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of Defence

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13 June 2016

Dear [REDACTED]

Release of Information

Thank you for your correspondence dated 23 May 2016 requesting the following information:

*'Could you please provide me with some information regarding the RM Senior Command Course (SCC).*

*1. Is there a "modified" version of the SCC for personnel who are medically downgraded MLD or MND?*

*if so,*

*2. Is this a specific course iteration made up entirely of medically downgraded personnel or do downgraded personnel attend a routine course, the content of which is tailored to accommodate their individual limitations?*

*3. Are the entry and output standards and tests the same for medically downgraded personnel as for fully fit personnel. For example, will a downgraded candidate still have to pass the 4 mile speed march entry test?*

*4. If medically downgraded personnel are allowed on SCC, how many downgraded personnel attended SCC from 1 April 2011 - 31 March 2016. Of these, how many were successful?'*

Your enquiry has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I can confirm that the Department holds the information you have requested. In response to the first three questions I have included with this letter a copy of the Royal Navy Temporary Memorandum 080/11 'Royal Marines Modified Command Course Training' which provides

the answers to those questions. You will see that the contact details for individuals have been redacted (withheld) under section 40(2) of the FOI Act (personal data).

Section 40(2) applies to personal data relating to third parties. The release of personal information relating to other individuals would contravene the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998, namely Principle 1 – personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully and not unless certain specified conditions are met, and Principle 2 – personal data shall be obtained and processed only for specified and lawful purposes and not further processed in a manner incompatible with the purposes. In this instance, data has been provided for internal purposes and with the expectation that it would not subsequently be made public.

With regard to question 4 there are 10 individuals with a medical restriction 418 (MOD Command Course) who have attended and passed the SCC within the time period requested and who are still serving. To provide the number of individuals who have since left the service, failed the course or were withdrawn (voluntarily, medically, compassionate etc), would involve a search of the personal records of all ranks who have attended the course during this period of time, an exercise it is estimated would exceed the £600.00 cost limit and the department is therefore not obliged to go any further to answer the request.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Zone N, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely

Navy Command Secretariat – FOI Section

Sponsor: [REDACTED]

### Introduction

1. The Naval Service Medical Board of Survey (NSMBOS) and Unit Medical Officers seek to place both fully fit and unfit personnel into appropriate medical categories. The Board considers both new and review cases with the aim of declaring ranks fully fit (MFD – Medically Fully Deployable) or placing them in a medical category which seeks to safeguard them from the full rigors of Royal Marines' service life either temporarily or permanently.

2. An important part of the NSMBOS process, which relates solely to RM ranks, is an individual's general suitability to attend RM command course (CC) training, which is physically and mentally demanding. However there remains the opportunity for medically downgraded men to attend modified command courses in order to allow career progression and assist RM manning. Consideration should therefore be given to a man's sustainability if attending the course medically downgraded.

### Aim

3. The aim of this RNTM is to detail precisely what individuals are required to physically achieve on the regular and modified Junior Command Course (JCC), Senior Command Course (SCC), and Advanced Command Course (ACC), in order that NSMBOS members and Unit MOs can make a considered decision on a rank's suitability to attend the appropriate CC training.

### Physical requirements to attend RM CC training

4. CC training is not specifically designed to be a test of physical ability. However, the training and assessments place practical leadership tasks in a simulated operational environment. Consequently, both JCC and SCC, and to a lesser extent the ACC, contain serials that are both mentally challenging and physically demanding. Furthermore, busy course programmes afford very little time for recovery. Ranks nominated for CC training must be physically and mentally robust; they must not be allowed to commence training with an injury or illness that is likely to preclude them from successfully completing set criteria of the course.

5. During various phases of the CC training, individuals will be expected to load carry different equipment orders. The following is a guide for those not familiar with the various configurations:

- a. **CEFO (Combat Equipment Fighting Order).** 20-30lb of equipment with 11lb rifle.
- b. **Patrol Order.** As above, but including day sack, 50-60lb of equipment and 11lb rifle.
- c. **Marching Order.** As above, but including Full Bergen, 75lb of equipment and 11 lb rifle.

In all cases the rifle may be substituted or supplemented with another weapon system (GPMG, LSW, LAW etc).

6. **Fully fit (MFD).** MFD ranks must be able to do the following:

- a. **RM Basic Fitness Test.** 5 over grasp pull-ups, 50 sit-ups, 1.5 mile squaddled road run in 15 min wearing boots followed immediately by a 1.5 mile best effort run to be completed under 11 min 30 sec (this varies according to age). **JCC, SCC and ACC.**
- b. **4 MSM.** Four mile speed-march, carrying CEFO and rifle in 40 mins. **JCC and SCC only.**

c. **Troop attacks.** JCC candidates must be capable of conducting a minimum of 3 days section/troop attacks over rough terrain carrying CEFO and weapon. SCC candidates must be capable of conducting up to 10 days of troop attacks over rough terrain carrying CEFO and weapon. **JCC and SCC only.**

d. **Field exercises.** Two Field Exercises of between 5 and 10 days duration by day and night, in arduous conditions, occasionally carrying Marching Order for up to 13km, often in inclement weather and under conditions of fatigue and stress. **JCC and SCC only.**

e. **NAVEX.** Night navigation exercises, up to 11km across rough ground, at night, with CEFO and rifle at 3km per hour. **JCC and SCC only.**

f. **OBUA.** A week long Operations in Built Up Area (OBUA) Training Exercise, including entering and exiting buildings via window frames and necessitating jumping onto concrete. **JCC only.**

#### 7. **Permanently medically downgraded MLD and MND (Medically Limited/Not Deployable).**

Downgraded individuals who can meet the minimum requirements will be considered on an individual basis depending upon the nature of their injury. Their treatment in principle will be no different from those who are injured during the course. There is the opportunity for permanently medically downgraded men to undertake a modified JCC (Mod JCC) or modified SCC (Mod SCC) in order to allow them to progress. If any rank appearing before the NSMBOS is unable to complete any of the above physical tests as a result of a medical condition then for their own protection they must be medically downgraded, either for a review period or permanently. Additionally, should an individual present themselves at NSMBOS and the Board felt whilst able to complete the criteria tests, completing a course of this nature may exacerbate the individual's known medical conditions, consideration must be given on suitability to attend a modified course. Downgrading does not necessarily preclude the man; he may be able to undertake CC training within the guidelines below. Based on a RM Commando's primary role, a rank attending Mod JCC or Mod SCC must be able to do the following:

a. **Section/Troop attacks.** Section/troop attacks over rough terrain carrying CEFO and rifle. Typically the training area for JCC and SCC is Woodbury Common, Dartmoor, Caerwent and Sennybridge. The terrain, whilst not extreme, can vary considerably from easy going, clearly defined tracks to deeply rutted, steep ground covered in gorse and/or rocks. Therefore a rank carrying out a section or troop attack (day or night) is usually working hard physically and doing so across ground which he may or may not be able to see where he is placing his feet. During the attacks the rank will be required to carry out a wide range of physical activities which may include walking, crawling, throwing grenades and sprinting. **A medically downgraded rank will only be required to lead up to 3 section/troop attacks per exercise.** He will not necessarily be required to act in a support role for all the remaining section/troop attacks where other JCC/SCC ranks are in command, but should expect to participate in some prior to his own assessment in command to maximise his chance of success.

b. **Field exercises.** A 5-10 day field exercise by day and night, in arduous conditions, occasionally carrying for short distances up to 60lbs of additional stores and routinely during the exercise carrying Patrol Order and weapon for up to 13km, often in inclement weather and under conditions of fatigue and stress. The terrain will be almost identical to 7a above. The speed of movement will generally be a great deal slower due to the weight of equipment being carried and the tactical nature of the task. **A medically downgraded rank will not be required to carry his Bergen during any yomping phases.** This will be moved around the training area for him. However, he must be capable of carrying Patrol Order as described above and must be capable of moving his Bergen short distances.

c. **NAVEX.** Night navigation exercises – up to 11km across rough ground, at night, carrying CEFO and rifle at 3km per hour. **Medically downgraded ranks must participate fully.**

8. If any rank appearing before NSMBOS is unable to complete any of the above physical tests as a result of a medical condition then for their own protection they must be declared **UNFIT Mod JCC and Mod SCC.**

9. There are a number of additional points to consider:

a. If a rank is to attend CC training he must be capable of lifting and carrying weight as described in paragraphs 5a through 5c. If a rank cannot carry or lift weight then he must be declared UNFIT Mod JCC or SCC. Medically downgraded ranks are expected to carry CEFO and weapons, negative Bergen as a concession where appropriate. In applying medical criteria to the requirements of CC training a robust stance must be adopted, as inappropriate attendance is both a disadvantage to the course and the individual.

b. It is appreciated that some medical conditions permit lower intensity physical activity than others and for this reason some ranks are deemed physically able to attend Mod JCC and Mod SCC. The requirement for Mod JCC and Mod SCC ranks to be able to complete physical tests in accordance with para 7 is to be the minimum standard and will serve to protect all parties.

### **Relevant medical categories**

10. An individual may be medically downgraded and awarded one of 2 medical categories, which would allow him to remain in service:

a. **MND.** Any rank given the MEDCAT P7P (non-deployable) should automatically be declared **UNFIT Mod JCC/SCC.** In this instance a rank will only be able to attend CC training once he has been re-boarded by NSMBOS and been placed into a higher medical category (MLD or MFD).

b. **MLD.** Ranks given a P3P MEDCAT (deployable with certain restrictions) remain eligible to attend Mod JCC/SCC. The F/Med 23 will be annotated accordingly to reflect this stating what physical limitations are to apply.

c. A rank may be made MLD and made UNFIT Mod JCC/SCC. In this instance and where ranks wish to be reconsidered they can either be reviewed at NSMBOS after a period of time or remain at the rank they hold at the time they are medically downgraded. Service needs and requirements will subsequently determine whether or not it wishes to employ that downgraded rank. The significance of not being declared fit for CC training must be briefed prior to the man expressing his opinion of whether he wishes to be retained or invalided, ie prior to completion of NSMBOS forms.

### **Course reports**

11. Ranks attending Mod JCC or Mod SCC are to have mention of this fact in their end of course reports, eg 'LCpl X has successfully passed the modified JCC'.

### **Guidance notes**

12. Unit Medical Staff, Medical Officers and Coy Comds (DOs) are to complete their respective sections of the Certificate at Appendix 1 to Annex A. This will devolve responsibility for assessing medical suitability to the unit MO, whilst the Coy Comd will be responsible for the non-medical aspects such as motivation, attitude and commitment.

Annex:

A. Guidance notes for Medical Staff, Medical Officers, Company Commanders and Divisional Officers when considering fitness for command training.

## **GUIDANCE NOTES FOR MEDICAL STAFF, MEDICAL OFFICERS, COMPANY COMMANDERS AND DIVISIONAL OFFICERS WHEN CONSIDERING FITNESS FOR COMMAND TRAINING**

### **Introduction**

1. These notes provide guidance for Medical Staff, Medical Officers (MO), Company Commanders (Coy Comd) and/or Divisional Officers (DO) when considering the medical fitness and general suitability of an individual nominated to attend a command training course. The Weapon Handling Tests and Essential ITD Tests sheet signed off by a unit before release to Command Courses is issued by CTCRM as part of the Joining Instructions as is not part of this RNTM.

### **Certificate of Fitness**

2. The Certificate of Fitness for Command Training is at Appendix 1. This is to be completed by the Unit Medical staff (or the Unit MO for Permanently downgraded men) and the man's Coy Comd (or DO) for all nominees and reserves selected to attend command course training once the selection notification signal has been announced by the Naval Career Management (Promotions) (NCM(PROM)). The signed and dated Certificate is then to be returned direct to the NCM(PROM) RM NCO, [REDACTED] in accordance with the timings detailed in the signal. The individual is to hand a copy to the relevant Chief Instructor on arrival at CTCRM.

### **Aim of the Certificate**

3. The aim of the Certificate is to confirm a man's medical and physical fitness and general preparedness at the time he is selected for the course, in order to prevent under use of training capacity.

a. **Part 1: Medical.** If the man is MFD (P2), and in date for his PULHHEEMS medical, or temporarily downgraded, the form can be completed by the Unit medical admin staff; there is no longer a requirement for the MO to sign for men who fall into these categories. The unit MO will only see permanently downgraded men in order to assess whether there has been any deterioration in their condition.

(1) **MFD (ie P2 and in date PULHHEEMS) or temporary downgraded.** Unit Medical admin staff are to complete the relevant section of Part 1, confirming the candidate's PULHHEEMS status from his FMed4 and DMICP. The form should be signed and date stamped. Candidates who are temporarily downgraded MLI/MND (P3 or P7) are automatically UNFIT any CC training. Additionally MFD candidates should sign the self-declaration box indicating that they have no recent injuries that may cause problems on a CC.

(2) **Permanently downgraded.** The Unit MO is to see the rank and confirm that he remains fit to attend CC training within the limitations imposed by the NSMBOS. If there has been any deterioration, he should be further downgraded, the form should be annotated and he becomes automatically UNFIT in accordance with para 3 a. (1).

b. **Part 2: Chain of command.** The Coy Comd/DO is to certify that the nominee selected by the NCM(PROM) is considered by the Unit to be ready to attempt the command course with respect to motivation and welfare situations.

## Command course training

4. Command course training is not specifically designed to be a test of physical prowess. However, for obvious reasons the training and assessment vehicle in most cases is a practical leadership task in a simulated operational environment. Consequently, both the Junior Command Course (JCC) and Senior Command Course (SCC) and to a lesser extent the Advanced Command Course (ACC) contain many training serials that are both mentally challenging and physically demanding. Furthermore, busy course programmes afford very little time for recovery. Ranks nominated for command training must be physically robust and they must not be allowed to commence training with an injury or illness that is likely to preclude them from successfully completing the course. **Temporarily medically downgraded men are NOT eligible for command training.** Furthermore, nominees must be withdrawn, if at the time of selection, they are not medically fit to undertake the following activities:

- a. RM Basic Fitness Test: 5 over grasp pull-ups, 50 sit-ups, 1.5 mile squaddled road run in 15 min wearing boots followed immediately by a 1.5 mile best effort run to be completed under 11 min 30 sec (this varies according to age). **JCC, SCC and ACC.**
- b. Four mile speed-march, carrying CEFO and rifle in 40 mins. **JCC and SCC only.**
- c. JCC candidates must be capable of conducting a minimum of 3 days section/troop attacks over rough terrain carrying CEFO and weapon. SCC candidates must be capable of conducting up to 10 days of troop attacks over rough terrain carrying CEFO and weapon. **A medically downgraded rank will only be required to lead up to 3 section/troop attacks per exercise.** He will not necessarily be required to act in a support role for all the remaining section/troop attacks where other JCC/SCC ranks are in command, but should expect to participate in some prior to his own assessment in command to maximise his chance of success.
- d. Field Exercises of between 5-10 days duration by day and night, in arduous conditions, occasionally carrying Marching Order for up to 13km, often in inclement weather and under conditions of fatigue and stress. **A medically downgraded rank will not be required to carry his Bergen during any yomping phases.** This will be moved around the training area for him. **However, he must be capable of carrying Patrol Order as described above and must be capable of moving his Bergen short distances.**
- e. Night navigation exercises, up to 11km across rough ground, at night, with CEFO and rifle at 3km per hour. **JCC and SCC only.**
- f. A week long Operations in Built Up Area (OBUA) Training Exercise, including entering and exiting buildings via window frames and necessitating jumping onto concrete. **JCC only.**

6. **Further guidance.** If further guidance is required then this may be obtained from the following sources:

- a. General information on the JCC and SCC:  
OC Command Wing, [REDACTED]
- b. Medical advice on fitness for JCC and SCC:  
PMO, [REDACTED]

Appendix:

1. Certificate of fitness for command training.



**CERTIFICATE OF FITNESS FOR COMMAND TRAINING**

Unit:.....

Name:.....

Rank:.....

Number:.....

SQ:.....

Nominated for Cse No ..... JCC/SCC/ACC

This Certificate provides confirmation of a man's medical fitness, commitment and general preparedness for command training at the time of his provisional selection and must be completed in ink, firstly by the Unit medical staff (MO for permanent downgraded men) then by the man's Coy Comd, DO or equivalent. On completion it is to be returned direct to NCM(PROM) RM NCO, [REDACTED], in accordance with the timings detailed in the command course loading signal. A copy must also be taken by the individual to C I CRM and handed to the respective Chief Instructor.

**Part 1: Medical**

**Latest PULHHEEMS Status** – dated..... (completed by Unit Medical Staff)

P	U	L	H	H	E	E	M	S
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**MFD (P2) (completed by Unit Medical Staff and candidate)**

MFD (P2) Candidate (in date PULHHEEMS)	Medical Centre Stamp, Date and Signature
I confirm there has been no deterioration in my medical condition since my last PULHHEEMS and that I am not carrying any injury that may adversely affect my suitability for Command Training.	Candidate's Signature

**Temporary Medically Downgraded (completed by Unit Medical Staff)**

MI D or MND (P3 or P7) Candidate <b>UNFIT Command Training</b> (His nomination should be withdrawn immediately)	Medical Centre Stamp, Date and Signature
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**Permanently Medically Downgraded (completed by Unit MO)**

Last NSMBOS date	
NMBOS Restrictions and Waivers:	
<p>There has been no deterioration in his condition since last NSMBOS. <b>He is FIT to undertake Command Training within the limitations stated above.</b></p>	MO Stamp, Date and Signature
<p>There has been deterioration in his condition since his last NMBOS. <b>He is UNFIT to undertake Command Training within the limitations stated above</b>          (He cannot be considered as fit for command training without further attendance at a NSMBOS. His nomination should be withdrawn immediately)</p>	MO Stamp, Date and Signature

**Part 2: Chain of Command (Coy Comd / DO)**

As the man's Coy Comd/DO you are requested to consider the following questions and, where necessary, make appropriate amplifying remarks in support of your responses. Insufficient knowledge should also be reported below.

<p>a. Do you have any reason to doubt the man's levels of motivation, commitment or attitude towards both promotion and responsibility at the time of his nomination? If 'yes', record your comments below.</p>	Yes/No			
<p>b. Does the man have any welfare problems (recent, current or potential) that may preclude him from successfully completing the course? If 'Yes', record your comments below.</p>	Yes/No			
Coy Comd/DO Signature:	Name	Rank:	Unit:	Date: