

# Bucks Military Museum Trust

Today's Citizen Soldiers

# History of the TA

- **Formation of the Territorial Force**

In 1907 Parliament passed legislation which saw the consolidation of the yeomanry and volunteers into the Territorial Force. The first units were stood up on 1st April 1908, and this date is accepted as the birth of what we know today as the Territorial Army.

The Territorial Force was mobilised in August 1914, its soldiers fighting alongside, and indistinguishable from, the Regular Army. Upon demobilisation in 1918 Territorial Force units were disbanded, but were reconstituted in 1920 as the part-time Territorial Army.

- **The Territorial Army in 1939**

As war clouds loomed over Europe in the early months of 1939, the Government authorized the 'duplication' of all Territorial Army units, thereby doubling the size of the TA.

On the outbreak of hostilities in September 1939, the Territorial Army was mobilized and its units absorbed into the British Army. When the Army demobilised in 1946 the TA was temporarily suspended, but was reconstituted in 1947 as a part-time reservist force similar to its pre-1939 structure.

- **The Cold War Years**

During the 1950s and 1960s the Government allowed the Territorial Army to become seriously under-manned and poorly-equipped. In 1967 a poorly-advised and heavy-handed attempt at reinvigorating the reserves led to a virtual abolition of the regimental system among the reserves.

Realising the error of its ways, the government set out in 1971 to increase the size of the reserves, creating many new battalions. Subsequent expansions and reorganizations over the following 20 years meant that, by the early 1990s, the regimental system was almost totally re-established.

Throughout this period of fluctuating fortunes, the Territorial Army was never regarded as a particularly useable or effective force, either by the Government of the day or by the Regular Army. With the image of a 'force of last resort', its role was, at least unofficially, seen as home defence.

- **Recent cutbacks**

In 1998 the 'Strategic Defence Review', would make the Army more relevant and effective in meeting the demands of the post-Cold War era and the 21st century. 87 Territorial Army companies in 33 battalions reduced to 67 companies in 15 battalions.

- **A New Purpose**

The final years of the 1990s and the turn of the Millennium saw the Territorial Army assume a more high-profile role. As the Regular Army became increasingly engaged in overseas operations, the TA moved from being a 'force of last resort' to become the 'reserve of first choice' in supporting the Regulars. Some 6900 personnel were mobilised for Operation TELIC, the invasion of Iraq, and the TA continues to provide around 1,200 troops each year to support the Regular Army in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Balkans.

In 2004 the Government announced a radical restructuring of the Army, leading to the realignment of the TA as reserves of the regular regiments. Under TA Rebalancing, 15 TA infantry battalions were reduced to 14, but the overall strength of the force remained the same.

# Cold War Training on Salisbury Plain 1980's



# Today's Volunteers

- 1(RBY) Sqn 38 Sig Regt - Bletchley
- 860 Tp 94 Sig Sqn 39 Sig Regt Aylesbury
- A Coy 7 Rifles High Wycombe
- E Coy 7 Rifles Milton Keynes

# Recent Operations

- Iraq – Op TELIC
- Afghanistan – Op HERRICK



# Training



# Training

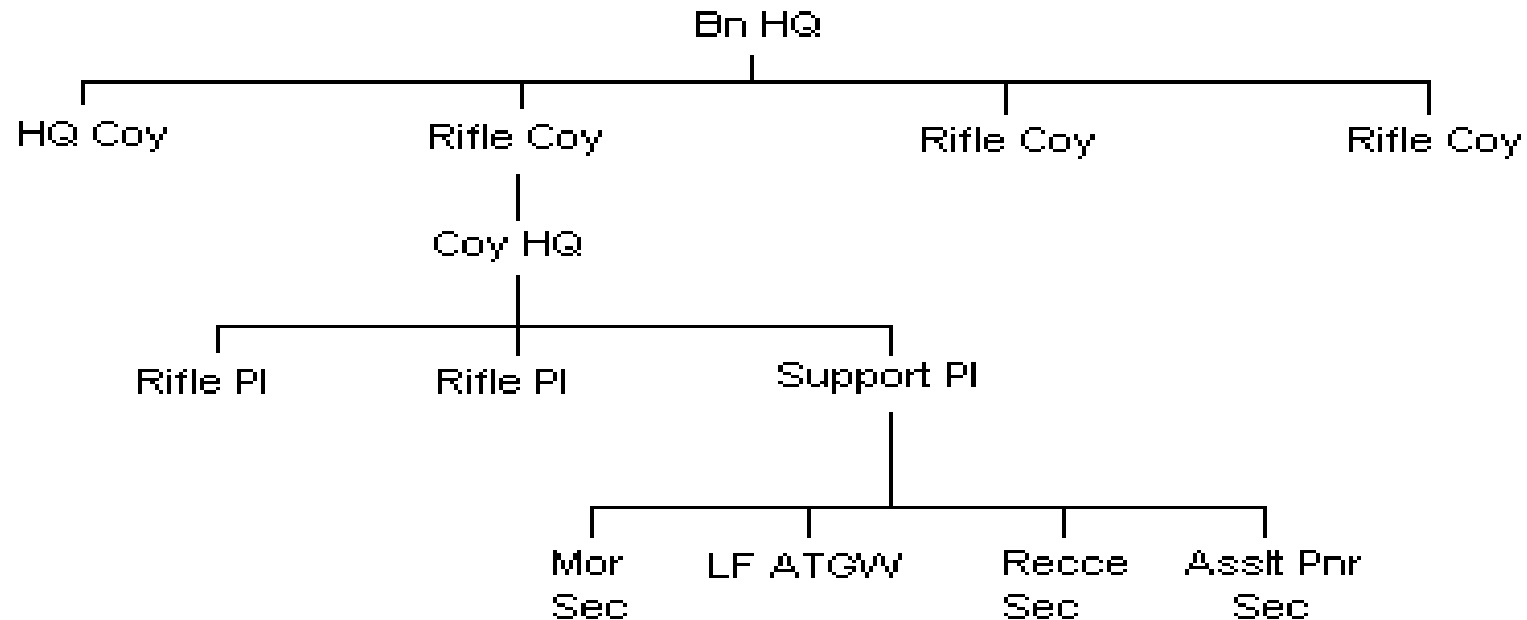
- Training is at the heart of Territorial Army (TA) life. Whether it's in a classroom, on an exercise or at camp, your training will set the tone of your involvement in the TA. Before going on to acquire specific trade skills, or to use the ones you already possess, all TA members must first train as soldiers. This means anyone in a combat service support role can be deployed as a soldier if the need arises. Of course, it's not just about military training - civilian qualifications can be acquired for many of the skills you will learn in the TA and there are plenty of opportunities to take part in a wide range of adventurous training and sporting activities.
- 

## **Basic Recruit Training**

If you have no previous military experience when you join the TA, then you will need to learn the basics of being a soldier. Spread over a number of training weekends and, for Regional Units, midweek training evenings, your training will culminate in a two-week recruits course at one of the TA recruit training centres. Here, you will learn a range of skills including fieldcraft, first aid, map reading and weapon handling. You will then face a series of tests and a physical assessment known as the Combat Fitness Test.

# Organisation

## **Territorial Army Infantry Battalion** (Commander Lt Col TA or Regular Officer)





# E Coy ( Milton Keynes)



# Around the markets in Basra



# Keeping the peace





# Rngaging with local boys



return after a hard and hot day



# What we do

- There are TA soldiers from Buckinghamshire who work in a variety of other jobs in different Units across Defence
- The following example is of an Officer from the Jt Civil Military Cooperation Group
- The Senior Reservist in Defence – Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff ( R&C) – a Major General lives in the County!



A Bucks TA officer flying from Al Kut to Al Hillah Iraq 2003



# The Safwan Border crossing - Iraq





# Um Qasr – the first place to be liberated





# Bomb Damage - Basra



a sense of freedom





# Reservist Humour



One way to carry your rocket home!

