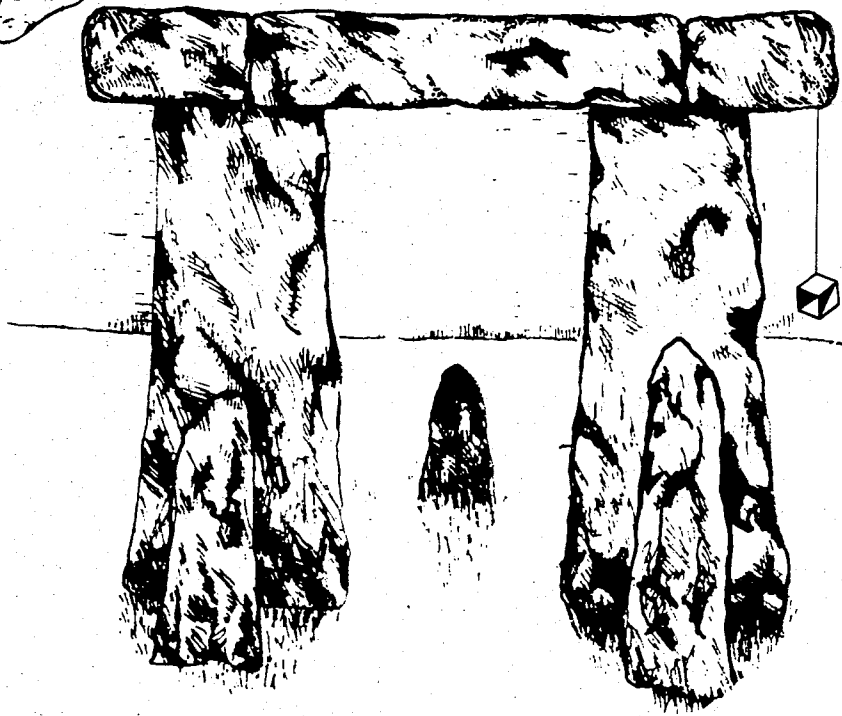


ARMY UKLF & TA

Orienteering Championships Results

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DAYS 1+2 = GARE HILL
DAY 3 (INDIV) = STOURHEAD

6 ~ 8 June 1992



ORGANIZER'S COMMENTS

Thank you for entering the 1992 Army Championships and I hope in retrospect you enjoyed it, and found it challenging but fair. Although the two maps we used were almost four years old, the areas had been little used since JK 89 and neither teams nor individuals should have had any significant advantage. There were inevitably vegetation changes but I believe we were, in the main, successful in planning around these areas, certainly for those competitors taking the more sensible routes. We were surprised but delighted at the number of teams who entered although I am sorry they did not all survive. I would like to thank you all for your enthusiasm and good humour, and the good sportsmanship that was evident throughout the entire three days.

I discovered to my cost that being an organizer of a competition of this standing is fraught with problems and difficulties, but when half of the RAAT bid is taken away without replacement, it becomes an absolute nightmare. Fortunately I had surrounded myself with people who knew what they were talking about, in particular Major John Parfitt, and they kept me pointing in the right direction. We were lucky that 94 Locating Regiment were the other half of the RAAT and I hope you all agree they performed a magnificent service at Knook Camp, and the QM, Major Mel Hampson could not have been more helpful. When the manpower help from the TA failed to materialize on the first morning, the QM produced a competition-saving six men under WO2 Conaty to help with the general administration. The other 'knight in shining armour' was WO1 Cantrell from the School of Infantry, who hearing of our plight, performed his all too frequent magician's act and produced men, vehicles and equipment out of his bottomless top hat. He spoilt it slightly by having a prang on the first morning whilst signing the route to the car park! Nevertheless, my thanks to all the administrative staff for working through a wet weekend to provide us with a successful Army Championship.

The course for Day One was planned by Major John Parfitt and Controlled by Mr Jan Belza from Sarum OC. Both of them are 'compass and pacing' men and I was not surprised when I saw the layout of the courses. The Planner was concerned that the winning times might be well over those recommended, and although he was not prepared to reduce the technical difficulty, he was prepared to reduce the lengths. Having studied the times from both the BAOR and the Southern District Championships, I strongly urged him to retain the courses as he had planned knowing full well it was not going to rain for at least two weeks before the competition. On the day we only had two showers - one for three hours and one for five hours! The torrential rain during the preceding week even caught Michael Fish by surprise and the endurance, perseverance, and good nature of the early runners brought tears to the eyes. To offset the vagaries of the weather we planned the start times so that the different types of units were competing within thirty minutes of each other and therefore in similar conditions, eg all the TA male units ran, followed by all of the male minor units etc. This did not necessarily work as far as individuals were concerned but I gave the priority to the team competition. My thanks to those runners

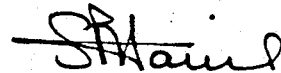
who produced a control card in one piece, and thank you all for bringing a vehicle each to the event - the car parking would have been a real bore without your help. There was no doubt we missed the old 'washing line' system and much as I am keen to progress, the hi-tec results system on the day was not as quick or as interesting as the manual method. Do remember, however, we were operating on light scales and Captain Lew Lawton, and Sgts Webb and Huxley from the RSA were doing their level best, and produced the results in an accurate and timely manner throughout. My big disappointment was the number of teams disqualified and that included someone running on the wrong course !

To ease our administrative burden I agreed to run the whole of the team event on the same map and area. There was not an obvious start/finish area for the relay and I think we did the best we could, although some of you may have stumbled across a better site during your progress along your own unique route. I therefore had to contrive courses around and through the only spectator site I could find. Of course I am sorry it happened to be at the bottom of an incline but it gave you all the opportunity to demonstrate how fit you were - pity no-one took up the offer! To make the courses worthwhile I planned on a 45 minute winning time. Well I was pleased that one runner achieved that goal and two other top orienteers admitted it should have been within their capabilities. I have to admit I was taken by surprise at the height of the undergrowth in some places which hindered me putting out the controls, and I apologise for a delayed start. Many thanks to my Controller, Richard Raynsford from BOK, who probably ran the fastest course of his life attempting to check the controls in time, and for keeping his sense of humour as I gave him his next impossible task. I must also thank Major John Parfitt for keeping a calm professional eye on proceedings while I ran around in ever decreasing circles, and also to the volunteer 'stats team' of Major Nick Bateson, Captain Peter Blomquist, and Ssgt Jock Marshall, who quietly (most of the time) got on with the job and enabled us to have the prize giving in broad daylight.

I was delighted when Major Glen Grant agreed to be the Planner for Day Three and even more delighted when Mr Gavin Clegg from Devon OC was persuaded to be his Controller. They were given the map and told to get on with it which they did, both conscientiously and with great care, taking into account the limitations imposed by the considerable changes in the forest and endeavouring to make best use of the accurate areas. As for Day One, the Planner was determined to get as near as possible to the recommended winning times, but had the difficulty of balancing these times between those runners who had run hard over the previous two days and those runners arriving relatively fresh. Looking at the final results it would appear that the courses were about right although the 'A' Course times may have been a little longer than hitherto. Despite the fact that they had been given a dry wood, a sunny day, and a picturesque setting, I have heard nothing but praise for all their courses and my thanks to both the Planner and Controller for providing us with such a fitting finale. The only disappointment of the day was the fact that several runners were still out in the forest long after the prize giving had been completed and the tents taken down. Most

of those returned at the stated time for the course closing but clearly they should have been running on a different level. Perhaps they ignored my earlier request and stopped to feed the deer.

Last but not least, mention must be made of Lt Col (Retd) Allan Payne, the UKLF Secretary (for most sports), who worked flat out in the background to ensure all the difficult tasks were sorted out, such as money, portaloos, transport, and prizes. He was ever present during the Championships, volunteering for everything, and even finding time to glide through the forest on Day Three. Our sincere thanks for all his efforts.



SP HARRIS
Lt Col