON
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KIC GUIDE ANNEX E



Taking his turn in the same KIC was 44-year-old John Brown, a telecommunications engineer from Farnham, father of four children, who had punctually responded to his 0650 alarm call, his designated turn in the bathroom at 0720 and descent to breakfast at 0745.

There, wife Patricia watched as he crunched his customary way through three slices of toast and gulped down two cups of tea.

John had left the Army four years previously having joined the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers as a 16-year-old in 1952, later seeing service in Australia, Malta, Canada and Germany.

While 'doing his bit' he got his LS and GC Medal and an NI Service Medal, leaving the Army with the rank of Warrant Officer 2 as an instructor at the School of Electronic Engineering at Arborfield.

John had driven to the Pirbright depot to become, for the benefit of the paper exercise, 22845008 WO2 Brown, J.

"It's a bit different from my usual routine," he grinned. "It's not every day that I get £70 and all the clothes I can carry. But seriously, I still keep in contact with some of my Service friends and the Army still gets the job done when required with the minimum of fuss."

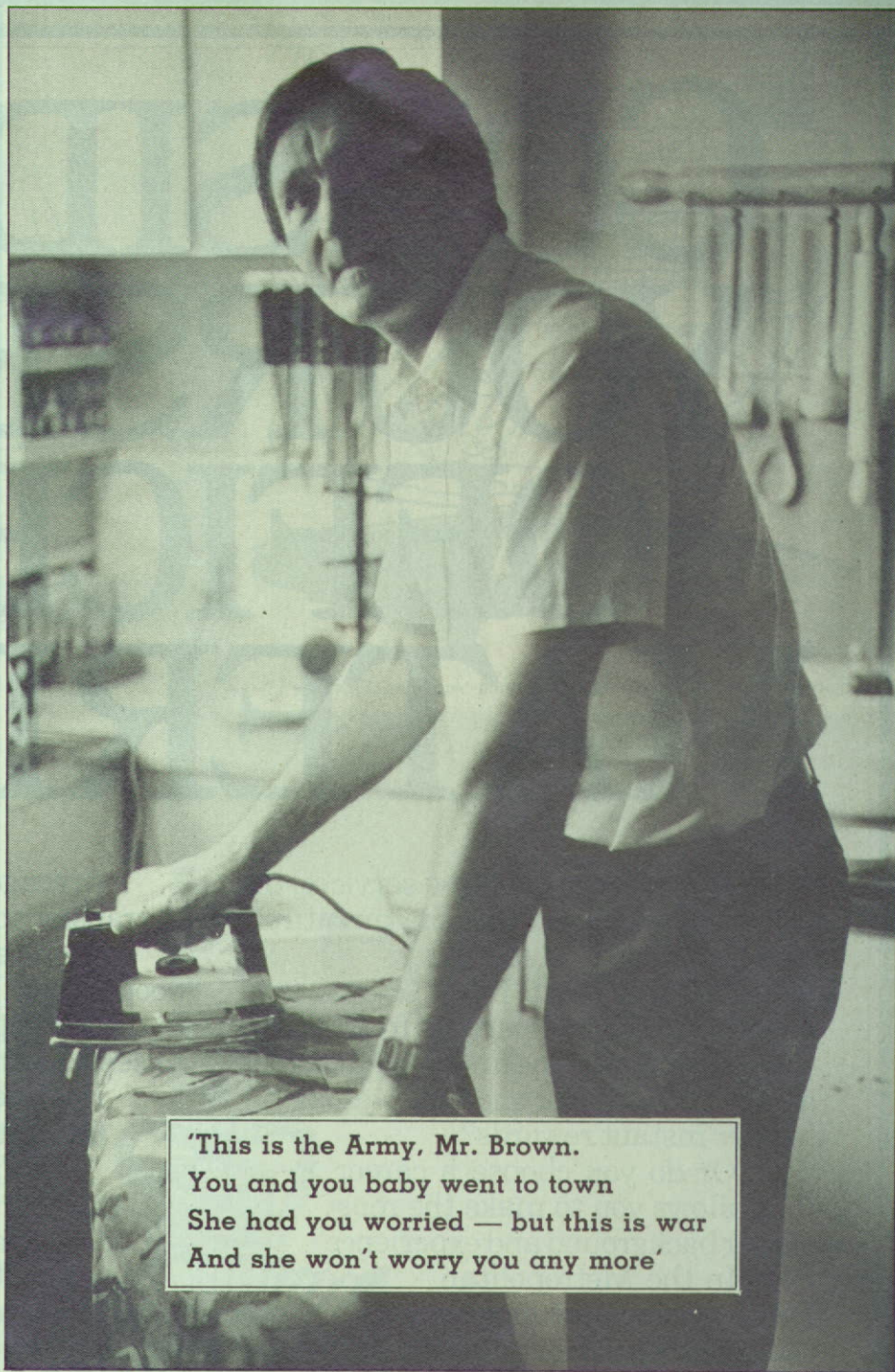
John had already worked out what he was going to do with his £70 grant — it would go on buying the Christmas turkey and the spirits to wash it down with.

He quipped: "No, this money will in no way change my lifestyle. I shall continue to work!"

The Mobilisation Day operation was the latest phase in a review which had been going on from the previous year.

An MOD spokesman said: "All servicemen who have engagements of less than 12 years have a reserve commitment and there is power to require them to spend two weeks a year in training. This has never been implemented and until now all they have needed to do was to let us know their address four times a year.

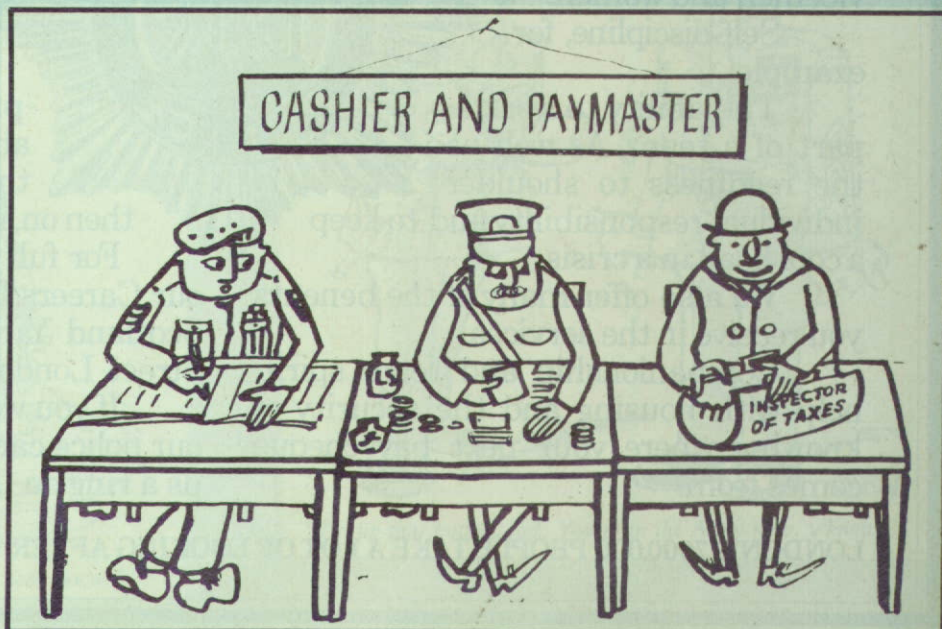
"The system until now has been for them to report to nominated depots but it is felt that the existing arrangements might be unnecessarily time-consuming. So the decision was taken to issue the men with uniforms to keep at home and to review the units to which they are allocated."●



'This is the Army, Mr. Brown.
You and you baby went to town
She had you worried — but this is war
And she won't worry you any more'

Top left: A kiss for Mrs Brown as John sets off.

Above: Back home with kit for pressing business.



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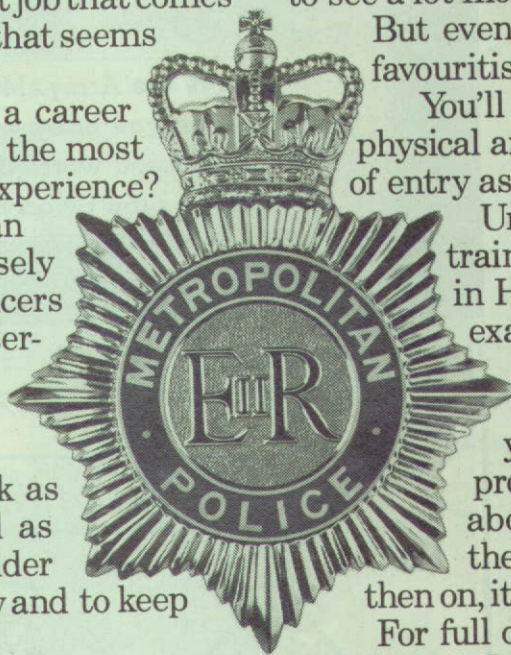
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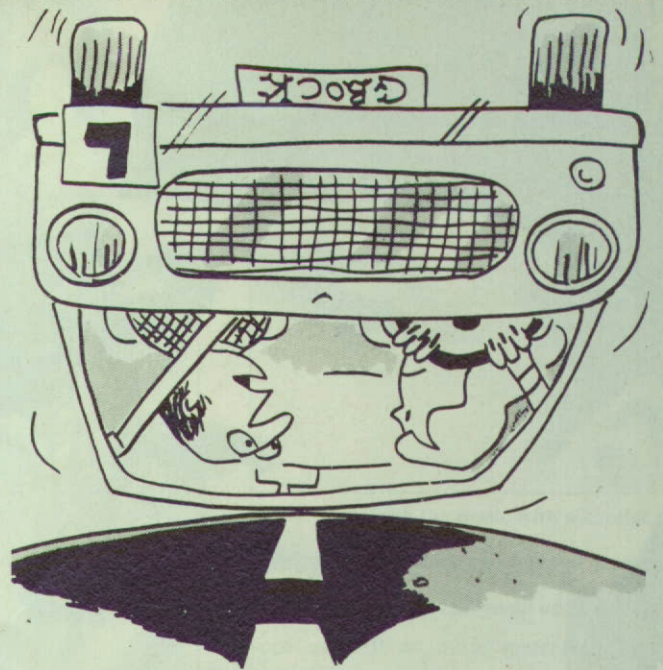
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"Hey, Bill! Remember me, Sandhurst 1951?"

POWER

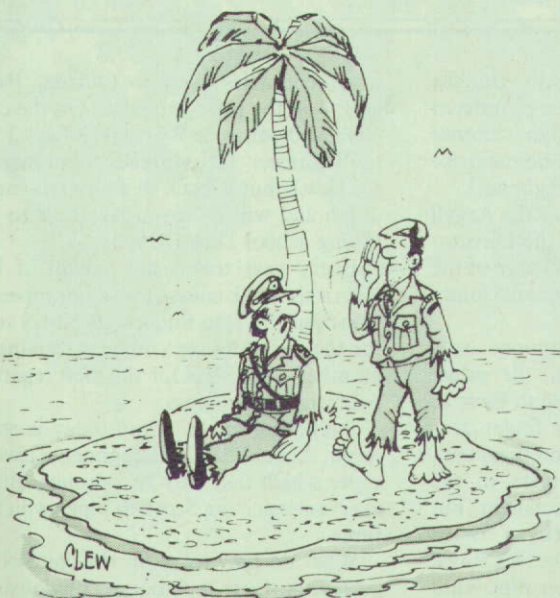


"I'm afraid your three-point turn still needs some working on."



CLEW

Humour



"You can cut out the saluting until we've been rescued."

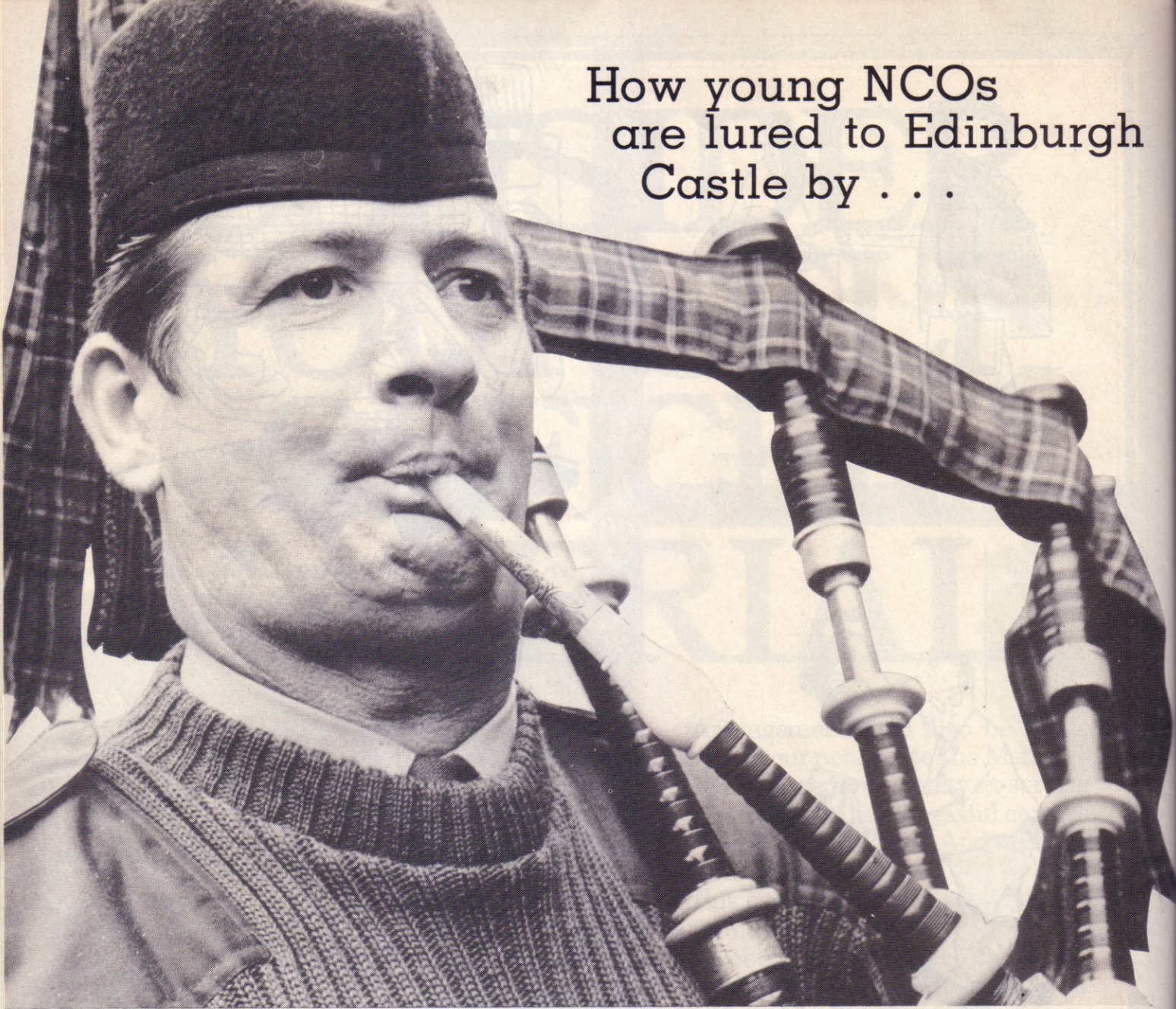
CLEW



"Do up that button, lad. You're in the Army now, y'know."

CLEW

How young NCOs
are lured to Edinburgh
Castle by . . .



THE CALL OF THE PIPES

WALK BY SOME ROOMS deep in the heart of Edinburgh Castle on certain afternoons and you're likely to hear a noise that sounds like the buzzing of a swarm of berserk bumble bees. But open the doors and you'll find a hive of industry of a different kind. For that demented drone is the sound of soldiers at work — some of the Army's 200 or so bagpipers practising on their chanter.

The Army School of Bagpiping has an unrivalled reputation in producing exponents of the ancient Scottish musical art. Foreign armies who have taken on the tradition of pipe bands clamour to send students to Edinburgh.

Fortunately perhaps, for the ears of tourists visiting the Castle, the students are all experienced pipers. Beginners are taught at

battalion level or divisional schools. But the courses at Edinburgh take up ten months of the year — only lapsing in high summer when there tends to be a great demand for the pipers' skills in their own regiments.

Captain Andrew Pitkeathly, of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, is the Director of Army Bagpipe Music and in charge of the school. He was the Queen's personal piper for eight years.

While he admits that the bagpipes are a hard instrument to play well, he adds: "They are not as hard for people to blow as people think. You need to have finger dexterity and a certain amount of intelligence."

Today he deals with all pipers in the British Army — not just Scotsmen but Irishmen, Gurkhas and those with Armoured regiments (such as the 4th Royal Tank Regiment who started their pipe band quite recently).

And the men who come on the courses are from all these regiments as well as from

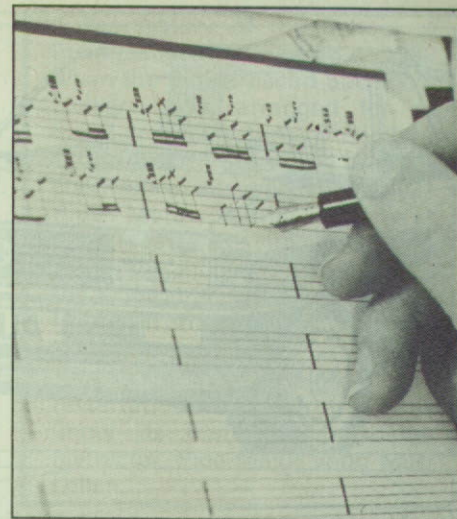
other countries such as Canada, Pakistan and — in the past — Jordan. On the current advanced course is Warrant Officer 2 Douglas Thoresen. He is already a graduate from the Castle but is back to study the course in depth and will return to Australia to start a piping school Down Under.

Every year the Army School of Piping runs a six-week course for senior pipers. The principal aim is to find gifted pipers suitable for the much longer course — lasting eight months — which is for the men regarded as potential pipe majors.

Bagpiping in the Army today is standardised. At one time Irish regiments used Irish pipes which had only two drones. But now everyone uses the Scottish pipes which have three.

What do they learn on the course? Well, perfecting their techniques, obviously. But they also learn how to write music, about the history of piping in various Scottish families and about famous individual performers of

Story: John Walton
Pictures: Doug Pratt



Above: Preparing the music with a careful pen.

Left: Gurkha soldiers make proud pipers too.

Below: Pipe Major MacDonald and some pupils.

yore as well as more generalised piping history.

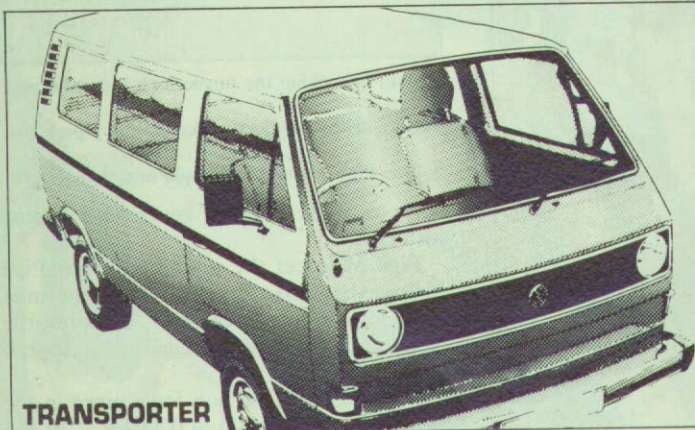
Pipe Major of the piping school is Pipe Major Angus MacDonald. He is the man who, for the last three years, has been the 'lone piper' at the world famous Edinburgh Tattoo.

"This is the finest job for a piper in the British Army" he told SOLDIER. "At the end of their courses they are very tuned up and will probably never play any better for the rest of their lives."

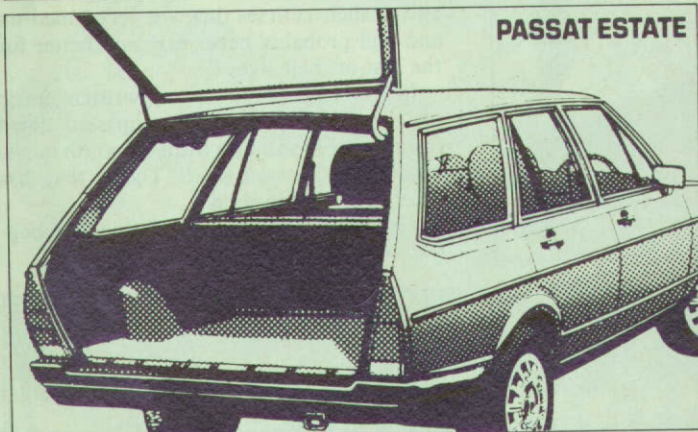
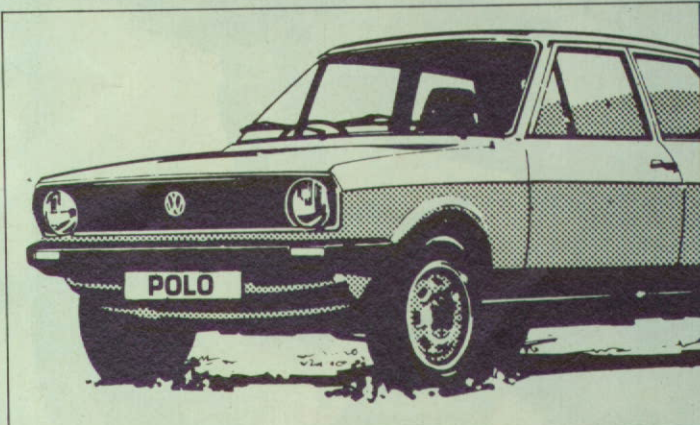
Before 1803 there was no written music for bagpipes and piping was passed down from father to son by a form of mouth music known as *Canntaireachd*. Today that has practically disappeared.

Any tune which comes within the bag-
continued on page 29





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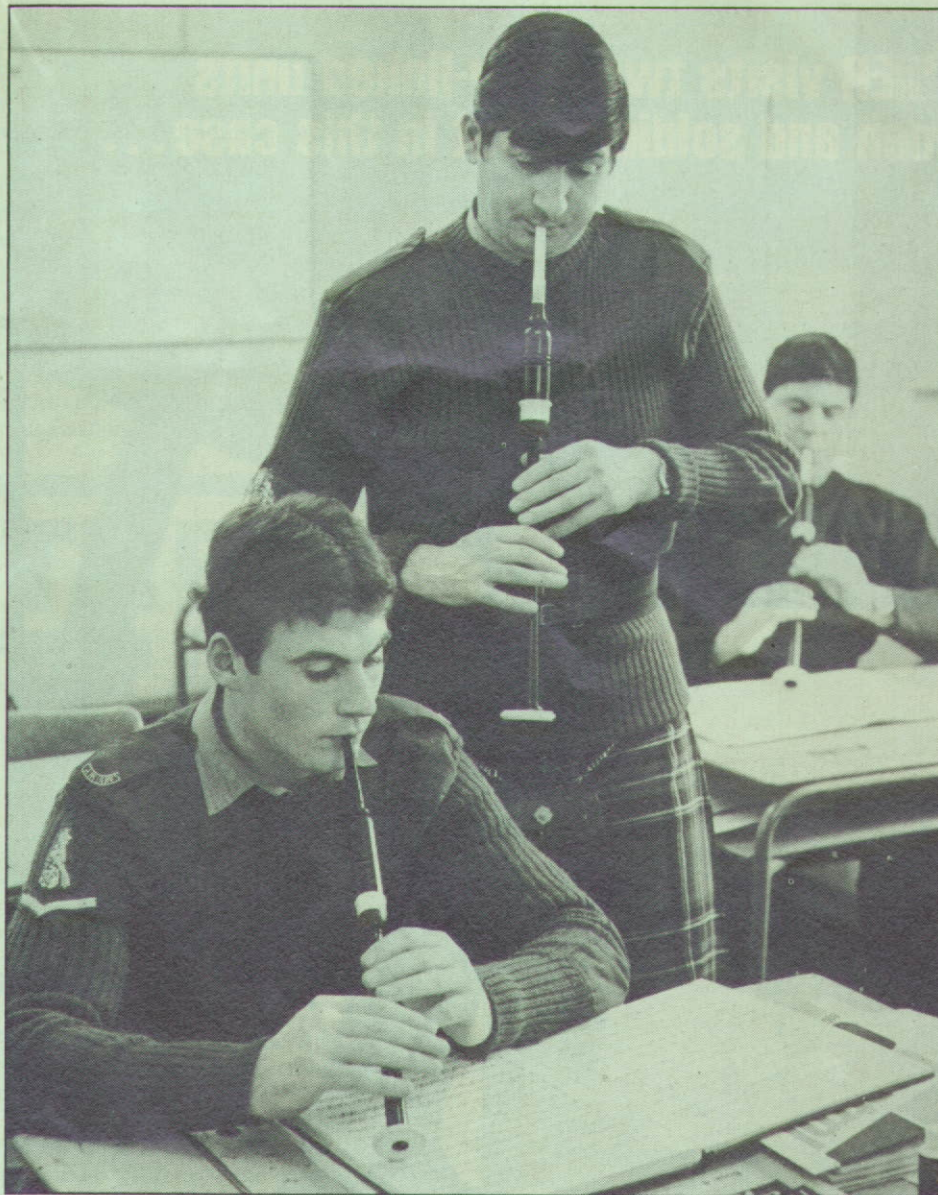
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Above: Practising chanter with Pipe Major.

Below: Blackboard lesson from Capt Pitkeathly.

The history of the School of Piping effectively begins in 1909 when the Piobaireachd Society, a civilian body, arranged for an instructor to teach Army pupils.

During the First World War the class was in abeyance but in 1921 Pipe Major Willie Ross was appointed as the Society's instructor and he ran courses for the Army until he retired in 1957 (apart from another wartime break).

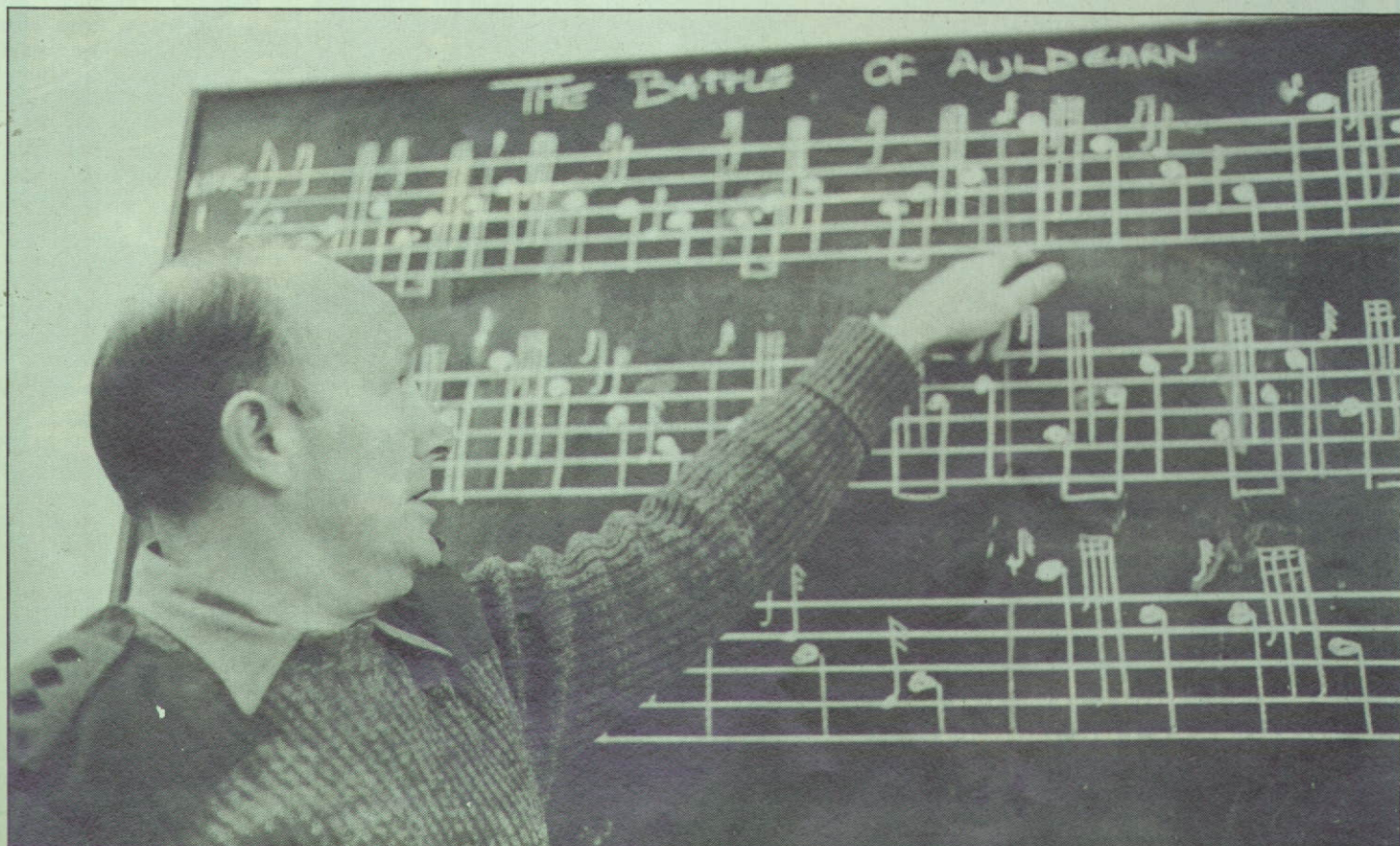
In 1959 the School was restarted at Edinburgh Castle under its first Regular soldier instructor, Pipe Major John MacLellan.

pipers' musical range can be played — laments for funerals, stirring tunes and dance music. On the course, the lighter side like jigs and hornpipes is not neglected but the pipers learn to play pibrochs (or *piobaireachd*) — extremely complicated pieces of music lasting up to a quarter of an hour — as well as competition-type strathspeys and reels.

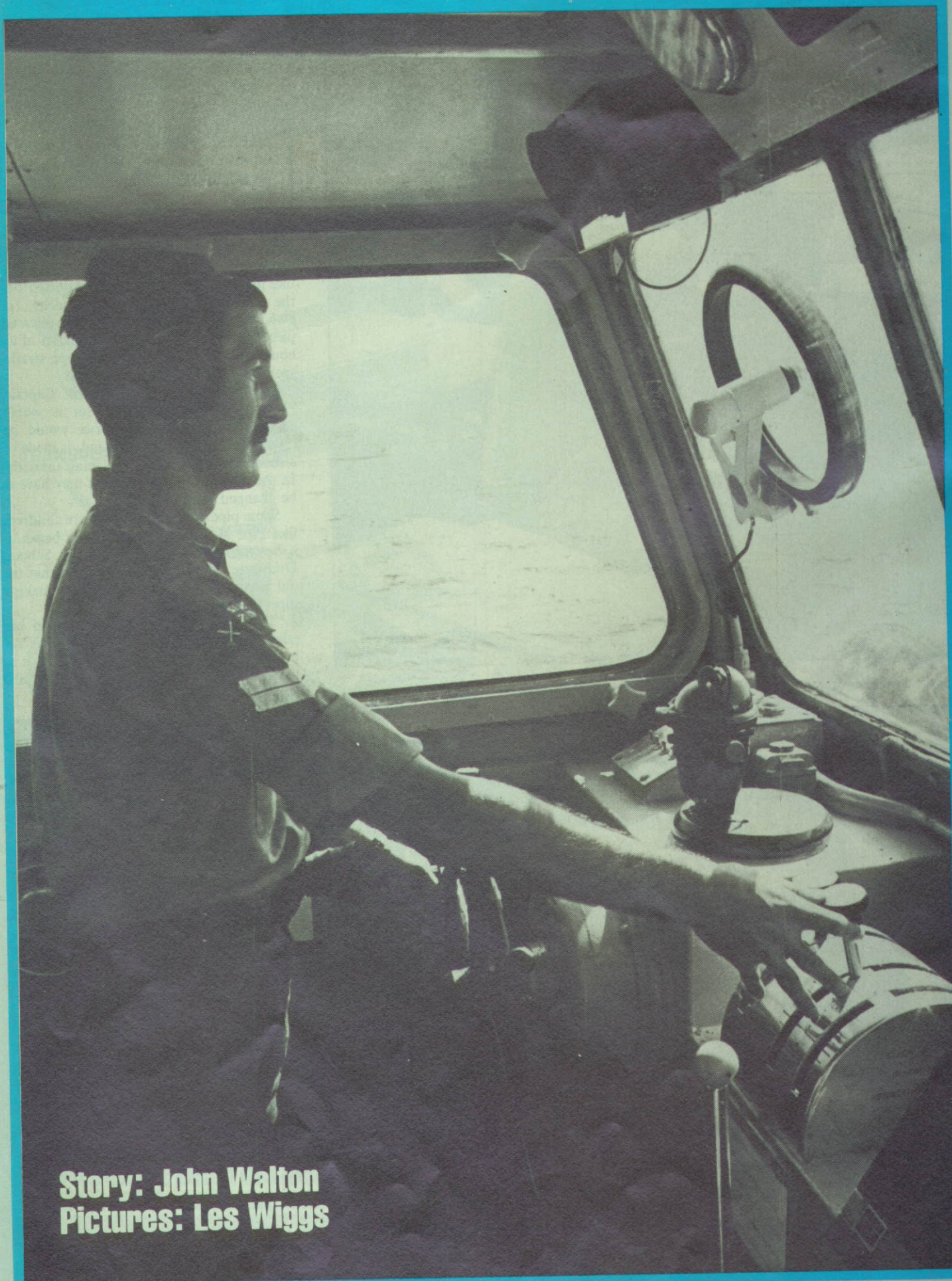
Bagpipes cost a lot of money. Captain Pitkeathly's silver mounted set is worth £1000 — and an average price would be £500-£700. The bag, in Scotland, is made of a sheep's skin and needs replacing annually. In the tropics hide is used and may have to be changed after only six months.

Some pipers start when they are children, like Pipe Major MacDonald, who began as a boy of ten at Queen Victoria's School, Dunblane. Captain Pitkeathly says that the old saying 'it takes seven years to make a piper' is just a myth.

"If a man starts young enough and has talent he can become a pretty good piper but it takes a long time to get the experience to bring his talent right to the fore. We regard this as the piper's finishing school."



In Cyprus SOLDIER visits two inter-linked units involving both airmen and soldiers. But in this case ...



**Story: John Walton
Pictures: Les Wiggs**

WITH THE WHITTILING DOWN of the RAF's fleet of transport aircraft, the amount of cargo which can be taken by air to support the British forces in Cyprus has gradually been reduced. More and more, the emphasis has returned to the traditional routes by sea.

The job of handling both the incoming and outgoing container loads of supplies and equipment as well as the unaccompanied baggage sent on by Service families as they move to and from postings on the island, falls to a small (Army/RAF) Joint Services Unit based at the bustling and recently completed Limassol New Port.

Before the 1974 Turkish invasion the Joint Services Port Unit — formed in 1965 from an amalgamation of No 20 Movements Unit

THEIR TRADE IS THE SEA

(Embarkation) RAF and the Army Movement Control Unit — had been based in the port of Famagusta.

When that town disappeared behind the Turkish lines the unit was split between Dhekelia and Akrotiri — moving to Limassol the following year. In the first eight months of 1980 JSPU was responsible for something like 7500 tons of imported British Government cargo with about a quarter of that figure exported.

Port Commandant is Major Tommy Thompson, Royal Corps of Transport, who is also Officer Commanding 10 Port Squadron RCT at Akrotiri. But the day to day running of the Service business at Limassol is in the capable hands of Flight Lieutenant Ron Kennett, RAF.

As he walked around the docks, greeted by smiles and waves from all sides, Flight Lieutenant Kennett told SOLDIER: "By being here we save the Government a lot of money. We have close personal relationships with the shipping agents right down to the stevedores. I have to go to the shipping offices and negotiate prices and the special relationship helps a lot."

What also helps is that his staff includes, as well as Army and RAF personnel, a number of Cypriot clerks who have been with the unit ever since Famagusta days — one since the Second World War.

The relationship is illustrated by the fact that Service cargo is allowed to go direct from the ship to the shed rather than through a Customs warehouse. Customs examinations take place in the shed which is guarded 24 hours a day by Cypriot Army Depot policemen from 227 Provost Company, RMP.

"We don't look at the colour of a man's uniform when we are working for him," says



Left: Soldier turned sailor — Cpl Andy Farrell, coxswain of *Pike*, the Squadron's work boat.

Above: RAF Whirlwind helicopter winches crew member onto *Pike* in air-sea rescue drill.

Flight Lieutenant Ron Kennett, and illustrates this by the example of a shipping scheme he worked out which helps the soldier posted from Cyprus to Rhine Army. A posting between Cyprus and Germany rarely happens with the RAF.

Prior to its introduction, baggage from Cyprus to Rhine Army was going by container to London. It was then being transported from Britain to Germany via Rotterdam. And, in reverse, items were being put into containers for the United Kingdom, then emptied, Customs cleared and finally put into a Cyprus container.

Said Major Thompson: "Ron initiated the system straight from Cyprus to BAOR and it took some time to convince the other end that they should send straight to Cyprus".

At the end of the day, however, the Serviceman is getting his effects quicker and the shipping costs have been cut by about two thirds. A ship goes to Rotterdam every ten

days which takes the Service containers. They then travel overland to Dusseldorf.

"The old system often took a long time," said Flight Lieutenant Kennett. "The worst case we had was someone who waited five months from handling his things in Germany until they arrived here."

The unit is also responsible for collecting excess baggage charges from Service families who want to move just too much furniture and effects. Happily this task has decreased considerably since the unaccompanied baggage entitlement scales were revised. But Flight Lieutenant Kennett is convinced that many Servicemen land themselves with excess baggage charges by bad packing.

Walking up to 15 boxes sent down to the port by a sergeant he picked several up — and rattled them. "If there is space someone is having to pay for it. Even if he is not over his entitlement it is still costing the Government extra money."

continued on page 32

That sergeant would be called down to the port to open his boxes to see if they could be repacked into a smaller number.

"Bad packing can result in excess baggage charges as well as damage," said Ron Kennett. "The excess charge is £94 a cubic metre and what they must ask themselves is if the stuff they are moving is worth £94 to them."

The United Kingdom-bound baggage moves by container to Ellesmere Port near Liverpool for North of England and Scotland addresses and to London for the southern half of England.

Among the other cargoes which go through the port for the British forces are sea mail, rations including frozen foods, furniture, military vehicles, films, stationery and private vehicles (moved officially for civil servants but only on an indulgence fill-up basis for the Servicemen).

From the port to the sovereign base areas the container loads are taken by road using Army Scammell Crusaders from 58 Squadron RCT — among the biggest vehicles to be seen on the Cyprus roads.

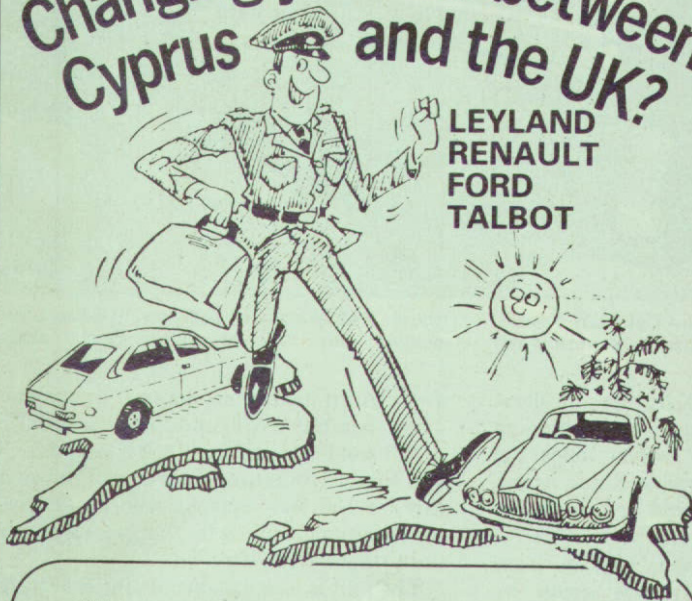
And occasionally the JSPU has to make the arrangements for a civil servant or high ranking Service officer who elects to take up his right to return home by sea and rail rather than by air.

Two years ago the JSPU took on an added role — for the United Nations peace-keeping forces in the Lebanon. The goods, mostly dry rations and MT spares, go to Beirut, with frozen food going to Haifa. Among the ship-



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ping companies which are used for this service is an East German one!

Every summer JSPU moves to Akrotiri for a short period where it teams up with 10 Port Squadron for the annual visit of a Landing Ship Logistic with a cargo including more than 200 tons of explosives.

Non-urgent export cargoes for UK are always accumulated for the visit of the LSL and those of the RFA *Bacchus*, which goes to Cyprus quarterly. This helps to keep the shipping costs down.

Back at Akrotiri, site of the now famous Mole built in the early Sixties and reconstructed in the Seventies, Major Thompson dons his second hat as OC of 10 Port Squadron — a 31-man outfit including locally employed civilians which provides the Army's sea power in Cyprus.

The squadron boasts two ramp powered lighters, capable of carrying vehicles and general cargo, two Mexeflotes (rafts powered by outboard engines), a work boat and the pinnacle *Hyperion*.

The squadron does a lot of training — delivering men and vehicles along the coast for both UKLF based and local units on exercise. But it comes very much into its own with needle-sharp seamanship when Royal Navy warships visit the sovereign bases — on average about five or six times a year.

Visitors in the past 12 months have included the carrier *HMS Bulwark*, the 12,000 ton amphibious assault ship *HMS Intrepid* and a range of frigates.

"Many thanks for your invaluable professional assistance" is a run-of-the-mill departure signal from the Navy after 10 Port Squadron have spent several days providing almost round-the-clock support for the big ships at anchor or berthed alongside the Akrotiri mole.

Help will range from a friendly and skilful nudge while picking up moorings, down to the vital but unglamorous need for 'gash runs' — carting ships' refuse and rubbish ashore. In between there will be hundreds of visitors and shore-going sailors to be ferried back and forth and the major logistic task of re-provisioning ships on the last leg of their programme homebound after a Suez Canal transit and weeks in the Indian Ocean and further east.

It's often an all-weather job when the Navy's in and many a dark-blue tribute has been paid to the tenacity and boat-handling skills of the Squadron's crews in 'bad blows'

and heavy seas — a feature of the East Mediterranean climate which is very real but often forgotten.

In a more minor capacity they put out the swimming buoys in the sovereign base areas at the start of each summer and remove them at the end of the season.

The *Hyperion* is the main search and rescue vessel available to Cyprus. It comes under an air-sea rescue operation controlled by the RAF and incorporating their Whirlwind helicopters but which is also available to the Republic of Cyprus. There is a 24 hour standby service 365 days a year.

Any of the Squadron's available vessels are likely to be committed to emergencies however and RPL 05, the *Eden*, earned what is thought to be a unique Commander's Commendation for an RCT craft in April 1979.

The six crew members at the time received personal awards for their "outstanding seamanship" during a hazardous rescue picking up a critically ill seaman from a cruise liner in storm-driven 20 foot seas. And flat-bottomed bucketing *Eden* herself was judged to have qualified for a commendation of her own for coping with weather which had kept all other craft for 30 miles in harbour.

Recently the *Hyperion* was involved in a massive eight day search along the southern coastline of Cyprus for drugs after the Cyprus police had made drugs arrests in Larnaca.

More than 175 kgs of cannabis resin were picked up by the British forces off the Akrotiri peninsula in seven floating bags —

and RAF helicopters found nine more bags which were transferred direct to Cyprus police launches.

Warrant Officer 2 Bill Havard, coxswain of the *Hyperion*, takes up the story: "We were just coming in from a detail at about 5pm when we got a telephone call to say there were five or six packages floating in the sea west of the point here.

"We found a square polystyrene buoy with five canvas sacks joined to it by a line. Each sack contained a polythene bag. When the RAF police and the Customs men opened them they found individual packets all containing pure Lebanese hash.

"Later that evening we were called out again to a little cove where policemen handed us another two sackfuls which we passed over to the Customs."

Mr Havard runs a night class at Akrotiri for budding yachtsmen and is planning to start a navigation course this winter for corporals in the squadron.

"Recently we have been getting a lot of junior NCOs from the big ships and I want to boost their capabilities in handling small boats so that they can do it on their own with confidence when it becomes necessary."

Wherever you are in Cyprus you are never far from the water. And the men who work with 10 Port Squadron, based as it is on an RAF station, and those who work with the Joint Services Port Unit in Limassol, know one thing for sure. The air forces and the land forces work very well together on the sea! ●

Below: *Eden* — winner of a Commander's Commendation.



Below: Flt Lt Kennett watches containers being loaded.



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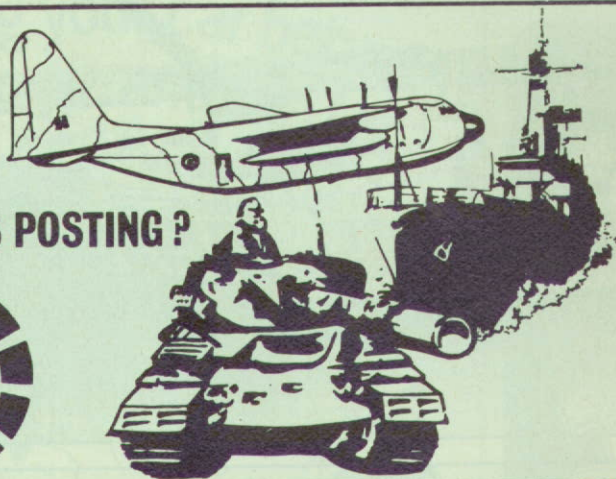
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LABOUR OF LOVE

**Story: Graham Smith
Pictures: Paul Haley**



A famous
regiment's
old
treasures
get a new
home

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD! In an exclusively male preserve, the recently re-sited Gloucestershire Regiment Museum in the county's cathedral city, there are five ladies of plastic proportions lurking out of sight among the priceless exhibits of war. And they had willingly submitted to genteel sex change and transplant operations to fulfil what has been described as an "unselfish and unstinting labour-of-love".

They were toted to the museum quite 'starkers', without struggle or public outcry, a quarter-mile through the busy city streets under the arms of two retired majors from the Regiment which has fought in almost every campaign in which the British Army has taken part.

The once elegantly-clad department store window exhibitionists who were suddenly declared to be redundant were decapitated in the museum's 'surgery', had their heads replaced by those from models in a mens' multiple tailors and are now modestly covered by heavy khaki overcoats complete with sword slits . . . jodhpur-type breeches . . . and trench boots.

It all took place in time for the museum's re-opening last autumn by the Duke of Gloucester, the Regiment's Colonel-in-Chief. Formerly housed at Bishop Hooper's Lodging, the museum is now sited more spaciouly at the Custom House in Commercial Road in premises vacated by HM Customs. And it has all been made possible by the tireless efforts of a baker's dozen of voluntary helpers drawn up from retired officers and their wives.

Project officer behind the scheme, in which the volunteers put in an average three days a week, was Colonel Allen Knight, former second-in-command of the Battalion during the Imjin incident in Korea in 1951.

For nearly nine months his helpers painted, drilled, sewed, framed, polished cleaned and generally cared for the exhibits prior to their move. Now the fruits of their labours can be seen in four period rooms, a medal room, two corridors and a central hall.

Colonel Knight explained: "We started with a very small committee of three retired officers who were asked by the Regiment to advise on the re-setting up of the museum. When we met it was clear that we would not be able to employ professionals to do it. They would have asked for at least £2000.

"We drew on retired officers and their wives who lived reasonably locally and asked them if each couple would like to take over a room with the responsibility of setting it up.

Above: Mrs Weller 'bulls' model's brass buttons. That appealed to us. Now each room has the stamp of individuals who set it up."

And still the material is coming in, mostly from families clearing out attics and even old soldiers coming in off the street to donate memories of their moments of glory.

Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Radice, the Regimental Secretary, said: "For some strange reason there is a shortage of Second World War material. We need a Vickers gun, even a Bren gun."

Among the 13 helpers were two officers who were Korean prisoners-of-war and action there by the Regiment figures prominently among the memorabilia. But also on display are items reflecting service under Marlborough in the Low Countries, with Wolfe at Quebec, with Wellington in the Peninsula and at Waterloo, in India at Chillianwallah and at the siege of Delhi, in the Crimea at Inkerman and Sebastopol, in South Africa, the two World Wars, Cyprus, Aden and, latterly, Northern Ireland.

The museum houses medals galore including replicas of two of the Regiment's VCs — it won nine in all — two solid gold crosses from the Peninsular War, a Queen's South African medal with six bars, a George Cross and many campaign medals.

It is estimated by Lt-Col Radice that some 15,000 men from the county's Regiment have given their lives since the unit's inception in 1694.

Of the museum, he said: "A museum's work is never finished. It goes on. As time goes by we will want to ring the changes and we are planning for a couple of mobile displays which can be sent out to Open Days and fetes."

Mrs Berthe Weller, whose husband was a Korean POW, said: "I knew very little about military history before this. We have several female window dummies under those uniforms. We acquired not only these, but hands, torsos and male heads. They were a sort of Frankenstein composite when we were making them up."

Colonel Knight, who retired from the Army in 1966, summed up: "In terms of time the project has cost us nothing. The expense has been on materials costing about £2000 plus the security system. We are limited by space and our exhibits have to be fairly small scale.

"By and large, the whole has been an unselfish, unstinting labour-of-love." ●

Our regular article on Military Museums appears on page 37.



Right: Piling sandbags in World War One room.

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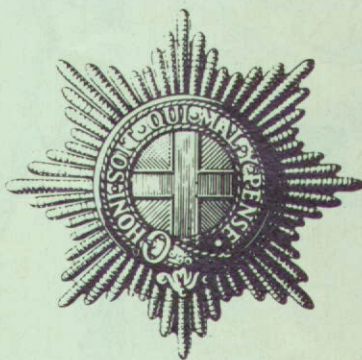
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MILITARY MUSEUMS

THE GUARDS DEPOT, PIRBRIGHT



The badge of the Coldstream Guards.

Here at Pirbright is the second of two museums devoted to the Brigade of Guards, the other being at Wellington Barracks, London, (Military museums 32). Part of the Guards Depot educational and library complex, it occupies two spacious floors and the curator is ever on the look-out for new exhibits.

On entering, three items quickly catch the eye: a German machine gun captured by General Lord Jeffreys when commanding the 2nd Battalion, Grenadier Guards, at Loos in 1915; a World War One German trench mortar and carriage; and the late 19th century full dress uniform and accoutrements of Colonel F Lloyd, Grenadier Guards, including his spurs and two swords. His mess jacket is also shown.

Reminders of the South African war are a bugle used by a Coldstream Guards bugler and two Enfield rifles with bandoliers and bullets. An 1884 pattern bayonet and scabbard is also worth noting.

The museum is particularly rich in First World War exhibits. A German trench club, a Bavarian infantry dress helmet, a German cavalry sword and scabbard and a vicious saw bayonet fixed to a rifle used by German infantry contrary to a ruling by the Geneva Convention banning this type of bayonet. Among other items are a letter written by Lord Kitchener to soldiers of the British Expeditionary Force; a cartridge case used by a member of the firing squad at the execution of Lieutenant Carl Hans Lody, of the German Naval Reserve, who was one of the first spies to be planted in England; a German fighting knife; a British trench lamp; an early French gas mask; two types of egg bomb used by British soldiers on bombing raids; a casualty book — open at a page of missing and showing the devastating effect of gas attacks — and, finally,



The badge of the Grenadier Guards.

the front page of the London Evening News of Monday, November 11, 1918, headlined "The End of the War."

Two Sten guns, a Mark 1 and 2, Afrika Korps miscellanea, German medals, among them two Iron Crosses, and a set of trench armour worn by a German sniper are representative of World War Two relics. A special Order of the Day by Major-General Allan Adair congratulating the Guards Armoured Division on their "magnificent performance in liberating Brussels" is a much prized exhibit.

A reminder of the Mau Mau troubles is a home-made rifle with its bolt fashioned from the bolt of a front door. Then there are jungle boots worn by British troops in Borneo, a matchet and sheath from the Far East, an Arab rifle from the Radfan and various other souvenirs. A fine display of rifles of different nationalities includes one of the first to be fitted with a telescopic sight and used by the British Army. There is also a rifle carried by Sir Charles Russell during the storming of the Sandbag Battery at the battle of Inkerman.

In the gallery a number of prime exhibits are shown to advantage, among them an 1878 bugle, two fencing foils which once belonged to the Begum of Bhopal, drums which saw service in the Crimea, a collection of revolvers and pistols and a particularly interesting Lee Enfield rifle adapted for trench warfare with a periscope and specially curved butt.

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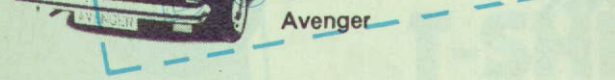
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On the west coast of Scotland SOLDIER unlocks the secrets of 'compo' in the factory where they cook up ...

MEALS FOR MARCHING ON

IT WAS NAPOLEON who started it all. It is not as strange as it might seem perhaps that a leader famous for so many things military should have been the inspiration behind the first 'compo' rations.

He offered a prize to anyone who could suggest a way of preserving rations other than by salting. And so the can was born.

'Compo', in many quarters, seems to be almost a dirty word. The very mention of it can send grown men into paroxysms of teeth gnashing and face pulling.

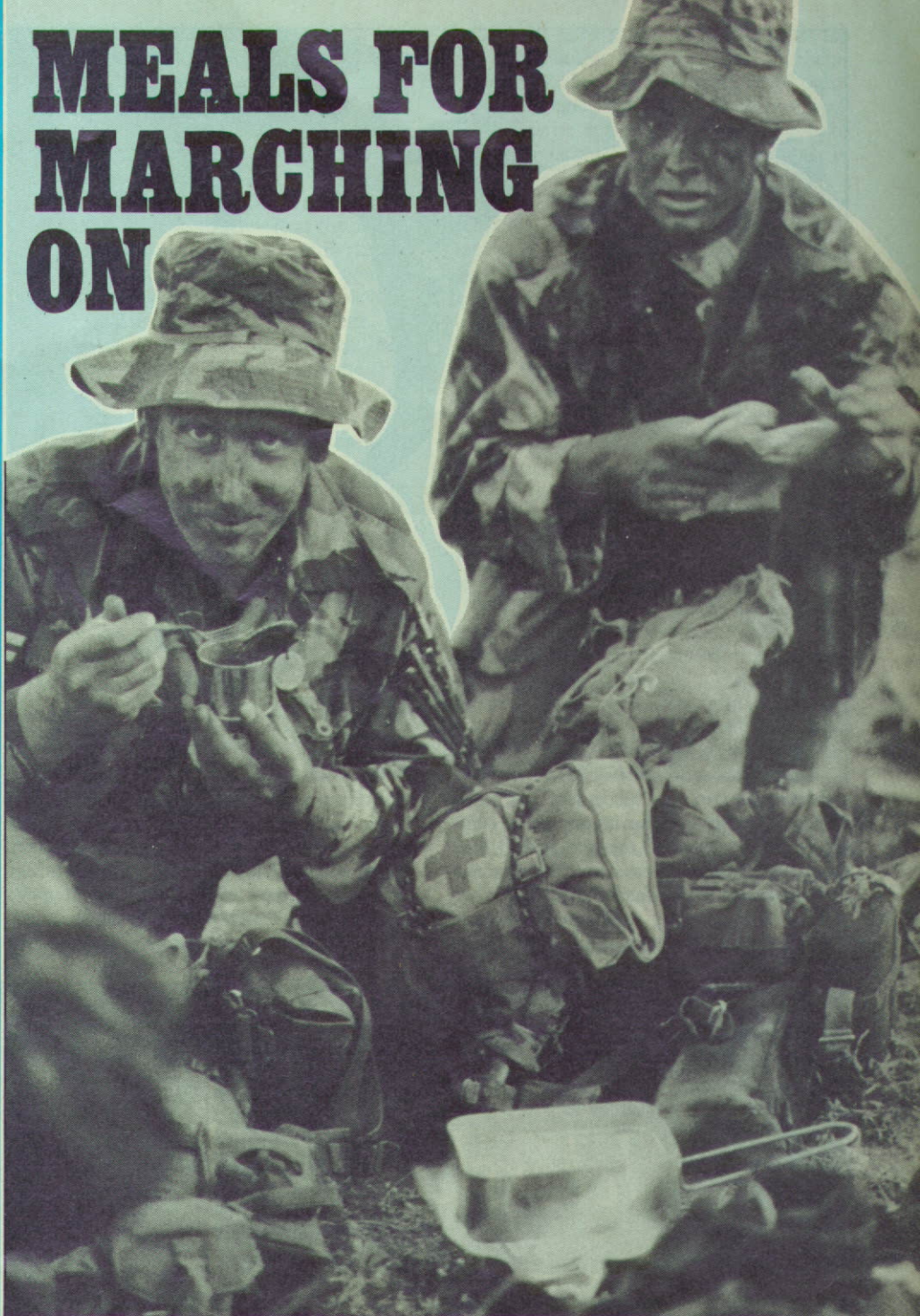
But oddly enough, after all the trauma, it usually emerges that not only do most soldiers appreciate the anonymous little tins that make up the ration packs, but that there is hot competition for favourites. Steak and kidney puddings and beefburgers in rich gravy have as many fans as the deliciously sweet apple puddings.

Tracking down the source of these tasty offerings led SOLDIER to Ayrshire in Scotland. There in a beautiful converted eighteenth century stable block, once part of Eglinton Castle, and set amid 50 acres of rolling parkland, is the factory of Robert Wilson and Sons Ltd who supply a good proportion of the compo rations, particularly the tins of meat and vegetables that make up the major part of each menu.

The business is very much a family concern and 'the old man', Mr Clement Wilson, was as much a father figure as an employer. The same close relationship exists today between the management and the workers on the factory floor.

Mr Douglas MacNeill, the present Managing Director, appreciates the value of such

continued on page 40



Above: The convenience foods they love to hate. Below: Messrs MacNeill and Golding outside factory.



Story: Ann Beecham

Pictures: Paul Haley



a relationship to the success of the firm. "We've literally got the biggest food companies as competitors", he told SOLDIER, but Wilsons are nevertheless a force to be reckoned with in the food industry.

They supply many well-known retailers with quality products — including Marks

and Spencer — and compo is made to the same high standards. Indeed the steak and kidney pudding served up on Salisbury Plain was acclaimed by no less a gourmet than Egon Ronay of *The Good Food Guide*.

The factory's own stringent standards are

Above: Proof of the pudding is in the eating.

supervised regularly by MOD inspectors to ensure the high quality of the products. And responsible for maintaining these standards is Mr Michael Golding, Technical Director.

Food preparation in any form is a problem and the path from hoof to tin is fraught with pitfalls. Mr Golding has to make this path as smooth as possible. The strictest hygiene is observed at every stage and floors and working surfaces are hosed down with high pressure jets of water.

"The butchery is ideal and there are no problems keeping it clean," said Mr Alec Miller who has been with Wilsons for 22 years. "It is built to EEC standards and operates at 50 degrees Fahrenheit." The operating temperature is important during the handling of the raw meat. "We start preparing the afternoon before we can a product and then it goes into the chill overnight".

His 22 years service is by no means extraordinary among Wilson employees. Mr Frank McGary has been with Wilsons for 16 years and remembers the old days. "The meat we got then had the bones and everything in it. Mr Wilson, the old man, never wanted to waste anything. I started crushing bones when I came which we sold to petfood suppliers".

Nowadays the meat is mostly from the EEC and the standards laid down for all European meat make the job of preparing the carcasses easier. Even so, it still takes time to check quality when around 100 tons a week are involved. Commented Mr Golding: "The meat buyer is much more of a political animal now. Before it was more of a

Below: Cutting the meat is only the beginning.

commodity market."

He still has to be an economic animal though. Alec Miller has been a butcher since the old days and he remembers: "It was an old shilling per lb in those days. Now it is about 65 pence. That is the key to the operation — watching the odd pennies." And it is under his watchful eye that the cutting goes on at Wilsons.

Preparing a slab of meat for canning is a highly skilled operation. The men and women cubing the pieces in front of them work quickly and deftly. The men usually tackle the larger and more awkward fore-quarters while the women deal with the hindquarter cuts which are rather more manageable and need cutting more neatly.

The butchered meat is collected in trolleys at the end of each bench and, despite the large quantities of meat processed daily with the sharp knives, there didn't appear to be any missing fingers among the staff.

The cannery area started life as the cobbled courtyard in the centre of the stable block, but as the needs of the factory demanded more and more space, so the cobbles were removed. Now, instead of the ring of hooves, there is the deafening noise of machinery as tins rattle past in all directions, even vertically, pulled upwards by magnets. Some are empty, some half-filled with meat heading for a scoop of vegetables and a squirt of gravy before they are whisked through to another machine which extracts the air and fits the lids.

Beefburgers are flipping their way through a machine that partly cooks them so that they don't stick together in the tin and a

Below: Jackie chooses various herbs and spices.

row of cheerful women are weighing the mixed vegetables for compo meat and veg. 36,000 kilos each of peas, onions and carrots go to make up 200,000 tins.

The tins, with their special lacquer coatings inside and out, have to conform to as strict an MOD standard as their contents. Wilsons boast that the special lacquer they use is as effective in the desert as the arctic. Every tin is subject to high-pressure rinsing before and after it is filled by a method specifically designed to prevent bacteria being transferred through the moisture.

In commercial terms the canning lines move slowly at only 250 tins-a-minute, but Michael Golding explained that this gives Wilsons the flexibility of which they are justly proud. Lines can be adapted easily to cater for special needs and they are equipped to put together a complete compo package if the demand arises.

High overhead, on metal platforms, are the retorts — huge pressure cookers which cook the contents and sterilize the cans. Cooking is judged to the second according to timings and temperatures worked out by laboratory tests to combine maximum flavour and shelf-life.

Although relatively small in size, the lab is of great importance. Samples are held for a fortnight to check that the sterilization process has been effective before each batch is labelled and packed for removal to Botley, near Southampton, where the compo packs are put together.

Chris Kent is in charge of quality control: "When you've tasted it every day for so many years you know what you are looking for." Sam Emberson also knows what he is

looking for as he runs a series of tests on the tins to check the seams and seals on them. "You are looking for the standard of tightness and degree of interlock and overlap," he said as he attacked a tin with a pair of pliers. "In fact, when a line is going, you can tell a lot from just looking at a can."

The Experimental Kitchen staff under the guidance of Wilson's leading lady for 30 years, Mrs Jackie Patterson, are also responsible for developing new lines and testing processes on a small scale before they are committed to factory production.

Wilsons were the only UK firm to get corned beef samples through the tests held by government chemists and they also take pride in having developed the baconburger from scratch. Michael Golding explained: "On many products we work with government scientists but after that it is put out for tender and we may not even win the contract. But we have to be philosophical about it and we do still have a substantial part of the MOD business."

Mrs Patterson takes her customers very seriously and market research has taught Wilsons a lot about the tastes of the people who actually eat compo. "The one-man ration packs are particularly popular. All the soldiers and sailors I have spoken to have their views on them. The one essential item seems to be the oatmeal biscuit. They would miss this most of all."

Napoleon may or may not have been first with the idea that an army marches on its stomach but when he got tired of salt beef, he certainly left a lasting monument in 'compo'.

Below: Total sterilisation is all-important.

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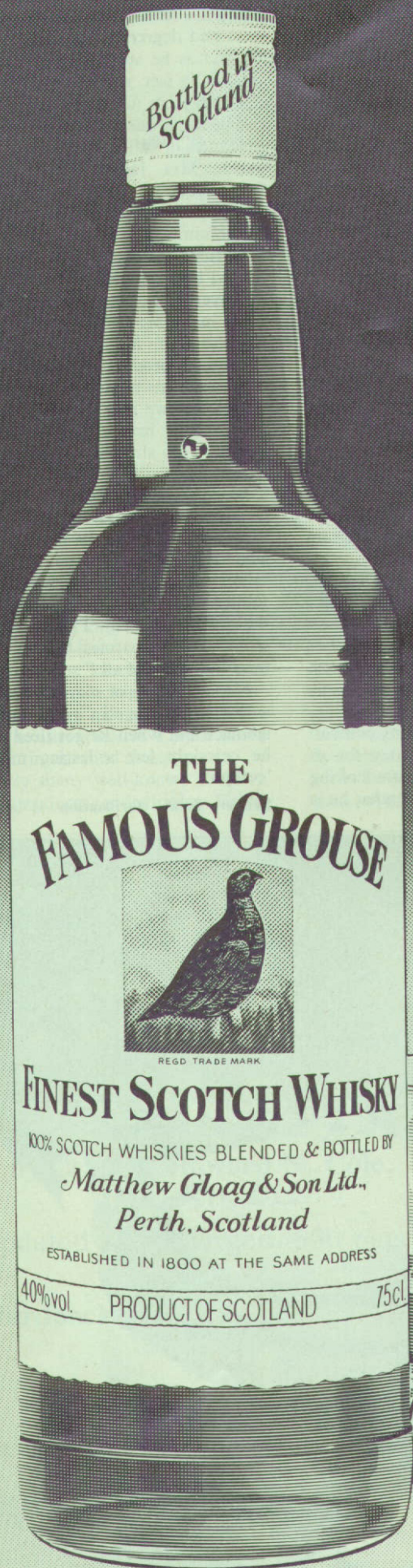
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The dishes are of course, merely training aids used on three-week food service courses for trainees throughout the Army. And students who attend these courses — and other courses run for mess supervisors — have recently acquired an extra incentive to do well. They can now leave the depot with a City and Guilds of London Institute 707, Part One, Certificate — a vital passport to a catering job in Civvy Street should they ever want to apply their skills outside the Army.

This arrangement has been back-dated to 31 October 1978, and Catering Corps' chiefs hope that the opportunity to gain civilian recognition will actually encourage stewards to stay in the Army instead of foraging around 'outside' for catering jobs against stiff competition.

Lieutenant-Colonel Peter Drewett, CO of the Army School of Catering, endorsed the theme: "This joint certification with the stewards' course is in line with the Army Catering Corps philosophy of obtaining qualifications for their soldiers to equip them for their second career and encourage them to continue to serve a full career with the Army."

Each year some 250 stewards including members of the WRAC pass through the portals of the training depot to return to their regiments, spread world-wide, much wiser and more highly skilled in the art of waiting at table.

And, within weeks, some of them could actually find themselves serving at regimental functions involving visiting Royalty.

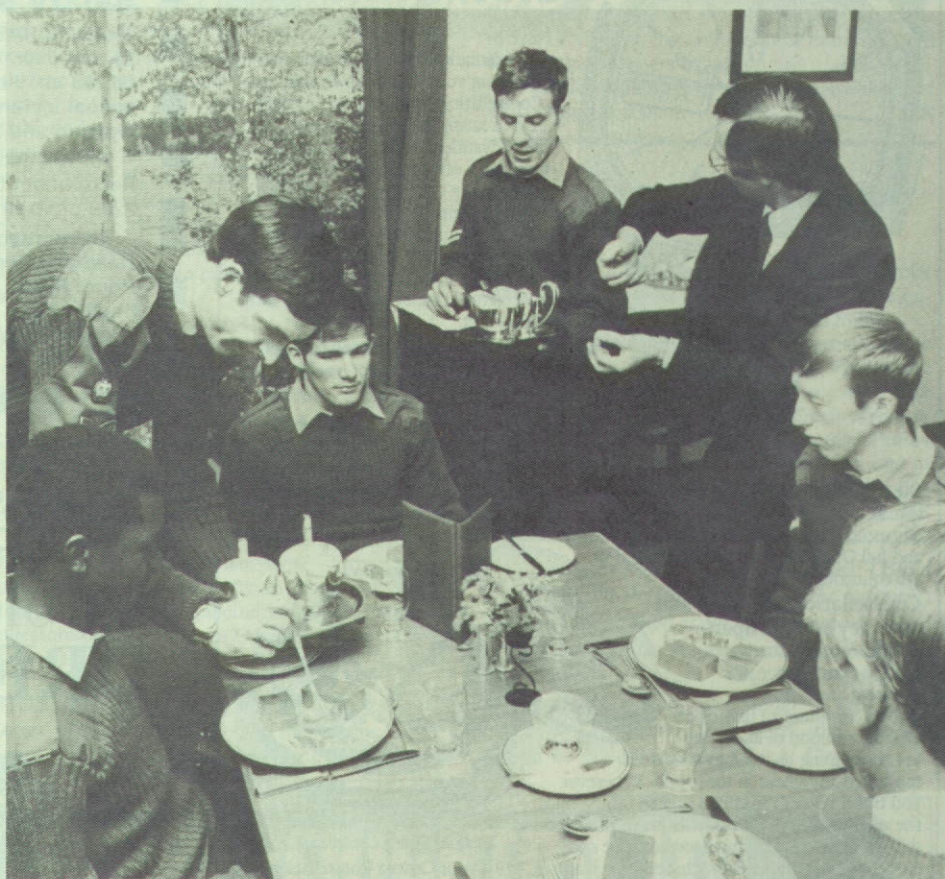
There is no shortage of volunteers either for the dozen basic courses, each of which attracts about 20 students. They apply themselves enthusiastically to preparing for their new — admittedly often more comfortable — lifestyles amid the mess silver, portraits, candelabra and chandeliers where their duties may range from serving breakfast to waiting at glittering gala nights.

Now, under the back-dating arrangements, about 600 stewards will be credited with City and Guilds Certificates which are now strived for at the Officer Training Wing of Aldershot's St Omer Barracks.

To earn their 'pass' the students must put in an intensive 135 hours of careful study even practising, in their spare-time with a pair of pencils, the techniques of serving food with spoon and fork from a silver flat dish.

WO 1 John Moorey, the Staff Sergeant Major in charge of administration, said: "They all apply themselves to the training when they come here. There are only a handful that do not fit. I suppose we have had, in the past year, only four students returned to their units."

Trainee mess stewards have just been given an added incentive to perfect their polished table manners.



He added: "But we do have our amusing moments, too. In our training restaurant we tell our first-time 'guinea pig' customers that we can supply plastic macs if they are scared of the waiter service about to be applied on them! This always goes down well and makes the stewards more relaxed."

The most difficult courses to serve at table, he confided, are spaghetti served from the silver flat with fork and spoon . . . Dover sole (especially when well-cooked) on the bone with a request to fillet . . . and spun sugar.

Concessions for clumsiness or excuses are not built into the training syllabus at Aldershot. Life is life, they say, and the mess steward must sort out his own salvation on the spot.

The ice-cream and melba sauce slithering down the ample cleavage of a Brigadier's lady . . . the scalding soup suddenly upset over a mess tunic . . . the uncontrolled disintegration of a spoonful of French Fries onto

an unsuspecting lap . . . all must be handled with decorum there and then.

But in every case when course students at Aldershot turn out for on-the-job training at a function an instructor is never far away.

Dining room dexterity is instilled into the students with humour not harshness at the school's training restaurant.

Stewards, for example, have to know how to fold a napkin in no less than four different styles.

Also on the curriculum are housekeeping, reception, bar service, cellar work, beverage service, flower arrangements for tables, good hygiene and storage, care of silverware and function planning.

Temperaments, too, are tested to the full. The staff of four instructors take an almost paternal interest in the progress of the youngsters and the not-so-young, including civilians, who would probably agree with Milton's philosophy that "they also serve who only stand and wait." ●

Right: Watched critically by fellow trainees a student steward ladles out invisible 'gravy'.

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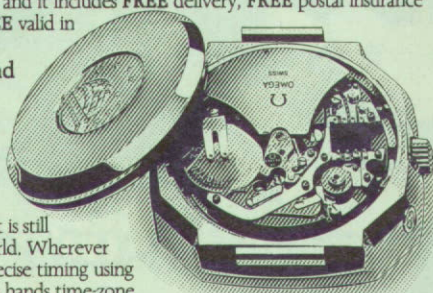
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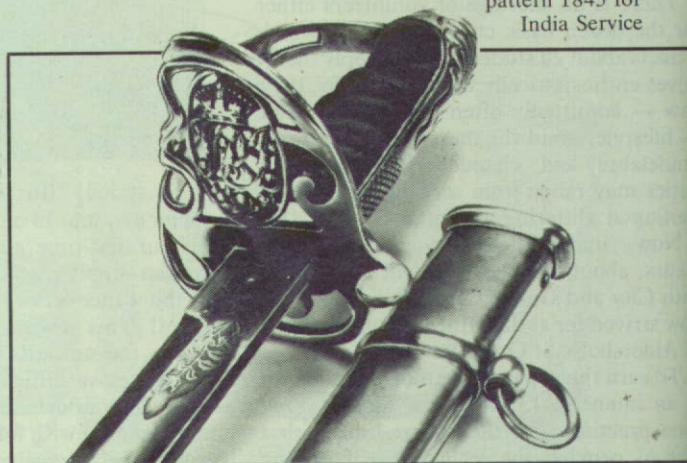
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ON RECORD

'The Vikings' (Band of the 1st Bn The Royal Anglian Regiment) (Conductor: Bandmaster S P W Lines) (Music Masters 0565)

The present battalion appears, however tenuously, to have inherited the old Vikings nickname, and luckily for them the American Alfred Reed's Nordic Trilogy includes a *War March and Battle Hymn of the Vikings*. In a Hollywood epic-film style it gives the disc a nicely atmospheric start which hardly prepares one for the programme as a whole; I think I would have saved it for a programme of the marvellous Nordic music now available, and gone the whole hog on the Viking connection.

An unhackneyed choice of music though, and well put across with conviction and bravura. Donald Stauffer's *Fugue and Swing* is interesting but not in the class of Alec Templeton's *Bach Goes to Town*. *Free an' Easy* is a little trombone trio by Captain Jerry McColl, *Die Soldaten von Celle* a

The established winners are a favourite Bavarian bierkellerish tune called *Trompeten Echo*, a version of Mozart's tune known, I think, as *Elvira Madigan*, and the great *Pinball Wizard*. Side two includes two rather overdone items in *New Sounds of the Carpenters* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* but some newer sounds than usual here.

A disc well worth having, from MM, price £4 plus P&P from PRI, 1 R Anglian, BFPO 23, or DM15 locally. **RB**

'Marching with The Gunners' (Royal Artillery Mounted Band) (Conductor: Major T A Kenny) (EMI NTS 204)

March collectors will need to be careful in future. Major Terry Kenny has recently broken into the field of pasticcio in a big way and I feel it a reviewer's duty to reveal all. His march *The President Elect*, which has appeared several times recently, is a fair-enough pastiche of Sousa's style, but here we have a *Florian* march and a *Fliegers-marsch*, both in well-worn idioms, not to say cliché-ridden monstrosities, which are somewhat shamefacedly attributed to one C Siegal. I wouldn't be at all surprised to find that the *Petersburg March* (arr Heisig), *La Soirée* (D Ordini), and particularly *The Masterpiece* (Mouret-Parnes) were from the Kenny stable. Writing sincere (if not original) music under a pseudonym is not at all the same thing.

The marches I can guarantee as by the named composer are Laukien's great *Thro' Night to Light*, Strauss' *Die Fledermaus* and Suppé's great *Boccaccio* (both arr Kenny), Codina's *Zacatecas*, Fielding's *Hogan's Heroes*, and an arrangement of Charpentier's *Trumpet Prelude*. Others which are forced into a marching mould are *Adeleta*, *Who's Sorry Now*, and Nationwide's old signature tune *The Good Word*.

An excellent disc of nicely varied styles and rhythms (which means that some of the tunes could only be marched to by an American Grid-Iron girl's band) which includes at least three for collectors and, if you count C Siegal as collectable, about half a dozen. **RB**

'Sousa, The March King' (Band of the Royal Corps of Transport) (Conductor: Major T A Kenny) (DR Orchestral & Recording Services, 36

Garrick Gdns, W Molesey, Surrey)

Ah, Major Terry Kenny again; but there's a picture of Sousa on the sleeve and he doesn't look a bit like C Siegal.

As I've often had to explain to 'Disgusteds from Tooting' (too often, no doubt) there is always a market for Sousa discs, even if it is the same old dozen every time. Here, in a beautifully produced album with many photographs of the composer, you not only have ten of the best but also a couple of rarities in *From Maine to Oregon* and *The Northern Pines*.

The usual ten are *Fairest of the Fair*, *Sabre and Spurs*, *Manhattan Beach*, *Thunderer*, *Picadore*, *Hands Across the Sea*, *Semper Fidelis*, *Gladiator*, *El Capitan* and *Belle of Chicago*. In several of them C Siegal has let loose his newly acquired corps of trumpets/bugles and drums, but only where many of us have always thought Sousa himself should have done so. All in all an exceptional Sousa disc of which the great man himself would have approved, in strict, no-nonsense lively tempo and precision performance. One of these days someone should attempt a Victorian concert-hall, showman-like performance of the twelve greats, with audience atmosphere and a few Sousa eccentricities of interpretation, like ten piccolos for the variations in *Stars & Stripes*, massive dynamic extremes, and some rather tasteless exaggerations of tempo.

It should sell like hotcakes. But not to Disgusteds of Tooting, of course. **BR**

Brass in brief

'Cwm Rhondda' (The Cory Band) (Treorchy Male Voice Choir) (Conductors: Major H A Kenney and John Gynan Jones) (EMI NTS 202)

For all true Welshmen and others, a great Sunday afternoon's listening in front of the fire to the *Huntsmen's Chorus*, *Calon Lan*, *Arouse Ye!*, *Non Nobis Domine* (Kipling-Quilter), *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, *Roman War Song*, *Llanfair*, *Pirates Chorus*, *March to the Holy Grail* (Parsifal), and of course *Cwm Rhondda*. Both choir and band in fine form. **RB**

Following the review of **'Quick Silver'** (Band and Bugles of the 2nd Bn The Light Infantry) in our October 1980 issue, we have been asked to point out that the record can be obtained from The Director of Music, HQ Light Division, Peninsula Barracks, Winchester SO23 8TS. Price is £3.50 including p&p and cheques should be payable to: HQ Light Division.



march by Mr Lines, *Concert Rondo* a horn solo by Alfred Tubb of the RCT Band, and *Boulevard* a piece by Sergeant Hill, a member of this band. With two other items arranged domestically the whole record is a tribute to the Army's present state of health. All good stuff too, even if Mr Lines' march suffers an unfortunate plagiarism right at the start and Mr Tubb's rondo is a bit of Mozart on a horse riding by.

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Story: Graham Smith



A retired Brigadier's bright idea has paved the way for package tours with a difference.

RETURN TO THE RAJ

THEY PROBABLY 'BAG' VERY FEW TIGERS from the safety of elephant-borne howdahs in the Punjab nowadays. Though some will say indignantly they never did. And Lucknow has not enjoyed quite the same notoriety since its well-publicised Mutiny of 1857.

The thwack of stick against ball during vigorous chukkas as Brits played polo at Bangalore has been silenced by the passing decades and there are fewer elegant mem-sahibs to be found taking tiffin on well-manicured lawns.

But for those who yearn to return to those golden days of the British Raj, all is not lost, thanks to a unique 'package tour' being offered specially to erstwhile 'pukka sahibs'.

The tours are the brainchild of Brigadier John Woodroffe, an enterprising former subaltern in the 19th Lancers who served in Lahore and who is now diplomatic representative at London's swish Carlton Tower Hotel as well as chairman of the 550-strong

Top: Last Skinner's Horse crest with Crown.
Left: The remarkable Ramzan, 73 — Skinner's Horse Officers' Mess steward since 1932.



Left: 'Jumbo jet' taxi service — these elephants carry visitors to famous 'pink city' of Jaipur.

Indian Cavalry Officers' Association.

It was he who thought up the idea of the nostalgic pilgrimages back to India and Pakistan and passed it on to a business acquaintance, Mr Michael Robinson, who subsequently specialised in arranging trips for those who used to serve out there.

Each sentimental journey for former servants of the Empire to the steamy Indo-Pakistan sub-continent averages out at two-and-a-half to three-and-a-half weeks, costs up to £1000 a head and is organised from the Hermes Tours Ltd offices in London's Conduit Street.

And satisfied clients still come back for more — year after year.

Last autumn, for instance, one of the 'India hands' who re-visited the old haunts which he occupied as a subaltern was an 89-year-old Lieutenant-Colonel from Devon. He remembered standing on the verandah of the British Residency in Gulmarg, 8500 feet up in the Kashmiri Mountains, when a telegram was thrust into his young hands on August 4, 1914, telling him that Britain was at war with Germany.

Flown out by scheduled services, each group — up to a couple of dozen in number — is usually accommodated in chalet-type hotels with all the customary services and crackling log fires to while away the memories of yore and keep the cold of the tropical night at bay.

Others, however, opt for sun-decked houseboats with viewing verandahs anchored on a Kashmiri lake flanked by fragrant lotus flowers, chinar trees and, of course, lofty mountain ranges.

Brigadier Woodroffe estimates that some 600 nostalgies and curious novitiates connected in some way or other with the Indian Army have headed out East since 1976 to soak up the atmosphere that is uniquely India, the land mass that was once a bold red imprint on schoolroom wall maps in the days of the Raj and thereafter.

"The tours are always looked forward to with great favour particularly by the women and especially the widows who may not have personal experience of India and go back to meet people who served with their husbands," he said.

"One of the great characteristics is a wonderful 'esprit' among the visiting groups, a sort of club, where they can talk on past subjects and places in India common to them all."

There have been tales of meetings with elderly house-staff of three decades or so ago like eight-rupee-a-month punkha wallahs. Some of these had made ten-mile trips or more on foot to meet again with their revered sahibs of yesteryear.

All the trips mounted by the Hermes agency are different. There are usually about three or four a year, some in temperatures nudging 120 degrees and swamped by high humidity.

Volunteers, however, are not in short supply despite the stifling nature of the Indian climate. They take to the houseboats at Srinagar... visit Simla, the 'hill station' perched at 2158 metres... look at Benares (now Varanasi), the holy city 160 miles north-west of Calcutta... tour the bazaars and mosques of Rawalpindi, Islamabad and Peshawar... and gaze on Agra's Taj Mahal by moonlight. Even the Khyber Pass is on one of the itineraries.

When the tours first got under way, including ever-popular regimental reunions, there were military parades, mess nights, banquets and cocktail parties laid on by their eager hosts. But this is not done so much now at the request of the travel agency.

Mr Michael Robinson explains: "The degree of hospitality and sheer goodwill was incredible and, quite honestly, just overwhelming from various Indian messes and units. Now we don't encourage this because we feel we are presuming on this hospitality. Even so, it's nice to see that Indian Army units of today preserve British military tradition right down to the mess silver, pictures, customs and the like."

Perhaps the oldest person to make the trip — and he's already planning another this year — is Lieutenant-Colonel Rob Shewen, 89, from Devon who went out to India in 1910 as a subaltern with the 3rd/15th Punjab Regiment and stayed out there until 1945. It was he who received the telegram at Gulmarg, a town now boasting one of the world's highest golf courses.

"I arrived at Delhi airport just as the dawn was breaking and it was a nostalgic sight for me to see the polo ponies being exercised along the road from the airport," he reminisces. "I stayed at the Imperial Hotel which still retains its old world atmosphere with excellent service and hospitality. Little has changed since 1945."

Colonel Shewen did not visit any Indian Army units though the Army, he recalls, was "very much in evidence."

He added: "It was clear to me that the Indian Army standards of today are still very high."

Major Tom Harrison, formerly with the Staff College at Quetta and then the Jat Regiment, led a tour to Lahore, Peshawar and Rawalpindi. "We went in October because it was not too hot in the plains nor too cold in the hills," he said. "While the tour was originally intended for old 'India



Left: Lt-Col Douglas Gray meets Skinner's Horse commandant Lt-Col Narjinder Singh.

hands' several of those who came had never been there before."

One highlight was a dinner in the Pakistan EME Officers' Mess given by their CGS, General Lohdi. "It was in the best tradition of the old Indian Army customs," said Major Harrison.

At another location, a party of 50 flew out to Bombay and then to Bangalore, 3000 feet up in the Deccan, for the bi-centenary celebrations of the Madras Sappers and Miners, led by Major Tony Williams, who formerly served with them.

"We spent three days seeing all the sights one should and visited the Amber Fort high up in the hills, only easily accessible by elephants which we duly rode to feast our eyes on the treasures housed in its walls."

Bangalore, formerly a large military cantonment and social centre for tea planters and other British expatriates working in the south of India, was summed up by another tour leader, Major 'Jim' Foord-Kelcey, as a city with a "residual flavour of the days of British influence." He was formerly CO of 325 Field Park Company, 53rd Infantry Brigade, 25th Indian Division.

Mr Peter Sibree, a London shipping broker and formerly with the Prince of Wales' Own Gurkha Rifles in 1944-45, was another tour leader.

Part of his trip involved travelling 5000 feet up into the Punjab and to Bakloh, the regimental home where, incidentally, Col John Masters, author of *Bhowani Junction*, once 'bagged' a tiger and where, during the group's visit, some 150 Gurkha pensioners turned up by train from next-door Nepal.

Elsewhere, two further milestone pilgrimages were made to celebrate not only the 175th anniversary of Skinner's Horse — raised by Col John Skinner in 1803 — but the bi-centenary reunion at Jammu, on the Pakistan-Kashmiri-India border.

Leader of that trip was Lt-Col Douglas Gray, a former GSO 1 at GHQ Delhi, who served with Skinner's Horse and is now a bloodstock breeder at Newmarket.

Early morning rides on mounts supplied by the President's Bodyguard (all of them qualified parachutists!) and a visit to Jaipur, the 'pink city' with its palaces, museums and forts on every sky-line, were included in the busy itinerary.

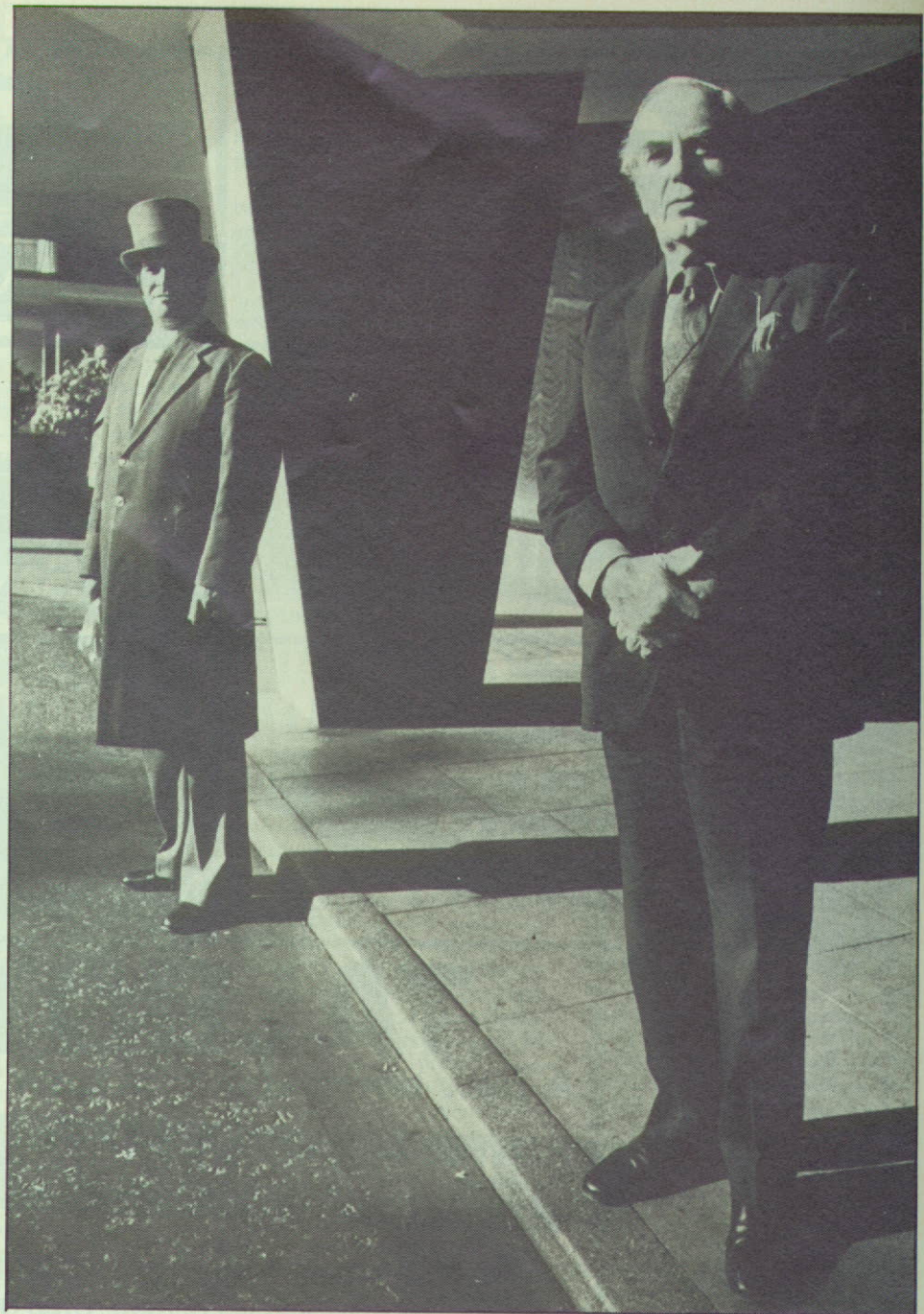
Lt-Col Gray also recalls from the trip: "It came as a big surprise to those of us more accustomed to the prim days of pre-war India to see a couple of German women calmly sun-bathing by a hotel pool — topless!"

That eye-opener aside, the 15 in the party were invited by India's sole remaining mounted unit, the 61st Cavalry, to lunch and watch a display of horsemanship including tent-pegging with lances.

Every officer in today's Indian Army undergoes an equitation course.

"There must be a moral in this for the British Army," mused Lt-Col Gray.

And Lucknow? Ardingley College schoolmaster, Mr John Craig, once with the 4th Prince of Wales' Own Gurkha Rifles, who took a pilot tour there, recalls: "Lucknow was hot but most interesting, especially the Residency with evidence of the savagery



of the fighting and suffering during the Mutiny."

Brigadier Woodroffe, who looks after the diplomatic, government and foreign business at the Carlton Tower, has been to the Indian sub-continent three times since the end of the last war.

Formerly CO of the 3rd/15th Punjab Regiment, he remembers a visit to the Khyber Pass, within sight of the snow-capped Hindu Khush, as a particular highlight.

His group was escorted by 20 riflemen from the Khyber Rifles (re-formed in 1945 as part of the Frontier Scouts) and dressed in traditional grey loose pyjamas and kamiz with slouch hats.

He recalls with amusement a bright-eyed boy who spoke good English and who had been told that many of the group had served in India. "In which century?", he chirruped.

During the visit, the Khyber Rifles put on some Khattak dancing for their guests. "We all hoped that the suggestion that they might one day visit the Royal Tournament and the Edinburgh Tattoo would really happen,"

Brigadier Woodroffe offered with a smile.

He added: "We said goodbye to the Khyber Rifles feeling that we had lived for a few hours the history of the Frontier from its earliest times. Although travel is now free and unmolested in that region the pickets and sangars on the hill tops, the badges of the regiments carved in the rocks, the memorials and the descendants of the bold tribesmen are a reminder of the best training area the British Army ever had. It was indeed a day we shall all remember."

Brigadier Woodroffe explained why so many who have served in India feel the urge to return. "We keep going back because it was a privilege to serve in the Indian Army. We want to return to the country in which we all had such a marvellous time in peace and war, but our journeys are also a sign that it is possible for races, separated by half a world, to get together and feel something like love for each other."

So, the days of the 'pukka sahib,' it seems, are not yet over in the country beloved of Rudyard Kipling who penned: "A scrimmage in some border station, a scamper down some dark defile. . ."



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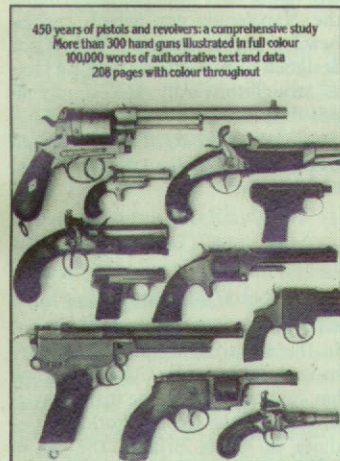
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BOOKS

Pistol packing



'Pistols and Revolvers' (Maj Frederick Myatt)

Pistols are very much a part of life today through fiction, the cinema and television. They are also becoming more common in real life, in the hands of both criminals and police. As a result, many people have a healthy and legitimate interest in their development and use, yet it is difficult to own one (except for pistol club members) and even to see one, since for security reasons gunsmiths do not display them. Hence, says Major Myatt, the publication of this book as a substitute, with 300 good photographs and detailed captions.

It is a handsomely produced volume, and easy to digest. There are five sections on different types of pistol. Each has an introduction outlining development, with dramatic illustrations of the weapons in use, followed by the colour pictures and details of specimens. Most of the arms illustrated are in the School of Infantry museum, Warminster.

After the solid meal of standard models comes dessert in the form of a sixth section of miscellaneous arms. This tasty lot includes the Welrod silent pistol (used, says the author, by British forces in World War Two), zip-guns and some other home-made single shots. Also featured is a throwaway assassin's gun, made in America in World War Two for resistance fighters in Europe at the rate of one every seven-and-a-half seconds — less time than it took to load the finished product.

Salamander, 27 Old Gloucester St, London WC1N 3AF, £8.95 **RLE**

Fallible Fuhrer

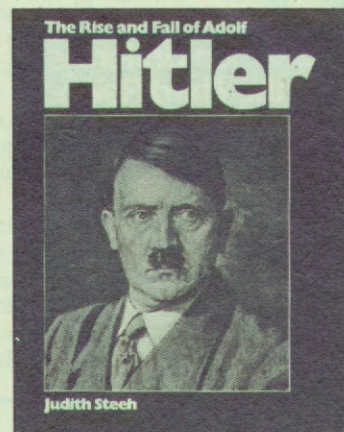
'The Rise and Fall of Adolf Hitler' (Judith Steeh)

Dangerous, fanatical, hateful yet with an unexpected streak of nervousness, even a hint of warmth, are all facets of the character of Adolf Hitler which are carefully probed and analysed in this revealing biography.

Judith Steeh's reappraisal of the life of the German dictator draws on fresh sources of information and incorpo-

rates all the latest research on his life and times. It is interesting to note in the section dealing with *der Fuhrer's* school days and service in World War One that after being blinded by gas in the third battle of Ypres he regained his sight only to lose it again until quite suddenly, in the night of November 11, "he heard voices summoning him to save Germany". Be that as it may, his sight returned, and there and then he vowed to become a politician so launching himself on a career that tasted the heights of victory and the despair of bitter defeat.

From being a poor artist in Vienna he moved to Germany and politics.



Once he had seized power he quickly built up a political and military machine with which to tackle his long-term aim of total domination of Europe.

The Nazi administrative system and the foreign policy which led to the Second World War are carefully and thoroughly researched. Particular emphasis is given to Hitler's relationship, not always a happy one, with his generals and his conduct of the war as Supreme Commander of the Axis Forces.

There are more than 300 illustrations and many of the photographs are unique, while the biography itself is easy to assimilate and ranks as an important record of the period.

Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd, Astronaut House, Feltham, Middlesex, £5.95 **JFPJ**

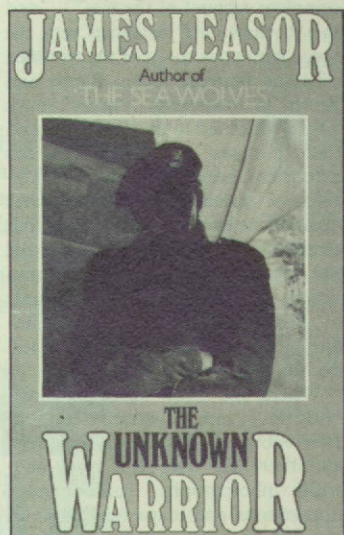
A likely story?

'The Unknown Warrior' (James Leasor)

The secrets of X Troop, No 10 (Inter-Allied) Commando, have a hundred years embargo on them — they may not be revealed to the public until 2042. This was a very secret formation indeed. The individuals were aliens who perforce changed their names and adopted new identities for their various daring and dangerous exploits. Few records were kept and today it is practically impossible to trace particulars or discover those who at any time served in the troop. The author pieced together the story of one dramatic mission from details he learned from such

authorities as Earl Mountbatten, who was responsible for the formation of X Troop, Sir Ronald Wingate, who was associated with the episode, and from scrutiny of certain documents which he was given special permission to peruse.

This is, therefore, a fictional story based on fact. It concerns a volunteer



of German-Jewish extraction who helped to deceive the Germans as to the Allies' point of invasion of Northern Europe in 1944. It includes German agents in England being used by the British, and the vast deception by dummies, bombing and radio traffic to imply a build-up of 40 divisions in South East England ready for the invasion of Europe, presumably in the Pas de Calais area. At the centre of the story is X Troop Commando Rosenberg, alias Rigby, carrying documents to the Germans to prove beyond doubt that the Pas de Calais, and not Normandy, was the certain target.

Through adventures on the way and many escapes from death, Rigby is accepted by Rommel and eventually penetrates Berchtesgaden and is questioned by Hitler — who is convinced. Then the need to escape, and more adventures on the way to Normandy, the Allied invasion and freedom. A likely story? It makes good reading. *William Heinemann Ltd, 10 Upper Grosvenor Street, London W1X 9PA, £6.95* **GRH**

Nuclear strategy

'Countdown: Britain's Strategic Nuclear Forces' (Air Vice-Marshal Stewart Menaul)

British scientists were already working on nuclear fission before the United States entered World War Two. British and American sources then combined in a rush to produce an atom bomb before Germany could do so. British scientists made a notable contribution to the success of the Manhattan Project which resulted in the explosion of the first atom bomb. After the war the Americans went their own way, but in 1956-57 British nuclear test explosions carried out at Christmas Island and Monte Bello, together with the advanced V-bomber force of Valiant, Victor and Vulcan bombers, made Britain one of the world's three nuclear powers. This strategic nuclear force maintained a four-minute standby around the clock for the next decade, until 1968 when the United States cancelled the

plane-carried Skybolt missile. Then the Royal Navy took over the responsibility for Britain's nuclear force.

There has been much political manoeuvring and some pressure from vocal minorities that has resulted in the weakening of the force. Air Vice-Marshal Menaul here lays out the full story from 1946 to the present day. He declares that Britain's nuclear capability has been "eroded to a dangerously low level" during the past decade and that this is only now being recognised because of the "serious discontent within the Forces the like of which has not been seen since the Invergordon mutiny".

Stewart Menaul served with Bomber Command during the war,



was later responsible for nuclear weapons and the V-bomber force. He also planned Britain's nuclear tests in the Pacific. He has produced a book that will be widely read and discussed, not only because of his exceptionally wide knowledge of this universally delicate subject but also because of the intrigues, rivalries and political manoeuvrings he discloses. As to the future, Stewart Menaul believes that the US Trident submarine ballistic missile system, which it is estimated will cost Britain £5000 million in the 1990's (but more like £7000 million), is the wrong system. The US will have phased it out of operational service by then. His knowledge, training and reasoning lead him to the opinion that "the Cruise missile would be much more effective, more credible and much cheaper".

Robert Hale Ltd, Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0HT, £8.25 **GRH**

Hardy roses

'The Roses of No Man's Land' (Lynn Macdonald)

It is over sixty-two years since the First World War came to an end, and still it continues to fascinate historians and general public alike. Some are attracted by the study in military incompetence it presents, but most are simply appalled by its terrible, sordid waste. More than any other, World War One brought home to people the true horror of war. There was scarcely a family which was not touched by it at the time, and many still bear the scars.

So what more is there still to say about that most awful conflict? Well, in the glare of public scrutiny which continued on page 52.

MORE BOOKS

has shone so brightly on the trenches, the story of many of those 'who also served' has too often been overlooked. In this book, Lynn Macdonald goes some way to putting that right.

The Roses of No Man's Land is the story of the Voluntary Aid Detachments, the women who joined up to serve as nurses, often from sheltered backgrounds and with hopelessly naive and romantic ideas of what the work would entail. With remarkable courage and versatility, they struggled to cope amid inadequate facilities in makeshift hospitals with a constant flood of men, many of them physically and mentally shattered beyond repair. "If the ghost that haunts the towns of Ypres and Arras . . . is the statutory British Tommy", writes Miss Macdonald "then the ghost of Boulogne and Etaples and Rouen ought to be a girl. She's called Elsie or Gladys or Dorothy, her ankles are swollen, her feet are aching, her hands reddened and rough. She has little money and

offer? The answer, fortunately, is yes, if only because in this slender and attractive volume Mr Barthorp presents us with an easily readable resumé of 'the situation so far'.

With refreshing honesty, he admits in his foreword that "the . . . text makes no claims to break new ground, and serves merely to give a concise but complete account of the war" — and this it does. Mr Barthorp sets the scene with an account of the troubled relations between Boer, Bantu and Briton in nineteenth century South Africa which led to the Zulu War, and then plunges in with a spirited account of the campaign. His description of Isandhlwana incorporates some of the latest research (which has cast doubt on the accepted theory that the disaster was due to faulty ammunition supplies), and his accounts of Rorke's Drift, Kambula, Gingindlovu and Ulundi are crisp and exciting.

Where the book succeeds most, however, is in its illustrative content. It is subtitled 'A Pictorial History', and there are over 150 black-and-white photographs, contemporary illustrations and maps to provide as complete a picture as possible of the events described. Most of these will be new to all but the most dedicated student of the Zulu War, since they were chosen specially for their origi-

importance sported a uniform and the various examples here dealt with are just some of the many items of official clothing worn by Germans during this period.

The uniforms of all three fighting services are meticulously portrayed from those of Supreme Commander, Adolf Hitler, to infantry sniper and Able Seaman, and Grand Admiral and Reich Marshal to fighter pilot and paratrooper. The SS, coastal artillery units, female auxiliaries, air raid warning service and many more are all featured but most surprising are the non-military examples — the grey dress and plumed hat of a district falconry master, the dagger-carrying senior locomotive driver, the girl wearing the jacket of an auxiliary postal worker and the silver-buttoned black tunic and plumed headdress of the coal-mining official.

Each of the 240 uniforms referred to is described in some detail and the colour illustrations by Pierre Turner are of an exceptionally high quality. A

tional objectives and techniques.

In the main, the book consists of 169 full-page, two-colour maps illustrating the campaigns and battles at which Napoleon was in command, and the text is conveniently tailored to fit the pages opposite the maps. There is a useful introduction and notes on Napoleon's principal commanders and enemies.

Something like a quarter of a million books have been published about the Napoleonic era, which can be bewildering for students. This is one designed to present the fighting facts as straightforwardly and simply as possible.

Arms and Armour, 2-6 Hampstead High St, London NW3 1QQ, £14.95

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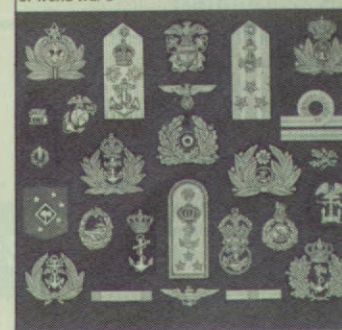
All at sea

'Naval and Marine Badges and Insignia of World War 2' (Guido Rosignoli) In this his sixth volume on military badges and insignia, Guido Rosignoli has concentrated on the major navies involved in the second World War — those of Great Britain, the Soviet Union, Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, the USA, Japan, Poland, the Netherlands and Finland. The many

Blandford Colour Series

Naval and Marine Badges and Insignia

of World War 2



Guido Rosignoli

badges of rank and trade of all these navies are illustrated and described and it is interesting to note that while each country may have its differences in design, all are united in the basic navy blue which forms the background for the majority of badges and insignia.

An informative text accompanies each national section of illustrations, nearly all in colour, and the book as a whole should prove a useful addition to the collector's reference shelf.

Blandford Press Ltd, Link House, West Street, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1LL, £4.95

JFPJ

German Uniforms of the Third Reich 1933-1945



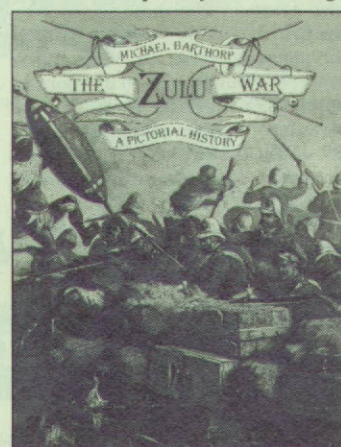
useful and instructive reference for both student and collector.

Blandford Press Ltd, Link House, West Street, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1LL, £4.95

JFPJ

Fighting facts

'A Military History and Atlas of the Napoleonic Wars' (Brig-Gen Vincent J Esposito and Col John Robert Elting) This is a reprint of a textbook compiled in 1963 for cadets of the United States Military Academy at West Point. It replaced Count Yorck von Wartburg's *Napoleon as a General* which had served the Academy well for more than 20 years, and it was designed as a simpler medium of study for cadets with more to fit into their course in an era of new instruc-



nality and many have not been published before. The photographic processes of a hundred years ago did not allow the depiction of movement, so most of the photos are posed shots of troops in the field, but there are some interesting and hitherto neglected portraits of Zulu personalities and commanders, and the battle scenes are adequately provided by newspaper engravings and paintings.

The clarity and conciseness of this book make it the best general history of the Zulu War published in the last five years. Those new to the subject will find it the perfect introduction, and those well read in it will find the illustrations invaluable.

Blandford Press Ltd, Link House, West Street, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1LL, £8.95

IJK

Dressing up

'German Uniforms of the Third Reich 1933-1945' (Brian Leigh Davis) How the traditional German love of uniform was indulged, one could say to excess, in the Third Reich is vividly demonstrated in this book. Practically every able-bodied person who was a member of a military or para-military or civil organisation of national



A Military History and Atlas of the Napoleonic Wars

Lyn Macdonald The Roses of No Man's Land



no vote, and has almost forgotten what it feels like to be really warm . . . she is on active service, and as much a part of the war as Tommy Atkins". And even when peace returned, life would never be the same again. Condemned to a life of spinsterhood by the loss of their men, few were prepared to accept the restrictions that society had formally placed upon them. The revolution which led to the liberation of women began in the aftermath of World War One.

In researching this book, Miss Macdonald interviewed many VAD veterans, and their reminiscences, personal and still vivid, give a far truer picture of the nature of war than many a book on strategy and tactics.

Michael Joseph Ltd, 44 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3DU, £10.00

IJK

Vivid pictures

'The Zulu War — A Pictorial History' (Michael Barthorp)

Over the last couple of years, prompted no doubt by the Centenary, a great many books have been written on the 1879 Zulu War. There have been books considering particular battles, the part played by particular regiments, the weapons and uniforms of the combatants, even the battlefields as they are today. The casual reader has been in danger of being swamped by it all so does yet another book on the subject really have anything to

LANCE BOMBARDIER THOMAS McKAY reckons he's the luckiest soldier in the British Army — with a unique job. For he is 'Tam the Gun' — the man by whom the citizens of Scotland's capital city of Edinburgh set their watches and clocks.

Every day except Sunday Lance-Bdr McKay starts to put on his best uniform at about 12.30 pm. Then, at ten minutes to one, he crosses to his telephone and has a one way conversation — with the Speaking Clock.

Having set his stop watch he moves to Mills Mount where he is greeted with applause from a crowd of spectators — ranging from perhaps 600 people in the tourist season to a handful on a dank, grey winter's day.

For Thomas McKay's job is to fire the Edinburgh One O'clock Gun — a tradition dating back to 1861 and originally conceived as a time signal to shipping in the Forth. Nowadays, with time checks blasting out of radios every few minutes and shipping communications so good, that purpose would seem to be obsolete, but the people of Edinburgh have come to like their lunchtime gun.

In fact, while the Army owns the wartime 25 pounder gun which Lance-Bdr McKay fires in his capacity as District Gunner, the blank rounds are paid for by Edinburgh City Council.

Until a few years ago the gun fired a three lb blank charge — and when the weather conditions were right it could be heard as far away as the other side of the Forth and in North Berwick. Now the charge is only eight ounces but that is still sufficient for the gun to

**For 120 years
the people of
Edinburgh have
set their clocks
by ...**

be heard all over Edinburgh city centre.

Lance-Bdr McKay is a regular soldier on the permanent staff of the Castle but is attached to a Territorial Army unit — 207 (Scottish) Air Defence Battery, Royal Artillery (V). Sometimes, when 21 gun salutes are fired from the Castle, he is joined by others

THE ONE O'CLOCK GUN

from the unit.

Apart from Christmas Day and Good Friday, the One O'clock Gun is fired every weekday throughout the year. And 'Tam the Gun' is the man who fires it — except when he is on leave or away for his TA training with Blowpipe missiles.

"It's a marvellous job — you meet every nationality you can think of. I've been doing it for three years. I came as a relief when the then district gunner was ill and the job passed to me. It was just sheer luck that I fell into it and I have never regretted it for a minute. I hope to do it for quite a few years to come — as long as they will have me."

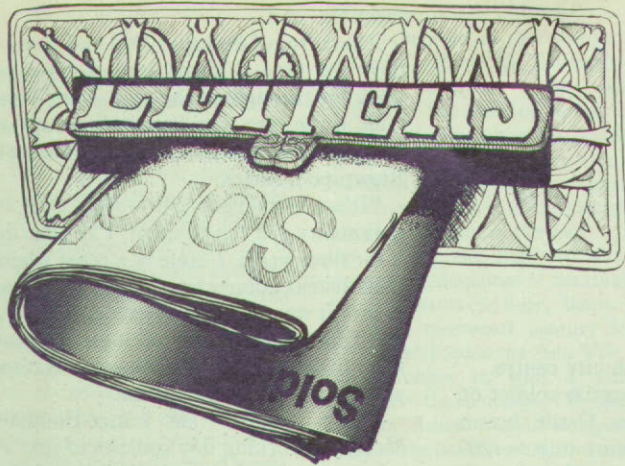
Don't imagine that Lance-Bombardier McKay's working day consists of just a few minutes around lunchtime. As well as his TA duties he also has to look after the gun — and exposure to salt-laden mist and frequent rain, snow and frost means a constant battle to keep it rust free.

In this day and age it is odd to hear of a case where automation has been replaced by a human being rather than the other way round.

The gun, apart from during the two World Wars, has been fired ever since 1861 and, of course, this was originally done by a gunner.

In more recent times though, it was fired electronically by means of a lanyard connected to a clock. But in 1975 the gun was moved from another site in the Castle, Half Moon Battery, to Mills Mount and, at the same time, the firing reverted to manual control. The official reason — "it was so often wrong that we went back to human reliability!" ●





Name challenge

How about calling the British Army's new steed 'Charger'? It is an inspiring name conjuring up pictures of the mighty beasts of medieval times that, snorting and prancing, carried their knightly masters into battle to ride down the foe.

Still on the subject of tank names, the name 'Valiant' for the new Vickers MBT is also not original, having been the name for the A38 Infantry tank of 1944-45, albeit an experimental design. One of these is on display at the RAC Tank Museum, Bovington Camp, Dorset. How about a new name for this 'landship' too — Vickers 'Victory' for example? — **David J Newbold, Glen Orchy, Norton End, Wendens Ambo, Saffron Walden, Essex, B11 4JS.**

Lieutenant-Colonel Steel Brownlie (November SOLDIER-to-Soldier) is nearly right in his references to Challenger.

The Challenger was a modification of the Cromwell design with a longer hull and modified suspension, including an extra pair of road wheels. A larger turret, designed and developed by Stothert and Pitt Ltd, was fitted, mounted with a 17-pounder gun and a co-axial 0.30in Browning machine gun. This type of tank was used in small numbers in the campaign in North West Europe to stiffen up the

fire power of regiments equipped with British Cruiser tanks. The initial design of the Challenger was drawn up in 1942 by the Birmingham Railway Carriage and Wagon Company, and a total of 200 tanks was produced under the parentage of this firm. A Challenger II, with a lower turret, was not produced beyond the prototype.

As to the names of new tanks, how about these — 'Caesar,' 'Calliope' (steam organ), 'Camorra' and 'Carcajou'? — **Thomas E Bell, 22 Foredraft Close, Woodgate Valley South, Birmingham, B32 3TR.**

My theory about the use of the letter 'C' in the naming of British Tanks is as follows: prior to the naming of the tank after Prime Minister Churchill, the method of naming was rather sloppy — for example, Matilda, Valentine and so on. I think someone must have decided to tidy up the naming system after the Churchill was introduced and decided to stick to the letter 'C' for as long as possible. Carrying on from C to Z in sequence throughout the alphabet now leaves a huge selection of names for many, many years to come — **J Bingham, 24 Cloisters Road, Luton, Beds, LU4 0NJ.**

Last word on...

In view of the recent correspondence in SOLDIER about the head-dress of the Band and Corps of Drums of the 1st Battalion The King's Own Royal Border Regiment, your readers may be interested to know that the Army Dress Committee gave its approval to wearing of the white Wolesley Helmet by the Band and Corps of Drums on the 9th of January 1978.

The white helmet with a white puggaree, brass spike and brass chinstrap is only to be worn in full dress, and is not to be worn with No 1 dress, in order to avoid confusion with Her Majesty's Royal Marines, who wear white helmets with blue tunics.

The wearing of these helmets commemorates the service during the 18th Century of both The King's Own, who bore the title of The Royal Regiment of Marines from 1703 to 1715, and The Border Regiment, who as the 34th of Foot served as Marines in 1740.

It may be interesting to record that before the two regiments amalgamated in 1959, The Border Regiment followed the naval custom of remain-

ing seated during the Loyal Toast, a practice which was discontinued after the amalgamation.

Another tradition which was lost on amalgamation was the wearing of the red and white centre in The Border Regiment cap badge, to commemorate the unique battle honour of Arroyo Dos Molinos, and the wearing of white head-dress with scarlet tunics has restored this outward and visible link with the past.

From 1902 onwards it became the normal practice within the British Army to wear white Wolesley helmets with full dress in non-temperate stations. Generally this practice was discontinued after World War Two, but was re-adopted by The Corps of Drums and later the Band of The King's Own Royal Border Regiment when the 1st Battalion was stationed in Cyprus, a non-temperate climate, between 1968 and 1970. — **Lt Col (Retd) J Petty MBE MC, Regimental Secretary, RHQ The King's Own Royal Border Regt, The Castle, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA3 8UR.**

... white helmets

I refer to Mr S M Waters' letter in the October issue 'No to Navy look.'

The large white helmet was universally worn by the Army in hot climates until about 1940 — white with full dress, khaki with service dress. Before 1914 the Royal Marines also wore the small helmet with full dress in temperate climates. From about 1920 the Royal Marines adopted the large white helmet for full dress in all climates.

Recently the Band of the King's Own Royal Border Regiment adopted a similar type of helmet in full dress. I believe one or two other regiments have also done this — perhaps because they have a long and distinguished record of service in India. But please don't say the large helmet is part of 'the Navy look.' It has been worn in the past, by the Royal Navy, the Army — and the Royal Air Force! — **KG L Mills, 2 Second Avenue, Bezuidenhout Valley, 2094 Johannesburg, RSA.**

I refer to RLE's letter 'Bullet Proof' in your November issue.

Surely the tyres of many vehicles used by the British Army in those days (1941) were not inflatable but manufactured of sponge rubber — certainly there were such in the Western Desert.

We understood that they were proof against punctures, not only by stones and wire, but bullets. Shots into sponge rubber would not even show. Some of the tyres, I believe, had a small inflatable core. — **George Hogan, 5 Queenswood Road, St John's, Woking, Surrey, GU21 1XJ.**

George Hogan's book 'Malta: The Triumphant Years 1940-43' also includes some reminiscences of North Africa. — **Ed.**

Time for truth

Yet another book about Dunkirk has been published, this time by Nicholas Harman (Books, October). Such a lot of tripe has been written about the Dunkirk episode that I feel it high time that one or two truths be told, as

seen through the eyes of an ordinary front line soldier.

It wasn't, as some people would have you believe, a 'glorious victory out of defeat.' It was, in fact, a disorganised rabble that destroyed its weapons and then walked into Dunkirk. Alongside the road that I took into the town, there was enough hardware dumped in the fields and hedgerows to have stopped Jerry in his tracks, but I saw no senior officer trying to organise anything.

The reasons are plain to anyone who was a regular soldier prior to 1939. Most of our time was spent spit and polishing our obsolete equipment, and if bullshit won wars there wouldn't have been any Dunkirk. As it was, Dunkirk was a disaster, so let's put the blame where it belongs.

Our politicians, in spite of repeated and well-informed warnings about the growing strength of Germany, sat on their fat backsides and let the British Army stagnate. Our generals and senior officers, who must have known the situation, never raised a squeak, or if they did, never squeaked anywhere near loud enough. Instead of polishing everything until it sparkled, we should have been getting it dirty, day after day, until we could use it in our sleep and on our own initiative without waiting for an order, as per training manual, by an officer. As it was, we went off to war, a happy band of warriors, to face the most professional band of killers in the world. No wonder we got a hiding.

In my unit our main anti-tank weapon was a Boys anti-tank rifle, of which we had one only. I don't know what damage it ever did to a tank, but it nearly broke the shoulder of anyone foolish enough to fire it.

When I think back to how our senior officers allowed us to go into battle with the weapons we had, it makes me feel sick. Even as late as mid-1942 we were still using the two-pounder anti-tank gun, and on the Western desert I actually saw our tanks getting knocked off long before they ever got within hitting range of the panzers.

How many brave young men died attempting the impossible? A David and Goliath act, if ever there was one, but this time in reverse.

Should this letter be printed, and should by any chance a couple of generals or politicians read it, take heed of my warning. A policy of appeasement and disarmament never did stop a bully. Furthermore, I consider, being an ex-front line soldier, I know more about war than any general — which leads me to my final point.

At the present time there is a lot of talk about how many tanks the Russians have, and how few we have. Believe me, the best answer to a tank is an anti-tank gun; not another tank! A good gun, well sited, with the power of penetration can stop any tank and they are much more economical to produce. The tank itself should be used in an attacking role, only when the Infantry, backed by the Field Artillery, have winkled out the defending guns, and should then play havoc in the rear areas.

To sum up, it wasn't only that Field Marshal Rommel was a good tactician; he was all of that, but he had the right weapons and his men knew how to use them, whilst we, the British,

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had to wait until 1942 before we got a decent tank, and that was American made.

Has the lesson finally been learned or shall we one day have to face another Dunkirk? I sincerely hope not. — **D Simpson, Dover, Kent.**

Danger ahead

The soldier on your October cover is asking for serious injury if an explosion takes place anywhere near him while he is wearing his helmet chin-strap under his chin. The blast will get under his helmet and break his jaw or, worse, his neck. During World War Two we were always instructed to wear this type of helmet with the chin-strap at the nape of the neck. — **L F H Newport, 18 Swinburne Road, Donnington Bridge Road, Oxford OX4 4BG.**

Cover queries

As a recent former member of the Royal Anglian Regiment, I cannot help but wonder about your October front cover illustration of the platoon leader in Canada on an exercise. Can someone please explain why: a) the soldier has no 'cam' cream on, b) he is not wearing a face veil, c) his gas mask bag is open and not clipped (this can be lost whilst advancing etc.), d) he wears a ring (wedding?) which as any soldier knows, can reflect the sun and be pinpointed by an enemy.

I have always been trained to obey all those commands. Enlightenment will be very much appreciated. — **R V Cutter, 82 Northumberland Ave, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.**

We're sorry that our photographer Doug Pratt wasn't able to raise all these points at the time Mr Cutter, but he was in the middle of a 'battle'! Maybe the platoon leader himself can supply the answers. — Ed.

Admiration

Thank you for the sweatshirt you sent me — the motif and the shirt have been widely admired.

You may like to know that I circulate both **SOLDIER** publications around the US Army Chemical School and that they are avidly read and admired by a wide range of ranks. — **Major J G Wishart, British Defence Staff (Army), British Embassy Washington, BFPO 2.**

The tartan oar

In your September article on Military Museums you mention the Colours "borne by the 21st East Surreys from 1788 to 1802". This is obviously a typographical error for 31st, the old number of 1st Bn The East Surrey Regiment, but we would like to point it out since 21st is the regimental number of the Royal Scots Fusiliers (now the Royal Highland Fusiliers), second oldest Scottish line regiment and second oldest Fusilier regiment in the British Army. Moreover, and despite our numbering, we are the fourth oldest line regiment, having been raised in 1678, a year before the 'official' 4th, the King's Own Royal Border Regiment. This is because regimental order of precedence was

laid down by a Board of Officers convened by King William III in 1694, which decided that regiments would take precedence from the date on which they first appeared on the English military establishment as opposed to the date on which they were raised.

As the Scots Fusiliers were raised on the Scottish military establishment — England, Scotland and Ireland having separate establishments — and did not serve in England until 1688 on the occasion of James II's concentrating his forces near London in a vain attempt to counter the imminent landing of William of Orange, they lost out in this early numbers game.

Doubtless you will already have heard from the Queen's Regiment on this subject, but it is an axiom that the tartan oar should be got in whenever opportunity arises.

Major D Mack, RHQ The Royal Highland Fusiliers, 518 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow, G2 3LW.

Bugle calls

I am deeply interested in the words that soldiers have used over the years to associate with bugle or trumpet calls; for instance: 'Come to the cook-house door boys, come to the cook-house door!'

I feel certain that the different branches of the Services have different words associated with their calls. I would be extremely grateful to any reader who may care to assist me in enlarging my collection and I do promise to answer all letters and refund all postage involved. — **S D Stone, 20 Buckingham Road, Petersfield, Hants, GU32 3AZ.**

New film club

At some of our symposia we have shown films such as *Waterloo*, *War and Peace* (Russian version), *The Duellists* and so on. These have been very popular and we are now considering starting a Military Film Club. The idea would be to show members a film (probably in Hampstead) every 4-6 weeks on Saturday mornings.

I should be glad to hear from any readers who would like to receive details of the Club if and when it is formed, and also for views on which films people might like to see. We are, by the way, trying to obtain Abel Gance's *Napoleon* as soon as work on it is finished. — **Lionel Leventhal, Arms & Armour Press, 2-6 Hampstead High Street, London, NW3 1QQ.**

Since we received this letter, Abel Gance's famous film has had a one day showing at London's Leicester Square Odeon. — Ed

7 Flight AAC

With reference to your article in the October 1980 **SOLDIER** regarding 7 Flight AAC in Berlin, when 1907 AOP Flight RAF disbanded (I believe it was on the 1st September 1957) we reformed as 7 Recce/Liaison Flight AAC, commanded by Major F C Russell. Our headquarters were at Kuala Lumpur with 656 Sqn AAC, commanded at that time, I think, by Lt Col B B Storey. — **S/Sgt K J Price, RAPC MISM, Army Mountain Training Centre, PO Box 30 04, BFPO 27.**

Collectors' corner

P J Stewart, 178 Western Road, Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks, Sussex, BN6 9TE. *Seeks Scottish cap badges and a para or SAS badge. All letters answered.*

J J Cowdell, Police House, Longdon, Nr Rugeley, Staffs. *Wishes to purchase genuine WW2 beige or red beret and insignia including wings of the Special Air Service.*

W P Hancox, 10 Appledorne Gardens, Birmingham, BB4 6TN. *Wishes to contact any one person who has photographs of tank transporters and heavy equipment transporters (HETs) and of production and prototype vehicles used by the British Army 1927-1980.*

John Hurst, 14 Eaton Road, Handbridge, Chester. *Wishes to purchase Royal Welch Fusilier crested swagger cane.*

Mr R Gee, 7 Downlea, Down Road, Tavistock, Devon, PL19 9AW. *Wishes to purchase secondhand copy of Volume 3 (Sep 1941 to Sep 1942) 'Mediterranean and Middle East Official War History', by Maj Gen I S O Playfair.*

W M Crooke, Woodbourne, Banchoy, Kincardineshire, AB3 3XX, Scotland. *Has small collection of military books for disposal including regimental and divisional histories. Send SAE for list. Wants books dealing with Indian Army pre-1947.*

Lt Col A M Macfarlane, RA. 60 Holden Park Road, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 0EP. *Wishes to obtain Africa General Service*

medal with clasp 'Kenya' and Campaign Service medals with clasps 'Radfan' and/or 'Dhofar' to the Royal Artillery. Good price paid or would consider exchange for other RA medals, Lebanese or Syrian medals or British military badges and buttons.

A M Arcari, 3 Dundas St, Queensferry, Clwyd, North Wales. *Is starting a service for collectors of foreign airborne insignia and badges. Send large SAE for details of items available, ie French para/Legion para/Foreign Legion/Foreign para.*

Oliver Simmons, 5 Jeffreys St, London NW1. *(CCF Cadet) will pay £15 for modern British Army combat jacket, NATO camo. Must be undamaged and in excellent condition, size 1 or 2. Payment on receipt of goods.*

Walt Barrington, 103 Cremer, St Mary's Road, Eccles, Manchester. *Has for exchange WW11 plastic cap badges: High Regt, Inn Fus, Lancs Fus, Border Regt, Cameron, RB. Interested in: The Loyal N Lancs Regt. Badges, ST, buttons.*

Robert Neilson, 96 Bawdlands, Clitheroe, Lancs, BB7 2LA. *Wants Camo jacket size 40 with hood, also camo trousers 38W, 32L or Army trousers. Will pay well or swap for badges, Nazi items and books. Any British Army gear wanted — must be current issue.*

Henry O'Kane, South Lodge, Honiley, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 1NP. *Wants Korean War literature, publications, books, photos, records, anything related to UN Forces Korea 1950 on.*

How Observant Are You?

(see page 17)

The two pictures differ in the following respects: 1 Branches of tree second from left. 2 Stripe on right stocking of left player. 3 Eyebrows of player with moustache. 4 Thumb of player with ball. 5 Spectator at far right. 6 Window at right of house. 7 Left chimney pot. 8 Hair of player at right. 9 Height of right goalpost. 10 Shape of hedge inside right goalpost.

Reunions

RAMC/RADC WOs & Sgts Past and Present Dinner Club: The 1981 Dinner is to be held on Saturday 2 May at the Royal Officers Club, Aldershot. Further details available from: RSM, RAMC Training Centre, Keogh Bks, Ash Vale, Aldershot, Hants, GU12 5RQ.

4th/7th Battalions Royal Tank Regiment Old Comrades: Reunion at Pontins Holiday Village, Southport, Lancs, over weekend 10-12 April 1981. All serving and ex-members welcome. Contact: W Penketh, Secretary, 93 Birchett Road, Farnborough, Hants. SAE please.

Violette Szabo, GC C de G: In June 1981, a blue commemorative plaque is to be erected on Violette's Stockwell home. Anyone connected with ATS, SOE who knew or trained with Violette, especially the French Foreign Legion in which her late husband served, invited to attend.

Applications to: The Press Officer, WRNS, Violette Szabo Committee, Stockwell Good Neighbours, 69 Stockwell Road, SW9.

Pre-1939 Trumpeters RA. Annual Reunion of the 'Fiddlers Club' will be held in the RA Mess, The Royal School of Artillery, Larkhill, on Friday 31 July 1981. Further details from: Major J J Dobbs, 5 Glynswood, Portsmouth Road, Camberley, Surrey.

Competition

Our September competition (266) 'Here and There' proved far tougher than we expected even though, because of a minor printing error, we decided to accept either 31 or 32 correct answers. The palm goes to Mr H Merritt, 1 Westbrook Farm Cottages, Elstead, Godalming, Surrey who proved that the puzzle could be solved by submitting the only all-correct solution to win the £15 prize. No one else came even close so there were no runners-up.


For those of you still trying to puzzle out the place names they were: Angus, Bahia, Banff, Cadiz, Egypt, Essex, Haiti, Ibiza, Kelso, Lagos, Malta, Meath, Morea, Nairn, Namur, Natal, Naxos, Nepal, Omaha, Otago, Paris, Perth, Poona, Sitka, Syria, Texas, Tibet, Truro, Ujiji, Upolu, Yemen, Yukon.

● Our See-the-Army Diary feature will be resumed as soon as full details of 1981 events are to hand.


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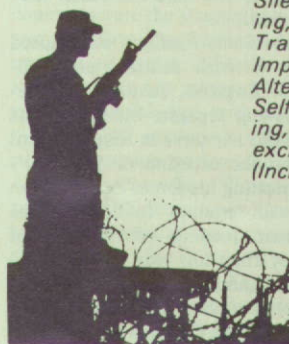
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EVERY WHICH WAY

COMPETITION 270

This month's competition has been devised by a reader from Cranleigh in Surrey, Mrs R L Simpson.

Starting at No 1 on the grid, write the answers to each clue in the direction of the next number. Thus the answer to question 1 should be entered vertically downwards and the answer to question 2 diagonally from lower left to higher right. Each number indicates the start of a word *but not necessarily the end of the previous answer*. Words may read in any direction — forwards, backwards, upwards, downwards or diagonally. When you have filled in all the squares on the grid look for the names of three famous battles in which the British Army were involved.

What does the completed grid look like? And what are the

names of the three battles?

The closing date for the competition is Monday 2 March 1981. The answers and winners' names will appear in the May SOLDIER. More than one entry can be submitted but each must be accompanied by a 'Competition 270' label. Winners will be drawn by lots from correct entries. Entries using OHMS envelopes or pre-paid labels will be disqualified.

Send your answers by postcard or letter with the 'Competition 270' label from this page and your name and address to:

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18	21						25	24	
S	L	R	A	L	O	H	C	S	Y

CLUES

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Opportunity | 15 Animal stuffing |
| 2 Sudden downfall | 16 Cleopatra's serpent |
| 3 Widespread destruction | 17 Political intentions |
| 4 Protective garment | 18 Outhouse |
| 5 Just a trace | 19 Weighty |
| 6 Antelope | 20 Slippery fish |
| 7 A meadow | 21 Neighbourly pub |
| 8 No scientist, this graduate! | 22 Spring |
| 9 Repulsively slippery | 23 Heaps of combustible material |
| 10 This animal has pride | 24 One engaged in learning |
| 11 Lubricate | 25 Hard labour |
| 12 A single article | 26 Limit attainable by gun |
| 13 Niggard | 27 Newt |
| 14 Can you spell it? | 28 Bloodsucker |
| | 29 Confederate |

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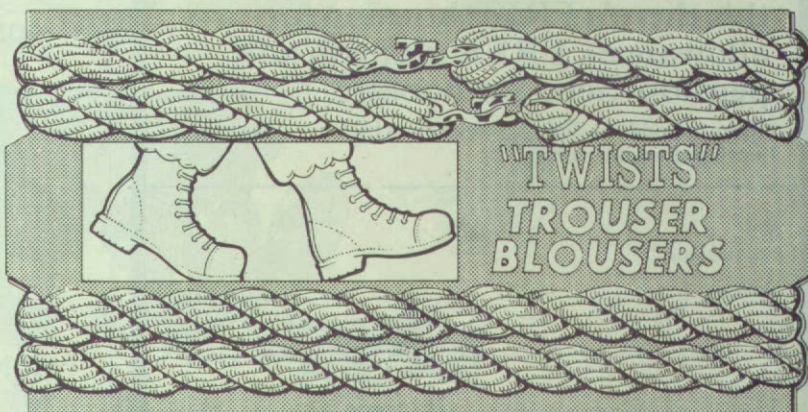
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A preparatory school for boys 7 to 14. 70 boarders live in the main house in the care of Mr and Mrs Davies and three matrons. The school has recently enlarged to 270 and added a pre-preparatory department. There are twenty five acres of playing fields and ample facilities for indoor sport. The school has an enviable reputation for both academic results and sporting achievements. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is encouraged.

Prospectus from the Headmaster.

Haberdashers'

MONMOUTH SCHOOLS

ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS 1981

The scholarship and entrance examinations for day and boarding pupils will take place at the schools in February 1981. It is the intention of both schools to offer a number of places under the government's Assisted Places Scheme on the results of the 11-year-old examinations. Further details of the examinations and of the Assisted Places Scheme, together with copies of the Schools' Prospectuses, may be obtained from the Headmaster or the Headmistress.

MONMOUTH SCHOOL

Main School: The examination (for boys over 10 and under 12 on 1st September 1981) will be held on February 21st. Two bursaries reserved for sons of serving members of H.M. Armed Forces will be awarded on the examination. Closing date for application February 11th.

The Grange: The examination (for dayboys and weekly boarders over 7 and under 8 on 1st September 1981) will be held on February 28th. Further particulars may be obtained from the Master of The Grange, Monmouth School.

MONMOUTH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Main School. The examination (for girls over 10 and under 12 on 31st July 1981) will be held on February 7th. Closing date for application January 26th.

Pre-secondary Department: Tests for girls aged at least 7 by July 31st, 1981 will be held in March. Further particulars may be obtained from the Headmistress.

The Admissions Secretary, Monmouth School, Monmouth, NP5 3XP. Telephone Monmouth 3143.

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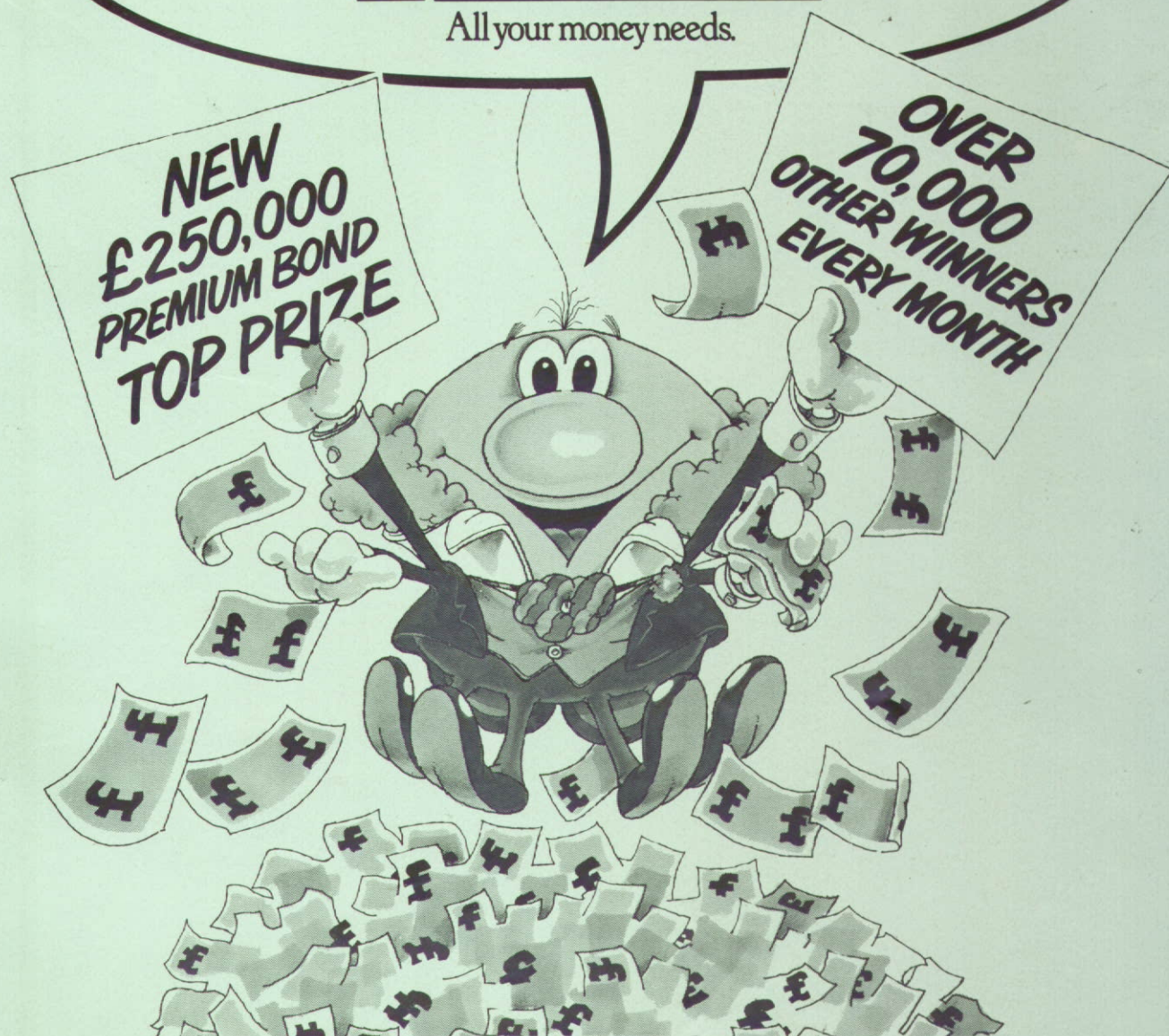
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