

## BRITISH ARMY TAKES PART IN WORLD ORIENTEERING DAY 2018

Organised by the Royal Engineers on behalf of the Army Orienteering Association (AOA), the British Army Inter Unit Orienteering Championships took place on Wednesday 23 May 2018 as part of the World Orienteering Day celebration. A total of 153 Army competitors and 60 civilians ran on a number of courses on Bulford Ridge, Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA) in the south of England. Additionally, in the morning, 48 soldiers took part in pre-arranged coaching under the instruction of Colin Metcalfe (BAOC) who was ably supported by Colin Dickson, Colin Holcombe, and Steve Blount. This was very well received and 12 of the soldiers were introduced for the very first time to the intricacies of an orienteering map.



Picture 1: Coaching.

The British Army soldiers compete in teams for the two day Inter Unit Orienteering Championships; Day 1 being a Spanish Score and Day 2 a Harris event; with orienteering in the Army being classified as individual military training. For the Spanish Score, units could enter the following classes: Long, Short, Master, Female or Under 25. The Spanish Score was introduced this year to encourage units with limited orienteering experience to participate, by allowing soldiers to run together as a team. The format for the Spanish Score was that all controls must be visited by every member of the four man team, with no time limit; and, the time for the last team member is counted.



Picture 2: Pre-race briefing.



Picture 3: Pre-race discussions on tactics.

After a pre-race brief by the organiser, Major Andy Brett (Royal Engineers), the team competition started, with teams setting off together onto the training area; on either a Long Spanish Score with 25 controls to get, a Medium with 17 and a Short with 11. The courses had been planned by members of the local SARUM Orienteering Club and particular thanks must go to Liz Yeadon and Charlotte Thornton.



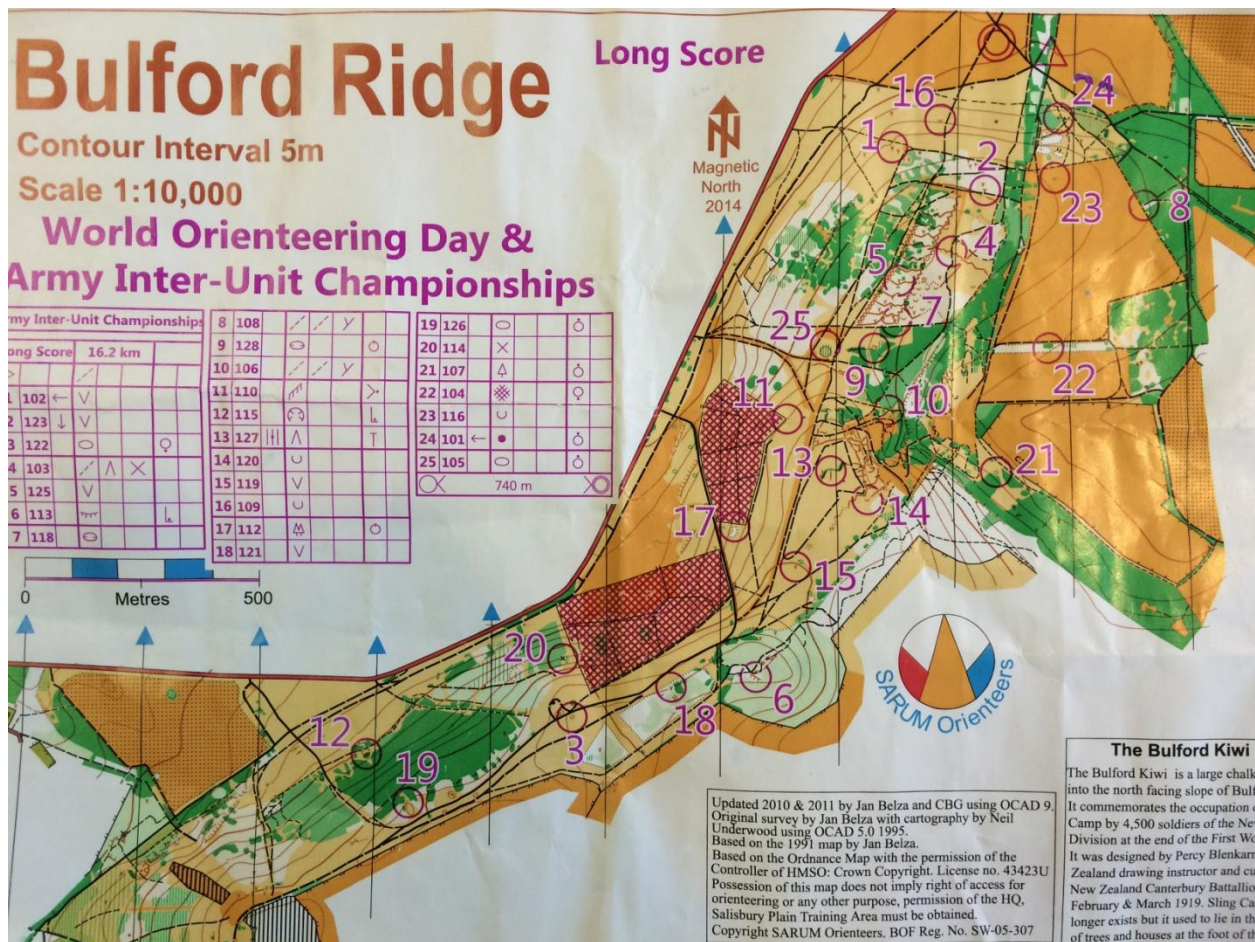
Picture 4: Race planning.

This change to the team competition was positively received by junior soldiers with little or no experience, allowing them to benefit from the team's skill; and run together as a team. However, this change wasn't as widely accepted by the experienced orienteers; but they did want to reserve judgment. As competitors began to finish and report to download, managed by Allan Farrington from EMIT UK, it started to be clear that the introduction of the Spanish Score format had been a success. This was particularly evident on the Medium Course, with the first five teams' last runner well within ten minutes of each other: 26.44 mins; 27.41 mins; 30.14 mins; 33.17 mins; 33.48 mins.



Picture 5: A team runs across the training area.

Day 2 is planned for Thursday 24 May 2018, on the same map with some of the same controls. The format for day 2 is a Harris Relay, where there is a mandatory spine of approx nine controls that every member of the team must visit and an additional 24 or so controls that only one member of the team need visit. The close results from day 1, means that the competition is wide open and should make day 2 an exciting and competitive event.



Picture 6: Long Score map.