

There is a presumption in favour of public access to the Defence Training Estates, on Public Rights of Way, balanced against the overriding national requirement for safe and sustainable military training and conservation. Three-quarters of the training area can be used by the Public but only on designated Public Rights of Way. The area is also used, with permission, for various organised activities including, field sports, walks and model aircraft flying.

Over 100 years of military stewardship has helped conserve, and even enhance, an area of remarkable landscape and archaeological value. Where the public is prohibited, it is for safety reasons, for example from the range impact and live firing areas. Where permitted, however, and when on a Public Right of Way that crosses a training area, please adhere to the following:

Follow the Country Code

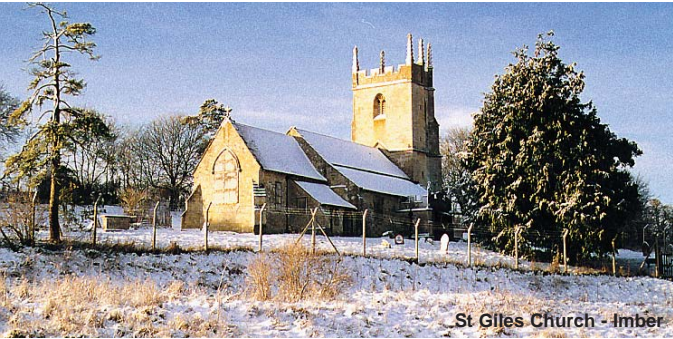
- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
- Guard against all risk of fire
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone
- Take your litter home
- Take special care on country roads
- Make no unnecessary noise
- Keep to the public paths both on the estate and 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 SP training areas. Anyone walking on MoD land must obey all signs and byelaws relevant to the area being visited.

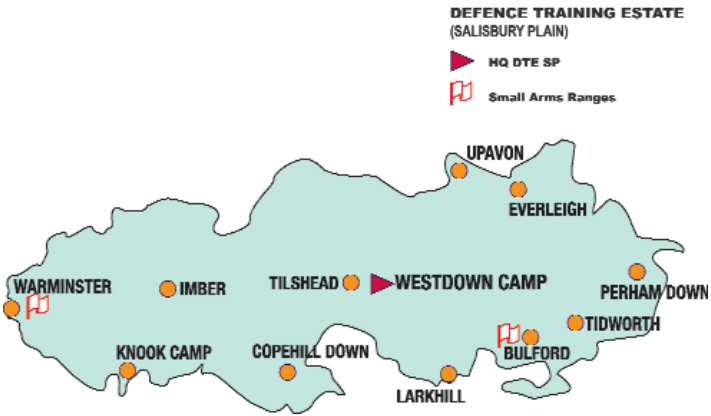
Remember! Unexploded Ordnance: Do not touch any unidentified object.
Always comply with the following Safety Rules:

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



St Giles Church - Imber



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Both the Defence Training Estate and Defence Estate (DE), produce 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, 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 and website listed below.

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Headquarters DTE SP
Westdown Camp, Tilshead, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP3 4RS
Telephone: 01980 620819
LIVE Firing Information line: 01980 674763

Headquarters Defence Training Estate
Land Warfare Centre, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 0DJ
Telephone: 01985 222856

Defence Estates
Blakemore Drive, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B75 7RL
Telephone: 0121 3112000
www.defence-estates.mod.uk

PUBLIC INFORMATION LEAFLET



DTE Salisbury Plain

WHY THE ARMY NEEDS TO TRAIN



ORGANISATION & MANAGEMENT

The DTE is controlled by its Headquarters, based at the Land Warfare Centre in Warminster, Wiltshire. The Estate is sub-divided into 10 regionally-based areas, each with its own Headquarters and staff.

DTE SP is managed jointly by two bodies based at Westdown Camp: HQ DTE SP

is responsible for military activities, whilst Defence Estates looks after the professional estate management, with both attending to archaeology and conservation. DTE SP, along with the rest of the DTE organisation, has made significant progress over recent years in improving management practices to ensure that training is appropriate in terms of the area, nature of ground, and seasonal factors. For example soft and wet ground, these take into account farming practice and the increased possibility of damage to softer ground. Landmarc, our Public Private Partner, has its own 'repair team' which undertakes tasks such as repairs to tracks and tank crossings, plus maintenance and repairs to farm buildings and training features.

TRAINING IN DTE SP

At over 94,000 acres (38,000 hectares) DTE SP is the UK's largest training area, roughly 25 miles by 10 miles. About 25,400 acres (10,000 hectares) are permanently closed to the public for safety reasons – Larkhill and Westdown artillery impact areas, and Warminster live firing area. During the past 35 years, over 9 million large-calibre rounds have been fired on Salisbury Plain Training Area, and live firing takes place on an average of 340 days a year.

DTE SP offers live firing and other facilities for armoured vehicles, artillery,

engineers, infantry and aircraft. The newest facility is the 'village' on Copehill Down used to train for operations in built-up areas. Regulars, Territorials and Cadets use the training area as a whole, as do our NATO allies. DTE SP also manages the airspace over, and adjacent to, the Plain: military aircraft from all three Services use this airspace both by day and night, sometimes being joined by NATO aircraft. Everything possible is done to minimise the effects of low flying over the area, although this is of course an unavoidable aspect of essential training for military operations.

Every effort is made to minimise the impact of military training on people's lives: a special parish liaison system is in place offering a direct point of contact to the people in all of the 45 parishes around the Plain. A regular newsletter informs residents of forthcoming exercises and other planned military activities. Noise levels are constantly monitored, and exercise planning takes due account of the effects of training on the local population.

The military garrisons around the Plain (Bulford, Larkhill, Tidworth and Warminster) contain some 14,000 soldiers. They, and visiting units, spend some 600,000 man days on the Plain annually.

HISTORY OF THE TRAINING AREA



Land was first purchased for military training in 1897. Within 5 years the total area in the hands of the War Department had risen to 43,000 acres (17,400 hectares). Permanent barracks were started at Tidworth in 1905. After the First World War, the War Department resumed buying land on Salisbury Plain and spread westward across the Devizes to Tilshead road. The Larkhill Royal School of Artillery was built in 1920. The village of Imber and its surrounding terrain were acquired over the period from 1928 to 1932, although the villagers were not actually evacuated until 1943, during the Second World War. The village remains uninhabited, but one service a year is still held in the church, which is well fenced and protected. The Warminster Land Warfare Centre dates from 1937.



The use of Salisbury Plain as a military training area has preserved a substantial archaeological landscape dating back some 6,000 years. There are about 2,300 monuments, 550 of which are protected by law. The most important of these are given protection by 12 agreed Archaeological Site Group management plans, and within these are 6 Important Fragile Sites, the values of which are inestimable. The Plain has one of the densest concentrations of ancient long and round barrows anywhere in Britain.

Some 50,000 acres (20,200 hectares) of the training area constitute 6 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The area has remained a home to a wealth of rare species of fauna and flora already lost in other parts of the country. There are approximately 6,000 acres (2,500 hectares) of woodland which are used for training, and new woodland is planted each year. The MoD pays careful attention to managing this heritage to preserve it for future generations.

Within the UK there are nearly 200 military conservation groups. Three of the most active thrive on Salisbury Plain. Each group, which has a mixed membership of service personnel and local civilians, is advised by Defence Estates and national and county bodies responsible for archaeology and conservation. The groups are open to new members, and are always pleased to recruit anyone prepared to help in the monitoring and the compilation of records of the area's wildlife. No great knowledge is necessary as expert members are most willing to assist the novice. Membership is free and groups consist of volunteers, mainly local residents who have an interest in Salisbury Plain. The groups are:



- The Imber Conservation Group – covering the area west of the A360 as far as Warminster
- The Larkhill/Westdown Conservation Group – the area between the A360 and the River Avon valley
- The Bulford Conservation Group – looking after the River Avon valley and the training land to the east as far as Tidworth and Bulford.

Each group maintains records of all wildlife and archaeological sites, vegetation and usage maps, as well as habitat registers. Sub-groups, each under an expert leader, cover archaeology, botany, ornithology, entomology, vertebrates, invertebrates, mycology, deer, and badgers.

The advice of these Conservation Groups is always welcomed by HQ DTE SP and Defence Estates in the overall management of the Plain. Close liaison is also maintained with national agencies such as English Heritage, Natural England and the NGO's, and county agencies such as the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, the Wiltshire and Hampshire Ornithological Societies, and the County Archaeologist, as well as with individual naturalists and farmers.

