

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN and THE ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY  
MILITARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Meeting held in the University of Aberdeen  
on 7 December 2009**

*Present:*

Professor T Salmon (Convener), Professor D Alexander, Squadron Leader K Block (representing Squadron Leader Gusterson), Professor J Broom, Ms C Buchanan, Dr A Clarke, Professor R Flin, Dr D Galbreath, Dr J Grieve, Wing Commander M Henderson, Lieutenant M Hutchinson, Mr J Lemon, Chief Petty Officer Mitchell, Professor P Robertson, Lieutenant Colonel K Wardner; with Ms Y Gordon (Clerk)

*Apologies:*

Principals Rice and Pittilo, Brigadier H Allfrey, Mr P Fantom, Wing Commander Kennedy and Lieutenant A Rose.

The Convener invited members to introduce themselves and welcomed the following members who were attending for the first time: Professor Broom, Lieutenant Colonel Wardner, Lieutenant Hutchinson. He went on to inform the Committee of the sad news that Dr Molyneaux had passed away in the Spring. The Convener also thanked the former Clerk to the Committee, Mr Duggan, who had served as Clerk for many years.

**FOR DISCUSSION**

**1. Minutes**

The Committee approved the Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 December 2008

(copy filed as MEC09/1)

**2. Unit Progress Reports**

URNU

2.1 The Committee considered a report from the Universities Royal Naval Unit, January – December 2009.

(copy filed as MEC09/2a)

2.2 Lieutenant Hutchinson reported that 29 new students had been recruited, with a good cohort of 25 remaining. Unit strength currently stood at 51, at full capacity, and was split 24 male to 27 female. The Unit's summer deployment of eight weeks duration was in the South

Coast of England and included a visit to Greenwich and London. Future deployments included operational sea training early in the new year;

26 Jan – 3 Feb	Rosyth
6 – 7 Feb	Montrose
6 – 7 March	Dundee

HMS Illustrious would be in Rosyth at the end of January and cadets would have the opportunity to go onboard the aircraft carrier.

- 2.3 It was explained that the reason for only allowing three years in the Unit for a student was because it had been designed to fit the English University structure of a three year degree. It was noted that in the OTC unless a student was going to be a junior officer they did not continue beyond year two, but in the UAS there was no such restriction.

#### OTC

- 2.4 The Committee considered a report from the OTC covering the last twelve months.

(copy filed as MEC09/2b)

- 2.5 Lieutenant Colonel Wardner reported that the inter-OTC competition, Northern Lights, held in Northern Ireland in March 2009 was very successful. Glasgow would host the next competition in March 2010. Summer camp in Benbecula was also successful even though some activities had to be curtailed at short notice due to land clearance approval being withdrawn. He also reported that some officer cadets had managed to be deployed abroad, one to Kenya and another to France.

- 2.6 During the recruiting period in September 2009 450 expressions of interest were received but only 50 turned up, all 50 were recruited and none have left so far. It was noted that Aberdeen students made up 90% of the cadet population and RGU 10%. Aberdeen charged cadets to have a stall at Fresher's fair but RGU did not. To raise the profile of the Units it was suggested that the Students' Association Presidents from Aberdeen and RGU be invited to visit the Units. It was also suggested that a fund-raising activity could be planned, ending at King's College.

- 2.7 October led to the announcement that OTC cadets would not now get paid due to Government cutbacks. This had a big impact on cadets – they could not take on part-time jobs normally due to weekend training – so it had now been agreed to reduce training to one weekend out of four so that cadets could take on another job where possible. Lieutenant Colonel Wardner reported that payment to cadets would recommence from April 2010 onwards (i.e. at the start of the new financial year).

- 2.8 Activities would be quiet during January because of exams and then start again in February 2010. A trip to St Valerie had been arranged for third and fourth year cadets. It was the seventieth anniversary of this battle and some veterans from Aberdeen would also attend.

## UAS

- 2.9 The East of Scotland Universities Air Squadron report was considered by the Committee.  
(copy filed as MEC09/2c)
- 2.10 Squadron Leader Block reported that a group of twelve students had been given the opportunity to visit the Falkland Islands and had since given a presentation to the Royal Marines Association in Arbroath which was well received.
- 2.11 After a successful recruiting period 294 initial applications had been received and 34 students were invited to join the Squadron. With regards to Aberdeen students, five were recruited from Aberdeen and two from RGU.

## 3. COMEC

- 3.1 The Committee considered a report from Mr Lemon on the recent COMEC meeting.  
(copy filed as MEC09/3)
- 3.2 Mr Lemon reported that the COMEC meeting had been very informative. Both City and Guilds and the Institute of Managers gave good presentations on their respective qualifications available to students who successfully completed training in the University Service Units. The COMEC prize this year had gone to a very worthy student who had motivated his whole Unit to raise money for local charities throughout the whole year, setting two world records in the process.
- 3.3 With regards to co-curricular activities it was noted that RGU students were awarded 30 credits at the foot of their transcript for passing modules in leadership. Credits do not currently count towards the degree programme. Similarly, Abertay were trying to have these 30 credits recognised towards a relevant degree, for example if the student was taking a management degree. At Aberdeen it was reported that the STAR project (Students Taking an Active Role) was ongoing with about 80 students taking part, so were moving towards having these credits recognised as worthy to go onto a transcript.

## 4. Funding cuts for students

- 4.1 Lieutenant Colonel Wardner reported that the Army's budget would be £3.5 billion overspent during the next couple of years, as money was diverted to pay for operations in Afghanistan, and the army was

considering how to deal with this overspend. As officer cadets were not directly supporting the campaign in Afghanistan their pay had been stopped but those in URNU and the UAS were still being paid. The Commander of Regional Forces was looking into a review of OTCs and it might be that the future of the 4 Scottish OTCs were at risk, possibly being merged into a single Scottish OTC only, based in the Central Belt, with Aberdeen becoming an outpost.

- 4.2 Lieutenant Hutchinson reported that although URNU's aim was not to recruit for the armed services, about 30% – 40% of URNU cadets did choose a career in the Navy, going through officer training at Dartmouth. The main costs for URNU was taking people away to sea, because the ship could not accommodate all those on board, so hotel accommodation had to be provided at a cost, and the navy was looking to address this in the future. It was imperative that the number of students in URNU did not drop below 50 as this could signal a review of the URNU provision in Aberdeen.
- 4.3 The Committee offered to provide any pro-active support needed, perhaps both University newsletters carrying a feature on each of the Units and their function.

## **5. Elphinstone Defence Lecture 2009/10**

- 5.1 It was agreed that Mr Angus Robertson SNP/MP for Moray be proposed as speaker for the Elphinstone Defence Lecture. He is the spokesperson (Foreign Affairs; Defence) (since 13 July 2009).

Action: Clerk

## **6. Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 6 December 2010 at 11.30 am. The meeting was scheduled to be hosted by the University of Aberdeen.

## **7. Committee Remit**

The following remit was noted:

- (a) To direct the policy of the Officer Training Corps, the Air Squadron and Royal Naval Unit (the three Service Units) within the University of Aberdeen and the Robert Gordon University (the Aberdeen Universities).
- (b) To co-operate and liaise with the Ministry of Defence in all service matters affecting the Universities.
- (c) To encourage the study of National Defence within the Universities and to secure Military Science its due place in University studies.

- (d) To ensure that the time spent by students with the Service Units is not to the detriment of their academic studies.
- (e) To promote instruction and training for candidates for commissions in the Armed Services.
- (f) To foster an interest in, and an understanding of, the Armed Services and to provide leadership training in a military environment.
- (g) To approve recommendations for the posts of Commanding Officers of the three Service Units.

## 8. Composition and Membership

The Committee's composition and membership was noted:

### The University of Aberdeen

Senate	Principal and 7 nominees: (Professor Salmon, Dr Clarke, Mr Fantom, Professor Flin, Dr Galbreath, Dr Grieve and Mr Lemon)
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### The Robert Gordon University

Board of Governors	Principal and 1 nominee (Professor Alexander)
Academic Council	3 nominees (Professors Robertson and Broome, Mrs Buchanan)

### Ex Officiis

#### Post

CO AUOTC  
 Oi/c AURNU  
 OC ESUAS  
 Commander, 51 Bde  
 Secretary, Highland RFCA  
 FOSNENI Staff Officer  
 University Liaison Officer, Army  
 University Liaison Officer, RN  
 University Liaison Officer, RAF

#### Current individuals

**Lieutenant Colonel MR Wardner, MERCIAN**  
**Lieutenant M Hutcheon RN**  
**Squadron Leader G Gusterson RAF**  
**Brigadier HD Allfrey MBE**  
**Colonel AK Miller, CBE**  
**Lieutenant Commander G Atkinson RN**  
**Lieutenant Colonel (ret'd) NS Southward**  
**Lieutenant Commander S Lister RN**  
**Wing Commander BJO Kennedy \***

## **9. Elphinstone Defence Lecture 2008/09**

It was noted that the Elphinstone Defence Lecture took place on Wednesday 18 February 2009, in the Robert Gordon University. The lecture was given by Lord Alderdice: *"Hearts and Minds" - The Soldier in the Peacekeeping Role (how do soldiers effect the transition from "Warrior" to "peacekeeper"?)*.

## **10. COMEC**

The Committee noted the following reports:

- a) on the COMEC and OTC Conference – RMAS 2-4 SEP 09  
(copy filed as MEC09/4)
  
- b) on the Council of Military Education Committees Meeting (COMEC) –  
2 OCT 08  
(copy filed as MEC09/5)
  
- c) on the UOTC Conference Discussion on the Future of the UOTC:  
Summary of Deductions  
(copy filed as MEC09/6)