



NW RFCA

RESERVE FORCES' AND CADETS' ASSOCIATION FOR
THE NORTH WEST OF ENGLAND AND THE ISLE OF MAN

AGM 2020

Chairman's Report



Contents

Section	Page
Introduction Col Nick Williams, Chairman	1
Cadets	4
Infrastructure	10
Altcar Training Camp	12
Holcombe Moor Cadet Training Centre	14
Alternative Venues	15
Employer Engagement	16
Communications	18
Finance	20
Conclusion Mr David Briggs, Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Cheshire, President NW RFCA	23

Introduction



Col Nick Williams, Chairman

Reserves and Cadets “valuable and valued”

As I write this piece for my report for the last year I am conscious as to the turmoil,

we as a nation, indeed the World, find ourselves in. Before addressing the points of matter concerning the AGM annual report, may I record by deepest condolences to those of you across the association who have lost members of your family and friends due to COVID-19. The President, Vice-Presidents and the Board extend their thoughts and best wishes to you at this difficult time.

Can I also pay tribute to all staff from across the Association and our service providers who have continued to work tirelessly during these unprecedented times. COVID-19 has presented a variety of challenges to us all and I am proud of how quickly we have adapted as an Association to continue to successfully deliver our key outputs. To each and every one of you, your commitment and support is appreciated.

Lastly to the members of the Reserve and the Cadet Forces Adult Volunteers who are classed as “key workers” your continued support to fight this pandemic is humbling; please keep up this fantastic work. Lastly, I must point out the plethora of cadets who have also supported the cause, and whilst there have been many cases of initiative, Cadet Johnson from Cheshire ACF who made the national news on TV and the papers with his making of PPE, just shows how blessed we are to work with such brilliant youngsters.

So, the formalities of this year’s AGM, are of course, different and whilst we will undertake the formal governance virtually using digital communications the usual meet and updates by Service personnel along with the President’s Dinner have been curtailed. I might add, that it is the president’s intention to hold his dinner later in the year or into the beginning of 2021.

As I pen my opening statement, the staff within the HQ of NW RFCA have been putting together and closing the accounts for the last financial year. It has been a challenge – but a job that has to be done on time and correctly and I pay tribute to the Head of Finance, her administrative support along with those involved in holding budgets in enabling us to meet the Council RFCAs deadlines; the formal audit now awaits us. Last year, I wrote that I hoped we would not see any savings measures implemented in

year; we did well and that never happened. Sadly, I cannot say the same for this year, and whilst in the main the operating costs for the NW RFCA staff, vehicles and Army Cadet Force Support – called Grant-in Aid seems to have been met in full by Headquarters Regional Command; that is certainly good news. However, we are hugely cognisant that the UK will require through the government to claw back some of the unexpected and unforeseen costs that have been spent to fight the Coronavirus. I fear that we are in for some really challenging times beginning with some cuts very soon. Also, another yearly concern – as always - will be the financial allocations from the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, and in particular our routine maintenance allocation, as all readers and especially our units will be aware – we never receive enough!

The Tailored Review

So, looking back over the financial year, the review of the RFCAs (*The Tailored Review* or also known as *The Sullivan Review*) has kept many of the senior salaried staff, the board and I very busy. The handling of the final versions and the announcement and distribution of the report was a real challenge for the CRFCA and the 13 associations. Without warning, the final report was published on the MOD a .Gov websites on 24 March 2020. CRFCA and the associations were still expecting



Introduction

to see the final version before distribution. The ministerial statement and subsequent press release, purporting to be a joint statement, took all by surprise as we had not been informed on what was happening. The Permanent Under Secretary and Chief of Defence Staff wrote jointly to the Board Chairman on 27 March 2020 and on 6 April 2020 the President of the CRFCA – The Rt Hon The Lord de Mauley TD, received a letter from the Secretary of State informing him that the Review had been concluded. The latter letter expressed the MODs gratitude for the manner in which the RFCAs engaged proactively with the Review team, but said, that having considered the recommendations made in the report, he believed the RFCAs needed to be “modernised and regularised.” The report is 65 pages long with 46 pages of recommendations and other explanations within the Annexes. A copy can be found on the Gov. uk website at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-the-reserve-forces-cadets-associations-2019>. If nothing else, I would urge you to read the Executive Summary, Next Steps (Chapter 6), The Recommendations (Annex A), The Terms of Reference (Annex B) and The Alternative Delivery Models (Annex C).

In short, the main recommendation is to move the CRFCA and the 13 associations into a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) to take over the functions of RFCAs (and Council RFCAs) via primary legislation (the next Armed Forces Bill). If there is any encouragement, we have been told that the new organisation will be a bespoke one and that “we” will be engaged fully with the Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Reserves & Cadets) and his team to develop the framework and structure of the new organisation. The CRFCA Board Chair has been invited to chair the implementation Steering Group jointly with ACDS (RF&C). Other members of the CRFCA board and Executive will be closely involved in the process as well. It is absolutely the intention that corporately we will work to ensure that the key ingredients of what makes us special and unique are carried through from London to across the regions. These are: our volunteer ethos, our constituted membership (you that are reading this report), which is involved in selecting its Board; and maintaining the link to the Crown through our President and Vice-Presidents (The Lord-Lieutenants and HE The Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man). If this can be achieved, then we will be able to support our Reserves and Cadets in the manner in which we do now, by the people of the regions (us) who understand the local dynamics of the North West, rather than becoming another government quango. The changes at the national level, or what is now the Council, are likely to be more significant, but again we will work collegiately to ensure that the volunteer ethos and spirit of the RFCAs runs through this. Many of the other recommendations are non-contentious and give us all food for thought over the coming short few months and years.

The timelines are sharp, but we are already, due to COVID-19, seeing slippage:

May 20 – RFCA NDPB Initial Operating Model
Sep 20 – Introduction of the Armed Forces Bill
May 21 – Armed Forces Act 2021
– RFCA NDPB established
Apr 22 – New RFCA Framework Document
– RFCA NDPB Initial Operating Capability
Jul 22 – RFCA NDPB Final Operating Model
Apr 23 – RFCA NDPB Full Operating Capability

As your chair, I am currently a member of the CRFCA Strategic Group and so as we orientate ourselves though the coming stages I hope to be able to keep you all fully abreast of the work and direction of travel.

So:

- It is a 2-3 year process
- We will continue to deliver our outputs and through the Chief Executives we will continue to be responsible for the delivery of the three pillars in the North West in accordance with the Service Level Agreements, in much the same way we do today
- For our staff, it would appear that there will be little change in how they work through their line managers and the Chief Executive. We will continue to deliver the 3 pillars
- Nevertheless, there will be change, not least because current structures are not best organised to meet current outputs
- These changes should not require a reduction in the over-all number of staff or redundancies, unlike the changes following the Paterson Report of a few years ago



Introduction

- In partnership with the MOD, we are working to design a new model in order to retain the key strengths of the RFCAs and maintain their *“...key role in connecting Defence with the nation and supporting delivery of an outstanding Reserve and Cadet experience.”*

Unlike last year, I will not go into detail of the 3 pillars and associated supporting business support outputs; you can read more about these in the follow on pages.

However, noting the challenge of reacting to the recommendations within the review, still a significant challenge for us all whether in the RFCA or serving in the reserves or the cadet organisations is that of recruiting – not only more Reservists but Cadets and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers. I used the strap line *“Reserves are recruiting & Cadets are growing”* in 2017. For the last 2 years and again, this year I have used *“Reserves and Cadets; valuable and valued”*. Sadly, recruiting has become the norm and, for many, the focus of everyday life. The challenges have been there to see across all organisations. With the remit, on the reserve side, to meet and reach the Ministerial Statement Government targets was always a challenge.

In addition, increasing the number of Cadets and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs), which still are in decline, needs all the support we, as an association can bring. I know the President is writing a letter to all the membership covering the recruitment of cadet force adult volunteers and in particular cadets – though of course, the two go hand in glove.

Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenants' and the Lieutenant Governor Awards

There has been some good news though! In January just gone, on behalf of the President and his Vice-Presidents in their roles of Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenants' and the Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man, I and my vice-chairs screened the nominations for this year's awards. We were humbled by the increase in submissions but would ask, once again, that those in the chain of command nominate suitable individuals in recognising the outstanding work that is being undertaken. We appreciate the difficulty in writing citations but would ask every unit and organisation to spend a little bit of time towards the end of each year in seeking out the exceptional individuals in their own structures. For us, on behalf of the counties and the Isle of Man, this is always a highlight for me as Chairman seeing the fantastic achievements undertaken by our Reservists, Cadets (and those civilian staff working tirelessly in their respective organisations. In addition, the awards have now widened to include support to the Armed Forces by other communities – on the main veterans – either as individuals or as small groupings.



As an association, we do really enjoy facilitating the awards; it is one of the real highlights of the year for us. So, I would urge you all to look long and hard at all those involved in the Cadet and Reserve organisations and submit citations to recognise those outstanding achievements. We would now be in the process of undertaking the awards ceremonies but alas, they are also on hold, but we do hope to be able to facilitate the awards later on in the year; our Lord-Lieutenant's and HE The Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man are desperately keen to be able to give out the awards in person at a suitable ceremony. Let us keep our fingers crossed!

Lastly, and as always, I remain amazed, as ever, to the quite excellent work that has been undertaken by the Association – both from the salaried staff and all the volunteer members of the Association who unstintingly give so freely of their time to further the work and outputs of the NW RFCA in supporting the community of Reservists across the three Services, Cadet Force Adult Volunteers and the young cadets throughout the North West of England and the Isle of Man. We are truly blessed with some outstanding people; thank you for your continued support.

I do hope you enjoy the report.

Cadets

Cadet Expansion Programme

Under the joint DfE/MOD Cadet Expansion Programme (CEP) the number of schools across the UK with cadet units has almost doubled. The North West gained 34 new units through the CEP (breakdown of sS attached) and now has 46 CCF Contingents across our AOR.

The announcement that the 500 target had been reached was made in November 2019.

Due to the success of the CEP, in Sep 2018 the then Secretary of State (SofS) for Defence announced the Government's ambition to increase the number of cadets in school units from c.43,000 to 60,000 (by 2024).

The School Cadet Expansion Officers have therefore been granted an extension of service to March 2022, with an option to potentially extend this to 2024 based on funding being made available. The SCEOs will work to the new CEP Directive for "Phase 3" which is focussed on sustainment and growth of the Contingents.

With the smallest contingent being 18 cadets and the largest 600, this really shows the varied challenges ahead for ensuring that all schools meet their growth targets. The SCEO has already begun to engage with School Senior Leadership Teams and the Single Service Cadet Training Teams to ensure that the North West meets their aspirational targets and schools continue with successful CCF Contingents into the future.

NUMBERS	
Pre CEP	16 Contingent
Units Opened	
CEP 100 (2012-2015)	4
May 16	4
November 16	2
May 17	5
November 17	3
May 18	7
November 18	5
Breakdown by Service	
Army	18
Royal Navy	5
Royal Marine	2
Royal Air Force	5
Current Cadet Numbers	
Growth Status 2019 Target	1431
Actual	1076
Regional %	75%
National Average	64%
Contingents by County	
Lancashire	9
Greater Manchester	12
Cheshire	9
Merseyside	12
Cumbria	3
Isle of Man	1

Army Cadets

Greater Manchester

Greater Manchester ACF, Holcombe Moor Training Centre (HMTTC) continue to improve their facilities with the assistance of NW RFCA, both financially and contractually. Funding to replace the dated and extremely slow Wi-Fi system for a new high capacity platform has significantly improved connectivity, delivered greater phone coverage and provided all visiting cadet units with a better welfare package. A new welfare centre has been designed and funded by NWRFCFA to provide a comfortable, safe and relaxed zone where GMACF and visiting cadets can unwind after demanding training events. This has been



Cadets

fitted out with soft furnishings, Wi-Fi, new décor and the latest electrical entertainment equipment. The Cadet Force Adult Volunteer rest area has also been enhanced with new furniture, new décor and a fresh entertainments system.

Greater Manchester ACF Cadets deployed to Canada and Canadian Cadets conducted their Annual Camp at HMTC; both were supported by NWRFCFA and HMTC Professional Support Staff. Funding has been made available to cut the cost of 2 battlefield tours to Dunkirk and WW1 battlefield sites with NW RFCA continuing to provide grants to off-set the cost to impoverished individuals providing them the opportunities which would otherwise be missed.

NW RFCA provide the guidance, direction and full life support to Greater Manchester ACF across the G1-G9 spectrum, which sustains and maintains a healthy and excellent training environment for cadets and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers to operate in.



Cumbria

Partly through generous financial support from NW RFCA, Cumbria ACF have achieved a great deal.

Highlighting a few innovations, the county bought 18 complete sets of paintball equipment and associated equipment, which allowed Cumbria ACF to deliver weapon training in an exciting way. This significant help supported the County as they were required to withdraw their weapons from the detachments. The new weapons allowed the county to continue with one of the organisations unique selling points.

Cumbria were also able to reduce the individual Cadet contribution for an overseas trip to £200 per person due to a 4K contribution from RFCA grants. This once-in-a-life-time trip for Cumbria cadets is something that will give them memories for the rest of their lives. NW RFCA were instrumental in providing additional funding to allow Cumbria ACF to set up 3 VTC locations across the county. These were placed in three prime locations to suit the CFAVs in Carlisle, Kendal and Workington. The VTC sites had been used before COVID-19 but have become a valued addition to our county during these unprecedented times.



Isle of Man

The recruiting campaign, supported and organised by NW RFCA through the YES agency and carried-out over a number of months on the Island, produced 6 new adult volunteers for the County and was the nemesis for a phenomenal increase in cadet numbers. Cadet numbers have risen steadily since summer camp last year, from 80 cadets to the current total of over 150.

Additionally, the Isle of Man ACF has increased its participation in regional sports through good organisation from County HQ personnel and the Regional Sports Officer. The availability of sports funds for travel has simplified the Isle of Man ACF participation. Amongst others, the Isle of Man ACF last year participated in swimming, football and rugby, offering cadet participated fantastic opportunities.

Lancashire

NW RFCA grants to support the purchase of Expedition Equipment for cadet opportunities, including clothing, the Barbados Exchange, Bavaria Expedition, and the Great Glen Way adventurous training, were all valuable contributions to Lancashire ACF. In addition, NW RFCA funding to buy printers for each Detachment and new Banners for all the Normandy Company Detachments were greatly valued contributions and support. Financial support from the NW RFCA allowed a Cadet Force Adult Volunteer and a Cadet to attend Ex Kenyan Cub, the ACFA Football tour to Kenya. Looking forward, grants have recently been pre-approved for Lancashire cadets to take part in the Hadrian's Wall Expedition and to purchase additional, much needed expedition clothing.

Cadets



Lancashire ACF have benefited enormously from NW RFCA's recruiting support initiatives which have resulted in significantly increased applications from potential Cadet Force Adult Volunteers from across Lancashire.

A key enabler for Lancashire ACFs consistently high grading in the Cadet Experience Report is its committed professional staff, who have remained flexible in their support to the wide-ranging cadet activities, in part necessitated by the continued loss of the Lancashire cadet training accommodation in Preston. Every weekend involves the use of external facilities and often requires PSS to conduct tasks that Cadet Force Adult Volunteers would otherwise support, but are prevented from doing so, due to the additional time commitment required for travelling to, and taking over training accommodation. In addition, PSS have willingly volunteered to support activities in place of Cadet Force Adult Volunteers due to shortfalls in adult volunteers.

Last but not least, Lancashire PSS have successfully trialled on behalf of the NW Counties, the use of a county based vehicle booking systems to relieve pressures on the Army HQ in Preston, and have during the last year reviewed on behalf of all the Cadets counties across the UK an ACFA Accounting package and accounting practices.

Cheshire

Once again Cheshire ACF must record it's thanks to the NW RFCA for its vital direct support to the County's Adults and Cadets over the last year. Alongside the continued and advice and guidance it offers, either via the PSS or direct to the Commandant; NW RFCA have this year contributed both in the financial and recruitment space.

Battlefield Tours are immensely popular with both Cadets and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers alike. These activities offer the chance for a more tangible study of modern military history which for many, who may prefer perhaps a less academic approach, enjoy immensely. Such activities not only enhance education and discovery but also stimulate an interest in defence in general.

These enterprises are not inexpensive but thanks to the most welcomed financial contribution made by NW RFCA, Cheshire ACF managed to get away on a trip across to France and Belgium. Without the NW RFCA financial contribution, some Cadets may not have been able to attend. This event was such a success that two more are being planned again for this year. As a second project during this year, the County HQ was able to secure a grant from NW RFCA to replace some aging bedding and mattresses in the County Training Centre. Although perhaps unnoticed by many, this again is really helpful support when the County finances can be stretched at year-end.



Finally to close on support, but certainly not as a footnote, the very successful eight week social media CFAV recruiting campaign headed by the Head of Communications is worthy of mention. Cheshire ACF benefited enormously from this campaign, and the challenge now, is inducting these individuals into an organisation which is, like many others, currently facing huge challenges.

Cheshire ACF would like to take this opportunity to record its thanks to the NW RFCA for all its support across all the pillars that it delivers throughout the year. However, a special thanks specifically, for the projects mentioned above.

Cadets



NORTH WEST CADET FORCE STATISTICS

	ARMY CADET FORCE		AIR TRAINING CORPS		SEA CADET CORPS		COMBINED CADET FORCE	
	Apr 2020	May 2019	Apr 2020	May 2019	Apr 2020	May 2019	Apr 2020	May 2019
OFFICERS	145	144	187	192	147	122	57	53
SNCOs	578	579	201	185	547	536	0	0
CI/CGIs	-	-	526	609	409	386	-	-
TOTAL	723	723	914	986	1103	1044	57	53
CADETS	4206	3652	4639	3758	2886	1899	1954	1898



Merseyside

Merseyside ACF works from 28 detachments covering a large geographical area from Newton-Le-Willows to Hoylake. A strong and confident CFAV leadership group are effectively supported by a small team of Professional Support Staff (PSS) based at Altcar training camp. Lt Col (Retd) Andy Downey took over as CEO from Maj (Retd) Tony Kirkpatrick in November to head-up a very experienced and committed team who work tirelessly to meet the needs of the adult volunteers and cadets. Their work is unspectacular, but characterised by enthusiasm, persistence and moral courage.

The Teams

Logistic support continues relentlessly in the background, with the unsung G4 heroes, covering health and safety assurance inspections, equipment provision and feeding

plans at weekend training just to note a few of their contributions. Wider Cadet out-put's and many other successes were made possible by the County Admin Assistant Team.

The achievements

Highlights of the Merseyside year included a new detachment location for Aigburth, in a larger and newly refurbished location on the top floor of 208 Battery, Royal Artillery which includes three classrooms, drill hall, office, store-room and dedicated toilet facilities.

Successes during the year included Crosby Irish Guards detachment winning the national Mini Micks Competition for the second year in a row. The cadets also won 11 medals at the National Swimming Competition and the County Signals Team achieved a Bronze Medal at Ex ROLLING THUNDER 2020.

In addition

The year saw very generous financial support from NW RFCA which included a substantial amount to help to deliver summer-camp adventurous training, but also a number of IT enhancements to the County Training Centre, and more recently an upgrade of equipment for the County Public Relations Officer (CPRO).

Recruiting Adult Instructors became a priority for the County last year. With support from NW RFCA, Merseyside had great success with a 300% increase in adult applicants and this was only possible through support provided by NW RFCA and follow-through from a significantly depleted County Admin team.

Cadets

RAF Air cadets - A view from Merseyside Wing ATC

Merseyside Wing ATC HQ based at RAF Woodvale has 29 squadrons operating from 27 locations around Liverpool and the Wirral. It is tasked with delivering a progressive syllabus of Training to 12 to 20-year old cadets and also CPD and Mandatory training to its 300 Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs). Training activities are a mix of Desirable and Essential activities including an Aviation Training Syllabus, Leadership, Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, Radio Communications, Shooting, Flying and Gliding. Other follow the three Air Training Corps aims of:

- Promote and encourage, amongst young people, a practical interest in Aviation and the Royal Air Force,
- Provide training useful both in the services and in civilian life,
- Foster the spirit of adventure and to develop qualities of leadership and good citizenship.



Training and winning

Merseyside Wing has many links with professional bodies including St Johns Ambulance, British Mountaineering Council and CVQO who help deliver safe, quality training, through direct instruction and empowerment of CFAVs. By March 2020 Merseyside Wing trained and maintained 64 qualified First Aid Trainers registered with St Johns Ambulance, 49 of whom are also registered with the British Heart Foundation to deliver their 'Heartstart' award. These high standards resulted in the Wing winning the Regional First Aid competition and going on to represent at the Corps competition.



Sport and Adventure Training were high on the agenda with Merseyside Wing competing in all disciplines at Wing, Region and Corps level; Merseyside was awarded the Gillian Trophy for the best ATC Wing in Sports. Adventure Training was delivered by Merseyside CFAV's maintaining NGB qualifications in, and training cadets in Paddle sport, Climbing and Mountain Biking. Merseyside Wing cadets competed in their annual Adventure Training Competition in March 2019 and for the first time Merseyside delivered 3 separate AT CPD events in multiple disciplines.

Challenges

2019 was not without its challenges, which included a change in command, reduction of flying capability, and implementation of several new training courses. Severe weather had an impact on its Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) expeditions, but notwithstanding this Merseyside Wing achieved 124 DofE awards. Merseyside Wing currently has 46 Bronze and Silver DofE assessors and 15 Gold. In June 2019, Merseyside Wing awarded 55 of its adult volunteers DofE long service certificates representing a cumulative total of 768 years of service to the DofE.

Flying was reduced through long-term unserviceability of RAF Woodvale's primary runway and the after-effects of the permanent standing down of the Grob Vigilant aircraft. In response, Merseyside wing had to promote air mindedness, differently utilising flight simulators, air traffic control trainers and drone flying; with Merseyside Wing held its first Aviation Training Day in August 2019.

Cadets

Academic Training continues to produce a steady stream of cadets qualifying in BTEC Aviation Studies. Liaison with CVQO continues with cadets from around the wing benefiting from the BTEC L2 in Teamwork and Personal Development. Merseyside Wing was highlighted in CVQOs annual report for its improvement in this award.

October's Nesscliff camp was the Highlight of the Wing calendar and 300 personnel attended during last year's October half- term. Merseyside Wing cadets also attended RAF Annual Camps at RAF Halton and a detachment went on a battlefield tour in Normandy.

Moving forward

With a new Wing Commander comes new direction and Merseyside Wing are looking to build on its solid foundations. New courses involve Silver Level Cyber Syllabus, Presentation Skills and Method of Instruction courses and Silver Leadership courses with new leadership equipment from MTC. Shooting and Fieldcraft remain high priorities and competitions are also on the agenda with 18 year old staff cadets planning to run their own wing camp, Operation WEDGEWOOD.



Sea Cadet Corps (SCC)

The SCC has expanded, and four new Junior-Sections that have been started. Summer camps have been brought back-in for both Blue Jackets and Marines, adding nearly 2000 more training days to their delivery, and dramatically increasing the 'experience' available to the Cadets. SCC performance in national competitions also improved with the gap closing on the 'top three areas' in the coveted Peter Riley Trophy. In particular, the North West's success winning the National First Aid Competition was notable and Birkenhead won the National Continuity Drill prize. Warrington won the National Piping team and individual prizes. Many more SCC Cadets participated in Duke of Edinburgh awards and the NW SCC Area Cadet Forums have become a 'model' for such activity nationally.



North West Sea Cadets performed particularly well in the end of year National Prizes, with Southport winning the Captain's Cup as well as the Stephenson Trophy for the Unit providing the best Sea Cadet Experience in the North West. Altrincham, Sale and Stretford won the very prestigious McBeath Trophy for their commitment to the aims of the Sea Cadet Corps in starting two new Junior Sections, and a satellite in Wythenshawe amalgamated with Stretford commencing refurbishment of their cadet facility. Sergeant (SCC) Michael Meakin is congratulated on winning the coveted McCarroll Royal Marine trophy.

Most improved Units

Birkenhead, Chorley, City of Liverpool, Fleetwood, Stafford and Rugeley, Warrington, Wigan and Winsford & Middlewich SCC units all received Captain's commendations for their work. Hoylake was our most improved unit overall and Barrow won the social action prize. As last year, we have held a 'roadshow' weekend at Tameside Unit 8/9 Feb to upskill and to plan for the future in the Districts and Units.

Looking forward

Over the coming year, the SCC look forward to improving the strength and qualifications of its adult volunteer body to enable them to extend the full Cadet experience to more young people. An 'on the water' outreach programme will be run at Crosby in the summer for those who might not normally consider joining Sea Cadets and, on the back of this, there is a plan to start a number of new 'Junior' sections across Merseyside. The SCC are also working to further develop Manchester Trafalgar as a 'boating hub' for all Manchester Units. In the short-term, Crosby Boating Station accommodation will move into the Sefton Unit when the site is refurbished by the Local Authority. Working with the RFCA, work will begin on a new Marine Cadet/Adventure Training Centre at Altcar and also, changing the former rifle range into a Sea Cadet Centre for South Liverpool Sea Cadets at Aigburth Road. Support of the NW RFCA remains both a vital and much appreciated resource.

Infrastructure

2019/20 has seen the usual mix of routine and extraordinary challenges for the Department but the Infrastructure team have once again risen to meet these opportunities head-on.

Projects which we expected to take much of our time have fallen by the wayside, despite a huge effort on behalf of our stakeholders, while others have been completed on time and on-budget, quietly and without fanfare. In the former category was the proposal to build an 80-bed accommodation centre at HMS Eaglet for the Royal Navy, only to see the project quietly shelved before groundworks began. Despite the termination of the scheme, NW RFCA proved its ability to take on significant and innovative projects and guide them through a complicated gestation period, including securing planning permission from the local authority.

In the latter category was the successful completion of the £1.3 million project to completely refurbish the National RAF Air Cadet Adventurous Training Centre at Windermere.



Cadets at Aigburth Road ARC

The centre, which operates throughout the year, provides 7-day residential, adventurous training and leadership courses for over 40,000 Royal Air Force Air Cadets (RAFAC) adult staff and cadets and was in a poor state of repair due to excessive use and age. Now, thanks to the work carried out by NW RFCA, the centre has 68 bed spaces compared to the original 43 plus 3 brand-new break out/training areas whereas previously there were none. Works involved a new roof, full refurbishment and remodelling of the existing building and adjacent ATC Sqn building. The Squadron, which used to operate from the same site has now moved to another town centre location freeing up this building to become part of the Centre. Both buildings are now connected via a link-way corridor, much welcome in one of the rainiest parts of the country! This additional 'Annexe Building' now consists of the centre manager's office, 3 dormitories with en-suite facilities, kitchenette and open plan conference training area. The cadets and adult staff will now be greeted with a fresh, bright and efficient training and accommodation environment with the added bonus of extra space.

This year the Infrastructure Department completed over £9 million worth of works to support and maintain the Volunteer Estate across the North West. Numerous sites have benefited from refurbishments, internal and external decoration along with essential maintenance that is carried out throughout the year. In addition to routine faults, some works are seasonal so specific measures are put in place to manage these issues as funding permits.

Construction of the new NW RFCA headquarters began in October 2019 with a projected completion date of July 2020. The new HQ, which has been entirely funded by the sale of our previous site – Alexandra Court, has been designed to achieve the BREEAM sustainability assessment method rating of 'Excellent' and will provide open plan offices, meeting spaces and conference facilities over two-storeys. The aim of the design is to make the NW RFCA HQ an extremely efficient and cost-effective building which will continue to deliver a first class support for the Reserve Forces and MOD sponsored cadet organisations. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 the new build which was on target to be completed in July has now been delayed, however due to the contract NW RFCA will incur no extra costs due to works being halted during the lockdown.



New NW RFCA Headquarters May 2020



Windermere ATC

Infrastructure



Aigburth ARC

Aigburth Road ARC, which is home to 103 Regiment Royal Artillery, South Liverpool Sea Cadets and Merseyside Army Cadets, was given some exciting renovations this year thanks to funding made available for reinvestment into the site after the sale of land to the rear of the centre. The works included the conversion of a garage to a gymnasium with ablutions and the first floor has been converted from a mess facility to a multi-function conference facility complete with new bar. Added to this the top floor has been converted from a mess facility to classrooms and offices for the ACF and now consists of three classrooms, a drill hall, office space, a store room and dedicated toilet facilities.

In the early months of 2020 the estate was plagued by consecutive storms along with the rest of the country, however due to the essential maintenance that is carried out yearly, the Volunteer Estate thankfully only sustained minimum damage which, in other years might have proved extremely costly. As it was, the most significant damage was probably felt at Altcar Training Camp where the Bailey Bridge over the River Alt was lifted off its foundation in some of the highest tides ever recorded. Structural engineering analysis revealed that the bridge was fundamentally sound and the work required to re-seat the bridge elements was relatively simple to achieve.



Bailey Bridge damaged

The Help Desk – which is the first point of contact for all of our fault reports – received more than 2,500 calls and raised another 600 related to Statutory & Mandatory Inspections and Tests. Wherever possible we task one of our contractors to investigate the fault and effect repairs where the funding is in place. This is not always possible as the rules which govern our responses are laid down by our funding organisations, usually the Top Level Budget (TLB) holders – Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO). For those faults for which we do not have funding to tackle (routine faults or those that make a significant difference to site users such as faulty lights and broken toilet seats), NW RFCA have a unique weapon to deploy – our immensely successful Multi-Skilled Operatives (MSO) scheme.

Our MSOs continue to deliver an outstandingly efficient output tackling faults that would not normally be funded. Found only in the North West, RGI funding is dedicated to ensuring that routine faults that would inevitably give rise to more serious situations or which affect site users at a low level are dealt with while they are still manageable. This year we have seen our three MSOs deal with around 500 faults around the Volunteer and cadet estate on more than 150 individual sites.

Finally, the Infrastructure Department has tried to tackle how to improve our communication and the distribution of information to our stakeholders across the estate. In order to achieve this the department launched a redesign of our electronic based newsletter in September 2019.



Produced on a quarterly/seasonal basis the newsletter is an ideal way to keep site users up to date with information about works and developments along with the opportunity to explain in more detail some of the processes of site maintenance and funding streams.

Currently distributed via email and available on the NW RFCA website, the newsletter is due for review in the Summer and future plans are to make it more digital so it has the capability to incorporate interactive infographics, direct fault reporting and many other tools to make it a more beneficial user experience. Feedback is, of course, always welcome.

Altcar Training Camp

This has been an exciting and busy year for Altcar Training Camp. We have an all-time 'high' number of unit bids and 'heads on beds' for the site. Regular Unit bids continue to increase each year. Reserve bids have remained high and constant over the last 3 to 4 years, whilst Cadet Bids have increased significantly.



course the same weekend, so overall numbers significantly exceeded bed capacity. The Cadet Shooting competition went ahead and was executed without problems.

At the time of writing this report, the site is currently occupied by 2 Signal Regiment Coronavirus Testing Teams. All normal unit bids have been switched-off, pending the conclusion of Op Rescript (COVID-19). This has resulted in 2019 recording the highest number of bids on record, and it is possible that 2020 could see the lowest number of bids from Regular, Reserve and Cadet's.



Site activity

Looking at other activities on the Altcar site, we hosted Ex FARADAY FIELD, the Annual tri-service helicopter exercise. Around 11 rotary-winged aircraft were on site for a week, working and flying until midnight most nights. With the opening of the new Altcar Training Camp Field Supply Area, a 1 Km circuit, storage bunds, hardstanding areas and large grassed area suitable for rugby/football/other sports – essentially an upgrade to part of training area 7 is now up and running, and available for units to book. The Helicopter Force used the site extensively for their annual Helicopter drills, refuelling and maintenance schedules. Other major events included the Annual Cadet Skill-at-Arms Competition, and the Annual Altcar Challenge; all multi-national events, and just a few of the Altcar highlights. Altcar has become a very popular site with units making multiple bookings for its use.

Unit Designation	2014 Unit bids	2015 Unit bids	2016 Unit bids	2017 Unit bids	2018 Unit bids	2019 Unit bids
Regular Forces bids	32	104	131	128	152	160
Accommodation	16466	21265	20678	23137	22310	20014
Reserve Forces bids	87	195	246	282	254	264
Accommodation	16964	21090	18965	22084	20622	22475
Cadets bids	118	229	301	300	274	340
Accommodation	53401	54034	53888	45829	47115	57161
Accommodation St Georges	3349	5970	7468	7882	5804	10935
Total Bids	237	528	678	710	680	764
Total Accommodation	90180	102359	100999	98932	95851	110585

The increased use of the site has put considerable strain on the heating and hot water systems and we are pleased that funding was secured by the Head of Infrastructure to replace the failing boilers. The boiler replacement is phased, with two thirds already completed.

The increasing use has been challenging for the Altcar Team. The Council for Cadet Rifle Shooting held their '50 Year' event at Altcar; the first time the Council had used Altcar, and it was a pleasure to host the event on site. Their bid, along with other unit bids meant there was insufficient bed-spaces on site to meet their needs, and a quick-fix to the problem was needed, so 93 additional beds were secured at Pontins in nearby Southport to provide a solution. The Cadet Training Team were also running a

Altcar Training Camp

In addition to the boiler refurbishment, Project Aintree (Bastion Modular Secure Facility's (MSF's) have been initiated and installed on site. Project Aintree is a complete new build of Armoury and Explosive Safe House in which the structures are built inside the existing building, with a layer of security enhancements for storage of weapons and ammunition. The two MSF units on Altcar have been installed on site and at the time of this report, are being checked before being signed off, and handed over to the site for use.



Other good news, is that support and funding from the Army Training Unit North (ATU N), have allowed 1 and 2 Grange Road to be converted and refurbished into Instructor accommodation, mainly for ATU N staff. These will also provide some additional accommodation for Altcar when not being used by ATU N. Work is ongoing, with a completion date around the end of June 2020.

Cambria Cottage has also been converted and refurbished into an accommodation block. The additional accommodation will provide a total of 707 bed spaces on the Altcar Training Camp site.

Through Alternative Venues, Altcar Training Camp also hosted the Ant Middleton's 'Mind Over Muscle' Bootcamps. Ant Middleton is best known as the Chief Instructor for Channel 4's hit show, SAS: Who Dares Wins. The event was a success and they hope to return to the camp.



Code's Retreat (an accommodation facility for Veterans and Wounded Injured and Sick personnel) was officially opened on Saturday 1st June by Andy Reid, ex-soldier, triple amputee and Honorary Colonel of Merseyside Army Cadet Force. Andy is described by many as an individual with courage, a soldier and someone who has shown bravery and sheer determination with incredible resilience.

Challenge

The weather presented challenges again to Altcar this year. The amount of rain and bad weather meant the site saw more than its fair share of water and duck ponds. Ranges were flooded, and Hythe Frame Footings and a number of Target sheds found themselves underwater. The Bailey Bridge took a hammering, resulting in us having to close the bridge for a few months, before it was repaired, and back in operation.



Camp and Range maintenance continues, as part of the normal routine. The Red Rose Club (all ranks communal area/bar/shop), and Sefton Mess have had their window blinds replaced. There have been minor repairs to the roof of the Sefton Mess and Hunter Hall.

As I conclude this Report, a big thanks goes to the Altcar Training Camp Team, for their enduring efforts. The team have worked extremely hard this year. We are now preparing for a number of Annual Inspections, so work continues.



Holcombe Moor Cadet Training Centre

It has been an exciting year at Holcombe Moor Cadet Training Centre. During the year the site has seen a number of new facilities which have enhanced the appeal for cadets of Greater Manchester Army Cadet Force, as well as Regular and Reserve units and other many other organisations. The site is also proving attractive for Alternative Venues clients.

What is available at Holcombe Moor?



200 beds
10 Lecture rooms of various sizes
Indoor range
Welfare Suite
Laundry Facility
Bar & Mess facility
Car parking



During the year the following facilities were updated

Welfare Suite – A significant amount of money was spent to improve welfare facilities on camp. The main hall was transformed with the addition of chesterfield seating, soft furnishings, two 75 inch TV sets and a complete redecoration. The suite also doubles-up as a comfortable conference facility. The Suite has proved very popular to all visitors, both young, as a facility where they can relax in comfortable surroundings when not training, and whilst off duty.

Installation of PH2 WIFI system – All areas of the camp are now covered with free internet access, fast enough to stream training aids requiring video and audio. In addition, users can keep in contact with family and friends using social media. A monitoring overview facility was installed onto the system to ensure appropriate usage.

Laundry facilities – A much needed refurbishment of the on camp laundry has been undertaken, and all the machines upgraded to larger capacity appliances. The facility has been well received, and used extensively by camp users on longer residential courses.

USB Charging Lockers – USB charging lockers have been installed across the sleeping accommodation. This gives users the opportunity to charge their mobile telephones and other devices free of charge, whilst being secured in a small cabinet. These are a great asset especially for Cadets so they have the means to keep in contact with home by having a charged mobile device and the peace of mind its secure when out on the training estate.

Holcombe Moor users

During the year Holcombe Moor Cadet Training Centre has had many visitors. The purposes of training and usage vary from Cadet Force training and conferences all the way up to Regular and Reserves who attend to use the facilities for annual mandatory training. The Camp also has regular civilian visitors who take part in training, but it is also a facility for short-notice support to UK Ops and for Regular/ Reserve service personnel.

Holcombe Moor is very well supported with an excellent catering service provided by Aramark Side by Side, who are able to cater for a very diverse customer and a range of dietary specialities.

Holcombe Moor continues to become a popular site for low level training. In 2020-2021, it is expected that the centre will attract more visitors with the excellent reputation it has for friendly efficient staff, outstanding facilities, a picturesque location and direct access to 748 acres of DIO training estate.



2019-2020	Total users	Accommodated overnight	No of GMACF Events	Usage events by Other cadet units
Totals	13160	11578	36	14

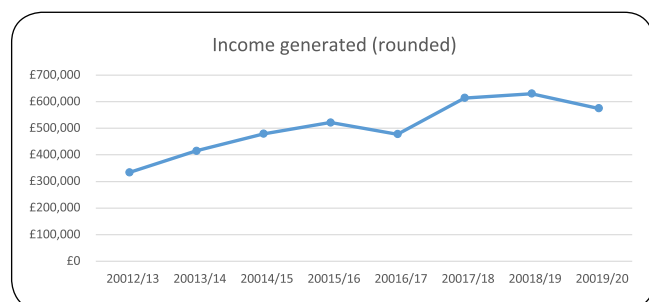
Alternative Venues

I write this report from my spare room, AKA the “Home Office”. The AV team is currently working remotely due to the government directive in place.

COVID-19 has all but forced a cessation of Alternative Venues bookings across the region from mid-March. A handful of Operational Support bookings are the only ones currently continuing. Cancellations of all non-essential bookings have been made as far as the end of May. At the time of writing, we are yet to make a decision on June, but this will be dependent upon a number of factors. Obviously this will have a huge impact on our ability to generate income for the units (RGI) for the financial year 2020/2021.

In total, around £17,000 of bookings were cancelled during March 2020. So far there have been £60,000 of cancellations for 2020/2021.

2019/2020 was a tough year already, due to decreased bookings from some of our strategic clients and a number of our ‘regular’ clients outgrowing our venues.



As you can see, there has been a drop in income during 2019/2020 from £630,841 (an all-time high largely contributed to by approx. £70,000 of filming income) to £574,794. This represents a decrease of just over £56,000.

Although AV NW classes itself as a “not-for-profit” entity. The reality is slightly different.

- In 2019/20 the business cost approximately c£115,000 to operate.
- In the same year, the RGI income totalled c£574,000.
- That leaves £459,000 profit.

With these figures in mind, it is clear that the business is successful, despite the decreased income for 2019/2020.

Mast Income

Due to the introduction of the Electronic Communications Code 2018, income from Telecommunication masts will reduce significantly over the course of the next 5 years. Our managing agents CELL:CM suggest that an annual income loss of around £90,000pa (90%) is likely by 2025.

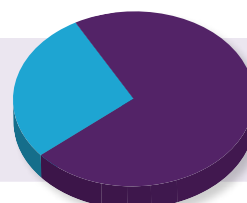


Our best classroom at our highest earning ARC

Caretakers

Over 12 months ago, we became aware of a review on caretakers across the estate by Regional Command. To date, we have not had any feedback on the results/findings of this study and still await news. The loss of caretakers could have a negative impact on our business as many of sites do have caretakers whom we rely upon to assist with AV clients (paid separately by us for this). That said, due to the goodwill of the site leads, the income generated by our sites without caretakers is higher than raised by those that have caretakers still in place. This is a stark contrast to two years ago when 75% of our income was generated by sites with caretakers.

Income Generated 2019/20



Without caretaker	72%
With caretaker	28%

Looking forward

Nothing is ever perfect, and if the current crisis has taught us anything, it is that we need to diversify our client base and engage with new sectors across the business and leisure industries. I am currently researching ways we can do this and hope to be able to make some recommendations to the board in the near future.

Overall, it has been a challenging year for Alternative Venues North West but with a solid plan to move the business forward, I am confident that we can continue to operate for the benefit of the Reserves Forces and Cadets in our region when the time is right.

Employer Engagement

In support of the Ministry of Defence, the North West Regional Employer Engagement Directors (REED) are employed to build enduring and mutually beneficial relationships with businesses across the region. By partnering with organisations throughout the North West, we help them understand the value of signing the Armed Forces Covenant and the benefits it can bring to business, whilst also providing support on employing Reservists, Veterans, Cadet Force Adult Volunteers and military spouses.

Meet the Team

In July 2019, a new REED was appointed to the team, WO1 (Retired) Jan Cox QVRM RNR. Jan served as a Navy Reservist at HMS Eaglet for 38 years. Her final role in the RNR was as Command Warrant Officer RNR based in Naval Command Headquarters, Portsmouth. Jan joined her fellow REED: Wing Commander Chris Ashworth (RAFAC) and Administration Officer Mrs Liz Lloyd –Young. Together, they engage with employers across the North West. Chris covers Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Cumbria, Jan covers Merseyside, Cheshire and the Isle of Man and Liz keeps us all shipshape and in good order.



Chris Ashworth, Liz Lloyd-Young and Jan Cox

North West Gold Award Association (GAA)

The GAA has three specific aims; they are to: mentor and inspire other employers, provide an independent collective voice to Defence, and to develop and share a suite of good practices.



The North West GAA

The North West GAA met at Haydock Park on 23 January 2020. The event provided a platform for the members to receive relevant updates, network with likeminded people and share their views. The outputs of the meeting were reported back to the MOD to help shape future Defence People policy. Going forward, North West GAA is planning to meet on a regular basis. The group aim to work collaboratively to strengthen their partnership with each other and Defence.

Armed Forces Covenant and Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS)

2019 sees the fifth anniversary of the introduction of the ERS in 2014. The scheme aims to deliver a Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) White Paper commitment to recognise employers who support Defence People objectives and encourage others to exhibit the same behaviours.

Whilst the scheme was initially focussed on support to the Reserve Forces, it has since been widened to include the full-spectrum of Defence People issues and initiatives. The scheme now encompasses Service Leavers, Veterans, Wounded Injured and Sick, Cadet Forces Adult Volunteers (CFAVs), commercial fairness, and spousal employment; in essence, the wider principles of the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC).

The scheme is accessible online and uses a tiered approach for awards. Having first signed the AFC at Bronze level, employers state their intent to be supportive towards Defence People issues. The Silver level recognises employers who actively demonstrate support; and the Gold level recognises the very best of employers, who deliver the greatest support and advocate support for the Defence People agenda to other businesses and organisations. Silver and Gold awards are renewable every five years and 2020 sees the first North West revalidations of several Silver and Gold awards, ensuring that the award holding organisations are still maintaining the levels of support for Defence People required by the current award criteria.

Participation in the ERS within the North West has grown year on year alongside the number of AFC signings, see figure 1. Of particular note is the number of Gold awards

Employer Engagement

		AFC & ERS Data							
		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 (to date)
AFC	Cheshire	1	8	7	5	14	20	33	10
	Cumbria	0	0	0	3	3	8	1	2
	Greater Manchester	2	14	11	13	32	48	49	24
	Isle of Man	0	0	0	4	4	0	1	0
	Lancashire	0	6	7	8	19	19	35	6
	Merseyside	0	3	13	30	22	24	34	13
	Total	3	31	38	63	94	119	153	55
Bronze ERS	Cheshire	0	0	2	4	5	4	18	6
	Cumbria	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	3
	Greater Manchester	0	1	3	8	12	6	32	8
	Isle of Man	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Lancashire	0	2	2	4	7	5	26	7
	Merseyside	0	3	2	7	16	6	15	12
	Total	0	6	9	25	42	23	93	37
Silver ERS	Cheshire	0	0	1	1	4	0	0	TBC
	Cumbria	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	TBC
	Greater Manchester	0	0	2	4	4	2	6	TBC
	Isle of Man	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	TBC
	Lancashire	0	0	2	2	2	3	2	TBC
	Merseyside	0	0	1	1	6	5	1	TBC
	Total	0	0	6	10	16	11	9	TBC
Gold ERS	Cheshire	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	TBC
	Cumbria	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	TBC
	Greater Manchester	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	TBC
	Isle of Man	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	TBC
	Lancashire	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	TBC
	Merseyside	0	0	0	0	1	1	5	TBC
	Total	0	0	1	1	2	1	8	TBC

Figure 1 - Armed Forces Covenant and Employer Recognition Scheme Growth by County 2015 – 2020



Figure 2 – Growth of the Armed Forces Covenant and Employer Recognition Scheme in the NW 2015-2020

achieved in 2019, a significant increase on previous years. The 2019 North West Silver awards ceremony was held in October at the Imperial War Museum North, and the Gold awards ceremony was held in London at the National Army Museum.



The 2019 North West ERS Silver Awards

2020 ERS awards

In 2020, the Employer Engagement (EE) team took our supportive employers through their ERS applications “on the road”. During January and February, we delivered full-day workshops in Greater Manchester, Lancashire, and Merseyside. In Cumbria, a half day workshop was delivered following an EE event in Penrith supported by Cumbria County Council, Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, and the Lord Lieutenant of Cumbria. These workshops were well attended and well received, and it is expected that they will both raise the number and quality of ERS award applications received.

As such, it is hoped that 2020 will see a continued upwards trend, although at the time of writing the full impact of the COVID-19 situation on the eventual submission of ERS applications is not clear. The increased numbers of ERS awards year-on-year has also led to the decision by MOD to hold future Gold award ceremonies regionally, and so for the first time in 2020, COVID-19 permitting, a Gold award ceremony will be held in the North West, specifically for North West winners; in addition to the annual NW Silver awards ceremony. See figure 2 for the NW AFC and ERS growth profile.

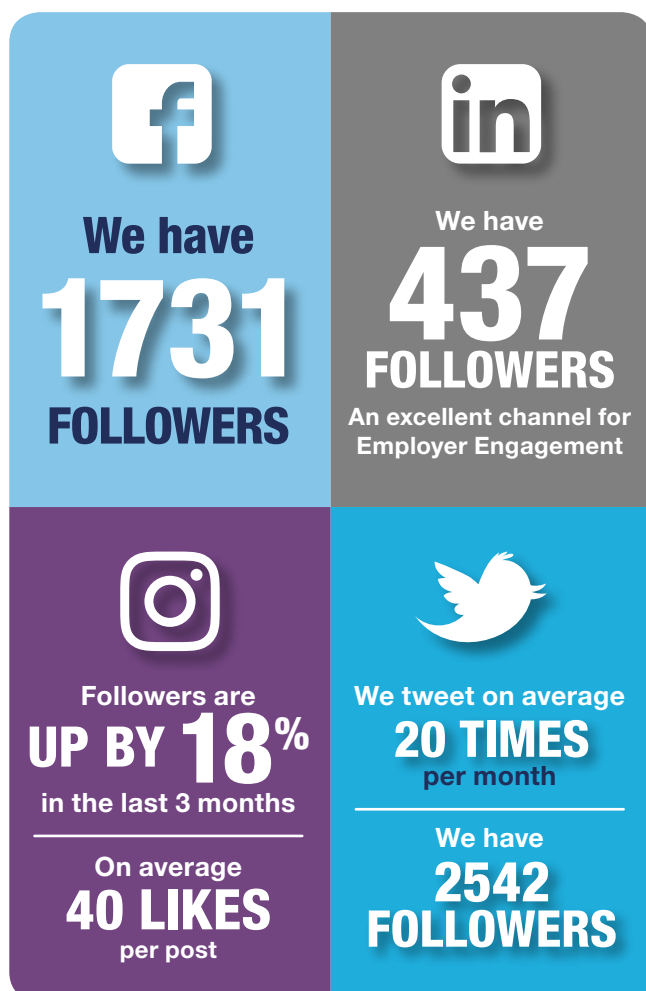
At the time of writing in May, it is still hoped that these awards ceremonies will take place later in the year during October to December, but that is of course subject to COVID-19 and the relevant social distancing requirements in force at that time.

Overall, despite the challenging circumstances, it looks like 2020 will see a continued upwards trend in the numbers of Silver and Gold ERS awards achieved by North West organisations; the real benefit of which will be felt by Reservists, CFAVs, Veterans and Spouses/Partners employed in those workforces through improved support, such as additional leave to enable attendance at annual camps and other training commitments.

Communications

Social media

In autumn 2019, we ran our first paid social media recruitment campaign. Funding was secured through the ACFA in order to boost online applications for Army Cadets and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers in the Isle of Man and for CFAVs in Lancashire. Through succinct targeting of tested content, the campaign delivered a total of 82 applications across the two areas, reaching nearly 73,000 people and encouraging nearly 3,000 of those to visit the ACF websites to find out more. This was all within the set campaign budget of £1,500.00.



Following on from that successful campaign, we rolled out an 8 week Facebook campaign for the recruitment of Cadets and CFAVs in Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Lancashire (cadets only in Lancashire) in January 2020. £4.5k of funding was secured from the ACFA and the campaign was run in their own branding.

The campaign was a huge success in terms of engagement, lead generation and value for money. Across the five counties, the campaign delivered 199 expressions of interest in becoming a CFAV at an average cost per conversion at £10.05. For the Cadet element, the campaign generated 318 expressions of interest in becoming a Cadet at an average cost per conversion of £7.86. The ACF counties have followed up the leads generated through holding recruitment open days. Looking forward, the campaign has clearly demonstrated that Facebook works as an impactful recruiting channel and we can look into replicating this success to further support our audiences.

The NW RFCA continues to organically grow our audiences on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram with Cadet success stories, Reserve case studies, video content and Employer Engagement posts proving to be popular content. We also focus on real-time interactions and share posts from the wider armed forces community to maximise their reach. We will continue to monitor our social media analytics to enable us to be more strategic with our approach.

The Volunteer and media support

Historically the Association's magazine had been produced on a quarterly basis to showcase the news of Reservists and Cadets in the North West. We undertook a review of the magazine in late October 2019 in order to understand if the format was still fit for purpose and relevant to its broad readership. An online questionnaire was sent to RFCA membership and the distribution list to review the usage.

Key results indicated that the respondents find the contents of the magazine relevant and informative and that they prefer to read the magazine in a digital format (53% of respondents).



Communications

Following further analysis of the results, we have decided to reduce our print frequency to once a year and to continue to utilise our various online platforms to host content all year round.

NW RFCA continues to provide media support to local unit activities and achievements, working closely with the media leads in the region across our tri services to amplify our good news stories.

E-newsletters

Our Association newsletter continues to be the main source of information and news for the Association Membership and our key stakeholders. Published monthly, our key measures of success are the open rate (average 44%) and click through rate to the article content (average 40%) which is consistently above the industry average. During COVID-19, we have focused on our internal communications, developing a new bi-weekly update for staff. Focusing on HR updates, Government advice and tips for employee well-being whilst working at home, the newsletter has been well received with opening rates of over 65%.

Website developments

The Lord-Lieutenants' Award page has been refreshed and updated to allow for online nominations. The updated process has worked well with feedback being positive in terms of ease of submitting nominations for this year.

A new members' secure portal has been developed to store important information and documents to keep our membership better informed with MOD, DRM, NW RFCA business and forthcoming events. We are working with the Council of Reserves Forces' and Cadet Associations' for a website re-design.



Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenants' and Lieutenant Governor's Awards

The annual presentations of Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenants' Awards in Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside, and Her Majesty's Lieutenant Governor's Awards in the Isle of Man, continue to be our flagship community engagement events in the region.

This year, we saw a 63% increase in the number of awards submissions with in excess of 170 nominees going on to receive awards. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, we have had to postpone the awards. We hope we will be able to deliver the award ceremonies in late 2020 or early 2021, further details will be announced on our website in due course.



The 2019 Lord-Lieutenants' Awards in Lancashire

Finance

The Association began the financial year 19/20 with a budget allocation of £8.66M. In addition to this the Association had receipts in advance of £2.38M to fund various projects such as the joint cadet centres.

The budget increased by £4.96M during the year to reflect new projects and priorities and funding available for the year totalled £16M (excluding RGI). In year allocations included £230.8K for the maintenance of the Estate, £225K for a number of minor new works, £2.9M for new capital projects, £560K for revenue projects and £214.5K for additional Injured Service Personnel adaptations. We have a few large projects that have been delayed due to COVID-19 which has increased the Receipts In Advance carried forward into FY 20/21 to £2.8M.

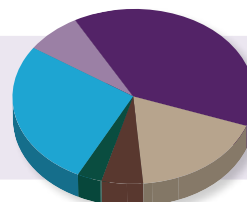
The Association's accounts would normally be presented here but due to COVID-19 we are unable to provide these at this moment in time, the figures shown are unaudited and maybe subject to change.









The pie-charts below illustrate both the summary of income and how this has been allocated to our outputs with 25% earmarked for Estates Management and 18% allocated to infrastructure (primarily rents and rates).

In addition to the funding provided, NWRFCA has generated £3.4M of income. £2.6M of receipts from the sale of 2 sites, part of which will be retained to fund costs associated with the relocation of the HQ. £574K was generated primarily through the work of the Alternative Venues team. This Regionally Generated income is used for support to units within the North West, both directly and indirectly. Examples of how the funding is used are outlined below:

Regionally Generated Income - Distribution



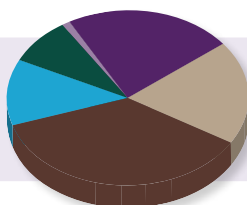
	Refunds to units for use of facilities for hiring to 3rd parties	£209,178
	Maintenance Works to the Estate	£97,327
	Donations to units for Adventure Training, Equipment, Expeditions etc	£28,851
	Production of the Volunteer Magazine	£18,670
	Business Development and Alternative Venues costs	£145,476
	Costs associated with Association properties	£39,446





Finance

Turning to our Trusts, these have been able to support units with grant contributions and in 2019/20 the value of grants awarded is shown below. In cases where there were additional funds available to Trustees, grants for marketing were also awarded. The Trusts meet annually in November and welcome applications from all eligible units.

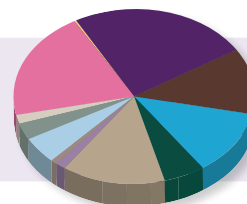
Trust grants awarded in 2019/20















	Stretford Road Trust	£13,075
	Macclesfield Drill Hall Trust	£10,523
	NW Army Cadet Force Trust Fund	£21,300
	Congleton Drill Hall Trust (meeting not held)	£6,950
	Yorkshire Street Trust	£5,195
	Sir Alan Jones	£600
Total		£57,643



Summary of Income 2019/20

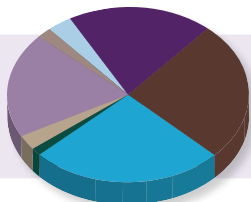


	Grant in Aid	£3,995,258.46
	DIO Infrastructure	£2,100,731.50
	DIO Maintenance	£1,972,813.83
	DE Rdel	£890,382.04
	DE Cdel	2,313,848.24
	Dinfra Rdel	194,377.03
	DRM	156,046.00
	CRF Vehicles	813,539.47
	ATC Input	514,870.00
	Funding Sundry	270,025.84
	Regionally Generated Income	3,284,977.00
	Other (Fleet/RAuxAF/ATC Rdel/CRF Grants)	5,764.93



Finance

Summary of Expenditure 2019/20



Staff Costs	£3,304,423.77
Estate Management	£3,811,765.81
Capital Expenditure	£3,801,857.74
Adaptions to Injured Soldiers properties	£194,377.03
Reserve & Cadet Support	£419,564.18
Infrastructure (rates, rents, utilities)	£2,734,259.22
Administration & HR	£266,559.32
Other (IT, Recruiting Support, Transport)	£449,642.52
Total	£14,982,449.59



Conclusion



**Mr David Briggs,
Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant
of Cheshire, President NW RFCA**

I have now concluded my first year as your President and on behalf of my Vice-Presidents, I hope that the

Chairman's Report has given you just a glimpse of the wide scope of work undertaken by the salaried staff and the volunteer membership in support of the wider Reserve and Cadet community across the North West and the Isle of Man. The outputs, undertaken by the Association, against continued financial pressure (and in all realism, even greater pressure to come), across the MOD show that the challenges slowly but surely can be overcome. That said, we must not be complacent - our Reserves and Cadets and many other customers continue to live in an era of an old and declining volunteer estate which is going to give us many more pressures over the coming years. Defence will look at ways of undertaking business with declining funding across all outputs and our customers will, quite rightly, want a continued and improved service from us. The challenges aside, I firmly believe that we have played our part in enabling our customers to undertake their primary and secondary roles.

I have been kept fully abreast of the CRFCA Review and I await with interest how an NPDB will work for us. The key has to be that we maintain our autonomy at the regional level. It is our people on the ground who understand the local and regional NW and Isle of Man dynamics and we must not leave NW matters to those in London to direct us without the necessary local knowledge.

I would like to make a special mention of our volunteer membership. As all are aware, the RFCAs are fundamentally volunteer membership organisations. Over and above the membership identified within the Schemes of Associations (the formal mechanism by which the RFCAs are authorised to undertake their duties), NW RFCA enjoys considerable help and advice from an extended network of volunteers who collectively provide unparalleled expertise and experience. These volunteers – you who are reading this report – are the life-blood of the RFCAs and are an invaluable means by which we connect to communities, provide good value-for-money services and ultimately shape defence thinking, towards the long term well-being of the Reserves and Cadets. In this continued period of change, opportunities and challenges, we continue to rely on you to act as ambassadors for the Reservists and Cadets whom we support.

We will continue to keep you informed with regular updates on news and events. We will continue to rely on your local knowledge, your professional expertise and your feedback to ensure we continue to facilitate, support, promote and serve our Reservists, Cadet Force Adult Volunteers and cadets. Please keep in contact with us and if you have any questions or uncertainties we will try and give you the correct answer: this well-informed network will and must stand us in good stead as we move forward.

I have written to all the members of the NW RFCA separately about Cadet (and Cadet Force adult volunteer) recruiting. We will face even more challenges post lock-



Conclusion



down in ensuring that we still have cadets parading and adults able to give of their valuable time to run the various single Service and Combined Cadet Force organisations. I remain adamant that we must ALL work harder in this area of recruiting – the organisations are in place to expand and post COVID-19 is the time for an even more concerted effort in this arena. I would urge you to support recruitment; it brings so many tangible benefits to the young people of today – the leaders of tomorrow.

Amongst the highlights continue to be the annual military awards – certificates of meritorious service along with commendations for both the reservist, cadet and now wider community and I know my fellow Vice-Presidents would echo my sentiments. My only plea to those in command – is please take the time to acknowledge the quite outstanding work that is undertaken in this community. Your time in writing and submitting citations and nominations can really make a difference and I send my thanks to those of you who have done this.

I also re-iterate a plea made by my predecessor. The Chief Executive NW RFCA is very keen to have the salaried staff of the association brief the incoming “command teams” of the reserve units, tri-Service cadet organisations and their respective chains of command as well as the staff in the Army and Navy Headquarters on the outputs and structure of NW RFCA; quite simply – the more that our customers know about us, the better. Sadly, the work of the RFCAs across the country is not as widely known as perhaps it should be, and if we can help incoming staff at the

beginning of their tours understand what we do and what we can do for them it will definitely be a win-win for all.

I send my thanks to my Vice-Presidents, Board members and subsidiary committee members who have all give an abundance of their own time freely to further our work in supporting those we serve; it is much appreciated and long may it continue.

In summary, the Association is doing great things – many challenges are in front of us but above all I know you will work together to climb and rise above everything thrown at us.

Lastly, as your President, I would like to add my personal thanks to all the salaried staff working in NW RFCA. Their dedication and commitment is hugely appreciated. For those that have moved on in the last year, I thank you. To those new in appointment, I wish you every success in your new role. All have once again stepped up to the mark during what has been yet another challenging and hugely busy year.

In conclusion, I would like to pass on my sincerest condolences to all those involved in NW RFCA who have lost loved ones due to COVID-19. To those of you classed as “Key Workers” – you are all doing an amazing job – my sincere thanks. None of us can forecast what the coming months will bring, but I would urge you all to stay safe, look out for each other and follow the Government guidelines. Above all, in unprecedented times, I send everyone every good wish for the coming year.



📞 0151 317 9500

✉️ nw-info@rfca.mod.uk

🌐 nwrzca.org.uk

Facebook NorthWestRFCA

Twitter @NorthWestRFCA

Instagram NWRZCA



NW RFCA

RESERVE FORCES' AND CADETS' ASSOCIATION FOR
THE NORTH WEST OF ENGLAND AND THE ISLE OF MAN



ARMED FORCES
COVENANT