



TAQ

The magazine for the Territorial Army

Issue 1 : June 2007

A New Communications Channel

Welcome to the first edition of **TAQ** (TA Quarterly), a new direct channel of communications between Commander Regional Forces (CRF), who is also Inspector General Territorial Army, and TA soldiers and officers. It's not intended to replace traditional channels such as briefings by the chain of command, but it will allow us to provide you with details on the issues that affect you.

TAQ will be sent to TA centres in sufficient quantities to enable most of you to have your own copy. It will either be available for you to pick up in the TAC, or those units that operate a regular mailshot can choose to send it out direct to home addresses.

Our aim is to keep you informed of those issues that may affect you directly or indirectly, as well as including news items of interest. If you would like more information about any of

the points covered in these pages you should find it on ArmyNET. If not, ask your unit staff to obtain the information for you.

As you will see from the article on TA Rebalancing on page 2, we are going through times of great change, with many units relocating and changing roles. Yet the changes are more than just structural; the days when we were the Reserve of Last Resort are long gone. The TA now fulfils a vital role in support of the Regular Army, and everyone who joins now understands that they stand a strong chance of being mobilised to go on operations.

Our communications with our people must keep pace with that change, and it's vital that everyone within our organisation is up to speed with what is going on. That is the aim of TAQ.

Who are Regional Forces?



Britain's military land forces are divided into Field Army and Regional Forces.

Regional Forces, under the command of **Lt Gen John McColl CBE DSO**, pictured left, includes most UK-based units, as well as German garrisons, Brunei Garrison and the Gurkha base in Nepal.

Although Territorial Army units are split between Field Army and Regional Forces, Commander Regional Forces holds the post of Inspector General Territorial Army (IGTA) and takes the lead as 'head' of the TA.



Rebalancing

In March 2006 the Secretary of State for Defence announced some of the most wide-ranging changes to the Territorial Army for many years. TA Rebalancing aims to reshape the force to make it more effective and more integrated with the Regular Army.

A vital element of that integration is 'pairing', in which TA units are affiliated with one or more Regular units. Where possible, those units will train together, and when the TA soldiers are mobilised, they should be attached to their paired Regular unit.

"Obviously, there will be times when it is not possible for a unit to train with its Regular counterpart," says Brigadier David Shaw, Chief of Staff Regional Forces.

"For instance, the Regular unit may be stationed overseas, or is on ops, in which case the TA unit will train with an alternative Regular unit. Similarly, it may not be possible for an individual to be mobilised with the affiliate unit, but whenever possible that is what we will do."

Organisation

Rebalancing is not about cuts - the TA will remain at its current establishment of around 42,000 soldiers and officers (which includes University OTCs). The way the force is organised will be changing, however, with some units changing location or role, and a small number of under-utilised and under-manned units disbanded.

Some parts of the TA are being expanded; there will be more opportunities in areas including air support, armour, intelligence and engineering, while others are being re-roled into new areas of expertise.

"We recognise that the changes may affect some individuals more than others,"

"It's important to stress that no TA member will see their service compulsorily terminated. Anyone who is displaced by their unit closing or changing role will have the chance of transferring to another unit." says Brig Shaw.

The net effect of the changes will be a TA that's always ready to meet the full range of operational requirements and which is fully integrated into the Army as a whole.

The Reductions

- Infantry -850
- Royal Artillery -507
- Army Medical Services -1598

The reduction in the size of the AMS is a 'realism measure' - it recognises that we have never been able to recruit up to the full strength of the AMS, so we have adjusted the authorised strength to a more realistic level and allocated the extra manpower to other areas.

The increases

- Royal Engineers +1594
- Adjutant General's Corps (Provo) +239
- Intelligence Corps +196
- Army Air Corps +394.

Major structural changes include:

- A new Engineer Regiment (72 Engr Regt) in the North East.
- The reduction of one Infantry Regiment (King's Cheshire Regt).

- A new Medical General Support Regiment (224 Med GS Regt) in Cambridge.
- Two new national RLC units - 155 Transport Regiment in the South West and 159 Supply Regiment in the Midlands.
- A new Military Intelligence Battalion (5 MI Bn) in the North East.
- The formation of a new AAC Regiment (6 Regt AAC) in East Anglia.
- A new Military Provost Service Coy at the Military Corrective Training Centre, Colchester.

Timelines

Rebalancing will not happen overnight, but will be phased in over a number of years. Obviously, things will change during that time and will have an impact on the plans; some changes will happen sooner, some will be delayed, others may be cancelled altogether.

Communications

Supplies of a specially-produced pamphlet were sent out to every TA centre immediately after the announcement. If you did not receive one, you should speak to your unit staff in the first instance. If no copies are available, further supplies can be obtained from: SO2 RF Media & Comms, Room C58, Main Building, HQ Land Command, Wilton, SP2 0AG.

You can also find the pamphlet on ArmyNET - after logging on, click on 'TA Rebalancing' in the Quicklinks menu on the right of the page.

If anyone had any doubts about the 'usefulness' of the TA, they will have been quietened over the past three years. Since the start of Op TELIC in January 2003, some 12,300 TA soldiers have been mobilised - that's the equivalent of almost 22 battalions/regiments*. The Reserves have consistently made up more than 10% of personnel deployed on major operations since the start of Op TELIC, and during the summer of 2003 the figure was more than 20%.

Iraq. For Op TELIC, we have called out some 15,300 TA, of whom we have mobilised more than 10,300. There are currently around 280 TA mobilised on ops in Iraq (TELIC 9).

Afghanistan/Balkans. There are 270 TA deployed in Afghanistan and 22 deployed in the Balkans (Bosnia/Kosovo).

Sustainability. It's clear that, given the high volume of operational activity, it would have been very difficult for the Army to do what it has done over the last three and a half years without the TA. Obviously such a level of commitment places a burden on our resources, and in

order to maintain our contribution to operations, TA mobilisation has been kept at about 600 every six months (i.e. a maximum of around 1,200 per year). This could fluctuate, depending on commitments.

* 12,300 TA personnel have been mobilised for OP TELIC. The average strength of an infantry battalion is 562.



TA Manning

A lot has been written in the press about the 'manning crisis' in the TA. Headlines shout "2000 leaving the TA every month", "TA loses 20,000 since Iraq War", "TA at lowest strength ever", and so on. Of course people leave the TA; we would prefer that people didn't leave, but we have to accept that like every large organisation, the TA has turnover among its people, with some leaving and others joining. So let's look at the facts about TA manning.

Decline. The Strategic Defence Review at the end of the 1990s considerably reduced the TA's liability and many loyal, experienced members had their service compulsorily terminated. Even after that, the strength of the TA continued to decline steadily until the latter months of 2005. Contrary to media reports of an 'Iraq effect', there was no particular downturn in TA manning around TELIC I in 2003.

Gradual Increase. From late 2005 the strength of the TA gradually increased, so that in October 2006 there were 232 more than a

year earlier. Unfortunately, at that point the move to Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) started a 'data cleansing' exercise, and that has made TA numbers appear to drop sharply. The important point is that numbers in the TA have not actually changed - what JPA has done is to clear out a lot of old records and establish a more accurate recording system.

National TA. Whilst overall manning levels in the TA are better than in the other volunteer forces (Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Air Force), the shortfalls are much greater in the nationally recruited units such as the Army Medical Services, Royal Signals and Royal Logistic Corps. However, the measures we are taking to improve retention will have a positive effect on National TA manning.

Despite the decline in TA manpower over recent years, the indications are that morale has never been higher. Involvement on operations clearly shows that the Army needs the TA - and that's good for the TA.

Manning Action Plan

The TA has evolved from being the 'reserve of last resort' in the Cold War years to the 'reserve of first choice' and an integral part of the Army's capability.

Yet in early 2005 TA numbers were still declining and it was clear that we needed to take drastic measures to stem that decline and restore TA manning to a healthy level. That was the aim of the TA Manning Action Plan (TAMAP).

The Plan addresses a number of separate areas, and you will have noticed the results over the past few months:

One Army Recruiting

As part of the move towards 'One Army', a programme was introduced known as 'One Army Recruiting' (OAR). Already, all advertising material for the Army, whether on television, billboards, in the press or on the internet, includes information about the TA. In addition, Armed Forces Careers Offices, which have previously only recruited Regular personnel, will now provide information about opportunities in the TA.

Overall, TA soldier recruiting is fairly buoyant, but TA young officer recruiting remains an area of concern. Specified priorities in CRF's plan include the recruiting effort for TA officers and National TA posts.

Of course, a fully-recruited Army depends on more than just recruiting enough people – it's just as important that we keep them once they are recruited, and there are a number of initiatives underway to improve our retention.

Pairing Mechanism/ Training Affiliations

The clearest message to come from consultation was that we want to be treated, as far as possible, like Regulars and to be part of 'One Army'. The Pairing Mechanism, linking Regular and TA units for routine training and operations, aims to strengthen regimental links and improve the quality of training.

There are few Regular exercises that could not accommodate a TA section, an additional platoon/company or even battalion. Such pairing offers the most effective way of delivering high-quality training and assisting the integration of Regular and TA units. Training together will also help when

individuals and formed units are mobilised on operations with their paired unit.

Implementing pairing and making it work will be very much a two-way process, and will depend largely on the enthusiasm and initiative of commanding officers.

Operational Commitments Plot

Earlier in this edition of TAQ we described the level of TA commitment to operations in the past three years. That's fine, but we need to manage mobilisation to allow the TA to recuperate, and ensure that we can meet the long-term needs.

Legislation states that no TA soldier should be mobilised for more than one year in three, but the 'Defence Intent' is that no TA soldier should be mobilised for more than one year in five, unless they volunteer.

We need to give the TA as much warning as possible so that they, and their employers, can organise their lives. As a result, the Operational Commitments Plot (OCP) now contains an estimate of the requirement for mobilised units at five years (i.e. for 2012); a Warning Order to units and an estimate of requirement for individuals at the two year point (i.e. this year for 2009); and a mobilisation plan for 2007.

Inevitably, there will be short notice changes, but this planning will provide a bedrock on which units and individuals can plan.

Phase 1 Training

A revised system of TA Phase One Training began on 1st October last year. This new system is designed to increase the emphasis on individual training excellence and hopefully will also improve retention.

Weekend training in units and at Regional Training Centres will be followed by a two-week residential Phase One C course at either an Army Training Regiment or HQ RLC TA, or by attending the Combat Infantryman Course (TA) at the Infantry Training Centre (Catterick).

The new system is regarded as a key element in the retention of new soldiers at this vulnerable stage and will ensure that recruits are nurtured through the system as quickly as it, and the individual's availability, will allow.

TA Physical Fitness Policy

Greater TA participation in Regular Army collective training and deployment on operations demands a fitness policy that delivers TA soldiers who are at the required levels of fitness.

The key points of the TA Physical Fitness Policy are:

- **Military Annual Training Tests (MATTs) for both Regulars and TA now have to be passed, rather than simply attempted. These replace the old Individual Training Directives (ITDs).**
- **The new policy will be introduced in stages, allowing time to achieve the new standards. By 1st April 2008, the TA will fully adhere to MATT 2, including the Level 1 Combat Fitness Test of eight miles for operational deployment.**
- **Training is classified as duty; personnel undertaking unsupervised personal development will be classed as on duty, provided**

ONE ARMY FULL-TIME or PART-TIME

they are undertaking a training programme that is Service-recognised.

- **There will be more qualified TA PTIs within units. TA Rebalancing allows for an increase in full time staff who will give advice and support to units, while each Regional Training Centre will have a full time Army Physical Training Corps Warrant Officer.**

Occupational Health Service for the TA

Specialist Occupational Health (OH) is delivered by consultant occupational physicians and specialist nurses, and its aim is to screen out those unsuitable for service, provide case advice for treatment and rehabilitation, and monitor fitness levels.

Until now the TA has had no formal access to these OH services, but under a new system the pre-employment entry medical process will mirror that of Regular applicants. The initial questionnaire will be completed by the applicant's GP, and then screened by the ARTD medical staff at the regional Army Development and Selection Centres. If the individual passes, they will have a medical examination locally to where they live.

Key Messages

There are three key messages contained within CRF's Manning Action Plan:

- **For the first time, the TA is a fully-integrated part of the Army.**
- **It has endured through very demanding times, but**

we need to go further to sustain a volunteer force.

- **The manning decline has been arrested, but there is more to do, and it will take time.**





Are you on the net?

Throughout these articles you will have seen references to ArmyNET, the Army's own on-line network.

What is ArmyNET?

It's a powerful communications tool, enabling you to access information published by the Army and your chain of command, and to send e-mails. You can access your pay statements, find out about operational and welfare arrangements and download Army forms.

You can also create community areas, join discussion forums, use instant messaging, buy and sell in the electronic marketplace, take part in surveys and even keep up to date with the latest sports news.

Material on the site is not classified, but may be classed as 'sensitive', such as your unit's training timetable. ArmyNET is therefore a restricted site, which means that the general public does not have access, but it is available to all serving personnel and their families.

You will find a huge amount of information on ArmyNET, ranging from Army-wide issues such as pay and allowances, down to 'mini-sites' posted by units for their own members.

Who Can Have an Account?

Membership of ArmyNET is open to all members of the British Army – Regulars, TA and Reservists. Members can sponsor 'guest accounts', enabling spouses, partners and families to keep up to date and stay in touch.

Soldiers register on www.armynet.mod.uk, using their Army number and surname. Family members also start at the armyNET Home page, where they register by entering their sponsor's user ID and their own details. ArmyNET will then e-mail the sponsor and, if they agree, they will be provided with their guest's user ID and temporary password. The sponsor then passes the log-on details to their guest.

Future plans for ArmyNET will make it even more a part of everyday life for the TA. For instance, with the introduction of the new Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system, you will have direct access to your Army record and will be responsible for keeping it up to date.

So, if you haven't already registered with ArmyNET, it makes sense to do so now. Registration is fast and easy – you will need only the last three digits of your Army number and the first five letters of your surname. After that, the system will take you through the registration process.

100 Happy Birthday

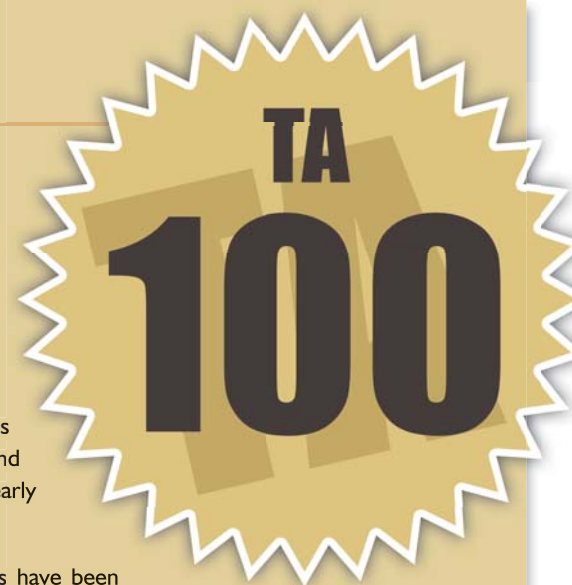
The Territorial Army will be 100 years old on 1st April 2008, and already plans are underway to celebrate the occasion.

It was in August 1907 that legislation was passed to draw together the county-based militias and the various yeomanry regiments into what was known as the Territorial Force. However, the first units were not stood up until 1st April 1908, and it's that date that is accepted as the birth of the TA.

To mark the occasion, a range of activities is being planned at national, regional and local level. National events include an exhibition at the National Army Museum and a major event in central London. We hope that the latter will feature representatives

from TA units around the UK although, as you can imagine, the planning is complex and is still in its early stages.

Planning teams have been meeting regularly at national and Div/Bde level, and as those plans take shape we will publish updates in TAQ.



Thinking of going full time?

The Reserves Manning & Augmentation Cell (RMAC) opened on 17 Jan 07 in Glasgow. Its role is to provide a single point of contact for all Reservists interested in full or formal part-time service (which means mobilised, FTRS, NRPS or the new Additional Duty Commitment arrangements), and for employers wishing to employ Reservists.

The RMAC will work with the Regular Career Managers in the APC and with LAND Commitments staff to match individuals to appropriate full-time posts, and will publish a single list of opportunities on the Internet and Intranet weekly (as far as security constraints allow). The current FTRS List published monthly to the chain of command will be expanded to include all FTRS, NRPS, mobilisation and TA appointments, and will be renamed the Reserves Assignment Opportunities List (RAOL). Further details will be distributed to the Chain of Command and published on the TA & Reserves MCM Division website:

<http://www.army.mod.uk/servingsoldier/career/mcmdivs/ta/index.html>

Employers and those interested in serving in a full or formal part-time capacity should contact Mr Billy Tennant, EO RMAC, on Glasgow Mil 94561 8800 or civilian 0141 224 8800.



Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS)

Following a review of age limits and FTRS requirements, the maximum age limits for commencing FTRS commitments (Full and Home Commitment) have been raised to:

Soldiers	-	55
Officers	-	60

FTRS (HC) Reserve Staff Group (RSG) Terms of Service allow an officer to serve to age 65 (60 for DTE posts). All posts are advertised for at least a calendar month in the FTRS trawl. The majority of FTRS (HC) RSG posts require extensive regular staff experience and personnel leaving the Regular Army are invited to consider these posts as part of their resettlement process.

The maximum age limit for commencing FTRS (HC) RSG appointments has been increased from 55 to 60 with effect from 22 Jan 07.

Maximum Periods of Employment

The current FTRS rules restrict the normal maximum duration of FTRS to 42 months, at which point FTRS personnel should return to the Reserves. However, there is a footnote:

- Personnel may serve on FTRS (Full Commitment) for as long as there is a suitable gapped regular post (within the age limits above). The maximum for any one commitment will remain 42 months, however personnel who have previously served 42 months or more on FTRS are encouraged to apply for any FTRS FC post advertised on the trawl (including posts advertised generically).
- FTRS HC contracts are limited to 42 months in total (and may be less). Where an individual has completed 42 months in an FTRS (HC) post, no further extensions will be permitted until the post has been advertised and boarded once again in open and fair competition.
- FTRS RSG, ACOs, ADSOs and TSAs are subject to different commitment lengths.

For more information, contact the RMAC on Glasgow Mil 94561 8800 or civilian 0141 224 8800. As we went to print the details of the RMAC had not been published on the Web. However, you can find lots of information on the MCM Div website:

<http://www.army.mod.uk/servingsoldier/career/mcmdivs/ta/index.html>

More and more people are becoming aware of the benefits of personal fitness. But many Britons live and work in environments that work against a healthy lifestyle.

The Territorial Army's national 'Fitness that Works' programme, launched in January, is based on the TA's regime but is adapted to suit everyone. The 14-week schedule will support all those who are determined to make 2007 the year that they really do get fit, but are already struggling to find the time whilst juggling work and family commitments.

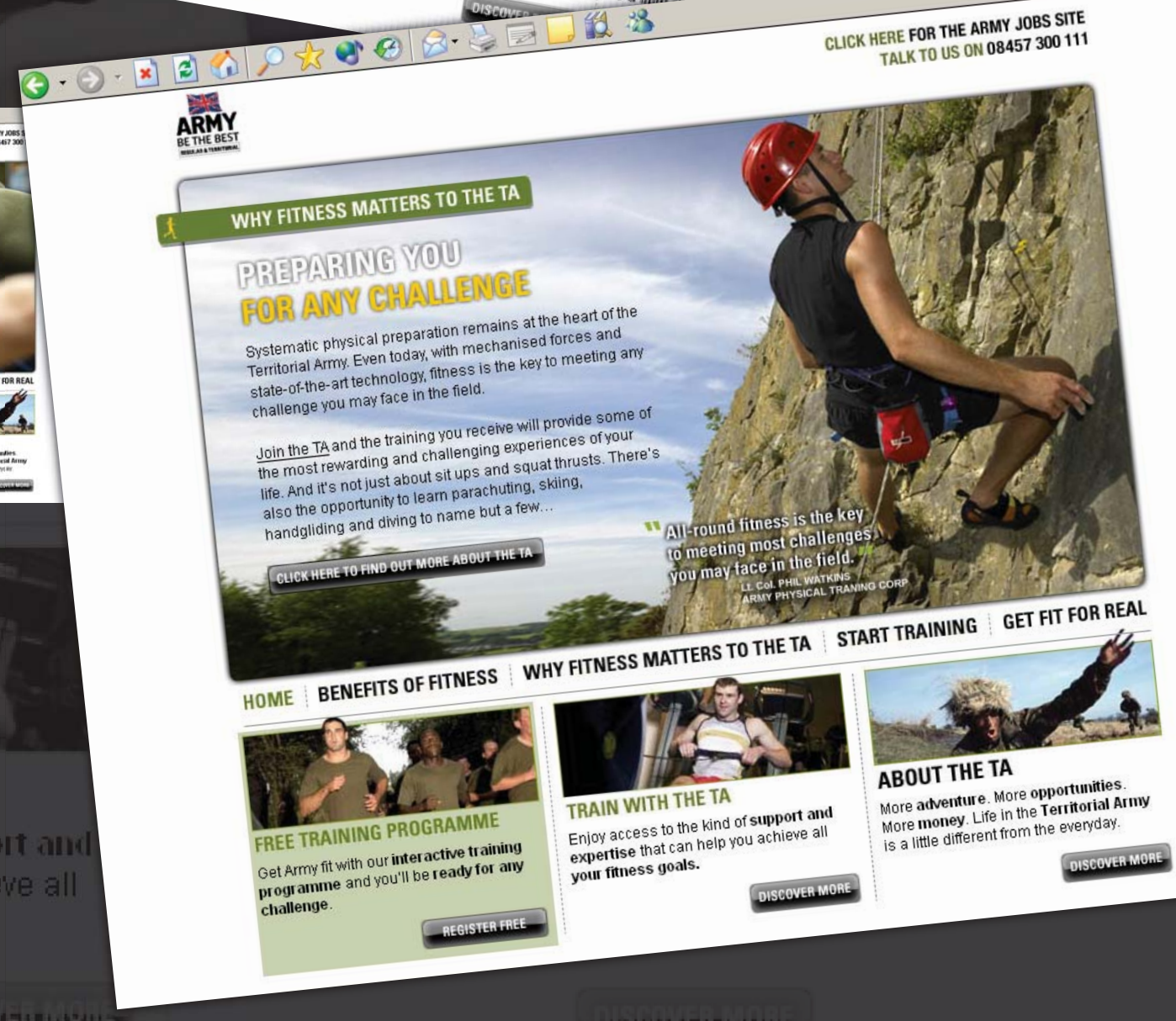
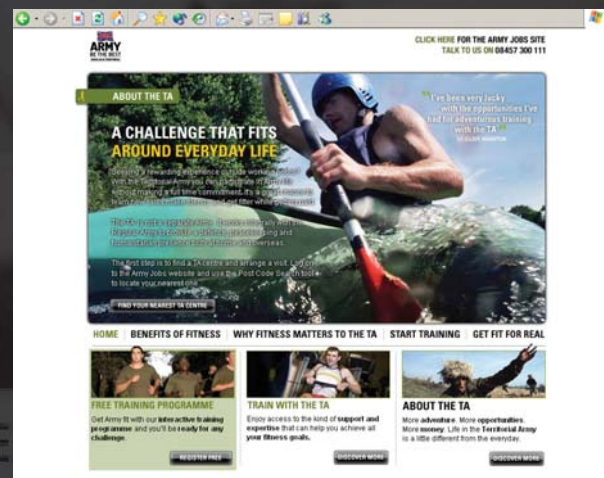
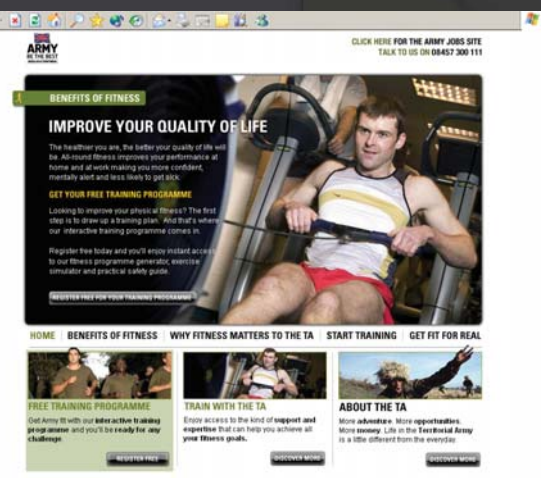
Based on a dedicated website, www.armyfit.mod.uk, and supported by a series of fast-paced TV commercials, the campaign offers a free, 12-week interactive fitness programme on three levels, preceded by a two-week conditioning package for those who are at 'zero-rated' fitness levels. In addition, there are tips on nutrition and injury prevention, as well as warm ups and down. Exercises can be seen demonstrated by TA PTIs.

Lieutenant Colonel Phil Watkins, Army Physical Training Corps, comments: "All areas of performance are significantly enhanced when you become physically fit. You are likely to become more confident, mentally alert, and happier in both your work and personal life."

The programme certainly succeeded in raising the TA's profile, with BBC Breakfast News covering it every hour for five hours, and 25 national and local radio stations running interviews with TA personnel.

The various screens on the ArmyFit website take users through the stages of the fitness programme. There's also the chance to find out more about joining!

"All areas of performance are significantly enhanced when you become physically fit"



Mobilisation

Elsewhere in this edition of TAQ we talk about the level of support being provided regularly to the Regular Army.

There are currently 925 Reservists mobilised for operations worldwide and there are always opportunities for individuals. You can find details of the current requirements on the MCM Div website, http://www.army.mod.uk/servingsoldier/career/mcmdivs/ta/opportunities_mobilised_service.htm.

Should you be available and want to be considered, you should ensure that you inform your unit immediately or make a direct approach to MCM Div on the numbers below. *“Every effort will be made to place volunteers into their preferred post, although this may not always be possible,” says Col Roger Stewart, Col TA & Reserves at the Army Personnel Centre. “There are also a number of options in the type of contract which may be open to the volunteer – straight mobilisation or an extended period of Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS). We would welcome the chance to discuss the expectations of volunteers and to match them with the needs of the Army.”*

Need More Notice?

Looking further ahead, volunteers will be needed for TELIC 11, HERRICK 7 and beyond. *“We seek both to backfill unit requirements and to fill individual appointments,” says Col Stewart. “Should you wish to be considered for a tour, however far into the future, we are now in a position to identify a post and agree a call out date with you. This should allow you to more easily plan for work, family and TA commitments, so please give us a call so that we can discuss your availability and options.”*

Particularly, there are many opportunities for staff officers to support headquarters in 2008-2010, so you could start planning your life to include an operational tour.

Job Security

Individuals who volunteer and are mobilised are protected by Safeguard of Employment legislation, can apply for financial assistance for any loss of income and claim some allowable expenses. Financial assistance is also available to employers, contributing towards the cost of a temporary replacement employee, agency, advertising and retraining costs. Phone the MCM Div for details.

Contacts - Mobilisation Desk Staff:

OIC
Maj (Retd) Chris Morris Tel: 0141 224 8742

Head - Called Out Service
Lorna Hamilton Tel: 0141 224 8882

New Opportunity

At the end of April the Armed Forces Minister, Mr Adam Ingram, announced to Parliament that Territorial Army soldiers may be mobilised to support the United Nations peacekeeping operation in Cyprus, Op TOSCA. This will be the first time that TA personnel have been mobilised to support Op TOSCA, and it offers a unique opportunity to take part in a UN peacekeeping operation.

TA personnel deployed on Op TOSCA will be employed on the same duties as their Regular Army counterparts, policing the UN buffer zone (the ‘Green Line’) and operating alongside the other UN troops.

Initially, individual augmentees will be sought through their chain of command to support their paired unit.

News

Change of Title

The title of RRRWO has caused some confusion, particularly over the roles and responsibilities. Therefore with immediate effect, IGTA has directed that the RRRWO (or whatever is the locally used title) is to be known as the Regimental Operations Support Officer, or ROSO. There should be no need to alter the incumbents’ job descriptions and the functions remain the same. (Source: TA & Reserves Career Management Newsletter, Jan 07)

Let us know

If you have any item of news that you think will be of interest to other TA colleagues around the UK, let us know. Send it to the Editor either by e-mail (alan.frost232@land.mod.uk) or snail-mail to Maj A Frost, Room C58, Main Building, HQ Land Command, Wilton, Wilts., SP2 0AG.

Civilian Awards

Any Service person of substantive Sgt rank or above may claim a Leadership and Management Award from City and Guilds by virtue of their rank and experience. TA personnel of equivalent rank as well as retired officers and SNCOs may also be eligible for these awards.

There is a one-off payment which can NOT be reclaimed from public funds. See 2006DIN02-317 for full details and an application form on the TA & Reserves MCM Division website:

<http://defenceintranet.diiweb.r.mil.uk/NR/rdonlyres/5E0E2DED-0427-4771-A16A-B733212F1E61/0/02317DINs.pdf>.

(Source: TA & Reserves Career Management Newsletter, Jan 07)

Booties and Loggies



TA drivers shortly after their arrival in Afghanistan

Op HERRICK 5 witnessed the unusual union of the Royal Marines Commando Log Regt and TA drivers from London and East Anglia. Twenty-six TA drivers from 151 (London) Tpt Regt and 158 (R ANGLIAN) Tpt Regt were mobilised to augment RM CLR squadrons in Kandahar and Camp Bastion.

The personal commitment, robustness and trade skills of the TA Soldiers proved to be valuable assets to the CLR. It was encouraging to see both RM and TA personnel work well together, especially as there was no integration before mobilisation.



Gnrs Sam Aitkin, Matthew Bennet and Paul Boon of 201 Bty, 100 Regt RA(V) on Op TELIC earlier this year.



Summer Challenge

A unique training experience

Over the summer of 2006 one of the most ambitious and successful recruit training exercises ever undertaken in the UK took place in the north of Scotland.

The aim of Exercise SUMMER CHALLENGE was to recruit 250 young men and women, train them to basic soldier standard in under two months and set them on a career in the Territorial Army.

51 (Scottish) Brigade joined forces with the Government employment and careers agency Jobcentre Plus to design an intensive seven-week training course that would take in raw novices at one end and turn out well trained, confident and highly motivated soldiers at the other.

Jobcentre Plus identified the course as being an opportunity for their customers to gain the skills most desired by employers - the ability to work both together as a team, as well as demonstrate individual initiative, reliability, communication skills and leadership, which could potentially lead to full-time civilian employment.

For 51 (Scottish) Brigade SUMMER CHALLENGE provided a golden opportunity to deliver substantial numbers of recruits to the units within the Brigade.

The response was staggering, with almost two thousand enquiries received. In the end, of the 250 places allocated 210 recruits passed out as trained soldiers.

"This was the first time we had done this on such a scale and we had individual recruits from across the whole of Scotland taking part," said Colonel Jim Wilson, Chief Instructor at the Regional Training Centre at Redford Barracks in Edinburgh.

"We found they enjoyed the experience a great deal, and the cohesion within the groups and the teamwork was fantastic from the start."

The seven-week course included firing on the ranges at Fort George, combat military skills culminating in a three-day field exercise, and driver training that saw recruits arrive with no experience of driving and leave with a Cat B licence. The third part of the training package was designed to promote confidence, team working and fitness and comprised a comprehensive adventure training package of wind surfing, canoeing, sailing, hill walking and rock climbing.

"The hours were long, the terrain hilly and boggy in places and the demands on the young people stretched them to the limit of their endurance," said Colonel Wilson.

"But it wasn't their platoon commanders or Sergeants who caused the greatest discomfort to the recruits, but the infamous Scottish midgie!"

The climax of the training came when the recruits passed out as fully trained Phase One soldiers in front of parents and friends at two passing out parades at the historic Cameron Barracks in Inverness.

For the vast majority this was the experience of a lifetime. For a few, the Army is now their career as they joined the Regular Army on completion of SUMMER CHALLENGE.

For the rest, they expect that their new career in the Territorial Army will lead to employment in civilian life.

SUMMER CHALLENGE 2007 was officially launched on 12 March and the organisers expect applications to be significantly higher this year.

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"the teamwork was fantastic from the start"

» Recruits joined with no experience of driving and left with a Cat B driving licence. It was 'the icing on the cake' for many of the Summer Challengers.

For the vast majority this was the experience of a lifetime.



» Recruit Lesley Aitken (18) from Wormit, Fife, taking part in the military skills training. Lesley is now a member of 2 Signal Squadron based in Dundee.



Welfare on Ops

Having deployed two Force Protection Companies to Op TELIC in 2004, The London Regiment was ready when they received a similar tasking for Op HERRICK 6.

Somme Company is a composite company comprising 140 soldiers from 11 different TA units (both Infantry and non-Infantry), reinforced with soldiers from the Regular Army, Regular Reserve and RAuxAF Regiment.

“From the beginning, we recognised that while G3/G7 was critical, equally important were two areas unique to the Reserve Forces - dispersed families, spread within the M25 area and across the UK, and more than 50 employers of London Regiment soldiers within the M25,” said Maj Giles Morgan, 2ic The London Regt.

The newly-created post of Regimental Operations Support Officer (ROSO) proved key to Somme Company’s deployment, providing co-ordination for welfare and employer support, and acting as a focal point for the ROSOs from TA units and RCMOs from Regular units.

While support for deployed personnel continues, so do existing welfare cases.

“The London Regiment set up a Welfare Fund in 2004 using donations from regimental ‘friends’, including Livery Companies and Regimental Associations,” says Maj Morgan.

“This fund provides grants on a case-by-case basis and will be maintained and grown to support those who may suffer on operations.”

The value of the ROSO has been proven in the case of Private Jason Sylvestre (pictured), injured on Op TELIC 4 but who was only deemed fit for discharge in February. The Regiment’s ROSO provided the vital liaison between the soldier and welfare organisations, including the Army Benevolent Fund. In this instance, the ABF has enabled Jason to move from his 10th floor flat to a Hayes Dashwood flat, dedicated to veterans, and has also provided money to offset a debt he has been struggling to pay due to disability.



New Legislation Affects Drivers

You may have heard about new legislation introduced by the EU which may affect vocational drivers who belong to the TA. The legislation, which came into force on 11th April, applies to everyone whose civilian job involves driving and who is, by law, required to record their daily activities, including hours driven, by means of a tachograph.

What has changed?

Vocational drivers are already required to take minimum periods of rest, but they are now obliged by law to keep a record of all work they do, including any work done during their rest periods. This means that members of the TA or ACF Adult Instructors must record the work they do for the TA or ACF, whether or not this involves driving duties.

The new legislation also extends to employers; employers of vocational drivers are legally obliged to check that their employees are getting the mandated rest period, which clearly they may not be if they are attending TA or ACF training at weekends.

Can vocational drivers continue to serve in the TA or ACF?

The short answer is yes; vocational drivers should have no problems attending drill nights by reducing one of their daily rest periods to 9 hours before commencing driving once again. The ArmyNET Home Page contains further details and examples of how you can meet weekend and Annual Camp requirements with the TA or ACF whilst meeting the rest requirements of the legislation.

Some employers may take the view that they do not want their vocational drivers to remain in the TA or ACF. Members of the TA who find themselves in this position should contact their unit Regimental Operations Support Officer (ROSO) immediately, while ACF Adult Instructors should contact their local Cadet Executive Officer (CEO). Unit ROSOs and CEOs should in turn seek assistance from SaBRE* if required.

What is being done?

SaBRE is engaging employers on several fronts. They have produced an advice note for employers that can be downloaded from their website at www.sabre.mod.uk. The MoD has assessed the impact the new legislation will have on the TA and Cadets, and intends to apply for an exemption from some of the more constraining elements. However, this process can take 12 to 18 months, so in the meantime, if you are affected by these new regulations you should speak to your chain of command.

In the meantime, the MoD will continue to work closely with the Department for Transport and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA), and our latest information is that the DET will be applying for delogation.

* **SaBRE** (Supporting Britain's Reserves and Employers) is the Government body established to liaise with employers and promote the benefits of employees belonging to the Reserve Forces. They can be contacted at www.sabre.mod.uk or on their Helpline 0800 389 5459.

Have your say

TAQ aims to cover issues that will or may affect TA soldiers and officers, and to ensure that you are kept as well informed as possible about those issues.

If there is any issue that you would like to see included, or if you or your unit is doing something that you think would interest others in the TA then we'd like to hear from you. If you wish, you can write in complete confidence – if you request it, we guarantee that your identity will be kept confidential.

Items should preferably be accompanied by good-quality

photographs, in JPG format, together with details of everyone in each photo.

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