

# AGM 2010

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



**NORTH WEST RFCA**



Colonel CT Hillock RD\*

# Chairman's Report

## Introduction

There is little doubt that support for the Volunteer Reserve Forces has strengthened over the last year as has public concern for their well-being on operations and when they return. Widespread and generally favourable media coverage has had much to do with this. However, public knowledge about the Armed Forces in general terms remains pretty patchy as it does about the role of Reservists. It is within this context that we as Association members operate and it is our responsibility to inform and educate those with whom we need to connect, both formally and informally. We need to spread the message about what our Reservists do and explain the superb contribution that our Reservists are making, particularly on operations.

The activities and recognition of the service cadet organisations have received an increased profile this year, mainly due to increased interest in them by politicians and the launch of Cadet 150. The public's perception of the work and value of the cadet movements is, rightly, extremely positive. Enormous financial difficulties have been endured particularly by the ACF and CCF (Army) but, despite this, the quality of the cadet experience and the fulfilment of the voluntary ethos has been maintained by our extremely dedicated and committed Cadet Force Adult Volunteers. No praise can be too high for them.

## Major Issues

Over the year some 250 reservists have been mobilised for Op HERRICK and Op TOSCA and there are many others who have been or will be mobilised for duty in Afghanistan in 2010. Without exception they have risen to the challenge and

performed magnificently. Sadly last November a TA soldier, Cpl Steven Boote of 116 Provost Company based in Manchester, was killed at an Afghan National Police checkpoint in Nad-e-Ali district of Helmand. We were represented at his funeral and our condolences go out to his family.

In November 45 TA soldiers, mainly from the Brigade Reinforcement Team and 4 LANCS were mobilised to assist with the floods in Cumbria. This was the first time that Reservists had been mobilised for UK operations under RFA 96. These soldiers assisted the civil authorities in Workington, Cockermouth and Carlisle and did a sterling job. The Association played its part by providing assistance to employers whose employees were mobilised and by providing accommodation both for TA and regular army soldiers at these locations.

Early in the year the Review of Reserves was published. The Review made 89 recommendations, 14 of which were directed towards RFCAs and Employer Support/SaBRE. Of these 13 have been accepted and are being implemented and one has been rejected. Two implementation teams were set up in the latter part of 2009, one to deal with Personnel policy for Reservists and one to examine the Volunteer Estate about which I will say more later.

At the same time as the Review of Reserves was made public in April 2009, there was an announcement of severe savings measures to the Royal Signals TA. In this region both 33 Signal Regiment based in 2 TA Centres in Liverpool, one in Manchester and one in Runcorn and 93 Signal Squadron, part of 38 Signal Regiment based in Blackburn, have been disbanded. 33 Signal Squadron will be formed on 1 April 2010 and will occupy 2 TA Centres at Huyton and Norman Road, Manchester so a Royal Signals presence will remain. That said, there has been a significant reduction in the Royal Signals TA establishment although HQ 42 (NW) Brigade has done a marvellous job in redeploying

soldiers to posts elsewhere in the Brigade area.

Other savings measures took place during the year, which had an impact on both the RFCAs and our Reserves. In our case cuts were made to our estates funding which affected our ability to maintain it. The number of TA Man Training Days was reduced in the Summer which resulted in EX EXECUTIVE STRETCH being cancelled for the second time in 3 years amongst other things. Further in year cuts were announced in October which affected the TA, ACF and CCF (Army) and the UOTCs. Only those in the TA involved in initial training or training for operations were unaffected. Subsequently the TA savings measures were revoked but not those for the ACF, CCF (Army) or the UOTCs. Although these savings measures affected the whole of the army and despite the restoration of the October TA savings measures, many within the TA were distinctly upset that such measures were originally taken against them given their splendid mobilisation record since 2003. It will take some time for their confidence and trust to be restored.

The Volunteer Estates Modernisation Team (VEMT) began its work in October. Initially it appeared that the requirement to make savings from the Volunteer Estate (VE) of £25M in FY 11/12 and £40M in FY 12/13 was driving their agenda. To the Chains of Command and RFCAs this seemed illogical. Much better to await the announcement of the Strategic Defence Review when the future size and shape of the Volunteer Reserve Forces but particularly of the TA will be known and then decide on what estate is required and what can be disposed of. Nevertheless planning continued and a shortlist of 22 VE sites was drawn up, 3 of which were in the North West, which were seen as 'quick win' options for disposal. As well a much larger list of about 190 sites was compiled for consideration for modernisation and rationalisation. This plan was put to Ministers in early February who decided

not to press ahead with any rationalisation of the VE this side of the general election and who have indicated a willingness to take the £65M savings at risk. On the face of it this is good news as it allows more time to determine the requirement, more opportunity to plan coherent disposal and possibly pushes back the disposal into a resurgent market.

Turning to funding in FY 10/11, some aspects are already looking difficult. I suspect our opening Grant-in-Aid funding will reflect the same start position as this year as we remain outside the MOD boundary. However, Grant funding i.e. that for the volunteer estate looks much more austere with a national savings measure of £5M against our maintenance budget and a £300K savings against our SaBRE/Employer Support budget already public knowledge.

Finally in this part of my report, I should remind you that during 2010 the 150th Anniversary of the start of the Cadet movement will be celebrated. Nationally Cadet 150 was launched last month with a reception of cadet ambassadors at Buckingham Palace, followed by one in the evening at Lancaster House. Two cadets from the North West attended these events, Cadet RSM Alice Whitehead from Kirkham Grammar School CCF and PO Cadet Danielle Irvine from the Blackburn Sea Cadet Corps unit. Throughout the region there are a series of county sponsored events co-ordinated by the ACFs but also involving the SCC, ATC and the CCF. The main regional event will be the Preston Military Show at Fulwood Barracks on Saturday 26 June 2010. It will involve all the cadet forces and promises to be a memorable and spectacular event.



# Performance Targets

Turning to our outputs, we are on schedule to deliver all of them and more than has been asked of us. Crucially this has been possible because of our ability to inject regionally generated income into most of our output areas such as Employer Support, Community Engagement (for which no funding is provided), Recruiting Support and the Estates. During 2009 there has been a continued determination to migrate towards Service Level Agreements (SLAs) to define these outputs which the Internal Review identified as requiring change. This has resulted in the introduction of five SLAs (Estates with DE, Recruiting Support with LF PSC Employer Support/SaBRE with RF&C, TA and ACF with LF PSC and RAuxAF and ATC with HQ Air Command). Two remain outstanding, namely the Financial Framework with LF PSC and the RNR and RMR with FOSNNI. It is particularly disappointing that these two have not yet been concluded. It is perhaps at Regional level that the remit falls to the Association to work around a degree of stove-piping of funding in order to deliver the synergies between our outputs that lead to value for money and effect on the ground.

The summary of our achievements against our performance targets will be published after the end of the financial year but as indicated above we are on schedule to meet them. That said, two areas probably deserve some qualification. First, with the pressure on manpower costs, all 3 services, but specifically the army in our case, have reined in their recruiting efforts. This has meant that there has been no funding for a TA Officer recruiting campaign this year, a considerable drawback given the paucity of TA Officers. Second, the asymmetric funding positions of the three Commands make it less likely that we will move towards common funding solutions for tri-service Reserve and Cadet centres.

The corporate business software 'SYMPHONY' has remained a challenging system with which to work. That said, additional training for staff, in year improvements and the migration to new, more powerful servers at CRFCA has helped functionality although there is still some way to go.

# Financial Year, Management and Year End Position

We began the year with Global Reserves of £571K, most of which was estates related funding which we were permitted to carry forward. A robust and well prepared submission for our Grant in Aid funded operating costs was met in the main although there were significant shortfalls in funding for Non Domestic Rates, Utilities, Vehicles and the Establishment Grant. We carried this risk for most of the year but happily our several requests for these operating costs to be met in full met with success and funding was restored to the levels required by AP 09. Additional funds were also allocated to us in mid year to meet the salary requirements of the newly recruited ACF Permanent Staff.

There can never be enough funding to meet all our estates needs and total funding was reduced by £76K this year. In all we received £3444K for the delivery of Statutory and Mandatory, Responsive and Planned Maintenance. This may seem a lot but with over 300 sites in the region to maintain including Altcar this level of funding is just sufficient to meet our statutory requirements for a legally compliant estate. On the Capital Works side the Holcombe Moor project started in November and significant funding was received for this.

As well we anticipate generating income in the region of £250K this year. The economic climate has depressed the

level of funds usually generated from the commercial use of our facilities and of course bank interest has been virtually non existent. Plans have been put in place to spend all of this income by the end of the financial year.

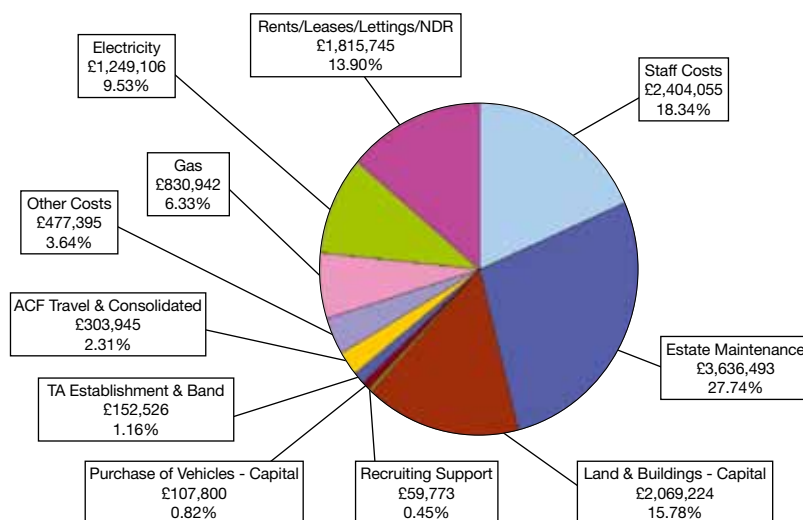
The forecast as at AP11 (Feb 10) is for the complete delivery of outputs within the financial allocation provided with a small Grant in Aid reserve of £140K or so carried forward to the next Financial Year. This FY has been another demanding one for all Departments who are on target to achieve the outputs and targets set in the Association's Management Plan.

In July the Association was audited by the Defence Internal Auditors. The 3 day process was exacting for all those involved but the observations made were mainly positive. Recently tender boards have been held for our bank and our auditors and both Lloyds TSB and Langtons have been reappointed as Bankers and Auditors for the next 5 and 7 years respectively.

Turning to Non Public Funds, those held by the County ACFs are now audited on a regular basis by Association Staff. Cumbria, Merseyside and Lancashire ACFs have all been audited this year. Regarding our Trusts, they have somewhat limited in the amount they can distribute owing to reduced share values (although these have picked up) and virtually no bank interest.

## The Trusts have made grants this year as follows:

<b>Stretford Road Trust</b>	<b>£4,039</b>
<b>Macclesfield Drill Hall Trust</b>	<b>£2,748</b>
<b>NW Army Cadet Force Trust Fund</b>	<b>£6,892</b>
<b>Yorkshire Street Trust</b>	<b>£2,666</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£16,345</b>



# SaBRE Report



Duke of Westminster at Merseyside/MEC University Reception presenting certificate to Mr Jack Mackinson, Director of Formula International Ltd



Op GIRAFFE - The new footbridge at Workington



North West employers at No 10 Downing Street

## General Trends in the Region

Support for Reservist employees remains almost universally strong in the North West as a little over 250 Reservists from all three services were mobilised during the last twelve months.

Good relationships with employers, built up over many years, played a great part in their understanding of the need for these deployments. They were also quickly able to glean any information from the Employer Support Team regarding the circumstances of the deployment and how they should handle any claims they wished to make for compensation.

Because of the current downturn in the global economy, some organisations that employ Reservists have been forced to reduce their workforce during mobilisations. Generally, these situations have been handled well, only a few requiring additional advice from the Regional SaBRE Campaign Director. This is a new aspect of Employer Support and much valuable experience has been gained by dealing with these unfortunate circumstances.

Employer information is vital and all Reserve Commanders are urged to ensure that complete and current information is communicated at regular intervals to the Association for the attention of the Employer Support Team. The recent mobilisation in aid of the civil power in Cumbria highlighted the need for instant access to reservist employer information because of the pace of the mobilisation and the need to contact employers as required in RFA 1996. Some difficulties were experienced because of incorrect or a lack of employer details. However, despite reluctance on the part of a small number of employers all reservists were mobilised and support from these employers remains intact.

## Activity and Effects

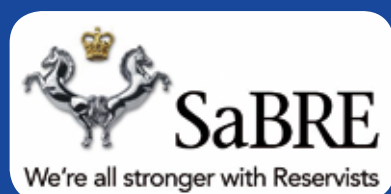
Despite the initial reduction in SaBRE funding, we were able to provide a full and varied programme of events throughout the year. Included in this were the opportunity for employers to be guests at a Royal Garden Party and at a reception at No 10 Downing Street. Add to these employer attendance at Trooping the Colour, annual dinners or lunches in each of the five counties, attendance at the Liverpool and Preston Military Shows, visits to warships and smaller events organised by units and you will see that we were able to provide a year rich with opportunities for them. These events allowed us to thank, advise, educate and inform our guests, who came from the whole spectrum of organisations both public and private and large and small. Not only were employers of Reservists featured at these events, but also employers who, as yet, do not have a Reservist employee. In doing this we were able to spread the word more fully and embrace Community Engagement.

Regrettably Exercise EXECUTIVE STRETCH was not funded this year. This was a huge blow to the employer support effort in this region, as it is considered a most important event at which we are able to develop a clear understanding of the role of Reserves and the type of essential training they undertake outside the workplace. That experience remains with participants and influences their attitude towards Reservists for whom they have responsibility in the work environment. Additionally, the commitment fee which each participant attracts helped considerably to support the ever reducing Employer Support budget; its loss, this year, was keenly felt.

## SaBRE Campaign Developments

The campaign targeted local authorities this year and the North West achieved almost 100% support for the Reserve Forces during the timescale of the campaign. The remainder have been secured since. This region has exceeded the target for securing online support, whereby the employing organisation is recorded on the SaBRE website. The target for gaining committed Supportive Employers has, once again, been achieved.

There has been a slight change to the SaBRE brand, with new colours and a changed strapline. **'We're all stronger with Reservists'** is now the message carried on letterheads and literature.



# Publicity and Recruiting Support

After the hectic activities of the TA Centenary in 2008, the last 12 months have been relatively quiet on the publicity front. Recruiting Support staff assisted with the Royal Opening by HRH The Duke of Gloucester of the new TA Centre at Pelham Drive, Bootle with administrative and financial help. It was a very successful and most



Pelham Drive, Bootle opening. The Chairman greets HRH The Duke of Gloucester



Links with Veteran Organisations



The Volunteer Magazine

enjoyable event. We also provided administrative support to the new Higher Education Committee which is chaired by the Deputy Commander 42 (NW) Brigade, Colonel David Atkinson, and whose remit is to discuss and recommend proposed initiatives for future TA Officer recruiting.

Under the umbrella of the regional Service Level Agreement (SLA), recruiting and retention of the TA in the North West remains our main priority. Biannual meetings with Permanent Staff Administrative Officers are held under RFCA auspices to discuss topics of concern and offer assistance to help maintain standards in TA Centres. The Association also offers help with the welfare of those TA soldiers deployed in Afghanistan. Under the SLA we remain committed to providing the following:

- Advice to HQ 42 (NW) Bde and its units
- PR and marketing in support of unit and sub-unit initiatives including publication of the Volunteer magazine
- Recruiting of adults and cadets into the ACF
- Encouraging ACF cadets to join the Army
- Vocational partnering with Colleges of FE and universities
- Encouraging potential officers and soldiers into the Regular Army and TA
- Maintaining links with veteran organizations

The AGM continues to be the stage for the presentation of the PR awards. These photographic portfolios provide a history of a unit's events throughout the year and highlight the work undertaken. The award also demonstrates the amount of positive PR provided by the TA throughout the region through the local and regional press. This year it ranged from assisting with the bridge building in Cumbria after the floods to operational deployments in Afghanistan.

The Volunteer magazine is another tool used to promote the Reserve Forces by spreading word of activities and events of units and cadets throughout the region. It is a thriving magazine and continues to receive great interest and commendations from far and wide. With the work of Concept Communications and Bigspark Publications who produce,

# Community Engagement

Effective Community Engagement relies heavily on a healthy and active Association Membership so that we are seen to be even more representative of our region. One of the recommendations of the Review of Reserves was to conduct a diversity review and to that end the Board has been working towards expanding and diversifying the membership to meet that requirement. It is believed that a very positive knock on effect of this will be an expanded membership more capable of delivering effective Community Engagement.

Delivery of Community Engagement has taken place through the many events that have been held in the region over the year in conjunction with the Chains of Command. In this our SaBRE County Committees have been used to good effect and through events organised by them they are not only delivering Employer Support but increasingly Community Engagement. The membership of these Committees has been increased to include members from business associations, small businesses and the voluntary sector to help with this. To be able to assist the Chains of Command connect with those who matter both to them and to us – elected leaders, officials, employers organisations, schools, universities, 'wider youth', veterans and so on – are 'vital ground'. With that intent and within the last few months the Army has set up Community Engagement Committees at Brigade and Divisional levels which should enable us to co-ordinate better our Community Engagement efforts. Beyond that I am confident that each Association member knows that they have a role to fulfil in helping to put across the message in their own way to those whose support is important. In this respect we are all 'on duty'.

edit and publish the magazine, the magazine has become a much valued and respected publication. Photographs and copy for the magazine are always welcome on any aspect of Reservist life in the North West and we will do our best to publish everything we receive. We are particularly grateful to the financial support the magazine receives from the Commander 42 (NW) Brigade and to all those other services and organizations who support the magazine financially.

The NW RFCA website [www.nw.rfca.org.uk](http://www.nw.rfca.org.uk) has been modernized and continues to provide up to date information on North West Reserve units and all of the cadet forces. The job vacancy section has also proved to be a useful tool. We are open to all suggestions to improve or add to the website.

# Cadets and Youth



Lancashire Annual Camp



Bury Sqn marching band at the Battle of Britain Parade



Cheshire ACF overall winners of the Brigade Cadet SAAM



Libby Anderson (2nd from left) and Luke Finnigan (2nd from right) outside No 10



Cdts Matt and Courtney show off their cookery skills with celebrity chef Nick Martin

The North West continues to be one of the largest regions for the four cadet forces with a total of 2881 Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) (including officers) and 14,212 cadets. A detailed breakdown of strengths showing increases and decreases is given in the tables below. It is particularly encouraging that the number of CFAVs in the ACF has continued to increase despite the withdrawal of their pay and allowances in October 2009. We very much hope that funding for both the ACF and the CCF (Army) will be fully restored in April 2010 and we applaud those adults who have been affected and who have continued to parade without financial recompense. Their goodwill must not be taken for granted.

Unfortunately the withdrawal of ACF funding for the second half of 2009 has had a detrimental effect on training with many counties having to put their preparations for Cadet 150 on hold until the picture becomes clearer. However, both HQ 42 (NW) Bde and NW RFCA have done all they can to support ACF activities in these difficult times and we look forward to being able to celebrate Cadet 150 in style in 2010.

All ACF counties enjoyed successful annual camps training from Barry Buddon in Scotland to Dartmoor in the South. For the first time Greater Manchester ACF took formed bodies of cadets from the SCC and the ATC and incorporated them fully into their training programmes. As an Association we continue to fully support joint annual camps but there may well come a time when extra resources will be requested from the other cadet forces. Add piece on ATC and SCC camps here.

The expansion of the ACF into state schools continues apace with the opening of 2 new detachments at Whalley Range High School and at the Manchester Academy. We were also delighted to learn that the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) had made a grant to Royton School ACF Detachment for improvements to its accommodation. Furthermore a new detachment will soon open at the Moorlands School near Clitheroe in Lancashire. All good news of course but new projects require extra funding and it may well be that Counties will have to consider closing detachments that are not so successful in order to open new ones.

Noting that the administrative burden on ACF Counties has continued to increase, it was especially encouraging to learn earlier in the year that HQ Land Forces had agreed to fund additional permanent staff in the form of a Cadet Stores Assistant (CSA) and an

additional Admin Officer (AO) for each County. Even the Isle of Man ACF has benefitted with an additional half post of an AO. All the new staff were quickly recruited and are reported as having settled in well in their respective Counties.

Another piece of excellent news has been the commencement of work to build the new Weekend Training Centre (WETC) for Greater Manchester ACF at Holcombe Moor. After several fits and starts and not a little pressure from friendly corners, it is very much hoped that work will be completed later this year in time for a possible opening as part of the Cadet 150 celebrations.

Cadet shooting was seen to be in very good health at the 2009 Cadet Skill at Arms Meeting (CSAAM) held at Altcar Training Camp. Some 200 cadets in 42 teams representing all ACF Counties and most CCF Contingents fought for the honours in a number of competitions in near perfect conditions. Cheshire ACF were the overall winners whilst individual honours went to Cdt LCpl Charlotte Langan of Birkenhead School CCF (Best Girl) and to Cdt Cpl Seth Snape from Lancashire ACF (Best Boy). Later in the year, Merchant Taylors' School CCF went on to win the County of Lancaster Rifle Association competition and were awarded the prestigious Red Rose Challenge Trophy for their splendid efforts.

Further successes came in the Duke of Westminster's CVQO Awards which were presented to the most outstanding cadets from all cadet forces. We congratulate LCdt Luke Finnigan from Huyton with Roby SCC detachment and Cdt CSM Libby Anderson from King's School Chester CCF who were among those selected from over 200 cadets across the nation.

Cadets from across the region have been busy carrying out a variety of challenges in order to raise money for a number of charities including service benevolent funds, Help for Heroes and Cancer Research. A couple of their activities attempts are pictured here.

Finally we are delighted to be able to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the founding of the Cadet Movement here in the North West in 2010. Regionally, events kicked off in Cumbria on 1 January with the Presentation of the Cadet 150 medallion to the Longtown Detachment. The aim is for every detachment in the County to hold it for a short period. Nationally, the first event took place in February with the Presentation to HM the Queen at Buckingham Palace of some 20 Cadet 'Ambassadors', one of whom was PO Cdt Danielle Ervine from the Blackburn SCC detachment. Many other events are being organised across the region and a full list can be found on the NW RFCA website. We would like to highlight the one 'regional' event which takes place at Fulwood Barracks on 26 June as part of the Preston Military Show where cadets from all four services will participate in a colourful display that reflects the great variety of cadet life.

## NW RFCA Overall Cadet Figures

Cadet Units	Officers	WO/NCO	CI/CGIs	Total	Cadets	Total Overall
ACF	224	697		921	4644	5565
ATC	254	178	561	993	4149	5142
SCC	134	444	197	775	2169	2944
CCF	160			160	325	3410
<b>Total</b>	<b>772</b>	<b>1319</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>2849</b>	<b>14212</b>	<b>17061</b>

# Altcar Training Camp

The retraction of the Defence Training Estate has continued to place an ever increasing burden on range, training and accommodation facilities at Altcar.

Apart from supporting local units and the increased demand by the Brigade



National Band concentration



Opening of North West Regional Activity Centre



Bevan Normandy Wood



Ranges



New Conference Centre

Regional Training Team, Altcar is supporting recruits from ITC Catterick on a weekly basis and this is programmed to run into 2012 and possibly beyond. We are also fully committed to supporting unit training for operations in Afghanistan, placing an ever increasing demand on our maintenance budget.

## Events

Among the many events that have taken place at Altcar in the last year, the following are highlighted:

- The ACF National Band Concentration in April when 500 ACF musicians were at Altcar for a week.
- The opening of the North West Regional Activity Centre for the Air Training Corps, by Air Vice Marshal Paul Luker.
- The Brigade Skill at Arms Meeting. This competition was held in May and is now an annual feature in Altcar's calendar.
- The UKRFA International Military Skills Competition. The competition was held in May, and involved 40 teams from the volunteer reserve forces including some foreign ones.
- Several OTC and Cadets camps throughout June, July and August.
- The Cadet Skill at Arms Meeting. There were 39 teams that took part in this year's successful competition in September.
- The Army Careers Exhibition. This was held in October and attracted over 10,000 school children. It was also visited by the cadets from the North West. The event was a resounding success and is now an annual event.

## Conservation

In consultation with Defence Estates a 5 year conservation programme has been put in place for the Altcar Estate. This includes the requirements of the Sefton Coast Sight of Special Scientific Interest and the Special Area of Conservation being incorporated into it. In December the Association planted a further 2000 Conifer and Hardwood trees and honoured their photographer, Major Roy Bevan, by naming this wood after him.

Altcar remains one of the few sites in the North West which has a high red squirrel population, so much so that the University of Liverpool has been carrying out a red squirrel survivors project to determine why there is such a large and thriving population of that species at Altcar, whereas at nearby Formby it has been decimated.

## Altcar Estate Development

During the year there have been major range developments on 6 of our ranges, of these 3 have been fully converted to electric target systems, one with 12 additional Hythe Frames and 2 converted to support Project

# Personnel

I am sure you would all wish to join me in congratulating Lieutenant Colonel John Wilson, the Deputy Commandant of Cumbria ACF, on the award of the MBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours List. John Wilson has been a stalwart Volunteer member of Cumbria ACF for 42 years and a Cadet Administrative Assistant as well for part of that time. A popular and highly effective member of the ACF, his award is most richly deserved.

This has been another busy and taxing year for all the staff and my report would not be complete without a mention of the superb work of the Association staff at Alexandra Court, the Camp and Range staff at Altcar Training Camp and in the ACFs across the 5 counties and the Isle of Man. Happily we have been able to spread the load a little wider within the ACFs by employing additional staff including a Cadet Stores Assistant and an extra Admin Officer in each county. We hope that this will ease the pressure on them a little.

All of the staff have run on full throttle and we are now trading too heavily on their goodwill with very few measures at my disposal to improve their lot. That said, we have an excellent retention record for our staff. A great proportion of them have served over 10 years with the Association and a few for as long as 30 years. For many of them it not so much a job but more a vocation and they demonstrate this through their loyalty and their excellent work output.



Lieutenant Colonel John Wilson MBE

Odysseus which facilitates the new fire and movement test required by army operational shooting policy. In addition plans are underway to build an Afghanistan style Forward Operating Base or Patrol Base on the old grenade range which is adjacent to the OBUA village.

As well this year the old Stats building adjacent to the Range Control Office was demolished. In its place, a modern brick building has been erected which has become the range conference centre.

# Estates and Facilities Management

Funding to manage our estate has been just about sufficient. All Statutory and Mandatory, Responsive and Planned Maintenance has been carried out and we have been able to deliver a compliant estate. We have received cash injections in year from some of our customers namely HQ Air Cadets, Recruiting Group and the



Installation of new electric gates at the RNHQ in Liverpool



New TA Centre at Pelham Drive, Bootle



New build project for 1832 (North Manchester) Sqn at Blackley

RNEO which have enabled minor new works to be carried out at various sites across the North West. A good example of this was the much needed installation of new electric gates at the RNHQ in Liverpool.

There have been 3 significant estate events this year within the region and a further national issue, namely Volunteer Estate Modernisation/Rationalisation with which we were preoccupied for much of our time. The first was the official opening of the new TA Centre at Pelham Drive, Bootle by HRH The Duke of Gloucester. Secondly work commenced in November on the new County Headquarters and Weekend Training Centre at Holcombe Moor. Although there has been a delay caused by the recent bad weather completion is expected at the end of 2010. We have been extremely fortunate to have secured funding for this project in the current financial climate. Finally the disbandments of 33 Signal Regiment and 93 Signal Squadron have led to the closure of 3 TA Centres at Crown Gate, Runcorn, Long Lane, Liverpool and Canterbury Street, Blackburn. The future of these TA Centres remains undecided until strategies have been put in place with Defence Estates for cadet re-provision and possible disposal. I have covered the national issue concerning the VEMT work earlier in my report.

In October we were directed by HQ Land Forces to use a large proportion of our property maintenance funding on ACF buildings. An extensive programme of work was planned and it is now being carried out on 57 separate sites. This work includes redecoration, the upgrading of electrics, new floor coverings and the installation of new kitchens as well as other minor works. A number of new build projects have been completed or are in the course of construction for the cadet organisations at Nelson Street, Bolton and Caton Road, Lancaster for the ACF, at 1832 (North Manchester) Sqn at Blackley and 2275 (Walton) Sqn at Long Lane, Liverpool for the ATC and at Moss Street, Blackburn for the SCC. Before the end of the year we anticipate completing a joint ACF/ATC cadet facility at Wilmslow.

This workload has been delivered in tandem with the continued implementation of Project Alexander process and its attendant SYMPHONY IT system. Further a considerable amount of data has also been provided to the VEMT which has meant

## Conclusion

This last year has been extremely busy, one which has presented many challenges but one in which a great deal has been achieved. All of the activities in which we have been involved and the work of the Association HQ, the Altcar Training Camp and range staff and the ACF Permanent Staff convince me that we are a valued organisation, united in our desire to support and promote the Volunteer Reserve Forces and Cadets in our communities. The standing and reputation of the Reserves and Cadets in the North West of England and the Isle of Man is extremely high and increasingly the public recognises their commitment and worth to the nation. Our thoughts go out to the many Reservists who are deployed or will deploy on operations this year and on your behalf I would want to pass on our thanks to them and wish them every success in the months ahead.

I would again wish to record our appreciation for our President and our Vice Presidents for their active support and irreplaceable involvement in all aspects of the Association's work but particularly with Employer Support, Community Engagement and Cadets. I know, too, that all of them are involved in some way in Cadet 150 in their respective counties. Finally may I thank all members of the Association's Board for giving so freely of their time for the benefit of North West RFCA and for their immeasurable contributions towards the delivery of our outputs. The splendid work undertaken by our President, Vice Presidents and our Board is without doubt one of the main reasons why the Association continues to be successful.

gathering an array of information from all RFCAs ahead of any decisions made about the future of the Volunteer Estate. Overall our estate is fit for purpose and all properties are at, or above, the benchmark established by the Baseline Condition Survey carried out 2 years ago. That said, there is a threat to funding for the estate in the future which is of real concern if we are required to maintain the estate to its current level.

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