

HIGH-LIGHT



THE NEW HIGHLAND RFCA WEBSITE IS NOW LIVE: www.hrfca.co.uk



THE TRI-SERVICE NEWSLETTER FROM THE HIGHLAND RESERVE FORCES' AND CADETS' ASSOCIATION



Basel Military Tattoo



Super Cup Final



1 Highlanders D of E



Ski Foundation 1

Editorial:

Farewell to the Chief Executive – an Appreciation from the Chairman

Tall, imposing with a ready laugh and twinkle in his eye, “Colonel AK” is the embodiment of a Scottish soldier. He seems rarely happier than when up to his knees in heather, upwind a fine stag or running before a ‘sou-wester’ up the Sound of Jura. For the past eight years, we in Highland RFCA have also been fortunate to have him as our Chief Executive.

AK’s commitment to our Reservists and Cadets throughout this very challenging time has been determined and unwavering. He has worked remarkable hours, driven many thousands of miles, and sat in too many departure lounges in order to ensure the best for the Highlands and Islands and for our core constituents. Finally, he has decided that the time is right to step down from this pivotal role so that he and Carol can spend a little more time enjoying life in the shadow of the Ochils and rather less time managing unremitting change with ever-diminishing resources.

AK came to Seathwood in 2007 fresh from a final military appointment as a Defence Attaché in one of the more ‘interesting’ corners of the globe. Having promoted the UK’s defence and security interests while keeping a careful eye on his hosts, he may have concluded early on that being the Chief Executive of Highland RFCA required many of the same skills: unceasingly pressing the case for defence in the Highlands while maintaining an unblinking gaze on the ‘budgeteers’ in MOD Main Building, Sutton Coldfield and Andover. It is perhaps testimony to the excellence of the training to be a Defence Attaché that AK has nurtured, protected and promoted us with such success!

Every year since I became Chairman, I have been fortunate to attend the opening or re-opening of



Colonel Miller, Honorary Colonel of the Argyll Cadets, engaging with Cadets



AK off duty: enjoying the great outdoors

Cadet centres across the Highlands and Islands; almost all funded through AK’s careful husbandry of resources and eye for exploiting opportunity. Perhaps most importantly, these enhancements to our real estate have not just been about bricks and mortar but more crucially about the communities of which they form a part.

Similarly, his determination to secure improvements for our Reservists has ensured that we now have some of the most modern and attractive Reserve Centres in the UK. Any visitor to Gordon Barracks in Bridge of Don or Oliver Barracks in Dundee will see the outcome of sensible rationalisation and programmed improvement that is fit for today’s Reservist.

For seven years, AK was the national RFCA lead for ‘Employers’. As many of you will know, it is the need to accommodate and encourage Reservist Employers that remains one of the most difficult issues for the Regular military to comprehend. It has rarely been done well and too often senior Regular officers have simply been naïve in their expectations of loyalty and commitment to Queen and country from employers with whom such concepts simply fail to resonate. Accordingly, when the Future Reserves 2020 initiative was launched in 2012, securing civilian employer support for an expanded and better integrated Reserve became the ‘vital ground’ for realising political aspirations. AK’s tireless work while still running Highland RFCA without skipping a beat was remarkable – and nationally recognised as such.

Across the Highlands I believe that we are all justly proud of the development of Piping and Drumming within the Cadet movement. Once again, AK has provided both determined leadership and the practical resources to bring this about.

We have been rewarded by repeat invitations to Balmoral for the past four years for our combined

Cadets to perform privately before Her Majesty and her immediate family. This has been a signal honour that I know will have provided life-long memories for all those who have been fortunate to be involved.

As your Chairman I believe that Highland RFCA has been uniquely fortunate to have benefitted from AK's lengthy tenure as our Chief Executive. He leaves us with a record of operational mobilisation by the Reserves to Iraq, Afghanistan and Cyprus that is amongst the highest in the United Kingdom. The Highlands continue to provide some 5% of Britain's Reserves; well in excess of the 3.5% of the UK population we represent. We

are better accommodated, more tightly administered and enjoy greater political understanding and support than for many decades.

We have much to be grateful for and I know that I speak for you all when I say that we will miss AK's friendship, irrepressible enthusiasm, and pride in the Highlands' military contribution to national defence. On behalf of the whole Association – past, present and indeed future – I would like to wish AK and Carol all the very best for the future and for them to know that they leave us with a legacy of remarkable achievement that I know will endure for many years to come.

Raising Awareness of the The Cadet Experience Benefits Cadet Presentation Team Workshops

This joint initiative between Highland and Lowland RFCAs on behalf of the Tri Service Cadet Forum is focused on raising awareness of the benefits of the Cadet Experience to a strategic audience across Scotland.

Whatever uniform they wear – the Sea Cadets, The Army Cadet Force or the Air Training Corps, and whatever their own particular interests and motivations, cadets all share a common outcome in that they gain valuable life skills. Through a range of carefully planned Service-specific and generic activities, cadets are encouraged to develop qualities such as teamwork, discipline, self-confidence and communication skills, which in turn help to instil a range of core values, including integrity, moral courage and respect for others. The overall Cadet Experience also seeks to highlight the importance of vocational qualifications to complement academic achievement.

In order to spread the Cadet Experience message to audiences of potential employers, educational professionals, political leaders and many other influential groups, earlier this year the Cadet Presentation Team Leader, Richard Pattison (as featured in the last edition of *High-Light*), started a series of pan-Scotland workshops to begin developing a pool of cadets and Adult Volunteers able to help deliver the benefits of the Cadet Experience - the Cadet Presentation Team. Phase 1 workshops for Highland RFCA have been conducted at Cadet Training Centres at Arrachor and Dunkeld, and at the ATC Regional Training Centre at RAF Lossiemouth; the focus has been on delivery techniques and developing confidence, emphasising practical participation and learning with, and through, each other. Participants enjoyed a series of progressive exercises beginning with one-on-one introductions and conversations, and concluding with short syndicate presentations to their peers and visitors.

The approach adopted is designed to safeguard the

authenticity of participants' contributions and to avoid any perception that cadets are 'toeing the party line'; they are encouraged to share their experiences in their own words while using opportunities to dispel preconceptions and to reinforce key messages and themes. The diversity of Cadets' 'stories' is emphasised too, not just the breadth of the cadet experience but also the social inclusivity and connections with those from all walks of life. To date nearly 100 cadets and Adult Volunteers from all three Cadet Organisations across Highland RFCA's area have attended. Feedback from participants and visitors alike has been extremely positive and itself provided further examples of how the Cadet Organisations develop transferable skills that benefit individuals, their life chances and helps to create stronger communities across Scotland. A series of Phase 2 workshops are planned pan- Scotland in May-June 2015.

For more information on the Cadet Presentation Team please contact Richard at: hi-cptl@rfca.mod.uk



Cadets at Dunkeld being briefed on presentational skills

Ministry of Defence Silver Awards Dinner

Prestigious Employer Awards Event at Edinburgh Castle

Over 65 employers from across Scotland were treated to a glittering evening reception in The Great Hall of Edinburgh Castle on Thursday 4th December. The Reserve Forces Employer Awards Dinner hosted and organised jointly by Highland and Lowland Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations, was to award employers for their supportive attitude towards defence over the last twelve months.

During the night, the audience heard from two reservists, one a Royal Marine and the second an Infantry Officer. Both had been on operations and recounted their experiences and the lessons they had learnt from their deployments and how they had managed to use the skills gained whilst serving as reservists in their civilian place of work. The third vignette was an employer who gave his view of the benefits to him of employing members of the Reserve Forces.

The main part of the evening, was an opportunity to publically acknowledge employers in Scotland who support the United Kingdom's armed forces by employing reservists, veterans, disabled veterans, Cadet Adult Instructors or the spouses of members of the Armed Forces.

Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach, presented employers with Silver Award certificates on behalf of the Ministry of Defence, and spoke to the gathering about the value of reservists in the workplace and the additional skills and training they bring to employers through their military service. The employers represented most sectors of Scottish Business and included both the public and private sectors.

As well as the vignettes and awards, the audience were treated to music from a small ensemble of military musicians who again are reservists employed in a number of different civilian organisations.

The following employers were presented with awards:

Aberdeen City Council
 CalMac Ferries Ltd
 City Building (Glasgow) LLP
 City of Edinburgh Council
 Currie European Transport Ltd
 DC Thomson & Co. Ltd
 Dundee City Council
 Forth Valley Chamber of Commerce
 Glasgow City Council
 Global Energy Group
 Grampian NHS Board
 James McVicar Printworks
 Job Centre Plus
 Michelin Tyre PLC
 NHS Borders



Delegates from the MOD Silver Awards Dinner at Edinburgh Castle

Two Army Cadet Pipers played a set at the end of the evening. The audience were amazed at the very high standard of piping from two fourteen year-olds. The Cadet Forces are an integral part of youth activity in Scotland and offers boys and girls from all walks of life the opportunity to take part in challenging activities whilst gaining life skills in order to prepare them for adulthood.

Support from employers is vital to those members of their staff serving with the Reserves. Companies gain a great deal from employing reservists on their staff such as training in leadership and teamwork and development of skills including communication and decision-making – all essential to successful companies. As well as these soft skills, the reserves carry out a lot of training that is readily transferable to the civilian workplace, such as driving licence acquisition, Health and Safety training and a plethora of other hard skills.

NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
 NHS Fife
 Police Scotland
 Scottish Ambulance Service
 Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
 Scottish Prison Service
 South Ayrshire Council
 South Lanarkshire Council
 Standard Life Assurance Ltd
 Stirling Council
 Strathmore Farming Company Ltd
 Tayside NHS Board
 The Royal Bank Scotland

Working Together to Save Lives

Dr Sam Rawlinson OBE TD, Clinical Director SNBTS Dundee Explains



CH47 Chinook on a Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT) mission

It has often been said that the training, experience and expertise gained by serving members of HM Forces, whether as Regulars or Reservists, can be applied to the benefit of civilian organisations. In this context I thought that it would be of interest to offer examples of how this symbiotic relationship has substantially improved the medical treatment provided to severely injured patients, both in military and civilian settings.

In recent years, our Military Medical Services have become renowned for their care of wounded personnel, many of whom had suffered life-changing injuries and needed to receive substantial blood transfusions using blood, plasma and platelets, on arrival in hospital. As a result a Massive Transfusion Protocol (MTP) was put in place: similar MTPs are now used in every hospital in the UK.

Providing blood, plasma and platelets presents a particular challenge when the hospitals in question are thousands of miles from the UK. Blood needs to be stored at a constant 4C and has a shelf life of only 35 days. Plasma must be stored at -30C and, once it begins to thaw using specially designed plasma thawers, must be used within 24 hours. Platelets present their own particular requirements, being stored at room temperature and having a shelf life of

only 5 days. To address the platelet challenge, my colleagues and I sought to increase flexibility of supply by introducing a system allowing us to collect and test additional platelets in the field using a collection process based on the UK Blood Transfusion Service's own process, with testing validated by the Health Protection Agency.

During military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan the hospital receiving a casualty would be routinely informed by radio, giving us time to prepare. It seemed obvious that a similar system could be used in UK hospitals, and the 'Code Red' system has indeed been implemented at Dundee's Ninewells Hospital. The Medical Response Team bringing in the casualty notifies the Hospital, allowing time to issue emergency O Negative blood, Group A platelets and thawed Group AB plasma and to deliver them to A&E for immediate use. 'Code Red' is now also being

employed in Scottish Trauma Hospitals in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Another innovation, this time applying civilian experience in a military context, is the provision over many years of the Dundee Medical Response Team's (MRT) pre-hospital transfusion support to patients, code-named 'Safe Return' and using transport boxes specially designed to hold emergency O Negative blood at the correct temperature for several hours. This emergency blood is taken to the casualty by the MRT and is transfused if required. This system was modified by the UK Military Blood Supply Team for use by Medical Emergency Response Teams (MERT) in Iraq and Afghanistan, employing 'Golden Hour Transport Boxes'. The military system has since been adopted by the Glasgow-based civilian emergency helicopter service, with blood having been transfused on no fewer than 14 occasions in its first 6 months.



The Golden Hour box

These life saving techniques, processes and equipment enhancements are the result of dedicated healthcare professionals working together to the mutual benefit of all patients, whether wounded on the battlefield or, for example, injured in road accidents. Such collaboration is a hallmark of our military and civilian medical services and continues to go from strength to strength. Long may it continue.

Former Carnoustie ATC Cadet Awarded Top Student

Focus on Sergeant Thomas Podger

Adult Instructor, Sergeant Thomas Podger has been Awarded Top Student at the recent ATC Senior NCO Staff Initial Course held at RAF College Cranwell. Having joined 2449 (Carnoustie) Squadron in September 2008, Sergeant Podger progressed through the ranks attaining the most senior cadet rank of Cadet Warrant Officer in December 2012.

A highlight of his cadet career was being selected to attend the International Air Cadet Exchange (IACE) visit to Ghana in 2013. By coincidence the reviewing officer at the final parade of his course, Wing Commander McNeill, was his escorting officer on his IACE visit.

Commenting on his course Sergeant Podger said: "I thoroughly enjoyed my time as a cadet and I am very grateful for the opportunities and skills the organization has provided me; both within the cadets and in my civilian career. I now look forward to the giving back to the ATC through my role as an Adult Sergeant where I will work with the cadets to develop their skills which will help them in their futures."

Now fully appointed, Sergeant Podger will remain at 2449 (Carnoustie) Squadron, where he was a cadet, working alongside his fellow staff members to oversee the next generation of young adults achieve their potential.

2449 (Carnoustie) Squadron will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2016, when at the same time the ATC will be celebrating its 75th anniversary. This important milestone that the Squadron shares with the Corps will be celebrated with a large range of cadet activities and formal events.



Sergeant Podger receiving his Top Student Award

Stonehaven Squadron Air Cadets Surpass Themselves

1297 Squadron Cadets Enjoy Shooting Success at Pirbright

Cadets from 1297 (Stonehaven) Squadron Air Training Corps recently took part in the Cadet Inter-Service Skill at Arms Meeting. The competition is made up of the top teams from all three Cadet Organisations, with a total of 260 Cadets taking part.



L-R, Cadet Nick Avis, Corporal Ewan Matheson, Cadet Erin Blackwood, Flight Sergeant Christian Avis, Corporal Alistair Cunningham

The shooting competition is held at the Army Training Regiment Ranges in Pirbright, Surrey. Cadets use their equivalent of the British Army SA80 Rifle to shoot at targets ranging from 100 to 300 Yards using iron sights. There were fifty-two teams in total who had qualified for the final of the national competition.

The Cadets competed in four separate competitions; Rifle Pairs, Earl Roberts AMS, Montgomery of Alamein, and the Marling. They came 3rd, 2nd, 2nd and 1st, respectively in the team competitions. They also won Top Team Overall and Top Air Cadet Team

Top Individual Overall and Top Air Cadet were won by Flight Sergeant Christian Avis. The Individual Snap trophy was won by Corporal Alistair Cunningham. Both Cadets, along with Corporal Ewan Matheson, Cadet Nick Avis and Cadet Erin Blackwood all finished in the top fifty and were presented with "Fifty Marksman" badges.

It was an extremely good result for the Squadron; they competed against the top teams from all three Services. The Squadron has been competing at Pirbright over the last ten years but has never excelled to this level. The cadets are to be congratulated for practising so hard over the last six months, and the support staff from the organisation for their assistance in getting the Squadron to the event.

Duke of Edinburgh Success for 1 Highlanders ACF Success for 5 Cadets!

Cadets of 1st Battalion The Highlanders Army Cadet Force have had a successful start on their Duke of Edinburgh's Award's for 2015, with five Cadets receiving their Bronze Award.

For Cadet Sergeant Rae, completing his award gave him a sense of achievement; "I feel like I've really accomplished something - it makes all the miles of the expedition worth it. I'm moving straight on to silver!"

1st Battalion The Highlanders Army Cadet Force's Duke of Edinburgh's Officer, Captain Carrie Higgins presented



Captain Carrie Higgins, Corporal Kerr McKellar (15) Sergeant Finlay Rae (15), Sergeant Jake Crawford (16) and Lance Corporal Lewis Robertson (15) with Corporal Ross Clark (15) on the front cover

the awards to the Cadets, all from the Battalion's Moray Company. To achieve their Bronze Award all of the Cadets had to complete four sections: Volunteering, Skills, Physical and an Expedition over two days and one night camping outdoors, which all of them did at the Rothiemurchus Estate near Aviemore.

Cadet Corporal McKellar very pleased in achieving his Bronze; "It is a good award to do and even better to complete it! My highlight was the expedition in Rothiemurchus, it was great fun to work as a team and a great laugh."



It's Thirsty Work for Stonehaven Sea Cadets Fizzy Support from Sainsbury's

Stonehaven Sea Cadets recently took delivery of an unusual donation from Sainsbury's Berryden in Aberdeen, in the form of 30 crates of soft drinks and bottled water, weighing over a ton.

The donated drinks originally came from multipacks that had been damaged and so were unable to be sold in their condition – but there was nothing wrong with the taste!

They will instead be used to support the Cadets' tuck shop and to raise money over the summer at the events such as the Folk and Harbour Festivals and Feein' Market. The money raised will go to support local Cadets learning to sail and row, as well as undertaking courses such as First Aid. Stonehaven Sea Cadets are also fundraising towards building a new Unit HQ at the harbour.

This year, Stonehaven will be hosting the Sea Cadets Grampian District Regatta and the donation will assist them to welcome guests from other Units. Unit Commanding Officer, Sean Fraser was delighted to have been approached by the store and welcomed the donation in kind.

"This can be put to so many different uses, as well as raising money through fund-raising events, it frees up funds

normally used for purchasing supplies that will now be used instead for equipment or subsidising training costs."

He added "We were particularly pleased that the consignment included bottled water as this will be used throughout the boating season to make sure Cadets keep hydrated during training afloat, an important part of looking after their welfare. From an environmental point of view, we are also getting to benefit from supplies that would simply have been sent to waste otherwise."

Store manager David Vass said "Sainsbury's Berryden has always supported the local community and as Grocery Online becomes a growing part of our service, we now regard Stonehaven as part of our local community". The Berryden store co-ordinates Online deliveries across North East Scotland."



Sainsbury's representatives with Stonehave Sea Cadets

Royal Navy and Royal Marine Reserves compete in Austria Telemark Championships

Royal Marine Reserve Scotland competed for the second time in 2015 in the Royal Navy / Royal Marines Telemark Championships in Austria, held alongside the Army and GB Championships. Armed with £8000 worth of ski clothing and equipment funded through both Highland and Lowland Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations, the RMR Scotland squad, bolstered by two ranks from Royal Marine Reserve Mersey and Bristol, took to the slopes.

With many having never raced before, the first week of training proved invaluable. The group received instruction from British and Slovenian instructors, and despite initial struggles, everyone made significant progress throughout the week.

At the end of week one, a qualification race was held for the novice skiers which gave them the opportunity to qualify for the British Championship races the following week. Marine Angus Dobie, who only 5 days previously picked up his very first pair of Telemark skis, put in a very strong performance and qualified!

Racing began properly with the development sprint for those novices who had not qualified for the British Championship. Marines Wiseman, Gallagher and Clutton finished 2nd, 8th and 15th respectively, a very encouraging result from a field of sixty competitors.

In the Championship races RMR Scotland surprised all by putting in the strongest performance of any unit at the event. It was also at this point that Marine Dobie became a minor celebrity overnight by skiing at a fantastic level to finish inside the top 20 from a field of over 80. Even the GB team were becoming concerned at how fast he was; he registered the same times as the GB Development squad and he was not even using race skis!

The Mountain Race, an open event to all three services and civilian competitors attending the UK championships, followed. It is a relay race where teams skate along, skin up and then ski down a mountain. As Mountain and Arctic Warfare specialist troops, this race was dominated by the Royal Marines. The final result saw RMR Scotland 'B' winning the race with RMR Scotland 'A' 2nd, and a team from Commando Training Centre Royal Marines finishing 3rd and completing an all Royal Marines podium.

Marine Dobie was awarded the RN Championships 1st place overall individual winner. He also won the best Novice prize for the overall UK championships, winning himself a set of skis and some considerable interest from the GB team coach. A fantastic achievement considering he had never raced before!



Telemark Royal Marine Scotland Reserve in Austria



Telemark Royal Marine Scotland Reserve in Austria

Army Reserve on Operation HERRICK 20

71 Engineer Regiment

Six members of 71 Engineer Regiment deployed as individual augmentees on Operation HERRICK 20 as part of the Joint Force Engineer Squadron Group. Having completed their mobilisation process and Operational Training and Advisory Group (OPTAG), they joined their Troops just before deployment – unfortunately due to the late notice of the mobilisations there was very little time for them to be involved in the Squadron’s mission specific training.



Reservists from 71 Engineer Regiment in Afghanistan

“It would have been great to get out to Germany sooner and spend some time with everyone before we deployed, but after a couple of weeks it didn’t really make a difference” said Lance Corporal Moore. Once deployed all six were given very different tasks: Lance Corporal Stirrat who has a civilian career with the NHS was employed as an Armoured Plant Operator, Lance Corporal Moore, a fireman at Dundee Airport who also deployed on Op HERRICK 10, was a Section 2IC and G1098 storeman and Lance Corporal Glass, a civil servant, was an Ammunition Storeman.

The majority of the work undertaken during the tour was deconstruction tasks and preparing vehicles for recovery back to the UK; however Corporal McClenaghan and his Section were deployed to the Afghan Officer

Academy to complete maintenance and construction tasks. This was initially supposed to be a short term deployment, but it was extended until it lasted for almost the entire tour.

Corporal McClenaghan was awarded the Afghan National Army Officers’ Academy (ANAOA) Brigade Commander’s Commendation for his and his Section’s efforts. He said afterwards, “The award was definitely the highlight of the tour; the boys worked hard to get all the tasks done on time. I deployed on HERRICK 15 as well, but this time I had a lot more responsibility which was great – once we had all settled in there was absolutely no difference between Regular and Reserve.”

Throughout the tour, the things that they missed the most were

friends, family and a “proper cup of tea”. Thankfully with the tour safely completed they were all able to return home and enjoy some well-earned post operational tour leave – all except for Lance Corporal Knox who opted to spend her leave on the Advanced Freefall Course in California. Unfortunately on her second jump she landed awkwardly and broke her ankle and had to be flown back to the UK for surgery. Undaunted by her accident she is determined to find another opportunity to learn to skydive.

Five of the six were re-united at the 35 Engineer Regiment Medals parade where Brigadier Ian Mortimer, Commander 20th Armoured Infantry Brigade presented the medals and congratulated everyone from the Joint Force Engineer Group on an excellent and successful tour.



Deconstruction task using Armoured Plant in Afghanistan



Enjoying solidarity between Reserves and Regulars

Banchory Air Cadets Flying High

Cadets Reach for the Sky at Leuchars

Sometimes the good opportunities come at short notice, such as the chance to fly in the Grob Tutor T1s of Number 12 Air Experience Flight at RAF Leuchars.

Saturday 7th February was such an occasion, when cadets from 2367 (Banchory) Squadron Air Training Corps travelled to the Fife base to take up the opportunity and enjoy a good day of flying.



Banchory ATC's answer to Top Gun

Tattoo Success in Switzerland

1st Battalion The Highlanders

Six Members from 1st Battalion The Highlanders Army Cadet Force, including two Cadets from Orkney Independent Battery, departed to Switzerland for eight days to take part in the Basel International Military Tattoo.

The Tattoo has thousands of performers from all over the world and presented a phenomenal opportunity for the Cadets to participate, meet and perform with other bands. The cadets took part in intense rehearsals for the Tattoo during the day, alongside other UK pipebands, before their evening performances. It was certainly not a holiday!

All six of those from 1st Battalion The Highlanders Army Cadet Force are active members of the Battalion's Pipe & Drums, including Staff Sergeant Instructor MacFarquhar who is the Detachment Commander of the Pipes & Drums Detachment based in Culloden.

Drum Major Bruce and Cadet Corporal Drennan (both of the Battalion's Inverness Detachment) participated in the 2013 Basel Christmas Tattoo and both have previously played at the Berlin Tattoo. However, this was the first time Cadet Lance Corporal Green of the Battalion's Pipes & Drums Detachment had travelled overseas with the Pipes and Drums.

Cadet Pipe Major Anderson couldn't quite believe he was asked to represent the Battalion in Switzerland; "I feel very



1 Highlanders Cadets and Adult Volunteers

privileged to have had the opportunity to pipe at the Basel Christmas Tattoo. It was such a great experience!"

In 2014, the band participated in many events including the Beating Retreat at Dingwall and Inverness, the ACFA Beating Retreat at Edinburgh Castle and the Highland Military Tattoo at Fort George in September. They also had the chance to perform for Her Majesty The Queen at a private Beating Retreat held at Balmoral Castle.

Exercise Alpine Challenge

Tayforth UOTC send 42 Officer Cadets to find their Ski Legs

Tayforth UOTC deployed on Exercise Alpine Challenge 2015 to the Les Deux Alpes region of France in early January 2015 to conduct a broad spectrum ski expedition with the support of a £2500 grant from Highland RFCA. The spectrum of personal development and ski skills began with introducing those people who had never skied before through to introducing some potential young ski instructors to the challenge of conducting and planning

skiing Adventure Training trips for others.

For the 32 novices starting the Ski Foundation 1 course, the day began on the nursery slopes with an assessment of ski ability followed by a long day of basic instruction in technique. The first day of training for the 10 more experienced skiers attending the Ski Foundation 2 course and for those wishing to progress to the Ski Leader 1

course (future instructors) started at a high standard of developmental instruction and cross country ski assessment and continued in this vein for the rest of the exercise.

By day 3 tiredness and the inevitable aches, strains and minor injuries began to set in after several long days of challenging skiing under the constant eyes of the instructors and the words of the initial brief “this is not a holiday it’s a British Army Adventure Training exercise” began to take hold.

In the final days of the course our six instructors really began to introduce the elements of risk, challenge, determination and leadership by starting the formal assessment stage of each level of course.

All in all the Exercise Alpine Challenge was a huge success and all but 2 Officer Cadets, who sustained injuries, came away with the ski qualification they were aiming for and the

continuation days required to progress to the next stage in their development as British Army skiers.



Novice skiers gaining confidence and experience at Les Deux Alpes

Dollar Cadets Achieve Piste Perfect Skiing in Bavaria

Fun in the snow, Scottish-Style

On the 6th of February three cadets from Dollar Academy joined the Inverkeithing CCAT (Cadet Centre for Adventurous Training) ski course in Bavaria. All three cadets had previous ski experience and so were enthusiastic about getting back out in the snow and improving their skills.

Bearing in mind “If you can ski in Scotland you can ski anywhere”, the cadets were keen to tackle the first resort, Bolsterlang. The large resort has plenty of green and blue runs lower down and multiple steep powder-laden slopes further up. Having frequently skied in Scotland, the cadets were well adapted to the almost constant snowfall and biting, cold air but still made use of the delicious German “heisse Schokolade” to keep warm.

Having had a day to ‘warm up’, all of the cadets were excited to build upon their technique. From Beginners to Advanced everyone was challenged by the CCAT instructors and the resort.

Day three presented a visit to Ofterschwang where there were breathtaking views of the three-peaked Fellhorn and its two sister mountains. Never having skied outside Scotland before, Vikki and Scott were amazed to discover that ski resorts in Bavaria come fully equipped with sun loungers and felt obliged to make use of them. On the fourth day we drove across the Austrian-German border to Ifen, the highest resort of the week. The Fellhorn was the largest resort of the week and the cadets were extremely pleased to find that the slopes were almost empty allowing for fast, yet ‘technical’ skiing.

Each evening was spent with a lecture and playing Pool or Ping-Pong. These sessions gave the cadets the chance to enjoy après ski with a fun group of other cadets and adults. Being true Scots, we gave them a thorough education in bagpipes, haggis and all things Scottish. Thursday evening’s lecture was presented by our ski instructor Ben, who gave a talk on avoiding avalanches. This was incredibly interesting and useful, especially for off piste skiing.

The last day at a different resort called Grunten was spent doing “fun” skiing including mini jumps, helicopter turns and human slalom. Throughout the course all of the cadets worked incredibly hard to achieve their UK Snowlife ski awards with the three of us all achieving level 8: piste perfect!

Written by Scot Nurval, Sula Douglas and Vicky Walls



Enjoying the Bavarian ski conditions

Kinloss Survival Weekend - January 2015

Volunteers from 71 Engineer Reserves learn the Priorities of Survival



71 Engineer Reserves learn about survival

The night was snowy with sleet and very cold winds when eventually all the volunteers appeared at 236 (Log) Troop's location at Kinloss Barracks. The budding students were moved as sections into complete isolation. All they had were the clothes they stood in, a survival tin, section bag with a knife and small saw and a bivi bag each.

It was 0330 on the Saturday morning when the sections finally moved in to their Immediate Action shelters having been briefed on the scenario: they were the sole survivors from a C130 crash. It was a very cold few hours for them before first light and the start of formal lessons.

Run and delivered by the Unit SERE Instructors Warrant Officer 1 (RSM) Melloy and Warrant Officer 2 (QMSI) Stewart the sections were taught the priorities of survival: Protection, Location, Water & Food. Once taught about shelters and how to make fire they were on their own to build shelters and get a fire made. They quickly discovered that this involved lots of physical effort and time with the fires constantly requiring fuel and the shelters needing a lot of materials. With no food, energy levels quickly diminished. The weather added to the overall experience with the wind-chill making it approximately -4 C.



First rule of survival: create protection, then make fire

It was important that they understood the need to ensure that their fires never went out. Just before last light they were scrambled into action when a helicopter was spotted and the signal fires were lit. This in itself was a valuable lesson as only one signal fire worked. Once darkness fell a night navigation exercise was conducted using only a button compass and pacing.

Once debriefed they all moved on to the last priority - Food. Being next to the coast and it being low tide coastal lessons were delivered. Despite plenty of evidence of razor clams and cockles on the beach, only a few limpets were found.

With the limpets being cooked and sampled the students were taught about traps & snares and the law regarding them before moving on to preparing game. They were shown how to prepare pheasants, before getting one to do themselves and a duck. These were well received and devoured as this was the first food for them all since Friday.

After extracting back to the Reserve Centre and a final debrief the troops were released to travel back to sub unit locations though very few of them were awake by the time the minibuses left the camp gates.



Learning to prepare limpets and pheasant

Regulars Vs Reserves in the Super Cup Final

A Battle between 71 Engineer Reserves and 22 Signal Regiment

The British Army's football tournament, The Super Cup Final took place for first time following the recent integration of all sports events of the Regulars and Reserve.

The match was played between the winners of the Regular Army Challenge Cup and the Reserve Army Challenge Cup. The Regulars of 22 Signal Regiment, based in Staffordshire, and the Reserves of 71 Engineer Regiment, who have their headquarters near St Andrews clashed at the indoor pitch at the Toryglen Regional Football Centre, Glasgow with the Regulars of 22 Signal Regiment coming out tops with a 2-0 win.

The 22 Signals skipper Corporal Kevin Cameron said: "We took a while to get into our stride as we had to get used to the huge artificial pitch. Overall the team played very well against well drilled opponents and I am very proud that 22 Signals are the first winners of the Army Super Cup."

Captain James Grant on behalf of 71 Engineers said: "The fact that the Regiment's team is paid to train and to play in high profile matches like this one shows the diversity of opportunities afforded to the Army Reserve. When they are not involved with the team the soldiers are preparing to undertake one of the three overseas exercises the Regiment is undertaking this year – the Falklands, United States, and Cyprus.

"The match against 22 Signals was a challenge, and we were confident that all the training and hard work would pay off, but in the end 22 Signals ran out deserving winners. It was a cracking match!"

Major Si Smith of 22 Signal Regiment concluded: "We were looking forward to what was to be an extremely challenging and exciting football match.



71 Engineer Regiment and 22 Signal Regiment battle it out on the pitch

Alpine Ski Expedition to Les Contamines, France

105 Regiment Royal Artillery

Thanks in part to a £500 grant from HRFA, 105 Regiment has recently enjoyed taking part in Exercise Northern Snow Gunner, an adventure training Alpine skiing expedition in Les Contamines, France.

Having participated in last year's Exercise Northern Snow Bunny, I was confident in my basic Alpine Ski ability. However, I wasn't anticipating such a huge downfall of snow which led to incredibly difficult ski conditions. It was



Gunner Alexei Smith and colleagues from 105 Regiment Royal Artillery

a very different experience for me, with smashing falls and people managing to get easily buried in the snow when they ventured off piste, it was all great fun.

We had plenty of training and skills practise over the week. The most enjoyable part of the entire trip was avalanche training, although we all hoped we would never have the misfortune of needing to use it. The training consisted of how to detect avalanches, what kit and equipment is required in avalanche zones and lastly how to build an emergency shelter; we were all thrilled at learning how to build igloos!

We had an amazing opportunity to do some ski touring and although I was apprehensive, it was an experience I will never forget.

The author, Gunner Alexei Smith, said of the Exercise "overall I had a smashing time and I managed to gain a Ski Foundation 2 qualification. Going as part of the Reserves meant I was paid to complete my training during the entire Exercise, a massive bonus! I would love to go again and I advise anyone that hasn't thought of the Reserves yet to get involved!"

Farewell Colonel Chapman

Goodbye from 2 Highlanders as well as the HRFCA

Stepping out of his marching boots for the last time is Colonel David Chapman after a 44 year career in uniform. A career which began as a young soldier in The Queens Own Highlanders where he attained the rank of Regimental Sergeant Major before serving as Adjutant with Aberdeen University Officer Training Corps.

His final five-year spell in uniform was served as Commandant of 2nd Highlanders Battalion Army Cadet Force, a period of time which saw the Battalion go from strength to strength. Colonel Chapman was presented with gifts from all of the Permanent Staff, Adult Volunteers and Cadets to mark his retirement before he was piped out of the Battalion Headquarters by Cadet Regimental Sergeant Major Ewen Brindle.

In addition to relinquishing his Cadet responsibilities, in February Colonel Chapman stepped down as Highland RFCA's Assistant Chief Executive. Based in our Inverness Office, David has provided outstanding support to Reservists and Cadets in the Northern and North-Eastern areas, and has overseen significant infrastructure enhancements,



2 Highlanders with Colonel Chapman (standing to right of image)

including completion of the Cadet Training Centre in Aviemore, shortly to open its doors to young people from all three cadet organisations.

David departs with the thanks and good wishes of all those with whom he has worked, both within Highland RFCA and throughout the wider community.

7 SCOTS Handover

Welcome to Lieutenant Colonel Piers Strudwick

Lieutenant Colonel Piers Strudwick has recently assumed the appointment of Commanding Officer 51st Highland, 7th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland (7 SCOTS) from Lieutenant Colonel Peter Little OBE (see cover photo).

Lieutenant Colonel Piers Strudwick was commissioned into the Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) and has completed numerous Regimental appointments, including anti-tank platoon commander, Regimental Signal Officer and Adjutant. He has a wealth of operational experience from Afghanistan, including commanding a Ground Holding Company in Babaji, Helmand on Op HERRICK 13, with The Royal Highland Fusiliers, 2 SCOTS and working for Senior US Military Generals in HQ ISAF, Kabul.

Lieutenant Colonels Little and Strudwick have conducted an extensive handover of command, focusing on visits to the main 7 SCOTS Army Reserve Centres in Highland Scotland, attending Firm Base meetings with Council and community representatives in Perth, Inverness and the Western Isles and also visiting a recent 7 SCOTS training weekend in Barry Buddon.

The forecast for Lieutenant Colonel Strudwick and 7 SCOTS is firmly aiming at capability integration with The Black Watch, 3 SCOTS, continuing to build on the early successes of Op FORTIFY in the Highlands and reaffirming our links with 51st Highland, 7 SCOTS' antecedent Regiments and our

many local communities that provide unswerving support to The Regiment.

There continues to be a good variety of opportunities for Reserve Service with 51st Highland, 7 SCOTS. More than 20 Jocks are currently mobilising to deploy with The Black Watch, 3 SCOTS on Op TOSCA in Cyprus and 10 members of the shooting team are preparing to compete in a Skill at Arms Competition in South Africa.

All at HRFCA would like to offer a warm welcome to Lieutenant Colonel Strudwick and also to take this opportunity to congratulate Lieutenant Colonel Peter Little, who departs Command on promotion to Colonel to assume an appointment as a Fellow at the US Army School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) in Leavenworth, Kansas.



Lieutenant Colonel Piers Strudwick: new Commanding Officer 7 SCOTS

New Director Engagement Arrives at Seathwood Introducing Dai John

The call from the Officers' Association Scotland had been intriguing: Highland RFCA was looking for a 'Director Engagement' to start as soon as possible. This sounded interesting – a chance to work within a small team of permanent staff and a much larger group of knowledgeable and influential Association Members with the common focus of our Reserve Forces and Cadets. Just the thing, I thought, where I might usefully employ some of the experience I've gained during nearly 29 years in the RAF.

I had completed my engagement only a few weeks before, having served most recently at NATO's Operational HQ in Belgium, where I had led the Alliance's global movement and transportation effort, including planning and coordinating the return of ISAF forces from Afghanistan at the end of its 12-year mission. Easier said than done, with some 120,000 personnel from 49 countries and over 150,000 vehicles and pieces of equipment to redeploy, not to mention the closure of over 800 bases.

No surprise then that I have spent much of the last couple of years in such interesting places as Uzbekistan, Kirgizstan and Pakistan, as well as in Afghanistan, helping to set up transit agreements and border crossing procedures. I'd previously served in Afghanistan as deputy commander at Kandahar Airfield, then the world's biggest, busiest and most frequently attacked combat airfield, and as chief of staff of the British support HQ.



Top image: Meeting the locals in Zarak-Kalay, Kandahar Province

Lower image: Glenshee March 2015



Group Captain Dai John at Kandahar Airfield

I've also been fortunate to have completed operational tours in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Kosovo and the Middle East and, amongst too many highlights to mention, have commanded the RAF's No 85 Expeditionary Logistics Wing, deployed with a small recce and activation team into a newly captured Pristina airport, led the UK HQ's J4 logistics staff division during the initial stages of the Iraq Campaign, and gained my military parachute wings, subsequently 'enjoying' numerous jumps, invariably at low level and mostly at night. Oh, and some staff jobs!

As I find my way around Highland RFCA, it is a constant pleasure to be part of an organisation whose focus is very much on providing the best support that resources will allow. My role is to coordinate and direct our efforts in maintaining and developing existing two-way engagement with employers, opinion formers and communities across our area.

Our ability to communicate effectively with a range of audiences has never been more important: FR20 presents significant challenges for all those with a role in supporting our Reservists, and at the same time we seek to emphasise the opportunities and benefits of the Cadet Experience, anticipate the impact of new Service Level Agreements and accommodate a fiscal climate with implications for employers, reservists, cadets and adult volunteers alike. By putting in place an Engagement Strategy, we will keep under review **what** messages we want to convey, **to whom**, and **where** - using well-established forums such as our Regional Employer Engagement Groups, through the pages of *High-Light*, in other print media, and online via our website and in looking to develop social media.

And as there is of course no monopoly on Bright Ideas I am always very pleased to receive suggestions for how we might further promote the Reserves' and Cadets' contribution, both locally across our area and more widely. I look forward very much to working with you.

Rothiermurchus Challenge Needs You!

18-20 September 2015

The Military's operational capability is totally reliant on the resilience and resourcefulness of its people. Opportunities for Physical Development are a key factor in boosting morale and delivering individuals who are mentally and physically robust with a high degree of war fighting spirit.

As part of the Tri-Service commitment to the development of its people and the recognisable link between Adventurous Training and the Moral Component, a multi discipline challenge will be organised by HMS NEPTUNE PT Staff from Fri 18-Sun 20 Sep 15.

Based at the fabulously situated Rothiemurchus Lodge (in the Cairngorms and 8 miles from Aviemore) participants of any standard will have the opportunity to experience walking, running, kayaking and mountain biking in one of the world's most idyllic settings. The Challenge will be a team event, consisting of 4 personnel and the format will be promulgated once all entries have been received. There will be a £20 per team personal financial contribution required and places are limited to 64 personnel.

The Challenge is aimed at RNR, URNU, Army and RAF Reserves and UOTC and UAS units and places will be allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis. All participants



Rothiemurchus Lodge - the base for the Adventure Challenge Event

will require Line Management approval to attend and will be on Duty Status throughout. To be eligible, personnel must be in-date for their relevant service fitness test and need to be medically fit.

If you are interested in taking part, please contact the event organiser, SGT (PTI) Marv Williams-Thomas RM in the At Centre on 93255 3300 / 01436 674321 ext 3300 (email NAVYNBCC-NEPTUNEATSNCO@mod.uk) or CPOPT Vercoe on 93255 3622 (email andrew.vercoe119@mod.uk).

Forthcoming Events

10 Apr 15	Dingwall Beating Retreat
11 Apr 15	Inverness Beating Retreat
2 May 15	Edinburgh ACFA Beating Retreat
21 May 15	HRFCA Council Meeting
26 May 15	Incoming HRFCA Chief Executive Takes Post
5-7 June 15	Exercise EXECUTIVE STRETCH
13 June 15	Stirling Gun Salute
18 June 15	Tri-Service Cadet Forum
20 June 15	Stirling Military Show and Stirling Armed Forces Day
27 June 15	Armed Forces Day
20 Aug 15	Executive Board Meeting
5 Nov 15	HRFCA Council Meeting
17 Nov 15	Eastern Area Meeting (Seathwood)
19 Nov 15	North-East Area Meeting (Aberdeen)
24 Nov 15	Northern Area Meeting (Inverness)
26 Nov 15	Southern Area Meeting (Stirling)
9 Dec 15	CRFCA Annual Briefing (London - Executive Board only)

What do YOU want to see in your High-Light?

Contributions are always welcome from anyone.

Contact: hi-admin@rfca.org.uk
or 01382 631027