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4 NOVEMBER 1995

# COLONEL BOB STEWART

"DIARY"

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Friday 28 August 1992

I decided to start writing a diary about what is happening when I was watching the news last night. John Major seems to have had a highly successful London Conference. At least all the participants have now agreed on 'principles' and the UN has confirmed that it wants about 6,000 troops; presumably about 1,800 of them being British. Last Friday we were selected as the Battalion to be placed on standby for the commitment.

Previous to the announcement that 1 CHESHIRE was the selected Battalion for possible deployment to The Balkans there had been many rumours. On Wed 19 Aug I telephoned Brig Tim Sullivan and we joked about the possibilities. He too thought the Cheshires were likely contenders; but nonetheless told me to continue with my leave plans.

Lizzie, the kids and I left for Berlin on Thu 20 Aug. We had booked into Edinburgh House a few months ago and it was good to be going back to Berlin after so many years. Both children were very excited. Whilst Lizzie had a snoop around her old haunts I took the children swimming in the Officers Club. There we met up with Andrew and Sandy Meek; he is now COS Berlin Garrison. In the evening we also saw Richard Sherriff who is MA/CINC BAOR. Richard was staying there as his boss was up in Berlin for the closure of the Berlin armoured squadron.

Our rooms were fine although Lizzie thought she had got a better deal when she had first come out here over 20 years ago. On the next morning we all went down to Berlin for the morning. We were trying to get some clothing for the kids - with mixed success. We had ended up in the PX - but that wasn't too good either. It was over lunch that I was summoned to the reception by an announcement.

Tim Park wanted me to ring him. Apparently he had been warned to stop B Coy, Sp Coy and the remainder of HQ Coy from going on leave. Those of us that were on leave were ordered to return to Fallingb. Despite my wish for Lizzie and the kids to stay in Berlin they insisted on coming back too. We reached Fallingb. in the car at 1800hrs.

That evening I had a Conference at 2100hrs. We discussed how we should tackle training. During the Conference a formal Warning Order arrived. We were placed on 7 days NTM and the whole UK Contingent would include 1 CHESHIRE, an armoured reconnaissance squadron, an engineer squadron and a large logistical tail. It was a classic warning order which stated that no firm decision was going to be made before the London Conference (Thu 27 Aug) at the earliest. The whole endeavour was to be dubbed OPERATION GRAPPLE.

From then on though we worked all hours we could to get things ready - starting right through the weekend. On Sun 23 Aug a meeting conference was held at HQ Inf in Sonnenlager. It was jointly chaired by Brig Colin Groves (Brig Inf) and Keith Shampton (22nd Armoured Div). Tim Park and I both attended having travelled there and back in a LYNX. At the Conference we were told that 2 BATTALIONS were to reinforce the Battalion at necessity.

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The whole world seemed to attend the Conference. It was agreed though that B Coy and Sp Coy would start a package of training on the evening of Tue 25 Aug. The package would consist of 2 days firing small arms followed by 2 days firing WARRIOR - which we had never yet fired. After that we envisaged a 36 hour FTX held at Company level and below. I expected to go on a recce at short notice and so Tim Park would have to run the training without me.

The Media interest flared and then went away in the few days after Mon 24 Aug. I was interviewed by The Sunday Times and then by Aidan Donovan of BFBS. After these brief forays I have been instructed to avoid the Press until a decision is made, but, having spoken to Col Simon Stocker (Chief PR at HQ BAOR) I accepted that a large Press Conference might have to be held after a final decision was made.

On the evening of Thu 27 Aug I went to Sennelager - just in time to attend some very good presentations on Yugoslavia, Health and the Law of Armed Conflict. Having spent the night there I was therefore present when 3 Senior Officers visited during Fri 28 Aug.

I was firing my GSTEs with WARRIOR on F Range when Lt Gen Jeremy MacKenzie arrived at about 1115hrs. It was rather nice to see him again. We talked and he stressed a few points to me. Firstly, he told me not to expect any sort of direction if I deployed. There would be no rigid control and I would have to work hard at everything. I ought to make up my own mind and then get on with things. Secondly, he told me that he thought I would probably come under command of Col Mark Cook, who was on the ground already. Jeremy MacKenzie thought he was 'OK' but not a particularly good commander. Thirdly, he thought I would be very well advised to train up a few snipers as the Canadians had shot about '12' with their own snipers. I was surprised by this fact as it had not been on the news; or at least I hadn't seen it. I agreed that perhaps we should keep that sort of thing quiet for the moment. Fourthly, Jeremy MacKenzie advised me to get as good a Rear Party as was possible - particularly on the welfare side. Finally we discussed where I might end up in the Balkans. Wherever it will be I was told it would be the main effort. We should expect a tour of 6 months. It would require adaptability and tact. Jeremy MacKenzie rather nicely said I had those in abundance - as well as strong nerves. On parting he told me to keep in touch and naturally wanted his ARRC to be used - an example of the 'new' NATO.

At 1415hrs I went back to the OP GRAPPLE Coordination Centre where I was due to meet Maj Gen Peter Shepherd, CDS HQ BAOR. He reminded me of Maj Gen James Gordon, currently CDS HQ UKLF. I was not too keen on him at all on first sight. Shepherd was aggrieved that he was mounting the operation and yet UKLF was in command. To the intense irritation of Brig Colin Groves who was present he raised questions about whether the Cheshires and R 181SH would be able to get on with one another. I fully supported Colin Groves and said that both COs were fully in agreement on how things should be done. There was no conflict at all. Shepherd suggested that on the recce it would probably be me who would have to recommend what Force composition was required. I must be totally honest about that. Most certainly no more than 1622 personnel would be allowed. We also discussed Chobham Armour. I said there could be no doubts

there about the need for it. Shepherd agreed to pass my views on. Incidentally this is where I slightly differ from Colin Groves. He is not at all convinced of the need for it. Shepherd discussed move dates too. He stressed how important he felt it was to establish a 'No Move Before' time. I mentioned that B Coy, Sp Coy and a lot of people in HQ Coy had no leave and he agreed how important it was that they got something. Shepherd left telling me to contact him direct outside the chain of command if I felt like doing so.

As Shepherd left Maj Gen Iain MacKay-Dick arrived. He seemed a very good sort; easy to talk to and relaxed. I told him I had two immediate aims. First I wanted to be able to shoot accurately with both small arms and WARRIOR as well as get my vehicles up to scratch. Second I wanted to take some leave - especially for those who have not had much. I thanked him for all the help his staff had given us. After that I drove into the NATO Mess and had a bath. During the evening I had dinner with A K Miller, new CO 1 A & SH, who was providing all our range teams.

The equipment state is pretty bad at the moment. Twenty-six out of 45 WARRIORS are off the road and 13 out of 46 FV 430 are down. Six out of 8 SCIMITARS don't work and half the landrovers are VOR.

I have organized the Battalion's ORBAT so that each company will have at least one major and two captains. This would at least give me that option to change things around without too much impact if I wanted to do so. Each company is also to have a subaltern watchkeeper - from 2 R IRISH?

Saturday 29 August

Reveille was at 0530hrs when I was unceremoniously awoken by a soldier. I found it impossible to sleep anymore anyway and so got up. Having washed and shaved I drove from Inverleith Barracks to the NATO Mess and watched TV News. There was nothing new.

During the morning I visited as many ranges as I could and also fired SCIMITAR with the Recce Pl. I wasn't much impressed by SCIMITAR. WARRIOR has everything on SCIMITAR except size, and stealth. I wonder if SCIMITAR is worth taking?

During the day I also met up with Phil Gosling who is commanding 10 Regt RCT. We discussed the subject of women because I was concerned that so many seemed to be coming in his RCT Squadron. He said they would do the job and it would not matter. He's probably right.

Very sadly a soldier, Pte Kelly, died at lunchtime. He had a serious medical problem which has meant he was on light duties. Kelly just keeled over and died - tragic. CSgt Randall gave him EAR but to no avail. As a result I stayed longer than I expected in Sennelager.

It will take us a week to get our vehicles up to scratch, another week to fit Chobham Armour and yet another week to paint them. That together with a possible 3 week sea move could mean that we will not be in The Balkans before, at the earliest, 10 Oct. That is of

course if the decision is taken.

Monday 31 August

Andrew MacDonald had moved into my room - as I had expected to have returned to Fallingbowl - and so I spent the night in 9 Pl lines. Some poor unfortunate soldier probably spent all night in the bunk bed above me trying very hard not to move in case he disturbed the CO. In fact I didn't sleep too well and was got up at 0530hrs' reveille. Perhaps it wasn't quite such a good idea after all.

I had expected simply to spend the night in Sennelager and then travel back to Fallingbowl as soon as Mick Dimblott turned up with my 'In' Tray. In the event he didn't get back early enough and I set off back home at 0745hrs.

On arrival there I reported in to Lizzie. She was not too happy about my delayed arrival home. I suppose I had stayed out of some sense of 'proper' behaviour after Kelly's death but I wonder if that was necessary - probably not.

I had a quick cup of coffee before going into Bn HQ and by that time I was not really in the best of moods. In a short time Tim Park, Simon Ellis and the RSM all received a backlash about their seeming lack of support over the Kelly incident. To be fair I was probably far too unkind to them.

I wrote a fairly detailed appreciation between 1630 - 0130hrs. Basically I wanted to assess when I could move, when I should move and what training I could achieve in the time available. On a short warning scenario I thought that the earliest we could be in The Balkans would be about 5 Oct but in real time it would have to be much closer to 15 - 16 Oct. Naturally I also included a brief period of pre-tour leave in my appreciation.

On the morning of 31 Aug I discussed the situation with Brig Tim Sullivan and Brig Colin Groves. Now I feel that we will probably still go but it will be much later than was at first thought a possibility.

Later in the day the RSM and I went down to Range 3 at Hohne to visit B Sqn 9/12L firing with their SCIMITARS. James Short (CO 9/12L) and Alan Abramam (CO B Sqn) were both there. We discussed how B Sqn could be used on the FTX later in the week and agreed how we should do it.

After lunch BEME, Joe Ulyat, came into my office to discuss critical timings. He agreed with the time appreciation as shown in my planning.

Wednesday 1 September

My highest priority yesterday was to get Alexander back back to school safely. Lizzie took the children to the Wives Cafe and I joined them for lunch. After that together with Ron Stevens I drove Alexander to Hannover Airport to catch the Island Britannia flight to London. The RSM and I thereafter drove on to Sennelager.

By 1600hrs we had arrived and I was able to discuss my concept for a possible Brigade and Battle Group Trainer Exercise with Colin Groves. In short I want a 1 CHESHIRE Operational Area established within which we would practise convoys, protection/security patrols and disaster relief. The Base would have to be sustained along an MSR where the National Support Element would be located. I want a 2 day exercise to which all officers above the rank of captain would attend.

AITAT laid on a series of lectures in the evening which I attended. These included presentations on the Media, convoy drills, proxy/mortar bomb drills, cordons and driving. We also received orders for the FTX which started today. Arriving late back at the Officers Mess I found a P-INFO officer with no room. Tim Park was in the same state and so both of them slept in my room in The NATO Mess.

This morning I observed a whole series of practical stands in Tin City. I thought that they were particularly relevant to the situation despite the fact that they obviously came from NI training. We have nothing else to go on at this stage. The Convoy Exercise itself started at 1130hrs. The Company level FTX has been much shortened to become only about 7 hours long. To be honest I wasn't sure what else people would get out of it. A and C Companies were the first two companies to go through the Exercise and they did so with no problems at all.

At 1530hrs I went to Brig Colin Groves' Office to meet up with Ian Talbot (COS 1 Arm Div) and Brig Inf himself. We considered Follow-on Training and (luckily) I was able to pull out my Appreciation which helped me get what I wanted - not that they didn't want to give me exactly that! I think Colin Groves is being a little 'heavy' at the moment - but that is probably for other reasons (he wants to get his Training Support Organisation properly set up). My Appreciation gave the best possible windows for Follow-up Training and so we provisionally sketched out the details at those times.

I have just heard that NATO has offered 6,000 troops to the UN. (presume we are likely to be the UK's contribution. Jeremy MacKenzie had mentioned to me the any Two Star Headquarters would include Maj Gen Dennison-Smith (maybe). There is a growing feeling that the delay in making final decisions on deployment is because CE arrangements need to be organized.

I spoke to all OP GRAPPLE personnel who were attending training last night in Sennelager's Lecture Hall. I stressed that there was no decision yet, but there would likely be a 31 day programme to get us into Theatre beyond any decision. We would have to get our shooting and vehicles in good order as priorities. After that we could go on leave. In particular I warned everyone that they must be prepared to do all jobs. Above everything else I wanted everyone's personal weapon to be totally accurate.

Saturday 5 September

Thursday was in large part a repeat performance of the day before with B Coy and B Sqn 9/12L going through the package instead of A and C Coys. Additionally The Daily Telegraph had increased anticipation by publishing an article by Peter Armand predicting that up-armouring would happen shortly and that we would deploy quite quickly thereafter.

For my part I completed a TV interview with Peter Waters (SO 2 P INFO 3 Arm'd Div) so that the Army would have something to give the Press once a decision was announced. I flew back from Sennelager shortly after the TV interview. Yesterday I spent most of my time in the office. James Miles (SO 2 P INFO 1 Arm'd Div) visited and we discussed how I might play the Media. It was obvious that I would need to have a Press Facility very soon after it was announced that we were going to deploy.

Monday 7 September

Although we were all working on Sunday 6 September Lizzie, Caroline and I had lunch in the Officers Mess. After that I went home and spent the rest of the day and evening 'revisiting' my appreciation. The earliest I reckon we can deploy would be at the end of the month with a full deployment in Bosnia not before 5 October.

Every morning now we have a session of 'prayers' which reviews what we have achieved and how we should proceed. After that this morning Ian Talbot rang me to say that a Cabinet Meeting on Thursday 10 September might result in a decision to deploy. I have now been to the QMs Stores and sorted out my kit; result was a new sleeping bag and helmet!

Wednesday 9 September

Despite initial problems with the delivery of bolts the fitting of Chobham Armour is now proceeding at a very good pace. By last night the whole of A Coy was complete. But all this is at a price. Many soldiers are getting very little sleep; that's not the case with me. I make sure I get all I need.

Although we have been told to up-armour our vehicles there are still no clear orders on their painting. Now I have been told to paint one vehicle of each type - just to see how it goes.

Last night 2 French soldiers were killed on Sarajevo Airport. It seems their convoy had been mortared and machine-gunned. There are some fears that this will have considerable impact on the British decision to send us. We shall see.

Over the last 2 days Major Tony Baines RM has been conducting 10 to review technique training. Both Lizzie and I went through the drill. Lizzie was very good and I'm quite proud of her - she's a natural at it despite being very nervous. There is still no final decision although my Notice to Recce has been reduced to 24 hours.

Sunday 13 September

From Wednesday we have had a series of 'scares' that we were 'off'. These have mainly been started by P INFO. James Myles told me that an announcement was due of Thursday at 1830hrs and then on Friday at 2200hrs. The latest rumour is that the Security Council will decide tomorrow but who can tell now. We have had so many false starts.

Now the vehicles are all operationally fit and up-armoured. The up-armouring was achieved in 4 days which I think is amazing considering the work required. A soldier on the tank park told me that Chobham Armour's secret was simply a stuffing of NAAFI pork pies! That may well help me answer a difficult Press question!

Major General Iain MacKay-Dick visited us on 11 September. It was a very good visit. He talked to me in my office, spent a long time talking to soldiers on the tank park and then had tea in the Officers Mess.

We are still working 7 days a week although the tempo has toned down a little. I tend to come home at 1900hrs. Using my computer at home I have now completed so much work it has almost paid for itself in gained time.

At 1545hrs today CGS visited us. General Sir Peter Inge landed in a LYNX on the playing fields in front of the Officers Mess. Jeremy MacKenzie came with him. In my office I briefed both senior officers on what my aims were and when I thought we could be ready. CGS said he had heard I was being most positive. We discussed the winterisation of WARRIOR and ROE. CGS was anxious to ensure that ROE should allow us to engage 'aggressors' who would not let us carry out our duties. Only the Canadians really knew what they were doing in Bosnia at the moment, he said. A Two Star HQ was needed and a Frenchman was likely to command it.

We toured the tank park between 1610 and 1700hrs. The soldiers spoke up well and obviously left a very good impression. Later in the Officers Mess CGS talked to the officers and warrant officers over tea. He said he had been shocked by the devastation in Bosnia when he had visited. The hatred between opposing factions was almost impossible to believe. He wanted us to go to Banja Luka, but nothing was fixed yet. Battalions in UNPROFOR were a very mixed bunch; only the Canadians drew top marks from him. CGS suggested a decision was likely tomorrow. Inge stated he wanted us to go to Bosnia and restore the prestige of UN Forces.

The visit was a success as far as I was concerned. It lifted morale. Inge has told me that the Prime Minister was determined on the operation - provided it was well organized - which it would be. After CGS had gone I too spoke to the officers. I warned them that I was still not convinced that the decision would be announced tomorrow and we should all wait until it was made properly before we got too excited. However it was now clear for us to take leave from after duty on Friday 18 - first parade Monday 23 September - provided of course that I was fully satisfied that we were up to speed!

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Tuesday 15 September

Together with RSM Stevens I travelled down to Sennelager again on yesterday morning. I spoke to Simon Edwards and Lawrence Jones about the BBGT Scenario. Time was very short as I had to get to CGS's formal talk in Bielefeld. It was quite disappointing.

Still no decision. But at 2030hrs I was telephoned at home by Brigadier Tim Glass (DPR(A)). We discussed a Press Facility and agreed it might be at 1400hrs on Wednesday 16 September as an announcement would be made within the hour. It didn't come before I went to bed but was all over the news when I got up this morning.

'Prayers' took on greater importance that morning and it showed; people were very much more attentive. I also took myself off to the ranges and fired my WARRIOR. It didn't seem very accurate but WO 2 Lawson said it was; commander 'finger trouble' perhaps!

Friday 18 September

I travelled down to BBGT on my own in the staff car and arrived at 2200hrs on Tuesday. By mistake I missed the Paderborn turnoff and travelled on to Gutersloh. Immediately on arrival I went straight to my room and prepared a lecture for the Study Day. I went to sleep at about 0100hrs.

At 0900hrs on Wednesday we assembled in BBGT's main lecture hall and Malcolm Wood (CO 5 Ord Bn) and I introduced ourselves to everyone present. Thereafter we had a series of presentations on GB, UN Forces in Bosnia, 1 CHESHIRE ORBAT, 5 Ord Bn ORBAT, The Logistic Concept of Operations and finally my own Concept of Operations. That took until 1230hrs when Malcolm Wood, Alan Abraham (CO 8 Sqn 9/12L) and WO 2 Cussack (2 R IRISH) and I jumped into a helicopter bound for Fallingb.

John Ellis, Bn P INFO Officer met us. Additionally DPR (A) was there with Nigel Gillies (UKLF P INFO). Whilst we were talking in the Mess Jeremy MacKenzie arrived. This was the 'Press Facility' and I was the Front Man. As we went in towards the MT Area I felt like a boxer being led into the ring! A vast swarm of Press were there and James Myles positioned me in front of them. I was tested for sound and then launched into a statement - which I did without notes. Having welcomed the Press to Fallingb. I explained that we had been on standby since 21 August and it was now clear that we were to go. By Friday we would be fully operational and then the soldiers could go on a week's leave. Finally I ended by stating that exactly what our tasks, locations and ROE were had yet to be decided. That was followed by a lot of questions. Jeremy MacKenzie and Brigadier Tim Glass congratulated me on the way I had handled it all. I took another 7 telephone radio interviews in my office from North West stations. These were not quite so good!

We flew back to Sennelager at 1700hrs and I aborted the Exercise early because I didn't think it particularly worthwhile to continue. That evening the Cheshire Officers paid for drinks all night and the Tippers Cup was deployed; I went to bed at 0130hrs which left me feeling bad in the morning. Nonetheless I was in the Factory by 0700hrs which was more than the company commanders were! I

promoted Bob Ryan to Captain during the exercise after he had used mortars to get out of a sticky situation. Again I ended BSGT a little early because we had had enough out of it. Having travelled back to Fallingbowl in the car with Martin Forgrave, John Ellis and John Donnelly, I arrived home at 1930hrs.

Today I inspected every company stood to its vehicles. It's strange but some of the soldiers are complaining of snow blindness from the whiteness of their vehicles. Tim Sullivan arrived and helped me inspect HQ Coy.

DMD is now in Bosnia and apparently returns tomorrow night. Both Malcolm Wood and I have been told to report to Main Building on Sunday for briefing by DMD and his team. It seems we may be going to Bosnia on Tuesday.

Saturday 19 September

Lizzie had tea and toast in bed this morning. We had lunch in The Rathaus in Hannover. By 1550hrs I was driving with Pte Bagley to catch the Lufthansa Flight 4106 to London at 1720hrs. James Percival met me and we drove to his flat in Putney. I stayed the night with the Percivals.

Sunday 20 September

By 1000hrs I was in Historic Room 27 having been driven into Town by James Percival. It took a while for everyone to assemble as there was a previous meeting of the Current Operations Group but by 1100hrs ACGS (Major General Wheeler), Major General Rupert Smith, Major General Field (DGLP (A)) and Brigadier Jenkins (DMD) had arrived.

ACGS stated that a Two Star HQ was now authorized and Major General Philip Morillon would command it. Brigadier Roddy ndy-Simpson was to be the Chief of Staff. HQ COMBRITCON was to be upgunned to One Star or failing that to remain at full Colonel level. Our operational area was to be Tuzla. The French were to have Gihac and the Canadians to have Banja Luka. An FST was to join the British Contingent. At the end of this Rupert Smith passed me a note. It said 'Bob, This looks like a crock of shit. Best of luck. Rupert.'

After that the Logistics Officers went off to talk loggie matters and DMD took over. He tried to explain UNHCR operations and the Force Structure in more detail. Things were obviously pretty busy - particularly about what we should do on the recce. It seemed we were required to take two landrovers from Zagreb and negotiate our way to Tuzla through the Serbian lines.

I spent most of the afternoon reading through documents and discussing matters with Brigadier Miles Frosty (DCOS GS HQ UKLF) as well as a series of colonels including Austin Thorp (Col HQ 3). We decided that we had little choice but to tackle the problem from the north east. We hope to find our way through to Tuzla and then to Gihac. Thereafter we would fit an operational plan around that.

Returned to Putney on the underground. James Percival's son

Justin was there. Together we went round to see Keith and May Prosser in Clarendon Drive. James Percival was amazed by the lack of direction I seemed to be getting in preparation for a vital recce.

Monday 21 September

James and Justin Percival were decent enough to get up and see me off at 0730hrs when I left for the 20 minute walk to East Putney Underground Station. I took a train directly into Westminster on the District Line. By 0915hrs I was in DMO's Office. Miles Frisby, Roy Lennox, Major General Field, and (newly summoned from Germany) John Field (CO 35 Engr Regt) were there too.

DMO gave us the gist of his notes. He told us that UN Military Observers would guide us in-country. In the middle of this briefing Colonel Mark Look rang and I spoke to him; it seemed that I was the 'lead man on the recce'. General Morillon had told DMO that we must not think in terms of controlling ground but were to find ourselves a base in Bosnia-Herzegovina - not anywhere else. The United States has offered Strategic Airlift help. As for the French they did not want US Officers in the Two Star Headquarters. Medical support was available on the USS IWO JIMA should we want it. Apparently SYKORSKY helicopters could pick us up if necessary.

The Two Star Headquarters was to be established by 14 October. This seemed highly unlikely as the shelling in Sarajevo had only stopped for 10 minutes out of 24 hours last Saturday. So far 8 UN soldiers had been killed in Bosnia - only one not on active service. The Director of the Town of Tuzla had stated that his airport was still open. Ethnic cleansing was still going on hard in our area. DMO suggested that SCIMITAR could check routes and WARRIORS escort convoys. I made no comment on that. The meeting ended at 1100hrs.

It was very good of QMG's Empire to arrange a hire car for me and so I drove out to Windsor and visited Alison at work in her Adult Education Centre. She was delighted to see me and cried when I left. I also travelled on to see Dolina in Gerrards Cross before going back to London and the Percivals (via Tony Twiss in his office). I did not want to go back to the Percivals too early.

That evening I tried a little bit of Mission Analysis (without a Mission?). My tasks seemed to be:

- Securing bases and LOCs to the NSE
- Being located near to UNHCR at Tuzla/Dobro
- Protecting UNHCR facilities
- Protecting convoys
- Providing LOs
- Surviving the Winter

I had already cleared what I thought to be the Recce aim with DMO: to find suitable bases in or near Tuzla/Dobro from which to carry out operations in support of UNHCR. My supplementary aim was to work out a concept. The bases should ideally be out of range from shellfire, in existing accommodation, well connected to LOCs and in a good position to help with UNHCR operations.

There seemed to be 3 options:

Option 1: Based around Tuzla/Dobrooj with NSG in Serbia.

Option 2: Based in Serbia near the BiH Border.

Option 3: Staggered/Compromise Option.

I agreed with Colonel Mark Cook that we would approach BiH from the North East (Loznica). We would then try for Tuzla before going on to Dobrooj.

Friday 25 September

It was very early (0450hrs) when I left James Percival's house in the rented car. James gave me a cup of tea and wished me luck before I went. I delivered the car back to Hertz; simultaneously arriving with Roy Lennox and Malcolm Wood. We took the Hertz bus into Terminal 2 together. Lufthansa took us to Frankfurt and there we had a 2 hour wait before travelling on with Air Croatia to Zagreb. There were Canadian UN troops on the aircraft in uniform.

Colonel Mark Cook was at Zagreb Airport to meet us. Pleso Camp was right beside the Airport and it took us 2 minutes to get there in a minibus. In the so-called Conference Room in the British Medical Battalion's Barracks we next had a series of briefings. Major Jonathon Riley RWF (Ops Offr European Community Monitoring Mission) started. It seems that the Bosnian Serbs (YDF) have about 70,000 troops deployed in BiH. The land link between Serbia proper and their forces in the West of BiH is of the greatest strategic importance. The Croatian Defence Council (HVO) is weaker with about 45 - 50,000 troops. The HVO are trying to close this strategic corridor. Finally the Bosnian Territorial Defence Force (YDF) consists of about 50,000 South Slav Muslims which are now being reinforced by Mujhaddin from Islamic Fundamentalist countries. Lieutenant Colonel Colm Doyle, Head of the European Mission to BiH, spoke next. He is an Irish Army Regular Officer and had been Lord Carrington's Special Envoy until recently. He said most people in BiH are really good at twisting the truth. All parties are quite prepared to attack their own people and blame it on someone else. He said it was the YDF who killed two French soldiers recently and destroyed the Italian Aircraft as it was en route for Sarajevo. He felt it was high time the UN did something positive. Enough was enough. He was thinking in terms of enforcement action. The Serbs have broadly got what they want. 'I never knew how much they could lie', he said. 'People are not killed here they are slaughtered'. Finally he told us that the Serbs will not allow themselves to be in the minority anywhere; they want the lot. Gilbert Greenall, from the Ministry of Overseas Development also talked. His job was to assess how much aid was required and quite obviously he was very widely travelled in BiH. In conversation I heard that the Kenyan UN Battalion had placed 120,000 pounds in a local bank but it had disappeared before they went back to collect money for Pay Day.

Later Mark Cook took us on a tour of Camp, we had drinks in the Officers Mess and then Patrick Russell turned up. He is working with the SCMM. Although it was entirely my fault I woke up with a

blinding headache the next morning; I'm sure Patrick was the catalyst though!

It was a very early start on Wednesday 23 September. We took some land cruisers down the 'motorway without motors' towards Belgrade. Here we had our first sight of the United Nations Protection Areas and the Battalions that man the checkpoints - Russian, Nepalese and Jordanian. We drove on to Sabac and then through to Loznica. We had started at 0600hrs and arrived in Loznica at about 1430hrs.

In Loznica we found our way to the International Committee of The Red Cross (ICRC) Building which was a one storied construction up a fairly narrow street - a long way from Geneva! There we met Lars Skanaar (Logistics Officer from UNHCR Belgrade) and Lyddel Sachs (Field Officer UNHCR for East Bosnia). After a little bit of discussion we went to look at the UNHCR warehouse. We also learnt that Yugoslavia (i.e. Serbia) had been expelled from the UN. We managed to fix up an interview with the President of Loznica City Council and we put our requests for accommodation to him. He thought he could do something. Whilst we were in the City Council Meeting Room the BBC burst in on us; we told them to get out! By 1600hrs we were driving South to try and see how far we might get towards Tuzla. We managed to negotiate our way across the bridge at Zvornik but were stopped after about 4kms. Our vehicles were searched - the UN Military Observers with us saying this was normal - and then we were escorted towards Bjelina. But we could not get too close to the Town and were stopped again at a barricade for 2 hours from 1730-1930hrs. Whilst there we cooked our supper. Miles Frisby eventually could stand it no more and we turned around and went back. Re-entering Serbia we soon found a hotel - squalid, despite its former glory. It seemed to be a sanatorium alternatively filled with legless wounded soldiers and refugees. Large numbers of people were just hanging around and the place was foul. Malcolm Wood and I occupied Room 504. We had supper in a large 'ballroom' where a revoltingly loud group banged out such a volume of noise that it even hurt my ears! The place was awful.

Thursday 24 September

We tried again for Tuzla today - approaching from the Zvornik Bridge entry point. There we met a Military Policeman called Splicu who carried a Kaloshnikov with 3 magazines strapped together on his weapon. He helped us after a while and by patient, slow progress we got as far as Sedovici. During our travels we saw considerable evidence of fighting and at one point which the Serbs called 'Black Mountain' we had to join a convoy of lorries. We were escorted through by an OA Gun mounted on the top of a light truck - a very strange contraption.

By chance we met a French Convoy coming out of Sarajevo. The French were escorting 37 vehicles and were using Eutetracs (Qualcom Corporation) to communicate and identify their positions. The system looked ideal for our use and I made a note of it for action later. We were not allowed to go further than Tisca because of the fighting and so we turned around there. Lunch we had beside a river on the way back. The country was magnificent and looked like the Alps in parts. By 1630hrs we were back at the ICRC Building where

we re-joined the Admin Party and toured around looking at their suggested solutions for accommodation. They seemed Ok for a start.

We had passed a message at the Bosnian Serb checkpoint on the Zvornik Bridge that we would be delighted if senior officers joined us for drinks that evening. I wrote the invitation out on a Cheshire headed piece of paper. It worked. At 1850hrs a group of officers appeared. The most influential of these seemed to be a man called Milan Milosevic. Apparently he is a staff officer in the Zvornik Headquarters. He told me that if I wanted to go anywhere I had but to contact him. I promised I would do that when I returned - and within 24 hours. Miles Frisby ordered omelettes for us all and we ate them with the Bosnian Serbs. It was a fairly interesting meeting - slightly strained but workable. We went to bed at 2330hrs in our exceedingly grotty hotel bedroom.

Friday 25 September

We had decided to split up today. For my part I wanted to go and see Michel Jones (CD Vingt Doux) who was based in Daravar. Neil Wright, Nick Stansfield, Peter Telford (Signals Squadron Comd) and Sean the doctor travelled along the route with us. Rather decently Michel had arranged to move himself to the Bn HQ of the Nepalese to meet me there as it would save me a lot of time. We left Telford, and Sean along the route; they were returning to Zagreb and we all parted at the Russian Battalion's Checkpoint where we refuelled.

Michel turned up at 1100hrs. He was a typical Canadian but knew his business alright. In his briefing he advised me that in dealing with the Serbs you have to start at the highest levels and then work down. He thought a base at Bjelina would be possible. He felt we might be able to get to Tuzla but not Doboj. Move slowly he advised - and consolidate. You will also need at least 15 interpreters within the Battalion. Get National Intelligence. Personally he has had to blackmail Muslims as well as feed them. I thought it might make sense to get my LOs to the Canadians for training. Michel advised that I should trust nobody - not even the UN. On the matter of armoured vehicles he stated: 'Noise impresses, size impresses, numbers impress. I want more of everything. The French APCs are better than mine but they are not as noisy/impressive.' Finally he suggested that if we cross an obstacle and have to clear it then we should close it down again afterwards. Having talked to Michel he suggested I tried talking to the Banja Luka Corps Commander. And so that is what we decided to try and do.

Neil Wright (representing UNHCR despite being an RCT Lieutenant Colonel), Nick Stansfield and I left the Nepalese Bn HQ at about 1200hrs. We drove South across the River Sava to Prijedor and then turned East towards Banja Luka. Some barriers tried to stop us but we were determined and eventually got through.

In Banja Luka we saw Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance - but that was simply in the distance. We didn't want to get too involved. In the headquarters we were very well entertained by Major Jordan Pavlovic who was a Logistics Staff Officer. We watched the negotiations being carried out by Owen and Vance across a courtyard whilst we were drinking with Pavlovic. When these negotiations

broke up Pavlovic fetched Colonel (Pukovik) Mulin Vukelic, Deputy Commandant of the 1st Corps. He seemed courteous enough and listened intently to what we had to say. Both I and Neil Wright explained out respective missions. I also asked for his help to secure accommodation for my Battalion. We seemed to get on well. Vukelic told me that Colonel Novica Simic was the Commandant of The 2nd Corps in Rijeka and that I should contact him about what I wanted. He suggested that there should not be too much of a problem. We parted 'good friends' and he seemed 'on side'.

After that we travelled back to Pleso Camp in Zagreb. We had one small problem at the Bridge over the River Sava - but that was all. On arrival back I broke into the Conference Room to discover Sir Marshal here (DCDS (C)) deep in conversations with the Senior Officers. After a while it became apparent to me that things were moving in a new direction. The plan has changed. We are now to recce a route in from Split and go to a place called Vitez - which is where a UNHCR Office is based. After all we have done - the majority of it is wasted effort.

General Morillon, having been briefed on our lack of progress in Eastern BiH, has decided to try a different tack. Now we were to be retasked to make a plan in Central BiH from the South through Split. The Loznica Option is still a possibility but it looks unlikely. Personally I think we had made considerable progress and it would have worked. I guess now we may never know. Brigadier David Jenkins (DMO), who had been liaising with HQ UNPROFOR, was having to go back to UK because of a large bomb in NI but we are to stay on and do another feasibility study for Vitez.

We were booked into the International Hotel - a palace but indecent for this place - overnight. I telephoned Lizzie and informed her of the change of plan. Under the circumstances she was pretty decent about it all.

Saturday 26 September

Jeremy Bowen of BBC TV caught Malcolm Wood and I as we had breakfast. I told him that we were not in a position to speak really but under background brief rules told him much of what was going on. It cost me \$92 with AMEX for the night before we boarded a minibus to take us back to Pleso Camp.

Whilst waiting to fly to Split in The Conference Room we met Sir Fitzroy and Lady Maclean. Mark Cook had invited them to present UN Medals to the Royal Engineers. He seemed frail but she didn't.

We loaded 3 landrovers into a C-130 at about 1200hrs and flew from Zagreb to Split. I sat beside Roy Lennox on the journey. On arrival we had to wait for about 90 minutes until Major Kent Carswell (Royal Canadian Dragoons) arrived. Kent had had very little time to prepare for our arrival and had been off in Split trying to get us some hotel rooms. He was to be our UNMO for the trip. We travelled to a hotel about 30 minutes from Split called Medena Apartments. The Apartments were on the side of a hill with a normally superb view of the sea. But the whole place was ruined by the atmosphere; it was full of poor unfortunate refugees.

Immediately after arriving Miles Frisby, David Glyn-Owen and I went with Kent Carswell to the Hotel Split. There we saw the ECLMM office and met Geoff Beaumont. After that we went along to the Croatian Liaison Office in the Hotel. Two men manned this. The leader was Tomislav Vidosevic and his assistant was Zdeslav Perkovic (known as Elvis). They were charming and terribly anxious to please. They spent the next few hours trying to make arrangements for us to get into BiH. Miles Frisby got unnecessarily irritated with them. We returned to the Medena Apartments late, and I was sharing an apartment with Malcolm Wood again.

Sunday 27 September

It was good to know that the clocks were going back last night as it gave us all an extra hour in bed. We were at the International Hotel by 1030hrs where we had a quick word with Tomislav. He had arranged passage for us to Tomislavgrad. A police car took us to the Border at Kamensko and then, after a while, an escort arrived to take us in to Tomislavgrad.

Naturally we were being escorted by the HVO. The Air Raid Siren was going when we arrived at what looked like an old Police Station. The HVO said that the siren was in fact a warning of artillery attack - maybe, maybe not! The Brigade Commander in Tomislavgrad was a man called Siljeg. He was not there. Instead we met his Deputy who was an ex-PPCLI soldier called Nicholas Glasnovic. Recently he stated he had been wounded by a 7.9mm(?) in the leg and another through the back and out through the chest. He said he had been shot whilst attacking a house. We also met a mercenary from Glasgow at the Headquarters.

Glasnovic promised to help if he could. He arranged for an escort all the way to Vitez having told us that the Front Line was about 15 kms away. He was a Croatian by birth and explained how much his people were glued to their land. 'Chetniks' he said 'often cut off the leg of a pig to allow its screams to upset people.' I wonder if it's just Chetniks? He also told us that we were in such a barren part of BiH that some people didn't even realise that Tito was dead.

We had no idea of how difficult the route over the mountains might be. However John Field said that it was workable with effort. Arriving in Vitez we narrowly missed driving over some mines at a roadblock which was heart-stopping. Hotel Vitez where we are staying is much better than I thought it could be; except that it is HVO Headquarters!

After supper Neil Wright introduced us to Anders Levinson of the local UNHCR Office. He offended Miles Frisby by totally misinterpreting our mission. Miles left and a fairly lively debate then took place. Again I shared my room with Malcolm Wood. During the night there were many explosions and much firing.

Monday 28 September

Our plan is starting to firm up. We are thinking that it might be possible to position 3 companies in the Vitez area and have one at the 'back door' in Prozor's vicinity. WARRIOR would only be used



for delivery to the very front lines; it would not be used over the mountains. The route would obviously have to be a major Sapper problem.

In the morning Anders took us to the Travnik Refugee Centre where about 2-3,000 refugees were living. The conditions in the Refugee Centre (a High School) were bad but could have been worse. However the 3 lavatories could not have been much worse; they were overflowing.

We also met a couple of Danish Mercenaries in Travnik. They worked simply for the love of the job and received no money. Both had high powered sniper rifles which they said could 'kill' at 1500m!

Miles wanted to get up to the Maglaj area and so we travelled to Zenica. There we heard that we might get as far as Maglaj, but that was the Front. A police escort took us North. We saw the village of Zelece on fire and then went into the town of Zepce. Again we did not meet the Commander but his Deputy was there; Bozimar Tomic. Once more air raid sirens greeted our arrival. Tomic told us that Zelece had been set on fire by 'Chetniks' using artillery from the surrounding hills. We didn't believe him. Miles decided it was a little too dangerous to go on to Maglaj. Tomic had stated that the Town was being fired at now and he felt it would be lost soon.

On our return to Vitez we looked at a local school which might form the nucleus of a Battalion Base. Over supper we revisited the plan again and discussed it in considerable detail. The biggest bone of contention was where COMBRITCON would be sited. Apparently only one COMCEN from the Dutch was on offer and therefore wherever that was would be the interface between the Battalion and HQ BHC.

Tuesday 29 September

We left for Tuzla at 0800hrs. It took us ages to negotiate the mountain roads and we went there via Danovici. At one stage we loaned our Flak Jackets and Helmets because a local checkpoint told us there was sniping up ahead. We heard it but went on in any case. After a seemingly unending drive we reached Tuzla at 1415hrs.

Lukic St Jeko was the local President for Refugees. He was accompanied by a trainee doctor called Nikita Tulic who was interpreting. After Miles Frisby had been to see the town's President we all split up. Frisby went to see refugees whilst John Field and I travelled to look at the airfield and accommodation upon it. The airbase was ex-JNA and had enough shelter for 3,000 people; a bit primitive but basically it could be made to work. They pushed us very hard to open up the Tuzla Airfield. We replied that we could not.

Our journey home was equally long as that going to Tuzla. We managed to get as far as Kladanj before we were forced off the main road into the mountains. After what seemed like ages we made it to Vares. From there we went south to Breza where we were forced to go cross-country again using a track. Along this track we were told to put out our lights. It was Norman's Land. After a while we were not sure where we were and so our guide went back to ask in his

vehicle. We got out of our own vehicles and watched Sarajevo being bombed in the night sky!

Malcolm Wood had spent the day in Zenica receiving alternative bases. Whilst there he had twice come under attack from MIG fighters making strikes on the town. Cpl Burns the medic saved the life of an old man whose heart had stopped.

Wednesday 30 September

There was a firefight outside our Hotel during the night. Someone had tried to loot the UNHCR trucks out there and the local HVO guard had opened fire. On top of that there was no water when we got up. Malcolm used my electric razor as our razor as he called it! By 0830hrs we were en route to Split via the Mostar road. We had neither interpreter nor escort and this worked rather well. Having travelled to Kiseljak we took the mountain road through to Tarcin. But there we were held up by an HVO roadblock which cost us about an hour as we were made to go to the local Military Police Headquarters.

The road to Mostar was an excellent one. There was plenty of evidence of the fighting and a tunnel was blocked by demolition charges. Six drivers had apparently been killed on the Mostar road last week and so we were a bit wary. We kept our speed up and drove determinedly through roadblocks. It was good to get back to the Mediterranean climate of the coast and at Ploce we turned for Split. En route we stopped for lunch and I had a swim.

Once at Split I telephoned Lizzie to say all was well and tell her of my plans for returning. I did so on a mobile telephone. We then loaded our vehicles onto a C-130 and flew back to Zagreb. Again we stayed in the Intercontinental Hotel.

Thursday 1 October

I woke up in the Hotel with a filthy cold. Peter Telford had the same one. Most of the morning was spent in checking out the plan and writing it up as Miles Frisby had to present it in London. We eventually went for a Bn HQ and 3 x Coys in Vitez, a coy in Gornji Vakuf and the NSE based between Gornji Vakuf, Tomaslavgrad and Split. The main cause for concern was the tremendously long MSR. But the plan was the best we could come up with.

Malcolm Wood and I travelled with the others as far as Frankfurt but there we split off to take a flight to Hannover. On return to Fallingb. I set the Duty Clerk to work on my debrief and then I went home. Very sadly John Donnelly's mother has died - which was expected unfortunately. We will have to see what the Current Operations Group (COG) has to say about the plan.

Friday 2 October

I briefed all officers and warrant officers on the plan between 0900-1145hrs. I described the main events of the recce, the main conclusions we had reached and then I outlined the plan. I explained the the COG had yet to agree it fully.

Alice Ellis had a son this morning; John paid his dues in champagne at lunchtime. Lizzie and I went out to dinner with the company commanders and their wives in the evening. We went to the local Chinese Restaurant in Fallingbowl. It was not a particularly relaxing evening.

Tuesday 6 October

There is growing Press interest in the purposes behind OP GRAPPLE. The whole matter was started by the Media to begin with. It's slightly amusing all round. We are going because of Press pressure, I'm sure of that. Now the Press want to know why we are going.

I have heard from Jeremy MacKenzie that if a One Star Headquarters is to be sent it will be commanded by Brigadier Andrew Cumming and if a full Colonel is to command it will be Ian Talbot. Both of them are decent men and I'm sure I can get on with either. I wonder how Mark Cook will take that; especially as we need him and OP HANWOOD to get us into the country.

Having spoken to Austin Thorp in HQ 3 I learnt that we will not deploy until HQ COMBRITCON is fully set up in Split. However the Recce and LO Teams I have established might be going next week. Yesterday Tim Sullivan telephoned me from EXERCISE REFURGER. He was very upset that HQ 7 Armoured Bde had not been selected to command OP GRAPPLE (unsurprisingly). He has been carrying out an intensive campaign to get that; to the irritation of both Ian Talbot and Keith Skempton who have had him on their backs all the time. It's nice to know that Sullivan's influence over me is on the wane.

This morning General Charles Guthrie, CINC HQ BAOR, flew in to visit. Richard Shirreff came too. For a brief time we discussed the operation. His main point was that he thought R & R to be essential and he was going to push very hard for it. He's OK and I like him. Sadly he was under extreme time pressure and had to depart quickly in his LYNX helicopter. By return all I asked of the CINC was a decision -quickly- we had been hanging on for so long on the brink of going.

Ian Talbot telephoned me in the afternoon. He told me that Andrew Cumming is to get the job of Commander which must be slightly sad for Ian. Apparently our logistic support may well be extended to include the Spanish in the Mostar area - which makes sense. It might also give the MOD leverage to get a One Star Headquarters established within the UN Chain of Command which is causing enormous problems at the moment.

Apparently the COS has finally endorsed the plan - together with the COS Ctte and S of S, but the matter still needs PM approval. That is the reason for delay. However next week is the Conservative Party Conference and many people say John Major could well be fighting for his political life - with the Pound crashing downwards at a tremendous rate!

I have still not been given a Mission. The only one I've got is that I worked out for myself on the recce. Perhaps that is it. I have now produced a Battalion ORBAT which is different

from that of BAOR. The basic difference is that I've set up five Liaison Officer Teams, an AI pl and a SCIMITAR tp all directly under my command.

Friday 9 October

On Wednesday I was told to travel to UK with Andrew Cumming to be briefed. Thereafter I was to travel to Zagreb/Sarajevo to meet General Morillon. I cancelled all kinds of things to do so only to be told an hour later that I was not going - and to reinstate them. Only to be told I was going after all later!

That evening I briefed all companies (including B Sqn 9/12L who were in Oerbke Camp for field firing) in the Jerboa Cinema. I gave a 'soldiers' level' talk with slides. Late in the evening I was told by Tim Park that I had to fly at 0700hrs on Thursday.

I met Andrew Cumming at Hannover and we travelled to Heathrow together. Cumming had a hire car and wanted to go somewhere separately and so I hired one for myself and drove to Wilton. I was there by 1300hrs and had lunch with Tony Hayes-Newington. During lunch Miles Frisby told me I was no longer required to travel to Zagreb/Sarajevo - neither was Andrew Cumming. However after a briefing I had quick interviews with Lieutenant General Sir Michael Wilkes (Comd UK Fd Army) as well as the CINC General Sir John Watters. I managed to make it back to Heathrow in time to hand in my car and depart back to Germany on the 1940hrs flight. At Heathrow I met Tony Gaites who was travelling out to give HQ 11 Armd Bde some interview training.

I was home by 2200hrs and found John and Vinna Smedley staying with Lizzie. Apparently Joe Edmunds is having problems coping and so there can be no possibility of him coming to Bosnia. I went to the 2 RTR Amalgamation Parade on Friday which was why John and Vinna Smedley were staying with us.

Sunday 11 October

We had a hugely successful Ladies Dinner Night last night. The Smedleys had departed after lunch and so we were on our own again. People are really getting a little 'rattled' by the lack of absolute decision. A wife pushed Lizzie in the corridor in her frustration. Lizzie didn't blame the woman at all.

Apparently DMO has been out to see General Morillon and the main discussion centred on C2 and ROE. I have had no readout from the meeting. I have now produced my Desired Order of Arrival for the Staff. However even though no decision has been made a Start-Up Team has deployed to Split.

Monday 12 October

I went back to Sennelager today. HQ 11 Armd Bde are new to the game and they needed to be briefed up on what was happening. Additionally it gave everyone the chance to get to know one another. Andrew Cummings opened up the meeting with a description of C2 and his 'draft' policy directive. After Andrew then myself, John Field and finally Malcolm Wood gave our concepts of operation. Noody

asked any questions.

I telephoned Austin Thorpe over the lunch hour and finally I learnt that the Prime Minister has given his endorsement of the plan. CGS was about to sign a signal confirming this and the so-called 'Ship' Committee was in urgent session.

We put each company through a small BBST exercise in the afternoon; that is B Coy and B Sqn. General Iain MacKay-Dick visited during the afternoon. He told me that everyone in the Army envied us our opportunity! I wonder if they will be quite so envious in a few months time! B Coy and B Sqn returned to Barracks at the end of their exercise and I dined with A Coy and C Coy officers who were positioned in Sennelager ready to do the same exercise tomorrow. On top of all this we have been warned that a CFE Team may well be visiting over the next few days!

Friday 16 October

Things are really on the move now. We didn't get selected for CFE thankfully. BBST did highlight a few useful points - particularly on NOILCAS. We have yet to standardize our ZAP numbers properly. WO R Blake from HQ 1 Arm Div has joined us as AAdjt and he is to sort it out. Joe Edmunds is an increasing worry for me. The activation of Split is now in full flow. I have been told to fly to Split ahead of the full Battalion Recce to be briefed by Colonel David Glyn-Owen. Pte Bagley is returning my long-term NAAFI hire car to Bielefeld today after he dropped me off at RAF Gutersloh.

Martin Bell (BBC TV) did a piece from Fallingb. over the last couple of days. He had dinner with all of us last night in the Mess. Prior to that he had talked about BiH to all officers and warrant officers in the Mess. Bell said there was residual good feelings for the British in BiH and he had been repeatedly asked when the British Army was coming. Bell felt very strongly that such missions were the future for the British Army - rather than fighting non-existent Cold War scenarios in Germany.

Malcolm Rifkind announced formally our deployment yesterday and at the same time Andrew Cumming was declared commander. I am informed that as BRITFOR may not be within the UN chain of command, they may not qualify for a UN medal.

My Recce Party to BiH will be 10 in total: Martin Thomas (OC A Coy), Alistair Rule (OC B Coy), Andrew MacDonald (OC C Coy), John Donnelly (OC D Coy), Simon Ellis (Ops Offr), Mike Monstanley (OC), WO R (TOMS) Salisbury, Steve Marsh (BPM), Bill Irving (OC LDC) and myself. Additionally I will be taking the five liaison officer Teams which consist of a captain and two other ranks. The LD Teams will be lead by Martin Forgrave, Matthew Dundas-Whitney, Mike Hughes, Bob Ryan and Mark Cooper (B Sqn 9/121). Alistair Rule, Simon Ellis, the LD Teams and TOMS are to be left in BiH once we return from the Recce.

The flight from Gutersloh to Split was courtesy of Blurb. It was a bit long and bumpy and I didn't feel too good about it. David Glyn-Owen briefed me on arrival back at the Medona Apartments.

There are increasing numbers of refugees.  
 The BiH Government is increasingly non effective.  
 There is a 'hotline' between HVO and Serbs in Tomaslavgrad.  
 Stress British payment for this operation not the UN.  
 There was now a possibility of SEAKING helicopters.  
 Divoulje Barracks had been rented in Split.

At 1830hrs I had a short meeting with Andrew Cumming, John Field and Malcolm Wood. I briefed Andrew Cumming on my ideas for LOs and suggested that they be under up con of HQ BRITFOR from the end of the racee until my return.

Saturday 17 October

Together with Andrew Cumming I met with Tomaslav Vidosevic and 'Elvis' this morning. They were as anxious as ever to help. We did not anticipate any problems going up country. I attended a Press Conference held by Andrew Cumming at 1130hrs. In the afternoon I tracked down Anders Levinson to the Hotel Park where he was staying with a fantastically good looking Japanese girl who ran the UNHCR Sarajevo Office. Anders said that we had certainly made a good impact on our last racee - particularly the fact that Cpl Burn had saved someone's life in Zenica. By the early evening the remainder of the Racee Team had arrived. I gave orders for the move up-country. Andrew Cumming was there - he was coming with us, which made perfect sense.

Sunday 18 October

Getting the vehicles ready to go by 0815hrs was a real hassle - but we made it. I led 13 landrovers (some with trailers) out of the Medona Apartments and we drove slowly up-country. At Tomaslavgrad we met Colonel Zelko Siljeg, apparently Commander of the HVO Corps which stretched from Livno to Jajce. He was 32 years old, ex-JNA, and faced a Bosnian Serb Commander who was a colonel in the JNA when he was a captain.

I thought Siljeg to be a hard man. He was very pleased when we gave him a Regimental Plaque. It seems there may well be a de-facto acceptance of the situation as it stands at the moment.

The mountain road was much fuller than last time. We passed an M-40 tank on the plateau. It seemed to have broken down. I dropped Blair Rule off at Gornji Vakuf and pressed on for Vitez.

The first hint of problems came some 5 kms South of Novi Travnik when we encountered a TDF roadblock. We insisted on our right to go forward whilst they said there were problems ahead. Eventually they agreed after an argument. A few hundred metres up the road we encountered an HVO roadblock. Again I insisted on our rights of passage - and in doing so also insisted on the right of a UNHCR convoy to go the other way as well. It was driven by Swedes who were very pleased. We reached Vitez at 1900hrs and I went straight to the School where a caretaker admitted us. We all slept in the Gym.

Monday 19 October

The School's Director arrived at 0830hrs as requested by me the previous evening. I agreed that the School would be suitable for our base - provided contracts were appropriate. By 0900hrs we were at the local UNHCR Office where we met Anders Levinsen (who had travelled back from Split) and other members of the UNHCR staff. I explained our concept of operations. After that we went to see the Town's Director, Jean Santic. Thereafter we saw Mario Cerkoz (HVO Comd in Vitez), Marijan Jukic (HVO Mil Police Comd Vitez) and Marko Knezevic (Dep Defence Minister Vitez). We drank coffee with them whilst they warned that trouble was brewing in Vitez between the HVO and TDF.

At 1430hrs we held a meeting with the Sapper Recce Team to decide what needed to be done to the School. As things stand we can only accommodate about 300 soldiers but will need space for 800. Later in the afternoon Anders Levinsen briefed the Recce Team on UNHCR operations. During the evening Andrew Cumming and I went into Travnik and met Brig Ribo, TDF Comd. He was very amenable. We heard a lot of firing and encountered more roadblocks than normal en route. Later the UNHCR Office Staff refused to join us for dinner as they felt there was too much tension around.

Tuesday 20 October

We had arranged to meet Timomir Blaskic, Comd of Central Bosnia, in the Hotel Vitez at 0900hrs. But when we went into town we discovered the whole place was electric. Blaskic was not there. We cocked our weapons after some close firing by HVO soldiers in the vicinity of Hotel Vitez. They claimed to be shooting at Muslim snipers.

Mario Cerkoz explained that Blaskic was in Novi Travnik where there was now serious fighting between both Croats and Muslims. We could hear great evidence of this - small arms and mortars/artillery. I asked Cerkoz to open up his roadblocks through Vitez area. He said he would do so if the Muslims did too. I said I would go and see the TDF Commander who I had never previously met. Zelko, Mario's PIC, guided me around to see him. Andrew Cumming and I thought it would be better if I went alone.

We went to a school where most of the glass had been blown out of the windows. Having been guided upstairs I met Dzidic Sefkija, Commander of the Vitez TDF. During the night and whilst Sefkija had been sitting at his desk, a CLAW type weapon had been fired at his office. It had struck just below the window sill and that was why all the windows were blown out. Sefkija said that he was not prepared to remove his roadblocks as a force of HVO soldiers was getting ready to go to Novi Travnik and kill Muslims. I asked him if he could warn off the Muslims in Novi Travnik so that there was a ceasefire at 1500hrs to allow us to get in there. He said he would although I didn't have much faith in his word. At the end of our conversation Sefkija handed me the telephone, Dan Damon of SKY News had been ambushed and was sheltering at a roadblock (in a nearby house). I said we would come and rescue him as soon as possible.

Returning to Cerkoz I asked him if he too would warn off Novi Travnik that we were coming at 1500hrs. This he agreed to do. The

Reece Party then rescued Damon on our way back to the School. Damon's vehicle had been struck by two rounds. I told a TDF soldier to move his bus barricade and the mines so that we could get through. He did so (surprisingly). Later this came over in what Ian Talbot was to describe as rather a 'butch' way on TV.

By the time we returned to the School there was a great deal of firing - an AA gun firing in the ground role 200 metres away, RPGs and small arms. Snipers tried to use the School until I told them to get out. John Field and his Sappers had been turned back by fire on the road to Kiseljak, East of Vitez. They decided that they would go down the Novi Travnik - Gornji Vakuf route home. In short both they and SKY News would accompany us when we went in to try and get a ceasefire in Novi Travnik.

A small convoy of vehicles left for Novi Travnik at 14.30hrs; not just Andrew Cumming and I but also some protection, the Sappers and SKY News. We had no problems to the Novi Travnik crossroads where we sent the Sappers and SKY News on their way South. But then our problems started. Going into Novi Travnik we didn't quite know where to go but were trying to find either HVO or TDF headquarters. As we went into the centre of the town we sped through a considerable small arms firefight. No casualties. After a few streets I saw some soldiers who gesticulated wildly to us. We drove towards them. They were Muslims and I asked to see Commander Lendo. Andrew Cumming and I went upstairs to meet him in the TDF HQ. The others stayed outside. Nick Stansfield came with us of course. Lendo was in his mid-thirties and very calm. He said he would agree a ceasefire. I asked him if I could take back the 7 prisoners he was reputed to hold. He said that this was not possible. Then I said one would do. He agreed to my surprise and a man called Iliya was produced. I said I would use Iliya to get through to HVO Headquarters. We returned to the vehicle and Iliya guided us through the streets under fire to HVO HQ in a house.

At HVO HQ we were taken to meet Kordich. I produced Iliya and told Kordich how I came to have him with me. After that I asked if a ceasefire could be arranged. There was much discussion between Kordich, Andrew Cumming and myself. The HVO claimed that 14 people had been killed already.

Kordich said that he would not talk with Lendo who he considered a war criminal but would talk with a man called Merdan. On a mobile telephone Merdan was contacted from our seats. Merdan, who was in Zenica, said he would agree a ceasefire and would fax through a draft. The HVO wanted the document authorized by the Bosnian Government in Sarajevo and they also wanted Lendo surrendered to them. After a further wait a fax did appear:

REPUBLIKA BOSNIA HERCEGOVINA  
STAB VRHOVNE KOMANDE ORUZANIH SNAGA  
Sarajevo; 20.10.1992.godine

O V L A S T E N I C

Kojim se ovlašćuje gospodin Merdan Džemal, komandant OKSU



Zenica, da može pregovarati o uvjetima prekida vatre sa Glavnim stožerom HVO u Grudama, na dogovorenim principima bez ikakvog uvjetovanja.

N A C E L N I K  
STABA VRHOVNE KOMANDE OS R BiH  
SEFER HALILOVIC.

*Anders Loo - in.*

We agreed to set up a ceasefire meeting at our School in Vitez. Merdan would come, but we had to fetch him from Zenica. We were guided out of Novi Travnik by the HVO and did not come under fire. The escorts had seen quite a lot of fire whilst we had been in the Hotel though. We returned to the School. I took 4 landrovers to Zenica to pick up Merdan whilst Andrew Cumming stayed at the School to prepare it for a meeting. En route to Zenica we had to clear a barricade which included some anti tank mines with tilt switches!

In Zenica we found Merdan at the Obstina Building and took him back to Vitez. The deal was that we should meet at the School but all parties thought it might be a better idea if we met at Hotel Vitez. I sent word to Andrew Cumming to join us there.

In HVO HQ Office we met. I didn't know quite where to start. In the end I decided to make a short opening statement as I think they expected me to lead. I stressed the need for a ceasefire and how vital it was to my mission - thus my involvement.

Blaseik, who represented the HVO, was adamant that the TDF should unconditionally surrender. In particular though they must surrender their weapons, come under HVO control and give Lendo to the HVO as well. After about 45 minutes Andrew Cumming joined us. We were getting nowhere when Andrew suggested a harder line. He suggested that the TDF should remove Lendo. But it also emerged that the HVO Representative had written instructions not to compromise. There was little further point in continuing and we asked both sides to try and get higher level agreement. On the other hand we did get absolute guarantees that UNPROFOR and UNHCR could pass through any barricades without hindrance.

Andrew Cumming presented plaques to each side and we chatted about the problems over whiskey we had provided. Both sides seemed much more talkative during such informal talks. Merdan and his party were then taken back to Zenica by Mark Couper and his LO Team.

By the time we got back to the School BBC World Service had reported the extraction of UNHCR from Vitez by the French in their APCs. This did not surprise me as I had spoken to Anders on a 'Yuppie' telephone earlier; he had warned me that might have to happen then.

Wednesday 21 October

I drove into Vitez at 0730hrs to see if Anders really had gone. He had. Things were a little quieter but there was still a great deal of tension. At 0830hrs I saw Santic and told him I was leaving 9 soldiers here. We also hired an interpreter - DM200 for a two

week period. With some misgivings I left the LOs in Vitez and headed back to Split at 1030hrs. En route we passed Gornji Vakuf where Alistair would be based.

Thursday 22 October

The Recce Party returned to Hannover via Zagreb and Frankfurt and courtesy of Air Croatia and Lufthansa. On the flight to Frankfurt I talked to the Canadian Recce Team (Logistics) and asked if the the CO of the Royal Canadian Regiment (due to base itself in Banja Luka) could telephone me.

I had left the following members of 1 CHESHIRE behind:

OC B Coy. Liaison with HQ BRITFOR based in Split.

Ops Offrs and two LO Teams in Vitez. Tasked to work with and get to know the local UNHCR Office and local politics. Teams were to stay in Vitez area. Under Op con HQ BRITFOR until my return on 29 Oct. INMARSAT as soon as possible to Vitez.

Three LO Teams to work the route up from Split.

TQMS to be under op con of HQ NSE.

Thursday 29 October

On Sunday 25 October the Skemptions came for lunch. Alexander drank too much and was very sick indeed upstairs. (It was very funny really. He'll learn.

I drove down and briefed C R IRISH on Monday. Whilst with the IRISH I had a telephone conversation with the GOC from the Mos. telephone at lunchtime. I rehearsed the S of S Visit on Tuesday and briefed the Wives in the evening. Gordon Baker help me; except that he caused huge hilarity to the wives because his flies were open!

Malcolm Rifkind, S of S, visited on Wednesday 28 October. Jeremy MacKenzie was there too. I briefed him in my office, he toured around the WARRIORS, met the Boys, gave a short Press Conference, had lunch with the officers and their wives and then departed. All in all it went very well.

I flew back to Split today. On arrival I was interviewed by Dan Damon of SKY News. Again I went back to the Medena Apartments (third visit - still the same room).

Friday 30 October

I had only brought 30 with me on the Advance Party - that included Alan Abraham, Mike Winstanley, Mark Weir and Bill Irving but did not include the company commanders. We took our small fleet of landrovers to pick up stores from the LSL at Split Docks and then headed up-country.

In our absence Simon Ellis had worked wonders and had helped get a ceasefire in Vitez which seemed to extend to Novi Travnik too. But Prozor had erupted and there had been much fighting there between the HVO and YDF. The Cafe where we had had our lunch as we were leaving on the road was wrecked. What a shame. I visited the HVO Commander as we passed through Prozor. His name is Ilya Franjic. He was mid-twenties, wispy beard and rankless. He blamed the violence in Prozor on fanatical muslims. He said there were about 18-20 wounded.

Vitez was much quieter than it had been when we last saw it. I occupied the Directors Office in the School and sorted myself out as quickly as I could.

Saturday 31 October

Today Jajce fell to the Serbs. We have known it would happen for some time because of the vast swarms of refugees coming into Travnik. I put Mark Weir into the Refugee Centre in Travnik to help. This was a tremendously popular thing to do. Pharmacies Sans Frontieres (Patrick Dagassan) provided Mark with the drugs he needed.

Martin Forgrave and Bob Ryan came under fire as they were in the Karaula area of villages - West of Turbe. Andrew Cumming had organized a convoy of vehicles up from Split which carried a lot of UNHCR gear. They arrived late - led by Mike Healis - and I took one truck directly into Travnik to distribute blankets to the poor devils who needed them. Travnik was not under fire when we did it although there had been shells on the town in the early evening. There was quite a lot of loose fire around though.

Sunday 1 November

I spoke to 4 journalists this morning as well as Andrew Cumming later. I also went to HQ BHC with Nick Stanfield and Simon Ellis. There I met Roddy Cordy-Simpson. I stressed here my belief that the only way we could get through to Tuzla in the winter would be via main roads. I also met Glyn Evans, Head of UN Operations in the FCO. She said she was on her way to visit us.

On my return I learnt that a BBC Cameraman had been killed in the Karaula. His name was Tihomir Tunokovic. Martin Forgrave was later to help get his body back.

I briefed Glyn Evans, travelling with Neil Wright, on her arrival. Later I took her with me when I went into Travnik. I met the HVO Deputy President Ferica Krizanac with her. Krizanac told me that Travnik was 39% Croat and 43% Muslim which I found a bit suspect. He confirmed that Jajce had fallen during the night. Glyn Evans left me after I had taken her to visit the Refugee Centre.

For my part I went on to the TDF HQ where I found Merdan. It was nice to see him again. I like this man. He marked the front lines in great detail on my map - including Forward Detachments. The Karaula area looks very vulnerable from both the north and south.

Monday 2 November

Some BRITFOR Staff Officers have arrived. I took them on a tour of the area. I also wrote a letter of condolence to Iliomir's parents and gave it to the BBC team accompanying his body back to Split. I asked that it was not publicised.

There seems to be a bit of an HVO mutiny around here. I think because Jajce has fallen the HVO drafted in from Tomaslavgrad are insisting on their rights to go home. A large column of refugees and HVO is manoeuvring around Vitez at the moment. They eventually moved off towards Kiseljak. Apparently Blaskic has ordered that they be disarmed at Kiseljak.

Tuesday 3 November

I met 'Stanley' the Danish Mercenary in Travnik today. Apparently his friend 'Johnnie' has been missing for a while and he has 'lost his way'. I also visited the local hospital and spent a rather pleasant time in the company of the hospital Director who gave us coffee and biscuits. Outside the hospital I met 'Ted' - another mercenary fighting for the TDF. He was ex-NZ Army and originally came from Cheshire. Ted told me that the Serbs had killed a young boy by throwing a grenade into his vehicle. He had attended the funeral earlier today.

Wednesday 4 November

Today I wanted to see what Maglaj was like. We met Bozimar Tomic, the Deputy Commander of Zepce and he arranged for us to meet Ivo Lozancic, the Commander.

We marked our maps in detail from his briefing at Zepce. Then he arranged for us to go into Maglaj. At a roadblock just south of Maglaj (4 kms) we met Alois Gasparic, HVO Comd in Maglaj. He guided us over a rather exposed mountain road into Maglaj. The town was in ruins. We met Herceg Sulja Comd TDF too. There was a lot of incoming and outgoing fire. We crossed the bridge over the River Bosna to the old town which was seriously destroyed. This was quite dangerous as many people had been shot by snipers as they crossed the bridge. After that we went to see people living in cellars. I made a broadcast on Radio Maglaj. I promised Barbara Baric, local Red Cross Office, that I would return as soon as possible. About 6,000 people are still living in Maglaj - maybe more with soldiers. Once 42,000 people lived there. I agreed to bring some medical supplies back to Barbara as soon as possible.

I returned to Vitez across the mountain road and later made a TV broadcast which lasted 75 minutes on TV Vitez! I had to insist that the local HVO man did not interview me as I did not wish to appear one-sided. I was also in a little trouble at home for being too forthright in my approach. Some people in MOD have asked me not to be quite so resolute - but I never did say we would fight our way through roadblocks!

Thursday 5 November

There is now quite a lot of shelling onto Turbe and Travnik. We

protest to Kiseljak every time that happens. Today I tried with Don Steele, Signals Squadron Commander, to get mobile telephones. We had mixed success. The P INFO Team have also arrived; led by Andrew Venus who I like a lot. The MST and Advance Party of 42 Fd Sqn are now here and putting up their equipments and tents very fast.

Friday 6 November

Today I fulfilled my promise to return to Maglay. Pharmacies Sans Frontieres and UNHCR had given us an 8 ton load and we packed our Landrovers with extra stuff from the UNHCR Warehouse. Jorge from UNHCR together with Gilbert Greenall and Doug Houston (First Secretary British Embassy Zagreb) came as well. I called in to see Ivo Lozancic as we went. I told him that I had passed on some information on 2 of his soldiers with broken backs to the ICRC.

I took the convoy directly into Maglay down the main road. There had been no shelling since 0700hrs onto the road. The inhabitants were really amazed that we had come back so quickly and we gained great credit for that. I drank Slivovitch with the two local commanders (Gasparic and Herzog). Clearly they had a joint command post. After we had unloaded our stores we went to the local hospital where we picked up Mark Weir. There was considerable fighting about one km east of the town and some sniper and artillery fire landing within the buildings. Some rounds came close to our escorts.

I made the decision to go out of town on the mountain road and I'm glad I did as a lorry that went straight ahead was heavily mortared just after we started up the mountain route. Again good decision; lucky though! We returned without further incident and I was well pleased by the days work.

Saturday 7 November

The ROCA DAN which carries all my WARRIOR has now been delayed 48 hours. Now she is due in on Wednesday 11 November.

At 1105hrs Bob Ryan leading 4 landrovers (two LJs; two Sapper-recce) came under fire en route to Tuzla. A great deal of fire was put down from Serb positions including AA Bofors, mortars and small arms. We returned about 20-30 rounds back. One of our Sapper vehicles was struck. It was absolutely amazing that nobody was hurt. ITV was travelling with the vehicles and filmed it all. They also got in the way whilst my vehicles were manoeuvring to get out.

Whilst waiting for Ryan to return so that I could debrief him properly I went up to the hills south of Turbe to watch the battle. From there we could clearly see why the Serbs have the advantage. The Serbs shell at will and the HVJ and TDF have nothing with which to reply. When I returned I spoke to Bob Ryan and congratulated them all on reacting properly. I also gave an interview to The Guardian and ITV. This was the first time perhaps that we have been deliberately targeted.

Sunday 8 November

Together with Richard Barrons, COS BRITFOR, who is staying with

us for his familiarisation visit, I went to meet up with Jorge who is currently standing in for Anders Levinson in the UNHCR office. Jorge had requested a meeting and I told him that the best time would be before I travelled to HQ BHC - as then he would ensure that any points he made went straight to the Command Headquarters. Despite the very early hour of 0830 Jorge was only a couple of minutes late. Naturally the UNHCR Office was closed and so Jorge suggested we went to their house. I agreed.

Jorge wanted the British to escort a Muslim trucking company from Zenica to Ploce/Split and back - carrying UNHCR aid of course. We have a problem over this as it is in the Spanish Battalion's area and politically the MOD is most anxious not to upset the applecart. However I agreed to take the matter up to HQ BHC. Richard and I left at 0915hrs. We were in Kiseljak by 1000hrs.

There Brigadier Roddy Cordy-Simpson met us. Together with Mark (his MA) we reviewed things in general. In particular we discussed the Tuzla Route. I agreed to start working on trying to get through via North of Sarajevo as soon as possible. For their part it was essential that someone speaks to the Serbs. There was no need for that until I was in a position to move and I didn't think that could be until after WARRIOR was here.

Jorge and Kim from UNHCR also appeared at HQ BHC too. Apparently UNHCR had lost a few trailers - abandoned on the Mostar Route - and they needed help. After quite a bit of scurrying around a couple of UNMOs were despatched to try and sort it out. I had lunch with Brigadier Roddy and in the process acquired a couple of French cheeses. Sgt Taylor who was driving me suggested that I joined a queue for American camp cots - which I did - thereby acquiring a second one (brand new). On return to Vitez I gave my old one to 'Joesia' - for looking after me.

Andrew Cumming rang in the evening. It seems that even now the Government may renege on placing the Battalion at Vitez. He says he needs to be convinced that the HVO are not going to abandon the area completely - in favour of an area they are attacking to the east of Mostar. Andrew wants me to see what senior HVO intentions are with regard to the future and in particular to assess whether they have any intention of pulling out of this area (leaving the local HVO to their fate perhaps) and going for the creation of a Croat area to the East of Mostar. To be honest I think he's wrong but who knows. I've sent Martin Forgrave to fix up a meeting with Blaskic. If anyone in the area has any idea about that sort of thing I think it would be him. I told Andrew I would do that and report my results tomorrow. He seems to have a 'bee on the bonnet' over this.

Today Cpl Farrell has issued me with this Gridcase word processor and so I am determined to put my diary onto it. I did so by 12 Nov.

Tuesday 10 November

Yesterday I spent the morning visiting Mario Cerkez of the HVO and Gekij of the TDF. It seemed to me that they had no intentions whatsoever of abandoning the fight. There were indications that the HVO and TDF were trying to get back together. I asked them

both to keep their forces away from my facilities; they promised they would. Sefkija's HQ is no longer in the School Building. He now lives in the West of the Town near the Mosque. On my return I wrote out a long signal to Andrew Cumming in which I stated that I could see no sign of the HVO abandoning their place here.

Today I decided to try and assess how we would make an emergency withdrawal from the School and I wrote an appreciation. The main conclusions of the appreciation were that we would require up to 5 hours to get out of here if we concentrated on only taking essential equipment, a hasty defence plan was required, and that it was essential to discover what artillery pieces the Serbs had in the area of the TV Tower at Paljenik which was on 16,000 metres away. That was almost within D-30 range and certainly within the range of some Serbian guns. I tasked G2 in HQ BRITFOR to see what they could come up with.

General Nambia, Major General Morillon and the Deputy Commander of HQ BHC visited us today from 1300 -1500hrs. I briefed them, gave them lunch, showed them the School and then had a private talk with them all in my Office. Nambia struck me as a nice man. Morillon I'll reserve judgement upon. Just as they were leaving Brigadier Andrew Cumming turned up. Neither Nambia nor (particularly) Morillon seemed keen to meet him. Nambia had met Cumming a couple of days ago but Morillon and Cumming had never met. In conversations it was quite clear that the UN does not particularly like the British approach to C2. Andrew Cumming had Lieutenant Colonel David Roberts with him. Roberts was here to discuss emergency withdrawal plans. Cumming read but discarded my appreciation as I don't think it accords with his pre-conceived notions of BiH being cut in half by Serbians and the Croats going for Herzegovina. He's quite hung up on this.

Wednesday 11 November

This morning I decided to consider going to Tuzla again. The problem was that last time we had gone it had resulted in Bob Ryan being shot at by the Bosnian Serbs. It was very great luck to have avoided serious injury or death. I thought we could easily get through to Tuzla if we were to use the North of Olovo route. I even went to see Jorge in UNHCR to see what could be done; but Jorge was not particularly keen on the idea. It really died a natural death when I learnt from Richard Barrons in Split that the Secretary of State had asked that we do nothing more like that until we have WARRIOR on the ground.

Kate Adio from BBC TV came here for the first time. I had last met her at Ballykelly in 1982 after the Bomb. She seemed pleasant enough but she really is a bit of a hard nut I suspect. Later three other journalists called by; they included Mark Laitly. Again I talked to them briefly.

Doug Houston, First Secretary British Embassy in Zagreb, called around later with two men who were to put up Bovis sheltered accommodation for refugees. He offered us the portacabins which the workmen would erect for themselves if we allowed them to be positioned at the Base. The workmen would be staying here for about 6 weeks until they had done the job and then they would be ours. In

addition he offered me the use of his vehicle whilst he was away. I agreed to that rapidly - as well as the invitation to dinner in Zenica later. We went to a restaurant called 'Cafe Horse'; I had little doubt what I was eating there.

Thursday 12 November

When General Nambra and General Morillon visited two days ago they mentioned the possibility of a general ceasefire throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Apparently that was signed last night according to the BBC Overseas Service News. However I was awoken by a gun firing very close to the School. When I was briefing everyone at my 0800hrs General Briefing I was just telling them about the possible ceasefire when the gun went off again. It caused us all considerable amusement. I despatched Matthew Dundas-Whatley to identify its exact location and to find out at what it was firing. After a couple of hours he came back to report that the gun was firing at the Serb guns at the TV Tower. He had talked to Blascik about it all. Blascik had ordered the gun to fire as the Serbs had been blasting Turbe since 0500hrs and the gun was simply retaliating. We reported it all to Kiseljak.

There was a very fierce storm here this morning which destroyed a few of the tents and was exceedingly dangerous as it brought down quite a few power lines too. The boys (and girls) did very well to try and keep things under control, but we have lost quite a lot of canvas.

Doug Houston promised me the use of his landrover Discovery whilst he was away and so I have recovered it from Kiseljak where he left it. Rather wickedly I'm going to change its markings if I can - so that they become UN ones. He said he doesn't mind.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) telephoned and asked me if they could meet with me to discuss matters. I invited them to come to tea this afternoon. At 1630hrs Yves Maunon, leader of the Zenica Office (12 Aprila Put 15, 72000 Zenica; Tel 072. 26568) and Claire Podbielski arrived. Both are rather nice people. I gave them tea, a briefing on the front lines around Olovo and Maglaj and a decent map because they didn't have one. I also discussed what we do about the increasing number of reports of atrocities we are discovering; in short we report it to the UN and ICRC (as well as BRITFOR). Although I invited them to stay for supper they had to get back. I think they were amazed and amused by us.

Friday 13 November

I have received an instruction from Gen Morillon that I should try and use my 'contacts' in the area of Maglaj to check on the ceasefire. Additionally Brigadier Roddy Cordy-Simpson was to visit today and wanted to see something of the area. And so it seemed sensible to go to Maglaj with Cordy-Simpson so that he, as Morillon's COS, could see for himself. On top of that nobody should really go to somewhere like Maglaj without taking aid and so our landrovers were to be filled with UNHCR aid. Roddy Cordy-Simpson turned up here at 0900hrs. I showed him quickly around the base and then we set off for Maglaj.



I took the Landrover Discovery - newly cleaned and with UN in black masking tape on its side. At the roadblock just to the South of Maglaj we heard sounds of the town being shelled. We waited awhile and then decided to go straight into Maglaj down the main road. We travelled at high speed down the road to the river. All went well until the second tunnel when just before we emerged a shell burst about 150 metres in front of the tunnel entrance! I halted the convoy for a few minutes before we made a dash for the centre of town across the railway where the shell had just fallen. No further shells fell whilst we were getting into town. I went to HVO/TDF HQ and asked to see Alois Gasparic (HVO) and Herce Sulejman (TDF). Meanwhile we asked the local Red Cross to take delivery of the UNHCR aid of mainly flower, oil and baby food. A number of artillery shells fell close to us as we were waiting around. I made everyone take effective cover.

The HVO/TDF explained that a battle had been ongoing for at least 2 hours. The Serbs were attacking in the area of Teslic east to Maglaj and were doing so with infantry and tanks. No aircraft were being used. Roddy Cordy-Simpson listened intently and explained his role as the ceasefire broker. He would take action on what he had heard. I gave both Alois and Suleman a bottle of 'Johnnie Walker' and this went down very well indeed.

The Discovery had a puncture of the way out of town - in the first tunnel. We changed the wheel in the tunnel and then took the mountain - rather than main road - route out of Maglaj. Roddy Cordy-Simpson left us at Zenica; Nick Stansfield and I went to see Yves Maunon of ICRC to advise him not to put an office in Maglaj yet.

After that I returned to Vitez and prepared to go to Gornji Vakuf to pick up my WARRIOR. Tac (my WARRIOR and the Signals' APC) were there. Again I used the Discovery. At Gornji Vakuf I saw Alistair Rule quickly and then jumped into OA. We came back to Vitez at an amazing speed really. WARRIOR has no problem here. Mine was the first WARRIOR to enter Vitez.

Saturday 14 November

There was a light smattering of snow on the hills and even the fields around the School when I awoke this morning. But it rapidly turned to slush and then mud which didn't help the sartorial elegance of this place much.

Although B Coy rode easily over the hills that's not likely to be the case for A Coy who have been held up at Tomaslaygrad by blockages - particularly civilian cars stuck in the snow. These have had to be cleared before A Coy could start the route and they are much delayed as I write this - although they are well into the route now. If we cannot clear this one then we might as well go home!

I went over to the Press Centre at 0900hrs and spoke for a few minutes before taking questions. I said that B Coy had made it over the mountains with relative ease - not one had broken down.

and the WARRIORS had had no problems whatsoever. I told them about the current problems on the Mountains - snow - but said it should be overcome and we must expect the odd set-back. After that I took OA for a spin into Vitez and then down to Dusavaca in search of a 'lost' UNHCR convoy.

There is quite a problem in the Karaula now. Colonel (he's not a Brigadier) Ribo of the TDF has told Martin Forgrave that: -

There is a two-brigade sized Serbian attack on Turbe.  
It has been going on since early morning.  
Tanks and infantry are being used.  
Two thousand civilians are trapped - many injured.

Ribo wants us to get a ceasefire and also to evacuate the 2,000 civilians. I have naturally warned off HQ BRITFOR. HQ BHC are trying to get a ceasefire. If we get a ceasefire which can be agreed by Serbs, Croats and Muslims, then I may be in a position to act. My worries are that we are being trapped into involvement and why did they not evacuate these people before? They have known about them for long enough. I think the chances of a ceasefire are negligible but nonetheless have warned off Alistair Rule to do the job if necessary. Finally, just before bed I am telephoned and told that General Morillon has made a slight gaffe; he has informed the World's Press that he has ordered the British Battalion to evacuate casualties from the Karaula. This without any pre-conditions such as the fact that there should be a ceasefire first. I have telephoned Roddy Cordy-Simpson who is trying to get a ceasefire. We shall see.

In the early evening I was working in my office when I was told that the Mayor of Gorazde wished to see me. He was at the Front Gate and his name was Hadzo Efendic. He was accompanied by Emin Imamovic of the Charity 'Merhamet' (their spelling). Efendic told me that there was a total of 70,000 people in Gorazde of which 15,000 were under 15 years of age. They were surrounded and would start to starve in a week. He had already visited Kiseljak and UNHCR. He was pleading for help and my heart went out to him. I promised I would represent his case to HQ BHC but could not promise anything substantial. I felt ashamed. I invited the Party including interpreter and driver to stay for dinner - which they did. Efendic had walked out of Gorazde (40kms) but that path was now closed.

Sunday 15 November

I decided late last night that I would try and talk to the Serbian Commander on a radio. Nick Stansfield had told me that the HVO often listen to the Serbs (and even talk to them) on the radio. And so at 0830hrs I drove into Travnik and went to the TDF HQ. There I met Ribo who told me that it could be possible. It was obvious that the whole Headquarters was in a high state of excitement/anguish. After a while Leila the Interpreter's father turned up. I think he is a Major and ex-JNA. His name is Dalje Sahinovic. Apparently the local Serbian Commanders are Brigadier General Galic to the South based around Komar and Colonel Peulic to the North based around Paljenik. Dalje said he would try and put us in touch with the local Serbian commanders but we would

have to go to Turbe to do it. As we were leaving I met both Merdan and Blascik. Clearly there is considerable HVO/IDF cooperation in this time of extreme crisis for the area. I followed Dalje up the Turbe Road and we turned left up on to the hill we had visited last week - but we stopped in dead ground. Twice Dalje tried to make contact with the Serbs on his radio - on the second time he managed it. Apparently Brigadier General Galic had received instructions from Banja Luka not to talk to "UNPROFOR". That was the end of the matter and so I decided to go to Kiseljak to see if Roddy Cordy-Simpson had had any more luck. My provisional plan to get into the Karaula was to use B Coy as well as vehicles from the Sappers and MST.

But from my vantage position on the hill I could see very little evidence of refugees in the Karaula. Reports had suggested that they had left during the night - and had arrived in Travnik. There were certainly never 2,000 there. As I travelled to Kiseljak I stood down the troops whom I had put on stand-by.

Last night I had given my word to report the matter of Gorazde to Kiseljak and so I did this after talking things through with Roddy Cordy-Simpson. I also gave a debrief on the situation to both G2 and G3. Thereafter I had lunch and then returned to Vitez. By now Ribo had withdrawn his request for help to get refugees back and so it was all rather a 'storm in a teacup'.

There is clear evidence that the HVO/IDF are planning some kind of offensive to strike back. The gun, positioned 1,000 metres from us, started firing at 1630hrs. This tends to suggest this might be true. Martin Forgrave told me that the plan is for a left hook to cut off the Serbs.

Tonight was the first time I have either managed to remember or been able to visit the mobile shower unit. Not having a bath or shower has not been a great problem because each morning I tend to wash my hair in a bowl and then stand in it and use a facecloth to wash my body. Nonetheless being able to have a really good shower was fabulous.

Monday 16 November

A Coy are now complete at Vitez having had a horrendous journey. C Coy are almost here; the last packet of their WARRIORS arrive tonight. Sp Coy are still en route.

Today I decided I would get reccé Tuzla as a pre-cursor to convoys starting later this week. I gave out orders at 0745hrs and we departed at 0830hrs. Not only did I take Jamie Sage, Bob Ryan and Martin Forgrave, but I also started with 9 Media vehicles as well. The route I had decided was most safe took me from Vitez to Catolci, then on through Ratanj, Pogar, Rijeka, Milankovici and Kladanj. Bob Ryan, who knew the way well, led until Rijeka but then I took over. In Pogar I met Claire Podbielski (ICRC); she was delivering aid to Vares. The route was fine; a couple of shots, some explosions and slight snow between Ratanj and Rijeka. The whole journey took about 6 hours and we were there by 1430hrs. At least now I had proved we could get there!

I had agreed to keep the journalists with me, but did warn them that they would need 4-wheel drive. In fact several came without it and in the end ITV had to ditch their armoured Granada at Rajeka when the clutch burnt out on the way back.

In Tuzla I went to see Lukic St Japo (President for Refugees). I gave him a bottle of whiskey as a present and also a 10-man combo pack. The reporters filmed me with Lukic and also interviewed me outside the Town Hall afterwards.

The journey back was fairly uneventful - except for the ITV car incident. We were back in Vitez School by 2130hrs. At 2215hrs I held an O Gp and gave a warning order for Jamie Sage to plan how to get aid to Tuzla. I told him to give me his plan at 0830hrs tomorrow. I intend using a forward base in Kladanj to support the operation and will pour as much UNHCR aid as possible into Tuzla until the weather stops me. WARRIOR cannot be used because of the fragile bridges but SCIMITAR, once it gets here, is a possibility. There is a dangerous stretch of the route between Kladanj and Stupari on which I would like to have some armoured protection.

Richard Waltier has arrived and given me a second radio. I thought it sensible to have two; one for my office and one for my bedroom.

Tuesday 17 November

Jamie Sage, Marilyn Thomas and I discussed the plan to get aid to Tuzla at 0830hrs. Jamie suggested that there was not time to do everything by a start time of tomorrow and that we should aim to initiate convoys at 0400hrs on Thursday 19 November. I agreed.

In the middle of the briefing Andrew Cumming telephoned to say that he wasn't too pleased I had ignored his order not to go to Tuzla until we had WARRIOR on the ground. To be honest I didn't realise he had been as specific as that but knew he had some inhibitions. It was my fault; I should have discussed it with him. And so I apologised immediately. I told him about the proposed plans for Tuzla. He seemed content with them. Andrew also told me that it seemed sensible to pass tactical control of me to HQ BHC with effect from midnight tonight. It doesn't really make much difference to me in day to day operations. I'm told by Roddy Cordy-Simpson that HQ BRITFOR will be in the UN L2 CREAT but Andrew Cumming denied he had been asked as yet.

This afternoon I went to Zenica and saw the JERC about their operations in order to tie up details. I have put John Donnelly as an IO with the local UNHCR office. He is to become completely 'UNHCRised' including civilian clothes, no weapon and UNHCR Identity Card.

There has been a power cut all day. They say it will be off for between 1 - 5 days! Nobody really knows what is going on with the electricity. I am typing this by the light of a Tilley Lamp.

My small microprocessor runs on batteries for up to 4 hours.

Tonight I received an appeal from the Mayor of Travnik to put his town under international protection. I don't blame him for

that; I would do the same in his position. I've passed it on to Kiseljak. It's more difficult to reach HQ BRITFOR as everything is down - because of the power cut.

Finally we are now complete in Vitez. B Sqn 9/12L rejoined me tonight. They are tired and cold after their long sojourn on the mountains guiding everyone along the routes. They will get a good night's rest and then at least two troops will be sent off to help get aid through to Tuzla.

Thursday 19 November

I didn't do too much this morning apart from wander around the Base with Malcolm Wood who was visiting. 'Nora' the artillery piece (155mm) fired a total of 13 rounds towards the Serbian positions during the day; I wonder when the Serbs will try counter-battery fire?

Shortly after midday Yves Mauron and a man called Pierre-Andre Conod arrived. Yves is the local Zenica ICRC Representative and Conod is the Head of Delegation from Zagreb. We discussed a possible release of Serbian internees from Zenica and Jablonica areas. I gave them lunch and a briefing on the situation around Maglaj.

The Netherlands Transport Battalion has arrived and is positioned only 20 minutes away in Busavaca. I decided to go and see the Commanding Officer. To do so I took the Standby Platoon (Alex Watts) in its WARRIORS. Jan De Boer seems a very normal and balanced type of man. I liked him and we got on well. We discussed C2 and came to an agreement that we would decide who commanded based on the requirements of each operation. I returned from Busavaca just in time to go to the UNHCR Office for the 1700hrs Meeting. There we discussed in broad outline how we should tackle things - UNHCR, Dutch and British.

Later I received two totally contradictory instructions. HQ BRITFOR sent me a signal saying the the ICRC did not envisage a detainee escort task and Chief G3 HQ BHC (Mike Cornwall) sent me a signal saying that I should liaise immediately with Yves Mauron in order to escort Serb detainees from Zenica to Ploce from 1100hrs tomorrow. To resolve the matter I drove into Zenica, found the Metalworkers Hotel and spoke to Yves. There is no detainee movement for the moment. HQ BRITFOR was correct.

Martyn Thomas gave his orders for the Tuzla Operation at 1400hrs - largely for the Press who are here in large numbers. Jamie Sage is already positioned at Kladanj ready to receive the convoy after it leaves here at 0400hrs. The plan is that Martyn will run up to Tuzla and back to Kladanj by about 1800hrs. The convoy will overnight at Kladanj and then return here for a further load. The whole matter is, of course, weather dependent - and it's started sleeting badly tonight. No doubt that will mean snow in the mountains! We shall see.

Thursday 19 November

I was woken up by Martin Thomas' departure with the convoy bound

for Tuzla. It went at 0400hrs as planned - apparently trailed by about 12 vehicles belonging to the Media. Jamie Sage had set up a Base in Kladanj although I do not know exactly where it is yet.

John Donnelly is now not going to be the UNHCR LO; I agree with Tim Park that he would be far more valuable as a G4 coordinator. James Askew is to be his replacement with UNHCR and so I started the day by taking James down to the UNHCR Office. At 0945hrs I took my WARRIOR and the Standby Platoon (four WARRIORS of Alex Watts' Platoon) into Zenica across the short mountain route. I had agreed to take a trace of the frontlines to Yves Mauron of the ICRC and so had Sgt Connolly accompany me in the back of my vehicle. Parking five WARRIORS outside the ICRC Building - between HVO and HDZ Barracks - caused quite a stir. In the event I moved them away as the Military Police (HVO) were apparently getting excited.

At 1300hrs I took Doug Houston's Discovery Landrover back to Kiseljak. He was due to arrive at Sarajevo Airport in time to catch the 'Shuttle' to HQ BHC. In the event he was late and so I left the keys with G3 Ops. However I did manage to 'remove' a couple of Norwegian stools to help sitting arrangements in my office.

Most of the night has been spent trying to get more information about the Tuzla trip. I had heard that Jamie had set up the Forward Operating Base in Kladanj and the Convoy had reached there relatively on time. I had also assumed that it would be back at Kladanj in good time (before 1800hrs). But suddenly we received a message that there was a contact about 7 kms North of Kladanj. Nobody was hurt, no shots were returned, the fire was possibly mortar and small arms and finally there had also been a traffic accident involving a SCIMITAR. That report reached us at 1924hrs and we have heard nothing else since. Luckily Andrew Cumming and Kiseljak are not getting on our backs about it, but as I write I have heard nothing more at 2330hrs. There are probably excellent reasons for no communication - the HF is terrible - but nonetheless it's still a considerable concern. At least they are alright though; I made sure the Rear Party knew it too by getting Simon Ellis to ring them on the INMARSAT. Telling of that I also rang Caroline at School on the Dutch INMARSAT - well, today is her birthday and ...What the Hell!

Friday 20 November

I had been told by Matthe Dundas-Whatley that Colonel Ribo had been replaced as Commander of IOF in Travnik. Matthew informed me that he had fixed up an appointment for me to meet the new man at 0900hrs. I was there. The new Commander is Ahmed Kulenovic and his Ops Offr is Muris Yezic. Apparently Ribo is on 'leave'. Ahmed Kulenovic is much younger and (I think) ex-JNA. Debbie translated for me during the interview.

After meeting Ahmed Kulenovic I travelled down to Gornji Vakuf to meet up with Lieutenant General Sir Michael Wilkes, Commander UK Field Army. He was due to arrive there at 1200hrs in company with Andrew Cumming. In fact he was about 45 minutes late because the convoy of landrovers had been held up by blasting along the track.

Simon Ellis, Chris Leyshon and I together with Alistair Rule and

Mike Healis gave him a quick brief, he had lunch with the Officers and then toured around the Base. We left for Vitez at 1415hrs.

In the morning I had arranged for Wilkes to meet with Ahmed Kulenovic and possibly Blascik at HQ TDF. We were there on time for 1700hrs, but both Merdan and Blascik were there. Wilkes led the discussions on what was going on. Blascik and Merdan agreed that the main Serbian War Aim might be to split BiH in half possibly along the Prozor - Jablonika Road.

In the evening we had a dinner night in the tents! It went very well. I had invited many people - all international staff types - from UNHCR, ICRC, NL Tpt Bn and Kiseljak. Additionally we had invited members of the Press - without their reporting heads on! The French had kindly sent out some super wine; including some Beaujolais Nouveaux with Sarajevo labels on them! The empty bottles were taken as souvenirs.

Saturday 21 November

I had not made it to bed before 0300hrs this morning and so consequently I slept - what little time I had - well. My head wasn't too bad this morning and I got up at 0630hrs. Not only had Wilkes and his Party stayed the night, but so too had Brigadiers Ruddy Cordy-Simpson and Andrew Cumming. They stumbled into breakfast in the tents at about 0730hrs.

My plan had originally been to take Comd Fd Army into the hills South of Turbe so that he could see the Battle at close quarters. However that does not seem very sensible at the moment. There is a real possibility that Turbe could fall and then there would be nothing left between the Serbs and Travnik. The people of Travnik know it full well and are petrified! I don't blame them. Now the shelling of Travnik is getting far more frequent. Instead I took Wilkes and Co to visit the Echelon Workshop, into Vitez to UNHCR and The Pizzeria. Finally he addressed the Officers in the Gymnasium before he took a quick lunch literally as he was dashing off to see Morillon in Kiseljak. Whilst I was in the UNHCR Office I was asked if I could see Amnesty International about what was happening; I said 'Yes' but not just then.

What is happening in Travnik is beginning to worry me a lot. Wilkes had suggested that patrolling was necessary and so that is what I will do. WARRIOR patrols will commence tomorrow.

I spent a couple of hours in the afternoon together with Tim Furphy and Simon Ellis constructing an OPO. After that I issued a 'draft' to company commanders for any comments they may have before I finalise it. I have decided that the company/squadron commitments should be triangular: Escort Duties - Extended Area; Escort Duties - Local Area; and Guards and Duties. There would be 6 LOs, and an AI Pl and SCIMITAR Tp at short notice to move.

In the evening I went across to the PINFD House and watched a film on their video. Unfortunately I spent most of the film asleep.

Sunday 22 November

It was the BBC Overseas News which convinced me that I ought to go to Turbe as soon as possible. The 0700hrs bulletin this morning suggested that Travnik was about to be full with refugees again and I thought it high time that I actually assessed the situation in Turbe for myself. There had been much more shelling in Travnik than was normal throughout yesterday, Anders Levinson had visited me late last night worried about it all and Lord UK Po Army had suggested that I could patrol throughout my area - provided I did so in WARRIORS or at least SCIMITARS. COS HQ BHC agreed the plan and sent me a signal to back me up in case HQ BRITFOR did not. As I had washed I planned the operation. I decided to use Alex Watts and his Standby Pl, as well as two Scimitars, an ambulance and the recovery vehicle. Naturally I would use OA. We were to leave at 0930hrs and thus aim to be in Turbe about 45 minutes later. Martin Forgrave and Matthew Dunne Whalley were to wait off the local HVO/TDF at 0930hrs. I gave orders out at 0830hrs and then prepared myself for the trip.

I was writing a letter in my office at about 0945hrs when a tall, strong looking and mountaineered man came in. His name was Tom Geburt and he was CO RCR. Tom, together with his Ops Offr Andrew Butlers, had crossed the Serbian/Muslim line in Bugojno last night. He has spent the night in Kiseljak and was going back later today. We discussed lots of things - particularly opening up a route between us - maybe via Turbe/Komar. I gave Tom a letter to Colonel Galic, Serbian Commander in Donji Vakuf, asking him to stop using artillery on Turbe and Travnik before I rushed off to go to Turbe at 1030hrs.

En route to Turbe I was requested to stop at HQ HVO in Travnik. There I met Blavcik again. He asked me if I could bring back a couple of dead bodies from Turbe; apparently they were both UNPROFOR accredited once. I said I would do my best and went on to Turbe with the Column. There were no problems during the route and quite quickly we were in the centre of Turbe. I had ordered everyone under cover for the move in and kept that order in place as Olivier de Bavinchard (LO from COS HQ BHC), the RSM, Nick Stansfield and I debussed. Going into the Headquarters we noticed a dead (Serbian) soldier lying in a farm cart. To start with I thought this was one of the bodies - but I was wrong.

Inside a smoke-filled room I met Sulejman Leko, Commander of Turbe. He had been a teacher until a year ago. Sulejman told me that there was only one Command Post in Turbe. Only 2% of the fighters in Turbe were HVO. We were about 400-500 metres from the frontlines. He had 10 dead (many still lying in No-Man's Land) and he did not think it would be 'politic' to take back HVO dead. As this might cause trouble for Muslim/Croat relations I agreed not to do it. It was a fairly chaotic meeting but worthwhile as I gained the distinct impression that there was still life in the defence of Turbe. This I later reported to Brigadier Roddy Gordy-Simpson.

There was quite a lot of artillery and small arms fire taking place as we arrived and during my time in the Command Post. But the shells landed no closer than 250 metres away and no small arms fire seemed to be directed at us exclusively. Whilst talking to Sulejman



another older man joined us. This was Ante Prkacin, a General on the HVO/TDF Council. Prkacin is a Croat but he seems to have tremendous links to the Muslims too.

The journey back was not a problem. I stopped off in Travnik to brief Blascik on my lack of success over the bodies. Prkacin joined us and Blascik understood. Interestingly enough Kordich was there too. He greeted me well. Before leaving Travnik I gave Alex Watts instructions to stay there until 1730hrs as many are starting to say that the bombs do not land when we are there. I intend to patrol Turbe regularly from now on - at least in daylight!

I briefed Brigadier Roddy Lordy-Simpson on the outcome of the trip over the INMARSAT. In short I thought the fall of Turbe was not imminent, there were about 400-500 TDF soldiers there, and approximately 200 civilians. There was not a refugee problem as far as I could see. When I spoke to Tom Geburt yesterday he told me that he did not think the Serbians had any intention to take Travnik; in fact he suggested they would be content with what they have up to Turbe. I'm not so sure of that and think they will want Turbe at least. All will no doubt be revealed in time.

Monday 23 November

'Nora', our local HVO-owned gun is now 'speaking' up to 10 times a day. She is situated in a quarry about 1500 metres from Camp Vitez. Sometimes the whole place shakes during firing. What worries me is the seemingly inevitable counter-battery fire! We think 'Nora' is usually aiming at the Serbian artillery in the area of Plajenik.

I have now placed a guard on the UNHCR Depot in response to a request made by Anders Levinson. He was particularly worried about another HVO-owned gun which is relatively close to the Depot. When talking to Blascik yesterday I mentioned it and asked him, when the tactical situation allowed, for the gun to be moved further away from the Depot. Under the circumstances - HVO/TDF being so pressed - I didn't go in hard on the matter, but I simply mentioned it so as to register the point.

It seems we may soon have some helicopters. Commander John Bond and some SEAKING pilots have arrived to recon landing sites. I told John that I thought CASEVAC was about the only reason I could see for helicopters to fly in the area. After that, if they are serious, I would like to see them carry R & R pax to and from Split. It now seems we are going to get 15 days R & R with the first and last days of the package being the flight date to and from our destinations.

This afternoon Clive Newell turned up. He is Andrew Cumming's Civil Affairs Advisor and I spent some time with him explaining the situation here. Additionally the ICRC arrived - led by Yves Mauron. Yves invited me to have dinner with him in Zenica tonight and I was at the ICRC Office by 1830hrs. Denis, Michel and Claire were present with both Yves and myself. We went to Yves house which he shares with Michel. It was close to the Stadium in Zenica. I returned relatively early at 2300hrs - picked up by WD 2 Lawson in my landrover.

Tuesday 24 November

This morning I decided that it was time to go to Kiseljak again. I wanted to speak to Roddy Cordy-Simpson about the possibility of going hard for the route to Tuzla directly North from Sarajevo. Don Steele, the outgoing BRITFOR Signals Officer, followed me there. We left at 0800hrs. I had to wait awhile before I saw Roddy as he was in a meeting. He agreed with me that we should try up the main road and I suggested that we do a detailed recce tomorrow and have an attempt at driving up the route on Thursday. We also discussed the forthcoming visit of CGS and Roddy suggested that WARRIORS drive CGS around Sarajevo. On my return I passed all that to Andrew Cumming for clearing with London; later I was told 'no problems' - except that going into Sarajevo was a one off.

During the afternoon I saw Anders Levinson and spent an hour or so in HQ HVD talking to Mario's SIC about rumours that we had either 'spiked' HVD guns or blocked off their tanks. In the evening Anders and I appeared on TV Vitez together to state what we were doing from both of our perspectives.

I had a quiet night after dinner; a few drinks in the Mess and then to bed. Peter Armand of The Daily Telegraph was there and asked if he could follow me around tomorrow.

It's funny how the Army can get things so wrong. Currently the lockers they have sent to store our clothes in are stationary ones. That links to the fact that all our beds are single not bunk beds. The latest 'hip' phrase is 'BIF'; a Bosnian Induced Fuck-up! Perhaps such things are part of that!

Wednesday 25 November

Peter Armand did follow me around throughout the day starting from breakfast. He seemed alright, but I'll reserve judgement until I see what he has written.

Today I intended to go to Maglaj - with WARRIOR. Jamie Sage and Andrew MacDonald told me that I would bring down the two bridges that are used on the slip-track around the village of Seleg. I accepted their judgement but still said I would try anyway. En route I called in to see the ICRC as they wanted to know details of a Serbian helicopter that might or might not have crashed in the area some 2 months ago.

I took with me my WARRIOR, a SPARTAN, an FV 432, two SCIMITARS, my landrover and a Recovery Vehicle. At the bridges I took one look and decided that I would try it. It worked and so I drove straight into Maglaj - only stopping to leave the soft skinned vehicles behind. We positioned our vehicles around the Joint HQ and met Herzog Sulja inside.

Sulja told me that yesterday there was very fierce artillery strikes in Novi Seher. A young girl had been very badly hurt. A tank had been captured (T 55) and another destroyed. Alois was on the Front. They had been re-equipped with 'FAGGOT' (FT 18?). He was pleased as people were returning to the Old Town now; about 500

so far he maintained (questionable!). The Front had been pushed a bit further away from the town and in sum things were a little better. A helicopter had been brought down in the Testanj area. I reported this to the ICRC on my return.

Again the ICRC have invited me out for Dinner. Silly of me not to accept under the circumstances and so I have.

Thursday 26 November

Enver Hadzihasanovic, BiH 3rd Corps Commander based in Zenica, had requested me to meet him at 0800hrs. Simon Ellis had arranged the meeting to be in Camp Vitez and so by that time I was waiting outside for him. He was bang on time and I took him up to the Mess for the meeting. Whilst we talked he was given the option of coffee and whiskey; he took both - as did I. It was really just an introductory meeting and so I invited him to join us for dinner next week.

Immediately following on from that I had promised to brief the Press in the P INFO Centre and so I rushed around there in my landrover. I did so and then rushed back because Dalje Sahinovic, Leila's father, was waiting for me. Nobody in their right mind would want to keep that sort of man waiting for long. He just wanted to see me. Apart from generalities he repeated the accusation that General MacKenzie had slept with underage girls; I rather truculantly (and bravely!) reposted that personally I would prefer overage ones myself!

Tim Park had left earlier to set up our possible operation in the Visoko area. I departed at about 1030hrs to join him. Tim was still negotiating with the local commander (Kadir Jusic - 1DF) when I arrived and so there was a short delay. Then Tim came and got me and we went into Visoko to meet him. Tim had in fact tried to go across to the Serb side and had met two Serbs - but there was no chance that we could go further as there was a huge great ditch there and many mines. Kadir advised us to try going South from Breza.

We were guided around to Breza by a BiH guide and tried to strike South to Ilijas - again across the Lines. At Podlugovi we encountered the end of the BiH positions but try as we could neither Martin Thomas nor I could get the position's commander to move his mines. He insisted on orders from his Commander and I eventually said I would go and seek him out. As I walked back up the lines of WARRIORS some shooting and shelling was starting. At the Headquarters in Breza I was inside waiting to see the local Commander (who never turned up) when GA was attacked by an SPG-7 or some other kind of rocket. Nobody saw where it came from but it injured a young girl - who was rushed off with a small flesh wound. As it was obviously I was being stonewalled, and anxious to get on, I decided to go up to Vares.

Martin Thomas turned his column around (Tim had returned to Vitez) and we went North as the light faded. In Vares we found the local HQ HVO and they rather decently put some of us up whilst the others camped outside their hotel at Ponikva. Kate Adie was still with us and was allocated a bedroom. I shared mine with Martin

Thomas - except that Martin's bed was occupied by an HVO soldier before he got into it, and so he slept on the floor.

Friday 27 November

I had an ultra-sweet cup of tea for breakfast in the hotel. A UBRE and Jamie Sage turned up at 0830hrs. We took them in train for refuelling and route recon purposes. Tudor Ellis tried one route to Olovo whilst we tried another - due East. Our route was eventually stopped by a very bad bridge - so too was Tudor's. I turned the column around and we went high over the mountains from Drdo to Mizanovici, Ligatci and Solun. That worked although it was long, hilly and tortuous. But the bridge at Grid 042902 was almost impossible - it too narrow. The solution was to mount WARRIOR on one of the guide rails with one track whilst the other stayed on the floor. Difficult and at first dangerous but it worked. We then took the road into Olovo.

We had achieved quite a lot already as now I knew we could get to Olovo via Vares. Olovo was obviously a town at war with shelling very much in evidence. But there was no shelling when we entered it. En route we had almost pushed a Mercedes Car off the road; the driver refused to move it. It came as a considerable surprise for me then to discover that Fadil Kariencic's driver was also the IDF Commander in Olovo. Martin Thomas gasped it out when we saw him! I made all kinds of soothing noises and I think he was mollified. However he did not think we could/should try going directly up the road to Kladanj. He offered to guide us to Kladanj over the mountains but when it became obvious that was our original route we dismissed the guide.

This route took us from the Bridge at Grid 030960 to Milankovici and Brateljevidi to Kladanj. But the Bridge was our first concern. Jamie had told me it would not hold WARRIORS. In the event I gambled on it and over we went. We did the same over about ten more bridges en route. The rough rule of thumb was; five cross beams - Nemo Problema! We also got through both tunnels and I made it to Kladanj with a platoon of WARRIORS and 60; Martin having been sent back by me.

B Sqn 9/12L was in a small factory in Kladanj. It wasn't very nice but it was adequate. I spent very little time there before going off to Tuzla with Alan Abraham. As it was after last light we risked the main road and did so without any lights at all - dodgy! Bob Ryan and Mark Cooper were in Hotel Tuzla - and that's where we stayed too. Despite all the build-up Ryan's interpreter was not half as pretty as suggested! I had dinner with members of the ECMM.

Saturday 28 November

It was really nice to spend the night in a proper bed having had a decent bath first. After breakfast Bob Ryan took me to meet Hazim Sadic (COS BiH 2nd Corps). Apparently the Commander Zeliko Knez was away. I had a long chat with him using Ryan's interpreter and then headed back to Hotel Tuzla for a TV interview.

I was in a hurry to get back as I had been away for too long and so we left Tuzla at 1045hrs, paused briefly at Kladanj and then

drove back. En route I passed OA with the RSM and 'Tiny' Lawson. Jamie Sage had smashed his FV 432 into an approaching lorry - whilst he was driving it. Both Jamie and OA were waiting for the Police. The whole journey took 4hrs 30mins which I thought was brilliant. I came back through Vares and Breza.

Travelling in landrovers was far quicker and makes Kladanj almost accessible for a visit. My trip had allowed me to assess whether Kladanj should stay as a base; I decided it would. In addition I left Tudor Ellis' Platoon up there with Alan Abraham. I was a little disappointed with the UNHCR effort in Tuzla; their so-called warehouse is actually used by the BiH Army.

I had a lot of work to catch up on when I got back - especially answering letters.

Sunday 29 November

It was time I visited Gornji Vakuf and a few chance remarks by CSM Atherton last night at the O Gp were the catalyst for it. He had implied that B Coy were "forgotten". Thus I left with The OM and RSM at 0800hrs. We arrived in good time an hour later and I toured around the Base. It was fairly obvious to me that B Coy were underworked and so I decided to revise the deployment plan - not immediately perhaps but in the future at any rate. Alastair apologised profusely for CSM Atherton whom he said was acting entirely unguided by him.

After returning I had a quick visit to the POL Farm and then on to UNHCR in Vitez. There I spoke to Anders Levinson about the possibility of there being an official UNHCR Warehouse and Office in Tuzla. I would attach Bob Ryan and Mark Cooper to it if there were. As things stand we are taking aid up to Tuzla and the BiH Army is distributing it for us!

At 1400hrs I had a Feasibility Study Meeting with company commanders. I suggested that Tuzla should become a company base with an outstation in Kladanj. Gornji Vakuf might become an offshoot of Vitez. Everyone liked that idea, but I warned it may take some time to complete especially as it was dependent on the winter, bridges and the Serbs/Muslims. Jamie Sage's boys are going another recon on the bridge to Kladanj today.

Andrew Cumming visited today. He is with us for the next few days including CBS's visit. We discussed lots of things but not the latest Press offerings which were about Whitehall's concern over me as a personality cult figure I'm pleased to say.

Monday 30 November

The day started with me taking Brigadier Andrew Cumming to Maglaj in my WARRIOR. Andrew MacDonald had to do a recon of the place too and so it made sense for us to combine the trip. We motored up there with no problem starting at 0800hrs and were there by 0930hrs. I took Andrew Cumming directly into the Joint HQ and we met with Herzog. I gave him a bottle of Whiskey. Maglaj is very much more peaceful than at any time before and all I heard was the occasional sound of small arms from behind the hill to its East.

We came back at lunchtime and ate in Camp Vitez. Thereafter Andrew Cumming went off with the Standby Platoon to Turbe where there was a contact in so far as one section was engaged by 2 140mm mortars making some small impression on Choochew Armour.

Wednesday 2 December

Yesterday CGS came to Vitez. He was accompanied by Colonel Austin Thorpe (Col MO 3), Sebastian Roberts (MA) and Andrew Cumming. On arrival at 1500hrs he was briefed in the new Ops RA Setup and thereafter I took him for a tour of Travnik and Vitez. After a short stop for tea in the Mess I thereafter took him on a tour of Camp Vitez. CGS stayed in the Company Commanders House and that was where I dropped him off at 1750hrs.

Later we went to the WO's and Sgts Mess for drinks before we had another 'Up the Khyber' Style Dinner Night. This time I invited the local HVO and TDF commanders. Also this time the piper (LCpl Geary) was able to play and I had to drink the toast in one and place the glass upside down on the tray afterwards! I cannot remember going to bed but I was awoken by David Sherlock in time to go with CGS to Gornji Vakuf at 0650hrs. CGS eventually left Gornji Vakuf at 1000hrs. The visit seemed very successful and CGS left in very good heart. He told me that everyone had absolute trust in me and I was not to worry about what the papers were saying.

In the afternoon I stayed around the Base for most of the time. My head still hurts now - too much whiskey last night!

Thursday 3 December

I had intended to go to Kiseljak today but first thing this morning the Duty Watchkeeper informed me that Lt Col Mike Cornwall and a party of staff officers from Kiseljak were going to visit here. In consequence I decided to stay put here. Mike was here by 0900hrs and we gave him a standard brief. Thereafter I decided to take the party to Turbe.

By 1100hrs the Standby Platoon, 0A and 22B were ready to go with a party of 8 staff officers enclosed within. Just as we were leaving Camp Vitez along the main road Alex Watts' vehicle discharged a round - 30mm HE. I thought it was a backfire to start with but it soon became clear that the gun had fired. CSM Lawson checked the weapon and during the unload it fired again. Thankfully the gun was elevated for the second occasion as it would probably have hit the back of my vehicle. As it was I was standing directly underneath the gun when it went off for the second time. I returned Alex Watts and his platoon to Camp Vitez and ordered that proper procedures should now be followed.

0A and 22B went on into Turbe on their own with me leading. We drove into the centre of Turbe and found it to be relatively quiet - even having some people on the streets. But just as I was announcing this on the radio some incoming artillery began. A number of mortar bombs and a few artillery ones landed nearby - one very close to 22B. We returned after about 30 minutes in Turbe.

On my return I discovered that there had been a couple of shooting incidents close to camp. In the first an HVO truck had passed by the Camp and a soldier in the back had loosed off about 10 rounds over the School. In the second a civilian aid convoy had been shot up close to the garage. After lunch I decided I would go and let the HVO know about both incidents - as well as the accidental firing. I couldn't find Mario Cerkoz but remembered he was due to move to Novi Travnik when I last saw him. And so I drove (with Mike Cornwall and an interpreter called Suzanne) to the Cafe Grand in Novi Travnik. There I found Mario who was apparently pleased to see me. I met his new commander - Mario is now the 2IC of the Vitez\Novi Travnik Brigade. We drank slivovitz and then I returned back to Vitez Camp.

Tonight was the last evening that Andrew Venus is with me. He returns to UK tomorrow. Therefore I invited him to join me for dinner in Zenica. He drove and we took the PINFO landrover.

A soldier out running from HQ BHC was kidnapped today. HQ BHC reckoned it was the HVO. I supposed it was rather a compliment for them to ask us to help them recover the soldier - because of our local contacts with the HVO. Matthew Dundas-Whatley and Martin Forgrave went to see Kordich. He was most complimentary about the Dinner Night and a few hours later the Danish soldier was released. HQ BHC put it down to us.

Friday 4 December

I waited before going out today because I had promised Kate Adie that I would be around to say goodbye. Both she and Martin Bell, who is succeeding her, arrived for coffee. Kate was in a very

good mood; Martin Bell was whimsical! After they had gone I briefed Clive Newell (and Peter Black) - both Civilian Advisors - on the situation.

At about 1130hrs I went to Kiseljak because I wanted to check out whether HQ BHC really had contacted the Serbs about the Tuzla Convoy coming in from Belgrade. It was clear that this might not have happened and so I was not particularly happy about Alan Abraham's operation tomorrow.

In the evening I managed to speak to Alan. I told him that I was not convinced that all the appropriate people had been spoken to or that the ECMM officer on the Serb side would be in place. Alan said that from his local contact with the ECMM he would have communications with the convoy and that an ECMM officer would be travelling with it from Belgrade. Under those circumstances I said I was content for him to make the decision as to what should be done. I told him that I would keep well off his back but would like to be informed when he felt it appropriate. I wished him luck in going across the Lines towards Bijelina.

After dinner I fell asleep watching a film of the Kray Brothers on the Mess Video.

Saturday 5 December

As I suspected there was a problem over the Belgrade - Tuzla Convoy. When I awoke this morning Alan Abraham contacted me by telephone from Hotel Tuzla. It was a bad line but essentially he said that he had heard (from ECCM) that the entry point was no longer where we had planned but much further to the North. Apparently UNHCR, ECMM and the HQ BHC LO in Belgrade had changed all this without informing HQ BHC. To be honest I'm sure that they are doing their best but it is terribly frustrating. I told Alan that he was not to deploy to the North without further orders but that he had carte blanche otherwise. He could go to the original RV if he wished to do so.

Tim Park has gone up to Tuzla to have a look around this morning. We are thinking about putting a Company Group into the area and Alan is already looking at the Airport as a possible Coordinating Centre with immediate effect.

Whilst sitting in the Mess at Coffee this morning we started discussing how we might counter being threatened by mortars. After all, twice now, there have been deliberately targeted attacks against our patrols into Turbe. And as well as that 5 mortar rounds this morning landed amongst the PINFO convoy heading north from Kladanj. Having thought it through it seemed that we could probably engage the mortar base plate to the North of Turbe. Tim Furphy, Ops Offr 2, had seen the mortars firing at us. What we need to do is set the Serbian mortars up; when they fire next time we should be in a superb position to reply with our own six mortars which would be in position for precisely that purpose. However there are a few problems. To start with UN authority to even deploy mortars is vested only in the Force Commander - presumably General Morillon. After that, of course, national rules allow us to deploy mortars but not necessarily to fire them. As we are at the edge of the mandate anyway it seemed to me unlikely that I would get authority to do



anything like a mortar ambush. However it seemed to me a little bit of fun to feed the request into the system - just to try things out! There are a few factors which complicate it for those that will look at the problem higher up than me. To start with they could order me not to go into Turbe but that is a bit wet. On the other hand, if I do go into Turbe and they deny me the right to use mortars then they tie my hands effectively. After all someone might die because the Serbian mortarmen continue to fire at us unchastened by any response. For my part I could point out that I had asked for authority to use mortars - and it had been denied - ergo the Serbs got away with it, and continued to do so until they had achieved a kill. It would not be an easy problem for the Staff to solve and rather unfairly I took a certain amount of satisfaction in putting the matter upwards. I referred the matter first to HQ BRITFOR and thereafter to HQ BHC.

In the evening I went out to have dinner with Merdan, 2IC HQ 3rd BiH Army, in Zenica. By 2000hrs I was at The Metallurgical Hotel and there I met Merdan and his interpreter, a girl called Leila. We had a drink at the Hotel and thereafter went to the Cafe Horse. There we saw members of ICRC at another table - including Claire and Jean-Michel. During dinner there was a BiH Military Police visit and Merdan had to help the ICRC personnel out. Merdan told me that he had lost 480 soldiers under his command since the war started. On the subject of a possible 'stitch-up' between the Serbs and Croats - putting the Muslims out in the cold, he was coldly angry, remarking that if that happened there would be a World War. Leila did all the translating but she got progressively tired. At about 2315hrs Merdan drove me back to the Metallurgical Hotel where I spent the night.

Sunday 6 December

WO2 Lawson and LCpl Gill picked me up from the Hotel at 0830hrs and we travelled back to Vitez. Immediately I summoned Sgt Connolly to debrief on what had been said between Merdan and myself the night before.

Today is important as it is the tenth anniversary of the Ballykelly Bomb. We had a short and slightly moving Memorial Service at 1100hrs. Not only were the names of those killed read out but the Last Post was also sounded. I had ordered that no Press were to be present and so it was.

This afternoon at 1528hrs Alan Abraham managed to cross Serbian lines with 3 Pl (Tudor Ellis) leading. I'm not quite sure of all the details but it appears that B Sqn 9/12L encountered mortar and small arms fire as they did so. The Squadron drove on until it encountered the Serbs. Alan had given orders that if attacked, and targets could be identified, then fire could be returned. The important thing is that the Line was crossed by us. Eventually the Belgian Transport Company was met and they are spending the night in Serbian territory before returning to Tuzla. I'm thrilled to bits about it all.

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Apart from that excitement today Paul Scott of Bovis turned up. He apologised for not putting his camp here and suggested (again) that we might have two Landcruisers when they go. Orlando Fraser, who has started the Bosnian Winter Appeal, is also staying with us. I invited members of ICRC to have dinner with us to make up a small party.

Monday 7 December

The day started fairly early as I decided that I wanted to go to Tescañj. Matthew Dundas-Whatley had made some arrangements as the LO with that area as his responsibility and so he went on ahead.

I travelled with OA and my landrover. We drove North of Zepce and then crossed to Novi Seher where we met up with Matthew. At that point I abandoned the WARRIOR and drove into town with the landrover. The TDF Commander in Novi Seher is Lt Col Ivitea Jozic; strangely enough he is a Croat serving with the Muslims. He was also a former Yugoslav Navy Officer, speaks good English and is a whiz kid on satellite navigation. He commands the whole area and told me that an offensive was taking place as we spoke. That was certainly true; some round came into the town whilst we were there! But I think he meant that his soldiers were mounting an offensive. He also mentioned that a few days ago the Serbs had captured two of his soldiers, flayed their skins and then beheaded them!

From Novi Seher we travelled on to Tescañj. The track was certainly possible for WARRIOR - despite what I had been told. In the Town Hall of Tescañj I met Clanjak Muhamed, the Mayor, and also representatives of the towns of Dobroj and Teslic - both of which had been captured by the Serbs. I took part in a TV interview. Thereafter Matthew took me on to visit 110 (Usura) Brigade which is the (quite famous) HVO Brigade that fronts up to the Serbs just South of Dobroj. Initially we met with the Deputy Commander, Jelec Anto, but after a while the Commander arrived. He seemed about 24 years old. I returned south to meet the overall Muslim Commander, whose name I did not note, in Tescañj. Thereafter we travelled back to Vitez by 1730hrs.

The really good news is that Alison has had twin girls, Emily and Sophie! I am thrilled to bits for both her and Nigel. Lizzie passed a message to Joe Edmonds who telephoned Richard Waltier here. I wrote immediately to congratulate them both.

Tuesday 8 December

Today The Secretary of State for Defence, Malcolm Rifkind, visited. I left Vitez with my WARRIOR and landrover at 1115hrs taking Tim Furphy, Simon Ellis and Chris Leyshon (the Briefers) with me. We made good progress towards Gornji Vakuf until we met a work party blasting the road and there we were stopped in our 'tracks'. After a while and in order to get to Gornji Vakuf in time I abandoned the vehicles and walked over the rockfall. Meanwhile Alistair Rule sent his landrover to pick me up. I made it on time and the WARRIOR and original landrover followed on.

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The following people were with The Secretary of State:

Alastair Goodlad MP, Min of State FCO  
 Henry Bellingham MP, PPS to S of S  
 John Pitt-Brooke, PS/S of S  
 Ms Gill Samuel, Press Sec and Hd of Info MOD  
 Bill Reeves, AUS (C)  
 Brig David Jenkins, DMO  
 Maj Bill Cubitt, MA 2 CGS  
 Brig Andrew Cumming, COMBRITFOR

Over lunch in Gornji Vakuf, we briefed S of S with a package of Int, Concept and Ops. Thereafter took a quick tour around the base before getting into my WARRIOR for the trip to Vitez. The Press were all over the place - but I reckon this pleased S of S; especially when he was filmed in the WARRIOR. I like the man and think he's good news. En route to Vitez I heard on the radio that a car from the International Rescue Committee (linked to UNHCR) had been struck by fire in Visoko. We sent the Standby Platoon to pull them out; which they did. Twent rounds had struck the car.

Once here we showed Malcolm Rifkind the Ops Rm and Int Cell - to warm ourselves up as much as anything else as it was freezing in the turret - before he gave a Press Conference in the Gymnasium. After tea in the Mess S of S toured the Camp. Meanwhile General Namibia arrived, having crossed the lines at Bugjorno with Tom Geburt the Canadian Battalion's CO. Namibia and Rifkind chatted to each other in the Officers Mess for about 30 minutes.

By 1900hrs we were in the WOs and Sgts Mess for drinks. It was a pleasant evening after that. A 'Top Table' Dinner (Field Officers) was held in the Mess and most people went to bed pleasantly mellow!

Wednesday 9 December

I had to wake early at 0600hrs in order to have breakfast with S of S and then see him off after that. Malcolm Rifkind was up on time and away shortly after 0700hrs having stated that it had been a thoroughly worthwhile trip for him.

I did little for most of the morning until I decided to take Richard Waltier, the RSM and WO 2 Lawson into Zenica. We had a couple of drinks at The Horse Cafe before returning to Vitez. En route we distributed lots of sweets and chocolates to kids. Save The Children have given us lots of goodies as we are probably in a better position to distribute them than they are.

At the moment I am running into two problems. Firstly the British seem to allow me to consider the use of mortars and MILAN whilst the UN does not. Roddy Cordy-Simpson was not pleased to see MILAN being deployed on TV last night; that was for Alan Abraham's line crossing operation. Secondly I am unhappy about the prospect of a Dutch/Belgian officer commanding such line crossing operations - in accordance with the HQ BHC SOP. I decided to go to Kiseljak and thrash it out as the next convoy runs on Saturday. Having had an interview with The Washington Post and The News of the World WO 2 Lawson took me to Kiseljak where I discussed the matter with

Mike Cornwall. We decided to revisit the matter when I returned for an ICRC meeting with Roddy Cordy-Simpson on Friday.

Thursday 10 December

This morning I learnt that the house we were to takeover as the Officers Mess is no longer available for that purpose. I was hardly pleased having waited so long just for that and was rather shirty with Mike Winstanley about it all. I ordered that the second house - ground floor - was to be converted by 1800hrs.

As I was doing all that Doug Houston turned up and I spent some time with him and some other Overseas Development Agency types. After that it seems I may be able to get my hands on some Bovis Landrover Discoveries and some 'buckshie' accommodation which needs to come from Mechovich, South of Mostar. Doug Houston invited me to have dinner with him in The Horse Cafe during the evening. This I did.

Friday 11 December

I spent the night in the Metallurgical Hotel before being picked up by WO 2 Lawson and being driven to Kiseljak. There I had a meeting with Brigadier Roddy Cordy-Simpson and Jean de Courten, Director of Operations International Committee of the Red Cross. We discussed how to tackle the problem of displaced persons. It seems that ICRC's policy is that they should remain in their home locations and aid must be taken to them. This accords with UNHCR's own approach. Additionally we discussed the possible escorting of detainees from various places in Central Bosnia to safety. The first time we are due to do such a task will be next Monday.

After de Courten had left for Split I discussed the two matters I had given to Kiseljak the evening before last. On mortars and MILAN we are not allowed to even take them out of Camp apparently, and on C2 with regard to convoys we reached a satisfactory solution whereby the Escort Commander commands from the moment documentation is complete to passage complete over the lines of conflict.

Doug Houston had promised me the Landrover Discovery - provided I recovered it from Sarajevo Airport. Richard Rochester went to get it for me today - travelling in with the armoured escort from Kiseljak. Unfortunately he did not have a UN Identity Card and was stuck there for some hours until we got one to him. But by the early evening I had recovered the Landrover Discovery.

Prior to lunch I visited the Fuel Farm (appallingly muddy) and then the Garage. I took lunch in the tent at Vitez before going back to The International Hotel in Zenica to try and find Paul Scott from Bovis. He wasn't there, but Patrick Russell was. We drank slivovitz together and then I went to the ICRC to get plans for the detainee release next Monday. Whilst I was in the building WO 2 Lawson distributed chocolate to the local kids - it almost caused a riot.

Andrew Cumming turned up in the early evening. He had

discussed the use of mortars with Kiseljak and suggested that there would be a loosening of the conditions shortly. We shall see.

The 'Captains House' held a very good party during the evening. They did very well to get so many local girls to come. I went along for a while. When I got back to the Office I received the Regimental Christmas Card from Prince Charles. It was rather nice to get it.

Saturday 12 December

Whilst B Sqn 9/12L once again went across the Lines to the West of Tuzla, and did so successfully, those of us in Vitez went to the Rugby Match. We were playing Zenica Rugby Club in the main stadium in town. And what an occasion it turned out to be.

I left Vitez just after 1000hrs in my newly acquired Landrover Discovery - having cleaned it thoroughly again. At the Stadium I met the whole range of dignitaries, from Town Director to Corps Commander. We sat and waited whilst the Band played in the centre of the Stadium. Just before the match The Corps Commander and I went down and shook hands with the team. Having climbed back to the VIP Box the European and British National Anthems were played and the game got under way.

To everyone's surprise the teams were fairly well matched. We thought we were going to be wiped all over the floor as many of the Zenica Team had been withdrawn from The Front in order to play. In the end the final result was a loss: they scored 17 points whilst we took 16. Honours were about even and everyone was very well pleased. That was exactly the sort of result I wanted.

In The International Hotel afterwards we had a superb party. The Band played exceptionally well - rugby tunes and christmas ones as well. The Drums did a display which was terribly impressive and everyone was most relaxed. The affair ended with speeches and presentations at about 1730hrs.

I returned to Vitez changed out of the suit I had been wearing and went back for dinner with a group from the ICRC including Jean-Paul Corboz, the ICRC Delegate in Tuzla. I have heard very good things about him. I was picked up from Zenica very late - having spent the latter half of the evening with Radio Zenica at the top of The Metallurgical Hotel.

Sunday 13 December

I was fairly shattered in the morning and so had a little bit of a lie-in until 0800hrs. Thereafter I didn't do too much for most of the morning except that I inspected and approved the new Officers Mess. It is in a former discotheque at the entrance to Camp. Now all I need is a decent bedroom as I cannot really stay in my office for very much longer.

At 1330hrs I left Vitez to go and watch the football between the Battalion and a local side between Novi Travnik and Travnik. Like yesterday they really pushed the boat out - including a group in the interval!

Paddy Ashdown, Leader of The Liberal Democrats, arrived at 1730hrs. We briefed him in a standard way and then took him to the WOs and Sgts Mess for drinks. Thereafter we had supper in the tent - nothing too special as he did not want it that way. At least Ashdown does care and is taking time to find out what is going on.

Andrew Cumming returned from Tuzla today. He had been to a pre-arranged meeting across the Serbian lines this morning. Apparently Andrew MacDonald and Alan Abraham had arranged it. However, he did so by landrover and that certainly did not please me as it broke a cardinal rule; don't cross lines in non armoured vehicles. I registered my complaint to Andrew Cumming; he accepted he had done wrong and apologised!

Monday 14 December

I was in breakfast by 0700hrs as Paddy Ashdown had quite a busy day and I wanted to get started quickly. However Ashdown had to take part in The Today Programme and something for London Radio. He used the INMARSAT to do so.

We took the Standby Platoon and proceeded to Travnik and thence to Turbe. Previously Matthew Dundas-Whatley had cleared our arrival in Turbe with both HVO and TDF. Things were fairly quiet in Turbe except that there was one explosion and some small arms fire as we went into the Headquarters. Once in the Headquarters I allowed the Press to film for a few minutes before asking them to leave. The Commander stressed how valuable he felt our daily visits to Turbe were; because they tended to calm down the shelling. For my part I wanted to try and get a crossing over the lines and asked the Commander if he could contact the other side as I wanted to get across to talk to the Serbian Commander in Donji Vakuf. It seemed there might be some chance of this at first but after a while I realised that I was wrong.

On the way back we were mortared. The first bomb landed right alongside OA and I felt the blast of it - obviously very close. Those in vehicles behind me said that the whole vehicle was enveloped in smoke. A second bomb also exploded but further away. We kept going and didn't stop. I think it made Paddy Ashdown's day! Actually it was very close and could have done some real damage to us.

After that we visited the UNHCR Depot. Having changed from OA to my landrover we then went on to Zenica where we visited ICRC. After that Ashdown went on to Kiseljak. I returned to Vitez and had lunch before doing some paperwork.

The Officers Mess was opened tonight at 1830hrs. Considering all things it isn't bad at all and it will get better as we improve things. I had invited Doug Houston, Paul Scott and three members of ICRC to have dinner with me. In the event only Claire Podbielski turned up - but that was pleasant enough. WO 2 Lawson and Cpl Gill escorted her back to Zenica at the end of the evening.

Tuesday 15 December

To start with I went to Travnik. Together with Matthew Dundas-Whatley as guide I wanted to meet a man called Beba; a TDF officer responsible for exchanges of prisoners and bodies with the Bosnian Serbs. Beba was most welcoming - an ex-JNA officer who looked very switched on. We discussed how I might use his meetings (he's had 34 of them to date) in order to get some kind of dialogue going with the Bosnian Serbs. In the end we decided that I would write two letters. The letters would be addressed to the separate commanders of the Bosnian Serbs both north and south of Turbe. I wrote the first letter there and then as Baba had to go to a meeting at 1000hrs. The letters would ask for authority for me to cross the lines of conflict and meet with the respective commanders. In my first letter I asked if I might do this for the first time on thursday. Baba had to go to his meeting and so after a couple of slivovitz and a meat pastie we left for Vitez. I won't hold me breath on this approach succeeding - but then you never know. Beba did mention that in private conversations the Bosnian Serbs had told him how sick they were of the War and how they wanted it stopped by Christmas.

Pausing briefly in Vitez we then went on to the area of Zepce/Zavidovici. In Zepce Matthew took me to the Headquarters of the TDF where I met the Commander. He looked tired and worn out. After that we travelled on to Zavidovici where I met both the HVO and TDF commanders. The TDF Commander was by far the most impressive. The main aim of my trip was to ascertain whether it was worth my while trying to establish a main route from Zavidovici to Ribnica (where we were contacted by the Serbs) and thence on to Bandovici/Tuzla. Having been up there I believe the problem is just too difficult at the moment. Contrary to what I had heard Ribnica is still occupied by the Bosnian Serbs and the whole road (for at least 15 kms) is seriously mined/blocked.

Returning to Zenica I went to see Action Internationale Contre la Faim where there were some very nice girls. The whole operation was being directed by Martine Cajapano who many had advised me I should have met before. I agree; she is a thoroughly sensible and nice person. They asked me if I could provide an intelligence briefing of the area. I suggested they arrived tomorrow at 1800hrs and that they stayed for dinner thereafter. They agreed and five members of AICF will come.

ITV News (Robert Moore) invited me for dinner in Kiseljak and so I took WO 2 Lawson and Cpl Gill with me. It was a good evening - including a very lively debate with Robert Fox on the subject of the requirement for a Peacekeeping Doctrine. I agree to talk to the Radio 4 Programme 'Today' at breakfast time tomorrow.

Wednesday 16 December

This morning I started my day with the 'Today' Interview. It was pre-recorded at 0745hrs and I presume it went out later in the programme. I spoke to Brian Redhead - mainly about the conditions facing us here.



Later I received the most welcome news that Salko Beba thought a meeting between myself and the Serbs would be possible tomorrow. We made preliminary arrangements for it all. The meeting is due to take place at Boriku which is 800 metres West of Turbe.

Paddy Ashdown did not make it out of Sarajevo on the airlift and so he came back to us at lunchtime. John Donnelly then took him off to Split using my Landrover Discovery.

In the evening <sup>u</sup>Start Hall of Granada Television turned up. He is doing a 30 minute programme on 1 CHESHIRE to be screened at Christmas.

Thursday 17 December

At 0900hrs I gave orders for the meeting West of Turbe. The Standby Platoon (CSgt Sheridan) deployed first at 1000hrs and then I followed up with three landrovers, including Matthew Dundas-Whately, Nick Stansfield, RSM Stevens, WO 2 Lawson and WO 2 Cussack. Turbe was remarkably quiet; the ceasefire held properly from 0800 - 1600hrs in the event. At exactly 1100hrs we took the Komar Road out of Turbe. We crossed through two BiH minefields and then the third was a Serb one. Beba moved the mines himself before we drove through. About 800 metres though the Serb position (Grid 048011) there was an old Cafe (ruined) beside a swimming pool. This was where the meeting was due to take place.

The Chief Negotiator for the Serbs was Captain Milutin Gruicic, Head of the Exchange Commission. Mladen Arezin, Rodogub Tryuga, Vaso Lukic and (a woman) Mira Jokanovic were the other Serbian representatives. I talked at length about the vital task they were doing, how everyone wanted peace, how the war would solve nothing as everyone had to live together anyway, how I needed to meet all parties in order to form a balanced view and how aid needed to be taken to the Serbian areas as well. They warmed up as the meeting progressed - which was more than I did as it was freezing. They said they would try and arrange a meeting for me with the Commanders - who were away at the moment. Finally they also agreed I could attend any of their meetings - the next being 1100hrs on 24 December. At about 1300hrs the meeting broke up. There was a short pause for photographs and then we retraced our steps across the lines. This time I helped Beba replace the mines he had moved on the way in - to everyone's amusement! Once back in Turbe the Commander there insisted on giving me lunch - which was in a freezing hall!

Eventually at 1450hrs we left Turbe; the ceasefire was still holding. Unfortunately the people we met were not the right ones to discuss a truce over Christmas. I will have to leave that for the meeting with the Commander - if, of course, that comes off. However all told it was a most successful event and I felt very pleased about it. We have crossed the Serbian lines without too much fuss. Now we must consolidate on that.

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Friday 18 November

Today is Lizzie's birthday. I tried to telephone her but she had gone out - apparently to Hannover; hopefully to get her birthday present.

My first stop today was to Major Beba. Firstly I wanted to thank him for all his help and then secondly I wanted to assess exactly how I might get across the Lines again. Beba felt that I might be able to get on an Exchange Meeting on Sunday where I could meet the Commander of the area to the North of Turbe. Additionally he felt there may be a chance I could meet the Commander of Komar on Monday. Under the circumstances I decided I would not be able to go to Split and had to stay here. Beba invited ten officers to have dinner with BiH Forces tomorrow at 1700hrs.

Colonel Filipovitch, HVO Commander, was next on the agenda. I went to see him in HVO HQ at Travnik. He assured me there were no problems between us at the moment and he was very happy with all that was going on. After that I tried to find Blascik in Vitez as I had to discuss the rebuilding of bridges West of Vares; in particular those bridges under HVO control. Blascik was in Kiseljak and so I failed there.

At 1815hrs I telephoned Highgrove House to talk to the Prince of Wales. We discussed the situation and he said how well we were doing which was nice of him. The Colonel in Chief suggested that he wanted to come out here but was absolutely forbidden from doing so by the Government.

In the afternoon I visited AICF and ICRC. Doug Houston and a group from ICRC including Iris, Jean-Luka, Claire, Denis and his wife had dinner with me in Vitez during the evening.

Saturday 19 December

I waited for Lord Owen until about 0900hrs but it became obvious he was not going to come today - maybe tomorrow. Therefore I decided I would head off for Vares to try and right what had gone wrong the night before last. Sgt Gilbert, Tech Sgt C Coy, had had an incident in which he had given a lift to 3 soldiers and then been lifted by the HVO Military Police. I took the Discovery and my landrover with me. The journey was uneventful and in Vares I asked to see the Commander, Emil.

I opened by apologising for the incident wholeheartedly. Sgt Gilbert has acted like an idiot - most of all in not protecting his soldiers during the incident. Emil accepted my apology. After that I talked about improvements to bridges in the area and was referred to Blaskic for authority. Thus having finished in Vares I drove back to Vitez and went to see Blaskic. He agreed the authority and so now we are in a position to start improving routes West of Turbe.

This evening I was entertained to dinner (starting at 1700hrs) by the TDF Travnik. We had the Party in The Logistics Centre in Travnik. It went on until about 1930hrs and could have been worse. At the end the officers that went were given small presentations and I made a short speech of thanks. I spent the evening in the Mess thereafter.

Sunday 20 December

I slept well last night. Today I was determined to see what I could do about getting across the Line again. In much the same formula as last time Matthew Dundas-Whatley went to see Beba at 0830hrs whilst I gave orders out at 0900hrs. This time though I decided that one Press vehicle might be allowed to follow us and so the Press were present for orders. At 0940hrs Matthew telephoned to say that the meeting was to go ahead - despite a few breaches of the ceasefire that was supposedly in place since 0800hrs. The Standby Platoon commanded by Paul Gill took position in Turbe and then we followed it in. This time we took the Vlassic Road out of Turbe and on the outskirts of the town we paused for a while at the BiH Front. It seemed quite well prepared and the soldiers looked fairly competent to me. Whilst at the BiH Front I gave an interview to ITV and was just talking about the ceasefire when a machine gun fired nearby. I'm pleased to say I didn't jump - just turned slightly and said that there were exceptions to the ceasefire of course!

After a while we cleared some anti-tank mines over the road and then drove for about half a mile until we met the Serbs. This time there was no meeting in a house. They told me that I should try to talk to their higher authorities through Kiseljak in order to get authority to meet. I got the impression that this might be possible (and put it to Kiseljak as soon as I returned). Bebe tried to look for some bodies but the mist was down and the effort would have been very dangerous. After a little mucking around we returned to Turbe where the Commander gave us lunch in his Headquarters. Only when we finally left Turbe did I recall the Standby Platoon from their position on the Front Line.

Jim Hooper of Jane's Defence Weekly came back with us - having been over the far side for a few days. He has met the Commander of 122 Bde BSA at his Headquarters in Vitovlje. Trivic also advised me to talk to the Mladic through Kiseljak if I wanted to meet him.

In the afternoon I went over to inspect my house. It looks super and big - but I flooded the floor of the living room and kitchen by turning on the washing machine.

Monday 21 December

I met the company commanders at 0800hrs this morning in the Officers Mess. We reviewed the situation as we saw it and made a few decisions about what we should do next. In short we decided:

To roulement through Tuzla after each company has been there for 6 weeks. A Company is to go there on 26 December.

The Tuzla Company will have three armoured infantry platoons and one SCIMITAR troop. It will be based at the Airfield.

The Gornji Vakuf Company is to keep two armoured infantry platoons but lose some of it Sp Coy attachments to Vitez to help with Guards and Duties here.

The Guard Commitment at Vitez must be reviewed.

After the conference I took John Ellis, who I have removed from P INFO, up to the area of Visokó, Vares and Olovo. He is to set up an LO Team for that area. En route I called in at various headquarters finally finishing up at Olovo. In fact when we arrived and throughout our stay Olovo was being shelled by artillery. We estimated that about 10 - 15 shells fell whilst we were there. Just outside Olovo we met the ICRC (Claire Podbielski) and we escorted them into town. We escorted them out too. I was back in time for the 1700hrs conference. At that I discovered that Orlando Fraser had been hurt in a bad car crash last night. Currently he is in Zenica Hospital and tomorrow he will be moved to the MST. In the evening I telephoned Orlando's mother, Lady Antonia Fraser, to let her know he was alright.

Tuesday 22 December

I left for Redoubt, the Sappers Camp in the Mountains, at 0830hrs. Brigadier Roddy Cordy-Simpson was with me in the Discovery. John Major was visiting Bosnia and he couldn't get up as far as Vitez in the time available. I thought that was a mistake but who am I to reason why? Anyway we had to travel 3 hours to get there. It was all a bit of an anti-climax in the end. Major looked absolutely tired out. He took a look around a stand of WARRIORS and then chatted to the lads before distributing some musical tapes. He seemed a decent enough guy and told me that I was to appear on TV as often as possible. He said he was a little dismayed not to have made it all the way to Vitez. Roddy Cordy-Simpson and I returned to Vitez by 1800hrs.

Wednesday 23 December

This was not a particularly significant day. I sorted out the house a little as Andrew Cumming came for the night. In addition I had a small dinner party in the Mess during the evening.

Claire Podbielski managed to secure the release of about 60 people from Vissoko Prison today. She did amazingly well in my opinion.

Thursday 24 December

The main effort for today was to cross the Serbian Lines again in the hope that I could make contact with Serbian Commanders. Already Kiseljak had informed me that Banja Luka would not agree to such a thing but I had been back to them and told HQ BHC to try again - which in fairness they did.

Beba was crucial to success once again. A ceasefire was imposed from 0800hrs and we deployed into Turbe by 0930hrs. This time we were slightly earlier than normal as Beba wanted to use the time to find the body of a Serbian soldier in the area to the North-West of Turbe. To start with we went to Suljeman Leko's Headquarters and shortly after that drove off to a small village to the North of Turbe. There we left the vehicles and, proceeded by a White Flag with a Red Cross on it, went into No Mans Land where after about 25 minutes uphill walk we found the body. It was well frozen and we pulled it in case it had been booby-trapped. The poor devil seems to have been killed by a shot to the head in combat. Certainly he still had his assault rifle with him. We put him into

a body bag and carried him back to the Serbian lines. Once there we left the body and walked back across to the Bosnian Lines. Both going out and coming back we had to step carefully for fear of mines. There were at least 3 dug in Anti Tank mines on the track and also a trip wire.

Having found the body we then drove back to Leko's Headquarters where we were forced to undergo another Christmas meal. After a while we mercifully escaped across the lines again - this time back to the Cafe we had used on our first crossing. The format was much the same except that this time I arranged for a stove to be taken to keep me warm. To my delight the Deputy Commander of 19 Brigade Bosnian Serb Army turned up. His name was Major Mico Poletan. I greeted him and asked him for a truce from midnight tonight until midnight 7-8 January (after the Serbian Christmas). I stressed that this should not be a problem as a truce was already in existence; all we needed now was restraint on all sides. In the end I gave him a bottle of whiskey and a Regimental Plaque. The whole business was filmed by the BBC - to the delight of Jon Simpson. I was very pleased indeed. At least unofficial contact has now been made with the Serbs.

Friday 25 December

The day started with 'Gunfire' delivered to the soldiers at 0630hrs and so we had to be up very early indeed. After that I drove with the RSM and Adjt to Gornji Vakuf. We spent an hour or so with members of B Coy before returning to Vitez in time for the 1100hrs Christmas Service. I read the lesson in the Gymnasium. Drinks with the WOs and Sgts Mess followed in our new Officers Discorama. The Band led the collective messes to the Cookhouse where we served lunch to the soldiers in two sittings.

During the afternoon I spent quite a lot of time preparing my house for a dinner party. It is still far too cold for comfort. I had telephoned Lizzie and the kids very early in the morning. In the evening the Master Chef delivered Christmas Dinner to the house and I had a quiet but nice dinner party for Richard Waltier, Martyn Thomas, David and Sarah Stuart-Smith (Feed the Children - next door) and Claire Podbielski.

Saturday 26 December

The Fight for The Key to the Kyber Pass took place today from 1230 - 1330hrs. It was an impossible task for the Officers to get anywhere near the Key; about 50 sergeants blocked off the small room in which the Key was positioned on the far wall. I took part in a minor way - suffering a considerable blow to the nose - not broken though. All in all it was a very good 'Fight' and went down very well. Nobody was seriously injured although the Sergeants Mess did suffer in fabric terms. A sledge hammer was used to break through the Wall and at one point there was some suggestion that a WARRIOR might do so. I stopped that.

This morning Lieutenant Justin Freeland was wounded in the upper left arm as he was crossing the Front Lines East of Tuzla. He was waiting in the RV prior to going up to the Lines when three mortar rounds landed. Two BiH soldiers received minor wounds; his was more serious and required surgery here in Vitez. The whole

matter of mortars and MILAN is something which really bothers me now. Despite all my pleas to, at least deploy them, I am still refused by Kiseljak. Andrew MacDonald, in Tuzla at the moment, had written formally to ask me to do something about the use of support weapons even before this happened. However there is very little I can do beyond what I am doing now. I have pressured as much as I can and been told to obey orders!

In the evening we had a most successful dance in the Officers Mess. I thoroughly enjoyed it and put up two ICRC staff in my house after the dance was over.

Sunday 27 December

Those of us staying in my house stayed in bed until 1000hrs as we had not gone to sleep until 0300hrs last night. I cooked us an English Breakfast of sausages, egg and bacon. The girls who had stayed then went off to see Orlando Fraser in the MST. Orlando is returning to UK tomorrow. He is being CASEVACed and is likely to have to fly at low level as he still has a drain in his lung.

During the afternoon I went to watch the Battalion Football Team playing Vitez - a loss! After that I went to have tea with the ICRC in Zenica. I took Richard Waltier with me.

Jim Davidson arrived this afternoon. He gave a performance in the Garage between 2000 - 2100hrs which was very well received by most people. I wasn't quite so keen as I found a lot of his jokes just a little too crude - and that's saying something for me to state that.

I was a little upset by a telephone call I received from Andrew Cumming. He chastised me for not following - up his initial contacts to the East of Tuzla. To be fair I think I am at fault and could have put more effort into it but I was a little hurt as he seemed to imply that lack of contact with the Serbs may well have contributed to Justin Freeland's injury. He also told me to fortify the Base properly; and just for good measure that I may well be back under TACCON soon - whatever that means! To be honest the telephone conversation hurt me - especially the implication that lack of contact just might have contributed to Justin's injuries.

Monday 28 December

I said goodbye to Jim Davidson at 0830hrs. He still looked very tired. He asked me to meet him in London for a drink at the end of the Tour! I think it unlikely somehow. He would not have an easy trip back as the snow has now made driving conditions very hazardous indeed. In fact during the day we had 3 accidents; none involved bad casualties although one resulted in a WARRIOR overturning.

Matthew Dundas-Whatley spent most of the morning trying to fix up a meeting with the Serbs. In the event he went along on the planned meeting beyond Turbe without me because I had to stay for Roddy Cordy-Simpson's visit. Roddy came at about 1130hrs and we

discussed the sticky subject of mortars and MILAN again. I am now convinced by the argument that we should try to avoid using them if possible - and I said so at the Conference at 1700hrs. I ordered that mortars and MILAN were not to be deployed. I also discussed my 'bollocking' from Andrew Cumming with Roddy. He was most supportive and I felt much better for so doing.

Tuesday 29 December

Rather a quiet day for me at least. HQ BRITFOR continue to be obsessed with withdrawal plans; I wish they were a bit more positive about what we are doing here rather than how to get us out. At least HQ BHC is more on side in this respect. I telephoned Andrew Cumming in the afternoon to report that I hope to cross the Serbian Lines with OP CABINET on Saturday. The ECMM are trying to fix up a meeting then. I also told him that we intended to harden the area of the MST and Ops Rm as well as dig in some containers as protection.

At 1530hrs Iris Wittwer and two men called Patrick visited for a briefing and tea. Sadly Claire was not with them as she was in Maglaj. I understand she is not very well.

On the Welfare telephone I also telephoned Aunt Eileen and the Bartletts; it costs nothing and so why not? I have decided that two members of the mess staff may move into my house. They will occupy the top floor and 'do' for me. Jonsey returns from leave today and Pte Platt will move in with him.

Wednesday 30 December

Again this was a fairly idle day by comparison with some. There is a great deal of work going on now to harden the Base here with the lower floor of the building being strengthened - particularly around the MST and Ops Rm. I telephoned back home to speak to Lizzie but she was out; instead I talked to both children. Lizzie has been asked if she would be interviewed by The Mail on Sunday; I have no objections about that at all. It's up to her.

In the afternoon 4 Tp B Sqn 9/12L, under op con A Coy, were severely attacked on the road coming from Tuzla, just before Kladanj. The attack included BOFORS firing in the direct fire mode as well as indirect fire. Martyn Thomas suggested that tomorrow he would deploy Mike Dooley's Platoon along the route in advance of the A Coy Column going up to Tuzla - commanded by David Sherlock. If the same thing happened again then he would be in a good position to do something about it. I agreed with him and told Martyn to get it organized. After that I warned Andrew Cumming and Mike Cornwall of what we intended to do.

Thursday 31 December

Another fairly itchy-bitsy day. I spent a lot of the morning relaxing by taping music onto tapes for my new machine. Whilst I was doing that I did a little bit of checking around Vitez Camp to ensure I was happy with things. I was.

I had a bath in the afternoon as the water in my house has been off now for 2 days; I used P INFO's house. The pipes in my house have frozen solid. At night the temperature drops drastically; so much so that as many people as possible are now in the School Building for sleep.

In the evening we had a New Year's Eve Party which was great fun. I put up a whole batch of people in my house overnight.

Friday 1 January 1993

Having made bed very late I did not wake until 0845hrs when, together with Ptes Jones and Platt, I made breakfast for my houseguests. I left before them at 1015hrs as I had to get up to Tuzla to visit A Coy. I had three main points for going to Tuzla. First I wanted to see what A Coy accommodation looked like. Second I wanted to meet the BiH Comd of 2nd Corps. And thirdly, I wanted to try and set up meetings with the Serbs on the far side of the lines of conflict.

ITN were due to travel with us but they rapidly fell behind in their 'new' armoured landrover. Although the weather was now very severe with extremely bad snow en route we managed to make it to the airfield at Tuzla by 1630hrs; which was not bad going considering we only started at 1045hrs.

A Coy were in excellent accommodation. The offices were ideal - in good condition and better than Germany. The boys had decent barrack blocks which were inevitably a bit primitive when it comes to lavatories but they are just about warm. And the cookhouse was ideal - warm, clean and a good spot for the boys to meet to watch the Satellite TV. In addition the facilities for the vehicles were good too - including an excellent hangar into which the WARRIORS could go.

After that we travelled on into Tuzla where I occupied Room 719 of the Hotel Tuzla. In the hotel I met up with Jean-Paul Corboz the ICRC Delegate. The Press in the shape of Anna Pukas, Chris, Giles and Simon were also there. We had dinner together and then I went to Jean-Paul's room where we had a few drinks. I fell asleep there and so excused myself and went to bed.

Saturday 2 January

This was an early start day and I woke at 0540hrs. I had Richard Waltier, Tim Furphy, Nick Costello (interpreter) and Tyrone Hilary with me. We left the hotel at 0620hrs bound for the Airport. By 0700hrs we were there eating breakfast in the cookhouse. The Airport is very convenient for OP CABINET; it is only about 25 minutes drive from Kalesja which is the front line crossing place. The Crossing to pick up the Belgian Convoy was due to take place at about 0900hrs. In mechanical terms we are utterly dependent on the ECMM who have teams on both sides of the Crossing; the ECMM Teams were led by an ex-Irish Guards Officer called Tom Colebourne-Malpas whom I liked greatly.

However the Serbs appeared very twitchy. To start with they didn't want the Press to cross. And after that they said they were not prepared to have the Commanding Officer either. Reluctantly I agreed with Tom's advice that I should wait on this side. However Nick Costello went over as interpreter; and he took with him Cpl Clark INT CORPS. In the event Matyn Thomas, who was commanding the Operation, only had time to pick up the Convoy and return. He allowed Nick Costello and Cpl Clark to remain on the far-side with the ECMM Team there. His intention was to pick them up when the re-crossed later. For my part I was less than happy about this - especially as the Convoy never made it back that day in the event. Nick and Cpl Clark remained with the ECMM Team overnight - which gave me a certain amount of worry to say the least.

As I could do nothing I returned to Hotel Tuzla by lunchtime and spoke to the Senior UNMO; a Belgian officer who was behaving very badly indeed. I pointed out that this was my area and he must work with Martyn Thomas. Later in the evening I saw Sadic the Deputy Commander 2nd BiH Corps in his office. Sadly Knares the Commander was away.

The good news later in the day was that a meeting was arranged by Nick Costello - but tomorrow. I did not know who the meeting was going to be with or where but it was worth doing it. That meant my return to Vitez had to be delayed by 24 hours - which was acceptable under the circumstances.

Sunday 3 January

We left Hotel Tuzla at 0800hrs and picked up Martyn Thomas and the LOs (Bob Ryan and Mark Cooper) at the Airfield before proceeding to Kalesja. There we met Tom who cleared our crossing. We simply drove for a couple of miles to the far side. The snow was quite severe and it worried me. But thankfully there on the other side was Nick and Cpl Clark with the ECMM Team. They had spent the night in a First Class Hotel in Zvornik - courtesy of ECMM.

Nick told me that we were to go to the Brigade Headquarters at Sekovici and so this is what we did. It was amazing to go back through Caparde and Sekovici which I had visited on my first recce. I never thought I would see them again.

At Sekovici we were told that the Brigade Commander had had to go and it was suggested that we drove on to the Headquarters of the Drina Corps in Vlasenica; that being about 18 kms further on. This pleased me greatly and so we drove on as fast as possible. We were never escorted once! Our three vehicle convoy consisted of my Landrover Discovery, my FFR landrover and the LOs landrover.

On arrival in a snowbound Vlasenica we were met at a crossroads by a large imposing man called Skocogic Milutin, a Colonel who was the Deputy Corps Commander. He took us to a disused factory where we talked for about 45 minutes. He was much in control, listened politely but made his own points well too.

My three points were. Stop mortaring/shelling convoys particularly North of Kladanj. He accepted that they sometimes did so but would not if they had advance notice of their arrival. This



is difficult if not impossible to achieve. The second point I made was to discuss the prospect of an LO being placed at the HQ Drina Corps. He was happy with this - provided it was agreed by Pale (HQ BSA). Thirdly I tried to set up a weekly liaison meeting between the Tuzla Company Commander and the BSA as a part of OP CABINET. Again Milutin agreed with me that it might be possible.

It took us until 1515hrs to get back - the weather was deteriorating rapidly. At the Airfield we had a quick bite for lunch and then we set off back to Vitez. Amazingly we managed to get through remarkably quickly and were back here (having started at 1600hrs) by 2115hrs.

Monday 4 January

This was a fairly quiet (recovery) day for me. In the morning I sorted out some paperwork and rang a few people in UK on the telephone. And in the afternoon I had my hair cut. Anna Pukas did it in the PINFO House. Apparently she used to be a hairdresser and was doing a few other people as well. I also went to Zenica to see if ICRC could locate a Serbian Captain who might, or might not, be in Zenica Prison. No joy there.

Tuesday 5 January

All the lavatories are in the process of being renovated - and there were very few sit-down ones anyway - and so I now take my constitutional in a freezing cold tent into a bucket! I suppose that's fair enough as all the soldiers have been doing this for some time now.

Today the RB-44 arrived; the LO Team with dedicated communications which has been placed under TACCON so that I can communicate from wherever I am. I have decided that it should go to Tuzla in time for next week's OP CABINET; just in case Martyn Thomas is able to have the coordination meeting with the BSA. We have still heard nothing.

I am really pleased with Staff Sergeant Flower who has spent 5 days recovering a WARRIOR from where it overturned in a stream near to Kladanj. I passed him on the mountain path as I came back from Tuzla the other evening and he was in fine spirits. He's an excellent example of what a SNCO should be and deserves some recognition. But he already has the BEM.

Work on hardening the Base has proceeded at a rapid pace and now we have protected almost all of the lower ground floors by putting containers and other protective blast walls in place.

Wednesday 6 January

At lunchtime I drove into Zenica to see Iris Wittwer of ICRC; I wanted to discuss the matter of ICRC representation at prisoner exchange meetings. Whilst I was with Iris, Anders Levinson turned up. He had just returned from his Christmas leave. Anders proposed that we all went out to lunch together and so we did - taking Lizalotte and Claire with us too. We had lunch in a Pizzeria and it was not very good either.

At 1400hrs we all went to the UNHCR Depot in Zenica to discuss the matter of the loss of IRC's car last Sunday evening. Apparently about DM83,000 were also taken. It looked like the whole affair was a stitch-up by the Mayor of Travnik. Indeed the Mayor himself arrived at 1500hrs to discuss the matter. During the meeting I was rather pointed with him - suggesting that the hold-up had occurred on BiH territory and they should know something about it. I then left - to allow Anders to pick up the pieces! In fact what happened was that the IRC representatives - Michael Stievater and John Fawcett - went over the top after I had gone. They accused the Mayor of being an incompetent administrator and apparently worse. Anders phoned me later and we decided that we must go and see the Mayor - Muhamed Curic - tomorrow.

Thursday 7 January

First thing this morning I was at the Garage for breakfast. I wanted to see the boys very early in the morning; many were a little surprised that I was there. I done good by going!

I met Anders Levinson at 0830hrs at the old UNHCR Office in Vitez. We travelled together to see Muhamed Curic, Mayor of Travnik. I apologised for my apparent rudeness yesterday and we put the matter straight. We still want an official report though - about what happened to the IRC car.

Whilst in Travnik I also went to see Major Beba to discuss the matter of prisoner exchanges. The Bosnian Serbs have refused to have us present on the next exchange and so Beba has refused to go along with them. I agreed with Beba that I would try again to get authority for such meetings from Pale. Thus almost straightaway afterwards I drove to Kiseljak where I pressed Mike Cornwall to keep going on getting us, across the lines and an LO in Vlasenica. I returned to Vitez having eaten too much lunch.

In the evening together with Richard Waltier, WO2 Lawson and Claire Podbielski we joined Doug Houston for a meal in The Horse Cafe. After dinner Claire invited us back to her flat for drinks which was lovely.

Friday 8 January

Anna Pukas has written an article for yesterday's Daily Mail which is causing a furore here. The headline is enough as it matches General Mourillon against me: "This Town ain't big enough for the two of us". It went on to say how Morillon had banned me from Sarajevo. Although the article was factually correct in many ways it has caused considerable difficulties; not least for myself with General Morillon and BRITFOR. To say the least it is highly insensitive. I'm worried by the matter but am not sure what I can do about it. One thing is clear and that is that it will further strain relations between Andrew Cumming and myself.

Andrew Cumming is COMBRITFOR but the Press do not concentrate on him; thus he's at least a tiny bit resentful of me. I can understand that. I wonder if I could do a little bit more to try and avoid this resentment - perhaps by biting my lip more.

It started raining and then froze later in the afternoon. And as a result I put my landrover into a ditch from which I had to be recovered by the wrecker. Thankfully the landrover was undamaged as I would hate to have to go in front of the Brigadier!

During the evening a Vice President of Bosnia was assassinated just outside Sarajevo Airport. He was being escorted by the French Commanding Officer at the time. As a result tensions are very high indeed and all convoys have been cancelled for tomorrow.

Saturday 9 January

At 0900hrs we held a conference to decide what we should do as a result of the the assassination last night. In short we decided that we would largely carry on as normal - except that some sentries were doubled, our security arrangements were checked again, we should rehearse actions on artillery attack and the situation should be kept under review. Doug Houston was present; he is on his way to Split in 'our' Discovery.

The weather is still very treacherous and ice covers the roads. I wish I had a Discovery as their road holding is absolutely brilliant; the sooner BOVIS sort themselves out the better. When they go Doug has promised me a Discovery from them.

In the afternoon I went to visit ICRC and UNHCR in order to liaise with them on our reactions to last night's incident. At UNHCR I met Jose Mendeluce, the head man from Zagreb, who was visiting. He was in company with Anders and that lovely Japanese girl whom I met at The Park Hotel in Split right at the start of my tour. I invited them all to have dinner with me on Monday night.

At night I went out to dinner with Denis and Pascale; spending the night in Zenica. WO 2 Lawson and Cpl Gill picked me up in the morning. We ditched the landrover whilst travelling back.

Sunday 10 January

At lunchtime I went into Zenica with some milk and eggs. I had promised Claire Podbielski that I would get her some and so I delivered them to her.

Today Alun Jones (replacing Alistair Rule) and Philip Jennings (replacing Andrew MacDonald) arrived. Also Patrick Russell turned up after lunch.

At 1600hrs I learnt that there was trouble once more in Novi Travnik. Martin Forgrave telephoned to say that each side had taken hostages and that we might be able to play the honest broker about getting them out. On Martin's advice I took the doctor and travelled down to Novi Travnik. There I met Lendo, BiH Comd, again. He was amenable to a swap of prisoners and held three Croats. I had the doctor examine them and then went to see Malabasic, the HVO Comd, in the Hotel Novi Travnik. Malabasic held four prisoners and again I had the doctor examine them. Once both sides were satisfied that the prisoners held by the other were not hurt we carried out the transfer. A few weapons had gone missing and a little cash. Everyone seemed genuinely pleased by the role we played. The cause was that a Muslim had been shot at an HVO checkpoint last night.

The whole matter was resolved by 2000hrs.

Whilst I was away though we opened fire in a big way. At 1645hrs Monty Woolley was escorting a Danish UNHCR Convoy when he was engaged by mortars and small arms fire. The range to the mortar base plate was 2.4kms. A total of 14 rounds HE, three APDS and about 97 x 7.62mm were fired by three out of four SCIMITARS. The contact was at GRID 182031 and the Firing Point was at GRID 209029. This is the fifth time in 4 days that we have been attacked by the Serbs in the area North of Kladanj. All the ROE seem to have been applied; we were escorting a convoy, the convoy was attacked by effective fire, convoy flashers were on, UN Flags were flying and even the range was (just) acceptable. So far I have had no comeback about it all.

Monday 11 January

I spent a fairly cold night in the house. The electricity was off again. I got up early and came over to my office as I had some paperwork to get through.

Roddy Cordy-Simpson came to visit - he's just got back from leave. He told me that General Morillon was 'steaming' about the Daily Mail article of 7 January. I told him that I felt responsible - if not to blame - and that I had written a letter of apology to the General. We also discussed the shooting incident yesterday. Roddy was concerned - quite rightly - about it's further implications. We also talked about the British 'reinforcement options' and wondered exactly what London were up to in the matter. We both felt very much in the dark and a little uncertain as to how to play things. After a while we went off to the Officers Mess where we had coffee before Roddy disappeared back to Kiseljak.

I had lunch in Zenica at a Pizzeria and then returned to Vitez. In the afternoon I saw Paul Scott from BOVIS. He is fairly 'nervy' about things and has withdrawn a lot of his men to the UNHCR Depot just inside Croatia. I told him that he must talk to Doug Houston, who should be back in Zenica by today.

In the evening I received word that the UNHCR Delegation were stuck in Sarajevo; they couldn't get out of the place. And so the dinner I planned was a bit of a write off except that I expanded the numbers of the Battalion who were invited and it took place regardless. I went to bed at midnight - in a power cut of course!

Tuesday 12 January

Novi Travnik was surprisingly quiet overnight. I had ordered that the Standby Platoon was to go in there from 0900hrs and that Andrew MacDonald was to assume responsibility for the area - if necessary backing it all up with another platoon. For my part I wanted to see Blascik; as we had been told by the HVO that he was the authority for anything that happened with regard to the HVO. It was much the same story with Vares a few weeks ago. Blascik does seem to be the power in 'HVO Land'. Martin Forgrave tried to make contact with him using Debrilla as interpreter but Blascik kept dodging us as we tried to reach him.

Later in the morning I was interviewed by ITN; the reporter being a man called Robin - second name escapes me! The ITN Team had lunch with me.

Things are fairly tricky all round at the moment. UK Limited are broadcasting that they are sending the Arc Royal and lots of gunners to stand off the Dalmatian Coast. Novi Travnik is being difficult. Sarajevo is impossible and is still suffering from the repercussions of the Bosnian President being shot whilst being protected by the CO FRENCHBAT. There is an anti-UN rally in Zenica tomorrow. Tomaslavgrad was shelled by 140 rounds of artillery a few days ago. The Geneva Peace Talks looks highly likely to fail and a No-Fly Zone imposed. The only good news is that it seems the Serb Commander to the West of Turbe may wish to meet me after all. Martin Forgrave is to go down to Beba's Headquarters tomorrow morning to find out exactly what is going on; we shall see.

I spoke to Doug Houston about Paul Scott. He and I agree that he is running a little too scared. Doug thinks he should be replaced. I have to agree. The word is that he sleeps in his Flak Jacket in Zenica for God's Sake!

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Wednesday 13 January

Today is my wedding anniversary and so I arranged for Joe Edmunds to give Lizzie a bunch of flowers which I think went down well by all accounts.

But the most important thing of all was the development of outright hostilities between the Croats and Muslims in Gornji Vacuf. Last night I spoke to Alistair Rule and we decided that there was little point in my redeployment down to his Base until this morning. Meanwhile all hell was being let loose within the town - including mortar fire. At 0830hrs, together with the Standby Platoon (Alex Watts), I took my WARRIOR down to Gornji Vacuf. We arrived there at about 1000hrs having run down and then having had to shoot a dog. Mortar and small arms fire was occurring in abundance when we got to Gornji Vacuf and things looked pretty bad.

A local ambulance turned up at the Base and asked Alistair if it could be escorted through Gornji Vacuf. Inside were two Muslim and one Croat women. Alistair deployed two WARRIORS from the Standby Platoon and the ambulance took up station in the middle. As the convoy was approaching the T junction in Gornji Vacuf the second vehicle slewed off the road and nearly crashed through the bridge. The driver, Lance Corporal Wayne Edwards, had been shot through the cheek and out of the back of his head. I heard about it whilst in the Officers Mess - CSgt Williams informed me. I rushed out and jumped in the Ambulance Landrover to get down there.

When I arrived the first WARRIOR was still slewed across the road and the boys were trying to extricate Lance Corporal Edwards through the tunnel. It was taking far too long and so I said we had to do it from the front. We did so despite considerable mortar and small arms fire in our area. For 10 minutes we tried to keep Edwards alive but it seemed clear to me that he was dead from his eyes. Tracy Clark, the doctor at Gornji Vacuf, was with us too. After about 10 minutes work on him I suggested we should get out of the area. We put Edwards on a stretcher and rushed him to the wheeled ambulance. Tracy pronounced him DDA at the Base.

Edwards had been shot through the hatch - in its umbrella position and so no doubt there will be some comeback there. But all of us know the score and so too did S Pl who have been into Turbe and elsewhere enough times and so I think we can wear that.

Alistair had convened a meeting of all local commanders for 1130hrs - actually it started at about 1200hrs! I opened the meeting and demanded that fighting stop forthwith. I stressed how serious this incident would be internationally. Eventually both sides agreed that an 'artillery' ceasefire would come into effect at 1315hrs and a general 'small arms' one at 1400hrs. After that I returned to Vitez.

By 1500hrs I was seeing the Comd 3rd Corps BiH Army in Zenica. I didn't think the meeting would be too fruitful as there was little either of us could do in my opinion. Enver Hascovicovic did however tell me his theory as to what was happening. He said that prior to Jajce falling the Croats had started trouble in Prozor; now they were starting trouble in Gornji Vacuf so that Turbe could fall. In short he believes that the Serbs and Croats have agreed on a line which excludes Turbe. By starting trouble in Gornji Vacuf the Muslims would have their attention distracted and thus Turbe could fall more easily. I wonder if there is any truth in this.

00189881

During the evening I went to the JRC and sat having a drink with S Pl. I spoke to Alex Watts also. All were in a fairly depressed state which is unsurprising. The boys want to put Lance Corporal Edwards' name on his WARRIOR. I said the best thing was just to do it. They also suggested we put up a reward for information leading to the arrest of the murderer; I quite like that notion.

Thursday 14 January

I had a fairly quiet day today; simply thinking through things and relaxing a little after yesterday. Messages of sympathy are flooding in at the moment. Lance Corporal Edwards' body left Gornji Vakuf this morning. I took about 5 drafts to write to his mother in Wrexham before I got it right.

At lunchtime I entertained a party of ICRC. Two people came; Iris Wittwer and a guy called Ernst from Zagreb. In the afternoon I spent some time watching some latest TV News clips and then wandered over to my house. In the PINED Centre I met Anna Pukas who was exceedingly sorry for the damage she had done. I don't really blame her as she did not mean to do it.

The situation in Gornji Vakuf continues to be seriously worrying with the ceasefire working spasmodically if at all. Alun Jones has now taken over from Alistair Rule and is continuing the negotiation process with all sides. I gather that Mardan has been at Gornji Vakuf for most of the time. B Coy has been involved in escorting monitors of both sides to gun/mortar positions, helping in the recovery of an AVD body (mutilated on the face) and extensively patrolling in a bid to calm the situation. As B Coy is stretched I have sent S Pl back down there (Standby Platoon). I think we will have to let this one run until it gets out of steam. All sides seem to appreciate our efforts at least.

In the evening I joined Paul Scott and Doug Houston for dinner in The Horse Cafe in Zenica.

Friday 15 January

My mind must be going as I seem to find trouble remembering what I did this morning. Doug Houston turned up and went into Travnik with Martin Forgrave. They were trying to sort out the matter of BOVIS portacabins as Paul Scott is more than a little worried about security for his workforce.

In Gornji Vakuf the situation seems to be getting a little better and the ceasefire looks more likely to hold. The boys have now purchased a huge wreath with the word 'ED' in flowers on it. They are going to position the wreath on the spot where LCor Edwards died in Gornji Vakuf. For my part I telephoned Mrs Edwards this afternoon; a fairly traumatic it was too - for me rather than her as she was terribly good about it all!

At 1500hrs I went to see Santic, the President of Vitez. I should have visited him ages ago. It was only a courtesy visit but nonetheless well worthwhile. As I write NORR our gun has started firing again; it's really making the old school shake!

Saturday 16 January

This morning Tim Park led a recon team into Sarajevo to assess whether we would agree to send a WARRIOR Platoon into the City on a

daily escort run. He arrived back at 2000hrs with a plan that's workable and so we will do so. Interestingly enough we managed to get one concession at the Serb Checkpoint; when they insisted on searching our vehicles we insisted that they did so unarmed as they had shot someone inside a UN vehicle before! The gambit worked. Ideally I do not want the Serbs to either stop us or look into any of our vehicles.

The CDS was supposed to visit today but in fact he cancelled at the last moment - too late for me to take the Sarajevo recce - which I should have led. These VVIP visits are a pain! Alun Jones rang me and so I decided I would go down to Gornji Vakuf again. At 1030hrs, together with T21 (Standby Platoon Vehicle) I departed for Gornji Vakuf.

The checkpoint at the end of the mountain pass road was deserted. We proceeded carefully out fast from there into B Coy's Base. There Alun briefed me on the situation. In his view the fighting could easily get much worse and it was continuing. The HVO had threatened to 'flatten' Gornji Vakuf unless the Muslims recognised it was a part of Herze-Bosnia! I believe the HVO are at the bottom of this trouble. Merdan was there and had been for several days. I asked Alun to ensure he was given a razor etc as he was grossly unshaven. He greeted me effusively.

At 1400hrs Alex Watts' Platoon took their four WARRIORS to the spot where Lance Corporal Edwards was killed. They put two WARRIORS across the bridge facing outwards and then neutral turned with the other two to face back the way we had come. A JNCO laid a wreath on the wrecked bridge. Tyrone Hilary said a short prayer. We had a minutes silence. The all of us (myself, Alun Jones, RSM Stevens, Tyrone Hilary, Alex Watts, Merdan, the local HVO Commander) saluted, climbed back into the WARRIORS and returned to the Base. During the Service there was an explosion and a shot; but the interpreters said he heard people shouting 'no shooting'. Merdan and the local HVO Commander had tried to stop everything for the Service.

I spoke briefly to Merdan and the local HVO Commander in the Base before I returned. I said that I accepted that the High Command of neither side would have given orders to kill a British soldier but that someone on the ground had. He must be found and brought to trial for murder as there had been no orders given down the chain of command - ergo it must be murder! We returned to Vitez and stopped en route to inspect what we thought was a fish farm in the mountains.

On return I immediately took my landrover into Zenica to brief Denis at ICRC on the situation in Gornji Vakuf. He wants us to help deliver medical supplies into the town with WARRIOR. I had agreed and Denis plans to go down there tomorrow.

Sunday 17 January

Andrew Cumming turned up at 0900hrs to talk to me about possible options with regard to the future. It seems that we can either intervene massively, withdraw, continue operations or indeed institute a peace plan. In short everything is up in the air as far as things go at the moment.

Meanwhile Gornji Vakuf continues to 'burn'. I deployed down there in my WARRIOR at 1000hrs in order to be there for the memorial service at 1130hrs. The Band deployed with me in a 4 ton vehicle. Gornji Vakuf is still seriously in danger. I met Merdan down there.



he has been there since the start. Whilst I was there I heard considerable artillery firing and much small arms. Clearly a multi-barrelled rocket launcher was also being used - probably by the HVO who are the people most responsible for what is happening there. During the Memorial Service there was considerable fire being levelled on Gornji Vakuf. After the Service I said goodbye to Merdan. We were engaged with about two rounds of small arms fire as we left Gornji Vakuf Base. The Bandmaster loved it as he was in the WARRIOR with us.

At 1800hrs General Sir John Waters arrived. His programme involved a brief, walk around camp, drinks in the Sergeants Mess and a buffet dinner in the Officers Mess. He slept in my house.

Monday 18 January

All of us woke early in my house - I think to get to the water, which was amazingly warm. Even the CINC was there at the same time as me. Jonesy and Platt carried breakfast over from the cikhhouse and we were finished by 0800hrs. At that time we were transported around to Battalion Headquarters.

I gave Waters a quick brief and then we departed for Turbe. We had arranged to see the Commander Ieko at about 0900hrs. He received us well and very politely. A few rounds of mortars landed whilst we were in the HQ. We returned to Vitez without incident thereafter.

However Gornji Vakuf was 'ablaze' and there was no way that Waters could go there. He had to travel back to Split the long way - at least he'll get a feel for the place! The CINC's earlier than anticipated departure from the realms of my responsibility was fortuitous and gave me some breathing space.

Tuesday 19 January

Things are getting very tricky indeed at the moment. The HVO are apparently threatening to go 'all out' in Gornji Vakuf and even expand the conflict to up here. Enver Hazdihanovic, Commander 3rd Corps BiH Army, has appealed to me to recover Merdan from Gornji Vakuf and this I agreed to do. He was pulled out with a WARRIOR escort this morning amid reports that the HVO had mined the road overnight (false). People are now saying there is a deadline for violence to commence in the Vitez area too; that deadline being midnight tonight!

At the moment I have a small dose of 'Bosnian Belly' which makes me visit our new lavatories fairly regularly. My landrover had a small smash this morning; sliding into the back of a LNHOK vehicle and so it is away being repaired.

I stayed around this morning so that I could monitor what was happening in Gornji Vakuf. In fact things seem a little quieter than they have been. Kate Adie remains down there and so I suspect things have not yet finished. An CRC delegation came this afternoon; to check out the latest security situation and up-date their maps.

Wednesday 20 January

The morning started with me visiting Enver Hazdihanovic, Comd 3rd Corps BiH Army, in his headquarters in Zenica. Merdan was there as well. Both of them were profuse in their thanks for the

recovery of Merdan from Gornji Vakuf yesterday. We discussed the situation there and I told them that I was going down to Gornji Vakuf almost immediately to see if there was any way in which I could help the ceasefire process. Apparently a ceasefire was supposed to be in place by 1230hrs - possibly brokered by the ECMM.

Having travelled back to Vitez I joined my WARRIOR and drove down towards Gornji Vakuf. I had ordered the mineplough to be in position on the route at the end of the mountain road - but that seemed to go wrong and we only had the EOD officer and sapper's. I wanted the mineplough in order to impress the locals that we could shift mines if necessary. It was largely a bluff as I want them not us to clear mines. There were about 18 mines blocking the exit from the mountain road North of Bistrica. Obviously the HVO have taken over the checkpoint there as it used to be BiH. The HVO turned up in a car about 5 minutes after we arrived, unceremoniously threw the 18 mines into the back of a car and drove off. We then went into the Gornji Vakuf Base; we travelled closed down.

In discussion with Alun Jones it was clear that the local forces had heard nothing about a ceasefire. There was little point in flooding the area with WARRIORS; my original plan. It was too risky. I heard that another meeting might take place tomorrow at 1400hrs and so decided to return to Vitez. Gornji Vakuf was still under serious shellfire - including multi-barrelled rocket launchers fired by the HVO from South of the town.

In the evening a UN Commission into Rape turned up and I put them up overnight in the Base. They were 5 women and one man; not one was particularly attractive.

Thursday 21 January

I decided that I would go down to Gornji Vakuf at about 1000hrs and took a few people with me. My WARRIOR led the expedition. I heard that Patrick Russell, ECMM from Kiseljak, was leaving there at 1030hrs and that the Ambassador Bousseaus would be coming to chair the meeting too. There were few details as to who would represent the local sides. No mines blocked our route this time and we made Gornji Vakuf relatively quickly having picked up the BBC and ITN teams en route - unsolicited. Kate Hoie kissed me on the top of my WARRIOR and said how sorry she was about the death of Lance Corporal Edwards. We drove into Gornji Vakuf Base and there I talked to Alun Jones.

The situation was a little quieter but nonetheless there was still a great deal of fire going down on the town - mainly from HVO guns positioned to the South. Alun Jones had to escort various factions into camp from pick-up points outside Gornji Vakuf and the meeting started at about 1530hrs.

Colonel Siljeg from Tomislavgrad represented the HVO and Selmo, Merdan's staff officer represented the BiH Army. Agreement on a ceasefire was quickly reached in accordance with high level instructions. I suggested that the ceasefire should start at 1700hrs (at 1600hrs); all parties agreed and disappeared to try and fix it within an hour. We reconvened at 1700hrs; there was still some firing. Next I suggested that we should see how the ceasefire was doing and the Ambassador suggested I went into town to monitor it and report back.

I took OA, T22 and T23 with me. We crossed the bridge where Lance Corporal Edwards was killed. There was a burning house at the

T Junction. I led and turned right towards the South. On the edge of the Town we came against a minefield - which I knew about. There was some firing - several rounds were fired over the top of my WARRIOR. At the minefield we neutral turned and came back to the T Junction where I had left T22. Next we went to the North and turned around. There was a firefight (brief) near to T22 whilst we were investigating North but it was not prolonged. I returned to the minefield and escorted two ECMM vehicles which passed through it back to the Base.

I was ambushed by the Press as I walked back into the Building and told them that the ceasefire appeared to be holding. I also reported that back to the Conference. By 200hrs the conference had agreed most things and the Ambassador suggested we had dinner before making an agreement in writing. But Siljeg received an important message - two soldiers had been killed by snipers he said - and he had to go. That effectively broke things up. I had a similar problem as General Morillon has decided to visit tomorrow and announced an arrival time of 0900hrs. I thought it best to return to Vitez. We arrived back at about 2215hrs where I met Brigadier Wood, Comd Comms from UKLF. I was fairly rude about the lack of Eutetracs and Mentor system (only CO, 2IC and Adjt being allowed to telephone out of Theatre). He stayed in my house overnight.

Friday 22 January

General Morillon visited us today; for the first time - apart from when he came with General Namybia right at the start of our tour. He arrived slightly late and then we briefed him in the Information Room. After that we went to Gornji Vakuf where all hell continued. The ceasefire lasted until about 0700hrs and then the HVO began attacking the town from the South. It seems the HVO are determined on their course of action and heavy artillery is being used from the South.

Ambassador Beausseau was still there - having spent the night in Gornji Vakuf with Alun Jones. Morillon wanted to meet both sides and so summoned Colonel Siljeg - who took some time to arrive. Present for talks were Selmo Cikotic, COS to Merdan, and Pia Agic - both representing the BiH Army as well as Colonel Siljeg and the local HVO Commander Zenko. The talks were fairly fruitless. Siljeg made impossible demands. We offered to be in the middle between the forces and to man a roadblock. Siljeg said he had to consult and then we broke up. A round came through the Medical Centre window; it was spent. I travelled back with General Morillon in his staff car. En route we noticed that many of the houses in the village of Bistrica were ablaze. We presumed it was HVO ethnic cleansing.

Outside the Vitez Base General Morillon told me to tell my soldiers that he was "content with what he had seen". I'll pass it on as it will do great things for morale!

In the evening I went to see Enver Hadzihanovic, Comd 3rd BiH Corps, to discuss the matter. I felt there was little that either of us could do in the service of peace at this moment. Whilst I was there he had two conversations with Colonel Blascik. When I returned I discovered that further talks in Gornji Vakuf had broken down but that more talks were scheduled for tomorrow at 1200hrs. Alun Jones requested my presence.

00189886

Saturday 23 January

I attempted to do some paperwork this morning prior to departing for Gornji Vakuf. To be honest paperwork is about the last thing on my mind at the moment and I've got all the Non Staff Officer reports to complete. We departed for Gornji Vakuf at 1030hrs and I was there by midday.

Selmo was there but Colonel Siljeg didn't turn up until much later - having been picked up from beyond the minefield to the South of Gornji Vakuf. The battle is continuing in earnest. Parts of the BiH Army positions have fallen. The Croats are using a T55 tank to blast hell out of the houses on the south edge of town. At the same time they are using artillery and multi-barrelled rocket launchers in their attacks. Bistrica was struck twice whilst I was there. Within the camp perimeter three mortar rounds landed today; and a round penetrated through the sill of the Officer's Mess window, struck a chair in which Selmo sat and 'pinged' around the room. All in all Gornji Vakuf was not a particularly healthy place to be today.

When we finally got down to talking Siljeg was unbending. He demanded that the BiH Army centralise their weapons under his/our control. The BiH soldiers could stay there except that he wanted some for 'crimes'. I told him that was surrender in all but name. In addition I reminded him that the world would note who was attacking civilians; this was the first time I hinted at war crimes. In the end I asked for a 'truce' to try and ease the tension. The truce was to start at 1800hrs and last until the termination of our next meeting at 1200hrs tomorrow. Appropriate BiH representatives would be transported by myself to Gornji Vakuf. I would take Selmo back to Zenica and return with BiH representative tomorrow. We would patrol Gornji Vakuf - identifying who we were by use of 4-way flashers. First reports after I returned to Vitez indicate that there is still fighting in town. I was not very hopeful in any case.

I returned to Vitez by 1920hrs and had Selmo taken on to Zenica in a landrover.

Sunday 24 January

Today I made my final effort to try and stop a holocaust in Gornji Vakuf. When I woke I felt there was very little chance of success but all of us had to try. Before I left Vitez I tried to telephone Andrew Cumming or Richard Barrons to tell them what the situation was like. They were no available and so I passed a message to the Watchkeeper stressing a number of points. To start with I suggested there was little hope of success in Gornji Vakuf. I complained that Colonel Siljeg seemed set on a battle and the 'capture' of the town. Ethnic cleansing and EM 21 strikes as well as tank attacks were taking place - all by the HVO. Although I was not to know it this message was passed to UNLFF, MCD, FCD and thence to Geneva where Lord Owen used it to browbeat Boban, the HVO Military Commander there.

I drove to Zenica at 0900hrs and spoke to Denis Cretencu and Iris Wittwer of ICRC. I suggested that they wish to come to Gornji Vakuf and at least witness what was going on there. They agreed. After that I went on to BiH 3rd Corps Headquarters to pick up the BiH representatives for the journey to Gornji Vakuf. I spoke to the Corps Commander and then Selmo Cikotic. We drove back to Vitez; the whole area was very tense and I was a bit concerned about taking

Selmo through checkpoints, but things were alright.

At Vitez I picked up OB and two other WARRIORS as well as two ICRC cars. We travelled to Gornji Vakuf, arriving shortly after midday. After a while Colonel Siljeg was escorted in from the South of the town. We started our meeting at about 1330hrs.

I opened the proceedings and then Iris Wittwer made an appeal to both sides to obey the Geneva Conventions. To start with it looked like Siljeg had not changed his views but after a while it seemed that he was softening. I was in the process of laying out some principles when Andrew Cumming telephoned on the INMARSAT. Despite sending Alun Jones to the telephone Cumming insisted on speaking to me. I handed over the meeting to Alun and went to the phone. Andrew Cumming told me that my message had been passed to Geneva and that Lord Owen had used it to pressure Boban who had ordered an immediate cessation of hostilities by the HVO. I returned to the meeting and told Siljeg - who accepted my word - rather quickly I thought! Did he know already because his position had softened quite a lot already.

With this fillip to proceedings I continued to lay down some principles as follows:

1. A ceasefire by 1800hrs tonight - with some expectation that it would continue to be broken for some time afterwards.
2. Gornji Vakuf to be patrolled by B Coy and the routes through the town to be opened.
3. Withdrawal of outside local forces by 1600hrs tomorrow - if necessary escorted by B Coy.
4. Alleged war crimes to be investigated by the accused side with investigative reports sent to ICRC - copy to UNPROFUR.
5. Both sides to provide full lists of detainees to ICRC by 1200hrs on 26 Jan.

It did not take long to agree those principles and the meeting broke up quite quickly. Selmo Cikotic was instructed to stay in Gornji Vakuf by his headquarters and so at 1630hrs I returned to Vitez. This time I was far more hopeful that we had achieved something. I checked on return and Gornji Vakuf seemed to be relatively quiet - just a little small arms fire reported. My hopes grew.

However there were incidents elsewhere too. Busovaca was terribly tense after two HVO soldiers had been killed and barricades put up. Medrdan telephoned me and asked for my help to take the bodies back from the Muslims to the Croats. But there was a great big barricade between the two sides and it was apparently immovable. I decided to do nothing until the morning.

Denis Cretenat had invited me out to dinner in Zenica. I arrived there at 2000hrs and had a pleasant evening with him before being picked up to return at 2315hrs by WO 2 Lawson. I slept well.

Monday 25 January

**00189888**

All hell was happening on the road to Kiseljak. Apparently an HVO vehicle following Sgt Smith's two WARRIORS was attacked by Muslims in the village of Kacuni and in the resultant events two HVO

soldiers were killed. Both sides, Croats and Muslims, are having a 'go' at one another with the Croats based in Busovaca and the Muslims in Kacuni.

I sent OC C Coy, Philip Jennings, to try and get through to Kiseljak but he felt it was not a good time and turned around just after the T Junction turning off the Zenica road for Kiseljak. I was not too pleased by this as it seemed a bit of a climbdown on our part. Brigadier Roddy Cordy-Simpson was speaking to Blascik who agreed that we should be able to pass. For my part I spoke to Enver Hadzihasanovic who willingly agreed to that as well. At about 1030hrs I took OA and another vehicles (ambulance) and tried again. OC C Coy came with me. So too did Kate Adie of the BBC in her armoured landrover.

We drove to the Kiseljak turning and crossed the river. The bridge was well defended and possibly mined by the HVO. Driving on we went through a few HVO roadblocks in Busovaca. As we approached Kacuni there was a lot of indirect fire coming into the area and sniper fire as well. At the bridge in Kacuni we were blocked by a huge lorry filled with logs on the bridge. I went forward on foot to find someone to move it. At first we saw nobody until I tried to ram the lorry off the bridge with my WARRIOR. The some BiH soldiers appeared from a house on the North side of the road. They agree that they could move the lorry but then they would have to put it back. That was not the point; I wanted the road open again. I demanded that they go back up their chain of command and ask the Corps Commander if he agrees that my WARRIORS could replace the lorry. It took them ages to get through and whilst that was happening Brigadier Roddy Cordy-Simpson arrived from the Kiseljak end in his armoured landrover.

There was quite a lot of loose fire around - mortars, rocket launchers and sniping. Additionally whilst I was talking to the local commander in the house to the North of the roadblock one of his soldiers had an ND - firing a burst into the ground by us. We all took cover thinking it was a sniper. The only casualty was the top of Nick Costello's boot which was struck by something.

After about 90 minutes I got fed up with waiting. We could go through but then the lorry would be repositioned - which was not the point. I insisted on going on and did so. As we left Philip's WARRIOR broke down and we had to leave it behind. Also I received word from Bn HQ that the Corps Commander had agreed that two WARRIORS could replace the checkpoint. But by then I was en route for Kiseljak. We stopped at the 'Media' Hotel. Kate Adie gave me a cup of tea and then we returned. Going back I was stopped by an HVO roadblock that tried to prevent our further progress. I insisted on passing. Mortars struck near us as we passed the main roadblock.

Coming back through I withdrew the proposed roadblock - I didn't think it was safe overnight. I stopped at the Headquarters of the Dutch Transport Battalion and organised two WARRIORS there overnight. I tried going to Zenica down the main road but it was blocked by a demolition and three large vehicle - action tomorrow - and so I went over the mountain. I visited ICRC and then went to the Commander of 3rd Corps BiH Army. I complained that they had really started this trouble, I was 'mucked' around and that a soldier had had an ND. I arranged a ceasefire from 0600hrs tomorrow; Brigadier Roddy Cordy-Simpson was meanwhile doing the same with Blascik in Kiseljak. After that I returned to Vitez on the mountain route. I tasked Philip Jennings to get the road to Kiseljak properly open today and B Gen 9/121 to sort out the

demolition on the road to Zenica. I had dinner, a couple of drinks in the Mess and then went to bed.

Tuesday 26 January

Philip Jennings departed at 0800hrs to open the route to Kiseljak properly. But by 1030hrs he was still having difficulties with the roadblock held by the Muslims in Kacuni. In some anger I telephoned Merdan in Zenica. I told him that this time the Muslims were at least in some way to blame. They had killed two HVO personnel - and they were holding me up. He said the difficulty was communications and he offered to come personally to help sort it out.

My landrover was despatched to collect him and at about 1330hrs we departed in my WARRIOR having got Merdan to Vitez first. We drove to the roadblock where Philip Jennings was located. After some negotiations it was agreed that the lorry should be moved and that two WARRIORS would remain. One would sit on the bridge and the other would patrol. Only international aid, UN and ambulance vehicles should go through.

Having discussed the matter with Merdan I then decided to take him on to Kiseljak so that he could meet Roddy Cordy-Simpson. En route, with WO 2 Lawson and in sitting in the turret, a HV shot was fired at us as we were driving through some HVO positions. We took immediate cover and I swung the turret to face the threat as we drove on. The boys in the back seemed impressed that I was able to send out a 'Non Effective' fire report within 30 seconds!

At Kiseljak we met Roddy Cordy-Simpson and then he summoned Blascik for a meeting. After about an hour, and just as things were being sorted out, Blascik received word that '7' HVC had been killed on a prisoner exchange with the Muslims. That effectively broke up the meeting but it was agreed we would meet again tomorrow.

Getting back was a real performance. Kiseljak staff officers insisted that we have a Spanish APC escort - as I had allowed my WARRIOR to return escorting a whole load of vehicles. That took a long time to organize; and then there was a blockage on the road in an HVO village. This apparently required a visit to the local HVO Police. In some irritation we took dinner there. By the time everything was done the WARRIORS I had requested to RV with me had drive all the way through to Kiseljak. Therefore I abandoned the Spanish and travelled back with Sgt Edwards RWF. Near the HVO checkpoint at the start of the mountain route I met my landrover. WO 2 Lawson took Merdan back to Zenica. I carried on to Vitez bringing Clive Newell with me. I also met the ECMM monitors from Zenica in the Mess on my return.

Wednesday 27 January

Merdan was picked up by RSM Stevens from Zenica at 0800hrs. He returned here and then we took OA off to Kiseljak to meet with Blascik; again to try and get a proper ceasefire.

The road was fine and I got to the roadblock where C Coy were located. There were 3 rounds of mortar fire as we passed through as well as some sniper fire. At Kiseljak we started the meeting - almost on time and reached agreement on a ceasefire quite quickly. Roddy Cordy-Simpson chaired the meeting and then took the participants off for a press conference. There was a performance over an alleged atrocity by the BiH Army but then after lunch we got

down to some more detail. The big sticking point was the roadblock en route to Zenica. I agreed to leave C Coy's roadblock in position for the time being. Eventually we broke up with some form of agreement but it wasn't tied up properly.

I took Merdan back to Zenica and then returned to Vitez. At 2000hrs Lind Chalker (sorry Lady) arrived. She stayed the night in company with Gilbert Greenall and Doug Houston. I rather liked her. I did talk briefly to her about leaving the Army and working for some kind of international aid effort. She didn't seem to register anything but I have a feeling that I might get some kind of assistance from her if I need it.

Thursday 28 January

Lady Chalker departed after a 'candlelit' breakfast (powercut) at 0700hrs. After that I walked across to BHQ to get into my WARRIOR for the journey down to General Morillon's two day seminar at Kiseljak and in Sarajevo. There was no firing on the route but things were still very tense. C Coy's WARRIORS were still on the bridge at Kacuni - blocking all traffic except that which we authorised. I picked up Jan de Boer as I drove down; he followed me in his armoured Mercedes landrover to Kiseljak. At Kiseljak Martin Bell interviewed me for a Panorama programme. He did it outside the headquarters Hotel.

Shortly after 0900hrs the seminar started with Morillon 'boring' on about his experiences in theatre. After that the Russian Civil Affairs Advisor (Victor), spoke quite well on the political environment. We took lunch in the restaurant with a little French wine. However during the afternoon things in my area of operations started to 'hot up' and there were numerous reports of ceasefire violations - from both sides. Buscovaca was reportedly 'in flames'. Having consulted with Roddy Gordy-Simpson I decided I had to return to Vitez. Jan de Boer came with me in a Danish APC. We were to RV with a couple of WARRIORS en route.

At an HVO checkpoint to the South East of Kacuni we were refused passage. I said we were going and they said not. After a few minutes I insisted I was going and ordered a very, very reluctant Danish soldier to drive on. He did so after considerable hesitation. I must say I did wonder what kind of a mess an RPT-7 would make of the side of an M113 but shortly thereafter we met Richard Rochester in two WARRIORS. We transferred (gladly) and the Danish APC returned to Kiseljak.

At the Dutch Transport Battalion Headquarters Jan and I spoke to the ECMM Commission and its two local force representatives. I protested to the HVO about being stopped and also some shelling onto Zenica (confirmed by ECMM); and I also protested about the movement of BiH troops too. I asked both sides to tell their headquarters to cool things down and reminded them that there was to be a meeting at Vitez on Saturday morning. I had some dinner with Jan de Boer and then came back to Vitez. Last night I slept well again.

Friday 29 January

I spent some time this morning trying to get Non Stair YOs reports complete and so was not ready to go out until 1130hrs. The situation in Kacuni has been much quieter although there is still shelling and small arms fire occurring. However I wanted to go back down the Kiseljak road to see things for myself. My WARRIOR



travelled to Kacuni with no problems at all. The area seemed quiet too. Even the HVO checkpoint where I had had problems last night was OK. We travelled on to the Fojnica junction - close to the Media Hotel. I stopped there and Robert Fox of The Daily Telegraph gave us some lunch. Thereafter we travelled up to Fojnica - visited B7.RITFOR Tac HQ - and then drove back to Kiseljak. In Kiseljak I checked to see if Blascik was in town. He was and they had been talking to him - but to no avail. It looks like he will send his SIC for the talks tomorrow.

Whilst travelling back to Vitez a mortar round landed close by - on our left and just in between Kacuni and Buscavaca. We just continued and drove on. I called into to the ICRC en route back to Camp. There I briefed Iris Wittwer and asked her to attend the talks tomorrow. At the bottom of the mountain road - the Y Junction - I found the personnel from the HVO Checkpoint robbing three HVO lorries. I was very angry - stopped it - and sent the drivers (local) on their way to Zenica.

As I returned to my Office Dick Peel was on the Mentor telephone. I was requested to ring Robert Fraser, Equerry to The Prince of Wales, and brief him on the situation. I did so - stressing my belief that the HVO were causing problems in order to force the Muslims to agree the Geneva Peace Plan. Both the Croats and Serbs get what they want out of Geneva's proposals whilst the Muslims who represent some 45% of Bosnia's population get only 3 out of 9 cantons. I also stated that we would like to keep the BI telephones - on repayment of course.

Saturday 30 January

Today the main event was the meeting in Vitez between the HVO and Bill. Roddy Cordy-Simpson was to have chaired it but decided to leave it to me. Blascik was not going to turn up and instead sent along Nakić Franjo his Second in Command. Mardan had to be collected from HQ 3rd Corps in Zenica. In addition Jorge de la Mota and Anders Levinson for UNHCR and Iris Wittwer for ICRC attended.

I started the meeting by welcoming everyone and then asking Jeremy Fleming of ECOMM to present the report of the ECOMM Commission. This he did - labelling neither side as responsible. I did much the same in summing up the report. We broke for a few minutes at about 1115hrs and then I reconvened the meeting to get down to the real business.

In short we agreed another ceasefire to start from 0800hrs tomorrow. All roads were to be opened. The Commission's powers were extended and it was to have extra HVO/BIH representatives. The Commission is to supervise the withdrawal of forces and the continuation of the ceasefire. All detainees are to be registered with the ICRC. We all signed the document at about 1430hrs and the Press were present.

I have no idea about how things will go. If I was a betting man I'd not put any money on it. We will have to wait and see.

In the evening Doug Houston and John came over. I invited them to stay for dinner and put them up overnight in my house.

Sunday 31 January

I decided that I would go down to Boranj Vakuf today. I wanted to assess the state of the ceasefire, to meet up with

Alistair Duncan (CO 1 PWO on his initial recce) and also to help ICRC re enter the Battalion's area as a car was apparently stuck in Jablonica. My WARRIOR departed at 0930hrs and we travelled slightly carefully down there as it was terribly icy.

I looked around the Base and checked with Alun Jones who was running a Joint Commission Meeting. Gornji Vakuf's ceasefire was holding. We had 4 checkpoints out around the town and there were still some unrecovered bodies in Bistrica, but essentially all was well. I then departed for the Mak-Jan Checkpoint which took me about 40 minutes. After a while Andrew Cumming in company with Robin Searby (COMBRITFOR Des) and Alistair Duncan arrived. They went on to Gornji Vakuf. I stayed a few minutes to see if the ICRC car arrived. It did and Claire Polibelski was in it. I escorted the ICRC Car back to the Base in Gornji Vakuf. After lunch and a briefing the Recce Party departed, I followed shortly afterwards and then the ICRC cars (one was visited Gornji Vakuf) followed thereafter.

At Vitez the Recce Party received it's briefing and then the brigadiers departed. Alistair and I had dinner together before I departed for Zenica to meet up with the ICRC who had invited me for a drink.

Overnight the ceasefire seems to have continued to have held although there was a shooting incident at the Bulk Fuel Installation. A white car approached, fired some shots and then disappeared. The guard followed-up and saw the car at the T Junction on the Vitez by-pass. The car drove at the guard and fired again. Three members of the guard returned fire. Apparently the car was hit but we know nothing more than that as it sped away.

Monday 1 February

I took OA out and down to Kacuni to check out the area prior to General Morillon's conference at 1100hrs. Kacuni seemed very quiet and so I went to look for the ICRC who were interviewing detainees in the area. A barrier manned by Muslims blocked my way and despite all my best persuasion they refused to lift it up. Therefore I barged into it with OA and then backed off and told them they were to move it. They did and I followed up the road for about 2 kilometres to a large warehouse where the ICRC vehicles were parked. Inside up a central corridor and in 'cells' were Claire and Sean as well as Denis and Simola. They were interviewing about 30 Croats - one at least was very old. The place was freezing cold and Claire complained about it. The detainees must have been really cold. They were huddled together under blankets - looking really pathetic. After that I returned to Vitez in time to be slightly late - Morillon had already arrived.

His conference was being held for entirely selfish reasons - he wanted to associate with the ceasefire - and then to hold a big Press Conference for the Parisien Media. Blascik and Hadzihaseovic were present - after a slight delay as we had to fetch them. Morillon made a total ass of himself and was most inept in his handling. It was clearly obvious that he had nothing further to add to what had been agreed. Moreover it was clear that he wanted to have a very short meeting, make a statement to the Press and then get maximum personal publicity. I'd love to hear what he said to the Parisien Media! Alistair Duncan, CO 1 PWO, was amazed by it all. After lunch Jeremy Fleming chaired a meeting which both sides stayed at in order to organize detailed arrangements for the supervision of the ceasefire and withdrawal of forces. It was

agreed that the Zenica road should start to be opened from 1400hrs on Tuesday 2 February.

In the evening I was invited to dinner by Doug Houston and we went to The Horse Cafe. I spent the night in Zenica afterwards.

Tuesday 2 February

Today I very much stayed around the Base. I managed to finish off the Non Staff Officers Confidential Reports and also to have a shower - there seemed little water. I spent some time talking to Alistair Duncan about the handover to 1 PWD.

In the evening John Adlam was in the Mess and so I invited him to stay for dinner. Just after dinner I talked to an American called Les Geld who was visiting us to do a report for the new President Clinton apparently. The word is that John Major convinced the new American Administration to send someone to see how the British troops are dealing with the situation.

Wednesday 3 February

I said goodbye to Alistair Duncan at 0830hrs. Apparently he will be back with the main peace party in March. After that I went across and talked to Les Geld as he had his breakfast in the PINO House. He's very impressed by what we have achieved and I do not think he favours massive intervention; indeed I think he believes there should be many more like us!

After that I took a trip down to Kacuni and visited the checkpoint we have set up there. Things are relatively quiet and the ceasefire is holding just. On the way back OA skidded on ice and ploughed into an ICRC car containing Denis Castenet and Amela. Thank God they were not killed but it was terribly embarrassing. Claire Podbielski was in the second car. Later in the day I went down to the ICRC to apologise and to make amends. It all ended with dinner at Claire's with Denis, Doug Houston, John Adlam and Richard Waltier - after the utterly splendid news that the Regiment is to be saved.

At about 1645hrs a message was flashed on to the MAPPER Terminal to the effect that The Secretary of State had announced that two amalgamations were not going to take place after all. One was us with the STAFFORDS and the other was The Royal Scots with The Kings Own Scottish Borderers. Everyone was ecstatic with excitement and we immediately broke open champagne at the 1700hrs Conference. After that the Officers went to the Mess and the celebrations started. Richard Waltier and I had to leave at 1830hrs as we had promised to go out for the night already. Richard and I stayed the night with Claire and Roberto.

Sadly it seems to have been confirmed that Ted Skinner and Derek Arnold, two British mercenaries, have been shot - apparently by the side they were working for. Details are a little hazy but it seems that Mujahaddin forces tied them up and then shot them in the face - one through the forehead and the other through the mouth. Their bodies were apparently thrown into a stream. I have asked Martin Forgrave to investigate further.

Thursday 4 February

**00189894**

Today was a fairly routine office-type day until about 1530hrs when I was told that the HVO wanted to see me urgently in Hotel

Vitez. I went down there and met Santic, President of Vitez. He told me (interestingly) that he thought all military commanders should be 'sacked' as they were tired and did not seem to have the answers to anything here. I warned him to take care!

Dario Kordich wanted to see me too. He was in Buscavaca and so I travelled there to local HVO HQ. Kordich and I agreed that I should go to Katici and Merdani where there was serious fighting. I checked with Merdan on the telephone and he thought it was a good idea too. OA and two other WARRIORS were positioned outside HVO HQ and I took off towards Katici.

We had to go South of the River but could not cross a very small bridge over a tributary. And so after some deliberation I forced the River and continued up a very narrow road on ice. We went through some HVO positions and a single shot rang out - it seemed quite close to my head. I continued leading only one WARRIOR - the other I had left at the ford. A few minutes later there was a fusillade of fire - another contact. We reached Katici but not Merdani. Katici was held by the Croat and Merdani by the Muslims. I turned around in a school yard because the road was getting impossible to pass along. Katici and Merdani both looked in a mess. There were many fires and lots of firing.

On the way back Sgt Kujavinski's WARRIOR somersaulted off the road. It was filmed by Kate Adie who had come upon us by chance. Luckily nobody was hurt. Sgt Kujavinski set to releasing everyone with a vengeance. The driver was the only person we were really worried about as we did not get an immediate response from him. But he was OK. As we were dealing with the matter a real old firelight started up the valley and a 12.7mm automatic weapon started firing from our left behind passing quite close over our heads. Having summoned an ambulance and recovery recce I established the second WARRIOR up with Sgt Kujavinski and left him for the night. I arrived back in Vitez at 1900hrs.

Friday 5 February

At 1000hrs Jeremy Fleming, ECMM Monitor, chaired a meeting consisting of Blaskic, Merdan, Iris Wittwer, Jose de la Motz and myself to consider the state of the ceasefire. I decided that Jeremy ought to chair the meeting rather than myself - this was a mistake as he just did not get down to things. In the end it was I who suggested that we needed to do something now - not talk vaguely of training a police force at a later date. I suggested:

1 CHESHIRE should patrol the villages of Katici and Merdani between 1600 - 1730hrs today and 0900 - 1200hrs tomorrow.

If there was calm at 1200hrs tomorrow then the HVO should dismantle the Zenica Barricade under our protection.

This seemed to find general agreement and so I also suggested that I take Merdan to Merdani so that he could explain all this to the Bosnian Army defenders. This was agreed too and so after the meeting I returned briefly to Vitez before setting off to pick Merdan up from HQ 3rd Corps in Zenica.

We could not approach Merdani from the East and so I decided to do so from the West - retracing my steps across the mountain road to to so.

**00189895**

With two SCIMITARS in from my Landrover, Martin Forgrave's

vehicle and Robert Fox (BBC landrover) drove into first Katici and then Merdani. It was a bit 'wibble-wobble' going in - particularly as we crossed from Katici (Croat) to Merdani (Muslim). However there was no real firing at all. There was a burst of firing while Merdan was talking in Merdani - but nowhere near us. Apparently the Bosnian Army has lost 4 soldiers killed in Merdani. On returning someone fired a shot at us as we were manoeuvring after we had taken a wrong turning. At least Phase 1 of the proposal seems to be off to some sort of start. I am not hopeful that it will work.

Merdan also helped with the recovery of the two British mercenaries' bodies. They are now in Zenica Hospital Morgue. The word is that they were blindfolded and then shot repeatedly in the back - not the head as previously reported.

Today I took delivery of my Landrover Discovery from Doug Houston. WO 2 Lawson has picked it up from Split - very nice too.

Saturday 6 February

This morning at 1000hrs I was at the Logistics Centre in Travnik for a meeting with the Commander and other 'worthies'. I briefed them on the situation as I saw it and I also mentioned the possibility of line crossing to bring in UNHCR supplies from Banja Luka. This is a real possibility now and Jose Maria Mendeluce may well accompany the first convoy across between 8 - 14 February.

Beba is trying to fix up a meeting with the local Bosnian Serb Army commanders on Monday morning. With luck he will succeed and it will be the last thing I do before I depart on R & R.

This evening the Archie Hamilton, Min AF, and the Adjutant General (Ramsbottom) visited. They arrived at about 1800hrs and we had a briefing followed by drinks (Sergeants Mess) and buffet supper with the officers. The Adjutant General talked about allowances etc and gave a predictable line out.

Sunday 7 February

A fairly quiet day for me at least. The most important thing was the Philip Jennings seems to have got the Zenica road open at last. I lost DM30 because I could not believe it would be done today. I was glad to be proved wrong.

In the evening I gave a dinner party for Denis Castetnet's farewell. To it he invited Claire and Beth (the Canadian woman in ICRC). Jeremy Fleming also joined us.

Monday 8 February

Today I am going down to Split to join the R & R package. But before I do so I intend to cross the Serbian lines to talk to them about:

Not shelling towns.

The proposed UNHCR Convoy from Banja Luka.

Not attacking UN (or other international) vehicles.

Continued liaison meetings.

00189896

I do not intend to continue this diary during my R & R and it will re-commence when I return.

Saturday 20 February

I arrived back from R & R last night at midnight having taken 4 hours 45 minutes to travel from HQ BRITFOR in Split - not a bad time. My Discovery was awaiting my return and so after a brief talk with Andrew Cumming I travelled up here.

Despite a few incidents the situation is generally more stable than when I left. In Tuzla an idiotic TACP Team of Marines have advanced beyond Kalesi and were engaged by a Serbian Anti Tank Weapon which destroyed the front end of the vehicle with its first round. By extreme luck the marines were not badly injured - they evacuated - and then a further two rounds destroyed the vehicle. Since then they have been expelled from Bosnia by COMBRITFOR. In Gornji Vakuf we have had to open fire a total of three times - most probably at the HVO. The Commission continues to meet and I am to chair a meeting of it tomorrow.

I spent most of today getting back up to speed and had a formal briefing from G2 and G3. Brian Watters is here now. Tim Park has done a good job and has held the ring very well.

Sunday 21 February

The main point of today was a meeting of the Coordinating Committee in Kakanj. Tim Park had suggested that I chair it. The point of the meeting was to hear a report of the Buscavaca Commission. Enver Hadzihasanovic and Tihomir Blaskic were there as well as the whole EMM Team.

We met in the French Engineer's Battalion Barracks at 1200hrs and I ran the meeting fairly strictly in terms of time. I didn't want it to last over-long; the last one had apparently taken 5 hours. From the meeting I got agreement to withdraw the two vehicle checkpoint we have had on the Zenica Road. That is the last checkpoint removed and I am quite pleased. The rest of the meeting was fairly mundane and we had a Press Conference at the end of it - for local consumption.

Bryan Watters had come with me and so we took the circuitous route back - having tea with Claire Podbielski in Zenica. As we left Claire's flat the vehicle took off sideways down the hill. It was very dodgy driving back and indeed my 'proper' landrover has had a bad crash following the meeting. All three inside it are needing hospital treatment. As a consequence all non essential vehicle movement has now been banned.

It's quite strange what sometimes happens. Cpl Burns, who was involved in the shooting incident at the Bulk Fuel Unit just before I went on R & R, has just had quite a large lump of bullet dug out of his skull. At the time it was assumed he had scraped himself and the wound had been sewn up. But apparently a ricochet must have gone up inside his helmet and lodged under his skin. It seemed to be the size of a pea when I saw it and so I wonder about our doctors occasionally. Why didn't they spot that one?

Monday 22 February

**00189897**

The weather is appalling and all the roads are almost impassable. I have banned all non essential movement because it

would be crazy to do so.

However I did take a short trip into Zenica myself. It took over an hour to get there along the main road. En route I spoke to the HVO checkpoint just beyond the Buscavaco turnoff. They were petrified and so I ordered that we reassume the two vehicle checkpoint on the Zenica Road. Philip Jennings worked hard all day to keep the Kiseljak Road open as well. Kordich in Buscavaco says that he did not agree with Blascik and that we should keep our checkpoint on the road. Obviously the HVO does not work with one voice at all. The HVO in Buscovaca seemed frightened by the thought of being encircled by Muslims.

Roddy Cordy-Simpson came to visit this afternoon. We discussed Tuzla; he told me that there was great British pressure for us to withdraw from it. I said I knew it too but wanted to stay. He suggested that he may have to put the Canadian Battalion up there in about 4 weeks time. We also talked about redundancies. Roddy was particularly upset about the prospect of Mike Cornwall being made redundant; I agree.

Mark Laity of BBC Radio turned up in the early evening. He did an interview with me and then I invited him to stay the night -- which he did in my house.

Tuesday 23 February

This morning a Dutch captain had his Mercedes jeep hijacked on the Vitez bypass. A Golf overtook him and then blocked his progress. Two men, in semi-uniform, stepped out with Kalashnikovs. They approached the car and ordered him out. He had locked the doors and so they smashed in the window, hitting the captain on the side of the head with the butt of a rifle in the process. They pulled him out and stole the vehicle. The whole incident occurred at 0945hrs -- it was a hell of a cheek.

I was down at the garage having snow chains and UN insignia fixed to my vehicle at the time. When I was informed I returned to the School where I spoke to the captain and immediately went down to Hotel Vitez. There I complained (nicely) to a military police 'officer'. Afterwards I took the captain back to Buscovaca and spoke to Jan De Beer. I do not blame the officer at all; he was clearly shaken up by the experience.

After lunch I went with Martin Forgrave to see Mario Cerkoz in Novi Travnik. There I spoke to the HVO Police Chief -- he seemed to be fairly switched on; Mario wasn't there. It seems the thieves may well be local Mafia; in fact I'm fairly certain they are. The vehicles used by the hijackers are frequently seen outside the 'Al Capone Cafe' in Vitez; strange coincidence that -- maybe the naming of the Cafe was not a coincidence though.

**00189898**

Wednesday 24 February

This morning the R & R flight I should have returned upon arrived. Thus Alan Abraham, Martyn Thomas and WO 2 Lawson are back. I started in the Office and Filipovich, HVO Commander in Travnik, called in to see me. We spoke a lot about the lost vehicles. He stressing that I didn't think it was the HVO but Gangsters -- and he agreeing that. I asked for his assistance in getting the vehicles back. It won't be easy though.

WO 2 Lawson and I travelled into Zenica afterwards. I called

in briefly at ICRC and thereafter at UNHCR where I saw Jose de la Mota. I also arranged for a child to be taken from Buscavaca to hospital in Zenica using one of our landrover ambulances.

Tomorrow is the great day for Redundancy announcements. I'm hardly looking forward to it as I fear it will be very bad for officers - all soldiers will be volunteers. Therefore I decided to have Tim Park's farewell dinner tonight. We went to the Hotel Bosna which is just down the road. Andrew Cumming came as well. Over thirty people were present in all which was a super turnout.

Thursday 25 February

This was a very black day. Redundancies were to be announced. The officers were the most difficult as I had four and three of them were compulsory: Matthew Dundie-Whitley, Jak Jakobowski and Roddy McCauley (R RISH). I went to the Garage first - at 08.30 hours - and told Jak. He took it very well but was terribly upset. Next I went back to the Officers accommodation where I bumped into Simon Ellis - confirming his voluntary redundancy - and then taking him on to tell Matthew. Matthew just didn't believe it when I told him in his room. I felt awful. After that I caught Roddy McCauley as he was leaving his house. Again Roddy was terribly upset. Telling the soldiers assembled in the old MST room was much easier; they were all volunteers.

I kept an eye on the three officers who had been made compulsory redundant for a while and made sure their cunks were around. Later in the morning I was interviewed for radio in the PINFO House.

To get away from it all I took Richard Waltier out to lunch in the Hose Cafe. We met Claire Podbielski there which made the whole occasion.

Friday 26 February

I was summoned to Kiseljak for 1200hrs as this was General Nambiar's last visit before he handed over the UN job in former Yugoslavia. Morillon was there as were all the Staff including Roddy Cordy-Simpson. We had coffee altogether and then Morillon made a short rather typical speech to which Nambiar replied properly. After that I had to rush back as the rumours that there were several thousand refugees about to cross over through Turbe seemed to have been confirmed.

I had set Philip Jennings the task of organising the reception. Our role with Major Biba was to supervise a ceasefire in order to help these poor unfortunate people over. I drove to Vitez, picked up Martyn Thomas and the Acting RSM (Percival) and then took my Discovery to a position West of Travnik where I met my WARRIOR. From there I drove into Turbe to meet up with Philip Jennings, Major Biba and Martin Forgrave. We took the top road leading to the Karaula and at the Bosnian Army Front Line had some problems identifying where the mines were in the snow. Biba cleared the mines by pushing a large plank through the snow. Eventually we identified five anti tank mines and made a lane through them. We then drove across the lines, leaving the WARRIORS behind. After about a mile we met up with the Serbs.

**00189899**

There were five busloads of people with them. I spoke to the same Exchange Commission people as normal - asking them if we could use the buses to take the people across. No chance. They had to



walk. Meanwhile Martin Forgrave helped the Serbs recover a body that had been rotting since December; poor devil he was a real state. About 500 people had to make the walk. Both the journalists and all of us were moved by what we saw. I utilised all the landrovers to take the old women and children across. We ended up carrying kids and bags. When I got to the far side I stood on a C Coy WARRIOR to use the radio and a Serbian sniper took a shot at me from the North. I ordered the turret to traverse and seek him out - but alas no joy. Over the radio I ordered some four ton vehicles to help with the transfer of refugees over the lines. Having done that I then walked back across the lines to meet up with Martin Forgrave. By this time another 2500 refugees were waiting over on the Serb side. It was horrific. An old lady was in floods of tears, others had just given up. We moved people as best we could even putting people on the bonnets of vehicles and their possessions on the roof. After a while the 4 tonners (5) turned up and that helped a great deal.

The light was failing and I thought we would be very pressed to get everyone across in time. But amazingly we just about managed it before it was completely dark. I escorted the last stragglers across on foot with some other people - including Chris Marsden, the Families Officer, on a visit. As darkness arrived the firing started and we were engaged at least three times by snipers with tracer rounds over the last 500 metres or so. We had to dash from cover to cover with refugees. It was not funny. When all the refugees were over I ordered C Coy to hit the snipers if they tried engaging them again. Sadly they didn't. Once aboard my WARRIOR again I travelled back to the main road before transferring to the Discovery for the journey home.

This was probably the most satisfying day of my tour so far. True we had been instrumental in ethnic cleansing but it would have happened anyway. Perhaps we made it less painful than it might have been and possibly - by being quick about it - we saved lives.

Monday 1 March

I haven't managed to devote time to this diary for a few days now; not because I haven't had the time but simply because I had little to say. The repercussions of bringing so many people across the lines have been very good - a lot of favourable Press comment and thanks from BHC.

Last night I gave Alan Abraham in Tuzla authority to take a UNHCR/ICRC recce to a pocket of trapped Muslims - apparently about to fall into Serbian control. It seems a bit 'Mickey Mouse' at the moment but we shall see.

Alastair Duncan and his 1 FWD Recce Team are back here; they are alright - especially Alastair. Sadly it seems we may have to withdraw from Tuzla; the Canadians are going to be given it and I do not think we will be getting a compensating challenge. Going to Banja Luka seems almost impossible. Roddy Cordy-Simpson wants us to establish a stranglehold over the Vitez - Kiseljak Valley - possible as a Company task. I'm not so happy at that as we should be able to do that with a platoon. But there is little I can do about it. HQ BRITFOR have given clear signals for a long time now that we should get out of Tuzla. BHC has finally decided to take them up on it; and put the Canadians into the 'jewel in my crown'.

00189900

Tuesday 2 March

I waited for quite a while to discover whether there was going to be a refugee crossing over from Turbe today. By 1000hrs it became fairly obvious that this was not going to take place and so I took Alistair Duncan and Chris Coates with me on a tour of Zenica. En route I discovered an Equie Libre Convoy stopped by the HVO Checkpoint on the Zenica Road. I told the Checkpoint that they had no right to stop the Convoy and escorted it onwards to the Vissoko Road - where it was bound. I think the problem was that the drivers were locals - the usual excuse.

In Zenica we went first to the UNHCR where Roisin (an Irish girl) entertained us in her flat to beer. After that we saw Jose de la Mota and a Canadian Lt Col on attachment to UNHCR called John. Kim was there too. We went to ICRC where we saw the nurse Claire; she had had a message that there was to be a refugee crossing at Turbe tomorrow. We shall see.

Wednesday 3 March

Today the Coordinating Committee for the ECMM Commission were due to meet at 1100hrs in Vitez. I say 'were' because there was a total cock-up and Tudor Ellis failed to pick up the 3rd Corps Commander - instead picking up someone else. But it was not just the the 3rd Corps Commander; he was accompanied by the 4th Corps Commander and two representatives of the Bosnian President's Government - including his Military Advisor. I sacked Tudor for it - but reinstated him later!

The meeting itself went off alright - I chaired it and we dealt with the usual type of business. Roads were to be opened and rights of passage were to be guaranteed etc. Meanwhile the Bosnian Serbs had decided that ethnic cleansing on a grand scale like a few days ago was probably not quite such a good idea. The Refugee Crossing at Turbe was off - I suspect for adverse publicity as a result of the last time reasons.

Now we have been told to withdraw from Tuzla starting on 6 March. I am very unhappy about that as I consider that was the primary point of our mission and it has now been taken away. I have voiced my disquiet considerably and now must just get on with it. However I do think we have been sold a lemon!

Thursday 4 March

Alan Abraham, based in Tuzla, is concerned about the exact handover of the operational area there. He feels that it is too tricky to hand over at the moment. Also he believes that too many people, like UNHCR and UNMOs, are operating in rather a non-sensible way. I took both these points with me to Kiseljak when I visited. 22though Roddy Cordy-Simpson was not there (picking up CINC BAOR fr22 Sarajevo) I spoke to Petre Leentjes about our concerns. We agreed that the handover would take place when Alan and his Canadian opposite number were happy - there was no strict timetable.

Alistair Duncan accompanied me to Kiseljak and we had a very pleasant time with Victor Andreev and his assistant Tricia Kierney. Victor is a Russian whilst Tricia is American. They seem to get on very well together and I invited them both to come to Vitez for a party. Victor wants to talk to me about a job with the UN.

In the evening Alistair Duncan, Briuan Watters, Richard

00189901

1434

Waltier and I went out to dinner at Claire Podbielski's house. It was a lovely dinner party.

Friday 5 March

The day started with me picking up General Sir Charles Guthrie and Major General Anthony Dennison-Smith from Kiseljak at 0845hrs. Guthrie is CINC BAOR and Dennison-Smith is GOC 4 Arm Div - and our Boss on return from Bosnia.

We drove back to Vitez and there they had a briefing. Guthrie was most impressed by our level of knowledge of the area. We toured Camp and thereafter I took both generals down to Gornji Vakuf. The journey was quite difficult because of the ice. On return I took the generals into Turbe where we had a meeting with Leiko, and surprisingly Colonel Filipovitch (HVO). They really enjoyed that - especially as there was a little bit of mortar and small arms fire evident. Whilst the generals went to the WO and Sgts Mess I went back into Travnik to the BiH HQ where they were having a farewell party for Martin Forgrave. Beba was there and told me the the Bosnians intended to give me a 'Golden Lily' - whatever that is. I returned to Vitez at about 2030hrs and rejoined both generals for supper in the Officers Mess. Bed was achieved at about midnight.

Saturday 6 March

Sadly at about 0130hrs Lance Corporal Roche (R IRISH) shot himself in the head. He was apparently larking around with a rifle and said - watch this before firing. It's a very great tragedy. What a shame. Richard Waltier woke me to inform me of the facts. There was little that could be done.

At 0730hrs I took the generals to Kiseljak and they flew off to Redoubt. Whilst in Kiseljak I learnt that Morillon had been successful in getting to the Cerska Pocket with Alan Abraham, we were to stay in Tuzla (Morillon didn't like the plan) and our boundaries have been slightly adjusted to include Tomaslavgrad. This was good news although I think we may have to position a platoon at Tomaslavgrad on pressure from HQ BRITFOR.

I had lunch with Doug Houston and Bill Tyas, as well as Claire, in the Cafe Horse. After that Doug, Bill and myself sought out the manager of the Vitez Explosives Factory in order to get some explosives for the Zenica and Kakanj Coal Mines. We seemed to be successful.

In the evening I went out to HQ 3rd BiH Corps for dinner with a whole load of people including Doug and Bill.

Sunday 7 March

I wrote to Mrs Roche, mother of Lance Corporal Roche, who accidentally shot himself the night before last in the morning. At 1130hrs we held a commemoration service for him; the boys seemed mighty depressed about it all and so I gave a pep talk at the end of it all - including the fact that I was a little bit angry with what had happened. Certainly I do not feel responsible - unlike the death of Lance Corporal Edwards.

In the afternoon I wrapped myself away and started to think about honours and awards.

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Monday 8 March

Alan Abrahams seems to be having a 'ball' on the far side of the lines around Tuzla. He's still over in Zvornik negotiating with the Serbs about the release of refugees/wounded from Cerska - and doing so very well indeed.

Down here I took Brian Watters into Zenica for a run around today. We started by visiting the ECMM in the International Hotel in Zenica. The new Ambassador was not there - he's gone to Tuzla. After that we went to ICRC where we had a coffee with Iris. Finally we visited UNHCR where we discussed a system of traffic control around the village of Milankovici. We agreed to establish something by 1600hrs tomorrow. Brian suggested that we use the majority of what is required from Tuzla - B Sqn 9/12L. That makes sense.

In the afternoon I took some time off and had a bath in my house. I got Pte Jones to fill up a 'puffing billy' so that there was enough hot water. I also told the mess staff that they were to get the hot water system going ASP. Brian Watters came over too and looked to see if he wanted to move into my house. He will probably do so later in the month; it's up to him.

During the evening I had dinner with John Adlam and Claire Podbielski in The Horse Cafe at Zenica. John's a really nice man; he's just got married.

Tuesday 9 March

This morning I started by going to a crash site. The MRG Wrecker whilst dragging a Dutch truck went over the side of the viaduct at the Sarajevo BiH Checkpoint. Both vehicles dropped about 35 feet into the River. Both British soldiers - there were no Dutch in the vehicles - were injured. Amazingly enough they were not too badly hurt. We have been extremely lucky with vehicle accidents so far. I met Merdan and his ECMM Team whilst there; he was on his way to complete EOCM business.

By chance also two UNHCR vehicles passed by and in the first was Karin Landgren, UNHCR Chief of Mission for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Andre was with her. I invited the whole team to Vitez for a briefing and lunch. They arrived at 1130hrs and we took them through a standard briefing; followed by drinks and then lunch in the Officers Mess.

In the afternoon I went to see Santic, President of Vitez. He wanted to discuss contracts and thus Mike Winstanley had to come along as well. In short the Town's President wants a few anomalies to be cleared up - particularly the water supply, the road to be prepared for tarmac and also to be cleaned of mud.

After the evening conference at 1700hrs I spoke to Robert Fraser, Equerry to HRH The Prince of Wales. Apparently the Commander of the UK Field Army has laid down that HRH must not go further than The Redoubt Camp. His visit will take place on 16 March and he will arrive there between 1300 - 1430hrs. Brian Watters is to travel to Redoubt to discuss the programme tomorrow at 1040hrs.

Wednesday 10 March

The CSE Show arrived last night and spent the hours of darkness drinking in the Officers Mess. They seem a good lot and

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obviously needed to sleep late this morning. Brian Watters took off for the Redoubt to see what needs to be done with the Equerry to HRH. For my part I did a session of Orders followed by a briefing to the CSE Show personnel.

After lunch I took the CSE Show Staff to Travnik and Turbe. All was very quiet there and we had no problems whatsoever. In the evening the Show itself started at 1930hrs. David Coperfield, a comedian, was the 'Star' but most people were watching the girls. Because the CSE Show had spent last night in the Officers Mess, the Show adjourned to the Sergeants Mess on this occasion.

Thursday 11 March

This morning at 1040hrs Ranger King from B Coy picked up a device in Bistrica. It exploded, apparently as he threw it away. He now has several injuries, his balls, arm, chest and head have been penetrated. A small ball bearing seems to have gone through his head and might or might not have gone out the other side. I have seen the X Rays; the ball bearing entry point shows most clearly. He was CASEVACED by SEAKING from here at 1715hrs having travelled here from Gornji Vakuf. What a fool he appears to have been - once again we have to learn old lessons.

Personally I visited ICRC and UNHCR today. We had a non-meeting at UNHCR. It was pointless because everyone was getting into a twitch about the movement of explosives for no point; local trucks could and will take explosives to the mines in Kakanj and Breza. We do not have to make difficult decisions.

Friday 12 March

I had to attend a seminar at HQ BHC today - yet General Morillon was still in Srebrenica. His Deputy General Prado ran it - or rather tried to run the meeting. He had great problems because of his very poor English! The seminar was much better than last time and included presentations on the political developments, UNHCR operations and future plans. After that each Battalion Commander gave a short presentation on his Battalion. Most of us were very short and to the point - which was great.

I spoke to Victor Andreev about a job and he suggested that I might be graded as P3 or P4 - apparently there are about 7 subsidiary grades in each P category. Victor wants me to go and see him separately about it all; he seems quite hopeful that something can be found for me.

As soon as I got out of Kiseljak en route back I discovered that Alan Abraham in position south of Zvornik was in considerable trouble. Shell fire was incoming and very close; indeed a considerable number of Muslims (blocking him in) had been struck. The situation got worse and worse until an UNMO vehicle and the Wrecker dragging a SULTAN were also struck - killing 10 people. At this point Alan decided that enough was enough and broke out. He spent the night in Zvornik. I must say I will be very grateful to see him back in Tuzla and safe.

Saturday 13 March

Alan Abraham was supposed to get on the back of OP CABINET and recross the lines. There was a minor hiccup to start with and he didn't get away from the Zvornik Bridge with the OP CABINET vehicles. Eventually though things started to work and he was able

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to get back to Tuzla by 1630hrs. Alan has done very well indeed and I hope I will be able to get him some suitable recognition for all he has done. We shall see.

It seems though that General Morillon is stuck in Srebrenica - surrounded by Muslims who refuse to let him go! I should think he will get out eventually but he's giving the Staff at Kiseljak considerable nightmares by his escapades at short notice.

Sunday 14 March

Quite a quiet day all round. I spent most of the day in Zenica and even went for a walk in the hills. Whilst I was away the UNHCR Convoy from Zagreb via Banja Luka was cancelled - again. Morillon is still in Srebrenica - now issuing instructions like he will stay there until his conditions are met etc. We shall see.

Monday 15 March

Today I decided to tackle the problem of the Mafia in the Vitez/Travnik area. I went to see President Santic and the main players in Vitez to complain strongly about the latest vehicle to be hijacked - an IRC vehicle on Saturday night from outside a house in town. The Town notables were obviously very upset about it all and were doing all in their power to control such things. After a lot of discussion I agreed to put the Standby Platoon into Vitez occasionally. Also I discovered that the Head of the Mafia was named Andric Zarko. He operates from a Cafe about 2 miles west of Nova Bila School. From the meeting I drove there directly to discover that I had just missed him. I asked the Cafe personnel to tell Zarko that I wanted to see him at 1600hrs this afternoon and would be back.

After that I went into Zenica to visit ICRC and UNHCR. The UNHCR (Turbe) Convoy has been cancelled again. This is about the sixth time.

When I returned to the Cafe Boba at 1600hrs Zarko still had not arrived. I arranged a return visit at 1830hrs and this time they went and got him for me. Through a local interpreter (careful) I explained that I was fed up with hijackings and it had to stop. I told him that I wanted the IRC vehicle and UNHCR vehicle for that matter back. I also said that I had given my soldiers instructions to shoot if stopped! This thug (30-ish) listened and I think took note. He asked to meet me tomorrow but I said I couldn't. Brian Watters could go. Andric Zarko is Head of Police in Travnik and Novi Travnik! We shall see what happens now.

Mike Lewinson and a girl called Sheila (slightly Chinese) turned up for the night from the UNHCR. We had a party in the Mess to which we invited Claire and Francois from ICRC in the evening. Everyone stayed in my house.

Tuesday 16 March

My houseguests departed at about 0815hrs and then I prepared to go to Redoubt - where we were due to meet HRH Prince Charles at 1300hrs. Travelling in the Discovery and landrovers the party from Vitez included Martin Thomas, Chris Leyshon, Richard Forde-Johnson and RSM Stevens. We made fairly good time until we came to the mountains south of Prozor where a WARRIOR had slipped off the track because of ice. The recovery took some time and was not complete before the end of the visit. Nonetheless we had two WARRIORS, two SCIMITARS and the landrovers as a backdrop.

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1430

HRH arrived on time and we briefed him after the Sappers had had him for 30 minutes. Thereafter I took him down the ranks of soldiers for about half an hour before we had lunch altogether in a big Mexi Shelter. HRH was very embarrassed that he was not able to make Vitez - I told him that I had been very rude to the MOD about it all.

After the visit ended I travelled back to Vitez and met up with Brian Watters. Whilst I had been away he had been to interview Andric about the missing cars. No joy so far but Brian felt there was still some hope. Andric blustered a bit.

Wednesday 17 March

Today was St Patrick's Day and the Irish Contingent were to celebrate in true style. However before things started the Dutch Minister of Defence visited us with Jan De Boer. We briefed him on our situation here and then entertained him to some drinks in the Officers Mess. The visit seemed to be a particular success.

St Patrick's Day started with a Parade at which Andrew Cumming presented Shamrock to the assembled Irish masses. After that LCpl Cleary (the Piper) led the parade to the Junior Ranks Club for a little whiskey et al. It was quite a nice party with nobody misbehaving.

Andrew Cumming, together with Clive Newell and his replacement Keith Craig, stayed overnight. I took them to the Horse Cafe for dinner. Sadly Beth (the Canadian girl) was ill otherwise both her and Claire would have joined us too.

Thursday 18 March

I went up to Tesanj today. We left in the Discovery at 0930hrs and took 2 hours to get there - a short hold-up because of mud en route. South of Tesanj we met up with John Ellis and Matthew Dundas-Whatley before proceeding into the Town accompanied by Colonel Yosic. There we had a meeting with Halibasic and Yossic. I wanted to clear up a few points. First I wanted to re-establish free entry to Tesanj for all UNHCR, ICRC and UN vehicles; the joint checkpoint at the South of the Town had previously insisted on an escort. I don't think they were trying to be too difficult but it was a bore. This was agreed. Second I wanted John Ellis to spend a few days attached to Halibasic's Headquarters; particularly to check the claim that the BSA were flying in the area. Finally I challenged Halibasic's men to a football match. We parted at about 1430hrs and I drove into Tesanj where I met up with Claire Podbielski and a new ICRC representative called Diane. We shared some coke together and then we returned to Vitez.

In the evening I went looking for John Adlam in the International Hotel. I wanted to get a UN application form off him; as well as deliver some mail. He was not there.

Friday 19 March

Today I was meant to fly to Tuzla; the French were going to do the job. But because of all the performances in Eastern Bosnia, Kiseljak ordered that the flight should not take place. Instead I stayed around Camp and entertained the new Commander of UN Forces in the Former Yugoslavia. He was Swedish, Lieutenant General L E Wahlgren; and what a ball of fire he didn't turn out to be!

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After lunch ( and Wahlgren had departed) I drove into Zenica and visited the ICRC. Srebrenica has now received its first UNHCR Convoy since November and so perhaps things will start to calm down - although now a No Fly Zone is about to be announced I think.

Saturday 20 March

I went to Turbe this morning principally to see what the situation was like as I hadn't been there for some time. I took Leiko 200 cigarettes and gave Beba (who was there too) a bottle of Martell. Apparently the shelling has increased but Leiko had only lost one man killed in the last week. I discussed with him how I might cross the line to implement any peace agreement. Basically I might cross with WARRIOR and head either for the Vlassic Headquarters or Donji Vakuf. Beba gave me a huge great hunting knife which everyone said was excellent. It's not really my style though. There was some small arms fire around Turbe.

At 1130 Jean Luc, the new Head ICRC Delegate, arrived. He was briefed in the Intelligence Section and then a group of ICRC personnel and selected officers had lunch together in the Officers Mess. After lunch I went off to the UNHCR Party in Zenica with Claire and Beth. The Party was not too good and so I left fairly early.

Sunday 21 March

General Sir John Wilsey, new CINC UKLF, was due to visit today. I went to Kiseljak and picked him up for 1100hrs. He was accompanied by Brigadier Charles Vyvian, Jamie Daniells and Peter Pearson - as well as Andrew Cumming and Richard Barrens. We travelled back down the Kiseljak Valley and I talked to him en route. Once at Vitez I decided to take him across the lines as we were monitoring a ceasefire meeting of the Exchange Commission. I put the General and his party into JULIET and we set off.

Matthew Dundas-Whatley was across the line and sent back an escort for us as we took the Northern crossing point. The road across was littered with vehicles and looked very impressively warlike! I met the Serbs over there and requested a 3 day ceasefire on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday - these being Muslim feast days. I also pressed my request to go to Banja Luka again to a major. After a while we returned. There was no firing whilst we were there. After lunch in the Officers Mess and a quick visit to the Sappers the General left for Kiseljak.

I returned to Turbe in my Discovery and went across the lines again. This time on the Southern Crossing Point. We had to wait at the Cafe Biffa for about 90 minutes before the first UNHCR Convoy to come via Banja Luka appeared. General Jerrie Hulme was with it - ex-Army and working for UNHCR. We had to re-negotiate two minefields and remove a pile of soil with a CET to get the convoy through. I refused to allow the Muslims to search the convoy and told them to stop pointing a 12.7 gun at the trucks and then we were through. There was a little firing - one sniper round going over our heads. I led the convoy to Vitez and left it there. I also brought over a family of Muslims in my landrover.

In the evening I had dinner with Claire and John Adlam in the Horse Cafe - where we met up with all the UNHCR who had just crossed the lines. The UNHCR Convoy goes back tomorrow.

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Monday 22 March

The UNHCR Convoy crossed over back into Bosnian Serb territory with no hold-ups at all. That was very pleasing. Apparently neither the Muslims nor the Serbs wanted it delayed and so it went straight through again. UNHCR plan the next convoy for Friday of this week. Brian ran that operation because I was due to fly to Tuzla (again).

I travelled down to Kiseljak in my Discovery. There Roddy Cordy-Simpson briefed me on the developments in Tuzla - particularly the fact that Morillon was doing his 'thing' again. We needed to sort things out and he asked me to do my best during my visit. But I could only remain on the ground for about 45 minutes because of the dangers from artillery.

Two French Pumas were positioned on the sports field and I took with me Olivier (French Major), a Civil Affairs advisor called Mark, the RMO and RSM. Additionally two Legionnaires travelled with us. They would be responsible for satellite communications back to Kiseljak; strangely one was a Scot and had been at university with Mark Weir.

We took off at 1130hrs and travelled up the old route to Tuzla until we dropped down out of the mountains. The snow was still there right at the tops but had largely gone elsewhere. Once we started coming out of the mountains we travelled right on the ground - especially as we approached Tuzla. Alan's Squadron has been under quite a lot of shellfire recently. If we'd put our wheels down we could have landed. The French seemed very good indeed.

We taxied straight to a WARRRIOR where Alan met me. Closed down we travelled to his Headquarters where I met Tom Malpas - the excellent EDCM officer. I held a meeting where I established that Alan, Olivier, Mark and Tom were to be the action centre to sort things out - particularly the business of repatriating about 272 Serbs. They were to hold a meeting with UNHCR and ICRC immediately and try to get lists of those that wanted to go to Zvornik. Ideally OP CABINET escorting those that wished to go was to take place tomorrow - although I was quite pessimistic about the chances. After 40 minutes Alan took me back to the Pumas where the Press caught me for a quick interview. We took off and returned to Kiseljak. I was well satisfied. On return I debriefed myself to Roddy Cordy-Simpson who looks absolutely bushed. I was back in Vitez by 1430hrs. The whole idea of helicopters to Tuzla is a great improvement I must say.

Tuesday 23 March

At 0900hrs I left Vitez in JULIET - bound for Vissoko. I wanted to visit Tom Gebirt and the Canadian Battalion. I had arranged for Claire Podbielski to meet me there as she wanted to get to know the UNPROFOR unit responsible for Vissoko, Vares and Olovo. In fact we joined up with her en route and travelled in semi convoy on to the Canadian Battalion.

Tom Gebirt was hospitable and we also looked around the hospital. I returned at lunchtime and had a really good (hot) bath in my house this afternoon.

Wednesday 24 March

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This was rather a laid-back day in many ways. I decided to venture into Zenica with Brian Watters at 1100hrs. En route we visited the Sappers as they did their recce (with local forces) to clear the landslip on the main Zenica road. Apparently there is about 200lbs of High Explosive contained within the pile which was originally collapsed with explosives. The locals are going to remove that before our Sappers get going on it.

In Zenica I visited UNHCR and also ICRC. Brian and I had lunch in a local Pizza Restaurant before we returned to Vitez. During the afternoon I read through Alan Abraham's rather harrowing account of his experiences in the Cerska Pocket; the worst bit being when a child had had it's head blown off whilst in it's mothers' arms. One of the things that strikes me is that there is a big difference between the Cavalry and Infantry approach to casualties. The Infantry seem to be more philosophical about such things whilst the Cavalry do seem to get over emotional. I wonder if this is a reflection of Infantry Northern Ireland experience and the domination of pre-scripted Germany based exercises for the Cavalry over the last 40 years or so.

Thursday 25 March

I held an Officer Plot discussion with Brian Watters and Richard Waltier this morning. John Donnelly is to command B Coy from our return until the end of the year. I drove into Zenica during the afternoon and in the evening Brian, Richard and myself went out to dinner at Claire's. Jean Luc and Beth were there too.

I thoroughly enjoyed the following extract from the Daily SITREP today:

"B Coy is presently hosting some of our French UN colleagues. It was reported this afternoon that a convoy of 9 Renault APCs was heading towards BUGOJNO. B Coy became suspicious as this was obviously towards the front line. After heading off the convoy it was escorted to B Coy's location where it is over-nighting. The convoy contained two Lts, four Cols, and Gen Kote, the 5 Star CINC Land Forces France. The General intends to move to Sarajevo tomorrow. It is not known whether he will be using the same mapreader, although he is more than likely discard his Michelin Road Map and use Ordnance Survey maps as issued by B Coy."

Friday 26 March

Apparently the French Party left Gornji Vakuf at 0730hrs but they took until 1430hrs to reach Kiseljak. Maybe they did use the same mapreader again!

For my part I went to a Commission Meeting today. Thebault, the French ECMM Ambassador, chaired the meeting starting at 1100hrs in The International Hotel in Zenica. It dragged on and on and rapidly I learnt that I had made a mistake to allow the Ambassador to chair the meeting. All kinds of 'politicos' were there and they all insisted on having the little speeches. In despair I left at 1400hrs and returned an 90 minutes later - just in time for it all to break up. None of the military commanders, and the BiH had Comd 1st, 2nd and 3rd Corps present, were too amused about the length of time it all took - and neither was I. Actually I said as much to the Ambassador. I will not be going to the next meeting if it's like that.

Overnight the snow has returned - wet and heavy. Amazing

really; just as we had ordered shirt sleeve order. The roads are in disarray again but at the moment the stuff isn't staying on the roads. The only person who will be happy is likely to be MacKenzie, the big brown bear, at the garage on the Vitez by-pass.

Saturday 27 March

Andrew Cumming stayed overnight having driven (with extreme difficulty) back from Tuzla where he had been staying with Alan Abraham. He left at 0900hrs bound for Split - although the roads still look pretty foul. First thing in the morning the road to Gornji Vakuf was closed and the Sappers are doing their best to open it.

I spent a relatively quiet morning in Vitez Camp but then travelled into Zenica to see Enver Hadzihasanovic, 3rd Corps Commander leaving Vitez Camp at 1215hrs. It was a serious slivovitz drinking session and I crawled out at 1630hrs. George Atard was with me (the surgeon); he loved it all.

In the evening we had a superb party in the Mess with Thierry's band and the Regimental Dixieland Band playing alternatively. Only one person ended up kipping in my house despite many pleas for overnight accommodation.

Sunday 28 March

Not much happened today - especially as we didn't realise the clocks had gone back, thus making everyone an hour behind anyway. I suppose it doesn't really matter in Bosnia. I spent a quiet day.

Monday 29 March

I drove up to Maglaj to see Suleiman. I took George Atard with me as he obviously thoroughly enjoyed the last session two days ago. In fact he had performed an operation on his last return - taking a bullet out of the lkeg of an ICRC driver who had been shot in Zenica (Negligent Discharge).

The journey up was fairly uneventful and quick. Tudor Ellis had his Platoon already in Maglaj and I drove straight into Suleiman's Headquarters. Sadly Suleiman had had a heart murmur yesterday and he had fallen over. He needs leave desperately and so I agreed to get him to Split - his family are in Zagreb. Maglaj has been quiet since the start of the Ceasefire (1200hrs yesterday); that's good. I discussed the possibility of me crossing the lines of conflict either North or South of Maglaj next week. It seems dangerous in cold blood but we shall do all we can to do it safely.

In the evening I had dinner with Jean-Luc, Claire and Jean-Paul Corboz who had come out of Sarajevo. We dined in the Horse Cafe and Jean-Paul paid. I had fixed his armoured Landrover Safari earlier in the day.

Tuesday 30 March

This morning I decided it was probably time to go and talk to Victor Andreev, Civil Affairs Advisor in Kiseljak, about the possibilities of a UN job. I telephoned Victor and he said I should go straightaway - which I did; arriving at 1000hrs. Unfortunately Victor was bombed out with work by the time I arrived and so I just left some CV material with him. He said he would look at it and then we would talk; Victor offered me dinner and an overnight stay

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with him later. I also spoke to Roddy Cordy-Simpson; he has drafted an insert slip for my report as he is due to go shortly. I discussed the problem of awards and particularly the business of Tuzla with him. He advised me not to put anyone up for anything if I had the slightest doubt. Driving back to Vitez I saw Jean-Paul Corboz in Kiseljak and stopped for a chat. I thanked him for last night.

As I was driving through Kacuni I re-positioned the two armoured vehicles at the bridge there as they were not in tactically sound locations. This led to a row with the local Police (BiH) and so I gave in as I did not want to jeopardise the agreement - so fragile at the moment. At lunch in Vitez I met David, Deputy Director of OXFAM; he had commanded 1 DERR some 12 years ago. I vaguely recognised him.

I took JULIET into Turbe in the afternoon and there met Leiko, Beba and Col Filipovitch. We discussed the ceasefire at length - apparently it seems to be holding in Turbe. Leiko declared it to be 95% effective. There was some small arms fire - machine gun - whilst we were there.

I had a long discussion with Lizzie on the telephone when I got back. Things don't look too good for us.

Wednesday 31 March

I started the day by talking on Radio 4's 'Today' Programme at 0845hrs. The thrust of the interview with Brian Redhead was about Srebrenica and British involvement in the operation - which wasn't too much as Alan Abraham is simply doing an OP CABINET type opening of the Lines in order to facilitate the arrival of refugees.

By 1000hrs I was with Col Filipovitch, HVO Commander in Travnik. We discussed things for about 90 minutes. He's a nice guy and I felt a little bad that I had not been to see him for so long. He suggested to me that he also had a 'Beba Salko' equivalent who might be in a position to get me across the Lines - particularly on the Vlassic Feature. I said I would be very interested in this and stated that I will send Matthew Dundas-Whatley to arrange something. The bottle of Martel I took with me seemed to go down very well!

I was interviewed by 'The World at One' after lunch. Again the subject was the same as earlier - about British involvement in refugees coming out of the Eastern Enclaves. Later in the afternoon I received a signal from Creighton Wakelin saying I had gone down very well on 'The Breakfast Show'.

Tonight the 'No Fly Zone' Resolution was passed and we now have a 7 day period of grace before it is due to be implemented. It is directed only against air targets - but what if an active ground radar acquires a UN aircraft and possibly engages it? That's the rub!

Tomorrow being April Fools Day we have published on Part 1 Orders that the UN's shortage of funds has necessitated the non issue of UN Medals; and those that have had them already are to return them. I suspect the boys will rumble this one.

Thursday 1 April

Roddy Cordy-Simpson warned me a few days ago that he would move to Italy to become Chief of Staff of the UN Air Effort if a No

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Fly Zone were to be implemented. I fully expect him to be moving in the next few days.

I have arranged for Suleiman, Commander in Maglaj, to be taken to Split tomorrow morning. John Ellis will RV with him in the tunnels near Zepce and arrange for his onward transmission via one of our convoys. It's a wee bit illegal but what the hell!

I left Vitez bound for Kiseljak at 0900hrs. Roddy Cordy-Simpson had promised to take me for a tour around Sarajevo; I had never been there before. Roddy confirmed that he is moving to Italy imminently once I got to Kiseljak. He gave me a rather nice insert slip for my report on arrival and we set off for Sarajevo in his armoured landrover soon after 1000hrs.

The first checkpoint was HVO but then we went through a Serbian one where we had to show our ID Cards. Most of the area into Sarajevo was Serbian territory. The place was pretty badly shot-up. To start with we visited the Airport and then went to the PTT Building where the UNHCR was based. I gave two parcels in to the office for distribution to locals; I was doing this as a favour.

Roddy decided that we should visit Dobrinja; a Muslim run community under continuous fire. But not today; I didn't hear a shot fired whilst I was in Sarajevo. There were a great number of people on the streets. In Dobrinja I saw Comd 1st Corps again. The whole place is a commune run very efficiently and was most impressive.

We journeyed on from there on a City Tour. I saw the Holiday Inn and we ended up at The Residency where Morillon normally lives. There I met Jeremy Braid - Owen's advisor. We had a rather splendid lunch before returning to Kiseljak in time for me to make a Mess Meeting in Vitez at 1530hrs.

The ceasefire that was holding seems to be breaking up again. Maglaj, Turbe and even Travnik have been shelled during the late afternoon. Perhaps this is the Serbian response to the 'No Fly Resolution'.

Friday 2 April

OP SLAVEN the UNHCR crossing at Turbe has been cancelled indefinitely. I suppose the UNHCR are concerned about the implications of political developments - particularly the 'No Fly Zone'. It's quite funny but I learnt yesterday that the very day on which the UN intends to commence it's next round of talks is 6 April; the day on which the Germans attacked Sarajevo, the day it was liberated from the Germans and the very day in 1992 when it was attacked for the first time.

Today I went to Kiseljak again. I wanted to see Victor Andreev but I couldn't get round to it because he was very busy and I did not want to push the matter. Brian Watters came with me and we discussed helicopters etc; Brian is going to Tuzla in SEAKINGS tomorrow. He will overnight there.

Whilst in Kiseljak I said goodbye to Roddy Cordy-Simpson who is now going off to Italy where he will be Chief of Staff for the Air Forces implementing the air exclusion zone. He told me he sees his role as making damn sure that the air exclusion zone is not carried to ridiculous lengths. As things stand UN Air Forces can only shoot down anything that flies - but they cannot attack ground

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targets.

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I stayed in tonight and started to work on Honours and Awards. It is all very difficult as there is no operational status for this tour as yet. Maybe there will never be; I hope not as that would be wrong. In the meantime I have a month to get my citations in order and presented to HQ BRITFOR. Company commanders are recommending their boys but there are a great number of 'worthies' who work directly for me. How to identify exactly who should get what is terribly difficult.

The last fall of snow was so heavy and wet that it has collapsed all out tentage. Thankfully no soldiers are still living in the tents but I think we will end up taking them down now. Previously I had intended leaving them up as spare accommodation - just in case we were heavily reinforced!

Saturday 3 April

I woke early and came over to my office to work on Honours and Awards. At 0840hrs I departed for Zenica because this morning we were going to give Ted Skinner and Derek Arnot McBride a christian burial. They had been interred in a Moslem Cemetery with appropriate headstones and I thought we should at least do the decent thing - not that we had much to do with them, but it might help the families.

At 0945hrs I met a man called Esad Denanovic at 3rd Corps HQ; he was the Muslim charged with showing us where the graves were. Together with Padre Tyrone Hilary we travelled South of Zenica and found the graveyard on a plateau. There Tyrone took a spade and dug out the Moslem headstones - replacing them with crosses given by UNHCR. They had had the names placed on them in plastic letters. I noticed both men were about 8 years younger than myself. Once that was done Tyrone conducted a very short burial service for both men. At the end of this Esad Denanovic just said "C'est la Vie". I wonder what he meant by that - considering both men were working for the Muslims but apparently were murdered by the Mujahaddin. I returned directly to Vitez once the service was over - dropping off Esad in Zenica en route.

Sunday 4 April

This morning we played Zenica Rugby Club again. This return match was likely to be interesting after the last result which was 17:16 to them. The match took place in the Stadium and started with myself and the President of the Rugby Club shaking hands with all players. LCpl Cleary led us out to that with his pipes playing the Regimental March.

The Band played upstairs both before the match, during the interval and at the end whilst the teams were having drinks in an upstairs bar. The match itself was not a particularly good one. We took an early lead and kept it with the result being 12:10 in our favour which was pleasing.

During the afternoon I spent a considerable amount of time trying to sort out Honours and Awards.

Brian Watters and a party of 7 others flew to Tuzla from Kiseljak during the morning. They used French Pumas and Brian expects to be there for about 2 days before flying back. Joe Edmunds is with him and so I suppose this will delay Joe's return to

Germany - I do not suppose he will complain.

1422

Monday 5 April

Yesterday we received notice from the ICRC that about 250 refugees might well cross the line at Turbe today. This morning Jean-Luc confirmed as much and we set up an operation to recover them from the Serb side.

Alan Abraham and B Sqn 9/12L were responsible for the detail of the operation although Matthew Dundas-Whatley did all the liaison work on the ground. I left to join the operation at 1045hrs and started by going in to see Beba at his office in Travnik. Whilst with Beba he received word on the radio (from the Serbs) that the refugees were at the front line. I half expected this and had warned off Alan Abraham to be far faster than expected. Alan had some SCIMITARS in an overwatch position behind Turbe. I followed the WARRIORS into the town and went directly up the northern route to the Front Line. There was a little bit of firing. An ITN Team was with us - although the Serbs did not want it over the Line. Alan was a little slow in my opinion and at the Front a line of mines stretched across the road.

We asked the Bosnian Muslims to move them but they declined as they felt they might get shot. In consequence I decided I would do so; and did accompanied by Matthew Dundas-Whatley and the RSM. We ran out, moved the mines and ran back. After that I led a landrover convoy over the lines - pausing briefly to clear a pole barricade away just before the Serbian positions. Five buses were at the Serb Front Line when we arrived.

Immediately I ordered our transport (mainly Dutch) to come forward. I went to each bus and told them who I was and what we were going to do. After this we began the business of off loading the buses one by one - as the trucks came up. They were then led away across the Lines. In the middle of this I heard that Staff Sergeant Bristow, the PINFO cameraman, had been shot in the head by a sniper. I went back across the Lines immediately - as he had stayed with the ITN Team. Bristow had already been evacuated and it seemed that it might not be as serious as was at first thought. In any case there was nothing I could do and so I returned to the Serb positions where I watched the remainder of the refugees cross-loaded to our vehicles. I then drove back and into the School in Travnik where chaos seemed to reign. Neither ICRC nor UNHCR were there. I went to the local Red Cross Office and telephoned ICRC. They were still en route and arrived as I left the office. Jean-Luc, Francois and Roberto were in the cars. The UNHCR also turned up shortly afterwards. There was nothing more I could do and so I returned to Vitez and checked on Staff Sergeant Bristow. Apparently the sniper's bullet had hit the side of his helmet and the round had just penetrated into the skull. He was very lucky indeed; his life saved by the helmet. Later the MST discovered he had a bone fragment in his brain and so he was CASEVACED to UK later.

Marshal of the RAF Sir Peter Harding (CDS), Pauline Neville-Jones (Dep Cabinet Secretary), Brigadier David Jenkins

(DMO) and Andrew Cumming arrived at 1900hrs. I had just watched the report of our day's activities on the BFBS News. We briefed them immediately and then they had a buffet supper in the Officers Mess. The entire party spent the night in my house.

Tuesday 6 April

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I woke early in order to be out of the bathroom quickly. After a breakfast at 0700hrs we went into Turbe with CDS's Party. There we met Leiko, Filipovitch, and later Selko. They entertained us royally before we had to leave at 0940hrs. I insisted on slivovitz and they also gave us coffee and food - the traditional cheese and roast potatoes. CDS seemed to enjoy his visit very much. There was some shooting around but nothing serious. After we left Matthew Dundas-Whatley stayed on to help Beba (also present) to locate a Muslim body. Later it was found in No-Man's Land.

I took CDS back to Vitez where we had coffee in the Officers Mess before travelling on to Gornji Vakuf. There Alun Jones briefed us. We had a quick walk around and then had a curry lunch. Bang on the dot at 1230hrs CDS disappeared South to the Redoubt. I returned to Vitez with Richard Waltier. I had a bath and freshened myself up on return.

Staff Sergeant Bristow was evacuated by SEAKING this morning. He is going all the way back to UK to be fully checked out.

We have now had reports that Halibasic, previous Commander in Tescanj, was killed last night on Bomb Alley. Apparently his civilian car was struck by a Serb tank round. It's been a sad day all round as Matthew Dundas-Whatley's appeal against being made redundant has been turned down. I told him after the conference tonight.

Wednesday 7 April

This morning I went down to Kakanj to join the ECCM Commission Coordinating Meeting chaired by Ambassador Thebault. It started almost on time and went on and on; eventually I got fed up and left at 1330hrs. The meeting achieved very little beyond a general wish that there would only be 7 'joint' checkpoints.

After leaving I went to the ICRC and had lunch with Claire Podbielski - which was very nice indeed. After that I went back to Vitez.

Apparently last night the tank transporters that had parked outside the Base had their heavy duty batteries stolen. The fools had left two sentries 'on guard'; they were sleeping in a cabin of one of the vehicles. I was furious as it shows 'us' up in a very bad light to the locals. Andrew Cumming telephoned later and said he didn't think it very good as it had happened in my area; that didn't please me much either as we neither knew they were coming, had responsibility for them (picking up Sapper APCs) or had anything to do with the guarding.

Thursday 8 April

This was a fairly inactive day for me. We had warning that there was likely to be a refugee influx tomorrow - across the lines at Turbe. I warned Bryan Watters off to do it as I was going to be away in Dubrovnik.

Friday 9 April

Leaving at 0700hrs I travelled down to Dubrovnik with my team. Once there I booked all of us into the Hotel Argentina which was a

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fabulous place overlooking the old town and harbour. The Dubrovnik UNMOs were in the same hotel and I met a guy called Jim Finlayson, a Kiwi Flight Lieutenant, who was the Senior UNMO. He was a charming but utterly gauche individual. He gave me the low-down on CSgt Oram's work in Sarajevo. It looked like Military Medal stuff to me and I asked him to write it up for me - which he did.

After walking around town we all had dinner in the Hotel. There was nowhere else to go at night. Dubrovnik was utterly deserted of tourists - it was lovely.

Saturday 10 April

The UNMO interpreter took us on a tour of Dubrovnik and then we walked around the walls of the old town. The afternoon was spent being utterly lazy and included a swim (freezing) in the sea just at the foot of the hotel. Again dinner was in the hotel.

Sunday 11 April

The journey back from Dubrovnik took an amazingly short time considering - four and a half hours. We travelled back via Mostar, Jablonika and Gornji Vakuf.

In the evening we had a superb dinner night to which we invited a collection of officers from Kiseljak, and members of the UNHCR and ICRC. I thanked everyone for coming and made mention that this was probably our last serious party before leaving Bosnia.

Monday 12 April

My head hurt quite a lot when I awoke. I had a houseful of guests who took breakfast and then departed. Jean Luc, Jean Paul and Claire were there too. We had a very nice time even if I cannot remember going to bed. Oh yes, Victor Andreev was there too.

In the morning we had a meeting of the so-called Honours Committee before I went at lunchtime to the Vitez HVO Easter Party in the Hotel Vitez. The hosts were Blascik and Kordich as well as the Vice President of the HVO (name escapes me). We met for drinks and then sat down to be entertained by three groups; a cultural one from Vitez, the Busovaca Choral Society and the HVO Orchestra. At 1500hrs I made an excuse and withdrew.

The No Fly Zone is now in and today being Day 1 a French MIRAGE crashed into the Adriatic - no casualties. We can hear a lot of flying noises; there seem to be quite a lot above us. I haven't seen anything yet though.

Travnik is terribly tense and has been for several days now. It all started with the HVO hoisting flags for Easter. Radicals set to and so it started. A few people have been killed and we are patrolling the town using the Standby Platoon. All sides seem very grateful for that.

Tuesday 13 April

My Discovery seems to have a brakes problem; in fact I think the disks have been worn down. The REME suggested it was VOR and I told them to get it sorted out in double-quick time. We shall see how it all goes.

I spent the morning on polishing Honours and Awards citations.

There seem to be so many of them and as well as that I must put a number in for Force Commanders Commendations. Bryan went to Kiseljak to talk to the Staff there about all sorts of things but amongst others when they were intending to drop aid on to Tuzla Airport. The Americans seemed amazed when we told them we had a company there.

Wednesday 14 April

The new COS of HQ BHC wanted to visit Tuzla today, and so I decided I would go with him. We used SEAKING helicopters and flew from Kiseljak at 1000hrs. Victor Andreev was with us too. No problems on the flight except that the automatic flares were set off by some form of IR source as we approached Tuzla Airfield where I met Philip Jennings.

The Mayor of Tuzla, Beslagic, was there to meet the COS. After a short Int/Ops Briefing Brigadier Vere Hayes sat down and talked to Beslagic. I decided to go ahead and went off to the Hotel Tuzla where I met Tom Colebourn-Malpas, just finishing as ECCM coordinator there. After that I had lunch and a sandwich with Kate Adie of the BBC. She told me that when she had been given the OBE by The Queen she had been amazingly complimentary about the British Battalion in Bosnia.

On the helicopter up to Tuzla there was an American called Andrew who represented MEDICARE. I didn't really know what he was doing there but suspected that he was CIA. In the event later I was to discover his plan was to fly aid direct to the Muslims into Tuzla Airfield. We only learnt this late at night and took effective action to stop it all - I hope. There are some crazy people around here - we would be the recipients of incoming fire on Tuzla Airfield - if indeed this man had managed to fly through from Venice we are told.

Vere Hayes' agenda in Tuzla was to try and get about 460 Serbs released from the town. It seemed to me that the Mayor and his cohorts had little intention of so doing but Vere Hayes seemed optimistic. Personally I do not think he handled them too well.

I toured around the soldiers after lunch and then jumped on a SEAKING at 1600hrs. It flew me direct back to Vitez in 30 minutes or so - wonderful! However I was not too well when I got off the helicopter and spent a lot of last night in bed.

Travnik is bubbling and the ECCM Commission are not helping too much. We advised them not to go down a road where people had been kidnapped last night. They insisted on it despite the fact that we had offered them armour. Brian withdrew the LO Team. Later they were arrested with Merdan being the man the HVO held. We were seriously unamused and had to take extensive steps to get them out.

Thursday 15 April

I started the day by telephoning Zenica and asking to speak to Ambassador Thebault. He was not there and so I demanded an explanation of the extraordinary behaviour of the ECCM last night. I asked the Deputy to investigate and then let me know what had happened from his side.

The rest of the morning I spent in my office doing paperwork. At 1300hrs I decided I would take a trip around Travnik to see how things were. I took with me Roger the new Surgeon. The commanders

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of HVO and BiH were out but I wandered around and talked to to soldiers I met. They all wanted WARRIOR to be in Travnik overnight and so I ordered that this would happen. In the event there was to be no trouble overnight - maybe in consequence. Halfway through my trip to Travnik I received word that there was serious trouble in Zenica. Apparently an HVO Brigade Commander had been kidnapped during the morning. His name was Totic. There was a meeting taking place in the Hotel International at 1500hrs. I hurried to be there.

At the meeting I agreed to place WARRIOR in Zenica up until 0100hrs. The Civil Authorities were to deal with locating Totic as the BiH denied absolutely that it was anything to do with them. After that I stayed in Zenica as I was to have dinner with Jean-Luc and Claire.

Friday 16 April

All hell broke loose this morning in Vitez. It seems much of a repeat of last September. I am sure it's all to do with Totic etc. There were a considerable number of dead people lying around the streets when we first went in this morning. At 0900hrs I went into the Town to see for myself. No commanders were around but at that time we counted 9 dead alongside the roads. I drove my Discovery into Town between two WARRIORS which did not seem so clever when firing started I must say. I came under fire a couple of times and an RPG was also fired nearby which frightened me quite a lot. From Vitez I drove directly to Zenica for the ECCM Meeting at 1030hrs. That was very inconclusive.

Coming back across the mountains was tricky. I had to clear mines at an ex-BiH checkpoint at the top; CSgt Gram who was with me loved every moment of it all. Things were getting very bad in Vitez and so for my next meeting I decided that I needed to go to Zenica in 0A. Escorted by another WARRIOR I left and travelled down the Valley Road. En route we counted 35 houses that had been destroyed and also saw a family of 5 people lying dead where they had been shot near the village of Nadioci. Another man had been shot in his doorway about 150 metres to the east of these bodies too. Again the ECCM Meeting achieved very little. Totic was still not located - and probably will not be! I stayed the night thereafter in Zenica so that I could escort both ECMM and ICRC delegates back to Vitez in the morning.

During the night I arranged for WARRIORS to be positioned in Vitez and on the Mountain Road to Zenica. Additionally two SCIMITARS were deployed by myself to the Lasva Checkpoint on the Sarajevo Road.

Saturday 17 April

After 0A and another WARRIOR (R11) arrived at 0815hrs I put Jean-Luc Novorra and his interpreter into 0A and picked up the ECMM from the International Hotel. We put the two ECMM vehicles between our WARRIORS and drove down the Bosna Valley towards Vitez. But R11 lost a track and turned over; thankfully Cpl Cutting and his crew escaped without injury but the WARRIOR looks in a bad way. Consequently we were late for the meeting which was due to take place at 0900hrs.

Brian had started without us but I took over the meeting once I arrived. Yesterday Brian (in my absence) had arranged a ceasefire from 1230hrs, exchange of prisoners, troops back to barracks or out of the area and this meeting. Nothing really had happened though. Things were a little quieter but not very much.

I reinforced all these points, made a plan for Vitez and positioning of armoured vehicles in the Town, arranged for a Joint Commission to be set up to investigate things and made provisional arrangements for the ICRC to start prisoner releases. This was the first time that the ICRC had travelled in one of our WARRIORS and I was pleased that Jean-Luc had done so. Personally I have now seen about 16 bodies on the streets of Vitez; it is appalling.

The ceasefire does not seem to be holding very well. NORA and MBRLs as well as mortars are firing from around our Base and they seem totally undisciplined.

Sunday 19 April

If anything things have got worse overnight. Zenica has blown up with violence and the Muslims are now having a go at the Croats who live in and around Zenica. I decided that I would try the Mountain Road and took Alex Watts and his Standby Platoon with me over the mountain. We found a minefield at the top (Muslim) and I moved it and went through. I continued on through a Croat area at Cajdras where there were clearly a lot of refugees. After a patrol around Zenica we returned over the Mountain Road again.

At Cajdras our progress was blocked by about 800 civilians - mostly women and children. Margaret Green of UNHCR was with us. After about 30 minutes of negotiations I agreed to go to Vitez and pick up a team to go and see the area of Podbrezje, West of Zenica, from where they said they had been ethnically cleansed by the Muslims. By the time I got back to Vitez there was all hell loose.

But I had to go back as I had given my word to return. Together with Martyn Thomas and about 6 armoured vehicles we returned. En route at Cajdras I picked up the local priest and we continued on to Podbrezje. There were a few houses burning and the HVO Headquarters had been attacked. All HVO/HOS buildings in Zenica seem to be taken over by the BiH. In the village itself the local Muslim soldiers were very hostile. They were looting and I thought it better to order Martyn Thomas to return. We then went to the Mayor of Zenica's Office where I spoke to him on the telephone. He agreed to send a representative there to Cajdras to start to sort out the problem. I asked him for a meeting tomorrow - Martyn Thomas must go as I must hand over the problem. Margaret Green, the Priest and ICRC (possibly) were to attend. That having been done I backed out and returned to Vitez leaving Martyn to take the Priest home. Later in the evening in response to an appeal by Timomir Blaskic I put two armoured vehicles in Cajdras to reassure people. The only time I was under direct fire today was in Podbrezje - a sniper!

The Mosque in Vitez blew up as I returned; a vehicle bomb I think. Martyn Thomas deployed all his armoured vehicles and we took 8 seriously injured, 6 less so and about 200 homeless people to Travnik Hospital. It was fairly horrendous - therte arte probably a few dead under the rubble too but we do not know yet.

I spoke to Enver Hadzihasanavic and Timomir Blaskic on the telephone after this. Apparently Boban and President Izabegovic have agreed a ceasefire. I agreed with both of them that it should come into effect at midnight. We shall see.

Monday 19 April

Of course it all made little real difference. There seemed to be a bit of a lull but nothing really changed. Andrew Cumming turned up at 0830hrs and I took him for a tour in JULIET. The area beyond the Mosque in Vitez was in a dreadful mess; there was a leg

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and a piece of body in the road and a body lying across the rubble in an upstairs ruined part of a house. All in all about 3-5 people seem to have died; later in the day we recovered 3 bodies but apparently there were more further under the rubble. As we were under sniper fire down there I didn't insist that we recovered bodies.

At 1130hrs I had a meeting with The President of Vitez and also Pero Skopje. Unpleasant little man, Pero: accused us of siding with the Muslims. I think the HVO have an agenda to which they are working - and it is maybe against UNPROFOR in a big way.

I spoke on The World at One and Newshour at lunchtime. In the afternoon I escorted Claire Podbielski and a guy called Raoul around Vitez area. The ICRC have placed Claire here as their representative which is super as she is absolutely lovely. I took Claire to see the displaced persons at the Garage and then into the Mosque area before going down to the Lasva Junction. En route we met 20 Muslim displaced persons who pleaded with us to take them away; it was a bit heart-rending. After that I returned for the 1700hrs Conference. At the Conference I told everyone to concentrate on essentials; saving lives, keeping route open and escorting convoys.

When walking to my house with Claire, Raoul and Richard Waltier at 1600hrs a mortar round fell about 50metres away from us. Luckily it had little effect as it landed between houses. I think it was a one off!

Tuesday 20 April

Things are still pretty bad in Vitez and the battles continue in a big way. I received orders that General Morillon was to visit the area starting with Zenica and then possibly Vitez. This was strange as he should have started with me here at Vitez and then possibly gone around the area. Anyway I first went into Zenica and saw both the UNHCR (Margaret Green) and ICRC (Jean-Luc Noverraz); telling them that Morillon was about to arrive (approximately 1330hrs) and perhaps they too should join the meeting. We arranged to meet just as one enters Zenica by the Valley Route. I also went briefly to 3rd Corps HQ where I saw Merdan; telling him what we had been doing. But when we all met at 1330hrs it became clear that Morillon had not even met our escort at Kakanj. I suggested that they should go back to their offices and when he turned up I would telephone them.

In the event I decided to go to Kakanj so that I was there when he arrived. I drove down there in JULIET. In fact he wasn't there and still had not turned up by 1515hrs. Furiously I left and drove back; only to hear on the radio that he had gone through Busovaca at 1455hrs; bound for Zenica with an ECMM and SPANBAT escort. I turned and went back to The Hotel International where I was very angry/abrupt with Morillon; saying I had wasted all today and many of my precious operational assets on a wild goose chase. He was most apologetic to be fair and so I calmed down a bit. I met the new Piers; a Wing Commander called Bernard. After that I left for Vitez (having organized an escort for Blascik to get to Zenica from Vitez). En route back and for the village of Katici a sniper opened up on the vehicle. He hit one of my aerials and frightened LCpl Higginson very much!

Wednesday 21 April

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Things are still very bad and the guns/mortars surrounding the Vitez Base are continuing to fire. It seems to me that the people who have really suffered are the Muslim civilians who have been massacred in considerable numbers - maybe as many as 300 perhaps even more. On the other hand the Croats are doing bandily. The Muslims seem to have advanced across the opstina boundary from Zenica by up to 3 kms.

Ambassador Thebault called a meeting of all interested parties at the ECCM House near our Base. Brigadier Milivoj Petkovic, CDS HVO, and Sefer Halilovic, CinC BiH Army, were present. Petkovic asked me if we could get hold of Blascik from Hotel Vitez.

I agreed and went there myself in JULIET. En route a sniper had a go at us near the Garage but was well high. We backed the vehicle into Hotel Vitez and after a while Blascik appeared. He asked me to rescue some of his Officers' families from Zenica; I agreed to prove that we were not one-sided.

The meeting took a long time but eventually came up with some conclusions. An immediate ceasefire (of course), a separation of lines along the rough opstina boundaries (supervised by BRITBAT, a demilitarized area (only UN troops inside) between the Mountain Road and the Valley Road to Zenica, a Joint Command (based at Vitez) and finally the release of all detainees. Everyone parted on good terms - me stressing to Blascik that the roadblock at Busovaca must be opened up again (Kordich is up to his normal tricks).

Firing continued during the night but it seemed to lessen. I had a party in my house to which I invited Martin Bell (BBC News), Roddy McCauley (Ops Offr), Bryan Watters, Richard Waltier, Claire Podbielski and Amela Sadagic (ICRC Interpreter).

Thursday 22 April

Surprisingly perhaps there has been a reduction in the sounds of explosions etc during the night. But I wanted to sort out going between the lines and held a planning conference on that at 0900hrs. I decided that I would take two SCIMITARS (Mark Jones), a platoon of WARRIORS (Alex Watts) and JULIET in this task. To start with I went up the Mountain Road and from the top struck East. It was quite difficult to go through the narrow lanes but eventually we reached a magnificent plateau with splendid views. We stopped there for a while and Mark Jones recced a route to the South. We found a route to Kratine and thence to Nadioci - but the route was not marked on the map. En route I spoke to both the BiH and HVO; all had heard of the ceasefire but I could still hear breaches of it. The BiH were most reluctant to withdraw from the areas they had captured as they claimed that atrocities including children being killed had occurred in the village of Ahinici. Therefore I decided to travel to Ahinici and see for myself.

The village of Ahinici was thoroughly destroyed; all Muslim houses were destroyed. The minaret on the Mosque had been blown up and looked like a rocket - positioned as it was at a crazy angle. We drove through the village to the end and then I ordered a thorough search to be made of all houses. We were looking for bodies. About a third of the way through the village the soldiers found blackened corpses of a man and a child on the stairs at the front entrance of a house. In the cellar an adult (mother?) and possibly five children had died. From the doubled back position of the heads of at least two children (all burnt) it was clear that they had died in agony. It was appalling. Later we found evidence of other shootings and the skull of another child at the bottom of

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the village in the last house on the left before the main road. It was appalling. Two shots went over my WARRIOR as I returned to camp.

Both Martin Bell (BBC) and Paul Davies (ITN) were with us and reported it - although it cannot go out until tomorrow. Later Ambassador Thebault arrived and I showed him. He was greatly upset by what he saw. After that we returned to Vitez. I wrote a letter to Blascik asking him to investigate the atrocity and gave an interview to a Guardian journalist called Ian in my house. It has been a hell of a day today. Since the Ballykelly Bomb, I've never seen anything as bad. Perhaps this was worse as it involved children.

Later in the evening I saw the videotape taken today. It was very compelling stuff. Some of my actions may get me into trouble with MOD PR; we shall see. However I am not prepared to ask for anything to be removed. A CNN reporter called Christina asked me to speak live on Newshour at 2100hrs. I did this; apparently it is seen by all major offices in Washington and is a most influential programme!

Friday 23 April

The day started with me telling Bryan to reduce the Alert State in Camp. There is no longer an absolute need for everyone to wear helmets and flak jackets. After that I gave orders for a patrol across the disputed area - I used the same formula as yesterday.

We set off at 1100hrs and travelled to the Mountain Road Checkpoint where we turned up the mountain. After a short while we came across a Muslim Checkpoint and there was a very short delay as we told them to open it. After that we travelled in convoy to Povlica and thence south to Vrhovine where we encountered an intransigent Muslim Commander who refused to let us go through the lines to the south on two counts. First there were two minefields and second he had no orders to let anyone through. After about 30 minutes of discussion I withdrew and went down the route we had gone yesterday (LANCER). That presented no real problems except that it was clear the Muslim forces were most reluctant to withdraw and the Croats were moving forward to their agreed boundary. At the main road we turned east towards Zenica and beyond the Busovaca turnoff went north into Putis.

There we saw the body of an old man in the fields and so I swung my WARRIOR cross country to its location. We pulled the body first before we bagged it with hesian. After that we put it in 0B where Richard Waltier complained a little because of the stink! In the next village of Jelinak there was nobody present either. However some houses had been sacked; I entered one that was obviously a Croat residence (Virgin Mary statue on the TV). Whilst we were in the village a sniper opened up on us. He fired three rounds LCpl Higginson was able to identify the firing point: It was on the Gradina feature to our south. Immediately after that an anti-tank projectile of some sort slammed into the house beside us. I dashed back to my vehicle, climbed in to the commanders seat and gave orders. However when I looked through the sight the two perpetrators were standing up. It would have been murder to kill them outright and so I ordered LCpl Higginson to aim left into the rocks first. The first burst sent the men diving for cover and the rest hit around their location. In fact I was acting totally in accordance with UN rules; paragraph 17d states that warning shots must be fired. They were and a total of 80 rounds of co-ax were

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fired in all. Many journalists were with us and so it was all on camera. We withdrew down to the main road where as we formed up we came under fire again. We could not identify the firing point though and so we did not return fire.

During the evening I did an interview with Trevor MacDonald on News at Ten. I made no reference to the shooting earlier as the news about Ahmici was making headlines everywhere.

Saturday 24 April

The business of Ahmici is really big now and I decided to go and see Santic, President of Vitez, and also Pero Skopje, leader of the HDZ. I drove into town in my WARRIOR and found them both in the basement of the PTT Building. I was fairly to the point. I informed them about what I had seen in Ahmici, that it was a total disgrace, that it might have big impact on American opinion and put it to them that the Americans might just decide to arm the Muslims.

In short it was a disaster for HVO politics and those that were responsible should be identified and dealt with as soon as possible. In addition I felt that the matter should be investigated fully with Bosnian Muslims on the Commission that did so. After this I went to see Blaskic who was in Hotel Vitez. He readily agreed that it was his zone of responsibility and that he must do something positive. I told him that it needed action at the very highest level. For example I suggested that the Security Council ambassadors might visit Vitez later today. The impact would be severe and the HVO had better do something.

After that I returned to the PINFO house where I briefed the Press on what had taken place and in particular Blaskic's agreement that it was in his area of responsibility. I stated that Blaskic had told me that top level meetings were taking place about it too. In fairness to Blaskic I also told them he seemed very shocked about it all!

During the afternoon the a group of Security Council ambassadors did visit. We briefed them for about 30 minutes in the Intelligence Cell and then I took them to Ahmici under armour. Previously we had cleared the house with bodies so as to ensure there were no booby traps in it. We stopped at the bottom of Ahmici and then walked up the hill to the top. There the ambassadors viewed the house and bodies. All were very shocked. The leader was the Venezuelan Ambassador - a really nice guy who gave me a silver coin. After that I said goodbye and they proceeded on their way to Kiseljak. En route back to base I went to investigate a fire on the hills north of Krecvine. It was the ground on fire and we went to the Croat front lines. As we did so we came under fire; I think from the Muslims. Four or five rounds were fired at JULIET and one may have struck us. We did not return fire.

Andrew Cumming stayed with me overnight. He gave me my insert slip report. This was his last visit. It has not been a particularly happy relationship between us. I was fairly blunt as we parted - saying that I was always conscious that he seemed 'jealous' and that I felt, at times, he had been too worried about taking casualties.

00189923



Sunday 25 April

This morning Andrew Cunningham departed at 0830hrs having said goodbye to everyone; I don't suppose I was too obliging as I have not really got on too well with him. After that I prepared myself for a line crossing; Matthew Dundas-Whatley had told me last night that the Bosnian Serb Commander of the Vlasovo Feature was prepared to meet me.

It was all very simple. I drove in my LPR Landrover to Turbe in company with Matthew Dundas-Whatley. After a brief visit to Leiko we crossed the line on the Northern Crossing and went to the normal house. There Zijad Gaber, Comd 312 BiH Bde, met Lt Col Janko Trivic, Comd 22nd Vlasovo Bde BSA, for about an hour. I was getting bored and so sent in Nick Costello to inform them that I was here and shortly about to depart. The message came back that it would only be a few minutes and so I waited. Martin Bell of BBC News was with me.

Janko Trivic came out shortly afterwards. He started by saying, "Well here I am..." Quite a good way to put me off I thought. He was very upset about the No Fly Zone and in particular Margaret Thatcher's attitude. He threatened that if any 'bomb' fell on UNH territory then it would be WNS. He also warned that any aircraft that transgressed against BSA on the ground would be destroyed. He also warned that if such things happened then the British Army Base at Vitez would be targetted. We did not get on particularly well although he wished me luck when I left. I asked if my successor could come and meet him but he was not keen. Nonetheless he shared slivovica with me.

En route for home we stopped in Turbe. There Zijad Gaber and Zepa warned me that the HVO had departed Travnik and were in 'two positions all around the town. They were about to assault the town with artillery! Could I do something? Obviously I am persona grata about the business of Ahmici though.

Monday 26 April

I did a couple of radio interviews this morning - one with the 'Today' Programme. However in mid morning I decided to go off to see Dario Kordich in Busovaca. I took one other WARRIOR and a whole gaggle of the Press with me. Kordich was more subdued than normal and seemed to be in a bit of a panic about an attack on Busovaca. He suggested that I went to Putis and Jelinak to see the Muslim offensive that was taking place from the North. I did so but all had been quiet for some time. Jelinak was the place I had opened fire at the other day.

From there I travelled on to Zenica and called briefly in to see the ICRC (Jean-Luc Novorral). He raised the matter of recovery of the Ahmici bodies with me. I told him we would help if necessary but it was not really something upon which I should lead. He agreed to front up for it.

Enver Hadzina's show was next. I persuaded him to speak to the Press as Kordich had done so. He told me about an atrocity committed by the Bosnian Muslims - a man had gone to work after hearing about his family in Ahmici. On the way back to Vitez Camp took the Mountain Road and saw some clear evidence of Muslims cleansing Croats by burning houses.

00189924

Tuesday 27 April

This morning I really had to crack down hard on Honours and Awards as they are needed in 2 days time because Andrew Cumming is on his way out and must deal with them before going. I spent most of the morning going at them with Richard Walter and managed to crack almost all of them. Apparently we are still not getting an operational list which is amazing.

I am told that in the United States I have become something of a 'cult' figure. Martin Walter, even went as far to say that I was having some impact on stopping funds being devoted to the IRA. I'll drink to that. At lunchtime I did a live telephone interview with NBC Breakfast TV.

In the afternoon though I went with the Snappers and Medics to clean up the bodies from the house in Ahmicl. It was a pretty horrid job which we tried to do with some dignity. We included the presence of an Imam and also allowed the HVO and Bill to be present. Just after we arrived a couple of shots were fired at us and I ordered the WARRIORS present to chase up the hill in the direction of the snipers. That stopped it. Not only did we recover a total of 8 bodies from the house but also the body of a child from a house near the road. I returned to the School via Vitez to assess whether it was OK to drive through in civilianized vehicles. I think it is now.

Wednesday 28 April

This morning I decided that I would check out some of the fighting around the town of Busovaca. A Coy were going to the area anyway and so I would have plenty of support. Together with R31, an A Coy WARRIOR, I drove to Busovaca where I linked up with two SCIMITARS (S31 and S32). We then drove North-East from the centre of the town across a very dodgy bridge (for a WARRIOR); it was weak and very narrow. The SCIMITARS led up a dusty track towards the town of Kula.

We passed through the HVO lines where there was extensive evidence of trench systems (the BiH claim they were dug by their civilians being held by the HVO). We didn't see much evidence of civilians as we passed through. After leaving Kula we travelled on for about another 800 metres before we encountered BiH dug in positions and a trench system. There was a dead soldier lying by the side of the track - he was HVO apparently. I went up to a bunker system to talk to the soldiers there. I wanted to know if they had heard about the ceasefire. They said they had (Nick Costello was the interpreter) but that they were not going to stop fighting yet. As we were talking a massive firefight started from the HVO positions. A lot of ammunition was expended towards us - perhaps as much as 1000 rounds plus. We all took cover behind a bunker and waited for some time for the firing to stop. About 6 mortar rounds came in too. Whilst this was happening JUIJ was trying to pull R31 out of a trench system. But it had lost a track and needed recovery properly.

I decided to return to Vitez and leave the recovery to the system which is what I did. Mark Larty had made a recording whilst we were under fire. It came over very well.

Melissa Mekis

Kate Odie has arrived. She is on her way out of theatre and is staying one night here. I do not think Martin Bell is too pleased. Claire Podorski turned up with a little girl aged about 7.

years. Her parents had been massacred at Omulci and Claire had rescued her from an HVO Prison.

Thursday 19 April

This morning Halilovic, CINC BiH, and Petrovic, CINC HVO, met at the ECOM House by the Camp. Quickly they decided that they should go into the field to try and persuade their soldiers to observe the ceasefire. Ambassador Chiebaull came too; after all he had made the arrangements.

I led the other WARRIORS on the trip around. We started by going into Buscovaci where we met up with Kordic outside his headquarters. After that we went up the hill to Del. This time there was only a little firing - none directed at us - and we went through the HVO lines and on to the BiH positions where we were two days ago. Halilovic spent a short time trying to persuade his soldiers to observe a ceasefire. After that we travelled South-East on the Kiseljak road. We went to a village called Gornjaci which was about a mile north-east from the road. To get there we had to cross a very narrow bridge and go across country in WARRIOR as the road was too bad. Again Halilovic explained the ceasefire to his men. Petrovic stayed in the vehicle - quite rightly. Thereafter we went to the HVO Headquarters in Kiseljak where the two generals listened to reports about what was going on. Thereafter I escorted everyone back to Vitez in time for me to make the Conference at 1700hrs.

Friday 20 April

In the morning I took the Force Commanders' Commendation recommendations to Kiseljak. There I spoke to Vero Hayes. He warned me a little about overexposure in the Press. I replied that I was a little fed up with people saying such things and then denying that such things had been said. I warned him that he had not played Press too well himself when the Security Council arrived in Vitez. It was not in the slightest bit scrupulous - in fact very civilized indeed. He was just talking about the problems.

After getting back I went to listen Queens Day in Buscovaci. I sat and watched the Medal Parade and then handover between Jan De Boer and his successor called Paul. We all went to a reception afterwards in the Main Headquarters.

En route back to Vitez I bumped into Glavin Godunovskiy who was having considerable difficulties getting some 200 prisoners from Gornjaci to Zenica. Most of them are inhabitants of Omulci - poor devils they have absolutely nowhere to go at all.

Saturday 21 May

I have just seen last week's press - particularly over the weekend and am amazed by the amount of publicity I personally have received in the UK Media. God, I'll never be able to stay in the Army now; I have no chance!

This morning I led a reconnaissance to see exactly how the ceasefire is holding. To start with, though I had to go to Travnik, I was not insistent on it. He wanted me to escort a convoy of buses down to the river and return with knowledge of food. I did not provide UNHCR as I considered the busmen. I am not sure why I had to be summoned to see the leaders of the HVO and BiH there to sort that one out though. Eventually, at 1100hrs, I was able to get on with

the business of the day. Together with two SCIMITARS and two JARROLDs I left for the Mountain Road. ABC News and BBC News came with us in one armoured vehicle. We drove through the mountains talking to people en route. As I was going to I received word that Morillon wanted to visit. I agreed to meet him at 1400hrs at the same location. Whilst in transit I discovered there was a Bill Battalion there - in contradiction of the ceasefire. There we also saw three bodies. Apparently 3 Muslim men had been shot and then their bodies were burnt. I saw the remains of three skulls, the torso and upper body of one man and a pair of feet still in their boots. The place smelt appallingly and I felt a wee bit sick. The men had been shot against a wall about 10 metres from where they had been burnt. Having met Morillon I took him to Jilank and thence to Vitez where he was arrested. I presented him with a beer mug and Regimental Plaque in the Mess and he left at 1600hrs.

In the evening I went to the BBC Barbeque but did not stay late as I was tired. Bryan, Richard, Claire and Amelia came too.

Sunday 2 May

This morning we all got up quite late and had a cooked breakfast in the house before starting work. At 11.15hrs I left camp in Jilank with two in tow. I went to Bisovara and thence to Kula up the mountain track. Yesterday I had intended to go there but with the arrival of General Morillon decided that I would have to cancel the trip and concentrate on him.

In fact the ceasefire is working very well indeed. I spoke to both the HRG and BIL as I went through their lines. Apart from the odd sniper shot nothing else seems to be happening. The BIL at Kula people told that we talk to the Brigade Commander in transit so that they would let us proceed further. I didn't want to proceed further anyway but thought that this would be a good idea anyway for next time. The Operation Company Commander is to do it. In addition there are 2 bodies (HRG) which are in shallow graves in the BIL position. I think it would be nice if we picked them up next time we went there. I returned to Vitez at 1400hrs and did some work in my office during the afternoon.

Monday 3 May

I spent the morning in my office trying to catch up on reports and other such matters. Paperwork is beginning to overwhelm the system here as we run towards the end of our tour.

At lunchtime I gave a short, live interview to an American Breakfast TV Programme. Immediately thereafter I departed for Gorazd Vahit as Lance Corporal Edwards' Memorial Stone was going to be dedicated today. I travelled down in JILANK. After a brief stop in the Base I went down into the town for the ceremony. We were a little late but that did not matter too much. B Coy had marched down to the memorial stone and the book ceremony was quite effective. A pipe played a lament and Tyrone Hilary said the prayers. After that we headed back to Vitez. En route I freed up a UNHCR convoy that was being searched at a checkpoint.

Tuesday 4 May

I started the day by appearing on BBC Breakfast TV in UK at 0845hrs. It was a fairly straightforward interview which ended by them asking what advice I would give my successor. I replied that he should not trust anything anyone says until he sees something

happen on the ground.

Most of today was taken up with showing these ECMM Ambassadors around. Also Dan Damon (Sky News) and Andrew Hogg (Sunday Times) spent the day with me. It started properly with me meeting the ECMM Ambassadors in the ECMM House at 1000hrs. We briefed them in the Information Room at 1100hrs and thereafter I took them onto the ground. Whilst hanging around the ECMM House I talked to Thomas Osorio (ICJ) and Jayam Akhavan (ICJ) who were both members of the UN Centre for Human Rights. They were investigating Ahmici.

They told me that technically Tihomir Blaskic, Ante Valentin (Vice President HVO), and Pero Skopljak were at least guilty of 'complicity in genocide'. In addition Santic Nenad, Ivan Livancic, Kristo Zeko and Vlado Krizanac were part of the attacking HVO team. The attack had started from two sides with mortar fire cutting off another side. Out of a possible 'bulge' figure of 800 in the village they had accounted for at least 103 deaths. And that another 35 were probably killed too. Krizanac had apparently given the following instructions: "First kill the men, then the male children and then the rest. Destroy all that is muslim." I was incensed by this and asked what he should do. I agreed to raise the matter with Valentin and Blaskic without giving them names.

I took the ambassadors to Hamici. Whilst there Thomas Osorio used his notes and led us to a house where we discovered 3 - 4 more bodies; probably one adult and 3 children. They had been shot and burnt apparently. After that we travelled to Jelinak where I met the Commander of 103 BiH BSB again. The ambassadors held a press conference there. We returned for lunch in the mess a little late.

When lunch was over I took the ambassadors into Vitez and there met with Valentin and Blaskic. I stated that nothing had happened about a Commission of Inquiry into Ahmici for 18 days, that nobody was charged or arrested to my knowledge and that I knew the names of men accused - which I would give to the ECMM ambassadors. I insisted that the Government of Vitez was also involved in "complicity in genocide". By that I meant Valentin (who said he knew nothing about Ahmici until 2 days later), Blaskic and Skopljak. I said I expected action and was backed up well by the ambassadors. After that I returned to Vitez Camp - having told about it to Sky News.

Wednesday 5 May

This morning I gave the list of four men who had apparently attacked Ahmici to Jean-Pierre Thebaud for inclusion in the Ambassador's Report. I think I've played that about right. I don't want to do anything that will prejudice those bastards being brought to justice - if there is such a thing in this country.

Thereafter I gave a Press Interview to Chris Hollins of The Independent and another guy from The Daily Express. It was quite a long interview - about 20 minutes. Alistair Duncan arrived today. He flew in to Kiseljak and Bryan Walter picked him up. He arrived at lunchtime having been bristled up to the eyebrows by Split and Kiseljak. Alistair flew up to Kiseljak in a helicopter.

During the afternoon I went down to Vitez to see 190 detainees released from the Cinema. The ICRC were organising it in the shape of Claire Podbielniak. I gave an interview to TV Vitez whilst I was there - stressing again our neutrality and our role of saving life. I was back in time for a meeting with Forge de la Motte. We

discussed how we should deal with refugees outside our gates and how we should try to avoid 'springing' UNHCR to make so many difficult decisions.

The ICRC were having difficulties when I arrived at Poculica in the early evening. There the BiH had interned 20 men (Croats) and they were most unwilling to release them. Jean-Luc, Claire and Omela were trying to persuade the local commander that he should do so as the general release of all prisoners had been ordered by Mladic a few days ago - but to no avail. I pressed the Commander on the point using the fact that I was an officer, my 'apparent reputation' and anything else that would help. All this conversation took place in an upstairs room of a house with a splendid view; I guessed it was the Commander's personal house. After a bit of persue on - including making all preparations to leave - the Commander agreed to release them because he had 'no respect for me'. But it was far too late. The night was fading fast and the ICRC just could not do such release, it was a dangerous time. Jean-Luc joined me for dinner and spent the night with us. We had a good dinner in my house.

Thursday 6 May

The morning started with the Media in so far as I gave an interview for GMTV (UK) before I appeared - together with Alistair Duncan - at the Press Briefing at 0900hrs. We stood together behind my house. I introduced Alistair and then we took questions. A lot of them were about the Bosnian Serb Parliament's refusal to ratify the Vance-Owen Plan. We ducked most of them.

I had promised to go and see Mario Cerkez, Hde Comd in Vitez, to try and get a prisoner release. Last night this had been part of my bargaining with the Commander in Poculica. And so I took Alistair with me to Vitez. Claire and Omela were there. We discovered that the people we were looking for were probably in prison in Banovaca; there were 10 of them. However Mario asked me to go and see how close the lines were to the East of Dubravica - particularly in the Sivrane Selo area. After a very brief orders session (which I could not put off) I set off for Sivrane Selo at 1100hrs. I took another WARRIOR and two SCIMITARS with me. We went up the mountain road for about 300m before turning off on a track. Then we went through both sets of lines; colligingly they marked the map with the front lines for me. I went up the track as far as I could - there was a minefield - and then I turned around. Both Alistair and I thought it was a very valuable trip. Clearly the lines are very close and everyone is greatly intermingled.

The UNMOs are beginning to be a wee bit of a pain. For some time now Kiseljak have been pressing us to accept UNMOs into the area. I was reluctant because I couldn't see what use they would be when viewed against my current IDs; they made us set up our own organization in the first place, and I was not too impressed by the fact that half of the 12 UNMOs were from Third World countries - which would not go down too well. There were other reasons too - such as the fact they are unarmed and unarmoured. Despite agreement on two occasions with Verc Jager the UNMOs continue to operate in my area - without reference to me and causing considerable confusion. The agreement was that they would not operate here at all - yet they are patrolling, have set up a meeting in Travnik without reference to us (and with no interpreter) and have made crazy reports about the activities of Serb 'special forces' when someone has driven over a mine and/or a US has gone to the funeral. As they have direct links to Kiseljak and Zagreb reports which are

totally wrong or intimidating.

Alistair and I are getting on very well indeed. He's a really nice guy and a pleasure to have around. I don't really know what he thinks of me in the present circumstances but I think he's happy.

Friday 7 May

A slow starting day as there was not too much on. I went to the office at around 0900hrs and dealt with a little bit of correspondence. At 1100hrs Alistair and I went to see Ante Valenta, Deputy President HVO. I hadn't seen very much of this character before as I simply didn't know he existed. In fact his office had been in Travnik until recently. Valenta gave Alistair and I a long lecture about the origins of the troubles; expounding his theory that each of the Serbs, Croats and Muslims should have - and be confined to - their own cantons. He gave us a book which is probably much like Mein Kampf; much the same guide for action. He stated that he had forecast what was happening in the book. It's funny really - how he can say that when he's actually putting his theories into action. Again I repeated my dismay about America and told him that conspiracy to genocide extended to the Vitez Government. I asked when those guilty would be identified and put in prison. I also told him that the ICCHM investigators were taking the whole matter up at high level.

At lunchtime I went to Travnik where I was hosted to lunch by the B.H. Boba and the Travnik Commander Bilic were there. I have forgotten the Commander's name. It was a pleasant enough affair in which they gave me a portrait and a large copper coffee making stove as a memento. I had to leave relatively early as I was going to Gimici. The ICRC had asked us to help with the recovery of the 4 bodies we found in House Number 5 in Gimici. They were the remains of the family Naser family; father 30, mother 20, son 8 and baby 3 months. We had arranged for an Imam to be present and also for the house to be cleared by the Sappers unit.

On arrival the medics went into the house to recover the bodies. A dog was actually eating the flesh when we arrived there. It was only a puppy and so the B.H. Team decided to adopt it. Claire Humeblain made a statement to the TV camera and then we departed.

Whilst all this was going on David Shepherd was recovering the European Brown Bear known as MacKenzie. He is to be transported to Split Zoo by Liberty and is to stay there until the end of the war at least. I suppose this is the first bear we have ethnically released.

In the evening Robin Searby, the new COMBRIFOR, arrived and was briefed. We had a party for him in the Officers Mess.

Saturday 8 May

Today I took Alistair on a tour of Zenica starting with LOR. where I left him with Jean Lou Novorra for 20 minutes or so. We then travelled on to the UNHCR where we talked to Jose de la Mota and Margaret Green. It is clear that UNHCR are very depressed about the situation. They are getting no direction at all and are wondering what they should do. In particular they feel that Hase Bilic is clearly going to eventually cleanse all the so-called Croat provinces. I agree that is what the VRS are up to at the moment.

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Valenta and Boban have given such instructions. And it is behind all that has happened since Gornji Vakuf. The High Command of the HVO are behaving like Hitler did in the way they are instructing the clearing of other minorities.

Our Corps Headquarters did not contain Ivo. Hadziahasonovic but two of his staff officers entertained a well. They are in total agreement as to what the aims of the HVO are. They also accepted that the Muslims had done some evil things; the HVO never do. "I have far more respect for the Bos than the HVO when it comes to telling the truth. On return to Vitez we relaxed at home for the rest of the day.

Sunday 9 May

The main point of today was to try and get Alistair to meet some of the local 'borders'. This started with Linamar Blaskic at 1100hrs. We went into the Hotel Vitez with the others who were also changing delegate and so it made sense for us to go together. Just as we were about to leave Dario Koroch turned up at well and so that delayed things a little. Smooth round of slivoviz was summoned and drunk with toast.

Today was a time for the Media too. I had already been on 'Front on Sunday' first thing in the morning and I did a lunchtime slot on HVO as well.

In the afternoon we went to Zenica where we saw Ivo Hadziahasonovic. He was very nice and effusive in what he said. Apparently there are still perhaps 500 plus HVO prisoners in Zenica which isn't too good and displeases Claire Podbielski as the HVO have released all their prisoners in Vitez.

Monday 10 May

This is the final day of my diary as tomorrow I will hand over command to Alistair. We continued our handover by going into Travnik to see the commanders there. Unfortunately the HVO Commander was not available - which was fine in my view as I wanted to get on. Then we went to see the BiH Commander in the barracks there. We were just in time for our first lunch. Boba was there too. We had a mutual back-slapping campaign over lunch and slivovitz. After that Alistair and I mounted our HARRIS - just West of Travnik - and went into Turbe. There we met Lord 312 Eric, the Commander from Travnik and Leiko. Again we had lunch and slivovitz. It took us until 1530hrs to get away. Leiko and Blaskic were in the Officers Mess for 1600hrs. They had invited on us - despite my wish for it not to happen.

Tomorrow we are due to handover command at 0830hrs with a hand-shaking ceremony at the Regimental Sign. I must say my most profound feeling is one of sadness. I wish we could have done more here. Most of them are really good people. I would like to come back.

00189931



*Maj Bryan Watters*

216 1st Battalion  
The 22nd (CHESHIRE) Regiment  
Bila School  
VITEZ  
British Forces Post Office 547

I apologise that this is a typed letter but it allows me to clear my conscience and write a few letters that I feel I owe. After a short break in the UK, I arrived in Bosnia on the 6th of February and have not really drawn breath. The Battalion is doing a quite outstanding job here, as part of the United Nations and their courage and coolness under fire has become so common place that it now passes without comment. To date we have had two soldiers killed and twenty injured the majority of the injured have returned to duty.

The greatest impact does not come from the sight of the battle and its immediate aftermath but from the collateral damage to the civilian population. The sight of mutilated women and children and countless refugees is something that nothing can prepare you for. The recent campaigns in which we have been involved have been 'clean' wars, fought between combatants. There are few noble acts in a civil war. I suspect some of our people will be troubled by what we have been powerless to prevent and I think there lies the rub. I suspect history will not judge the world community on what it has done here but on what it has or will fail to do. We are powerless under the present mandate to prevent this genocide taking place on a holocaust like proportion.

It is all too easy to apportion blame to a specific faction prosecuting its particular military or political advantage. It is convenient to identify the culprit and level the blame in his direction. It is comfortable but too simplistic. There are no "good guys and bad guys" in this bitter civil war, there are only victims. Who the victim is or which of the triumvirate is the victim changes from region to region.

The Serbs, Croats and Muslims appear incapable of restraint and will push home their advantage when the opportunity arrives with all the means at their disposal. The peace initiatives currently on the world stage are underwritten by the requirement for the desire for peace and a return to the status quo. As such I believe it has little chance of success because it ignores the facets of this war, which are:

The combatants appear to have lost sight of their strategic objectives, if they ever had any. The war appears to have gained a momentum of its own and has become self perpetuating, fed on a lust for killing and the sacred creed of revenge, a war psychosis.

The war is not fought on any single plane, it is now a complex web of courses and objectives at the strategic, tactical and personal level. Any peace initiative or ceasefire that meets the requirements of the protagonists on one level will falter ultimately at the personal level, in the village, with the need to avenge some hideously barbaric atrocity in kind.

The war tends to be conducted over considerable ranges. The mortar and artillery piece together with the sniper are the primary means of waging war. Thus the combatants do not witness the death and destruction they cause. They do not look into the eyes of their enemy; there is no genocide fatigue on the part of the gunners and snipers.

How do 1 CHESHIRE find themselves able to contribute to the humanitarian effort being expended in Bosnia by the United Nations? Each National military unit has an area of Bosnia as its Area of Responsibility (AOR) and the unit is described by its national name, thus the 850 members of the 1 CHESHIRE Group are known as The British Battalion or BRITBAT. Our mission is deceptively simple: To assist the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to distribute Humanitarian Aid. This has been interpreted by many UN units quite literally and they escort convoys through out their area. This

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is often unproductive as these convoys are unable to reach their destination due to fighting or intransigent ethnic checkpoints.

1 CHESHIRE's concept of operations requires the Battalion to dominate its AOR and through the establishing of local peace initiatives and the agreed passage of battle lines lay a framework of trust and security for the passage of humanitarian aid. This has regularly required the interjection of force to demonstrate our resolve and the prompt returning of fire to support that resolve. The Balkans has a deeply held respect for the strong and will ruthlessly exploit any weakness. This robust form of UN interjection does not always rest easily with our more "professional" or experienced UN colleagues. My personal view is that many of these so called experienced peace keepers have lost sight of how to prosecute their mission with anything but endless negotiation and constant retraction. The successful formula is the rather cliched steel fist within a velvet glove. It is our modus operandi and no one is in any doubt that we will remove the velvet glove if that is the only course available. In order to achieve our framework of trust and a belief in the minds of the indigenous forces of our impartiality and integrity we have pushed our mandate to its limit. We have for example transported displaced military units whose existence was upsetting the delicate Croat/Muslim local ethnic balance. Our soldiers have cleared mines, retrieved the dead and wounded from the battle field and secured the safe passage of countless wretched refugees through the lines of battle to a place of relative or temporary safety. At what cost this has been to ourselves is difficult in real terms to quantify. It is not yet however the time to count the cost to ourselves as the cost of this war to the innocents is all too apparent and demands our tireless efforts.

This letter when I began it was not intended to be a philosophical or indeed conceptual explanation of our role in Bosnia, I am afraid it appears to have developed that way. Before I close I would like to exorcise two further conundrums that puzzle me and for which I have no answer.

We the United Nations are prepared to stand by and witness at first hand the killing of combatants, women and children and as a world community we will not directly intervene. I understand the risks, I presume they (The peopled Bosnia) are not worth the risks, but I can't, and don't want to believe that is the answer.

In prosecuting our tasks we have very clear rules of engagement. If we are engaged we can return fire to protect ourselves or those in our temporary safe keeping. In placing ourselves in areas of greatest risk, including occasionally between the combatants this has often been required. We are limited to our direct fire weapons which give us an effective range of 1000 metres and an extreme range of about 2000 metres. We are therefore unable to effectively deal with Mortar or Artillery fire when it is directed against us. I have been told by the Commanding UN General that artillery and mortars (ie indirect fire weapons) should not be on the inventory of United Nations peace keeping forces as by their nature they are indiscriminate. The Swedish General in question had a fervent belief in the surgical capability of air power and did not appear to entertain discussion on its limitations or as to why it is not currently available. The argument also pertains that our use of these weapons would escalate the conflict or our involvement in it. That it is not acceptable for the indigenous forces (a politically correct statement) to engage our soldiers with direct fire weapons is indisputable. We have returned fire to considerable effect with all our direct fire weapons to date. It by implication appears to be politically acceptable for our soldiers to be engaged at this time by indirect fire without the means to reply. This as a principle would appear to be quite usual for United Nations operations and greeted by the Bosnian Combatant as a demonstration of UN weakness. In military terms I can see the inherent dangers of our use of indirect fire weapons and specifically the risk of ourselves killing innocent bystanders and possibly there is the true political conundrum, the impossible task of the peace monitor, keeper, protector or enforcer. Doug Hamerskold (2nd Gen Sec UN) said, "Peace keeping is a job not suited to soldiers, but a job only soldiers can do". If there is not the political or humanitarian will to enforce peace regardless of the cost then we remain sidelined and in political terms are little more than expendable spectators.

This returns me to how we will be judged by history or closer to home how my children will regard our role in this genocidal conflict. How did we stand by and watch the systematic destruction of Sarajevo by the Serb artillery? Why did we prevaricate while Sarajevo burnt? What did we think while we watched entire communities dispossessed of their homes and flee into a cauldron of shell fire to die in the streets of some further besieged village of cold and neglect.

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We do try to make a positive contribution, to instill a little sanity or demonstrate some humanity. Today might serve as a snap shot, Matthew Dundas-Whatley (a Battalion LO) was tasked to arrange a ceasefire between the sometime Muslim-Croat coalition and the Bosnian Serb Army in a village called TURBE. The aim was to cross the line and with our trucks collect 150 refugees and take them to the town of TRAVNIK. A journey of 5kms from Bosnian Serbia to Bosnia Herzegovina. The ceasefire agreed I deployed 3 WARRIOR and 2 SCIMITAR into the village to provide close protection and over-watch. with a Bosnian Armija (BiH) Officer responsible for the Refugee Commission in Travnik we moved towards the front line in a convoy of his car and 3 land rovers. At the mine field that marks the forward edge of the BiH/HVO line Mr Baber and myself dismounted and moved 6 TMM Anti-Tank mines from the road. Our convoy then drove through no mans land to the forward edge of the Bosnian Serb positions and into their rear area to link up with the refugees. 150 young and old men, women and children were sitting in 4, 45 seater coaches. We placed a very ill mentally retarded child and an old blind man and his wife in our ambulance and cross loaded the remaining refugees into our 5, 8 Ton trucks. we then retraced our steps, replaced the mines and began our 5km journey to TRAVNIK. The BiH stopped us still within TURBE and demanded to search our trucks and check the identity of the refugees for spies. I refused their demands, agreed to the placing of 2 BiH soldiers on the first truck and proceeded to TRAVNIK. I refused because we were still well within range of the Serb mortars covering the front line and our withdrawal is often followed by a few well placed rounds. We proceeded to a primary school in TURBE which doubles as a refugee centre and delivered our pathetic cargo, clutching their worlds possessions in a single bag to their ethnic kin. That brings the total The Battalion has escorted on this route to over 2000. Today went well, a very smooth operation. There were a few shots fired but non appeared to be directed at us. Two days ago on the same operation SSgt Bristo was shot in the head. He was flown from our base in Vitez to England via Split in Croatia. His helmet saved his life.

Tonight I deployed a liaison officer into Travnik supported by 2 WARRIORS and 2 SCIMITARS. There is a dispute between the Croats and Muslims over the positioning of their respective flags. Two Muslims were shot dead last night and one Croat earlier this evening. These are of course allies, but then again this is Bosnia. It is 1153pm. I withdrew our people at 11pm, it appeared relatively quiet. I can hear sporadic rifle fire but that is nothing unusual. The situation report as at 2300 hrs 9 april reported: Generally a quiet day, a successful refugee crossing in Turbe, an increase in tension in Travnik, sporadic shelling throughout our area and General Morillon was escorted to Split departing Vitez at 0230 hrs.

I offer no comment on today's activities. Bob is away for a well deserved long weekend (the balance of his R & R), thus today I have enjoyed commanding the Battalion.

I do not know what the next few weeks will hold. It achieves little to second guess this game of Balkan chess, where the only truth is a lie.

We will continue to do what we can to contribute in some small way. we have not lost our perspective nor our commitment to the preservation of good over evil. Like any professional it remains an imperative to avoid personal involvement. there are some who have lost their perspective, I do not condemn them, they are however less effective. A few have lost their edge but they have been through a great deal and their stock has run low. I hope this letter has not appeared to over dramatize it was intended to do quite the reverse. I will enjoy leaving Bosnia, although it will be difficult to leave. Today I lifted a child onto one of our trucks, it was a beautiful child, I was glad it was not mine.

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