

# Alpha Company (South West Area) Marine Cadet Staff Conference 13th December 2008

## 1. Welcoming

Captain Benton welcomed everyone to the 2008 Alpha Company Conference, with a Special Welcome going to Cdr N Hinch RN and a thank you to CSgt Claridge for letting us use Bristol Filton SCU for the venue and the stop over.

## Present

Coy Cdr – Major I Devenish RMR  
Coy 2IC – Major A Benton RMR  
CSM – WO2 P Wagstaff RMR  
South West Area Officer – Cdr N Hinch RN  
Coy Clk – Sgt V Wagstaff  
Cpl P McBride (Attached Rank)

Sgt M Cann	Sgt J Taylor	SLt L Jeffries	TI J Williams
Sgt N Thompson	Sgt C Kelley	CSgt P McEllin	CSgt M Webley
Sgt A Lawrence	Sgt D Edwards	Sgt C Cardus	TI B Southan
PO B Nash	Sgt R Mitchell	CSgt J Coles	Lt S Volkes
Sgt C Morgan	Sgt N Rayer	Lt C Shepherd	Sgt S Stevens
CPO N Gregory	Sgt B Burlace	Sgt L Kesterton	CSgt M Claridge
PSgt S Griffiths	CSgt A O'Connor	PO C Girling	Sgt J Throop
CSgt N Hignett	Sgt G Lewis	Sgt P Bickley	CSgt P Edwards
Sgt S Kent	Sgt D Austin	TI A Derby	

## 2. Format of the Conference

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

## 3. Apologies

SRMO – CSgt A Bourne RM	WO1 G Robinson RMR	PO L Perry RN
Lt Cdr G Hollywell	Sgt D Exley	T Austin
CSgt K Cooper		

## 4. Security and Health & Safety Brief

This was given by WO2 P Wagstaff

## 5. Minutes of the last conference & Matters Arising

NIL

## **6. Area Officers Address - Cdr Neil Hinch RN**

- Navy board for funding. This year the Chief Exec & CSC have asked for £2 million, rising to £5 million over the next few years. However, because the defence budget is tight we may only receive £300,000 or £400,000. Money is likely to drop to half because of budget. Good news is that we shouldn't be any worse off than we are currently.
- Thanks went out to all the staff for their hard work and effort
- Unit survey, regarding real estate's within units around Britain. We are still awaiting the results of this, which will point out the units needing more work to make appealing.
- A good news story is that adult volunteers within South West have risen in numbers over the last 12 months. Cadet numbers have also gone up during the same period.
- Westminster – South West haven't been brilliant on completing this, which needs to be done by January 09. If Cadets are not on Westminster they cannot be involved in Competitions or courses.
- Weymouth – About 6 months ago the housing developer almost scuppered the building plans. Luckily MOD bailed us out by injecting money into Weymouth. Cadets are due to move back sometime during January 2009.
- Jack Petchy – This is the Corps new boat, which is due to be birthed in London. The first voyage are due to be soon
- South West Area – Alpha Company come on in leaps and bounds, with many new detachments being opened this year. We have been working well together and Alpha Company Cadets always seem smart, upbeat and happy.
- Gibraltar Cup 07 – BZ to Bristol Filton who won this year, again for South West.
- Trafalgar Parade London 08 – Captain commented The Alpha company Display was the best display and saved the day.
- Comments have been passed on to the next Area Officer, that South West Area is the best. The handover to the new AO will take place in April 09.

### OPEN QUESTIONS -

Coy Cdr – Is there any talk about moving away from the VA?

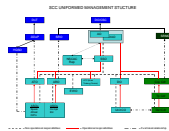
AO – The new VA - I have never been happy with and I think it needs to be looked at, however I don't think it will be looked at for a couple of years.

Coy Cdr – To be fair though, £30 for a weekends training is an insult to a AV's

AO – I agree, however unfortunately Norman Sheldon is leaving 31<sup>st</sup> March 09 and his position is not going to be filled. Going forward, the job will be split between existing members of Area staff to save some money. Clare will be looking after the T17's and Peter Stallibrass will be running the budget.

Coy Cdr – Is there any news on the Workstrand project?

AO - South West Area are going to re-write the Corps organisation, as we're the ones who are always saying it needs changing. This will get each Area to balance together, using a common template for all the Areas.



Click PowerPoint

AO – the AO explained the PowerPoint. We currently have 2 Warrant Officers within South West Area; however we could potentially have 7. I'm happy for people to be put up to the Warrant Officers post, however what would you do once you've become a Warrant Officer as you need to have a position. Warrant Officers need to be identified as what they should be doing. They should not be attached to units.

Lt Cdr Main – How far away from it being rolled out are we?

AO – South West is happy with it, but it needs to be Okayed by everyone in the Corps.

Coy Cdr – explained the template had been agreed by the all the Company Commanders, RSM and SRMO with CSC at the November meeting.

CSgt P Edwards – DBM, are they going to more control over the chairman, in the cases where the chairman's aren't very good within their positions?

AO – The way to get rid of a chairman is to manage it. You need to talk to Peter Stallibrass and he can advise how to go about it democratically.

AO – This is my last conference and it's been a pleasure and will try to keep in touch. Merry Christmas & a prosperous New Year to one & all within Alpha Company.

## **7. Awards 2008**

The following national nominations have been put forward from Alpha Company for 2008:

- McCarroll Trophy
  - Speanbridge Trophy & Gibraltar Cup Nominee
  - Indefatigable Shield
  - Port Stanley Cup
  - Leadership Trophy
- Sgt Thompson – Exeter  
Bristol Adventure Detachment  
Leading Cadet Sims – Britsol Adv  
Exeter Detachment  
Cdt Sgt A Balfour & D Balfour – Bristol Filton

We should hear the results of these within the next month.

On top of these awards the AO presented the following to:

- HM Lord Lieutenants Award of the West Midlands WO2 P Wagstaff RMR
- HM Lord Lieutenants Award of the City of Bristol Major I Devenish RMR

The Company Commander presented Cdr Hinch with a Bronze Marine Statue as a token of our appreciation for supporting Alpha Company and South West Area during his tenure.

## **8. POAC and National OSB Process**

Coy 2 IC – Lt Cdr Gary Hollywell was due to talk about this, however unfortunately he is ill and sends his apologies

We currently only have 6 officers within Alpha Company and only 4 of those are currently active. I am looking for potential officers to push forward through the system during 2009. People have indicated that they are happy being a SNCO. If anyone is seriously interested in it, contact the 2IC and he will pass on all relevant information regarding it. The May AMTAC has a Potential Officers Course on it – If your interest then book via Westminster.

Coy Cdr – Basically, we have only have 5 years in post and need people to take on our posts after us. Succession planning is being activity pushed within the Corps.

The following posts need to be filled by active officers:

Coy Cdr  
2 IC  
TO

## **9. Coy Cdrs & CSMs Conference – November 2008**

Coy Cdr – We currently have 2 conferences to attend each year, one in April & one in November. The marine cadet organisation is now starting to move forward at a rapid pace and is better organised than it ever has been; this has increased our training professionalism and liaison with the RM. We need feedback from detachment staff so we can put it forward to these conferences as things are finally being listened to and actioned.

Minutes from the May and Nov 08 are now ONLINE!

**The following was discussed at the April 08 Conference –**

- Camps – Alpha Company ran their own camp this year, which saw qualifications and training come out on top. 2009 is a national Camp.
- Gibraltar Cup was held in March and saw Bristol Filton winning the trophy back for Alpha Company.
- Company Orbat – the Alpha Company Template is now the National Template for all Companies within the SCC.
- KG IV course @ CTC Frimley – This is the replacement course for the old Advanced Course which used to be held at Lympstone. Currently, no-one from Alpha Company has been on this to date.
- CPO & CSgts Qualifying Course – It's no longer a giveaway course, as there is a lot of emphasis on management & Leadership.
- Warrant Officer Selection – There is a set standard to go on this and after sitting on the board, I can confirm that this is one of the most difficult courses around.
- Exercise Bavarian Surprise – This is a free course for cadets, therefore please let them know about it.
- Cadet basic, Intermediate and Arduous Courses – This is now run by the RSM
- Cadet Sergeant Boards – We need cadets on this as we currently only have 2 in the company who are due to leave soon
- Adult Steering Groups – Our representatives are currently the RSM & Captain Walsh, from Lima Company.

- Cadet steering groups – The Sea Cadet syllabus is changing, however the Marine Cadet syllabus is staying as it is for now until our adult Training is completed – work is in progress with the RSM and Capt Walsh.
- National Drill – Alpha Company haven't lost this competition since 2001, with 1 Troop (Perry Barr & Walsall) winning this year. It has been suggested that the drill team is changed from 12+1 to 8+1, but this was turned down by the other Coy Cdrs.
- Adults and Cadet Flashes – These are now available from Sea cadet stores at the cost of a £1 a pair – Bargain.
- Age for Marine Cadets – There has been a lot of discussion with regards to lowering the age from 13 to 12. It was voted that the entry age for Marines cadets will stand at 12. 9 (3 months as a recruit).
- Combat Medic – This is now not going to be included in Marine Cadet Training Programme.
- National Detachments Commanders Course - Is this a good idea? It was agreed that an Area Detachment Commanders course would be beneficial and could be ran as an AMTAC as soon as a syllabus could be agreed.
- New weapon allocation - Apparently figures for allocation were collated around 10 years ago. The new weapons are due to start rolling out September 2009 onwards. We will be receiving 55 firing A2's, however only 20 BFA's, which doesn't add up (RSM working on). We cannot use A1 kit with A2 weapons either. Currently it looks like every Detachment will receive 2 DP SA80 A2's. Units will be receiving PP weapons....not sure on numbers though. It had also been confirmed that a conversion is going to be ran.
- Terms of References - These are not rolled out Nationally. The ToR's will be rolled out, but nothing major is due to change. RSM has TOR's for every job in the ORBAT and will distribute nationally when the workstrand is complete. The Company standing Orders are to be used until that point.
- DO's Conferences – In the past Troop Commanders have being invited to the DO conferences. This is not going to happen from now on. Coy Cdrs only – Coy Cdr to take up with RSM and SRMO.
- Westminster - MCD is now split on the system, i.e. Walsall & Walsall MCD. This splits the Sailors from the Marines and helps us invite Marine Cadets/Staff rather than the whole of a unit. Cadets need to be put into Westminster ASAP. All MC staff and Cadets need to put under the MCD banner.
- Norway 2009 – This is an Arctic training trip for Cadets, with the cost being between £800-£900. However the true cost to a cadet will be around £100 or less. There are only spaces for 10 Cadets & 2 Staff and this will probably be for the more senior cadets.
- Clay Pigeon Instructor Course – For this course you need to be Full Bore qualified, however this is on hold as the Pamphlet is being written.
- Assault course supervisors – Royal Marines PT won't touch this, however School of Army PT are thinking of bringing this back. If we send people on the trainers course, they can then train our staff to become assault course supervisors. SRMO dealing. Coy Cdr pursuing with SRMO.
- UKSCC – The SMRO has raised concerns that some posts are inappropriate and rude. Be careful what you post and make sure its correct first. If you need to ask questions, ask the Company staff first as they are here to help. Utilise the knowledge within Alpha Company. The forums are now being monitored by HQ, so please be careful.
- Marine Ceremonial Events - If you want to run a major ceremonial event, you need to apply via a form to Alpha Company HQ and this will be vetted. This may then have to go to the SRMO and RSM depending on the event. Application form online within our Standing Orders.

**The following was discussed at the November 08 Conference –**

- Gibraltar Cup - As far as we know, the competition is going to run as it did last year. The RMVCC are going to piggy back on to us on the Saturday.
- Field Assessment – Please remember that this is a 2 day event. The North assessment will be held 11-13<sup>th</sup> September 2009 @ Caerwent. The Southern assessment will be held 16-18<sup>th</sup> October 2009 @ Caerwent
- Gibraltar Cup – This will be held 6-8<sup>th</sup> March 2009.
- Annual Camp 2009 – This is to be a National Camp, held 25<sup>th</sup> July – 1<sup>st</sup> August 2009 @ Okehampton. It will be a military camp, unlike 2007's. Applications via Westminster under Alpha Company.
- CTCRM Cadet Courses – Please get your cadets on these courses.
  - Arduous Course – This is open to all ranks above MC and 16yrs. It is a good course for any cadet considering the Royal Marines
  - Marine Cadet Basic course – This is open to MC's and MC2's
  - Marine Cadet Intermediate course – This is open to MC1's and LCpl's
- Globe & Laurel – Other companies have been sending articles in directly to the Globe & Laurel which have been shocking. These need to be vetted by Company HQ first, which will then get forwarded on. Please pass all articles to Coy cdr for forwarding onto the RSM/SRMO.
- 2011 Trafalgar Parade – This will be the first ever full Marine Cadet guard.
- Pyrotechnics – The ban on Pyro's is still on!
- Skill At Arms Instructor – This is going to be a Qualification for Marine Cadet staff only. They will need to have Long Range or a CRCQ FB ticket, as well as BFSS (T), WHI (T) and hold an IM Level 2.
- UR &RNP reporting process - 2009 will see no change to the process.
- Ranks on mail – No more mail to home addresses are to have ranks on them.
- Shoulder titles on Blues & Lovats - Due to current financial problems, the Sea Cadets are not going to endorse the gold SCC / MC for Blues & Lovats.
- Webbing & Bergens - 90 Pattern is no longer available. SRMO has looked into this and requested that our stores holdings are upgraded, which is to include 95 webbing, Bergens, top covers, sleeping bags, bivi bags, mess tins, water bottles & waterproofs. This is currently with FOSNI for authorisation.
- Pam 21C - Every detachment should now have one of these.
- Detachment numbers - It has been reported that units in Southern have being turning away Marine Cadets due to a capping system...ie only 50% of MC allowed compared to full intake of Sailors. This is not legit. You can have as many Marine Cadets that you are comfortably able to accommodate. There is no capping system in place.
- Security Clearance - Those using weapons need to be appropriately security cleared. Those with new ID cards are already cleared.

If you ever want anything brought up at these conferences, let Alpha Company HQ know, they will bring it up.

## **10. [www.acoy.co.uk](http://www.acoy.co.uk)**

**Presentation on use of the Alpha Company Website and the Company Email System.**  
[Company Website](#) and [Company Email](#).

## **11. Mongolian Rally 2009**

A informative presentation by Sgt Kesterton and Sgt Burlace about the Mongolian Rally that they are undertaking during 2009 in aid of various charities including Alpha Company. Alpha company have agreed to support TGB 'The Saints' in their venture across the Globe. Good Luck!



## 12. Training

Good points for the year:

- Winning competitions is a good sign of things. Gibraltar Cup & National Drill have both been retained this year.
- Field Assessments – This year the scores were very mixed, having some Very goods ranging down to Poor.
- Annual Camp – This year we had an amphibious theme and was a complete success. The comms during this year's camp were also successful.
- Trafalgar drill display – This was run by CSgt K Cooper and his team, using a lot of young Cadets.
- Recruit training weekend – This was successful and we're looking at running more of these.
- Induction courses – All new instructors now need to complete this course and we have several members of Alpha Company now on the board as instructors for this course.

Bad points for the year:

- 70% of adult courses were cancelled due to lack of candidates.
- Scores on advancement boards are dropping. We are not getting the credit passes we used to get, which proves that unfortunately the standards within the cadets are dropping and lack of preparation.
- Detachments are still not meeting deadlines when submitting paperwork. These are here for a reason and must be kept.

Improvements going forward:

- All adult training modules that are run, involve the syllabus up to Cpl. Therefore, if you are going on a training weekend, it will give you all the specifics for training your cadets.
- Gibraltar Cup & Field Assessments are now becoming much more arduous. Therefore it may be worth a member of staff being able to teach phys. We need more PT qualifications.
- Intermediate Fieldcraft course is available for instructors who are looking at going on the KGIV course.

Upcoming Courses:

- Exercise Loyal Defender
- Field Assessments – Let's try and get all detachment achieving a Good grading. It is possible!!

An Ex Cadet has emailed Major Benton recently and is interested in setting up a new fund which will be called the 2IC's fund. He wants this to be set up for cadets who struggle financially with regards to going on national courses or exercises. Once all the details are finalised, these will be forwarded out to all detachments.

Basically, the bottom line is to get on the courses which will enhance your training abilities for the cadets.

YOUR NOT ONLY CHEATING YOURSELVES BUT YOUR CADETS.

### **13. Finance Report**

Sgt V Wagstaff – Overview on SWAMC & Staff Fund

South West Area Marine Cadets – This is Alpha Companies main account:

- Within the first 6 months of the Financial year 08-09, we have made a profit of £3350.00

Staff Fund – This is a merchandise fund for Alpha Company and primarily goes back to the Staff within the Company.

- Within the first 6 months of the Fiscal year 08-09, we have made a profit of £400.00

Purchases – We need to spend this money, All Ideas are welcome:

- We have purchased display boards, however 2 more would be beneficial.
- 12 radios have been purchased, but we are looking at a further 12

Going forward it has been decided that all Alpha Company Cadet Advancement Boards will be free for 2009, but only for Cadets that pass their board. The Cadets will still pay upfront before the board, however if the cadet passes they will received a full refund. If the cadet gets a partial pass or fails, they will not be refunded.

Norway – If we get any cadets on the Norway trip, then Alpha Company will fund them in full.

### **14. Exercises & Camps 2009**

A Training Officer has been appointed. This will be CSgt P Edwards as of 1<sup>st</sup> January

Exercise Loyal Defender, 10-12<sup>th</sup> April 2009 @ Caerwent £5 per person.

Norway, 14-22<sup>nd</sup> April 2009 Free (Alpha Company Funded)

Bavarian Surprise, Free

National Summer Camp 2009 @ Okehampton

Company training weekends – 2008 was poorly supported and therefore we will not be any run during 2009. However we will run more exercises.....but we need to support them!! Support or loose them.

### **15. Alpha Company Display teams**

We would like to set up standing company display teams, looking forward to Cadet 150. These teams will meet upto 4 times a year to train together. These displays can then be rolled out during the year throughout the Company / Area. It has been suggested that we get display teams together covering Drill, PT, and Un-Armed Combat this will include a Recruitment Team.

### **16. Detachment Grading Improvement**

Info Part of Company Standing Orders.

### **17. Regular Service Personnel**

Serving personnel can now be put onto Alpha Company's books. This takes the pressure off their attendance on Unit books. If you have any suitable candidates please forward to the Company Commander. All service personnel must be registered as CI's (minimum).

## **18. Any Other Business**

- CSgt P McEllin – After the conference there will be a huge kit giveaway in the TA centre. Please help yourself.
- Sgt C Kelley – Company T-shirts & Pin Badges will be available for sale after the conference
- Lt C Shepherd – At CTC, I see recruits who are leaving training that may be interested in becoming staff. This is being pushed for anyone who doesn't pass the commando course, to join cadet units to help out.
- CSM – Thanks to Bristol Filton for accommodating us today.
- Coy Cdr – Postal Shoot. The gauntlet has been laid down by the shooting team and only 4 people have replied. Please put your names down to join us.
- Coy Cdr – tonight will see the first (for a very long time) a Company Mess Dinner hosted by the Company Sergeant Major. Please support this event it is an excellent opportunity for us all to socialise, create team spirit and 'Espirt de Corps'. Each year after the Company conference the CSM will host this event.

## **19. Way Forward 2009**

2008 saw four new detachments join the Alpha Company family. A further two Units are very interested in forming a Detachment within the next 12 months. We are also expanding, having 65 Instructors in 2007 and now having 76 to date. Cadet numbers are also growing.

Training - We need to get back to basics with our training. The cadets depend on us to teach the correct syllabus to them. Get on the courses to help the cadets.

Priorities for 2009:

- STAFF TRAINING
- INCREASING OUR RANKS – DETACHMENTS, STAFF & CADETS
- MAINTAINING OUR STANDARDS

And finally a Very Merry Christmas to one and all.

## **20. Date of next Conference**

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2009 @ Bristol Filton TAC