

LOWLAND RFCA 21/22



ANNUAL REPORT



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A photograph of Colonel Ted Shields, a man with glasses wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a red and green striped tie. He is standing behind a podium with microphones, speaking. The background is dark with some purple and blue lighting effects.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

COLONEL TED SHIELDS MBE DL

A 'jack of all trades and master of none', it is an enormous pleasure and privilege for me to be Chief Executive of Lowland Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for I, along with Elaine Ferguson, our Deputy Chief Executive, get to see pretty much everything that the Association does. It is a wide-ranging and sometimes complex portfolio but everything that we do makes a significant contribution to the defence and wellbeing of our Nation, not least in the Lowlands of Scotland.

Our salaried staff at Lowland House and across the Army Cadet Force (ACF) Battalions are second to none: dedicated, hardworking, ingenious (as we have to be at times), great fun to work with and, above all, always prepared to go the extra mile as we deliver across the board for our Reservists, Cadet Force Adult Volunteers, Cadets, employers and the single Services more generally. We know we make a tangible difference and that everything we do directly and indirectly benefits our constituents.

There are challenges and opportunities aplenty but overcoming the former and exploiting the latter make our professional lives all the more interesting and worthwhile. Let me take as an example Operation RESCRIPT, the MOD's 'biggest ever military operation in peacetime' which saw 23,000 personnel deployed across the UK in support of the Government's response to COVID-19.

Our Engagement and Communications Team helped oil the wheels of the mobilisation and demobilisation of our Reservists. The Team organised webinars for Scotland's 14 National Health Trusts to wide acclaim. Our Estates Team, with Alternative Venues in close support, ensured that our Reserve Centres and Cadet Training Centres were operational for, among others, the military Mobile Testing Teams (MTTs).

And later, we provided sites for the Scottish Ambulance Service under Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA). Cadets and Youth, under Elaine Ferguson's leadership, ensured that our Professional Support Staff in the ACF Battalions were able to support the MTTs, primarily at Glasgow and Lanarkshire ACF's Cadet Training Centre by Cambuslang. Real purpose, real outcomes, great work. As ever, none of this endeavour, as in all other lines of activity, would be possible without the sterling support of our Finance and HR Team.

I particularly enjoyed my first face-to-face Association Meeting in Dumfries last November. It was great to see so many Association Members in person and online for the meeting itself but it was also extremely productive to be able to make the most of our time in Dumfries by briefing local Lord-Lieutenants and Deputy Lieutenants, facilitating the presentation of Lord-Lieutenant's Certificates, meeting Members over supper and, the following morning, hearing from CFAVs during a business breakfast with local employers. We look forward to our Annual Association Meeting in Edinburgh on 19 May.

As the Lowland Team are all too aware, I am determined to develop Dechmont Range and Training Area for the benefit of our Reservists and Cadets. We are making great progress. For many units in the Central Belt, Dechmont should be their training area of choice, not least because they will spend less time travelling, more time training and be reducing the military carbon footprint. Defence Training Estate are more than content for Lowland RFCA to continue to manage and operate the area – the sky's the limit, our only constraint is funding!

I and the Lowland RFCA Team are here to serve Defence in the Lowlands. We are superbly supported by the Association's 175 Members who amplify and magnify our work and that of the Reserves and Cadets across their professional, domestic and recreational networks. Thank you for all that you do!



CHAIR'S REPORT

CAPTAIN ANDREW COWAN RD RNR
CHAIR OF LOWLAND RFCA
APRIL 2022

I am delighted to present our Annual Report for 2021-2022, the purpose of which remains to provide the Association's Members and stakeholders with the key drivers that direct and guide our activity, an overview of our business performance this past year and to offer my perspective for the coming year. Interspersed by articles about Lowland's Reservists, Cadets and employers, the reports of our permanent staff at Lowland House set out their challenges and achievements.

As I write, 1 in 12 people in Scotland have COVID-19 so there will be few who have not been affected by the disease. To those who have suffered loss, I offer my sincere condolences on behalf of the Association. The success of the vaccination programmes, so ably supported by us all in Defence, as well as our collective common sense in adhering to the direction and guidance of the Scottish Government, has, nevertheless, helped us to move forward and emerge from the pandemic. Day by day, we are learning to live with COVID-19.

Putin's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 shocked us all and continues to shock us as we see the humanitarian consequences played out in the media. While this Report is not a forum for such military analysis, the ever-increasing demands on the Government must dictate priorities, of which the Defence of the Realm must remain paramount.

The invasion itself has prompted debate across all Western militaries as to whether our current Defence postures are sufficient to deter and to counter such aggression but it is, in my view, all too early to tell. What I must note is that the impact on the UK economy adds further complexity to our domestic and professional lives. The invasion is just one of a complex cocktail of factors that will likely drive inflation to a 40-year high later this year and will impact our disposable income levels and living standards.

Against this backdrop, few would not consider themselves to have been 'busy' these past 12 months. 'Busyness' – having plenty to do – seems to be endemic and thus we must do everything that is important and nothing that is not. Therein lies a possible conundrum for the Association: what is important and what is not? Despite its many and varied business outputs, Lowland RFCA is ultimately about connecting Defence to the 3.1 million people who live in the Lowlands and connecting them to Defence. So, rather than trotting out yet again that the Association is 'busy', it is more correct to say that we are all working very hard to deliver what is required of us. We too must prioritise our business outputs but never lose sight of the fact that we are, for the vast majority, the conduit between Lowland citizens and UK Defence. I will return to this theme a little later.

But first, what is directly driving and guiding us? From the Integrated Review, published in March 2021, flowed two supporting reviews of importance to us: the Reserve Forces 2030 Review (RF30), published in May 2021, and the RFCA Estate Review which led to Ministerial endorsement of Tranche 1 of the Reserve Estate Optimisation Programme (REOP) in September 2021.

'Future Soldier', published in November 2021, brought together RF30 work and other plans for the Army, both Regular and Reserve. HQ 51 Infantry Brigade and HQ Scotland will remain the 'Regional Point of Command' (RPOC) for Scotland, based at Redford Barracks in Edinburgh, but without any Regular (less Balaklava Company 5 SCOTS) or Reserve units under command. An RPOC delivers Firm Base support to the Army, engages with Society, enables the Cadet Forces and enables UK Resilience Operations. The Brigade is to lose its remaining Army Reserve units to other Brigades. For units in the Lowland area, almost all will reduce in size: 105 Regiment Royal Artillery joins 7 Brigade in Catterick; the Scottish and North Irish Yeomanry and 6 SCOTS join 19 Brigade in York; 154 (Scottish) Logistic Regiment joins 4 Brigade in Catterick; 71 Engineer Regiment will be in 8 Engineer Brigade with its HQ at Minley; 205 (Scottish) Field Hospital is to merge with 225 (Scottish) Medical Regiment to form 215 (Scottish) Multi-Role Medical Regiment, joining 2 Medical Group at Strensall; and 32 Signal Regiment will be part of 1 Signals Brigade at Innsworth. With no Regular or Reserve units under command, HQ 51 Brigade will become even more closely engaged with Firm Base activity, Engagement and Cadets; we look forward to helping the Commander and his staff better understand our respective roles in these activities and establishing how we can support and complement each other in our work.

Transformation in the Maritime Reserves sees HMS DALRIADA moving from a Unit-led to a Capability-led model. This not only affects budgetary and administrative responsibilities, but also the staffing of Units and how they deliver training. HMS DALRIADA will become a supported Unit sharing permanent staff with HMS SCOTIA at Rosyth. There will be a marginal uplift in staff to enable regionalised weekend training for both Units. This regionalised training will continue to utilise the excellent facilities on offer in HMS DALRIADA whilst also benefitting from greater efficiencies as training will be delivered by combining personnel and training staff from both Units.

Meanwhile, the RAF Reserves have initiated new workstreams through Project ASTRA and RF30. These are around identifying sectors that can provide future support to the RAF through its Reserves. The ambition is to grow the current UK-wide cadre from 2300 to over 3200 by 2028/29 and to 5000 by 2030/35. New approaches to Reserve career

management and training are also being considered. There is the potential for new Squadrons to be formed around centres of population and industry. The RAF seeks to reinforce sectors such as Space, Data Analytics, Cyber and Information from industry specialists employed in the RAF Reserves. How this will impact 602 (City of Glasgow) Squadron and 603 (City of Edinburgh) Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force remains to be seen.

The RFCA Estate Optimisation Programme (REOP) is well under way. Tranche 1 concerns the disposal of Cadet sites no longer in use (of which there are none in Lowland) and to scope the co-location of Army Cadet Force and Air Training Corps sites (of which only one town in the Lowlands, Lanark, met the criteria). Tranche 2 is also under way, with a Military Judgement Panel (MJP) convening at Redford Barracks in early May. Tranche 2 is reviewing options to relocate outlying detachments to their sub-unit locations, such as the 6 SCOTS' detachments in Dumfries (to Ayr) and in Galashiels (to Edinburgh). The strategic implications of relocating the last remaining Reserve units in Dumfries and Galloway and in the Scottish Borders are significant. Thus far, the arguments for these Reserve units to remain in situ have been well made and firmly noted. We will continue to make the case regularly and forcibly with and through HQ 51 Infantry Brigade.

Our progress towards the unification of the 13 RFCAs to become one Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) continues, albeit somewhat slowly. The MOD were unable to secure a slot in the third Legislative Session to introduce the primary legislation to create the RFCA executive NDPB. The MOD's intent is to bid for a slot in the fourth Session but success is assessed to be slim, not least because a General Election must be held by May 2024. Nevertheless, the CRFCA Board has agreed to continue to make changes to CRFCA and the RFCAs which will take us towards an NDPB. From my perspective, the advantages of the NDPB far outweigh any possible disadvantages so long as Lowland continues to have a voice, just as Lord Haldane intended back in 1908.

All of these reviews potentially affect our Cadet organisations, not least in the provision of their training. Many Cadet units are located in our Reserve Centres so if a Reserve Centre closed, there would have to be reprovision for the Cadets. The many benefits of the Cadets were laid out by Professor Simon Denny in his final report published in May last year. Those who joined our Association Meeting in Dumfries last November will have heard the Professor speak powerfully about the 'social impact and return on investment resulting from expenditure on the Cadet Forces in the UK.' I am delighted that Professor Denny is working with our Deputy Chief Executive, Elaine Ferguson, to produce

a Scottish 'annex' to this report which will greatly assist us in our advocacy of the Cadets. Despite the rigours of the pandemic and the demands placed upon the Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) and our own Professional Support Staff, I am pleased to report that the Cadets of all three Services are in good fettle. There can be few youth organisations, if any, that can beat the Cadet Experience for levelling up and improving social mobility, educational outcomes and employment opportunities.

Turning to our business outputs, I return to my earlier point about Lowland RFCA often being the principal conduit between Lowland citizens and UK Defence. All of this is enabled by our Engagement and Communications team at Lowland House. But what exactly are we trying to do?



A Lowland Board workshop in 2019 agreed that we seek to:

'Utilise the RFCA's extensive Volunteer Membership to influence directly and indirectly public thinking on Defence, Armed Forces', Veterans' and Cadets' issues in order to create a favourable environment for regional activities and to engender better understanding of and support for Veterans and the role of the Armed Forces, Reserves and Cadets, using Media and Comms messaging to assist when appropriate.'

The pandemic has required the Secretariat to explore, develop and trial new ways and means to empower our 175 Association Members. We have seized opportunities to ramp up our social media activity. Our followers now number:

- Twitter: 2,027
- Facebook: 1,800
- LinkedIn: 500
- Instagram: 863
- Youtube: 139

While accepting that people may follow us on more than one means, it is still an impressive collective and far in excess of our 175

dedicated Association Members. These networks will be further developed, the focus continuing to be on quality not quantity. Our Members also receive a regular drumbeat of excellent articles about our Association, our Reservists and our Cadets through:

- Lowland Quarterly (LQ). Lowland's e-zine of quality articles, videos and information has now seen six editions. LQ is circulated to all Association Members (who are online) and is also used to demonstrate our business to any interested party.
- Virtual and Hybrid Association Meetings. Thus far, we have had two virtual Association Meetings (November 2020 and May 2021). Between 90 and 100 Members joined each meeting online to receive various Association updates but, more importantly, to hear from inspirational Reservists, Cadets and CFAVs. Such was the success of these Virtual Meetings that we trialled a Hybrid Association Meeting in Dumfries last November. Around the meeting, we built in: a briefing to local Lord-Lieutenants and Deputy Lieutenants; the presentation of Lord-Lieutenant's Certificates of Meritorious Service to local CFAVs; an informal supper and social gathering; and a Business Breakfast for local employers at which CFAVs extolled the virtues of employing CFAVs and the Cadets in the round. All this proved to be successful and enabled us to re-establish a more tangible presence in Dumfries and Galloway while at the same time allowing Members from across our 7,500 square miles to participate in the Association Meeting.
- The Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Awards. Held at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, Lord-Lieutenants and Association Members were invited to join the Awards ceremony on 9 September 2021. We were thus able to 're-connect' with our Members after the rigours of lockdown. Again, this was deemed to be a most successful event in terms of 'business' and social interaction.

Having already covered the exceptional work of all those involved in the Cadets, I now turn to our Estates Team. Keeping 347 buildings, many dating from the Second World War and earlier, on 132 sites across 70 towns and cities in the Lowlands is no small undertaking. The pandemic has caused additional challenges: empty buildings, limited access for our staff as well as for our contractors, the latter having to contend with building supply issues, and lost Alternative Venues' income. Then layer on top of that the demands of Statutory and Mandatory Inspection and Testing (SMIT) – fire, legionella, asbestos, gas, electrical and fuel – as well as numerous new build, rebuild and refurbishment projects. It is a tall order but we are just about on top of it all – for which I congratulate the Estates Team and thank the Chair of our Estates Advisory Committee, Lieutenant Colonel Guy Maxwell, for all his

advice and assistance. Meanwhile, our redevelopment plans for the range and training area that we operate and manage at Dechmont are beginning to take shape, providing a convenient training facility for units in and around the Central Belt. I am also delighted to report that we teamed up with the Lord-Lieutenant of Lanarkshire, Lady Haughey, to create a wood of 2,700 native trees at Dechmont to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen and to help mitigate climate change. Lady Haughey unveiled a commemorative plaque at Lanarkshire's flagship Jubilee project on 31 March 2022 and a further phase of planting is anticipated.

In closing, what do we need to watch out for and what are we looking to achieve this coming year? We will, of course, continue to contribute to the ongoing reviews, especially NDPB, REOP and RF30. We will seek to help shape and support HQ 51 Brigade and HQ Scotland as they recast themselves as a Regional Point of Command. Constrained though we are by clunky management information systems, limited funding and labyrinthine processes, we will seek smarter ways to deliver the three critical functions of the Estates Team: survey, compliance and estate management. We will continue to build our social media presence, mindful that it is the quality of our posts and not the quantity of them that counts. As we emerge from the pandemic, we will endeavour to provide more opportunities for our Members to engage 'face to face', not just with the Association but with our Reservists, Cadets and Employers (current and future).

In this Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee year, I judge our Association to be in good shape. Our staff at Lowland House and in the ACF Battalions continue to deliver on all fronts. We have made the transition to hybrid working and are effectively operating in a hybrid environment. We are forward-leaning, channelling our energy into embracing change, shaping it where we can. I commend to you the reports that follow.

We are, as ever, indebted to our salaried staff at Lowland House and across the ACF Battalions. They manage a raft of often complex issues with limited resources but continue to deliver time and time again. There is no question that we and those whom we support are in the best of hands.

I remain extremely grateful for your extraordinary support and I look forward to seeing you all at our Annual General Meeting on Thursday 19 May, in Edinburgh (not Galashiels as previously advertised) if you can, or otherwise online.



NAVAL RESERVE UPDATE



BRIGADIER ANDREW MUDDIMAN ADC RM

It has been a year of contrasts, which has taken us from COVID-19 and winter storms through to NATO operations against the backdrop of war in Ukraine.

Looking back to the Summer term of 2021, June saw the commissioning of HMS SPEY at Invergordon, the first such event to take place outside of Portsmouth or Plymouth. The fifth-in-class of the second generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (all of them built on the Clyde) SPEY is now operating in the Pacific alongside her sister ship HMS TAMAR, providing the first permanent presence there since Hong Kong was returned to China.

July 2021 saw the Faslane-based Diving & Threat Exploitation Group (Charlie Squadron) receive the Freedom of Orkney in recognition of their services, both in support of the annual commemorations for the sinking of the Battleship HMS Royal Oak in WW2 and also their regular visits to the islands to dispose of legacy ordnance. Part of their role involves not just rendering a mine or other explosives safe but also collecting forensic evidence to understand how the device works.

This aspect was at the heart of a recent exercise in Iceland where Royal Navy (RN) divers joined counterparts from seven NATO nations to practice neutralising a range of bombs, mines and explosive devices.

The RN also had a Royal engagement at the Steel Cutting ceremony for HMS BELFAST, conducted at BAE Systems in Govan, where HRH The Earl of Strathearn conducted this ceremony. HRH The Countess of Strathearn was announced as the Sponsor of HMS GLASGOW, and thus the two Scottish affiliated Type 26 frigates are certainly going to enjoy a Royal following!

The steel cut for BELFAST was notable as two of our Honorary Officers, Honorary Captain Philip Braat and Honorary Captain Alastair Adair were present in their Lord-Lieutenancy roles, representing the cities of Glasgow and Belfast respectively. We also bade a fond farewell to our previous Naval Regional Commander Scotland and Northern Ireland, Captain Chris Smith. A supersession ceremony held in MOD Caledonia in Aug 21 marked the end of Chris' remarkable nine years' service in the role at the end of a long career in the RN.

The pace of RN engagements across Scotland and Northern Ireland continued to build through the early Autumn period of 2021, made possible by a bumper crop of ships visits after NATO's Exercise Joint Warrior. We hosted many visitors across multiple platforms in Belfast, Aberdeen, Orkney, Glasgow and Rosyth, not to mention numerous Sea Cadet and school visits.

At the same time, the Armed Forces in Scotland were supplying an unprecedented number of Military Aid to Civil Authorities (MACA) tasks and the Royal Navy has played its part here too with fuel tanker drivers, 'vaccinators' and command elements, all deployed to help ease the post-pandemic pressures.

However, perhaps our proudest moments from the last year came from two key events that were achieved on the same day. On the west coast, we commissioned HMS AUDACIOUS at HM Naval Base Clyde. The fourth of the Astute-Class submarines, she is part of the increasing footprint at Faslane, which will ultimately see the Royal Navy comprise over 40% of the regular Armed Forces in Scotland. Simultaneously, the first Steel Cut on HMS VENTURER took place at Babcock in Rosyth. The Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace, said that this 'was not so much a milestone in the life of a single ship, as a glimpse of the future of our fleet'. HMS VENTURER is scheduled to be structurally complete and in the water by 2023.



PHILIP BRAAT TOURS HMS GLASGOW



HMS GLASGOW IN GOVAN SHIPYARD
UK MOD © CROWN COPYRIGHT 2021

All five Type 31 ships are planned to be delivered to the Navy by 2028, with the final ship operational by 2030. This will be the first of five new Type 31 Global Combat Ships, a more affordable class which is already being purchased by at least five other navies and will complement the seven Type 26 Anti-Submarine Warfare Frigates being built on the Clyde.

Speaking of the latter, the build of HMS GLASGOW continues to advance at the BAE Govan yard, and the first eight members of the Ship's Company joined in late 2021, which commenced the Royal Navy's input to the build process, ensuring the training, processes and procedures reflect the modern technology and capabilities of the ship's design. The crew of HMS GLASGOW were quick to forge links with Lord Provost of Glasgow and Honorary Captain Philip Braat. The Principal of the City of Glasgow College, Paul Little, a long-time supporter of the Royal Navy in Scotland, was officially commissioned as our second Glasgow based Honorary Officer. Congratulations and welcome aboard Captain Paul!

In Belfast, a steady drumbeat of youth and Cadet engagement has continued while Honorary Captain Alistair Adair prepared the ground earnestly for the Belfast University URNU opening this in April this year.

COP 26 in November also drew support from the Royal Navy with the Joint Military Headquarters for the security operation operating from HMS DALRIADA, the Maritime Reserve unit based in Glasgow. The Diving & Threat Exploitation Group also provided personnel on standby from HM Naval Base Clyde, ensuring that their collective bomb disposal expertise was available to Police Scotland if required.

Turning to the New Year and activity in the 2022 Winter term, Scotland and Northern Ireland based units have broken new ground (URNU Belfast) whilst maintaining vital connections with our communities and hosting several VIO visitors, underscoring the National commitment to ship building in Scotland within a newly refreshed and ambitious National Shipbuilding Strategy. Both the Prime Minister and the First Sea Lord visited Babcock Rosyth, with the First Sea Lord delivering a keynote speech outlining his vision for the Royal Navy to 2035 - to be the foremost naval power in Europe - to both Defence and shipbuilding industry leaders; including announcing 'a call to arms' for those in the shipbuilding industry and to recognise that this industry is integral to the success of a Global, Modern and Ready Royal Navy.

Glasgow hosted a national awards ceremony championing all that is best in the maritime sector - the Royal Navy proudly presented a diversity award, welcoming a range of guests from communities from right across the UK. The week before, the Royal Marines Scotland Band played splendidly at the Mountbatten Festival of Music with specially commissioned pieces marking the 40th anniversary of the Falklands Conflict - an important milestone which we will commemorate from April to June this year. The tempo of face-to-face engagement is building.

Looking forward to the year ahead, The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June, the Falklands 40 Events (that are now underway), and the return of the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo will all be hugely significant. As we celebrate our Sovereign's accession to the throne some 70 years ago and in the same year mark four decades since the Falklands Conflict, there is much to commemorate and reflect on and we look forward to welcoming many of you from Lowland RFCA to ships visits and other events in the months ahead.

LIFE ON AND UNDER THE SEA



When a young Chief Petty Officer (CPO) Chris Betts watched divers jumping off the back of HMS Brazen, he knew what he wanted to do in the Royal Navy (RN).

Thirty-five years after leaving Loughborough, the now Oban-local continues to enjoy life under the sea as a Reservist since leaving his full-time post in the Navy in 2018.

Like many members of the Reserve Diving Group (RDG), Chris completed a full career as a RN Clearance Diver before joining the Maritime Reserve with HMS Dalriada, based in Glasgow.

Traditionally a Clearance Diver (CD) was a specialist Naval Diver who would use explosives underwater to remove mines and other obstructions, allowing harbours and shipping channels to safely navigate. However, the role has changed over the years to include other naval underwater work.

Chris is now part of an exclusive team, the High Readiness Reserve (HRR). He is one of 12 Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) personnel committed to 72 hours notice to be deployed on submarine emergencies anywhere in the world.

The HRR delivers a unique role in support of the NATO Submarine Rescue System (NSRS), based out of HMNB Clyde. Chris is also one of only a handful of Regular and Reserve Diving Supervisors trained to manage and supervise therapeutic decompression of rescued submariners using the NSRS Transfer Under Pressure system.

Why did you want to be a Reservist for the RN?

I think I just preferred the camaraderie and

wanted to keep in with it (the military). It's about maintaining a link to the Navy. After 32 years, people may say I am institutionalised, but I'd say I was just lucky enough to be in a club where I could serve with my mates, enjoy what I do, and get paid for what I love doing, along with travelling the world. The amazing thing about that is I can still do that in the RNR. I still get to see many of the lads I served with in the RN. I have made many new friends in the RNR, and I still have an attachment to what I did when I was in the Navy.

What operational support do you provide as a Reservist?

We operate for the Fleet Diving Squadron, and the role we supply to them is EOR (Explosive Ordnance Reconnaissance). Having several ex-surviving CD supervisors allows us to conduct searching for jetties and piers in harbours – anywhere a naval asset might come alongside – and we can be asked to search the jetty as Reservists.

You can also be called upon to support the area Bomb Disposal Team in Portsmouth, Plymouth and Faslane when needed, working alongside the Regulars.

What is the HRR (High Readiness Reserve)?

Twelve RNR divers are currently engaged in HRR at 72 hours notice to move for NSRS along with other UK and foreign divers, doctors, and nurses from France and Norway. This system provides a submarine rescue capability for the three nations that run the system. It has the capacity of being flown anywhere globally to a capable seagoing platform. We can also, at request, help any country that has the misfortune to lose a submarine at sea, aiding the rescue of men lost at sea.

What do you do in your job as a civilian?

I work at Tritonia Scientific Ltd and in addition, I am the Chamber Manager for the emergency recompression facility for the NHS West Coast of Scotland, a service that Tritonia Scientific also provide.

How supportive is your employer surrounding your duties with the Armed Forces?

My HRR and NSRS duties are always emergency responses. You're not getting called out for training. We are getting called out to help save lives. If a submarine malfunctions and is sitting on the seabed, I'm sure any employer is more than happy for us to go and spend two or three weeks away helping. Companies get financial help from the RNR to bring someone in to fill our space for a support role or equivalent civilian from another outside agency. There are thousands of employees and companies out there who help the personnel of the RNR.

INTERVIEW: MARINE GREGOR LESLIE



Who are you and what do you do?

I'm Marine Gregor Leslie and I am a Reservist with Royal Marines Reserve (RMR) Scotland. I work in the hospitality industry in Edinburgh, but I've recently returned from two RMR deployments. My first deployment was to Norway for Cold Weather Warfare Training. My second deployment was on Exercise GELDERLAND STRIKE in the Netherlands with 43 Commando Royal Marines.

When did you join the Reserves?

I became a Reservist in May 2019, just as I was finishing up at the University of Edinburgh. When I was looking at possible careers I decided I wanted to get my 'green lid' (Commando Green Beret) and become part of the Reserves. After the turbulence of the pandemic, it's great to have subsequently deployed and I'm now looking forward to deploying full-time with the Lead Commando Group of 3 Commando Brigade.

What does your employer think about your Reservist activity?

Work has actually been fantastic and very flexible with me as they like the skills I bring back. My boss is a really lively guy who always enjoys hearing about the adventures I have been on and he can see that I'm being developed through the training which serves both him and the RMR. Recently I took some of my colleagues skiing, showing them what I had learned from my deployment to Norway. If I hadn't been taught to ski by the RMR, I wouldn't be able to contribute to the team in this way.

What else have you enjoyed learning with the RMR?

I've had a lot of opportunities to rock climb, which have been amazing and something I've then enjoyed in my downtime too. The RMR took us to Foggin Tor (a quarry in Devon) and we were taught vertical assault techniques to overcome natural obstacles. I ended up getting on with one of the mountain leaders, so we've since met up to climb together. Last summer we actually climbed in Snowdonia National Park.

What was your mobilisation like in Norway?

Norway is an annual deployment for the Royal Marines so I was really keen to do it. The deployment is broken down into three phases. The first phase is the 'Sustain Phase' where you learn how to sustain yourself in a cold weather environment. This included sleeping in tents when it was -18 degrees Celsius, a night of survival where you build a quincey (a snow hole), outdoor cooking under the Northern Lights, and practising walking in snowshoes. During the second 'Movement Phase' you learn to ski, which is challenging but really enjoyable. Finally, you have the 'Tactical Phase' where you wear special snow camouflage and you use all the correct weapons for a cold weather environment. You're working in all the kit and you're seeing all the skills coming together, which is hugely rewarding.

What did Exercise GELDERLAND STRIKE involve?

My second deployment was to play enemy for O Squadron, 43 Commando Royal Marines in the Netherlands, which was a fantastic trip. We went by ferry to Rotterdam and set up in the Mainhausen Training Area which has an incredible MOUT (Military Operations in an Urban Theatre) village; it's a lot bigger than anything we have here in the UK. I got to observe all the tech and gear that 43 Commando deploy with as part of the Commando Force, which included: drones, infra-red/thermal vision capability, the new sharp-shooter rifles, as well as all their new kit.

After your year with 43 Commando, what are you planning to do?

I've actually just applied to join Police Scotland, with the aim of becoming a Response Officer. I know my Reservist career will transfer very well into policing, not least because Police Scotland are Armed Forces Covenant signatories and very Forces-friendly. As a Reservist I've gained medical and firearms skills, and I've learnt to work as part of a team in a high-pressure environment. I'm pretty sure my year as a full-time Reservist with 43 Commando Royal Marines will also prove very useful for a career in policing.

ARMY RESERVE UPDATE



BRIGADIER BMA WRENCH
COMMANDER 51ST INFANTRY BRIGADE,
ARMY HEADQUARTERS SCOTLAND AND
JOINT MILITARY COMMAND (SCOTLAND)
LA A BHLAIR 'S MATH NA CAIRDEAN
(ON THE DAY OF BATTLE, FRIENDS ARE
GOOD)

I'm delighted to accept this opportunity to update the Lowland RFCA membership on the British Army's activity in Scotland during 2021/22. I assumed Command of 51st Infantry Brigade and HQ Scotland in June 2021, perhaps just when we might have expected to emerge from the pandemic (Op RESCRIPT) and see a return to routine activity. Instead, the year has been dominated by events linked to the pandemic, not least our support to Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA), whilst seeing a return to the Army Force Generating for on-going and new Operations

That said, the most significant milestone in a busy year was the Army's contribution to the UK Government's planning and delivery of the Climate Conference (COP 26), a conference that helped demonstrate the UK's commitment to deepening international cooperation to combat climate change. In November COP 26, combined with Op RESCRIPT, saw 874 Service Personnel deploy across six sites within the Lowland RFCA area. In addition, 640 Army personnel remained on standby to support Police Scotland, who themselves deployed

14,000 officers to oversee the event. Police Scotland, the Scottish Ambulance Service and other emergency services also used Lowland RFCA estate.

If COP 26 was our most high-profile challenge it was arguably our support to the NHS & Scottish Ambulance Service that brought the Army most firmly into the public consciousness. Drawing heavily upon expertise from the Royal Logistic Corps (RLC) more than 78 soldiers fulfilled ambulance driver requirements, providing upwards of 45 shifts per day. In addition, almost 100 Specialist Medics provided acute medical support to four NHS Boards (8 hospitals from Grampian to the Borders), it was calculated that between Oct 21 - Mar 22 they delivered upwards of 24,000 hours of acute health care support. We deployed on two Vaccination MACA in June and then from October to January to support the NHS vaccination programmes. We had at its height over 221 Service Personnel spread from Thurso, to the Isle of Skye to Galashiels. Finally, soldiers deployed to 23 Mobile Testing Unit sites, in a particularly overt task that required constant interaction with a grateful public. Each team was commanded by a Junior Non-Commissioned Officer (JNCO) exemplifying how the Army empowers its junior commanders allowing them to just get on and deliver the task at hand.



PAULINE HOWE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE SCOTTISH
AMBULANCE SERVICE THANKS ARMY RESERVISTS



ARMY RESERVISTS IN SUPPORT OF THE SCOTTISH
AMBULANCE SERVICE

I also suspect you would have not missed the very rapid deployment (within 18 hours from request) of Service Personnel from Inverness, Kinloss, Arbroath and Perth to support Grampian in their response to the devastation from Storm ARWEN at the start of December. What I would call a more 'traditional' MACA, with decisions being made at the JMC level as it was a risk to life situation. What this deployment demonstrated was how the Reserve and Regular components work hand in glove with each other alongside the Local Resilience Partnerships.

It is important to note that 22% of military personnel committed to these tasks came from the Army Reserve. My own HQ leaned heavily upon Reservist expertise with almost all our day-to-day operational command being delivered by members of the Army Reserve working either in the Joint Military Command operations room or as embedded staff working from Scottish Government locations.

The reader would be forgiven for assuming that other activity took a back seat, but not at all. The HQ maintained its Defence Engagement commitments to the Middle East, and our battalions and regiments pursued busy training programmes seeing them exercise not only across the UK but also as far away as Serbia, Oman, Jordan and Kenya.

Just ahead of Christmas the Brigade received orders to re-shape under the Integrated Review. Since then, we've been working towards re-subordination of each of our

Regular and Reserve units to other Field Army commands. I shan't attempt to list all the changes, but of significance is the re-formation of 19 Brigade which will assume command of the majority of Reserve units. This new Brigade will be Commanded by an Army Reserve Brigadier and be principally staffed by Army Reservists.

As a result of the Integrated Review HQ 51 Infantry Brigade will evolve into a Devolved Administration Regional Point of Contact (RPOC), allowing us to focus exclusively upon delivery of the Firm Base in Scotland and, with fewer calls on our time from the Regular Army, enhance our involvement with the Cadet Force in Scotland. This streamlining of our Command and Control is overdue and welcome, and I relish the opportunity to dedicate more time and resources to the superb set of Army Cadet Force Battalions and Combined Cadet Force Contingents that we're blessed with here in Scotland.

Finally, my staff and the Lowland RFCA team have been engaged in the detail of the RFCA Estate Optimisation Plan (REOP). This change programme will refine how we utilise the Defence Estate in Scotland to the betterment of all. I've no doubt there will be points of friction but with the continued close cooperation between HQ 51 Infantry Brigade and L-RFCA we'll be left with an improved foundation for the next generation of Army Reservists and Cadets.

Yours aye
Ben



SCOTTISH & NORTH IRISH YEOMANRY RECEIVE THEIR NEWLY GRANTED FREEDOM OF EDINBURGH

WOMEN IN ENGINEERING WITH THE ARMY RESERVES

The Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers (REME) provides engineering support and is responsible for maintaining and repairing the Army's equipment. Lowland RFCA caught up with two inspiring and accomplished REME Reservists from 153 Recovery Company (Rec Coy) to find out about their Reservist experience, their civilian life, and how they ended up in the Army's engineering division.

OFFICER CADET ABBY SEMPLE



Who are you? Where are you from? What do you do?

My name is Abby Semple, I'm 23 and I live in Carlisle. I've got a two-year-old son, I have just graduated from Glasgow Caledonian University with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and I am a Reservist with 153 Rec Coy REME.

I'm currently completing my teacher training to become a Physics and Maths teacher.

Why did you want to become a Reservist?

I was very shy and figured I needed to challenge the other side of me, to stretch myself physically. So I decided that after university I would join the Regulars. However, life changed quite dramatically when I had my son two years ago and I did not want to be away from him for long periods of time. So when I saw there was a Reserve unit nearby

(153 Rec Coy), I joined it.

How do you balance being a mum and a Reservist?

Being a Reservist is a great accompaniment to being a mum. When I am away on training it feels like a real sacrifice. However, I enjoy it so much it feels worth it and it makes you appreciate what you have all the more. It also gives me a chance to focus on myself and my development.

Tell us a bit about your degree and your passion for engineering.

I found my degree really interesting, it was really varied and included a lot of problem-solving. Essentially that is what engineering is, finding the simplest solution to complex problems. My final year project involved trying to find sustainable energy solutions in third-world countries. Our focus was on power solutions for African healthcare providers in light of COVID-19. Vaccine centres need constant access to electricity for fridges and other equipment and it's a bit disastrous if the power cuts out. Our solution was to install mini-grids across Africa which would provide solar energy.

What's it like being a woman in engineering?

Whilst you are in the minority, I've never felt out of place and the guys I studied alongside were always really friendly. At the end of the day, we're all in the same boat and we all want to get through it together.



LANCE CORPORAL JADE HYNDS

Who are you? Where are you from? What do you do?

My name is Jade Hynds, I am 32, I am a Community Police Officer, and I live in Falkirk. After spending six years in the Regular Army as a dental nurse, I've now been in the Reserves for six years.

Why did you join the Army?

I joined the Regular Army to get away from the streets of Falkirk. I knew I needed a change of scene and the opportunity to break the negative cycle. So when I was asked to leave school at 15 and told not to return I joined the Army.

Was it a good decision?

Without a doubt. I was taught discipline and uniform standards, I was educated, I was given confidence and relational skills.

I joined up as a dental nurse because I wanted to gain a civilian qualification and I had an interest in teeth. By doing dental nursing I got my English and Maths Highers. I also read a whole book – I had never done that before!

AYRSHIRE RESERVIST IN KENYAN ADVENTURE

BY LANCE CORPORAL EWING -
SCOTTISH AND NORTH IRISH
YEOMANRY (SNIY)

It's not your usual Army adventure. When you join as a Reservist, you sign up to a specific trade and develop into that specific skill set. Join the REME (Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers) and you learn craft fitting and mechanics; join the infantry and you carve a knowledge of storming beach heads and close-quarters combat (CQB); join my regiment (SNIY) and you learn how to operate on the Jackal platform and to fulfil a reconnaissance role... So what would a chippy Reservist from a Recce troop know about dealing with the welfare of troops overseas? My name is Lance Corporal Ewing and I am currently the Welfare JNCO (Junior Non-Commissioned Officer) for British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK).

BATUK is primarily based in Nyati Barracks in Nanyuki, Laikipia county. Nanyuki is in the shadows of Mount Kenya. The BATUK contingent has 103 families (most of which are service personnel but there are some civil servants too) 193 children, 47 dogs and about 150-200 temporary duty staff (TDS); all of whom have contact with our small department.

The main effort of the BATUK team is to provide training in an arduous environment. Given that we are 1947 metres above sea level and right on the equator (never mind the lions, buffalo, elephants and hippos that just cut about like they own the place) it provides a naturally challenging environment.

You left the Army Regulars after six years, what did you do next?

Immediately after leaving I took on a full-time position with 153 REME (East Kilbride) as their Recruiting Officer. It was a great position and I learnt I was actually really good at recruiting people. In that role I learnt a lot about dealing with members of the public and I learnt how to speak to everyone. After a year, with the skills I gained, I was able to apply to become a police officer.

Why did you stick with the REME Reserves after you became a police officer?

I actually prefer being in the Reserves to being in the Regulars. Since being a Reservist I have travelled the world, I have challenged myself on hard exercises and I have gained so many useful life skills. I joined the REME because it was geographically the easiest Reserve unit to join, but as it turns out, I actually really enjoy learning about vehicles and mechanics. I was working one snowy Christmas and a taxi driver had slid and blown his tire. I was the only one who knew how to fix it, so I got stuck in and got it sorted for him. That was very satisfying! I had no interest in vehicles at first but I really enjoy it now.

My role here is quite expansive. I predominantly deal with the TDS and help provide relaxation opportunities. I help them find avenues to enjoy their free time and to help them function as normally as possible. Besides from the various administrative and strategic tasks to complete, I am also always on hand to encourage anyone struggling with the being so far from home, and then point them in the direction of the Welfare Officer.

So, you might ask, what would a Reservist know about this kind of engagement? Well, quite a bit actually. As with all Reservists, we bring a little extra something to the party from our civilian lives and experiences. Amongst other things, my background is in management within the hospitality sector. As such, speaking to people and dealing with multiple issues, forward planning, organisation, and relationship building is second nature. These skills have been exceptionally handy in this job.

You should now have a good idea of what occupies my days. We are a small team, just myself, the Senior Non-Commissioned Officer (SNCO), acting Unit Welfare Officer (UWO) and Padre. As such we are particularly busy, but that doesn't mean I haven't managed any time off to enjoy this beautiful country. I can safely say I have seen Africa's big five on a number of occasions and they never cease to amaze me. I have been canyoneering, enjoyed safari/night safari/helicopter safari, seen some of the most dramatic and beautiful areas of the country and have so much more to look forward to.



POSEIDON MRA 1 (P8A) ON THE TARMAC
AT RAF LOSSIEMOUTH

ROYAL AIR FORCE RESERVE UPDATE

SQUADRON LEADER SOHAIL B KHAN BSC

INTRO

Throughout the year, RAF units or individuals have been deployed on, or have contributed continuously to UK security and overseas Operations in Romania, Cyprus, the Middle East, Kosovo and the Falkland Islands. Concurrently, RAF personnel have supported UK authorities with assistance in COVID-19 pandemic measures and in maintaining fuel supplies, whilst coping with the impact of the pandemic.

Op RESCRIPT

RAF Regular and Reserve personnel provided wide assistance in the provision of COVID-19 testing facilities. Despite sustaining this and all of the above operations, Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) cover has been maintained 24/7, intercepting numerous incursions into UK airspace.

CHANGES

The RAF's Poseidon MRA 1 (P8A) programme has seen the successful arrival of all 9 P8 aircraft into the UK and aircraft are now conducting anti-submarine surveillance and search and rescue missions, filling the gap left when the Nimrod was retired. Part of this programme has seen the completion of a brand new £100M Strategic Facility at RAF Lossiemouth, in a collaboration between the RAF, Boeing and local constructors.

Poseidon will be joined by the E7 'Wedgetail' airborne and maritime surveillance aircraft in a further enhancement of the RAF in Scotland, making RAF Lossiemouth one of the most important military bases in the UK and, whilst the Station is based in the Highlands area, its operations and support to them links in personnel from across the Lowlands AOR.

FUTURE

Developments of the Next Generation RAF programme, together with the establishment of the UK Space Command, brings another new focus to the RAF in Scotland, with ongoing developments of Space facilities, primarily in the Highlands and Islands, but incorporating tech industry companies across the Central Belt and elsewhere. These developments, together with advances in military Cyber, Coding, Data-analytics and other technologies, will see growth between the RAF and Scottish industries and academia. To that end, collaborative events have been arranged, bringing the RAF together with industry, education, sustainability organisations and other vital stakeholders in advancing STEM, with a major event in Edinburgh held in Oct 21 and a programme of ongoing seminars planned. A restructure of RAF Reserves will see increases to the Reserve component and the development of 'Reserve Hubs', allowing greater efficiency and economy of effort in the administration and management of RAF Reserves. Finally, we look forward to the presentation in August of a Squadron Standard to 602 (City of Glasgow) Squadron, emblazoned with all of that famous Squadron's Battle Honours.

SUMMARY

The past year has been extremely busy for the RAF in Scotland and especially for those units in the Lowlands AOR, despite the difficulties posed by COVID-19 measures. The successes of the units and people can only add to ongoing developments in all areas of technology, foretelling an exciting future for the RAF in Scotland.





EXERCISE READINESS BULL

In September 2021, RAF Reservists joined their Regular colleagues at Kinloss Barracks, Moray, to take part in Exercise Readiness Bull as part of their Annual Continuous Training (ACT).

Exercise Readiness Bull was designed to simulate a real-life deployment over a 15-day period and gives Reservists an opportunity to train and to develop skills they might well need should they be deployed.

Flight Lieutenant Dalziel of 603 (City of Edinburgh) Squadron RAF Reserves said: 'Exercise Readiness Bull is an exercise conducted by our Reserve Squadrons here at RAF Kinloss. The purpose of this is to simulate going through the pre-deployment, the deployment and the recuperation phases. It gives our Reservists an insight into the whole deployment process, it allows us to bring our Squadrons together, and we can offer a greater quality of training for all of our Reservists.'

Group Captain Layden, Station Commander RAF Lossiemouth, had the opportunity to visit the training and said: 'It is a focused period of two weeks where they have the opportunity to cut away from their civilian jobs to focus not just on basic soldiering skills, but to develop specialist training needs. This might include medical services in a combat environment, logistics, force protection, and many other things that contribute to making air power work.'

The RAF had invited a number of guests from both within and outwith the organisation, including an assortment of Forces-friendly employers, to observe the training and to get a sense of how valuable this sort of training is for Reservists on a special VIP day.

Stefan Gryzbowski, the Early Years Career Lead at Police Scotland and Lowland RFCA Member, was invited to attend the day. Police Scotland do a lot to actively advocate for the Armed Forces and to help Reservists manage their civilian and Defence responsibilities. Stefan commented: 'Police Scotland really do find the value in sending people onto these ACT exercises, whether it be in the UK or whether it be overseas. The Reservists benefit so much from training with their Regular counterparts, taking what they've learnt in the classroom and translating that onto the field.'

Also in attendance was Air Marshal Sir David Walker, Honorary Air Commodore 603 Squadron. Sir David emphasised how critical the relationship is between Defence and employers, and celebrated how mutually beneficial training exercises are such as Exercise Readiness Bull. He said: 'I think for the employer there's a real enrichment of the individual. I know there are so many employers in Scotland who are signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant, and they do it for a reason! These employers are prepared to let their Reservist employees go away on Exercises because they know they will come back better and more capable, whatever environment they are in.'

Lowland RFCA were very pleased to be able to attend and support the event. Whilst it was obvious the Reservists were being upskilled and challenged, it was also evident how powerful it was to invite employers to such an event. The employers saw first hand how Reservists make the most of their ACT, and couldn't help but be impressed by what they saw and by those they spoke to.

EMPLOYERS ON VISIT TO RAF LOSSIEMOUTH

Employers and guests from both the Lowlands and Highlands of Scotland came together in March 2022 for a unique and exciting visit to the Royal Air Force (RAF) station in Lossiemouth. The visitors enjoyed an opportunity to meet with Reservists, gain an insight into the Station's inner workings, and catch a glimpse of the RAF's latest generations of Quick Response Alert (QRA) and Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA).

Following a warm welcome in the Officers' Mess, the guests moved across to the Atlantic Building, RAF Lossiemouth's strategic facility that also houses its new Poseidon aircraft. Between talks from the station staff on the future of the E-7 Wedgetail vessels (an advanced fleet of QRA aircraft capable of tracking multiple airborne and maritime targets simultaneously) and the capabilities of the Poseidon fleet, visitors were thrilled to have a walk-round of a Boeing Poseidon MRA1 (P8-A) in the Atlantic Building hangar.

With a wingspan of over 123ft and capable of reaching a maximum speed of 907km per hour, the Poseidon is a specialised MPA fitted with state-of-the-art sensors used in submarine detection and search and rescue operations.

Visiting employers, which included representatives from Brodie Engineering and Scottish Engineering, also had a chance to meet and chat with Reservists working at the station. The Reservists detailed the diverse skills and qualifications they have acquired through their RAF service and how they can benefit their civilian employers.

'I am very much a supporter of the Reservists,' said Gerry Hilferty, Managing Director of Brodie Engineering, 'and I think there's very much a two-way street with them. I can understand the military benefits that the Reservists have, but there's also a benefit that employers receive through the experience they have.'

The afternoon at RAF Lossiemouth concluded with a visit to 1(F) Squadron where, after an introductory talk on the Squadron's history and recent overseas activities, the guests were given a close-up tour of a Typhoon FGR fighter jet, which proved to be a big hit for many in attendance and a popular topic of discussion over dinner in the Officers' Mess that same evening.

'The absolute highlight for me of the day was looking in the cockpit of the Typhoon and looking at the handle for pulling the ejector seat and listening to the technology behind it,' said Paul Sheerin, Chief Executive of Scottish Engineering.

'I put my head through that thinking, "How do you not have a situation where you are either pulling it too early or too late? How do you get that training to the point where you are so highly skilled that you know when it is the absolute critical moment when that is the right thing to do?" That was a big "Wow!" moment for me.'

Flight Lieutenant Terry Cowan, Adjutant for 2622 Squadron based at RAF Lossiemouth said: 'The aim of today was to show employers what the Regular Service does and provide that as a platform to promote what Reserves do and what Reserves can bring to employers and their companies. It is very easy to say "Oh, they pick up guns and they do guard" but it is to show all the other aspects - the leadership, the management - and indeed how they impact on different jobs and what we can do to look after both Reservists and companies that take them on.'



EMPLOYERS WITH A TYPHOON FIGHTER JET
@MOD CROWN COPYRIGHT



MAKING THE MOST OF A UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

Deciding how to make the most of one's time at university can sometimes feel a bit daunting. Fortunately, most universities have military units attached to them which can give students the most extraordinary experiences. With land (University Officer Training Corps, UOTC), sea (University Royal Naval Units, URNU) and air (University Air Squadrons, UAS) units throughout Scotland, students have the opportunity to participate in military themed activities and training, to get paid for their involvement and to make special bonds which can last a lifetime.

To give you an insight into these special student units, we spoke to some of their members from universities across the East and West of Scotland.

- Name: Nick Lilley
- Unit: City of Edinburgh UOTC
- Rank: Officer Cadet
- Age: 20

Why did you join the UOTC?

'The big draw for me was adventurous training but once I got involved in October 2020 I found the weekend exercises great fun, all the while getting paid for it!'

What do you enjoy most about being part of the UOTC?

'The amount of opportunities provided by the UOTC is immense. I've been lucky enough to complete the Basic Army Reserve Physical Training Instructors Course which allows me to conduct PT (Personal Training) sessions at the unit. I also got to work at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival with Army at The Fringe, engaging with both the public and performers alike, a fantastic time which I will remember fondly.'

- Name: Abbie McKelvie
- Unit: East of Scotland UAS
- Rank: Officer Cadet

Why did you join the UAS?

'I had never heard of the University Air Squadron before, it was just by chance their stand caught my eye at the Freshers' Fair. The girl at the stand said you get paid to do cool stuff such as flying, adventurous training, sports, and so much more. I was sold before she even mentioned getting paid. I became even more determined to join when I heard about all the opportunities on offer: flying lessons, expeditions, bursary options and training, to name but a few.'

What do you enjoy most about being part of the UAS?

'Adventurous training has been a definite highlight for me and it has pushed me very far out of my comfort zone. The first course I did was a ten-day rock climbing foundation course – I was a bag of nerves. Since then I have managed to jump out a plane four times, abseiled the Forth Road Bridge and can climb with confidence. I was also given the opportunity to be a service steward at Wimbledon, which is by far the best job I have ever had.'



- Name: Anthony Anderson
- Unit: Glasgow and Strathclyde URNU
- Age: 21

Why did you join the URNU?

'I decided to join the URNU because I had an interest in power boating and sailing and when I heard about the opportunity to be paid for activities such as sailing, adventurous training and sport, I was instantly attracted. I also had a slight interest in the Royal Navy so I thought it would be a good way to get an insight into the military.'

What do you enjoy most about being part of the URNU?

'I really enjoy the friendships that I have made. Everyone joins with similar core values to yourself and so you know that you can trust them and have a good time with like-minded people to forge friendships that will last even after university. My highlights of the URNU so far would definitely be doing a two-week expedition across to the Channel islands and France and also being a part of the first URNU team to complete in the Nijmegen marches – the largest multiple day marching event in the world set in Netherlands – over the summer in 2018.'



“

'Everyone joins with similar core values to yourself and so you know that you can trust them and have a good time with like-minded people to forge friendships that will last even after university.' Officer Cadet Anthony Anderson



CADET REPORT

ELAINE FERGUSON
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

It has been a difficult time for us all over the last two years. The restrictions placed on us have had a big impact on Cadet training and delivery. Since taking up this post seven months ago, I have been amazed at how much has been achieved over the last two years and want to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved. It has not been an easy journey but thanks to great drive and determination (and IT skills) the Cadet experience is still being delivered and is as strong as ever. It is particularly fantastic to see training resume to some sort of normality. Face-to-face training has started again, as well as residential and activity-based training. Meanwhile Professional Support Staff, Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) and Cadets are enthusiastically preparing for summer camp, which all are looking forward to.

The last year has been peppered with a great number of selfless acts from both the Cadets and the CFAVs. These have received both internal and external recognition and could easily fill this entire report. This demonstrates the quality of the people within the Cadet organisations and exemplifies how their invaluable training equips them to help their community. Such transferable skills and training are also seen, time and time again, to further the individual in both education and employment.

In 2019, the Ministry of Defence commissioned the University of Northampton (Professor Simon Denny) to research the social impact resulting from expenditure in the Cadets. The resulting paper was published in 2021, but due to the pandemic, did not include a Scottish Annex.

Working in partnership with the three Cadet Services, the University of Northampton, and Professor Simon Denny, Lowland and Highland RFCAs have commissioned a bespoke Scottish paper which is due to be delivered in the coming months.

This is a particularly exciting project as it will give us a document that quantifies and qualifies what we all already know; that the Cadet experience prepares our youth for the future and produces confident, trained, and skilled individuals. This sort of investment doesn't just benefit the individual, but brings great value to Scotland and its communities.



ARMY CADET FORCE

COMMANDANTS COIN FOR CADET HEROES

Two Army Cadets have been honoured for their heroics after aiding injured members of the public.

Cadet Lance Corporal (LCpl) Glenn McIntyre, of Alma Company, Lothian and Borders Army Cadets, was training at his local gym in Edinburgh, when a 19-year-old male appeared to have been the victim of a hit and run incident. Seeing the man lying on the ground, Glenn went to administer first aid to the young man who was coughing up blood and was lapsing in and out of consciousness. Glenn called an ambulance and the young man's mother to alert her to the incident and remained with the casualty until the police and ambulance arrived.

Cadet LCpl Ben McGrath also of Alma Company, Lothian and Borders Battalion ACF, was on his way to Cadets when he witnessed a disabled man take a nasty fall outside a Post Office. Along with another young man, they offered assistance, checked him over, then accompanied him to his home and settled him in safely before Ben continued on his way. Thankfully the man wasn't seriously injured so medical assistance wasn't required.

Thanks to their ACF training, experience and qualifications both Glenn and Ben made an incredible contribution to society and were rightly awarded a Commandants Coin.

'BEST DECISION OF MY LIFE' - AMY BAIRD

Popular Cadet and teenager Cadet Sergeant Major Amy Baird has aged out as Cadet Sergeant Major of Inkerman Company, West Lowland Battalion Army Cadet Force.

During her time with West Lowland Battalion, Amy became a Master Cadet, 4 Star, earned a BTEC Level 2 diploma in Teamwork and Personnel Development (or Public Services) and represented the Battalion in drill, sports, first aid competitions, and trips abroad.

In a tribute to her Cadet Experience, Amy said: 'These guys were my family, I struggled and they struggled with me... Ayr detachment is the place to be, to build your bestest of friends and happiest memories. I have always encouraged Cadets to be in the ACF. It was the best decision of my life.'

She leaves the Battalion, briefly, to pursue a career as a paramedic and will shortly be returning to Fusilier House HQ West Lowland Battalion to complete her application to become a CFAV.



'I have always encouraged Cadets to be in the ACF. It was the best decision of my life.' CSM Amy Baird

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NEW COLONEL CADETS SCOTLAND APPOINTED

Scotland Headquarters 51st Infantry Brigade has appointed Colonel Alex McNamee as the new Colonel Cadets.

Colonel McNamee took on the new role from Colonel Pat O'Meara on 1 October 2021 after spending over 32 years as a CFAV with Glasgow and Lanarkshire Battalion Army Cadet Force (ACF) and West Lowland Battalion ACF.

The role of Colonel Cadets involves being the subject matter adviser to the Brigade Commander on Cadet matters throughout Scotland and to be the voice of the Commandants and contingent Commanders in Brigade and Regional Command.

Colonel McNamee joined the ACF in 1975 as a Cadet at B Cameronians detachment in Pollokshaws where he spent four years gaining 3 Star and the Corporal rank. He left to join the Regular Army at 16 years old and joined the Royal Signals as a junior soldier, going on to serve for just under eight years.

He rejoined the ACF as an Adult Instructor with the Glasgow and Lanarkshire Battalion in 1988. And while he had a four-year stint as Company Commander with West Lowland Battalion ACF, he rose up the ranks and took on a variety of roles before he was appointed Commandant of his local Battalion in 2016.

Lowland RFCA caught up with Colonel McNamee to find out more about his new appointment.

How did the appointment of Colonel Cadets Scotland come about?

The role became vacant as Colonel Pat O'Meara was coming to the end of his five-year tenure and, as I was near the end of my tenure (as Commandant), I felt it was the next logical step for me.

Why did you want the role?

I have always been interested in ensuring that our Cadets are looked after and given the opportunities available to them to make sure that their time in the Cadets is the best it can be. I believe that in the Colonel Cadets role I will be best placed to continue to do that.

How does the job compare to your previous role?

It is completely different in that there is more time spent looking at the strategy and governance rather than commanding Cadets on a day-to-day basis. It is also Scotland-wide rather than just the Glasgow and Lanarkshire Battalion area.

How would you reflect on your time as Commandant of Glasgow and Lanarkshire Battalion?

Being Commandant was the highlight of my career so far, to be able to see all those Cadets achieve and become good citizens is so rewarding. The Permanent Support Staff (PSS) and CFAVs put so much time into making the Battalion successful that I can't thank them enough. Especially during the last 18 months of the pandemic it made me proud to be Commandant during this time.

What are your plans going forward in your new job?

I am still getting to grips with the requirements of the new role but the aim is to ensure that every member of the ACF in Scotland, be that Cadet, PSS or CFAV get the best possible experience from their time in the Cadet Forces and go away with good memories of fun and friendship.



SEA CADETS ON A MISSION

A group of Sea Cadets discovered and disposed of nearly 20 bags' worth of litter during a mission to clean up their local beach.

Members of the Dunbar Sea Cadet unit took to the seaside at Pease Bay Beach on Saturday, 22 May, 2021 in one of their first community events of the year.

The Cadets, aged 10-18, joined CFAVs to collect litter during the tidy-up at the beach in the Scottish Borders, a bay situated at Verdant Leisure Park and close to the border with East Lothian as well as Cockburnspath, Cove and Dunglass.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the environmental expedition was the first opportunity the Dunbar unit had got to say thank you to Verdant Leisure Park CEO Graham Hodgson, who donated 60 high visibility vests to the youth organisation.

Dunbar Sea Cadets Commanding Officer and CFAV, Chief Petty Officer Martin Galloway, said:

'The Sea Cadets have been involved with this beach clean in partnership with the Pease Bay Leisure Park. The company that donated our high visibility jackets - Verdant Leisure - who own the park, donated them free of charge so as a thank you we decided to do a beach clean on one of their parks.

'Every year we look to do as many community events as we can to make an environmental impact and to make a difference.'

The donation of vests will allow the unit's Cadets and volunteers to feel safer when carrying out activities. Each year the Sea Cadets aim to achieve 1,290 hours of boating for Cadets and at times have to walk the boats down to the harbour, which includes travelling on busy roads. This extra added protection will allow them to keep all personnel safe and be seen.

Having recently joined Keep Scotland Beautiful - a charity which aims to improve Scotland's environment, combat climate change, tackle litter and waste - Dunbar Sea Cadets are continuously on the lookout to find new ways of protecting the sea and their local environment.

Cadet Hannah said: 'We are doing a beach clean by picking up all the litter as we want to help the environment. We can all do something to help, even by just not dropping our rubbish and letting it go into the sea.'

Cadet Natalie said: 'I'm currently completing my Duke of Edinburgh's Award and I've been litter picking for that. I heard about this litter picking event today and I knew I needed to come down and help. There are lots of volunteers who have come down to help too.'



PORT EDGAR BOAT STATION OPENED BY HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS ROYAL



On Friday the 1st April, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, Admiral of the Sea Cadets, attended the official opening of the brand new Sea Cadet Port Edgar Boat Station in South Queensferry.

The fantastic new boating and residential venue is an incredible state-of-the-art facility which will give Sea Cadets from across the United Kingdom more opportunities to enjoy the water.

After being greeted by a fantastic performance by The Royal Marines Band, HRH witnessed the Cadets take part in drill and watersports. Following a tour of the new facility, HRH enjoyed cutting a large cake with three Sea Cadets and unveiling the commemorative plaque.

On her first official engagement as Admiral of the Sea Cadets, The Princess Royal commented that the new boat station was 'an exceptional place' and expressed her hope that Port Edgar Boat Station 'will be home for many generations of Sea Cadets.' She also praised the charity for the opportunities it offers to young people, telling the cadets: 'Sea Cadets has quite a history - a history that you keep adding to'.

Captain Neil Downing (Captain Sea Cadets), was also in attendance and set the scene for how crucial the new facility was for the Sea Cadets. He said: 'This location is perfect to learn how to row and sail. It used to be far from the water with basic facilities. The new boat station brings ideal water access, training and residential opportunities.

'With the £1.65 million investment, we hope more Scottish Cadets will be able to achieve a minimum of 30 hours of boating a year. With 34 existing units within two hours of Port Edgar Boat Station, this facility is ideally located.'

'This is all part of our commitment to reaffirming the "Sea" in "Sea Cadets".'

Able Cadet Hutchinson, a local to Port Edgar, also took to the stage to extol her Cadet experience and to explain what Port Edgar Boat Station means to her.

Having first attended when she was 12, pre-pandemic, she found the facility to be like a big extended family. Over the years she gained various qualifications and since restrictions have eased she has clocked up over 200 hours of sailing at the Boat Station.

Hutchinson said: 'I enjoy sailing as there's no better feeling of being out on the water having fun with like-minded friends, enjoying the peace of the sea, and escaping everyday life.'

As well as offering plenty of off-shore opportunities (rowing, sailing, kayaking, paddleboarding, powerboating, and windsurfing), Hutchinson was keen to point out that Port Edgar also gave Cadets a multitude of on-shore experiences, such as catering and mountain biking.

She closed her impressive speech by saying: 'Port Edgar Boat Station must be one of the best facilities in the country. No two weekends are the same and you're always made to feel welcome.'

From the smiles on the guests' faces, to the pride with which the Cadets paraded, it was evident that all in attendance were thoroughly impressed by not just the new facility, but the Sea Cadets programme itself.



PHOTOGRAPHS: ROYAL NAVY

ACHIEVING WITH THE AIR CADETS

Kieran Harkness, a third-year engineering apprentice from Livingston, is flourishing both at work and in his personal life. In his opinion, he owes that to his Air Cadet experience, both past and present. We caught up with Kieran to discuss why he loves what he's doing, and to talk about the impact the Cadet organisation has made on his life.

Tell us about the apprenticeship you are currently doing?

I am currently working for Engineered Foam Products (formerly known as D S Smith Plastics) as an apprentice. The company specialises in making polystyrene packaging and construction materials. I want to be an engineer, so this apprenticeship is perfect because I get lots of hands-on experience and constant mentoring from my colleagues.

What do you love about your apprenticeship?

From my earliest days of playing with Lego, I've always loved building things and fabrication. My apprenticeship is great because my employer gives me projects where I get to do exactly that. For example, I might be given a design on a piece of paper; I then get the time and the materials to make the design come to life. It's really satisfying, and I go home with a smile on my face. I would thoroughly recommend an apprenticeship as you get to learn, and get paid at the same time.

How did you get the apprenticeship?

When I was 18 I was working as a kitchen porter, and I was a little lost as to what to do next. However, one of the Cadet Staff members told me that his company was going to be looking for an engineering apprentice. I jumped at the opportunity, went for an interview, and got the job.

Did your Cadet experience make an impact on you wanting to get into engineering?

When I joined the Cadets (2535 Livingston Squadron ATC) I didn't really know what I wanted to do. However, I got an offer to go on a week-long STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) course at RAF Lossiemouth, where we would learn about what role STEM plays in the Royal Air Force. That really piqued my interest, and led me to taking up light vehicle mechanics at school. The more I got involved with Cadets, the more STEM I did, as we were given so many cool and practical opportunities.

Did being a Cadet help you land the job?

Firstly, Cadets gave me a network. So practically speaking, it was a Cadet contact that alerted me to the job and my Commanding Officer who wrote one of my references. Secondly, Cadets gave me a real interest in engineering and STEM in general. Thirdly, Cadets allowed me to gain qualifications like the Duke of Edinburgh Award, which made me stand out as a candidate. I was also able to talk about my amazing Cadet experience at the interview, which gave me an edge. Fourthly, being a Cadet gave me real-life skills which have prepared me for the world of work.

How did being a Cadet help you with your apprenticeship?

As a Cadet you go to events, you are given tasks, you're both a team player and a role model. All of this means you learn organisational skills, how to complete paperwork, time-keeping, planning, and flexibility. I thought being a Cadet was just about rolling about in the mud, marksmanship, and drill. We do all those things, and we have a lot of fun, but it's so much more. I never would have guessed that going to the hut on a Monday and Thursday has ended up helping me build a career in something that I really like to do.

You're now a volunteer with your former Air Cadet Squadron. Why did you decide to go back?

The Cadets gave me skills, happy memories and helped me transition from being a child to an adult. How could I not want to give back? Lots of young people don't make the most of their time, wasting it on an Xbox or getting into trouble. The Cadet organisation gives them so much more, and I want to be involved in showing the young people that they have lots of potential. I'm always telling them that if they take every opportunity, and that if they put the work in, they can begin to build their future now and then later, they can enjoy the fruits of their labour. I love being a volunteer, I love doing my apprenticeship, and I'm just really enjoying living an honest life.



AIR CADET LEARNS TO FLY PLANE

An Air Cadet was given the opportunity to learn how to fly a plane through a scholarship thanks to the Royal Air Force Air Cadets.

Cadet Warrant Officer Lewis McCallum, of 498 Wishaw Squadron, completed the Air Cadet Pilot Scheme (ACPS) and achieved his Gold Aviation Wings at Tayside Aviation Ltd, Dundee.

This fantastic opportunity saw Lewis complete a solo flight which has inspired him to become a pilot.

He explained: 'ACPS is one of the flying scholarships available to Air Cadets who are motivated to pursue a career in aviation. I was there for two weeks and completed 12 hours of flying in an Acquilla 211.



'I initially learned basic controls, then ascending and descending, and eventually moved onto landing and taking off. I was also taught about air law. The course is designed to get Cadets to solo standard and culminates in the Cadet flying a solo circuit. After I had done this I was awarded my Gold Wings.

'ACPS is one of the best courses available at the Air Cadets and has made me even more certain that I want a career as a pilot.

'This course is the foundation of a pilot career. All the flying hours can be used towards a private pilot's license and I will now be applying for other scholarships to hopefully continue flying.'

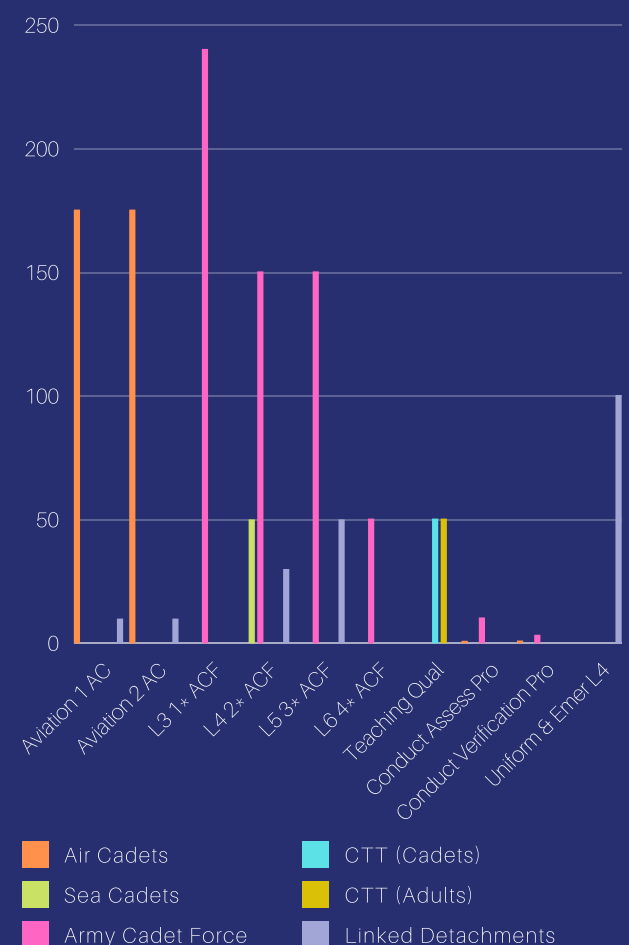
SQA 2021-2022

We now have the 'Matrix' which includes custom made awards. This is a suite of qualifications that has been mapped across to the Cadet Force Syllabus ensuring that every Army Cadet has the opportunity to gain a SQA Qualification for each Cadet Award (Star) level that they complete. Work is still ongoing with the mapping of a qualification to the Master Cadet level.

Customised awards have also been created to suit the Air Cadets syllabus. These are called Aviation Practice 1 and 2; they map exactly to training that is already ongoing. When Cadets complete these awards they have the potential to leave the Air Cadets with an extra 40 credit points. Work continues on developing a third award to match their Senior Cadet syllabus.

Cadet Force Adult Volunteers are also busy achieving SQAs in Training and Delivery, Leadership and Conducting Assessment and Verification Processes.

PROJECTED AWARDS 22-23 (APRIL TO MARCH)



A SPOTLIGHT ON BROXBURN ACADEMY LINKED DETACHMENT

In June 2012, the UK Government introduced the Cadet Expansion Programme (CEP) to give school children access to the Cadet experience. Part of this initiative was to launch Linked Detachments (LD), whereby schools could have a resident Cadet unit. The LD model has been championed by Head Teachers who understand the great value the Cadet experience can bring to their pupils. Broxburn Academy has been the home to a LD since August 2012. Peter Reid, the Head Teacher, took some time to answer some questions for us on the programme and the value he sees for his young people.'

Why did the school agree to have a LD?

We recognised the opportunities to engage a group of pupils who weren't coping well with academic classes. Having said that, because we were building on an already well-established partnership with our local Army Cadet Force detachment, a wide range of abilities and backgrounds have been incorporated into the unit.

How many students have been part of the LD?

In total around 200 Cadets have been part of the detachment. In 2021-2022 we had 39 pupils from S1 - S6.

Who facilitates the running of the detachment?

We have a combination of teachers and non-teachers (volunteers) who participate in overseeing Cadet activity. These Linked Detachment Instructors (LDIs) have been upskilled by virtue of the Cadet programme, and through opportunities we offer at school.

How visible is the Cadet unit to others in the school?

On parade days, Cadets change into their uniform and wear it about the school, just as they might change for PE. Throughout the year we also invite the Cadets to parade in uniform for Remembrance, Broxburn/Uphall Gala Day, and at Christmas.

What feedback have you had from parents/guardians of the students that are Cadets?

All the feedback we've received has been really positive. It's usually about how much better behaved the students are, how better mannered they are, and also about how much more capable they are of looking after themselves and getting themselves ready and organised for the day.

Overall, do you value the LD?

The detachment is valued very highly and is definitely at the heart of our school.



THE CARAS 2021

The CARAs (Cadet Adult Recognition Awards) are Cadet nominated awards which recognise and thank Cadet Force Adult Volunteers within the Cadet Services in the Lowlands of Scotland.

With thousands of CFAVs across the Lowlands, tirelessly committed to ensuring Cadets get the most out of their Cadet experience, the CARAs gives the Cadets an opportunity to say a big thank you to their leaders.

In the summer of 2021, Lowland RFCA was delighted to host the second CARAs. The ceremony was broadcast from Port Edgar Boat Station, the new state-of-the-art sailing facility for the Sea Cadets just north of Edinburgh.

In total there were ten awards, all sponsored by a local Lowland business. This year's sponsors were: ScottishPower, Forrest Precision Engineering, Scotia Surface Hardening, Sked Construction, Virtue Recruitment Services Ltd, GalloGlas Security and Logistics, James McVicar Print Works, Impress, BD Print and Rangers Charity Foundation.

This year's winners were:

- Glasgow & Lanarkshire Winner: PI Sean Deary
- Glasgow & Lanarkshire Runner-Up: Captain Alex Stirling
- Lothians & Borders Winner: SSI Steven Murphy
- Lothians & Borders Runner-Up: Sgt Amanda Jack
- West Lowland Winner: SMI Gary Wakelam
- West Lowland Runner-Up: SMI Jonny Marshall
- Air Cadets Winner (1): Flt Lt Suzanne Callan
- Air Cadets Winner (2): Flt Lt Bill Taylor
- East Sea Cadets Winner: Sgt Paul Hendry
- West Sea Cadets Winner: Lt Cdr Jim Hearl

It was tremendously humbling to hear what receiving a CARA meant to the CFAVs. In his acceptance speech Captain Alex Stirling said: 'It's great because it is coming from the Cadets, not anybody else, and that means quite a lot to me. We are, after all, here for the Cadets, they're what it's all about, the Cadet experience!'

On what it meant to be nominated by the Cadets, Sgt Amanda Jack said: 'I think it's important that the Cadets nominate the adults, because it shows the Cadets do have appreciation for what their CFAVS put in, it shows it doesn't go unnoticed by the Cadets.'

Flt Lt Suzanne Callan noted how after COVID-19, the award was particularly meaningful: 'This year has been quite difficult with COVID-19. We've had to adapt to online training sessions and we have had to prepare our building for the return... It's been a really difficult year so this little bit of recognition means an awful lot'.

In a typically self-effacing manner, all of the CFAVs were stunned to have won the award. Lieutenant Commander Jim Hearl exclaimed: 'I'm extremely honoured and pleased to receive this award... It was an absolute surprise... when I was phoned I was taken aback and really pleased that my Cadets recognise the activities, effort, and time that is put into running the organisation.'

All in all, the campaign and ceremony were a real highlight after a long few years of limited Cadet activity and engagement. We look forward to hosting the CARAs 2022 and are excited to see that other RFCA regions intend to replicate the awards scheme.

#BringOnCARAs2022



'It shows the Cadets do have appreciation for what their CFAVS put in, it shows it doesn't go unnoticed by the Cadets.' Sgt Amanda Jack

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ENGAGEMENT REPORT

COLIN VOOGHT
HEAD OF ENGAGEMENT

I would begin by saying what a year that was but I think that comment should be assigned to 2020/21; considering the initial stages of the pandemic and the considerable tragedies and difficulties that we all dealt with. My overwhelming takeaway is that the National Health Service is nothing short of fantastic and we all owe them a considerable debt.

From May last year we saw COVID-19 measures relaxed, followed by the emergence of Omicron, and the re-establishment of some of those measures that remain with us now. All of this made planning and the execution of any engagement changeable!

For the Engagement team this has meant a continual alteration of direction in order to try and find innovative ways to communicate, engage, and sustain our relationships with employers, communities, and those we seek to influence. The team has done a fabulous job over the two years and I am immensely proud of them.

Hybrid meetings have now become routine, which has opened up the variety of both speakers and audiences across the Lowlands. Sometimes the technology does make things difficult but on reflection, what a considerable way we have come from February 2020.

The Communications team has been at the forefront of our activity as virtual offices, meetings, and awards ceremonies have called for a far more precise level of messaging.

Fortunately, we were able to stage two Employer Recognition Scheme Award ceremonies. The Silvers were held with an Association reception in the National Museum of Scotland Edinburgh, whilst the Castle was the venue for the Golds. Both proved to be fabulous locations, providing the perfect settings for these prestigious events.

With the help of Edinburgh and Glasgow Councils we were also able to hold two Lord-Lieutenant Award ceremonies to recognise meritorious service by Reserves and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers. These are always popular events for the families of the recipients and their parent units; the perfect opportunity for their hometown to recognise their contribution.

The Cadet Adult Recognition Awards (CARAs)

continue to grow in popularity and this year was no exception. One of the most humbling stories of the pandemic has been the commitment shown by the adults charged with the delivery of the Cadet programme. Their continued engagement with the young people helped to maintain commitment, kept friendships alive, and brought something interesting to the young people when they were stuck at home for most of the day. The CARAs were born out of this environment and gives the Cadets an opportunity to thank the Cadet Force Adult Volunteers. The winners are then selected by a panel consisting of Employers (who sponsor the awards) and senior Cadets.

Turning to statistics and against all predictions our numbers of Armed Forces Covenants and Employer Recognition Scheme Awards have continued to increase. As I write, the numbers stand at:

- Armed Forces Covenants (And Bronze ERS by default): 320
- Silver Awards: 50
- Gold Awards: 26

It is also worthy of note that we have a further ten Gold nominations for this year with an additional 2 revalidations. There are potentially another 26 Silver with ten revalidations all of which are keeping the Employer Engagement team very busy.

I would like to end by reporting our increasing success with Social Media. During the pandemic we have raised our presence on all of our platforms and there is little doubt that this is helping to raise the profile of the Reserves and Cadets in the Lowlands.





GLORIOUS GOLDS AT THE CASTLE

After a scaled-down campaign in 2020, we were delighted to celebrate the 2021 Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold and Silver Awards in person.

Breaking away from ERS tradition, this year's Gold Awards moved out of London, giving the regions the opportunity to host their own unique events. Teaming up with our Highland and North of England colleagues, Lowland RFCA welcomed winners and guests to a stunning reception in the Great Hall of Edinburgh Castle on Thursday 21 October.

The winners' certificates were presented by Chief of Defence People Lieutenant General James Swift, and the evening closed with a performance by two Pipers from George Heriot's School.

Lowland RFCA would like to congratulate all of this year's winners, and to thank them for their continued support of the Armed Forces community.

WINNERS

Annan Athletic Football Club:

Having received the ERS Silver Award last year, Annan Athletic FC has demonstrated an outstanding level of commitment in challenging times. Its staff includes three-

ex-Forces members, and the club promotes events such as Armed Forces Day in its match day programmes and across its social media platforms.

NHS Ayrshire & Arran:

Like many of its counterparts up and down the United Kingdom, NHS Ayrshire & Arran has gone above and beyond during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board's Armed Forces Champion assisted with the planning and execution of Defence networking events that were deemed a great success by all involved; additionally, these events raised the profile of Defence amongst hospital patients and visitors, and Specialist Defence Medical Units have since returned to make contact with specialist clinicians required by the Reserves.



'Even though we have won Gold, we have no intention in slowing down our efforts to support and promote Defence.' Phip Jones, Annan Athletic FC Chairman

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NHS Lanarkshire:

As a show of the great collaboration efforts between Health and Defence, NHS Lanarkshire released members of its staff for mobilisation during the pandemic, and backed recruiting operations for 205 Field Hospital Reserve Unit. Additionally, NHS Lanarkshire has established a unique Health Service for past and present service personnel, managed by former and current Defence Medical Services staff.

NHS National Services Scotland:

Despite the numerous challenges that all NHS staff have faced recently, NHS Services Scotland has been resolute in promoting its support for the Reserve and Cadet Forces. NHS National Services Scotland is delighted that those in leadership roles within its workforce have witnessed first hand the resilience and efficiency of their military counterparts, and are more resolved than ever to consider them as candidates for employment going forward.

ScottishPower:

In 2021, ScottishPower took several steps to underscore its reputation as a Forces friendly employer, increasing paid training leave for Reservists and CFAVs from 5 to 10 days and sponsoring Lowland RFCA's CARAs. ScottishPower currently employs 11 Reservists and a CFAV, and maintains a strong partnership with the Army's 153 Field Company 102 Battalion REME.



“

Our commitment is exhibited both in terms of delivery of health services for Armed Forces personnel and veterans as well as support for employment of our Reserves and veterans.’ NHS Lanarkshire's Craig Cunningham



Taylor Wimpey PLC

Taylor Wimpey PLC achieved the ERS Silver Award in 2020 in recognition of its incredible support for the Armed Forces community. It regularly advertises job vacancies through CTP, the REME Jobs Association and at local unit recruitment events, and offers roles to spouses and relatives of serving Armed Forces members.

Virtue Recruitment Services Ltd.:

Virtue Recruitment Services Ltd.'s reputation for being a Forces friendly business was highlighted in 2020 when it received the ERS Silver Award, acknowledging the company's support for serving Reservists by providing additional leave for training days, and for appointing an Armed Forces mentor to improve the workplace transition process for service leavers. Externally, Virtue Recruitment Services Ltd. actively promotes support for the Armed Forces among other companies within its network.

West Lothian Council:

Many Scottish councils are proud advocates of fair and respectful treatment for Armed Forces members and their families, and West Lothian Council is a glowing example of this mentality. The council takes active steps to promote employment of Reservists, for example by appointing an Armed Forces Champion and by registering vacancies with CTP (Career Transition Partnership). West Lothian is also a keen and visible presence at Lowland RFCA events, and participates in both internal and external Remembrance campaigns.



SILVER EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME AWARDS 2021

The 2021 Silver ERS Awards was Lowland RFCA's first major face-to-face event in well over a year, so it naturally had to be a special one. Set within the stunning Grand Gallery at Edinburgh's National Museum of Scotland, the joint award ceremony and Association meeting was a welcome chance for employers and members of Lowland's Armed Forces community to meet and mingle away from the Zoom screen.

WINNERS

Arnold Clark Group:

The Arnold Clark Group is a well-known nationwide chain of motor dealerships. Founded in 1954, Arnold Clark is currently Scotland's largest private enterprise. Since signing the Armed Forces Covenant in 2018, Arnold Clark has taken numerous steps to fulfil and even surpass its pledges to the Armed Forces community.

Defence Gardens Scheme:

The Defence Gardens Scheme (DGS) provides vital mental health and wellbeing support to those from the Defence community. The service offers nature-based and horticultural therapeutic activities. As well as a generous Reservist and CFAV leave policy, the organisation seeks to actively advocate for service leavers through their extensive network.

GalloGlas Group Ltd.:

Based in Dumfries, GalloGlas Group provides security, training, logistics and environmental services. A vocal advocate for the Defence community, GalloGlas has fully embraced the Armed Forces Covenant and the ERS. Furthermore, GalloGlas sponsored one of Lowland RFCA's CARAs to show support for the Cadet Forces.

The Glasgow Academy:

The Glasgow Academy is an independent school for children aged 3-18 years, and aims to become a world-class provider of education. As well as pledging support to Reservist employees, Glasgow Academy employs and supports 11 CFAVs, providing Cadets with access to the school's excellent facilities.

Inverroy Crisis Management Ltd.:

Inverroy Crisis Management is an Edinburgh-based consultancy helping businesses across various sectors to understand new and changing risks and protect against them accordingly. Alongside a generous Reservist leave policy, Inverroy Crisis Management currently employs 7 veterans and gives charitably to the Erskine Hospital, a care home for Veterans.

Joint Force Alba:

Joint Force Alba is Scotland's only recruitment consultancy specialising in ex-military recruitment, helping to match organisations with their ideal candidates. With its keen focus on showcasing the unique skills and disciplines of current and former military personnel, Joint Force Alba is a prime example of a 'Forces friendly' employer. A vocal advocate for Defence people, the organisation has helped others in its network shape Reservist policies.

Poppyscotland:

Poppyscotland is part of the Royal British Legion group of charities, offering a helping hand to serving Armed Forces community members, families and veterans all across Scotland. As well as offering facilities for Reservist causes, Poppyscotland works closely with other military groups to assist with employment for service leavers.

Sked Construction:

Sked Construction is a Lanark-based family-owned construction business providing an array of high-quality services with specialisation in civil engineering and concrete works. As a keen advocate for the Armed Forces community, Sked Construction displays the Armed Forces Covenant logo on its fleet, and actively promotes the Covenant amongst its network. Furthermore, Sked Construction generously sponsored a Cadet Adult Recognition Award to demonstrate its support for the Cadet Forces in 2021.





LOWLAND RFCA WINS SCOTTISH ENGINEERING AWARD

The Employer Recognition Scheme. The Lord Lieutenant's Awards. The Cadet Adult Recognition Awards.

If there is one thing Lowland RFCA knows a thing or two about, it is giving out awards, especially to those who go above and beyond in their support of the Armed Forces community.

It was, therefore, an immense privilege for the Association to not only attend the Scottish Engineering Awards ceremony in a guest capacity on 2 September 2021, but also to receive the Business and Community Engagement Award.

Each year the Scottish Engineering Awards acknowledge individuals and businesses for their outstanding displays of innovation and resilience. As a Gold Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Award winner, Scottish Engineering consistently demonstrates its support for the Reserve Forces and values their diverse skill-sets, and has maintained a strong working relationship with Lowland RFCA over many years.

The evening saw a broad range of organisations and entrepreneurs receive accolades for their inspiring performances over the last year.

Scottish Engineering's former President John Campbell said of Lowland RFCA's win: 'Scottish Engineering's award to Lowland RFCA for "Business and Community Engagement" reflects the member organisation's role in supporting our Reserve Forces, and promoting the high calibre of Reservists and the valuable skills they bring both to the Armed Forces and to Employers in the engineering sector. It also recognises the critical support that our Reserve Forces have recently offered to local communities in the PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) distribution and vaccination programmes, alongside their Regular counterparts.'

'Lowland RFCA projects all that is best about our Armed Forces, as a model for inclusion, youth development, skills attainment, and above all for defending our nation when called upon to do so.'

Lowland's Colin Vooght commented: 'Scottish Engineering and many of its members have been alongside Defence since the publication of the White Paper, Future Reserves 2020. It is a partnership that we are honoured to be a part of and thoroughly enjoy. We are delighted to have been given this award and thank Scottish Engineering for making it.'

To be recognised as a model for inclusion, youth development and skills attainment among many worthy nominees is a great honour, and the award ceremony itself was a welcome opportunity to meet friends old and new in person again.

LORD-LIEUTENANT AWARDS 2021/2022

After a COVID-19 induced hiatus, in person Lord-Lieutenants' Awards returned with a bang. With multiple ceremonies held in various locations across the Lowlands, Lowland RFCA was thrilled to meet with so many well-deserving and inspiring recipients.

Within the Lowlands there are fourteen Lord-Lieutenants who represent Her Majesty The Queen in a specific geographical area. Whilst the role of a Lord-Lieutenant is varied, the primary task is to uphold the dignity of The Crown. Other duties might involve: arranging Royal visits; supporting and promoting civic and social activity within the Lieutenancy; supporting the Armed and Reserve Forces and liaising with local units and their associated Cadets Forces.

The yearly Lord-Lieutenants' Awards for Reservists, CFAVs, Cadets and employees of the Reserve Force and Cadet organisations are recognised as prestigious honours throughout the Ministry of Defence. The Awards are an important means of recognising valuable Reserve and Cadet Force service.

Speaking on the night of the Glasgow awards ceremony, the Lord-Lieutenant for Glasgow Philip Braat, an Honorary Captain with the Royal Navy Reserve and former Reservist, said: 'Glasgow has a long and proud history of supporting military Reservists and Cadets. We recognise the enormous benefits it brings.

'My congratulations and grateful thanks to all the recipients for their commitment and selfless service to our communities. I would also like to pay tribute to their families, friends and employers who have lent them their support, and all the military personnel and volunteers who have aided them in their success.'

The Awards were a real opportunity to highlight the amazing impact that Defence has in the local community.

One such recipient was Colonel Derek Coulter, Commandant of Glasgow and Lanarkshire Battalion Army Cadet Force. Having spent over 40 years as a CFAV, Derek was rightly honoured for his service and dedication.

Derek said: 'I am proud to receive this award. It's a great accolade to get but all the work I do is on behalf of the Cadets.



'Throughout my years as an instructor I have helped thousands of young people and watched them achieve things they'd never have thought was possible. That is what I enjoy most about being a CFAV – watching Cadets develop and progressing.

'I have had so many opportunities with the Cadets that I would have never got to do if I didn't join all those years ago. I've travelled the world, performed at the Edinburgh Tattoo and attended over 38 annual camps which are so much fun. I've also used the managerial and leadership skills I've gained in the Cadets which helps me in my day job.



'I cherish all the awards I get with the Army Cadet Force but this is right up there with the best because it is great to be recognised by my local area, Glasgow.'

Lowland RFCA facilitates the Awards and is pleased to have moved the entire nomination process online. For those Commanding Officers wishing to nominate an individual for either a Meritorious Certificate or a Cadet Certificate, all they need now do is head onto the Lowland RFCA website.

FINANCE REPORT

ANGELA EMSLIE
HEAD OF FINANCE & HR

Financial Year 2021-22

In-year funding of £8.3m split across all Top Level Budget Holders (TLBs) to fund operating costs, Engagement, Estates management and capital expenditure, has allowed Lowland to continue to deliver the outputs and services to all internal and external customers.

That said, we are always challenged by the economic climate and once again budgets were squeezed for savings. The savings were only possible during COVID-19 isolation; where operations, Estates, Engagement, Cadets and Youth and so on, had almost ground to a halt. This, of course, does mean that the work is no longer required and the risk is that this is lost in future years.

Forecast for 2022-23

Already, before the year gets into full swing, it has been confirmed that our budget for operating costs will remain the same as 2021-22; no uplift despite the cost of living being at an all-time high. It is not known if there will be a need for savings in Estates and Engagement, these have yet to be confirmed.

Our budget forecast is already very lean, funded by the need to deliver per Service Level Agreement. Cutting this any further will impact on service delivery and it is difficult to see how much more frugal we can be in this regard. If pressed, we will have to hit Infra and Reserve and Cadet Support. The impact of this is unknown at present..

We continue to be challenged and we will continue to challenge, to ensure the impact is minimal and we can continue to deliver our outputs to benefit all across the Lowlands.

Revenue/Expenditure 21/22	Total	Spend
Staff Costs	1,888,153	1,890,790
Infrastructure	2,033,711	1,992,564
IT and Comms	74,898	147,560
Transport and Movement	21,110	176,834
Recruiting Support	36,880	49,724
HR Support	11,601	1,588
Reserve and Cadet Support	169,697	144,448
Administration	357,226	120,446
Total Revenue Expenditure	4,593,276	4,523,954

Other Expenditure - Estates Management		
Sub-total	1,963,257	1,698,572
Capital Expenditure		
Sub-total	1,825,234	555,354

Note: Receipts in Advance (RIA) have been processed for Work in Progress (WIP) where invoices have not been received in year or work continues into 22-23.

Funding Summary 21/22	
Army Infra - CDEL	0
Army Infra - RDEL	0
DIO - Hard FM	1,564,428
DIO - Projects - CDEL	1,121,518
DIO - Projects - RDEL	445,875
DIO - Soft FM	1,740,153
Funding Sundry	274,427
Navy	0
Navy - CDEL	0
Navy - RDEL	0
RAF - CDEL	0
RAF - RDEL	0
RAF Reserves - CDEL	0
RAF Reserves - RDEL	34,326
RAFAC - CDEL	195
RAFAC - Input	288,997
RAFAC - RDEL	358
RC - Grants to RF & Cadets	0
RC - RFCA Grant-in-Aid	2,030,072
RC - Vehicles	617,080
RFC - DRM	177,897
RGI - Regionally Generated Income	0
Total Funding	8,295,326
Other Receipts Generated by the RFCA	86,441
Total Income	86,441
Funding Total 2021-2022	8,381,767



DECHMONT REPORT

The pandemic gave us the opportunity to take stock of our management and operation of Dechmont Range and Training Area, 627 acres of prime real estate just south of Cambuslang and only 20 minutes' drive from the centre of Glasgow.

An incident on the century-old gallery ranges in 1986 resulted in their closure. A 25m Barrack Range was subsequently brought into use while the northern part of the area is used extensively by local Reserve units, Cadets from the Cadet Training Centre on Gilbertfield Road and by local community groups. Recognising the enormous potential of the area, a Development Officer was appointed in April 2021 for 3 months. Lt Col John Kerr's Development Report identified a number of options and combinations of options for enhancing training opportunities in order to make Dechmont the training area of choice for Reserve and Cadet units in and around the Central Belt. The reinstatement of military ranges was quickly ruled out on grounds of cost as well as the fact that Dechmont Hill no longer satisfies MOD Range Regulations as a backstop. Other options included a cross country driving circuit, urban warfare training facilities, Counter Improvised Explosive Device training and navigation courses.

These options remain under consideration. However, other works to revitalise Dechmont are already underway. The old Pavilion, beset with structural issues, has been demolished. An old byre adjacent to Range Control is to be refurbished as a classroom. Emergency and more routine tree husbandry of the existing woods is in progress. And to mark HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, a 2,700 tree wood has recently been created. Consisting entirely of native trees, Lady Haughey CBE, the Lord-Lieutenant of Lanarkshire, planted the final tree – a Scots Pine – and unveiled a plaque at a ceremony on 31 March 2022. Over time, the wood will provide additional bivouac areas for Cadets as well as enabling vehicle-borne Reserve units the opportunity to practise their camouflage and concealment.

Although Dechmont Hill no longer meets MOD specifications as a backstop, the National Rifle Association, whose ranges operate under slightly different rules, are to undertake a technical feasibility study to see if they might be able to bring back one part of the old ranges into use. The Lowland RFCA website will shortly begin hosting a 'one stop shop' for potential users, including a booking facility, Standing Orders and a downloadable range map.

Our permanent staff at Dechmont, Craig Graham and now, since August 2021, Kevin McAtee as Range Manager, and Derek Brow as Range Warden are to be congratulated on their dedication, commitment and innovation to take Dechmont into the 21st century.



SPOTLIGHT: ESTATES, CARMYLE AND THE SAS

The Estates Department constantly works away in the background to ensure that the infrastructure of the Reserve Force and Cadet units (within the Lowland AOR) is maintained. Far from just fixing leaking taps and blocked pipes, the team oversees building standards, fire safety regulations, and health and safety. To add to an already busy portfolio, inspections made by civilian and military authorities (environmental protections, security, catering, and logistics) must be followed up. Additionally ad hoc tasks crop up, such as: inclement weather damage, 'Army at the Fringe', pandemics, COP26; not to mention special projects such as AINTREE (armoury upgrading).

Not being blessed with an extensive range of Regular Forces Camps in Scotland means any large-scale event (such as COP26 or pandemic response) needs to find their real estate solutions in the Reserve and Cadet Estate. The responsibility of managing and facilitating these needs is inevitably absorbed by Lowland's Estates Department. Whilst this is a large task, it's a worthwhile one.

Since the start of the pandemic, the Estates team have conserved a continued presence at Lowland House, on call to deal with any issues that arise from the vast estate (over 300 buildings). Furthermore, the Works Officers continued to ensure the Estate was compliant and safe, dealing with contractors where possible. All of this is to say, the Estates Department have been unceasing in their commitment and zeal to keep Reserve and Cadet units in a suitable condition for their users.

A site of particular interest is Carmyle. Usually the home of 154 Regiment's 221 Transport Squadron, Carmyle was identified as the perfect location for the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) to operate a base during COP26. The Estates team put a great deal of work into preparing the site, all in order to allow the SAS to deliver their usual first-class service from a remote location.

We reached out to the SAS and asked them for comment. A representative said:

'The SAS worked closely with Lowland's Estates Department, especially Alternative Venues, when it came to identifying a suitable site for the preparation and delivery of its medical response to the UN Conference of Parties (COP) 26.

'Planning for the event took almost a year and Carmyle was chosen due to its excellent location; centrally located to Glasgow; 15 minutes by road to the COP26 site; and excellent motorway links.

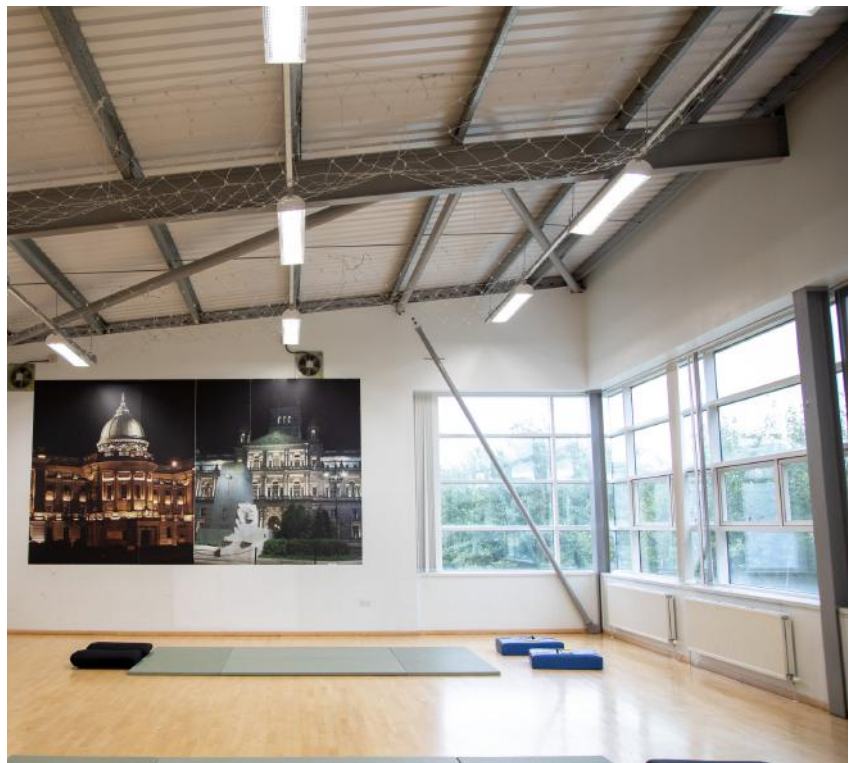
'Additionally the large site was able to facilitate a project team and all of our equipment, which enabled us to host staff training and briefings. The space also allowed us to establish a fully functioning operational ambulance station (this required storage for a large number of vehicles, medical drugs and gases) and the ability to operate with and deploy a large number of staff.'

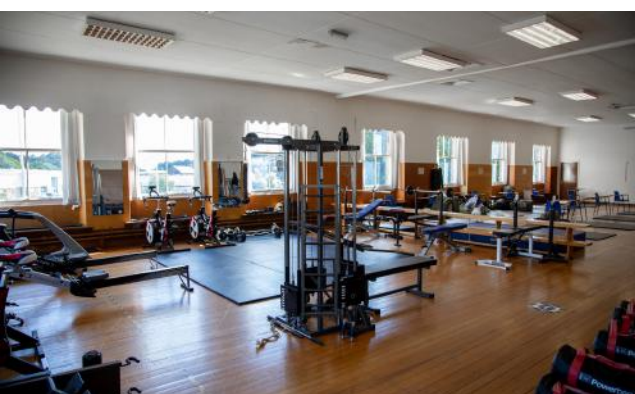
Pat O'Meara, SAS Project Director for COP26, said: 'The location of Carmyle, the facilities for staff (such as the fully fitted professional kitchen), the large indoor and outdoor spaces, and the support from Lowland's Estates Department were ideal for what was the largest deployment of staff in our history, not to mention one of the most high-profile. We would certainly look at using the Reserve Estate again.'

The organisation went on to say: 'The SAS has been given great support during the pandemic by both Regular and Reserve Forces. From the handover of MOD run Mobile Testing Units to NHS Scotland, to the military drivers that assisted with the driving of ambulances last winter, members of the Armed Forces have stepped in quickly to support patient care at a critical time for the NHS.

'Many of the Liaison Officers, as well as the troops who worked alongside clinical staff, were in fact Reservists. Across the board, they have received positive feedback from ambulance staff and patients on their professionalism and care. Everyone learnt a great deal from one another in the process.'

Pauline Howie, Chief Executive of the Scottish Ambulance Service, elaborated by saying: 'The support given to the SAS by Regular and Reserve Forces has been outstanding. They were able to create professional capacity at a time of great pressure on our staff and on the NHS, making a real difference to our patients, for which we are most grateful.'





GALASHIELS ARMY RESERVE CENTRE

This immaculate and well-maintained venue is centrally located across from Galashiels retail park. As well as being a popular training venue for local authorities, it is also available for: sports, meetings, local forums and TV/film. Facilities include a sizeable hall, impressive meeting room and a comfortable social area. The area benefits from excellent transport links and is situated 33 miles from Edinburgh.



EAST KILBRIDE ARMY RESERVE CENTRE

Approximately nine miles from Glasgow City Centre, East Kilbride ARC is regularly used for specialist training by local authorities. The Scottish Ambulance Service use this site for preparation that forms part of their response to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear incidents and mass casualty from armed terrorism. The site is ideal for training privately due to the secure compound and professional staff.

Alternative Venues Lowland (AVL) is an initiative managed by Lowland RFCA. AVL manages the public use of the Lowland RFCA Estate, when not in use by the military. To find out more please visit AlternativeVenuesLowland.co.uk or contact Denise Regan lo-av@rfca.mod.uk.



