

HISTORY OF THE ACF

The Army Cadet Force is a national voluntary youth organisation for male and females between the ages of 12-18 years. There are now approximately 1,600 detachments in the UK and a total of 45,000 cadets nation-wide. In Middlesex and North West London ACF there are 31 Detachments, with 1000 cadets. Each detachment is affiliated with a Corps in the British Army 203 Brentford is affiliated with the Royal Logistics Corps.

The ACF can trace its history as far back as 1859, when there was a threat of invasion from the French. Few units were in the UK and so volunteers were formed to repel a possible invasion, which did not occur.

Immediately following the formation of the Volunteers came the start of the cadets. By 1860 eight schools had formed volunteer companies and a number of units had started their own cadets companies.

Many social workers/teachers saw the cadet movement as a great asset, especially for boys born into poverty. Among these pioneer workers was Miss Octavia Hill (she also helped to establish the National Trust).

Although she was not a militarist, she formed the Southwark Cadet Company in order to introduce the boys of the slums in that area to the virtue of order, cleanliness, teamwork and self-reliance.



In 1908 the volunteers were converted into the Territorial Army (TA), Public Schools/Universities formed the Officer Training Corps (OTC) and Schools –formed the Cadet Corps which were the forerunners of the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) which still exist in many schools across the U.K. Open units were formed which were the precursor to the ACF and the title *Cadet Force* was introduced.

The expansion of the ACF continued up to and during both the First and Second World Wars. At one point the Government ceased to recognise the ACF and withdrew financial support. This meant that all training had to be privately funded and even wearing Regimental badges and buttons was forbidden.

A body known as the British National Cadet Association (BNCA) was formed with the aim of getting official recognition restored. It also had responsibility for running the Cadet Force. This was achieved to a limited degree in 1932 and small grants provided by 1936. The War Office then took over the organisation, equipment and accommodation and increased grants and authorised free uniforms, a privilege which ACF cadets still enjoy to this day.

The BNCA continued to deal with matters such as sport, competition shooting and general cadet welfare. The BNCA was renamed the Army Cadet Force Association (AFCA) in 1945. It continues to be responsible for activities which are not the concern of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and advises the MoD/other Government bodies on ACF connected matters.



Motto: "Renovate Animos"
Refresh the Spirit

The Cadet Training Centre

In 1957 the Cadet Training Centre at Frimley Park, Surrey was opened. It provides courses for officers, adult instructors (AIs) of the ACF, CCF and leadership courses in the summer for a limited number of senior cadets.

The Centenary of the ACF was celebrated in 1960. The chief event was the presentation of the Banner to the force by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh at the Tower of London. During that year the Banner was passed from unit to unit and county to county in the UK. It is now housed at Frimley Park.