



British Army Patrol

Southern Germany: September 2000

These two soldiers are a patrol from the 11th Armoured Brigade and can be identified as members of 3rd Battalion Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment by the cap badge. Both are presumably in a lower threat environment as they are not wearing body armour or helmets (it is a British Army habit to remove helmets where possible to appear less intimidating).

Both are wearing standard British Disruptive Pattern Material (DPM) combat uniforms of the Soldier 95 pattern. Soldier 1 is wearing standard issue uniform with commercially purchased Magnum boots (these were found to be suitable for patrolling but wore out very quickly – their use at such a late date in such good condition is unusual). Soldier 2 is wearing the standard 95 pattern trousers and the late issue hooded jacket (note the rolled hood at the neck. Both wear the standard dark blue beret although neither has the pre-war standard cap badge (soldier 1 has the cloth version introduced in mid 1997 and soldier 2 has a private purchase brass cap badge). As a regimental tradition these are worn on a Lincoln green backing. The only visible insignia is the small Union flag patch worn at the top of the left sleeve.

Neither wears the standard issue PLCE webbing, soldier 1 wears an assault vest (although it is not clear enough to indicate if it is an issue item or a commercial version (these had a large number of variants). Soldier 2 is wearing an issue chest rig which would indicate (along with the lack of packs) a short range patrol.

Soldier 1 is carrying a folding stocked AKS47 (which was issued as a substitute weapon to mainly rear echelon troops as the L47A2). This will have given her problems as the curved magazines did not fit the pouches of the assault vest very well, necessitating the use of the large zip compartments as ammo pouches, making for a very painful impact if the wearer has to drop prone quickly.

Soldier 2 is carrying the standard L85A1 which was still in widespread service despite the A2 upgrade being more common in infantry units. It is fitted with the standard 4x SUSAT sight. It developed an excellent reputation for accuracy but it required heavy maintenance which did not completely solve the reliability issues.

The field sign being performed by soldier 2 consists of moving the arm forwards with the arm vertically down and means move up. Note that as one moves the other covers them.

Despite the surprisingly clean uniforms, neither soldier would have been popular with pre-war sergeants-major as soldier 1 has her hair worn very loose and soldier 2 has a beard (but is not a pioneer platoon sergeant who was required to wear one).