

APRIL 2021 • ISSUE 4

MINI



High-Light

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



**Second modular hut
completed – Page 3**

Activity set to pick up soon

With a further national lockdown in December and the normal scaling back of activity over the winter months there is less news to pass on from the cadet and reserve units we support in this issue.

However, with significant easing in lockdown to come in the near future we can expect that to pick up soon.

A number of estate projects have been going on in the background, some of which are reported here, and I am delighted that the rebuild of Bo'ness ACF hut has now been finished.

We hope to arrange a formal opening by the Lord-Lieutenant of Stirling and Falkirk at some point in the summer.

A number of high level reviews that will affect us and those who we support have been announced recently, the most notable being the Integrated Review of Defence, Security and Foreign Policy and the Defence Command Paper which translates the IR policy changes into changes in the size,

structure and capability within the Armed Forces. Further details will emerge later this year as to exactly what this will mean for individual units and formations.

We also await the outcome of the review of the RFCA managed estate, both reserve and cadet. Lastly, due to delays in recruiting the MOD Implementation team, there is little to report so far on the steps to convert the thirteen RFCAs and their national co-ordinating body into a single Non-Departmental Public Body with 13 regional offices.

So, much change lies ahead but in the meantime we retain our focus on delivering our outputs and support for the reserves and cadets in the best, most nimble and cost effective way we can. I thank the HRFA staff for sticking with the task through the depths of winter despite the inefficiencies and frustrations of working from home.

Mark Dodson

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)

First steps towards 'normal' trading

After a challenging year of Covid restrictions, business organisations across Scotland are taking the first tentative steps towards 'normal' trading and rebuilding the economy.

Many employers have also willingly released the Reservists in their workforce, with personnel across all three Services mobilised to assist with Covid testing as part of Op RESCRIPT.

The Engagement team at HRFA has been working hard to assist and support all of our employers, and in recognition of their efforts, several have been put forward for Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold and Silver Awards, presented annually by the Ministry of Defence.

Six organisations from Central and Highland Scotland have been nominated for Gold Awards, with a further two looking to revalidate Gold Awards

previously achieved. The Gold Awards ceremony is scheduled to take place in Edinburgh in October for winners from Highland and Lowland Scotland, the North East of England and Northern Ireland, with the winners announced in late summer.

The window for Expressions of Interest for the Silver Awards to be submitted has now closed and 12 organisations are now passed this first stage and working with Regional Employer Engagement Directors Roy McLellan and Ray Watt to finalise their applications. There are also 14 existing Silvers up for revalidation, so a busy time ahead for the Engagement Team.

Head of Engagement Michelle McKearnon said: "It is tremendous to see so many employers continuing to support Defence despite all the challenges they have been facing. We are delighted to be supporting such a large number of Gold and Silver ERS nominations and will be



keeping our fingers crossed for all of our nominees.

"We hope to present the Silver winners with their awards at a ceremony at Scone Palace on October 7th and are very much looking forward to celebrating their success."



The new building at Bo'ness.

2nd modular build finished

The second of HRFCA's new modular cadet hut projects was completed at the end of March.

The £340,000 project at Bo'ness follows a similar build in Newport. That building was officially opened in November last year by the Lord-Lieutenant of Fife.

The Bo'ness building will be handed over to the Argyll and Sutherland Battalion Army Cadet Force in the near future.

Installation of the five sections of the building, which are manufactured off site, takes four to eight hours to complete and thereby reduces the time from demolition to occupation from 34

to 8 weeks. That part of the process was completed last summer. However, the overall timescale was impacted by Covid-19 restrictions.

The building was designed to the specifications of the ACF and HRFCA by Jam Studios in Aberdeen and made and installed by Elite Modular Buildings Solutions.

The modern, energy efficient modular design replaces the old Spooner huts that have passed the point of economical repair.

The Bo'ness and Newport projects form part of HRFCA's £1.4 million programme of cadet building replacements.



From left: The refurbished hut at Stanley; a freshly-decorated room with new ceiling, lights and floor coverings; how the hut used to look.

A busy 2020 for the HRFCA Estates team was rounded out in December with the completion of a total refurbishment to The Black Watch Battalion ACF's Stanley Detachment cadet hut in Perthshire.

Externally, a new metal perimeter fence was installed, the building was insulated and the cladding upgraded using Marley

boarding. The soffits and rainwater goods were all renewed as well.

Internally, the ceilings have been renewed, all the lights upgraded to LED units, a new kitchen was fitted, and the toilets were upgraded with wetwall panelling and new sanitary ware. New floor coverings were also fitted

throughout, along with new fire doors. The building was also completely redecorated.

The project was delivered by Colcro Property Maintenance at a cost of just under £60,000. The original timeframe for completion was eight weeks. However, due to COVID-19 there was a four-week delay.

Exercise Polar Scapa

HRFCA provided funding to assist Orkney-based 124 Fd Sp Sqn of 71 Engineer Regiment to undertake Exercise Polar Scapa 21.

The exercise – taking place over eight days in March – saw 10 (Orkney) Field Troop deployed to conduct self-help tasks at the Kirkwall Army Reserve Centre.

The works included rebuilding the Cromwell Cannon carriages that sit in front of the ARC. Railings around the ARC were also refurbished as was the flagpole.

The works developed soldier confidence and experience at improvised construction. While eight days was not quite long enough to complete the intricate works, extra days have been allocated to the task with the ambition of holding an unveiling event in May.

HRFCA was delighted to cover the material costs for the project, aiding the development of the Reservists in Orkney. Many thanks to WO2 (QMSI) Mick Gawne for providing us with the photo diary of the works.

EX POLAR SCAPA – PHOTO DIARY

START - STATE

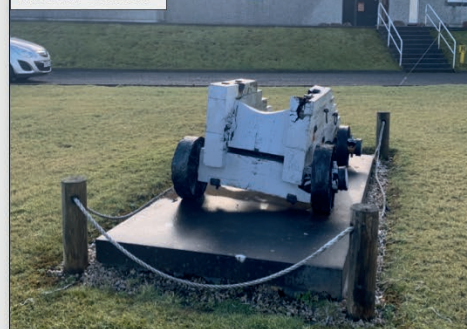
The Cannons:

The Eastern Cannon – The carriage had collapsed under the weight of the cannon, the cannon had been removed in the summer of 2020 for safety reasons. The timber was deep with rot and the wheels rusted beyond salvage. This carriage was built by an Orkney Volunteer Youth Group in the 1970s so had lasted between 40-50 years. The cannon itself is the smaller of the two and little is known about its history.

The Western Cannon – The carriage timber was in a deep state of rot, which becomes clearer once the cannon was removed. The iron works and iron wheels were in a much better state, deep with rust but salvageable. The carriage itself is thought to be the original carriage from C. 1830, was built with a high degree of workmanship and strength as a working cannon carriage. We therefore aimed to rebuild the carriage as true to form as possible, reusing as much of the original ironwork as possible. This is the larger of the cannons and weighs 2.4 tonnes



Eastern Cannon



Western Cannon



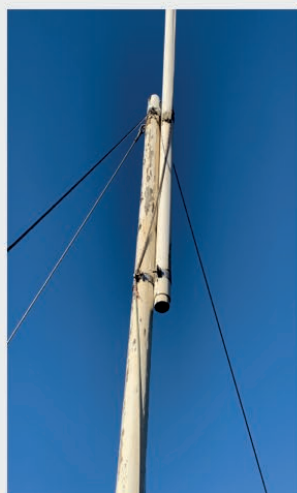
EX POLAR SCAPA – PHOTO DIARY

START - STATE

Railings, Fences and Flagpole:

Railings – Four sets of steps lead up to the ARC front door and rear doors. The metal rails here were severely damaged by the Orcadian weather, flaking paint and deep rust.

Rope Fence – A large number of the fence posts around the cannon green and the driveway approach to the ARC, had become rotten and had collapsed out of their concrete base. The rope itself was looking tired and dirty.



Flagpole – The flagpole looked tatty. The paint was flaking off up its full length. The top of the main base pole was succumbing to rot from the top down. The metal work and pulley equipment was starting to come loose from its fixings. The pole needed to be removed and refurbished.

Summary – The approach to the ARC in Kirkwall looked in a state of disrepair, unkept and uncared for. This is a poor first impression to anyone who might visit the ARC. It is also a terrible injustice to our stalwart caretaker, Mr Mally Rorie, who keeps the ARC in such fantastic shape. These repairs are just beyond his remit and funding he is given.

Railings



Fence around Cannon Green



EX POLAR SCAPA – PHOTO DIARY

THE CANNON CARRIAGE BUILD

Constructing Axles - Two Hydro-Poles/Telegraph Poles were salvaged for no cost, already deep pressure treated with creosote and made of a solid hardwood. These were cut down and worked into new Carriage Axles. Cpl Petrie constructed a rudimentary Lathe and using a combination of grinders, hand saws, chisels and an axe the troop constructed four new axles.



Removal of Cannons and Demolition/Salvage of Carriages – A HIAB operator was contracted locally to lift the cannons into a position near the workshop to use as a template for the building of new carriages. The existing carriages were painstakingly demolished to salvage as much ironwork as possible to use in the new carriages. Rust was taken off existing wheels and then painted. The old iron pins and links were cleaned up for re-use. The HIAB also removed the flagpole.



Constructing Wheels – Six Pallets made of 18mm Marine Plywood were salvaged locally at no cost and used to construct new wheels for the eastern carriage. A total of 26 circles were routed from the pallets to glue and laminate wheels. Once screwed together and glued, they were sanded smooth and to fit the Axles. Treated and lined with lead. Finally lead squares were shaped and hammered to make authentic looking iron nail heads.



Constructing Carriage Bodies – 12 Railway Sleepers were locally purchased to construct replacement cannon bodies. The existing carriage of the Western Cannon was used as a template for the build. The timber was intricately cut at all manner of strange angles to perfectly mirror the existing carriage. It was sanded, doweled and glued, then drilled for the replacement of ironwork. Spr Tait and Cpl Petrie painstakingly grafted on this to recreate a pair of perfect bodies.

EX POLAR SCAPA – PHOTO DIARY

ARC FRONTAGE REMEDIATION



ARC Frontage Remediation – The fence posts were re-concreted in place and treated with creosote. The rope was removed and spray painted to freshen the look. The flagpole was refurbished, the rot was cut out and a lead cap placed to prevent further rot. The pole was sanded and painted. The metalwork was replaced and the flagpole re-erected using improvised ropework techniques. The railings outside the ARC were stripped back of rust, holes filled with Isopone and repainted.





CFAVs a credit to TS Duncan

The Sea Cadets of TS Duncan in Dundee have – like all Service Cadets – been faced with a tough 12 months. The ship’s 20 adult volunteers have worked extremely hard to ensure that their cadets have remained engaged in the cadet experience.

Commanding Officer PO (SCC) Barry Ross took up his post at the end of 2019, before being fully enrolled as CO in April 2020.

Taking on the role during a pandemic is not something Barry thought he would ever face. He and his volunteer staff and Unit Management Team rose to the occasion however, with Barry himself being awarded an Area Officer Commendation for Exceptional Achievements during the Covid-19 pandemic.

To keep the ship together during the first lockdown all parades became virtual, with the cadets responding positively to these taking place on Zoom.

The Facebook page also allowed everyone to keep in touch and kept the TS Duncan banter flowing!

They also developed a #TeamDuncan initiative to promote positive mental health activities for their young people and staff and took part in events like clap for heroes and salutes on Remembrance Sunday.

All that was made possible by the

amazing CFAVs and their ability to adapt to online platforms.

Following the easing of lockdown in August 2020 outdoor activity recommenced with plenty of boating hours and in-person learning on offer. This was halted again towards the end of the year by the second lockdown and a return to online training with the Ship’s Company picking up where it left off earlier in the year.

With restrictions easing once again a return to face-to-face training has been possible with lots of further activity planned afloat, ashore and virtually for the remainder of 2021.

● HRFCA supported TS Duncan in 2020 by awarding a Board Grant of £2,200. This was used to provide a Rigidflex Safety Boat and a bright room projector to deliver sailing theory training.

The Safety Boat allowed TS Duncan to provide hundreds of hours of boating for its 54 cadets during the periods when lockdown was eased and enabled 16 Qualifications to be achieved.

PO Ross said: “When we applied for the grant we had no idea about Covid-19. When we got the green light to go boating again after the first lockdown the safety boat was an absolute godsend. It allowed us to be on the water as previously we did not have a vessel fast and manoeuvrable enough to provide a safety boat.”



From top: PO Ross; cadets showing off qualifications; and the Rigidflex Safety Boat in use.

New look for Wings

Changes in the Air Training Corps cadet and adult volunteer numbers across Scotland resulted in a review of the current Air Training Corps Wing structure.

With effect from February 1, a new structure was implemented which will result in a more equitable delivery of the cadet experience to the cadets with best use being made of available adult volunteers and permanent support staff.

Highland Wing (HW) and the majority of North East Scotland Wing (NESW) will integrate to become a new Wing called North Scotland Wing (NSW). This Wing will contain all the existing Highland Wing units except 2521 (Oban) Sqn that will transfer to West Scotland Wing.

All the existing North East Scotland Wing units, except those in the county of Angus, will form part of the new Central Scotland Wing. These units are 2231 (Forfar) Sqn, 2288 (Montrose) Sqn, 2231 (Brechin) DF, 2422 (Arbroath) Sqn and 2449 (Carnoustie) Sqn.

The new North Scotland Wing HQ will be in the existing integrated Highland Wing HQ/ Dacre Regional Activity Centre/cadet accommodation at RAF Lossiemouth. This facility already manages and supports the Highland Wing units.

A new Central Scotland Wing (CSW) will be formed and will contain the units in the county of Angus and currently part of North East Scotland Wing, 2231 (Forfar) Sqn, 2288 (Montrose) Sqn, 2231 (Brechin) DF, 2422 (Arbroath) Sqn and 2449 (Carnoustie) Sqn and the units in Dundee, Perthshire, Fife, Stirling, Dunblane & Alloa which are currently in South East Scotland Wing.

The Central Scotland Wing HQ will be in the existing South East Scotland Wing HQ offices at Leuchars Station which are co-located with the Air Cadet Region HQ and a Region Activity Centre.

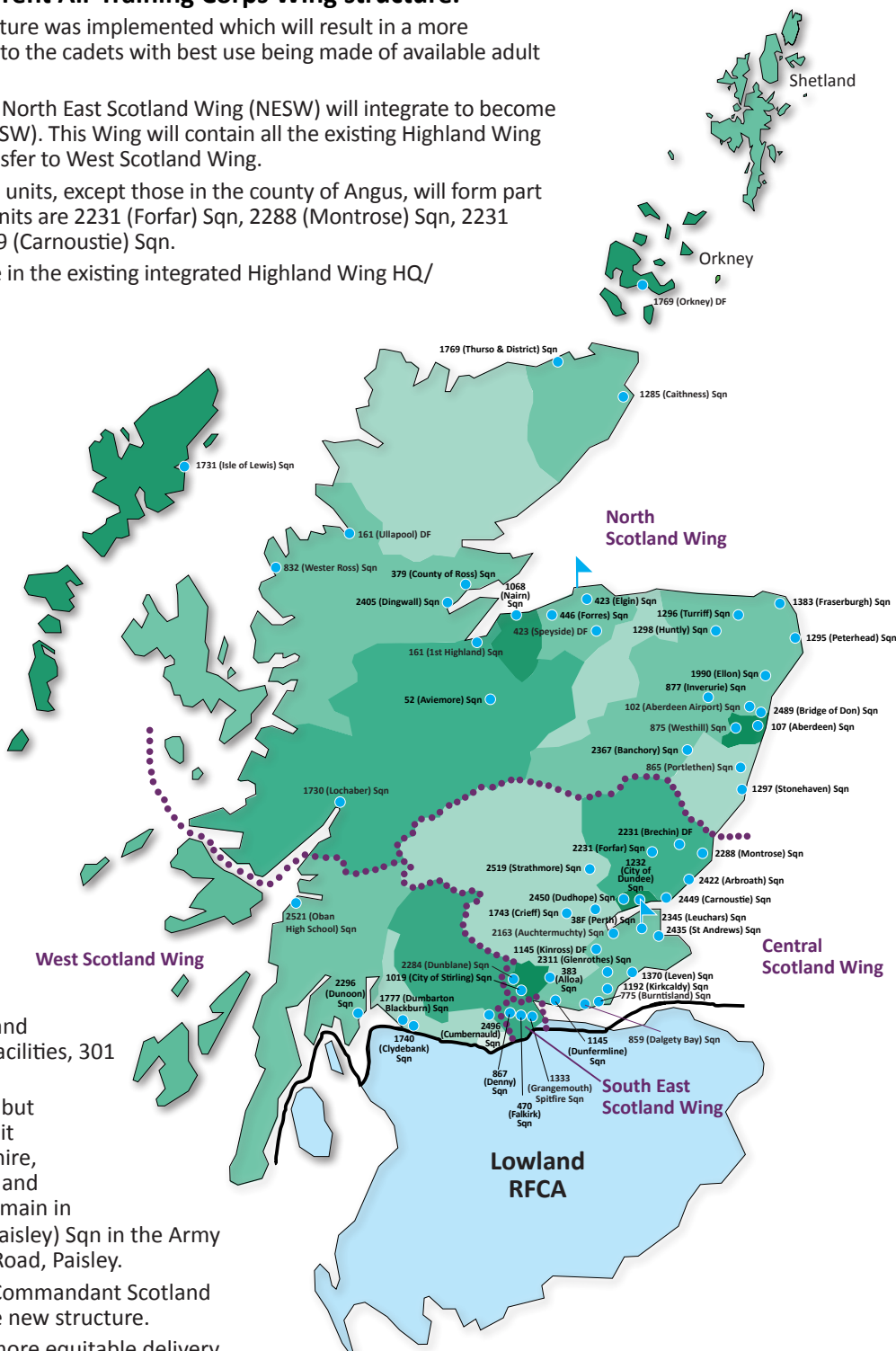
South East Scotland Wing (SESW) will remain but with a modified geographic footprint and it will contain units in Edinburgh, the Lothians, the Borders and parts of Stirling & Falkirk District, including 470 (Falkirk) Sqn, 867 (Denny) Sqn, 1271 (Bathgate) Sqn, and 1333 (Grangemouth) Sqn which will transfer from West Scotland Wing.

The new Wing HQ is being established and provisioned at the Army Reserve Centre facilities, 301 Colinton Road, Edinburgh.

West Scotland Wing (WSW) will remain but with a modified geographic footprint and it will contain the units in Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Dunbartonshire, Argyll, Renfrew, Ayrshire and Dumfries & Galloway. The wing HQ will remain in the existing offices co-located with 396 (Paisley) Sqn in the Army Reserve Centre compound at Hawkhead Road, Paisley.

Group Captain James Leggat, Regional Commandant Scotland & Northern Ireland Region, welcomed the new structure.

He said: "This structure will result in a more equitable delivery of the cadet experience to our cadets with best use being made of our available adult volunteers and permanent support staff."



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

Contributions are always welcome!

Email: hi-offcomms@rfca.mod.uk