

Alpha Company (SW)
Marine Cadet Staff Conference
12th December 2009

1. Welcoming

Maj Benton welcomed everyone to the 2009 Alpha Company Conference, with a Special welcome going to Lt Cdr S Bradbury, SWA ATO.

Present

Coy Cdr – Maj I Devenish RMR
Coy 2IC – Maj A Benton RMR
CSM – WO2 P Wagstaff RMR
Coy Clk – Sgt V Wagstaff
Coy TO – C/Sgt P Edwards
SW ATO – Lt Cdr S Bradbury RNR

C/Sgt N Hignett	C/Sgt P O'Connor	CI R Stirling
P/Sgt G Lewis	Mr I Smith-Jones	Sgt M Cann
P/Sgt M Burnett	Sgt S Stevens	Sgt J Williams
S/Lt B Nash RNR	P/Sgt D Balfour	Mr P Butcher
Sgt S Kent	P/Sgt A Balfour	P/Sgt R Burlace
C/Sgt M Webley	Mr L Bissell	Sgt L Kesterton
Sgt P Lawrence	Mr S Lee	CPO N Gregory
C/Sgt P McEllin	C/Sgt C Morgan	Sgt J Brammer
Sgt P Bird	Sgt S Scholes	Lt S Vokes RNR
Lt Cdr S Lawes RNR	S/Lt S Glover RNR	Lt J Thurland RMR
P/Sgt P Gurney	Miss R Swift	Sgt N Thompson
Sgt D Edwards	Mr M Smith	Sgt L Turberville
C/Sgt K Cooper	Sgt D Austin	Sgt D Hayshom

2. Format of the Conference

This was explained by Maj Benton. A change to the agenda was announced, presentations will be taking place after the Area Officer's address.

We will be holding a working lunch, at 1300 not 1230.

The conference is hopefully finishing around 1500, due to the football.

3. Apologies

AO – Cdr M Skeer RN	Cpl McBride (Attached Rank)
DAO – Cdr J Binns RN	CSgt M Claridge
SSO – Cdr G Hollywell RNR	Sgt K Caddick
RSM – WO1 G Robinson RMR	Capt D Scholes RMR
PO L Perry (Attached Rank)	S/Lt C Girling RNR
Sgt P Bickley	

4. Security and Health & Safety Brief

This was given by WO2 P Wagstaff

5. Minutes of the last conference & Matters Arising

NIL

6. Lt Cdr Bradbury Address

Lt Cdr Bradbury, South West Area Training Officer introduced himself.

He continued to present courses that are available for all staff within the Company:

- Pre Officers Course – This is a “Dip your toe in the water” course for anyone thinking of becoming an Officer within the next 5 years. At the end of the weekend, you will receive an evaluation, not a recommendation. This is run twice a year at Raleigh.
- POAC – This is the first formal part of becoming an Officer. P2 is to be filled in and sent onto Area Office, via the Coy Cdr. It will then be forwarded onto the SSO where you will receive an invite to attend the course. Rather than having dates set, as soon as 6 candidates are booked, we’ll run a course. Information is all detailed in SWAM 01/2008. If successful, a mentor will be allocated from the Area Training team.
- National OSB – The current format of this course is about to change. This is going to change from 1 weekend to 2 weekends. All details to follow.
- AIC – This is a compulsory course for everyone who joins the Corps. If you don’t get this done in 6 months, you’ll be asked to leave the unit however, this is going to change to a 3 strike system. AIC courses are being run every month at a charge of £20.
- CSgt & Chiefs course – This has been made into a week’s course nationally, to standardise CSgt & Chiefs. SWA are now running a weekend assessment to help prepare you for the week’s course. This is being run along the same lines as the POAC course.

One thing we are looking for is trained staff to help as trainers on the above courses. We only have two Marines at present; we would like to see some more helping out.

C/Sgt Cooper – On the last MAST, did people come along to the Core Drill Module too early?

Lt Cdr Bradbury – Yes, this is being amended to say that you do not come onto Core Drill Modules until you are in uniform. This will be written into the National training orders. Chapter 4 is now being re-written with regards to promotion.

Sgt Bird – Are there any exceptions for previous service?

Lt Cdr Bradbury – Prior learning, for example first aid & IM can be forwarded and signed off. Regarding MC Modules, you would need to speak to Maj Devenish.

Maj Benton – If anyone is interested in becoming a MC Officer then please contact myself. If anyone is interest in becoming a C/Sgt and or WO2 then please contact WO2 Wagstaff.

Training

C/Sgt Edwards, Alpha Company Training Officer introduced himself.

The following attached was presented by C/Sgt Edwards. All questions below



Alpha Company
Conference 2009 - TC

Double click icon to open presentation

Training Questions

C/Sgt Webley – Re the Arduous Course, have the ages changed as we had a cadet that was refused for not being 16?

C/Sgt Edwards – I will look into this and get back to you.

Maj Devenish – The minimum age for this course is 16, requirements are published on Westminster and on www.acoy.co.uk

Lt Cdr Lawes – Re Cadet Courses, what's the situation for females applying on national courses?

Maj Devenish – If a female instructor applies to be DS on a course, female cadets will be allowed to attend the course. This is controlled by HQ Company and Courses Office. If you have a female Cadet that meets the criteria for a National Course then please apply!

Sgt Cann – Re the Basic course, is there no capacity for Cpls to help out DS as a supervisory role on the basic course?

C/Sgt Edwards – The problem is they are very limited for bunks and they need to allocate as much space to the cadets the course is aimed at.

S/Lt Glover – If the Field assessment is a 2 day course, why is the weekend not a 2 day assessment?

Maj Devenish – The weekend is a two day assessment. HQ staff mark there 100 marks on the Saturday. The Coy staff doesn't always have the opportunity to see what you do within the field, so this gives us a chance to make assessments during the rest of the weekends training. It is also possible that the assessment will run into the Sunday depending on timings and weather.

C/Sgt Edwards – Sometimes we don't always get round the units and see enough fieldwork relating to the UR/RNPs, therefore we can utilise what we see on the Saturday evening/Sunday morning.

S/Lt Glover – But cadets don't see the HQ staff after the assessment and therefore think the weekend is over.

Maj Devenish – That's why we have discussed and briefed this item, Detachment staff can now go back to their Detachments and explain this that the Field Assessment is a two day Assessment. It is also possible during 2010 that the Field Assessments will change anyway!

C/Sgt Edwards - Please note that during the 2010 Field Assessments, staff will not be allowed to tag along with cadets for the briefings. Staff are also not allowed to be in the vicinity of the model and orders. Staff will be welcomed back once the assessment is under way to watch their Cadets.

Lt S Vokes – Re Easter Ex, are there any limitations for numbers of cadets?

C/Sgt Edwards - No

C/Sgt Webley – Will we have A2s?

C/Sgt Edwards - No

Sgt Wagstaff – What will the cost be?

C/Sgt Edwards - £5

All information can be found on the company website - WWW.ACOY.CO.UK

During 2009, we have had to cancel three core modules due to under subscription. These are mandatory courses and need to be attended. Because of budgets if the course doesn't meet the minimum numbers then unfortunately we will have to cancel.

If there are any courses you'd like us to run as a Company, let us know and we'll look into it. If the budget and need is there it shouldn't be a problem.

7. Finance Report

Sgt V Wagstaff presented the Company Accounts:

- Main Account - SWAMC
- Alpha Company Staff Fund

The conference agreed the accounts.

8. Coy Cdr – Publicity & Communications

Globe & Laurel Articles – Other companies within the SCC have been sending articles in directly to the Globe & Laurel which have been quite shocking and unprofessional. All proposed articles need to be vetted by Alpha Company Commander first, which will then get forwarded on to the SRMO. If you are to send in photos, these also need to be of high quality and relevant to the article.

A Coy Website – We currently have a news feed on the website. If you have something to publicise, please send to Coy Cdr and it will be added on.

A Coy Email system – There have been complaints received re: spam. Unfortunately we have no control over spam within the company email facilities, therefore please try and set up the email on outlook, which has a built in spam filter. The Company Commander reminded those with an Alpha Company Email Account that it is only to be used for Sea Cadet business.

9. Welfare Boxes

C/Sgt Cooper – As we are attached to the Royal Marines, why don't we help support our troops by sending out welfare boxes?

Would DCs be willing to help 40 Cdo by sending these welfare boxes out?
General consensus from the conference was of agreement.

Specifics would include:

- Shoe box sized, max of 2kg in weight.
- Must be addressed to a specific person
- Aerosols cans are a definite no
- All packages need to have a customs declaration

Detachments can start making these up and liaise with C/Sgt Cooper

All info will again be on the website.

10. Work Groups

All troops broke down into work groups and reviewed the current cadet syllabus, over a working lunch.

These were discussed briefly afterwards and all 3 troops generally had the same message.

All Troop Sergeants are to collate their information and report back to CSM by January 30th 2010, for action for further discussion with the MCDO - WO1 RSM Robinson RMR.

11. Question Time

S/Lt Glover – Why don't we use computer technology and why isn't it allowed to be used by Cadets when on boards?

Maj Devenish – Firstly – who is going to supply this technology? Secondly - The lessons are designed to be taught in the field, therefore technology is to be kept to a minimum. We won't always have a suitable venue to use technology. Also, not all cadets have access to it. We have tried it before but it started to get silly when cadets were bringing PowerPoint's on iPods. Cadets have also been known to copy other peoples work, i.e. Staffs.

S/Lt Glover – But surely the cadet is being assessed on how they deliver and not so much the content?

Maj Devenish – The content has a huge impact on the assessment and sometimes when cadets were questioned about the content, they had no idea of the subject and how to answer as it wasn't their work.

Lt Vokes – From the IM teaching side, we encourage Cadets to use their own skills and projection rather than standing in front of a screen and talking about it. This shows the Cadets ability of putting lessons across, rather than talking about a PowerPoint.

Maj Devenish – From a practical element, if we were to supply a PowerPoint projector and it failed to work, then the Cadet is stuck, how would they deliver his/her lesson?

Maj Devenish – Lets put this to a vote to the conference on PowerPoint's & projectors for lecturettes?

The Conference voted unanimously **NO To The Use Of PowerPoint Projector for Cadet Examination Boards**

S/Lt Glover – As the MC Field Assessments hold a large proportion of the MCD RNP/UR scores, why are field assessments not subject to the marking and feedback system as RNP & URs?

Maj Devenish – The SRMO gives feedback after each attack and unfortunately time doesn't allow them to write up a feedback report for every Detachment. When I was a Detachment Commander I used to capture the feedback in a dedicated notebook, this I used to make adjustments to my training year on year. There are a number of Detachment Commanders that currently use this system, this is reflected in there scores achieved. I have asked the SRMO if we could have a written breakdown of the actual attack which makes up the total scores. This has been agreed and SRMO will provide a crib sheet for each Detachment. Be prepared that it is understood that the Field Assessment system is due to change during 2010/11!

S/Lt Glover – Can we have the crib sheet circulated prior to the field assessment so we know what and how much different parts of the assessment is marked out of.

Maj Devenish – Coy Standing Orders gives a breakdown of what is expected at an Annual Field Assessment and what is assessed.

C/Sgt Edwards – Can SRMO & Capt Reynolds assess each Detachment the same way, i.e. Capt Reynolds assesses the model only and the SRMO assess the attack only? This way all the scoring would be consistent.

Maj Devenish – This is still open for discussion with the SRMO. I am expecting a briefing at the next Company Commanders Conference as to the future of the Annual Field Assessments.

Maj Devenish – A Question for the Conference - Do you think the current advance to contact scenario, is current and should form part of the annual field assessment or is it too aggressive for the our Cadets?

The Conference voted unanimously that “the current advance to contact scenario” to be kept in. This is to be fed back to the SRMO by the Company Commander.

S/Lt Glover – What are the Area team doing to encourage integration of MC and Sea Cadets following an announcement from the AOs meeting about study interlinks?

Maj Devenish – Don't know anything about this study. It is known that North West Area are currently having problems, but Alpha Company has an excellent relationship with all within South West Area. Alpha Company is well represented at every level and integration is second to none and is a current model for the rest of the country to follow. (Many in the conference including some assemble Commanding Officers agreed with this statement).

S/Lt Glover - Who decides if Alpha Company is proud of its detachment on the UR Paperwork and what is the criteria of this?

Maj Devenish – The Troop Commander does.

Sgt Kesterton – Re the format of the way some of the exams are being assessed, are these going to become more field orientated.

Maj Devenish – We will link into the Troop work that has been done today and any future rework of the MC Cadet Syllabus. All will be forwarded to HQ Company. I would like to see our current assessment be more field orientated, something for the future I hope!

Sgt Kesterton – Can we have more Staff training cadres during Annual Camp? At some camps, Troop Officers/Sergeants tend to detail their troop staff off to run lessons, however at times have received negative responses due to the staff being too junior or not having the correct knowledge. Would it be feasible to run staff cadres?

C/Sgt Edwards – Good question, well presented but in the past it hasn't worked. Also H&S deems a 6-1 staff to cadet ratio which can cause a problems.

Maj Devenish – If we get enough take up from Staff for this year Summer Camp and we can provide adequate supervision for our Cadets then I would love to run staff core modules during the camp!

12. Awards 2009

The Following Trophies were presented. These nominations have been put forward from Alpha Company nationally:

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|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • McCarroll Trophy (Zeebrugge Shield) | Sgt V Wagstaff – Walsall Detachment |
| • Gibraltar Cup (Speanbridge Trophy) | Bristol Filton Detachment |
| • SRMOs Award (Port Stanley Cup) | Yeovil Detachment |
| • Indefatigable Shield | MC2 R Nash – Gloucester Detachment |

13. Any Other Business

CSM – Copies of JSP595 Cadet Safety Precautions 2009 are available after the conference.

14. Way Forward 2010

We need to continue with our instructor training during 2010, by getting our skills up to date (current and competent). Core modules are the key to our training and to provide a professional service to our Cadets.

Key Elements for 2010:

- PUSH STAFF TRAINING

- PUSH PROGRESSION SUCCESSION PLANNING
- PUSH PERSONEL DEVELOPMENT

Thank you all for your help throughout 2009. We are still setting standards nationally and need to maintain the standards. Good Luck to Bristol Filton in the forthcoming Gibraltar Cup.

Merry Christmas and a safe journey home.

15. Date of next Conference

Saturday 11th December 2010, Venue TBC