

REPORT ON THE ARMY TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS TEUTOBURGER WALD NEAR SENELAGER 27 – 29 APR 10

The Army Team Championships were held in the Teutoburger Wald near Sennelager from 27 – 29 Apr 10. The Championships Event Centre was based on Polish Barracks in the Sennelager Training Centre and proved to be an excellent administrative base for the Championships. Glorious sunshine blessed the Championships and on Day Two temperatures at the Event Site were in the mid 30s with shade temperature at a balmy 26 degrees! Despite pressures on Unit T&S Budgets, almost 100 of the 200 participants came across from the UK. A total of 24 A Course Teams took part and 27 B Course Teams.

The Championships organisation was headed up by Tony Farrow as the Planner and main Organiser. Captain Huw Williams was the Assistant organiser and helped enormously as the Championships planning unfolded. Jill Choudhury (nee Farrow and Tony's eldest daughter) travelled across for a short holiday with her parents and assisted with Registration. Richard Baldwin who travelled across with the 1 R ANGLIAN Team spent almost the whole of his time in Germany helping with control placing and collection and controlling the start – an huge thank you. Finally the organisation was completed with Allan Farrington heading up Registration and EMIT and he was assisted throughout by Major Duncan Parkinson. A big thanks must also go to Herr Peter Gehrman and Erich Montag of ASG Teutoburger Wald for preparing the competition area maps during a relatively short period due to the long, long, German Winter (snow on the ground from 18 Dec – 12 Mar inclusive).

Enough of the introduction; what about the orienteering! The Teutoburger Wald was last used for serious competition for the World Championships in 1995. An area rich in beach forests and firs with mainly runnable terrain which seems to be mostly uphill!. The areas chosen for the Army Team Championships were based on an area suitable for the Team Harris Event on Day One and a more technical area where we could 'lose' up to 50 people at any one time with few options for following at the Relay Event on Day Two. Looking at the results and chatting to competitors, the strategy proved to be about right. A training event was organised for the Tuesday on the Inkerman Training Area map and consisted of a short Harris Style event which teams could use for their own training.

The Day One event was on the Wistinghauser-Senne 'Ravensberg' map. This part of the forest rises from 200m near the Stapel Training Area to well above 300m at the highest point and touches on the famous Hermannslauf route (a 31.1km run across the Wald from the Hermannsdenkmal in Detmold to Bielefeld). The A Course was planned with a 10 Control Spine of approximately 4.6km and a further 20 Controls. The start was set higher up the hill to enable teams to take on the spine either clockwise 1 – 10 or anti clockwise. The difficulty for Team Captains was the location of 3 controls behind the Ravensberg hill and furthest from the Start/Finish. This needed careful planning in order to either use strong endurance orienteers to collect these additional controls against other more technical controls on the SW slope. The B Course had an 8 Control Spine of approximately 3.5km and a further 15 Controls. The Planner was less harsh on the Team Captains and did not put the hill climb and endurance problem in the challenge.

Following a short brief and information regarding the name of the map 'Ravensberg', a 600m walk slightly uphill to the start prepared the orienteers for the Harris Event. Commencing at the planned 1720 hrs, the organisers quickly processed the A Course Teams through the Start and then on to the B Course Teams. Planning by Team Captains was followed by orienteers disappearing into the forest in all directions. No team was better organised than 1 R ANGLIAN with each of the teams equipped with A4 size cardboard backing boards to rest maps on for planning and red lumocolours – Great preparation Vikings!

Some of the quickest orienteers to complete the Spine and their additional controls came to the Finish in just over 42 minutes. At 45 minutes there were several teams waiting for their 3rd and 4th team members. On the day, it was the experienced team from Arty Centre who took the glory in 50 mins 08 secs just ahead of the RMAS team in 51 mins 25 secs. The B Course quickest teams were swarming close to the finish in 35 minutes with the last team members of the 3 men team arriving in 42 mins 15 secs for the winners Arty Centre B team who were clear leaders ahead of the RMAS B team in 50 mins 15 secs. Needless to say, the Arty Centre seemed to have a lead that should have meant that they were untouchable – or were they!

Day Two was the traditional Team Relay Event using the Grizzly Creek map extended to the North of the Training Area boundary into the Augustdorf area. All courses except the Shorts were to experience the technical contour areas on the east side of the map – scheise! And didn't that area cause problems for some experienced MLS orienteers! Once out of the contour area, all courses then followed in figure 8 shaped courses, crossing a crystal clear stream (water catchment area) via a compulsory footbridge, up

a 15m steep climb and via a spectator control in the open area before completing a loop of between 1.5 and 2.2km. The final control was placed approximately 220m from the Changeover Area with good views for spectators to cheer their team members and for next leg runners to spot their incoming runner. The A Course runners were treated to an area in the North that was previously denied to Army orienteering as it is within a protected area. Close liaison with the local Stadt and Forstmeister ensured that the area was cleared and the orienteers could enjoy runnable terrain with some technical contoured areas.

Following a briefing on the Changeover procedures, the A Course first leg runners were called forward for checking and then a Mass Start. 20 minutes later the B Course first leg runners commenced.

At the start of Day Two, the Arty Centre had a clear lead of approximately 10 minutes over their nearest rivals RMAS and were therefore clear favourites to win. Only an error or a missed control (surely not) could prevent them becoming Champions for the second year in succession. Oh dear, a simple control missed by one of the Arty Centre members and this put the whole Championships open to the rest of the field and in particular the 'youthful - not' team from RMAS. But at the final count, fine navigation and good running from the remaining team members confirmed the Arty Centre as the 2010 Army Team Champions.
