

CHARLES RITCHIE was educated at Wellington College and, despite a childhood desire to act, entered the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 1960. Commissioned into The Royal Scots, his 38-year military career took him all over the world.

Charles rose to Brigadier, served as Colonel of his Regiment and was decorated with the MBE, OBE and CBE. After retiring, he became Secretary at The New Club, Edinburgh, a Director of the Edinburgh Military Tattoo and an officer in The Queen's Bodyguard for Scotland (Royal Company of Archers). He also served his local community as Chairman of the Black Mount Community Council and Honorary President of the West Linton & District Pipe Band.

He and his wife Araminta moved back to the family home in South Lanarkshire in 1998. Charles's interests included shooting, tennis, curling, politically incorrect speeches, singing and extreme partying with his many friends. Urged for many years to record his adventures, he delivered his manuscript to Pen & Sword Books on 14th December 2020. He died, suddenly, two days later.

Jacket design: Jon Wilkinson

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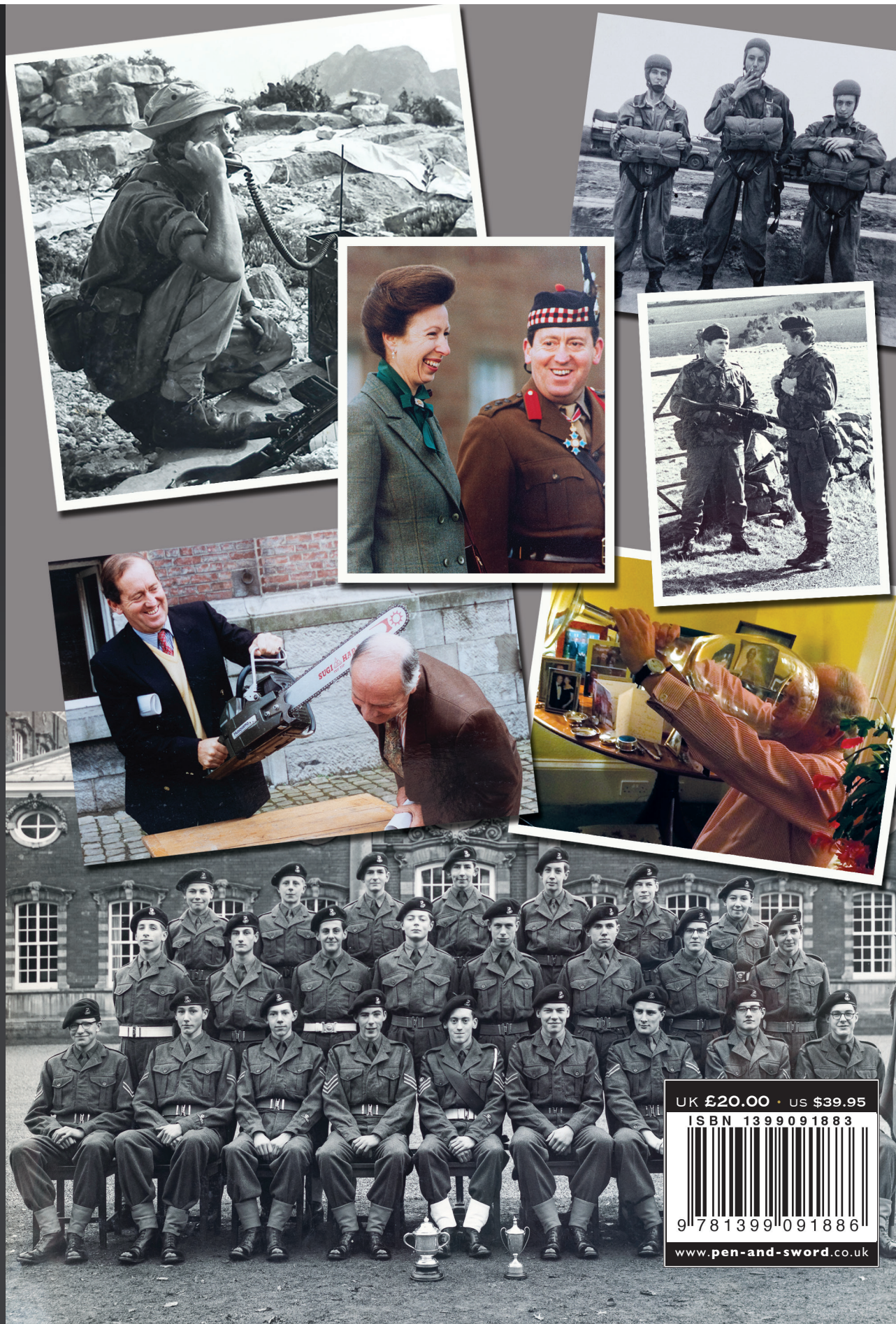
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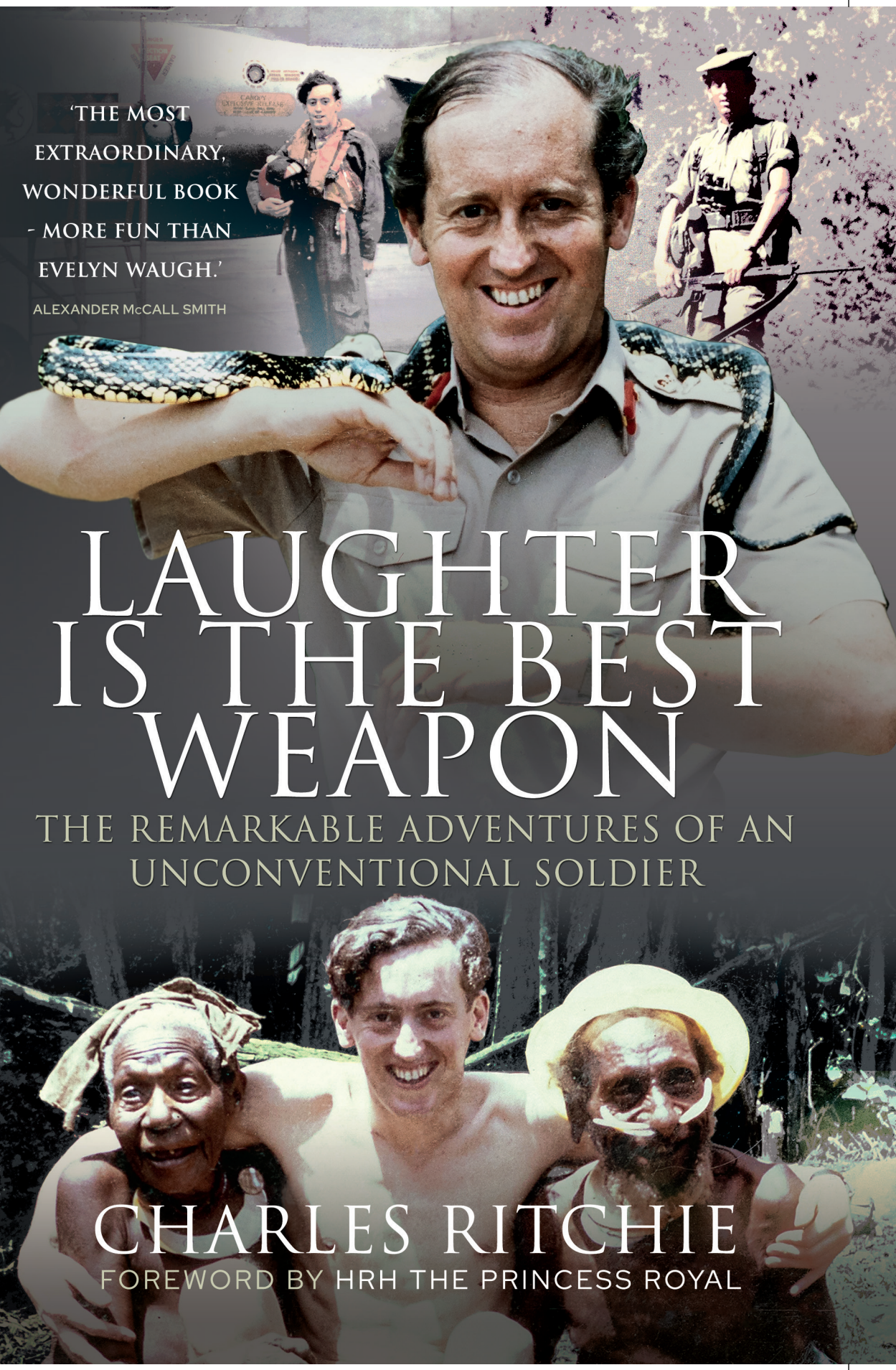
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LAUGHTER IS THE BEST WEAPON
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CHARLES RITCHIE
FOREWORD BY HRH THE PRINCESS ROYAL

'An army may march on its stomach but it leans on its funny bone.' So says Brigadier Charles Ritchie, and he should know. Postings to the Yemen, Northern Ireland, Bosnia and other far-away trouble spots gave him many opportunities to demonstrate that the ability to laugh – and make others laugh – is an invaluable skill in an officer's kitbag.

In *Laughter is the Best Weapon – the Remarkable Adventures of an Unconventional Soldier*, Charles abandons the popular trend for military heroism and angst-ridden confessions. Instead he leads the reader on a forthright yet light-hearted and self-deprecating journey through his 38 years' service as a Royal Scot. In the process we witness his sometimes significant, but often comedic, participation in a wide range of recent British military operations.

If you prefer your military history more entertainingly honest than earnestly intellectual and your soldiers hilariously slapstick rather than heroically stoic, then this is the book for you. Liberally sprinkled with career-limiting cock-ups, bizarre near-death experiences and the clatter not of gunfire but shameless name-dropping, these delightfully varied anecdotes deliver a hugely entertaining glimpse into the extraordinary life of one of the British Army's most spirited and loveable characters.

This book is a fitting encore to the incredible life of a much-loved man.

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