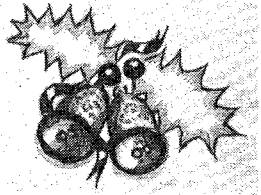




THE LEEK



Happy
Christmas

Suddenly we are at the half way point of our tour. R & R is in full swing and already the Battalion has spent many thousands of man hours in the pursuit of peace and the defeat of terrorism in South Armagh. We have had some noted successes and some near misses. The Battalion has arrested terrorists, discovered IRA weapons and explosives, saved civilians and property from arson and bomb damage and made an important contribution to the effort towards peace in Northern Ireland.

On Tuesday 20th November The Colonel of the Regiment visited us. The Prince of Wales spoke to many members of the Battalion and was able to see for himself for the first time the life and conditions in Northern Ireland. On The Colonel's return to London he sent a message to say how immensely impressed he had been by the morale of the Battalion.

Our families at home are very much in our thoughts and on behalf of every member of the Battalion in South Armagh I would like to wish them and all our friends, in particular all Welsh Guardsmen past and present, wherever they may be, a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.



Message from the Commanding Officer



EDITORIAL

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

Our area consists of approximately 140 square miles of South Armagh which borders the Republic of Ireland. We are responsible for 54 miles of border. The countryside is beautiful and in many ways resembles parts of Carmarthenshire or Breconshire. There are a number of lakes and rivers and the whole countryside is inundated with unusual hogs back shaped hills. The highest mountain, Slieve Gullion, is 1894 feet high and dominates a good half of the area.

There are 49 road crossing points running into the Free State, of which four only are official ones. All of them are used to a greater or lesser extent, as Dundalk, which is the nearest big town in the Republic, is considered by most people to be the local town. This is not strange really as the population are staunchly republican in their outlook on life and have always been so since Ireland was divided. We look after 54 miles of border in our area.

The main Belfast — Dublin railway also runs through our area which is the main commercial lifeline of the Province. It is obvious therefore, that this proves to be one of the terrorists favourite targets and we have had to clear the lines of hijacked cars on a number of occasions.

Against this staunch republican attitude it is comparatively easy for the IRA to operate, as it is safe country for them. They maintain this position by terror tactics on the local population. Conversely our position as the Security Forces is a difficult one, as intelligence is hard to get and we are literally looked upon as an invading army. As the only police presence is in our forward bases of Crossmaglen and Forkhill, and that only a very limited one, we solely represent the forces of law and order.

Operating during the daytime is made more difficult as we cannot

use any transport on the roads. There has been a long history of mining of military vehicles and the risks do not make it worthwhile. Consequently we are dependent on helicopters and our feet. Helicopters not only allow us to cover our area adequately by day but also are used in the vital re-supply of our forward bases.

The actual type of operations which we carry out are: snap vehicle searches, house searches and patrolling by day and night. So far, we have had several finds, including weapons ammunition and a mortar.

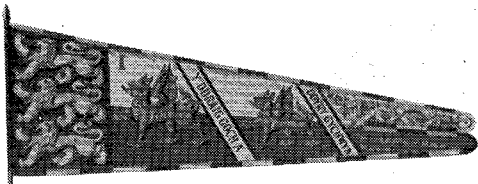
As Christmas fast approaches we do not feel forgotten in South Armagh. We have been visited by a large number of people who have a genuine interest in our welfare. In addition to the Colonel of the Regiment, we have been visited by Sir Maurice Oldfield, Lt Gen Sir Timothy Creasey KCB OBE, GOC HQNI, Maj Gen J M Glover MBE, CLF, Maj Gen F J Plaskett DGRCT, Maj Gen The Lord Alvingham DAQ. and Maj Gen J V Homan DGEME. Mrs. Atkins, wife of the Secretary of State, honoured No 2 Company and our ship HMS Alert, with a visit. The sailors do seem to attract the girls.

We were delighted to welcome Sir Harold Atcherley and Professor Sargeant of the Armed Forces Review Body. They showed a real interest and a genuine understanding of the financial problems that we experience in the Army.

Brigadier D C Thorne OBE, Commander of 3 Infantry Brigade moves to a new job. He and the deputy commander Colonel W J Hiles are frequent visitors to all our company locations.

Currently Prince of Wales Company have Jerry Brown and Ian Cutler of the News of the World staying with them. They have shared the tight living accommodation and the dangers of patrolling for some weeks now. So we are not totally, a forgotten Army.

The Christmas spirit pervades every corner of our company locations and we are all in good heart.



'The Red Dragon Gives A Lead'

Prince of Wales Company Crossmaglen

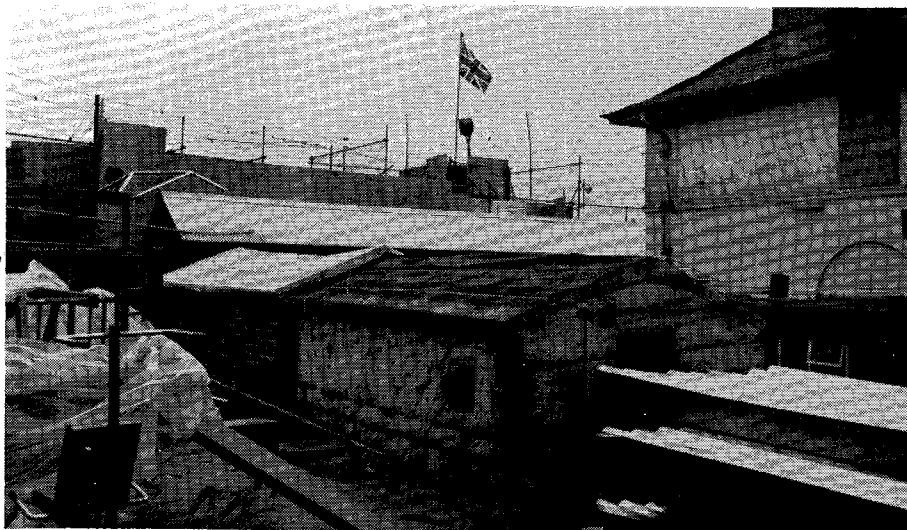
Since the last time of writing the company has suffered the tragic death Guardsman Paul Fryer, a loss and shock felt deeply by us all. Nevertheless morale has remained high and every man in the Company has continued to give 100% without complaint.

Life has settled down into a routine of patrolling the town, guarding the base and patrolling the rural areas. Needless to say this routine is disrupted by an operation almost every day and the camp is full of tired but willing faces.

Much else has happened: A light aircraft flown by the Army Air Corps had a lucky escape after being hit six times by small arms fire near the border (the Pilot said over his radio "I think I'd better go home now!"). We have visited border farms and villages whose occupants were rather surprised to see us, and we have arrested a wanted man who is now awaiting trial on a number of charges. Vehicle Check Points (VCPs) have been set up all over the area (on some days we search over 500 cars) and on one occasion our popularity with some locals was reduced somewhat by checking everybody who attended a particular wedding — at least there were no queues at the reception.

Without doubt the highlight of the month was the visit of HRH The Prince of Wales on the 20th November. His busy day included glimpses of other Regiments in the Province but members of his Company were particularly honoured and pleased to welcome him to Crossmaglen. In addition we have been visited by the GOC Northern Ireland, the CLF, the Brigadier of 3 Brigade and many others with an interest in this rather isolated outpost.

Just as we were beginning to get a feeling of space in the cramped base as the Engineers used up their supplies of building materials, hopes of four-a-side



Crossmaglen Base

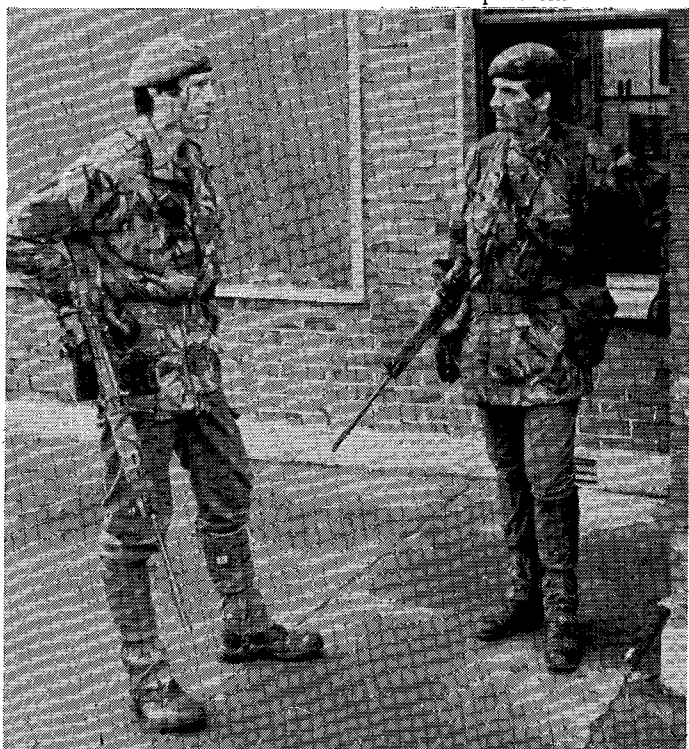
football were dashed by the arrival of hundreds of tons of aggregate, concrete and metal to fill up nearly every square foot of space again. As this is the only time when vehicles move to and from the base, a massive operation was mounted to secure their route. Locals were surprised at the digging of trenches to protect the convoys; they probably weren't as surprised as the members of Lt Bevan's platoon who were doing the digging!

Company headquarters continues to support the teeth men in the field and indeed most have been called upon to dirty their boots where operations stretch the Platoon's resources. The OC and CSM are a familiar sight around the TAOR when operations are on — few notice the inevitable Gdsm Skinner leaping from hedge to hedge issuing instructions to his superiors concerning their personal security. The intelligence staff lurk unobtrusively with cameras, questionnaires and little note books — generally oblivious to all around them except a view-finder or cries of "that's one of them, isn't it?" Even Kestrel occasionally manages to extract himself



03 Thomas considering the Christmas decoration problem

Major Wall and
CSM Evans 33
considering a
suspicious wall



Capt Kirkwood and Lt Stephenson "If you want a Pay Parade on Drumackavall . . ."



The Prince of Wales meets the Company Sergeant Major of his company CSM Evans 33.

from a web of helibids and traces, to get out and about the countryside with his side kick CSM Cox. Both get welcome respite from the continuous demands of the Ops room.

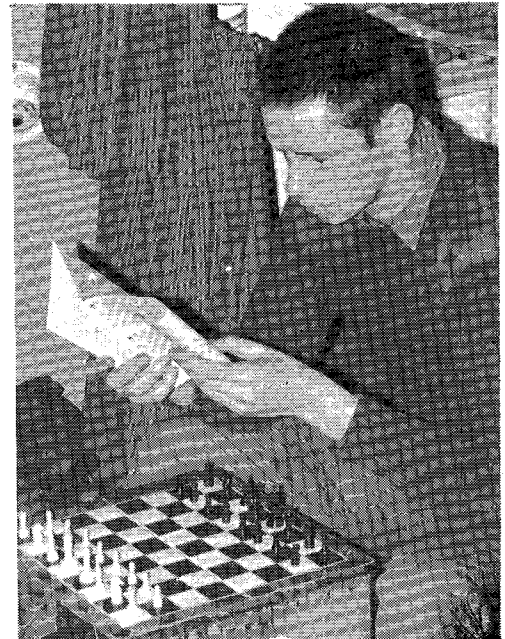
Back inside base the storemen, cooks and rent-a-helicopter teams continue to provide an un-flagging excellent service. The peace is broken only by the occasional "Which so-and-so has pinched my puttees?" or demands as to Rats (the dog)'s state of health. Since Rat's rise to fame he has visited the vet for the first time and daily situation reports filled the Company notice board as one war wound was dealt with after another. All is now well again and he is out in the streets dealing with anything that moves in his own charming way (this generally involves the shredding of trouser legs and biting of vehicle tyres).

Meanwhile winter is drawing in and winter drawers are filling out (with cold legs). Snow hasn't settled here yet but the elements are beginning to make flying in doorless helicopters something of an ordeal; nights under bushes are harder. Even a space 6 feet long and 3 feet wide is a home to return to, although many have already seen their families; R & R is now in full swing as we are in the central part of our tour.

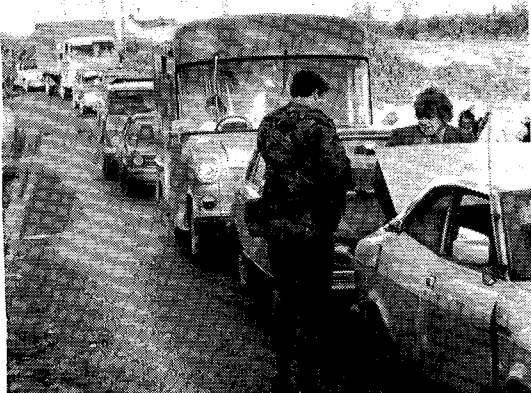
No 1 Platoon flourishes under the calm, calculating leadership of Lt Bevan and Sgt Stewart. Apart from forgetting their mess tins on one occasion and their waterproof jackets on another (care of Gdsm Davies 52) things are running smoothly. Sgt Topham has become so adept at camouflaging himself that he can never be found, but he and his beret appeared fleetingly to meet HRH The Prince of Wales on his visit. LCpl Jones 29 has had many radio eaves-droppers guessing with bursts of Welsh over the company net and LCpl Brown has kept his men cheerful with endless appalling jokes. LCpl Callan's brick want to start house checks within the base in an attempt to establish where everybody lives. This is a valid point; on stumbles upon men sleeping in strange corners of the main buildings and randomly placed sheds. No 1 Platoon particularly welcomes Gdsm Parry & Gdsm Lane who have joined us since we came to Crossmaglen, and wish Gdsm Miller 84 a speedy recovery from his injuries (which thankfully were not serious) in Pirbright, where he has been ordered for a well-deserved rest.

Lt Manville — "arrests" — Hales and Sgt Harvey watch over No 2 Platoon.

This gang of trouble-shooters seem accident prone: "Who else but Gdsm Falcon could be kicked in the rear by a rather less — than — charitable middle aged woman while searching her car boot? Who but 2 Platoon meet with endless aggressive drunks around the town in the small hours? Certainly nobody else has had a cocktail party with locals in the back of a Saracen. It was LSgt Morris's brick who spotted the famous "phantom saracen of Castleblaney road" and LSgt "Minimum force" Hartnell has seen his fair share of dubious activity. Leppls Bevan and Rowlands' men are well-known for maintaining a presence. This widely — used term covers such actions as singing ludicrous songs to the locals and being absurdly polite to more dubious characters while they stand in the rain watching their cars being dis-mantled. ("Just checking, Sir; never know what some swine might have put in your boot do you? Nice day isn't it? Well, a bit of rain I suppose; quite a lot actually. Still, nice apart from that. Better just have a look in the door panels. I see Chelsea lost again on Saturday" (etcetera). Two platoon welcome Gdsm Walker 85 and Gdsm "When are my size 14 boots arriving?" Evans 73 and congratulate



Gdsm Mahoney "I bet Fisher and Spassky never had this problem."

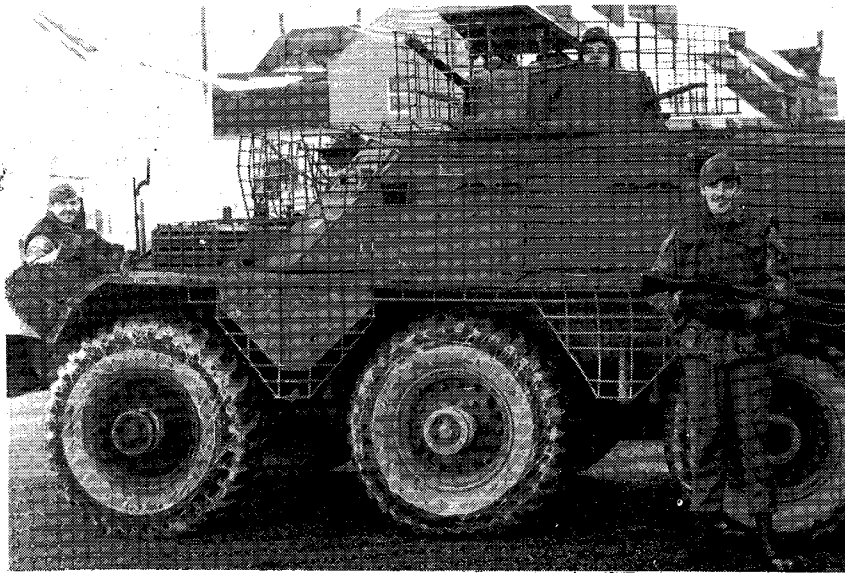


Gdsm 60 Rees

'Routine car checks can lead to queues.'



LCpl Pearson carrying out a routine car check.



LCpl Stables, LCpl Davies, LCpl Rowlands "Welcome to our vehicle checkpoint."



Gdsm Gibbs 90, Sgt Topham, Gdsm Cunliffe, Gdsm Fyfield,



LSgt Price, Gdsm Gill, Gdsm 75 Lewis, Gdsm Price 84 inside the saracen in Crossmaglen Square "Life in the fast lane."



Sgt Stewart explains to Lt Bevan the value of waterproof headwear.

LCpl Miller 69 on his recent promotion. Two Platoon deny categorically that one of their bricks was caught looking through a particular window by a particular householder a few nights ago. Hmmmm! Gdsm Tudor will be sadly missed when he leaves for civilian life.

3 Platoon's commander 2Lt Koops is in excellent form apart from making occasional peculiar references to tulips and clogs while CSgt Llewellyn, although adept at finding bogs, misses the more substantial water-courses of Sandhurst. In 3 Platoon we have a dedicated, prepared and alert team: Most seem to sleep in their flak-jackets and berets and some are rumoured to shower in them. LSgt Fisher's brick are thought to be living in the multi-gym shelter and LSgt Horrell's men spend long happy hours melting from shadow to shadow in back alleys and farm-yards. LCpl Williams 54 and his crew have a watchword "None shall pass." A drunk driver tried to break through their VCP in town but Gdsm Sweet leapt aboard the car bonnet and, after being taken for a tour of Crossmaglen in this awkward position finally brought to justice the driver when the car was stopped at another VCP to which the RUC were summoned. 3 Platoon welcome Gdsm Conlon and Gdsm Jones 62.

Half the Anti-Tank Platoon, under Lt Traherne, do a normal patrolling job in the area while the others, under "Baruki Kid" Sgt Morgan 40, man the sangar

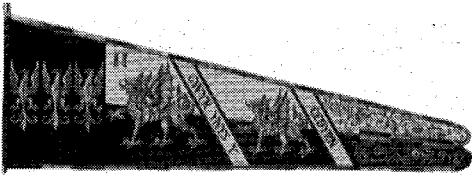
in the main square. All have shown themselves to be thoroughly efficient although the rest of us are occasionally mystified by strange shouts of "tank action" and "tracking on!" Lt Traherne's brick nearly got to use their ammunition recently when armed men were spotted over the border but the standard checks were made and they were found to be members of the Garda — the Southern Irish Police. Gdsm Philips is wished a speedy recovery from a bout of illness. LSgt Lippiatt leads his men unerringly about the countryside (once into 2 extremely large holes) and LCpl Lewis, keeper of "Rats" somehow finds time to reject Hollywood contracts for himself and his dog between lengthy patrols. "The Kod", "Dapper" and "84 the Poacher" have manned Baruki sangar vigilantly with their No 2s every hour of the tour so far and have developed into authorities on life in the square. Little passes unnoticed and unusual activity is soon reported. The anti-tank Pl welcomes Gdsm Morris 30 and says farewell to Gdsm Stephens who will join the IDB at Warminster.

All in all, the company is now operating well together and with increasing efficiency as we daily learn more about our area and we hope this knowledge will lead to more successes in the future.

We wish those families and friends behind a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



Sgt Topham expecting bad Mosquito attack.



'The Men Of The Island Of The Mighty'

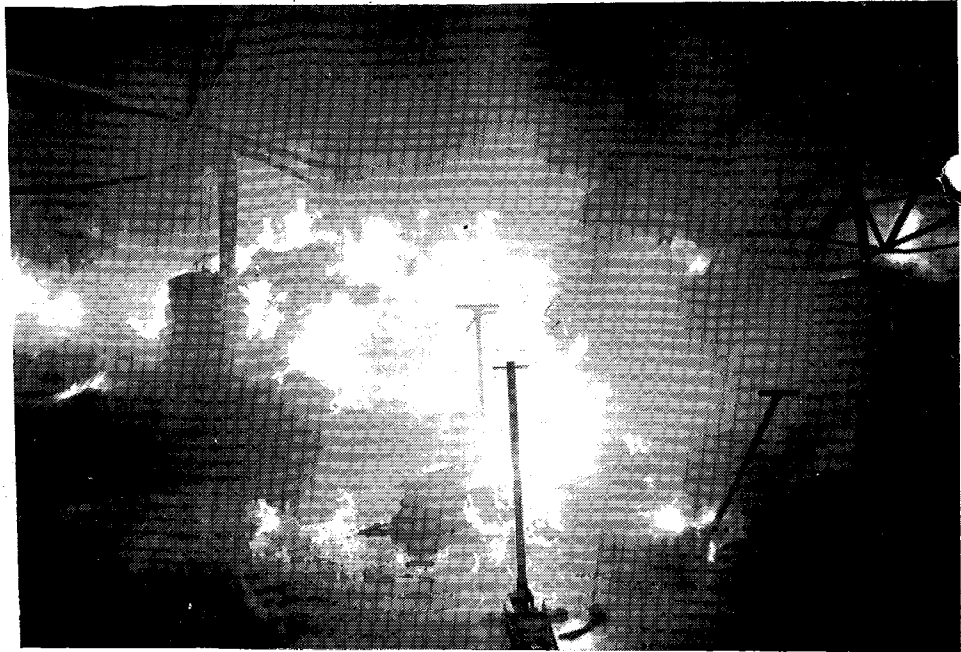
Number 2 Company Newry

It is amazing to think that it is already time to sit down again and write a few words for the second edition of The Leek. Without doubt the last month has gone by extremely quickly for all and sundry in Newry with plenty of searches and bomb threats to keep us on our toes.

On Monday 12th November, the Search teams uncovered one imitation Armalite and 49 rounds of ammunition in the Derrybeg Estate. A few days later a petrol bomb was found in the same area confirming that we have very few friends there! Incidentally the Derrybeg Estate has a highly efficient and well organized team of dogs whose sole mission in life is to bite as many legs of the Company's mobile patrols as possible!

The bombing campaign in Newry has continued with a blast incendiary attack on a firm in the South West corner of the town. This happened on the 26th of November and kept not only our troops busy but also the local Fire Brigade; fortunately the fire did not spread elsewhere.

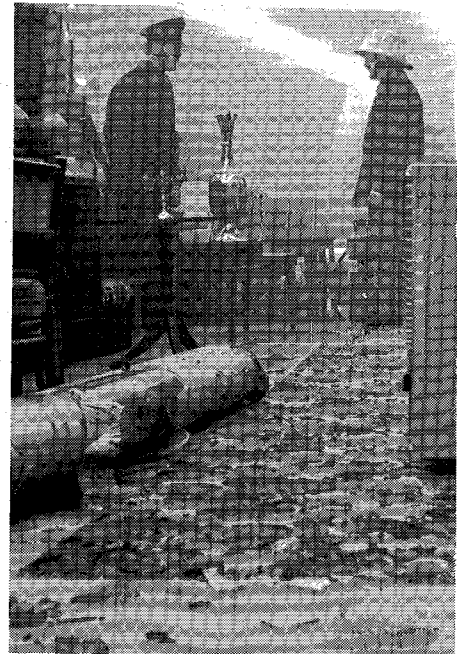
Our camp continues to be made more and more homely under the personal supervision of the CSM. Every effort is being made to keep the Company in peak fitness as not only do we have the inevitable Multi-Gym and volleyball



Effects of a blast incendiary attack — Newry centre



LSgt Cross — Thinks Newry is good news.



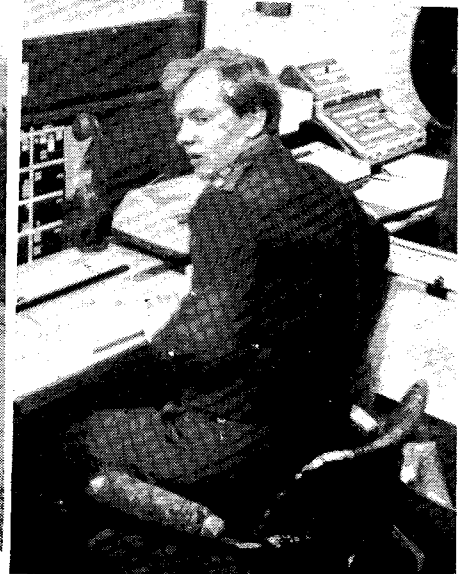
Aftermath



Major Glyn-Owen discussing the situation with the Chief Fire Officer.



Gdsm Logan and Dummer — 'Early morning mobile'



Capt Syms — in control



2Lt Martin-Smith, driver Gdsm 48 Roberts, Gdsm Young and Broad, mobile patrol.



Gdsm Ratsep (Eric), LSgt McGlynn, LCpl Williams 99, Gdsm 60 Thomas, 07 Jones, Cleary — End of a successful search.



'A man and his dog'

Cpl Giles and Bruce resting after a search with No. 2 Coy

THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING VEST

The winter days in Newry Town were getting Mr. M-S down. He invested in a thermal vest, to keep the warmth around his chest. It did the job, and did it well, Then wash day came he thought "Oh hell," "What is this machine for washing clothes, Ah well in for a penny, in for a pound, here goes." The vest was dropped in the said machine, The dirt removed, and the garment cleaned. From there he put to tumble dry, The temperature lever from low to high. ALAS instructions were not read, "Avoid all kinds of heat," it said. The minutes passed, the dryer turned round, That — Expensive garment devalued pound by pound. And now the vest which cost many a quid, Would just about fit, a two year old kid.

The moral of this story is Big Birds in unfamiliar nests, should never heat their thermal vests.

pitch at our disposal but we are also in the process of having a running track built around the perimeter of camp — I hasten to add this is on the inside!

Company Headquarters seem to be in fine fettle although everyone is slightly concerned to see the 'new look' Vicar — possibly because he does not want to be associated with 'The Good The Bad And The Ugly' any more. LCpl Forward has at last performed his first operation of the tour — stitching up Mr. Martin-Smith who was trying to fly down a hill and came to rather a sticky end. The Stores Dept., is a complete madhouse with CQMS Everett learning a new language which nobody understands but it keeps him happy. Incidentally he is delighted that his wife told the Prince of Wales that his job is to "count pillowslips", he remembered this as he was the first to arrive on the scene of our third and largest bombing attack.

The Int Cell continues to brief and debrief all patrols coming and going out of this location; though it has been rumoured that Sgt Denman has in fact acquired a Tailors dummy and just continues to play the same tape over and over again.

Walker has been nominated for the GCM (Good Coffee Medal) or possibly just an apron.

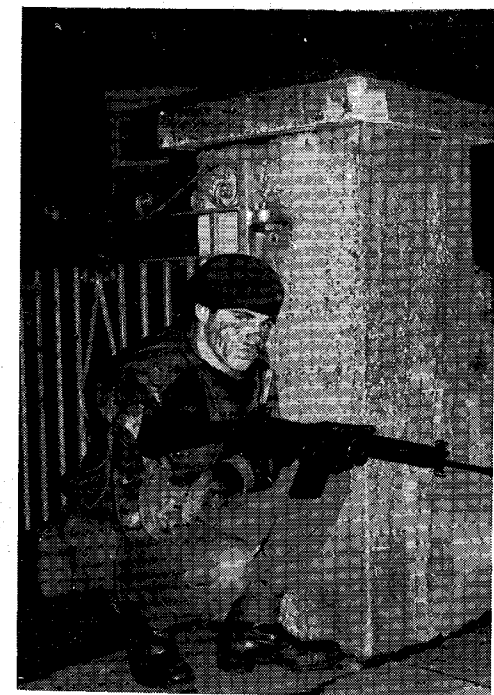
The Catering Corps continue to keep the scoff 'on the boil' at practically any time during the day and night — keep up the good work Sgt Bright.

Mr. Lewis is ageing rapidly as his driver, 46 Smith, continues to drive around Newry like Jackie Stewart, although his track record is a little suspect at the moment. 18 Davies seems to thrive on all swabbing tasks and is trying to make up his mind where he can continue with this his favourite practise during the leave. Sgt Walford and LSgt Roberts 15 seem to be losing their escaped convict look so it is obviously time for Blaszkiv's return.

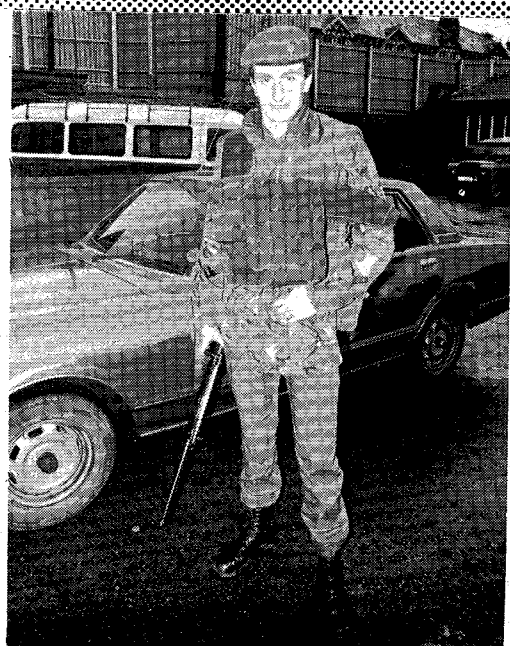
Before signing off it just remains for 'The men of the island of the mighty' to wish everyone at home a very happy Christmas.

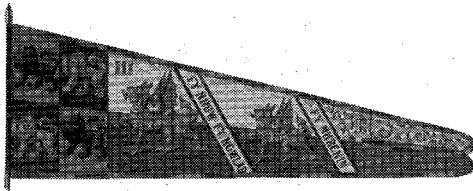


Gdsm 88 Jones — On a night operation



Gdsm 09 Evans — Night patrol in Newry





'My God, My Land, My King'

Number 3 Company Bessbrook

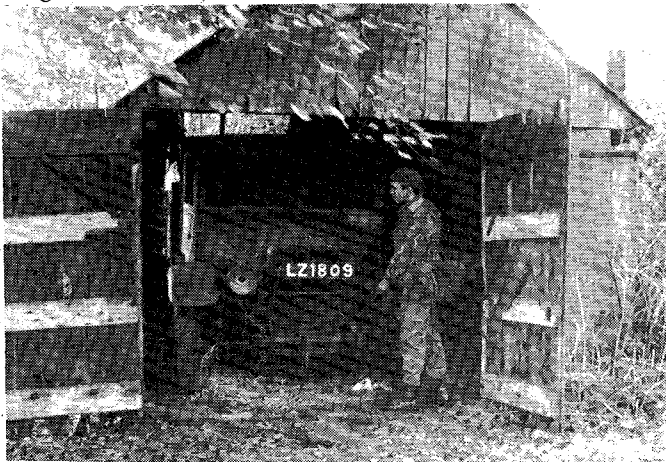
Life in Bessbrook has been steady this last month with fewer Farmers Daughters patrols and more operational OP or Ambush patrols. The worsening weather situation has meant a shorter duration for each task. We have been helping out the other companies in moments of crisis. The first task was supporting Support Company on their route clearance operation on the 9th Nov. This provided a certain excitement for the Iron Men as after only one hour of



"Best foot forward Sir."

Major Goodridge and CSM Hough

the operation Gdsm Whatling was seen apparently fast asleep. His brick commander, LSgt Hinder, responded in the time-honoured fashion with a dash of water but when this failed to have the desired effect he wisely called for medical assistance and 10 minutes later Whatling was being casevaced by helicopter to Musgrave Park Hospital. A slight dose of pneumonia was later diagnosed but he quickly recovered and after 10 days sick leave at home he is now back and raring to go.



Standby ARF crashout vehicle with "Petal" Scourfield.



The Airborne Reaction Force "Scrambling."

2Lt Malcolm and Sgt John nearly had an interesting experience when they were the ARF during the Fords' Cross Incident. While they were overflying the incident a nearby aircraft was shot at. Lt Tony White, RN, the pilot of the ARF helicopter roared over to investigate but suspected a 'come-on'. Subsequent discoveries showed that if he had landed it may well have been into a well planned IRA ambush. Later they cordoned the scene of the explosion and were further reinforced by Sgt Perry and LCpl Evans 73, who all had a wet and unpleasant night.

Sgt John was out on loan to 2 Company the same week, for a Search Operation. They had a wonderful time and were on top of the find, a fake armalite and some very real ammunition.

We had a big search of our own on the 25th Nov which, produced nothing of note. The search included the house of Mr. Joseph McElhew, the self-appointed leader of the Republican movement in the area. His bubble was severely pricked when the Royal Engineers moved into his house.

We have always understood that the local people in most of the Battalion Area were terrorised by the PIRA but this was never more clearly shown than when, a couple of weeks ago, CSM Hough and LSgt James 30 lead a patrol to arrest a Mr. Martin Smith. When the CSM hammered on the door at 0645 an ashen-faced Smith appeared a few moments later at an upstairs window



Capt Gwatkin giving Saunders a dog's life.

enquiring who was there. When told it was a travelling man from Her Majesty's Fifth Regiment of Foot Guards his relief was hugely evident "Why on earth didn't you say so in the first place," he said. We are not certain whether he was more frightened of the PIRA Head Squad or the CSM's jolly features.

Our biggest commitment was Op Wiseacre. Mr. Errington and Sgt Perry, the 7 Platoon multiple commanders sent in a report which read like Spike Milligan's "Hitler — my part in his Downfall". Hardly had breakfast started



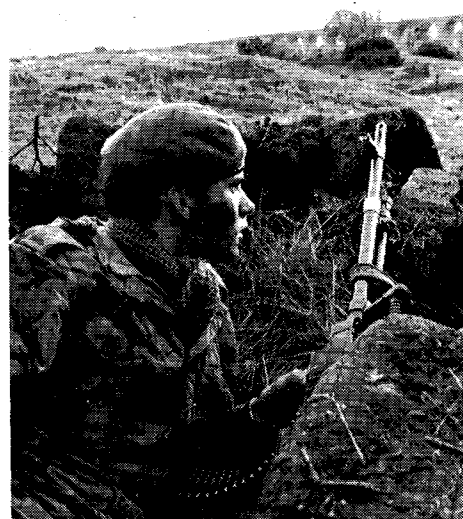
Lt Minoprio and LSgt James 30 sorting out spelling problems



Lt Zulueta "mirror mirror on the . . ."



LCpl Andy Loveridge — having just been given a letter from Mrs. Andy Loveridge.



Gdsm Campbell observing the area.

on 26th Nov when digging began in the back gardens of some startled locals. The report continues; "Now there are holes and there are holes but LSgt Hinder with ecological interests uppermost in his mind, decided that digging was offensive to the local population and so with Gdsm Smith 57, West and Price 57 they made an offer which the local farmer could not refuse and moved into a position conveniently alongside a star and a crossed knife and fork in the Michelin Guide, i.e., his garage. Other 7 Platoon OP positions varied: LCpl Evans 34 with Copeland, Roberts 65 and Williams 57 took up residence in a cosy little derelict and spent the next 3 days pestering neighbours for coal and firefighters. Not to be outdone by these small indulgences Gdsm Campbell asked over the air for cornflakes, fresh milk and some fruit and much to his surprise these arrived 2 hours later.

Mr. Errington's report contained no news about LSgt Jephcott's brick. This was not surprising as when it came to digging, they developed a severe case of China Syndrome and after 36 hours in their position was so deep radio waves could not penetrate. This brick contains such hard men as "Trucks" Thompson, "Petal" Scourfield and "Noggin" Norris who were happy as pigs in a pigsty up to their knees in water. Sgt Perry, warmly tucked away in his pigsty, has won the record for cups of tea per hour.

7 Platoon arrested 2 men earlier this month who drove a lorry through a Vehicle Check Point (VCP). While the men were flown back to see the Police, S. Copeland Esq drove the lorry back to the Mill. On arrival, the cargo was checked; 2700 chickens! It is rumoured the floor of the lorry looked like 7 Platoon lines.

8 Platoon have been notching up a steady number of OPs, Ambushes and Farmers' Daughter Patrols with some good intelligence success. Sgt Samuel made an interesting point the other day: Whilst taking part in a cold weather exercise, a number of his platoon suffered frost bite of the feet. They were all good cross country runners. The COP, who hop-along-placidly at the moment had six cases of frost bite recently, 5 of whom were cross country runners. The

moral of that story is plain to see. I think!

While 8 Platoon were on guard the other day they were amused to hear the answer to a question "What is the calibre of a 9mm Pistol?" that was addressed to an MT driver. "I don't have a clue, Sarn't I'm just an MT driver."

9 Platoon fare well under the jet-setting style of Mr. de Zulueta and Sgt Powell OI. They spend most of their time defending their organisational skills against the envy of those who claim 9 Platoon guardsmen always seem to have too much spare time. During Op Wiseacre they provided 3 mobile multiples. They provided a morale raising hot drink delivery service for the Staffords, Royal Marines, Support Company and our own boys. Riding around in open landrovers had left them looking very weather beaten and rugged, almost as though they spent half their time under a sun lamp. Still, no purging is heard from their steady ranks and they soldier on, as usual, very well.

Our most serious Republican incident happened when a 9 Platoon VCP stopped a bus full of children. Gdsm Roberts 81, that true grit North Wales man swaggered up the steps to do a headcheck only to be greeted by a piping call of "Hello, Big Ears."

Mr. de Zulueta had an interesting Farmers' Daughter the other day. He was chatting to a woman near the Killeen Bridge and she invited him inside (his brick was left muttering outside). He, in fact, was shown a neat machine gun pattern of shots which entered the sitting room, whistling between the 5 children watching the television, depositing some tracer which burnt up the carpet, and exited through the kitchen, taking out the kettle and the pet budgerigar on the way. As he was quick to point out the PIRA shoot first and don't even bother to ask questions later.

Company HQ stags on in the usual relaxed atmosphere, only occasionally ruffled by Mr. Whiteheads snoring. He had a close shave the other day. As he approached the Ops room he heard Captain Gwatkin shouting "where the hell is Pithead he's got 10 seconds, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5" He made a lucky entrance with just 5 seconds to go. Gdsm 52



Man of many parts — LCpl Weaver



"Finders Keepers" — LSgt Price, Gdsm Roberts 31, LSgt Roberts 32, P. Ingles Esq and Gdsm Roberts 81 waiting for SOCO after finding a weapon.



"Christmas comes but once a year."
Gdsm 85 Williams — not feeling festive

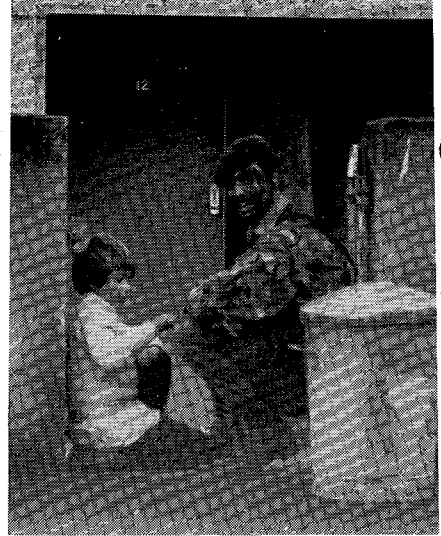
"Plate-Check Piggy" Griffiths is this month's worst signaller and "Dog" Saunders has reached an all time high. Mr. Minoprio occasionally pokes his head through the hatch and drones like a foghorn for a few minutes which usually means he wants a cup of coffee.

The Commander Group was nearly wiped out at the beginning of November when they were chased by a maddened cow. The Company Commander, CSM and Mr. Errington desperately grappled with each other in a narrow gateway to get out of the field — naturally age and good looks won and Mr. Errington was sacrificed. The intrepid two then tried to distract the cow from the fleeing Mr. Errington ("Woody Wooster" to his friends) with a philosophical soliliquay but without success and he only just managed to clear the 16ft blackthorn hedge in one bound but lost his monocle on the way so didn't see he could have gone through another gate 2 feet to the left.

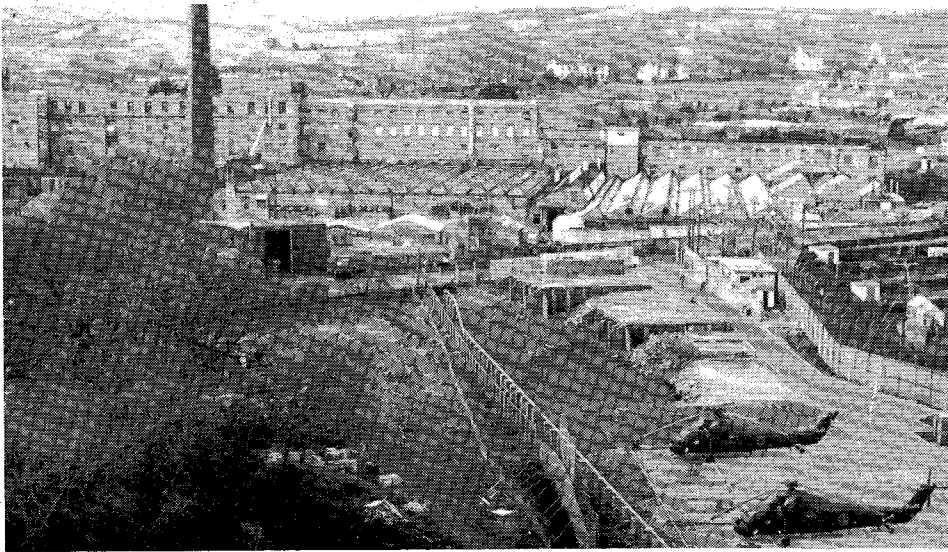
It was the best "Contact-wait out" we have had.

Well that's it for this month. R and R approaches which everyone looks forward to. The "Anonymous Grunter" has not yet been found and LSgt Wigley is just still alive after a brush with a VCP in a covert car.

Best wishes to all the other companies and to the families and friends back home, a very merry Christmas.



Gdsm Hicks making friends.



Bessbrook Mill and helipad



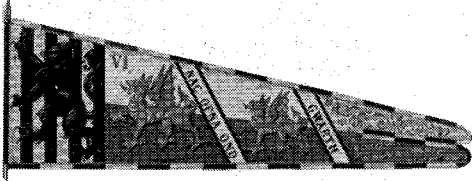
Sgt John
— Crossing yet another black thorn hedge



"You can't park here boyo" LSgt James having a word with the driver.



Lt Minoprio pleased with his find of the 800mm mortar



'Fear Nothing But Disgrace'

Support Company Newtownhamilton

Support Company has now fully settled down in Newtownhamilton and we have been made to feel very welcome by the locals. We have been kept very busy with long distance patrolling and as a result time has passed extremely quickly.

Both the Royal Engineers and civilian contractors are here daily, improving our living conditions in camp. In fact the RAC had just added a third star to our rating. The only complaint seems to have come from the RUC, who are being flooded by the Officers/Sgts Messes' showers, which are directly above them.



Gdsm Rosser, Sgt Elley, Capt Bonas, LSgt Calladine, Parsons (again).

One major operation that took place was the manoeuvring of our new portakabin into the base. It took several hours of heaving from half the company, under the masterful direction of CSM Malcolm, to get it in the right place. Wimpy men could not have done better.

We have had several visitors during the last few weeks, in particular the Kings Own Borderers recee party. This marked the first stage of our return to Pirbright and they were a welcome sight.

Company Headquarters has now been renamed "the Jack of all trades" platoon, due to the many varied tasks that members perform both around the base and out in the cuds.

CSM Malcolm's brick are to be congratulated on their fine victory in the monthly shooting competition, as is the Company Commander's on being a close runner up. However it has not gone unnoticed that both the CSM and the Company Commander are both on the adjudicating panel!

CQMS Lyth and his willing hand of helpers in LSgt Jones 13, LCpl Atkins and LCpl Cole have been doing a magnificent job. It is a marvellous sight when kit held in the stores can actually

be issued! However the CQMS hardly ever sees his 'brick' as they are normally either on the streets or manning the LZ. Its nice to hear from LCpl Hibberd in Buzzard's Office, although the CQMS asks him not to ring every night in the middle of the evening meal.

LSgt Jones 88, our medic, has been chasing everyone for 'Jabs'. He himself had a narrow escape, when a fireman crashed through the vehicle check point on his way to a fire. Luckily 88's reactions were swift and he saved himself injury.

After an initial burst of typing, Gdsm Yeo has hardly set foot in the Company Office. Instead he and Gdsm Lima have been escorting the Company Commander around the area.

LCpl Harford has been doing an excellent job in the Ops Room, acting coolly but swiftly in hectic moments. He is also teaching morse code to Gdsm Roberts 80, who seems to be a dab hand and learning very quickly. The team is completed by Gdsm Jones 98 who has 'come in from the cold' (the mortars). In between their normal duties they also go out on patrol to relieve the pressure on others. Capt Peel-Yates, now another year older after his recent birthday (his actual age cannot be revealed) has been keeping a wise eye on matters



Gdsm Gough on foot patrol
'The way ahead.'

'A day in the country'
Major David and CSM Malcolm



900 LCpl Jones discussing transfer to Dundalk United
with Mr. Preston

operational. Now he has finally arranged his skiing holiday we can have his undivided attention.

The Intelligence Desert said its sad farewells to Capt Bonas, who has recently left the Company after two years faithful service. He has swapped the bogs of Ireland for the rains of Brecon — we wish him all the best in his new posting. His position has passed to Lt Prichard, who is now frantically composing his Christmas Card list to be sent to people of interest around Newtownhamilton. The birth of a son to Sgt and Mrs Elley was suitably celebrated in the Sgts Mess, and it is hoped that a future Battalion Rugby player is on his way. Gdsm Sutton, who makes David Bailey look like Donald Duck, has been in great demand. The hordes descend on him when word gets out that a new set of prints has arrived. Gdsm Rosser has become very well known in the cuds and has befriended many of the locals. LSgt Calladine keeps the whole office cemented together, while Gdsm Parsons still hasn't recovered from his two photographs printed in the last Leek.

Sgt Clarke and his two gourmets, LCpl Lucas and Pte Wright, have produced



"Are you in the IRA?"
 "No, I'm with the Woolwich"

excellent food throughout. There was a testing period when the kitchen ceiling was being mended, but they carried on undaunted. They are to be thanked for all Birthday cakes they have produced.

Not to be forgotten are the intrepid RCT of Lcpl Taylor, Ptes Miller and Thorogood.

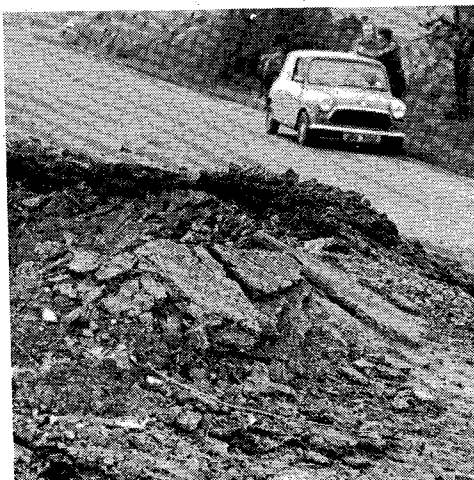
You will be glad to know that the Mortar Platoon haven't yet sunk without trace. They were involved in the re-closure of a border crossing point. This came about when a smuggler from the South removed the concrete barriers with a covert 60 ton Crane! A new barrier was successfully placed, although the Mortar bricks had to stay out for another 24 hours to allow the concrete to set!

We were all very sorry to learn about the recent bereavements of both LSgt Buckley and Gdsm Trenchard. Our deepest sympathy goes to both their families.

The Mortars welcome 2Lt Sale, Gdsm Green, Bates and Hammond to their ranks and hope that they enjoy their brief stay with the Company.

LCpl Clements has been getting on pretty well but please don't mention anything to him about a certain motor cyclist who wears a white helmet!

LSgt Davies 77 celebrated what he assured everyone was his 21st birthday, although Sgt Evans 84 is quite convinced that this is not the case. Sgt Evans seems to have taken a leaf out of Capt Sayers' book, when it comes to walking through bogs — between them they must have found all the classic bogs in Ireland.



Not the mole — A bomb which went bang!



LCpl Harford

The Drums have also had some new additions in the form of 2Lt Syms (hot from University), Gdsm Davies 39, Loveridge and Brennan. They have also gained the redoubtable Sgt Roberts 48, who has soon found out that helicopters are fickle creatures — sometimes they arrive early and sometimes they don't arrive at all.

The Drum Major has set up in competition to Gdsm Blaszkiv, the Bn barber, and has been seen touting for business in the Choggie shop.

Both Gdsm Jenkins 78 and Jones 92 have had birthdays, the latter being his 21st. LCpl Gwilym and Lcpl Jones 900 have been having very good chat ups at VCPs, although sometimes quite a long queue builds up because they can't stop talking. The Drums musical talent will be tested when it comes to Carol Singing in Newtownhamilton at Christmas.

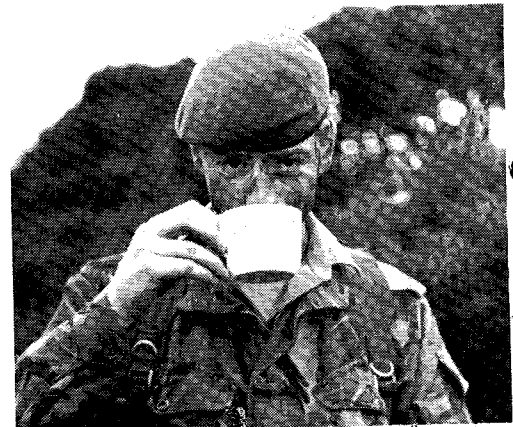
So from Major David and the rest of Support Company, we wish all the Battalion, their wives and families a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



LCpl Clements looking alert on patrol in Newtownhamilton.



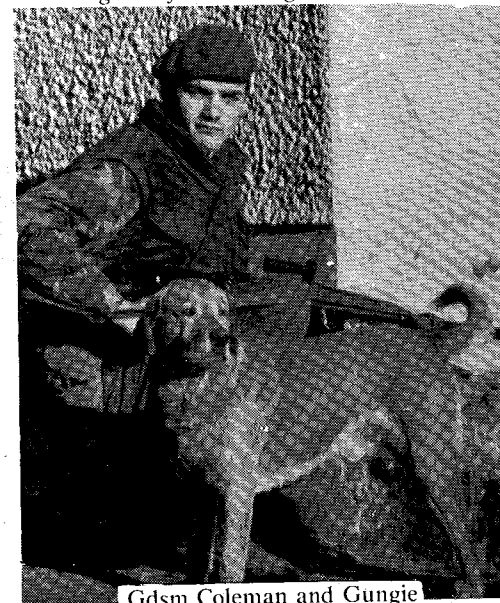
Gdsm 61 James and RUC in close co-operation



Drummer Amos savouring a hot cup of tea at the end of a long patrol.



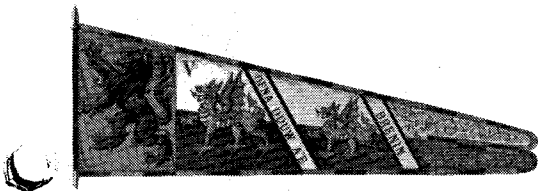
Sgt Elley — Moving into cover



Gdsm Coleman and Gungie in competition with Rats?



Drum Major outside his basher thinking about spring drills.



'Fear God, Honour The King'

Headquarter Company Bessbrook

HEADQUARTER COMPANY

We now go into our 7th week of the tour and if the next 7 weeks go as fast, it will soon be time to start packing to come home.

Company Headquarters now consists of:

Major Harmsworth — (The Prophet) who incidentally is now fully qualified to take over Battersea Dogs Home, after his dealings with the famous "Rats".

CSM Parry 38 — Is now right into the wine making business along with DSgt Davies 22. However they cannot meet the demand of 4 cases per month to the officers mess, owing to lack of space in their wine factory.

CQMS Neck — I can assure you is doing a first class job, and with all the extra people who float into the Mill wanting accommodation, he is now fully qualified to take over any of the worlds top class hotels. His catch phrase now is "leave it with me, I'll fit them in some where."

LSgt Holland — When he is not upsetting the Orderly Room, actually does some work. He is now convinced that Major Harmsworth is a schizophrenic, stating that no man could create so much work.

LCpl Sherwood — Is still stuck in his Armoury and only comes out for fresh air and to do the odd escort.



Rats "Dog of the year" having his pulheems done.

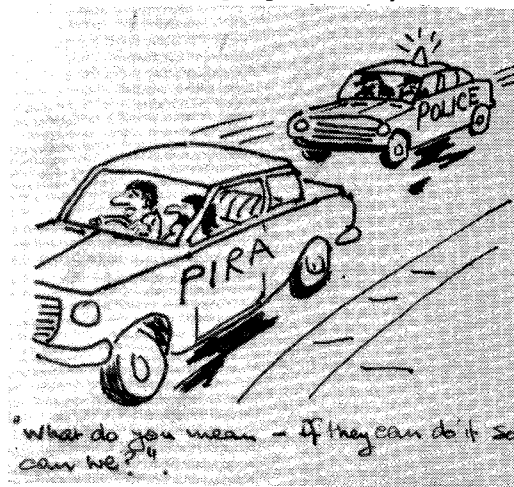


'Man for all seasons' CSM Parry 38

Gdsm Demery — Is usually found in his accommodation stores when he is not riding around the country-side on escort.

Gdsm Blaszkiv — Our intrepid barber is now wanted in 3 locations (I think), or is it that the locations use him as their secret weapon against the local mafia.

Finally from Company Headquarters. We are all looking forward to our R & R and of course from those who are not home for Christmas we would like to wish everyone back home and around the locations in South Armagh, a very happy Christmas and prosperous new year.



"What do you mean - if they can do it so can we?"

ORDERLY ROOM NOTES

The Christmas month was entered quite unnoticed amongst the tap-tap of the typewriters and the ringing of the telephones. Six weeks have now gone by and we are all beginning to look forward to our R & R.

ORCS P Richardson is now contemplating applying for the SAS after the tour, as a result of his day out with the COP. Anybody who doubts that he has been outside the Mill is quite welcome to view his muddied patrol boots which are mounted on a cardboard box in the Orderly Room.

LSgt Stacey is claiming the first confirmed kill within the Mill. Together

with LCpl Atwell, whom we would like to welcome back to the Battalion from civilian life, they disposed of a small rat which was lurking within the Orderly Room. Apart from this unusual burst of energy LSgt Stacey has been spending most of his time either behind his typewriter or beneath his blankets.

LCpl Csernikovics (Kojak) is still stunned by the fact that the first few R & R flights have gone off without a hitch. He is now looking forward to his new posting in January to the Guards Depot, and is keeping his fingers crossed that his new job won't entail any booking of flights or making out of train warrants.

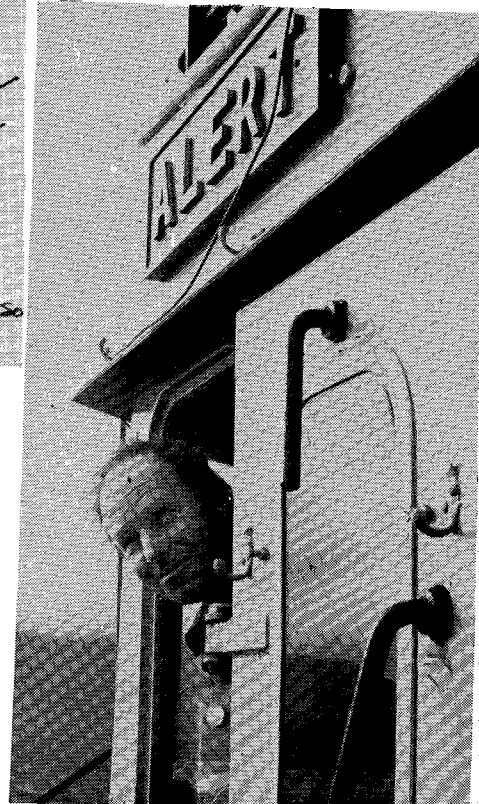
007 LCpl Bond is still bringing the mail through daily. His only excitement during this last month has been three trips down the Falls Road, after which he was heard to say that his bicycle clips came in handy after all.

It has been noticed during the last month that the door to the COMCEN is usually locked. Not as a result of the security check as was first thought but because Gdsm Stevens and Jones 29 are fed up with people waking them up whilst they are on stag.

Gdsm Bray is being kept busy completing demands for stationery which seem to be never ending. Lately he has been heard muttering that the rumours about his relations working in the Choggi shop are totally untrue.

Wilkinson our part-time dispatch clerk is still fully occupied trying to decide which pigeon hole should receive which letter. Besides these mind searching decisions he has been spending quite a bit of his time in the Mills sangars.

During the last month we have managed to fit in some time for sport. Our hockey team, which includes Major Stephens and Major Watt, has met with moderate success.



Second in Command looking alert Major CFB Stephens on a routine inspection of HMS Alert.

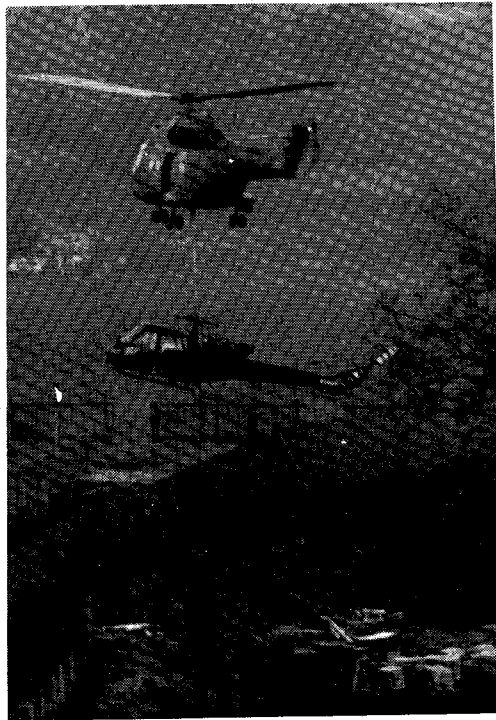
BUZZARD NOTES

The visibility is nil, all aircraft are grounded, at least thirty irate Engineers are outside threatening to burn down the waiting room if they aren't taken to Crossmaglen or Forkhill right away. The duty Buzzard is busy answering the telephone to equally irate would be travellers wishing to come back to Bessbrook. A half dozen pilots in the rest room (just across the passageway) all trying to adjust a very noisy TV set. Then — in the middle of this mayhem appears a very familiar figure, holdall slung nonchalantly over the shoulder, spectacles slightly steamed up from his efforts to push his way to the door, — in well modulated tones he enquires: "Buzzard do you realise Rats and I have to be at Crossmaglen in thirty minutes? We can't keep the Nationwide team waiting can we?" After the duty Signaller has prized Buzzard's hands away from the gentleman's throat, it is carefully explained to him that he will have to wait because the pilot can't see his way through the fog, not even to find his helicopter! A fact that our Prophet might have missed because of a very good party he attended the previous evening. He grudgingly accepts the very doubtful reason he is given for being unable to fly, and disappears through the door dragging a very unwilling Rats behind him — last seen waiting for a 44 bus in Bessbrook Square.

At this time of year even though we exaggerate slightly, (and I am sure Prophet won't mind) this unfortunately could be the start of any normal day at Bessbrook International Airport. The notoriously unpredictable South Armagh weather has a great deal of influence over the way in which we function, and therefore because of the current situation, over all the lives of those living in the outstations south of Bessbrook.

For those of our readers not acquainted with the situation may I explain that no movement by road is allowed in the south of the area. Therefore all stores, food and mail, indeed everything that is required by the men on the ground has to pass through Bessbrook heliport. By reputation it is noted in the Guinness Book of Records as the busiest heliport in Europe.

It has meant of course that the very "tribal Taffs" have had to learn to get on



with a different breed of people — the very helpful RAF and RN pilots who fly the support helicopters, and the equally helpful AAC pilots who operate the light aircraft.

At the start of our tour, great exception was taken by all pilots to the odd rifle barrel being stuck through the aircraft windows, or to the chalk commander who leapt from his seat on de-planing, with his headset still firmly clamped to his head, thereby dragging most of the aircraft with him.

Of course, things have now improved, and having got used to their flying four tonners, the guardsmen and crewmen have actually been seen smiling at each other.

There can't be many places left to serve, where the Navy, Army and Airforce work so closely together, and I believe we can all derive some satisfaction from this situation.

However I must end this short description of life with Buzzard at Bessbrook — Prophet is back this time soaking wet — do you know I believe he has somehow managed to come back from Crossmaglen by boat along the Newry Canal.

QM'S DEPT

Some of you readers out there may wonder why the "Godfathers" (Part 2) did not have our notes in the First Edition of "The Leek."

Well, with all the duties which have been cropping up, we are still not sure who is in the Department. Of course, our QM, Capt Morgan (16) is the one and only man who can control all aspects of the 'Q' side from his bed or the Ops Room. In fact, since Reginald Bosanquet left ITV the QM thinks, that with all the N.I. Briefs he has read to the staff he is destined for the vacant seat.

The RQMS and the Master Cook (Alias Smith & Jones) are really in with our comrades in the Navy, and by the sound of it they are in the wrong jobs as each morning they fold their hammocks up, and the air is filled with Sea Shanties.

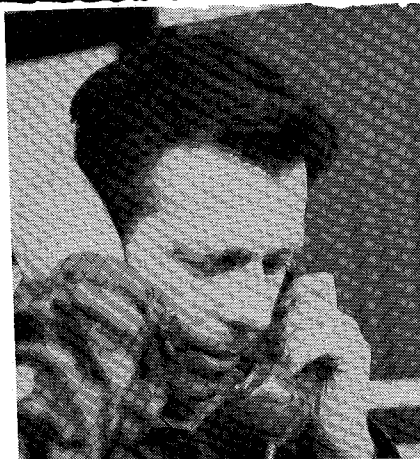
The Accommodation Stores (Csgt Wilson & Gdsm Baker 86) are too busy sorting out who is going to have the next Water Bed to know that the NIMSA (Csgt Jones 98 & LCpl Ellison) have sold all plastic bags to our Oppos., in Buzzard (Air Re-Supply). Their admin side is run with a 'plant' from our department, he is known throughout as 79 'Dusty'. Each day he comes to the QM saying he is sure that the helicopters have been compromised.

The Clothing Stores is run by Sgt Jennings and Gdsm 'Poet Laureat' Duggan (When they are there!). They have done more trade in the last five weeks than C&A's have done in a decade. We have on paper anyway, our globe-trotting pioneers LSgt Fennell, 33 Bennett and Binnal flying from location to location in response to various pleas from the locations for 'paint', 'timber' etc, whilst LSgt 'Big Eric' Padmore remains in his workshop up to his neck in zips, should-holsters and his new line in 'handbags', ably assisted by 24 Gdsm Williams of "Connie's Bar" fame.

We must not forget our trusty Armourers who under the guide of SSgt "We can rebuild it" Balchin have repaired more arms than Doctor Kildare. Last but not least our Clerks, Sgt 'Put it in the Central Fund Sir?!' Hogarth and LCpl 'File It' Cole who are doing a grand job distributing the newspapers and fixing duties (If the price is right).



Glad to be of assistance



Surrounded by idiots,



Look what I got for Christmas



Mrs. Pridham and Mrs. James sharing a joke with The Prince of Wales.

LETTER FROM PIRBRIGHT

The passage of time is the subject of much of the conversation around Elizabeth Barracks at the moment; "five coffee mornings and ten late night shopping trips to go" was how one wag described our present situation earlier



Medical Officer, Capt A Tully 'Diagnosing'

BN INT — TINKER TAILOR SOLDIER TAFF

Gdsm (I hate work) Sinsinatti is the first to proceed on R & R. He is now typing 140 mistakes a minute — congratulations — and is fully recommended for a further tour of duty with RHQ.

L/Cpl 'Michael Malone' Marlow has taken up tossing for the best of three, as to whom goes first to lunch. Yesterday after loosing the first 2 rounds he requested the third round be played. This must be put down to pressure of work throughout the morning period.

L/Sgt Turner and L/Cpl Rice are proving extremely good Int gatherers in respective messes. On collating various bits of information they realise the Battalion will not be going to Zimbabwe Rhodesia, Belize, Cyprus, Berlin or Hong Kong.

L/Sgt Saunders has been seen many times on patrol with 3 Coy and in his spare time is studying for a degree (correspondence) course to help him with future EPC studies.

From the Photocell a large number of photographs for the PRO, Maj Harmsworth have been produced. Lt

this week. Not that you front liners should get the impression that we at the blunt end are under employed, rather the reverse, but busy as we are we do actually miss having you all around!

Nevertheless there is some consolation in being on the Rear Party and operating from Battalion Headquarters. CSM Pritchard looks so comfortable in the Regimental Sergeant Major's chair it will be a pity to disturb him and LCpl Troath positively gleams as he takes his seat in the Orderly Room Colour Sergeant's office each morning. As for the Families Officer, he spends his days pontificating from the Adjutant's chair, transferring to the Second in Commands position only to eat his lunch of cheese banjos. He was ever seen to hover around the Commanding Officer's seat on one occasion and was about to lower himself into it when the Regimental Adjutant burst into the office on an unannounced visit and the UFO was brought swiftly back to sanity.

On a less frivolous note, some of our wives travelled to London on Sunday 11th November, chauffeured by Noddy (Roughton) in the Toytown Bus to attend the Regimental Remembrance Day service in the Guards Chapel. Afterwards

Mitchison, who has been observed occasionally wearing uniform, is rather perplexed at the disappearance of his web belt, gloves and G1098 watch. He suspects someone may be exacting revenge for a bad photograph taken. Gdsm Shone is feeling fitter than ever after carrying all the darkroom stores up the 100+ stairs that lead to the Photo Lab. L/Sgt Monument is still trying to cover the bald patch that appeared after his last visit to the Battalion demon barber — Gdsm Blaszkiv.

Capt "George Smiley" Henderson is proving to be a magician. He is answering questions before they are even asked. He has now entered as an entrant in the next BBC Magnus Magnusson competition 1980, the subject to be covered S A

0022 has gone into big business having gone into producing Chateau Bessbrook. His next brew is to be 1980 Besswater, having started off in October with a simple home made wine that proved to be a block buster come-on.

Sgt Hopkins has disappeared to 2 Coy (NWY) for a break and rest from the pressure of the Mill. More of his exploits in NWY and Armagh will be published in the next issue. Sgt (Slack Pat, Chunky, I'm on a diet) Aston has also been out

they were introduced to HRH The Colonel who had read the lesson at the service. Prince Charles talked to the wives for some time although few of them afterwards were able to remember much of the conversation. Such is the effect upon ladies of a young attractive bachelor. He asked one of the wives if her husband wrote often and she mentioned that there were sometimes delays in the mail. The following day the Adjutant General ordered an investigation into the Army Postal system — there are many advantages to having a Royal Colonel it seems.

The Louise Margaret Maternity hospital is being kept very busy delivering baby Welsh Guardsmen (of both sexes!). We offer our congratulations to the following on producing beautiful healthy babies since the Battalion left for Northern Ireland: Gdsm and Mrs. Jones (29), LCpl and Mrs. Riley (ACC), LSgt and Mrs. Adamson, Sgt and Mrs. Elley, Gdsm and Mrs. Bevan and LCpl and Mrs. Cole.

We wish everyone in the Battalion in Northern Ireland a very Happy Christmas and look forward to you coming home.

and about (COP) for a break from the BBK hectic routine. He spent two days packing a bergen full of compo, unfortunately the helicopter didn't get off the ground due to fog, but other rumours do exist as to why it didn't take off. For his next op he has tasked Buzzard, to travel net style underslung.

S/Sgt Sorensen has discovered many a character skiing during the 7 p.m. PT session, and additional entries are being collated in his MOD F383A. As this information is classified they can only be recorded here in code as 98, 78 (who is top of the list regularly), 2 x Corps blokes (REME/R Sigs), and an ex Capt of the 1st XV, to name a few.

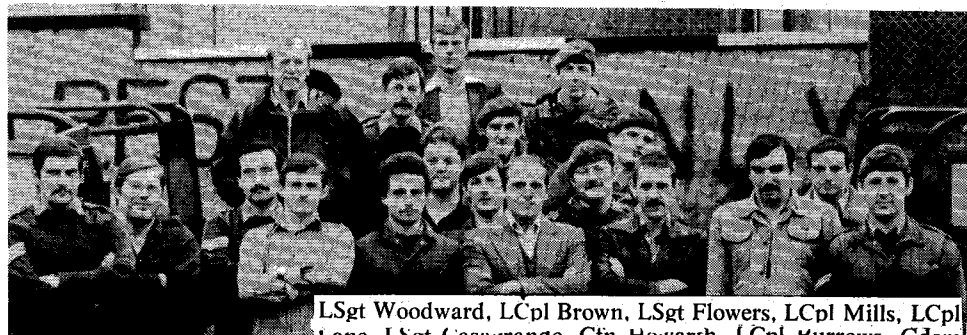
DEAR EM.

Dear Em.

My wife recently paid me a fine compliment, when she was introduced to HRH The Prince of Wales after the Remembrance Service at the Guards Chapel in London. She was asked "What does your husband do," the reply came.

"He counts pillow slips," Thank you love . . . (remind me to get you to sign for the Continental Quilt when I come home).

EM — What can I say?



Rent a cab team — ready for anything

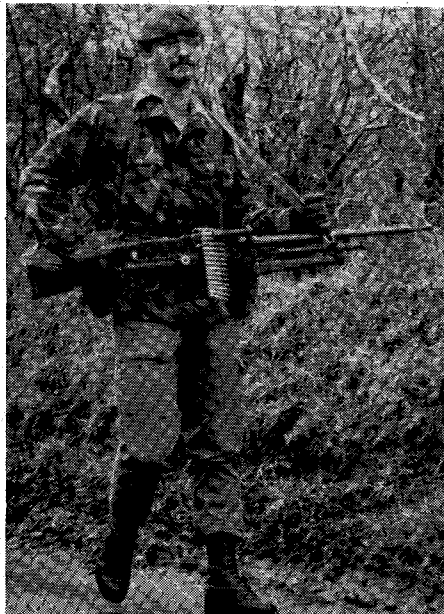
LSgt Woodward, LCpl Brown, LSgt Flowers, LCpl Mills, LCpl Lane, LSgt Casagrande, Cfn Howarth, LCpl Burrows, Gdsm Oldfield, LCpl Hayman, LSgt Hurley, Sgt Ward, Gdsm Hughes 04, LCpl Powell, Gdsm Rogers, Gdsm Lewis 01, LCpl Moore, LCpl Edwards 75.



THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY!



No matter how tired you are — You can always share a joke and a cigarette with a friend.



Drummer Davis 38 (Billy the Kid)



Lt Gen Sir Timothy Creasey
Giving the thumbs up to RSM Pridham.

Entries are
invited for this
competition.
Send your
suggested
caption to:

Editor
The Leek
1WG
BFPO 811

Entries must
reach us by
15 January.

A prize of £5
will be
awarded for
the funniest
caption.



Alias Smith and Jones.
RQMS and SQMS doing their thing



Quartermaster Capt B Morgan —
Resupply in the field