

High-Light



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



Beating Retreat
– Pages 10 & 11

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Busy time for staff and units

As is usually the case it has been a very busy Autumn period for all the HRFCAs staff and the reserve and cadet units we support.

As this edition shows, there have been a large number of cadet and reserve exercises, employer engagement and employer award events and we are in the middle of the part of the year when most construction and estates maintenance activity occurs. This is also a busy period in the cadet training cycle and our Professional Support Staff have been very active in support of this.

On the estates side I am pleased to report that plans to replace three single service cadet huts, deemed beyond economic repair, with new, modular construction facilities are under way with work starting at Newport on 2 December, to be followed at Bo'ness and Banff in 2020.

At the same time refurbishment of 21 cadet huts has been ongoing across the whole of our area, as has the renovation of Strathmore Avenue, Dundee for the Royal Navy and Royal Marine reserves and a number of small projects on 11 Army Reserve Centres.

Our three Area Committee Meetings passed off in a flurry of activity over a 10 day period in October, swiftly followed by the Gold and Silver Employer Recognition Scheme awards in London and Edinburgh for a record number of companies or organisations.



Chief Executive Mark Dodson speaking at the ERS Silver Awards.

Cadet music has again been catching the headlines with another stunning performance by the tri-Service cadet pipes and drums for Her Majesty The Queen at Balmoral in August, and more recently the military bands and some pipers and drummers performed at the Nanchang Tattoo in southern China in October.

Photos and links to that excellent performance can be found on our website and Facebook page.

The Association has disbursed nearly £30,000 in grants so far this financial year to reserve and cadet units to support welfare, adventure training, battlefield tours, music and so on and our sister organisation, the Highland Cadet Forces Trust, has disbursed a further £1200 to cadet projects. Details of this very worthwhile charity can be found below.

There will be much that has gone on unreported and we always welcome articles from units, so please keep feeding them to us.

Mark Dodson



Her Majesty The Queen with HRFCAs Chief Executive Brigadier Mark Dodson (centre) and Lowland RFCA Chief Executive Colonel Robbie Gibson at the Balmoral Beating Retreat.

**Highland Cadet
Forces Trust** 

If you wish to make a charitable donation to the Highland Cadet Forces Trust, the bank details are:

A/C no: 30401028

Sort code: 83-91-46 (VAF Bank)

A Direct Debit mandate form is also enclosed in this edition of *High-Light*.

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Representatives from the six winning organisations in the HRFCA area.

100 organisations strike Gold

Representatives from 100 winning organisations collected their Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold Awards during an event at the National Army Museum in London.

Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir Nick Carter spoke to those in attendance on 12 November before handing out certificates at a fantastic evening, which also included the Welsh Guard Drummers, Band of the Scots Guards Trumpeters and the Band of the Royal Yeomanry.

Six organisations from the HRFCA area received awards for their outstanding support to the Armed Forces community (there were 11 Scottish winners in total).

They were Aberdeenshire Council, IED Training Solutions, Knockhill Racing Circuit, Police Scotland, Stirling Council and West Dunbartonshire Council.

Bill Howatson (Aberdeenshire Council), Ian Clark (IED), Stuart Gray (Knockhill), Iain Livingstone (Police Scotland), Kristine Johnson (Stirling Council), and Geraldine Lyden (West Dunbartonshire Council) collected the awards.

The MOD's ERS Gold Awards represent the highest badge of honour available to those that employ and support those who serve, veterans, and their families.

The scheme continues to grow year on year with awardees doubling in the last 12 months, taking the total to 228.

Employers have won awards for initiatives such as employing veterans,



supporting individuals transitioning out of the Armed Forces into a new career and providing flexibility for Reservists. Included in the 100 recipients are 23 Local Authorities, 13 NHS Hospitals and Trusts and 29 SMEs.



Geraline Lyden and Rachel Robb of West Dunbartonshire Council with a pair of Coldstream Guards.



General Sir Nick Carter speaks to the attendees.

Silver celebration



The 2019 Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award winners.

Employers from all over Scotland gathered at Edinburgh Castle’s Great Hall to receive Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Silver Awards.

Around 100 guests looked on as 18 organisations were awarded with certificates from the Ministry of Defence (MOD) in recognition of the support they give to the Armed Forces community.

The 14 November event was jointly organised by Highland and Lowland RFCAs.

The guests and service hosts were welcomed to the Great Hall by Lt Col Hugo Clark, the Commander of Edinburgh Garrison. Master of Ceremonies for the evening was Highland RFCA Chief Executive Brigadier Mark Dodson.

Prior to the presentation of the awards, the audience listened to vignettes from the perspective of a Reservist, a Cadet Force Adult Volunteer (CFAV), and an employer.

First they heard from Scott Menzies, a Reservist with 6 SCOTS and an employee of Loganair, who spoke about his dual role as both a Reservist and an employee. Then Flying Officer Ashley Brooks of 1756 (Broxburn) Squadron spoke on the role of the CFAV. Finally, the audience heard from one of this year’s Gold Award winners, Police Scotland. Stefan Grzybowski, the organisation’s Early Careers Programme Lead, highlighted the benefits of employing Reservists.

This year saw a record number of Silver Awards achieved in Scotland. The winners from the HRFCA-area were: Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce, EVi Charge Points,

Fife Chamber of Commerce, High Life Highland, Scottish Water, SFB Consulting, and Sport Aberdeen.

The other Scottish award recipients were: BD Print, Bell Group, Bruce Stevenson Insurance Brokers, CAMOR, East Lothian Council, Forrest Precision Engineering, Glasgow Caledonian University, Heriot Watt University, NHS Dumfries & Galloway, Phoenix Group, and Wilson Auto Repairs.

The awards were presented by Major General Simon Brooks-Ward, Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff for Reserves

and Cadets. Maj Gen Brooks-Ward then spoke to the gathering on the importance of employing Reservists. He also made special mention of HRFCA’s ChamberFORCE initiative, which he praised as “excellent”.

Brigadier Dodson thanked the Band of HM Royal Marines for delivering music on the night to their customary high standard, and to Willie McIntyre and the young pipers from George Heriot’s School in Edinburgh who turned in a fine performance. He also thanked 154 (Scottish) Regiment RLC for helping with the background logistics.



Silver recipients included (from left) Fife Chamber of Commerce, Dundee & Angus Chamber of Commerce, High Life Highland, Sport Aberdeen, Scottish Water and EVi Charge Points.



Guests in the Laich Hall prior to the awards.



Marie Johnstone receives the Silver Award for SFB Consulting.



Employers look into the back of a field ambulance and (right) medical Reservists prepare to load a 'casualty'.



As part of the event, Dave Bywater, the chair of Basics Scotland, signed the Armed Forces Covenant with Group Captain Mike Priestly co-signing on behalf of Defence.



Insight into Reservist training

Employers gained a valuable insight into Reservist training courtesy of Leuchars-based 612 Squadron RAF Medical Reserves.

The event was timed to coincide with 612 Squadron's Annual Continuous Training (ACT) period and involved RAF Medical Reserves personnel from across the UK. This involved the Reservists being tested in a live deployed environment, showcasing some of their operational medical and leadership capabilities.

Following on from a short introduction about the Armed Forces Covenant and Defence Employer Recognition Scheme, employers were taken to the exercise area where Reservists were treating simulated casualties as part of an overseas humanitarian response scenario.

After a quick break for lunch, the group heard from a Reservist about their personal journey and how the experience had developed

them personally in their role as a paramedic with the Scottish Ambulance Service. This development included funded academic qualifications provided by the RAF, an operational deployment overseas, leadership and management skills, team working and becoming a more confident and resilient problem solver.

Guests who attended the October event included Pauline Howie (CEO Scottish Ambulance Service), Edward Dunning (Surgeon, NHS Fife), Dave Bywater (Chair Basics Scotland), and Sarah Dickie (Interim Executive Nurse Director, NHS Tayside).

The event also saw an Armed Forces Covenant signing with Perthshire Charity BASICS Scotland putting pen to paper to show their support to



From left: Jim Dickie (HRFCA), Wing Commander Mark Colligan (CO 612 Sqn), Pauline Howie (CEO Scottish Ambulance Service), Edward Dunning (NHS Fife), Sarah Dickie (NHS Tayside), Dave Bywater (Basics Scotland), Group Captain Mike Priestly (Commander Medical RAF), Alan Cowan (HRFCA), and Sharon Swash (HRFCA).

the Armed Forces. BASICS Scotland Chair Dave Bywater signed the document, with Group Captain Mike Priestly, Commander Medical Royal Air Force Medical Services co-signing on behalf of the Ministry of Defence.

The visit to Leuchars Station was organised by HRFCA Regional Employer Engagement Director Jim Dickie.

Jim is also a serving Reservist with 612 Sqn.

Exercise JOINT WARRIOR took place off the West Coast in October and organisations from West Dunbartonshire visited HM Naval Base Clyde as guests of HRFCA to find out more.

Guests were welcomed into the Command Conference room to meet Commodore Donald Duill, who is in charge of the Faslane Base. The Commodore shared several facts about the base including that, as the largest of the Naval Bases in the UK, it houses over 3,000 people. It is also the only defence authority to directly partner with the local authority, Argyll and Bute Council.

The employers were then taken to the operations floor where Exercise JOINT WARRIOR is controlled by a number of teams comprised of Reservists and Regulars. With over 3,700 individuals participating in realistic, multi-threat scenarios the operations teams are vital in ensuring each component of the exercise runs smoothly.

Speaking to the Reservists gave employers the chance to hear about how their skills can benefit employers and transfer positively into the civilian workplace.

Captain Paul Pitcher, Captain Joint Tactical Exercise Planning Staff, said: "Reservists provide civilian expertise where regulars can't, specifically in areas such as IT and media. On this exercise 66% of the Royal Navy are Reservists, 7% Army and 49% RAF; the contribution made by the Tri-Service Reserves in supporting the delivery of a major multinational NATO exercise is invaluable."

After lunch in the wardroom, guests were welcomed aboard HMS Grimsby – a 21-year-old Minebreaker ship. The crew includes a team of bomb disposal divers responsible for locating and disposing of WW1 and WW2 mines.

Following a tour of the vessel, guests headed for the Bridge where Louise Worrall, Principal St James Wealth Management put pen to paper and signed the Armed Forces Covenant. The document was co-signed on behalf of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) by CO HMS Grimsby, Lieutenant Commander Hazelwood.

The day was rounded off with a visit to the Royal Marines at 43 Commando and a presentation by the Commanding Officer, Colonel Andy Muddiman.

Employers visit Faslane



Above – Employers, HMS Grimsby crew and Royal Naval personnel.
Below – Louise Worrall and Lt Cdr Hazelwood signed the Covenant on the HMS Grimsby bridge.





Yeomanry House was the venue for a busy Eastern Area Meeting.

Members given HRFCA update

October saw members of HRFCA attend meetings in the Eastern, Southern and Northern committee areas of the Association.

On the 22nd the Eastern Area meeting took place at Yeomanry House Army Reserve Centre in Cupar, with Area Committee chairman Lt Col Gregor Lindsay presiding.

Members, including unit representatives and the new Lord-Lieutenant of Perth and Kinross Stephen Leckie, were briefed by HRFCA Chief Executive Brigadier Mark Dodson, on a variety of areas within the Association. These included: key staff changes, the creation of an Engagement and Outreach sub-committee, estate development of Dunfermline ARC, the Cadet Expansion programmes within schools and employer engagement activities.

Commanding Officers or Unit Representatives were invited to give an

update on the past six months since the last Annual Association Meeting, before enjoying a capability demonstration by Reservists of the Scottish and North Irish Yeomanry (SNIY). The evening came to a close with a hot supper and a further chance for guests to discuss Eastern Area business.

7 SCOTS' Army Reserve Centre in Stirling provided the venue for the Southern Area meeting on the 24th. The meeting was well attended by non-military members which generated a good discussion on how to encourage businesses to be Armed Forces-friendly.

Following formal proceedings led by Area Chair Lt Col Gilly Moncur, a team of Reservists from 225 (Scottish) Medical Regiment were awarded The Ulysses Trust Prince of Wales's Award 2019 in the Volunteer Reserve Category. Corporal David Toshack, who pitched the idea to kayak down the Amazon, was presented with the award by the Lord-Lieutenant

for Stirling and Falkirk, Mr Alan Simpson. Before heading home, 154 Med Sqn gave guests the opportunity to get 'hands on' and try out giant operation, CPR techniques and casualty bandaging.

Finally, on the 29th, the Northern Area Committee members gathered at the Highlanders' Museum at Fort George, near Inverness. Having welcomed employers to a dinner the night before, Chairman Cdr Angus Ross encouraged members to look at how the Association can better support the Cadets in their transition from school to future education or employment.

Following on from this, members were delighted to hear from three RAF Air Cadets who took part in work experience at Inverness Airport over the summer. Over the course of three days the Cadets got an insight into air traffic control, fire safety and security procedures. After a group discussion, members enjoyed a hot lunch provided by the museum.



154 Medical Squadron gave Southern Area guests the chance to brush up on their medical knowledge.



Sqn Ldr Chris Beckley of 2622 (Highland) Squadron speaks at the employer dinner ahead of the Northern Area meeting.



161 (Highland) Sqn cadets shared their insights of work experience at Inverness Airport with Northern members.



Above – There was a strong turnout at the Southern Area meeting.

Left – A team from 225 Med Regt was presented with The Ulysses Trust Prince of Wales's Award 2019.



The Eastern Area meeting saw members trying out an SNIY Jackal and (inset) night vision equipment.

Cadets entertain Queen



The Service Cadets' Massed Pipes and Drums.

The Service Cadets' Massed Pipes and Drums had the honour of Beating Retreat before Her Majesty The Queen at Balmoral Castle on 8 August.

ACF cadets from as far afield as Northern Ireland joined forces with their RAF Cadet and Combined Cadet Force counterparts for the spectacular performance in sunny Royal Deeside.

After a packed week of rehearsals at Gordon Barracks in Aberdeen the cadets certainly produced a performance fit for royalty.

The Massed Pipes and Drums came from the following cadet units: Army Cadet Force – The Black Watch Battalion, 1st Battalion the Highlanders, 2nd Battalion the Highlanders, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Battalion, West Lowland Battalion, Lothian and Borders Battalion, 2nd Battalion Northern Ireland. Royal Air Force Air Cadets – Highland Wing, West

Scotland Wing, North-East Scotland Wing, South-East Scotland Wing, York Wing, London & South East Region. Combined Cadet Force – Campbell College CCF.

Piping and Drumming has a long tradition in the Cadet Forces, but has taken a significant step forward since the establishment of a structured approach to tuition over the last 13 years.

A week-long course of instruction is held at Cameron Barracks, Inverness around Easter each year for some 200 youngsters. This concludes with Retreats in Dingwall and Inverness and this year they mounted a spectacular Retreat at Edinburgh Castle in late April.

This was the fourth occasion on which the Massed Pipes and Drums played before the Queen at Balmoral. In 2012 the cadets had the privilege of playing at the Jubilee Garden Party and also Beat Retreat in 2014 and 2016. Several of the cadets taking part will already have played on two occasions, but for many this was their first time.

The programme of music was jam packed, with each cadet committing all the music and moves to memory.

The music included renditions of: *The Battle of the Somme*, *Scotland Forever*, *Balmoral*, *Cullen Bay*, *Highland Cathedral*, *Scotland the Brave*, *The Black Bear*, and *Highland Laddie*.

Prior to the March Off, Cadet Drum Major Paula Paulina from 2nd Battalion the Highlanders ACF came forward to request permission from Her Majesty to take leave.

Following the performance, cadets and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers were introduced to Her Majesty who took the time to chat to and congratulate each individual on a job well done.

The performance also marked the final day of involvement with the ACF of Colonel Malcolm MacBean MBE after a hugely impressive commitment to Cadets spanning 52 years.





The band performs before Her Majesty.



Cadet representatives are introduced to Her Majesty by Chief Executive Mark Dodson.



Cadets (above and below) are introduced to the Queen by Major Ross Munro.



Right: Adult volunteers meet the Queen.





Tayforth Universities Officers' Training Corps (Tayforth UOTC) took part in Exercise Northern Fox Cadet 19, a Level 3 adventurous training exercise in Bavaria, Germany.

Tayforth UOTC trains potential officers who are undertaking studies at St Andrews, Dundee, Abertay and Stirling universities.

The team of 45 flew from Edinburgh to Memmingen Airport in late August. Upon arrival at Drei Muhlen Multi Activity Lodge the team were briefed about the challenges ahead. The exercise commenced with poor weather and a strenuous two days of hillwalking in the Austrian Alps involving scrambling. This instantly put the majority of the group outside their comfort zones with the steepness of the hills, the unsteady ground and the poor visibility. After summiting the Grunhorn at 2,020 metres, the group descended through the mist to the sound of nearby cowbells, to the area chosen to stay the night.

In stark contrast to the conditions on day one, the team woke to glorious alpine sunshine. With limbs aching from the previous climbs, they pushed themselves up the next peak in order to take in the beautiful views that were hidden the day before. They were also able to appreciate the stark ridgeline that had been traversed, thankful that they had not been able to see the 2,000 metre drop the day before. The team then ambled down into the valley passing various sights and red-faced Austrians as they trudged up the hill, who greeted them with an encouraging Grüß Gott (the local Bavarian greeting).

On day three the team travelled back into Austria for rock climbing. All began on a beginner slab, top-roping under the tuition of the local instructors. The confidence within the group was gradually built, as climbers learned to trust their belayers and belayers their climbers, before progressing onto more challenging rock faces. Developing their techniques and facing their fears, they were able to conquer some very technical routes. The



following day saw more vertical climbs as well as abseiling and learning how to boulder. This enabled many of the group to face their fear of heights and build confidence in themselves and each other.

The next Adventure Training discipline was kayaking on a placid lake. In preparation for navigating the River Illa the following day, the group were taught basic kayaking techniques. The group also learned some swimmer recovery methods. With some refreshing capsizes in

the freezing river, the skills were honed in preparation for the river trip. The trip itself proved to be a challenging day out.

The next challenge was to take on white water rafting (pictured, above) through the grade three rapids in 10-man rafts on the River Inn. The team struck out onto the river, bouncing and bucking gallantly down under several bridges and, as they passed the home of Arnold Schwarzenegger's mother, there was agreement that we would be back! Disembarking from the rafts, the group stormed area 47, the largest water park in Austria, wearily eyeing up the 27 metre diving board and the gnarly adventure brand sponsored slides. Gathering all the courage they had left, the majority of the team took on the formidable drops. This allowed those frightened of heights to face their fears.

After nine days of excitement and challenges the team departed Drei Muhlen and headed to the city of Munich, visiting and learning about Dachau, one of the first Nazi concentration camps. This was a sorrowful but meaningful experience which will stay with everyone for the rest of their lives.

Ex Northern Fox pushed the group mentally and physically. Many were placed in situations completely out of their comfort zones but, with the help of fantastic instructors and sheer willpower, the group overcame such challenges, developing many skills including confidence, teamwork and leadership along the way.

A grant from HRFA helped towards the cost of the trip. Officer Cadet Wareham said: "The kind donation from HRFA ensured the trip was a complete success."

“Confidence was built by starting off each activity at a gradual pace, allowing each of us to get comfortable with what we were doing before moving on to more difficult experiences.” – Junior Under Officer Doran.



The Tayforth UOTC group at Drei Muhlen.

“Teamwork was enhanced in each of the activities: making sure everyone was alright during hillwalking when reaching high altitudes; trusting one another to belay when rock-climbing; helping a friend when their kayak capsized in the water or simply pulling someone back in from the river when they fell overboard during white water rafting, each situation had us working as a team to produce effective results.” – Senior Under Officer McCracken.



Confidence skills being built successfully on a high ropes course.



White water rafting put smiles on faces.

Cadets' Canadian adventure

Two cadets from the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Battalion ACF spent six weeks in Canada as part of the Army Cadet Force's annual international exchange programme, Exercise Oak Leaf.

The exercise saw them training and living alongside their counterparts from the Royal Canadian Army Cadets (RCAC).

Here, Cdt CSM Jack Lord and Cdt Cpl Mia Glen, both of Milngavie Detachment, recount their experiences of this amazing experience.



Images from Exercise Oak Leaf 2019.



Memorable summer

"Ex OAK LEAF was an eye-opening experience which truly expanded my knowledge of the adventurous training available to cadets. Throughout all my six cycles: horse-riding; rock climbing; glacier climbing; mountain biking; whitewater kayak/canoeing; and alpine trekking, I was not only amazed by the incredible grandeur of the Rockies but also of the time and effort that had gone into the organisation from the Royal Canadian Army Cadets adults allowing this to be possible. (The RCAC is funded at a community level by their civilian organisation, the Army Cadet League of Canada.)"

"Every week I was out there I learned more about other cultures, leadership skills and pushing myself."

"From improving my French to being CO and taking the entire camp for the graduation parade, new experiences were plentiful. Receiving best British Cadet and best in camp for rock and trek cycles rounded off an incredibly memorable summer, only possible due to the dedication of Army Cadet adults from quite literally across the world."

– Cdt CSM Jack Lord

Incredible opportunity

"This Summer I had the incredible opportunity to go to Canada for six weeks on Ex OAK LEAF. I was not only learning to become a Sports and Fitness Instructor but simultaneously I was exposed to the Canadian culture which increased my knowledge of a different army cadet system. After a thorough UK selection process, I felt truly honoured to be chosen to partake in a course which I loved, in a country I had never been to."

"Each week, the cadets and I were pushed physically with fitness tests to improve our overall physical wellbeing as well as being observed and assessed when taking charge of sport sessions. Through this, I developed a huge amount of confidence as well as enhancing my leadership abilities that I am now able to implement within my Detachment."

"Being chosen as Platoon Commander and being shortlisted to go back as Staff next year during graduation parade was a memorable way to celebrate the friendships made and the unforgettable experiences I had this summer."

– Cdt Cpl Mia Glen



Six RAF Air Cadets from 161 (1st Highland) Squadron, Air Training Corps, spent time with staff from Highlands & Islands Airport Limited (HIAL) gaining work experience at Inverness Airport.

The cadets attended in pairs over three days and spent time visiting the various areas at the airport. They spent around an hour and a half at each area, learning all about its roles and functions.

Cadets had the opportunity to visit Airport Security, which covers building and ground patrols, searches and scanner machines. They then moved on to the Information Desk to learn about customer services. Cadets also experienced Airport Mobility Assistance, learning how to assist passengers with mobility problems through the terminal and on and off the aircraft.

The cadets also visited the airport fire section and were shown around the appliances and workings of the station before heading to the control tower and learning about work as an air traffic controller.

Flight Sergeant Neil Jack (Officer Commanding 161 Squadron) said: "The cadets had a fantastic experience over the three days and all enjoyed it. It was fantastic how Inverness Airport hosted us and supported the squadron and cadet organisation in this experience."

Graeme Bell, Inverness Airport general manager, said: "We are always eager to be involved in the development of young people and were delighted to welcome the Air Cadets as part of HIAL's ongoing youth engagement programme.

"The cadets saw first-hand how our people in the fire service, security and air traffic control work together to keep our services running and our passengers and customers safe. Initiatives like these are essential as they allow young people to experience jobs that they may not have known were available and find out directly from the professionals what the job entails."



Oban Sea Cadets visited HM Naval Base Clyde to learn more about what goes on inside the base at Faslane.

Petty Officer (PO) Mark Dunion invited the group from TS Pharos, consisting of seven sea cadets and their instructor, to the base.

PO Dunion enlisted the help of Chief Petty Officer (CPO) Murray Anderson to arrange a guided tour of some of the facilities on site. PO Dunion will soon retire from the Royal Navy after 22 years of service and will move to Oban with his fiancée, where he has volunteered as an instructor at TS Pharos.

During the visit the cadets were treated to a demonstration by Northern Diving Group (NDG), a trip out on the water with the Queen's Harbour Master, a guided tour of the sports facilities and finished off the day with a chat with the Head of the Submarine Service, Rear Admiral John Weale CB, OBE.

The Cadets from TS Pharos enjoyed the day and showed interest in all they were shown, asking lots of questions along the way, which kept PO Dunion on his toes.

PO Robert Neil, who is an instructor with the unit, said: "It was an absolutely wonderful day! Full of exciting technology and an opportunity to experience and view the modern Royal Navy's working life. Thank you to everyone involved in organising the visit for the unit."



Duo scale Spanish heights

During the October break two members of 1st Battalion the Highlanders ACF spent a week rock climbing in Spain.

Cadet Sergeant Andy Tait (17) and Staff Sergeant Craig MacIver (32), from Dingwall Detachment, built on their climbing techniques in Calpe, in Spain's Costa Blanca.

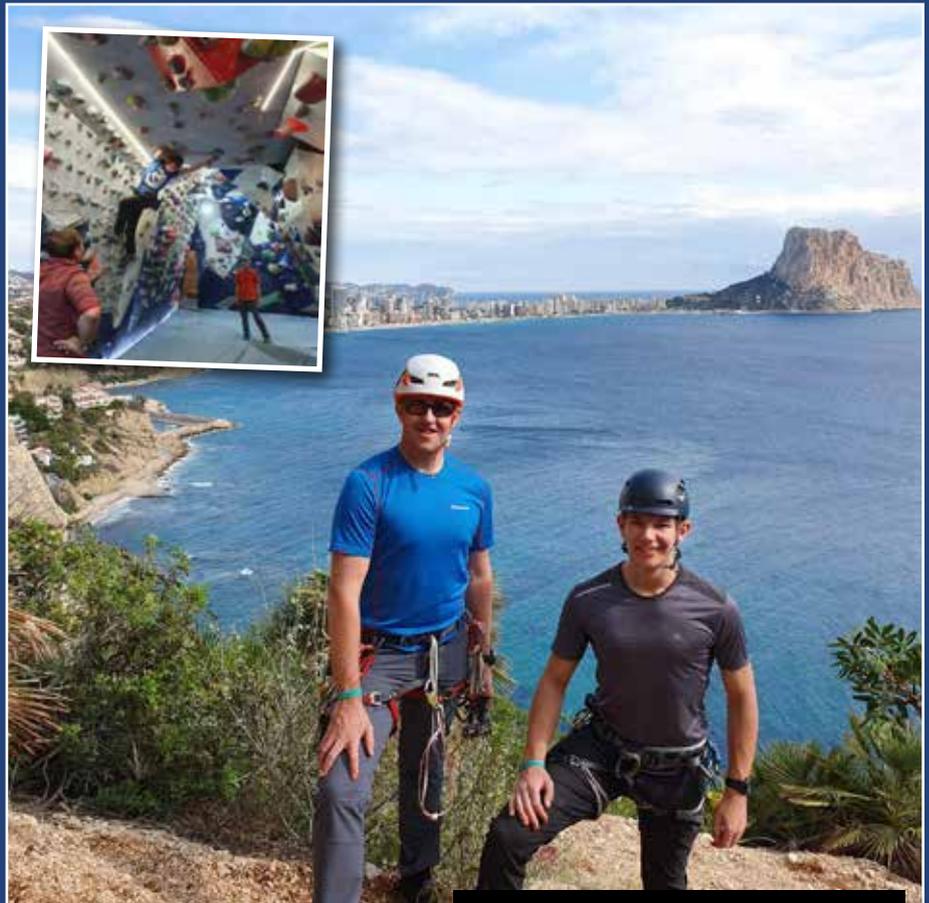
The 'Cadet Rock' expedition, available through the Cadet Force's Adventure Training Organisation – the Cadet Centre for Adventurous Training – offered eight days in a multi-pitch environment predominantly on bolted routes.

The region boasts some of the best bolted rock climbing in Europe and, over the week, Craig and Andy covered access and conservation, mountain hazards, weather, care and use of equipment, rope management and knot tying, belaying techniques, climbing techniques, multi pitch climbing, abseiling, setting up anchors, gear placement and protection.

The course also covered an introduction to leading in the outdoor and indoor environment.

Both of them got quite a lot of the Spanish sun, as well as the odd day of thundery showers which took them inside for a day at a bouldering gym in Benidorm. The course was not for the faint hearted, requiring outdoor rock climbing experience – plus a good head for heights!

The next step for Craig and Andy is



to gain more experience climbing outdoors, which in the future will lead them on the pathway to become qualified rock climbing leaders and instructors.

Craig (left) and Andy ready for a day's climbing, with Calpe's Peñón de Ifach rock in the background. Inset: Andy (centre) making sure the heavy rain did not affect his climbing by spending the day bouldering in Benidorm.

Forthcoming Events

16 January 2020
17 January
12 February
21 March
24 June
27 June
7-29 August

ERS Gold Workshop (Dundee)
ERS Gold Workshop (Inverness)
ERS Silver Workshop (Dundee)
HRFCA Annual Association Meeting (Perth)
Reserves Day (UK-wide)
Armed Forces Day (UK-wide)
Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo



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

Contributions are always welcome

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