



Council of Military Education Committees of Universities of the UK

Executive Committee Meeting

Held on 12 September 2017

At

Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

Minutes

Present

Mr R G Livingston (Chairman); Dr P J R Mileham (Vice Chairman); Rev Professor J P Taylor (Treasurer); Professor E Archibald; Professor W I Ball; Mr J Castle; Mr R Hall; Mr B Ritchie; Grp Cpt A Dickens; Col M Guzkowska; Cdr A McLennan.

Apologies

Gen Sir Peter Wall; Mr H Hamilton; Miss A Lyon; Col D Guinness; Wg Cdr J Kindell; Wg Cdr A Bake.

In Attendance;

Professor S Denny; Ms C Kinkead; Mr R Thomas (Outgoing Secretary); Mr Jason Norris (Incoming Secretary)

444. Minutes

CONFIRMED: The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2017 (COMEC209)

445. Matters Arising

a. Attendance

CONSIDERED: The importance of regular representation and reports by the Services and MoD at meetings in order to have a resilient and effective channel of communication between the two sectors. This was necessary for members to represent the interests of MECs and their students in reviewing the maintenance of existing activities and the development of new.

b. Continuation-Recruiting Statistics

RECEIVED: Continuation Recruiting Statistics. (COMEC210)

NOTED:

- a. The intent was to record the proportion of USU graduates committing to continuation of military service, providing reliable annual data to inform deliberations.
- b. Definitions might vary between the Services and the data not be directly comparable, but in-Service annual trends could be identified.

CONSIDERED:

- a. What stakeholders require from collection of data.
- b. The value of tracking the progress of USU OCdts entering the Services.
- c. The USU experience was an asset in the early weeks of officer initial training, when former USU members were able informally to 'mentor' those without that experience.
- d. Whether the USU experience enhanced the prospects of those entering civilian careers beyond getting an interview/job.
- e. The USU experience was good for the employability metric for universities as it offered the opportunity to enhance a graduate's CV with skills and training.

RESOLVED:

- a. Appropriate point of data collection was the autumn for the previous academic year.
- b. To review the range of data that would be useful to stakeholders, including the MECs and their work with USUs.

446. Chairman's Report

REPORTED:

- a. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman met Major General Jamie Gordon, Chief Executive CRFCAs, and Colonel Hugh Purcell, Chief Executive GLRFCA. The joint interests of the two organizations were discussed including:
 - Common allies and supporters, and modernization agendas.
 - That Reserves manning was influenced by the whole force concept, which USU COs had a role in promoting.
 - The volunteer estate needed to be fit for purpose, and was a measure of the value Defence puts on students.
 - MECs and RFCAs had similar local footprints, were independent, not being part of the respective chains of command, and provided continuity and a corporate memory.
 - Both organizations had an informed interest in the development of people, and were key influencers, locally and nationally.
 - The two organizations bridged the academic/military relationship, providing local connectivity, soft influence and messaging, rather than Defence propaganda.
- b. Other matters considered included the Defence Engagement Agenda, Immersion Programme and Covenants, and the CRFCAs' External Scrutiny Report. The last had similar conclusions to COMEC's Offer Right? Report, referencing the need for data gathering, innovations in officer Phase 1 training, HE and FE recruiting, and improving the officer proposition and career pathway.

447. Treasurer's Report

REPORTED (CAGM003)

- a. The deficit in-year was £1329. This was slightly higher than previous years but continued the process of reducing reserves.
- b. There were one-off costs associated with meetings for the Offer Right? Report and to develop relations with Defence and reinvigorate the network of alliances.
- c. A new line of expenditure for Conference planning had been added.
- d. The method of collecting subscriptions required review as some universities changed their processing of invoices. Collection was further complicated as some MECs rotated administrative responsibilities including finance.

RECOMMENDED: There should be no increase in the subscription for 2017-18 and net assets should continue to be reduced.

448. COMEC Prize

REPORTED:

- a. The COMEC Prize Winner 2017 is 2Lt Hannah Clancy of Queen's UOTC. The Runner-Up is JUO Gibbons of Cambridge UOTC.
- b. There had been a reasonable number of candidates.

CONSIDERED: The need to publicize the criteria, and reflect on their current pertinence.

NOTED: Some MECs award their own prizes and put forward the winners from each Unit.

RESOLVED:

To discuss at the next meeting in November and in the light of the review of relationships with MECs.

449. COMEC Study, 'The USU Offer'

NOTED:

- a. The Report (CAGM002), and parallel COMEC Occasional No 10 'COMEC Rejoinder: The Value of the Armed Service Units', were submitted in response to a presentation at the COMEC 2015 Conference by Brigadier Mark van der Lande, Head Reserves, Defence People Directorate, MOD. The Conference was informed of the increased needs for Reserve officers to meet Future Force 2020 establishment, and how the MOD was proposing to extend a more intense engagement with the civil population and, in particular, Higher Education to meet the need for officer and enlisted recruitment.
- b. The documents formed the central theme of the Conference that would be considered by syndicates. The threads would be brought together at the subsequent forum and published for the MoD and Single Services to carry forward as appropriate.

450. Occasional Papers

NOTED: Occasional Paper 8 was being finalized. Occasional Paper 9 was now published, and Paper 10, together with the Working Group's 'Is The Offer Right?' Report, would be considered at the Conference.

CONSIDERED: As Dr Mileham was standing down, Prof Denny was appointed to work with Dr Mileham on editing the Occasional Paper arising from this year's Conference. Publication policy would be considered in due course.

451. Reports from the Service Staff Officers

RECEIVED: A report from each of the Service Staff Officers:

a. Royal Navy (COMEC211)

Significant Events

- In administrative terms the main event had been the URNU Annual CO and Coxswains conference in June which was hosted by Liverpool URNU at HMS EAGLET. As the main occasion where all of the URNU permanent staff come together it was a highly productive period. The main issues revolved around the recruiting process and development of policy and training to support the URNU mission.
- With more time and scope, the summer deployments saw multiple P2000s organised into Task Units (TUs) that were able to range further afield. This year saw two TUs in and around Northern Europe, Scandinavia and the Baltic with another around the UK. Given the practical maritime and varied travel experience that these deployments provided, it was unsurprising that they were the highlights of the year for the URNU students.

Personnel

- The summer term had also seen a change of command at Southampton, Cambridge and an imminent change at Yorkshire. The gapped position of CO Birmingham would be filled in October whilst a fill for the CO position in Glasgow was not expected until early 2018. Manpower at the OF2 (Lt RN) level was challenging across the Service so the challenge of gapping was expected to remain in the near future.

Recruiting

- After completion of the summer deployments the focus of the units had been the preparations for the start of the next academic year and the new URNU intake. Significant work had been done with the RN medical entry team and CAPITA to improve the recruiting medical process. Additionally, alongside scoping the establishment of a new URNU in Northern Ireland the option of increased unit numbers and satellite units were also being considered. However, reductions in the Man Training Day budget supplied by the Maritime Reserves would make this challenging.

Training

- As part of the URNU Assurance process COMCORE had directed that a new URNU syllabus was to be produced by the end of the year. This work would be done by URNU staff leveraging existing BRNC, RN Leadership Academy and RNR training where appropriate.

Future Activity

- Once the recruiting round had been finalised all of the new intake will attend New Entry training weekends at BRNC in November to provide comprehensive induction training.

NOTED: The cost of entry to some ports was also a constraint on training

b. Army (COMEC212)

- Recruiting had been going well.
- Exercises had taken place in South Africa and Mexico.
- A review of the student experience, particularly among the 3rd year, was taking place.
- Although USUs provided 50% of officer cadets entering Sandhurst, only 10% of USU OCdts converted to an Army career. Selection into the UOTC would have to be more focussed.

- Gapping remained a constant challenge resulting in FTRS being retained. Options to relieve the pinch points were being considered.
- The UOTCs were being visited by Ofsted. A couple of UOTCs would work with Ofsted and share outcomes with other UOTCs
- Medicals continue to be a problem. The renewal of the contract would provide an opportunity to rectify some of the shortcomings.

c. Royal Air Force (COMEC213)

Summer Training.

- There had been a particularly successful period of summer training with improved UAS student flying rates following the completion of Elementary Flying Training on 6 FTS (Since November 2016 the UASs had trained 25 pilots destined for the front line on behalf of the Directorate of Flying Training). Of note, as well as flying and adventurous training, this summer over 200 students completed a UAS STRIKEX Force Development Exercise and a further 350 students completed a Summer Vacational Attachment working alongside regular RAF personnel.

Recruitment.

- The changes made to the UAS 'offer' in 2015 were continuing to deliver results with 37% of new entrants to the RAF officer cadre in the last academic year coming from a UAS. The emphasis to attract talent from UASs would increase as the annual RAF officer requirements grows from 400 to 650 officers a year in this Financial Year. The RAF Bursary scheme remained a key part of the revised 'offer' with 150 sponsored places available on the UASs (this is separate to DTUS).

Bristol UAS.

- The plan to relocate BUAS to Kemble had failed after the landlord signed a lease with a third party. 22 Gp were currently working with Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) on alternative sites that presented the best value for money for Defence.

RAF Woodvale.

- Funding for remedial work to repair the main runway at RAF Woodvale was not secured and the runway was likely to remain closed until next year. Whilst limited currency and student flying was continuing from the short runway, air cadet flying remained paused due to the increased engine failure risks.

Financial Pressure.

- In year financial pressure within Air Command had resulted in RAF Cranwell and 6 FTS having to identify savings. As a consequence of this, individual UAS establishments had been reduced for the next 2 years by 10% and some activity savings were currently being costed.

Tutor Display.

- This summer saw the reintroduction of the Tutor display by 6 FTS. The flying display and ground support had raised the profile of USUs and the UAS in particular, through its participation at 22 air shows, displaying the Tutor aircraft to over 1 million people across the UK. The Team was ably supported on the ground by UAS students who quickly struck up a rapport and projected a very positive image of the USUs with the general public. As a result of its success, AOC 22 Gp had already committed to displaying the aircraft again in 2018 as part of the RAF 100 celebrations and 6 FTS would look at the feasibility of increasing the number of air shows at which it participated.

NOTED: Whilst pilots were important, a range of other careers were available, e.g. doctors, dentists, engineers etc., and summer camps would be established to display a variety of job types.

d. DTOEES (COMEC214)

Defence Sixth Form College (DSFC) Welbeck

17 Entry.

- The release of GCSE results had enabled 160 MOD students to join the College this month within 17 Entry. This time, the Royal Navy had succeeded in bringing 36 new students into the Scheme. Army recruiting remains challenging: 90 places were allocated, but just 61 students managed to gain the required threshold examination grades. The RAF and DESG accepted 47 and 16 new students respectively.

University Entry.

- All DSFC Upper 6th (15E) students succeeded in gaining a place at university and 143 would join DTUS in September. Overall, their A Level results were impressive: one student who achieved 3 x A* grades was awarded an Excellence Scholarship by the University of Birmingham. This year, only 5 students needed to start at university with a Foundation Year.

Foundation Year Courses.

- Having consulted the single Service authorities, Head DTOEES had decided to discontinue the option of a Foundation Year Course (FYC) for students who underperform at A2 Level. Whilst the number of students accepting places on a FYC was increasing, the proportion of these students who succeeded in entering Initial Officer Training was just 21%. Many were deficient in other areas, for example, physical fitness. In view of the additional training pipeline costs, future students entering DTUS would need to either start on an Honours degree or withdraw from the Scheme. This year, 5 students withdrew from the College at the end of the Lower 6th, because their AS Level results indicated that they did not have the capacity to study a STEM subject at degree level.

Support from the Services.

- The Army's Technical Corps had recently supported the Military Skills and Leadership Training (MSLT) exercises to a very great extent. Their commitment and expertise had been welcome: CCF officers on the academic staff of the College were often not available to participate in exercises, chiefly because they were also responsible for managing sport and other activities. From the RN perspective, the *Type 26 Experience* was installed at the College for several days in November to allow students to interactively learn about the new frigate, which was due to replace the Type 23.

Annual General Inspection.

- The Annual General Inspection (AGI) of DSFC took place on 8 July 2017. Prizes were distributed beforehand by Rt Hon Anna Soubry MP, who gave a speech entitled "Welbeck Past and Present". At a demonstration of drill and music, the salute was taken by Commodore Paul Marshall, Leader of the Type 26 Project. The parade was taken by Director Personnel (Army), Maj Gen

Robert Nitsch. A musical accompaniment was provided by the National Marching Band of the Air Training Corps.

Activities.

- *Foreign Exchange.* L'École Spéciale Militaire de Saint-Cyr was now partnered with DSFC and students from France took part in Adventurous Training in the Yorkshire Dales within the bounds of Exercise TRAIL, during the period 25 – 29 June. Students from DSFC would reciprocate with a visit to France in the autumn.
- *Aerospace Challenge Competition.* The RAF managed a national competition, which required students to design a UAV that was capable of delivering a one ton payload anywhere in the world within 12 hours. A team of 3 from Welbeck, (alongside 11 other teams), had succeeded in being selected to enter the National Finals at Cranfield University.
- *Madagascar.* Welbeck students joined hands with the Army Foundation College on an expedition to Madagascar.
- *Jubilee Sailing Trust.* Many students had engaged in sailing activities, often in the company of injured Service personnel, to locations such as the Canary Islands and New Zealand. Fourteen Welbeck students toured the East Coast Islands of Canada within a fleet of 40 tall ships, to mark the 150th anniversary of the Confederation.

Staff Changes.

- Flt Lt Jon-Paul Priest replaced Flt Lt Edward Lawrence as the Training Officer within the Military Team on 24 July 2017. Flt Lt Priest would be the second RAF Regiment Officer in this post, which was now permanently annotated for his Branch. The Adjt, Lt Alex Olsson RN, was assigned to HM Submarine Base, Faslane to take on a new role in the management of maintenance by contractors. It was hoped that a new Adjt would be found shortly.

Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme (DTUS)

Graduation.

- This summer the results of the Bachelors' and Masters' final examinations at all 11 DTUS partner universities were excellent: 17 bursars gained a 1st Class Honours Degree and 44 an Upper 2nd Class. Confirmation of the outcome of assessment for 6 were awaited. A total of 90 bursars are entering initial training with the Armed Forces or Civil Service (DESG) either this autumn or early in 2018.

University of Loughborough.

- Typhoon Sqn has relocated to newly refurbished premises on the Loughborough University campus. With proper classrooms and more space the accommodation greatly improves the scope of the Sqn. In October, the Vice Chancellor and the Director General of the Defence Academy would sign a new Memorandum of Understanding for Typhoon Sqn to operate within the University.

University of Portsmouth.

- With 37 DTUS bursars entering the University of Portsmouth, Thunderer Sqn had easily the largest first year intake of the 4 DTUS Sqns. (60 students in

contrast to 11 into Typhoon Sqn). The longer term implications for resource allocation, including permanent staff, were clear.

Staff.

- The gapping of posts within DTUS continued to be a challenge. The Training Captain's role on Taurus Sqn had now been gapped for a whole year. Three out of 4 Sqns were sustaining at least one gap, but the largest Sqn, Thunderer (Southampton) was at last fully manned. In Birmingham, CO Taurus Sqn, Lt Col Richard Craig was posted with effect from 18 September 2017 and would be replaced by Lt Col Jason Kennedy.

Staff Development.

- DTUS COs met at the Defence Academy 28 – 29 March 2017 for a workshop to reconfigure the DTUS training programme. The purpose was to reorientate activities towards engineering in Defence rather than generic military skills. For example, 2nd year students would participate in Exercise BRUNEL, which would be designed to prepare them for their careers as engineers. A second workshop for junior officers and warrant officers took place during the period 31 May – 1 June to share best practice and raise issues which currently challenge them. There would be a further workshop to establish best practice among the DTUS Sqn Administrators, which was scheduled for 18 September 2017.

Awards.

- On 18 July Flying Officer Hannah Wright (nee Williams) was presented with an award at the annual dinner of the Worshipful Company of Engineers. She achieved this through leadership of a variety of academic, sporting and military activities whilst serving on Typhoon Sqn (Loughborough). She had just completed her engineer officer initial specialist training at RAF Cosford to prepare her for her first tour of duty. Typhoon Sqn would be the focal point for events in April 2018 to celebrate 100 years since the formation of the RAF. In relation to this DTUS bursars would shortly be invited to enter an engineering student competition.

Great North Exhibition.

- The Great North Exhibition was scheduled for the summer of 2018. Located mainly on the quayside between Newcastle and Gateshead, around the Baltic Centre area, it invites participation by Trojan Sqn bursars, who were particularly interested in the "Opportunities for HE" and "Innovation" categories.

DTOEES Headquarters

- Eighteen months ago the need for a review of DTOEES was agreed between the Engineering Champion, Air Marshal Julian Young and the Director of the Defence Academy, Vice-Admiral Duncan Potts. The aim was to ensure that the Scheme continues to recruit the greatest number of students of the right quality and delivers value for money. The Review Team had completed its report and this was currently being staffed within MOD.

- Following a 6 month gap, the RAF SO2 role was to be filled by Sqn Ldr Tony Morris, who would become Chief of Staff with effect from 18 September 2017.

Conclusion

- DTOEES continued to deliver a large number of engineers to Defence. This year, numerous initiatives had been launched by new and experienced members of the DSFC and DTUS permanent staff. Wastage remained a challenge: a large proportion of those who started at DSFC did not ultimately manage to enter initial officer training. With improved PR there was scope to increase the number of engineer branch direct entrants who join DTUS at university. It was hoped that the DTOEES Review would ultimately maximise the efficiency of the training pipeline. Finally, the DSFC students and DTUS bursars continued to inspire with their remarkable achievements.

NOTED: The demands on DTUS staffing had necessitated withdrawal of representation of DTOEES on the Executive Committee.

FURTHER REPORTED:

- a. The Chairman had visited the Defence Academy and spoken with Vice Admiral Duncan Potts, Director General, and Air Vice-Marshal Chris Luck, Commandant JSCSC, who were aware of the benefits COMEC had offered DTUS. However, Wg Cdr Jeremy Kindell (Head DTOEES), with the agreement of Mark Alexander (Operations Director), advised the Chairman of his intention to withdraw DTUS from attendance at COMEC events because participation was not essential to their operation and Jeremy's role had become so exacting. The Chairman had since been communicating with him, but it was evident that high turnover and gapping of staff posts had hit his HQ badly. Lieutenant Generals Sir John Kiszely and Andrew Graham took time to determine the best working relationship with COMEC and MECs, and it would be unfortunate to lose the benefits of sharing experience, collaboration with USUs and recognition.
- b. Defence Engineering Champion, Air Marshal Julian Young's strategic review report to ensure delivery of value for money was being implemented by the MoD and would be passed to DTOEES for the education delivery mechanism. Chris Luck questioned the quality of entrants and the number on foundation degrees, how students could experience engineering in the Services through placements and projects, and whether the Services had specified their requirement for engineering graduates correctly. It seemed to the Chairman that these questions must be addressed in close collaboration with the universities if the review was radical and was to be implemented successfully.
- c. COMEC remained ready to resume communication or recraft a working relationship whenever it may be expedient would continue to maintain contact with the Defence Academy, which remained a member of COMEC Council. COMEC would listen to the views of those universities which were DTUS partners and their related MECs on whether there were implications at Squadron/USU level.

452. Development of COMEC and Relations with MECs

CONSIDERED:

- a. A preliminary report from Mr Ritchie on working relationships with MECs and the currency of the Constitution. The positions of MECs within universities and their relationship with USUs is understood by all stakeholders. MECs also offered

a conduit to research opportunities and university governing bodies, requiring a high profile to maximise their impact.

- b. The strategic changes in the university sector were not always reflected in the structure of MECs, particularly their more corporate nature. The need for a broad representation on MECs that reflects the universities' direction.
- c. Recognition that USU potential recruiting ground included postgraduates as well as undergraduates.

RESOLVED: To review developments in November.

453. Defence Conference and AGM 2017

NOTED: The arrangements for the Annual Conference to be hosted by the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

CONSIDERED: To reflect on the structure of the Conference, and its successes and failures.

454. Secretary to COMEC

REPORTED: Mr Jason Norris, University of Dundee, has been appointed to the post of Secretary. (CAGM008)

455. Nominations to the Executive Committee

NOTED:

- a. There were no Terms of Office of Ordinary Members due to end in 2017, but there remained one unfilled vacancy from 2016.
- b. The Vice-Chairman had indicated his intention to step down in 2017.

REPORTED:

- a. Nominations to the post of Vice-Chairman had been received in respect of:
 - Ms A Lyon (Exeter) (CAGM004)
 - Mr B Ritchie (Edinburgh) (CAGM005)
 - Rev Professor J P Taylor (Queen's) (CAGM006)
- b. There being three nominations by the due date, an election would be held at the Annual General Meeting.
- c. Nominations to Executive Committee Member had been received by the due date in respect of the following:
 - Ms C Kinkead (Queen's) (CAGM007)
- d. There being one nomination received by the due date Ms Kinkead would be duly declared elected to the Executive Committee as an Ordinary Member at the AGM.

FURTHER NOTED:

- a. In the event that either Ms Lyon or Mr Ritchie were elected to the role of Vice-Chairman, a vacancy for a Member would be created. Nominations to the role of Member in the event of this occurring had been invited.
- b. No further nominations to the Member vacancy had been received.
- c. In the event that Rev Professor Taylor were elected to the role of Vice-Chairman, the role of Treasurer would become vacant. Nominations to the role of Treasurer in the event of this occurring had been invited.
- d. No nominations for the role of Treasurer had been received.

RESOLVED: Co-option of Dr. P. Mileham to the Executive Committee until September 2018 to complete outstanding publication business.

456. Dates and Venues of Future Meetings:

NOTED: The dates and venues of future meetings:

- 22 November 2017 (London)
- 22 February 2018 (London)
- 17 May 2018 (London)
- First week in September 2018 (Date and Venue to be confirmed)
- Whilst the first week in September remained the preferred date for the AGM and Conference, the dates had to remain flexible due to the demands on available facilities throughout the year.

CONSIDERED: The withdrawal of the Defence Academy as a host of the Defence Conference and AGM would return the hosting to a three-year cycle, resulting in the following hosting arrangements:

- 2018 – Royal Navy
- 2019 – Royal Air Force
- 2020 – Army.