Independent Advisory Panel

2007 REPORT

on

Infantry Training Centre
Catterick
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Foreword

I welcome this first report of the Infantry Training Centre (Catterick)’s Independent Advisory Panel. In setting up the panel I was determined to be completely open about the ITC’s work; there is nothing to hide, indeed there is much at Catterick of which we can be proud and which deserves a wider audience.

The Centre continues to produce the best trained Infantrymen in the world and I am grateful to the Panel for acknowledging the skill and commitment of our staff and the quality of the educational, developmental and vocational training environment that they provide.

The Panel’s members have been generous with their time and wise counsel. I welcome and will act on their constructive advice, taking full advantage of the expert external scrutiny that they provide.

The Panel’s work does not stop here. We will continue to work together to build on the foundations laid in this report, to help ensure that we maintain the high standards of training, welfare and professionalism that are the hallmark of the British Army.

Brigadier D J Clements MBE
Commandant
School of Infantry
In early 2006 I was approached by Brigadier David Clements, Commandant School of Infantry, and asked to be Chairman of the Independent Advisory Panel to the Infantry Training Centre (ITC) at Catterick, North Yorkshire.

My experiences from my visits to the ITC acknowledge the fact that recruits joining the Army are increasingly self-absorbed and undisciplined. They come from backgrounds that have suffered from the decline of traditional family and leave school without any set of moral values.

Some recruits are socially immature, lacking mutual respect, and have led self-indulgent materialistic lives, and they also are too easily shocked by the close confines of military life.

Having had the privilege of taking a Passing Out Parade and all that that involved I have to say it was amazing. The quality of training in the 24-week period produced an outstanding outcome. All the participants in that particular Passing Out Parade were without exception delighted with their experience having admitted that it was hard work. The general standards were in my observation were very high. The turnaround in every soldier’s attitude to life was of a very high standard. Soldiers generally speaking were far more focused on wanting to learn and better themselves. The camaraderie that the military experience produced was very noticeable. The feedback from parents, relatives and friends of all involved was very encouraging. Without exception they were very impressed with the effect that the experience had on all recruits.

The ITC benefits from strong leadership and management, excellent welfare and support facilities that meet all the needs of young recruits joining the Army. Accounts from operational theatres such as Iraq and Afghanistan indicate a high degree of satisfaction from Commanding Officers with the standard of trained recruits from the ITC.

The Group have enjoyed working with the Commandant and his senior management team who have all been very open and transparent on all issues involving the ITC. I have much pleasure in enclosing this report.

Alasdair MacConachie OBE VL FRSA
Chairman
Introduction

As a part of the process to implement the recommendations of the first DHALI\(^1\) report, the Adjutant General tasked the Director General Army Training and Recruiting to establish Independent Advisory Panels (IAPs) across the Army’s Training Establishments.

Aim

The aim of the IAP is to provide an independent, non-statutory source of Advice, Challenge, Encouragement and Support (ACES) to the training establishment in order to exchange information, provide feedback and assist in identifying possible areas for improvement.

Roles

The IAP has the following roles:

- To act as a conduit for external communication for the training establishment to de-mystify the Army’s individual training organisation and promote the Army’s and training establishment’s reputations locally.

- To act as a source of local feedback on local issues.

- To act as a “sounding board”. The Panel will support and challenge the training establishment by providing advice and encouragement on particular issues (both local and national) raised by the Commandant on an as “required” basis.

Limitations

The IAP will not override the fundamental Army principle of self-regulation vested in the commanding officer and the higher chain of command. It will have no responsibility for budgets, objective setting, policy or staff selection.

Frequency

The IAP is, in addition, asked to meet three times a year; it will meet a lot more than this as it develops - group meetings, probably four times a year and individual activity three to four times a year as well.

\(^1\) Directorate of Operational Capability, House of Commons Defence Commitee and Adult Learning Inspectorate Reports
Membership of Panel

Alasdair MacConachie [AM]
OBE VL FRSA (Chairman)
Managing Director of
Sherwoods (Darlington) Limited.

Michael Banks [MB]
BA (Hons)
Assistant Chief Constable,
Durham Constabulary.

Alan Fielder [AF]
Regional Chairman of
Yorkshire Bank and formerly
Regional Director of Barclays Bank.

Carole Brown [CB]
Formerly Head Teacher
Risedale Community College,
Catterick Garrison.

Peter Rowley [PR]
Director and Chief Executive,
Darlington Building Society.

(A representative from Darlington Social Services was also appointed to the Panel but shortly after changed jobs before being able to contribute. We hope to recruit another panel member from social services soon).

CVs of Panel Members are at Annex A.
Brigadier David Clements asked the Panel to focus its activities in four areas in its first year. Each topic had either been highlighted as an area for further work by the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) in its report “Better Training”, or was felt to be an area in which the expertise of the IAP could add real value.

These workstrands are:

- To review the ITC’s complaints procedures to ensure that they are fully accessible, independent and properly scrutinised.

- To advise on how we might improve the Equal Opportunities and Diversity training programme, to include follow-up training and an audit of its effectiveness.

- To advise on what more could be done to educate, inform and reinforce links with society in order to improve public perceptions of ITC Catterick.

- To advise and assist in the development of a Quality Assurance Programme for training at ITC Catterick.
Findings

Complaints Procedure

We were given a presentation about the complaints process. A discussion took place (with ITC staff) about the recording process, and whether or not there was complete compliance with this, or whether there were circumstances, given the low number of complaints, that there would be no record whatsoever. The feeling was on the whole, everything was recorded and there was no personal pride in not recording. [MB]

We noted the ‘process’ was displayed on a poster on the Welfare Board and that each recruit receives a card with advice on the ‘bullying text’ facility. A consideration is with regard to ‘mixed messages’ as the poster advocates complaint ‘without comeback’ but of course there rightly is a way of dealing with malicious complaints which are a disciplinary issue which staff are made aware of. [MB]

The evidence has been of all complaints being handled seriously, sensitively and thoroughly. I do feel it can be a fine line between strongly encouraging recruits to succeed, and potentially overstepping the mark. [AF]

I have not, so far, been involved in addressing any issues regarding complaints, although officers have openly shared with me some complaints that have recently arisen, and the manner in which they were addressed. [CB]

Equal Opportunities & Diversity (EOD)

By recording [complaints], officers can monitor patterns and report trends to the CO who in turn can convene a meeting with EOD officers to discuss matters. However, there were examples given of isolated incidents where staff had resolved matters without formally recording the issue. [MB]

It was established that each EOD officer deals with complaints from their own battalion. It was queried whether they therefore shared findings as the numbers recorded seemed to be too low to identify trends (for example in February 2007 only one complaint was formally recorded). [MB]

I have seen no evidence other than that all recruits are given an equal opportunity irrespective of background. It is worth mentioning the huge support and encouragement given to recruits who become ill or are injured during training with a view to getting them back on track. [AF]

I have seen good examples of equality – for example additional help where physical fitness was an issue, or further help with academic attainment. Some good practice in
terms of coping with and encouraging diversity, eg recruits from Gibraltar and Kenya being given particular help with cold weather conditions. [CB]

**Links with Society & Reputation of ITC and Army**

The more pro-active management of local press relationships, which has been initiated, is clearly a strong positive, and an ongoing imperative. That said, reputation is extraordinarily difficult to measure, and unfortunately is to some extent at the mercy of events potentially outside the control of the ITC. On a scale of 1-10 I should be interested to know how the Commandant would score the ITC’s current reputation, and what would be his target for improvement. [AF]

I have not had any involvement in any issues connecting with this although I have discussed, with officers, the importance of reputation and some steps which I took to improve the reputation of my school as Head. I do not say this in any way which might indicate they were not full aware of its importance. [CB]

The IAP is certain that the lack of investment in accommodation will be negatively impacting on retention, and on presenting a positive image of the Army. [MB]

**Quality Assurance in Training**

I perceive quality and standards being at the very heart of the whole ITC operation, with an impressive commitment to their maintenance at all times. Any diminution of standards would of course place others at risk in situations of real warfare, but this does not stop everybody striving to achieve the highest possible pass rates among recruits. [AF]

It is apparent that many recruits come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and often for the first time in their lives have to face up to discipline and high standards. There is an inevitability that some will fall by the wayside, but when compared with much “dumbing down” in the non-military world, the unswerving commitment to standards and success must be applauded. [AF]

It is clear that 1st Battalion work very hard at this, even though some recruits require additional help and support. Many avenues are explored before reaching the decision that a recruit is unable to reach the required standard. [CB]
Shock of Capture

The switch from a civilian existence lacking in structure to a strictly defined structure was a factor, especially when the routine at school was seen to be as an optional and unenforceable experience. [AM]

It has been suggested that perhaps getting more recruits through their training may necessitate a less confrontational training approach. Discipline, structure and routine should be introduced more gradually. [AM]

Recent media coverage has suggested that psychologists could be employed to help recruits cope with the shock of capture. There is a further view that psychologists might be able to assist in improving behavioural modification and acceptance of the military culture. [AM]

There is a popular culture issue around learning, resulting in too much skiving and failure to change. [AM]

Some recruits struggle with the lack of personal space [AM]

Many modern recruits come from families with no values, particularly where there is little stability at home and at school with attitudes of religion, moral standards, social attitudes, political views and sexual attitudes. All children are expected to make up their own value system. [AM]

Fitness

There is a view that young men lack sport in school and the increase in obesity rates among children contribute to a recognised fall in fitness levels throughout society. The current Soldier Pre-Conditioning Course trial is intended to better prepare recruits for the rigours of physical training as well as reduce the incidence of injury during the course. [AM]

Few of the troops we met were worried about their ability to aspire to the physical challenges required by modern Army training. The vast majority in my experience rose to the challenge. [AM]

Leadership

Together with Heads of Department I was given a presentation by Training Leadership Advisory Team (TLAT) on ‘enhancing operational effectiveness of the best trained
infantry in the world through values based leadership’. I was impressed that the Army, which I had hitherto considered by necessity to have a transactional leadership style, was embracing transformational leadership. Part of the presentation involved ‘creating the climate for success’, demonstrating the effect of leadership behaviours on creating a positive motivational climate that in turn leads to enhanced attitudes and maximised performance. This had been evaluated and ‘evidence proves that TLAT advisors have begun a paradigm shift in the culture of infantry recruit training, by demonstrating that values based leadership has a very powerful motivational effect on staff and recruits alike, that leads to enhanced performance, beyond expectations’. [MB]

I note that the Army’s new leadership behaviour programme has been benchmarked with experimental and control teams established and results compared. [MB]

There may be an opportunity for the Army to consider the Police Leadership Quality Framework by way of comparing and contrasting. The Police Service is increasingly basing its training of transformational leadership on ‘emotional intelligence’. [MB]

**Accommodation**

The new accommodation is excellent. The refurbished accommodation is satisfactory. The old accommodation is appalling and needs at least refurbishing if not renewing as a matter or urgency. This accommodation is some of the worst I have seen and has an adverse effect on recruits and indeed staff. It is vital that funds are found to alter this unsatisfactory situation as a matter or urgency. [AM]

In the Burton Block we were given an overview of the Integrated Estate Management Plan and how that is developed externally rather than what ITC want. Burton Block is due for demolition in 2 years time therefore there is a reluctance to invest in it. This is unacceptable. Recruits are living in sub-standard accommodation which requires painting, repair and upgrading (eg stained carpets, broken window, broken lockers, dishevelled appearance, problems with showers so recruits have to use a different block). It is clear that officers are chasing up contractors (with some repairs requested 2 months ago) but this is preventing them from operational duties. [MB]

The IAP had lunch in the Cook House and chatted informally to recruits from different stages of training. Without exception, they were all very positive about the regime at ITC (and even the food!) [MB]

The new cookhouse is outstanding and the quality of food is excellent and well supervised. [AM]
Budgets

At a meeting with the Commandant I raised the subject of budgets, for it is clear
that there is no sense of cascaded budgetary ownership as one would expect in
the commercial world. Real ownership can enhance efficiency and effectiveness at
all levels. I felt that even the Commandant was frustrated by his lack of input into
budgetary matters, and whilst it might be like “trying to push water uphill” to effect
any move away from centralisation, I feel our report could usefully draw attention to
this issue. [AF]

The IAP and the media

Having previously offered to present issues to the media, following a one sided
‘expose’ by a national newspaper of a alleged misconduct involving recruits at the ITC,
when in possession of the full details the IAP were able to give a more balanced and
informed perspective to regional media. [AM]

If there is particular room for improvement, it is to do with public relations and media
handling......too often, there are chains of command to go through before a story is
approved for release. The media will interpret this as defensive and opaque. This is not
an easy process to redress. It requires hard work, courting of key media and the regular
planting of positive news stories so that when there is potential for something negative
to comment upon, the battle for the heart and mind of a particular journalist is more
easily won. [PR]

Daniel’s Trust

This organisation provides an independent and confidential help line and advice
on bullying in the Armed Forces. One of their champions, Mrs Lynn Farr, joined
one of our Group meetings and made us aware of the services that the Daniel’s
Trust offer. [AM]

The ITC were very sympathetic and understanding to this organisation. [AM]

We are very satisfied that the issues that the Daniel’s Trust are concerned about are
very well managed by the Army and its normal processes. [AM]
Areas of Further Work

We will continue to monitor the observations highlighted in this report.

We will continue to share best practice in reputation and quality. This will take the form of private sector organisations such as Sherwoods (Darlington) Limited, Cummins Engine Company Limited, AMEC and other private sector employers.

We will continue to provide leadership in relationship with local authorities in North Yorkshire and South Durham.

We will give advice on improving public relations and on communication with the media.

Annexes:

A  CVs of Panel members
B  Detailed Reports by Panel Members
Alasdair MacConachie OBE VL FRSA

Managing Director of Sherwoods (Darlington) Limited, his own business in motor retail – Vauxhall and Chevrolet. Businesses in Darlington, Northallerton and Stockton, employing 173 staff with a £60m turnover. Long established family business since 1928.

Also Vice Lord Lieutenant for County Durham, Chairman of Darlington College, which has a unique satellite college in Catterick Garrison assisting with the educational needs of the Army and surrounding communities.

Chairman of St Teresa’s Hospice and Darlington’s Local Strategic Partnership.

Michael Banks BA (Hons)

Assistant Chief Constable, Durham Constabulary with responsibility for operational policy. This includes:

- Territorial Policing (Basic Command Units)
- Headquarters based CID (specialist operations and investigations)
- Command and Control/Communications Centres
- Operational Support Department (Strategic Roads Policing; Firearms; Public Order and Civil Contingencies; Air Support)

His former roles include general police duties via uniform and detective postings, and specialisms in Corporate Development; Scientific Support and Criminal Justice. He was a BCU Commander covering Darlington, Sedgefield, Wear Valley and Teesdale for over four years. He has twice been seconded to Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary at the Home Office.

He particularly values partnership working and has ‘chaired’ two (vice chair of a third) Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and has been a member of four Local Strategic Partnerships. He is currently Vice Chair of the County Durham Local Area Agreement and the Chair of the North East Region Community Safety Partnership. He is a board member of the County Durham Children’s Trust; a School Governor at Eastbourne Comprehensive School Darlington and Blue Coat School Durham. He is a member of the Common Purpose (Wear) Advisory Group.

Alan Fielder

Regional Chairman of Yorkshire Bank and formerly Regional Director of Barclays Bank.
Carole Brown

Formerly Head Teacher at Risedale Community College, Catterick Garrison (12 years) and active consultant to North Yorkshire Education Authority. Carole has been working on large projects with local authorities and undertaking staff training with the National College of School Leadership. Author of 14 historical textbooks.

Peter Rowley

Director and Chief Executive, Darlington Building Society since 1992. He has spent his working life in financial services. A banker by training, he is also a Chartered Marketer and a Chartered Director. He is a member of the Assets and Liabilities and Nominations Committees and a director of all the Society’s connected undertaking.

He is heavily involved in local and regional affairs as a board member of a number of businesses, community, learning and training organisations serving the region.
Detailed Reports by Panel Members

Michael Banks
Alan Fielder
Carole Brown
Peter Rowley
Report April 2006-March 2007  
by IAP MEMBER  
MICHAEL BANKS  

Report  

On being invited to be a part of the Independent Advisory Panel I received the following documents as background reading:-  

• The Infantry Training Centre, School of Infantry information sheet  
• ITC (Catterick) Pocket Book  
• ATRA Code of Practice for Instructors  
• Terms of Reference for Independent Advisory Panels (HQ ATRA/1/6/6)  

19th April 2006  
I attended the inaugural meeting to establish the I.A.P. at the School of Infantry, Catterick and I was briefed by Brigadier Clements on the role of the ITC and its organisational structure; the role of the IAP; the Inspection regime for the Army; current issues for the Army.  

13th June 2006  
I attended the bi-monthly chairman’s review meeting at Sherwood’s Darlington, in company with Alasdair MacConachie and Major Stainthorpe.  

19th July 2006  
I attended the first official visit of the I.A.P. to the ITC (Sc Inf). Following further briefings by Brigadier Clements and Lt. Col. Robinson on the mission; structure; modules and statistics of the I.T.C. I was able to observe combined infantryman training at various stages (including Light 1 - Section Attacks and Light 7 - Rifle Lesson 7) and speak candidly to approximately 40 recruits. I was impressed by the positive approach of the recruits at the commencement of their army career.  

I was given a tour of ITC Catterick including; the accommodation blocks, Williams Coy (rehab/physio); the Vickery Club and the Welfare Web (Rev. Macknight and Mr & Mrs Stephenson of the Salvation Army)  

I was given responsibility as an IAP member for the 4th Bn. and informed that our focus was to be on the following, which had been identified by the Brigadier:
I received a copy of ‘Populus’ survey results ‘Attitudes to the Army’ Tracking Poll, June 2006.

25th October 2006

I attended ITC Catterick at the invitation of Lt. Col. Robinson C.O. 4th Bn at Helles Barracks. I was given a tour of the 4th Bn HQ and met Heads of Department and the Training and Leadership Team. This enabled me to ‘get a feel’ for the organisation and how it conducted its business.

Together with Heads of Department I was given a presentation by T.L.A.T. on ‘enhancing operational effectiveness of the best trained infantry in the world through values based leadership’. I was impressed that the Army, which I had hitherto considered by necessity to have a transactional leadership style, was embracing transformational leadership. Part of the presentation involved ‘creating the climate for success’, demonstrating the effect of leadership behaviours on creating a positive motivational climate that in turn leads to enhanced attitudes and maximised performance. This had been evaluated and ‘evidence proves that TLAT advisors have begun a paradigm shift in the culture of infantry recruit training, by demonstrating that values based leadership has a very powerful motivational effect on staff and recruits alike, that leads to enhanced performance, beyond expectations’.

I note that the Army’s new leadership behaviour programme has been benchmarked with experimental and control teams established and results compared.

There may be an opportunity for the Army to consider the Police Leadership Quality Framework by way of comparing and contrasting. The Police Service is increasingly basing its training of transformational leadership on ‘emotional intelligence’.

31st October 2006

I attended the bi-monthly Chairman’s meeting at Sherwood’s Darlington i/c Alasdair MacConachie and Major Stainthorpe. Amongst other issues we discussed was the identification and exchanging of ‘best practice from IAP members respective organisations or experiences.'
10th November 2006
I attended 4th Bn Dinner Night

16th November 2006
IAP/ITC Annual Dinner at Darlington College.

11th December 2006
Unfortunately I was unable to attend this meeting of the IAP at ITC Sch. Inf. due to a major policing operation.

14th December 2006
I attended Vimy Barracks as Inspecting Officer for Course 0601 Pass Off Parade Army School of Ceremonial. I gave a speech to those present on the role of the I.A.P. and met a number of the soldiers’ friends and family after the parade. Without exception they were proud of what their friend/family member had achieved in the Army.

20th December 2006
I received a document ‘Director’s Individual Training Capability Evaluation Visit Report’ from Major Stainthorpe.

23rd January 2007
Informal discussions with Brigadier Clements about the feasibility of the Senior Management Team attending Police Headquarters Durham to be given a policing perspective on diversity; complaints and media issues.

28th March 2007
I attended ITC Catterick for the Equality and Diversity Day, accompanied by Ch. Supt. Trevor Watson, the Head of our Personnel and Development Department.

Lt. Col. Robinson gave a brief presentation on the restructure of ITC Sch Inf from 4 to 3 battalions. In relation to equal opportunities and diversity the E.O.C. findings in 2005 included:

• Sexual harassment of women frequent but complaints low.
• Formal complaints procedure poor with regard to process /objectivity and investigation.
• Investigating officers not trained.

It was established that the EOC required ‘substantial’ progress by June 2008. The DITC were to evaluate this. We were informed of the Army Regulations which
covered the complaints system and terms of reference for the I.A.P. to explore, namely to establish:

- What is the complaints procedure?
- Who holds key responsibilities in the Bn?
- Is there a training gap?
- Are complaints dealt with promptly?
- Do people know what the process is?

Ch. Supt. Watson gave a presentation on diversity from a policing perspective and covered the following:

National Reports and legislation including Race Relations Amendment Act and its impact on policies, decision making; elimination of discrimination and harassment. Also the opportunity to improve the organisation, through positive attitudes and encouraging minority groups to take part in public life.

Examples were given of how the police are taking this issue forward to see if there is any transference for Army ITC.

Internally - Durham Constabulary has established:
- Equality and Confidence Board
- Cultural Audits
- Staff Support Groups
- Positive Action Plans
- Employment Monitoring
- Impact Assessments (on policies)
- Equality Scheme
- Assessments against diversity standards
- Reasonable adjustments to current practices

External
- Revised assessment process
- Revised training
- Independent Advisory Groups established
- ‘Hate Crime’ officers appointed
- Impact Assessment
- Monitoring of Data, e.g. stop and search statistics
- Community and Partnership consultation
- Positive Action re Service Delivery

Overall - Diversity and Equality is about: outcomes and improvement; being
proactive not just reactive; requires personal commitment from the top; employees and service users.

A challenge to ITC Sch Inf. was put in the context of a quotation from Brig. Clements (Feb. 06) in the ITC pocket book.

‘Army’s reputation is on the firing line due to issues in training and reports of inappropriate behaviour on operations’.

The questions are:
• Is this an issue for the role of the infantry?
• If so, how is training seeking to alter these behaviours?
• How will you evaluate if this occurs?

In company with Ch. Supt. Watson I then met with three Majors and a Captain to discuss the questions posed at our terms of reference. We were given a presentation about the complaints process, including:
• Scope
• Policy
• Principles
• Types
• Procedure
• Informal resolution
• Assisting officer (role)
• Formal complaint
• Harassment Investigation Officer (HIO) (role)
• Outcomes
• Actions by deciding officer
• Recording of complaints

A discussion took place about the recording process and whether or not there was complete compliance with this, or whether there were circumstances, given the low numbers, that there would be no record whatsoever. The feeling was on the whole, everything was recorded and there was no personal pride in not recording.

By recording, officers can monitor patterns and report trends to the C.O. who in turn can convene a meeting with the E.O.D.’s to discuss matters. However, there were examples given of isolated incidents where staff had resolved matters without formally recording the issue.

We noted that the ‘process’ was displayed on a poster on the Welfare Board and
that each recruit receives a card with advice on the ‘bullying text’ facility. A consideration is with regard to ‘mixed messages’ as the poster advocates complaint ‘without comeback’ but of course there rightly is a way of dealing with malicious complaints which are a disciplinary issue which staff are made aware of.

It was established that each E.O.D. deals with complaints from their own battalion. It was queried whether they therefore shared findings as the numbers recorded seemed too low to identify trends (for example in February 2007 only one complaint formally recorded).

The DIN reporting structure was discussed and it was noted that although they covered military on military; and military on civilians, they did not cover civilian on civilian and so a variation of the military system was utilised.

The timeliness of complaint resolution was discussed. It was noted that timescales are ‘formal’ for formal complaints, but ‘A.S.A.P.’ for informal complaints.

The ‘training’ of staff for complaint handling was discussed and it was noted that there was a five day E.O.D. course and also an H.I.O. course but that not all personnel performing that role had been on the course at the time of the IAP visit, although it was to take place shortly.

Perhaps a good practice issue would be to formally agenda what had been achieved via the processes to impact on redressing the issue raised in the Brigadiers statement. (at page 5 overleaf)

I would like to conclude by stating how ‘open’ and accommodating the ITC Sch. Inf. have been to the I.A.P. There is clearly a desire to do the right thing, and to be able to demonstrate that; but also to learn and continuously improve in the areas of complaints; equal opportunities and diversity; quality assurance in training and representation.

I submit this 2006/07 Report for the information of Alasdair MacConachie OBE.DL (Chair of I.A.P.); Brigadier Clements and Lt. Col. Robinson.

M. A. Banks
Assistant Chief Constable
Durham Constabulary

3rd May 2007

Appendix: 1.IAP Meeting 14 June 2007 at School of Infantry, Catterick
IAP Meeting 14/6/07 at School of Infantry, Catterick

Input from Brigadier David about:

The limitations on funding, which could have been spent on refurbishment but has now been recalled to HQ. Impact on motivation; achievement and retention. Negatively impacts on the Army trying to dispel ‘National Service’ type conditions and portraying itself as a professional army, which looks after its people.

IAP requested to look at Burton Block and the Cook House.

Trends in recruiting and wastage. Effectiveness

Media intrusion into an incident at the Sch. Inf. A briefing was given by the investigating officer and the IAP was satisfied that the correct procedures had been applied and those involved had been given every opportunity to engage in the process.

IAP offered to assist in presenting to media

A discussion took place about recruits and whether they have a realistic expectation about what Army life will be like. The Brigadier has adopted a ‘what surprised you?’ element to recruit survey.

Update on Transformational Leadership

IAP offered a training input for Sch. Inf. Trainers to be conducted outside of Catterick. It was agreed that the first session would take place at Durham Police HQ, and cover Organisational Reputation and Quality Assurance (23/7/7)

IAP visits:

Shooting Training Section: briefing and practical demonstration from WO1 Watson re Close Contact Training Systems, covering the 5 stages of Operational Shooting Package

Burton Block: overview of the Integrated Estate Management Plan and how that is developed externally rather than what ITC want. Burton Block due for demolition in 2 years time therefore there is a reluctance to invest in it.
IAP view: This is unacceptable. Recruits are living in substandard accommodation, which requires painting, repair and upgrading. (e.g. stained carpets; broken window; broken lockers; dishevelled appearance; problems with showers so recruits have to use a different block). It is clear that officers are chasing up contractors (with some repairs requested 2 months ago) but this is preventing them from operational duties.

On a positive note, posters and signage on bullying and equality and diversity support was clearly evident. However, the IAP is certain that the lack of investment in accommodation will be negatively impacting on retention, and on presenting a positive image of the Army.

Cook House: IAP was made aware of some of the recent issues to do with the Cook House, for example poor quality food; time delays in serving; queues; ergonomics; failing a recent inspection (though passing re-inspection).

IAP had lunch at the Cook House and chatted informally to recruits from different stages in training. Without exception, they were all very positive about the regime at ITC. (and even the food!)

IAP and ITC visit to Durham Constabulary 23/7/7

Input was given by Media, Personnel and Professional Standards staff on:

- Media and organisational reputation issues;
- Quality Assurance of Training;
- Fairness at Work Policy;
- Professional Standards and organisational reputation issues.
Looking back over the IAP’s first year it has, given my non-military background, been quite a steep learning curve in understanding the modus operandi of the ITC. That said, the support has been excellent, and I found it particularly useful to join some of the “in the field” training exercises.

In respect of the Commandant’s four points I comment as follows:-

**Complaints**

The evidence has been of all complaints being handled seriously, sensitively and thoroughly. I do feel it can be a fine line between strongly encouraging recruits to succeed, and potentially overstepping the mark.

**Quality & Standards**

I perceive quality and standards being at the very heart of the whole ITC operation, with an impressive commitment to their maintenance at all times. Any diminution of standards would of course place others at risk in situations of real warfare, but this does not stop everybody striving to achieve the highest possible pass rates among recruits.

It is apparent that many recruits come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and often for the first time in their lives have to face up to discipline and high standards. There is an inevitability that some will fall by the wayside, but when compared with much “dumbing down” in the non-military world, the unswerving commitment to standards and success must be applauded.

**Equality & Diversity**

I have seen no evidence other than that all recruits are given an equal opportunity irrespective of background. It is worth mentioning the huge support and encouragement given to recruits who become ill or are injured during training with a view to getting them back on track.
Reputation

The more pro-active management of local press relationships, which has been initiated, is clearly a strong positive, and an ongoing imperative. That said, reputation is extraordinarily difficult to measure, and unfortunately is to some extent at the mercy of events potentially outside the control of the ITC. On a scale of 1-10 I should be interested to know how the Commandant would score the ITC’s current reputation, and what would be his target for improvement.

Other Matter

As you will recall, at our last meeting with the Commandant I raised the subject of budgets, for it is clear that there is no sense of cascaded budgetary ownership, as one would expect in the commercial world. Real ownership can enhance efficiency and effectiveness at all levels.

I felt that even the Commandant was frustrated by his lack of input into budgetary matters, and while it might be like “trying to push water uphill” to effect any move away from centralisation, I feel our report could usefully draw attention to this issue.
Have been following one platoon in First Battalion, Queens Division.

Met them when they were in week 3 of their training and spoke with four young recruits of varying ability. Kept in touch with their progress.

Attended the Live Fire exercise at Warcop - extremely interesting as it showed the further development of the recruits; their knowledge of tactical deployment and use of fire arms with live ammunition. (Bit scary at first but fine as long as one followed instructions and remained behind the line of fire!!) Has to wear a bulletproof vest, which I found extremely heavy, yet this was still lighter than the ones being worn by troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Of the four recruits followed, three passed out successfully on Friday 10.8.07 and I attended their Passing Out Parade. The fourth recruit has had to extend his training, but hopes to pass out in a few weeks time.

It was enlightening to observe the development of these young men in terms of their greater confidence, maturity and enthusiasm by the end of the 24 weeks training.

My grateful thanks to Major ‘Bunny’ Nye and commanding officer Lt. Col. Mike Thornton for allowing me to undertake this exercise and for being so honest, open and hospitable. It was an extremely valuable experience.

I have found my visits very interesting in terms of deepening my knowledge of the training, which recruits experience.

Officers and recruits have been open and honest. However, I would appreciate some time with recruits without officers being present.

It has been particularly useful to meet with, and follow, a small group of very mixed ability recruits. However, I have not been able to visit as frequently as I would wish owing to my other commitments.

The question is to what degree have my visits helped to further the aims and objectives of the IAP with regards to managing: complaints; equality and diversity; quality and standards; reputation?

I have not, so far, been involved in addressing any issues regarding complaints. Although officers have openly shared with me some complaints, which have recently arisen, and the manner in which they were addressed.
I have seen good examples of equality - for example additional help where physical fitness was an issue or further help with academic attainment.

Some good practice in terms of coping with and encouraging diversity e.g. recruits from Gibraltar and Kenya being given particular help with cold weather conditions.

In terms of quality and standards it is clear that 1st Battalion work very hard at this, even though some recruits require additional help and support, many avenues are explored before reaching the decision that a recruit is unable to reach the required standard.

With regard to reputation - I have not had any involvement in any issues connecting with this, although I have discussed, with officers, the importance of reputation and some steps which I took to improve the reputation of my school as Head. I do not say this in any way, which might indicate that they were not fully aware of its importance.

In terms of providing ‘independent, non-statutory advice, challenge, encouragement and support’ - I would hope that I have done this through my visits. It is very difficult to evaluate to what degree this has happened from the point of view of the IAP as a body.

Carole Brown
As a newish member of the IAP, I do not feel qualified to comment upon the professionalism and dedication of everyone that I have encountered at Catterick so far. Without exception, they deserve our unqualified gratitude and support.

At the outset therefore I have no wish to be critical. If there is a particular room for improvement, it is to do with public relations and media handling. It is my view that news rarely happens, it is mostly manufactured and planned in advance. Yet whenever the army is mentioned, stories are critical and senior representatives appear to be on the back foot and defensive rather than pro-active. Too often, there are chains of command to go through before a story is approved for release. The media will interpret this as defensive and opaque. This is not an easy image to redress. It requires hard work, courting of key media and the regular planting of positive news stories so that when there is the potential for something negative to comment upon, the battle for the heart and mind of a particular journalist is more easily won. Dealing with the media is not something that an army professional joins the army to do. It often tends to be thrust upon them and even I can see in my limited dealings with the army to date that they are not entirely comfortable with explaining themselves to civilians. The grammar, the vocabulary, the extensive use of acronyms is not customer friendly.

P W Rowley