

Annex 3.7 Sennybridge Training Area

1 Suitability

Location/Distance/Accessibility

- 1.1 Sennybridge Training Area (SENTA) is located in South Wales approximately 12 kms west of Brecon. The main camp is located about 8 km from the southern boundary of the training area in a separate block of land within the Brecon Beacons National Park.
- 1.2 There is good access to the training area via the A40 from the east and the A470 from North Wales.

Topography

- 1.3 The landform is one of generally high land; rising to over 450m AOD at several points, forming a plateau of rough ground comprising upland moorland and peat bogs. The plateau is penetrated by the Ysgir Fechan River. Elsewhere, the land falls quickly to lower ground in a series of ridges and steep-sided valleys. In the main plateau area, upland moor broken by small rectangular blocks of coniferous woodland is the dominant landcover. To the west, coniferous woodland dominates, encompassing a small number of open areas.

Size and Shape

- 1.4 SENTA is one of the UK's major training areas. The whole of the main training area is held by MOD on a freehold ownership basis and extends to approximately 13,800 hectares, of which some 6500 hectares is set aside for dry training. Military training rights have also been secured on two adjacent and contiguous areas of woodland (of about 2,630 ha) at the western edge of the MOD freehold area.
- 1.5 SENTA can offer training up to Brigade level and 7 live fire company exercises can be undertaken concurrently, with all supporting arms. In addition, 5 companies could undertake tactical dry training at the same time. With this breadth of facility there is much scope for different units to train concurrently.

Facilities

- 1.6 SENTA is the principle light force training area in the UK and provides a comprehensive range of facilities for dry training and live firing, both of small arms and artillery. The principle facilities comprise 10 infantry field firing and other fixed ranges, plus a number of dry training areas and contiguous forest blocks. Artillery and mortars can also be fired. All ranges can accommodate exercises based on all tactical scenarios (CQB pairs, defence shoots etc.) and combined arms live firing exercises up to Battalion level can be conducted in the impact area.
- 1.7 There are also occasional airborne activities – including Flight to Ground Activities and two drop zones. There is also an off-road driving circuit and an Operation in Built Areas village (OBUA).
- 1.8 The height of the training area (350 and 450m) its topography and often-hostile climate make it an ideal arduous light force training area.

2 Availability

Priority

- 2.1 At SENTA pre-operational training (OPTAG) takes priority, along with regular training courses from the Infantry Battle School (IBS) at Brecon, the RM (Phase 3 career training), Special Forces and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS).

Disruption

- 2.2 SENTA is open 360 days a year without restriction and is currently running at full capacity. Even during the Christmas period, when it is open for public access, it may still be in use for dry training. Decisions of any disruption to the normal training programme for Priority 1 pre-deployment exercises are taken by HQ ATE following receipt of an impact statement from SENTA.

Limitations

- 2.3 There are no constraints on the training programme at SENTA but there are environmental considerations that need to be taken into account. SENTA HQ is situated on the banks of the River Usk, within the Brecon Beacons National Park. It is also a

SSSI. Within the main training area, which is outside the National Park, there are two additional SSSIs, with several more about to be notified. Some of these qualify for designation as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

- 2.4 In addition there are 16 Ancients Monuments mainly evident as sub-surface features of limited visual prominence. No digging is permitted within 100 metres of these features. The military road is made available for public use and there are substantial lengths of PROW¹ and some permissive routes.

3 Available Sub Unit Training Weeks

Typical annual training programme

- 3.1 SENTA provides a total of around 400,000 man-training days per annum. The backbone of the training programme are the regular training courses for the IBS, RM Phase 3 training, CTCRM and use by light force brigades. Consequently, the ranges are in constant use during the day and are presently used on 3 evenings per week and 2 weekends per month. In addition, cadets and the TA make use of the training facilities, particularly in the summer.

Availability for CP1 and CP2 light force training

- 3.2 SENTA is presently booked out to the end of 2006 and has no spare capacity for use of the training area for other light force training exercises.

4 Sources of Information

- 4.1 Details of the Sennybridge Training Area contained in this Annex is drawn from the following data sources:
- ATE Wales : User Guide
 - ATE Wales : Public Information Leaflet
 - RPS "*Public Access Consultancy for the Army Training Estate : Regional Report ATE Wales* " March 2003
 - Meetings with Commandant SENTA on 26 January 2005

¹ Public Rights of Way