

# AGM agenda: marines, mud, mayhem

THE Royal Navy's amphibious assault force played host to XLVets during its AGM and showed delegates the true meaning of the terms "partnerships for success" and being "fit for practice".

Sixty members of the veterinary group, along with teams from Pfizer and Kingshay Farming Trust, braved the gruelling Royal Marine commandos' endurance course at Woodbury Common, near Exeter.

## Did I do that?

David Black, managing director of XLVets, told *Veterinary Times*: "It was a truly awesome experience. I was so impressed by the way everybody threw themselves – literally – into the challenge. It was a wonderful example of how, by working together in teams, we achieved far more than would ever have been possible alone. Indeed, many looked back at the end of it and said: 'Did I do that?'"

The Marines have trained at Woodbury Common since the Second World War. The endurance course is probably the most notorious of the four achievements required of recruits and officers. A highlight is the infamous "sheep dip" – a fully-submerged underwater pipe.

Rachel Hayton, from Southfield Vets, said: "I'd seen this exercise on the TV advert for the Royal Marines, but I thought they

were just joking when they told us we'd be doing it too.

"I'd never have believed I could do it, but the effect of working together was incredible and our whole team accomplished the challenge. I just hope we don't all go down with post-dipping lameness."

The winning team was led by vet Charlie Lambert, from Lambert, Leonard and May in Nantwich, Cheshire, and included Carolyn Hogan from Pfizer and Duncan Forbes, managing director of Kingshay Farming Trust.

## Filthy

Mr Forbes said: "When XLVets invited me to its AGM to speak about our new membership for vets, I'd no idea I'd spend the afternoon in filthy water in which no self-respecting sheep would ever allow itself to be dipped. However, the challenge was great fun."

The winners received Royal Marines shirts, while further prizes were awarded to participants who demonstrated outstanding commitment in the eyes of the physical training instructors leading the challenge.

Captain Mark Latham, of the Royal Marines, said: "All competitors worked exceptionally hard throughout the challenge, while also having a lot of fun. It was great to see the large amount of teamwork and encouragement displayed by all participants."



Above: A final glimpse of everybody looking clean.



Left: Paul Rogers emerges from the notorious "sheep dip".

Below left: Dewi Jones leaves the "Smartie tube", a 25m tunnel half-filled with water that feels like being buried alive.

Below centre: Will it get much deeper?, wonders Jo Stanley.

Below: Fingers crossed that Luke Knowles (front) and Mike Thorne brought a change of clothes.

