

1977

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FROM THE LIBRARYOPEN FORUM (18)STUDY ON ACTIVE SERVICE
(GERMANY)

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OPEN FORUM Animated Titles Sequence (with music)

VOX POPS:
(Students in Army
and RAF in Germany)

W.O.1. TERRY HART:

I'm very pleased to see the army taking such a big part in the OU, because as I said, failing the 11 plus, leaving school at 15, if I hadn't of come into the army, I don't really know what I would do with my education.

SGT. TONY DAVIES:

If I can use the degree while I'm in the army I will but I've got another 5 years to my option date and if I cannot use it, the degree, to further my career, I will leave the army and go into Civvy Street.

CPL. DICK CHARRINGTON:

I decided to do an OU degree because I felt I was wasting the time really my spare time, just sitting watching the television in the evenings and so on and I wanted to do something specific.

FLT. LT. ALAN DOWELL:

I'm using the simply the studying for the Open University to increase my knowledge in my own particualr field. But if successful I would like to go on and use this as an entrance qualification for further graduate studies, primarily in organisation and management.

MRS. CATRIONA MILLER:

I'm fairly interested in academic subjects, and bring in Germany there's not much opportunity for going and having a job outside. It seems to be the best thing to do at home.

CAPT. BILL BOOTH:

I do less in the afternoons and evenings now in the sporting line and consequently I decided this year rather than sit around watching television perhaps and doing nothing but reading newspapers it might have been it might be a good idea to do an Open University course.

JOSIE SMITH:

Some of the reasons that students give for reading an Open University degree while they're with the British forces in Germany, and this is the area we're looking at in this programme. There's a special scheme for Foundation Year students that involves the O.U., the Services, and the Treasury. Under this scheme, students can reclaim a substantial amount of their fees, all TV and radio programmes are available at the study centres, and Army or RAF Education Officers act as local counsellors. Since 1973 servicemen, their dependents and civilian personnel working with the services in Germany have been encouraged in this way to study with the O.U. Post Foundation and S100 students (for whom there is no provision) are more or less on their own, and have to depend on correspondence material and on tutors mainly in the West Midlands region. There are three OU study centres for British personnel in Germany- at Rheindahlen, just west of the Ruhr, at Bielefeld, and up in the north at Hohne. Because you can't get BBC transmissions in Germany, these study centres are even more vital in providing cassettes and playback facilities for programmes. Students have to attend a Summer School in the UK like any other student - but as well as this there are two weekend schools run by staff of the West Midlands region - that's the region responsible for students in Germany. Open Forum cameras have been out to make a film for us. They went first to Rheindahlen near Mönchen-Gladbach. The Joint Headquarters building houses not only the administration for the British Army of the Rhine and RAF Germany, but also the parallel NATO Forces. Rheindahlen is one of the largest military garrisons in Europe, two miles long by a mile wide. The Germans provided the land and constructed the buildings as part of their post war reparations. It is a whole town-ship in itself, with excellent sports facilities

(Film of
Rheindahlen)

cinemas, theatres, churches, schools and the largest NAAFI shopping centre in the world. This is stocked full of every kind of consumer goods at very competitive prices. In fact, servicemen are also supplied with coupons which enable them to buy petrol at roughly halfprice. So travelling in to study centres is in effect subsidised for our students based elsewhere. We hear first from a Staff Officer at H.Q., Captain Geoff Simmonds.

CAPT. GEOFF SIMMONDS :

GEOFF SIMMONDS: I work in the offices of the Chief Education Officer for Headquarters BAOR and part of my job is to administer the Open University out here, the nuts and bolts of administration. There have been no real big problems at this stage, the scheme has now been running for four years, most of the big bugs have been ironed out, the mail is coming fairly smoothly now, we have good counsellors with a lot of experience, at all four, all three centres, and the whole thing is going fairly smoothly at the moment.

JOSIE SMITH:

JOSIE SMITH: Every serviceman or woman whether in the Army or the Airforce is entitled to claim up to £30 a year for educational courses, so those studying with the OU only have to find £15 more for their tuition fees, assuming one full course, and any summer school fees are paid in full. At Rheindahlen the Study Centre is provided and run by the RAF as part of their general educational and training services. Like most buildings in the garrison it's a single storey self-contained unit, accessible to everyone whether serviceman or civilian working on site or anywhere in North-West Germany.

SQN. LDR. HARTNETT:

FRANK HARTNETT: Well we're here basically to provide the facility for servicemen for people who are in the RAF or the Army and so we get both officers and airmen, soldiers, coming along to the centre to do all the courses. They count for about 50% of our population I suppose, and the rest I made of housewives, civil servants, who work here, or civilian employees who work within the local area.

A100 COUNSELLING
SESSION:

PETER KENT: Some people equate artistic ability with the ability to sort of create an almost photographic image, if you like.

STUDENTS : (unintelligible)

SQN. LEADER DAVIES:

DAI DAVIES: I'm Senior Education officer at Rheindahlen and in charge of the Rheindahlen centre for the Open University. I'm also counsellor for the Humanities A100. This I've been doing since 1974, so I've seen almost 3 years of the OU in Germany. It's been a very interesting time, I've seen a lot of turbulence, I think it's become more turbulent recently, but it's a very enjoyable course, and I think that the cross-section that you get make it very interesting. The facilities are very good as you can see here, we have a library of OU books, which were provisioned at the beginning of the course. They're for A100, D101, T100 and M100 which are the 4 Foundation courses we run in Germany. We are unique in a sense, as far as the OU is concerned, because the counsellors in Germany, in the services scheme, are counsellors and not tutors. They have merged this function in the UK now, so that the tutor and the counsellor are one person. It's separate in as far as Germany's concerned, in that we do the counselling function and the tutor is in the UK, corresponds with the

student, marks the T.M.A's, We chair a weekly session which lasts for two hours, or at least it's supposed to last for two hours, but if discussion gets going as it often does, it runs often a lot later.

FLT. LT. HARTLEY: VIC HARTLEY: My particular job involves being a T100 counsellor and also I'm responsible for the exams in the Education section here. Of course we don't have just Open University exams we have exams such as GCE, Education Tests, for the RAF Exams, Royal College for General Practitioners, Institute of Chartered Secretaries just to mention a few.

SQN. LDR. HARTNETT: FRANK HARTNETT: I've been here about fifteen months, and it's part of my job to work as a counsellor for the Open University, and I look after the D101 course. I have about thirty students on the roll at the moment.

FLT. LT. HARTLEY: VIC HARTLEY: I have some pretty interesting students in my group, they range from a Colonel, who's a dentist, and therefore professionally qualified, down to one chap who drives heavy plant material, plus motor transport fitters, and I have a pilot who flies strike aircraft, so they're quite a wide range.

CPL. CHARRINGTON: DICK CHARRINGTON: Well, my actual job is an armourer, but what I do in fact is work on armament support equipment, which is the equipment which transports weapons to and from where they're stored to the aircraft and vice versa. The reason I went in for T100 was because there was such a diverse amount of subjects in it, and as I didn't have anything specific in mind, I felt I would find something

in that course which would lead me onto other subjects for my degree.

SIG. TONY DAVIES:

TONY DAVIES: I'm with the Royal Signals in Krefeld and my job is a clerk tech. Which is a technical clerk, and we receive all the equipment into the regiment and distribute it among the regiment, and we receive damaged equipment and dispose of it, either for repair or to disposal unit. I live in Krefeld which is 23 miles from Rheindahlen and I'm taking T100 at the moment. I intend to go to study computer sciences.

PADRE REVELL:

PADRE: Well I was posted to Royal Airforce Germany in 1972, and at that time I was in fact doing a course with London University, a philosophy course. I completed that when I arrived in Germany, and it so happened that I was friendly with the Command Education Officer at that time, decided I think to introduce the Open University into Germany. He came along and thought I might be a very good guinea-pig you see, so although I wasn't very keen to do anymore study after having flogged through this philosophy course, I decided I'd have a go, so I in fact did the D100 Foundation course. When I finished that I was in fact posted back to England, and having got bitten with this Open University bug, particularly having been to a summer school I decided I had better carry on.

ALISTAIR ARTHUR:

ALISTAIR ARTHUR: Well I work for the Met. Office here in Germany, and my responsibility is for all the electronic equipment, so I'm not really a weather man as such. And being in electronics my interests are naturally towards science and technology subjects.

SAC LAWTON:

CHRIS LAWTON: I'm the medical secretary at the only Royal Airforce hospital in Germany, at Wegberg, which is quite close to the garrison at Rheindahlen, I'm currently studying the D101 with the Open University at Rheindahlen study centre, I've been in Germany now for about 1½ years, I've been at Wegberg now for all this time. I commenced my studies this year, in February. First of all, it was difficult deciding which Foundation Course to study, since I didn't know much about any of the Foundation courses and the names tend to be slightly mis-leading. Social Sciences, I wouldn't have thought, what I knew about Social Sciences, I'd be studying what I'm studying now.

FLT. LT. DOWELL:

ALAN DOWELL: I'm a physiotherapist in the Royal Airforce. I qualified in physiotherapy as a civilian in 1953, and entered the service as a national serviceman. I decided I liked what I found, and stayed. I have now completed as you can see, 23, coming up to 24 years in the service. During this time, as well as physiotherapy, I've been employed at the RAF school of physiotherapy, where I was the deputy principal prior to coming to Germany. Being involved in education, but only in a professional way, and narrow, simply to physiotherapy, I decided I was in a rut, and the opportunity the Open University I thought I would take, and see what it gave me. I was given, from the board, three exemptions, so I was very fortunate in that I only had three credits to take. I'm now in my third year, hoping successfully to complete at the end of this year.

FLT. LT. HARTLEY:

VIC HARTLEY: The arrangements that we have over here for course material, apart from the stuff which comes by post, we have a technicolour viewer, which is mis-named really because it comes out in black and white, but these are the same programmes that would be broadcast in the UK. We also have the radio tapes which will be broadcast, and on the study evenings the group comes along, sees the film first of all, and then listens to the radio broadcast. So that really they're getting almost as good as the UK people are getting. It's just that they have to come here to see the films rather than watch it on television in their own homes. One advantage of this system though, is that if somebody has missed a study session and they've got a few minutes to spare in the day, they can get over here, and they are available all through the working day. Sometimes people that have to come in a long way, will save up a journey so that they will come once, and perhaps see three or four films at once.

SQN. LDR. HARTNETT:

FRANK HARTNETT: I think some of the problems that our people encounter which they wouldn't encounter in the UK, is the military distraction they have from exercises. (Bangs)
Well they're off their bases for pretty lengthy periods of time, they just don't have any access to a centre, or any availability to a tutor, they can't even ring a tutor up (Bangs)
They're working maybe 16 hours a day over lengthy periods, and they just have no contact with us at all. Then of course, they're very very tired and certainly after a 16 hour day, no-one feels like doing very much in the way of study.

(Film of Bielefeld)

JOSIE SMITH: The other two O.U. study centres are run by the Army. The more northerly one in Germany in the Luneburg Heath Area, which we were unable to visit, has the smallest student numbers of the three, but in fact covers those based in Berlin as well. Here at Bielefeld in the centre of Northern Germany, the British presence takes the form of the first Army corps housed on the edge of the town in a former German Army barracks. In one of its rather grim looking blocks is the well equipped education centre run by the Royal Army Educational Corps. Three of its officers provide the counselling back-up for the four Foundation courses. The man in charge, Major Hawes, himself an O.U. Graduate, owes his job to his degree.

MAJOR HAWES:

MIKE HAWES: Provision here is to provide for the four Foundation courses, T100, M100, A100 and D101, and we draw students from a geographical area. Our provision is that one night a week each Foundation course student comes here, they can use the audio tapes from radio programmes, and the video-tapes of the television programmes. Or, more usefully perhaps, sit and talk to each other, and discuss.

D101 TUTORIAL

BILL BOOTH: I think that since personal communication there's got to be immediate feed-back, so that A knows that B has received his communication

VARIOUS STUDENTS: (Unintelligible)

W.O.II. CLIFTON FIELDS:

CLIFF FIELDS: I in fact want to have an academic career, because I consider myself not having the opportunity at the age when I should have done. My intention is eventually to do law, so I wanted to try and find out what I could do to enhance my career. And the Open University was mentioned to me by a friend who was himself a student, and he said, "Well why don't you give it a try?" And I have.

CAPTAIN BOOTH:

CAPT. BILL BOOTH: I've been in the Royal Army Education Corps for seven years, now, the last two of which I've been staticed here in Ruppen barracks. I work primarily as the German language instructor in the education centre here.

For example, let's take a look at this sentence here, 'I'm going to the theatre with my wife, by taxi.' 'Ich fahre uder ich gerer'.

Because of my language qualification I was given three general credit exemptions. At the moment I'm only on my first Foundation Course. A Foundation Course has to be done as I've got three credits left to get.

W.O.I. T. HART:

TERRY HART: I didn't have any as I said, any 'O' Levels, or anything like this, when I left school, but having been made, no not made, by the army, but having been taught by the army, that education is important, even for a soldier, besides a civilian. I then took an interest in my own education. Having passed first education, which I was very pleased in, as were the education centres as well, I then saw the adverts for Open University. I was a bit worried, I suppose like some other people are,

about essay writing, but I did before the course started, a few essays, for the Education Centre, on subjects which the centre picked, and I was quite pleased with the marks I got there. So I wasn't worried about essays anymore.

SGT. J. HUGHES:

JOHN HUGHES: Well I've taken on A100 and D101 and finding there, that there's a bit of pressure, and there's a lot of work to do, in both cases, and the difficulty comes in trying to sort out how much attention to give each one at any specific time. It's working out alright by the third or fourth assignment.

WOI TERRY HART:

TERRY HART: Again in 1974 I experienced more problems than I did with A100, because of exercise commitments. (Bang) I tried taking my books along when we got a moment's rest, but (Bang) The job I was doing at the time was a 24 hour shift. Although I took my books, I didn't manage to get anywhere. (Bangs)

CAPT. KERLY:

BRIAN KERLY: I think the major thing a lot of them find difficult is the actual getting down to the nitty-gritty of essay writing and academic work. Many of them have not worked at this level before, or anywhere near this level.. As we know, the O.U. doesn't expect any educational qualifications, and so consequently for a lot of people it's a hurdle they have to overcome very quickly; with regard to putting things on paper, communication, in particular essay writing. They also find that the inter-disciplinary nature of a multi-discipline, like the D101, very difficult to grasp. One is going from subject to subject in the space of three or four weeks. They find

subjects like Economics difficult to grasp, they find subjects like attitudes difficult. They enjoy subjects, power, for instance, is one which goes down extremely well. And they enjoy also the bias towards education, particularly if they're teachers.

CAPTAIN DANA:

DAVID DANA: What I try to do with the students when I get them is to go and get the information from the units themselves, I think this is one of the problems. Most of them have been away from education for a long time, and they have, they find it difficult initially, to get information from the booklets. What I try to do to begin with, is to show them how they in fact can absorb the information, to decide which parts of the information are important, and which aren't important, and once having done this, of course, they are then able to, when they come onto second level courses to work much more on their own. And out here of course, they are on their own, completely, in second level courses.

MAJOR HAWES:

MIKE HAWES: We're here to help them in the counsellor role, as opposed to the counsellor-tutor role. Although, of course, ^{since} all of us have some kind of subject sympathy with these courses, it goes over into the tutor role. You've seen here today, there's a whole weekend of the staff-tutors coming out, and therefore because these people are in a foreign land you've got, as it were, on the doorstep, provision, tutoring, which happens twice a year.

T100 TUTORIAL:

KEN REYNOLDS

KEN REYNOLDS: What it does teach very effectively is how you can add up using nothing more than one's and zero's. Which can easily be related to an electrical switch, which is either on or it's off. And by adding a sufficient number of one's and zero's in a line, you can express any number, and you can use this series of one's and zero's to multiply, divide, add and subtract. And this is called binary systems.

JOHN FAUVELL:

JOHN FAUVELL: And I think that academically they derive great value from our visits. You see, they assure us is the best test I think, And this contact with the tutor, who's able to be with us on the A100 course, on this occasion, is something that particularly they find useful, finding, discovering who the person at the end of the, of the TMA, who writes all those remarks and gets all those grades, who he really is and what his responses to things are.

D101 TUTORIAL

REX HALL:

REX HALL: And secondly, we've been asked as far as TMA 3 is concerned to deal with problems as they arrive, in particular, and so that's the subject for the next half-an-hour of our session.

JOHN FAUVELL:

JOHN FAUVELL: Part of our task is a reassuring task, that one just has to trust one's own judgement, and perceptions, initially and just build on those. And because the study centre here is by far the best equipped study centre I think I've ever been in, which is another advantage students have. They are therefore able to use a full range of visual aids and slides and tape-recorders.

JOSIE SMITH:

JOSIE: We've been looking at the bigger of the two special schemes for O.U. students with the services overseas. There's a similar operation in Cyprus where in fact the experiment began. Well - generalisations are always dangerous, especially about such a varied collection of people as our students, but it does seem that these services schemes are very successful - the drop-out rate is better than the UK average, motivation is well sustained, and from both the services and the Open University point of view, the scheme is highly cost-effective. There are regular flights between the UK and Germany anyway so both personnel and postal packets can be moved about without too much difficulty or expense, and it looks as if the services provide a very supportive back-up for studying our courses.

FINAL CREDITS

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A BBC-tv Production for
THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

CLOSING MUSIC