

High-Light



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



**Employers strike
gold and silver**
Pages 4&5

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New Year with new challenges ahead

What better way to begin the New Year than with the latest edition of *High-Light*?

Once again the magazine is full of items that we hope will be of interest from what has been an eventful few months, rounding off an extremely busy and challenging year. Among these, the official opening of the new Highlander Accommodation Block, covered on pages 14 and 15, marked a significant uplift in the facilities available for cadets of 1 HLD RS Bn ACF and a milestone for HRFCA, being the biggest capital works project using Regionally Generated Income undertaken by our Estates team in many years, and led by Randall Christie.

On the engagement front, in this issue you will find a report on the 2016 Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) silver awards dinner which took place in the Great Hall of Edinburgh Castle in November. Overall a highly successful event which continues to set the standard for these awards, with special thanks due to our Lowland colleagues who did most of the heavy lifting.

One other significant event in the life of the Association since our last *High-Light* has been the departure of our Deputy Chief Executive Sarah Rawlings, now established in her new ACF role down in Wiltshire. Sarah has been a great asset to HRFCA throughout her four years with us, and our loss is very much Wessex RFCA's gain; read more on Sarah's farewell on page 13.

Nothing stands still for long around here, and our new DCE, Andrew Macnaughton, is now firmly established and has already covered over 700 miles as he gets his head around a demanding and multifaceted post. A regular Argyll who commanded 51 Highland Volunteers, Andrew has a depth of

knowledge of the reserves and of our region that will be very useful to us.

Looking to the year that lies before us, it will certainly present more than its fair share of challenges as well, no doubt, as plenty of opportunities. Challenges will continue to include the very testing financial climate, not least in managing the Volunteer Estate with extremely limited funds, our restructuring, as well as the setting by CRFCA and DRM of ever-more demanding targets against which our performance will be assessed.

Of the many opportunities likely to come our way, we look forward to both the planned engagement with MSPs at Holyrood and the consolidation of relationships made over the last couple of years with the education and youth areas to highlight the value of the cadet organisations in Scotland. This second point is the legacy of the Cadet Presentation Team.

For now though I would like to take this opportunity of wishing our readers a happy, prosperous and peaceful New Year, and I look forward to seeing as many of our members as possible at the Annual Association Meeting in Perth on Saturday 25 March; details, as they say, to follow.

Mark Dodson



New DCE Andrew Macnaughton.



Introducing the winners at the ERS Silver Awards in Edinburgh.



Highland and Lowland Chief Execs visited HMS Queen Elizabeth.

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Scottish council among gold winners

Prince William, The Duke of Cambridge, presented twenty-two companies with the Ministry of Defence's highest recognition for employer support to the Armed Forces.

The Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) awards ceremony on 12 October was hosted by Defence Secretary Michael Fallon at the Royal Hospital Chelsea – a retirement home for hundreds of army veterans.

The Duke of Cambridge thanked all of the twenty-two companies for their work in the area by handing them a Gold award. Among the winners were three Scottish organisations: Dundee City Council; Royal Bank of Scotland; and the Scottish Ambulance Service.

The scheme is designed to recognise and thank employers who support the Armed Forces community and their families, and to inspire others to do the same.

Defence Secretary Michael



Dundee City Council's Janet Robertson collected the Gold Award from The Duke of Cambridge.

Fallon said: "Employers across the country are ensuring our military get a fair deal including by helping veterans to have successful careers after leaving service. These companies are rightly being recognised for the support they offer under the Armed Forces Covenant and encouraging other firms to go the extra mile".

The full list of employers recognised for their outstanding support for Defence personnel includes: AECOM, Atos UK Ltd, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Boeing Defence UK Ltd, Bureau Veritas, DJ Rees Decorating Services Limited, Doncaster Council, Dundee City Council, Hampshire County Council, HSBC, Kier Group, KPMG,

Nationwide Building Society, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Pertemps, QinetiQ, Holt's Military Bank/NatWest/Royal Bank of Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service, Surrey County Council, TA Plastic Supplies Ltd, United Utilities and Waves Training Solutions Ltd.



The Band of the Irish Guards performed at the event.



The Duke meets Chelsea Pensioners and members of the Band of the Irish Guards.



Defence Secretary Michael Fallon.



Great night to remember for employers



General Sir Gordon Messenger, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff.

Highland and Lowland Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations were at Edinburgh Castle's Great Hall for the ERS Silver Awards dinner.

The 10 November event recognised the commitment of employers who demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the Armed Forces community.

The awards were announced by the Chief Executive of Highland RFCA, Brigadier Mark Dodson, and presented by General Sir Gordon Messenger, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff.

Brigadier Dodson said: "The success of our armed forces in delivering defence capability is entirely reliant on their relationship with the society from which they are drawn. Key to this relationship is the role played by employers, who not only support members of the volunteer reserve forces but the whole armed forces family, whether veterans, spouses and partners, or the adult volunteers so crucial to the viability and vitality of our service cadet organisations. All of the 25 recipient companies or organisations recognised tonight have demonstrated that they are actively supporting the wide spectrum of the armed forces community in many ways."

Following the awards, the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff addressed the audience on behalf of The Secretary of State for Defence.

As part of the evening the audience also heard from Corporal Catherine Pounder, a Reservist from 205 Field Hospital, who explained how she has benefited from Reserve service. Lt Col Andrew Muddiman, the commanding officer of the Royal Marine Reserve in Scotland, also spoke giving his perspective on the value that Reservists bring to his unit. Lastly, Jill Young, Chief Executive of The Golden Jubilee Foundation, highlighted the employer perspective.

Thanks from both Highland and Lowland RFCAs go to Maj Gen Mike Riddle-Webster, the Governor of Edinburgh Castle, for allowing the awards to be held in the impressive surroundings of the Great Hall.

Thanks also to The Band of The Royal Marines, Willie McIntyre from George Heriots School and Lothian & Borders ACF Battalion for providing the cadet pipers Paul Christie and Bruce Gardner. Also to 154 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps, and 603 Squadron, Royal Auxiliary Air Force, for helping with logistics.

Recipients of the award in the Highland RFCA-area were: Abertay University, East Dunbartonshire Council, Goucher Consulting Ltd, Highland Spring Ltd, Highlands & Islands Airports Ltd, Kingspark School, Moray Chamber of Commerce, Moray Council, Orkney Islands Council, SCORE Group plc, Robert Gordon's College, Shetland Islands Council, University of Aberdeen, Western Isles Council, and Woodmill High School.



Pipers Paul Christie and Bruce Gardner; HRFCA CE Mark Dodson with Mark Stuart of HIAL; and AOS AVM Ross Paterson with 51 Bde Comd Gary Deakin.

Knockhill on track for Covenant success

Knockhill Racing Circuit has pledged its support for the Armed Forces Community by signing the Armed Forces Covenant.

In doing so Scotland's National Motorsport Centre has made a commitment to support the country's servicemen and women wherever and however it can and to ensure no member of the Armed Forces should suffer any disadvantage as a result of their service.

The signing on 8 November – by Knockhill Events Director Stuart Gray – took place at the racing circuit, which is situated around seven miles north of Dunfermline in Fife.

Rosyth-based Commander Felicity Campbell of the Royal Navy co-signed the Covenant on behalf of the Ministry of Defence.

The event was organised by Highland RFCA and attended by the organisation's Regional Employer Engagement Director Ron Macgregor. Also in attendance were HRFA's Lornette Parker and Knockhill Sales Manager Laura Graham.

For more information on the Armed Forces Covenant contact Ron Macgregor on 01382 631026 or email hi-empsp@rfca.mod.uk.



Stuart Gray and Commander Felicity Campbell sign the Armed Forces Covenant.



From left: Ron Macgregor, Commander Felicity Campbell, Stuart Gray and Laura Graham.

Falkirk Football Club unveils new signing



Falkirk Football Club signed the Armed Forces Covenant on 5 November during a ceremony at the club's Falkirk Stadium.

Club chairman Douglas Henderson signed for Falkirk FC with Captain Mark

Anderson of 106 Battalion REME co-signing on behalf of the Ministry of Defence.

The club's commitments to our Armed Forces include aiming to participate in Armed Forces Day, offering discounts, and free home fixture tickets through their 'Tickets for Troops' initiative.



Falkirk FC Chairman Douglas Henderson and Captain Mark Anderson following the signing.



Left: John Silcock of Borland Insurance signs the Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of Fife Chamber while Captain Chris Smith RN, co-signs for the MoD. Above: Captain Smith made the dash north to RAF Lossiemouth to be one of the co-signatories when Moray Council signed the Covenant on the same day. Also pictured are Allan Wright, Convenor of Moray Council, Group Captain Paul Godfrey, Station Commander RAF Lossiemouth, and CO of 39 Engineers (Air Support) Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Jim Webster.

Three organisations sign up in one day!

HRFCA joined the early birds of Fife Chamber of Commerce on 6 October for a business breakfast at the Dunhill International Pavilion just across from the 18th hole of the R&A at St Andrews.

Proceedings included an update from Development Director Sandy Richardson on progress in the V&A Design Museum development currently emerging from Dundee's new riverside development.

Star billing though was the signing by the Chamber of the Armed Forces Covenant, with John Silcock of Borland Insurance

signing on behalf of the Chamber and Captain Chris Smith RN, Naval Regional Commander for Scotland and Northern Ireland, representing the MoD.

Captain Smith thanked the Chamber for their continuing support to the Armed Forces Community and looked forward to ongoing and mutually-beneficial relations.

He then headed north to RAF Lossiemouth to see Moray Council and the armed forces renew their pledge to work together for military families in the region.

Captain Smith, along with officials from the air force and army, joined dignitaries to sign the Armed Forces Covenant.

The agreement is designed to demonstrate a commitment to personnel, veterans and their families in Moray.

While signing the covenant, council convener Allan Wright emphasised the strong ties built between the community during the fight to save the airfield in 2010.

Since the previous covenant was signed four years ago, the base at Kinloss has changed hands with 39 Engineer Regiment moving in.

RAF Lossiemouth Station Commander, Group Captain Paul Godfrey, said: "The covenant is a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served, and their families, are treated fairly.

"It's a privilege for me to re-sign it for RAF Lossiemouth personnel, their families, veterans and local air cadets."

The day's third signing took place at Gordon Barracks, Bridge of Don, in Aberdeen.

This time it was Robert Gordon's College who were committing to help the Armed Forces Community.

Its head, Simon Mills, signed the document with Lt Col Piers Strudwick, CO of 7 SCOTS, signing on behalf of the MoD.

HRFCA Chief Executive Mark Dodson congratulated the Head of College and said he looked forward to working with him and his team, headed up on the CCF side by Wg Cdr Daniel Montgomery who has been instrumental in not only the Covenant signing but also in securing a prestigious Employer Recognition Scheme silver award for the college (see page 5).



Lt Col Piers Strudwick and Simon Mills sign the Covenant.

Students show team spirit



Exercise Team Spirit took place over several weeks in late November/early December at Dundee's Oliver Barracks and the AR Centre in Glenrothes with nursing students from the University of Dundee (pictured) taking part in a series of team building and leadership tasks set by 225 Medical Regiment.

Overall the Exercise, organised by 225 and lecturer in nursing Tom McConnachie, saw more than 300 students from the university's Dundee and Kirkcaldy campuses taking part.

Tom said: "By tapping into the military's professionalism and team working we can help to instil those qualities into our students at an early stage in their training. They have all been 200% committed to this Exercise and everyone taking part loved the experience."



Marine Angus Dobie on point.

RMR on target for charity

RMR Scotland provided administrative and logistical support to the RMA East of Scotland President in their second charity clay shoot at the Scottish Clay Shooting Centre, Leuchars, Fife.

The aim of the event was to raise funds for the Royal Marines Association and Royal Marines Charity whilst concurrently placing elements of the Royal Marines in direct contact with members of the civilian population.

Both registered charities provide lifelong support to regular, reserve and retired Royal Marines and their families in order to compensate for shortfalls in Ministry of Defence budgets.

Fourteen teams competed over the event with representation from RMR Scotland, 45 Commando, the RMA and other civilian teams.

The inaugural event raised £4400 last year with the current 2016 figure sitting at £8000.



The RM and RMR contingent.

Live firing, car bombs and night attack for 2622 Squadron

2622 (Highland) Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force Regiment, an RAF Reserve unit based at RAF Lossiemouth, conducted their annual two-week Battle Camp in Ballykinler, Northern Ireland.

Also taking part were new members of their regular sister squadron, 51 Squadron RAF Regiment.

The opportunity for Reserves and Regulars to train together before deploying on operations is particularly beneficial for the RAF Regiment who are currently deployed on Force Protection missions worldwide to protect RAF assets from ground attack. The first

week of the Battle Camp consisted of the live firing of a number of weapon systems including the Service Rifle, Glock pistol, Rifle Grenade Launcher, Hand Grenade and the General Purpose Belt Fed Machine Gun. The week's live firing culminated in a night defence shoot and manoeuvre attack exercises.

The second week consisted of an exercise which saw the Squadron deploy into a patrol base, an urban mock-up village and a farm complex.

The highlight of the week was a post-explosion exercise (pictured). A car bomb had gone off in the centre of the

village and there were many casualties.

2622 (Highland) Squadron and 51 Squadron personnel arrived at the scene to be confronted by four serious casualties, cars on fire and an angry crowd. The Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service and St John's Ambulance also took part in the exercise providing the commanders on the ground with the opportunity to practice their on-scene command and control and liaison roles.

The week-long exercise culminated with a night attack on the farm complex.



Honour for Ashley

An Air Cadet from Aberlour has been appointed as the Station Commander's Cadet at RAF Lossiemouth, and will assist the Station's Commanding Officer at civic occasions and during ceremonial duties.

Cadet Sergeant Ashley Duncan joined 423 (Speyside) Detached Flight Air Training Corps in November 2013, since then she has been involved in a multitude of activities including representing the Squadron at hockey, swimming, athletics, cross-country and netball.

She attended Altcar Band Camp, gaining her musician badge; she has completed a 'Heartstart' first aid qualification and has achieved her bronze Duke of Edinburgh award.

RAF Lossiemouth Station Commander Group Captain Paul Godfrey said: "The ATC is a fantastic organisation that allows children and young adults to grow both as individuals and as members of the community. I am delighted to be able to appoint Ashley as the new Station Commander's Cadet as she demonstrates all the qualities the RAF hold in high esteem and has done a huge amount to benefit our local community and fellow cadets in a very short period of time."



Station Commander Group Captain Godfrey with Cadet Sergeant Duncan.



Deputy First Minister meets cadets

The Scottish Government's Deputy First Minister and Secretary for Education and Skills John Swinney MSP attended the School Leaders Scotland annual conference at Cameron House, Loch Lomond, on 18 November. Mr Swinney spoke to Chloe Clarkson (12) of Dundee Sea Cadets, and Scott (15) and Isla Kelly (13) of Shetland Army Cadet Force. They briefed him on the Cadet experience and were his only photocall of the visit!

Best UK first aid team

Dollar Academy CCF have been crowned the best first aid team in the UK at the CCF First Aid Nationals 2016 competition.

Returning for their 10th year at the national event hosted at the Army Medical Headquarters, Strensall, the A team, led by CSgt Kathryn Scougall consisting of CSgt Catriona Ferguson, Cpl Nicola Henson and LCpl Beth Logan and the young adult team (u23) of S/Sgt Emma Rattray and CSM Darwin Douglas all took part. After winning the CCF nationals on the Saturday the team then qualified for the inter-services competition on the Sunday.

The Young Adult team placed a highly-creditable 3rd overall and the cadet team prevailed, winning the overall competition outright. However this was not the main accomplishment, Dollar also won the prize for the best overall cadet, Dollar by combining young adult and cadet team scores.

This saw Dollar Academy CCF (pictured) crowned the best first aid team in the UK.



**Associations
visit new carriers**
– See page 12

Association area meetings round-up



The four annual committee meetings for the Association's Northern, North Eastern, Eastern and Southern areas took place over a busy three-week period in October.

First up was the Northern Area Committee whose members gathered at the Gordonville Road Army Reserve Centre in Inverness on 4 October.

Some members from as far afield as Shetland were in attendance.

The full agenda included updates from regular and reserve units as well as the service cadet organisations, all of which were well represented around the table.

The many diverse topics of interest included the growing air power footprint at RAF Lossiemouth, the successful re-equipping of 3 SCOTS with their new,

highly-capable Foxhound vehicles, and the selection of a sea cadet from Highland District as one of only six from the UK to represent the country at the International Regatta in India.

The meeting was rounded off by the Lord-Lieutenant of Moray, Lt Col Grenville Johnston.

He entertained and informed his audience, describing the work of Lord-Lieutenants and how they support the efforts of the RFCA.

Much was said too about the extremely high calibre of those selected to be Lord-Lieutenant's Cadets, and the opportunities to nominate reservists and others for the highly-prestigious Lord-Lieutenant's Certificate of Meritorious Service.

The evening of 6 October saw the North-Eastern Area Committee meet

at Gordon Barracks, Bridge of Don, in Aberdeen. One of the meeting highlights was a fascinating insight into the world of military medicine by Maj Kevin Forbes, OC of A Detachment, 205 (Scottish) Field Hospital.

Maj Forbes had deployed to Afghanistan on Operation HERRICK 20, with responsibility for assisting in the drawdown of capacity – but not the capability – of Camp Bastion's famous Role 3 hospital.

Descriptions of the dedication, professionalism, speed and efficiency of the hospital's multi-national military medics greatly impressed the audience, who were again reminded of the huge benefit to civilian medicine gained from operational deployments.

Congratulations to Kevin for an outstanding presentation and to Area



Chair John Lemon for putting together a successful and well-attended meeting.

The Eastern meeting followed on 13 October at Queen's Barracks in Perth.

Following the Chief Executive's report, Area Chairman Maj Donald Elliot briefed the meeting on the future of the United Kingdom Reserve Forces Association (UKRFA) Scottish International Military Skills Competition, which had restarted in 2014 in Edinburgh and had moved to Barry Buddon in 2015.

2015's event had demonstrated the potential for the Eastern Area's members to support the competition in 2016, an expectation which had not been fulfilled last year due to the cancellation of the event.

Given the excellent opportunity offered by the competition in previous years to showcase reservists' skills to employers, the chair said that he hoped it could be reinstated in the future.

The meeting generated lively discussion and was rounded off with an excellent supper; thanks were given to 7SCOTS for their support of the first Eastern Area meeting to be held at Perth's Queen's Barracks, with the curry getting a special mention.

Finally, the Southern Area Meeting,



chaired by Lieutenant Colonel Gilly Moncur, took place on 20 October at Cumbernauld Army Reserve Centre.

There, members enjoyed not one but two fascinating insights into aspects of the work of the UK's armed forces.

The first began with an eye-catching video showing the opportunities, challenges and rewards of serving in the Royal Naval Reserve, after which Petty Officer Joanne Browning talked enthusiastically of her personal experiences as a Warfare Specialist and how it contrasts with her civilian profession as a Staff Nurse.

Joanne, whose day job is at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow, was representing HMS Dalriada at the meeting.

The second presentation was delivered energetically by Captain Euan Irvine of the Royal Engineers, a regular officer

currently serving with 124 Field Squadron of 71 Engineer Regiment.

In twenty minutes Euan managed to bring the members up to speed on the evolution of military engineering, the Royal Engineers' core mission of enabling the UK's armed forces to deliver military capability, and a whistle-stop tour of current operations.

Underlining the Corps' motto of 'Ubique', Euan briefed the audience that six sappers from the Regiment were currently supporting Op TRENTON humanitarian relief tasks in South Sudan with another thirty on standby and undertaking pre-deployment training.

Others are being held at readiness for relief operations in Somalia as part of Op CATAN, while a number of their colleagues have just completed an Op TOSCA deployment to the UN mission in Cyprus.

Restructuring – the future takes shape

Regular readers of *High-Light* will recall that in Issue 13 we provided an update on *Project Revive*, designed to ensure that RFCAs throughout the UK continue to be 'fit for purpose' and relevant to Defence into the future.

Since then, work has continued to identify and agree the core structures common to all RFCAs, based on the three 'pillars of delivery' – Estates, Cadets & Youth and Engagement, with the aim of making sure that the revised structures result in better-balanced RFCAs able to rise to, and exploit, future challenges. Each RFCA was screened by a panel to examine proposed staffing against the new structure and to review the justification for additional posts, including in outstations.

This process took four months longer than originally envisaged, but the work is now complete, endorsed by the Board of the Council of RFCAs (CRFCA), and the next step will be implementing the new structure.

However, before the plan can be implemented in full, a number of important issues will require detailed

work and agreement, potentially including a small number of redundancies; this may apply to HRFCA as in other RFCAs.

While the Army has agreed 'in principle' to fund a redundancy package, the work to identify exactly how many people will be affected, and correspondingly what it might cost, has yet to be undertaken.

If, given the considerable pressure the defence budget is currently under, this is not considered to be affordable, the changes in staff structures would take place over a much longer period than the two years envisaged, and would instead rely on normal retirement and staff turnover.

Until the funding situation is confirmed, therefore, no changes involving redundancies will happen and, when they do, will be conducted in accordance with the relevant civil service policy and procedures, including Trade Union consultation. No timeline has been given for this, though the likelihood is that it will all take several months to be completed; TU consultation alone takes 90 days. Consequently, it is not yet possible to give any details of which posts in HRFCA might be affected,

although the good news is that the outstations in Inverness, Aberdeen and Dumbarton will be retained. As a final point to note, ACF Permanent Support Staff posts do not fall within the scope of Project Revive.

HRFCA Chief Executive Brig Mark Dodson is keenly aware that this process – particularly the possibility of a small number of redundancies – continues to be a cause for concern for members of his team.

As he has written to staff: "Please be assured that I will continue to represent your interests with CRFCA as we go through the implementation planning and I will give you more detail as soon as it is possible to do so. Thank you for your continued understanding during a challenging and unsettling time for us all."

We will continue to keep readers updated on Project Revive through the pages of *High-Light* and via the HRFCA website.



Associations visit new Navy carriers



Highland RFCA Chief Executive Brigadier Mark Dodson (left), Captain Chris Smith and (right) Lowland RFCA Chief Executive Colonel Robbie Gibson.

Highland and Lowland RFCAs visited Rosyth on 20 September to view progress on the construction of the two Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales.

The visit was hosted by Captain Chris Smith, the Naval Regional Commander for Scotland and Northern Ireland, and members of his team.

The visitors were briefed by Warrant Officer One Gary Nicholson MBE, the Executive Warrant Officer of HMS Prince of

Wales, an experienced submariner who is relishing the challenges of working up his ship's company.

The crew of the sister ship HMS Queen Elizabeth will embark in early 2017 for sea trials with a Ready For Sea Day currently scheduled for March. The second carrier will follow on a year or so later. The carriers are the biggest warships ever built for the Royal Navy, each displacing over 72,000 tonnes when fully laden with stores and fuel, and are designed to operate up to thirty-six F-35B Lightning II strike aircraft plus a range of helicopters. The ships will each have a company of over 650.

The skill and expertise required to build and then operate the new ships was clear to the visitors, with numerous technical and logistical challenges being overcome, including the daily transportation of construction specialists from the Clyde to Fife, as well as accommodating the crew of the Queen Elizabeth in Rosyth ahead of their moving on board.

In the warm autumn sunshine both ships made an impressive sight – 'awesome bits of kit' as the Warrant Officer observed, and will increasingly attract media attention as they move toward the final stages of construction and commissioning.



Left: The visitor centre provides an insight into the massive project. Right: One of the huge cranes used during construction.



Sarah (right) watches the Service Cadets Massed Pipes and Drums Beating Retreat in the company of Her Majesty The Queen at Balmoral.

Farewell to HRFCA Deputy Chief Executive

November 25th saw the departure from Seathwood of Sarah Rawlings, HRFCA's Deputy Chief Executive since September 2014.

The occasion was marked with a lunchtime gathering of friends and colleagues at HRFCA's Dundee HQ, during which Chief Executive Brigadier Mark Dodson thanked Sarah for her outstanding contribution to the Association and paid particular tribute to her tireless efforts to support all three cadet organisations throughout the length and

breadth of the largest of all the RFCAs' regions.

In addition to her day-to-day responsibilities Sarah has devoted a huge amount of her time and effort to ensuring the success of the Cadet Presentation Team project, designed to equip cadets with the tools and techniques to describe in their own words what membership of the cadets means to them.

The occasion was made more memorable as Major Andy Potter, Cadet Executive Officer of The Black Watch Battalion ACF, piped *Sarah's Highland Farewell*, a tune composed specially for the

occasion, before a framed copy of the piece was presented to Sarah, together with other gifts including a specially-made HRFCA pipe banner and a framed one-off edition of her favourite journal *High-Light*.

Sarah was accompanied on her departure by her black Labrador Malt, constant companion on her many journeys to visit cadet detachments across the Highlands and Islands, and a regular feature of life in Seathwood: fully compliant of course with HRFCA Policy Statement 15 'Animals in the Workplace', though it wasn't

always obvious that Malt had read and understood the small print.

Sarah has exchanged the rugged grandeur of her beloved Scotland for the leafier surroundings of Wiltshire, where she has continued her involvement with the cadets by taking up the role of Cadet Executive Officer for the County's ACF.

All at HRFCA and in the service cadet organisations in HRFCA's area wish Sarah every success in her new appointment and settled once again in her own home in Devises.



HRFCA staff gathered at Dundee HQ to say goodbye to Sarah.



Both Sarah and her lovable Lab Malt will be missed.

£1.3 million Highlander Block opened

The new £1.3 million Highlander Accommodation Block at Dingwall Cadet Training Centre – which will benefit more than 500 service cadets – was opened on 21 November by Mrs Janet Bowen, the Lord-Lieutenant of Ross and Cromarty.

The block will be used by the cadets of 1st Battalion the Highlanders Army Cadet Force, who come from detachments across the Highlands from Thurso to Aviemore and Dingwall to the Western Isles. The training centre is a key facility that allows the detachments to come together for training, sports and much more.

Funding for the project was provided by HRFCA. The Association manages all the reserve and cadet infrastructure – buildings of all shapes and sizes – across the Highlands and Islands. The project architects were Wellwood Leslie,

and building work was carried out by McGregor Construction (Highlands) Ltd.

The 50-plus guests and hosts, including local councillors and military representatives, were welcomed to the centre by HRFCA Chairman Nick Dorman.

He said: “The new Highlander Block is the most challenging project the Estates Team, led by Randall Christie, has undertaken in many years, both in practical terms and financially. The site was a demanding one, with a high water table meaning that getting out of the ground was an achievement in itself. All in all quite an achievement, and the end result is a facility that will be used most weekends for the cadets of 1 Highlanders.”

Opening the centre, Mrs Bowen, said: “The new Highlander Block is an impressive building, purpose-built specifically to provide comfortable, modern accommodation for cadets. It is a real demonstration of the fact that careful management of very limited budgets

can produce first-class results. The building has been designed for today’s needs and the demands of the future, and is as ‘green’ and efficient in terms of running costs, as possible. The primary beneficiaries of course will be the cadets themselves, and this is a most welcome addition to the facilities available for their use.

“I would also like to pay tribute to the adults who lead and look after the cadets, both full-time and especially volunteers, without whose dedication and commitment, not to mention good humour, the cadet organisations would simply not exist.”

Presentations were also given by Cadet Lance Corporal Laura Bates from the Tain Detachment and Cadet Adult Sergeant Ashleigh Davison from Dingwall.

The Storehouse provided excellent catering, with front-of-house duties courtesy of sisters Sophie Heise and Erin MacNeil.



Above (left) the comfortable accommodation. Above: 1 HLDR Commandant Colonel Iain Cassidy. Above (right) the bright, modern corridors in the block. Left: Cadets from 1 HLDRS with the Lord-Lieutenant. Right: Dalnaspidal, looking up Loch Garry, photographed en route to the opening.





The Highlander Accommodation Block.



Lord-Lieutenant Mrs Janet Bowen and 1 HLDRS Commandant Colonel Iain Cassidy officially declare the centre open.



Above (left) those present included 1 HLDRS Honorary Colonel Carolyn Caddick and Captain Tommy Blair of 7SCOTS. Above (right) sisters Sophie Heise and Erin MacNeil of caterer The Storehouse. Left: HRFCA Chairman Nick Dorman and (right) the opening generated strong interest from the local press.



Success at the double for Argyll Cadets

For the first time (certainly in current memory) both key cadet appointments in the National ACF Pipes and Drums are held by members of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Battalion ACF.

Drum Major Steven Gray and Pipe Major Lewis Dillon come from Clackmannanshire and the Isle of Mull respectively and are keen contributors to many aspects of cadet life as well as the Pipes and Drums.

Steven is the Battalion's Cadet RSM and recently led the Battalion drill team to winning the 51 Brigade drill competition.

Lewis has performed at many ACF piping events across the country and abroad and is senior cadet in his detachment at Tobermory.

Congratulations to both on their appointments.



Drum Major Steven Gray (left) and Pipe Major Lewis Dillon.



Drum Major Steven Gray at Stirling Military Show.

Forthcoming Events

24-25 Jan
7 February
9 February
16 February
24 February
25 March
13 April
25-26 April
29 April
11 May
16 May
17 May
17 June
21 June
24 June

CRFCA Executive Board Meeting (London)
RFCA Pension Scheme Reform Brief (Perth)
HRFCA Executive Board Meeting
CRFCA Council/Board Meeting (London)
MoD Rainbow Day
HRFCA AAM (Queen's Barracks, Perth)
ESUAS Annual Formal Inspection & Dinner (Leuchars)
CRFCA Executive Board Meeting (London)
Cadet Pipes & Drums Beating Retreat (Edinburgh Castle)
HRFCA XB/Council Meeting (Seathwood)
CRFCA Board Meeting and Chairmen's Dinner (London)
CRFCA Council Meeting (London)
Stirling Military Show
Reserves Day
Armed Forces Day



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

Contributions are always welcome from readers

Contact: hi-offcomms@rfca.mod.uk
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