



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

### **Executive Committee Meeting**

**held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022 from 1230hrs to 1530hrs at the Officers  
Mess, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Camberley, Surrey GU15 4PQ.**

### **Minute**

#### **Present**

Dr M Vilnay (Vice-Chair); Rev Professor J P Taylor (Treasurer); Ms C Kinkead; Dr G Matthews-Smith; Professor M Siva-Jothy; Maj I Stoney; Gp Capt R Caine; Col J Powell; Col L Brooks; Lt Cdr B McWilliams; Lt Cdr L Youngson;

#### **In Attendance**

Mr J Norris (Secretary)

#### **Apologies**

General Sir P Wall (President); Mr J S Castle (Chairman); Dr R Hall; Cdr T Stevens

#### **1. Introductions**

- NOTED: The Vice-Chair noted her standing in for the Chairman due to illness.

#### **2. Minutes**

- APPROVED: The Minutes of the Executive meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022

#### **3. Matters Arising**

- CONSIDERED: Any matters or action points arising.

##### Matters Arising (Min 3 19 May 2022)

- DEFERRED: 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 requested this to be added to the November COMEC Executive agenda.
- DEFERRED: The Chairman requested HE Engagement with the Army be moved to a future meeting and also consider RAF and RN in discussions.

The Chairman requested the Services contribute a short paper on this to be added to the November COMEC Executive agenda.

- DEFERRED: 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. 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. Following discussion, the Chairman noted we needing a new approach to reviewing and suggesting new Occasional Papers. Maj I Stoney will consider and discuss with the Chairman on next steps with the outcome. Col D Gray also offered to join noting possible key links to Northampton report and deprived areas where cadet units have brought about major change.

#### Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal (Min 5 19 May 2022)

- RESOLVED: The Executive agreed to give conference delegates the option of adding on a voluntary donation to the Ukraine appeal with the conference fee. **It was noted £60 had been raised.**

#### COMEC Constitution & MEC Terms of Reference (Min 6 19 May 2022)

- ON AGENDA: Following discussion, the Chairman noted approval in principal of the final draft of the COMEC Constitution and for it to proceed to the next stage.

#### Engagement (Min 8 19 May 2022)

- RESOLVED: Ms C Kinkead noted that following MEC Forum feedback, that it would be useful to capture bullet points of discussions at the fora to support sharing of best practice. The Chairman requested the Secretary collate notes taken to date and he will pick out the key messages. It was noted this might also be helpful content for the conference and encouraging other MEC colleagues to attend. **MEC Engagement will be discussed at AGM including sharing best practice with other services.**
- RESOLVED: The Chairman requested a more detailed discussion and actions on the MEC awareness survey report for the November Executive meeting. **Professor M Siva-Jothy is sharing details at the AGM.**

#### Conference (Min 9 19 May 2022)

- RESOLVED: The Secretary will block book conference accommodation for non-service members of the Executive.

#### **4. Chairman’s Report**

- RECEIVED: Receive: An Executive Summary from the Chairman.

#### ***Chairman’s Report***

*This annual report is presented to the Executive and Council. It forms a summary of activities between September 2021 and now.*

### **CONFERENCE 2021**

*Held and hosted by RAF Halton. This was one of the first engagements that we attended face to face after so much time talking through computers. Underlying theme was Space and the way we must develop into this area. Workshop also a great success. Good cross section of the MEC community present, including COs and students. Our thanks go to Halton and the whole RAF team for a fantastic event.*

### **COMEC PRESIDENT**

*General Sir Peter Wall is coming to the end of his term. We are in the process of finding and securing a replacement.*

### **EXECUTIVE MEETINGS**

*We have moved back to mostly face to face meetings, recognising the importance of talking directly to people during the network sessions. At the same time we have recognised convenience, so retain one of the meetings as on-line. The meetings are as follows:*

- *November – London*
- *February – on-line*
- *June – London*
- *September (AGM) – Conference venue*

*Our thanks go to the Army, who act as our excellent hosts when we are in London.*

### **MEC CHAIRS' MEETINGS**

*These only introduced over the last year or so. They are held roughly three weeks before the Nov, Feb and June meetings. Representation from the MECs has been good with around 80% attendance on most occasions. Invitations go to Chairs and Secretaries, with the Chairs encouraged to send a representative if they themselves cannot attend. Discussions are far more informal than the traditional meetings. Nothing is off the table.*

*As a note for your diaries, I am pleased to report that Rt Hon Johnny Mercer MP has agreed to join us for Nov meeting. This of course has to be wrapped up in the usual caveats associated with those in Government.*

### **CONSTITUTION**

*I was elected on the premise that COMEC (and the MECs), could and should improve their relevance through 360°. The new COMEC constitution (and the suggested MEC constitutions) are an attempt to do just that. They are not directional or aspirational, they are designed to facilitate activity across the Defence and Veteran space. The additional activities are optional, should time and other resources allow.*

*We are at a position where the new Constitution has been agreed by the Executive. We now look for approval by the Council. The final draft is annexed to your papers. The Constitution will be covered under a separate agenda item at the AGM.*

### **CONFERENCE 2022**

*Considerable time and resources have been employed in developing the Conference, which this year comes from RMAS. I am eternally grateful to the sub-committee responsible.*

**COMEC PRIZE 2022**

*Winner of the COMEC 2022 Student Prize: 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Alice Walton-Knight of Cambridge UOTC*

*The panel would also like to highly commended two other students on their outstanding contributions to their USUs:*

- *Snr Welfare Mid Alastair McDonald of Wales URNU*
- *SUO Libby Rickard of East Midlands UOTC*

*I would like to thank the sub-committee for their enduring efforts and time in successfully running and judging the event.*

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

*Jim  
J S Castle  
Chairman*

- NOTED: It was suggested the “Johnny Mercer MP - in Conversation” event have no limit of attendees.
- NOTED: The Vice-Chair asked for feedback on the constitution at this point. There was wide ranging discussion and feedback and opinions can be summarised as follows:
  - There was positive feedback on direction of travel however further clarity was needed on the new areas of focus (for example research aspects) and how these would be taken forward (tactical / strategic).
  - The Service Staff Officers noted some of the new areas of focus were outside of their current remit or did not have relevance for them to participate in discussions. Some strategic input would be needed at 1-3\* star level for example while other tactical decisions might be taken at Unit/MEC level.
  - There was feedback that MECs did not have enough time to meet and discuss the new constitution properly with their members or feedback their thoughts to COMEC.
  - It was felt there is a current lack of capacity in COMEC to be able to take the new dimensions in the constitution forward. It was suggested there needs to be more clarity on what is aspirational and what is core business.
  - It was noted the constitution was trying to act in part as an action plan and incorporate standing operating procedures with a feeling this should be separated.
- **ACTION: The Vice-Chair summarised and noted agreement from the Executive that the draft COMEC Constitution and Terms of Reference could not be taken to the AGM to be ratified at this time. Although there was agreement in principle on the direction of travel it was felt more time needed to be spent working through the detail in consultation with the MECs.**
- NOTED: The Vice-Chair thanked Col J Powell and her team for hosting the conference at a very difficult time and that the social event restrictions were

understood. The Treasurer also noted thanks to the COMEC Executive conference team for the considerable preparatory work.

- NOTED: The Vice-Chair noted thanks to the COMEC Executive prize adjudication team for all their work on the selection process. It was noted clearer guidance was needed for COs with templates and limited work count. Col J Powell noted Executive COs can help by instructing COs to nominate at least one candidate. **ACTION: Templates / Guidance to be discussed at the November meeting.**

## 5. Treasurer's Report

- RECEIVED: An Executive Summary from the Treasurer (COMEC\_Exec\_2022\_09\_C)
- NOTED: The Treasurer noted not all MECs had paid their subscription with one MEC being 2 years in arrears, however expectations are that payments will be settled in due course. It was noted a significant amount of effort and time was required to ensure subscription payments, which the Treasurer will note at the AGM. The Treasurer thanked the Secretary for helping to chase payments.
- NOTED: The Treasurer highlighted the most significant spend has been on Executive travel and travel to COMEC meetings, reflective of the diversity of the COMEC Executive membership across the United Kingdom and increased distance to meetings. Rail strikes and disruption have also increased costs this year.
- NOTED: The Treasurer noted the previous policy of reducing reserves to no more than one year of income which was happening until the Covid19 pandemic. The Executive agreed to continue this policy and the Vice-Chair suggested using some surplus to pay for more cadets to attend the conference.
- NOTED: It was agreed that as the honorarium for the Secretary had not been reviewed for many years, and the workload for the role had increased substantially, the amount should be increased to £3K per annum from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022 and reviewed every 2 years.

## 6. Reports from the Service Staff Officers

- RECEIVED: An Executive Summary from each of the Service Staff Officers:

a. Royal Navy:

### ***UNIVERSITY ROYAL NAVAL UNITS REPORT TO THE COMEC, AUG 2022***

#### ***Introduction***

1. *This report covers the period May 22 to Aug 22 for the University Royal Naval Units (URNU) in pursuance of their mission:*

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

## **Activity**

2. *As was usual in pre-pandemic times, the summer term has seen the continuation of drill nights until the end of May, and at some units into early June, but with smaller numbers attending. This is to be expected as the academic year for most student Officer Cadets (OCs) culminates. However, this is also the time for more longer length training activities and events, enabling OCs and staff to bring together the skills and experience gained across the four URNU training pillars of Militarisation, Marinisation, CLM (Command, Leadership and Management) and Sport/Adventurous Training. Activities have included:*

- a. *163 OCs embarked for up to a week in various Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) vessels.*
- b. *168 OCs completed other maritime training including sailing, swimming, paddle sports, diving and Royal Yachting Association accredited qualifications.*
- c. *372 OCs completed land training activity including regional and national sports championships, 'Tough-Mudder' endurance competitions, Chartered Management Institute qualifications, parachuting, mountain biking and other adventurous training activities.*
- d. *106 OCs undertook various visits, including sailing up the River Thames in RFA MOUNTS BAY and helping to form the '70' on the ship's flight deck, an image seen around the world as part of Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.*
- e. *67 OCs supported public engagement events for the Royal Navy, including Armed Forces Day, Falklands 40 and regional activity.*
- f. *130 OCs attended a national Summer Camp at URNU Cambridge, with 60 British Canoeing and 200 RYA qualifications awarded.*
- g. *URNU Oxford supported the hosting of the annual Hudson Fellowship Trust Memorial Lecture and dinner at Exeter College, Oxford, with The First Sea Lord as guest of honour.*

## **Personnel**

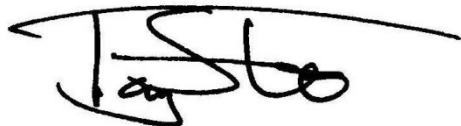
3. *As reported previously, one of the biggest risks the Universities Department at Britannia Royal Naval College faces is a lack of capacity within the headquarters staff (and as noted in the Feb 22 OFSTED inspection). The main method of mitigating this risk remains the use of individual URNU Commanding Officers (COs) to in 'virtual HQ' roles, with most of the 15 COs having specific additional responsibilities for national functions. This approach continues to work well, but the intent remains to increase the HQ workforce. To this end, a new Civil Service post, the departmental Support Officer, has been approved for funding with first post older expected to join the HQ in October. Supported, later in the year, by a further two new Civil Service posts, this team will take*

*much of the financial management burden, reporting and data analysis workload from the units, enabling the latter to focus more time and effort on direct student-facing activities. This is a major advance for the organisation, achieved in an environment of generally downward pressure on workforce numbers, and will help address many of the issues highlighted by various external inspections, such as those by OFSTED. A bid has been made for one final addition to the team, a military Chief of Staff, to provide additional resource for the leadership and holding to account of individual URNUs. Subject to final approval, it is hoped to be able to stand up that position in Dec 22.*

4. *In addition to these planned changes, three of the existing 15 URNU COs have changed as part of the normal Royal Navy assignment cycle. One unit, Yorkshire, is currently gapped its CO, with support being provided from URNU Northumbria, with Navy Command actively engaged in actions to fill the post,*

### ***Farewell***

5. *Having had the great privilege of being Commander Universities for a second time, I will be leaving this role, and full-time service with the Royal Navy, in the near future. Ahead of this, I will be handing over as Commander Universities to Commander Andrew Loring in the week commencing 12 Sep 22, so am unable to be present at your Executive meeting. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all the members of COMEC for your unstinting support for all that the URNUs do. It is greatly appreciated and, quite simply, vital to us being able to give your students the best experience possible. Thank you.*



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

- NOTED: Lt Cdr B McWilliams and Lt Cdr L Youngson represented the Commander Universities.
- NOTED: Challenges were noted on staffing resources and a recent OFSTED inspection reported the organisation was undermanned. Investment is coming to HQ to better support URNUs.
- NOTED: It is expected cadets recruitment targets will be met and the DTUS to DSUS transition will further increase numbers.
- NOTED: An MoU is to be put in place with local units in relation to welfare with the aim of strengthening links to MECs and Universities. It was noted this was a tri-service issue so more detail and outcomes would be welcomed. Dr G Matthews-Smith suggested linking to the student's association as

Universities may not be able to share information. **ACTION: RN to update the Executive on this initiative at the next meeting.**

- NOTED: An increase in Freshers Fair costs were noted and the Executive were asked if they could help support and reduce costs to service units noting public funds. The Treasurer noted it was the student associations that manage these rates and not Universities making it more difficult for MECs to input. **ACTION: Executive members were asked to check what is happening at their Universities and report back.**

b. Army (COMEC\_Exec\_2022\_09\_D2)

02 Aug 22

COMEC Secretary

*University Officers' Training Corps – COMEC Executive – August Update*

1. **Commander OTC overview.** *In the autumn we look forward to welcoming the new Commandant to RMAS (on promotion) Maj Gen Zac Stenning. The summer term has focused on units' Annual Deployment Exercises (ADXs), including completion of Module A and B training and has seen a considerable number of domestic and overseas adventure training (AT) exercises taking place. With Covid restrictions in the main now behind us, units have been able to deliver more of the expected 'offer' to their OCdts who have thrown themselves into these opportunities, following their annual exam periods (many for the first time, following previous years' post pandemic restrictions). With ADXs and AT expeds now mainly complete, less a few late deployments, units are now planning for the next academic year including their critical period of annual recruitment. This, with the earlier revision of the RMAS directive and the new mission easily translated into our 'ATTRACT' space with marketing literature reflecting the re-energised UOTC offer.*

*'The UOTC is to deliver leadership development for selected students through military training, adventure training, personal, intellectual and social development physical training and sports. On behalf of the Army, it is to engage with higher education institutes to support RC civil engagement and contribute to Army inflow'.*

2. **G1.** *Once again, the UOTC programme will focus on a target of 1400 new OCdts to be recruited and attested (nationally) this year. The medical induction process for those new joiners in the next quarter is expected to be dynamic and efficient once again and the challenge remains to attract quality as well as quantity. Gapping of key posts remains an issue in many of the UOTCs, particularly with Reservist under manning in critical training posts. The small UOTC HQ within the RMAS Group remains a concern, however all three primary posts (Comd, SO1, SO2) are now filled. A comparative study is now underway to ascertain a better HQ structure in order to*



*better exercise control and support to the units, with an aspiration of a small uplift in personnel.*

3. **UOTC Review Update.** *Having concluded, the HC directed UOTC review means work is well underway to convert 11 x Reg XO appointments into FTRS as a Regular Army cost saving measure in personnel.*

4. **G5 Plans.** *The initial tranche of the new Defence STEM Undergraduate Scheme (DSUS) is on course to deliver the first tranche of OCdts into universities beginning in Sep 22. It is likely that numbers will be limited in the first year, due to late recruiting activity for the scheme. Plans are also ongoing to establish 2x SO3 posts at RMAS to oversee and administer the scheme in the UOTCs. The new in-service degree officers (ISDO) will also parade with the UOTCs (11x ISDOs in autumn 22). This is in concert with the existing MPhil and Masters programmes, the UOTCs supporting those more senior officers administratively too, whilst they are studying.*

5. **G5 Recruitment Plans.** *Planning work with TONIC (the marketing contractor) continues apace which will undertake part of the 'ATTRACT' campaign, mainly in the digital space, on behalf of the UOTC programme this year. The campaign is already underway to target those students post final school exams who have now made/are making choices regarding university places in autumn 2022.*

6. **G7 Military Training.** *This summer, 47% of the intake on CCS 222 at RMAS was from the UOTCs. UOTCs presently, continue to deliver Module A and B of the Commissioning Course Short (CCS) syllabus, primarily to their first and second-year students, with training objectives completed at ADX. The potential for UOTCs to amend their training to deliver Army Reserve basic soldier training (Common Military Syllabus (Reserves) or CMS (R) remains a live topic of discussion, although this is not expected to result in any immediate change at the present time. Implementation of which, would aid in reducing the training delta when UOTC OCdts leave university and choose to transfer to Type A reserve service.*

7. **G7 Overseas Training.** *Overseas training exercises (OTXs) continue to provide a key piece of the UOTC offer; NUOTC deployed overseas to Gibraltar on Ex BARBARY WARRIOR. YOTR successfully undertook a joint ADX in the Netherlands forging new and close links with the Dutch. Although UK and not overseas, Ballykinlar in NI has been identified as a suitable training location for future summer ADXs that will still involve a sea or air transit move.*

8. **G7 Other Training (AT).** *Numerous UK and overseas AT activities have been undertaken during this period; including skiing on an exchange in Chile (QUOTC), mountain biking, mountain climbing, rock climbing and abseiling, canoeing, parachuting and sailing. Units continue to plan forward for winter Alpine AT for the next Academic year.*

9. **G8 Finance.** *The financial position remains difficult across Defence and UOTCs remain subject to close scrutiny especially with regard to Reserve Service Days (RSDs). However, at present no planned activity is under threat. The RSD training year budget sits at £7.2m with approximately 27% of annual budget spent in the first 3 months of FY 22/23, before the next annual recruitment period. It is anticipated that the budget for 2023/24 will be broadly as per FY22/23.*

*{electronically signed}*

*T J Irwin-Parker*

*Lt Col*

*SO1 OTC*

- NOTED: Col J Powell noted a sustained period of review and requirement to support other areas of work which was putting pressure on the organisation.
- NOTED: Col J Powell noted good performance in terms of recruitment and noted incoming DSUS students this year.

c. Royal Air Force (COMEC\_Exec\_2022\_09\_D3)

*20220826 – 6 FTS COMEC Report*

*26 Aug 22*

*Comdt 6 FTS*

*COMEC Executive*

### **COMEC EXECUTIVE MEETING 13 Sep 22 – 6 FTS REPORT**

#### **Comdt 6 FTS Overview**

1. *6 FTS has returned to the full delivery of all of its outputs, especially with regard to providing Elementary Flying Training, Phase 1 training to students, and all of this on top of a full programme of adventurous training and force development activities. This has of course presented challenges to some of our squadrons where they have had to prioritise resources accordingly as gaps in Civil Service staffing have appeared in some locations. The breadth of activities that the students get to experience has been impressive to witness and it is notable how much more active the student body has become this summer period. Steady progress is being made in supporting youth aviation through the RAF Air Cadet AEF flying that 6 FTS provide. The seasonal increase, and changes post COVID in aviation industry habits, has put our AEF pilots who also work as airline pilots under great pressure and this has impacted our level of output. The annual summer camps, that the Squadrons deliver, have given us an opportunity to refresh our planning and safety protocols for ground training activities. As a CPD*

*activity we are going to be delivering additional training courses for those responsible for overseeing these events over the next few months.*

### **Recruiting**

2. *UAS recruitment activity has now normalised successfully post the Covid pandemic. One of the major issues has always been getting the students through the Capita Medical process but great progress has been made to streamline this as far as is possible. Capita have increased the recruitment of more doctors and the medical process has reverted from a two-part (Covid mitigation) medical, back to a single face-to-face clinic. With the combination of more doctors and one clinic, we anticipate a more efficient process and expect that this service will see a return to 2019 output levels. Retained graduated students for elementary flying training are mostly complete as they approach Phase One start date. A post recruitment pulse survey to understand the challenges faced by the operational teams has highlighted some areas which require improving. These efficiencies have been actioned and the result is more collaboration between 6 FTS, Capita and The Department of Occupational Medicine at the Recruiting and Selection Centre for the RAF. This HQ now tracks all applications and can extract management information from “application to attestation” timeline. Recruitment has started in our Scottish universities and we anticipate a normal recruitment season going forward. Some of our Squadrons have exploited new techniques with online adverts, social media and differing approaches which have mitigated against some of the challenges of the pandemic.*

### **UAS Student Population Breakdown**

3. *Despite the challenges of COVID, the student population breakdown figures are largely unchanged from our previous report and are healthy in numbers and demographics. However, as we come to the end of the academic year, 6 FTS will lose a significant number of Officer Cadets as they leave university and are discharged or join the RAF. The recruiting season will start, aligned with the new academic year in Sep / Oct, and representatives from our sqns will be actively engaged selecting the next intake. As freshers are recruited into 6 FTS, our numbers will gradually increase to their usual levels and by the time of the next report the annual recruitment figures into the RAF will be available.*

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

4. *The challenges of a new recruiting system are improving as experience and IT issues are identified and swiftly rectified. The results of the Medical Officer Bursary/Cadetship Board produced eight successful Cadetships against a Board number of 19 candidates; many of those that were unsuccessful on this occasion were offered the opportunity to reapply for the next Board in 2023 and indeed many have already reapplied. At least 100+ candidates have applied for the RAF Pilot vacancies remaining in Recruiting Years 23 and 24 from the UAS cohort and several have already made it to the Aug /Sep 22 Officer and Aircrew Selection Board. This very challenging opportunity is already producing high calibre results in both the Computer-Based Aptitude Test and the on-line Filter Interview with many other candidates still active in their application. Direct Entry applications, and those from within the UAS Bursary Scheme 2021-2022, are progressing with many reaching the OASC stage. New*

*applications for branches and professions within the 2022-2023 UAS Bursary Scheme will be advertised and open from Aug 22 until Mar 23.*

### ***Force Development***

5. *In July, UAS OCdts from four sqns took part in the 2022 Nijmegen Marches (NM-22), in Holland (i.e. 31 students from OUAS, ULAS, EMUAS & CUAS). NM 22 is the largest walking event in the world and enables participants to develop resilience, leadership, and camaraderie throughout. The competition has an added benefit of helping the participants to understand how to look after themselves and each other in an adverse environment, when physically exhausted and gives them the opportunity to push themselves harder than they thought they could.*

6. *Numerous Major Expeditions and Force Development exercises have been conducted by our sqns in this period, both domestic and international (e.g. Rock Climbing in Calpe, Mountain Biking in France, and Mountaineering in Norway). During such exercises, our UAS OCdts can lead, manage and organise themselves and others in a developmental capacity in a challenging environment. In addition, Air Power Study Exercises has also been delivered in Berlin, Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus where, through research, an understanding of Air Power and historical aspects of the Military campaigns develop insight into military development from the past, through the present and to consider the future. These activities raise OCdts awareness and, hopefully, adds to the attraction of joining the RAF.*

7. *Over 80 UAS OCdts from several sqns assisted the RAF Charitable Trust at the 2022 Royal International Air Tattoo, which was held at RAF Fairford, 14 to 16 July. Our students provided valuable assistance during this important event in a wide variety of important roles, including the Patron's Pavilion, Hospitality, Corporate Events, Park & View, Guest Relations, Sponsorship/Trust and Flight Centre. The event provided our OCdts with valuable experience working in a challenging environment, requiring teamwork, leadership and effective communications as well as exposing them to a wide variety of air power, manufacturers and international defence partners.*

### ***The Accelerated Training Pathway***

8. *6 FTS are currently awaiting Training Requirements Authority approval for the Royal Auxiliary Air Force Phase 1 accreditation, as mentioned in our May report. So far, 28 UAS officer cadets have been allocated to a Module Two start of the Modularised Initial Officer Training Course at RAF College Cranwell. Feedback from those who joined at Module Two has been very positive and they report an easy integration into the course at this stage along with serving Aviators. The RAF Officer Training Academy are planning to conduct a review of the Accelerated Training Pathway this Autumn however, to analyse the efficacy of the initiative.*

### ***K Thompson***

*K Thompson MA*

*SO2 Force Development, HQ 6 FTS*

- NOTED: Gp Capt R Caine reported UAS' now back to flying after a period of aircraft being grounded. 1000 student cadets are budgeted for each year of which there were 920 in the system last year and expect the same this year. Approximately 30% of the RAF Officer intake will come from UAS'.
- NOTED: Gp Capt R Caine noted that students that now complete the Elementary Training Syllabus at the UAS can shorten their flying training by 18 months.

d. Defence People (COMEC\_Exec\_2022\_09\_D4)

## **DEFENCE PEOPLE (RF&C) UPDATE FOR COMEC – SEP 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.*

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 shapes 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 population at 1 Apr 2022 was 35,890, a decrease of 1,520 personnel, or 4.1% since 1 Apr 2021.*

6. *The trained strength is comprised of:*

- a. Maritime Reserve: 2,870
- b. Army Reserve: 25,730
- c. RAF Reserve: 2,880

7. Reserves from all Services continue to serve on operations in the UK and overseas alongside their Regular counterparts.

### **Employer Engagement**

8. **Overall Assessment.** As previously reported, key drivers for EE are now the AGILE STANCE Campaign Plan (ASCP) and RF30, both reported on below. Additionally, the coming months will inevitably see increased pressure on the Reserves due to the requirements of the winter period. We expect Reserves to be involved in the full range of winter activities, plus the additional 'Homeland Resilience' pilots being run by Army (see RF30 below).

9. **ASCP.** RF&C EE Branch continues to contribute to ASCP. The key aspect now is to ensure employers are aware of the implications of ASCP in a timely manner, and to ensure the links with RF30 and the sS transformation programmes are properly understood.

10. **RF30.** Initial consultation with employers in Dec 21 suggested a cautious welcome for RF30, but also a need for better and more consistent communications with employers. RF&C has accordingly used the Gold Award Association (GAA) to better understand employer concerns. Further wider consultation is paused pending future Ministerial announcements on RF30, meanwhile the Army is pressing on with a series of winter pilot projects to test the concept of 'Homeland Resilience' and the potential uses of Reserves in such situations. A significant EE effort is under way to support this, to ensure that employers are not confused between this activity, sS transformation programmes in the wider sense, and RF30 itself.

11. **Anchor Events.** PwD was held in Mar 22, a welcome return to F2F engagement and judged successful by employer attendees. The Defence Insight Brief has now been moved to Oct 22 in order to relieve diary congestion, meanwhile Rd22 continued to use online engagement as for 2021 and a good result was achieved across all target audiences in what was a crowded summer of events including the Platinum Jubilee, Op CORPORATE 40th Commemorations, the Commonwealth games and various memorial days including Windrush Memorial day on RD22 itself.

12. **Employer Notification.** The annual Employer Notification Directive was issued 15 Aug 22, in order once again that sS could combine the data cleansing and compiling activities required with those for the ASCP ACA. Excellent returns for 21/22 were achieved, with all 3 sS reporting a 100% success rate.

13. **Employer Recognition Scheme.** Current numbers are 642 Gold winners, 1324 Silver and 4558 Bronze. Demand for advancement on the scheme remains strong, and the quality of nominations is robust, with a particularly strong set of Gold nominations this year.

*Col Darin Gray / Col Lisa Brooks*  
*Assistant Head Reserves, Defence People (RF&C)*

- NOTED: Col L Brooks noted the need to keep reserve numbers up. Col L Brooks also highlighted the current status of RF30, AGILE STANCE, RFCA reform and employer engagement.

#### **7. COMEC Prize**

- NOTED: The COMEC Prize Winner 2021-22 is 2nd Lt Alice Walton-Knight of Cambridge UOTC. The runners up are Snr Welfare Mid Alastair McDonald of Wales URNU and SUO Libby Rickard of East Midlands UOTC.

#### **8. COMEC President**

- NOTED: The Vice-Chair noted there are talks with a potential candidate but no decision at this time. Gen Sir P Wall has agreed to continue until a replacement is found. It was noted both male and female candidates should be considered from all services.

#### **9. Nominations to the Executive Committee**

- NOTED: There are four vacancies on the Executive occasioned by the completion of term of office for Major Ian Stoney (eligible for re-election), and the resignation of Simone Bedford, Paul Ivey and Andy Smith.
- NOTED: Nominations have been received by the due date in respect of the following:

##### Executive Committee Member

- o Major Ian Stoney (Leeds MAFNEC; COMEC\_Exec\_2022\_09\_E1)
- o Dr Fred Ruddell (Queens University Belfast MEC; COMEC\_Exec\_2022\_09\_E2)
- NOTED: There being two nominations received by the due date for the four vacancies, Major Ian Stoney and Dr Fred Ruddell are to be ratified by the AGM. The remaining vacancies will carry forward to the 2023 AGM.
- **ACTION: The Vice-Chair asked the Executive to consider if we should co-opt a colleague until the next AGM to support activity. Gp Capt R Caine suggested the Executive should consider co-opting a student and it was agreed this should be discussed at the next meeting.**

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

- RECEIVED: The final draft COMEC Constitution and Terms of Reference from the Chairman (COMEC\_Exec\_2022\_09\_F)
- NOTED: This item was discussed earlier in the agenda (item 4)

**11. Conference**

- RECEIVED: An update from the Vice-Chair on planning for the COMEC AGM & Conference at RMAS.
- **ACTION: Executive to discuss whether to have a conference once per year or every two years.**

**12. Any Other Business:**

- NOTED: There was no other business considered.

**13. Dates and Venues of Future Meetings:**

- APPROVED: The dates and venues of future meetings subject to pandemic restrictions:
  - Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022 (ULOTC, London)
  - Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2023 (Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting)
  - Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023 (ULOTC, London)
  - September 2023 AGM & Conference (Royal Navy)