

High-Light



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



ERS Gold & Silver
Awards: **Pages 4&5**

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Looking forward to a challenging year

With 2018 now in full swing and the evenings already beginning to draw out, the Association once again finds itself looking forward to another year of challenges, whether practical, financial or organisational.

The good news is that despite the austere budgetary regime we find ourselves in, capital works are well in hand in Dunfermline and in Arbroath, with the new Joint Cadet Centre in the latter soon to be handed over and long-overdue work on the former now beginning. More on both in due course.

Since my last *High-Light* editorial in which I flagged up a number of changes in the Home Team line-up, we have bid farewell to long-serving Head of Estates Randall Christie and welcomed Fraser Kennedy, fresh from a stint as the Estates Officer East, into the top Estates job (more on Page 7).

With his experience and local knowledge, Fraser is well placed to pick up where Randall left off. Having hung up his hard hat and hi-vis vest, Randall can now be seen at Dundee's Ancrum Outdoor Centre, sharing his passion for sailing with young people. We wish them both the best of luck in their new roles.

As promised last time, this issue of *High-Light* includes reports on the successes of many of our dedicated supporters in the business and public sectors, demonstrating their commitment via the Armed Forces Covenant and winning more of the prestigious Employer Recognition Scheme gold and silver awards than ever before. Our cover photograph shows the impressive Imperial War Museum setting for the gold awards ceremony which took place in October and reported on at Page 4.

With nominations for the 2018 ERS awards already starting to come in, we hope that other employers are inspired to achieve the same level of commitment as the current winners – no easy task.

Also in this edition you will find eye-catching articles from 612 (County of Aberdeen) Squadron RAuxAF marking the Squadron's 80th Anniversary, the action-packed lives of the Officer Cadets of Tayforth UOTC, and some very impressive achievements by members of the Army Cadet Force.

To all those units out there, please keep your news coming so that we can share it with the wider HRFCFA community.

One other important recent development has been the welcome arrival of a number of new Associate Members into the Association, including Members of Parliament and Members of the Scottish Parliament whose constituencies and electoral regions intersect with the HRFCFA area. We very much appreciate their lending their support, and look forward to meeting and briefing them so that they – and all our Members, can help in sustaining and promoting the Reserves and Cadets whose wellbeing underpins all that the Association seeks to achieve.

Looking forward, 2018 will be marked by some highly significant commemorations, including RAF 100 – the centenary of the formation of the RAF, and the hundredth anniversary of the Armistice that ended the First World War. And in addition to those and the annual events surrounding Armed Forces Day and Reserves Day, the Scottish Government is promoting 2018 as The Year of Young People, providing an opportunity to showcase the important role played by our cadets and their adult volunteers and leaders.

We in HRFCFA look forward to contributing to them all, as well as keeping you up to date through the pages of *High-Light*, on Facebook and, of course, on our website at www.hrfca.co.uk.

Mark Dodson



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High-Light is designed and produced for you by Highland RFCA, Seathwood, 365 Perth Road, Dundee, DD2 1LX

hi-offcomms@rfca.mod.uk
tel: 01382 631027 twitter: @hrfca
facebook: facebook.com/HRFCA



Scots employers shine at Gold Awards



Prince Harry and HRFA REED Michelle McKearnon with Paul Harkness and Simon Cole (right), chamber directors at Forth Valley Chamber of Commerce.

Prince Harry presented 33 UK employers with an Armed Forces Covenant Gold Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) award.

The award is the Ministry of Defence's prestigious badge of honour for organisations who have demonstrated outstanding support for the Armed Forces community.

The award presentation took place on 9 October at the Imperial War Museum, London.

Prince Harry thanked 2017's winners and heard about successful initiatives providing veterans with a fair chance of starting a second career in diverse industries following military service. Other support measures in the workplace include flexibility for Reservists, and mentoring and job opportunities for military spouses.

Two organisations in the HRFA area won Gold Awards, with Forth Valley Chamber of Commerce and NHS Golden Jubilee Foundation receiving the accolade.

Golden Jubilee Foundation Chief Executive Jill Young said: "The Golden Jubilee has been a proud supporter of both our Armed Forces and Reserve Forces for more than 15 years and is fully committed to not only progressing, but also enhancing this valuable strategic partnership.

"We are thrilled to receive this prestigious Gold Award from the Employer Recognition Scheme and privileged that we have acting reservists and veterans working within our Golden Jubilee team.

"Armed Forces personnel develop a wide

range of transferable skills during their military service, providing numerous benefits to service delivery at the Golden Jubilee and the NHS in Scotland.

"As well as problem-solving and leadership techniques, they possess the ability to work well under pressure – skills they are always willing to teach or share with their colleagues. Consequently, they can help us expand

our innovative ways of working to improve our services to Scotland's patients."

Forth Valley Chamber of Commerce became the first UK chamber to receive Gold status. Their award was collected by former CEO Michelle McKearnon (now with HRFA), and chamber directors Paul Harkness and Simon Cole.



Prince Harry with Jill Young, Golden Jubilee Foundation Chief Executive.



The ERS Silver Award winners with Lt Gen Richard Nugee (centre).

Silver winners gather at the Great Hall

Employers from across Scotland gathered in the Great Hall of Edinburgh Castle on 2 November for the Silver Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) awards dinner.

Principal military host and speaker at the event sponsored by Highland and Lowland RFCAs was Lt Gen Richard Nugee, Chief of Defence People. He heads up the MoD's strategy for developing a 'capable and motivated military and civilian workforce' across Defence.

Also in attendance as hosts were Chris Smith NRC SNI, DComd 51X Col Charlie Wallace, Gov Edinburgh Castle Maj Gen Mike Riddell-Webster, Edinburgh Garrison Comd Lt Col Doug Mackay, and both RFCA CEs.

A total of 56 employers attended from both public sector and commercial organisations, 21 of whom were receiving silver awards.

Following drinks in the Laich Hall the guests were conducted into the Great Hall

where they were welcomed by Maj Gen Riddell-Webster.

Introduction to the event was provided by HRFCAs Chief Executive Mark Dodson – who subsequently announced each award and invited Lt Gen Nugee to speak.

Dinner was served by caterers Benugo under the watchful eye of MC Cpl Snowy Robinson of 3 Cdo Bde RM.

Music was provided by an ensemble from the Band of 6 SCOTS (all reservists), plus an impressive piping performance by Cadet Piper Paul Christie and Cadet Piper Christopher Happs of George Heriot's School CCF.

Three excellent speakers shared their experiences of being a reservist, Cadet Force Adult Volunteer (CFAV) and employer.

The first was Royal Naval Reservist Lt Chris McDade RNR.

He said: "The RNR has taught me how to adapt my leadership style to the requirements of particular circumstances and I am constantly learning new techniques. My RNR career is a real

challenge and a chance to get stuck in. It has made a massive positive difference to the way I approach my day job."

Lt McDade was followed by speaker Lynette Brough, a CFAV from West Lowland Bn ACF who shared her experiences of being in the ACF.

The final speaker was Sandy MacDonald of Standard Life who gave an employer's perspective on recruiting former service personnel. He said: "We have found that the commercial benefits of employing service leavers with the skills they bring is enormous. Through our organisation's armed forces network we are able to make the most of this, and we look forward to working with defence in the future."

Dinner was followed by the presentation of awards by Lt Gen Nugee.

HRFCA-area winners were: Aberdeenshire Council; Aberdeen Considine; Angus Council; Argyll and Bute Council; Driver Hire Dundee and Perth; Falkirk Football Club; Knockhill Racing Circuit; McLeod Glaziers Perth Ltd; NHS Orkney; Perth & Kinross Council; and Thorntons Law LLP.



Lt Gen Nugee presents silver awards to (from left) Knockhill Racing Circuit, NHS Orkney and Perth & Kinross Council.



HRFCA Chairman Captain Nick Dorman and Southern Area Chair Lt Col Gilly Moncur enjoying the reception.

Holyrood event helps raise awareness

Highland and Lowland RFCAs held a well-attended reception at The Scottish Parliament on November 21.

The event, hosted by Deputy Presiding Officer Linda Fabiani MSP, was aimed at raising awareness of the work of RFCAs, as well as the value to society of service in both the Reserves and Service Cadets.

To achieve this, members of the Associations, reservists, cadets and senior military figures were given the opportunity to meet MSPs. MSPs also had the chance to hear from a member of the reserve forces and a service cadet.

Colonel Helen Singh, the Commanding Officer of 205 Field Hospital, spoke of the transferable skills medical reservists – many of whom work within the NHS – brought to her unit and also highlighted the outstanding support the NHS has offered her as she pursued both her civilian NHS role and career in the Army Medical Services.

The audience then heard from Cadet Colour Sergeant Naomi Evans. She spoke of how, after joining the ACF as a shy cadet in 2013, she worked her way through the ranks as her self-confidence grew.

She has gained her bronze and silver Duke of Edinburgh awards and is also

working towards gold. She is hoping to eventually qualify as a nurse or combat medical technician, and is already a fully qualified first-aider. She has also been nominated for the Master Cadet course at Frimley Park.

She also told of the positive impact the Cadet Experience has had on thousands of young people from all over Scotland, developing potential, providing a sense of responsibility and the key role that the Sea, Army, Air and Combined Cadet Forces play in today's society.

The Associations are grateful to all the MSPs who made time in their busy schedules to attend the successful evening.



Speakers at the event included Colonel Helen Singh (left) and Cadet Colour Sergeant Naomi Evans.



Edward Mountain MSP (second left) with (from left) Colonel Charlie Wallace, HRFCA Chairman Captain Nick Dorman and HRFCA Chief Executive Mark Dodson.



Johann Lamont MSP (left) with Colonel Stephanie Jackman and HRFCA REED Michelle McKearnon.



Captain Peter Adams and HRFCA Deputy CE Andrew Macnaughton chat to Sea Cadets.



Supportive (Lowland-based) MSP Annie Wells.



Deputy Presiding Officer Linda Fabiani MSP hosted the evening.

New Head of Estates Fraser Kennedy

Fraser Kennedy has taken over from Randall Christie as HRFCA's Head of Estates (HoE).

Randall – who had been in the post for more than 18 years – has retired and is pursuing his passion of sailing by starting up a youth programme at Dundee's Ancrum Outdoor Centre.

Fraser has been with HRFCA for nearly five years as an Estates Officer for the eastern area.

In July he was promoted to a more senior role in recognition of the increased responsibilities in the five new builds he has completed and his role in the Dunfermline replacement Army Reserve Centre (ARC) project.

Prior to joining HRFCA, Fraser worked in the private sector for five years as a building surveyor which saw him travelling all over Scotland. He also spent

a year working for a housing association in Edinburgh surveying and managing a portfolio of properties.

Fraser has his work cut out maintaining the estate on a shrinking budget, but with an experienced and professional team behind him they will strive to continue delivering first-class projects.

RFCA is in a period of change moving from the Alexander model into the Next Generation Estates Contract which aims to be more customer focused. This will allow the team to liaise better with both contractor and customer to ensure best value for money is achieved.

Fraser got married in July 2017 to Rachel and they live in Midlothian along with their little black cat Mickey.

He is currently learning French – which makes good use of the time he spends commuting – in the hope it will help him during skiing trips in the Alps.

He has a love of travel and regularly blogs about his and Rachel's adventures at basilthegreat1.wordpress.com/



Fraser checks on progress at the Arbroath Joint Cadet Centre project.

612 Sqn celebrates 80th year in style

612 (County Of Aberdeen) Sqn RAuxAF raised a large glass and a sizeable donation in its 80th Anniversary Year.

2017 was a milestone year, celebrated in tremendous style by the Squadron.

In March, Wg Cdr Cowan and 6 Sqn reservists were privileged to represent the Sqn in Iceland to commemorate a 612 Sqn crew who tragically died at RAF Reykjavik. At the outbreak of WW II 612 Sqn were mobilised in an operational role as part of Coastal Command; subsequently deploying to Iceland in 1942. On the 15 Mar 1942, a Whitley aircraft S/N Z6807 crashed on take-off from RAF Reykjavik, with the loss of all seven of the 612 Sqn crew who are buried in the Commonwealth War Grave Cemetery in Fossvogar. The team researched that fateful day and individually gave briefs on the events leading up to the tragedy of the stricken aircraft.

OC 612 Sqn said: "Many of my team have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan but it is important for the current generation to remember the sacrifice made by those who have gone before them. In this case on the 75th anniversary we simply wanted to make sure our colleagues were not forgotten."

Over the past two years 612 Sqn have initiated a tremendous working relationship with the United States Air Force 911th Aeromedical Evacuation Sqn (911 AES) who reside at their airbase in Pittsburgh.

In August this year an invitation was extended to the Sqn OC of 911 to visit 612 Sqn over a training weekend. They wasted no time in organising a ten-man team to board one of their KC-135 Aeromedical-configured aircraft and set off for Scotland. As there was not sufficient fire cover to land the aircraft at Leuchars Stn the aircraft planning team had arranged to fly in to Edinburgh Airport instead. It was a fantastic four-day visit which saw the American guests participate in some challenging Adventurous Training (AT) that stretched them to the limits and ensured they were taken outside their comfort zones.



The charity abseil off the Forth Bridge.



Wreaths laid in Iceland.



The Anniversary Dinner was held in October.



80-mile cycle from Dyce to Leuchars.



In-flight training on a US KC-135 medevac aircraft.

2017's Annual Continuous Training (ACT) exercise was undertaken at Nescliffe training area in Shropshire during June. It was a joint medical exercise that saw Army, Royal Air Force and USAF medical reservists working together to tackle both a testing field element as well as exercising a Role 1 Enhanced field hospital. The DI staff ensured all participating personnel were placed under pressure as they generated a multitude of casualties that are likely to be presented at a field hospital when in conflict on operations. The extreme hot weather in June during the exercise period ensured the training was made doubly difficult for those participating, so much so that enforced water breaks had to be factored into the working day schedule.

At the beginning of the 2017 training year, 612 Sqn personnel voted on a number of Royal Air Force associated charities that were shortlisted that the Sqn could adopt as its main focus to raise money throughout the year. After the votes were counted the decision was made to install the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund (RAFBF) as the main beneficiaries for all Sqn charity events throughout 2017.

The effort, determination and kindness of personnel and supporters to help raise money for this worthy charity during the year has been outstanding to say the least and at the last count the Sqn had raised over £7000 to date by participating in the following charity events.

- 80-mile cycle ride from Dyce to Leuchars;

- WO Styles completing a 150 mile Charity Tour of Suffolk with Ipswich Town Football Club;
- Charity Quiz at Sqn Training Weekend;
- 612 Sqn Relay Team completing Hairy Haggis Run Edinburgh Marathon;
- Charity Abseil off the Forth Bridge.

October saw the Sqn host an Anniversary Dinner in the Warrant Officers' & Sergeants' Mess at Leuchars Station. Many current and past Sqn personnel attended a fantastic evening to celebrate the 80th Anniversary in style. The night was made all the more special when the Guest of Honour Lord Beaverbrook (Inspector General, RAF Reserves) read out a small note of congratulations to the Sqn from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Tayforth UOTC take on OMM challenge

Running around the Lake District through late October gales may not be everyone's cup of tea, but this is exactly what the eight teams Tayforth UOTC entered into the Original Mountain Marathon (OMM) found themselves doing.

The OMM is a two-day orienteering event, held in 2017 in the Cumbrian hills. It attracts hundreds of competitors, both civilian and military, from all around the world.

The majority of Tayforth's pairs were competing in the short course event. Given five hours each day to pick up as many points as possible from a number of checkpoints, teams had their fitness, planning and navigation skills put to the test.

Each team also had to carry with them all the food and equipment necessary for an overnight camp. Striking the balance between weight and comfort proved to be tricky. The more competitive Officer Cadets, having stripped all non-vital kit from their



packs, subsequently endured a rather wet and cramped night's sleep, much to the glee of those who had lugged heavier loads around all day.

The first day proved particularly challenging due to inclement weather. 60mph+ winds, rain, and low cloud restricting visibility to as little as ten metres. At times this made finding the marked campsite challenging enough, let alone checkpoints perched atop mountains. Team Tayforth performed admirably, however, and all teams

demonstrated strong proficiency for map-reading. Even the 2nd Lieutenant team managed not to get lost, thereby defying centuries of tradition! OCdts MacMaster and Hetherington are worthy of particular mention, achieving the twelfth best score on day two of the medium course, placing them a creditable 33rd overall in a field 232 strong.

A worthwhile weekend was had by all and Tayforth are looking forward to returning for the 2018 event.

Taking the lead

Luxuriously housed in the Officers' Mess at Leuchars, 13 officer cadets appointed to Tayforth's Student Governance participated in a leadership weekend.

The weekend commenced with a tour of the Mess, followed by a quick change for a mildly (very) competitive match of ultimate Frisbee.

Covered in sand and scrapes, the astroturf pitch took no prisoners. Forty minutes later red-faced and adrenaline filled we returned to the Mess to take part in discussions about leadership.

After an informative hour, we were told to go get into civvies to take part in a "mystery afternoon activity".

A little nervous the group packed into the minibus, only to be delighted by the destination: not only a

go-karting arena, but also an indoor laser tag arena!

We started with laser tag, which was the most tactical some of us have ever been. People were on their belt buckles everywhere, the intensity increased due to the fact the staff were participating. Half an hour later, after what felt like three years of warfare, the laser flashes concluded and we reluctantly handed our weapons back, drenched in sweat, hearts beating.

It was then time to hit the go-karting arena and battle it out to find the Lewis Hamiltons amongst us. After some seriously speedy competition, Duncan Smith from St Andrews reigned supreme. Both these "mystery afternoon activities" not only were incredibly enjoyable but really created a sense of teamwork and trust between us all. Although it has to be said the highlight



of my afternoon was laser zapping the CO from behind.

We then returned to Leuchars and got suited and booted for a formal dinner night. Met by delicious food and good company, the Officers' Mess was a fantastic location for a dinner to celebrate our new leadership roles. The night concluded with whacky games, a highlight of which was putting tights with a tennis ball on our heads and knocking over bottles: I'll leave the rest to your imagination.

On the Sunday we continued discussions on

leadership and what makes a good teacher. Knee-deep in acronyms we learnt our LUVSIKRSMs and our QNPSLs and came away with a deeper understanding of how to teach and how to lead. We then went outside to learn how to lead Drill: it is fair to say some of us do not have the voice of a sergeant major yet!

The weekend concluded with everyone feeling more comfortable as a leader and trusting each other as part of a team. A fantastic weekend enjoyed by all!

SJUO Harwell

RAF Lossiemouth engagement day

RAF Lossiemouth hosted an HRFCA Employer Engagement Day.

Project Officer, Flying Officer Chloe McFarlane, the Station Adjutant, put together an interesting and informative programme, as well as making sure the visitor party was in the right place at the right time.

Transition Team Leader Wing Commander Dave Allen briefed visitors on the current roles and future expansion of the Station.

As well as an extra Typhoon fast jet squadron, major investment is being made in facilities and infrastructure to accommodate new P-8 Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft, nine of which will be formed into two front line squadrons and an Operational Conversion Unit.

A highlight of the October visit was a detailed briefing by the No 1 (Fighter) Squadron 'Uncle', Squadron Leader DJ Greenhowe, who explained the history and current role of the Squadron, including its key function in contributing to the UK's Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) capability, with aircraft and crews poised 24/7 to ensure the integrity of the UK's airspace, a task they undertake for real on a regular basis.

Sqn Ldr Greenhowe, a Tornado navigator and Qualified Weapons Instructor, is now a full-time reservist who provides vital continuity and depth of experience for both his Squadron and the Station. Not surprisingly, when it comes to left-field requests and queries he finds himself the go-to guy for both his Squadron and Station; never a dull moment!

TYPHOONS

During the 1 Squadron visit, visitors were able to get up close and personal with Typhoons as well as with a famous ancestor in the form of a Spitfire F Mk 21 LA255, which shares the Typhoons' hangar.

Following lunch, visitors were briefed on reserve units on the station, including No 2622 Squadron RAuxAF Regt, the Moray Flight of 602 Squadron and Fulmar Flight, recently formed and manned by Volunteer Ex-Regular Reserve (VERR) personnel. By all accounts a great success, Fulmar Flight provides a pool of trained and experienced service men and women who can be called upon as required to support non-deployed operations.

OC 2622, Sqn Ldr Andy Liggat, explained the challenges and rewards of reserve service in his Squadron, and how the key to recruitment and retention is 'scratching the itch', encouraging reservists to join and stay with the Squadron with a range of exciting and rewarding training activities.

Overall it was a most successful and useful day, with visitors gaining insights into the current commitments and future of the RAF's only main operating base in Scotland, and keen to repeat the experience. With the RAF about to begin its RAF 100 centenary programme in earnest, Lossiemouth will hopefully remain at the forefront of local interest throughout 2018 and beyond.



Sqn Ldr DJ Greenhowe, No 1 (F) Sqn Uncle, briefs the visitors on Typhoon capabilities.





IED Training Solutions returns to its roots

The team behind Arbroath-based safety training company IED Training Solutions has gone back to its military roots by providing civilian workplace training for Army Reservists.

IED Training Solutions – set up in 2015 by former Royal Marines Ian Clark and Paul ‘Baz’ Barrett – delivered the UK’s only industry-approved trauma stress management (TSM) course, as well as First Aid training, to a number of Reservist soldiers from 236 Supply Squadron 156 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps based at Haldane Barracks in Salford.

Both courses are designed to cover trauma and stress in the civilian workplace – not the military environment – and were provided as part of the Army’s commitment to offering Regular and Reserve personnel learning credits.

The course was part of the Squadron’s Op FORTIFY weekend, a two-day event aimed at allowing those taking part the opportunity to gain civilian-recognised qualifications. The soldiers are entitled to an annual allowance to contribute towards life-long learning initiatives which can benefit them – and potentially their employers – in their civilian lives.

IED Training Director Ian and his colleague Alan Starr delivered the TSM course – the only one of its kind to be endorsed by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), the world’s largest professional health and safety membership organisation.

Ian said: “It was a genuine privilege to get the opportunity to return to a military environment and deliver our IOSH-approved Trauma Stress Management and first aid courses. The soldiers involved

showed great enthusiasm and now have the knowledge and skills to identify potential responses to a traumatic event in a civilian workplace, and how to support the people involved. The benefits of this training to the Reservists and their civilian employers cannot be underestimated.”

The TSM course is a proactive, peer group-delivered management strategy that aims to keep employees of organisations functioning after incidents or accidents that may otherwise manifest into worry, stress, anxiety or depression for the person concerned.

Based on clinical research – which

shows that most people who encounter a traumatic incident or accident can adjust well and suffer no long-term ill effects – it was developed by Ian and Baz, who deliver the course along with a number of former Royal Marines colleagues who work as consultants with IED Training Solutions.

HSE statistics show that some 11.3 million working days are lost in the UK due to stress, anxiety or depression, at an estimated cost to employers of £3.7 billion.

■ IED signed the Armed Forces Covenant at RM Condor last August. They also received a Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Bronze Award.



IED Directors Ian Clark (left) and Baz Barrett with the Armed Forces Covenant and the Defence ERS Bronze Award.



Back, from left, Russell Sim, Philip Briscoe, Lt Col Matt Sheldrick, Nick Allan and Erik Archer. Front, from left, Chamber Chief Executive Damon Scott and Chamber President James Stewart Rennie.

HRFCA covenant coup in Clydebank

Dunbartonshire Chamber of Commerce has become the first Chamber in the UK to sign the Armed Forces Covenant along with all members of its board and their companies.

In doing so the Chamber and board members have made a commitment 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 17 January signing – by Chief Executive Damon Scott and board members James Stewart Rennie (Rennie McInnes LLP); Russell Sim (Sim Property Management Ltd); Nick Allan (Nick Allan

and Associates Ltd); Erik Archer (Archer Associates); and Philip Briscoe (European Circuits Ltd) – took place at the Chamber's HQ in Clydebank. The document was co-signed on behalf of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) by Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Sheldrick, the Commanding Officer of 7 SCOTS.

Chamber Chief Executive Damon Scott said: "We are proud to be the first Chamber and board in the country to sign the Armed Forces Covenant.

"The wide variety of skills members of the Armed Forces community bring to a workforce makes them an invaluable asset. By partnering with Defence we are aiming to raise awareness of their value to the business community."

The Covenant signing was organised by HRFCA.



Aberdeenshire Council demonstrated its commitment to supporting our Armed Forces by signing the Armed Forces Covenant on November 22.

The pledge was signed by Council Chief Executive Jim Savege and co-signed on behalf of the Ministry of Defence and Defence Relationship Management by Lt Col Geraint Davies, the recently-arrived Commanding Officer of Aberdeen Universities Officer Training Corps (AUOTC).

The council also recently received the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award at Edinburgh Castle (see page 5).

Large and small, we welcome them all!



NHS Western Isles Chief Executive Gordon Jamieson and Capt Dalzel-Job shake hands following the signing of the Covenant.

More than 2000 businesses across the UK have now signed the Armed Forces Covenant, as organisations of all sizes and sectors pledge their support for Reservists, Veterans and the wider Armed Forces family.

This variety was very much in evidence in Stornoway in December when two very different businesses put pen to paper in the workplace.

NHS Western Isles re-signed their original Covenant with new pledges and a desire to offer more support to Reservists.

Chief Executive Gordon Jamieson commented on how the NHS has benefitted from medical Reservists bringing back new skills and techniques from their deployment, in particular trauma care learned at Camp Bastion. This work has been so innovative and successful that

most NHS hospitals across the UK now use the so-called Bastion Protocol in dealing rapidly with trauma patients' radiology requirement. An excellent example of skills acquired in the military being transferred into the civilian workplace.

Blackhouse Bakery then became the first private sector business in the Outer Hebrides to sign the Covenant, with Director Becca Engebretsen keen to show support for the first Reservist on their workforce, James Morgan.

"James has been working for us for six years now. He is a great employee and we will always back him in whatever he chooses to do outside of the bakery," said Becca.

"Having been in the Cadets myself I understand a bit about what the Army has to offer and we are really pleased that James wants to give up his spare time to pursue a career in the Army Reserves. Signing the Armed Forces Covenant is our way of showing our support."

Both of the Covenants were co-signed on behalf of the MoD by Captain Malcolm Dalzel-Job, OC C Company of 7 SCOTS.

HRFCA Regional Employer Engagement Director Michelle McKearnon travelled to Stornoway to witness the two signings.

She said: "The two Covenants demonstrate that every business, regardless of size has something to gain from recruiting and working with Armed Forces personnel and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers.

"The business benefits from the amount of personal development training which their Reservist staff receive – up to £8K per year – and from the skills which they bring into the workforce. Organisations who have signed the Covenant can also be put forward for Bronze, Silver and Gold awards through the Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme; and we will be working with both NHS Western Isles and the Blackhouse Bakery to help them achieve these standards."



Becca Engebretsen and Capt Dalzel-Job during and (right) after the signing.



HRFCA helps to celebrate successes

HRFCA attended the Forth Valley Chamber of Commerce Business Awards 2017.

The glitzy event – held at Dunblane Hydro – celebrated the successes of businesses from across Stirling, Falkirk and Clackmannanshire.

HRFCA sponsored the Developing the Young Workforce category which featured finalists The Robertson Group, Rooftec (Scotland) Ltd, and Trossachs SAR.

Head of Engagement Dai John had the honour of presenting the prize – and announcing the winner – The Robertson Group (pictured right with Dai).

Robertson is one of the UK's largest independently owned construction, infrastructure and support services companies. They have offices across Scotland and the North and Midlands of England.

Other winners included Stirling Gin, Siabann, SV24-7 Vending Ltd, Ecosse Holdings, Neil McLean, Lou-Mac Fitness, and Falkirk Football Community Foundation.

Entertainment on the night came from pipes and drums outfit Clanadonia.

Social Bite co-founder Alice Thompson congratulated the winners via a video message. A charity collection then followed for the social enterprise chain of sandwich shops which donates all profits to homeless charities in Scotland.

HRFCA guests on the night included Wendy Goucher and Matthew Pemble of Goucher Consulting, Thom McLoughlin of Police Scotland, and Kristine Johnson of Stirling Council.

Helping with the hosting were HRFCA's Regional Employer Engagement Director Ron Macgregor and Highland REEG Chairman Graham Struthers.



Military/business bonds reinforced

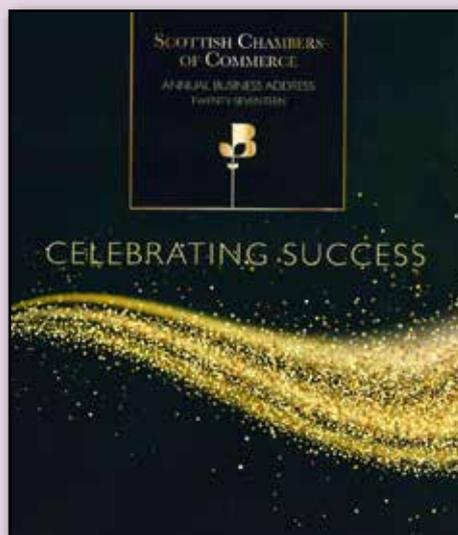
HRFCA were in Glasgow on 7 December for the Scottish Chambers of Commerce Annual Business Address 2017.

The event, hosted by TV presenter Kay Adams, held at the Glasgow Hilton, brought together an audience of senior executives from across Scotland's business community, local and central government.

The address given by Tim Allan, President of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce, included reference to the value to business of armed forces reservists, veterans and the service cadet organisations.

Mr Allan made special reference to the work done in this area by Forth Valley CoC under its former CEO, not sparing HRFCA REED Michelle McKearnon's blushes by name-checking her in referencing her former Chamber as being the first in the UK to win the coveted ERS Gold Award.

Other Chambers in HRFCA's area also up in lights during the event for their involvement with the ERS and Armed



Forces Covenant Schemes included Aberdeen & Grampian CoC (with the HRFCA Chairman prominently featured in the obligatory photographic record to provide the evidence) and Fife CoC.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon also spoke, stressing her Government's focus

on making Scotland the best place in the UK to do business.

Keynote speaker on the night was Steve Smart, Senior Vice President, CGI UK and Member of the CGI UK Leadership Team, who shared his thoughts on growing the success of Scotland's businesses, including in CGI's field of high-technology.

Mr Smart referenced Scotland's success as world leader in the production of micro satellites harnessing the most complex manufacturing processes, citing firms such as Clyde Space helping Glasgow to become the foremost satellite-building city in Europe. The Scottish space industry, he said, has created over 7000 high quality jobs and contributes over £130 million to the Scottish economy, paving the way for Scotland to potentially become home of the UK's first spaceport.

Overall, the event provided an excellent networking opportunity and helped to reinforce mutually-beneficial linkages between Scottish business and the armed forces to which the Scottish RFCAs contribute.



Above: Cpl Graham during his section's fieldcraft exercise.
Right: Cpl Ross Brown and Cpl Stuart Graham were assigned to separate platoons for the week.



Cadets enhance their leadership skills

A pair of Army Cadets from Forres have taken part in a week-long course to build upon their personal leadership abilities.

Cadet Corporal Ross Brown (16) and Cadet Corporal Stuart Graham (16), from 1st Battalion the Highlanders' Forres Detachment, attended the Tri-Service Cadet Leadership Course in Brecon, Wales.

The course is open to cadets aged 16-18 from all three services and is designed to develop initiative and self-reliance. It is orientated around the leadership abilities within the cadet Fieldcraft syllabus.

Throughout the week Cpls Brown and Graham took part in various leadership scenarios. It wasn't all Fieldcraft based, as they were given the chance to see the Welsh countryside by taking part in a navigation exercise to the top of Pen y Fan – the highest peak in South Wales – with plenty of sunshine on their way to the summit.

Upon his return to Forres, Cpl Brown said: "It was such a good course and I would definitely encourage those eligible to apply.

"It helps so much in boosting your ability to be a leader and also enhances your knowledge of field tactics at the same time.

"It's not an easy course but definitely worth it."

Three Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders ACF cadets are set for the voyage of a lifetime in 2018.

The Helensburgh trio will join fellow cadets and service personnel from across the country on the voyage aboard the Lord Nelson in The Lord Dannatt Round Britain Challenge in association with the Jubilee Sailing Trust.

The voyage will commemorate the centenary year of the end of the First World War.

The cadets are Cadet Corporal Jessica Noble (16), Cadet Lance Corporal Wallis Jamieson (17) and Cadet Lance Corporal Sophie Craig (16).

They will set sail across two legs of the journey on a voyage of remembrance, adventure and personal development.

The crew will change every 10 days when the ship docks in each capital city, and in each 'changeover' port there will be a service of remembrance.

During each 10-day voyage, 12 injured service men and 24 cadets and instructors aged 16-25 will work together to sail the ship to the next capital city, they will climb the mast, helm the ship, set the sails and more.



The A&SH cadets are split across the first two legs of the four leg journey: leg 1 from London to Edinburgh from July 25 to August 3, 2018, leg 2 from Edinburgh to Belfast from August 4-13, leg 3 from Belfast to Cardiff from August 14-23, and leg 4 from Cardiff to London from August 24 to September 2.

A quarter of a wooden shield will be presented to the crew in each capital city, and at the end of the challenge the final piece of the shield will be presented in London where the cadets will march

the shield to the Tower of London. The shield will form a WW1 memorial. While on board the crew will also participate in their Institute of Leadership and management, Level 3 Award.

SSI Fay Young of the Helensburgh and Arrochar Detachment said: "I am extremely proud of the team and their commitment to each other. They will benefit greatly from the challenge personally as well as the chance to work towards their Gold Duke of Edinburgh and an award in leadership and management."

National recognition for drummer Jodie

A Highland Drummer from Fort William has received national recognition for her dedication to Cadet Piping & Drumming.

Cadet Colour Sergeant Jodie Standen (16), from 1st Battalion The Highlanders ACF Fort William Detachment, was awarded the BAE Systems Recognising Excellence Award in Piping & Drumming.

The ceremony took place at the annual Army Cadet Force Association Dinner, held in the De Vere Grand Connaught Rooms in Covent Garden, London.

CSgt Standen is everything that a cadet should aspire to be. She is dedicated to not only furthering herself, but also helps to ensure junior cadets within her Battalion and Detachment strive to reach their goals. Although she is not a member of the Pipes & Drums Detachment, Jodie makes an almost four-hour round trip from Fort William to Culloden to take part in the Pipe Band Detachment's training nights where she holds the position of Cadet Drum Major.

Jodie became the Lead Drum Major for the National Cadet Pipes and Drums during their performance with the Massed Bands and Pipes & Drums of the Household Division on Horse Guards Parade in June. A daunting task which meant she had to learn a completely new set of drill, Jodie rose to the occasion, putting on a fantastic performance of which she was also commended by the Senior Drum Major of the Guards Division. Jodie has also completed her BTEC Music Diploma with CVQO and is currently completing her Duke of Edinburgh Silver award.

Jodie was presented with her award by Lt Gen (Retd) Andrew Graham, President of the ACFA. The presentation was watched by her proud parents, who are also her Fort William Detachment adults, Company Sergeant Major Instructor Margaret Standen (39) and Sergeant Major Instructor James Standen (47).

Jodie was not the only member of the Highland Battalion who attended the dinner. Four members of the Battalion's Pipes & Drums were invited to perform as a Pipers Quartet: Cadet Pipe Major John McLaren (16) and Cadet Lance Corporal Alan Hasson (15), from Culloden Pipes & Drums Detachment, Cadet Callum Clark (16), from Thurso Detachment, and Cadet Corporal Innes Stone (16) from Elgin Detachment.



CSgt Jodie Standen (front) with her BAE Award in Piping & Drumming alongside parents James and Margaret.

Forthcoming Events

24 March	HRFCA Annual Association Meeting (Perth)
21 April	Royal Gun Salute, Stirling Castle
27-29 April	Exercise EXECUTIVE STRETCH
10 May	HRFCA Council Meeting (Dundee)
15 May	CRFCA Board Meeting & Chairmen's Dinner (London)
16 May	CRFCA Council Meeting (London)
1 June	Armed Forces Day Clackmannanshire (Alloa)
25 June	Armed Forces Day Flag-Raising (events nationwide)
27 June	Reserves Day
30 June	Armed Forces Day
30 June	Stirling Military Show
30 June	Piping at Forres



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

Contributions are always welcome from readers

Contact: hi-offcomms@rfca.mod.uk
or 01382 631027