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of Defence

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17 August 2017

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 23 July in which you requested the following information:

*"I respectfully seek any information you may hold on the following:*

- 1. Salisbury Plain-Spring (May?) 1980: As part of a routine Chemical exercise troops from 6 field force (based in Aldershot/Dover commanded by Gen Sir Anthony Farrah Hockley) were asked to take medication that with hindsight appears to have been a forerunner to NAPS tablets (Nerve Agent Pre-treatment set). I respectfully seek all information re tests of this nature in 1980 inc what the substances were and any results of anything the troops were exposed to.*
- 2. During the same approximate timeframe (1978-81 but particularly 1980) troops were given unmarked packed food in tins etc instead of the normal compo (Composite Rations). This too was explained as some sort of experiment "It's the same as you'd buy in a supermarket but without the colouring or additives and is made by the same manufacturers..."*
- 3 Queens moved from Dover to Germany in March 81 and it's possible that they were exposed to similar testing in or around 1983. I again respectfully seek full details of anything that might still be held.*
- 3. Canada: Fuel Tanker fire (A Bedford Fuel Truck or possibly a Stalwart was filling an armored column in the field when it ignited, destroying at least 2 AFVs)-BATUS-Summer 1983.*
- 4. Canada: Training accident involving 10 rounds of 81mm mortar HE being dropped on dug-in troops-Batus-Summer 1983. On both occasions the troops were from 3 Queens (3rd Bn Queens Regt)"*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000.

I am writing to advise you that following a search of our recorded information, I have established that the information you requested is not held by the Ministry of Defence.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance), I have attached extracts from a photo album of a trial that took place in Aldershot on 6 May 1982 where soldiers from C Coy The Royal Regiment of Wales were trialling the Retort pouch. As a result of the success of this trial the retort pouch was introduced into ORP in the mid-Eighties and tins were phased out. The tins would be galvanised with no outer packaging with the contents in black printed on the lid of the tin. I have

redacted the faces of the soldiers concerns under section 40 – Personal Information. This is an absolute exemption under the FOIA and does not require a public interest test.

I have also undertaken a brief search on the National Archive website where I located a number of references to 6 Field Force, which may hold information of interest to you. The link is below.

<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/results/r?q=6+Field+Force>

Having made contact with the Regimental Secretary of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, I have been advised that the Queen's Regiment Journals and available information for the period make no mention of special rations or the Regiment taking part in any trials. There is also no record of the BATUS incidents you mentioned. Indeed, the link below does not show the unit having been in BATUS during 1983:

<http://british-army-units1945on.co.uk/infantry/queen-s-regiment.html>

The British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS) do not hold any records prior to 2005.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

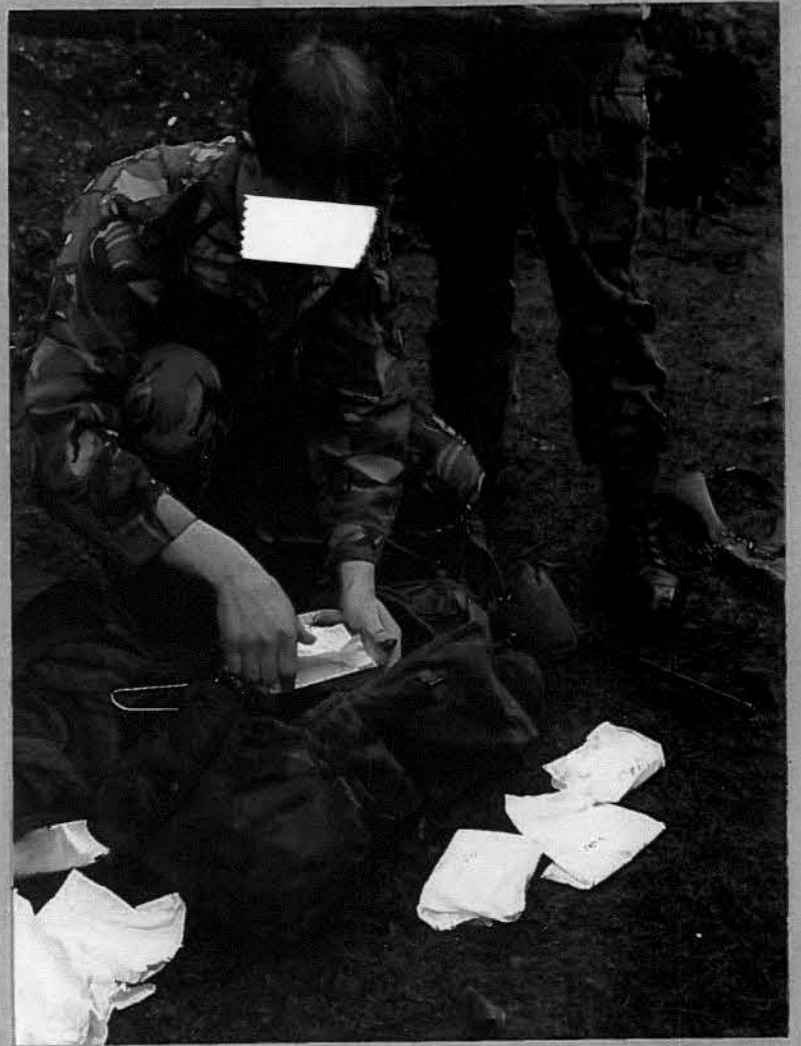
If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <https://ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

Disclosure and Litigation Leader



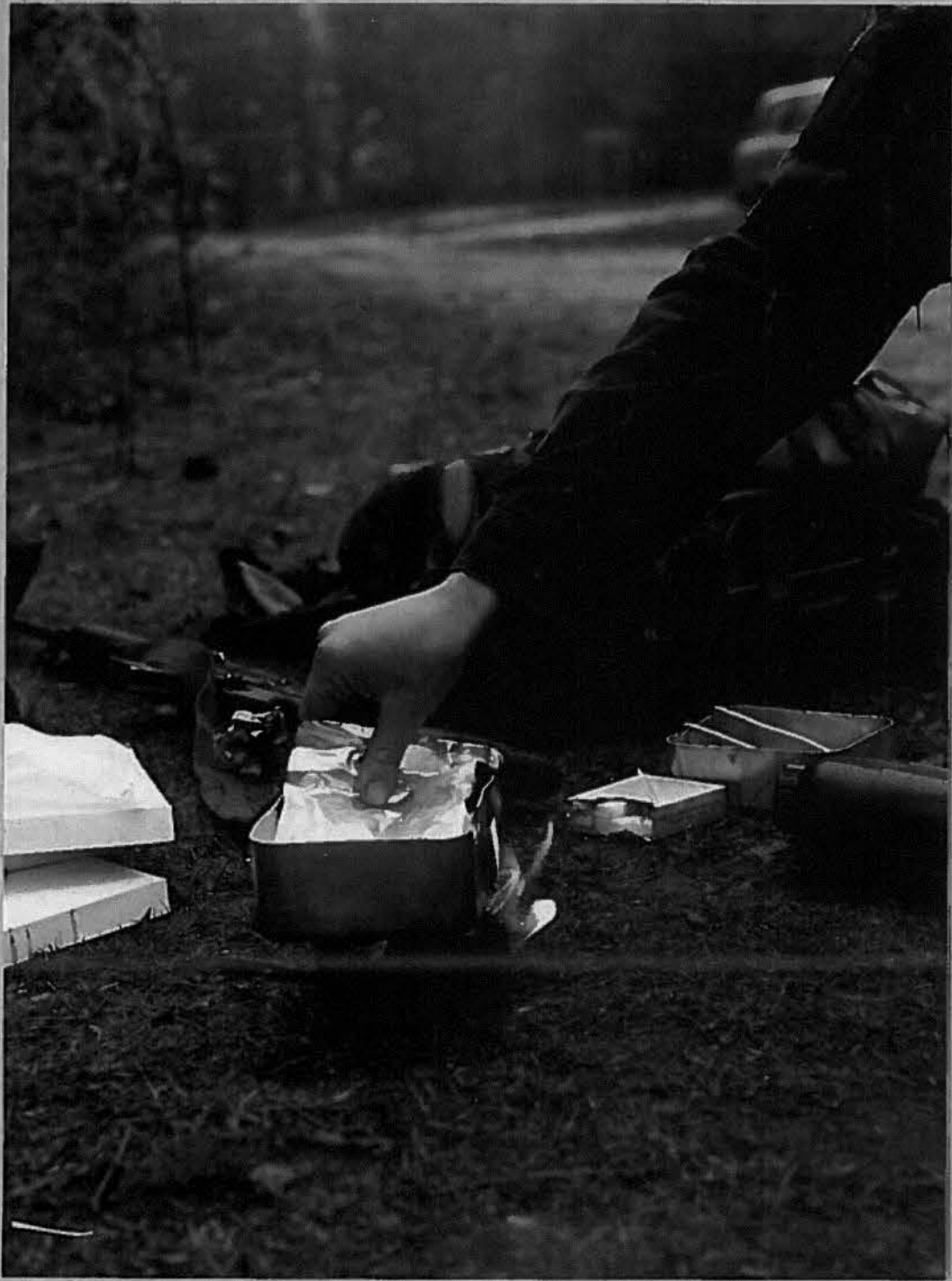
Using rear pouch  
of equipment but  
Subjecting the  
retort pouch to  
physical abuse.

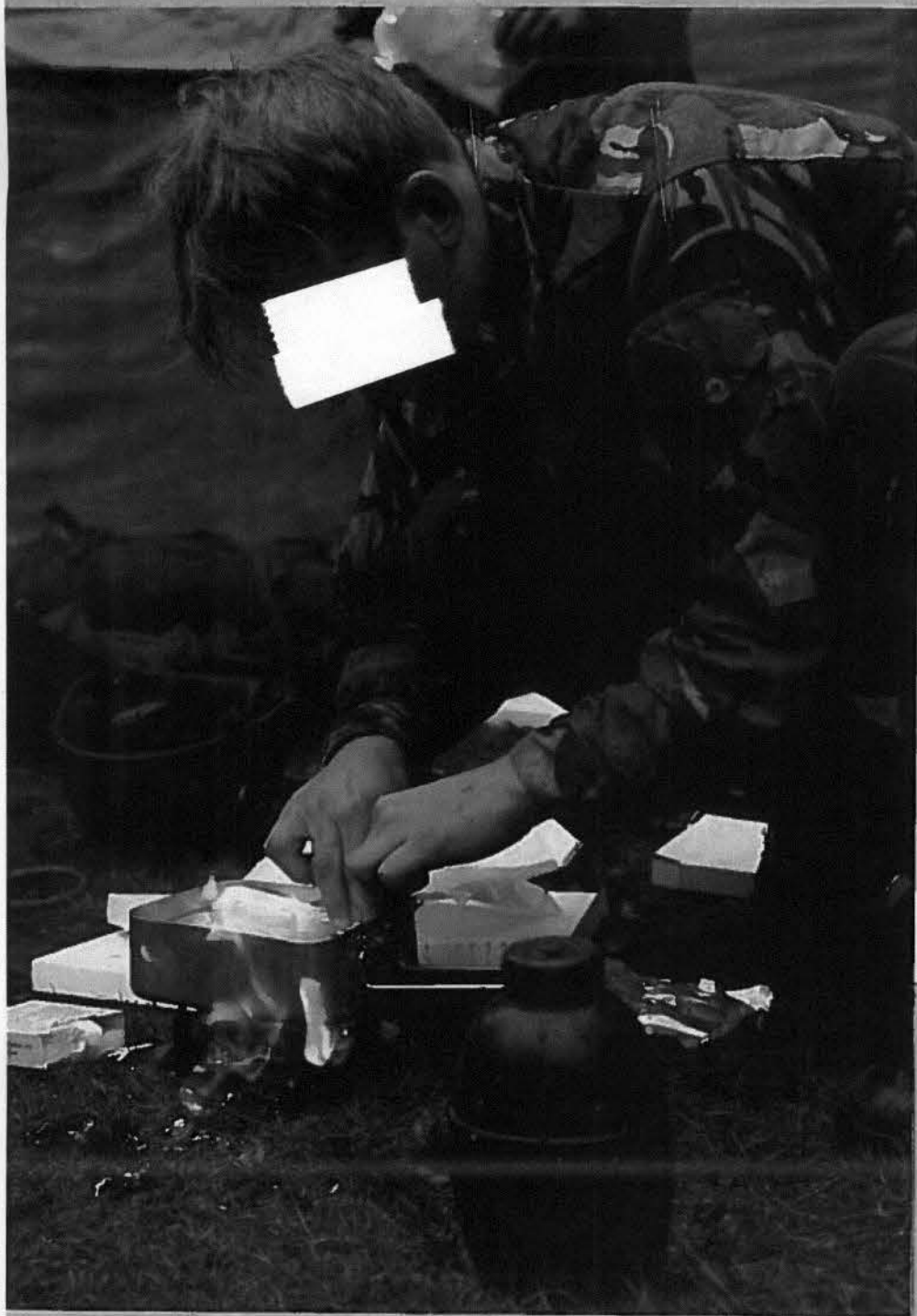


Whereas mess tins will protect the retort pouch and their contents.



Note - these retort pouches were not those carried in the physical activities  
Those were removed for scientific assessment as to damage.





The retort  
pouch is An  
easy, quick  
Container ideal  
for use in  
patrol  
conditions.



Interest in  
what comes out!

" BANGERS " being the soldiers choice!

But see how quickly the hot retort pouch can be hand held for easy eating..





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