

The Army Technical Foundation College Winchester



Independent Advisory Panel Annual Report 2011

INDEPENDENT ADVISORY PANEL TO ATFC (WINCHESTER)

ANNUAL REPORT AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2011

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CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. The most significant event of the past year for the ATR in Winchester has been its change to the Army Technical Foundation College (ATFC), and the IAP has supported the Commanding Officer as he has led the way in making this transition. There have been changes to the training programme to cater for the different requirements of the new standard of recruits but the work being undertaken at the College has continued as before to make a positive contribution to the high standard of training of young soldiers for the British Army.
2. Membership of the IAP has been fairly settled for the past year, and I would like to express my gratitude to all members for their commitment to the work and for giving of their time voluntarily to ensure that training at the ATFC is of the highest quality and care for the welfare of the young people is given highest priority. With so many changes being introduced to the training of Service personnel across the three Services, it is good that we as an independent panel are able to provide some stability and continuity of support and scrutiny.
3. **John Beveridge** has continued to make a significant contribution and has looked particularly at the condition of the infrastructure at Sir John Moore Barracks. The environment in which the Junior Soldiers train and live is a very significant factor in their satisfaction with Army life and success in training. It is important that this is kept under review. I am most grateful to him for his commitment to the work of the IAP and for his insights and analysis.
4. **Chris Pines** has been a frequent visitor to the ATFC on the occasions when parents of Junior Soldiers have attended. He has the excellent ability to get alongside people and discover just how well the ATR has been communicating with parents and families – its major supportive resource. During this past year he has been looking at the follow-through of training to the Phase 2 establishments and he has made links with the IAPs at a couple of local Phase 2 training units. I am very glad of his continuing work with the IAP.
5. **David Drake** is involved in the IAP work with commendable commitment. Throughout the past year he has looked at the Discharge process and his Report demonstrates a very thorough investigation of the matter. His general contribution to life at the ATFC is much more than is conveyed by the Report alone.
6. **Professor Jim Tiles** has quickly got involved in the work of the IAP and has been very proactive in studying the area of his interest – that of Educational and Functional Skills Training. As can be seen from his Report, there have been difficulties for the ATFC in this department, but Prof Tiles has been able to utilise his considerable expertise in supporting the Education Wing as they have adapted to new circumstances.
7. **Brig (Retd) Nicholas Prideaux** has 'hit the ground running' and has brought a great wealth of military experience to the Panel. He has quickly become known to the staff at the ATFC (particularly to A Sqn) and he has immersed himself in the training programme of the Junior Soldiers. He is a very welcome contributor to the work of the IAP.
8. **Lt Col Peter MacMullen's** command over the past year the training provided for Junior Soldiers has built on the improvements noted in the Ofsted Report of 2010. To carry this forward during a time of significant change and severe budgetary constraints has been a remarkable achievement. Lt Col MacMullen and all the staff are to be congratulated on their dedication and commitment to the high standard of training of young soldiers in their charge.
9. IAP members have continued to receive a welcome and open access to the camp, and knowledge of our work and existence has continued to improve. **Captain Neil Johnson** has been

our secretarial support and liaison officer and I am most grateful to him for his support and good natured efficiency and patience enabling the IAP to function. As we put this Report together he is preparing for his next posting on a well deserved promotion and we wish him every success for the future.

PROFILE OF THE IAP

10. As well as the information display stand about the IAP at Form Up days we have also had opportunity during the past year to address parents briefly in the lecture hall as part of the CO's and Sqn Cdr's briefing. This has helped to explain who the members are and what the IAP aims to achieve and it has served to raise the profile of the IAP and reassure parents about the training their young people are about to embark upon.

11. IAP members have been granted honorary Mess membership of the Officers' Mess during the past year, and this has also helped to make known the IAP function amongst the permanent staff.

WORK UNDERTAKEN

12 This past year we have noticed a difference in the calibre and demeanour of the new entrants to training (the entry requirements of the technical corps being of a relatively higher standard) and the training teams have risen to the challenges that this has thrown up. There has continued to be an atmosphere of confidence and pride in the training being delivered as we have visited and made contact on many different occasions.

13. Items included in this Report are not a full account of the work undertaken by the Panel members, but a selection from the many meetings, visits and observations which have taken place over the past year. We have continued to meet together informally off site (to maintain our independence) as well as on site with military staff and personnel.

PANEL MEETINGS

14 Our regular Panel meetings with the CO have been very fruitful times during the past year when we have had frank and open discussions about various matters affecting the training of Junior Soldiers. We have received regular updates about the numbers passing through the training course, the self-evaluation and improvements being delivered in the face of stringent budgetary constraints. We have been apprised of cases in the disciplinary register and are satisfied that correct procedures and protocols are being followed.

RELATIONS WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

15. Relationships between the local community and the ATFC have been significantly improved under Lt Col MacMullen's watch. Of particular note is the resolution of the problem of the security perimeter fence in one location and the neighbours there are very grateful for the improvements made to their environment. The CO has ensured that his RSM has regularly attended Parish Council meetings to keep the local community informed of developments at the Camp and to keep the lines of communication open. The IAP has played a useful role in this community liaison.

FUTURE WORK

16. The future of Army training at the Sir John Moore Barracks has been assured for the foreseeable future, but no-one has the 'crystal ball' to know exactly what that training will consist of. That there will be change is not in question, but the next year is likely to see a period of settled building on the foundations of last year, and the IAP members will be further developing the work they have been doing this year. The latest intakes look promising and all being well the ATFC

should be running its next training courses at 70% capacity. There was considerable difference in the 'loading' of the three Squadrons this last year and if there is any way this could be evened out it would be beneficial, bearing in mind that C Squadron will always be picking up the 'back-squadded'.

17. This is my last Annual Report as Chairman of the IAP and I would like to express my gratitude for the privilege of heading such an experienced, capable and diverse team of people for the past three years. The IAP is likely to remain an important factor in helping to provide a measure of stability and solidity in the context of perpetual staff churn and MOD policy changes.

18. I re-iterate my thanks to all the staff and personnel at the ATFC – you are all to be congratulated - and to my colleagues on the IAP. We all look forward to the many challenges of the year ahead.

Cllr.Jacey Jackson
Chairman
September 2011

PANEL MEMBERS' BIOGRAPHIES



COUNSELLOR JACEY JACKSON (CHAIRMAN)

Jacey Jackson was a Secondary School teacher of RE before raising a family. With her husband seconded to the MoD, two years were spent in Northern Ireland where she gained a Certificate of Social Welfare Studies from Queens University. On returning to Hampshire she was instrumental in setting up *The Olive Branch Christian Counselling Service* and remains actively involved as a voluntary counsellor. Further work has included Local Government records management and Primary School teaching. In 2004 & 2008 she was elected to the Winchester City Council where, amongst other duties, she serves on various environment Panels and the Licensing & Regulation Committee. For the past 5 years she has also been running her own businesses.



JOHN BEVERIDGE

John Beveridge served in the army for 5 years with two years at RMA Sandhurst and 3 years with the Royal Green Jackets. This included commanding an infantry platoon and running training courses in various skills. On leaving the army he gained a law degree and then qualified as a solicitor working in different areas of the law in private practice in London, Winchester and Salisbury. His experience included employment law and industrial tribunals. He has been involved with various bodies in the voluntary and charitable sector, including Winchester Diocese, a governor of a local school and service on the boards of housing associations in Winchester and Hampshire. He served for 12 years as a Winchester City Councillor until May 2008, specialising in planning and transport matters with responsibility for these areas as a member of the Council's Cabinet.



DAVID DRAKE

David Drake was commissioned in the Royal Air Force as a navigator in 1967. He served primarily on transport aircraft, including VC 10s, based at Brize Norton, Oxfordshire. He joined the Foreign & Commonwealth Office in 1977 and served in a number of roles in Nigeria, Kuwait, Germany, Singapore and the USA. Towards the end of his diplomatic career, he became a crisis management specialist involved in the coordination of HMG's response to terrorist incidents involving British nationals overseas and the security of FCO personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is currently employed as the clerk to Compton and Shawford Parish Council.



COUNSELLOR CHRIS PINES

Chris Pines gained his teaching qualifications at King Alfred's College in Winchester and the University of London. Now retired, his career has been in primary education, the last position being at Winnall Primary School in Winchester until 2004. He has also been deeply involved in public and civic life, the following being a selection of the many roles he has undertaken at various times: National Union of Teachers – past President & Secretary, Winchester Association; Winchester Trades Council delegate; Founding member of Winchester Unemployed People's Project, pre-cursor of the Trinity Centre; Winchester City Councillor – St John & All Saints ward since 1980; Mayor of Winchester 2007-8; Building Trustee of Winnall Community Centre; Trustee of Winchester Age Concern; Senior Advisor to Winchester Muslim Cultural Association.



PROFESSOR JIM TILES

Jim Tiles first came to the UK as a Marshall Scholar at the University of Bristol in 1966. Following National Service (U.S. Army Medical Corps) from 1969 to 1971 he returned to the UK to undertake graduate study at Oxford and from 1974 to 1989 was a lecturer in philosophy at Reading University. From 1989 to 2009 he was a professor of philosophy at the University of Hawai'i (Mānoa Campus) and has retired this year to Winchester with his British wife. He is the author of three books (and co-author of a further book) on philosophy.



BRIGADIER (RETIRED) NICHOLAS PRIDEAUX

Nicholas Prideaux joined the Army in 1959 and was commissioned into the Green Jackets. He served for 37 years during which time he held a variety of appointments at Regimental duty and on the Staff including Commanding Officer of 2nd Battalion The Royal Green Jackets on operations in South Armagh and Commanding Officer of the Rifle Depot, The Royal Green Jackets in Winchester where he was responsible for the training of Potential Officers, Adult Recruits and Junior Soldiers for the Regiment. He was a member of the Team that designed Sir John Moore Barracks and Army Director of NAAFI (HM Forces Trading Organisation). He ended his service as Defence and Military Attaché in Athens. Since retiring to Hampshire in 1996, he has been the National and Regional Director of Fundraising for the Army Benevolent Fund, a Governor of an Independent Girls School, an Advisor in the Citizens Advice Bureau in Winchester and is currently a member of the Independent Monitoring Board for HMP Winchester.

CONDITION OF BUILDINGS AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE AT SIR JOHN MOORE BARRACKS

INTRODUCTION

1. I was asked to look into the condition of the buildings and other facilities to see if they were in satisfactory condition for the training and other activities performed on the site. My involvement covers the period from December 2010 to September 2011.

2. I had meetings and discussions with the two officers who filled the post of Quartermaster during this period, Major Kelsall and Major Ross. Mr Andy Kirby, who has been in the civilian post of Works Services Liaison Officer for many years, guided me round many of the Barrack buildings in January. I am grateful for the time they all gave to me.

GENERAL COMMENTS

3. The Camp was purpose built in the mid 1980s and is well laid out in spacious grounds. It has a pleasant aspect and creates a positive atmosphere. Being comparatively new the buildings and plant are generally in good condition but some of the services, like the plumbing and electrical services now need attention in some buildings and this is likely to increase in the coming years. Being a hard water area, all water pipes and water heating equipment will be suffering damage from lime scale deposits which reduces their durability.

4. The latest Ofsted report received in September confirmed the good condition of the property at the Barracks making only two minor critical comments on the state of the accommodation blocks.

PROBLEMS AND IMPROVEMENTS DURING THE YEAR

5. **The Single Living Accommodation Modernisation Project (SLAM).** There has been a need for some time to provide better and more accommodation for the permanent staff living in the Barracks and the SLAM project which began early in 2011 is delivering this with 12 for members of the Sergeants Mess and 98 rooms for **all** other ranks towards the Western boundary of the site. This has progressed well, will be finished several months early and be ready for occupation in December. Besides providing much better accommodation for all those currently living in the Barracks, it will enable the small number of staff in rented private properties outside the Barracks to be accommodated on site. The Project has benefited from the contractors being experienced in using an offsite prefabrication process for the buildings which they have provided elsewhere for Defence Estates.

6. **Aramark Contract.** I was asked to look into criticisms of the standard of the food and service in the Sergeant's Mess by a member of the IAP following discussions with senior NCOs. Problems with this were confirmed by a member of the Mess in A Squadron. I raised this with Major Ross soon after his arrival. He knew of the complaints and had taken steps to investigate it by arranging a meeting with Aramark's contract monitoring officer and relevant representatives of the Sergeant's Mess. Investigating the matter was made more difficult because there was no record of any complaints recorded in the comments book provided for this purpose. Nevertheless, following his investigations and as a result of these discussions the criticisms were addressed and the food and service have improved and are now satisfactory.

7. **Virtual Bank Account £129,000 Additional Funding.** Major Kelsall was able to access additional funding from Defence Estates (DE) because of his experience of working in previous posts in which he understood how the budgetary system operates and how to prepare a bid which included statements and wording that complied with the rules. This provided the Barracks with an extra £129,000 for addressing breakages and parts of the infrastructure which were wearing out.

The exercise track, known as the Trim Trail benefitted from a major part of these funds but it also extended to cracked windows and improvements to the dining area for junior soldiers.

8. Repairs for provision of hot water and electricity supply in 3 accommodation blocks.

The loss of hot water and electricity in some accommodation blocks led to a request for emergency funding for repairs. There was an unacceptable delay in receiving this. Meanwhile temporary emergency measures had to be taken to provide the junior soldiers with these essential needs. It was fortunate that washing and showering facilities in some nearby unoccupied accommodation blocks could be used.

9. My inquiries about the delay in getting funds released for these essential repairs revealed that £90,000 was available for work of this nature held in an account for the Barracks but because insufficient notice had been given it could not be released and furthermore would be lost as it had not been used during the financial year. It seems that rigid and nonsensical rules within Defence Estates result in unnecessary inconvenience and inefficiencies that can result in adverse effects on the standards of training for the Junior Soldiers.

CONCLUSIONS

10. The Barracks are generally in a good state of repair and improvements and progress in several areas have been made during the period covered by this report. As the year's pass a greater sum will need to be spent on maintenance, especially the services like heating, water and electricity, as is evidenced by the emergency repairs needed in 3 accommodation blocks.

11. The main concern I have is the way DE operate their budgets for the maintenance of buildings and infrastructure. From the level at which I have been operating their rules seem to obstruct and delay work to maintain the Barracks in a satisfactory state of repair, for no good reason.

12. Although the experienced gained by Major Kelsall from earlier postings of the rules that have to be followed for a successful bid enabled the Barracks to benefit from an extra £129,000 for various repairs and improvements, I question whether this is in the overall interests of the Army as the other training units may have been at a disadvantage from not having knowledge of the budgetary rules of DE. I also have doubts whether this funding was spent on the items in greatest need in the Barracks. Money that has been budgeted for barracks' maintenance should be prioritised and made available in an open, constructive and timely manner to the maximum benefit of all establishments.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

13. Action is taken to improve the way DE operate their budgets, authorise expenditure and release funds. Could a meeting be arranged with DE to include representatives of all establishments which suffer from the current arrangements and officers of appropriate seniority who can ensure changes agreed to be necessary are implemented.

14. If not already done, surveys and plans for the future maintenance of the buildings allow for the replacement of the heating water and electrical services and finance is allocated in budgets for this work.

15. Being a hard water area, it could be worth investigating if it would be good value to install water softening equipment which could extend the operating life of pipes and boilers.

16. If there are any complaints or problems about the catering or other services provided by Aramark at the Barracks, they should be recorded in any comment books provided at the time the issue arises and then pursued with the relevant officer or person.

John Beveridge
September 2011

THE LEAD IN TO PHASE 2 TRAINING AND LOCAL AREA IAP GROUPS

INTRODUCTION

1. In addition to our own Independent Advisory Panel for the Army Technical Foundation College at Sir John Moore Barracks, there is another panel within the wider Winchester Garrison area and one more within a reasonable distance from Winchester, based at Middle Wallop. These are:
 - a. The Army School of Education, Staff & Personnel Support Training School and The Defence Food Services School, as well as a number of Lodger Units and Support elements all based at Worthy Down, providing Phase 2/3 Trade Training; and
 - b. The Army Aviation Centre, Middle Wallop, providing Phase 2 Training Centre for all Army trainee helicopter pilots and aircrew.
2. Before the second round of Service reorganisation was announced this summer, I met with the Chairs of the other IAPs to establish, on behalf of our own group, how those groups were established and how they organised their work - with a view to discussing similarities in working practices, and offering suggestions to improve best practice.
3. In the light of the possible changes which may well occur at Sir John Moore Barracks in the coming months and years, this initial contact can easily become more formalised and may well provide us with a fruitful series of ideas.
 - a. Chair of IAP at Worthy Down: Professor Joy Carter, Vice-Chancellor at the University of Winchester.
 - b. Chair of IAP at Middle Wallop: County Councillor (and ex. Chairman of Hampshire County Council), Pat West.

CONSIDERATIONS

4. Our initial considerations established a number of obvious differences between the various training establishments:
 - a. The age groups of Junior Entrants at Sir John Moore Barracks, and those undertaking Phase 2/3 training at Worthy Down & Middle Wallop are markedly different, and the corresponding duty of care for base staff altered accordingly;
 - b. The physical, social and intellectual development of Phase 1 & Phase 2/3 trainees provided different challenges for the training skills of staff;
 - c. The differing numbers of trainees present at any one time at each centre, the length of time they were based in those centres, the numbers of skilled staff necessary to assist them, and the types of training they needed was considerably different and changing;
 - d. The physical building and land stock needs of each group, together with different civilian back-up and support staff was significantly different;
5. In spite of the above differences, it was agreed that the three IAPs did in fact face similar monitoring challenges in each establishment, that there were similar themes to be observed (and without going into considerable details these could be characterised as: in terms of trainees' personal needs, for example; monitoring staff/trainee or trainee/trainee interactions; physical living

conditions; fitness for purpose, quality and clarity of training modules; personal evaluation; staff evaluation, recording and communicating within the local chain of command) and that further discussion of how each group carried out its monitoring function, and what tools and techniques they had used and developed (surveys, studies, questioning & interviewing, challenging) should take place.

6. It was agreed that the most productive way to begin to develop this initiative would be to compare two areas common to all three IAPs. These should be their constitutions, and the broad topics they had discussed recently (over the last year). On behalf of her IAP, Joy Carter offered to collect and collate this information and provide it as the basis of a further Chair's meeting in the Autumn.

7. This work will also continue next year in looking at the differences in experience offered to Phase 1 trainees by the various Phase2 units at taster days and in the follow through from Phase 1 to Phase 2 training.

Chris Pines
September 2011

DISCHARGE AS A STATUTORY RIGHT (DASR) - OBSERVATIONS

INTRODUCTION

1. DASR is more commonly known as Discharge as of Right (DAOR). "DASR is intended for those who believe themselves to be temperamentally or mentally unsuited for Army life". Junior Soldiers are able to apply for DAOR following a minimum of 28 days service and within 3 months of service from first reporting for duty following attestation. For those under 18, this period is extended to 6 months.

3. In order to take DAOR, a Junior Soldier must formally apply in writing to the Commanding Officer, giving a minimum of fourteen days notice (this means that the minimum time for the DAOR process is six weeks from the date of entry). If a soldier has re-enlisted, having previously taken DAOR, then he/she no longer has the right to take it again: it is a once-only opportunity.

5. The DAOR process consists of five actions:
 - a. The Junior Soldier submits his/her written request.
 - b. Interview with his/her Troop Commander.
 - c. Interview with his/her Squadron Commander.
 - d. Interview with the Commanding Officer.
 - e. Two weeks, following discharge, the Junior Soldier is contacted by the Squadron 2IC to see if he/she wishes to return.

OBSERVATIONS

6. To enable all recruits to experience the 'more enjoyable aspects' of army life, the Commanding Officer has brought forward adventure training to week 5.

7. All permanent staff at ATFC Winchester take a very compassionate approach to DAOR applicants and do their best to encourage them to think again, especially with regard to the consequences of their actions e.g. current high levels of youth unemployment.

8. Interviews with the Troop and Squadron Commanders are conducted in a more relaxed style than that of the Commanding Officer. Junior Soldiers are allowed to sit for the first two but marched in and made to stand during the latter.

9. When this reporting period commenced, all Junior Soldiers were expected to sign the 'learning agreement' within the first week of training. This was a poor document full of acronyms and totally unintelligible to sixteen year old recruits (and most serving personnel). It is to the credit of ATFC (Winchester) and ITG that, when brought to their attention, this requirement was dropped.

10. The DAOR application used to follow a template which gave three numbered reasons for wishing to leave the army. Not surprisingly, most applicants gave three reasons, two of which tended to be 'homesickness' and 'I don't enjoy army life'. The template has now been changed by dropping the three numbered reasons and including a request for 'personal factors', 'specific dislikes during Phase 1 Training' and 'plans for life after the Army'. It is too early to assess whether this will produce more information on the main reason(s) behind the application, only time will tell.

11. Some Troops have significantly more DAOR applications than others, which has caused senior officers to have doubts about a Troop Commander's leadership qualities. I have seen no evidence to support these doubts. On the contrary I have noticed that some Troop Commanders, whose leadership qualities are highly regarded, have had more than their share of DAOR applications. I believe that the number of DAOR applications is more a reflection of the quality of the Junior Soldiers that were initially assigned to their Troop: a factor over which they had no control.

12. Due to training commitments, the DAOR process can, at times, be rushed. I observed two DAOR applicants being interviewed on a Saturday morning within hours of returning from a three day exercise at Barton Stacey. Not only were the applicants tired and cold but so were the troop and squadron commanders. This was far from ideal and efforts should be made to ensure that all interviews are conducted in a more organised and relaxed manner. In recent months, troop and squadron commanders have tried to conduct the initial interviews in an informal manner, such as a walk around the playing fields, or over a game of pool. But these innovations do not appear to have had any influence on the outcome of the DAOR application.

13. On arrival at ATFC (Winchester) Troop Commanders have had little (if any) training on how to interview young people, many of whom can be extremely reticent and need considerable encouragement to reveal the underlying reasons behind the DAOR application. There has been a commendable attempt by the Commanding Officer to introduce an element of such training but I wonder whether a trained youth worker, who is currently engaged with young people, might be brought in to advise on interview techniques.

14. A recurring complaint of Junior Soldiers, applying for DAOR, is not having been being assigned the cap badge of their choice. Having been told, by the Army Careers Information Office (ACIO), that there are no vacancies in their preferred Corps they have been encouraged to accept another 'cap badge' on the understanding that, once in the Army, they will be able to reapply. The reality is that, once enlisted, there are few opportunities to change cap badge. ACIOs should discontinue this practice, which has been known to allocate relatively intelligent recruits to regiments that are well below their levels of capability and causing them to be disenchanted with Army life in general.

COMMENT

15. Despite the considerable effort made by permanent staff to identify the main reasons behind a Junior Soldier's request for DAOR, it is difficult to discover why many of them wish to leave the Army. Reasons that are trotted out include 'made a mistake in joining', 'homesickness' and 'pressure from home/girl/boyfriend' but, having observed several interviews, I suspect that 'immaturity' and 'lack of personal commitment' are more of a factor. Indeed most would appear to be "not temperamentally or mentally suited for Army life" (paragraph 1).

16. The main reason for trying to discourage Junior Soldiers from applying for DAOR is the cost of recruitment, calculated at around £5000 per individual. I do wonder whether the effort made to encourage them to reconsider is sufficiently rewarded by the very few who eventually change their minds. Over the period of this report (which covers Junior Entries 5 & 6), 61 DAOR requests have resulted in only 1 Junior Soldier resuming training. These statistics would seem to indicate that, once a Junior Soldier submits a request for DAOR, it should be accepted and processed, as quickly as possible. This should help to improve the morale of those remaining Junior Soldiers who are intent upon making a career in the Army. It would also be a more effective use of resources, especially permanent staff time. I recommend that, bearing in mind the age of the recruits, ITG should give greater emphasis to the numbers that complete training. At ATFC (Winchester), it is close to 90%, which is a very impressive figure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

17. The following is a summary of the recommendations contained within this report:
 - a. Efforts should be made to ensure that all DAOR interviews are conducted in an organised and relaxed manner (paragraph 12).
 - b. Consideration should be given to using a trained youth worker, who is currently engaged with young people, to help to improve the interviewing techniques of junior officers (paragraph 13).
 - c. Where there are no vacancies in a potential recruit's preferred regiment, ACIOs should discontinue the practice of encouraging them to accept a different 'cap badge' on the premise that he/she can apply for a change during the initial training process (paragraph 14).
 - d. Consideration should be given to processing DAOR applications as quickly as possible because this should help to improve the morale of those Junior Soldiers intent upon making a career in the Army and be a more effective use of resources, especially permanent staff time (paragraph 16).

David A Drake OBE
September 2011

THE WORK OF THE EDUCATION WING OF THE ATFC (W)

INTRODUCTION

1. During this year—my first as a member of the IAP—I followed the activities of the Education Wing of the ATFC (W). The Education Wing is responsible for equipping Junior Soldiers with an understanding of the structure and responsibilities of the British Army (military studies) for providing lessons on critical thinking in support of the third Physical Development Training Exercise (PDT3) and for ensuring Junior Soldiers have the necessary skills of literacy and numeracy to function effectively as soldiers.

2. Under normal circumstances the officers and civilian staff of the Education Wing are assisted by an "External Provider", which is contracted to bring civilian instructors to the barracks to assess the levels achieved by the soldiers entering training and to teach "functional skills" classes designed to ensure that soldiers who have not reached National Qualification Framework level 1, do so and those who are at level 1 reach level 2. (Those already at level 2 are given further military studies by the Education Officers.)

UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

3. Circumstances during the first training cycle that I witnessed (three Squadrons—September 2010 to March 2011) were not normal as no contract for an external provider was in effect until the cycle was over. These unusual circumstances placed a good deal of strain on the staff of the Education Wing as they were by themselves responsible for all the teaching normally carried out by the Wing, and were moreover required to adapt their plans and schedules at short notice (1) because it was not clear until six weeks into the cycle that the delay in finalizing a contract with an external provider—which was in the hands of the MoD and not something under the control of the ATFC(W)—would not be short-term but likely to go on indefinitely and (2) because severe weather in December disrupted the training schedule.

4. During September and October, when only the intake of A Squadron was under training, the staff of the Education Wing assumed that there would soon be a contract with an external provider and sought to cover what would be the curriculum for normal circumstances. When B Squadron arrived, it became clear that there would not be sufficient personnel to continue to do this for the foreseeable future. The functional skills and military studies classes were consequently merged for the remainder of the cycle.

5. A contract with Chichester College was finalised in April in time for the A Squadron intake of the next training cycle. At this time all three of the officers in the Education Wing were reassigned to other duties—only one of them remaining, albeit in another office at the Sir John Moore Barracks, who could provide new staff with institutional memory and some degree of continuity as circumstances returned to "normal".

MY OBSERVATIONS AND INVOLVEMENT

6. During the autumn I attended nine classes on functional skills and military studies delivered in the Education Wing to soldiers from A and C Squadrons. In March I looked at, and to some extent participated in, the assessment of assigned written and oral reports by Junior Soldiers from all three Squadrons. I was very favourably impressed with how well the staff of the Education Wing coped with the fluid situation they had to deal with, and also with the quality of the delivery of instruction and of the feedback on assignments—especially with the maintenance of discipline, the clarity of the objectives and the respect shown to the Junior Soldiers.

7. Early in March I looked at approximately forty reports on what had happened on D-Day at the places the Junior Soldiers from A Squadron had visited during the "Realities of War" exercise

in Normandy. These had been carefully read, copy-edited, evaluated and provided with constructive comments. I also examined a folder of reports on current affairs topics, which had also been given similarly careful feedback. The quality of feedback on written work matched the high quality of instructional delivery. In addition I took away reports on current affairs topics (all of 8 Troop, B Squadron) to mark during the following week in the way I had seen those of A Squadron marked, and I participated (as a "second marker") in hearing and providing feedback on the oral reports of six four-man teams of C Squadron Junior Soldiers.

8. There was evidence, however, in what I looked at that, in spite of the good efforts of the staff, the need for abrupt changes in schedule and the lack of personnel resources during the cycle meant that some soldiers had been left with insufficient time to complete assignments to a satisfactory level of competence. I offered some suggestions as to how assignments could be scheduled to allow soldiers' time to benefit from feedback and resubmit competently produced assignments—thereby compensating for lack of personnel resources—although with the contract now in place, the specifics of these suggestions may have less relevance.

9. I have been shown complete data on the assessments of the written reports of the five Troops of A Squadron from the most recent cycle and it is clear that the Junior Soldiers submitted their reports on their Normandy experience of the Realities of War in time to be assessed and to resubmit, if their reports were deemed not to be competent. About 12% were required to resubmit or to reshew their work. A similar proportion of the Junior Soldiers were judged to be competent but to need further work on their literacy skills. This will be useful if there is follow-up and it leads to their receiving additional help in Phase 2 of their training.

10. Although I saw only a sample of the written work from the previous cycle, the proportion of Junior Soldiers whose work was judged to be 'highly competent' in this cycle—roughly 27%—appears to be considerably higher in this cycle. All in all it seems that the return to 'usual circumstances' has had a positive effect on the efforts to improve the written communication skills of the Junior Soldiers.

11. During the first part of the new training cycle (from late April to late July) I was in temporary full-time employment and was unable to observe classes. In August I was able to watch five functional skills classes given by the staff from Chichester College, two military studies classes given by the education staff as well as watch some of the oral presentations of A and B Squadrons. The classes were all well conducted and the Junior Soldiers appeared to be satisfactorily engaged. (I was in particular very favourably impressed by a functional skills mathematics class, which I observed.)

12. Oral presentations conclude with an opportunity for the audience to ask questions. There were no questions (apart from one I asked) following the presentations by Junior Soldiers from A Squadron that I witnessed on 5th August. On the 4th of March during the previous cycle, when I participated in assessing oral presentations, staff made efforts to question Junior Soldiers, and also debriefed each group providing them with suggestions for improving their performances. I recommended to Capt Eade that training staff be present to ask questions. Following the B Squadron presentations, which I witnessed on the 1st of September, training staff made a good effort to do this. I've also suggested how the training staff could work more closely with the instructors from Chichester College to improve the lessons that prepare the Junior Soldiers for their oral presentations and the take away value of the final exercise.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

13. At various times during the year I suggested to the staff of the Education Wing (1) that the due dates of written assignments be timed to permit Junior Soldiers (especially those who are having difficulty producing competent work) to benefit from feedback, (2) that efforts be made by military staff to engage Junior Soldiers with questions and feedback at the occasion of their oral

presentations. I have been pleased by evidence that my suggestions have been taken seriously.

14. I have also encouraged efforts to increase cooperation between civilian instructors and Army training staff. The development of their functional skills no doubt strikes Junior Soldiers as a carryover from their schooling and unless its importance is underlined by evidence that Army staff regard these skills as essential to good soldiering, Junior Soldiers are not likely to take the time they spend in the Education Wing seriously. I hope there will be no let-up in the efforts to foster increased co-operation.

15. Although my experience suggests that whatever I might say about the need for the timely conclusion of contracts and the need for efforts to preserve institutional continuity during staff turnover will have little effect, I nevertheless offer these observations: I worked for many years in an educational institution that was government-run and civil servant-managed and found it resistant to calls to improve the timeliness of its management of contracts for needed resources and equally reluctant to make efforts to ameliorate the disruptions caused by foreseeable staff rotations and turnover. The consequences were always to some degree damaging to the educational effectiveness of the institution.

16. One might argue that members of a military organization should be agile and flexible enough to cope with the need for all personnel to be readily replaceable at short notice and to cope with unusual and unforeseeable circumstances. Circumstances this year have indeed tested the resourcefulness and adaptability of the staff of the Education Wing, and they have in my view passed with flying colours. But the mission of the ATFC (W) is not to train and test its Education Officers but to train and encourage the development of adaptability in Junior Soldiers and it would be hard to affirm that meeting the demands created by the failure to complete in a timely fashion the contract for an external provider followed by a complete turnover of staff in a short period of time has contributed in any positive way to that mission.

J Tiles
September 2011

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF A SQUADRON, ATFC (WINCHESTER)

INTRODUCTION

1. On appointment to the IAP ATFC (W) in September 2010, I was attached to A Squadron. During the year I was able to follow JE 05 and JE 06 through their Phase 1 Initial Training from Form Up to Passing Out. It enabled me with my previous background of training at all levels including Junior Soldiers (JS), to monitor and get to know the modern Junior Soldier as well as the Permanent Staff of the Squadron. Thus I have gained a very valuable insight into the training and welfare of two very different Intakes.

2. I was very quickly made to feel "at home" and was able to see all the activities either on pre-planned or unannounced visits to the Troops in the field, on the Ranges or in Barracks. The Squadron provided me with a comprehensive pack which included the Training Programme and detailed nominal rolls of both Permanent Staff and JS.

TRAINING PROGRAMME

3. **Skill At Arms.** There were no problems with this subject. The Lessons and practical skills were well taught and the JS responded enthusiastically with some reaching marksmanship standard.

4. **Education.** This specialised subject is covered in greater detail by another IAP member; see the Report by Jim Tiles. Suffice it to say that there was certain amount of turbulence and teething problems while Chichester College got to grips with the syllabus. There was also a noticeable improvement in delivery when some of the military personnel were changed.

5. **Field Training.** In general the Field Training out of Barracks was well conducted and with considerable imagination on the part of the Troop and Section Commanders. The highlights were the change of venue for Physical Training Development 1 (PTD 1) to the Soldier Development Wing (SDW) at Sennybridge, the Training Test Exercises on the local Training Areas, the Realities of War (ROW) visit to Normandy, the CO's Competition and the Final Exercise on Thetford Training Area. It was interesting to note that the two Intakes differed in fitness at the start of their training. JE 05 was considerably fitter than JE 06. The fact that JE 05 started in Sept 10 not long after leaving school as opposed to JE 06 which started in March 11 may have had some bearing on this. Both Intakes suffered from problems with their feet but a protocol on foot care was put in place with success.

6. **PTD1.** In May 11 A Squadron acted as the guinea pigs for this change in location from Crowborough to the SDW at Sennybridge. Despite some initial problems, this was an excellent package, well organized and the JS enjoyed it (the weather was exceptionally kind!). OC SDW now comes to the ATFC to brief Squadrons before deployment so that everyone understands exactly what is going to happen and fully understand the aims and objectives. There were problems with blisters mostly caused by new boots and JS not conditioned with 22 kg of weight to be carried at certain times. The timing of this training at SDW should continue to be monitored.

7. **Local Field Training Exercises.** The initial Section level training was well conducted and the aims were achieved. EX HALFWAY for JE 05 took place in Dec 10 in seriously cold conditions (minus 14 degrees F). Therefore it was not just a Test Exercise but an endurance one too. The Troop and Section Commanders were outstandingly good at keeping the JS motivated and safe whilst the JS were determined to "stick it out" and did so with humour and a great sense of achievement. Only 4 JS out of 118 had to return to Barracks for medical reasons.

8. **Realities of War (ROW).** Both JE 05 and JE 06 went to Normandy but at different times of the year. Both gained much from the experience and some JS researched and wrote (mostly in their own time) essays of a very high standard related to the D-Day and following Operations. It is worth mentioning two incidents on the JE 05 visit. A civilian travelling on the return journey was so impressed with the manners, behaviour and bearing of the JS that he donated £50.00 to be used as a prize for the best essay. Another civilian on the same ship stopped the Squadron Commander before disembarking and thanked him for the good behaviour and manners shown by the JS. He had been a little concerned when he had noticed three coaches arrive onto the ferry full of young soldiers but he added that they were a credit to the British Army. JE 06 did not travel by ferry but by coach and rail which was not satisfactory as two full days were spent on coaches travelling from/to Winchester via Calais.

9. **CO's Competition.** This inter-Section multi-discipline event is well organized and as the name suggests, the competition between the Sections and Troops is intense. JE 05's Competition was delayed due to the bad weather in Dec until after the Christmas break and JE 06 did theirs over two days in the early morning due to the high humidity. It is a tough Competition and it was commendable to see the individual Sections working as a team under their Section Commander's leadership. The Commanding Officer deployed on one day as a Section Commander much to the amazement of the JS and the relief of a Troop Sergeant!

10. **Final Exercise (Ex FINAL FLING).** This Exercise was held at Thetford for both JE 05 and JE 06. This Training Area is ideal for the purposes of the JS Final Exercise. JE 05 was in hatted accommodation but for JE 06 this was full due to Army Cadet Force (ACF) Camps being held at the same time. This meant the use of a Forward Operating Base (FOB) on the Training Area. In the event it did not cause too many problems with the G4 (housekeeping) issues being overcome by the QM and SQMS without any fuss. I visited the JE 06 Exercise for one full day and was impressed by the variety of the training which had been devised and being executed with imagination and flair. The JS rose to the challenges and it was a realistic and fitting end to their field training.

COMMUNICATION

11. **Form Up and Parents Days.** Form Up Day is important as it enables the parents to see where their sons (in the case of A Squadron) are about to start their training and to meet those personnel who are going to be in charge of this training and the welfare of the JS. For the parents and the JS it is pretty stressful but the organization was well done and sympathetically handled. It was notable that both JE 05 and JE 06 arrived wearing collars and ties! Parents Days are an eye opener for the parents in terms of seeing their sons' appearance, bearing and confidence after just six weeks. The JS welcome the chance to impress their families with what they have learnt as well as the start of their first period of leave. I attended both Parents Days and was able to talk to many parents, most of whom were amazed by the change in their sons and very grateful for the communication they had had from the Troop Commanders when necessary. It was also a chance to highlight and explain the role of the IAP.

12. **DAOR Procedure.** This topic has been looked at in depth by another IAP member. (See David Drake's Report) A Squadron has an enviable reputation for having the lowest DAOR Rate in the ATFC – 8% for JE 05 and 4% for JE 06. These low figures reflect the care and attention that is spent on DAOR applicants by the Troop Commanders and the Squadron Commander. I have been able to sit in on several DAOR Interviews at Troop and Squadron Commander level all of which were conducted with great sensitivity. Communication with the JS and his Parents was timely and efficiently carried out. The reaction of the Parents was mixed; some were disappointed that their son wanted to leave especially when the reason was that "his girlfriend was missing him", others were less happy knowing that the labour market in their home area was dire. However, none attached any blame to how their sons had been treated whilst at the ATFC. I have no doubt that those JS whose DAOR was approved would have completed training without a struggle.

13. **IT.** There have been problems with the MOD Computer System during the year but there has been an improvement during the last few months. I examined the case for Troop Corporals to have their own dedicated computers. This was not confined to A Squadron but to other Squadrons too. In essence, the problem was the amount of time Corporals had to spend recording Army General Administrative Instructions (AGAI) action taken on JS. However, it was concluded that whilst this was appreciated, the use of the Troop Sergeant's computer was a workable alternative as the cost of computers for the Corporals was not an option in the current economic climate. Case closed.

PERMANENT STAFF

14. **Standards.** I have noted the overall very high standard of the Permanent Staff who I have got to know well during the year. They work long hours but their professionalism has been first class. They take infinite care over the JS in their Troops but remain firm but fair over discipline and AGAI action. Only one Corporal had to be removed from post but he should never have been sent from his parent unit to train JS.

15. **PS Development.** The Squadron Commander (an LE Officer) has taken great trouble over the Career Management, Man Management and Personal Development of all his Permanent Staff. The result has been very well motivated Officers, SNCOs and JNCOs who take a real pride in their work.

CONCLUSION

16. This has been a very rewarding year. I have much enjoyed my involvement with A Squadron and having the opportunity to see at close quarters two Intakes of Junior Soldiers through their Phase I Initial Training. I hope too that in return I have been an approachable yet impartial and independent advisor/sounding board for members of the Squadron. I have been very impressed by the dedication and leadership of the Permanent Staff who have shown professionalism of a high order. Undoubtedly, the Junior Soldiers have benefited from this and many have told me how much they owe to their Instructors and feel confident about taking the next step in their careers. Of course, there have been problems which have arisen with both Intakes but these have been surmounted by quick thinking on the ground, tact and diplomacy and a sense of humour without any lowering of standards.

17. The Passing Out Parade of JE 06 on 2 Sept 11 taken by the GOC UK Support Command was arguably the best I have seen for many years. It reflected the high standards that the Permanent Staff and the Junior Soldiers had achieved. The many Parents who came from all over the country were rightly proud of their sons and the Parade showed the ATFC and the Army in the best of lights. I congratulate them all.

Brigadier (Retd) Nicholas Prideaux
September 2011

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

FROM BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE (pg 9 – 10)

1. That action is taken to improve the way DE operate their budgets, authorise expenditure and release funds. Could a meeting be arranged with DE to include representatives of all establishments which suffer from the current arrangements and officers of appropriate seniority who can ensure changes agreed to be necessary are implemented?
2. If not already done, surveys and plans for the future maintenance of the buildings allow for the replacement of the heating water and electrical services and finance is allocated in budgets for this work.
3. Being a hard water area, it could be worth investigating if it would be good value to install water softening equipment which could extend the operating life of pipes and boilers.
4. If there are any complaints or problems about the catering or other services provided by Aramark at the Barracks, they should be recorded in any comment books provided at the time the issue arises and then pursued with the relevant officer or person.

FROM DASR (pg 13 – 15)

5. Efforts should be made to ensure that all DAOR interviews are conducted in an organised and relaxed manner.
6. Consideration should be given to using a trained youth worker, who is currently engaged with young people, to help to improve the interviewing techniques of junior officers.
7. Where there are no vacancies in a potential recruit's preferred regiment, ACIOs should discontinue the practice of encouraging them to accept a different 'cap badge' on the premise that he/she can apply for a change during the initial training process.
8. Consideration should be given to processing DAOR applications as quickly as possible because this should help to improve the morale of those Junior Soldiers intent upon making a career in the Army and be a more effective use of resources, especially permanent staff time.

FROM EDUCATION (pg 16 – 18)

9. There should be no let-up in the efforts to foster increased co-operation between civilian instructors in the Education Wing and Army training staff.
10. Army staff should demonstrate that they regard functional skills as essential to good soldiering to encourage Junior Soldiers to take the time they spend in the Education Wing seriously.
11. Press for timely agreement and management of the educational contract to obtain the needed resources.

Commanding Officer's Response

1. Firstly I would like to thank all of the members of the Independent Advisory Panel (IAP) for their continued hard work in what has been another busy year at ATFC(W). It should be noted that this report represents a considerable amount of hard work and that their commitment is entirely voluntary. The significance of this system of observing, advising and at times holding to account is hugely welcome. It's not always an easy process and can lead to passionate discussions, but it adds value and is very important. I am also pleased that the new members this year: Professor Jim Tiles, Mr David Drake and Brigadier (Rtd) Nicholas Prideaux have settled in so well and have found the time in their first full year to contribute so much.

2. After all the change in 2010 my aim was to use 2011 to consolidate on the progress we made, embedding in the culture of Continuous Improvement, encouraging the Staff to develop the instruction and comment on the syllabus. However, the pace of life has only got faster and the army has had to react to the changing environment; restructuring and resizing whilst all the time continuing to commit to operations in Afghanistan. This has forced us to examine both *What* and *How* we instruct at ATFC(W) and to conduct our own restructuring exercise within the Initial Training Group. 2012 will see the consolidation of all Junior Entry training at the Army Foundation College in Harrogate and the return of adult entry soldiers to Winchester.

3. It is hearting to note that I am familiar with the issues raised in the report as a result of the positive and detailed dialogue that occurs between the IAP and Commanding Officer throughout the course of the year.

4. **Detailed Responses.** I would like to briefly address some of the issues raised in the report:

a. **Condition of Buildings and Other Infrastructure.** This is an area of increasing concern as budgets only get tighter and the passage of time increases the wear on the barracks.

- The management of the DE budget is an area of concern that has been raised to the highest level within the division. Specifically the issue of predicting amount of underspend and the recovery of committed but not spent funds. In September both the Director General ARTD and the newly established GOC commanding Support Command, who has responsibility for this matter, were briefed on this issue. I will report directly to the IAP on this matter in the New Year.
- The previous Quartermaster, Maj Kelsall, did not require any specific or specialised knowledge to give him an advantage in the bidding for and use of underspend cash. This is standard practice across defence at the end of the financial year and all of the bids are centrally collated and reviewed across the division.
- A series of meetings will be arranged between the DE regional and area team leaders with the IAP.

- All funds allocated to the upkeep of the buildings and infrastructure in Sir John Moore Barracks are subject to a centralised priority system. However, on occasions end of year funds are released with certain caveats: the amount of cash available; the timelines and what through-life support will be incurred, all of which can mean the money has to be spent on different projects. They remain subject to a system of prioritisation and are used to best effect.
- The Quartermaster will investigate the fitting of water softening equipment.
- I am pleased to report that there has been a marked improvement throughout the last year over the matter of communication between ATFC(W) and the contractor, ARAMARK. Comment books are available in all areas and are well used resulting in a general improvement of the service.

b. **Discharge as of Right (DAOR).** I especially welcome any reviews into this area of our business. As a Junior Entry training college it is of great importance to us; unlike adult entry where the DAOR window closes during training it remains open throughout the Junior Soldiers time at Winchester. In fact whilst the name of the process changes any soldier who is under 18 years old can leave the army at any stage of their service.

- It is important to note that DAOR statistics are not used as a metric to judge the leadership qualities of the troop commanders.
- The techniques used in the interview process are an area that would benefit from some additional work and whilst some improvements have been made more are required. Most soldiers have already made up their minds prior to being interviewed and as such every effort should be made to reduce the formality of this process and intervene as early as possible. This is most important with interviews at section level and to some extent those conducted by the Troop Commander, both could be more informal.
- The issue of false promises allegedly made by ACIOs is a difficult matter; useful and well intentioned advice can often be interpreted by some as fact. In a time when there is considerable competition to get into the army and places are tight some recruits are not offered their first choice regiment or corps. This can lead to an element of dissatisfaction. Whilst there are some opportunities to change capbadge later on in their service, including at Phase 1 training, these are limited. ACIOs now get the recruit to sign a document ensuring they understand the implications of their career choice and they must remain extremely wary of giving the wrong impression and creating false hope.
- I note the comments about the speed of the DAOR process but disagree that it is a waste of the staff's time. Whilst an interview with the Sqn OC and the CO may not change the mind of the individual it allows the chain of command to ensure that due consideration of all the factors is being made

by both the soldier wanting to leave the army and their training team. It allows for important functions of command to be enacted.

c. **Education.** Many of the issues raised in this section of the report reflect the initial period of the Chichester College tenure as the Education Provider. Now that the college has had time to adjust much has been resolved. Early sight of this report greatly assisted us in doing this.

- The timing of written projects has been improved allowing them to be completed, marked and reflected upon prior to any further work being done.
- A considerable amount work has been done by the OIC Education Wing to promote greater understanding of the military learning environment by the civilian educators. They have been included in a workplace induction packages, social functions, shooting coaching sessions and much more. I am also looking at the option of getting them to attend the commander's element of ASLS.
- The time it took to negotiate the Education Contract was indeed frustrating and was highlighted at the time to the chain of command. The delay meant that the education package for the Junior Entry Course 5 was indeed sub-optimal. This will be staffed again in an attempt to prevent this from reoccurring.

4. In conclusion I would like to reiterate my thanks to all of the members of the IAP for their hard work this year. I look forward to working with the IAP until Apr next year when my successor, Lt Col Neil Wright, takes command.

PCA MacMullen MBE IG
Commanding Officer
Army Technical Foundation College (Winchester)