

# ARMY SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

61 Autumn 2020

## Safety during COVID-19



**Army Safety**  
**'Protecting the Force**  
**Protecting the Nation'**

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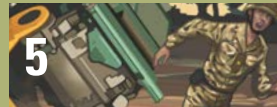
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# NEWS IN BRIEF

## WELCOME



**Col Graham Livingstone**  
Army Safety Centre (ASCen) welcomes our new

Chief Safety (Army) – Col Graham Livingstone, replacing Col Mike Jeavons, who has moved to a new role as Deputy Army Inspector in the Army Inspectorate.

[See Col Graham's introductory article on page 4.](#)



**Elizabeth Adeosun**  
creates ASCen's new C1 Assurance role and says:

*I was promoted to the C1 Assurance role in March 2020 and I am pleased to have been given the opportunity to make a positive contribution that I hope will help enhance the concept of assurance within the Army TLB. Assurance in itself has evolved over the years and it is continuously developing to ensure that it is a tool that helps improve the safety culture by maintaining an evidence based evaluation of the Army's safety health and I am glad to be part of this process!*

*Within the last three years I have worked within the RPoC as 7X SO2 H&S, where I was able to contribute to the overall safety management system. I enjoyed my time working with the various stakeholders and units, but in particular enjoyed the interaction and positive attitude portrayed to safety by the majority of the personnel that dedicated their time and resources in ensuring that their units were safe places to work.*



**Blanka Balazs** is ASCen's new SO2 Communications, having

replaced Sharon Foster earlier in 2020, and says:

*I am pleased to announce I am the new SO2 Communications in ASCen and am excited to learn the role and Army Safety. This will be a busy and challenging position, and one which I'm sure I will thrive in.*

*My previous post was ISO within the Army HQ iHub and thoroughly enjoyed my time there, however it was time for a new challenge. Before joining the MOD, I worked alongside the Army Cadet Forces supporting Adult Volunteers and Cadets. I am looking forward to the challenges and the contributions I can make.*



**Catherine Lintell** joins ASCen's AINC team in an E1 role:

*I previously worked in a local Preschool, initially as a practitioner and gained promotion to Deputy room leader. I worked at the Preschool for 11 years, specialising in working with SEN Children and gained qualifications to NVQ level 4.*

*I am pleased to say that I am not only new to the AINC team, but also to the MOD. Since joining the AINC team it has been a steep learning curve, but I have enjoyed all the new challenges. I look forward to learning all aspects of AINC work, so that I can continue to make valuable contributions to the team.*

**William Talmage** also joins AINC in a new E1 Administrator. William is new to the Civil Service and joins us after completing a Honours degree of bachelor of science in computing and working in the private sector. We are currently waiting on a start date from DBS but we're hopeful he will be joining us in the next few weeks. William is very keen to start working for ASCen and AINC is looking forward to welcoming him to the team.

It's a welcome back to **Kinisimere Mateiwai** following maternity leave, who says:

*Life as a New Mum...*

*I'm Kinisimere Mateiwai (aka Kini) and I've been with AINC for five years.*

*On January 13, 2020 at 0045hrs we welcomed our baby girl into this world – the moment that changed my life forever. For the past seven months, I've had my share of sleepless nights, like any mum would expect. Anyway, I've enjoyed my six months maternity leave and now I am back to work. I'm glad I've have met up with our new SO2 AINC, Tracey Trueman, and our new Data Analyst who have joined our small AINC Team.*

*There have been a few changes in our incidents/work processing and the main change was our working pattern as we all work from home due to COVID19. With the talk of the new system/software package coming up soon, there will also be more changes in our incidents processing. I'm looking forward as always to working together with the Team and to together tackling any challenges coming our way.*

## CONGRATULATIONS

**Captain Karen Thomson** has been a vital link in planning and implementing the correct FP stance in order to operate and permit training in a COVID-19 environment for JMC Wales on Op RESCRIPT and IBS for Op FORGE supplying advice and direction when needed to the HQs and the deployed units on the ground.

This has required in depth and rapid original thought; Karen's work has been routinely identified as best practice with



the procedures being shared across Defence. A recent Environmental Health Survey showed that Karen is at the top of her game and as a direct result of her efforts training has now re-started with no significant COVID related concerns.

For Capt Karen Thomson's efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic thus far, she receives a Director Land Warfare Coin.

**Tony Beauchamp** – SO1 SHE&SD, Support Branch, Headquarters Regional Command received a



Commendation from Major General Duncan Capps CBE, GOC RC on 6th July 2020 in recognition of 20 years service as a full time Safety Professional working for the Army, and 35 years duty in the Civil Service. Tony says:

*I certainly wasn't looking for or expecting the Commendation, but it was nice to get the recognition for the time served. I truly wasn't looking to stay in the MOD for 35 years, let alone get to C1 or do Safety as a full-time role, but I'm glad I stayed for the ride. My job in RC is made so much easier by the RPoC SHE&SD Staff, thank you one and all. Finally, my thanks to "Tony's Angels", Sascha, Janet and Jac, I couldn't have done it without you!*

## REMEMBER!

### We Must Report Near Misses...

Using an AF510 to the Army Incident Notification Cell (AINC) so that analysis and/or investigations can be conducted, lessons learnt and these communicated across the Army to help prevent injuries and save lives – JUST DO IT!

*Deputy Chief Safety (Army).*

# WELCOME, FROM THE NEW CHIEF SAFETY (ARMY)

**It gives me great pleasure to introduce this edition of Army Safety and Environment Matters – my first, and one which is published at a demanding time for the way we operate and live our lives.**

**An environment that also presents valuable learning opportunities...**

I am grateful to all those who have contributed to this edition and additionally, to my predecessor, Col Mike Jeavons for taking Army Safety along a significant journey from CESO(A) to a maturing Army Safety Centre, and for establishing the framework on which Army Safety is developing.

The Army Safety Centre continues to recruit as it builds the capacity to give real substance to ‘protecting the force that protects the nation’. Ultimately, this is about leading and enabling governance, organisation and culture that ultimately manifests as enhanced force protection and the preservation of our combat effectiveness.

The new arrivals to the team are already injecting real energy and purpose to complement the extant experience and expertise in place in the Safety Centre and across the matrix of safety professionals within the Army and beyond – a critical network.

In building our collective capacity and capability, the Army Safety Centre is working to drive hard the learning of safety lessons through effective tasking and holding to account, to ensure lessons are getting to those that need them most in an efficient manner. We are also evolving important training for Autumn 2020 to enhance the Army’s wider capability, which, in addition to

extant Risk Assessment packages, includes training for Safety Risk Management, revised Army Duty Holder concept packages and enhancing unit investigation capability.

As we collectively refine the Army’s Safety Culture drawing on just, flexible, questioning, learning and reporting elements, we are developing with the MOD a transformative mobile phone app based reporting tool to distribute and simplify the ability to report occurrences as learning opportunities; and then to seize, exploit and communicate them as lessons.

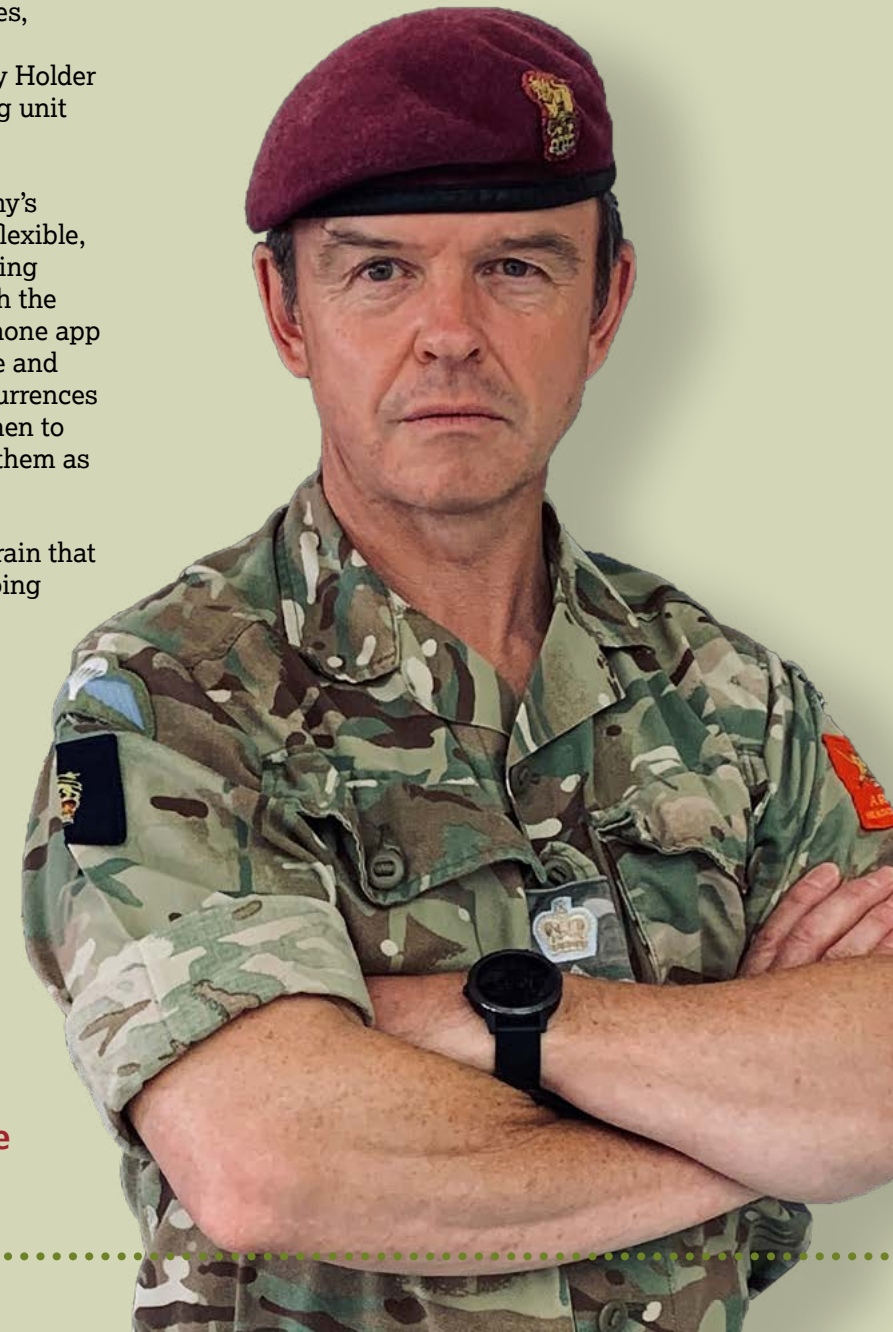
So there is much good work in train that promises real benefit. With ongoing engagement across the Army we will ensure the continuous improvement to learn lessons effectively, enhance force protection, preserve combat effectiveness and mature our Safety Culture.

In the meantime, I hope you find this edition insightful, we really value your perspectives.

I look forward to working with you.

Regards,

**Col Graham Livingstone**





**REPORTING**

The Army Incident Notification Cell (AINC) has seen some considerable changes in the past few months. Two members of the team have moved onto pastures new and we have welcomed back Kini Mateiwei from maternity leave. Catherine Lintell joined the team and we have recruited another E1 administrator who will start in the next few weeks. Its been a great start to the year for the AINC team, processing over 3,500 incidents including reducing the legacy AF510s by over 1,000. This being no mean feat, as the majority of time, AINC has been at 50% manning.

Many of us were expecting the roll-out of the new AF510, however, matters out of ASCen control meant this did not come to fruition. All occurrences should continue to be reported on the current AF510 V1.10-U(003). Links can be found on the Army Safety Centre and AINC SharePoint:

ASCen

AINC

AF510 V1.10-U(003)

AINC is now responsible for distributing the newly introduced AF510A Investigation Form. An AF510A will be forwarded to the AF510 notifier, irrespective of the severity level, unsafe act/condition, near miss up to death – if the occurrence relates to a fire / fire alarm, diving, parachuting, range, climatic (heat / cold), hearing, road traffic occurrence (RTO), equipment (MOD provided) and any other, as directed by ASCen or CoC.

AF510A

Contributed by Tracey Trueman, SO2 AINC

**INVESTIGATIONS**

As mentioned in the above section, we have recently introduced a new AF510A Army Investigation Form. There has not been an investigation form until now, so this is a good step forward. When the completed form is returned to AINC it is uploaded in the same way as the AF510 Report Form. By uploading it the

information contained in the form auto-populates the respective fields in the occurrence record in INS, making the information searchable and retrievable so that trends and themes can be identified and reports easily produced. The form leads people through an investigation, plus, there is a guide available to help people with investigations called the Army Guide to Reporting and Investigations.



The AF510A has been used by ASCen since the 1st July 2020. When they are sent out units are given 10 working days to complete and return the form to ASCen. As at the 30th July 2020, 55 have been sent out and 10 completed forms have been returned – most within the 10 working days. The forms have been well completed although there is some learning and bedding-in that needs to happen to make it an efficient process.

The information contained in the forms is good, objective, factual information that will be used to identify trends and themes, not just on the types of activity during which occurrences happen, but also recommendations, causal factors and lessons that can be applied across a formation and in some cases across the Army. The units that have been sent forms have done a good job and engaged positively with this new form and process – thank you. It is a big improvement in being able to collect, retrieve and make good use of information from investigations to help

improve safety for our service civilian personnel and our contractors.

Contributed by Martyn Cox, SO1 SL&I

**LESSONS**

ASCen holds an internal monthly review to check progress of DLIMs lessons that have been identified and taken through a Military Judgement Panel (MJP) from Service Investigations (SIs) and for lessons originating from another branch, and where Chief Safety (Army) is the Senior Point of Authority or Support Action Manager.

Currently, ASCen has six SIs: Castlemartin, a fatal collapse on an AFT, diving, Taji death by gunshot, Al Assad RTI and Glock – with a total of 132 lessons. Lessons originating from another directorate with ASCen as SPA or SAM are 31.

14 lessons have been updated and will be reviewed in August by Chief Safety (Army), 10 recommended for closure.

We are expecting two more SI reports shortly – Malawi and Jackal. These have several recommendations and will be put before an ASCen MJP to identify the lessons and SPAs and then loaded onto DLIMs. Lessons videos in support of these SIs will be available.

In the reviews held by CS(A), evidence supplied by the SPA and SAM is checked to make sure the lesson has been covered, if not, then the lesson will not be closed, and the SPA will be notified.

Contributed by Jenny Godfrey, SO2 SL&I

# A TEMPERATURE CHECK ON HEAT ILLNESS



## Heat illness remains a significant risk for the Army and the MOD as a whole...

It is a serious condition that has the potential to affect those undertaking physical activity, ranging from operations, training and day to day activities. It can happen both at home and overseas. In fact, there have been **2,728 UK Army personnel with a heat illness over the last 10 years** (source: Defence Statistics Health). With this background, it is crucial that all those involved in planning and running activities must fully assess and mitigate the risks of heat illness.

### Policy Changes

The Defence policy in this area has been comprehensively reviewed. There is a new Chapter 41 in the Defence Health and Safety Manual JSP 375 which focusses on preventing exertional heat illness and provides a simpler, easier to understand handrail for commanders that will assist them with assessing and controlling the risks.

This has been tested across the Services to ensure it is useable in the 'real world'. Many of the changes are directly linked to recommendations from Service Inquiries and direction from the Senior Coroner.

### Key Theme: Clarity on Responsibilities

There is a continuing focus on the need for a named responsible person to command or supervise any activity where the risk of heat illness exists. The Commander's Guide emphasises the duty of Commanders in this area with Guide now included as an Annex within Chapter 41.

Note that Army Command Standing Order (ACSO) 3222 provides further expansion on the responsibilities within the Army setting.

### Key Theme: Importance of the Risk Assessment

It is a mandatory requirement to undertake a risk assessment to assess and control the risk of heat illness,

as an integral part of the overall risk assessment for the activity. For many unit activities, a 'generic' risk assessment will be sufficient. However, the evaluation of local conditions using a dynamic risk assessment is essential, taking into account factors such as unusually warm conditions or individual risk factors specific to the personnel on the day. Again, ACSO 3222 provides additional direction specific to Army requirements.

### Key Theme: Use of Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) Meteorological Forecasts

For certain activities such as fitness tests, WBGT readings must be obtained using a QT34. For all other activity, wherever possible WBGT forecasts and/or a QT34 reading should be used to dynamically inform the risk assessment. Chapter 41



## QUICK SUMMARY OF CHANGES

### Replacement of JSP539 with:

- JSP 375, Chapter 41 – heat illness prevention
- JSP 375, Chapter 42 – cold injury prevention (still to be written)
- JSP 950 – treatment of heat/cold injury by medical community

**ASCO 3222 is retained and covers Army arrangements.**

provides work/rest tables to assist activity planners to set the right balance of activity to rest based on the clothing/equipment state and the intensity of the activity.

The risk assessment and associated control measures need to mitigate risks where no accurate WBGT forecasts or readings are available (e.g. Adventure Training in austere locations). ASCO 3222 provides further information on the use of the WBGT.

### Key Theme: Need to Follow the Risk Assessment Controls

Once approved, the risk assessment must be followed, and the controls complied with. Examples of risk reduction can be found in the Commander's Guide. If at any stage the risk cannot be reduced to a level that the commander can hold himself, but the activity must still go ahead, then the risk must be escalated. The process for escalating the risk is in ACSO 3216, but if in doubt, it should follow the chain of command.



### Key Theme: What to Do if Heat Illness Symptoms are Observed

Clear direction is provided on actions in the event of suspected heat illness:

- Pause activity.
- Treat the casualty.
- Dynamically risk assess the activity.
- Apply further mitigations.

The activity is only to restart once these actions have been applied and with approval from a named commander/line manager. It also covers the need for reporting all suspected/confirmed heat illness cases. If a heat illness casualty is identified in AFT or RFT(S) then the test must be terminated (this is detailed in MATT 2 guidance).

### Further Support: Risk Assessment ‘Handrail’, Work Rate and Work/Rest Tables

In the ‘Handrail’ support and guidance is provided on activity, environment and people, with prompts on how the risk can be controlled – all helping to produce a robust risk assessment at the point of delivery. It is intended to inform the 5-step risk assessment.

Dynamic management and rapid responses to changing conditions is key to avoiding serious heat illness cases. The importance of the dynamic risk assessment both immediately before and during the activity cannot be over-stated.

Work Rate Tables are provided which use the Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) scale that will enable any activity to be assessed for its intensity or work rate. Units (with assistance from PTIs) should consider producing work rate guidance for any activities that they routinely undertake to inform the subsequent risk assessment.

Work / Rest Tables are provided and cover activities up to four hours in duration (longer than 4 hours will require additional controls). These tables should be used in the planning of activities and should be accessible for the duration of the activity. The correct table should be selected based on whether troops are acclimatised and the clothing/equipment being worn. All activity in the UK and Europe must be considered to be “unacclimatised” due to the variability of the temperature in those locations which prevent the body from adapting to higher temperatures.

Finally, the ‘RAPID’ mnemonic has been developed to assist commanders with conducting a “sanity check” that they have completed the necessary actions to consider and control the risk of heat illness:

## HEAT ILLNESS ‘RAPID’ CHECKLIST

WHAT TO DO	COMMENT
<b>R</b> Understand the Risks.  Make sure there is an up-to-date Risk assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Army Form 5010 is recommended to record the risk assessment, but substitutes may be used.</li> <li>• Make sure the risk assessment is checked and signed by the person responsible for the activity.</li> </ul>
<b>A</b> What are the specific considerations relating to the Activity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the activity increase risk? Do you understand the intensity of the activity? What is the state of dress ?</li> <li>• Is it a test? What is the duration? Do you have the correct equipment?</li> <li>• How would you manage an emergency?</li> </ul>
<b>P</b> Are the Personnel prepared and competent for the activity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider acclimatisation, education and training, experience, fitness, injuries, and the effect of other activity (flight or social event).</li> <li>• Are those taking part rested, fed and hydrated, wearing the right clothing and carrying the right kit?</li> <li>• Do you have enough ‘suitably qualified and experienced person(s)’ (SQEP) for the activity?</li> </ul>
<b>I</b> Has the correct Information been supplied to the participants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does everybody understand the control measures?</li> <li>• Do those taking part understand the signs and symptoms of heat illness and know what to do if they have or witness them?</li> <li>• Has the Medical Plan been resourced and briefed? Are the casualty procedures rehearsed and agreed with all staff?</li> </ul>
<b>D</b> Dynamically risk manage the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All activity must be dynamically risk managed (carry out a risk assessment whilst the activity is underway) – including before starting.</li> <li>• How will you manage a situation and prevent an emergency?</li> <li>• What could trigger a review of the risk assessment?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty – is the activity more difficult than you thought (terrain, intensity and so on)?</li> <li>• Duration – is the activity lasting longer than planned?</li> <li>• Casualty – has there been a heat-illness casualty?</li> <li>• Environmental – has there been a change to the weather forecast – WBGT and/or temperature, humidity, cloud cover, wind strength?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# LOGISTICS SUPPLY FOR NHS NIGHTINGALE LONDON

## Capt Jim O'Connor, AFPA for 9 Regiment RLC outlines some of the H&S measures

The project to convert London's ExCel into a 4,000-bed field hospital in March 2020 was unprecedented with a model of care never needed or seen before in the United Kingdom.

In less than two weeks this ambitious and critical facility was planned, designed and built, with the Army, NHS and the construction industry joining forces to meet the national need and support the government response to COVID-19.

84 Medical Supply Squadron (84 MSS) of 9 Regiment RLC were deployed in support of the Military Assistance to Civil Authorities (MACA) to NHS Nightingale London, tasked with providing strategic planning advice and assistance with the management and control of medical materiel flooding into the facility.

Despite the pandemic and the huge logistical challenge that this presented the team, health and safety remained a significant and critical factor to contend with. Normal working confines were removed, seeing construction, warehouse and clinical teams

working alongside each other, with an abundance of concurrent activity happening across the site, as everyone strived towards individual targets and the wider development of the facility. This in itself created many risk factors and health and safety implications notwithstanding the wider infectious control precautions to protect against COVID-19 required continual and careful management.

Health and safety law regardless of the evolving situation still applied, its criticality in many respects more imperative with the environment the NHS Nightingale project presented. In normal circumstances organisations will have taken time to evaluate risks and apply appropriate controls, policies and procedures to create an effective safety climate to reduce accidents. However, with so many simultaneous working parts to the project, there required a pragmatic system that kept both people and assets safe, applying a reactive and adaptive approach to health and safety, often conducting dynamic risk assessments with decisions and safe guarding being implemented on the spot as the environment evolved, drawing on not only the teams' experience but that of external actors.

The limited exposure to construction site safety within the team, required

communication to not only be effective within the team but to efficiently interlink with the numerous organisations on site to ensure all safety needs were met. Liaising closely with the construction companies and joining daily safety briefing enabled enhanced awareness for the team and facilitated wider compliance – from simple distancing, to wearing of PPE like high visibility clothing and moving around plant equipment, ensured that health and safety procedures were adhered to and the continual safety of the team was maintained while working within this high-risk environment.

Testament to the team's ability to acknowledge their own limitations

and incorporate additional guidance into 84 MSS own health and safety approaches resulted in no injuries or cases of COVID-19 coming from the deployment to NHS Nightingale London. Furthermore, considering the scale and speed in which this project came together and that many organisations had never worked together there were no serious injuries, incidents or accidents despite the many risk factors associated with a project of this scale.

**This further demonstrates the power of a positive safety climate and culture and that this can be achieved even in a rapidly evolving and dynamic health and safety environment.**

**Photo – 84 Medical Supply Squadron at the London Nightingale. Rear row (left to right):**  
Pte B Limbu 299 | Sgt R Piesse-Mills | Lt G Barnes | Maj A Glass | WO2 C Peace | Cpl R Roberts | Pte G Jacobs  
**Front row:** LCpl G Randolph | Cpl E Ayrey | Cpl C Crossley | Pte S Gurung 768 | Pte E Baadu | Pte G Collins



# LOGISTICS FOR MOBILE TESTING UNITS

**Tony Richards (C1), SO1 FP at HQ 1(UK) Div outlines how 102 Logistic Brigade developed a training and assurance package for Mobile Testing Units**



A section of personnel from Headquarters 102 Logistic Brigade developed a training and assurance package for the Mobile Testing Unit (MTU) teams. The activity brought together circa 1,100 service personnel from across the United Kingdom over an eight day period and deployed an initial 96 MTUs across the entire UK to conduct COVID 19 testing in 'pop up' locations.

The team developed Risk Assessments to cover accommodation, feeding, and training on mobile testing units – all aimed at maintaining social distancing and eliminating the possibility of spread of infection. In all, the team managed to keep the risk of transmission to ALARP.

Provision of accommodation and feeding were key challenges. 24 man rooms were reduced to 12 with all bunk beds spread two meters apart and made into single beds. Personnel were told to bring their own sleeping systems and mattresses were sanitised on a rigorous daily schedule. Due to the numbers being trained two separate feeding facilities were used to cater for over 100 personnel each. Three separate lecture theatres were rearranged with all chairs two meters apart.



A significant challenge was to design a package that would rotate up to 300 personnel each day through three different course environments.



The training package was developed from the SOPs of a recently established MTU and the knowledge gained from observing a fully functional regional test site running self-testing lanes.

In less than two days a training package of nine training objectives covering topics including the correct use of PPE and the contents and function of a COVID test kit, as well as the accompanying lesson plans were developed. Training commenced on the third day. In addition to the training of the MTU operators, over 60 instructors were trained to deliver the training. These instructors went on to run distributed training across the country, ensuring the operational capability of the MTUs trained by 102 Log Bde.

Overall the team managed the receipt and handover of 96 mobile testing units, 39 Driving Vehicle License Authority (DVSA) vehicles and audited over 2,750 items of CES and 310 mobile phones. Due to the speed that the project was brought into service a Letter of Comfort was agreed for the temporary loan of DVSA vehicles. These had to be fitted with all equipment needed to function as a MTU. They were outfitted and made operational within four days.

To meet the tight timelines each MTU was effectively built on a rolling production line which saw each platform leave Grantham complete with CES every 6 minutes.

It was a combined effort across Defence as some troops were flown into Grantham by helicopter from Edinburgh for the training to allow them to quickly deploy across the UK ready to begin testing the next day.



**Designed, delivered and assured in a short time with limited initial resources it was a tremendous achievement by the staff of Headquarters 102 Logistic Brigade.**



# MOBILE TESTING UNIT EXPERIENCES

**Cpl Ollie Ball of 16 Signal Regiment was deployed as 2IC for MTU 64 (Mobile Testing Unit) and outlines his personal experiences**

We were based in Coventry and accommodated at 30SR Camp Nuneaton. The experience was all very new to us and the first few days were hard work trying to accommodate over 250+ tests in one day with just a 12 man team.



After a few days of the testing we seemed to have found a very smooth system that got the cars in and out within 10-15 minutes. Our MTU hit a record of 339 tests in one day! Safety of the MTU was always the highest priority when dealing with the patients, and we treated every single person as having the virus – not just symptoms. Two metre distance was always kept and windows were only open for a small period to post through test kits, minimising any risk of infection.

The basic layout of an MTU was simple and effective, starting with someone at the entrance of the testing site, which was usually a big open car park and they greeted the people coming for testing, showing them the one-way route and informing them of the guidelines they will have to follow whilst on the test site.

Windows were to be closed at all times unless instructed to open to deposit the test kits or receive the completed tests.

The next station was the booking in stand. All conversations were conducted over mobile phone to minimise the amount of time that the windows were down. Each person there for testing was booked in online and received a confirmation email with time, location and a QR scannable code.



This code was relevant to each person and it connected the person's contact details to the test that they would conduct on the day. The online system worked well with very little problems. We would simply scan the QR code of the person and the barcode of the test, and it would all link together.

They would be handed their tests through the window and shown to an area to conduct the tests in their car. We were only there to assist with any problems conducting the tests. The instructions given in the test pack were not very clear so instead we decided to talk them through the tests step by step. This proved very successful and the whole process was considerably sped up as a consequence.

Finally after self administering the test they would drive to the drop off point and simply show the two codes to be scanned and drop their test off. They would then receive a text with the results within 24 hours. PPE was very limited as it was in very high demand. A full set of PPE was worn at all times for a maximum of three hours. After that a full decontamination of the person was needed, following NHS 'Donning and Doffing of PPE' guidelines. At the end of each testing day all equipment used on the test site was sprayed down with bleach to remove any traces of the virus.

**Overall the experience was enjoyable and we felt we had done our bit to help the current situation. A very positive attitude towards the MOD was shown by the majority of people tested.**

# 7 SCOTS, NORMANDY PLATOON – OP RESCRIPT

**33 volunteers from Army Reserve Infantry Battalion, 7 Scots, were mobilised on COVID-19 Operations (Op Rescript) on 14 Apr 2020 for six months.**

Tasks were to include support to the NHS and other governmental organisations. Volunteers were derived from A, D and HQ Companies. In the early stages of the deployment we were to stay homebound as per government guidelines and await taskings accordingly, so we took advantage of this gap by using Zoom and other platforms to improve soldier's IT skills as well as personal and career development.



Most of the online calls were teaching and using Powerpoint presentations in various aspect of military training, education and interest periods. Soldiers would be given or choose subjects of their own, either in teams or individuals. They would research, prep and then deliver the presentation in front of the platoon via Zoom – sometimes in the presence of Company Commanders or the Commanding Officer.

Sgt Bradford and a team of four were whisked off to Grantham at short notice in order to train as Mission Specific Trainers. They were to deliver Mobile Testing Unit (MTU) training to units in Scotland. The training task was to take them the length and breadth of the country in the initial stages, and as I write this, they again are on route this time to RAF Kinloss to train troops from 39 Eng and 3 Scots.

The platoon was attached to 5 Scots Balaklava Company and were split into two multiples of 12, myself in charge of one and Sgt McNiven (A Company) in charge of the other. Initially working to Scots DG BG then to 5 Scots and AO to the west of Scotland. Sgt McNiven was the first to deploy, the multiple was sent to Greenock for tasking on MTUs, the test was a welcome break from the monotony of Zoom calls and lessons and was met with the excitement that we were eventually carrying out tasks we were trained for.

My multiple was to take over from Sgt McNiven, also for a week's duration in Greenock. The task was to encompass other locations and care homes, so a flexible approach was required for short notice changes, something that most of the troops were used to in their civilian trades.

The teams have adapted extraordinarily well to the tasks, bringing with them a variety of skills from civilian life and work – we have everything from company directors to tradepersons. The skill sets they bring with them have been invaluable to the task, as well as dealing with the public in what is a highly publicised and sometimes extremely sensitive role – their public awareness and customer service has been second to none.

As I write this, the platoon has had to adapt to what has become a more flexible and logistically challenging role due to the geographical spread of MTU's and location of personnel within 7 Scots, however we have risen to this challenge and take it on with great gusto...

Contributed by WO2 Maestri, 7 Scots



# AFPA SUPPORT TO JOINT MILITARY COMMAND (WALES) – OP RESCRIPT

“The definition of intelligence is the ability to adapt to change...”

## How did Army Force Protection Advisors (AFPAs) in Wales rise to the challenge and how can we maximise the opportunities?

At the start of Op RESCRIPT, Joint Military Command (Wales) was formed to assist the overall UK effort to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic in Wales. The devolved Nation was geographically divided into three COVID Support Forces (CSFs), and fortuitously, each CSF found itself with an embedded AFPA:

- CSF(N) – 1 R Irish AFPA, WO2 Carl Cooper
- CSF(SW) – 14 Sig Regt (EW) AFPA, Capt Dave Ford
- CSF(SE) – 1 Rifles AFPA, Capt Andy Rainey MC

Towards the end of March, Capt Karen Thomson (Infantry Battle School AFPA) was allocated by Deputy Chief Safety (Army) to support JMC(W) following a request from DCOS JMC(W) for SME Force Protection input and advice at the planning level. This was to ensure that working practices in a COVID-19 environment were safe to maintain combat effectiveness in the face of a very new and unique threat.

As well as supporting their individual Units, the team of four AFPAs worked together

to provide advice and guidance across the whole of the JMC(W) AoR working closely with the SO2 SHE, Mr. Haydn Adams.

The first task was to create a repository of information for all to access including template risk assessments for Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) tasks. A total of 15 template risk assessments were created based on the Op RESCRIPT Fragmentary Orders (FRAGOs) and expected MACA taskings. These included everything from ambulance driving and decontamination of ambulances in support of the Welsh Ambulance

Service NHS Trust to manning and operating COVID-19 Mobile Testing Units.

In addition to providing template risk assessments, the AFPAs were represented on the JMC(W) J1/J4 brief where we briefed key Force Protection issues twice a week. This ensured good communication of key risks across the Area of Responsibility (AoR) and provided a forum to share best practice.

A Force Protection slide was inserted into the brief which provided the basis for key areas of risk to be identified and therefore

enable better risk management. The Force Protection atmospherics slide covered the key areas of AINC reports, Learning Accounts, RTCs, confirmed cases of COVID-19 and the number of risks raised to 2\* level. AFPAs used the average number of force elements deployed and the number of accidents to provide data with regards to incidence percentage across the CSFs and therefore the whole AoR. This data proved extremely useful going forward. The team were then invited to give input to the Command JMC(W) Risk Sanctioning Board working in unison with the J5 team to ensure that the Command had full awareness of high-risk areas with regards to safety which contributed to the complete risk management picture across the AoR.

Whilst Op RESCRIPT presented unique challenges it also created unique opportunities to identify what was wrong with the old system and how our ‘new normal’ could be exploited to develop lasting change for the future.

Safety professionals have been brought closer together and have presented a united front able to influence working practices with a balanced and sensible approach to risk management in support of UK resilience. AFPAs in Wales have certainly seized the initiative.

Contributed by Capt Karen Thompson, AFPA.

## LESSONS / OPPORTUNITIES

- **AFPA Laydown** – Correct laydown of AFPAs is critical to ensure that full support can be given across an AoR / RPoC. 160X AFPAs had been allocated Units in Jan 20 by DCS(A) and this model was used (and continues to be used) to support the whole AoR.
- **AF5010 utility** – The current AF5010 risk assessment is fit for purpose, well understood and well used. AFPAs were able to produce quality work quickly. The risk assessments were well received, understood and could be easily adapted and updated as a (very fast) moving situation developed.
- **Training is key** – Risk Assessment Training continues to be popular across the AoR. AFPAs and the SO2 SHE have devised a comprehensive HS&EP Training Programme for 20/21 to deliver key HS&EP Training across the 160X AoR including Risk Assessment, COSHH, Manual Handling, First Aid, Shelving & Racking, Building Custodian Courses and IOSH Managing Safely.
- **Access to quality information, templates and advice is crucial** – Creating a library of information and reference documents for all Units to access ensured that work was not being duplicated. It would have been easy for information overload in such a dynamic theatre of operation. AFPAs were able to sift and provide the right advice and guidance in a succinct format.

# FIT TO OPERATE IN A COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT

## Army Environmental Health takes a key role in assuring ‘Return to Workplace’ Assessments

### Background

The Regional Command Environmental Health (EH) Teams, as part of their remit for Med Force Protection and in support of Project PHOENIX, conducted risk assessments of the staged reopening of Phase One Basic Training (BT) establishments. The intent was, if successful, for this assessment and assurance activity to then be used as the blueprint for assessing the wider Army Return to Workplace (RtW) activity.

EH assessments of the establishments’ ability to protect personnel against the spread of COVID was conducted during initial recces of the site prior to the workforce returning. This identified whether training could recommence safely, and what risk mitigations measures would need to be applied. Information was gathered from the Chain of Command (CoC) to develop a thorough understanding of the specific training needs, whilst inspection of the the physical environment and activities facilitated a thorough understanding of the risks and limitations posed.

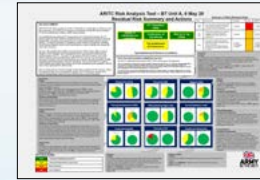
The key Force Health Protection (FHP) question was, *‘Which Covid-19 risk reduction measures are required to ensure the risk of cross-infection during each training/real-life activity remains as low as reasonably practicable?’* Where potential non-conformance to the Project Phoenix Force Health Protection Instruction (FHPI) was identified, risk reduction measures were discussed with the CoC along with consideration as to whether the activity was critical, and should therefore be ‘Tolerated’.

### The Assurance Process

The process for assuring an establishment was divided into four phases as follows:

- 1. Phase 1 – Initial EH Recce/Risk assessment (IDENTIFY & COMMUNICATE).** This was a physical visit by the EH team to assure conformance with the Project Phoenix FHPI.
- 2. Phase 2 – Policy/Guidance shaping (MITIGATE).** Extensive liaison between the EH Team and the CoC assisted with the development of unit level policy. This would commence within 48 hours of the initial EH recce.
- 3. Phase 3 – In Flight Assurance (MEASURE & ASSESS).** Conducted via a remote wargaming activity to confirm appropriate local SOI development relevant to each training establishment; and was followed in some cases by ROC drills. This was within 2-3 weeks of the initial EH recce.

The risk analysis tool



- 4. Phase 4 – Assurance – Post new cohort intakes (CONFIRM & ASSURE).** An assurance visit to assess the effectiveness of infection control measures, was conducted 2 weeks after return to training commenced.

### Measurement of Risk

A bespoke assurance tool – the COVID-19 Assurance Framework (CoAF) was designed to meet the requirement to measure the risk of COVID spread. This was predominantly based on the factors considered during the EH recce, and considered five key domains:

- 1. Maintaining Command and Control.** What FHP risk-reduction measures are required to be adopted across the training estate, including for the management and administration of permanent staff, recruits and contractors?
- 2. Continuance of Training Effect.** The implementation of FHP measures must enable key training objectives to be maintained wherever practicable.
- 3. Maintaining Training Flow.** FHP measures must allow course synchronisation to be maintained wherever practicable.
- 4. Sustaining Training Effect.** FHP measures must also consider infrastructure, equipment, IT and contracted support requirements.
- 5. Maintaining Duty of Care.** Minimising the impact of FHP measures on welfare, legal, medical and presentational output.

Following recce visits to the establishments, the initial domains were further refined, and the CoAF document populated with the findings and recommendations. Whilst the initial data focussed on FHP measures, this was set against data produced by the Army Medical Services Training Centre (AMSTC) who considered two keys questions. These were *‘What consequential risk arises in training delivery standards as a result of applying COVID-19 Force Protection measures?’* And secondly, *‘At what load capacity does the risk become intolerable?’*

### Conclusion

**The EH support and collaborative report with AMSTC has enabled the return to BT. It has proven effective and has enabled Phase One establishments to recommence training in a suitable and timely manner.**

**Due to the fluidity of the COVID-19 risk (Note - the FHPI is being constantly updated as the situation develops), and changes to government policy, the supportive relationship between the Regional EH Teams and BT establishments looks set to continue for the foreseeable future. However, the lessons identified, and measures implemented at these locations has set a standard which continues to be rolled out across wider formations and will enable the Army to remain fit to operate, whilst protecting the health of all members of staff.**



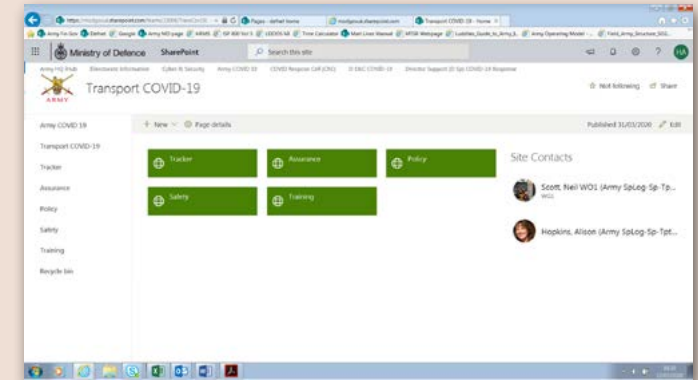
# ROAD TRANSPORT IN THE COVID-19 WORLD

As road transport is used to support most Army activities in some form or another, it has been no different during the current COVID-19 situation.



During this novel time, unless otherwise stated, road transport regulations and policy remain as before, whether it be entitlement (e.g. carriage of non-entitled civilians), driver training, or any other aspect of the control, management and operation of MOD road transport. Where the Government issued legislation/suspensions/direction which related to road transport, including the MOD's Disapplications, Exemptions and Derogations (DEDs) from legislation, the Movement & Transport Safety Regulator (MTSR) team issued Regulatory Notices on its website which were quickly disseminated by the Army HQ Transport Team (a very small team of two – SO2 Tpt and the Command Master Driver (CMD)) through the Master Driver cohort to their formations and units. Regulatory Notices covered topics including 'Clarification of Drivers' Hours' and 'Licence Renewal'.

To assist the Master Driver cohort and road transport community, the Army HQ Transport Team created a COVID-19 page on the 'Log Support Transport' SharePoint site. Within the COVID-19 page, a 'Transport Tracker' was created to allow questions/queries to be shared and for all to see the extant policy/resulting direction which not just cut down on a significant amount of e-mail traffic (no pun intended) but also gave an immediate answer for Master Drivers and the transport community.



The COVID-19 page on the 'Log Support Transport' SharePoint site

The Transport Tracker also gave visibility to both SJC and the Field Army Land Operations Command (LOC) because, as previously mentioned, most COVID-19 activities involved road transport at some point.

During the COVID-19 situation, there were two prime areas which affected transport; initially social distancing in vehicles, then face coverings when travelling in MOD road transport – neither of which were covered by Defence regulations or policy. Both areas sit within the medical arena but immediately impact upon the road transport (and movements) world.

As there are numerous vehicles in the Army which cover a myriad of tasks and scenarios, one direction for all was not going to be fit for purpose. For example, a body of Service Personnel which was living together and would continue to do so for several weeks would have different considerations to several people living in their Service Family Accommodation (SFA), with families, but travelling in the same vehicle.

The Transport Team worked closely with Medical Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to provide pragmatic direction which is detailed on the next page.

Consideration should be given to the following:

- If someone becomes unwell whilst at a transport hub, or on their journey with a new persistent cough or a high temperature, they are to be sent home or isolated in line within Unit Outbreak Control plans.
- Passengers should wash their hands for 20 seconds before and after using the transport and cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and ideally catch coughs and sneezes into a tissue, then discard immediately afterwards.
- Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly with standard cleaning products and before and after each journey.

- Advise passengers that if they feel unwell with Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms including a dry persistent cough and/or high temperature, to inform others in the vehicle, this will also help to protect others from infection.
- Increased spacing through extra vehicles with one person to each double seat WHERE POSSIBLE.
- Take improvised hand wash facilities or hand sanitiser (alcohol gel) with vehicles if any stops are scheduled.
- Good ventilation may also have an impact.

It is ultimately the Commander on the ground's decision but the above is guidance and pragmatism must be applied.

Direction relating to face coverings when travelling in MOD road transport was first issued in Defence Advisory Note (DAN) 19 – Face Coverings and Facial PPE in the Defence Environment, which was amended several times. The Master Driver cohort and Army HQ Transport Team received many queries relating to the use of face masks/personal protective equipment (PPE) and face coverings when travelling in MOD road transport. DAN-19 clearly articulates that while PPE is manufactured to a medical standard, face coverings are not manufactured to a specific standard and could be home-made. The DAN-19 direction is detailed below and at the time of writing, remains correct.

Contributed by Alison Hopkins, SO2 Transport

## FACE COVERINGS AND TRAVEL

In line with Government guidance on the use of face coverings on public transport, Defence personnel should wear face coverings when travelling as a passenger on Military Air Transport aircraft, split-cabs, minibuses or coaches operated by Defence from 15 Jun 20. Face coverings should be worn unless there are strong operational reasons not to do so.



- Face coverings may be removed/not worn for medical reasons and to eat and drink, where necessary.
- Children under the age of 3 should not wear face coverings. Children aged from 4 to 11 can wear face coverings, but they are not required to.
- TLBs should ensure a risk assessment is carried out for all drivers/crews operating defence vehicles. Risk assessments should consider the risk of COVID-19 transmission for Defence personnel in passenger facing roles and ensure suitable mitigation measures are employed where necessary.

- Face coverings are not to be used as an alternative to other COVID-19 risk mitigation methods. Social distancing and effective hand and surface hygiene remain the most effective methods of reducing the transmission of COVID-19.
- Whilst face coverings are available to purchase and make, individuals are reminded that shamags, buffs etc. can be used as face coverings.

Although not directly transport related, the Army HQ Transport team was made aware of units wishing to fit screens in White Fleet vehicles as extra protection; however, this was quickly closed down as the White Fleet contract does not permit modifications and would have

resulted in charges to the Army budget for rectification costs etc.

Throughout the COVID-19 situation, the Army HQ Transport Team has been continuing its 'business as usual' workstreams based on the four transport pillars – training, policy, safety and assurance, as well as providing transport SME advice and knowledge to numerous teams who have taken the opportunity to resurrect projects and workstreams that were in abeyance. All in all, it has been a very fast paced, challenging but highly rewarding time for the Army HQ Transport team and the Master Driver cohort.

# RESERVES BUSINESS CONTINUITY

**8 RIFLES is the most recently formed unit on the Army Reserve Order of Battle and formerly ‘stood up’ for initial operating capability in November 2017.**

The Battalion has a presence across seven separate Army Reserve Centres (ARCs) up to 225 miles apart and is primary/lead unit for five of them.

A continuity planning group was formed (lead by the Bn XO) and before any work could continue, all business outputs were subject to hazard analysis and any elements deemed ‘non-essential’ were ‘eliminated’ in line with the HSE hierarchy of controls. The main priorities identified that required planning against were:

1. Manning the HQ/sub units.
2. Battalion battle rhythm (meetings and conferences).
3. Internal assurance.
4. Delivery of unit training.

Whilst all important, the ability to deliver training across the volunteer reserve (VR) cohort was identified as critical.

A general risk assessment was drafted which served as a template for each Company to then specifically assess to suit local conditions required for working in the COVID-19 environment.

The first task was to remove all non-essential staff from the workplace and (where possible), assign tasks that could be completed in the home environment. To make things safer for those required to physically attend the workplace, ARCs were then subject to movement/track plans, sanitisation points being established and office spaces arranged to maintain social distancing.

All meetings, conferences and planning groups were moved to online MODNET platforms such as Skype for Business/MS Teams or commercial solutions such as Google Meet and Zoom where staff were without portable (MOD) IT. In the main, this was not challenging as the weekly Battalion permanent staff conference is normally conducted across Skype. Less some elements of G1/G8 and security, the majority of internal assurance was suspended. G1 assurance was able to continue (largely using JPA as a remote tool) presenting little in terms of critical G1 risk.

8 RIFLES locations



Online meetings have become the norm



The most difficult part to manage was the continued delivery of training. Considering that VRs join the Army Reserve to ‘train’ then maintaining interest here was assessed as priority work with the real challenge being ‘how does a light role infantry unit train for role across the internet?’ Initially eLearning tasks were set which was fine in the short term in improving statistics although this was never going to be sustainable in the longer term. Licences were purchased for each Company to use Zoom and this was then the main platform for delivery (noting DPA and security restrictions). Initially, Company training nights were delivered to prove the delivery method (keeping activities simple) and as confidence in technology grew, these were grown into Company and then Battalion level training weekends covering a variety of common syllabus and infantry based skills (including virtual PT supervised by unit PT staff), outdoor weapon training sessions and even virtual battlefield studies.

Virtual training has been excellent throughout and has seen an increase in attendance of our VRs. Given the relatively short existence of the unit coupled with the fact that some functional areas remain work in progress, adjusting working routines to deal with a sudden global pandemic was always going to be challenging but 8 RIFLES seems to have endured and survived!

Contributed by Maj R McLauchlan AGC(SPS) - 8 RIFLES



# RESERVIST ENGINEER JOINS THE COVID FIGHT

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic Reservist Major Niall Raeper was mobilised and has been providing advice and support to the Scottish Government Health & Social Care as a Military Liaison Officer.



## PROFILE

**Major Niall Raeper** is a Project & Programme Manager at Wood Plc, an engineering company based in Aberdeen.

He is also an ex-Army Regular, having spent six years in the Army as a Royal Engineer Officer, mainly dealing with Explosive Ordnance Disposal, including an operational tour in Afghanistan.

He still serves with the Army as a Reservist, working for Aberdeen University Officer Training Corps, helping educate and lead the Officer Cadets, developing some of the Army's future leaders.



Niall's role was to bring his expertise in project and programme management to help the Scottish Government's response to the crisis. In particular, he focused on risk management, supporting the department's Project Management Office as it developed enhanced risk and business mitigation plans to ensure risks did not become issues.

As well as Maj Raeper, each Health Board across Scotland has two Military Liaison Officer (MLOs), many of them Army Reservists, who bring specific knowledge and experience to add capacity to the individual NHS boards, to support them in implementing their response. Further MLOs, from across the Armed Forces, are working directly with NHS Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Service. These can lead to a Military Assistance to the Civil Authority (MACA) Task, where soldiers are deployed to assist in practical ways, such as providing manpower at testing sites, or assisting occupational health staff in testing the fit and function of PPE.

On the subject of experiences during this time Niall went on to say about how the MLOs and their civilian colleagues have learnt from each other:

*"I think it has been a shared learning experience all round, from internally in the team as a mixture of regular and reservists, to our interactions with Scottish Government. The ability of the Scottish Government to turn around policy is unbelievable. They have appreciated our candour and some of the unique skills brought in terms of programme and project management experience, often from the point of view as an outside observer who can offer independent observations. It has really felt like a partnership where we have constantly been sharing and learning from each other."*

## A CHANGE FROM THE DAY JOB

Niall also commented:

*"In my civilian job I work in a corporate HQ where everyone is busy with very little time to spare. This experience has come in particularly handy in supporting Scottish Government Health at the strategic level – best presenting information and ideas as succinctly as possible to aid timely decision making."*

Maj Raeper highlighted his employer's understanding and commitment which was vital over the last few months, even when he was mobilised with three days notice, providing exceptional support throughout his deployment.

He continues to provide support to the fight against COVID-19 and was subsequently deployed to London as a Strategic Military Liaison to the Department of Health and Social Care.



# THE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF COVID-19

The last few months have been very difficult, even unpleasant for most of us. Even if your family and friends have been lucky enough to escape COVID-19, lockdown has prevented many of us from doing what we enjoy. However, lockdown has resulted in several benefits to the environment

## AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN CITIES

Many cities across the world have seen big improvements in air quality. This is due to decreased emissions from vehicles and industry. For example, during lockdown London measured an average of 60% less carbon dioxide. Blue sky was seen for the first time in many years over several large Chinese cities.

## LESS USE OF FOSSIL FUELS

As the need to travel lessened during lockdown, fuel sales decreased. Vehicle fuel sales decreased by 70%



Empty fuel station forecourts were a feature of lockdown

in the UK and civilian aviation activity dropped by 90%! Again, this had a positive effect on air quality.

## WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

With less boat traffic on the water, many harbours and other inland waterways were reporting clearer water with more wildlife. Unfortunately, the stories of dolphins being seen in Venice canals were faked, but water there was running clearer, with increased

Some fish thrived in undisturbed waters



sightings of fish. More locally, Portsmouth Harbour and the Test Estuary in Southampton both reported clearer water and increased fish presence, seals had been regularly spotted in both locations which had been something of a rarity.

## LESSONS?

What can we learn from this and how can we continue these environmental gains as we come out of lockdown and hopefully go beyond the pandemic?

Firstly, do we have to travel to a centralised place of work to do our

The end of unnecessary travel?



jobs? With many people successfully working from home through lockdown the need for all of us to commute must be questioned. It is appreciated that some jobs cannot be done from home and people's personal circumstances could dictate that working from home is not suited to them or that many people just like going to work as it aides their mental wellbeing. However, if there is no great advantage in commuting to work and the worker is agreeable to working from home then why not? After all, nowadays in our crowded country the commute home adds more stress to the day and is often no longer a method of winding down (more likely a method of getting more wound up!).

The need to travel to some meetings should be negated by the increased

effectiveness of tools like Skype, Zoom, VTC and teleconferencing. Travelling many miles just to sit around a table and talk for a couple of hours can create unnecessary emissions and waste time, especially when you can now easily electronically share documents. Perhaps the savings created where we can avoid business travel could be used to select a more environmentally friendly method (which is often more expensive) of travelling when we must travel?

Although, as things return to normal, emissions and fuel use will rise due to the UK and world economy getting back up to speed and people going off on leisure pursuits; it is worth looking back and realising how the environment can improve with some behavioural changes – perhaps a good message to us all.

Contributed by Simon Morriss, SO2 EP.





# COVID'S SHIFTING SANDS IN 225 (SCOTTISH) MEDICAL REGIMENT

## A Quartermaster's (USA) observations from the early days of the Pandemic

### Your Business Continuity Plan – Isolate, Shield, Protect or Mass Dispersal? It's... unprecedented!

While these are known tactical terms and definitions above, they don't generally all get employed at once. Where's deny, destroy or defend to name a few? Were we to just run away and hide from this invisible threat? Surely not – we've got audits to prepare for! A question (well, maybe not the audit bit) that the world, and not just the British Army was asking on or around 23 Mar 2020.

HQ Field Army had signalled a requirement for units to review their business continuity plans and infectious disease control plans, in particular, in late February. We were relatively confident this was fit for purpose, having only recently conducted a self assessment audit. Indeed, I was right, apart from having to insert some COVID-19 specific 'actions on', it was good to go. After all, it majored on the control of airborne viral infections such as Norovirus or Pandemic Influenza. We didn't know then what we know now. It certainly didn't factor a mass dispersal at formation level. Nor did it factor ever evolving SAGE-driven Government advice, at a national and devolved level.

So, to the kitchen table?

Well, for some that may have been true (where the IT was available). For an Army Reserve unit it was never going to be that easy. We simply didn't have sufficient IT to enable all of those eventually dispersed to working from home. Firstly, we had to justify who could be classed as a key worker, then having understood the aim and how to maintain it, we couldn't all disperse anyway. Additional IT did come later, but then so did a remote audit and the evidence isn't all electronic.

With 63 NHS facing Army Reservists, 43 Reserve Combat Medical Technicians at readiness and 8 deployed in support of Op RESCRIPT, there was still a business as usual output expected.

Concurrent to preparing service personnel for deployment or readiness states in support of Op RESCRIPT, we had to prepare medical assets, ambulances and medical modules.

This is where our 'just in time' (Amazonized) supply chain was tested. We needed sanitising products and a very small amount of PPE for handover/takeover of vehicles (for example). CHEMGENE was identified early on as the preferred product for such activity. Supply times were 6-8 weeks via known contract and purchasing routes and they arrived in 10. We knew, but it's now more apparent that contract and purchasing routes are the same for most Government departments, and the NHS (of course) was the priority.

So, except for those necessarily shielding, the majority of permanent staff had to continue to attend the workplace – testing and adjusting Force Protection measures as advice evolved. In the early weeks and as the mortality rate increased, that was worrying for some – as it was all, well, unprecedented.

### So what?

Yes, there were many constraints, but an expected output was delivered. Yes, there were and still are lessons to be learned, but I won't list them here. I'm sure that if you share an interest in health, safety and efficiency you'll get them from between the lines.

At the time of writing this I have had notice that the additional laptops are to be returned soon. There can't be the possibility of a second wave... can there?

Contributed by Maj Stewart G Bridgehouse, QM 225 Med Regt.



# 5 RIFLES PREPARE FOR OP CABRIT 7

**Different perspectives on training for 5 Rifles' Op CABRIT, undertaken in a COVID-19 context.**

## BGHQ PERSPECTIVE

After the 5 Rifles Battle Group BATUS exercise was cancelled we were forced to quickly redesign the force preparation pathway for Op CABRIT 7. As well as working out how we achieved the training objectives required for Op CABRIT we also put a considerable amount of analysis into how we trained in a COVID-19 context – reconciling the need for realistic training with the threat to the force from the coronavirus. This generated the control measures for our Gunnery Camp in Castlemartin. These included operating and living in households (crews and sections) and cohorts (platoons), rigorous adherence to hand-washing and disinfecting regimes and the need to dynamically risk assess to mitigate the risk of transmission.



From a command perspective there were a couple of key principles the CO came up with to guide our thinking. The first was to ensure we didn't over-complicate our training. The unifying purpose was to train the BG for operations – making it too complex would detract from the quality of the training. The second was fostering mutual trust between the command team and the troops. This was achieved through explaining the reasons why the control measures were implemented, the right level of supervision by commanders and by the troops demonstrating, through their excellent battlefield discipline, that they understood and could operate within those constraints.

The BG's confidence grew as the Gunnery Camp progressed and we exceeded the operational start state for mounted gunnery by achieving Annual Platoon and Troop Assessments. It shows that despite COVID-19 constraints, quality training is still eminently achievable.

Contributed by Maj Stone, 2IC, 5 RIFLES.

## QM'S PERSPECTIVE

As I was about to deploy on CSTTX as the BGLO in late March, the exercise was cancelled. We were soon to find out all exercises including BATUS were off. As lockdown was enforced the QM's department had to continue operating (albeit with a smaller team) to ensure resources were available as the BG embarked on a new training pathway for readiness and Op CABRIT 7.



This was no easy task with the competing demands across defence for PPE (including from Op RESCRIPT) and with lockdown having an impact across the Defence logistic set-up and civilian suppliers.

The BG returned to work after Easter leave to prepare vehicles for Castlemartin Range and to conduct Collective Training in camp. With COVID-19 risk assessments written for every activity we conducted and the requirement for PPE getting ever higher, we had to find other ways to ensure our Riflemen had the PPE, which included locally purchasing anti-bacterial wipes and spray from local supermarkets when they had them in stock.

Castlemartin presented some G4 challenges. With lockdown still in place in Wales no walking out was permitted and many of the contractor operated services on camp were affected. The normal day to day activities were a little more difficult such as the transport, cookhouse, armouries and laundry. We found a way with great support from the DIO team at Castlemartin and Field Training Unit during our Field Training Exercise (FTX) on Salisbury Plain – all within social distancing guidelines.

Contributed by Maj White, QM, 5 RIFLES.

## D COMPANY PERSPECTIVE

D Company 5 RIFLES have been busy during the Covid-19 lockdown period, spending three weeks on a live fire camp at Castlemartin followed by a week-long light role FTX on Salisbury Plain and then immediately after, transitioning to a week honing armoured infantry manoeuvre skills in the Combined Arms Tactical Trainer (CATT) facility at Warminster.

Social distancing was enforced throughout as per government guidelines, as well as specific control measures imposed by the Battalion. Hand wash stations were provided at mealtimes and training serials and transport plans were elongated to allow social distancing on vehicles. Riflemen were also banded into households and cohorts to aid tracking and tracing should anyone develop symptoms. Households were four strong and either reflected Warrior crews or dismount fire teams. Each household shared the same room and spent most of their time together, which while a restriction, also served to enhance team cohesion. Cohorts were simply platoon groupings and had little to no impact on conducting training. Inevitably there were times when social distancing had to be broken between households in order to facilitate worthwhile training, such as during live platoon attacks.



However, whenever this occurred the incident was simply logged so that should anyone become symptomatic, identifying those at risk could be promptly identified and isolated.

Overall, training had to become slightly slower and more deliberate, however from a Rifleman perspective little changed.

Contributed by Maj Murray, OC, D Coy.

## AFPA'S PERSPECTIVE

The Coronavirus Pandemic hit like a wave. As Army Force Protection Advisor I was quickly isolated from the Units I support. Now working from home, I read the plethora of information on how we were to deal with the challenge of operating in a COVID-19 world.

It struck me that there are two key requirements: firstly, risk assessment training was necessary to give commanders the ability to manage the risk; secondly, the Riflemen needed clear direction on how to combat the virus (in the form of a SOP).

Using MOD Zoom, I trained Riflemen on how to risk assess, which allowed the chain of command to follow the AF5010 five steps, giving them the confidence to lean into risk.

Prior to Castlemartin Ranges I linked in with Colonel Hadfield's team to assist with the development of a risk assessment. From that I was able to collaborate with the experts in 3XX and 20X to produce a comprehensive risk assessment and TAM-style SOP insert that gives guidance on how to reduce risk to ALARP and tolerable.

The ability to risk assess thoroughly and dynamically, combined with strong SOPs mean that 5 RIFLES can operate in Estonia as a high readiness BG on NATO's Northern Flank.

Contributed by WO2 Pepper, AFPA, 5 RIFLES.

## BRIGADE PERSPECTIVE

20 Armoured Infantry Brigade (20X) have been tasked to deploy five Battle Groups (BGs) on overseas operations in 2020 and 21 along with UK based readiness and commitments. When the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the globe, 20X had just deployed two BGs overseas and were conducting the early stages of force preparation training for the 5 Rifles BG to deploy on Op CABRIT 7 (Sep 20) as the UK's enhance Forward Presence BG based in Estonia.

With the key force preparation collective training event in BATUS cancelled due to the pandemic, the 5 Rifles BG and 20X had to cut through the friction of COVID-19 impact and deliver adjusted and innovative training. Making virtue out of necessity, a new training progression was identified and tested on behalf of the Division. The objectives of the training were to execute non-discretionary training in the UK (live firing, field training and simulated training), mitigating the risk of COVID-19 and protecting the morale component. There was a tricky set of risks to manage – the key risks were identified as the risk against the mission of deploying a trained BG on operations, the risk to the force posed from COVID-19 and the reputational risk from the Unit to Defence levels. The 5 RIFLES force preparation has been successfully and impressively executed due to the command-led and collaborative approach of all stakeholders. Initiatives such as deploying a 1\* assurance node, detailed rehearsals, and focussed use of soldiers' time assisted greatly in balancing the risks and achieving the mission of a force prepared 5 Rifles BG ready to deploy on operations.

Contributed by Maj Matt Ellison, HQ Armoured Infantry 20 Brigade.

# **THORNEY ISLAND STATION COVID-19 RESPONSE**

**With a real estate covering 6.4km<sup>2</sup>, more than 30 businesses, clubs and charities utilise this former RAF Coastal Command station to ride, cycle, sail, fly and drive seven days a week.**

Following the Government's decision to relax lockdown procedures and even before the return to work authorisation process was received for service personnel in Baker Barracks, numerous requests were received from organisations to re-commence their activities.

This enabled the small, but extremely proactive Station Management Team (SMT), comprising of the SSO, SO2 J4, Facility Service Manager and Station AFPA, to formulate a plan whilst still protecting the force. This was made more challenging as 12 Royal Artillery

Thorney Island, Chichester



Google Earth © 2020 TerraMetrics

were being deployed on COVID Support Force duties in Sussex and 16 Royal Artillery were supporting global operations. In addition, the Station has an obligation to provide 24/7 access to the public right of way which circumnavigates Thorney Island.

By adapting the existing Force health protection documentation and return to work brief to be Thorney Island specific enabled the SMT to produce a business, clubs and charities return to activity process within 48hrs. This process requires each organisation to complete and submit self-assessment documentation through the SSO to the AFPA who will ratify that their processes are COVID-19 compliant.

Prior to the organisation's point of contact receiving a confirmatory on-site brief to finalise all suitable and sufficient procedures are in place, the respective organisation must confirm in writing that all their club members have received and will comply with the short Powerpoint presentation.

Nominal rolls are regularly updated by each organisation to ensure details are current to enable test and trace to be initiated in accordance with the Station business continuity plan, should a case of the virus becomes apparent. Club members can only return to Thorney Island if their name is added to the nominal roll.

At time of writing, 23 organisations have been processed and have successfully adopted our procedures. *Exemplo Ducemus.*

Contributed by WO1 Bennett, AFPA, Baker Barracks

AFPA delivering a Club Brief to Hampshire Constabulary



Bourne 55 Archery Club on the airfield



Solent Pirates Youth Cycling Club using open space



M & C Motorcycle Training Centre conducting training on the main runway



# INTERVIEW WITH THE ARMY'S NEW CHIEF MARITIME OFFICER



**Army Safety & Environment Matters interviewed Bill Dawson, the new Chief Maritime Officer for the Army, about this new post and what it was all about. Bill joined Army HQ in January 2020 on loan from the Defence Maritime Regulator, and after 37 years with the Royal Navy.**

**Q. Good morning Bill – so, Chief Maritime Officer – what’s all that about? We know about Chief Engineers, Chief Medical Officers and so on but haven’t heard about this role?**

A. You probably haven’t heard about it, as it is completely new! The post was established in Army Headquarters in January 2020 following a study conducted in Autumn 2019 by DCap’s team in to the Governance and Assurance of the Army Maritime capability.



The recommendation of the study was to create a post for someone with a deep maritime background, who understood the complexities of maritime legislation, and could represent the interests of the Army maritime community within the higher echelons of Army HQ.

**Q. That sounds like a sensible initiative! So what are the aims of the post?**

A. When we started out, I came up with the aim: **“To give a strong stakeholder voice to the Army maritime community in order to achieve the right capability, properly resourced, robustly trained, expertly maintained and safely operated...”**. I’m not sure it is terribly catchy as a strapline, but after six months I still think it explains what we are trying to do.

**Q. That’s quite a bold statement – what does it exactly mean in terms of safety?**

A. Across the MOD safety broadly falls in to two areas: equipment that is “safe to operate” and people who “operate safely”. For the equipment side I will be working with the HOCs to ensure that the maritime capability is properly defined as a requirement. I then work closely with Navy Command (as lead service for maritime matters) and DE&S to ensure that the right capability for the future is procured, and that the craft we operate now have a valid Safety and Environmental Case, with a Hazard Log which is regularly reviewed and updated by teams of our own expert users from the RLC and RE mariners.

**Q. That makes sense of ‘safe to operate’, how about ‘operate safely’?**

A. One of the things I will be working hard to achieve is standardisation of training. Whilst across the Army the maritime community is relatively small, they are still part of a larger MOD Maritime community with considerable expertise and experience. Over the coming year we will need to establish a full Training Needs Analysis to ensure that we are delivering the

very best training to meet the standards laid down by the international maritime community (IMO – International Maritime Organisation) and recognised by our national regulatory bodies (MCA – Maritime & Coastguard Agency) to give our people recognisable through-life qualifications. Where possible we will align training with our colleagues in the Royal Navy & Royal Marines to improve inter-operability in the Joint environment. There are already some exciting initiatives underway.

**Q. It sounds as if you have your work cut out! What do we need to look out for as your post develops?**

A. Many of you will already have seen some early work, including a survey sent out in July to try and capture data about who is operating boats, where they are based, what boats they have and who is responsible for them. It’s important we have a really clear picture to inform the follow-on work. In September / October you will see the CMO post formalised as ACAI for the maritime capability, and also Army Professional Standards Authority (APSA); these will appear in the relevant ACSOs. I will be starting work on a new publication, ACSO 3218, which will essentially be the maritime Safety & Environmental Management System, and we are working with colleagues in the Royal Marines to see whether we can create a common set of maritime operating instructions which will allow us to operate more effectively together in the future. Once we have those in place, we will be developing the maritime assurance & inspection teams to provide the evidence that we are compliant and safe in everything we do. Its going to be quite a voyage!

**Ed: Thanks Bill – good luck with the role, and we look forward to more articles in the future about safety in the Army maritime community.**

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## FUTURE EVENTS

### ARMY SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE (ASEC)

**Theme: Environment Matters**  
 Thu 18 Mar 21  
 South Tidworth Garrison Theatre

### ARMY SAFETY ROADSHOWS

- Catterick – Thu 15 Jul 21
- Tidworth – Fri 24 Sep 21
- London District – Thu 18 Nov 21

The Army Safety Centre Forecast of Events can be checked on the ASCen SharePoint site.

## MAGAZINE BACK ISSUES

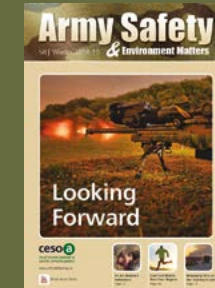
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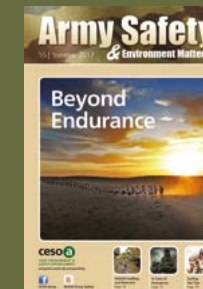
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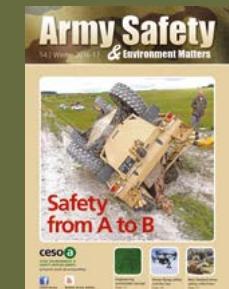
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