

The Athenaeum
Pall Mall
London

14th August 1984

Dear Secretary of State,

DARTMOOR STEERING GROUP

In accordance with our terms of reference I submit below a report for 1983. The brevity of this report reflects the unanimous resolve of the members of the Steering Group to seek to reconcile the conflicting requirements of military training, conservation and public access.

The Group met once and its supporting Working Committee met twice.

Of the several subjects kept under review only two merit a specific mention in this report:-

Environmental Base Line. Some progress was made with tackling the difficulties in establishing this as a means of monitoring and assessing the military impact on the Moor. In 1979 the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food undertook an aerial survey using infra-red photography which, together with further work intended to map vegetation and areas of bog and peat, would serve to establish a base line as at 1979 which would be suitable for our needs, although it would have to be supplemented by more recent photography showing the effect of artillery firing and by a detailed study of selected areas.

Archaeological Trail. The proposed extension of the environmental appreciation courses for units training on the Moor, by including instruction on the ground with an archaeological walk, has continued to prove more difficult to arrange than had been thought when approved in 1978. We have reluctantly concluded that no suitable site exists, but there will be class-room instruction about ancient monuments and the need to care for them. A film "Looking at Pre-historic Sites 1982" was viewed. While it was agreed that this was a good film for use as a general introduction for troops training on Dartmoor or Salisbury Plain, it would need to be supplemented by some instruction more directly related to Dartmoor.

The decision of the Secretary of State for the Environment permitting the modernisation of the Willsworthy Ranges to go ahead, removed the most contentious item from the Steering Group's agenda.

Yours faithfully,

Sir Peter Stallard KCMG., CVO., MBE.
Chairman

The Rt. Hon. Patrick Jenkin M.P.
Secretary of State for the Environment
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