



Operation Commando 2013



The annual navigation and evasion event for Scouts and Explorer Scouts in Montgomeryshire.

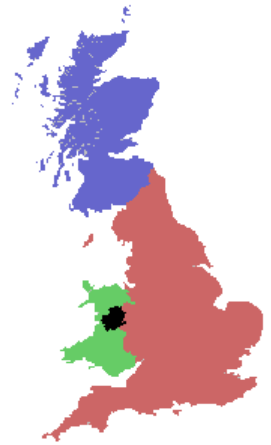


Saturday 28th September
This year in the Hafren Forest.




scouts
be prepared . . .
Montgomeryshire

Operation Commando 2013



NOTES FOR LEADERS

Location: Rhyd-y-Benwch car park and picnic site, Hafren Forest. Approx 7 miles eastwards along the minor road from Llanidloes (via Old Hall), Powys.

Arrival time: 9.30am (10am if travelling from further away). There will be a staggered start so that teams do not set out together.

Note: During the event the main communications/safety base will be the food base, located part way around the course. Toilet facilities are only available at the start/end point.

- 1 Leaders who can attend will, as usual, be expected to run checkpoints or other similar tasks. Leaders are requested to bring First Aid kits so as to ensure that all checkpoints are fully equipped. If possible also bring a supply of water for any needy participants. Most, if not all, checkpoints can be reached by car. (When, and **only** when, all teams have passed a particular checkpoint will that base will be closed and leaders will be freed up to move on to other bases, duties or to the food stop.)
- 2 Scouts may only participate as team members. Explorer Scout Units and the Scout Network are very welcome to enter teams and we hope that some will do so, but they can choose to be 'catchers' instead.
- 3 Young Scout teams can be given support in the form of older Explorer Scout/Scout Network members and should therefore not be discouraged from entering due to their age or inexperience. Only in exceptional circumstances may a leader accompany a team as an adult presence risks distracting the Scouts' from independent decision-making.
- 4 A more comprehensive verbal briefing will be given individually to each team at the start of the event, along with a kit inspection. This will include any modifications required for reasons of safety or other concerns.
- 5 As far as team preparation is concerned, map reading skills and the use of a compass will be required. **PLEASE ENSURE THAT EACH TEAM MEMBER HAS PRACTISED MAP READING SKILLS!**
- 6 Team tactics for the event:
 - Either use forest roads and get caught frequently (not recommended!); or
 - Stay 'undercover' to avoid the catchers between the checkpoints. Use available cover and natural features and minimise the number of times the team gets caught. (N.B. There is a 100m radius safe zone around each of the checkpoints.)

There will be more than one winner:

- The team that is caught the fewest times will be the 'stealth winner'. (All teams will be issued with a bag of jewels, and must hand one jewel over each time the team is caught.)
- The team that returns to base zero after visiting all bases in order will be the 'speed winner'.

- 7 Team equipment should be distributed amongst the team members, not carried by just one individual.
- 8 One checkpoint positioned part way round will include a refreshments stop where 'hot dogs' and hot and cold drinks will be provided. All participants will still need to bring their own packed lunches with plenty to drink.
- 9 It is a condition of our use of the forest that all vehicles taking part in this event must be fully roadworthy and the driver and vehicle must be appropriately licensed for the use of public roads. Vehicles must also be driven at a slow and safe speed; the maximum speed stated by Natural Resources Wales is 15mph. All of the required roads can be driven without four-wheel-drive capability, but other tracks do require appropriate off-road vehicles. Vehicles are used at your own risk and under the owner/driver's own insurance.

- 10 We have official permission from Natural Resources Wales to use the forest for Operation Commando, but please note that members of the public may well also be in the area.
- 11 Natural Resources Wales state that no smoking is permitted in the forest.
- 12 As you would expect, it is extremely unlikely that bad weather will stop the event.
- 13 Please note that whatever the weather, the Scouts and Explorer Scouts are very likely to get wet (due to crawling on wet ground, and stream and bog crossings) so you should ensure that they are carrying sufficient spare clothing, and have dry clothing for the journey home.

Please note:

Each Leader is responsible for maintaining their own records of home contact information for the participants from their own Troop or Unit. The issuing of Scout Emergency Cards to their group members is also the responsibility of the Troop or Unit leader.

It is essential that where a participant has a special medical requirement or other necessary consideration that their Leader makes this known to the organisers by the start of the event.

This event is open to all members of Montgomeryshire Scouting of Scout age upwards. The invitation to join in is also extended to our neighbouring Scout Areas/Counties.

As usual, some photography and filming of the activities for our internal and external Scouting promotion purposes will take place during the day. It will be assumed that this is acceptable to all unless the organisers are informed otherwise by the responsible Leaders by the beginning of the event.

Accident / Emergency / Communications

The nearest Accident and Emergency Hospital Units are in Shrewsbury Hospital (SY3 8XQ - 70 minutes drive) and Aberystwyth Hospital (SY23 1ER - 50 minutes drive).

If a participant needs to be taken to hospital then the general procedure will be that the leader of his/her Troop or Unit will be the first choice of person to drive to the hospital. Transport will be arranged for anyone therefore left without their expected means of transport home at the end of the event. The communications base must be informed of any accidents or problems at the time.

Mobile phones do not work in all of the operational area for the event. Radios will be in use to assist with leader communications within the forest. It is therefore requested that commando teams do not carry radios as their use disrupts communications.

=====

For any further information contact:

Michael Smith: (01686) 623437. E-mail: Michael@m-d-smith.fsnet.co.uk

John-Paul Lawrence: (01874) 754848. E-mail: jpleho@yahoo.co.uk

Please be in touch with numbers

Please e-mail Michael Smith 4-10 days before the event to say how many teams you are entering or approximately how many people you are bringing. (Names and precise numbers are not required.) This is important so that the required numbers of maps and check-in sheets are produced and that the right amount of food is bought. We hope that the majority of members of each Troop and Unit will attend. Thank you.

E-mail: Michael@m-d-smith.fsnet.co.uk

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR LEADERS

Operation Commando is a highly popular Scout and Explorer Scout event that has been run by Montgomeryshire Scouting for many years. It is held annually on the last Saturday in September, (with the first Saturday in October being held as the reserve date in case a forest is unavailable on the first date).

The event date does not clash with Welsh Scout Council activities. The date and contact details for further information are published each year on the Montgomeryshire Scouts website:

<http://www.montgomeryshirescouts.org.uk>

It is by its very nature an adventurous event which presents a challenge to those taking part.

Teams are quizzed about the preparations that they have made for the event and what training they have been provided with.

To be fair to the Scouts, it is necessary for them to be provided with the opportunity to practise navigation in the weeks before the event – it is recommended that at least **two** Troop meetings before the event should be based on navigation exercises. This will help to ensure that the Scouts get the most out of the day.

The use of camouflage clothing and face paint is welcomed as this fits well with the theme of the day - to navigate through forest whilst evading the catcher teams.

The cost of entry has been kept at the same amount for a number of years. This is only possible if we have a large turnout of Scouts and Explorer Scouts – typically 75-95% of the membership. Please ensure that your Troop or Unit continues to maintain these excellent turnouts. Please also ensure no other events are run which might clash or compete with this event or tire the Scouts immediately in advance of this challenging day.

Unless a good night's sleep can be guaranteed, it is recommended from experience that teams planning to camp do so on the Saturday night after the event, rather than on the Friday night.

TEAMS must consist of a minimum of 4 persons and no more than 6. If, due to illness or injury, numbers fall to below 4 persons the team will be amalgamated with another/others.

NO ROUTE - JUST CHECKPOINTS AND A MAP

All teams will be given the same maps and information with regard to the locations of the checkpoints that they must visit and in what order. But there is no prescribed route between the bases. What route each team takes to get the checkpoints is up to them, however the maps provided may show some areas where a short prescribed route must be followed so as to avoid a known hazard.

COST

The cost of entry is £4 per Scout or Explorer Scout. This is to cover the expenses of marshalling / safety, maps, bases, etc. This fee must be paid on the day (by cheque or cash) and any team failing to pay will not be allowed to compete. The fee applies to all Scouts and Explorer Scouts, whether they are team members or catchers.

CHEQUES should be made payable to "*Montgomeryshire Area Scout Council*" or "*MASC*".

Operation Commando can accommodate the full Montgomeryshire membership and we would hope that all Troop and Unit leaders will encourage full involvement. Scouts from other Scout Areas and Counties are also welcome to attend. Leaders are not required to attend.



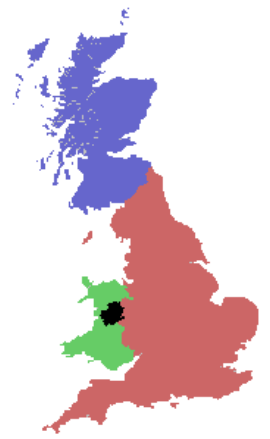
Montgomeryshire Scout Area

Operation Commando 2013

The annual navigation and evasion event
for Scouts and Explorer Scouts.

Saturday 28th September

This year in the Hafren Forest.



NOTES FOR SCOUTS & EXPLORER SCOUTS

- Report to:** Rhyd-y-Benwch car park and picnic site, signposted in the Hafren Forest.
Approx 7 miles eastwards along the minor road from Llanidloes (via Old Hall).
- Start time:** 9.30-10am. There will be a staggered start so that teams do not set out together.
All participants must register themselves in the tent at the start and all must log out at the end of the event before leaving the forest. This applies to ALL involved – whatever part you are playing on the day.
After registering, each team will have a kit check followed by a briefing about the day. Only then can they set out on their mission.
- Maps:** All maps will be provided to the participants on the day (two per commando team, plus copies for catchers and Leaders).
- Finish:** The event is expected to conclude by 5-5.30pm. It is appreciated that some teams may finish earlier and they may choose to leave before 5pm – **after** logging out.

COMMANDO TEAMS = Scouts or Explorer Scouts

Teams must consist of 4-6 Scouts or Explorer Scouts. Teams must not join together.

If, due to illness or injury, numbers fall to below 4 persons the team will be amalgamated with other teams so that they may continue.

CATCHER TEAMS = Explorer Scouts

These consist of Explorer Scouts who hunt the Commando Teams all day. Most catchers have been part of Commando Teams in previous years. The teams of catchers operate under the guidance of designated adult leaders and are moved by car to different locations throughout the day. Explorer Scout catchers should operate on foot and not be driving themselves or mountain biking.

ENEMY AGENTS / CATCHERS can be identified by yellow markers on their vehicles and they will be wearing yellow head or arm bands.

FRIENDLY FORCES can be identified by blue markers on their vehicles and they will be wearing blue head or arm bands.

THE MISSION

The object of the exercise is for the teams to get to all the bases in order whilst avoiding being caught by 'enemy agents'. The 'agents' will be patrolling most of the area, but there will be some 'safe areas' defined on the map. All teams must go through ALL checkpoints in the correct order.

NO ROUTE - JUST CHECKPOINTS AND A MAP!

All teams will be given the same maps and information with regard to the locations of the checkpoints that they must visit and in what order. What route each team takes to get the checkpoints is up to them, this is what makes Operation Commando so challenging.

TEAM TACTICS

Either use forest roads and get caught frequently (not recommended!); or

Stay 'undercover' to avoid the catchers between the checkpoints. Use available cover and natural features and minimise the number of times the team gets caught.

(N.B. There is a 100m radius safe zone around each of the checkpoints.)

RULES of ENGAGEMENT

- 1 A team is caught (and must hand over a jewel) if any member of the team is touched by one of the catchers. All catchers wear a yellow head or arm band. All enemy vehicles display yellow markers. (Rules will be fully explained at team briefings given at the start.)
- 2 All 'Commandos' MUST wear their troop scarf visible on their person at all times.
- 3 There are three ways to 'win': **1. Enjoy yourself. 2. Be the team caught the least. 3. Be the quickest to visit all the bases and return.**
- 4 You cannot be caught within approximately 100 metres of a checkpoint.
- 5 The area around a 'Friendly Forces' vehicle (marked blue) is to be considered a safe zone – no catching allowed within this area.

SAFETY RULES

- 1 If one of your party is injured, do not leave them alone. At least one person should stay with them whilst a minimum of two others go to a base or the nearest track to find help. Make sure you know where you are on the map! If the casualty is in the forest, leave an easily seen marker on the nearest road – to identify access to the casualty.
- 2 The "Blue" marked vehicles and people are there to help you, and you cannot be caught whilst near them.
- 3 If a Catchers'/Enemy Agents' vehicle is showing blue markers, it has changed sides and is there to help you.
- 4 If you get totally lost, find a forest road and walk along it. If it comes to a dead end then turn around and go the other way – DO NOT wander off into the forest again. If you come to a junction with a main tarmac road – stop there.
- 5 If you hear **6 long blasts on a whistle**, repeated after a pause, this is the **International Rescue Signal** and somebody needs help from you.

TIMINGS

If a team has not finished the course by 4.30pm they MUST report to the nearest checkpoint. (All teams must have reported to the nearest checkpoint by 4.45pm at the very latest.)

PERSONAL KIT

(N.B. it will be wet and streams and bogs will need to be crossed)

Outdoor clothing (remember you don't want to be seen, so bright pink is not a good colour! Camouflage clothing and face paint is good). NO jeans to be worn as they are cold when wet.

Walking Boots (it will be wet even if good weather!)

No uniform, except Scarves – which must be worn as additional I.D.

Rucksack

Spare Clothing (incl. socks!).

Waterproofs (jacket & trousers)

Packed Lunch, including plenty to drink.

Emergency Rations (not intended to be eaten)

Whistle (for emergency use only)

Scout Emergency Card (or home-made version), & pencil (in plastic bag)

TEAM EQUIPMENT

2 Silva type Compasses

First Aid Kit

3 Torches (plus spare batteries)

Toilet Roll

2 Bivvy Bags

KIT LOAD must not exceed one-quarter of the person's weight. A kit inspection will take place at the start. Any team not meeting the above requirements will not be allowed to take part.

NOT NEEDED

Please do not bring walkie talkies; this is because their use will interfere leaders' communications and make the event more difficult to organise.

Mobile phones are also not required and should be left with your leader before setting out into the forest.

COST

The cost of entry is **£4** per Scout or Explorer Scout.

This is to cover the expenses of marshalling / safety, maps, bases, refreshments, etc. This fee must be paid by your leader on the day and any team failing to pay will not be allowed to compete. The fee applies to all Scouts and Explorer Scouts, whether they are team members or catchers.

Be prepared, take care and have fun!



Montgomeryshire Area Scout Council

Registered Charity Number 513787