

BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

Saul Grey

I would like to express both general and specific thanks to those who helped us through some most memorable days in December, specifically: Canadians in Vienna and Belgrade who made evacuation and return possible; Austrian air staff at Otopeni airport whose courtesy and patience were unbelievable, even after the first evacuation was aborted; a Canadian student in Timisoara (Anon because of privacy) whose consular-related assistance was invaluable and who willingly kept in touch with us to relay very valuable information about the situation in that city; one locally engaged staff (LES) who in early days willingly took over an important function when the incumbent twice abandoned the position; another LES who phoned around and visited when feasible to ensure SQs had no problems of heat, light, etc.; and, still another LES, who willingly drove anytime, anywhere - a model of loyalty and devotion.

Further thanks to: Canadian media representatives who lived up to their promise to tell audiences that all Canadians were safe and well in exchange for phone favours or a scheduled interview; RBR Desk Officer who seemed to be the microcosm of the downsizing philosophy of doing more with less; An officer who, if this were wartime, would have merited a battle field commission for an ultra cool and effective performance; BBC World Service for demonstrating superb standards of radio journalism; a spouse who, before evacuation, monitored, translated and assessed important developments on T.V.; crowds who provided the exhilarating experience of applauding and cheering a Canadian flag in Bucharest, December 21 and 22; British and American colleagues who responded with alacrity to requests for assistance (sending MSGs, use of armoured limo, etc.); and above all, those Romanians, first in Timisoara and then in Bucharest, particularly young students and workers, who showed courage and dignity in the face of a brutal dictatorship in demonstrating for a better life.

TABASCO AND DIPLOMACY: A HOT COMBINATION

Janet Brons

Having lived in Warsaw now for a year-and-a-half, it is difficult to distil one's impressions of a country and a posting such as this into a few paragraphs. There is, however, something that any single person contemplating a posting here must know before boarding the next LOT flight. There is no fast food in Warsaw. This basic staple of single life is absent from the Polish scene, and after a few months one begins to have disturbing fantasies about joint ventures with Pizza Hut or Dairy Queen. There is also a dearth of Seven-Elevens for that forgotten jar of coffee; there is no Shoppers Drug Mart should the latest telegram from Ottawa necessitate a Tylenol; and if there is a Canadian Tire in Warsaw, I've not found it.

In short, personal organization is a must here, and as anyone who has ever seen the contents of my purse will know, this is not one of my strong points. Without organization, or lacking the time, energy, or a sympathetic, non-working spouse to organize one's life, one can face a wide variety of household disasters. It is not impossible to end up missing the key element from your favourite Lemon Chicken recipe (i.e., the lemon) in mid-January, or to find yourself wondering whatever possessed you to order an entire case of tabasco sauce. To be fair, most things are now available in Warsaw, but it does take some time and creativity to find them, and they are definitely not all located in one's immediate neighbourhood. There is much of interest here in Warsaw, not to mention the fascinating political scene. And should anyone be planning a trip to Warsaw, I can give you a real deal on tabasco sauce.