

Not to be communicated to  
anyone outside HM Service  
without authority



RESTRICTED

DCI RN 97 2001

# Defence Council Instructions Royal Navy

*Kenneth Tabor*

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE - 13 July 2001

DCIs are automatically cancelled after one year

## CONTENTS

97 Service with SBS and SAS - Opportunities for Naval Service Personnel (R)



## 97/01 Service with SBS and SAS - Opportunities for Naval Service Personnel (R)

[D/NAVSEC/7710/13/19: (9)380x30051]

## References:

- A. BR 1283 Royal Marines Instructions.
- B. BR 8748 Terms of Service for RN, QARNNS and WRNS Ratings and RM Ranks.
- C. BR 1950 Naval Pay Regulations.
- D. BR 1066 Advancement Regulations.
- E. BR 8373 Officers Career Regulation
- F. DCI RN102/00

**Introduction**

1. Members of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines may volunteer to serve in both the Special Boat Service and Special Air Service, two of the core components of the UK Special Forces (UKSF). The operational capabilities of both units are broadly similar, however, the SBS being the principal RN contribution to UKSF have the additional training and equipment to lead in the maritime, amphibious and riverine environments. Both units come under the operational command of HQ Directorate of Special Forces (DSF), undergo an identical selection process and enjoy significant interoperability in training and on operations. The SBS is based in Poole, Dorset; 22 SAS Regt in Hereford.
2. SF operations require men of courage who are determined, highly motivated, intelligent, reliable, and who possess mental, moral and physical stamina. Service with UKSF demands much of the individual. Overseas deployments for training or operations are frequent, though usually of short duration, however, this is balanced by greater stability for families and dependants in the Hereford and Poole areas.
3. In accordance with current Government policy on the employment of women in the Armed Forces, service in the SBS and SAS is only open to male volunteers, however appointments do exist for females throughout the UKSF Group.

**Aim**

4. The aim of this DCI is to describe the fundamental entry requirements, selection process and Conditions of Service for RN/RM personnel seeking to serve in the SBS and SAS.

**Responsibilities**

5. *Commanding Officers.* Commanding Officers are responsible for forwarding applications from suitable volunteers to the Naval Manning Agency (NMA).
6. The NMA is the central Naval authority, responsible for the recruitment and supply of RN/RM Officers and Ratings/Other Ranks (ORs) to UKSF.
  - a. CNOA. CNOA is responsible for receipt of officer applications, staffing within the NMA and forwarding to SBS/22 SAS.
  - b. CND. CND is responsible for receipt of rating applications, staffing within the NMA and forwarding to SBS/22 SAS.
  - c. DNM. DNM is responsible for ensuring the structural integrity of source branches serving the UKSF requirement.

**Entry Standards and Applications**

7. Rating/other rank applicants for UKSF Selection should commence the selection process aged 32 years or under. Officers should be 30 or under and have completed a minimum of two years service in a complement billet. Commanding Officers, Appointing and Drafting desks may NOT withhold applications on manning or structural grounds:



a. *Officers.* Officers who wish to volunteer for UKSF should submit their application on the form at ANNEX A. Following a CO's interview this will be forwarded through the chain of command to the appropriate desk in DNOA/DRMOA. Applications will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and clearance will be granted by Appointing Directors. Clearance may only be denied in exceptional circumstances and then only with the personal approval of the Naval Secretary. Officers:

- (1) Must be recommended for service in UKSF by their Commanding Officer.
- (2) Must be capable of passing the UKSF Selection Swimming Assessment.
- (3) Must be capable of passing the Army Basic Combat Fitness Test (Infantry) (BCFT (I)).

b. *Ratings/ORs.* Ratings/ORs should apply to CND on the form at ANNEX A accompanied by a form C240 (RM C233), which will initiate a manning clearance request. Applications will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and clearance will be granted by the appropriate Branch Managers from the Directorate of Naval Manning (DNM). Clearance may only be denied in exceptional circumstances and then only with the personal approval of DNM. Commanding Officers should assess general suitability and motivation of the volunteer, before forwarding the application. Ratings/ORs:

- (1) Must have RORRs (or pre RORRs equivalents) conduct and effectiveness assessments of at least Grade "E" or better (Unspent Career checks will not necessarily be a bar to service with UKSF. These are to be reported for consideration together with a recommendation for service with UKSF, made by the CO).
- (2) Must be recommended for service in UKSF by their Commanding Officers.
- (3) Must be capable of passing the UKSF Selection Swimming Assessment.
- (4) Must be capable of passing the Army Basic Combat Fitness Test (Infantry) (BCFT (I)).

The minimum fitness and medical standards required by applicants are listed at ANNEX B.

#### Appointing/Drafting Action

8. The NMA will forward applications with supporting documentation as follows:

- a. *For SBS volunteers:* Original to T Wing, RM Poole, Dorset, BH1 5 4NQ. Copy to Trg Sqn 22 SAS.
- b. *For SAS volunteers:* Original to Trg Sqn, 22 SAS Stirling Lines, Hereford HR4 7DD. Copy to T Wing SBS

#### Preparatory Briefings / Training.

9. Both the SBS and 22 SAS conduct a number of briefings to RN, Army and RAF units designed to give officers and ORs an insight into each unit, how best to prepare properly for UKSF Selection, the selection process itself and subsequent career progression in UKSF. Furthermore both units sponsor individual training courses designed to assist individuals with their personal preparation. Advice on pre-training and preparation is always available from T Wing at Poole and Trg Sqn at Hereford.

10. SBS. The preparation available for SBS candidates includes:

- a. *SBS Briefing Course.* The SBS BC is conducted over three days by the SBS and is designed to give both officers and OR volunteers an insight into the UKSF Selection process and how best to prepare for it. It also provides information on subsequent career progression within the SBS. The briefing concludes with an opportunity to dive using three of the military sets currently in use with the SBS. SBS BC should be seen as the first step for SBS candidates. It is not a pass or fail course, however levels of fitness and aptitude will be assessed and advice will be given on any further preparation required prior to candidates attending UKSF selection. The Course is held four times a year, is mandatory for all SBS aspirants, officer and OR, but is also open to those who have not yet committed themselves to either SAS or SBS. Nominations and enquiries should be made directly to T Wing SBS. Candidates will be loaded onto the SBS BC by the NMA; thereafter CO SBS will inform the NMA of those SBS candidates who have attended the SBS BC and who are considered to be suitable to attend UKSF Selection. Candidates will be loaded on to the UKSF Selection Course by the Appropriate Appointing/Drafting Authority. On the SBS BC candidates will be asked to undertake:



- (2) *Swimming*. The Battle Swimming test (BST) and a 600m freestyle swim in 15 minutes and a 200m underwater swim.
- (3) *Diving*. Three acquaint dives in the swimming pool, each using a different type of military diving set.

- b. *Potential Officers Briefing Course (SBS)*. The POBC (SBS) is an additional 24 hr package at the end of the SBS BC. It is designed to give officers an opportunity to meet serving SBS officers and to gain a better understanding of what is involved, what the SBS expects of its officers, and how to prepare properly for UKSF Selection.
- c. *RM Individual Training*. Three weeks prior to the commencement of the UKSF Selection Course, RN/RM SBS and SAS candidates will attend a three week individual training/administrative package at RM Poole. This course is designed for candidates to improve and refine navigation skills and fitness. During this period officers undergo a three-day package at CTCRM, designed to give officers revision in the estimate process in preparation for the Officers' Week phase of UKSF Selection.

11. *SAS*. The pre-selection preparation available for SAS candidates is similar to that for the SBS but the swimming test is substituted by the UKSF Selection Swimming Assessment.

- a. *Potential Officers Briefing Course (SAS)*. The POBC (SAS), run by 22 SAS over two days aims to give officers who are interested in volunteering for service with the SAS a clearer understanding of what is involved, what the SAS expects of its officers and how to prepare properly for UKSF Selection. Officers should aim to attend POBC one year before UKSF Selection. Courses are run four times a year. Nominations should be made directly to Trg Sqn 22 SAS and copied to NMA Portsmouth and T Wing SBS on a restricted signal with SICs BAJ/W2B giving the following detail:

- (1) SAS Potential Officer Briefing.
- (2) Number, rank, name of officer.
- (3) Number and date of briefing course.
- (4) Address to which joining instructions should be sent.
- (5) Remarks/special considerations.
- (6) PULHHEEMS standard/date last tested.

- b. *SAS Briefing Course*. The SAS BC is run over three days by 22 SAS and takes place six times a year in the UK and twice in Germany. It is designed to inform OR aspirants what UKSF Selection involves and how best to prepare for it. It also gives an insight into Regimental life and subsequent career progression within the SAS. This course should be regarded as the first step for SAS candidates. Nominations and enquiries should be made direct to Trg Sqn 22 SAS.

12. *Additional Courses*. Additional courses are also held to assist with preparation for UKSF Selection. Places may be available for RN/RM volunteers for SBS/SAS on a case by case basis:

- a. *All Arms Infantry Skills Course (AAISC)*. The AMSC is run by the Infantry Training Centre at Catterick and lasts for four weeks. It is designed to improve basic fieldcraft and weapon handling in preparation for the jungle phase of UKSF Selection and is most suitable for those without a current Infantry background, including RN officers and ratings. Applications for AAISC should be made directly to Trg Sqn 22 SAS and copied to T Wing SBS. Applicants should have attended either the SBS BC or the SAS BC prior to the AAISC.
- b. RN candidates should be aware that some Army Units also run preparatory courses for those individuals under their command. An example is the Advanced Navigation Course run for members of the Household Division and Parachute Regiment by the Household Division Centralised Courses department at ATR Pirbright. RN personnel may be allocated places subject to vacancies. Applications should be made directly to Trg Sqn 22 SAS and copied to T Wing SBS as appropriate.



13. *Course Dates.* Dates of SBS BCPOBC (SBS), SAS BCPOBC (SAS) and UKSF Joint Selection are published in DCIs annually. Dates of SBS briefings to RN/RM units can be obtained from T Wing, SBS.

### The UKSF Selection Course

14. The UKSF Selection Course is attended by volunteers for service with both SBS and SAS. The course consists of:

- a. *Aptitude Phase - Four Weeks.*
  - (1) The aptitude phase is designed to select those who are suitable for SF training. The initial three weeks are devoted to gradual physical training designed to develop physical and navigational abilities. Candidates will be expected to complete the standard Army BCFT (I) on the first day and EX HIGH WALK on day six. This Ex takes the form of an escorted hill march over approximately 23 kms; timings will be dependent on weather conditions. EX HIGH WALK identifies those who are not adequately prepared to continue the selection process. All other training during this period is directed at preparing individuals for the fourth and final week which is called Test Week. Test Week consists of five timed marches of between 23-28 kms followed by a final endurance march of 64 kms which must be completed in 20 hrs. The weight carried during Test Week increases from 18.2-25 kg for the endurance march. Candidates will be required to pass the UKSF swimming assessment.
  - (2) To maximise their chances of success, candidates must be physically fit at the beginning of the course, be carrying no injuries and have a sound grasp of navigational techniques. The course requires far greater expenditure of physical energy than is normally required in other peacetime training.
- b. *Officers' Week - One week.* Officers' week will take place whilst ORs are preparing for the jungle phase. It is designed to identify those officers who display characteristics suited to SF employment. These principal characteristics include integrity, humility, determination, an aptitude for lateral thought and an ability to learn quickly. Lack of operational experience should not be seen as a barrier.
- c. *Tactical and Jungle Training Phase - Eight Weeks.* Those who pass the aptitude phase next undertake an intensive period of instruction and examination in SF weapons, SOPs and tactics. The majority of this period is spent in the jungle, an environment that is ideal for SF training. Much of the training is aimed at discovering an individual's qualities. Techniques can be taught; the necessary qualities of self-discipline, self-confidence, determination and humour are inborn. The suitability of candidates is judged by their reaction to, and ability to cope with, a series of situations when under physical and mental pressure. Previous jungle experience is not necessary, however a good knowledge of; and ability in, basic military skills would be beneficial.
- d. *Combat Survival - Two Weeks.* All candidates must attend and pass the Army Combat Survival Instructors Course. SF students who may have attended the course before will still be required to pass the course as part of the selection process.
- e. *Continuation Training - Ten Weeks.* Those selected will undertake a period of Continuation Training that will provide them with the individual skills necessary for SF service. This includes the SF Parachute course at RAF Brize Norton. Only on successful completion of Continuation Training will the candidate be "badged" and posted to an operational Sqn with the SBS or 22 SAS.
- f. *Return to Unit (RTU).* Officers and Ratings/ORs RTU'd from UKSF Selection will be appointed or drafted in accordance with drafting priorities and branch requirements. All ratings should submit a C240, and RMORs a C233 (Drafting Course and Record Card) prior to commencing UKSF Selection.



## Terms and Conditions of Service in UKSF

### Rank and Promotion

15. *Officers.* Officers' careers will continue to be managed by the parent service, as will promotion. Subsequent tours with UKSF will be subject to the aspirations of the individual, assessed suitability for further SF employment and Service requirements.

16. *Non-Commissioned Officers.* Non Commissioned Officers volunteering for service with UKSF will not have the experience or knowledge to serve in UKSF in their existing rank. As a consequence, they will initially serve in the AB/Mne rank on joining the SBS or Tpr in 22 SAS. Seniority in their substantive Naval Service rank will continue to accrue (this is known as shadow rank) and those returning to their source specialisation on completion of their first or subsequent tours with UKSF, will return in their shadow rank. Promotion within SBS and SAS will be based on merit tempered by SF seniority. Typically an AB/Mne/Tpr can expect to be promoted to SBS/SAS Cpl in three-four years and to Sgt after six-eight years. Further details on promotion are at ANNEX C to this DCI.

### Pay and Pension

17. Pay, pensions and service conditions within UKSF differ considerably from those in the remainder of the Armed Forces. Pay and pensions are currently the subject of a major review and a new pay and pensions system will be in place from April 2002.

### Return Of Service (ROS)

18. On successful completion of SF selection the ROS is an initial three year tour of duty to run from 'badging' day. This will run concurrently with any existing ROS, and may be served out in an OR's source branch should he be returned to unit (RTU) from UKSF.

### Type of Service

19. Service with UKSF will be counted as SEA service for the purposes of drafting and SEA service rosters.

### Conditions of Service - Ratings/Other Ranks

20. *Tours of Duty.* RN/RM personnel serving with UKSF will be drafted to either the SBS or SAS for an initial tour of duty of three years calculated from badging day. Any Rating wishing to extend his tour of duty with SBS or 22 SAS should make a formal application to the appropriate CO, nine months before the end of his first tour. If recommended for a further tour, the application is to be forwarded to the NMA for action by the Manning Branch Manager who will give manning clearance; authority will normally be given. Manning and Drafting officers are to advise on any career implications within the individuals source branch specialisation. During an extension of service seniority will continue to accrue in the Naval Service shadow rank.

21. *Premature Termination of Tour.* Ratings/ORs may be returned to their source branch/specialisation at any time during their tour should they prove unsuitable for further service with UKSF. For the first year from badging day, ORs will be under probation so that their suitability and compatibility in an SB 5/SAS sabre squadron can be confirmed. RTU action during this period will be initiated solely by a CO's interview with no further formal administrative action being taken. Thereafter RTU can follow either because of lack of suitability, disciplinary or administrative action and will be at the discretion of the Commanding Officer. On RTU an individual will rejoin his source branch at his extant Naval Service shadow rank (reflecting seniority and any promotion accrued). He will then have a period of 12 months to achieve the necessary outstanding professional qualifications. Failure to achieve the necessary outstanding professional qualifications may result in reversion in rank. Any Officer/Rating/OR wishing to leave the Service for personal, medical or compassionate reasons or after RTU will be returned to their source branch/specialisation for discharge.

22. *Permanent Cadre.* A Permanent Cadre exists in the SBS and SAS to provide ORs with a greater degree of career security, to simplify administration and to assist career planning. ORs will be eligible to join the Permanent Cadre after six years service in UKSF subject to the Commanding Officer's recommendation. Criteria for selection will include potential to reach senior SNCO rank in SBS/SAS, a proven ability to acquire skills readily and motivation beyond doubt for the length of an applicant's career. In certain cases it will not be in the best interests of an individual to transfer to the Permanent Cadre, eg where his shadow rank might be higher than his SBS/SAS rank. Transfer to SBS/SAS Permanent Cadre signifies an



acknowledgement by the individual that his primary career path is now with UKSF. For RN/RM personnel serving in 22 SAS, transfer to Permanent Cadre will involve a transfer of Service.

### Discipline

23. RN and RM personnel serving with 22 SAS (less SAS Permanent Cadre) and RN personnel serving with the SBS (less Permanent cadre) will remain members of the RN and will continue to be administered by the RN. However, during their period of service with the SAS/SBS they will be subject to Military Law in addition to the Naval Discipline Act, under the provisions of the Naval, Military and Air Force (Attachment) Regulations 1964 Regulation 4.i.

### Disclosure Contract

24. Due to the sensitive nature of their employment and the potential damage caused by unauthorised disclosure of information, all personnel volunteering for service with SBS and SAS will be required to sign a confidentiality contract prior to badging. Failure to abide by this contract will result in an individual being deemed unsuitable for employment in UKSF. Full details of the provisions and conditions of the Disclosure Contract are given at UKSF briefings.

### Related Publications

25. A copy of this DCI should be retained within the covers of the References.

26. This DCI supersedes Annex 35C to Chapter 35 of Reference A and DCI RN 102/00.

### Summary

27. UKSF offers a challenging and rewarding career to all officers and ratings of the Naval Service. UKSF seeks to attract determined, highly motivated, intelligent, reliable and physically fit individuals to serve with both the SBS and 22 SAS. This DCI provides the basic information to allow individuals and their Divisional or Commanding Officers to make an informed judgement before applying for UKSF Selection.