



East Anglia Reserve  
Forces and Cadets Association  
Annual Report  
2020-2021





# ABOUT US

Welcome to East Anglia RFCA.  
We hope you enjoy reading our Annual Report.



## WHO WE ARE

East Anglia RFCA is widely recognised by its target audiences as the most valuable, knowledgeable and authoritative body in support of Reserve Forces and Cadet Organisations in East Anglia.

## WHAT WE DO

Our core business pillars are based around the three Defence outputs of Estates, Engagement and Cadets and Youth.



### Estates

We manage and maintain over 200 Reserve Forces and Cadet sites across the region, the acquisition and disposal of land and buildings and adapting homes for injured service personnel.

### Engagement

We assist the civil community, employers and local authorities with understanding the needs of Defence people and developing appropriate support and services for the region. We also help to improve the knowledge and understanding of Reserves and Cadets within the wider community.

### Cadets and Youth

The RFCA provide the professional support staff who maintain and run the Army Cadet county HQs, the equipment and transport that Army Cadets use for their activities, and administer enquiries, new joiners and the adult volunteer membership.

In addition to raising awareness of the positive contribution of Sea Cadets, Air Cadets and Army Cadets in the region, East Anglia RFCA provides regional support for the recruitment of Army Cadet Force Adult Volunteers, with funding sourced from the Army Cadet Force Association.

### Members act as local ambassadors across the range of RFCA interests.

The volunteer membership of the Association is the enduring interface between the local community and the Ministry of Defence.

Volunteer Members are drawn from officers of all three services and cadet forces, representatives from local authorities, local business communities and charities. Members seek out opportunities for the promotion of the RFCA's key messages amongst influencers and those who can provide input. That they are prepared to give so freely of their time is a great testament to the high regard in which our Reserves and Cadets are held.

# CHAIRMAN

After a very long and difficult period for all, we are now hopefully not too far away from some semblance of normality.

As we entered 2020, I don't think any of us could ever imagine what the population was about to face. The Covid-19 pandemic has caused the UK to take regulatory and financial remedial measures that we would have thought unbelievable as we welcomed in the new decade on New Year's Day 2020. It has been a very long and difficult period for all, but we are now hopefully not too many months away from getting back to some semblance of normality.

Not only has the Association had to change its working practices to allow it to work safely and effectively within a covid secure environment, but it has had to deal with a continual stream of covid related calls on its resources. These have ranged from ensuring as many locations as possible remain compliant in order to provide accommodation for MOD and NHS assets engaged in fighting the pandemic, through to employer and community engagement activities related to Reservists who have been mobilised in support of the NHS.

The much heralded transition to a National RFCA in the form of a Non Departmental Public Body has commenced. Although, as the MOD project team enabling the implementation has only recently stood up and government focus has been elsewhere, progress has been slower than expected. It is still early days but the Associations are doing all that they can to ensure the structures and processes that emerge are fit for purpose and preserve the regional strengths of the RFCA.

Reserve Forces 2030 (RF30), in the context of the Integrated Review, has now reported and its recommendations are starting to be implemented. The opportunities, in the Armed Forces, for the Reserves are widespread and the support required by the RFCA has never been more in demand. I am confident that we are in a strong position to provide that support as its details become clearer.

Unfortunately budgetary pressures, in spite of the MOD's four year funding deal with the Treasury, remain very demanding. The Association has had to produce significant savings measures this year and it is likely to have a similar



**MR IAN TWINLEY DL**  
**CHAIRMAN**

experience next year. However, be assured that we have managed to ensure none of our core outputs have suffered to date.

As we face a more optimistic future from a covid pandemic perspective, the Association must also confront a number of interrelated change challenges. I have no doubt that we have the organisational resilience, capacity, and capabilities to seize any opportunities that will arise within those challenges and to ensure the Reserves and Cadets of East Anglia will continue to flourish in the future.

# CADETS

Keeping the Cadet flame alive.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the basis of cadet training and engagement this year has been via online platforms such as Zoom or MS Teams. We have been in awe of how CFAVs switched their focus from familiar face-to-face training, to one that was unfamiliar and required a completely different approach. Adult Volunteers in all the cadet organisations demonstrated their true colours in the time of need, and stepped up to the plate and the challenges to 'Keep the Flame Alive'. It is no mean feat to keep young people's attention and interest engaged and our thanks and appreciation go out to all the Adult Volunteers we support in our region. Sadly, all Cadet Annual Camps were cancelled in the summer as no residential training was permitted, but Essex Army Cadet Force took the camp into the online space with a hugely successful virtual camp – which proved that where there is a will, there is a way!

## Zoom, Zoom, Zoom!

Over nine days, 420 Essex Army Cadets and adults took part in 50 sessions on Zoom. 150 cadets and instructors attended the opening address by the Commandant, Colonel Leona Barr-Jones via the online platform, marking the official start of Virtual Annual Camp 2020.

W01 Lightfoot, RSM of CTC Frimley Park sent in a video. He said how the senior cadets and instructors of Essex have held "impeccable standards" and been "a pleasure to teach" on their visits to Frimley Park in previous years.

National Army Cadet Force Champion Big Phil also sent in a video encouraging the cadets of Essex to "keep being extremely cool getting involved in things."

On the last day, the Commandant awarded the Annual trophies and announced the winners of the Camp Competitions; the overall winners being D Company. There was even a competition to involve your dog in annual camp!



## RAF Air Cadets benefited from enhanced virtual training.

Our three wings across East Anglia (Bedfordshire & Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire & Buckinghamshire and Norfolk & Suffolk) all enjoyed the cadets usual program of training and courses via MS Teams but there was also a number of events tailored to the "new normal". Often working together, these included guest speakers across a wide range of military, aviation and space topics. Key note speakers included a Deputy Lieutenant from Hertfordshire, senior RAF Officers, Commanders of local bases and former cadets. As a result, more than 800 virtual parade nights took place during the lockdowns providing the much needed fun, engagement and support to aid retention for both cadets and staff.

Every other year, RAF Air Cadet units enter a competition to be the best large unit in a competition for the "Morris Trophy". Congratulations to 1094 (Ely) Squadron who were judged to be in the top six units in the UK, earning them a welcome cash grant of £1000.

## A Big Camp Out for Armed Forces Day.

In a normal year, Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Army Cadet Force would have spent Armed Forces Day on parade or at public events across the county. This was not possible in 2020, so they did something different - a virtual camp in their gardens. Cadets and adults across the county took part however they could - with tents or bashas in the garden or by building a den inside the house. Cadets also took part in a competition by submitting photos of their shelters which were then judged by VIPs including the Lord Lieutenants from both Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire!



# CADETS

Despite three national lockdowns, Cadets and Adult Volunteers have received prestigious awards and accolades.

There have been a multitude of significant achievements by individuals, highlighted and showcased by their respective counties. It has been an honour, humbling and uplifting to see how so many have worked so hard in support of others at such a difficult time.

From receiving National Honours, to supplying kit to help the NHS, to delivering support in local communities, to raising thousands of pounds for charities, the cadet forces have truly displayed the positive societal impact they have.

## Cambridgeshire Army Cadet takes on top Security apprenticeship.

Cadet Sergeant Charlotte Wallace of Cambridge Detachment was awarded an apprenticeship with The Worshipful Company of Security Professionals and presented with an Intelligence Corps Medallion at a socially distanced ceremony at Waterbeach Cadet Training Centre. The WCoSP is one of the principal security-based organisations in the UK, with members drawn from the security industry. Having applied earlier last year, Charlotte was accepted for the four-year apprenticeship, only the second person ever to do so.



## Two Suffolk Army Cadet Force Adult Volunteers receive outstanding medals for service.

SSI Lesley Utting BEM was awarded the British Empire Medal for Meritorious Service to Suffolk Army Cadet Force and the youth of Suffolk.

Lesley, a mum of four and gran to seven from Thetford, has been a cadet instructor for over 18 years and "still loves every minute of it." When she isn't volunteering, Lesley is a driver for Vertas, driving children with special educational needs to and from school.

Captain Ian Partridge MSTJ Suffolk Army Cadet Force became a Member of the Order of St John after 30 years of volunteering with St John Ambulance.

Ian has trained over 600 adult instructors and cadets since he joined the Army Cadet Force in 2004. He is currently the Medical Support Officer for Suffolk ACF, giving advice to the County ACF Commandant on first aid policy, first aid governance and medical planning. Prior to that, he had been the Suffolk ACF First Aid Training Officer for eight years.

Cadet Executive Officer, Major Keith Humphrey said "Both of these highly prestigious awards are hugely deserved and mark many years of selfless and committed service in furthering the objects of the ACF and the Order of St John. We are all very proud of them both and hope that this marks the beginning of more to come in future years."

# CADETS

Cadet forces across the region have taken part in phenomenal fundraising events to support the NHS and local charities.

## Sea Cadet praised as a local hero to many.

Petty Officer Cadet Apple-Jane Hayward BEM from Brentwood Sea Cadets received the British Empire Medal in Her Majesty The Queen's Birthday Honours for her commitment and support towards her local community during the pandemic.



When the first lockdown arrived AJ made weekly calls to her fellow cadets to check up on them and offer her support. She decided to extend these calls to the members of the Royal Naval Association and offered weekly chats to their members. AJ then joined the Brentwood Mutual Aid Group helping with things like the distribution of recycling sacks, to the cooking and delivery of hot meals to the lonely and vulnerable, along with weekly friendly phone calls which she still continues to this day.

Before long, AJ was struggling with worries about her father who is an Officer in the Fire Service, so she decided to put her feelings down on paper. She wrote an open letter to the children of front line workers to let them

know they were not alone. The letter was widely shared on social media and AJ had many wonderful responses from families who had taken time to sit with their children and talk about the situation. She was so pleased to learn that the London Ambulance Service wrote a letter to every child of their staff members, thanking them for sharing their parents with them through the pandemic. She is thrilled that her words were able to help so many families.

## 7.5 challenge raises thousands for local Suffolk charities.

Many cadets were desperate to support charities in the battle against coronavirus so Suffolk Army Cadet Force introduced the 7.5 challenge to commemorate VE-75.

Captain Rob Catton led on this mammoth fund raising event where cadets and adults were asked to run, walk or cycle 7.5 miles or multiples of in aid of three charities; The Suffolk Community Foundation, St John's Ambulance and the NHS Charities Together.

In January, Suffolk ACF received confirmation that the matched funding (working jointly with the Suffolk Community Foundation (SCF) had been approved. Working together both organisations are hoping to re-institute a 'youth intervention fund' which had previously been depleted, in order to reinvigorate it for young people across the county.

Of the £10,015 raised, a third will go to the volunteers at the front line of our hospitals, ambulance service and vaccination response, a third to the patients and NHS staff (NHS Charities Together), and a third to local communities across Suffolk (via the SCF). The latter is likely to be ring-fenced to help young people across the county who are adversely affected by Covid-19.



## Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Army Cadet Force walked the walk for charity.

Cadets and instructors walked over 300km to raise vital funds for Walking With The Wounded.

Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Army Cadet Force raised more than any other of the 52 Army Cadet teams taking part in the Walking Home For Christmas campaign this year, bar Yorkshire (North and West) Army Cadets, with a whopping £5.9K contribution to the charity. The team earned a mention on the Walking With The Wounded website and in the National Army Cadets Colonel Cadets' weekly newsletter.

32 adult instructors and 24 cadets from Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Army Cadet Force took part. Notable contributions came from RSM Petrie, who raised £824 walking from Tring to Hemel and then to Berkhamsted, with fellow adult instructors and cadets from Tring detachment joining in for parts of the route. SI Shults of Tring detachment also raised £705 after a Christmas day walk.

Essex Army Cadet Force also made a fantastic contribution raising £3.9K. Their top two fundraisers were Cadet Corporal George Myers and Cadet Staff Sergeant Joe Gafney who walked 27 Miles from Chelmsford War Memorial to Colchester War Memorial, raising nearly £700.



Despite a global pandemic, East Anglia still has over 13,000 cadets and 2,250 Adult Volunteers supporting them.

# CADETS

## One person's rubbish is another person's treasure.

As part of the volunteering aspect of his Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire's Cadet, Sergeant Rhyder Cameron-Wickes, made sleeping bags from empty crisp packets to help homeless people.

The packets are melted together with an iron, on low heat, to form large sheets. These are then covered with plastic sheeting, also ironed on, and then joined to form sleeping bags which are then distributed by a local charity.

150 packets are needed to make one bag. He said: "there is no target for how many I want to make, but I'm aiming to continue making them until the end of 2021."



## Cadet used 3D printer to make face mask clips for NHS.

During the initial PPE shortage, Cadet Lance Bombardier Daniel Reeve, of Suffolk Army Cadets' Felixstowe Detachment, printed mask clips for Essex Partnership NHS.

Daniel, 15, started printing mask straps for his detachment's sergeant David Powell (an NHS nurse) after seeing a post by Crealitiy, a manufacturer of 3D printers, and then scaled up his production line with two printers.

# RESERVES

Reservists from across East Anglia have been mobilised as part of Operation Rescript; the British military's response to help tackle the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic in the UK.

Throughout the pandemic the Armed Forces have stepped in to support the Covid-19 response, from helping to build field hospitals, run mobile testing units and delivering PPE to offering high level logistical support to the NHS.

## Test, Test, Test.

Essex and Hertfordshire soldiers helped to deliver Covid-19 testing in the county as part of the Government's national testing programme. Reservists from 3 (Hertfordshire and Essex) Company, 3rd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment worked at drive-through mobile coronavirus testing sites across East Anglia. 3 Company Commander Major Rhys Little, who lives in St Albans and works as a change manager for Tesco in his civilian life, was responsible for managing the five Mobile Testing Units working across East Anglia.

He said: "The Army Reserve is all about adaptability, in moving from a civilian job to an Army Reserve role and then dealing with an ever changing military situation. This deployment has typified this with our soldiers quickly stepping up to a unique and unpredictable environment with professionalism and good humour. Across the unit we have a diverse range of jobs and experience, but they all decided to put their civilian career on hold to support the national response during this time of crisis. Putting the needs of others before themselves, this is what it means to be in the Army Reserve."



Over 50 people from 158 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps deployed with members of the Regiment joining Mobile Testing Units (MTU), working as Military Liaison Officers (MLOs) across the regions and some embedded in the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in London.

This was the largest cohort deployed by a Reserve RLC Unit and resulted in the award of a Commander SJC's Commendation for Major Rich Pelan of 202 (Ipswich) Squadron. Pictured on the right below.



2623 Squadron RAF Reserves had 13 personnel mobilised in support of Op Rescript with one Senior Non Commissioned Officer also supporting Op Biloxi (flight line security for the RAF Typhoon's operating in Romania as part of the UK's contribution to the operational capability of NATO's eastern flank).



# RESERVES

From running mobile testing sites to delivering PPE, Reservists have worked alongside NHS colleagues.



In addition to testing members of the public, soldiers from Norwich based No1 Company, 3rd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment, spent two weeks on Op Rose; the deployment of troops in support of the Department of Transport in the testing of all lorry drivers and hauliers bound for continental Europe.

When the Kent strain of the Coronavirus was identified, all those crossing the Channel to mainland Europe were required to be tested for the virus. So, it was to the military that the Government initially turned to support the massive logistical challenge of testing and registering the tens of thousands of lorry drivers that pass through the Channel Tunnel and Port of Dover.

The Norwich Reserve soldiers deployed to the Inland Border Facility; a huge purpose designed expanse located at Sevington just outside Ashford in Kent. It was constructed as a border control point for the checking of lorry documentation following Brexit and was utilised as a location at which to ensure every driver had tested negative before heading on to the channel ports.



## Army Reservists helped to distribute NHS Personal Protective Equipment.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Army Reservists from 124 Transport Squadron, part of 151 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps, kept vital NHS supplies moving. Usually based at the Army Reserve Centre in Warley, Essex, 12 soldiers from the unit worked at an NHS distribution centre in Maidstone, Kent. There was also an 8-man operation cell running 24/7 out of Warley ARC. The reservists helped pack vital PPE before delivering it across the south-east. The regiment also put their London facilities to use, with Army Reserve Centres in Southall and Barnet being used to receive and distribute NHS supplies around the capital.



In April, 3rd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment supported the distribution of Personnel Protective Equipment from a PPE Cell at Endeavour House, Ipswich. The cell contained hundreds of thousands of pieces of PPE ranging from small disposable gloves and hand gel to full face masks that were sorted and organised ready for pick up or delivery to care homes and mobile carers as well as fire service and other agencies.

# RESERVES

In line with Government guidelines, some training was able to take place between lockdowns whilst restrictions were eased.



## HMS Wildfire Reservist named Maritime Reservist of the Year 2020 and recipient of the Commodore Muriel Hocking Trophy.

Leading Seaman Ryan Scott, who volunteers with HMS Wildfire based in Northwood, Hertfordshire, was instrumental

in helping fellow members of the Royal Navy Reserve seamlessly fit into life with the Gibraltar Squadron and patrol ship HMS Tyne.

A former full-time member of the Royal Navy, he's the first recipient of the Commodore Muriel Hocking Trophy, named in honour of the late Commodore, who is remembered for her example of service, compassion, hard work and determination in the face of adversity.

Ryan was mobilised twice in 2020, firstly to the Gibraltar Squadron and then to the Offshore Patrol Squadron and HMS Tyne; which has been keeping an eye on fishermen and Russian warships operating around the UK.

## Reservists provided ground crew support for Apache attack helicopter.

Reservists from 6 Regiment Army Air Corps worked side-by-side with their regular counterparts in 3 Regiment Army Air Corps during the summer to maintain, refuel and rearm the Apache during a major training exercise.



Six reservists started a three-week stint on Exercise Talon Hydra with refresher training on the Apache at Wattisham Flying Station. They then moved out into the field, working on Forward Arming and Refueling Points (FARPs) – the military equivalent of a Formula 1 pit stop – while living out on the STANTA Ranges in Norfolk.

## Cambridge University Royal Navy Unit took to the water at Coldhams Lane.

Due to Covid-19 limitations, CURNU were only able to come together on a number of occasions. The unit held a joint Summer Camp for Cambridge and Oxford URNUs where the Officer Cadets had their first experience of water-based training. This is something they intend to focus on during warmer terms as CURNU are now a Royal Yachting Association qualified centre using the wonderful lake at Coldhams Lane Army Reserve Centre in Cambridge.

## A small window for Adventure Training.

32 Military Intelligence Company continued to support Imagery Intelligence Operations throughout the training year alongside general analytical and open source analysis support to the military and NHS Covid-19 Response. A highlight of the year was a short expedition to cross the Cairngorms National Park on foot across the UK's most remote terrain.



# RESERVES

With the majority of face-to-face training paused, Reservists turned their attentions to fundraising challenges.



## Officer Cadets ran, cycled and hiked over 9,000 miles in aid of first responders.

Cambridge University Officers' Training Corps (CUOTC), the Army Reserve unit for university students across East Anglia, presented the East of England Ambulance Service (EEAS) with a cheque for £5,823 following an epic challenge.

Following the March 2020 nationwide lockdown, CUOTC's training programme was halted as its officer cadets returned home from their respective universities and colleges. Seeing an opportunity to improve personal fitness during lockdown, while supporting a worthy cause, a team of officer cadets created the Cambridge to Cape Town (C2C) Challenge. The officer cadets organised and ran the event remotely and entirely via the power of social media.

The C2C Challenge sought to cumulatively cover the overland distance between Cambridge and Cape Town, South Africa, in recognition of CUOTC's service there in 1901. The unit is unique in the OTC space in that it is the only Officer Training Corps to have a Battle Honour for its officer cadets service in South Africa (South Africa 1900-01) where they acted as sharpshooters.



## Reservists from 124 Transport Squadron fundraised for ABF The Soldiers' Charity

53 soldiers from 124 Transport Squadron, 151 Regiment RLC completed their own Nijmegen Challenge, in which individuals marched a total of 1,500 miles over a period of four days.

The Nijmegen Four Day Marches is the largest walking event in the World, with an astounding 47,000 participants. People from many countries come to walk in and around the city and through the surrounding towns and villages.

The reservists from 124 Transport Squadron based at Warley Army Reserve Centre had planned to take part in the 2020 event, however were unable to do so due to Covid-19. They combined the walking challenge with the ABF The Soldiers' Charity annual code-breaking fundraiser, Operation Bletchley, to raise an impressive £2,444 for The Soldiers' Charity.

## RAF Reserves climbed mountains and rowed for charity.

2623 Squadron supported St Nicholas Hospice Care Virtual Girl's Night Out fundraising event, with four gunners running the charity banner to the top of Ben Lomond on the night. Separately, members of the squadron supported an RAF Rowing Club initiative, with Squadron members rowing 9,400 km and raising £3,500 for the RAF Benevolent Fund. The standout contribution was from Senior Aircraftsmen Darren Clements who achieved 625 km, whilst holding down a busy full time job.

# EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Employers from across our six counties have continued to offer phenomenal support to the Defence Community.

Our employer engagement team had a busy start to the year managing to deliver five prestigious engagement events before lockdown hit in March. For many, the highlight was an Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) Silver Award workshop at the Tower of London.

As part of the ERS, the team went on to achieve 26 Silver Awards, four Silver Revalidations and eight Gold Awards.



Many congratulations to the 2020 ERS Gold Award Holders:

- |                               |                                                           |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Cambridgeshire County Council | Peterborough City Council                                 |
| Cranfield University          | Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn NHS Trust Foundation |
| Milbank Group                 | Ringway Jacobs                                            |
| Network Training Partnership  | Rose Builders                                             |



# EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Our team continues to deliver outstanding results against our SLA targets.

We congratulate this year's Silver Award winners and look forward to strengthening our relationships on their Partnering with Defence Journey.

A massive thanks to our 2020 Silver Award winners who, with no face-to-face events taking place, really got behind our social media campaigns providing us with numerous videos and content for our YouTube launch.

- Avonline Networks
- Basildon Borough Council
- Broadland District Council
- CNet Training
- Cranborne School
- CYSIAM Limited
- Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation
- Fortem Solutions
- Hopkins Homes
- Magadlene Telecom
- Management Security Solutions
- McGinley Support Services
- Mildenhall College Academy
- Morrison Telecom Services
- North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust
- Reactive Integrated Services
- Road Haulage Association Ltd
- RT Infrastructure
- Skills4STEM Ltd
- Sopra Steria
- South Norfolk Council
- TES 2000
- VolkerWessels
- Westway Nissan
- Willmott Dixon
- Your Telemarketing

The revalidation of a Silver Award demonstrates at least five years' of continuous support to the Armed Forces Community and we thank 1st Line Defence, Dunster House Ltd, Huggable Heroes and MASS Consultants Ltd for their outstanding commitment.

Each year, the Employer Engagement Service Level Agreement sets out targets to be achieved by our team and here we share the results known as 'Measurement of Effectiveness'. The activity of every employer who has signed the Armed Forces Covenant Pledge through to those achieving a Gold Employer Recognition Scheme Award is recorded against four categories of engagement:

**External Advocacy Output** - What the employer is doing to pro-actively promote and support the agenda/advocacy of the Armed Forces Community.

**Commercial Fairness** - Discounts, pausing contracts etc.

**HR** - Supportive policies including recruitment, retention, mobilisation and extra leave.

**Engagement with Single Services** - Military Partnering.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The majority of our events were delivered virtually whilst a few were able to proceed following strict social distancing guidelines.

We work closely with local communities to increase the profile of our Cadet and Reserve Units and help Local Authorities understand the needs of the Armed Forces Community. We are in regular contact with many of our Local Authorities, their officers and elected members. In the past year, despite the pandemic, we have continued to deliver briefings to disseminate information on the Association's work and that of the Armed Forces Covenant.

Throughout the year East Anglia RFCA attends and contributes to local Armed Forces Covenant Boards across the six counties. The initiatives and projects delivered by these groups are far reaching and benefit not only the Armed Forces community but the civil community as a whole. These meetings have continued to take place remotely during the past 12 months.



One of the most successful events was the annual Service of Thanksgiving held by the Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Helen Nellis to honour the thousands of people who volunteer and who play such a significant role in building kind and cohesive communities.

The Lord Lieutenant created an online service to pay tribute to our volunteers and to the 75th Anniversary of VE Day, as the county of Bedfordshire remembered with gratitude the formidable generation who sacrificed so much for peace. The service was viewed by over 1400 people.



The Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, Mr Robert Voss CBE used the virtual world to present to, and praise both cadets and adult volunteers from the Sea Cadets, Army Cadets, Air Training Corps, Combined Cadet Force and the St. Johns Ambulance cadets. During October, the Lord Lieutenant presented Certificates for Meritorious Service, for Praiseworthy First Aid and Hero of Hertfordshire awards.



The Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, Clare Countess of Euston, also took to her computer screen to present the awards for her county.

Pictured above is one of those recipients, Senior Aircraftman Clements from 2623 Squadron RAF Reserves. Darren received the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate of Meritorious Service for his contributions during the pandemic. He offered tremendous support to essential training during covid restrictions, RAF media, charity fundraising and operational mobilisations.



Deputy Lieutenant Anthony Fairbanks Weston presented Awards on behalf of the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, the Countess of Euston, to four individuals during a socially distanced ceremony at Ipswich Army Reserve Centre. Lance Corporal Kokonas and Mr. Thorrington made an outstanding contribution to the community in Suffolk during the Covid-19 pandemic and two members of 158 Royal Logistical Corps, Sergeant Bickers and Staff Sergeant Davis were both presented with their Volunteer Reserve Service Medals (VRSM) for 10 years' service with the Army Reserve.

# COMMUNICATIONS

A small team of communication professionals deliver a wide range of services to support the Association's core outputs.

From fielding press enquiries to delivering public relations, training, adult recruitment advice to the cadet forces, website curation, and networking, the services delivered by the communications team enable RFCA staff, members and partners to support Defence messaging in line with the regional agenda.

Delivering innovative campaigns across print and digital communications channels, we engage effectively with our key stakeholders in the region across all three Association pillars of Estates, Cadets and Engagement.

We draw on the combined knowledge and experience of all 13 RFCAs, also collaborating with Defence and cadet organisations to deliver the best value and service to our stakeholders.

By delivering low cost initiatives, PR opportunities and digital campaigns with effective planning and evaluation, our creative campaigns align with the wider Defence communication objectives.

Our monthly Association newsletter is the main source of news and information for the Association Membership and our partners.

We monitor key regional publications so we can report monthly on the Advertising Value Equivalent. This year, our media support was equivalent to a £615K advertising spend. Our Armed Forces Week campaign included new cases studies, driving traffic to a new dedicated landing page on the website.



Since April 2020

- 85** 85 stories published to our website
- 4000** 4,000+ newsletters sent
- 12** 12 staff 'lockdown' bulletins
- 1** 1 Special Reserves Day letter to our members
- 90K** Pages on our website were viewed 90,000 times
- Hand icon** The most popular stories on our website included an open letter from Brentwood Sea Cadet Apple-Jane to other children of front-line workers and the personal account of Operation Crusader by Lt Col Jackie Allen.

Last year we identified that 55% of Army Cadet detachments had no Google listing. We assisted them in improving their online visibility and the proportion of detachments without listings has dropped significantly.

School engagement packs and mobile recruiting stands are ready for use across our five counties as soon as recruiting activities are able to resume. East Anglia RFCA's communications team developed the stands and solutions with the Army Cadets because only 15% of adult volunteers in our region had visited their local schools in the last two years.



# SOCIAL MEDIA

During the pandemic, we have remained highly engaged with our stakeholders via social media.

Our Social Media focus in 2020/21 was to ensure our content remained relevant and engaging to our target audience against the backdrop of the pandemic. Our approach therefore has been to:

- Seek out and post content which was directly relevant to the Covid-19 response i.e. Reservists mobilising in the Covid-19 Support Force.
- Deliver our standard campaigns such as Armed Forces Week and Reserves Day but tying them into Covid-19 whenever possible and relevant i.e. Reservist case studies mobilised at testing units.
- Post content which demonstrated the efforts of Sea, Army and Air Cadets to keep the flame alive through virtual training.
- Share the efforts of the wider Armed Forces community during the Covid-19 response.
- Post good news and light-hearted content aimed at providing light relief for our audiences.
- Monitor our social channels and interacting in real time, ensuring we remain topical and keep up with shifting situations.

Follow us at:

@EastAngliaRFCA

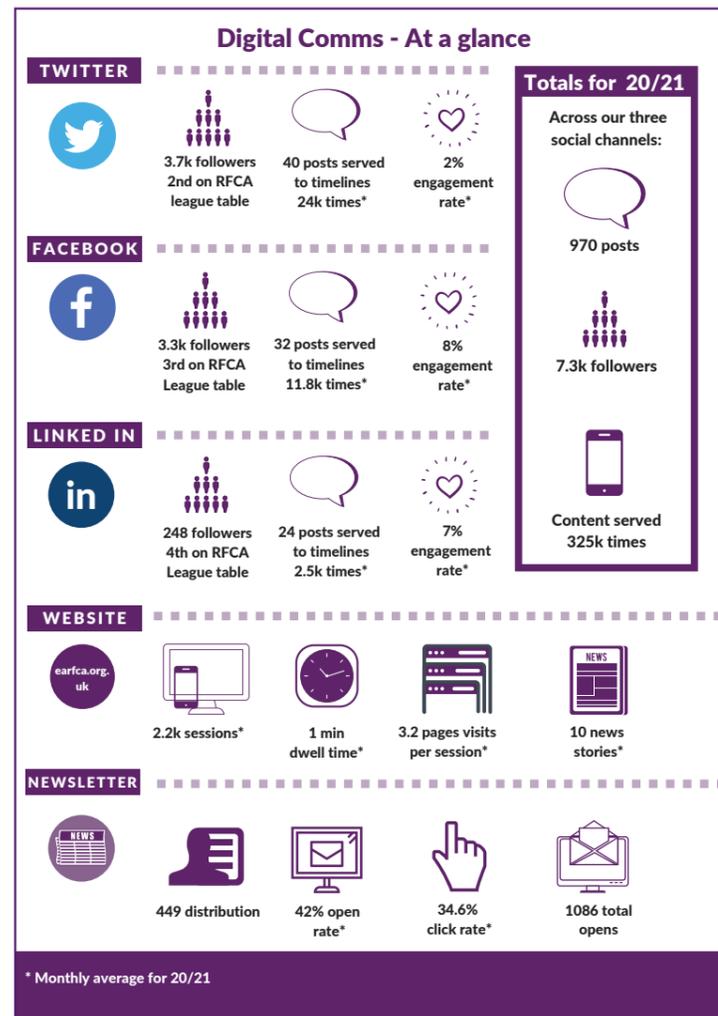
Twitter and Facebook

linkedin.com/company/east-anglia-rfca



Our performance is measured against the key metrics set out in our social media strategy and summarised in the infographic. All of our results are based on organic content only i.e we had no paid for content in 2020/21. Highlights include:

- Retaining or increasing our engagement levels across all three social channels.
- Increasing the volume of our posts across all three channels.
- Retaining and building our followers, especially with Linked In which saw a 43% increase in followers.



# WIDER MARKET INITIATIVES

A selection of our Army Reserve Centres and cadet buildings are available to hire. All income from this activity supports the further betterment of our estate.



With the announcement of the first national lockdown in March 2020, the majority of private hiring activity across our estate ceased with immediate effect.

Fortunately a number of income generating activities were able to continue as they were unaffected by social distancing restrictions.

Vehicle storage, private housing rentals and businesses still able to operate in line with Government guidelines continued.

As restrictions eased, we slowly welcomed groups back to site; primarily other uniformed services. With very strict Covid-19 risk assessments and protocols in place, several Army Reserve Centres were in a position to allow smaller training groups to use the drill halls and classrooms.

During 2020, the business model for Wider Market Initiatives switched focus from exploring the renewable energies market to forming working relationships with other Government departments and blue lighted services. Our real estate can accommodate other Services that are currently very restricted in terms of their own training and conferencing facilities.



Our new partners include:



These new partnerships have been welcomed by the units as the activity does not interfere with Reservist training and the clients have the same working practices and ethos in terms of being security conscious and respectful of Government property.

Against a forecast of £211K we are projected to exceed this by over £30K. A truly outstanding performance given the current climate.

The pause in site activity has also given the team time to focus on essential housekeeping tasks with hiring contracts and agreements being updated to reflect current legislation.

In terms of marketing, a new Alternative Venues website is set to launch in May functioning as both a shop front and centralised booking system.



# ESTATES

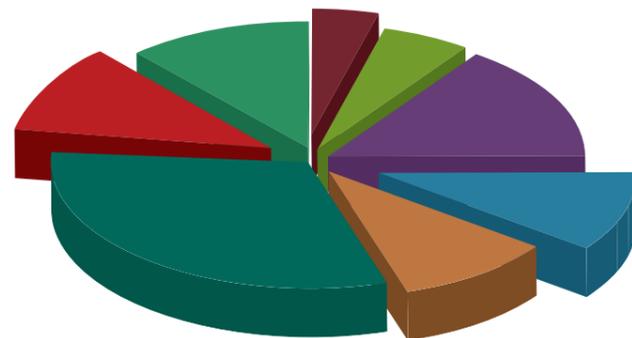
In addition to delivering several significant projects, the estate has remained fully compliant this year.

**It has been an extremely busy year for the Estates team against a backdrop of remote working, lockdowns and reduced manning at our sites for protection of the Force.**

The increasing focus on compliance continues, with Gas Safety and Asbestos Management being the latest challenges to hit the Estates team. We are fortunate in having a highly qualified H&S professional in our Head of Estates and are confident the developing governance regime we have in place will continue to be fit for purpose.

By the end of March, in addition to carrying out more than £500k of reactive maintenance tasks, managing just under £400k of Statutory Inspections and associated work, and managing over £1m of Project Aintree builds (the provision of new compliant armouries across the MOD estate), the Estates team will have delivered nearly £1m of 'sustain and change' projects across the volunteer estate.

## End of Year Expenditure



- Minor New Works, £153,724.00
- Grounds Maintenance, £200,370.00
- Reactive Maintenance, £536,118.00
- Statutory inspection, £378,332.00
- Statutory Works, £359,483.00
- Project Aintree, £1,115,170.00
- RGI, £442,302.00
- WISPA, £411,868.00

**Many of our Army Reserve Centres have benefited from major upgrades.**

At Luton ARC all areas of the flat roof were re-covered to include new fixed stairs access to the roof, the boarding of old roof lights, relining of gutters over the drill hall and the wrapping of coping stones that were letting water through cavities. The gas kitchen was also converted to electric and kitted out with new appliances.



In Essex, Colchester ARC received a £30k refurbishment of the ablution facilities.



Following significant upgrades to the Reservists part of Peterborough ARC last year, attentions this year turned to the cadet space with a complete re-roofing of the cadet areas and band room.



# ESTATES

When cadets return to training, they will discover fresh, modern facilities awaiting them.

**Across the cadet estate various projects were undertaken in the past year.**

A large number of those were spend to save projects, for example replacing all lighting with LED and all heating with programmable timer units.

At Stevenage, East Anglia RFCA are undertaking a full refurbishment of the facility for the RAF Air Cadets and Army Cadet Force. This £150k project will see both Stevenage cadet forces return after almost two years.



At St Ives in Cambridgeshire the roof rainwater goods, fascias and soffits were replaced and insulation added.



Gorleston ACF in Norfolk is currently undergoing a full refurbishment of the property.



In Suffolk, new windows and external doors are being installed at Felixstowe ACF as well as refurbishment to the timber building at the rear of the site with new roof, composite cladding and insulation throughout.



At Woodbridge Joint Cadet Centre the building was stripped and re-roofed re-using the existing materials. The centre also benefited from a complete external and internal re-decoration, with all lighting and heaters replaced throughout.



The Hadleigh ACF refurbishment project has also been completed.



# MEMBERSHIP

The volunteer Members of the Association act as local ambassadors in the community across a range of RFCA interests.

With over 160 Members across the six counties, our members range from qualified surveyors, accountants and solicitors to industry leaders and opinion formers. Giving their time freely, without remuneration, their expertise in finance, legal matters, HR policy, estates and employer engagement are core to the success of East Anglia RFCA.

## We welcomed several new Members this year and celebrated new appointments.



Helen Nellis

When the AGM meeting was cancelled last year, we sadly didn't have the opportunity to thank our outgoing President, the Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, Mrs Helen Nellis for her tremendous support. She has and continues to be a huge supporter of cadets and youth and a fantastic champion to our Armed Forces.



Lady Euston

We are confident that enthusiasm will be matched with equal gusto by our new President, the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, Clare Countess of Euston. Lady Euston has already sprung into action across the virtual world and championed the RFCA at every given opportunity. We extend the warmest of welcomes.



Tim Seal

Congratulations to Brigadier Tim Seal TD, Chair of Cambridgeshire County Forum who was appointed as ADC to HM The Queen.



Iain Macdonald

The Joint Cadet Committee welcomed a new Chairman, Colonel Iain Macdonald (former Commandant Essex ACF), who took over from Squadron Leader Paul Bower. Paul served as the Chairman since 2014, and encouraged an inclusive and open forum, in which the region's Sea, Army, Air and Combined Cadet Force units were able to come together



Shaun Hindle

and understand the common challenges and mutual opportunities across the volunteering spectrum. We thank him for all his contributions and hope that there will be an opportunity to dine him out formally in January 2022!

The Cambridgeshire Employer Engagement Group welcomed a new Chair. Our thanks to Phil Toombs for his wise counsel and excellent networking as Cambridgeshire's CEEG for the past 3 years. The reigns go to Shaun Hindle, CEO of SJH Management Associates Ltd/ Interim Governance at the Education and Training Foundation. Working within the Further and Higher Education sector, Shaun specialises in business development, curriculum design and employer engagement.

We also welcomed several new Commanding Officers across our region:

Lt Col Heather Tysall, 254 Medical Regiment

Lt Col Rob Futter, 158 Regiment RLC

Lt Col Adam Wolfe MBE, 3rd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment

Lt Col Debbie Taylor, 151 Regiment RLC

Lt Col Adrian Garrett, Cambridge University OTC

Squadron Leader Gary Martin, 3 Tactical Police Squadron RAuxAF



Heather Tysall



Rob Futter



Adam Wolfe



Debbie Taylor



Adrian Garrett



Gary Martin

# EA RFCA HQ & REGIONS

We employ 69 people across the six counties and are headquartered in Chelmsford, Essex.



Matt Ponder

## Welcoming new faces.

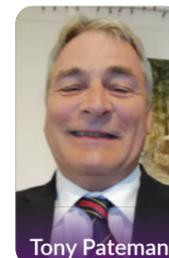
Throughout the year, the majority of our team remained in post.

We bade a fond farewell to Kevin Humphrey, who had held the role of Facilities Manager since May 2016. Kevin was a popular member of the RFCA team, and we wish him all the best in his new role working for John Grose Ford.



Julie Wray

Matt Ponder joined the Association in September as the new Facilities Manager and we wish him all success in this pivotal role. Matt served in The Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers for 24 years where he was responsible for logistics and overseeing instruction and officer selection. Matt joins us from Anglia Ruskin University where he was part of the Facilities Management Team.



Tony Pateman

Julie Wray joined the Employer Engagement team in April. Following the first challenge of meeting her entire team remotely, she is now a valued member of the engagement team.



Mike Freeman

Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Army Cadet Force welcomed two new CAAs this year; Tony Pateman for 2 Company based at Hitchin, and Mike Freeman with 3 Company at Hemel Hempstead.

## Shining a spotlight on Professional Support Staff Administrative Officers.

This year we shine the spotlight on our Professional Support Staff Administrative Officers. As RFCA employees on either a full time or part time basis and working to the CEO in each County ACF, the two or three County AOs support the ACF Commandant with the recruitment and administration of both CFAV and Cadets.

This year has seen the formal implementation of the ACF New Joiner Tracker for CFAVs, which East Anglia RFCA originally were on the trial for with Suffolk and Cambridgeshire ACFs. The intent is to follow this online system with an ACF Cadet New Joiner Tracker, which will help improve the application process.

With the option to be a member of the ACF too, AOs in some of the Counties take on additional roles within their ACF, from organising CVQO courses for their Cadets, to delivering First Aid Training, to deploying on the summer Annual Camp in an administrative role to support their CFAV leadership team.

For all their efforts both behind the scenes and leading from the front, and in particular for keeping processes smooth running and fluid during the demands of operating in a remote based office environment in the pandemic, we congratulate all our wonderful AOs and thank them for their commitment and dedication.

# FINANCE & IT

The forecast for the Financial Year is expenditure of £11.810m.

**East Anglia RFCA is funded by several Ministry of Defence and single Services sources to deliver its three mandated outputs of Estates, Engagement and Cadets and Youth.**

The forecast for this financial year is expenditure of £11.810m on an income of £10.794m, the difference being supported by income self-generated within the region. This income is from Non Domestic Rates Reliefs (NDRR) for cadet premises and from the commercial exploitation of our estate. The forecast for self-generated income this financial year is circa £383k and £211k respectively.

Estates maintenance, revenue and capital projects accounted for 54% of expenditure.

Soft Facilities Management support to the estate added a further 14% to the spend.

Wounded, Injured and Sick Personnel Adaptations (WISPA) accounted for 4% of total annual expenditure.

Support to cadets, including staffing, represented 20% of total expenditure.

Overheads were tightly controlled with the cost of Association HQ staff and IT/general administration expenses representing just 8% of expenditure.

## IT Systems

The main challenge this year was ensuring all staff had the option to work from home during the Covid-19 pandemic. This saw temporary laptops being distributed whilst new ones could be sourced; all of which was completed with minimum disruption for staff. New laptops were distributed in January, ensuring remote working is a possibility for all staff, and maintaining the support to remote users remains a high priority.

## Secretariat

The Secretariat department carries out administrative control and management of HR support, training and MIS administration for our 69 staff.

The team has successfully introduced a new online HR system for booking leave, recording sickness and other similar tasks. This is part of the drive to Modernise and improve our processes and reduce the amount of paper records being stored.

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE

I am extremely proud of our people and I often find myself humbled by their enthusiasm, their commitment, and their levels of professionalism.

**The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was felt from late February 2020 when the need for many of our gatherings had to be reviewed in order to decide whether a physical gathering was required.**

In early March we went into lockdown and the HQ and County teams had to work remotely. Fortunately we had started some early planning of our business continuity arrangements and we were able to move rapidly into the right format. Almost every one of our members of staff had adequate IT to be able to work remotely and/or on-site as required. As the weeks went on, the level of IT available increased and I am pleased to say that all of our outputs on behalf of the MOD continued to be delivered throughout the year. This is a tribute to the attitude and commitment of our people who made it all happen.

The roll-out of the much awaited covid vaccine is in progress but it is expected that our current model of blended on-site and remote working will continue for some time. Our Association HQ and County HQs are operating in a covid secure fashion and remain able to do so on an enduring basis.

In the context of additional work, related to the pandemic and the MOD's response to it and increased non core pressure caused by multiple reviews consequent to the decision to transform to a single National RFCA, our organisational performance on our core tasks has not suffered. I would like to highlight and thank all teams for their hard work:

**Estates** – the Estate has remained compliant. Construction projects have continued through numerous lockdowns and the wide variety of reviews of our Reserves & Cadet sites have been serviced appropriately.

**Engagement** – the sensitivities around the mobilisation and demobilisation of Reservists, particularly those supporting the NHS, have been handled very effectively. Our Social Media profile has increased and our commercial Wider Markets activity performance has held up extremely well.

**Cadets Professional Support Staff** – both cadets and adult volunteers have continued to be engaged and supported, in spite of the 'on-off' nature of pandemic constraints placed on



**COLONEL RAY WILKINSON QVRM TD DL VR  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

face-to-face training, and much assistance has been given to the Estates team with compliance and Armoury projects.

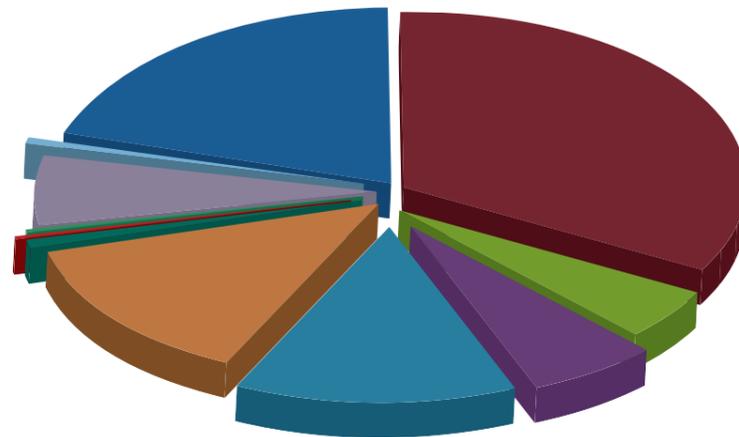
**Secretariat** – the blended operating model we have adopted has increased pressure on office operations and we would not have been able to achieve what we have without their flexible and committed response.

**Finance** – significant budgetary pressures, caused by the financial strain of the pandemic, and data collection for the numerous reviews to which we have been subjected, have demanded much of the financial management of the Association and in spite of this the robustness of our financial affairs has been maintained.

I am extremely proud of our people and I often find myself humbled by their enthusiasm, their commitment, and their levels of professionalism. Because of their fortitude I am in the fortunate position of having every confidence that we will be able to deal with any challenge the next twelve months may throw at us.

## Consolidated Expenditure Forecast Financial Year 2020/21 (£11.810m)

- Estates Capital Projects, £3,944,582
- Vehicle Replacement, £553,112
- Staff Costs (Assn HQ), £735,118
- Staff Costs (ACF PSS), £1,559,974
- Infrastructure (Soft Facilities Management), £1,621,923
- IT & Communications, £106,059
- Transport & Movement, £13,637
- Recruiting Support, £49,738
- Reserves & Cadets Support, £762,863
- Administration, £62,230
- Estates Maintenance & Minor Projects, £2,400,495



## Our Vision

East Anglia RFCA is widely recognised by its target audiences as the most valuable, knowledgeable and authoritative body in support of Reserve Forces and Cadet Organisations in East Anglia.

## About Us

East Anglia RFCA is an autonomous and tri-service corporate body established by an Act of Parliament. Our main role is to give advice and assistance to the Ministry of Defence on matters relating to Reserves and Cadets in our region.

East Anglia RFCA covers Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.



**GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES OF EAST ANGLIA RFCA**

## Support Us

You can support our work in the following ways:

- Share your knowledge and enthusiasm for Reserves and Cadets by using your network to create local engagement opportunities.
- Use your local government connections to encourage attendance at events, support for planning applications and assistance with housing and education for service leavers.
- In your business, encourage your HR representatives to follow **@EAEmployers** on Twitter and email us at **ea-empsp@rfca.mod.uk** to find out how to show support for Armed Forces Personnel.
- Tell your friends and colleagues that our sites are available to hire for training and conferences. Our sites are secure, often with plenty of free parking, well-equipped and all proceeds are invested back into the estate. Contact 01245 245590 for enquiries.

## Stay up to date

Sign up to receive our monthly newsletter and stay up to date with Reserve and Cadet matters across the region.

Email **ea-comms@rfca.mod.uk** and we'll add you to our distribution list.

You can also find us **@EastAngliaRFCA**



## East Anglia Reserve Forces and Cadets Association

250 Springfield Road, Chelmsford, CM2 6BU

earfca.org.uk | @EastAngliaRFCA | 01245 244 800