

NORTHUMBRIAN UNIVERSITIES MILITARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (NUMEC)

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

NUMEC Activities in 2023-24

Two formal meetings of the committee meeting were held in person on 18 October 2023 at Newcastle University, and on 6 June 2024 at St Cuthbert's Keep, Newcastle.

The Chair attended the Exercise RIDGE THREAD at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst on 10 October 2023.

The NUMEC Secretary attended the Annual Conference of the Reserve Forces and Cadets' Association, held in London on 8 November 2023. An excellent dinner was taken by RFCA representatives from the North of England in the Victory Services' Club the previous evening.

Services of Remembrance were held in the Newcastle University Armstrong Quadrangle, and at Durham Cathedral, on Sunday 12 November 2023.

The NUMEC Secretary attended the Autumn meeting of the Reserve Forces and Cadets' Association for the North of England at the Stadium of Light, Sunderland, on 10 November 2023, and also the Association's Annual General Meeting, which took place at the same venue on 12 April 2024. At the latter meeting, two Officer Cadets from NUOTC co-presented with XO Major Rob Goatly on 'Positive Action for Under-Represented Groups'. The presentation was exceptionally well-received.

A number of NUMEC members, and a large number of service unit representatives and officer cadets in uniform, attended the NUMEC Annual Defence Lecture, held at Newcastle University on 1 February 2024, and given by The Rt Hon Lord Robertson of Port Ellen with the subject 'Can we manage a very dangerous world?' The lecture was sold out.

At Durham University, the St Cuthbert's Society hosted the Northumbrian Universities Air Squadron Annual Dinner on 15 March 2024. This was an inspiring and most enjoyable occasion where celebrating the achievements of students from across the North East was a high priority. The event was co-organised by St Cuthbert's Vice-Principal Dr Jon Warren (member of NUMEC). Both Dr Warren and the NUMEC Secretary were privileged to be honoured guests at the top table.

The NUMEC Secretary, Brigadier Paul Baker (Chief Executive of NERFCA), and Dr Jon Warren (member of NUMEC), attended the Northumbrian Universities Air Squadron Annual Visit on Wednesday 8 May 2024, where they were privileged to observe a student presentation, speak with a number of Officer Cadets, and experience flying in a Grob Tutor.

Two students – one Officer Cadet from NUOTC and one from NUAS – were endorsed by NUMEC as applicants for the COMEC Prize. Sadly, NUMEC was unsuccessful with a nomination for the Prize on this occasion.

On 11 June 2024, the NUMEC Secretary and two members of NUMEC – Dr Katharine Wright (Newcastle) and Dr Michael Mulvihill (Teesside) – accompanied by Lt Phil Biggs (CO NURNU), received a guided tour of HMS Tyne alongside on the river Tyne. Led by the Officer of the Watch, the tour party were shown around the vessel, viewing the bridge as well as other working and living quarters.

Dr Katharine Wright (Newcastle) and Professor Catherine Turner (Durham) attended the 2024 NUOTC ADX on behalf of NUMEC in Aviemore on 22 June 2024. They facilitated a session for 70 Officer Cadets designed

to provide OCdts with an opportunity for personal reflection on gender and leadership and, building on this, to develop inclusive leadership and decision making skills; and to facilitate an opportunity for Wright and Turner to observe first-hand the gender dynamics in how OCdts interact and relate to each other; and to provide impetus for future research.

Next steps

The Committee will continue with its range of formal and informal engagements with the Service Units with a view to involving University representatives throughout the region. Strengthening interaction with and support for students remains a primary ongoing objective, and further opportunities for engagement with Officer Cadets in training will be explored.

Dr Simon Meacher
Head of Executive and Governance Office, Newcastle University
On behalf of NUMEC

November 2024

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 scheme is in the process of shutting down over a five year transitional period, and is being replaced by the Defence STEM Undergraduate Scheme (DSUS).

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 a small annual subscription. 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.