

Map reading is the only way if satellites fail, Army cadets told

By Danielle Sheridan

DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

SOLDIERS must not forget how to read maps because satellites are at risk of being lost or attacked, the Commander of the Field Army has said, amid wider concerns that cadets lack the basic skill.

Lieutenant General Ivan Jones hailed “the edge” that technology provides the Armed Forces but warned that it “also presents a threat and we’ve got to protect ourselves”. He told *The Daily Telegraph*: “The big ‘what if’ is, if we lose that satellite, lose that geo-locating device, if we lose our communication system, how do we operate?”

Other senior commanders are understood to be worried that some cadets are turning up for military training without “basic skills” such as map reading.

Tobias Ellwood, chairman of the Commons defence select committee, said: “A senior commander at Sandhurst confirmed that the cadets of today are arriving with a very different skill set than his generation. The creature comforts that surround the mobile phone has changed what your typical recruit looks like and is inspired by.”

He said although that was positive, “as the character of conflict tilts to the cyber world”, it was imperative lessons learnt by predecessors remain a priority.

Lt Gen Jones added: “I think we have, as with many, been seduced by the benefits of technology but having been so wonderfully seduced one realises that that reliance does present a vulnerability and if you are overly reliant that can be really exploited.”

He said the military was actively looking at “how we start to balance out those traditional skills – map reading – with modern techniques that don’t require you to use a map”. However, Lt Gen Jones, who was speaking at the annual exercise Cyber Spartan, which challenges personnel from across defence in various cyber scenarios, cautioned that it was a delicate balancing act and that the Army could not

“remain stuck in the past”.

“We’ve got to continue to move forward but understand that those key vulnerabilities are protected,” he said.

General Sir Patrick Sanders, the head of Strategic Command, also told *The Telegraph* that operations such as Cyber Spartan prepared for such eventualities. The exercise, in its fourth year, simulates potential cyber attacks in order to test the military’s responses.

It is also beneficial for personnel who show a flair for cyber ops, as Sir Patrick revealed that “a lot of the talent we have in cyber is because of the talent-spotting we have done here”.

He said: “Cyber space has an effect in every single one of the other domains.” Sir Patrick added that he had to ensure that Lt Gen Jones’s “people are capable of defending their own networks”. Lt Gen Jones agreed that “an army fit for the 21st century has to be more than tanks and soldiers with bayonets”.

He said: “A soldier behind a keyboard could potentially have, indeed is more likely to have, a more profound effect on the activities on the land environment than you could with the bayonet.”

“In the Field Army, we are driving a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship ... we have to continue to look forward at how we can improve in all areas and all domains. This is absolutely an area of growth for the future.”

General Lord Dannatt, the former head of the Army, said he “would not be surprised” if training of cadets had “changed so that there is a greater reliance on technology”.

Lord Dannatt said that, while it was “right and proper” that there had been a pivot towards technology in training, it was important that cadets were still able to “take a bearing with a compass, which might just come in useful if your iPhone gives up”.



Lieutenant General Ivan Jones, Commander Field Army, said relying on technology alone was dangerous