

The Reservist

East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association Newsletter

Winter 2017

Focus on:

101 Military
Working Dog Squadron

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101 MWD SQN

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ALPHA

MP meet reserves
in Lincolnshire

Completing a battlefield
study in Italy



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Contents

5 Chairman's Introduction

Development

- 6 Simulating a nautical environment
- 7 Sporting opportunities in the Army Reserve
MP meets reserves in Lincolnshire
- 8 Catering Regiment conquer West Highland Way
- 9 Army Reservists join cadets for Operation Steelback
Assisting an Orbital Railway Project

Exercising abroad

- 10 Completing a battlefield study in Italy
Cycling 230 miles for charity
- 11 Two weeks in Virginia

Achievements

- 12 An epic motorbike adventure
- 13 Tunnel training in Gibraltar
- 14 Taking part in a Dragon Boat Race
Double win for Lincolnshire reservist
- 15 The past proves inspirational for Royal Marines Reserve
- 16 Being a professional football referee
Learning from industry
- 17 Full-time mum: "Being a reservist allows me to enjoy the best of both worlds"

A focus on:

- 18 101 Military Working Dog Squadron
- 19 The Reservist Profile

Employer Engagement

- 20 Employer Engagement update
- 21 Nottingham business forms links with the Army Reserve
Employers experience reserve training in Denmark
- 22 The Employer Interview

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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Grantham based business TMS Support Solutions Ltd, whose workforce includes many veterans has received the Silver Defence Employer Recognition Award in recognition of its support to the wider Armed Forces Community.

TMS is a family business set up in 2001 by Brian Cannon following 23 years' service in the British Army. In addition, most of the management team and technical authors are service veterans, so they know first-hand the value of the transferable skills that ex service personnel can bring into the workplace including; communications, leadership, management and problem solving.

Since its formation, the company has been actively committed to supporting ex-service and Armed Forces Community personnel in their transition into civilian employment. The company's first step in demonstrating this commitment was signing The Armed Forces Covenant which represents a promise to those currently serving our country that as a reservist, service leaver or relative from a military family, they will be treated fairly. Currently 73% of TMS's employees are from this military family.

With clients in both the defence and commercial sectors, TMS needs the engineering and technical skills and knowledge of the ex-military community to produce technical manuals for vehicle, aircraft and electronic equipment manufacturers as well as providing technical support in areas such as training, through life support and safety procedures. In short, military expertise in the fields of vehicle mechanics, avionics and electronics are invaluable to the services TMS provide their clients.

TMS further demonstrated their commitment to the wider Armed Forces Community by gaining the Bronze Award in 2015 and have since worked tirelessly to achieve the Silver Award this year.

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Chairman's Introduction

This magazine is intended to illustrate the many opportunities and activities that are available to those who serve in the reserves of all three Services. However, history and tradition are quite rightly a central part of the military ethos and serve as inspiration to those who serve today. Who could fail to be inspired by the story of Major Al Edgar's father, who landed at Sword Beach on D-Day with No 4 Commando. No 4 Commando had been involved in a significant number of raids before D-Day, including those at St Nazaire and Dieppe; on 6 June their objective was to capture gun batteries at Ouistreham, which could have enfiladed the eastern edge of the landing beaches. Despite intense resistance from the Germans the objective was successfully taken, although the Germans had actually removed the guns from the battery three days beforehand. Having been briefed that the assault troops would be relieved within a few days, No 4 Commando eventually spent 82 days holding the bridgehead, before returning to the UK in September. A truly inspirational story of a truly heroic unit that was no doubt central to Major Edgar's own decision to join the Royal Marines Reserve.

While Major Edgar's father survived his experience of war, Sapper George Mellors tragically did not. He fought at Mons, the Marne and Aisne, and apart from a slight shrapnel wound escaped injury, but unfortunately succumbed to pneumonia in 1915. He was evacuated from France to

Norfolk and his grave lies today in a small Norfolk coastal churchyard, a long

way from the Derbyshire village of Crich where he was born and where his sacrifice is recorded on the village church war memorial. Sapper Mellors' grave was recently found and cleaned by a fellow Sapper engaged in a community project in the neighbourhood; two young men distanced by over a century, but united in a common ethos of service to their country and community.

The theme of Service is infused throughout many of the stories of reserve activities within this magazine, but complementing that theme are others highlighting the challenges, sports, activities and opportunities for travel that attract so many to reserve service. Take a few moments to peruse the articles and you will see how service with the reserves can transform a young person's life and provide opportunities that simply don't exist in the civilian world.

Murray Colville

Colonel Murray Colville TD DL,
Chairman of East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association.



Colonel Murray Colville TD DL

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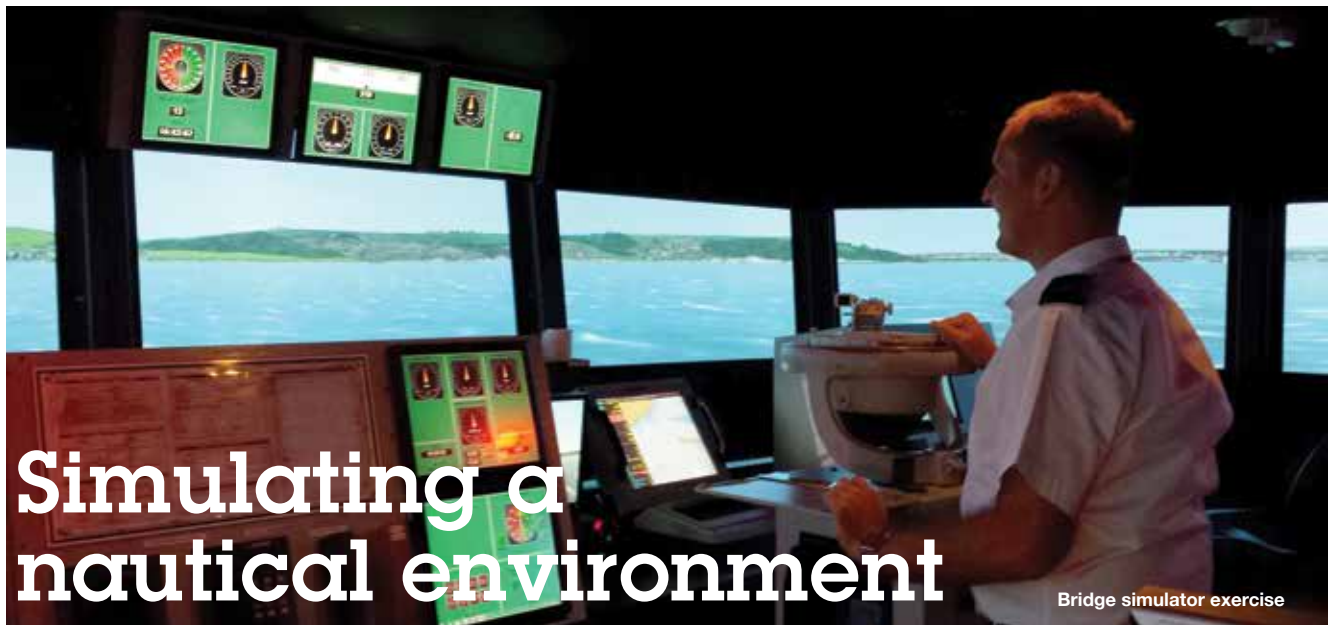
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Simulating a nautical environment

Bridge simulator exercise

A reservist from HMS Sherwood, the East Midlands' only Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) unit, has embraced the opportunity to take part in a bridge simulator exercise that mimicked being at sea for real.

Leading Hand Richard Cooke, aged 30, who works as a Pastoral Manager in a Derbyshire Secondary School in his civilian career, took part in a two day exercise in September on the Royal Navy's bridge simulator in Portsmouth. The exercise allowed him to develop specialist navigational skills enabling him to respond to different challenging situations, albeit in the safety of the training environment.

Bridge simulators are the Royal Navy's equivalent of a flight simulator. It allows personnel to replicate the reality of the bridge of a Royal Navy warship at sea, and allows personnel to train in how to safely and successfully navigate around a variety of obstacles such as other boats or buoys. It also allows personnel to enter and exit ports and harbours, which each have their own individual challenges.

Richard joined the RNR eight years ago, and has recently been promoted from an Able Seaman to Leading Hand, allowing him to take on a number of new responsibilities at HMS Sherwood such as leading those more junior than himself and organising training sessions.

Richard explained: "It was a fantastic experience to use navigational charts, or what you might call 'maps of the sea', to plot the locations of ships and effectively navigate the simulator around a range of hazards as well as safely navigating the simulator in and out of port. In reality it would be my job to take the relevant information and pass it up the chain of command as needed.

"The photo-like graphics shown on the cinema-like screens inside the simulator are really realistic, often showing landmarks or other naval vessels you would recognise. It is actually easy to forget you are in a simulator environment at times as you become immersed in the environment surrounding you.

"I even felt like I was swaying around at times, as even though the simulator itself does not move, the screens recreate different sea and weather conditions, tricking your brain into believing you really are on the water."

Richard's specialism in the RNR is Maritime Trade Operations. If mobilised he has to effectively understand the risks and issues affecting the maritime community operating in the region, such as issues effecting safe navigation, as well as working to prevent pirates or people traffickers operating in specific locations.

He continued: "Although this is not the first time I have been able to take part in simulator based training in Portsmouth,

I have learnt something new every time. The bridge simulator gives you a good understanding of life at sea, and allows everyone taking part to build their confidence and team-working skills which would obviously be drawn upon in an operational situation."

Apart from experiencing the bridge simulator, Richard explained that another recent highlight of his RNR career was when he completed his leadership course as part of his promotion to Leading Hand.

The course pushed him physically and mentally to develop and enhance his naval skills, confidence and leadership, in highly demanding situations, and in the face of adversity. Richard added that the course culminated in him

operating in a disaster relief scenario where he was able to successfully demonstrate his new found skills.

He concluded: "Continuing my development in the RNR is really important to me. I hope to continue my leadership training in the future to be able to mentor others in developing their skills and overcoming any hurdles they may be experiencing.

"I'd recommend joining the RNR to anyone who wants a new challenge. I've made some great friends, had some once in a lifetime experiences as well as gaining loads of skills, many of which can be transferred in to my day job."



Leading Hand Richard Cooke

Sporting opportunities in the Army Reserve

Many of us may associate sport with simply keeping fit but in the Army Reserve it means so much more.

The Reservist Magazine had the chance to speak to two reservists who believe that the adventure training and sporting opportunities they have undertaken through their part-time military career have helped them to develop their team-working, leadership, fitness and endurance skills.

Sapper Samuel Reilly, from 65 Works Group, attended a training exercise in Capel Curig in North Wales this summer, during which time he developed his mountain biking skills.

He explained: "I've always enjoyed keeping fit so the idea of taking part in adrenaline fuelled activities and riding along the slopes of Welsh mountain roads, racing on and off different tracks to test my coordination skills filled me with excitement.

"However, this was actually the first time I had ever been mountain biking. I'd rarely even gone cycling before joining the Army Reserve apart from using the bikes in the gym, so this experience really was a massive achievement for me."

Samuel joined 12 fellow reservists from his unit to ride along the mountain bike trails and even take part in the odd unintentional jump.

He continued: "Being an Army Reservist allows me to take part in sporting activities more often. I'm now hoping to work towards achieving my Mountain Bike Leadership Course which I probably never would have done without my recent military training experience."



Private Tom Clancy

Another reservist to take part in the adventure training weekend was Corporal Sarah Taylor, also from 65 Works Group; she explained: "I don't think I want to cycle a three mile uphill track again but I thoroughly enjoyed the experience as a whole and my personal achievement was beating the younger Sappers to the top of the course. Adventure training encourages us to get out of our comfort zones and better ourselves. This event certainly did that but everyone still had a great time."

Private Tom Clancy of 160 (Lincoln) Squadron found he was able to compete with some of the best badminton players in the Army when he took part in the Royal Logistic Corps Championships in Grantham.

The 20-year-old from Lincoln is an adept player himself and has represented Lincolnshire for the past six-years.

In his first Army competition and against regular and reserve soldiers, he certainly made his mark by finishing runner-up in the men's open doubles competition and reaching the semi-finals of the singles and mixed doubles.

Tom, who is looking to join the regular Army himself, said: "It was a very good standard of competition overall. I wasn't sure what to expect but I came across some very tough players so I was really pleased with my performance.

"To me the sporting side of being a reserve is very much an added bonus. I didn't realise the sporting opportunities it would bring when I joined up."

MP meets reserves in Lincolnshire

Reserves in Lincolnshire welcomed a special guest to their recruiting stand in the county this summer as Victoria Atkins, MP for Louth and Horncastle, popped in to see them.

Members of 4 (Lincolnshire) Company, 3 Royal Anglian were recruiting at Revesby Country Fair in August and were busy engaging with members of the public when their guest arrived.

4 Company previously supported Ms Atkins by attending her Jobs and Apprenticeships Fair in Louth last year, so were delighted to meet her in person again.



Private Greg Turner with Victoria Atkins, MP

During the visit, Ms Atkins agreed to present reservist Private Greg Turner with his stable belt to signify him passing the Combat Infantry Course at Catterick.

Speaking about the experience Greg said: "It was a great to be formally presented with my belt by Ms Atkins at the fair. She was only too happy to pose with me for a photograph, to mark the occasion."

Catering Regiment conquer West Highland Way



Reservists walk the West Highland Way

Officers and soldiers of 167 Catering Support Regiment have completed one of Britain's toughest walking challenges as part of Exercise Highland Sustainer.

The group spent four days completing the 96 miles of mountain rubble and muddy footpaths on the West Highland Way situated among some of the most stunning scenery that Scotland has to offer.

Averaging over 20 miles a day the team climbed a total ascent of 13,000ft, and made almost a quarter of a million steps after beginning each day at 5.30am.

Every year the unit organise a challenging event that is also the perfect opportunity to bond as a regiment.

The group battled through some difficult weather conditions at times but all made it to the end of the trek.

Major Sarah Conway, the Adjutant of 167 Regiment, said: "Everyone was very proud to have completed the route.

"It was a challenging and arduous journey that simultaneously boasts some of the most spectacular scenery in the Lowlands and Highlands.

"We do something like this every year and everyone is really looking forward to completing the next Exercise Highland Sustainer!"

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Army Reservists join cadets for Operation Steelback

Reservists and senior Army Cadets from the East Midlands joined forces to showcase their respective skills as part of Operation Steelback in October.

Over 60 cadets descended on the Stanford Training Area in Norfolk for a weekend spent alongside 18 reservists from 3 Royal Anglian, including those based in Leicester and Lincoln.

The cadets were keen to get involved in various tasks that helped build on their engineering, navigation and communications skills.

There were also assault courses and command tasks as well as presentations from reservists about being a member of a reserve infantry regiment.

Operation Steelback used to be a regular part of the calendar, but this is the first time it has been run for five-years and it proved a success for both cadets and reserves.

Major Gavin Rushmere of 3 Royal Anglian, who organised the event, said: "It was a fantastic weekend and it was brilliant to see both the cadets and the reservists get so much out of it."



Taking part in Operation Steelback

"Working alongside reservists who have years of military training behind them was a wonderful experience for the cadets that they will remember for a long time."

"We hope the cadets were inspired to continue to embrace the opportunities and skills the Army Cadet Force provides them with, many of which will stand them in good stead for their adult lives."

"It was equally rewarding for the reservists who helped out to provide these opportunities. Many of them spoke enthusiastically to the cadets about their lives both inside and outside of the military."

Assisting an Orbital Railway Project

A team of five volunteer bomb disposal and search specialists from a Nottingham-based Army Reserve unit took part in a completely different type of training exercise that saw them get a former railway back on track.

The reservists, who each serve with 350 (Sherwood Foresters) Field Squadron (EOD), gave up their free time to work alongside The Melton Constable Trust.

The Trust is in charge of the Norfolk Orbital Railway Project that is working to clear trees and overhanging branches to bring the former railway back to life.

Sergeant Philip Brazier from 350 Field Squadron took part in the clearance exercise. He said: "The railway track bed was raised in 2016 and has now settled and is ready for new track to be laid. However, the Trust needed our help to remove trees and other undergrowth that were preventing the next stage of the project commencing."

"We regularly undertake specialist search exercises but this was a training event with a difference. We often have to search for, and clear, objects that could prevent the use of communication routes, but this time the Norfolk Orbital Railway team had already identified which natural objects they wanted to have cleared. We were also fortunate to have Warrant Officer Class Two Tim Illsley in our unit who is a professional arboriculturalist and was more than happy to lend his skills to the task."

During the exercise, the team stayed at Cley Church in North Norfolk. The churchyard of which contains a small number of graves from both World Wars.



Reservists pictured during the tree clearing exercise

Sapper Andrew Marriott tidied the graves of two First World War Sappers, one of whom, Sapper George Mellor, is known to have contracted pneumonia on the Western Front and died at Kelling Sanitarium in 1915.

By coincidence, this sanitarium (now a community hospital) was adjacent to the task site the team were working at. Research by Sergeant Brazier has found that Sapper Mellor was a pre-war regular soldier from Crich in Derbyshire, who was on duty at Queen Victoria's funeral in 1901 and had fought in the early actions of the war in 1914.

Philip continued: "Sapper Marriott found a .303 cartridge case next to the grave that may have been fired by the burial party from the South Nottinghamshire Hussars, who were stationed in North Norfolk in 1915. The grave was brought to our attention by members of the Trust we were working with on the railway project, so we were honoured to be able to do our bit and tidy the grave of a man who served his country all those years ago. Finding that there was a link to our unit's local area has made this even more relevant."

Exercising Abroad

Completing a battlefield study in Italy

Reservists from 222 Medical Squadron joined regular soldiers from 2 Medical Regiment for a battlefield study in Italy, following in the footsteps of a World War Two campaign to liberate Rome.

The group studied the route taken by the American Army's 36th (Texas) Infantry Division in 1943 beginning on the beach in Salerno, just south of Naples, and travelling along the Mignano Gap, the location of a German defensive line during World War Two otherwise known as the Bernhardt Line.

The soldiers followed the roughly 150km route the offensive took to Monte Cassino as part of the Italian Campaign which intended to breakthrough to Rome.

The battlefield study took place in October and was led by Warrant Officer Class Two Richie Parsons.

Corporal Bruce Fielding from 222 Medical Squadron, was one of five reservists from the Leicester based unit that took part.

He said: "It was a fantastic opportunity and a great experience.

"It's fascinating to hear about the differences between how and why the allies acted as they did then compared with how we're told to deal with a similar situation now. It gives you a different perspective on military training.

"It's also a great opportunity, especially for the newer reservists, to work with regulars in a military environment outside of the usual exercises. They get the chance to get to know the regulars more and it's the same for the regulars with the reservists."

All the soldiers on the trip were split into groups with each being given four questions to answer as part of a presentation to the rest of the group at certain points during the five-day trip.

It proved incredibly eye-opening for Bruce who has over 25 years' experience as a reservist.

He continued: "As soon as you leave Salerno beach the



Reservists pictured on a beach during the battlefield study

whole route is in a valley between two huge mountain ranges and the whole way they would have been overlooked by German soldiers.

"There was just nowhere for them to hide right up to Monte Cassino. You get there and that's on a hill. They had to take that and you look at it and think – not a chance.

"It was particularly interesting for myself as both my grandads served during World War Two, including one who was a Royal Navy medic in Italy.

"That led me into taking part in battlefield re-enactment events which take place up and down the country."



Bruce Fielding taking part in a re-enactment event

Major Alex Smith from 222 Squadron also took part. He said: "The study provided an opportunity for reserves and regulars from across the whole spectrum of the Regiment to come together and follow in the steps of the allied forces who had the task of liberating Italy.

"The whole experience allowed us to consider real historical actions, which were at times, very humbling.

"There was a period of reflection at the British War Cemetery and a wreath was laid in honour of the fallen. The study from start to finish was educational, enjoyable and should be one for all reserves to aspire to be involved with."

Cycling 230 miles for charity

An RAF Reservist has raised more than £2,000 after cycling more than 230 miles for the military charity SSAFA.

Flight Sergeant Sharon Wyatt, who serves with RAF Waddington's HQ Intelligence Reserves, took part in the Ride to the Somme event alongside around 150 other cyclists. The cyclists rode from Arras to The Tyne Cot Memorial visiting some of the most important battlefield sites of The Great War along the way.

As a reservist Sharon believes it is important to continue to commemorate the fallen, so welcomed the opportunity to take part in the cycling event, which also enabled her to raise much needed funding for SSAFA along with her friend and riding partner Flight Sergeant Lesley Woodley.

She explained: "SSAFA provides lifelong support to individuals who have previously served in the Armed Forces and require support. I have never taken part in an event of this length so it was a huge challenge but also greatly rewarding as I knew all of my effort was for a good cause."



SSAFA cyclists at the Tyne Cot Memorial

In order to prepare for the event, Sharon took part in the Ride the Night event which covered 65 miles from Windsor Racecourse to central London, as well as taking part in the Maid Marion event in Nottingham, organised by Cycle Live, that saw her pedal 75 miles in just under seven hours.

She concluded: "To visit the battlefield and the cemeteries gave all of the riders a real insight into the enormity of World War One which resulted in the British Army losing a million men and two million men being wounded.

"I felt very proud to represent the RAF Reserve at the event and always take any opportunity I have to champion the fact that being a reservist is 'no ordinary job' and opens up a world of new opportunities and learning possibilities."

Two weeks in Virginia

A Lincolnshire-based reservist took part in a unique exchange visit this summer that saw him spend two weeks training at the Langley Air Force Base in Virginia, USA.

Sergeant Chris Medley from the RAF Reserve's 7006 Squadron (Sqdn), who works as a Building Surveyor in his civilian career, had the opportunity to shadow staff at a number of United States Air Force Reserve Command units during the exchange programme as well as learning more about the 480th and 363rd Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Wings.

The hosting base provided participants with training opportunities that broadened their professional development in the RAF and increased their knowledge of other Reserve Forces both at home and overseas.

The Military Reserve Exchange Programme is designed to inform and educate each of the individuals taking part providing an insight into different military services, training procedures and multi-national information.

Commenting on the experience, Chris said: "I've had contact with a number of the agencies I met as part of the exchange programme in the past but it was great to see how procedures work up close and witness how US-based reserve Sqdns do



Sergeant Chris Medley with a US colleague

their business. I enjoyed seeing how the operations floor works and how the different Sqdns and units mesh together to work operationally.

"I was able to brief my US colleagues about where I have previously been deployed to and explain how the Reserve Forces operate in the UK. I think the US air personnel I met appreciated my current knowledge on certain subjects and how I gave them a first-hand account of the situations and environments I have encountered so far in my military career.

"I feel really lucky to have been selected to take part in the exchange programme and feel I gained a lot from the visit. My RAF colleagues in Lincolnshire were all eager to hear how I got on and how the base in Virginia operates."



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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Achievements



An epic motorbike adventure

After spending four months providing veterinary cover for the Cyprus Military Working Dog (MWD) Troop, Captain Richard Harvey began the most epic adventure of his life so far on two wheels.

Richard is a reservist with 101 MWD Squadron and works as a veterinary surgeon in his civilian career, allowing him to embrace the opportunity to serve overseas and enjoy many more opportunities than just his veterinary career could provide.

Towards the end of his deployment to Cyprus Richard decided to buy a second hand motorbike and started to contemplate how he could ride from his military base in Cyprus back to the UK; little did he know what challenges lay ahead.

Richard, aged 28, explained: "When I started talking about the possibility of buying a cheap used Kawasaki KLR and riding it back home, it created varied reactions. From support and enthusiasm, to others thinking I was downright mad, especially on a bike not designed for long distance travel."

So after making his decision to start his adventure, Richard donned his heavy motorcycle jacket in the Cypriot heat, sat on the uncomfortable seat and set off, but couldn't have imagined what awaited him.

He continued: "I certainly didn't think I'd be facing four foot snow drifts and -5 degree temperatures in Kosovo, I definitely hadn't packed for it.

"In fact I wasn't even sure if the authorities would let me cross the border into Turkey due to the bike's Cypriot heritage, but they did, allowing me to fly along off-road trails in the glorious Turkish sunshine.

"Crashing in the Albanian backcountry wasn't too much fun as there was little prospect of help around. However, setting off on a journey like this having never ridden a motorcycle for more than 100 miles at a time in the UK, with little mechanical experience, was always going to be unpredictable."

Richard believes that being in the Army Reserve has broadened his horizons by providing challenges and opportunities for adventure, like this one. It's also set him up with the skills to think on his feet, tackle what may seem like the impossible and overcome problems when necessary.

Continuing to describe his off-road adventure, Richard continued: "I must admit there were a number of occasions when I thought I may not make it back to the UK on the bike, or at all, and I really questioned what I was doing in the middle of the Balkans alone and cold, with a broken bike, but I got through it.

"Sleeping in an Albanian police station wasn't a particularly high point, nor was lying in a snowy ditch up a deserted mountain pass with 200kg of motorbike and gear lying on top of me. However, overcoming these challenges I feel that I am better able to tackle challenges in my daily life.

"To that end I would recommend anyone to get out there and have an adventure. I made it back to the UK in one piece with my bike and fantastic memories that will stay with me forever."

Tunnel training in Gibraltar

As an Army medic it is important that you are prepared to deal with any situation at a moment's notice, so a group of reservists from 212 Field Hospital embraced the opportunity to train in absolute darkness as they learnt to extract casualties from a tunnel.

The group of 17 reservists, based in both Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire, spent 16 days in Gibraltar where they completed tunnel searches and clearances, as well as extracting casualties from the unfamiliar environment.

The reservists also used this time to search for improvised explosive devices using specialist night vision equipment that many of those taking part in the training activity had not used before.

212 Field Hospital has the capability to both staff and operate up to a 200 bed field hospital almost anywhere in the world at short notice, so annual training exercises such as this in Gibraltar are vital in continuing to build the reservists' skill-set.

Sergeant Kate Thornton from 212 Field Hospital took part in this activity, that was organised as part of Exercise Barbary Star, she said: "A number of volunteers acted as the casualties in this exercise, all respect to them as they may have suffered some rough handling due to us not being able to see anything in the tunnel at some points. The tunnel search was fantastic as it pushed many of us outside our comfort zones, especially as



Reservists tunnel training in Gibraltar

the darkness and extremely warm temperatures added an extra layer of difficulty."

Many of the reservists taking part in the exercise work as medical professionals in their civilian careers, including those employed as nurses, consultants and healthcare assistants.

Kate, who in her civilian life is employed by Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, added: "The training I have received in the Army Reserve has been brilliant and only adds to my clinical knowledge. I would never normally have the chance to undertake training in pressurised environments such as the exercise I recently undertook in Gibraltar. My work colleagues are always really interested in hearing where I've been and what I've been up to when I return to work."

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Achievements



Taking part in a Dragon Boat Race

15 Reservists from Lincoln-based 160 Transport Squadron helped to raise more than £7,000 for charity by taking part in a Dragon Boat Race.

The Army Reservists joined 16 local businesses to sponsor a boat and race each other along the Brayford Waterfront in front of a crowd of more than 3,000 spectators.

The event was held in aid of three local charities: The Nottingham and Lincolnshire Air Ambulance, LIVES and St Barnabas Hospice.

Warrant Officer Class Two Shawn Bailey organised the team from 160 Transport Squadron after attending a business networking event through his civilian employment and hearing that local companies were planning to come together to raise as much money as they could for each of the charitable causes.

Explaining how he prepared for the race, that took place in July, Shawn said: "I wanted to prepare the team the best I could for the boat race as this is not something we have done before as a unit. I researched dragon race techniques, training tips and tried to work out a training schedule for the group of us taking part."

"Although we were a bit nervous when we climbed into the boat for the first time, our competitive nature soon shone through with us just grasping first place in the first heat. We worked hard to get a rhythm going but had a big wobble and a near capsizing along the way."

Shawn explained that there was a lot of excitement between the teams and that many of the other participants taking part wanted to beat the only military-based team in the competition.

He concluded: "The day went really quickly. There was lots of splashing between boats to try to put off other competitors but this was all done in good spirits as we were all there for the same reason, to help raise vital funds for local charities."

Unfortunately the Army Reserve team didn't make it to the semi-finals but the event did result in them finishing in the top half of the results table.

Double win for Lincolnshire reservist

A reservist from Lincolnshire has achieved two gold medals after rowing her way to victory in an international rowing competition.

Senior Aircraft Woman Lou Elkington, aged 54, serves with the RAF Reserve's 7010 Squadron, an Image Analysis Squadron, and travelled to Bled in Slovenia in September to participate in the FISA (Fédération Internationale des Sociétés d'Aviron) World Rowing Federation World Masters Championships, and picked up two awards alongside her racing partner.

The mother of two who lives with her family on a farm in Lincolnshire, is a member of Newark-on-Trent's Rowing Club and took to the water with the civilian club to compete in both the Double Scull Race and the Coxless Pairs Race.

Lou has been rowing for more than 10 years and has been paired with her rowing partner, Dawn Zalas, for the last two.

Lou explained: "It has been a successful season for us. We picked up a gold and silver award at the National Masters Championships in June, so we are delighted with our latest achievement. Getting two gold medals in September was really the icing on the cake!"



Senior Aircraft Woman Lou Elkington and her rowing partner Dawn Zalas

"Competing at the World Masters Championships was really exciting as we came a close second to the German crew last year so we have undertaken a strict training schedule to up our game for 2017. To prepare we have entered as many competitions as we can including a number of regattas to increase our chances of winning. It has been hard work but really enjoyable."

This is the first time since 1999 that a representative from the RAF has won two medals at both the National Masters Championships and World Masters Championships, and only one medal has been achieved in the intervening years.



Major Al Edgar and Sergeant Roy Maxwell

The past proves inspirational for Royal Marines Reserve

A senior Royal Marines Reservist has expressed the importance of remembering those who fought in previous conflicts and how it inspired his own service.

Every year Major Al Edgar, the Officer Commanding Nottingham Detachment Royal Marines Reserve Merseyside, looks to visit one particular site of the D-Day landings, Sword Beach.

Al's dad, Charlie, who was a Sergeant, landed there as part of the operation with No.4 Commando, one of the Commando Units of Lord Lovat's 1st Special Service Brigade. This was alongside 45 Commando Royal Marines, the only Commando Unit that landed on D-Day still in existence and now part of 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines.

Like most years he was joined by 95-year-old Sergeant Roy Maxwell who fought alongside his father. Al said: "It's the efforts of all those that served, including my dad, that inspired me and that's why I still go back to pay my respects.

"I've done tours of Iraq and Afghanistan all because I was inspired by those who fought in the Second World War and to by those that gave their lives.

"My dad did not want to talk about the war but over the years I've spoken to many of those who fought alongside him including Sergeant Roy Maxwell and it remains inspiring.

"I enjoy going to Sword Beach to mark my respects but it is a humbling experience to stand beside the likes of Roy and those that landed on D-Day.

"We were unaware a French photographer had taken a picture of us at this year's commemoration and he approached us afterwards. Roy had been given a bag by a local and apparently the inscription says 'I'm not a hero, just a legend' in French."

Al's dad did not remain in the military after the Second World War, but Al himself eventually went into the Reserve Forces 50 years after D-Day in 1994. Now aged 53, he's been serving ever since making his way up the ranks amid his full-time job flying around the world as a pilot with British Airways. He's been the Officer Commanding of the Royal Marines Reserve's (RMR) Nottingham Detachment for the last eight years.

Al said of life in the RMR: "It's been a challenge but an excellent

experience. I feel a great amount of loyalty to the guys and the detachment as a whole."

On his dad, who passed away aged 77 in June 2002, Al continued: "I'm sure my dad was proud seeing me in uniform and I'm sure he would be proud now."

The Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund
 Email: rnchildren@kbcwavel.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 largest of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund's 100 branches, with 1,400 children, has over 70,000 hours volunteered by the Naval Reserve. The fund is a charitable trust set up to support children of

How We Help
 We provide direct support to children whose parents work or have worked for the Royal Navy or Royal Marines, including special educational needs and other special circumstances.

To reach as many children as possible, we make special use of our extensive financial links with the charity's fund-raising. This has allowed us to fund a number of projects, including the purchase of a new school building in a disadvantaged area, the purchase of a new school building in a disadvantaged area, the purchase of a new school building in a disadvantaged area, the purchase of a new school building in a disadvantaged area.

For more information, please contact:
 The Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund
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To make a donation, leave a gift in your will or simply to find out more about our work, please contact:
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Or visit our website at:
www.rnchildren.org.uk

Achievements

Being a professional football referee

Rubbing shoulders with professional footballers may seem like a dream to some sports fans, but this is actually a reality for a reservist who also works as a referee at matches across the country.

RAF Intelligence reservist Sergeant Darren Drysdale is a professional Football Association referee and balances his footballing commitments around serving as a reserve with the RAF's Intelligence Headquarters at RAF Waddington.

Darren, aged 46 has been serving as a full-time reservist since 2013 but previously served in the regular RAF for 24 years.

Refereeing has been a big part of Darren's life for a long time. As a child he followed his dad on to the pitch when he was working as a referee at his local park which fuelled his enthusiasm for working in the same field himself.

At the age of 15, Darren successfully completed his National Football Referees qualification, something he took with him into the RAF when he began his military career a couple of years later.

Throughout his military career, Darren has enjoyed officiating both civilian and military football matches, at the highest level both in the UK and overseas.

Describing how he balances serving in the military and working as a referee, Darren said: "I have to constantly juggle family commitments, my love of football and work, ensuring I don't drop any of these items at any time.

"I am really lucky that I can fit my continuous physical training for my referee job around my reserve commitments. I receive regular emails from a sports scientist informing me how I need to



Sergeant Darren Drysdale photo credit: Tina Jenner

prepare for my forthcoming games over the following days. My training could involve sprinting, high intensity pitch work, gym sessions or power and strength training. Over the season I often referee up to two matches per week, which can be as far apart as Carlisle and Exeter.

"My military training has taught me to always be prepared. If I know I have to travel to the other side of the country to referee a match I often travel there the evening before to avoid putting myself under undue pressure travelling to games on the day."

Over the course of his refereeing career, Darren has been fortunate enough to spend six years as a Premier League assistant referee, officiating the FA Cup Final at Wembley Stadium as an assistant referee in 2000, something you are only allowed to do once in your career, and has appeared on the international stage as an assistant referee at both The Champions League and FIFA Competitions.

Darren concluded: "I love what I do. Completing a full-time regular military career and then returning as a reservist only adds to my determination to succeed. I feel very privileged to be in a position where I can balance a professional refereeing career alongside my reserve duties. I have been able to travel around the world, and although it can be difficult at times to organise my time, I wouldn't change anything."

Learning from industry

A Protection Dog Handler who serves with 101 Military Working Dog Squadron has been learning from civilian detection dog services thanks to a specialised work placement.

Reservist Staff Sergeant Luke Jones spent one week at Wagtail UK Ltd based in North Wales to share best practice, develop his knowledge and take any new tips back to his military unit to be tried out 'in the field'.

Wagtail UK Ltd provides specialist detection dogs for Government agencies such as the UK Border Service, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and other dogs under contract within the UK and internationally.

Some of the services explored during the visit included explosives detection, live body detection, drug detection, conservation and illicit, counterfeit tobacco and cash detection.

Luke, who in his civilian life is studying a Master's degree in Business Administration, was able to see how Wagtail train their dogs to find particular scents and how the handlers and trainers conduct continuation training for all search types.

Explaining more about this rare training opportunity, Luke explained: "I was lucky enough to act as a Physical Training Assistant during my visit laying out target odours for

conservation dogs to find such as those relating to ivory, bats, great crested newts and pine martin faeces in the local woodland.

"I also worked alongside a lead trainer with a new drug detection dog who needed to work on her indication technique. The dog's skills improved day-by-day by undertaking extra training sessions using different drug types to find.

"It was also interesting to witness a training session relating to explosive detection in a theatre environment in which the dogs worked their way along rows of seats similar to those found in many public entertainment spaces."

The placement provided Luke with new knowledge and ideas, particularly noting how many different training methods are employed by Wagtail which in some cases were similar to those already conducted by his military unit.

Luke concluded: "Overall it was a highly beneficial experience as I am keen to work with search dogs in the future and I have been able to feedback all of my learning to colleagues at my unit."



Staff Sergeant Luke Jones during a canine-based training exercise

Full-time mum: “Being a reservist allows me to enjoy the best of both worlds”

A mother of twins has explained why being a reservist has allowed her to enjoy a career in the military whilst spending all the time she desires at home with her children.

Corporal Tammy King, serves with 101 Military Working Dogs Squadron in North Luffenham, and feels very fortunate to be able to have such an interesting role in the Army Reserve.

Originally joining the Army as a regular (full-time) soldier in 2003, she was a direct entrant into the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, which was at the time a fairly rare thing as much of the unit was made up of transferees from other Corps.

As a Military Working Dog Trainer for much of her career, she worked with numerous protection dogs who she helped to prepare for duties around the world.

Tammy, aged 34, commented: “I continued to develop my trade experience when I was promoted to Lance Corporal completing my Class One and Class Two Dog Trainers courses, as well as qualifying as a Vehicle Search and Arms and Explosive Search Dog Handler. Both of these courses were put to good use when I deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan where I was proud to serve my country in an operational environment.

“During 2012 I deployed with the search dogs on Op Olympics assisting the Met Police in securing key venues for the Olympic

Games in London. This was an amazing experience and something I was proud to be involved in.”

In 2013, Tammy received the very welcome news that she was expecting twins so then transferred to Germany to carry out her duties until the birth of her children.

She continued: “I’ve always wanted to be a mum, so in 2014 I decided the time was right for me to take voluntary redundancy and embark on the next chapter of my life as a full-time mum.”

Three years on, Tammy’s husband raised the idea of her joining the Army Reserve as he knew how much she had enjoyed her former career.

So in September this year she stepped back into her ‘green kit’ to continue her military career.

She concluded: “Being a reservist allows me to enjoy the best of both worlds. I can be at home with my babies Elliott and Caleesi as well as getting back into the training I had previously enjoyed so much. Although it’s early days I’m already looking forward to attending drill nights, training weekends and annual camps.

“In the future when the kids are older, I will be able to tell them about all of the experiences I have had and why I’m proud to be continuing my personnel development as well as spending as much time as I can with them when they are growing up.”



Corporal Tammy King

The Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) is an armed police force keeping the nation safe from harm by securing the integrity of civil nuclear material. Our primary function is the protection of licenced nuclear sites not used wholly or mainly for defence purposes and the safeguarding of nuclear material in the UK and elsewhere.

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A Focus on:



101 MWD Sqn's annual training exercise

A focus on: 101 Military Working Dog Squadron (MWD Sqn)

101 MWD Sqn is a reserve component of 1st MWD Regiment, Royal Army Veterinary Corps, and provides an exciting opportunity for reservists to train to be a dog handler or develop their veterinary skills in a military environment.

The unit, based in North Luffenham, has 112 reservists on its books who are each training to play an important role in supporting operational tasks such as the detection of improvised explosive devices, counter insurgency operations and providing assistance in searching buildings, vehicles and key routes.

Military working dogs and dog handlers have been an important part of the Army for many years. However, it was only in 2015 that a reserve Sqn was introduced allowing reservists to deploy on worldwide operations.

An Army Reservist's training is varied to allow individuals to gain a rounded skillset including the ability to work as a team, lead a group and think on their feet.

In September this year, 25 reservists from 101 MWD Sqn deployed on their annual two-week training exercise to the Yorkshire Dales seeing attendees take part in adventure training and study the battle craft syllabus.

The adventure training aspect of the programme allowed reservists to hone their navigational skills whilst hill walking, test out their map reading abilities using route cards and compass aids, and test their confidence by completing a mountain bike trail.

One of the reservists to take part in the annual training exercise was Warrant Officer Class Two Darren Garratt, aged 45, who in his civilian life works as an Emergency Medical Technician. He explained: "The adventure training allowed everybody to get to know each other and build the Sqn's cohesion even more.

"The instructors recognised the various levels of experience and skill in the reserves taking part and tried to adjust the programme to suit everyone's needs."

The battlefield training allowed the reservists to spend four days revising basic soldiering techniques including section battle drills and refreshing their infantry skills.

Darren continued: "The battle craft activities were great preparation for our final task. We heard the unmistakable sound of the Chinook helicopter rotor blades approaching, and the excitement on everyone's faces was plain to see. As our adrenaline began to pump we reassured our canine colleagues and the Chinook landed in front of us. The ramp came down and after receiving a thumbs up from the crew we boarded the flight to Nescliffe Training Area for the final four day exercise that was focused around completing dog patrols in a forward operating base.

"The exercise saw us encounter friendly and enemy forces and actors playing members of the local community. The management fell to the reserves with some people assuming more responsibility than others and being able to use their

initiative to achieve the best results from the exercise. We bonded well and learnt from each other's strengths. Where mistakes were made we learnt from these allowing us to gain confidence in a controlled environment."

101 MWD Sqn's annual training exercise was a success and gave everyone involved a chance to continue to develop their military skills and trade dog handling techniques.



Waiting to board the Chinook



Lance Corporal Keil Fraser

The Reservist Profile

Name: Keil Fraser

Rank: Lance Corporal

Age: 35

Military unit: Nottingham Detachment, 144 Parachute Medical Squadron

Q - What brought you to the Army Reserve?

A - "I completed six years' service in the regular Army with the Royal Corps of Signals as an Engineering Technician. During that time I went on operational deployments to Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Kosovo.

"I had been out of the Army for seven years before deciding to join the Army Reserve. The reserves offers you everything the regular Army does including the adventure training, overseas travel and experiences you can't just pay for.

"I chose to join 144 Parachute Medical Squadron as a driver and communications specialist for a number of reasons: I wanted the chance to do a pre-parachute selection course (known as P-Company) leading to the Basic Parachute Course.

"I also wanted to put my previous communications knowledge and experience to good use and develop my medical knowledge and skills that cross over in to my civilian job as a Firefighter."

Q - How else do your skills from your civilian and military career intertwine?

A - "Coming from a military background definitely prepared me and helped me get the job as a Firefighter with Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue.

"Both job roles complement each other in various ways with teamwork, being able to work alone confidently, working under pressure, leadership training and medical knowledge all skills that are transferable.

"I also organised a combined training night where members of 144 came to Newark Fire Station one evening. We had medical input from 144 followed by a lesson on how to deal with a road traffic collision from myself and Green Watch covering the phased approach and methods of extrication used by the fire service."

Q - What have been your highlights of being a reservist with 144 Squadron?

A - "One of the best things so far has to be going to Gibraltar for our two week annual camp. I was part of the medical validation exercise and I worked in the command post as a radio operator. We also conducted training exercises of fighting in built up areas and tunnels as well as some adventure training.

"I've also become a Physical Training Instructor so I can take personal training lessons and conduct fitness tests within the unit.

"I've completed my Class 3 driver course which allows me to drive Land Rovers and MAN six tonne support vehicles as well as a communications course enabling me to operate radio systems."

Q - What does the future hold for you?

A - "I have lots planned for the next two years in the reserves. I hope to complete my parachute training and then earn my 'Parachute Wings'.

"I also hope to further my qualification levels in driving and communications. All of this will hopefully help me get promoted to Corporal in the future."

Employer Engagement

Defence Employer Engagement

An important objective of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) is to recruit and retain regular and reserve personnel for the Armed Forces. The Defence Employer Engagement strategy is important in helping to achieve that objective.

The primary objective of the RFCA's employer engagement activities is to 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 MOD to support Defence personnel; before, during and after their service.

Military units in the East Midlands have nearly 2,400 reservists and the RFCA has engaged with over 4,600 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 provides options to support Defence in various ways, including recruitment and retention of reservists and cadet force adult volunteers; employment of Service leavers; and spousal/partner employment. Businesses sign the Covenant to pledge support for Defence personnel who work in their businesses or access their products or services.

Over 2,000 organisations have signed the Covenant and over 190 are in the East Midlands.

Further details, together with a list of companies who have signed the Covenant, can be found on the Covenant website: 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. In 2017, 62 East Midlands' employers have registered for Bronze (to date) and 21 have been approved for Silver Awards which were presented at a special dinner on 9 November.

For a list of all employers who have received Awards, or to register for a Bronze, search 'Employer Recognition Scheme' on the internet.



Events

Employer events provide opportunities for briefing, informing, and thanking employers for their support to the Armed Forces community. Events this year have included: London Heritage day; golf day; Her Majesty's Birthday Parade; Derbyshire Military Tattoo; visit to the Army's Mission Training and Mobilisation Centre; Army Leadership Exercises; RAF Leadership Training; Air Combat Power Visit.

If you are interested in the Armed Forces Covenant or the Employer Recognition Scheme, and require further information, please contact:

John Wilson OBE DL, Regional Employer Engagement Director: em-empsp@rfca.mod.uk 0115 924 8627

Nottingham business forms links with the Army Reserve

A Nottingham-based consultancy has developed a positive working relationship with the Army Reserve by using their drilling equipment to train soldiers at Chetwynd Barracks.

Bridgeway Consulting based on Riverside Way formed links with the Army's 530 Specialist Team Royal Engineers (Materials) (530 STRE) as several of the business's employees previously served with the unit on a full-time basis and three individuals continue to serve as reservists.

Corporal Dominic Whitehead, aged 38, is a Drilling Manager and Lead Trainer at Bridgeway Consulting, and is a reservist within 66 Works Group, 530 STRE. He explained: "Due to the high percentage of ex-military personnel and reservists working at Bridgeway, we will always have links to the Armed Forces.

"As a company, in order to continuously deliver to our clients, our employees are required to complete a range of training and up-skilling programmes through the year. I believe the skills I have learnt in the Army can be instantly transferred to a civilian job that requires management and leadership capabilities so it makes sense to share our knowledge with those serving in the military currently where we can.

"As lead trainer I have delivered some of our recent training courses at Chetwynd Barracks and have been able to provide drilling training



to reservists, like me, who are affiliated to 530 STRE. The training is designed to demonstrate new drilling techniques and market standards."

Bridgeway Consulting signed the Armed Forces Covenant in September this year and actively encourages its staff to find out more about serving with the military on a part-time basis if they have an interest.

Dominic recently returned from Exercise Island Spell Two in Gibraltar where he, alongside his reservist colleagues, spent two weeks undertaking an intrusive investigation into the runway pavement to determine the pavement formation and construction. He helped to gather core samples of the pavement and then carried out a 'strength test' to confirm the runway's overall strength for future design purposes.

He continued: "I feel really fortunate to work for an organisation that values military training as much as Bridgeway do. The company understands that the Army Reserve training I undertake is in the long-term beneficial for the business."

During his time in Gibraltar, Dominic also had the chance to experience an adventure training package that saw him visit the tunnels located inside the Rock of Gibraltar and hike up the 'Rock' to see the famous Barbary Macaques.

He concluded: "Even the adventure training undertaken in the Army Reserve teaches individuals to communicate with their peers and seniors, to be adaptable and work as a team. All of these skills are qualities that individuals can use in their civilian careers and general lives outside of the Forces.

"Bridgeway's link with the Army Reserve is an excellent way for those of us who have gained more than we can ever put into words from our military careers to pay back to the Corps that helped us to form who we are today.

"One of our employees has recently decided to apply to be in the reserves after receiving the training at Chetwynd. He is extremely excited about the future and looking forward to starting basic training."

Employers experience reserve training in Denmark

Four representatives from both public and private sector organisations had the opportunity to visit reservists on their annual training exercise in Denmark.

158 Regiment welcomed personnel from Bombardier Transportation, Loughborough Endowed Schools, Leicester City Council and Mewies Engineering Consultants (M-EC) to the military training camp in Oksbollejen explaining what the schedule would involve for them over the following three days.

During this unique visit the employers got to view weapon systems, the Royal Artillery in action and see how exercises are planned and carried out. They also witnessed military convoy moves, vehicle ambush drills and exercise control techniques.

Andrew Earnshaw, Headmaster, at Fairfield Preparatory School, Loughborough Endowed Schools, said: "Having witnessed firsthand the benefits of reservists undergoing military training in the field, I would wholeheartedly recommend other employers seizing the opportunity to do likewise in order to observe the benefits of providing specific opportunities for their staff to develop, both as an individual and as part of an effective team. The skills, knowledge and experience that they acquire in participating in such exercises can only benefit the organisations from which they have been released. I can unquestionably state that the visit to Denmark gave me the chance to reflect on my own style of leadership and how to bring the best out of my fantastic team at Fairfield."

Eddie Mewies, Managing Director at M-EC, also attended the training exercise between 13 -15 September, he said: "The trip to Denmark incorporated a full range of activities such as officer and battle order briefings; off-road travel in varying vehicles; live artillery firing at close quarters; opportunities for in-depth discussion with army officers and a cultural visit to Tirpitz WW2 museum. This well-planned and considered itinerary gave us not only an insight into the role of reservists 'in action' but also enabled a stronger understanding of the commitment both reservists and their employers must make. It was also particularly helpful to see how transferable skills such as leadership, organisation and general competency are utilised and nurtured in the reservist environment. Thank you to all involved for a very valuable and rewarding exercise."

158 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps, is an Army Reserve Transport Regiment that provides general transport support to its paired regular Army Regiment, 7 Regiment.

The regiment provides trained manpower and equipment on operations and other tasks when required at home or abroad. They provide a vehicle fleet including Land Rover communication platforms and MAN Support Vehicles that are able to carry up to 15 tonnes of equipment on or off road.



The Employer Interview

Whitehouse Construction based in Ashbourne has been supporting the Armed Forces community for a number of years.

Providing specialist civil engineering solutions in highly controlled environments, the company's clientele includes Rolls Royce Marine Power, Western Power Distribution, Bombardier Transportation and the Manchester Airport Group.

The Reservist had the opportunity to speak to Brell Ewart, Chairman of Whitehouse Construction about why he chose to sign the Armed Forces Covenant and went out of his way to raise a substantial amount of money for the new Defence and National Rehabilitation Centre at Stanford on Soar, near Loughborough.

What does Whitehouse Construction do and what services do you offer?

"We have been providing civil engineering services to our customers since 1977. Our business today is founded upon many of our established principles directly employing our entire workforce, wholly owning and operating our internal plant fleet and remaining debt free."

You employ a number of Service leavers. What transferable skills do they bring in to the business?

"We are proud to have a number of ex-Forces employees working for Whitehouse Construction, who bring the Forces ethos of respect, integrity, commitment and loyalty in to the workplace for the benefit of the company and our clients.

"We are delighted and committed to give our support and assistance to personnel who are prepared to give their time as members of our Armed Forces. Although we do not employ any reservists at the moment, when recruiting we do see the transferable skills that current or former Service personnel have as a big plus. We know the individuals from a military background will be hardworking and efficient."

"...We need people who have the ability to work to instruction and understand the importance of safety and quality. In my experience, Service personnel have these skills..."

You received an Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award in 2016 and previously signed the Armed Forces Covenant. Why did you sign the Covenant and what pledges did you make?

"I believe we all owe an enormous amount of gratitude to those who serve and defend our country, both at home and abroad. We all believe we have important jobs until we see the sacrifices made by Service personnel.

"Signing the Covenant was a positive way for us to publicly demonstrate our support for both serving and former Service personnel and their families. When we signed the Covenant we knew we had a number of vacancies that could potentially be filled by reservists or veterans as we knew they would each have transferable skills they could bring through our door including the ability to solve problems, think on their feet and work as a team."



Brell Ewart with John Wilson, the MOD's Regional Employer Engagement Director

You come from a military family and recently attended a special employer visit to the Battle of Britain underground bunker in Uxbridge, near London which was important to you. Could you explain why this was significant for you?

"My mother and father served King and Country in World War Two in the RAF. My mother was a Senior Wireless Operator who served in Blackpool, Cardington, Central London and Uxbridge. Following my visit to the bunker in Uxbridge as part of the visit organised by East Midlands RFCA, I told my Aunt where I had been and what I had seen. She was able to tell me that my mother served in Uxbridge during the war, albeit not in the Battle of Britain Bunker. In addition to this, she was asked to go to Bletchley Park (otherwise known as Station X) but declined. Although she didn't know much about Station X she knew she would probably not get the chance to go to any other RAF stations and she did like to travel. My visit to Uxbridge was really special as I was able to gain a small insight into the work she did all those years ago.

"I recently researched two other members of my family from an earlier generation who made the ultimate sacrifice in World War One. It's important to me to find out as much as I can about those who came before me and how they served our country."

Whitehouse Construction is open to employing reservists and Service leavers in the future. What in your opinion makes them stand out?

"The construction industry is one where there is a wide variation of roles available and skills needed. We need people who have the ability to work to instruction and understand the importance of safety and quality. In my experience, Service personnel have these skills installed in them so we are able to work with them to build specific construction skills. Additionally individuals who have served in the military are generally fit and have the desire to learn and do better in everything they do."

You recently raised £6,700 for the new Defence and National Rehabilitation Centre (DNRC) at your 40th Year Gala Dinner. Why does the rehabilitation centre interest you and why did you decide to encourage people to donate to this cause at your event?

"We have previously supported St Dunstan's the centre for blind Service personnel then went on to support the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre Headley Court. We sponsored a team of disabled Service people from Headley Court to travel to Austria for a canoeing expedition. This was a huge success for them and very rewarding for us. At our Silver Award Presentation evening we were shown a film of the new DNRC and one of their ambassadors spoke. We were hooked on the idea of furthering our support for the Armed Forces community so decided that our 40th Anniversary Gala Dinner gave us the chance to raise funds for this important cause and spread the word about DNRC amongst our business contacts. As a business we decided to match the funds raised at the dinner making a total of £6,700, something we are very proud of."



Goodwill Solutions



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MIKE BRITTON - CEO, Goodwill Solutions

Helping people and the economy

Goodwill Solutions was founded in January 2008 and offers bespoke logistics and warehousing solutions to retailers, manufacturers and distributors, across the UK and Europe.

We have created a truly unique business that is customer focused, competitively priced and delivers social change.



For Business

Providing a range of unique, cost effective logistics and support functions for retailers and manufacturers



For Investors

Ranked one of Europe's fastest growing companies, we're generating an excellent ROI for investors



For Social Good

Working with disadvantaged people in the local area, we're using our business to increase opportunities

An Award Winning Year



Our Partners



Business solutions with a social focus

We invest our commercial revenues into community welfare projects – helping businesses achieve their social responsibility goals, without accruing any extra cost.

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 Northampton NN3 6RX (Registered No. 09646655)
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