



Army Training Centre

Pirbright

Independent Advisory Panel Report 2012

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Introduction

There can be little doubt that this has been a difficult period for ATC Pirbright struggling with the increased training demands, both from regular and TSC Alpha and Bravo courses, in the midst of voluntary and now compulsory redundancies in both the military and civil service components of the permanent staff. It is perhaps no accident that of the five complaints that came before the Service Complaints Commissioner regarding Pirbright, this year, the most serious surrounded the training of TA recruits. The notion that a 14 week course for regulars can be encompassed by just over three weeks of intensive training for TA recruits is probably unrealistic given the variability in regional training and inevitable differences in the primary motivation for wanting to undertake this training. The training regiments at Pirbright have responded marvellously to this new demand and the move to establish dedicated training teams specialising for a specific period in TA training is most welcome. My visit to 160 (Wales) Bde RTC, earlier in the year, revealed how effective the new training arrangements for the TA were already becoming. However, there still needs to be more effective sharing of best practice, a consistent recruit experience for all TA recruits and perhaps most importantly the embedding of regular staff within the RTC. It should be noted that at Pirbright these arrangements have put training teams under considerable pressure and the potential for burnout is high. It is then of paramount importance that these new pressures are addressed if the aspiration to increase the numbers of combat ready soldiers to 30,000, in the TA, is to stand any reasonable chance of success. It is right that the regiments should expect wastage rates of 11% or lower and that all of the conditions to achieve this should be in place.

The command structure at Pirbright is rather unusual in many respects and I have over the years witnessed tensions and inconsistencies imposed by a triumvirate of commanding officers with sometimes very different priorities. I am pleased to say that rarely have I seen such harmony within the training environment and it is a testament to the eminent good sense and dedication to the ethos of training, displayed by the current command, that has allowed such good progress to be made in recent times. I was a little surprised to hear in my interview with the Army inspectorate, during the preparation of their report for Pirbright, that values and standards were more important than values based leadership. Leadership is, in my opinion, the cornerstone of training and the ability to “do the right thing on a difficult day” can only come from an ethos that builds upon the notion that every soldier must have the confidence and ability to make decisions and lead. Leadership and the mutual support that develops from it is evidently one of the greatest successes of army training. We have for this reason supported the SDW and the mentoring approach promulgated in recent years and we would not like to see any reversion to a streamed and hierarchical structure which inevitably would stifle the flexibility and ultimately the efficiency of the Field Army.

After years of lobbying it is very pleasing to see, a new welfare centre in operation, the promise of considerable financial support for the renovation of PS housing, and the refurbishment of SANDES. We remain concerned about other areas of pastoral support and these will be looked at in more detail in the following.

At the time of writing it has become clear that there is the potential for considerable overloading of the Training Teams in the coming year. Without significant investment in facilities and increases in PS manning it is very hard indeed to see how Pirbright will be able to satisfy the requirement to train

500 extra regular recruits, 4,000 extra TA recruits and maintain the appropriate DHALI Blake ratios. We have commented more than once on the lack of Female Permanent Staff and it appears that Pirbright might not be able to maintain the ideal female presence for the training of female troops.

There have been significant problems with the management of the community centre (first highlighted in the 2008 IAP report). Following the suspension of the manager it has fallen to the UWO and her staff to maintain and develop this facility. They have done tremendous work in the interim but the value of strong community links and appropriate facilities for a base the size of Pirbright cannot be underestimated. We hope to see continued rejuvenation of this area in the future.

Inevitably then the process of recruit selection, the logistics of course loading, the welfare infrastructure and support for both the permanent staff and the recruit need to be managed at a consistently high standard. Some of these themes are explored in this report and where necessary recommendations are made for the future bearing in mind the limitations imposed by the SDR.

After the very sad deaths of two of our members in recent years I am delighted that we have been able to recruit Will Smythe and Nick Butcher to our panel and I very much look forward to working with them in coming years and I thank all of our existing members for their continued hard work.

Medical Support and Remedial Training

As part of our ongoing scrutiny of the Supervisory Care Directive time was spent looking in more detail at the activities of the Medical Centre and Sword Company. Inevitably the activities of the two centres in the base overlap and it has been interesting to see how this is achieved and to what extent there is conflict or tension between the personal ambitions of the recruits, medical procedures and the military priorities.

Medical Centre

Pirbright is privileged to have a very well equipped medical centre which serves the needs of the recruits, permanent training staff and any resident battalion. This is a huge responsibility but my investigation revealed a well run and efficient practice which was comparable to any civilian practice. Unfortunately, in recent months, this facility has suffered from the priorities of operations in Afghanistan and has been without a SMO and RMO for very long periods of time. Whilst these gaps have been excellently covered by civilian staff, and other gaps have been filled by locums, the fact remains that the base has been papering over cracks and it could be argued that there has been significant risk in doing so. The normal and frequent reviews of the cases within the RRB have, arguably, not received their normal medical scrutiny and whilst this did not result in any problems such scrutiny is important as is regular review from an RMO. Asking one person to be both RMO and SMO is not good practice. Not only have operational military needs put pressure upon the medical centre but so too have Civil Service redundancies and gapping. The medical centre has been without a practice manager for a considerable length of time and whilst the matron and others have filled this post it inevitably takes them away from their primary role. I would argue strongly that the cumulative effect of these cuts and postings have put the medical centre in a vulnerable position which should never be the case in a training establishment.

The centre is very well equipped and capable of dealing with all the needs of both the base and the wider community. Given that the centre is a regional asset and that it is funded directly by Army Primary Healthcare, the responsibility for other healthcare equipment, training and health education does perhaps fall between two stalls. It would, for example, be beneficial to have more general health education available for recruits, permanent staff and the community. Although a health fair once every two years is a good idea it is debatable how much lasting impact such a day has. More work on smoking, diet, chlamydia and other STDs etc. could and should be delivered by the health centre and I am sure that they would be keen to deliver it.

Given the potential vulnerabilities within the intake of recruits and the problems associated with soldiers returning from operational tours, it is a testament to the quality of the psychiatric care available that problems are dealt with promptly and well. There is of course excellent support from DCMH Aldershot but the work done in the training teams is thought to be excellent. It was very pleasing to hear that training teams pick up such problems at a very early stage and that they are dealt with effectively.

Having an army medical centre with such a concentration of expertise has enabled some innovative and interesting research to be done with such a large and fluid population to deal with. For example a recent study on Vitamin D deficiency and its relationship to stress fractures (an increasing problem

within the training environment) may well have implications for general education on diet and the scheme of physical training.

A situation which we first reported on back in 2007 concerning the problems with the timing of attestation and the assessment of Defect on Enlistment was again raised. The more complex problem, concerning the legality of having access to detailed medical records before attestation, has yet to be fully addressed. Clearly, there are many medical issues which arise between the ADSC selection, its associated medical and the medical after attestation. It is recognised that employment and the law surrounding medical confidentiality makes it difficult to keep abreast of changes in this period although the use of a PMAR (Personal Medical Attendant Report) in circumstances when there is a long delay between ADSC and arrival for initial training may well give access to recent medical issues and problems which might reasonably allow a further delay or abandonment of the attestation process. Once attestation has taken place it appears to have taken a very long time to finally execute the discharge on medical grounds with the days on RECU averaging around the 80 mark. This has been a considerable financial burden upon the army given that the target is 14 days. 2 ATR reports a considerable success in attempting to streamline this process by expediting the paperwork electronically bringing this average waiting time to discharge down from 80 days to 11 days. It seems sensible to continue exploring new ways to increase the efficiency of this process and preventing its necessity by improving the flow of medical information before the recruits' arrival at Pirbright.

With the arrival of a new SMO and RMO at the medical centre we now hope that a period of relative instability has come to an end. This is not to say that we feel that any of the personnel involved in the interim arrangements have been ineffective in any way (indeed quite the reverse they are excellent clinicians) but the burden they have been under trying to undertake both SMO and RMO roles at the same time and cover for other gapped posts within the organisation has been unreasonable and unrealistic and potentially risky.

Sword Company

The close relationship between rehabilitation training and the medical centre led to a more detailed review of the rehabilitation company in Sword. It had become apparent from our routine work within the training regiments that some of the permanent staff had a misperception of the function of Sword and that in the eyes of some it was a dumping ground for troublesome recruits who were either hopeless or disaffected. In our opinion this was a gross misrepresentation of both Sword's function and the reality of the situation as evidenced by our previous visits. However, if such a misperception existed we felt it necessary to investigate why this should be so and what if anything could be done to correct it.

Sword Company is split into two platoons responsible for both rehabilitation training following injury and remedial training if and when re-squading has proved unsuccessful within the training unit. Primarily Gold Platoon take care of the recruits whilst they are undergoing physical rehabilitation and Juno Platoon caters for remedial training for recruits, either requiring specialist remedial mentoring or specialist mentoring, before returning to their training teams within their regiments. The recruits remain on their respective regiment's held strength throughout. One of the unique features of Sword Company is the fact that it is self sufficient in coordinating the provision of physiotherapy and physical rehabilitation. Pirbright is very lucky indeed to have a dedicated

specialist (former SMO) attached to Sword Company permanently permitting comprehensive medical cover and expert development of physical rehabilitation programmes in a bespoke manner for each recruit enabling the most efficient recovery and return to normal training.

For example, during the period 1 Apr – 30 Nov 2012 Sword Company dealt with a considerable number of recruits with the outcomes to date recorded in the following way:

- Discharges: 40
- Returned to training and subsequently passing out: 105
- Returned to training but subsequently failing: 13

It should be remembered that complete rehabilitation may take up to four months and this can place recruits under severe pressure. Whilst there are considerable advantages in removing recruits from their normal training teams and regiments one should not underestimate the psychological pressure this places upon them, particularly when this is in addition to being away from home and being within a career wilderness for a prolonged period. This associated with anxiety surrounding their illness / injury is not conducive for recovery.

In addition to these pressures time in Sword can be perceived as failure. This is compounded by the fact that Juno is dealing with many whom, for a variety of reasons, find themselves in need of remedial training. An understandable reluctance, on the part of the training regiments, to re-squad recruits in the early stages arguably leads to cumulative damage during the training process which can then only be dealt with by intensive remedial training given that a problem, which may have started as a lack of confidence in one specific area, has now become more pervasive. It is an unfortunate consequence of the very intensive 14 week training programme that there is little room for accommodating the very different speeds of assimilation of material and levels of anxiety. I am full of admiration for the way the specialist remedial teams in Juno deal with a range of problems but one cannot help thinking that many of these issues would have been dealt with more quickly and efficiently if there had been time and the level of remedial support available within the regiments. Keeping abreast of training difficulties and attempting to support these difficulties as soon as they emerge, without removing the individual from the training team completely, has both psychological benefits for the individual and arguably some financial efficiency. It would also remove the stigma attached to being sent to Sword for remedial training felt by many and used by some NCOs as a threat in the mistaken belief that somehow this will spur the failing recruit into action. Despite the expertise of those working within Sword; the fact that it is involved in remedial training and ultimately is also a holding company for ATC recruits awaiting discharge from the army, damages the perception of the company within the training centre as a whole.

In order to gain a point of comparison and address some of these issues, I spent some time at ITC Catterick. Catterick is an impressive centre with a Battalion strength of 1725 with 359 Permanent Staff (Military) and 43 Permanent staff (Civilian). Like Pirbright they are working at capacity and have some 38 of the 41 training teams fully committed (running at red). The combat infantryman's course runs over 26 weeks (effectively Phase 1 and Phase 2). Rehabilitation from medical injury and some remedial (focussed assistance) is provided by Waterloo Platoon. Unlike Pirbright they do not have an embedded specialist physiotherapy department. Interestingly all discharges are dealt with

independently by a specialist discharge company, Hook. Having visited Pirbright and other training establishments (RAF and Navy) they are proposing to adopt the Pirbright model of separate rehabilitation and retraining platoons and embedding the specialist physiotherapy within the platoon. There is a relatively small but frequent intake into Waterloo with on average 40 undergoing rehabilitation and 10 re-training. However, arguably, the longer nature of the course does not necessitate instant redeployment to Waterloo (only after 2 weeks physical injury). Having said this, the wastage rates from ITC are relatively high on average 35% and for the parachute regiment 50%. DOE rates are comparable with Pirbright (1-2%) but still with an unacceptably long RECU and this figure of 1-2% should be much lower. Work with RAF Honington where they use electronic muscular-skeletal assessment and other sophisticated assessment over three days gives quite a clear determination of risk and a better estimation of whether this risk is worth taking. The army continues to take this risk and with 1,500 discharged in the last year this could amount to as much as £1.5m wasted money.

Again it was clear that within Waterloo platoon and within the physiotherapy department the psychological component of managing the conditions would significantly mitigate the risk. The reluctance on the part of many recruits to take ownership of their condition represents a significant problem. It is perceived as the army causing the problem and it becomes the physiotherapist's responsibility to rehabilitate. The lack of connection with the training teams and the confusion of identity that results is a significant issue. Again the need for specialist psychological support for these remedial platoons is indicated.

At both Pirbright and Catterick the quality of the remedial support is of the highest order as is the dedication of all of those I have met operating within the remedial care situation. However, one cannot help feeling that they are reacting to situations that arguably should not have occurred in the first place and are not fully equipped to deal with the psychological issues they encounter. I received candid and forthright opinions upon the poor recruit selection process, the lack of robust physical screening of recruits and the inappropriate grading of recruits. Although this would need to be substantiated by more detailed research it was argued vehemently by a number of very experienced people that there was an overemphasis upon theoretical aptitude and less upon trainability. By that it was clear that the main reasons for DAOR are:

- Homesickness
- Pressures from the family
- Relative lack of maturity (usually chronological)

It was hoped that a more sensitive and informed identification of risk during the recruitment and selection process as described by Capita will offset many of these problems. The investment in the long term is huge and the high wastage rates, particularly in ITC, are unacceptable. It was interesting to note that there were many at Catterick who strongly believed that identification with a particular cap badge at an early stage and indeed a particular specialism was an anachronism which is inappropriate for the modern army, especially the streamlined 2020 army. There was a strong feeling that recruitment and selection should be for the Army as a whole and that this should be directed towards trainability and aptitude for specific areas. However, all army training should be geared towards a generic 14 week phase 1 training within which particular ability could be identified. The physical nature of this training should be carefully graduated and considerably de-

heated in the first half. The awarding of a cap badge should reflect desires of the individual and the application of detailed performance criteria.

THE INTRODUCTION OF FUNCTIONAL SKILLS AT ATC (PIRBRIGHT)

1. Introduction

ATC Pirbright is responsible for the Phase 1 training of new recruits to the British Army. The training is conducted during an intensive 14 week course (known as the Common Military Syllabus) that is completed by all adult recruits aged 17 years or older. In addition to the Common Military Syllabus that includes field-craft, skill at arms, fitness training, qualities of a soldier, military knowledge, battle-field casualty drills and individual health, the recruits are also able to enhance their education. During Phase 1 training recruits are allotted 23 periods of study to ensure that they achieve Entry Level 3 before passing out and moving on to Phase 2 training. Recruits who have already achieved Entry Level 3 are able to improve their education by supplementary learning. The educational requirements for soldiers are shown in Appendix 1.

At ATC Pirbright, prior to May 2011 recruits were taught Basic Skills through a contract with Birmingham Metropolitan University (BMET). Since September 2011, the involvement of BMET has lapsed and there has been no Basic Skills support at Pirbright other than that available from the Education Wing.

Through 2012, Chichester College has been trialling the introduction of Functional Skills at ATR Winchester, which appears to have been successful. In an extension of the trial and to expedite the introduction of Functional Skills at Pirbright, the contract with Chichester College has been extended to include Pirbright as a satellite site.

The introduction of Functional Skills is scheduled to start in January 2013 when three Chichester College staff will augment the ATC Pirbright Education Wing. The delivery of Functional Skills after 31 August 2013 may not be delivered by Chichester College as it will depend upon the outcome of a tendering process.

The purpose of this report is to outline the plans for the introduction of Functional Skills at ATC Pirbright and to highlight potential problem areas.

2. Army policy regarding education

There is much written evidence to show that the Army takes its involvement in improving the Literacy and Numeracy of its soldiers very seriously. The published statements below indicate the commitment of the Army Chain of Command.

2.1 Improving the Literacy and Numeracy (L&N) skills of Army personnel is essential. It enhances the effectiveness of Army personnel in their training and on operations and raises their potential for career progression. Raising the level of L&N skills makes a significant contribution to the Army's personnel strategies and underpins the Service's commitment to the Whole Life Development of its troops. To meet these needs the Army has introduced a new Army L&N policy. (Reference 1)

2.2 Improved Basic Skills will enhance the ability of Service personnel to cope with work pressures and increase their potential for career progression, thereby improving retention. Moreover, good Basic Skills improve the ability of personnel to absorb training. This underpins both the effectiveness and efficiency of training. Improvements to the Basic Skills of trainees should contribute to reduced wastage and improve the overall output to the trained strength. Trained personnel that have improved their Basic Skills during training will enter their front-line units with enhanced operational effectiveness and trainability. In addition, further improvement of the Basic Skills of personnel within their front-line units will increase both operational effectiveness and retention by ensuring that: individuals are equipped with the

Basic Skills needed to support their specific roles; their potential for career development is not constrained by poor Basic Skills; and they are better able to respond to change and innovation. Finally, by addressing individual development needs and contributing to the recruiting, retention and resettlement of personnel, the improvement of Basic Skills makes a significant contribution to Service Personnel Strategies. (Reference 2)

2.3 The Army strives to maximise the potential of its troops throughout their careers by means of education and training. Sound literacy, language and numeracy underpin soldiers' ability to assimilate this. The Army's Whole Life Development model defines three categories of personal development that will assist the individual:

- Category 1. To meet the minimum standards for professional development training;
- Category 2. To enhance his/her contribution to the Army in the future;
- Category 3. To undertake study/skills development for his/her own enjoyment and satisfaction.

While committed to encouraging all three categories of development, the Army prioritises funding and time for Category 1. Ensuring soldiers have the literacy, language and numeracy skills needed to undertake specific professional military training and to carry out the tasks expected of their rank and appointment is defined as a Category 1 requirement. This is an important contributing factor to the Army's business case for investing in the basic skills improvements of its personnel. (Reference 3)

3. Basic skills versus functional skills

Functional Skills are practical skills in English, Mathematics and ICT that enable learners to deal with practical problems and challenges. They allow individuals to work confidently, effectively and independently in everyday life.

For example, they help individuals to recognise good-value deals when making purchases, write an effective application letter, or use the Internet.

Functional skills are a key to success. They open doors to learning, to life and to work. These skills are valued by employers and further education and are a platform on which to build other employability skills. Better functional skills can mean a better future - as learners or as employees.

Both Basic Skills and Functional Skills require learners to gain the underpinning subject skills in order to progress. Functional skills are about problem-solving and require a more rounded approach to learning than Basic Skills, requiring both the underpinning knowledge and skills and then going a step further to apply this to everyday scenarios. For example, a learner studying or working in construction would need to know how to calculate an angle to build a wall, but to be functional, would also be able to apply this to other areas of life, e.g. fitting a carpet, cutting a cake or taking a shot in snooker.

The education support recruits receive at Pirbright ATC is designed to prepare them better for military training. Recruits are encouraged to apply what they have learnt in the classroom to practical problems. For those who already have good English and Mathematical skills, there are opportunities to improve their learning skills and gain a better awareness of the military and its many roles in supporting the Government. Learning is relevant to the job ahead of recruits and supports their chances of success in training and promotion throughout their Army career.

4. Staff to deliver training at ATC Pirbright

In common with much of the Army at the present time, the Education Wing at ATR Pirbright is currently not up to strength due to staff members being on special leave, or in the case of the Chief

Instructor, retiring from Service. This presents challenges to the department in terms of delivering the service for which they are employed.

Since cooperation with Birmingham Metropolitan University ceased in May 2011, withdrawing the supplementary learning assistance they provided, the Education Wing has been stretched in trying to deliver the Basic Skills programme.

The Education Wing is staffed as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
EDUCATION WING MANNING

Position	Establishment	Actual
Chief Instructor	1	1*
Basic Skills Delivery Manger	3	2**
Contracted Tutors From Chichester College	3	3
Basic Skills Clerk	1	0***

* *The Chief Instructor retired from the Army in December 2012 and her position has been filled temporarily by Captain J Gardner, Learning Development Officer, borrowed from the Training Wing.*

** *One BSDM is on maternity leave and a previously gapped post has just been filled.*

*** *Permission has been granted to recruit a Basic Skills Clerk*

Without additional teaching support from outside ATC there has been considerable difficulty in delivering a satisfactory service to the recruits. The priority has been, and always will be, to ensure that recruits who are not at Entry Level 3 achieve this before completing their Phase 1 training and Passing Out.

5. Training management at ATC Pirbright

Table 2 describes the transitional arrangements put in place by the Chief Instructor, Major T Savage, to ensure that Basic Skills has been delivered to the recruits most in need of learning assistance.

TABLE 2
MANAGEMENT OF BASIC/FUNCTIONAL SKILLS
THROUGH 2011 & INTO 2013

Serial		EL2	EL3	L1	L2	L2+
1	BMET	Sp	Sp	Sp	RTT	RTT
2	May - Sep 11	Sp	RTT	RTT	RTT	RTT
3	Oct 11 - Dec 12	Sp	IEP	IEP	IEP	IEP
4	From Jan 13	FS EL3	FSP	FSP	Stretch	Stretch

Sp	RTT	IEP	FSP	FS EL3
Support	Return To Training	Interim Education Programme	Functional Skills Profile	Functional Skills Entry Level 3

Serial 1. During the contract with Birmingham Metropolitan University (BMET) support for Basic Skills (EL2, EL3 and L1) was delivered by the BMET support team. Education at L2 & L2+ was not delivered and the recruits were Returned to Training.

Serial 2. After the withdrawal of BMET, the staff available for delivering Basic Skills teaching at EL2, EL3 and L1 was severely reduced. Priority was focussed on EL2 and no educational programme was delivered for EL3 and higher. Whilst this was not satisfactory, it was a sticking plaster to temporarily facilitate the delivery of some education for the recruits most in need. This arrangement was in place from May until September 2011.

Serial 3. From October 2011 until December 2012 Basic Skills support continued to be given to the priority group at EL2 and an Interim Education Programme was introduced for the rest. This interim programme was delivered by the Training Team staff.

Serial 4. From January 2013, with the introduction of Functional Skills and the involvement of Chichester College, a new programme of education will be introduced, see Table 3. Functional Skills will be delivered to EL2 and lower by a Basic Skills Delivery Manager. The recruits will follow a Functional Skills programme and sit contextualised exams.

Recruits at EL3 and L1 will follow a Functional Skills Profile programme delivered by Chichester College, receiving Certificates of Achievement for the Functional Skills syllabus covered. Given the limited time available for teaching (23 periods over 14 weeks) it will not be possible to cover the whole syllabus.

Recruits at L2 and L2+ will follow a Stretch programme delivered by the Learning Development Officers and Training Teams (Platoon Commanders).

**TABLE 3
DELIVERY OF FUNCTIONAL SKILLS IN 2013**

Serial	EL2	EL3	L1	L2	L2+
4	FS EL3	FSP	FSP	Stretch	Stretch
	BSDM FS EL3 Syllabus Sit Contextualised Assessment	External Provider (Chichester College) Functional Skills Profile Programme To Support CMS Gain Certificate of Achievement (FS Syllabus Covered)		LDO & TT (Platoon Commander) Stretch Programme To Support CMS Gain Certificate of Achievement (FS Syllabus Covered)	

BSDM	CMS	LDO	TT	FS EL3	FSP
Basic Skills Delivery Manager	Common Military Syllabus	Learning Development Officer	Training Team	Functional Skills Entry Level 3	Functional Skills Profile

The introduction of the support from Chichester College will enable a programme of Functional Skills to be followed. However, the weakness in the system is the resource to deliver a satisfactory service.

6. Concerns related to delivery of functional skills at ATC Pirbright

Two major concerns raise themselves when planning to deliver Functional Skills at ATC Pirbright. One is the number of staff available and the other is the space available for teaching.

The current situation at ATC Pirbright in respect of the levels of attainment found in each recruit intake is roughly as indicated below in Table 3. The current weakness of the national economy has enabled the army to recruit soldiers with a higher level of attainment than would be the case if the economy was stronger and more jobs were available. This is a bonus for ATC Pirbright as it means that the number of recruits at EL2 is significantly lower than has been seen in past years. Should the economy improve significantly in the future, and the balance of the level of attainment falls, this would put a strain on the current manning level.

Typically, at ATC Pirbright, between 1 and 3 new Troop intakes form up each week. Occasionally there is a week where there may be no Troop intake. The number of new recruits each week at each attainment level is thus a multiple of the numbers in Table 4.

TABLE 4
LEVEL OF ATTAINMENT PER PLATOON INTAKE
2012/2013

January 2013	EL2	EL3	L1	L2	L2+
Number of Recruits	1	35		12	

One BSDM has been inadequate to deliver a satisfactory Basic/Functional Skills programme in the restricted time available while the recruits are at Phase 1. Three BSDMs would be satisfactory (Note: three is the establishment level). The staffing has been increased currently (December 2012) to two BSDMs and a third BSDM is anticipated to return from maternity leave shortly. Once the third BSDM is in place, staffing should be adequate to deliver Functional Skills to those most in need.

The arrival of three Chichester College support staff should significantly increase the capability of the Education Wing to deliver a meaningful service to the recruits already at EL3 and L1.

There has been a resource shortfall across ATC Pirbright for some time over the past year or more resulting in some lessons having to be conducted under less than ideal conditions. Enhancements to the Education Wing classrooms in anticipation of the arrival of resources from Chichester College should create a highly satisfactory learning environment for the recruits.

Classroom resources available to the education wing include two large classrooms and two smaller classrooms available to service a maximum of two troops (each divided into up to 3 streams) at any one time with class sizes up to 35 recruits. It is anticipated that these classrooms will be equipped with computers and audio visual equipment.

Heretofore, ATC Pirbright has struggled to deliver a satisfactory service due to limitations in the staff available to deliver the Basic Skills programme coupled with challenges related to the availability of suitable teaching space.

Much of this shortfall in resources has been addressed by the filling of the gapped BSDM post, the arrival of the Chichester College resource and the recruitment of a Basic Skills Clerk, in concert with

the equipping of suitable classrooms with furniture and IT & AV resources. It is the view of the Education Wing that despite the not insignificant challenges they face to deliver Functional Skills to the recruits, they are now equipped to offer a better service than has been offered at ATC Pirbright since BMET left.

It is interesting to note that ITG are applying pressure on ARTD to raise the input standard at Phase 1 to EL3 in order to remove the need for a high concentration of high-value assets (BSDMs) in delivering education to a small number of recruits to meet extremely challenging targets in a very short space of time (essentially getting someone with the abilities of a 7 year old to the standard of an 11 year old in 11 lessons (some of which are used for assessments).

One further weakness in the delivery of Functional Skills at the higher level is the low number of Learning Development Officers at Pirbright. This, in the current climate of contraction and reduction in military and supporting capabilities, is arguably an inescapable consequence of streaming troops into 3 separate courses of learning.

One further resource viewed whilst at Pirbright, in the Education Wing, was a 100-seater lecture theatre which requires enhancement to bring it back into service – it lacks heating and IT/AV equipment. The availability of this lecture theatre would add a significant buffer to the teaching space already available and would be a first class Pirbright asset.

It is believed that a Business Case for £500,000 of works has been staffed to include enhancements to resources in the Education Wing. It is important that this Business Case is successful for the Education Wing to be properly resourced to deliver the new Functional Skills programme.

7. Conclusion

Since the demise of the relationship with Birmingham Metropolitan University (BMET) as the education provider for Pirbright ATC, the delivery of education to recruits has suffered badly. Recruits requiring help to achieve Entry Level 3, the basic requirement for Phase 2 training, have been prioritised. However, other recruits have not had the opportunity to enhance their Basic Skills.

The commencement of Functional Skills provision in January 2013 with the assistance provided by Chichester College should significantly improve the situation. This is predicated by the provision of IT/AV equipment for classrooms and the full manning of the Education Wing.

The Education Wing at ATC Pirbright is better placed now to deliver a satisfactory service to the recruits than it has been since the arrangement with Birmingham Metropolitan University ended in 2011.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Chief Instructor, Major T Savage and Learning Development Officer, Captain J Gardner, provided me with frank and honest input for this report. Their cooperation is much appreciated.

9. REFERENCES

1. Army Briefing Note 18-12. *Army Literacy and Numeracy Policy 2012*. 7 March 2012
2. 2007DIN06-043. *Armed Forces Basic Skills Policy*. March 2007
3. The Basic Skills Agency A2139. *Army Basic Skills Provision, Whole Organisation Approach, Lessons Learnt*. 2007

The Commanding Officer's Supervisory Care Directive

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to report on the Commander's Supervisory Care Directive and associated Risk Assessment. It is based on several visits to ATC(P) during 2012.

Primary Level Support

The Unit Welfare Officer, responsible for the coordination of the welfare provision across ATC, has made a noticeable and dramatic improvement in managing, coordinating and delivering welfare services for all military staff and their dependants and recruits since the last IAP report in 2008. The two Unit Welfare Warrant Officers assigned to ATR 1 and 2, one with special responsibility for housing and the other for the Community Centre, have been exceedingly conscientious and made very positive contributions since their appointments. The Welfare Office is located in new premises, previously an unprepossessing portacabin, with a welcoming clerk, proper interview facilities and office space and is adjacent to the Chaplaincy.

Proper records are kept of each interview with Rcts and Permanent staff, an improvement following the previous IAP report. Although these do not indicate any trends currently, they are useful for monitoring and statistics. In addition monthly statistics are produced which can be used for the purpose of monitoring trends.

An introductory talk is given to the Rcts on day two during their first week, about the Welfare support available. This is particularly valuable for the female troops when there is no female section commander/troop commander to whom they feel comfortable in approaching with welfare issues. There is always one member of the Unit Welfare Office on call 24/7.

The previous IAP report in 2008 criticised the lack of provision for Child Protection issues. This has now been addressed and there is a specific policy in place – Policy on the care of Service Personnel Under the Age of 18. In addition the Welfare Officer has had an advisory visit from the Quality Assurance Team at Surrey Safeguarding Children Board which has discussed the policies and procedures in place at Pirbright and will be given copies in January 2013 in order that they can comment or suggest any amendments. There is open dialog between the Unit Welfare Office and the Surrey Safeguarding Team

There is currently no Infantry Regiment in Elizabeth Barracks in Pirbright. The Royal Anglians moved to Bulford in the Dec 2011. 2nd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment who were due to move to Pirbright in June 2013 are now being disbanded and the results of the Basing Plan are awaited in January which should identify which battalion will move into Pirbright. Currently there are around 140 void houses on the Pirbright estate. The air gap between the new battalion arriving should give DIO adequate time to complete all the refurbishments scheduled for the woefully substandard housing in Pirbright. There will be a brief to Unit staff and families on the 14th Jan 2013 at 1230 and 1330 at which the detailed plans will be discussed.

Regimental Chaplains

The Padres make up an essential component of the Welfare provision at Pirbright. Their role is to offer pastoral care, rather than deal with specific welfare issues. They are involved in week one induction classes where they inform recruits, not only of their role, but also the provision made for non-Christian faiths. There is good communication between the Chaplaincy and the Unit Welfare Office.

For over a year the Chaplaincy has been under severe pressure as they have been operating with only two, rather than the required number of 3.

Services Welfare

This organisation has now replaced the Women's Royal Voluntary Service, it is run as a branch of the Army Welfare Service. They provide emotional and welfare support to a large number of trainees at Pirbright and run the Alexander Club very efficiently with support from the UWO. Many of the facilities have recently been upgraded including a complete refurbishment of the cinema using a grant obtained from the Church of England Trust, and the facility offers the Rcts an excellent recreational club. Apart from one member of staff, who has since departed, I found all the staff to be warm, welcoming and well trained. They are available for confidential help and advice and provide 24 hour cover. They offer an important listening and advice service, signposting Rcts. where necessary to the relevant agency or referring matters back at the appropriate level for resolution. Referrals made, in order of priority over the past two years, are as follows: Chain of Command; no further action, UWO, Padre, Medical Centre, Hive, continuing support. The key issues dealt with in order of priorities are: emotional wellbeing; Discharge as of Right (DAOR) homesickness and health; bullying and harassment; leaving the Service; training/coursework, relationship with partner/family; finance/debt/legal; trade transfer, effects on personal life; back squadding and discipline.

Although predominantly used by male Rcts, there have been events held to encourage females to make more use of the Alexander Club with a degree of success.

SANDES

SANDES is an alternative recreational facility provided by this charitable organisation for all ranks. It is exceedingly popular and provides a very valuable meeting place for all, proving particularly popular with the female Rcts. The listening service provided by the management is excellent and highly regarded by, and well integrated with, the UWO. SANDES was recently under a stay of execution as funding was needed to reroof and update the premises. Several fund raising events have been held and almost £200,000, including funding from ATR, has been raised and to date and work will be commencing shortly.

Messing and Welfare Forum

This is held monthly by the QM and is the forum for Rcts to voice their concerns directly via a representative selection from each troop as well as staff and representatives from those involved with welfare support. I have attended a few of these sessions, and the same issues seem to be raised each time. The major complaints are always about the laundry.

Community Centre

The Community Development Worker running this Centre was suspended for several months before being finally dismissed. The relationship between the AWS Community Development Worker responsible for the Centre and the UWO at Pirbright has been strained over the past year or so and it is hoped that the lack of a Development Worker can be resolved soon. There is a new point of contact as the Senior Community Development Worker will now come under a new functional line of command. However, the Unit Welfare Team have done a very good job of running the Centre and keeping a programme of events going under difficult circumstances. They have applied for grants for refurbishing the Centre and spent hours making it a more welcome, friendly and bright environment for families. They arranged for the Woking Community Payback team to do some of this work and are hoping for more time from this team in due course. An enthusiastic new youth worker is running the youth club. The Centre is being used by many more family groups than before, with support from Unit Welfare Office. I visited the Community Centre one evening when a dance class was in progress and one morning during a mother and toddler session run by a Brookwood and Pirbright Sure Start Centre. Well-structured play and learning was taking place with healthy snacks being prepared and nutritional advice being dispensed for mums. There can be up to 80 children on a Monday morning for this session and more volunteers are needed as well as funding to run a second group.

Peter Pan Playgroup

This facility has been well patronised in the past, but numbers are slightly down at present due to the departure of the resident battalion. The Unit Welfare Officer is Chairman of the setting and has obtained funding for a refurbished kitchen and redecoration which has now taken place. The result of a funding application for painting the outside of the classrooms is awaited. Although very wet on my recent visit, restricted outside play still went ahead under cover. The Playgroup is a real hub for families; there is an active fundraising committee and there have been significant improvements made in the last year. The last Ofsted inspection was graded GOOD. Surrey early Years have recently granted FEET funding (Free Early Education for Two year Olds) to parents in the Armed Forces which is of significant benefit to many of the families. It is as much a centre for social work activity as recreational and educational. There are several children on an 'At Risk' register so the families are closely monitored and supported.

Community Liaison

At the beginning of 2012 I attended the Community Covenant Signing with Surrey held at ATC Pirbright at which the Commanding Officer gave an overview of the role of the ATC and its existing links with the local community. This included such points as the work with Woking Borough Council Community Payback Team; two of the local officers are governors of Pirbright and Brookwood Schools; work with Brookwood Children's Centre, liaison with Guildford Home Start; Surrey Primary Care Trust work with service families; military dependents work locally in schools, retail, care industry etc.

Since then a Community Engagement and Development Liaison officer has been employed to work in the Unit Welfare Office to develop the links already made and to forge more.

I attended the presentation given by the Army Engagement Team in Woking which was followed by the signing of a local Community Covenant by members of Woking Borough Council and the Army

intended as 'an enduring statement of partnership and mutual support'. It is to be hoped that these two events held to promote partnership with the community will prove to be more than lip service provided by Surrey and local councils and will result in positive action such as grant aid for projects. There is a plan to sign Community Covenants with Guildford Borough Council and Brookwood and Pirbright Parish councils in the spring of 2013 and we are awaiting the outcome of a Community Covenant funding bid that have been submitted to improve the Deepcut Community Centre.

Welfare Support for Permanent Staff

Housing is the main cause for concern with regard to new PS moving to Pirbright.

There appears to be a systemic failure as the communication between MHS (Modern Housing Solutions) and DIO (Defence Infrastructure Organisation) appears to be at best sporadic. No one accepts full responsibility leaving both occupants and the Unit Welfare staff frustrated and angry. Unless the Unit Welfare staff are aware of the move in, as was the case with Optitime, they cannot assist in mitigating the crisis but only be reactive after the event. The Optitime report allowed Unit Welfare staff to be present at Move In and see the standard of accommodation for themselves, enabling them to proactively manage the situation. Recently a system whereby the housing officer faxes through their Move In/out diary on a weekly basis in advance allowing Unit Welfare Staff to see appointments and attend Move Ins/outs was instigated which, it is hoped, will improve the process.

Properties are invariably dirty with filthy stained carpets, mould in many places, damp and smelly. Bathrooms and kitchen are in an unacceptable state with boilers, immersion heaters and plumbing systems often malfunctioning. Complaints have been received about an uncaring incompetent housing officer which only exacerbates the problem. On a positive note the previous MHS Technical Officer has been replaced with a much more amenable and proactive individual and the previous housing officer mentioned above has also been replaced by someone who appears much more equipped and suited to the role.

This situation is particularly disappointing as the Unit Welfare staff had meetings with MHS and DIO at which operational agreements were minuted. Although there is a very good relationship between the Unit Welfare Team and MHS and DIO Area management staff, both the Unit and MHS and DIO themselves are often let down by less than acceptable delivery. However, no action to rectify the state in which houses were deemed suitable for occupation was taken. Frequently several months elapsed during which these houses were vacant and there would have been adequate time for the necessary repairs, refurbishments and cleaning to have been effected.

Not only does this unsatisfactory situation affect the morale of the serving soldier, it puts a strain on their relationship and often adversely affects the health and safety of the children. The damp insanitary conditions have exacerbated a child with bronchial pneumonia. Gardens with rubbish and rubble pose a hazard for children. Even garages are handed over full of the previous occupants rubbish. First impressions do count. If the first impression a family is met with is a dirty and ill prepared SFA this can have a damaging effect and instils a lack of confidence in the system.

One engineer, following an assessment of the jobs to be done and state of the house, recommended its demolition such was the work required to bring it up to an acceptable standard.

The chapter of complaints about MHS not attending to urgent issues, such as the smell of gas and leaking pipes, in a timely way, nor keeping agreed appointments with the occupant or failing to make return phone calls as promised, are legion.

It is not just the standard of Move Ins and maintenance of SFA that is unacceptable. The general maintenance of the estate is poor and not proactively managed – from pot holes in the road to weed control. Scheduled monthly estate inspections by MHS, a Housing Officer from DIO and the Unit Welfare Warrant Officer are frequently cancelled at the last minute by MHS with no notice or they just do not attend. There are a list of jobs on the estate many of which have been outstanding for over a year and a have been reported many times with no action taken. The Unit Welfare staff will now raise every single outstanding task as a complaint with MHS in Jan 2013 in order to effect action.

Unit Welfare Officer

The best news the IAP has received recently, is that the current UWO has had her term of office extended for another two years. The work she has undertaken to date, the commitment, procedures and personal effort for both Rcts and Permanent Staff has improved the welfare support enormously and is to be highly commended.

Conclusions and Recommendations

There can be no doubt that this has been a very difficult year for ATC Pirbright. Nevertheless, training of very high quality has been maintained and we are full of admiration for the permanent staff who have shown resilience and dedication. It should be noted that the morale of recruits can be severely damaged by failures in infrastructure. Our routine work with training teams has revealed repeated difficulties with showers, heating that did not work and inefficient plumbing. Such Housekeeping issues are often not passed on to the company QM and we recommend that there should be more spot checks of facilities. Although in the overall scheme of things these are perhaps small items they are crucial for morale particularly in the early part of training.

Perhaps the main area for complaint and an issue raised by most recruits is the poor quality of the laundry and we recommend that the quality of the service be properly investigated.

The following represent our observations and recommendations for further work:

1. More effective sharing of best practice between TA Regional Training Centres and Army Training Centres ensuring a more consistent experience for all TA recruits with more realistic expectations.
2. Ensure that values based leadership remains a central feature of all army training.
3. Attempt to maintain sensible ratios of female permanent staff to recruits within female troops.
4. Never allow the medical centre to be without an RMO and SMO at the same time.
5. Establish a more comprehensive health education programme for recruits and permanent staff.
6. Consider the implementation of a PMAR immediately before attestation to appropriately assess risk before employment.
7. Further develop the electronic processing of DOE
8. Consider the further professional psychological support for recruits in Sword Company.
9. Consider ways in which the remedial component of Sword's activities might be undertaken within the training regiments.
10. Ensure that the Education Wing is fully resourced to deliver the Functional Skills programme.
11. The systematic failure in communication between MHS and DIO should be addressed to prevent continuing erosion of morale amongst the permanent staff.
12. Audit the performance of the laundry.

IAP 2012 REPORT – COMMANDING OFFICERS RESPONSE

1. The COs' Council once again thanks the IAP for their considerable efforts to provide a level of independent advice and support during the challenges of 2012 and welcome the two additional panel members. The Army's largest Training Centre continues to develop and progress due to the very intimate and yet separate relationship we hold with the IAP members in support of the supervisory care of Recruits and the Permanent Staff. We accept that once again the two major challenges have been the ongoing cuts in both civilian and military manpower despite being asked to deliver the same and actually more often increased outputs¹. The lack of Regtl 2ICs in both 1 and 2 ATR has had a significant impact on Continuous Improvement as well as resilience within the respective regimental headquarters. As a result 2IC HQ Regt has become temporarily the natural focal point for a wide range of additional responsibilities. This will hopefully be resolved in Apr (2 ATR) and by the summer (1 ATR). In addition civilian manning remains extremely tight in key niche areas: we now have 5 of the 9 SIO AT instructor posts at SDW gapped and await Land Force Committee approval to recruit externally as our efforts to internally recruit have failed; pan-ATC(P) E2 admin clerks have reached almost critical levels within the 9 sub-units with 5 of the 9 posts gapped. We continue to adopt a holistic approach to military manning and civil service manning / recruiting at Pirbright.

2. We would also like to acknowledge the efforts of all members of Permanent Staff, both civilian and military, whose continued efforts have ensured that quality of recruit output has been largely unaffected. ATC(P) has increased in output during the last 12 months and will have trained 3700 Regular and 944² Reserve by the end of the current training year 12/13³. Overall regular wastage remains low at 12% but we hope to reduce this further where we can. The CLP for 13/14 has now been set and whilst the SE course loading has reduced slightly to 78 courses⁴ and an input figure of 3744⁵ recruits the TA course loading has increased by 180% to 2592 Reserve recruits and 54 TSC(B) courses. In addition 1 and 2 ATR have been tasked to provide 6 external Trg Team commitments⁶ in support of Army Training Unit (Scotland) and Regional Training Centre (Northern Ireland) during the trg year. This will go some way to supporting one of the key IAP report recommendations in sharing best practice and ensuring a more consistent experience for all TA recruits. This will be further delivered through the continued partnership between the 3 regiments at ATC(P) and one of the ten RTCs in training year 13/14 too⁷. First Time Pass Rates remain steady overall with the Reg recruits standing at 77%, TSC(A) at 69%⁸ and TSC(B) at 78%⁹. At time of going to print it remains unclear whether ATC(P) has sufficient training resources to enable the CLP 13/14

¹ Tranche 3 Redundancy has notified 64 military personnel across the 3 regiments as vulnerable for being made Compulsory Redundant in Jun 13.

² 144 TSC(A) and 800 TSC(B) recruits.

³ As at 31 Mar 13.

⁴ 1 ATR: 43 SE courses and 2 ATR: 35 courses.

⁵ ARTD initially planned ATC(P) would train 4128 Reg recruits for CLP 12/13.

⁶ Each commitment of a Trg Team will train up to 48 TA recruits.

⁷ 1 ATR with ATU(S), 2 ATR with RTC(NI) and HQ Regt with ATU(L).

⁸ This includes deferred passes whereby a departing recruit has up to 6 further months to pass a single training objective failed on the course. It is worth noting the small (144) number of TSC(A) recruits who attended ATC(P) in Trg Year 12/13.

⁹ This includes deferred passes whereby a departing recruit has up to 6 further months to pass a single training objective failed on the course.

however a Business Case for additional resources¹⁰ was submitted in Aug 12 and will hopefully deliver these capabilities in the next training year. In addition CITG has directed that ATU(S) moves from Malta Lines, Aldershot into Brunswick Lines in Alexander Barracks. ATC(P) will support this move as much as possible and clearly it supports the 'Whole Force Concept' under Army 2020 but note that this will place even greater pressure on the finite training resources at Pirbright.

3. The response below does not cover all of the issues raised by the IAP 2012 report however it does cover the key concerns raised. The COs' Council propose to deal with those issues not covered in the response through the routine meetings with the panel members during the coming months.

Medical Support

4. We acknowledge and agree with the report's recommendation that the medical centre should

not be gapped key staff such as Regimental Medical Officer (RMO), Senior Medical Officer (SMO)

and Practice Manager. This is under the control of the Manning and Career Management Division, Army Personnel Centre, Glasgow and they have been given a copy of the report. Col Cottrell, Regional Health Clinical Director for London and the South East is fully aware too of the implications of the gapping last year and the new CITG was briefed on the issue during his recent initial unit visits. All these posts now filled has brought a considerable degree of stability and much needed continuity to the Medical Centre.

The current level of education for recruits and permanent staff has improved dramatically from the level the report describes. Medical staff have weekly training on a number of clinical topics e.g. eating disorders¹¹ and anaphylaxis¹². There is health promotion material around the medical centre aimed at recruits, permanent staff and families. Current posters on display include: cold injury, mouth cancer, heat and fluid intake, smoking cessation, children's nutrition, pregnancy and vaccinations, alcohol abuse, blisters, mental health and healthy eating. Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) posters are not on display because this is a family practice but extensive leaflets for individuals are available on request and on referral by medical personnel. Medics give mandatory lessons to all recruits on sexual health, substance misuse and hot and cold climatic injury (4 lessons). All permanent staff undergo Workplace Induction Programme training (WIP) that include a lesson on healthy living given by a medic. Annually all permanent staff are mandated to undertake Military Annual Training Test (MATT) - number 6 includes healthy living and substance misuse topics. As well as the recent Health Fair weekend, in the gym¹³, there was 'Movember Event' – growing moustaches in efforts to increase awareness of prostate and testicular cancer in November 12. There was also a

¹⁰ 2 x RUBB Shelter (temporary) Gyms, 4 x portacabin classrooms, 1 x refurbished lecture theatre and 1 x refurbished cinema.

¹¹ November 2012.

¹² January 2013.

¹³ October 2012. ATC(P) plans to conduct this event on an enduring biannual basis.

health promotion fair in the Sgts' Mess organised by the Med Sgt and Non-Smoking Day¹⁴ health promotion organised by the Practice Families Nurse.

5. The timing of attestation before the Initial Medical Assessment continues to be a real issue and has frustrated ATC(P) since 2007. The doctors require a copy of the medical notes to screen an individual fit for military training. However we are not authorised to do this, by employment law, until we legally become their GPs following attestation. This decision has been made and remains at Directorate Manning Army DM(A) level. To swap the order of the process will carry risk that DM(A) is not prepared to currently take. However we are aware that the new CITG has raised his concerns at this procedural flaw too on his initial visits and its potential impact and we sense will ask his staff to raise this again with ARTD.

6. The electronic RECU (Restricted Employment in Current Unit = administrative discharge on medical grounds) has dramatically expedited the discharge process for recruits deemed unsuitable for military service during the Initial Medical. The process piloted by 2ATR, RMO and Occupational Health at ARTD has had teething problems but has overall been a huge success reducing the number of days taken to discharge recruits down from 96 to 11 days. The challenges now are to ensure its smooth running across the whole of ATC(P) (and across all ITG regular units) and to widen the remit from Defects on Enlistment to all RECU discharges in recruits. Frustratingly Occ Med at HQ ARTD at this stage do not wish to extend the e-RECU process to those recruits beyond the IMA process who find themselves being discharged at some stage in the 14-week course due to being a sub-standard medical grading. This results in Gold Pl, Sword Coy holding (at home routinely on unit sick leave) approximately 30 recruits who are discharged by the routine paperwork RECU process that can take upwards of 4-6 months to complete. The COs fully acknowledge the greater complexity of these medical cases in terms of medical paperwork, appointments and consultation between various medical staff however CO HQ Regt carries the personal risk of commanding these individuals at a distance at home. We plan to re-attack this issue with the chain of command again in 2013.

Remedial Training

7. **Centralising Recruits for Rehabilitation.** Any injury requiring more than outpatient style treatment will result in a recruit being removed from their platoon and therefore offering a potentially anxious time. The COs are currently content that by grouping the injured recruits centrally they benefit from living in a team environment with a common concern (injury & recovery); experience suggests that on referral for rehabilitation recruits experience a brief reduction in morale but quickly recover and recognise the advantages of the Rehabilitation Platoon. These remain some of the most vulnerable recruits at ATC(P) and receive a far higher tempo of regular review¹⁵ than their counterparts in 1 and 2 ATR. Perception of Sword Coy by recruits and a few members of

¹⁴ April 2012.

¹⁵ Regimental Review Boards (RRBs) take place every week in Sword Coy, a far higher tempo than 1 and 2 ATR.

Permanent Staff remains an issue and efforts will be focused in the coming year of key themes and messages to portray Sword Coy in a far more positive manner. For many recruits it remains the best opportunity for them to pass the SE course.

8. **Remedial Support Within the ATRs.** Prior to referral to the Remedial Training (Juno) Platoon the ATRs will employ extra training, re-squadding and intervention training from Juno Platoon. Juno Platoon will only accept those recruits thought to have potential to pass the 14 week course after extra training. The COs agree that they could only support embedded remedial training staff at regimental level at the cost of training teams (and therefore Phase 1 capacity). The advantage of a dedicated and centralised remedial training team is the maintaining of high standards and a pool of JNCOs who understand the challenges of bringing a struggling recruit to his or her highest potential. We believe that our rehabilitation and remedial training model is currently best practise across ITG and probably ARTD. We have conducted a peer review with the ITC in the last 16 months and they are planning to move to our model. The Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) have also reviewed our model in the last 6 months and endorse it. We are currently content that our model meets the demands of the recruits and makes best available use of finite resources.

9. **Specialist Psychological Support.** Recruits receive several levels of support at ATC(P):

- Tier 1 – The Training Team (including Company Headquarters).
- Tier 2 – SANDES (Christian Charity), Chaplaincy Team, Services Welfare and Unit Welfare staff.
- Tier 3 – The Medical Centre.
- Tier 4 – Specialist health care professional support on referral from the Medical Centre.

Tiers one to three are routinely employed and tier four only by exception. Given that we are training recruits for robust military Service we are not convinced that greater psychological support is appropriate or desirable for recruits remaining in training although of course should they require this level of treatment it would be made available as part of their possible transition back to civilian street (under RECU) including the appropriate handover to NHS practitioners should this extend beyond the recruit's discharge date. We must be confident that those recruits reaching the Regular Army are wholly suited to the rigours of military life. The introduction of a pan-ATC(P) TRIM¹⁶ Policy in the last 12 months on the back of its inception for personnel returning from operational deployments and signposting them for Occ Med support has further sharpened the Permanent Staff's radar to potential psychological cases amongst the recruit community. Several recruits do arrive having previously experienced traumatic family or life experience events.

¹⁶ Trauma Risk Incident Management.

Functional Skills

10. The identification of potential problem areas and the advice outlined in this IAP report on Functional Skills at ATC(P) are much appreciated; particularly at this stage, when plans for provision of Functional Skills post-August 13 are being formulated¹⁷. Whilst there remains room for improvement of Functional Skills provision at ATC(P), (and this report is useful in highlighting where improvements can be made) it is reassuring to note that the problems faced in delivering education to recruits at Pirbright are starting to be addressed and that the current structure of provision is one which ensures that most, if not all, recruits have the opportunity to improve their Functional Skills and develop their broader knowledge of the military. This has not been the case since before Birmingham Metropole College (BMET) were involved in Basic Skills delivery.

11. It is acknowledged that resources are still holding us back somewhat, and whilst considerable advances have been made in the enhancement of Ed Wing infrastructure and classroom resources so that classrooms are now very well equipped for delivery of Functional Skills, manpower is one area where we are still lagging behind. The report alludes to the need to enable better use of current resources and to increase resources. If the educational input standard at phase 1, were to be aligned with that of phase 2, our SMEs (BSDMs) who currently focus solely on a small number of Entry Level 2 learners, would be released to work with and add considerably greater value to the training of a much larger number of recruits and potentially also to support members of the Permanent Staff. In addition to this, if the number of Education Officer posts¹⁸ at ATC matched that of ATR(W)¹⁹, delivery of the L2 stretch programme could be broadened to encompass more Functional Skills competencies. It is hoped that the highlighting of these issues by the IAP report will lead to further support for proposed measures to overcome them.

Supervisory Care Directive

12. **Supervisory Care and Welfare.** It has been a very busy year for the Welfare Office on many fronts. It continues to provide a great deal of primary support to Recruits, Permanent staff and families. Whilst records and statistics indicate that there are no underlying trends that indicate cause for concern for the chain of command indicating that the Supervisory Risk Assessment and Care Directive are fit for purpose they do clearly indicate that we currently provide a higher proportion of time and support to the permanent staff and their families than recruits.

13. There have been many positives in all areas of Primary Welfare Support across ATC(P). A decision is still awaited as to who is likely to be running Services Welfare as it ceases to be a function

¹⁷ HQ ITG are working with both DETS(A) and HQ ARTD on the possible contenders to take on the contract when the current Chichester College contract expires in Aug 13.

¹⁸ ATC(P) is established for 2 x AGC(ETS) Learning Development Officers (LDOs).

¹⁹ ATR(W) is established for 4 x LDOs.

of the WRVS²⁰. We have seen a big turnover of staff this year and we are at a stage now where we have a team of younger more dynamic and professional Services Welfare Staff. In addition additional redecoration and improvement of the facilities has taken place making it much more appealing for the Regular and Reserve Rcts that use the facility. The planned refurbishment of SANDES which is due to commence imminently will make an enormous difference not only to Pirbright Station and all its visiting units but also to the SANDES staff and their morale and enable them to focus once again on providing that listening ear and support instead of having to worry about fundraising and infrastructure. It is good that the facility is used regularly by families and wives and that the arrival of another infantry battalion into Elizabeth Bks (probably in late 2013 / early 2014) will provide a much needed increase in business in SANDES.

14. Although ATC(P) is without a permanent Army Welfare Service (AWS) Community Development Worker (CDW) currently we are being well supported by a Senior DW from HQ 2 Bde in Dover. The Jubilee Community Centre is busier than ever, with more groups running and all well supported. In addition, social functions that have been organised by the Unit Welfare Office have been successful and well attended by members of ATC(P) improving morale and cohesion across Pirbright. The Jubilee Centre has been decorated and a bid for re-flooring the Centre has been resubmitted via the usual route to the MOD Community Covenant screening panel. The AWS will eventually recruit a full time CDW for Pirbright which will add value and enhance what is already on offer for the service community here²¹.

15. Despite initial fears that the temporary loss of an infantry battalion from Elizabeth Barracks would cause problems financially for Peter Pan Playgroup this has not been the case. A small drop in numbers in 2012 meant that a large amount of overdue Infrastructure work could be completed, and the facility is again very busy with a team of dedicated and well trained staff and numbers of children remaining high. The Management Committees main concern now is that the facility may not have sufficient spaces to absorb the incoming infantry battalion's two to five year olds so some thought is being given to possible expansion of the facilities in readiness for this.

16. As rightly identified by the IAP report the most challenging area for the Unit Welfare Office throughout 2012 has been the management of the estate and housing in conjunction with MHS and DIO to ensure the correct delivery of service. However with 2012 behind us we are now overall in a much better place. A consistent and determined approach with both MHS and DIO and regular communication with 2 Bde and UK Sp Comd²² has brought about improvements and developments which will continue. Two incompetent members of MHS and DIO responsible for housing and customer delivery at Pirbright have been replaced by motivated and proactive individuals. The significant challenges brought about by the change from Housing Information Centre (HIC) to Housing Allocations Support Centre (HASC) have largely dissipated and working solutions introduced to

²⁰ Whilst the current Services Welfare contract expires 1 Apr 13 we have received formal assurance from the chain of command that the team in place will continue until a new contract is let.

²¹ It could take a further 4-6 months before a CDW is in place.

²² 2* HQ based in Aldershot commanded by Maj Gen Boag and the superior headquarters for 2 Bde.

mitigate problems caused by lack of IT capability. Two key positions within the DIO and MHS CoC at area level have been filled by permanent suitably qualified and experienced personnel. The long awaited refurbishment of a significant proportion of the estate is due to start this month with a completion date of April 2014. This will see 75 houses undergoing a complete refurbishment²³ and then the replacement of kitchens and bathrooms in other properties that require it running simultaneously. In addition several of the play parks will be upgraded and any residual funds will be spent on improving parking and garages. It is essential that the pressure is maintained with DIO and MHS to extract the standard of delivery in all areas that is laid down and permanent staff are encouraged to continue to play their part by themselves being proactive and raising any issues in a timely manner through the correct channels in order that we can get resolution as quickly as possible.

17. Finally the arrival of the Community Development and Engagement Officer (CEDO) Mrs Goldsmith in June 2012 has brought enormous benefits. Community Covenants signed with Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council in 2012 have increased the level of support and understanding within the local community. Mrs Goldsmith was successful in gaining an MOD Community Covenant Grant in Dec 2012 which will enable the £15K refurbishment of the Deepcut Community Centre kitchen to take place in the next few months. The plan to sign Community Covenants with Guildford Borough Council and the local Parish council this spring will continue to increase the mutual support and understanding between the civilian and military communities.

18. Overall 2012 was a busy year with many positive outcomes and successes. Looking towards 2013 we see this trend continuing with main efforts being centred about the continued high level of personal support to Recruits and staff; managing improvements to the housing stock and quality of service provided in partnership with MHS and DIO and the integration of an Infantry Bn into Elizabeth Bks and working with their Unit Welfare Team to ensure a smooth transition into Pirbright.

Conclusion

19. There is little doubt that this has been the busiest year yet for many at the Army's largest Training Centre and with a significant uplift in Reserve course training: the arrival of up to 3 additional Training Teams; uplift in training resources; arrival of ATU(S) into Alexander Barracks; and military post gapping only likely to increase for the next two years, ATC(P) faces a challenging future. We look forward to working alongside our IAP members in 2013 in ensuring that the training experience for both the recruits and Permanent Staff at ATC(P) is a positive one.

R DICKINSON
Lieutenant Colonel
Commanding Officer
HQ Regt ATC

R HEAD MC
Lieutenant Colonel
Commanding Officer
1 ATR

G BARTLE-JONES
Lieutenant Colonel
Commanding Officer
2 ATR

²³ Up to £75K per property.