BLOODBATH IN SUPERMARKET

11 British soldiers among freed UN hostages

By Ray King

ELEVEN British soldiers were among 126 UN hostages released by their Bosnian Serb captors today.

The freed troops were bussed across the border into Serbia and were expected to be airlifted to the Croatian capital Zagreb this afternoon.

The 11 Royal Welsh Fusiliers were relaxing and enjoying a meal and a wash after their ordeal at Njivice in Serbia.

Bosnian Serbs said their release was "a gesture of goodwill" and were understood to have promised to allow all except one of the UN hostages to leave in return.

Two other UN personnel and 11 of the freed Britons were said by British chargé d'affaires for Roberts to be slightly injured.

"There are all in good spirits," he said. "But three are suffering from cuts, two have broken wrists and one has a broken ankle.

The injuries were caused when their military personnel were in an accident.

Serbian sources hinted that the remaining hostages would be freed in the next few days.

The hostage release came in response to a plea by Bosnian President Gnojadovic Misic, desperate to get sanctions against his country lifted.

The freeing of British, French, Swedish, Canadian and Danish troops, just after tests came ahead of today's crisis meeting of NATO chiefs in Paris.

Top of their agenda will be a blueprint for the creation of a multinational rapid reaction force of up to 20,000 troops to protect the Bosnia peacekeepers.

Britain's Prime Minister, with three companies of the Devon and Dorset Regiment, is expected to be ready for deployment next week.

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OFF-DUTY DOCTOR IS LIFE-SAVER

A former Hope Hospital doctor performed life-saving first aid on the floor of Sainsbury's Regent Road cafe, after a father and son cut their throats in a double suicide bid.

And police say that but for the actions of cervical registrar Dr Mike Bickell, the men would 'certainly' have bled to death.

Dr Bickell was shopping at the Regent Road supermarket at 1pm on Friday when he saw police and ambulance race up.

He immediately learned to give resuscitation, Sainsbury's first aid staff and two off-duty nurses from the blood-splattered cafe.

There, according to police, Thomas Hunt, aged 56, and his son Albert, aged 45, carried out a bizarre 'ritualistic' stabbing with a carving knife they had bought in the store.

Thomas slit his own throat, and moments later his son offered himself to his father, who slashed the younger man's throat before Albert stabbed himself in the stomach.

Shocked shoppers were evacuated as the impromptu medical team sealed the wounds.

Store manager Gordon Davy was full of admiration for Dr Bickell, the nurses and his own store staff.

'The doctor and nurses were absolutely marvellous,' he said. 'They rushed in and immediately began giving first aid to the badly wounded man to Hope, I was just helping out,' he added.

'And Dr. Albert Hunt, for merly of Dearhurst Drive, Chorlton Mill, left their home on Monday which has since been boarded up, and police believe they had been living rough. As The Advertiser went to press, Albert was in a stable condition at Withington Hospital. Thomas's condition was described as unsatisfactory by a Hope Hospital spokesman.'

Store brings in counsellors to comfort traumatised on-lookers

SAINSBURY'S is offering free professional counselling to anyone who witnessed the shocking double stabbing at their shoppers' cafes on Friday.

The store, which immediately brought in an expert counsellor from London to help traumatised customers, was already employing another counsellor following a recent armed robbery in the store.

On that occasion a security guard was marched through the busy store by gun toting robbers who forced terrified workers to hand over a large sum of cash.

Anyone who witnessed the apparent suicide bid by Thomas and Albert Hunt and would like to speak to a counsellor should contact Sainsbury's manager Gordon Davy at the Regent Road store.

Joe's bowling along!

100 up: Centenarian Joseph Lomax prepares for action

A CLIFTON bowling fan celebrated his centenary down at his favourite greens.

Joseph Lomax, of Hagland Avenue, was 100 years old last Friday, and to mark the occasion enjoyed a game of bowls at the club where he's played for 90 years.

Mr Lomax spent his special day at Newton Bowling Club in Moss Side Road, Pendlebury.

'He was very enthusiastic,' said the sports coordinator, who is wonderful for his age.'

He said: "He still goes watching football matches and the dogs. He really enjoys them all.'

And his family has no intention of retiring from his bowls, either.

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