

MINUTES OF THE ARMY RUGBY UNION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT 1400 HRS ON FRIDAY 27 JANUARY 2023 VIA MICOROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT: A LIST OF ATTENDANCE IS ATTACHED AT ANNEX A

ITEM	Action
The Chair opened the AGM at 1400hrs.	
Welcome and I wish to give you a reminder all in attendance why we have the AGM -	
 The AGM shall be held annually as directed by the Management Board. Each club within the Union may send one representative to such meetings, exclusive of any member of their club serving on the Council, who shall be entitled to vote. The Management Board, also known as the Board of Trustees, for which I am the Chairman, is accountable to a variety of different organisations in varying degrees and areas including the Charity Commission, Companies House, the Rugby Football Union, the Army Sport Control Board and to you, our members. The purpose of this AGM is to brief you on our strategic plans and intentions so that you can endorse them where appropriate and question where appropriate in order for the ARU to deliver them on your behalf. Therefore, as we finish each section please do ask any relevant questions you may have. 	All
A reminder of what the Aim of the ARU is:	
The aim of the ARU is to promote and foster the game of Rugby Union in the Army and its local communities in accordance with the Laws of the Game promulgated by the World Rugby (WR) and rules, regulations and byelaws issued by the Rugby Football Union (RFU).	
The Management board executes this task on your behalf. Our Mission is to:	All
 The Management Board Mission Statement is to promote and govern Rugby Union in the Army through the maintenance of stable structures for the game that enable its successful development at all levels for the benefit of all its participants. If you remember from previous AGM's and the reports that are published on the ARU's website we have been in a sound financial position for several years, however with reduced income from our 	All

Inter Services matches for last year and restricted sponsorship revenue we clearly are having to tighten our belts. I can confirm that the Board remain transparent and financially compliant as a registered charity; that the Trustees and directors remain accountable, that the ARU have once again been subject to an independent audit, and that the Board deliver the best possible value for money as one of the National Constituent Bodies of the Rugby Football Union, importantly focused in every respect on our Charitable objects.

• The Management Board, also known as the Board of Trustees, for which the Chairman, is accountable to a variety of different organisations in varying degrees and areas including the Charity Commission, Companies House, the Rugby Football Union, the Army Sports Control Board and to you, our members. As I mentioned at the start, the purpose of this AGM is to brief you on our strategic plans and intentions so that you can endorse them where appropriate, question where appropriate in order for the ARU to deliver them on your behalf. Therefore as we finish each section please do ask any relevant questions you may have.

With regard to maximising rugby for all, I do have some significant concerns. While I believe our representative teams and the men's Corps sides are in a reasonably good state, I get the very strong sense that we are facing significant challenges with availability of players and teams in our Community Rugby and therefore the rugby being played at Premiership, Championship, Garrison, and women's Corps levels. The last 6 months have indeed been taxing however this summer saw our men's and women's VIIs team in full action, we had a fantastic Armed Forces Day GB7s and ARU Community Festival on Armed Forces Day and a good start to the Corps Competition despite the cancelling of the Corps Festival in September.

 Following the latest strategy planning days in Twickenham; the Board have produced our revised strategy and associated plans for the next 5 years; the Strategy is linked directly to the Management Plan and reflects what we as a Board feel is important on how rugby union is developed within the Army.

 Our Strategy is based on the following building blocks: Maintain, Sustain, Develop, Grow, Evolve and Succeed.

I believe we have the best people working within the representative game; coaches, match officials, medical staff, and administrators, however we are always after people to fill numerous positions as individuals step down from the supporting and management roles. Colonel Andy Geary has recently taken on the Director of Representative Rugby and Major Gemma Stonebridge Smith is taking the lead on Rugby Development. There are also two posts being advertised currently for the men's and women's Directors of Rugby, closing dates for application are the end of February.

 Turning now to the Inter-Service matches I just want to cover the somewhat difficult and dynamic situation we find ourselves in.
 Following last year's game where we had a crowd of 57,000 it is hoped that we can expand on the numbers from that game, however ΑII

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we are for present only opening up the lower and middle tier. The overarching feedback was extremely positive and the RFU were exceptionally pleased with the event. We clearly need to build on these numbers.

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 The Army Masters v Royal Navy Ancient Mariners game will be played at Rosslyn Park on the Friday evening, and the Army Women will again play the Royal Navy Women in the stadium following the men's game, kicking off at 1700hrs.

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 Lastly a few points regarding some key points. The Army Sport Control Board has a new Director; Major General (Retired) Darrell Amison, a much different individual from the previous Director, and we hope; the ARU will have a much more positive relationship with him.

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Lastly two serious concerns from Grass Roots up:

 Head injury and its prevention, also its effects on the game, more to come on this subject......it is a serious subject and effecting our players, we need to take action on the recommendations coming from World Rugby and the RFU.

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 And lastly the challenge of the Chain of Command to supporting grass roots rugby, the Board and Council are working on ideas and any you have and wish to forward will be greatly received, we need to get the message through to our Commanding Officers that Rugby is a key Team sport, and its values mirror the Army's key values.

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You will now receive reports from the following:

Finance Report.

Representative Rugby.

Community Rugby.

Rugby Development. (Coaching and Referees)

Discipline.

Approval of the ARU Management Board and Council.

Mr Steve Bates – Finance Director - Ladies and Gents – a very good afternoon – I wish to give you the relative Finance overview relating to the ARU as at today.

- The current cash in bank is £1,120,013K.
- Audited accounts TBC due to still being externally audited by DJH Mitten & Clarke
- Investments £348,416k.

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Income Revenue Streams: (for fiscal year 2022-23)

- Sponsorship £243,000K
- Cashflow- £267,000K.
- RFU £21,102k

• Investments - (£14,047K).

All

Financial Season Spend: (for this 2022 – 2023 season)

- Opening Account £1,120,000K.
- Representative Teams £418,200K.

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Financial Overview:

- Army v Navy Twickenham revenue potential difficult to estimate due to the introduction of the e-ticket sales through the RFU
- Army v RAF Gloucester potential £15 –20K.
- Oxen (Elite Pro Sport-retail element)—Hold all the risk with stock and the ARU has a 50:50 split of Sale of Goods minus Cost of Goods.
- Sponsorship revenue £243k.
- IMS and Affiliation Income £6.7K.

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Summary – look forward: Improving the Inter-Service Championship offer by recruiting an overarching sponsor for all three fixtures.

Representative Rugby Update.

Colonel Andy Geary OBE.

19. I would like to start by quickly introducing myself as the new Chair of Representative Rugby after taking over from Brigadier Adam Griffiths back in August this year. My name is Colonel Andy Geary, and having been involved in Army, Corps and Unit rugby for the last 24 years, it gives me great pleasure to lead our representative, Red Shirt Teams. In many ways these are challenging times for both the Army and the game, but through Red Shirt rugby we still offer an incredible opportunity for our soldiers to play consistently at a high level with some continuing to balance professional rugby careers and gain international honours.

For my report I would like to start with the Army Women's.

20. Following last year's inter-service success, with wins over the RAF and the Navy, our Army Women's season was started in mid-Nov 22 to allow the community season to bed in and for our UKAF players to attend the IDRC(W). The women have started with a larger player base of c.60 players for their initial fixtures, with players being rotated to give opportunities to demonstrate their suitability for selection into the IS squad. The squad will filter down to 35 for the IS training camp which will be held in February and then reduced to 30 players for the final IS squad. Of note, SSgt Jade Mullen AGC (SPS), Bdr Bethan Dainton RA and Pte Courtney Pursglove RLC were all selected to train with their respective nations over the last 12 months and we have a number of players involved in the Premiership 15s competition.

On the management front, Maj Gemma-Stonebridge-Smith stepped down as the Head Coach and WO2 Sarah Mitchelson has succeeded her in this role.

Moving next to the Men's U23s.

21. Following the successes of Nov 2021, the IS results of 2022 were clearly disappointing although this young squad (many of whom qualify for U21s rugby) will hopefully remain at the core of the 23's group for the next 2 seasons.

In all, 54 players played Army 23s rugby this season, and despite beating Gunner Dev, Berkshire u20 & RMAS, we lost to both RAF (7-8) and to Royal Navy (3-44). The RAF fixture was played in horrific conditions at Witney RFC, where despite maintaining a slender lead for the most part, a late penalty decision disappointingly allowed the RAF to steal the result with 2 minutes go.

Having already well beaten the RAF, the Navy delivered a dominant performance in Aldershot and were comfortable winners on the night. Importantly, the full U23 squad was involved in the Senior Men's trial, setting the player development pathway which will be essential in the coming years.

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This neatly takes us to the Senior Men

22. The Senior Men were crowned inter-service champions in May 22, having won convincingly against the RAF and finally pulling ahead of the Navy in an incredibly close fought game at Twickenham. On the management front, Head Coach, Capt Mal Roberts has retired from the Army, with Lt Col Tim Osman stepping in as 'interim' to see the team through this season. Impressively we had a wealth of new and quality players turn up at the open trial in October 22. The team aim to give as many of those an opportunity to compete for an IS Squad place as part of the Development fixtures against British Police, Oxford Uni Greyhounds and Blackheath. The squad will then refine down to the core Inter Service Squad in late Feb. The next phase of the season will see fixtures against the Varsity teams, French Army, a training camp in Wales, MOBBs (this year in Bedford) and then into the IS games.

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Moving to the 7s teams.

23. The Army Men and Women's 7s continue to grow and surpass expectation. Competing again in the 4 rounds of the Super Sevens Series (SSS), this time against emerging international representative teams, both squads delivered to the highest level. For the men, finishing 3rd in the series with victories at Sixways, Heart of Wales, and Norwich. Of note, was the season opening win in Melrose, the birthplace of 7s rugby and a first for the British Army. For the women, their growth continued, as impressive runs in the SSS cup competitions were routinely ended by international opposition. The development of the women's game remains exciting as their continued exposure to elite level 7s serves to accelerate their progress. In a congested season, both squads were able to support the new UKAF 7s construct. 2

Army Rugby Union – Annual General Meeting 2022

Army head coaches were selected to lead the squads (both dominated by 80% of Army players) to Agen, France to compete in the newly founded World Military 7s Championship. The men's victory and women's success in reaching the final were undoubtably down the successes of the Army programmes. Further evidence of this was demonstrated with international representation, with 1 from the men representing Fiji at the London leg of the HSBC sevens and 2 from the women gaining the opportunity to train with their respective national team programmes.

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And finally, the Masters

24. The Masters successfully defended their IS title for the 5th year in a row with a narrow win over the RAF and a comprehensive win over the Royal Navy. Impressively, the Season saw 12 new players capped. From a management perspective there has been considerable churn with the DoR Col Mark Benyon, Team Manager Capt Brad Sutherland and Head Coach WO2 Dean Lloyd-Christie all retiring from their appointments. I am delighted to report that Lt Col James Harris took up the DoR mantle, Capt Spencer Sutton appointed as Team Manager and Capt Mark Eastley promoted from within the ranks to Head Coach. This season saw over 60 expressions for the initial trial fixtures culminating in a IS Squad of 30. Of this 15 are again new master's and the average age of the squad is 40 ½. The final series of games ahead of the IS will see the Masters face the Fire Brigade, Army Scotland, North Petherton and Camberley, none of which are Vets sides. Finally, the Masters will play as part of the Inter-service programmes, on the Saturday morning of the RAF game at a local club in Gloucester and on the Friday evening at Rosslyn Park before the Twickenham event, ensuring they remain closely connected to the Senior XVs.

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Are there any questions on Representative Rugby?

I will now pass you on to Major Marc Wilding – Director of Community Rugby

25. Community Rugby.

Administration

- Affiliation. All Corps and 66 Units have affiliated so far thank you to ROs.
- Accreditation (Corps). Only x4 Corps have completed the process.
- Structured Season. Minimal changes.
- GMS. All players and units will need to utilise GMS for 23-24 season.
 D&G to follow.
- ROs Checklist. Defence Connect page: here
- ARURS Match Card. Match Official Abuse.
- Concussion Protocol, WiP

Activate. Defence Connect>Resources>Content>Club Cluster	All						
Resources <u>here</u>							
Questions –							
 Colonel Gary McDade – How do we as a Union develop Rugby Union within the Army. This was a good discussion and one to break into subgroups within the coming six months. 	ТВС						
26. CORPS							
Corps Festival.							
 League Season Men. Corps 1 & 2 progressing well, Corps 3 under 							
some pressure.							
 League Season Women. Some pressure but progress and positivity. 							
 Corps Dev. Opportunities to play – demand? 	A.II						
 Corps Finals – 8th March at Aldershot. 	All						
Questions –							
 Major James Fish enquired re individuals playing for the Army that had not played for their Corps – Col Graham Taylor responded saying that he thought 'in general' players should represent their Corps before they play for the Army. Lt Col Ann O'Flynn asked on the perspective of Women's Corps and the structure moving forward. Col Graham Taylor replied stating there would be a 'Women's strategy afternoon to move things forward during the summer. The Army Medical Services asked re the structure of League 2 / 3 and why no one had been relegated last year. Col Graham Taylor replied stating the rules would be amended to ensure there was a promotion and relegation in future years. 	GT GT						
• UNIT							
 Premiership. Overall good engagement and fixtures fulfilled. Good work ROs! 							
Championship. North under strain, better in South but still not ideal.							
KO Comp. Progressing well.							
 Unit Finals. KO Finals 22nd March, Army Cup Final 17th May. 	All						
Questions –							
 Major Marc Wilding thanked the many volunteers that had supported him so well in the last 12 months. 							
Rugby Development.							

Colonel Gary McDade - Chair ARURS

General

ARURS support to Army rugby has returned to pre-COVID levels. Almost every referee has returned, which is a real positive when compared to civilian societies, many of which are struggling for numbers.

The Society continues to grow which is good, although development opportunities for newer referees are inconsistent due to the relative low number of games at the unit level.

In order to gain experience, all ARURS referees are encouraged to join their local societies as well.

 ARURS is now in its second full season as a voting member of the RFU and has now almost completely moved the management of appointments on to the Who is the Ref

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(WTR) platform in line with our civilian peer societies. Adoption has not been seamless however, and the dynamic nature of regularly changing rugby officers at unit level has meant we have not yet been able to exploit the full potential of WTR. But we are making progress. A key benefit we are realising this year is the ability to monitor the progress of our officials in their non-Army fixtures so that we can provide the top ARU fixtures with our very best.

- Since COVID, the RFU has changed its policy to require all referees
 officiating U18fixtures to have completed a Disclosure & Barring
 Service (DBS) check. Although this has no impact on the majority of
 Army fixtures, ARURS members are being encouraged to complete
 the check to support Community Engagement opportunities. With the
 reduction in community level fixtures due to Army tempo, this has the
 additional benefit of being able to provide additional opportunities for
 our officials to develop and could play into Op MOBILISE
 engagement efforts.
- Referee feedback forms remain vital for official development and are available by QR code and on the ARURS web page. Only by getting routine feedback will we be able to develop robust development plans for all our officials. All clubs are strongly encouraged to submit feedback, using the QR Code on Page 3 of this report.

At the most recent ARURS ExCo, the establishment of a mentoring mechanism for new referees was discussed and will be developed ahead of the 23/24 season.

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Membership

 ARURS currently has 210 members, up by nearly 40 from last year. A solid core of active officials but many members are currently unavailable due to work, deployments, overseas postings, injury etc.

Whilst numbers are reasonably healthy, we must not be complacent. New talent is always needed and welcome, and we are grateful for ARU, Corps and Club support in advertising refereeing opportunities.

Sadly, there have been two deaths of ARURS members to report –
 Col Rob Burley (in Service) and Stuart Gray-Cowan (Yorkshire MOD).

Inter Service matches

 ARURS fielded three strong teams of 5 officials for the RAF v RN IS matches at Ealing Trailfinders in Apr 22. Feedback on all ARURS officials was good and we were very well looked after by our sister Services.

In the U23 IS tournament for the 22/23 season, Pte Mike Todd put in an excellent performance in middle of the RN v RAF game.

Training

- The most recent ERRA tri-Service cse run in Dec 22 had 17 x attendees (20 originally loaded but 3 dropouts for welfare reasons (hopefully they will attend the next cse)). Of the 17 attendees 12 were Army, with some promising potential identified. All have elected to join ARURS.
- The next ERRA course is booked for 20-21 Mar 23 in Aldershot, so please spread the word. If interested, engage with:
- Trg Offr: Bentley, Martin Capt (FdArmy-Sp-Egpt-Plans-SO3)
- Martin.Bentley794@mod.gov.uk
- Recruitment Offr: Atterton, Johnathan Maj (CRHQAGC-OC)
- Johnathan.Atterton100@mod.gov.uk
- Hon Sec: Fetters, Mark Maj (33ENGR-49-SHQ-OC)
- Mark.Fetters882@mod.gov.uk

ARURS would welcome the ARU finding a new RDO. Presently there is a considerable administrative burden in training and developing new talent, so any support would be gratefully received.

Appointing

Communication between Corps, clubs and officials remains a sticking point in some instances. Some are excellent with early, positive comms, whilst there are still too many reports of late notification of games, or no engagement from the sides. There have, once again, been instances of games being called off without officials being informed. Poor communications have been a constant for several

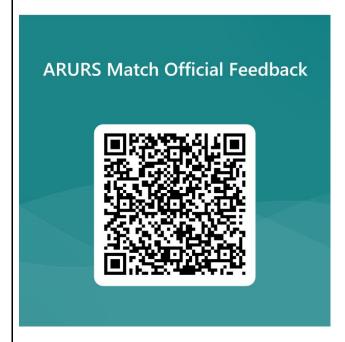
years now; units are requested to remind their officials of the requirement to engage with officials.

Whilst sometimes it is unavoidable, particularly for representative and UKAF fixtures, there have been some instances of units scheduling fixtures for Saturdays. Most ARURS referees have RFU or local society appointments at the weekend, so it is often difficult to get the correct level of match official to these games.

Discipline

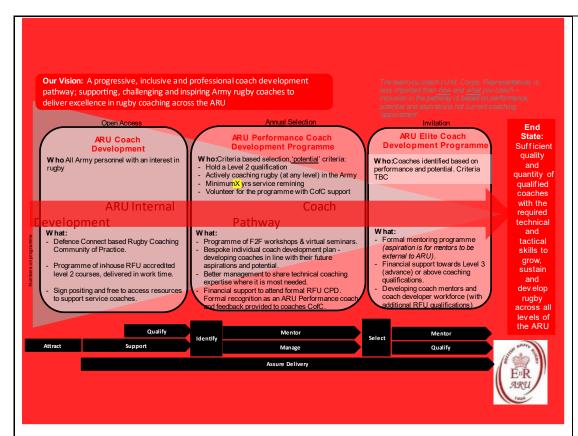
 Although there have been no particular trends regarding playing discipline and relatively few Red Cards recently, there has been a worrying increase in player (and coach /management) backchat and persistent questioning of decisions, with several reports from all levels of rugby. ARURS is grateful for the support of Community rugby officials in arresting this decline in standards before it becomes a significant issue.

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Coaching Development

 Major Gemma Stonebridge Smith – Gemma will brief off the slide she has provided.



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I will now pass you over to Maj Stuart Scott - Chair of ARU Discipline.

Season 21/22

- 22 Cases in total (20 proven)
- 2 cases dismissed.
- Most common offence 2 x YC (6 cases) and Striking (4 cases)
- 12 different panel members used
- No MOA cases (1 of only 3 CBs in the RFU not to have a MOA Case last season)

Season 22/23

- 4 cases so far this season
- 1 case dismissed
- Key Points
- Over 75% of cases are Corps level matches.
- Only 1 female case
- Players need to be registered on GMS (especially if Red Carded)
- RFU CB Audit carried out in November 2022.
- RFU National Discipline Conference in September 2022, which we had 5 people going to.

Approval of the Board and Council.

ARU Management Board and Council Appointments

MANAGEMENT BOARD

Chairman - Maj Gen Jez Bennett CBE

Vice Chairman - Brig J Cook OBE

Director Marketing - Col G Malec

Chairman of Representative Rugby - Col A Greay OBE

RFU Council Member - Brig J Cook OBE

Director Community Rugby - Maj M Wilding

Director of Rugby Development - Maj Gemma Stonebridge Smith

Non-Executive Director -

Non-Executive Director - Miss A Teasdale

Non-Executive Director – Mr A Leach

Director of Finance- Mr S Bates

Chief Operations Officer - Mr C Fowke



ARU AGM 2022

All

ARU Management Board and Council Appointments

THE ARU COUNCIL

The Chairman and Members of the ARU Management Board

Director of Senior Rugby - Col S Fitzpatrick MBE

Director of Women's Rugby - Maj C Maxwell

Director Academy – Lt Col T Osman

Director Masters - Lt Col J Harris

Director of Sevens - Maj J Lord

Chairman ARURS - Col Gary McDade

Chairman Corps Rugby - Col G Taylor CBE

Chairman Discipline - Maj S Scott

Chairman Premiership - Maj A Bennett

Senior Medical Advisor - Lt Col S Gough

Chair of Diversity and Inclusion - Mai Paul Smithurts

Director of Communication - Miss K Fowke

ARU AGM 2022



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AOB. Approval of Brigadier Paddy Allison to be an Honorary Life Vice President. - Carried

Brigadier James Cook updated the AGM on the following:

- The recent announcement from the RFU on a proposed tackle height changes. More to follow.
- Medical provisions new direction from the RFU preventing injury –
 every club must have a qualified individual that has attended a 'basic'
 RFU course, so an injury does not get worse while specialist medical
 treatment is summoned.
- The RFU 'register to play' APP that will be required to be completed by all.

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There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 1555hrs.

Post meeting link to recorded video. -

https://armysportscontrolboard331my.sharepoint.com/:v:/g/personal/cfowke_ascb_uk_com/EbZwKy q9gZBCtku8p4VzYncBUfD8mABgfjFYkuV_v3pfAQ

Rank / Title	Initial	Surname	Unit	Appointment	Voting Member
Maj Gen	J	Bennett CBE	ARRC	Chairman ARU	Υ
Col	А	Geary OBE	MOD	Chair Rep Rugby	Υ
Brig	J	Cook OBE	Project CASTLE	VC & ARU Council Member	Υ
Mr	S	Bates	ARU	Finance	N
Mr	С	Fowke	ARU	Secretary	N
Lt Col	Т	Osman	AMC	Dir of Academy	N
Мај	М	Wilding	MOD Lyneham	Dir Community Rugby	N
Col	S	Fitzpatrick MBE	MOD Glasgow	Dir of Rugby - Men	N
Miss	К	Fowke	ARU	ARU – Comms Director	N
Capt	S	Scott	MOD Lyneham	ARU Chair of Discipline	N
Major	G	Stonebridge Smith MBE		ARU Director of Coaching	Υ
Col	G	McDade	Comd SW	Chair of ARURS	N
Мај	А	Bennett		Chair of Community Rugby	N
Мај	D	Price			N
Lt Col	А	O'Flynn			N
Col	G	Taylor CBE		Chair of Corps Rugby	N
Lt Col	S	Gough		Senior Medical Director	N