

PRIME MINISTER

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A young Captain in the Queen's Royal Irish Hussars has written to you direct from Saudi Arabia about the experience of deployment there. It is generally an upbeat and cheerful letter. Water has been a problem, but supplies are now improving. Vehicles have performed better than expected. But he adds: "One thing has become very clear. We must have all the spares we need as and when we need them". He also mentions that the temperature in the gun turrets reaches 36°C and "the gun kit heats up worryingly".

More generally, he says "We are still desperately short of world news and have no idea what is likely to happen", and adds that "the US Army make us look like poor relatives at times" (although they have treated us terribly well).

I do not propose to send the letter to MOD since it might get him in trouble: but will raise the points with them without revealing the source.

C.P.

CHARLES POWELL

11 November 1990

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