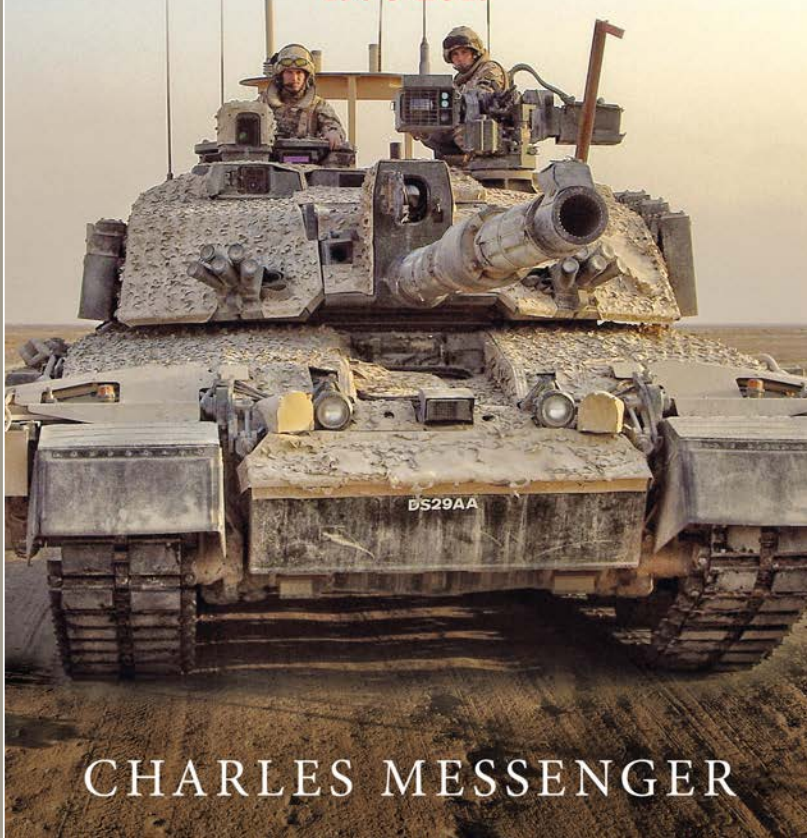


THE TANKS

The History of the Royal Tank Regiment
1976-2017



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The Royal Tank Regiment celebrates its centenary this year (2017). This, the fourth volume of the Regiment's history, begins in the midst of the Cold War, with the four RTR regiments mainly based in Germany. They experienced NATO's rearmament in the early 1980s and the implementation of General Sir Nigel Bagnall's revolutionary new concept for the defence of the NATO Central Region. The Troubles in Northern Ireland were also at the height and the RTR served there on numerous occasions. In addition, the Regiment saw service with the United Nations in Cyprus.

The Berlin Wall came down at the end of 1989, signalling the end of the Cold War. Yet, President Bush's New World Order proved anything but. Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait resulted in the First Gulf War, in which the Regiment played its part in many ways. However, the so-called Peace Dividend meant that the RTR was reduced to just two regiments. Then came the horrors of the civil war in Former Yugoslavia, in which the Regiment also became involved. While it did operate in tanks in Bosnia and Kosovo, it was also demonstrating its versatility in many other roles in these increasingly uncertain times. Not least of these was the formation the Joint Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Regiment, made up of 1 RTR and the RAF Regiment.

The RTR was at the forefront of the assault on Basrah in the 2nd Gulf War and thereafter served a number of tours in Iraq. Indeed, the Regiment was among the very last troops to withdraw from the country at the end of Operation Telic in 2009. By this time, the British Army was heavily committed to Afghanistan and the Regiment would spend the next five years deploying on Operation Herrick. As in Iraq, it carried out a variety of missions and in many different types of vehicle. The book makes plain how tough conditions were, as they had been in Iraq. The Army, however, faced further reductions and the RTR was cut to a single Challenger 2 regiment.

This History not only covers the Regiment's numerous operational tours. It describes the development of the armoured fighting vehicles it has used and shows how life in the RTR has changed over the past forty years. It does not duck controversy and allows the voices of all ranks to be heard. *The Tanks* reflects an everchanging British Army and one of its most famous regiments, the one constant being the character of the RTR soldier, the Tankie.

