



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

### **Executive Committee Meeting**

**held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2022 from 1100hrs to 1345hrs via Microsoft  
Teams**

### **Minute**

#### **Present**

Mr J S Castle (Chairman); Dr M Vilnay (Vice-Chair); Dr R Hall; Ms C Kinkead; Dr G Matthews-Smith; Professor M Siva-Jothy; Mr A Smith; Maj I Stoney; Col N Cheshire; Col D Gray; Gp Capt R Caine; Lt Col M Bishop; Capt Jonathan Phelps

#### **In Attendance**

Mr J Norris (Secretary)

#### **Apologies**

General Sir P Wall (President); Rev Professor J P Taylor (Treasurer); Cdr T Stevens; Professor P Ivey; Wg Cdr M Dewar

### **1. Introductions**

- NOTED: The Chairman congratulated Air Cdr Sharrocks on his promotion and welcomed Gp Capt R Caine.
- NOTED: The Chairman noted it was Lt Col M Bishop's last meeting and on behalf of COMEC thanked him for his service and wished him well.
- NOTED: The Chairman welcomes Capt Jonathan Phelps who is standing in for Cdr T Stevens

### **2. Minutes**

- APPROVED: The Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021 (COMEC\_Exec\_2022\_02\_A1)

### **3. Matters Arising**

- CONSIDERED: Any matters or action points arising (COMEC\_Exec\_2022\_02\_A2)

Matters Arising (Min 3 18 November 2021)

- RESOLVED: The Chairman requested a working group be formed to discuss widening AFC University membership. The Chairman noted this also links into military relationships and connections with Defence Relationship Management (DRM). The Chairman met Col D Gray to discuss further and how best to take forward. Considerations include using the RFCA to encourage all employers to sign up to the covenant and progress through the Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS). Also being considered is the Scottish type of model to support engagement. Col D Gray is looking into this, possibly involving the Department of Education.
- RESOLVED: The Chairman asked about the outcomes and any action from the OFSTED reports, and could these be shared by the Army? It was noted that student support and welfare was a common theme running through the OFSTED reports. Specifically in relation to University welfare units and UOTC welfare units where there may be a disconnect and support information is not shared. This has been raised through Tri Service (TESA) to Department of Education and also through local MECs. It is a very delicate area due to confidentiality.
- **ACTION: The Chairman requested student support and welfare be added to a future agenda to discuss how COMEC can support and work with MECs and Universities to facilitate this important issue.** The Chairman will also liaise with each Service Executive member on how best to resolve. Dr G Matthews-Smith noted that unless the student agrees to share information the University's hands are tied.

Reports from the Service Staff Officers (Min 6 18 November 2021)

- RESOLVED: Col D Gray requested a meeting with the Chairman and education links in Defence Relationship Management to improve military / academic relationships going forward. The Chairman noted this had been covered.

COMEC Prize (Min 7 18 November 2021)

- ON AGENDA: The Chairman noted general agreement on principal for new COMEC Prize criteria and requested the COMEC Prize Sub-Group now consider the options in detail and decide on how best to take forward.

COMEC President (Min 8 18 November 2021)

- RESOLVED: COMEC Executive members to email any suggestions for COMEC President candidates to the Chairman. The Chairman thanked Maj I Stoney and other colleagues who had suggested candidates.

Engagement (Min 9 18 November 2021)

- RESOLVED: The Chairman requested Professor P Ivey, Ms C Kinkead and the Treasurer investigate HE engagement further with the Army Engagement Group once Maj R O Wilson's replacement is in post. Ms C Kinkead will report at a future meeting.

- **ACTION: The Chairman requested this discussion be moved to a future meeting and also consider RAF and RN in discussions.**

Conference (Min 10 18 November 2021)

- RESOLVED: Consider on the spot feedback for the next conference and a networking session at the beginning of the conference schedule.
- RESOLVED: The Chairman suggested we ask MEC Chair's to invite a CO or student representative to the next MEC Chair's Forum to widen representation. **ACTION: The Chairman will send a note to MEC Chairs in due course.**
- **ACTION: Dr G Matthews-Smith agreed to send out a questionnaire to MECs that would crystallise a set of themes that would come to the next conference for further discussions and support development of an action plan. Dr G Matthews-Smith noted she had looked through the information from the previous questionnaire sent by Mr B Ritchie and thought an update would be useful. Some pre-work was also being looked at by the Vice-Chair.**
- RESOLVED: The Vice-Chair will approach the Secretary of HR Scotland to support development of the COMEC vision and principals, as well as creative ways of marketing these with MECs. The Vice-Chair updated she had approached the Secretary and next step is to meet and identify an individual willing to work with COMEC.
- ON AGENDA: Conference Sub Committee and Col N Cheshire to report back on draft conference proposals at the February Executive meeting. The Committee to consider changing the name from Conference to Working Group.

Any Other Business (Min 11 18 November 2021)

- RESOLVED: Dr G Matthews-Smith suggested this would be a good opportunity for a new occasional paper updating the benefits of the USU. The Chairman agreed this to be taken forward and also a paper on Space Command that AVM Godfrey could support. **ACTION: The Chairman will write to Paul Godfrey, and it was noted that Maj I Stoney is leading the development of literature side of things at present including an update of the "Benefits of USUs" occasional paper.**

#### 4. Chairman's Report

- RECEIVED: An Executive Summary from the Chairman (COMEC\_Exec\_2022\_02\_B)

*Chairman's Report*

*Date: 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2022*

*Activity since the November meeting has been focused in the following areas:*

- *Constitution and ToRs*
- *Attempts to engage with Southampton*
- *MEC Chairs' meeting (apology for absence)*

## **COMEC CONSTITUTION**

*I am grateful to the subcommittee comprising Jason, Margi and Patton. It is always useful to have a degree of “sense” checking and “reins”, regards some (but not all) of my more radical ideas. Once the COMEC section is resolved, we will be adding Mike to the team for development of what we might suggest to MECs as “model MEC terms”. It is certainly the case that since COMEC and MECs are effectively one big organisation, it makes sense to have a degree of synergy.*

*It seems that the last attempt at revision was in 2010. It not only talked about COMEC, but MECs, USUs and more besides. I made the mistake of taking what was already there and rewriting it. It became apparent that the original was over complicated and with the addition of items to cover what had been agreed as part of the intended COMEC mandate, this would further complicate matters.*

*Whilst the overall holistic team approach will sit as an umbrella, I have decided to keep the individual components (Executive; COMEC; MECs; and USUs) as separate entities, in terms of paperwork. There will be cross referencing and “guidance” to ensure there is no “silo” mentality. It is intended that there will be more of a Team spirit and acceptance of mutual reliance.*

*Those who remember my election some 18 months ago, may also recall the platform that I was voted in on. Overall, increasing the relevance of COMEC and the MECs; to the Universities; to Defence; and wider, to those who have served and their families. COMEC (UK) being well positioned in terms of University coverage across the UK as a whole. To achieve this, we have to extend our remit beyond the original 1917 model ie move beyond sole involvement with the USUs. Working together, COMEC and MECs, will aim to be the centre for all military and veteran related University activity, across the UK.*

*The new COMEC constitution and ToRs will allow:*

- *Continuation of full engagement in all USU related activity, (much the same as before)*
- *Development of the new role of Veterans and families’ engagement*
- *Development of the new role in research promotion and coordination*
- *Development of the new role of advocacy to encourage Universities (and MECs) to engage more fully in the military and veteran related space.*

*Precise wording is yet to be developed. It is hoped that future MEC C & ToR redrafts will incorporate the same. (It is appreciated that not all universities and all MECs will be able to engage in everything from the outset. However, when they have the time and resources to do so, the mechanisms will be there in place to allow it).*

## **SOUTHAMPTON**

*This MEC effectively disengaged with COMEC during the tenure of my predecessor. There are a number of good reasons why every attempt has to be made to encourage them to re-engage.*

- *We cannot call ourselves COMEC(UK) if any groupings do not feel a part of COMEC*
- *Fractionalisation results in loss of strength; we will always be stronger as a larger unit.*
- *They must have good people; we always want good people who can sit on the executive*

*There have been recent developments:*

- *I wrote to the Southampton Chairman (and am yet to receive response)*
- *Brighton MEC has disbanded for totally unrelated reasons. Their Chairman has been welcomed into Southampton MEC. We are still in contact. There are plans (undisclosed), to encourage re-unification.*

### **MEC CHAIRS' MEETING**

*This was hosted by Carol and Jason, at the end of January. Unfortunately, due to a family bereavement, I was unable to attend.*

*Carol to report.*

*I look forward to any discussion at the meeting.*

*Jim*

***J S Castle***

*Chairman*

- NOTED: The Secretary noted discussions at the MEC Forum centred around i) Current status (overall mostly going well) ii) How MECs interact with their units and students (a wide range of events were noted including dinners, presentations by students to MEC at their AGM, invitations to inspections and holding MEC meetings at different units throughout the year etc) iii) Interaction of MECs over Teams / in-person post pandemic (many use a hybrid approach) iv) PREVENT legislation and how this links to USU recruitment v) Connection to the covenant / ERM.

### **5. Treasurer's Report**

- RECEIVED: An Executive Summary from the Treasurer (COMEC\_Exec\_2022\_02\_C)
- NOTED: The Chairman asked for feedback on how best to use the current surplus and also to consider ideas for MECs who may also be operating a surplus due to the pandemic e.g. sponsoring students to attend the next conference.

### **6. Reports from the Service Staff Officers**

- RECEIVED: An Executive Summary from each of the Service Staff Officers:
  - a. Royal Navy (COMEC\_Exec\_2022\_02\_D1)

**UNIVERSITY ROYAL NAVAL UNITS REPORT TO THE COMEC, FEBRUARY 2022**

**Introduction**

1. *This report covers the period Nov 21 to Feb 22 and highlights significant activity undertaken by the University Royal Naval Units (URNU).*
2. *Despite the continued evolution of the URNU organisation nationwide, the organisations' mission statement remains:*

*“To inspire individuals through Leadership and Maritime Training, whilst facilitating a career in the Royal Navy for those who choose.”*

*To achieve this mission the 16 URNUs are set a series of output requirements by Commander Universities, Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC). These include delivering the URNU training syllabus, maximising recruitment to the individual units, at sea experience, Adventurous Training and Sport and engagement with local communities.*

**Training Developments**

3. *As CV-19 restrictions have continued to ease, all URNUs have returned to face to face activity. In the period of this report, this has included weekly drill nights, regional New Entry training weekends, Adventurous Training, sport and, increasingly once again, short embarkations at sea in destroyers, frigates and patrol craft. Of note, the first Commanding Officer for URNU Belfast took post at the end of January 2022, providing a full permanent staff for the unit for the first time, with a specific objective of raising awareness of the new unit's existence amongst the local student population. A formal opening ceremony for the unit is planned for early April.*
4. *In addition to this, the URNUs have returned to pre-pandemic engagement with their local communities, working within the Royal Navy's national Naval Regional Command structure. Of particular note in this reporting period was the involvement of URNU students in November Remembrance events. These ranged from taking part in civic parades to holding services at on campus memorials. For many students this was the first main activity outside of drill nights that they took part in, giving them a memorable start to their time with the organisation in which to take pride.*

**Personnel**

5. *The programme of replacing regular Service Coxswains (the unit second-in command) with Full-Time Reserve Service Coxswains is approaching completion, with three final candidates having just been selected by interview. This is a significant step in reinforcing the resilience of the units, reducing the churn in personnel that can come*

*with members of the regular Service, and the commensurate benefit of retaining the knowledge of the individual universities that is needed to provide the best student experience.*

6. *As part of a long term effort to increase the capacity of the URNU HQ, there is positive movement in increasing the staffing of the Universities Department Headquarters at BRNC. At present just two posts, Commander Universities and the Universities Staff Coxswain, provide the URNU HQ function. As briefed to COMEC previously, a Management Team model, tasking individual URNU Commanding Officers with additional duties in support of the HQ, is used (eg. Current Operations, Future Operations, Logistics, Adventurous Training, Training Policy). Agreement has now been achieved that, subject to confirmation in the next financial year, an URNU Chief of Staff post will be established as a deputy to Commander Universities, plus a Training Support Officer and a Training Support Administrator (both Civil Servants). These posts will provide invaluable support in directing and assuring the operations of the units, ensuring that all of the benefits from the URNU transformation programme of the last two years are delivered.*

7. *With only two permanent members of military staff at each URNU, the role of volunteer reservist Training Officers is vital. For many years, each unit has typically had four of these officers, holding honorary rank in the Royal Naval Reserve and often ex-regular personnel or former URNU students. As part of the URNU transformation programme, a major overhaul of the professional training and development available to these personnel was completed. An Initial Training Officers Course (ITOC) and a Training Officers Continuation Course (TOCC) have been developed. Three iterations of the ITOC have now been run and the first TOCC is planned for Spring 2022. This investment in the training staff is seen as a key enabler in further enhancing the URNU student experience.*

8. *At the time of this report, there are 727 URNU Officer Cadets. One of the main lessons from the pandemic has been the use of social media in recruiting new members and, although this number is approaching the funded maximum, recruitment of new members is still being pursued outside of the traditional 'Freshers' season.*

### **Summary**

9. *The URNUs remain at the heart of the Royal Navy's engagement with the national undergraduate population. With the URNU Belfast now operating with a full staff, it has a footprint across all four home nations. Transformation has continued with the completion of the move to Full-Time Reserve Service Coxswains and plans are in place to create an HQ function with greater capability and resilience. In the units, investment in the Training Officers continues, to enable them to provide the best possible student experience. As the organisation looks towards the rest of this academic year, student numbers remain good, with an ongoing effort to recruit new members into remaining spaces.*

*A J Stevens  
Commander, Royal Navy  
Commander Universities, Britannia Royal Naval College*

- NOTED: Capt Jonathan Phelps noted that 4 units and the HQ are currently undergoing an OFSTED inspection. Final outcomes are still pending noting early feedback suggests themes around personnel redundancy, and sea time for cadets noting shortage of training vessels.

b. Army (COMEC\_Exec\_2022\_02\_D2)

*G3/COMEC SITREP/RMAS/Feb22*

*4 Feb 2022*

*UNIVERSITY OFFICER TRAINING CORPS – COMEC REPORT*

1. **Commander OTC overview.** *Recent command and control changes in RMAS have seen the appointment of Col Jax Powell as the Regular Commander OTC (WEF 1 Jan 2022). Much work has been conducted into articulating the value proposition for UOTCs successfully placing them firmly in the delivery of effect for the 3\* Commander Home Command. Christmas recess saw some Covid disruption to overseas activity, but many UOTCs successfully delivered a wide range of Winter AT*

2. **G1.** *UOTC funded OCdt establishment remains at 2570. Planning saw 1945 entry standard medicals distributed across the UOTCs, (compared to 2205 in 20/21 and 2456 in 19/20). Despite Herculean efforts to ensure attendance, a disappointing amount of no-shows meant only 1752 medicals were delivered to the potential new cohort. As of 3 Feb, 1337 first year OCdts have been attested, and this is expected to grow to about 1400 (historical norm). Focus now shifts to ratifying the medical documentation allowing them to participate fully in UOTC activity.*

3. **G5. Plans.** *Last term, Commander Home Command directed a project to articulate the UOTC value proposition. This work has highlighted the areas where UOTCs are adding value to his commands effects – notably recognising the inflow, but adding engagement and lived-experience elements. This work will be used as the foundation for further work strands designed to optimise, standardise (where desirable) and deliver the UOTC experience in the best possible manner. The initial tranche of the new defence STEM Undergraduate Scheme (DSUS) is expected in September 2022 and the scheme promises to offer potential expansion for UOTCs.*

4. **G5. Recruitment plans.** *Last year’s successful commercial partnership with TONIC – a media company allowed a more efficient ATTRACT campaign and the intent is to continue with a commercial relationship in 2022/23. Discussions are ongoing with agencies.*



5. **G7 Military Training.** UOTCs continue to deliver against Module A and B of the Commissioning Course Short. Most UOTCs are approximately halfway through delivery of Module A at the time of writing. The potential for UOTCs to deliver Army Reserve basic soldier training (Common Military Syllabus (Reserves) (CMS (R)) ) is being investigated in order to allow OCdts greater opportunity to work with Regular and Type A units. A number of UOTCs, including Birmingham, Oxford and Bristol are forging new links with US based officer delivery programmes such as ROTC.

6. **G7 Other Training (AT).** The constraint on UOTCs for activity to remain within the UK for has been lifted and UOTCs have an ambitious programme of AT; including parachuting, sailing mountaineering and skiing.

7. **G8 Finance.** The financial position remains difficult across Defence and UOTCs still remain subject to close scrutiny. The financial position is shown below (As at 3 Feb)

<i>Planned</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Budget</i>
<b>£9,043,328.06</b>	<b>£5,332,358.32</b>	<b>£7,118,361.82</b>

*It is anticipated that the budget for 2022/23 will be broadly as per FY21/22.*

*{electronically signed}*

*Colonel Nick Cheshire  
Commander OTC*

- NOTED: Col N Cheshire noted his thanks to Lt Col M Bishop and his stalwart support for OTCs over the years. He also welcomed Col J Powell as lead for day-to-day management of the OTCs. Col N Cheshire will now lead the digital transformation of the RMAS group using OTCs as a test bed.
- NOTED: Col N Cheshire noted that although recruitment has been successful there have been a number of no shows at medicals which is impacting on final numbers. Lt Col M Bishop noted OTCs attested 1400 last year and conducted 2200 medicals.

c. Royal Air Force (COMEC\_Exec\_2022\_02\_D3)

*20220208 – 6 FTS COMEC Report*

*8 Feb 22*

*Comdt 6 FTS  
COMEC Executive*

**COMEC EXECUTIVE MEETING 17 Feb 22 – 6 FTS REPORT**

### **Comdt 6 FTS Overview**

1. *The level of activity across 6 FTS has increased in all aspects as COVID restrictions have evolved in recent months. The induction and onboarding of new students is prevalent in this period but there has also been an increase in Adventurous and Personal Development Training and formal Phase 1 training. All of this is in addition to the continued safe return to flying which is being successfully managed and all 6 FTS sites are now back conducting flying activities with opportunities for new UAS students to gain flying experience or for those further on conducting elements of formal flying training. Around 2/3 of the aircraft fleet are now fully back in service and the prospect of return to RAF Air Cadet flying has recently been endorsed by the Chief of the Air Staff.*
2. *Funding has been allocated for a large scale winter sports expedition where in Mar 22, 6 FTS are taking a total 125 UAS OCdts to conduct alpine ski training in the French resort of Les Contamines. Each squadron has been allocated a number of places on this expedition which will deliver ski foundation level 1 and level 2 training, as well as being challenging and rewarding for our students. Although it is clear that COVID restrictions are receding in the UK it has nonetheless remained a significant challenge to plan around evolving overseas governments policies to ensure we can deliver high quality and meaningful training and development opportunities.*

### **Recruiting**

3. *Recruitment numbers look strong this year with 6 FTS on target to reach 90-95% capacity compared to establishment<sup>1</sup>. When compared to the last 2 recruiting years that have been affected by the pandemic this is encouraging to report. The single largest delay in recruitment is usually caused by medical issues and the HQ has worked hard with the Squadrons and Capita to resolve local capacity issues to try and streamline the process. There have been some capacity challenges in areas<sup>2</sup> but we have adapted our travel funding policy to overcome these obstacles and use any spare capacity at other nearby locations that are able to support.*

### **UAS Student Population Breakdown**

4. *Of the current student cohort (903 members), 29% are female and 71% male. Of our total number of students, 53% are studying a STEM subject of which 20% are female and 80% male. Within the STEM group 69% are studying a subject relating to engineering, with 30% females and 70% males. 15% of our total student population are BAME, and 52% of those studying STEM subjects are BAME. For comparison the current RAF diversity targets for Regular Service are 10% BAME and 15% Female respectively.*

### **HQ 6 FTS Armed Forces Career Office**

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<sup>1</sup> 6 FTS are established for 1000 Officer Cadets and as at 8 Feb there are 903 students attested.

<sup>2</sup> Capita have found it challenging to create capacity in Bristol and London.

5. *The 6FTS Virtual Armed Forces Careers Office (VAFCO) is moving across to the new RAF Recruiting Information Technology system (RITs) during February 2022. This is a manual process which has been conducted by the Whole Force across the Recruiting Force. It is hoped that this will provide a better experience for all candidates going forward and enable better communications between the VAFCO and our students. New applications from students, direct to RITs should be authorised some time in February 2022 providing them with a more user led experience. As COVID restrictions are being relaxed, the Officer Aircrew Selection Centre has increased its attendance capacity back to pre-COVID numbers in most, if not all areas. This means that our students can benefit from taking part in the Test in Advance (TIA) which gives them an opportunity to attempt the Aptitude Testing for the respective chosen branches<sup>3</sup>. Figures from RITs detailing the number of UAS applications for Service should be available for the next quarterly report once the data transition has occurred.*

### **Accreditation of Phase 1 Training**

6. *The delivery of the 6 FTS Ground Training Syllabus has continued over the period. Many or those new to a UAS have completed their Induction Training or will do in the next few weeks. Most of our training is now face-to-face (at sqns and at RAFC Cranwell), with a blend of virtual training being provided as required. The first student who joined RAF Officer Training Academy's (OTA) Modularised Initial Officer Training Course at Module 2 is due to graduate 10 Feb 22. Not only has this shortened their time through the training pipeline but it also recognises their hard work and dedication in balancing their academic studies with the training that they have undertaken during their UAS service. This is the first evidence that the UAS Accelerated Training Pathway (ATP)<sup>4</sup> is working as designed. On 13 Feb 22, five more UAS OCdts will join MIOTC at Module 2 and we expect them to perform to a similar high standard. A third Pre-MIOT course will run later in Feb to prepare another two OCdts to join RAF OTA.*

7. *The next stage of this work strand is to accredit the 6 FTS ATP with that of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) Phase 1 Training. This work is progressing well, we have obtained support from the RAF Halton Training Wing, Reserve Strategic Plans and Reserves Recruitment & Selection organisations to make significant progress. A formal proposal has been drafted which will be presented to the RAFC Cranwell Customer Executive Board in May 22. It is anticipated that from Aug 22, 6 FTS OCdts will be eligible for accelerated pathway in to the RAuxAF.*

### **Project TELUM**

8. *TELUM In Service Date (ISD) has been delayed by at least 5 years due to Senior Leadership Team direction to incorporate a 'Net Zero at Point of Activity' propulsion system in accordance with UK Govt (2050) and ASTRA (2040) targets; current indications are that Technological Readiness Levels would not support an In Service Date prior to 2027. The Strategic Overview Case (SOC) has now been approved and*

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<sup>3</sup> Aptitude branches include: Pilot, Remotely Piloted Air System Pilot, Weapon System Operator, Air Ops Controller, Intelligence

<sup>4</sup> The UAS ATP is the accredited Phase 1 training delivered to UAS students enabling them to miss the first 6 weeks of Initial Officer Training.

*proof of concept work is ongoing to further Defence understanding of the potential technical solutions, noting that TELUM remains solution-agnostic. Scope is not limited merely to the Air System but will seek to capture the wider issues associated with a novel propulsion system, including (but not limited to): infrastructure and electrical resilience across the Defence Estate. In the interim, work is ongoing to ensure a seamless transition between the end of the current contracted flying provision and the replacement capability; and a limited cockpit upgrade for the current Tutor aircraft that will further enhance the safety of operating crews and passengers, whilst ensuring that the aircraft remains regulatory-compliant and fit for purpose, has just been approved.*

**K Thompson**

*K Thompson MA  
SO2 Force Development*

- NOTED: Gp Capt R Caine noted UAS OCdts are back to flying now after Covid and the issues with the Tutor aircraft. Recruiting is looking promising and already have 900 enrolled. Diversity of students has also been positive.
- NOTED: Gp Capt R Caine noted 6FTS are now doing 7 weeks of officer training as well as elementary flying training which will shorten IoT (Initial Officer Training) for students. New aircraft are expected in 2027.
- NOTED: The Chairman noted COMEC's best wishes to Air Cdr I Sharrocks and welcomed Gp Capt R Caine to the role.

d. Defence People (COMEC\_Exec\_2022\_02\_D4)

## **DEFENCE PEOPLE (RF&C) UPDATE FOR COMEC – FEB 2022**

### **Defence Overview**

1. *The department's priorities are focusing on the immediate challenges posed by living with COVID 19 and ensuring Defence's and HMG's outputs are not adversely affected. The department continues to work on the outcomes from the Spending Review and Integrated Foreign, Defence and Security Review. R&C remains actively engaged regarding any measures that might affect Reserves and Cadets.*

### **Reserves Policy**

2. **Reserve Forces 30 Review.** *The RF30 report has been published and a programme team within Defence is working to develop the recommendations. Governance process is being assured with the Senior Responsible Officer approval process initiated. Early 2022 will see the initial formal responses to the RF30 to parliament through cross-government consultation.*

3. **Use of Reserves.** *As part of the Department's focus on Enterprise Approach we are examining ways that we might make better use of the Reserves. Specifically, the Ex AGILE STANCE campaign continues to focus on the ability to re-build a culture of readiness and re-establish our ability to mobilise reservists at mass and pace. This will*

require a supporting employer engagement LOD. We are actively considering how the RF30 work shape the future role of Reserve Forces. Through the Defence Plan we are also looking to optimise the use of Reserves and develop better metrics to define the utility of reservists outwith Mobilisation.

4. **RFCA Reform.** The business case to establish the new RFCA NDPB has received cross-government approval. Good progress has been made between the RFCA Reform team and RFCA representatives on various aspects of the new operating model, executive composition, and advisory structure (through which the existing wider membership will be retained).

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

5. The total Trained and Untrained Strength of the Tri-Service Future Reserves 2020 at 1 July 2021 was 37,290, an increase of 180 personnel or 0.5 per cent since 1 July 2020.

6. The trained strength is comprised of:

- a. Maritime Reserve: 2,890
- b. Army Reserve: 26,510
- c. RAF Reserve: 2,870

7. Reserves from all Services continue to operate in every theatre alongside their Regular counterparts.

#### **Employer Engagement**

8. **Overall Assessment.** We assess that EE has now reached an Operational Pause; FR20 is largely delivered, and largely successful. Preparations must now be made to move to the next phase of employer engagement which is likely to have 3 main sections:

- a. **Retention of the MOD/Employer Relationship.** Essentially this will require effort to preserve and develop where necessary the work that has already been achieved with FR20 in the 2013-2021 timeframe. Key to this will be ensuring that the work outlined below does not impede/fracture that MoD/employer relationship.
- b. **Support to RF30.** RF30 represents a new paradigm in EE terms. Both employers and employees/reservists will be asked to do more, often outside agreed or understood tempos and routines. Any campaign to develop or embed even part of RF30 will require a sophisticated EE campaign to ensure understanding and consent on all sides.
- c. **AGILE STANCE Campaign Plan (ASCP).** As a campaign plan, AGILE STANCE may fundamentally change the way UK prepares, delivers and sustains her Armed Forces in the future. The role of Reserves in ASCP is being developed and will require a strong EE element in support, not least in the work being done to stand up a Strategic Reserve.

9. **Employer Recognition Scheme.** *The revised ERS Directive was issued in Jan 21 and the 4 regional Gold award ceremonies were all completed successfully. Current numbers are 493 Gold winners, 1270 Silver and 4292 Bronze. Of these, there are 17 Gold, 26 ERS Silver and 24 Bronze winners in the University sector.*

*Col Darin Gray VR  
Assistant Head Reserves, Defence People (RF&C)*

- NOTED: Col D Gray noted Defence is currently focussed on dealing with spending reviews and the integrated review, as well as reservists supporting ambulance drivers in Scotland, Wales and Yorkshire.
- NOTED: Col D Gray noted numbers continue to grow in the Employers Recognition Scheme (ERS). There are now 9 new Universities and in total there are 17 Gold members, 26 Silver members and 24 Bronze members.
- NOTED; Col D Gray noted the Partnership with Defence conference which is an annual large-scale event for defence and supporting organisations. Col D Gray suggested COMEC get on the agenda and target for next year. The Chairman noted this would be an excellent platform and can market attendance to MECs. The Vice-Chair will look into attendance next year.

#### 7. COMEC Prize

- RESOLVED: The Chairman noted general agreement on principal for new COMEC Prize criteria and requested the COMEC Prize Sub-Group now consider the options in detail and decide on how best to take forward.
- APPROVED: The 2022 COMEC Prize Criteria was approved.
- NOTED: Discussions were had around suitable wording around the prize criteria and how this should best be marketed. In discussion with the Service Staff Officers the nomination wording requirement was shortened to 500 words to make the nomination process more efficient.
- **ACTION: Dr R Hall noted their MEC has a best student competition with a submission date one month before the COMEC Prize whose submissions could also inform the prize nomination and make this process less onerous. The Chairman requested this be added to a later agenda for discussion and possibly consider at a MEC Chairs forum.**

#### 8. Engagement

- NOTED: The Executive had a wide discussion around engagement. Professor M Siva-Jothy noted the need to have better channels of communication between Universities, community and the military. He noted at Sheffield MEC they have organised a small conference with the current financial surplus in which a lecture was presented by the Army on leadership training and how Universities might develop leadership in the curriculum. Civic leaders were also invited. This made engagement with the military more relevant for those not normally connected and MECs should be doing more to support this.

- NOTED: Gp Capt R Caine noted we need to do more in the social media forum to engage young people. Capt Jonathan Phelps noted not enough is being done on self-esteem and mental health – could some money be put towards mental health development for individuals e.g. engaging a performance psychologist to give a talk?
- NOTED: Dr R Hall noted we had a Benefits of the USU publication which we could use more to note relevance to Vice-Chancellors.
- **ACTION: Dr R Hall to look into performance psychology and how this could be funded and used to support engagement.**
- NOTED: It was noted the Northampton report on cadet membership was really helpful particularly for deprived areas of the UK. The Chairman noted Major I Stoney could look into how best to use this and perhaps adding an annex to the report.
- NOTED: Dr R Hall noted on the engagement theme that his University is hosting the “Force Atlantic Team” for an afternoon of presentations and Q&A. They are inviting all Universities, Regular and Reserve Units and local government. They also have a Defence Dining Club event with a specialised speaker, local dignitaries and the University Executive. They sit the University Executive with their own students to demonstrate the added value of the USU student experience which works really well.
- RECIEVED: UK MEC Representation Summary  
(COMEC\_Exec\_2022\_02\_E)

UK Military Education Committee Representation – Q4 2021

<i>MEC</i>	<i>Universities Represented</i>	<i>Service Units Represented</i>	<i>Other Information</i>
<i>Aberdeen</i>	<i>University of Aberdeen Robert Gordon University</i>	<i>Aberdeen Universities Officer Training Corps East of Scotland Air Squadron HRFCA</i>	
<i>Bristol</i>	<i>Bristol Bath West of England (UWE)</i>	<i>BUOTC BUAS Bristol URNU</i>	<i>Service Units also take students from: Bath Spa University BUAS also has students from Exeter and Plymouth</i>
<i>Cambridge</i>	<i>University of Cambridge University of East Anglia Anglia Ruskin University Essex University of Hertfordshire</i>	<i>Cambridge University Royal Naval Unit Cambridge University Officer Training Corps (aka Light Blue Volunteers) Cambridge University Air Squadron</i>	

	<p><i>University of Bedford</i>  <i>University of Suffolk</i>  <i>Cambridge Regional College</i>  <i>University Centre Peterborough</i>  <i>Rittle</i>  <i>University College</i></p>		
<i>East Midlands</i>	<p><i>De Montfort Leicester</i>  <i>Lincoln</i>  <i>Loughborough</i>  <i>Nottingham</i>  <i>Nottingham Trent</i>  <i>Northampton</i></p>	<p><i>URNU</i>  <i>EMUOTC</i>  <i>EMUAS</i>  <i>Defence Academy, DTU</i>  <i>East Midlands RFCA</i></p>	<p><i>Bishops Grosseteste University (Lincoln) is currently being considered for representation by the MEC</i></p>
<i>Edinburgh</i>	<p><i>University of Edinburgh</i>  <i>Edinburgh Napier</i>  <i>University Heriot-Watt</i>  <i>University Queen Margaret</i>  <i>University</i></p>	<p><i>Edinburgh URNU</i>  <i>CEUOTC</i>  <i>ESUAS</i></p>	
<i>Exeter</i>	<p><i>University of Plymouth</i>  <i>University of Exeter</i>  <i>Falmouth</i>  <i>University Plymouth</i>  <i>Marjon</i>  <i>University</i></p>	<p><i>Exeter University Officer Training Corps</i>  <i>URNU</i>  <i>Wessex Reserve Forces and Cadets Association</i>  <i>Royal Navy</i>  <i>British Army</i></p>	
<i>Glasgow and Strathclyde</i>	<p><i>University of Glasgow</i>  <i>University of Strathclyde</i>  <i>Glasgow</i>  <i>Caledonian</i>  <i>University</i></p>	<p><i>Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities' Royal Navy Unit, GSURNU</i>  <i>Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities' Officer Training Corps, GSUOTC</i></p>	<p><i>Some of the USUs also recruit from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland</i></p>



	<i>University of the West of Scotland</i>	<i>Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde Air Squadron, UGSAS Trojan Squadron, DTUS (Newcastle) [Strathclyde has a contract to recruit DTUS students]</i>	
<i>Leeds MAFNEC</i>	<i>University of Leeds Leeds Beckett University Leeds Trinity University Leeds College of Music University of Bradford University of Huddersfield University of York York St John University University of Hull</i>	<i>Yorkshire Universities Royal Naval Unit (YURNU) Leeds University Officers' Training Corp (LUOTC) Yorkshire Universities Air Squadron (YUAS)</i>	<i>The Universities of Hull and York are representing on Leeds MAFNEC currently.</i>
<i>Liverpool</i>	<i>University of Liverpool LJMU (tbc) Hope University (tbc)  In Attendance: University of Chester (tbc) Edge Hill University (tbc)</i>	<i>Liverpool University Royal Naval Unit (LURNU) Liverpool University Air Squadron (LUAS) Liverpool University Officer Training Corps (LUOTC) North West Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (NW RFCA)</i>	
<i>London</i>	<i>LSBU SOAS Imperial College Kent QMUL Brunel KCL UCL Kingston</i>	<i>London URNU ULOTC ULAS</i>	

	<i>Birkbeck (soon to join)</i>		
<i>Manchester and Salford</i>	<i>University of Salford University of Manchester Manchester Metropolitan University University of Bolton University of Central Lancashire</i>	<i>MAS UOTC MAS URNU MAS UAS Navy Regional Command Northern England &amp; Isle of Man The Reserve Forces &amp; Cadets' Association for North West of England &amp; Isle of Man</i>	
<i>Northumbrian</i>	<i>Durham University Newcastle University Northumbria University The University of Sunderland Teesside University</i>	<i>Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme Trojan Squadron Northumbrian Universities Air Squadron Northumbrian Universities Royal Naval Unit Northumbrian Universities Officers' Training Corps.</i>	
<i>Oxford DMI</i>	<i>Oxford University Oxford Brookes Reading Buckingham New University University of Gloucester Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester</i>	<i>Oxford OTC</i>	
<i>Queens Belfast</i>	<i>Queen's University Belfast Ulster University</i>	<i>Queen's OTC Northern Ireland Universities Air Squadron Belfast University Royal Navy Unit</i>	
<i>Sheffield</i>	<i>Sheffield Hallam University</i>	<i>Yorkshire URNU (YURNU) Yorkshire UAS (YUAS) Sheffield UOTC (SUOTC)</i>	

	<i>University of Sheffield</i>		
<i>Southampton (includes Sussex)</i>			<i>Not currently a COMEC member</i>
<i>Tayforth</i>	<i>St Andrews Dundee Stirling Abertay University of Highlands and Islands</i>	<i>Tayforth OTC ESUAS URNU Edinburgh</i>	<i>Stirling students link to West of Scotland UAS</i>
<i>Wales</i>	<i>Aberystwyth University Bangor University Cardiff University Cardiff Metropolitan University Swansea University University of South Wales University of Wales Trinity and St David's.</i>	<i>Wales UOTC Wales URNU Universities of Wales Air Squadron</i>	
<i>West Midlands</i>	<i>Aston BCU Coventry Harper Adams Keele Loughborough Stafford UCB Birmingham Warwick Wolverhampton Worcester Newman</i>	<i>BURNU BUOTC UBAS</i>	<i>Not all Service Units recruit from all Universities</i>

*Total: 19 (18 COMEC members)*

- **ACTION: The Secretary will explore turning the above table into a map for the COMEC website.**

- NOTED: The table helpfully identifies Universities that are not represented and could be targeted for engagement in future.

#### **9. Conference**

- NOTED: Col N Cheshire confirmed RMAS can support the 13,14 and 15 September for the conference. Detailed planning will now commence with the conference team. Speakers will now also be considered under the leadership theme including the Commandant.
- **ACTION: The Secretary will set up follow up meetings with the Conference team.**
- **ACTION: The Secretary will send out a “Save the Date” to MECs.**

#### **10. COMEC Constitution & MEC Terms of Reference:**

- CONSIDERED: An update on discussions relating to the COMEC Constitution and MEC Terms of Reference.
- NOTED: The Chairman noted this is still a work in progress and that he is working through a draft with the Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.
- **ACTION: A draft will be circulated to the COMEC Executive before the AGM.**

#### **11. Any Other Business:**

- NOTED: There was no further business discussed.

#### **12. Dates and Venues of Future Meetings:**

- APPROVED: The dates and venues of future meetings subject to pandemic restrictions:
  - Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022 (ULOTC, London)
  - Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022 AGM & Conference (RMAS, Army)
  - Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022 (ULOTC, London)
  - Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2023 (Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting)