

Reserve Forces & Future Reserves 2020 Programme Update – Spring 2016

Foreword from Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Reserves & Cadets), Major General Ranald Munro



As the new Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Reserves & Cadets), I am heartened by the progress that has been made on the Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) programme and the Reserve Forces since the publication of the White Paper nearly three years ago.

Recruitment to the Reserve Forces has improved significantly, with all three Services on track to meet their Trained Strength targets. This is due in no small part to Defence's much improved offer to reservists, in terms of experience, including more opportunities to train overseas and deploy alongside Regulars, as well as welfare and remuneration.

We have introduced professionalised employer relationship management to work proactively with employers to identify and deliver benefit for the employers, the individual and Defence. This approach is working, as we are now seeing growing levels of support from employers with more than 70% of employers of reservists reporting that they are satisfied with their relationship with Defence. Employers are also becoming increasingly aware of the skills and behaviours that reservists can bring to a civilian career. Recent research showed that nearly 90% of employers think that reservists are an asset to the UK's workforce.

Now we need to consolidate the progress that has been made so far and develop it. In order to meet our challenging recruitment targets, Defence must continue to attract new entrants to the Reserve Forces by offering a rewarding and challenging experience. We also need to cement Defence's position as a trusted partner with employers of all sizes, developing relationships based on mutual benefit.

We will continue to provide updates regularly, but if you have any questions please do contact us.

First reservist to join the Executive Committee of the Army Board

At the start of April, Major General John Crackett – the senior reservist in the Army – became the first reservist to sit on the Executive Committee of the Army Board (ECAB). He takes up the newly created role of Director Reserves, responsible for championing the Army Reserve at 2-star level and for leading the drive to rejuvenate the Army Reserve.

Major General Crackett said: "I'm primarily a businessman and this appointment to the ECAB is evidence that the military really recognises and benefits from the skills that are brought by reservists with civilian experience. I am excited by the prospect of having the opportunity to represent the Reserve forces at the very highest level of the Chain of Command and am grateful for having that opportunity."



Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Nick Carter said: "I am delighted to be welcoming Major General Crackett on to the ECAB. He brings a wealth of experience from both his military and civilian career. I hope that the creation of the Director of Reserves role on the ECAB will show that there is a real career path for reservists in the military, and one that extends all the way to 2-star level."

Increasing support for reservists from small businesses

New research from the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) has found smaller businesses are increasingly positive about employing reservists.

The proportion of respondents who said they were reluctant to take on a reservist has fallen dramatically over the past three years, with many more business owners saying they can see the benefits of hiring those with Service experience. The change demonstrates the progress which has been made in improving the package of support available to small businesses hiring reservists. The number of small firms saying they would actively consider hiring a reservist has increased too, up from 45% in 2013 to 49% in 2016.

Mike Cherry, Policy Director for the FSB, said: "The Government has made good progress towards encouraging employers to take on reservists. The financial support now on offer to a small employer can help to cover the cost when a member of staff is deployed. But there are clearly still challenges to overcome. We would like to see more small businesses supporting our troops. They serve our country and the skills they come back with are diverse and often invaluable."

Minister for Reserves, Julian Brazier, said: "I'd like to thank the growing number of small businesses making the effort to serve their country by supporting our Service personnel. It is very encouraging to see more small employers finding the value of the unique skills and expertise that reservists and Service Leavers can bring to their businesses."

Reservists on Operations

The Reserve Forces continue to provide personnel in support of operations and military tasks worldwide.

As well as continuing to support the train, advise and assist mission in Afghanistan, operations in Cyprus and Iraq, and global counter-terrorism and counter-piracy operations worldwide, reservists have been called out to support our permanent joint operating base in the Falkland Islands, support maritime operations and undertake Defence engagement tasks worldwide.

There are currently more than 450 reservists mobilised for operational duties.

Reservists training overseas

As part of the improvements to the offer to reservists, the Reserve Forces now receive high quality, challenging training, including more opportunities to train overseas.

Earlier this year, Royal Marine reservists from RMR Scotland travelled to Norway to participate in Exercise Hairspring. Royal Marine reservists must be ready for deployment anywhere in the world, which is why this exercise 200 miles north of the Arctic Circle is so necessary, teaching reservists to survive and fight in an arctic environment.

Michael Grewcock, area manager at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, attended Exercise Hairspring as the service employs a reservist. Michael said: "Observing the Royal Marines reservists exercise in extreme climate conditions was a fantastic experience as it allowed me to see the rigorous and breath-taking activities they undertake. The positive attitude, commitment and incredible ability they all have is a credit to them and the Ministry of Defence, which has developed their skills, knowledge and understanding to a significantly high level."



14 Army reservists from 4 YORKS recently deployed to Uganda, joining Regular soldiers to deliver specialist training to Ugandan troops who are fighting Islamist insurgents in Africa. The 28-strong team put more than 1,800 Ugandan soldiers through their paces, showing them how to deal with improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and defend a convoy from attack. The Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) will put this training into practice when they are deployed as part of the African Union Mission to Somalia.

Lieutenant Ibrahim Sekitto from the UPDF said: "These two weeks that the British Army have been training us have been so important. It's been so hands on; it's really helped us to prepare for scenarios which may happen in Somalia."



In March, RAF reservists from sixteen Reserve squadrons around the UK participated in Exercise Wintermarch in Rjukan, Norway. Over five training days, RAF reservists were instructed by Norwegian and Danish experts in cross-country skiing, dealing with cold weather injuries and avalanche survival. The exercise also developed team-building skills and physical fitness.

Squadron Leader Paul Chegwidden said: "The opportunity to take part in challenging exercises, like Wintermarch, is often one of the main reasons that people join the RAF Reserves. This type of world-class training develops skills and strengths that RAF reservists will use when on operations with regular forces and with international allies. Such skills are also extremely valuable to employers."



Strength of the Reserve Forces

As at 1 March, the total strength of the FR20 Tri-Service Volunteer Reserve was 34,590, with 27,060 of those at Trained Strength. The April 2016 Monthly Service Personnel Statistics are available at the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/515805/Monthly_service_personnel_statistics_March_2016.pdf

Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award 2015 winners announced

On 14 January, the 2015 Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold Award winners were presented with their awards by the Secretary of State for Defence at an event hosted by the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street.

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



Businesses who hold ERS Gold awards have introduced HR policies to encourage the recruitment of Armed Forces personnel, spouses and veterans, and enable reservists to fulfil their annual training and mobilisation.

This year the ERS Gold awards focussed on commitments to employ reservists, veterans, and Forces family members. The winners included: Atkins, The Automobile Association, Babcock, Fujitsu, Gateshead Council, Deloitte, Jaguar Land Rover, Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, ISS UK, J.P. Morgan, M-EC Consulting Development Engineers, National Express, PwC, SERCO and Tesco.

Secretary of State for Defence, Michael Fallon, said: “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.”

The nomination window for the 2016 Gold Awards is now open. Nominations must be submitted by 30 June, using the online form which can be found at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-employer-recognition-scheme/defence-employer-recognition-scheme

Defence Relationship Management host the second annual Partnering with Defence Conference

On 16 March, 150 delegates gathered at the MOD’s Partnering with Defence Conference to discuss how Defence and employers can foster a mutually beneficial relationship. The day focussed upon the skills which Service personnel can offer to employers, as well as the support which employers can offer to ensure that the Armed Forces community receives fair treatment in the job market. Examples of best practice were provided by a range of employers, including Kier Group, Nationwide, M-EC Engineering, Carillion, whilst Tesco’s People Director, Therese Procter, gave the keynote speech, highlighting the value Defence People can bring to an organisation and the utility of establishing an internal Armed Forces network.



At the conference The Open University (OU) became the latest organisation to sign up to the Covenant, pledging to offer specialist support to Service people who want to access further education and training.

Minister for Defence Personnel & Veterans, Mark Lancaster, speaking during the morning of the event, praised the OU and the impact their support would have: “The OU is a fantastic organisation: in the same way that it opened up prospects for hundreds of thousands of people, they have pledged to make education more accessible and more flexible to our brave serving men and women.”



The conference closed with a review of the day’s most important topics by Chief of Defence People, Lieutenant General Andrew Gregory: “Defence now has a much more coherent and regular engagement with employers. This is vital if they are to be able successfully to employ military personnel – Regular and Reserve, spouses, and veterans, as well as support the Armed Forces Community, in a mutually beneficial manner. Today we heard some excellent, proactive examples of best practice that we will share more broadly.”

New Royal Naval Reserve unit opens

Leeds' first Royal Naval Reserve Unit HMS Ceres has been formally commissioned by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal.

Ceres has existed in various forms as a naval establishment in Yorkshire over the past 70 years and, until last year, was a satellite unit of HMS Calliope on Tyneside. Now, following an injection of funding from the FR20 Programme, it is a Reserve headquarters in its own right, and home to 80 reservists from Yorkshire.

Reservists from HMS Ceres have deployed with the Royal Navy to Afghanistan, Iraq and the Gulf, on anti-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa, and have supported the security effort at the London Olympics and Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

Minister for Reserves, Julian Brazier said: "Our Naval reservists are an integral part of the UK Armed Forces, and have served on operations right around the world, from counter piracy operations in the Indian Ocean to service in Iraq and Afghanistan, to assisting in disaster relief in the Philippines. Today's commissioning of HMS Ceres is an important milestone in the history of the unit, and our investment in the facilities in Leeds will see them go from strength to strength."



Armed Forces Employability Pathway attracts interest in the Army Reserve

Around 900 jobseekers took part in one of the 29 Armed Forces Employability Pathway (AFEP) courses across the UK in 2015/16, resulting in more than 560 expressions of interest in joining the Armed Forces, including 288 for the Army Reserve.



AFEP is a mutually beneficial partnering scheme designed to help unemployed and under-employed jobseekers become more employable. AFEP offers jobseekers the opportunity to undertake employability training, a work placement, gain in-depth understanding of Armed Forces and civilian opportunities and, if they wish, begin the application process for the Reserve Forces. The programme also offers opportunities to develop sector-specific programmes which focus on national skills shortages for UK plc.

AFEP takes referrals from Jobcentre Plus and is seeing successes across the country. The average time people spend unemployed is between six and seven months, however 50% of those who have taken part in AFEP have been back in work within six weeks.

Natasha Turner, 29, from Southampton said: "The programme has opened a whole new door and opened my eyes – they've been shut for far too long. This is something that I would highly recommend. I now want to look at joining the Reserves; I know that I will get the guidance and training to be able to turn my life around."

Reserves Day 2016

Reserves Day is the moment to celebrate those who give up their spare time to protect our nation's security at home and overseas. Reserves Day has traditionally been part of the Armed Forces Day campaign and taken place on the last Wednesday in June. This year, that date was due to be 22 June. However, due to the EU referendum taking place on 23 June, Reserves Day 2016 has been postponed and will now take place in early September. The new date for Reserves Day will be announced shortly.

If you want to get involved, there are plenty of things to do to support Reserves Day. If you employ a reservist you could invite them to wear their uniform at work or host a workplace event to recognise the valuable skills reservists bring to your organisation. If you're already in the Reserves, you could wear your uniform at work on the day, give a talk at work about your experience in the Reserve Forces or get involved with a community engagement event to show pride in your Reserve service.

Last year, employers such as British Airways, BT, Google, Tesco and Vodafone showed their support by holding events to promote the work of their employees who are reservists.

