



Welcome to the
**INDEPENDENT
ADVISORY
PANEL**
(IAP)



The IAP provide an independent and non-statutory source of advice, challenge, encouragement and support to the College, by exchanging information, identifying good practice, providing feedback, asking questions and assisting in identifying possible areas to address.

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

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2. Foreword by the IAP Chair

It is nearly ten years since publication of the Deepcut Review 2006 led to the creation of IAPs at all Phase 1 military establishments training Junior Soldiers (JS) under the age of 18. Over that period the IAP at Harrogate has gone from strength to strength, with each Commanding Officer acknowledging the IAP and its members as a key part of the assurance arrangements within the College for delivery of the duty of care to JS. Under Lt Col Oz Lane's leadership of the College, working relations with the IAP have gone from strength to strength. As a result, IAP members are confident the College will always be receptive to our ideas, observations and recommendations for further improvement. It is equally receptive to our identification of good practice and our willingness to identify permanent staff whose input is particularly valued by JS.

As the Report illustrates, the key role of the IAP and its members is to provide an independent source of assurance to parents, the College leadership and the young people themselves that every JS has the most positive experience possible whilst undergoing their Phase 1 training at the College. However grown up and mature each JS will become during their time at Harrogate, including carrying lethal weapons and learning how to use them, we are all aware that throughout their training they are still legally minors. As such, a duty of care is owed to them which must be delivered by the College and all its staff.

We operate independently of the military chain of command. IAP members are widely drawn from the local community. *Membership is entirely voluntary and totally unpaid.* IAP members give freely of their time and energy to the work and I would like to thank them all for their commitment and active support to the IAP during 2014. This Summer for the first time ever we advertised some IAP vacancies in the local press and we have been overwhelmed by the quality of response from the community. We were able to appoint three new members from a really strong field of applicants. This bodes really well for the future of our role at the College.

Kevin McAleese CBE, December 2014

3. The Role of the Independent Advisory Panel (IAP)

The role of the IAP is to focus on the duty of care and check whether it is being delivered in the daily life of the JS, whether in training in the classroom, on the parade ground, in the gym or out on military exercise. The independence of IAP members from the College is vital. They are recruited for the range of their expertise and experience in the commercial and industrial world, the public services, education and the military. The majority are parents themselves and serve for a maximum of seven years. *Two IAP members are assigned to each of the five Companies at the College, so that they can understand and explore all aspects of the training and care of the Junior Soldiers and the work of the permanent staff.*

Members of the IAP have access at any time to the Army Foundation College site or wider afield and provide a written report on any activities they undertake. Those activities can include dropping into Company lines, visiting education classes, observing military training and attending exercises in the field. On every visit a key part of any activity will be talking directly with the JS about their experiences to date. IAP reports always acknowledge positive work which is observed, as well as recording any issues relating to the welfare or the duty of care to JS. They may also make recommendations for action where applicable.

IAP members meet at the College as a group up to six times a year with the Commanding Officer and all the Company Commanders, where specific themes and issues arising from the written IAP reports are explored in greater depth. The Annual IAP Report is published at the end of each calendar year and is available to review and download from the College website.

4. IAP meetings this year

The IAP held six meetings this year with the Commanding Officer and his senior leadership team, plus the Officers Commanding the five College Companies. The meeting dates were:

11 February, 15 April, 10 June, 5 August, 7 October, 9 December 2014

5. IAP reports submitted this year and issues discussed

By the end of 2014 some 50 written reports had been submitted by IAP members following visits to activities at the College. An "Action Matrix" is maintained by the IAP Secretary, onto which all report recommendations are first entered, responded to and discussed and then either closed when agreed action has been taken or left for further review. Issues arising from the reports at IAP meetings this year included:

- Army policy on kit and use of e-cigarettes
- JS Access to mobile phones
- Quality of the College Laundry service
- Organisation of the Graduation Day

- Access to leave for JS over weekends
- Explaining to other JS the leadership roles given to some JS
- Access to wet weather clothing
- The Capita recruitment process
- Use of microphones for Open Days and New Intake Days
- Charges for damages in the Lines
- Food quality
- Variability of mobile phone coverage by different networks on the College site
- Inconsistent requirements from permanent staff about uniform and similar matters
- Taking account of prior academic achievement, particularly with Scottish qualifications
- How to provide extra PT sessions
- Medical screening of JS reporting sick
- The use of group discipline
- Access to adventure training
- The use of microphones for public events in the Robinson Theatre
- The gender balance amongst permanent staff and levels of prior training and clearance
- Access to more PT sessions
- A more gradual build up to weight carried on Exercises
- Award of regimental cap badges
- Access to travel permits
- Compulsory Chapel attendance at weekends
- The operation of the on-site Laundry service
- The scheduling of routine medical appointments during off-site Exercises
- The need for a booklet explaining to families and JS the stands and displays available on New Intake Days

There are often no simple solutions to the matters raised, which may involve contracted services and have cost implications, but it is the IAP's role to ask such questions and give them due consideration.

6. Current IAP Members

<p>Alamein Company: Richard Corby is a Chartered Surveyor with wide experience in the property sector and is the director in charge of the Leeds office of a national practice. He has also been a trustee of Leeds Counselling for over 20 years and lives in Harrogate. Appointed in August 2014.</p>
<p>Alamein Company: Kevin McAleese CBE is Chair of the IAP. He was Head of Harrogate Grammar School before becoming Chair of NHS North Yorkshire and York. He currently chairs the City of York Safeguarding Adults Board and also York Housing Association. Appointed July 2011.</p>
<p>Burma Company: Ann Mannion is Head of Information Systems and Programme Management at Skipton Financial Services. She and her husband live in Summerbridge. Appointed May 2014.</p>
<p>Burma Company: Ciaran McGuigan OBE is an Occupational Psychologist and was the Head of Centre at the College of Policing based in Harrogate. He lives in Scotton village. Appointed November 2010.</p>
<p>Cambrai Company: Mark Roberts undertook a series of senior marketing roles before becoming Managing Director of his own premium beer importing company. He lives in Harrogate and has a young family. Appointed July 2014.</p>
<p>Cambrai Company: Beverley Twizell is a retired teacher who worked at a local Young Offenders' Institute. She lives in Spofforth and was appointed in September 2008.</p>
<p>Peninsula Company: Peter Chambers was once a Junior Soldier himself before being commissioned into the Royal Engineers. He then became Head of Strategic Development for BT and now runs a coaching and mentoring business. Appointed July 2013.</p>
<p>Peninsula Company: John Parker is a retired businessman with extensive international experience, most recently in the healthcare sector. He is also chair of By the Bridge, a private fostering business. Appointed September 2014.</p>
<p>Waterloo Company: Angela Monaghan is a Registered Nurse and was the Chief Nurse at Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust until Summer 2014. She is the mother of two young adults. Appointed January 2012.</p>
<p>Waterloo Company: Sue Symington is Vice-Chair of the IAP. She has worked at Director levels across public, private and third sector organizations. Sue is a Non-Executive Director at Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust and The Beverley Building Society, and runs her own business in Knaresborough. Appointed May 2009.</p>

Thanks are also due to four IAP members who gave valuable service during their appointments, which ended during this year: **Gary Dale, Lorna Snowden, and Michelle Woolley**. Particular thanks must also go to **Paul Nee**, who left this year after completing his maximum seven years of service. As a founder IAP member, Paul is the first to have achieved this impressive milestone and his departure was marked with a presentation by the Commanding Officer in October 2014.

The IAP was also very appreciative of the secretarial support received during the year from firstly [REDACTED] and then [REDACTED]

7. Commanding Officer's Response

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Appendix

8. Aspects of Junior Soldiers' life at the College as reported in extracts from individual IAP reports. (Note: JS= Junior Soldiers; PS = Permanent Staff; DAOR = Discharge As Of Right, names of individuals have been removed)



17.1.14, Cambrai. I then spent time with 9 platoon on the Lines. They seem a gregarious and upbeat group and were keen to express themselves. The usual suspects were raised-dirty, wet laundry, repetitive food choices and dirty plates in the canteen. So nothing new there! There were comments made about blanket punishment for individual wrongdoing, no recognition of Scottish qualifications, use of own kit on exercise and complaints regarding kit and equipment supplied..

However, there were 3 interesting issues which deserve consideration.

- 1) I noticed that quite a number of JS had E cigarettes but there was general confusion over when and where these could be "smoked".
- 2) The vending machines in the Education block are "locked up" at 3pm but the JS don't finish class until 5pm so they are unable to purchase snacks during afternoon break.
- 3) Cold weather boots were supplied after the exercise.

There had been an allegation of bullying behaviour made against two JS. The JS concerned were promptly removed to other platoons and this appears to have solved the problem. No JS had ever seen or experienced any form of bullying or inappropriate behaviour from PS, (this includes two in the process of DAOR). They consider the PS to be hard but fair. Several said they acted professionally all the time.

Alamein 22.1.14 I met the OC at 11.30am. There are still no DAORs across 24 and 25 Platoons, and one uncertain JS has been reassured and will continue. The Company moves off for two weeks of Exercises, with the first week in Otterburn and then on up to Kirkudbright for Battle Camp. Results on the shooting range have been very pleasing so, subject to there being no injuries on Exercise, all of the JS can look forward to graduating on 20 February. Fittings have been carried out for No 2 Dress and Regimental cap

badges will be worn shortly. These are important steps on the final stages of the course.

I then went into 24 Platoon Lines and spent half an hour talking freely with one of the Sections who were undertaking admin after a Gym lesson. Some 10 JS talked, I thought very honestly, about their experiences to date. A number admitted some anxiety about next week's Exercises and some said they hated sleeping in the open and being exposed to the elements. They described the use of press-ups as a punishment which made them fitter, and generally saw group punishments in the early part of the course as a way of getting them to gel together as a Section. They were unsurprised by the two JS who had DAORed. The PS were seen as firm but fair with some being more approachable than others. There were no complaints at all of unfair or excessive treatment.

They valued having free access to their mobile phones now when the day's work finished, though most saw the sense in having very limited access in the first six weeks because otherwise homesickness could have been even worse. The JS said there is no wifi facility in the Company Lines so they tend to use the facilities in the Education Wing.

27.3.14, Peninsula. Time was spent with recently appointed CSM ■, who seemed pleased with the handover that he had received from his predecessor. He is happy with what he has found in Peninsula Company and thought that the JS were making good progress. This view was reiterated by 2I/C ■ who confirmed that they were through the spike of DAORs that followed the return from the Christmas break and that numbers had settled at around 210. A JS had got into trouble in town and his case was being looked into by senior staff. Otherwise, there had been no significant disciplinary matters since my last visit and ■ thought that this reflected the growing levels of maturity amongst the JS, now in their 28th week of the course. He and the CSM had been impressed with how the JS had performed on the recent TAC EX at Otterburn and asked that I seek feedback from the JS on how they had viewed the experience.

I had called the 2I/C a couple of hours before to let him know of my intended visit and he had arranged for me to spend time with 2 JS from each of the 6 platoons. I found them in good heart and they were happy to talk. They seemed bemused that I should ask about bullying and whether it was something that they had encountered during their time at the AFC. Other than "banter" which occasionally came too close to being unacceptable they were united and forthright in their view that it was not an issue for them. They felt confident that if they were to see it occur that they could talk to their PS but also said that they thought fellow JS would not tolerate it in any case.

They had really enjoyed TAC EX and the chance to put all their earlier training into practice - this had been the best part of the course to date. They were also appreciative of their improving relationship with PS which had become much more adult/adult compared to the adult/child feel of the early weeks. They talked about Section Commanders choosing to complete some of their admin in the lines (ironing) and chatting freely to the JS about their experiences - they have developed a strong sense of belonging and inter dependency. They are looking forward to the forthcoming realities of war training in Normandy.

25.4.14 Waterloo. I arrived at 11am and spent an hour in the lines with JS and their families. I had the opportunity to speak with all the JS in one section. My opening question was to ask if their first 6 weeks the AFC had matched their expectations. In every case it had been better than the JS thought. There were no grumbles about any aspect of their experience and plenty of positive endorsements of the permanent staff. In particular the family of one JS spoke very highly of ■ who had conscientiously provided the family of one JS with excellent support and prompt effective communications while their son/ JS 'wobbled' about his career choice. It was very clear that ■ had done much to reassure the family.

I spent my second hour in the canteen again speaking with parents and JS. I was reminded of the great diversity among the JS and their family backgrounds. Creating a 'level' among the JS is a real challenge and my sense is that [REDACTED] and the PS are doing a great job of achieving this (for interest, I had lunch in the canteen- huge amount of varied food available for JS and their families and it did seem that some families were really enjoying their free lunch!!)

From my conversations it seems that the major issue for this cohort of JS is homesickness. It seems that real homesickness starts at about week two and that for many JS this is a horrible time- and also a worrying time for parents. One particular JS spoke about his time of greatest homesickness and interestingly he said his misery hadn't arisen from one single event- but a series of small things. I was reminded of the findings of the Deepcut investigation in that no one single thing breaks the spirit of a JS but that it is a series of seemingly minor issues which together can create an unbearable situation.

I asked all the families about telephone communications and the parents all confirmed that they had an opportunity to speak with their child every day- however it would seem that there is variable reception for different phone networks with some being absolutely fine and dependable and others less reliable.

17.7.14, Burma. [REDACTED] had arranged for me to meet with approx 12 JS and we agreed that he would sit in on this first session. The general mood was very positive, as they have nearly finished the course, with only the Battle Camp to complete. I asked some general questions about what they had found hard about the course and how their views have changed from when they arrived. Being away from home and undertaking exercises were considered difficult as was the transition from being a 'normal teenager' to the life of a soldier. In terms of what they had found positive, one JS said that he had learned a lot and felt that he had come a long way, which met with agreement from others. Many said that they had made strong friendships through the course and now would rather be with their friends from the AFC than their 'old' friends, with whom they no longer feel they have much in common.

I asked how helpful they found the PS and they all said that they were very supportive, particularly their Section Leaders, e.g. showing them how to prepare their kit by example. When asked whether there were any negatives, laundry was mentioned. Specific issues were listed as: getting other people's items mixed in with their own; damage to clothes by burning or laundry marker pen, which resulted in the JS being blamed; items not being properly cleaned. I asked about the food and the response was that there was plenty of it and it was generally good, although it could be repetitive. Several commented that they hadn't really liked it in the beginning, as it was not what they were used to, but once they had adjusted to it they thought it was quite good.

[REDACTED] then gave me a tour of the College. I was very impressed with the range and quality of the facilities and the variety of welfare support channels for the JS. Everyone I met greeted me warmly and I formed a very positive impression of the people and the environment.

1.10.14, Waterloo A close track was kept on progress of JS back at base and their status about ability to join the Company in Otterburn as well as monitoring those JS who were not fully fit on exercise. An army nurse was based for the duration of the exercise with the Company, which is routine practice for all such exercises. I visited sections

of JS out on exercise, speaking to sections within 3,4,5 and 6 platoons over the two days and also observing preparations and briefings for activities and activities themselves . Almost without exception, I found the JS in good morale and this was more impressive on the morning of the second day when the temperature had dropped 10 degrees from the previous night to only 2 degrees.

I also noted that it is up to the PS to devise the individual exercises and it seemed to me that considerable care was given to this which was generally appreciated by the JS. Members of 5 platoon said that their section and platoon commanders were “squared” , for example. On checking, this is a compliment, meaning “organised “ and “sorted !” There are tedious and boring tasks to undertake such as constructing “shell scrapes“ in the ground to afford protection from the enemy . One JS in 3 platoon told me that he had got a bit fed up and one of the PS had told him about the construction of trenches in the First World War which he had found interesting. The mini exercises are the best bits for the JS it would seem. I saw one exercise which revolved around helping a wounded “local national“ and the debrief afterwards. Care was taken not to embarrass the JS leading this and he was debriefed separately (as is always the case) before joining the others. Major J contributed to the learning on this and spoke vividly about real life experiences in the field which all found riveting.

In the evening an “O Group“ meeting takes place. This allows opportunity for all the PS on exercise to meet and be briefed on keys points. I was interested to hear of the care that was taken to ensure everybody was prepared for a very cold night to follow.

14.10.14 Cambrai. My visit to Education highlighted to me what a great opportunity the AFC are providing JS to achieve Level 1 and 2 qualifications in core subjects, to those JS that might have not had a positive experience with mainstream school education. It struck me how engaged the JS were across all the classes I visited, and in my opinion this is largely due to the excellent efforts of the PS to make the lessons relevant and practical to the JS. In particular, witnessing █████ explain fractions and decimals to JS by relating these concepts to discounts on purchasing and Xbox and Army weaponry was excellent!

I then met with some of the NCOs, before hosting a group discussion with JS on the lines. Overall spirits were high. The JS were all looking forward to the upcoming Families Day and the subsequent week’s leave. It seemed that the JS were getting to grips with Army life, and were generally very positive about the training so far. Unprompted comments about how much they enjoyed Education and the intense bonding between the JS were exceptionally encouraging to hear. There were of course some grumbles and niggles primarily about physical training and food provision.

The JS expected much more physical training to take place within the first six weeks, and expressed a strong desire for more PT opportunities. Many commented that they had put on weight and that their general fitness and specifically running times had decreased since joining the AFC. When pressed they understood the reasons why PT was limited in the first 6 weeks, but suggested that expectations for this could have been managed better before arrival. All were looking forward to increased opportunities for personal PT following their return from leave.

When I asked the JS about potential unfair treatment in training, or instances in which banter can cross the line, I was impressed by how aware these JS seemed to be on the avenues available to report it and the expected likelihood of how this would be handled. Whilst some of the JS commented that it would be difficult to raise an issue or grievance with some of the PS, they quoted without prompting the role of Welfare, the IAP and the CISP process. When pushed on the reasons why some JS might not feel confident in reporting issues to the PS, the main reason seemed to be that they were still unsure about whether this could have a negative impact for them personally in future training. Some PS were called out as being exceptionally approachable – Sgt. P and Bombardier M were specifically named as great examples. Welfare were also seen as being very helpful, approachable and removed from the system that could lead to any personal implications.