



The Reservist

East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association Newsletter

Summer 2018

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embraces Army Reserve

Fire crew learn more about
life in the reserves

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Left to right: Siobhan Weller, Les Fryatt, Kenneth Kwogyenga – Charity beneficiaries



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Find Out More

If you are interested in becoming a reservist or would like to find out more about the Reserve Forces please visit:

- Royal Naval Reserve - www.royalnavy.mod.uk
- Royal Marines Reserve - www.royalnavy.mod.uk/rmr
- Army Reserve - www.army.mod.uk
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Ruth Morgan - Officer Commanding 1211 (Swadlincote) Sqn ATC



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Chief Executive's Introduction



Group Captain Nick Sharpe

As I write this introduction in barmy summer temperatures, it is difficult to believe that just a few months ago much of the East Midlands was facing Arctic winter conditions, as people struggled to cope with increasingly snow-bound roads and freezing temperatures.

I well recall standing with a group of RAF Regiment Reserves, from RAF Waddington's 2503 Squadron, on a March Saturday afternoon at their training camp at RAF Syerston. Sub-zero temperatures, 20 knot winds and horizontal snow did not even begin to dent their enthusiasm as they explained the training programme that would see them engage in patrols and drills well into the early morning of Sunday. On Sunday they would close down their camp, clean their kit and return to RAF Waddington. On Monday each of them would be back at their day jobs, be it medical technician, plumber, or one of the multitude of other careers represented by this diverse group of volunteers. I suspect that 2503 Squadron's weekend was far removed from that of most people, but every one of the volunteers at the camp was clearly enjoying themselves and equally gaining valuable experiences that simply could not be acquired in a civilian world. As you read the articles in this latest copy of The Reservist, you will find similar tales of opportunities taken and skills gained.

This year is one of many anniversaries, including that of the centenary of the Armistice that drew the First World War to a close and the formation of the RAF. The Reservist highlights the long history of the RAF Volunteer Reserve and

the Royal Auxiliary Air Force; it also illustrates the manner in which RAF Reserves are actively supporting operations that continue today. The Royal Navy has a somewhat longer history than that of the RAF and is represented in the East Midlands by HMS Sherwood, a unit whose influence in the region is significant. All of us at East Midlands RFCA congratulate HMS Sherwood on the award of the Freedom of the City of Nottingham, which they exercised for the first time on 2nd June.

Finally, you will find in this edition of The Reservist an article on The Year of Engineering. All three Services place a great emphasis on the skills of engineers, without which the military's ships, submarines, aircraft, vehicles and other systems simply would not function. The Armed Forces are committed to training large numbers of engineers, many of whom move on to perform engineering roles in the civilian workplace, using the very skills they learnt in the military. Those skills can also be gained in the reserves and used to complement a civilian career as the members of 170 Engineer Group demonstrate so ably in this magazine.

Nick Sharpe

Group Captain Nick Sharpe, Chief Executive of East Midlands Reserve Forces & Cadets Association.

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Achievements



Sapper Lizzy Ahmed with fellow reservists after a triathlon event

Trainee chemistry teacher embraces Army Reserve

A trainee chemistry teacher from Nottingham has explained why joining the Army Reserve has helped to fuel her passion for learning.

Sapper Lizzy Ahmed, aged 31, serves as a reservist with 350 Field Squadron Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and works at George Spencer Academy in Nottingham in her civilian career.

Coming from a military family, Lizzy has always had an interest in joining the Army so decided to join 350 Field Squadron as she was drawn in by the specialist trade opportunities and wanted to learn more about search and EOD techniques.

Speaking about life in the reserves, Lizzy said: "I'd say the location of the unit you train with in the Army Reserve is important as well as the specialist trade as you are balancing your Army life with your civilian career.

"Whilst there is nothing like EOD and search in my civilian job, the general skills you learn are definitely transferable. You learn a lot about yourself during basic training and I think a lot of the confidence and adaptability I've developed in the Army comes across in my teaching."

Spending her days in the classroom and a number of weekends 'in the field', Lizzy has a number of methods up her sleeves to engage with her students.

She continued: "As a science teacher I've used a couple of my Army examples to demonstrate chemical reactions such as using self-heating food rations to explain exothermic reactions. The students love it and are really interested when they realise it is something really used by soldiers.

"Prior to teaching, I had studied a PhD in Pharmacy and spent a few years after that working in labs. I found this to be repetitive and methodical, but as this requires a great deal of concentration I have been able to tap into these traits when completing my Army-based search training."

Lizzy has packed in as much training as she can since joining the Army Reserve in 2015, including completing her intermediate search and foundation combat engineer training last year, which led to her being crowned Best Sapper by her unit Officer Commanding.

As well as having a passion for learning, Lizzy is also a keen sportswoman and has also embraced the Army Reserves sporting culture too.

She explained: "I was competing in triathlons before I joined the Army so when I found out how much support is on offer for participating in sports with the reserves I really jumped at the chance to get involved. I took part in my first Army triathlon earlier this year so took away some useful tips from that. I train most days as it is a fairly demanding sport going straight from swimming, on to the bike then running, but I often practice simulating race days, which paid off when I became the first female to cross the finish line in a competition I took part in last year."

Looking ahead to the rest of the year, Lizzy is hoping to continue her triathlon training alongside further specialist trade training and developing her teaching career.

She concluded: "It's a unique experience being part of the Army Reserve. I've met some amazing friends from all over the country and thanks to my training I am both physically and mentally stronger. I have learnt so much about soldiering, my trade and myself. I'd encourage anyone to get involved in the reserves, no matter

what your interests are there are plenty of opportunities available to make the most of your spare time."



Sapper Lizzy Ahmed

Completing a training biathlon

With the Winter Olympics taking place in 2018, 101 Military Working Dog Squadron decided to organise their own biathlon training event designed to challenge both the reservists and their canine colleagues.

Traditionally, a biathlon is a winter sport that combines cross-country skiing and rifle shooting. It is treated as a race where the contestant with the shortest total time wins.

As the Military Working Dog event was taking place in North Luffenham, Rutland, it wasn't possible to take part in any ski-based challenges so instead the Squadron replaced this element of the challenge with a dog agility activity instead.

One of the reservists to take part in the biathlon was Private Rob 'DC' Dobson-Crockford. He explained: "This was the first time the Reserve Canine Biathlon had taken place. We were split in to four teams with each having four dog handlers, then along with the working dogs, we completed various challenges around the airfield.

"We got a chance to utilise our basic soldiering skills as well as getting hands on with our military working dogs."

'DC' explained that this was the first time that a number of those taking part had been able to use the indoor electronic shooting range at the base in Rutland, which has recently been fitted with new rifles.



Private Rob Dobson-Crockford and his dog Axel

'DC' continued: "Each reserve was given the chance to handle their working dog as they made their way around the agility equipment. For the less experienced reserves this was a great chance to reinforce their knowledge and learn some new skills. A lot of people also commented that the agility stand helped them to better understand what their military working dog was capable of achieving."

The event concluded with an award being presented to Private Lindsey Furness as she was crowned the Squadron's 'Reserve of the Year'. Lindsey appeared by video link as she was deployed to Cyprus at that time.

Thanks to the success of the biathlon and positive feedback received from everyone involved, it is now hoped this will become an annual fixture in the Military Working Dog calendar.

Naval recruits complete basic training

Despite adverse weather conditions created by the 'beast from the east', three new Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) recruits have successfully completed their basic training after spending two weeks at HMS Raleigh in Cornwall.

Able Seamen Hannah Joynes, Richard Taylor and Michelle Rowlands of HMS Sherwood, the East Midlands' only Royal Naval Reserve unit, completed their two week basic training in the middle of the bad weather in February and March.

Speaking about the toughest part of her training, Able Seaman Michelle Rowlands who works as a Nursing Assistant, explained: "The hardest test was definitely Dartmoor. We spent two days doing survival skills and then we walked 25km on day two after four and a half hours sleep in minus eight temperatures."

Able Seaman Hannah Joynes, who is currently studying for a master's degree, explained: "I really enjoyed my time at the Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear Defence Centre. It's good to be able to do things you wouldn't normally get to do in a civilian job."



Recruits at Raleigh

Michelle added: "My family are very supportive of me. Joining the armed services has made my oldest son want to join up too."

During the training the recruits were able to learn and practice skills in team work, drill, First Aid, firefighting, damage control and seamanship. Physical fitness is another key part of the syllabus.

After training in unit since joining, the course shows that the recruits have reached the required standard.

Hannah added: "I would definitely recommend the experience to others as the whole RNR and HMS Raleigh experience can teach you so much and increase your confidence.

"My advice to others before going to Raleigh is to focus on your fitness and practice your ironing at home but remember to have fun when you're there."

Achievements

“I completed four ski races after just 10 hours training”

The idea of taking to the slopes to ski in any kind of Nordic Skiing event could be nerve wracking for most people, but a reservist from Lincolnshire took this all in her stride as she completed four races with just 10 hours previous training.

Private Sonya Key, who serves with 160 (Lincoln) Transport Squadron, travelled to Ruhpolding on the Germany/Austria border in February as part of 158 Regiment's team to compete in a series of challenges designed to both test her physical fitness and push her out of her comfort zone.

Passing her basic soldier training course in May last year, Sonya has embraced being a reserve by balancing looking after her two children, working full-time as a Private Hire Driver and spending time with her husband, alongside completing as many military training courses as she can.

Sonya, aged 39, explained: “This is the first time I have completed any adventure training with the Army Reserve, but I was eager to give skiing a go. The Army Reserve organises lots of different sports related challenges that are designed to build your team-working skills and confidence, as well as developing your fitness so this ticked all the boxes for me.”

Speaking about how she found taking part in the ski-competition, Sonya said: “I had never skied before taking part in this event

so feel very lucky that I got to spend time with a trainer before competing in any of the races.

“I completed four ski races after just 10 hours training: a 5k Nordic race; an individual 3.5k time trial, an individual 10k race and a relay race where I worked with three others. I found the competition tested me both physically and mentally but I feel a real sense of achievement to know that although I didn't win any trophies, I pushed myself as hard as I could to do the best I could.

“I'm a bit battered and bruised thanks to falling over a few times and I damaged my coccyx which was painful, but I still loved every minute of the time I was there.”

Sonya is a keen horse rider and commented that she found it difficult to digest the different skill-set needed on the slopes. She continued: “I've spent years learning to lean back on a horse to ride successfully but when skiing you have to lean forward instead which took me a while to get my head around. However, thanks to there being positive team spirit amongst the group, we just kept reminding each other about the techniques required if anyone forgot anything.”

Now she is back in Lincolnshire, Sonya is considering how she can challenge herself next. She concluded: “Over the last year I have taken part in numerous driving courses meaning I'm now qualified to drive HGVs, SVs and military Land Rovers, so I now hope to take part in more adventure training. Learning to kayak is next on my list, although I'd also jump at the chance to go skiing again too.”



Private Sonya Key



NEED SOME ADVICE? POP IN FOR A CHAT

If you're currently serving or have ever served in the Armed Forces,
The Royal British Legion can offer you and your family advice and support.

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LIVE ON 

Retiring after 38 years in the reserves

A reservist from Nottingham is set to retire after 38 years of service.

Warrant Officer Class Two John Parker, aged 55 serves with 350 Field Squadron, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and in his civilian life he works as a plumber for Derby Homes.

John joined the reserves after being inspired by the stories he was told by his grandfathers who both served in the Army.

When asked why he has stayed in the reserves for so long, John explained: "I love it, the sense of belonging to something that is bigger than you, the pride and privilege in serving and above all the comradeship with all the people you meet while in service.

"The best thing for me is the many people I have served with, I have friends all around the globe, in life it is not where you are but who you are with."

When he first joined in 1980 John was part of 3 Troop (Derby) 575 Field Squadron.

He continued: "I have had many highlights over the years, one that really stands out is winning the 29 Engineer Brigade Bridging Competition in 1988.

"Serving on overseas deployments including the Falklands were some of the best experiences I have had.



Warrant Officer Class Two John Parker

"I also had the honour of being Squadron Sergeant Major at 350 Field Squadron on two occasions.

"I am proud to have been a Warrant Officer for 23 years, upholding the high standards expected of the appointment.

"I would highly recommend joining any of the three Services as a reserve, at least give it a try because you never know until you try."

Former police officer takes up command role

At the start of January a new Commanding Officer took charge of 158 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps (RLC).

His name is Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Gifford and, like the vast majority of soldiers in 158 Regiment, he is a reservist, so fulfils his duties as Commanding Officer on a part-time basis.

Speaking about why he took on the role, Andrew said: "Command is a privilege, it is seen as the most desirable professional position for a soldier whether regular or reserve and therefore Commanding Officer is the pinnacle of most people's careers.

"The regiment is probably one of the best regiments, if not the best, I've ever had the privilege to work with. It's the professional nature of the regiment that really drew me in to taking on the command appointment."

Andrew previously spent 30 years in the Police Service, he explained: "I worked for Hampshire Constabulary and I was involved in all aspects of policing."

Andrew has also had a long and varied career within the Army Reserve, he continued: "I joined the reserves back in 1988. I had to do a project whilst I was a new police officer and mine was on



Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Gifford

the Royal Military Police based in Aldershot, as a result of that I joined them."

Andrew has been on numerous military-based tours throughout his long career as an Army reservist including helping plan and undertake the withdrawal from Afghanistan and a tour in which he supported the United Nations in Cyprus.

While talking about his role in Cyprus and why others should consider joining the reserves, Andrew concluded: "I think operational tours are the real highlight within my reservist career, because you are putting in to practice all the training and skills that you've learnt and you're putting them to focus in an operational environment.

"It's as Churchill described being a reservist is being twice the citizen and it may be an old fashioned notion but the idea is that you give something else back to your community other than your regular work."

Development

“My family are incredibly supportive of my reserve commitments”

A former cruise-ship retail manager has embraced all of the opportunities being a part of the Army Reserve brings, thanks to the support of her family.

Private Ruth Archer, aged 46, serves with 160 (Lincoln) Transport Squadron, 158 Regiment, and is currently self-employed in her civilian life.

Being a part of the Reserve Forces means different things to different people, but Ruth explained that she wanted to make a difference in her spare time and was encouraged to join up after hearing an advert on the radio.

Ruth, who lives in Newark, explained: “I was driving home one day when I heard an advert for the Forces on the radio saying ‘this is belonging’. That was it for me, I got home and processed my application straight away. I didn’t tell my partner or my family what I had done for a while though as I wanted to make sure my application was successful! On breaking the news to them though, they were so pleased and continue to support me every step of the way.”

Ruth completed her first Army Reserve training course in April last year and has not looked back since. Prior to this, she had been working on cruise ships travelling all over the world as a retail manager for more than 12 years.



Private Ruth Archer

She continued: “I felt I needed a fresh start and a new challenge in my life. I wanted to do something that pushed me out of my comfort zone, enable me to foster new relationships and learn a new trade or skill. Being a reservist has definitely allowed me to do this.

“I chose to specialise in being a Combat Medical Technician (CMT) as I wanted to study something that would provide me with a wealth of knowledge that I could put to good use both in and outside of my part-time military career.”

Ruth explained that to gain extra experience she has also started to volunteer as a First Responder for Newark Fosseway.

Ruth concluded: “My family are incredibly supportive of my reserve commitments as they know how much being a reservist means to me. In the short period I have been in the reserves I have learnt so much, met some amazing people and passed my CMT – all things I wouldn’t have thought were possible a year ago. If I have one regret it is not joining earlier in my life, hence the reason I am going to embrace as many opportunities as possible for now on!”

Ravenshead Scouts visit HMS Sherwood

A Scout group from Ravenshead had the opportunity to learn about being a Royal Naval Reservist earlier this year after they visited a military training event in Nottingham.

HMS Sherwood, the East Midlands’ only Royal Naval Reserve unit, invited the 1st Larch Farm Scouts to visit a reservist training event held at Foresters House in Chilwell in which military personnel were practicing weapons handling and improving their drill technique.

Reservists at HMS Sherwood meet each Tuesday evening and conduct a variety of training through the year. The event was a hands-on exercise in which the reservists got a chance to refresh their weapon handling and drill skills but also demonstrate these techniques to the Scouts.

Weapons handling is an important skill that all reservists must practice in order to be ready for any potential operations.

Explaining why the Scout group was invited along, Warrant Officer Sean Jones from HMS Sherwood, explained: “As we have hosted local Sea Cadets many times I felt it might be a good idea to open the invitation to other youth groups who wouldn’t normally get the opportunity to mix with the Armed Forces.



Scouts at HMS Sherwood

“The offer was enthusiastically received, subsequently, four members of staff attended with approx. 26 Scouts to get a tour of the unit and take part in some world class parade training from one of the few State Ceremonial trained reservists, Petty Officer Jason Kingham.

“HMS Sherwood is made up of volunteers many of whom have a variety of civilian careers so all of our training happens in the evening. We therefore thought that the Scouts may enjoy learning what we do on a training evening and we gave them the opportunity to ask any questions they may have about the Royal Navy.”

Being a Scout is all about being outdoors, travelling to new places and experiencing new things. Scout Leader, Andy Chick explained: “We’ve had a wonderful time and it’s great to see what ordinary people can achieve.”

A plaque was also presented on the evening from HMS Sherwood to the Scout group as a memento of their visit.

Fire crew learn about life in the reserves

Firefighters from Edwinstowe Fire Station had the chance to learn more about life in the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) thanks to a visit to HMS Sherwood.

The visit, which was organised by Firefighter Craig Wagstaff who is also a reservist at HMS Sherwood, saw Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's (NFRS) White Watch from Edwinstowe show the ship's company around the fire engine and its firefighting equipment, while learning more about firefighting in the RNR.

Craig has been a reservist for three years, and organised the visit to bring both of his roles together after his reserve unit asked if they could learn more about modern methods of firefighting.

Craig said: "Being a firefighter and a reservist complement each other well, and both roles rely on excellent team work to get the job done, as well as self-discipline.

"My colleagues at the station are incredibly supportive of me and my role in the RNR and have said that they thoroughly enjoyed the evening, even commenting on how engaging the unit were and how eager they were to ask questions to learn more about different roles and the kind of equipment used.

"I am now in my 20th year with NFRS and without their support, I would not be able to continue in my reservist role. I am extremely grateful to them.



"The Service has a reservist policy which allows me to fulfil my annual commitment to the RNR, and while I have not yet been deployed through my role as a reservist, I look forward to what the future holds for me in both careers."

NFRS has a history of supporting the Reserve Forces, with a recent wholetime recruitment campaign opened up to members of the Armed Forces from anywhere in the country.

Lieutenant Commander Rod Grant from HMS Sherwood explained: "All Naval personnel are trained in firefighting techniques, so it was good to see the civilian equipment in use and compare procedures. We received lots of positive feedback about the visit from those who took part and thank the fire service for taking the time to visit us."

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Veterinary clinical skills training

Members of the 1st Military Working Dog Regiment (1 MWD), the Defence Animal Training Regiment and Army Headquarters joined together earlier this year to take part in clinical skills training at St George's Barracks in Rutland.

The key focus of the day was improving the management of injured military working animals and the day was led by a number of experts from both an academic background and the Royal Army Veterinary Corps (RAVC).

Lieutenant Tessa Muir, aged 32, works as Anti-Doping Manager at the British Horseracing Authority but in her spare time she is a Veterinary Officer with 1 MWD. She explained: "The training provided an opportunity to practice a clinical technique that would not typically be undertaken in day-to-day veterinary work, but may prove to be a vital life-saving procedure in an operational theatre environment."

The training was delivered through a series of lectures, interactive workshops and case studies.

Tessa added: "Aside from the opportunity to practice the clinical application of fluid administration, an application used in veterinary (and human) medicine to replace or maintain normal water and electrolyte levels in the body of sick or injured patients, a key component of the training was the chance to gain an insight into the management of human patients."

"We also considered what skills or practices being used in human medicine may not currently be being utilised in the military veterinary environment, but may be transferable to the management of military working animals."

"This learning ensures that we continue to strive for best practice, and best health and welfare for the animals under our care."

The training was attended by 20 Veterinary Officers and 12 Veterinary Technicians from both reserve and regular units.

Tessa concluded: "I would recommend joining 1MWD Regiment to any of my veterinary colleagues looking to become part of a dynamic team that is committed to both the care of the military working animal and the development of soldiers under their command."



Reservists practising a medical technique

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A focus on: The Year of Engineering

2018 is The Year of Engineering – a 12 month campaign designed to promote the engineering profession and encourage young people to consider how they could achieve their ambitions in this field of work.

This is a national campaign organised to both increase awareness and understanding of what engineers do among young people, their parents and teachers.

The Year of Engineering forms an important part of the government's Industrial Strategy which is ensuring we have the skills needed to succeed in a modern economy.

Engineering affects all of us in one way or another from hospital treatments to transport and the food we eat – investigative and engineering expertise are needed to create each of these things that help to make our lives more comfortable or easier in one way or another.

The world of engineering offers a vast array of opportunities for both men and women with each individual having the chance to make a positive contribution to the place we call home.

In the East Midlands, there are a number of Army Reserve units that specialise in engineering.

Here we meet some of the reservists who serve with the Army in their spare time, to continue their professional development and in some cases enhance their CV for future civilian work opportunities.



Corporal
Simon Wilson

Name: Corporal Simon Wilson

Age: 34

Civilian Occupation:

Lead Designer for North Midland Construction Limited

Unit: 170 Engineer Group

“If you are already working in the engineering industry, joining an engineering-based Army Reserve unit is a fantastic networking opportunity amongst other things. It is the only place in the world where you get that mix and variety of people and skills in one room.

“In my civilian career I work within the waste water industry and I bring this technical knowledge to my role in the reserves as I am part of the water infrastructure team. I would encourage anyone to join the Army Reserve as not only can you learn new engineering-based skills but you can also participate in other sports and adventure training that may not be available to you otherwise.”



Warrant Officer Class One
Mark Boardman

Name: Warrant Officer Class One Mark Boardman

Age: 45

Civilian Occupation:

Managing Director of BEM Services

Unit: 170 Engineer Group

As a former regular soldier Mark explained: “I run a Building Services Design Consultancy which means we provide heating and lighting designs for architects in the construction industry. After leaving the Army on a full-time basis I later joined the reserves so I now take my commercial knowledge back to the military as I have been in business for a few years.

“I think a well-structured and organised unit works efficiently and effectively so I wanted to recreate that within my business. The highlight of my reserve career so far was probably the two weeks I spent in Cyprus trying to resolve engineering solutions on the military base's airfield infrastructure. We explored a lot of issues on this exercise from a weak harbour jetty to a replacement baggage handling facility.

“Engineering is a very wide sector and I think most people would find an aspect that they enjoy, be it information technology, welding or surveying. There really are lots of options out there. Most engineering roles require some element of problem solving so there is always a sense of job satisfaction when a task is complete.”



Warrant Officer Class Two
Robert Evans

Name: Warrant Officer Class Two Robert Evans

Age: 40

Civilian Occupation:

Project Controller at Portakabin Limited

Unit: 170 Engineer Group

Robert joined the reserves in 2015 after leaving the regular Army, as he wanted to continue to progress his engineering skills alongside moving into civilian industry.

Explaining what he enjoys about being a member of the Army Reserve, he said: “Being a reserve is a great way of networking inside the construction industry and allows you to learn and share best practices with others. There are loads of opportunities available in the reserves for you to work with like-minded people and is a good platform for you to learn to solve problems that may be of use in your civilian career too.”

A focus on:

“Being a reservist has given me a new found confidence in myself”

A reservist from Nottingham has described why being in the Army Reserve has helped her to improve her confidence and why she would encourage others to follow her footsteps in to the world of engineering.

Lance Corporal Kate Bellerby, aged 40, serves with the Army Reserve's 170 Engineer Group, and works full-time as a Pre-Construction Manager.

2018 is The Year of Engineering, a year-long campaign designed to tackle the engineering skills gap and widen the pool of young people who join the profession. The programme aims to celebrate the world and wonder of engineering and encourage future talent to consider engineering as a profession.

Kate joined 170 Engineer Group in 2014 as she wanted to gain broader experience of engineering projects. It also really appealed to her to be able to work overseas on military engineering projects.



Lance Corporal Kate Bellerby

Working predominately on construction projects for the education sector in her civilian life, Kate believes she has developed a variety of transferable skills through her part-time military role which have helped her to grow personally.

She explained: “Being a reservist has given me a new found confidence in myself. The Army Reserve has improved my self-discipline within my civilian job, and in return I offer a spectrum of commercially and environmentally focused design knowledge to the military design team that I am a part of.

“In my civilian job I typically work on projects which last for between one and two years. By contrast, the Army Reserve allows me to work on projects that have to fit in to a two week Annual Training Exercise. This condensed way of working has sharpened my focus for delivery.”

Speaking about why she would encourage others to join the engineering profession, Kate continued: “I worked in architecture for the first 10 years of my career, but I had always been more interested in the construction stage of the project so I made the switch to be a building contractor just under five years ago. The challenges vary and no two days are the same.

“The aspects of my current engineering role I particularly enjoy are stakeholder engagement, running a team and balancing the aspirations of the building users with the stringent funding and technical requirements.

“Engineering is a fantastic profession which enables you to be involved in a variety of projects at home or aboard, depending on your skills and experience. I'd definitely recommend it.”

Speaking about her role in the Army Reserve, Kate said: “I am a Junior Team Leader within 508 Specialist Team Royal Engineers (STRE), which is one of the teams within 62 Works Group that forms part of the wider 170 Engineer Group.

“508 STRE is a team of around 25 specialist infrastructure engineers assigned to work on a wide range of military engineering projects that provide engineering, design, consultancy, programme and project management, and facilities management to the British Military and other government agencies. I can be employed as an infrastructure specialist, military engineer or soldier. The advantage of this is being able to use your civilian expertise whilst gaining experience in new areas.”

As well as building on her engineering knowledge in the Army Reserve Kate has also had the opportunity to participate in a number of adventurous training activities such as hill walking, kayaking and sub-aqua diving. She has also achieved a mountain bike leader qualification too.

She concluded: “If you have an interest in engineering I'd certainly encourage you to find out more. There are tangible career benefits to being a reservist and you'll have fun in the process!”

The Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund
Email: mcchildren@bbc.com

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund has supported children whose parents work, or have worked, for the Naval Service for over a hundred years.

The latest feature The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund is available on the 19th of October with over 10000 new members joining the Naval Reserve. This has been a record for the Naval Reserve since it was formed in 1902.

How We Help
We provide direct support for children whose parents work or have worked for the Royal Navy or Royal Marines. We provide financial support and help with their education and other needs.

To reach as many children as possible we also support our community and family units at all our stations. The Royal Naval Reserve is a family friendly organisation and we offer a range of family friendly events and activities. We also offer a range of support for our members and their families. We are a family friendly organisation and we offer a range of support for our members and their families.

To find out more about the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund please visit our website at www.royalnavyandmarineschildrensfund.org

To make a donation, leave a gift in your will or simply to find out more about our work, please contact:
Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund
c/o BBC Children's Fund
100 Victoria Street, London W1A 0AB

Or visit our website at: www.royalnavyandmarineschildrensfund.org

Celebrating the RNR in Nottingham

Nottingham may be 60 miles from the nearest coast but the city has a strong history and connection with the Royal Navy Reserve (RNR).

Originally HMS Sherwood was a World War Two Destroyer under the lend-lease agreement with America, however, much has changed since then.

The earliest known record of RNR activity in the city dates back to 1949 when a preliminary meeting was held to discuss the possibility of opening a Royal Naval Volunteer (Wireless) Reserve.

This crucial meeting was held in a hotel bar in Nottingham and over the following months moves were made to establish a wireless reserve unit.

Initially the unit had no home base and instead held weekly parades in members' homes, the Navy even allowed them to install military grade radio equipment in order to keep up to speed.

Many of the first members of the RNR in Nottingham were previously regulars in the Navy who had experience of communications.

In 1950, the wireless unit moved into its first formal premises in the Lace Market but within just a few years the unit would need to move again.

Due to steady growth they soon they were too large to meet in the Lace Market, so moved to the vacant space above the Navy recruitment office on Carrington Street, they would eventually take over the recruitment office as well.

In the early eighties the unit was re-designated as a Communications Training Centre but the process of modernisation would mean further changes.

In 1984, the RNR unit was finally commissioned as HMS Sherwood. Senior officials originally opted for naming the unit HMS Trent, but later changed this to Sherwood because of the city's connection to the World War Two destroyer of the same name.

The crest of the 1941 HMS Sherwood was slightly modified for use by the RNR unit.



PO Jason Kingham, PO Jake Jacobs, WO1 Sean Jones & Col Jeff Moulton

Just two years later HMS Sherwood would move again, this time to Chalfont Drive, which would be home for the next 18 years.

Chalfont Drive was built during the early stages of World War Two and had changed little since, members of HMS Sherwood set to work finalising the internal layout and rebuilding it themselves.

HMS Sherwood formed a satellite unit in the early 21st century which would eventually split off and become an independent RNR unit, HMS Ceres in Leeds.

In 2014, HMS Sherwood relocated to their current base at Foresters House in Chilwell and a rededication ceremony attended by HRH Prince Michael of Kent soon followed.

Now almost seventy years after the formation of an RNR unit in the city, HMS Sherwood is being granted the Freedom of the City of Nottingham.

PRIVATE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

At Henmore Health we know that without our skilled and experienced Armed Forces Leavers and Reservists it could not operate with the level of service it enjoys. Our team, which includes award winning Senior Mental Health Practitioner Major (Ret'd) Cormac Doyle ARRC and Army Reservist Ajda Ellis, delivers the highest level of outpatient Mental Healthcare to private patients from London to the Peak District.

We are proud to support the Armed Forces Covenant and to have received the ERS Bronze Award this year. For more information on how we support the Armed Forces Community, The Bridge Charity for Veterans Mental Health or to hear more about our Mental Health Services and FREE first appointment contact us on:

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Achievements

HMS Sherwood granted Freedom of the City

HMS Sherwood, the East Midlands' only Royal Naval Reserve unit, has received the Freedom of the City of Nottingham a rare honour presented by Nottingham City Council.

The official scroll presentation to mark the occasion took place at Nottingham City Council's Full Council in May, which was followed by a Freedom Parade in Nottingham in June this year.

Freedom of the City is an honour reserved for military units and gives the unit being awarded the opportunity to march through Nottingham in this instance.

The official parade saw reservists from HMS Sherwood be joined on parade by local Sea Cadets, members of the Royal Marines Reserve and the Band of HM Royal Marines, Portsmouth (Royal Band) as well as veteran's who have served with the Royal Navy in years gone by.



Reservists on parade outside their HQ in Nottingham

Members of the public were invited to see the military parade as it made its way through Nottingham.

Lieutenant Commander Rod Grant from HMS Sherwood explained: "We are immensely proud to receive the award. To receive this fantastic accolade is extremely rare, particularly for a Royal Naval Reserve unit like HMS Sherwood.

"We marched through the city with the band's drums beating, colours flying, and our bayonets fixed."

Cllr Brian Grocock, Nottingham City Council's Armed Forces Champion, said: "The granting of the Freedom of the City is a ceremonial honour, and the oldest and highest civic honour that can be bestowed on a military unit and it is such an honour and privilege to be part of this momentous occasion."



The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust
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Men and women of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines serve their country, often at times of danger. Established in 1922, the RNBT helps non-commissioned Sailors, Marines and their families (The RNBT Family) throughout their lives.

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Gavin Williamson Secretary of State For Defence
visiting reservists on deployment

Credit Corporal D. Parnham

The Reservist Profile

Name: Dave Rimmer

Rank: Senior Aircraftman

Age: 35

Military unit: 7010 (VR) Squadron, RAF Reserve

Civilian job: Financial Services Senior Developer

Q - Have you always wanted to pursue a career in the military?

A - "I'd always wanted to be a member of the UK's Armed Forces and at the age of 15 I was determined to become a helicopter pilot. Unfortunately, poor eyesight inevitably meant that this particular ambition never came to fruition. I did however maintain my interest in the military – even as I pursued a somewhat different career in financial software development."

Q - Why did joining the RAF Reserve appeal to you?

A - "Joining the Reserve Forces only became something I could seriously contemplate later on in my life. In fact, it wasn't until I was in my late 40s that I came to attest with 7010 (VR) Squadron who are based at RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire.

"I now work as an Imagery Analyst in the Squadron and am following my life-long ambition."

"If you want a challenge and want to do your bit for your country, joining the RAF Reserve could be for you."

Q - You were recently mobilised in your reserve role. What did this involve?

A - "I went out to Cyprus in autumn last year. Being mobilised was no small thing for me, but like many of my reservist colleagues I actually joined the RAF Reserve with mobilisation in mind. As an Imagery Analyst my work on Op SHADER was essentially divided in to creating battle damage assessment products and producing intelligence based on tactical reconnaissance imagery. This could be day or night, such is the nature of modern air power. I had to get used to working at different times of the day and night depending on the requirements, I may have been working up to 12 hours over a night shift."

Q - Did you have an opportunity to enjoy any downtime during your mobilisation?

A - "As intense as the operation could be, I did have a bit of time to enjoy the benefits of being deployed to Akrotiri. Admittedly the weather in Cyprus during the winter is cooler and wetter than during the summer months but with temperatures in the low 20s it's still significantly more pleasant than the weather back home in the UK."

Q - Why would you encourage others to join the RAF Reserve?

A - "Being deployed to Cyprus as an Imagery Analyst turned out to be everything I expected, especially from a professional standpoint.

"My time in Cyprus undoubtedly improved my skills as an Intelligence Analyst and I felt that at the end of my deployment I had positively contributed to an ongoing operation."

The changing face of intelligence reserves

2018 marks the centenary of the formation of the Royal Air Force and while the Intelligence Branch only dates back to 1939, its reserves have played a crucial role in how the RAF has delivered air power since day one.

During World War Two, RAF Volunteer Reserve personnel often worked in Squadron Intelligence roles, briefing aircrew before missions and de-briefing them on their return to capture information about the enemy first-hand for further analysis.

RAF intelligence reserves provided a cadre of trained Intelligence Officers and Senior Non Commissioned Officers throughout the Cold War, principally from three nationally recruited Squadrons; 7006, 7010 and 7630 specialising in Operational intelligence, Imagery Intelligence and Linguistic Intelligence respectively.

Operation (Op) GRANBY, the Gulf War to liberate Kuwait in 1991 saw part-time intelligence reserves mobilised for the first time. Since then they have been involved in supporting the RAF in every major UK operation, from peace-keeping in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, through Op's TELIC in Iraq and HERRICK in Afghanistan, right up to the present day with Op SHADER as the RAF continues to deliver its contribution to the defeat of so-called Islamic State.

This history of operational support has brought big changes in recent years.

Sergeant Steve Farley joined over 25 years ago in 1993 as a Photographic Interpreter and Flight Lieutenant Graham Blackburn joined in 2004 as a Linguist; both have seen the use of intelligence reserves develop significantly.

Graham explained: "It has become more professional and we are more integrated with the regulars. When I was in training, in the past you would sit down and think how can I fill my time over a training weekend. Now it's a question of how do you squeeze everything in."

Steve said: "For a lot of the time, our weekends were mostly training, you would occasionally work with regulars but that has changed and now a lot of our guys are working alongside regulars for most of their time."

Steve's role has evolved and he is now an Imagery Analyst. Speaking about when he joined, he continued: "Tactical reconnaissance was really a case of the aircraft going out collecting some imagery and basically finding out what the enemy is doing over the hill, how many tanks they have, the state of readiness. Now a lot of the time is spent analysing more deeply, identifying and understanding patterns of life. For example, it's more a question of what is going on down on the ground rather than identifying what equipment they have and where it is."

Technology has added a new dimension to intelligence work, enabling the rapid processing, exploitation and dissemination of information to users far more quickly than ever before.

Steve explained that when it comes to imagery analysis: "digital image manipulation gives you a significant advantage over traditional 'wet film', but many of the skills have stayed the same - a lot of the skill is knowing what you're looking at".

Graham also commented: "In the past we used to have an awful lot of protectively marked hard-copy documents but nowadays everything is IT based, so instead of massive cupboards full of



books and files, everything is on a database so it's much easier to access and search."

The RAF has expanded its intelligence reserves in recent years, drawing additional personnel from General Service Support Squadrons across the UK and refocusing the roles of the 7010 and 7630 Squadrons.

Today, 7006 still retains its specialisation in Operational intelligence, 7010 has expanded beyond its original remit of imagery intelligence to support the wider Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance community and 7630 has been re-rolled to host a pool of subject matter experts who are available to support all aspects of both the RAF's and Defence's intelligence community. There's certainly no shortage of opportunity.

Steve concluded: "Working in intelligence, I think opens up a fascinating world and it can be very rewarding when the information you discover is of critical importance to a mission"

"I've got a lot out of it and I like to think the country and the Royal Air Force have got a lot out of me too."

An advertisement for "The Regimental Shop". The top part features the shop's logo and tagline "Serving those who serve their country". Below this is the slogan "Don't be reserved about your commitment". The main image shows various military-themed merchandise including a striped scarf, a blue polo shirt, a watch, and a belt. At the bottom, the website "regimentalshop.com" and phone number "0845 459 1964" are displayed.

The RAF Reserve in the East Midlands



The Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) was formed just eight years after the RAF was founded in 1918, it aimed to be an elite corps of civilians that would serve their country in flying squadrons during their spare time..

Sergeant Phil Doorbar, is a member of the RAF Reserves and a custodian for the RAF Waddington Heritage Museum, he explained: "The 600 series Squadrons of the Auxiliary Air Force, were manned by gentleman airmen, all holding private pilots' licences and treating their service as weekend flying clubs."

Two of these Flying Squadrons formed in the East Midlands. 503 (County of Lincoln) Squadron was founded in 1926 and was originally based at RAF Waddington but moved to Doncaster in 1938.

504 (County of Nottingham) Squadron was formed in 1928 at RAF Hucknall where it began its life as part of Bomber Command but by the outbreak of the Second World War it had transferred to Fighter Command. Throughout World War Two it operated from 30 different airfields across the globe and performed a wide variety of roles including heavy bomber escort, disruptive raids over occupied France and was heavily involved in the Battle of Britain.

To help grow the number of reserves, the Royal Air Force Voluntary Reserve (RAFVR) was formed in 1936. 95% of Bomber Command aircrew were RAFVR by the end of the war, however, their role has significantly changed since then.

Phil continued: "The RAFVR are now not a Reserve Force as such, but responsible for training Air Cadets and University Air Squadrons."

After the war, the RAuxAF had a reduced role until 1957 when major changes saw the disbandment of many Reserve Squadrons.

Phil explained: "There were still 20 flying Squadrons in the 1950's. However, because of costs, the complexity of jet aircraft and social changes, the RAuxAF was all but shut down in 1957.

"After 20 years there was a renaissance with a gradual increase in Squadrons reforming, albeit mainly in ground roles."

After World War Two, Lincolnshire became arguably the most important county in the East Midlands for the RAF.

Phil explained: "By the end of World War Two there were some 46 airfields in Lincolnshire, many of them were Bomber Command Stations. Post war, a lot of these continued to be operational bases.

"It's just the sheer concentration of bases in one area. All these bases required armies of civilian workers who spent lots of money in the local economies, so attachments to the RAF were formed.

"The RAF Regiment have featured prominently, recruiting locally for airfield defence units.

"Most RAF Trades can now be supported by reservists. Some require professional qualifications; some require previous service yet the majority don't require applicants to possess either.

The exception of course is aircrew, although the newest Squadron in the Royal Auxiliary Air Force, based at RAF Waddington, are focussing their efforts on recruiting former pilots back into the cockpit.

From the Typhoon multirole fighter to the Sentinel battlefield surveillance platform, reservists are again flying some of the most advanced and capable frontline aircraft that the RAF has to offer. However, the demand for aircrew is even greater on the ground where they are required to fulfil a diverse range of staff and training appointments, supporting the introduction of new platforms such as the Boeing P8 Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft and providing specialist airpower decision making on multi-national exercises around the globe. While all of these aircrew roles are available exclusively to those with previous regular RAF flying experience, it is nevertheless the case that the centenary year of the RAF will be marked by a return to Lincolnshire skies of volunteer reservists.

In 2018, there are eight RAF Reserve units in the East Midlands including Intelligence Squadrons and Signals Squadrons amongst others.

Employer Engagement

Defence Employer Engagement

The Defence Employer Engagement strategy continues to support the recruitment and retention of regular and reserve personnel for the Armed Forces.

The RFCA's employer engagement activities primarily support the recruitment and retention of reserves but it also supports the full spectrum of Defence personnel including: Service leavers; veterans; military families; and cadet organisations. We aim to develop and sustain positive, mutually-beneficial

relationships between employers and the Ministry of Defence to support Defence personnel; before, during and after their service.

Military units in the East Midlands have over 2,350 reservists and the RFCA has engaged with over 4,300 employer contacts, providing information, guidance and advice on matters relating to Defence personnel, especially the employment of reservists and Service leavers.

Potential benefits to employers

Engaging with Defence can help businesses become stronger and more successful.

- By employing military personnel, ex-regulars and reservists, organisations can acquire a range of skills and attributes that are beneficial to the workplace.
- The skills and attributes that military personnel can offer include nationally recognised business and technical qualifications, as well as desirable 'softer' transferable skills such as leadership, team working, strategy and problem-solving, proven in challenging environments.
- Businesses can enhance their reputation and corporate social responsibility by supporting Defence and signing the Armed Forces Covenant, which may be formally recognised through the MOD's Employer Recognition Scheme.

The Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant aims to ensure that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly.

The Covenant raises awareness of the opportunities for employers to support Defence personnel who work in their businesses or access their products or services.

Over 2,450 organisations have signed the Covenant and 239 are in the East Midlands. Further details are on the Covenant website along with a list of the companies that have signed the Covenant so far www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk



Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS)

The ERS recognises and rewards employers for their support to Defence personnel. The scheme encompasses Bronze, Silver and Gold awards for employers who respectively pledge, demonstrate or advocate support. Employers who have signed the Armed Forces Covenant may self-register for a Bronze award; Silver and Gold awards are subject to an annual nomination and assessment process.

To find out more about the ERS search 'Defence Employer Recognition Scheme' online.



Events

An Invitation To See How Businesses Can Benefit From Reserve Forces -

'Behind The Wire' - Army Training and Mobilisation Centre

Chetwynd Barracks, Chilwell, Nottingham NG9 5HA

5 July 2018 from 8.30 am to 2pm

Reserve Forces are an essential part of our national security and Defence capability, supporting our Regular Forces.

By employing reservists, organisations can acquire a portfolio of skills and behaviours such as self-confidence, leadership, teamwork, organisation, resourcefulness, perseverance and problem solving, proven in challenging circumstances; these are essential in every workforce. Military training also covers a wide range of skills such as communications and IT, HGV and LGV driving licences, first aid, engineering, catering, and personnel management.

At this a special event, you will hear about the role of the Army (regular and reserve) and relationships with and potential benefits to employers. On a guided tour of the facilities, you will see: the medical and rehabilitation facilities; weapons, kit and equipment (with 'hands-on'); training facilities, including counter improvised explosive devices (have a go) and an electronic rifle range (have a go).

Numbers are limited so to book a place please contact Cat Suckling on 0115 924 8622 or email: em-areed@rfca.mod.uk

The Employer Interview

Bridgeway Consulting Ltd is one of the leading consulting and contracting companies in the UK, covering many aspects of civil engineering and asset management.

Understanding that both ex-Service personnel and reservists can have a positive impact on the projects undertaken, Bridgeway is fully-supportive of those with military experience and actively encourages its workforce to find out more about the benefits reserve service can bring.

Here we speak to Mark Lindahl, Director of Site Investigation at Bridgeway to find out more about how the business is forming strong links with the military.

What services do you provide at Bridgeway Consulting Ltd and what areas do you cover?

“We always aim to provide an effective and professional service that sets us apart from others in the industry. Bridgeway are known for their proactive approach which is underpinned by a detailed Director led management process, allowing our clients to utilise an expert team of engineers and consultants.

“Our extensive engineering expertise allows us to provide a dynamic and innovative service, which equips us to undertake small or large tasks efficiently, professionally and most important safely.

“We believe in the quality of our workforce who have delivered on frontline civil engineering projects for many years which firmly fits and mirrors a ‘forces ethos’ of get it done and get it done right first time. Our ethos and culture allows ex-Service and reserve personnel to fit in quickly and with the minimum of disruption to their career.”

You completed a career in the military before beginning your civilian career with Bridgeway. Can you tell us about your military service history including the unit you served with and the various roles and/or operations you were involved in?

“I joined the Royal Engineers in 1995 completing my Phase One and Phase Two training without a clue as to what I would like to do afterwards.

“Post both phase testing for maths and English skills I was sent to attend the Design Trades Combined Assessment which I duly passed.”

Your career in the Army was extremely varied. What were your highlights?

“During my varied career I served with five different units including 3 Royal School of Military Engineering, 35 Engineer Regiment and 36 Engineer Regiment.

“I was fortunate enough during my service to serve/deploy to Germany, Northern Ireland, Kenya, Cyprus, Bosnia, Kosovo, Falkland Islands, South Georgia, Afghanistan and Iraq.”



As an ex-Serviceman why do you think it is important to provide a clear and smooth transition into civilian employment for individuals who have either completed a full-time military career or who are currently serving our country as a reservist?

“The skills gained during a military career are second to none, it is important those skills are brought to the forefront where they can best serve the business they are employed by.

“Leaving any service is a daunting prospect, I remember very clearly the physical sense of loss that I felt leaving the gates for the last time after handing in my ID card, it is certainly a wrench.

“The easiest way to ensure a smooth transition is to give an environment and ethos familiar to those leaving, yes there may now be other worries like mortgages/pensions/living off camp etc but with some consistency the transition can be a lot smoother.

“From experience I know that if this is not the case then the transition is not a smooth one. My own was far from smooth and I felt lost for months post leaving. It was at this point I realised that should I find myself in a position to influence this process then I had a duty of care to do so.”

How many ex-Service leavers/reservists do you currently employ and what skills have they successfully delivered in your organisation thanks to their previous military training?

“I currently employ three reservists with another currently going through the recruitment process. These are all Royal Engineers and I am also mid-recruitment process of a new Project Manager who is an ex-regular Royal Marine and who still serves in the Royal Marines Reserve. Overall we employ 16 ex-Service personnel within the organisation and are actively recruiting more.”

Do you think that military personnel bring transferable skills into the civilian workplace?

“My employees have for the most part brought their transferrable skills across with them i.e. what they were trained to do in the Royal Engineers.

“We have also trained ex-Service leavers in our skill sets and what they have brought is a can-do attitude and an ability to process and absorb new information and then put it into practical use. For the ex-instructors amongst us, we still use the EDIP process

continued...

Employer Engagement



for training (Explanation, Demonstration, Imitation, Practice) which works well with people from all walks of life. I would have to say the largest thing ex-Service personnel and reservists bring is confidence, confidence to do what is right first time and to make the decision when the time comes and this is one of the major factors which sets them apart.”

Bridgeway previously signed the Armed Forces Covenant and have previously won an Employer Recognition Scheme Bronze Award. What does it mean to your organisation, and you personally, to be recognised as a Forces Friendly business?

“This means a great deal to us, we are as you state a forces friendly company. We understand military personnel, we engage with military personnel and when it is time to leave we assist in every way possible with their transition even if it is not to join our company. I and some of the others here have reviewed CV’s for people, we have assisted in finding employment, and where we personally know the individual written references so they have a civilian reference as well as a military ones, basically anything we can do to assist in the process. The award is not just about

recognition, we also hope it will inspire others to do similar things and realise that you do not need to be a massive company and you can achieve a substantial amount still as an SME.”

Bridgeway has developed links with the Army’s 170 Engineer Group regarding the drilling side of your business. What training do you/the unit undertake? Where does this happen and what have the results been so far?

“We have very close links with the team as five members of our team have served within 530 STRE and have maintained links with friends still serving there. My Drilling Manager Dom Whitehead is a serving reservist with the team and has recently deployed with them to Singapore for a specialist task.

“We continually develop equipment and purchase equipment in line with changing standards. When we do we require an area to practice on and 530 have a dedicated training area within camp. We utilise the drilling training area for familiarisation training and also the training of new members of the team. Whilst training the 530 technicians come out to the area and we train them on the equipment and on current standards changes to assist in the continuing professional development of the team.

“These sessions also allow the team to ‘try before they buy’ and test what we are using to ensure it is fit for purpose for the team. This arrangement works well for all parties, it also allows technicians who are thinking of leaving an introduction to our business and what we do to see if it is a good fit for them post-service life.”

Derbyshire NHS Trust appoint Reserves Champion

A Trainee Advanced Clinical Practitioner who works for a NHS Trust in Derbyshire has been appointed Reserves Champion in her place of work thanks to her part-time military career.

Christine Ongoma, who works at Whitemoor Medical Centre in Belper, is employed by Derbyshire Community Health Services NHS Foundation Trust (DCHS) and spends her spare time serving as a reservist with the Army Reserve’s 212 Field Hospital in Beeston.

Explaining why it was an honour to accept her new title, Christine explained: “I am really passionate about being Reserves Champion. It is a new role created by HR to allow us to work together to raise awareness about being a reservist and encourage other people who are currently or have previously served in the military to consider a career with the Trust.

“I presented at an Executive Board Meeting explaining more about my military experiences and drew on a couple of other colleagues’ stories about why they also serve as reservists. It is our hope that we will start to increase the number of reservists and Service Leavers employed by the Trust over future months.”

Speaking about the cross-overs between her medical role in the NHS and her military career, Christine continued: “Being Reserves Champion is already starting to have an impact on the advice I give. The GPs I work with often refer patients to me who have connections with the Armed Forces as they understand that I may be able to tell them who to contact for support and guidance.”

Joining the Army Reserve in 2009, Christine explained that she hasn’t looked back since: “A career in the Army started to become an interesting idea to me when I worked with the Kenyan Red Cross in a Humanitarian Aid Camp for two years



Amanda Wildgust and Christine Ongoma

after I qualified as a nurse.

“So when I came over to the UK to live in 2003 and a few years later saw an Army recruiting stand I knew I needed to find out more about how I could potentially wear the green uniform myself!


“After joining, I realised there were so many more opportunities available to me in the Army Reserve than I could ever have imagined.

Amanda Wildgust, Head of People Services at DCHS, said: “I knew Christina beforehand and knew she would be an ideal person to help to promote the Reserve Forces to the rest of the organisation.”

“Reservists bring a variety of skills in to the NHS that are really beneficial to both us as an organisation and their personal development. We currently have three reservists working at the Trust as well as a number of Service leavers, each of whom bring with them a range of experiences such as the ability to lead a team and solve problems.”

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