

THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN and THE ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY

MILITARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee on Friday 11 November 2011

Present: Dr J Grieve (**Convener**, UoA), Professor I Broom (RGU), Dr A Clark (UoA), Mr P Fantom (UoA), Professor A Flin (UoA), Squadron Leader J Lafferty (ESUAS), Mr J Lemon (UoA), CPO P McCaughran (AURNNU) (*vice* Lieutenant M Hutchinson), Colonel AK Miller CBE (HRFCA), Lieutenant Colonel MCR Thorp (AUOTC), Mr J Wyllie (UoA) and Ms Y Gordon (Clerk).

Apologies: Ms C Buchanan (RGU), Professor I Diamond (UoA), Lt M Hutchinson (AURNNU), Wing Commander BJO Kennedy (ESUAS), Professor P Robertson (RGU), Dr P Ziegler (UoA).

On behalf of the committee, the Convener extended his thanks to RGU for hosting the event and providing lunch.

Minutes

- 1.1 Subject to minor changes the Committee approved the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 June 2011:
- In the list of those present amend ESUAS to HRFCA after Wg Cdr Henderson's name;
 - In 6.2 amend Grant Mitchell to Phil Mitchell. *(copy filed as MEC11/1)*

Matters Arising

Monies Available for Prizes (Minute 3.3 refers)

2.1 The Convener reported that he hoped to be able to speak to the management to request an increase to the £500 current budget for MEC to £1000. If the additional fund was made available the MEC could be in a position to offer a prize to its best cadets. **Action: Convener**

2.2 It was agreed to combine monies from RGU and UoA in a single location.
[Note by Clerk: Due to financial audit purposes in both institutions this would not be permitted.]

Membership (Minute 5.1 refers)

2.3 It was noted that Mr Wyllie and Dr Ziegler had become members of the committee representing the UoA. There was still a vacancy for a member from RGU.

2.4 It was agreed that RGU consider asking Professor Alexander, who had recently retired, to rejoin the Committee. It was understood that a person could remain on the committee for 5 years after retirement. **Action: Prof Broom**

New Military ORBAT (Minute 5.2 refers)

2.5 It was noted that the outcome was expected in May 2012.

Unit Progress Reports/Presentations

UOTC

3.1 The UOTC report was tabled, the principle points are given below:

(copy filed as MEC11/2a)

- Lt Col Matt Thorp had taken over from Lt Col Matthew Wardner as the Unit's Commanding Officer. He was a former member of the UOTC;
- Andrew Bradford had been appointed as the new Honorary Colonel of the AUOTC;
- The Unit size was now at 154, with 73 new recruits. There had been a three-fold rise in students from RGU;
- 8 former members of the UOTC are currently serving in Afghanistan across the full rank range, from the CO downwards;

- Under a recent review pilot Officer Training Regiments in the North West and Yorkshire were formed. For example the North West is made up from UOTCs formerly in Liverpool and Manchester. All UOTCs are under scrutiny, including the four Scottish UOTCs;
- The annual summer camp was held at Cameron Barracks in Inverness;
- 5 University of Aberdeen cadets had received STAR Awards (2 gold/1 silver/2 bronze);
- The AUOTC Centenary weekend would take place 8-10 June, to include a march down Union Street followed by a Civic Reception in the Town House;
- On the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) Colonel Miller reported that the outcome of the Review was now with the Secretary of State. The plan was to further reduce the size of the Regular Army, and increase the size of the Territorial Army to 30 000 by 2015. The TA would be more integrated with the Regular Army. A recruitment drive for the TA, which was particularly short of officers, was to commence in the New Year. Due to the current economic climate the challenge would be to convince employers to allow an employee time off for TA deployment duties in Afghanistan;
- It was reported that the military already worked together with the NHS, with cross-training of benefit to both parties eg trauma techniques used in the field were now used on road traffic accident victims.

UAS

3.2 The UAS report was tabled, the principle points are given below:

(copy filed as MEC11/2b)

- Squadron Leader Lafferty reported that he took over as the Unit's Commanding Officer in January 2011. He was a former member of the UAS;
- For entry in 2011/12 ESUAS received c.300 applications from the 9 universities affiliated to it, with 42 candidates finally selected to join the Unit: 8 were from the University of Aberdeen and 2 from RGU. ESUAS has 90 student cadets in total;
- The Army was due to take over from the RAF at Leuchars, but it was hoped that the ESUAS could be retained as an enclave;
- Colonel Miller reported
 - that there would be an increase in military personnel in Kinloss when the army relocated there;
 - RMB Condor was to close with personnel relocating to Plymouth;
 - RNB Rosyth was to close as a Navy enclave, with army personnel relocating there;
 - The Navy was to move its entire submarine fleet to RNB Faslane;
 - He was confident that Gordon Barracks would remain a core site.

URNU

3.3 The URNU reported the following:

- 19 new recruits passed the medical and the Unit strength was at 53, which included 2 Bursars (one each from Aberdeen and Dundee);
- The summer deployment had been to Norway, with the ship completing 2 legs there and 1 leg in Newcastle;
- That all ships were awaiting new engines;
- A large deployment was to take place after Easter;
- As far as he was aware there was still a plan to retain the URNU in the Aberdeen area, and to have one covering the Strathclyde area;
- The Alumni Ball was to be held on 10 March.

Elphinstone Defence Lecture 2011/12

4.1 It was reported that Wing Commander (retired) Philip Mitchell, who had been in command in Kandahar, Afghanistan, had confirmed that he would be the speaker at the 2011/12 Elphinstone Defence Lecture, to take place at RGU. The Committee confirmed that both the suggested dates of 6 or 8 March were suitable.

4.2 It was agreed that a) the speaker be asked to select the date best suited to him and b) that a Committee meeting would take place in advance of the dinner, prior to the Lecture.

Action: Clerk

[Note by Clerk: The speaker has confirmed Thursday 8 March as the date for the Lecture.]

COMEC

5.1 Mr Lemon reported on the COMEC Conference, that:

- The University of Exeter had again won the prize for the best presentation by a cadet. They had won for the past 4 years out of 5. Cadets had been asked to present on their thoughts on being a cadet;
- The structure and future of the COMEC Conference was discussed, the outcome being that no changes were to be made. The conference was to be hosted by RAF Cranwell in 2012.

5.2 It was agreed that written feedback on the outcome of the COMEC prize be sent out with a copy of the minutes, so that feedback could be given to the local Units.

Action: Mr Lemon

Students Taking Active Roles (STAR) Project

6.1 Mr Fantom reported that:

- He had been working with the UOTC in the past year to develop a range of competencies and skills to meet the STAR Award scheme. URNU had made some enquiries but nothing further, and 18 November was the closing date for applications;
- The 2013 enhanced transcript would reflect the STAR Award achievements.

6.2 Mr Fantom agreed to email details of the scheme to URNU.

Action: Mr Fantom

Date of Next Meeting

7.1 It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee be in advance of the EDL dinner, either on 6 or 8 March, to be hosted by the RGU.

Action: Clerk

[Note by Clerk: The meeting will be on **Thursday 8 March at 4.30pm in H230 (Conference Room)** situated in the Faculty of Health & Social Care Building, at RGU, Garthdee Road.]