

**The Forces' favourite paper**

## Competition

**Win Bomber Girls novel**

● See R'n'R page 5

**Win!**



## Books

**Million-word WWII tomes**

● See pages 19



Friday, January 12, 2024  
Edition No. 1575 £1.20

# RAF News

See story on p9



## Tempest treaty lift for UK

**Ice Hockey To Hull and back**



● See p25

**Alpine Challenge 24**

● See pages 26-27



**Rugby A taste for revenge**

● See p28



# Frontline fast-track

## RPAS training ramps up at Waddington



AIR CHIEFS are aiming to slash training time for the RAF's new Protector crews using the latest simulator training kit. The move could see pilots and mission operators move to the Protector frontline with 31 Sqn in just 18 months. ● See pp4-5



## BiteSize

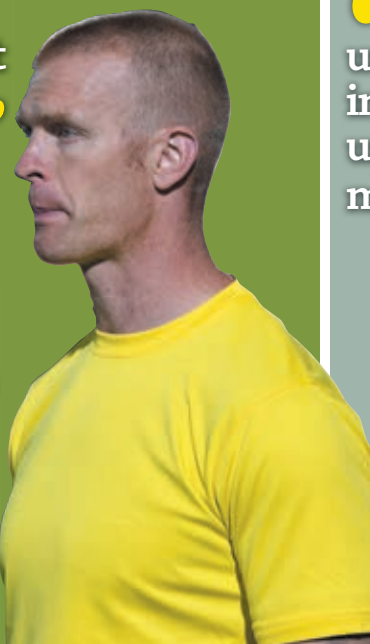
“20,000 others, some no longer with us, deserve recognition,”

Nuclear Test Medal recipient John ‘Dusty’ Miller  
**See page 9**



“Revenge is a dish best served cold,”

New RAF rugby league head coach Sgt James Hutchinson on his plans to defeat the Navy in Challenge Cup opener  
**See p28**



“I was unaware of income tax until this morning,”

Business guru Barry Butterfield, AKA comic Peter Serafinowicz  
**See R’n’R page 4**



# Ukraine set for F-16



**ROYAL AIR FORCE**  
**RAF News**

#### RAF News

Room 68  
Lancaster Building  
HQ Air Command  
High Wycombe  
Buckinghamshire  
HP14 4UE

**Editor:** Simon Williams  
**Email:** editor@rafnews.co.uk

**Features Editor:** Tracey Allen  
**Email:** tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk

**News Editor:** Simon Mander

**Sport:** sports@rafnews.co.uk

**All advertising:**  
Edwin Rodrigues  
**Tel:** 07482 571535  
**Email:** edwin.rodrigues@rafnews.co.uk

**Subscriptions and distribution:**  
RAF News Subscriptions  
c/o Intermedia,  
Unit 6 The Enterprise Centre,  
Kelvin Lane, Crawley  
RH10 9PE  
**Tel:** 01293 312191  
**Email:** rafnewssubs@subscriptionhelpline.co.uk

THE FIRST cohort of Ukrainian pilots to receive training from the RAF are now learning to fly F-16 fighter jets in Denmark.

UK instructors began training student pilots in August last year as part of the international Air Force Capability Coalition for Ukraine, to bolster the country's air defences.

Defence Secretary Grant Shapps said: “I am proud of the support the Royal Air Force is providing to the next generation of Ukraine's combat air pilots and ground crew, who will be the first line of defence in protecting Ukraine's skies.

“Its Armed Forces are now able to intercept and destroy the overwhelming majority of incoming ordnance – protecting their civilian population and vital infrastructure.

“Together we're now going further by ensuring Ukraine has a modern air force formed around the highly capable fourth-generation F-16 fighter jet.”

The programme is designed to give trainee pilots the skills to advance to the next phase of



**AIR POWER LIFT:**  
Ukrainian pilots moving on to F-16 after completing basic training in the UK

training with partner nations and bring Ukrainian pilots closer to a Nato standard approach to flying.

Pilots undergoing the basic flight

training scheme are conducting practical lessons in Grob Tutor aircraft with RAF instructors.

Alongside the pilot training,

dozens of Ukrainian aircraft technicians are also receiving English language training, geared towards engineering.

## This Week In History



### 1919 Churchill RAF post

WINSTON CHURCHILL is appointed as Secretary of State for War and the Royal Air Force in the Lloyd George government.

### 1951 Korea rescue

88 SQN Sunderland pilot Flt Lt Houtheusen lands just 200 yards off an enemy-held harbour in North Korea to rescue a ditched US Navy pilot.



### 1991 Desert Storm raids

TORNADO GR1 bombers attack Iraqi airfields as Desert Storm begins. One aircraft is shot down and Flt John Nicol and Flt John Peters are taken hostage.

Extracts from *The Royal Air Force Day By Day* by Air Cdre Graham Pitchfork (The History Press)



# Caroline's pride



**CAMPAIGNER:**  
Former RAF navigator  
Caroline Paige receives  
the MBE in the King's  
New Year Honours

## Tracey Allen

THE RAF'S first transgender officer, Caroline Paige, has been awarded the MBE for campaigning for LGBT veterans and serving personnel.

The former helicopter navigator, who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, launched the Fighting with Pride group which has led calls for compensation for victims of the military gay ban.

Earlier this year the charity launched the first UK study into the effects of the hardline ruling, highlighting the mental and financial hardship suffered by those prosecuted by the MOD.

She said: "I am truly honoured, proud and thrilled to have received this award.

"It is especially uplifting to receive such amazing recognition in my 25th year of working openly to raise and demonstrate not just the value of transgender inclusion in the Armed Forces and beyond, but of the wider LGBT+ community too."

PM Rishi Sunak and Defence Secretary Ben Wallace apologised to the House of Commons for the

ban, which was in place from 1967 until 2000.

The Prime Minister made the apology following the publication of the review into the impact of the policy.

An estimated 5,000 veterans were forced out of the Services, stripped of their medals and pension rights and criminalised following intrusive police investigations.

Fighting with Pride patron Sir Andrew Gregory added: "Caroline put herself forward in order to make the Armed Forces accepting of those who change gender, serving as the first openly transgender officer and proving to others that this could and should be perfectly acceptable.

"She has championed LGBT+ issues, to provide support to those discharged from the military when homosexuality was still deemed illegal, battling to see some of the wrongs done start to be addressed.

"Her courage has been exceptional and I am thrilled to see that so publicly recognised; this award is very, very richly deserved."



**MEETING:** Chief Chaplain The Venerable (AVM) Dr Giles Legood with 102-year-old WWII veteran Jack Hemings

## Padre praise

**CHAPLAIN-IN-CHIEF** AVM Giles Legood paid tribute to one of Britain's oldest WWII pilots, who went on to set up the world's largest humanitarian air service using a Miles Gemini aircraft.

Veteran Jack Hemings, 102, earned the Air Force Cross flying Hudson and Dakota aircraft with 353 Sqn during the conflict before founding the Mission Aviation Fellowship alongside wartime pal Stuart King, delivering humanitarian aid to the world's poorest and most remote regions.

His love of flying saw the super-vet perform aerobatics to mark his 100th birthday and he went on to pilot a Gemini in 2022 to raise more than £40,000 for MAF in memory of Stuart, who died in 2020.

Speaking after joining Jack in the New Year, Dr Legood said: "What a life of devotion and service to others Jack has given.

"As wartime RAF pilot and peacetime supporter of MAF, he has helped establish peace and improve the lives of so many.

"My grateful prayers and thanks are offered for his remarkable life."



**ON THE MOVE:** Ed in his new electric wheelchair. Inset, during his RAF days

# Charity's the wheel deal

## Tracey Allen

A FORMER aircraft engineer struck down with a chronic lung condition and given three years to live has thanked the RAF Benevolent Fund for changing his life – seven years after he received the devastating diagnosis.

Ed Brophy joined the RAF in 1974 aged 18 and left in 2007, after serving in Germany, Sardinia and around the UK.

Retiring after a 33-year career, he was working as an engineering surveyor when he had dizzy spells and what he thought was a chest infection.

He was later diagnosed with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis – a chronic lung condition.

He said: "The prognosis wasn't good, I was given three to five years to live – I'm now on year seven – and had to leave my job due to breathing issues, lack of oxygen and the inability to concentrate for long periods. I had no option other than to take early retirement in 2017."

After catching Covid in 2021, Ed's health deteriorated even more. He added: "My breathing capacity reduced considerably following my bout of Covid, resulting in my needing oxygen 24 hours a day."

Despite having donated monthly to the Benevolent Fund since joining the RAF, Ed initially felt reluctant to ask for help.

He said: "It was only after encouragement from ex-Service

colleagues and friends that I finally plucked up the courage to apply to the Fund for help to buy a powered wheelchair."

The award was granted less than two months later, transforming Ed's life.

With his new wheelchair, he has the independence he needed and can spend more quality time with his large family.

He said: "I have four children, my wife has two and between us we have four grandchildren. I can now spend more time with them outdoors."

Ed urged others seeking support not to be afraid to approach the Fund.

He said: "Shrug off some of that pride and ask for help. It is there waiting for you."



# Go Pro



**THE BEST TRAINING:** Learning in the Gladiator facility at Waddington's syn city.  
**PHOTO:** CPL WILL DRUMMEE



## Staff Reporter

**THE RAF'S new Protector Operational Conversion Unit has set its sights on training more than 70 aircrew a year to operate the UK fleet.**

With type training delivered by Waddington's Advanced Air ISTAR Academy, 54 Sqn, the fast-track intensive course could see graduates arrive to the Protector frontline squadron as soon as 18 months after finishing their entry training at Halton or Cranwell.

Pilots, Sensor Operators and Mission Intelligence Coordinators drawn from across the Service will join initial crews on the programme, which will use higher levels of synthetic training than ever before.

The first of the UK's order of 16 Protector aircraft to arrive in the UK is currently undergoing testing at Waddington with 56 and 31 Squadrons.

The aircraft will be operated by 31 Sqn from

the Lincolnshire station and is equipped with upgraded surveillance sensors offering UK forces critical global surveillance and strike capability.

The remotely piloted Protector will take on a range of land and maritime surveillance roles, to include tracking threats and conducting counter terrorism and search and rescue missions.

With a wingspan of 79ft, the uncrewed aircraft can operate at heights up to 40,000ft for more than 30 hours. However, unlike its predecessor Reaper, Protector will be certified to fly in shared airspace giving the ability to conduct both domestic and global missions.

54 Sqn's Flight Commander said: "With Protector we train our people beyond the international standard for airline pilots – we fly in the same airspace, but with extra capabilities.

"Not only do our pilots, sensor operators and mission coordinators have to have the



# Waddington's synthetic training centre and 54 Sqn OCU will fast-track Protector crew from entry to frontline in as little as 18 months



**ACCESS ALL AREAS:**  
Protector will be able to operate in civilian air space and be NATO-certified to cross national borders  
PHOTOS: AS1 AMELIA TURNBULL



**“We need cognitive diversity in a way we didn't in the past”**

skills of civilian pilots, they also need the skills to deliver operational tasks covered by both traditional ISR platforms like Rivet Joint and combat aircraft like Typhoon. It is one of the most difficult training tasks in Defence.”

The Protector training team, currently based at Grand Forks airbase in North Dakota working alongside manufacturer General Atomics, is expected to return to the UK this year and all training will be conducted by 54 Sqn at Waddington from 2025.

With the ability to fly remotely in shared air space and Nato certified to cross national borders, Protector has been hailed as a step change for the UK's

capability. Equipped with upgraded sensors and capable of carrying the RAF's latest weapons, it bridges the gap between traditional intelligence gathering platforms such as Rivet Joint, Shadow and the new Wedgetail and combat fast jets.

The training package for Protector reflects the capability lift. Waddington's new Gladiator multi-domain synthetic training facility will be an integral part of the programme, giving rookie crews the opportunity to hone their frontline skills in complex war-fighting scenarios alongside ground and maritime forces.

54 Sqn's training chief added: “The difference between individual and collective training is huge. Bringing

several platforms together to achieve the best effect for the theatre commander is invaluable. Gladiator unlocks that in a war-fighting context.

“We can build complex scenarios and expose people to things they wouldn't otherwise get. The only other country to have it is the US – that gives us an advantage.”

Exploiting the upgrade in RPAS capability requires a wide set of skills which Protector bosses say could put 31 Sqn pilots among the Air Force elite.

“Compared to crewed aircraft and traditional piloting, cognitive requirements are more similar than different, but one difference is that we need people who can also interpret ambiguity and manage automation.

“We need cognitive diversity in a way we didn't in the past – we need people who bring different perspectives but

have the confidence to assert, discuss and compromise with others where necessary, that's a real skill.

“The confidence to say what you think and self-confidence to agree compromise – that happens within the crew and on the squadron.

“You need to be able to explain your understanding of a situation, listen to others and be prepared to reconsider; to have the mental flexibility to adjust to new information quickly and without hubris. That psychological approach is not something that we traditionally associate with the Cold War era, but it is absolutely something we need in the ISTAR force today.

“There is a high demand for the role across all platforms. It excites people and they want to come and do it. We have no shortage of applicants,” a 54 Sqn spokesperson said.



**// Our  
welfare break  
gave us the  
quality time  
we needed as  
a family."**

**- Al Dyer**



## **FANCY A HOLIDAY ON YORKSHIRE'S EAST COAST?**

**Our holiday home is available for breaks all year round.**

Why not apply to stay in our holiday home for serving RAF personnel and RAF veterans? Situated only a 15-minute walk from the traditional seaside town of Bridlington.

It's the ideal destination to visit for a holiday with kids or for some peace and quiet.

The four-bedroom chalet bungalow is suitable for wheelchair access, along with a disabled friendly bathroom. A real home from home, with everything you need for a memorable holiday.

To find out more and apply, visit: [rafbf.org/thefolly](https://rafbf.org/thefolly)

**CALL 0300 102 1919**



**Royal Air Force  
Benevolent Fund**



**SCAN  
ME WITH  
YOUR  
CAMERA**



The RAF Benevolent Fund is a registered charity in England and Wales (1081009) and Scotland (SC038109).



## In Brief



**COLD FRONT:** A member of the Expeditionary Logistics Sqn prepares to start refuelling an Atlas A400M

## Pump action

GROUND CREWS braved Arctic conditions at Nato's most northern base as they honed their combat refuelling skills with an Atlas transporter crew.

A team from Wittering-based Expeditionary Logistics Sqn set up a tactical fuel system at Bardufoss Air Station in Norway to test their ability to operate in remote regions and extreme conditions, during Exercise Arctic Phoenix.

Flt Lt Woodhouse said: "In collaboration with other force elements, we have worked to enhance tactical refuelling capability under very challenging conditions."

"We've been able to test and prove the capability in the High North for the first time, with valuable support from our Norwegian partners."



Norwegian partners."

# Clyde & seek



**Sub-hunters eye Navy's next-generation frigate**

**ON BOARD:** CXX Sqn crew join Navy chiefs beside HMS Glasgow – the first of the UK's Type 26 frigates. Inset left, Poseidon conducts torpedo drill during a recent exercise



**POSEIDON CREWS** conducting long-range surveillance missions to safeguard Nato seas joined Navy sub-hunters on board the first of the UK's new-generation Type 26 warships on the Clyde.

CXX Sqn pilots, weapon system officers and operators will work alongside HMS Glasgow crews when the new frigate enters operational service following forthcoming sea trials.

The vessel is among the first of the new class of frigates nearing completion in the

Govan and Scotstoun yards which will replace the ageing Type 23s later this decade.

HMS Glasgow forged an alliance with the Lossiemouth-based squadron almost from the moment the first sailors joined the ship and crew headed up to Moray for a glimpse inside a Poseidon, last year.

The ship's company, led by Senior Naval Officer Commander Phil Burgess, provided the aviators with an update on the progress with the new frigate programme.

In service since 2020, the nine-strong

fleet of Poseidon P-8 aircraft boast an array of sensors and suite of computers to crunch data – including sonobuoy listening devices dropped in the path of suspected subs and high-resolution area mapping to pinpoint contacts of interest on and below the waves.

"When in service we will be working closely with our RAF colleagues; it's great to be able to build these relationships and develop a greater understanding of the future capabilities at this early stage," said Commander Burgess.

## Final salute for Rusty

LANCASTER BOMBER pilot Flt Lt Russell 'Rusty' Waughman, who served on 101 Sqn that suffered some of the highest casualties of WWII, has died a month before his 101st birthday.

Born in 1923 in County Durham, when he joined 101 Sqn in 1943, aged 20, he was the second oldest crew member.

In March, 1944, his crew joined 794 other bombers to attack Nuremberg, which saw Bomber Command suffer its biggest loss of the war.

His final sortie was on D-Day, as the squadron launched 21 Lancasters to

jam wireless communications and prevent enemy night fighters targeting airborne invasion forces.

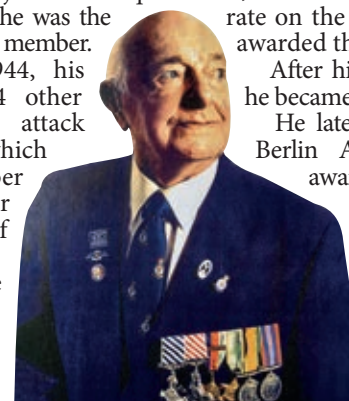
Waughman and his crew had flown 30 operations and were the first in six months to complete a tour, such had been the casualty rate on the squadron. He was awarded the DFC.

After his time on 101 Sqn he became a flying instructor.

He later took part in the Berlin Air Lift and was awarded the AFC.

He was also presented with the Légion d'Honneur by the French government.

See full obituary on p21.



**SOME OF the UK's frontline Top Guns** are set to take to the skies alongside the Red Arrows and vintage warbirds at Cosford as the Midlands site prepares to kick off the UK air show season, in June.

Organisers are offering aviation fans the chance to snap up a limited number of tickets at last year's price of £34, and entry to under 16s is free.

Go to [cosfordairshow.co.uk](http://cosfordairshow.co.uk) for details.



# Worcestershire Medal Service Ltd

Specialists in the manufacture and supply of full and miniature size medals, medal mounting and framing.



56 Broad Street, Sidemoor,  
Bromsgrove.  
B61 8LL

**01527 835375**

[www.worcmedals.com](http://www.worcmedals.com)

[sales@worcmedals.com](mailto:sales@worcmedals.com)



 **ADDICA**

**Promotional and Corporate Gifting**

**01527 509380**

**[www.addica.co.uk](http://www.addica.co.uk)**

**[sales@addica.co.uk](mailto:sales@addica.co.uk)**





PRIME MINISTER Rishi Sunak checks out a Typhoon from a Voyager tanker over Scotland during a visit to RAF Lossiemouth.

# Vet Dusty goes Nuclear

VETERAN FIREFIGHTER John ‘Dusty’ Miller was presented with his Nuclear Test Medal at a surprise party organised by pals and RAF Coningsby station chiefs. The 86-year-old airman, who served at the Lincolnshire base, took part in the UK’s H-Bomb test programme on Christmas Island in the South Pacific in the 1960s. He is among an estimated 20,000 Forces personnel who qualify for the medal, introduced last year by Veterans Minister Johnny Mercer.



Dusty thought he was attending a veterans get-together at Tattershall Lakes Country Park when Coningsby Station Commander Gp Capt Billy Cooper stepped in to present the award. Dusty said: “I’m very grateful to the Station Commander for taking the time to present my medal. “I’m also proud to recognise the 20,000 or so other people, some of whom are sadly no longer with us, who were also entitled to this award.”



# Tempest treaty lift



**WORLD FIRST:** Sixth-generation Tempest will feature AI-driven weapons systems and interactive cockpit

## Tracey Allen

THE UK has signed an international treaty with Italy and Japan to develop the supersonic sixth generation Tempest fighter jet in Britain

The move marks a key stage in the Global Combat Air Programme and will see British aerospace giants BAE and MBDA working alongside Italian firm Leonardo and Japan’s Mitsubishi and hundreds of tech organisations.

Launched in 2018, the Tempest programme has received more than £2.5 billion in UK government and industry funding, and is expected to take to the

skies in 2035 ahead of the planned drawdown of the Typhoon Force.

Already in development, the cutting-edge aircraft will be equipped with stealth capability and radar providing 10,000 times more data than existing systems, a spokesman said.

Defence Secretary, Grant Shapps added: “Our world-leading combat aircraft programme aims to be crucial to global security and we continue to make hugely positive

progress towards delivery of the new jets to our respective air forces in 2035.

The UK-based headquarters will also see us make important decisions collaboratively and at pace, working with our close partners Italy and Japan, and our impressive defence industries, to deliver an outstanding aircraft.”

Among the innovations planned to make Tempest a world-leading platform are an AI-driven weapons systems and an interactive cockpit which allows pilots

to take control using hand gestures and augmented reality displays.

Among the world firsts are an efficient electric starter generator producing huge amounts of power and open system software architecture allowing rapid changes in capability to suit any mission.

A spokesman for UK Defence added: “This is a crucial programme for the future of stability in the Euro Atlantic, Indo-Pacific and wider global security.

“The Global Combat Air Programme is a strong example of the UK’s global leadership in developing next-generation military capability to deter and defeat threats to the UK and our allies.”







## SPORTS LOTTERY

**WILL YOU BE OUR NEXT  
£10,000 JACKPOT WINNER?**

Play for as little as **£1** per week  
whilst supporting your RAF charity!

Join today or increase your tickets at:

[www.rafcf.org.uk](http://www.rafcf.org.uk)



**OPEN TO RESERVISTS!**



Reservist and RAFCF beneficiary, Cpl Phil Hall - World Rally Championship co-driver

**RAFCentralFund**

**BeGambleAware.org**

The RAF Sports Lottery operates as a society lottery within the Royal Air Force Central Fund and is licensed and regulated by the Gambling Commission ([www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk](http://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk)). The Royal Air Force Central Fund is a company registered in England and Wales 8555984. Charity registered in England and Wales 1152560. Charity registered in Scotland SC044299.

Registered office: Hurricane Building | HQ Air Command | RAF High Wycombe | Bucks | HP14 4UE  
Principal office: RAF Central Fund Danesfield | New Lock Lane | Henley Road | Madmenham | SL7 2EY

## Afghan sniper hero signs on at Cranwell



**COURAGE UNDER  
FIRE:** Army sniper  
Simon Moloney adds  
his name to Cranwell's  
Wall of Honour

**AIRCREW SURVIVAL specialists at Cranwell brought in an Army sniper who faced down the Taliban after being critically wounded to help prepare rookie aircrew for the frontline.**

Brigade recce force sharpshooter Simon Moloney was awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross for fighting on after being shot through the neck.

The round knocked him from his position on a building's roof but despite bleeding heavily from his wound he stayed in the fight, returning fire until a medic was able to get to him.

Following treatment in the UK he returned to Afghanistan after just three weeks and later battled in vain to save the life of his best pal, who was shot in the face during a fierce fire fight.

His experiences on the frontline led him to start the Heads Up charity, to support veterans battling PTSD after their military service.

Simon joined the RAF's list of modern heroes at Cranwell as he signed the Air

Crew SERE Training Course Wall of Honour before sharing his combat experiences with the latest graduates of the course.

SERE training instructor Mark Fairhead said: "Thinking he only had minutes to live and determined not to simply lie down and give up, he stayed in the fight.

"Once it dawned on him he was alive, still breathing and bringing the fight to the enemy, he continued to engage until a medic, himself awarded a Military Cross for his action, made it through to Simon whilst under heavy enemy fire, and patched him up.

"It was truly an honour to listen to his story and witness how he is turning his own battles with post-traumatic stress into something so positive to help others to avoid unnecessary loss of life.

"A giant of a man both physically and psychologically, his courage, sacrifice and support of others is humbling and inspiring."



**MISSION OVER:** 617 Sqn  
pilots greet after landing  
on the deck of HMS Queen  
Elizabeth during Exercise  
Phoenix Strike in Norway



# Royal Air Force Festival of Music

[www.rafmusic.org.uk](http://www.rafmusic.org.uk)



## Lincoln Cathedral

7.30pm Saturday 11 May 2024

RAF Music Charitable Trust

20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert

Compere: Melvyn Prior

## Royal Hall, Harrogate

7.30pm Friday 28 June 2024

Royal Auxiliary Air Force

Centenary Concert

Compere: Howard Leader



## Watersmeet, Rickmansworth

Royal Air Force Squadronaires

7.30pm Friday 15 March 2024

## CAST, Doncaster

Band of the Royal Air Force College

7.30pm Thursday 19 September 2024

## Palace Theatre, Newark

Band of the Royal Air Force College

7.30pm Friday 20 September 2024

## Playhouse Theatre, Weston super Mare

Central Band of the Royal Air Force

7.30pm Friday 27 September 2024

## Assembly Hall, Worthing

Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment

3.00pm Saturday 28 September 2024

## West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge

Central Band of the Royal Air Force

7.30pm Friday 4 October 2024





**Royal Air Force  
Benevolent Fund**

# BUILDING STRONGER FAMILIES

- It's our free **online platform** exclusively for RAF personnel and their partners.
- Covering a range of **self-directed topics** tailored to life in the RAF.
- The course can be **accessed anonymously**, either as a couple or separately.
- It aims to equip you with the **communication skills and strategies** to get the best out of your relationships.

We also provide relationship counselling and mediation support.

Find out more and register:  
**[rafbf.org/families](https://rafbf.org/families)**



SCAN  
ME WITH  
YOUR  
CAMERA





# St Mawgan mourns Burma hero Mervyn

**Jonathan Lord**  
St Mawgan

THE RAF has paid tribute to a WWII wireless operator who survived more than 30 missions with long-range bomber crews during the Burma campaign, as he was buried in St Mawgan's military cemetery.

WO Mervyn Thomas died three months after marking his 100th birthday with personnel from his local station, who joined three generations of his family for the funeral service.

He signed up in 1941 at the age of 18 with Coastal Command and flew Wellingtons, Shackletons and Lancaster bombers all over the world during his 27-year career.

He survived a crash landing at RAF Habbaniya in Iraq during a mission to deliver a Wellington bomber to Bombay, before joining 355 Sqn at RAF Salbani, a long-range bomber squadron flying sorties into Thailand and Burma against occupying Japanese forces.

At the end of the war he moved to RAF Poona, where he helped establish a rest camp for Allied fighters released from notorious Japanese POW camps.

Mervyn left the Service in 1946 and after four years on Civvy St he rejoined Coastal Command at St Eval, where he met his wife Eleanor, who worked at the station NAAFI. The couple married at St Mawgan Parish Church in 1951.



**BURMA HERO:** RAF bearer party enters St Mawgan parish church. Right, WO Thomas at 100

He went on to complete another 17 years with the RAF, based at St Mawgan, Kinloss and Penang in Malaysia, before retiring in 1968 and taking a job in the Civil Service.

He maintained strong links with the RAF and was a regular visitor to St Mawgan. Rev (Wg Cdr) Andrew Turner, who

conducted the service, said: "It is fitting after such a long association with the station that personnel from St Mawgan provided such support during the service in the parish church where he and Eleanor were married."



## In Brief



## Gulf move

SQN LDR Ali Nurse has taken over command of 901 Expeditionary Air Wing in the Middle East.

The unit is part of the RAF'S 83 Expeditionary Air Group and provides support to Coalition operations across the region.

## Gay ban pay call

WELFARE chiefs are calling for the Government to scrap a £50 million cap on payments to British military veterans prosecuted under the MOD's hardline gay ban.

The Royal British Legion, Help for Heroes and Combat stress have joined demands for the limit to be reconsidered and for a parliamentary debate on the findings of the recent LGBT Veterans Independent Review.

In an open letter to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, they said: "We call upon the Government to put in place a compensation scheme which fully recognises the disadvantage and injury LGBT+ Veterans have suffered. This arbitrary cap was set without knowledge of the number of veterans affected and the nature of their losses or injuries they faced."



**HONOURED:** Air Cdre Fin Bradley

## Medics award

AIR FORCE nursing chief Air Cdre Fin Bradley has been awarded an honorary Doctorate from Birmingham City University.

It is the latest accolade for the RAF medic who holds the posts of Matron in Chief of the Princess Mary's RAF Nursing Service, Chief Nurse to the Armed Forces and Regulator of UK Defence Medical Services.

# Merlin weighs in for return trip

BRIZE NORTON transport crews flew into the Middle East to bring back military kit used on recent training drills in the region.

The mission included loading a Royal Navy Merlin on to the 99 Sqn C-17 for the flight back to Oxfordshire before the aircraft's return to 845 Naval Air Sqn at Yeovilton, Somerset.

The 10 tonne helicopter was dismantled and each part weighed before being winched on board by Air Force Movers and Navy engineers during a five-day operation.

Loadmaster FS Bevan said: "This is a challenging move as the freight fits within an inch of the aircraft so every team member, whether they are RAF or Navy, plays a pivotal role in ensuring the task is completed with the precision it needs."



**CHECK-IN:** RAF and Royal Navy teams prepare to load Merlin onto 99 Sqn C-17 for flight back to the UK



Feature

The following Royal Air Force personnel are recognised in the New Year Honours List 2024 (Military Division):

NEW YEAR

THE MOST HONOURABLE ORDER OF THE BATH

As Companion (CB)

- AM I.D. Gale MBE
- AVM N.J. Colman OBE

THE MOST EXCELLENT ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

As Commander (CBE)

- Air Cdre C.C. Coton
- Air Cdre J. Moreton
- Air Cdre G.A. Opie

As Officers (OBE)

- Gp Capt (now Air Cdre) P.J. Shea-Simonds
- Gp Capt P.A. Weaver Smith
- Wg Cdr E.J. Ferguson
- Wg Cdr M.E. Lewis
- Wg Cdr S. McCleery
- Wg Cdr A. Morton
- Wg Cdr C.A. Wright MBE

As Members (MBE)

- A/Wg Cdr R.C. Timothy
- Sqn Ldr (now Wg Cdr) S. Haley
- Sqn Ldr J.D. Hemingfield
- Sqn Ldr S. Ingle
- Sqn Ldr K.C.W. March
- Sqn Ldr C.S. Middleton
- Sqn Ldr M. Shipley
- MAcr O.M. Dewey
- WO G.J. Stanton
- FS (now A/WO) S.M. Jackson
- FS P. Kipling
- Sgt (now A/FS) G.J. Downey
- Sgt M.J. Henderson

King's Volunteer Reserves Medal

- Sqn Ldr J. Pritchard
- WO M.A. Kennedy
- WO S.D. Thompson
- Sgt J.M. Soutar

THE CIVILIAN DIVISION OF THE MOST EXCELLENT ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

As Officers (OBE)

- Mr S.J. Ensor

As Members (MBE)

- Air Cdre (Retd) P.J. Hughesdon

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

- WO (now Flt Lt) J. Blinkhorn
- WO (now Flt Lt) H. Dimeck
- WO (now Flt Lt) F.E. Hunt
- WO1 R.Stj.H. Banfield DFC (British Army)
- WO D.P. Burke
- WO W.O.R. Clements
- WO N.W. Cook
- MAcr A.R. Davey AFC
- WO J.C. Foxall
- WO D.G. Jackson
- WO K.E. Jones
- WO E.L. Kerslake
- WO M.E. Larkin

- WO D.A. Lawrence
- WO R. Laycock
- WO B. Moore
- WO C.L.S. Old
- MAcr S.R. Parsons
- WO K.N. Phillips
- WO S.G. Rowbotham
- WO1 J.I. Sweeney (British Army)
- WO1 J.T. Williams (British Army)
- WO A. Wilson
- WO P.B. Wilson MBE
- WO S.M. Wooles
- A/WO K.S. Edwards
- A/WO A.S. MacDonald
- WO2 (now Capt) T.A. Tuhey (British Army)
- FS M.J. Moore
- FS J.C. O'Grady
- FS J.A. Simpkins
- FS C.A. Smith
- FS P.S. Ware
- FS L.A. Williams
- Chf Tech D.G. Bristow
- Sgt E.P. Jones

CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF COMMENDATIONS

- A/Wg Cdr D.K. Miller MBE
- Sqn Ldr P.J. Allen
- Sqn Ldr T.J. Bates
- Sqn Ldr N.L. Cooper
- Sqn Ldr P.J. Grubb
- Sqn Ldr E.R. Palethorpe
- Flt Lt S.H. Boulton
- FS A. Jones
- Chf Tech (now A/FS) R.D.L. Swanson
- Cpl S.D.G. Butler
- Cpl O.R. Griggs
- AS1 A. Graham

Team Commendations

- Number 51 Squadron
- RAF Police Air Transport
- Security Detachment, Operation POLARBEAR
- Learning Technologies Team – Defence School of Aeronautical Engineering
- Programme HYDRA
- Joint Task Force for Space Defence Commercial Operations UK Cell

DEPUTY COMMANDER'S COMMENDATIONS DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF COMMENDATIONS

- Sqn Ldr C.A. Pilliner
- Flt Lt S.J.K. Darby
- AS1(T) C. Ryan
- AS1 P.Y. Minta
- Mrs J.L. Dee

Team Commendations

- RAF Benson Service Discipline & Personal Support Team
- RAF Disclosures Subject Access Request Team
- Air Cyberspace Services Centre – Command Team

AIR AND SPACE COMMANDER COMMENDATIONS

- Wg Cdr G.K. Bingham
- Wg Cdr J.M. Taylor-Head
- Sqn Ldr (now Wg Cdr) D.J. Hankin
- Maj V. Cangiotti (Italian Air Force)
- Sqn Ldr S.K. Lockhart
- A/Sqn Ldr D. Lewis
- Flt Lt G.P. Connolly
- Flt Lt M.A.I. Jenkinson
- Flt Lt J.A. Sheldon
- Flt Lt C.B. Smith
- Flt Lt P.A. Smith
- A/WO (now FS) C. Reynolds
- A/MAcr A.T. Winter
- FS (now A/WO) M.A. East
- FS A. Campion
- FS C.C. Pezzuto
- FS J.E. Shaw
- Chf Tech (now A/FS) A.X. Stainfield
- Chf Tech J.P. Fitzsimons
- Sgt (now Chf Tech) J.W. Wright
- Sgt P.G. McKinlay
- Sgt D.P. Ward
- Sgt N.M. Williams

- A/Sgt (now Cpl) J.M. Fearnside
- Cpl L.R. Gunson
- Cpl S.C. McEwan
- Cpl R.J. Osler
- Mr D.R. Baxter
- Mrs J. Brown
- Mrs G. Moore

Team Commendations

- Air Land Integration Training Delivery Team
- Counter Intelligence Operations Flight
- Deployable Air Defence Flight, Expeditionary Radar and Airfields Squadron
- Imports, Air Movements Squadron, RAF Brize Norton
- Tactical Communications Wing, Aerial Erector Flight
- Intelligence Flight, 54 Signals Unit, 1 ISR Wing
- Trade Group 4 Apprenticeship Management Centre
- Central Flying School Elementary Examiners
- Team Atlas Engineering
- RAF Lossiemouth Mobility Team

AIR OFFICERS COMMANDING COMMENDATIONS

AIR OFFICER COMMANDING NO.1 GROUP COMMENDATIONS

- Sqn Ldr C.E. Baker
- Sqn Ldr L.D. Bell
- Sqn Ldr A.G. Pickup
- Flt Lt C.J. Barker
- Lt J. Glassman (US Navy)



ACTION STATIONS: Eight F-35B Lightning jets from RAF Marham conduct Carrier Qualification

- Flt Lt M.I. Mather
- Flt Lt T. Moore
- Flt Lt L.J.W. Paddon
- Flt Lt A.E. Shenton (formerly Milne)
- WO1 L. Hoddy (Royal Navy)
- MAcr E.J. McCabe
- A/WO (now FS) G.A. Steel
- FS (now A/WO) M. Wilson
- FS P.R. Mulley
- CPO P. Sayers (Royal Navy)
- Chf Tech (now A/FS) D.L. Clayborough
- Chf Tech (now A/FS) J.J. Moore
- Chf Tech C. Petrie
- Chf Tech N.A. Sockell
- PO (now CPO) K.D. Joseph (Royal Navy)
- A/Chf Tech (now Sgt) S. Nunn
- A/Chf Tech (now Sgt) C. Oultram
- Sgt D.P. Adams
- Sgt R.T.M. Duke
- Sgt R.J. Livesey
- Sgt E.A. Ryan
- Sgt A.M. Sharkey
- A/Sgt A.E. Conway
- Cpl (now A/Sgt) S. Smith
- Cpl C.S. Denton
- Cpl M.W. Kirkpatrick
- Cpl G.M. Ward
- Cpl S.D. Wild

- LW (now LH) R.J. Spriggs (Royal Navy)
- Mrs A. Wales

Team Commendations

- 56 Squadron 'First Flight'
- Joint Air Delivery Test and Evaluation Unit – Air Portability Section
- Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Engineering Team
- BDUK Training Service Provider
- Crossbow Flight, 1 Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron
- Mercury Flight, 54 Signals Unit, 1 ISR Wing
- Force Protection Training Flight, RAF Lossiemouth
- Number II (Army Cooperation) Squadron Engineers
- Ground Support Systems Flight, RAF Lossiemouth
- Mechanical Transport Flight, RAF Lossiemouth

AIR OFFICER COMMANDING NO.2 GROUP COMMENDATIONS

- Sqn Ldr G.L. Bean
- Sqn Ldr T.J. Clement
- Sqn Ldr S.P. Revell



# AIR HONOURS



ions on HMS Queen Elizabeth

PHOTO: AS1 AMBER MAYALL

- Flt Lt (now Sqn Ldr) A.J. Hill
- Flt Lt M.Z. Allman-Jeffery
- Flt Lt A.C. Brennan
- Flt Lt A.W. Hughes
- Flt Lt C.J. Northcote
- Flt Lt G.F. Timms
- WO G. Maiden
- FS D.J. Cross
- FS M.W.W. Mclean
- FS J. Morbey
- FS A. Peirce
- A/FS K.D. Ford
- A/FS (now Sgt) S.J. Milner
- A/FS (now Sgt) C. Thomas
- Sgt (now A/FS) A.L.R. Fraser
- Sgt (now A/FS) M.P. Owen
- Chf Tech M.A. Mowforth
- Chf Tech F.A. Williams
- PO (now Chf Tech) M.P. Dodd (Royal Navy)
- Sgt L.D. Chinnoek
- Sgt R.L. Clarke
- Sgt N.A. Francis
- Sgt R.R. Green
- Sgt J.L. Holyoake
- Sgt M.A. Kay
- Sgt M.J. Ramsdin
- Sgt A.B. Towse
- A/Sgt B.J.D. Jones
- A/Sgt D.J. Short
- A/Sgt J. Tharratt
- A/Sgt D.S. Wilkinson
- A/Sgt (now Cpl) A.J. Chudley
- Cpl S.J. Gratton

- A/Cpl J.G. Bown
- A/Cpl F.R. Legge
- A/Cpl (now LCpl) G.E. Jones
- AS1 D. Parziale
- AS1 J.W. Plunton
- Mr J.D. Boulton
- Mrs L.J. Doyle
- Mrs P. Hamblin
- Mr J. Lisle
- Mr E. McDonald
- Mrs E. Mistry
- Miss M. Wickett

#### Team Commendations

- 2623 Squadron RAuxAF Regiment Training Team
- Assurance Team, Security Consultancy Flight
- Counter Uncrewed Air Systems (C-UAS) Operational Evaluation Unit and C-UAS Training and Standards Unit
- Exercise AUXILLIUM FORT 23 Planning and Delivery Team
- RAF Boulmer WOs' & Sgts' Mess Committee
- RAF Brize Norton Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Committee
- Serco Passenger Team, RAF Brize Norton
- Sodexo Inflight Catering Team, RAF Brize Norton

- Vampire Block Operations Support Team
- RAF Waddington Force Community Support Team

#### AIR OFFICER COMMANDING NO.11 GROUP COMMENDATIONS

- Flt Lt (now Sqn Ldr) T. Blocksidge
- Flt Lt T.J. Hamilton
- A/WO A.D. Hague
- A/Sgt (now Cpl) L.E. Powell

#### Team Commendation

- A6 Ops & Cyber Team

#### AIR OFFICER COMMANDING NO.22 GROUP COMMENDATIONS

- Wg Cdr J.P. Bowes
- Lt Cdr A. Boardman (Royal Navy)
- Lt Cdr B.R. Parmar (Royal Navy)
- Lt (now Lt Cdr) K.D. Dallimore (Royal Navy)
- Flt Lt W.J. Enright
- Flt Lt T. Knapp
- Flt Lt M.P. Thompson
- WO K.J. Morley
- WO1 R.J.E. Reeves (British Army)
- FS A.M. Childs
- FS A.I. Ferguson
- SSgt C.M. Devereux (British Army)
- SSgt I. Sunuwar (British Army)
- Sgt (now Chf Tech) A.I. Collins
- Mr R. Gaskin
- Mr J. Hughes
- Mr P. James
- Mr J.M. Thomson
- Mr G.R. Webber

#### Team Commendations

- Learning Support Team, Number 4 School of Technical Training
- Future Opportunities Team, MOD St Athan
- Project CUBIT Interim Training Design Team, MOD St Athan
- RAF Cranwell Airfield Management Team
- RAF Cranwell Force Protection Training Flight
- Robson Resilience Centre Crickhowell Employee Self Service 'ESS' Team
- Central Flying School Development and Delivery Wing
- Number 3 Flying Training School Air Safety Team
- DCASO Assurance Squadron Standards Flight & Training Specialist Advisor
- Affinity Texan Part 145 Engineering Team

#### AIR OFFICER COMMANDING NO.22 GROUP COMMENDATIONS - RAF AIR CADET PERSONNEL

- Flt Lt R.C. Appleby
- Sqn Ldr A-M. Worsnop
- Flt Lt A.E. Wilson
- Sqn Ldr G.S. Wills
- Mrs J. Tack
- Sqn Ldr N.J. Gensler
- Sqn Ldr K.H.A. Lavender
- WO G. Lockwood
- WO M.A. Saxby

#### ASSISTANT CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF (ACAS) STRATEGY COMMENDATIONS

- Fg Off M.W.L. Chamberlain
- Fg Off A.E. McGill

#### COMMANDER UK SPACE COMMAND COMMENDATIONS

- Maj (now Lt Col) T.D.H. Oakley (British Army)
- Cpl Y.N. Cole
- AS1 R.J. Sinclair

#### CHAPLAIN-IN-CHIEF COMMENDATION

- Mrs J. Clifford

#### DIRECTOR PEOPLE COMMENDATIONS

- Sgt A.D. Sharpin
- A/Sgt S.E. Partridge
- Mrs L. Parsons
- Mrs H. Subramaniam

#### Team Commendations

- Career Management Trade Group 1 Section
- RAF Inclusion Training Team

#### DIRECTOR SUPPORT COMMENDATIONS

- Flt Lt (now A/Sqn Ldr) D.W. Earl
- Flt Lt C.D. Ambo
- FS J.J. Plummer
- Sgt S. Reece
- Mr P. Brayford

#### DIRECTOR DIGITAL COMMENDATION

- Flt Lt K.D. Khan

#### DIRECTOR RESERVES COMMENDATION

- AS1 K.S. Corbett

#### DIRECTOR LEGAL SERVICES COMMENDATION

- Flt Lt H.L. Morgan

#### VICE CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF COMMENDATIONS

- Wg Cdr E.A. Hudson
- Wg Cdr T. Lenaerts
- Wg Cdr J.M. Nichols
- Wg Cdr G.L. Thomas
- Sqn Ldr D. Bebbington

- Sqn Ldr P.T. Carlon
- Sqn Ldr S.E. Stait

#### COMMANDER UK STRATEGIC COMMAND COMMENDATIONS

- Wg Cdr J.A.B. Jakubowski
- Sqn Ldr K.W. Brooke
- Rev (Sqn Ldr) P. Craven
- Sqn Ldr B.J. Milner
- A/Sqn Ldr R. Griffiths
- Flt Lt J. Wainwright
- WO A.J. Duckett
- FS (now A/MAcr) D.J. Whittington
- FS M.F. Ferguson
- Sgt S.M. Blomquist
- AS1 D. Brown

#### CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF, COMMANDER FIELD ARMY, COMMANDER HOME COMMAND AND DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF COMMENDATIONS

#### CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF COMMENDATIONS

- Sgt S.M.C. Duke
- Sgt K.S. McHardy

#### COMMANDER FIELD ARMY COMMENDATION

- Flt Lt M.D. Dearden

#### COMMANDER HOME COMMAND COMMENDATION

- Lt (now Capt) A. Radford (British Army)

#### DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF COMMENDATIONS

- Wg Cdr R.E. Howard
- A/Flt Lt S.A. Bennison

#### JOINT HELICOPTER COMMAND COMMENDATIONS

#### COMMANDER JOINT HELICOPTER COMMAND COMMENDATIONS

- Flt Lt G.E. Cone
- Flt Lt J.R. Hicks
- Flt Lt K. Ripley
- Flt Lt M.A. Williams
- Fg Off (now Flt Lt) O.F. Barrow
- A/WO R.M. Coleman
- FS C. Jenkinson
- FS M.P. Staley
- Chf Tech (now A/FS) L. Margetson
- A/Sgt P.L.A. Blakeman

#### Team Commendations

- 18(B) Squadron Op PELEDA Engineers
- 27 Squadron Engineers - DAT(I), Op SHADER
- Chinook Maintenance Flight Minor Star Team





FARNBOROUGH  
INTERNATIONAL

EXHIBITION &  
CONFERENCE  
CENTRE

27 MARCH 2024

[www.dprte.co.uk](http://www.dprte.co.uk)

1600+  
attendees

130+  
exhibition  
stands

40+  
speakers

MINISTER CONFIRMED  
FOR DPRTE 2024

**JAMES CARTLIDGE MP**

MINISTER OF STATE  
MINISTER FOR  
DEFENCE PROCUREMENT



THEMES INCLUDE

Science &  
Innovation

Digital &  
Technology

Equipment  
& Supplies

Infrastructure  
& Estates

Market  
Engagement

Procurement  
Reform

Supply  
Chain

Register today for your complimentary  
MOD/Public Sector Ticket

[www.dprte.co.uk](http://www.dprte.co.uk)

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



EVENT DELIVERED BY  
**BiP**  
SOLUTIONS



By Tracey Allen

Feature

# N. Yorks town's airshow links live on

**MILITARY AND aviation historian Mick Britton's latest book – the third in his trilogy of air show histories – focuses on his local show at the former RAF Church Fenton in North Yorkshire.**

*Church Fenton Airshows, An Illustrated History*, (F4 Publishing) follows his previous titles *RAF Mildenhall's Air Fete 1976-2001* and *RAF Finningley Airshows 1960-1994*.

The author said: "I was inspired to write my most recent book after taking my nine-year-old grandson to the 2023 Flying Legends show held at Church Fenton. He is the fourth generation of my family to attend its shows.

"For three and a half decades the Church Fenton shows were organised by SSAFA but there have been air shows there since the pre-war Empire Air Days (to which my father cycled) and there are once more shows being held at what is today Leeds East Airport thanks to the arrival last year of Flying Legends, the world's premier warbird air show."

He added: "One of my earliest childhood memories is of sitting on a grassy mound at a Church Fenton show being fed toffees by my mother near an aeroplane with a very long nose. I would have been about three years old and the show was one of the Battle of Britain At Home Days held across



**AUTHOR:**  
Mick Britton



**1993:** A mixed static park typical of the later SSAFA events at RAF Church Fenton. Jet Provost T5 XW369 sits in front of Slingsby Firefly G-BONT with a Bulldog squeezed between it and Jetstream T2 ZA111 from 750 NAS

the RAF every September. I now know that the grassy mound was the outside of a Second World War fighter pen and that long-nosed aeroplane was a Gloster Meteor NF11."

Mick's in-depth look at the Church

Fenton shows covers the precursors to the early SSAFA shows, pre-1963, then the decades from the 1960s to the final SSAFA show in 1994, and concludes with a chapter on shows staged at the former station after it closed on December 19, 2013.



**1992:** Mass formation of trainers including Bulldogs, Jet Provosts and Tucanos from RAF Linton-on-Ouse

## Win airshow book

WE HAVE copies of *Church Fenton Airshows, An Illustrated History*, rrp £22.99, to win. For your chance to own one, tell us:

**In which year did RAF Church Fenton close?**



Email your answer, marked Church Fenton book competition, to: [tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk) or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by January 26. Please include your full postal address.

## Photo of the week



A ROYAL Air Force Medical Emergency Response Team prepare to evacuate a simulated battlefield casualty supported by a Chinook during frontline combat drills in Akrotiri, Cyprus. PHOTO: ASI TOMAS BARNARD



# IT<sup>2</sup>EC

9 - 11 April 2024  
ExCeL, London

Discover IT<sup>2</sup>EC

## Advancing defence training through technology

**IT<sup>2</sup>EC is Europe's leading defence training technology and simulation exhibition and conference.** This specialised event brings together prime full-service training providers and technology start-ups, alongside key influencers and decision makers from all areas of the supply chain.



### Sponsorship and exhibition enquiries:

- 👤 Samar Jaafar, Event Manager
- ✉ Samar.Jaafar@clarionevents.com

In association with

**NTSA**

Lanyard Sponsor

 **4C STRATEGIES**

Organised by





By Malcolm Triggs

Feature

Renowned military historian Sarker's magnum opus

# Author's 1 million words on Battle of Britain



**DATE DEBATE:** Sarkar, pictured, claims accepted Battle start and end days are wrong



**NOCTURNAL RAID:** An Armstrong-Whitworth Whitley of Bomber Command sets off on a mission

**A** LEADING historian and author looks set to commit one million words to paper as he completes the ultimate guide to the Battle of Britain, the 1940s aerial conflict which changed the course of World War II.

Dilip Sarkar is well on the way to completing his eight-volume history of the Battle, which is being published in association with the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust, based at Capel-le-Ferne in Kent.

His extensive research into the battle that changed history has already led him to question one of the fundamental 'facts' behind it; the dates themselves.

"There is a clear case to suggest that the Battle of Britain started on July 2 not July 10," he explained, "and if it's supposed to have been a battle for aerial superiority prior to an invasion, the end date should really be October 12, when Hitler postponed his invasion plans

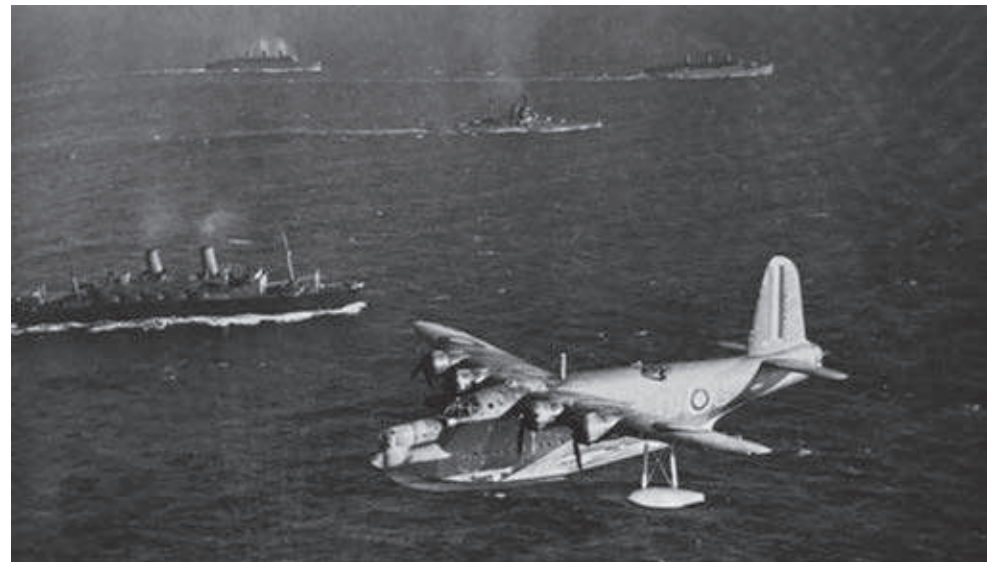
indefinitely, not October 31."

Sarkar added: "Writing this work has been an incredible experience, a real marathon that has needed a different mindset to just writing a standalone book. I've discovered that you can't rely on anything and have to cross-check every last fact, date and reference."

That has meant checking every single combat report from every squadron, but as the author pointed out: "I don't just cover the air warfare; the books also cover politics, diplomacy, the Home Front and the contributions made by Bomber and Coastal Commands and by the Royal Navy."

Sarkar, who has written more than 20 books about the Battle of Britain, has even found errors in some of the documentation, with squadron records disagreeing on timings and, in one case, getting the date of a combat wrong by a whole month.

"It's been a learning curve for me,



**CONVOY PATROL:** A Short Sunderland of Coastal Command

as well as a chance to bring all my previous knowledge and interviews together," he said. "The eight volumes will include a number of new interpretations of the Battle of Britain and its impact on world history."

Not content with producing the ultimate guide to the battle that prevented a Nazi invasion of this country, he is now considering a ninth volume which will conclude the story, explaining the immediate aftermath of the battle through to the end of February 1941.

With the first six volumes now finished, the prolific author has already written 714,216 words, putting his predicted one million well within reach. He hopes to finish the last of the eight volumes in June – by then

he will have taken just two years to write the work he considers will sum up a lifetime's research.

The first two volumes – *The Gathering Storm: Prelude to the Spitfire summer of 1940* and *The Breaking Storm: 10 July 1940 – 12 August 1940* – have already been released by publishers Pen and Sword (pen-and-sword.co.uk), with the others scheduled to follow at regular intervals.

Sarkar has also set up a YouTube channel where he will be sharing podcasts and videos around the project.

● *The Gathering Storm* and *The Breaking Storm* are available from [battleofbritainmemorial.org](http://battleofbritainmemorial.org) and all good bookshops.





## THE NEW WAY TO CONTACT YOUR MEDICAL CENTRE

### FOR ADVICE ON:

- SYMPTOMS, CONDITIONS OR TREATMENT
- REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS
- MEDICALS
- LIGHT DUTIES CHITS
- TEST RESULTS

### TO GET STARTED:

1. GO TO ECONSULT AND FIND YOUR MEDICAL CENTRE
2. FIND YOUR SYMPTOM, CONDITION OR REQUEST
3. FILL OUT A QUICK FORM
4. YOUR PRACTICE RESPONDS WITH ADVICE, A PRESCRIPTION OR AN APPOINTMENT





# Bomber veteran Rusty dies just weeks short of his 101st birthday

**F**LIGHT LIEUTENANT 'Rusty' Waughman, who has died aged 100, completed a tour of operations as the pilot of a Lancaster bomber on a squadron that suffered some of the highest casualties of World War II.

Russell, always known as Rusty, joined the RAF in May 1941. He trained as a pilot in Canada and, after converting to bombers, he joined 101 Squadron at Ludford Magna, near Lincoln. Aged 20, he was the second oldest member of the crew.

The squadron operated Lancasters equipped with a special apparatus that searched out and then jammed enemy radio transmissions. To operate this equipment and transmit spurious messages to German night-fighter pilots, a specially trained German-speaking operator accompanied the crew. The Lancaster's transmissions allowed German night fighters to intercept the bomber and the attrition rate on 101 Squadron was one of the highest in Bomber Command.

The crew's arrival on the squadron coincided with the beginning of the second phase of the Battle of Berlin. They visited the 'Big City' several times and also carried out other long-range bombing operations. Their Lancaster was damaged over Munich, and they returned without an air speed indicator, landing after almost 10 hours in the air.

On the night of March 30/31, 1944, Waughman's crew joined 794 other bombers to attack Nuremburg. On a cloudless night, the German night fighters caused havoc with the bomber stream and Bomber Command suffered its biggest loss of the war, with 95 bombers failing to return. Waughman described the sight of falling bombers as "spectacular and very frightening".

Two weeks later, on April 10/11, 1944, Waughman's crew were tasked to bomb the railway system at Hasselt in Belgium. Nearing the target,

another Lancaster collided with their aircraft causing extensive damage. Waughman managed to maintain control, he bombed the target and returned to make a crash landing. The other Lancaster fell away and crashed.

During the next few weeks, Bomber Command flew many sorties in preparation for the impending Normandy invasion. Transportations systems and storage areas were attacked. On May 3/4 the large German military camp and armament storage area near the French village at Milly-le-Camp was attacked. Due to radio problems, orders from the Master Bomber were confusing and the 346 Lancasters had to orbit the target, allowing German night fighters to attack. Seconds after bombing the target, another bomber flew below

Waughman's Lancaster and exploded, throwing it onto its back. To regain control, the flight engineer assisted Waughman and they managed to recover the aircraft after the bomber had descended to 1,000 feet and exceeded the maximum permitted speed for the Lancaster. The raid was a success, but 42 bombers were lost, almost 12 per cent of the force.

His final sortie was on the night of D-Day, June 5/6, 1944. The squadron launched 21 Lancasters to jam wireless communications and prevent enemy night fighters from being directed against the airborne invasion forces. Waughman and his crew had flown 30 operations and were the first in six months to complete a tour, such had been the casualty rate on the squadron. He was awarded the DFC. He always regretted that none of his crew were decorated. "They kept us all alive, they were doing exactly the same job as I was doing, under the same circumstances. Same risks, but nothing."

After completing his time on 101 Squadron, he became a flying instructor before converting to the Dakota. He continued instructing and in February 1947 was sent to Oakington, near Cambridge, where he became the

station's flying training officer for four Dakota squadrons. With the beginning of the Berlin Air Lift, he flew training and crew standardisation sorties to prepare the crews for the unique operation. On some occasions, he spent 10 hours in the air on these duties. He later took part in the Airlift flying many resupply missions from the forward RAF airfield at Fassberg in West Germany. He was awarded the AFC.

After the airlift, Waughman was posted to Abingdon to join 30 Squadron to become its training officer. The squadron had a VIP flying role and it was Waughman's task to check all the pilots on instrument flying.

When his young wife Pat was diagnosed with a terminal illness, he resigned from the RAF in 1953 to take care of her until she died ten months later.

In 1990 five of his crew met at Ludford Magna before travelling to RAF Coningsby as guests of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and where they were reunited with the Lancaster. Last year he returned to Coningsby, where he met the King at a reunion for Bomber Command veterans. The French Government awarded him the Légion d'Honneur and he was a strong supporter of the Royal Air Force Association in Leamington.

He died on December 14, a month before his 101<sup>st</sup> birthday.



**RAIDS:** Rusty, and with medals in later life, above left





# **RAF News**

The Forces Favourite Read

Hit your target market with **RAF News** - the official newspaper of the Royal Air Force since 1961.

Reaching an audience of more than 50,000 readers every fortnight, **RAF News** is the Forces' favourite newspaper delivering exclusive news, features and sports action from across UK Defence.

To discuss your advertising in  
**RAF News** please call or email:  
T: +44 (0)7482 571535  
E: [edwin.rodriques@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:edwin.rodriques@rafnews.co.uk)

**RAF News**

The official voice of the Royal Air Force





Tim Morris

Jeep Compass (from £25,799 otr)

Motoring



I'VE ALWAYS had a soft spot for Jeep. The brand has always been, in many ways, the USA's version of Land Rover, a practical manufacturer that was founded on its amazing ability to produce go-anywhere vehicles that were easy to fix in a jungle, or a desert.

Jeep's current line-up consists of the compact Renegade, the mid-sized Compass, the signature Wrangler and the big-boy Grand Cherokee. I adore both the Wrangler and the Grand Cherokee because they sum up the best aspects of American design.

The Renegade and the Compass however have been designed for the European market, so they are slightly different beasts. The latest Compass is a nimble car that runs on a similar platform to the Kia Sportage. It's not a full-fat SUV like its larger siblings but it's a neat family wagon that's easy to park. That will be a crossover then.

### Exterior

The Compass certainly has neat dimensions and several signature design cues. The nose is unmistakably Jeep, with a sleeker version of the traditional grille. The chunky, angled wheel arches and the rakish lines of the windscreen pillars help to complete the overall image. It looks like a smart, capable Jeep.

### Interior

There's a good amount of space in the cabin. You also get plenty of adjustment on the front seats and steering wheel. Visibility is good and you get a lofty view of the road thanks to the higher driving position.

Everything is solidly bolted together and there are plenty of squidgy materials on the most obvious surfaces. The texture that Jeep has chosen however is a little unusual. On close inspection it looks like it's been moulded to resemble Velociraptor hide, perhaps a nod to the Jeeps in Jurassic Park, but I'm not convinced. There's also a fair whack of cheaper plastic on display elsewhere, which lets it down a bit.



# Jeep lite

## Jeep Compass

### Pros

- Good equipment levels
- Looks good, with nice proportions
- Spacious cabin

### Cons

- Clumsy gearbox
- Interior quality could be better
- No 4x4 on the MHEV

### Verdict

On paper the best version of the Compass is the 4xe plug-in hybrid, which comes with four-wheel drive and a 0-62mph time of 7.3 seconds. The mild hybrid has several drawbacks but it will do what you need it to do and get you where you're going in style.

In the centre of the dash you'll find Jeep's latest 'Uconnect' infotainment system. The 10-inch touchscreen display is crisp and fast. It's also simple to use, with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay smartphone mirroring. The only downside is the slight angle that the screen sits at. It took me a while to work out what was 'off' about it but eventually I twigged that the screen hasn't been reversed to suit right-hand drive.

Otherwise, the interior quality is good. It's not up there with the best in segment but provides a simple comfort that suits the utility image.

### On The Road

Unsurprisingly, the Compass's on-road handling isn't going to leave you thrilled. The steering is a bit too light for fast country roads and it never really feels composed at speed. There's plenty of body roll through the bends too but it doesn't dramatically

soak up the bumps as a pay-off. Around town things are much rosier though, where it trundles along with no fuss.

Our test car was the 128bhp, 1.5-litre, mild-hybrid (MHEV) petrol in 'Limited' trim. It came with an automatic gearbox and front-wheel drive as standard. Official figures were 0-62mph



in 10 seconds and a top end of 120mph.

Off the mark it statistically matches the Peugeot 3008 but there are plenty of rivals that can get there a lot quicker. You also need to deploy a heavy right foot to get it to perform well in the mid-range. It feels, dare I say it, a bit underpowered. That's something you don't say too often about American cars.

The gearbox is a sore point with me on this model too because it always makes the engine sound noisy.

In two-wheel drive format it's very much a case of style over substance. We've yet to try the plug-in hybrid (PHEV), which comes with four-wheel drive, but we're told that it has good off-road capability. This is something that could give the Compass a strong edge over the competition in this segment.

Fuel consumption figures for the MHEV and PHEV versions of the Compass are 47mpg and 149mpg respectively. For the former you can expect much closer to 30mpg in the real world.



# Infrastructure service project - a case study



## The Task

A multi-tank decommissioning programme of a BFI (Bulk Fuel Installation) was awarded to LCM from one of our defence customers.

The team carried out fuel uplifts from the various tanks and pipelines ahead of the industry clean, de-gas and certification. Phase two of the work was to remove all useable assets from site, this was completed, and the goods were palletised, wrapped, and transferred to a local site for safe storage.

## Scope of Works

On arrival the LCM team collected their security passes which enabled them to travel around the base to the various work locations.

Our welfare unit arrived and was positioned in the designated area, the work area was segregated with heras fencing and safety signage.

Once all paperwork was completed and the toolbox talks received, the engineers began scoping out the area and preparing for:

● **Stage 1:** The removal and disposal of all fuel from the various vessels and

pipelines. All fuel was taken off site for disposal at a licenced facility.

● **Stage 2:** The draining and removal of the FWS (Fuel Water Separator) All internal elements were bagged up and removed from site for disposal.

● **Stage 3:** Flushing and purging of all fuel lines was completed at various points along the pipelines to ensure no fuel remained within the system.

● **Stage 4:** Main bulk tank (1,250,000L capacity) for man-entry cleaning. The tank was vented, and the lids carefully removed. The cleaning process was carried out with a 7-person confined space entry crew. On completion the tank was dried and certified gas-free.

● **Stage 5:** Non-man-entry tank clean to the remaining tanks on site. 1 x 30,000L backflush tank, 5,000L slops tank, 7,500L gas oil tank. All tanks were cleaned, and all washing removed from site. On completion of the



## The Outcome

The client was left happy with LCM's professional approach and quality work. All health and safety procedures were strictly followed and adhered to; no incidents were reported, and the engineers enjoyed a partial Red Arrows show to top up the experience.

cleaning tasks, salvageable assets were identified and removed for possible use across the military estate.

Some of these included Hamworthy pumps, ATEX lighting and switches; the FWS (Fuel Water Separator) all TRVs (Thermal Relief Valves) and DPIS (Differential pressure indicators) were salvageable, as well as two engine-driven generators, dispense meter, slam-shut valve and the entire control panel and tank gauging system.



# Air Cadet Exclusive Offer

Subscribe to **RAF News** and get the **First 3 Months Free!**

Go to [rafnews.co.uk](http://rafnews.co.uk) to subscribe now  
Offer Code AC01

## RAF News - The Forces' Favourite Paper

Delivering the best frontline news, sport and features from across the RAF and UK Defence every fortnight.





# pages of the best of **RAF Sports** action

## ICE HOCKEY

# Vulcans in bid to slay the Knights

**Daniel Abrahams**

**THEY'LL BE** the first RAF team on the ice and Vulcans captain Flt Lt Tom Yeoman spoke to *RAF News* about his plans for a busy January.

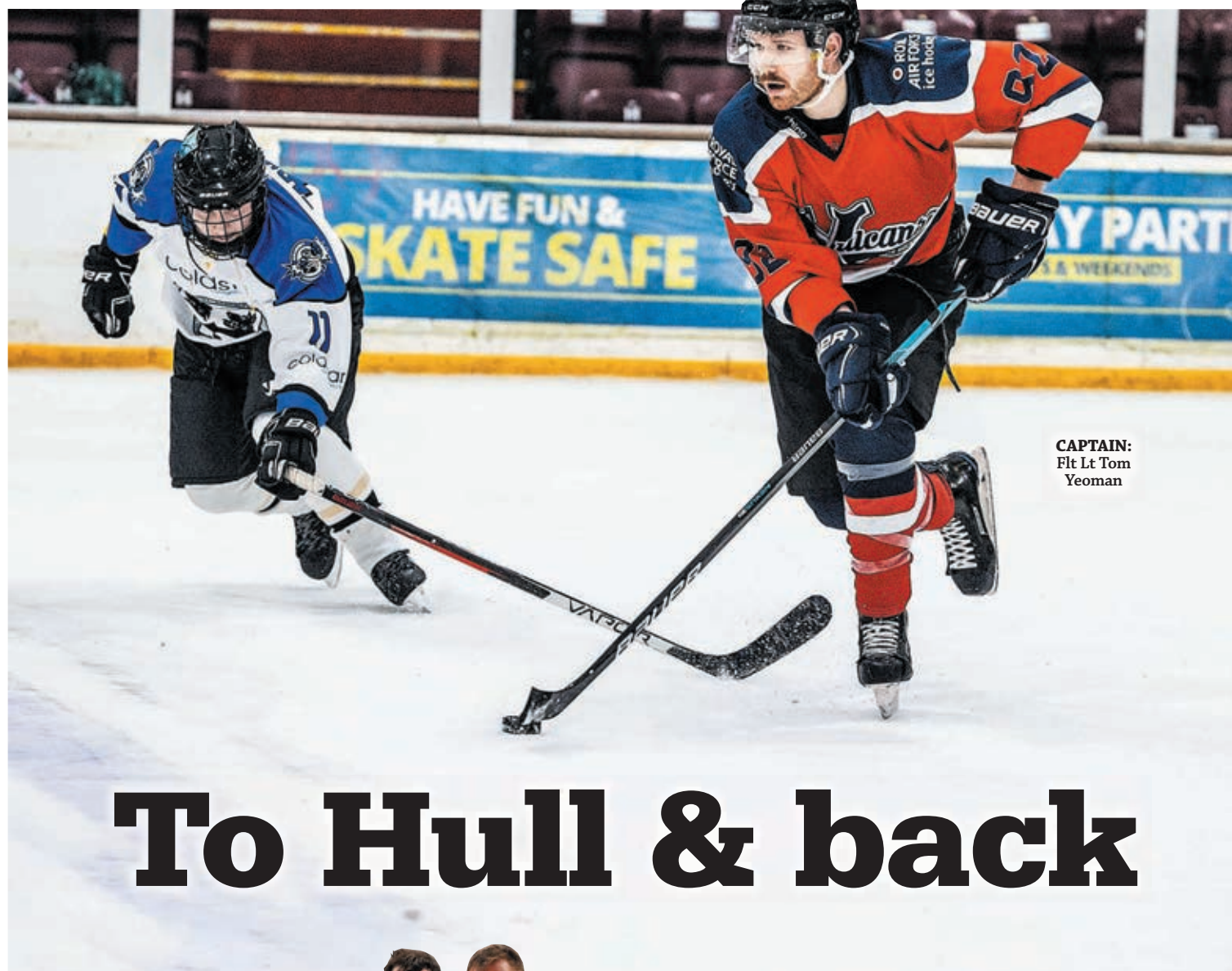
The team – in their 16th year – will play English Ice Hockey Recreational League side Hull Knights, with Yeoman busily organising a training camp in either Telford or Dundee to end the month.

Yeoman – who spent large chunks of last year organising the RAF Championships, won by RAF Bluewings at Ice Arena Wales – said: “This will be our first match since October and will be an exciting start to the year.

“This is the best time I have ever known for new players; 70-80 members is now 100 plus.

“If someone is joining the Service and wants to play ice hockey, we are providing them with a good platform. Both teams are in a good place – men's and women's – we are really pushing forward.

“The new injection of players means standards drop slightly because many are learning the game, so we will adjust matches to cater for this. First team coach Sgt Karl Jones has already



**CAPTAIN:**  
Flt Lt Tom  
Yeoman

# To Hull & back

identified some new talent.”

The Vulcans – who have a large catchment area, taking in Scampton and Honington in East Anglia – are developing plans for two to three camps in Telford four times a year, instead of evening training sessions.

Having beaten Coventry Corinthians 5-3 before a close run 8-6 loss to Sheffield Ice Tigers and a 16-4 defeat to Nottingham Outlaws in 2023, Yeoman is



relishing the chance to get time with his teammates and face Hull Knights in East Yorkshire.

He said: “We have a close-knit squad which helps in keeping the players involved, so it will be great to get together for camps, rather than just turning up, playing and going.”

**RAF CHAMPS:** Trades comp winner Barry Fee (Captain, Logistics, left) with Yeoman  
**PHOTOS:** TRISH THOMPSON

The Ice Hockey Association's groundbreaking Learn to Play days have proved a huge hit.

Yeoman said: “Kit is expensive, so that's something we are looking at. We can loan items, but once the camps are over it is the player's responsibility, and it can be very expensive. We are seeing what else we can do to help.”

● Find out more about RAF Ice Hockey on Instagram @ RAFVulcansIHC.

## FOOTBALL

# White's uncorking the red to build on legends' success

UKAFFC HEAD coach Cpl Darryl White is planning a glass of red with the trophy and former bosses to start 2024 in style.

White, who steered his charges to victory in France last month to return the oldest European cup football trophy to its rightful home, has plenty of work to begin as he plans to defend the trophy next winter, but taking time out with Sgt Nick De Long (Ret'd) and Cpl Dyfan Pierce (Ret'd) is his first port of call.

Speaking to *RAF News*, with the Kentish Cup sat on his office desk, White said: “Nick and Dyfan started the recent history

of this whole thing and won the cup and made it ours in many ways. I needed to go and get it back having lost it to the French last time out. This was my first experience as head coach, so to crack open a good bottle of red and chat with the two legends will be the right thing to do in my mind.”

In Aquitaine, France, UKAFFC drew a hard game against holders France, with Cpl Jake Gosling smashing home a stunning equaliser for a 1-1 scoreline at the Espace Sportif Antoine Lomet.

They won the second clash against the Dutch 5-2, having gone behind 1-0.

There were goals from AET Jack Wright and braces from LPT Elliott Holmes and CPOPT Danny Kerr (captain).

They then had to watch the French and Dutch play, with the game ending 4-2 to France. White said: “It was an unbelievable feeling. I am just so happy for the staff and players. We have come a long way to win this.

“The way the tournament went it was the worst way to win it, to have played your matches and then have to wait to see if you have done enough watching the other teams play – basically deciding your fate.

“We won't have the players in until the

end of May, but I will be looking at every game at the Inters in March and catching club games.

“We'll have the Irish Defence Forces in Galway in May, the German Bundeswehr in October, plus defending the Kentish in December in Holland. There's a lot of planning for six or seven meets for the year.”

White is currently in talks with a high-profile opponent. He said: “There is still work to be done to secure anything, but we are determined to get this fixture.”

● Follow UKAFFC on Instagram @ ukafffootball.

**Would you like to see your sport featured in RAF News? Send a short report (max 300 words) and a couple of photographs (attached jpegs) to: [Sports@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:Sports@rafnews.co.uk)**



## Sport

### ALPINE

# Winter wonders land

## Alpine stars gear up for Championships and Inter-Services

### Daniel Abrahams

AUSTRIA WILL be the familiar destination for Exercise Alpine Challenge 24, from January 13-27, with the event promising something for all alongside the serious business of being the final curtain call for Inter-Service selection for France.

Speaking to *RAF News*, on the eve of the event, Gp Capt Martin Cunningham – chair of the RAF Winter Sports Alpine Association (RAFWsAA), said: “Royal Air Force Alpine Challenge 24 will ensure the slopes will become the stage for the adrenaline-fuelled event which promises not only to be an exhilarating display of skiing, snowboarding, and telemark skills but also



**RALLYING CALL:** Gp Capt Cunningham

exceptional instruction as part of its grass-roots program.

“Thanks to the RAF Central Fund and the generous support of sponsors, this ambitious

endeavour is made possible year after year. Once again, our headline charity is the RAF Benevolent Fund, whose incredible work serves as a constant reminder of the importance of assisting those in need.

“Alpine Challenge 24 is not just about sport, it embodies personal resilience, teamwork, and camaraderie. Participants, both beginners and seasoned athletes, will come together to face the challenges of the Alpine terrain and to push their limits. In doing so, they will not only forge unforgettable memories but also raise vital funds for the RAF Benevolent Fund, ensuring continued support for RAF personnel and their families.”

## Women bid to retain title

A LANDMARK IS win for the Telemark women's team and further breakthroughs for the men's team in 2023 have left the two team captains, Cpl Steve Fryer and Sqn Ldr Clare Thomas, all fired up for more success this season.

From winning the first ever women's telemark ISSSC competition, the team were nominated in the RAF sports awards team of the year category, giving Thomas a superb platform to launch into 2024, starting with the RAF championships.

She said: “I'm certainly feeling the pressure this year after we broke new ground last season. I know the Navy and Army have been working hard to take full squads to ISSSC24 and will be hunting us down as hard as they can. We're on track to have a full female squad of four, with Wg Cdr Alexa Smyth joining us officially for the first time.”

Regular monthly training sessions in Milton Keynes and two week-long camps in Landgraaf, Holland, learning from Dutch telemark instructors and joining forces with RAF Nordic team have proved invaluable.

Fryer said: “The build up has been good and the team have seen improvements throughout our development squad personnel, so much so that although we have lost a few racers this season due to work training commitments, we should be able to fill those slots.”

On his captain's role, he added: “It is a lot of responsibility, but it is also very exciting. We have all put a lot of effort in to preparing ourselves for the races through exercise training plans and our many ski training sessions. The aim for the men's team is to close the gap between us and the other services. With several of our top racers not able to compete this season it is going to be a challenge, but



**IS HOLDERS:** Women's captain Sqn Ldr Clare Thomas

one we are ready and determined to take on.”

The two captains follow their other Alpine counterparts on pointing towards the unique bond the air force teams have as key to helping them strive for success.

Fryer said: “The bond in the team is something that is very important to us, we take our sport very seriously, but you have got to have fun as well. You will often see the team skiing around together and relaxing in the evening after a hard day's training.”

Thomas agreed, adding: “The team is what it's all about and we'll always want to keep what is ‘special’ about the telemarking community alive. A key part of that is always supporting each other at all levels and having as much fun as we can along the way.

“Of course, we want to push ourselves as individuals to perform to the best of our ability and really take the challenge to the other Services, but that comes from a place of support and confidence, as Steve mentions, built by our team and the wider telemark community.”

AS THE Service's Alpine stars prepare to set Europe's ski slopes and boarding parks ablaze with speed, skill, tricks and turns, *RAF News* went off-piste with the six captains of ski, snowboard and Telemark who are looking to capitalise on last season's mixed

bag of Inter-Service results, which saw dominance for the women's ski and telemark teams, an agonising runner-up spot for the men's skiers and further solid building blocks for the boarders and telemark men.

Game on.



**UP FOR CHALLENGE:** Telemark men's captain Cpl Steve Fryer has some top racers missing

## Camaraderie key

THE START to the snowboard season has been seen as positive by the team's two captains, Chf Tech Martin Boon and Sgt Hannah Pringle, with both looking to build on last season's IS finishes.

Both teams are hoping for improvements on 2023, when the women's team, hampered by injury, came home with a silver and a bronze individual medal courtesy of Cpl Jasmine Furber (Parallel Slalom and Slopestyle), while the men recorded a silver in snowboard cross through Fg Off Chris Harrington and a team win in slopestyle with Flt Lt Lee Clark, Fg Off Chris Harrington, Chf Tech Boon, Cpl Sean Davy, Cpl Alec Sladen and Cpl Adam Woolley.

A pre-season charged by camps in Manchester, Milton Keynes and Hemel Hempstead, along with Kaprun in Austria,

(see side bar, right), under the watchful eyes of coaches Jack Taylor (REAL Snowboarding), Maisie Potter and Joe Mather, has the two captains poised for success.

“This is my second season as captain, with Cpl Natalie Fields as my vice-skip. We've been on the team for years and have become very good friends.

“She's an amazing rider, I'm happy to have her by my side for what looks like a really exciting and promising year,” said Sgt Pringle.

“This is the biggest development squad in years, with a mix of experienced and newer riders. We'll be running our eye over everyone until the end of the champs, to see if we can find any new talent to add before IS selection,” she added.

That will see 10 men and six female riders chosen to represent the RAF in Meribel.

Chf Tech Boon said: “This is my first year as captain, after many years



**WOMEN SKIERS:** Hoping for a clean sweep

PHOTO: AS1 EOIN KIRWAN-TAYLOR

**SKI CAPTAIN:**  
Cpl Barnaby  
Rudge

# Skiers are aiming to go one better

**A WOMEN'S ski team of newcomers with a new skipper and an ever improving men's team, both coming runners-up, was the story of last year's Inter-Services. RAF News spoke with team captains Plt Off Kirsty Guest and Cpl Barnaby Rudge about their hopes and dreams for 2024.**

Guest said: "Having stepped in last year as the interim captain [women's captain Cpl Rachel Hughes was injured following last year's RAF Championships], I now know what to expect from the championships and how to best manage the role that I am in. For me the tournament itself was a bit of a whirlwind, the schedule was busy and it was great to bring home wins for the team.

"I'm hoping that I can continue to build on the success from last year and hopefully defend the individual titles that I won. I am also hoping that

the girls' team can steal the overall victory from the Royal Navy.

"Everyone is keen to build upon our success from the previous years and I think this has been a key motivating factor in people as they continue to push themselves."

Rudge said: "This is possibly the most excited I've been about the IS champs in years, I have the buzz because I really think we could make that final jump to the top step this year, which would just be awesome to finally win one as men's captain.

"That's no disrespect to teams from previous years that I've captained because they were still awesome teams, but something just feels a little different this

year, so hopefully we can make the most of it.

"It feels like I've only been captain for five minutes and forever at the same time, but I've loved every minute. I know people always say this kind of thing, but I never expected to get asked to do it. It was such an honour that there was no way I was going to turn it down. I'm so proud of all that the team has achieved together and individually, and I've had some of my best results while leading them, with last year being a standout for me. Looking forward to this season it would just be the icing on the cake to be able to take the IS crown for the first time in eight years."

The squad's management and coaching team of Sqn Ldr Bruno Wood (Team Manager), Eilidh McLeod (Head Coach), Sqn Ldr Phil Ashtley and Sqn Ldr Howard Fields have been working with the team since September, with both captains purring over the way things have been developing.

Guest added: "All the girls have gone from strength to strength having attended the camps we have been running throughout the year, they are showing a lot of promise and it is great to see this depth of talent coming through for the women's squad."

Having faced their baptisms of fire, both captains believe the bond between members of the ski team will play a vital part in the fight for victory.

Rudge said: "I think as ever our team spirit and togetherness is a huge part of that success, we all want each other to do well and want to push each other on to be better and faster. I also think that the level of skiing is increasing every year and we have been managing to raise our game with it, especially last year."

Guest added: "I think the bond the team has is still something that is vital to our success as we can rely on each other and know each other's strengths and weaknesses."

**AWARD:** Women's ski captain Plt Off Kirsty Guest with CAS, ACM Sir Richard Knighton

## for teams

on the team. I'm hoping to take the team forward.

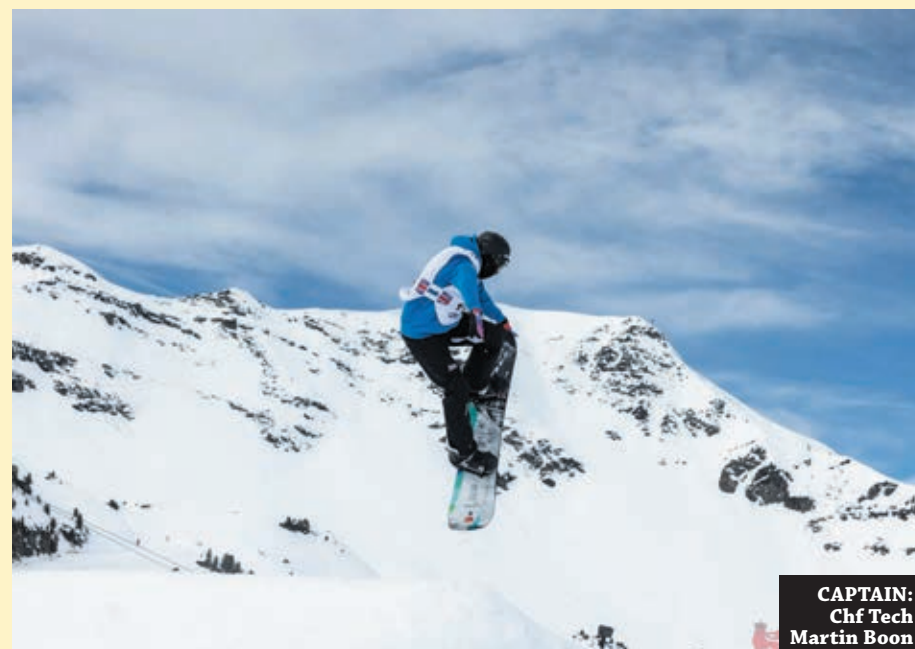
"The majority of riders are available for this season, plus a few promising new wild cards are at the champs, so I'm looking forward to seeing them perform.

"Things have got off to a great start already with everyone kicking on superbly in Austria, plus we have had some new training sessions including wakeboarding, indoor skating and trampolining, which has been great.

"I am always excited in the run-up to the season. I am confident the team will be on point when I need them to be. As always, the squad is buzzing for the full season already."

Both captains have cited the bond in their teams as a vital part of any potential victory, with Pringle seeing the 'play' aspect of the sport as vital in riders' growth, while Boon, whose vice-captain will be Cpl Adam Wolley, believes the bond creates a welcoming atmosphere that helps push all riders to greater things.

Pringle said: "I want the girls to enjoy it

**CAPTAIN:**  
Chf Tech  
Martin Boon

and get the buzz that keeps them coming back every year. I noticed a big change post-Covid between the teams, everyone was happy to be back doing the sport they love, so keeping that enthusiasm going

will be great for all of us."

Boon added: "I'll be aiming to not break myself or anyone else, so we get the best chance of putting down solid performances."

## Eyes on prize at camp

IT WAS two weeks of focused training at Kitzsteinhorn in Kaprun, Austria, to instil new skills in developing riders and tweak the older stagers' knowledge.

Coaches Jack Taylor, (REAL Camp Instructor - Morzine), Maisie Potter, (ex-GB Rider) and WO Paul Granycorn (RAF Brize Norton) concentrated on race training, with riders transferring to the piste once the day was done to fine-tune skills and try new things.

So how did it feel for those on the snow?

Development rider Cpl Darrell Manning said: "I had the privilege of attending the camp for the second year and the team camaraderie is like no other. Thriving off one another, sharing skills and tips, I feel I've excelled as a result.

"With eyes on the prize at the Inters, I am extremely excited about the season."

Marham IS rider for the past three seasons Cpl Sam Brown said: "The winter camp brushes away the cobwebs and it's always been one of the most beneficial of the season.

"From a personal perspective these camps have projected me forward to Inter-Services and Combined Service action, something unthinkable when I started."



## RUGBY LEAGUE

# New boss Hutchinson up for the Challenge

HOCKEY



STAR ROLE: Naughalty (front) at IS Indoor Hockey Championships at Aldershot

PHOTO: ANDREW FOSKER/ALLIGIN

## RAF hockey captain Alex going for second serving of Turkey in Euros

RAF HOCKEY will be getting a second helping of Turkey when AS1 Alex Naughalty represents the Service in the European Indoor Hockey Championships in Istanbul next month.

AS1 Naughalty will be part of her club team Buckingham as they represent England in the tournament.

The RAF women's captain is no stranger to the tournament having led her club side to victory in it in 2022.

She said: "This will be a step up, it's a bit more physical and I must admit, I like the challenge and the physical side of things. We will be in our club kit, but representing England. Last time out we played Scotland, Turkey and Ireland, the opportunity to test yourself against the European teams is great."

"I am happy to be in Turkey with my club for our country but to be representing RAF hockey as well is an extra thrill. I am always proud to don our colours and show people what we can do in the Service."

Since joining the Air Force in 2021, Naughalty, who shares the women's armband with AS1 Rebecca Douglas, has won the Inter-Services three times (indoor twice, outdoor once) calling the experience a 'huge Honour' and 'something I want to do for many years to come'.

On the Euros, she added: "Previously, I was the only person who had played European hockey before, but this time we will have players with a bit more experience."

"We are known for our consistency, making the finals weekend at the last four attempts, we have trained hard and are quietly confident, so we will see how we go."

Naughalty also acts as the RAFHA's social media representative and photographer, having accompanied the men's team on their tour to India in 2023, but added: "I might not find time to capture the action in Istanbul, it will be pretty intense match-wise while I am there."

## Sgt out for revenge in mouth-watering first round Cup tie against Royal Navy

### Daniel Abrahams

A PLUM all-military Challenge Cup first round clash against the Royal Navy at Cranwell has new RAF rugby league head coach Sgt James Hutchinson chomping at the bit.

Hutchinson, who has captained the RAF and UKAF sides during his 13 years in the services game, had been assistant to Sgt Gary Dunn (Ret'd) over the past two years.

The new chief has called the draw the tie of the round.

"These type of games do not come along very often, to my mind it's the first of its kind in the opening round of the cup and it also means we get a crack at revenge over the Navy, who beat us in the Inters in September," he said.

"You normally have to wait a whole year to get revenge but we have that chance now, plus what a way to kick off my career as head coach with such a mouth-watering game."

RFL spokesman Andy Donnelly agreed about the significance of the fixture, saying after the draw: "It is almost certain to be the live BBC match of the round."

If the RAF win, they will face Thatto Heath Crusaders, again at Cranwell, at the end of the month.

Hutchinson, who will oversee his first training camp as head coach in the week leading up to the Navy clash, added: "I have been in so many roles now with RAFRL, from strength and conditioning coach to assistant coach and now head coach. It will be great to get my hands on the team with my new assistant Cpl Tom White."

"The set-up I have been left in is such a good place I will simply be looking to steady the ship and add a few of my own touches, but no major changes will be happening until they must."

"We felt we had a good chance in the Inter-Services last year and the squad we have chosen for this match is extremely strong. They say revenge is a dish best served cold, well it's always cold and windy at Cranwell, so it seems apt that we get our chance there."

● RAF rugby league stalwart Sqn Ldr Damian Clayton, retiring from the service this month, has been presented with the game's Role of Honour trophy by RFL CEO Tony Sutton.

### NEW HEAD COACH:

Sgt James Hutchinson aims to make his mark



Would you like to see the sport you participate in featured in RAF News? Send a short report (max 300 words), your contact details and a couple of photographs (attached jpegs) to: [Sports@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:Sports@rafnews.co.uk)



**Announcements**

- p6-7
- Puzzles**
- p8

# R'n'R



**Win new  
WWII novel**  
● p5

A man with curly brown hair and a beard, wearing a maroon t-shirt, stands against a black background. He is holding a tall, thin, unlit candle in a brass candlestick. He has a tattoo of a woman's face on his left forearm and another tattoo on his right forearm.

# Strictly spooky – Jay McGuinness stars



# A Coat of Arms and Surname History Scroll for **YOUR** family name.

**GREAT  
GIFT!**

Discover the fascinating origins of your surname plus the earliest-known coat of arms for a bearer of the name, with this beautiful printed scroll.

Ever wondered about the story of your own name? **Hall of Names** has the history of more than a million surnames and you can see your own surname's history faithfully reproduced on high-quality A3 parchment paper. A full colour rendition of the name's earliest-known coat of arms also features at the top of each scroll to create a real talking point. If there is a motto, this is usually in Latin with a translation at the end of the scroll. With attention to detail, the surname history is extensively researched and includes fascinating facts and intriguing details about your chosen surname.

## Look what you can find out!

- Name origins
- Spelling variations
- Early movements
- Lands owned
- First migrants to the New World
- Notable bearers of the name
- Passengers on the Titanic
- Convicts to Australia

Beautiful border graphics complement the coat of arms and relate to the name's country of origin. Each surname history scroll comes with an individual certificate number and a gold seal. In addition, a bibliography of sources is printed on the reverse. These beautiful scrolls are a real talking point, and the perfect gift or keepsake to celebrate a family name. Plus, the scrolls are available unframed or in your choice of two stunning quality frames, hand finished in our UK workshop.



## **RAF News** SPECIAL OFFER!

Readers of **RAF News** are entitled to 10% off any Coat of Arms and Surname History Scroll.

Framed: Was 39.99, now £35.99  
Unframed: Was £24.99, now £22.49

\*Your discount is automatically applied

**HALL<sup>OF</sup> NAMES**  
*Your history revealed*

Order today by visiting  
[www.hallofnames.org.uk/raf](http://www.hallofnames.org.uk/raf)

01984 632120





**Theatre**  
**2:22 A Ghost Story**  
UK tour

# Soap star and TV 'doc' take to the boards

## Emmerdale favourite back as spooked wife

**G**EORGE RAINSFORD and Fiona Wade are famous for their long-running TV roles – George played Jimmy Wilson in *Call The Midwife*, then doctor Ethan Hardy in *Casualty* for nine years, and Fiona played Priya Sharma in *Emmerdale* for 11 years.

Now the pair say they couldn't be more excited about their new venture – they're starring in the award-winning supernatural thriller *2:22 A Ghost Story* that was a hit with audiences and critics alike when singers Lily Allen, followed by Cheryl, headed the cast in the West End.

The scary, funny and intriguing show is by award-winning writer Danny Robins, who created several highly popular podcasts including *Battersea Poltergeist* and *Uncanny* – recently adapted into a BBC 2 series.

Fiona stars as Jenny who

is convinced her new home is haunted, but her husband Sam (Rainsford) isn't having any of it. They argue with their old friend Lauren (Vera Chok, *Hollyoaks*) and her new partner Ben (Jay McGuiness, *Strictly Come Dancing* star and singer with boy band The Wanted) who are the first dinner guests they invite to their new place.

Can the dead really walk again? Belief and scepticism clash, but something feels strange and frightening, and that something is getting closer. So they vow to stay up until 2:22... and then they'll know...

The six-month nationwide tour kicked off in Northampton on January 5 and goes to another 20 venues, including the Wycombe Swan Theatre from January 30 to February 3, Cambridge Arts Theatre in March, the Liverpool Empire in May and culminates at The Lowry, Salford in early June.



CHOK: 'Lauren'



REHEARSALS:  
Fiona Wade  
and George  
Rainsford

George said: "When the play was in the West End it was really successful, really well-received. It's got a bit of everything in it – it's spooky, funny and thought-provoking."

He explained: "Jenny and Sam have this loving relationship but actually they are quite different characters to each other – Sam is at best effervescent and at worst overbearing."

"He's very opinionated and self-confident about his views and likes to hold court. I'm really enjoying playing those,

maybe, slightly more negative characteristics."

Fiona added: "Jenny is a tired new mother and she's scared because she thinks there's something in the house she can't explain. She's been on her own with her baby Phoebe while her husband's been away working and she's desperate to tell him about the strange noises – footsteps and crying in particular, coming from Phoebe's bedroom – and convince him that what she's heard is true."

Both actors are big Danny

Robins fans. Fiona said: "I've listened to nearly all of his podcasts. While driving back with my husband from filming *Emmerdale* in Leeds to our home in Hertfordshire, we listened to *The Witch Farm* [about a couple living in an isolated farmhouse in the Welsh countryside]."

"It's terrifying, amazing – I was hooked. So to be asked to be in Danny's play was absolutely wonderful."

By Tracey Allen

● Go to: [222aghoststory.com](http://222aghoststory.com) for full tour details.



**Film Review**  
**Poor Things (12A)**  
In cinemas now

# A fairytale for grown-ups

**B**ELLA BAXTER (Emma Stone) is a young woman revived and reborn in Yorgos Lanthimos's latest weird and wickedly funny flight of fancy. Five years since their last collaboration on *The Favourite*, the darkly comic historical film that earned Olivia Coleman an Oscar, comes another plunge into black comedy, but this time in the suitably wonky realm of fantasy.

Willem Dafoe plays Dr Godwin Baxter, a monstrous genius both feared and admired by his peers. Godwin is guardian

to Bella, a woman who has ostensibly become a child again and will have to relearn the ways of life. Desperately wanting to protect the product of his experimentation but knowing that she needs to explore for herself, 'God' (a playfully direct nickname) allows for her to be married away to a young assistant. Just as the arrangements are being made, Bella is swooped up and stolen away by lustful opportunist Duncan Wedderburn (Mark Ruffalo).

Taken travelling around

Europe, imagined here in a kaleidoscopic series of sets with gorgeous production design often captured with fish-eye distortion, this is a bizarre coming of age story that becomes a perverted reflection of recent blockbuster *Barbie*.

Childlike at first, Bella moves with a toddler's gait and speaks in simple form, before learning of life's pleasures and toddling headlong toward them.

Delighted to be her hedonistic guide, Duncan is devious but never enough to quash Bella's



HEDONISITC ADVENTURES: Bella (Emma Stone) and Duncan (Mark Ruffalo)

hunger to learn and experience more. Ruffalo is hilarious, his slightly off English accent only adding to his preposterousness, where Stone's alien bluntness is able to cut through social niceties, right to the bone.

Left to play in a genre where surrealism can stretch out quite comfortably, Lanthimos creates a raucous fairy tale filled with sex, violence and mad science.

4 out of 5 rounds ●●●●  
Review by Sam Cooney





**Theatre**  
**Call of Now**  
UK and Ireland tour

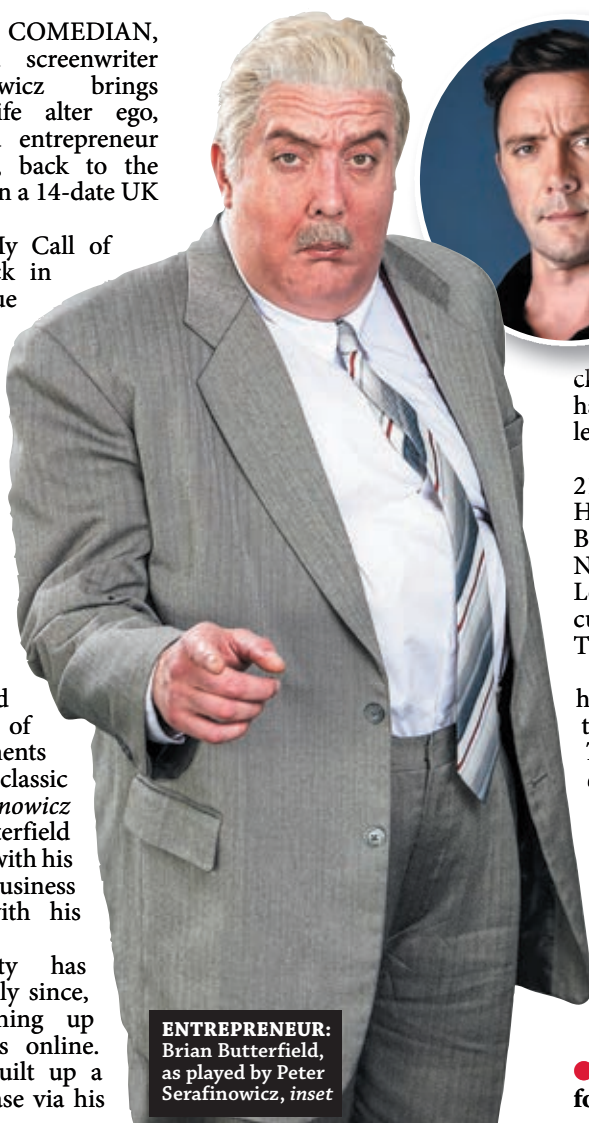
# Butterfield means business as he embarks on taxing tour

**A**CTOR, COMEDIAN, director and screenwriter Peter Serafinowicz brings his larger-than-life alter ego, businessman and entrepreneur Brian Butterfield, back to the stage this spring on a 14-date UK and Ireland tour.

Brian said: "My Call of Now tour is back in 2024. I will continue to impart all the key elements of business, including information on income tax, something I was unaware of until this morning. Please, please, please buy tickets before January 31."

Making his debut to the world through a series of spoof advertisements on BBC Two's cult classic *The Peter Serafinowicz Show*, Brian Butterfield charmed viewers with his forever flawed business ideas coupled with his eternal optimism.

His popularity has grown considerably since, with clips notching up millions of views online. Brian has also built up a large online fanbase via his



**ENTREPRENEUR:** Brian Butterfield, as played by Peter Serafinowicz, inset



Twitter/X, Facebook and Instagram accounts, delivering commentary on politics, business, sport, and every episode of *The Apprentice*.

Brian believes that every failure is just an opportunity to learn a new lesson. Having opened – and closed – several businesses, he has learnt more than a thousand lessons and counting...

The tour kicks off on May 21 at Liverpool's Philharmonic Hall and visits venues including Birmingham's Town Hall, the New Theatre, Cardiff and London's Eventim Apollo, culminating at the Pavilion Theatre, Glasgow on June 25.

Serafinowicz is best known for his roles as the title character in the 2016 live-action series of *The Tick*, Denarian Saal in *Guardians of the Galaxy* (2014), Pete in *Shaun of the Dead* (2004) and as the voice of Darth Maul in *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace* (1999).

He has also appeared in many British and American comedy series and directed music videos for bands such as Hot Chip.

● Go to: [brianbutterfield.co.uk](http://brianbutterfield.co.uk) for full tour details.



**MADNESS:** Sandown date

## Put your money on Suggs

**T**OP SKA/POP pioneers Madness have announced they'll be returning to Sandown Park Racecourse this summer on their C'est La Vie tour.

As well as performing tracks from their recent No 1 album *Theatre Of The Absurd Presents C'est La Vie*, the band will also play some of their greatest hits from a career spanning more than four decades including *Baggy Trousers*, *It Must Be Love*, *Driving In My Car*, *Our House* and *House of Fun* at the famous Surrey racecourse on July 31.

Fronted by the charismatic

Suggs, since they formed back in 1979, Madness have notched up 10 UK top 10 albums, 15 top 10 singles and won a multitude of awards including a prestigious Ivor Novello. They've performed for The Queen's Jubilee celebrations and set the record for the biggest ever audience for the BBC's Live New Year's Eve Broadcast – the most watched TV music event of 2018.

The racecourse date is a Jockey Club Live event combining an evening at the races with a concert.

● Go to: [thejockeyclublive.co.uk](http://thejockeyclublive.co.uk) for more details.



**Competition**  
**Banff Mountain Film Festival**  
UK and Ireland tour, 2014

**E**XTREME SKIING, mountain biking, climbing and more are featured in the Banff Mountain Film Festival 2024, bringing new adventure movies to the big screen at venues around the UK and Ireland this year.

The Festival programme has two new collections of gripping action films – Red and Blue – from remote regions of the globe such as Greenland and Kyrgyzstan.

Tour director Nell Teasdale said: "Get ready for an inspirational night of adventure from the wildest corners of the planet. With intrepid athletes, spectacular cinematography and a big dose of adrenaline, the Banff Mountain Film Festival stars the best new films from the world's top adventure filmmakers. Plus, we

guarantee you'll be inspired to have an adventure of your own as well."

Film highlights include *Chronoception*, an expedition along the ancient Silk Road into one of the least explored regions of Asia, where three skiers and snowboarders follow in the footsteps of Kyrgyzstan's nomadic people; *Cross Countries*, which stars French mountain biking legend Kilian Bron crossing North America on some of the continent's most iconic trails; and *Going Greenland*, in which athletes Rachael Burks and Jessica Baker, in a bid to follow their dreams while living in a way that is more in harmony with our environment, combine a renewable energy sailboat with an Arctic ski expedition in Greenland.

As well as white-knuckle

## Take a walk on the wild



**ARCTIC ADVENTURE:** *Going Greenland*

PHOTO: ERICH ROEPKE

films, each event features a free prize draw for outdoorsy goodies from the tour's partners.

Banff tour films are chosen from hundreds of entries into the Banff Mountain Film and Book

Festival, held every November in the Canadian Rocky Mountains. Now in its 15th year, the UK and Ireland tour will visit more than 50 locations this spring and autumn.

We have a pair of tickets up for grabs to attend the Festival's Blue programme at the Amey Theatre, Abingdon at 7.30pm on February 20.

For your chance to win them, tell us:

**What is the name of the Banff Mountain Film Festival 2024's tour director?**

Email your answer, marked Banff Festival tickets competition, to: [tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk) or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by January 26.

● Go to: [banff-uk.com](http://banff-uk.com) for more information and to book tickets.



Edited by Tracey Allen

# The women of WWII

## Bomber Command Girls star in author's latest tribute to the females in a man's world



**WE HAVE** copies of *The Girls of Bomber Command* to win. For your chance to own this great read, simply tell us:

**What was Vicki Beeby's first job?**

Email your answer, marked Vicki Beeby book competition, to [tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk) or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by January 26.

**Win!**

**B**EFORE BECOMING a successful historical novelist, Vicki Beeby had some very different occupations – her first job was as a civil engineer on a sewage treatment project. She's also been a Maths teacher and worked as an education consultant.

Now the self-confessed avid reader is a full-time writer, specialising in historical fiction about women in World War II.

Her latest book, her eighth under her own name (she previously published a couple of novels, set in medieval times, under a pseudonym) is *The Girls of Bomber Command* ([canelo.co](http://canelo.co)) featuring WAAF Pearl Cooper as the heroine.

Giving up on her dreams of being a journalist, Pearl joins up as a radio telephone operator for Bomber Command, based at the fictional RAF Fenthorpe. There, the over-protective Pearl can keep an eye on her errant younger sister, Thea, an instrument repairer at another Lincolnshire bomber station.

A page-turning combination of romance and adventure, the novel follows Pearl as she befriends Met WAAF Jenny and Australian pilot Greg, who she guides home safely during an emergency.

Pearl puts her background in journalism to good use – a series of thefts from pilots relights her investigative fire as she and Greg are caught up in the mystery. But when all signs indicate that Thea could be the perpetrator, Pearl has a race against the

clock to prove her sister's innocence.

The book is the first in a new four-part series – the second, with the same main characters, is due out in the spring. It follows Vicki's first trilogy, under the umbrella title *The Women's Auxiliary Air Force*, and her three-part series *The Wrens*.

The Shropshire-based author revealed it was her first job, working as a female civil engineer alongside mainly men, that sparked her interest in writing about women serving in the military in WWII.

She said: "I like writing about women in a man's world. I was really interested in the fact that women were doing what was considered a man's job and really not getting much praise for it."

"It resonated with my own experience when I first started work as a young civil engineer in the early 1990s. Senior male personnel would come into the office, look at me and say, 'Vicki, make a cup of tea.' I could have fought the sexism but I didn't."

**AUTHOR:**  
Vicki Beeby



As a child, Vicki said she was a 'totally voracious' reader and had a long-term ambition to earn her living as a writer.

"I kept a diary and at the time that fulfilled my desire to write. At the back of my mind I was always thinking 'I want to be a writer' but I felt I didn't have anything to say then, I was too young and needed more life experience," she said.

Then she discovered fan fiction, where people who are big fans of a particular story – whether in book form, as a TV show or a film – can imagine prequels or sequels to that story and create new scenes and plotlines for their favourite characters.

She explained: "It was a really good way to start learning how to write fiction because you don't have to come up with an entire world yourself. I learnt a lot from it."

"I didn't even know it was 'a thing' to start with, I just wrote it for myself, then discovered there are online communities where you can post your fiction. I posted some of my writing, got good comments and it went from there."

The winner of the prestigious 2023 Romantic Novelists' Association Saga Award, for her title *A New Start For The Wrens*, she revealed that, unlike some authors, she enjoys the writing process.

She said: "It can be tough at times but overall I love it."

And she relishes the painstaking research necessary for historical fiction just as much. To ensure vital accuracy for *The Girls of Bomber Command*, Vicki carried out research at the International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln and the archive of the Imperial War Museum.

She added: "It was amazing, what I discovered inspired me so much, I ended up having so many ideas."

Fans of Vicki's writing have plenty to look forward to, with a third title in the quartet featuring Pearl and co coming out later this year, followed by a Christmas title about the same characters.

She said: "Fans can continue to follow their journeys through the war. Although they are set in wartime, my stories are quite heart-warming and my characters always have a happy ending."

"Reading was always an escape for me and I have 'comfort books' I go back to. It's very rewarding when readers who have been experiencing difficult times, such as serious illness or bereavement, contact me through my website to say they find my books a comfort read. Sometimes their comments move me to tears."

**Tracey Allen**

## side with adventure film festival

**Win!**



**SILK ROAD TRAIL:** Chronoception

PHOTO: JEREMY BERNARD



**EXTREME MOUNTAIN BIKING:** Cross Countries

PHOTO: JB LIAUTARD





## Your Announcements

You can email photos for announcements on this page to:  
[tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk)

### Reunion

RAF TG11 Reunion – calling all ex T/phonist/TPO/Teleg/TCO/TCC/WOP Spec/TRC personnel in the former Trade Group 11, also any contemporary comms trades that superseded any of the above. All are welcome at the forthcoming TG11 reunion in March.

Venue is the Marriott Delta Hotels Nottingham Belfry, Mellors Way, off Woodhouse Way, Nottingham NG8 6PY, Friday, March 22 to Sunday, March 24. Please find further details at: [tg11association.com](http://tg11association.com) where, if not already a member of the association, there is a facility to become one (just click on the register motif at the top of the website page).

### Associations

6 Squadron will celebrate its 110th anniversary on January 31, 2024. To commemorate the event, the Sqn Association, in concert with the squadron, will be holding a dinner at the Queen's Hotel, Farnborough, on Friday, February 2, 2024. Given a numbers limitation of 130 diners, we currently anticipate the event being 'stag' but that might change to a guest night closer to the time if take-up is less than anticipated. Whilst still at the formative stage, likely details are as follows: three-course meal – approx. £60 including arrival drink, half bottle of wine with dinner and a glass of port; room rates – £99 including VAT and breakfast, based on a maximum of two people sharing. The Association Committee has kindly agreed that Association Members will get a subsidy of £10 per head.

If not already an Association Member, you can join by contacting: [6sqnassociation@gmail.com](mailto:6sqnassociation@gmail.com). Expressions of interest should be made to Clive Mitchell at: [clive.mitchell163@mod.gov.uk](mailto:clive.mitchell163@mod.gov.uk). Please let Clive know if you would like to attend

and bring a guest, should that opportunity arise.

RAF Armourers past and present. RAF Association's Armourers Branch aims to provide welfare support and comradeship for all who have served or currently serve as an RAF Armourer. Please see: [rafaarmourers.co.uk](http://rafaarmourers.co.uk) or you can contact the committee via: [plumbersrest@outlook.com](mailto:plumbersrest@outlook.com).

RAF Physical Training Instructors Association holds an annual Dinner and AGM over a weekend plus locally organised events. Contact RAFPTIA Honorary Secretary Denise Street-Brown on: [ptisec@outlook.com](mailto:ptisec@outlook.com) for membership enquiries. The Association was formed in 1996 to bring together serving and retired PTIs. It currently has 600 PTI members.

To become a member of the Association you will have had to have successfully passed the RAF Physical Training Instructors Basic Training Course.

IF you trained as an RAF Administrative Apprentice (or are related to one) we would be delighted to welcome you to the RAFAA Association. Please see: [rafadappasn.org](http://rafadappasn.org); or contact the Membership Secretary on: 07866 085834 or the Chairman on: 01933 443673.

THE Association of RAF Women Officers (ARAFWO) is a lively, friendly, world-wide networking group. Visit our website: [arafwo.co.uk](http://arafwo.co.uk) and discover the benefits of membership, plus see what activities and events we offer all over the world.

RAF Catering Warrant Officers' and Seniors' Association: All serving or retired TG19 WO or FS and all former Catering Branch Officers are invited to join the RAF CWO&SA. We meet twice yearly with a vibrant gathering of retired and serving members. For more information send an email to: [janedjones6@btinternet.com](mailto:janedjones6@btinternet.com).

# Marvellous Matilda



**FORMER WAAF Matilda Irvine has celebrated her 100th birthday.**

The veteran, from Ayrshire, where she still lives, served at stations including RAF Wilmslow and RAF Hucknall.

She left the Service in the rank of acting Sgt and, after getting married, was demobbed and lived in Fontainebleau, near Paris, for a few years with her husband Frank who was stationed there, said daughter Marie Johnson.

Matilda then went with Frank to Northern Ireland when he was posted to RAF Aldergrove.

### How to use our service

There is no charge for conventionally-worded **birth, engagement, marriage, anniversary, death, in memoriam seeking and reunion** notices. For commercial small ads contact Edwin Rodrigues on: 07482 571535. We cannot, under any circumstances, take announcements over the telephone. They can be sent by email to: [tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk). Please note that due to the coronavirus pandemic we are currently unable to accept notices submitted by post.

### Important Notice

The publishers of RAF News cannot accept responsibility for the quality, safe delivery or operation of any products advertised or mentioned in this publication. Reasonable precautions are taken before advertisements are accepted but such acceptance does not imply any form of approval or recommendation. Advertisements (or other inserted material) are accepted subject to the approval of the publishers and their current terms and conditions. The publishers will accept an advertisement or other inserted material only on the condition that the advertiser warrants that such advertisement does not in any way contravene the provisions of the Trade Descriptions Act. All copy is subject to the approval of the publishers, who reserve the right to refuse, amend, withdraw or otherwise deal with advertisements submitted to them at their absolute discretion and without explanation. All advertisements must comply with the British Code of Advertising Practice. Mail order advertisers are required to state in advertisements their true surname or full company name, together with an address from which the business is managed.

## Paul's charity honour

THE RAF Benevolent Fund's Force families across the UK and former Director of Grants, overseas.

Services and Programme, Paul Hughesdon (inset), has been awarded the MBE for his work supporting the charity.

Air Cdre Hughesdon, who retired from the post in 2023 after 14 years, was the driving force behind the RAFBF's Airplay scheme to improve life for Air



A spokesperson said: "Paul's contribution to supporting the RAF Family both through his work and voluntary activities has left a lasting change."

"He has overseen the expansion of the Fund's welfare offer, making a generational change in how members of the RAF Family are supported."





## Your Announcements

You can email photos for announcements on this page to:  
[tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk)



## Liam's moo-ving mission

BIG-HEARTED Liam Price is a man on the moo-ve – after clocking up 250 miles for Forces charity SSAFA.

He took up the challenge to cover the distance over the Christmas break after turning to running to battle depression.

He warmed up for the mission by taking on the annual Santa run in Wallingford, close to his home station at Benson, and then hit the road in Oxfordshire to complete his fundraising target, grabbing a few selfies with the local wildlife on the way.

He said: "I have struggled with many aspects of my life;

leaving home, bereavements, relationships, deployments, loneliness, never feeling like anywhere is a place to call home.

"On a couple of occasions I simply could not handle anything anymore.

"The depression gripped me hard, and I almost lost the battle with myself to stay alive.

"Without SSAFA's help, I probably wouldn't be here today.

"Wherever I have been, when I needed help, SSAFA representatives have treated me with the greatest of respect and advised me when I never thought I could get help."

# Shawbury delivers

**CHARITY CRUSADERS** at Shawbury took a bow as the station scooped the Firmin Sword award for community and humanitarian efforts in the local area and abroad.

Judges for the annual award praised the Shropshire station's programme to promote science and technology across the region's schools and colleges, and the long-standing Taking Football to Africa appeal set up by Wg Cdr Neil Hope.

Since its launch the charity has delivered nearly 300,000 items of sports kit and school clothing to disadvantaged children in 59 countries worldwide.

Presenting the award, Chief of the Air Staff, ACM Sir Richard Knighton, said: "The award of the Firmin Sword of Peace recognises the tremendous efforts of the Whole Force in its humanitarian activities and exceptional engagement with its local community and far beyond.

"Shawbury continues to consistently deliver superb community, youth and veteran



**SWORD OF PEACE:** CAS makes the presentation to Gp Capt Baron

engagement, despite being one of our smaller RAF stations. It is a superb Unit with a big heart and enduring drive to maintain its excellent community relations."

Shawbury Station Commander Gp Capt Andy Baron added: "It is an incredible privilege to accept

the Firmin Sword for Peace on behalf of the Whole Force at RAF Shawbury.

"We are fortunate to be exceptionally well supported by our local community and those farther afield, and so we work hard at giving back in any way we can."





## RAF News

The Forces Favourite Read

Hit your target market with **RAF News** - the official newspaper of the Royal Air Force since 1961.

Reaching an audience of more than 50,000 readers every fortnight, **RAF News** is the Forces' favourite newspaper delivering exclusive news, features and sports action from across UK Defence.

To discuss your advertising in **RAF News** please call or email:  
T: +44 (0)7482 571535  
E: [edwin.rodriques@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:edwin.rodriques@rafnews.co.uk)



The official voice of the Royal Air Force



R'n'R



Prize Crossword  
No. 354

Solve the crossword, then rearrange the 11 letters in yellow squares to find an RAF station.

- Across
- 6. RAF attacks creature that is savage to begin with (7)
  - 7. Fashion vehicle outside village (5)
  - 9. Remark on Manchester United, say (5)
  - 10. Recent arrival at Royal Navy after Bowen upset (7)
  - 12. Trouble door caused Chinook, for example (6,5)
  - 14. And 21 Across. Ah, brother's kaftan repaired at training school (3,8,5)
  - 18. See 3 Down
  - 19. Pace some people exceeded every day at first (5)
  - 21. See 14 Across
  - 22. Victorian consort reaches a province (7)

- Down
- 1. Police reach middle of green thicket (5)
  - 2. Macho man I duck in office (6)
  - 3. And 18 Across. Sounds like third letter to runner on plane (3,7)
  - 4. Shoot Disney deer before I leave with two ducks (6)
  - 5. Never to upset Toffees (7)
  - 8. Maybe see Shakespearean king set free (7)
  - 11. Decided not to take off sailor or Edward (7)
  - 13. A German upset Klopp, for example (7)
  - 15. Fruity hats, by the sound of it (6)
  - 16. Helicopter to circle southern quarry (6)
  - 17. It's capital in Western Australia but original in Scotland (5)
  - 20. The Italian leaves horse to go up in the world (3)

Name: .....

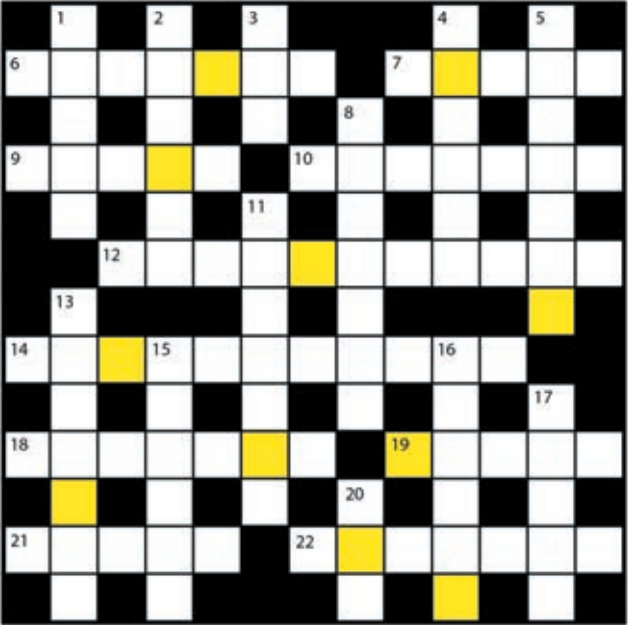
Address: .....

.....

.....

RAF station: .....Crossword No. 354

The winners of our Prize Crossword and Prize Su Doku puzzles will receive a recent top aviation title – please send your entries to the address printed in the adjacent Su Doku panel, to arrive by January 26.  
Prize Crossword No. 352 winner is: R. Manley, Exeter.



**Solution to Crossword No 353:**  
**Across** – 1. Jets 8. Pearly King 9. Iron Lung 10. Saws 12. Victor 14. Nobody 15. Hamper 17. Scenic 18. Otto 19. Neon Sign 21. Even-handed 22. Aunt  
**Down** – 2. Exorbitant 3. Spin 4. Jaguar 5. Flagon 6. Sky Sabre 7. Ages 11. Waddington 13. Typhoons 16. Runway 17. Swords 18. Open 20. Soda

RAF station – Coningsby

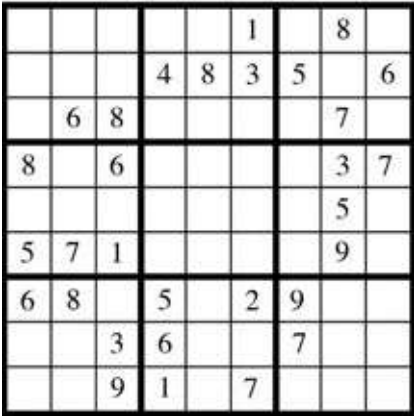


Prize Su Doku  
No. 364

Fill in all the squares in the grid so that each row, each column and each 3x3 square contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

Solutions should be sent in a sealed envelope marked 'Su Doku' with the number in the top left-hand corner to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP14 4UE, to arrive by January 26.

The winner of Su Doku No: 362 is: Avis Macdonald, Doncaster.



Solution to Su Doku No: 363

6	1	4	8	3	7	2	5	9
3	5	9	2	6	4	7	1	8
8	7	2	1	9	5	3	4	6
9	6	1	4	5	3	8	7	2
5	3	7	6	8	2	4	9	1
4	2	8	9	7	1	5	6	3
7	8	6	3	4	9	1	2	5
2	4	3	5	1	6	9	8	7
1	9	5	7	2	8	6	3	4



Film Review  
One Life (PG)  
In cinemas now

Mission to  
save Jewish  
war children

ONE LIFE is based on the remarkable true story of Sir Nicholas Winton and the operation that he headed in 1938, to save Jewish children from the clutches of invading Nazi forces.

Set in 1988, Nicholas (Antony Hopkins, *The Two Popes*, *The Father*) is decluttering the house when he comes upon a precious scrapbook that contains details of his self-appointed mission in Prague 50 years prior.

Between stints of cleaning and collecting donations from charity boxes, Nicky takes his scrapbook to a local newspaper to see if anyone would be interested in this time capsule and the many stories contained within. What becomes abundantly clear is this man's humility, waiving his own involvement and, instead,



championing the success of the campaign.

Hopkins once again shows his phenomenal talent, doing so much whilst doing so little. It is his reserved, humble nature that evokes so much emotion, especially when faced with people who understand the magnitude of his undertakings – the sheer number of lives that he has saved.

As memories of the mission



**WELCOME:** A young Winton (Johnny Flynn) awaits the young refugees arriving by train. And the older Winton (Hopkins) on *This Is Your Life*, left. Winton's mother (Helena Bonham-Carter) lends a hand, inset top

are trudged up, we jump back in time to see his endeavours first-hand. Played by Johnny Flynn (*Operation Mincemeat*, *The Outfit*), young Nicky is working as a stockbroker when he puts together a plan to help fleeing refugees just as World War II is beginning. The son of German parents (his mother is played by Helena Bonham-Carter, *The Crown*, *Enola Holmes*), and

Jewish grandparents, he has enormous compassion and an ability to command attention and empathy.

Much of the film takes place during the 40s as Nicky's team fight to rescue children from the squalor of invaded countries and rehome them back in England. Though there is some espionage-style tension, the film drifts towards depicting the rather more

staid bureaucratic struggles.

However the emotional core and power to *One Life* is in the quiet, distant reflections, as a now older Winton is faced with his accomplishments, building to his appearance on BBC show *That's Life*, thanks to an incredible performance from Hopkins. Not a dry eye in the house.

3 out of 5 roundels   
Review by Sam Cooney