

Inter-Services Orienteering Championships 1987

The 1987 Inter-Services Orienteering Championships were held recently at Whiteash Hill Wood, 50 miles east of Inverness. The RAF, the hosts this year, provided an excellent weekend of orienteering on October 4-5. What made it more enjoyable was the weather — the southerners in the party who have come to believe that the Scottish weather is all rain and high winds, were in for a pleasant surprise.

Throughout the weekend, the weather was warm and dry, ideal conditions for orienteering.

The men's course of 8.5 km with 380 mtrs of climb proved more frustrating than technical for most of the runners. The technical problems posed were not that taxing, but the runability in most places was very slow. This last fact is clearly shown in the results. Mike Brett came home two minutes clear of Bob Horlock of the RAF to win the Inter-Services title for the third time in four years. As he intends to leave the Army next year a new name will appear on the individual cup in 1988.

The team competition saw another close encounter — with the fastest three times considered, the Army had a lead of only 29 seconds. With the fastest four times considered, the gap was only 1 min 58 sec, the closest ever between these two teams. Nevertheless, when the full seven to count were considered, the Army came home with a comfortable lead of 28 minutes — after six consecutive victories, the Army needs to be careful, for the RAF are improving every year.

In the ladies event Coral O'Nians came home first for the Army in 63 min 43 sec, with Bronwen Jones of the RAF second in 64 min 59 sec. In third place was Gillian Gibson (Army) in 79 min 44 sec. Next year Bronwen Jones hopes to have transferred to the Army — that must be good news for the Army.

This was by far the best year for the Army, not only winning both individual and team prizes in the Inter-Services Championships, they also produced the winner in the Army v TA event that was run concurrently.

Ken Williams



Inter-Services Orienteering Championships — Results

INDIVIDUAL

Men			
1	M Brett	Army	61.28
2	R Horlock	RAF	63.40
3	J Dowty	TA	68.56
4	P Frith	RAF	75.44
5	C Bramley Gardner	Army	76.10
6	S Smirthwaite	RAF	77.43
7	D Smale	Army	79.00
8	G Priestly	Army	79.26
9	J Rye	RM/RN	79.46
10	A Rowland	RAF	80.56
11	P Stuart	Army	81.56
12	A Parkington	TA	86.61
Women			
1	CO'Nians	Army	63.43
2	B Jones	RAF	64.59
3	J Payne	TA	73.42
4	E Fryer	TA	75.13
5	G Gibson	Army	79.44
6	P Rye	Army	79.48

TEAM RESULTS

Men (Army v RAF v RM/RN)

1st Army;
2nd RAF;
3rd RM/RN.

Men (Army v TA)

1st Army;
2nd TA.

Women

1st Army;
2nd TA;
3rd RAF.

The Loneliness Of A Late Starter

The Scene: The second day of the Individual Army Orienteering Championship.

It is not uncommon for the author to ignore the written event instructions thus increasing his problems before he has even entered the start box. The message given to me was as follows!

'It's at 3 BAD and will be signposted'.

No problems I thought — wrong on both counts! 3 BAD was Day One and there wasn't a Tac sign in sight. Some time later (= mad frantic drive through the RCZ), I arrived at the gates of RAF Bruggen only to discover that the event was in no man's land and had I got my passport handy? Risking a major diplomatic incident I slipped across the border. Still no Tac signs but I've got a good nose for event

centres. A frantic change followed by a mad gallop to the start ensured I had ten minutes to get cold before the off.

Only one man behind me on my course (M21A) but not to worry. I'm off, just follow the beaten track diagonally NE across the wood for 1 km. Catch No 1 quickly then off to No 2, I struggle up the hill and there it is; No 3's easy as I count paths and ditches to it. No 4 would have been easy if the gyros hadn't thrown me right. However, potential mistake rectified by a prominent tower. No 5 never looked difficult and No 6 produced the recurring problem of righthand steer on the old body. No 7 was another epic of 800 metres diagonally SW across the wood. Overshot No 8 by 100 metres cursing my tiredness and lack of map sense. Still I'd had no real problems and No 9 looked straight-forward enough. Across the track, through the wood, along the fence and up the hill onto the plateau. Then strike NE for 200 metres to the control. Ten minutes later I'd been round the area three times and was getting desperate. Suddenly, out of the scrub comes my faithful friend the last competitor on his way to No 10. The rest of the controls to No 14 were a bit of a blur as the good old fatigue set into the legs and brain. With foreboding I picked up the second half of the map and made the momentous decision — oh to hell with it!

As the Chinese orienteer once said: 'Somedays you do, somedays you don't!'

Colin Walsh.