

NORTHUMBRIAN UNIVERSITIES MILITARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (NUMEC)

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

Background

The Armed Forces sponsor three designated University Service Units to serve the five universities in the North East:

- Northumbrian Universities Royal Naval Unit (NURNU)
- Northumbrian Universities Officer Training Corps (NUOTC)
- Northumbrian Universities Air Squadron (NUAS)

In addition, Trojan Squadron, Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme (DTUS), was formed under Ministry of Defence contract with Newcastle and Northumbria universities in 2002.

The mission of the service units is to develop the leadership and management skills of selected university students, thereby enhancing their potential as future officers in the armed forces, or as leaders in their chosen future professions

Following the purpose laid down in the Haldane report (1908), the Northumbrian Universities Military Education Committee (NUMEC) oversees the work of the service units and represents the combined interests of the region's higher education institutions in liaising with them and providing advice and support. The primary aims of the committee are as follows:

- (i) to encourage the study of defence-related issues within the constituent universities;
- (ii) to promote the selection, instruction and training of candidates for Commissions in the Regular and Reserve Forces;
- (iii) to co-operate with the Ministry of Defence in all Service matters affecting the universities;
- (iv) to ensure that the time spent by undergraduates enrolled in a Service contingent is not to the detriment of their academic studies;
- (v) to encourage liaison between the university Service contingents and the Regular and Reserve Forces at regional level;
- (vi) to report via the Senates to the Councils of the universities, or their equivalent statutory bodies, on all matters which require their financial consideration, and all matters which affect the roles of the Service Units in the universities.

NUMEC members include the Commanding Officers of each service unit, and academic and professional service staff representatives appointed by each institution. The committee holds two formal meetings annually. Additional informal visits to the service units are arranged on an opportunity basis. Each university pays an annual subscription of £200. The Committee is serviced by Newcastle University which is also responsible for organising the Annual Defence Lecture as part of the University's Insights Public Lectures series.

NUMEC Activities in 2018-19

Service units were represented at the Freshers' Fairs of all the universities attached to NUMEC with the exception of Teesside, but there is a desire to rectify this in the future, something NUMEC is willing to facilitate. All service units reported favourably on their participation in 'Experience Durham', the University's programme of participation and volunteer opportunities.

Two formal committee meetings were held, one at Newcastle University in November 2018 and one at NUOTC headquarters St Cuthbert's Keep in May 2019. The latter was preceded by a visit to St Cuthbert's Keep during which NUMEC members participated in planning and command exercises devised by NUOTC staff and officer cadets.

NUMEC members, Officer Cadets and Commanding Officers attended the Annual Defence Lecture on 6 November 2018, given by Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Johns, as well as the additional Defence Lecture on 21 March 2019 held to mark the 70th anniversary of NATO and given by Ambassador Clare Hutchinson, NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Security and Defence.

The Newcastle University Service of Remembrance was held on 11 November 2018 and was attended by NUMEC members and representatives from each service unit. Officer Cadets also attended the service of remembrance held at Durham Cathedral.

The Chair of NUMEC attended the DTUS STEM 'Trobot' competition award presentation at HMS Calliope on 13 November 2018. The prizes were sponsored by a £500 donation from NUMEC funds. NUMEC agreed to sponsor the competition again this year.

In November 2018 the NUOTC worked with Teesside University on their employer engagement symposium and in December met St Cuthbert's College, Durham University to discuss plans for shared leadership presentations. Engagement of this nature is aimed at increasing awareness of the military and OTC among the wider student body.

In December the NUOTC also presented to Sunderland University health and nursing students about the benefits of the OTC.

In February, Newcastle Law School staff (one a NUMEC member) devised and facilitated a human rights debate for Officer Cadets which was staged at HMS Calliope. The debate was very positively received for providing the students, who are all on engineering or other STEM degree programmes, with the opportunity to widen their perspectives on international security and politics.

Durham University staff facilitated a workshop for NUOTC Officer Cadets on military ethics at Durham University in February 2019, with NUMEC providing funds towards the catering. This workshop was also very well received.

Members of NUMEC attended the NUAS Annual Formal Visit at RAF Leeming on 14 February 2019 and its Annual Dinner at St Cuthbert's Keep on 15 March. The visit to RAF Leeming included an opportunity to meet the Commandant, cadets and staff and view NUAS facilities, as well taking a short flight in NUAS training aircraft.

The NUOTC Commanding Officer and Regimental Sergeant Major have delivered three Leadership Presentations for students studying business courses at Teesside University. The students attending were a mix of full and part-time students many of whom work for local companies in the North East. It is hoped that these engagements may help to generate an interest in joining the UOTC or the Reserves.

On 9 May NUMEC members attended the NURNU Annual Reception at HMS Calliope on the Gateshead quayside where officer cadets gave an impressive presentation about their recent activities and achievements.

On 17 May the Secretary and CO of NURNU attended the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association Annual General Meeting at Anzio House, Newcastle. It has been agreed with the Chief Executive of the Association that there will be a student-led presentation on NUMEC at its next meeting in the Autumn.

NUMEC sponsored the Award for Outstanding Contribution to Sport at the Newcastle University Pride of Newcastle Awards on 6 June 2019, taking advantage of this opportunity to raise awareness and profile. The event was attended by the Chair of NUMEC and the Commanding Officer of NUOTC.

NUMEC sponsored the NUOTC Platoon Competition focusing on teamwork, sport and military skills, which took place in June at the unit's annual training exercise in Germany.

Next steps

The Committee will continue with its extensive range of formal and informal engagements with the Service Units. Links between the universities and the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for the North of England will also be strengthened: the intention is that NUMEC members will participate, alongside Officer Cadets, in the Autumn meeting of the RFCA to support the service units in raising awareness of how student membership of service units enriches the student experience. Another objective is to strengthen student engagement with NUMEC.

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On behalf of NUMEC