

High-Light



THE TRI-SERVICE MAGAZINE OF HIGHLAND RESERVE FORCES' AND CADETS' ASSOCIATION



ERS Gold Awards
– Pages 6 & 7

Tough times ahead in 2024

It has been a very busy autumn for HRFCAs and the Reserve and cadet units we support.

Having eventually received a budget to deliver employer engagement the Regional Employer Engagement Directors have barely been in the office as they try to catch up with a backlog of employer meetings and deliver various employer events. At the same time the rest of the Engagement and Communications team has assisted the Area Chairs to deliver their autumn membership meetings with very successful events in Nairn and Glenrothes and a much smaller event for the Southern Area Committee.

The delivery of the Future Defence Infrastructure System (FDIS) on the volunteer estate draws ever closer and, at the time of writing, only requires HM Treasury approval before it is enacted next year.

This will generate a significant additional workload for the Estates department through the winter as they prepare for their new roles and hand over site data, contractors and contract data to Mitie, the regional prime contractor who will take on the Hard Facilities Management role from us.

The switch over is likely to occur in June or July next year and be completed by the end of the year. It will amount to a significant change for all of our units and a communications plan will follow once the final sign-off has been given.

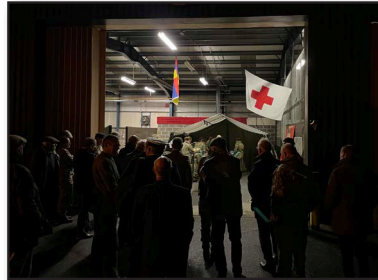
Having been in being for 10 years now, and with an ever

growing number of Armed Forces Covenants and Employer Recognition Scheme Awards, there is a review of the Defence Relationship Management (DRM) role and outputs under way in the Ministry of Defence. Whilst everyone understands that employer engagement is an essential activity for Reserves, it will be conducted against the backdrop of significant in-year savings within the defence community and in the knowledge that operating budgets for DRM and the RFCAs will not grow next year, despite the inflationary pressures we are all experiencing. Tough times are ahead.

But, as can be seen from the range and breadth of the activities we have conducted or supported, we will continue to add value wherever we can, continue to champion the Reserves and cadets with the single Services, government and the local communities. It is very good news that Captain Nick Dorman RNR has been selected to be the Council of RFCAs Board Chair in London where he will play a key role in shaping the RFCAs future and interacting with Ministry of Defence officials and Ministers.

Finally, I would like to add my personal thanks to Andrew Macnaughton, who has just retired after seven years as my Deputy. Andrew has made an immense contribution over the years, and it has been an enormous pleasure to work with such a pleasant, hard-working and capable man. Fare thee well in your retirement old friend.

Mark Dodson



Members observed a field hospital demonstration at the Eastern Area Meeting.



Staff gathered at Highland RFCAs headquarters in Dundee to wish Deputy Chief Executive Andrew Macnaughton (inset) all the best as he retired after seven years with the Association. Story on Page 8.

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At the ground-breaking ceremony were (from left) Fraser Kennedy (HRFCA Head of Estates), Colonel (Retd) Jim Kinloch (HRFCA Eastern Area Committee Chair), Brigadier (Retd) Mark Dodson (HRFCA Chief Executive), and Major Ray Watt (Regimental 2I/C 154 (Scottish) Regiment RLC (and HRFCA Regional Employer Engagement Director).



Emergency Services at Dunfermline and (inset) the hazardous material that was uncovered.

The £6.6 million project to replace the Army Reserve Centre (ARC) at Dunfermline is under way.

The site offices have been set up and ground works started. Initial works (pictured top of page) saw a small brick building demolished, a portable building relocated and a trench for the high voltage cable excavated.

Work on the project had to be suspended temporarily on 16 November after hazardous material was uncovered during the initial works. The material was of a historic nature (self-igniting phosphorus incendiary devices) and had been buried following the Second World War. The devices were intended for use by the Home Guard. Experts from the British Army's 11 Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search Regiment, 521 Squadron Edinburgh Troop, attended along with the other emergency services. They removed the devices and safely disposed of them on site by carrying out a controlled explosion on 17 November.

The incident was then stood down.

After the discovery a temporary exclusion zone was put in place as a precaution, leading to a road closure and evacuations of properties and a nearby business.

The Bothwell House project had originally been due to get under way in March 2020. However COVID-19 hit and the national lockdown that followed halted all projects that weren't already in progress.

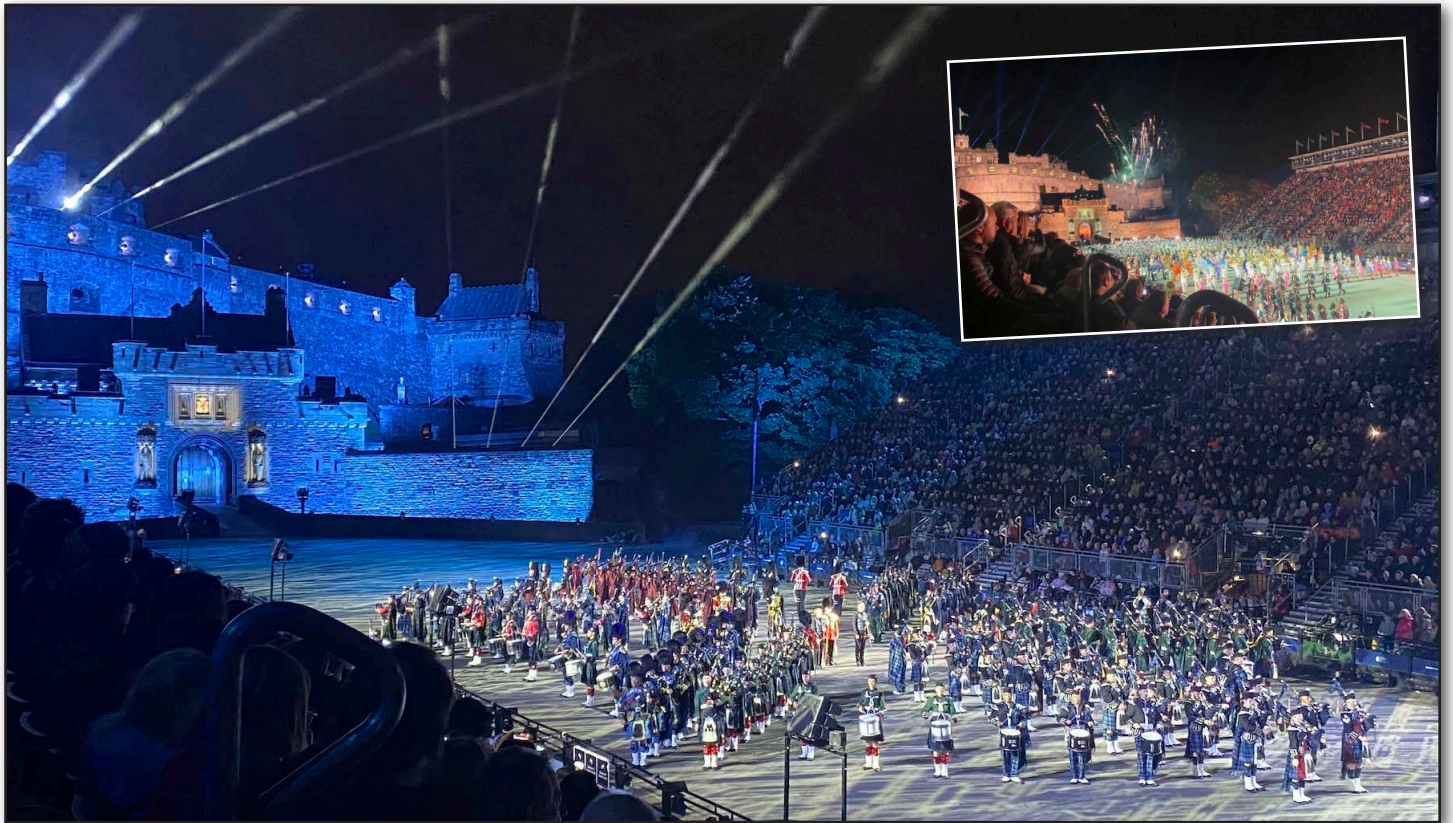
In 2022 Henry Brothers won the contract to design and build the new ARC and demolish the original Bruce House.

Mott MacDonald is acting as technical service providers, supporting the Highland RFCA Estates team with project management. The Army-funded project is due to be completed in 2025.

The Dunfermline ARC serves as the Regimental Headquarters for 154 (Scottish) Regiment Royal Logistics Corps (RLC); and is home to 239 (Fife) Transport Squadron and the Dunfermline Detachment of The Black Watch Battalion Army Cadet Force (ACF).

The new building will provide first-class facilities, allowing all the units housed there a chance to grow, and will impact positively on training, recruitment and retention.

A ground-breaking ceremony was held at the site on 13 August to formally mark the start of the project. The ceremony was carried out by Councillor Jim Leishman MBE, Provost of Fife.



Employer evening at Tattoo

Employers from the Highland RFCA-area enjoyed a fantastic evening at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo on 24 August.

The Highland guests joined others hosted by the RFCAs of the Lowlands, the North of England, North West of England and Northern Ireland.

The evening kicked off with a reception at the Radisson Blu Hotel on the Royal Mile before guests moved up to the Castle for the show.

The guests included Armed Forces Covenant signatories and Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold holders Fife Medical Group, Forth Valley Chamber of Commerce and NHS Tayside; as well as Silver holders Falkirk Football Community Foundation, Forth Valley College, G.H.Q. Spirits, and Glenhead Engineering; and Bronze holders Clinical Business Solutions, Petrofac, Port of Aberdeen, and Serica Energy.

The Chair of Highland RFCA's Highland Gold Network Stephen Massetti, of the Scottish Ambulance Service, also attended.

Guests were impressed with the fantastic performances

and location. It was also a great opportunity for like-minded employers and businesses to network.

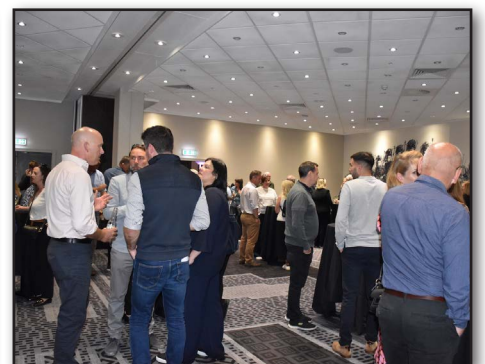
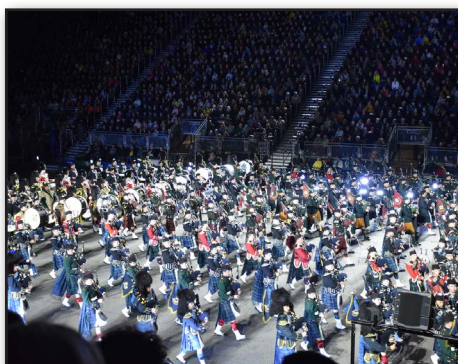
2023's theme was Show Stories. It featured 800 international performers, engaging more than 200,000 audience members across its run.

Norwegian, Swiss, US and Trinidadian performers, along with homegrown talent from around the UK – dazzled and delighted audiences with performances ranging from Highland dance, fire breathing, to marches performed to tunes from contemporary video games.

In a Royal Air Force lead year, the Tattoo hosted seven fly-pasts during the August run, which included the Red Arrows taking to the skies above Edinburgh Castle.

Lynn Harris, President and Chief Executive of Forth Valley Chamber said: "Thank you so much for the invite to the Tattoo – it was spectacular! It was great to see the esplanade filled with happy smiling faces enjoying the festivities."

The Tattoo returns in 2024 from 2-24 August with the theme being Journeys.



From left: All set for the performance; massed bands take to the parade square; employers enjoying the pre-performance reception.

Golden night for employers



The ERS Gold Award recipients with Vice Admiral Hally (centre) at Scone Palace.

Eleven employer organisations had their outstanding commitment to the Armed Forces recognised at the 2023 Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold Awards.

The Highland RFCA-organised event was held at Scone Palace on November 9 with the recipients representing a wide range of organisations and companies from both the public and private sectors.

Nationally, 193 organisations have been recognised by the UK Government for their outstanding support towards the Armed Forces community. This is a record high for Golds since the Employer Recognition Scheme launched in 2013. The ERS Gold Award is the highest badge of honour and recognises the positive role employers play in supporting the Armed Forces community.

The Employer Recognition Scheme, delivered by Defence Relationship Management, has a current total of 641 Gold holders. Organisations must reapply every five years to retain their Gold Award status.

To win a Gold Award from the Ministry of Defence, organisations must provide 10 extra paid days leave for Reservists and have supportive HR policies in place for Reservists, Veterans, Cadet Force Adult

Volunteers (CFAVs) and the spouses and partners of those serving in the Armed Forces.

They must also advocate the benefits of supporting those within the Armed Forces community, by encouraging other organisations to sign the Armed Forces Covenant and engage in the Employer Recognition Scheme.

2023 ERS Gold Award winners in the HRFCA-area: Donut Pig Digital Media; Drumfork Nursery & Family Centre; Five Medical Group; Flagship Maritime Ltd; Forth Valley Chamber of Commerce; Moray Council; NHS Highland; NHS Tayside; Recruitment Bee (Scotland) Ltd; The MacRobert Trust; Trident IES.

Principal guest at Scone Palace was Vice Admiral Phil Hally, Chief of Defence People (CDP). Vice Admiral Hally presented the Awards and delivered a speech on the Employer Recognition Scheme and the value of Reservists to civil society.

He said: "We are here tonight to celebrate your success as employers who have been awarded the accolade of Gold status in support of our nation's Defence.

"As I look around the room, I see a rich diversity of organisations, private and public sector, large and small. The support you provide is so much more than just about employees who have signed up to become Reservists. Your organisations support the whole Armed

Forces community from the support you give to families of Service personnel to the opportunities you provide Forces spouses and partners.

"I want to say a heartfelt thank you and congratulations to you all on behalf of UK Defence and Government."

During the evening guests also heard from serving Royal Air Force (RAF) Reservist AS1 Virginia Ankers of Lossiemouth-based 2622 Squadron; Cadet Force Adult Volunteer Lieutenant Colonel Sarah High, Deputy Commandant of Angus and Dundee Battalion Army Cadet Force (ACF); and Stephen Massetti, Chair of HRFCA's Highland Gold Network. They spoke respectively on the value of Reserve service; the rewarding nature of being a CFAV; and the benefits to employers of the Employer Recognition Scheme.

Music was provided by a quartet of musicians from 7th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland (7 SCOTS); Cadet Pipe Major Magnus Porter, Pipe Major Conner Pratt, Drum Major Cameron Goodsir-McGuire of The Black Watch ACF Pipes & Drums; and Cadet Lance Corporal Saul Cameron of the Royal Marines Cadets who drummed the guests into dinner.

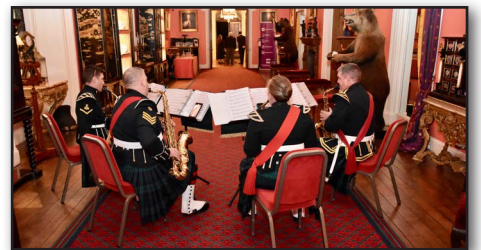
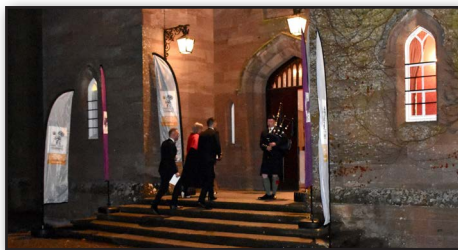
Our congratulations and thanks go to all the winners for the support they give to the Armed Forces; and to the staff at Scone Palace for helping to organise a successful evening.



Guests enjoyed a celebratory meal in Scone Palace's Long Gallery.



Chief of Defence People Vice Admiral Phil Hally (left) chats to Royal Marines Cadet Lance Corporal Saul Cameron as Brigadier (Retd) Mark Dodson looks on.



From left: RAF Reservist AS1 Virginia Ankers; Cadet Force Adult Volunteer Lieutenant Colonel Sarah High; and Stephen Massetti, Chair of HRFCA's Highland Gold Network deliver speeches.

Tom Kerrigan joins Association

Major (Retired) Tom Kerrigan joined Highland RFCA on 1 December as its new Deputy Chief Executive.

Tom commissioned into the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards in August 1999 and completed two tours of Kosovo (Op AGRICOLA 3 & 6) as a Troop Leader and then deployed on Op TELIC 1 as a junior captain working in 7 (Armoured) Brigade Headquarters. In 2004 he was appointed Adjutant of The Queen's Own Yeomanry and, following two years at the Joint Arms Control Implementation Group as assistant Ops Officer, promoted to Major in 2008.

Following completion of the Intermediate Command and Staff Course, Tom was posted to

British Army Headquarters where he worked as an SO2 in Command Plans as part of the Plans Directorate. He then returned to Regimental Duty as a Squadron Leader in 2011 and deployed on Op HERRICK 14 with A Squadron 9/12 Lancers. His final post in the Army was as Training Major to the Royal Mercian and Lancastrian Yeomanry before leaving the Army in 2014.

Since leaving the Army, Tom has worked and qualified as a rural Chartered Surveyor in Devon and had, since 2018, been the Bursar of Craigclowan Preparatory School in Perth.

Tom is married to Zoe and they have two young children. Outside of work Tom enjoys all sports (especially cricket) and has a keen interest in history.



Tom Kerrigan.



Andrew (left) receiving best wishes and a farewell gift from the Chief Executive.

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Andrew Macnaughton retired from Highland RFCA on 30 November following seven years as Deputy Chief Executive and Chief of Staff.

Staff, including several Battalion Cadet Executive Officers, gathered at the Association HQ in Dundee to say farewell over coffee and cake.

Chief Executive Brigadier (Retired) Mark Dodson gave a speech reflecting on Andrew's work across three key areas: Youth and Cadets where he championed the Permanent Support Staff in the Army Cadet Force (ACF) Battalions, worked effectively with the Cadet Executive Officers and forged strong links with Commandants. He then moved on to Andrew's role as Chief of Staff for the Association and how he positively impacted the lives of all staff, and steered Highland RFCA through the challenges of COVID-19 and hybrid working policies. The final area was his role as the Chief Executive's right-hand, and how Andrew had constantly provided balanced and well-reasoned advice.

He said: "In summary it would be fair to say Andrew that you have been a tremendous Deputy Chief Executive and Chief of Staff. You've had a profound impact on the lives of our team over the last seven years or so. Literally, from the bottom of my heart, thank you so much for all you have done."

Andrew thanked the Chief Executive for his kind words, adding: "This is the longest time I've worked with a continuous bunch of people and it has been a great deal of fun. That's as much down to you all as anything else. I think we're working better together now than we have at any time in the last seven years, and that is absolutely down to team effort.

"It's been a great experience, and I'm sure I will miss it in lots of ways. So thank you all very much indeed."

Andrew joined the Association in late 2016, hitting the ground running and covering 700 miles in a matter of weeks as he got his head around a demanding and multifaceted post.

A Regular Argyll who commanded 51 Highland Volunteers, Andrew's good humour and wise counsel will be missed. All at Highland RFCA wish him a long and happy retirement.

Laura Scobie is the new Deputy Finance Officer.

Tell us a little bit about yourself?

"I grew up in Monifieth so I'm a local! My background is in doctoral research, focusing on the material culture of contemporary Scottish whisky. Lots of history, and objects, and distilleries. I can't offer any freebies unfortunately, but I do love to hear about people's favourite drams! I've previously worked in museums and customer service whilst carrying out my university degrees."



What attracted you to a job with Highland RFCA?

"I came into the office to learn more about the job and that gave me the motivation to apply for the position. I knew I would enjoy learning the job and gaining new skills in what I could see was a supportive environment."

What's your role within the organisation?

"I am Deputy Finance Officer, so I assist the Head of Business Administration and Finance in providing efficient and effective financial and human resource outputs for Highland RFCA."

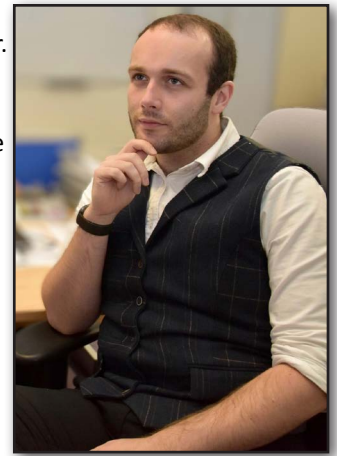
What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

"I'm quite a homebody so I love reading, cross stitch, chilling with video games, and cuddling the cat. When it's not raining I enjoy a good walk, and I love driving so enjoy getting out to new places in Scotland to explore."

Aaron Bain is the new Employer Engagement Administrative Officer.

Tell us a little bit about yourself?

"I'm Aaron from the charming town of Arbroath! I delved into the fascinating world of neuroscience during my time at St Andrews University, where I completed my BSc with honours. While my academic focus revolved around the brain, my passion for science extends far beyond. I find myself intrigued by various scientific domains, always eager to explore and learn more."



What first attracted you to a job with Highland RFCA?

"When I first came across the role, I must admit I knew nothing of Highland RFCA. Before applying I looked into what the organisation does and I felt I would experience fulfilment in the role."

What's your role within the organisation?

"I am the Administrative Officer who supports Ray Watt, one of the Regional Employer Engagement Directors. I assist in growing the number of companies signing the Armed Forces Covenant, maintaining those relationships to see them progress through varying Defence Employer Recognition Scheme levels."

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

"I am a man of many hobbies ranging from playing table-top games, enjoying video games, watching anime and I won't say no to a local craft beer if the offer ever comes up."

↑ New faces and new HQ roles ↓



Nikki Philip is the new Safe Estates Compliance Officer.

Tell us a little bit about yourself?

"I have worked with HRCA for 20 years in various admin roles. I went part-time after my maternity leave and in August this year I was successful in an application for a promotion in a full-time role within the Estates department, which I am thoroughly enjoying. Aside from that I am a mother to a 13-year-old son and a wife."

What first attracted you to a job with Highland RFCA?

"In all honesty I didn't know a lot about Highland RFCA when I joined to provide temporary sickness cover. I have enjoyed my time with the Association and find it an enjoyable place to work."

"I was attracted to this new role as something I could get my teeth into, controlling my own projects and seeing them through from start to finish."

What's your role within the organisation?

"We have a legal requirement to provide a Safe Estate, falling in line with HSE. It's my job to prevent any danger/injury to staff/occupants of sites. I also have to ensure that inspections are carried out on time and any risks are communicated to site users."

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

"I enjoy walks with my dog, swimming and socialising with friends and family."



Danielle Barclay is the new Office and Systems Manager.

Tell us a little bit about yourself?

"I began at Highland RFCA as an Employer Engagement Administrative Officer last year. My background is in fashion management and I was able to adapt the business side of my degree within that role. I have now progressed into the Business Administration and Finance team as the new Office and Systems Manager."

What first attracted you to a job with Highland RFCA?

"I come from an Army background with my Dad and Grandad having served, so the organisation appealed as it champions the Armed Forces and cadets. I was attracted to the role as my previous jobs highlighted that I enjoy admin, business and HR."

What's your role within the organisation?

"As the Office and Systems Manager I support the office with HR, IT and admin. My role also includes supporting the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive in the smooth running of the Association's admin outputs. I also assist the Head of Business Administration and Finance in providing HR."

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

"I am at my happiest when spending time with my family and friends, especially when coffee is included. I enjoy exploring different areas of Scotland mainly to discover new cafes and antique shops to find unique pieces to add to my home. Downtime includes cosy nights with my cats and a good book."

Area updates for members



At the Eastern Area Meeting Lieutenant Colonel Brian (Edd) Gordon, Commanding Officer of 215 (Scottish) Multirole Medical Regiment, provided an insight into the Regiment.



The Southern Area Meeting (above) was conducted virtually via Zoom from the Seathwood HQ. Below: Northern Area Chair Major (Retd) Alec Rose hosted his first meeting since taking charge of the Northern Area Committee.



Highland RFCA's Southern, Northern and Eastern Area Committee members gathered for the annual Area Meetings.

The Committees typically meet annually in the autumn for updates on challenges, developments, achievements and future plans.

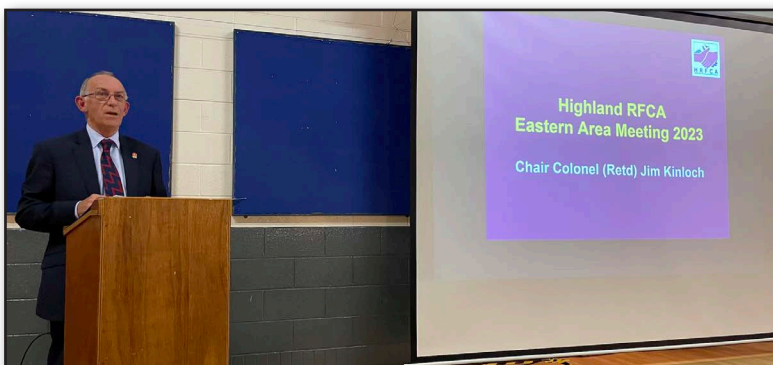
The Southern Area Meeting (SAM) was the first of the three, which took place virtually via Zoom. It was conducted from the HRFCFA headquarters in Dundee on 4 October. The Area Chair Captain (Retired) Chris Smith led the meeting. HRFCFA's Chief Executive Brigadier (Retired) Mark Dodson, Deputy Chief Executive Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Andrew Macnaughton, and Head of Engagement Mrs Michelle McKearnon were in attendance face-to-face with Captain Smith.

The SAM began with the Area Chair's introduction, welcome, and report. The Chief Executive provided an update on key changes since the Annual Association Meeting (AAM) in April.

The Northern Area Meeting (NAM) took place at the Royal British Legion Scotland Nairn Branch on 18 October. This was the new Area Chair Major (Retired) Alec Rose's first official Area Meeting since being appointed in the role. However, he chaired last year's NAM as the Vice Chair at the time on behalf of

Commodore (Retired) Angus Ross. Ms Glenda Gray, who is also an Employer Representative as the HR Manager at Aberdeenshire Council, is the current Vice Chair. The Council is an Armed Forces Covenant signatory and Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold Award holder. Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Macnaughton delivered the Chief Executive's report on behalf of Brigadier (Retd) Dodson who was unable to attend.

The NAM speakers included Mr George Asher, Lord-Lieutenant of Nairnshire, who gave a brief introduction to his lieutenancy; Wing Commander David Caddick, HRFCFA's Vice Chair (Air) and a Reservist on Base Support Group (Covesea Flight) at RAF Lossiemouth, who had pre-recorded a presentation highlighting the Northern Area geography; Ms Gray, who highlighted the Northern Area demography; Mrs Joanie Whiteford, Lord-Lieutenant of Ross and Cromarty, who paid tribute to her Lord-Lieutenant's Cadets; Major Rupert Read, Officer Commanding of 157 Company, 102 Battalion Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, who provided a Reservist's perspective by showcasing the importance of transferable skills; Mr Darren MacLeod, Director of Safety, Compliance and Accountable Manager of Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL), who gave insight into an employer's perspective on the value of Reservists and cadets; Mr Gary Chapman, a former Army Cadet and Regular soldier as well as a parent of two former Army Cadets, who spoke



Colonel (Retd) Kinloch addressing the Eastern Area Committee and, right, attendees being briefed ahead of demonstrations of medical equipment and techniques.





A Field Hospital scenario formed one of the demonstrations for Eastern Area Meeting guests.

of the value of the Army Cadet Force (ACF); and Wing Commander Christine Copsey, Officer Commanding of North Scotland Wing RAF Air Cadets, who read Cadet Flight Sergeant Ivan Jariod's statement on his positive cadet experience.

Major Read also works for HIAL, one of HRFCA's Armed Forces Covenant signatories and ERS Silver Award holders. He said: "My military appointment absolutely ties in with my day job and professional development. HIAL benefits from my transferable skills."

Mr MacLeod said: "We recognise what we get back after those two weeks of Reservists' training." Similarly, on the ACF, Mr Chapman said: "I use the team and communication skills that I learned from the Army Cadet Force every day, which I wanted to pass on to my kids. I could also tell a difference in my son Jayden after his two-week cadet camp."

Unit representatives were also given an opportunity to expand upon their submitted written unit reports. After the official business, members seized the opportunity to catch up and network over supper. Elgin-based The Deli Next Door provided catering for the second year in a row.

The Eastern Area Committee gathered for its updates at the Army Reserve Centre in Glenrothes on 1 November. Eastern Area Chair Colonel (Retired) Jim Kinloch led the Eastern Area Meeting

(EAM), welcoming and updating the members before handing over to Brigadier (Retd) Mark Dodson for his report.

Lieutenant Colonel Brian (Edd) Gordon, Commanding Officer of 215 (Scottish) Multirole Medical Regiment, provided an insight into the Regiment that was recently formed by merging 205 (Scottish) Field Hospital and 225 (Scottish) Medical Regiment. Lastly, the attendees were taken outside for two equipment demonstrations. WO1 Ryan Melville, who organised the EAM demonstrations, said: "215 Multirole Medical Regiment will provide the full spectrum of battlefield casualty treatment and evacuation. A demonstration of the unit's medical capabilities showed the full Operation Patient Pathway/Cycle and the excellent training capability offered at the Glenrothes Army Reserve Centre."

Covenant signatory and ERS Bronze Award holder, Hazelnuts Catering, provided supper.

This year's Area Meetings were the last ones attended by Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Macnaughton who retired as Deputy Chief Executive in November. The Area Committees thanked him for his counsel and considerable experience with both cadet and Reserves matters. The HRFCA membership will gather next for the AAM on 20 April 2024. This will be the second time the meeting has been held at Discovery Point in Dundee.



The Royal British Legion in Nairn was the venue for the Northern Area Meeting. Right: NAM Vice Chair Glenda Gray gives a presentation.





RAF Regiment Gunners prepare to enter a building.

RAF Reservists sharpen skills

HRFCA Head of Engagement Michelle McKearnon travelled to the Kirkcudbright Training Area on 19 September to see the RAF Regiment taking part in Annual Continuous Training.

The training in Dumfries and Galloway involved 603 (City of Edinburgh) Squadron

and Lossiemouth-based 2622 (Highland) Squadron of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force Regiment.

Visitors arrived at Dundrennan Camp before witnessing an exciting indoor Close-Quarters Battle (CQB) demonstration.

Following an outdoor lunch, the visitors were taken to the Capability Demonstration Area for a briefing before

they watched the Reservists in action during an ambush demonstration.

Other visitors in attendance represented organisations including Police Scotland and Lowland Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association.

Many thanks to the RAF for giving us an insight into the Regiment's hard work and training, as well as an opportunity to meet first-hand with Reservists.



A busy day was punctuated by a hot lunch in the field (left).

Uniformed services honoured

HRFCFA Head of Engagement Michelle McKearnon joined Dundee's Hindu community to celebrate the festival of Raksha Bandhan on 3 September.

The event – at the Tayside Hindu Cultural and Community Centre in the city's Taylor's Lane – was held in honour

of the work of the uniformed services, including members of the Armed Forces.

Dundee Lord Provost Bill Campbell, Councillors, and representatives from the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force, Police Scotland, the NHS and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service were all in attendance.

The term Raksha Bandhan means "bond of protection", with this year's

festival celebrating the bond between the community and the uniformed services.

The event featured traditional music and dancing and was followed by a feast of delicious South Asian food.

Centre Chair Naina Penman said: "We were honoured to have the Lord Provost here with our Armed Forces, police and fire service. It was a great success. A joyful day and everyone had a great time."



Dancers entertained the audience that included members of the emergency services.



Left: Dundee Lord Provost Bill Campbell attended the celebration.
Above: Army Medic Major Chloe Tisshaw being adorned with a traditional bindi.
Above right: Traditional dancers.
Right: Centre Chair Naina Penman with Major Tisshaw.



Boddam celebration

The newly-refurbished Cadet Training Centre at Boddam was officially opened on 27 August.

The occasion was marked by a day of celebrations at the site near Peterhead in Aberdeenshire.

The £1.6 million two-phase redevelopment was completed earlier this year with the building handed back by principal contractor Morrison Construction on 21 April to 2nd Battalion The Highlanders Army Cadet Force.

The first phase of the Highland RFCA Estates team's development saw the creation of a Four-Tube Firing Range, Parade Square, and the old Shetland Accommodation Block being refurbished into an IT Suite and classroom space (named the Ken Masson Learning Suite). Phase 2 added a new drill hall and stores provision.

Ken Masson was, for nearly 20 years, a Cadet Executive Officer with the Battalion.

Dignitaries, including Highland RFCA Chair Captain (Retd) Nick Dorman and Deputy Chief Executive Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Andrew Macnaughton, were welcomed to the site by outgoing Battalion Commandant Colonel Gordon Rae.

Colonel Rae then introduced Deputy Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire, Rear Admiral (Retd) Chris Hockley CBE DL, representing His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for Aberdeenshire, who unveiled a plaque outside the Ken Masson Learning Suite to declare the centre open.

The Deputy Lieutenant said: "It is my pleasure on behalf of the Lord-Lieutenant and His Majesty The King to declare this facility open."

A tour of the facilities followed before guests were treated to displays from all the cadet organisations present, and a demonstration of drill and a formal Battalion parade.

The Deputy Lieutenant then presented the Kaylee McIntosh Trophy to Cadet Corporal Natalie Cartney, for her outstanding commitment and endeavour as a cadet.

Improvements at the facility will enable the more than 300 cadets and 80+ adult volunteers of the Battalion to train and learn in the best possible conditions.

The Battalion's Cadets have already made good use of the facilities during Annual Camp and, in October, the Cadet Training Team (CTT) Scotland used the Ken Masson Learning Suite to deliver its next Senior Cadet Instructor Cadre (SCIC).



The Battalion parades and (right) making use of the new parade square.



From left: Colonel Rae welcomes guests; the Kaylee McIntosh Trophy presentation; and a display of drill.



From left: A First Aid demonstration; dignitaries mingling; and a tour of the new firing range.



Musicians gather for camp

Highland RFCA enjoyed a visit on 16 October to the Army Cadet Force (ACF) Pipes and Drums Concentration held at the Barry Buddon Cadet Training Centre, near Carnoustie.

The week-long residential training camp saw around 80 pipers and drummers from across Scotland (and the UK) gather to improve their musical skills under the watchful eyes of adult instructors.

The week culminated in the cadets sitting exams and taking part in a piping and drumming competition, all in an

effort to help the young people progress as musicians. The ACF Cadets, from Battalions including The Black Watch, and 2nd Battalion The Highlanders, as well as Battalions from the Lowlands were joined by around a dozen musicians from the Royal Air Force Air Cadets (RAFAC).

Callum Moffat, SO2 Pipes and Drums, took time out from his busy schedule to provide a tour of the classrooms to see various workshops designed to improve piping and drumming proficiency.

The next Concentration will take place over a week at Easter and is normally held at Cameron Barracks in Inverness. The intense tuition period culminates in a parade through Dingwall and a charity

concert in Inverness, attracting crowds of up to 2,000 at each event.

The training events provide a great opportunity for cadets from all over the UK to see Scotland at its best and to meet new friends.

■ By entering the Army Cadets Piping and Drumming structured learning programme cadets can earn a Cadet Proficiency Certificate, gain Army Cadets Star levels, study for the BTEC First Diploma in Music and attain the Piping and Drumming Qualifications Board / Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Certificates in Piping, Pipe Band Drumming and Bass & Tenor Drumming.



Cadets using their practice chanters.

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