SECTION 1

FILING SYSTEM

ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL CENTRE

CLERICAL TRAINING WING

STUDENT HANDOUT

FILING SYSTEMS

1.   Filing is the act of keeping documents in an organised manner so that they can be easily referred to and retrieved when needed. Every unit should have one filing system. In an ideal world the whole of the Armed Forces would be on the same filing system, however financial restrictions prevent this happening at the moment. However if possible a Brigade and its Battalions should attempt to have the same system throughout.

2.   The most common filing system within the forces is the **J1, J2, J3** and **J4** system. All filing is centred round the **'GOLDEN RULE'** of one file, one subject.

3.   **Why do we file**
a.   To keep the office neat and tidy.
b.   To avoid deterioration of documents.
c.   To retrieve document speedily.
d.   To be able to answer to queries quickly.

4.   **Methods of filing:** There are four main methods of filing, these are:
a.   Subject filing – file by subject.
b.   Chronological filing – date.
c.   Numerical filing – number.
d.   Alphabetical filing - alphabets.

5.   **Mail handling:** All correspondences coming into the unit should be booked in each morning by the Chief Clerk as quickly as possible. The mail booking in book should be formatted as per the example at Annex 'B'. You will note that each page is reserved for each day.

6.   **Unit date stamp:** Once the correspondence is registered, it should be stamped and dated. Placing the stamp on each letter records for future reference, the date of receipt of letter.

7.   A circulation sheet is then to be stapled to it, a copy of which is at Annex 'C'. Once the mail is booked in each of the correspondence is to be given a file reference. The file reference that you allocate is to be entered in the fifth column of the booking in book.

8.   **First sight file:** All correspondence is to be placed in a first sight file. The first sight file is used to get the mail to the responsible officer as quick as possible, usually the Adjt, without the delay of entering all the letters and signals onto individual files. It is the responsibility of the officer to indicate what action is required and by whom on each

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letter. On its return to the Chief Clerk the first sight file is to be dismantled and each letter/graphed place on the relevant file and given to the person indicated to see it.

9. **Folio numbering**: A Folio number is the number rating on each correspondence on the right hand corner in red as they are physically filed. The first folio number on a file would start from '1' and so on.

10. **Flagging:** This has been toppled by the first sight slip. However, flags are small slips of paper, usually printed 'Action' on one end and 'Information' on the other. They are printed to the top of relevant folio so that they protrude beyond the top edge of the file, being visible even when the file is closed. It should be placed on all correspondence from outside units. When all required actions have been completed, these flags are to be removed. Files should never be returned to the filing cabinets with flags on them.

11. **Cross reference**: As correspondences are normally filled in the order in which they are produced/received, those dealing with particular aspects may not always be together. This makes it necessary to cross reference the correspondence to make each letter easily recognisable as being part of a particular aspect.

12. Further correspondence would similarly be cross-referenced to earlier letters, which in return, would be forwarded referenced to new correspondence. This would ensure that regardless of which of the letter is referred to, it would have listed, under its folio numbers of all earlier letters in the file dealing with particular aspect of the subject.

13. The two most commonly used cross-referencing are:

    a.   **T – Bar Method**. E.g.
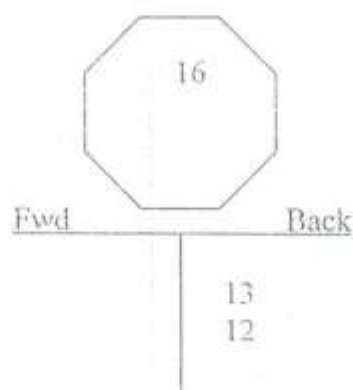
    b.   **Balloon Method**: The basic principles of this system are the same as T-Bar methods. The main difference is that only previous connected letters are Are cross-referenced, there is no forward reference. E.g.
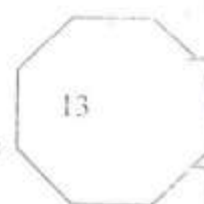
14. **Opening a new file**: It might become necessary to open a new file. Before doing so, the file list should be checked to ensure there is no suitable file already in existence. The Chief Clerk would normally decide whether it is necessary.

15. When a new file is opened, ensure that its details are added to the file lists. Select a new file cover, ensuring that the colour is different from those used for confidential and above. Neatly record in the boxes the new file number, title, volume

number, unit/branch title and the date showing when the file was opened. E.g. of a file front cover is at Annex 'E' to this handout.

16. **Storage** Files are usually kept in 4 drawer filing cabinets in numerical sequence. When returning files to their respective cabinets care should be taken to ensure that files are placed in the correct place.

17. Files should, where practicable, be kept under lock and key when not in use. Where the file contains correspondence bearing descriptors, this is mandatory.

18. Before returning files to their cabinets they should be checked to ensure:
    a. There is no outstanding action
    b. Action/info flags have been removed
    c. BF action has been entered in the BF diary.
    d. Necessary repairs are done to keep the file in good order.

BOOKING IN/OUT SYSTEM

19. It is important that the location of files is known at all times. There are a number of reasons for this, not the least of which is, that by being able to locate files as and when they are required, the filing of correspondence can be carried out quickly this improving the efficiency of the system.

20. There is no set of system for booking files in/out and indeed many units do not record the movement of their files. If the maintenance of filing system were your responsibility, it would be wise to maintain some form of booking in/out system for files.

21. Should a system be employed it need only the title, number of the file, the date it was taken out/returned, and to whom it was issued. These details may be kept in a SO Book or on a card system. The choice of method is invariably the Chief Clerk's.

BRING FORWARD SYSTEM

22. It may be necessary to refer to particular correspondence at a future date to enable action to be taken, or simply to refresh some one's memory. For example: A letter has been written asking another unit to forward some documents by a specific date. It would be necessary to bring forward the file on a certain date to check that the replies have been received or action taken.

23. A typical BF sequence is:

    a. The CO decides that he wishes to see folio 24 of file AFPC/1000 at a future date (e.g. 20 Oct 03). He will indicate this by writing on the circulation sheet or either on the file, i.e. F24 to CO on 20 Oct 03 or similar words.

    b. The Chief Clerk would then enter those details into the BF diary. If no other action was required at this stage; the filing clerk would remove the action flags and return the file to its storage place.

    c. The BF diary, which should be consulted at the start of each working day

will ultimately be consulted on 20 Oct 03, and the entry noted. The appropriate file is obtained. Folio 24 flagged up and the file passed to the CO, who will take the necessary action in accordance with the folio. The entry in the diary would then be lined through.

J1 - ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL

ADMINISTRATION

21BN/1001	General
21BN/1002	Staff List/Telephone Lists
21BN/1003	Welcome/Farewell/Congratulations Messages
21BN/1004	Personality Briefs
21BN/1005	File Lists/Distribution Lists
21BN/1006	Standing Orders/Instructions/SOPs
21BN/1007	Part One Orders
21BN/1008	Unit Clerical Guide

BOARDS OF INQUIRY

| 21BN/1010 | General/Policy |
| 21BN 1011 | Absence Without Leave |

CIVILIAN MATTERS

| 21BN/1020 | General Policy |

COMMAND AND ORGANISATION

| 21BN/1030 | General policy |

COMMISSIONS

| 21BN/1040 | General Policy |

CONFERENCES

| 21BN/1050 | General |

CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS

21BN/1060	General Policy
21BN/1061	Officers
21BN/1062	Soldiers
21BN/1063	Civilians

DEATHS AND BURIALS

DISCHARGES

DISCIPLINE

DOCUMENTATION

DUTIES

ENTERTAINMENT

FORECAST OF EVENTS

HEALTH AND SAFETY

HONOURS AND AWARDS

21BN/1150	General/Policy
21BN/1151	Military
21BN/1152	Civilian

INSPECTIONS

21BN/1160	General/Policy
21BN/1161	AFPC Inspection Team

LEAVE

21BN/1170	General/Policy
21BN/1171	Holidays
21BN/1172	Military
21BN/1173	Civilians

MEDICAL/DENTAL

21BN/1180	General/Policy

MESSES

21BN/1190	General/Policy
21BN/1191	Officers
21BN/1192	Sgts/Ors

PAY AND ALLOWANCES

21BN/1200	General/Policy
21BN/1201	Officers
21BN/1202	ORs
21BN/1203	Allowances
21BN/1204	Pensions/Gratuity
21BN/1205	Allotments/Banking
21BN/1206	Civilians

POSTINGS/ATTACHMENTS

21BN/1210	General/Policy
21BN/1211	Officers
21BN/1212	Soldiers
21BN/1213	Civilians

PROMOTIONS/APPOINTMENTS

21BN/1220	General/Policy
21BN/1221	Promotion Board
21BN/1222	Officers
21BN/1223	Ors
21BN/1224	Appointments
21BN/1225	Civilians

PUBLIC RELATIONS

21BN/1230	General
21BN/1231	Media Ops

RELIGION

21BN/1240	General/Policy

RETURNS

21BN/1250	General/Policy
21BN/1251	Strength Returns

TRANSPORT

21BN/1260	General/Policy
21BN/1261	Transport request

VISITS

21BN/1270	General/Policy

WELFARE/CHARITIES

21BN/1280	General/Policy
21BN/1281	Charities

J2 – INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY

INTELLIGENCE

21BN/2000	General/Policy
21BN/2001	FISU

SECURITY

21BN/0010   General/Policy

J3 – OPERATIONS AND TRAINING

COMMUNICATIONS

21BN/3000	Genera/Policy
21BN/3001	Telephone/Fax
21BN/3002	Postal

COURSES

21BN/3010	General/Policy
21BN/3011	AFTC
21BN/3012	Education
21BN/3013	Clerical
21BN/3014	Chief Clerks Courses
21BN/3015	Local courses for the Military
21BN/3016	Overseas courses for Military
21BN/3016	Civilian Staff Course

ESTABLISHMENT

21BN/3020	General/Policy
21BN/3021	Establishment Tables

EXERCISES

21BN/3030   General/Policy

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

21BN/3040	General/Policy
21BN/3041	Computers – General

OPERATIONS

21BN/3050	General/Policy
21BN/3051	Ops Orders

SPORT

21BN/3060	General/Policy
21BN/3061	Competitions
21BN/3062	Adventure Training

TRAINING

21BN/3070	General/Policy
21BN/3071	Officers
21BN/3072	Ors
21BN/3073	Training Directives
21BN/3074	SAAM
21BN/3075	AFTC General matters
21BN/3076	Education

J4 – STORES AND EQUIPMENT

ACCOMODATION

21BN/4000	General
21BN/4001	Move of AFPC
21BN/4002	Housing

ARMS AND AMMUNITIONS

21BN/4010	General/Policy

EQIPMENT

21BN/4020	General/Policy
21BN/4021	Clothing
21BN/4022	Vehicle
21BN/4023	Office Equipment (not incl computers)
21BN/4024	Office Furniture
21BN/4025	Photocopier

RATIONS

21BN/4030	General/Policy

STATIONERY

21BN/4040	General/Policy
21BN/4041	Stationery Demand

LAYOUT OF AMAIL BOOKING IN BOOK

SNO	REF OF LTR	DATE OF LTR	UNIT	SUBJECT OF LTR	FILE REF

AN EXAMPLE OF A CIRCULATION SHEET FOR AFPC

FIRST SIGHT	ACT	INFO	SIGN	DATE
CO				
IMATT Advisor				
2IC				
Adjt				
OC ROS				
OC EDP				
Trg				
QM				
D'Base/Postings				
Unit RSM				
VWO				
Ch Clk				
Cashier				
Banking				
Civ Admin				
COMMENTS:				
File Number				

EXAMPLE OF A FOLIO SHEET

Folio No	Unit Letter From	Date of Letter	File Reference of Letter	Subject of Letter