



Council of Military Education Committees of the Universities of the United Kingdom

Executive Committee Meeting

held on Thursday 21st February 2019 at 1115hrs

at ULOTC, Yeomanry House, Handel Street, London, WC1N 1NP

Minutes

Present

Mr R G Livingston (Chairman), Mr B Ritchie (Vice Chairman); Rev Professor J P Taylor (Treasurer); Professor E Archibald; Mr J S Castle; Ms A Lyon; Ms C Kinkead; Maj I Stoney; Dr P J R Mileham; Col N Tougher; Col D Guinness; Lt Col M Bishop; Sqn Ldr A Hawes; Lt W Jones RN

In Attendance;

Mr Jason Norris (Secretary); Brig (Retd) M van der Lande

Apologies

Mr R Hall; Mr H Hamilton; Gp Capt H Edwards; Lt Cdr O Loughran RN; Dr J Smith

1. Opening Remarks

- NOTED: The Chairman welcomed Lt W Jones substituting for Lt Cdr O Loughran representing the URNUs.
- NOTED: The Chairman welcomed Brig M van der Lande in his new capacity as Chairman of Sandhurst Group's Independent Advisory Panel.

2. Minutes

- APPROVED: The Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 22 November 2018 (COMEC_2019_02_A)

3. Matters Arising

- Action points arising (COMEC_2019_02_A1):

GDPR Statement (Min 3 22 Nov 2018)

- RESOLVED: The GDPR compliance statement and privacy policy have been added to the website by the COMEC Secretary.

Armed Forces Covenant Briefing (Min 3 22 Nov 2018)

- **ACTION: Information regarding the Covenant can be found on the main armed forces webpage. Col D Guinness will request this and other useful links to be sent to the COMEC Secretary.**
- NOTED: Dr P J R Mileham noted that there is content due for the Conspectus which could be used for senior university staff. Col D Guinness confirmed the DRM team could also be consulted for any specific information required.
- **ACTION: Dr P J R Mileham has invited the DRM team to send copy text for the COMEC Conspectus.**

Reports from the Service Staff Officers - Army (Min 6 22 Nov 2018)

- NOTED: The Chairman noted that the Home Command paper to the Executive Committee of the Army Board included the essence of the UOTC Study report and was sensitive. However, the restrictions on the final UOTC Study report had been lifted, and it had been distributed in January for the benefit of MEC members.

Conference 2019 (Min 8 22 Nov 2018)

- NOTED: This item to be discussed later in the agenda.

COMEC Prize (Min 9 22 Nov 2018)

- NOTED: This item to be discussed later in the agenda.

Publications (Min 10 22 Nov 2018)

- NOTED: This item to be discussed later in the agenda.

4. Chairman's Report

- RECEIVED: An oral report from the Chairman.
- NOTED: Navy Command: The Chairman had a meeting with Brig Dave Kassapian, Commander Core Training, and subsequently with Cdre Bob Anstey, ACS Submarines, for wide-ranging discussions of issues affecting recruitment and training.
- They were naturally concerned that their continuation-recruiting rate from our URNUs to the RN was significantly lower than that for the other Services. However, once the URNU C2 structure was delivering across the board, monitored by our MECs, it should begin to pay dividends. They were keen to plan forward recruiting across all branches, and echoed Admiral Ben Key's enthusiastic support and encouragement for the work of our URNUs and MECs.
- Membership of the Council: Southampton MEC had withdrawn from membership of the Council because its universities could not budget for the subscription for reasons of financial stringency.
- The Chairman had reminded their Chairman of our activities and offered to attend one of their meetings to address issues that might be of concern to their Committee. However, it was difficult to respond to any concerns if they won't reply. Brig Gerhard Wheeler had since spoken with Southampton's Secretary because they did very well out of the MoD in terms investment in their students. He thought they were willing to look again at their position if they could be persuaded that COMEC can add more value to their activities.

- Col N Tougher noted the MEC was engaged with the service units. The Committee discussed MEC engagement with COMEC generally and how this might be improved, including through the conference and sharing of best practice. The power of social media, including the COMEC Twitter Feed, could improve communication with and between MECs.
- The Chairman intended to write to Southampton again in the spring.
- **CRFCAs:** The CRFCA Annual Briefing heard from the Chairman of the Council, CDS, Flag Officer Reserves, CGS and AOC Training.
- There was much discussion of the challenges posed by the world becoming more complex and dangerous. China had been spreading its influence, developing the next generation of fighting equipment and challenging international security. Reserves had a central role in deterrence to such state-based threats. The offer had to compete to attract more diverse and inclusive recruits, and improved flexibility was required: universities could contribute there.

5. Treasurer's Report

- RECEIVED: A report from the Treasurer (COMEC_2019_02_B)
- NOTED: The Treasurer noted that Southampton MEC remains a debtor as instructed at the September 2018 COMEC Executive meeting and the 2018 AGM. Two reminders have been sent for payment with no response and there is now a concern the debt may have to be written off.
- **ACTION: The Chairman will raise this in the Spring with Southampton MEC, and, if necessary, with the University of Southampton and the other four participating universities.**

6. Reports from the Service Staff Officers

- RECEIVED: A report from each of the Service Staff Officers:
 - a. Royal Navy (COMEC_2019_02_C1)

URNU Report

Significant Events

1. *Midway through the spring term, URNU training for New Entrants is designed to consolidate their induction knowledge so that they can operate at sea in a safe and effective manner. The Training for URNU Officer Cadets in years 2 - 4 is designed to continue Taskbook progression, alongside this they have the option to pursue Chartered Management Institute (CMI) accreditation and Royal Yachting Association (RYA) qualifications.*
2. *The Annual inter-URNU Sports Weekend is programmed 1-3 Mar 19 in Portsmouth, this evolution is the largest whole URNU event of the year, over 460 attendees expected.*
3. *The next significant evolution is the URNU Easter deployments in Apr 19. The various deployments in the 14 P2000 patrol craft will largely be UK based with the option for some foreign runs ashore. The take up for Easter deployment is often less*

than the Summer deployment attributed to University deadlines and approaching exam periods in May.

Personnel

4. *The Commander Universities position remains gapped due to personnel challenges at the OF4 level, the next incumbent is expected to arrive in post in Apr 19. Commander Ian Lynn, Royal Navy, has recently handed over as Commander Training at BRNC and is offering oversight to the URNU organisation whilst the URNU COS coordinates day to day activities.*
5. *The CO at London URNU has handed over; Lieutenant Toby Milligan Royal Navy took command from Lieutenant Steve Dodds Royal Navy, who is leaving the Service. The planned personnel changes up to the end of Q2 2019 have been determined with selection boards for the subsequent handovers for the rest of 2019 expected in the next month.*

Equipment

6. *Navy Infra have allocated funding for infrastructure improvements to Bristol, Cambridge, Devon, Edinburgh and Sussex URNUs.*

Training

7. *COMCORE (the URNUs 2UP HQ) are commencing a new format of assurance visits in Q2 19 using the OFSTED Common Inspection Framework as a guide to be prepared for future OFSTED inspections.*

- NOTED: Ms C Kinkead noted using the OFSTED Common Inspection Framework was a positive development and this has also been used successfully by UOTCs.
- NOTED: The Chairman was pleased there was now a full and stable OiC plot, and Command Selection Boards working well.
- NOTED: The Chairman reflected on the last COMEC Executive meeting where some discouragement of extracurricular activities was noted by some Universities. Lt W Jones noted he had not received this feedback in his role. Brig M van der Lande noted the IAP had been doing some work on this, noting Universities are interested in employability, and Cambridge University is actively encouraging students to undertake extracurricular activities. Mr J S Castle noted his institution also actively promoted these opportunities. Professor E Archibald noted this message needs the attention of senior University staff noting the JP Morgan relationship (noted in November 18 minutes) would be useful to reference.

- b. Army (COMEC 2019_02_C2)

UNIVERSITY OFFICER TRAINING CORPS – COMEC REPORT – FEBRUARY 2019

1. **Mission.** *The 2018 ECAB paper redefined the OTC Mission subtly, but significantly as: “Develop the leadership potential of selected students and Army Reserve potential officers, and to promote the Army’s ethos and career opportunities in order to secure commitment to the Army, first as officers, but also as future leaders in their chosen profession who will champion the Army in society”.*

2. **Pipeline.** *In line with the amended mission, officer recruiting continues to gather momentum as we progress through the academic year. Officer Cadets interested in becoming Officers are made aware of the benefits of attending the Army Officer Selection Board early on in their studies, so they can apply for a bursary if they are committed to Regular service or can continue in the Army Reserve as an Officer after they graduate. Our aspiration is that as many Officer Cadets as possible who expressed an interest in a commission, go on to make an application for an Army Officer Selection Board Briefing (AOSB (B)) weekend.*

3. **AOSB (B).** *In support of the mission, an OTC-specific AOSB (B) occurred on 2nd and 3rd February with encouraging initial results. The statistics break down as follows:*
 - a. 45 attendees. Representation from all OTCs bar one.
 - b. 37 males (82%) and 8 females (18%)
 - c. 20 x Cat 1 (44%)
 - d. 16 x Cat 2 (36%) - 7 at 3 months, 1 at 6 months, 7 at 12 months and 1 at 24 months
 - e. 9 x Cat 3
 - f. No Cat 4s.

4. *The category definitions are:*
 - a. Cat 1 – can move straight to Main Board
 - b. Cat 2 – can move to Main board with a time delay
 - c. Cat 3 – can go to Main Board but would need some significant development in a particular area or combination of areas.
 - d. Cat 4 – would find Main Board overwhelming. Army Officer pathway possibly not for them.

5. *A further weekend is planned for early April and based on results, additional weekends may follow.*

6. **Outputs.** *Draft output numbers are included at Annex A. These numbers will be finalised by the Financial Year end. For historical comparison, Annex B lists Reserve Commissioning Course (ResCC) statistics and its replacement, Commissioning Course Short (CCS). It must be noted, the composition of ResCC and CCS is significantly different and comparisons between the two sets of figures should be heavily caveated. Annex C details UOTC input into Regular commissioning for this Financial Year.*

7. **Distributed training.** *Training within the UOTC will start again in earnest during February. With exams now out of the way until the summer, training tempo will increase over the next two months offering Module A and B training weekends between the start of Feb and the Easter Break. Consolidated Module A and B courses will be run*

in the UK and Cyprus over the Easter recess. Additionally, OTCs will be providing lectures on Army Leadership, delivering Leadership in Practice and conducting civil engagement activities in support of their local Brigades. OCdts can also attend Special to Arms weekends supported by a number of the Corps. Looking forward, OTCs are currently planning their annual deployment exercises (ADX).

8. **Leadership and Resilience Training.** We have begun to evolve the way we plan and conduct our social, sports and adventurous training events to encourage Officer Cadets to lead more. In the coming year they will take the lead to plan, organise and conduct their own events with the permanent staff in a supporting role. This will provide our Officer Cadets with more leadership development opportunities, increase their confidence and future employability. It’s a subtle change but hopefully one that will prove to be extremely rewarding. Greater analysis of LRT training will follow at the conclusion of the Financial Year.

9. **Independent Advisory Panel (IAP).** RMAS Group have enlisted external support from an IAP, who, as civilian and military subject matter experts with specialist knowledge can assist OTCs conduct their business better. The IAP team have a particular knowledge of mechanisms to better utilise alumni, increase diversity and welfare/duty of care and take advantage of digital opportunities. The IAP will, this year conduct a “Deep Dive” into OTCs.

10. **Conclusion.** Following the ECAB paper last year, the wider Army is now better aware of the value of UOTCs. Financial pressures remain however, and all elements are being asked to look at how they can do their business better – both organisationally and financially. I am confident that this year, OTCs will deliver increased output of world-class quality young people to our Armed Forces and wider society.

Annex A - UOTC Outputs – Financial year 18/19

	AOSB attendance			CCS Mod D			Transfers to Army Reserves		Transfer to Regular Army					Other		Totals
	Brief	Main Board	MB Selected	182	183	191	Soldiers	Officers	Soldiers	CC182	CC183	CC191	AMS	RN/RM/RAF	CFAV	
Aberdeen	6	7	6	0	0	0	5	2	0	4	3			0	0	14
Birmingham	11	10	6	6	1	0	5	6	0	7	3	2		0	0	30
Bristol	6	8	6	4	0	0	12	7	1	2	7	6		1	0	40
Cambridge	9	6	4	3	0	0	14	7	0	3	1	0		2	0	30
East Midlands	8	15	12	10	1	0	6	8	NK	1	6	1		0	0	33
Edinburgh	8	13	13	1	0	1	4	5	5	4				1	0	21
Exeter	1	2	2	6	0	0	4	0	0	14	5	5		0	0	34
Glasgow	8	9	7	3	0	2	13	3	0	3				2	0	26
London	7	3	0	14	6	1	27	8	0	13	4	3		0	1	77
Northumbrian	14	13	6	1	0	0	10	1	0	3	10	5	2	0	0	32
NWOTR	23	12	11	4	2	0	24	5	0	3	1			0	0	39
Oxford	13	7	5	5	2	0	0	5	0	6	5	2		0	0	25
Queens	3	3	3	0	0	1	0	1	1	2				0	0	5
Southampton	9	6	5	3	0	0	5	5	0	1	3	1		0	0	18
Tayforth	26	11	9	3	0	0	9	3	0	3	2			1	1	22
Wales	22	10	2	6	0	0	22	5	2	9	4	8		0	0	56
YORKS	16	3	6	13	0	0	26	9	0	6	4	3		0	0	61
Total	190	138	103	82	12	5	186	80	9	84	58	36	2	7	2	563

Annex B - UOTC Cadets commissioned on Reserve Commissioning courses or Commissioning Course Short

UOTC Cadets* Commissioned on Res CC/CCS Courses																
UOTC	CC151	CC151+	CC152	CC+152	CC161	CC162	CC163	CC171	CC172	CC173	CCS 171	CCS181	CCS182	CCS183	CCS191*	Total
Aberdeen	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Birmingham	3	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	3	2	0	0	5	1	0	19
Bristol	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	4	0	0	9
Cambridge	1	3	0	1	0	3	0	1	6	1	0	2	3	1	0	22
East Midlands	1	1	1	1	0	2	3	0	7	2	0	0	10	1	0	29
Edinburgh	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	6
Exeter	1	2	1	2	1	4	0	0	2	1	0	0	6	0	1	21
Glasgow & Strathclyde	1	1	0	3	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	1	14
London	1	3	0	4	1	4	0	1	6	1	0	2	5	7	2	37
Northumbrian	0	4	0	4	0	3	0	1	2	3	0	1	1	1	0	20
NWOTR	1	1	1	6	0	4	0	0	3	3	0	0	4	1	1	25
Oxford	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	2	2	1	14
Queens	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	10
Southampton	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	0	2	3	0	0	12
Tayforth	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	2	9
Wales	0	0	0	5	0	8	2	0	7	2	0	0	4	0	2	30
YOTR	1	1	0	3	0	0	3	0	4	5	0	1	14	0	1	33
Total	13	20	4	37	3	41	9	5	55	25	0	9	68	14	14	289
Course total	15	69	6	61	13	56	25	30	88	38	11	23	94	36	112	677
%	87	29	67	61	23	73	36	17	63	66	0	39	72	39	13	43

*Does not include DE or Unit ResPO

** Yet to form up. Projected numbers.

Total	13	20	4	37	3	41	9	5	55	25	11	9	68	14	14	328
Female	4	4	1	6	0	9	0	0	10	9	0	1	8	2	0	54
% Female	31	20	25	16	0	22	0	0	18	36	0	11	12	14	0	16

CCS 183 - 26 Res Others - 10 Reg PQO, Intl
 CCS 191 - 26 Res others - 86 Reg PQO, Intl, GVC

Annex C - UOTC Cadets attending Regular Commissioning – Financial Year 18/19

	Abdn UOTC	Bham UOTC	Bristol UOTC	Camb UOTC	Edbg UOTC	Exter UOTC	Glas UOTC	Leeds UOTC	Lndn UOTC	Lpool UOTC	Man UOTC	Mdlds UOTC	Nbrn UOTC	NRC	NWOTR	Oxford UOTC	Qns UOTC	Shef UOTC	Soton UOTC	Tayft UOTC	Wales UOTC	YOTR	Total
Reg CC 182	4	5	2	2	1	14		5	4	4	1	1	4			4	1		4	4	10	1	71
Reg CC 183	2	2	7	2	3	4	4	2	5		2	7	5		1	3	2	1	2	1	3		58
Reg CC 191	3	1	6		1	4		1	4	1	2	2	5	1	1	3	2	1	1		8	1	48
Total	9	8	15	4	5	22	4	8	13	5	5	10	14	1	2	10	5	2	7	5	21	2	177

	CC191	CC183	CC182
UK	214	217	171
Intl	38	33	22
UOTC	48	58	71
Total	252	250	193

- NOTED: Col N Tougher noted, following the ECAB paper, the Army now understand better the UOTCs and their student destinations, and it also dispelled some myths.
- NOTED: Col N Tougher noted he had been asked to scope a Highland OTR, and the COs in Edinburgh and Glasgow were involved. An issue that has arisen is that the University of Dundee have requested the building currently occupied by Tayforth UOTC is vacated, requiring alternative accommodations for the unit / HQ. Options are being explored with Abertay University and also in other cities. The final decision will be based on the needs of the unit.
- NOTED: Professor E Archibald noted it would be useful to see the BAME breakdown for UOTC student's categorisation at the AOSB (B). Col N Tougher noted this information was difficult to obtain due to students' reluctance to provide it. There are examples of MECs that have a wide mix of students e.g. Queen's. The Chairmen requested COMEC were kept informed of the AOSB (B) outcomes.
- NOTED: Col N Tougher noted further AOSB (B) weekends were planned and this experience provides an excellent example of employability

enhancing activity for students through their participation in the UOTC. Further details about the AOSB are available on the internet.

- NOTED: Col N Tougher noted there was a cap on UOTC deployments outside of Europe but this has now been lifted.
- **ACTION: Col N Tougher noted UOTCs were receiving increasing visit requests to the unit, which take up significant resource, and asked if MECs could support by gatekeeping these requests?**
- NOTED: Ms C Kinkead noted thanks to Col N Tougher especially in relation to the work that that has been done with Queen's.
- Independent Advisory Panel: Brig M van der Lande, Chairman of the Sandhurst Group IAP, briefed the Committee on the work of the Panel of military and commercial experts to look at how the Group could do their business better, both organizationally and financially.
- The Panel was now conducting a deep dive into UOTC business, visiting UOTCs in the South of England in May and June, consulting widely and engaging with the MECs and employers, and report in September. The aim is to drive forward the good work already carried out at UOTCs and improve their efficiency in the longer term: COMEC will be involved at each stage.
- This report would also provide insight into diversity and recruitment issues, particularly in relation to females and minorities. It would also focus on certain specialisms and best practice at Universities e.g. Bristol and its initiative with chaplains. The panel will also look at UOTCs' contribution and engagement with the Army and employers.
- Professor J P Taylor queried the exclusion of other parts of the UK and it was noted Scotland was currently under review due to the OTR discussions and Col N Tougher provided substantial knowledge on Northern Ireland. Dr P J R Mileham noted that work in this area has been undertaken through the COMEC rejoinder and occasionals which could be used as a basis for further discussion.

c. Royal Air Force (COMEC_2019_02_C3)

COMEC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UAS UPDATE 4 FEB 18

Key Points

- *Successful annual recruiting.*
- *Bristol UAS future location to be announced Apr 19.*
- *Northern Ireland UAS to have permanently based aircraft at Aldergrove from Sep 19.*
- *RAF Woodvale runway to be repaired by Apr 19.*
- *Call forward of AT equipment expenditure*

1. **UAS Recruitment.** *A successful recruitment and induction period for 387 'first years' has brought student numbers across the 15 UASs up to 887 officer cadets of which 30% are female. Whilst this number remains below the establishment of 1000 UAS students, it was a command decision to focus on quality rather than quantity. There are currently 68 sponsored students across the 15 UASs who are committed to a career in the RAF; this number will increase between now and Apr 19. Of our total strength,*

10% are BAME and this is reflected in the number of sponsored students which currently stands at 11%.

2. **Bristol UAS.** DIO Business Case to determine future location of the Sqn is programmed to go before the investment approvals committee in Mar with the formal announcement of its decision in Apr 19. Once the announcement is made we can then crack on with long term planning for BUAS. As reported at the last meeting we will look to mitigate the loss of flying at Colerne and restricted opportunities at Boscombe with 4 one week flying camps at Newquay Airport, formerly RAF St Mawgan.

3. **Northern Ireland UAS.** Infrastructure work has started and is programmed to be completed this financial year.

4. **RAF Woodvale.** Repair of the main runway has started and is programmed to be completed during Apr 19. It is anticipated that flying sortie rates for Manchester & Salford and Liverpool UASs will be back to pre-runway closure rates by Jul 19.

5. **Tutor Safety Enhancements.** Comdt RAFC Cranwell has funded 2 major safety enhancements to the Tutor, namely the provision of an artificial horizon to the Tutor fleet and a Hi-Vis Trial.

6. **Adventurous Training Equipment.** Comdt RAFC Cranwell called forward planned expenditure on AT equipment to the current financial year; circa £28K.

- NOTED: The Chairman noted a recruitment focus on quality rather than quantity and asked if this was an issue. Sqn Ldr A Hawes noted no issue, and they hope to build capacity next year.
- NOTED: Sqn Ldr A Hawes noted the RAF are now in a much better recruiting position across all branches now noting there were gaps in previous years.

d. Defence People (COMEC_2019_02_C4)

RF&C UPDATE FOR COMEC EXECUTIVE BOARD – 21 February 2019

Defence Overview

1. The MOD continues to progress the final elements of the FR20 programme and a number of new work strands have commenced to ensure the progress made under FR20 is maintained (e.g. examining the wider use of Reservists and delivering greater parity across the Single Services). Support to the wider People Programme also remains a key focus to ensure that Reserve specific issues are factored in as the Defence People Strategy is being finalised.
2. The department's priorities remain delivering operations overseas, especially against Daesh, and supporting the Government in its work to deliver the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union. The financial situation for the department continues to be challenging and ensuring that the budget is balanced remains a priority. It is unlikely that there will be any relief, in the short term,

from the financial controls, but RF&C remains actively engaged regarding any savings measures that might affect Reserves and Cadets.

Reserves Policy

3. The key priorities for the Reserves Policy team are:
 - a. Flexible Engagement Strategy (FES) 2. RF&C will support the future FES 2 programme. The aim is to further modernise change, beyond Flexible Service, to increase the flexibility and agility of the whole Armed Force, either with a focus on Reserves delivering capability, or to bring Regular and Reserve components together.
 - b. Use of Reserves. As part of the Department's focus on Whole Force we are examining ways that we might make better use of the Reserves. Specifically, we are looking at ways that we might make it easier for the Services to use Reserves across the spectrum of defence activities. As these ideas progress we will be engaging with stakeholders including the RFCAs.
 - c. Modernising FTRS. RF&C are focused on delivering VfM to Defence and have undertaken a review of FTRS commitment types (CT) to ensure they are fit for purpose and able of delivering the right people into the right roles for the sS. Wider initiatives are also being scoped alongside the wider CDP area looking at the value a Reservist's civilian skills can add value to Defence.
 - d. Reserve Forces Act 1996. In the time between now and the next Armed Forces Bill, we will be examining the 1996 Act to ensure that it continues to meet the requirements of the whole force concept in the modern defence context.
 - e. RFCA Review. RFCA have committed to reviewing the RFCAs against the following objectives:
 - a) Ensuring the RFCAs continue to deliver to Defence output
 - b) Ensuring the RFCAs continue to deliver the best VfM for Defence
 - c) Identifying additional opportunities that RFCAs could undertake which delivers value to Defence
4. Dr Rob Sullivan has been appointed lead of the Review.

FR20 (Update info from the latest UK Armed Forces QSPS info)

5. The trained strength of the Volunteer Reserves continues to increase as we progress towards the overall tri-service trained strength. As at 1 October 2018, the trained strength of the FR20 population was 32,270 (from around 22,000 at the beginning of the Future Reserves Programme), with about 4,000 more in training.

6. Whilst the overall trend is upwards we are unlikely to deliver 35,000 Reserves trained strength by 2019, in particular due to Army shortfalls. However, our recruitment campaign is a long-term programme, and we are committed to meeting our target of around 35,000 trained Reservists.
 - a. The Maritime Reserve (MR) trained strength (TS) at 1 Oct 18 was 2,800 against an end of year target of 3,100 (31 Mar 2019).
 - b. The Army Reserve (AR) TS at 1 Oct 18 was 26,960 against an end of year TS target of 30,100 (31 Mar 19).
 - c. The RAF Reserve (RAuxAF) TS at 1 Oct 18 was 2,510. The RAF Reserve have achieved their FR20 target of 1,860.
7. Reserves from all Services continue to operate in every theatre alongside their regular counterparts.

Employer Engagement

8. The latest updates on EE initiatives are:
 - a. Employer Notification (EN). EN19 is under way. Deadline for completion is 28 Feb, after which RF&C will analyse performance and report through the normal governance process (EEWG, E3G). Proposed changes to JPA to improve data quality are on schedule to be introduced in Nov 19.
 - b. Armed Forces Covenant (AFC). The rate of signings has increased to c. 25-30 per week. As at 16 Jan 19, the total number of signings was 3153.
 - c. ERS Awards. A total of 51 organisations received ERS Gold Awards in the presence of HRH Prince Edward on 12 Nov 18 The Defence Directive for ERS 19 has been issued and expressions of interest are already flowing in. Defence is working with stakeholders to consider how best to manage a potentially significant number of nominations. RF&C are re-submitting a request for Royal Patronage.
 - d. Reserves Day (RD). The RD19 Directive has been issued and a working group of key stakeholders to take forward detailed planning has been established, chaired by RF&C.
 - e. CS Reserves Challenge. The results from the latest 6 monthly data matching exercise shows that there is continued growth in the number of Civil Servants serving in the Reserves. The figure has risen by 53 from 1620 in Jan 18 to 1673 as at Jul 18, the annual increase since Jul 17 is 109 or approx. 7%. This overall total is thus broadly 0.77% of eligible Civil Servants.

Cadets

9. Interest in cadet activity remains high on Ministerial and senior officers' agendas, evidenced by a successful visit by Min(DPV) in Nov 18 to E-Act Royton & Compton Academy, where he praised the Cadet Expansion Programme (CEP). The CEP remains on track to achieve 500 units parading in UK schools by Mar 20 with over 400 units parading as at Dec 18. Having had the final full approval round in Nov 18, the number of schools which have been approved or are already parading now exceeds the risk-based overshoot figure of 510 which has been set for the programme.
10. Work continues to progress the cadet related Government announcements made by the Secretary of State in Sep 18; an ambition to increase the number of cadets in schools to 60,000 by 2024; delivering cyber training for cadets; and planning for an annual Cadet Week.
11. For the increase in school cadet numbers, work is in hand to establish individual schools' achievement of CEP growth figures to date and examine the potential for further expansion. Target criteria are being drawn up prioritising engagement with schools which have the best prospects for increasing the number of cadets in their units. Any increase in numbers of cadets is dependent on the school's enthusiasm and capacity to sustain and expand their unit for which the MOD and DfE have little leverage.
12. Planning is in hand with single Services for the delivery of the National Cyber Security Centre's (NCSC) nationally recognised CyberFirst programme to deliver various training for up to 2000 cadets per year from 2019 as well as train the trainer courses for Adult Volunteers.
13. Finally, dates are being investigated for a national Cadet Week, which will be an annual event, to provide MPs and local dignitaries with the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of cadets and Cadet Force Adult Volunteers across the UK. This is likely to take place during a recess period, dates of which have not yet been confirmed.
 - NOTED: Col D Guinness asked the COMEC Executive to consider if the DRM team have sufficiently engaged with Universities and if there is anything more they can do to support. In particular, how can the DRM team get Russell Group Universities more engaged? Can MECs continue to provide feedback on their institutions so DRM can learn how to enhance their work with Universities? Ms A Lyon noted that Wessex RFCA initiated a thank you campaign for silver and gold covenant signatories e.g. allowing them to try a tank simulator – this was an excellent way of increasing engagement. The Chairman noted it would be useful to have some text highlighting benefits of the covenant to both parties. Dr P J R Mileham noted the above text has been requested for the COMEC Conspectus and that could be used for this purpose.
 - NOTED: Professor E Archibald asked if the CyberFirst programme is available to Universities. Col D Guinness noted there is a cyber apprenticeship programme some Universities are involved in and that Col N Tougher had mentioned current opportunities in some UOTCs e.g. Queen's. Mr B Ritchie noted some challenges in Universities with security

requirements due to foreign nationals in the department. It was noted that there is competition from industry for cyber / AI students due to level of pay compared to military, however the military does offer unique opportunities.

7. Conference 2019

- RECEIVED: A report from the Vice-Chairman on committed attendance of members, timing, location and format of the COMEC Conference 2019 (COMEC_2019_02_D)
- NOTED: Mr B Ritchie confirmed there was sufficient response from MECs to proceed with the conference (26 delegates). In addition there were 12 personnel expected from the RAF and numbers are awaited from Army and Navy.
- **ACTION: Army and Navy service staff requested to supply expected conference numbers to Mr B Ritchie.**
- NOTED: Mr B Ritchie noted conference location options of the Victory Service Club (VSC) in Marble Arch, where the entire conference could be held, or a split between the VSC and HMS President (noting HMS President does not have accommodation). The latter option would cause some logistical issues. Approximate costs for VSC would be £145 (including dinner, room hire and refreshments) per head plus accommodation and shared cost of materials. It was noted that external sponsorship should be explored to reduce costs.
- **AGREED: The COMEC Executive agreed the entire conference to be held at the Victory Services Club.**
- **AGREED: The COMEC Executive agreed to the suggested structure and format for the conference as noted in the report.**
- **AGREED: The COMEC Executive agreed to the conference being held on 4th and 5th September 2019.**
- NOTED: Discussion was had regarding speakers and content. Mr B Ritchie noted no concrete suggestions from MECs other than student experience. Possible options include “Brexit”, “Education Strategy for Military Officers”, “University and Military Balance” or “Defence Briefing”. Professor E Archibald noted the requirement for a high profile speaker to attract attendees to the conference, and to also involve cadets (perhaps as a panel). Mr J S Castle suggested a technical theme e.g. new equipment like the Trident replacement. Col D Guinness suggested a theme of robotics in the Armed Forces. Ms C Kinkead suggested all MECs should be requested to sponsor at least one cadet attending. Rev Professor J P Taylor noted a key highlight in previous conferences was the military briefing giving the “state of the union”.
- **ACTION: COMEC Executive requested to send suggestions for COMEC conference to Mr B Ritchie at the earliest opportunity.**

8. COMEC Prize

- NOTED: Ms A Lyon noted a call for nominations was sent to MECs in January noting revised criteria and stressing the need for complete paperwork.
- **ACTION: The COMEC Secretary will send COMEC Prize nomination reminders in March and April.**

- NOTED: Professor E Archibald, supported by Ms C Kinhead, noted interest in succeeding Ms A Lyon on the Prize Lead Adjudicator role from September 2019 if she were elected to the COMEC Executive at the AGM.
- NOTED: The Chairman thanked Ms A Lyon for her contribution.

9. Publications

- RECEIVED: An update on Occasional Papers and Conspectus
- NOTED: Ms A Lyon noted the future of DTUS / DTOEES is still being decided with an update expected in April, this may delay content being sent for the Conspectus.
- NOTED: It is expected the Conspectus will be ready for the COMEC Conference in September and will be available digitally and hard copy (with a small print run). Suggestions were made by the Executive on enhancing content.
- **ACTION: Nominations were invited from members to succeed Dr P J R Mileham as Publications Editor.**

10. Membership of the Executive

- NOTED: The terms of office of Ms Lyon, Professor Archibald and Mr Hall end in September. Professor Archibald and Mr Hall are eligible for re-election for one further term of four years.
- NOTED: Mr J S Castle noted nominees' availability to attend COMEC Executive meetings should be considered.
- **ACTION: COMEC Secretary to send out a call for nominations in March for submission by July for the 3 positions.**

11. Any Other Business:

- NOTED: Professor E Archibald asked if the COMEC Executive could introduce a system requesting MECs for a brief report to highlight their activities. This could rotate around 1 or 2 MECs per meeting. The Vice-Chairman would consider this within the development of relations with MECs.

12. Dates and Venues of Future Meetings:

- **AGREED: The dates and venues of future meetings:**
 - Thursday 16 May 2019 (ULOTC, London)
 - 4-5 September 2019 (VSC, London)
 - Thursday 21 November 2019 (ULOTC, London)
 - Thursday 20 February 2020 (ULOTC, London)