

**NARRATIVE
CONCLUSIONS &
RECOMMENDATIONS**



ARMY

**BOARD OF INQUIRY
INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES
SURROUNDING THE
DEATH OF
25127287 PTE GRAY G ON
17 SEP 01**

PTE GRAY BOARD OF INQUIRY REPORT

LIST OF CONTENTS

PART ONE

The Report

	PAGE	<u>Side Flags</u>
Introduction	i	Intro
Glossary	iii	
Chapter One – Deepcut & Training – 1993-2001	1-1	Side Flag 1
Section 1 Background	1-1	
Section 2 The Training Environment	1-3	
Chapter Two – Private Gray	2-1	Side Flag 2
Section 1 Before Joining the Army	2-1	
Section 2 Pirbright (Jan-Apr 01)	2-2	
Section 3 Deepcut (Apr-Sep 01)	2-4	
Section 4 The Last Weekend	2-9	
Chapter Three – Events Prior to Pte Gray’s Death	3-1	Side Flag 3
Section 1 Guard Mounting & Orders	3-1	
Section 2 Guard Rest Period	3-3	
Section 3 First Guard Period	3-4	
Section 4 Second Guard Period	3-5	

Chapter Four – Pte Gray’s Death	4-1	Side Flag 4
Section 1 The Gunshots	4-1	
Section 2 The Initial Searches	4-4	
Section 3 Finding the Body	4-6	
Section 4 Expert Evidence	4-10	
Chapter Five – The Period Following Pte Gray’s Death	5-1	Side Flag 5
Section 1 Notifying Pte Gray’s Death	5-1	
Section 2 Units Actions	5-2	
Section 3 Funeral	5-5	
Section 4 After the Funeral	5-6	
Section 5 HM Coroner’s Inquest	5-7	
Chapter Six – Deepcut – 2007	6-1	Side Flag 6
Section 1 25 Trg Sp Regt: Role, Structure, Staff Ratios	6-1	
Section 2 Duty of Care & Supervision	6-3	
Section 3 Staff Selection & Training	6-6	
Section 4 Phase 2 Trainee Programme	6-7	
Section 5 Guarding and Security	6-10	
Section 6 Discipline & Related Issues	6-12	
Section 7 Best Practice	6-13	
Section 8 The Trainees	6-14	

Chapter Seven – Related Issues

7-1

Side Flag 7

Section 1	Duty of Care & Supervision	7-1
Section 2	Help Lines & Feedback	7-2
Section 3	Service Complaints Commissioner	7-4
Section 4	Validation & Training Assurance	7-4
Section 5	DHALI(B) Process	7-5
Section 6	Self-Harm & Suicide Prevention	7-6
Section 7	Support to Bereaved Families	7-8
Section 8	Personal Effects	7-11
Section 9	Boards of Inquiry	7-12
Section 10	Psychologist Support to BOIs into Undetermined Deaths	7-15
Section 11	Inquests: Support to Families & Service Personnel	7-16

Annexes

A	Convening Order (Original)	A-1	Side Flag 8
B	Reconvening order	B-1	Side Flag 9
C	Witness List & Transcript References	C-1	Side Flag 10
D	Reference Documents	D-1	Side Flag 11

PTE GRAY BOARD OF INQUIRY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

1. The purpose of this Board of Inquiry (BOI) is to investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of 25127287 Pte Gray G, RLC, and to examine whether the subsequent reports into Phase 2 training in general, and Deepcut in particular, have led to appropriate change in 25 Trg Sp Regt RLC. There are also a number of related issues which the Board has considered and upon which it has made comment and drawn conclusions. Copies of the Convening Order and Re-Convening Order are at Annexes A and B.
2. This is an internal inquiry, conducted in accordance with the Army Act 1955 and the Board of Inquiry (Army) Rules 1956. Evidence has been taken under oath or affirmation from witnesses, and items of documentary evidence have also been considered by the Board. In conducting this BOI, the Board was directed not to attribute any blame, negligence, or recommend disciplinary action.

Structure of the Report

3. The report is divided into two parts:
 - a. Part One – a narrative summarising the evidence considered by the Board, followed by conclusions and, where appropriate, recommendations. Where evidence is used in the report, it is cross-referenced to the source, by endnote.
 - b. Part Two - all evidence and exhibits.

Family Involvement

4. At the invitation of the Board President, Mr & Mrs Gray (Pte Gray's parents), attended all the witness sessions throughout this BOI. Their presence and contributions have been of considerable help to the Board in its work.

Surrey Police

5. The Surrey Police assisted the Board by providing access to their report covering their re-investigation in 2002 into the death of Pte Gray. Witnesses called by the BOI have also had the opportunity to see and read their original Surrey Police statements, and, with their permission, these statements have been made available to Board members. The Board has adhered to the Surrey Police rules of disclosure.

Witnesses

6. Including Mr & Mrs Gray, 35 witnesses have given evidence. They include both serving and non-serving personnel and two expert witnesses. The assistance and openness of all witnesses has been a considerable benefit to the BOI. A list of witnesses is at Annex C.

DAPS Support to BOI

7. An occupational psychologist from the Directorate of Army Personnel Strategy (DAPS) attended most of the BOI's witness sessions, providing useful assistance to the Board.

References

8. Details of other reference documents and publications consulted, but not included with the report as exhibits, are at Annex D.

Glossary

Term	In Full
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
ARTD	Army Recruiting and Training Division
ATR(P)	Army Training Regiment (Pirbright)
ATRA	Army Training & Recruiting Agency
CMS(R)	Common Military Syllabus (Recruit)
DAPS	Directorate of Army Personnel Strategy
DCL	Defence College of Logistics
DGATA	Director General Army Training & Recruiting
DHALI(B)	DOC, HDCS, ALI, Blake (i.e. Deepcut Review)
DOC	Directorate of Operational Capability
DofC&S	Duty of Care & Supervision
DR	Deepcut Review
ECAB	Executive Committee of the Army Board
HCDC	House of Commons Defence Committee
JNCO	Junior Non Commissioned Officer
MPGS	Military Provost Guard Service
NCO	Non Commissioned Officer
PS4(A)	Personal Services 4 (Army)
QRF	Quick Reaction Force
RLC	Royal Logistic Corps
SATT	Soldiers Awaiting Trade Training
SNCO	Senior Non Commissioned Officer
SQMS	Staff Quartermaster Sergeant

Term	In Full
WRVS	Women's Royal Voluntary Service
WS	Witness Sessions
25 Trg Sp Regt	25 Training Support Regiment
2IC	Second in Command

CHAPTER ONE

DEEPCUT & TRAINING – 1993-2001

Section 1 – Background

Royal Logistic Corps

1.1. The Royal Logistic Corps (RLC) was formed on 5 Apr 93 and is the largest and most diverse Corps in the British Army. It was formed by the merging of four Corps and an element of a fifth: the Royal Army Ordnance Corps (RAOC), the Royal Corps of Transport, the Royal Pioneer Corps, the Army Catering Corps, and the Royal Engineer Postal and Courier Service.

1.2. Prior to the formation of the RLC, each of these corps had their own training regiments and depots, responsible for both basic soldier and trade training. Deepcut, the former home of the RAOC, was selected as the headquarters of the RLC, with the RLC Training & Support Regiment forming up there in Apr 93.

1.3. The RLC's formation came at a time when the Army was changing in both size and structure, and when the emphasis on resources and funding was shifting away from the support and training functions to the Field Army. A sense of the Army's priorities at this time is reflected in one of the aims of the *Front Line First* Defence Costs Study: '...the study will allow us to proceed with programmes to redirect expenditure to more important areas and enhance the [Army's] operational capability'.¹ A fundamental part of this was to improve cost effectiveness and reduce duplication and waste through restructuring the training base. Indeed, the primary purpose of a study undertaken in 1991 was intended to improve 'outputs in the training base of the Army within a reduced resource ceiling, by 1995'.²

1.4. A consequence of this policy was that the new RLC Training & Support Regiment's structure and establishment size remained broadly similar to the days when it was the depot regiment for just one of the forming Corps of the new RLC. Now, however, it was fulfilling this role for a much larger part of the Army.

Single Entry Training

1.5. In Sep 93, the standardised Single Entry system was introduced, with training in two phases: recruit training and trade training. Previously, the Arms and Corps provided both recruit and trade training to their soldiers. However, now, all those between 16 yrs, 3 mths and 30 yrs of age carried out their recruit training together, while trade training continued to be an Arms' and Corps' responsibility.³ Phase 1 (recruit) training was to take place at one of five Army Training Regiments (ATRs), with Phase 2 (trade) training at specialist depots / schools. Women were also, for the first time, to undertake recruit training alongside their male colleagues in those parts of the Army that employed women; this included the RLC.

Phase 1 Training

1.6. Phase 1 training is where a recruit undertakes the Common Military Syllabus Recruit (CMS(R)) course, which is designed to provide the basic generic soldier skills.

1.7. RLC recruits carry out their Phase 1 training at ATR Pirbright (ATR (P)). As noted in the Deepcut Review, Phase 1 training is a 'very intensive 10 week period of tasks, targets and transition. There was much to learn in a short period. The day was structured and tiring. There was little free time for recreational activity'.⁴

1.8. During Phase 1 training, recruits join and remain with the same formed Platoon or Troop throughout, failure/medical problems aside. These are around 36 strong, and sub-divided into Sections of approximately 12 recruits. In this environment, the ratio of staff to recruit is high, with one Lance Corporal (LCpl) or Corporal (Cpl) to each Section, together with a Platoon Commander and Sergeant to each Platoon. This structure provides recruits with a sense of identity and stability, in surroundings designed to transform them from civilians into trained soldiers.

RLC Phase 2 Training

1.9. On completion of Phase 1 training, a recruit becomes a trainee and moves onto Phase 2 trade training. For RLC soldiers, this phase began at Deepcut. However, because of the diversity of trades within the RLC, much of the specialist trade training was, and continues to be, conducted away from Deepcut at specialist schools (for example, Driver Training at Leconfield).

25 Training Support Regiment

1.10. During the period 1993-2001, the RLC Training Regiment & Depot changed little in size and composition, although it changed its name to 25 Training Support Regiment (25 Trg Sp Regt) in 1999. From 1996, its three constituent Squadrons (Sqns) at Deepcut were named 85 Sqn, 86 Sqn, and 87 Sqn, with a fourth Squadron, 110 Sqn, being later formed, at Aldershot, for the training of Phase 2 Army Chefs.⁵ This BOI is principally concerned with 86 Sqn, based at Deepcut, and responsible for Phase 2 trainees. 86 Sqn was sub-divided into two Troops (Tps), each varying in size between 400 and 600 trainees, under a Lieutenant as Troop Commander (Tp Comd), a Troop Sergeant (Tp Sgt), and a small number of Junior Non Commissioned Officers (JNCOs). The concept of Sections, in any meaningful form, did not exist during this period.

1.11. 25 Trg Sp Regt was not, at this time, resourced by ATRA to provide training, since its role was a holding unit. Its task was to support, administer, and accommodate trainees at Deepcut during the 5-9 months period it took them to complete Phase 2 training and be posted to the Field Army.⁶ The time that trainees spent at Phase 2 varied for a number of reasons. For example: lack of vacancies on trade training courses, failure on courses, delays in the issuing of provisional driving licences, or medical problems.

RLC Training Group

1.12. The Regiment at Deepcut was part of the RLC Training Group which, in August 2001, became the Defence Logistics Support Training Group. The Commander, a Brigadier, had responsibility for Logistics trade training schools, including the RLC's trade training. In this capacity, he reported to the Director General Army Training & Recruiting Agency (DG ATRA), and sat on the ATRA Management Board. In his secondary role, as Commander Deepcut Garrison, he was responsible for security, discipline, and maintenance of the local estate, through the Land Regional Forces chain of command.⁷

Army Training & Recruiting Agency (ATRA)

1.13. The organisation responsible for Army training and recruiting, instructor training, and the setting of standards, was the Army Training & Recruiting Agency, which has undergone several restructurings and name changes since 1993.

Section 2 – The Training Environment

Staff/Trainee Ratio

1.14. The issue of staff to trainee ratios at 25 Trg Sp Regt was a constant problem during the period, raised frequently by successive commanders at Deepcut and in both the Evans Report in Dec 95 and the Haes Report in Apr 01.* In April 99, Brig Brown, Commander, RLC Training Group, in his first Quarterly Report, stated that the Regt was 'established with 10 Cpls for direct face to face duty of care responsibilities, this equates to a ratio of One Cpl to 120 Phase 2 trainees.' In his view, this was an issue that 'must be addressed at corporate level'.⁸ As an indicator of the problem, on 3 Jul 01, 25 Trg Sp Regt had a total of 8 JNCOs.⁹ Absences on leave/courses, etc, impacted further on this staff/trainee issue.

1.15. No additional resources were forthcoming. It seems, from HQ ATRA responses to these requests, that funding was not available for any additional staff at Deepcut.

1.16. The Haes Report, a study into Duty of Care & Supervision across all ATRA units, concluded that 'Action is needed to reduce the gap in care capabilityby all practical means or output should be reduced.'¹⁰ In Haes' view, 'Few instructors claim to know their students. The shortage of contact time means that 80% of trainees pass through ATRA "unknown". The other 20% are more likely to be known for the wrong reasons'.¹¹

1.17. There was a particular problem within the RLC Trg Gp, where the diverse nature of the Phase 2 training environment made it difficult for staff to get to

* The Evans report was commissioned and written by Brig Evans, Comd RLC Trg Gp, in Dec 95, following the death of two trainees at Deepcut in the previous 6 months. The Haes Report, a study into Duty of Care & Supervision across all ATRA units, was commissioned by HQ ATRA in Oct 00 and published in Apr 01. Its author, Lt Col Haes, was a staff officer in HQ ATRA. See Annex C for reference details.

know trainees. In recognition of this, and in order to 'achieve minimum levels of supervision and legal [Duty of Care]' Haes recommended an additional 62 staff for the RLC Trg Gp.¹²

1.18. The official response to the Haes Report, from DG ATRA, in a letter dated 6 Sep 01, rejected its main conclusions on the grounds that 'In the current climate of under manning and operational overstretch it is self-evident that there is no possibility of achieving enhancements to the manning liability without compensating reductions and gapping of posts elsewhere.'¹³ The letter went on to remind Op Div Comds that 'first and foremost, we must remember that responsibility for providing adequate duty of care and supervision remains firmly with the commanding officer.'¹⁴ DG ATRA asked 'that commanders at all levels continue to seek innovative and imaginative ways of providing the resources to occupy and assist trainees during their off-duty hours.'¹⁵ The problem was much worse at Deepcut than this response recognised, since the inadequate staff numbers also impacted on supervision levels during on-duty hours.

1.19. Brig Brown, in overall command at Deepcut in 2001, recalls the discussion at the ATRA Board meeting at the time of the Haes Report, and was particularly disappointed with the decision to reject its main recommendations (i.e. those relating to increased manpower). He was not impressed with the ATRA response, not least since his people were already being imaginative in trying to improve matters.¹⁶

1.20. The DG ATRA during this period, Maj Gen (now Lt Gen (Retd)) Palmer, has addressed some of these issues in a letter, written to the BOI President in Apr 08. The comments that follow are taken from that letter.¹⁷

1.21. Every year, as with other budget areas across the Army, ATRA was required to make further savings. As the primary proportion of its costs were in manpower, any increases in this area could only be made at the expense of other areas where investment was also required.¹⁸

1.22. ATRA was further constrained by *Front Line First*, the policy by which the priority for manpower was to the Field Army, not the Training base. Since operational commitments were placing a particular strain on the RLC, with good NCOs at a premium, there was a view that, by transferring these NCOs from the Field Army to the ATRA, this was 'merely transferring risk from one part of the Army to another.'¹⁹ At the time, ATRA was also reliant upon a 'significant number of instructors' (some 500+) that were, in effect, being borrowed from the Field Army, since they remained on the LAND budget. Due to operational overstretch, HQ LAND Command was now calling for the return of these instructors. One of DG ATRA's motivations in commissioning the Haes Report was to make the case to retain them. However, when Haes recommended an increase of over 300 staff 'required to achieve minimum levels of supervision and legal Duty of Care',²⁰ without regard for *Front Line First* and the need to argue for the retention of the 'borrowed' staff from LAND, DG ATRA judged this suggestion as 'simply fanciful.'²¹

1.23. DG ATRA 'made a considered judgement that the Haes Report was not a realistic basis for a specific "pitch" up the Chain of Command for increased manpower.'²² Lt Gen (Retd) Palmer states that 'in recent times I have carefully considered whether I would again, given the policies and priorities in the Army at the time, and without the benefit of knowledge of later events, reach the same judgement on the Haes Report as I did in 2001. I believe that I would indeed do so.'²³ The problem, in his view, was 'that there was an enormous difference between recognising the need to address a problem and being in a position to be able to persuade the Army to reverse its perception of the appropriate balance of risk and divert both manpower and resources from the Field Army to the training organization.'²⁴

1.24. Although Haes' recommendations regarding increased manpower resources were not taken forward by HQ ATRA, other initiatives, unrelated to the Haes Report, were pursued within existing constraints. These included: an Instructor School for Phase 1 instructors; two Junior training colleges to separate adults from junior recruits; increased pre-entry assessments; and a raised passing-in standard.²⁵

1.25. Particular emphasis was also placed upon 'the well-known, but well nigh intractable problem of dealing with SATT [Soldiers Awaiting Trade Training]'.²⁶ On several occasions, DG ATRA considered restricting the number of recruits entering Phase 1 training, thereby reducing the burden on Phase 2 establishments such as Deepcut. In DG ATRA's view, while this would have resolved the SATT problem, it would have also exacerbated the shortfall of Army recruits, particularly in the RLC.²⁷

1.26. The 'ATRA Strategy', published during this period, 'recognised that the ATRA could not go on living beyond its means'. The Strategy, which included the closure of a number of schools and the concentrating of training on fewer but larger sites, was endorsed by the Army Board, however, it was soon to be overtaken by the Defence Training Review.²⁸

Conclusions

1.27. The underlying problems at Deepcut during the period 1993-2001 were due mainly to a lack of resources. This led to insufficient numbers of staff to provide an appropriate level of duty of care and supervision to trainees, some of whom were under the age of 18.

1.28. Although this situation was not unique to Deepcut, it was here that the problem was at its most acute, reducing the Army's ability to meet, fully, its duty of care and supervision responsibilities.

1.29. This problem was well known at the time, and was frequently raised up the Chain of Command, to HQ ATRA.

1.30. In the view of the Board, sufficient evidence existed in 2001 to substantiate a strong case for action, by either reducing the number of recruits entering Phase 1 and 2 training, or by increasing the number of

ATRA staff. Such action would have relied upon a change in Army policy and priorities, together with an increase and/or reallocation of resources.

SATT and Continuation Training

1.31. Not all of the trainees' time was spent on trade training, since there was a shortage of vacancies on courses and therefore frequent delays. This led to a phenomenon known as Soldiers Awaiting Trade Training (SATT) and the need for the trainees to be usefully occupied during the time between trade courses.

1.32. The problem, however, was that 25 Trg Sp Regt was not resourced to provide this level of support to the trainees. The issue had been raised by Brig Evans in Dec 95, when he found a lack of programmed training. Since he had also found evidence of 'skill fade, especially in weapon-handling' among trainees, there was clearly a need for some form of structured training, making best use of the available time.²⁹

1.33. This lack of formal and structured training was exacerbated by the contrasts between the tightly knit, structured and disciplined regime of ATR(P) and the starkly different environment at Deepcut. Taken with the greater freedoms enjoyed by trainees, and their lack of experience, this led to numerous minor breaches of discipline.³⁰ The normal process of countering this through structured and progressive training was missing.

1.34. In early Jun 01, Lt Col Laden assumed command of 25 Trg Sp Regt. Since he had been working close-by in his previous appointment, he had the opportunity to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Regt prior to his arrival.³¹ The problem areas he identified were SATT, availability of Driver Training, Continuation Training, the 'poor attitude of the permanent staff', along with trainees who 'often reverted to their pre-military behaviour'. Lt Col Laden identified a number of challenges on assuming command, and set about making improvements.³²

1.35. Lt Col Laden planned to address the causes of SATT and to make Continuation Training more relevant. He introduced structured and progressive training programmes, and made greater use of available facilities. Although improvements were achieved during Lt Col Laden's tenure, due to his considerable efforts and those of his staff, he was frequently constrained by the lack of additional resources.³³ He was being directed to 'train as many people as possible' whilst 'remaining within budget' but set against a background of falling resource levels.³⁴ He was under pressure from ATRA to make savings on his budget, and often at short notice.³⁵ His response was always to resist these calls, since his resources were already inadequate.

Conclusions

1.36. Despite considerable local efforts at Deepcut to improve Continuation Training, it remained an issue throughout Lt Col Laden's tenure of command.

1.37. Considering that trainees were spending a significant proportion of time on Continuation Training, it is difficult to understand why this was not resourced by ATRA, in order that properly structured and progressive training could be conducted, making best use of the time between trade courses.

Discipline

1.38. Lt Col Laden considered that, at 25 Trg Sp Regt, there were 'unacceptable levels' of discipline problems among the trainees, albeit minor, caused through 'a combination of immaturity, stupidity and drink'. This low level misbehaviour' was, in Lt Col Laden's view, due more to the lack of senior soldiers in the barrack room than the shortage of non-commissioned officers at 25 Trg Sp Regt. Lt Col Laden addressed the problem by applying a firm policy on discipline, while also setting high standards for his own staff.³⁶

Conclusion

1.39. In the view of the Board, Lt Col Laden's firm approach to discipline was appropriate, and within Army guidelines.

Staff Selection

1.40. The Evans Report in 1995 recommended a review of the procedures for the selection of staff at Deepcut, however there appears to have been no significant improvements in selection criteria until sometime after 2001.³⁷ This resulted in staff being posted to Deepcut and other training establishments without undergoing a thorough process of selection.

1.41. It also seems that a posting to a training establishment during the mid-1990s was regarded as less desirable than service in the Field Army.³⁸ Indeed, those involved in training during this period felt that being an instructor in a training establishment was not a career-enhancing move. It appears that, for some people, this perception still existed in 2001. To quote Lt Col Laden, being 'a training NCO ... was not necessarily the first choice of many junior NCOs, for a number of reasons.'³⁹ It was also considered to be a particularly demanding posting, requiring long hours and often evening and weekend working. Lt Col Laden recalls an ATRA sponsored survey at the time showed an average 4.5 day working week of 67 hours, and it was not unusual for this figure to rise even higher.⁴⁰ With the resources provided to Lt Col Laden, it seems that he and his staff could have done no more. Indeed, a number of staff at Deepcut during this period suffered from stress-related illnesses, due, in the main, from the pressure of work and the long hours.⁴¹

Staff Training

1.42. The BOI found evidence of an increasingly progressive staff training programme during Lt Col Laden's tenure. For example, staff were encouraged to attend the All Arms Drill course and the All Arms Skill at Arms course. On the last Friday of each month, when trainees were given a long weekend, the Regt ran small in-house training cadres (from Dec 01 onwards).⁴²

Conclusions

1.43. During this period, there was insufficient selection, training and preparation for staff prior to arriving at an ATRA establishment such as 25 Regt, where they would expect to be in contact with young and inexperienced soldiers on a regular basis.

1.44. Given the perceptions about postings to training establishments, it is possible that some of the more suitable JNCOs/SNCOs in the Field Army were either not being offered such a tour, or had no desire for one. The Board is satisfied, however, that the staff who served at Deepcut during this period were both dedicated and hard-working.

1.45. The staff training efforts at 25 Trg Sp Regt, in the absence of formal ATRA pre-employment training, went some way to addressing the requirement.

Welfare

1.46. In 1995, the Trg Regt at Deepcut had a Padre, a Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) representative, and a Medical Officer (MO) available for consultation on and handling of welfare matters. However, there was no single focus in the Chain of Command to coordinate and monitor the welfare provision to trainees undergoing Phase 2 training. The lack of a formal overall welfare policy led to the welfare agencies regularly working in isolation.⁴³

1.47. Brig Evans noted that welfare agencies/professionals felt in 1995 that they were not sufficiently involved in the 'management of soldiers under training' and that there was a requirement for regular meetings with all concerned to 'discuss individual cases'.⁴⁴ In view of this, the Evans Report recommended that welfare agencies be involved more often, that a single focus for welfare of all soldiers under training should be established, with a welfare group comprising all interested parties.⁴⁵

1.48. This recommendation had been implemented by the time that Lt Col Laden had arrived in command in mid-2001. While the level of welfare resources remained much the same, regular welfare meetings were now held at Squadron and Regimental level. The CO also took a direct and personal interest in welfare issues, by chairing Regimental Welfare meetings himself.⁴⁶ This enabled a more focused and organised approach to the provision of welfare.

Conclusion

1.49. From the evidence received by this Board, it seems that both the Welfare Agencies and professionals at Deepcut in 2001 were regarded as dedicated and professional staff, providing a good service within the available resources at the time.

Morale

1.50. Brig Evans had noted in 1995 'from the outset of my review, I was struck by the very low morale of the current B Sqn soldiers with whom I spoke'.^{*} The most constant frustration he encountered concerned the frequency of Guard duties and disappointment with the lack of structured training.⁴⁷

1.51. Evidence gathered by the Surrey Police in their Duty of Care Schedule 01/02, and published in redacted form in the Deepcut Review, underlines this impression of 'boredom of SATT and the monotony of continuation training and regular guard duties'.⁴⁸ As noted in the Deepcut Review, it seems that, even making allowance for the subjective nature of these comments, and the failure of individuals to take advantage of the opportunities available, many of the themes identified by the Evans Report in 1995 still existed six years later.⁴⁹

Conclusion

1.52. Low morale existed among some trainees at Deepcut during this period, and any incidences of low moral is clearly regrettable in a training establishment for young soldiers. However it is the Board's view that care must be taken in using this evidence to draw overall conclusions about life at 25 Trg Sp Regt in 2001.

Guarding

1.53. Princess Royal Barracks, Deepcut is a large camp with a long perimeter fence. Outside this fence are the Officers' (Offrs') Mess and the Sergeants' (Sgts') Mess, both within small compounds, with their own external access gates. Since they both contained Service living accommodation, there was a requirement to guard these compounds with armed soldiers, providing area patrols and security control on the gate. Both locations during this period were manned solely by Phase 2 trainees, some of whom were armed with SA80 rifles. The Offrs' Mess compound was some distance from the main Guardroom, accessible by vehicle and via the public road.⁵⁰

1.54. Throughout the 1993-2001 period, the manpower commitment for Guard duties at Deepcut was met predominantly by Phase 2 trainees - some 22 trainees when the Security State was at normal. Supervision was provided by the SNCO Guard Commander and JNCO Second in Command (2IC), with additional assistance from the Regimental Police Duty NCO and Security Duty NCO. In addition to unit staff, use was also made of NCOs attending Phase 3 training courses at Deepcut to provide supervision. These NCOs were not familiar with

^{*} B Sqn was the former name of 86 Sqn, based at Deepcut.

the trainees, nor had they undergone the internal staff training conducted by 25 Regt Sp Regt.

1.55. During weekdays, Guard duties were split into two 12 hour shifts, while at weekends this was extended to a 24 hour duty. Duties were divided into those on Guard duty and those forming the Quick Reaction Force (QRF). Whilst on Guard, soldiers performed two hour shifts of duty, interspersed by two hour rest periods. Those on shift could be employed at any of the various security locations.

1.56. The frequency of Guard duties depended upon the available pool of trainees at Deepcut; fewer trainees led to a greater number of duties, and vice versa.

1.57. Guarding provides a common theme at Deepcut, since the four trainees who died there during the period 1995-2002 were all on Guard at the time of their deaths. Following the second death, in Nov 95, Brig Evans acknowledged that the problem of guarding was not new, and therefore made a number of recommendations, including a review aimed at reducing the military manpower bill for Guard duties at Deepcut.⁵¹ The Haes Report, in 2001, commenting on ATRA establishments where there was a reliance upon trainees for Guard duties, noted that '...the guard is found from SATT, SAD (Soldiers Awaiting Discharge) and Phase 2 trainees. Security may be in the hands of dissatisfied, disinterested or unqualified soldiers with live ammunition.'⁵² There is no suggestion, however, that Soldiers Awaiting Discharge were conducting Guard duties at Deepcut during this period. Indeed, in Lt Col Laden's view, this was no longer an issue, since it had already been identified before he assumed command in Jun 01.⁵³

1.58. It was not until around Aug 02, when the Army made additional resources available, that the reliance on trainees for Guard duty at Deepcut began to diminish.⁵⁴

Conclusion

1.59. The reliance on Phase 2 trainees as the primary source of manpower for Guard duty at Deepcut was a constant theme throughout the period 1995-2001.

Notes

¹ MOD *Front Line First – the Defence Costs Study*, HMSO 1994. paragraph 121. Quoted in DR, paragraph 4.21.

² DR, paragraph 4.28, Footnote 16.

³ DR, paragraph 4.29.

⁴ DR, paragraph 4.70.

⁵ DR, paragraph 4.67.

⁶ DR, 4.68.

⁷ DR, paragraphs 4.63-4.65.

⁸ RLC Trg Gp 1st Quarterly Report, Apr 99. Quoted in DR, paragraph 9.61.

⁹ DR, paragraph 9.95.

¹⁰ Haes, paragraph 28.

¹¹ Haes, paragraph 61.

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- ¹² Haes, paragraph 61a, Serial 7.
- ¹³ D/ATRA/20/578 Pers. *Duty of Care Within ATRA Units*. Dated 6 Sep 01. DG/ATRA's response to the Haes Report. paragraph 1.
- ¹⁴ Ibid, paragraph 2.
- ¹⁵ Ibid, paragraph 4.
- ¹⁶ WS3(C)(3),29A-31C.
- ¹⁷ Letter to Board President from Lt Gen (Retd) AMD Palmer. Apr 08. Exhibit 16.
- ¹⁸ Palmer. p2. paragraph 2.
- ¹⁹ Palmer, p2, paragraph 3.
- ²⁰ Haes, paragraph 61a.
- ²¹ Palmer, p3, paragraph 2.
- ²² Palmer, p3, paragraph 3.
- ²³ Palmer, p3, paragraph 4.
- ²⁴ Palmer, p5, paragraph 3.
- ²⁵ Palmer, p4-5, a-g.
- ²⁶ Palmer, p4, paragraph 1.
- ²⁷ Palmer, p4, paragraph 1.
- ²⁸ Palmer, p5, g.
- ²⁹ Evans, paragraphs 15, 23.
- ³⁰ WS1(G),29A-G.
- ³¹ WS1(G),15F.
- ³² WS1(G),12E-13G.
- ³³ WS1(G),59G-60G.
- ³⁴ WS1(G),14C-D.
- ³⁵ WS1(G),20B.
- ³⁶ WS1(G),32G; WS1(G),34C-D; WS1(G),84C-86G.
- ³⁷ Evans, paragraph 35n.
- ³⁸ DR, paragraph 4.22, Page 69, Footnote 13.
- ³⁹ WS1(G),87C-E.
- ⁴⁰ WS1(G),61B.
- ⁴¹ WS4(C), p116, line 13-117, line 24.
- ⁴² WS4(C), p33, line 5-24.
- ⁴³ Evans, paragraph 10.
- ⁴⁴ Evans, paragraph 10.
- ⁴⁵ Evans, paragraphs 35b, 35e, 35f.
- ⁴⁶ WS1(G),18H-19A.
- ⁴⁷ Evans, paragraph 13.
- ⁴⁸ DR, paragraph 10.31.
- ⁴⁹ DR, paragraph 10.31-37.
- ⁵⁰ See maps – Exhibits 19 & 20.
- ⁵¹ Evans, paragraphs 14, 33g, 35a.
- ⁵² Haes, paragraph 25a.
- ⁵³ WS4(C), p38, line 12-p40, line 3.
- ⁵⁴ WS1(G),121F.

CHAPTER TWO

PRIVATE GRAY

Section 1- Before Joining the Army

Background

2.1. Geoff Gray was born in Sunderland on 28 Jan 84.

XXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX¹

2.2. Geoff Gray had a happy and secure family upbringing. He went to a primary school in Aldgate, and spent just under 5 years at the St John Roche Comprehensive School in Poplar, leaving with 5 GCSEs, taken in Jun 00. The subjects he enjoyed at school were Geography, Science, Social Science, and Maths, and he liked 'problem solving'.² He had a notable success as a sportsman, being the East London champion at the 100 metres. Running came naturally to him, aided by his slim, tall build.³ He was also interested in ice skating, DJ and Disco equipment, computers and electronics generally.⁴

2.3. He joined the Scouts at the age of 6, progressing to the Venture Scouts.⁵ It was here that he showed some early leadership qualities, and he continued to visit them at weekends when home from the Army. He liked to help the younger members.⁶

2.4. At school, he was an average student who was occasionally in minor scraps, but was not troublesome.⁷ Until the age of 16, he was getting up at 06:30 in the morning to do a paper round before going to school.⁸ He did not go out much in the week-day evenings; he did his homework, occasionally meeting friends, playing music, and spent time on the computer.⁹

2.5. Geoff Gray had three different groups of civilian friends, based on the Scouts; those at the ice rink; and those with whom he went out socialising.¹⁰ One of his friends, who Mr Gray described as his 'very best friend', was still in contact with him during his time in the Army.¹¹

2.6. Geoff Gray was a fit teenager with no significant or enduring medical problems. He had been diagnosed with asthma in 1994, but had never had a serious attack and no longer needed any treatment.¹² He sustained a head injury in Jan 00, however the experience did not appear to have any long term physical or mental effects on him.¹³

2.7. Geoff Gray was consuming alcohol in his teens, but his parents never saw him excessively drunk.¹⁴ On the subject of money, Geoff was a fairly typical teenager, and there is no indications that he had any debt problems.¹⁵ He did, however, have quite expensive tastes – both in clothes and shoes.¹⁶

Interest in the Army

2.8. Mr Gray believes that Geoff's interest in the Army began at about the age of 11 or 12. He saw it as an opportunity for travel and sport, particularly running. It also appears that he was attracted to organisations that provided structure and stability.¹⁷ He did not, at this stage, have a clear idea of which part of the Army he wished to join, something that probably only began to emerge following his visit to the Recruiting Office.¹⁸

2.9. Geoff Gray made his initial application to join the Army on 17 Aug 99, while studying for his GCSEs. He was self-motivated and was not, it appears, being pushed by his parents.¹⁹ Nor is there a suggestion that he joined the Army as a result of peer pressure; he made the decision for himself.²⁰

2.10. One of his referees, his Group Scout Leader, described him as being a Patrol Leader who 'motivated and encouraged his Patrol Members, maintained a high level of enthusiasm for all troop activities, invariably allowing his sense of fun and good humour to show through, and achieved all the targets he set himself.'²¹

2.11. Mr & Mrs Gray supported their son's desire to join the Army, believing it to be a good career. At one stage, when Geoff was making good money on a building site, Mr Gray feared that he might change his mind, but neither he nor his wife applied any pressure on him. Despite the money he was now earning, Geoff remained determined to join the Army.²²

Interview for Army

2.12. In Aug 00, Geoff Gray visited an Army Careers office in London and was formally interviewed for entry. Giving his reasons for wishing to enlist, he wrote 'For many years I have wanted to join the [A]rmy. I see it as a new experience giving me a challenge and a chance to learn new skills. I always work my best and like to be pushed to new extremes both physically and mentally. I think the [A]rmy will help me build myself to a new person teaching me many new things.'²³ The Recruiter's comment, in the margin of the application form, was 'What more can I say!'²⁴

2.13. The Recruiter described Geoff Gray as being polite, well dressed, clearly a responsible young person, crime and drug free, and determined to be in the Army. He concluded that he was definitely apprentice material. The Senior Recruiter, in his Confirmatory Report, described Geoff Gray as 'A very good egg & plenty of potential.....Cheerful, articulate, easy to interview..... Recommended for first choice'.²⁵ Geoff Gray's Attestation took place on 16 Jan 01, when he was enlisted into the RLC for training as a Supply Controller.

Section 2 - Pirbright (Jan-Apr 01)

2.14. On 28 Jan 01, 25127287 Recruit (Rct) Gray reported to the Army Training Regiment, Pirbright (ATR(P)), to commence his 12 weeks Phase 1 training. He seemed to be well prepared for what was to come. To quote his father: 'He was

not naïve, he knew that the twelve weeks was going to be toughit has got to be toughand I am pretty sure that he was well aware of that.²⁶

2.15. His progress at Pirbright can be followed by an analysis of his weekly reports. At the end of Week 1, his Sect Comd reported that he had 'settled in well, comes across as a little shy, but this is to be expected. He needs to work on his confidence'.²⁷

2.16. From there on, his performance steadily improved, and by Week 8 he was receiving above average grades and good scores in his map reading and live firing tests. His Sect Comd praised his efforts while encouraging him to work on 'his self confidence to bring out his leadership potential'.²⁸

2.17. In Week 10, Rct Gray passed his Annual Personal Weapon Test. To quote his Sect Comd: 'Done well this week on Exercise 3 passing all tests to the required standard, showed good administration skills in the field and managed to keep himself at a good level throughout the exercise. He has a good head when it gets tough and just knuckles down and gets on with it'.²⁹

2.18. By Week 11, Rct Gray's grades had improved significantly from Week 1, with 3 at A; 9 at B; and 1 at C+.³⁰ His Final Report, at the end of his 12 weeks' training states:

'Rct Gray has matured from a very quiet Rct with very little self confidence into a capable and confident Rct over the last 12 weeks. His personal admin has also improved dramatically. He is always a hard worker giving 100% in all lessonsHas shown no difficulties throughout. I believe Rct Gray is ready to progress onto the next phase of his [training]. Well Done'.

2.19. Both Rct Gray's Platoon and Company Commanders endorsed this report, with the latter commenting that he had produced 'very creditable results'. The overall gradings in the Final Report indicate that his performance was above average, with a consistent grading of B in all respects.³¹

2.20. Rct Gray passed-out at ATR(P) on 20 Apr 01 and took leave until 29 Apr 01, when he reported to 25 Trg Sp Regt RLC at Deepcut.³² In summing up this first period of Pte Gray's time in the Army, it is clear that, with a steadily improved performance, he was well-set for a promising career. He had been physically and mentally stretched by his 12 weeks' training, but had enjoyed his time, passing-out with an above-average report.

2.21. Mr Gray saw a distinct change in his son by the time he left Pirbright. 'He had a great sense of achievement. I know we personally could see a difference in him physicallyand I think his attitude was a little bit more mature than when he went away'.³³

Conclusion

2.22. Pte Gray did well at Pirbright, receiving an above average report. He had no disciplinary problems there, appears to have felt a sense of achievement when he passed-out, and to have been looking forward to going on to Deepcut, learning to drive, and gaining a trade.

Section 3 - Deepcut (Apr-Sep 01)

2.23. Pte Gray was formally posted into 86 Sqn, 25 Trg Sp Regt RLC, on 30 Apr 01 for his Phase 2 training.³⁴ The unit is based at Deepcut in Surrey, within a few miles of ATR(P) at Pirbright.

Chronology

2.24. The Board has compiled an outline chronology of Pte Gray's 4½ months' at Deepcut, based on his 'Personal Profile - Activities' held at the time by his unit.³⁵ Additional information from other sources is also included.

Date - 2001	Event / Comment
30 Apr-4 May	Arrival at Deepcut & Induction.
2 May	Weapon handling test. ³⁶ One of his closest friends at Deepcut, XXX testified that Pte Gray was competent with his weapon. ³⁷
5-22 May	Continuation Training.
15 May	Reported sick, having fainted (possibly on PT). During this period (15-17 May) he was designated as 'Sick Able'.
17 May	Reported sick again, still feeling faint.
21 May	Saw the Medical Officer, whose opinion was that Pte Gray may have been suffering from migraine. This is the last record of Pte Gray seeking medical attention. ³⁸
23 May	Guard.
4 Jun -6 Jul	Attended and passed a Supply Controller Class 3 course, held at the School of Logistics, Deepcut. The report indicates that Pte Gray passed comfortably with most gradings above 70%. ³⁹
22 Jun	Guard.

Date - 2001	Event / Comment
3 Jul	<p>Reported to the Dental Officer, having sustained broken teeth at the front of his mouth the previous Saturday. The Dental Officer records that this had been caused by a bottle which had been knocked onto his front teeth. He did not lose consciousness when this happened, but had clearly suffered pain, particularly later when eating and drinking, and had also experienced disturbed sleep.⁴⁰</p> <p>Mr Gray's explanation for this differs from the Dental Officer's notes, suggesting that his son's teeth were damaged when he fell as a result of an accident.⁴¹ It may be that Pte Gray gave one explanation to the Dental Officer and another to his family. His close friend, XXX states in his evidence to the Board that he thinks Pte Gray said he had been pushed down some stairs.⁴²</p>
13 Jul; 30 Jul; 14 Aug; 20 Aug; 21 Aug; 22 Aug; 24 Aug.	Visited Dental Officer, for repair work.
9-11 Jul	Attended Category B Driving Theory Course, and passed. ⁴³
15-20 Jul	Guard.
21 Jul-4 Aug	Continuation Training.
5-11 Aug	'Detached' – No other details shown. It is possible that this was an exercise at Otterburn. Mr Gray recalls him returning from there and thoroughly enjoying the experience. ⁴⁴
12-23 Aug	Continuation Training.
24 Aug-6 Sep	Attended Category B Driving Course, and passed.
9 Sep	Spent the weekend at home with his family, and went out with several girlfriends and attended a party. When he said goodbye to his parents he was slightly hung over from Saturday night, but was cheerful and looking forward to getting back to barracks. ⁴⁵
10-14 Sep	Five day, day-time Guard Duty. One soldier recalls being on guard with Pte Gray for three days after 11 Sep (9/11). ⁴⁶
14-16 Sep	Off duty from the evening of Fri 14 Sep until he went on guard at 1800hrs on Sun 16 Sep. See Section 4 below for details of this period.

Date - 2001	Event / Comment
16 Sep	<p>Commenced a five day night Guard. The additional guard requirement was a consequence of 9/11.</p> <p>Due to commence his HGV Driver Training at Leconfield on the third week of Sep 01. He knew he was on his way to Leconfield, since he had mentioned this to other trainees and also to his parents.⁴⁷</p>

Induction

2.25. Pte Gray spent the first four days in Induction Tp, which appears to have consisted of 29 soldiers. Of this number, 21, including Pte Gray, were assigned to Normandy Troop. Pte Gray's trade is shown as Supply Controller (SUP CON).⁴⁸

2.26. During the Induction process, Pte Gray was required to write a short essay. He concluded this by saying 'My "Ambition" is to enjoy life, travel around the world and experience new things. I'm a person who acts off impulse and I love a challenge, therefore the army life is perfect for me. My time at ATR Pirbright was tough but I enjoyed it. It was a hard and intense course and I'm proud of myself for keeping my head down and working hard.'⁴⁹

Continuation Training

2.27. Pte Gray, in his 4½ months at Deepcut up to the time of his death, spent approximately a third of his time on Continuation Training. The exact nature of this training is unknown, although the chronology (above) gives some indicators of frequency and duration. Given Lt Col Laden's stated priorities, it is also clear that some improvements in Continuation Training were taking place during this period. There were, however, times when Pte Gray expressed boredom at Deepcut, something he had not done at Pirbright.

Welfare

2.28. No one that the BOI consulted (including the CO and Padre) recalls Pte Gray's name being raised at any welfare meetings, whether Squadron or Regimental. Throughout his time at Deepcut, Pte Gray appears never to have given cause for concern.

2.29. Both Mr and Mrs Gray recall their son speaking positively of XXX, albeit in general terms. In evidence to the Board, XXX did not, however, recall meeting Pte Gray and was never approached by him in confidence.⁵⁰ From other evidence to the Board, it appears that the welfare support in 2001 was appreciated by trainees. For example, the WRVS facilities were particularly popular.

2.30. It seems that Pte Gray's visits to the Medical and Dental Centres were followed by the appropriate diagnoses and treatment. Whilst his passing migraine, and the more protracted dental treatment he received following

damage to his teeth, probably had an impact on him at the time, there is no indication that these had a damaging or prolonged effect.

Discipline

2.31. Throughout his time in the Army, Pte Gray was never charged with a disciplinary offence, nor was he in receipt of any minor censure. Evidence provided by his peers supports this view. He was an amiable person and a good young trainee soldier.

2.32. No evidence has been produced during this inquiry to suggest that Pte Gray had ever complained about any member of the staff or that anyone had ever witnessed him being mistreated in any way.

Guard Duty

2.33. Pte Gray, during his time at Deepcut, conducted 12 Guard duties up to the evening of 16 Sep 01, when he started his final Guard. He had previously been on a five day, day-time guard during the week 10-14 Sep. However, due to '9/11' and the raised security state, he found himself back on guard two days later. This second period was to consist of a five day, night-time guard concluding on the morning of 21 Sep 01. It coincided with the period that, reasonably, Pte Gray would have expected to be preparing for his imminent move to Leconfield, to conduct HGV driver training.*

2.34. Pte Gray had admitted to his parents that he found Guarding 'boring' and he made similar comments to colleagues during his last Guard on 16 Sep 01. There is no evidence that he was ever placed on Guard as a disciplinary punishment.

Pte Gray's Character

2.35. The general impression of Pte Gray was of a 'happy-go-lucky' teenager with few problems or cares. He made friends easily, and had many girlfriends. While he could give the impression of being quite shy and reserved, 'keeping his head down' as described by one of his friends, he was a highly socially-active young person.⁵¹

2.36. Mr Gray describes his son as having a 'shy side and a very forceful side' to his character, but in a 'family environment he was completely opposite ... very outgoing.'⁵² He also had a 'wicked sense of humour', particularly when with his family.⁵³ Since his parents had no contact with the Army hierarchy at Deepcut, they knew little about how he was performing there, other than from what he told them himself. However, Mr Gray believes that his son was very open with both his parents, and willing to share his problems.⁵⁴

2.37. There were numerous girls in Pte Gray's life, and it appears that he attempted to keep in contact with most of them. In Mr Gray's view, the longest

* A more detailed discussion of Pte Gray's last period of Guard duty is at Chapter 3 of this report.

continual relationship he had was with a girl who was a member of the Scout Group. They met at least once or twice a week, and, as they grew older, spent time together at weekends. Mr Gray describes her as a 'constant friend' even though they were both in other relationships during the last few months of Pte Gray's life.⁵⁵ They exchanged text messages and had a mobile phone conversation a few hours before Pte Gray died on 17 Sep 01.*

2.38. XXX, in his evidence to the BOI, described Pte Gray as having the 'gift of the gab' when it came to girls. He appeared to be always on the phone with different girls, and, in XXX view, it may be that he was in a bit of a muddle over these various relationships. In his evidence, XXX describes Pte Gray as a flamboyant character with boundless energy, blending into the background during the working day but coming alive in the evening and at weekends.⁵⁶

Conclusions

2.39. Pte Gray's 'boredom' at Deepcut suggests that his time was less structured, and occupied, than at Pirbright.

2.40. There is no evidence that Pte Gray ever experienced any sustained or noticeable periods of unhappiness at Deepcut. He appeared to those around him, including his family, to lead a trouble-free and contented life.

2.41. Given the lack of staff, the absence of formal monitoring of soldiers under the age of 18, and the fact that Pte Gray was never in trouble and kept a low profile, it is not surprising that he was generally unknown to the staff. This is regrettable, given his youth and state of maturity.

2.42. The Board concludes that, overall during his time at Deepcut, Pte Gray did not conduct an excessive number of Guard duties, although he was on Guard for an extended period in the last two weeks of his life.

2.43. Guarding appears to have had a negative effect on Pte Gray. Being placed on a second 5 x day duty, two days after a similar period of Guard, could have exacerbated these feelings.

2.44. The Board is of the opinion that neither the discipline problems at 25 Trg Sp Regt nor the discipline policy adopted by Lt Col Laden[†] had a negative impact on Pte Gray.

2.45. Pte Gray appears to have had plenty of friends during his time at Deepcut, particularly girlfriends. There are indicators that some of his relationships with girls may have caused him some difficulties. This, in the view of the Board, is quite normal for a teenager of Pte Gray's age and maturity.

Section 4 - The Last Weekend

* See Chapter 3, paragraphs 3.20-3.22.

† As outlined in Chapter 1, paragraph 1.34.

2.46. Pte Gray finished his five day Guard duty on the early evening of Fri 14 Sep 01. He would have known that he was on Guard again on the evening of Sun 16 Sep, since the Guard Roster for that date had already been published.⁵⁷

2.47. The Board approached XXX, formerly a serving RLC soldier and a friend of Pte Gray's during their Army service. XXX had spent time with Pte Gray during the period 14-16 Sep 01. He was not called to give evidence at the Inquest, but later gave statements to the Surrey Police. XXX did not give evidence to the BOI, however he gave formal written approval for his statements to be quoted.⁵⁸ The following account of events during this period is based solely on XXX evidence to the Surrey Police.

2.48. At 1930 hrs on Fri 14 Sep 01, Ptes Gray, XXX and XXX left the barracks by taxi, and went to the Working Men's Club outside Deepcut, where they had a pint of beer.⁵⁹ From there, they took another taxi to Woking, purchased some alcohol from an off licence, and went to an amusement arcade.⁶⁰ They stayed there for a couple of hours, went to a club, got 'fairly drunk, danced a bit' and returned to barracks at around 0200 the following morning.⁶¹ Pte Gray appeared to be 'lively' although he didn't flirt with women as much as he normally did.⁶²

2.49. XXX and Gray stayed in barracks on Saturday 15 Sep 01 until about 1600 when they both went to Frimley, bought beer in an off licence, and began to drink in a local park.⁶³ It was somewhere near here that, at about 1800 hrs, Pte Gray met a girl who he had spoken to earlier on his mobile phone.⁶⁴ Following this short meeting, both Pte Gray and XXX walked from Frimley to Camberley, buying more alcohol on the way.⁶⁵ When they arrived in Camberley, at around 2000 hrs, they visited a number of pubs in the town.⁶⁶

2.50. At some stage later, XXX realised how drunk Pte Gray had become. In one of the pubs, Pte Gray was asleep at the bar, and XXX woke him up before going to the toilet, but when he returned Pte Gray had disappeared. XXX spent about the next hour searching for him in the streets and in other bars.⁶⁷ When he did find him, Pte Gray was asleep in a skip in an alleyway close to the High Street, and XXX woke him.⁶⁸ Since they were both fairly drunk, they decided to walk back to camp. Somewhere along the way, Pte Gray entered a scrap yard, where he tried to find a car to drive home.⁶⁹

2.51. After about 40 minutes, Pte Gray found and took a pedal bicycle. They then started to make their way back to barracks, Pte Gray on the bicycle, XXX walking close by. They had gone some distance when, without warning, Pte Gray threw the bicycle over a railway bridge. It landed on a railway track below. They continued to walk home, and Pte Gray appeared to be in good spirits.⁷⁰ It was probably nearly 0200 hrs when they arrived back at Deepcut.⁷¹

Conclusions

2.52. In the seven days prior to his death, Pte Gray had spent five days on

Guard, followed by a two-day period during which, according to the evidence of XXX , he consumed alcohol heavily and was sleeping at irregular times.

2.53. It appears, from XXX testimony, that on the second evening, Sat 15 Sep 01, Pte Gray behaved in an impulsive and potentially reckless manner during the journey back to camp. This was completely out of character.

2.54. These two days, between Guard duties, were disjointed and possibly very tiring for Pte Gray – since he would have been coping with sleep deprivation and the after-effects of heavy alcohol consumption.

2.55. It is also possible that Pte Gray's uncharacteristic behaviour that weekend caused him concern, since up to that time his record had been exemplary.

2.56. Given all these factors, it is likely that Pte Gray was not in the best physical or psychological state to commence a 12 hour Guard duty at night, when the security state was at a raised level, and when he would be expected to be conducting armed guarding with the minimum of supervision.

Notes

¹ WS2,12B-G.

² Personnel Selection and Employment Allocation form, signed by Geoff Gray on 31 Aug 00 and stamped by ACIO Strand with the same date.

³ WS2,17D-H.

⁴ WS2,18B-F.

⁵ Pte Gray P File.

⁶ WS2,15D.

⁷ WS2,15C, WS2,17A-D.

⁸ WS2,20B.

⁹ WS2,19E.

¹⁰ WS2,15D.

¹¹ WS2,22D-F, WS2,23D-24D.

¹² Letter 'To Whom It May Concern' dtd 7 Sep 99 – from XXX , The Surgery, Hackney, E9 7PX.

¹³ Letter dtd 19 Jul 00 - from XXX , The Surgery, Hackney, E9 7PX, to Senior Medical Officer, Medical Centre Recruit Selection Centre, Pirbright. WS2,22A-B.

¹⁴ WS2,21B.

¹⁵ WS2,26G-27B.

¹⁶ WS2, 79G-80F.

¹⁷ WS2,24G-25F.

¹⁸ WS2,24G-26D.

¹⁹ WS2,27F.

²⁰ WS2,28G.

²¹ Letter 'To Whom it May Concern; Re: Geoff Gray (d.o.b. 28/1/84); dated 14 Sep 99, signed by XXX , First City of London (Lord Mayor's Own) Scout Group, London, E2 8LE.

²² WS2,26F.

²³ Personnel Selection and Employment Allocation form, signed by Geoff Gray on 31 Aug 00 and stamped by ACIO Strand with the same date.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ WS2,30B.

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- 27 CMS(R) Report Week 1, 2 Feb 01.
28 CMS(R) Report Week 8, 24 Mar 01.
29 CMS(R) Report Week 10, 13 Apr 01.
30 CMS(R) Report Week 11, undated.
31 Initial Training Group Phase 1 Training. Recruit Final Report, signed as seen by Rct Gray on 18 Apr 01, with PI Comd and Coy Comd comments added on 19 and 24 Apr 01.
32 Leave Record Report (printed 16 Oct 01) states that Pte Gray's leave ran from 20-29 Apr 01.
33 WS2,40C.
34 Personnel Full Record Report
35 Ibid.
36 Induction Troop Weapon Handling Test Results, dated 2 May 01.
37 WS8(1) – Signed statement.
38 Pte Gray P File – Medical Notes.
39 Pte Gray P File – Report.
40 Pte Gray P File - Dental Notes.
41 WS2,43B.
42 WS8(1) – Signed statement.
43 DSA Certificate Number 0000000064643540.
44 WS2,54C.
45 DR, Appendix 1, A1.002.
46 DR,10.65.
47 WS2,53F-H.
48 Induction Troop Weapon Handling Test Results, dated 2 May 01.
49 Pte Gray P File.
50 WS3(2), 28C.
51 WS8(1) – signed statement.
52 WS2,13E.
53 WS2,14D.
54 WS2,37C-F.
55 WS2,30G-32E.
56 WS8(1) – signed statement.
57 See Exhibit 2.
58 WS11.
59 WS11,5.
60 WS11,6.
61 WS11,4,6.
62 WS11,5.
63 WS11,11.
64 WS11,10.
65 WS11,14.
66 WS11,15.
67 WS11,16.
68 WS11,17.
69 WS11,18.
70 WS11,20.
71 WS11,21-22.

CHAPTER THREE*

EVENTS PRIOR TO PTE GRAY'S DEATH

Section 1 - Guard Mounting & Orders

3.1. Pte Gray was on day-time Guard duty from 10-14 Sep 01, and then off duty until 16 Sep 01.¹ The Guard Roster had been affected by the raised alert state imposed at Service establishments as a result of the terrorist atrocities of 11 Sep 01 (9/11) in the USA. The Guard Roster shows Pte Gray as being assigned to an additional night-time Guard duty from 16-21 Sep 01.²

3.2. The night Guard on 16 Sep 01 was paraded in accordance with Standing Orders at 1800 hrs outside the main Guardroom at Princess Royal Barracks by the Guard Commander (Gd Comd), XXX (SQMS, 86 Sqn). This was XXX first duty as Gd Comd since being posted to Deepcut in Aug 01. He was an experienced SNCO with recent experience of Phase 1 training. The only contact he had hitherto with trainees in 86 Sqn was when he attended PT with them and when they visited his store to collect or hand in kit.³

3.3. The Guard Second in Command (2IC), XXX, was at the briefing. He was attending a B1 Supply Controller course at Deepcut, and had been there for about two weeks.[†] He perceived this weekend duty to be a punishment following his performance in the course entrance exam.⁴

3.4. XXX, the Barrack Orderly Officer (BOO), was in attendance at the briefing.⁵ He was the Superintendent Clerk at the HQ Defence Logistics Support Training Group (HQ DLSTG) located within Princess Royal Barracks. He found that this duty enabled him to get to know some of the Phase 2 trainees.⁶

3.5. The allocation of troops to specific locations was carried out by the Gd Comd, and he read them a detailed brief for each of these posts.⁷ The BOO inspected the Guard and then spoke briefly to them, reminding them of their responsibilities.⁸ It was normal practice for these Orders to be read out again before soldiers were posted to their locations. A written copy of the Orders was also supplied to each post.⁹

3.6. The Orders for the Guard stated that 'Sentries will be posted in pairs'.¹⁰ However, the Appendix dealing specifically with the HQ RLC Officers' (Offrs') Mess stated 'During silent hours (2000-0500 hrs) 1 x Other Rank (OR) is to carry out a foot patrol of the inside of the compound (grounds only) at irregular intervals ensuring that the Guardroom is contacted before the conduct of the patrol'.¹¹

* Where witnesses have given evidence to the BOI, their current ranks are mentioned when their evidence is first introduced. Thereafter, the ranks used are those held at the time of the events under discussion.

† In order to widen the pool of NCOs, the practice at Deepcut was that JNCOs attending courses were assigned duties as Guard 2IC.

3.7. Due to the raised security state, the number of trainees to be posted to the Offrs' Mess compound had been increased to three, and XXX confirmed that he assigned three trainees to each of the 2 hr shifts there. One of the armed guards was required to remain at the gate at all times with prowler guard duties being carried out by one armed guard and one unarmed guard. The decision as to who performed which task was left to the trainees at the location.¹² A trainee who was later on duty with Pte Gray at the Offrs' Mess compound could not recall the detail of the briefing but did remember that the orders were that prowler guard duties were, indeed, to be carried out by two soldiers, with one armed soldier remaining on the gate.¹³

3.8. XXX gave evidence that armed sentries had individual weapons assigned to them before assuming their duty. These weapons were issued to trainees by butt number against their weapon card for each shift, along with 10 rounds of ammunition. This duty of signing-out weapons and ammunition was conducted by either the Gd Comd or his 2IC.¹⁴

3.9. The Orders for the Guard stated, 'You are to sign in/out your allocated weapon and ammunition at each change of duty on the allocation sheet held by the Barrack Orderly Corporal (BOC). You are personally responsible for the safe custody and handling of the weapon and ammunition in your charge during your tour of duty.'¹⁵

3.10. The Army policy then, as now, was that soldiers under 17 years of age were not to carry out armed sentry duties, however, there was a more restrictive policy at Deepcut where the qualifying age was 17½. In view of this rule, XXX states that he accordingly checked soldiers' ID cards as they booked on duty. This rule had no relevance to Pte Gray, since he was over 17½.¹⁶

3.11. At the end of each shift, weapons were returned to the weapon rack in the Guardroom, secured by padlocks and then signed back in the register. The ammunition was similarly returned and stored in the ammunition box. Only the Gd Comd and 2IC had access to the keys, which were stored in the main key press in the Guardroom.¹⁷

3.12. XXX evidence regarding the handling of weapons and ammunition was corroborated by XXX as well as by the members of the Guard who were armed that night, namely XXX , XXX and XXX .¹⁸

Conclusions

3.13. There is no evidence on this, or any other occasion, that Pte Gray was assigned Guard duty as a disciplinary punishment. Additional personnel were on Guard duties as a result of the heightened security state.

3.14. It is unlikely that the 2 members of the permanent staff on duty on 16/17 Sep 01 knew the trainees on duty that night.

3.15. **The written Orders for the Guard at Princess Royal Barracks had not been updated to take account of the increased number of soldiers on duty as a result of the raised alert state following the events of 11 Sep 01. The variations from the verbal orders had the potential to cause confusion, particularly when Guard duties were being performed by unsupervised Phase 2 trainees.**

3.16. **Notwithstanding the terms of the written orders at the time, the Board finds that verbal briefings were given to the Guard that an armed soldier should remain on the gate with two soldiers, one being armed, carrying out any prowler patrols round the mess compound. This is the recollection of the Gd Comd and a trainee on Guard duty with Pte Gray.**

3.17. **Both the extant written orders for the guarding of the Offrs' Mess and the orders given verbally to the Guard inevitably resulted in an armed soldier being left alone.**

Section 2 - Guard Rest Period

3.18. Pte Gray was assigned for Guard duty at the Offrs' Mess compound along with XXX , a male soldier from Fiji, and XXX , a female soldier from St Vincent. The first shift was 2100-2300 hrs, and the second was 0100-0300hrs.¹⁹ Following the briefing, the three soldiers had a rest-period.

3.19. Sometime during the first rest period, Pte Gray was overheard to say 'I wonder what it is like being shot in the head'. The other soldiers laughed, with one replying "It would probably hurt", and another saying 'You wouldn't feel a thing you would be dead.' This was followed by more laughter. The comment was not taken seriously, and having made it, Pte Gray then went outside with others for a cigarette.²⁰

3.20. At around 1900 hrs, Pte Gray used his mobile phone. He called a girl with whom he had a close relationship for some time although they were no longer going out together.* The Deepcut Review quotes this girl's evidence to the Surrey Police, 'She recalled that at about 19.00 hrs she received a call from Geoff but because she was at work she could not answer. A few minutes later, she received a text from Geoff which said: "If you don't want to talk to me just tell me to fuck off, love Geoff". She noted that it was unusual for Geoff to swear in a text message and to appear to be annoyed that she hadn't answered, but she replied: "Don't be silly call me back later".'²¹

3.21. About 1930 hrs, Pte Gray called her back, and they spoke for about ten minutes. The girl recalled that 'Geoff mentioned a number of things...': that he had been in a fight that weekend; that he was due to do his HGV driving course the following week; and the possibility of him visiting her now that he had his driving license. At the end of the call, Geoff said: 'I love you'. As far as she was concerned, it was normal for Geoff to say this and she would usually respond in similar terms but, because the call took place in the presence of her then boyfriend, she did not.²²

* See Chapter Two, paragraph 2.37.

3.22. A number of trainees witnessed part of this call, corroborating some of what was said, and Pte Gray received 'some stick for talking to a girl and saying "I love you".'²³ One soldier who overheard the call assumed that Pte Gray was on the phone to his girlfriend, and when they next spoke he noticed a change in mood. He asked Pte Gray if his girlfriend had dumped him which he denied, adding that he was fed up with Guard duty.²⁴

3.23. At some stage during this first rest period, XXX recalls having a cigarette with Pte Gray outside the Guardroom. They chatted generally, and then Pte Gray said that he 'really hated guard duty'. They both agreed that it was depressing. Pte Gray said "I might shoot myself", and then "If I shoot myself first will you shoot yourself second?" XXX acknowledged the comment, but thought Pte Gray was joking.²⁵

3.24. There is no evidence that these or the earlier comments made by Pte Gray (see paragraph 3.19) were reported to the Gd Comd at the time. An entry in the Guardroom Incident Log at 0425 hrs, some 2 hrs after Pte Gray's body had been discovered, states 'XXX reported that Pte Gray had talked about killing himself earlier while he was on guard.'²⁶

Conclusions

3.25. The significance of the telephone conversation that Pte Gray had with a former girlfriend is difficult to determine, although there is some evidence that his mood was affected.

3.26. Pte Gray clearly expressed his frustration about Guard duty. This was not surprising. He had spent the previous five weekdays on Guard, and this was the first night of a further five days of duty, during the time when he would have been preparing for his move to Leconfield.

3.27. Comments reportedly made by Pte Gray during the evening prior to his death were clearly regarded as trivial at the time by those who heard them. It is impossible to determine their significance, but they may have relevance to Pte Gray's subsequent death.

Section 3 - First Guard Period

3.28. Pte Gray's first period of duty at the HQ RLC Offrs' Mess (Alpha 4) commenced at approximately 2100 hrs. He was accompanied on Guard by XXX and XXX .

3.29. There was one incident during this period when XXX , a civilian employed as a MOD Fire Service officer, arrived at the Offrs' Mess gate. He produced his ID card, which differed from the military ID with which the trainees were familiar, and the trainees refused him entry to the Mess. XXX appeared to have been drinking and was allegedly abusive.²⁷ XXX requested assistance from the Guardroom and XXX , the Guard 2IC, made his way to the location. On arrival, he calmed down the situation and then, together with Pte

Gray, escorted the MOD civilian to the Offrs' Mess where XXX identity was confirmed by other officers.²⁸

3.30. An unidentified officer, who was apparently resident in a married quarter nearby, then spoke to XXX and commended the way in which the guard had handled the situation.²⁹ XXX, on returning to the Guardroom with the three soldiers at around 2300 hrs, told them that they had done well.³⁰

Conclusions

3.31. Despite some confusion on the part of the witnesses regarding the time of this incident involving the MOD Fire Service officer, the Board is satisfied that it occurred during Pte Gray's first period of duty between 2100 hrs and 2300 hrs on 16 Sep 01.

3.32. The Board draws no particular significance from the incident involving the MOD Fire Service officer. There is no evidence that it had a detrimental effect on Pte Gray's state of mind, indeed, he was commended for his performance during this incident.

Section 4 - Second Guard Period

3.33. Approximately 15-30 minutes before their second shift was due to begin, Pte Gray, XXX and XXX were warned by XXX to get ready. Pte Gray and XXX drew their weapons and ammunition, and the three were then taken by XXX in the transport to their respective locations. XXX gave evidence that she had chatted with Pte Gray on the way to the Offrs' Mess.³¹

3.34. It is likely that they left before 0100 hrs. XXX recalled being on the same vehicle, and although he did not speak to Pte Gray during the short journey, he did observe that he looked "quite worrying" – he was just staring ahead, his mood had changed from earlier that evening, and it looked as though he had something on his mind.³²

3.35. On arrival at the Offrs' Mess, Pte Gray and XXX loaded their weapons at the loading bay under supervision of XXX who then left with the trainees who had just completed their 2 hour duty.³³

3.36. The time was now approximately 0100 hrs. XXX recalled chatting with Pte Gray following their arrival, and after a short time he said to her that he was going on a lone patrol. She suggested that she should accompany him and it was at that stage XXX had become involved in the discussion.³⁴ XXX recalls telling Pte Gray that one of them should go with him, however Pte Gray repeated he would do a quick five minute patrol by himself. He recalled Pte Gray's demeanour as being normal.³⁵

3.37. XXX and XXX watched Pte Gray as he walked off along the perimeter fence. They then chatted to each other. Approximately 5 minutes later they heard gunshots from the direction of the cricket pitch.³⁶ The shots were

also heard by others on duty that night, and by an officer who was in his quarter nearby.*

Conclusions

3.38. The Board concludes that all three soldiers, Pte Gray, XXX and XXX were aware of the rules prohibiting lone prowler patrols.

3.39. The BOI is satisfied that the conversations between the three soldiers took place sometime around 01:00 hrs on 17 Sep 01, prior to Pte Gray departing on his lone guard a few minutes before 01:15 hrs.

3.40. XXX and XXX have a slightly different recollection of the period immediately prior to Pte Gray's departure on his lone patrol, however, the Board judges that these discrepancies are to be expected, given the period which has elapsed since the night in question.

3.41. The precise reason for Pte Gray's wish to conduct a lone patrol is not known.

3.42. The Board accepts the evidence of XXX and XXX in that they both attempted unsuccessfully to dissuade Pte Gray from conducting a lone patrol.

3.43. The Board concludes that there is an identifiable risk that orders will be disobeyed if Phase 2 trainees are on Guard duties and without direct supervision.

Notes

¹ WS10,WS10,50B-F, WS10,51D-G.

² WS10,51A-C, WS10,55A-F. See Exhibit 2.

³ WS4,215.E, WS4,8B-F, WS4,15E-16A.

⁴ WS4,328G-329B, WS4,337B-E.

⁵ WS4,91A-B.

⁶ WS4,89C-90B.

⁷ WS4,10B, WS4,9E-H.

⁸ WS4,91G, WS4,98D-G.

⁹ WS4,9G-H, WS4,337G-338B, WS4,338F-G.

¹⁰ 25 Trg Sp Regt Standing Order No 2, Orders for the Guard, Princess Royal Barracks, paragraph 2. See Exhibit 1.

¹¹ Ibid, paragraph 3(d).

¹² WS4,10B-11C.

¹³ WS4,287B, 296F.

¹⁴ WS4,11F-14B.

¹⁵ 25 Trg Sp Regt RLC Standing Order No 2 Orders for the Guard, Princess Royal Barracks, paragraph 3g. See Exhibit 1.

¹⁶ WS4,49C, WS449F.

¹⁷ WS4,12C, WS4,15C-D.

¹⁸ WS4,335C-E, WS4,294C-F, WS4,224A-E, WS4,289G-290A.

* See Chapter Four, Section 1.

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- ¹⁹ WS4,24C-25B.
- ²⁰ DR. paragraph 10.132.
- ²¹ Ibid. 10.125
- ²² Ibid.10.126.
- ²³ Ibid. 10.127.
- ²⁴ Ibid. 10.127.
- ²⁵ HM Coroner's Notes of Evidence for Inquest into death of Geoff Gray (deceased) 19 Mar 02. Dated 10 Apr 02. p.19.
- ²⁶ WS4,39E-G. See also Guardroom Incident Log, 17 Sep 01. Exhibit 3.
- ²⁷ WS4,17D-E, WS4,290F-292F, WS4,342C-343C.
- ²⁸ WS4,342D.
- ²⁹ WS4,344F.
- ³⁰ WS4,349G.
- ³¹ WS10,30D-G.
- ³² HM Coroner's Notes of Evidence. Inquest into death of Geoff Gray (deceased) 19 Mar 02. Dated 10 Apr 02. p.19.
- ³³ WS4,296A-C.
- ³⁴ WS10,31E-33E.
- ³⁵ WS4,296D-297E.
- ³⁶ WS4,298A-B.

CHAPTER FOUR

PTE GRAY'S DEATH

This chapter provides a summary of events surrounding the circumstances of Pte Gray's death on 17 Sep 01. This is based upon evidence given before this BOI, together with additional evidence received at HM Coroner's Inquest in Mar 02.

Section 1 - The Gunshots

4.1. Sometime before 0115 on 17 Sep 01, Pte Gray commenced a lone patrol at the Offrs' Mess compound. Approximately 5 minutes later, his two colleagues heard gunshots from the direction of the cricket pitch. XXX described them as a burst of automatic fire, and he responded by making his weapon ready and dropping to one knee facing the cricket pitch. He then instructed XXX to call the Guardroom.¹

4.2. XXX recalled standing at the door of the Guardroom when he heard a burst of automatic fire of 3 to 5 rounds. Various stations then came up on the net and he received a phone call from an officer who had heard firing. He recorded the shots in the Log Sheet as being at 0115 hrs. He gave evidence that he was unsure at that point as to the location at which the shots had been fired and dispatched XXX and two members of the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) to the out-stations.² An entry on the Log Sheet at 01:30 states that 'Pte Gray had gone missing from Prowler Guard.'³

4.3. XXX evidence was that she immediately thought there was something wrong and that it involved Pte Gray, and that XXX initial reaction was to be dismissive of her fears.⁴ XXX described XXX as having called up the Guardroom virtually immediately but that a lengthy interval elapsed before assistance arrived.⁵ XXX recalled that it took some time before she could contact the Guardroom due to another call-sign on the net. She then spoke to a NCO and informed him of the situation.⁶ XXX remembers calling-up Alpha 4, making contact at approximately 0130 hrs, and being informed that Pte Gray had gone missing. He then contacted XXX (Guard 2IC), telling him to make his way to the Offrs' Mess.⁷

4.4. XXX recollection was that he had returned to the Guardroom after posting the sentries. He believed he had left the Offrs' Mess no later than 0100hrs and was sorting out the soldiers who had just come off shift when outstations began calling-in on the radio and the telephone rang. The caller, who he believed was an officer, reported hearing an SA80 firing on automatic from the direction of the Offrs' Mess. At this time, he was also hearing reports of firing coming in over the radio. XXX

* Where witnesses have given evidence to the BOI, their current ranks are mentioned when their evidence is first introduced. Thereafter, the ranks used are those held at the time of the events under discussion.

was unable to definitely recall who had been responding to the radio, although he believed it could have been the Gd Comd.⁸

4.5. Just before XXX left the Guardroom to go to the Offrs' Mess, he had taken a call on the radio from Alpha 4, and had been informed that Pte Gray was not there. He had gone direct to the Offrs' Mess without delay.⁹ XXX recalled being briefed by the Guard 2IC on their way to the compound that a soldier had been missing for some time, and that shots had been reported from the Offrs' Mess.¹⁰

4.6. XXX and XXX had just come off shift and had been standing outside the Guardroom smoking when they heard firing. XXX gave evidence that they were informed by XXX that they were going to the Offrs' Mess. XXX evidence was that there was minimal delay before they left for the scene, having been issued with their weapons and ammunition. The transport went straight to the Offrs' Mess. This evidence is supported by XXX testimony.¹¹

4.7. XXX described to the Board that he heard a burst of automatic fire from the direction of the Offrs' Mess from his married quarter, which was between 200-250 metres from the Offrs' Mess gate. He rang the Guardroom to report what he had heard. He was unable to recall the time exactly, but remembered it as being after midnight. At first, he had been treated with some disbelief but the attitude of the person on the phone then changed. He concluded that he should go to the Offrs' Mess main gate, and arrived there on foot at approximately the same time as XXX and the two members of the QRF.¹²

4.8. On arrival at the main gate, XXX spoke to XXX and XXX. He described XXX as completely tongue-tied, she would not look him in the eye, and appeared worried. XXX was very excitable and agitated, and trying to get up close to him.¹³

4.9. XXX described XXX as saying he was 'ready to kill'. He ordered XXX to unload and make safe his weapon, then took the weapon from him and carried out the drill himself, before returning the rifle to the soldier. There were two rounds in the breech and one fell out. XXX informed the Board that he thought the weapon was warm. XXX had then calmed down sufficiently, in his opinion, for him to return his weapon, together with its ammunition.¹⁴

4.10. XXX did not recall XXX condition when they arrived at the compound. XXX appeared a bit agitated, and he recalled XXX asking him why he had made his weapon ready and heard him making XXX weapon safe. Although at the time it seemed rather strange that XXX had made his weapon ready, XXX believes that he would have done the same.¹⁵

4.11. XXX recalled XXX as shaking; she did not know what was going on. XXX had made his weapon ready and appeared angry. XXX did not hear any

conversation between the Guard 2IC and the two soldiers. He recalled XXX had instructed XXX to make his weapon safe and had then checked it.¹⁶

4.12. At the gate, XXX identified himself and then remained with XXX and XXX while XXX and team carried out two searches of the compound. Although he was briefed by XXX, he did not initially take control of the situation as he was not a member of the unit and was conscious that he was unknown to the soldiers. Both XXX and XXX were very agitated, with XXX close to tears.¹⁷

4.13. Having been told by XXX and XXX of the incident with the MOD Fire Service officer earlier that evening, XXX decided to check on XXX. The soldiers at the gate had clearly been upset by this incident, and XXX wished to satisfy himself that it had no bearing on the disappearance of Pte Gray. XXX found XXX in his room in the Offrs' Mess, and his demeanour and state of dress led him to believe that he had been roused from sleep.¹⁸

Conclusions

4.14. The Board finds that there was one burst of automatic fire, heard by a number of witnesses. The entry in the Incident Log records the timing as being at 0115 hrs, and there is convincing evidence to support this.

4.15. In comparing the evidence of XXX and XXX regarding the reporting of the incident at Alpha 4, the Board prefers XXX recollection. His evidence regarding the radio call from Alpha 4 is supported by the recollection of XXX and XXX. They made their way straight to the Offrs' Mess, and he briefed them during the journey that shots had been fired in that area and that Pte Gray was missing.

4.16. The Board finds that the QRF arrived promptly at the scene. The evidence of XXX, corroborated by XXX and XXX, was that, having drawn weapons and ammunition, they made their way direct to the location without delay. XXX evidence supports this.

4.17. The Board concludes that the demeanour of XXX and XXX after Pte Gray went missing was to be expected, since it was natural that they were anxious and nervous:

a. They were inexperienced Phase 2 trainees, and this was a period of heightened tension following a major terrorist incident one week earlier.

b. A fellow member of the Guard had gone on a lone prowler patrol in contravention of orders, and both soldiers had failed in their attempts to prevent him from going.

c. **A burst of fire had been heard a short while after Pte Gray had left, and he had not been seen since.**

4.18. As the ‘warm’ condition of XXX weapon was raised by XXX (and not at the time, but much later) the Board believes that this issue should be addressed. The Board concludes that this has no relevance. There was only one burst of gunfire noted by witnesses that night. The BKA forensic evidence was that the weapon found beside Pte Gray’s body had been fired at close range. The forensic evidence also confirmed that the rounds recovered from the immediate area were fired from that same weapon.*

4.19. The Board concludes, in the light of the evidence before it, that the MOD Fire Service Officer involved in a minor incident in the early part of the evening had no further involvement in the events of that night.

Section 2 – The Initial Searches

4.20. XXX gave evidence to the Board that, prior to Pte Gray’s body being found, he and his party had conducted two searches. In the first search XXX had been in the lead, followed by XXX, then XXX, in a line. They had gone along the inside of the perimeter fence from the guard hut until it meets the cricket pitch; then they had cut off, slightly, the corner by a couple of metres where there was an open space. XXX described how they had then gone round the remainder of the perimeter fence, following the track until they had arrived back at their start point. He was sure that all three of them had walked through the area where the body was subsequently discovered.¹⁹

4.21. Having confirmed that Pte Gray had not returned, XXX recalled reporting this to the Guardroom. He then carried out a second search, in the same direction as the first. The three had been in extended line with the outermost soldier, probably XXX, near the fence. During this search they concentrated more to the interior of the compound XXX used a small LED key ring light to provide illumination, and they searched the shrubs and bushes and round the bin area of the building. XXX evidence was that they had generally followed the same route as on the first search, although this differs with XXX recollection (see below).²⁰

4.22. More soldiers had now arrived at the Offrs’ Mess, and XXX recalled placing them around the perimeter as best he could, in order to secure the area.²¹

4.23. XXX had carried out a number of night guards whilst at Deepcut, and so he knew the area particularly well. During the first search, he recalled that they came across a small mound about 25 metres from where Pte Gray’s body was later found. XXX had gone to the top of the mound to look over the area. XXX considered that XXX had put himself at risk, since he could be seen on the high ground, and so had suggested cutting the corner as they made their way across. XXX had

* See paragraph 4.68.

agreed, and they did this. XXX came diagonally across the open ground from the service gate area, rejoining the perimeter fence between the tree where the body was eventually found and the next tree down. XXX had been on his right, and he searched by the Offrs' Mess building and then cut across. XXX could not recall XXX route. Thereafter, they had followed the perimeter fence round. They had not searched the area where the body was later found.²²

4.24. XXX described the second search as unstructured, concentrating more on the interior of the compound looking round the buildings and the wooded area. Again, they had not covered the area where the body was later found.²³

4.25. XXX recalled that he then took part in checking the wooded area adjoining the Offrs' Mess car park with two other soldiers from a group of five who had reported to the scene. These soldiers lacked both weapons and torches.²⁴

4.26. XXX evidence corroborated that of XXX regarding the areas searched, confirming that they had not searched where the body was subsequently found. XXX does, however, describe a first search which is the same route as his second search but in a reverse direction.²⁵

4.27. XXX recalls XXX agitated state following the second search, and so he took the radio, calling the Guardroom requesting more manpower and for the RMP and emergency services to be contacted.²⁶ The Guardroom Log states that at 0200 hrs XXX had reported no sign of Pte Gray and Civil Police being phoned.²⁷

4.28. XXX, the BOO, gave evidence that he had been contacted by the Gd Comd and had made his way to the Offrs' Mess. He described the scene on his arrival as chaotic.²⁸

Conclusions

4.29. The Board concludes that, prior to the final search, there had been two searches of the Offrs' Mess compound, the first being a perimeter search in a clockwise direction, and the second being an internal and unstructured search.

4.30. Regarding the searches, the Board prefers the evidence of XXX, supported by that of XXX, to that of XXX. XXX led the party on the first search and was familiar with the Offrs' Mess compound from recent Guard duties there. XXX had not visited the Offrs' Mess compound for two years. The accounts given by XXX and XXX are consistent with the body not having been found in the course of the first two searches.

4.31. The reasoning put forward by XXX for the omission of the corner from the route taken in the first search makes good military sense, having

regard to the security situation perceived, given that shots had been heard, and with no indication as to their source.

4.32. XXX recollection of an initial counter-clockwise perimeter search does not accord with the recollection of any other witness. It is, in all respects other than direction, exactly the same route as described by XXX , and by XXX in what he believed to be a second search. The Board concludes that his initial search should be discounted.

4.33. As regards timings, it would appear that the police were not called until 02:00 hrs, some 45 minutes after shots had been heard at 01:15, and 30 minutes after Pte Gray had been reported missing. This time-lapse, in the view of the Board, is excessive. The police should have been informed as soon as Pte Gray was reported missing.

Section 3 – Finding the Body

Search Begins

4.34. XXX instructed XXX and another member of the QRF who had by then reported to the scene, to make their way to the front ornamental gate on the far side of the Offrs' Mess building and, if they saw or heard anything suspicious, to raise the alarm.²⁹

4.35. The two soldiers made their way to the ornamental gate when XXX heard a noise which, at the time, he believed came from the fence, but now believes could have been from the main gate. He turned and saw what he thought was a silhouette dart across the cricket field from right to left and go straight through the other fence without stopping. The other soldier witnessed nothing. XXX then whistled for assistance.³⁰

4.36. XXX , XXX and XXX made their way through the tunnel between the Offrs' Mess buildings to the ornamental gate. It was then that XXX explained to them what he believed he had just seen and heard.³¹

4.37. XXX , in his evidence, noted that if vehicles were driving at night along the road past the bottom gate where XXX had been, their headlights produced a flickering effect across the cricket pitch, as a result of the trees casting shadows.³²

The Body

4.38. XXX , XXX , XXX and XXX then made their way from the ornamental gate, in an anti-clockwise direction, along the perimeter fence next to the cricket pitch, an area that XXX and XXX recalled had not previously been searched. XXX was in the lead, and described the area as being really dark. He was walking along by the perimeter fence when he spotted, at an estimated 10 metres distance,

the dark silhouette of a person lying on the ground. The feet were towards the base of a tree, the head was near the fence line, and the body was lying face upwards. XXX moved back, dropped on one knee and shouted for assistance. XXX recalls seeing XXX drop to his knees and scream for the corporal.³³

4.39. XXX ran over and knelt beside XXX and, having been told by him what he had seen, issued a challenge. He then moved forward and repeated the challenge again. XXX made his way to the body and knelt beside it. He picked up the SA80 rifle which was lying on the ground and made the weapon safe by clearing the chamber of any live rounds.³⁴

4.40. XXX recalled that prior to XXX picking-up the weapon, it had been on the left-hand side of the body with the butt facing the tree and the muzzle towards the fence. XXX recollection was that the rifle was parallel to the fence and in line with Pte Gray's feet. XXX recalled XXX commenting that there was blood on the weapon as he cleared it.³⁵

4.41. XXX recalled that, when he joined XXX, the body was lying on its back and that the weapon was initially next to the body. He attempted to ascertain if there was a pulse. He thought that he could feel a faint pulse so he asked XXX to check. XXX recalled what appeared to him to be three bullet wounds to the forehead and black residue on Pte Gray's face across the bridge of the nose as well as a significant amount of blood behind his head.³⁶

4.42. Later, when it became lighter, XXX observed blood and body tissue on the cricket sight-screen on the other side of the fence, approximately one third up the screen. He also noted blood by the base of the tree. He had pointed this out to the police at the scene.³⁷

4.43. XXX had initially noted one entry wound on Pte Gray's forehead, and then saw a second. He also noted that the body was lying face upwards. He initially believed there was a faint pulse, however, in attempting to administer first aid, he found the back of the head was missing and noted fragments of bone behind it. He noticed a beret lying some distance away from the body; this was badly torn with the badge a couple of feet away on the ground.³⁸

4.44. XXX, who had run over with the others, noted Pte Gray was lying on his back, with a wound to the forehead, blood at the base of the tree, and a large patch of blood behind the head. XXX recalls at that time being in shock. He returned to the Offrs' Mess gate, and then could not recall much until he was later sitting in the Guardroom with the Padre.³⁹

4.45. The entry in the Guardroom Log records that the BOO informed the Gd Comd at 0220 hrs that 'Pte Gray had been found, gunshot wound to the head, ambulance required.'⁴⁰

RMP – On the Scene

4.46. XXX and XXX (both RMP) were on duty at the time, in a marked RMP vehicle, when they were notified at 0215 hrs that there had been a shooting incident at Princess Royal Barracks, Deepcut. They made their way from Aldershot to Deepcut, arriving at the barracks at 0225hrs, and were directed to the Offrs' Mess. They were met close to the Offrs' Mess archway by XXX.⁴¹

4.47. XXX recalled that it was extremely dark. Using their maglite torches, they made their way to where the body was lying. He saw the body only when it was pointed out to him by XXX. XXX subsequently provided a sketch map to Surrey Police showing the layout of the body and the immediate scene.⁴²

4.48. When he saw the body, it was obvious to XXX that Pte Gray was dead. He noted two entry wounds in the forehead and the body lying on its back. XXX informed him that he had cleared Pte Gray's rifle, which XXX saw lying next to him with the magazine taken off. A beret was at the base of the tree; the cap badge was detached. There was body tissue and pieces of skull about five to six feet up the tree and at the base of the tree. He recalled scorch marks on Pte Gray's face.⁴³ XXX then moved everyone back and took steps to prevent unauthorised access to the scene pending the arrival of the Surrey Police.⁴⁴

4.49. When the Surrey Police Armed Response Team arrived on the scene shortly afterwards, the military and civil police used their vehicle headlights to illuminate the cricket pitch. The police team then swept the area with a night vision aid before declaring it clear.⁴⁵

4.50. XXX subsequently assisted a member of the Surrey Police with the recovery of the rifle, the magazine and five empty cases found at the scene. The rounds were within 1½ metres of the body on its left-hand side. A member of the Surrey Police marked, on a sketch, the location of the rounds as they were recovered.⁴⁶

4.51. A Police Doctor certified Pte Gray as dead at 0350 hrs. Following the arrival of the Coroner's Officer at 0400 hrs, the body was removed to Frimley Park Hospital.⁴⁷

4.52. XXX maintained his own log until 0520 hrs when he handed this over to the Surrey Police.⁴⁸

Conclusions

4.53. The Board finds that there is no credible evidence to support a figure running across the cricket pitch shortly before the body was found. Movement was seen by only one soldier and the effect described is consistent with it being caused by the headlights of passing traffic. Furthermore, there is an

inherent improbability that an intruder could pass through a security fence without halting. On the balance of probabilities, the Board considers that what was seen was misinterpreted by a young and understandably nervous soldier.

4.54. The evidence of the witnesses who found the body and the circumstances of its discovery and location is consistent.

4.55. Having considered the witness evidence, together with the forensic evidence available, the Board finds that Pte Gray's body was found at the place where he died, because:

- a. The condition of the body would have made it extremely difficult to move without leaving a trail of debris and blood beyond the surrounding area. No such trail was ever found.**
- b. The recovery of the spent cartridges and weapon and the blood and body tissue found in the immediate surroundings of the body are consistent with the shooting having occurred at that location.**

4.56. As regards the exact location of the weapon recovered from the scene, the Board concludes that XXX recollection is erroneous regarding where the weapon initially lay. He cleared the weapon to make it safe and in doing so moved it. The Board concludes that the weapon was initially lying beside the body as indicated by the other witnesses.

4.57. The Board finds that XXX and XXX (both RMP) arrived promptly on the scene, having been notified of the incident.

Section 4 – Expert Evidence

Post-Mortem

4.58. XXX conducted the post-mortem on 18 Sep 01, at Frimley Park Hospital. His report noted black soot and powder marking as being apparent on the face. Two gunshot entry wounds were present in the forehead. He detailed the position and size of the entry wounds and a huge stellate split with a further large exit injury.⁴⁹

4.59. His conclusions were that no natural disease was present. Death had resulted from the effects of two gunshot injuries to the head. The wounds appeared to be of close or contact type. The appearance appeared consistent with self-infliction. The cause of death on the death certificate was given as gunshot wounds to the head.⁵⁰

4.60. At the Coroner's Inquest, XXX gave evidence based upon his earlier post-mortem. He stated that there was no evidence suggesting that Pte Gray had been assaulted. He noted that Pte Gray was a young and fit man and he would have expected signs of struggle or restraint if that had occurred. He had found none.⁵¹

Reconstruction of the Search Routes

4.61. The Board requested Virtual Reconstructions to assist with an analysis of the search routes, based on the evidence of witnesses to the BOI. This analysis was given in evidence by XXX of Virtual Reconstructions.⁵² He described the methodology used by the company when conducting a reconstruction, illustrating the routes described by each witness in their evidence to the Board, comparing this with their earlier statements to the police.⁵³

4.62. At the request of the Board, XXX provided a graphic representation of the evidence of XXX, XXX, and XXX.⁵⁴

Evidence of the BKA

4.63. The Board consulted the Bundeskriminalamt (BKA), the German Federal Crime Bureau. The BKA had previously been commissioned by Surrey Police to conduct a forensic examination of the SA80 rifle recovered from beside Pte Gray's body. XXX (BKA), at the request of the Board, gave a presentation covering the nature of the tests carried out on the rifle, together with the BKA's findings and conclusions.⁵⁵

4.64. The weapon, when tested, was found to be in normal working order. When the weapon was fired, the dust cover opens as part of the firing sequence. Traces of blood were found inside the dust cover of the rifle. This was consistent with the weapon having been fired at close range and body tissue and blood then falling on the weapon.⁵⁶

4.65. Experimental firings were carried out with similar military ammunition to those recovered from the scene. This showed that, due to the tumbling of rounds following impact, the exit wounds caused are much larger than the entry wounds.⁵⁷

4.66. Examination of the beret showed gunshot residue. The staining and tearing of the fabric was consistent with a shot being fired when the weapon was in contact with or very close to the beret. The two holes in the beret were consistent with one round having gone through the folded material of the beret when worn, thereby causing two holes in the material.⁵⁸

4.67. The pattern of gunshot residue on the face was also consistent with a weapon being fired at very close range. XXX gave evidence that test firings had indicated that a muzzle 5cms from the test material surface produced the same result.⁵⁹

4.68. XXX stated that forensic examination of the empty cases and weapon recovered from the scene demonstrated that these cases had been fired from that weapon. As a result of further forensic testing carried out by the BKA and comparison of the results with the ejector marks on the cartridge cases, he considered that it was probable that the weapon had been fired on automatic rather than on repetition (i.e. single shot) mode. However, due to possible differences in metal hardness of cartridge cases, the evidence could not be regarded as conclusive.⁶⁰

4.69. The BOI heard expert evidence from XXX that, having regard to the firing characteristics of the SA80 rifle, it was possible, in the case of a self-inflicted shooting, for such a rifle to fire five rounds, if set on automatic. Two rounds hitting the body and the remainder missing were consistent with the body and rifle falling after a self-inflicted shooting. The evidence was also consistent with third party involvement with a victim pushing away the rifle.⁶¹

Conclusions

4.70. Based on evidence to this BOI and the analysis of the search routes provided by Virtual Reconstructions, the Board concludes that the area where Pte Gray's body was found had not previously been searched by XXX , XXX and XXX .

4.71. The Board finds that the empty cases found near Pte Gray's body had been fired from the SA80 rifle recovered from the scene.

4.72. Forensic examination of the strike marks on the cases indicates it was probable that the weapon had been fired in automatic mode.

4.73. The Board finds that, having regard to the firing characteristics of the weapon, it was possible, if the shooting was self-inflicted, for two rounds to have hit Pte Gray, with the remaining rounds then missing him.

4.74. The Board finds that the gunshot residues pattern and the chemical residues found on the beret were consistent with the weapon having been fired close to the head. The description of the injuries noted in the post mortem report was consistent with the entry and exit wounds in the test firings conducted by the BKA.

4.75. The Board concludes that the site of the two wounds is consistent with a self-inflicted injury although, as noted by the BKA, the same effect could have been achieved if a victim was shot at close range and pushed the weapon away.

Main Conclusions

4.76. The Board concludes that there is no substantial evidence supporting third party involvement in Pte Gray's death. Although the BKA tests could not rule this out, the pathologist's report noted that the wounds to the head appeared to be of the close or contact type and were consistent with self-infliction. The pathologist had found no signs that Pte Gray had suffered any form of assault. Nor were there any signs of struggle or restraint on the body, or defence marks on the hands.

4.77. There were no indications in Pte Gray's general behaviour during his time in the Army to suggest that he was at any particular risk. He was a trained soldier who had passed his weapon-handling tests; he had not sought help regarding any welfare or personal problem that might have been concerning him at the time; and there is no evidence that he was being bullied or harassed. He appeared to everyone who knew him, including his parents, to be a happy and contented teenager.

4.78. However, Pte Gray's general demeanour during the weekend prior to his death suggests that he was not his normal self:

- a. Heavy drinking, irregular and limited sleep on the previous two nights.
- b. Uncharacteristic behaviour on the second night.
- c. Comments he reportedly made on the evening of 16 Sep to other trainees regarding shooting himself.
- d. Comments he reportedly made to individual trainees about being bored and unhappy with Guard duty.

e. **A mobile phone conversation with a former girlfriend with whom he still had a close relationship.**

f. **His subdued demeanour during his Guard duty.**

4.79. None of these factors were seen as sufficiently compelling to be raised at the time, and no single person was aware of all of them together.

4.80. Those who had come into contact with him that weekend were all young and inexperienced trainees. It was only when questioned after Pte Gray's death that they recounted these various incidents and his changed demeanour.

4.81. There will always be an element of risk when personnel of any age or experience are carrying loaded weapons. Training and awareness can reduce this risk; however it can never be entirely eliminated.

4.82. Given these factors, the Board concludes that it is unlikely that Pte Gray's death could have been predicted, and therefore prevented by those on duty on 16/17 Sep 01.

4.83. The Board agrees with the HM Coroner's Open Verdict that there is insufficient evidence to determine the exact circumstances of Pte Gray's death.

4.84. The Board heard evidence set out above, some of which was not available to the HM Coroner at the time of the inquest. However, it is the Board's view that this evidence does not resolve the uncertainties that led the HM Coroner to return an Open Verdict.

Notes

¹ WS4,298B-299H., WS10, 33F-34G.

² WS4,28D-29G.

³ Guardroom Log. Serial 003. See Exhibit 3.

⁴ WS10,34G-35D.

⁵ WS4,300A-H.

⁶ WS10,35D-36D.

⁷ WS4,30C-G.

⁸ WS4,353E-356E.

⁹ WS4,356E-359B.

¹⁰ WS4,169B-G.

¹¹ WS4,229E-232E, WS4,167D-169B.

¹² WS7,53G-57C.

¹³ WS4,360C-G.

¹⁴ WS4,362E-365G, WS4,370B-374A.

¹⁵ WS4,233D-235B.

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- ¹⁶ WS4,170C-171B, WS4,171G-172D.
¹⁷ WS7,57C-58G.
¹⁸ WS7,58H-59C, WS7,67A-71A.
¹⁹ WS4,374D-376C, WS4,377A-C.
²⁰ WS4,377D-383F.
²¹ WS4,390C-E.
²² WS4,215F-216A, WS4,235F-244A.
²³ WS4,244E-F, WS4,245F-253B.
²⁴ WS4,253B-256A.
²⁵ WS4,171B-182E.
²⁶ WS7,71D-F.
²⁷ Guardroom Log. Serial 004. See Exhibit 3.
²⁸ WS4,100G-104F.
²⁹ WS4,385A-B.
³⁰ WS4,183E-186E.
³¹ WS4,186E-G, WS4,256F-257E, WS4,108E-109A..
³² WS4,109B-C.
³³ WS4,258C-260G, WS4,186A-187E.
³⁴ WS4,261A-262A, WS4,262F-G.
³⁵ WS4,261G-262F.
³⁶ WS4,113B-117C.
³⁷ WS4,117D-118D.
³⁸ WS4,394D-E, WS4,399F, WS4,401A-402F.
³⁹ WS4,192F-197D.
⁴⁰ Guardroom Log, Serial 7; WS4, 37F-H.
⁴¹ WS7,31A-E, WS7,32F-35C.
⁴² WS7,35D-F, WS7,36F-37B
⁴³ WS7,37G-38E, WS7,36A-C, WS7,39A-D, WS7,44C-D.
⁴⁴ WS7,40C-E.
⁴⁵ WS7,40F-G.
⁴⁶ WS7,41F-42D, WS7, 44G-45E. See Exhibit 5.
⁴⁷ Coroner's Officer's Statement, dated 25 Jan 02. Appended to HM Coroner's Inquest - 19 Mar 02 – Notes of Evidence. Dated 10 Apr 02.
⁴⁸ WS7,47D-F, WS7,41B-E.
⁴⁹ Coroner's Officer statement, dated 25 Jun 02; Pathologist's report, dated 17 Sep 01. Appended to HM Coroner's Inquest Notes of Evidence.
⁵⁰ Pathologist's report, *ibid*.
⁵¹ Pathologist's verbal evidence, *ibid*.
⁵² WS8(2).
⁵³ *Ibid*.
⁵⁴ See Part 2 – Witness Sessions - Side Flag 13.
⁵⁵ WS9.
⁵⁶ WS9,7B-F, WS9,5E-6B, WS9,22E.
⁵⁷ WS9,8C-10G.
⁵⁸ WS9,12B-E, WS9,16H-18F.
⁵⁹ WSS9,6G.
⁶⁰ WS9,15H-16C, WS9,16E-G.
⁶¹ WS9,20B-D, WS9,22G-25E.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PERIOD FOLLOWING PTE GRAY'S DEATH

Section 1 – Notifying Pte Gray's Death

5.1. Mr & Mrs Gray were informed of their son's death by a Casualty Visiting Officer and the Padre serving at Deepcut at approximately 0900 hrs on 17 Sep 01. Accounts of that meeting, and subsequent telephone calls on that day, differ in detail. In Mr & Mrs Gray's submission to the Deepcut Review, and later, in their evidence to the BOI, they both state that they were being informed, at this early stage, that their son had taken his own life, by self-inflicted gunshot wounds from his own weapon.¹

5.2. Early on 18 Sep 01 Mr & Mrs Gray were collected by the CO's staff car and taken to Frimley Park Hospital. Prior to their arrival, the Adjutant, XXX, had a conversation with the Surrey Coroner's Officer. A number of personal effects belonging to Pte Gray were handed-over to XXX at this time, and he signed a form to acknowledge the items in question. Pte Gray's mobile phone was retained by Surrey Police. His beret was not returned, although XXX was shown it by the Coroner's Officer.

5.3. XXX was asked whether the Army wished to have Pte Gray's Combat 95 uniform that he was wearing when he died. He was told that neither the Surrey Police nor the Coroner had any further use for this clothing. On being advised that Pte Gray's clothing was heavily soiled with blood and had been cut from the body, XXX agreed that it should be destroyed. At no time did he see the clothing, and at no time was it in the Army's possession following Pte Gray's death.²

5.4. When Mr & Mrs Gray arrived at the hospital to formally identify their son's body, they met the HM Coroner's Officer, the Adjutant, the Adjutant (Designate), the Padre, and two plain-clothed members of the RMP.³

Conclusions

5.5. Comments made to Mr & Mrs Gray, on 17 Sep and thereafter, suggesting that their son's death was self-inflicted, were inappropriate. The police investigation had not been concluded, and the HM Coroner's Inquest was some months away. It is the role of the inquest to determine cause of death.

5.6. In procedural terms, early assumptions about the nature of Pte Gray's death had a number of consequences. The initial investigation left areas unresolved that later became the subject of speculation; and the relationship that the Army should have maintained with the Gray family was undermined.

5.7. The visit of Mr & Mrs Gray to formally identify their son's body at Frimley Park Hospital could have been better handled. This was a most

distressing experience for them, and the number of Army personnel present appears to have been excessive. Although not intended, this experience reinforced the Grays' impression of the Army as being unsympathetic and uncaring.

5.8. Mr & Mrs Gray's belief that the Army had destroyed the clothing Pte Gray's was wearing when he died is not supported by the evidence. The Adjutant merely endorsed a decision that had been taken by the Surrey Police / HM Coroner's Officer.

Section 2 – Unit Actions

5.9. The investigation into Pte Gray's death was vested in the Surrey Police, supported by the RMP. The unit was not, therefore directly involved with this investigation, other than to provide liaison and access to the barracks.

Review of Guarding Procedures

5.10. There are no indications that a formal external security review was conducted after Pte Gray's death. Indeed, the Board has found no record of such an inspection until early Apr 02, following the death of Pte Collinson

5.11. Local discussions did take place concerning Guarding arrangements at Deepcut. Brig Brown, in his Oct 01 Quarterly Report, states that he had satisfied himself that 'local orders for guards, including patrol composition and weapons handling are in accordance with best Army practice.'⁴ It was also clear that if the Guarding levels at the Offrs' and Sgts' Messes were to revert to their pre-9/11 numbers, with the requirement to guard the gate *and* conduct prowler patrols, there would be frequent occasions when trainees would be alone and armed. The CO took the decision, therefore, to maintain the number of trainees on guard at these locations at three, not two. The option to increase the numbers further was rejected, since the CO 'did not want to have yet more soldiers on guard'.⁵

5.12. Capt Skinsley, who took over as Adjutant just after Pte Gray's death, recalls the reasoning behind this decision. It was to ensure one unarmed trainee stayed at the gate, checking ID cards, leaving two armed trainees to conduct the perimeter patrol and to support each other if required.⁶

Conclusions

5.13. It is the Board's view that a formal external security review, directed by either HQ 2 Bde or HQ 4 Div, should have been conducted following Pte Gray's death.

5.14. The CO's decision to maintain an increased number of trainees on Guard (post 9/11) was pragmatic, since it removed the requirement for lone armed Guards. However, without increased supervision, it could never prevent this occurring altogether.

The Guard Orders

5.15. The Orders of the Guard were amended, in manuscript. It is not entirely clear to the Board when, precisely these changes were made, however they still existed in manuscript form when a Protective Security Advisory Visit was conducted in Apr 02, following the death of Pte Collinson.⁷

5.16. Verbal briefings of the Orders were already common practice at Deepcut prior to Pte Gray's death, and it is clear that the rules regarding lone guards would have been given even greater emphasis in the months that following. Capt Skinsley could not recall, during this period, any incidences where trainees had contravened the rules regarding lone patrols. He acknowledged, however, that the rules could easily be broken, because of the lack of supervision.⁸

Conclusion

5.17. The Orders for the Guard, which had been amended in manuscript, should have been retyped and reissued.

Supervision at the Offrs & Sgts' Mess Compounds

5.18. The issue of staff supervision at the Offrs' Mess and Sgts' Mess had certainly been raised following Pte Gray's death. The CO had no additional NCOs under his command to provide an increased supervision on Guard duty. If the option of requesting additional resources was discussed, then it did not result in any tangible actions.

5.19. The level of supervision at these locations remained unchanged following Pte Gray's death. A JNCO posted the trainees at the beginning of their 2 hr shift and relieved them at the end. During the shift, trainees sometimes received visits from the Orderly Officer, Gd Comd, or the Guard 2IC. The extent of these visits is difficult to determine, but evidence to the BOI suggests that, at best, they were infrequent. For the remainder of the time on guard at these locations, trainees were left alone and unsupervised, and at some distance from the Guardroom. It was not until around Aug 02 that any significant changes were made in this respect.⁹

Conclusion

5.20. As the Board has concluded elsewhere in this report, leaving trainees unsupervised on Guard duty increases the possibility that orders will be disobeyed.

Daily Occurrence Book & Incident Log

5.21. It is normal practice for a Daily Occurrence Book (DOB) to be maintained in the Guardroom, however, in the event of a serious incident, a separate Incident Log (Army Form B58) is opened. XXX, the Gd Comd on 16/17 Sep 01, confirmed in evidence to the Board that such a Log was opened, with the first entry being at 0115 hrs on 17 Sep 01. XXX also stated that it was his responsibility to maintain this Incident Log, which he did contemporaneously, as

and when events occurred.¹⁰

5.22. XXX recalls that the DOB and Incident Log were taken by the police sometime on the morning of 17 Sep 01, before his duty ended.¹¹ However Capt Skinsley, who took over as Adjutant during that week, recalls that these items remained in his hands until the following year.¹² He also believes that the 'weapon-signing register' or log sheet probably stayed in the Guardroom, since the weapons it referred to were still there. This register was loose-leaf in nature and would have been routinely destroyed in the Guardroom as the pages were completed and weapons were signed-back in. It was not practice at the time for these sheets to be archived and retained.¹³

5.23. Capt Skinsley recalls a request by the police, early in 2002, for items of documentary evidence which were still being retained at Deepcut. It is not clear to the Board when this occurred, however 25 Trg Sp Regt still had at least a copy of the Incident Log for 16/17 Sep 01 at the time of Pte Gray's Inquest on 19 Mar 02.¹⁴ At the Inquest, which Capt Skinsley attended, he recalls leaving the court to call his office at Deepcut to request a faxed copy of the Incident Log. This followed a discussion at the Inquest indicating a general confusion about timings on the night Pte Gray died. The relevant pages covering the events of 17 Sep 01 were then faxed to the court.¹⁵ See Exhibit 3.

Conclusions

5.24. **It was common Army practice at this time for the Daily Occurrence Book and Incident Log to be written in a fair hand from notes before being submitted at the end of a duty. Given the neatness of the Incident Log for 17 Sep 01, it seems likely that this was not a truly contemporaneous record. The Board draws no particular conclusions from this, since witness evidence corroborates much of what happened that night.**

5.25. **The Board has been unable to trace the original copies of the Daily Occurrence Book or Incident Log, It is possible that these were taken by the police (possibly RMP or Civil Police) in the early hours of 17 Sep 01, and then later returned to 25 Trg Sp Regt until handed-over again to 2002. Copies of the Incident Log, the more important of the two documents, are in existence.**

5.26. **The Board accepts that the weapon register was probably retained in the Guardroom following 17 Sep 01, and the relevant sheets routinely destroyed sometime later. While its retention would have been most useful, the Board draws no other conclusions from this fact.**

Recommendation

5.27. **Whenever there has been an incident involving a weapon, any supporting registers or logs should be retained until all subsequent investigations have been fully concluded.**

Self-Harm Awareness

5.28. Lt Col Laden recalls that Army policy during this period was that soldiers were not briefed on suicide awareness while NCOs were.¹⁶ Trainees were not encouraged to report on each other, although Lt Col Laden recalls incidences where trainees did raise concerns to the WRVS about colleagues. There was also the Army confidential support line, posters were displayed widely within the Regt, and newly joined staff were provided, as part of their induction, with a locally-produced leaflet regarding self-harm.¹⁷

Conclusions

5.29. **Self-harm awareness in the Army, although it existed in 2001, had a lower profile than it does today, although it is clear that some additional efforts were being made at 25 Trg Sp Regt.**

5.30. **Given that the trainees at Deepcut were young and inexperienced, it is also difficult to see how practical suicide and self-harm awareness training could have been implemented without wider acknowledgement and support from the Chain of Command. These are difficult issues – with no simple or foolproof solutions.**

Section 3 – Funeral

5.31. Pte Gray's funeral took place on 27 Sep 01 at Seaham, Co Durham. The funeral was conducted by the Padre at 25 Trg Sp Regt, and a number of Army friends and colleagues were present. The CO did not attend; he had a 'consistent policy' that he would not attend funerals where he did not know the soldier concerned.¹⁸ Mr Gray recalls the Adjutant and XXX being present at the funeral.¹⁹

5.32. One of Pte Gray's two closest friends at Deepcut, XXX, who was away on a course at the time of his death, was specifically informed that he would not be allowed to attend the funeral. It was only in Apr 07, at the BOI, that Mr & Mrs Gray finally met XXX.²⁰

5.33. Mr Gray informed the BOI that at the funeral he had a conversation with XXX, who had been a member of the first search party that arrived at the Offrs' Mess. Mr Gray recalls being told by XXX that 'Geoff's body was not there when they searched for him'. He explained to the Board that, at the time, he did not know what XXX was talking about, however, he definitely said that his son's 'body was not there.' In his evidence to the BOI, XXX recalled speaking to Mr & Mrs Gray, but could not remember what he said. His impression was that, whatever it was, it may have been out of context.²¹

5.34. Mr & Mrs Gray were unaware, until they heard evidence from Lt Col Laden at the BOI, that the Regiment had stood in a minute's silence at Deepcut on the day of the funeral.²² This was, in Mr Gray's words 'Very touching to know' but 'rather frustrating to find out five years later'.²³

Conclusion

5.35. The funeral of Pte Gray was conducted with the support of 25 Trg Sp Regt, and in line with the Army policy that existed in 2001.

Section 4 - After the Funeral

5.36. Mr & Mrs Gray both feel strongly that they were abandoned by the Army shortly after their son's death, since they had no further contact with 25 Trg Sp Regt following the funeral. It is clear from their evidence that this was a period during which they needed contact in order to help them understand what had happened to their son. They knew little about his life in the Army, and they did not know his Army friends. To quote Mrs Gray: 'At the time I felt as though we had literally been dropped and that was it. I thought they were pretty quick to tell you about the death, funeral over and done with and then when the funeral is finished the Army is finished with you.'²⁴

5.37. Mr & Mrs Gray held a memorial service sometime after the funeral, and were particularly disappointed that none of his Army friends attended. This was most likely due to a lack of communication, since, in line with extant Army policy, there was no requirement for formal support to families in the period following a funeral.

5.38. On 23 Mar 02, four days after the Inquest into Pte Gray's death, Pte Collinson died at Deepcut, in similar circumstances, and in close proximity to where Pte Gray's body had been found on 17 Sep 01. When the Surrey Police subsequently re-opened its inquiries into Pte Gray's death, the planned Army BOI was adjourned until further notice.

5.39. Mr & Mrs Gray received some of their son's personal effects later in 2002, but it was not until about Feb 03 that they received the remainder. It was Surrey Police that returned most of these effects, in a cardboard box, with an inventory of what was there and what had been destroyed (for example, items such as deodorant, after shave, cigarette lighters, etc). These were of sentimental value to the Grays, and they would have liked them all returned.²⁵ The Grays also believed that shoes given to them were not their son's. He had a particular taste in shoes, and these appeared to be too scruffy to be his.²⁶

5.40. Mr & Mrs Gray also discovered that two personal letters belonging to their son had been given to the Surrey Police by the Army Personnel Centre in Glasgow. They were clearly annoyed and upset that these items turned-up due to the Surrey Police inquiry, and had not been returned by the Army.²⁷

Conclusions

5.41. The lack of Army support to Mr & Mrs Gray following their son's funeral was due to an absence of Army policy regarding Casualty Visiting Officers.

5.42. **While the Board can find no evidence that any of Pte Gray's belongings were not handled and in some cases destroyed other than in accordance with official procedure, it is clear that the matter was not handled sensitively. This was unfortunate, and due to the absence of an appropriate and sensitive Army policy at the time.**

5.43. **Since the death of Pte Gray, the Army has improved its procedures for notifying the deaths of Service personnel, and for the support of families at this difficult time. * Sadly, the Grays did not benefit from these later improvements.**

Section 5 – HM Coroner's Inquest

5.44. The HM Coroner's Inquest took place on 19 Mar 02.²⁸ A number of military witnesses were called to give evidence, and a staff officer from HQ 4 Division was present as an observer.

5.45. Based on evidence heard by the Board, it would appear that some of the military witnesses called to the Inquest did not understand its purpose and had not been briefed by the chain of command. The fact that Mr & Mrs Gray later commented that soldiers in the court were whispering and appeared disrespectful during the Inquest, reinforces this perception.²⁹

5.46. The Army gave no specific support to Mr & Mrs Gray prior to the Inquest; this was not an Army policy at the time.

5.47. In the HM Coroner's summing up, he noted that he had to rely upon the evidence before him and there was nothing to suggest that the weapon found by the body was discharged other than by Pte Gray.³⁰

5.48. HM Coroner stated that it was unclear to him what Pte Gray's true intention was. If it was to cause his death then he succeeded. If he was either unfamiliar with this particular weapon or weapons generally and was tired or in some other way discharged the weapon accidentally, then that necessarily had not become apparent to the HM Coroner, but the result was the same in that he died from the wounds he received.³¹

5.49. There was nothing before the HM Coroner in terms of substantial evidence to suggest that a third party inflicted these wounds upon Pte Gray.³² For him to have permitted another to have used his weapon against himself would suggest that he had in some way been persuaded to hand the weapon over and there was nothing to suggest that this was in fact the case.³³

5.50. In concluding, the Coroner stated that he did not find that Pte Gray had taken his own life, nor did he find that there was substantial or sufficient evidence either to otherwise explain his death. The only conclusion he could reach was an Open Verdict.³⁴

Conclusions

* See Chapter 7, Section 7.

5.51. Some of the young soldiers called as witnesses at the Inquest were unprepared for the experience. This was unfortunate.[†]

5.52. The summing up by HM Coroner outlines the basis on which he arrived at an Open Verdict. The Board agrees with his conclusions and finding.

Notes

¹ Exhibit 6; WS2,70,A-G.

² WS7,19A-23D.

³ WS2,71C-72G.

⁴ RLC Trg Gp Quarterly Report, 15 Oct 01. Exhibit 18.

⁵ WS1(G), 110D.

⁶ WS2(C), 8B.

⁷ Protective Security Advisory Visit report by 44 MI Sect, dated 5 Apr 02

⁸ Pte Collinson BOI Report [WS2(C),8E-G].

⁹ WS1(G),121F.

¹⁰ WS4,20A.

¹¹ WS4,20D,21B-D.

¹² WS4,83C-F.

¹³ WS4,83G-84D.

¹⁴ WS4,84C.

¹⁵ Pte Collinson BOI Report [WS2(C),14E-G].

¹⁶ WS1(G), 51F; 65A.

¹⁷ WS1(G), 65A-66D.

¹⁸ WS1,136B-D.

¹⁹ WS2,57F-H.

²⁰ WS8(1), signed statement.

²¹ WS4, 199B-H.

²² WS1,137G, WS2,74B.

²³ WS2,75B.

²⁴ WS2,124G-125C.

²⁵ WS2,74B.

²⁶ WS2,79G.

²⁷ WS2,78E-79E.

²⁸ HM Coroner's Inquest - 19 Mar 02 – Notes of Evidence. Dated 10 Apr 02. Exhibit 5.

²⁹ DR, Appendix 1. Submissions by Mr & Mrs Gray to the Deepcut Review.

³⁰ HM Coroner's Inquest – Notes of Evidence. Summing-up. p.28.

³¹ Ibid.p28.

³² Ibid.p28.

³³ Ibid.p28.

³⁴ Ibid.p29.

[†] See Chapter 7, Section 11 – Inquests: Support to Families & Service Personnel.

CHAPTER SIX

DEEPCUT 2007

The purpose of this chapter is to review the 2007 environment at Deepcut, with particular emphasis on the role and structure of 25 Trg Sp Regt. This chapter is not intended to be a straight comparison with previous years, since 25 Trg Sp Regt is now better resourced for its role than it was prior to 2001/02. Nor should it be assumed that all the changes and improvements at Deepcut have been introduced since this period. Many of the procedures and policies covered in this chapter are well-established, and it would be misleading to imply otherwise.

Section 1 - 25 Trg Sp Regt*: Role, Structure, Staff Ratios

Role of 25 Trg Sp Regt

6.1. 25 Trg Sp Regt provides the training and support structure for RLC Phase 2 trainees. As an ATRA unit, it is unique, due to the size and wide-ranging nature of the RLC, its diverse and specialist trades, and the fact that its trade training is not conducted on one centralised site.

6.2. The most significant change in the Regt's role since 2001 is that it now has the additional and recognised task of ensuring that the trainees' time during the gaps that occur in Phase 2 training is usefully occupied with relevant training and other activities. Implicit in this is that Phase 2 training is organised in a manner that minimises the gaps and therefore the trainees' overall time at Phase 2.¹ To achieve this, the Regt is now fully resourced to provide additional training where required, and also to manage the trainee Phase 2 'pipeline' as efficiently as possible.

Sqn Structure

6.3. A training Sqn consists of either three troops commanded by a Lt / Capt, or two troops with the third Tp Comd acting as an Ops Offr, to ensure continuity. The CO allows Sqn Comds the flexibility to adopt either structure, depending on circumstances, for example the changeover of Tp Comds.

6.4. 109 Sqn is one of the three Trg Sp Sqns in 25 Trg Sp Regt providing support to Phase 2 trainees.^{†2} Although based in Aldershot, it is fully part of the Regt, with a structure and ethos similar to 86 Sqn. The breakdown of trainees and trades in the Sqn is approximately 60% Drivers; 25% Suppliers; and 15% Ammunition Technicians.³ The Sqn staff includes 13 Cpls who are Sect Comds.⁴

6.5. The average size of a troop in 109 Sqn is 60 trainees in barracks at any one time. When trainees are away from Deepcut, for example attending a course at Leconfield, they will expect to find a similar Tp structure in place. Close links

* In 2008, the title of 25 Trg Sp Regt was changed to 25 Trg Regt.

† 109 Sqn is used as an example of a typical sqn within 25 Trg Sp Regt.

exist between Deepcut and receiving units to ensure that any specific issues concerning an individual are passed on.⁵

6.6. At 109 Sqn, Sect Comds are split equally between the two Tps and, taking account of other duties, each Tp will have a minimum of five Cpls assigned directly to 'duty of care' responsibilities. Of the remainder, a Cpl will be assigned to assist the SQMS, but is always available for duty of care purposes. Another Cpl from the Sqn works in the Regimental Training Wing, on a three month detachment. If available, a Cpl will also work within the Sqn Trg Cell. The aim is to rotate the Cpls during their two year posting, so that they do not spend their entire time as Sect Comds and to give them experience in other fields.⁶

Staff Ratios

6.7. Staff ratios have improved significantly at 25 Trg Sp Regt since 2001, with the largest increase being the provision of Cpls at Sqn level. These are mostly employed as Sect Comds, providing duty of care and supervision to trainees on a daily basis.⁷

6.8. The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) inspection report on 25 Trg Sp Regt, published in Mar 07, identified, however, that 11 of the 37 Sect Comd posts were vacant.⁸ The CO confirmed to the BOI that this is no longer the case. While the Regt is not at full strength all the time, in his view, the staffing levels remain good, and a high priority is placed on maintaining that figure as close to 100% as possible.⁹

6.9. 25 Trg Sp Regt is occasionally trawled for staff to deploy on operational tours. However the CO confirmed that he had a 'very robust penalty statement', and would be prepared to refer the issue to a higher level if necessary.¹⁰

6.10. The staff-to-trainee ratio is the subject of continuous management since trainees continue to attend training at other sites and the population fluctuates accordingly. At any one time, the CO estimated that he might have 900 trainees under command, with 600-700 temporarily elsewhere, either on local courses or at other trade training establishments.¹¹ At Sqn level there are likely to be around 300 trainees, with some 180 Sqn personnel in camp, of which 23 are established as staff.¹²

Conclusions

6.11. 25 Trg Sp Regt is now resourced with staff to fulfil its role; and a high priority is placed on ensuring that this remains so.

6.12. The staff-to-trainee ratio has increased significantly, particularly in respect of Cpls (Sect Comds), arguably the most vital of all staff members in terms of direct daily duty of care and supervision of trainees.

6.13. Based on the figures given to the BOI, the estimated average staff-to-trainee ratio at 25 Trg Sp Regt compares favourably with Phase 1 training establishments and the Field Army.

Section 2 - Duty of Care & Supervision

6.14. The concept of 'duty of care' is fundamental at 25 Trg Sp Regt and is regarded as everybody's business.¹³ At Troop level, for example, the main purpose of the staff (Tp Comd, Tp Sgt and Tp Cpls) is to have knowledge of the Phase 2 trainees; what is happening in their lives, ensuring that they receive the correct training, and that they get through it as smoothly as possible.¹⁴

6.15. As in 2001, trainees, on arrival, are briefed on the sources of assistance available to them at Deepcut, both through the Chain of Command and from other agencies. They are also issued with a locally produced card which contains essential telephone numbers, including the Sqn contact numbers and welfare numbers (for example, Confidential Help Line, SSAFA Forces Help, Confidential Debt Advice Line).

Interviews & Monitoring

6.16. Once the trainees have completed their Induction package, they report to their Sqns, where they receive an in-depth one-to-one interview with the Tp Comd. In these initial interviews, trainees are questioned to identify any problems or issues likely to arise during their time at Phase 2. This information is treated as confidential, and is added to the 'Troop Watch Register', providing the opportunity to flag-up any issues where help and support may be required.¹⁵ While watch registers existed in previous years, the additional resources now available have led a more robust system.

6.17. Every week, all under 18s are interviewed by the Tp staff. The Tp Comd will also see all his under 18 trainees, to check whether they have any problems or concerns, etc.¹⁶

6.18. The level of monitoring and reporting changes once the trainee becomes 18, in part because the law takes a different view about over 18s and the rights of privacy to which they are entitled. For them, most of the formal reporting is confined to written reports from training courses. However, if there are issues of concern involving an over 18, the information is recorded and suitable actions taken, for example, the placing of a trainee on a 'Watch Register'.¹⁷

6.19. Sect Comds have frequent and daily contact with trainees, however, once a week, they will have a 'night in' when it is the responsibility of the Tp Comd to chat to them and see how they are getting on. This is particularly important during the periods of Continuation Training when it is possible that trainees might begin to drift. On these evenings, once the Tp Comd has completed his visits, he will stay around so that individual trainees can come and chat about any problems.¹⁸

6.20. As in previous years (including 2001), a member of staff is on duty during silent hours (i.e. outside the normal working day), and at other times, ensuring that any issues that arise will either be dealt with immediately or passed on to the appropriate Tp staff.¹⁹ One method for achieving this is by 'passage of

information' whereby daily at 08.00 hrs, the nominal roll is passed to the instructor for the day, with all relevant information included. For example, an instructor may be asked to 'keep an eye on' an individual and this will be sufficient forewarning to report back immediately if a problem arises during the working day. A similar process exists when trainees go away from Deepcut, for example to Leconfield, ensuring that issues are not lost between locations.²⁰

6.21. The weekly Sqn welfare conference is an opportunity to review the Troop Watch Registers and follow-up on any actions required. About one third of the cases dealt with will be related to injuries, while most others are of a relatively minor nature. The next level of monitoring is known as Medical, Administrative and Discipline where, if there is a requirement, the monitoring becomes much more in-depth. In these cases, a soldier will become subject to a Care Assessment Plan (CAP), which will be monitored on a Regimental basis.

Care Assessment Plans

6.22. At Regimental level, a trainee can be subject to a CAP if deemed to be at risk of self-harm or to have suffered serious injury, or have discipline, indebtedness, or family problems. For example, one case cited by the CO involved a soldier with considerable debts and associated problems.²¹ All such cases require the closest level of monitoring and reporting, as well as liaison with the soldier's family and other agencies. CAPs are carefully recorded, with the full consent and knowledge of the trainees concerned.²² Confidentiality is also maintained at all times.

6.23. Once an issue has been raised to Regimental level, the CO remains closely involved through his monthly welfare meetings. Chairing this meeting is not a duty that the CO ever delegates. These meetings, which can be convened more frequently if necessary, are fully minuted.²³

6.24. The success of this system is, of course, dependent upon identifying the soldier with the problem, and no system can be entirely foolproof. This is acknowledged by the CO, who has provided guidance on 'emergency procedures' in his Supervisory Care Directive. As an example, the introduction to the Care Directive cites a case of 'serious self-harm committed by a soldier who showed no warning signs whatsoever.' In his evidence to the BOI, the CO described the background to this particular case, which involved the soldier's personal life. Once the problem was known, it was handled appropriately.²⁴

Welfare Support

6.25. As in previous years, the Padre and the WRVS Services Welfare Officers continue to have important roles to play in supporting the trainees. The Padre, in addition to making himself generally available, has a session with trainees every week, when he covers subjects such as ethics, war, bereavement, and stress.²⁵ The Padre keeps in close touch with Sqn staff and the WRVS Services Welfare Officer, who refers soldiers to him, and attends Regimental and Sqn Welfare meetings.²⁶ The WRVS Services Welfare Officers also provide support and practical help to single soldiers.²⁷

Army Suicide Vulnerability Risk Management

6.26. 25 Trg Sp Regt complies with the Army's Suicide Vulnerability Risk Management policy, and the guidance is highlighted in the unit's own aide memoiré. Staff are aware of the importance of being vigilant, picking-up and reporting any signs of crisis or stress.²⁸

6.27. The Padre's view is that awareness and understanding of the suicide prevention policy is 'pretty high' at Deepcut. He also believes that there is a common understanding about the importance of reporting, immediately, any incidents or comments that might indicate that a trainee has a problem which may place them at risk. However, in talking to trainees, he tends not to discuss the risks of suicide in a direct way; he encourages them to look out for other trainees, and, if necessary, to approach a member of staff if someone is reluctant to seek help.²⁹

Complaints Procedures

6.28. The complaints procedure is fully explained to trainees during their Induction course. As in previous years, they have the normal re-course of complaint via the Chain of Command and a separate channel through the Independent Complaints Officer. This officer works directly for the CO, is not involved in training at all, and can be approached by anyone in the unit, trainees and staff alike.³⁰ The message is simple: If an individual feels bullied or harassed, then they should contact the Independent Complaints Officer.³¹

6.29. In addition, there are other avenues open for soldiers who have complaints. For example: the Padre; the Medical Officer; the WRVS Services Welfare Officer; the Confidential Help Line; and the Recruit Trainee Survey. The CO also makes it clear to trainees that they have direct access to him if they feel they need it.³²

6.30. The CO gave an example of a case where a trainee had made an allegation about the behaviour of the Cpls in one of the sub-units. An investigation was launched, and individuals interviewed. In the event, the allegation proved to be unfounded. The important point is that it was swiftly investigated.³³

Conclusions

6.31. Duty of care, supervision, and welfare, are fundamental aspects of the 25 Trg Sp Regt role. They are common currency throughout the staff, from the CO downwards.

6.32. 25 Trg Sp Regt has a comprehensive mechanism for identifying and monitoring welfare issues among trainees, and for ensuring that support is provided when necessary.

6.33. Monitoring and reporting in respect of Phase 2 trainees, and particularly under 18 yr olds, is thorough.

6.34. The Board is satisfied that 25 Trg Sp Regt protects the confidentiality of individual welfare cases and the personal data of its soldiers.

6.35. It is acknowledged by the unit that watch registers and welfare meetings are not a panacea. Vigilance is required at all times, and the staff are trained to deal swiftly with issues when they occur.

6.36. The Board is satisfied that 25 Trg Sp Regt complies with the current Army Suicide Vulnerability Risk Management policy.

6.37. The range of means by which trainees can make complaints, should they wish, is both extensive and appropriate.

6.38. The Board is satisfied that complaints made by trainees regarding staff are subject to appropriate investigation.

Section 3 – Staff Selection & Training

Selection of Staff

6.39. There is a balance between selecting the best people for the Field Army while also ensuring that instructors in the training organisations are of the highest standards. The majority of NCOs in the RLC have the opportunity to attend an instructors' cadre course, acting as a good filter. Ideally, everybody promoted to NCO should be capable of being an instructor as well as being effective in the Field Army.³⁴

6.40. The Army Personnel Centre is responsible for staff selection for 25 Trg Sp Regt. This is based on suitability, as reported on an individual's annual report. If recommended and qualified, and there is a vacancy, the individual is subjected to a Military Secretary (MS) Referral. This entails checking all military sources of information for indicators of unsuitability that might preclude service with a training establishment.³⁵

6.41. Existing law was changed in Aug 07 to allow for CRB checks on potential instructors to be carried out through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) even though they would not hold Regulated Positions. These checks apply to all instructors at training establishments, including 25 Trg Sp Regt. Those instructors who were posted to ARTD establishments after Dec 07 will have been subject to checks on posting, and all existing military staff posted prior to that date will be checked in a rolling programme.³⁶

Training of Staff

6.42. Once selected, staff attend a course at the newly established Army Staff Leadership School (ASLS) at Pirbright. The ASLS draws together three previous training schools into one, purpose-built organisation, delivering 'Defence Train

The Trainer' approved courses for all staff being posted to Phase 1 and 2 training establishments, including Deepcut.

6.43. Courses are tailored to individual needs and specific appointments. Those staff directly involved in the training of recruits and trainees receive the most extensive training.³⁷ For example, Phase 2 Training Staff with responsibility for the delivery of face-to-face instruction (Oftrs, SNCOs, JNCOs & civilian Instructional Officers) attend an 8 day course at the ASLS.³⁸

6.44. The CO attends a COs' Designate Course prior to assuming command of the Regt. While this course is not designed specifically for COs of training establishments, the legacy of 'Deepcut' is such that there are frequent references to the place and the lessons learned there. These lessons have been widely shared across the Army. The CO also attends a Tri-Service, MOD sponsored course specifically designed for COs of training establishments.³⁹

Conclusions

6.45. The selection and vetting of training staff is thorough, although the Board acknowledges that it can never be entirely foolproof.

6.46. The recent establishment of the Army Staff Leadership School is welcomed as a means of ensuring that instructors / supervisors are well prepared for their appointment.

6.47. The introduction of CRB checks for all potential instructors is welcomed.

Section 4 – Phase 2 Trainee Programme

Regimental Induction Programme

6.48. As in previous years, Induction occurs in the trainees' first week at 25 Trg Sp Regt, before they join their Sqns. The Regimental Induction Programme is a rolling one, running throughout the year.

6.49. Trainees normally arrive on a Sunday afternoon, and are met by a Sect Comd. Following a briefing, a tour of the camp, and a fire practice, they have a 30 minute briefing from the WRVS Services Welfare Officer based at Deepcut.

6.50. The course then runs throughout the working week, beginning with the CO's Opening Address and the RSM's Welcome Brief. During the remainder of the week, topics covered include: Health & Safety; Pay & Documentation; Welfare; Well Being & Health; Education; Security training; meeting the Padre; and Personnel issues. The Tp Comd's initial interview also takes place during this week.

6.51. At the end of the Induction week, trainees move to their allotted Sqn, where they receive a welcome brief from the OC, a disciplinary brief from the

SSM, and a welfare brief. From then on, they may progress at different stages, due to course availability and their specific needs.

Trainee 'Pipeline'

6.52. Phase 2 training depends on an individual's trade path, and therefore needs to be managed throughout. In some trades, for example, Driver, there are frequent courses throughout the year, while other trade courses may be much longer in duration and occur less frequently. If a trainee arrived at Deepcut just after the beginning of such a course, he could wait many months for the next one.⁴⁰ The 'pipeline' is designed to prevent this happening, by programming the arrival of trainees into Phase 2. This is achieved by close liaison with ATR(P) and a managed 'pipeline' through Phase 2 training although a trainee's progress may still be affected by illness, injury or below standard performance.

6.53. Each trainee passing through 25 Trg Sp Regt, regardless of trade, has their own individual training plan, tailored to their specific needs. To assist trainees to keep their own personal record of progress, they also receive a Phase 2 Trainee Progress card on arrival at Deepcut.

6.54. Within the Sqn, the pipeline is mostly the Sqn 2IC's responsibility; he attends Regimental meetings and implements any actions required in the Sqn. In addition to the longer-term training programmes that are available, on every evening, the following day's activities are briefed verbally to trainees. This is conducted by the Admin Sgt, in the presence of the Sect Comds. By the end of the brief, each trainee will know what training they are on the following day, where the training is taking place, and any other relevant information.⁴¹

6.55. The Regimental Pipeline Cell is run by a Capt (Military Support Function) and two WOs. The TAFMIS computer system provides IT support, but what makes the difference, in the CO's view, is the staff allocated to the specific task who manage the whole process on a day-to-day basis.⁴²

6.56. In the past, trainees have experienced uncertainty because it was not possible to predict when they would complete their Phase 2 training. The situation is now improved, because the system is better managed. Once trainees are well into their training, they receive a provisional posting order to a Field Army unit. Occasionally this has to change, for example, for discipline or welfare reasons, but this is quite unusual.⁴³

Continuation Training

6.57. Continuation Training used to be split between military training and adventure training. The emphasis has now shifted to military training, due to the high tempo of operations and the likelihood of soldiers deploying on operations early in their careers.

6.58. Continuation Training at 25 Trg Sp Regt is now fully resourced, structured and progressive, with a rolling four week military training package that runs for 49 weeks a year. If trainees are not doing something else, they will be on

Continuation Training. They tend to do one or two weeks of training, and then return later for a further period. Although it is a rolling programme, it is not found to be repetitious.⁴⁴ 'Skill fade' is often an issue, so the opportunity to repeat some training is beneficial.

6.59. To manage and run Continuation Training, a Capt is employed as the Regtl Trg Offr, supported by a WO2, a Sgt, and three Cpl Instructors. This is further augmented by three Cpls (one from each Sqn). The Regt is also supported by SNCOs attending the cadre for potential instructors at Sandhurst. These SNCOs are of extremely high quality, and while their support is not available at all times, it is invaluable when it is.⁴⁵

6.60. Continuation Training is varied and relevant. It includes: Sport, Weapon Training and two Range Days; Chemical, Biological, Radiation & Nuclear (CBRN) Training; Command Tasks; a 2½ day Exercise; Battlefield Casualty Drills; Corps History & Core Values; and a CO's Competition. There are also common activities that take place every week, for example, Physical Training, and a session with the Padre.⁴⁶

Additional Training Needs

6.61. The Army acknowledges that some soldiers require additional assistance with literacy, numeracy, or if they have learning difficulties caused by conditions such as dyslexia.

6.62. Any problems would normally have been identified and assessed at Phase 1, and details included in the reports that pass to the Phase 2 establishment. At Deepcut, once it is known that a soldier requires additional help, time is made available, and specific training is provided in the Education Centre.

Conclusions

6.63. The Induction Programme conducted at 25 Trg Sp Regt provides a good introduction to Phase 2 training.

6.64. Dedicated resources now exist to ensure that the trainees' time at Deepcut is managed fully and usefully.

6.65. Trainees are treated as individuals, with a tailored training package that takes account of their specific training needs and any personal or medical issues that might affect their time at Phase 2. These improvements are welcomed.

6.66. Continuation Training at 25 Trg Sp Regt is now well structured and progressive, and is properly supported with dedicated and trained staff.

6.67. Resources are available to meet the need for additional educational support through the Education Centre.

Section 5 – Guarding and Security

Access to Weapons

6.68. RLC soldiers require to be trained to use and handle weapons, in line with Army policy. This remains a fundamental aspect of their training.⁴⁷

6.69. The Army Recruiting and Training Division (ARTD) has provided additional policy and guidance on guarding and the control of weapons in training establishments – augmenting the Army policy.⁴⁸ 25 Trg Sp Regt adheres fully to these rules. As in previous years, weapons and ammunition are always kept under lock and key, and separately, until they are signed-out, under supervision, to trainees. When weapons are issued in the Guardroom, this is recorded on a log sheet which forms part of the Guard Report. This log sheet, and the signing-out of weapons and ammunition to Phase 2 trainees, is managed by the Regimental Provost Staff.⁴⁹

6.70. At the end of every guard duty, the Guard Report is submitted to the RSM. Names, weapon butt numbers, weapon serial numbers and signatures are recorded on these sheets. The RSM signs each page of the Guard Report, in red. These logs are then filed in the Orderly Room – and retained for a period of time.⁵⁰

Military Provost Guard Service

6.71. CO 25 Trg Sp Regt is no longer reliant upon his trainees to provide the manpower for guarding the camp at Deepcut. That role has now been handed over to the Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS) Company, which also covers Pirbright. The Company, with an establishment of 63, is rank ranged, and benefits from the considerable experience of its ex-military personnel. The OC is an ex-Regular Army Warrant Officer, is under the overall command of CO 25 Trg Sp Regt and, on security issues, reports to the Regimental 2IC and the RSM.

6.72. The role of the MPGS at Deepcut (and many other military camps) is to provide both armed and unarmed Guard services. This includes roving and static patrols, and tasks such as controlling entry into areas, the issuing of keys, vehicle searching, building searching, etc. Additionally, the MPGS now provides security training to Phase 2 trainees at Deepcut.

6.73. The MPGS area of responsibility covers the camp at Deepcut with two outstations (the HQ Offrs' Mess and HQ Sgts' Mess), and Pirbright. The Company HQ is co-located with the Regimental Police at Princess Royal Barracks, Deepcut. It operates in section groupings, with each section commanded by a sergeant, working a 4-day x 12 hour shift.⁵¹

Trainees on Guard

6.74. Trainees no longer conduct Guard duties at the Offrs' and Sgts' Messes.⁵² Occasionally, trainees do, however, conduct armed guarding on the front gate, fully supervised and in sight of the main gate. Whenever trainees are on Guard,

they are fully supervised by a trained NCO. As in the past, if trainees are 17 yrs of age or older, and qualified, then they can conduct armed guards, however they will always be supervised.⁵³

Guard Training

6.75. While the reliance on Phase 2 trainees for guarding at Deepcut has been removed, there remains the requirement for them to be trained in guarding techniques. ARTD's stated policy is that Guard duty training is covered during the Induction package for Phase 2 training, and that, wherever possible, trainees should carry out Guard duties during the period they are awaiting their trade training or prior to posting to the Field Army. The ARTD policy also directs that trainees are to be briefed in detail and properly supervised throughout the duration of their duty. The ARTD training objectives for guarding and security are comprehensive.⁵⁴

6.76. Local practice at Deepcut accords with this policy. CO 25 Trg Sp Regt has laid down that each Phase 2 trainee will conduct at least one guarding foot patrol and a gate sentry before being posted to a Field unit. These guards are fully supervised by MPGS soldiers. While guards are primarily designed as training, they are done as a proper duty, with the Phase 2 trainee being fully briefed, watching and learning from experienced MPGS NCOs.⁵⁵

6.77. At Deepcut, the MPGS run a training package included in the Induction of all Phase 2 trainees. This is then followed up, immediately before a trainee goes on guard, with a one-day package covering rules of engagement, powers of arrest, etc.⁵⁶ In order for MPGS personnel to instruct Phase 2 trainees, they are required to attend a half-day training package.⁵⁷

Awareness of Self-Harm Risks

6.78. The MPGS receive training and awareness of self-harm issues when they attend their training package. This gives them an understanding of the tell-tale signs to watch for, among both their own staff and trainees.⁵⁸

Incident Management

6.79. The MPGS is capable and equipped to deal with a range of possible security incidents at Princess Royal Barracks. It conducts two training days a month for its personnel, including live firing, immediate response drills, and first aid. While there could be a requirement to involve Phase 2 trainees on guard if the security state was raised significantly, the MPGS remain firmly in control of an incident at all times, or until such time as the Civil Police take over.

6.80. In the event that an incident required a cordon, the MPGS have the ability to mount this to control access and to preserve forensics.

6.81. If there is an incident or crime scene in the barracks or garrison, the MPGS are trained to be aware of the requirement to ensure the preservation of

evidence. This is also something that has been covered on the CO's monthly study days.⁵⁹

6.82. The MPGS rarely have any direct contact with the Civil Police, however, when they are called in, for example in the event of a suspect package being found, they will take control of the incident on arrival.⁶⁰

Conclusions

6.83. **25 Trg Sp Regt complies with the extant Army rules on the security and control of weapons, and the additional ARTD policy.**

6.84. **Guarding is an important military function. It is vital that Phase 2 trainees are trained in Guarding procedures and techniques and have the opportunity to conduct Guard duties before they join the Field Army. This happens at Deepcut, although there is no longer a reliance on trainees for Guard duties. This is provided by MPGS.**

6.85. **When trainees are on Guard duties, particularly those who are armed, they are fully supervised.**

6.86. **While improved supervision and clearer policy can reduce the possibility of death or injury on Guard, this can never remove the risk altogether.**

Recommendation

6.87. **Given the extensive experience of MPGS personnel, their expertise as instructors and trainers in guarding and security could be further utilised at Defence establishments. Any review of MPGS support should also look at the level of training provided to the MPGS on issues such as suicide awareness.**

Section 6 – Discipline & Related Issues

Discipline

6.88. The trainees are generally young and often immature, and while it is clear that the majority are well-behaved and keen to get on in the Army, there will always be a small core who are regularly in trouble.⁶¹ Where discipline problems occur, they are often drink-related, and are more likely to be when the trainees are on leave and away from camp. In contrast, within camp, levels of ill discipline are much lower, with a policy of 'zero tolerance' towards breaches.⁶²

Harassment & Bullying

6.89. The CO does not claim that there is no bullying at Deepcut, since this can occur in many walks of life. He is clear, however that there is certainly no culture of bullying at Deepcut and there is very little actual bullying. This is because no scope exists, due the amount of checking that goes on and the serious view

adopted by the permanent staff. In the CO's view, bullying or harassment would be quickly identified and prevented before any culture could develop.⁶³

Substance Misuse Policy (alcohol and drugs)

6.90. The CO takes a pragmatic view about alcohol. He gives a lecture to the under 18s when they arrive at Deepcut, making it clear it is illegal for them to drink in the UK and it is therefore illegal to do so in the Army. Under 18s are not served alcohol on camp, and the nearby off-licence is regularly checked-on by the police and by trading standards officials. However, the CO has no powers to prevent under age drinking away from the camp.

6.91. The Regt runs 'alcohol awareness focus evenings' to explain the effects of excessive drinking. Soldiers under the age of 18 are made aware that it is an offence under the Army Act for them to consume alcohol. When this occurs, the individual will be disciplined. If it reoccurs, they will again be disciplined, and referred to the doctor to ensure there is no underlying alcohol abuse. There is also a degree of education required, considering that trainees are young and often immature. In approaching the problem, the CO emphasises two perspectives that trainees need to understand: their ability to do the job, for example driving a vehicle or protecting other soldiers on operations; and their desire to become trained soldiers.⁶⁴

Conclusions

6.92. With the improved staff ratios and the approach adopted to allegations of bullying or harassment, it is unlikely that such behaviour could continue undetected for long.

6.93. The policy at Deepcut regarding alcohol is pragmatic and sensibly implemented. Although the Board did not question the CO specifically on the issue of drugs, it is content that 25 Trg Sp Regt adheres to Army policy. Deepcut, like all Army units, is liable, at any time, to compulsory drug testing.

Section 7 - Best Practice

6.94. There are several mechanisms for the sharing of best practice across the RLC training organisation and, indeed, across Army Training. The function of external validation has acted as one mechanism, since the inspection reports are widely circulated and read. Best practice issues are discussed at quarterly command boards, and the merging of disciplines across Defence, and visits across the organisation, have also played their part.⁶⁵

6.95. At 25 Trg Sp Regt, once a month, and as in previous years, the CO has a staff study day. This is an opportunity to go through and discuss supervisory care issues. Talking through difficult scenarios is helpful for the staff, since no one can claim to be an expert in everything. It is an opportunity to share ideas and best practice.⁶⁶

6.96. Across Army training schools and establishments, best practice in Supervisory Care is exercised by the Chief of Staff ARTD, who has an overview of all initiatives. Other aspects of best practice are promulgated by ARTD (Training and Education) who identify best practice in their internal validation visits.⁶⁷

Conclusion

6.97. Mechanisms for best practice exist. However, given the vagaries of corporate memory, and the proliferation of rules and legislation, this is an area that needs constant attention if best practice is to be maintained across all training establishments.

Section 8 – The Trainees

6.98. A number of witnesses commented on the difficulties and challenges that some recruits and trainees face. They often bring family and personal issues with them, and these will impact on the training and care they require. Some soldiers need more attention and training than others before they can move to the Field Army and deploy on operations.

6.99. Trainees are now less physically robust than they were, and so they need extra help with physical fitness. Some may also need help with basic educational skills, such as literacy and numeracy. Increasingly, it would appear, these are areas where the Army is seeking to fill a gap.

6.100. Trainees are now more aware of their individual rights, and occasionally some of them have difficulty in coming to terms with the realities of Army life. Where such attitudes cannot be reconciled with the needs of the Army, and the trainees are clearly not suited to Army life, then they are given the opportunity to leave.

6.101. There is a real challenge in getting the balance right. If the type of recruit is different, due to societal change, and yet the demands that modern operations is placing on our soldiers is increasing, then this gap needs to be closed by training. This will require additional resources and time.⁶⁸

Conclusions

6.102. Societal changes, aspirations of young people, and changes in legislation, set against the need to prepare soldiers for the rigours of military operations, present real challenges for any military training establishment.

6.103. This dichotomy will increase in the future, and so it is vital that resources are provided to fill the gap that must be closed by training.

6.104. If resources are not provided when they are needed, then it is likely that the Army's ability to meet its duty of care responsibilities, while also delivering fully trained soldiers, will be undermined.

Recommendation

6.105. Regular reviews must take place to ensure that changing standards and practice in the training of young people are fully applied across Army training establishments.

Notes

¹ WS5(G),4E-5B.

² 109 Sqn is used as an example of a typical sqn within 25 Trg Sp Regt.

³ WS5(G),77E-F.

⁴ WS5(G),78G.

⁵ WS5(G),150A.

⁶ WS5(G),79A-D.

⁷ WS5(G),14E-G.

⁸ *Better training* - Managing risks to the welfare of recruits in the - British armed services: two years of progress. Adult Learning Directorate, March 07. p.62.

⁹ WS5(G),17A-C.

¹⁰ WS5(G),17F.

¹¹ WS5(G),16C.

¹² WS5(G),78A-F.

¹³ WS5(G),39C.

¹⁴ WS5(G),152E.

¹⁵ WS5(G),153A-C.

¹⁶ WS5(G),157A-G.

¹⁷ WS5(G),160A-G.

¹⁸ WS5(G),159,D-E.

¹⁹ WS5(G),166F-G,168F,169G.

²⁰ WS5(G),154B-E.

²¹ WS5(G),40D-G.

²² WS5(G),163F-164C.

²³ WS5(G),39C-40E.

²⁴ WS5(G),41E-42E

²⁵ WS5(G),64F-65B.

²⁶ WS5(G),66F-67C.

²⁷ www.wrvs.org.uk

²⁸ WS5(G),55C-G.

²⁹ WS5(G),70A-G.

³⁰ WS5(G),44G.

³¹ WS5(G),45D-E.

³² WS5(G),19C-D.

³³ WS5(G),44B-D.

³⁴ WS6(G),16D-G.

³⁵ WS5(G),28E-29C; with additional input provided by XXX , Dep Hd Mil Pers (SO1 G1), 13 Jul 07.

³⁶ Updated input provided, via email, by C2 Mil Pers, HQ ARTD, 10 Feb 09. Exhibit 17.

³⁷ WS10(G),83E-84H, with additional comment provided, via email, by C2 Mil Pers, HQ ARTD, 10 Feb 09.

³⁸ Army Staff Leadership School (ASLS) Course Policy, published in Jul 07.

³⁹ WS5(G),6B-7B.

⁴⁰ WS5(G),21D-E.

⁴¹ WS5(G),165D-166B.

⁴² WS5(G),22C-23B.

⁴³ WS5(G),25B-C.

⁴⁴ WS5(G),37C-F.

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- ⁴⁵ WS5(G),37G-38B.
⁴⁶ See Exhibit 6.
⁴⁷ WS5(G),11C-D.
⁴⁸ G2 Security and Guarding Policy, last reviewed May 06.
⁴⁹ WS5(G),144C-F.
⁵⁰ WS5(G),116C-G.
⁵¹ WS5(G),126-132.
⁵² WS5(G),119G.
⁵³ WS5(G),111F-112A.
⁵⁴ ARTD G2 Security and Guarding Policy May 2006. Paragraph 4 and Annex A.
⁵⁵ WS5(G),134C-F.
⁵⁶ WS5(G),141B-E.
⁵⁷ WS5(G),140D.
⁵⁸ WS5(G),145B-D.
⁵⁹ WS5(G),42G; 136D-137D.
⁶⁰ WS5(G),137D-138D.
⁶¹ WS5(G),102A-D.
⁶² WS5(G),164G-165C.
⁶³ WS5(G),43G-44B.
⁶⁴ WS5(G),34G-35E.
⁶⁵ WS6(G),21E.
⁶⁶ WS5(G),41E-F.
⁶⁷ Input provided by XXX , Dep Hd Mil Pers (SO1 G1), 16 Jul 07.
⁶⁸ WS6(G),13D-14F; WS5(G),32A-F.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RELATED ISSUES*

Section 1 - Duty of Care & Supervision

Soldiers Under the Age of 18

7.1. In March 2007, the MOD published a new policy on the care of soldiers under 18.¹ The policy makes clear that a CO's 'duty of care' obligations arise from the employment of individuals, including those under 18. A CO does not have the rights and obligations imposed on a parent or guardian, and therefore cannot act in *loco parentis* to those aged 16-18. Notwithstanding this, the all-encompassing nature of Service life (particularly during initial training) determines that the duty of care of under 18s requires particular attention. The policy acknowledges that over 18s, particularly those under training, need much of the same care and consideration as younger soldiers.

7.2. The policy is comprehensive, covering 18 separate topics relating to the care of under 18s. Of particular relevance to this BOI are the following:

- a. **Arming and Armed Guards.** Soldiers must be over the age of 17 and have been appropriately trained before being employed on armed guarding duties. Where possible, the MPGS are used for guarding Phase 1 and 2 Establishments.
- b. **Vulnerable Recruits and Trainees.** COs are directed to publish a Supervisory Care Directive, underpinned by a Risk Assessment. This is to ensure that measures are in place to identify and protect soldiers who may be vulnerable to harassment, bullying, or discrimination; those who have welfare problems; and those potentially at risk of self harm or suicide. An 'At-Risk Register' system is also to exist at unit level, to manage individual cases following their identification.
- c. **Levels of Supervision.** Suitability checks exist to identify and exclude personnel deemed to be unsuitable to work with under 18s. The minimum acceptable levels of supervision (the number of supervisors to the number of recruits / trainees in their charge) must be determined by a Risk Assessment, and clearly articulated in the Supervisory Care Directive.
- d. **Welfare, Mentoring and Interviewing.** All soldiers are made aware of the various avenues open to them should they need to seek help, including the Chain of Command and other welfare agencies (for example, SSAFA, WRVS, etc). COs are also advised to consider appointing a 'mentor' for each under 18 yr old, responsible for meeting their charges individually each fortnight.

* This chapter covers wider issues raised during this BOI. While some initiatives are new, others reflect long-standing best practice developed over a period of time.

e. Contact with Parents. Contact with parents and guardians of under 18s is strongly encouraged, while noting that under 18s have a right to respect for their private life in accordance with Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (incorporated into UK domestic law in 1998).

f. Discipline. Under 18s are subject to the same disciplinary arrangements as over 18s. However, COs should be aware and take account of under 18s' relative immaturity and vulnerability, offering additional support and advice if appropriate.

Supervision on Guard

7.3. Additional guidance is provided in an ARTD publication covering Security and Guarding Policy.² Of specific relevance to this BOI, the policy makes clear that a detachment isolated from the main guard is to be commanded by a trained NCO. If prowler patrols are necessary then detached locations must be guarded by a minimum of 4 soldiers. Detached guards are also to be visited regularly at stipulated intervals by the Duty Officer and NCOs.³

Conclusions

7.4. The recent MOD policy guidance on the care of soldiers under 18 is comprehensive, providing a benchmark for best practice across all training establishments.

7.5. The Army now has a clear policy regarding NCO supervision at isolated guard locations. The Board notes that at Deepcut trainees no longer undertake Guard duties at isolated locations.

Section 2 – Help Lines & Feedback

Confidential Help-Line

7.6. The Confidential Help-Line, set up in 1997, has seen a steady improvement over the last 10 years. The free phone lines are open 12 hours a day, 365 days a year; and are staffed by SSAFA health volunteers. It is now Tri-Service, open to all Service personnel, their families, and to Civil Servants, and it is also available on operations. Additionally, there is now an anonymous email service.

7.7. The Confidential Help-Line cards are widely available across the Services, and its existence and value is frequently mentioned on courses such as the COs' Designate Course. As an accredited member of the Telephone Help Lines Association, the Confidential Help-Line represents best practice, comparing favourably with services such as the Samaritans and Child Line.⁴

Recruit Trainee Survey

7.8. ARTD now sponsor a Recruit Trainee Survey, run on the Army's behalf by the independent polling company Ipsos MORI. Trainees are polled anonymously, and are encouraged to give their candid views on the training they have received. The most important questions from the ARTD perspective are those relating to fairness and equality, harassment, and bullying.

7.9. ARTD receives a full report of any complaints regarding members of staff, and the information is formally communicated to the unit in order that an investigation can take place. This can also indicate trends in a unit, for example, if particular members of staff are named frequently by trainees.

7.10. The Recruit Trainee Survey was initially a paper questionnaire, but is now moving to an on-line version, partly because experience indicates that people have more confidence in this approach. Once completed, it can be despatched from the computer desk-top without a member of staff being involved at all.

7.11. Every trainee that has undertaken more than two weeks of training will complete a Recruit Trainee Survey. Thereafter, the trainee will complete a questionnaire at the end of each course attended. In this way, the surveys can be unit-specific, giving the Chain of Command valuable feedback on how each unit is run. It is likely that most trainees will complete three or four surveys before joining the Field Army.

7.12. MORI conducts some of the analysis, and ARTD employs an occupational psychologist who conducts further, more specific, analysis. Some 25,000 soldiers complete the survey each year, and it has proved to be particularly useful on the fairness and equality questions. It can also identify problems and trends, for example, in the case of vulnerable groups. The reports that units receive form part of their management plans, against which they report on actions-taken.

7.13. With new, on-line versions coming in, higher headquarters will have easy on-line access to unit reports, allowing them to interrogate the data and ask specific questions. This will lead to more responsive solutions to problems and adverse trends.⁵

Local Helplines

7.14. Local Helplines use the established welfare team within a training establishment, providing a means of communication via mobile telephones, manned by the WRVS during working hours. Recruits or trainees are able to call the Local Helpline using their mobiles if they feel that they cannot approach someone in person. The Helpline can be used by soldiers to seek assistance on a range of problems and issues; for example, bullying, stress, homesickness, depression, relationship difficulties or loneliness.

7.15. This concept has the advantage of being linked-in to welfare staff with local knowledge and expertise. An additional benefit is that the caller's number can be displayed unless the caller has decided to withhold it.⁶

Conclusions

7.16. The Confidential Help-Line, available Defence-wide and on operations, continues to provide a useful and alternative avenue for Service Personnel who need to talk in confidence about their problems.

7.17. The Recruit Trainee Survey is an initiative that improves communications and transparency, and empowers trainees by providing an additional means of feedback. The trend analysis that it provides, across all training establishments, is a powerful tool.

7.18. Local Helplines provide a further channel for trainees to seek help, with the additional advantage that they can engage local welfare staff quickly and, if the complainant chooses, anonymously.

Section 3 - Service Complaints Commissioner

7.19. The Deepcut Review, published in Mar 06, recommended the introduction of a 'Military Ombudsman' whose powers would include the ability to intervene in the handling of a complaint and in disciplinary matters. The Government did not accept the full remit of this recommendation, however, the first Service Complaints Commissioner (SCC), Dr Susan Atkins, has been in post since Jan 2008.

7.20. The SCC provides an alternative point of contact for individuals, either Service personnel or third parties, who wish to make an allegation of discrimination, harassment or bullying, or similar. The SCC can then refer these allegations to the Chain of Command for action; and receive a report on the progress and outcome of those complaints. The SCC is independent of the Services, has direct access to Ministers, and reports annually and publicly on the efficiency, effectiveness and fairness of the complaints process, providing recommendations for improvements where necessary.⁷

Conclusion

7.21. The Board welcomes the appointment of the first Service Complaints Commissioner.

Section 4 – Validation & Training Assurance

7.22. The external auditing of Deepcut has been extensive, and regarded as a useful tool – both beneficial and reassuring.⁸ The most recent ALI inspection took place in Feb 06. The report was published in Mar 07 and it was, overall, most favourable. The only 'area for development' concerned the workload of welfare and duty of care staff at squadron level which, in the view of the inspectors, remained unsatisfactory.⁹ This problem has now been addressed.¹⁰

7.23. Defence training is assured under arrangements set out in the Defence Systems Approach to Training Quality Standard.¹¹ This comprises a system of evaluation, inspection and audit at three levels: the Training Delivery Authority (TDA); parties having an interest in the training deliverer; and organisations independent of the TDA. Direction for the conduct of evaluation is laid down in a written policy document.¹²

7.24. Army assurance is conducted by Director Standards on behalf of the Adjutant General.

7.25. The Directorate of Individual Training Capability (DITC) provides an assurance capability to conduct independent and directed evaluations within Individual Training. Its roles are to conduct a continuous programme of evaluations of Departmental policy and its implementation by training establishments across Defence.

7.26. In common with all work-based learning provision funded through the Learning and Skills Council, the MOD is inspected by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED), which has now taken over the responsibilities of the former Adult Learning Inspectorate.

7.27. It is understood that the MOD has been in discussion with OFSTED to identify arrangements for future collaborative work.

Conclusion

7.28. In the view of the Board, external validation is vital, since it provides transparency and maintains trust with a wider audience.

Recommendation

7.29. It would be useful for the MOD to clarify its plans for external assurance and validation of training establishments.

Section 5 - DHALI(B) Process

7.30. The DHALI(B) process is the management tool by which the MOD, supported by ARTD and others across Defence, take forward the numerous recommendations relating to Defence Training.¹³ The meaning of the acronym is as follows:

- 'D' is a report by the Director of Operational Capability, 2002, a Tri-Service review of initial training (DOC 1, DOC 2 and DOC 3) leading to a list of recommendations.
- 'H' is the House of Commons Defence Committee, who visited a number of establishments, conducted a review and produced a report.

- 'ALI' is the Adult Learning Inspectorate reports – *Safer Training* and *Better Training* – and supporting unit inspection reports.
- 'B' refers to the Blake (Deepcut) Review.

7.31. The DHALI(B) process is captured on a large rolling matrix, recording the original recommendations and progress in implementing them. Every recommendation, its progress and financing, etc, is tracked on this matrix. Where necessary, individual recommendations are categorised into sub-recommendations.

7.32. DHALI(B) represents a wide area of initiatives, some more quickly and easily delivered than others. For example, some of the accommodation in the ARTD is both new and good, while some is well below an acceptable standard. Achieving the right improvements everywhere takes time, and cannot be achieved without investment and resources.¹⁴

Conclusion

7.33. The DHALI(B) process is a thorough mechanism for ensuring that a range of recommendations are taken forward. It must rely, however, on effective measures to maintain corporate memory despite changeovers in personnel.

Recommendation

7.34. It is vital that, as memories of the 'Deepcut era' fade, the comprehensive DHALI(B) approach, and the funding that must attend it, is maintained.

7.35. Since many of the original DHALI(B) recommendations are in the public domain, more could be done to demonstrate their progress and implementation to a wider audience.

Section 6 - Self-Harm & Suicide Prevention

Psychological Screening

7.36. As part of the recruiting process, the General Practitioners of potential recruits are asked to complete a questionnaire which includes questions relating to self-harm. This part of the screening process is designed to identify and, if necessary, exclude individuals who may be at risk of self harm or suicide if they were to join the Army.

Conclusion

7.37. Given the nature of military service, the Army's efforts to identify potential recruits who may be at risk of self harm or suicide is an important aspect of the recruiting process.

Recommendation

7.38. In the view of the Board, it is vital that screening of potential recruits for risks of self-harm or suicide continues in the future and is enhanced to reflect best practice.

Suicide Vulnerability Risk Management Policy

7.39. It is acknowledged that psychological screening will not identify all individuals who may later be at risk of self harm or suicide. It is for this reason that the Army has a Suicide Vulnerability Risk Management (SVRM) Policy.

7.40. While an awareness of the risks of suicide in the Army certainly existed in 2001, significant improvements have been made in recent years. A new Army policy was endorsed by the Service Personnel Executive Group in 2004, followed by an ARTD trial of the new SVRM Policy in 2005.

7.41. The new SVRM Policy was published in Jul 06, and promulgated down the Army Chain of Command.¹⁵ The policy introduced some significant changes, including the mandated requirement for COs to conduct regular risk assessment conferences to identify soldiers at risk. Suicide Prevention leaflets are issued to all Army personnel and there is specific guidance to Commanders at all levels.¹⁶ Leaflets and posters have existed for some time, however a new leaflet entitled '*Self Harm can lead to suicide*' has now been distributed across the Army. Its aim is to make soldiers aware of the signs that a friend or colleague may be self harming or at risk of suicide. The leaflet makes clear, in simple and direct language, that 'doing nothing is not an option' - '*do not* ignore signs or symptoms' - '*do not* take the mickey' - '*do* speak to someone who can help.' It also emphasises that 'sometimes warning signs only become apparent in a very short space of time and sometimes there is no warning at all.'¹⁷

7.42. The policy acknowledges that there are risk factors present when people commit suicide or are thinking about it, and that timely identification of some of these factors can provide help to an individual and hopefully save a life. An important aspect of the policy is to ensure that all ranks, down to the youngest and most junior soldiers, have a role to play. They need to understand that unusual changes in the behaviour of friends and colleagues may be an indicator that they are at risk.

7.43. Once a soldier has been identified as being at risk, he or she is placed on a care regime. This is documented, and Posting Authorities are made aware, to ensure that the Army does not lose sight of the soldier's problems.

7.44. During the period Jul 06-Nov 07, 287 Army personnel were identified as being at risk of suicide, receiving the appropriate support from their Chain of Command and other agencies. 24 have been discharged, and 131 have now had their risk files closed because their circumstances have been deemed to have changed for the better. Of the 287 identified, none has committed suicide. When files are closed they are held by the unit for 3 years in a closed section of the

individual's personal file. Also, a copy goes into the individual's medical documents and is held indefinitely.¹⁸

7.45. The Defence Stress Management Policy has now been disseminated, and has led to the development of training objectives intended to raise the awareness of stress and its potential links to self harm and suicide.

Conclusions

7.46. The Army's Suicide Vulnerability Risk Management Policy has developed considerably in recent years. It is extremely thorough in its approach, providing clear direction and guidance. It has also led to a much greater awareness, throughout the Army, of suicide prevention and how individuals can help their friends and colleagues.

7.47. The Board acknowledges that the policy can never be the complete solution. Self harm and suicides sometimes occur as an impulsive act and without any tell-tale signs or forewarning.

Recommendation

7.48. The Army, given the nature of its business, must remain at the forefront of best practice in self-harm and suicide prevention.

Section 7 – Support to Bereaved Families

Casualty Notification

7.49. In 2001, the Army ran its own Casualty and Compassionate Cell with a 24/7 service. While this was effective, it was regarded more as *casualty administration* than *welfare*. The distinction between these two functions became clearer when, in April 2005, the Joint Casualty Compassionate Centre (JCCC) took on the Tri-Service role of casualty administration, thus leaving the delivery of welfare and after-care as a single Service responsibility.¹⁹

7.50. The Army realised, some time ago, that it needed to improve its support to bereaved families. It was not sufficient to leave this to Casualty Visiting Officers (CVOs) and Notifying authorities. The Army had also received complaints from families about the level of support, and it was clear that these issues needed attention. The assumption that all units managed the process with the same levels of care was not borne out by experience.²⁰

7.51. It was recognised that the Army has two distinct obligations to the bereaved family: the requirement to deliver the sad news; and the ongoing need to support the family for a period thereafter. These two responsibilities had previously been vested in the CVO who was often arbitrarily selected and inadequately trained. Normally, the responsibility of the CVO ended with the funeral; thereafter it was for the Regimental or Corps Association to provide support to the family.²¹

Casualty Visiting

7.52. The two duties (Notifying and Visiting) have now been separated - with Casualty Notifying Officers (CNOs) carrying out the first, and CVOs conducting the second and more sustained one. The CVO's duties have now been extended in order that a much closer and personal relationship could be maintained with the family, for as long as necessary, and for as long as the family required it.

7.53. The long-term focus for support to bereaved families is now the Army Inquiries and Aftercare Support Cell (AIASC), established in April 2005. The AIASC works very closely with the Notifying authorities, is a focal point for CVOs, and is frequently in direct contact with families.²²

7.54. The training package now in place for CNO / CVOs consists of a CD and DVD - providing for about a day of instruction. The package draws on Defence-wide policy, and has been devised with help from the Chaplains' Department and the Army Welfare Service. It helps CNOs / CVOs to understand their duties and responsibilities, how to conduct themselves, what they should wear, what they should be thinking of, what they can expect, and what feedback they should provide the Chain of Command.²³

7.55. The Army and the JCCC have become much more knowledgeable about how to support both estranged and extended families. Back in 2001/2002, the Army's assumption tended to be that, once a Next of Kin had been informed of a death, the notification process was complete. Now, the CNO is taught to do research beforehand, to find out who is in the extended family and whether they are communicating with each other. If necessary, this has led to the deploying of more than one CNO, and, in some cases, three or four have been involved in one case. It is the Army's view that it will deploy as many CNOs as is necessary to ensure that members of a family are informed of a death in a timely and sensitive manner.²⁴

7.56. Under the revised rules, published in early 2003, the Army acknowledged that information about a bereavement must be passed as quickly as possible. Now, with mobile phones and 24/7 news coverage, waiting until the morning to knock on the door is no longer acceptable. This applies in all deaths – both operational and non-operational.²⁵

7.57. Lt Col Laden, the CO of 25 Trg Sp Regt during the 2001-03, period believes that the institutional mindset of the Army, of which both he and his Regiment played a part, 'lacked sensitivity to the impact of the deaths upon the families. What we thought was enough was plainly not.' In retrospect, Lt Col Laden believes that 'we should have made ourselves even more open and available to the families'.²⁶

7.58. Turning to Deepcut, and today's Chain of Command, the importance of supporting a family during the difficult period of a bereavement is well understood. Bereaved families must become the Army's centre of attention, with every effort being made to develop a relationship with them.²⁷

7.59. Undetermined Deaths (i.e. where there is a possibility that death may be self-inflicted) have their own additional factors which can sometimes undermine the Army's efforts to provide and maintain the right level of support to bereaved families. For example, an inability to understand or explain the cause of death can lead to speculation, suspicion, and mistrust. The requirement for an investigation and inquest, and the retaining of personal effects during this period, may also place additional limitations on maintaining an open and supportive relationship with a bereaved family. If, in addition, the press and media become involved, maintaining these relationships can be extremely challenging, if not impossible, for both the Army and the family.

7.60. Experience suggests that these factors can only be overcome by ensuring that: communication with the family is maintained at all times; that no early assumptions are made or communicated about the nature of the death; that due consideration is given to the families wishes and requirements; and that the Army is, at all times, transparent in sharing known facts.

Conclusions

7.61. The new Tri-Service casualty administration organisation, supported by single Service welfare and after-care, is a significant improvement on the arrangements in place in 2002. Given the nature of the Army's business, this can be no less than is required and expected. Army personnel must have absolute confidence that their loved ones will be given the best support in the event of their deaths or serious injury. This is a vital aspect of the covenant between the Army and its people.

7.62. In the case of Undetermined Deaths, however, there are additional factors and circumstances which can easily undermine relationship between the Army and the family. These factors should be acknowledged, and appropriate guidance promulgated.

7.63. Although there have been significant improvements in both policy and procedures regarding the support to bereaved families, it is clear that failures in this area continue to occur. In the Board's view, this is due to a lack of firm direction and education down the chain of command rather than an absence of policy.

Recommendations

7.64. The Army should make all efforts to gather lessons learned from UDs and their handling, in order that families can be given the right level of support. Policy on Casualty Procedures should cover UDs in detail, providing guidance for both CNOs and CVOs. BOI reports can contribute to this process.

7.65. Procedures for the support of bereaved families must be frequently reviewed, updated, and promulgated across the chain of command.

Section 8 - Personal Effects

7.66. There have been a number of complaints by families, about the issue of personal effects. These complaints led the Army to issue two policy letters on the subject in early 2003.²⁸ The new, much tighter, rules on personal effects are now reflected in a revised Joint policy.²⁹ This is comprehensive, dealing with both the legal and moral aspects.

7.67. The Army acknowledges that the issue of personal effects is more complex than previously assumed. Rules are essential, however every case is different. There are legal and moral factors to address, such as the rights of the deceased and the respect that should be afforded to even the most trivial personal possessions. It is also important to identify the legal beneficiary, since in some cases this will not necessarily be the Next of Kin or the Emergency Contact.

7.68. Balancing the Army's administrative and legal obligations with its moral responsibility to provide welfare and support to the family is not straightforward, since adherence to one can sometimes be in conflict with the other. The right approach can only be achieved by the closest liaison between the unit, the CVO, the JCCC, and the family, including any legal beneficiaries. One of the issues that complicated matters in the past was that the Deceased Estates section was not located with the Army's Casualty and Compassionate Cell at Upavon.³⁰ It has now been co-located with the JCCC, where it is much better placed to provide the right levels of support.³¹

7.69. All items of personal effects are retained, and the family is consulted before anything is done with them. For example, if clothing needs laundering, this will only be on the authorisation of the beneficiary.³² The revised policy states the basic principle that 'nothing should be destroyed unless it is a health risk', since there may be items which, for understandable reasons, the family will wish to have returned.³³

7.70. From evidence heard by this BOI, it appears that difficulties are sometimes encountered in liaising with the RMP and the Civil Police in the tracking and return of personal effects held as part of police inquiries. An example cited to the BOI involved personal effects being retained by the RMP for extensive periods.³⁴

Conclusions

7.71. The revised policy on personal effects is most welcome, covering a complex subject in a comprehensive manner.

7.72. While there have clearly been some significant improvements in the handling of personal effects, this remains a difficult area.

7.73. Close liaison with the family and all other involved parties, including the police, is vital, to avoid misunderstanding, mistakes, and unnecessary delays.

Recommendations

7.74. **With regard to the policy, the BOI recommends an additional paragraph on the subject of Liaison with the Family. Once a deceased's family believe that information is being withheld or that they are being misled about the nature or location of personal effects, trust is lost and may never be regained. This point needs emphasising.**

7.75. **The issue of liaison with police, and the delays in returning personal effects to families, must be addressed.**

Section 9 - Boards of Inquiry

Permanent Presidents

7.76. In the past, there have been delays in BOIs, due to lack of resources and issues relating to the precise legal and procedural requirements for their conduct. To address this, the Army has introduced Permanent Presidents, who are able to take-on management of a case from the outset, through to the conclusion of a BOI. This involves close liaison with the family, the Chain of Command, Competent Army Authorities (CAAs), and other agencies, including the RMP, Civil Police, Health & Safety, etc.³⁵

New Procedures

7.77. Boards of Inquiry have now been replaced by Service Inquiries, under the provisions of the Armed Forces Act 2006. While procedures appear similar to those currently in place, there are to be significant differences. For example, because of the need to call civilian witnesses, a Service Inquiry will have the authority to compel witness attendance through a Judge Advocate. Also, under the new rules, Disclosure will be more tightly defined in accordance with Freedom of Information and the Data Protection Act.³⁶

Staffing

7.78. This BOI has seen various formal reports, including BOI reports, raised during the 'Deepcut era'. It is clear that, in some cases, the staffing of these reports was about process rather than content. As a consequence, important recommendations were overlooked rather than being examined by the appropriate Competent Army Authority. It seems that, in respect of BOI reports, the principle of identifying lessons and then applying them has not always been followed.

Administrative Support

7.79. Administrative support is vital to a BOI. The wider duties of Presidents, the importance of conducting BOIs in a timely manner, and the requirement for liaison with other agencies, all suggest the need for dedicated support staff. The identification and calling of witnesses also requires administrative effort, and is not a task that can be delegated lightly.

7.80. This BOI was well supported by a civilian contractor who provided electronic recording and transcription facilities. However, the Board experienced difficulties due to the fact that pagination of printed versions of the transcript varied from one to another. A comparatively minor issue, however it created considerable additional work to ensure that the references in the narrative matched the appropriate text in the transcript. A fixed (i.e. Adobe or similar) format would solve this problem and also protect the integrity of the original transcript.

Family Attendance

7.81. The MOD has considered the issue of family attendance at BOIs, and while families may be invited to be in attendance on occasions, this is not policy. It is the MOD view that the attendance of family members can inhibit witnesses, can hinder and slow down the process, and there can also be related security issues.³⁷ The Army does, however, update families on the progress of a BOI, and provides summaries of the Learning Account that is opened following an incident.³⁸

7.82. The presence of family members at this BOI was of considerable value to the process, enabling them to meet key witnesses, who, in some cases, they had not met before.

Timing of BOIs

7.83. Current thinking supports the aim to convene and conduct BOIs as soon after a death as possible, and often ahead of an inquest. This is reliant upon direction from the police that criminal proceedings are not being pursued, and upon careful adherence to the BOI terms of reference. This was not the practice in either 2001 or 2002. Had the BOI into the death of Pte Gray been conducted promptly in late 2001, it is possible that valuable lessons would have been learned then and not later, following the death of Pte Collinson in March 2002. In 2006, the Adjutant General directed that BOIs were to be included on his Delay Action Group, in order to monitor their progress more closely.³⁹

Witnesses

7.84. For some of the witnesses, the giving of evidence at this BOI was a deeply distressing experience. There were Serving and Ex Serving personnel who commented to the Board on their feelings of abandonment by the Army and the Chain of Command following the events at Deepcut. In some instances, individuals had been the subject of press speculation and, in their view, were not given the support that should be expected from an employer. It was clear to the Board that, six years on, emotions continue to be extremely strong.

Conclusions

7.85. This Board welcomes the introduction of Permanent Presidents. It will improve the process in a number of important areas, providing

expertise, continuity, and close liaison with families. However, the experience of this Board suggests that for this to work, Permanent Presidents and BOIs must have dedicated administrative support.

7.86. It is hoped that the introduction of Permanent Presidents will lead to a further improvement in the Army-wide approach to staffing and after-actions following the publication of a BOI report. Corporate memory and Lessons Learned are vital aspects of this. Changes in legislation, for example in respect to corporate responsibility, makes this vital.

7.87. Intelligent and thorough staffing, to ensure that BOI reports are seen by the Competent Army Authority, is self-evident and must be applied as a standard procedure.

7.88. BOIs conducted as soon after the event as possible should be the norm in all cases. Early BOIs allow lessons to be identified, they assist families in reaching 'closure' in respect of a bereavement, and they provide an opportunity for all witnesses to place their experiences on record. Delays of over six months should be exceptional.

7.89. In the view of this Board, the close involvement of families in BOIs can be invaluable, particularly in respect of Undetermined Deaths. It is vital for the Army to seek evidence from family members in these cases, and it is extremely useful for families to hear the evidence of others.

7.90. An open and inclusive approach in the conduct of BOIs builds trust and confidence between families and the Army.

7.91. The flexible approach adopted by the MOD and the Army to the extant rules regarding family attendance is welcomed.

7.92. The new rules introduced in 2008 regarding the attendance of civilian witnesses are welcomed.

7.93. Some of the witnesses called by the BOI have clearly been deeply affected by their experiences, and have also felt a degree of abandonment by their employer, the Army. This, in the view of the Board, is deeply regrettable, since the problems at Deepcut were predominantly caused by a lack of resources, not the actions of individuals who served there.

Recommendations

7.94. That Permanent Presidents are properly resourced with administrative and specialist support.

7.95. That the Army adopts a thorough, rigorous, and centralised approach to the staffing of BOI Reports, their recommendations, and the implementation of any changes that follow.

7.96. **Witness transcripts should be published in an Adobe or fixed format to ensure that pagination is consistent and the integrity of transcripts is preserved, both on paper and in soft or on-line versions.**

7.97. **That, where appropriate, professional counselling is offered to Service witnesses.**

Section 10 – Psychologist Support to BOIs into Undetermined Deaths⁴⁰

7.98. An understanding of the organisational and personal factors leading to an Undetermined Death (UD) is an important aspect of a BOI's work if lessons are to be learned, and to prevent or reduce the risk of re-occurrence. This should seek to identify factors in the soldier's surrounding environment, and / or factors in the soldier's personal life, that might have contributed to the death.

7.99. The Board sought the assistance of XXX, an occupational psychologist at the Directorate of Army Personnel Strategy (DAPS) Science. * XXX had previously developed an Organisational Audit (OA) for use after a UD, on the basis of research sponsored by PS4(A) and the Army Suicide Prevention Working Group (ASPWG). The purpose of the OA, as formally trialled in an earlier BOI, and used to support two others, was to:

- Ensure the range of appropriate questions are asked at the time of the death;
- standardise the data collected for the Army;
- facilitate understanding of the specific UD;
- develop an understanding or model of UDs in the Army;
- identify what took place within the Unit and the soldier's life prior to the death;
- identify lessons learned for the unit, PS4(A) and the wider Army;
- facilitate the lessons learned process as recommended by DHALI(B) initiatives.

7.100. The OA constitutes a list of forensic questions to be used in all BOIs into UDs, providing the means for scientific data collection and improved understanding/prevention of UDs in the Army. The trial was found to be useful in structuring the interviewing process in a BOI, and in providing BOI Presidents with a good overview of issues of relevance to UDs. DAPS Science subsequently provided a report and, in the light of ongoing DHALI(B) work, the initial response to these proposals was positive. However, the initial trial has yet to be formalised into a firm recommendation.

7.101. To complement the OA, DAPS Science recommended to the ASPWG that it would be useful to include a retrospective clinical psychological

* Occupational Psychology is concerned with the performance of people at work in training, how organisations function and how individuals and small groups behave at work. The British Psychological Society. See www.bps.org.uk.

assessment in the course of the BOI in order to determine the state of mind of the deceased at the time of death.* The ASPWG commissioned a trial to determine the value of clinical psychological profiling as a support to BOI into UD's. The trial ran for a year, concluding in 2006. The lead clinical psychologist provided some preliminary conclusions and recommendations, and a completed report was considered by the ASPWG in Sep 07.⁴¹ The report concluded that: a clinical psychological judgement assisted the family and the unit to come to terms with events; and the presence of a clinical psychologist assisted the President in technical areas and general understanding.

Conclusions

7.102. Psychological support provides a scientific approach to analysing the organisational and clinical issues that might lead to a death, either accidental or intended. Such an approach is consistent with the Lessons Learned process widely accepted across Defence.

7.103. A greater understanding of Undetermined Deaths, through a more scientific approach to the resultant BOI, may help to prevent further deaths. It will also assist the family, unit, friends, and colleagues of the deceased to deal with possible feelings of guilt. There may be a role for psychological support to other BOIs as well (for example, in cases of serious injury and accidents).

Recommendations

7.104. The Army should hasten to conclude the outstanding study into psychological profiling as soon as possible, and then take forward the recommendations.

7.105. It is the Board's view that occupational *and* clinical psychological profiling are complementary, and therefore they should both be taken forward, and be fully resourced.

7.106. This work should be underpinned by an on-going analysis of BOI findings, to ensure that the Army's self-harm and suicide prevention policies reflect best practice and experience.

Section 11 – Inquests: Support to Families & Service Personnel

7.107. The inquest procedure operates under the direction of HM Coroner. It is the HM Coroner's responsibility to inform the families about dates, and to decide which witnesses to call. The Army is not involved in this process, although it will have inputs through pre-inquest hearings.

7.108. In recent years, the Army has become more proactive in its relationship with HM Coroners, particularly in operational deaths where military input is

* Clinical psychology aims to reduce psychological distress and to enhance and promote psychological well-being. See www.bps.org.uk.

important. The CVO also has a greater role now in maintaining close links with the family – throughout the period between a funeral and an inquest.⁴²

7.109. The Army has identified the importance of providing support to military witnesses called to give evidence at inquests. At the inquest into the death of Pte Collinson, held in Feb 06, PS4(A) prepared an information pack for military witnesses, consisting of a copy of the Home Office booklet on HM Coroners and Inquests, together with a media handling brief, a general background brief on the process, advice on what to wear, and guidance on answering questions, etc. This is now standard practice for all military witnesses at inquests. There is also a military staff officer present (as there was at Pte Collinson's inquest).⁴³

Conclusions

7.110. There have been improvements in the Army's liaison with families prior to inquests, and there have been significant improvements to the Army's support to military witnesses.

7.111. These improvements are welcomed, however this Board is aware that some families continue to raise issues about the Army's lack of support to them at inquests.

Recommendation

7.112. While acknowledging the improvements made in recent years, the Board's view is that this matter should be kept under frequent review. The Army should ensure the right level of support for both families and Service witnesses in all inquests into the deaths of all Service personnel, whether or not these are 'high profile' inquests.

President:
XXX

Member:
XXX

Member:
XXX

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Notes

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- ¹ Defence Instructions and Notices – 2007DIN02-100 – Policy on the Care of Service Personnel Under the age of 18. March 2007.
- ² ARTD G2 Security and Guarding Policy, last reviewed in May 06.
- ³ Ibid. Paragraph 6i.
- ⁴ WS10(G), 74B-76E.
- ⁵ WS10(G), 80A-82G.
- ⁶ Updated information provided by HQ ARTD, 7 Dec 07.
- ⁷ Joint Service Publication 831.
- ⁸ WS6,18E-19C, WS5,50C.
- ⁹ *Better training* - Managing risks to the welfare of recruits in the British armed services: two years of progress. Adult Learning Directorate, March 07. p.62. A copy of the report can be found at <http://www.mod.uk/NR/ronlyres/E82B3EE1-182B-47F6-8693-05AF88E6CF63/0/MODBettertrainingfull.pdf>
- ¹⁰ WS5,16G-18A.
- ¹¹ DIN 2005DIN06-090: Defence Systems Approach to Training Quality Standard 002:2003.
- ¹² Defence Training Support Manual (DTSM) 4: The Evaluation of Training, Published 2007.
- ¹³ DOC, House of Commons Defence Committee, the Adult Learning Inspectorate, and the Blake Deepcut Review.
- ¹⁴ WS10(G), 83A.
- ¹⁵ AGAI 110. Army Suicide Vulnerability Risk Management (SVRM) Policy, D/DPS(A)/28/3/1/6PS4(A), 20 Jul 06.
- ¹⁶ WS10,68F-G.
- ¹⁷ AC63830 Edn 0607.
- ¹⁸ WS10(G),67E-68C – with updated figures provided by PS4, 7 Dec 07.
- ¹⁹ WS10(G),3E-H.
- ²⁰ WS10(G),4B.
- ²¹ WS10(G), 4F-5C.
- ²² WS10(G),3F-4A.
- ²³ WS10(G),7B-D.
- ²⁴ WS10(G),5D.
- ²⁵ WS10(G),8A-D.
- ²⁶ Letter from Lieutenant Colonel R St L Laden to BOI President, Pte Collinson BOI, dated 10 Jul 07.
- ²⁷ WS6(G),25,B-F.
- ²⁸ WS10(G),8G-H.
- ²⁹ Joint Service Publication (JSP) 751, Chapter 12 – Disposal of Effects.
- ³⁰ WS10(G),11E-F.
- ³¹ WS10(G),10E-F.
- ³² JSP 751, Chapter 12, paragraph 10k.
- ³³ JSP 751, Chapter 12, paragraph 9.
- ³⁴ WS10(G),12C.
- ³⁵ WS10(G),18D-19C.
- ³⁶ WS10(G),19E-20B.
- ³⁷ See JSP 832 for further details.
- ³⁸ WS10(G),20E.
- ³⁹ WS10(G),21C-22C.
- ⁴⁰ Based on information provided to the Board by XXX (formerly DAPS Science). Dated 28 Mar 08. Exhibit 11.
- ⁴¹ Conversation between BOI President & SO2a PS4(A). 10 Sep 07.
- ⁴² WS10(G),15G-16A.
- ⁴³ WS10(G), 16D-17E.

ANNEX A TO
PTE GRAY
BOI REPORT

CONVENING ORDER FOR A BOARD OF INQUIRY

BY ORDER OF

THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING 4TH DIVISION

1. A Board of Inquiry composed as under is to assemble at Trenchard Lines, Upavon on 30 November 2006 to investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of 25127287 Pte Gray G, 25 Trg Sp Regt RLC, at Princess Royal Barracks, on 17 Sep 01, and examine whether the subsequent reports into Phase 2 training in general, and Deepcut in particular, have led to appropriate change in 25 Trg Sp Regt RLC:

President: XXX - HQ LAND
Member: XXX - HQ DALs Advisory
Member: XXX - RHQ AGC
Member: XXX - Land Forces Secretariat

2. Evidence is to be taken on oath, by solemn affirmation or by other appropriate means in accordance with the provisions of the Army Act 1955 (AA 1955) and the Board of Inquiry (Army) Rules 1956 (BI(A)R 1956), Rule 13. The statements recording such evidence are to be signed by the witness who gave the evidence.

3. Any person to whom Rule 11 of the BI(A)R 1956 applies and who, in the opinion of the President, may be affected by the findings of the Board is to be given the opportunity of being present and represented in accordance with Section 135(4) of the AA 1955.

4. The Board is not to attribute blame, negligence, or recommend disciplinary action. Should any evidence be brought before the Board of criminality, negligence or blame the Board should adjourn and report such evidence immediately to the Convening Authority.

5. The Board is to record a factual account of the circumstances surrounding Pte Gray's death, covering the following areas, and commenting on any aspects, where appropriate, which in their opinion were a significant contributory factor in his death:

a. The events of the days leading up to the death of Pte Gray; how and where he died, and the procedures followed immediately after his death.

b. The orders and procedures for guard duty, weapons and ammunition within 25 Trg Sp Regt RLC at the time of Pte Gray's death.

c. The procedures which Pte Gray underwent during guard mounting, including briefing on the control and issue of weapons and ammunition.

- d. Whether the welfare organisation or the Chain of Command had expressed any concern over Pte Gray's wellbeing, emotional/mental state, and whether he had a known history of depression, relationship or debt problems.
 - e. Pte Gray's conduct, performance and demeanour from enlistment up to the incident, including his relationship with fellow Phase 2 soldiers.
 - f. A description of the measures taken by the Chain of Command within ARTD, and more specifically by 25 Trg Sp Regt, to reflect MOD/Army policy on suicide/self harm prevention, and the extent to which they have been promulgated within the unit.
 - g. Any declared difficulties with the implementation of Army policy, and the steps taken by 25 Trg Sp Regt RLC and the Chain of Command to address them.
 - h. What investigations have taken place into Pte Gray's death? If such investigations have been made and they make recommendations what are they and have they been implemented?
6. The Board is to express an opinion on the following issues:
- a. The adequacy of the welfare support, pastoral care and general supervision provided to Pte Gray within 25 Trg Sp Regt RLC prior to his death.
 - b. Whether the orders and procedures for guard duty, weapons and ammunition within 25 Trg Sp Regt RLC in place at the time of Pte Gray's death were compliant with the training and security policies contained in documents such as SOP's, SOI's Standing Orders, ATRA guidance, JSP's and other disseminated policy from the chain of command?
 - c. Whether the measures taken by the Chain of Command within ARTD, and more specifically by 25 Trg Sp Regt RLC were compliant with MOD/Army policy on suicide/self harm prevention?
 - d. Whether Pte Gray had shown any dissatisfaction with his life in the Army, particularly during Phase 2 training, and whether there is any evidence to show that he was unduly concerned about any aspect of his life?
 - e. Whether action could have been taken at unit level to prevent the death of Pte Gray, and if so how ?
 - f. Whether Pte Gray's training was adequate for the task he was given at the time of his death, taking into account his age and stage of training?
 - g. If other reports into Pte Gray's death have been made and they have made recommendations that have not been implemented what is the reason?

h. Any other matters the President feels appropriate to report to the Convening Authority to prevent re-occurrence.

7. The Board is to record what changes have been made to the procedures and working practices in 25 Trg Sp Regt RLC since Sep 01 in the areas listed below, and assess their impact on the management, welfare and lifestyle of RLC soldiers undergoing phase 2 training. In undertaking this analysis, the Board is to express an opinion whether these changes have adequately rectified any weaknesses identified in Paras 5 and 6 above:

- a. Orders and procedures for guard duty, including the security and issue of weapons and ammunition.
- b. Supervision both on and off duty.
- c. Welfare support.
- d. Treatment of soldiers under the age of 18.
- e. Passage of information, including procedures for complaints, redress etc.
- f. Discipline policy, including summary dealing and sanctions.
- g. Implementation of the Army Self Harm and Suicide Awareness policy.
- h. Implementation of Army policy on substance misuse (alcohol and drugs).

8. The attention of the Board is drawn to the following list of documents, which should all be perused, and brought in as exhibits if the President considers that they directly relate to the TOR, and should be used to support the report. The list is not exhaustive:

- a. The Haes Report.
- b. The Evans Report.
- c. The report on Pte Gray's inquest dated 22 Mar 02
- d. DAG's Final Report dated 3 Dec 02.
- e. The Surrey Police Final (5th) Report dated 4 Mar 04.
- f. The Blake Report dated 29 Mar 06 and the subsequent Government response.
- g. DHALI Monthly Progress Report dated 31 Oct 06
- h. The DHALI-B Action Grid

- i. The HCDC Inquiry dated Mar 05.
- j. The ALI Safer Training Report dated Mar 05/06.
- k. The Deepcut Chronology Brief dated 13 Mar 06.

9. In presenting its report, the Board is to provide a clear, concise, easy to read narrative of events and facts revealed by the evidence. It should take the form of a chronological record amplified by the evidence. This should be accompanied by the conclusions, which will reflect the Board's opinion and the impact of changes to the command and control of trainees undergoing Phase 2 training at Deepcut, and the manner in which the Duty of Care is discharged, which will in turn lead to any recommendations. Care must be taken to ensure that the conclusions clearly delineate between 'fact', 'deduction' and 'opinion'. In compiling the report attention must be paid to the following:

- a. Ensure that all documentary exhibits referred to by each witness in the statements are signed by the President and annexed to the Record of Proceedings.
- b. Ensure that the statements, together with any additional evidence are signed by the President and annexed to the Record of Proceedings.
- c. Ensure that all documentary exhibits referred to by each witness in the statements attached to the SIB Report/ Civil Police Report, are annexed to the record of proceedings. The SIB Report/ Civil Police Report itself however, is not to form part of the Record of Proceedings, as this is a privileged document and individual statements are subject to the Data Protection Act.
- d. Ensure that a copy of the Death Certificate and the Post Mortem Report are annexed to the Record of proceedings.
- e. Ensure that the Narrative of Events, Conclusion and Recommendations are cross-referenced to the evidence presented to the Board.

10. The following military witnesses may be required to attend the Board of Inquiry, and should be on standby to do so, in addition to those called separately by the President:

- a. Lt Col St J Laden RLC - HQ IMATT Sierra Leone
- b. XXX - HQ Defence College of Logistics

11. Col PS4(A) is requested to provide:

- a. A room suitable for the Board.
- b. Typing/IT facilities and stationary.
- c. A Bible (or other religious text as required).

- d. A SNCO to act as orderly for the Board.
 - e. Copies of the following manuals, fully amended:-
 - (1) Manual of Military Law Part 1.
 - (2) Queen's Regulations 1975.
 - (3) LAND COMMAND Standing Order No. 3207.
 - f. Food, accommodation and transport for all persons attending the Inquiry.
12. The Inquiry is the Board's priority task and takes precedence over any other duties.
13. The President is to keep the Convening Officer and Col PS4(A) informed of the progress of the Inquiry on a regular basis and is to forward three copies of the proceedings to the Convening Authority by 2 February 2007.

XXX
GOC

30 Nov 06

ANNEX B
TO PTE GRAY BOI REPORT

RECONVENING ORDER FOR THE BOARD OF INQUIRY INTO THE DEATH OF
25127287 PTE GRAY, 25 TRG SP REGT RLC, AT PRINCESS ROYAL
BARRACKS ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2001

1. For the avoidance of doubt the Convening Authority directs that in accordance with Rule 9 of the Board of Inquiry (Army) Rules 1956 the Board shall reassemble from Monday 24 November 2008 for the purposes of recalling Lt Col R St L Laden RLC as a witness, to receive any further evidence as necessary and to then conclude its deliberations and make recommendations in accordance with the original convening order of 30 November 2006.

2. The Board is to comprise:

President:

Member:

Member:



R L KIRKLAND
Maj Gen
GOC

21 Nov 08

PTE GRAY BOI

WITNESS LIST & TRANSCRIPT REFERENCES

Serial	Witnesses	Appointment / Relationship to Pte Gray	Dates	Transcripts (Witness Sessions)
1.	Lt Col Laden	CO 25 Regt (01-03)	7-8 Feb 07	WS1
2.	XXX	PS4(Army)		
3.	Mr Gray	Parents of Pte Gray	19-20 Feb 07	WS2
4.	Mrs Gray			
5.	Lt Col Kerce	DCOS, RLC Trg Centre	28 Feb 07	WS3(1)
6.	Lt Col Haes	SO1 Pers, ATRA, Author – ‘Haes Report’		
7.	XXX	Padre, 25 Regt (01)	1 Mar 07	WS3(2)
8.	Brig Evans	Comdt, RLC Trg Centre (95)		
9.	Brig Brown	Comdt, RLC Trg Centre (01)	2 Mar 07	WS3(3)
10.	XXX	Guard Comd – (17 Sep 01)	12 Mar 07	WS4
11.	Maj Skinsley	Adjutant (Des) – (Sep 01)		

Serial	Witnesses	Appointment / Relationship to Pte Gray	Dates	Transcripts (Witness Sessions)
12.	XXX	Barrack Orderly Officer, (16/17 Sep 01)	12 Mar 07	WS4
13.	XXX	On Guard (16/17 Sep 01)	13 Mar 07	
14.	XXX		14 Mar 07	
15.	XXX			
16.	XXX			
17.	XXX	Guard Second in Command – (16/17 Sep 01)	15 Mar 07	
18.	XXX	CO 25 Trg Sp Regt – (07)	22 Mar 07	WS5
19.	XXX	Padre 25 Trg Sp Regt – (07)		
20.	XXX	OC, 109 Sqn, 25 Trg Sp Regt – (07)		
21.	XXX	RSM, 25 Trg Sp Regt – (07)		
22.	XXX	MPGS WO, Deepcut – (07)	23 Mar 07	
23.	XXX	Tp Comd, 25 Trg Sp Regt – (07)		
24.	Brig Wallace	Comdt, Defence College of Logistics – (07)	30 Mar 07	WS6
25.	XXX	Regimental Second in Command, 25 Trg Sp Regt (01-02)	30 Mar 07	
26.	XXX	Adjutant, 25 Trg Sp Regt – (Sep 01)	23 Apr 07	

Serial	Witnesses	Appointment / Relationship to Pte Gray	Dates	Transcripts (Witness Sessions)
27.	XXX	RMP Rep – (17 Sep 01)	23 Apr 07	WS7
28.	XXX	Off Duty – (17 Sep 01)	24 Apr 07	WS7
29.	XXX	Friend of Pte Gray	30 Apr 07	WS8(1) (typed statement)
30.	XXX	Virtual Reconstructions Ltd	30 Apr 07	WS8(2) (typed statement)
31.	XXX	Bundeskriminalamt (BKA), German Federal Crime Bureau.	14 May 07	WS9
32.	XXX	Interpreter	14 May 07	
33.	XXX (recalled)	PS4(Army)	29 May 07	WS10
34.	XXX	SSM, 86 Sqn (01-02); Sqn 2ic, 25 Trg Sp Regt (07)	29 May 07	
35.	XXX (recalled)	On Guard, (16/17 Sep 01)	29 May 07	
36.	XXX	PS4(Army)	29 May 07	
37.	XXX	HQ ARTD	29 May 07	
38.	XXX	Friend of Pte Gray (XXX did not give evidence in person to the BOI, however he authorised the Board to quote from his earlier statement to Surrey Police)	9 Jul 02	WS11 (Surrey Police MJB/10D - signed statement, pp4-22)

Serial	Witnesses	Appointment / Relationship to Pte Gray	Dates	Transcripts (Witness Sessions)
39.	Lt Col Laden	CO 25 Regt (01-03)	2 Dec 08	WS12
40.	Mr Gray	Parents of Pte Gray	2 Dec 08	WS12
41.	Mrs Gray			

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

General Source Documents

1. HQ E Region SIB Final Report - CCRIO No 01634/01 Investigation Summary (25127287 Pte Gray), dated 4 Feb 02.
2. The Surrey Police Report into the death of Pte Gray – 2002.
3. The Surrey Police 2001/02 Duty of Care Schedule (DR, Appendix 6)
4. The Adult Learning Inspectorate Report – *Safer Training* published in Mar 05.
5. DAG Final Report – 3 Dec 02. ((DR, Appendix 15).
6. The Government's Response to The Deepcut Review, Jun 06.
7. Trainee Survey Establishment Report: 25 Trg & Sp Regt - Oct 2006. Dec 06.
8. The Adult Learning Inspectorate Report *Better Training* - Mar 07.

Policy & Staff Documents

9. RLC Trg Gp Quarterly Reports – with ATRA responses - Apr 99-Jan 02.
10. 25 Trg Sp Regt letter RHQ/25/3821 – covering letter for 2nd Quarter Report - Oct 01
11. HQ 2 Inf Bde reference 2606/5 G2 (covering PSAV report) dated 8 Apr 02
12. ARTD G2 Security and Guarding Policy - May 2006.
13. Army Suicide Vulnerability Risk Management Policy - Jul 06.
14. 25 Trg Sp Regt – CO's Supervisory Care Directive.
15. Defence Instructions and Notices – 2007DIN02-100 – Policy on the Care of Service Personnel Under the age of 18. March 2007.
16. Joint Service Publication (JSP) 751, Chapter 12 – Disposal of Effects.
17. Army Staff Leadership School (ASLS) Course Policy, Jul 07

Additional Material Produced During BOI

18. D/ATRA/20/551/1 letter dated 1 Dec 01 – Supervision of Soldiers under the age of 17 years.
19. XXX – signed authority to release statements – dated 20 Jul 07.
20. XXX – Surrey Police Interview – dated 9 Jul 02.

21. XXX – Surrey Police Interview – dated 27 Nov 02.
22. 25 Trg Sp Regt Regimental Induction Programme – 25-29 Mar 07
23. 25 Trg Sp Regt Continuation Training Programme – Mar 07
24. 25 Trg Sp Regt Continuation Training Programme – Apr 07
25. 25 Trg Sp Regt Trainee Contact Numbers Card – 07
26. 25 Trg Sp Regt Trainee Progress Card – 07
27. 25 Trg Sp Regt Sickness on Leave Card – 07
28. 25 Trg Sp Regt Welcome Guide – 07
29. 25 Trg Sp Regt Trades Guide – 07
30. 25 Trg Sp Regt Guard Orders – 07
31. Surrey Police Aerial Photograph - HQ RLC Officers' Mess, Princess Royal Barracks, Deepcut
32. Statement by XXX RMP dated 13 Sep 07 (covering RMP report – serial 5 above)
33. Soldering The Military Covenant AC 71642