

Sandy Times

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Somewhere in Iraq...

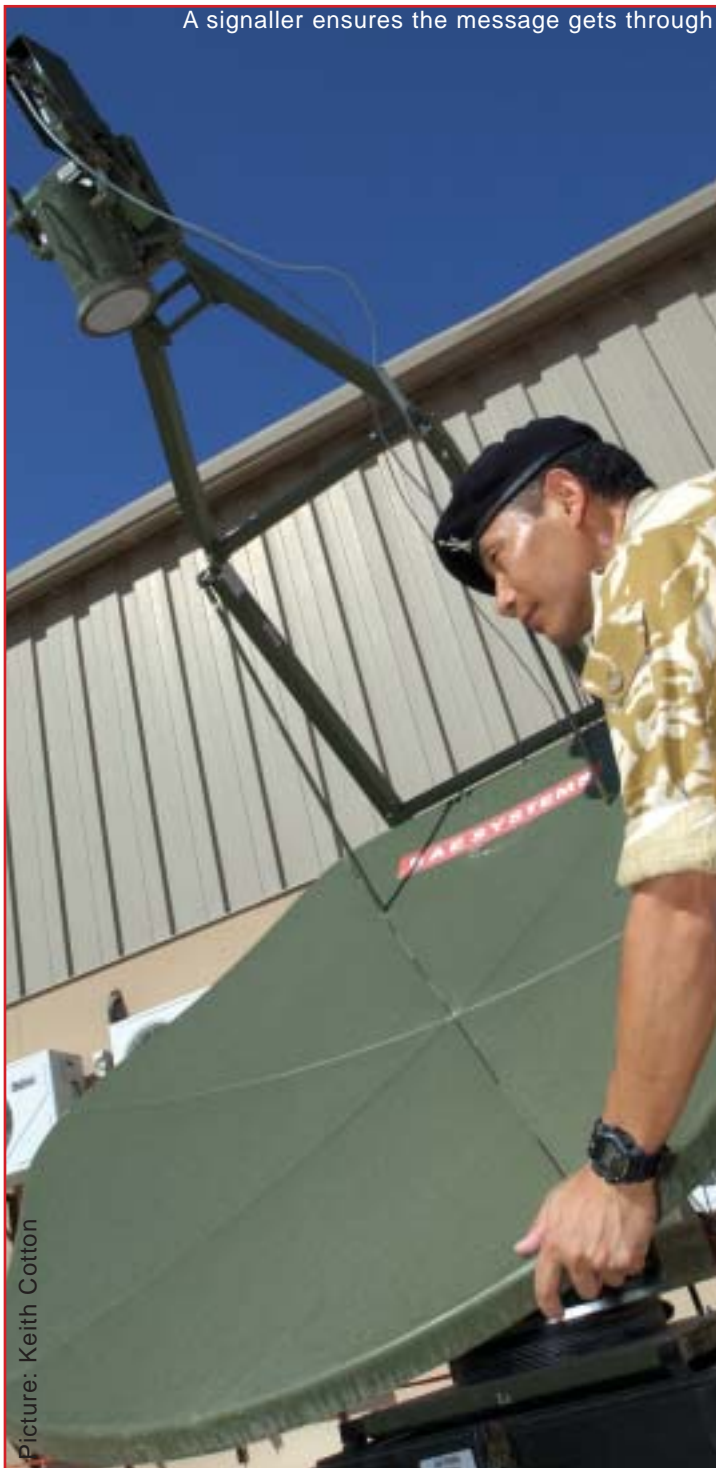
Australian Defence Minister, Senator Robert Hill, and the Chief of Defence Staff, General Peter Cosgrove, made an historic visit to an air base in western Iraq. The base, one of the largest in Iraq, was secured by coalition special forces during Operation Telic (*continued on page 3*).



An Iraqi MIG hidden in an orange grove

“Communication is the life blood of what we do”

Sandy Times' Cath Convery met Air Commodore Andy Warnes, Commander of the Joint Force Communication and Information Systems



A signaller ensures the message gets through

IT'S GOOD TO TALK and almost essential to pass data in various forms across the battlefield and the 2 000+ personnel in the Gulf region who have been working in this area know that the era of the *Blackadder* career pigeon are long dead.

Every photograph of a modern HQ, whichever the contingent, shows the heavy reliance on the ability to pass information in one means or another. In this area more than any other there has been a huge range of capability. Batco to Video Conferencing all have taken their place in this operation. Op Telic saw the first deployment of a Joint Force (CIS) organisation to coordinate delivery of CIS across the JOA. The concept was developed as a result of lessons identified on exercise Saif Sareea 2 and has seen voice and data services successfully delivered to over 40 location in the Maritime, Land, Air and Logistic environment.

Op Telic stretched the RAF's deployable CIS and Tactical Air Traffic Control capability to the limit, deploying over 220 personnel of the Tactical Communications Wing across all contingents, except the Maritime Contingent. They have provided coms support in all countries where we have had British forces. The deployment of the RAF's primary Command and Control system, RAFCCIS, has been particularly successful supporting the numerous small and mobile detachments, as have a number of new capabilities. The staff has reacted in their normal unflappable manner and although problems were encountered they have, on the whole, been overcome through ingenuity, tenacity and perseverance.

The land element has been spread right across the battlefield from day one of the operation, crossing the burm immediately after the

Engineers. Ensuring that the critical networks were up and running when needed. Often in first place the Royal Signals troops and Signallers within other capbadges had to move with the lead elements along with keeping a capability with the rear parts of the unit they were with. The CIS assets have had to move across the theatre regularly often using novel methods such as getting the comms cabins around on the back of DROPS vehicles. They have also taken part in recce missions to places such as Baghdad.

Why this concentration of bleeps? Air Commodore Andy Warnes, the man in charge, describes communications as the “life blood of what we do”. He is passionate about the role that the Signallers have taken in this campaign explaining that the military are rapidly becoming an information driven organisation although he is aware of the possibility of receiving too much information.

Air Commodore Warnes admitted that communications is “an area where you are ignored if you get it right and rightly criticised when it is wrong. You get a good kicking, I often wear books down my trousers as things will go wrong and we expect any day that the network may fall down.” So did it go wrong often, my favourite quote of the operation happened one evening in the National Contingency Command when the J3 Coord Desk turned to the SO1 from JFCIS and said ‘everything going well’ the answer came back “of course it's bloody not.” Perhaps Speckled Jim still has a part to play!

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Somewhere in Iraq (*continued from page 1*).

Senator Hill, the first coalition minister to visit Iraq, and his small entourage landed in an Australian C-130 on the 25th April, the eve of ANZAC Day. They were greeted by some of the soldiers from Australian Special Forces who had secured the base. After a briefing, he was taken on a comprehensive tour during which he saw a command-and-control centre, drove through a scrap yard of bombed-out aircraft and other military ordnance left from the first Gulf War.

He was taken into orange groves where he was shown

MIG aircraft hidden under camouflage netting. The aircraft had been left untouched by the coalition bombing but, for some reason, looters had removed some of the parts. The plan is to restore the aircraft and give them back to a newly-formed Iraqi Air Force. After a tour around the perimeter fence, Senator Hill was taken to the air traffic control tower where he addressed the troops in private. Afterwards he said: "I am very proud of what the coalition has achieved and on the eve of ANZAC Day, I am honoured to be here."

The Coalition Special Forces' task was to crush the

enemy's spirit and to force them to either surrender or capitulate by "laying down their arms and going home." Using surprise and shock tactics to shape the battlefield, a relatively small team of men were able to overcome a large conventional force within hours, as one soldier commented, "We arrived, did the job, and then disappeared."

Another explained that in the early stages of operations, the soldiers from Australian Special Forces, were confronted by 40 knot winds and freezing weather. Their progress was hampered further by a complex waddi-system which made ground manoeuvres

challenging and poor visibility slowed their movement further. On one day they experienced a full day of pouring mud! "We had to stop every couple of hours to clean our goggles and weapons." The men praised the close air support they received from their air force colleagues. He said: "We were in contact with enemy forces within one hour of being in Iraq. It was a high-tempo operation in which local commanders had to make snap decisions. UK, US and Australian air assets were tasked to us when we needed them and provided excellent support. We couldn't have done it without them."



A special forces soldier stands watch

From manoeuvre warfare to manoeuvre welfare



IN THE LAST few weeks the British military has been dominating its area of operations (AO) in order to ensure it is sufficiently benign for the Royal Engineers and Army Medical Services to operate unhindered. Their task is to ensure that there is no humanitarian disaster in the AO. Soon the military will be handing over to a plethora of civilian aid agencies, who will be able to operate safely in southern Iraq.

The Royal Engineers have been providing infrastructure support to make certain that vital utility services, such as water and electricity continue to operate.

The Sappers have re-established 80% of water distribution in Basra city. The existing system was neglected for a number of years and is now unreliable and fragile. The Royal Engineers have made it their priority to ensure that the flow of water is disrupted as little as possible.

To ensure no one goes without, an additional 400,000 litres of tankered water and 50,000 litres of bottled water, are delivered each day.

The electricity grid is supported by standby generators, ready to kick in at a moments notice. Sapper electricians are being supported by civilian

engineers from PowerGen and together they are assessing requirements to re-establish an all encompassing electricity grid.

A senior British official said: "The power system probably has not been working correctly for a number of years."

Further exasperating the problem is a shortage of heavy fuel oil that is required to run the generators: this problem is being addressed.

As part of the plan to get the Iraqis involved in the rebuilding of their country as soon as possible, a number of committees in major towns have been set up to engage with the local population to restore public services and the local economy.

A British spokesman said: "We found that health provi-

sion within the AO has previously been provided on a two tier system, with those favoured by the Ba'ath regime receiving better treatment."

British Forces have now seen a significant shift of emphasis in medical establishments since the regime collapsed, with younger members of the medical services ousting Ba'athists operating within the medical system.

An estimated three months of basic medical supplies are currently in the health system, though specific shortages are still occurring in specialist healthcare fields. All hospitals are now currently provided with power and water supplies.

Drugs are being supplied via a central pharmacy and redistributed to health facilities according to the existing

system.

The Royal Engineers have successfully ensured that hospitals in the AO have received power and fuel. In addition, the Medics are now closely monitoring the health situation in light of the annual cholera threat.

The lead food agency has conservatively estimated that households have food stockpiles until the end of May. British Forces have identified that much of the food distribution infrastructure is largely in place but suffering from a lack of investment prior to the conflict.

The re-opening of the rail link from Basra to the Port of Umm Qasr by British Forces on Saturday 19 April was a significant step forward in assisting the movement of food supplies.



Opinions expressed in the Sandy Times do not necessarily reflect those of the British MOD and Forces

IN A WEEK that has seen visits from both the UK Secretary of State for Defence, Geoff Hoon and his United States counterpart, Donald Rumsfeld, it seems obvious that the war-fighting phase of this campaign is drawing to its natural conclusion and that politicians will once more take a lead.

This week, the media have focussed their attention on Baghdad and northern Iraq, with few stories coming out from the British Area of Operations. It would appear that there is no news in peace!

The UN and the civilian NGOs are working effectively in our area and local workers are now being paid (in hard cash) for their work in the port of Umm Qasr. There are also reports that fewer people are relying on water distribution points, another sign that things are returning to normal.

Schools are reopening, but unfortunately these appear to be only for the older children. The state of the classrooms would put Mr Blunkett in fear of his job, any re-openings are good news.

The tone of press reports has now changed dramatically from one of doom-and-gloom in the middle of the campaign, to euphoria a week later. If past history is anything to go by, we must now await a media critique (of the way we are operating) with "poor old Tommy Atkins" getting a kicking even as we continue to work towards improving the lot of those we have so recently liberated.

Having said that, we are more than aware that this week's copy of the *Sandy Times* is full of stories of many of our colleagues on their way home. We appreciate that this makes it doubly difficult for those of us who have to stay on. The "groundhog days" that we are once more in represents normality for the Iraqis and that after all is not only our aim but something that we should all be proud to have brought to this often recently troubled land.

Home soon says Hoon

Planning: The top brass meet

Report: PA



Picture: Keith Cotton

IN AN INTERVIEW with British Forces Broadcasting Services, Secretary of State for Defence, Mr Geoff Hoon, said he was keen to get British Service personnel back home as quickly as possible.

"There is still a very important job to do here restoring Iraq to its own people. But I want British Forces to go back home just as soon as possible," said Mr Hoon.

He said his visit had given him the opportunity to see the results of the tremendous work carried out by members of Britain's Armed Forces, "I simply want to say thank you to them on behalf of the Government," he

added.

Mr Hoon said British Forces were making a "tremendous humanitarian contribution to rebuilding this country."

The Defence Secretary said all three Services had performed admirably during the military campaign.

"There was a tremendous sense of co-operation between the different armed Services, the three worked very closely together."

Earlier in Umm Qasr, Mr Hoon shook hands with Iraqi port workers and petted a sniffer dog, an English Springer Spaniel named Buster, who has discovered several Iraqi arms and drugs caches.

He visited a Gurkha Engineer Squadron, medical teams and logistics teams. He also tasted bread from the British operated bakery.

One of the port workers, Fadel Abbas Jassem, a 40-year-old seaman, expressed gratitude that Mr Hoon had visited the city.

"The British saved us. I feel good that he came here. It makes me feel safe," Jassem said.

The previous day a senior military commander said that British ground forces in Iraq would reduce from three Brigades to one.

3 Cdo Bde and 16 Air Assault Bde would be initially withdrawn leaving 7 Armd Bde to be replaced later.

Surrounded: The Right Honourable Geoff Hoon MP, Secretary of State for Defence visits 102 Logistic Brigade at the port of Umm Qasr in Iraq before heading North to visit British Forces based near Basra



Picture: Paul Jarvis

What next for the SCOTS DG



AFTER SEVERAL weeks of fighting, the soldiers that crewed 7 Armoured Brigade's heavy metal wonder what's next. Wil MacKinlay met the SCOTS DG as they wait for their next orders in the desert.



Picture: Wil MacKinlay

(Main picture) Tankbusting: A Challenger 2 battle tank fires at a T55 tank abandoned by Iraqi soldiers at Basra Airport

(Above) Dressing up: Capts Will Leek, Johnny Hanlon, Colin Dobeson on parade demonstrating the new orders of dress for the desert

(Below) Debating: SSM MacIntyre, SSgt Lillie, Sgt Taylor discuss issues of national importance



Picture: Wil MacKinlay

Picture: Paul Jarvis

Shaibah is a forty minute drive south west of Basra International Airport. The route through the desert plain and salt flats varies from a six lane highway to a dusty dirt track.

The length of the route is littered with debris from battle, burned out T55s, abandoned MTLBs and artillery pieces. At the main entrance to the airfield where the armoured elements of 7th Armoured Brigade are now billeted, is a scrap yard of shot up Iraqi weapons, gathered by the REME. Pass this and you're onto the airfield proper and the enormous collection of UK military hardware becomes apparent.

The UK battle groups formed for the war are no longer suitable for the task in hand, that of patrolling and policing Basra, so the city has now been handed over to the Infantry.

All the heavy armour of

the SCOTS DG, the Challenger 2 squadrons and their attached arms, are now concentrated and provide a quick reaction force manning several key checkpoints on the city limits.

Report writing is ongoing and where possible improvements to living conditions are being made. Everyone is getting used to a slower pace of life after the intensity of the previous weeks.

The SCOTS DG have adapted well to their new lifestyle and their unorthodox operational role. In addition to this 'traditional soldiering' they occupy their time repairing and servicing their vehicles, playing the odd game of football, or volleyball, and of course writing home.

While conditions may be improving slowly, central catering is now in place with other facilities soon to follow. Inevitably, people's thoughts are beginning to turn to home.

Why we're so good

Report: Pete Cottrell

CIVIL-MILITARY COORDINATION (CIMIC) has become increasingly important in post-modern military operations and if done well it can drastically increase the support and cooperation received by a military force from the civilian population. Although CIMIC has become a part of everyday life for the British Army in the Former Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan the only unit specifically trained to provide a CIMIC capability is the small but well travelled Civil Affairs Group (CA Gp) based in Gibraltar Barracks, Minley.



Picture: Paul Jarvis

Private Paddy Riddell (left) and Sergeant Dave Carter are registering the firefighters at Umm Qasr

The CA Gp is made up of specially trained personnel whose job is to provide both CIMIC training for units about to deploy, as well as to deploy themselves in order to provide expert advice on operations. Op Telic has been its biggest deployment since it was created in 1996.

The CA Gp has deployed staff officers to the NCHQ, HQ 1 UK Div as well as CA Teams to the British Brigades. In addition, G5 staff and a number of willing volunteers have all contributed to a successful CIMIC operation.

So what is CIMIC? The

answer is remarkably simple but in essence it is something all of us can contribute to. It is any action conducted to establish, maintain, influence, or exploit relations between the military and the civilian population so that they do not hinder operations.

Specialist Staff Officers and Civil Affairs Teams (CA Tm) identify potential humanitarian disasters, liaise with aid agencies and facilitate the flow of aid to help alleviate the crisis.

Although the CA Gp has plenty of experience of peace support operations it has been

58 years since the British Army has had to deal with the Humanitarian Aid (HA) challenges created by high intensity conflict.

But CIMIC is not just the prerogative of the CA Gp, Divisional and Brigade G5 staff have all helped to 'make things happen' in Civil – Military Operations (CMO) and since the outbreak of hostilities in mid-March UK forces have distributed food, water and medical supplies to Southern Iraq as well as opening the key Oil-for-Food port of Umm Qasr, re-opened the Umm Qasr to Basra railway,

built a pipeline to supply drinking water to Umm Qasr and its outlying settlements, as well as helping to re-open schools, re-establish civil policing and help set up local town administrations.

Not all of this is due to the efforts of the CA Gps members but is a product of the professional 'can do' attitude of the British Armed Forces and the realisation that if we are to consolidate our spectacular victory on Iraq's battlefields we must do everything we can to help re-build Iraq, until the Iraqis can fend for themselves.

Watch out there's a mine about



Disabled: Land Rover down

Report: PA & Cath Convery

WHEN YOU DRIVE from Kuwait into Iraq the first thing you see is children jumping in front of your vehicle with almost complete disregard for their own safety. This cavalier attitude is mirrored in their behaviour around the mine fields and unexploded munitions that litter the area. The Garden of Eden is no paradise but a dump festooned with unexploded bombs where children play football with mines. Troops who have been patrolling the area are baffled by Iraqis' attitude towards deadly munitions waiting to go off.

WO2 Daz Breeden tried to warn residents of a village near the famous Biblical site of the danger of interfering with the unexploded ordnance littering the country.

The 37-year-old, who is serving with 3 Regiment Army Air Corps was stunned that children were playing soccer with lethal anti-personnel mines right in front of colleagues in the helicopter unit.

A colleague Sgt Glenn Reeves said: "They were just kicking the mines about, they obviously didn't realise how dangerous they are."

WO2 Breeden told how he taped off a huge stash of unexploded ammunition with mine tape to keep locals away, only to see the next day villagers in Medina, central Iraq, had stolen the tape overnight.

The next night the same thing happened. He said: "There were thousands upon thousands of Iraqi grenades and mortar bombs and around 60 per cent still had their detonators in – they were armed and ready to explode.

"The locals have no awareness at all about the ordnance and how dangerous it is."

More than 140 ammo

dumps packed full of explosives abandoned by retreating Iraqi forces have been unearthed by troops with 16 Air Assault Brigade in the region of Amara.

But Iraqis' urge to plunder anything they can lay their hands on means they freely carry stacks of plastic explosives like bundles of firewood to use as fuel.

Teams of Royal Engineers are hard-pushed to clear the bomb sites to stop curiosity killing and maiming innocent Iraqis.

The Sappers of 36 Engr

Regt will undertake limited mine education, within schools and amongst the local population while they are deployed within the region, but the UN will bring in mines education teams as soon as possible. This organisation will work on developing radio and TV adverts, as well as producing hand bills and a poster campaign. Within the UN's Office of Rehabilitation and Humanitarian Aid is the Directorate of Humanitarian De-mining Operations. This group will coordinate efforts within the British Area of Operations.

Seven non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are ready to work with Joint Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group. It is understood that this work should start as early as this week with Danish Church Aid and European Land Mines Services.

Meanwhile the military will facilitate the UN involvement and undertake taskings that will impact on other military activities.

The aim of all of this is to make Iraq as safe as possible for the Iraqis so that a game of football can be just that.



Probing: Sapper clearing a route



ANZACs at dawn

AS THE SUN rose over the Middle East on Friday the thoughts of the Australian Contingent are with the ANZACs. On April 25, 1915 in the pre-dawn darkness, the volunteers of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, landed on the Gallipoli Peninsular. By the end of the war, as a proportion of the total population, no other nation had suffered as many war dead, and few Australians families remained untouched by this national tragedy.

The Gallipoli landings were the Australian's first large scale involvement in the war. In the first few weeks it became apparent that the operation would be difficult, not only because of the terrain and climate, but also because the Turkish resistance was much stiffer than expected.

During the following eight months the ANZACs made few territorial gains and lost over 8,000 men before withdrawing, but their experiences gave birth to a tradition of service and sacrifice that has come to symbolise the spirit of the Australian nation.

Signaler Reynolds, who participated in the service, said: "By the end of the war Australia had suffered the impact of over 60,000 casualties; it had a profound effect on our nation's psyche."

The Australian Contingent Commander, Brigadier Maurice McNarn said: "In the intervening 88 years since the Gallipoli landings the Australians have always

fought as members of coalitions: WWII, Korea, Malaya, Vietnam, the Gulf War and Afghanistan."

He added: "Today Australian military personnel are once again on active service far away from their homeland and this morning's simple service symbolises the tradition of national service that was born in 1915, a tradition the Australian Contingent are proud to continue."

Few nations would so proudly commemorate a military defeat. Perhaps there is something in the wry Australian sense of humour that allows them to make the best of even a bad situation.

However, the ANZAC tradition is best seen as revering the qualities of bravery, perseverance, mateship and all those other positive characteristics that can be found in the story of Gallipoli, qualities that Australians have shown time and again wherever they have been tested on other battlefields.



Pictures: Keith Cotton

Sunrise (*above*): The guard of honour as the Last Post is played

Symbolic (*left*): A Digger's rifle and hat

Paras find ammo at schools

Report: PA News

AMMUNITION has been found stored in every school searched by British soldiers securing their section of Iraq.

Speaking at a media briefing at Colchester Colonel Tony Barton, a spokesman from the 16 Air assault Brigade, said: "There is absolutely stacks of it (ammunition) around."

Brigadier Jacko Page said: "I can't believe it. Most of it has been dragged into built-up areas to secure it. Every single school we went in to was full of ammunition."

The 5,500 Brigade members deployed to the Gulf are

now based in the 75km wide Maysan area, bordering Iran. Its initial role at the outbreak of war was to secure the oil fields of Rumaila.

Captain George Tweedy said the job of the Brigade, based in Al Amarah, was to maintain security in the province, which is inhabited by the Marsh Arabs.

"7 Royal Horse Artillery and 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment are finding tanks, unexploded ordnance, ammunition and ammunition dumps abandoned by the Iraqi 10th Division.

"Our troops are stockpiling it, partially to prevent chil-

dren being injured."

Brigade medics treating such injured youngsters are carrying out "one of the most important tasks" for winning local hearts and minds, he said.

Capt Tweedy added: "If we can treat the children we get the parents on our side and then we get the population on our side." "By dealing with the basic medical needs of the population, it shows we are not a threat to them, we are there to assist them."

Military Police are working with local police to show them the techniques of patrolling. A platoon from 1st

Battalion The Parachute Regiment is in Baghdad securing the British embassy, said Captain Tweedy.

3 Regiment Army Air Corps are patrolling in helicopters to locate arms dumps.

Capt Tweedy said: "So far we have not found any chemical, biological or nuclear weapons in our area in the Maysan province."

Troops are living in more basic conditions in the province and eating combat rations because there is no way of keeping fresh produce in temperatures which do not dip below 30 degrees, even at night.

Fast food

THE BORDERS are still shut and the diplomats have yet to travel, but envoys from Pizza Hut and Burger King arrived in Iraq last week.

The two fast food giants set up their first franchises inside the war-torn country, while many aid convoys waited on the borders for the war to officially end.

The arrival of the two restaurants - sited inside giant trailers on a British military base near Basra - won a rapturous welcome from soldiers, whose limited range of rations lost their appeal weeks ago.

But some officers were less keen on the new arrivals, which are due to start selling food tomorrow.

"I would prefer we got decent showers and toilets sorted out first," muttered one high-ranking officer.

Fast food outlets are common in US bases, including Camp Doha in Kuwait, but it is believed to be the first time

they have been sited inside a British military base.

Another officer, who was directly involved in the franchise process, said: "It's an Americanism, we usually have them off the base, but because it is still a war zone we have to give them protection."

Permission to open the restaurants was granted through the Army and they will be run by existing franchise holders from Kuwait, with a percentage of any profits going to charity.

But soldiers waiting for a brewery franchise to be awarded are set for a disappointment, as military chiefs have already vetoed any alcohol being sold on the base, which is home to almost 8,000 British soldiers.

The Kuwaiti franchise holders provided staff and raw materials and the Army escorted them into Iraq, although it is understood it will not provide constant escorts for the supply runs.

Report: PA News

Picture: Keith Cotton



Variety: Pte Shane Nash, 23 Pnr Regt, enjoys a burger

HMS Bangor leads the way

IN THE EARLY HOURS of Tuesday 18 March 2003 HMS Bangor quietly left Bahrain to proceed up to the Northern Arabian Gulf (NAG). Her task was to assist in the clearance of the Khawr Abd Allah (KAA) waterway that lead to Umm Qasr. This important route was to be the lifeline for the humanitarian aid convoy scheduled later in the war.

Respite: HMS Bangor upon her return to Bahrain



Relaxing: Time for a brew



Cool: with temperatures at 33 degrees Smiler Molton demonstrates his diving prowess

The route was suspected of being mined and all intelligence indications pointed to several different types of mines being used. Early in the war boats were captured that had onboard mines ready for laying and more importantly showed empty spaces where mines had, until a few days previously, been sat.

Undaunted, for this is what we train long and hard for, the coalition minehunting force (British and American) set forth to clear a safe route.

The KAA is, at times, only a few hundred metres wide and manoeuvring within these tight confines with other ships around is difficult enough but add an airborne mine countermeasure helicopter and all of a sudden every turn seems to bring you face to face with another vessel.

The waterway is littered with many wrecks from the

Iran/Iraq War and the First Gulf War. There is also the usual scrap and debris thrown and lost from passing ships. At one point we had found a table and a cupboard, it appeared that not only had Iran and Iraq mined the area but also Ikea had taken an interest too!

Minehunting techniques vary from ship to ship but the objective is still the same, render the mine useless either by blowing it up or by shaking the thing so hard that the inside fails to work (we favour blowing up). To this end we employ a Remote Control Mine Disposal Vehicle (RCMDV) which drops a small 'bomb' next to the mine. The RCMDV returns to the ship and is 'hooked' and craned inboard and the ship moves off to a safe distance. When the 'bomb' is detonated it usually destroys the mine.

This does on occasion fail

to happen but the mine is well and truly shaken. The satisfaction of a large explosion is self-evident.

Throughout the war we were in a heightened state of readiness. The ship was working a six hours on-watch, six hours off-routine for eating, sleeping and personal administration. We are 'closed down' in that all ventilation coming into the ship was through a few carefully chosen filtered inlets and the rest were closed to give a gas tight seal. Dress of the day was coveralls which are double thickness overalls (which we slept in) with anti-flash hood pulled down and gloves carried. Life jackets (not inflated) are worn at all times except when asleep and respirators are always close at hand. The task of taking a shower meant carrying more baggage to the shower than a royal party on a two-month

state visit.

We conducted a daily brief for the commander; highlighting the past 24 hours and looking ahead for the next 24 hours. Through this we could see the developments on the ground, but this was only a fraction of what people saw at home on TV.

Throughout all this action and boredom, the ship tried to function as normal, the galley still prepared food with meals being served four times a day. The engineers provided power and fresh water, whilst the sailors maintained round the clock lookout and weapons crews on the bridge.

Our hard work resulted in an aid convoy, led by our sister ship HMS Sandown, passing safely through the KAA to deliver much needed supplies to the port of Umm Qasr. We are proud to have been part of this effort.



Pathfinder: A convoy carrying humanitarian sails towards Umm Qasr

Troops to be offered DU tests

Report: PA News

SOLDIERS RETURNING from the war against Iraq will be offered tests to check levels of depleted uranium in their bodies, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) has said.

The MOD said that it had been decided last year to offer urine tests to personnel returning from operational deployments where DU ordinance was used.

A spokesman said the move was a precautionary one as the overall assessment was that the problems that DU might pose were only likely to be very localised.

DU-tipped shells are used to pierce armoured vehicles including tanks, but the MoD maintains that the particulates produced by the weapon travel only very short distances.

Britain's Armed Forces continue to use Depleted Uranium (DU) ammunition because it's the most effective material available. DU is almost twice as dense as lead and therefore is highly valued for its ability to punch through armoured vehicles.



Tank Buster: A Challenger 2 main battle tank

Pictures: Paul Jarvis



Destroyed: Burnt out Iraqi armour

Nimrods return

Report: RAF Kinloss

TWO NIMRODS with crews from 201 Sqn and 206 Sqn returned from the Gulf last week. The aircraft will also have on board some of the Operations Wings staff and Ground Engineers who have been working in support of the Nimrods in the area.

Nimrods have returned to RAF Kinloss last week



Nimrods have been permanently based in the Middle East since Sep 01, covering a variety of roles. Initially the aircraft deployed on exercise Saif Sareea 2 but were quickly re-tasked to fly missions over the Arabian Gulf in their maritime surveillance role as well as over Afghanistan.

As the focus on Iraq began to take shape, the deployment began to provide the support to coalition maritime forces gathering in the Gulf, including American aircraft carriers. At the same time, they began

to fly reconnaissance missions along the borders of Iraq. As hostilities broke out, the aircraft and crews found themselves increasingly over Iraq itself, providing reconnaissance support to troops on the ground. Gulf.

Flight Lieutenant Jez Batt, 31, was among 50 Air Force personnel who touched down at RAF Kinloss, Moray, after playing a crucial role in the operation to depose Saddam Hussein. They were involved in reconnaissance missions with the Nimrod surveillance

aircraft, carrying out support roles using surveillance equipment and high-tech search and rescue equipment.

He said: "This is certainly the biggest operation I have ever been involved in. We came under fire pretty regularly - it's a very sobering experience, but we did what we were trained to do, and the crews did not take any unnecessary risks."

Group Captain Garfield Porter, station commander of RAF Kinloss, said he was "proud" of the way the crews

had gone about their jobs.

He said: "I'm immensely proud of the job the guys have done, not only in the last few months, but in the last couple of years since we have been involved in the Middle East.

"It has seen a huge expansion of our traditional role, and what has been particularly pleasing is the way the guys have really proved that they were true professionals and quite up to taking on additional roles."

Although only 2 crews have returned, one each from 201 and 206 Squadron, this marks a reduction in the Nimrod's contribution to UK Forces in the Gulf. All 4 RAF Kinloss Squadrons - 42 (Reserve); 120 Squadron; 201 Squadron and 206 Squadron have been involved in the Gulf operations.

It is envisaged that the Kinloss Wing will continue to provide support to the various strands of operational activity in the Gulf region for some months to come, albeit at a reduced capacity.

Personnel return to Lossiemouth

TORNADO pilots who flew back to Britain from the Gulf recently, spoke of their delight and relief at being back on home soil. Members of 12 Squadron based at RAF Lossiemouth were greeted with cheers and waves from their waiting families as they touched down at the Moray airbase.

The Squadron was involved in air attack missions over Iraq as part of the US-led campaign to depose Saddam Hussein.

They were met on the tarmac by Britain's top airman, Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Squire, who said he was "delighted"

that the 24 pilots and navigators had returned home safely. He said: "I am delighted to see members of the offensive wing back here at their home base after a job extremely well done in the Gulf.

"I think the whole of the air campaign has gone extremely well, but clearly the offensive contribution provided by the Squadrons based here was particularly important.

"I think the crews have done their job with enormous skill, great professionalism and very much courage."

Squadron leader Simon Tickle, 37, was met by his wife

Amanda, 33, and two-year-old son Ethan as he stepped off his jet.

He said: "We have been away for two months, it doesn't seem to be a long time but it has been quite difficult for the families back home - probably more so than for us."

More than 200 "unsung heroes" of the war in Iraq also went home. The group, which includes the Lossiemouth's Station Commander Group Captain Steve Hillier, were being met by their families and friends.

RAF spokesman, Michael Mulford, said the servicemen

and women, who had been working all over Iraq, had received a hero's welcome.

He said: "These are the people who toil away in the desert heat to maintain the aircraft, arm them and refuel.

"They are the real unsung heroes because without them the planes wouldn't fly and nothing would get done."

The return of the crews, who are serving with the four RAF Lossiemouth flying squadrons, will mean more than 300 of the base's 500 servicemen and women who have been in Iraq are back on Scottish soil.



World scene

Compiled by Cath Convery

Stories from the UK papers

Millionaire film

The story of the Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? cheat scandal is to be turned into a film.

The programme's makers revealed the plan at the end of Monday's ITV1 documentary about the furore, which drew more than 15 million viewers, according to unofficial estimates.

SARS

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has extended its SARS travel warning to Beijing, China's Shanxi province and Canada's business capital Toronto to try to halt the global spread of the deadly virus.

The advisory to postpone non-essential travel to the three areas will be in effect for at least three weeks, twice the disease's maximum incubation period.

The death rate for Sars could be significantly higher than previously thought, an expert study into the pneumonia-like virus is expected to suggest.

The research by a British scientist, due to be published in a medical journal next week, is expected to say the virus could kill between 8% and 15% - or one in seven - of those infected.

The WHO is currently predicting a death rate of 5% to 6% and has insisted the virus could still be beaten if countries worked together to stop it from spreading.

Latest figures show that Sars has infected almost 4,649 people in 26 countries around the world. So far 275 people have died, with most sufferers making a full recovery.

Action from the IRA

Tony Blair has publicly challenged the IRA to make a clear break with its violent past, blaming its ambiguity for the deadlock in the Northern Ireland peace process.

Throwing the debate over peace in the province into the public arena on Wednesday, Blair said the IRA must answer unambiguously three simple questions on its intentions to disarm, to relinquish all paramilitary activity and to end the conflict.

Gerry Adams, leader of the IRA's political ally Sinn Fein, has insisted that a statement earlier this month from the guerrilla group on its future was clear, and that its contents demonstrated its commitment to the peace process.

But Blair disagreed. "The truth is they are not clear and unambiguous, they are uncertain.",

Blair said the British/Irish blueprint included a timetable for "total normalisation" -- pulling British troops out of Northern Ireland -- along with policing and justice issues.

The United States backs the blueprint, Blair said. U.S. President George W. Bush offered support for the Northern Ireland peace process on a recent trip to Belfast, a move widely seen

as a payback to Blair for his support over the Iraq war.

The Northern Ireland Assembly is expected to be dissolved at midnight on Sunday as efforts continue to find a breakthrough in the stalled process.

Cops still racist

The Metropolitan Police remains "institutionally racist" 10 years after the murder of Stephen Lawrence, the commander of Scotland Yard's anti-racist unit has said.

In an interview to mark the anniversary of the black teenager's death, Commander Cressida Dick, the head of the Met's diversity directorate, said the force was unlikely ever to be free of racism.

North Korea next?

Talks between North Korea and the United States have ended in Beijing amid mutual recrimination after US officials said Pyongyang had admitted to having nuclear weapons.

North Korea said it had put forward a "new, bold proposal" to resolve outstanding issues, but heard nothing new from the United States. President George W Bush earlier accused North Korea of using "blackmail", after the new claims about its nuclear programme emerged

in Washington.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell said "strong views" were expressed during the two days of talks in Beijing - which BBC State Department correspondent Jon Leyne says is barely coded diplomatic parlance for a blazing row.

SATS stress

As many of you with children in year 2 at school will know Sats are nearly upon them and latest research suggests more than a third of children aged six and seven in England are suffering stress because of the national tests they have to take.

The survey of 200 parents, carried out by YouGov for the Times Educational Supplement, found that by the age of 11, when they take their next set of national tests, two thirds were showing symptoms of stress.

A quarter had lost their confidence and a fifth were so busy revising they had less time to play with their friends.

A little cheeky

A pair of pop stars who like to shake it on stage have strutted off with the Rear of the Year Awards.

Natasha Hamilton from pop trio Atomic Kitten and Ronan Keating won the 2003 award for their well-shaped bottoms.

Crisis diary

Money is uncovered. More of Saddam's henchmen surrender to Coalition forces. The analysis of the war begins and politicians start to visit Iraq.

By Peter Caddick-Adams

Mon 21 Apr

Saddam's son-in-law, Jamal Mustafa Sultan – has voluntarily returned from Syria and surrendered to US forces. US troops recovered \$656m in \$100 bills, hidden in a Baghdad villa. Three US troops were questioned over further amounts that were missing. It is announced that the US intends to keep a long-term military presence at four Iraqi airbases. A US tank commander admitted firing on the Palestine hotel, housing international media, on 8 April. He thought that TV cameras were binoculars directing sniper and mortar fire. There are threats of more strikes in the UK by firefighters.

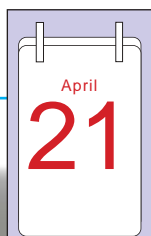
Tue 22 Apr

Quotes from the Iraq war are to be included in the new Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. The retired US general in charge of rebuilding Iraq, Jay Garner, met the press. He heads ORHA (the Office of Reconstruction & Humanitarian Assistance) who will oversee the reconstruction of Iraq, with a British deputy, Maj Gen Tim Cross. Garner told locals: 'we need...to give birth to a new system in Iraq. We will help you as long as you want us to.'

Wed 23 Apr

The bodies of Spr Like Allsopp and SSgt Simon Cullingworth were identified yesterday after the recent discovery of their shallow

graves at Az Zubayr, near Basra. They disappeared whilst undertaking EOD work in the area, exactly a month ago, on 23 March. The standpoint of France and Russia against war with Iraq becomes clearer as it emerges that France is owed over \$10bn by the regime, whilst Russia has an estimated \$53bn tied up in deals with Iraq. The Daily Telegraph



Returning: An RAF Sgt and his wife are reunited at RAF Kinloss

appears to have discovered documents suggesting that the pro-Saddam Labour MP, George Galloway, received money and benefits from Saddam's regime worth £375,000 a year. He has denied all the claims. Nearly 1 million Shia Muslim pilgrims take part in Arba'een processions in Iraq for the first time in decades, with no disruption.

Thu 24 Apr

US Marines protecting a bank in Baghdad shoot dead

three Iraqi looters. British forces have restarted southern Iraq's main crude oil pumping stations in an essential first step in restoring electric power and water supplies to the main centres of population. Claims surface that Saddam Hussein is alive with his two sons, Uday and Qsay. Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon visited Umm Qasr, the first British or US politician to set foot in post-Saddam Iraq.

Further documents emerge seeming to incriminate sitting MP George Galloway as working for Saddam since 1990, Galloway has consistently supported the Saddam regime. In 1994, he praised Saddam's 'courage and indefatigability' on Iraqi TV, though he denied using such words, claiming to regard Hussein as a bestial dictator. Then the BBC's monitoring service at Caversham produced the Iraqi film footage showing Galloway indeed praising the Iraqi dictator.

Sat 26 Apr

Military analysts have already started to review the war. Harlan Ullman in Washington DC stated that the 'professionalism of US British and Australian personnel was exceptional'. Mike O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institute put success down to 'the rapid advance of armoured columns into Iraq, achieved at extraordinary speed'. O'Hanlon thought that technical advances (96% of air weapons were precision-guided, as opposed to 4% in 1991) were less decisive than military professionalism and inspired special and urban ops. Another strategist, Michael Vickers, suggested that 'the early movement of ground forces took away a lot of Saddam's options'. All agreed that the surveillance provided by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) was key, and that the future of heavy MBTs like the Abrams and Challenger 2 was assured, because lighter armoured vehicles, while quicker, were far more vulnerable.

Hoon stated that whilst he was unable to give a timetable for withdrawal, British troops would not stay 'a day longer than is necessary.'

Fri 25 Apr

Lt Alexander Tweedie, HCR, has died in Edinburgh, three weeks after his CVR(T) rolled during operations. His death brings the number of forces personnel who have died in Op Telic to 32.



Families noticeboard

To SSM Andy Williams with 84 Med Sup Sqn: Hi babes I miss you so much, just waiting for the day when you're home and we can do the 'family thing' and maybe I'll let you out on the motor-bike if you're good! Lots of hugs and kisses for Daddy from Sasha and Holly and big wet sloppy one from Max. All my love Debs x

Message for Warwick Fraser-Coombe, Paratrooper, from Chiswick, London. Last heard of digging holes somewhere near Ramallah:
MESSAGE - Sexbuck may be turning 36 but Monkey Girl still fancies the pants off him. Happy Birthday, Always.

To Cpl Laidler from HQ Sqn. 3 Regt. Army Air Corps: Benn, Happy Birthday my darling. Everyone sends their regards. I miss you so much & can't wait to see you again. I will be so proud to be your wife. All my love forever, Claire xxx
PS. A big hello to everyone in the troop.

To SSgt David Graham, 1RRF Recce group L.A.D. Thanks for all the phonecalls, they made me soooooo happy. I love you very much and will always be your hag I don't care if someone MADE YOU paint over "the hag" on your vehicle! Who cares! All my love, Irene aka the HAG

Send your messages to thesandytimes@hotmail.com

LAME A.J.Simpson, 845 Squadron, HMS Ocean:well its about right your soon be on your way home, the builders have left and the house is all but done, never fear - the garden is awaiting your return and the boys are itching for that treehouse!! Bluebells are just popping up in the forest, just need your footsteps next to mine to make it perfect. I Love you.
FOREST.XXOOXX

To Tpr Stephen Matthies of the P's & D's of the RSDG, missing you lots babe and can't wait to see you home!! Everyone's hearts are with you and all the lads!! Your family, my family and let's not forget Kev Eke the legendary coach captain!! All we have to say here in Oz is G'DAY

To Battery Sergeant Major Barrett (Baz), 8 Battery 29 Commando Keep your chin up honey. Bradley and Brandy what their daddy for fights. We love and miss you lots, but don't worry we are coping. Loving you forever Paula and all your family and friends xxx

To our Dad, WO2 Rob Jones, 3 Regt AAC: We love and miss you so, so much. Keep safe and come home soon, so we can go to Disneyland!!! Big kisses from Megan & Caitlin

To Pte McCormick of 1CS Med Regt: Hiya babes we all really missing you especially me, can't wait to see your hair (baldy bouncer) take care babes, come home soon loads and loads of love Natalie xxx (every1 said hi)

Hiya Drew: Just a note to let you know that I'm missing you more each day and I can't wait until you are home. Say Hi to all the boys with 16 Tk Wksp and the wives will get the beers in when you get home in thanks for the money!!!!!!! Hope to see you soon, all my love Donna

For Stevie Plummer: For My Old Man, Happy anniversary on the 27th. Love ya Aly xxxx

To Cpl Ally Gardiner, A Sqn Scots DG: love and miss you millions hope your not getting to sun burned my wee red tomato take care and see you soon, Anne, Casey and smelly pants Kain xxxx

To the Gardiner Brothers Jamie & Ally: I hope its no long until we see you, all the best, God speed, Mum and Dad xxxxx

For Stretch: I haven't been able to write as I didn't have your BFPO No or Regiment. Hope you're OK though. Take care. Love Fiona

To Andy Tibbetts, 847 Sqn, HMS Ocean: Hi hon happy birthday for the 5th. Missing you loads - salsa isn't the same without you! - get practicing for your return! Jake sends hugs and kisses and misses you heaps - really wanted you home for your birthdays - but he has another party for you both planned for when you eventually get back hugs and stuff Hels and Jakester

To LCpl Graham 'Smudge' Smith: Hi Babe/Dada - Love & miss you loads. Tegan is in her big bed now and my bed seems really big without you, can't wait for our fantasy to become reality! We'll keep sniffing the housecoat 'til you come home! I'll be seeing stars on the 24th, hope you will too. Lovies from Dovies and Tegan x x

Hello to SSgt Lorna Bishton: serving with 202 Field Hospital. Her husband Ronnie and daughter Emmi love her loads and cant wait until she comes home.

To SSgt Harrogate, 1 Blackwatch, 1BG: your family love and miss you dearly and can't wait for your safe return hopefully sooner rather than later. Aall our love, Sharon, Daniel and Kimberley

For LCpl John Tin Wing Man: Hello bro! everyone is missing you at home. Take care of yourself! love Chris :) xxx

Hi Marcopolo, 28 Engineer Regiment: Just to say that we love and miss you loads, from all the family on the Isle of Wight. Stay safe love you lots, Mum.xxx

To my Super Trooper Geordie: If you are the desert I'll be the sea, if you ever hunger, hunger for me. I'll be dreaming of your love XxXxX Vicki

Your letters



WE WANT to hear from you. There are great Maglite Army torches for writers of the best letters. We reserve the right to

refuse publication and to edit. Names and units must be supplied but can be withheld. Sandy Times contact details are on page 2.



Prize letter

I must write and complain about the prices in the EFI. As all serving Armed Forces in the Gulf Region, the only place we can shop is the EFI, so they have a captive audience which they use to best effect! I recently went into one of these EFI shops and asked the price of a product, which was a spray can of scholl feet deodorant! I was told the price of this was \$15 (approx £10). This is disgraceful! Your help in this matter would save me a fortune.

Cpl D Mellors
3 RHA

*Lt Col Steve Mitchell, CO
EFI replies*

I was extremely concerned to read Cpl Mellors' letter detailing his recent enquiry into the cost of some Scholl foot deodorant at an EFI detachment in the Gulf. We are unsure where he tried to purchase the goods but we must advise that the retail price at all EFIs for Scholl foot deodorant is \$10.50 and not \$15 that Cpl Mellors was quoted.

I also wish to reaffirm that EFI's service to the armed forces is the reason we exist.

I would like to explain recent developments within our EFI operations in the Gulf. There are eight EFI detachments: four serving Iraq and four in Kuwait. In January the EFI purchased stock comprising some 227 product lines to a total value of £2.8 million and they were shipped to the

Gulf during Feb and Mar. We selected the product lines that we felt best met the daily needs of the armed forces.

The quantities supplied were estimates based on previous experience, however, we were constrained by the fact that space for shipping our stock was limited.

Some of the lines proved to be so popular that sales exceeded our estimations particularly in the case of certain toiletry products such as face wipes, skin and foot-care products. Stock was re-ordered from the UK but because of the lengthy delivery times we took the decision to make a one-off purchase to maintain stock availability until the next arrival from the UK. We purchased replacement products from local sources in order to maintain availability

of these popular products. Toiletry products in the Middle East are more expensive than UK so we sold them at cost price with a margin sufficient only to cover delivery costs.

Despite the additional costs EFI is not selling products at the inflated prices that Cpl Mellors has been quoted.

Finally EFI's sales to the end of March have been: 490,000 cans of soft drink; 11,000 cans of Pringles; 9,500 tubes of shower gel; more than one million packets of cigarettes and 53,000 bars of confectionery.

EFI is part of NAAFI International. NAAFI is a company limited by guarantee and its profits are reinvested into facilities and a welfare dividend for the armed forces personnel.

To our **Daddy Leigh Caruana**: We are missing you lots and lots. Can't wait until you are home so we can have lots of cuddles. We love you lots and lots, from your special boys Luke and Charlie-Oliver xxx

Hi my sexy husband **Leigh Elvis Caruana**: Missing you like crazy. Counting down the days until you're home. Love you more than anything. Forever your Kristen.

To **Sgt Tom Lock 16 CS Med Regt**: Just to let you know we love you loads and counting the days until you come home. Love you loads, big hugs and kisses Deb, Jack and Harry.

Hello **Hubbybear**: Just to let you know that we are all missing you heaps. Can't wait for you to come home

so we can have our honeymoon! Take care Handsome. All My Love Always, Sam (Wifeybear)

To **LCpl Musson, 3PARA**: Tell the guys around you that there are a lot of girls who want to meet them in Vancouver! Y'know how Canadians feel about British guys (especially ones in uniform). Remember that there's a large population of Canadians who admire and think of you and your guys. You, though, will have to remain mine. Hurry your butt back here already! Wocka Wocka! Miss ya. love, Hanagirl

For my darling husband **Stevie**: Sending you all our love, counting the days until we're all together again. Take care, lots of love and kisses Aly, Liv and Dan.

For **Mne Cuschieri, 40 CDO**: Hope you are OK and are looking after yourself as best you can. We are all thinking about you constantly and can't wait for you to get home. Take care and hope to see you very soon. Love from all of the family.

Hello to all of **Y Sqn, Royal Yeomanry** especially **LCpl Andy Hyde**. Wishing you all well, you are missed loads, keep safe and hurry home. Love Chrissy and Ossie Hyde

To **Gnr Brad Angel**: Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you! ;-) Hope you will have a great day, even if you are out there with lots of work! Amanda misses you so much, please hurry home soon! We are waiting to go out with you to the Feuerstein again! ;-) We

think of you! Your friends Judith and Manuela

To **Capt James Fowler**: Hope your suntan is going well!! and you are keeping safe and all is OK. Have a giggle when I'm thinking of you. Wish you and your fellow troops a speedy and safe return. Happy Easter to everyone. PS It's 25C in London today, amazing! Love Ros from Oz

To my sexy **Scots Dragoon Soldier**, Hurry home baby I have plans for you. All my love Your Personal Morale Booster in Essex XX

To **Sgt Ryan Hills**: Happy Birthday Darling! I love you and miss you more than you can imagine. Hurry home. Yours now and always Ana

Continued on page 19

Celtic in

Boavista 0-1 Celtic, Celtic win 1-2 on aggregate.

Henrik Larsson made amends for his penalty miss in the first leg by scoring the goal that put Celtic into the UEFA Cup final.

Celtic just about deserved their victory against a Boavista side that failed to excite, although the Scottish champions played well below their best.

Larsson's 78th minute strike was the one bright point in a highly disappointing and dour match.

But the performance will be forgotten as the Celtic supporters prepare for the trip to Seville, where their team will play Porto in the final on 21 May.

Spitting incident

The Football Association will look at the report of Saturday's Merseyside derby when Wayne Rooney was alleged to have spat at fans, even though the teenager will not face police charges.

"We have been in consultation with the Merseyside Police during the course of their investigation," an FA spokesman told the FA website on Wednesday.

"And we will consider the contents of the officials' match reports, as is normal procedure."

Utd out

Man Utd 4-3 Real Madrid, Real win 6-5 on aggregate.

Ronaldo single-handedly wrecked Manchester United's Champions League dreams with a virtuoso display at Old Trafford.

Real Madrid's Brazilian superstar scored a stunning hat-trick to destroy United's ambition of reaching the final on home soil in May.

Sir Alex Ferguson's men won a match liberally sprinkled with

sparkling attacking football - but Real went through as United's defensive deficiencies were cruelly exposed again.

To add to the drama of a magical evening, David Beckham emerged from the substitutes' bench to score twice as United staged a late rally.

Ruud van Nistelrooy gave United hope when he levelled Ronaldo's early goal.

But Ronaldo struck twice more early in the second half to ensure Real always stayed tantalisingly out of United's reach.

Iven Helguera's own goal and Beckham's double gave United pride and the victory - but not what they so desperately wanted as they went in search of Champions League glory.

Army remain dominant

Royal Navy players came close to breaking the Army's customary dominance of the three-day Combined Services Real Tennis and Rackets competition, played at Queen's Club, London.

Real Tennis is the original version of lawn tennis, as played by Tudor royalty, and is thought to have originated in France in the 13th century as a hand-and-ball game, the strung racquet not appearing until the early 16th century. In its modern form, although very much a minority sport, it has elements of lawn tennis, being played across a central net, but it also allows bounces off side walls as in squash.

In the Rackets semi-final, S/Lt Oliver Craven, an anthropology student at University College, London, defeated the Combined Services champion, Capt Paul Tennant (Army Air Corps), 15-10, 15-13, 12-15, 15-10. An hour later, in an epic five-game final, Oliver lost to Lt Christian Barker (Royal Signals) 15-6, 15-2, 10-15, 11-15, 12-15. In the Real Tennis singles which, like the Rackets singles, is only open to

serving members of the Armed Forces, Oliver made smooth progress to the semi-finals before losing 8-3 to the 2001 champion Major Andrew James (Grenadier Guards). Oliver then teamed up with Cdr (rtd) Simon de Halpert for the tennis doubles, the main event of the championships, and defeated the former champions in the quarter-finals by 16-8 before being edged out 10-8 in the semi-finals.

Prizes were presented by Prince Edward, an enthusiastic Real Tennis player and occasional competitor in the Combined Services Real Tennis doubles.

End game nearly there for the footballers

Portsmouth take title

Svetoslav Todorov was the Portsmouth hero as the south coast club won the Division One title when they beat Rotherham 3-2.

All the goals came in the first half as Pompey went a decisive four points clear of Leicester, who could only draw 1-1 with Norwich earlier on Sunday, with just one game left to play.

Bulls take rhinos

Bradford Bulls 22-20 Leeds Rhinos Bradford edged Yorkshire rivals Leeds to win a pulsating PowerGen Challenge Cup final at the Millennium Stadium.

Paul Deacon's penalty proved the difference between the two sides after the game had swung back and forth for the entire match.

Leeds will rue the chance they had to tie the game at 22-22 in the final five minutes after referee Russell Smith had awarded them a penalty.

But they opted not to go for goal and failed to break down the Bulls, who hung on for their sixth victory in the competition.



BFBS radio

Turn on and tune in

Short wave (times in zulu):

0300 to 0400, 7260 & 15795;
0400 to 0500, 11795 & 15975;
0900 to 1000, 15425 & 15795;
1400 to 1600, 17895 & 13860;
1600 to 1700, 15245 & 13860;
1700 to 1800, 15150 & 13860;
1800 to 2000, 13760 & 6105

Daily programmes Mon to Fri:

0000 to 0100 Lisa Davis
0100 to 0300 Early Riser
Parts Paul Wisdom
0300 to 0600 Middle East
Breakfast
0600 to 0800 Germany
Breakfast
0800 to 0900 Greatest Hits
0900 to 1100 Germany
Morning
1100 to 1300 UK Lunch
1300 to 1500 Hatch and
Duffus
1500 to 1700 BFBS Radio 2
1700 to 1800 BBC Radio 4's
PM
1800 to 1900 Six o'Clock
BBC News followed by
magazine programme
1900 to 2100 Five Live
Sport
2100 to 2300 BFBS Radio 2
2300 to 0000 Lisa Davis

Variations

Monday

0000 to 0100 Greatest Hits
2200 to 2359 Forces Finest

Friday

1900 to 2000 Baily Collection

Saturday

0000 to 0200 Cox & Bumfrey
0200 to 0400 The Selector
0400 to 0700 Middle East
Saturday Breakfast
0700 to 1000 Cox & Bumfrey
0900 to 1200 BFBS & Virgin
1200 to 1300 Forces Finest
1300 to 1900 BFBS Radio 2
1930 to 2000 Eurodance
2000 to 2200 Club Culture
2200 to 2359 Chill Out Room

Sunday

0000 to 0200 Sim Courtie
0200 to 0400 Groove Coll've
0400 to 0700 UK Breakfast
0700 to 1000 Most Wanted
1000 to 1100 BBC Radio 2
1100 to 1300 Access All Areas
1300 to 1400 Forces Finest
1400 to 1800 BFBS Radio 2
1800 to 2000 Lisa Davis
2000 to 2200 Chill Out Room
2200 - 2359 Forces Finest

To Cpl Lovejoy: Hi Daddy I can't wait until you're home so you can take me to my swimming lessons. Molly is like Mammy, she never shuts up! I'm being a good boy for Mammy so don't forget my present. We love and miss you hurry home (Mammy needs a holiday!) Take care lots of love Liz, Kierin & Molly xxx

To LCpl Lee Brannan: Hello Daddy how are you? I hope your SSM is taking care of you for me! Daddy when you come home will you take me to see Mr No Feathers and push me high on the swings? I love you all the way round the world and back again, all my love Konor. Love you too sweet cheeks keep safe all my love Clare xxx'

To Cpl Martin Malone, 16 Air Assault. Hi honey, just to say we are all thinking about you. I miss and love you like crazy and can't wait till you home. Keep your chin up sweetie, Love you millions Louise

For Pte Luke Bradbury, 3 PARA: Dukie Babe, We all miss you, especially me. Can't wait for your return. Hopefully you'll be back soon. Love and lots of kisses Natalie xxx

Hi to Cpl Kate Porter, 34 Field Hospital & all the other personnel out there. You are doing a grand job, keep up the good work and keep smiling. Kate you are never far from our thoughts, take care, we love you, Mum, Dad & family.

To SAC Paul Curra: just to let you know we really miss you, We're just sorry it was not you coming home on the Ark Royal, but we'll be there when its your turn. We just hope it's very very soon. It seems like forever, we love and miss you, Mum Dad, Mark, Debbie, Georgia. And a great big hug from your girlfriend Lois xxxxx

To all members of **306 Fd**

Hosp: Keep up the good work, keep safe and fly the flag for the unit. We are all proud of you. Rosina Howe

To all the medics from Fallingbostel: The place isn't the same with out you, it's much too quiet and tidy. Come back soon safe and sound. Rosina and all from the Med Centre.

To LBdr James Chapman and all the lads and lasses of C Bty 3 RHA. Hi James, I'm thinking of you every day and can't wait until you come back safe and sound. I'm so proud of you son. Keep safe and watch your back. Love you lots, Mum.

To Maj Duncan Gray, 16 CSMR: Happy Birthday! I love you more than you know and miss you loads. Hope you're OK and I can't wait until you come home to me. All my love, your Princess xxx

For Sgt Gus Haines: Hiya Hun, I miss you and love you more each day and can't wait for you to come home so I can have a cuddle :o) You are constantly on my mind, you are my world and my very best friend so keep yourself safe and sound. All my love now and forever Deanie xXx

To Pte G Hay: Never forget how much I love you babe, miss you loads, see you soon all my love Natalie x

To Doc Foley 'Somewhere sandy!': Got the message, don't fall out! All the best mate. Keep your head down, pecker up and keep the faith! Will see you whenever. From Andy, Jo, the girls and all at 2420 (best in the west!) PS Sam silently you know whated!

For LCpl Carr, Queens Dragoon Guards: Hiya babe, missing u loads, can't wait to see you home safe n well. Look after yourself n don't forget bout us! Always thinkin of u, take care babe. Loadsa love n hugs - Lynz n Monkey! xxx

To LCpl Andy Hyde: missing you loads, got our letter the other day :o) can't wait to see you again honey. Love Lou xxx

A German girl has contacted us offering to write to a soldier in the Gulf. She is Sandra Edelkamp, aged 33, and her address is Schelmenstiege 33, D-48161 Münster. It is certainly a nice offer.

To Mark on his birthday on 8th May. Looking forward to your homecoming and special celebrations to include "a whole lot of shaking going on." All our love, Mum, Dad and Carl.

To WO1(ASM) George Smith 1(UK) ADSR: Hiya Old Fart! Miss you and love you with all my heart. Cam sends loads of hugs and 'mooches'. Don't forget - snip, snip! Many happy returns for May 12th (big 3-8). Come home safely and come home soon! All my love always, Kelly

To LCpl Keith Doods, 28 Engr Regt. Keep California Dreamin' babe, the pool in Palm Springs is warming up and theres a Marguerita with your name on it. Love you loads, Jackie.

To Lt Scott Dunlop, 2CS Regt: Allo Darlin'! Thinking of you and missing you loads. Can't wait to see you and make you a brew! Love from your wee Pool Shark x

Solution to crossword on page 20

Across : 1 Carry, 4 Booze (Caribous), 10 Broil, 11 Toused, 12 Tranche, 14 Issue, 15 Ales, 17 Boxer, 19 Atlas, 22 Newt, 25 Tweed, 27 Ostrich, 29 Cleaved, 30 Wheat, 31 Stash, 32 Pride,

Down : 2 Avocado, 3 Relic, 5 Oculist, 6 Zulus, 7 Abate, 8 Steel, 9 Odder, 13 Hare, 16 eats, 18 Endives, 20 Aniseed, 21 Stock, 23 Woods, 24 White, 26 Erect, 28 Tower,



Frewin's view

Snapshot



CD raises £800

PICTURED ABOVE are members of the Media Ops team from the RAF Detachment based at Ali Al Salem Airbase, Kuwait. Left to right, Cpl Craig Fryer, Cpl Jon Molyneux, Flt Lt James Barker, Flt Lt Phil Powell holding Flt Lt Annie Gibson photographed during Op Telic.

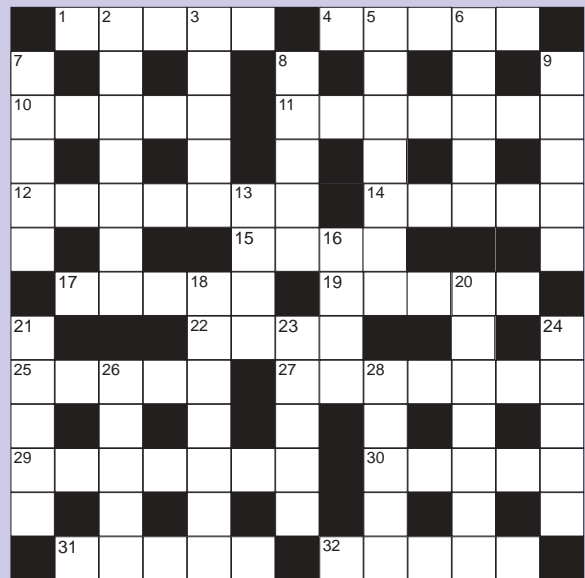
Having completed hosting/escorting duties of their embedded media namely, Karen Allen and Steven Adrain from the BBC, Stewart Payne from the Daily Telegraph and Mark Nicholls from the Eastern Daily Press and organised a multitude of media facilities - the Media Ops team busied themselves by producing a Detachment CD which raised over £800 for charity.

Cpl Fryer had the idea to produce a CD-ROM that included images from the operation. In all, the CD contains over 350 images taken by Media Ops staff during Op Telic as well as 3 video clips produced by the photographers and the BBC News team Steve Adrain and Karen Allen. The money raised will be donated to an as-yet undecided UK children's charity as well as the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Crossword No 8

A quick crossword from Kernow.

Can you complete it in your tea-break?



Across

- 1. Port (5)
- 4. Liquor (5)
- 10. Grill (5)
- 11. Uncombed (7)
- 12. Slice (7)
- 14. Offspring (5)
- 15. Beers (4)
- 17. Fighting dog? (5)
- 19. Maps (5)
- 22. Amphibian (4)
- 25. Border river (5)
- 27. Flightless bird (7)

Down

- 2. Savoury pear (7)
- 3. keepsake (5)
- 5. Eye specialist (7)
- 6. African warriors (5)
- 7. Moderate (5)
- 8. Knife sharpener (5)

- 9. Stranger (5)
- 13. Game animal (4)
- 16. Food (4)
- 18. Salad plants (7)
- 20. Eased in (7)
- 21. Broth (5)
- 23. Balls (5)
- 24. Snowy (5)
- 26. Stiff (5)
- 28. Tugboat? (5)

Answers on page 19