

The Organisation of The Armed Forces

◆SIM 7/2002/25

Target Audience:

All FOD Inspectors
HID Inspectors LD2 (Exp)
NSD 3

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SUMMARY

This SIM describes the general organisation of the United Kingdom armed forces, and replaces NIGM 7/B/1998/7, which should be cancelled. It should be read in conjunction with OC 335/1 Inspecting the Ministry of Defence.

ARMY

1 The management of the Army is the responsibility of the Army Board, on which the Chief of the General Staff (CGS) is responsible for the Army's contribution to national defence. Three subsidiary headquarters report to the CGS: Adjutant General, HQ Land Command and the General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland (GOC NI).

2 Many former Army establishments which once belonged to the Quartermaster General (QMG) are now part of the Defence Logistics Organisation (DLO) which provides logistics support for all three Services (see para 33). These establishments include base workshops and defence storage depots. The Army Base Repair Organisation (ABRO) is an executive agency of DLO, responsible for supply, logistics and procurement of equipment for the Army with a workforce of 2500 civilian employees.

Adjutant General's Corps

3 The Adjutant General's Corps (AGC) is a diverse organisation with many specialist roles, including staff and personnel administration, education and training services, Royal Military Police and legal services.

HQ Land Command

4 The role of HQ Land Command is to deliver and sustain the Army's operational capability world-wide. The Command includes all operational troops in Great Britain, along with their fighting equipment, including tanks, attack helicopters and artillery.

5 There are five divisions of troops within Land Command: two operational divisions and three infrastructure divisions. The operational divisions form part of the NATO Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps, but may also be deployed in other defence roles. They are 1st (UK) Armoured Division based in Germany, and the 3rd (UK) Division with its HQ in Bulford, Wiltshire and with four operational brigades located in Aldershot, Tidworth, Colchester and Catterick. These brigades work on the 'aircraft carrier principle'. They are purely operational: when not deployed on operations, ie when in their home UK bases, administrative support is provided by the infrastructure divisions.

6 The infrastructure divisions are based in this country: 2nd Division with HQ in Edinburgh, 4th Division at Aldershot, and 5th Division with its HQ at Shrewsbury. These Divisions are also responsible for the administrative support of their allocated geographical areas, including all health and safety matters.

7 Each division is made up of three or four brigades: a fighting brigade would normally contain infantry, armoured, artillery and engineer regiments, and include field

ambulances, workshops, signals and supply companies. It could contain up to 5000 soldiers.

8 Land Command are responsible for military training and the training areas such as Salisbury Plain. Their Land Accident Investigation Team (LAIT) deals with army training accidents throughout the world. Although Chief Environment and Safety Officer (Army) (CESO(A)) is located within Land Command, his branch is responsible for health and safety advice throughout the Army.

Army recruit training

9 The Army maintains several training regiments which form part of the Army Training and Recruiting Agency (ATRA). Recruits undergo a 12 week course in basic skills at a training regiment before going on to Specialist Training schools and then joining their regiments. The Agency also has responsibility for Career Training, to meet the Army's need for specialists.

10 The Army operates a number of educational sites: the Army Foundation College for 16-year-olds; Welbeck College, a residential 6th Form College aimed at producing Officer recruits; the Army Technical Foundation College, which trains junior recruits to the engineering and technical Arms and Services; the Army Apprentice College; and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

GOC Northern Ireland

11 GOC NI is responsible for all army activities in Northern Ireland. Up to six army units, usually infantry battalions, are temporarily posted in from Land Command for periods of up to six months to assist with anti-terrorist activities. These Units are known as 'Roulement Battalions'.

ROYAL NAVY

12 The head of the Royal Navy is the First Sea Lord, who sits on the Admiralty Board chaired by the Secretary of State for Defence. The management of the Navy is divided between the Commander in Chief Fleet (CINCFLEET) and the Second Sea Lord. CINCFLEET has responsibility for the ships, submarines and aircraft of the Royal Navy, and the Royal Marines. The Second Sea Lord (2SL) is responsible for Navy personnel, including their training and welfare.

13 There are three naval bases: HMNB Portsmouth, Devonport, and Clyde; two naval air stations: RNAS Yeovilton and Culdrose; and four shore training establishments. The training establishments are HMS Sultan (School of Marine and Air Engineering), HMS Collingwood (School of Maritime Warfare), HMS Raleigh (new entry training establishment, plus several technical schools) and the Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth (naval officer training). Apart from the Clyde Naval Base, all these establishments are in the south and south west of England.

14 There are two fleets of vessels which provide essential support to the Navy: the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) and the former Royal Maritime Auxiliary Service (RMAS). The RFA is a civilian manned fleet, owned by the MOD, with the main task of supplying

warships at sea with fuel, stores and ammunition, but it also provides transport for army units and their equipment. RFA vessels may be registered merchant vessels and hence subject to inspection by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA).

15 The Royal Maritime Auxiliary Service (RMAS) provided civilian manned tugs, tenders and barges to assist Royal Navy ships in and around naval bases. However, in 1996 the running of most RMAS vessels was taken over by Serco Denholm Ltd under a Government Owned/Commercially Operated contract. These are registered merchant vessels and subject to merchant shipping law and inspection by the MCA.

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Royal Marines

17 The Royal Marines are the Royal Navy's amphibious infantry. Combat troops serve in three Commando Brigade Royal Marines (3 Cdo Bde RM) with the Brigade Headquarters and its integral Command and Support Group based in Stonehouse Barracks, Plymouth. The Brigade comprises 40 Commando Royal Marines (based in Taunton), 42 Commando (Plymouth) and 45 Commando (Arbroath).

18 Within the Brigade there are also other specialist Combat Support units. These are the Commando Logistics Regiment Royal Marines and 59 Independent Commando Squadron Royal Engineers (based in Barnstaple); 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery and 539 Assault Squadron Royal Marines (based in Plymouth), as well as other smaller support units. The Royal Marines also has reserve units based in London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Bristol and Newcastle.

19 The Commandant General Royal Marines (CGRM), with his headquarters (HQRM) in Portsmouth, is responsible for regimental issues for the Royal Marines, but other issues, including command of operational and training activities are the responsibility of the Commander in Chief Fleet's Headquarters (CINCFLEET) in Portsmouth.

20 Commando basic training for officers, NCOs and other ranks, is mainly carried out at the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) at Lympstone in Devon. Members of other arms and services seeking to serve within the Commando Brigade also have to complete training at CTCRM. Other training establishments are 1 Assault Group Royal Marines (Poole) and Royal Marine bands (based in Portsmouth).

21 The Royal Marines also provides personnel for the Special Boat Service (SBSRM) and the Fleet Protection Group Royal Marines, FPGRM (based in Faslane). SBSRM report directly to the Director Special Forces and the FPGRM operates mainly on the west coast

of Scotland providing, amongst other requirements, protection for the UK's nuclear deterrent.

Warship Support Agency

22 The Warship Support Agency (WSA) comes within the Defence Logistics Organisation (para 33); its role is to provide logistic support to the Fleet and to other in-service maritime elements of the Armed Services. WSA has strategic responsibility for the repair and maintenance of the Navy's vessels. Under new 'partnering contracts', Fleet Support Limited has the contract for fleet maintenance and repair at Portsmouth, Devonport Management Limited (DML) at Devonport, and Babcock Naval Services Limited at HM Naval Base Clyde.

ROYAL AIR FORCE

23 In 2000, the Royal Air Force was reorganised into two commands, under the Chief of the Air Staff: RAF Strike Command (HQ at High Wycombe), and RAF Personnel and Training Command (HQ at RAF Innsworth, Gloucester). Logistic support is now provided by Equipment Support (Air) at Wyton, commanded by the Defence Logistics Organisation (para 33).

24 Strike Command consists of three Groups, which are in turn responsible for strike and offensive support aircraft; air transport, air-to-air refuelling, and airborne early warning aircraft; and Joint Force Harrier plus maritime patrol aircraft and rescue helicopters.

25 Personnel and Training Command covers all aspects of RAF recruiting, training, welfare and conditions of service, and includes the RAF's Chief Environment and Safety Officer's organisation (CESO(RAF)). The RAF Training Group Defence Agency is an integral part of the Command and is administered from RAF Innsworth. The Agency comprises nine RAF stations UK wide, with additional minor units elsewhere. The Command also has control over 14 University Air Squadrons (UASs) and air experience flights for ATC air cadets, co-located at 12 sites, 27 gliding schools and three outdoor activity centres.

26 Under the terms of the HSE/MOD General Agreement, HSE inspectors have access to operational Strike Command bases and may inspect all levels of aircraft servicing. Significant numbers of civilians work under contract alongside service personnel in aircraft maintenance and rebuilding: and, at certain sites, on arming combat aircraft.

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29 All complaints about noise from low flying military aircraft should be referred to MOD Secretariat (Air Staff), Complaints and Enquiries Unit, Room 664, Metropole Building, Northumberland Avenue, London WC2N 5BP, telephone: 020 7218 3617. e-mail: lowflying@gtnet.gov.uk.

SPECIAL FORCES

30 The Special Air Service (SAS) and the Special Boat Service (SBSRM) make up Britain's primary Special Forces. All of the Special Forces' activities and premises are open to inspection under the terms of the HSE/MOD General Agreement (see SIM 7/2001/46). However, inspectors will be aware that they are bound by Government security regulations and should therefore use their discretion when seeking to visit the Special Forces. The HSE/MOD General Agreement, Annex D sets out special arrangements for dealing with particularly sensitive activities.

RESERVE FORCES AND CADETS

31 Each of the Armed Services has its reserve forces: the Territorial Army (TA), the Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF), the Royal Marines Reserve (RMR) and the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR). Personnel serving in the reserves are regarded as being employees of the MOD whenever they are on duty, on exercise or carrying out training. They are also subject to military law. Approaches to reserve forces can be made by inspectors in the normal way and problems pursued via the chain of command. Departments exist within each service at HQ level dealing with the policy and management of reserve forces, eg Director Naval Reserves at Portsmouth.

32 There are also four cadet forces, comprising the Combined Cadet Force based in schools, and the 3 single service cadet forces: the Army Cadet Force, the Sea Cadet Corps and the Air Training Corps. Full information on all of these organisations is given in SIM 7/2000/10.

DEFENCE LOGISTICS ORGANISATION

33 The Defence Logistics Organisation (DLO) was formed in April 2000 following the Strategic Defence Review and brought together the three single service logistics support organisations who were responsible for the supply of everything from food and fuel to ammunition. Reference is made in earlier paragraphs of this SIM to the organisations concerned.

34 There are more than 80 DLO sites throughout the country, and it is the single largest organisation within the MOD, employing around 43 000 people. If inspectors encounter DLO sites registered under their previous client numbers, new incumbents can be created using the following client number 020360039.

MOD AGENCIES

35 In recent years the MOD has restructured large parts of its organisation, and formed many agencies. Some of these are merely 'internal' agencies, some are true Next Steps Agencies, and a few are full trading fund Agencies. In all these cases, separate Client records exist on FOCUS (see OC 335/1 Appendix 2).

36 The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) was formed in 2001 as a result of the partial privatisation of the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency (DERA). Dstl remained an MOD Agency, while the remainder of DERA became QinetiQ, a Government-owned limited company without Crown immunity. Full details are given in SIM 7/2001/33.

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¹ Exemption 2 – Internal discussion and advice

² Exemption 2 – Internal discussion and advice