

EX

# Dad's Army set to stamp out Kremlin's moles

2/9/85

by IAN MATHER, Defence Correspondent

THE nefarious business of undermining vital installations gets underway this weekend as a legion of 'sleepers, creepers, moles and voles' emerges from the undergrowth around Britain.

This colourful description of the enemy within belongs to retired Colonel Michael Hickey, of the Defence Begins at Home movement, which stands four-square behind Exercise Brave Defender.

With 65,000 troops defending 200 'Key Points,' the exercise is being billed as the biggest in Britain since World War II.

The scenario is that preparatory to a Soviet invasion, Russian 'sleepers' living here would come out of the woodwork to assist Soviet special forces—the Spetsnaz—arriving by parachute or submarine.

The enemy role is being played by small groups of regular British troops, including the SAS, who will try to take the 'KPs' by surprise.

Against them are pitted the Territorial Army and the new 'Dads' Army,' the Home Service Force.

Peace groups have condemned the exercise as being a cover for the Ministry of Defence's real aim of putting down civil protest. Ex-Services Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament said: 'It is actually about peace groups who are getting better and better at expressing public fury at the use of Britain as a US nuclear base.'

Spetsnaz, Voiska Spetsial Nogo Nazachenma or 'Special Purpose Force' was first described in 1982 by a Soviet defector now living in Britain under the name of Viktor Suvorov.

In a succession of books about the Soviet armed forces, the former Soviet army officer has revealed that the Spetsnaz are part of the Soviet military intelligence organisation, the GRU. Suvorov says there are 31,000 of them, including 'sleepers,' foreign citizens living ordinary lives who are waiting for the moment to go into action.

Defence begins at Home, a group formed by some retired senior officers to lobby for an extra volunteer force of patriotic citizens, believes that while there may not be a red under every bed 'there are reds in quite a few.'

Colonel Hickey said: 'Spetsnaz agents are in every country — sleepers, creepers, moles and voles. The sleepers' roles might be very simple, like leaving open a gate or providing a car.'

'Spetsnaz troops can be introduced as merchant seamen who can go ashore anywhere without passports. Their role is disruption by sabotage, assassination and misinformation. You could isolate Bristol or Southampton from London in less than 12 hours and make life totally unendurable.'

The numbers of Spetsnaz said to be busy learning to speak English with various accents has fluctuated somewhat erratically. MoD briefings have put it at 8,000 or 16,000. These figures have recently been downgraded to between 800 and 1,200.

Gerard Holden, a researcher at Sussex University's Armament and Disarmament Unit, who has studied the Spetsnaz, said yesterday: 'I don't doubt that the Spetsnaz exist, but it seems to me that the threat is exaggerated and is not suf-

ficiently grave to merit the largest military exercise since World War II.'

To ensure that Britain is successfully defended with the minimum inconvenience, troops taking part in Brave Defender will each carry a glossy Central Office of Information booklet in their kitbags containing a list of 'do's and don'ts.'

They must 'on no account' climb fences and hedges.

Arable and hay crops are 'out of bounds' as are farmhouses and buildings. 'Where digging of slit trenches or latrines is authorised they must be properly filled in and turf relaid after use.'

Given such strict restrictions, what can the Brave Defenders do? 'They are going to be based at Key Points on their own in harsh conditions,' said Major General Philip Davies, General Officer Commanding of North West Region, as volunteers laden with outdoor survival equipment reported for duty at a drill hall in Lancaster in a scene typical of what was happening all over the country.

At a later stage in the exercise, mobile squads of British troops will be summoned to assist at key points under attack.

'If we are on full alert, everybody inside our Ground Defence Area must be apprehended,' said Sergeant David Stanway, 42, a Home Service Force volunteer who runs a fish and chip shop in Morecambe.

'Intruders could possibly be civilian carrying little parcels that can do a lot of damage. We will use minimum force but do not rule out shooting people if necessary.'