

THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN and THE ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY

MILITARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee on 8 March 2012

Present: Dr J Grieve (**Convener**, UoA), Professor I Broom (RGU), Ms C Buchanan (RGU), Lt M Hutchinson (AURNU), Mr J Lemon (UoA), CPO P McCaughran (AURNU), Colonel AK Miller CBE (HRFCA), Flight Lt G Nash (ESUAS), Professor P Robertson (RGU), Lieutenant Colonel MCR Thorp (AUOTC), Mr J Wyllie (UoA) and Ms Y Gordon (Clerk).

Apologies: Professor I Diamond (UoA), Mr P Fantom (UoA), Wing Commander BJ Kennedy, Squadron Leader J Lafferty (ESUAS), Professor von Prondzynski (RGU), Dr P Ziegler (UoA).

On behalf of the committee, the Convener extended his thanks to RGU for hosting the meeting, the lecture and providing dinner.

Minutes

1.1 The Committee approved the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 November 2011.

(copy filed as MEC11/03)

Matters Arising

Monies Available for Prizes (Minute 2.1 refers)

2.1 The Convener reported that he had secured an increase to the current budget for MEC to £1500. The MEC was now in a position to offer a prize to its best cadets. **Action:** Clerk

2.2 Professor Robertson agreed to discuss a possible prize fund to be available from RGU.

Action: Professor Robertson

Membership (Minute 2.3 refers)

2.3 Professor Robertson reported that Professor Alexander, who had recently retired, would be asked to rejoin the Committee. Professor Alexander would be permitted to remain on the committee for 5 years after retirement.

COMEC Prize (Minute 5.2 refers)

2.4 Mr Lemon reported that a response was awaited from COMEC regarding feedback on the outcome of the prize.

[Note by Clerk: Mr Lemon later reported that COMEC would not be able to supply this information.]

Unit Progress Reports

ESUAS

3.1 The ESUAS report gave an update on the Unit's activities. Other principle points are given below:
(copy filed as MEC11/4a)

- 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. The decision on the enclave would be made by the Army;
- An invite to fly at Leuchars was extended to Committee members.
- The annual ESUAS dinner was to be held on 4 May when prizes would be presented to the best students. Funding for a prize for the best student at Aberdeen was requested.

Action: Clerk

AUOTC

3.2 The AUOTC report was tabled. Lt Col Thorp gave an update on the Unit's activities and strength. Other principle points are given below: *(copy filed as MEC11/4b)*

- Under discussion was the formation of two officer training regiments for Scotland. Lt Col Thorp re-iterated that he hoped the Unit in Aberdeen would be retained, but the form may change. A report was due in April 2012;
- In January 2012 the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) had assumed command of the 19 UOTCs. The Scottish UOTCs remain under the direct direction of Headquarters 51 (Scottish Brigade in Stirling). Now that the training would be under the RMAS the award certificates would carry the Sandhurst kite-mark;
- The AUOTC Centenary events, with the main events over 8-10 June, were being finalised.

AURNU

3.3 The AURNU reported that HMS Archer would be involved in helping at the Olympic and Paralympic locations from the end of May to the end of September.

Future of AURNU in Aberdeen

4.1 The Committee considered an email from Lt Alan Tulloch (RNR), Senior Training Officer, regarding the future of AURNU's base in Aberdeen. The principle points of the discussion are given below: *(copy filed as MEC11/05)*

- HMS Archer was 26 years old now and a study had been commissioned to establish a location to get the best out of the vessel. The Firth of Forth had been identified as the best location. Because of this consideration was now under way as to where to locate the AURNU. A new ship was due in 2016;
- Members of MEC confirmed that they would not like to lose the AURNU from Aberdeen. If students were to be bussed to/from Edinburgh there was more likelihood of the students disengaging and the Unit eventually disbanding. Students' academic time also needed to be protected so bussing to/from Edinburgh had no support from MEC members;
- Col Miller reported that he understood the benefits of the ship being in the Firth of Forth but would embrace the ESUAS model, rather than the AURNU being disbanded altogether. He would facilitate the ongoing presence of AURNU;
- It was agreed that the Convener write an open letter to the Commodore to voice the opinion of the MEC that the AURNU should be retained in Aberdeen.

Action: Convener

Annual Reports and similar items

5.1 The Committee agreed that a copy of the *Defence Technical Officer and Engineer Entry Scheme Annual Report 2011* should be passed to the Careers departments in both universities.

Action: Clerk

Date of Next Meeting

6.1 The Committee agreed that the next meeting should take place in early June 2012. The meeting will be hosted by the University of Aberdeen. **Action:** Clerk

[Note by Clerk: the next meeting has been arranged for **Tuesday 5 June at 3pm, in the Court Room, University Office Building, University of Aberdeen, Old Aberdeen Campus.**]

COMEC PRIZE

- 7.1 It was noted that the closing date for entries submitted to the next COMEC prize was 30 April 2012. The COMEC Executive has asked that the CO and the Convener of the MEC countersign any submission prior to despatch to COMEC. It was suggested that this could be by either attaching a letter of acknowledgment to the CO's submission, or if it is easier, email: a.c.mayes@exeter.ac.uk

AURNU DRILL NIGHT

- 8.1 It was noted that if any members of MEC were to attend the drill night on 14 March they should inform Karen Fraser at URNU-Aberdeen-Sec@mod.uk . The evening was to commence at 2000hrs at the Royal Naval Unit at Gordon Barracks, Bridge of Don, and would include a presentation and a curry meal, prepared by the Students, as well as the opportunity to spend time with the Commodore Simon Williams, Commanding Officer of Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth.