THE CHALLENGE!

Summer 2026



THE RETURN!

BEHIND THE SCENES UPDATES
Training & Support Department Update

FLYING THE FLEET AIR ARM WAY
Cadets take on the Silver Wings

VOLUNTEER CADET CORPS

INSIDE: NEWS > BRANDING UPDATES > BOLEH!
BEHIND THE SCENES > EXERCISE HARKNESS ROUND UP

Editor-in-Chief
Maj (VCC) Louis Colpitts

In This Issue

04

Evolving, not replacing

Learn more about the update to our branding



10

BOLEH! Time to Meet the Challenge!

Can Do! — VCC Cadets Take to the Solent

12

Bravo Zulu Colours Zoë!

Read about one of our own being named Gosport Youth Citizen of the Year 2026

20

Flying the Fleet Air Arm Way!

Learn how our cadets took to the sky during a recent RNCF Aviation Course.



21

Know Who's Who

Know who's who. Know who to contact across the organisation.

28

Key Dates

Save the dates and make sure you don't miss out!

VOLUNTEER CADET CORPS

Every care has been taken in the preparation of this publication but neither the VCC nor the MOD can be held responsible for the accuracy of the information contained herein or any consequence arising from it. Views expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the VCC or the MOD.



FROM THE COMMANDER

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the new-look The Challenge! Magazine. It has been some time since the last edition of our VCC magazine, and I am delighted that we are bringing it back.

Much has happened across the Volunteer Cadet Corps during that time. Our cadets have continued to learn, explore, achieve and, most importantly, meet the challenges placed before them. Our volunteers have continued to give their time and commitment to provide the opportunities that make the VCC such a special organisation.

This new edition is therefore more than simply the return of a magazine. It is an opportunity to celebrate the people, activities and achievements that make up our organisation.

You will notice that The Challenge has a fresh look and a renewed purpose. We want it to be a magazine for the whole VCC — something that showcases what our cadets are doing, celebrates our volunteers, remembers our history and looks towards our future.

And what better year to bring it back than 2026, our VCC125 anniversary year.

In this edition, we celebrate some of the incredible opportunities that we have experienced over the last 6 months.

Russ

WO2 Russ Piner RM
Commander VCC

Evolving, not replacing

For 125 years, our identity has been shaped by our history, our Royal Navy and Royal Marines heritage, our traditions and, most importantly, the generations of young people and volunteers who have been part of the VCC.

As we celebrate VCC125, we've taken the opportunity to evolve how we present ourselves — creating a refreshed brand that reflects the VCC of today, while remaining firmly rooted in our heritage.

Our Commander and Deputy Commander worked closely with local marketing company MindWorks Marketing to create a visual identity that is cleaner, more distinctive and more adaptable, while retaining the characteristics that make the VCC recognisable.

Our Crest remains an important part of our identity and will continue to be used on official documents, publications and formal VCC branding. Alongside this, our new VCC logo will be used across our day-to-day communications, social media, digital platforms and promotional materials.

It's a new look; but the same VCC, built on 125 years of history and looking confidently towards the future.



ROOTED IN NAVAL TRADITIONS

SIMPLIFIED FORMS & CONSISTENT GEOMETRY





***Left to Right**: Lt (VCC) Duncan Ellis - Head of Training VCC, Lt Cdr Ross Duncan - SO2 VCC RNCF, Lt Cdr (VCC) Rodger Mills - First Lieutenant RNVCC, Cadet CSgt Arthur W - First Sea Lord Cadet 2026, WO2 Russ Piner RM - Commander VCC, RAdm Andrew Rose OBE RN - Director Personnel & Training, Capt Terry Tyack RN - Deputy Commander RNCF, Leading Cadet Rosie A - First Sea Lord Cadet 2026, Maj (VCC) Louis Colpitts - Deputy Commander VCC, Capt (VCC) Gaz Langworthy - Head of Support VCC*

In February, the Volunteer Cadet Corps proudly signed the Armed Forces Covenant onboard HMS VICTORY, alongside the Royal Navy's Director of Personnel and Training, Rear Admiral Andrew Rose OBE RN, reaffirming our commitment to ensuring that those who serve, or have served, in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated with fairness and respect.

We're also proud to have achieved the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Bronze Award in July 2026, recognising our commitment to being a forces-friendly organisation that actively supports serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families.

These achievements are particularly meaningful as we mark VCC125. For 125 years, the Volunteer Cadet Corps has inspired young people through adventure, discipline and service, while maintaining a strong and enduring connection with the Royal Navy and Royal Marines. As we look to the future, we remain committed to developing the next generation and supporting the wider Armed Forces community.

ARMED FORCES COVENANT

The VCC are also proud to have achived the Defence Employer Recongision Scheme Bronze Award

Historic First for the Volunteer Cadet Corps

The VCC made history on Tuesday 21 April 2026, becoming the first youth organisation ever to conduct the Ceremony of the Constable's Dues at the Tower of London, as part of its 125th anniversary celebrations.

The Ceremony of the Dues is a tradition dating back to the 14th Century, when ships entering the Port of London were required to pay a levy to the Constable of the Tower. In 1381, King Richard II decreed that every vessel arriving upstream to the City of London must present "two roundlets of wyne", a custom that has endured for over 600 years.

Traditionally carried out by Royal Navy sailors, the ceremony remains a powerful symbol of the relationship between maritime service, the Crown and the City of London.

The ceremony saw a contingent of VCC cadets carry the symbolic dues, a barrel of wine, through the outer gates of the Tower. In keeping with tradition, they were challenged at the entrance by the Yeoman Gaoler and two Yeoman Warders, dressed in full state attire, before being formally escorted through to Tower Green.

There, the Chief Yeoman Warder led the parade to present the dues to the Constable of the Tower, General Sir Gordon Messenger KCB, DSO & Bar, OBE, in a ceremony rich in heritage and national significance.



The event marks a defining moment in the VCC's 125-year history, reflecting both its historic roots and its modern-day role in developing young people through leadership, discipline and service.

The ceremony was hosted by Brigadier Ged Salzano MBE RM, Commander Royal Navy Cadets, and attended by Louise Sandher-Jones MP (Minister for Veterans and People) and Rear Admiral Andrew Rose (Director People and Training), alongside senior representatives, cadets and volunteers from across the Corps.

Speaking after the Ceremony, Cadet Warrant Officer First Class Oliver Epps, Parade Commander, said:

"**To take part in a ceremony with over 700 years of history, at the Tower of London, during our 125th anniversary year is an incredible honour.**

Standing in uniform, carrying out a role traditionally performed by Royal Navy sailors, really brings home the responsibility we have as cadets. It's not just about drill, it's about representing the VCC, respecting its history, and doing something that very few young people will ever experience.

I feel proud to be part of this moment, and to represent not only my unit, but cadets across the entire Volunteer Cadet Corps."







Warrant Officer Second Class Russell Piner RM, Commander VCC, added:

"**This is a truly significant moment, not just for the Volunteer Cadet Corps, but for every cadet and volunteer who has contributed to its 125-year history.**

To be entrusted with a ceremony of this importance, in a place as iconic as the Tower of London, reflects the professionalism, discipline and commitment that our cadets demonstrate every day.

Behind this moment are countless hours of dedication; from the cadets who have trained to the highest standards, and from the volunteers who give their time to develop them. It is a proud day for the Corps and a powerful reminder of the impact we continue to have."

As the VCC marks 125 years since its formation in 1901, this historic first stands as a testament to the organisation's enduring values and its continued relevance in developing the next generation.

***Top Image**: Cadets from across the VCC formed up ready on Tower Green for the parade to commence.*
***Centre Image**: Spar Party in position ready to present the barrel to the Constable of the Tower.*
***Bottom Image**: Leading Cadet Rosie Auckland from HMS Collingwood RNVCC meeting Louise Sandher-Jones MP (Minister for Veterans and People)*

Training Wing Update



Breaking Boundaries through PT



CSgt (VCC) Tony Ryan and Sgt (VCC) Kaz Slaby attending the SCCPTQ Course

Congratulations to our VCC staff on their PT qualifications!

CSgt (VCC) Tony Ryan from Gosport RMVCC and Sgt (VCC) Kaz Slaby from Portsmouth RMVCC recently attended the Royal Navy Cadets Physical Training Qualifying Course (SCCPTQ) 2026 at HMS Temeraire, Portsmouth, facilitated by the Sea Cadet Corps.

The achievement qualifies both CFAVs as PT Trainers and marks an exciting opportunity for closer cooperation between the VCC and the SCC Physical Training Branch.

The demanding course combined classroom theory, practical instruction and intensive physical training, challenging participants both mentally and physically.

The week culminated in a Passing Out and Awards Ceremony, attended by Captain Sea Cadets, Captain Hannah MacKenzie VR RN, celebrating a week of hard work, resilience and achievement.

The ceremony included qualification presentations, special awards and an impressive PT display, providing a fitting conclusion to the course.

The occasion was particularly memorable for CSgt (VCC) Tony Ryan, who was presented with the Keith Wollaston Endeavour Trophy in recognition of his dedication, effort and sportsmanship throughout the demanding course.

Speaking after the course, CSgt Tony highlighted the inclusive atmostophere and demanding programme:

> **"There was no 'them' and 'us'. It was a hard but enjoyable course; lots of running around, uniform changes, theory and, what I liked most, lots and lots of physical activity."**

Sgt Kaz praised the welcoming and supportive environment:

> **"Combining classroom learning with hands-on practice ensured my peers and I were fully prepared to pass. While intense at times, the mutual support among everyone was wonderful to experience."**
>
> **SGT (VCC) KAZ SLABY**





With their new qualifications, skills and valuable connections, Kaz and Tony return to the VCC as qualified PT Trainers, helping to strengthen the delivery of physical training across the VCC.

Congratulations to everyone who successfully completed their courses, and a huge thank you to the staff and volunteers who made the week such a success.



Boleh! The VCC Takes to the Solent

VCC Cadets to Crew Historic Boleh in the ASTO Small Ships Race

The Volunteer Cadet Corps has been given an exciting opportunity to crew the historic junk yacht *Boleh* in this year's Association of Sail Training Organisations (ASTO) Small Ships Race.

Taking place from Cowes on the Isle of Wight, the annual event brings together sail training vessels from across the UK for a competitive "round-the-cans" race in the Solent.

For the VCC cadets selected to take part, this will be far more than simply a weekend on the water. It will be an opportunity to experience traditional sailing, develop practical seamanship skills and work as part of a crew aboard one of Britain's most distinctive historic vessels.

Sailing a Living Legend

Built in Singapore in 1949 by Malay shipwrights and designed by Commander Robin Kilroy DSC, *Boleh* is a 40-foot historic wooden junk yacht with a remarkable Royal Navy connection.

Her name means "can do" in Malay - a fitting name for a vessel that has lived up to that philosophy throughout her history.

On her maiden voyage in 1950, Commander Kilroy and a Royal Navy crew sailed Boleh more than 10,000 miles from Singapore to Salcombe, Devon.

More than 75 years later, the yacht continues to provide young people with the opportunity to experience sail training and develop skills at sea.

Her distinctive junk rig and traditional wooden construction offer a very different experience from sailing a modern yacht. Operating Boleh requires communication, teamwork, physical effort and adaptability - qualities that fit perfectly with the VCC's ethos of Meet the Challenge!

More Than Sailing

Now, VCC cadets will have the chance to become part of her story.

Working alongside experienced crew, cadets will get hands-on experience of seamanship, navigation, sail handling, helming and watchkeeping, while putting their teamwork and leadership skills to the test during the competitive Small Ships Race.

But this isn't simply about winning a race.

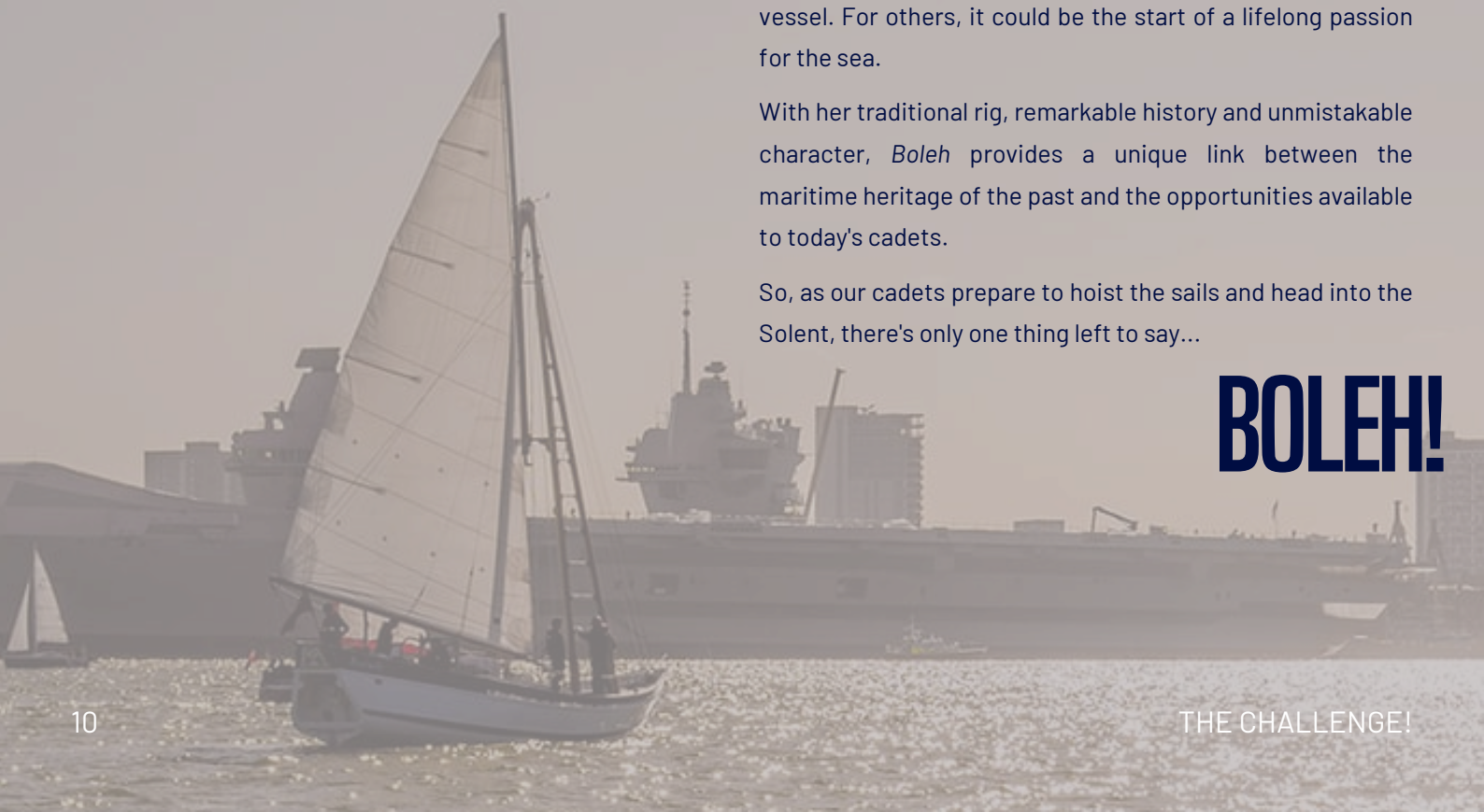
Life aboard *Boleh* will challenge cadets to communicate, make decisions, take responsibility and work together in an environment where everyone has a role to play.

For some, it may be their first experience of sailing a historic vessel. For others, it could be the start of a lifelong passion for the sea.

With her traditional rig, remarkable history and unmistakable character, *Boleh* provides a unique link between the maritime heritage of the past and the opportunities available to today's cadets.

So, as our cadets prepare to hoist the sails and head into the Solent, there's only one thing left to say...

BOLEH!



Shared Approach to Cadet Training

One Royal Navy Cadet Forces family. Shared experience. Greater opportunity.



The RNVCC and Royal Navy Combined Cadet Force (RN CCF) are working together on an exciting new approach to training, strengthening collaboration across the Royal Navy Cadet Forces and creating greater consistency in the cadet experience.

Led by Head of Training, Lieutenant (VCC) Duncan Ellis, the project brings together Training Officers from RN VCC units to help develop a new training programme that builds on the established CCF syllabus while reflecting the specific needs and strengths of the VCC.

The proposed programme will introduce a combination of mandatory core modules and optional flexible modules. Core training will provide a consistent foundation for all VCC cadets, while optional modules will allow individual units to make use of their specialist expertise in areas such as drill, marksmanship, boatwork and other activities. The revised syllabus will also look to expand naval knowledge and skills, including advanced seamanship and navigation, naval history and traditions, communications and signals, maritime safety and damage control.

Importantly, the partnership works both ways. The CCF has recognised the VCC's successful approach to early-stage training and leadership development and is incorporating elements of the VCC's First Wave Exercise Camps, Junior Command Courses and Senior Command Courses into its own training.

This two-way exchange demonstrates the value of closer collaboration across the Royal Navy Cadet Forces.

By sharing experience, expertise and proven approaches, the initiative aims to provide better, more consistent and more ambitious training opportunities for cadets across both organisations.

Parade, Ho!



The RNVCC is strengthening its ceremonial training with the launch of a new Train the Trainer RN Drill Instructor Course, developed as part of the growing collaboration across the RNCF.

Delivered in partnership with CPO (AWW) Bill Bilbe, Royal Navy Area Instructor for the RN Combined Cadet Force and former Ceremonial State Drill Instructor, the course will bring high-level Royal Navy drill expertise directly into the VCC.

The first course is planned for September / October, with successful participants gaining the skills to train and qualify future VCC Drill Instructors across the Corps.

The initiative aims to establish a sustainable pipeline of qualified instructors, raise drill standards and encourage greater participation in ceremonial activities, including the potential development of unit drill display teams and increased VCC representation at major ceremonial events.



Bravo Zulu Colours Zoë!

The Volunteer Cadet Corps is delighted to congratulate Zoë Malam on being named Gosport Youth Citizen of the Year 2026, recognising her exceptional commitment to volunteering, leadership and youth development.

Zoë joined the Band of the Royal Marines Volunteer Cadet Corps Gosport in 2019 and quickly embraced the opportunities offered by the VCC.

Throughout her time as a cadet, she developed valuable leadership skills while participating in concerts, ceremonial parades and training activities. Despite many opportunities being disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, she was selected as a First Sea Lord Cadet, recognising her dedication and potential.

Progressing to the rank of Cadet Colour Sergeant, Zoë demonstrated outstanding commitment before transitioning into adult service at the age of 18. Since then, she has supported numerous training camps and activities, serving as a Sailing Instructor, Welfare Officer and member of senior leadership teams delivering safe, rewarding and memorable experiences for cadets.

Most recently, Zoë has served as Second-in-Command of Royal Marines VCC Gosport Division, helping to strengthen recruitment, encourage greater participation from female cadets and adult volunteers, and further develop the delivery of training within the unit. Her passion for practical training and youth development has made a lasting impact on countless young people.

Reflecting on her journey, Zoë credits the VCC with helping shape the person she is today through the confidence, skills and lifelong friendships she has gained. In turn, she has dedicated herself to ensuring future generations of cadets benefit from the same opportunities.

Everyone at the Volunteer Cadet Corps congratulates Zoë on this well-deserved achievement and thanks her for her outstanding contribution to the VCC and the young people it supports.

Behind the Scenes: The First Lieutenant



It has been a busy six months for Lt Cdr (VCC) Rodger Mills, First Lieutenant VCC, whose role focuses primarily on strategic engagement and representing the Volunteer Cadet Corps across the wider Armed Forces and local community. One of the highlights was facilitating the VCC's signing of the Armed Forces Covenant aboard HMS Victory, a significant occasion during the Corps' 125th anniversary year. Rodger also secured a foreword from the Lord-Lieutenant to help mark VCC125.

Another memorable opportunity was representing the VCC at the Ceremony of the Dues at the Tower of London.

> "I was proud to represent the VCC and to visit such a historic location. This event really helped raise our profile."

Rodger continues to represent the VCC within the wider Armed Forces community through his work with SERFCA, including sitting on the Hampshire Reserve and Cadet Forces SERFCA Committee and coordinating VCC contributions to Cadet Link. He has also secured an official SERFCA photographer for a number of VCC events.

His engagement extends to the Joint Services Youth and Cadet Committee, where he represents the VCC alongside the other uniformed cadet organisations in Hampshire. He also coordinates the MOD-sponsored uniformed cadet forces on the Hampshire Youth Network, supporting opportunities such as cathedral services in Winchester and engagement with the Dean of Winchester.

Partnerships with external organisations have also been a key focus. Rodger liaises with the Connaught Trust, supporting and endorsing grant applications, while also helping to facilitate visits to VCC units from organisations including the NAAFI and Shaping Portsmouth.

Finally, Rodger continues as a committee member of the Connaught Cadet Challenge, now entering its seventh year. The skills competition brings together MOD-sponsored Cadet Forces and Volunteer Police Cadets, with Hampshire Fire Cadets joining this year.

Much of this work happens behind the scenes, but the aim is clear: to raise the profile of the VCC, strengthen relationships and create new opportunities for our cadets and volunteers.



New Digital Home

Behind the scenes, our Deputy Commander has been working hard to develop a modern new website that reflects the VCC's refreshed brand and makes finding information easier for cadets, CFAVs, parents and supporters.

With a cleaner design, improved navigation and a more user-friendly layout, the new website will provide a central hub for everything VCC.

Watch this space – our new digital home is coming soon!

Exercise Harkness: Summer Camp '26

230 Cadets and Staff. One Week. Countless Challenges.

After a memorable week in the heart of Northumberland, Volunteer Cadet Corps cadets and staff returned home from Exercise Harkness with new skills, and lasting friendships. The annual summer camp, held at Otterburn Training Camp, proved to be a great success, combining adventure, leadership and teamwork in one of the UK's most spectacular outdoor environments.



Named after Captain William Harkness RMA, the VCC's founding Commanding Officer, and marking the Corps' 125th anniversary, Exercise Harkness brought together cadets from across the Volunteer Cadet Corps for a week packed with adventure, activity and challenge.



Set against the dramatic backdrop of Northumberland National Park, the camp provided opportunities for cadets to step outside their comfort zones, develop new skills and discover what they were capable of achieving.

The adventure training programme was undoubtedly a highlight of the week. Activities included kayaking, canoeing, paddleboarding, rock climbing, mountain walking and tag archery. For many cadets, these were first-time experiences, providing exciting opportunities to build confidence, develop resilience and discover new strengths.

Alongside the main outdoor pursuits, cadets took part in a range of STEM and team-building exercises delivered by the Royal Navy Youth Engagement Team. Through practical challenges and problem-solving tasks, participants strengthened their communication, teamwork and decision-making skills.

A local excursion added further variety to the programme as cadets visited the iconic Bamburgh Castle, perched high above Northumberland's dramatic coastline.



The visit provided an opportunity to explore over 1,400 years of history while enjoying the spectacular beach and stunning views across the North Sea to the Farne Islands.





Otterburn Training Camp provided an excellent base throughout the week, offering decent accommodation and facilities surrounded by the beautiful countryside.

The setting played a significant role in making Exercise Harkness such a memorable experience, giving cadets the perfect environment in which to learn, develop and thrive.



> "Seeing 230 cadets embracing new experiences, supporting one another and growing in confidence throughout the week has been a real highlight. The friendships, skills and memories created here are exactly what the VCC is all about."

WO2 RUSS PINER RM
Commander VCC

The camp concluded with a final gathering for the impressive Summer Camp photograph, bringing together all 230 cadets and staff who had shared the week's adventures.

Following some last-minute packing and preparations for the long journey home, a series of presentations and awards recognised the effort, determination and achievements of the cadets throughout the camp.









Support Wing Update



A New Chapter for the VCC Charity

BY LIEUTENANT (VCC) JULIAN STRONG

2026 will be remembered as a landmark year in the history of the Volunteer Cadet Corps, as the organisation completed its transition to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and laid the foundations for a stronger, more resilient future.

While many cadets and volunteers may have noticed little change in their day-to-day activities, an enormous amount of work took place behind the scenes to modernise the VCC's governance, finances and legal structure.

The year began with the Volunteer Cadet Corps CIO entering its second year of existence. Having been established in 2025, attention turned to developing its governance arrangements and ensuring that trustee appointments, constitutional requirements and corporate records were fully aligned with the CIO structure. Trustee appointments and governance records were reviewed and updated in accordance with the CIO constitution, ensuring the charity was properly positioned for the next stage of its development.

A major milestone was reached on 19 March 2026, when the Charity Commission issued a formal Section 105 Order authorising the arrangements necessary to transfer assets and liabilities from the former Headquarters Volunteer Cadet Corps charity into the Volunteer Cadet Corps CIO. This important legal step enabled the merger process to proceed lawfully and transparently, providing certainty for trustees and safeguarding the interests of the charity.

On 21 March 2026, the transfer of the former Headquarters Volunteer Cadet Corps charity into the CIO took effect, marking the point at which the new charity became the principal vehicle for the VCC's operations and governance.

The beginning of the new financial year on 1 April 2026 saw the operational launch of the new arrangements. Across the VCC, units began transitioning to new Co-operative Bank accounts and Xero accounting systems, providing a common financial framework for managing charitable funds. Volunteers and staff worked tirelessly



to establish banking arrangements, transfer balances, reconcile accounts and ensure that every transaction was supported by a clear audit trail.

Alongside the financial transition, significant effort was devoted to the practical work of incorporation. Governance registers were established, insurance arrangements reviewed, legal notifications completed and procedures updated to reflect the new structure. Trustees and volunteers worked closely with professional advisers to ensure that the transition met both Charity Commission requirements and recognised best practice for charitable governance.

By the summer, a number of constituent units had successfully been integrated into the CIO framework. Dedicated unit bank accounts had been established, new accounting systems were operational and work had begun to identify additional units ready to transfer into the organisation. The long-term objective is to bring the VCC together within a single charitable structure, ensuring consistent governance, financial oversight and support for cadets and volunteers across the country.

Another significant milestone came on 16 July 2026, when the Charity Commission formally registered the merger between the former Headquarters Volunteer Cadet Corps charity and the Volunteer Cadet Corps CIO. At the same,

CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

the former charity was removed from the Register of Charities, formally recognising the completion of the changeover.

The benefits of the new structure are already becoming evident. The CIO has established consolidated budgets, improved financial reporting and strengthened oversight of charitable resources. These arrangements provide trustees with greater visibility of activity across the VCC and help ensure that funds continue to be directed where they matter most: supporting cadets and delivering life-changing opportunities through training, adventure, leadership and personal development.

Although much of this work has taken place away from the parade ground and out of sight of cadets, it represents one of the most significant organisational changes in recent years.

The successful establishment of the Volunteer Cadet Corps CIO has created a modern charity fit for the future, providing a secure platform from which the VCC can continue to grow and deliver opportunities to young people across the UK.

> **"The transition to the CIO has involved an enormous amount of work by trustees, volunteers and staff across the VCC. Much of that work has taken place behind the scenes, but it provides an important foundation for the future of the VCC and, ultimately, the cadets we exist to support."**

LIEUTENANT (VCC) JULIAN STRONG
Charity and Finance Officer

Flash, AAAHAAAAA!

New Royal Marines Cadet Badges

There is an update on the new Royal Marines Cadet badges being introduced across the VCC RM units.

The initial quantity supplied was based on one badge per CFAV or cadet and the badges were produced with Velcro backing, allowing them to be moved between garments.

Following the decision that the badges are to be sewn directly onto uniform, additional badges without Velcro are now being procured through RNCF HQ.

We are currently awaiting delivery of the additional badges, along with the final decision on positioning and rollout across the RNCF.

Once received, the new badges will be issued to VCC RM units as part of a gradual transition.

One important point: ***there are currently no Black on Green RMC mudguards available.***

More information will follow once the final arrangements have been confirmed.



THE CHALLENGE!

Dress to Impress



Investing in the VCC's Ceremonial Uniforms

One of our key uniform priorities this financial year has been to increase the number of Ceremonial Number 1 uniforms available across the VCC.

Our Head of Support, Capt (VCC) Gaz Langworthy, has been leading this work behind the scenes and has committed to investing approximately £50,000 in the purchase of new uniforms to benefit all cadets across the organisation.

The first batch has been received and will be distributed to units in due course.

At the same time, Capt Langworthy has been working with a company called Ammo & Co on the design and materials for new uniforms specifically for our younger 9–12-year-old cadets. New mock-ups of the smaller RN and RM uniforms are expected shortly.

Together, these initiatives will bring around **400** additional Number 1 uniforms into circulation across the VCC.

A significant investment that will ensure more of our cadets have the opportunity to proudly represent the VCC in ceremonial dress.

VCC Signs the Seafarer Pledge

Continuing our support for careers at sea and the wider maritime industry, the Volunteer Cadet Corps is proud to have signed the Seafarer Pledge.

The Seafarer Pledge is a commitment to recognising the vital contribution that seafarers make to the UK and global economy, while promoting greater understanding, respect and support for those who work at sea.

As a maritime youth organisation, we're committed to inspiring the next generation to explore the exciting opportunities the maritime sector has to offer.

Whether it's serving at sea, working in engineering, logistics, navigation or maritime operations, we want young people to see the industry as a rewarding and fulfilling career path.

The VCC is proud to support the people who keep the maritime world moving – and to inspire the next generation to follow in their wake.

Flying the Fleet Air Arm Way!

Two cadets from Portsmouth Division RMVCC took to the skies recently as they joined cadets from across the CCF RN-RM and Sea Cadet Corps for the Silver Wings Cadet Naval Aviation Course at Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton.

The week began on the ground, with cadets completing a FOD Plod across the apron alongside members of 727 Naval Air Squadron, before attending the morning Shares briefing and getting to grips with the programme ahead.

Refresher training in meteorology and navigation followed, putting the cadets in the right frame of mind for what would be a busy week. The afternoon provided an opportunity to explore the history of naval aviation with a visit to the Fleet Air Arm Museum.

Day two brought a more practical focus, with training in cockpit procedures and escape drills, followed by navigation assessments and pre-flight briefings. Cadets also experienced the Underwater Escape Trainer and Airbase Fire Station, before getting a fascinating look at historic aircraft with Navy Wings.

Then came the moment everyone had been waiting for — flight!

The cadets took to the air, flying circuits around the airfield before putting their navigation skills to the test during a pre-planned navigation exercise conducted in real time. The course concluded with a full programme of flights, aeros and manoeuvres.

The week ended on a high as the new Executive Officer of RNAS Yeovilton visited the course and presented the cadets with their Silver Wings — a fitting recognition of their hard work, determination and newly developed aviation skills.

For Portsmouth Division, it was a fantastic opportunity to experience naval aviation from the inside, challenge themselves in the air and gain an insight into the skills and disciplines required by Fleet Air Arm personnel.



Command Tasks

Put your leadership, teamwork and problem-solving skills to the test. Challenge yourself and your fellow cadets with two of our favourite Command Tasks – can you complete them?

GET INVOLVED

We're always looking for features in our magazine. Get in touch: thechallenge@volunteercadetcorps.org

RED ALERT

Equipment: Various ropes, planks, burdens (such as an oil drum or metal box), red coloured tape, and materials to buld two scaffolds.

Time: 5 minutes briefing, 5 minutes planning by task commander. 15 minutes to complete the task

Where: Indoors or Outdoors

Aim: To get the groip and the burden from the start to the finish, without the burden touching the ground or any area on the equipment marked with red tape, in a safe and efficient manner.

Benefits: Gaining experience managing a team, planning a task as a team, delegating tasks, making command decisions, teamwork, achieving the physical demands of each task and working to a deadline.

Instructions: Cadets are asked to listen to the instructions given for each task which outline the objective, the rules and the safety precautions. A task commander is assigned who then has 5 minutes to formulate a plan with their team, incorporating where necessary the ideas from the team with their own, delegate tasks and execute the task by managing the team.

No one and nothing may touch the ground betwen the start and the finish lines, the sides of the obstacle, any part of the scaffolding or anything marked with red tape. Any equipment which crosses the start line must cross the finish line, and keep in mind the burden is fragile and may not be thrown or dropped.

Make it harder:

- Decrease the time allowed.
- Remove elements of equipment.
- Make the teams smaller.

NOTHING MAY TOUCH THE GROUND BETWEEN THE START AND FINISH LINES

SPIDER WEB

Equipment: Long rope and two wooden posts or trees 2-4 meters apart.

Time: 20-30 minutes.

Where: Outdoors

Aim: To work as a team to get each member through a different hole of the spider web without touching the rope.

Benefits: Encourages participation, contribution, relating to others, teamwork, communication and listening.

Instructions: The CFAV sets up the spider web then sets the challenge with as little instruction as possible. Cadets work toegther to strategise ways to overcome the challenge while thinking logically about implications and risks. They try their ideas and re-try as required. At the end, they should reflect on what went well and what they would do differently.

Make it harder: Make the holes in the spider web smaller.

CADETS WORK TOGETHER TO STRATEGISE WAYS TO OVERCOME THE CHALLENGE WHILE THINKING ABOUT RISKS

DUKE OF EDINBURGH EXPEDITIONS

AUTUMN 2026

EXPLORE • CHALLENGE • ACHIEVE



1

BRONZE PRACTICE EXPEDITION

DATE

26th–27th September

LOCATION

South Downs

COST

£25

Sign Up and Payment Deadline

20th September

2

BRONZE ASSESSED EXPEDITION

DATE

10th–11th October

LOCATION

South Downs

COST

£25

Sign Up and Payment Deadline

3rd October

3

SILVER & GOLD PRACTICE & ASSESSED

DATE

24th–27th October

LOCATION

Wye Valley

COST

£45

Sign Up and Payment Deadline

10th October

FURTHER INFORMATION

ORGANISER / CONTACT DETAILS

SLt Norris
HQ.DofE@volunteercadetcorps.org

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS

Joining instructions are available from Units.

WHO CAN ATTEND / ELIGIBILITY

Cadets must be enrolled on DofE Award
Bronze Assessed *must have completed a Bronze Practice*

DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD MORE INFORMATION

https://www.dofe.org/do/basics/
https://www.dofe.org/do/your-dofe/
https://www.dofe.org/do/expedition/
www.dofe.org/do/parents/

VCC Volunteer Service Awards



After a period away, the VCC Volunteer Service Awards are being reinstated, recognising the dedication and commitment of the adult volunteers who give their time to support our cadets and the wider VCC.

Long service is a significant achievement. Behind every year of service are countless parade nights, weekends, camps, courses, events and activities — all made possible by volunteers giving their time, knowledge and experience.

The reinstated awards will provide a meaningful way to recognise those reaching significant service milestones and ensure that the contribution of our volunteers does not go unnoticed.

The Deputy Commander VCC and Volunteer Support Manager are working closely with the other Royal Navy Cadet Forces to develop a consistent approach to volunteer recognition across the RNCF brand. This will help ensure that service is recognised fairly and consistently, regardless of which organisation or unit a volunteer serves with.

While the awards themselves may be straightforward, the message behind them is important:

Your service matters. Your commitment is valued.

As the VCC looks towards its next 125 years, we are proud to recognise the volunteers who have helped shape our past and continue to build our future.

Thank you to everyone who continues to give their time, experience and commitment to the VCC.

From the VCC Archive: Royal Marines Museum

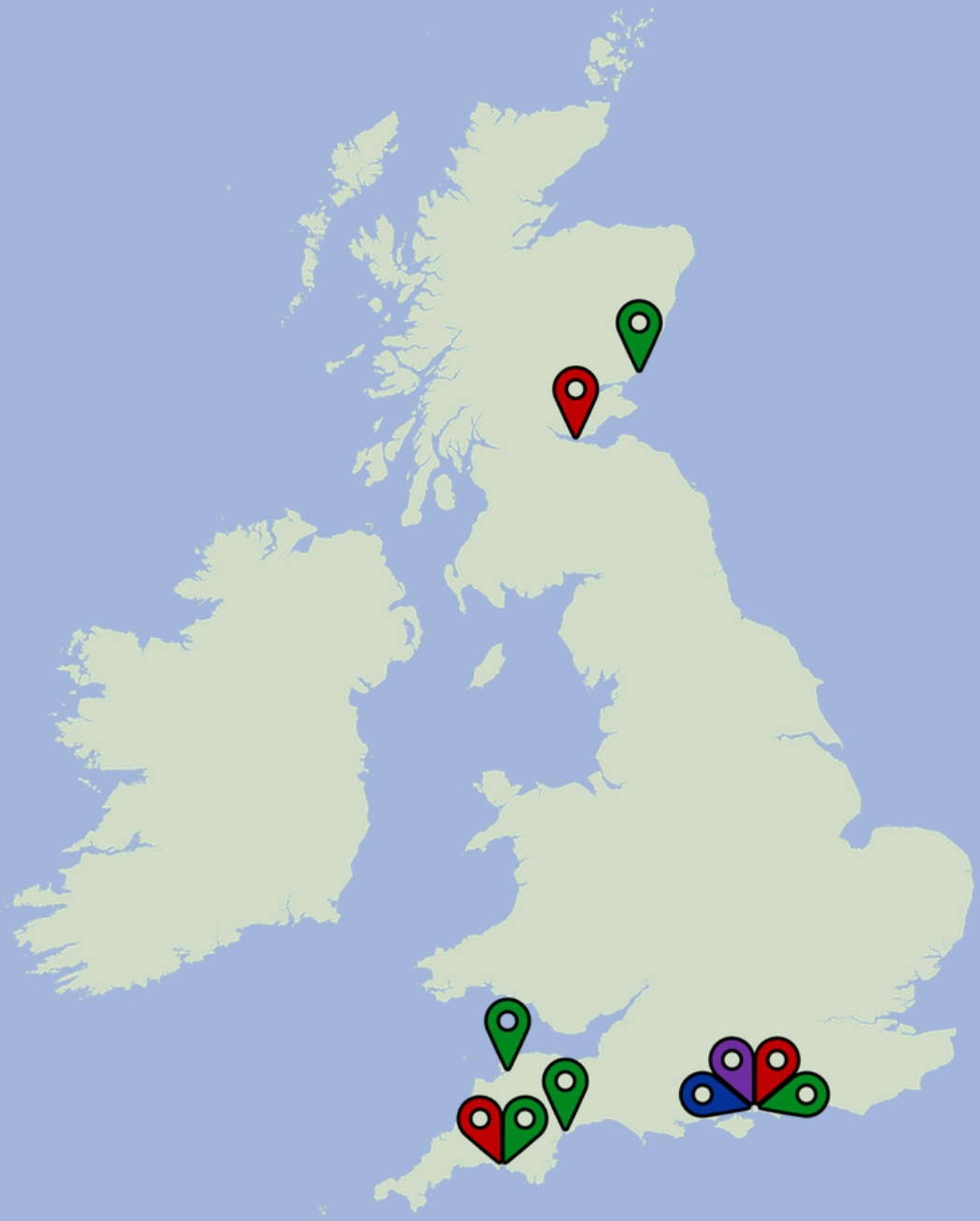


With the new Royal Marines Experience at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard due to open on 24 October 2026, we look back through the VCC archives to the opening of the former Royal Marines Museum at Eastney.

The museum was officially opened by His Late Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh and Captain General Royal Marines, with VCC cadets taking centre stage during the grand launch.

The VCC has a long and proud association with both Royal Marines Barracks Eastney and Portsmouth Dockyard, and this archive photograph offers a glimpse into that enduring connection.

Know Who's Who in the VCC



The VCC is powered by volunteers. From our Unit Commanding Officers and Regional Officers to the team at Headquarters, the people supporting our cadets give their time, experience and commitment voluntarily to help make the VCC the organisation it is today.

Your Unit Commanding Officer (CO) is your first point of contact for matters relating to your unit. They are responsible for the leadership, management and welfare of cadets and adult volunteers within their unit.

Supporting our units are the Regional Officers, who act as an important conduit between units and VCC Headquarters. They provide regional support, guidance and oversight, helping information, advice and good practice flow effectively in both directions.

The VCC Headquarters team provides support to Command, Regions, units and volunteers across areas including operations, training, safeguarding, administration, communications and compliance.

Keep the details handy

In this edition, we've included a VCC Contact Directory to help you identify your Unit CO, Regional Officer and key Headquarters staff, together with their roles and official contact details.

Whether you need advice, support or simply aren't sure who to speak to, the directory is there to help you find the right person at the right level.

And remember — every person listed is a volunteer giving their time to support the VCC and our cadets. Please respect their time and remember that, just like you, they are balancing their VCC commitments alongside their work, family and other responsibilities.

North Region



Lt (VCC) Graeme Ashford
Regional Officer (North)
HQ.RON@volunteercadetcorps.org

WO2 (VCC) Damian McCarthy
Commanding Officer, Arbroath RMVCC
arbroath@volunteercadetcorps.org

WO2 (VCC) Paul Castledine
Commanding Officer, Band of RMVCC Scotland
band.sco@volunteercadetcorps.org

West Region



Lt (VCC) James Glass
Regional Officer (West)
HQ.ROW@volunteercadetcorps.org

Lt (VCC) Tim Healy
Commanding Officer, Plymouth RMVCC
plymouth@volunteercadetcorps.org

WO2 (VCC) Gav Harris
Officer Commanding, Lympstone RMVCC
lympstone@volunteercadetcorps.org

Lt (VCC) James Glass
Commanding Officer, Chivenor RMVCC
chivenor@volunteercadetcorps.org

CSgt Andy Wainwright RM
Commanding Officer, Band of RMVCC Plymouth
band.ply@volunteercadetcorps.org

South Region



WO2 Daniel Tregarthen RN
Regional Officer (South)
HQ.ROS@volunteercadetcorps.org

CSgt Martyn Chapman RM
Commanding Officer, Band of RMVCC Gosport
band@volunteercadetcorps.org

CPO (VCC) Andy Sansom
Commanding Officer, HMS Collingwood RNVCC
collingwood@volunteercadetcorps.org

South Region

WO2 (VCC) Paul Conway
Commanding Officer, HMS Excellent RNVCC
excellent@volunteercadetcorps.org

CSgt (VCC) Dan White
Commanding Officer, Gosport RMVCC
gosport@volunteercadetcorps.org

WO2 (VCC) Sam Moody
Commanding Officer, Portsmouth RMVCC
portsmouth@volunteercadetcorps.org

WO2 (VCC) Dan Rands
Commanding Officer, HMS Sultan RNVCC
sultan@volunteercadetcorps.org

Headquarters VCC



WO2 Russell Piner RM
Commander VCC
hq@volunteercadetcorps.org



Maj (VCC) Louis Colpitts
Deputy Commander VCC
HQ.DCOMD@volunteercadetcorps.org



Capt (VCC) Gaz Langworthy
Head of Support VCC & Adjutant RMVCC
HQ.HDSPT@volunteercadetcorps.org



Lt (VCC) Duncan Ellis
Head of Training VCC
HQ.HDTRG@volunteercadetcorps.org



Lt Cdr (VCC) Rodger Mills
First Lieutenant RNVCC
HQ.1STLT@volunteercadetcorps.org



WO2 (VCC) Andrea Colpitts
Volunteer Support Manager
volunteersupport@volunteercadetcorps.org



SLt (VCC) Ben Hutchens
IT Officer
HQ.ITO@volunteercadetcorps.org



Mrs Samantha Holmes
Health and Safety Officer
HQ.HS@volunteercadetcorps.org

Headquarters VCC

Know who's who. Know who to contact. And remember the volunteers behind the uniform.



WO2 (VCC) Stuart Hinchliffe
Deputy Head of Training
training@volunteercadetcorps.org



Mrs Tina Hinchliffe
Finance Administrator
finance@volunteercadetcorps.org



Sgt (VCC) Brandon King
Medical Support Officer
HQ.MSO@volunteercadetcorps.org



SLt (VCC) Kim Norris
National DofE Manager
dofe@volunteercadetcorps.org



Lt (VCC) Julian Strong
Charity and Finance Officer
HQ.SFO@volunteercadetcorps.org











VOLUNTEER CADET CORPS
125 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

From Eastney's shore, one spark was lit,
A vision born through courage and grit.
One hundred twenty-five years have passed,
Yet still the VCC stands proud and steadfast.
An organisation built on service and care,
Shaping young lives everywhere.

Royal Naval Cadets answer the call,
Learning seamanship, teamwork and all.
Royal Marines Cadets, steadfast and bold,
With courage and resilience to uphold.
Royal Marines Band Cadets proudly play,
Inspiring others every day.

Behind each success, often out of sight,
Stand volunteers whose passion burns bright.
Giving their evenings, weekends and more,
Creating opportunities to explore.
Not seeking recognition or acclaim,
But changing young lives all the same.

From parade grounds, camps and open seas,
To concert halls and ceremonies,
Friendships are forged and leaders grow,
Confidence flourishes, ambitions show.
Our heritage guides the path ahead,
By those who've served and those we've led.

To those who came before, we honour your name;
To those who follow, carry the flame.
Meet The Challenge with courage and pride,
Be Worthy with honour as your guide.
Make A Difference in all you pursue -
The future of the VCC now rests with you.

BY MAJOR (VCC) LOUIS COLPITTS
DEPUTY COMMANDER VCC

Safety: Looking Out for Each Other



Safe Together. Stronger Together.

At the VCC, safety is everyone's responsibility.

Whether you're a cadet, CFAV or part of the wider VCC community, we all have a role to play in making sure everyone can take part, enjoy themselves and get home safely.

Our activities are about challenge, learning, teamwork and adventure. Looking after one another means we can enjoy those opportunities with confidence, knowing that safety remains at the heart of everything we do.

Look out for yourself. Look out for each other. Speak up if something doesn't feel right.

Being safe isn't about stopping us from doing things — it's about making sure we can keep doing the things we love, safely.



DO YOU HAVE A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN?

Step 1: Head to volunteercadetcorps.org/safeguarding

Step 2: Click 'Submit an Incident Report'

Step 3: Fill in the ACSH Form, then press submit

Remember, if someone is in immediate risk, call the police as the Safeguarding Hub is not staffed 24/7, or talk to a CFAV you can trust.

Please note that the Designated Safeguarding Person will be notified once the report has been actioned by one of the ACSH Case Workers

National Cadets Week

For the first time ever, National Cadets Week will take place from 5–11 October 2026, celebrating the UK's cadet community and the thousands of young people and adult volunteers who make it possible.

Throughout the week, cadet units across the UK will have the opportunity to open their doors to schools, families and local communities, showcasing the incredible opportunities available through the Cadet Forces.

For the Volunteer Cadet Corps, it is a chance to showcase what makes our cadets so special — their commitment, teamwork, resilience and willingness to challenge themselves.

From training on the parade ground to adventure, waterborne activities, STEM, music, community engagement and leadership, VCC cadets continue to develop skills and confidence that will serve them well throughout life.

National Cadet Week is also a time to recognise the CFAVs who make these opportunities possible, giving their time, experience and enthusiasm to support the next generation.

This year, as we celebrate 125 years of the VCC, there is even more reason to be proud.

Celebrating our cadets. Celebrating our volunteers. Celebrating the future.

Dates for Diary

There is plenty happening across the Volunteer Cadet Corps over the coming months. Save the dates and make sure you don't miss out!

Date	Event Name	Region
11-13 Sept	Connaught Cadet Challenge	South
12-13 Sep	RM Corps Families Weekend	All (RMVCC Units)
26-27 Sep	DofE Bronze Practice	DofE Cadets Only
05-10 Oct	National Cadets Week	All
16-18 Oct	National Trafalagr Parade	South (RMVCC)
26-27 Oct	DofE Silver/Gold Expeditions	DofE Cadets Only
08 Nov	Remembrance Sunday Parades	All
11 Nov	National Remembrance Day	All
06 Dec	Chatham RMVCC (now RMSCC) Bus Disaster Service	All RMVCC Units
10 Dec	VCC125 Christmas Service	All





THE CHALLENGE!

Commander VCC Closing Remarks

As we reflect on what has undoubtedly been one of the busiest and most productive periods in recent years, it is impossible not to feel an overwhelming sense of pride in all that our cadets, volunteers and supporters have accomplished. This has been a time of considerable change, uncertainty and transition across the Corps, yet throughout it all, the dedication, resilience and professionalism of our people have remained unwavering.

Our cadets continue to demonstrate exactly what the Volunteer Cadet Corps stands for. Whether representing the Corps on the national stage at the Mountbatten Festival of Music, performing with distinction during the historic Ceremony of the Dues at the Tower of London, engagement with the general public across our many public facing events, or forging new opportunities, they have consistently showcased the very best of the VCC.

We have also seen remarkable achievement in individual development. Cadets have earned Bronze and Silver Aviation Wings (with one cadet progressing towards their Gold!), whilst our Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme is going from strength to strength, opening new avenues for personal challenge, adventure and achievement. Alongside this, cadets have continued to benefit from opportunities to gain recognised qualifications through the Cadet Vocational College, developing valuable skills, knowledge and experiences that will support them throughout their future education, employment and careers.

Equally encouraging has been the significant progress made in training and development across the Corps. Volunteers have embraced opportunities to enhance their skills, with two of our CFAV's successfully passing the Physical Training Instructors course, ensuring we continue to provide safe, effective and inspiring experiences for our young people. The rollout of the Royal Marines Recruit Syllabus marks another important milestone, providing a structured and challenging pathway that reflects the proud traditions and values of our Corps. Closer ties with the CCF and SCC will provide further developments and updates to our RN & RM syllabuses.

A highlight of the summer must surely be our annual Summer Camp, Exercise Harkness, in Northumberland. Bringing together nearly 200 cadets for a week of adventure training, challenge, teamwork and fun was no small undertaking. However, the smiles, achievements and memories created throughout the week were a powerful reminder of why we do what we do and of the life-changing opportunities that cadet service provides.

While the future may still present challenges and uncertainty, the achievements of recent months give us every reason to be optimistic. The strength of the VCC has always been found in its people, and the commitment demonstrated by our cadets and volunteers continues to inspire confidence in the road ahead.

Talking of which, there remains much to look forward to. September sees our Royal Marines Cadets come together for the Corps Families Weekend at CTCRM (11-13 September). October promises to be equally busy, with National Cadet Week (5-10 October) providing an opportunity to showcase the incredible contribution of cadets nationwide. This is followed by the prestigious Cautley Cup competition at CTCRM (23-25 October). We also anticipate our next Executive Committee meeting at the end of October, subject to final confirmation, as we continue shaping the future of the Corps. In November, cadets and volunteers across the country will once again proudly represent the VCC during Remembrance events and parades on 8 November, honouring those who have served before us. Finally, our VCC125 celebrations will conclude in fitting style with the VCC125 Christmas Carol Service in Portsmouth on 10 December, providing an opportunity to reflect on our rich heritage, celebrate our achievements, and look ahead to the future with confidence.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to these successes. Together, we are not simply navigating a period of change; we are actively shaping a stronger, more capable and more ambitious Corps for the future.

FAIR WINDS AND FOLLOWING SEAS.

WO2 RUSS PINER RM
Commander VCC



The aim of the VCC is to provide opportunities for young people to develop in to responsible, dependable and useful members of society, employing the traditions and practises of the Naval Service as the basis for their activities

www.volunteercadetcorps.org

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GET INVOLVED: Cadet | Adult Volunteer | Corporate Partner | Supporter

volunteercadetcorps.org apply@volunteercadetcorps.org

VOLUNTEER CADET CORPS