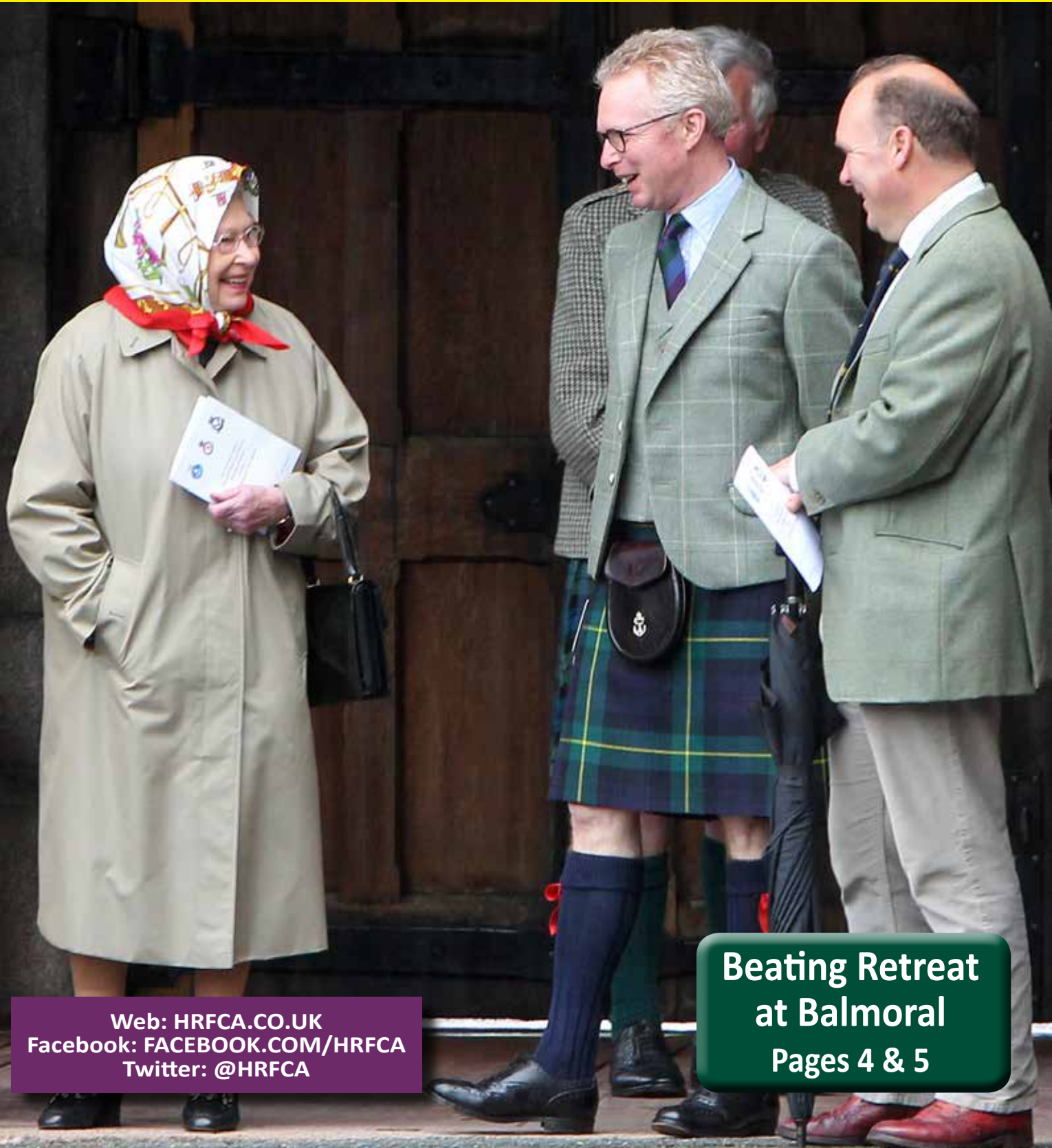


SEPTEMBER 2016 • ISSUE 14

# High-Light



THE TRI-SERVICE MAGAZINE OF HIGHLAND RESERVE FORCES' AND CADETS' ASSOCIATION



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**Beating Retreat  
at Balmoral**  
Pages 4 & 5

# Events galore during very busy summer



The Chief Executive looks on as Cadet Drum Major Dominic Buttifant of the Orkney Independent Battery ACF comes forward prior to the March Off to request permission from Her Majesty the Queen to take leave.

**W**elcome to *High-Light* Issue 14, our biggest ever edition; a one-off special expanded by four pages to showcase the number and variety of activities that we, and those we seek to support, have been up to over a very busy summer.

In the following pages you will find reports on Armed Forces Day events, Cadet annual camps, our traditional association with Stirling Military Show, as well as some eye-catching pictures from two key employer engagement events, Exercises Medical Stretch and Executive Stretch, during which willing volunteers elected to forego their home comforts for a brief but intensive insight into life in the Reserves.

While demanding in terms of Reservists' man-hours, these exercises really do allow the units from all three services which support them to demonstrate the outstanding personal and professional attributes of their people.

But perhaps it was the superb standard of musicianship

currently delivered by the Service Cadets that has most caught the eye.

As reported on Page 4, the biennial Beating Retreat in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen at Balmoral exemplifies the achievements of the Cadet pipers and drummers and, of course, their instructors, without whom none of this would be possible.

A flavour of Balmoral and the dress rehearsal at Gordon Barracks in Aberdeen is captured within the following pages. But please do also take a look at the HRFA website and Facebook pages which provide access to many more photographs than there is room to print in even an enlarged *High-Light*. Incidentally, I was again reminded of the potential of social media when one of our short videos of Executive Stretch had, at the time of writing, reached no fewer than 49,780 people.

In one further departure from the norm, this edition includes a short summary of some of the topics being addressed and managed by HRFA's Executive Board.

As you will read on Page 17, we continue to operate in challenging and fast-evolving political, commercial and military environments – each with the potential to impact on the Association's business.

While not everything with which we find ourselves confronted is within our gift to resolve, you can be sure that your Board, supported by the executive, is applying itself energetically to the task in hand.

I do hope you enjoy *High-Light* and, as ever, welcome your suggestions and views to make sure that it continues to fulfil its purpose as the Association's in-house journal.

*Mark Dodson*



The Chief Executive visiting Exercise Medical Stretch in Dundee.



# Contents

- 4, 5** Beating Retreat at Balmoral
- 6** Clackmannanshire Armed Forces Day
- 7** Medical Stretch
- 8, 9** Executive Stretch
- 10, 11** Stirling Military Show
- 12, 13** Armed Forces Day Dundee
- 14, 15** Armed Forces Covenant signings
- 16** NE Area meeting
- 17** Member information
- 18, 19** Service Cadets round-up
- 20** Fast track to success



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# Royal appointment for Service Cadets

**The Service Cadets' Massed Pipes and Drums Beat Retreat before Her Majesty The Queen on 10 August.**

The musicians from the Sea Cadets, Army Cadet Force and Air Training Corps were drawn mainly from Scottish units.

It was the fourth time the Massed Pipes and Drums have played before The Queen at Balmoral. The performance was excellent with all units acquitting themselves extremely well and, despite the damp conditions, the event was a resounding success.

HRFCA was represented by Chief Executive Mark Dodson, Deputy Chief Executive Sarah Rawlings and Martin Passmore.







## Skills fine tuned at Gordon Barracks

**P**rior to playing Beating Retreat for Her Majesty, the Cadets staged a full rehearsal at Gordon Barracks, Bridge of Don.

The event was well-attended by invited guests and members of the public. Both sets of spectators enjoyed tunes including *Scotland Forever*, *Salute to the Fallen*, *Balmoral*, *Highland Laddie* and *Mairie's Wedding*.

The salute was taken by the Lord Provost of Aberdeen.

Following the reception, guests were treated to talks by members of the Cadet Presentation Team.

The assistance of Aberdeen UOTC was greatly appreciated and ensured the event ran smoothly.







## Parade going from strength to strength



**A** warm and sunny Alloa was the venue for the Clackmannanshire Armed Forces Day Parade on 1 June.

As invited guests and children from local primary schools took their positions, the parade of Cadets from Dollar Academy Combined Cadet Force, the Clackmannan Company of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, the Royal Regiment of Scotland, Number 383 (Alloa) Squadron of the Air Training Corps and other youth organisations, led by Dollar Academy Pipes and Drums, made its way through Alloa town centre to the Town Hall.

They were met there by the Lord-Lieutenant, Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Johnny Stewart, accompanied by Colonel Stephanie Jackman, Assistant Commander of the 51st Infantry Brigade.

Also taking part were Lord-Lieutenant's Cadets – Cadet Sergeant Jonny Haywood of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and Cadet Flight Sergeant Andrea Paterson of 383 Squadron of the Air Training Corps. Both said that they were very pleased and excited to be part of the proceedings.

The Royal Regiment of Scotland's

popular mascot, Lance Corporal Cruachan IV, was impeccably behaved throughout, under the careful eye of Pony Major Corporal Mark Wilkinson. Cruachan IV's predecessor Cruachan III was also present.

Other guests included Royal British Legion Scotland Clackmannanshire and District representatives and veterans.

The Lord-Lieutenant welcomed all those present, saying he 'was delighted so many had come'.

He was pleased that since 2006 when the annual event had been inaugurated with the aim of ensuring that the contribution made by our veterans was never forgotten, it had gone from strength to strength. This year the focus was on the centenary of the great naval Battle of Jutland, which cost over 9000 allied and German lives.

Following the flag raising ceremony, the parade was dismissed and invited guests – including HRFA representatives – retired to the Town Hall for refreshments, and for the Lord-Lieutenant to once again thank everybody for coming.

He also awarded certificates to schoolchildren whose handmade flags had been judged the most colourful.





# Thumbs-up for Exercise Medical Stretch

**M**edics were put to the test at Exercise Medical Stretch in Dundee on 21 May.

This year the annual exercise was run by city-based 225 (Scottish) Medical Regiment. It took place at Magdalen Green and Riverside Park with participants from Dundee University, NHS Tayside, NHS Lanarkshire, the Scottish Ambulance Service and St Andrews University.

Reservists had put on a wide range of activities including a zip line, assault course, paint ball, stretcher run and command tasks. The aim of the exercise was to continue to develop links between 225 Med Regt, 205 Field Hospital, Dundee University, NHS Lanarkshire and the Scottish Ambulance Service. It also helped attendees understand what the Defence Medical Services do and what benefits the Army Reserve can bring to their organisations.

The event was won by a composite team which included members from Dundee University and NHS Tayside, with a team from NHS Lanarkshire coming second.

Tom McConnachie (56), a nursing lecturer at Dundee University and part of the winning team (pictured on stretcher run above), said: "We teach the students that nursing is very much about leadership and what greater opportunity to experience that than here at Exercise Medical Stretch where there is situational awareness teambuilding and leadership exercises in a one-day package."

Cameron Tisshaw (20), a student at St Andrews University studying International Relations, said: "This has been an excellent experience in leadership activities and teambuilding. It was also a good bonding opportunity with students from other universities as well as a chance to meet Army Reserves."

Cameron, who is in Tayforth UOTC, hopes to join 225 Med Regt as a Medical Support Officer.

Murray McEwan (32) works for the Scottish Ambulance Service in Edinburgh.

He said: "Medical Stretch exceeded our expectations. We thought it was going to be a lot of lifting and shouting, and it was! But it was evident from the start that there was a lot of transferable skills from the civilian setting to the military and vice versa. It was really well hosted, very enjoyable and provided valuable shared experiences."

Pam Curtis (26) is a Dundee University 3rd year mental health student.

She said: "This has been really good fun and enjoyable. The soldiers were so friendly and approachable and gave me a brilliant insight into working as a team."



Participants took part in a wide range of activities including a stretcher run, zip line and assault course along with various command tasks.



The opportunity to practice as a team and being a leader was invaluable – it was so great that I am seriously considering joining 225 Med Regt."

Morvan Kyle (31) is a 2nd year adult nurse student at Dundee.

She said: "It has been challenging but fun at the same time. I appreciated the leadership experience and the lunch was



delicious. From what I have discovered about military medics, the Reservists are amazing people – second to none in my eyes."

VIP visitors to the event included the CO of 225 Med Regt Lt Col Helen Smyth, the CO of 205 Field Hospital Col Helen Singh, and HRFCA Chief Executive Brig Mark Dodson.



# Executives are put through their paces

**E**xecutives from all over Scotland were put through their paces at Exercise Executive Stretch from 22-24 July.

On arrival at Redford Barracks in Edinburgh over 50 participants from organisations including Stirling Council, Aviva, HMRC and the UK Border Force were thrown into military life.

The object was to give them first-hand experience of the Reserve forces and to highlight the vast range of valuable transferable skills Reservists bring to both their civilian and military lives.

Over the following days participants tackled a wide range of physical and mental tasks spread across the Castlewart and Dregthorn Training Area, slept outside, had a chance to live fire weapons and abseiled off the rocky Pentlands.

Lead unit for the 51 Infantry Brigade exercise was the Scottish and North Irish Yeomanry (SNIY) with support coming from Royal Navy, Royal Marine, Army

and Royal Auxilliary Air Force units. Participants were broken into colour-coded syndicates with points awarded at each stand for – among other criteria – initiative and teamwork.

The event was rounded off on the Sunday with an energy-sapping assault course and stretcher run back at Redford.

Following that, SNIY Commanding Officer James Campbell-Barnard, addressed the teams.

He said: “My guys at the SNIY and those from all the other units who have supported this exercise and worked with you over the weekend have had a ball. It is because you have put 140% into it and as teams you have gelled together fantastically.

“When you go back to your workplace please spread the message that there are plenty of opportunities, challenges and fun to be had in the Reserves.”

Following a hotly-contested exercise it was the green and white team who came out on top and, despite being exhausted,

they still enjoyed a well-earned celebration. Their prizes were presented by Brigadier Charlie Coull (ADC).

Judging by the positive reaction of the participants it was mission accomplished with most leaving the barracks with a new respect and understanding of the work of the Armed Forces.

Lisa Powell, of West Dunbartonshire Council, said: “I now have a better understanding of the key roles available to Reservists, a greater respect for their work and a willingness to support anyone from within my organisations who wants to apply.”

Natalie Harrison, of Stirling Council, said: “I have had my eyes opened and have total respect what the Armed Forces do for our country.”

Guy Hanlon, who works for Aviva in Perth, and also won the Best in Team award, said: “I have a much greater understanding and respect for the Armed Forces after this. It has also opened my mind to new ways of thinking.”











The Cadets of The Black Watch Battalion ACF who won the drill competition with Lt Col Piers Strudwick, CO of 7SCOTS and RSM (WO1) Michael Fairweather.

## Great turnout at Stirling Military Show

**S**irling Military Show on 18 June was a huge success, with thousands of people of all ages attending Kings Park to show their support for our Armed Forces.

Once again Highland RFCA was at the heart of the action with a VIP tent where close to 100 guests and military personnel were treated to hospitality and given front row seats for all the entertainment.

The guests were drawn from the private and public sector and the VIP experience was aimed at thanking them for their on-going support to Reservists and Cadets in the Highlands of Scotland.

Despite earlier weather concerns, the sun shone throughout putting smiles on the faces of visitors and military personnel alike.

The show kicked off with a parade of troops, Cadets and veterans from Port Street, which marched through the town to Kings Park. The Royal Regiment of Scotland and the Band of the Royal Marines Scotland provided music.

The parade formed up in the park and was inspected by the Lord Lieutenant of Stirling and Falkirk, Mrs Marjory McLachlan, Stirling Provost Mike Robbins, the Commander of 51 Brigade, Brigadier Gary Deakin, and the CO of 7SCOTS, Lieutenant Colonel Piers Strudwick.

Addressing the parade and crowd, Brig Deakin thanked both the bands then, before saying he hoped everyone would have a great show, added: "Thank you to the people of Stirling, thank you to your families, and thank you to everyone who is here today showing us your support. It's really wonderful."



The Band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland during the parade.

An infantry demonstration followed involving soldiers from units including 7SCOTS, C Squadron of the Scottish and North Irish Yeomanry and 225 (Scottish) Medical Regiment. Lieutenant Andy Nicol (7SCOTS) led the dynamic simulated assault on an insurgent position.

Other show highlights included a Cadet drill competition, which was keenly contested by three ACF units, and one unit each from the ATC and Sea Cadets. The competition was won by the Cadets of The Black Watch Battalion ACF who were awarded the Erskine Quaich by Brig Deakin

for their efforts. More music and dancing courtesy of the Kennedy Cupcakes followed before the Band of the Royal Marines Scotland played an excellent, atmospheric Beating Retreat to draw the proceedings to a close. Provost Robbins and Lt Col Strudwick took the salute.

The show also featured vintage military vehicles, family entertainment in the form of a climbing wall and assault course, representation from numerous Service Charities and an impressive police dog demonstration courtesy of Police Scotland.





Sea Cadets parading through Stirling.



The Lord Lieutenant during the inspection.





# Dundee celebrates Armed Forces Day



Army and Royal Navy Reservists march towards City Square.

## Dundee celebrated Armed Forces Day in style on 25 June.

The weather may have been alternating between blazing sunshine and heavy rain, but that didn't deter a healthy crowd from enjoying the parade, military demonstrations and a variety of static displays from across all services, Cadets and charities.

Highland RFCA secured a prime spot in the City Centre for their tent and spent a successful day engaging with the public, and explaining the Association's role in supporting Reservists and Service Cadets.

Also catching the eye of young and old were military vehicles from Cupar-based C Squadron of the SNIY, who brought a WMIK, and 3 SCOTS who travelled from Fort George, near Inverness, with one of their Foxhound armoured vehicles.

The public were able to enjoy the displays from 10am to noon along with entertainment from youth and community groups on the City Square stage.

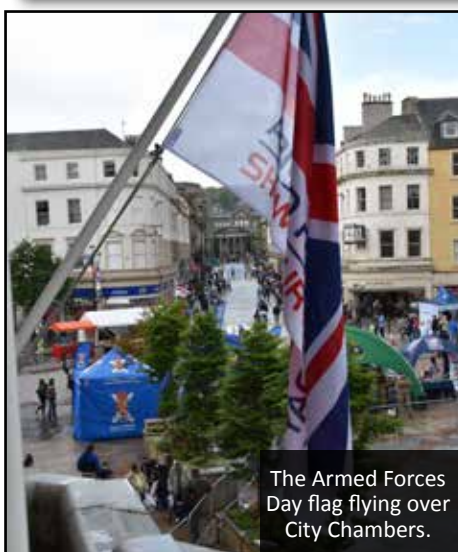
Luckily, the main event of the day took place shortly after a cloudburst, with the parade of military personnel, Cadets and veterans – including Reservists from City-based 225 (Scottish) Medical Regiment and from HMS Scotia – stepping off from Dundee High School at 12:30 sharp.

The parade – led by the excellent Mains of Fintry Pipe Band – travelled down a packed Reform Street to City Square. The salute was taken by the Lord Lieutenant of the City of Dundee, Lord Provost Bob Duncan, who was accompanied by Major General Mike Riddell-Webster CBE DSO, Governor of Edinburgh Castle and Mr Vic Herd, President of the City of Dundee Combined Ex-Services Association.

Major General Riddell-Webster is one of the highest-ranking Army Reservists and was installed as the castle's Governor last



Dundee Lord Provost Bob Duncan and Vic Herd, President of the City of Dundee Combined Ex Services Association, lead Lt Col Helen Smyth (CO 225 Med Regt) and Maj Gen Mike Riddell-Webster down Reform Street along with Lord Lieutenant's Cadet, Cadet Sergeant Mark Osborn.



The Armed Forces Day flag flying over City Chambers.



The parade formed up in City Square.

year. Once formed up in City Square and following welcome speeches, Mr Duncan, Maj-Gen Riddell-Webster and Mr Herd inspected the parade.

A demonstration of military capability and a gun run for Service Cadets followed. Following the formalities, the public were again free to tour the stalls and displays.





Mains of Fintry Pipe Band lead the parade down Reform Street.



Veterans proudly march through the city centre.



Army Cadets during the parade.



3 SCOTS travelled from Fort George to show off their Foxhound armoured vehicle.



Angus & Dundee Battalion ACF.



HRFCA's Ron Macgregor mans the Association's tent.





# City Council signs Covenant on AFD

**On 4 July the 1000th Armed Forces Covenant to be signed nationally was presented in London (see P15).**

Highland RFCA has been working hard to contribute to that impressive national tally by encouraging employers to become signatories.

Since the last edition of *High-Light* was published, nearly 20 organisations in our area have signed the document which commits organisations to ensure no member of the Armed Forces community suffers any disadvantage as a result of their service.

Included in that tally was Dundee City Council.

Lord Provost, Councillor Bob Duncan, made the pledge in the council's City Chambers on 25 June as the city's Armed Forces Day celebrations got under way outside in City Square.

Lieutenant Colonel Helen Smyth, the commanding officer of Dundee-based 225 (Scottish) Medical Regiment, witnessed the signing on behalf of the Ministry of Defence. Also present was Major General Mike Riddell-Webster CBE DSO, Governor of Edinburgh Castle and the highest-ranking Army Reservist in Scotland.

The event was attended by HRFCA Deputy Chief Executive Sarah Rawlings and Director Engagement Dai John.

Even better news followed for Dundee City Council in August when, along with a further 21 employers



Lord Provost Bob Duncan signed the Covenant on behalf of the City Council with Lt Col Helen Smyth co-signing on behalf of the Ministry of Defence.

nationwide, it was revealed that they had won the Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award.

The scheme is designed to recognise and

thank employers who offer and advocate first-class support to Armed Forces personnel and their families. The awards were announced by Defence Secretary Michael Fallon.

## College gains bronze

**Forth Valley College has received the Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) bronze award from the Ministry of Defence.**

The award acknowledges employers who have provided exceptional support to the armed forces community and defence by going above and beyond pledges they made when signing the Armed Forces Covenant.

The ERS scheme encourages employers like Forth Valley College – which has campuses in Alloa, Falkirk and Stirling – to inspire others to do the same.

The award was presented to the college by the Royal Navy's Captain Chris Smith, Naval Regional Commander for Scotland & Northern Ireland, at

Stirling Military Show on 18 June in a ceremony organised by Dundee-based Highland Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association.

The college's Forces Veterans' Champion Richy Todd accepted the award on behalf of college principal Dr Ken Thomson.

Mr Todd said: "We were delighted to be presented with the Bronze Award at such an important event as Stirling Military Show.

"It really is excellent recognition for all the College's initiatives which see us work closely with former military and serving personnel and their families as we try to help them into training and subsequently employment. We are all really proud of this award."



Richy Todd of Forth Valley College receives the bronze award from Captain Chris Smith.





## Eight firms pledge support on same day

**The boss of the Perthshire Glazing Group signed the UK Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of eight of his companies on 8 July.**

In doing so, Chief Executive Derek Petterson committed each of the firms to support the country's servicemen and women wherever and however they can, and to ensure no member of the Armed Forces should suffer any disadvantage as a result of their service.

The signings took place at the group's HQ in Perth with each document co-signed on behalf of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) by the Commanding Officer of Perth-based 7 SCOTS, Lieutenant Colonel Piers Strudwick. 7 SCOTS is the Army Reserve infantry battalion for the north of Scotland. Mr Petterson took

the pledge on behalf of McLeod Glaziers Ltd; Meldrum Property & Design Services; ABC Business Services; Greyfriars Bar; Kirkside Bar; Forty Four Bar and Late Lounge; Soaper Stars; and Café Tabou.

He said: "We're proud to show our support to the Armed Forces community and to develop an affiliation with the MoD."

Lt Col Strudwick added: "It's fantastic that a company here in Perth is showing its support to the Armed Forces and is one that sees all the opportunities available to young men and women to gain personal development skills and to be able to be a better you."

Mr Petterson – a former member of the Army's 4th Royal Tank Regiment – was also presented with an Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Bronze certificate for each of the companies.



Derek Petterson and Lt Col Piers Strudwick sign the eight Armed Forces Covenants.

## Milestone event aboard HMS Belfast



Michael Fallon (left) and Dennis Hogan.

**The UK's largest catering and support services company, Compass Group UK & Ireland, was the 1000th UK employer to sign the Armed Forces Covenant – marking a significant milestone in Defence's efforts to build relationships with companies to increase business support for the Armed Forces community.**

The 1000th signing shows that the

Covenant is helping to build an extensive network of support across a wide range of industry sectors. Compass Group's signing took place at a 4 July ceremony on board HMS Belfast attended by Defence Secretary Michael Fallon, Managing Director of Compass Group UK & Ireland Dennis Hogan and senior Defence and Compass Group representatives.

Recent signatories in the Highland area include Thorntons Law, Aberdeen University and the Golden Jubilee Hospital.



# North Eastern Area meeting a success



RMR Captain Robbie Kennedy and (right) ATC Cadet Sgt Eilidh Rattray share their experiences at the meeting.

## HRFCA's North Eastern Area Committee Meeting was convened by Chair John Lemon at Gordon Barracks on 12 May.

A strong turnout saw 34 people enjoy an evening of individual insights into life in the Cadets and Reserves, with many amazing stories of challenges overcome and great personal achievements.

The theme throughout the evening was 'transferable skills' and was referred to by all speakers, despite them all being at very different stages in their studies/careers.

Aberdeen UOTC's Isla Matheson – a postgraduate student – said: "I'm getting loads out of the UOTC as part of my masters studies, and you can achieve far more than you think you can, even when you're cold and tired."

She added that she had attended a 'Dispel the Myths' day at RMA Sandhurst.

Her UOTC colleagues echoed her sentiments and spoke about the range of training and social opportunities on offer, including military training, leadership and teamworking, and adventurous training, from hill-walking to canoeing, to a forthcoming climbing expedition in France.

Marine Will Barratt said he joined the RMR in 2012 having returned from global travels and viewed it as an opportunity to get the 'best of both worlds'. He spoke eloquently about the exacting standards demanded of Royal Marines, with no distinction made between Regulars and Reservists, so RMR service demands personal commitment. Even when not undertaking formal training the individual must take responsibility for their own progress. In exchange, the Royal Marine Reserve builds leadership and self-confidence and offers the opportunity to work alongside Regulars. He is currently going through the commissioning process.



John Lemon addresses the audience.

Marine Lorcan Thame is a police officer and police diver, one of only 20 in Scotland. Lorcan talked about the challenges of reconciling a demanding career as a police officer – constant training, demanding shift pattern – with RMR service, and in return how being a Royal Marine complemented his role in the police.

RMR Sgt Paul 'Cookie' Cook explained how as a Regular he enjoyed an incredibly varied and challenging career, with tours in Iraq and Afghanistan including, prior to deploying to the mountains of Afghanistan, being sent on 'a donkey and mule-packing course in Melton Mowbray'. He left regular service to follow his wife, a geologist in oil and gas, to Aberdeen, where he transitioned seamlessly into the RMR, and now works in security in the industry.

For him the change to a civilian job while continuing to serve in the Royal Marines 'has really paid off and I love it'. He too is going through the commissioning process, and as a Senior NCO is looking forward to 'seeing how much silver they've got in their mess!'.

ATC Cadet Sgt Eilidh Rattray won her audience and provided a compelling personal insight into her time in the Cadets, speaking with great passion about the confidence and friendship she had gained, and the importance of structure and routine in young people's lives.

Eilidh is keen to give back to the Cadets what they have given to her (she talked about her recent trip to Westminster as 'like it was Christmas'), and has ambitions to become an adult volunteer and pursue her dream of commissioning as an RAFVR officer.





Above: HRFCA Chairman Captain Nick Dorman was among the guests. Left: Some of the Service Cadets, RMR personnel and Aberdeen UOTC representatives who shared their experiences with the audience.

## Association facing challenging times

**With many recent developments likely to affect the business of HRFCA over the coming months, your Executive Board has been busy considering and, where necessary, preparing to deal with the potential impact across a range of issues.**

Though there is nothing unusual in the Association evolving and adapting to external change as well as exercising its independence in initiating change from within when it serves the interests of those we seek to support, the convergence of a number of separate factors promises to make the near and medium-term particularly challenging. The following highlights provide a taste of some of these, and the Chief Executive and his team would of course be pleased to expand on any of them as required.

### **Strategic issues**

Of the strategic issues which will influence our work in coming months is the recent cabinet reshuffle, with the MOD losing the Minister for Reserves post, reducing from 6 to 5 the number of ministerial posts. From our point of view, the appointment of Mr Mark Lancaster as the minister responsible for reserves and cadets is of particular interest, and the Association will be writing to him seeking early engagement. A further notable aspect of the reshuffle is the PM's asking Mr Mark Francois MP to undertake a review of the utility of the Army Reserve. At the time of writing the background to this request and the terms of reference under which the review will be conducted are unclear, but we will watch its progress with interest,

contributing as necessary. On the subject of the Army Reserve, an initiative likely to have implications for us is the ongoing Army 2020 Refine work, with announcements expected soon on any re-balancing between cap badges and capabilities potentially affecting both regular and reserve units.

Another area where we expect to see developments is in the management of the volunteer estate, inevitably linked with wider decisions on the next tranche of disposals recommended by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation. Added to this, the outgoing CE CRFCA recently observed that with recent post-referendum changes at the top of government we might expect there to be calls for further changes driven by affordability considerations. Closer to home, the squeeze on estate funding may impact the availability of money for Betterment projects, and CE CRFCA has been at pains to make sure that senior officers of the three services are made fully aware of the limited ability of the RFCAs to mitigate the effects of continued under-funding. A further unwelcome though long-running aspect of estate funding is the lack of resources to undertake planned maintenance, putting additional pressure on already-stretched reactive maintenance budgets. All of this will affect reserve and cadet units in our area of responsibility, and the Estates team is working as hard as it can to mitigate the consequences.

As some members will already be aware, the successor to AVM Paul Luker as CE CRFCA has now been formally endorsed. Maj Gen Jamie Gordon, whose long and distinguished Army career culminated in his last appointment as defence and security adviser to the

Sultan of Oman. We look forward to working with him. Close to the top of Jamie's in tray will be impending changes to RFCA pensions and the review of salaries for senior RFCA staff. Pensions will move from the current final salary scheme to the increasing-common career average scheme in August 2017, reflecting wider public sector pension reforms. A majority of RFCA staff nationally will be affected, including those with more than ten years to serve before reaching normal retirement age (60 years); many will qualify for transitional arrangements. For us in Highland, the impact is expected to be modest – for most members of staff in stand-alone posts there is little real difference between career average and final salary, though clearly careful management will be required.

### **Salary concerns**

Salary concerns relate to the attractiveness of the RFCA salary package now that earlier changes in service pensions are coming into effect. They also relate to the competitiveness of salaries for professionally-qualified staff, particularly in the Estates Management area.

We will contribute to the work of the Strategy Group as it analyses the issue and produces recommendations for the Board.

In summary, the environment within which we operate continues to present us with a variety of challenges that will collectively test our agility, flexibility and resilience. Meanwhile the day-to-day business of supporting our reserves and cadets continues unabated, and we will continue to appreciate members' commitment and contribution in fulfilling this, our key remit.



# Chance-of-a-lifetime trip on RN flagship



## Army Cadets from Shetland spent a training weekend with fellow Cadets from Orkney.

Having travelled south on Friday night there was only time for a welcome brief and organising sleeping arrangements at the Cadet Training Centre in Kirkwall before 'lights out' and an early call in the morning for a day packed with activities. The more senior Cadets left for Ramsdale Range after breakfast and, after an impromptu command task involving the recovery of a bogged-in minibus, they were soon firing full-bore weapons on the range.



With no rifle firing ranges remaining on Shetland, this was a great opportunity for Cadets to test their marksmanship skills and all Cadets from Shetland who attempted shooting tests passed at their star level. Bombardiers Jordan Campbell and Iona Middleton both achieved First Class Shot at three star level. Meanwhile the junior Cadets had remained at the Cadet Centre where they fired air rifles and were instructed in various Cadet force syllabus subjects. Once the senior Cadets had cleaned and returned rifles to the armoury in the evening, it was time to put on fresh uniform and parade at St Magnus Cathedral for a group photograph in front of the 'weeping window' poppy display.



On Sunday, after packing and loading

kit for the ferry trip home, the Shetland Cadets were transported to Ness Battery for an informative visit under the direction of a guide. The Cadets, who are affiliated with the Royal Artillery, took great interest in the visit and the tour finished with a group photo in the Mess Hall, which remains almost unchanged since the end of WW2.

The Cadets were then transported to Scapa where they rejoined the Orkney Cadets as well as members of the Reserve Forces and Sea Cadets for a chance-of-a-lifetime trip on the Royal Navy's flagship, HMS Bulwark. Transport to the ship was by Royal Marine landing craft and some of the Cadets were given the opportunity to pilot the vessel.

Once on board HMS Bulwark the Cadets attended a Service of Remembrance on the flight deck in memory of those who gave their lives 100 years ago at the Battle of Jutland. A tour of the huge ship followed. Meanwhile HMS Bulwark set sail in thick fog for the six-hour journey that would take the ship out of Scapa and around the east of Orkney mainland to Kirkwall. All were well fed and hosted on the trip and arrived back in Kirkwall tired and ready for the trip back north. The May 27-30 weekend was thoroughly enjoyed by the 11 Cadets and 5 adults from Shetland and future trips to Orkney are in the diary for next year!

## Fundraising Cadets from 1st Battalion the Highlanders raised money for SSAFA (the Soldiers', Sailors' & Airmen's Families Association) as part of their Annual Flag Day in Inverness City Centre.

The event which took place on 4 June saw Cadets from Raigmore Detachment raise nearly £700 for the charity alongside members of the Inverness Sea Cadets, Royal British Legion Women's Section and also the battalion's Honorary Colonel Carolyn Caddick, who is Highland Council's Armed Forces Champion.

On the day there was a competition for the largest collector, with the accolade won by a Sea Cadet, however, this was closely followed by Cadet Max Sloan (14) and Cadet Lance Corporal Benjamin Johnston (16) who collected £144.40 with their joint bucket.

SSAFA's Inverness-shire and Western Isles Branch Secretary Helen Jenkins said: "We are extremely grateful to members of the public in Inverness who donated so generously to our cause. The funds raised help us to assist servicemen, ex-servicemen and their families in Inverness city and the surrounding area."



Raigmore Detachment Cadets Jack Carrington and Amber Salter with CFAV Sgt Mick McCann collecting in Inverness City Centre.



# ACF annual camps



2nd Battalion The Highlanders enjoyed their annual camp at the Barry Buddon Training Area, near Carnoustie, from July 9-22.



2nd Battalion The Highlanders weren't the only ones having fun at Barry Buddon. The Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders were there from 24 July to 5 August.



# ATC Cadets on fast track to success



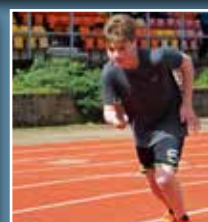
Around 150 ATC Cadets and staff from Highland Wing attended the annual Highland Wing Parade and Inter-Squadron Athletics competition at Queen's Park Stadium, Inverness.

The reviewing officer was Group Captain Phil Dacre MBE DL RAF Retd.

Group Captain Darce was escorted

through the flights by Highland Wing's Wing Commander Christine Cospey RAFVR(T). At the end of the parade Cadets and staff formed up in the shape of ATC75, in celebration of this 75th anniversary year.

The athletics competition followed with events including high jump, long jump, javelin, shot, discus and track.



## Forthcoming Events

8 September	Reserves Day
9-11 September	Highland Military Tattoo (Fort George)
21-22 September	Scottish Learning Festival (Glasgow)
27 September	Highland Spotlight (Inverness)
4 October	Northern Area Meeting
6 October	North Eastern Area Meeting
13 October	Eastern Area Meeting
20 October	Southern Area Meeting
3 November	HRFCA Council/Board
3-4 November	SPDS Conference (St Andrews)
10 November	ERS Silver Awards (Edinburgh Castle)
14 November	Gun Salute (Edinburgh)
14 November	Gun Salute (Stirling)
17 November	CRFCA Council/Board (London)
7 December	CRFCA Annual Briefing (London)
9 February 2017	HRFCA Executive Board Meeting
25 March 2017	HRFCA AAM (Queen's Barracks, Perth)



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

Contributions are always welcome from readers

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