

## FIRST PUPILS AWARDED BURSARY PLACES IN FORCESELECT SCHOOL INITIATIVE

**London, May 17 2011** – ForceSelect, the UK’s leading military service leaver recruitment consultancy, is delighted to announce that the first two beneficiaries of a bursary scheme for the children of military families have been granted places at leading independent school Mill Hill.

The awarding of the bursaries comes as Prime Minister David Cameron made a commitment to make the military covenant legally binding, and it underlines the determination of ForceSelect to help service personnel, service leavers and their families in as many ways as possible.

Ellie King and Megan O’Kane, both 13, have family serving in the forces and undertook a rigorous exam and interview process to win the prestigious bursaries. In order to be eligible, families must also meet certain specified financial criteria.

Ellie’s father, Sgt Julian King, served for 22 years before leaving the armed forces in October 2009 while her mother, Sgt Sharon King, who has undertaken tours of Croatia, Iraq and Northern Ireland, is set to complete the same length of service in April 2012 when she is also planning on concluding her commission.

Sgt Sharon King said: “The process via ForceSelect was simple and seamless and we will be recommending the scheme to other families. Ellie has been telling family and friends how excited she is, particularly about the science and music facilities.

“She’s a headstrong girl and the discipline and academic opportunities at Mill Hill will be the making of her. Peter McDonough (Deputy Head of Mill Hill) has been wonderfully positive and helpful and we’re thankful to 1PWRR – particularly the Colonel and Families’ Officer – for their support. We are chuffed to bits.”

Ellie King added: “The school’s huge and really impressive – all the facilities are on a larger scale than I’m used to. The swimming pool and music block are cool. I’m nervous but that standard of education, free of charge, is a brilliant opportunity in life. I’ve been to a few schools and it will be great to stay in one place now.”

Megan O’Kane’s father Corporal Michael Shepley, who has served for 12 years, will be in Afghanistan next year and her mother Roisin Shepley explained that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity.

Mrs Shepley said: “She’s a smart girl and recognised the opportunity. She’s repeating what she’s learnt at one school after another and is losing heart – she’s been to 7 schools already and this move will give her the stability she needs. The facilities at the school are out of this world and Megan keeps asking if it’s really happening. ForceSelect has been really helpful and went out of their way to make it happen – we’re so thankful and can’t quite believe it.”

Megan O’Kane added that she is looking forward to taking advantage of the wide range of facilities at Mill Hill. She said: “I’m very very excited to be getting a head start in life that other schools wouldn’t offer – and very excited about the swimming pool too. The music rooms are huge and they have an art programme which will be great.”

Ellie and Megan are part of a pilot scheme to identify children of service families eligible for bursary places and will start at Mill Hill School in the autumn term this year.



The bursaries are for up to 100% of annual fees which are currently £25,500 per annum for boarders, who attend the school from the ages of 13-18, and from £14,000 per annum for day pupils, who attend the school from the ages of 11-18.

In addition, Mill Hill offers a discount of 20% on fees to children of service leavers, as well as currently serving Forces personnel who do not qualify for the bursaries. The scheme is also open to the children of service widows and those who have been medically discharged.

ForceSelect founder and Chief Executive Hugh Andrée, who served in the army for ten years, said: “We have worked hard with Mill Hill to make sure that this pilot scheme is a success and Ellie and Megan are hugely deserving of the bursaries. I’m sure that they will go on to become valued members of the school and wish them every success in their studies.

“ForceSelect is embracing Big Society and we’re doing everything we can to help service personnel and service leavers. Mill Hill has a superb academic and extra-curriculum reputation I’d like to thank them for their assistance in making the ForceSelect bursary possible. In line with the recent Government initiative to enshrine the Military Covenant, ForceSelect believes that those schools which choose to support service families should receive additional funding for their efforts.”

As a pilot scheme, the bursaries were initially offered to the PWRR regiment, but based upon the success of this test activity, ForceSelect plans to develop a national network of independent schools offering bursary places to families of all three Armed Forces.

Polly Irish, bursary scheme director added: “At a time when independent schools are facing court battles to retain their charitable status, this is exactly the type of initiative they should be embracing. We would urge other independent schools to contact ForceSelect to become part of this initiative.”

Headmaster of Mill Hill School, Dr Dominic Lockett commented: “Mill Hill is delighted to be working with ForceSelect to provide these bursaries for children from military families. We have had a number of first class candidates and Ellie and Megan were the best of a very good bunch. We are committed to helping those who have served their country and provide the best possible opportunities for their children.”

More information about the bursary scheme can be found at: [www.millhill.org.uk](http://www.millhill.org.uk)  
Independent schools interested in discussing the bursary schemes should contact Polly Irish at: [pirish@forceselect.com](mailto:pirish@forceselect.com)

**Ends**

## NOTES TO EDITORS

ForceSelect was set up in 2009 by former Army Officer Hugh Andree to provide military service leavers - currently estimated to be around 22,000 each year - with the best and most appropriate career opportunities within UK businesses.

ForceSelect believes that Armed Forces leavers are efficient, reliable, disciplined, and self-motivated candidates who can contribute positively to Britain's society and workforce.

All ForceSelect consultants have served in the military including Managing Director and former Artillery Officer Lucy Wood; Director, best-selling author and SAS hero Andy McNab DCM MM; and Non-Executive Director and former Chief of General Staff General Sir Michael Jackson GCB CBE DSO DL.

ForceSelect has partnership deals in place with several leading UK businesses including British Gas, UPS and Sainsbury's. It is keen to sign up with a wide range of large and small businesses across the UK across all business sectors.

ForceSelect has developed a mentoring and support programme to provide advice and guidelines to individuals having left the Armed Forces, enabling a seamless transition from service life into civilian employment.

Via a national network of volunteers, the mentoring service is offered to every service leader placed in a new job and covers areas such as accommodation, financial matters, medical matters and the different culture of civilian life.

As part of a wider corporate responsibility, the ForceSelect Foundation has been established to contribute towards service charities each year and distributed grants to smaller service charities.

ForceSelect contributes a proportion of its profits to the Foundation as well as organising a range of fundraising activities.

ForceSelect was named the UK's Best New Recruitment Company 2011 at the prestigious Recruiter Awards earlier this year.

For more information, please visit [www.forceselect.com](http://www.forceselect.com)



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