

DUKE'S DIARY

BELFAST

OCTOBER 1979—FEBRUARY 1980



Commanding Officer's Introduction

I write this introduction in the middle of January, well aware that we still have four weeks to go in Springfield Road. In Belfast a lot can happen in four weeks. However the Royal Scots rece party has just visited so that we are now clearly on the home straight.

The ambushes and shootings that marked our first few weeks demonstrated the dangers of West Belfast. Apart from the tragic murder of QMSI Bellamy the storm was weathered successfully with true Yorkshire grit. The November/December stretch was a period in which the Companies consolidated their knowledge of the area and people. Our terrorists stayed clear and concentrated on assassinating prison officers. Whiterock became a feature of our life. This first stage of the new, large base dominating the Turf Lodge and Ballymurphy was started in early November. Unfortunately the designers did not allow for the high winds that gust round Black Mountain so that they were still putting the sides back up to "Fort Jerico" on Christmas Eve. Burma Company spent 1,234 brick hours alone protecting the Sappers on this task they will remember the Turf.

In January redeployment became the centre of activity — for Echelon and the planners at least. Basically, when 2 Armoured Division Engineer Regiment leave next week we assume the responsibility for the whole of West Belfast and get a battery of Gunners under command. It sounds easy, but can anyone understand the signals plan alone?

By the end of the month Tac HQ will be commanding 1 DWR, B and C Companies 2 RRF, 23 Battery 27 Field Regiment Royal Artillery, four Troops 2 Armoured Division Engineer Regiment, two Troops 1 Armoured Division Royal Corps of Transport Regiment and one Platoon of Green Howards. Throw in a few RMP and WRAC, add two Troops of 12 Light Air Defence Regiment in early February, stir them all up and that's the Battle Group — oops, I mean Battalion Group! The RUC in 'B' Division seem to understand it, at least they will have only one battalion headquarters to deal with! To get this shuffle right, to keep the pressure on the terrorists and to hand it all over to the Royal Scots will keep us all busy, right to the end of the tour.

All the news from the Rear Details and the wives is good. We can't wait to see "Minderella"!

I close by thanking you all — to the Companies for their determination, endeavour and cheerfulness and to the RUC for their friendship, tolerance and guidance; to the Headquarters for keeping pace with it all; to Echelon for getting on with it and providing the goods; to the Rear Party for looking after our vehicles, our families and our base. The Dukes are still coming up the hill!



Storm damage at the new Whiterock Base.

ALMA

MADDOCKS' MISDEMEANOURS

Silently, cat-like, and with the look of death lurking in his pale yellow eyes, he creeps up behind our beloved cook, Cpl Maddocks, and with a mad scream he lunges, forward, ramming the red hot poker into his old grey head; and the blood gushes forth, making a sickening hissing noise on the glowing metal. "That should teach him not to make lumpy custard!!!"



CSM TO OC 3 PLATOON ON CHRISTMAS DAY

"Sir, promotion has lowered you to the level of the people above you."



"Which way up did you say the mag goes Colour?"

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Rugby is a game played by Gentlemen with odd shaped balls!"

HEARD ON THE INTERCOM

Lt Dixon: "QRF mount up, mount up!"
QRF: No answer.
Lt Dixon: "QRF, if you have already deployed buzz to acknowledge."
(Mmmmm — bright young man that!)



Mrs. Chris Gooch, the splendid WRVS lady from Lisburn who braved bricks and bottles to deliver her Christmas goods, selling cards to the lads of ALMA Company.

SIGN IN CORPUS CHRISTI CHURCH

"We regret that the box marked 'For The Sick' must be restricted to monetary contributions."



"I do believe this is carrying joint Army/RUC operations just a little too far!"



Stephanie Laine, our wonderful 'Miss Wellie' enjoying a visit to ALMA.



The RSM in true Christmas spirit at Moyard

ALMA look as though they're having fun as well!!!



TRUE STORY (HONEST)

Irish referee to Dukes rugby player after flare up:

"I don't know what you've done. I don't care what you're going to do. But I'm penalising you — and any more and you're off!"

Is It True that Paddy used to take hay to bed — to feed his nightmares??



BURMA



Lcpl Cater celebrating his 21st birthday.



21L giving Patrol Orders



Christmas at BURMA Company



Loading up for patrol in BURMA Company.



Sgt Dent and his brick after finding a cache of bomb making equipment during a search.



And the Brigadier getting a first hand report. (Pity Sgt Dent looks more like he's just **lost** something — but it was a gripping tale!)



Capt Richardson's cat-astrophe!



Ptes Draper, Acklam and White, Dvr Rowe RCT and Lcpl Smith 92 take a break between patrols.

A Belfast woman was heard to remark to her friend whilst being talked to by an officer, "Can you hear him? He talks like a +/%-&% £ book!"

★

What happens when you cross a donkey with an onion? Most of the time you get onions with long ears, but occasionally you end up with a piece of ass that brings tears to your eyes!



Just some of the finds made by the battalion so far. It may not look a lot — but in terms of potential lost lives it is a great deal.



Mr. Ivan Lee, Editor of the Huddersfield Examiner with Lcpl Irving in the North Turf.

CORUNNA



"Eh — this joker says his name is Westcob!"

Seen in the log, "There are suspicious youths hanging around the Community Centre looking as though they are going to lift it." (Strong yobs!!)

Congratulations to Sgt Breach who has been promoted is this a Breach of promise? (Groan — Ed!)



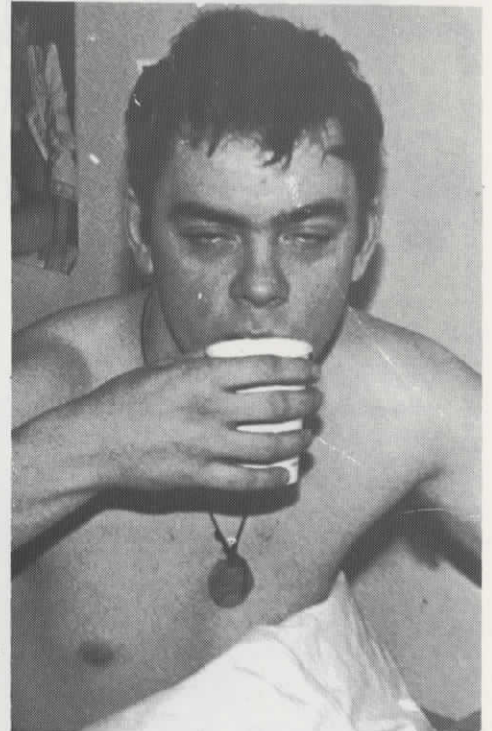
Informality was the keyword during The Duke of Wellington's visit.



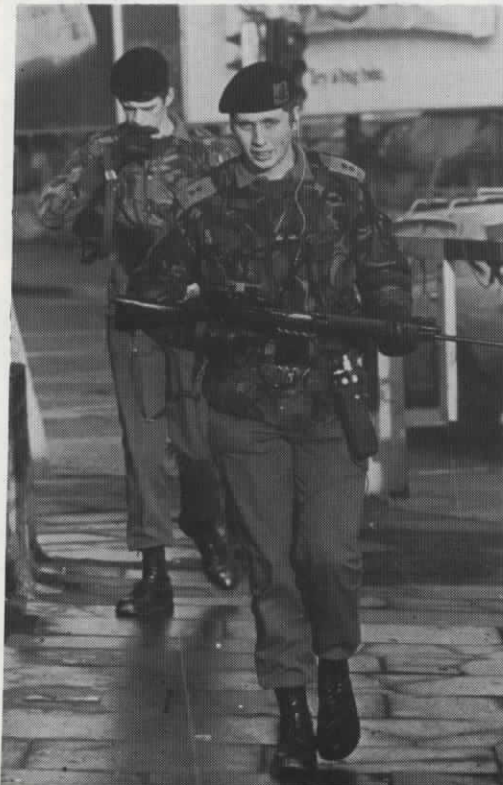
CHATTING UP

On a pre-Christmas patrol briefing in CORUNNA Company the platoon was reminded that it was a good chat-up policy to remind any pensioners that their Christmas Bonus was now in the Post Office ready for collection. At least one young man remembered, and after his initial, "Ello luv" passed on the good tidings to the lady concerned. All he got for his troubles was a near miss with a handbag and a colourful retort of, "Ye cheeky young &!+% , how old do ye think I +&£% well am!!!"

The delighted personnel of 3 Troop Royal Engineers, who have supported CORUNNA Company for the past 3 months, hand over a parting gift to Major Palmer.



Don't ask a man to drink and drive. Lcpl Gaskin RCT, Pig Pilot!



Lt Morgan caught in between telephone calls — and without his fingers in his ear!!





Lcpl Walters enjoying the CSE show!



Lcpl Purdie, Royal Engineers, hears that his R and R has been cancelled.



Butch Hill and the Shuttleworth Kid!

ARRESTING RESCUE

Callsign 32C decided to go into business as windscreen removers, but evidently using rubber bullets is illegal so they have sacked the idea. But it does work — ask Annie!

HANDOVER — NORTH HOWARD STREET MILL

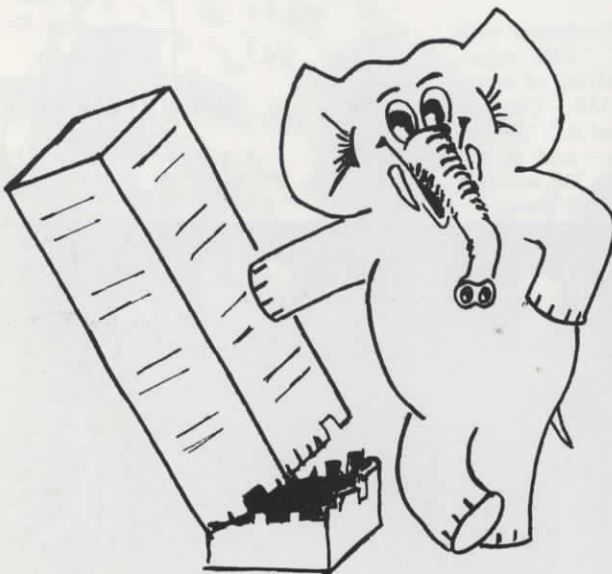
What a disastrous day this is, Gunners stuck in the lift at Divis. What's the score when the day is ended? Thirty on foot and nine suspended!



Pte Brooke keeping careful watch from the interior of a 'pig'.



"Hurry up! It's due to go off in 5 minutes!"



Albert prepares Divis for Handover



Residents of the Divis Flats being moved to safety by CORUNNA Company after a bomb warning.



Stephanie has a weighty problem judging the CORUNNA Company hairy chest competition — and she's not the only one!!



OC CORUNNA supervises the bomb disposal team. "There must be something here — it says so on the wall!!"



"Come up and see me sometime!"



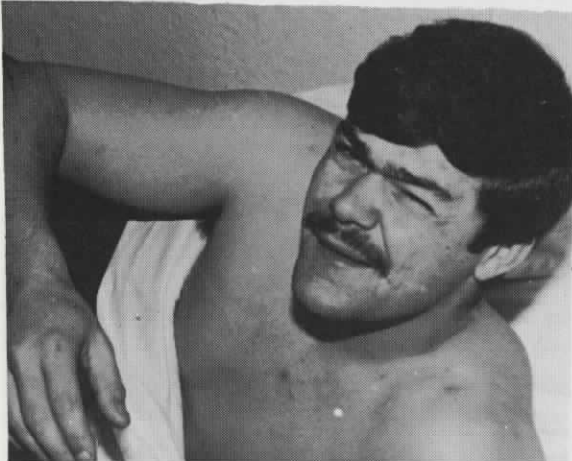
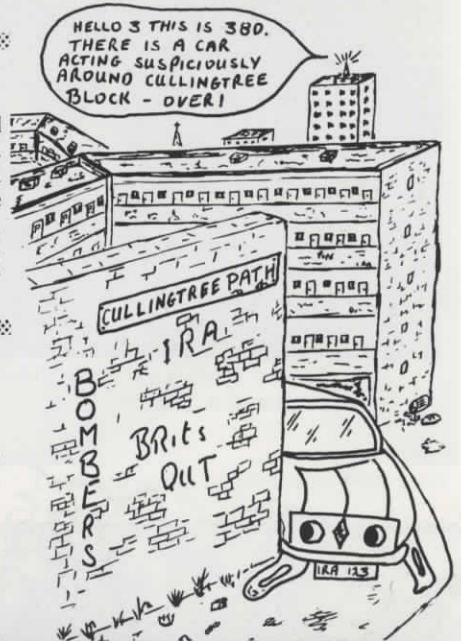
Callsign 33A was tasked to do an arrest in the Lower Fall, and then go to the Springfield Road with the arrestee. The Brick Commander said to his soldiers, "I know a fast way to get there, then we can get back here in time for breakfast." Next thing: "Hellow 3 this is 33A. We are bogged in on Ross Street. Send recovery." 45 minutes later Callsign 33A managed to get back with some rather red faces!

BRADLEY'S BOOT

On a search at St Louise School Cpl Williams tried to force a door open. Eventually Pte Bradley said, "Stand aside — I'll show you how it's done." He did. The door flew open, he followed it, but his foot, which was stuck in the door, remained behind. The spectators (CO and RSM) were not amused!

ORIENTATION PROBLEMS — IT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO ANYONE!!

"Hello 33B this is 33C. Rendezvous with me on Kashmir Road." "33B, roger, wait out. . . ." (Much studying of map). "Hello 33C, this is 33B. Confirm Kashmir Road. I can't find it." "33C — it's OK. I'm there now — and so are you!" Commander Callsign 33B now has his street book with him at all times!



"Eh"



Capt Grieve pooling his resources. We wondered why, when asked by Gloria Hunniford, "What do you do?" Capt Grieve replied, "Not a lot!" Mmmmm.



Chief Superintendent Jimmy Crutchley about to go on patrol with CORUNNA.

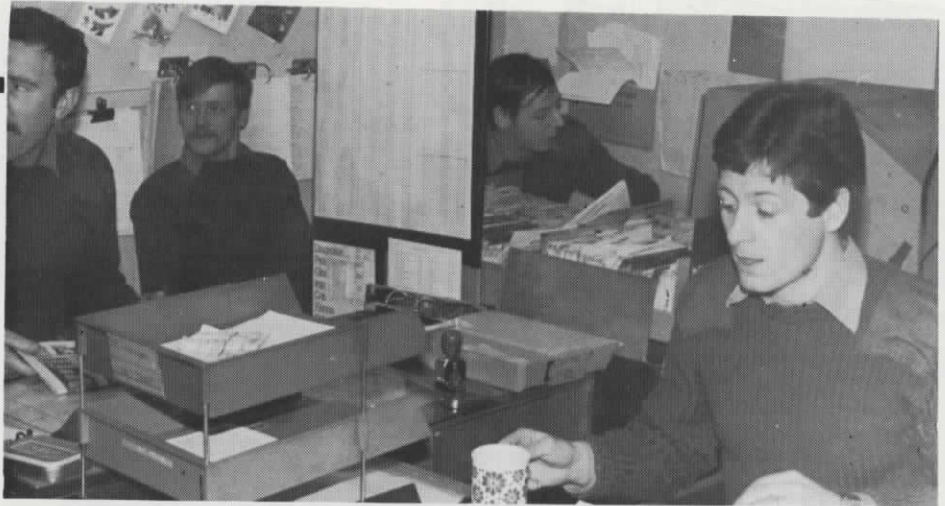
SOMME

TICKING OFF THE BRICK COMMANDER — WELL ALMOST!

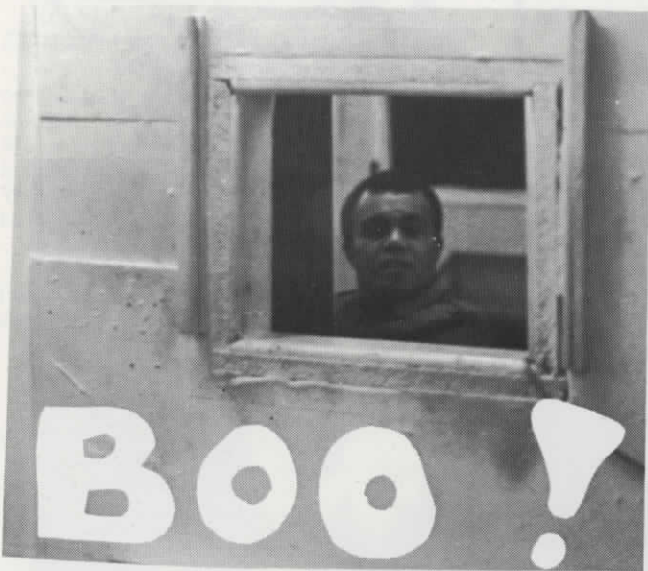
Platoon Commander: "Hello 41B, this is 41L, radio check over."

41B: "OK over."

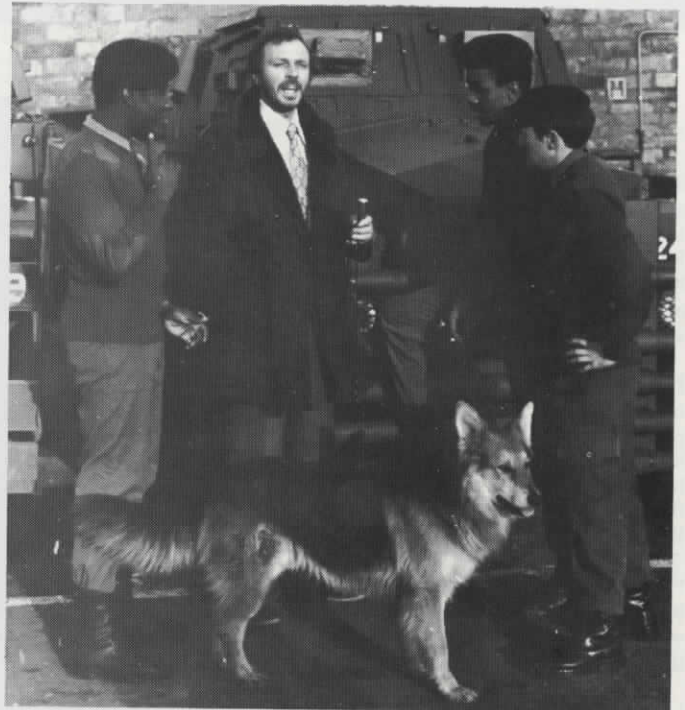
Platoon Commander: "OK where have you been? You must listen out, I have been trying to contact you for 5 minutes on the other means (pausethink) You were obviously on this means — Ahhh that is obviously why you didn't answer me — out!"



This must be one of the most unusual photographs of the tour. More than two people in the Int Cell — and one of them actually working!!



The result of this photograph was Cpl Cockshot (the photographer) suffering from a severely cracked skull!



Peter Crabtree, BBC Radio Sheffield interviewing soldiers in SOMME Company. Peter paid a 3 day visit to our patch just before Christmas to record messages for families and friends in the Sheffield area.



Sergeant Major Basu convincing The DUKE that all is well in Somme Company.





SOMME Company Sports Day. OC Somme performing in front of admiring onlookers.



"I'll get the burgers Cpl Harrison — you get your wallet!!"



DUMMY OF THE TOUR

Nominations for Somme Company's "Dummy of the Tour" award pour in almost daily. A few of these nominations are published below for your amusement. Lcpl Barker — for shredding Tuesday's Patrol Programme on Monday — before it went to print. Last seen sitting uncomfortably at the end of the 2IC's size 10 boot!

Pte Wade — in the Multi-Gym for failing to put weights on the apparatus before pulling on the handles. He gave such a heave that the handles bounced off his head as he sagged unconscious to the floor. Pte Wade has since applied for a PTI's course!

Pte Glatress, on a night patrol — he left base with Callsign 43 and came back with Callsign 42. "Rather a long 2 hours that," he said, five hours later!

Lcpls Conlon and Bailey and Pte Holt for standing in a telephone queue for an hour when there was nobody in the phone-booth. Tut, tut!

And finally Dvr Squire, RCT, who asked COFFEEPOT about transport to "Tampax Towers" (Nurses home observation post). Naughty little man!!!

NORTHERN IRELAND AWARDS FOR 1979/80 TO MEMBERS OF SOMME COMPANY

The WRAC 'What a Nice Boy' Certificate goes to Cpl Able for escorting COFFEEPOTS bigger than himself.

The Ruli Bronze Medallion goes to Lcpl '94' Conlon for saving an electric kettle, 2 packets of Weetabix and a copy of Fiesta from the Telex floods of December 79. The 'H' Block Award goes to Sgt 'Snurr' Sweeney for staying on the blanket longer than anyone else during the tour.

The Lord Snowden Golden Camera of 1979 goes to Lcpl Craven for taking snaps of the lads for the Duke's Diary and throwing away the undeveloped film but keeping the empty container!

STEPHANIE LAINE —
MISS WELLIE 1979/80



(Photograph courtesy of The Sun newspaper)

TACH HQ

"I FORGOT TO MENTION . . ."

A follow-up report to the Brigade Watchkeeper by the 2IC after the initial report that a soldier had been the victim of a hit and run incident on the Falls Road, went something like this:

2IC: "Hello, Springfield Ops here. I didn't tell you earlier, basically because I wanted to find out the full facts; but regarding the hit and run . . . a number of shots were fired."

Bde Ops: "Oh no — how many?"

2IC: "Not many — about 30 I think."

Bde Ops: "30! What on earth happened?"

2IC: "Well, the Divis Tower OP saw the incident and had a pot-shot with their GPMG."

Bde Ops: "GPMG!! My God!"

2IC: "Yes, well, it's not too bad. Only one chap was hit and we took him straight

2IC: "Yes, well, it's not too bad. Only one chap was hit and we took him straight to the Military Wing of Musgrave Park Hospital so that we could keep the whole business in Army hands. We're not sure yet as to his condition, but I'll keep you posted."

Bde Ops: "Who was the casualty?"

2IC: "Father somebody or other. I'll find out the name when he regains consciousness."

Bde Ops: "A PRIEST!!!"

2IC: "Yes, but he might be OK."

Bde Ops: "Might be! This is not good. Who's going to tell the Brigadier?"

2IC: "Surely that's your job. We only report these things to you."

Bde Ops: "He'll go bananas!"

2IC: "No — its a joke."

Bde Ops: "Hang on, I'm still writing."

2IC: "No, it's only a joke."

Bde Ops: "Just hang on — I've not finished."

2IC: "I said it's only a joke!"

(Shouting)

Bed Ops: "Oh — thank God for that — you had me going for a minute there. You shouldn't do these things to me!"

The retaliation from Brigade was not slow in coming. A signal received the next day read: From Brigade Watchkeepers to Ops Room 1 DWR.

"Quote: I have invented an invaluable permanent invalid called Bunbury in order that I can go down to the country whenever I choose. Unquote. (Oscar Wilde)!"

P.S. The soldier hit by the car is now OK (ED)



His Grace The Duke of Wellington with his escort group. The Duke spent a day with the battalion on 23rd January and visited all the Company locations.



Heard on battalion net: "Hello 4, this is 41C. The female piper leading the cortege is a female, over!"



Adjutant on watchkeeper at Springfield Road: "Right — I want something to read. Penthouse — Mayfair anybody?"
PRO: "I've got an old Playboy upstairs."

Adj: "I'm not interested in the Paymaster — I want something to read!"



"Ello, ello, ello; what's goin on ere then?"

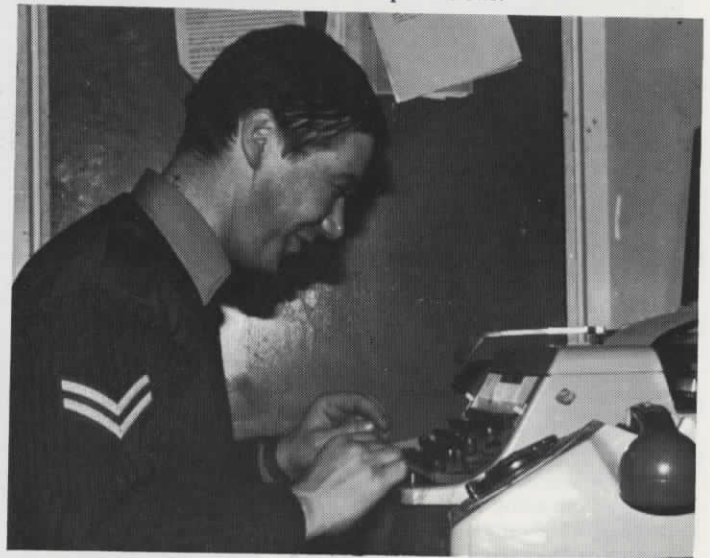




"Sorry Santa — your sleigh doesn't move an inch until we get our pressies!"

Being battalion photographer obviously has its compensations!

★ Place: '28's' bunk.
 Time: Christmas Morning.
 Occasion: CO and fellow officers, accompanied by RSM, serving gunfire.
 Scene: '28's' in bed with about 14 empty beer cans on floor by bedside.
 RSM: "Morning 28. I see you and your six mates had your 2 beers each last night!!"



"Dear Mr. Tetley"

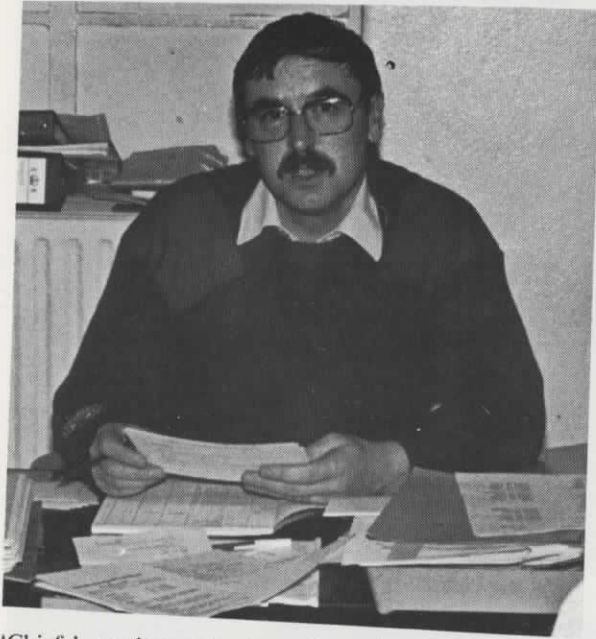


★ The Mayor of Kirklees, Councillor Donald White, signing the Sgts Mess Visitors Book. Council Director of Administration Mr. Lewis Richards, who accompanied the Mayor on a visit to the battalion just before Christmas, looks on with the RSM. ★



★ "You chaps may be jolly good pilots, but your safety belts are a bit basic aren't they?" ★

ECHELON



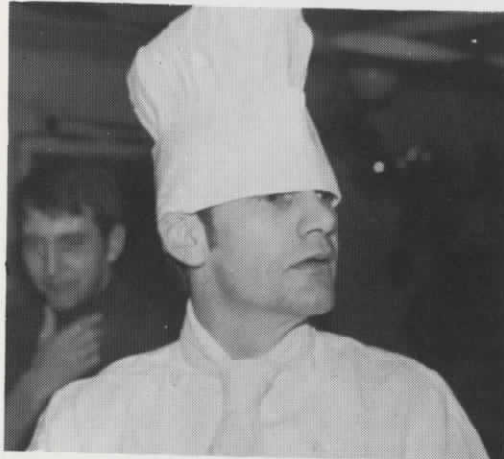
'Chiefy' sorting out more R and R problems.



"Alez Ooops!"



"I said start and finish on a double!"



"If that bloody laundry man gets mixed up once more I'll"

★ ★ ★ ★

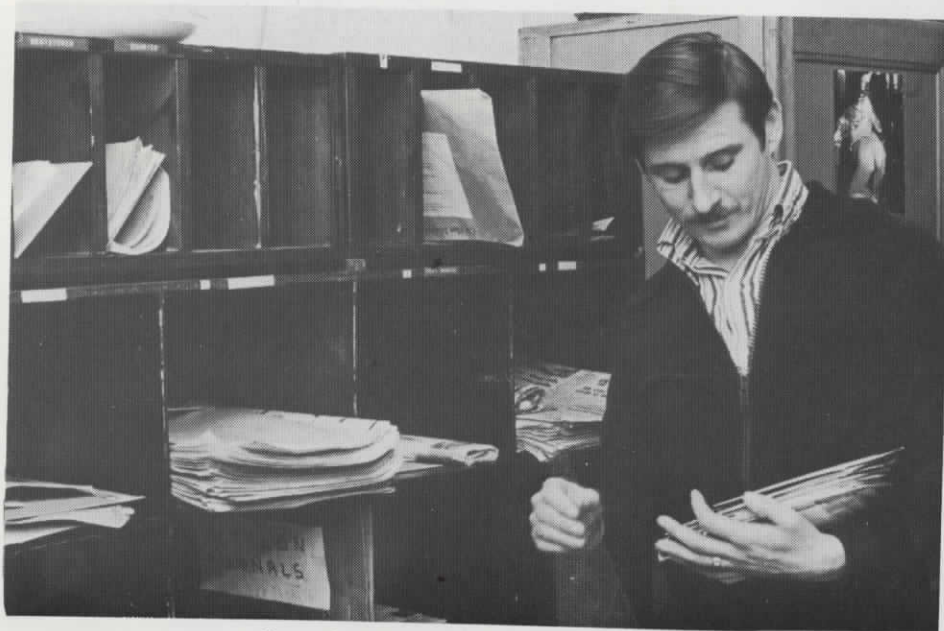
RQMS when asked by his storeman for a pair of size 6 insoles for a third party

. . . . "We have none. Send him one size 12 and tell him to cut it in half!!"

★ ★ ★ ★



"Arrr — it's a cracker!" Ssgt (10%) Lawrence with Lcpl Preston in the PRI shop.



★

One of the very important back-room boys, Lcpl Blagborough, who has helped to maintain morale by making sure that our mail is delivered on time.

★



And for those who missed the British Airways sponsored Christmas Show!!!!



The Royal Scots Advance Party??



Cpl Jameson and Cpl Woolley wondering if video really did kill the radio star/



And Staff Kirkpatrick trying to escape the lense!

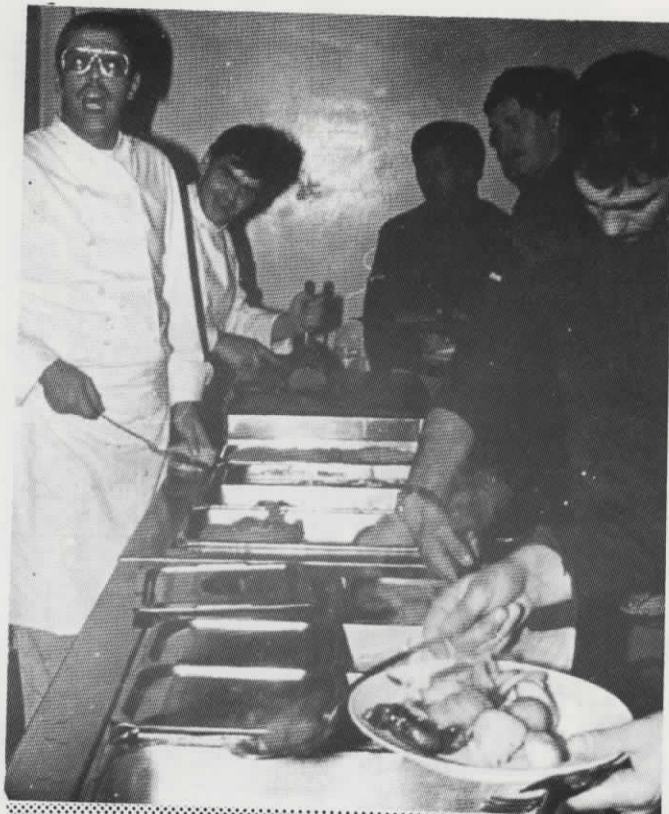


"We three . . . of Echelon are!"

"Aldergrove airport and don't spare the horses!" With three weeks to go, the REME are making sure that everything is mobile.



"PAY attention to the notes!"



Caption Competition Winner

The winner of the 'Mini' issue Caption Competition was OC BURMA who submitted the caption shown. Well done Major Nicholson. £5 is on its way to you.

"All right Eagon bloody Ronay, let's see what kind of dinner you can turn out when the QM gives you two dead giraffes and a gorsebush to work with!!"



"SEARCH ME?"

Looking through the search reports submitted by various individuals has revealed a truly impressive source of amusement. A few of the more interesting comments are:

Mr. told us to hurry. He had to be in court by 0900 hours. When I asked him, "What for?" he said, "For what you's lookin for." When I asked him, "What's that?" he replied, "Guns!"

.Not very worried or emotional, until he was arrested

. The occupants were very friendly in the cupboard under the stairs

The parent are of low inteligance and could possibly be used by terrorists!!!!

.Very friendly towards SF, has a son in the Maze doing 20 years

. She tried to pull off her old trick by saying her husband had just died. We know she was lying because the Army shot him some years ago

. He started to go on about harassment and torture. He said that he had wrote to the House of Commons who has sent him an apology

It is understood that families in Minden were unable to see the Christmas show filmed in the Belfast BBC Studios. As a consolation, here is a photograph of those who took part. (Note who the workers are!)

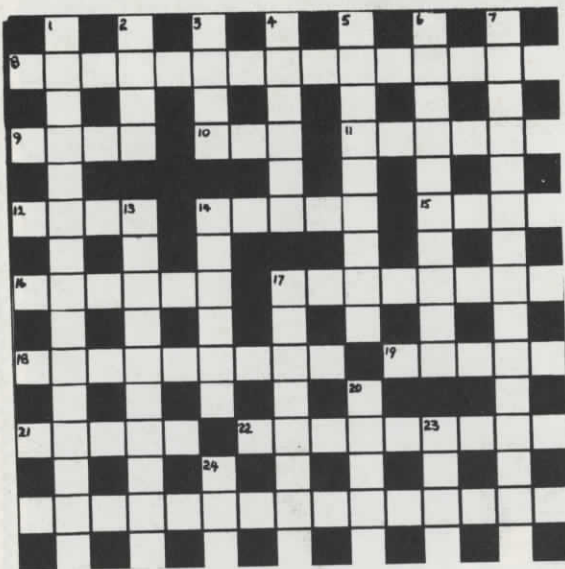


CAPTION COMPETITION

Every picture tells a story. Let the PRO have your ideas of what Lcpl Cowburn was either saying or thinking when this photograph was taken. £5 will be awarded to the sender of the most amusing caption.



CROSSWORD



PRIZE CROSSWORD

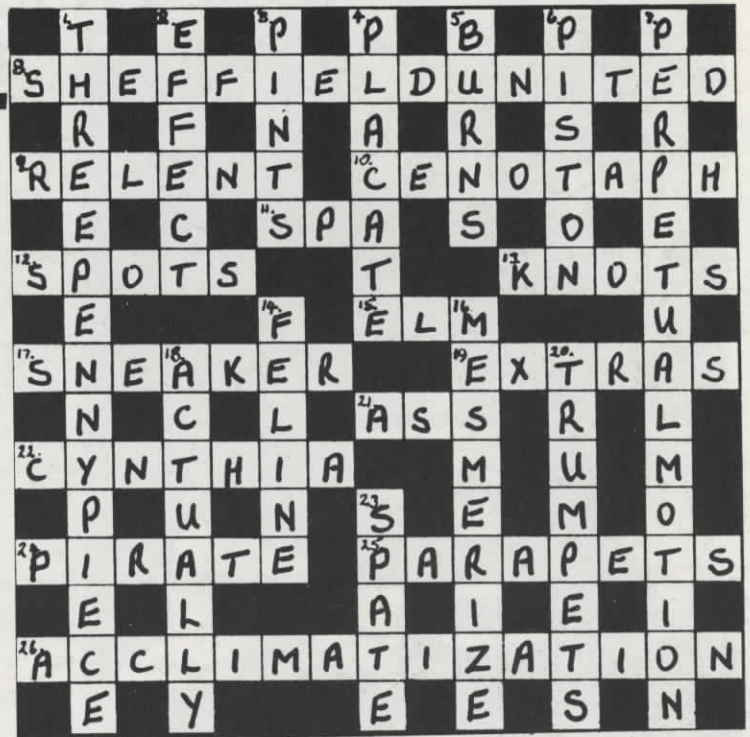
The sender of the first correct solution to the PRO wins £5. Second and third prizes of £3 and £2 respectively will be paid to runners-up. The winner of the Prize Crossword in the 'Mini' issue was Lcpl Bibbings who was £5. No other entries were received.

ACROSS

8. He excels at his trade (6,9)
9. Best job at the fruiterers? (4)
10. Take the juice from the teacher's apple (3)
11. Crazy deer do get gradually destroyed (6)
12. Blackleg in strike (4)
14. Greet in a strange way the lesser white heron (5)
15. Merely a little quarrel (4)
16. Just the place for a plug (6)
17. A number in the landing stages could be the chaps to initiate the enterprise (8)
18. Avoid him to save money (9)
19. You've got to do this in order to finish (5)
21. Don't argue! (5)
22. Just the thing for heavy rock music? (5,4)
25. Brighten up the place and have a good time (5,3,4,3)

DOWN

1. Afternoon out for shopping? (5,7,3)
2. Supporter at the flower show? (4)
3. The flower of the islands (4)
4. Support the Queen in the correct manner (6)
5. A little of a lot (10)
7. Regarded as necessarily true (5,3,7)
13. Cooked seeds for sustenance (5,5)
14. It's something between fish and meat of course! (6)
17. A cunning trap lets a childish talker express himself.
20. A member of the criminal class (5)



Solutions to the 'Miji' issue prize crossword



"SEND — OVER"

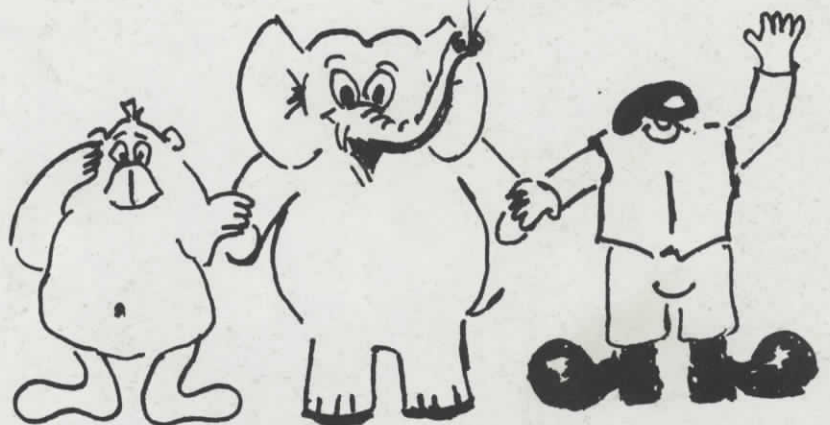
One Brick Commander who shall remain nameless decided to inform the whole of Belfast what he thought of the set up and the RCT and GCH in particular. Not only is being on permanent send embarrassing — it's costly too!!



Hear about the paddy salvage team who went to raise the Titanic? The iceberg came up!



The end!



And so it's goodnight from him and it's goodnight from him and Albert!