



ARMY CADET FORCE ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Held on Saturday 25th November 2017 at 14.00 hours at the Grand Connaught Rooms 61-65 Queen Street London WC2B 5DA

Present:	
Col DI Fuller OBE (Acting Chairman)	Vice Chairman ACFA
Lt Gen AJN Graham CB CBE	President ACFA
Col R Ayres	Comdt Cheshire ACF
Col ME Bennett OBE DL	Member Finance Committee
Col J Brunt OBE	Chairman ACFA Wales and Trustee (outgoing)
Col AH Cassidy OBE	Chairman ACFA Scotland and Trustee
Col K Cockman	Member
Col AI Denison OBE	Trustee Greater London
Col S Haughie	Comdt Northumbria ACF
Col V Jassal	Member. Vice Chairman Youth & Cadets North East RFCA
Col A Laker	Comdt Cleveland ACF
Col EJ Mytton	Trustee West Midlands
Col C Riley	ACF National Training Adviser to Regional Command
Col RE Stafford-Tolley	Chairman ACFA Wales and Trustee (incoming)
Col C Tearney	Trustee North East
Col MV Warnock	Chairman ACFA Northern Ireland
Lt Col WA Adams	Trustee East Midlands and East Anglia
Lt Col PA Naysmith	Secretary ACFA Wales
Lt Col A Sharkey	Member and ACFA Hons & Awards Coordinator
Maj J Brocklehurst	Trustee South East England
Maj C Dobson	Member
Ms A Zukowska	Marketing Adviser and Trustee
Mr R Walton	Director Finance Operations & Training ACFA
Ms V McBurney	Head of Volunteer Recruitment and Communications ACFA
Col MNS Urquhart OBE (Secretary)	Chief Executive ACFA
In attendance	
Brig MP Lowe MBE	Deputy Commander Cadets Regional Command
Mr D Haigh	Ministry of Defence
Apologies	
Maj Gen MD Wood CBE	Vice President ACFA
Maj Gen D McDowell CBE	Chairman ACFA
Col JA Fogerty	Chairman Finance Committee and Trustee

Col HMW Williams	Trustee North West
Lt Col JRC White	Legal Adviser and Trustee (outgoing)
Cdr G Bushell	Director Cadets and Youth Council of RFCAs
Mr R Duncan	Investment Adviser and Trustee
Mr AJ Goodwin	Hon. Treasurer and Trustee
Mrs E Lincoln-Gordon	Legal Adviser and Trustee (incoming)

Item	Subject
1.	<p>Chairman's Opening Remarks.</p> <p>The Chairman introduced to the AGM members new Trustees who had either joined during the year or were just joining the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Col Russ Stafford-Tolley (new Chairman ACFA Wales) • Lt Col Wendy Adams (Trustee for the East Midlands and East Anglia) • Maj Jo Brocklehurst (new South East trustee) • Ms Agata Zukowska (Marketing Adviser) <p>The Chairman passed on the following apologies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maj Gen Malcolm Wood (Vice President) • Maj Gen David McDowall (Chairman) (detained abroad at short notice on business, hence the Vice Chairman was chairing the AGM) • Col Jacqui Fogerty (Chairman Finance Committee) • Col Hilary Williams (Trustee North West) • Mr Ruadhri Duncan and Mr Alan Goodwin (both Finance Committee). • Mrs Emily Lincoln-Gordon (new Legal Adviser)
2.	<p>Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting. Minutes of the last AGM on 19th November 2016 were distributed prior to the meeting. There were no matters arising and no comments from the members. The Chairman signed the minutes as a true record.</p>
3.	<p>Chief Executive's Report. The Chairman handed over to the CE. The CE's report to the AGM is attached at Annex A.</p>
4.	<p>Chairman's Annual Report. The Chairman then gave his traditional update looking back over the past year. His report is at Annex B.</p>
5.	<p>The Trustees Annual Report, Accounts, Balance Sheet and Auditor's Report. Financial Reports. Richard Walton reported on behalf of Col Jacqui Fogerty, Chairman Finance Committee. He advised members that copies of the full accounts were available on-line. Extracted versions were available in the room for members to examine. He expanded on the salient points:</p>
a.	<p>The Trustees' Annual Report. The Annual Report in full is available on the website. It was used to produce the snappy and glossy Annual Review, copies which were also in the room, which focusses on the key headlines. Members who thought the Review would be useful in helping to promote the ACFA could ask for additional copies.</p>

<p>b.</p>	<p>The Accounts.</p> <p>Charitable activity levels were steady throughout the year and the trustees have established a new reserves policy that is being met. Donations in the year to cadet related causes fell to £148k, but that comparative fall is predominantly because in the prior financial year a number of large grants went in and out. Grants included financial help to sustain cadet sport, music and battlefield tours, but also individual grants to cadets.</p> <p>The overall operating budget was initially agreed at £3.78M (2016 £2.14M). This reflects the change to request all funds up front for known regular annual activity rather than requesting in-year uplifts. Last year an uplift of a further £2.62M was passed to ACFA by the MoD as grant to achieve additional in-year activity and equipment purchases. This year we managed to reduce requests for financial uplifts to purely one-off projects (£469K) which related to items that came up in year that were not anticipated (rather than in-year, every year).</p> <p>During 2017 total incoming resources amounted to £5,624,766 (against £8,434,414 in 2016). The MoD grant was £5,292,639 (against £7,800,340 in 2016).</p> <p>Resources expended totalled £5,542,826 (versus £9,329,932 in 2016). The President asked DFOT to clarify what he had just reported as it was a large swing from £9.3m to £5.5m and whether there was an unusual cause. DFOT explained that it included returning to Regional Command a large sum of money initially allocated to ACFA to purchase the new fleet of cadet radios. DFOT confirmed that £5.5m was a more normal figure.</p> <p>The net surplus for the year, therefore, was £454,514 (against a deficit of £997,185 in 2016). This is largely down to the increase in the value of our portfolio.</p>
<p>c.</p>	<p>Balance Sheet. The balance sheet shows total funds of £3,643,536 (versus £3,253,998 in 2016). The Charity's free reserves of £3,634,260 (£2,946,065 in 2016) at 31 March 2017 remain in excess of that set out in the Reserves' Policy and trustees will take further action to offer financial support to cadets accordingly.</p> <p>Also included in total funds is an amount of £7,520 in restricted funds, which has dropped from £39,175 in 2016. Predominately this money is restricted to spending on DofE or Music.</p>
<p>d.</p>	<p>The Auditor's Report. Buzzacott LLP again audited the financial statements of the ACFA for the year ended 31 March 2017. Their report in full is published in the Annual Report and Accounts which is available online.</p> <p>Buzzacott's opinion on the financial statements is that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give a true and fair view of the state of the ACFA charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2017 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; • have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and • have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and Regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. <p>The audit went well and the auditors issued an 'unqualified opinion', which is the best opinion that can be given by an auditor.</p>

e.	<p>Approving the accounts. The Chairman asked the floor if there were any questions. None were asked. The Chairman asked that the accounts be agreed as being accurate. Col Tearney proposed that they were accurate and Lt Col Adams seconded the proposal. All members voted in favour. The Chairman thanked the volunteer members of the Finance Committee for their commitment and wise management.</p>
6.	<p>Authorising Remuneration of the Auditors. Richard Walton reported that, last year, a quick assessment of Buzzacott had been conducted by comparing their charges and services with those conducted for other similar sized charities, and the conclusion was that Buzzacott provide good value. Additionally trustees have considered whether Buzzacott are robust auditors, challenging ACFA when necessary and appropriate, and here too Buzzacott were considered to indeed be challenging. The Finance Committee therefore proposes to members that Buzzacott remain as ACFA's auditors for a further year, but to bear in mind that ACFA has used Buzzacott for eleven years therefore the intention is to go out to tender in the next 18 months.</p> <p>There were no questions. The Chairman asked members to agree to authorise the remuneration of the auditors for the following year. This was proposed by Col Mytton and seconded by Col Ayres. All members voted in favour.</p>
7.	<p>Election of Trustees. The Chairman reminded members that under ACFA's articles one third of the board of trustees were required to stand down each year and either stand for re-election or stand down as part of a healthy process of good governance to refresh the board, the term for those elected being for a three year term. This year's list of one third has simply been formed by taking the longest serving members.</p> <p>The Chairman then stood down given that he was one of the trustees standing for re-election, handing over to the President.</p> <p>The President took the members through the Board's proposed succession plan, which was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Vice Chairman:</u> Col David Fuller agreed to stand down for the greater cause, even though he wished to continue. The post was then advertised and there were no applicants. David agreed to stand for re-election and the Chairman and I are truly delighted to commend him, because he is one of the most senior adult volunteers and with his great depth of ACF experience he brings much wisdom to board meetings. • <u>Chairman ACFA Wales:</u> Col John Brunt stood down earlier this autumn. His replacement, Col Russ Stafford-Tolley was elected by ACFA Wales. • <u>East Midlands and East Anglia Trustee:</u> Col Peter Christian stood down earlier in the year. The post was advertised within the region and three applications were received. The Commandants from the East Midlands and East Anglia chose Lt Col Wendy Adams of Beds & Herts ACF to be their representative trustee. • <u>South East and Home Counties Trustee:</u> Col Alan Mulder has stood down. The post was advertised within the region and three applications were received. The South East and Home Counties Commandants chose Maj Jo Brocklehurst of Surrey ACF to be their representative trustee. • <u>West Midlands trustee.</u> Col John Mytton agreed to stand down in order to refresh the board. The post was advertised one application was received. The applicant was worthy in many respects, but did not have the longevity and depth of ACF experience considered to be important, which was a shame. Col John Mytton has kindly therefore agreed to stand for re-election for a three year term, but on the amicable proviso that we will actively seek a replacement in 2018.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>South West trustee</u>: Col David Howells has stood down because of ill-health. The post has been advertised and applications received, however the selection process is ongoing. • <u>Marketing Adviser</u>: It was decided that there was no longer a role for a Commercial Adviser and therefore Col Mike Bennett stood down. It was however decided that a Marketing Adviser was essential given the public funds allocated to ACFA for this purpose. The post was advertised widely and four internal applications and one external application were received. From the shortlisted candidates the Chairman was delighted to select Ms Agatha Zukowska. Her credentials were impressively strong, having wide experience of marketing including advertising, media sales and planning, PR and brand management plus knowledge of the current communications and marketing world. • <u>Legal Adviser</u>: Lt Col John White is standing down. The post was advertised and we were delighted that Mrs Emily Lincoln-Gordon applied. She is a practising lawyer in the education arena and importantly brings experience of charity governance. She is not here today but even more importantly she will bring an outsider's perspective into board meetings. <p>The President informed members that he proposed to conduct the vote en bloc. Before doing so he confirmed that necessary due diligence had been conducted by scrutinising the candidates to ensure there are no conflicts of interest, a statutory requirement these days, and no bars to them becoming trustees of a youth organisation.</p> <p>The President proposed that the named candidates be re-elected or elected. Col Mike Bennett seconded the proposal. The members voted in favour unanimously.</p> <p>The President then handed the chair back to the Acting Chairman.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>ACF WW1 Commemoration event for 2018. The President informed members that he had attended Regional Command's STEM Camp organised for cadets over half term. During a conversation with Commandant Wiltshire ACF the President learnt of a major initiative to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the First World War Armistice in 2018. An ACF Committee led by Comdt Wiltshire ACF is organising a succession of one day First World War battlefield experience tours in France for Army Cadets from across the country. Each tour day will take place on a Sunday in late September and throughout October 2018 leading up to wider Armistice commemorative events. Army Cadet Force Counties will be invited to bid for up to 100 places per county, with the aim that 5,000 Army cadets will complete this tour. Regional Command has given support to this initiative. The President considered that it was a tremendous idea and an event that the ACFA would want to publicise and support.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Farewells. The Chairman, on behalf of members, thanked Trustees who had stood down for the time and wisdom they have given to steering the Association:</p> <p>In the room: Col John Brunt Chairman ACFA Wales and Lt Col John White Legal Adviser.</p> <p>Not in the room because they had effectively already stood down: Col David Howells (Trustee South West) and Col Alan Mulder (Trustee South East).</p>

10.	AOB and Open Forum. No items were formally tabled for AOB. There were no questions from the floor. The Chairman informed members that the AGM and annual dinner would revert to the normal third weekend in November next year. He confirmed the date as: Saturday 17th November 2018. There being no other business the meeting closed at 14.50 hours.
------------	---

Annexes:

- A. Chief Executive's Report.
- B. Chairman's Report.

ARMY CADET FORCE ASSOCIATION

Annex A Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Held on Saturday 25th November 2017

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

My report will be much shorter than last year, but before beginning I want to pose a question that I have given at a number of Brigade conferences that I have attended this year: Is the ACFA relevant and does it have a role? The answer, of course, is absolutely "Yes", but as I go through my report please keep that question in the back of your minds.

In last year's report I recognised that the Army's chain of command had taken a greater role in the running of the ACF and therefore that the ACFA had a reduced role. No one would deny that the ACF would exist and operate without the material and moral support of the Army, represented here today by Brigadier Matthew Lowe from Regional Command. However, it would be equally fair to say that the chain of command would struggle to run the ACF without the ACFA.

The tangible support we provide through the Memorandum of Understanding is obvious, i.e. the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, First Aid, Music, Sport, Volunteer Recruitment and Communications. Arguably that is because we are better placed to deliver them than the chain of command which is geared up to run the Regular Army.

More difficult to measure and describe is that intangible support we provide to the Chain of command, which I touched on in my report last year. I can tell you that we have been providing this intangible support constantly throughout the year through discussion, acting as a sounding board and, when asked, by providing advice. We have also taken on discrete thinking on behalf of the chain of command about knotty subjects. You may ask "Who in ACFA is doing this?" The answer is that all of us in ACFA provide this intangible support at different levels via different channels and in different fora. It is happening and it is fair to say that it is valued and welcomed by Brigadier Lowe and his team in Cadets Branch in Regional Command and elsewhere in the regional HQs. A measure is that our advice and views are frequently and actively sought.

So far I have not mentioned what is, arguably, our most important task, which is representing the members of the ACFA, the adult volunteers of the ACF. It is the purpose driving everything we do and is central to our thinking, because if we can support you adult volunteers, you in turn can deliver a wonderful cadet experience.

Last year I reported one particular concern, which interestingly the Trustees have just discussed at length in their Board meeting preceding this AGM, which was that too many ACF adult volunteers do not know of the ACFA and therefore do not know how we represent them. That remains a gut feeling concern and overcoming it is not easy. To try to do something about it we have to constantly bang the ACFA drum and this year we have done so in three ways:

- Either I or Richard Walton try to be present at every regional Cadet conference, where we are normally able to give a brief update on the ACFA.

- Richard usually gives a brief about ACFA on key courses at the national Cadet Training Centre at Frimley Park. There was such course running this week and Wendy Adams, one of our trustees, was helping to run the course. At this morning's Board meeting she reported that Richard's brief to the course was greatly valued and that adult volunteers on the course said they had wished they had known about the ACFA earlier in their ACF service.
- We endeavoured to arrange for ACFA trustees to visit as many ACF annual camps as possible this year, speaking to Commandants about what is that the ACFA does for them and their adult volunteers, seeking a 360 degree appraisal on how they see the ACFA. I visited eleven annual camps this year and I believe that the Commandants I spoke to found it very useful.

I am realistic. Doing this once will not be enough and we will have to continue to bang the drum again and again. I ask all of you to help by spreading the message about the worth of the ACFA wherever and whenever possible. I return to my question: Is the ACFA relevant and does it have a role? The answer is: Yes! Thank you.

ARMY CADET FORCE ASSOCIATION

Annex B to Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Held on Saturday 25th November 2017

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I give this report on behalf of General David McDowall, our Chairman. Before I now look back over the past year at areas where the ACFA has undertaken to deliver activities and services on behalf of the chain of command, first I want to report about how we organise ourselves, because in terms of **Governance** we have been busy modernising and evolving. All of our board meetings now routinely consider Governance in the round as a standing agenda item. We were in no bad shape and the evolutionary changes are not too onerous for the trustees, rather we have had to adjust our mindset by becoming more conscious of best practice. In that respect your board of trustees has just agreed to adopt the Charity Commission Code of Conduct, which is new and full of practical common sense guidance about how a board and its trustees should operate.

In particular, during the year we changed the way we selected the trustees and you can already see the changes here today. Before I describe the changes I want to make one important point so that there is no misunderstanding. Hitherto trustees were selected by spotting experienced Commandants and in a rather opaque way giving them an informal tap on the shoulder. Invariably they have turned out to be excellent trustees, however that process is no longer tenable in this era of increased regulatory compliance and media scrutiny.

The first change that we made is that we have written role descriptions for each trustee's post and when we need them filled we advertise time widely in the right area seeking applicants. In the case of regional trustees, we will only seek applications from serving ACF members in that region, because they must represent it. We then ask the Commandants in that region to consider all of the qualified applicants and ask them to choose their trustee based purely on the content of their application; we feel it is important that our members have bought into their regional representative. In the case of more specialist central posts, we advertise internally across the whole of the ACF but also externally.

The second change is that in seeking regional trustees in particular, we have actively sought applications from a more diverse and slightly younger generation of ACF members than the hitherto senior Commandants. This ensures that the majority of our trustees remain serving ACF Officers for their entire tenure. It is now well recognised that a board made up of people of a similar background is much less effective. We cannot however have a wholesale change because, first, we will always need some wise and experienced senior ACF officers on the board and, second, we will always carry out the selection based on what a candidate brings to the board in terms of experience and skills. The key is to have a balanced mix and our Chairman sees that achieving this mix as his job working with me as the senior volunteer and the Chief Executive.

I now move on to the more traditional part of the Chairman's report about the activities and services we deliver on behalf of the chain of command.

Volunteer Recruitment and Communications. As with last year, I begin with one of the most important services that we deliver on behalf of Regional Command. When the Chairman reported last year he referred to Marketing and Communications, but during the year we changed it to Volunteer Recruitment and Communications, because that is its purpose and focus. Valerie McBurney and her team have done a sterling job during the year, the key achievement being that they have developed and are now coordinating the delivery of a range of projects to help join up national, regional and local recruit marketing.

- Following a successful pilot project (in four counties during 2016) the 'Grass Roots' local level recruit marketing programme – developed with Yes Agency – was rolled out more widely in 2017. In total 13 ACF counties are now actively engaged and a further 12 have expressed interest in taking part. The programme aims to help counties to understand their local recruitment issues and develop and deliver a detailed plan of activity to help boost recruitment.
- In addition, the Yes Agency has developed a new course on 'Recruiting Adult Volunteers to the ACF' (to be delivered with the PR Training Team on 12th to 14th January 2018) and produced a wide range of new marketing and training resources to aid county level adult volunteer and civilian assistant recruitment activities.
- Following the VRC team's work to develop and roll out a more user-friendly CFAV recruitment process and convert more applicants into CFAVs, trials have been taking place of the New Joiner Tracker (NJT). The NJT is an electronic database system (linked to Westminster) to help county admin officers keep track of applications. A group of volunteer admin officers are now taking part in Phase Two of the trial, with the goal of rolling out the new system and new application forms, across all counties in Spring 2018.
- The VRC team organised a major recruitment campaign across Wales in April 2017. The bilingual campaign included radio across Wales, bus and train panels, supermarket and health club poster sites, ATM advertising, Open Week activities and a detailed digital advertising campaign. Overall there were 252 applications in April and May compared to 81 in the same months last year, an increase of 171 or 211%.
- Improvements in our digital advertising and targeting, online content and Search Engine Optimisation are paying dividends. Recruitment from paid digital advertising this year (mainly Facebook) is up 37% on the previous 12 months (per £1,000 spent). We have also seen a decrease in average recruitment cost for each CFAV of £1.62 (costs are now regularly under £5 for each online conversion - i.e. someone who fills in the online application form). We are now integrating our Google Grant (free) advertising with our other digital advertising activity and expect to see an uplift of 20% in Google Grant conversions.

ACFA delivered activities. I now move on to the four areas where ACFA delivers wider cadet experience activities on behalf of the chain of command, namely the Duke of Edinburgh's award, First Aid, Music and Sport. Before reporting on each in turn, it is pleasing to report that the success is due to the teams delivering them. Last year the Chairman reported that for each activity we have

a senior adult volunteer as the National Adviser supported by an ACFA employed Activity Manager. This has developed into a powerful and effective model and I congratulate them, especially three of the National Advisers who are or were concurrently serving Commandants.

Duke of Edinburgh's award. I will begin with the Duke of Edinburgh's award. The Activity Manager changed during the year, Lucy Welsh returning to D of E to work on the international scheme. Lucy remains a serving ACF officer. We wish her well and thank her for the significant changes made during her tenure. Lucy was replaced by Liz Green, who we welcome to the ACFA fold.

ACF D of E has had a good year with innovations for training. Two new national events were organised, a combined residential course and centrally organised expeditions run in the South West over Easter and centrally organised expeditions run in the North West over the recent half term. It has been a flat year in terms of overall achievement, but that should be put in context by pointing out the well known current demographic trough in young people. A better sign is the greater achievement in Gold awards, which indicates greater retention of senior cadets.

First Aid. I move on to First Aid, and here too I am pleased to report great innovation.

Hitherto, successful completion of ACF First Aid training led to an in-house qualification, which whilst perfectly effective and legitimate did not have to be accepted by employers. Our team have arranged for our First Aid at Work training to be recognised by the Defence Awarding Organisation, the resulting award being a regulated external qualification that can be recognised by employers and other bodies. We hope this will help adult volunteers and senior cadets with their job prospects.

The other great innovation is the development of the Medical Support Officer role to be filled by adult volunteers in the ACF. It has been approved by Regional Command, is being briefed down the chain of command now, and should be substantially in place for annual camps in 2018. Without going into detail, it has the potential to be one of the most significant step-change improvements in the running of the ACF in recent years, and the pleasing thing is that it was developed by serving adult volunteers, with Colonel Chris Young deserving particular thanks.

Time precludes me going through the statistics for First Aid training, but suffice to say that the numbers continue to be something of which we can be proud.

Cadet Bands and Corps of Drums. Next I move to Cadet Bands and Corps of Drums. Throughout the past year the ACF's Cadet Bands and Corps of Drums have, once again, performed throughout the UK and taken part in World War 1 commemoration events in France and Belgium. Concerts and other performances were well attended and repeat bookings taken for similar events next year. Some of the highlights were a concert in Brecon, Powys for the Zulu Royal Family, in commemoration of Rorke's Drift and a performance for the staff at the Army School of Ceremonial in Catterick. Once again music training concentrations took place at Altcar over Easter and at Crowborough over the recent half term, along with regional training weekends. In total over 1,150 Cadets and Staff were in attendance, with a notable increase in the award of BTECs and NVQs.

Adult training continues to flourish with the support of the Training and Development Team. A well planned and structured induction and instruction course, bespoke to music, has now been introduced that will encourage more musically qualified adults to become involved. This is also now being extended into promotion and further training courses.

Contemporary music is now part of the training offered concluding with a major talent show at the end of each camp. The introduction of a short summer tour to ACF annual camps to further promote Cadet Force Music has resulted in three new counties becoming involved in music. With more Cadets joining this year the future of Cadet Force Music continues to look as bright as ever.

National Pipes and Drums. I now move to an activity dear to the heart of our President and Chairman. The National Pipes and Drums have had a very busy year with training and performed at some very high profile events. The annual April training week was very successful with a number of our senior cadets gaining Schools Qualifications in Piping and Drumming as well as their CVQO and Cadet Qualifications.

The National Pipes and Drums also had the proud privilege of taking part in this year's Household Division Beating Retreat on Horse Guards in high summer tourist season, which the Chairman attended. For young people playing with seasoned regular musicians this must have been a heart pumping time, so the Chairman has asked me to pass on his delight at the perfect performance of our Pipes and Drums. It was a wonderful evening and they looked extremely smart in their ACF tartan.

Sport has been more successful this year because our team took proactive steps to prevent being bumped out of camps at short notice, which for example caused the national swimming finals to be cancelled at short notice last year. The result this year was that the national competitions for all of the core cadet sports took place successfully and all were great events. I cannot run through the statistics, but yet again a number of ACF national records were broken by cadets. I attended a number of these finals and it is a real pleasure to report the true spirit of sportsmanship shown by our cadets. Their behaviour is an example many of our national sportsmen would do well to follow.

Our Sports team have developed a strong relationship with the Army Sports Control Board which has provided much tangible support. The Army is also investing in coaching courses for adult volunteers and senior cadets in Football, Rugby and Orienteering. We are also grateful for support from the Army to help run these national events. A significant number of Royal Army PT Corps officials helped adjudicate at the national athletics and national swimming finals, and the Army's panel of Rugby referees turned out in force to referee the national rugby finals at Brecon in April. I mention that because one of those referees is here today, which is Brigadier Matthew Lowe. How fitting that the Army's senior serving officer focussed on cadets helped to officiate at a national cadet sporting event and we thank you for it.

In sport too there is innovation. Given our struggles in guaranteeing camp bookings, through a strong relationship between HQ North West and also North West RFCA, plans are advanced to concentrate the national sporting finals at Altcar because it makes logistic sense, the key being that accommodation is guaranteed. This will happen in 2018, with the Sports team looking to introduce

Boys' Hockey and Girls' Rugby and for the first time national Orienteering run by ACFA. We will report back next year.

I close Sport by reporting that Colonel Andy Dawes has just resigned as the National Adviser. He is concurrently Commandant Hampshire and Isle of Wight ACF and we thank him for his great personal commitment in holding down two significant ACF appointments plus his day job.

Recognition of Volunteers and Cadets – Honours and Awards. Those are the main activities ACFA delivers on behalf of the chain of command, but I want to report on one other area where we do our best to support you, which is recognition of worthy service and great deeds by adult volunteers and cadets. Here I want to publicly thank Lieutenant Colonel Alan Sharkey for his remarkable ability to hear of good deeds and then finding a way for them to be recognised. Without Alan's effort much of what I will now report would not happen.

- The **President's Certificate** was launched in 2017 with nine awards to cadets and adult volunteers who have excelled in ACFA supported activities.
- The third round of **BAE Systems awards** for excellence will be presented early this evening before the dinner.
- Cadet Sergeant Major Jeremiah Emmanuel of South West London ACF was **honoured with the BEM** in the 2017 New Year Honours list.
- Corporal Ewan Lees of Nottinghamshire ACF received the **Life Saving Medal of the Order of St John**.
- Adult volunteers and cadets of the ACF received resuscitation certificates and commendations from the **Royal Humane Society**.
- ACFA supported some 90 praiseworthy events in 2017 for 64 cadets and 43 CFAVs with appropriate **First Aid certificates**.
- ACFA fielded 9 finalists in 7 categories in the prestigious **St John Ambulance/Mail on Sunday Everyday Heroes Awards** on 28th September 2017 and Mark Farmer of Hampshire and Isle of Wight ACF was a winner in the Workplace Hero category.

Well done to all and again well done to Alan. We cannot recognise our adult volunteers enough.

That concludes my report. I think you will agree that it gives a sense that the ACF is very busy and we all know that to be true, but it is productive. The ACFA played its part in delivering the Cadet Experience and we will continue to do so in 2018 by working closely with Regional Command and the RFCAs.