



EAST MIDLANDS
RESERVE FORCES AND CADETS ASSOCIATION

Spring 2020

The Reservist

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**HMS Sherwood provides
Supersession Guard for
new Commodore
Reserves**

**East Midlands
Employers shine bright
at Employer Recognition
Awards 2019**

**Royal Yeomanry
Reservist nominated
in 'The Millies'**

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The Reservist Magazine

Hello

Welcome to the Spring edition of The Reservist.

Hopefully by the time you read this magazine, some form of normality, whatever that might be, will have returned. Who would have thought, even a matter of weeks ago, that a simple virus would unleash a global pandemic that would bring untold misery and economic hardship to individuals, families and countries?

The developing effort to control the spread of Coronavirus is at too early a stage to enable us to include detailed coverage in this edition of The Reservist. However, as I write, the government has announced the mobilisation of up to 3000 Reserves to assist with the fight – a fight that I can't imagine many of those called up would ever have expected to be involved in when they initially considered joining the Reserves.

Ironically, many of those in the Reserves' medical units cannot be mobilised because they are already in the frontline, working in their day jobs with the NHS. The use of intelligent mobilisation by the Armed Forces has ensured that no attempt has been made to mobilise those who are already actively involved in protecting us all. Nonetheless, the Reserves are contributing already in

a number of areas and no doubt their contribution will increase in the weeks and months ahead.

Army Reserve Centres are being used as logistics hubs to provide greater flexibility and more people to ensure that NHS supplies are delivered where they are needed when they are needed. No doubt there will be much more to tell you in the next edition of The Reservist, when hopefully we will be able to look back on all this as something very firmly in the past.

I wish you all the very best and hope you enjoy these insights into the wide range of activities that Reserves undertake in more normal times. Stay safe.

Nick Hile

Chairman of East Midlands RFCA



Colonel Nick Hile

Who we are

The Reservist is a biannual magazine focused on news, events and updates from the military reserve community in the East Midlands. Inside you'll find stories from the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force, each providing a behind the headlines look at life in the Armed Forces.

Do you have a story you'd like to share? To feature in the next edition of The Reservist get in touch with the East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association Communications Department on 0115 924 8628 or em-comms@rfca.mod.uk

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Cover photo features Able Rate Michelle Rowlands at the Supersession – read more on page 7



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Warrant Officer Bowles receives Lord-Lieutenant's Certificate for Meritorious Service

Warrant Officer Richard Bowles, 158 Regiment of the Royal Logistic Corps, was presented with the award at Loughborough Army Reserve Centre recently. It was presented by the Mayor of Charnwood and Councillor, Brenda Seaton, and was awarded for his commitment and dedication to the Reserve Forces. During the Councillor's visit, an open evening took place for people interested in finding out more about the Reserves. The Chefs prepared food and drinks, including pancakes (it was Shrove Tuesday, after all!) for the 30 or so people who attended. Congratulations WO Bowles!



WO Richard Bowles receiving his Certificate

Army Reservists freshen up on their Battle Craft Syllabus



158 Regiment at Thetford Forest

Army Reservists from 158 Regiment of the Royal Logistic Corps, threw themselves into a weekend of field craft, focusing on skills from the Battle Craft Syllabus. This is a programme that was introduced in 2017, and requires units to train in the field for a minimum of 10 days every 3 months. The training activity was held in Thetford Forest, Stanford Training Area.

During the weekend, all Reservists had to sleep in field conditions under a basic Army Basha (waterproof roof shaped sheet). They practiced making fires as well as strategic movements and positioning. Units also trained in setting up flares, as well as other pyrotechnics. Reservists practiced the simple but gruelling graft of carrying their kit and equipment, alongside practicing their basic navigation skills.



Brushing up on the Battle Craft syllabus

Army Reservists make a splash in the 'Gaddesby Gallop'

On a bleak day in December, Army Reservists took part in the cross country 'Gaddesby Gallop' run. Seven members of 203 Squadron, Royal Logistic Corps, took part in a run that began and finished in the village of Gaddesby, just outside of Loughborough. The race is approximately 5 miles long, and meanders across various different types of terrain through the countryside of Gaddesby. Warrant Officer Class 2 Tobey Wing, is photographed getting stuck in to the water obstacle, fully committed to keeping ahead of the rest!



Tobey Wing getting damp in the Gaddesby Gallop

HMS Sherwood provides Supersession Guard for new Commodore Reserves

HMS Sherwood, the only Naval Reserve in the East Midlands, was extremely proud to be asked to organise the Parade for this historic occasion.

The newly appointed Commodore Reserves, Melanie Robinson, has served in the Royal Navy for 27 years. She was amongst the first women to go to sea and remains amongst the first to command a warship. One of only 12 female Captains, Cdre Mel now becomes one of only four female naval officers to have achieved flag rank as Commodore Maritime Reserves (COMMARES). Setting out her stall on day one, she said, "I am determined to lead a step-change in how the Maritime Reserves recruits,

employs and deploys its personnel. We are already operating as an auxiliary support force. Offering flexibility and cost efficiency, Reserve personnel deliver capabilities into every aspect of frontline activity every single day." Warrant Officer Sean Jones, HMS Sherwood, was the Parade Commander for this special ceremony, and commented: "It was a huge honour for HMS Sherwood to provide all the ceremonial training staff and one member of the guard at this very



AB1 Michelle Rowlands with her commemorative coin

prestigious occasion."

Personal acknowledgement for taking part in the Guard

Able Rate Michelle Rowlands spoke to the Commodore, and said: "It was a great honour to be part of the guard on board HMS Victory for Cdre Mel Robinson's Supersession."

Following the ceremony, Michelle received a personal thank you.



CPO Jason Kingham, WO1 Sean Jones, CPO Derick Parsons at the Supersession

"It was a huge honour for HMS Sherwood to provide all the ceremonial training staff and one member of the guard at this very prestigious occasion."

Royal Navy Reservist and Olympic hopeful: Nottingham athlete has the 'best of both worlds'

What is it that drives top achievers? Is it to do with their upbringing, their genetic make-up or even their family birth order? Or are some people just born 'natural' strivers? It's likely to be a combination of all these factors, but after nature comes nurture. Afton Fitzhenry, Royal Navy Reservist and Olympic hopeful, shares her experiences of finding the impetus to keep pushing herself.

Afton is a prime example of having 'the best of both worlds', driving herself to success in her day job whilst also making the most of her spare time. Afton is currently in full-time training as part of the GB Podium Potential Programme for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Her sport is the Canoe Sprint. Having won a bronze medal in the 2018 European Championships, she is now focussing on Olympic qualification as the next goal.

Her paddle training regime at Holme Pierrepont includes three sessions a day, six days a week. This is a combination of work on the water, gym sessions and running for general fitness. You'd think after all that, you might want to sit down with a cuppa and relax. But no, Afton is also a Reservist with the Royal Navy and has just completed her Midshipman Officer training at Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth.

Just after the challenging two week Midshipman training programme, Afton explained: "They say you should be at peak fitness and 100% ready for the Officer Confirmation course, as it's very demanding, but I went in at a pretty exhausted level, because of my sport training. I knew I would finish the course, but in sport, I am reflecting and reviewing constantly. On the course, you get little feedback as you go along, so you are working in the dark. I felt like I was doing great whilst on the course. I was trying my best but you still don't know if it's good enough."

"A structured but adventurous organisation can prepare you to face the world with more self-confidence, broader skills and a positive attitude."

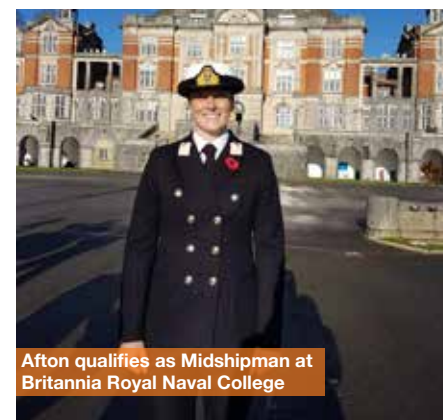


Team mates testing their face masks

Strong team effort a testament to achievement

"I found the physical part of training enjoyable and could challenge myself, whereas some people just thought it was hell! However, they excelled in other areas and we were a strong team. We all passed, so that is a testament to the team effort."

"When I saw my strong pass, I was relieved. It's good to have completed it when I was so tired. At least I know now that even at my lowest ebb, I can keep going."



Afton qualifies as Midshipman at Britannia Royal Naval College

For eighteen months, Afton has been a part of HMS Sherwood, the only Royal Navy Reserve unit in the East Midlands. She has been learning the basics of training and getting to grips with all the disciplines involved. The Navy Reserve officer training programme includes several leadership tasks, including how to give clear, concise orders to get maximum activity out of the minimum time available. Trainees also have the opportunity to consider the diversity of job roles available, to help form a decision as to which route they might like to take, although this is also determined by what vacancies there are and where

there are skills shortages. The officer training also includes a 'Marinisation' weekend at Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC) which helps candidates understand what to expect from life on-board.

Afton goes on to describe where she gets her self-motivation from: "My Mum. She's always been one for chasing opportunities when she sees them. She set me up to have a go at things, and see what happens. I joined the Sea Cadets because my Mum was looking for something active and social for my brother. I went with them and ended up enjoying it more than him. Mum was trying to give us the best start. At Cadets, you get so many opportunities.

"A structured but adventurous organisation like that can prepare you to face the world with more self-confidence, broader skills and a positive attitude. I really took to canoeing, winning medals at the National Sea Cadet Paddlesport Regattas. When I saw the Girls4Gold training programme, I applied, but didn't tell my Mum until I was selected and then had to break it to her I was moving to Nottingham!"

Northern Ireland has a sense of belonging

"I also think there is something about being brought up in the community of Northern Ireland which gives you a desire to give something back. When I race, I think first I've got Northern Ireland backing me and Great Britain, and after that, it's about doing it for myself."

"I have a strong sense of belonging and will always be proud to be a Northern Ireland girl. I was inspired by Mary Peters and her charity, the Mary Peters



Afton and team mates prepared for command tasks

Trust. It's about creating a community for athletes, whatever their background.

"I think things like 'Game of Thrones' have helped broaden people's perspective of Northern Ireland to things like its beautiful scenery, but you really need to visit to get its sense of community and belonging. I go home three or four times a year and the thing that always hits me is stepping off the plane, how fresh the air is. From the plane, it looks so green and lush, and then it smells like home."

Afton has also recently completed an Open University Mathematics and Statistics degree and also volunteers at her local Nottingham Sea Cadets on a weekly basis, aiming to 'give back' to the organisation which provided her with such a great start. Whether it's nature or nurture, it seems passion and drive are the key qualities to be able to really explore and embrace everything you want to achieve. All you need is the opportunity and it appears you really can have 'the best of both worlds'.

Postscript: As we go to press, in light of Coronavirus, it is not clear if the 2020 Olympics will be postponed or rescheduled. Afton continues to train.



The full cohort pass out at BRNC

"I found the physical part of training enjoyable and could challenge myself, whereas some people just thought it was hell! However, they excelled in other areas and we were a strong team. We all passed, so that is a testament to the team effort."



Leicester Tigers mark Uniformed Services Day with signing of the Armed Forces Covenant

Leicester Tigers hosted a special matchday celebrating the work of the region's uniformed services during the club's 18-9 victory over Wasps in the Gallagher Premiership recently.

Representatives from Leicester Police and Ambulance services, as well as the RNLI, Navy, RAF Reserves and Royal Anglian Regiment took over the Plaza and the Final Whistle Bar in the Holland & Barrett Stand, with the Thurmaston Marching Brass Band providing the soundtrack ahead of kick-off.

Some of the region's highest-ranking officials from the Armed Forces were also in attendance, posing for an official photograph recognising the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant – an agreement by the club to help support and promote opportunities for servicemen and women.

Former player and non-executive director Rory Underwood currently serves as Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire as well as a number of staff members having served as Royal Marines, Navy, RAF and Reserves.

More than 23,500 supporters packed into Welford Road to watch Tigers make it three home wins a row, with current and former servicemen and women benefitting from a special discounted ticket in recognition of their service to the community, as part of the annual fixture in the club's calendar.



AFC signing at Leicester Tigers





Naval Children's Charity

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Naval Children's Charity, www.navalchildrenscharity.org.uk
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caseworkers@navalchildrenscharity.org.uk
 Registered charity number: Royal Navy & Royal Marines Children's Fund 1160182

National asbestos cancer charity, Mesothelioma UK, signs Armed Forces Covenant

The charity have pledged to support the military community in the UK, as part of its 'Supporting our Armed Forces' project.

As part of the Covenant, Mesothelioma UK commits to training all clinical and benefits advice team members in Armed Forces communication, refer all Armed Forces patients to specialist benefits advisors, and undertake research to better understand the incidence and impact of mesothelioma among the Armed Forces community.

Development of Mesothelioma UK's Supporting our Armed Forces project is supported by Government funding from fines levied on the banking industry for manipulating the LIBOR rate (the London inter-bank lending rate).

As part of the project, a comprehensive research programme will provide a broad insight into the impact of mesothelioma amongst Armed Forces personnel and veterans. Mesothelioma UK is also working with a growing number of Armed Forces organisations to pool its resources and reach those veterans and armed forces personnel who need support.

Mesothelioma UK is a national specialist resource centre, specifically for the asbestos-related cancer, which integrates into the National Health Services' front line, ensuring specialist mesothelioma nursing is available at any point of need. The charity achieves this by employing a growing network of mesothelioma specialist nurses, based in regional NHS Hospitals, but funded by the Charity.

Head of Services for Mesothelioma UK, Liz Darlison, commented: "Our Supporting our Armed Forces project has gone from strength to strength and we're delighted, through signing the covenant, to formally commit long term to supporting the Armed Forces community."

John Wilson OBE DL, Director of Employer Engagement at East Midlands RFCA, commented: "We are delighted to have such an important charity as Mesothelioma UK on board with the Armed Forces Covenant. They are already providing direct support to members of the Armed Forces affected by asbestos cancer, but they have also made clear by their actions and policies that they intend to support our wider Armed Forces community, and we are very grateful for their support."





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East Midlands Employers shine bright at Employer Recognition Awards 2019



Twenty seven organisations across the East Midlands celebrated achieving Gold and Silver awards in the 2019 Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS). The five Gold Award winners attended a sparkling ceremony in London, with nationwide Gold winners. The twenty two Silver Award regional winners commemorated the achievement at a black-tie event at Leicester Tigers.

The Employer Engagement Awards Scheme formally recognises the support the businesses provide to Defence personnel through having signed the Armed Forces Covenant.

Geoff Parker, chief executive at Charnwood Borough Council said:

“Charnwood Borough Council is delighted to receive this Gold Defence Employer Recognition Award. Charnwood’s elected members and officers are committed to continue building on the great strides that we’ve made in providing positive support for our armed forces community.

“Our successful partnership with Rushcliffe and Melton Borough Councils in this area of work to understand and recognise the personal sacrifice made by our service men and women, Reserve forces, families, veterans and adult cadet force leaders is an achievement in which I and many of my colleagues take great personal pride.”

Under the Defence ERS, employers support Defence personnel and encourage others to do the same. The Scheme has three



East Midlands Gold Award Winners

levels, Bronze, Silver and Gold for organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support for Defence and the Armed Forces community.

Hugh Griffiths, CEO of Inzpire Ltd which is based in Lincoln, said:

“We are overjoyed to be recognised as one of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award winners for 2019, this means the world to us since 80% of our employees are ex-military and we really admire the military work ethic and ethos.

“We feel that ex-military are sometimes disadvantaged, so we take great pride in supporting them and the wider Armed Forces Community. We are extremely proud of being able to promote best practice for recruitment from the Armed Forces Community and support to our reservist personnel through enhanced paid leave provision.”

The Gold Award winners:

Charnwood Borough Council
Derbyshire Community Health Service
NHS Foundation Trust
Inzpire Ltd
Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust
Rushcliffe Borough Council



Gold Award Winners- Charnwood Borough Council with Coldstream Guards



Silver Awards – an opportunity to network



Gold Award Winners - Defence & Security and Inzpire Limited with the Chief of Defence Staff



Silver - representatives of Wilkin Chapman receiving their award



Silver - representatives of East Midlands RFCA and the military host the awards

“... what we are able to give back to the Armed Forces community is only a small token of appreciation for the sacrifices that are made by the members of our Armed Forces, past and present, and their families ...”

The Gold Awards were presented by Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Nick Carter, at the National Army Museum in London.

John Wilson, the Ministry of Defence’s Regional Employer Engagement Director for the East Midlands, said: “I’m thrilled that we can announce a record number of Gold award winners for the region. I know all of these organisations have worked hard to support Defence objectives and they are all very worthy winners.”

The Silver Awards were presented by Colonel Adam Fraser-Hitchen, who commented: “There are two leading principles that epitomise the Armed Forces Covenant from my point of view: to ensure that our service personnel are not disadvantaged as a result of their

commitment and service to their country, and to acknowledge that the badly injured and bereaved may need additional support throughout their lives.”

James Marsden, Partner at Wilkin Chapman LLP, said: “Receiving an ERS Silver Award is obviously a huge honour for the firm but, in reality, what we are able to give back to the Armed Forces community is only a small token of appreciation for the sacrifices that are made by the members of our Armed Forces, past and present, and their families.”

John Wilson, the Ministry of Defence’s Regional Employer Engagement Director, explained: “We were delighted to be able to

The Silver Award winners:

Ashfield District Council
Belvoir HR Ltd
Bentleigh Chase
Bright Rebel Coaching Ltd
Catena
DEA Aviation Limited
Derby County Community Trust
Freshline Group Limited
HMP Leicester
Keith Cook Training Ltd
Level 7 Expertise Ltd
Lincolnshire County Council
LIVES
Minster Group
Northampton Borough Council
One To One Support Service Ltd
Rangoon Point
Stamford Town Council
UK Veterans Hearing Help
Wilkin Chapman LLP
Wilson Browne Solicitors
Workforce Unlimited

present 22 Silver awards to local businesses this year, a confirmation of the great commitment they give to supporting members of the Armed Forces community throughout the East Midlands.

“Employing military trained personnel is highly beneficial to employers; the skills and experiences developed through military training help employers to fill skill gaps in their businesses. These Silver Award winners recognise that and actively seek to take advantage of it.”

To find out more about the ERS and how your organisation could support Defence personnel in the workplace through the Armed Forces Covenant contact Cat Suckling at em-areed@rfca.mod.uk or call 0115 924 8627



Shining a light on the Prison Service

Last year, HMP Leicester were amongst the twetny two organisations in the East Midlands who received a Silver Award in the Employer Recognition Scheme. The scheme recognises the achievements of employers who have signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant and taken action to support the wider Armed Forces community.

A prison is a unique type of organisation, so what can be learned from their practices that will help you achieve a Silver or Gold Award?

The Prison Service is an employer of choice for military personnel when they leave the Forces. They bring their focused, hard-working attitudes, discipline and a sense of family and trust, that is crucial to the smooth operation of the prison. HMP Leicester currently has 30 out of its 300 staff who are veterans, many in senior positions.

On the flip side, there are a number of ex-Forces personnel in custody, sometimes having offended whilst in service and therefore having been discharged. If this is the case, it may make it difficult for them to adjust.

On entering prison, those who are ex-Forces may have particular needs; there can be a tendency to distance themselves mentally from their military career, as they feel they have strayed so far from the ethos of the Armed Forces in committing a crime. This can create mental health issues that need to be discussed with someone with an understanding of what they have experienced.

Consider the specific needs of ex-Forces personnel

HMP Leicester has appointed Craig Clarke as the Veterans in Custody Support officer at HMP Leicester. As well as acting as a central point of reference for all things Veterans related, Craig also liaises with charities who offer support to Veterans once they are ready to be released.

Craig commented: "It's important to provide that point of contact for ex-Forces personnel within the prison. Having been in such a structured environment previously, they can struggle to adjust to life outside the services. Prison can then seem like it's familiar, with its daily routine, but we need to help them be ready for re-entering civilian life."

Craig's 'day-job' is Allocations Officer, managing the various job roles available within the prison, some of which will help offenders gain employment when they leave. Basic skills, such as English and Maths are taught, to get everyone to a basic level of education. There are plans to introduce a coffee shop with Barista training, a growing area of employment.

HMP Leicester also supports the Armed Forces Covenant by offering 10 days additional paid leave to Reservists with training commitments, and also 5 extra days paid leave to Cadet Force Adult Volunteers to attend Cadet commitments. Its policies also support Service spouses, who can apply for special leave if their partners are deployed, injured or they are bereaved.

Cadet organisations offer a safe environment for young people

Craig also happens to be an Executive Officer in the local Navy Cadet Force, and so benefits from the additional leave offered by the prison. He recognises the role Cadets have to play, particularly in underprivileged areas, to provide a safe environment for young people to develop. Craig said: "Cadets gives young people a sense of purpose, and they make life-long friends. The discipline they are introduced to helps with behaviour generally, at school and at home. It's somewhere for them to go that offers a safe environment, it's affordable for all and offers them loads of opportunities they wouldn't get elsewhere."

Ex-Armed Forces personnel are actually statistically less likely to commit crime than the 'general population' but tend to make the headlines more. HMP Leicester has committed to providing



the additional support needed for ex-Forces personnel, on both sides, and put policies in place which mean Reservists and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers can continue to contribute to society without penalty.

Whatever your business or organisation type, taking time to consider the specific needs of Reservists or Veterans means seeing it from their perspective, understanding what their lifestyle demands of them, and putting policies in place to support them. As an employer, you benefit from the training, discipline, leadership and professional qualifications they have. Considering their specific needs helps show your support to those who serve our country.

Member Royal Yeomanry nominated as 'Best Reservist'

East Midlands Reservist Captain Karl Stone, A Squadron, Royal Yeomanry, was nominated in 'The Sun' newspaper 'Millie Awards' for his work in supporting the homeless. He has organised and led a number of charity events, including sponsored sleep-outs, and welcomes homeless people at the Reserve Centre in Nottingham, where they are offered showers, clean clothes, haircuts and a hot meal.



After 26 years with the 9th/12th Lancers, including tours in Ulster, Bosnia and both Gulf Wars, Sergeant Major Stone retired, but immediately signed on as a Reservist the next day.

Karl commented: "My former Regiment had a few guys who ended up on the streets and a good friend became homeless and took his own life, so I decided to help in whatever way I could.

"At first I was looking for homeless veterans to help. Tracy Dickinson, a remarkable woman who runs a local street kitchen, made me see the light. She told me you cannot differentiate

between veterans and the rest of the homeless. It quickly dawned on me that she was right."

Karl regularly helps at Tracy's Street Kitchen in Nottingham, where they feed up to 100 people on a Friday night. Karl, 51, whose partner Selina Smith is also a Reservist, has raised thousands of pounds for mental health and cancer charities, too. He said: "To be nominated for a Millies award is really humbling."

Nominees and Armed Forces personnel were joined at the event by a host of famous faces from the world of entertainment and sport. Held at

Banqueting House in Westminster, the awards ceremony celebrates the contributions of the British military. The Prime Minister was among the public figures to attend, after hosting members of all three services at a Downing Street reception ahead of the awards.

For further information on becoming an Army Reservist visit army.mod.uk or find your local unit by visiting eastmidlandsrfa.co.uk

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Image caption: Ever wondered what it takes to become a Royal Air Force Police Dog Handler? Source: RAF. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

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Royal Naval Reserve recruits challenged at HMS Raleigh

Travelling half the country in the wake of Storm Ciara may not seem like a sensible option but on offer was the opportunity to observe the latest class of Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) recruits being put through their initial paces at HMS Raleigh, so no storm was going to get in the way.

Most people with an interest in becoming a Reservist either sign up through a regional HM Forces careers office, or make contact with their local Reserve unit, be it Navy, RAF or Army. HMS Sherwood (the only Naval Reserve unit in the land-locked East Midlands) run regular open evenings where potential recruits are introduced to both the opportunities and the commitment required.

On joining a unit, potential recruits start an initial training programme, which includes attending 'Parade' or 'Drill Night' once a week. (Just one of many military terms to come to terms with, it doesn't actually mean they march around all evening). This training varies week to week, some classroom based, some outside-based practical assessments, but will include topics like understanding the military ethos, ranks and uniform care, roles and command kit and equipment operation and maintenance, and of course, fitness.

The RNR have developed a flexible, on-line virtual learning package that can be completed at home or in unit and is designed to help recruits speed up the training process. So successful has this been that it is now being used by the Regulars to enhance their training. There are two deal-

breakers to advance beyond initial training: potential recruits must pass basic fitness and swimming tests, to the same standard as those joining the regular Navy. Apparently, some people don't realise the necessity of being able to swim....



HMS Raleigh - teamwork in the DRU

Communal living a shock to recruits

In the initial months, recruits will attend a series of training weekends and a weeklong basic weapon training course. The first is a 'Development' weekend at HMS Raleigh, in Plymouth, which in 36 hours aims to consolidate the ethos of teamwork and the Royal Navy's core values. People applying as Reservists are often older than the average Regular Navy recruit, they may be established in their civilian career, have a family and enjoy their home comforts. Turning up to the development weekend, everyone is on an equal footing – from the company director to the young shop assistant. All must 'muck in' together, with communal living with up to thirty others in a 'Mess Deck', single beds lined up together, with no personal space, and it can be a shock to recruits. It is about find the commonalities, dealing with the differences, managing expectations and establishing mutual respect.

They must also learn the importance of being relied upon to follow orders without question and complete tasks to the highest standards. Someone used to leaving their clothes on the 'floordrobe' to be picked up by Mum might question the need for such millimetre perfect stacks of uniform. On a ship,

"Turning up to the development weekend, everyone is on an equal footing – from the company director to the young shop assistant."

or indeed on any military assignment, space will be restricted and supplies rationed. Everything must be in its place, so that it is immediately accessible, and doesn't cause potential problems. On a rolling sea, a stray shirt could block a drain, causing flooding. A paper clip left on a bed may not seem an issue – but if that person doesn't have the level of attention to notice it – are they going to be safe with a weapon or in charge of shutting a watertight hatch?



HMS Raleigh - tackling a fire



HMS Raleigh - re-filling hydrants

The next milestone is a basic weapons course at the Military Training Unit (MTU), also at HMS Raleigh. Here, recruits learn to safely handle and effectively shoot a rifle, are taught how to feed and shelter themselves and maintain personal hygiene in the field. They are also introduced to threats from explosive devices, including how to identify warning signs of potentially threatening activity in the area. This all takes place alongside their Regular counterparts. Assuming the recruits pass, there follows a 'Marinisation' weekend at Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth, Devon, which gives them their first taste of life on board. Here, the cramped conditions and daily routine of living on a warship becomes a reality.

During this time, which can be anywhere between 6 – 18 months depending on how much time the recruit has to commit, recruits continue training at their unit until they are ready to take the two week Confirmation course which will see them pass out alongside the Regulars as a trained Able Rate second class or 'AB2'. Arriving at HMS Raleigh half way through week two of the Confirmation course, it is clear to see the Reserve recruits in this cohort are already bonded as a group. In the first week, they learn about map and compass work – why is this needed if they going to be at sea? Simply because often the Navy will often be involved in disaster relief or humanitarian aid missions and need to work 'ashore'. The recruits have worked hard on improving their physical fitness prior to the course, and this continues in a well-equipped gym and full size swimming pool, which doubles as a sea survival training facility.

They also learn basic Seamanship skills: the basics of life on-board, including tying ropes, lowering anchors, docking and berthing, along with procedures for 'Replenishment at Sea'. The first week finishes with a 2 day exercise on Dartmoor, testing their teamwork, practical leadership and map reading skills under tough conditions, testing their physical fitness and mental stamina. (Continues on next page..)

For further information about joining the Royal Naval Reserve in Nottingham, call 0115 929 6373 or email navymr-sherwoodmailbox@mod.gov.uk

Fire-fighting, first aid and emergency ship repairs

Week two begins with Parade training, preparing them for passing out at the end of the week. It's interesting to note that this historically originated in formation fighting for infantry, when close-quarter manoeuvrability was essential. Today, Parades are mainly ceremonial, but still teach a specific type of discipline, and provide the opportunity to show the public the Armed Forces at their best. Most of the week is focussed on gaining a basic understanding of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and damage control (niftily entitled CBRNDC). The isolation of a ship at sea means sailors must be ready to deal with any circumstances themselves, as invariably, the emergency services are not going to arrive.

The recruits are introduced to the use of respirators (gas masks), for use in any toxic fume or gas environments. First aid is another essential for all – practicing how to treat wounds, what to do if they are first on scene for choking, burns etc – for which they are assessed by civilian and Navy trainers to meet the basic standard. Their fitness progression culminates in an assault course. It's one thing being 'gym fit', quite another

having to scale a scrambling net, cross a rope bridge, crawl through a 10 metre tunnel full of freezing, flowing water and climb a 2 metre high wall, as part of a 2.4 km run, under time pressure. With the wind and rain from Storm Ciara still

present, and temperatures plummeting to just above freezing, they are really pushed to their limits. Through it all, it is great to see their teamwork and genuine 'Esprit de corps' ensure all the recruits reach the finish line.

One of the unique aspects of the Royal Navy training is firefighting. Fire in a contained space like a ship can be very dangerous. The recruits get an intensive package of instruction and practical training in tackling fires with the different types of extinguishers and techniques required to deal with particular types of fires. The other main risk is if the ship is damaged in any way; it needs to be made good until a safe port can be reached and the damage repaired properly. This is where DRIU comes in – the Damage Repair Instructional Unit.

“... it has been a lifelong ambition for me to be part of the Royal Navy. It was something I thought had passed me by ...”

This is a fully mobile training unit that rocks and rolls whilst filling with ice cold water and gives the recruits a real adrenalin-fuelled taste of being on a ship with a breach to the hull.

The first task is to reduce the ingress of



HMS Raleigh fire-fighting with foam

water, and for this, some basic wooden wedges are hammered into place to stem the flow and make it easier to work. Then they have a number of options of kit and equipment to repair the ship until it can make port and be properly repaired. It's a race against time, as the water level rises, as it can imbalance the ship, especially in rough seas. It is exciting to see the teamwork come to the fore as they work together in cramped, dark, cold, noisy and confusing conditions to accomplish the task of saving the ship.

Having survived this intensive few days, the recruits must pass their Navy Fitness test, before proceeding to pass out parade on the Friday, with friends and family watching. One can only imagine the pride they must feel on completing their Phase 1 training, as individuals and as a team, alongside people who just 10 day ago were complete strangers.

HMS Sherwood recruit fulfils life-long ambition

There was one recruit from our local Royal Naval Reserve unit HMS Sherwood on the course, Paul Fox, (now Able Rate 2 Fox): “The RNR training has been a very good experience for me. At times it was very tiring, both mentally and physically, as I have been juggling shift work and home life. In my day job, I am a miner (not many of us left, I know!). But it has been a lifelong ambition for me to be part of the Royal Navy. It was something I thought had passed me by. The confirmation course was very good, our group had a great bond, and we all still keep in touch. The Passing Out parade was a fantastic experience, it was so lovely to have my family there, especially my kids. My son tells me he is now a future recruit!

“I would recommend the RNR to anyone who is thinking about it. Just do it, you won't regret it. Meet new friends, and have experiences that only the RNR can offer you. I am proof that it is never too late.”

The newly qualified 'AB2s' will return to their units, be officially welcomed into the 'Ships Company' and look forward to continuing their training into Phase 2. This is where they begin to specialise in the specific area of the Royal Naval Reserve they intend to commit to as they begin what will no doubt be a valuable and rewarding second career.



Able Rate 2 Paul Fox with children at the passing out parade



Seated L to R: Dave Hornsey, Career Transition Partnership Regional Employer Relations Manager; Lt General Richard Nugee CB CVO CBE, Chief of Defence People; Col Murray Colville TD DL, Vice Lord-Lieutenant for Leicestershire and Col John Wilson, Regional Employer Engagement Director East Midlands RFCA. They are accompanied by representatives from the Universities and Cadets from the University Officer Training Corps.

East Midlands Universities re-sign Armed Forces Covenant

The nine universities of the East Midlands celebrated the updating of their Armed Forces Covenants in a joint ceremony held at the University of Leicester. The revised agreements include new, clear-cut promises to support Armed Forces personnel.

The event also marked the achievement of 500 Armed Forces Covenant signatories in the region by East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (East Midlands RFCA).

The ceremony was attended by Chief of Defence People (CDP), Lieutenant General Richard Nugee CB CVO CBE, who commented: “I am delighted to see these institutions from the East Midlands higher education sector reaffirming their Armed Forces Covenant commitments. In particular the commitment to encourage students to become Reservists, and paid leave for existing Reservists to undertake their annual training commitments is very welcome, and sets a potent example for peer organisations in the education sector.”

The universities are uniquely placed to support the education and training of the Armed Forces community. As a group, the universities have committed to collaborate in research to the benefit of the Armed Forces community in areas such as social care, sports science and the justice system. They will also consider how they can improve and facilitate access to higher education for service leavers, Reserves and military families.

The ceremony was particularly significant to the University of Leicester, as it was founded as a living memorial to those who made sacrifices in the First World War and celebrates its centenary in 2021. Professor Nishan Canagarajah, President and Vice Chancellor, University of Leicester, said: “I am proud to re-sign the Armed Forces Covenant. It is appropriate that the signing ceremony took place in our Fielding Johnson Building which served as a military hospital during the Great War. The University of Leicester was founded as a living memorial to the sacrifices of local people during that conflict. Our commitment to all those who serve, or have served, in the Armed Forces is part of that legacy.”

John Wilson OBE DL, Director of Employer Engagement at East Midlands RFCA, added: “We are really thrilled to have this significant group re-signing take place, demonstrating the friendly and supportive dialogue between all the East Midlands universities.”

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Winner of 'Best Reservist' transformed Maritime operation in the Gulf

The winner of the Best Reservist category in this year's Millie Awards, run by The Sun newspaper, was Lieutenant Commander Tracy MacSephney, Marine Component Command, Royal Naval Reserve.

The attempted capture of a British ship was the catalyst for the UK to gather a team of specialists to build a detailed picture of UK merchant shipping movements in the Gulf region. The specialist knowledge and skills required were not available in the Regular Navy, so the demand fell to Tracy, a Royal Naval Reserve Maritime Transport Officer to be deployed to Bahrain to gather and analyse data.

Tracy 44, from Southampton, joined the Reserve in 2004 after five years in the Royal Navy. She commented: "It was such a volatile situation. One minute you'd be mapping a British ship, then it would change hands and be flying under a different flag. My job was to analyse and interpret what was going on and

work out which ships needed group transit. We had to work fast but with accuracy, but we got a system in place which ensured safe passage for British interests."

The first expert in her field on the ground, Tracy was on deployment for seven weeks, often working 16-hour days. Senior commanders say she "transformed" the way the UK Armed Forces protect merchant shipping in the Gulf.

Commodore Dean Bassett, UK Maritime Commander in the Middle East, says: "Without Tracy being here I would not have had the information needed to position my ships according to the threat."



Tracy MacSephney - credit UK MOD CROWN 2018

"... We had to work fast but with accuracy, but we got a system in place which ensured safe passage for British interests ..."



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Staff are presented with their certificates

East Midlands School Cadets Expansion Officer receives Award

The Government's Cadet Expansion Programme reached its record breaking 500th Cadet Unit parading in schools across the UK late last year. Recently Mark Alker, School Cadets Expansion Officer (SCEO) for the East Midlands, was presented with a certificate marking the success of the project, along with SCEOs from other regions.

Mark Alker, a retired RAF Squadron leader, has been the SCEO for the East Midlands since the inception of the scheme in 2012. He manages seventeen Army Cadet contingents and four RAF contingents. Having met the target of 500, SCEO's were extended in post for another two years as the emphasis moves towards the sustainment of units and developing growth in Cadet numbers. With around 800 Cadets currently in the East Midlands, Mark's aim is to reach 1,200 in the coming years. There is a national aspiration of 60,000 Cadets in schools, set at a recent Combined Cadet Force Headmasters' Conference in Coventry.

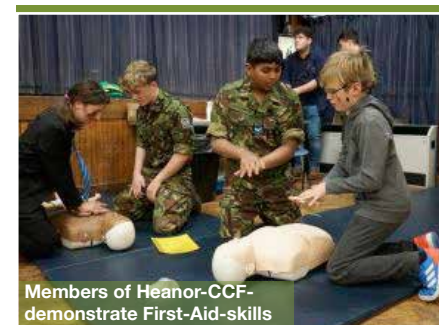
The Department for Education and Ministry of Defence originally announced the Cadet Expansion Programme back in

2012, setting a target of 100 Cadet Units parading in schools by 2015. It was set up to help equip young men and women with unique experiences and skills which can help them in their day to day life. The units teach young people transferable skills that will help them with their career goals, in whatever field that may be.

With the original programme smashing the 100 school target, a new target was set in July 2015, aiming to reach 500 Cadet units by May 2020. The programme focused on state schools in more deprived areas. This target was reached 5 months early.

On behalf of the Ministry of Defence, and to honour this achievement, the Chief of Defence People, Lieutenant General Richard Nugee, presented each of the School Cadet Expansion Officers (SCEO's) with an award in recognition of their contribution.

"The programme has gone from strength to strength, demonstrating the benefits we see in those young people who gain such important, practical and useful skills and experiences," commented Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace.



Members of Heanor-CCF demonstrate First-Aid skills

To learn more about the Cadet Expansion Programme visit:

www.combinedcadetforce.org.uk



Nurses assembling kit to pass over a 'minefield' in Command Task

Exercise Medical Challenge

Student nurses from the University of Nottingham recently took part in a leadership training event at Chetwynd Barracks, Chilwell. Hosted by 212 Field Hospital, the event included outdoor orienteering exercises and indoor command tasks designed to test their teamwork, communication skills and working under pressure.

Captain Robin Dutt, event organiser, commented: "Exercise Medical Challenge has been designed for over 240 students from the University of Nottingham. They do this as part of their leadership module; activities such as this help them think laterally, and consider how they can get the best from working together and combining their talents."

The teams of students were put through their paces by a group of Reservist medical personnel who had given up their free time to support the day. Many shared their experiences as Reservists and the opportunities that had been given them to see the world, and contribute to overseas disaster relief. Quite a few of the students were clearly inspired by the day and signed up for more information on the Reserves ... watch this space!



Student nurses working together on Command Task 1

A Day in the Life of...

an Estates Works Officer

The Estates team are the largest department at East Midlands RFCA, managing all 168 sites used by Reserves and Cadets. They are responsible for exciting new builds, but on a daily basis, their workload is primarily maintenance and repair, and ensuring statutory compliance checks are carried out. We recently spent a day with James Bellamy, Works Officer, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire, to learn more about what they do.

First up was a visit to the Army Cadet Centre, Southwell, where the recent extreme weather had caused major flooding in the basement. Severn Trent were asked to attend to tackle the flooding, and with the water level raised to head height, they had a long day ahead. The volume of water would have filled a swimming pool, and the pumping out took all day.



Severn Trent pump out the water

Next on the schedule was checking a recently redecorated Cadet centre, in Kirkby in Ashfield. With the refurbishment spec in hand and paying careful attention to detail, James thoroughly inspected the property. The centre had had a full paint job, including a two toned wall (to help hide the Cadet's boot marks!) and had a new anti-slip floor installed. With the property looking in tip top shape, we headed back to see what was left of the plunge pool we left earlier.

Severn Trent had managed to drain the water using two industrial pumps, but a number of penetration points were

discovered in the brickwork. After testing, it was found that the chlorine content was lower than expected for mains water, leading to the conclusion that the water was not leaking from our pipework. Further testing revealed a possible leak form pipework outside of our boundary, so this was reported to the local authorities to deal with.

The Estates team manage a capital value of £6 million and have a revenue budget of £2 million per year. Currently in the planning stage is a development at Sabraon Barracks, Lincoln, a £2 million pound project which will create state of the art garaging and workshops for 160 Transport Squadron. Creating these new facilities will help ensure Reservists keep up to date with their trade training and will ensure the barracks are fit for the soldiers based there.

It's difficult enough keeping on top of one's own house maintenance, so dealing with this number of buildings and suppliers must present a huge challenge to the team! Under the experienced direction of Martin Capewell, Head of Estates, and with Works Officer Kathy Williams (Central) working alongside James, Resources Manager Peter Byron, and the administrative support team of Sue Hall, Tina Beasley and Lynne Holland, they manage it all with great care and efficiency.



James Bellamy, Works Officer

Gardner Aerospace signs Armed Forces Covenant

One of the leading international manufacturers of aerospace parts, Gardner Aerospace, have signed the Armed Forces Covenant. Gardner Aerospace are aware of the benefits that Reservists and service leavers bring to the workforce, as they already employ several themselves.

Gardner Aerospace is keen to enhance its corporate social responsibility and reputation by engaging with the Armed Forces Covenant, recognising the value that service personnel Regulars and Reserves, Veterans and military families contribute to the country. Gardner Aerospace is a highly respected supplier in the global aerospace industry, supporting the critical production lines of its customers. They provide the aerospace industry including Airbus, Embraer, Gulfstream, Pilatus and many others. The company already benefits from

employing Armed Forces personnel, with the CEO Dominic Cartwright, being a former Reservist. He signed the UK Armed Forces Covenant alongside Major Lance Rosie, of the 103rd Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME). They were joined by UK HR Manager, Graham McCullough, who served 31 years in the RAF and Lauren Lucas, HR Manager, who is currently serving as an Army Reservist within 2 Operational Support Group, Royal Logistic Corps (RLC) . Dominic Cartwright commented: "Finding talent is always a challenge, we pride

ourselves on our labour turnover numbers. We want Gardner Aerospace to be a great place to work, offering good positions that are well rewarded in terms of pay, together with opportunities to move around the world." With part of the Armed Forces Covenant pledging to seek the employment of Veterans young and old, and working with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP), this signing opens up the opportunity for more Armed Forces personnel and Veterans gaining employment in the aerospace field.



Gardner Aerospace sign the AFC

Cultural visit provides insight to Bosnian War

160 Transport Squadron, Royal Logistic Corps, recently travelled to the Balkans on a cultural visit, named Exercise Steelback Balkans. The aim was to study and reflect on the events that lead to the collapse of the former Republic of Yugoslavia, in the mid-1990s. The 22 strong group was made up of a mixture of ex-Regulars and Reservists, with differing experiences.

Shortly after landing at Sarajevo airport, they travelled along what is notoriously known as 'sniper alley'. The architectural scars from the 1423 days of being under siege were evident, alongside new developments.

The following day, the group visited the 'Tunnel of Hope', an engineering feat and logistical breakthrough which provided a lifeline to normality. It was built by the Bosnian Army in order to link the city of Sarajevo, which was entirely cut off by Serbian forces, with Bosnian-held territory on the other side of the Sarajevo Airport, an area controlled by the United Nations. The tunnel allowed food, war supplies, and humanitarian aid to come into the city, and also provided an escape route. Commodities were scarce

and often astronomically inflated in price, so this was a much needed resource.



Gornji Vakuf shortly after the conflict

Emotional journey

An emotional visit to Srebrenica followed, the site of the largest known genocide in the country. Around 8,000 Bosniaks, mostly men and boys, were killed and over 25,000 women, children and the elderly forcibly removed from their homes. By contrast, visiting Gorazde lifted the spirits. Although the town had been surrounded and attacked, the commander in charge showed great moral courage and through gaining the hearts and minds of the local population, was able to protect the town.

The group took the opportunity to pay their respects to Lance Corporal

Edwards, who tragically died in Gornji Vakuf.

From a logistics point of view, there was much to learn from the tour. The area covered was large and posed many challenges. There were extreme weather conditions to deal with, tricky geological layout and poor, outdated infrastructure.

The group were able to discuss leadership traits to develop their own core values, including moral and physical courage through empowerment, and accountability from all ranks, developing trust and supporting individual's innovation.

The tour was organised by Officer Commanding Major Jim Hicks MBE, who commented: "Exercise Steelback Balkans has been a fantastic opportunity for members of the Squadron to reflect and learn lessons on the difficulties of providing logistic support to the United Nations during an extremely complicated conflict. For those that deployed here in the 90's it has been a time of reflection but the remainder it has been a real eye opener as to the level of atrocities that the Bosnian people endured during this bloody conflict."

"The Tunnel of Hope allowed food, war supplies, and humanitarian aid to come into the city, and also provided an escape route."



Messages from visitors to the Museum

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