



The NetWorker

Newsletter of the Pen & Sword Club

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Momentous changes in the Armed Forces

Last year produced some momentous changes for Britain's armed forces. A new Government has taken a rapid look at the navy, army and air force and some of their proposals are neither popular nor well understood. The Army appears to have come off best in many ways although we must await the result of more deliberations. It is our job,

as club members; to examine whatever decisions are made that will have a long term effect on the nation and to make our views known.

Between us we have a depth of experience of service matters and we can be an influence for the well being of the armed forces.

Those of us who were Cold War Warriors and served in BAOR will recall those tremendous armoured exercises and can now contemplate that the Rhine Army is likely to be recalled with probable reductions in the army's armoured and artillery strengths.

Our naval friends must be bemused at the debate on the new carriers and the reduction in the size of the fleet which includes some ships which are comparatively young.

In the air the loss of the Harrier capability and the demise of the MR4 Nimrod surveillance aircraft seem illogical.

Times change and we must all react to events. The nation does face massive debts but we can hope that the services do not face another bout of "salami slicing," and that the government gives deep consideration to a strategic review that is based on world reality and is not bounded by the need to simply reduce government expenditure.

Within the reserve forces and the cadet organisations there is also apprehension about the future and the on-going review of reserves. We live in interesting times and it is worthwhile all club members examining their own attitudes towards the forces and, where appropriate, take action.

Later in this issue you will note that MOG (V) is in good heart and, indeed, is highly thought of from the Chief of the Defence Staff downwards. The unit has grown and matured over the years and it is most pleasing to see that the great efforts and ideas expounded while we served have borne fruit.

We must not be complacent however, and must make sure our Members of Parliament do know our opinions. Check on your local MPs e-mail and send in your views. They do take note.

2010 - A Slow year for the Club

The club's last 12 months were not as active as some would have liked. The House of Commons dinner was a success but the actual membership turn out was not high. Thanks to the sponsoring of guests by individual members the event did, however, go well.

Sadly the turn out for the Remembrance Day parade was also low and the decision was taken to cancel. However, there have been representations that no matter what the club turnout might be in 2011 then those who want to pay their respects to our fallen comrades should attend. This is under review by Major John Boyes, chairman of the South East region.

The weather beat us for the annual Christmas Dinner. With the Army & Navy Club requiring an earlier than expected confirmation of numbers and the snow clouds

gathering we had to cancel the event. This also produced a reaction from those who had devoted time, effort and expense to their attendance. Hence in 2011 there will be a pre Christmas event. Decisions need to be made early as to whether it should be an evening event or a lunch time gathering as part of a possible visit to the theatre or an opportunity for partners to be let loose with a credit card under the festive lights of central London.

In 2011 the active Wales, The Marches and South West regions will no doubt continue their successful meetings but more response is needed from members in the south east, the midlands and the north. The central team is hoping that the midlands and north can produce two regional chairpersons to move the club forward in those areas.

Annual General Meeting

After some deliberation the management team decided not to call a general meeting last year but to try and hold a 2011 agm in conjunction with a major event. Nevertheless the club committee has acted on a number of proposals raised in the last 12 months.

Published elsewhere in The NetWorker are the annual accounts. The club is financially healthy and it is proposed to spend some of our funds in 2011 in making one of our events less costly, for example, the annual dinner

Expansion is the aim in 2011

The major consideration over the last few months has been to expand our current membership strength of 67 and consequently have a greater pool of people from which to attract attendance at events. Some 24 have now taken up life membership which indicates a continuing interest in our future and two new members, recently retired from active service, Sarah Shepherd and Jim Gallagher, have joined our ranks.

There has been a healthy interest in the club during the last year from our colleagues in the other services. As a consequence the management team has agreed to open membership to serving and retired volunteer officers of the Royal Navy, the Royal Auxiliary Air Force and those members of the Government Information Service who have contributed towards the success of the volunteer media operations units.

In conjunction with this move the National Chairman has suggested that each service be asked to put forward a nominee as a Vice-Chairman so that all can be represented on the management team.

Lt Colonel Barry Hawgood has volunteered to become vice-chair for the Army and Commander Sue Eagles has offered to represent the Royal Navy Reserve. The new posts are designed to create a further interest in club membership and to boost attendance at events. They are not seen as detracting from the valued and continuing role of regional chairmen.

Contact has been made with the Commanding Officers of the Royal Navy Reserve Public Affairs branch and the Royal Auxiliary Air Force PR unit with some success.

Let us hope that 2011 will become an extra special year for the club.

New Colonel for MOG (V)

Ronnie McCourt, who joined media operations in 1998, is the new Colonel of MOG (V.) He took over from Colonel Alistair Bruce in September last year.

Colonel Ronnie had a full career in the Regular Army as an infantry officer with the Royal Irish. During his service he attended Staff College in India and attained the rank of Lt Colonel.

He served four operational tours of duty mainly in Northern Ireland which, he says, is paltry by modern day standards.

On leaving the regular Army Ronnie commanded two different companies of 4th Royal Green Jackets in London before becoming an assessor at the Regular Commissions Board (now AOSB) at Westbury as SO1.

Ronnie commanded MOG (V) from 2001 – 2004 and was British Forces spokesman on Op Telic 1, working initially with CENTCOM in Doha and then for 1 (UK) Armoured Division in Basra for General Peter Wall, who is now Chief of the General Staff.

Since 1992 Ronnie has been a civilian lecturer at Sandhurst specializing in Applied Behavioral Science, essentially in social and cognitive psychology in relation to leadership.



Colonel Ronnie McCourt

Says Ronnie: After the last four months that I have been working with the Group I can honestly say that it is in the best shape I have ever seen it. Its reputation is extremely high – from the Chief of the Defence Staff downwards. The Group is in the very capable hands of Lt Colonel Rosie Stone who I do my best to support.

Obituary

It is with great regret that The Networker reports the death, late last year, of Major John Hadfield. John joined the TAPIO Pool in 1987 after serving some 11 years with the Mercian Volunteers and brought with him a wealth of newspaper experience.

He worked on a number of West Midland Newspapers and had been a senior executive of United News Services as well as a free lance journalist. John was a quiet man with an ability to get on with all he met. His wisdom was obvious and his love of the Territorial Army was great. On transfer to the Pool he took great pride in being cap badged to The Staffordshire Regiment and, we believe, even more so in his son who followed him to the Mercian Regiment

In his 71 years John gave much to those who knew him and served loyally, including a time with the public affairs committee of West Midland TAVR Association



Major John Hadfield

Editorial Team Expands

The Editor is delighted to report that there will be an expansion in The NetWorkers' editorial team in 2011. Major Gerry Bartlett has volunteered to help keep members informed and he will be contacting readers to raise more interesting stories and photographs for future editions.

Gerry was Defence Correspondent on The Daily Telegraph and brings great experience to his role as Deputy Editor.

What's On in 2011?

Ideas that have been put forward for national events in 2011 include:

- A major effort to boost attendance at the annual dinner! It is suggested there could be a change of venue away from the expensive House of Commons but many relish the central London location and the opportunity to entertain guests in splendid and historic surroundings.
- A change to the annual Christmas dinner! One idea is that this should be a lunchtime get together on the Saturday, possibly followed by a London Show and a visit to the Oxford Street festive lights. The new Military Tattoo is being held at this time and could also be incorporated.
- A limited numbers visit to Gibraltar to tour the tunnels and examine Operation Felix, the German plan to invade The Rock.



- An approach to the MOG (V) Commanding Officer for club members to be paying guests at a unit event! The unit's annual dinner is on May 20.

- There is a considerable interest in seeing and meeting the winners of the various trophies presented by club members to the unit. The trophies are currently being audited by Club Secretary, Major Doreen Cadwallader.
- Revival of interest in a visit to Normandy to see the 1944 battle sites! As well as the D-Day beaches the suggestion includes the Break-out battles and, particularly Hill 112, Operations Epsom and Goodwood and the Falaise Gap.
- A block booking at Beating of Retreat on Horse Guards in June.
- An application for a number of tickets to the Trooping of the Colour.
- Visits to the Edinburgh and the London Military tattoos

Please e-mail your thoughts, comments and additional ideas to the Editor:
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Time's up, move over

Says Lt Col Tim Purbrick as he hands over to Lt. Col Rosie Stone

Speaking to the NetWorker, Tim says: It has been a huge privilege and a pleasure for me to command such an outstanding group of talented and professional media operators, as MOG (V) over the last three years. The Group's volunteer ethos, and some innovative capability development, has seen the percentage of the Group deploying on operations rise from 2% to 25% per annum over the last three years – 58% of the Group's media operators have deployed on ops since 2003.

And, when they got on operations, they all delivered in spades significantly adding to the reputation of the Media Operations Group (Volunteers).

Those who went down range found the environment harsh, climatically, in tempo and kinetically. Lt Julian Allen proved that the Combat Camera Team was properly named when he was wounded in action on 7 Mar last year. Happily, he is now back at his desk in the City.

We have doubled the size of the Group to over 90 personnel on our way to our establishment of 137 personnel while, I believe, maintaining and increasing the quality of those we have recruited - we are now at 90% of our officer cohort and 35% of our soldiers. We have recruited professional photographers who are becoming military photographers and who will soon deploy on operations.

We recruited General Sir David Richards, now Chief of the Defence Staff, as our Colonel Commandant – he has been promoted twice since his appointment as Colonel Commandant, surely some link? We formed our primary military affiliation with HQ 3 (UK) Division at Bulford and started an affiliation with the Guild of Public Relations Practitioners.

We have filled the Media Ops Liaison Officer Detachment with MOG (V) ambassadors and sent them across the Army and Defence, particularly to the Brigades deploying to Afghanistan, to provide professional media assistance to regular officers.



Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir David Richards, left, Colonel Commandant of the Media Operations Group, Lieutenant Colonel Tim Purbrick, Commanding Officer and Colonel Nick Pollard, Honorary Colonel of the Group pictured at a Strategic Communications City forum & seminar on 15 September 2010

All MOG (V) operators have been assigned to their geographically local Regional Force Headquarters to provide immediate crisis communications support during civil or national emergencies. We have initiated, developed and deployed a Rapid Reaction Reserve (RRR). This is a higher readiness detachment within the Group for short notice, short term operational deployments

This is a new capability and a new way of getting our professional knowledge and expertise on operations, not only in media ops posts, but right now in what the military call Influence – the spectrum of information capabilities including Psychological Operations, Information Operations, Civil Military Co-operation and Media Operations and their synchronisation with all other military activities.

This was possible because we initiated the Influence Activity Cell in Group Headquarters, accepted volunteers and had them trained in these Influence capabilities. We initiated the Defence Engagement Team (Army) to make pinpoint use of our expertise in specific areas within the Ministry of Defence, firstly by working directly for the Chief of the General Staff and soon in other areas.

At the same time we have continued to support a raft of tasks from Army Media & Communications at Headquarters Land Forces, our superior HQ, from pre-deployment training for troops to home coming parades and exercises – 91% of our time has been spent on training others.



Captain Horspool interviews a soldier from the Yorkshire Regiment at Himal Op in Afghanistan

We have had some great regimental dinners in the Tower of London, the Houses of Parliament and at the Honourable Artillery Company.

We undertook adventure training in Weymouth, introduced the annual Operations Back Brief Day at Christmas time, to learn the lessons from those who have been on operations, followed by a carol service.

We initiated senior staff briefings to deliver informed civilian best practice to key military and MoD civilian staffs, held joint training and networking events with our affiliated Guild and did some interesting and invaluable training at our annual camp in Bovington last year, including a strategic communications course, a seminar on countering enemy propaganda and some testing military training.

I have now handed over command of the Group to Lt Col Rosie Stone and I will, hopefully, be deploying to Afghanistan in the near future.

Editor's Note: Lt Colonel Rosie Stone will outline her first six months as Commanding Officer in the Spring Edition.

It was better in the Golden Age

Roger Goodwin looks back on early days of media operations

Very *modern* sort of trade, this media relations business, isn't it? All information technology, and "exponential" media expansion, and electronic media, and 24 hour news, and satellite links, and live eye-witness accounts of events half a world away. Not an area with which our conservative (small c) MoD clients, whether in the ministerial offices, the mandarinates, or the military, are comfortable. So, they must be introduced to reality. Right?

Well, partially, perhaps. But don't indulge in any self-conceit that it's anything new. Over the past 160 years the British military, in particular, have been subject to more forced change – usually for the better - through the attentions of the media than most of them realise, and even fewer would be prepared to admit. And most of the time they had to be dragged to it screaming and kicking, just as, too often, they still do now.

Most have heard of William Howard Russell, billed as the first War Correspondent (which he wasn't), whose reports in *The Times* from the Crimea not only forced the Army into disgracefully-overdue reforms but toppled the Government of the day.

Billy Russell was the start of it. Before him war coverage routinely took the form of gentlemanly dissertations penned by officers serving with whichever was the campaign of the moment, and which, not surprisingly, were therefore always brilliantly conducted and effortlessly successful.

Once Russell exposed the reality things were never the same again. He opened the floodgates. When the American Civil War broke out five years later, 500 war correspondents took the field to cover the Northern side alone

Our Armed Forces have had to "deal" with journalists through just about every war and campaign from his day to this, sometimes effectively, often not. A *Times* man died with Gordon in Khartoum.

Another distinguished correspondent, learning that the commanding general intended to take his time over penning his victory message, rode 120 miles in 20 hours through Zulu territory to report the Battle of Ulundi, which avenged the Isandlwana massacre. His dispatch was read to great acclaim in both houses of Parliament. An international press corps accompanied the British-led international force which relieved the Legations after 55 days of siege in Peking.

It has never been a comfortable relationship. Russell was increasingly ostracised as his reports took effect, to the extent that his tent was cut down when he pitched it within the lines and he was forced out to join the camp followers. Kitchener, advancing up the Nile to avenge General Gordon, did everything he could to impede the 26 correspondents accompanying him, one of whom was Winston Churchill.

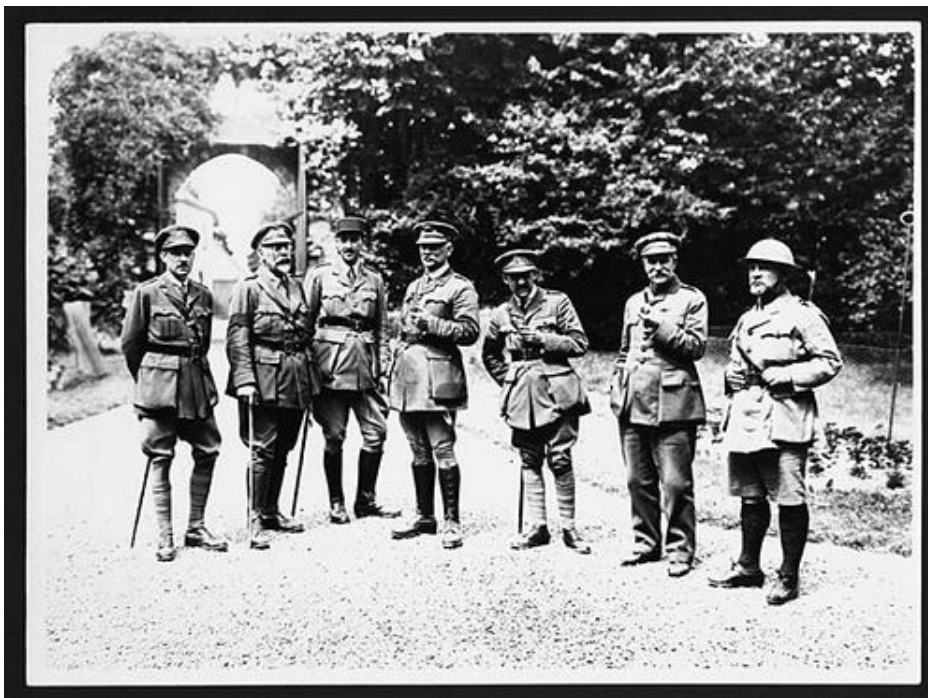
He gave them no help and treated them with contempt. Famously, as he emerged from his tent to begin the Battle of Omdurman he greeted them with words still often quoted

with relish (usually by the media) in debates about the military/media relationship – “Out of my way, you drunken swabs.”

Yet another hero of the high tide of Empire, Robert Baden-Powell, called together the five correspondents who were with him throughout the siege of Mafeking and told them he would not permit criticism of the conduct of the garrison or his officers. From then on he personally censored every dispatch. How modern commanders would envy him.

Certainly the Boer War saw censorship imposed in a form we might recognise today, if not the practice. One censor used to throw journalists' copy straight into the waste basket without reading it, and the chief censor told one correspondent, “There is one thing I will allow you to write today – a description of the new Union Jack which has just been run up over headquarters.”

By the time World War One broke out, still only 60 years after Russell's hey-day, the military's suspicion of the correspondents was entrenched and defined. Kitchener was now Secretary for War and the man whose face stared out from the famous poster, declaring over pointed finger that “Your Country Needs You.” His detestation of the press was as virulent as it had been in the Sudan.



A group of allied war correspondents pictured in France. The background indicates the photo was probably taken at a chateau.

He was determined not to have them in France at any cost and ordered that any correspondent found in the field should be arrested, his passport confiscated, and shipped home. His only concession to informing the public was to appoint a Royal Engineer colonel to write anodyne, boring and useless reports on the progress of the war. Even these were not released until they had been vetted by several generals and finally by Kitchener himself.

They were completely inadequate for a public thirsting for news of what, it was already clear, would be the biggest war in history, and inevitably Fleet Street's editors and their correspondents got up to every kind of ingenious mischief in their efforts to get round his restrictions.

It was a situation which could not last, but it took an American to point it out. In January 1915, former US president Theodore Roosevelt bluntly told Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey that the refusal to allow correspondents at the front was harming Britain's cause in the United States. "...Your censorship work and much of your refusal to allow correspondents at the front has ... been a danger to your cause from the standpoint of public opinion without any corresponding military gains."

Reluctantly, the Army gave in. But the effect was to produce not just the result it always wished for but much, much more. In June 1915 six correspondents, occasionally augmented by five more, were installed in their own house near GHQ and there they remained for the rest of the war. They were given the status of Army Captains and provided with orderlies, lorries, cars, conducting officers, and censors. They could visit the front only in chauffeur-driven cars accompanied by conducting officers who had been discreetly instructed to waste their time as much as possible.

Inevitably, they came to identify with the Army they covered and the staff officers they worked and lived with, a human reaction still sometimes detectable in today's correspondents. For the best of reasons, they evolved their own conspiracy of silence which largely stopped the truth of the most hellish war in history being reported in its full horror in Britain. For their compliance, the six principal correspondents were received by the King and at the end of the war some of them were knighted.

When the Second World War came along War Office officials fondly believed that they could simply repeat the arrangements of the First. Fifteen British and Commonwealth correspondents, nine American, and eight press and newsreel photographers duly joined the British Expeditionary Force in France, together with their conducting officers.

These were plainly as ineffectual a bunch as ever took the Queen's Commission, who were there because quite obviously they couldn't be trusted with any more martial roles. And in background and what in those days would have been called "social class," they and their charges might as well have come from different planets.

Clearly the cosy relationships of 1914-18 were not going to be re-established. Conditions deteriorated to the point where many of the journalists returned to London in protest at the restrictions placed upon them. They hastily returned when Germany attacked but found no chance for journalistic glory, getting swept up instead by the force of the Blitzkrieg which ended the Phony War, or the Bore War as the pressmen had nicknamed it amongst themselves. They were fortunate to escape with their lives through Dunkirk.

It was the end of the beginning which Russell had launched in the mud of the Crimea. Clearly both the media and the military had to get much more professional if they were to deal with the complexities not only of modern war, but the emergent new mediums of radio, film and instant newspapers. There is much, much more to tell.

The press pack which gathered at Dover to report the Battle of Britain above their heads in sporting metaphors: "Today's Bag: 60 for Nil." The courage of the reporters who flew with the Lancasters, went ashore on D-Day, and sailed with the fleet to hunt the Bismarck.

The dawning realisation by the authorities that open reporting of everything but genuine military information benefited all concerned, the nation and the war effort. The horrific discoveries of the concentration camps at the war's end, which moved the correspondents who were there to some of the most inspired and heart-wrenching journalism ever written.

And how we lost all that knowledge again when it was all over, so that all the same old mistakes mushroomed forth for the Falklands campaign in 1982, to be followed by the painful re-learning process which continues today. We forgot the mistakes of history, and were, therefore, condemned to repeat them.

But all of that is another story, and will have to wait for another day.



Pictured here, left to right, are Roger Goodwin, Allan George, Alan Percival and Martin Helm. All four MoD Information Officer are pictured with their "liberated" Argentinean 4x4 in Port Stanley shortly after the surrender.

The story of the Minders who accompanied the Task Force is fascinating and more will appear in later newsletters. Much maligned by the media the minders were, in fact, an experienced team that the task force press corps just did not understand. Both Roger and Alan are club members.

Editor's Note: Roger knows more than something of which he writes. In a 34-year career in Defence Public Relations, he was "involved" with six conflicts – seven if you count the Cod War with Iceland – and deployed on two – the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 and the Falklands in 1982.

He was "parachuted in" as Acting Command Public Information Officer at HQ Land for the first Gulf War in 1990 and twice more for the early interventions in the Balkans.

He was Director of Public Relations for the British Garrison in Hong Kong for the last four years of British rule, planning and organising media arrangements for the hand-over to China in 1997.

His last posting was as Chief Information Officer at HQ Northern Ireland in the politically-delicate post-conflict period leading up to and including the Good Friday Agreement. He took early retirement to care for his disabled wife in 1991, since which time he has indulged his life-long passion for aviation by taking new photographs of old airplanes; and his interest in military history as a Trustee of The Queen's Lancashire Regiment Museum in Preston.

LONDON TO SYDNEY – The difficult way

Lt Colonel Barry Hawgood relates his tale of cross continent travel

Sometimes, supporting and raising funds for a charity can lead you into doing things that never, in a million Sundays, would you do normally. A chance remark when asked if I would be prepared to take part in an anniversary endurance rally to which I said yes has ended up two and half years later completing an amazing two man and a Hillman saloon drive from London to Sydney and in the process raising some £35,000 for the Prostate Cancer Charity.

A civilian friend, John Lewis, and I undertook this challenge; he liking and owning many classic cars and me liking cars in general, we were both excited at the thought of achieving such a journey.

We left London, from the infamous Ace Café on the North Circular Road well known for its history of biker clubs and subsequently, motoring clubs using it as a venue, from when it first opened in 1938 as a transport café, on Saturday, 27th March last year. Our first real stop-over was in Italy when we reached Bologna. Here we met and stayed with a wonderful family who ran a B&B and who helped us add an additional leaf spring to each side of the rear suspension.

The weight in the rear of the car was putting such a downward pressure on the chassis, that the inner lip of the rear wheel body work was scoring the outer rim of the tyres! Nice one, with so far to go.

They did the trick though, although we still felt that we could do with even more reinforcement, bearing in mind that we were carrying spare parts, tools, camping gear, rations, personal kit and computers including a satellite telephone for emergencies. In other words we were as self contained as we could possibly get.

From Bologna, we travelled down to Bari, camping by the Adriatic the night before catching a ferry across to Greece. And then on to Turkey and Istanbul where we stayed with a Captain in the Turkish Navy and his family for several days, allowing us to see some of the sights of this interesting city, including experiencing a genuine Turkish massage (masochistic more like!) at the most famous baths in Turkey.

Eastern Turkey, once we had crossed the Bosphorus via the Asia Bridge, was an unknown in respect to road conditions and what we might expect to encounter on the way.

We had heard several stories about the dangers of travelling alone in Eastern Turkey, but apart from being a massive country, our progress was good. The terrain was magnificent, which cannot be portrayed in the one photograph used in this story.



The weather in Eastern Turkey was kind to us and the threatened forecast of snow stayed away until our last day in Turkey.

We were at this stage following the same route as the famous 1968 London to Sydney rally, even to the extent of staying in the same town, Erzincan, in Eastern Turkey as competitors did in 1968. This part of Turkey was extraordinary in that the people were very Asian in their outlook and way of life, and we were definitely alert to potential security issues that could arise with our presence.

Military installations and barracks were everywhere. We were also traversing a plateau 5000 feet above sea level. On our last night in Turkey we stayed at a place called Dogobayazit, a growing town with many infrastructure problems – using the lift in the hotel was a no!

It was here that my mobile phone's screen blacked out. Mentioning it the proprietor of the hotel, he organized for me to visit a mobile phone shop and within two hours the phone was as good as new – in the UK that same problem took three weeks to be repaired!



Arriving in Tehran. We were strangers! This picture shows the number of similar cars to ours – all derivatives of Hillmans, known in Iran as Paykans, as Rootes who made the Hillman set up assembly plants in Iran in the first instance and then sold the tooling to the Iranians when the Hillman ceased to be made here in the UK.

Tehran was a bustling, busy city; very modern in many parts with good roads in and out. We had an exceptionally warm and welcoming time there and were privileged to be taken up to the top of the country's tallest communication tower, the third tallest in the world, before its completion some time this year.



The Parsian Hotel, Shiraz, where we stayed on our way to Esfahan.

Note the interest in the car and military presence.

Our hosts in Tehran, people who had helped us get our visas for the country; kindly put together an itinerary for us to explore other parts of Iran while we were there. Iran is a wonderful country – I just hope that one day it will open its borders for more people to visit and explore some of the beautiful cities it has in other parts of Iran.

But it was time to move on to Pakistan, which we did crossing the border with the help from Iranian military police and friendly Pakistani customs officials, one of which shared his 'room' with us on the first night in Pakistan at the border, The Pakistan border of Taftan was such a contrast to where we had come from – poor, is the best possible description – and dusty. We took so long in getting through the customs processes that our ambition to reach a town called Quetta, close to the Afghan border was thwarted

somewhat hence the reason for spending a night in a room with one of our hosts! An interesting experience – John's lilo went flat on him again!



Pakistan roads from the border of Iran were no more than hard core based, which meant that with our hard springs, the Hillman and us felt every little hole in the road.

We were given an escort at Taftan that took the form of one soldier with rifle to share the front seats of our car; such was the concern of our safety within Pakistan. And throughout our trip to Lahore, we were either endowed with a third person in the cockpit, or had a vehicle escort provided by the Pakistani police.



Anyone else thinking of driving through Pakistan should remember that signage is almost non-existent. This was one of the exceptions. We navigated throughout using map and compass only! No GPS at all.

We were well and truly into our adventure by now. Following our stay in Lahore, one of the family members we had stayed with led us to the Indian border, which we crossed with no difficulty and on to Amritsar to stay the night.

There, we visited the Golden Temple and went back to the border to witness the famous "Closing of the Border Ceremony" with Pakistan. It truly was a case of one upmanship between the two countries.



And on into India to Dheli. This is one of the many stops made throughout India to take in liquids to combat the heat, which was intense – above 40 degrees C all the way down through India to Chennai (Madras) to put the car onto a boat to Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur).



The Taj Mahal – it was stunning, and so many people!

India to drive through was challenging in so many ways. The heat, as we had no air-conditioning, was indescribable. The traffic, the people, the noise of incessant horns being used by their owners to push and shove as fast as they could past each other to reach their destinations. However, we saw some fantastic sights including a visit to one of the largest tiger parks in the country.

And we did see a tiger! Also, one of the highlights of the trip was visiting a place called Varanasi.



This gives a snapshot of the early morning homage paid by the Hindu people to their Ganga, the river Ganges, which they worship, wash in, swim in, clean themselves in and so on. In this photo, you can make out people in the water. These places, called Ghats, are where the people come down to the river to pray, and, as witnessed by us, to burn the bodies of their dead.

Our stages through Malaysia went without incident, although we had some time to waste as a result of getting our car into and out of containers for the two sea crossings we had to make to reach Australia. Once we reached Australia, we started our journey from Fremantle, Perth, and drove the long way round Australia to reach Sydney, visiting Fort Hedland, Broome and Darwin on our way.

Then it was on to Rockhampton, Queensland, and then turning south, we headed for Brisbane and then onto our final destination. The Hillman behaved beautifully throughout our time in Australia, and responded wonderfully well even when we asked it cover more than 500 miles a day, which we did on several occasions.



The Hillman Club of Australia invited us to their weekend convention at Singleton, NSW on our last days on the road. Here you see our car surrounded by some of the Hillmans that make up the club.

After a wonderfully welcoming Saturday night with the members of the Hillman Club, we were escorted all the way into Sydney. The end of a 16 week trip where we had covered close to 24,000 kilometres, made four sea crossings (the Channel, the Adriatic, the Andaman Sea/Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean from Johore Bahru to Fremantle), increased our rear suspension by an extra two springs either side of the car, and

successfully got through the most daunting inspection regime by way of the Australian Inspection Authority enabling us to complete our trip to Australia.



Arrival on Sunday 18th July, 2010 at the Sydney Opera House. The photograph was taken late afternoon hence the long shadows.

If anyone held back to see if we would achieve our aim before donating to the Prostate Cancer Charity, and would like to do so now, please go to our web site www.gb2aus.co.uk and follow the links through to the Just Giving page.

A Word from Willie

Our northern-most member, Major Willie Morrison penned some words for the NetWorker following recent editions and has offered to share some of his “modest supply of good malts” if the Editor ever ventures north of the border.

Says Willie; As usual I enjoyed reading the latest issue of The NetWorker. I am indeed impressed by the improvement in the MOG (V) equipment after recalling on one occasion – around the late 1980s I think – in Hildesheim where I had to borrow a German typewriter with a keyboard somewhat different from that used in the UK.

With the help of a US Army NCO who knew a bit about computers, and a German language handbook, which I had to translate, painfully, almost word for word, I eventually managed to get some response from the instrument. But the learning curve took a long time. Would that we had laptops and digital cameras in those days. How much easier TAPIO life would have been?

It is particularly interesting to note just how far travelled and how active are today's sons and daughters of TAPIO. If only we had been afforded such opportunities in those faraway days. While re-reading an article in Issue 4 by my old colleague, Peter Rhodes, revealing how his experience of active service with the Army had always been as a journalist, never as a Terrier, I reflected on how my own military experience had been very similar to his.

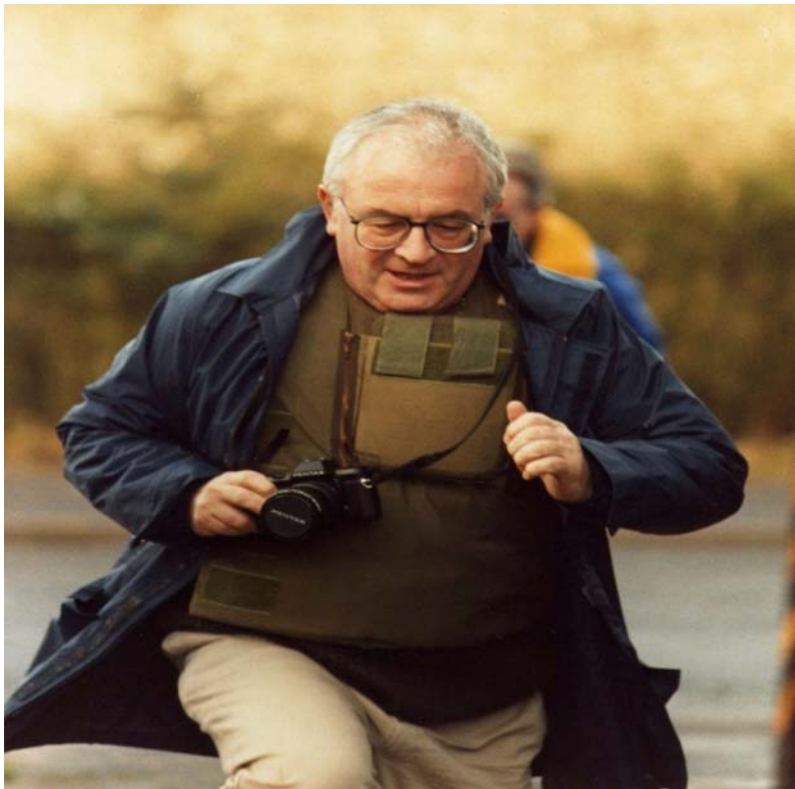
I first volunteered my services in 1982 at the start of the campaign to reclaim the Falkland Islands from Argentina and I was bitterly disappointed not to have been chosen for service in the First Gulf War.

As compensation I did spend a week just after the 1991 cease fire as the Aberdeen Press & Journal's representative in Kuwait and Iraq, with the Royal Scots and other Scottish units. In the process I picked up from Highlanders in 40 Field Regiment, RA a good story about how the unit narrowly escaped a massacre – with one or two only slightly wounded by “friendly fire” from a cavalry regiment which had mistaken their SP guns for Iraqi tanks.

Regrettably it received a more modest showing in the P& J than I felt it was worth. As far as I am aware the only other journalist to run the story was Robert Chesshyre of the Daily Telegraph, who later gave the incident some big licks in a weekend magazine. I have filed away a copy somewhere so safe I have forgotten its location.

I also visited the Queen's Own Highlanders, Royal Scots, Gordons and KOSB on many occasions in Northern Ireland and recently rediscovered several negatives I had snapped including some from inside the notorious Borucki sangar overlooking Crossmaglen Square, a structure I am told that has long since been demolished in the wake of the peace process.

I also unearthed a snap taken by the Royal Scots unit photographer of me in the middle of a run from the main base in XMG to the sangar. I was supposed to run the 100 yards or so as quickly as possible, but could not resist the temptation to stop momentarily to photograph the outpost,



On one occasion in 1978 while on a heliborne Eagle Patrol in North Armagh with a four strong “brick”, after being inserted into an isolated rural location we suddenly heard a series of sharp cracks, similar to those made by a small bore rifle, emanating from a farm complex about a ¼ mile away. The corporal decided we should investigate. Far from finding a hot bed of terrorist training we found the occupants dropping sheets of corrugated iron loudly on the ground and running over them repeatedly with a large tractor to flatten them out. Why, I don’t know to this day.

Call it serendipity if you will but a visit to the Borucki Sangar in December 1992 produced a splash for me a few days later after the post was fire-bombed only a few nights after my visit. I had interviewed the four Royal Scots who had volunteered to man the sangar on a permanent basis and had taken some photographs. The Royal Scots were at that time on a six months roulement from their home base at Fort George, near Inverness.

I should have loved to have visited Afghanistan when the Black Watch was there. Instead as a retired hack, I had to depend on some very graphic e-mail reports – not for publication – from Colonel Colin Mason’s son-in-law, Major Matt Munro, OC A Company, who kindly added me to his mailing, list.

Such are the consequences of ageing!



Willie Morrison meets up with Colonel Colin Mason, left, during one of Colin’s visits to Scotland.

Club Accounts

PEN & SWORD CLUB

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR TO 31 DECEMBER 2009

Income

Subscriptions & Donations	649.00
Interest Received	<u>2.20</u>
	<u>651.20</u>

Expenses

Cenotaph Parade (net) - recoverable	63.64
AGM & Lunch (net)	0.00
Gifts to Charities	75.00
Creditor paid during year on behalf of member	46.00
Postages and Sundries	<u>19.17</u>
	<u>203.81</u>

Net Surplus for year £ 447.39

Capital Account b/fwd as at 1 January 2009	1,064.96
Less: Sundry Debtor paid in 2010	46.00
Net Surplus for year	<u>447.39</u>
Balance as at 31 December 2009	£ <u>1,466.35</u>

I have examined the accounts of the Pen & Sword Club for the year to 31st December 2009 and found them to be correct



John Boyes TD
Honorary Auditor