

Following a Defence Council decision on a Service Complaint, readers of the OP Telemeter Internal Review Report are required to take account of the following statement which is to be attached to the front of all copies of the OP Telemeter Internal Review Report:

The Internal Review which led to this report went beyond the remit of its original Terms of Reference: an Internal Review intended to look at broad culture and ethos.

It was not sufficiently robust to allow conclusions to be drawn as to the appropriateness of individual operational decision making in the chain of command. Specifically, personnel criticised in the report were not able to identify the source of criticism such that they could respond effectively to it, and have their response considered, when judgements about them were made in the drafting of the report.

Therefore, statements containing specific criticism of individuals within the chain of command cannot be relied upon as the investigative process did not have sufficient veracity for such judgements to be made. The overall recommendations made are unaffected by this and may safely be relied upon.

The report should be read with this statement in mind.



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7 Mar 14

TELEMETER – INTERNAL REVIEW

1. You are directed to carry out an Internal Review under my Full Command into issues *ancillary* to the incident in respect of which former Sgt Blackman RM was convicted in Nov 13 of the murder of an unknown Taliban insurgent.

Approach

2. As a first step, you should familiarise yourself with NAVSEC's letter to me discussing the Full Command aspects of TELEMETER¹. The material referred to in that document can be made available on request. You should also read the relevant aspects of CNLS' After Action Advice².
3. In particular, you are directed to consider whether there are lessons which can be learned from this incident which are of value to Corps and to the Naval Service more widely. Your review should follow the framework outlined below:
 - a. an assessment of the extent to which the murder and the publicity surrounding the murder trial has influenced the culture, ethos and training of Royal Marines (what, if anything, has changed?); then
 - b. having established that, a qualitative assessment of the impact (is this change for the better?); then

¹ NAVSEC's 20140226_Telemeter_Letter_FC (Telemeter – Inquiry).
² 20140129R-SM_CNLS_Telemeter_After Action Advice.

- c. an analysis of what further changes, if any, might be necessary to ensure the Operational Effectiveness of the Royal Marines and wider Naval Service as we re-position from Campaigning to Contingency (how can we improve?).

It is anticipated that there will be some scope for improvement in how the Corps delivers its outputs, now and in the future.

Your Deliverables

4. You are to consider:
 - a. whether the mechanisms by which RM personnel (and by extension RN personnel) are selected and equipped for Command - at all levels, including but not limited to SNCO - is adequate to meet the demands of Contingency operations; and
 - b. the adequacy of decompression and post deployment mechanisms intended to manage the traumatising effects of repeated combat deployments.
5. Where remedial actions or improvements are identified, you should make recommendations in terms which make clear:
 - a. why the action is considered necessary and what it is expected to deliver;
 - b. upon whom the action lies, and in particular whether it is a single Service or joint responsibility;
 - c. your assessment, where reasonably practicable, of the likely resources associated with completing that action; and
 - d. your judgement on the timescale within which that action should be completed.

Advice and other Support

6. In the event that the Review exposes shortcomings which, in your judgement, require immediate remedial or ameliorative steps to be taken, they are to be reported immediately to DCGRM in the terms outlined at paragraph 5 above, keeping me informed.
7. In the event that your Review uncovers allegations of serious misconduct or criminal offending by any individual, you are to seek legal advice immediately. Legal advice is to be provided by CNLS legal advisers under the direction of DACOS Legal³ who should be your first point of contact.
8. DACOS Legal will provide you with a legal brief which explains your authority and responsibilities in undertaking this Review on my behalf.
9. Administrative support is to be provided by CO CTCRM Support Wing⁴. Reasonable costs for travel and subsistence are to be authorised and claimed through their UIN.
10. This review is to commence no later than 15 Mar 14 and I will be grateful for an interim report of your initial findings within 6 weeks of that date. Unless you advise me that more time is required, your written report should be submitted no later than 30 May 14,

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P A JONES
Vice Admiral
Fleet Commander

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OPERATION TELEMETER

This Internal Review was tasked to examine the events ancillary to the murder of an unknown insurgent in the Nad-e Ali North district of Helmand Province, Afghanistan on 15 Sep 11 by Sgt Blackman, a member of J Company, 42 Commando (J Coy, 42 Cdo) during Herrick 14 (H14). The following are the salient findings:

- An aggressive approach has and always will be required in conflict. However, in Counter Insurgency (COIN) and the circumstances we are likely to face in future, we will need to operate within tight legal and moral constraints and in an environment where all our actions may be subject to public scrutiny.
- Encouraging aggression is relatively easy, as it reinforces the lessons instilled in basic training. Engendering restraint, especially when an enemy is seeking to provoke a kinetic response, is far more difficult. It was evident in this case that situational demands had undermined clear Standard Operating Procedures. Training alone cannot mitigate against this; strong leadership and regular oversight is required. Therefore significant effort must be expended on preparing for such situational demands, enabling an understanding of the need for restraint, and in creating an appropriate command culture.
- The Nad-e Ali North area of Helmand, where 42 Cdo were operating, and the Nad-e Ali South area, where 45 Cdo were operating, posed different challenges but there is significant evidence that 42 Cdo's culture was perceived by many outside 42 Cdo to be overly aggressive.
- Concerns over 42 Cdo's approach were identified to and by the Brigade Commander. Representations were also made to the Brigade Commander about 42 Cdo's culture during the deployment by the Commanding Officer (CO) of 45 Cdo. However, the Brigade Commander judged that 42 Cdo's approach was appropriate given the circumstances. Therefore he did not formally reproach CO 42 over his unit's culture.
- The Officer Commanding (OC) J Coy 42 Cdo took over the sub-unit at short notice when the previous OC was injured. He had not therefore been prepared for the role and faced a considerable challenge in taking up this command in a demanding Area of Operations (AO).
- The face to face supervision by OC J Coy of Check Point (CP) OMAR, where Sgt Blackman's Multiple was based, was insufficient to identify a number of warning signs that could have indicated that they were showing evidence of moral regression, psychological strain and fatigue.
- Sgt Blackman allowed professional standards to slip to an unacceptably low level at CP OMAR. His poor leadership was a significant contributory factor in the way the insurgent was treated by other members of the patrol.
- Sgt Blackman's rank was a significant contributory factor in preventing others within the patrol from questioning his orders or challenging his actions. Group

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conformity and the patrol's positive past experiences of Sgt Blackman may also have contributed.

- Moral disengagement on the part of Sgt Blackman and the members of his Multiple was a significant contributory factor in the handling and shooting of the insurgent.
- The difficulty experienced by Sgt Blackman in changing from a mind-set which required him to kill an enemy to one which accepted having to administer first aid to an enemy in order to try to save his life, was a contributory factor in his treatment of the insurgent.
- A number of those involved in this incident both directly and indirectly, felt that the Chain of Command had failed to provide them with adequate support before, during and after the court martial.
- Within Task Force Helmand other units adopted a different approach. Most notably, 45 Cdo conducted a highly sophisticated COIN campaign that emphasised the need for restraint.
- The H14 deployment provides a number of important lessons on creating an appropriate command culture in a complex environment; both the pitfalls and examples of best practice. These should be used to inform future commanders and those they lead in order to reduce the likelihood of a repetition of the sort of behaviour exhibited by Sgt Blackman and his Multiple.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ser	Recommendation	Why necessary?	Progress on Recommendation
1.	Use this incident as a case study.	<p>The Future Operating Environment is likely to pose significant leadership challenges. The need to understand an environment, detect changes and react to them by adapting one's approach are likely to be skills required of all commanders.</p> <p>In particular, the difficulty of engineering appropriate restraint needs to be acknowledged and 45 Cdo's approach to this should be studied in detail.</p> <p>Current training appears to be lacking in terms of understanding how situational demands can undermine rules and regulations, particularly in situations where 'the battle lines are not straight'. Training alone cannot mitigate these risks, strong leadership and regular oversight is required.</p> <p>RM Training needs to emphasise the positive leadership lessons evident in this incident as well as highlighting the easily made mistakes. Specifically, it needs to make clear that loyalty to an 'opponent' is best expressed by challenging him before he makes a mistake rather than trying to cover-up for him afterwards. Moreover, that encouraging someone to own up quickly to their mistakes is better than allowing them to hide them.</p> <p>Good leadership, effective oversight and firm supervision are enduring requirements of every leader. This incident provides good illustrations,</p>	With CGRM

2.	SMEs should assure themselves that the issues identified in the HFACS report are adequately addressed.	both positive and negative. The HFACS report identified a number of issues that may already have been addressed or which may not still be applicable. However, it would be appropriate for relevant SMEs to conduct assurance to confirm that there are no outstanding actions that are not being taken forward.	With CGRM
3.	Consider creating Role Specifications for key command appointments against which individuals can be assessed.	A system that requires Reporting Officers to provide specific comments on an individual's suitability for command, including both positive and negative aspects, against a formal Role Specification should enable better appointing. This could also be used to ensure command teams are properly balanced. Psychometric tools may also have a role to play here.	With CGRM
4.	Include a period on 'Ethics in Command' on the RM Commanding Officers' Designate course and the RSMs' course.	The Army already include this in their COs' Designate Course. The Army's Military Judgement Panel on Ethics assessed that, while Values and Standards in combination with Law of Armed Conflict are essential, they are not sufficient in equipping officers and soldiers to deal with 'real world' ethical problems in complex operating environments. There are also plans to promote the need to 'foster and sustain an appropriate ethical climate within a unit of command' for junior Army officers in their first appointment.	With CGRM
5.	Consider making TRiM procedures more formalised, such that they are a mandated part of post-patrol action.	If TRiM is voluntary there is a danger that under certain circumstances some individuals who would benefit from the process may opt out. There is clearly a balance to be struck, otherwise it will lose its value from being too dogmatic, however, it is a route worth considering.	With CGRM
6.	Develop a policy for the way those implicated or involved in criminal investigations, both directly and more	CO 42 Cdo and CO 45 Cdo stated they felt that, despite personal assurances from their Chain of Command, they were not kept suitably informed during the RMP investigation, Court Martial and afterwards. Similarly, OC J Coy and some of the marines involved felt that once	With CGRM

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	<p>broadly, are supported.</p>	<p>they had been acquitted they were simply expected to 'get on with it'. This, despite the fact that they had been involved in a murder trial that had led to the conviction of one of their former colleagues.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>In appointing individuals into command teams it is important to try to ensure that commanders have someone who they respect but who is an independent voice and who is willing to challenge them.</p>	<p>The makeup of individuals within a command team will clearly have a significant impact on its effectiveness and approach. It is important to select those whose characters complement the commander. In particular, it is important to have variety of outlook and at least one individual with the necessary prestige and confidence to challenge the commander, when appropriate. See Serial 3.</p>	<p>With CGRM</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Service Values and Standards need to be used as a vehicle for debate.</p>	<p>Values and Standards (V&S) define our ethical approach and underpin our legitimacy. However, as this case illustrates, the contemporary and future operating environments are likely to pose highly complex problems. In order to allow our people to deal effectively with such challenges they will need to have a deep understanding of V&S such that they can apply their principles when under great stress on operations. This can only be achieved by debate not didactic instruction.</p>	<p>With CGRM</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Expand Military Education (Interim Recommendation).</p>	<p>While military training can prepare individuals for likely scenarios, education helps to develop skills and insights that can be applied in complex situations that present unexpected challenges or which are simply beyond the scope of training.</p>	<p>The Updated Commando Ethos is widely advertised at CTCRM and incorporated into all Command and Specialist training courses and practised through judgmental training in the Dismounted Close</p>

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<p>Combat Trainer using synthetics and on exercise alongside MATT 6 and MATT 7 scenarios. Forthcoming Officer Career Development and Command Leadership and Management Customer Executive Boards will consider delivery of broader doctrinal, training and education aspects. ONGOING to report in Apr 15.</p>		
<p>RM V&S was produced in 2011 and undergoing refresh with new vignettes and scoping feasibility of Smartphone App format. TELEMETER incident also reads across to MATT/CMS 7 (Operational Law) under CNLS lead for review. ONGOING</p>	<p>An updated version of MATT 6 RM is key to enabling meaningful discussions of V&S. See Serial 8.</p>	
<p>Building on the foundations set out in JDP 0-10 (British</p>	<p>There are currently V&S published for the Army, RAF, RM. The Civil Service have 'The Civil Service Code'. It would be beneficial for the RN to produce its own version of V&S to enable the sort of debate as set</p>	<p>10. Update the Royal Marines version of MATT 6 (Interim Recommendation).</p> <p>11. Produce RN Values and Standards Guidance (Interim Recommendation).</p>

		out in Serial 8.	Maritime Doctrine), the Naval Personnel Management Manual (BR3 Chapter 21) sets out in detail the Ethos, Values and Standards expected of individuals within the Service. The contents are extensively briefed from Phase 1 training and in subsequent career courses, particularly leadership courses as part of the Core Maritime Skills programme. COMPLETE.
12.	Introduce Voluntary 360 Reporting as part of the OJAR and SJAR process.	The use of 360 reporting as a self-development tool would help leaders become more self-aware. Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback has been used by the US Army for many years.	With CGRM
13.	Continue to Emphasise the Commando Mindset, Values and Spirit (Interim Recommendation).	The approach set out in 'The Commando Mindset' is perfectly in tune with the demands of the future operating environment and so provides a useful point of reference.	All Regular and the majority of Reserve RM Personnel have been issued with a hard wearing 'Commando Mindset, Values and Spirit' card suitable for each person to hold and carry. All new joiners and recruits receive the

<p>card and its issue and discussion is now business as usual for 3 Cdo Bde RM, 1 AGRM and CTCRM. With CGRM</p>		
<p>14. Efforts should be taken to make whistleblowing easier, particularly for those in remote bases.</p>	<p>If individuals have the moral courage to report serious failings or illegal acts then they should be provided with the means of doing so. Otherwise it will not be possible to take action to pre-empt or rapidly address incidents such as this or the Baha Mousa case investigated by Sir William Gage.</p> <p>There are over 20 MOD helplines listed on the .Gov website (including ones dedicated to Porton Down Volunteers and Gulf Veterans). In addition, SSAFA's Forcesline (https://www.ssafa.org.uk/how-we-help/forcesline/) offers support via Freepost, Freephone (including Paradigm) and email from anywhere in the world. However, Forcesline's remit does not extend to Whistleblowing issues such as security breaches, Health and Safety concerns or ethical issues. Someone raising such an issue to Forcesline would be encouraged to report their concerns through their Chain of Command (Telcon Huntley/SSAFA [REDACTED] of 21 Jan 15). Similarly, SpeakOut is a 'signposting' helpline for issues related to bullying harassment and discrimination (Telcon of 21 Jan 15).</p>	<p>With CGRM</p>
<p>15. In tandem with a clear policy on the use of Digital Recording Devices, promote an understanding that the unauthorised filming and sharing of provocative footage represents a serious risk to</p>	<p>Policies on the use of personal digital recording devices were widely promulgated; however the policies appear to have been ignored by many. It is important to emphasise the significant damage that can be caused if footage from such devices is taken out of context and used by others. Moreover, on operations where perception is everything, a proliferation of 'private' video clips available on line will make it more feasible for an opponent to create a spoof video and have it believed.</p>	<p>With CGRM</p>

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	UK Armed Forces and UK security.		
16.	Pilot the use of issued Personal Cameras.	There may be merit in issuing individuals with personal cameras, especially when there is likelihood that UK Forces may face malicious claims concerning their actions. The practicalities of this should be investigated and, if appropriate, a pilot conducted.	With CGRM
17.	Produce 'official' operational videos.	There is a clear desire among many individuals to retain a video record of their operational tours. The issuing of official videos should be considered in order to discourage the use of prohibited cameras. This would hopefully mean that any other videos that were published could be discounted as malicious frauds.	With CGRM

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