There are some skills and activities that are so strongly associated with one of the services that they can be overlooked by the others. Here, Warrant Officer Class One Glyn Buckley from UK Regional Command explains why orienteering is a great sport for any cadet, not just those in Army sections.

**SKILLS FOR LIFE**

Whether you're Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army or Royal Air Force, navigation is a hugely important skill: taking bearings and understanding distances is just as important at sea or in the air as on the land. Challenging cadets to read a map while running over rough terrain, observing the landscape for distinguishing features and planning a route – all against the clock – is a great way to learn and practice navigation skills while having fun outdoors. Best of all, it’s a sport that requires very little equipment: a map and compass, comfy clothing and waterproofs are enough to get anyone started.

**FIND A COURSE**

Make your own course (see box, p15) or look for an existing course near you. These fixed courses, which can be found in public parks and forests, are typically designed for beginners. Courses graded yellow or orange – easy or medium – are a good place for cadets to start. As they progress they can work their way up to courses that involve more distance, trickier navigation, or both.

**HOW IT WORKS**

Each course has a series of control points that individuals must navigate to in the shortest time possible. Each team is given a control description sheet so that they know exactly what they are looking for; they should use the International Orienteering Federation’s guide to decode the symbols. On arrival at each point the individual should note down the code, or use an electronic tag to register their arrival.

**EVENTS**

As your cadets progress, give them the chance to test their skills in a national event. Level A events are hardest, while
those at level D are suitable for beginners. CCF contingents are also eligible to take part in the National Cadet Orienteering Championships, which are held each year in November.

MAPS

Orienteering maps are typically much more detailed than those used for expeditions over larger areas, such as those undertaken for the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award. This means they can be a useful first introduction to map work for cadets who lack experience or confidence in navigation. Most maps use a 1:15000 or 1:10000 scale and include a comprehensive legend to help explain the international orienteering symbols used. They are also drawn using magnetic north, so they can be a useful training aid when teaching cadets about the differences between magnetic, grid and true north.

**FIND OUT MORE**

See [www.britishorienteering.org.uk/event](http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/event) for a list of upcoming events. Contact your brigade for more information.

**CREATE YOUR OWN ORIENTEERING COURSE**

**Equipment:** Map of the area (orienteering, Ordnance Survey or hand drawn), compass, pencils and card; orienteering markers – these could be as simple as a sports cone.

**Aim:** To familiarise your cadets with the maps and symbols used in orienteering by challenging them to establish their own mini orienteering course. Senior cadets should be able to plan and lay out the course before small groups of more junior cadets complete it.

1. **Choose a suitable start location:** mark this on the map with a triangle.

2. **Place your controls and mark them on the map with circles.** Each control should have an identifying mark/code for the teams to collect.

3. **Mark the end of your course on the map using a double circle.**

4. **Prepare a simple legend to illustrate the different features on the maps.**

5. **Complete a course description sheet for each of your controls using the International Orienteering Federation control codes as a reference.**

**MAPPED OUT**

**KEY ADVICE**

- **01** The map is colour coded to help navigation and route selection.
- **02** Circles show where the controls are located.
- **03** A double circle shows the finish.
- **04** A triangle shows the start point of the course.
- **05** Features shown in black are normally man-made, ie tracks and buildings.
- **06** Features that are shown in brown are natural features like contours and re-entrants.
- **07** A legend will indicate the type of terrain that will be run over.
- **08** A course description sheet describes the following:
  - Control code
  - Control description (feature)
  - Course distance (line)
  - Climb (height)