



**EAST MIDLANDS
RESERVE FORCES AND CADETS ASSOCIATION**

Annual Report **2016**



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Chief Executive's introduction

After almost five years in post I am still waiting patiently for a year that could be described as steady-state. As the Chairman identifies, this year has been marked by a continuation of the changes which began in 2010 and that have continued to see a renewed emphasis on both reserves and cadets as critical contributors to the societies from which they are drawn.

You will find within this year's Annual Report a wealth of evidence describing the many and varied activities undertaken by the reserves of all three Services of this region. The opportunity to deploy on operations still exists, as the article on Flight Sergeant Nick Smith demonstrates. But there are still plenty of chances to see the wider world, as Private Amy Brookman's article relating to skiing in France and Leading Hand Buster Browne's time spent patrolling the waters of Gibraltar prove.

Cadet numbers remain healthy, although we are keeping a watchful eye on the slight decline. Most importantly those young people who do join the cadets report an overwhelmingly positive experience, illustrated by the cadet articles in this publication. Indeed the Cadet Forces can be an inspiring experience for the entire family as evidenced by Second Lieutenant Adrian O'Dell's tale on page 27. Adrian is one of a band of adults who willingly give up their free time to run the Cadet Forces, and without them there would quite simply be no Cadet Forces. While it proves reasonably simple to recruit adults to work with the cadets, it has proven rather more difficult to recruit them to seek commissions within the Cadet Forces, and we are actively seeking to help with that and the recruitment of adults in general. Our Head of Communications has engaged in a recruitment campaign for Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland Army Cadet Force (LNR ACF) which has received some very good reviews and we are now waiting to see if it produces the desired result – more adults at the detachments.

It would be remiss of me not to highlight one important anniversary this year, the 75th Anniversary of the founding of the Air Training Corps (ATC). The ATC has a proud history and a number of commemorative events are being planned across the country, including a focus on the ATC at the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford. It is also good news that in the anniversary



*Group Captain (Retd) Nick Sharpe,
Chief Executive of East Midlands RFCA*

year the rather unwelcome hiatus to cadet gliding has ended and the cadets are once more taking to the air.

The RFCA's task is of course to provide the support that enables reserves and cadets to do their job. Our county committees have been busy this year, with a focus on organising events aimed at informing employers on the benefits of reserve service and of the cadets. These have included dinners at Army Reserve Centres, where employers have been able to meet reserves and find out a little more about what they do; it has included organising attendance at the annual Mobbs Memorial rugby match, held this year in Northampton; it has included a visit for those employers particularly supportive of the reserves, to London, to visit historic sites and meet Julian Brazier TD MP; Minister for Reserves.

I hope that the articles in the Annual Report provide at least a little illumination on the hard work undertaken by all those within the RFCA to ensure that the reserves and cadets can focus on their principal tasks. I am always humbled by the ready commitment of our Lord-Lieutenants, Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and volunteers to the many and varied activities that they undertake throughout the year, for without them, none of what we do would be possible. I would like to thank them and also the RFCA's professional staff, who, whether in our Nottingham headquarters, or working within the ACF counties, have continued to undertake all that the organisation has asked of them.

**Group Captain (Retd) Nick Sharpe,
Chief Executive of East Midlands RFCA**

Chairman's report

It barely seems credible that it is over five years since the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) of 2010, conducted in an environment of the most stringent financial scrutiny, initiated an examination of this country's Reserve Forces that led to fundamental changes in their structure and employment. After many years of post-Cold War institutional neglect their contribution to the nation's defence was again recognised and they were more closely integrated with the Regular Forces in areas such as training and equipment. Moreover, their terms and conditions of service were aligned to a greater degree with those of their regular brethren. The greatest challenge, however, was to initiate an increase in the size of the reserves to some 35,000 between all three Services. At the time of the SDSR, the strength of the Army Reserve (then the Territorial Army) was quoted as anywhere between 19,000 and 21,000; the inability to determine a precise figure is perhaps testament to the lack of focus on our reserves at that time. The recruiting challenge to all three Services was significant, but that of the Army was considerable; and there were some who deemed it unachievable. Nonetheless, in keeping with the ethos of our Armed Forces, they simply knuckled down to the task in hand. At first it seemed that reversing the downwards manpower trend would prove impossible, but numbers eventually began to increase and we are now in a position where the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) and the Royal Air Force (RAF) Reserve have achieved their manpower targets for 2018 (albeit the RNR manpower is not fully trained) and the Army Reserve is in a position which means it will probably make its target – which was always tougher than that of the two other Services. In a welcome development, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) has placed its recruiting figures on the internet and they can be obtained by simply Googling 'UK Armed Forces Monthly Service Personnel Statistics'. As I write this report, the figures show recruiting across the Reserve Forces is up by 46% in the 12 months to November 2015, while, equally importantly, numbers leaving the Reserve Forces have decreased.

November 2015 was a significant month, as it marked the publication of the 2010 SDSR's successor. SDSR 2015 was constructed against a still taut, but healthier, economic situation and in a more challenging international strategic scenario, in which the continuing threat of terrorism, extremism and instability was bolstered by a resurgence of state-based threats and intensifying wider state competition. This ensured that a wide range of equipment programmes, and capabilities 'gapped'



Colonel (Retd) Murray Colville TD DL

in the 2010 review, were now funded. But the SDSR also contained the following paragraphs of significance for the reserves and the RFCAs:

4.52: We will continue to develop the 'Whole Force' approach, ensuring that we use both regular and reserve members of the Armed Forces, and that we use MOD civil servants and contractors to support the front line, deploying forward when required. We will make it easier for people to move between the different elements of the 'Whole Force' over their career, and we will work collaboratively with industry.

4.56: The reserves are an essential part of our Armed Forces. They allow us to access skills and expertise found in the civilian world. Reserve personnel help to link the Armed Forces to society, and employers benefit significantly from the transferable skills that reserve personnel bring to their businesses. We will continue to grow our reserves to 35,000.

Thus, the aims of the previous SDSR have been reinforced. The manpower target remains the same and of particular note the report describes an intent to ease the transition between regular, reserve and civilian elements of what it describes as the 'Whole Force'. For us, and the units of all three Services that we support, that means that we will continue aiming for the Future Reserve 2020 (FR2020) manning targets and will ensure that the support arrangements are in place to enable that force.

A critical element in the RFCAs ability to support the Reserve Forces and cadet organisations are the over 130 volunteer members who willingly give up their time throughout our six counties. Our President and Vice-President's are tireless in their efforts to integrate the Armed Forces within their communities and to ensure that challenges that the Armed Forces face are understood by those who

have little or no experience of military life. They also invariably attend the annual camps of their Army Cadet Force (ACF) counties and the camps and parade nights of the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), Sea Cadet Corps (SCC), and Air Training Corps (ATC). In doing so they ensure that both adult volunteers and cadets are made aware of the importance that is attached to the activities undertaken and the ethos generated within their organisations.

Our Vice-Chairmen are intrinsically involved in all of our activities, either chairing one of our five County Committees, or acting as Vice-Chairman Navy or Vice-Chairman Air. The County Committees and the Regional Employer Engagement Group are of course central to the RFCAs' ability to engage with the wider civilian communities within which the reserves and cadets operate. It is with some sadness that I must advise you that the Chairman of our Nottinghamshire Committee, Commander (Retd) Peter Moore, who also holds the post of Vice-Chairman Navy, and Vice-Chairman Air, Air Commodore (Retd) Andrew Griffin, have decided to stand down after many years in these critical roles. I am pleased to note though that both have agreed to remain on their respective County Committees and, Commander Moore will remain as Vice-Chairman Navy and Chairman of the Financial Scrutiny Committee. I wish to place on record my thanks to them both for the considerable time and effort that they have expended in supporting this RFCA and the Reserve Forces and cadet organisations of the East Midlands. It is my great pleasure to announce that Colonel (Retd) Nick Hile has agreed to replace Commander Moore as Chairman of the Nottinghamshire County Committee and Group Captain (Retd) Nicky Loveday has agreed to assume the role of Vice-Chairman Air. Colonel Hile completed a distinguished career in the Royal Artillery and in addition to regimental duties served as Defence Attaché in Egypt; he is also Chairman of the Nottinghamshire Committee of the Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) The Soldiers' Charity. Group Captain Loveday joined the RAF as a Fighter Controller and commanded RAF Fylingdales, the UK's only space surveillance and missile warning radar station; her final tour was as Assistant Director of Defence Public Relations (RAF). Both have already been involved with their County Committees for some time and I am very grateful to them both for agreeing to take on the challenge ahead.

In my discussions with our President, our Vice-Presidents and our Vice-Chairmen I know that they are very conscious of the work undertaken by the volunteer members of each County Committee, including those with former military experience, but

also those representing cadets, employers, county councils, city councils, education and charities. Our County Committees are manifestations of the communities within which our reserves and cadets live and work; without them it would be considerably more difficult for both organisations to recruit, work and flourish. The RFCA exists to promote the reserves and cadets and we can too easily at times forget to thank those who so readily volunteer their support. Both our President and I would like to record our thanks for the immense effort undertaken by all of our volunteer members.

East Midlands RFCA is a 'Purple' organisation and I am pleased to say that we are actively engaged with reserve and cadets of all three Services and the region's regular units. However, it would be remiss of me not to highlight the wonderful level of support that we get from our Nottingham-based Brigade, 7th Infantry Brigade and Headquarters East (7 Inf Bde & HQ East). The range of responsibilities that Brigadier Jonny Bourne and his team willingly shoulder is considerable and significantly greater than those placed upon the Adaptable Brigade's predecessors, the Regional Brigades. Despite this, the brigade works closely with us to achieve a positive effect across the entire East Midlands region and that is attributable to the dedication and sheer hard work of the brigade staff, who work with us as a very well integrated team.

I have mentioned Project REVIVE in previous reports. This project was initiated to ensure that the RFCAs could collectively achieve the standards mandated by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) on the civilian contractors who now service the regular estate. There was at the time a perception that the RFCAs' stewardship of the volunteer estate might be under challenge. The agreement of a new five year service level agreement between the RFCAs and DIO has removed the immediate threat to our management of the estate, but we are committed to ensuring that we can meet the mandated standards, and Project REVIVE will continue with the same priority as before. A consequence of fulfilling the requirements of Project REVIVE will be that the 13 RFCAs will need to act in a more corporate manner to ensure that all achieve the required standards and, as importantly, we all provide a common service to our customers. The revised manner of undertaking our business is articulated in a Framework Agreement, which has been agreed by the Council of RFCAs Board, on which all 13 RFCAs are represented by their Chairmen. The principals of the Framework Agreement were agreed by our own board and it will be reviewed at least every five years (at the same time as the constitution), but could also be reviewed at the request of Board members over specific points.

The reserve units in the region are increasing in strength. East Midlands RFCA has continued to seek funds to support both recruitment and retention; the practical effect of that is demonstrated in our Head of Estates' report, with particular emphasis on the significant project to refurbish Clare Street Army Reserve Centre in Northampton. Relatively minor works at a former family quarter on Triumph Road in Nottingham have allowed 4th Battalion Parachute Regiment to recruit for their Rugby-based D Company. Close liaison between East Midlands RFCA, Yorkshire and Humber RFCA, and their respective local brigades, has enabled 3rd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment's return to Grimsby, a fertile recruiting ground for the infantry. We are also working closely with 1st Military Working Dog Regiment and Royal Army Veterinary Corps, a hybrid unit consisting of regulars and reserves, to enable them to establish themselves at St George's Barracks, North Luffenham.

The support of our cadet networks is a critical aspect of our role and I am pleased to observe the continued strength of the cadet organisations throughout our region. Before Christmas it had been decided that future appointments to ACF Commandant and Deputy Commandant would be 'de-enriched', which was a rather inelegant way of saying that future Commandants would hold the rank of lieutenant colonel, rather than that of colonel, and deputies would be majors, rather than lieutenant colonels. Following a question to the Chief of the General Staff at the annual RFCA briefing in London, the Army has decided to revisit the question of de-enrichment and place it within the context of ensuring that our adult volunteers feel valued for the considerable contribution they make to the youth of the country. A study has been initiated and whatever the result, and whatever your views on the topic, I believe that the subject will be given thorough examination and consideration. The Cadet Forces' adult volunteers are the key to their success and it is critical that their contribution is examined thoroughly and given due weight. A welcome example of the importance attached by the Army to the ACF is the recent decision to appoint two Colonel Cadets for the 7 Infantry Brigade & HQ East (7 Inf Bde & HQ East) area, to replace the much respected, and much travelled, Colonel Peter Christian. Later this year, Colonel Ian Sackree will relinquish his role as Commandant of Lincolnshire ACF and assume the role of Colonel Cadets for the East Midlands.

Finally, I was disappointed to hear shortly before Christmas that the military training area adjacent to our recently opened Cadet Training Centre (CTC) at Yardley Chase had been closed by DIO as they could no longer guarantee that it was a safe place to train. This followed the removal of their members of staff responsible for undertaking safety checks, on the grounds that they could be undertaken by staff operating from another location. This arrangement proved untenable and the range was closed – without consultation with East Midlands RFCA, the ACF or 7 Inf Bde & HQ East. The lack of a training area called into question the utility of our new CTC and caused significant difficulty to Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland ACF, who had to rearrange a significant percentage of their training programme. On a positive note, both East Midlands RFCA and 7 Inf Bde & HQ East worked together to reopen the area as soon as practically possible, with inspections being undertaken by individuals from each of



Yardley Chase Cadet Training Centre

the organisations working with DIO. As I write this report we are looking at ways of assuming responsibility for running the training area to provide an integrated training facility at Yardley Chase, if adequate resources are transferred to us.

This has undoubtedly been a thoroughly challenging year for all of us, and yet it has demonstrated consistently the 'value-added' that the combination of volunteers, professional staff, reserves and regulars bring to the reserve and cadet equation. In an age in which understanding of the military role is eroding in parallel with the reduction in the size of the military, it is critical that we continue to do our best to ensure that they get all the support they need and all the support that they deserve. Our President and I are very grateful to all our volunteers and to our professional staff for all that you do towards that aim.

Colonel (Retd) Murray Colville TD DL

Employer Engagement

Introduction

Employer engagement is an important activity in helping to achieve Defence objectives. It is the principal activity required to develop and sustain strong, positive, mutually-beneficial relationships between employers and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to support the Defence community, which includes regulars, reserves, civilians and their families, before, during and after their service.

In 2015, RFCA employer engagement activities were aligned with Defence strategy, focused on reserves, reflecting the imperative to achieve Defence's objectives. Our activities also supported the full spectrum of Defence personnel including service leavers, veterans, wounded injured and sick, families and cadet organisations.

Objectives

The MOD employer engagement programme has continued in support of its efforts to deliver 35,000 effective and capable reservists. The strategic priority has been to secure and sustain access to and availability of the skilled, capable people needed to deliver Defence outputs. Other key objectives have included:

- The provision of skills in key areas such as engineering, medical, communications and cyber.
- Recruitment and retention of reservists.
- Resettlement and employment of regular service personnel at the end of their service.
- Rehabilitation and employment of the wounded, injured and sick.
- Encouraging employers to employ spouses and civil partners of service personnel.
- Recruitment and support of Cadet Force Adult Volunteers.

In the last year, employer engagement activities have worked towards three principal objectives:

- Raising awareness of Armed Forces personnel.
- Establishing new relationships with employers.
- Sustaining current relationships.

East Midlands RFCA has supported over 2,150 reservists and has engaged with over 4,650 employer contacts, providing information, guidance

and advice on all matters relating to Defence personnel including the employment of reservists and service leavers.

A key contributor to the Association's ability to meet the employer engagement objectives is our Regional Employer Engagement Group (REEG), chaired by Dr Peter Barrett CBE. This group of influential business people, from a wide variety of public and private sector business areas, provides invaluable advice on our engagement strategy, helping employers to understand the potential benefits of employing Defence personnel and equally importantly, helping the military to understand the needs of employers.

New Branding

The MOD had previously engaged with employers through its marketing and communication campaign, SaBRE, to assist in developing good relationships between reservists and their employers. It had provided information and advice about the employment of reservists including details of reservists' training obligations, employers' legal rights and responsibilities and the potential benefits of employing reservists.



Ministry
of Defence

To reflect Defence's broader employer engagement agenda, the SaBRE brand has been discontinued. The provision of support, advice and guidance to employers, reservists and reserve units will now be delivered under the MOD brand.

In keeping with this, information about the Reserve Forces and matters relating to the employment of Defence personnel is now available in the Defence Relationship Management (DRM) section of the government website at: www.gov.uk/government/groups/defence-relationship-management

Partnering with Defence

The potential benefits to employers

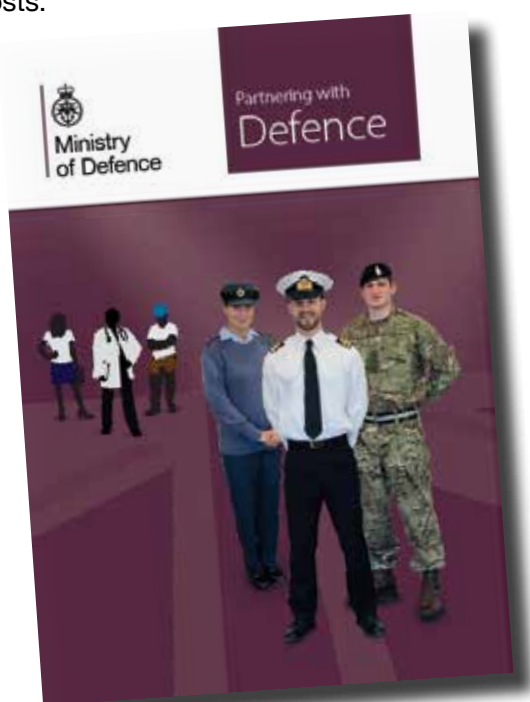
In 2015, our employer contacts were advised on the ways in which supporting Defence can help businesses to become stronger and more successful.

- By employing military personnel, ex-regulars and reservists, organisations can acquire a portfolio of skills and behaviours that are beneficial in a modern working environment.
- 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 up to the Armed Forces Covenant, which may be formally recognised through the Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS).

Defence's contribution to the partnership

For those organisations who have supported Defence by employing ex-regulars, providing additional paid leave to reservists, supplying services or products to serving personnel and ensuring the Armed Forces and their families are treated fairly, Defence has:

- Provided the necessary information, guidance and practical help needed to ensure that the business is fully aware of the impact and benefits military personnel can offer.
- Provided employers with appropriate advanced notice of the reservist training commitments and mobilisation to enable them to make arrangements to cover their absence.
- Provided financial assistance when an employer's reservist has been mobilised; to help with salary costs, recruitment fees and retraining costs.



- Recognised those employers who have actively supported Defence via the **Armed Forces Covenant**, through the ERS.

The employers' information leaflet '*Partnering with Defence*' includes brief details of the Defence-employer proposition and the tangible benefits for employers. Copies are available from the Regional Employer Engagement Director. To find out more about how employers can work with Defence, visit: www.gov.uk/mod/employer-relations

The Armed Forces Covenant



ARMED FORCES COVENANT

The Armed Forces Covenant is the basis of Defence's relationship with society. It is a promise by the nation to ensure that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly. The Covenant is a national responsibility involving the government, local authorities, businesses and organisations.

The Covenant provides a framework for initial discussions with businesses and organisations, outlining options to support Defence across a range of important areas of activity, including recruitment and retention of reservists and cadet force adult volunteers; employment of service leavers; resettlement of wounded, injured and sick; and spousal/partner employment.

Businesses may sign the Covenant to confirm publicly that they recognise the value that Defence personnel contribute to our country. The Covenant encourages them to develop a relationship with members of the Armed Forces community who work in their business or access their products or services.

The Covenant is designed to be modular and bespoke; the specific nature of pledged support will depend upon the size and nature of the organisation. Pledge options reflect meaningful actions with which individual employers are comfortable and able to deliver.

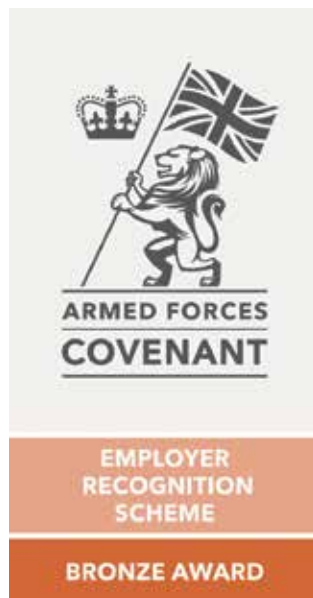
Over 880 organisations around the UK have signed the Covenant and 75 of these are in the East Midlands. Employers who wish to make a pledge should contact the Regional Employer Engagement Director.

Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) recognises and rewards UK employers for their support to Defence personnel. The scheme encompasses Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards for employer organisations who pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to the Armed Forces community, and align their support with the Armed Forces Covenant.

Bronze

Employers who sign up to the scheme through the government website and state their intent to support Defence personnel will receive a Bronze award. They will be listed on the ERS database and they may choose to have their details on the website to show their support for defence.



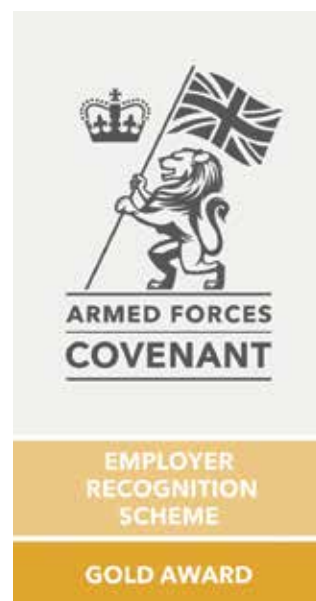
Silver

Employers who demonstrate support for Defence personnel may be nominated for a Silver Award by a third party, via the ERS website. Recipients will be presented with the Silver Award at special regional events and they will be listed on the ERS database where their details may be included on the website as supportive employers.



Gold

Employers who advocate support of Defence personnel may be nominated for a Gold award by a third party via the ERS website. Recipients will be presented with the Gold Award at a special prestigious national event. They will be listed on the ERS database and their details may be included on the website as supportive employers.



In 2015, 18 Bronze, 11 Silver Awards, along with one Gold Award were received by employers in the East Midlands.

We congratulate **M-EC Consulting Development Engineers**, based in Ibstock, Leicestershire, who were the only small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) in the UK to receive a Gold Award in 2015.

To see a list of all employers who have received awards or to register for a Bronze award, go to: www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-employer-recognition-scheme

For more information or with any queries contact:

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

Local business is awarded at Downing Street

A Midlands engineering development consultancy has been presented with the highest possible award in the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) during a reception held at No. 10 Downing Street with the Prime Minister and Defence Secretary on 14 January 2016.

M-EC, who employ Reservist, Rosie James in its Noise and Air Quality Division, was selected to receive an ERS Gold Award for their ongoing support of the Armed Forces community. Rosie and M-EC's Managing Director, Eddie Mewies, were invited to attend a special presentation ceremony at No. 10 to receive the award and meet the Prime Minister, David Cameron.

Rosie said: "We had an incredibly memorable afternoon at Downing Street, where we were one of only 15 companies in the UK to receive a Gold Award. Hosted by the Defence Secretary, Michael Fallon, we were able to celebrate the Armed Forces Covenant and meet like-minded reservists and employers. Obviously the highlight was my time spent talking with the Prime Minister, who was very interested to hear about our work at M-EC, and my role with 203 Transport Squadron, as well as reiterating the importance of small businesses continuing to support reservists."

The ERS was launched by the Prime Minister in 2014 to recognise businesses that are exemplary supporters of the Armed Forces Covenant, a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly.

The Defence Secretary, Michael Fallon

commented: "The support from these organisations is making a real difference to our Armed Forces community. They are ensuring that the men and women who have done and continue to do so much for our nation are treated fairly. Whether allowing reservists the time to train, providing jobs or supporting veterans and spouses, these companies embody what the Armed Forces Covenant is about. I am delighted to thank them for their unwavering support."

M-EC has been actively supporting the Reserve Forces since 2013, hosting awareness events and team-building activities to raise the profile of the Armed Forces locally.

John Wilson, East Midlands Regional Employer Engagement Director for the MOD, commented:

"M-EC has been a supportive employer for a number of years providing support to each of their reservists, enabling them to meet their training and mobilisation commitments. As the only UK small business to receive a Defence ERS Gold award this year, I would like to thank M-EC for their hard work in promoting membership of the Reserve Forces both internally to their staff and externally to their business associates through joint military events and publicity projects. I look forward to continuing to work alongside M-EC in the future and I congratulate them on receiving the highest ERS award, which is thoroughly deserved."



Employers at No 10 with Prime Minister (© Crown Copyright)

Defence Secretary Michael Fallon presents Gold Award to Rosie James and Eddie Mewies (© Crown Copyright)

Football club pledge support for the Armed Forces Community

Lincoln City Football Club has pledged to support the Armed Forces Community by signing the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Covenant was signed by the football club's **Chairman Robert Dorrian**, and **Ministry of Defence (MOD) representative Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Parker**, the Commanding Officer of 158 Regiment The Royal Logistic Corps.

The Club has pledged to:

- promote the Club as an Armed Forces friendly organisation;
- actively promote Armed Forces Day;
- strive to support the employment of veterans, service leaders, service spouses and partners;
- offer support to local Cadet Force units;
- seek to support club employees who are members of the Reserve Forces, and
- form a partnership between Defence and the football club.

Kevin Cooke, Managing Director, at Lincoln City Football Club, said: “The Club was delighted to sign the Armed Forces Covenant. We have always had a strong relationship with the Royal Air Force and the Army and so it was perfectly natural for us to sign.

“We hope to strengthen our bond with the Services and with the men and women that serve our country.”

John Wilson, East Midlands Regional Employer Engagement Director, said: “The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces or their families are fairly treated. The Covenant is a national responsibility involving government, businesses, local authorities, charities and the public.

“We are delighted that Lincoln City Football Club has signed the Covenant to confirm their support for the Armed Forces community.”

The Officer Commanding the local reserve unit, Major Lee Cope, attended the signing on behalf of 160 Transport Squadron in Lincoln. He said: “It is important for us as a unit to engage with local businesses and increase their understanding about the Reserve Forces and the transferable skills our soldiers could bring into their civilian workplaces. Lincoln City Football Club is an important element of our community so we were pleased to be invited along to the signing event.”

The Armed Forces Covenant was signed on 19 March 2016 at Lincoln City Football Club.



Wing Commander Fox, Lincoln City Football Club Chairman Mr Bob Dorrian, Lieutenant Colonel Andy Parker MBE, Lincoln City Football Club Manager Mr Chris Moyes and Major Lee Cope.

Cadets and youth

The Army Cadet Force (ACF) across the East Midlands has had another successful year, although the challenge to find adult volunteers willing to take on the added responsibilities of being an ACF Officer continues to be an issue.

With a target of achieving (and maintaining) ACF Officer establishment at 80%, only Nottinghamshire ACF has managed this for most of the last year, although even they have now slipped to 76%. In reality this simply means that one ACF Officer has left and has not yet been replaced. East Midlands RFCA continues to support the ACF Officer drive, by facilitating

Overall ACF cadet numbers have reduced, with a national 10% drop in the number of cadets since 2013 (45,011 in 2013 to 40,372 in 2016) although part of this drop may be explained by the recent reduction in the maximum permitted age of cadets, from 18¾ years old to 18 years old. However the ACFs in the East Midlands seem to have bucked this national trend with a drop in cadet numbers over the same period of only 4%; total ACF cadet numbers in the East Midlands are 3,772.



The command task at POST



Cadets at ACF camp

Looking at cadet achievement with regards to 'star passes' at the Army Proficiency Certificate, the core of the ACF syllabus, East Midlands ACF cadet counties are hovering around the national

the Potential Officer Selection Training (POST) weekends at Chetwynd Barracks, running two POSTs in 2015 and one in May 2016. POST, presently under the Presidency of Colonel Alan Burt, Commandant Nottinghamshire ACF, attempts to replicate the experience that potential ACF Officers will experience at the Cadet Forces Commission Board (CFCB) at Westbury, Wiltshire. Adult volunteers who have gone through the POST experience and subsequently successfully attended CFCB speak highly of the advantages of having already been through a 'mock CFCB' at POST.

average of 1.98 'star passes' per cadet, with Nottinghamshire ACF achieving a very credible 2.21 'star passes' per cadet. Along with the potential to gain BTEC awards, ACF cadets are also able to gain The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) and most of the East Midlands ACF counties are performing far better than the national average of one DofE award for an average of 31 cadets, with Derbyshire ACF achieving one DofE award for every 9.26 cadets (which included nine of the prestigious gold awards), whilst Nottinghamshire ACF managed one award for every 7.2 cadets.

The highlight of the ACF year is summer camp, and in 2015 the ACF in the East Midlands took over 1,800 young people away to Sennybridge in Powys, Longmoor in Hampshire and slightly closer to home, Wathgill in North Yorkshire. In addition, cadets have had the chance to go skiing in France and Bavaria, visit World War One battlefields in Flanders, assist in the re-interment of King Richard III and later this year will conduct an exercise in Gibraltar, organised by Derbyshire ACF. Individual cadets have reached the ultimate cadet achievement of Master Cadet, been awarded the Regional Command Certificate of Good Service and one has been selected to attend the six week long Cadet Leadership, Instructor Marksmanship course in Canada.



A cadet from Nottinghamshire on annual camp in 2015



LNR ACF cadets taking part in the re-interment event

Community Engagement Board

In a first for the East Midlands, Nottinghamshire ACF, working with the Lord-Lieutenancy, has set up a Community Engagement Board, which has a vision to ensure that the youth of the county are given the opportunity to showcase the skills acquired by being a member of the ACF. With the full support of the Lord-Lieutenant and the active participation of Deputy Lord-Lieutenants and the volunteer leadership of Nottinghamshire ACF, the Community Engagement Board will engage with the local business community to promote the cadets.

The Government's Cadet Expansion (CEP) programme, which successfully saw 100 new school based cadet units set up in England by 2015 (with ten of these new units being in the East Midlands), has now entered a second phase, known as CEP 500. The intent is to achieve a total of 500 school based cadet units, with the programme now extending across the United Kingdom. To reach this ambitious target, approximately 150 new units will need to be set up, and already East Midlands RFCA's School Cadet Expansion Officer, working in conjunction with the single services, is engaging with schools across the region.

Brooke Weston Trust CCF on parade



Financial overview

Financial Year 15/16 Overview

The general theme of economies prevailed throughout the current financial year with the outlook being more of the same. Revenues have been squeezed or kept at the same levels as previous years wherever possible, and we have had to live within our means.

Current Financial Year

As in previous years the two funding charts show similar funding for both years, with only Infrastructure, Property Management (Propman) and IT/Communications showing slight increases over last year. We are tied into the Ministry of Defence's (MOD) utility tariffs for gas and electricity, and rents and leases are typically rising above the rate of inflation with waste disposal costs continuing to increase with increased landfill taxes, all of which make it a challenge

to control infrastructure costs. Propman edged up £22k to £1.145m, barely an inflationary rise, and IT/Communications rose £13k due to a late injection from the Army Cadet Force Association to fund a recruitment drive for Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland Army Cadet Force.

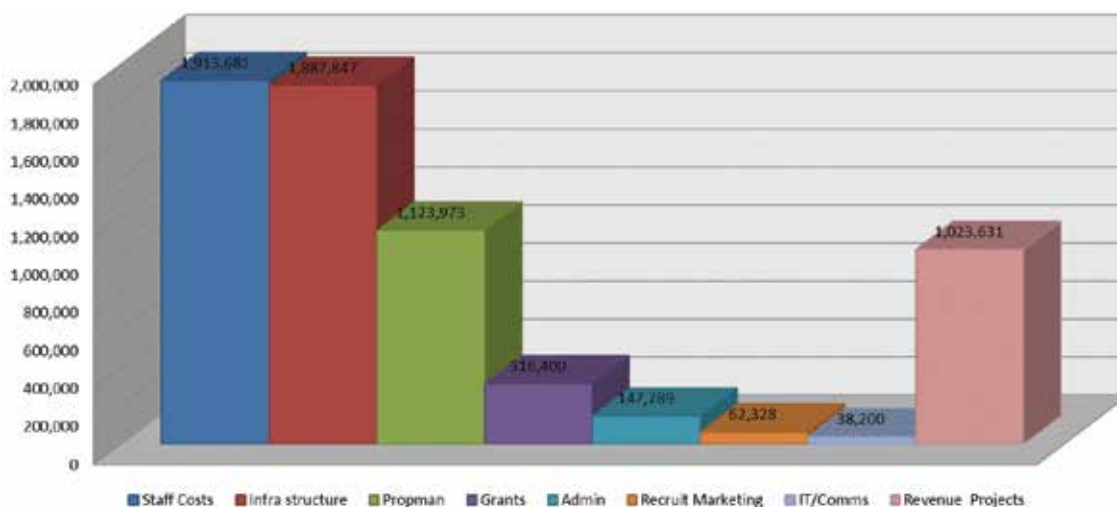
Project funding dropped nearly £300K which is a reflection of the current climate.

The Financial Scrutiny Committee, chaired by Commander (Retd) Peter Moore, has continued to provide invaluable oversight of our finances, and their support throughout the year is much valued.

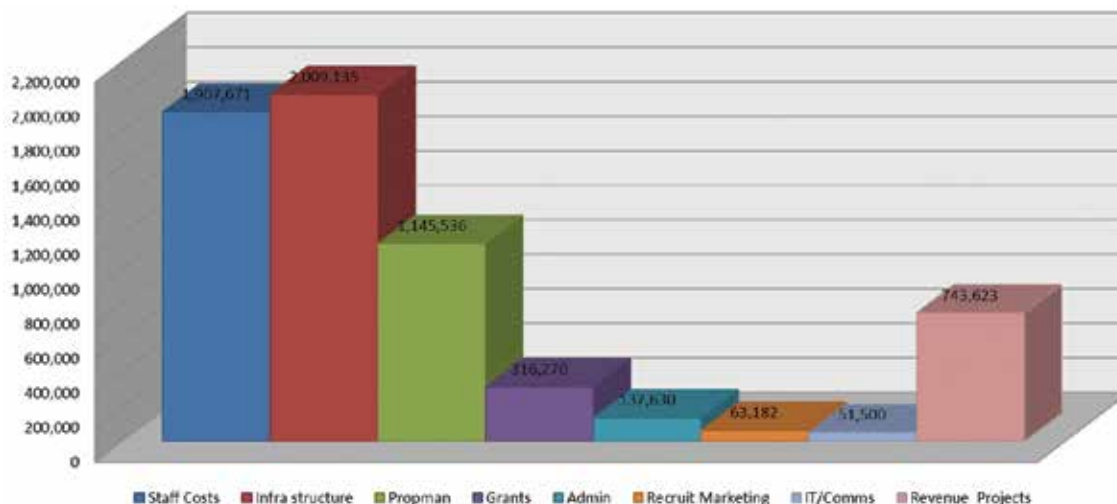
Next Financial Year

Our funding for infrastructure will be reduced next year when Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) take over responsibility for, and payment of, all gas and electricity accounts with the exception of Air Training Corps (ATC) sites. This represents approximately £750k of our current Infrastructure funding.

Funding F/Y 14/15 (excluding capital)



Funding F/Y 15/16 (excluding capital)



Estates

The signing of a new five year Service Level Agreement with Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) has removed any immediate challenge to our work for the volunteer estate. It has not, however, removed the need for change and for the RFCAs to align themselves with the processes laid down in Next Generation Estates Contracts; this will align us more closely with the means by which the regular estate is maintained, but without losing any of our flexibility or effectiveness. Getting to this point will still involve the RFCAs staff in a considerable amount of work and this burden rests mainly with the Head of Estates and his Deputy.

Despite these added pressures, the workload for the East Midlands RFCAs estates team has not dropped and we have had a very busy but productive 12 months. Our estate is 100% statutory and mandatory compliant and legal, ensuring a safe place to work and train for all of our employees, volunteers, reservists and cadets.

Our budget for ensuring a compliant estate and for general maintenance of £1.2 million was this year slightly up on the previous 12 months. We were also allocated a budget of over £3 million to allow us to complete the refurbishment of the Army Reserve Centre (ARC) at Clare Street and other ARC betterment works, as well as providing replacement cadet accommodation as detailed later. A further £400k has been provided to carry out further works in adapting injured servicemen's homes under the Wounded Injured and Sick Service Personal project.



Clare Street Army Reserve Centre main hall

Army Reserve

The project to refurbish the Grade II listed ARC at Clare Street in Northampton to allow the Battalion Headquarters of 104 Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers to fully occupy the site was completed and handed over to the Battalion in October 2015, on time and within budget. The works were successfully phased to allow the unit to continue to occupy the building whilst the refurbishment was proceeding.

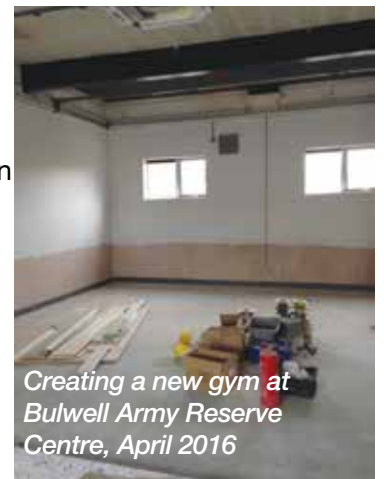
The introduction of a new fire escape has allowed some unusable rooms to be converted into a light and airy recruiting area. However, the most significant change involved the removal of the 1960s suspended ceiling in the main hall, which has allowed the full height, elegance and complexity of the original construction to be exposed. The dark and dingy atmosphere imposed by the 1960s ceiling has now been replaced by a bright well-lit area, as the original architects intended.

Betterment Projects

Betterment funding is a means of carrying out essential improvements to ARCs to assist the Army Reserve in the recruitment and retention of reserves. While these improvements can be relatively minor, they help to present a more professional and modern image. Our bid for the financial year 2015-16 was in excess of £4 million; unsurprisingly this amount did not materialise and we are allocated only £211K. This must not deter units from bidding for betterment works and we encourage all units to identify necessary changes and discuss them with the Estates Department, as we will keep pressing for funding.

The Betterment allocation has been used to carry out the following projects as well as allowing us to prepare documentation to have 'shelf-ready' projects should any additional funding become available.

The ARC on Hucknall Road in Bulwell has benefited from the largest injection of



Creating a new gym at Bulwell Army Reserve Centre, April 2016

betterment funding and we are currently on site converting underused garage space into a modern gymnasium, which is due to be completed in June 2016.

We have also replaced the leaking roof at **Wigman Road ARC** in Nottingham. This was partly funded from maintenance and was completed in April 2016. As well as this, the team have also completed the replacement of the front fencing and gates at the **ARC on Broadgate in Beeston**. The new higher security fencing at Broadgate has earned the area the nickname 'The Giraffe Pen', by the Officer Training Corps students, which we hope is affectionate.

Cadets

New Squadron Building for 1890 (Dronfield) Squadron Air Training Corps (ATC)

The new squadron building for **1890 (Dronfield) Squadron ATC** was completed in August 2015 and was officially opened by the Commandant Air Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty on 30 September 2015.



The new Dronfield Cadet Centre

Work has begun on relocating **331 (Chesterfield) Squadron ATC** from their existing training hut into a newly refurbished building at the rear of the ARC on Boythorpe Road in Chesterfield. This building was previously used as stores by the Reserve Forces and is now surplus to their requirements, so thanks



Existing 331 (Chesterfield) Squadron ATC training hut

to some internal alterations, a new home for the ATC will be created, and will be opened for use in late summer 2016.

New Joint Cadet Centre Hinckley Leicestershire



An artist's impression of the new Hinckley Cadet Centre



The existing Hinckley Cadet Centre building

Work is currently underway to replace the existing dilapidated Joint Cadet Centre and indoor range in Hinckley with a new state of the art building providing a far better facility for both the Army Cadets and the ATC who meet in the town. This work is scheduled to be completed in December 2016.

New Squadron Building for 126 (City of Derby) Squadron ATC

Significant work has been carried out to enable the replacement of the existing ATC accommodation in Alvaston, Derby. We have finalised a design for the new building and have submitted a planning application. The design has proven difficult as the existing World War II era buildings are in a flood risk area and adjacent to an old land fill site, meaning various measures to alleviate the risks have had to be incorporated within the design. We are planning to tender the works in May 2016 with a possible start date commencing in late summer 2016.



An artist's impressions of 126 (City of Derby) Squadron building

Refurbishment of 140 (Matlock) Squadron ATC buildings



Cadet Flight Sergeant E Gretorex opening one of the buildings



Main hall at 140 (Matlock) Squadron

We have recently completed a full internal and external refurbishment of the two squadron buildings located at Hurst Rise in Matlock for **140 (Matlock) Squadron**. The work has created better training facilities and storage solutions. This project was funded by Headquarters Air Cadets (HQAC) as part of their minor new works programme and has been well received by both cadets and adults.

7th Infantry Brigade and Headquarters East (7 Inf Bde & HQ East) works

All 13 RFCAs were approached in October last year to see if they would be prepared to help the regular estate in dealing with a backlog of self-help tasks that the incumbent main contractor could not action. All RFCAs responded in a positive manner and East Midlands RFCA has assisted **7 Inf Bde & HQ East** by carrying out some £175K worth of decorating works, spread across four regular army sites in the region, including **Chetwynd Barracks** in

Nottingham and **Kendrew Barracks** in Oakham.

Future Projects

RFCA, DIO, Brigade and HQAC continue to work together to ensure that funding is in place for new projects. This work could include works to ARCs



1211 (Swadlincote) Squadron ATC

as part of Future Reserves 2020 and creating new Joint Cadet Centres.

East Midlands RFCA is currently working on the following projects, all of which have received a small amount of funding to allow planning and feasibility studies to take place.

2502 (Hamilton) Squadron ATC

Planning has been approved for a new building within the grounds of the Hamilton Community College. Work has been delayed whilst we await the local council approval of an additional lease of land at the site.

1211 (Swadlincote) Squadron ATC

Approval is being sought from the local council to extend the ground lease of the site at Eureka Park to allow an extension to be built for this very well recruited squadron.

2017 (Stamford) Squadron ATC

HQAC have recently approved a feasibility study to look at building a new ATC building at the Stamford Welland Academy. Initial meetings with the school have proven very positive and we have now appointed a consultant to investigate further.

Wounded, Injured and Sick Service Personnel (WIS SP) Home Adaptations

East Midlands RFCA continues to be actively engaged in working with DIO to carry out home adaptations for wounded, injured or ill service personnel. This year alone we have completed



Injured Servicemen's accommodation

seven projects of varying complexity. Each project is different and requires a considerable amount of input by the RFCA Project Manager.

Regionally Generated Income (RGI)

RGI is additional funding that is earned by the RFCA from a variety of sources, including the use of RFCA land by telecom mast companies and letting out irreducible spare capacity for use by external agencies. This activity is run under the banner of Alternative Venues (AV). The majority of this money is reinvested back into the estate providing both reserves and cadets with better working and training spaces, carrying out works that are not funded from central funds. This regionally earned funding is also used to support local units' expeditions and other events. It is hoped that the

amount of RGI will increase in the coming years as we continue to market AV.

Alternative Venues

AV is a national initiative to enhance the RFCAs' ability to generate RGI through the hiring out of irreducible spare capacity on our sites and in our buildings. Many of our sites are advertised



for hire on eastmidlandsrfa.co.uk to encourage individuals or organisations to consider their use

for a variety of purposes. The programme not only generates income for the estate, but also helps to increase public awareness of the presence of ARCs and cadet units and their links to local communities.

This year we have seen a variety of organisations using our sites. From the Polish Scouts using Yardley Chase Cadet Training Centre to Derbyshire County Cricket Club using Chesterfield ARC for car parking during their festival. Lincoln City Football Club are also taking advantage of our facilities and use the football pitch at Sobraon Barracks for training, saving the estates department money in grounds maintenance.

We are always looking for the next opportunity and have recently been in discussions with Slimming World, local colleges, the YMCA, and contractor parking to discuss them potentially using our sites to meet their business needs. Advertising is also being considered at hoardings for some of our major sites.

Energy conservation

There has been a significant emphasis this year on spend-to-save projects that will not only reduce energy consumption but will also reduce maintenance costs.

These projects focused on two main areas:

- Replacement of old heating boilers with energy efficient boilers
- Replacement of lighting systems within ARC drill halls, changing from fluorescent fittings to LED systems.

Yardley Chase Cadet Training Centre will this year trial a Building Management System (BMS), which will be the first within East Midlands RFCA. This will enable controlling and monitoring of the building's heating and utility consumption remotely via the internet.

Waste reduction

This year has seen the consolidation of waste collection from ARCs, working closely with Biffa Waste Group. We now have a dedicated Account Manager, which enables us to resolve issues and change requirements more promptly than in the past.

We have assisted several ARCs this year by providing large roll-on roll-off skips to enable reserve units to 'clear-out' unusable / out-of-date items from their stores.

Looking ahead

There are no signs of an improvement in the strict financial climate we are currently operating under; we will be constantly challenged by DIO to prove we offer value for money against the NGEC Contractor, who provides similar services on the regular estate. However, we see opportunities on the horizon to carry out works on that estate and also with major projects where the customer sees that the RFCA is the best way to procure the works required.

All 13 RFCAs, working with the Council of RFCAs, will shortly start work to achieve International Standard for Organisation (ISO) compliance. This will be a challenging time as we may have to adjust our ways of working to ensure that compliance

is met. Nonetheless, accreditation by ISO will advertise to those for whom we work that we meet internationally agreed standards.

As part of a move to achieve a more corporate approach to our business, with the intent of achieving greater effectiveness and efficiency, we will re-tender our main contract for carrying out statutory and mandatory inspections and tests, working alongside East Anglia and West Midlands RFCAs as part of a trial to see if a larger contract to cover all three associations offers better value for money.

DIO will assume responsibility for paying utility bills from April this year, a task currently undertaken by the RFCAs. However, there is a degree of uncertainty as to what level of involvement we will still have in providing meter readings and checking bills.

Despite the challenges that are put in front of us, East Midlands RFCA's estates team continues to manage a vast array of projects that are all completed to a very high standard to meet the needs of the customer. We continue to provide the service demanded of us by our customers and we give them the confidence that we are meeting all of their requirements and guarantee compliance.

Communications update

Over the past 12 months, communications and marketing initiatives produced by East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association's (RFCA) Communications Team have continued to develop.

Most recently, a recruitment drive took place to help Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland Army Cadet Force (LNR ACF) recruit more adult volunteers. The campaign included bus and radio advertising, as well as news stories and online content across a four-week period.

In the first week of the marketing initiative, 12 individual news stories were placed online and in print through local newspaper organisations as well as social media content, which was well received on Facebook and Twitter.

Our publications:

The Cadet Magazine

The first edition of The Cadet Magazine was produced in winter 2015, following a number of requests received at engagement events across the East Midlands for a tri-Service publication to educate and inform our audiences about cadet activities.

The magazine publicised the achievements of both cadets and adult volunteers from the Combined Cadet Forces, Air Training Corps, Sea Cadet Corps, and ACF across the region.



The publication featured news, including stories of personal achievements, travel and training opportunities.

The next edition of the publication will be produced in late 2016.

The Reservist Magazine

The Reservist Magazine is currently onto its fifth edition, with a sixth due for publication in the autumn. The magazine continues to be well received by employers, and showcases the personal achievements, travel opportunities and military exercises undertaken by reservists across the six counties of the East Midlands.



Positive feedback has also been received from one particular employer who has said that the publication has encouraged a number of his employees to join the Reserve Forces.

E-newsletters

East Midlands RFCA has continued to produce the RFCA and employer engagement electronic newsletters, which are sent out monthly and three-monthly respectively. Both of these newsletters have undergone a re-design to coincide with the introduction of the new RFCA website last May.



Website

Our website, eastmidlandsrfca.co.uk, underwent a make-over during 2015, and has successfully been modernised into being a more user-friendly site containing information relating to each area of the Association, as well as having an events calendar and interactive map function.



Media update:

Last year East Midlands RFCA achieved more than £138,000 worth of positive press coverage including digital, print and broadcast media covering reserve, cadet and employer news. This figure is based on advertising value equivalent price, and is only a conservative estimate as it is not possible to measure every piece of coverage generated.

Through the vast range of news stories published, the Association also reached a potential audience of more than five million people based on reader and viewing figures of print publications, broadcast media and local news websites.

Recent headlines in the local press have included:

Army Centre's revamp project is complete

Northampton Chronicle and Echo, Nov 2015

Successful year for Heanor cadets

Ripley and Heanor News, Dec 2015

Army cadets' feats are recognised

Nottingham Post, Dec 2015

Old Dalby Reservist receives award for her military service

Melton Times, July 2015

Fire chiefs give Forces support

Worksop Guardian, Jan 2016

New RAF volunteers benefiting from trainer's 45 years of experience

Lincolnshire Echo online, March 2016

Spalding Reservist back from Kenya

Spalding Guardian, Dec 2015

Engineering consultants tackle Army activity day

East Midlands Business Blog, Nov 2015

Navy volunteer is on the fast track to become an Officer

Derby Telegraph, Aug 2015

Hats off to Hattie

Navy News, Jan 2016

Cathedral service for cadets

Belper News, Oct 2015

Charity is praised for work with veterans

Mansfield Chad, Nov 2015

Youngsters need adult volunteers

Derby Telegraph, Aug 2015

A focus on: the East Midlands RFCA County Chairmen

East Midlands RFCA has a volunteer membership totalling over 130 people, from a variety of backgrounds; each of them is a member of one of our five county committees; Leicestershire and Rutland form one committee.

Each county committee, which meets twice per year, is chaired by a County Chairman whose responsibility it is to communicate key messages to the public about the local reserve and cadet forces as well as being an important link between the Armed Forces, the RFCA and the business community.

It is through East Midlands RFCA's volunteer membership that a number of targeted employer engagement events have been organised to increase the business community's knowledge of the Armed Forces Community and the role organisations can play in supporting service leavers, veterans, reservists, cadet force adult volunteers and spouses of those serving in the Armed Forces.

Below we learn more about East Midlands RFCA's five county chairmen and why they believe it is important to act as regional ambassadors for the Armed Forces Community.



Wing Commander (Retd) Phil Giles, Derbyshire County Chairman, said: "My favourite thing about being a part of the RFCA is being able to network and engage with so many different people including local employers, and having

the chance to be an extension of the work the RFCA do in raising the profile of the reserve and cadet forces across the county. Throughout my time as chairman I have built a good relationship with local employers and would say that of all my roles in the voluntary sector, working with the RFCA is one of the most engaging."

Major (Retd) Richard Cole, Leicestershire and Rutland County Chairman, said: "Everyone interacts with reservists whether they know it or not. A reservist could be an employee, a friend or a stranger serving you in a shop so it is important to me to support the work they do and increase the public's knowledge about those currently serving in

the military as well as the Armed Forces Community as a whole."

Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Ron Gatepain TD, Lincolnshire County Chairman, said:

"Having served with the military, as a cadet, reservist and regular soldier I am passionate about supporting the Armed Forces



community in any way I can. The experiences and the transferable skills that I gained have been invaluable and combined with my civilian career and outside interests, have been extremely useful in allowing me to promote both the cadet and reserve organisations in Lincolnshire."

Colonel (Retd) Nick Hile, Nottinghamshire County Chairman, said:

"I have only been Chairman for a few months so I am still learning the job. After 37 years in the regular army, this is a chance for me to continue with some 'retired' service. At a time when our Regular Forces are getting smaller and fewer people have experience of serving or who know someone who has served, supporting our Reserve Forces is more important than ever. Our service personnel and cadets are, as ever, our most valuable asset and our finest ambassadors, and it is a privilege to continue my long association with them."

Colonel (Retd) Robert Blomfield, Northamptonshire County Chairman, said:

"I firmly believe that it is important for our reserve forces and military cadet organisations to be supported by those with a working knowledge of how they function, and, preferably, a knowledge which is based on previous military service. In addition to developing a practical understanding of what it means to serve as a volunteer it seems to me important for us to confront contentious issues, and to do so with a strong independent voice. During the five years I have been in post, I have enjoyed the many and varied challenges which being a county chairman has presented and have particularly valued the time I have been able to spend with both our volunteers and our cadets. I am also pleased that the RFCA now has close links with many county based employers and, generally within the county, has been able to develop a strong community ethos and identity."

Royal Naval Reserve

The opportunities are endless at HMS Sherwood

Taking part in one of Europe's largest military training exercises; patrolling the seas in Gibraltar; attending a Festival of Remembrance in London and receiving seasonal awards have all been opportunities embraced by Naval reservists in Nottingham over the last 12 months.

HMS Sherwood, the East Midlands' only Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) unit, has more than 80 reservists on its books, with more joining throughout the year – each of whom have the opportunity to travel, gain qualifications, seek promotion and have a varied career in the RNR.

Leading Hand Buster Browne, aged 43, who lives in Chesterfield, had the chance to work within the Gibraltar Patrol Boat Squadron, to protect British Gibraltar Territorial Waters last year. He explained: "Joining the RNR is one of the best decisions of my life. Travelling to locations including Gibraltar to take part in important military tasks has been an honour, and I was delighted I got the opportunity to 'act up' a rank during my deployment to work as a Leading Hand – which became substantive in summer 2015. I have recently been juggling my RNR commitments around working as a Horseman on television, which has been exciting as I have got to experience two completely different career paths at the same time."

Lieutenant Commander 'Hattie' Jacques, aged 36, who lives in Long Eaton, received an award for her long term contribution to the RNR in late 2015. She said: "Last year I climbed aboard a Royal Fleet Auxiliary Ship to take part in one of the biggest multi-national training exercises in Europe. This included taking part in a variety of scenarios such as conflict and crisis situations, which could potentially be encountered on operations. I also represented the RNR at the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall in London, which was a great honour, as well as previously taking part in adventure training in Canada and Snowdonia."

Serving personnel at the unit include reservists who work in a variety of professions in their civilian lives including administration, teaching, sales, IT, in the public sector or waitressing.

No specific skills or knowledge are needed to become a reservist, just enthusiasm to learn and progress in the RNR.



Buster Browne in Gibraltar

Royal Marines Reserve

The Reservist profile – Major Al Edgar, Royal Marines Reserve

Major Al Edgar currently serves as the Officer Commanding at the Nottingham Detachment of the Royal Marines Reserve (RMR). Here he talks about the training Royal Marines Reservists go through and how the road to earning the Green Beret is just as mentally challenging as it is physically.



Q - What training do you have to undertake to become a Royal Marines Reservist?

A - As reservists, we work to the same standard as regular Royal Marines, the only difference being that the training for reservists is spread out over a longer period of time, which is usually around 15 months compared to the 32 weeks for regulars. Our recruit training is split into two different sections called Phase One Alpha and Phase One Bravo. Phase One Alpha is our basic training and Phase One Bravo is our commando training. On

completion, recruits must then pass the two week Commando Course in order to wear the Green Beret and become a Royal Marines Commando.

Q – What do the two levels of training consist of?

A – The training under Phase One Alpha aims to develop the recruit's basic soldiering skills and includes training such as: how to look after yourself in the field, weapons handling, basic fieldcraft, map reading, shooting and physical training which includes marching with kit. Under the Phase One Bravo stage of training, recruits take their soldiering skills a step further and undertake amphibious training, speed marching, reconnaissance and fighting patrolling and ambushing. They also experienced cliff assaults and assault courses while carrying almost 100 pounds of kit. In my day job I work as an airline pilot so I know that this is the equivalent of carrying two large suitcases on your back for extended periods of time.

Q - With 22 years experience as a Royal Marines Reservist, what do you think it takes to succeed in the training?

A – There is a common misconception that we are looking for only one type of person, but anyone from any background can apply. At the Nottingham Detachment we have recruits who in their civilian lives work as everything from plumbers to police officers. To succeed in the training however, it is all about being mentally fit as well as physically fit. The training that Royal Marines undertake is widely regarded as being the toughest training in the world and it could be described as needing a particular state of mind which not everybody may have.

Q – What do you think the highlights of being a Royal Marines Reserve are?

A – The training programme is incredibly varied and ensures that individuals are fully prepared to complete operational tours and exercises as a Royal Marines Commando alongside our regular counterparts. During my time as a Royal Marines Reservist, I have completed operational tours of Afghanistan and Iraq and now enjoy being able to support detachment members through their training within my current role. For me, being a reservist gives me a sense of purpose and the personal development opportunities are extremely valuable in civilian life.

Army Reserve

“Joining the Army Reserve has allowed me to change my lifestyle”

A Chesterfield-based Reservist has described how joining the Army Reserve has allowed him to go from being one of the most inactive people he knew to learning to parachute jump.

Lance Corporal Stephen Nightingale, aged 27, serves with 350 Field Squadron Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) at Wallis Barracks in Chesterfield, and is set to take the next step in his part-time career by conducting a number of parachute jumps.

The parachute jumps will be conducted as part of a Basic Parachute Course at RAF Brize Norton No 1 Parachute School so he can qualify to serve with military airborne forces.

The Basic Parachute Course will involve Stephen jumping from a C-130 aircraft on six occasions using a low level parachute at heights of between 600 and 1000 feet.



Lance Corporal Stephen Nightingale taking part in marksmanship training

To get to this stage, Stephen has completed a parachute selection course meaning he is eligible to wear the coveted maroon beret. On successful completion of the Basic Parachute Course he will also be able to wear the parachute wings on his uniform and potentially be deployed on operations alongside airborne soldiers from 16 Air Assault Brigade.

In his civilian life Stephen works full-time as a Live Well Advisor at Derby City Council, and explained that he wouldn't be where he is today without the skills he has gained through his Army Reserve training:

“In 2011 I decided I needed to make a change in my life. I was unfit, never took part in any sports and did no outdoor activities. I saw a recruiting banner outside the Army Reserve Centre in Chesterfield and thought, ‘what the heck’ I might as well give it a go.

“Joining the Army Reserve has allowed me to change my lifestyle completely. I have literally gone from being what could be described as a couch potato to now being the Physical Training Instructor at the unit. I've put my all into my training and have embraced the opportunity to improve my health through fitness at the same time.”

As a Live Well Advisor, Stephen helps people to lose weight, stop smoking and improve their overall health and wellbeing. Individuals can be referred to this service by their GP or be self-referred to seek out the extra support they need.

Stephen continued: “After realising that I enjoyed working out and that my personal motivation and confidence had improved through exercising, I decided I needed a career change. So in 2014 I gave up my old job and started training as a personal trainer. Qualifying later that year, I worked in a Derby City Council gym for 18 months before applying for my current job as a Live Well Advisor.”

Being a Live Well Advisor allows Stephen to use his love of fitness by running exercise classes and putting together programmes to help individuals improve their self-esteem and nutrition. Stephen said: “One of the best things about improving my own well-being is that I can really empathise with those I am helping through the Live Well Programme. I honestly believe though if I can turn my health around as I have, I can motivate anyone else to do the same.”

Army Reserve

Skiing success in France

Skiing down slopes of more than 1000 metres and competing against professional-level sports personnel has been an experience enjoyed by a Loughborough-based Reservist.

Private Amy Brookman, aged 23, serves as a reservist with 203 (Loughborough) Transport Squadron Royal Logistics Corps (RLC) and has spent the last few weeks skiing as part of the British Army's ski team in Meribel, France. During the event, Amy was ranked second in a female downhill event, third in an alpine individual combination event and as third best female in a Super Giant Slalom competition.

Amy, who works as a Graphic Designer in her civilian life, originally started skiing when she was a child but put her skis to rest when she was 16-years-old due to studying and other commitments. More recently, however, she grabbed the opportunity with both hands to represent 158 Regiment RLC in February last year at an Army skiing event, during which time other participants referred to her as a 'natural talent'.

Over the last 12 months, Amy has travelled to France on two occasions as well as competing in Germany just before Christmas 2015.

Amy, who lives in Rothely, commented: "I have really enjoyed competing in the racing discipline of alpine skiing as I can really feel the adrenaline pumping through my veins as I travel at great speed downhill.

"I have now been fortunate enough to be granted a space in the British Army Ski Team so I can compete in both Army-based and Tri-service competitions with other professional-level skiers. My skiing journey began last year when I was ranked highly as an individual skier representing my Army Reserve Regiment. I am delighted with my progress to date and hope to continue representing my country at competitions on the horizon."

Amy's employer has been very supportive about her Army Reserve commitments, allowing her to take extended periods of leave to represent the military in sporting competitions as needed.



Private Amy Brookman skiing in France

Royal Auxiliary Air Force

New recruits benefit from trainer's 45 years of experience

New recruits joining the Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) are benefitting from a trainer's extensive military knowledge at training events held at RAF Waddington.

Sergeant Phil Doorbar serves as a reservist with the RAuxAF's Headquarters Intelligence Reserves, and delivers basic training to new recruits hoping to join a variety of reserve squadrons sharing experiences from his 45 year military career.

Phil explained: "I served as a regular (full-time) Airman for 39 years, before retiring at the age of 55. At this time I decided I wanted to continue my military career as a reservist with 7010 (VR) Photographic Intelligence Squadron, because I have always had an interest analysing imagery and map information."

New recruits joining the RAuxAF initially take part in four training weekends covering fitness training, drill instruction, uniform issue and lectures relating to the RAuxAF's branches, trades and core values.

"The RAF has been my life, so it is great to be able to give something back and share my experiences with my new recruits. Many of our new recruits have completely different 9-to-5 day jobs but give

up their time at weekends to train with the RAuxAF. The civilian jobs of those joining us vary from being company directors to housewives, so it's also fascinating for me to learn about their lives as well as them listening to stories about my military career," Phil commented.

Two years ago, Phil became one of the training instructors at RAF Waddington, a job he describes as being 'right up his street'. He continued: "Becoming part of the teaching team has been a great opportunity for me to share my knowledge of both the full-time RAF and my experience of serving as a reservist.

"A few of the students have commented on my passion for delivering my lectures, which makes the lessons a joy to teach."



Sergeant Phil Doorbar

Celebrating 10 years Reserve Service

A former full-time Airman is celebrating 10 years of serving with the Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) this year.

Flight Sergeant Nick Smith, who previously served as a regular (full-time) Airman between 1988 and 1997, joined 7006 (VR) Intelligence Reserves in 2006, after retaking the Airman's Selection Tests.

Based at RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire, Nick's role as an Intelligence Analyst has allowed him to be deployed to Baghdad and Iraq where he worked alongside a helicopter detachment providing updates

on traffic in and around the air space, as well as spending time in Afghanistan.

In this 10th year of Reserve Service, Nick is now preparing to be deployed to Kabul. He explained: "Since joining the RAF Reserve, I have been fortunate enough to enhance both my military and civilian skill sets by attending leadership training through promotion courses at RAF Halton. During the courses, I have learnt skills like briefing techniques which I have taken back into the civilian work place. I'm also proud to say I am the squadron's Equality and Diversity Advisor, which again works well in both my RAF and civilian careers."

On a day-to-day basis, Nick works in the IT industry where he leads a 25 person team. He continued: "I have been working for my civilian employer for almost 16 years and they have always been supportive of my reserve commitments. They particularly understand my desire to give something back to my country, and recognise the benefits of the transferable skills I can bring back into the business."



Flight Sergeant Nick Smith

Sea Cadet Corps

Cadets experience a ship simulator

Ten sea cadets from Northamptonshire have had the chance to experience navigating a 30,000 tonne ship across the North Sea using a ship's bridge simulator.

The cadets from Tidespring Division of the Sea Cadet Corps in Brackley spent a day at the HR Wallingford Ship Simulation centre in Oxfordshire where they learnt everything from steering and manoeuvring major merchant vessels, to using radio equipment similar to that used on board a real ship.

The centre, which has four ship simulators, is used for the training of future ship pilots and allowed the cadets to experience steering the ship out of the Harwich Channel on one of the fully-equipped simulators.

Sergeant Geoff Abbey, Divisional Officer for Brackley Sea Cadets, said: "The day was a really good experience for all of the cadets involved. They had the chance to take on roles including Pilot, Navigator and Radio Officer and were given an accurate taste of life on board a ship."

During the visit, the cadets were also taught how to use electronic navigation systems similar to those used on real vessels, as well as radar, used to detect other ships.

Cadets from Brackley experiencing the ship simulator



The centre also has the capacity to simulate a ship's response to waves, winds and currents, as well as collisions.

Geoff continued: "All of the cadets did really well to stay calm under pressure, even when navigating around the sharp turn at the end of the channel. One team almost ran aground, but managed to reduce the ship's speed and successfully navigate back into deeper waters."

"We would like to thank HR Wallingford for arranging an informative day for our cadets which gave them the chance to do things that young people of their age would not normally be able to do. How many other young people can say they have steered a 30,000 tonne vessel?"

"The cadets who took part were aged between 10 and 14-years-old and all have varying interests. This activity gave all the cadets a fun activity to take part in outside the classroom and it was great to see them have the chance to take part in something a bit different to their normal activities."



Army Cadet Force

Derbyshire cadet shows selfless commitment

A cadet from Bolsover has received praise from his youth organisation after he gave up his chances of winning a cross country event to help an injured runner.

Cadet Keenan Lee, aged 16, from Bolsover Detachment of Derbyshire Army Cadet Force (ACF), was taking part in the ACF Eastern Region Cross Country event when he used his First Aid skills to help a fellow cadet who fell during the race.

Keenan, who learnt First Aid through the ACF, was on track to finish the cross country event in third place when the female cadet from a different county collapsed on the track.

Colonel Chris Young, Commandant of Derbyshire ACF, said:

“Cadet Lee displayed selfless commitment when he stopped his race to put a fellow runner in the recovery position and waited with her until the St John Ambulance team arrived. His quick thinking is a credit to the ACF. He was about 500 metres from the end of a 3K cross country course when the other cadet collapsed at the side of him and his training immediately kicked in. He gave up his own chances of success to ensure her safety.”

All cadets joining the ACF receive First Aid training as part of their syllabus, which covers everything from how to contact the emergency services, to life saving by using the recovery position and CPR. Keenan is also undertaking his Duke of Edinburgh's Award through the ACF. He is also due to undertake

a St John Ambulance Youth First Aid Course later this year.

Keenan, who competed in

the intermediate boys race, said: “I am proud that my First Aid skills have been put to good use in a real-life situation as I think that it shows that organisations like the ACF really help young people to learn valuable skills which will help them in life outside of cadets.

“For me, there was no other choice but to help the injured cadet and although it means that I will not be able to compete in the national ACF Cross Country Championships in March, I am pleased that I helped someone using my First Aid knowledge.”

The event was a successful day for Derbyshire ACF who finished overall in second place, with first places achieved in the Junior Girls and Intermediate Boys categories.

The Eastern Region Cross Country event took place on 28 February in Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire.



Cadet Keenan Lee

Army Cadet Force

ACF is family affair at North Hykeham

An Army Cadet Force (ACF) Officer from Lincolnshire has explained how volunteering has brought his family closer together.

Second Lieutenant Adrian O'Dell, aged 44, currently volunteers as the Detachment Commander of North Hykeham detachment of Lincolnshire ACF where he works alongside his fiancé Sue to lead cadets, including Sue's daughter Hannah.

Adrian, who gained his commission as an Officer in October last year, told of how volunteering with the ACF has brought his family closer together, leading up to his wedding next year.

He explained: "As a family we are able to share experiences together outside life at home thanks to the ACF. Whether these are adventure training activities, First Aid training, or weekend camps, being in the ACF together is rewarding as we are able to watch each other grow and develop in ways you would not be able to at home.

"Since joining the ACF and having my family join me, Sue and I have got engaged and having our shared interests at the detachment has given us something else to experience together. How many couples can say that they saw their relationship grow closer through the ACF?"



Adrian with Sue and Hannah at the 2015 Remembrance Sunday parade in Lincoln

Adrian went on to explain how he was instrumental in ensuring that his family joined him at the detachment.



Second Lieutenant Adrian O'Dell

He said: "After joining the ACF in January 2014, Hannah joined one month later and I was keen to encourage Sue to join to give her a hobby and interest outside of life at home. She is now in the process of completed the commissioning process to become an officer and I am proud of what we have all achieved together as a family."

But it is not just Sue and Hannah who Adrian has been proud to recruit. Sue's youngest son Luke is also hoping to join the ACF detachment when he is old enough.

Adrian said: "As an adult volunteer I enjoy telling others about the benefits that the ACF can bring and was responsible for holding the detachment's first open day which resulted in several new cadets and adult volunteers signing up to join us. It is always a proud moment when you can share your passion with others."

Since joining the detachment, Adrian has completed the commissioning process to become an officer in the ACF. He told of how this has given him more responsibility and management opportunities and explained that having his family there to watch him achieve his commission had added an extra motivation to working towards the promotion.

He commented: "I come from a strong forces family background with various members having served and they have supported me and given me the encouragement as well as the confidence to achieve my commission."

Clean for the Queen

More than 60 cadets from a local youth organisation visited Elvaston Castle Country Park in March as part of an organised litter-picking activity.

Clean for the Queen is an event that was organised in the run up to Her Majesty The Queen's 90th birthday to inspire a million people across the country to take action and enjoy a few hours together litter-picking to make the places we live more beautiful.

"I'm delighted that in the year of The Queen's 90th birthday people across the country have come together to show we care about our cities, parks, beaches and waterways and that we will go out of our way to 'do our bit' to clean up litter."

Speaking ahead of the event, Sergeant Elodie Marsh, an adult volunteer from 126 (City of Derby) Squadron, said: "We hope that by taking part in this event we will help to encourage people to generally

stop dropping litter and instead use the bins provided."

Gill Forrester, Park Manager at Elvaston Castle Country Park, said: "I am delighted Youth United Derbyshire chose to come to Elvaston as part of this fantastic national event. It is a great way of encouraging everyone to take pride in their local environment."



Cadets from 126 (City of Derby) Squadron during the activity

In Derbyshire, cadets from 126 (City of Derby) Squadron Air Training Corps (ATC) helped to clean up Elvaston Castle Country Park on Saturday 5 March, with Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Derbyshire formally starting the event.

Wing Commander (Retd) Phil Giles, East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association's (RFCA) Derbyshire County Chairman, who is also part of the Youth United Derbyshire organising committee, said: "Under the guidance of Youth United, an organisation that brings together representatives from a number of local youth groups, 126 (City of Derby) Squadron were a part of the anti-litter campaign that was first carried out in 1953, the year of The Queen's coronation.



Cadets Kelsey Radford and Conor Dodsley at Clean for the Queen on 5 March

Air Training Corps

Celebrating 75 years of the Air Training Corps

From attending church services to taking part in organised parades, young people across the East Midlands have come together to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Air Training Corps.

Celebrations across the region marked the organisation's anniversary and saw over 1,000 cadets take part across six counties.

Cadets from 1461 (Wigston and District) Squadron ATC honoured the occasion with a celebration of their squadron's success throughout 2015, while cadets and adult volunteers from 858 (Rushden) Squadron and 378 (Mannock) Squadron in Wellingborough came together in Rushden, Northamptonshire, to parade and attend a church service led by **Squadron Chaplain Reverend Ian Fall**.

Cadet Toby Tully, aged 14, was part of the event in Wigston attended by HM Lord-Lieutenant of Leicestershire Lady Gretton and Wing Commander Nigel Dickinson who both met cadets and presented awards.

Toby said: "The 75th anniversary of the Air Training Corps was such a fantastic day to be a part of and I was touched to receive a special recognition award for my contribution and positive attitude towards being in cadets.

"I come to cadets because it's a good place to be. I feel accepted and I enjoy the family atmosphere

that we have at the Squadron. Everyone gets on with each other and we achieve lots together."

Cadet Harley Hadingham, aged 15, from Wellingborough-based 378 (Mannock) Squadron said: "The ATC celebrates its anniversary every year with a parade, but this year it was something really special. I enjoy being a cadet, getting stuck into the activities like flying, shooting and drill. I am also pretty ambitious to rise through the ranks, so who knows where I will be when we are celebrating the 100th anniversary."

Wing Commander Nigel Dickinson, Officer Commanding of South and East Midlands Wing ATC, said: "Friday 5 February 2016 kick-started a number of local and national events to mark a period of celebration around our 75th anniversary. During the course of the year there will be a series of events including a national torch relay, a cross channel relay swim, and a formal review of the ATC later in the year, culminating in an evening of musical entertainment at RAF Cranwell which we are immensely proud to be a part of.

"422 (Corby) Squadron have planted 422 trees on ground kindly donated by the local authority to mark our anniversary which is being mirrored by other Squadrons across the East Midlands."

The ATC was established in 1941 and now has over 1,000 squadrons in towns and cities across the UK.



Air Cadets from 1461 (Wigston and District) Squadron ATC celebrate the 75th anniversary of the ATC

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