



COMPLETE COMMANDO

UK MILITARY PREPARATION HANDBOOK

THE COMPLETE 2026 CANDIDATE GUIDE

Royal Navy / Royal Marines / British Army / Royal Air Force

2026 EDITION

ROYAL NAVY

ROYAL MARINES

BRITISH ARMY

ROYAL AIR FORCE

Your route through the handbook

Every panel is a live link. Start with the Service you are applying for. UKSF is shown as a later cross-service destination, not a direct-entry option.

01 UK DEFENCE

How the four services, joint headquarters, NATO and rank structures connect.

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02 ROYAL NAVY

History, fighting organisation, bases, careers, DAA, CPC, initial training and current capability.

[OPEN SECTION >](#)

03 ROYAL MARINES

Corps heritage, badge, units, VC recipients, PJFA, CPC, ROP and Commando training.

[OPEN SECTION >](#)

04 BRITISH ARMY

History, corps and regiments, assessment, training, cognitive tests and current land capability.

[OPEN SECTION >](#)

05 ROYAL AIR FORCE

History, stations, roles, aptitude, CBAT, OASC, training and current air capability.

[OPEN SECTION >](#)

06 UK SPECIAL FORCES

A joint, cross-service specialist destination. Public history, units and the correct long-term route from parent-Service competence.

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Routes, preparation and next steps

Use Reserve Forces for the part-time routes, then build the wider preparation required for selection, training and service life.

07**RESERVE FORCES**

RNR, RMR, Army Reserve and RAF Reserve: training, commitment, mobilisation and family reality.

[OPEN SECTION >](#)**08****OFFICER & INTERVIEW PREP**

Officer routes, interviews, planning, leadership evidence and family preparation.

[OPEN SECTION >](#)**09****FIELD CRAFT & NAVIGATION**

Maps, grid references, bearings, route cards, relocation and speed-distance-time.

[OPEN SECTION >](#)**10****PHYSICAL PREPARATION**

Evidence, nutrition, recovery, military bearing and the complete 16-week training plan.

[OPEN SECTION >](#)**11****100 CANDIDATE QUESTIONS**

Direct answers to the questions candidates and families repeatedly ask online.

[OPEN SECTION >](#)**12****CHOOSE YOUR SUPPORT**

Royal Marines coaching, the military pathway, a preparation weekend or 1-2-1 mentoring.

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FOUNDATION

UK DEFENCE

Understand how the services differ, how they fight together and where your chosen role contributes.

4 SERVICES

ONE INTEGRATED FORCE

JOINT

UK SERVICES TOGETHER

COMBINED

ALLIED NATIONS TOGETHER

Four frontline identities. One integrated force.

The Royal Marines are part of the Naval Service. The Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force and joint commands combine their capabilities on operations.

SEA

ROYAL NAVY

Protects maritime trade and sea lanes, operates warships and submarines, supports the nuclear deterrent and projects force from the sea.

LITTORAL

ROYAL MARINES

The Royal Navy's amphibious fighting force. Commandos operate from sea to land in raids, reconnaissance, protection and high-readiness tasks.

LAND

BRITISH ARMY

Fights and operates on land through infantry, armour, artillery, aviation, engineers, intelligence, logistics, signals and medical support.

AIR & SPACE

ROYAL AIR FORCE

Protects UK airspace and delivers combat air, mobility, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and space capabilities.

Formation timeline



How UK Defence and NATO connect

The UK commands its own Armed Forces and contributes people, units and capabilities to joint and NATO plans when authorised.

Level	What it does
UK national direction	The Government sets policy. The Chief of the Defence Staff is the professional head of the Armed Forces and directs military activity through Defence command arrangements.
Front-line commands	The Royal Navy, including the Royal Marines, the British Army and the Royal Air Force recruit, train and generate forces. Cyber & Specialist Operations Command supplies joint cyber, intelligence, medical, special operations, education and overseas-command capability.
Permanent Joint Headquarters	PJHQ at Northwood plans, executes and integrates UK-led joint and multinational overseas operations. It also commands UK forces assigned to operations led by allies.
NATO political control	NATO's 32 sovereign members take decisions by consensus through the North Atlantic Council. Each nation decides what forces it contributes.
NATO military command	The Military Committee links national Chiefs of Defence to NATO's military structure. Allied Command Operations plans and conducts operations; Allied Command Transformation develops future capability, doctrine and interoperability.

What the link means on an operation

Joint

A task may need ships and Royal Marines at sea, Army units on land, RAF aircraft overhead and CSOC intelligence, cyber, medical and command support. Joint means more than one UK service or command working together.

Combined

Combined means forces from more than one nation. A UK unit can serve inside a NATO headquarters or formation while remaining a British unit.

Article 5

An armed attack against one Ally is considered an attack against all. Each Ally must assist, but the action each nation judges necessary may differ and can include the use of armed force.

For your interview

Explain the chain simply: your service generates the capability; a UK joint headquarters can integrate it; NATO combines it with allied forces under agreed plans, standards and command arrangements.

Official rank structure across the services

Royal Marines use Army-style rank titles. Royal Navy and Royal Air Force titles are different even where responsibility is broadly equivalent.

Level	Royal Navy	Royal Marines / Army	Royal Air Force
Junior	Able Rate	Marine / Private	Air Specialist
NCO	Leading Hand	Lance Corporal / Corporal	Corporal
Senior NCO	Petty Officer	Sergeant	Sergeant
Technical SNCO	-	-	Chief Technician (technical trades only)
Senior NCO	Chief Petty Officer	Staff / Colour Sergeant	Flight Sergeant
Aircrew ranks	-	-	Sergeant Aircrew / Flight Sergeant Aircrew / Master Aircrew
Warrant	Warrant Officer	Warrant Officer	Warrant Officer
Junior officer	Sub-Lieutenant	Second Lieutenant / Lieutenant	Pilot Officer / Flying Officer
Junior officer	Lieutenant	Captain	Flight Lieutenant
Field officer	Lieutenant Commander	Major	Squadron Leader
Field officer	Commander	Lieutenant Colonel	Wing Commander
Senior officer	Captain	Colonel	Group Captain
One-star	Commodore	Brigadier	Air Commodore
Two-star	Rear Admiral	Major General	Air Vice-Marshal
Three-star	Vice Admiral	Lieutenant General	Air Marshal
Four-star	Admiral	General	Air Chief Marshal

Important distinction

A Royal Navy Captain is a senior officer rank and is not equivalent to an Army Captain. The RAF has separate structures for commissioned officers, enlisted aviators and non-commissioned aircrew. Chief Technician is used in technical trades; Master Aircrew is the senior non-commissioned aircrew rank. Learn the insignia and correct forms of address used by your chosen service.



ROYAL NAVY

Sea power, submarines, aviation and the people who keep the fleet fighting.

1546

NAVY BOARD ESTABLISHED

3

MAIN NAVAL BASES

4 DAYS

CANDIDATE PREPARATION COURSE

Purpose, history and fighting organisation

Britain's maritime force protects the country at sea and delivers military effect around the world.

History

Britain used naval forces for centuries before the modern institution took shape. Henry VIII established the Navy Board in 1546. Permanent dockyards, administration and a standing fleet developed through the Tudor and Stuart periods, which is why the Royal Navy has no single simple founding day.

What it does

- Protects maritime trade, sea lanes and national interests.
- Maintains the UK's continuous at-sea nuclear deterrent.
- Delivers carrier strike, surface warfare and undersea warfare.
- Provides maritime security, global presence and disaster relief.

Main fighting components

- Surface Fleet: carriers, destroyers, frigates, patrol and mine warfare vessels.
- Submarine Service: attack submarines and ballistic-missile submarines.
- Fleet Air Arm: aircraft and aircrew operating from ships and shore.
- Royal Marines: the Naval Service's amphibious fighting force.
- Royal Fleet Auxiliary: civilian-crewed support to naval operations.
- 2026 example: Op FIRECREST, led by HMS Prince of Wales, supported NATO security in the Arctic and North Atlantic.

Major naval bases

- HMNB Portsmouth: home of the surface fleet and aircraft carriers.
- HMNB Devonport: major base and support site in Plymouth.
- HMNB Clyde: home of the UK's submarine service and nuclear deterrent.

GLOBAL OPERATING COMMITMENTS

- North Atlantic and Northern Europe: NATO, JEF and High North activity.
- Caribbean: counter-drug work and hurricane-season response.
- Middle East: an enduring naval presence in the Gulf region.
- South Atlantic and Antarctic: Falklands reassurance and HMS Protector.
- Mediterranean, West Africa and Black Sea: presence and allied activity.
- Indo-Pacific: two forward-deployed patrol ships.
- Continuous at-sea deterrent: Vanguard-class submarine patrols.

Fleet units and shore establishments

The Royal Navy is organised around ships, submarines, naval air squadrons and shore establishments rather than regiments.

Location	Where it is	Main public role
HMNB Portsmouth	Portsmouth, Hampshire	Surface Fleet and the Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers.
HMNB Devonport	Plymouth, Devon	Major surface-fleet, engineering and support base.
HMNB Clyde	Faslane, Argyll and Bute	Submarine Service and the continuous at-sea deterrent.
HMS Raleigh	Torpoint, Cornwall	Ten-week Initial Naval Training for ratings and specialist schools.
Britannia Royal Naval College	Dartmouth, Devon	Initial officer training.
HMS Collingwood	Fareham, Hampshire	Warfare and weapon-engineering training.
HMS Sultan	Gosport, Hampshire	Marine and air-engineering training.
RNAS Culdrose / HMS Seahawk	Helston, Cornwall	Maritime aviation, Merlin helicopters and Fleet Air Arm support.
RNAS Yeovilton / HMS Heron	Yeovilton, Somerset	Wildcat Maritime Force and Commando Helicopter Force.
HMS Excellent	Whale Island, Portsmouth	Navy Command activity and specialist training.



HOW THE FIGHTING FORCE FITS TOGETHER

The Surface Fleet operates carriers, destroyers, frigates, patrol and mine-warfare vessels. The Submarine Service operates attack and ballistic-missile submarines. The Fleet Air Arm provides naval aviation, while the Royal Fleet Auxiliary sustains operations at sea.

Joining process for ratings

The exact eligibility and role requirements are shown in the candidate portal. This is the standard route for a typical rating application.

01

APPLICATION

Choose a profession, confirm eligibility and submit the online form.

02

DAA

Complete six timed multiple-choice tests: verbal, numerical, work rate, spatial, mechanical and electrical.

03

INTERVIEW

Explain your motivation, role knowledge, background, fitness, service awareness and readiness for naval life.

04

CPC

Attend the four-day Candidate Preparation Course, including medical and fitness assessment.

05

SECURITY & OFFER

Complete the required checks and receive a training date when all conditions are met.

06

INITIAL TRAINING

Begin Initial Naval Training at HMS Raleigh.

Initial training, professions and interview

Know the environment you are entering and the contribution your chosen profession makes to the ship, submarine, squadron or shore establishment.

Initial Naval Training

The Royal Navy announced a modernised model for 2026. Ratings complete a 10-week Initial Naval Training course at HMS Raleigh before moving into specialist training and allocation within their chosen profession.

Profession areas

- Warfare and operations.
- Engineering and technical work.
- Logistics, supply and catering.
- Medical and healthcare.
- Aviation and air engineering.
- Submarine Service roles.

Interview topics

- Why the Royal Navy and why this profession?
- What does your chosen role do at sea and ashore?
- What happens during DAA, CPC and initial training?
- Where could you serve and what are the realities of deployment?
- How have work, sport, family and education prepared you?
- What is one current Royal Navy operation or deployment?

Officer route

Officer candidates prepare for the Admiralty Interview Board. The current AIB assesses communication, planning, teamwork and officer potential. Under the Royal Navy model announced for 2026, officers first complete 10 weeks of Initial Naval Training at HMS Raleigh, then move to a redesigned 14-week commissioning course at Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth.

[OPEN DAA PRACTICE](#)

From Tudor administration to a global fleet

The Royal Navy has no single simple birthday. Its identity developed through centuries of permanent administration, dockyards, ships and operational service.

Date	Development	Why it matters
1546	Henry VIII established the Navy Board.	Permanent administration and dockyard management became more formal.
1660	The Restoration strengthened a permanent professional fleet.	The service developed the organisation associated with the modern Royal Navy.
1707	The Acts of Union created Great Britain.	English and Scottish naval institutions served the new state.
21 Oct 1805	Victory at Trafalgar under Vice Admiral Lord Nelson.	French and Spanish fleets were defeated; Trafalgar Day remains central to naval heritage.
1914-18	Grand Fleet operations and the Battle of Jutland.	The fleet contained German sea power and protected Britain's maritime position.
1939-45	Atlantic, Arctic, Mediterranean, Pacific and amphibious campaigns.	Sea control, convoy protection and carrier aviation were decisive to Allied survival and victory.
1969	Continuous at-sea deterrence began.	A ballistic-missile submarine has remained on deterrent patrol continuously since.
1982	Op CORPORATE retook the Falkland Islands.	Carrier aviation, amphibious shipping, submarines, escorts and the RFA operated as one task force.
Today	Carrier strike, undersea warfare, deterrence and global presence.	The fleet works jointly with UK forces and routinely with NATO and allied navies.

Professions, platforms and life at sea

Choose the work, not only the uniform. The profession determines your training, watchkeeping, technical responsibility and contribution to the ship or unit.

Profession family	Typical contribution	Questions to answer before applying
Warfare	Navigation, sensors, weapons, operations-room work and command decisions.	Can you work shifts, process information and remain accurate under pressure?
Engineering	Maintain marine, weapon, air or communication systems.	Do you enjoy fault-finding, technical training and accountable maintenance?
Fleet Air Arm	Fly, operate or support aircraft from ships and shore.	Is the specific aircrew or engineering route compatible with your aptitude and medical standard?
Submarine Service	Operate and sustain attack or deterrent submarines.	Have you considered confined living, security, watchkeeping and extended patrols?
Logistics	Supply, catering, finance, personnel support and operational sustainment.	Can you deliver reliable service when space, time and stores are limited?
Medical	Healthcare at sea, ashore and on operations.	Do you meet the professional or training route for the exact medical role?

Watchkeeping

Ships and submarines operate continuously. Depending on role, you may work a watch system while also completing maintenance, training and duties.

Ship's company

Every branch is interdependent. Operational output comes from warfare, engineering, logistics, medical and command teams meeting the same standard.

Time away

Deployments, exercises, courses and duty can disrupt civilian plans. Understand the effect on relationships before presenting yourself as ready.

Interview proof

Explain the platform, department, initial training and first employment of your chosen profession in plain language.

Defence Aptitude Assessment

A role-matching assessment, not a general intelligence label. Every section is timed and the required score depends on the profession.

Section	What it measures	How to prepare
Verbal reasoning	Understanding and evaluating written information.	Read short passages; separate fact, inference and assumption.
Numerical reasoning	Using and interpreting numerical information.	Practise fractions, percentages, ratios, units and mental arithmetic.
Work rate	Solving simple problems quickly and accurately.	Use timed symbol and rule-matching drills without sacrificing accuracy.
Spatial reasoning	Visualising shapes from different views.	Practise rotations, nets, reflections and two-to-three-dimensional problems.
Mechanical comprehension	Understanding forces and simple mechanisms.	Review levers, gears, pulleys, pressure, motion and mechanical advantage.
Electrical comprehension	Understanding basic electrical concepts.	Review circuits, current, voltage, resistance, switches and components.

Format

The official Royal Navy assessment has six multiple-choice tests. The formal sitting takes about 90 minutes and must be completed in one sitting.

Where

The link is normally available in the candidate portal for 14 days. Candidates can use a compliant device at home or arrange an AFCO sitting.

Professional standard

- Use the official familiarisation questions first.
- Practise on a large screen under time pressure.
- Read each section's instructions before chasing speed.
- Do not use AI or unauthorised help during the formal test.

Afterwards

Your Career Adviser discusses the result and which professions your scores support. A pass for one role is not automatically a pass for another.

[OPEN 36 PRACTICE QUESTIONS](#)

Ships, submarines and naval aviation

Know the current capability, the operational purpose and where your chosen role contributes.

Capability	Current examples	Purpose
Carrier strike	Queen Elizabeth-class; F-35B Lightning	Embarked air power, command and allied operations.
Surface combat	Type 45 destroyers; Type 23 frigates	Air defence, anti-submarine warfare, escort and maritime security.
Patrol and mine warfare	River-class OPVs; Hunt-class vessels	Presence, protection, surveillance and mine countermeasures.
Submarines	Astute-class; Vanguard-class	Attack-submarine operations and continuous at-sea deterrence.
Fleet Air Arm	Merlin Mk2/Mk4; Wildcat HMA2	Anti-submarine, surveillance, lift and ship-to-shore support.
Support	Royal Fleet Auxiliary Tide and Bay classes	Fuel, stores, aviation support and amphibious sustainment.

Dreadnought-class submarines and Type 26/31 frigates are future or entering-service capabilities, not a fully fielded replacement fleet.

Defence Aptitude Assessment / Part 1

Original practice questions in the six official DAA skill areas. Do not open the worked solutions until all three parts are complete.

SET A TIMER FOR 12 MINUTES / SELECT ONE ANSWER PER QUESTION

01 VERBAL

Which word is closest in meaning to **RETAIN**?

- ☐ A. release
- ☐ B. keep
- ☐ C. divide
- ☐ D. weaken

02 VERBAL

Which word is the opposite of **SCARCE**?

- ☐ A. hidden
- ☐ B. costly
- ☐ C. plentiful
- ☐ D. damaged

03 VERBAL

COMPASS is to **DIRECTION** as **THERMOMETER** is to:

- ☐ A. pressure
- ☐ B. temperature
- ☐ C. distance
- ☐ D. weight

04 VERBAL

The briefing begins at 08:30. Candidates must report 15 minutes early. When must they report?

- ☐ A. 08:00
- ☐ B. 08:10
- ☐ C. 08:15
- ☐ D. 08:45

05 NUMERICAL

A candidate runs 2.4 km in 12 minutes. What is the average pace per kilometre?

- ☐ A. 4:30
- ☐ B. 5:00
- ☐ C. 5:30
- ☐ D. 6:00

06 NUMERICAL

A store has issued 18 of 24 radios. What percentage has been issued?

- ☐ A. 60%
- ☐ B. 66%
- ☐ C. 75%
- ☐ D. 80%

07 NUMERICAL

Fuel and water are loaded in a ratio of 3:2. There are 40 containers in total. How many contain fuel?

- ☐ A. 24
- ☐ B. 20
- ☐ C. 16
- ☐ D. 12

08 NUMERICAL

A vehicle covers 54 km at an average speed of 72 km/h. How long does the journey take?

- ☐ A. 35 min
- ☐ B. 40 min
- ☐ C. 42 min
- ☐ D. 45 min

NOTEBOOK METHOD

WORKED SOLUTIONS

Defence Aptitude Assessment / Part 2

Original practice questions in the six official DAA skill areas. Do not open the worked solutions until all three parts are complete.

SET A TIMER FOR 12 MINUTES / SELECT ONE ANSWER PER QUESTION

09 WORK RATE

Which code is an exact match for K7M2P9?

- ☐ A. K7N2P9
☐ B. K7M2P9
☐ C. K7M2R9
☐ D. K7M29P

10 WORK RATE

What is the next number: 3, 6, 12, 24, ?

- ☐ A. 30
☐ B. 36
☐ C. 48
☐ D. 54

11 WORK RATE

How many pairs are identical? AB71/AB71, K9LP/K9PL, 44MN/44MN, QR5T/QR5T

- ☐ A. 1
☐ B. 2
☐ C. 3
☐ D. 4

12 WORK RATE

Each letter moves one place forward in the alphabet. CAMP becomes:

- ☐ A. DBNQ
☐ B. DBOQ
☐ C. CBMP
☐ D. EBNR

13 SPATIAL

You are facing east. Turn left, then make an about turn. Which direction are you facing?

- ☐ A. north
☐ B. east
☐ C. south
☐ D. west

14 SPATIAL

An arrow points north-west. It rotates 90 degrees clockwise. Where does it point?

- ☐ A. south-west
☐ B. north-east
☐ C. south-east
☐ D. north

15 SPATIAL

A box has A on the front and B on the right. Turn the box so its right side becomes the front. Which letter faces front?

- ☐ A. A
☐ B. B
☐ C. both
☐ D. neither

16 SPATIAL

A marker is left of two circles. In a mirror image, where is the marker?

- ☐ A. above
☐ B. below
☐ C. left
☐ D. right

NOTEBOOK METHOD

WORKED SOLUTIONS

Defence Aptitude Assessment / Part 3

Original practice questions in the six official DAA skill areas. Do not open the worked solutions until all three parts are complete.

SET A TIMER FOR 12 MINUTES / SELECT ONE ANSWER PER QUESTION

17 MECHANICAL

Gear A turns clockwise and meshes with B. B meshes with C. Which way does C turn?

- ☐ A. clockwise
- ☐ B. anti-clockwise
- ☐ C. it stops
- ☐ D. cannot be known

18 MECHANICAL

On a lever, moving the effort farther from the pivot generally:

- ☐ A. increases force needed
- ☐ B. reduces force needed
- ☐ C. removes movement
- ☐ D. changes weight

19 MECHANICAL

A single fixed pulley mainly:

- ☐ A. doubles the load
- ☐ B. halves the distance
- ☐ C. changes force direction
- ☐ D. stores energy

20 MECHANICAL

The same force is applied over a smaller area. Pressure will:

- ☐ A. fall
- ☐ B. stay equal
- ☐ C. become zero
- ☐ D. rise

21 ELECTRICAL

A 12 V circuit has a resistance of 4 ohms. Using $V = IR$, what current flows?

- ☐ A. 2 A
- ☐ B. 2.5 A
- ☐ C. 3 A
- ☐ D. 4 A

22 ELECTRICAL

Two 3-ohm resistors are connected in series. What is the total resistance?

- ☐ A. 1.5 ohms
- ☐ B. 6 ohms
- ☐ C. 9 ohms
- ☐ D. 12 ohms

23 ELECTRICAL

Two lamps are connected in parallel. One lamp fails open. The other lamp will usually:

- ☐ A. remain on
- ☐ B. also go off
- ☐ C. double its resistance
- ☐ D. short the supply

24 ELECTRICAL

What happens when a switch in a simple series circuit is opened?

- ☐ A. voltage doubles
- ☐ B. current rises
- ☐ C. resistance vanishes
- ☐ D. current stops

NOTEBOOK METHOD

WORKED SOLUTIONS

Record, mark and improve

Use a notebook to record your answers. The ebook stays clean while you build an error log that can be used again.

Step	Action	What to do
01	Set up	Number a notebook page from 1 to 24 before starting the timer.
02	Commit	Write one answer letter for every question. Do not check the solutions early.
03	Mark	Use the worked solutions and score each skill area separately.
04	Correct	For every miss, write the method, the cause and one new example.

Self-reflection after marking

Answer these questions in your notebook:

- Which skill area cost the most points?
- Was each miss caused by knowledge, method, reading accuracy or rushing?
- Which question took too long, and what faster method should replace it?
- What will you practise before repeating a timed set?

THE IMPROVEMENT RULE

Do not memorise the answer key. Correct the method, practise a fresh example and repeat under the same time limit. Track accuracy first, then speed.

[OPEN WORKED SOLUTIONS](#)

DAA solutions

Mark the answer, then write the method you missed in an error log.

Q	Ans	Worked method
1	B	Retain means to keep or continue to hold.
2	C	Scarce means limited or hard to find. Plentiful is the opposite.
3	B	A compass indicates direction; a thermometer indicates temperature.
4	C	08:30 minus 15 minutes is 08:15.
5	B	12 minutes divided by 2.4 km equals 5 minutes per kilometre.
6	C	18 divided by 24 is 0.75, or 75%.
7	A	There are 5 ratio parts. 40 divided by 5 is 8; 3 parts is 24.
8	D	Time equals distance divided by speed: $54/72 = 0.75$ hours = 45 minutes.
9	B	Only option B matches every character and position.
10	C	Each number doubles.
11	C	The first, third and fourth pairs match. The second changes LP to PL.
12	A	C to D, A to B, M to N and P to Q.

Q	Ans	Worked method
13	C	Left from east faces north; an about turn from north faces south.
14	B	A quarter turn clockwise moves north-west to north-east.
15	B	The side labelled B is deliberately rotated into the front position.
16	D	A mirror reverses left and right.
17	A	Each gear reverses direction. Two contacts return C to clockwise.
18	B	A longer effort arm provides greater mechanical advantage.
19	C	A fixed pulley changes the direction of pull but gives no ideal force advantage.
20	D	Pressure equals force divided by area, so a smaller area increases pressure.
21	C	Current I equals V/R: 12 divided by 4 equals 3 A.
22	B	Series resistance adds: $3 + 3 = 6$ ohms.
23	A	Parallel branches provide separate current paths.
24	D	Opening the switch breaks the only current path.

ERROR LOG: write the question number, the missed method and one new example. Retest the category after 48 hours.

[BACK TO QUESTIONS](#)



ROYAL MARINES

Commando forces trained to operate from sea to land in the world's most demanding environments.

28 OCT 1664

CORPS FORMATION

32 WEEKS

COMMANDO TRAINING

10

VICTORIA CROSS RECIPIENTS

The Corps badge and what it means

The badge carries the Corps' history, worldwide service and naval identity.

The globe

Granted in 1827 in place of listing every battle honour, recognising Royal Marines service around the world.

The laurel wreath

Commemorates the gallantry of the Corps at Belle Isle in 1761.

Gibraltar

The single battle honour carried on the badge, marking the capture of Gibraltar in 1704 and subsequent defence.

The crown and lion

Represent the Corps' Royal title and service to the Crown.

Per Mare Per Terram

The Corps motto means 'By sea, by land'.



History and battle honours

The modern Corps developed from maritime infantry raised in the seventeenth century and has served in major campaigns across the world.

Date	Development
28 October 1664	The Duke of York and Albany's Maritime Regiment of Foot was raised. The Corps traces its formation to this date.
1704	Marines took part in the capture of Gibraltar.
1761	Gallantry at Belle Isle was later represented by the laurel wreath.
1802	The title Royal Marines was granted.
1827	The globe was granted to recognise worldwide service.
1855	Infantry arm became the Royal Marines Light Infantry.
1859	Artillery arm became the Royal Marine Artillery.
1923	The RMLI and RMA were amalgamated into one Corps.
1942 onward	Royal Marines began forming their own Commando units during the Second World War. The Commando role subsequently became central to the Corps.
2026	3 Commando Brigade was renamed UK Commando Force.

Campaign heritage

Royal Marines history includes Gibraltar, the Napoleonic Wars, Crimea, the First and Second World Wars, Korea, the Falklands, Iraq, Afghanistan and continuing maritime and commando operations. The globe means the badge does not attempt to list every action.

Current units and locations

Learn the purpose and location of the main units that make up UK Commando Force.

Unit	Location	Primary public role
40 Commando	Norton Manor Camp, Taunton	High-readiness commando operations.
42 Commando	Bickleigh / Plymouth area	Maritime security and specialist ship-force tasks.
43 Commando Fleet Protection Group	HMNB Clyde, Faslane	Protects the UK's strategic nuclear deterrent.
45 Commando	RM Condor, Arbroath	Commando operations, including cold-weather expertise.
47 Commando (Raiding Group)	RM Tamar / Plymouth	Littoral manoeuvre, raiding craft and amphibious operations.
48 Commando Support Group	RM Chivenor, North Devon	Logistic, engineering, medical and support capability.
30 Commando Information Exploitation Group	Stonehouse, Plymouth	Reconnaissance, intelligence, communications and information exploitation.
Commando Training Centre Royal Marines	Lympstone, Devon	Recruit, Young Officer, command and specialist training.

Lympstone lies on the east bank of the River Exe in Devon, south of Exeter. It is the home of CTCRM and the centre of Royal Marines training.

Royal Marines on operations in 2026

Operation / readiness	People and place	Operational purpose
Cold Response	Around 1,500 personnel; Camp Viking, Northern Norway	Arctic warfare and NATO operations in the High North.
Arctic Fox	45 Commando; Norway, Sweden and Finland	A 1,500 km, 40-day winter patrol testing sustained Arctic operations.
Eastern Mediterranean	Royal Marines Air Defence Troop; Cyprus	Rapid reinforcement and protection of UK forces and facilities.
NATO high readiness	42 Commando-led UK task group	Ready for NATO special operations tasking from July 2026.

Operational snapshot: 28 July 2026

Joining process: application to training

Every stage tests a different part of suitability. Prepare for the complete process, not only the fitness test.

01

APPLICATION

Submit the online application and complete eligibility checks.

02

DAA

Complete the Defence Aptitude Assessment for cognitive and role suitability.

03

INTERVIEW

Demonstrate motivation, Corps knowledge, personal evidence and preparation.

04

PJFA

Complete the Pre-Joining Fitness Assessment under the current candidate instruction.

05

CPC

Attend the four-day Royal Marines Candidate Preparation Course and complete physical, swimming, medical and suitability assessments.

06

ROP

Complete the two-week Recruit Orientation Phase at CTCRM.

07

RECRUIT TRAINING

Begin the 32-week Royal Marines Commando course at Lymington.

PJFA and Commando CPC

The PJFA is the pre-joining fitness assessment. CPC is a residential assessment of physical readiness and suitability for commando training.

PJFA

- Minimum pass: MSFT level 10.5.
- Minimum pass: 30 press-ups to the bleep.
- Minimum pass: 40 sit-ups to the bleep.
- Minimum pass: 4 overhand pull-ups to the bleep.

Preparation priority

Build aerobic fitness, strict bodyweight strength, movement quality and the ability to recover. One good score is not enough if you cannot train again the next day.

Commando CPC

- Four-day course for Royal Marines candidates.
- Includes a VO2 max / bleep-test assessment.
- Includes press-ups, sit-ups and overhand pull-ups.
- Includes swimming assessment and suitability tasks.
- Includes medical and candidate preparation activity.

Swimming assessment

Current Royal Navy guidance describes stepping from a three-metre platform, swimming about 150 metres breaststroke without touching the side or floor, treading water for two minutes, and leaving the pool unaided.

ROP and the 32-week Commando course

ROP introduces life at CTCRM. Recruit training then develops military skills, fieldcraft, endurance, leadership and commando capability.

Stage	Focus
ROP: 2 weeks	Orientation, administration, physical preparation and readiness for mainstream training.
Weeks 1-10	Foundation military skills, physical development, fieldcraft and team standards.
Weeks 11-15	Further field skills, weapons, tactics and progressive endurance.
Weeks 16-23	Advanced soldiering, amphibious and tactical development.
Weeks 24-32	Commando phase, tests, final exercises and preparation for the operational unit.

ROP physical expectations

- Multi-stage fitness test level 11.
- 5 strict overhand pull-ups.
- 40 press-ups.
- 50 sit-ups.

The commando tests

The final phase is associated with the endurance course, nine-mile speed march, Tarzan assault course and 30-mile march. These are trained and conducted under service supervision. Do not imitate recruit-training loads or obstacles without qualified instruction.

Specialisations and career development

After general duties, Marines build specialist skills that support the operational force.

WARFARE

- Heavy weapons and fires.
- Signals and communications.
- Armoured support and landing craft.
- Mountain Leader and reconnaissance routes.

INFORMATION WARFARE

- Intelligence and surveillance.
- Information exploitation.
- Communications and specialist technical roles.

ENGINEERING SUPPORT

- Vehicle, equipment and technical support.
- Specialist maintenance and operational engineering.

WARFARE SUPPORT

- Physical training, clerical and administrative support.
- Stores, logistics and operational support functions.

The official careers site groups specialisations into Warfare, Information Warfare, Engineering Support and Warfare Support. Exact specialist routes depend on aptitude, service need, experience and available courses.

Ten Royal Marines Victoria Cross recipients

The Victoria Cross recognises valour in the presence of the enemy.

John Prettyjohns

Inkerman, 1854. Defended an exposed position with a small group after ammunition was exhausted.

Thomas Wilkinson

Sebastopol, 1855. Helped rescue a wounded soldier under heavy fire.

George Dare Dowell

Crimea, 1855. Boarded a burning vessel and assisted its crew while under fire.

Lewis Halliday

Peking, 1900. Continued leading the defence after being severely wounded.

Walter Parker

Gallipoli, 1915. Carried messages and helped wounded men under intense fire.

Victoria Cross recipients continued

The Victoria Cross recognises valour in the presence of the enemy.

Francis Harvey

Jutland, 1916. Mortally wounded, he ordered the magazine flooded and helped save HMS Lion.

Frederick Lumsden

Francilly, 1917. Organised the recovery of captured enemy guns under heavy fire.

Edward Bamford

Zeebrugge, 1918. Led the Marine storming company during the assault on the Mole.

Norman Finch

Zeebrugge, 1918. Maintained fire from HMS Vindictive's foretop despite casualties and heavy fire.

Thomas Peck Hunter

Comacchio, 1945. Advanced with a Bren gun to draw fire and enable his troop to move; awarded posthumously.

Interview and officer preparation

Use evidence from your own life. A strong answer connects motivation, service knowledge and action already taken.

Practice questions

- Why do you want to become a Royal Marines Commando?
- Why the Royal Marines rather than another service?
- Explain PJFA, CPC, ROP and recruit training.
- Where is CTCRM and what is trained there?
- What does each part of the Corps badge mean?
- Name key units within UK Commando Force.
- Describe a time you led when under pressure.

Officer route

- Application and Defence Aptitude Assessment.
- Selection interview and officer suitability assessment.
- Pre-Joining Fitness Assessment.
- Admiralty Interview Board.
- Royal Marines Officer Selection Course.
- Young Officer training at CTCRM.

Officer standard

Understand the task, communicate a plan, listen to the team, make a decision and accept responsibility.
Leadership is measured through behaviour, not claims.

[OPEN DAA PRACTICE](#)[START ROYAL MARINES PREP](#)[BOOK THE PREP WEEKEND](#)

PJFA: know the required standard

The Pre-Joining Fitness Assessment is a minimum selection standard. Technique and cadence count; preparation should create a margin above the line.

Event	Current minimum pass	Preparation target
Multi-stage fitness test	Level 10.5	Arrive able to repeat 11+ in training without a taper.
Press-ups to the bleep	30 repetitions	Build strict, repeatable sets beyond the minimum.
Sit-ups to the bleep	40 repetitions	Own the cadence and full accepted range.
Overhand pull-ups to the bleep	4 repetitions	Build clean strength with no kicking or shortened reps.

The standard

All four elements must meet the current pass line. A strong run does not compensate for a failed strength event.

Technique

- Train to the official cadence.
- Use the full required range on every repetition.
- Stop counting repetitions that would not pass.
- Practise the test order when fresh and when fatigued.

Build a reserve

Minimum numbers leave no allowance for nerves, travel, poor sleep or an unfamiliar floor and bar. Train beyond the minimum without testing to failure every day.

Four-day CPC

After PJFA, CPC assesses physical readiness, swimming, medical suitability, teamwork and potential for the two-week ROP and 32-week recruit training at CTCRM Lympstone.

Commando force from sea to land

Know the current capability, the operational purpose and where your chosen role contributes.

Capability	Current public examples	Purpose
Individual weapons	L403A1/KS-1, SA80A2, C8	Personal weapon systems across Commando tasks.
Support weapons	GPMG, heavy machine gun, 81 mm mortar	Sustained fire and indirect support.
Anti-armour	Javelin and NLAW	Defeat armoured threats at different ranges.
Mobility	Viking, BV206, Jackal 2, Polaris MRZR	All-terrain movement, protection and tactical mobility.
Littoral craft	Landing and raiding craft	Move and fight between ship, coast and inland objective.
Air integration	Merlin and Wildcat	Lift, reconnaissance, protection and maritime integration.

Commando capability comes from trained people combining communications, mobility, fires, intelligence and logistics in difficult terrain.



BRITISH ARMY

Land power built from combat arms, combat support and the services that sustain operations.



1660-61

STANDING ARMY ROOTS

13 WEEKS

ADULT BASIC TRAINING

3 DAYS / 2 NIGHTS

ASSESSMENT EXPERIENCE

Purpose, history and organisation

The Army fights and operates on land. Its combat units depend on technical, medical, logistical and information support.

Formation

The New Model Army of 1645 was an important predecessor. A standing Army emerged after the Restoration in 1660. Charles II issued the warrant creating the English Army on 26 January 1661. After the 1707 Union, English and Scottish military institutions developed as the British Army.

Army Values

- Courage.
- Discipline.
- Respect for Others.
- Integrity.
- Loyalty.
- Selfless Commitment.

How it is organised

- Combat arms: Infantry and Royal Armoured Corps.
- Combat support: Artillery, Engineers, Signals, Army Air Corps and Intelligence.
- Combat service support: Logistics, equipment support, medical and personnel services.
- Specialist capabilities: aviation, cyber, EOD, electronic warfare and technical trades.

Representative commitments

- NATO: Op CABRIT in Estonia and Poland; Op ELGIN with Kosovo Force (KFOR) in Kosovo.
- Cyprus on Op TOSCA; support in Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands.
- Training hubs in Kenya (BATUK), Belize (BATSUB) and Brunei.
- Germany supports forward holding and training across Europe.
- Units also deploy to the United States and other allied nations for multinational exercises; locations and units rotate.

TRAINING AND COMMISSIONING ESTABLISHMENTS

- Soldier Academy: adult Phase 1 training across Catterick, Pirbright and Winchester.
- Catterick: Infantry and Royal Armoured Corps routes, including the Combat Infantry Course.
- Pirbright and Winchester: Phase 1 for listed non-infantry roles.
- Sandhurst: Regular Army officer commissioning course.



From the standing Army to today's integrated force

The Army's history is carried by its regiments and corps. Their identities, battle honours and traditions sit inside one modern fighting force.

Date	Why it matters
1645	The New Model Army created a nationally organised field army during the English Civil Wars.
1660-61	After the Restoration, Charles II retained permanent troops and issued the warrant of 26 January 1661 that established the standing Army.
1707	The Acts of Union brought English and Scottish establishments into the developing British state and Army.
1815	At Waterloo, Wellington's Anglo-Allied army and Blucher's Prussians defeated Napoleon, ending the Napoleonic Wars.
1854-56	The Crimean War exposed failures in supply, medicine and command and helped drive major military reforms.
1914-18	The small pre-war regular Army expanded into a mass force and fought on the Western Front and across the world.
1939-45	British and Commonwealth soldiers fought in France, North Africa, Italy, North-West Europe, Burma and other global campaigns.
1982	Army units fought within the joint Falklands task force, including 2 and 3 PARA with 3 Commando Brigade and units of 5 Infantry Brigade.
1990-91	Around 35,000 British personnel served in the Gulf campaign; the Army contribution centred on 1st Armoured Division.
Today	The Army supports homeland defence, NATO deterrence, overseas garrisons, training partnerships and readiness for high-intensity warfighting.

Battle honours

Battle honours belong to regiments and corps, not to the Army as one single list. Learn the honours and history of the organisation you want to join, and understand what its current units do.

History for interview

Know the formation date, cap badge, motto, one or two major campaigns, current locations and the role of the regiment or corps today. Explain the facts clearly rather than reciting a memorised list.

Regular Infantry regiments and battalion homes

Infantry identity is regimental. Learn the battalion, role, location, history and current formation for the regiment you want to join.

Regiment	Regular battalion	Current official location
Grenadier Guards	1st Battalion	Lille Barracks, Aldershot
Coldstream Guards	1st Battalion	Victoria Barracks, Windsor
Scots Guards	1st Battalion	Somme Barracks, Catterick
Irish Guards	1st Battalion	Mons Barracks, Aldershot
Welsh Guards	1st Battalion	Combermere Barracks, Windsor
Royal Regiment of Scotland	2 SCOTS / 3 SCOTS / 4 SCOTS	Penicuik / Fort George / Dhekelia, Cyprus
Duke of Lancaster's Regiment	1st Battalion	Weeton Barracks, Preston
Royal Anglian Regiment	1st and 2nd Battalions	Kendrew Barracks, Cottesmore
Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment	1 PWRR	Episkopi to Woolwich transition, summer 2026
Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	1st Battalion	Tidworth, Wiltshire
Royal Yorkshire Regiment	1st / 2nd Battalions	Catterick / Warminster
Mercian Regiment	1 MERCIAN	Picton Barracks, Bulford
Royal Welsh	1 R WELSH	Lucknow Barracks, Tidworth
Royal Irish Regiment	1st Battalion	Clive Barracks, Tern Hill
Parachute Regiment	2 PARA / 3 PARA	Merville Barracks, Colchester
The Rifles	1 / 2 / 3 / 5 RIFLES	Chepstow / Lisburn / Edinburgh / Bulford
Royal Gurkha Rifles	1st / 2nd Battalions	Brunei / Shorncliffe, Kent



KNOW YOUR REGIMENT BEFORE INTERVIEW

Use official regiment pages to learn:

- Its role, current formation and battalion location.
- Its cap badge, motto, recruiting area and one important campaign.
- The training route for your chosen role and where that training happens.
- How its soldiers contribute to the Army today.

Unit basing changes as battalions rotate, deploy and re-role. These are the locations published on official Army pages and checked on 6 August 2026.

Armoured regiments and specialist establishments

The Army also organises soldiers through regiments and corps built around mounted combat, artillery, engineering, signals, aviation and support.

Regular Royal Armoured Corps locations

Regiment	Current official location
1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards (QDG)	Robertson Barracks, Swanton Morley
Household Cavalry	Hyde Park Barracks, London
King's Royal Hussars	Aliwal Barracks, Tidworth
Light Dragoons	Gaza Barracks, Catterick
Queen's Royal Hussars	Assaye Barracks, Tidworth
Royal Dragoon Guards	Battlesbury Barracks, Warminster
Royal Scots Dragoon Guards	Waterloo Lines, Leuchars
Royal Lancers	Cambrai Lines, Catterick
Royal Tank Regiment	Aliwal Barracks, Tidworth

Training and corps establishments

Establishment	Main purpose
Soldier Academy (North), Catterick	Catterick trains Infantry and Royal Armoured Corps candidates; the ITC delivers the Combat Infantry Course.
RMAS Sandhurst	Regular Army officer commissioning.
Larkhill, Wiltshire	Royal Artillery training.
Chatham and Minley	Royal Engineers professional training.
Blandford Camp	Royal Signals training.
Lyneham, Wiltshire	Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers training.
Worthy Down	Defence logistics, policing and administration training.
Middle Wallop	Army Aviation Centre and Army Air Corps training.
Bovington Garrison	Home of the Royal Armoured Corps.

HOW THE FIELD ARMY FITS TOGETHER

SOLDIER > SECTION > PLATOON > COMPANY / SQUADRON / BATTERY > BATTALION / REGIMENT > BRIGADE > DIVISION

Formal organisation and everyday names differ by cap badge. Infantry uses company and battalion; armoured units use squadron and regiment; artillery uses battery and regiment. The official title is 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards; the regiment is commonly called the Queen's Dragoon Guards or QDG.

Application and Soldier Assessment

Assessment lasts three days and two nights. You are observed throughout, including how you listen, work with others and respond to instruction.

Stage	What happens
Application	Choose a role, submit eligibility details and speak with the recruiting team.
Assessment Centre	Medical assessment, Army Cognitive Test, literacy and numeracy where required, fitness, team tasks and interview.
Role offer	Your scores, medical status and eligibility determine which roles are available.
Joining instructions	Complete security and administration, then receive a course date and preparation information.
Phase 1	Adult soldier basic training is currently a 13-week course. Junior and specialist routes differ.
Phase 2	Trade, regimental or corps training for the chosen role.
Preference and allocation	Where choice exists, state preferred regiments or battalions; later postings use Personal Posting Preferences (PPP). Performance, suitability, vacancies and the needs of the Army apply. First choice is not guaranteed.
Unit	Continue professional and collective training in the Field Army.

Assessment fitness

- Mid-thigh pull for lower-body force.
- Seated throw with a 4 kg medicine ball for upper-body power.
- Continuous 2 km run after an 800 m warm-up.
- Required scores are shown on the official page for the role you chose.

Basic training and role training

Every soldier learns military fundamentals before developing the specialist skills of a regiment or corps.

13-week basic training

- Military discipline, standards and personal administration.
- Rifle handling, fieldcraft and living in the field.
- First aid and battlefield skills.
- Navigation and physical development.
- Teamwork, inspections and safe working practices.

Soldier Academy locations

- Catterick: Infantry and Royal Armoured Corps routes.
- Pirbright: training for many non-infantry roles.
- Winchester: training for selected non-infantry roles.
- Sandhurst: Regular Army officer commissioning course.

Infantry route

Adult Infantry soldiers complete the 28-week Combat Infantry Course at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick. It combines basic training and Infantry Initial Trade Training before the soldier joins a battalion.

Phase 2

Role training varies widely. A medic, vehicle mechanic, signaller, gunner, driver, intelligence operator and infantry soldier do different daily work. Know the exact course and qualifications for the role you selected.

Preparation beyond fitness

- Feet, footwear and basic kit care.
- Early starts and punctuality.
- Laundry, ironing and shared living.
- Listening, note taking and learning from correction.

Parachute Regiment, Ranger Regiment and SFSG

These organisations are demanding and distinct. Use the correct public terminology.

Organisation	Public role and position
1 PARA	The core infantry component of the Special Forces Strike Group.
2 PARA	Airborne infantry in 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team, based in Colchester.
3 PARA	Airborne infantry in 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team, based in Colchester.
4 PARA	Army Reserve airborne infantry.
P Company	Pre-Parachute Selection during the training route for those seeking to serve with airborne forces.
Ranger Regiment	The Army's Land Special Operations Force within the Army Special Operations Brigade. Its public partner-force mission includes train, advise, assist and accompany (TAAA). It is not a UKSF unit.
SFSG	SFSG means Special Forces Strike Group. Redesignated from the Special Forces Support Group in December 2025, it is a UKSF formation with 1 PARA as its core infantry component.

The current official Paratrooper role page publishes a 76 kg mid-thigh pull, 3.1 m seated medicine-ball throw and 2 km run in 8:25. Train beyond the minimum and confirm the standard on your live role page before assessment.

Interview and regimental knowledge

The interviewer needs evidence that you understand the Army, your role and the life you are choosing.

Practice questions

- Why the Army and why this regiment or corps?
- What does your chosen role do in barracks, training and operations?
- Where will Phase 1 and Phase 2 take place?
- What are the Army Values?
- Describe a time you took responsibility after a mistake.
- Describe a time you worked with someone difficult.
- How have you prepared for field conditions and shared living?

Know your organisation

- Role, regiment or corps and cap badge.
- Main units and locations.
- Training route and first employment.
- One historical event or battle honour.
- How the role supports a brigade or division.
- One current Army operation or overseas commitment.

Answer structure

State the situation, your responsibility, the action you personally took and the result. Finish with what you learned and what you would improve.

Officer route and AOSB

Officer candidates are assessed for judgement, communication, leadership, motivation and the ability to learn.

Stage	What it examines
Application and interview	Eligibility, motivation and evidence of officer potential.
AOSB Briefing	Initial assessment, psychometric work, planning, group activity and interview.
AOSB Main Board	Leadership, planning, communication, outdoor tasks, current affairs, written work and interviews.
Commissioning Course	Forty-two weeks at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, delivered in three fourteen-week terms.
Regimental selection and Phase 2	Selection and professional training for the chosen arm or service.

During group tasks

- Confirm the aim and time available.
- Offer a clear, workable idea.
- Invite useful input and listen.
- Help the team execute, not only discuss.

When the plan changes

- State what has changed.
- Recalculate time and priorities.
- Give a concise new direction.
- Own the outcome without blaming the group.

Build your preparation route

Choose the level of support that matches the problem you need to solve.

The Objective

- Fitness standards and a military pathway.
- Weekly structure and community.
- Suitable for Army candidates building a reliable base.
- GBP 1 a week.

Start here when

You need consistency, running, bodyweight strength, accountability and a clear starting standard.

Military Preparation Weekend

- Navigation and field skills.
- Military fitness and test exposure.
- Team tasks, resilience and direct feedback.
- Useful for every service.

Handbook owner price

Use code HANDBOOK95 for GBP 95 off the GBP 395 Peak District weekend.



JOIN THE OBJECTIVE

BOOK THE WEEKEND

Soldier Assessment: the full visit

Official Army pages currently describe a three-day, two-night experience and also refer to the core assessment as two days.

Part	What to expect	Candidate action
Arrival and administration	Travel, booking-in, briefs and preparation for the assessed activity.	Arrive on time with every requested document and item.
Health review	Medical history, current health and a head-to-toe assessment.	Answer honestly and bring any evidence requested in advance.
Physical assessment	Current role-appropriate fitness activity.	Use the exact instruction in your portal; do not train from an old chart.
Cognitive and role work	Tests and discussion used to judge role suitability.	Practise timed reasoning and know your first and alternative role choices.
Team and career assessment	Behaviour with others, motivation, communication and career conversation.	Contribute, listen and show informed commitment.

Planning rule: protect three calendar days and two nights unless your own joining instruction states otherwise. Your portal and Assessment Centre instruction control the exact timings for your visit.

Army Cognitive Practice / Part 1

Original rapid reasoning and accuracy practice. Complete both parts before opening the separate solution page.

SET A TIMER FOR 9 MINUTES / WORK QUICKLY WITHOUT SACRIFICING ACCURACY

01 REASONING

What is the next number: 7, 10, 13, 16, ?

- ☐ A. 18
- ☐ B. 19
- ☐ C. 20
- ☐ D. 21

02 REASONING

Which code exactly matches 6K2M8R?

- ☐ A. 6K2N8R
- ☐ B. 6K2M8R
- ☐ C. 6K2M8P
- ☐ D. 6KM28R

03 REASONING

Which is the odd word?

- ☐ A. compass
- ☐ B. map
- ☐ C. bearing
- ☐ D. blanket

04 REASONING

A platoon has 3 sections of 8. How many soldiers is that?

- ☐ A. 16
- ☐ B. 21
- ☐ C. 24
- ☐ D. 32

05 REASONING

A task starts at 13:40 and lasts 1 hour 35 minutes. When does it finish?

- ☐ A. 14:55
- ☐ B. 15:05
- ☐ C. 15:15
- ☐ D. 15:25

06 REASONING

Face north, turn right, then turn left. Which way are you facing?

- ☐ A. north
- ☐ B. east
- ☐ C. south
- ☐ D. west

WORKED SOLUTIONS

Army Cognitive Practice / Part 2

Original rapid reasoning and accuracy practice. Complete both parts before opening the separate solution page.

SET A TIMER FOR 9 MINUTES / WORK QUICKLY WITHOUT SACRIFICING ACCURACY

07 REASONING

15 items cost GBP 8 each. What is the total?

- ☐ A. GBP 80
- ☐ B. GBP 100
- ☐ C. GBP 120
- ☐ D. GBP 150

08 REASONING

What is 30% of 90?

- ☐ A. 18
- ☐ B. 27
- ☐ C. 30
- ☐ D. 36

09 REASONING

RIFLE is to SOLDIER as STETHOSCOPE is to:

- ☐ A. driver
- ☐ B. medic
- ☐ C. engineer
- ☐ D. pilot

10 REASONING

Which number does not fit: 4, 8, 12, 15, 16?

- ☐ A. 8
- ☐ B. 12
- ☐ C. 15
- ☐ D. 16

11 REASONING

A ratio is 2:3. If the smaller amount is 18, what is the larger?

- ☐ A. 24
- ☐ B. 27
- ☐ C. 30
- ☐ D. 36

12 REASONING

A vehicle travels 36 km in 45 minutes. Average speed?

- ☐ A. 42 km/h
- ☐ B. 45 km/h
- ☐ C. 48 km/h
- ☐ D. 54 km/h

WORKED SOLUTIONS

Army Cognitive Practice solutions

Score accuracy and record the type of error: knowledge, method, reading or speed.

Q	Answer	Worked method
1	B	The sequence increases by 3.
2	B	Check every character in order.
3	D	The first three are navigation terms.
4	C	3 multiplied by 8 is 24.
5	C	Add 1 hour to 14:40, then 35 minutes to 15:15.
6	A	The right and left turns cancel.
7	C	15 multiplied by 8 is 120.
8	B	10% is 9, so 30% is 27.
9	B	The equipment is associated with the role.
10	C	All except 15 are multiples of 4.
11	B	One part is 9. Three parts is 27.
12	C	45 minutes is 0.75 hours. $36/0.75$ is 48 km/h.

[BACK TO QUESTIONS](#)

Land combat and the modernising armoured fleet

Know the current capability, the operational purpose and where your chosen role contributes.

Capability	Current examples	Purpose
Main battle tank	Challenger 2; Challenger 3 prototypes in trials	Protected direct fire and manoeuvre. Challenger 3 IOC is planned for 2027.
Armoured reconnaissance	Ajax programme; early vehicles in training and trials	Ajax replaces CVR(T) for armoured cavalry and ISTAR; it does not replace Warrior.
Mechanised infantry	Warrior; Boxer entering service	Boxer is taking over the heavy mechanised role as Warrior retires.
Protected mobility	Foxhound, Mastiff and Jackal families	Move troops and specialists across threat and terrain.
Artillery	AS90, M270 MLRS, L118 Light Gun	Close support and long-range fires.
Aviation	Apache and Wildcat Mk1; Chinook support	Attack, reconnaissance and battlefield mobility.
Weapons and enablers	SA80, GPMG, guided weapons; Engineers, Signals, Intelligence, Logistics and Medical	Firepower, mobility, information, sustainment and casualty care.

Modernisation position checked 6 August 2026: the future armoured fleet is built around Ajax for armoured cavalry reconnaissance, Boxer for protected mechanised infantry and Challenger 3 as the next main battle tank. Delivery and trials remain under way, so candidates must distinguish the future fleet from fully fielded equipment. Warrior and Challenger 2 remain current examples during transition; Wildcat Mk1 remains in Army service in 2026, with phased early retirement planned from 2027.



ROYAL AIR FORCE

Air and space power through combat air, mobility, intelligence, engineering and global support.

1 APR 1918

RAF FORMATION

10 WEEKS

AVIATOR BASIC TRAINING

6

DAA TEST CATEGORIES

Purpose, history and operational capability

The RAF protects UK airspace and delivers combat, mobility, intelligence and support effects worldwide.

Formation and history

The Royal Air Force formed on 1 April 1918 by merging the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service. It was the world's first independent air force. Its history includes the Battle of Britain, strategic air campaigns, the Berlin Airlift, the Cold War, Falklands, Gulf, Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq.

What it does now

- Protects UK airspace through Quick Reaction Alert.
- Delivers combat air and precision effects.
- Moves people, equipment and aid globally.
- Provides intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR).
- Contributes to space, cyber and command capabilities.
- 2026 example: RAF Typhoons on Op BILOXI supported NATO air policing from Romania.

Stations to know

- RAF Halton: aviator basic training.
- RAF College Cranwell: officer selection and training.
- RAF Brize Norton: air mobility.
- RAF Coningsby and Lossiemouth: Typhoon and Quick Reaction Alert.
- RAF Marham: F-35B Lightning.
- RAF Waddington: ISTAR, air command and control, Protector and the Red Arrows.

The whole-force reality

Aircraft only fly because engineers, movers, intelligence staff, force protection, medics, logisticians, controllers, administrators and aircrew combine their work. Know the output your role creates.

AIR POWER: THE DEFINITION TO KNOW

The ability to use air capabilities in and from the air, to influence the behaviour of actors and the course of events.

HEIGHT

Observation, three-dimensional manoeuvre and survivability.

SPEED

Rapid response, tempo and reduced exposure.

REACH

Influence at distance, largely unconstrained by terrain.

Four fundamental roles in JDP 0-30

Control of the air; attack; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR); air mobility.

Current RAF force terminology

ISTAR adds target acquisition: intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance.

A century of British air and space power

The RAF developed from fragile early aircraft into a force that protects UK airspace and delivers combat, mobility, intelligence and space effects.

Date	Why it matters
1912	The Royal Flying Corps was formed. Its Military Wing served with the Army while naval aviation developed separately.
1 April 1918	The Royal Flying Corps and Royal Naval Air Service merged to create the RAF, the world's first independent air force.
1940	Fighter Command, supported by radar, ground crews and personnel from many nations, denied the Luftwaffe air superiority in the Battle of Britain.
1939-45	Fighter, Bomber, Coastal and Transport Commands operated across the global war while training and support organisations sustained the force.
1948-49	During the Berlin Airlift, RAF and allied aircraft kept West Berlin supplied despite the Soviet blockade.
Cold War	The RAF maintained Quick Reaction Alert, air defence, strike, reconnaissance, transport and a major presence in Germany.
1982	In the Falklands campaign, RAF aircraft created the air bridge, conducted long-range Black Buck raids, refuelled aircraft and supported the joint task force.
1991	Op GRANBY in the Gulf demonstrated coalition air power, precision attack, air defence, transport and support at scale.
1990s-2020s	RAF personnel served over the Balkans, Sierra Leone, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, against Daesh and on deterrence and humanitarian operations.
Today	Typhoon Quick Reaction Alert, F-35B carrier aviation, air mobility, surveillance, remotely piloted systems and UK Space Command link air and space power.

The Battle of Britain

It was the first major battle fought entirely in the air. Aircrew were only one part of the system: controllers, radar operators, engineers, armourers, logisticians and ground crews kept the force fighting.

History for interview

Connect history to your role. An engineer, mover, intelligence analyst, RAF Regiment Gunner or aviator should explain how accurate work helps generate and protect air power.

Stations, wings and squadrons

The RAF is organised through groups, stations, wings, squadrons and units. The RAF Regiment is its specialist ground-fighting and force-protection arm.

Operational stations

Station	Main public role
RAF Brize Norton	Air Mobility Force: Voyager, C-17 Globemaster and A400M Atlas.
RAF Coningsby	Two front-line Typhoon squadrons, Typhoon training and southern QRA.
RAF Lossiemouth	Four Typhoon combat squadrons, Poseidon and Wedgetail activity, northern QRA.
RAF Marham	F-35B Lightning Wing: 617 Sqn, 207 Sqn and 809 NAS.
RAF Waddington	ISTAR, air command and control, Protector and the Red Arrows.
RAF Odiham	Chinook helicopter force.
RAF Valley	Fast-jet and flying training.
RAF Shawbury	Rotary-wing flying training.

Training, command and protection

Location	Main public role
RAF Halton	Initial aviator training.
RAF College Cranwell	Officer selection and initial officer training.
RAF Cosford	Technical and engineering training.
RAF Honington	RAF Regiment and force-protection activity.
RAF High Wycombe	Headquarters Air Command.
RAF Akrotiri	Permanent Joint Operating Base in Cyprus.
RAF Gibraltar	Overseas airfield and support.
Mount Pleasant	Air defence and support in the Falkland Islands.

HOW THE RAF FITS TOGETHER

GROUP

Commands a major capability area.

STATION

The base, its people and support.

WING

Groups related squadrons or functions.

SQUADRON

The main operational or specialist unit.



KNOW YOUR ROLE BEFORE INTERVIEW

Know the purpose of your chosen role, where its specialist training happens, the aircraft or equipment you may support, and the stations or squadrons linked to it. Be ready to explain why the RAF and why your evidence suits that role.

Aviator application and basic training

The exact route varies by role. Specialist and aircrew applications can include additional selection activity.

Stage	What happens
Apply	Choose a role and confirm qualifications and eligibility.
DAA	Complete the Defence Aptitude Assessment where the role requires it.
Selection interview	Explain motivation, RAF knowledge, role knowledge and personal evidence.
Health assessment	Complete medical assessment for service and role suitability.
PJFT	Run 2.4 km on a treadmill set to zero incline using the age and sex standard.
Acceptance	Complete final checks and receive joining instructions.
Basic training	Complete the 10-week aviator course at RAF Halton.
Trade training	Move to role-specific professional training.

Basic training develops RAF identity, discipline, administration, physical readiness, first aid, field and force-protection foundations, teamwork and preparation for specialist training.

Official Pre-Joining Fitness Test

The current PJFT is a 2.4 km treadmill run at zero incline. Standards are published by age and sex.

Age	Men	Women
15-16	13:52	16:22
17-29	13:20	15:48
30-34	13:49	16:14
35-39	14:14	16:44
40-44	14:46	17:22
45-49	15:17	17:57
50-54	15:53	18:34

Training target

Do not aim to scrape through once. Build a repeatable run time with controlled pacing, then maintain enough aerobic fitness to cope with basic training.

Officer candidates

Prospective officers complete the same pre-joining treadmill run and a second fitness assessment at Cranwell that includes the multi-stage fitness test. The required standard is issued during the process.

Roles, interview and service knowledge

Know the exact role title, training pipeline, first employment and the operational output your work supports.

Role families

- Aircrew and operations.
- Engineering and technical.
- Intelligence, cyber and communications.
- Force protection and security.
- Logistics, movement and supply.
- Medical, personnel and support.

Explain your contribution

A strong candidate can explain how accurate work creates a safe aircraft, protected station, reliable network, useful intelligence product, moved cargo or supported team.

Practice questions

- Why the RAF and why this role?
- Define air power and name its three characteristics and four roles.
- What does ISTAR mean and why does it matter?
- What happens at RAF Halton?
- Where does your trade training take place?
- Explain Quick Reaction Alert.
- Who is CAS and what is the RAF's current direction?
- Which current RAF programme matters most, and why?

Current knowledge

Maintain three global and two or three UK current-affairs briefs. Be ready to speak for 15 minutes on the issue, UK interests, Defence and RAF relevance, options, risks and your considered judgement.

Officer route and OASC

Officer selection looks for leadership potential, communication, judgement, motivation and the ability to work with others.

Stage	What is assessed
Application and DAA	Eligibility and role-dependent aptitude.
CBAT for selected roles	Role-specific aptitude for specified aircrew, control, intelligence and related careers.
Interview, medical and PJFT	Motivation, knowledge, health and physical readiness.
Officer and Aircrew Selection Centre	Leadership, teamwork, communication, motivation and problem solving.
Familiarisation visit	Role-specific exposure and further assessment where required.
Modular Initial Officer Training	Commissioning and leadership training at RAF College Cranwell.
Specialist training	Professional training for branch, aircrew or technical employment.

Prepare clear briefings, group planning, speed-distance-time calculations, prioritisation and evidence-based interview answers. Leadership is useful direction and responsibility, not volume.

[DAA PRACTICE](#)[CBAT GUIDE](#)[OFFICER TASK](#)

Build your preparation route

Use the service-specific material, then choose the support that helps you close the real gap.

The Objective

- Fitness standards and a military pathway.
- Weekly structure and community.
- Suitable for RAF candidates building consistency.
- GBP 1 a week.

Use it for

Running, bodyweight strength, repeatable habits and the accountability needed to arrive fit enough to learn.

Military Preparation Weekend

- Navigation and practical field skills.
- Fitness under instruction.
- Team tasks and decision making.
- Direct feedback from experienced military personnel.

Handbook owner price

Use code HANDBOOK95 for GBP 95 off the GBP 395 Peak District weekend.



JOIN THE OBJECTIVE

BOOK THE WEEKEND

A century of British air and space power

The RAF formed on 1 April 1918 by combining the Royal Flying Corps and Royal Naval Air Service as the world's first independent air force.

Date	Development	Operational significance
1 Apr 1918	The RAF formed during the First World War.	Air power became an independent service with its own ministry and command.
1940	The Battle of Britain.	Fighter Command, radar, observers, ground crews and an integrated control system defeated the Luftwaffe's attempt to gain air superiority.
1948-49	The Berlin Airlift.	British and allied aircraft sustained West Berlin during the Soviet blockade.
1947-91	Cold War air defence, strike, maritime patrol and nuclear roles.	The RAF maintained readiness against a peer state across Europe and the North Atlantic.
1982	Op CORPORATE.	Vulcan, Victor, Nimrod, Hercules, Harrier and helicopter forces supported the Falklands campaign.
1991-2014	Gulf, Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan.	Combat air, mobility, intelligence and support forces operated at sustained tempo.
Today	Quick Reaction Alert, NATO air policing, mobility, ISTAR and space.	The RAF protects UK airspace and projects joint power with allies worldwide.

CBAT for role-specific aptitude

Computer Based Aptitude Testing applies to specified aircrew, control, intelligence and related roles. It is separate from the six-part DAA-style stage.

Where and how long

CBAT is completed over one day at the Officers and Aircrew Selection Centre, RAF College Cranwell, Lincolnshire.

What it can measure

- Physical response to visual information.
- Interpreting two-dimensional information to produce a three-dimensional solution.
- Completing several tasks at once.
- Deductive and spatial reasoning.
- Work rate, concentration, verbal and numerical reasoning.

Who takes it

It is role-dependent, not a universal officer test. Current role pages identify CBAT for posts such as specified aircrew, control and intelligence pathways.

Preparation

- Check the exact process on your role page.
- Develop mental arithmetic, speed-distance-time and spatial reasoning.
- Practise sustained concentration and accurate multitasking.
- Protect sleep, food and travel before the assessment.
- Do not buy a result promise: aptitude is trained at the margins, not manufactured overnight.

THE DISTINCTION

DAA-style aptitude checks broad reasoning across six categories. CBAT is a longer role-specific battery for selected RAF careers. OASC then assesses officer or aircrew suitability through the current selection process.

CAS priorities, programmes and current affairs

Know the current direction of the Service and be able to connect events, capability and policy to the role of the RAF.

CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF

Air Chief Marshal Sir Harv Smyth is the professional head and four-star commander of the RAF. The published direction is to build warfighting readiness, develop the operational mindset needed for transition to conflict, modernise rapidly and deliver Air and Space Power for the UK and NATO.

Priority or programme	What an officer candidate should understand
Warfighting readiness	The RAF is moving from a predominantly post-Cold War posture towards resilience, readiness and the ability to deter, fight and win against state threats.
Integrated air and missile defence	UK and NATO command-and-control, sensors and combat aircraft must work together to protect the homeland and deployed forces.
Current combat air	Upgraded Typhoon and F-35B remain central; twelve F-35A aircraft are planned for NATO nuclear burden sharing.
Future combat air	FCAS and the Global Combat Air Programme combine a crewed next-generation aircraft with autonomous collaborative platforms and digital connectivity.
Information advantage	Wedgetail, Protector, Poseidon, the ISTAR Force and a digital targeting network improve warning, understanding and decision-making.
Resilient force	Dispersed operating methods, protected bases, deeper stocks, engineering, logistics, people and the Whole Force sustain combat output.

Current-affairs standard

- Maintain three current global issues.
- Maintain two or three current UK issues.
- Prepare to speak for 15 minutes on any one issue.
- Refresh the briefs weekly as events develop.

Sources

Start with GOV.UK, MOD, FCDO, NATO and RAF material, then use credible national and international reporting. Separate verified fact, informed analysis and your own judgement.

Build every 15-minute brief

- Define the issue and give a short timeline.
- Identify the main actors and their aims.
- Explain UK interests and the Defence or RAF connection.
- Describe credible options, risks and trade-offs.
- Finish with a balanced personal judgement.

Questions to rehearse

- Who is CAS and what is his published direction?
- Define air power and name its characteristics and roles.
- What does ISTAR mean and why does it matter?
- Which current RAF programme matters most, and why?

Combat air, mobility and intelligence

Know the current capability, the operational purpose and where your chosen role contributes.

Capability	Current examples	Purpose
Combat air	Typhoon; F-35B Lightning	Air defence, strike and coalition operations.
Air mobility	Atlas C1, C-17, Voyager, Chinook	Strategic and tactical lift, refuelling and support.
Maritime and ISTAR	Poseidon MRA1, RC-135W Rivet Joint, Shadow R1	Maritime patrol, intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance.
Remotely piloted	Protector RG Mk1	Persistent remotely piloted intelligence and operational capability.
Training	Prefect, Texan, Hawk T2, Phenom, Juno and Jupiter	Train pilots, mission aircrew and helicopter crews.
Transition	Wedgetail AEW1	Airborne early warning and command capability entering service.

Aircraft only create effect when engineering, operations, intelligence, force protection, logistics and communications generate the sortie.

UK SPECIAL FORCES

A joint Defence destination, not a separate Service or direct-entry route.
The pathway begins with competence in a parent Service.



JOINT

CROSS-SERVICE ORGANISATION

ROUTE

SERVE FIRST

STANDARD

EARN ELIGIBILITY

What UKSF is – and what it is not

UKSF is a joint Defence organisation for strategic specialist capability. It is not a separate Service or civilian direct-entry route; accurate categories matter.

Organisation	Public description	Correct distinction
22 SAS	Regular Special Air Service pathway.	A UKSF unit; not the same organisation as 21 or 23 SAS Reserve.
SBS	Royal Navy special forces unit with Second World War roots.	Part of UKSF; a separate service lineage from the SAS.
SRR	Special reconnaissance capability, operational from April 2005.	A UKSF unit; role is not interchangeable with direct-action stereotypes.
18 Signal Regiment	Specialist communications support within UKSF.	A recognised UKSF pathway for communicators.
Special Forces Medical	Specialist medical support pathway.	A professional and operational capability, not an afterthought.
SFSG	Special Forces Strike Group, redesignated from the Special Forces Support Group in December 2025; centred on 1 PARA with specialist enablers.	A UKSF formation, distinct from the operator units listed above.
Ranger Regiment	Army Land Special Operations Force formed in 2021.	Special operations, but not part of UKSF.

Public history and development

Special forces evolved to solve strategic problems with small, highly selected teams, specialist support and a high degree of judgement.

Date	Development
1941	David Stirling formed the SAS in North Africa for raiding behind enemy lines.
1942	Maritime raiding and reconnaissance organisations developed into the lineage associated with the SBS.
1947	The SAS lineage was revived in the Territorial Army; the Regular 22 SAS later developed from the Malayan Scouts.
1987	The Director Special Forces organisation brought acknowledged UK special forces under a joint command structure.
Apr 2005	The Special Reconnaissance Regiment became operational; specialist UKSF communications were also reorganised.
2006 / Dec 2025	The Special Forces Support Group was established in 2006 and redesignated the Special Forces Strike Group in December 2025.
Today	Regular and Reserve pathways provide operators, reconnaissance, communications, medical and support capability.

The lesson is not that one unit replaces another. UKSF combines different specialisms, intelligence, communications, aviation, medical support and conventional enablers to deliver strategic effect.

The public route from aspiration to eligibility

UKSF is usually a later service decision. The immediate task for a new candidate is to become dependable in the parent service and trade.

01

JOIN WELL

Choose a parent service and role you are prepared to serve in even if UKSF never follows.

02

COMPLETE TRAINING

Pass basic and initial trade training; build professional credibility.

03

SERVE

Develop judgement, field competence, fitness, discretion and evidence of reliability.

04

ATTEND OFFICIAL BRIEFING

Serving volunteers use the current official UKSF briefing and application process.

05

SELECT THE PATHWAY

The public briefing process explains acknowledged pathways and suitability.

06

LET THEM SELECT

Prepare thoroughly, but do not invent shortcuts or self-award readiness.

A specialist Reserve commitment

The publicly acknowledged Reserve structure includes 21 and 23 SAS, SBS Reserve and UKSF communications support.

Unit	Public role and route
21 & 23 SAS (Reserve)	Army Reserve special forces regiments. Current public information requires prior Phase 2 training in a Regular or Reserve unit before the briefing and selection route.
SBS Reserve	A publicly acknowledged maritime special forces Reserve pathway.
63 (UKSF) Signal Squadron	Publicly listed specialist communications support within UKSF Reserve.
Other attachments	Official recruiting material identifies opportunities for qualified support personnel from relevant cap badges and professions.

Greater than normal Reserve demand | Correct first move

- More training days and prolonged concentrated selection.
- High independent physical and field preparation.
- A real expectation of operational mobilisation.
- Long-term family and employer support.

Join and complete a suitable parent-service training route. Become technically and militarily credible. Use current official contact details when genuinely eligible.

Standards before ambition

The useful preparation is not secret. It is years of ordinary standards performed unusually well.

Build

- Aerobic durability and movement under load.
- Strength without unnecessary body mass.
- Navigation, foot care and field administration.
- Swimming competence where the pathway demands it.
- Decision-making while tired without becoming reckless.

Protect

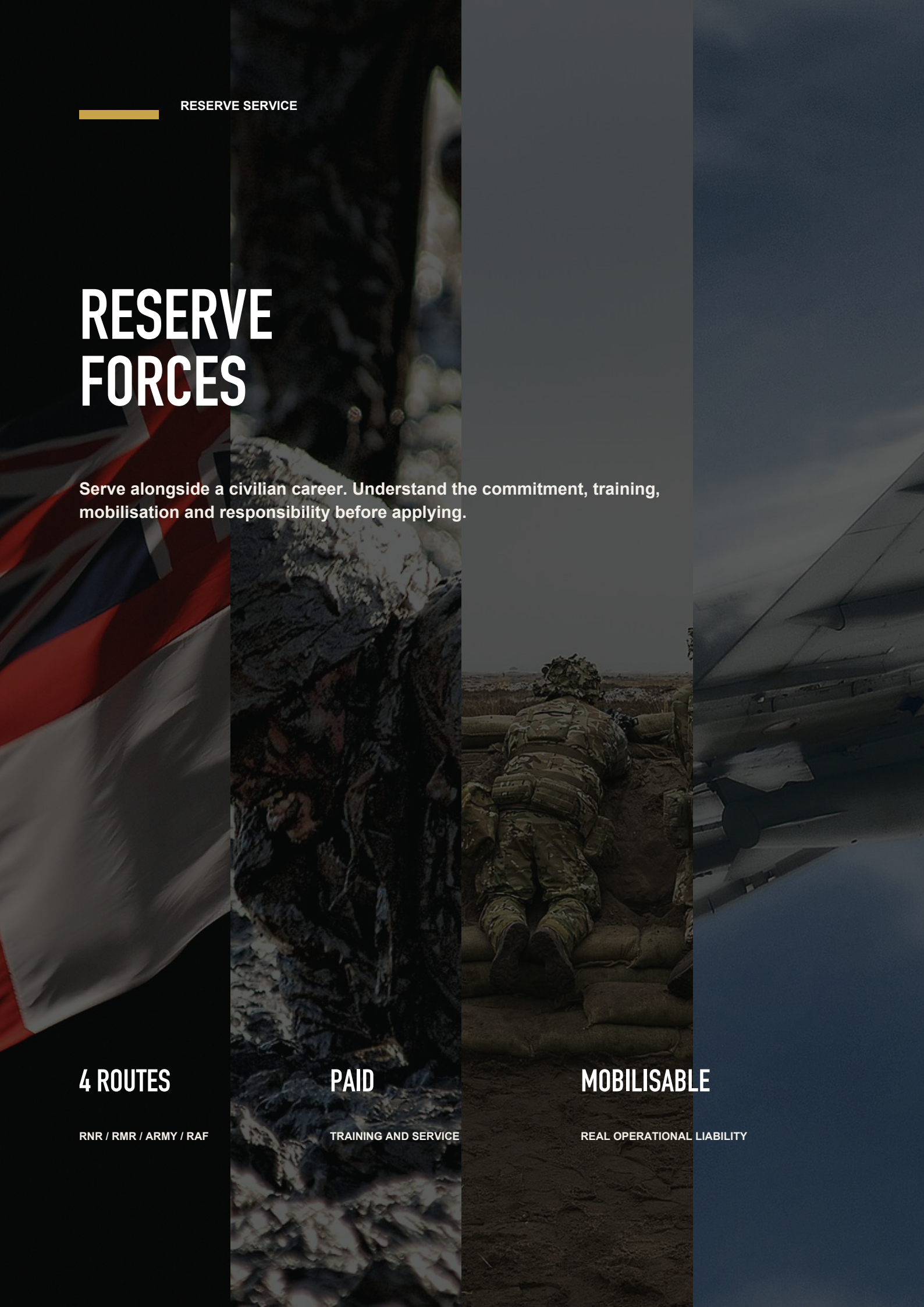
- Integrity and discretion.
- Long-term joint health.
- Family trust.
- Professional reputation in the parent unit.

Avoid

- Training from leaked or invented programmes.
- Announcing ambitions before earning credibility.
- Treating the Ranger Regiment, SFSG and UKSF as the same organisation.
- Chasing loaded mileage before building tissue capacity.
- Assuming selection is only a fitness event.

The immediate objective

If you have not yet joined, prepare for the service and role in front of you. A candidate who cannot master basic training has no useful UKSF problem to solve yet.



RESERVE SERVICE

RESERVE FORCES

Serve alongside a civilian career. Understand the commitment, training, mobilisation and responsibility before applying.

4 ROUTES

RNR / RMR / ARMY / RAF

PAID

TRAINING AND SERVICE

MOBILISABLE

REAL OPERATIONAL LIABILITY

Part-time structure, military responsibility

Reserve service adds trained capacity, specialist civilian skill and reinforcement to Defence. Flexibility changes the calendar; it does not lower the required standard.

Route	Typical annual commitment	Core model
Royal Naval Reserve	Generally 24 days	12 days non-continuous plus 12 days continuous operational training.
Royal Marines Reserve	Unit and training-pipeline dependent	Commando preparation around civilian life, leading to the Commando Course standard.
Army Reserve	Usually 27 days; some specialists 19	Drill nights, weekends, annual camp and role training.
RAF Reserve	Usually 27 days	15-day continuous block plus 12 other training or exercise days.

The value to Defence

- Reinforces Regular forces during operations and crisis.
- Brings civilian medical, digital, engineering and professional expertise.
- Maintains trained people without full-time employment in uniform.
- Connects Defence with employers and communities.

The candidate test

- Can your calendar absorb courses, weekends and annual training?
- Does your family understand mobilisation and time away?
- Will your employer support leave for training?
- Can you maintain fitness and administration between unit periods?

Train locally. Contribute nationally and at sea

RNR personnel train through local units and specialist branches, then reinforce the Naval Service in the UK, overseas and at sea.

Commitment

The public RNR model generally requires 24 days each year: 12 days of non-continuous training and 12 days of continuous training.

Non-continuous training

Paid midweek evenings and weekends develop basic military skills, branch knowledge, fitness and unit cohesion.

Continuous training

Usually a 12-day block or two six-day blocks. It can include accelerated courses, exercises and training on land or at sea.

Entry routes

- General Entry Rating without prior specialist experience.
- Professionally qualified or specialist entry.
- Officer entry.
- Ex-Regular return through the applicable re-entry route.

Reality

Deployment and mobilisation are genuine possibilities. The RNR is not simply an evening club; trained reservists support operational outputs.

Commando standards around civilian life

RMR candidates face the unusual challenge of developing Commando readiness through evenings, weekends, concentrated courses and substantial independent work.

Training route

- Join through an RMR unit and complete the current selection and medical route.
- Build foundation military skills before progressive Commando preparation.
- Complete required concentrated training periods and the Commando Course elements.
- Earn the green beret only by meeting the required Commando standard.

Independent preparation

Running, loaded movement, bodyweight strength, mobility, foot care and recovery cannot be built only on parade nights.

Who it suits

- Candidates committed to the Commando role but retaining a civilian career.
- People who can protect long weekends and course blocks.
- Families and employers prepared for a demanding training pipeline.
- Self-directed candidates who maintain standards between unit periods.

Common failure

Underestimating travel, recovery and personal administration. A hard weekend still has to be followed by work, family responsibility and training.

Local units, national specialists and operational reinforcement

Army Reserve roles span combat, engineering, intelligence, medical, logistics, communications and professionally qualified specialist work.

Stage	Current public route	Candidate implication
Foundation training	Five alternate weekends or a nine-day consolidated course.	Choose the format that you can attend completely.
Battle Camp	A 15.5-day residential course.	Build leave, family and recovery plans early.
Role training	Length varies by cap badge and trade.	Joining is not the end of training; role competence takes further courses.
Annual commitment	Most roles aim for 27 days; some specialists can qualify at 19.	Weekly training, weekends and annual camp all count.
Mobilisation	Reservists are liable under the Reserve Forces Act 1996.	Discuss the possibility with employer and family before applying.

RESERVE OFFICERS

Training can be completed through modular courses or an eight-week consolidated route. Both culminate in commissioning through the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

Squadron-based service beside a civilian career

RAF Reserve opportunities are tied to specific squadrons and stations. Geography matters because routine training is not residential.

Commitment

The public model asks for 27 days each year: a 15-day continuous block plus 12 separate days for training or exercises.

Location

Reserve roles exist at specified squadrons and RAF stations. Check the actual travel burden before selecting a role.

Training

Complete the current Reserve basic training pathway, then role-specific instruction at the squadron or another RAF station.

Role families

- Operations and intelligence.
- Logistics and movement.
- Engineering and technical support.
- Medical and professional services.
- Force protection and specialist support.

Deployment

Current role pages state that trained reservists may deploy to a UK or overseas base for periods that can extend to six months.

Employer, family, finances and recovery

The strongest Reserve candidates solve the practical problems before they become excuses.

Area	Question to settle	Strong preparation
Employer	How will drill nights, weekends, annual camp and mobilisation affect work?	Discuss policy early; give notice; understand official employer support.
Family	Who carries home responsibilities while you train or deploy?	Agree calendars, childcare, communication and recovery time.
Travel	How far is the unit and specialist training location?	Cost the real journey and late return, not only the parade time.
Fitness	Who maintains your standard between unit periods?	Use a repeatable weekly plan and arrive ready to learn military skills.
Recovery	Can you work safely after an arduous weekend?	Protect sleep, food, foot care and a sensible first civilian day back.
Finances	Are you relying on bounty or extra days to meet bills?	Treat Reserve pay as variable; understand qualifying criteria and expenses.

Regular or Reserve: make the honest decision

Both routes serve the country. The right choice depends on the life you are prepared to live, not which option sounds more impressive.

Decision area	Regular service	Reserve service
Primary occupation	Military service is the full-time career.	Civilian work or study remains primary between training periods.
Daily structure	The service controls postings, routine, courses and operational tasking.	The individual must integrate service obligations with civilian life.
Training exposure	More continuous military training and unit immersion.	Less contact time, requiring stronger independent maintenance.
Geography	Posting and deployment can move you nationally or overseas.	Routine training is unit-based, but courses and deployment still require travel.
Family impact	Frequent military demands and possible relocation.	Repeated weekend absence plus possible mobilisation.
Best fit	You want military service to be your principal profession.	You want genuine service while retaining a civilian profession or education.

Do not choose the Reserve believing it avoids sacrifice. Do not choose the Regulars believing every day is adventure. Speak to serving people in the exact role and unit, then decide from the real routine.

OFFICER CANDIDATES

Understand the responsibility, know your route and prepare evidence that stands up under pressure.



AIB

ROYAL NAVY & ROYAL MARINES

AOSB

BRITISH ARMY

OASC

ROYAL AIR FORCE

Responsibility before status

A commission places responsibility for people, standards, decisions and outcomes on you. Selection looks for the potential to grow into that duty.

What the role demands

- Understand the commander's intent and turn it into a workable plan.
- Make timely decisions with incomplete information.
- Set clear standards and enforce them consistently.
- Train, develop and account for the people you lead.
- Communicate clearly up, down and across the chain of command.
- Own the result, especially when the plan does not work.

Officer, not superior person

The officer route carries a different form of responsibility. It is not a shortcut around learning the profession, and it does not make you more important than the people you lead. Credibility is built through competence, character, humility and service.

What selection assesses

- Motivation and accurate knowledge of the service and role.
- Leadership potential and the effect you have on a group.
- Clear verbal and written communication.
- Planning, numeracy, judgement and problem solving.
- Teamwork, courage, resilience and physical readiness.
- Self-awareness, honesty and capacity to learn.

Build an evidence bank

Prepare real examples of leading, supporting a team, resolving conflict, making a difficult decision, recovering from failure, organising competing priorities and improving after feedback. Know the result and what you would do differently.

Self-reflection questions

Answer these honestly in a notebook. Use real evidence, not the answer you think a selection board wants to hear.

Question for your notebook	What a useful answer should examine
What proves my motivation is informed rather than imagined?	Role, training, daily work, service life and the cost of the commitment.
When did I improve a team's performance without taking over?	My action, its effect on others and the measurable result.
Which failure changed my behaviour?	What I owned, what I changed and evidence that the change lasted.
When did I plan competing priorities?	Time, people, risk, trade-offs and the final outcome.
Which current UK Defence issue can I explain clearly?	What happened, why it matters and how it connects to my chosen service.

The four officer routes

Learn the route for your chosen service. Role-specific aptitude, medical and security requirements can add further stages.

Service	Selection route	Initial officer training
Royal Navy	Application and role checks; interview; medical and fitness; Admiralty Interview Board; offer and entry.	Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, followed by professional training.
Royal Marines	Application; Defence Aptitude Assessment; interview; medical and PJFA; Admiralty Interview Board; Officer Selection Course.	Young Officer training at the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines, Lympstone.
British Army	Application and interview; Army Officer Selection Board Briefing; Army Officer Selection Board Main Board; offer.	The 42-week Commissioning Course at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, then regiment or corps training.
Royal Air Force	Application; role testing where required; interview, medical and fitness; Officer and Aircrew Selection Centre; familiarisation and offer.	Modular Initial Officer Training at RAF College Cranwell, then specialist training.

Prepare for every stage

- Know the service, role, training route and first appointment.
- Follow current affairs and explain why they matter to UK Defence.
- Practise planning aloud: aim, priorities, timings, risks and contingency.
- Train consistently and arrive medically and physically prepared.

During selection

- Listen fully before speaking.
- Contribute without dominating.
- Use names, allocate tasks and confirm understanding.
- When wrong, correct quickly and continue.
- Support the group while remaining accountable for your own task.

Officer route reflection

Write brief, evidence-based answers in your notebook, then turn each answer into a specific action.

Question for your notebook	Decision to make
Which service and role am I applying for, and why?	State the role and the informed reason it fits.
What is my next selection stage?	List what is assessed and the evidence I need.
Which weakness could expose me under pressure?	Choose the gap that matters most, not the easiest one.
What will I complete in the next seven days?	Set one observable action with a deadline.

Officer planning task

Read the scenario for four minutes. Prepare a concise plan and calculations. Do not open the worked solution until you have committed to an answer.

It is 09:10. Your eight-person team is at Checkpoint A. A casualty at Checkpoint C needs a medical kit by 10:30. The kit is stored at Checkpoint B, 18 km from A by road. B is 4 km from C along a firm track. Your minibus averages 45 km/h. Collecting and checking the kit takes 8 minutes. Walking speed is 5 km/h. Two bicycles are carried in the minibus and average 15 km/h on the track. One trained first aider must reach C with the kit. The remaining team must later arrive together. A radio is available at A, B and C.

Your task

- State the mission in one sentence.
- Calculate the road journey time.
- Calculate the walking and cycling times from B to C.
- Choose who travels by bicycle and who walks.
- Give expected arrival times.
- Give two control measures and one contingency.

Briefing structure

- Situation: facts that change the decision.
- Mission: who must do what, where and by when.
- Execution: sequence, roles and timings.
- Service support: vehicle, bicycle, kit and communications.
- Command and signal: who leads, reporting points and contingency.

OPEN WORKED SOLUTION

Officer task: worked solution

A strong answer is clear, numerate and executable. Other sound plans may also work if the timings and controls are correct.

Calculation	Method	Result
A to B by minibus	Time = 18 km / 45 km/h	0.4 h = 24 min
Collect and check kit	Fixed task time	8 min
B to C walking	Time = 4 km / 5 km/h	0.8 h = 48 min
B to C cycling	Time = 4 km / 15 km/h	0.267 h = 16 min
First aider arrival	09:10 + 24 + 8 + 16	09:58
Walking team arrival	09:10 + 24 + 8 + 48	10:30

One workable plan

- Move the full team by minibus to B immediately.
- At B, the first aider and one teammate take the bicycles.
- The first aider carries the medical kit and reaches C at about 09:58.
- The second cyclist supports communication and safety.
- The team leader walks the remaining six to C, due at 10:30.

Controls and contingency

- Radio C before departure and again from B.
- Check both bicycles and secure the medical kit before movement.
- If a bicycle fails, the second cyclist continues with the kit.
- If the minibus is delayed more than 10 minutes, radio C and request alternate support.

Build answers from evidence

The strongest answers are specific, concise and honest. They show what you did, not what you believe you would do.

Core questions

- Why do you want to join this service?
- Why this role, branch, regiment or profession?
- What do you expect during recruit training?
- What do you want to do within the service?
- How are you preparing physically and practically?
- What does your family understand about service life?

Service knowledge

- Purpose and current operational contribution.
- Training location and route.
- Main units, stations or bases.
- Role responsibilities and qualifications.
- Rank structure, values and standards.

Evidence questions

- When did you work in a team under pressure?
- When did you lead and what was the outcome?
- When did you leave your comfort zone?
- When did you fail or make a mistake?
- When did you show discipline over a long period?
- When did you help someone without being asked?

Answer structure

Situation: one sentence of context. Task: what you were responsible for. Action: the specific choices you made. Result: the measurable outcome. Reflection: what you learned and how it changed your behaviour.

FAMILY & HOME LIFE

Practical preparation for parents, partners and the people who support a service candidate.



PARENTS

HELP WITHOUT TAKING OVER

PARTNERS

PLAN BEFORE SEPARATION

SUPPORT

USE THE OFFICIAL ROUTE

Support the candidate. Do not carry them.

The strongest family support builds independence, keeps perspective and uses the correct route when something genuinely needs attention.

During the application

- Learn the service, role and joining route so conversations are informed.
- Help with travel, meals and practical organisation when needed.
- Encourage the candidate to read messages, meet deadlines and speak for themselves.
- Ask about the plan rather than repeatedly asking whether they will pass.
- For an under-18 candidate, complete required consent and safeguarding steps promptly.

What the candidate must own

- The application, communication and appointments.
- Fitness, recovery and honest reporting of injury or illness.
- Kit preparation, punctuality and personal administration.
- The decision to join and the consequences of that decision.

During initial training

- Expect communication to be less frequent and less predictable.
- Do not treat a difficult call as proof that the whole decision is wrong.
- Listen first. Avoid solving every problem from home.
- Keep home news honest and proportionate; do not hide a genuine emergency.
- Use official welfare or compassionate routes, not public social media.

Helpful language

- "What is the next action you control?"
- "What have your instructors told you to do?"
- "Do you need me to listen, help you think, or take a practical action?"
- "One hard day is not the whole course."

Family reflection questions

Discuss these together and record the answers in a notebook or family plan.

Question for the family	Why it matters
What do we understand about the service, role and training route?	Accurate expectations reduce avoidable worry.
Which responsibilities must be covered before training?	Bills, travel, childcare, pets, documents and emergencies.
Who is the official contact if communication is limited?	Use the correct welfare or compassionate route.
How will we respond to a difficult call?	Listen first, separate one hard day from the whole course and agree the next action.
Which family issue needs an honest conversation now?	Deal with it before pressure, distance or uncertainty magnifies it.

Discuss service life before it tests you

Separation, changing plans and demanding work are easier to manage when expectations, money and home responsibilities are agreed in advance.

Discuss now	Agree a practical standard
Time apart	Accept that courses, duties, exercises and deployments can reduce contact. Agree what useful contact looks like when time is limited.
Plans and leave	Treat dates as provisional until confirmed. Decide how you will handle changed travel, childcare and family commitments.
Money	Set a budget, automate essential bills, agree spending boundaries and keep an emergency reserve. Do not leave one person guessing.
Home responsibilities	Allocate bills, repairs, vehicles, pets, childcare and important documents before a period away begins.
Communication	Say what happened, what you need and what happens next. Do not use a short call to settle every unresolved argument.
Security	Do not post private movements, dates, locations or personal details. Follow the service member's current security guidance.

Before separation

- Confirm the unit or training establishment and the official family contact route.
- Record the Service Number once issued and store key documents securely.
- Agree who should be contacted in an emergency.
- Build support at home before it is needed.

Homecoming

Reunion is a transition, not an instant return to the old routine. Expect both people to have changed. Share what each person carried, restore responsibilities deliberately and raise problems early rather than waiting for resentment to build.

Use the right route early

Families do not need to solve military welfare, housing, education or deployment problems alone. Start with the route closest to the issue.

Situation	First route
Application or joining instruction	The candidate's recruiter, candidate portal and current written instruction.
Concern during training or service	The service person should use the chain of command, training staff, unit welfare, medical service or chaplaincy as appropriate.
Serious family event while someone is away	Use the service's official compassionate or family-emergency route. Do not rely on personal messages or social media reaching the person.
Deployment information	Use the nominated unit Point of Contact, Family and People Support or HIVE information service.
Housing, education, childcare or relocation	Use HIVE and the relevant Families Federation for current guidance and signposting.
Persistent service-related problem	Contact the relevant independent Families Federation for information, guidance and representation.
Immediate danger	Contact the emergency services first, then inform the appropriate service welfare route when safe.

The three Families Federations provide independent information and guidance. Royal Navy Family and People Support, Army HIVE and RAF HIVE provide service information and welfare signposting.

Ask for help early when

- A problem is affecting safety, health, housing or the ability to train or work.
- The same issue continues after reasonable attempts to resolve it.
- A family member does not know which organisation owns the problem.
- Separation, money or relationship strain is becoming harder to manage.
- A child or vulnerable family member needs additional support.

Family emergency checklist

- Deal with immediate danger through the emergency services.
- Use the official compassionate or unit contact route.
- Give the person's full name, Service Number if known, unit or training establishment and clear facts.
- Provide a reliable callback number and record any reference given.
- Keep operational and personal details off public social media.

RN SUPPORT

NAVAL FAMILIES

ARMY FAMILIES

RAF FAMILIES



PRACTICAL PREPARATION

FIELD CRAFT & NAVIGATION

Map-to-ground skill, route planning, bearings, relocation and the calm thinking that prevents small errors becoming large ones.

MAP

READ THE GROUND

ROUTE

PLAN BEFORE MOVING

CONTROL

CHECK AS YOU GO

The map-to-ground sequence

A strong navigator always knows the next destination, the route, the controls and what to do if the ground stops matching the plan.

Step	Action
1. Orientate	Set the map to the ground using visible features or a compass.
2. Confirm position	Use at least two reliable features. Do not invent certainty.
3. Define the destination	Write the grid reference and identify a clear attack point nearby.
4. Choose the route	Balance distance, climb, terrain, visibility, safety and time.
5. Set direction	Use the map and, where needed, a correctly converted compass bearing.
6. Measure distance	Use map scale, personal pace count and estimated travel time.
7. Set controls	Choose handrails, checkpoints, an attack point, a catching feature and a relocation plan.
8. Move and confirm	Use the map continuously. Match features, distance, direction and time as you travel.

Map to ground

- Identify large features before small detail.
- Turn the map so features lie in the correct direction.
- Compare slope shape, paths, water, woodland and buildings.
- Keep the map folded to the working area and protect it from weather.

Useful control features

- Handrail: a feature you can follow, such as a path, wall or stream.
- Checkpoint: a recognisable feature that confirms progress.
- Attack point: an obvious feature close to the destination.
- Catching feature: a feature beyond the destination that tells you to stop.

Grid references, scale and contours

Grid references give position. Scale gives distance. Contours show the shape of the ground between you and the destination.

Grid references

- Read eastings first, then northings: right, then up.
- Four figures identify a 1 km grid square.
- Six figures identify a point to 100 m.
- Eight figures identify a point to 10 m.
- Include the map sheet or grid zone when the context requires it.

Map scale

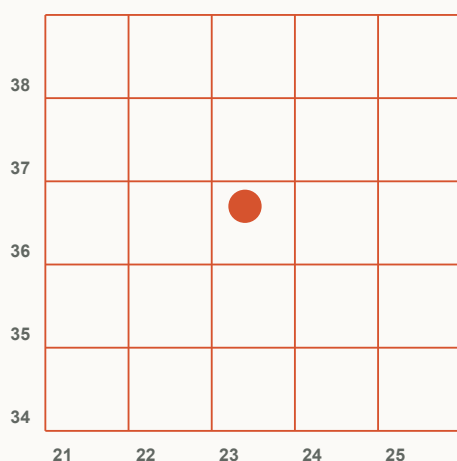
- At 1:25,000, 4 cm on the map represents 1 km on the ground.
- At 1:50,000, 2 cm on the map represents 1 km on the ground.
- Measure bends in a route rather than drawing one straight line.
- Ground distance grows with slope, obstacles and route choice.

Contours and relief

- Contours join points of equal height.
- Close contours mean a steep slope; wider spacing means a gentler slope.
- A spur projects from higher ground; a re-entrant cuts into it.
- A saddle or col is lower ground between two higher points.
- Check the contour interval in the map legend.

Terrain before compass

A precise bearing does not rescue a poor route. Use ridges, valleys, paths, water, woodland edges and slope shape to understand the ground before committing to a direction.



Example: 234 367 means 4 tenths across square 23, then 7 tenths up square 36. The point is accurate to 100 m. Read the number on the left of the square, then estimate the tenths.

Compass bearings that work on the ground

A bearing is a direction, not a route. Measure carefully, apply the current map conversion and keep checking the terrain.

Step	Taking a grid bearing
1	Place the compass edge from the start point to the destination, with the direction-of-travel arrow pointing forward.
2	Hold the baseplate still and rotate the housing until its orienting lines are parallel with the map's north-south grid lines.
3	Check the orienting arrow points to grid north, not south. Read the grid bearing at the index line.
4	Apply the current grid-to-magnetic instruction printed on the map. Do not reuse an old conversion.
5	Hold the compass level and clear of vehicles, weapons, phones, power lines and other magnetic interference.
6	Turn until the magnetic needle sits correctly in the orienting arrow. Select a visible feature on the line and walk to it.

Back bearings

A back bearing points in the opposite direction. Add 180 degrees when the bearing is below 180; subtract 180 when it is 180 or above. Use it to confirm a line or help return along a leg.

Aiming off

When moving to a linear feature such as a path or stream, deliberately aim to one known side. When you reach the feature, you know which way to turn rather than having to guess.

Bearing checks

- Does the direction agree with the map and visible ground?
- What feature should appear on the left and right?
- How far should you travel before the next checkpoint?
- What feature will stop you if you go too far?

Common failure

Candidates stare at the compass and stop reading the ground. Move from feature to feature, use the bearing to control direction and confirm progress with distance, time and terrain.

Route cards, pace count and controls

A route card forces you to think before moving and gives the team a shared plan.

Route-card field	Record
Leg	Start point, destination and leg number.
Direction	Grid bearing and converted magnetic bearing where required.
Distance	Measured map distance plus a realistic allowance for the chosen ground.
Height	Ascent and descent that will affect time, effort and visibility.
Terrain	Path, open ground, woodland, water, steep slope, settlement or complex ground.
Controls	Handrail, checkpoints, attack point, catching feature and any aiming-off decision.
Time	Start time, estimated duration, expected arrival and a decision time if progress is wrong.
Hazards and action	Roads, water, weather, livestock, steep ground, communications, escape route and relocation plan.

Build a pace count

- Count every time the same foot strikes the ground.
- Measure your count over a known 100 m distance.
- Repeat on flat ground, uphill, downhill and rough terrain.
- Record the range rather than pretending one number fits everything.

Use time as a second measure

Pace count changes with fatigue, load, darkness and terrain. Estimate time for the leg as well. If both pace and time say the feature should have appeared, stop and reassess before travelling farther.

Worked route card

The next page turns the same information into a clear route card using the field order shown in Royal Marines map-reading instruction: leg, grid references, distance, grid bearing, magnetic bearing, paces and route description.

A route card records the key details of an intended route. It supports planning and communication; it does not replace continuous map-to-ground checks while moving.

Worked route card

A clear training example using a 60-pace count per 100 metres and a +27 mil grid-to-magnetic correction.

LEG	GRID REF FROM	GRID REF TO	DISTANCE	GRID BEARING	MAG BEARING	PACES	ROUTE DESCRIPTION
1	CP A 031864	CP B 035870	750 m	0600 mils	0627 mils	450	Move east on the track. Use the stream as a handrail. Attack CP B from the path junction. Catching feature: road.
2	CP B 035870	CP C 042872	700 m	1275 mils	1302 mils	420	Continue east-north-east across open ground. Confirm the spur and path bend before CP C.
3	CP C 042872	CP D 053871	1150 m	1700 mils	1727 mils	690	Follow the broad ridge east. Check distance at the fence line. Catching feature: road beyond CP D.

Worked example only. The +27 mil correction matches this example. Use the grid-to-magnetic instruction for the current map and date. Recalculate paces from your own measured count and adjust for load, slope, terrain and fatigue.

Relocation and a safe practice progression

Getting uncertain is recoverable. Continuing quickly without a confirmed position turns a small error into a larger one.

Relocation drill

- Stop moving and state that the position is uncertain.
- Orientate the map and mark the last confirmed point.
- Check direction, distance, elapsed time and height change.
- Look for large, reliable features before small detail.
- Use a back bearing or retrace the route when it is safe and sensible.
- Communicate the problem early. Do not wander in expanding circles.

Night and poor visibility

Shorten legs, use stronger handrails and catching features, slow the pace and increase checks. Darkness magnifies weak daytime technique; it does not replace it.

Practice progression

- 1. Map walks in familiar terrain during daylight.
- 2. Grid references, scale and contour recognition.
- 3. Short legs using handrails and checkpoints.
- 4. Bearings, pace count and route cards.
- 5. Unfamiliar terrain with supervision.
- 6. Poor visibility, load and fatigue only after the basics are reliable.

Safety standard

Carry suitable clothing, water, charged communication and an emergency plan. Leave a route and return time with someone. Follow access rules and weather warnings. Do not practise alone in hazardous terrain.



PRACTISE NAVIGATION IN PERSON

The Complete Commando preparation weekend teaches map reading, navigation, field skills, teamwork and military fitness in real terrain.

Speed, distance and time

These calculations appear in planning tasks and make route estimates more reliable.

DISTANCE

SPEED x TIME

SPEED

DISTANCE / TIME

TIME

DISTANCE / SPEED

Example	Working	Answer
6 km at 4 km/h	$6 / 4 = 1.5$ hours	1 h 30 min
18 km at 45 km/h	$18 / 45 = 0.4$ hours	24 min
5 km in 50 min	50 min = 0.833 h; $5 / 0.833$	6 km/h
12 km/h for 35 min	35 min = 0.583 h; 12×0.583	7 km

Practical rule

Convert minutes to a fraction of an hour before using the formula. Then add time for loading, checks, terrain, rest, navigation and a realistic safety margin.

PERFORMANCE PREPARATION

PHYSICAL PREPARATION

Train for the demands of service without arriving exhausted,
under-fuelled or injured.



16 WEEKS

THREE STARTING LEVELS

4 PILLARS

RUN / STRENGTH / FUEL / RECOVER

ONE AIM

ARRIVE READY TO TRAIN

Eat to train, recover and think clearly

The goal is not a perfect diet. It is reliable fuelling, healthy body composition and habits that survive busy weeks.

Build the meal

- Choose a lean protein source first.
- Add carbohydrate around hard training.
- Add vegetables or fruit for micronutrients and fibre.
- Add fats in portions that support energy needs.
- Use water and regular meals before reaching for supplements.

Protein

Spread protein across three to five meals. A useful evidence-based range for many active adults is about 1.6 to 2.2 g per kg of body mass per day, adjusted for goals, body composition and total energy intake.

Carbohydrate

Running, swimming, circuits and high-volume military preparation use carbohydrate. Increase portions around hard or long sessions. Reduce them when total training demand is lower rather than removing the food group completely.

Before selection

- Use familiar foods.
- Eat enough carbohydrate to support the task.
- Hydrate normally; avoid forced over-drinking.
- Do not trial stimulants, supplements or extreme diets.
- Carry the food permitted by the joining instruction.

Body composition without losing performance

Rapid weight loss can reduce training quality, recovery and decision making. Use a controlled process.

If fat loss is required

- Use a modest energy deficit.
- Keep protein high and continue strength training.
- Place more carbohydrate around demanding sessions.
- Track weekly average body mass, not one daily reading.
- Adjust only after a consistent two-to-three-week trend.

Daily weight changes

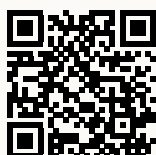
Body mass can rise after high-salt meals, greater carbohydrate intake, hard training, heat, poor sleep, constipation or menstruation. Trend data over time before changing calories.

Red flags

- Persistent fatigue or falling performance.
- Frequent injuries or illness.
- Loss of menstrual function.
- Dizziness, fainting or obsessive restriction.
- Rapid unexplained weight change.

When 1-2-1 support matters

Nutrition becomes harder when work, family, injury, weight categories, medical conditions or repeated dieting interact. Complete Commando 1-2-1 mentoring turns the target into an individual plan and reviews the data as training changes.



APPLY FOR 1-2-1 MENTORING

The evidence behind the plan

Selection preparation must improve performance without spending the candidate's health before training begins.

Aerobic base and specificity

- Use easy running to build repeatable aerobic work.
- Add one controlled threshold or interval session when the base is stable.
- Practise the official test, but do not make every week a test week.
- Introduce load carriage only where the route demands it and progress walking load conservatively.

Strength and robustness

- Train major movement patterns at least twice each week.
- Use progressive loads with clean technique and repetitions in reserve.
- Develop calf, soleus, hamstring, trunk, pulling and single-leg capacity.
- Bodyweight test work supplements strength; it does not replace it.

Recovery is training

- Protect 7-9 hours of sleep whenever circumstances allow.
- Use at least one low-load or rest day each week.
- Reduce volume when pain changes movement or performance keeps falling.
- Prior injury and low starting fitness increase recruit-training injury risk.

Fuel the work

- Protein: about 1.6-2.2 g/kg/day is a useful range for many active adults.
- Distribute protein over three to five meals.
- Scale carbohydrate to running, swimming, circuits and long sessions.
- Avoid rapid weight loss, dehydration methods and untested supplements.
- Servicewomen should protect energy availability, iron, vitamin D and menstrual health.

PROGRESSION RULE

Increase only what you can recover from. If sleep, mood, easy-run pace, strength and pain all deteriorate together, adding more work is not toughness; it is poor load management. Seek qualified clinical help for persistent pain, illness, fainting, disordered eating or menstrual disruption.

Standards before selection

Professional habits reduce avoidable stress and show respect for the people, time and task around you.

LOOK THE PART. FEEL THE PART. ACT THE PART.

RIGHT TIME. RIGHT PLACE. RIGHT RIG. RIGHT ATTITUDE.

PRIOR PLANNING PREVENTS PISS POOR PERFORMANCE.

The Condor moment

Pause before reacting. Take one breath. Confirm the task, time and standard. Notice what matters, choose the useful action and carry it out. Composure is a practised decision.

Personal administration

- Arrive early with the correct documents and kit.
- Keep clothing and equipment clean and serviceable.
- Write instructions down.
- Prepare travel and a backup route.

When corrected

- Listen fully.
- Acknowledge the correction.
- Apply it immediately.
- Ask a concise question if the standard is unclear.
- Move on without excuses or drama.

Team standard

Be useful when nobody is watching. Help the team without performing for attention. Own mistakes early and fix them.

Ironing, footwear and inspection-ready kit

Good administration is not decoration. It saves time, prevents missing kit and shows that you can follow a standard without constant supervision.

Task	Reliable method
Ironing	Check the care label, empty pockets and use a clean iron. Work in a repeatable order: collar, shoulders, sleeves, body and cuffs. Align seams. Add creases only where instructed, then hang the garment immediately.
Trousers	Match the inside and outside leg seams before pressing. Keep any required crease straight from top to bottom. Avoid double creases and shine from excessive heat.
Shoes and smooth leather boots	Remove dry dirt, clean seams and edges, then apply thin layers of suitable polish. Brush and buff between layers. Clean the laces and sole edge. Do not use this method on suede or rough-out footwear.
Laundry	Separate colours, read labels, wash early enough to dry fully and check every pocket. Pair socks, fold items consistently and label only in the way directed by the joining instructions.
Small repairs	Replace a loose button, remove hanging threads and report damage that cannot be repaired properly. Do not hide unserviceable equipment.
Documents	Keep originals and required copies in a waterproof folder, ordered to match the joining instruction. Add travel details, emergency contacts and any required medication paperwork.

The inspection scan

- Correct item and quantity.
- Clean, dry and serviceable.
- Marked, folded or hung as instructed.
- Pockets and containers empty unless told otherwise.
- Nothing borrowed, hidden or left until morning.

Build the skill now

Practise on your own clothing every week. Time the complete routine, then improve the order rather than rushing the finish. Training is not the place to learn how an iron, washing machine or polish brush works.

Standards when tired, rushed or corrected

The useful mindset is practical: control what you can, keep the team informed and complete the next task to the required standard.

Situation	Useful response
A new instruction	Stop, listen, write the key details, repeat back what matters and begin in the correct order.
You are behind	State it early, protect the priority, ask for clarification or support where needed and recover the plan without excuses.
You make a mistake	Own it, make the situation safe, correct what can be corrected and record the lesson.
You are corrected	Listen without interrupting, acknowledge the point, apply it and avoid repeating the same error.
The team is struggling	Complete your own responsibility, then offer useful help. Do not create noise, blame or a second problem.
You are tired	Slow the thinking, not the standard. Use written checks, prepare earlier and watch for avoidable errors.

Night-before routine

- Read tomorrow's timings and dress requirement.
- Prepare clothing, footwear, documents, food and water.
- Set two alarms and confirm travel plus a backup.
- Charge devices and place essential items together.
- Set a bedtime that protects the next day's performance.

Morning routine

- Get up on the first alarm.
- Make the bed and leave the room orderly.
- Wash, dress and eat without using the final minute.
- Run the inspection scan before leaving.

Weekly self-review

- What standard did I meet consistently?
- Where did I need reminders?
- What mistake repeated?
- What system will stop it happening again?
- What can I do this week to make the team stronger?

Character under pressure

Discipline is doing the ordinary requirement accurately and on time. Integrity is telling the truth when a mistake would be easier to hide. Courage includes asking for help before pride creates a bigger problem.

Choose one training level

Each week puts Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced training on the same page, with one non-fitness task alongside it.

Level	Choose it when	Do not choose it because
Beginner	You are building consistent running and strength, returning after a layoff or cannot yet recover from five training days.	The word feels safer. It is still progressive training.
Intermediate	You train four to five days consistently, can run continuously for 45 minutes and use sound strength technique.	You completed one hard week.
Advanced	You have years of consistent training, tolerate six to eight weekly sessions, recover well and have no current injury problem.	You want the hardest-looking column.

Strength A

Squat or split squat, horizontal push, row, calf work and trunk training.

Strength B

Hinge, overhead or incline push, pull-up progression, single-leg work and loaded carry where suitable.

Load rules

- Never run with weight.
- Progress hiking load gradually.
- Do not copy recruit-training loads or obstacles.
- Use sound repetitions with one to three reps in reserve.
- Stop and review a worsening injury.

WEEK 01

BASELINE AND MOVEMENT QUALITY

Day / Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
M: Easy run/walk 30 min + mobility	M: Easy run 40 min + 6 strides	M: Easy run 50 min + 8 strides
T: Strength A - squat, push, row 3 x 8	T: Strength A 4 x 6 + pull-up progression	T: Strength A heavy 5 x 5 + strict pull-ups
W: Swim or bike 30 min easy	W: Swim 35 min technique	W: Swim 45 min + recovery spin 25 min
Th: 6 x 1 min steady-hard / 2 min easy	Th: 6 x 400 m controlled	Th: 8 x 400 m at 5 km pace / 90 sec
F: Strength B + clean bodyweight technique	F: Strength B + 3 rounds strict reps	F: Strength B + quality calisthenics density
Sa: Easy 45 min walk/run	Sa: Easy run 55 min	Sa: Easy aerobic 75 min
Su: Rest	Su: Rest	Su: Recovery mobility

NON-FITNESS PREPARATION

Confirm role, create candidate portal folder, record honest baseline and start an error log.

WEEKLY REFLECTION

COMPLETION

RECOVERY

WARNING SIGNS

NEXT WEEK

Answer the four prompts in your notebook.

What did I complete?

How were sleep and recovery?

What pain or fatigue changed?

What will I adjust?

WEEK 02

AEROBIC CONSISTENCY

Day / Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
M: Easy run/walk 35 min	M: Easy run 45 min	M: Easy 55 min + strides
T: Strength A 3 x 8	T: Strength A 4 x 6	T: Strength A 5 x 4
W: Swim/bike 35 min	W: Swim 40 min	W: Swim 50 min technique/aerobic
Th: 8 x 1 min hard / 90 sec easy	Th: 5 x 600 m at controlled 5 km effort	Th: 5 x 1 km at threshold / 2 min
F: Strength B + trunk	F: Strength B + strict bodyweight	F: Strength B + weighted pull-up option
Sa: Easy 50 min	Sa: Easy run 60 min	Sa: Easy 85 min
Su: Rest	Su: Rest	Su: Recovery 30 min

NON-FITNESS PREPARATION Learn service purpose, values, training location and your role's first-stage training.

WEEKLY REFLECTION**COMPLETION****RECOVERY****WARNING SIGNS****NEXT WEEK**

Answer the four prompts in your notebook.

What did I complete?

How were sleep and recovery?

What pain or fatigue changed?

What will I adjust?

WEEK 03

STRENGTH AND CLEAN REPETITIONS

Day / Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
M: Easy 35 min + 4 strides	M: Easy 45 min + 6 strides	M: Easy 60 min + 8 strides
T: Strength A 4 x 6	T: Strength A 5 x 5	T: Strength A 5 x 3, heavy but clean
W: Bodyweight EMOM 15 min, clean reps	W: Swim 40 min + calisthenics	W: Swim 50 min + 5 strict-rep rounds
Th: 6 x 2 min hard / 2 min easy	Th: 4 x 1 km at threshold	Th: 3 x 2 km threshold / 3 min
F: Strength B 4 x 6	F: Strength B 5 x 5 + trunk	F: Strength B 5 x 3 + power
Sa: Easy 55 min	Sa: Easy 65 min	Sa: Easy 90 min
Su: Rest	Su: Rest	Su: Recovery mobility

NON-FITNESS PREPARATION

Practise ironing, laundry, packing and a timed morning routine. Be early all week.

WEEKLY REFLECTION

COMPLETION

RECOVERY

WARNING SIGNS

NEXT WEEK

Answer the four prompts in your notebook.

What did I complete?

How were sleep and recovery?

What pain or fatigue changed?

What will I adjust?

WEEK 04

DELOAD AND VERIFY

Day / Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
M: Easy 25 min	M: Easy 35 min	M: Easy 40 min
T: Strength light 2 x 8	T: Strength light 3 x 6	T: Strength light 3 x 5
W: Rest or swim 20 min	W: Swim 30 min easy	W: Swim 35 min easy
Th: 4 x 1 min brisk	Th: 5 x 400 m controlled	Th: 6 x 400 m smooth
F: Mobility + easy bodyweight	F: Easy calisthenics	F: Mobility + technique
Sa: Easy 35 min	Sa: Easy 45 min	Sa: Easy 60 min
Su: Rest	Su: Rest	Su: Rest

NON-FITNESS PREPARATION

Recheck official service pages and update any dates, tests or role facts in your notes.

WEEKLY REFLECTION

COMPLETION

RECOVERY

WARNING SIGNS

NEXT WEEK

Answer the four prompts in your notebook.

What did I complete?

How were sleep and recovery?

What pain or fatigue changed?

What will I adjust?

WEEK 05

THRESHOLD AND WORK CAPACITY

Day / Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
M: Easy 40 min	M: Easy 50 min + strides	M: Easy 60 min + strides
T: Strength A 4 x 6	T: Strength A 5 x 5	T: Strength A 5 x 3 + assistance
W: 4 rounds moderate circuit	W: Swim 45 min + 4 rounds strict	W: Swim 55 min + 25 min easy bike
Th: 3 x 5 min comfortably hard	Th: 3 x 8 min threshold / 2 min	Th: 4 x 2 km threshold / 2 min
F: Strength B + pull progression	F: Strength B + trunk	F: Strength B + high-quality density
Sa: Easy 60 min	Sa: Easy 70 min	Sa: Aerobic 95 min
Su: Rest	Su: Rest	Su: Recovery 35 min

NON-FITNESS PREPARATION

Write and record your two-minute answer: why this service and why this role?

WEEKLY REFLECTION

COMPLETION

RECOVERY

WARNING SIGNS

NEXT WEEK

Answer the four prompts in your notebook.

What did I complete?

How were sleep and recovery?

What pain or fatigue changed?

What will I adjust?

WEEK 06

HILLS AND ROBUSTNESS

Day / Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
M: Easy 40 min	M: Easy 50 min	M: Easy 60 min
T: Strength A + calves/feet	T: Strength A + calves/feet	T: Strength A heavy + calf capacity
W: Swim/bike 40 min	W: Swim 45 min	W: Swim 55 min
Th: 8 x 45 sec hill, walk down	Th: 10 x 60 sec hill	Th: 12 x 75 sec hill, controlled
F: Strength B + trunk	F: Strength B + strict reps	F: Strength B + strict density
Sa: Hilly walk 75 min, light pack	Sa: Hilly walk 90 min, modest pack	Sa: Hilly hike 2 h, sensible load
Su: Rest	Su: Rest	Su: Recovery 30 min

NON-FITNESS PREPARATION

Learn foot care, blister management, layering and how to pack waterproof kit. No loaded running.

WEEKLY REFLECTION

COMPLETION

RECOVERY

WARNING SIGNS

NEXT WEEK

Answer the four prompts in your notebook.

What did I complete?

How were sleep and recovery?

What pain or fatigue changed?

What will I adjust?

WEEK 07

REPEATABILITY

Day / Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
M: Easy 45 min	M: Easy 50 min + strides	M: Easy 65 min + strides
T: Strength A 4 x 6	T: Strength A 5 x 4	T: Strength A 6 x 3
W: 5 x bodyweight quality sets	W: Swim 45 + calisthenics	W: Swim 60 + 6 strict rounds
Th: 5 x 3 min hard / 2 min easy	Th: 6 x 800 m at 5 km pace	Th: 6 x 1 km at 5 km pace / 2 min
F: Strength B	F: Strength B 5 x 4	F: Strength B 6 x 3 + power
Sa: Easy 65 min	Sa: Easy 75 min	Sa: Aerobic 100 min
Su: Rest	Su: Rest	Su: Recovery mobility

NON-FITNESS PREPARATION

Build five evidence stories: team, leadership, failure, pressure and learning a difficult skill.

WEEKLY REFLECTION

COMPLETION

RECOVERY

WARNING SIGNS

NEXT WEEK

Answer the four prompts in your notebook.

What did I complete?

How were sleep and recovery?

What pain or fatigue changed?

What will I adjust?

WEEK 08

DELOAD AND NAVIGATION

Day / Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
M: Easy 30 min	M: Easy 40 min	M: Easy 45 min
T: Strength light 2 x 8	T: Strength light 3 x 6	T: Strength light 3 x 5
W: Rest	W: Swim easy 35 min	W: Swim easy 40 min
Th: 20 min steady + 4 strides	Th: 25 min steady + strides	Th: 30 min steady + strides
F: Mobility + easy swim	F: Mobility	F: Mobility
Sa: Day navigation walk	Sa: Day navigation 90 min	Sa: Day navigation 2 h
Su: Rest	Su: Rest	Su: Rest

NON-FITNESS PREPARATION

Complete a route card, grid references and bearings on safe familiar terrain.

WEEKLY REFLECTION

COMPLETION

RECOVERY

WARNING SIGNS

NEXT WEEK

Answer the four prompts in your notebook.

What did I complete?

How were sleep and recovery?

What pain or fatigue changed?

What will I adjust?

WEEK 09

SPECIFIC PACE

Day / Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
M: Easy 45 min	M: Easy 55 min	M: Easy 65 min
T: Strength A 4 x 5	T: Strength A 5 x 4	T: Strength A 5 x 3
W: Bodyweight technique	W: Swim 45 + strict reps	W: Swim 60 + calisthenics
Th: 6 x 2 min at test effort	Th: 5 x 1 km at target 2.4/2 km pace	Th: 3 sets 4 x 400 m faster than test pace
F: Strength B	F: Strength B	F: Strength B + power
Sa: Easy 70 min	Sa: Easy 80 min	Sa: Aerobic 105 min
Su: Rest	Su: Rest	Su: Recovery 35 min

NON-FITNESS PREPARATION

Complete one full mock interview. Correct every vague fact before repeating it.

WEEKLY REFLECTION

COMPLETION

RECOVERY

WARNING SIGNS

NEXT WEEK

Answer the four prompts in your notebook.

What did I complete?

How were sleep and recovery?

What pain or fatigue changed?

What will I adjust?

WEEK 10

TEAM OUTPUT UNDER FATIGUE

Day / Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
M: Easy 45 min	M: Easy 55 min	M: Easy 65 min
T: Strength A	T: Strength A	T: Strength A heavy
W: 5 rounds controlled circuit	W: Swim + 5 rounds strict	W: Swim + 6 rounds strict
Th: 4 x 4 min hard	Th: 5 x 5 min hard / 2 min	Th: 6 x 5 min hard / 90 sec
F: Strength B	F: Strength B	F: Strength B + power
Sa: Hilly walk 90 min	Sa: Hilly hike 2 h	Sa: Hilly hike 2.5 h, sensible load
Su: Rest	Su: Rest	Su: Recovery

NON-FITNESS PREPARATION

Lead a small real task. Brief the aim, allocate roles, use time checks and run an honest review.

WEEKLY REFLECTION

COMPLETION

RECOVERY

WARNING SIGNS

NEXT WEEK

Answer the four prompts in your notebook.

What did I complete?

How were sleep and recovery?

What pain or fatigue changed?

What will I adjust?

WEEK 11

PEAK VOLUME

Day / Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
M: Easy 50 min	M: Easy 60 min + strides	M: Easy 70 min + strides
T: Strength A 4 x 5	T: Strength A 5 x 4	T: Strength A 6 x 3
W: Swim/bike 45 min	W: Swim 50 + bodyweight	W: Swim 60 + double easy 30 min
Th: 8 x 2 min hard	Th: 6 x 1 km at 5 km pace	Th: 5 x 1600 m threshold / 2 min
F: Strength B + bodyweight	F: Strength B	F: Strength B + density
Sa: Easy 75 min	Sa: Easy 90 min	Sa: Aerobic 120 min
Su: Rest	Su: Rest	Su: Recovery 40 min

NON-FITNESS PREPARATION

Check travel, identification, medical instructions, finances and family plan. Remove avoidable friction.

WEEKLY REFLECTION

COMPLETION

RECOVERY

WARNING SIGNS

NEXT WEEK

Answer the four prompts in your notebook.

What did I complete?

How were sleep and recovery?

What pain or fatigue changed?

What will I adjust?

WEEK 12

DELOAD AND OFFICIAL CHECK

Day / Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
M: Easy 30 min	M: Easy 40 min	M: Easy 50 min
T: Strength light	T: Strength light	T: Strength light
W: Rest	W: Swim easy	W: Swim easy
Th: Controlled official-format rehearsal	Th: Controlled official-format rehearsal	Th: Controlled official-format rehearsal
F: Mobility	F: Mobility	F: Mobility
Sa: Easy 40 min	Sa: Easy 50 min	Sa: Easy 65 min
Su: Rest	Su: Rest	Su: Rest

NON-FITNESS PREPARATION

Use only your service's current official format. Record result, technique and recovery; do not chase repeated maximal tests.

WEEKLY REFLECTION

COMPLETION

RECOVERY

WARNING SIGNS

NEXT WEEK

Answer the four prompts in your notebook.

What did I complete?

How were sleep and recovery?

What pain or fatigue changed?

What will I adjust?

WEEK 13

SELECTION REHEARSAL

Day / Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
M: Easy 45 min	M: Easy 50 min + strides	M: Easy 60 min + strides
T: Strength A 3 x 5	T: Strength A 4 x 4	T: Strength A 4 x 3
W: Bodyweight official technique	W: Swim + official technique	W: Swim + official technique
Th: Short test-pace intervals	Th: 4 x 1 km at target pace	Th: 2 sets 5 x 400 m fast/controlled
F: Strength B light-moderate	F: Strength B moderate	F: Strength B moderate + power
Sa: Easy 60 min	Sa: Easy 70 min	Sa: Easy 85 min
Su: Rest	Su: Rest	Su: Recovery

NON-FITNESS PREPARATION

Run a complete selection-day rehearsal: wake, breakfast, travel timing, documents, warm-up and interview.

WEEKLY REFLECTION

COMPLETION

RECOVERY

WARNING SIGNS

NEXT WEEK

Answer the four prompts in your notebook.

What did I complete?

How were sleep and recovery?

What pain or fatigue changed?

What will I adjust?

WEEK 14

SHARPEN, DO NOT DESTROY

Day / Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
M: Easy 40 min	M: Easy 45 min + strides	M: Easy 55 min + strides
T: Strength 3 x 5	T: Strength 3 x 4	T: Strength 4 x 3
W: Swim/bike 35 min	W: Swim 40 min	W: Swim 45 min
Th: 6 x 90 sec at test pace	Th: 6 x 600 m at target pace	Th: 8 x 600 m at target pace
F: Bodyweight quality	F: Bodyweight quality	F: Bodyweight quality
Sa: Easy 55 min	Sa: Easy 65 min	Sa: Easy 75 min
Su: Rest	Su: Rest	Su: Recovery

NON-FITNESS PREPARATION

Practise concise answers to service history, current role, training pipeline and one current operation.

WEEKLY REFLECTION

COMPLETION

RECOVERY

WARNING SIGNS

NEXT WEEK

Answer the four prompts in your notebook.

What did I complete?

How were sleep and recovery?

What pain or fatigue changed?

What will I adjust?

WEEK 15

TAPER AND CONFIDENCE

Day / Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
M: Easy 35 min	M: Easy 40 min + strides	M: Easy 45 min + strides
T: Strength light 2 x 5	T: Strength light 3 x 4	T: Strength light 3 x 3
W: Rest or easy swim	W: Swim easy 30 min	W: Swim easy 35 min
Th: 4 x 2 min brisk	Th: 4 x 3 min at target pace	Th: 5 x 3 min at target pace
F: Mobility + a few clean reps	F: Mobility + clean reps	F: Mobility + clean reps
Sa: Easy 40 min	Sa: Easy 50 min	Sa: Easy 60 min
Su: Rest	Su: Rest	Su: Rest

NON-FITNESS PREPARATION

Pack, check route, confirm timings and sleep. No new shoes, supplements or heroic last session.

WEEKLY REFLECTION

COMPLETION

RECOVERY

WARNING SIGNS

NEXT WEEK

Answer the four prompts in your notebook.

What did I complete?

How were sleep and recovery?

What pain or fatigue changed?

What will I adjust?

WEEK 16

ASSESSMENT WEEK

Day / Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
M: Easy 25 min + 4 strides	M: Easy 30 min + 4 strides	M: Easy 35 min + 5 strides
T: Mobility, walk, normal food	T: Mobility, normal routine	T: Mobility, normal routine
W: Rest or short easy swim	W: Rest or short easy swim	W: Rest or short easy swim
Th: 15 min easy + 3 short pickups	Th: 20 min easy + 4 pickups	Th: 20 min easy + 5 pickups
F: Rest and prepare	F: Rest and prepare	F: Rest and prepare
Sa: Assessment / controlled check	Sa: Assessment / controlled check	Sa: Assessment / controlled check
Su: Recover and review	Su: Recover and review	Su: Recover and review

NON-FITNESS PREPARATION

Use your Condor moment. Listen, confirm the task, act with discipline and help the team.

WEEKLY REFLECTION

COMPLETION

RECOVERY

WARNING SIGNS

NEXT WEEK

Answer the four prompts in your notebook.

What did I complete?

How were sleep and recovery?

What pain or fatigue changed?

What will I adjust?

Seven days before selection

Reduce uncertainty. Confirm the facts, protect recovery and arrive ready to listen.

Area	Confirm
Instructions	Date, time, address, clothing, documents, medication, food and any fasting instruction.
Travel	Primary route, backup route, parking or station, arrival buffer and contact number.
Knowledge	Role, training, service purpose, bases, values and one current operation.
Evidence	Five clear examples: team, leadership, pressure, failure and learning.
Body	No new footwear, supplements or maximal training. Sleep and eat normally.
Life	Family understands the plan. Phone, money and emergencies are covered.
Bearing	Right time, right place, right rig, right attitude.

Pack once, check once, then stop. Set alarms and put the address in your phone. Eat familiar food, hydrate normally and protect sleep.

100 CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

Clear answers to the questions candidates and families repeatedly ask before joining the UK Armed Forces.



100

9

4

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

DECISION AREAS

SERVICES COVERED

Questions 1-5

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

01 Which service should I join?

Choose the work and environment, not only the badge. Compare the daily role, training route, likely locations, time away and qualifications before deciding.

02 How do I choose a military role?

Start with what you want to do each day: fight, lead, engineer, fly, analyse, communicate, move supplies or deliver healthcare. Then check current eligibility on the official role page.

03 Can I apply for more than one service?

You can explore every service, but active applications can interact. Tell recruiters the truth and ask them how another live application affects your route.

04 Should I join as an officer or other rank?

Officers are selected to lead, plan and hold wider responsibility. Other ranks develop deep trade and operational competence; senior leadership opportunities exist in both routes.

05 Is the Army only infantry?

No. Infantry is one part of a force that also needs armour, artillery, engineers, signals, aviation, intelligence, logistics, medical and technical specialists.

Questions 6-10

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

06 Is the Royal Navy only ships?

No. It includes surface ships, submarines, the Fleet Air Arm, shore establishments and the wider Naval Service, including the Royal Marines.

07 Is every RAF role aircrew?

No. Aircraft depend on engineering, intelligence, operations, force protection, logistics, medical, communications and many other ground roles.

08 What is different about the Royal Marines?

Royal Marines are the Naval Service's amphibious Commando force. The route is built around arduous Commando training and service from sea to land.

09 Can I change role after joining?

Transfers can happen but are never guaranteed. Join a role you are prepared to do, rather than relying on a later transfer.

10 Should I choose a role for its civilian qualification?

Qualifications matter, but so do daily work and service commitment. The strongest choice gives you both meaningful work and useful development.

Questions 11-15

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

11 What age can I join?

Minimum and maximum ages vary by service and role. Use the current official role page because age windows and entry points can change.

12 Am I too old to join?

Not necessarily. Many roles accept older applicants and reserves often have different limits, but arduous or aircrew roles can be more restrictive.

13 Do I need GCSEs?

Some roles require none; technical and officer roles often specify grades and subjects. Check the exact role rather than assuming one service-wide rule.

14 Can I join without qualifications?

Yes, for a number of roles. You still need to meet aptitude, medical, fitness, security and training standards.

15 Do officers need a degree?

Not for every officer role. Most require specified school qualifications; specialist professions may require a degree or professional registration.

Questions 16–20

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

16 Can Commonwealth citizens apply?

Some routes are open subject to current nationality, residency and recruitment rules. Check the official eligibility page before making travel or financial plans.

17 Can dual nationals join?

Often yes, but nationality and residency rules vary by role and security requirement. Declare every nationality and passport.

18 How much UK residency do I need?

It depends on the role and level of security clearance. Long periods abroad do not automatically end an application, but they can require more evidence.

19 Can I join with tattoos?

Usually, provided they meet current service rules on content, location and presentation. Declare them accurately and check the latest policy.

20 Can I join with a criminal record?

Some convictions do not permanently bar entry, while others do. Declare everything requested; concealment can become a separate integrity issue.

Questions 21–25

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

21 Will the military see my medical records?

Recruiting medical staff review the information and records required for your assessment. Give complete, honest details and help your GP return requested records promptly.

22 Why is my application waiting for GP records?

The medical team cannot decide until it has the requested evidence. Confirm the request reached the correct GP practice and follow up politely with both sides.

23 What do TMU and PMU mean?

TMU means temporarily medically unfit while evidence or recovery is awaited. PMU means permanently medically unfit under the decision made, though an appeal route may be available.

24 Can I appeal a medical rejection?

Often yes. Follow the instructions in the decision, address the exact reason and provide relevant clinical evidence rather than a general letter.

25 Can I join with asthma?

It depends on history, symptoms, treatment and current standards. Do not self-decide eligibility; submit accurate records for an individual medical assessment.

Questions 26–30

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

26 Can I join with eczema?

Severity, recurrence, treatment and occupational exposure matter. The recruiting medical team makes the decision from the full history.

27 Can I join with ADHD or autism?

A diagnosis is not answered safely by a blanket yes or no. Function, support needs, treatment, associated history and the current standard are assessed individually.

28 Can I join after anxiety or depression?

The decision depends on severity, recurrence, treatment, risk and time well. Be honest and provide the evidence requested; online anecdotes cannot decide your case.

29 Can I join after an operation or injury?

Possibly, once recovery, function and recurrence risk meet the occupational standard. Keep discharge letters, imaging reports and rehabilitation evidence.

30 Will a previous fracture stop me joining?

Not automatically. Healing, symptoms, function, hardware and the demands of the role all matter.

Questions 31–35

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

31 Can I join with poor eyesight?

Vision standards vary sharply by role, especially aircrew, diving and specialist posts. Use the official role standard and do not rely on a general answer.

32 Does colour vision matter?

For some roles, yes. The required colour-perception grade depends on the safety and technical demands of the job.

33 Will hearing loss stop my application?

Hearing is tested against occupational standards. The result and role requirement determine the outcome.

34 Can I join with allergies?

The cause, severity, treatment and anaphylaxis risk matter. Declare prescribed auto-injectors and all significant reactions.

35 Should I stop medication to pass medical?

No. Never change prescribed treatment without the clinician responsible for your care. Concealing treatment creates health and integrity risks.

Questions 36-40

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

36 How long does an application take?

There is no guaranteed duration. Medical evidence, role availability, security checks, assessment dates and your own response time all affect it.

37 How can I stop my application being delayed?

Complete tasks quickly, upload clear documents, keep contact details current, prepare early and follow up calmly when a stated timescale has passed.

38 What documents will I need?

Expect identity, nationality, address, education and medical information, plus role-specific evidence. Your portal gives the controlling list.

39 What is security vetting?

It checks suitability for access and trust required by the role. Answer accurately about identity, addresses, finances, relationships and overseas links.

40 Will debt stop me joining?

Debt is not automatically disqualifying, but unmanaged financial vulnerability can matter for vetting. Be honest and show that any plan is controlled.

Questions 41-45

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

41 Do I need references?

Some stages or roles require referees and verified history. Choose people who know you appropriately and tell them to expect contact.

42 Can I pause my application?

Often, but the effect depends on service, stage and role demand. Speak to your recruiter before missing deadlines.

43 Can I reapply after failing?

Usually after the stated waiting period or once the issue is resolved. Use the feedback to change something measurable before returning.

44 What happens after I accept an offer?

You complete outstanding conditions, receive joining instructions and prepare for the date, travel, kit and conduct requirements.

45 Should I leave my job before receiving a date?

No. Wait for written confirmation and understand every condition before making irreversible employment or housing decisions.

Questions 46–50

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

46 What is the DAA?

The Defence Aptitude Assessment is a timed multiple-choice test covering verbal, numerical, work rate, spatial, mechanical and electrical reasoning.

47 Which services use the DAA?

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines use it, and RAF role pages may include the same six-part aptitude stage. Always follow your candidate portal.

48 How should I prepare for the DAA?

Use official familiarisation material, practise timed basic maths and reasoning, read every instruction and complete the real assessment rested and distraction-free.

49 Can I use AI or a calculator in the DAA?

Use only what the official instructions permit. The Royal Navy explicitly treats AI use during the assessment as cheating.

50 What is Army cognitive testing?

Army assessment includes role-related cognitive testing. Practise clear numerical, verbal, error-checking and rule-following work under time pressure.

Questions 51–55

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

51 What is RAF CBAT?

CBAT is a one-day computer-based aptitude test at RAF College Cranwell for specified aircrew, control, intelligence and other roles.

52 What does CBAT test?

It can measure responses to visual information, two- and three-dimensional reasoning, multitasking, work rate, concentration and verbal or numerical reasoning.

53 Does every RAF officer sit CBAT?

No. It is role-dependent. The current role page and application process tell you whether it applies.

54 What will I be asked at interview?

Expect motivation, role and training knowledge, service awareness, personal history, teamwork, leadership, resilience and evidence of preparation.

55 How do I answer 'Why do you want to join?'

Give your genuine reason, connect it to the service and role, then prove it with actions you have already taken.

Questions 56–58

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

56 What is the Admiralty Interview Board?

It is the Royal Navy officer selection process. Prepare for the current format shown by your recruiter, including communication, planning and group performance.

57 What happens at Army Officer Selection?

Candidates are assessed on leadership potential, intellect, communication, teamwork, planning, physical readiness and motivation across briefing and Main Board stages.

58 What happens at OASC?

RAF officer and aircrew selection assesses suitability through the current mix of interviews, planning, group tasks and role-specific assessment.

Questions 59–63

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

59 How fit should I be before applying?

Apply with time to improve, but do not wait to begin training. Aim to exceed the entry standard and recover well enough to train consistently.

60 Should I train only for the entry test?

No. The test is a minimum selection standard; training demands repeat running, strength, bodyweight work, movement quality and recovery.

61 What is the Royal Marines PJFA standard?

The current minimum is MSFT 10.5, 30 press-ups, 40 sit-ups and 4 pull-ups to the specified cadence and technique.

62 Is passing the RM minimum enough?

It meets the selection minimum, but it is a poor final training target. Build a margin so nerves, fatigue and an unfamiliar setting do not leave you on the line.

63 What happens at Royal Marines CPC?

The four-day course assesses physical readiness, swimming, medical suitability, candidate preparation and potential for Commando training.

Questions 64–68

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

64 What happens at Royal Navy CPC?

The four-day induction includes medical, fitness and suitability activity plus preparation for Initial Naval Training.

65 How long is Army assessment?

Plan for the official three-day, two-night experience. Army pages also describe the core assessment as two days.

66 What happens at Army assessment?

Expect a health review, physical assessment, cognitive testing, team activity, career discussion and checks set out in your joining instructions.

67 What happens at RAF fitness testing?

The exact test and standard depend on entry route and role. Use the current RAF instructions rather than an old online table.

68 How often should I run?

Most candidates need a mix of easy aerobic work, one quality interval session and a longer run. The right amount depends on training age and injury history.

Questions 69–70

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

69 Should I train with a weighted bergen?

Only when your route requires load carriage and after a running and strength base exists. Progress walking load conservatively; do not turn every session into a race.

70 What if I get injured during preparation?

Stop forcing the failing movement, obtain appropriate clinical advice and train what is safe. A delayed test is better than arriving injured.

Questions 71–75

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

71 Can I use my phone in basic training?

Access is controlled by the training establishment and programme. Expect limited personal time and follow local rules.

72 Will I get weekends off?

Some weekends may be available, while exercises, duty, remediation and course demands can remove them. Do not build plans around guaranteed leave.

73 What is accommodation like?

Expect shared military accommodation during initial training, with standards for cleanliness, security and inspection.

74 What is the food like?

Training establishments provide meals designed for large numbers and operational schedules. Learn to choose enough protein, carbohydrate, fruit, vegetables and fluid.

75 Will instructors shout at me?

Training can be direct, pressured and corrective. Focus on the instruction, respond professionally and do not confuse discomfort with personal hostility.

Questions 76–80

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

76 What happens if I fail a test in training?

The response depends on the test and course: retraining, a retest, back-classing or discharge are possible. Ask for feedback and act on it.

77 How much ironing and kit preparation is involved?

A lot at first. Preparation, laundry, ironing, boot care, locker layout and equipment accountability teach reliability under time pressure.

78 How should I prepare for inspections?

Use a repeatable sequence, work from a checklist, prepare early, protect clean kit and inspect your own work before reporting ready.

79 What is military discipline really like?

It is reliable action within lawful orders, standards and team responsibility. Punctuality, honesty and attention to detail matter every day.

80 What if I am homesick?

It is common during a major transition. Keep the next task small, stay connected within the rules and use the welfare chain early if it is affecting function.

Questions 81–85

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

81 When do I start getting paid?

Pay normally begins from the official start of service, subject to payroll processing. Confirm current rates and arrangements in your offer.

82 Is food and accommodation deducted?

Service accommodation and food charges depend on location and arrangement. Use current service guidance, not an old forum figure.

83 Will I be posted far from home?

Possibly. Service need and role determine postings, and deployment or courses can add substantial time away.

84 How often will I deploy?

There is no single answer. Service, unit, role, readiness cycle and world events all matter.

85 Can I maintain a relationship while serving?

Yes, but it requires honest expectations, communication and planning around absence, fatigue and unpredictable changes.

Questions 86–90

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

86 What support is available to families?

Each service has welfare staff, HIVE or equivalent information and an independent families federation. Use support early.

87 Can I buy a house while serving?

Yes, but postings and affordability need careful planning. Use regulated financial advice and understand service accommodation options.

88 Can I study while serving?

Many roles include qualifications and there can be education support, but availability depends on service need, course and career stage.

89 How long must I serve?

Commitment and notice rules differ by service, age and entry route. Read the terms supplied with your offer.

90 What happens when I leave?

Resettlement support and transferable skills vary with service and length of service. Keep records of qualifications and achievements throughout your career.

Questions 91–95

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

91 Should I join the Regulars or Reserves?

Choose Regulars for a full-time service career and Reserves when you want civilian life alongside military commitment. Neither route is a casual version of the other.

92 How much time do the Reserves require?

Typical annual commitments are about 24 days for Royal Naval Reserve and 27 days for Army or RAF Reserve roles, with role and unit variation.

93 Can my employer stop me joining the Reserves?

Employment law and company policy matter. Discuss time, training and mobilisation honestly and use official employer-support guidance.

94 Can university students join the Reserves?

Yes, where age, role and training fit. University service units may also provide an introduction without the same commitment as trained reserve service.

95 Can reservists deploy?

Yes. Reservists can be mobilised and deployed. Understand that possibility before joining.

Questions 96–100

Short, direct answers built from recurring candidate concerns. Current role pages and your candidate portal control individual requirements.

96 Do reservists complete basic training?

Yes, through a reserve pathway that can be modular or consolidated. They must meet the required standard before trained service.

97 Can I transfer from Reserves to Regulars?

Routes exist, but timing, vacancies and additional training vary. Do not assume the transfer is automatic.

98 What is the Royal Marines Reserve commitment?

RMR candidates prepare around civilian life but must meet Commando Course standards. The physical and calendar demands are substantial.

99 Are there UK Special Forces Reserve units?

Publicly acknowledged units include 21 and 23 SAS, SBS Reserve and 63 (UKSF) Signal Squadron. Entry is selective and official public information should guide preparation.

100 Should I join solely to reach Special Forces?

Join a parent service and role you are willing to serve in. Build years of competence, judgement and reliability before treating later selection as a realistic aim.

YOUR NEXT STEP

CHOOSE YOUR SUPPORT

Turn information into preparation. Choose the level of coaching and real-world exposure that matches your route.



£1/WEEK

MILITARY PATHWAY

ROLE-SPECIFIC

ROYAL MARINES PREP

IN PERSON

PREPARATION WEEKEND

Four routes. One clear next step

Use the smallest level of support that genuinely solves the preparation problem.

Route	Best for	What it adds	Action
The Objective military pathway	Army, Navy, RAF, Paras and early-stage candidates.	Fitness standards, structure and community with a £1/week entry point.	Join the pathway
Royal Marines Prep	Candidates preparing for PJFA, CPC, ROP and recruit training.	Monitored, role-specific programming and coaching.	Start RM Prep
Military Preparation Weekend	Candidates who need navigation, field skills, resilience and coached pressure.	A demanding in-person weekend with experienced military instructors.	Book the weekend
1-2-1 Mentoring	Candidates whose training, nutrition, work and home life need an individual system.	Personal planning, accountability and high-touch review.	Apply for mentoring
THE OBJECTIVE		ROYAL MARINES PREP	
PREP WEEKEND		1-2-1 MENTORING	

Convert knowledge into action

A handbook can explain navigation, standards and mindset. A preparation weekend shows how you perform when the terrain, team and clock create pressure.

The gap it closes

- Reading a map versus navigating on the ground.
- Passing a fitness test versus working repeatedly under fatigue.
- Knowing teamwork language versus contributing inside a real team.
- Thinking you are organised versus maintaining kit, timings and hydration.

Included

- Navigation and map reading.
- Military fitness and coached testing.
- Survival and field skills.
- Team tasks, resilience and instructor feedback.
- Food and accommodation.

Who should book

- Candidates preparing for any UK service.
- People with no military family background.
- Applicants who want honest feedback before assessment.
- Candidates who need confidence built from competence.

Handbook owner price

Use code HANDBOOK95 through the linked checkout to take £95 off the listed weekend price. Places are limited by accommodation, instructor capacity and the quality of the training experience.



BOOK WITH HANDBOOK95

Official sources

Service facts, joining routes and published standards were checked against the official sources below. Every source title is clickable.

Information checked 3 August 2026. Candidate instructions issued during a live application remain the operational document for that candidate.

01 Royal Marines joining process

<https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers/royal-marines/joining-process>

02 Royal Marines CPC

<https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers/royal-marines/joining-process/commando-royal-marine-candidate-preparation-course>

03 Royal Marines ROP

<https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers/royal-marines/joining-process/commando--recruit-orientation-phase>

04 Royal Marines initial training

<https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers/royal-marines/joining-process/commando-initial-training>

05 Royal Marines fitness preparation

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06 Royal Marines specialisations

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A man with a beard and mustache, wearing a black cap, a black long-sleeved shirt, a black tactical vest, and black pants, is walking on a rocky mountain trail. He is looking towards the camera. The background is a misty, rocky mountain landscape.

**BE USEFUL.
BE COACHABLE.
KEEP THE STANDARD.**

Prepare honestly. Act with discipline. Keep learning. The application is the beginning; becoming a reliable member of the service is the standard.

COMPLETE COMMANDO