

History of the Army Cadet Force

Aim

To teach the new Army Cadet the reason why the ACF was formed.

Important information (that you should know) is given in bold type .

The Early Years

- **The Army Cadet Force traces its history back as far as 1859. The British Army was heavily committed across the Empire (the Indian Mutiny). There were very few troops left in Britain and there was a threat of invasion from the French.**
- In response to the French threat the Volunteer Forces were formed and with them the Cadets. By 1860 at least eight schools had formed Volunteer Companies for their senior boys and masters. Several schools also formed Cadet Companies for aspiring Volunteers.
- In the event the 1859 invasion didn't happen, but many teachers and social workers recognised the good work the Cadet movement did. Many boys lived in slums and the Cadets gave them a sense of purpose and valuable training.
- **Miss Octavia Hill (remember that name) started the Southwark Cadet Company to introduce the local boys to teamwork, cleanliness and self-reliance.**

The Turn of the Twentieth Century

- By the start of the Boar War (1890s) there were about 50 schools (the forerunners of the Combined Cadet Force) and many city (the forebears of the Army Cadet Force) with Cadet units.

The First World War

- The Volunteers became known as the Territorial Army in 1908. The The new Territorial Associations took over responsibility for the Cadet Force. As war loomed in Europe the Cadet Force grew in size.

Between the Wars

- There was a feeling that war could never again happen in Europe, and the Cadet Force had served its purpose. The government withdrew all support to the Cadet Force in 1930. The Regimental identity of the Cadet Force was stripped – the wearing of British Army capbadges and buttons forbidden. The British National Cadet Association (BNCA) was formed with the aim of regaining official government recognition. This aim was achieved by 1936, as the Second war loomed.

The Second World War

- The threat of German invasion once again led to the expansion of the Cadet Force. The government was now prepared to invest more money into training, weapons and uniform.
- **In 1945 the BNCA became the Army Cadet Force Association (ACFA), as it still is today. The role of the ACFA is to advise the government and Ministry of Defence on matters connected with the ACF.**

The Recent History

- **In 1959 the National Cadet Training Centre (CTC) Frimley Park in Surrey was opened.** Frimley (as most people call it) provides training to Officers, Adult Instructors and Senior Cadets.
- **In 1960 the ACF celebrated its centenary (100th birthday). To celebrate the event the Duke of Edinburgh, the ACF's Colonel in Chief, presented a Banner. The presentation ceremony took place at the Tower of London.**
- There are now about 1,600 ACF Detachments and 40,000 Army Cadets across the entire UK.

Summary of Key Points

- The Cadet Forces were formed in 1859 in response to a possible French invasion.
- Octavia Hill was key person in the formation.
- In 1959 the CTC Frimley Park was opened.
- In 1960 the Duke of Edinburgh presented the ACF Banner at the Tower of London.