



EAST MIDLANDS
RESERVE FORCES AND CADETS ASSOCIATION

Annual Report

2022-2023



Our people add value

www.eastmidlandsrfa.co.uk    



Here to champion, support and enable Reserves and Cadets

East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (RFCA) supports and promotes the value of people at the heart of Defence. Through our three key work streams, we create favourable environments that support better recruitment and retention.

CADETS AND YOUTH

We raise the profile of the adventures and achievements of Sea Cadets, Army Cadets and RAF Air Cadets in the East Midlands. For the Army Cadets, we also provide the professional support staff who maintain facilities, equipment and transport that enables their activity to take place. We also support the recruitment of Army Cadet Force Adult Volunteers.

ENGAGEMENT

On a national level, we are responsible for advising and assisting the Defence Council, the Royal Navy, Army, and Royal Air Force on matters that concern Reserves and Cadets.

Regionally, we build strong relationships – especially with employers through the Armed Forces Covenant and Defence Employer Recognition Scheme – to ensure the value of the Armed Forces community is recognised and that they are offered every opportunity to maximise their potential.

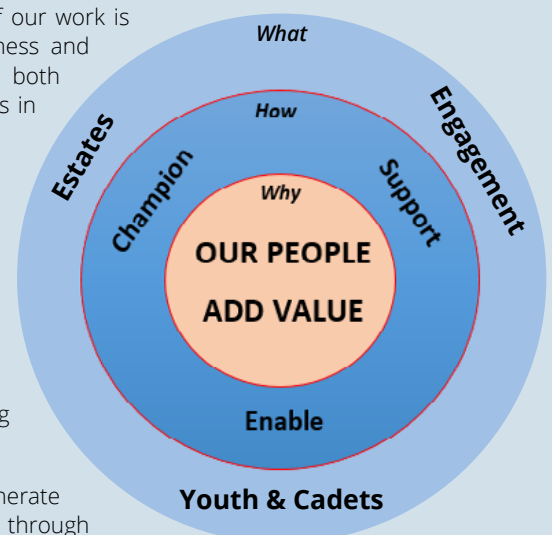
Our volunteer members include representatives from local authorities, a wide variety of employers, charities, education, Cadet services and the military who act as local ambassadors. Together, we work to promote the value of, and recognition of, the Armed Forces community.

Another key area of our work is to raise the awareness and understanding of both Reserves and Cadets in the East Midlands.

ESTATES

We maintain 161 sites across the East Midlands to ensure Reserves and Cadets have safe and fit-for-purpose training facilities.

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



Our Purpose

East Midlands RFCA; we champion, support and enable Reserves and Cadets, because our people add value.

Welcome

This year has been marked by a number of change management programmes, not least RFCA reform and the transition to a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), together with a study into the maintenance of the volunteer estate (VE) as part of the Future Defence Infrastructure Services (FDIS) programme. Yet business goes on at pace and our Reserves and Cadets continue to seize all opportunities presented. It is so true that “our people add value”, they really do.

Despite the best efforts of the team in London, the journey towards a NDPB continues to be challenged. In late March, the MOD determined that it was highly unlikely that it can secure the necessary space in the legislative timetable and, therefore, has decided to pause this aspect of the RFCA reform programme; a strategic pause. A fresh bid for parliamentary time will be made after the general election, or it may be included as part of the next review of the Armed Forces Bill in 2026. However, all is not lost as the modernisation programme that came as part of reform has delivered those recommendations that fall to the RFCA and do not require changes to legislation for their implementation, not least the establishment of the central human resources team downstairs in Triumph Road. Regardless, we are in a better position and the vast majority of our staff team are, and will continue to be, unaffected by NDPB or otherwise.

FDIS determined that a VE value for money study should be conducted to determine whether the responsibility for maintaining the VE should be moved to align more closely with the maintenance of the Regular estate. A series of options have been examined by the study team and the favoured outcome would see the RFCAs manage and assure a small number of prime contractors who will supply and deliver hard facilities management (HFM). This option presents real opportunity together with the ability to leverage economies of scale and adopt new processes that will enable us to provide a higher level of capability in the delivery of HFM to our customer base. It is also worth noting that the aligned staff structures provide opportunities for our Estates Team both in terms of career progression and making full use of their professional skills. We in EM RFCA believe the FDIS model is a good thing for us and those we support and enable.

Last year you may recall that I introduced the Reserve Estate Optimisation programme. I am delighted to report that we

appointed a Project Officer, Adam Hammett, who is bringing his extensive experience to bear in driving forward yet another change programme; we will begin to see the fruits of his labour in the coming months. On Employer Engagement, Bruce Spencer, Kirstie Lawrence and Stuart Ellis are doing all they can to champion our Reserves and Cadets and early this year achieved 1,000 signatories of the Armed Forces Covenant, I think you will all agree this is a major achievement.

In addition, they oversaw the delivery of 24 new Silver Employer Recognition Scheme Awards and, more impressively, 18 new Gold Awards. We now have a growing Gold Award Association to be exploited to further champion our people. You will read more about our remarkable Cadets further in the report, suffice to say their smiles and achievements stand out for all to see.

In closing I would like to record my gratitude to our Lord-Lieutenants, who actively champion our Reserves and Cadets. Finally, I express my personal thanks to Professor Dean Fathers, Wing Commander Phil Giles and Commander Peter Moore who, after many years of service on our Board, step down this year. All have, through their dedication, expertise and unstinting support for our Reserves and Cadets,

helped shape our Association over the years, and they have been critical friends to both past and present Chairs and Chief Executives. They are exemplars of the volunteer ethos that underpins what we do.

**Colonel Nick Hille DL,
Chairman**



2022/2023

AT A GLANCE



Our work can be split into three core pillars: Estates, Engagement, and Cadets and Youth.



8,500

Combined social media following.



161

The number of Cadet and Reserve sites we maintain.



Around 3,000

Reservists work in the East Midlands.



1,800

Cadet Force Adult Volunteers in the region.



10,000

Cadets in the East Midlands.



The importance of 'why'

Before I look ahead, I want to reflect on a hugely valuable exercise the executive in Nottingham undertook this year. The intent was to create a clear and compelling purpose, one that would energise the Association, and we took inspiration from Simon Sinek, inspirational speaker and author of the global bestselling book, *Start With Why*.

Using his concept, we renewed our purpose by honing in on the driving force behind all of our efforts. This required us to really think through who we are and what we do and, by doing so, we were able to reaffirm our 'what', better understand our 'how' and, more importantly, create our 'why' – the purpose.

'What' we do falls into our three RFCA pillars of Estates, Engagement, and Cadets and Youth.

'How' we do what we do comes down to three words: champion, support and enable. Many of you will realise that we began using these three powerful words last year, they drive everything that we do and link directly to the why.

'Why' we do it is because "our people add value", this is our purpose.

Education and training for both the Board and executive staff has instilled this across our Association and it is hugely positive to see our why, and the how, being played back across the region, and even in London too.

Indeed, our people add value resonates well with the employer network and in recent months has seen business leaders looking at our (their) amazing people through a different lens – they realise that our Reserves and former Cadets really do add value in their workplace.

I sense the year ahead will see no let-up in pace. At the strategic level, and following on from the Integrated Review Refresh 2023, we await the revised Defence Command Paper and any implications it will have for the Reserve. Regionally, Reserve Estate Optimisation projects will be delivered and perhaps transition to a new infrastructure delivery model,

which we see as a real opportunity to better serve our customers. We are looking to bring in new processes to our employer engagement, linking to the Army Engage to Recruit initiative and indeed recruiting activity of the other Services too. Meanwhile I can see our fabulous cadets only going from strength to strength and likely more joint activity across the Sea, Army and Air Cadets in the region.

Finally, and remaining with the people theme, our executive will this year be supporting our County Forums in identifying new members, those that are passionate about Reserves and Cadets, those that understand that "our people add value" and who want to help us champion them across the region.

"If you don't understand people, you don't understand business."

**Simon Sinek,
Feb 2023**

Brigadier (Retired) Stuart Williams OBE
Chief Executive



Reserves: At the heart of national resilience

The last year has been an interesting one for world events, not least of all the invasion of Ukraine. As a result the paradigm has shifted and the UK has conducted an Integrated Review (IR) refresh, released this year, which will lead to a further Defence Plan review later in the year.

The IR refresh has re-enforced the importance of NATO, recognised a Pacific tilt and also the utility of the Reserves in supporting homeland resilience, current operations and possible warfighting.

The UK military has continued its tempo of activity covering the strikes in the UK, multiple exercises and operations overseas, training the Ukrainian military and preparing for any warfighting task. Reserves have been committed across this plethora of activity.

The Reserves also continue to support the wider NATO network through the International Confederations for Reserve Officers and Medical Officers CIOR/CIOMR, with significant UK involvement.

ROYAL NAVY

HMS Sherwood continues to adapt to the draw-down of permanent staff as a result of the transition to app-based admin and regionalisation. In addition, the new permanent staff of East Midlands University Royal Naval Unit have moved into Foresters House, Chilwell, and now operate as a shared space for both units, further increasing the Royal Navy's (RN) footprint in the East Midlands.

Despite these changes and challenges, quality training has continued apace with full resumption of in-unit training on Tuesday evenings. As part of the Royal Naval Reserve's (RNR) move to more regional weekend training, HMS Sherwood also hosted the region's inaugural initial naval training for

new recruits. The weekend saw Reservists gain hands-on seamanship skills on Royal Yachting Association powerboat courses on the River Mersey at the regional sister unit, HMS Eaglet. Focus on initial naval training of new joiners is unabated with five young officers progressing through the key stages of their initial training at Britannia Royal Naval College, via either the RNR's Accelerated Officer Programme or the more flexible modular route.

Support to RN and wider Defence operations is a key output of the RNR. This year HMS Sherwood personnel have mobilised for UK Covid-support and Commonwealth Games taskings, and have also been deployed to the Mediterranean on Operation Achillean, providing logistics support to the HMS Albion-led Littoral Response Group task force. Other Reservists have contributed to counter cross-Channel migrant taskings closer to home and supported the biannual maritime-based Exercise Joint Warrior in Scotland. Seven members of the Ship's Company provide routine operational support to the RN by serving on full-time Reserve service across the UK, with two Junior Rates now working in Portsmouth on HMS Victory, the world's oldest warship which served as Admiral Nelson's flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar.

The unit has also reinvigorated its sports and adventurous training programme post-Covid, both hosting and winning the RNR 5-a-side football competition, and also seeing Reservists go offshore sailing in the Solent, summer mountaineering in Snowdonia, and taking to the skies in gliders at RAF Syerston.

ARMY

Reservists have supported UK operations and fundamentally provided the military 'neural network' that links into local resilience forums and facilitates wider military support.

Global hubs in Oman and Kenya have seen Reserve sub-units deploy as part of the wider force commitment to exercises and capacity building.

Ongoing training and development at unit level has moved to a pre-Covid tempo with a focus on supporting any warfighting force. The Reserves continue to contribute in key specialised areas such as cyber and medical to name but a few.

Ongoing work will review how best to refine Reserve capability, in terms of training, structures and readiness. The future looks bright and what is certain is that the Reserves will continue to be an agile force pivotal to meeting the Army's outputs.

ROYAL AIR FORCE

Volunteer Reserve utilisation in 2022/23 was higher than anticipated with 248 mobilisations taking place. Of particular note is that 12% of all individual augmentee requests against the RAF were filled by Reserve personnel.

Deployments to ensure the security of RAF Akrotiri to enable delivery of operations to counter IS, has increased the mobilisation demand on the Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) Regiment squadrons.

Development of the RAF counter unmanned aerial systems capability has seen Reserves being pivotal to enduring delivery of the capability, with posts identified as Reserve fills up to two years in advance enabling key employer engagement to occur in true timely manner.

Reserve aircrew numbers are also increasing with pilots active within the quick reaction alert role and air transport fleets. Moves into new technologies, particularly coding, cyber and space-based technologies continue with Space Command working on a new concept of employment for Reserves. Intelligence Reserves have already commenced delivering space-focused intelligence specialists.

The Reserve Support Wing (RSW) pilot was successful and work to create the Central RSW is underway. This will see a centralisation of recruiting and phase one training for 10 Reserve units, which includes all those supported by East Midlands RFCA.

The Base Support Group (BSG) and the Command Support Group (CSG) Reservist cadres manned predominantly by ex-Regulars continue to be an outstanding success for the RAF and feedback is consistently positive about the contribution of this cohort. The BSGs/CSG are staffed by personnel serving on volunteer ex-Regular Reserve terms and conditions of service.

Although the RAF Reserve is delivering on the offer, recruiting for the RAuxAF squadrons has been exceptionally challenging across the year, with a further reduction in applications compared to last year. Recruitment will be a critical area of focus in 23/24 and the support of the RFCA will be as important as ever.

The three local RAuxAF squadrons, No 504 (RAF Wittering – Logistics), No 2623 (RAF Waddington – Force Protection) and No 616 (Waddington – Flying Support) continue to prosper. The Intelligence Wing supporting 7010, 7006 and 7630 squadrons will now see its recruiting and phase one training held within the Central RSW, which will bring these units, for this activity, into the East Midlands RFCA area of responsibility.

"The IR refresh has re-enforced... the utility of the Reserves in supporting homeland resilience, current operations and possible warfighting."



FROM LONDON TO ANTIGUA

160 (Lincoln) Transport Squadron RLC has been involved in a number of different exercises and deployments this year. The squadron, part of 158 Regiment RLC, has been conducting weapon familiarisation and spent a weekend developing their skills on the Next Generation Light Anti-tank weapon.

Sergeant White deployed in support of Operation London Bridge and was responsible for the coordination of coaches that were transporting VIPs around London.

On the sporting front, Corporal Smith continues to represent the Army and RLC mountain bike team. He is the team manager for the RLC and organises all races and events across the UK. Private Benson represents the Army and RLC Cricket teams and has recently been to Antigua for two weeks on an overseas tour.





HOME EXERCISES AND JUNGLE WARFARE

The last year has been busy for No. 2 Company of the 3rd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment. They have taken part in demanding exercises, including Exercise Wessex Storm and Exercise Steeleback Warrior, and currently have Lt Rob Blackman attached to the British Army Training Unit in Belize as an instructor at the Jungle Warfare Centre.

Both Company locations are thriving and concentrating on recruitment and training.

INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT

7010 (VR) Intelligence Squadron, which is headquartered at RAF Waddington in Lincoln, has continued to deliver its specialised support to imagery and operational intelligence requirements throughout the year. Events in Eastern Europe have been a priority and during the last 12 months, 65-70% of the unit's trained strength has attended each working weekend to meet Defence tasking requirements.



ADDING VALUE AT HOME AND ABROAD

Army Training Regiment (Grantham) continues to be a Centre of Excellence for training the next generation of Reservist soldiers. With the highest calibre of instructors, the Unit has put Reservists through their training, culminating in an impressive, immersive field exercise. This training year, the Unit's instructors have successfully trained almost 2,000 Reserve soldiers for the Army: this represents a remarkable 35% of all Reservists put through their basic training.



GROWTH UNDER RF30

103 FS Battalion (Bn) Corps of the Royal Electric and Mechanical Engineers' (REME) year has been busy and challenging yet rewarding and exciting. The British Army Battalion has grown considerably under the Government's Reserve Forces 2030 (RF30) review.

The Battalion recognises the changing nature of the threats faced by the UK and the need for the Reserves to evolve, so improving operational capability and delivering the skills and competence needed to counter those threats.

This is never more evident due to Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. Members of 103 FS Bn REME volunteered to deploy as individual augmentees within the UK National Support Element (NSE) for Eastern Europe on Operation Aluminium.

Appointed as the NSE Commander and J3 Operations Officer respectively, Lieutenant Colonel Haslam and Captain Rowe deployed to Poland as permanent joint headquarters forward presence in Europe. This deployment touched every operation and activity in Eastern Europe where UK personnel served, from the International Donor Coordination Cell in Germany through to discrete operations in support of Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office in Kyiv, Ukraine, directly assisting the UK's national interest in the defence of Ukraine.

Looking ahead, the Battalion faces the challenge of recruiting significant numbers to meet its refined operational role, which now includes the introduction of power pack repair capability with the Babcock Sponsored Reserves.



FESTIVAL OF SPORT

162 Regiment RLC hosted the annual 104 Brigade Festival of Sport at ATR Grantham, Lincolnshire, in July. Across the Brigade 11 teams competed in a variety of disciplines, including clay pigeon shooting, command tasks, and tug of war. The teams were tested both mentally and physically and all teams performed to a high standard.



MOUNTAINEERING IN UNPREDICTABLE HIGHLANDS

Reserves from the East Midlands University Officer Training Corps traveled to Scotland for a snowy expedition in January.

Exercise Dragon Highland pushed the university students, who balance army training alongside academic studies, out of their comfort zone. The trip provided 24 individuals with an opportunity to progress their leadership skills while undertaking resilience and mountaineering training in challenging and sometimes unpredictable conditions.

The Winter Mountain Foundation qualification was also achieved by all participants who were not previously qualified.



THE MARATHON OF ALL MARATHONS

In November, nine Reservists from 4 Mercian ran the original marathon on an overseas sports visit to Athens, Greece. The Athens Marathon is notorious for its challenging nature, with over half the race being uphill.

The 2022 marathon took place on Remembrance Sunday, so the group visited the Phaleron War Cemetery – a Commonwealth war cemetery commemorating the servicemen who unfortunately lost their lives in the Second World War. A regimental wreath was laid on the headstone of Private William Mitchinson Perry, a soldier of the Sherwood Foresters – an antecedent regiment of the Mercian Regiment – who died aged 21.



ROYAL NAVY RESERVE DEPLOYMENTS

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

Newly qualified logistician, Able Rating James Gough, was mobilised for four months to conduct forward logistics site operations in support of Operation Achillean, HMS Albion's Littoral Response Group deployment to demonstrate in the Mediterranean.

- Able Rating Matt Larkin was mobilised in support of Covid-19 tasking in the East Midlands.
- One reservist, Able Rating Oliver Taylor, was deployed to support successful delivery of the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.
- General Warfare Seaman, Able Rating Martin Chamberlain, worked on small boats on Operation Isotrope, the Royal Navy's support to counter cross-channel migration.



OPS TOSCA AND GOLDEN ORB

101 Military Working Dog (MWDs) Squadron has made a great start to the year and has undertaken fieldcraft and training in fighting in built-up areas. Part of 162 Regiment RLC, the squadron is a specialised unit that utilises highly trained patrol MWDs, primarily a force protection asset; they provide commanders with a high-profile visual deterrent that can detect, pursue, and detain an intruder with sub-lethal force.

Ten personnel will deploy on Operation Tosca, the British contribution to the UK peacekeeping force in Cyprus, later this year. Additionally, five squadron personnel were with the Royal Army Veterinary Corps contingent for the King's Coronation in London.



Cadets: Fun, friendship and belonging

If Cadets are not throwing themselves into challenging situations, they are learning new skills, building confidence and resilience, and nurturing bonds of friendship which will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

Involvement with the Cadet experience is, without a doubt, one of the key elements that leads to a successful adult life. A majority of our youngsters go on to have fulfilling and rewarding careers, not just in the Armed Forces, but across a myriad of sectors and roles. The development and subsequent release of the 'Cadet potential' into the adult workforce is a huge asset for UK PLC. This potential is recognised by industry, and we at East Midlands RFCA are looking at how we can ensure business leaders get to see the talent pool available to them and recognise that Cadets who are at school leaving age are a potentially rich recruiting pool.

Of course, none of this would be possible if it were not for a team of dedicated, committed and utterly selfless volunteers. Across the East Midlands, there are over 1,800 Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAV) from all four Cadet services who deliver a youth service that is second-to-none. The CFAV cohort harnesses and then channels the boundless energy

that Cadets have and guide this towards outcomes that many would not expect to attain. Indeed, were it not for every volunteer who puts on a uniform and gives up their spare time for the benefit of young people, our society would be very much poorer.

The past 12 months have been very busy for our Cadets, from the celebrations of the Platinum Jubilee, to the sad passing of our late Sovereign Queen Elizabeth II. Cadets have been front and centre for many of the events that have taken place across the East Midlands, particularly where the Navy, Army and Air Force are not represented by Regular or Reserve units. It is very often our Cadets who are the connection between the military and the civil population.

Back in June 2022, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire, Sir John Peace, kindly opened up his home to a gathering of tri-service Cadets from across the region.

The Cadets had a wonderful day, a true joint event which included the first outing of one of the newly purchased laser clay shotgun systems.

August saw many Cadets attend their annual camp which for some was the first residential event since the pandemic. During the visitors' days, it was clear that many Cadets had missed their friends and adult instructors and it was a relief to finally be back to normal. However, August was anything but normal, with soaring temperatures into the high 30s. This created challenges for the CFAVs who had to be both creative and robust with their training programmes, ensuring the Cadets remained safe, whilst still conducting exciting and challenging activities. The success of these camps was in no small part down to the dedicated team of Professional Support Staff (PSS) who supported and enabled the CFAVs throughout.

October saw the appointment of 22 new Lord-Lieutenant Cadets. These special ambassadors are chosen by each Sea Cadet Corps Area, Army Cadet Force County, and RAF Air Cadet Wing, as well as from those schools which have Combined Cadet Force contingents. These few Cadets represent the very best of the best and being appointed as a HM Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet is the pinnacle of any Cadets' career.

The new Cadet year will be as challenging as the previous. As training areas continue to be squeezed the Cadet leadership teams will need to be both adaptable, imaginative and flexible. New ways of training delivery will need to be explored and the sharing of both space and assets more common. Having witnessed the incredible dedication of our CFAV cohort and the sheer resilience of our Cadets, along with the support of the PSS, the coming 12 months should hold no fear for us.

"The development and subsequent release of the 'Cadet potential' into the adult workforce is a huge asset for UK PLC."

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

Flight Sergeant Benjamin Halford of 2195 (Long Eaton) Squadron and Warrant Officer Lauren Griffen-Edmondson of 2160 (Sleaford) Squadron were selected to take part in this year's International Air Cadet Exchange.

Flight Sergeant Halford went to the United States, landing in Washington DC to see the White House, the Capitol Building, and Arlington National Cemetery. Amongst visits to Maryland and several Air Force Bases, Ben's highlight was an hour-long open-door flight over Virginia in Blackhawk helicopters.

WO Lauren Edmondson-Griffen joined Cadets from Belgium, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Germany on a trip to Paris, where she saw the final assembly lines at Airbus Toulouse and Dassault Aviation, visited the simulators at Flight Safety International, and attended the Bureau d'Enquêtes et d'Analyses, whose role is to investigate air crashes and improve air safety.





LIFE-SAVING SKILLS PUT INTO ACTION

A Cadet from the Bourne Detachment of Lincolnshire ACF was praised for their courage after applying first aid skills learned days before to save a life.

In February 2022, Cadet Staff Sergeant William Craft, 17, was making his way home when he encountered a serious road traffic collision.

A motorcyclist had been thrown from his bike, which then caught fire, and was left unconscious and not breathing. Without hesitation, William administered first aid to the motorcyclist, having completed his training with the Cadets the weekend before. William restored the casualty's breathing and conducted surveys whilst waiting for the emergency services to arrive. The casualty was taken to hospital and has since made a full recovery.

The Army Cadet Charitable Trust awarded William with a 'Praiseworthy Action Commendation' in recognition of his outstanding efforts.



PLANETS, ROCKETS AND TIM PEAKE SELFIES

Cadets embarked on a journey through time and space in April as they took over the National Space Centre, Leicester.

The space explorers travelled to the edge of the universe thanks to the centre's 'cinema-like' planetarium dome, came face-to-face with astronauts, and explored the inside of a 42m-high rocket. The rockets were, understandably, one of the biggest attractions. A cardboard cut-out of British astronaut Tim Peake was another favourite, with many stopping to take a selfie.

In total some 300 Cadets from the three services poured through the doors of the Space Centre for the special trip, which aimed to inspire Cadets and develop their awareness and understanding of careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering or mathematics.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

Last year RAF Air Cadets from 126 (City of Derby) Squadron became TV stars for the day in order to show their thanks and appreciation for the fantastic work of adult volunteers.

The Cadets welcome a film crew from comedy arts and crafts show Makeaway Takeaway along to film a giant creative surprise to say thank you to Flight Sergeant Simon Webster, featuring on CITV in the process. Check out Episode 13 – Things That Go Bump – on ITVx if you would like to watch it back.



INTER-SERVICE SHOOTING COMPETITION

Eastern Area SCC shooting team competed at Bisley, Surrey.

12 Cadets were selected to represent Eastern Area Sea Cadets in two inter-service shooting competitions against the Army Cadets, RAF Cadets, and Combined Cadet Forces from all over the UK. They were delighted to bring back the most trophies and medals in a very long time.



HITTING THE RIGHT NOTES

Two talented musicians from King's School Grantham CCF took advantage of opportunities to take their practise to the next level earlier this year.

Cadet James Diamond attended the RAFAC National Concert Band camp at RAF Cranwell over the Easter holidays. The week was spent practicing and rehearsing as a full band and as smaller instrument sections. At the end of the week, a final concert was held in a concert hall in RAF College Cranwell, which was a great success and attended by Air Cadets Commandant Tony Keeling.

Elsewhere, Cadet Eddie Leresche Hands joined a special trip to Wellington Barracks to watch the Grenadiers band play. They were also able to play with them and be conducted by the Grenadiers' music director. The trip took place over several days, with other activities on the programme, and culminated in a concert at RAF Holton's church.



DISASTER RECOVERY

Sea Cadets across Northamptonshire spent a week at HMS Raleigh undertaking personal leadership tasks and tackling an assault course before visiting the disaster recovery centre where they worked on a simulation to fix and stop a warship from sinking. They also learned about fire safety and the dos and don'ts when tackling a fire on a warship.




TOP COUNTY IN THE UK

Lincolnshire ACF has been awarded a special 'quaich' trophy for being named the top performing county in the country for Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Across the last year, the county's Cadets have achieved 97 awards – 66 bronze and 31 silver. After finishing runners-up over the last two years in, Lincolnshire ACF will be aiming to cement their place at the top once more for 2024 – and they have every chance as 202 Cadets have signed up for the Award.



NEW CYCLING WORLD RECORD

In November Leigh Timmis, Honorary Colonel of Derbyshire ACF, achieved a new world record of the greatest distance cycled in seven days. He smashed it with a new record of 2,230 miles. What made this achievement so impressive is that for three days of the attempt, he was battling Hurricane Nicole on Highway 41 in Florida!



Employer Engagement: Upwards trajectory continues

With the emergence from relatively slower times of lockdown in early 2022, the subsequent support from employers has grown exponentially. Over the last year, 230 additional Armed Forces Covenants (AFC) have been signed and some 42 organisations have received Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Gold or Silver Awards. Interest in AFCs has rarely been higher and has been embraced enthusiastically by the 1,000 holders across the East Midlands.

The employers of the 3,000 Reservists working across the East Midlands are realising the added value they generate, not just within the military operational environment, but within each organisation. For many employers, the appropriate response is to pledge further support through the AFC.

That business desire to show support flowed quickly through to a number of organisations signing or reaffirming their support of the Defence community. This includes Toyota Motor Manufacturing (UK), Gleeds and Northamptonshire Police. The July 2022 announcement of 18 Gold and 24 Silver Awards in the East Midlands led to three award ceremonies, with Gold holders being presented at the National Memorial Arboretum in October by the Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff, Major General Marc Overton.

Gold Award holders advocate widely yet Wright Logistic Services, from Northamptonshire, continues to advocate with business and local government. In the past 12 months, Jim Wright, the company's director, has arranged for some 30 companies to sign the AFC, with one notable mass signing in Towcester for 10 signatories attended by local unit 103 Battalion Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineers.

Across the year there have been many AFC signings involving Reserve and Cadet units such as HMS Sherwood and 126 City of Derby RAF Air Cadets which have shown employers the breadth of value that members of the Defence community bring to their organisations. At the Nottingham engagement

event, Sub-Lieutenant Kiera Nazarin Royal Naval Reserve, an officer serving with HMS Sherwood, joined via video called from Wales where she was deployed in support of North Wales NHS, controlling some 100 ambulances and crews. Her experience managing over a 100 personnel drawn from the NHS, Ministry of Defence (MOD) and civilian staff shone through to all in the room with the added value her operational experience brought to her employer being plain to see.

“The employers of the 3,000 Reservists working across the East Midlands are realising the added value they generate...”

The Regional Employer Engagement Group (REEG) is a group of 10 employers such as Northampton's Goodwill Solutions, University of Derby and Leicester's Aggregate Industries who support the MOD with advice. As well as meeting senior members of the RFCA, they have met staff from Northampton's Yardley Chase Cadet Training Centre and Reservists from 350 Squadron Royal Engineers in Nottingham. The REEG Chair, Professor Dean Fathers DL, who has skilfully led the group for a number of years, will leave and we welcome the Vice

Chair, Dr Craig Marsh into the role.

The commercial enthusiasm to support the Armed Forces and the Covenant continues to grow with Gold Award applications coming from every county and new companies applying for the Silver. The East Midlands has now achieved 1,000 AFC signatories – one month after the UK total reached 10,000 – with Caterpillar being the milestone signing. The strength of the Covenant is evident, with employers recognising that our people add great value.



Aware – Retained – Engaged

A key aim of our Engagement team is to bring awareness of what we do to as many new audiences as possible and ensure they understand the value our people add.

The other two key aspects of our strategy are:

- To ensure these new supporters and potential champions are kept engaged, that they are brought into the circle and given a deeper insight into what our people do and who they are, and crucially what this audience's support might mean. To retain this wellspring of goodwill and engagement.
- To nurture it to drive support into the future and to ensure we have created an atmosphere in the region conducive to the recruitment and employment of Reserves, service leavers, CFAVs, former Cadets, and military spouses.



This simple diagram illustrates our key underlying principles:



Estates: Modernising training facilities

Another busy and rewarding year supporting and enabling Reserves and Cadets. As always, the year has presented the team with challenges and rewards as we continue to modernise the estate whilst ensuring that we meet our main output of providing a safe place for our people to work and train.

With Sobraon Barracks handed over, the focus for major new capital projects has focussed on the new workshop and training accommodation at Kingsway Army Reserve Centre in Derby, with handover scheduled for June 2023.

Additionally, funding has now been secured and planning permission granted for the new Cadet Training Centre for Lincolnshire ACF at Beckingham in Lincolnshire. It is anticipated that works will start on site in late 2023.

The Reserve Estate Optimisation Programme (REOP) is progressing well. The first site to be completed was in Derbyshire with Staveley ACF Cadets relocating to Brimington, and this has proved very successful with the Cadets thriving in their new home whilst the old Staveley site has now been disposed of, releasing funds back to the MOD for further investment in the estate. Other relocation projects that are due to be completed in 2023 are Boston, Eckington,

Glenfield, Market Harborough, Market Rasen and Ripley. As well as relocations the project lead is working to oversee the delivery of two new Joint Cadet Centres at Skegness and Stamford, with works expected to commence in mid to late 2023. Other exciting projects which the estates team are progressing include:

- EV Charging points at Army Reserve Centres
- New HQ for Kettering Air Cadets
- New HQ for Coalville Air Cadets
- New Joint Cadet Centre in Northampton
- New HQ for Bourne ACF

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RFCA Estate Optimisation Programme

The Ministry of Defence's RFCA Estate Optimisation Programme (REOP) is a tri-service project that aims to ensure the estate managed by all 13 of the UK's RFCAs provides the best possible places for Cadets and Reserves to work and train in.

The programme follows a national review of the Reserve and Cadet estate, which took place in 2020 and examined in detail the reach, condition and suitability of every Cadet and Reserve building, as well as their value for money.

Although the initiative is led by the Ministry of Defence, the Council of RFCAs, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and regional RFCAs are all closely involved.

From Staveley to Brimington

Army Cadets from Staveley, Derbyshire, relocated a short distance to modernised facilities in Brimington, as the first successfully modernisation project as part of REOP.

Brimington ACF welcomed 16 Cadets, including three new recruits, to its opening evening in late 2022. The Cadets have all transferred from Staveley, where the building was showing its age and not suitable for their current, or future, needs.

The original building was also difficult to access via a narrow drive, with limited vision when exiting the site, and was opposite the entrance to a busy industrial estate. The new premises at Brimington are in a more suitable residential location and will provide an improved place to train, as funding was provided to enhance the facilities prior to the move, as part of REOP.

Alternative Venues

2023 has so far seen continued interest in use of the various Reserve and Cadet sites across the region. The Alternative Venues (AV) programme exists to ensure that irreducible spare capacity is made good use of, with the aim of a lasting betterment for Cadets and the local community. Ultimately, adding value locally and regionally.

The AV team remain committed to ensuring our sites are utilised and build on relationships that were solidified during the difficulties of the lockdowns, particularly within the emergency services who turned to us out of need and have remained with us thanks to the team's hard work and good rapport.

Of particular note in 2023 is the Military Preparatory Training College's (MPTC) approach to use a second of our sites in Lincolnshire to expand the reach of their training. So, alongside their Nottingham presence at HMS Sherwood, MPCT will now also have a presence at Sobraon Barracks.

MPCT delivers a military themed educational syllabus intended to support young people looking at a career in the Armed Forces, both as Regulars and Reserves. Many of their learners are former Cadets or Cadet Adult Volunteers themselves. The opportunity for them to continue their education in a military setting is highly valuable.

This welcome addition will be making good use of space within Sobraon Barracks and we look forward to working with MPTC in the future.



Communications: Ordinary people, extraordinary stories

Since last year's report a new Communications Team have taken post with Stewart Thorpe and Laura Gibb joining as our new Communications Manager and Communications Support Officer, respectively.

The team are full of energy and new ideas and are building on their predecessors' great work to help raise awareness and understanding of the great contributions that Cadets, Reserves, volunteers and their associated employers make to this country.

The time is therefore ripe for fresh thinking and a fresh strategy. The team will soon be reviewing existing approaches and injecting new ideas to ensure our key messages are being delivered to key audiences. Ultimately, they will produce a blueprint that helps us achieve the biggest bang for our buck.

For example, at a Cadet STEM day at the National Space Centre in April, the team produced a video that is more in keeping with recent trends on Instagram. Thanks to the excellent work of Cadet Jessica Rafelt of 2070 Glenfield in front of the camera, the video has been accumulated 7,300 views. The production values were not as high as others produced in recent times, but the rough and ready and 'in the moment' angle is more in keeping with the platform. The results speak for themselves as it has become our most popular video of all time on Instagram.

Social media, especially Instagram, will remain a key focus for communications. Currently, we have a combined following of



8,500 across channels and we aim to aggressively grow this in the years ahead to build an even bigger platform.

Our newsletter, which features a cross section of stories from across the organisation, will remain a key platform too. This bulletin has attracted almost 700 subscribers who receive our top news into their inbox each month. If you don't already receive it, make sure you subscribe via the pop-up menu on our website the next time you visit – that way you will never miss out on our biggest news.

Whether to discover more about a Cadet unit, find out about joining the Reserves or book one of our venues, tens of thousands of people continue to visit our website each year too.

The growth of our platforms will take time. Even then, their reach will only extend so far and therefore building up our media relations, especially to connect to new audiences who have no existing connection with Defence, will be an important area of work moving forward.

We have so many fantastic stories to share. Working with key internal and external organisations and stakeholders, the Communications Team will be working hard to ensure we are best positioned to share them far and wide.



Financial Year 2022/2023

We receive funding from many different Ministry of Defence and single service sources to deliver our three mandated outputs of Estates, Engagement, and Cadets and Youth.

The in-year funding of £12.7 million, which is split across all top level budget holders, has allowed us to deliver the outputs and services to all internal and external customers. It covers operational 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 fleet depreciation.
- Projects for injured service personnel.

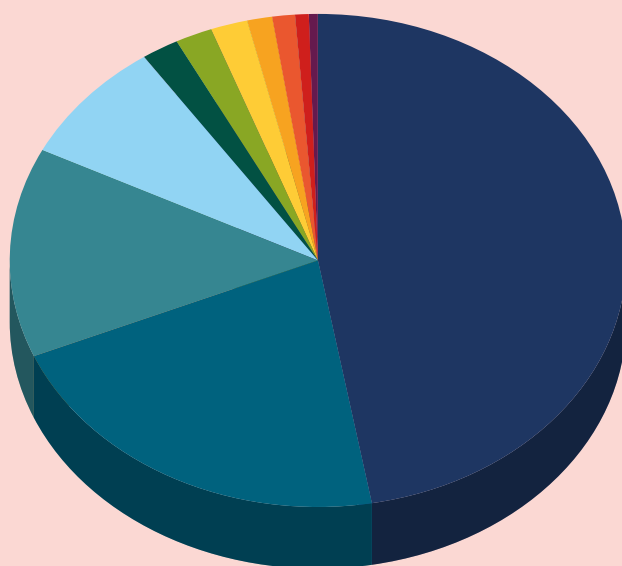
We continue to support Reserves and Cadets with annual camps, parades and other activities.

We also continue to generate commercial income from maximising the potential of our estate. The hiring of Army Reserve and Cadet Centres raised an income of £377,000 in 2022/23 as we continued to hire out the estate, primarily to the emergency services and NHS Blood to support these services during and after the pandemic. This is an area of the business we continue to build.

East Midlands RFCA secured a further £216,000 in non-domestic rates rebates from local authorities. Feed in tariffs produced £7,500 of income.

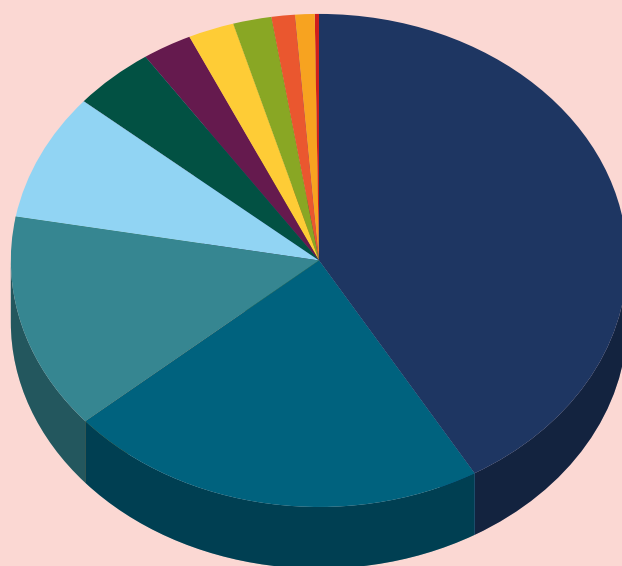
We have had our operational budget confirmed which includes a slight increase due to the increased activity across the RFCAs. We will continue to deliver our outputs to benefit all across the East Midlands the best we can.

Funding 2022/23



DIO – Projects – Capital Expenditure	£5.5m
Regional Command (RC) – RFCA Grant-In-Aid	£2.5m
Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) – Hard Facilities Management (FM)	£1.6m
DIO – Soft FM	£941,000
RAF Air Cadets – Input	£228,000
RC – Vehicles	£228,000
DIO – Projects – Revenue Expenditure	£226,000
Funding Sundry	£153,000
MOD RF&C – Defence Relationship Management	£139,000
RAF Reserves – Revenue Expenditure	£83,000
Army Infrastructure – Revenue Expenditure	£55,000

Expenditure 2022/23







DIO – Projects – Capital Expenditure	£4.7m
Regional Command (RC) – RFCA Grant-In-Aid	£2.5m
Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) – Hard Facilities Management (FM)	£1.6m
DIO – Soft FM	£941,000
RAF Air Cadets – Input	£486,000
Army Infrastructure – Revenue Expenditure	£295,000
DIO – Projects – Revenue Expenditure	£274,000
RC – Vehicles	£228,000
MOD RF&C – Defence Relationship Management	£139,000
Funding Sundry	£116,000
RAF Reserves – Revenue Expenditure	£25,000

Contacts

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www.eastmidlandsrfca.co.uk

Join the conversation

 @east_midlands_rfca  EMRFCA  East Midlands Reserve Forces  @east_mids_rfca



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

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

