



EAST MIDLANDS
RESERVE FORCES AND CADETS ASSOCIATION

Annual Report

2021-2022



Championing, supporting and enabling Reserves and Cadets

www.eastmidlandsrfa.co.uk    



Championing, supporting and enabling Reserves and Cadets

East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (RFCA) is a non-profit organisation, and one of 13 RFCAs across the UK. We are community-based, with the responsibility of advising and assisting the Defence Council, the Royal Navy, Army, and Royal Air Force, on matters that concern Reserves and Cadets.

Our staff are knowledgeable and local, and provide professional support. We promote the value, and recognition of, our people at the heart of Defence by driving awareness of the skills and attributes of Reserves and Cadets, and creating a favourable environment to better support recruitment and retention.

We have 162 sites located across the East Midlands, ensuring a community presence for Reserves and Cadets. We build strong relationships with local and regional contacts and employers, to ensure that the value of the Armed Forces community is recognised and they are offered every opportunity to deliver to their potential.

We generate additional revenue through the Alternative Venues hire programme which is re-invested to further benefit Reserves and Cadets.

Our volunteer members act as local ambassadors across the region, and include representatives from local authorities, a wide variety of employers, charities, education, Cadet services and the military. Our members work together to promote the value of, and recognition of, the Armed Forces community locally.

Our Vision

Our vision is to champion, support and enable Reserves, Cadets and the wider Armed Forces community in the region.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide professional and efficient support to the Reserve Forces to enable them to deliver military capability through the single Services. We do this through maintaining the estate across 17 Army Reserve Centres across the East Midlands. We provide vital support to employers of Reservists, and represent communities across the region through our membership.

Our mission for Cadets is to drive awareness and promote their values, provide professional administration support, and maintain the estate across 145 sites in the region.

A Welcome from our Chairperson

I forget who it was that said predicting the future is easy, getting it right is the difficult part. That nameless sage would have felt truly at home in the past two years, where COVID eroded our ability to control anything. I am pleased to see that restrictions have been lifted and that we are returning to normal, albeit with caution.

Reserves and Cadets have continued to parade when they can, from units or from home. I am extremely pleased that numbers, which had declined during the period of confinement, have begun to recover. Our own teams, in the HQ and at the ACF County HQs have continued to support them whenever and wherever possible. Indeed our staff, faced with a prolonged period of under-manning, have shown real commitment and ability. I am also grateful to our customers, who understood our need to restrict activity on the estate to ensure that it was maintained in a safe and legal condition.

Our journey towards a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) continues. The Council and regional RFCAs have started work to implement those recommendations of the Sullivan Review that are both good housekeeping and do not require a change in legislation. We are strengthening the Council head office, with additional senior HR and Finance managers to ensure there is a strategic and consistent approach across the regions. Unfortunately, Ministry of Defence (MOD) has been unable to secure government time to bring forward the required legislation in the current session of parliament so the initiation date for the NDPB is now not before April 2024. Notwithstanding that delay, the MOD's implementation team has worked closely with the Council of RFCAs' team to achieve a broad consensus on the most important matters, in particular that the volunteers, the heart of the RFCAs, retain a valid and worthwhile purpose in the future NDPB.

The Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations Estate Optimisation (REO) Programme which is reviewing the long-term viability of the Reserve Estate continues. The initial work is underway to rationalise some of our Cadet facilities, particularly those situated near each other. We will be funded to ensure that the detachment that moves will find its new facility a welcoming and functional home. Future REO work will look at the Reserve facilities across the country from a similar perspective.

After 10 years in post, Group Captain Nick Sharpe retired in February. Nick leaves East Midlands RFCA in excellent shape.

His leadership during the pandemic ensured that our core tasks of maintaining the estate, employer engagement and supporting the Cadets remained undiminished but always with an eye to the welfare of the RFCA staff. In 2019, after the Sullivan Review, Nick was invited to be a core member of the Council of RFCAs' implementation team working with MOD to develop the new NDPB. His contribution to this important work was key in ensuring that the views of the membership were considered and incorporated, and as a result we are well-placed for the future. I am sure that you will all join me in wishing Nick all the best in his retirement.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome Nick's successor, Brigadier Stuart Williams, to East Midlands RFCA as Chief Executive. Stuart was born in Lincolnshire and has served as Deputy Commander 7th Infantry Brigade and Headquarters East, our 'home Brigade'. During his time as Deputy Commander, Stuart was a keen exponent of engagement with local communities, a theme that he will no doubt bring to his new post. He joins us on retirement from the Army and his final post as Deputy Commander Cadets.

In closing I would like to express my thanks to our Lord-Lieutenants for their continued support of the Reserves and Cadets, and as the invaluable link into the civic life of the East Midlands. Finally, thank you to our volunteer members, who have faced a frustrating two years in the virtual world; like you, I look forward to returning to the real world in the coming months.

Colonel Nick Hile
Chairperson





Reserves: Serving our communities

This has been an exciting year for the Reserves. The initial announcements of RF30 and the Integrated Review have set the framework and vision for Defence moving into the next epoch. Both of these papers clearly recognised the vital Reserve contribution to the firm base and activities on the ‘far shore’.

Op RESCRIPT in particular has shown Defence's agility and ability in supporting the nation in a crisis, across a broad spectrum; from COVID testing and vaccinating, support teams in hospitals and ambulance drivers, though to planning expertise. Reserves have been mobilised in strength to support this effort, specifically using their local knowledge of the ground and ‘human terrain’ along with networks to augment ‘UK Ops’. The full detail of the upcoming Reserve lead for UK Ops is still to be finalised, but the opportunity is clear and the aspiration is for a quick implementation, with initial operating capability planned for the next few years.

Looking to the future, there is growing opportunity for the Reserves and a burgeoning recognition of what they can contribute in addition to numbers, especially in terms of specialist skill sets. There is also a corporate recognition of frictions that need to be overcome to unlock Reserve capability. Specifically the headline themes have been; equipment issues, specialist course lengths, maintaining currency for specialist roles, an ageing Reserve estate and the need for innovative approaches to utilising Reserves across their terms and conditions.

The post COVID civilian workplace has been a challenging one, with a variety of restructuring in numerous sectors. As a result, now more than ever, employer engagement has become vital ground in ensuring Reservists can be released and supported in their service. Notwithstanding current global events, the coming year will be the time to implement the new plans and take the next pivotal steps in transforming Reserve Capability and releasing its potential.

ROYAL NAVY – A SHINING EXAMPLE

Over the last 12 months HMS Sherwood has continued to provide a high level of training, both internal and external, on behalf of the Royal Naval Reserve.

Despite recruiting numbers dropping, personnel have successfully attended HMS Raleigh and Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC), Dartmouth, for confirmation courses in the past year. Reserves have also been mobilised to support various operations: six Reserves were deployed on Op RESCRIPT, supporting the COVID vaccination roll-out, one was mobilised on OP SHADER and one on OP FORTIS.

In Sept 2021, the unit was proud to provide the Core Ceremonial training staff at BRNC for a large-scale event with a guard of honour for a member of the royal family. The unit recently hosted the team from OFSTED, resulting in a successful inspection rated ‘Good’. HMS Sherwood was also very pleased to host Naval Regional Commander, Commodore Bellfield, who came up from London to meet the staff.

The unit has also been involved in the parenting of a large number of Regular RN personnel who have added value to the RNR training and engagement environment.

With minimal engagement opportunities available in the last year, members of the unit have attended schools, colleges and universities, utilising some high-tech simulators, with great success.

Under Project PENFOLD, staff have been working hard embracing new methods of communication, allowing Reserves to book their own transport, accommodation and courses, remotely. This ultimately involving the ending of all Permanent Staff roles in Sherwood, with Reserves taking on many of the unit roles.

ARMY RESERVES – FUTURE SOLDIER

The Army's response to the new directives in ‘Future Soldier’ redefined the paradigm, acknowledging and creating Reserve primacy for UK Ops and a clear dependency on Reserve capability for warfighting.

Army Reservists have also continued to be at the forefront of overseas operations. Units and sub-units have over the last year, deployed to Cyprus and the enhanced forward presence in Poland, as well as smaller scale support for short term training teams in Africa, and individual augmentees for the Middle East, Mali and wider. The coming year will see Reserve sub-units deploy on tours to the Falklands as well as supporting the new unit deployments for Land Regional Hubs in Kenya and Oman. There is now also a strong demand signal to aid the hosting of the Commonwealth games in Birmingham this summer.

RAF RESERVES – DELIVERING OPERATIONS

The Reservists of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) continue to provide outstanding support to the regular component, both through mobilisation and Reserve Service Days. The nature of RAF operations is such that in parallel with overseas commitments, many operational missions are delivered from the United Kingdom, with both the Quick Reaction Alert and Maritime patrol being excellent examples. This allows Reservists to be employed operationally in a wide variety of ways. In the last year over 50% of all Reserve Service Days delivered operational output and this will continue alongside the planned mobilisation of 150 trained personnel from a trained strength of just under 2000.

Currently RAuxAF Reservists are actively involved in supporting 20 operations spanning 5 continents, such as Operation BILOXI which sees the RAF forming part of a NATO Air Policing Force based in Romania and Operation SHADER, countering continuing Islamic state activity. Recent operational deployments, such as those in Estonia, saw mobilised Reservists forming 25% of the ground element of the detachment.

To enable this amazing commitment, and as part of our focus on Employer Engagement, the RAuxAF is now supported by 13 Air Regional Employer Engagement Officers each aligned with an RFCA, with East Midlands RFCA's officer appointed recently.

East Midlands Reserves: linking the armed forces and our local communities



HMS SHERWOOD

HMS Sherwood has deployed Reservists on a wide variety of activities this year.

- One of its longest serving officers, Leading Hand Dicky Dyke, was mobilised to serve on the Royal Navy flagship, HMS Queen Elizabeth, as part of the Carrier Strike Group 21 deployment.
- Lieutenant Mathew Hendery was mobilised as a watchkeeper on-board Royal Fleet Auxiliary Mounts Bay, off the coast of Norway in the Arctic Circle.
- Five Reservists were deployed as part of the Welsh Ambulance Support Force to support the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust.

It was the largest mobilisation HMS Sherwood had seen since the London 2012 Olympics.



ARMY TRAINING REGIMENT PRODUCE NEXT GENERATION

Army Reserve Phase 1 training comprises three consecutive residential courses, supported by remote learning and bespoke physical training. Army Training Regiment Grantham has the capacity to take Army Reservists through all three stages of their residential Phase 1 training. Training is conducted by sub-units based in Grantham and Donnington, which are staffed by Regular and Reserve training teams.

During training year 21/22, the Regiment trained 1550 Army Reserve recruits across the three courses, achieving a pass rate of 94.3% against the original course loading.



103 BATTALION REME PLANT A TREE FOR THE JUBILEE

In support of the Queen's Green Canopy project, 103 Bn REME planted a tree in the grounds of the Army Reserve Centre at Clare Street. The project aims to create a legacy across the country to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and one which enhances the environment. The ceremony included the Vice Lord-Lieutenant for Northamptonshire, the Mayor, and various local dignitaries and employers.



C (KOHIMA) COMPANY, 4 MERCIAN REGIMENT

The unit continued to support Op RESCRIPT, the latest of which saw tri-service personnel providing ambulance driving support to the Scottish Ambulance Service (ScAS). The operation has allowed Reservists to give back to communities and feel like they were making a real difference. This is particularly pertinent with Corporal Etches, who hails from Mansfield, who served in Aberdeen for four months.

The deployment provided personnel the opportunity to help save lives in patient facing roles. These skills were bolstered by the invaluable practical knowledge they have gained on task through growth of softer skills, pairing with paramedics, technicians and students, to drive ambulances, provide first aid and operate lifesaving technical equipment.

7010 INTELLIGENCE SQUADRON RAF

The Squadron began the year working virtually with training activities designed to maintain core analytical skills during COVID lockdown provided online in April and May 2021. The Squadron returned to its normal working location at RAF Wyton in June 2021 and quickly reintegrated into our usual working routine. Since then 7010 has continued to deliver intelligence outputs to a variety of UK Defence customers throughout the year.

Three members of the Squadron have been mobilised into full-time intelligence roles with the UK and beyond our work, personnel have participated in RAF sailing expeditions, the RAF Reserves UK/US exchange, re-established our important affiliation with the Worshipful Company of Chartered Surveyors and undertaken a wide variety of skills and career development courses.

2 OPERATIONAL SUPPORT GROUP, THE ROYAL LOGISTIC CORPS

The unit has continued at fast pace in the last 12 months despite pressures imposed by the pandemic. The Group was awarded the 104 Brigade Team Commendation for their continued support on Op RESCRIPT. At the same time, Reserves were also deployed on Exercise STEADFAST LEDA, and two HQ staff deployed on Exercise KHANJAR OMAN 21 in a Contract Management role. They hit the ground running within days of arriving in Oman, as contracts had to be in place to ensure there was no delay on the exercise start date.



350 FIELD SQUADRON SNOWBOARDING

East Midlands RFCA was pleased to be able to provide financial support to six members of 350 Field Squadron who went on Exercise Snowboard Sapper 22, an adventurous training expedition to Austria. The exercise saw 70 personnel from across the Corps of Royal Engineers take part in training and then four days of competition. The exercise allowed not only the development of specific, physical skills, but enhanced resilience, teamwork and boosted self-confidence.

EAST MIDLANDS UNIVERSITIES OFFICER TRAINING CORPS (EMUOTC)

Despite COVID restrictions, the Unit was successful in conducting its annual deployment exercise to Catterick for 110 officer cadets, enabling the culmination of the training year after a predominantly virtual delivery of the training syllabus. The unit also managed to deploy three UK based summer adventurous training expeditions across a variety of disciplines for over 50 officer cadets, in addition to a Winter Mountain Foundation Course over the Christmas leave period. Whilst sporting opportunities have also been limited, the unit's Simon Hale is to be commended on the incredible achievement of third place at the UCI World Masters Cyclo-Cross Championships.



It has very often been said that the youth of today lack focus, resilience and fortitude; and yet, over the past 12 months, across the whole of the country, tens of thousands of Ministry of Defence sponsored Cadets have demonstrated these very qualities, time and time again. Due to the challenging COVID-19 environment, there have been some very difficult obstacles to overcome, and yet the Cadets and Adult Volunteers across the East Midlands have returned in greater numbers than before.

As normality resumes, and face to face training becomes the main focus, we can look back on some stunning successes. Between October and November 2021, we witnessed the inauguration of 19 Lord-Lieutenants' Cadets, including four from the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), the first time the CCF have been routinely included in this prestigious award ceremony in the East Midlands. These Cadets are a shining example of the benefits of being a Cadet and have represented their units and the wider youth of their county, when assisting the various Lord-Lieutenants at some very prestigious events.

In the summer of 2021, the challenges of delivering Cadet annual camps came into sharp focus as the wider military, both Regular and Reserve, returned to those training areas that had, until recently been out of use due to COVID. This presented significant challenges as units vied for available training space. Cadet Commandants and their Senior Leadership Teams, ably supported by the County Permanent Support Staff, overcame these challenges and delivered a mix of residential and non-residential annual camps, thus ensuring that as many Cadets as possible had

the opportunity to meet with friends and engage in exciting and challenging activities.

What makes the Cadet movement work is the extraordinary effort, dedication and selflessness of those who volunteer. Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) from all four cadet forces are the backbone of the movement and without these exceptional people, thousands of young people from across all six of the counties of the East Midlands, simply wouldn't have a Cadet unit to attend. It is testament to the CFAV cohort's resilience that COVID has had only a minimal impact on their numbers and indeed, all the signs suggest that numbers are on the increase, further demonstrating that the majority of individuals believe that Cadets are a force for good and they want to get involved.

2022 will still present challenges, but the enthusiasm and fortitude of the Cadets and the selfless commitment of CFAVs from all four of the Cadet Services, along with excellent support from a wide array of organisations, will ensure that each Cadet has the very best opportunity to reach their fullest potential.





ARMY CADET FORCE – INSPIRING ACHIEVEMENTS

Staff Cadet Simeon Raines from Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland Army Cadet Force has had an incredible year of successes. Already Cadet Company Sgt Major, Cadet Company Drum Major and one of the county's Lord-Lieutenant's Cadets, Simeon then took the top award of 'National Drum Major' at the National Music Camp in October 2021. The win has also seen him put forward for the national ACCT UK Recognising Excellence Awards in June 2022.



COMBINED CADET FORCE REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

Haven High CCF took part in a High Ropes climbing course at RAF Conningsby in their first face-to-face training event following the lifting of restrictions. The various challenges helped them to build trust, practice balance, develop teamwork, as well as introducing them to safety and specific climbing skills.



SEA CADETS – MAKING A SPLASH

It has certainly been a challenging year for all youth organisations and the Sea Cadets is no different. They have tried, where possible, to get outdoor activities underway whilst keeping to the COVID restrictions. This hasn't been easy for some units but everyone has rallied round to get the Cadets back on the water and doing the fun, outdoor activities they so enjoy, including during the school summer holidays. Our appreciation goes out to our dedicated volunteers for delivering virtual training for our Cadets across the region during this difficult time.



RAF AIR CADETS – FLYING HIGH TRENT WING

Covid restrictions hit Trent Wing RAFAC hard, turning to online sessions at the peak of the pandemic. Staff and Cadet numbers suffered, and the easing of restrictions led to a number of challenges, which flexed and altered as the situation changed. Whilst we did lose two units due to staffing shortages, all the remaining units have returned to normal activities, offering the diverse range of opportunities to staff and Cadets. We are pleased to see Cadet numbers and staff numbers are increasing again now. It is great to have the return of flying and gliding opportunities, along with shooting, adventure training and several other aspects of the Air Cadet offering, as our CFAV's renew their qualifications.



DERBYSHIRE ARMY CADET FORCE

Derbyshire Army Cadet Force were delighted to be able to run their Summer Camp last year. Fraught with logistical difficulties, it was all the more satisfying to be able to run them successfully, with the Cadets really appreciating the opportunity after so long stuck at home and indoors. A great example of the adult volunteers and professional support staff working hand-in-hand. Great fun was had by all!



SOUTH AND EAST MIDLANDS WING RAFAC

Four Cadets, from Rushden, Birstall and Glenfield, completed the Qualified Aerospace Instructors course, which involved six months of training (over weekends) covering topics such as Air Power, Aerodynamics, Instructional Technique, Flight Simulation and Air Traffic Control simulation. They are now qualified to deliver the Blue Aviation Syllabus to cadets. These are four of just 40 Cadets across the whole RAFAC to achieve the qualification this year.



RAF AIR CADETS VOLUNTEERS RECOGNISED WITH QUEEN'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Volunteers from 1279 (Melton Mowbray) RAF Air Cadets received the honour in recognition of their work in planning, organising and running the vast array of activities for the Cadets. During lockdown, work continued, enabling the awarding of over 100 badges, certificates and qualifications for the Cadets. With a team of 18 volunteers, they go above and beyond to provide support and links with the local community.



SUCCESS IN DRILL ACROSS REGION

70 Cadets from Northampton Sea Cadets took part in the District Drill and Piping Competition, held at Clare Street Army Reserve Centre. Cadets across all ages and ranks took part, demonstrating their teamwork and skills, in the annual contest. The Armed Guard won a Silver medal and the Guard Commander Able Cadet Care won the Best Overall Guard Commander.

CADET FORCE ADULT VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTING TO THE COMMUNITY

Cadet Force Adult Volunteers are essential to the successful running of our Cadet units. They inspire others through their dedicated volunteering, sharing their time, knowledge and energy to help develop our young people into well-rounded citizens.

Whether Sea, Army or Air Cadets, all deliver a structured programme of activities for young people aged 10-18 (depending on the Cadet Force). This can include sports, canoeing, first aid, cyber training, fieldcraft, gliding and many qualifications such as Duke of Edinburgh and Cadet Vocational Qualifications (CVQO).



THE TIRELESS WORK OF A VOLUNTEER

In November, CSMI Sarah Burton, C Company, Derbyshire Army Cadet Force, received the Col Pickering Award in recognition of her tireless work and commitment to the Cadet Force. Sarah worked hard through lockdown to keep Cadets engaged and made a large contribution to the running of the successful annual camp.

Employer Engagement: Building business relationships

Our Employer Engagement team deliver a government campaign to continually improve the understanding of the role of our Armed Forces and to support their needs. We develop mutually-beneficial relationships with businesses and organisations in all sectors, in order to support the employment of Reservists; to improve transition to civilian life for those leaving the Forces; and to improve career opportunities for Service spouses and partners. The campaign also supports adult volunteers in the military sponsored Cadet organisations.

The cornerstone of our relationship is the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC), which also provides an opportunity for employers to recognise publicly the value that serving personnel, Regulars and Reserves, veterans, Cadet Force Adult Volunteers and military families contribute to our country; across the UK, over 8200 organisations have signed the Covenant, with almost 830 in the East Midlands. This year, we have targeted business sectors including manufacturing, technology, logistics, District Councils and education. The results have meant 152 Armed Forces Covenants signed in the year.

Those who sign the Covenant gain access to a range of Defence benefits: access to recruitment platforms targeted

at Service-leavers and Service spouses, with transferrable skill sets; a positive impact to reputation and corporate social responsibility; access to free personal development and leadership training delivered by the military; and are offered discounted rates on versatile and affordable venues for hire across the UK. Employers also gain acknowledgement of their support through the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS).

This year brought a significant number of ERS awards, with 11 Gold, 33 Silver and 109 Bronze awards across the East Midlands, showing much needed support for the 200 Reservists deployed to support the NHS fighting the pandemic.



Employer Recognition Scheme

The MOD's Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Awards recognise those employers who support Defence personnel and advocate for others to follow.

Bronze award-holders are self-nominated employers who have signed the Armed Forces Covenant and pledge their intention to be Armed Forces friendly.

The Silver Awards recognise employers who demonstrate support for Defence personnel and may employ (although not essential) a member of the Armed Forces community (Reservist, Service-leaver, military spouse or Cadet Force Adult Volunteer). They have established HR policies and actively communicate with their internal Armed Forces network and local units.

The Gold Awards highlight those employers who actively advocate and support Defence personnel, communicating both internally and externally to the wider community. They demonstrate significant support for Reservists through policies such as additional paid leave, to enable Reservists to fulfil their military training and mobilisation commitments. This year, the Gold award criteria has evolved to recognise organisations who engage and support Cadet units and military charities.

Face to face events have finally returned, replacing many virtual meetings, and employers are keen to attend. Of note, some 40 employers attended HMS Sherwood in Nottingham for a networking meeting, and we are now planning a full programme of in person events.

The Silver ERS Award ceremony for 33 winners this year was held very successfully at the International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln.

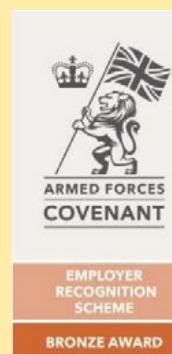
Gold ERS Awards were presented by the Minister for Defence People and Veterans, Leo Docherty, at the Royal Armouries, Leeds, in a joint event with Yorkshire & Humber and North West RFCAs. The East Midlands now has 36 Gold ERS Award holders representing every county.

GOLD ERS WINNERS 2021

Aggregate Industries
Ashfield District Council
Eagle Eye Innovations Ltd
Forces Cars Direct Ltd
Forces Solutions Limited
HZL Specialist Solutions Limited
Lincoln College
Mercury Electronic Warfare
Shorterm Group
TMS Support Solutions Ltd
University of Derby

GOLD RE-VALIDATION

Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust



Employer Engagement: Case studies

Gold ERS Award winner TMS Support Solutions

TMS Support Solutions, in Grantham, Lincolnshire, was one of just 11 Gold ERS Award winners in the East Midlands last year. They employ a large number of Veterans with the specific knowledge and skills needed to produce their highly technical manuals. But by signing the Armed Forces Covenant and submitting for the ERS Award, they had to go one step beyond to demonstrate their support for the broader Armed Forces community.

TMS began in 1991 when the publications division of a local company was disbanded and one of the workers recognised the opportunity, and began producing them from his kitchen table. Thirty years later, Theresa Cannon, the daughter of that determined entrepreneur, is now Commercial Director of the business which employs 28 people and has a growing order book.

TMS's primary focus is on writing technical publications for military equipment – essentially, detailed operator manuals. Sometimes it requires them to literally take apart the equipment, screw by screw, and put it back together, recording every minute detail according to the different standards demanded by whichever Service they are working with.

In addition, TMS have diversified into training, software provision, and providing support with planning and preparation to their customers with Integrated Logistics Support (ILS).

As much of their work is for the MOD, TMS signed the AFC fairly early on. It was only in recent years they decided to go for the ERC Award. When they looked at the criteria for Silver, they realised there were already doing a lot of what was required, and that came fairly easily.

To apply for Gold, TMS adjusted some of their HR policies, including additional leave for Veterans, Reservists and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers. With everything in place, they seemed in a good position to receive Gold, but did not achieve it on the first attempt. "That's where the Employer Engagement team at RFCA can really help, in highlighting the best ways to demonstrate your support of the Armed Forces," said Theresa. It also meant they were all the more happy to achieve Gold last year. "We were very proud to achieve the Gold Award, and to have that public recognition of what we do to support our people and the local community."

TMS' future business development plans specifically include advocating for the AFC – they actively ask the question of all their suppliers and contacts – "Have you signed the AFC?" and feature their Gold Award on their emails, website and sales materials. Nick Johnson, Business Development Manager and himself a veteran of 24 years in the Army says they plan to work more closely with the Careers Transition Partnership (CTP) on recruitment, and will continue to offer work experience placements. They are already determined to retain their Gold Award when the re-validation comes round in a few years time!



Forces Solutions

Another of our Gold ERS Award winners from last year was Forces Solutions, a small business which is having a large impact on the insurance business for the military. Their primary offering is motor and travel insurance, and in addition to offering competitive rates, they tailor their offers to ensure Armed Forces personnel are not disadvantaged.

In the UK, Armed Forces personnel are covered by the Financial Services Ombudsman, should anything go awry, but when they are stationed in Belgium or Germany, for instance, they may not be covered, which can mean hefty costs if anything should happen. Insuring via Force Solutions in the UK means you get the same cover as if stationed in the UK. Likewise, some insurers regard any Ministry of Defence location as hazardous, which may affect any claims made if at work in an Army Reserve Centre or similar. Travel insurance does not normally cover cancellation due to deployment, but this can be covered too.

Sandip Barchha, Director, explains: "Forces Solutions has only been in existence for 4 years, but I knew one of the first things I wanted to do was to sign the AFC. Having worked within military insurance previously, I was aware how important it was to support our Armed Forces."

Keen to get involved in the ERS Awards, Sandip attended some East Midlands RFCA workshops, to get ideas as to how he could support his veteran employees, without disadvantaging his other staff. They added to their HR policies that Reservists could take time off to prepare for going on training, including paying for their travel, and providing kit insurance. Once the Silver ERS was attained, it was a matter of extending HR policies further, and continuing the advocacy work Sandip was already involved in, such as being a part of the Financial Services Steering Group. Sandip also recently spoke at an event hosted by the Lord-Lieutenant of Rutland on partnering with Defence and the AFC.

Sandip commented: "Our Gold ERS Award is a treasured possession and one we are extremely proud of as a business. We are always mindful of the sacrifices made by Armed Forces personnel, including the spouses, who often give up or postpone their own career to follow and support their partner. We will continue to do all that we can to give something back to them."



HZL Specialist Solutions Ltd

HZL Specialist Solutions also won a Gold ERS Award in 2021 and are a private training provider based in Derby. The company was established in 2000 by Al Prescott, who saw the business opportunity whilst he was still serving in the Army. The company delivers training in professional qualifications through both recognised and bespoke courses, but also provides quality assured training to ensure compliance with national standards, for in-house training teams. The areas covered included education, assessment of competencies, quality assurance, risk mitigation and risk management, in both the public service sector and security industry.

HZL are just one of two approved providers of sector specific qualification that sit on the Regulated Qualification Framework and are the preferred supplier for the Metropolitan Police. They employ three veterans and two Reservists, and a member of the Royal Military Police, currently on sabbatical, who will join full time in July when he leaves the Army – though he will also transfer to be a Reserve.

In addition to fulfilling the 'essential' criteria for Gold Awards, HZL also provide free of charge advice and training for those transitioning from the Services, helping them identify and exemplify their transferable skills. They have also worked closely with local Cadet groups, providing free mental health training for Derbyshire ACF Cadet Force Adult Volunteers as they returned to training after COVID. So successful was this that further sessions are planned. HZL have also recently worked with HQ 7 Infantry Brigade to assist them with their recruiting programmes.

Al commented: "We are very proud of winning the Gold ERS Award. It is a privilege to be recognised for the work we have done, and has opened up a network of new contacts with whom we hope to work in the future."





Estates: providing secure training facilities

The last year has presented another interesting and challenging time for the Estates department. The lasting impact of the pandemic meant materials supply and manpower to support projects continued to be an issue. In addition, internal staff shortages put huge demands on those remaining. However, despite all of this, Estates continued to ensure safe and compliant buildings for all of our sites. Several large capital projects came to fruition and we continued to deliver change programmes as required.

The team were delighted to complete two high profile capital projects: new garages at Sobraon Barracks, Lincolnshire, and the new HQ for 2425 (Nottingham Airport) Squadron, Royal Air Force Air Cadets, which you can read more about below.

Specific Health & Safety improvements were carried out across all areas of the estate, and included replacing several failed industrial doors, removing all of the High Risk Asbestos, replacing old boilers, and carrying out improvements to the gas infrastructure.

Work continued to improve the estate where funding allowed, including new windows, internal redecorations, and ablution improvements to both Army Reserve Centres and Cadet premises.

Estates can look forward to a very busy 2022 and beyond, as work has just started on the new workshops and training wing at the Kingsway Army Reserve Centre in Derby. We have also begun work on the option studies for a new Cadet Training Centre at Beckingham Camp. This will be an exciting project to deliver as it requires the delivery of a Net Zero Carbon facility. In addition, we will be starting on the delivery of Tranche 1 of the Reserve Estates Optimisation Programme, where new Joint Cadet Centres will be created, enhancing existing facilities to allow a better training experience for all.



Sobraon Barracks

The £2.2 million Sobraon Barracks project arose out of the FR20 plan in 2016, which meant the relocation of 160 Transport Squadron to Sobraon. The size of the vehicles involved and the type of work needed meant it was quickly realised the existing facilities were not fit for purpose. As with all projects of this scale, Defence Infrastructure Operations sponsors were involved, a detailed business case was written and tenders invited for consultants. The development of the User Requirement Document (URD) was essential in identifying the additional requirements for a gymnasium, training facilities and classrooms etc.

Planning consent was sought; as the new building was to sit alongside the very traditional Victorian building, it was important to consider the design, alongside issues such as archaeology, ecology and the close proximity of domestic housing.

A local Lincolnshire builder won the contract and work started on site just 24 hours before the first national lockdown. The project was halted for a few months whilst it was worked out what could and could not be done under the new rules, and work began again. Issues then arose with the supply of both materials and labour due to COVID-19, but with the further easing of restrictions, the building was about 90% complete by early 2021. The delivery of new gas,



electric and water utilities involved further delays but the keys were finally handed over in March.

Captain Bruce Saunderson, 160 Transport Squadron, commented: "We've got a state-of-the-art servicing bay, gymnasium and classrooms. The Reservists are over-awed with the new facilities and looking forward to using them."

Martin Capewell, Head of Estates, said: "It's been a challenging project because of the times, but we are proud of the final result and of the sustainability that has been built-in. For example, heat recovery from the shower waste water is used to feed other systems, air source heat pumps and green and recycled materials are used where possible."

Nottingham Airport Squadron



Nottingham Airport Squadron RAF Air Cadets (RAFAC) detachment is located on a commercial airfield, so perfectly placed to help Cadets develop their skills. When the private landlord required their land for other purposes, he offered a new piece of land to lease for a new building. Once funding from RAFAC Headquarters had been secured, the process of finding suitable consultants and contractors began.

Local planners put a good deal of pressure on the architects regarding the design, as the airport itself has one of the only completed rings of listed World War 2 pillboxes left in the country. These needed to be protected, but the design also had to sit alongside them sympathetically. Mike Harrison of Allan Joyce Architects Ltd, commented: "The final form is quite cubic and simple, with a dark, dense look to it – dark bricks, dark roofing materials and dark windows – quite a statement but very much a part of the historical nature of the site."

During the build, there were still some materials delays to deal with – particularly concrete blocks and electrical equipment – but thanks to good relationships with local contractors, the project was finished within 12 months.

The upgraded accommodation is slightly larger than the previous building, but most importantly, has been updated to include wiring for computers, projectors and whiteboards, which the previous 20-year old building did not have. The Cadets are very much looking forward to training on summer evenings overlooking the airfield.

Asbestos

Asbestos is regarded as one of the main five Health and Safety risks – the others being Fire, Legionella, Electricity and Fuels – and Ministry of Defence had a focus on these in the last year. A funding pot was made available for the removal of High Risk Asbestos. Our Estates team identified seven sites where medium risk asbestos could become high-risk if disturbed by other works, and specialist

consultants were employed to carry out the work. The at-risk areas included boiler rooms in some ARCs, roof spaces and some floor ducts. The removal of the asbestos was carried out by specialists. Following Government guidelines, the waste was double-bagged and taken to controlled landfill. This whole process took less than three months to complete.

Alternative Venues

Maintaining our estates is a costly business and this is part funded through income generated from our Alternative Venues (AV) – a catalogue of our properties that are available to hire. They offer affordable, versatile and secure spaces, right across the East Midlands.

Our sites continue to offer large halls, conference facilities, professional kitchens, audio visual equipment and disabled access. Some also offer accommodation, up to 150 people, and are in easy to reach locations in the heart of our communities.

As the restrictions on activities lifted earlier this year we have looked to consolidate the relationships that carried our AV programme through the isolation of lockdown and social distancing.

We continue to work with, and offer our venues to, blue light (or emergency) services, amongst others, and provide these customers with a wide choice of venues across the region at affordable prices. We also continue to work with good and worthy causes like the National Blood Service and midlands-based police forces, providing support in local communities and meeting our aims of driving additional revenue for East Midlands RFCA and raising awareness of our activities.

Having reopened our venues in line with national guidelines and legislation, we are progressing as fits our clients and their needs, and the desire to resume face-to-face events. Though the pace of change has impacted our friends in business in different ways, we will continue to meet their needs for local, viable and versatile venues that stand out from the crowd.



Communications: Raising awareness

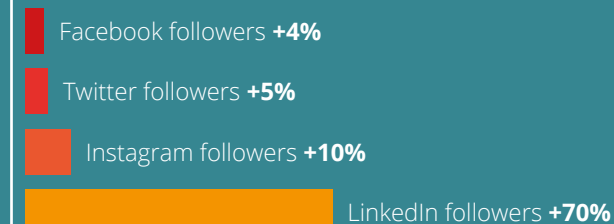
The continuing impact of COVID in the first half of the year meant major Communications campaigns were still delivered virtually. From the summer onwards, opportunities opened up to attend camps and events, and we have since taken every chance to get out in the field to gather fresh content and continue to raise the profile of Reserves and Cadets in our region.

Armed Forces Week in June 2021, of which Reserves Day is a part, was once again conducted mostly virtually, though some outdoor events did mark the occasion. We produced:

- 2 x video interviews with female Reservists, one of whom had been a part of running COVID vaccine trials, the other of whom had returned from leading a combined Regular and Reserve troop on Operation CABRIT in Poland.
- 1 x video of Nottinghamshire County Council flag-raising.
- 3 x written case studies, one of which featured an A&E intensive care Sikh Doctor who also passed the prestigious All Arms Pre-Parachute Selection Course with the Army Reserve. Following the issuing of a Press Release, the Reservist was also interviewed on BBC Radio Nottingham and BBC Radio Leicester.
- Provided a 'toolkit' for employers, including social media graphics, to make it as easy as possible for them to get involved. Many employers became engaged and posted strong content of their own, featuring their Reservists and activities at their workplaces.
- A focussed social media campaign across the week saw engagement increase by 30% on both Twitter and LinkedIn compared to the previous year. Videos published on Facebook had 156,000 impressions and the post about the Doctor on Instagram had the most number of likes across all 13 RFCA posts in the week.

Social Media Statistics

- Our follower numbers continue to grow through organic means, as we do not run any paid-for promotions. The largest growth reflects those areas in particular where we have put more focus this year:
- In total in the year across the four social media platforms, we posted 1554 posts.



The Silver and Gold ERS Awards ceremonies were finally able to be held in person. We supported the Silver event and winners as follows:

- Feature videos on Harborough District Council and KryptoKloud in the run up to the event. Short interview on the night with Kuku Connect, and publishing professional photos taken on the night, which led to engagement rates of between 23-29% on LinkedIn, well above average levels of engagement.
- It was the first time the Gold ERS Awards were held regionally, and we enjoyed the benefit of working alongside the experienced team at Defence Relationship Management to create video content which was shared both nationally and regionally. These featured Eagle Eye Innovations and Aggregate Industries. We also gained a double-page spread in Easy Resettlement magazine featuring our Gold winners.

We had over 34k users on our website during the year, over 41k sessions, and 68k page views. The website continues to be a useful reference point for people and is updated with news regularly. In addition, we set up a presence on the Gov.uk website, along with the other RFCAs, and this should provide additional traffic and interest in the fullness of time.

Our social media presence has continued to grow, as can be seen from the statistics (left), and as influential and relatively low cost avenues to target our audiences, will continue to be a focus. We create a good deal of 'original' content for our social media channels, with short interviews with CFAVs and Cadets proving very popular. We continue to refine our 'by-channel' strategy to optimise our engagement levels.



Financial Year 2021/2022

East Midlands RFCA is funded by multiple Ministry of Defence and single Service sources to deliver its three mandated Defence outputs of Estates, Engagement and Cadets and Youth.

The in-year funding of £10.3m split across all top level budget holders has allowed East Midlands RFCA to deliver the outputs and services to all internal and external customers and has been used for Operation Costs, Engagement, Capital Expenditure and Estates Management including:

- Statutory and Mandatory Inspections and Testing
- Maintenance and Projects; Capital expenditure on assets in the course of construction
- Infrastructure costs including utilities, rates etc.
- Transport and Movement including depreciation of the fleet
- WISSPA projects for injured service men and women

Reserve and Cadet support expenditure has risen this year compared to the previous year due to the lifting of COVID-19

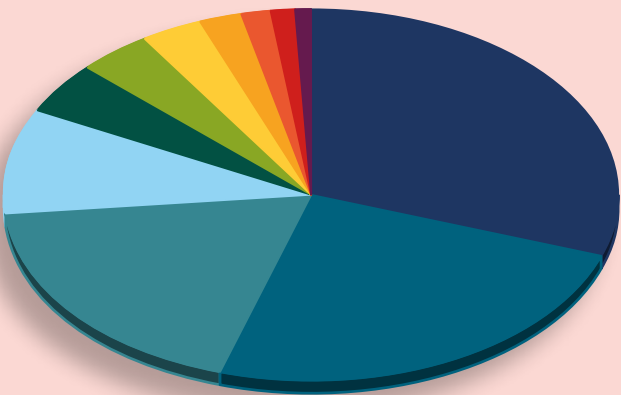
restrictions resulting in annual camps, parades and all activities going ahead in the later part of the year.

We continue to generate an income from the commercial exploitation of our estate and this is an area of the business we continue to build.

The hiring of Army Reserve Centres and Cadet Centres raised an income of £205k this year as we continued to hire out the estate primarily to the emergency services and NHS Blood to help support these services through the pandemic and after. East Midlands RFCA secured a further £331k in non-domestic rates (NDR) rebates from local authorities. Feed in Tariffs produced £11k of income.

The money raised has funded various estates projects approved by our Finance Scrutiny Committee and our Board; it will also be used to assist Reserves and Cadets to undertake adventurous training and help improve their facilities.

Funding 2021/22 – £10,221,000



- DIO – Projects – Capital Expenditure **£3.1m**
- RC – RFCA Grant-In-Aid **£2.5m**
- DIO – Hard FM **£1.9m**
- DIO – Soft FM **£935k**
- DIO – Projects – Revenue Expenditure **£459k**
- Army Infra – Revenue Expenditure **£396k**
- RC – Vehicles **£330k**
- RAFAC – Input **£228k**
- RFC – Defence Relationship Management **£157k**
- Funding Sundry **£130k**
- RAF Reserves – Revenue Expenditure **£86k**



The year ahead

As I write this I am still in my understand phase, adopting a 100 day (plus) approach to the start of my time as your Chief Executive. It is great to be back, and amongst friends, as I still see so many familiar faces on both the staff and across the region. Before I look forward it would be remiss of me not to pass on my personal thanks to Nick Sharpe for his superb handover, but more importantly for all that he did in his long and successful tenure leading our Association; it is definitely a going concern!

What we do by way of Estates, Employer Engagement and Cadets and Youth are as important today as they ever have been, however I am asking ‘why’ we do what we do, what is our purpose? It is an interesting question to consider, and answer, as by doing so this can help empower both the staff and membership. This important work is being led by our new Head of Engagement and will be briefed to the Board in the Autumn; what is clear though is that our people add value wherever they are, and within East Midlands RFCA we will continue to do all we can to champion, support and enable them.

Whilst we will continue to support CRFCA work in implementing the transition to the NDPB, in looking at the coming year there are, amongst others, three areas that will be vitally important to us: Reserve Forces (RF) 30, REO and Cadet Summer camps.

RF30 will coordinate an in-depth formal consultation with employers. This will include internal and external stakeholders across the UK and, as part of a broader public consultation, will provide significant thematic analysis to inform Reserve Forces policy development and support single Service transformation programmes. Our Engagement Team will be on point, ensuring our employers’ voices are heard. The analysis is due to report in late 2022.

Support to and delivery of change programmes as part of the REO programme, and in particular Tranche One, will be central to much that our Estates Team will do in the next 12 months. There are now 12 sites in the East Midlands and, of these, we have identified 5 ‘quick wins’ which we intend to deliver in year. Additionally, and working with 7th Infantry

Brigade and HQ East, we will continue to support and influence thinking on subsequent tranches that will focus more on the Reserve estate.

This coming year will also see our Cadet Forces fully back to face to face training and in particular the delivery of Summer Camps, exciting times as we must not forget that the last ‘normal’ year for camps was Summer 2019!

I very much look forward to furthering the great work of East Midlands RFCA and to working for you in the years ahead. Our people (Reserves, volunteers and Cadets) are our most important assets and I am sure all in the Association will join me in seeking to do all that we can to champion, support and enable them.

Brigadier (Retired) Stuart Williams OBE
Chief Executive



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Join the conversation

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Do you have a story you'd like to share?

Help us raise awareness of Reserves
and Cadets in the East Midlands,
email em-comms@rfca.mod.uk

