Army Training Centre

Pirbright

Independent Advisory Panel Report 2010

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Introduction

The IAP panel at Pirbright have once again enjoyed their association with the ATC and remain very impressed with the quality of training delivered, the enthusiasm for all of those involved in instruction and the high calibre of leadership.

It is with great sadness that I record here the death of one of our founder members, Mike Nevins, who had battled with cancer in recent years. Mike will be remembered fondly for his sense of humour and enthusiasm for the work he was doing at Pirbright, particularly in his role of involving and increasing the awareness of the local civilian community about the activities of the Training Centre.

I am pleased to see that the culture of "Continuous Improvement" is now firmly embedded at ATC(P) as indicated by the Ofsted Report September 2009 and the Army Inspectorate in 2010. The auditing, monitoring and evaluation of training is of a higher standard than I can remember in my time on the panel and the current command are to be congratulated on their attention to detail and the desire to firmly capture the best elements of training for the future.

I remain concerned about the community facilities at Pirbright and particularly the standard of PS accommodation. The married Quarters are poor and 232 houses are without showers. However, at long last, Defence Estates have found sufficient money to fit 100 new bathrooms. The start date is not known but residents have been informed that there will be some work done. The frustration experienced by HQ when dealing with Regional Prime Contractors was well known and I helped draw it to the attention of DGART in December 2009. I am pleased to note that better liaison has been established this year but that has not, however, resulted in more efficient use of money. Clearly quality control must be audited and building standards prescribed centrally but to stifle the ability of the Commanding Officers to bring to fruition their excellent initiatives when funding has, in theory, already been approved does not follow best management practice and certainly inhibits coherent forward planning.

Nevertheless, local initiatives to generate community involvements, for example, the Pirbright Patch community information site on Armynet is popular and working very well and has I understand been identified as best practice by Armynet. The community centre which we identified as having so much potential has, with the help of the local council, thrived this year.

The Ofsted report made particular reference to the poor Welfare Office arrangements and also to the fact that we must provide better education arrangements for Level 2 and above learners (they are generally catered for in the Army Learning Centre which would be more effective if it were part of the education Wing). I am pleased to say that a new welfare office complex is planned and that Defence Estates should complete it this financial year. A major reorganisation of the Welfare arrangements has been put into effect and ATC(P) has managed to upgrade the welfare officer to a major and one has been recruited. Unfortunately 1 ATR Welfare Warrant Officer has been gapped which has necessitated using a Platoon Sergeant as a stand in. I understand that in this particular

case the individual concerned has been excellent in the role and is now going on to join the Army Welfare Service; however, it remains a concern that a welfare officer should be gapped!

Last year we reported upon the training of Foreign and Commonwealth recruits and more generally on matters of equality and diversity. ATC(P) has continued to take these matters very seriously and conducted an E&D training surge over the summer with much training being scenario based. The majority of staff members have had this additional training over and above the mandatory E&D training. It is believed that staff members are much more E&D aware and better able to deal with issues. We intend to return to these issues in a follow up study of our welfare papers in 2008-2009. I am pleased to see that the ATC(P) Facebook page enables any future SUTs or their parents to ask questions to which they will receive about training.

I reported last year on our hopes for improvement in the ways best practice is recorded, developed and retained. This year has seen the introduction of a new internal validation system which is giving instant feedback on the quality and effectiveness of training. This system is anonymous and designed to collect large population data for trend analysis but measures are in place to address any serious issues (for example bullying) immediately if they come to light. The potential of this system is enormous but as ever the project may be hampered by inability to adequately analyse the data and formulate effective design to test hypotheses. It is of crucial importance that staff are made available to and trained to execute this vital component if continuous improvement is to be maintained.

This year there has been an important and interesting development in enhancing the coaching capability of the staff (e.g. the new ATC(P) marksmanship coaching course) and the formation of training support teams to increase the instructor: student ratio. This has been made possible by the current downturn in recruits passing through the centre. However the results have been impressive and the logistics of implementing this on a more permanent basis should be explored.

The excellent initiative to enhance the efficiency of our educational provision by the introduction of Functional Skills is most warmly welcomed. In our view the introduction of functional skills and the replacement of basic skills training are a forward thinking and very positive step in initial training. A considerable amount of work has been dedicated to this project and ATC(P) has worked very closely with Birmingham Metropolitan College to develop an appropriate trial which will give us vital information as to the efficacy of such an approach. I know from my professional background that there can be no substitute for careful and controlled trials of material and given that we are scheduled to introduce functional skills in April 2011 it would seem to me to be imperative that we give this work all the support we can. The introduction of functional skills and the data gathered from it will have important implications for educational pedagogy elsewhere. Unfortunately, the trial of the new course, which included 60 hours of functional skills, extended initial training by one week and was for that reason delayed. We do hope that trials can get underway soon so that vital data can be gathered before Christmas.

It is sad to note that ATC(P) now has only one Basic Skills Development Manager which is clearly insufficient for a centre the size of Pirbright and as a result vital dyslexia screening for SUTs who self-certify at the start of the course is no longer possible. At present there are about 50 SUTs in this position.

Staffing levels remain high and the vast majority of staff members now attend ASLS on arrival. It is pleasing to note the continued expansion of formal coaching structures developing at the centre and the much stronger links with ASLS with regular feedback sessions. These are of course vital if effective strategies for coaching, mentoring and retention and development of best practice is to continue.

This has been a very productive year for ATC(P) and the IAP remain committed to working with a highly professional unit.

In the coming year the IAP will focus upon the following themes:

- The relationship between recruitment and initial training.
- An audit of our previous Welfare and Support paper.
- Functional skills and the evaluation of Data in the Training Environment.
- Structural integration and the commonality of approach to training at ATC(P)

Bob Stephenson

Chairman IAP Pirbright.

ATC Pirbright Independent Advisory Panel

DR BOB STEPHENSON – CHAIRMAN

Dr. Bob Stephenson was born in Harrogate N. Yorkshire 26 March 1955 and was educated at Ashville College. He graduated from Sussex University in 1978 and was awarded his PhD at the Institute of Neuroscience there in 1981.

Following a brief period of Post Doctoral research work he was appointed to teach Biology at Eton College. Made Head of Biology in his first year, he went on to hold the positions of Head of Science, House Master and Senior Tutor, and has been part of the senior management team since 1998 and is currently The Lower Master (Deputy Head) of the College. During this period his research continued and he has been invited to speak at international conferences and review work in his specialist area. Married to Sandra with one son Ben he lives both in Eton and Harrogate.

TREVOR COBLEY

Trevor was born in Woking and has lived in the area all of his life. Most of his career was spent in the Home Office, latterly in the Senior Civil Service, where he worked on a wide range of subjects including extradition, coroners and electoral law. He spent three years in the Prison Service where he was responsible for life sentence prisoners. He also spent a period on secondment as Deputy Director of the Broadcasting Standards Council.

Since retiring from full-time employment, Trevor has worked as a consultant carrying out HR assignments and security investigations. He was a Member of the Governing Body of Guildford College for eight years, and Vice Chairman for three years. He was also an elected member of Pirbright Parish Council for sixteen years. He is a Governor of Pirbright Village School and Chairman of the Finance and Personnel Committee. In addition, he is Area Chairman of the Abbeyfield Society, which provides sheltered accommodation for the elderly and a member of the Executive Committee of the House in Pirbright.

THE VENERABLE STUART BEAKE

The Venerable Stuart Beake is the Archdeacon of Surrey in Guildford Diocese. The son of a regular army officer, he grew up in Surrey and has had a comprehensive experience across the breadth of the Church of England in a career which has given him parish experience in St Alban's and Coventry Dioceses, as well as having been Chaplain to the Bishop of Southwell.

He has also been Diocesan Director of Ordinands and Head of the Vocations and Training departments in Coventry Diocese before taking up the role of Sub-dean and Canon Residentiary at Coventry Cathedral. He moved to his present post in 2005.

He is married to Sally, a teacher, has two adult children and two granddaughters.

MRS TINA BYTHEWAY

Tina Bytheway was educated at a Convent boarding school for 11 years. She attended Freiburg University in Germany where she read German and Philosophy and then a Secretarial College in London. She ran her own Public Relations Consultancy in central London for 20 years.

For four years she was the South East of England regional representative for the Samaritans in Prisons, covering 18 branches and 20 or so prisons, after which she joined the Safer Custody Group of the Prison Service. Here she was a consultant specialising at working with the Voluntary Sector offering services to prisoners and their families. Safer Custody Group's remit was to reduce the incidence of self harm and suicide and violence reduction in prisons. She is still a Samaritan with the Guildford Branch.

Tina is a Trustee of the charity Action for Prisoners' Families and a member of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Send. She currently works for her son who runs a travel business from Cape Town in South Africa called Face Africa. As well as holidays throughout Southern Africa, Face Africa organises trips for British school children connected with charity projects in South Africa, Uganda, Kenya and Lesotho.

She also has a daughter and granddaughter. Tina, who lives with her husband in Pirbright, is a keen golfer, long distance walker, skier and tennis player.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL E A MULDER B.SC, M.PHIL, C.CHEM, M.R.S.C.

Alan Mulder was born and raised in the North West of England. He studied at Sir John Deane's Grammar School and Manchester Polytechnic, graduating with a 1st Class Honours Degree in Chemistry and an M Phil both obtained by part time study. Before retiring, he worked for ICI, the Science Research Council and the Shell International Petroleum Company.

Alan Mulder retired from Shell after 30 years service encompassing research & development and sales & marketing. Now Deputy Commandant of Surrey Army Cadet Force, a lifelong interest, he has firsthand experience of young people, their attitudes and aspirations and as a former TA officer he has an insight into the military system.

In addition to his ACF role, Alan is Secretary of the Technical Committee of the Refined Bitumen Association and is Secretary of the Surrey Committee of the Army Benevolent Fund. Alan has lived in Knaphill for the past 28 years with his wife Jean.

Group Dynamics and Initial Training

Introduction

During 2009 I reported on my review of the methodology adapted to ensure the Retention of Best Practice in phase 1 training. Detailed analysis of the coaching programme revealed a very useful model, developed from basic social psychological concepts, designed to raise the level of awareness of the instructor via a simple performance equation which tries to establish the link between performance, potential and psychology. The object of the exercise is to raise awareness, at all levels, to the psychological factors that affect performance and different approaches to management which may facilitate the performance of the individual be they SUTs, coaches or sub-unit coaches.

While the philosophy behind the coaching model is certainly sound I questioned it at two levels:

1. The emphasis was only on the development of the individual
2. The extent to which the model had been refined and developed through active feedback from the training regiments.

Whilst point 2 remains beyond our remit it remains clear that key personnel in the training regiments do not feel that they have an opportunity to refine the model and a review of this policy is necessary so that this vital source of information is not wasted. A reaction to the first point is the basis of this paper.

The performance development model clearly establishes the relationship between the attitudes of the individual and his underlying potential and uses the well established coaching techniques of empathic responding, active listening and directed questioning to develop an effective coaching programme. By building a performance cycle it is possible to hang clear and effective methods upon a single idea and establish a generic model with which instructors may develop their own coaching scenarios, using their invaluable field experience and memory of their own training period. We felt that there was no doubt that this simple model was being used very effectively by all training regiments. The fact that ASLS employs an identical philosophy to train at all levels up to Master Coach ensures that the philosophy of coaching is well entrenched and likely to be an enduring structure for the future. However, it is curious that the model relies almost entirely upon exploring the psychology of the individual and thus the relationship between mentor and mentee, excluding the psychological area of group dynamics and the performance of these groups. It is understandable that the process of self actualisation is of paramount importance but the performance of the individual is affected just as much by the dynamics of the group. Groups alter their members' attitudes, values and perceptions and an understanding of these influences will not only enhance the performance of the group and the training but be a very valuable education for both the trainer and trainee in understanding how to operate best in any given group situation; an essential component of Army life. Napoleon is reported to have said that the strength of an army lies not in the skill of its leaders but in the élan – the emotional intensity of its members. Be this as it may, there can be no doubt that for our understanding of cohesion, influence, performance, decision making, conflict,

personal development and leadership (despite Napoleon) the study of the group and the effects on the performance of the individual within it is crucial.

Clearly this is a very large project and the object of what follows is simply to identify the key components of group dynamics that may be important for inclusion in the training of coaches and for determining the composition and structure of the training groups themselves. It will be for the army to initiate and develop further study of the components it thinks valuable.

The importance of groups to humans is undeniable and the complexity and sophistication of our ability to operate within them and perhaps influence their structure and performance is still the subject of intensive academic research. Nevertheless, some crude analysis of regimental feedback last year (which then was in an early stage of development) attested to the importance of group dynamics for SUTs. A significant number wrote that seeing other recruits achieve motivated them more than anything else (see performance of groups later). Similarly the sense of belonging, possibly for the first time in their lives, emphasised more than anything else the importance of the group dynamic generated within training teams.

In the following paper a number of areas of group psychology will be explored for their relevance to military life and in particular initial training. They include group identity and inclusion within the group, composition, cohesion and development of the group, the important aspects of social influence, power and their implications for effective leadership, performance of the group, understanding how decisions are made, team development, conflict within groups and enhanced learning through groups.

In all of this is must be clear that the typical military group exists as part of a large, structured, hierarchical organisation, from which group members maybe somewhat isolated and find it difficult to leave and are subject to a highly articulated set of norms and values that are reinforced through a disciplinary mechanisms. Nevertheless, the processes of group evolution are common between groups and have considerable implications for the progress of training and indeed for the performance of the field army.

Group Formation

Whilst the members of a particular training team may have little choice of the group they train with there can be no doubt that this group has a decisive influence upon their development and possibly the career progression of that individual. As noted above; during the 14 week course at Pirbright SUTs found the group experience perhaps the most salient feature of their training. Most psychologists when describing fundamental psychological processes cite a need to belong as crucial in most forms of human activity (Maslow 1970). Such an important biological process has given humans the capacity to act as natural psychologists with great aplomb with the ability to read and understand emotions accurately, and almost instinctively read a social situation before the event occurs. The general impact of the group upon the individual can be summarised in the following powerful way: "providing that individuals believe that the groups they belong to are valuable they will experience a heightened sense of personal self-esteem" (Crocker et al, 1994). This concept of the Collective Self Esteem is of crucial importance to the military model. The training that the SUTs receive in phase 1 and the motivation and confidence that they espouse are inextricably linked to the formation of the group. The positive benefits of the need to belong can more than be offset by the psychologically destructive effects of ostracism from the group (Leary 1990). There are many factors involved here not least of which is the fact that many of the SUTs have had more transient relationships in the past for example via the internet and drifted in and out of other social groups nevertheless, the pain of ostracism, even in these groups, can be very significant and damaging (Williams et al. 2002).

Clearly there must be a tension between maximising one's own personal goals and helping the group reach its goals. Achieving this balance is clearly dependent upon a number of factors. Not only are there significant personality traits at work here but there may also be significant cultural and sub-cultural differences for example Western European cultures tend to be much more individualistic than Asian, Eastern European and African cultures (Oyserman et al., 2002) there is also evidence to suggest that modern subcultures have exacerbated these differences with the most recent generation being much more individualistic than ever before (Twenge, 2006). It may be argued that as the group develops such biases can be eliminated quickly but this can only take place once the individual identifies with the group and accepts the group as an extension of him or herself. As this process of social identification increases individuals come to think that their membership in the group is personally significant. This then is not a process of depersonalisation or the stripping away any self worth with selfless adherence to authority (perhaps characteristic of military training of the past). In general the process should allow individuals to think well of themselves and since their group comprises a significant proportion of themselves they maintain this self-worth by thinking well of their group and having reference to it at all times (Hogg 2005). The importance of this Collective Self-esteem must not be undervalued and indeed has been shown to be of crucial importance to feelings of self-worth (Crocker et al., 1994).

There may be significant cultural and personality implications for the likelihood of successful integration within the group. If this is the case are there things that can be done at a very early stage prior to arrival at Phase 1 training? For example, it is clear from a large body of work that personality, sex, social motive and prior experience all have a significant impact on successful group integration. Extraversion is a particularly influential determinant of group behaviour (Asendorph and

Wilpers, 1998) and this associated with other traits such as relationality and agreeableness (Cross, Bacon and Morris 2000) suggests that detailed psychometric testing at the recruiting stage may beneficial. Sex differences are much more complicated but research indicates that women seek membership of smaller less formal, intimate groups whereas ideally men seek membership in larger, more formal, task-focussed groups (Baumeister and Sommer, 1997). Similarly attachment style may have profound effects upon the willingness or ability of individuals to operate effectively in groups. Those who demonstrate low social anxiety and low avoidance take easily (not unexpectedly) to group life (Smith, Murphy and Coats, 1999). This requires a sophisticated approach to psychometric testing at an early stage in recruiting.

Other factors that may have significant impact on the success or otherwise of the group and the development of cohesive behaviour (see later) are experience and preference. These are clear factors in University and School experience and there is some evidence that prior experience via the CCF and ATC has a marked impact upon affiliation and success in initial training.

Following on from this initial selection ADSC go on now to make specific grading of each individual going into Phase 1 training. This evaluation is clearly in its early stages and it remains to be seen how consistent the evaluation is and whether it is statistically associated with outcome; in other words what its predictive validity is. It would be tempting to stratify groups and analyse outcome on the basis of grading. However, mixing of groups through experience has shown that much can be gained through modelling (see performance later) and mutual support. The Social-evaluation and maintenance model (Tesser, 1988) suggests that individuals maintain and enhance self-esteem by associating with high achieving individuals who excel in areas that are not directly relevant to their own sense of self-esteem. This suggests that personality factors rather than performance factors are more relevant to the stratification of the group. Humans are group-seeking animals but their gregariousness becomes particularly robust under conditions of stress (Rofe, 1984). Keeping SUTs at the limit for long periods is likely to enhance group cohesion or at least the need of the support of others. The management of this process and an understanding of how these groups develop and what stages and characteristics we should look for are crucial for the trainer. It is these processes that I now move on to.

Group Cohesion

Groups like all animate processes develop (and decay over time). The uncertainty resulting from the aggregation of a group of individuals gives way to cohesion and these processes are fairly prescribed and show enormous similarity between groups. It is, however, much more than the development of friendships it is bound by powerful and sometimes coercive social forces. Much has been made of the functional, military importance of cohesion, and analysed in terms of the organisation of military life and structures, particularly by the US military (Siebold 2003); however, little work has been done on the fundamentals of group dynamics as they apply to military groups. The outcome of this work on military structures concludes that cohesion contributes to performance by enhancing efficiency, motivation, discipline, flexibility and the establishment of joint lines of action among group members, including leaders. The cohesive structure in a unit is increased by skilful leadership, a

learning climate, passion for the mission, the fulfilment of member goals and basic needs and efforts to work well with one's peers. Much of this has been done in a social psychological vacuum concentrating on the development of the individual with little or no regard for the more complex properties of the group as a whole. Basically it has been thought that it is cheaper to manage personnel and training by individuals and to maximise individual opportunity than to manage blocks of people or units. It is argued here that a deeper understanding of the forces that operate within groups and their impact upon the individual involved will at all levels enhance the performance of the groups and indeed enhance the individual's performance.

The concept of cohesiveness gives insights into the following:

- Why some groups may perform better than others particularly under difficult conditions?
- Why do members sometimes put the needs of the group before their own?
- Why do some groups generate a sense of belonging and confidence when others do not?

There are many factors which contribute to the cohesion of the group. These factors may be social (the measured friendship structure within the group), task oriented (the capacity of the group to solve problems and work together), perceived (adherence to and belief in core values) emotional (the generation of an emotional energy and feeling of wellbeing a product of the other factors - the Napoleonic élan).

Social cohesion is facilitated well in army structures by the small sizes of functioning units a squad or section of up to 13 men, small platoon sizes 24+ each with its own highly coordinated structure. Structural patterns that influence this social cohesion are centrality, density and the number of isolates within the group. Analysis of these attraction relationships within the groups are most instructive (Sherif, 1956). The complexity of the process of joining the group (the recruiting process) and the possible social sacrifices made by breaking from existing peer groups enhances the likely cohesion of the training group through the process of cognitive dissonance. Having made, in some cases, such a difficult decision to join the army much evidence indicates that this will induce a favourable cognitive bias towards the training group even to the exclusion of previous relationships. This, of course, enhances the social cohesion particularly in the early stages. However, to a certain extent self-deception could be a weak principle upon which to develop any career and we must guard against excessive rejection of past relationships, attitudes and experiences. It is possible to measure group cohesiveness and there is much work to be done looking at measures of cohesion and the social aspects of cohesion as described above (Treadwell et al., 2001).

In addition to the measurement of cohesion and its relationship with antecedents it is clear that groups go through measurable and remarkably consistent phases of development with time. Tukman and Jensen 1977 labelled these five stages as forming (orientation in which members become familiar with each other and early stages of group development emerge; for example leaders) storming (conflict expressions of tension and dissatisfaction antagonism towards the leader etc.), norming (structure development – growth of cohesiveness and unity establishment of roles standards and relationships) performing (work goal achievement and high task orientation) and adjourning (dissolution completion of tasks reduction in dependency). This last point is perhaps not so relevant to training but it is a problem in the field army (Siebold 1996) where service members increasingly perceive over time that they are not fully using their skills or that accomplishing a

mission is as meaningful as they once saw it. Awareness of these factors and the study of them in the specific training environment might well increase our efficiency in training and the quality of the product. The possibility exists to do work on this using the group development questionnaire (Wheelan 1996).

There can be little doubt that cohesive groups outperform less cohesive groups and meta-analytic studies of a huge amount of research validate this (Beal et al., 2003).

The structure of the group that emerges in training or indeed in any military environment is highly prescribed. In the study of most groups one would be concerned with analysis of the norms and roles that emerge both formal and informal but in the military these tend to be more heavily weighted towards the formal. This is not to underestimate the informal structures that emerge and analysis of them may well lead us on to better theories of leadership and process analysis of groups. Clearly in any military environment prescriptive norms (a consensual standard that identifies preferable, positively sanctioned behaviours) and prescriptive norms (a consensual standard that identifies prohibited, negatively sanctioned behaviour) will be of paramount importance. However, an understanding of descriptive norms (describing how people act, feel and think in given situations is of enormous importance). The feedback we are gaining on every aspect of training from the SUTs themselves will provide most valuable information for the better development of group structure. Research indicates that the evaluation of norms and normative effects are crucial given that internalised and sometimes corrosive norms based upon erroneous information tended to be retained by members of experimental groups even when other members of the groups were no longer present (Sheriff, 1966). This can, for example, lead to the phenomenon of pluralistic ignorance. This occurs when the majority of the individuals in a group privately disagree with the group's norms but feel that they are alone in their misgivings (Prentice, 2007). So the norm tends to regulate behaviour due to misperceptions rather than a shared consensus.

Another area of group structure that has received considerable experimental analysis is that of role differentiation. Again an understanding of these processes and the nature of the roles that emerge can give us a greater understanding of both the structure of the group, its effect upon performance and the ability to maximise the contribution of individuals to that group and their personal growth and development. In addition this knowledge can be used to assess leadership potential and development (see later).

Much early work by Bales (1955) and others has clearly established the complexity and importance of role differentiation within groups. This early work determined by Interaction Process Analysis indicated that, in most groups, task roles were occupied by members who perform behaviours that promote completion of tasks and activities such as initiating structure, providing task related feedback and setting goals (there is of course less freedom for this to develop in the military setting nevertheless people with these qualities could easily be identified in the training environment). Similarly there were those who were more likely to fill socioemotional roles; performing behaviours that improve the nature and quality of interpersonal relations among members such as showing concern for the feelings of others, reducing conflict and enhancing the feelings of satisfaction and trust within the group. Early identification of both types of individual could certainly enhance the development of the group and the mentoring of each individual in the training environment. This work has established that very few individuals can simultaneously fulfil both roles, probably because

few people have the interpersonal and cognitive skills needed to enact both roles. However it is clear that groups with members who fulfilled both roles were more cohesive and performed more effectively (Mudrack and Farrell, 1995) and the need for an understanding of roles and their importance for group cohesion are evident and training teams could be proactive in establishing this from an early stage.

Roles influence the group members' happiness and well-being in significant ways. By taking on a role the individual secures their connection to their fellow group members in a particular way building interdependence that is essential for group cohesion and productivity. It would then be beneficial to identify the most appropriate roles for each individual within the training team permitting the members to express themselves.

It must of course be remembered that some roles are more satisfying than others and obviously people prefer to occupy roles that are prestigious and significant than roles that are menial and seemingly unimportant.

In addition to understanding the roles that individuals are best placed to undertake in a group the spontaneous relationships that are emerging and sub-group processes and dynamics that are evolving need to be clear to troop commanders and those responsible for the development of that group. Social network analysis would enable visualisation of the group dynamics and measurements of the relationships within the group to be established. This might then lead to effective manipulation and social engineering of the group to be established by coaches or at least develop a clearer understanding for those trying to enhance the performance of the group. Sociometric differentiation results in a stable ordering of members from the least liked to the most liked (Maassen et al. 1996). Some members are liked by many, some are rejected by most; some have few friends others may have many friends but within a clearly identifiable sub-group etc.

One's popularity within a group depends upon similarity, complementarity, reciprocity and personality factors. Clearly for different types of group in different socioeconomic settings the important characteristics differ. In the proscribed military environment however the factors that are most likely to determine a good fit are more likely to be identified and deserve some serious work.

Social Influence and Power Structures:

There are a number of powerful forces that operate upon groups which may push the members towards uniformity and homogeneity but equally such forces may promote dissension and disrupt the normal process of command. The interaction between the process of social influence and obedience to authority make the dynamics of any social group complex and indeed perhaps more complex in the military setting particularly when groups are required to make decisions. In early studies Asch (1952) demonstrated the importance of majority influence upon perception and the social phenomenon of compliance (change that occurs when the targets of social influence publicly accept the influencer's position but privately maintain their original beliefs). People who rely on situational cues when making perceptual judgements, self conscious individuals and those who are continuously checking to see how well they are fitting into the group or group situation (high self-monitors) are more likely to make certain that their actions match group standards. They have a higher need for social approval and are more fearful of social rejection. There are then extremes of

this situation which could bias a particular group in training making accurate assessment and positive development of the individual difficult. Similarly there may be cultural factors which (those from collectivist cultures (see earlier) when such conformity is extreme and detrimental to the group (Frager, 1970). The power of these influences can be illustrated by the fact that people comply with the norms of reciprocity and cooperation in online groups even when completely anonymous provided they identify with the group (Cress, 2005). One must not underestimate the power of minority influence when disagreements in the group result in conflict group members may be motivated to reduce that conflict by changing their own opinions however counterintuitive this may be. Work also indicated that the power of this influence is more likely to generate lasting changes in attitudes and perceptions that may generalize to new settings. Various processes influence groups for example informational influence occurs when group members use the responses of others in the group as reference points. This may be direct through communication and persuasion which may be desirable although there may be indirect effects through social comparison. For example many assume that the behaviour is the correct one when they see others performing it Cialdini (2009). This may be particularly problematical for the young and impulsive SUTs.

Fortunately in the training environment normative influence is likely to prevail when people identify with their groups they feel duty-bound to adhere to group norms and they accept their legitimacy. Normative influence generates conformity in a large number of everyday social situations. There is a great inhibitory anxiety that prevents us from breaching such social norms Milgram (1992). This is a phenomenon very similar to cognitive dissonance in that the consequences internally of not conforming are so painful that we all work hard to reduce this. Although these processes tend to accelerate the development of the group and the cohesiveness of the group they also tend to lead to a group inertia and diffusion of responsibility. These processes must be guarded against if individuals are to achieve their maximum potential. Latane and Darley (1970).

In addition to this powerful tendency to conform there is a natural tendency to obey authority. Providing, of course, this authority is legitimate and considered this can only enhance the cohesiveness of units and the process of training. However, the blind adherence to authority and normative influences has in many cases led to abuses of power and inappropriate behaviour in the military context (for example the well documented My Lai massacre in Vietnam1968). The work of Stanley Milgram clearly demonstrated that (Milgram 1974) the propensity for everyone to obey apparently legitimate authority almost without question, even in cases where it was perceived that the victim was suffering severe harm or indeed had been killed, in the experimental situation. Thousands of replications of these experiments have generally confirmed Milgram's initial findings (Blass, 2000). Such powerful influences can be a source of abuse in the wrong hands and although in the military situation obedience to authority is a necessary condition the complexities of these powerful social forces must be clearly understood in the planning and execution of training.

In other environments for example the excessive obedience by flight crews and the abuse of power by pilots have not attempted to change the long-standing norms of hierarchy, control and deference in the cockpit but have attempted to improve communication at all levels. Through workshops, simulations and the like co-pilots learn how to challenge errors made by pilots and pilots are encouraged to accept warning from crew members. In many training simulations there can only be a solution if there is clear and decisive communication with the captain (Merritt and Helmreich, 1996.)

Although the army is hierarchical and there are legitimate and well formed power structures groups are more likely to respond to expert power (defer to and take the advice of those who seem to possess superior knowledge, skills and abilities, Kaplowitz 1978) and informational power, although the latter can be used inappropriately to manipulate groups by withholding certain aspects of the information (Messick, 1999). Studies conducted in a range of organisations, including the military, suggest that harsh influence tactics such as punishment (both personal and impersonal) legitimate authority (such as rule-based sanctions and non-personal rewards) are less effective than soft influence methods such as expert power, referent power and personal rewards (Fiske and Berdahl, 2007).

Organisational experts advocate sharing power with subordinates by delegating responsibilities, and making use of self-directed work teams. (Hollander and Offermann, 1990).

Leadership:

Taking the previous section into account the complexity of leadership and the implications for the modern military are enormous. Groups clearly require guidance to function and achieve maximum performance. Given what has been said and the changing social and political environment leaders will need to be more aware of group behaviour and have the psychological insight into their own strengths and weaknesses to achieve this.

"A leader is best when people barely know that he exists, not so good when people acclaim him, worst when they despise him". (Lao Tzu)

The above definition of leadership is not one that many would associate with in the army and yet it may be nearer the model we should aspire to than the following perception. Many people believe that good leaders are those capable of manipulating, controlling and forcing their followers into obedience. The complexity of the social forces operating in groups already outlined suggests that constructive leaders act in the best interests of the group with the consent of that group. There is then as Meindl et al. 1985 point out a "romance of leadership" i.e. a tendency to overestimate the amount of influence and control leaders exert on their groups and their groups' outcomes. Leadership must be the process by which an individual guides others in their collective pursuits often by organising, directing, coordinating, supporting and motivating their efforts.

These processes are reciprocal, transactional, transformational, cooperative and adaptive. It must involve a huge number of activities including analysing, consulting, controlling, coordinating, deciding, monitoring, negotiating, organising, planning, representing and supervising (Mintzberg 1973).

As the work by Bales (see earlier) suggested leadership tasks are likely to fall into two distinct camps involving either performance maintenance or relationship maintenance. Early detailed studies of military leadership in the US, using factor analysis, identified clusters of interrelated variables associated with leadership. The work indicated that 80% of the variability could, in fact, be explained by two basic sub-factors task leadership and relational leadership (Fleishman, 1953). This has been confirmed by many studies in many different cultures (Shipper and Davy, 2002). It may be that there are sex-differences in these styles of leadership. Women more than men engage in relationship maintenance, including giving advice and managing conflict – men tend to be task orientated (Leaper and Ayres, 2007).

Although many theories of leadership have posited either the great leader view (some individuals possess certain characteristics that mark them for greatness) or the zeitgeist theory (history is determined by the spirit of the times and not the choices of the leader). Most recent research would favour a much more integrationist approach (Zaccaro, Gulick and Khare, 2008). These models suggest awareness of one's own personality, extraversion, conscientiousness, emotionally stability, honesty, high self-monitoring and social motivation as being of enormous importance.

Unfortunately many stereotypes prevail and many organisations are bedevilled by these stereotypes (Implicit Leadership Theory) appointing those who are outgoing, talkative and male and yet have few of the qualities that have been identified as important in successful leadership. These tendencies can be reinforced by the expectations of those operating in the group. If they expect their leaders to be dominant, for example, they may only remember their leader acting dominantly and forget the times when their leader engaged in submissive behaviour.

It is clear that any one type of leadership is not better overall. Fielder (1996) has done more than anyone else to establish that task-orientated leaders would be most effective highly favourable or highly unfavourable conditions whereas relationship orientated leaders would be most effective in non extreme conditions.

There can be little doubt about the effectiveness of innovative training programmes the evidence demonstrates that trained leaders outperform untrained leaders (Burke and Day 1986) and yet many organisations are disappointed with the immediate results. This is because we are dealing with a changing social dynamic (for example in the army the skills required for operational leadership as opposed to garrison duties). What would we be aiming for in leadership development? We must recognise the limits of changing complex personality types and aim to match leaders to particular social situations more effectively. By increasing their awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses and emphasising that there is more than one formula that is appropriate to develop strong leadership much can be achieved. Fielder would go further and teach trainees to modify their group situation until it matched their personal style of leadership. This, of course, would be contingent upon a detailed understanding of the group and the dynamics within it!

The army has embraced transformational, values based approach to all levels of its training but this is focussed primarily at the level of ASLS and its coaching and mentoring approach. From the research presented here we should encourage this approach to be taken further incorporating this ethos into all levels of leadership training and associating it with a more sophisticated understanding of social dynamics and the social cognition of the leader. It is not clear how the army intends to develop these ideas. However, it is evident that changing attitudes in society which by implication

are manifested in the cross section from which the army recruits, the complexity of family life, the increasing technological and socio-political demands of the fighting environment demands that the modern leader embraces and equips himself with the skills and techniques to satisfy leadership in this demanding environment. The increased use of information-technologies for communication and operation demands new skills, a form of e-leadership, which again needs to be cognisant of the limitations and difficulties of the environment and the social psychology developing around it. (Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber 2009).

Training them must identify all of these components but as indicated earlier rather than attempting to manipulate the personalities of those undergoing the training it is essential for them to experience the range of environments they will be expected to operate in or at least simulations of them. Training of leadership then would fall into three components:

- Awareness of social dynamics and the skills required to deal with them.
- Mentoring by and role modelling on a range of experienced leaders.
- Developing techniques that practically put individuals in complex social conditions in real time. The environment within which this is best delivered is probably through values based adventure training. Adventure training must not exist in a vacuum nor should it divorce itself from the fundamental ethos of delivery of core values. It provides the perfect environment within which to test leadership skills in challenging environments. The Soldier Development Wing at Sennybridge provides the army with a resource that can extract all manner of social groupings and place them in an unfamiliar environment (which we have a detailed understanding of) and perhaps such courses provide much more than a recourse for initial training and should become an integral part of leadership training at all levels.

The impact of the group upon performance:

When individuals join together in groups their collective impact is higher in all areas of performance. As we have seen however the problems come in the coordination of these efforts and the complex processes that operate to influence actions.

Much has been written about the positive effects of social facilitation. However, it is clear that the matter is a complex one with many researchers reporting increases in performance through coaction (performing the task with one or more others) and when an audience was watching. However, many also reported decrements in performance (Aiello and Douthitt, 2001)

One observable and consistent difference is that performance of well learned or instinctual responses such as lifting weights, bicycling etc. responds well to social facilitation. Novel, complicated or unpractised actions show little evidence of social facilitation (Zajonc, 1965).

Many factors are combining here to produce these results. The drive of the individual i.e. the increased arousal, the potential for evaluation by significant others, especially those in the peer group, both combine to evoke powerful reactions which may be stimulatory or inhibitory. Certainly

these forces can be distracting but these distractions can be overcome with effort and used for the benefit of the individual and the group. Indeed increased attentional focussing on the task is triggered by threat of self-evaluation (Muller and Butera, 2007).

Inevitably individuals with qualities that suggest a positive social orientation usually show facilitation effects. In the educational environment it is prudent to establish for whom and under what circumstances social facilitation operates best (for example study groups). Given that in most (but not all) military settings groups are the norm identifying the antecedents and decreasing the effects of distraction are crucial. It is interesting to note that the rules established for facilitation in tangible social groups also operate for individuals collected into groups electronically. Electronic performance monitoring (which operates in many environments) can establish the same effects (Douthitt and Aiello 2001). In industrial settings group size and productivity are often negatively correlated. Many factors are at work here but productivity is related to how easily their input can be identified. Similarly if individuals believe that their individual actions will make a difference to the performance of the group they work harder (Kerr and Brunn, 1983).

The establishment of mechanisms for initiating reward, motivation and encouragement alongside the setting of clear objectives results in enhanced group performance. The group's goals should be challenging rather than too easily attained. The advantages of working in a group are lost if individual members realise that they can get away with less effort. (Latham and Locke, 2007). Individual laziness is also reduced when rewards for successful performance are group-based rather the individually based providing the group is not too large in size. Much work by Steiner (1972) has indicated that the demands of the task vary depending upon the divisibility of the task, the type of output desired and the combination rules. For example can the task be broken down into sub-tasks, is the quantity produced more important than the quality of performance and how are the individual inputs by members of the group combined to yield the outcome?

Much work here suggests that the most effective training environment for a particular task should be considered in terms of the size of the group and the nature of the task being performed.

Similarly decisions are often made in groups and indeed the collective power of the group often leads to better decisions. However, there are forces operating in groups which can result in the group sacrificing rationality in its pursuit of unity with catastrophic results. Most groups tasked with a decision making process go through distinct processes: orientation (identifies the problem, sets goals, and develops a strategy), discussion phase (the group gathers information and considers options), decision phase (the group uses its conventional methods of social decision making), implementation (the decision is put into action and hopefully the impact assessed).

However, at each stage in this process the group dynamics discussed above influence the outcome of the subsequent stage. For example after the orientation phase the group is armed with a shared plan. It is now to their advantage to influence events so that their expectations are affirmed. The impact upon selective attention and the biases that can be introduced impeding accurate perception of the results and the events taking place subsequently can be very powerful indeed as any scientist who does not do his experimental work blind can attest.

In addition to these important effects although the performance of the group may be superior collectively the performance of individuals may be decreased as a result of their participation in the

group. A most notable effect here is that the complexity of the group setting disrupts the group members' ability to organise information in memory and then retrieve this information (Weldon, Blair and Huebsch, 2000). This has implications for when the information presented to the group is badly organised and when further action is dependent upon the group reconvening etc.

Many of the problems with groups can be summarised under the headings of failures in communication. These may be failures in basic communication skills, egocentric behaviour, nonparticipation, failure to stay focused, interruptions, negative leadership behaviour, negative attitudes and emotions (Di Salvo, Nikkel and Monroe, 1989).

In addition there tends to be a shared information bias. Groups can pool their individual resources to take into account far more information than any one individual. However, they spend too much of their decision making process upon shared information (information that they have in common) Wittenbaum et al, 2004). In addition group decisions are affected by a powerful confirmation bias (people often start out with an initial preference and then seek out additional information to test it). Unfortunately this testing process is faulty given that people seek out confirmatory evidence and reject contradictory evidence. (Dawes 1988). Much of this can be avoided by preventing preferences being aired too early in the process.

As we have established groups tend to be a very powerful decision making process but unfortunately group decision are often more extreme than individuals' decisions. Groups tend to polarise and amplify choices between risky and cautious alternatives. (Doise ,1969). The average group response will be a more extreme form of the average pre-group response (Lamm and Myers 1978).

Relationships and Conflicts within training teams:

As I have already pointed out the following traits have been identified as indicating a successful outcome for a team working well in a team: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability (low on neuroticism) and openness are all qualities that facilitate working in teams.

Are there benefits in diversity for example it may be argued that heterogeneous teams may become more productive because low-performing members are motivated by the high standards set by others and they may also be a source of help and assistance to the low performers providing it is not threatening to their own self-esteem (see earlier). As I pointed out earlier cohesion is developed from strong communication, commitment to the task which is rooted firmly in shared values, a willingness to put the needs of the team before individual interests. Building such cohesions requires leaders to augment social cohesion and task cohesion.

Task performance is the first and perhaps most important criterion. Teams are created to generate results and the successful group is the one that meets or exceeds agreed-upon standards.

Too many organisations create teams but then do little to help team-members develop the skills they need to work in those teams. As I have already pointed out given the complexity of

interpersonal and cognitive demands that teams require members need assistance in learning how to work effectively within them.

Almost by definition groups will generate situation from which conflicts may emerge. The management of such conflict is an important part of any leader or supervisor of a group. However, there is often little training for such management. Some groups spend a very large amount of time engaged in negative interactions. Using Interaction Process Analysis (see earlier) in some groups it was observed that as much as 20% of the time is spent in making hostile comments (Bales and Hare 1965).

The antecedents of the causation for group conflict have already been discussed at length. However, it would be fair to say that many conflicts are based upon misperceptions either as a result of the group process or as an individual misattribution. Group members often assume that others are competing with them when in fact this is not the case. Members may think that people who criticize their ideas are criticizing them personally. Members might not trust others because they fear that most people are selfish. (Simpson 2007). Much of this then is a simple breakdown in communication.

Mediation skills are crucial for all leaders allowing:

- both sides to express themselves in a controlled environment;
- improved communication between the disputants by careful facilitation of discussion;
- disputants to save face by framing acceptance of concessions in positive ways;
- both parties alternative proposals to move forward;
- manipulation of the social environment and conditions;
- disputants to have awareness of techniques for working together.

There can be no doubt that conflict lowers the performance of the group. Training teams provide a powerful environment for vicarious learning; in other words SUTs acquire new attitudes and behaviours vicariously by observing and imitating others' actions. This is most effective when they are (Shebilske et al 1998):

- Motivated to learn from their peers
- Attend closely to the behaviour being modelled by other group members
- Able to remember and re-enact the behaviour that they observed

This is clearly most powerful when the dynamics are positive and healthy and conflict is reduced to a minimum. Nevertheless, members who watch reconciliation unfold learn how they too can resolve conflict. Groups become more unified the more the members engage in self-disclosure and the sharing of personal information. Groups pass through clearly defined stages leading to stable exchange where personal feelings can be shared. Facilitation of achieving this stage is welcome particularly in an accelerated training process. Groups then can promote self-understanding by exposing us to the unknown areas of ourselves. Although naturally resistant to such feedback when several people provide the same feedback we are more likely to internalise this information. Group leaders can stimulate this process by rewarding members for accepting rather than rejecting this feedback which works to intensify self-awareness. Group members

benefit from the increased self-confidence produced by helping others and by gaining insight about their own personal qualities from other group members.

Discussion

The paper outlines the important areas of social dynamics the implications of which are important for the most effective training of SUTs, the development of unit cohesion and leadership at all levels. Inevitably the field of group dynamics is an enormous one and this is simply a first attempt to draw attention to the results of important areas of research which could form part of an ongoing process of continuous improvement in initial training and may have implications for other areas of work. In the ongoing development of this work some of the following may be considered:

- The development of a collective self-esteem must not be underestimated. The Army should aim to build a training environment which encapsulates all elements of this into a coherent training model.
- Be aware that there are significant cultural and personality implications for the likelihood of successful integration within training groups. This requires a sophisticated approach to psychometric testing at an early stage in recruiting.
- Detailed work should be undertaken with ASDC to make best use of the grading process. This will require basic research with the stratification of groups taking into account those factors which are likely to enhance group cohesion and development but at the same time keeping an eye upon the positive and powerful effects heterogeneity can have upon personal self esteem in a controlled environment.
- There is much work to be done looking at measures of cohesion and the social aspects of cohesion. The cohesive structure in a unit is increased by skilful leadership, a learning climate, passion for the mission, the fulfilment of member goals and basic needs and efforts to work well with one's peers. Such work would indicate:
  - o Why some groups may perform better than others particularly under difficult conditions?
  - o Why do members sometimes put the needs of the group before their own?
  - o Why do some groups generate a sense of belonging and confidence when others do not?
- Roles influence the group members' happiness and well-being in significant ways. By taking on a role the individual secures their connection to their fellow group members in a particular way building interdependence that is essential for group cohesion and productivity. It would then be beneficial to identify the most appropriate roles for each individual within the training team permitting the members to express themselves.
- Social network analysis would enable visualisation of the group dynamics and measurements of the relationships within the group to be established.
- There is a need to understand and measure the extremes of social influence particularly conformity and obedience to authority and their impact upon group performance. At the very least biases in performance induced by these phenomena must be understood by those delivering training.

- Effective training is highly dependent upon appropriate leadership skills. Evidence demonstrates that trained leaders outperform untrained leaders Training of leadership then would fall into three components:
    - Awareness of social dynamics and the skills required to deal with them.
    - Mentoring by and role modelling on a range of experienced leaders.
    - Developing techniques that practically put individuals in complex social conditions in real time. The environment within which this is best delivered is probably through values based adventure training.
- Given that in most (but not all) military settings groups are the norm identifying the antecedents of and decreasing the effects of distraction from optimal performance are crucial. Much work here suggests that the most effective training environment for a particular task should be considered in terms of the size of the group and the nature of the task being performed.
- Many of the problems with groups can be summarised under the headings of failures in communication. These may be failures in basic communication skills, egocentric behaviour, nonparticipation, failure to stay focused, interruptions, negative leadership behaviour, negative attitudes and emotions
- Groups tend to polarise and amplify choices between risky and cautious alternatives. These phenomena must be understood and measures taken to lessen their impact.
- Too many organisations create teams but then do little to help team-members develop the skills they need to work in those teams. Almost by definition groups will generate situation from which conflicts may emerge. The management of such conflict is an important part of any leader or supervisor of a group. However, there is often little training for such management and this must be corrected in ASLS courses.

In conclusion I advise that more detailed and applied study be targeted on:

1. The incorporation of an understanding of group dynamics in ASLS courses and at all levels of leadership training.
2. A number of key areas of group structure and performance should be analysed taking group cohesion as a fundamental measure.
3. Emphasising the importance of clear communication and establish new lines of leadership training to cope with changing social and economic pressures.
4. Training team members to develop the skills they require to operate in a complex social environment.

Bob Stephenson

Chairman IAP ATC Pirbright

September 2010

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Territorial Army Trained Soldier Course Part Bravo at ATC Pirbright.

Introduction:

For TA soldiers, recruit training is structured in two phases: Phase 1, also known as the Common Military Syllabus (Recruit) (CMS(R)) Course, and Phase 2, specialist training.

In Phase 1, recruits cover the Trained Soldier Course (TSC) Part A usually in a series of 6 training weekends at Regional Training Centres (RTCs), although it is possible to complete this training during a two-week intensive course.

For non-infantry units, training concludes with a two-week training course TSC Part B normally held at an Army Training Regiment. For infantry recruits an extra 3 weekends of training follow TSC Part B. Recruits to the 4th Battalion, The Parachute Regiment and The Honourable Artillery Company complete their equivalent of CMS(R) within their own units.

Phase 2 training is a further period of specialist training specific to the type of unit the recruit has joined. This is normally conducted by the Arm or Service that the recruit is joining, for example for infantry units; Phase 2 consists of the two-week Combat Infantryman's Course (TA) (CIC(TA)) held at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick.

For the purposes of this study, an examination of TSC Part B was made at ATC Pirbright. ATC Pirbright runs courses specifically for non-infantry recruits. That is, for recruits from units such as Royal Engineers, Royal Logistics Corps, etc.

Terms of Reference:

The Terms of Reference for this study were fairly vague. As a consequence, the report details various aspects of the TSC including Joining Instructions, Timetable, Accommodation, Food, Training, Attitudes and General Approach.

Methodolgy:

The author followed one specific TA course (Masters Troop) from its beginning to the passing out parade at the end. Whilst not engaged with the Troop for the whole of the time, the author visited the course at various stages. During the visits the author discussed aspects of the course with the TA SUTs and the Directing Staff (DS), observing the delivery of the training and the attitudes and demeanour of the SUTs.

Following the completion of the initial study, it was felt apposite to study another course (Cook Troop) to compare and contrast the results.

At the conclusion of both courses the SUTs were asked to complete a brief questionnaire. The questionnaire was completed anonymously by all the SUTs.

In order to elicit true opinions of the course from both the SUTs and DS the report has been sterilized of names.

Courses Followed:

Masters Troop:
19 February to 4 March 2010
Time spent: 24 hours in 7 visits
Number of SUTs Expected: 39
Number of SUTS Arrived: 35
Number of SUTs Completed: 33 (2 Returned to Unit at own request)

Cook Troop:
23 July to 6 August 2010
Time spent: 14 hours in 5 visits
During July/August there were 3 TA Courses running concurrently. Two were male only courses and one was female only. This was the first time the TSC Part B had been run in this way.

Number of SUTs Expected on all 3 Courses: 96
Number of SUTS Arrived: 70 males & 26 females
Number of SUTs Completed: Not known (a number Returned to Unit at own request)

Waters Troop:
23 July to 6 August 2010
This Troop was not followed continuously during the period; however, the views of the female SUTs were elicited and have been incorporated where appropriate.

TSC PART B – 19 February to 5 March 2010 and 23 July to 6 August 2010

Initial DS Briefing
The first course studied (Feb/Mar) was delivered by Masters Troop under the command of the Troop Sergeant, their officer being away on a training course himself.

The course commenced with a briefing by the Headquarters Company 2i/c to the Troop Directing Staff. Masters Troop had not delivered a TA course before. The briefing was very detailed and included specific directions as to how to approach the TA SUTs. Various aspects of the training programme, assessment and domestic arrangements were covered.

Several elements of the course were different from the normal recruit intake. In particular Headquarters Company took on board much of the routine paperwork normally undertaken by the Troop. The Troop Commander was unaware of this and had spent some time during the previous week preparing the administration unnecessarily. To paraphrase his comments, had he known earlier he could have concentrated on other aspects of his preparations. Nevertheless, a subsequent visit to the Troop Office showed that the DS had made very good arrangements and were well advanced.

The second course studied (Jul/Aug) was delivered by Cook Troop. The author was not present at the initial brief. Concurrently with this Troop, two other TA Courses were running. This was a departure from the norm. Typically one TA course was undertaken at a time. Neither of the Troops had trained TA SUTs before.

It was policy at ATC Pirbright not to have a dedicated TA Training Troop in order to ensure that the TA SUTs received the same level and currency of training as the Regular SUTs.

Reception

For both courses, the TA SUTs arrived at various times during the day, dependant on their individual circumstances. However, it soon became apparent that there were conflicting timings in the Joining Instructions depending from where they came. Some were given 2100hrs as the latest reporting time and others 2200hrs. Whilst this was a minor irritant, it did show that there was a conflict in the provision of information to the TA SUTs. This is an area that should be remedied for the sake of consistency.

On the Masters Troop course, despite the specification of a reporting time, TA SUTs continued to report at various times late into the evening and early morning. This reflected their necessity to finish work before starting their journeys to Pirbright. The DS took this in their stride.

Shortly after arriving it became apparent that many of the TA SUTs (up to half) had not been issued with all the equipment that was necessary for the course, despite a kit list being part of the Joining Instructions. In some instances they had been issued with equipment that was either obsolete or unserviceable. This involved the DS in a scramble to find and issue the correct equipment from local resources.

Some SUTs reported that they did not receive their Joining Instructions until a few days before the course, giving them little time to ensure that they were properly equipped.

Accommodation

Without a doubt, there was universal praise from the TA SUTs for the standard of accommodation at Pirbright ATC. This extended from the comfort of the beds to the size of the lockers and the quality of the ablutions. Those TA SUTs who had conducted their Part A on an intensive course had been to a Training Camp where the facilities were much less salubrious.

However, for Masters Troop there was an issue with some of the plumbing during their course. Not all the showers were working and, as it was a mixed course, some of the showers were unavailable

to the male SUTs. The lack of showers was a recurring complaint among the SUTs on this particular course.

On the Masters Troop course there were about seven female TA SUTs. They were accommodated in the same Troop lines as the male SUTs but in a segregated wing commanded by a female Corporal. There was no suggestion of any fraternisation (this was addressed at the initial course briefing to the TA SUTs). Nevertheless, due to the shortage of working showers for the males it was necessary to utilise the female showers when they had finished with them. On occasion this led to confusion as to who was using them at any one time!

Interestingly, at the conclusion of the Masters Troop course the beds in the Masters lines were being replaced by new, larger beds.

Meals

There was general agreement that the meals at the ATC were both substantial and nutritious. However, it was established that the female SUTs were not entirely satisfied with the provision of "healthy" alternatives. There was some criticism that it was not possible to mix and match "regular" meals with "healthy" meals. There was also some criticism among the male SUTs about the portion control exercised over meat dishes. There was no portion control in respect of vegetables. In general, the food was considered satisfactory.

Training

There was considerable variation in the amount of training received by the TA SUTs prior to attendance on the TSC Part B. Several had completed Part A sometime before and had received little or no complementary training since. Others had literally completed an intensive Part A in the week prior to Part B. However, the majority of the SUTs felt that they were adequately prepared for the course.

The training programme for the TSC Part B was, to say the least, intensive. This was both necessary – to deliver the volume of information required – and expected by the SUTs – who accepted the need to put in long hours. Nevertheless, many SUTs found the pace of the training exhausting.

There was universal praise for the standard of instruction and the dedication of the directing staff. The author witnessed additional training periods laid on in the DS own time to ensure that the SUTs were up to the standard required in order to pass out at the end of the course.

The DS were, in both courses followed, enthusiastic, encouraging and professional whilst exerting discipline and a sense of urgency when needed to achieve their aim.

There was some considerable debate about the training syllabus from the SUTs and the DS. It was interesting to note the contrasts. The SUTs felt more drill would be useful – the DS felt there was too much drill. All agreed that more shooting would be an advantage, especially as some of the SUTs would be engaging in Operations within a short time. Others wanted more map and compass training or field training exercises.

It is difficult in a two week intensive course to cover adequately all the subject matter to deliver a Trained Soldier. The approach to the training programme was dynamic. That is, the programme was not adhered to slavishly. Where the aim of a particular subject had been achieved in less than the

given time, the instructors moved on and utilised the freed up time to catch up on more difficult subjects. Masters Troop laid on extra mural periods in the evening where necessary. Both SUTs and Instructors were motivated to ensure no one failed.

An area of concern during the Masters Troop course was the need for SUTs to pass Live Fire 3 to successfully complete TSC B. It was common for SUTs to fail Live Fire 3, yet pass subsequent tests on Live Fire 4 and 5. As passing Live Fire 3 is a mandatory requirement some SUTs were given a deferred pass, requiring them to complete Live Fire 3 back at their unit. Many felt this was extremely difficult to achieve and some stated that if they were required to take the whole TSC Part B again they would leave the TA. It was gratifying to see that during the Cook Troop course there was a concerted effort to ensure that all SUTs passed Live Fire 3 before moving on to Live Fire 4 & 5.

In general most of the SUTs appeared satisfied with the quality of the training and the way it was delivered. Both courses studied were unanimous in their praise for the Officer and NCO Instructors on the courses, variously describing them as friendly, good at what they do, excellent, of the highest calibre, amazingly helpful, etc. Many of the SUTs had expected to be "beasted" from day 1. However, they were surprised at the professional approach to the courses and repaid their Instructors with their enthusiasm and willingness to learn.

From the questionnaires there was no one specific area of criticism relating to the subject matter or the delivery of the courses visited. There was, as might be expected, much individual comment as to what should or shouldn't be in the timetable. However, none of this pointed to any particular deficiency in the subject matter.

For interest, in Appendixes 1 and 2, are listed some of the more common suggestions regarding training or the course in general. Some of the suggestions are contradictory demonstrating the wide range of views expressed.

Instructors

During the visits to the course, informal conversations with the Instructors revealed a high degree of motivation. The calibre of the Instructors was first class and their rapport with the TA SUTs was excellent. Despite the fact that neither Masters Troop nor Cook Troop had trained TA SUTs before, they quickly developed the "right" approach to their students who were on average older and probably more "educated" than the typical regular recruit intake at Pirbright.

All indicated that they understood the importance of the job they were doing and some gave a significant amount of their personal time to delivering extra training.

During an informal discussion regarding the length of time an Instructor might be posted to an ATR, it was commented that 2 years was too long. One soldier stated that he felt his time away from his unit meant that he was losing his infantryman's edge. Nevertheless, he was an enthusiastic and knowledgeable Instructor who was fully engaged with the Troop.

General Comments

A summary of the responses from the questionnaires completed by the SUTs on completion of the TSC Part B are given in Appendix 1 and 2.

The questionnaires indicate a high level of satisfaction with TSC Part B from the SUTs. All rated the course as either Good or Excellent. Almost all considered the course to be better than expected and everyone stated that they would recommend the course at ATC Pirbright to their colleagues.

In addition the greater majority rated the instructors as Excellent.

Action Items

- Joining Instructions: There appeared to be a conflict related to information given in Joining Instructions. This is something could be easily remedied and would benefit both the SUT and the DS.
- Provision of Equipment: Up to half of the SUTs arrived on the course without all the equipment necessary or with equipment that was out of date (e.g. respirator canisters) or obsolete. This appears to be a difficult area that creates a lot of additional work for the DS at Pirbright.
- Plumbing: Whilst the accommodation at ATC Pirbright is of the highest standard, it must be said that defective facilities impact directly on the moral of the SUTs. During the Masters Troop course the inadequate number of showers for the male SUTs was a constant irritant, especially when showering was necessary between one activity (e.g. PT) and another (e.g. map reading) and the DS were chasing to keep to the timetable. This must be an area that can be easily remedied!

Acknowledgements:

I should like to convey my appreciation to all at ATC Pirbright who participated in the study of the TA Courses.

The study of the two TA courses was conducted with total cooperation from the Troops and the Chain of Command.

Contrary to my initial indication, due to personal time constraints, it has not been possible to discuss the findings of this report with any of the staff at ATC Pirbright. For this I apologise.

EA Mulder

Member Independent Advisory Panel ATC Pirbright

September 2010

APPENDIX 1

ATC Pirbright

Trained Soldier Course Part B (Masters Troop)

February/March 2010

		Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Unacceptable
1	Before This Course					
1.1	When did you join the TA? Approximately	About 8 months ago or less				
1.2	When did you complete Part A?	1 to 2 months ago – some much less				
1.3	How much training did you receive between Part A and Part B?	Varied				
1.4	How would you rate your preparation for Part B?	5	13	10	5	
1.5	Did you receive enough notification of this course?	YES 31		NO 2		
1.6	How would you rate the joining instructions?	7	15	8	3	
1.7.	Did you receive all the kit and equipment from your unit that you needed?	YES 21		NO 12		
2	During The Course					
2.1	Were you expected on this course?	YES 33				
2.2	How do you rate the reception on arrival?	11	12	9	1	
2.3	How do you rate the accommodation?	9	15	9		
2.4	How do you rate the meals?	11	16	5	1	
2.4	How do you rate the timetable?	4	21	5	3	
2.5	How do you rate the instructors?	32	1			
2.6	What was the worst aspect of the course?	Weather 3				
2.7	What was the best aspect of the course?	Instructors Shooting PT 2				6 5
2.8	Given the limited time on a two week course, what would you leave out?	CBRN JPA PT 2				5 4
2.9	What would you like more of?	Shooting Drill PT 3				10 7
3	After The Course					
3.1	Please give your overall rating for the course.	23	10			
3.2	Was the course better than you expected or worse?	BETTER 32	AS EXPECTED 1		WORSE 0	
3.3	Would you recommend this course at ATC Pirbright to your colleagues?	YES 33				
3.4	How would you rate the facilities in your billet?	8	18	5	2	
Comments: This course comprised 33 SUTs including 7 Females						

APPENDIX 2

ATC Pirbright

Trained Soldier Course Part B (Cook Troop)

July/August 2010

		Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Unacceptable
1	Before This Course					
1.1	When did you join the TA? Approximately	Range March 2007 to May 2010, most in 2010				
1.2	When did you complete Part A?	From 11/2009 to week before this course				
1.3	How much training did you receive between Part A and Part B?	Majority none				
1.4	How would you rate your preparation for Part B?	4	13	6	3	
1.5	Did you receive enough notification of this course?	YES 23		NO 2		
1.6	How would you rate the joining instructions?	6	10	9		
1.7.	Did you receive all the kit and equipment from your unit that you needed?	YES 17		NO 9		
2	During The Course					
2.1	Were you expected on this course?	YES 25		NO 0		
2.2	How do you rate the reception on arrival?	10	9	5	1	
2.3	How do you rate the accommodation?	18	6	1	0	
2.4	How do you rate the meals?	4	15	3	1	1
2.4	How do you rate the timetable?	2	11	11	1	
2.5	How do you rate the instructors?	19	6			
2.6	What was the worst aspect of the course?	No down time 8 No programme 3				
2.7	What was the best aspect of the course?	Instructors 4 Live Fire/Fire & manoeuvre 4 CBRN 2				
2.8	Given the limited time on a two week course, what would you leave out?	Nothing 10 PT 2 Exercise Halfway 2				
2.9	What would you like more of?	PT 4 Down time/Admin Time 4 Drill 3				
3	After The Course					
3.1	Please give your overall rating for the course.	15	10			
3.2	Was the course better than you expected or worse?	BETTER 22 AS EXPECTED 3 WORSE 0				
3.3	Would you recommend this course at ATC Pirbright to your colleagues?	YES 25		NO 0		
3.4	How would you rate the facilities in your billet?	12	12	1		
Comments: This course comprised 25 SUTs all male Female SUTs of Waters Troop were interviewed separately						

The Training of Female Recruits:

Methodology

Over the past year I have followed two female troops throughout their 14 week training, visiting on over 20 occasions. I have also visited several areas of the camp to become more acquainted with their environment and to follow up particular concerns. As well as spending time with the SuTs, I have spoken with their troop commanders, sergeants and corporals.

Findings

There has been a great deal of improvement since last year on the information and kit list requirement issued to SuTs prior to joining. This was also improved during the course of this year, however, it is recommended that a detailed, more specific list be sent to the female recruits and a draft recommendation is appended. This was compiled in consultation with both troops and a copy for further comments sent to the Morley Troop Commander. It is recommended that a list be prepared detailing exactly what kit will be supplied to SuTs on arrival as many are still spending money on items they do not require.

I note that the female SuTs are still being measured for their kit by a male tailor. This is unacceptable practice. Two issues result from this – the measuring is frequently inaccurate, as well as inappropriate, and the kit is often supplied in the incorrect size. There appears to be insufficient time allocated to this procedure, especially as it seems to be very difficult to rectify mistakes. Kit supplied is often not suited to the female form and size – many of the smaller recruits are drowned in their burgens and they cannot tighten their webbing satisfactorily. Moriarty Troop commander suggested that there needs to be two smaller sizes made available for females. One of the SuTs was supplied with men's boots as no women's size available.

Further to comments made in last year's report, there are still issues with regard to sufficient supply of lavatory paper. Females need at least twice the amount as males and this apparently minor complaint does create a major nuisance with recruits frequently having to purchase their own supplies from the Spar.

Several complaints were received about the laundry, especially the manner in which the female SuTs were spoken to. These were endorsed by the training staff. On investigation I was given a tour of the laundry and its procedures explained; the problem seemed to lie with the attitude of the laundry staff.

Over the course of the year I received several complaints, from both SuTs and staff, about the medical centre, particularly about the civilian doctors, who they feel, do not understand the army training and what it entails and also occasionally misdiagnose. One of the troop commanders suggested that the civilian doctors should have more knowledge of what military training involves. There were, however, complimentary reports with regard to the physios and nurses. One troop commander said that he found it difficult to fit in the SUTs medical appointments due to the training programme and that these needed to be scheduled better to fit in with the training. Although this is

not necessarily a gender issue, I would query the procedure of SUTs having their medicals after attestation, rather than prior to attestation.

The catering appears to be an ongoing problem for many of the female SUTs. All say there is an inadequate supply of fruit, many complain about the lack of variety and vegetarian options and inadequate and boring healthy options. Having visited the dining room and interviewed some of the staff, I would endorse the SUTs' opinions. The salad bar never appears to change and chips appear in the healthy options section! I intend to spend more time monitoring the catering over the next few months.

Both of the troops monitored felt that they would have benefited from more PE before embarking on runs. They felt that their physical condition was below par for the exercises and that they suffered as a consequence. Many would have been prepared to train in the evening when there was no other planned activity, but this is not permitted. Most would also have welcomed the opportunity of participating in the 3 week SPC course prior to commencing their military training. This was endorsed by the troop commanders.

There is little provision for activity at weekends. The SUTs felt that they spent too much time copped up indoors and the majority would welcome some form of physical activity such as the opportunity to play rounders or go for practice runs.

All the SUTs and staff are of the opinion that the Spar shop on site is too expensive. Obviously the SUTs have no other option, but as this issue is raised frequently I feel that it should be mentioned in this report.

Tina Bytheway

IAP Member

September 2010

Draft: Documentation and Kit Checklist for Female Recruits

Documentation to bring

- o Birth Certificate
- o National Insurance Card (if held)
- o Passport (if held)
- o Foreign and Commonwealth members should bring their visas with them
- o Full contact address and telephone numbers of immediate family to contact in cases of an emergency
- o 4 x Passport Photos
- o NHS Card
- o Bank Details,. (You **must** arrive at Pirbright having opened a UK Bank Account.) The following details will be required. Account number/ Sort code/Name of Bank/Address of Bank
- o Marriage certificate (if you are married)
- o Birth certificate of children (if you have any)
- o Driving Licence (if held)
- o P45 "Must be dated within 8 weeks of arrival date at Pirbright"
- o European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)
- o Any civilian qualification certificates
- o Any legal orders relating to divorce, custody, change of name etc
- o Details of any pending court cases

Clothing
Smart civilian clothes

- o Smart skirt, trousers, shirt/blouse, shoes
- o 1 set of casual civilian clothes for wearing out of work time
- o Underwear. Briefs x 14, sports bras x 5 (pref. black)
- o Socks x 6 pairs, to include black hiking socks (socks worn with uniform and for PT will be issued to you)
- o Natural tan tights (females)
- o Nightwear (you will be sharing a room)
- o Bathrobe/dressing gown
- o Shower footwear, i.e. flip-flops/slippers

Swimming Kit

- o One piece swimming costume – plain or simple design, black or navy

General

- o £100 in cash
- o Boot cleaning kit – 2 brushes and black Kiwi polish
- o Sewing kit in case – black, white and khaki thread, needles and safety pins
- o Large wooden coat hangers x 10 (may be bought on site)
- o Small torch with red filter (preferably a head torch)
- o Pens, including black permanent marker
- o 10 Padlocks to include 1 combination type
- o 4 x Bungees and 4 x tent pegs
- o 2 x food boxes (*dimensions?*)

Toiletries

- o Shower gel/soap
- o Toothbrush and toothpaste
- o Deodorant, talcum powder and moisturiser
- o Shampoo, conditioner and hairspray
- o Razors, scissors/nail clippers, cotton buds
- o Flannel, dark colour, and baby wipes
- o Towels 2 X Bath, 1 X Hand
- o Sanitary towels and tampons (necessary for swimming)
- o Hair-nets, hair-bands and slides of your natural hair colour
- o **NB** No nail polish on fingers or toes

Items you may bring, but are not essential

- o Writing paper, envelopes, stamps and important addresses
- o Personal items i.e. photos, pictures and teddy bear
- o Small personal radio alarm clock
- o Mobile phone and charger
- o Sports watch
- o Swimming goggles
- o Iron
- o Handwash liquid
- o Knife, fork & spoon (for exercises)
- o Zinc oxide tape, cotton woven
- o *First aid kit (is this permissible?)*

You will not need
Bed linen, blankets, pillows, duvet, ironing board