



# East Anglia Reserve Forces and Cadets Association Annual Report 2025/26



# ABOUT US & CONTENTS

Welcome to the Association's Annual Report for 2025/26 —  
we hope you find the content interesting and inspiring

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**WHAT IS AN RFCA?** Each UK region's RFCA is an autonomous and tri-service body established by an Act of Parliament with the aim of "connecting Defence with society".

**Our main role is to advise and assist the Ministry of Defence (MOD) in matters concerning reserves and cadets in our region. We also manage or support 180 sites in the MOD volunteer estate, including 15 Army Reserve Centres and four Cadet Training Centres.**

## Our region

THE boundaries of East Anglia Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (RFCA) are shown on the right. Each geographical county in East Anglia is a different shade of purple—the colour usually taken as representing all the branches of the UK Armed Forces.

The Association jointly administers Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire under a single team led by a Cadet Executive Officer (CEO). Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk each has its own CEO and team, with a secretariat in Chelmsford.



Front-page photos: An Army Cadet Force visit to India / Kayak practice for an Essex ACF cadet

# PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

Our Association's President considers recent world events, how those affect our Defence Community and ways we can support its members

**I**T has been a great honour to serve as President of East Anglia RFCA since succeeding my predecessor, Robert Voss CBE CStJ, last June.

As this is my first foreword for the Association's annual report, I would like to begin by paying tribute to Robert, who continues to serve with distinction as Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire.

I remain deeply grateful for his dedication, friendship and leadership, and for the strong foundations he has left for the Association to build upon.

The work of the RFCA, alongside that of the Lieutenancies across East Anglia's six counties, has perhaps never been more important. We are living through a period of considerable global uncertainty, with continuing conflict in Ukraine and other instability beyond NATO's borders serving as a reminder of the need for readiness, resilience and national unity.

Against this backdrop, the recommendations emerging from the Strategic Defence Review (SDR) 2025 carry particular significance. The emphasis strengthening NATO, improving warfighting readiness, supporting prosperity through Defence, and adopting a whole-of-society approach to resilience reflects many of the values and priorities that organisations such as ours seek to uphold every day.



I am immensely proud of the role East Anglia RFCA continues to play in supporting the Reserve Forces, cadet organisations and the wider Defence community across our region. The dedication shown by our Cadet Force Adult Volunteers, reservists, employers, staff and Members is both impressive and deeply inspiring.

Since taking up the role of President I have greatly enjoyed seeing the work of the Association at first hand and hearing from fellow Lord-Lieutenants across the region about the positive impact our cadets and reservists continue to make within their communities.

I am always impressed at civic events to see contingents from our Reserve Forces and Cadet Forces on parade, along with our Regulars and veterans. It is so important to keep the Armed Forces in the public eye. Like my fellow Lord-Lieutenants, it is a great privilege to have Lord-Lieutenants' Cadets taking part in these important events too.

At a time when service, resilience and community spirit matter more than ever, I remain confident in our collective willingness and ability to support Defence and our nation whenever called upon. I look forward to continuing to play my part in that service in the years ahead.

**Lady Philippa Dannatt MBE**  
Association President



# CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

The strategic vision of connecting Defence with society ensures RFCAs continue to deliver on their commitments to the country we all serve

**I**T is a privilege as Chair of East Anglia RFCA to provide the introduction to our annual report, and to offer a brief view on the state of the nation—or at least the part of it we are responsible for.

I am pleased to report, that part is strong. Across East Anglia, our Reserve Forces continue to deliver operational effect at home and overseas. Recruitment remains steady, despite the known challenges, training standards high, and our integration with Regular counterparts closer than ever.

The demand for what our reservists provide—capability, expertise, and resilience—has



never been greater, nor more valued.

Perhaps, as our President suggested in her foreword to this report, our reserve forces have never in our lifetimes been more important.

Our Cadet Forces are thriving. They remain a national exemplar of youth development—disciplined, ambitious, and community-minded.

Behind every successful cadet detachment stands a web of local support, delivered by our County teams, supported and enabled by our Chief Executive, and championed by our Vice Presidents and Lord-Lieutenants, as well as

# ASSOCIATION & MEMBER UPDATE

During 2025/26 we welcomed a new President, Deputy Chief Executive and Joint Cadet Committee Chair, as well as other new Members and staff

**T**HE most significant change in the Association for 2025/26 was the handover of our presidency to the Lord-Lieutenant of Norfolk, Lady Philippa Dannatt MBE. You can find her foreword for this report on the previous page.

Lady Dannatt was appointed to the Lieutenancy by HM Queen Elizabeth II in 2019. Prior to that, her roles and responsibilities had included High Sheriff of Norfolk and presidencies of the Army Widows Association and the Norfolk Club.

The Lady Dannatt continues to serve as a Lay Canon of Norwich Cathedral and is also vice-president of Armed Forces charity SSAFA alongside her RFCA role.

Changes to the Association Board were twofold. Firstly, Brigadier Mark van der Lande CBE, already the Association Vice-Chair (Military), took on the additional responsibility of chairing our Finance Scrutiny Committee (FSC).

The committee is a key part of the Association's governance to ensure we are offering value for money to taxpayers. We are grateful to Brig van der Lande for giving the extra time to the Association that this additional responsibility entails.

Subsequently, we welcomed to the Board Lt Cdr Mark Janner-Burgess RNR (*pictured right*) when he became Chair of our Joint Cadet Committee (JCC) at the end of the

our County Chairs. That partnership is our strategic advantage, and one we must continue to protect.

Our estates are improving, our governance is robust, and our voice in the region is influential. But we are not complacent. Challenges remain, including competition for talent, economic pressures and the perpetual need to demonstrate our relevance.

We meet those not by standing still, but by evolving, investing, and making our case with clarity and confidence.

Our engagement with supportive employers is exemplary and our work engaging with local communities and civic authorities goes from strength to strength. All this is achieved with the excellent ambassadorial and advocacy

work of our Board, counties and committee teams.

“Connecting Defence with society” remains the unique selling point of each RFCA and collectively we are greater than the sum of our parts.

So my message is simple: the Association is well led, well governed, strong and healthy. The mission is vital—and could not be more so. And the team across the region is exceptional.

Thank you to everyone reading for your interest in the work we do to support the Reserve Forces and cadets of East Anglia.

**Brigadier Tim Seal TD DL VR**  
Association Chair

2025/26 financial year. This important body brings representatives from all our local Cadet Forces together.



The committee shares best practice and ideas on how to encourage more adults to volunteer and young people to give cadet training a try.

Our Board members and staff all work to uphold the Association’s chosen values of: “Professionalism, Respect, Fairness, Integrity, Honesty and Moral Courage”.

**W**ITHIN the Association’s permanent workforce, our senior leadership team saw two appointments in 2025/26.

**Lt Col Derrick Louis TD VR joined the RFCA as our Deputy Chief Executive and Chief of Staff early in 2026.**

**Lt Col Louis has 30 years of military experience and in his civilian life is a Fellow of the Institute of Directors.**

**Paul Gilham became our new Head of Engagement in January 2026. Paul is a member of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations and has worked in journalism and PR for 25 years.**

# RESERVE FORCES

The past year has been important for reservists not only in deployment and training, but also through greater recognition of their importance to Defence

## HMS Wildfire, Royal Naval Reserve

HMS Wildfire is a Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) unit set within the UK's operational Defence Headquarters at Northwood.

On 5 November 2025, the unit's Lt Dunhill was presented her 2\* Commendation by Director Force Generation for her efforts during a six-month mobilisation to the Royal Navy's Mine and Threat Exploitation Group.

During her deployment Lt Dunhill showed the vital contribution that our reservists make to the Royal Navy and wider defence of the realm.



Lt Dunhill said: "It's a huge honour to be presented with this commendation. I thoroughly enjoyed my mobilisation—the whole of ZULU Squadron were very welcoming and it was great to work alongside them.

"I joined the RNR to make a meaningful contribution to Defence. To have it recognised through the commendation gives me a massive sense of achievement.

"I'd like to thank my husband and my family for supporting me throughout. Without their

efforts I wouldn't have been able to achieve what I did. Also, thanks to the support from HMS Wildfire, my RNR home."

Following the conclusion of their training at HMS Raleigh, near Torpoint in Cornwall, the class of Fisher 25/10 successfully entered the fleet. HMS Wildfire sailors were particularly proud of one of their own, AB Abrahams.

"Being the only reservist in a regular intake definitely came with its challenges," AB Abrahams said, "but it also made the experience even more special. It's been one of the hardest, most rewarding, and most unforgettable things I've ever done.

"These 10 weeks have pushed me further than I ever thought possible, both mentally and physically. I've learned so much about resilience, teamwork and determination, and I've met amazing people along the way."

## 158 Regiment Royal Logistics Corps (RLC)

IN 2025, 158 RLC saw a leadership change as Lt Col Judith Gallagher assumed command and a new regimental HQ team joined her.

A March study weekend focused on strategic priorities, risks, and recruitment to enhance resilience and readiness. April saw 202 Sqn deliver vital battle-craft training, while May and June focused on vehicle collections, including "fitted for radio" (FFR) Land Rovers and palletized load system (PLS) vehicles, with plans to train in-house instructors.

Innovations included 294 Sqn's offline supplier training facility, 202 Sqn's e-gaming driver and drone training platforms, and adaptive Sqn HQ deployment drills. These enhanced operational readiness and efficiency.

158 RLC has maintained a high operational tempo throughout the year, showcasing professionalism and commitment. Over the

summer, 11 personnel deployed on Operation Interflex, supporting 6 Regiment RLC and highlighting the adaptability of Army reservists.



158 RLC deployed on several training weekends focused on concealment, load restraint, tactical scenarios, and command exercises in preparation for Exercise Pinion Titan in October. The Regiment also received its first left-hand drive PLS vehicles, with soldiers trained on the new equipment. 158 RLC reservists reached the summit of Morocco's highest peak, the 13,671 ft Jebel Toubkal, alongside the Moroccan Armed Forces. The calendar year closed with a fantastic CO's challenge weekend, when 201 Sqn placed first.

In 2026, 158 RLC has continued to deploy on operations, training, and adventurous training activities. Several personnel extended their deployments on Operation INTERFLEX, while the unit enhanced combat and casualty handling skills. There was continued adoption of new technologies, including drone and driver simulation training. The Regiment has celebrated promotions and new recruits throughout the training year.

### 3 Royal Anglian Regiment

DURING the past year, 3rd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment, known as the

Steelbacks, have exemplified professionalism, dedication, and operational excellence. A highlight was their participation in Exercise RHINO HEART 2025, the largest deployment of Army reservists in a generation.

Held in Germany in October and led by the 19th Light Brigade, the exercise involved over 30 units operating at Battlegroup level, focusing on field craft and warfighting skills.

The Steelbacks rose to the challenge, showcasing resilience and professionalism, and returned with enhanced skills and a deeper understanding of their role within the Army.



Beyond RHINO HEART, the Battalion supported global operations with personnel deployed to Cyprus, Kenya, Pakistan and Belize, as well as UK-based operations supporting partner nations.

Their adaptability and operational readiness were further underscored by becoming the first unit in the Division to earn the prestigious

# RESERVE FORCES

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Gold Award for Army Continuous Improvement.

The Battalion's shooting team also achieved remarkable success, winning the 1st (UK) Division Reserve Operational Shooting Competition for the fourth consecutive year and placing fourth at the Defence Operational Shooting Competition (Reserves).

The Steelbacks have also strengthened ties with the community and the wider Regimental family. It was a proud moment when 2 Company exercised the Freedom of Kettering, marching through the town with bayonets fixed and colours flying.

The Battalion also actively supports Army Cadet Force and Combined Cadet Force detachments, providing mentorship, training, and inspiration to young people interested in military careers.

Through shared training, community work and ceremonial events, the Steelbacks foster collaboration and camaraderie between regulars, reservists and cadets.

Looking ahead, the Steelbacks remain focused on building on their successes, further developing their soldier skills and readiness for future challenges, all while upholding the proud traditions and values of the Royal Anglian Regiment.

## 6 Army Air Corps

THE Army Air Corps (AAC) Reserve unit plays a critical role in supporting flight operations, logistics and ground support across the British Army. The unit welcomed a new commanding officer in November 2025 when outgoing CO Lt Col Archer handed over to Lt Col McLeman—only the second female officer to lead a regiment within the AAC.

A number of 6AAC's reservists were deployed during the year, in some cases for several

months during Exercise Pinion Titan. This major aviation training exercise focused on operational readiness and joint force coordination.

A group of 15 personnel from 6AAC also travelled to Split in Croatia for a Battlefield Study focused on the 1991–1995 Balkans War and the Army Air Corps' role in joint operations there.



Further west, more than a dozen 6AAC soldiers took skiing courses in Flaine, France. Their training, in sometimes challenging conditions, reinforced the idea that reservists' adventurous training is more than recreation—it plays a vital part of their preparations for the rigours of military service.

The next few years will be an important time for 6AAC. Changes to the structure of the Regiment following the Strategic Defence Review will see an expansion in the role of reservists as part of an integrated joint force.

## 36 (Essex Yeomanry) Signal Sqn

OVER the past year, 36 (Essex Yeomanry) Signal Squadron has demonstrated its commitment to excellence through a wide range of activities, training and achievements. This has been done both independently and as part of 71st (City of London) Yeomanry Signal Regiment.

Training, as always, remained the priority, with a robust programme of communication skills

and military skills training weekends throughout the year. These efforts culminated in a two-week annual camp at St Martin's Plain camp in Kent, where soldiers tested their communications and military skills in challenging scenarios, including advanced live-fire ranges—a first for some.

In addition to its essential Royal Signals trade training, the squadron contributed to Defence Cyber Marvel 5, a UK-led international cyber exercise. Personnel were embedded in key roles across multiple teams, including geographically dispersed deployments to Kenya and Singapore, demonstrating both interoperability and technical expertise.

Members of the squadron took advantage of the multifaceted benefits of Army Reserve service by taking some adventurous training. Highlights included a hiking expedition in Morocco's Atlas Mountains, designed to push soldiers out of their comfort zones in a controlled environment.

Community engagement was also a key focus, with the Squadron representing at multiple Remembrance parades across Essex, including a strong presence marching in Colchester and participation in the national Festival of Remembrance.

The year's achievements reflected the dedication and professionalism of 36 (EY) Signal Sqn, firmly establishing its reputation within the regiment and the local community. Plans are already being made for further engagement and activity in 2026/27 by the squadron's committed soldiers and officers.

## **2620 RAuxAF Regiment Sqn**

IT has been a particularly active year for 2620 RAuxAF Regiment Squadron, beginning with annual continuous training at RAF Honington for Exercise Auxilium Fort. This exercise provided an opportunity to train alongside

RAF regulars as well as with the French Commando Parachutiste de l'Air 20 (CPA20), offering a diverse training capability and fostering a strong, ongoing partnership.

The squadron welcomed seven new recruits and awarded four promotions, creating a new cadre of commanders and strengthening the squadron as its internal ranks consolidate.

Alongside its regular training programme, the squadron hosted social events bringing together new and long-standing members to share experiences and engage with each other's families, building cross-team bonds.



2620 Sqn personnel also took part in sporting events including triathlons, 10k runs, and half marathons. Notably, a team of reservists completed the Norwich Half Marathon, raising more than £900 for the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Reservists have also represented the squadron at numerous public events, including the Cambridge Fair and the Royal Norfolk Show, as well as supporting the Royal British Legion in Poppy Day fundraising.

The squadron continues to develop and thrive, with strong camaraderie among its members. In the coming year it is supporting RAF Marham with Exercise Agile Defender and preparing a diversified training programme intended to cultivate a more dynamic and experienced squadron for the future.

# CADETS

Being an Armed Forces cadet helps our region's young people gain valuable skills and experience that will benefit them for a lifetime

**D**URING 2025/26 cadet numbers in East Anglia were relatively stable, in line with national trends.

Following recommendations in the Strategic Defence Review 2025, the Government announced in-school and community-based Cadet Forces UK-wide should grow by 30% by 2030 (the initiative thus being dubbed “30 by 30”), reaching 180,000 with an aspiration for more. East Anglia RFCA expects to assist with any concrete proposals that emerge.

In 2025/26 there were 15,862 young people across East Anglia involved with one of the uniformed Cadet Forces. Broken down by service, the numbers are as follows:

- **1,100 Sea and Royal Marine Cadets** (figures at 1 April 2024, prior to new boundaries for Sea Cadet districts)
- **4,255 Army Cadets** across five Army Cadet Force (ACF) counties: Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk
- **5,710 Royal Air Force Air Cadets** (RAFAC) across four wings: Bedfordshire & Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, and Norfolk & Suffolk
- **4,797 Combined Cadet Force (CCF) members**—CCFs are tri-service and open to the pupils of the school hosting them; East Anglia had 52 active CCFs in 2025/26

Whilst there are no region-specific objectives for growth at present, if East Anglian Cadet Forces were required to match the national 30% target, an additional 5,000 young people would need to join.

Such rapid growth would only be possible if the number of Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) who train and mentor those young people also increased substantially from its current level of 2,787 across all Cadet Forces.

## East District Sea Cadets

EAST District Sea Cadets had a very busy and exciting 2025/26. The District delivered several training weekends with opportunities for cadets to qualify in disciplines including first aid, seamanship, CIS (radio), catering, Royal Yachting Association sailing and powerboating, rowing and paddle-sports—to name just a few.



A highlight from 2025 was a week on board the Baltic Trader Queen Galadriel and Bermudan Ketch Faramir, operated by the Cirdan Sailing Trust. This activity was part-funded by the Ulysses Trust.

The voyage was planned so 26 cadets of all ages and abilities could experience a full week offshore. Their goals included gaining qualifications, but most importantly building their self-confidence with support from the five CFAVs accompanying them.

The voyage aboard the two vessels allowed the cadets to live and work at close quarters with peers they did not previously know, and to develop leadership skills in an alien and sometimes challenging environment—which they did admirably!

It was a good start to 2026 with 24 cadets and four CFAVs travelling to HMS Raleigh for a

Royal Navy Experience Week. The group gained first-hand experience of life in the Royal Navy as each cadet tried their hand at firefighting and the infamous assault course.

The Sea Cadets are looking forward to welcoming more young people and helping them to unlock their potential in 2026/27, with a packed regional training programme.

### **Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire ACF**

THE cadets of Beds & Herts ACF have had another busy year, especially as they support the Lieutenancy offices of both Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

Hertfordshire Deputy Lord-Lieutenant Mark Bretton MBE TD visited the ACF's County HQ in Hertford for a presentation evening last April, while the Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, Mrs Susan Lousada, visited Amphill, also for a presentation evening.

Soon after, a number of cadets took a trip to Buckingham Palace where each received the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme's top award, the Gold.

On 11 July 2025, Cdt Cpl Styczynska (*below*), was presented with the League of Mercy's Distinguished Community Service Medal for Cadets, at Mansion House, the official residence of the Lord Mayor of London.



A few days later, Cdt Cpl Croke from Buntingford Detachment, 2 Company Beds &

Herts ACF was also in London to take part in the Household Cavalry Military Musical Spectacular on Horse Guards Parade.

Annual Camp 2025 at Otterburn in Northumberland was a great success, with many cadets and CFAVs relishing the long journey and embracing the opportunities presented during the camp. Then it was back to awards, with Cdt L/Cpl Davis of Tring Detachment (*below*) receiving the British Citizen Youth Award for her fundraising work.



2026 started with the Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire opening the new joint cadet centre in Cranfield (details of the build are on page 23). Hertfordshire's Lord-Lieutenant, Mr Robert Voss CBE CStJ, presented his Meritorious Service Awards to cadet force adults and reservists at County HQ.

### **Cambridgeshire ACF**

CAMBRIDGESHIRE ACF had another successful year, with overseas expeditions featuring some unique experiences. Two ACF cadets, Colour Sgt Randall and Regimental Sgt Maj Long, also got to be part of an official visit to India.

As well as seeing amazing sights such as the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort, they also marched in

# CADETS

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the Indian Prime Ministers' Parade. C/Sgt Randall said: 'It's an incredible country. The experience has improved my confidence and social skills and inspired me to want to travel more.'



Perhaps Cambridgeshire cadets' crowning achievement, though, was their expedition to Mount Kilimanjaro (*above*). Eight cadets and a small team of CFAVs successfully reached the mountain summit during the trip, with each cadet learning teamwork and finding out more about themselves and their limits.

The ACF scored great results in the Inter-Service Cadet Clay Shooting Competition. Successful entrants included Cdt Norman, who made it to the final, was awarded the ACF Colours, received the trophy and Gold Medal for High Gun. He and Cdt Brotman of Chesterton detachment were selected by a talent scout to train with British Shooting.

The ACF held an exciting, action-packed Annual Camp at Otterburn, in Northumberland. This location features a spectacular landscape which cadets made the most of, running a series of field craft exercises that involved sleeping and eating outdoors, learning to look after one another in the field, and taking part in combat exercises.

All the cadets had a lot of fun and the ACF is now hard at work planning this year's camp.

## Essex ACF

ESSEX Army Cadets had an exceptional year filled with achievement, recognition and memorable experiences. A highlight of the year saw five cadets complete the Royal College of Nursing King's Nursing Cadet Programme, after 40 hours of teaching and learning, and 20 hours of clinical observation.

Their commitment was recognised by His Majesty King Charles III, who met the group and presented one of them with their certificate as the 1,000th cadet to complete the programme.

Due to the King's Nursing Programme, Essex Army Cadets were proudly named a finalist in the Soldiering On Awards in the Education, Training and Development category. This was a national acknowledgement of the hard work from the cadets and adult volunteers.



Chelmsford Detachment added further distinction by being unanimously selected as the Royal Signals' Best Cadet Detachment after submitting an outstanding record of their activities for the previous year.

Essex ACF's Annual Camp in August 2025 blended adventure training with high-quality syllabus training to give cadets a balanced and challenging programme.

The camp offered mountain biking, kayaking, paddle boarding and archery alongside field craft, shooting and navigation. With a combination of physical challenge and practical learning, it ensured the cadets returned home with new abilities and fantastic memories.

Essex units were honoured to be invited once again to march through London in the Trafalgar Parade, where cadets proudly represented their ACF.

## Norfolk ACF

IT has been an exceptionally busy year for Norfolk ACF. Each of the three cadet companies completed five training weekends required for the Army Proficiency Certificate, as well as three training weekends for CFAVs.

At the start of the 2025/26 financial year last April, the Central and East Joint Military Command ran its annual Combat Cadet Competition for ACFs and CCFs. Norfolk's team won Gold with a first-placed ranking overall.

Two groups of cadets also enjoyed a visit to the Williams F1 Racing HQ (*right*) in April 2025, with another two following in October. In total, more than 160 cadets and 16 CFAVs heard about the science, technology, engineering and maths skills F1 professionals rely on. They also visited the Williams museum and gave real race simulators a try.

May saw 36 cadets attend the VE Day 80th anniversary service in Norwich Cathedral, ahead of the similar VJ Day service in August.

In June, Norfolk ACF became the first cadet unit to earn Silver in the Army Benevolent Fund's "Cateran Yomp". They hiked 36 miles across challenging Scottish terrain, taking about 17 hours in total.

August of course meant school summer

holidays and annual camp for the cadets. The junior camps at Thetford cadet training centre saw 152 young people successfully complete their One Star training.

The Queen's Dragoon Guards visited to give cadets an overview of their operational roles and weapon systems.

The older cadets' annual camp took place at Otterburn in Northumberland. Nearly 140 cadets enjoyed activities including "Adventure Training Coasteering", a military skills competition day and even a flight in a Chinook helicopter. The Royal Artillery were on hand to lead senior cadet field craft sessions.



In September, 35 cadets took a Battlefield Tour to Normandy. Accompanied by nine CFAVs, they visited the D-Day beaches in the British section, tracing the footsteps of the former Royal Norfolk Regiment.

Towards the end of the year all 21 Norfolk ACF detachments supported their local Remembrance Day parades and maintained water stations throughout the Larking Gowen Norwich Half Marathon.

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## Suffolk ACF

IN 2025 and early 2026, Suffolk Army Cadet Force (ACF) delivered a strong programme of training, service, and community engagement, marking a year of notable successes for cadets and adult volunteers alike.

A highlight of the year was the Annual Camp 2025, where cadets from across the county participated in a packed schedule of activities including field craft, navigation, team building, marksmanship and communication exercises.

Despite challenging weather at times, cadets showed resilience and enthusiasm, earning promotions and awards for personal development and performance.



At the closing Commandant's Parade, multiple cadets were recognised with commendations, and B Company was named Champion Company for its overall excellence.

Suffolk ACF also made a strong community impact. Cadets and volunteers represented the county with pride at the Royal Anglian Regimental Day, engaging with serving soldiers and gaining valuable insight into Army life. Their professionalism drew praise from senior regimental figures.

At the Suffolk Lord-Lieutenant's Awards 2025, ACF members received distinguished honours. SSI Macalpine was recognised for her long-standing service, while Cadet Staff Sergeant West was appointed Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet—a role reflecting leadership and dedication.

Additionally, Cadet SSgt Thurtle earned a Royal Humane Society Resuscitation Certificate for her life-saving actions. These achievements demonstrate Suffolk ACF's commitment to youth development, community service and leadership, reinforcing its role as a respected youth organisation in the region.

## Brentwood School CCF

FOR the very first time, one of Brentwood School's cadets has won the prestigious Sir John Thomson Memorial Sword, awarded annually to the very best CCF (RAF) cadet in the country.

Cadet Warrant Officer Dedman (*right*), was selected earlier this year as the East Area Representative, securing his place among the top five cadets nationwide.

Following intense questioning and assessment, Cdt WO Dedman was announced as the winner and presented with the Sir John Thomson Memorial Sword during a special ceremony at RAF College Cranwell, the historic home of the Royal Air Force.

Cdt WO Dedman said he was "truly honoured" to have received such a distinguished award.

He added: "I am so grateful to the Brentwood School CCF RAF Section, which has given me so many unique opportunities—learning to fly, taking part in events such as the International Air Cadet Exchange, the finals of the CVC Westminster Award and teaching me leadership skills through Cadre courses and the Air Cadet Leadership Course.

“It has been a fantastic experience, and one which I will always treasure.”



## Hockerill College CCF

HOCKERILL College CCF has enjoyed an exceptional year, characterised by outstanding achievements, expanded opportunities and unwavering dedication from both cadets and staff.

The Army and RAF sections of the CCF have collaborated closely throughout the year, delivering combined field training and weapons instruction that make full use of the strengths and expertise within each branch.

While much of the training is integrated, the RAF section also continues to offer bespoke specialist activities, ensuring cadets benefit from the full breadth of RAF-specific skills and experiences.

One of the greatest sources of pride this year has been seeing former cadets progress into military and technical careers. One started officer training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, intent on joining the Royal Engineers, while another won a highly sought-after Naval Engineering Scholarship, opening the door to a prestigious and technically advanced career pathway.

These accomplishments highlight the strength and impact of the CCF in shaping capable, motivated and strategic leaders.

The RAF section has further benefited from the addition of a new member of staff with previous flying experience.

Their enthusiasm, expertise, and professionalism have significantly enhanced the quality of instruction and support that cadets receive.

This has also been one of the most successful flying years for Hockerill College CCF. Working closely with RAF Wittering, 11 cadets earned their flying badges after developing confidence and gaining invaluable air experience. One RAF cadet attended the prestigious National Aerospace Programme, reflecting the ambition of our young people.

Hockerill College CCF also saw a notable increase in participation and success within the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. There was a significant rise in Bronze and Silver Award completions, and two cadets achieving the Gold Award. Both are expected to receive invitations to Buckingham Palace for their official presentation.

Throughout the year, cadets have taken part

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in an ambitious and diverse programme of training activities. These included field exercises, ambush scenarios, arrest-operation exercise, weapons simulation training in a dismounted close combat trainer (DCCT) and even live-fire weapons.

These activities have strengthened teamwork, leadership, field craft, and operational understanding across the contingent.

## Framlingham College CCF

ON 9 March 2026, the college's CCF celebrated the 125th anniversary of its foundation.

Pupils, staff, alumni and special guests gathered with other members of the school community to witness a very special CCF banner procession (*pictured below*) led by a Year 13 pupil.

The chapel service that followed included readings from Heads of School and Head of CCF, alongside prayers by Framlingham College Principal Louise North. Pupils then headed back outside for an attack demonstration and military activities.

The CCF continues to play a vital role in traditions of Framlingham College, offering military experience days, combining outdoor education with leadership and teamwork skills.

Cadets also develop key life skills in leadership, teamwork, resilience and respect.

## Langley School CCF



ON 25 September 2025, CCF staff and 40 cadets attended the dedication to the 97 mainly Royal Norfolk Regiment soldiers killed in Le Paradis massacre of May 1940. The Army section at Langley (*pictured above*) is badged Royal Norfolk and their links with the old county regiment remain strong.

The Princess Royal was in attendance and spoke to cadets from the school, one a relation of a soldier who lost his life at La Paradis. Cadets received a 97 badge which they wore with pride.

Langley CCF also attended the annual service to mark the event in Norwich Cathedral at 1700hrs on 27 May—the time and date of the massacre.

## The Gateway Academy CCF, Tilbury

THE Gateway Academy successfully launched a new contingent in September 2025 with an initial intake of 30 cadets. An initial field craft training weekend was held at Thriftwood, Brentwood in October 2025 and cadets have since been busy completing the National Cadet Syllabus.





These have included several lessons on navigation and map reading which will equip them well for future outdoor activities.

Other areas on which the contingent focused included drill and turnout, first aid and air rifle training. March saw a weekend training day at the school when the CCF received training from the Army Cadet Training Team in air rifles. They learned skills including weapon handling and marksmanship principles (*pictured below*).



Enthusiasm and attendance remained high, with parades extremely well attended. Congratulations go to three cadets from the academy who achieved promotion to lance corporal—and to the contingent as a whole for an expected increase in cadet numbers in its second year of operation.

**RAF Air Cadets Norfolk and Suffolk Wing**

THE Marshall Trophy, awarded to the “most improved community-based Squadron in the Air Training Corps”, was this year won by 1379 (Leiston) Squadron in Norfolk and Suffolk Wing. This high honour recognises the squadron’s remarkable regeneration after being on the brink of closure four years ago.

Given the opportunity to turn the squadron around, 1379 Sqn has undergone an extraordinary resurgence. Cadet numbers have grown to more than 40 and several new adult staff members have joined. By placing itself at the heart of its community, the squadron secured a

huge investment—more than £50,000—for modern equipment to improve cadet experience. 1379 Squadron was also honoured with the Freedom of the Town of Aldeburgh.

Still in Suffolk, two forward-thinking Air Cadets from 432 (Woodbridge) Sqn—Sgt Wallace and CWO Palmer (since promoted)—each received a Commandant Commendation. The pair devised a Second Class Cadet manual to help train new recruits after seeing a gap in new cadet intakes’ knowledge, as such manuals previously existed only for First Class cadets and above.

**RAF Air Cadets Hertfordshire Wing**

THIS year has been a very active period for the cadets based in the 16 Squadrons across Hertfordshire. Many of the cadets took part in significant events such as the Multi Activity Camp Viking and supported the Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT).

In October, the Wing said goodbye to Wg Cdr Oram and welcomed Wg Cdt Tanner as the new OC Wing. In November, all squadrons took part in Remembrance Parades across the county.

220 (St Albans) Squadron (*pictured below*) took part in a sleep-out to raise the awareness of rough sleeping in St Albans and beyond.



In December, CWO Lucy Waller of 1372 (Elstree and Borehamwood) Sqn had the honour of switching on Borehamwood’s Christmas lights.

In February, the Wing celebrated the 85th Anniversary of the formation of the Air Training Corps with a parade at RAF Halton. The Lord-Lieutenant inspected the parade and took the salute. It was a great way to commemorate such a significant event.

# EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Our Employer Engagement team continued its work strengthening ties between the Defence community and organisations who are supportive of it

**I**T has been another impressive year of achievements and engagement for employers in our region that want to support East Anglia's Defence community.

Businesses, charities and public bodies can all take steps towards closer involvement with the Armed Forces and cadets by signing the **Armed Forces Covenant**. During 2025/26 there were **164 new signatories** in East Anglia, joining 13,000-plus others nationwide to sign since the Covenant's introduction in 2000.

Employers keen to offer a greater commitment to veterans, reservists, CFAVs and their families often then pursue awards in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS). The first tier of the award is **Bronze**, with **75 more qualifying employers** in our region during 2025/26.

Employers wishing to advance further must make substantive changes to their HR policies to ensure members of the Defence community receive appropriate support.

Implementing those policies can earn these dedicated employers a **Silver** award. There were **18 winners** in our region in 2025, with 11 more securing revalidation after their own wins in previous years. ERS Silver Award winners are reassessed every five years to ensure they still meet its challenging criteria.

Beyond that level lies only the top ERS award, **Gold**, which **11 elite employers in our region won** in 2025—and nine revalidations. They joined 200 other 2025 winners across the UK who actively promote engagement with Defence through their networks.

Altogether, there are now more than 700 ERS award holders in East Anglia and nearly 1,300 Armed Forces Covenant signatories.

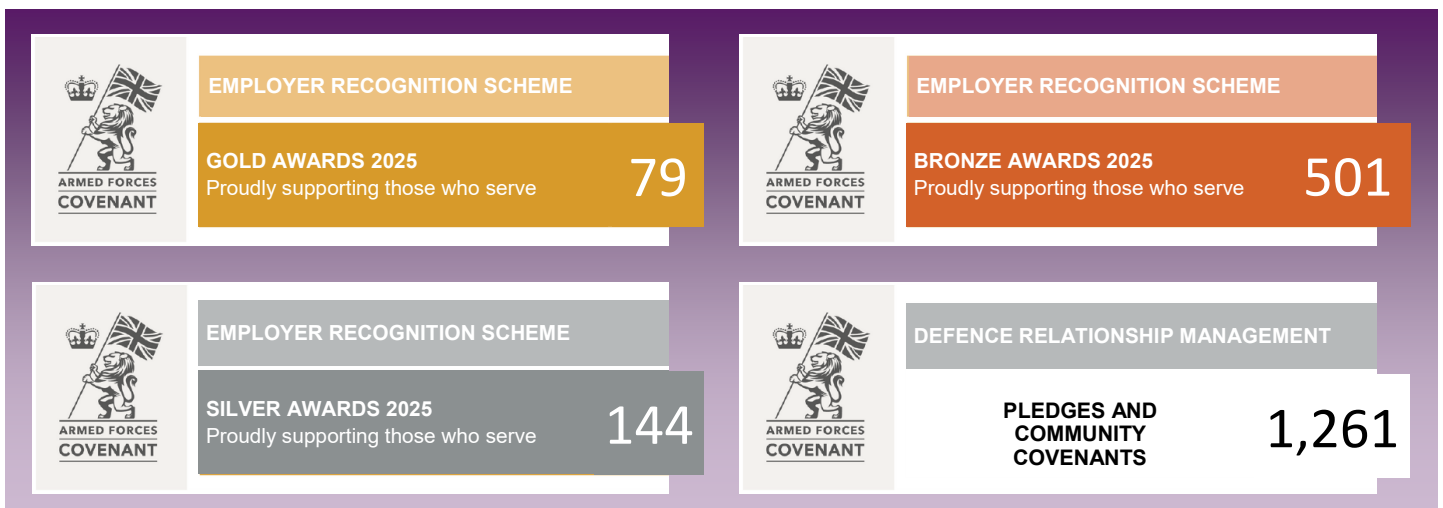
The graphic below provides a breakdown of those figures, which are testament not only to our employers, but the support they receive from the RFCA's Employer Engagement team.

## Employers and reservists meet up

Each year the team seeks not only to support employers already progressing through the ERS tiers but show those not already aware the skills that reservists, CFAVs and veterans can bring to businesses.

A key part of that work is inviting employers to engagement events on Armed Forces premises where they can hear directly from reservists in particular.

In February 2026 for example, 6 Regiment, Army Air Corps welcomed employers from around the region to their base at Wattisham Airfield. The visit coincided with the



*Representatives from East Anglia's latest group of ERS Gold Award winners standing on the deck of HMS Belfast, the venue for the 2025 presentation ceremony*



deployment of 6AAC on Exercise Pinion Titan, a major aviation training programme.

Working with the RFCA, 6AAC Unit Employer Support Officer Maj Morrison arranged for employers to see first-hand the contribution their staff make to Defence, including the maintenance of Apache helicopters (*right*).

Employers toured the Brigade's field facilities, observed live demonstrations including aircraft ground operations and tactical briefings, and spent time with their reservist employees.

The experience highlighted the transferable skills reservists bring to their civilian roles.

Maj Lee-Smith, Officer Commanding for one of the 6AAC units, said: "Reservists are a vital part of Defence capability, and their success depends on the support of their employers.

"This visit helped build understanding and appreciation for their dual role."



Other employer events during 2025/26 included briefing breakfasts at RAF Honington in Suffolk and Merville Barracks in Essex—as well as training evenings with 254 Multi-role Medical Regt in Hitchin, 3 Royal Anglian in Norwich and 71 Signal Regt in Colchester.

The RFCA also arranged for engaged employers to send staff members they felt had senior management potential on a full day of leadership training with 3 Royal Anglian.

# UNIVERSITY OFFICER CADETS

The University of Cambridge hosts three officer training corps that also take students from the Universities of East Anglia, Essex, and Anglia Ruskin

## University Royal Naval Unit Cambridge

THE University Royal Naval Unit (URNU) Cambridge has had a busy and rewarding year. In April 2025, officer cadets (OCdts) took part in the annual Norfolk Broads Marinsation Exercise. This is a regional event that provides training in boat handling, command, leadership, and a taste of life afloat in confined, close-quarter living.



URNU Cadets learnt a lot about planning, communication, and other skills that will go on to serve them later in life.

In June, URNU Cambridge arranged and ran a tri-service “Charity Sailathon” hosted on the lake at Coldhams Lane Army Reserve Centre in Cambridge. The unit ran the event to support Little Troopers, a charity that supports the children of serving personnel.

The participants enjoyed the chance of a day on (and in!) the lake building up sailing skills, and exceeded their £500 fundraising target. In November, URNU Cambridge personnel travelled to Staffordshire for a tour of the National Arboretum as part of Remembrance Weekend training, reflecting on past conflicts.

The Naval Service Memorial represented a

successful convergence of celebrating and memorialising the Royal Navy’s lost lives.

Remembrance Sunday saw the entire unit proudly take part in a Remembrance Parade through Cambridge, with a service at Great St Mary’s Church.

In the lead up to this event, URNU Cambridge personnel volunteered in uniform to collect funds for the Poppy Appeal.

January saw a Burns’ Night celebration, involving bagpipes, haggis and a ceilidh. It offered a great opportunity for instructors and cadets to meet one another’s friends and family, as well as alumni who came to reminisce and join in the festivities.

## Cambridge University Officer Training Corps (OTC)

ON 9 May, OCdt Rudkin-McLaren (Med. UEA) and OCdt Pradhan (Med. St John’s) were invited to attend Buckingham Palace to celebrate their achievement as Gold Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) Award holders.

The OTC has recently become a National Operating Authority for the DoE, with the Commanding Officer at Cambridge UOTC taking the lead as the national manager. Both students had taken up the opportunity offered by the UOTC for OCdts to compete the Gold DoE if they had been unable to do so whilst still at school.

OCdts Rudkin-McLaren and Pradhan had completed the large majority of their Gold requirements, so being able to complete the process under the banner of the UOTC was a welcome offer for them.

As well as finishing off existing awards, the UOTC offers the opportunity to complete the full Gold award, encompassing physical activity, learning a new skill, a residential course and an expedition.

Standard OTC activity covers all these requirements, with the bonus of being paid for it. Indeed, only the DoE Gold Award's volunteering activity remains unpaid for OCdts, though they would still receive support from their CO.



OCdts Rudkin-McLaren and Pradhan were able to bring a guest, wander the palace's

spectacular grounds and to speak with the Duke of Edinburgh himself.

They also heard from inspirational speakers including Olympian Dr Imogen Grant. She was a triple Cambridge Blue who won gold in Paris in the lightweight double sculls.

In February 2026, there was a handover of command at the OTC, as new CO Lt Col David Love MBE took over the role from his predecessor, Lt Col Matt Helsby (*pictured left at Buckingham Palace*).

### Cambridge University Air Squadron

THE OCdts of CUAS had a busy and productive year, training and clocking up flying hours where their studies allowed.

The most important points in the year for many were the 80th anniversaries of VE and VJ Days, with OCdts joining commemorations of the final victories against the Axis powers.

## COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITY

To help us meet our goals, we reach out to the wider population of East Anglia and show residents the value cadets and reservists bring to society



Over 550 posts published across our four social channels (in line with last year despite reducing posts on X)



Posts served to 445k timelines (110% increase on 24/25)



An average engagement rate of 7% (per impression) on our posts (1% increase on 24/25)



Just over 9000 followers across our four channels (an increase of 3.5% on 24/25)

**A**N important part of the Association's work is sharing with communities the benefits of having Reserve and Cadet Forces based locally. Our communications team undertakes this work and responds to enquiries via our various online channels listed on the back page of this report. Some highlights of this activity from 2025/26 are shown in the infographic on the left.

# ESTATES

Providing the best place to work and train for our reservists and cadets

**WORKING** alongside our service partner, VIVO Defence Services, our estates team continues to deliver key maintenance work, repairs, servicing, and Hard Facilities Management across the region.

Uniquely, to enhance cohesion and response times, East Anglia RFCA have integrated two full-time members of the VIVO team into our own team at our Chelmsford HQ. Together, we are mapping the extensive needs of our estate and providing workable solutions to ensure our customers' expectations are met.

Our estate managers and wider team have also continued to deliver a variety of building projects across the six counties for our reserve and cadet units.

To enhance security at our Army Reserve Centres, the RFCA launched a regional gate replacement program. Around Essex, Chelmsford, Southend-on-Sea and Warley benefitted from new main gates and access control systems, as did Coldhams Lane in Cambridgeshire and Hitchin in Bedfordshire.



The replacements were necessary due to ageing gate systems that were starting to fail more often at the end of their life cycle and requiring frequent repairs. Feedback from the sites has been consistently positive.

At Peterborough Army Reserve Centre, attention was focused on developing a wellbeing area for reservists with 158 Regiment RLC. The unit won a sustainability

award for reducing energy usage at the site—significantly supported by PIR/LED lighting upgrades delivered by East Anglia RFCA—and the related grant helped to deliver the wellbeing area, equipped with tiered hardwood seating, rainwater harvesting system and a living ivy screen.



Thousands of cadets and adult volunteers can now enjoy an even better residential cadet experience across our region thanks to the rollout of upgraded wi-fi range and bandwidth at all four of our Cadet Training Centres.

The final installation took place at the Cambridgeshire Cadet Training Centre, which brings together as many as 100 cadets and 40 adults from multiple detachments almost every weekend of the year for skill-building, activity-packed residential stays.

Wi-fi access is increasingly important to deliver these activities, with both cadets and adults accessing resources and recording progress online. At Waterbeach, our installation brought fast, reliable broadband to the main building classrooms, foyer, dedicated ICT suite, adult dormitories, lounge, dining room and outdoor classrooms.

This year, the team have completed a number of refurbishments projects jointly funded via Regionally Generated Income (RGI) and the RAF Air Cadets.

In Longstanton, the cadet centre shared by Longstanton ACF and 2524 (Oakington) ATC Sqn has benefitted from new roof coverings, insulation and sanitary-ware, rewired electrics, double glazing, flooring, a new kitchenette,

and new paintwork throughout. The site will also become more secure thanks to new fencing and provision for a vehicle gate and pedestrian access gate for outdoor activity.

309 (Sawbridgeworth) Squadron, RAF Air Cadets, will now enjoy brighter internal space thanks to new flooring, heating, lighting and painting throughout.

The ablutions have been upgraded too, and the kitchen has an array of new white goods. The site has also been fitted with a new fire alarm system and outside storage.

In Norfolk, the Diss Joint Cadet Centre has undergone considerable structural change. The old pipe range and associated building have been demolished to make way for a new traditional-build storage hut and an outdoor covered training area.

Internally, the space has been re-configured, with old store rooms converted to a classroom and office. With the addition of a new DDA-compliant WC, kitchen refurbishment, new flooring and LED lighting throughout, the space feels refreshed and modernised.

**T**HE Reserve Estate Optimisation (REO) programme has again supported high-quality upgrades across our cadet estate. This major Defence investment aims to improve the lived experience of reserves and cadets while still delivering value for money on behalf of the taxpayer.

In Bedfordshire, Cranfield Joint Cadet Centre underwent a refurbishment and extension to the existing building, with an overall project value of £500,000. The build (*pictured above*) was delivered on time and within budget.

The new single-storey brick-built extension with tile-covered pitched roof was accompanied by a covered outdoor teaching area. Refurbishment works to the original premises involved the replacement of soffits and fascias, windows, doors, flooring, sanitary ware and kitchen units.

The project also included the creation of universal, accessible toilets and, externally, the installation of a step-free access ramp.



Across the border in Hertfordshire, Tring ATC was refurbished and extended to welcome Army Cadets and form a new Joint Cadet Centre.

With an overall value of £1.2M, the project incorporated several innovative technical aspects such as;

a living roof, a sustainable urban drainage system with a grey water function (recycles rainwater for flushing toilets) and solar power generating enough power to not only remain

self-sufficient but also return power to the National Grid.

Cadets in March, Cambridgeshire have also witnessed a huge transformation to their site. The old timber Spooner hut used by the RAF Air Cadets was demolished and the original single-storey brick building used by the Army Cadets had a first floor mezzanine constructed to add an office, store and classroom.

Both cadet groups are now housed in the main building, with the removal of the Spooner hut freeing up space for a new parade ground.

# WIDER MARKET INITIATIVES (WMI)

Our commercial enterprise, Alternative Venues, continues to grow as we extend business with longstanding clients and welcome new organisations to our region

**W**ITH ever-increasing demands being placed on centralised budgets, Regionally Generated Income (RGI) is of utmost importance to the upkeep of our estate.

We strive to create excellent facilities for our reservists and cadets to use day to day and continue to pass on our thanks to supportive units by offering them a 20% share of the income from the premises they use.



*Coldhams Lane Army Reserve Centre, Cambridge*

The WMI team has grown the business by 12.5 per cent in the past year. In addition to arranging hiring activity the team delivered capital projects on behalf of clients in association with our estate managers.

This year, we doubled our business with MPCT (Military Preparation College for Training). Having established three colleges in 2024 based at Ipswich, Colchester and Cambridge, during 2025 we welcomed them to our Army Reserve Centres in Norwich, Peterborough and Luton. The Military Academy is a unique



training college that helps young people aged 16-plus to develop their fitness, vocational qualifications and employability.

This helps to prepare them for employment, predominantly in a military career. Funded by the Department for Education, MPCT is

the only organisation with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the British Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force.

As our hiring activity expands, some of our Army Reserve Centres are beginning to reach capacity so we have begun to open up our cadet estate to clients too. We now have regular Police training being conducted at two of our Cadet Training Centres and a new client for 2026, Anglian Water, are using Thetford CTC and Downham Market Joint Cadet Centre as assessment centres.

Moving forward, research and development is now underway on how we can offer our sites forward to the film and TV industry.

Several other RFCAs across the country raise a strong income from providing movie locations and logistical or welfare hubs for local film shoots. We also plan on monetising our solar panel arrays by exporting surplus electricity to the National Grid and therefore receiving payments from our electricity suppliers.



*An officer's mess laid out for a conference*

**Alternative**  
**VENUES** / **East Anglia**

[www.venues-east-anglia.org.uk](http://www.venues-east-anglia.org.uk)

# SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

While the Association's focus is on reserve forces, uniformed cadets, estates and employer engagement, veterans' affairs remain important to us

**SIGNPOSTING service leavers to government, local authority and third sector support is another RFCA goal.**

Operations Courage and Valour are the two central strands of current activity at the Office for Veterans' Affairs. Op Courage offers mental health support for service leavers, while Op Valour is a newer initiative seeking to improve how they access services more generally.

The Association shares information on these and other initiatives as it becomes available.

We are also very proud of a project that recently came to an end as other agencies began administering its delivery.

Specifically, the RFCA has overseen domestic adaptations for injured and disabled veterans so they can remain in their own homes.

Funding came from outside the Association, but we facilitated the work through an independent contractor who is now retiring. We are thanking him formally for his service during our Annual General Meeting in June 2026.

# SECRETARIAT & IT SYSTEMS

Central support for administrative, management and technology systems

**THE Association's Secretariat carries out administrative control of HR support, training, management information system (MIS) and office technology for more than 75 staff as well as being responsible for governance and policy.**

During 2025/26 the Secretariat oversaw the recruitment of two senior RFCA posts: the Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Engagement. It has also continued to enhance Association cybersecurity and awareness of it wherever possible.

In a time of financial constraints, it also seeks value for money from IT, for example giving a selection of laptops formerly connected to MOD systems renewed use as "standalone" devices—after first securely sanitising their hardware.

The security of our IT systems is of paramount importance at the moment, as RFCAs have been under active attack and

continue to be so. Promoting awareness and extra vigilance has already resulted in greater recognition of malicious emails.

The Secretariat also manages separate site-wide, standalone wi-fi networks for staff and guests. Both networks block malicious and foreign sites unsuitable for work or personal devices. We have also installed and now administer all ACF training centre wi-fi at Cherry Tree Camp, Basingbourn, Thetford and Waterbeach.

The Secretariat is currently seeking control of all cadet estate broadband connections in order to upgrading them, wherever possible, to 150Mbps full fibre.

All RFCAs are planning to move over to the MOD's preferred network, MODNET, soon. The change needs much preparatory work, but MODNET will better connect us with other Defence staff so we can improve cybersecurity while undertaking more tasks related to the Strategic Defence Review.

# FINANCIAL POSITION

## Consolidated expenditure forecast for the financial year 2025/26

**E**AST Anglia RFCA is funded from a number of sources, ranging from the Ministry of Defence to single Services, to deliver three core outputs of estates, engagement, and cadets and youth.

The forecast for the 2025/26 financial year is an expenditure of £6.018m on an income of £7.011m. The difference has been supported by income self-generated within the East Anglia region.

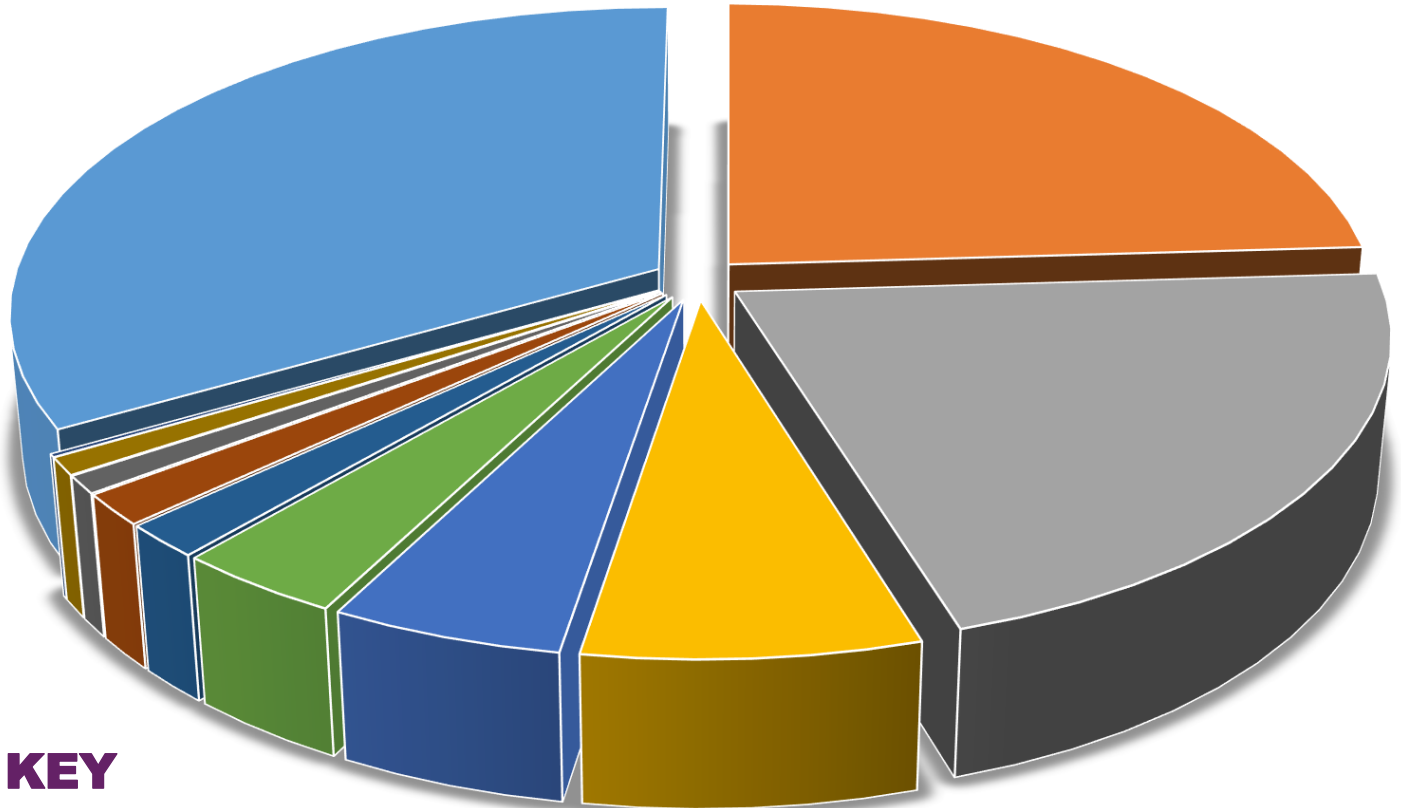
This income is from Non Domestic Rates Reliefs (NDRR) for cadet premises, the commercial exploitation of our estate as set out on page 24, and the interest earned on treasure deposit.

Estates maintenance, vehicles replacement and capital projects accounted for 12.6 per cent of overall expenditure. Soft Facilities Management support to the estate added a further 23.9 per cent to the spend.

Support to cadets, including staffing, represented 38.5 per cent of expenditure.

Overheads were tightly controlled with the cost of Association HQ staff and IT/general administration expenses representing 25 per cent of total expenditure.

A full breakdown of the Association's expenditure can be seen in the pie chart and accompanying key below, with the largest proportion of spending listed first.



### KEY

- Staff Costs (ACF PSS), £2,012,890
- Infrastructure (Soft Facilities Management), £1,441,437
- Staff Costs (Assn HQ), £1,277,055
- Estates Maintenance & Minor Projects, £438,551
- Reserves & Cadets Support, £303,887
- Vehicle Replacement, £220,368
- Administration, £105,971
- Estates Capital Projects, £98,342
- Recruiting Support, £55,652
- IT & Communications, £54,757
- Transport & Movement, £9,785

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S AFTERWORD

Our achievements and learning from 2025/26 will help us to deliver not only on our organisational pillars but emergent imperatives from the Strategic Defence Review

**A**s we close this reporting year, I want to reflect on not only what we achieved, but what those achievements represent for the future of the Reserve Forces and cadets across East Anglia.

This has been a year defined by commitment, adaptability, and quiet excellence. Across our estate, in our units and throughout our partnerships, we have seen people step forward with professionalism and purpose.

We have supported operational capability, maintained vital infrastructure and enabled opportunities for young people through the cadet experience. The impact remains tangible and far-reaching.

Our Reserve Forces remain a cornerstone of national resilience. The demands made of them are evolving, and so too must our approach. Over the past year we have continued to strengthen our support for reservists and their employers, a task requiring flexibility, understanding and strong relationships to sustaining capability.

Reservists are Lady Dannatt's main focus for her tenure as our President. The contribution of employers across the region deserves particular recognition as their support underpins everything we do. We are hugely grateful for their advocacy.

Our cadet forces have also gone from strength to strength. Beyond the numbers, which remain encouraging, the quality of experience really stands out. Cadet units across East Anglia continue to provide a safe, structured, and inspiring environment where young people develop confidence, skills, and a sense of service.

Our adult volunteers' dedication is simply extraordinary, and it is no exaggeration to say that their efforts change lives, setting our young people up for lifelong success.

This year has seen continued progress in how we manage and invest in our estate. Challenges remain, most notably in balancing constraints and limited resources against rising expectations, but we have taken a more strategic, long-term view.

Our goal is clear: to ensure our facilities are sustainable, fit for purpose and supportive of both current and future needs. I am grateful to our outstanding estates team for their dedication, and the collaborative approach our units take in tackling challenges across the estate.

None of this would be possible without the people behind the organisation. Our staff, volunteers, members and partners bring expertise, determination and integrity to their roles. They work, often behind the scenes, with a shared commitment to service. We are all mindful that the environment in which we operate will remain complex and at times uncertain, but we face that future with confidence. The strength of our relationships, the clarity of our purpose, and the quality of our people position us well to meet the challenges ahead.

My sincere thanks go to everyone who contributes to East Anglia RFCA's success. Your efforts matter—to our Armed Forces, to our communities, and to the next generation. Together we support, enable and inspire, and through your efforts we continue to "Connect Defence with Society".

**Colonel Leona Barr-Jones DL VR**  
Association Chief Executive



Now available for hire: Venues across the region, such as this spacious Army Reserve Centre in Chelmsford — visit [www.venues-east-anglia.org.uk](http://www.venues-east-anglia.org.uk) or email [ea-venues@rfca.mod.uk](mailto:ea-venues@rfca.mod.uk) for details



## Support us by:

- Sharing your interest in reserves and cadets by creating engagement opportunities in your networks
- Using local government connections to support planning applications and assistance for service leavers
- Encouraging HR colleagues to email [ea-empsp@rfca.mod.uk](mailto:ea-empsp@rfca.mod.uk) and ask about defence community support
- Spread the word about our venue hire!

## Follow us online:

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