

From Colonel C J Nicholls



ARMY

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Commandant

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Mr F R Draper
Chairman of Salisbury District Council
The Council House
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Dear Mr Draper

ROYAL SCHOOL OF ARTILLERY – INDEPENDENT ADVISORY PANEL.

I am the Commandant of the Royal School of Artillery based at Larkhill, on the edge of Salisbury Plain and I am writing to invite you to become a member of the School's new Independent Advisory Panel.

You may well be aware of the recent inspections of Defence training establishments by the Adult Learning Inspectorate, the House of Commons Defence Committee and the Ministry of Defence's Directorate of Operational Capability. As a consequence the Adjutant General (the Army's senior personnel officer) has directed that all Army training establishments are to establish Independent Advisory Panels. The Royal School of Artillery at Larkhill is one such training establishment where we take soldiers, who have passed their initial training elsewhere, and train and prepare them for service in Royal Artillery units in the Field Army.

The role of the Royal School of Artillery Independent Advisory Panel is to provide an independent, non-statutory source of advice, challenge, encouragement and support to the School and the Commandant of the school on a range of issues. Further details are in the enclosed Terms of Reference.

In the same way that school governors bring wider experience to schools, I see a similar role for the Independent Advisory Panel. I also see it as an excellent way of sharing best practice and ensuring that Army remains connected with the local Community. My aim is to form the panel after Christmas and hold the first meeting early in the New Year.

We have taken a careful look through our local Community to identify people within it who are leaders and opinion formers, and who might have an interest in the training and welfare of young people at Larkhill. Your current position as Chairman of Salisbury Council and the your roles as outlined in your CV caught my eye and I do hope that you will consider accepting this invitation.

If you do, I am sure you will find it interesting; you will have a unique opportunity to see first hand how the Army trains it soldiers and of course, you will be able to meet both soldiers and instructors. Membership of the Independent Advisory Panel will also provide the opportunity to help the Army take better care of its young soldiers by highlighting areas for possible improvement.

If you would like to discuss this further please feel free to ring me at any time or we could arrange a mutually convenient time to meet.

Yours sincerely

Chris Nichols

Enclosure:

1. Terms of Reference for the Royal School of Artillery Independent Advisory Panel.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ROYAL SCHOOL OF ARTILLERY INDEPENDENT ADVISORY PANEL

1. Introduction. As part of the process of implementing the recommendations of the DHALI¹ reports, the Adjutant General has directed Director General Army Training & Recruiting to establish Independent Advisory Panels (IAPs) across the Army's training establishments. The Royal School of Artillery (RSA) at Larkhill is one such training establishment.
2. Aim. The aim of the RSA IAP is to provide an independent, non-statutory source of Advice, Challenge, Encouragement and Support (ACES) to the School in order to exchange information, provide feedback and assist in identifying possible areas for improvement.
3. Role. The role of the IAP is to:
 - a. To act as a 'sounding board'. It will support and challenge the training establishment by providing advice and encouragement on particular issues (both local and national) raised by the Commandant on an as required basis.
 - b. To act as a source of feedback on local issues.
 - c. To act as a conduit for external communication for the training establishment to demystify the Army's individual training organisation.
4. Limitations. The IAP is a non-statutory body. It will not override the fundamental Army principle of self-regulation vested in the Commandant and the higher chain of command. It will have no responsibility for budgets, objective setting, policy or staff selection.
5. Composition. Membership of the RSA IAP will include opinion formers drawn from the local community, who between them are able to speak with knowledge, credibility and experience on a range of issues that might relate to the operation of the training establishment and the training of young people. The chairperson will be elected by the panel, and will not be a member of the training establishment. The RSA IAP will comprise 5 members, 3 civilian and 2 military² and will be supported by a secretariat. The civilian members, one of whom will be elected to chair the panel³, will have a background commensurate with the role they are being asked to perform. Membership of the IAP for military members will be tied to appointment and thus will normally be for 2 years (3 years maximum). Civilian members will similarly be asked to serve for 2 years.
6. Frequency. The IAP will meet each term (3 times a year) or as the Chairperson and Commandant decide.
7. Output. The IAPs will produce an annual written report to the Director Royal Artillery (the Commandant's Head of Arm), recording key issues raised and action taken.
8. Remuneration. Membership of the IAP will be 'pro bono' however any reasonable expenses submitted by civilian members will be met.

¹ DHALI is the acronym for Directorate of Operational Capability, House of Commons Defence Committee and Adult Learning Inspectorate work regarding the Army's duty of care to soldiers.

² Commandant RSA and a local Commanding Officer representing the recipients of trained soldiers.

³ The tenure of the Chairperson will be for one year.