

There is a presumption in favour of public access to the Defence Training Estate, on Public Rights of Way, balanced against the over-riding national requirement for safe and sustainable military training and conservation. For people who just like to stroll and look there is plenty of spectacular scenery within the Home Counties Estate: woodland, wetlands and heathland walks abound, many of which can be accessed from convenient car parks. Considerate visitors will always be welcomed on areas that are free from military training activities. We ask that all visitors respect the sites by not causing any disturbance to plants, animals and other visitors – and to take their litter home (DTE HC's bill for clearing 'fly-tipping' runs close to £100,000 per year). Dog owners should also spare a thought for the soldiers crawling through the undergrowth during training. Please help us to keep our training areas as clean as possible so that people can relax and enjoy the sites when the military is not training.

When permitted onto a training area:

## Follow the Country Code

- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
- Guard against all risk of fire
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone
- Take your litter home
- Take special care on country roads
- Make no unnecessary noise
- Keep to the public paths across farmland
- Fasten all gates
- Keep dogs under close control
- Protect wildlife, plants and trees
- Help to keep all water clean

Great care is taken to ensure the safety of these areas, although any land used by the Armed Forces for training can obviously be dangerous – and this applies throughout the DTE HC. Anyone walking on MoD land must obey all signs and bylaws relevant to the area being visited.

**Remember! Unexploded Ordnance: do not touch any military debris.**

Always comply with the following:

## Safety

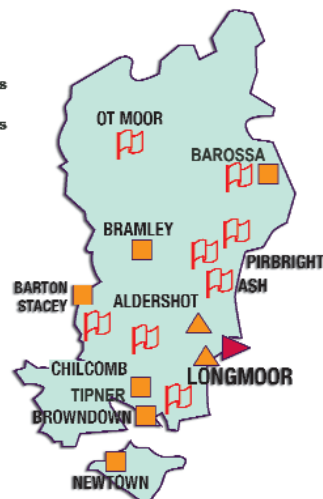
**Do not enter areas where there is an obvious military presence.**

- Do not approach, touch, or pick up any objects lying on the ground
- Keep to the footpaths and do not deviate from them
- The use of metal detectors is prohibited
- Keep away from all buildings, bunkers and military installations except where it is clearly shown that public access is permitted
- No camping or fires are permitted

If you see anything suspicious, unusual or otherwise of concern, please contact the Ministry of Defence Police Control Room on 02392 722707

## DEFENCE TRAINING ESTATE (HOME COUNTIES)

- ▶ HQ DTE HC
- ▲ Major Training Areas
- Minor Training Areas
- ▣ Small Arms Ranges



## PART OF OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

To assist in this task no fewer than eight conservation groups have been set up within the Home Counties. Many local experts and people with a genuine interest in environmental matters, join these groups which ensures the MoD has the very best knowledge at their disposal when making decisions which may affect the local area.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In addition to this Public Information Leaflet for the Home Counties, the DTE, Defence Estates (DE), each produce other literature: the *DTE Annual Report* summarises yearly progress by the DTE organisation; DE's *Walks on MoD Land* details a number of walks on 10 DTE estates including Salisbury Plain, Castlemartin, Catterick, Dartmoor and Otterburn. DTE also produces *In the Field* magazine, published each autumn, which contains news from some of the smaller training areas around the country, as well as updates on developments in management techniques. Finally, DE's annual publication *Sanctuary* contains articles about the Defence Estate across the whole country. All these publications are free and may be obtained from the relevant addresses below.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### Headquarters DTE Home Counties

Longmoor Camp, Liss, Hampshire GU33 6EL  
Telephone: 01420 483362

### Headquarters Defence Training Estate

Land Warfare Centre, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 0DJ  
Telephone: 01985 222856

### Defence Estates

Blakemore Drive, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B75 7RL  
Telephone: 0121 311 2000

[www.defence-estates.mod.uk](http://www.defence-estates.mod.uk)

Ministry of Defence Access Website [www.mod.uk/access](http://www.mod.uk/access)

# PUBLIC INFORMATION LEAFLET



Surrey heathland



# DTE Home Counties

## WHY THE ARMY NEEDS TO TRAIN

The British Army is held in the highest regard around the world. This respect has been hard-won over recent years in Northern Ireland, the Falkland Islands, the Gulf, the Balkans – and countless peacekeeping operations. But such professionalism does not happen by chance. It is attained by constant, thorough and tough training, in realistic conditions. The Defence Training Estate (DTE) provides the principal facilities to achieve this.

## ORGANISATION

The Defence Training Estate in the UK is controlled by Headquarters DTE, based at Headquarters Training Support Command (Land) at Warminster, near Salisbury. The Estate is sub-divided into 12 regionally-based areas, many of which have been used for training by the military for periods of well over 100 years. Each has its own headquarters and staff. DTE Home Counties (DTE HC) includes training areas around 'The Home of The British Army' – Aldershot – and manages sites from the Isle of Wight in the south, to Ot Moor in Oxfordshire to the north, Barton Stacey in Hampshire to the west, and Ash, Pirbright and Hankley to the east. The Estate covers an area in excess of 26,000 acres (10,500 hectares).

## TRAINING IN THE HOME COUNTIES

DTE HC is responsible for the military estate and its contents, both natural and man-made, in the Home Counties. Much of it is shared with farmers, who enjoy normal agricultural usage or grazing rights. The Army's requirement to use the land for training is paramount, but sensible arrangements are negotiated to ensure that farmers' animals and crops, and the indigenous flora and fauna, are not subjected to any unnecessary damage.

The Home Counties Training Estate has long been used for live firing of a variety of weapons and – understandably during the years of 2 World Wars – clearance of these areas was not given any priority and large areas of land were fenced off.

Many are still off limits to the general public, and it will be many years before they can be cleared to such a degree of certainty that visitors will be permitted. Even in cleared areas it is still possible for live ammunition to rise to the surface as a result of movement in the earth's crust. For example, even today on First World War battlefields such as Ypres and the Somme, shells, mines and other ammunition continue to appear. Visitors must therefore never touch any object they find on the military estate.

## TRAINING ACTIVITIES

The training on many areas has changed or is about to change because of the options taken during the *Strategic Defence Review*. Many units are being re-rolled and moved from traditional locations. As a result, areas that have been exclusively used by the infantry and logistical units may now have mechanised regiments carrying out manoeuvres and harbour drills on them. Change is necessarily continuous in the Armed Forces and the pressure on the training areas is relentless. It is essential that they continue to train, as a vital element in maintaining their proud heritage.



Bramley

## A UNIQUE AND VARIED HERITAGE



Browndown Battery

The beauty of our natural landscapes is diverse and includes heathland, chalk downland, light and dense woodland, and scrub. Many of the training areas contain old army campsites. These range from the Browndown Battery, part of the Palmerston defences of Gosport built in the 1850s, to the plethora of First and Second World War camps built at Hankley, Bramshott and Barton Stacey, the last of which was demolished in 1986.

The Browndown Battery is a listed building and because of its location inside a military training area, is in excellent condition. Though modified and strengthened many times during its history much of the original building is still identifiable. The many 20th Century campsites are easily recognisable and many of the camp roads and drill squares are used by today's Army during logistical exercises. Water towers, avenues of trees and the remnants of once-cultivated gardens are easily identified. Many training areas are the homes of archaeological sites. These include bowl barrows and a variety of other tumuli. Many, once common, Second World War pillboxes and bunkers scattered round the Estate have survived because of their location, and are now in the process of being listed.

Few visitors will know of the Atlantic Wall built in the heart of Surrey. This wall, complete with the evidence of the breaching methods, still stands erect on the slopes of Hankley Common. Built during the Second World War, it was used to train D-Day troops in the art of attacking Hitler's fortifications. Visitors may think and reflect on how many lives were saved because of the thoroughness of the Armed Forces' training and in doing so realise why training areas are required.



Atlantic Wall

There are 2 war memorials located within the Estate. Bramshott, forever synonymous with the Canadians and the site of their Great War Hospital, is the home of one of their most important war memorials. An avenue of red maples and sugar maples has been planted alongside the A3 road. This is a regular site of pilgrimage for many Canadians, and all visitors are requested to show the normal respect due to such a site. The avenue replaces the original memorial, which was demolished during a non-military road-widening scheme. Visitors should include the Bramshott village church in their itinerary, as 318 Canadians are interred in the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery which forms part of the church grounds. Also, a Second World War memorial is located within the Longmoor Training Area near the site where the pilot, Richard Pryce-Hughes, was killed on 15 April 1942 when his damaged bomber crashed as he guided it away from the residential area.



Longmoor Huts

The Longmoor and Bordon areas are the historic home of 'railway' soldiers. The original railway line was built to move a complete camp from Longmoor to Bordon in the early 1900s. From this relatively minor start the British Army's railway transport system was built which was to develop into a major railway artery during the Second World War. The centre was disbanded in 1969 but there is still much evidence of it in the form of buildings and memorabilia.

Military hardware is to be found on many of the Home Counties sites: a remnant of an Abbott self-propelled gun (of Cold War vintage) is to be found in the Longmoor area, alongside 2 Chieftain tanks. These weapons are still used as training aids and visitors should look but not touch. This especially applies to children: though attractive, these old vehicles hold many traps. They were never designed as playthings or climbing frames; they are dangerous.

## CONSERVATION OF FAUNA AND FLORA

Like the monuments, buildings and archaeological sites, the indigenous fauna and flora have often survived far better in the Training Estate than on other sites. Indeed, many forms of life on the edge of extinction live quite happily on military land where they have learned to co-exist with the rifle fire and pyrotechnics, which hold few fears for the wildlife that resides on ranges. For example, the steep sides of one firing range contain a colony of sand martins.

Similarly, rare plants have been allowed to prosper in their unspoilt environment because of the sanctuary afforded. The military do not intentionally destroy natural habitat or harm any form of wildlife; visitors are requested to show the same respect. Fire is a particular hazard in the Home Counties and every precaution should be taken to ensure large areas of valuable natural habitat are not destroyed.

The *lepidoptera* (butterflies and moths) are just as well served on the areas. Among the species to be found are grayling, green hairstreak, silver studded blue, dingy skipper, small heath and small copper.

The list of *coleoptera* (beetles), *diptera* (flies) and *hemiptera-heteroptera* (bugs) is apparently endless and people who study these creatures will not be disappointed during their walks through the training areas.

DTE HC includes one of the few areas to hold within its boundary representatives of all 6 species of indigenous reptiles – namely 3 snakes and 3 lizards. The 2 species of toad, the common frog and all three species of newt are also to be found making it very rich in reptile and amphibian life.

DTE HC is also a potential treat for bird watchers: no fewer than 175 species have made their home in the area. Annual bird counts, initiated by the MoD and carried out by local enthusiasts, enable the populations to be monitored. The results of the information gathered enable the MoD to undertake conservation projects for the protection and enhancement of many locally and nationally important bird species.

The training areas are also the answer to a botanist's prayer. Among the rare species to be found are bristle bent, lesser butterfly orchid, black bog rush, bog pimpernel, royal fern, slender cotton grass, carnation sedge, Dyer's greenweed, petty whin, sawwort, little robin geranium and yellow horned poppy.

Several populations of roe deer are to be found within the training areas. These are necessarily managed to ensure that their existence is sustainable in the long term. A few muntjac, 'invaders' from Japan, are known to live within the Estate; but being nocturnal these are seldom seen.



Natterjack Toad



Tawny Owl



Sand Lizards



Roe Deer