

PUBLIC INFORMATION LEAFLET



DEFENCE ESTATES

Delivering Estate Solutions to Defence Needs



DTE East

FACILITATING TRAINING AND PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

WHY THE ARMY NEEDS TO TRAIN

The British Army is held in the highest regard around the world. This respect has been hard-won over recent years in Northern Ireland, the Falkland Islands, the Gulf, the Balkans – and countless peacekeeping operations throughout the world. But such professionalism does not happen by chance. It is attained by constant, thorough and tough training, in realistic conditions. The Defence Training Estate (DTE) provides the principal facilities to achieve this.

ORGANISATION

The Defence Training Estate in the UK is controlled by Headquarters DTE, based at Land Warfare Centre in Warminster, Wiltshire. The Estate is subdivided into 12 regionally-based areas, each with its own Headquarters and staff. DTE East (DTE E) consists of Stanford training area and ranges, East Anglia training area with its Colchester-centred facilities, and East Midlands to the north of the region with its similar amenities in Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire.

TRAINING IN DTE E

DTE E was formed in 1999, and hosts units from many other parts of the UK, who come to take advantage of the particular facilities we can offer them. At Stanford training area, approximately 340,000 man-training-days are carried out annually by the Regular and Territorial Army, Cadet units from all 3 services, police forces, and overseas forces. East Anglia training area includes Colchester, the ranges at Middlewick and Fingringhoe, plus Barton Road, and a dry training area (i.e. without live firing) at Stradishall disused airfield. Finally, East Midlands training area includes facilities at Beckingham, Fulbeck, Yardley Chase, and Dukeries. Each of these facilities is described below.

STANFORD TRAINING AREA

Stanford provides one of the UK's major live-fire training and manoeuvre



facilities up to battalion level, including mortars, artillery and ground-attack aircraft in support. As one of the larger training areas, large parachute drops are also practised there. Designated to train for the eventual invasion of Europe following the evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940, Stanford is what's left of an area of Suffolk and Norfolk, which peaked at almost 120,000 acres. In the summer of 1942 the demand

for large areas to enable live firing of all types of weapon also meant that the inhabitants of six villages were moved out, joining many others displaced by the enormous areas of East Anglia being swallowed-up for the construction of several hundred airfields. Today, the 30,000 acres (12,150 hectares) of Stanford training area remains in use 350 days per year to satisfy the continued demand for the best of training in today's demanding and fast-moving operational environment.

Although the size, sandy soil and nature of its ground does not permit the use of heavy armoured vehicles, Stanford has a wide variety of ranges which allow all infantry weapons to be fired, including 105mm and 155mm artillery. Above all, Stanford is an infantry training area which makes full use of its close-country and sometimes marshy terrain. Urban operations, and so-called "CBRN" (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear), training also take place in purpose-built areas. Finally, the airspace above Stanford is also

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permanently designated a danger area, frequently in use by military transport and ground-attack aircraft playing their parts in training exercises.

Live rounds, dating from the Second World War onwards, are regularly found during clearance operations. This, plus high troop usage, sensitive and sophisticated electronic targetry, and intensive arable and livestock enterprises, restricts public access to the area.

However there are organised tours of Stanford training area for up to two coach loads at a time during the summer months. There is also a footpath along the Watton Brook from Great Cressingham to Bodney.



EAST ANGLIA TRAINING AREA

Colchester is the headquarters of the East Anglia training area, and comprises about 2,500 acres (1,000 hectares) for dry training, plus ranges at Middlewick, which includes a sniper training facility, and Fingringhoe, which permits grenade, anti-tank and machine-gun practice. Barton Road range has facilities between four and 12 lanes, depending on the distance required down-range. And finally, part of Stradishall disused airfield is used not just for infantry dry training, but also for signals and logistics support exercises.



EAST MIDLANDS TRAINING AREA

The East Midlands training area is headquartered at Beckingham which, in addition to its

accommodation for up to 480 personnel, is also used for small arms, anti-tank and grenade training. It incorporates one of Lincolnshire's largest grassland areas, much of it within a floodplain, and a third of which is within the ranges danger area – which itself protects very large badger sets along the river banks. Nearby Fulbeck training area, part of a disused airfield, is used for dry training and vehicle harbour exercises. Yardley Chase is a disused ammunition depot which provides wooded areas and storage buildings for training. Part of the site is old parkland dating back to Norman times as a hunting chase.



Air Weapon Ranges

RAF HOLBEACH

History

RAF Holbeach, one of the Southern Air Weapons ranges administered by Defence Training Estates (East) is a remote Bombing Range located on the Lincolnshire coast around 18 miles west of Kings Lynn. The range extends over an area of 3875 hectares, which includes 3100 hectares of Intertidal mudflats and 775 hectares of Saltmarsh. The range consists of 8 targets and has been used for bombing since 1926. Since 1993 this has included night bombing and helicopter operations. At the present time Tornado GR4, Harrier GR9, Jaguars, Typhoons, USAF F15s and Apache helicopters can be seen operating on the range at various times of the day. The southern edge of the range is part of the Wash walkway and it is possible to watch the aircraft operations from close hand.

Rather surprisingly, it also provides a haven for wildlife and this is a major consideration when planning operations. The casual observer sees only a bleak and inhospitable area of coastline, but the sands and marshes are an ideal habitat for the flora and fauna which remain largely undisturbed by the general public.

The Wash marshes are of great importance to nature conservation and the range area is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). During the winter months thousands of Brent geese arrive from their breeding grounds along the Arctic coast to feed on Zoster weed which grows on the foreshore. Unfortunately they are also partial to winter wheat much to the dismay of local farmers!

Barn Owls and Marsh Harriers regularly patrol dykes in search of food and there have been frequent sightings of Merlin.

A great variety of wading birds are always busy on the mudflats following the tides in and out.

Many other birds and animal species inhabit this area such as Curlews, Plovers and Redshanks. Seals can be seen in the summer months with their pups basking on the sand bars and creeks to the NW of the range.

Flora includes many rare marsh plants as well as more common varieties such as Sea Lavender and Samphire.

Visitors are welcome to the range but whether you are here to watch the aircraft or to enjoy the countryside, please ensure that you obey the range warning signs. Remember, it has been an active range for over 100 years so if you find anything suspicious, don't take it home and put it on your mantelpiece.

Air Weapon Ranges

RAF WAINFLEET

History

The first record of a weapons range at Wainfleet appears in 1890 when the marshes were used for artillery practice by the 1st Lincolnshire Artillery. However, it is believed that cannon and musketry practice was carried out as far back as Napoleonic times when the river Steeping was still navigable and Wainfleet was an important port.

In 1891 a set of bye-laws were published which defined the area of the range as: "The foreshore and sands bounded by the Nottingham House Hotel at Freiston shore to the High Horn Buoy and on the north-east by a line drawn from Wainfleet Goose Lane pull-over to the Wainfleet buoy,"

Contravention of the bye-laws attracted a fine of £5 - a considerable sum of money in those days.

The area was used for aircraft armament training from 1914 - 1918, initially by RNAS aircraft from HMS Deдалus (now RAF Cranwell) and from No.4 School of Aerial Fighting based at Freiston. There is evidence that the marshes were used for weapons training by both RAF and the Royal Artillery during the 1920s and 30s. Recently an 18lb artillery shell dating from 1925 was ploughed up on reclaimed land close to Wainfleet - it was kept in a packing shed until someone discovered it was live!

RAF Wainfleet opened again as an aerial bombing and gunnery range in August 1938. A temporary accommodation site was constructed at Sea lane, Wainfleet which remained in constant use until the site was closed in 1991. During the 2nd WW Wainfleet was used as a practice range by all types of aircraft engaged in the war effort.

Post war the area was used to dispose of bombs and ammunitions of all types. At that time the marshes were of marginal value and there was little thought or control over the environment. The construction of the new sea bank in 1978 revealed the ordnance again when the farmers began ploughing the reclaimed land.

During the post war years the range has been used extensively by all types of military aircraft from Lincolns, Canberras and Vulcans to the Tornados and Harriers of the modern RAF. With the recent changes in the balance of power, range activity has decreased, particularly with the withdrawal of the USAF A10 Tank-busters and F-111 aircraft from UK bases. However on most days you can see F-15s, Tornado and Jaguar in action on the range.

RAF Wainfleet weapons range is one of two such facilities situated on The Wash, the other being RAF Holbeach, there is also RAF Donna Nook to the north of Wainfleet at North Somercotes. Although

RAF DONNA NOOK AIR WEAPONS RANGE

RAF Donna Nook is an Air Weapons Range situated between Mablethorpe and Cleethorpes on the north Lincolnshire Coast, and comprises of 885 hectares of beach, saltmarsh and sand dunes and approximately 3200 hectares of sea danger area. Primarily for training UK and USAF pilots in bombing and gunnery, however, can be utilised as a static firing range for weapons up to 40mm including grenades. There are 4 permanent beach targets, 1 sea target and a range of tactical targets. The range is also a National Nature Reserve and has a resident grey seal colony that numbers approximately 3500.

Conservation

ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

Along with the rest of the Defence Training Estate, DTE E has made excellent progress in maintaining the development of sophisticated planning and management systems to ensure that training on our Estate is appropriate in terms of the area, nature of ground, and seasonal factors – for example, by taking into account farming practices and conservation considerations such as the breeding seasons of rare species.

The use of Stanford as a military training area has safeguarded a substantial archaeological landscape, and the home of a wealth of rare species of flora and fauna already lost in other parts of the country. In all, DTE E training areas represent a tremendous conservation resource containing some of the finest examples of wildlife and plants, with conservation groups in all its 3 commands, and regular liaison with English Nature. Together with the local people and organisations we work hard to accommodate the interests of both the military and other stakeholders in the guardianship of our open spaces, and of the fauna and flora which live on them.



Public Access

There is a presumption in favour of public access to the Defence Training Estate, on Public Rights of Way, balanced against the over-riding national requirement for safe and sustainable military training and conservation. The first priorities for any training area must be military training and public safety. Archaeology, conservation and agriculture follow closely. However, controlled public access is encouraged wherever and whenever possible. Public access to the range impact areas is, however, prohibited at all times, and when on a public footpath that crosses a training area:

Follow the Country Code

- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
- Guard against all risk of fire
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone
- Take your litter home
- Take special care on country roads
- Make no unnecessary noise
- Keep to the public paths across farmland
- Fasten all gates
- Keep dogs under close control
- Protect wild life, plants and trees
- Help to keep all water clean

Great care is taken to ensure the safety of these walks, although areas used by the armed forces for training can obviously be dangerous – and this applies throughout the DTE E training areas. Anyone walking on MoD land must obey all signs and byelaws relevant to the area being visited.

Remember! Unexploded Ordnance: Do not touch any unidentified object.

Always comply with the following:

Safety

- Do not approach, touch, or pick up any metal objects lying on the ground
- Keep to the footpaths and do not deviate from them
- The use of metal detectors is prohibited
- Keep away from all buildings, bunkers and military installations except where it is clearly shown that public access is permitted
- No camping or fires are permitted
- All cliffs are dangerous



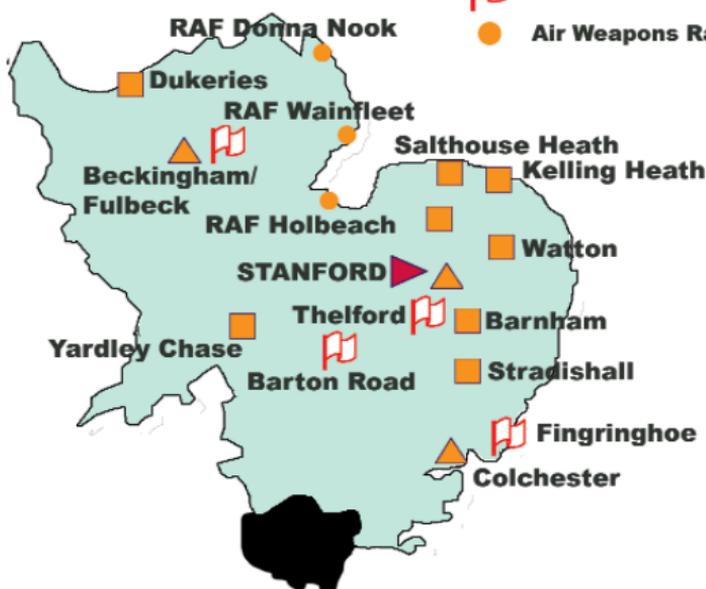
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Training Areas

DEFENCE TRAINING ESTATE

(East)

-  HQ DTE E
-  Major Training Areas
-  Minor Training Areas
-  Small Arms Ranges
-  Air Weapons Ranges



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In addition to this Public Information Leaflet for DTE E, the Defence Training Estate, and its sister land-agency organisation, Defence Estates (DE – address below), both produces more literature. The *DTE Annual Report* summarises yearly progress by the DTE organisation; DE's *Walks on MoD Land* details a number of walks on 10 DTE areas including Salisbury Plain, Castlemartin, Catterick, Dartmoor and Otterburn. DTE also produces *In the Field* magazine, published annually, which contains news from other training areas around the country, as well as updates on developments in management techniques. Finally, DE's annual publication *Sanctuary* contains articles about the Defence Estate across the whole country. All these publications are free and can be obtained from the respective addresses below.

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