

TOUGH ON THE TROOPS

The week-end soldiers of England, the southern Territorials, faced the biggest challenge of the year, called the Tough Training Contest. They were warned that it would be really tough - just the stuff to give us, they thought, as they got into uniform. Soldiers from all over the Greater London area were taking part.

27 teams were at the start, and ahead of them lay a slogging 2-day test, of 60 miles. 30 miles a day would be plenty for athletes, in running shorts; this was in marching kit, during a heat-wave. However, General Gleadell and other top brass were confident the exercise wasn't asking too much. So they set out from Pirbright to Wood Green in the best of spirits. Polythene waders enabled them to negotiate the wetter parts of the course. Needless to say, the route was planned with an eye on the hardest possible going. No use sitting down on the job.

The last war proved that the good soldier is a man who's 100% fit. It's the ambition of territorial commanders to get their troops into A.1 condition. There was firing practice on the way, which is the sort of thing infantry would have to encounter in real war.

Next, a 12-mile march at a hot pace. And so far most of the men were standing up to it all remarkably well,

What a relief when time came to Brew Up. They all knew how that no soldier is better than his feet. Blisters were taking toll.

Crossing the Thames in rubber dinghies wasn't so easy as the onlookers might think, but it must have been a pleasant change to have a ride, if only for a few yards. He'll be cool for the next five miles or so.

The 200-yards Assault Course at Mill Hill was pretty well the last straw. About 80 men had now dropped out, but the majority were still going strong.

At the finish the winners were number 562 Company, R.A.S.C. from Southall, in Middlesex. Trophy and barrel of beer, well and truly earned.