



The NetWorker

Newsletter of the Pen & Sword Club
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Look back - and forward – with pride!

All club members can read this month's Networker and reflect on their service and achievements while at the same time admiring and supporting the work of serving officers of the Media Operations Group (V.)

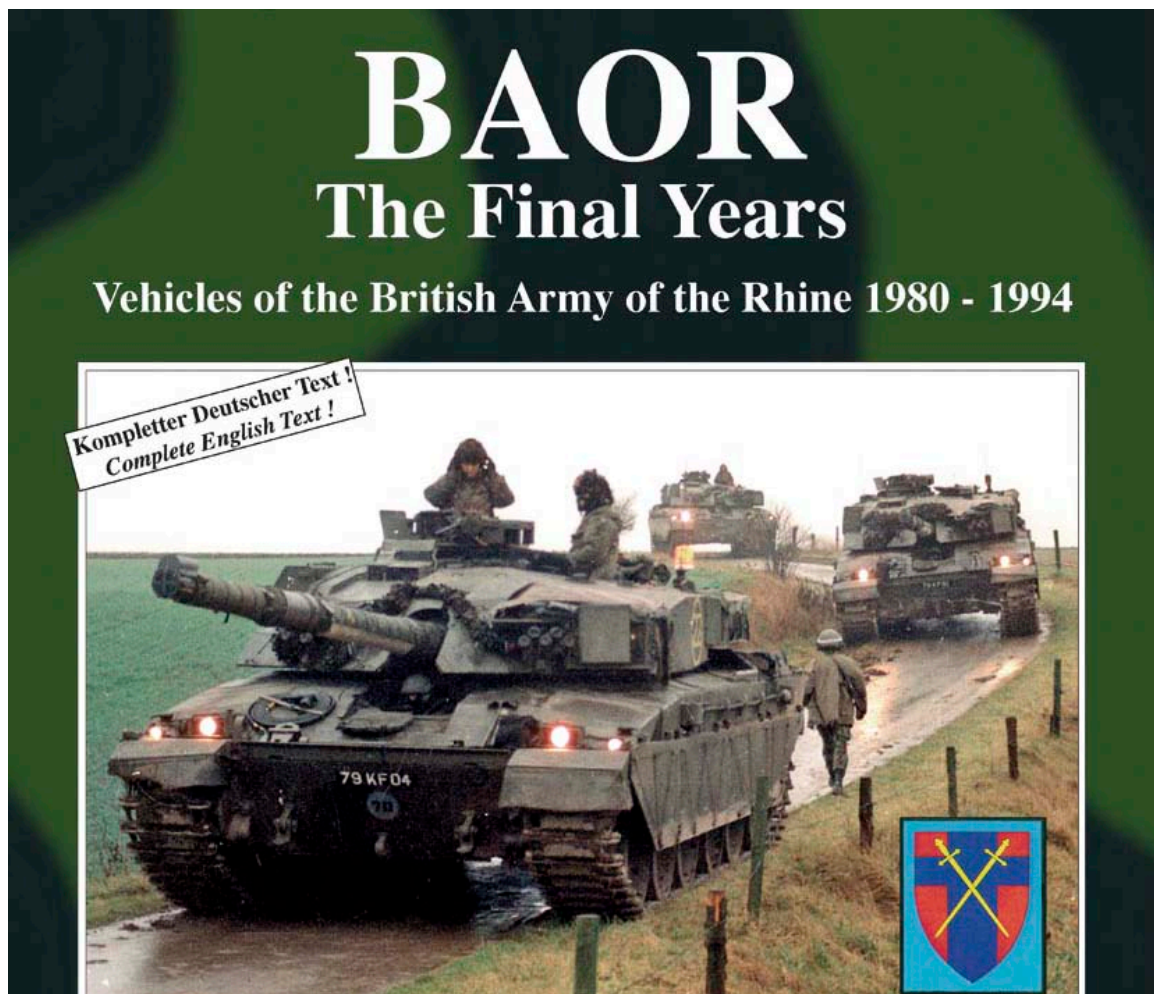
All the years of hard work by the TAPIO Pool and its senior officers together with those who transferred their allegiance when the battle to be renamed *Media Operations Group (V)* was won have proved worthwhile.

Lt. Colonel David Reynolds asserts later in this newsletter that media

operations are now held in high esteem by the Regular Army. It was not always so and we had to earn respect and recognition almost each time we encountered a new general officer or unit.

The TAPIO Pool long ago advocated the ORBAT, the role, the equipment and the unit expansion should include other ranks in vital roles. It is to the credit to the unit's advocates and leaders and the loyalty and hard work in many theatres of its officers that MOG (V) is, today, so well regarded.

That times have changed, and individual reinforcement rather than formed units is the discussion of the day may not be quite to the understanding, or liking, of those who planned and manned Corps



sized press information centres during the Cold War or who patiently advised while staying in the background for operations such as Zimbabwe/Rhodesia and elsewhere.

It has been a long series of battles won and we must not lower our guard. The Review of Reserves may be a serious document put together by an excellent team but there is skepticism of the possible implementation.

Lord Ramsbotham tells me that he is pressing for a full debate in the House of Lords. We too must stay interested and put our views forward to our Members of Parliament and others.

What can be added to today's media operation? Your editor, for one would like to see the magazine *Despatches*, so ably edited and managed by Lieutenant Colonel Lawrie Phillips, revived and flourish again. It was a TAPIO Pool idea and it worked amazingly well. Copies went internationally and from its first publication it drew plaudits from armies around the world.

Enthusiasm at Westcountry Region lunch.

The inaugural lunch of the Westcountry Region held at the New Inn in Salisbury – home of the HQ Land rugby club – was very well attended and will be repeated.

Discussions that followed included a request for a formal club dinner in London later this year and Colonel Mike Peters, Major John Boyes and Major Doreen Cadwallader will start making inquiries.

The possibilities are for a dinner at the House of Commons or at the Army & Navy Club. There is a distinct advantage for the club venue because we may be able to negotiate a special accommodation rate for non-members which will be much lower than London hotels.

A number of ideas for further Westcountry functions were put forward including an event at the Bath & West Show in 2010. The Rifles has a marquee at the show and there is usually a Sounding of Retreat in the evening. Lieutenant Colonel Spencer Gammond, who is now with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, has offered to investigate a

week-end at the RNLI training college and Colonel Donald Campbell has offered to arrange a lunch at his London livery hall.

The region's members are keen to throw open their future events to all club members and hope to see bigger attendances in the future. Thanks go to Major David Falcke and regional secretary Sue Nelmes for making all the arrangements.

On active service with MOG (V)

Media Operations Group (V) currently has four officers mobilised on active service.

Lieutenant Colonel Sean Tully is Chief Media Operations in Basra, Captain Paul Smyth is SO2 Media Ops for Op Telic but is held at PJHQ while Major Dale Clark is mobilised as SO2 Media Ops in Helmand and Captain James Mayhew is OC the Combat Camera Team.

In June, says Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Tim Purbrick, two more officers will be moving to Helmand to replace two unit officers currently on deployment.

The Group will shortly undertake adventurous training at Inverness, and will hold a week end training camp before going on a battlefield tour to Arnhem.

The regimental dinner is scheduled to be held in the House of Commons after a "Defence in Westminster Day later this year and annual camp will be two weeks of military and media training at Bovington in October.

MOG (V) has been formally affiliated with the Guild of PR Practitioners. The CO cemented the relationship by attending the installation of the Master of the Guild to build a strong relationship between the two organisations. "It's a great honour," says Tim who added that the Guild is offering a PR related award to the unit and will be sending care packages to unit members deployed on military operations.



Major Paul Smyth at work during his Kosovo tour



The Prime Minister visits Lashkar Gah in Afghanistan. Pictured right of Mr. Gordon Brown and wearing the shades, is Captain James Mayhew, HCR, commanding the Combat Camera Team on Op HERRICK

Review of Reserves – The Future for all Reserve Forces?

Colonel Tony Baldry MP questions the logic

It might just have slipped past the public but the recent announcement of the Review of Reserves did not escape the notice of our Parliamentary colleagues and friends and those who work closely with the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association.

The review has provoked some strong reactions and is best summed up for the club in this Communiqué from the House of Commons by Colonel Tony Baldry MP.

Tony writes:

“At the present moment there are more than 2,000 reservists on operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, involved in everything from front line fighting to force protection and medical support. Reservists at the moment are some eight per cent of deployed UK forces. Since 2003, some 18,000 Reservists have been deployed to operational theatres. During that time, 15 have, tragically, been killed.

In making a statement to the House on the future of the Reserves, the Minister for the Armed Forces’ Bob Ainsworth, said:
‘ . . we require them (the Reserves) to augment our regular forces on expeditionary operations.’

“Before the fall of the Berlin Wall, the role of the TA was to train to be able to deploy in support of the Regular Army in times of war. TA units would only deploy after an ‘Order in Council,’ that was the Government saying effectively that Britain was at war with the Soviet Union and they were intended to deploy as complete regimental units.



Colonel Tony Baldry.

Minister Bob Ainsworth

“For example, 100 Field Regiment The Royal (Volunteers) of which I was a member knew exactly where on the West German plain would be our position in time of warfare. Life is now very much less predictable.

“Prior to 1997, no-one would have foreseen Sierra Leone, Iraq, or Afghanistan, all of which have seen the involvement of TA men and women.

“The Reserves Review is an attempt to address this change in role. The Review, conducted by a team led by Major-General Nicholas Cottam, sought to consult widely and listen carefully to the view of Reserve Forces and their supporters.

“Given that in the future TA soldiers are much more likely to be mobilised as individuals rather than as units, the MoD has to work out how to reconfigure reservist training. According to the Minister, this will be refocused with a greater emphasis on preparation to support current operations. Initial training will be restructured so that new recruits receive sufficient military skills to participate in their unit’s

collective training within six months of joining and are fully trained and eligible for mobilisation in three years.

“Routine training will also be reviewed and sufficient man training days allocated to ensure that annual military competency standards can be achieved by all. The Territorial Army will be better integrated with the Regular Army to ensure that combined they are best structured to support current and future operations.

“There are seven strategic recommendations and 80 detailed ones. The Civil Contingency Reaction Force disappears. There now would seem to be no role for the TA in Home Defence or Civil Contingency, which begs the question, who is going to carry out that role, if not the TA?

“It would appear that there are going to be even fewer drill halls. The Government see this as an opportunity to rationalise the TA estate, but in reality, this is clearly going to be in part a savings exercise as there is £75 million in the MoD budget for the financial year 2011/12, as a contribution made by sales from the Reserve Estate.

“There is a lot more emphasis on training for niche skills and the Army is trying to work out if it does not have effective TA Regiments, if it is not going to deploy the TA in regimental strengths, how does it manage to train officers through the chain of command. I suspect, however, that Ministers have failed to understand the central conundrum of the TA.

“Since the present Government came into office, the Reserves have almost halved, from 62,000 to 33,000. As 18,000 have been deployed in the last six years, it is clear that in joining the TA today there is a high probability of seeing active service. It clearly takes some time to train a soldier to that degree of military competence.

“If the Army is going to deploy a TA soldier, there is no point in doing so for a period any less than six months. The conundrum is how often will men and women be able to deploy with the TA for periods of six months?

“In my experience as an Honorary Colonel, talking to TA men and women, they were very willing to be deployed for their first six months tour – that was, after all, what they had been training for. Six months out of civilian and family life can be a long time, particularly in a challenging labour market, and many of those that I spoke to made it clear that either family or employers were likely to be pretty resistant if they were going to have to deploy for a further six-month period.

“As to the Army Cadets, there is no mention of earlier proposals to expand cadet forces much more widely into our secondary schools. This would appear to have been a potentially good initiative that has withered on the vine.”

Colonel Mike Peters, as Club Chairman, wrote to our Patron General the Lord Ramsbotham and several other MPs prior to the Review debate in the House of Common. Lord Ramsbotham was very active in the subsequent debate in the House of Lords. Both debates are available on-line from Hansard and are well worth a close study.

Colonel Mike expresses his thanks to all those who responded to his request and wrote to their own Members of Parliament and drew their attention to the Review.

Congratulations to Martin.

Colonel Martin Newman has joined the ranks of club members who serve as Deputy Lieutenants.

Martin is now a DL for Greater Manchester and joins Colonels David McDine and Peter Bishop in supporting their County Lord Lieutenants.

The Lord Lieutenant, Warren Smith said: “I am delighted to welcome Martin to our team of deputies. He has made a significant contribution to the community and I now look forward to his help throughout our county.”

Martin’s career in marketing and public relations is notable. Currently he is with Communicado – a north west based communications

company – where he heads the PR division. A Fellow and former Regional Chairman of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations Martin is also an associate lecturer in PR at Manchester Metropolitan University,



Martin's parallel military career started with the Greater Manchester Army Cadet Force before he transferred to the TAPIO Pool. On his return to the ACF he founded and commanded the Public Relations Unit and subsequently moved to the Youth and Cadet Policy Unit at the Directorate of Reserves Forces and Cadets in the Ministry of Defence as a special advisor in media and corporate communications.

Martin is currently working with the Royal Gibraltar Regiment advising on the formation of a cadet organisation affiliated to the regiment on The Rock.

He is also vice chairman of the Jewish Committee for HM Forces the MoD's endorsing authority for the Jewish faith. He is a member of the North West Reserve Forces and Cadet Association.

Support the Ghurkas at a Brecon Durbar

A great offer from Doug McArthur and Wales & the Marches Region

The Ghurkas have been much in the news in the last few weeks with Joanna Lumley fighting a great action in their support. Now the Club has an opportunity to show its regard for the Nepalese soldiers by attending a Durbar in Brecon in August – courtesy of Major Doug McArthur and the Wales and The Marches region.

Doug says: “A touch of The Raj comes to Brecon on Sunday, August 30 when the Ghurka Company of the Infantry Battle School at Dering Lines stages a Durbar. A Durbar is best described as a great big village fete staged with a military feel with the added bonus of displays by the Band of the Ghurka Brigade and the Red Devils parachute team. And of course there will be some curry.....!

“The £30 entry fee is in aid of the Army Benevolent Fund and Help for Heroes and includes entry to the Sergeants Mess where a veritable feast of curry will be available.

“This promises to be a terrific day accompanied by like-minded people with the backdrop of the Brecon Beacons - a setting par excellence.

“The region has - with the permission of Major Guptaman Gurung of the Ghurka Company (Mandalay) - thrown open the invitation to all Club members. Partners are more than welcome. Depending on

numbers, a hotel and a dinner will be booked for the Saturday evening and there is plenty to do locally for those who want to make a week end of it.

“This is the fourth year the event has been held and each year has been more popular than the year before. Accordingly, therefore, bids for places have an absolute deadline of June 5.”

Doug has volunteered to negotiate room rates and reserve tickets if he gets an early response. Contact initially is by e-mail:

doug@uskvalleydigital.co.uk

Report from the Front Line

Lieutenant Colonel David Reynolds, MOG (V) returned from Afghanistan earlier this year and has sent this report to The NetWorker:

“In today’s conflicts and military interventions the potential of using media operations to deliver ‘effect’ in support of the commander’s intent is still largely mis-understood by many staff officers. As a result the opportunity to demonstrate the capability of this function has never been more relevant than in the last ten years.

“I joined the Media Operations Group in 1996 as a second lieutenant; I had previously served with the Royal Marines and then worked as a journalist for the Daily Express covering conflicts from the Balkans to Kuwait. But journalism was not for me and I then started writing books and eventually started a publishing company. I felt I had something to offer to the TA and it had given me that team spirit back, which I had missed.

“Within weeks I was sent with 5 Airborne Brigade to the US on a major exercise. It was in at the deep end and a baptism of fire, which would serve me, well. Within two years I was promoted and on standby with the Brigade to parachute into Zaire on Operation PURPOSEFUL. The aim was to find and protect thousands of refugees who the United Nations feared had been slaughtered by

rebels. But the operation was cancelled and within days assigned to history. Two years later I found myself in Kosovo as the spokesman for 7th Armoured Brigade, a great job and another learning curve.

“When I joined the unit it was called the TAPIO Pool. At the training weekends we learnt from those who had deployed on operations and in a short space of time personalities such as Colonel Mike Peters, Major Doreen Cadwallader and my mentor Colonel Donald Campbell delivered valuable advice and training. Then under Donald the Group was re-shaped to deliver effect and capability in support of operations. In my opinion he was the officer who despite lots of barriers, delivered the changes that shaped today’s Media Operations Group.

“I have been immensely fortunate in my TA career; I have served as Training Major and then second-in-command. Posts, which were great fun and offered a great challenge. But I must add that without the support of my wife, Jessica, and more recently the boys, Finlay and William, I would not have been able to give the TA the support it demands today.

“In 2002, I was asked by PJHQ to deploy to Bagram, the former Soviet air base in Afghanistan – ironically as media advisor to the Commander of 3 Commando Brigade, my old unit. A year later Operation TELIC, the invasion of Iraq, called for more volunteers and I found myself in Baghdad as an acting S01 attached to the huge US 18th Corps Public Affairs unit.

“My main role was to advise the UK General, who was second-in-command of Coalition troops and brief the US Commander. I was also the spokesman for UK forces in Iraq. This was a busy tour, many attacks - even the Press information centre was attacked four times – the last killing a colleague I worked with on a daily basis and injuring many young American media reservists.

“Back in the UK, the focus in 2004 was to make sure my business was still alive and attend Staff College. On promotion I was posted to PJHQ J9 as the S01 Media Ops. A great job and within a couple of years I was again training and preparing for deployment with 16 Air

Assault Brigade who were heading for Helmand. The first UK troops to enter southern Afghanistan.



Above: Lieutenant Colonel David Reynolds, QVRM

“This was an amazing and mentally stimulating tour. Civil servants had decided they did not want journalists in Helmand and as a result we were in a news vacuum, never a good policy. Brigadier Ed Butler, one of the most balanced and sensible commanders I have worked for directed me to deliver robust justification to London for the news blackout to be lifted.

“As the weeks rolled by those weekends of media training at Winterbourne Gunner which had served me so well in Bagram and Baghdad served me again. I adopted a pro-active policy and every time we mounted an operation I released a story direct to the nationals. Surprise, surprise they used the information as any one in MOG (V) would expect. Civil servants in London were amazed!

“A week before the Nimrod crashed, London announced that they would allow media to go to Bastion but not into the field, it was too dangerous! With the loss of 14 crew and soldiers on the MR2, I advised the boss that we needed to get this out as quick as we could.

“ITN were in Kandahar and we grabbed Bill Neely briefed him and did the interviews. I then asked if he wanted to go to Sangin, which was then the hellhole of Helmand. I stressed that we needed a balanced report showing life in Sangin and while I knew he would report what he wanted, I felt confident that he would deliver a professional report.

“That night I told PJHQ what we planned. There was a nervous and cautious response. What if he gets shot or sees an injured soldier. I tried to argue my case that we needed to let the public see the truth in order to get their support. For me UK public consent in any operation is critical in ensuring that the strategic message we deliver has integrity.

“Word came to take him, but be gentle and be careful with him. The Chinook had hardly landed when it started to lift, literally seconds, to avoid an RPG attack. We ran off the back and made our way inside the mud walls of Sangin District Centre. Almost within seconds the first rounds started hitting the base. RPGs whizzed overhead and Neeley’s cameraman raced to the roof to get some footage.

“Neely followed clearly without any awareness of what damage the AK47 rounds could do. I pulled him to the floor and asked him politely

not to get up again. I have to say all he wanted was his microphone and staying on the deck he gave his report.

“We had agreed to let them send a live piece to London our aim being that after the deaths of 14 on the Nimrod we were showing the public exactly what British soldiers were doing in Helmand. PJHQ were delighted,

“But four hours later the main media man in Main Building, a civil servant, called to say that while they appreciated our aim it would have been ‘awfully useful to have been told that the attack was going to happen so that they could brief Ministers! Clearly their understanding of military operations was limited.

“In the News Year’s Honours of 2008 I was awarded the Queens Volunteer Reserve Medal for service to the TA and felt very proud. Then in 2008 I was asked to deploy with 16 AA Brigade back into Helmand City. It was to be yet another bloody tour with 32 soldiers killed in action and many more wounded. The first challenge for me was to talk to the media about each death in a respectful and different way – it is so easy to just say ‘we will always remember him’.

“The main effort for the brigade was the installation of a third turbine to the Kajaki hydro-electric dam. This was to be the most significant operation to deliver development and enable economic progress in South Afghanistan since British troops first arrived in Helmand in 2006. This was to be a considerable media challenge.

“Called Operation QOAB TSUKA, the mission, the intent was to transport a 100 tonne hydroelectric power turbine and its ancillary items to the Kajaki dam, where a third turbine was required to upgrade capacity in order to allow engineers to eventually generate 51 Kilowatts of power to Helmand and Kandahar. The dam had been built 30 years earlier with the funding and direction of USAID, but had fallen in to a poor state of repair during the Soviet occupation resulting in a limited output of power.

“Once delivered and connected, the fully operational hydroelectric dam would provide access to electricity for many families as well as

the opportunity to literally light up business in a boost for the economy. But first the convoy of 100 vehicles would need to drive across 112 miles of open terrain, much of open to influence from the Taliban.

“Media planning was intense. In July I called MoD and asked for a DA Notice to be issued in order to protect the operation from being compromised in the media. But of course this only had impact on UK media so any visiting European media and USA needed close attention to make sure they did not hear about the operation. London declined to support a request to get media out; the comment being the story would not be that big!

“In the end we pulled in a media pool of UK media based in Kabul. Briefing followed briefing and having persuaded the commander of just how important the Information plan would be to deliver the success of this mission, I was given a helicopter to insert the media to Kajaki. I flew forward, taking the media and Capt Whitehead, another MOG officer, carrying a series of satellite comms and systems with us.

“While the operation was mounted by Task Force Helmand (UK troops) it was controlled and directed by ISAF (NATO) in Kabul where the senior media ops organisation is based. The synchronisation of dropping the DA Notice in order to allow the world’s media to report the event had to be planned taking into account the difference in time zones.

“After weeks of planning the DA Notice was lifted, the CCT started to transmit footage and I spent the afternoon being interviewed by the media. The overall media coverage, as reported by a UK agency, was 42 million print and broadcast hits in the UK alone. The following day it was front-page news in almost every newspaper in the UK and a high percentage across Europe.

“2008 was a hard but very rewarding tour with the overwhelming media success of Kajaki an experience not to be forgotten.

“I am also a City Councilor in Plymouth and had arranged for all emails to be re-directed to me, which added to my busy day and once

the national media discovered this through a Conservative magazine, I ended up in the paper myself!

“Since joining the Media Operations Group, I have seen the demand for media staff officers soar. In one clear example of how today’s Regular Army regards reservists in the Group I recently received a call direct from MS in Glasgow asking me to deploy to Basrah as the S01 during the withdrawal. I simply could not do it in the timeframe required, but another MOG (V) officer could. A week later I was asked if I could deploy to Brussels to work in NATO for six months again in a media job, sadly I could not meet the immediate start line. However, both examples highlight just how today’s Regular Army regard the skills of MOG (V).

“Back in the UK my business is, despite the economic gloom, doing well and my next media operations project will be teaching at the Kuwait Staff College this summer.”

Major George Oliver looks back on a life of crime

Seventeen years as a top level police spokesman brings praise for TAPIO training

Taking pride in a criminal record is, undoubtedly, a sin in its own right. But, journalist, former TAPIO and club member, George Oliver looks back on an unusual life of crime - that has embraced international terrorism, more than 100 murders, countless rapes, robberies and a litany of unspeakable wrong-doing - with a measure of professional satisfaction.

His 17-years of involvement in many thousands of offences are drawing to a close as he plans to step into retirement this summer.

Says George: “The move will end a career in journalism spanning more 45 years and finally silence the man who has been the official voice of Durham Constabulary since 1992.

“On leaving school in 1963 I took up an appointment as an indentured trainee with a leading north-east news agency based in Durham City – at that time covering assignments for regional and national media in an area stretching from Berwick to Leeds.

“By the end of the 1960s I was regularly involved with BBC Radio Durham, an experimental venture that boasted former TAPIO Commanding Officer Colin Mason, Kate Adie and Mike Hollingsworth among its luminaries.

“ In 1971 I switched to regional newspapers and was heading a seven-strong team as the Sunderland Echo’s chief reporter in County Durham when, in the fall-out of media coverage of the Falklands War, I took an interest in proposals for a major expansion of the Territorial Army’s pool of information officers.

“In 1984, at the age of 38 and with no military experience to call on, it took a waiver from a brigadier in Whitehall to get me into the local light infantry battalion as a private. I remain convinced my transition from field reporter to police press and public relations manager was only possible because of my 18-month schooling as an infantryman and decade as a TAPIO

“During my time with the pool I learned an enormous amount from a very able and widely experienced group of media and military professionals. I will always be grateful to those who tolerated my early lack of understanding of all things military and helped me on what was a fast learning curve.”

During his years with the police George has provided daily specialist media advice to nearly 3,000 police officers and police staff at every level. A measure of the importance given by the force to media management is reflected in his seat on the force management group and calls at the very earliest opportunity from senior officers involved in major incidents or serious crimes.

During his stewardship with what remains a largely rural force, the annual number of media calls has risen to now top 200,000. His work has earned him an unsolicited chief constable’s commendation, a

regional media award and acknowledgements from the association of police public relations officers (APPRO) for the press office's work.



Above: George is pictured with one of the weapons issued to guards on the constituency home of the then Prime Minister Tony Blair.

The force's armourer developed and engineered a mounting system to accommodate a USA-made day and night sight for the weapon. The mount lifted the sight clear of the cocking lever and was christened "The Durham Mount" by the manufacturers who adopted it.

"Life is not a rehearsal and, while I have the health to enjoy it, I intend spending more time with my wife, son, daughter and three grandchildren. I will also be keeping up my life-long pursuit of the trout and salmon that flourish in the rivers and lakes in this part of the country.

"I am sure I will still find plenty to occupy my time. But I certainly do not expect to be as busy as I was when I was on a 24-hour call-out rota, helping the victims of crime deal with the media, coping with the insatiable demands of local, national and international journalists, as well as running the force newspaper."