

NORTHUMBRIAN UNIVERSITIES MILITARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (NUMEC)**ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20****NUMEC Activities in 2019-20**

Activities were understandably curtailed by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. All service units suspended in-person activities from March 2020 onwards and, at the time of writing have not yet announced their resumption.

One formal committee meeting was held at Newcastle University on 9 October 2019, the second cancelled due to the cessation of service unit activity in Spring 2020.

Remembrance Day was observed by Officer Cadets at Durham and Newcastle universities. The Newcastle University Service of Remembrance was held on Sunday 10 November 2019 and was attended by NUMEC members and representatives from each service unit. A revised format for the service made it a more inclusive and enjoyable experience for all concerned.

On 22 November 2019, the Chair and Secretary, together with other members of NUMEC, were present at a very well-attended North of England Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association AGM at HMS Calliope, where Officer Cadets gave impressive presentations about how the service unit had enriched their University experience. The Chair also hosted a question and answer forum.

Durham University (Honorary Colonel of NUOTC Professor Elizabeth Archibald and new NUMEC member Dr Catherine Turner) hosted a workshop on AI and the use of autonomous weapons and systems on 28 January 2020. The event was attended by c. 30 Officer Cadets, International Relations students, staff and officers, plus an external speaker. Funds from NUMEC underwrote the costs of an excellent supper.

On 27 February 2020, representatives of service units attended a public lecture at Newcastle University by David Edwards (Academic Clinical Fellow, ex-Royal Army Dental Corps) on his experiences in a military environment. The lecture was attended by over 100 people in total and a recording is [available online](#).

The Chair of NUMEC attended the 79th NUAS Annual Dinner at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Durham on 10 March.

Also on 10 March 2020, Newcastle Law School colleagues (Dr Conall Mallory and Elliot Winter) facilitated a debate on the topic of 'a human-free battlefield' for Officer Cadets at Trojan Squadron. 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.

Next steps

The Committee will continue with its range of formal and informal engagements with the Service Units. A key focus of the relationship will be enhancing the quantity and quality of information shared by universities with the service units. Another important objective is to strengthen student engagement with NUMEC and attendant events.

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On behalf of NUMEC

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 colleagues appointed by each institution. The committee normally 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.