

FROM BRITISH 'FRONT LINE'

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'HERE IN ENGLAND, we're in the front lines — where the action is or is likely to be', according to an evacuation plan booklet secretly issued last month to American families in Suffolk. But British residents who live next door to US bases are expected to sit tight while their neighbours may be assisted to flee to 'survival areas'

A BOOKLET of plans for US 'Non-combatant Evacuation Operations' in Britain has been obtained by the *New Statesman*. The booklet was written in August 1983, anticipating a future European conflict. But after the US bombing attack on Libya, it has been handed out in case US families in Britain themselves become bombing targets and have to leave.

The booklet describes Pentagon plans to evacuate families from foreign bases, and to get them back to reception areas in the US within 15 days of leaving their homes. It warns that 'should hostilities ever break out, you may have to return to the United States... in a hurry'.

The plan calls for dependents to assemble at a public hall on each base. Depending on the situation, evacuation may take several forms, ranging from a 'gradual and deliberate acceleration of normal rotation processing to the US' to a 'more urgent situation where evacuees are moved as rapidly as possible to survival areas and eventually to the United States'. Neither the location of 'survival areas' nor the type of transport to be used is specified.

An accompanying checklist of items to be included in everyone's personal 'evacuation kit' includes money, checkbook, credit cards, auto registration certificates and authorisation for emergency pay. Among the less essential items to take are 'wills [and] powers of attorney', 'small non-electronic games', 'small

food', and 'enough clothing to get you to the safe haven'.

Other than this, 'all personal property will be left behind [and] as much as the government would like to, it cannot evacuate pets'. They should either be killed or be given away: 'you will be responsible for the disposition of your pets'. Evacuees are also urged to photograph their houses to 'help document future claims' just in case their homes and property aren't there to come back to.

No foreigners

Foreign nationals cannot be accommodated or protected in the evacuation plan. This is stressed in a warning to US evacuees that 'under no circumstances will foreign nationals (unless they are *bona fide* dependants) be allowed to accompany evacuees'. For example, 'village child minder[s]' will not be allowed to accompany US children whose parents are in the military, and have therefore to stay behind in the British 'front line'.

To make sure no foreigners sneak through, everyone turning up at the 'processing centre' will be

evacuation, using US passports or ID cards.

The Home Office has repeatedly refused to make evacuation plans for Britons living next to US bases. Current government advice to local authorities states that 'successive governments have concluded that the best protection for the public is to stay at home'. A Home Office press official last week said that the government considered that 'no part of Britain was safer than any other'. Asked about the American view that their bases were in the front line, she referred specific questions comparing US and British local evacuation schemes to the local authority, Suffolk County Council.

Suffolk's Emergency Planning Officer, Bill Hancock, told us last week that he was not aware of details of the US evacuation plans. But he knew that the plans presented 'a special problem'. Nevertheless, there were 'no specific plans for formal evacuation' of British residents in the areas close to US bases.

Information in the leaked booklet, entitled 'Bentwaters/Woodbridge Pamphlet no 400-3', is not supposed to have been passed outside US circles. According to the pamphlet, 'information on the evacuation of US Citizens from foreign nations is disseminated on a NEED-TO-KNOW basis'.

ANTI-NUCLEAR HOME GUARD CALL UP

HUNDREDS of volunteers have answered the Royal Air Force's call for civilians to help guard bases against nuclear protesters, says the Ministry of Defence.

RAF Brampton in Huntingdonshire is seeking 100 men and women aged 17-55 to turn out "in times of emergency".

They will receive tax free bounties at the end of each year on top of a daily rate of pay according to rank. Free uniforms will be issued.

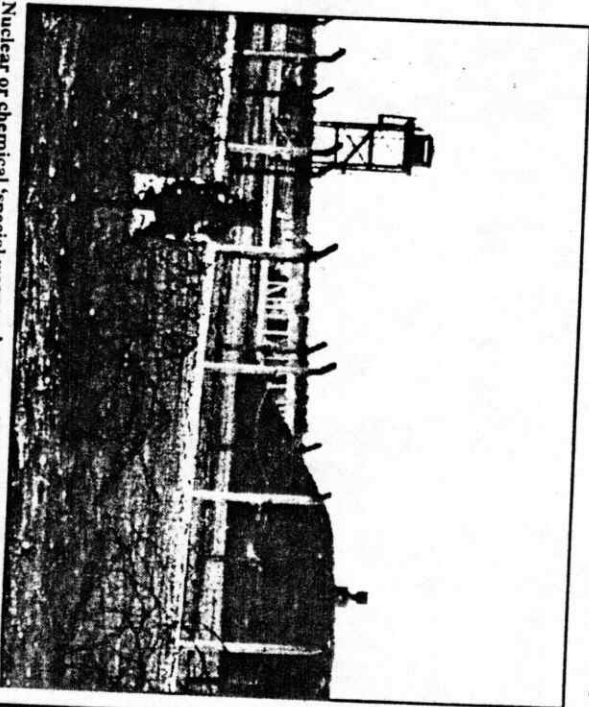
If the scheme is successful, the force will be expanded nationally to 2,000 strong. Other bases looking for recruits are St. Athan, South Wales, High Wycombe and RAF Lyneham in Wiltshire.

Huntingdon residents have protested to Defence Minister, George Younger.

Mrs. Christine Saltmarsh, who lives near the American airbase USAF Alconbury, has asked for details of how the recruits will be weapons trained.

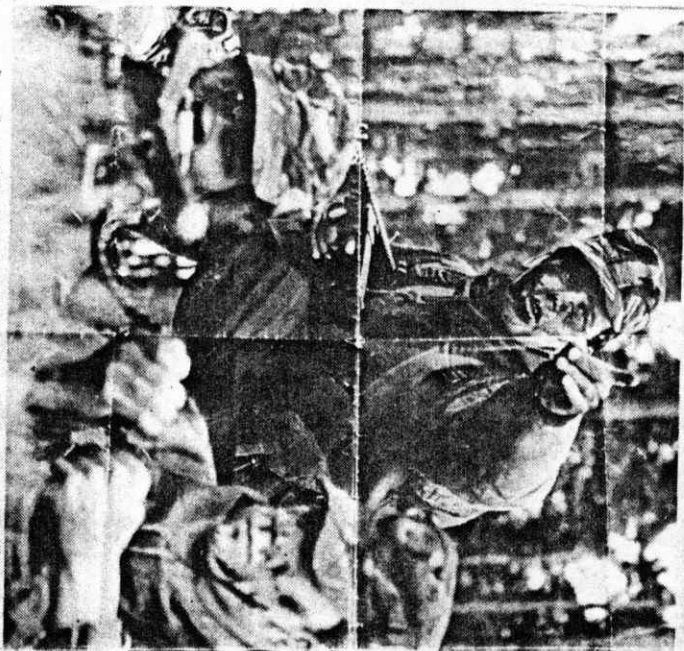
"This is arming vigilante types to the teeth," she said.

A Ministry of Defence spokesman said it hoped to start training the new recruits by November.



Nuclear or chemical 'special weapons' store at Woodbridge USAF base, Suffolk. US families plan to be well away before the evacuation.

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