

The Forces' favourite paper

Love Hercs: Win latest release on Fat Albert and other top titles



ROYAL AIR FORCE
Friday, July 12, 2024
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RAF News



The Blenheim pilot lothario who helped hit the Nazis for six



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Esports
Duty calls for Aviators



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Rugby
Fahey puts the boot in



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Olympics
Boxing and hockey coup



● See page 28

Top Gun lands air race crown



PARALYMPIC POWERHOUSE Stuart Robinson is bidding to retain his Olympic gold medal as he heads to Paris with the Team GB wheelchair rugby squad. The Ex-RAF Gunner is hoping to repeat their success in Tokyo in 2020, where they overhauled favourites USA in a nail-biting final. Stu, who lost both his legs and badly injured his arm in an IED strike near Camp Bastion in 2013, is one of the team's star players with two Invictus titles and two European titles to his name.

Staff Reporter

THE PRESTIGIOUS Schneider Trophy is coming home after Typhoon pilot Sqn Ldr Ben Polwin stormed to victory in his first competitive outing in a racing plane he built in his garage.

The 41-year-old air racing debutant flew his 250mph Vans RV-7 to victory against an international field of competitors, ending a 31-year Schneider drought for RAF privateer pilots.

And he dedicated his win to his RAF colleague and friend Sqn Ldr Mark Long, who died earlier this year when his Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Spitfire crashed during a training sortie.

Sqn Ldr Polwin, below, said: "Mark was a good friend. We talked a lot about air racing. I flew him in the aircraft a few weeks before he died."

"He kept sending me messages almost daily with details about an aircraft he was hoping to buy, to join me on this venture."

● See full story on pages 14-15



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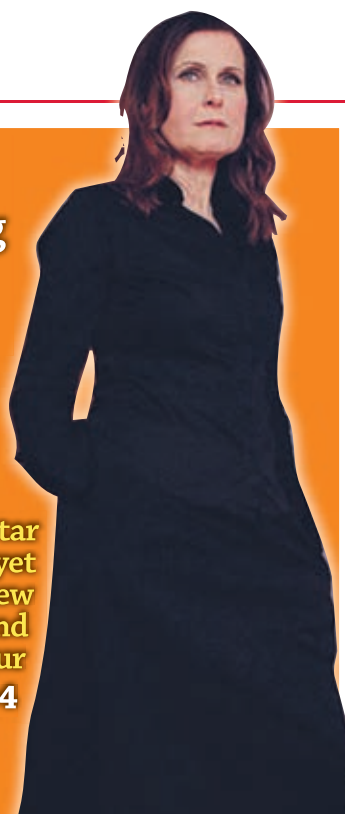
“Your unrelenting efforts and selfless loyalty are as enduring as our gratitude,”



The Queen in Armed Forces Day tribute to the military See p7

“I love the physical feeling that singing gives me,”

Pop star Alison Moyet on her new album and world tour See R'n'R p4



“The days in Paris will be long. It is pretty hardcore, 6am to 11pm daily,”

Olympics boxing official Gp Capt Ray Morley See page 28



Birthday bonanza



ROYAL AIR FORCE
RAF News

RAF News

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Tracey Allen

AN APPEAL by Air Force charity chiefs to help veteran Dick Skepper celebrate his 100th birthday produced amazing results – the former flight engineer received more than 1,000 cards from well-wishers.

As well as a birthday card from The King and Queen, Dick had a personal message from former Chief of the Air Staff Sir Mike Wigston and a visit from current members of 7 Sqn, where he served.

They presented him with a framed picture of a Chinook signed by 100 present day squadron members.

Air Cdr Martin Sharpe (Ret'd), president of the 7 Sqn Association, presented Dick with a pencil drawing of a Stirling bomber taking off in 1943. He also received a portrait of a Lancaster.

RAFA caseworker Michael Gilroy, who visits Dick at his nursing home in Warwickshire, attended



the veteran's birthday party, where guests also included members of Banbury's RAFA branch.

Michael said: “It was wonderful that Dick received more than 1,000 cards for his special birthday. His son told me that cards were still arriving in the post daily after his birthday on June 30. He also received three fabulous birthday cakes.”

Dick and his two brothers, Alec and Geoffrey, all served in Bomber Command.



YOU'VE GOT MAIL: Dick marks his landmark 100th with friends, family, RAF personnel and Forces charity workers

This Week In History



1940

Radar debut

A BLENHEIM becomes the first aircraft to shoot down an aircraft using its own Air Interception Radar, destroying a Dornier Do17 during a night attack off Selsey Bill.

1974

Cyprus invasion

PHANTOMS FLOWN by 6 and 41 Sqn provide tactical reconnaissance support to British forces following the Turkish invasion of Cyprus.



2006

Beirut evacuation

A PAIR of Chinooks evacuate 76 passengers from Beirut to RAF Akrotiri after Israel launches attacks against the Lebanese capital.

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

For those about to Wokk, RIAT salutes you...

Taste of real ops for the airshow crowds



READY FOR ACTION: Troops run off the back of the RAF aircraft

GUNSLINGER: RAF Chinook carries in 105mm light gun



Tracey Allen

COMBAT-HARDENED CHINOOK crews will be bringing frontline action to RIAT this year by showcasing the skills they use in the battle zone.

Air show fans will get to feel the heat of operations as 18 (B) Squadron launch a realistic mission at Fairford, flying in military kit and inserting and extracting elite frontline fighters in a simulated mission.

An eight-strong crew from 18(B) Sqn, led by captain and team manager Flt Lt Ian 'Coops' Cooper, are gearing up for the role demonstration with 14 members of the Joint Helicopter Support Squadron that includes RAF, Royal Logistics Corps and Army Air Corps personnel.

The iconic double-rotor helicopter, nicknamed the Wokka Wokka because of its distinctive sound, has been the backbone of land-based combat and humanitarian missions since it was introduced in 1980.

It has seen action in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Iraq and Afghanistan carrying Medical Emergency Reaction teams rescuing injured personnel from the battlefield.

In Afghanistan alone Chinooks flew more than 41,000 hours, extracted 13,000 casualties and its crews won 23 DFCs for bravery in the air.

Coops, pictured below, said: "Visitors to RIAT can expect a completely different show to recent years. The Chinook will be performing a role demonstration which to the spectators may look like a display but in fact it's more representative of the skills and capabilities that we conduct on operations around the world.

"We arrive with a 105mm light gun slung underneath the aircraft, we have live troops running off the back and a quad bike driving off the ramp, plus the crew will demonstrate the full

performance of the aircraft in the skies above.

"This is a true demonstration of how we fly on operations and a side of our flying that members of the public have probably never seen before."

Sgt Will Lawson from JHSS added: "JHSS involvement covers all the ground elements of the demo. We have a team who rig and hook the 105mm light gun from a separate site.

"A second team is on board the aircraft deploying ground troops and we will have a quad bike and driver on board to assist them.

"It's a great spectacle for the audience and something out of the norm for an airshow. Seeing an artillery gun being lifted, troops in fighting trim and a quad bike exiting the Chinook is something normally reserved for ops and exercises that would not usually be seen by the general public. The team are really looking forward to showing what we do, they're buzzing."

Coops said: "Without JHSS we couldn't conduct the demonstration. They provide the specialist skills and knowledge to be able to hook the gun onto the aircraft and provide the eight-person fire-team which runs off the back."

He added: "Being selected as the team captain for this year is a great privilege, it's a prestigious role. To be able to bring the bladeslap to the greatest air show in the world, performing at RIAT, will be a career highlight."

And Wokka fans who look forward to seeing the Chinook team's famous big orange 'hands' won't be disappointed.

Coops added: "Not only do we have the big orange hands, we've also added a big orange 'thumbs up' to clear the troops back onto the aircraft towards the end of our sequence."

After appearing at RIAT the role demo will move on to the Farnborough International Airshow later this month, then to the Odiham and Benson Families Days.



QUAD SQUAD: All-terrain bike is driven down the ramp of the RAF chopper by troops
PHOTOS: SGT NEIL CHAPMAN





Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund

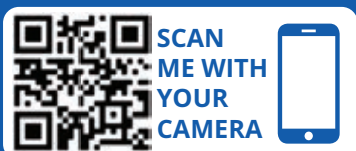


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Salute to D-Day's forgotten heroes

RAF radar pioneers who braved Omaha Beach killing zone honoured in France



NORMANDY TRIBUTE: Air Cdre Jamie Thompson at the 29 Infantry Division Memorial For the 80th anniversary of D-Day. Inset below, D-Day veteran Dr Les Dobinson with 78 Sqn's Flt Lt Ross Hammerston in Vierville-sur-Mer in 2019

Yves Gagnon Normandy

TACTICAL AIR controllers who today guide combat jets onto their targets gathered to remember RAF personnel who died on D-Day.

Modern Boulmer-based British battlespace managers joined with their French counterparts to honour those 80 years ago who defended the assault areas from enemy air attacks.

Two Tactical Air Surveillance and Control units landed at Omaha beach in support of American forces with 27 vehicles and 160 airmen to take position near the cliff at Pointe du Hoc.

When the RAF teams landed the beach was littered with burnt-out vehicles and dead bodies.

Under fire from German guns and mortars 15 vehicles were 'drowned', four were destroyed, and eight managed to get out of the area.

20 Sqn simulator pilot AS1 Charlie Raggett said: "The 80th D-Day anniversary left an indelible mark on our hearts and minds that will shape our perspective on history.

"We were granted a profound opportunity to reflect on the tremendous achievements of those who came before us."

In 1944 the beach was a killing



BEACH HORROR: The wreckage of GCI vehicles destroyed by German artillery on Omaha Beach

zone and with his CO and Second in Command, wounded Sqn Ldr 'Bill' Trollope took charge and, assisted by Flt Sgt Reuben Ekersall, organised the exit fired upon by both sides as salt water turned RAF blue battledress a blue-grey – like that worn by the Germans.

Eventually the unit moved up to Les Moulins where they lay on the edge of the road subjected to continuous sniping and saw six enemy Ju-88s bomb the beach.

But by June 10 they had achieved their mission and were directing Close Air Support missions by RAF Typhoons and

US Thunderbolts.

French Lt Col Henri said: "I was struck by the closeness of our mission to that of these men who fought 80 years ago for airspace control. We owe them a great deal, but we are also their heirs".

Six RAF and five Royal Signals personnel were killed and 41 were wounded in the first 24 hours.

Four Military Crosses, two Military Medals and a Croix de Guerre were won on D-Day.

Dr Les Dobinson, then an LAC, organised

the only RAF memorial at Vierville-sur-Mer.

78 Sqn Flt Lt Ross Hammerton said: "Sadly, Les passed away in 2021. I feel very honoured to have taken part in the commemorations this year with my RAF colleagues to honour him and his unit. His legacy still lives on."

This year, French tactical controllers honoured their British counterparts there and at Bayeux Cemetery.

Among them was Sgt Marius who said: "It was an enlightening experience to meet our cross-Channel counterparts. I am grateful they invited us to commemorate the sacrifices their unit made to liberate our country.

"I really hope the event can be repeated next year."



In Brief



Barnes stormer

WG CDR Russ Barnes and his RAF Youth STEM team from Cranwell have received the UK Defence Chief Scientific Adviser Commendation Award.

The team won the commendation for their science outreach programme that reached more than 1.5 million children in a year.



SUPPORT: RAF Veteran Leroy Francis received help from the RAFBF after developing multiple sclerosis

Force's family welfare check

Tracey Allen

AIR FORCE welfare chiefs have launched a probe to improve family life for serving personnel and veterans.

RAF Benevolent Fund and Greenwich Hospital researchers will use the results of a large scale survey to improve social and financial support for Air Force and Navy families and vets struggling on Civvie Street.

A spokeswoman said: "The evidence collected will help unlock the needs of serving and non-serving partners to understand their requirements and examine the impact of socio-economic trends on the family unit."

The survey will be conducted by RAND Europe who hope to contact RAF, RN or RM personnel (Regular or Reserve), and partners of former personnel, to take part in an online interview to discuss their experiences of life after military service.

The research is expected to take 18 months to complete and a final report will be published in 2025.

● To take part go to: rand.org.randeurope/research/projects/2024

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Reservists mark 100th

A SERVICE was held in Harrogate to mark the 100th anniversary of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force's volunteer reserve service.

The event recognised thousands who have served as volunteer reserves on operations world-wide and those who lost their lives.

Queen praises D-Day spirit in Forces Day tribute

Simon Mander

MILITARY PERSONNEL and their families have been praised for their D-Day spirit in a special Armed Forces Day broadcast by The Queen.

The video message, filmed in the Morning Room at Clarence House, was produced by the British Forces Broadcasting Service, of which Her Majesty became Patron as Duchess of Cornwall, in 2021.

She said: "Earlier this month, my husband and I were in Normandy on the 80th

anniversary of D-Day.

"We were reminded of the incredible bravery of the Allied land, sea and air forces whose combined endeavours brought about the liberation of Western Europe and in whose debt we shall forever be.

"Eight decades later, I know that that same spirit and those same qualities remain much in evidence throughout our Armed Forces,

as you undertake your duties in the face of a multitude of challenges and dangers. In so doing, you not only protect these Isles, but also defend liberties way beyond these shores. Your determination, unrelenting efforts and selfless loyalty to each other and to the United Kingdom are as enduring as our gratitude.

"I also want

to thank your families, who keep the home fires burning whilst you are deployed overseas.

"As the proud daughter of an Army officer, I know something of the impact military life has on your loved ones – you too are heroes."

The message follows the release of a new photograph of The King as Head of the Armed Forces featuring His Majesty in Field Marshal uniform, taken by photographer Hugo Burnand in the Grand Corridor at Windsor Castle, in November 2023.



Medals first on NATO beat

Simon Mander

TOP BRASS have presented a new medal to RAF personnel in recognition of their combat role.

The Wider Service Medal has been brought in to acknowledge the changing nature of operations.

And its first award is to Air Force members currently deployed on Nato air policing duties in Romania.

Communications specialist Cpl Harry Richards, who is on the operation, said: "It was an honour to receive my medal, especially as these were the first to be presented to RAF personnel.

"Receiving it from the Chief of the Air Staff while on operations was extra special.

"Having deployed on air policing in Estonia and now in Romania it's great to receive recognition."

Chief of the Air Staff ACM Sir Richard Knighton gave out a total of 13 of the honours while visiting the RAF detachment at Mihail Kogălniceanu Air Base.

Lossiemouth-based IX (Bomber) Sqn Typhoons are working alongside Finnish F-18s



AWARDS: CAS, ACM Knighton, presents Cpl Richards with the new Wider Service Medal in Romania, right, and IX Sqn crews after presentation ceremony
PHOTOS: AS1 SIAN STEPHENS

and Romanian F-16s to provide Quick Reaction Alert to intercept any Russian aircraft that encroach Alliance airspace.

The medal will be awarded to

all Armed Forces members who have accrued more than 180 days' aggregated service on eligible operations since December 2018.

It recognises that military

personnel are increasingly deployed or used to deliver operational output but not necessarily in roles that expose them to physical risk.

Its introduction was announced in March and the remaining medals will be awarded to eligible personnel over the coming months.

Fun's on the cards for Joe

FORMER SPITFIRE engineer Joe Jervis was 'overwhelmed' to receive more than 400 cards from well-wishers for his 101st birthday after care home staff launched an appeal to honour the World War II veteran.

He said: "It brought me immense joy to see that so many people care. I didn't think people would remember – it truly made my day."

Born in June 1923, widower Joe, raised in south Manchester, left school at 14 to join the Fairey Aviation Company at Stockport

as an apprentice airframe fitter.

In 1944, after an appeal for pilots, Joe and his friends enlisted in the RAF and trained at Padgate in Warrington.

Joe underwent a brief introduction to RAF procedures and then served at fighter airfields across the UK, servicing aircraft including the Spitfire.

His job was to ensure airframes were ready for combat and to repair any damage when they flew back from operations. He was demobbed in 1946 and

returned to work at Fairey.

Among those attending his party at Broughton House Veteran Care Village in Salford was Wg Cdr David Archibald.

Broughton House care director Jane Green said: "We set ourselves a target of getting 101 cards for him but ended up with over 400, which was a fantastic achievement.

"It's great to see that so many people in the wider community care about our veterans and it helped make the occasion extra-special for Joe."

CELEBRATION: WWII Spitfire engineer Joe Jervis marks his 101st birthday



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True Brew



Staff Reporter
RAF Leeming

CREWS WITH a joint UK-Qatari training squadron are saluting their Yorkshire roots – with a cheeky tribute to the region's favourite brew.

Rookie pilots training on 11 Sqn at Leeming in North Yorkshire have produced their own badge, based on the famous Yorkshire Tea brand.

RAF trainee fighter pilot Flt Lt Jordan Capehorn said: "Badges are a really important element of providing each course with its own identity."

"We wanted to draw on Leeming's fantastic location to highlight our time in Yorkshire."

The squadron was formed as part of a deal with the Qatari



Air Force to buy 24 Typhoons. Students train on the Hawk T2 fast jet before moving to the Typhoon on operational frontline units.

11 Sqn's commanding officer Wg Cdr Mark Lawson said: "The students follow a syllabus which will take them all the way through from converting from the Hawk to

then training to use an aeroplane as a weapons system. Badges are a tradition that go right back to when I was a student, which is a long time ago now.

"Each course designs their own badge to put their stamp on their course, because they will make friends for the rest of their career from it."

Big Mach delivery for Atlas



A ROYAL Air Force Atlas A400M transporter flies low level through the famous Mach Loop training area in Wales.

Also known as the

Machynlleth Loop, the valleys in west-central Wales are used as low-level training areas for military aircraft.

The system of valleys lies eight

miles east of Barmouth, between the towns of Dolgellau to the north and Machynlleth to the south.

PHOTO: SGT DEK TAYLOR



PLANE SAILING: Carpenter Rob on his way to Falklands in 1984 and, inset above, with family at his leaving party at Llossiemouth

Rob's a good 'un

Simon Mander

A FALKLANDS veteran who once lived in a hut at the end of Port Stanley runway has retired after 45 years.

Former carpenter Robbie Carswell put his hammer and chisel away after finishing his last shift at RAF Llossiemouth, where he has served for more than half of the Scottish airbase's existence.

A military career wasn't at the forefront of his mind when he left school and, despite being a former Air Cadet, he worked for an electrical company in Penrith.

But a bus picked him up one day and took him to the RAF recruitment office in Carlisle and he enlisted as a carpenter.

He started work at the Moray station in March 1979 as an SAC carpenter and when the trade was disbanded in 1995 he moved to a similar Civil Service role and has worked there ever since.

Robbie, a former Appleby-in-Westmorland Grammar School 2192 Sqn Staff Cadet, has been employed at Llossiemouth for more than half the station's existence.

After training at Swinderby and St Athan he was posted to Finningley, where he worked for four years. He moved to Llossiemouth in 1979 and three years later embarked on a two-week voyage for a deployment to the Falklands, where he was billeted in a cabin at the end of the runway.

In 1989 Robbie received the RAF Long Service and Good Conduct award and was finally discharged in 1996 after 22 years service, staying on at Llossiemouth as a civvie head carpenter where he has been ever since.

Station top brass and more than 30 close friends and work colleagues gathered at the station's workshops to celebrate his retirement.



Award for Rivet Joint I-Stars

FRONTLINE SURVEILLANCE specialists with 51 Sqn earned a Chief of the Air Staff's Commendation for supporting operations across the globe.

Operating the Rivet Joint, the squadron played a vital role during anti-terror missions in Iraq and Syria and Nato operations across Europe.

Presenting the award to Wg Cdr Keith Bissett, ACM Sir Richard Knighton said: "The determination and professionalism demonstrated by every member of 51 Sqn has been exceptional. It could not have been more operational, nor more effective, than it has been since the start of 2022."

News

Spit and polish

Simon Mander

A SPITFIRE said to be beyond economic repair when it was blown off its wheels in a storm last year is to be given a new lease of life by museum volunteers.

The replica fighter was bought following a donation by wartime test pilot Alex Henshaw, who flew more than 2,000 Spitfires between 1940 and 1945.

The aircraft was used to pay tribute to his boss at Vickers, Jeffrey Quill, who was the second man to evaluate the Spitfire, and displayed at the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust site near Folkstone.

Quill persuaded his civilian bosses to let him fly under frontline operational conditions and he joined a 605 Sqn mission in August 1940, to evaluate the Spitfire's performance in combat.

In response, the replica was painted the colours of the aircraft Quill flew during the Battle of Britain.

Now Kent Battle of Britain Museum chief Dave Brocklehurst has secured a new home for it with a donation that will close the gap between the insurance payout on the damaged aircraft and the cost of



REPAIRS: Battle of Britain Memorial Trust's Spitfire is transported to Kent Museum site for repairs ahead of arrival of replacement

acquiring a new Spitfire replica.

After 20 years of salty air and cliff-top wind and rain at the Battle of Britain Memorial at Capel-le-Ferne, the damaged replica will now be repaired and put back on display

at the Kent Museum at Hawkinge.

Meanwhile the donation will be a boost to an appeal to pay for a replacement replica at the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust site, now expected to arrive next month.



RAF FALCONS' head coach FS Liam Lyons leads the team as they land on Morecambe beach after performing their signature carousel and criss-cross formations to start Armed Forces Day celebrations in Lancashire. PHOTO: SGT MATTY MATTHEWS



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Sgt Robert Small

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Duo join Paris Gold rush

SERVICE HOCKEY star ASI Liam Sanford and boxing supremo Gp Capt Ray Morley will be eyeing British medals glory at the Paris Olympics this month.

It's the second time Sanford has faced the world's best as part of the UK squad, while Morley will be ringside as an International Technical Officer in the boxing events.

Chief of the Air Staff, ACM Sir Rich Knighton, who is also president of the Service Hockey Association, said: "The GB Men's Hockey Team are seen as real medal



GP CAPT MORLEY

hopefuls this year and it is an incredible achievement for Liam.

"The squad has been reduced for this year's tournament to only 15 outfield players and several big well-known names have not made the team.

"For Gp Capt Morley, officiating at the pinnacle event for amateur boxing is another huge achievement.

"I would like to wish both Ray and Liam the very best and know that we are all right behind you, and incredibly proud of both of you."

● See back page for more



GOING FOR GOLD: Service hockey star ASI Liam Sanford will be competing in his second Olympic Games



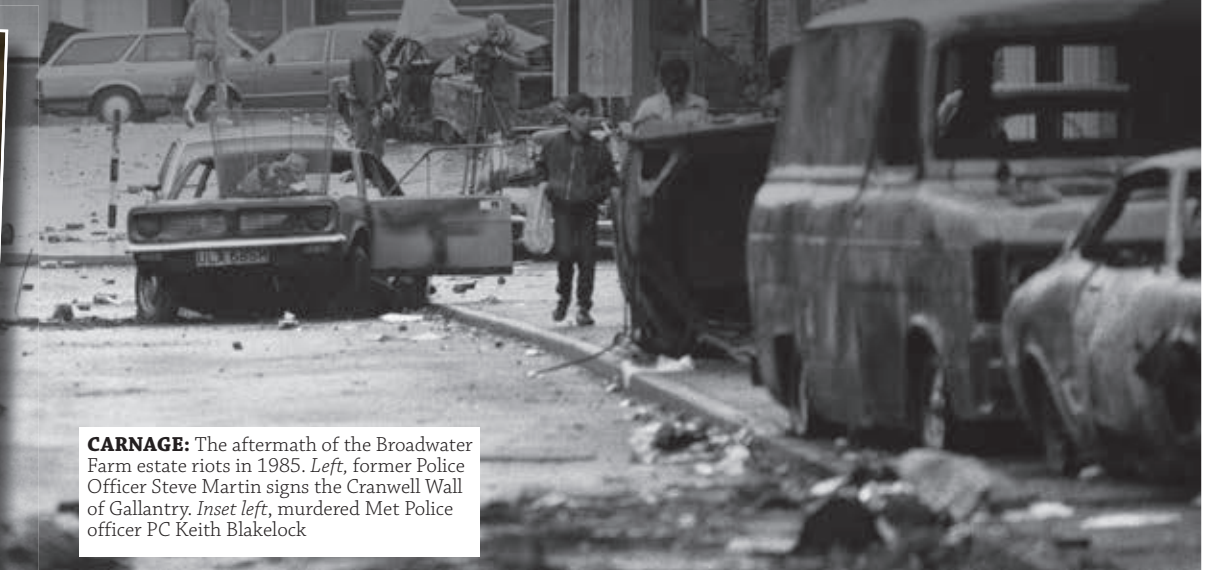
Pride of place

HUNDREDS OF military personnel joined marchers in London for the annual Pride event.

The ban on LGBT recruits serving in the British Armed Forces was finally lifted in January, 2000

Hero cop's lessons from Broadwater

Ex-PC relives horror of murderous '80s riots which led to the slaying of Met Police officer



CARNAGE: The aftermath of the Broadwater Farm estate riots in 1985. Left, former Police Officer Steve Martin signs the Cranwell Wall of Gallantry. Inset left, murdered Met Police officer PC Keith Blakelock

Simon Mander

A FORMER police officer who faced violent rioters alongside murdered colleague PC Keith Blakelock has signed on at the RAF's Wall of Honour.

Steve Martin's life was saved by a firefighter after he was confronted by a mob armed with concrete, bars, knives, machetes and petrol bombs on Tottenham's Broadwater Farm Estate.

Steve was with PC Blakelock in serial 502, led by Sgt David Pengelly, later awarded the George Medal for his courageous leadership.

Despite Pengelly's pleas for

calm, explaining they were only there to protect the firefighters, rioters attacked the police.

Wall Custodian Mark Fairhead said: "The murder of PC Keith Blakelock was one of the most infamous unsolved murder cases in the UK.

"It was a terrifying, brutally violent ordeal that saw Keith murdered as a crowd of hundreds of hooded, armed, masked rioters set about trying to hack Keith's head off and severely wounded numerous other officers.

"As Steve, with just a truncheon and round shield, collapsed from exhaustion against so many he was caught in the arms of

a firefighter, Trevor Stratford QGM, who pulled him from the fray along with the other severely injured officers."

At Cranwell's ASTC Steve read out the statement he gave at the Old Bailey during the murder trial that provided a harrowing insight into what he witnessed on October 6, 1985, and how he had felt as a 19-year-old.

Invited to speak to the latest aircrew survival training graduates about his experiences and the psychological impact of trauma, Steve said he has been troubled by PTSD from the injuries he witnessed inflicted upon his friends when there was little or no

intervention, support or treatment.

Plagued by survivor guilt, he spoke of relationship breakdowns, addiction and difficulties in rebuilding a sense of normality again and stressed the importance of reminding the world about Keith's loss and the inspiration he took from the exemplary conduct of Keith's wife Elizabeth and sons.

Mr Fairhead said: "Steve emphasised that effective teamwork and leadership in adversity saves lives and advised the graduates to ensure that when their heads hit the pillow, they ought to be able to say, 'I did my best today.'"

Steve Martin QGM joined the Police as a cadet in 1982 and went through training at Hendon in 1984. Posted to Hornsea in London, he had just started two years probation when he was called on to put his life on the line in service of his colleagues and the public.

He went on to serve 30 years as a Policeman, in CID, in the Murder Squad, and as a Home Office-approved canine specialist in search and anti-terrorist technique. But it was during an exchange program with the Australian Police that he met a critical debriefing expert who enabled him to meet the fireman who saved his life and to say thank you.

From Typhoon Top



RECREATION VEHICLE: The RV-7 being built in couple's garage as a hobby

PERFECT PAIRING: Ben and Sophie next to the tailfin bearing Sqn Ldr Mark Long's name and airborne, above and far right

Home-built aircraft wins Schneider Trophy and honours Sqn Ldr Long

TYPHOON TOP Gun Sqn Ldr Ben Polwin stormed to victory in the world's most prestigious aviation shoot-out... flying a light aircraft he built in his garage.

Air racing debutante Ben clinched the Schneider Trophy in his first season, bringing it home to the RAF for the first time in more than 30 years.

Launched in 1912 by French arms manufacturing heir and amateur aviation enthusiast Jacques Schneider, the contest was designed to push aviation design to the limit, attracting pioneering pilots from across Europe and America.

Regarded as the pinnacle of aviation excellence in the pre-war years and attracting huge crowds, contesting the Schneider trophy in exotic locations like Venice and Monaco was a matter of national honour.

Today it still stands as a supreme test of flying skill,



FRIEND: Sqn Ldr Mark Long

attracting the best privateer pilots in the world of air racing.

For combat-hardened Typhoon pilot Ben the event was a chance to test the 200hp Vans RV-7 he spent four years assembling in the garage of his Lincolnshire home.

He said: "I was not expecting to win in my first season of air racing. It was an honour to participate. To say you have taken part in the world-famous Schneider Trophy is something that I wanted to be able to say."

The 41-year-old joined the RAF in 2003. After fast jet training he flew the Tornado GR4 before becoming an instructor at Valley, operating the Hawk.

He flew F-18s with the US Navy during an exchange programme before transferring to the Typhoon, completing frontline tours in Afghanistan and Libya, and QRA missions in the UK.

His combat pedigree and experience at the helm of the UK's supersonic swing-role fighter mark him apart from the rest of the field.

But he says pushing his DIY racing machine through the tight twists and turns of the 10-mile course over Selsey Bay on the south coast requires a different skill set.

He said: "You can't compare it to the Typhoon. It's chalk and cheese and very different in every respect."

"This is pure flying. My RAF training helps of course. I am an experienced aviator and would not have had that experience without 20 years in the RAF, but this is a very different skill set."

"Time trial sticks to the Schneider tradition – it's a bit different and more technical than pursuit events."

"There are some very tight turns, you can gain a lot of time if you get it right. It comes down to decimal points – any little weave

will move you down the order."

Team Powlin includes Ben's wife Sophie – a former Canadian and Royal Air Force pilot who now flies commercial jets for British Airways – who acts as navigator during air racing events.

Ben said: "She sits alongside. I am the only one to fly the plane so far. I will teach her at some point. We had one go at it but it got a bit domestic. It is very different to anything else she has flown."

He added: "To win the Schneider Trophy at our first attempt is truly amazing."

The race was cancelled in 1930, as the shadows of war formed over Europe. It was revived in 1993 – and

By Simon Mander

Gun to air race ace



won by another RAF pilot, Mike Baker.

Ben says his ambition was to reclaim it for the Royal Air Force after a 30-year drought and to pay tribute to his friend and colleague Sqn Ldr Mark Long, who died when his vintage Spitfire crashed during a training sortie with the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight earlier this year.

After being sure he had qualified for the race, Ben and Sophie stencilled Mark's name on the tailfin of the Vans RV-7.

Ben added: "Mark was a good friend. We were co-flight

commanders on 29 Sqn and I had known him for 20 odd years.

"We talked a lot about air racing and he followed my build very closely. I flew him in the aircraft a few weeks before he died. He kept sending me messages almost daily with details about an aircraft he was hoping to buy to join me on this venture.

"It seemed fitting to put his name on the tail. I had the letters in a tube and took them down on the day before we knew we were entitled to compete."



HUGE: Schneider Trophy

After a storming start to his air racing career, Ben will be taking on the famous King's Cup event, and will be defending his Schneider title next year.

Whatever the outcome, he has a permanent reminder of his historic success – a replica of the giant Schneider Trophy, which he has stored in his garage.

"I will definitely be competing next year," he said.

"It was great to receive a replica. It's massive and weighs a ton. It won't go in the car and it's difficult to move, although I have heard CAS is quite keen to have it outside his office."



TOP GUN: Sqn Ldr Ben Polwin is more used to flying fast jets rather than light aircraft

The RAF Blenheim pilot, DFC, lothario and cricket star who hit the Nazis for six

YOU COULD say this was a book about cricket really with wartime RAF bits of derring-do thrown in for good measure. But actually, it is about another time, too far back for the younger generation, or this Baby Boomer, to fully appreciate.

It is a snapshot of life when Britain ruled the largest Empire the world had ever seen but had emerged bankrupt into a dismal postwar world of rationing and shortages.

Enter Bill Edrich, undoubtedly one of the cricket sensations of his time, and arguably still one of the all-time greats alongside partner Denis Compton, and others such as Don Bradman and Len Hutton.

I must admit I initially thought that this was a book about another England star, his cousin John, but I wasn't disappointed.

In 571 first-class matches from 1934 to 1958 Bill Edrich scored 36,985 runs, including 86 centuries, and took 479 wickets. But he was also an RAF war hero.

Volunteering for aircrew and circumventing the bureaucratic training log jam by joining a less popular (PTI) branch and re-mustering for flying duties, Edrich found himself learning to be a bomber pilot near Derby as the Battle of Britain raged overhead.

Newly commissioned at RAF Upwood, he learned to fly the twin-engined but already obsolete Blenheim, which was vulnerable to enemy fighters but one of the few aircraft Britain could throw at the Nazi Reich.

In May 1941, he joined 107 Squadron at Great Massingham in Norfolk, and the next month flew his first, albeit aborted, operational flight in a 12-strong attack on Haamstede airfield in Occupied Netherlands.

Edrich was promoted to Flt Lt after being pursued by four Messerschmitt 109s following a raid on the heavily-defended Luftwaffe base at Sylt.

Made up to Sqn Ldr, he was posted to 21 Sqn at Watton and began preparing them for the low-level bombing raid on a power station near Cologne in August 1941, for which he was awarded the DFC.

It was, says one survivor quoted in the book: "One of the most memorable raids of the war and the first deep penetration by a major force into Germany in daylight. We lost 25 men, but we gained a lot of publicity."

More importantly: "Bill had proved himself in combat. After that performance, there could be little doubt that he had temperament and capability to be a bomber pilot.



ADORED: England batsmen Denis Compton and Bill Edrich leave the pitch at The Oval Cricket Ground on August 19, 1953, after reclaiming The Ashes

"On all his missions, he always wore his England cricket sweater as a lucky mascot, but it was fearlessness as much as fortune that was the key to his survival."

Five more missions later Edrich was posted to a staff job at No 2 Group HQ, where he had more time for cricket and extra-curricular activities.

In the first biography for 30 years, award-winning writer and journalist Leo McKinstry recounts Edrich's life and extraordinary pursuits – from his cricketing success to his lesser-known days playing association football for Norwich City and Tottenham Hotspur.

As the book notes: "The dual role of professional cricketer and footballer has long disappeared from first-class English sport, wiped out by the demands of league clubs whose seasons are longer and whose

managers are more fearful about the risks of injuries to their expensively assembled staff."

And, along with another all-rounder – Lord Ian 'Beefy' Botham, who also made 11 appearances for Scunthorpe United – we are unlikely to ever see such all-round sporting excellence again.

Then there were the ladies.

Unaccompanied Ashes trips abroad provided many opportunities for dalliance, and arguably Edrich took full advantage.

It's not for me, or anyone else who has enjoyed postwar peace, to judge the personal morality of men who faced violent death daily during that conflict.

But, for what it's worth, one observer writes: "The deeper reason was Edrich's voracious appetite for amorous coupling, unbounded by restrictions of morality or logistics. His expectation of conquest became a self-reinforcing cycle, where his burgeoning confidence enhanced his appeal."

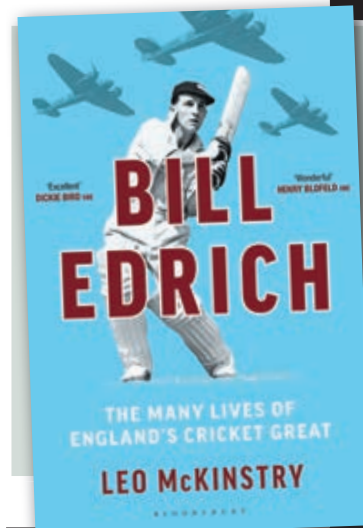
Indeed Edrich made the exploits of latter-day sporting lotharios (you know who you are) pale by comparison.

His life after the war included five marriages and clashes with the cricket hierarchy over arguments that now seem arcane, like whether a gentleman amateur or a professional should captain the England team.

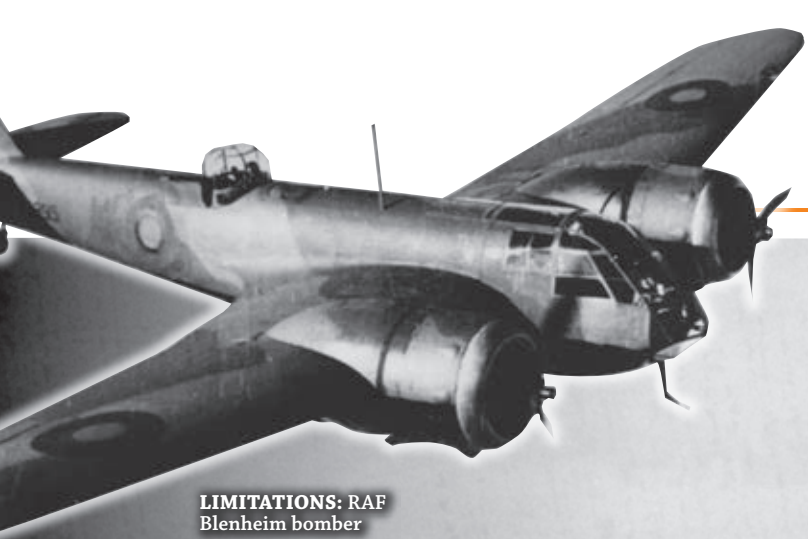
This history of cricket victories, explosive controversies, RAF heroics and a life lived to the fullest, confirms Edrich as one of cricket's greatest characters.

For those of a certain age, especially fans of the sound of leather on willow, this is a must-get, especially if the person concerned had also served in the Air Force.

● **BILL EDRICH: The Many Lives of England's Cricket Great**, by Leo McKinstry, is published on July 18 by Bloomsbury (hardback, priced £20).



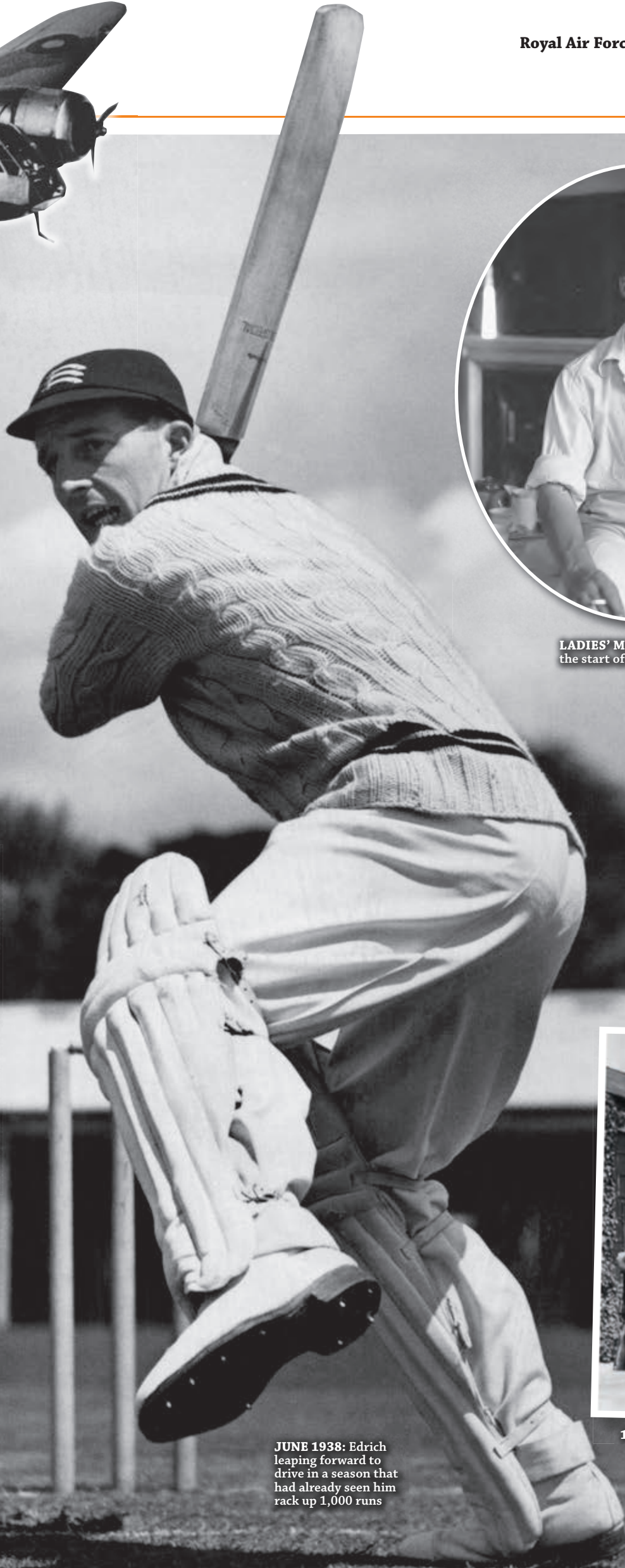
By Simon Mander



LIMITATIONS: RAF
Blenheim bomber



LADIES' MAN: Edrich in 1937, at
the start of his international career



ALL-ROUNDER: Edrich,
right, plays football for Spurs
against Reading in May 1937



1940: Edrich the RAF recruit

JUNE 1938: Edrich
leaping forward to
drive in a season that
had already seen him
rack up 1,000 runs

Win!

WE have copies of the book
to be won.

To enter, just answer this
question correctly:

*Which RAF squadron did
Bill Edrich lead on the mission
against two power stations near Cologne
that won him the DFC?*

Email your answer, marked Edrich
competition in the 'subject' section,
to: 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 July
26. Please include your name, address
and phone number.

Royal Air Force In Concert

CAST, Doncaster

Band of the Royal Air Force College

Thursday 19 September

Palace Theatre, Newark

Band of the Royal Air Force College

Friday 20 September

Playhouse, Weston Super Mare

Central Band of the Royal Air Force

Friday 27 September

West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge

Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment

Friday 4 October

Terry O'Toole Theatre, Lincoln

Royal Air Force Swing Wing

Friday 25 October

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By Tracey Allen

Feature

Fat Albert and 47 Sqn were a marriage made in heaven

...but operations around the world often brought hellish scenes for crews

THE C-130 Hercules fleet was an integral part of RAF air power for six decades, contributing to every British conflict since it was brought into service, on airlifts and airdrops often in the most remote and austere areas of the world.

Affectionately nicknamed 'Fat Albert', the instantly recognisable aircraft was first in and last out of any crisis – war, natural disaster or humanitarian emergency – faced by the British government around the world.

The American-built Lockheed C-130 Hercules first rolled off the production line in 1954. It flew dangerous missions in the Vietnam War before it went into service with air forces around the globe – as an aerial tanker, gunship, spy plane, air-sea rescuer and bomber.

In RAF colours it has seen action on every continent including Antarctica, flying life and death missions in the Falklands, Lebanon, Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan and Sudan.

When the aircraft left RAF service last year, Brize Norton-based 47 Sqn, which flew the C-130J variant on more than 20 years of continuous operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, laid up its Standard.

The Sqn became a C-130 Hercules unit in 1968, based at Fairford, moving soon after to Lyneham, then to Brize in 2011. 47 Sqn's final operation saw it return to Sudan, which it left 82 years ago and called home for the longest time, apart from Lyneham.

Now, one proud former member of 47 Sqn has written an insider's account of the legendary Herc. Starting as a loadmaster on the C-130 in 1990, Scott Bateman was selected for pilot training in 1997 and served in the RAF for 18 years. He filled three of the crew positions on the aircraft – air loadmaster, co-pilot and captain.

His book *Hercules, The story of an RAF Legend* (Penguin Michael Joseph, greenpenguin.co.uk), opens the cockpit for the story of the aircraft in peace and war, at home and abroad.

Remembering being on detachment in Basra in the early 2000s, Bateman said: "The Hercules is an amazing aircraft. And the tempo of operational flying ...means that it feels like a second home. It's so responsive that it's like an extension of your body, so much so that you can



OP KHANA CASCADE: RAF C-130s flew famine relief missions into remote areas of West Nepal in 1973



SEEN IT ALL: Bateman (left) started out as a loadmaster, centre above in Mogadishu, Somalia, 1992



make it do almost anything you want with complete confidence."

But when he was told, as a young Sgt during air loadmaster training, that he would be going to the Hercules – and not realising his dream of being a search and rescue helicopter winchman – he was far from enthusiastic.

He added: "This was my worst nightmare. Not just a lumbering support helicopter, potentially a lumbering support plane."

He was sent to join the Hercules Operational Conversion Unit.

He admitted: "I could not have felt more miserable. While the 'heroes' were going to fly the search and rescue support



WE HAVE copies of *Hercules* by Scott Bateman to win. For your chance to own one, tell us:

When did 47 Sqn move to RAF Brize Norton?

Email your answer, marked *Hercules* book competition, to: 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 July 26.

Win!

choppers, what were we going to be? The delivery guys.

"I put a brave face on it, because you had to, but I was gutted. I felt more disappointed than I'd

ever been in my young life. Little did I know that I was, in fact, joining the ranks of some of the most incredible, heroic people I would ever encounter. Still less

did I realise that I had just begun what would become a lifelong love affair with the most iconic military aircraft ever built."

Among the missions the book covers is the RAF's involvement in famine relief in civil war-stricken Ethiopia, following an October 1984 BBC News report by Michael Buerk which prompted singer Bob Geldof to create Band Aid, then stage the 1985 Live Aid fundraising concert.

47 Sqn captain Tony Evans was assigned to the task of delivering aid, setting up a detachment at Addis Ababa.

With the world watching, eager to see aid being delivered, Tony and his crew were joined on their first operation by Buerk and a BBC camera crew.

Bateman explained: "They first picked up supplies from Assab, where they'd been delivered, and then flew them to camps that had been established at Akele and Axum. Even for an experienced Hercules pilot who'd seen service in some pretty grim situation, Tony found it a lot to take in. The reality was shocking; the sheer expanse of the barren and almost lunar landscape, the sense of hopelessness and desperation in the hordes of starving people, the pitiful crying of listless and emaciated children. And along with all his crew, rather than just hearing about the threat of danger, Tony was now feeling and experiencing it."

Decades later, in September 2021, C-130Js played a key role in Britain's largest humanitarian aid operation for 70 years – rescuing 15,000 evacuees, often under fire, from Kabul airport on Operation Pitting as the Taliban took control of Afghanistan.

Bateman said: "I was hugely privileged to serve in three roles on 47 Sqn and work with and for some amazing people."

"...it's my belief that the unique chemistry between a certain extraordinary squadron and a certain extraordinary plane created a marriage made in heaven."

He added: "For at least the last 35 years the C-130 has been continuously involved in operations and this high-tempo, high-risk flying, which relies on absolute trust, forms relationships and bonds with colleagues that you will not find in any other work environment."

"Though both the C-130 and 47 Sqn have retired from RAF service, a very rich legacy remains."

Obituary

Flt Lt Bill Spence

Bomb aimer Bill took part in Dresden mission and distrusted detractors

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT Bill Spence, who has died aged 101, completed 36 operations as a Lancaster bomb aimer. Later in life he became a successful novelist, and he had 76 books published under various pseudonyms.

After joining the RAF in July 1942, Spence left for Canada where he trained as a bomb aimer.

After returning to England to complete his training on bombers, he teamed up with his pilot, Mike Wood, a Rhodesian. In August they were posted to 44 (Rhodesia) Squadron based near Lincoln.

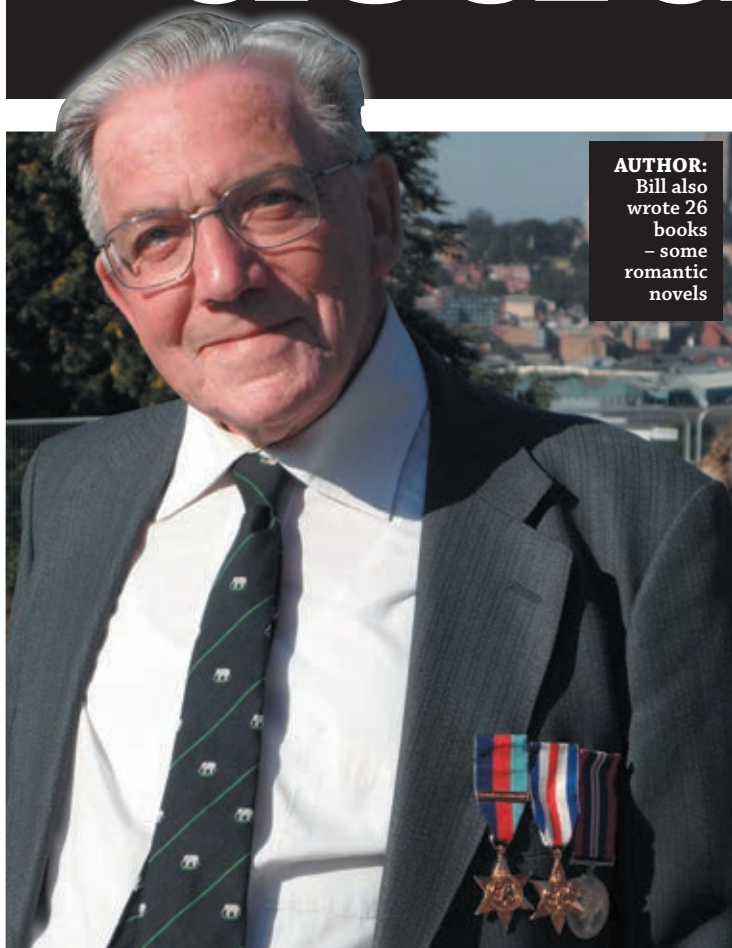
On August 29, 1944 they flew their first operation. The target was Königsberg in east Prussia and one at the extreme range for a Lancaster. Cloud cover resulted in a delay over the target of 20 minutes to allow the Pathfinder force to mark the target accurately. The force encountered heavy anti-aircraft fire, resulting in the loss of 15 Lancasters, but the raid was one of the most successful by Bomber Command.

Fog dispersal

After the attack, it was Spence's duty as bomb aimer to check that the bomb bay was clear. During his inspection he discovered that the bomber had been hit and was losing hydraulic fluid. On arrival back at base, the loss of fluid required the undercarriage to be pumped down manually. Dense fog prevented them landing at base and they were sent to nearby Fiskerton, which was one of a few airfields equipped with a fog dispersal device. This consisted of two pipelines situated along both sides of the runway through which fuel was pumped into burner jets positioned at intervals along them. The vapours were lit producing walls of flame along the length of the runway. They landed safely with minimal fuel after being in the air for over 11 hours.

His second operation was to bomb a V-2 storage site in the Pas de Calais. By mid-September, Bomber Command had returned to its strategic campaign against targets in Germany. On September 18, Spence bombed Mönchengladbach when Guy Gibson, of Dam Buster fame, was the master bomber. Gibson and his navigator were lost returning to base.

During November, Spence bombed the Mittelland and Dortmund Ems Canals.



AUTHOR:
Bill also wrote 26 books – some romantic novels

Oil targets became a high priority and Spence attacked the synthetic oil plants at Politz, Brux and Bohlen. His aircraft was one of the first to drop its bombs on Dresden on February 13, 1945. He always maintained that the city was a legitimate target and distrusted the judgement of those who did not take part in the operation.

In the closing months of the war, he flew seven operations dropping mines in the Kattegat and the approaches to the Baltic to prevent the German Navy, in particular the new generation of U-boats, from passing into the Atlantic Ocean to harass Allied shipping and convoys.

DFC

His 36th and final operation on April 4, 1945, was a daylight attack against Nordhausen. At the end of their tour, his pilot Mike Wood was awarded the DFC.

After the war, Spence

worked at Ampleforth College. He always had an ambition to write and his breakthrough came in 1958 when his first novel, *Dark Hell*, based on his wartime experiences, was published. He then turned to writing Westerns when he used the pseudonym Jim Bowden, the name of the first Canadian base where he had served.

Novels

He later adopted the pseudonym Jessica Blake to write romantic novels. He preferred to classify his stories as 'historical sagas' rather than romantic novels as he explained, "there is romance in practically every category of novel".

He went on to write 26 books, many based on his native North Yorkshire. His last Jessica Blair romantic saga was published when he was 95 and then he decided it was time to retire and use his computer to catalogue his vast book collection and to download music.

5008 just perfect for your growing pride

THE PEUGEOT car range is simple to understand. With the exception of the 208, which is ideal for young drivers and, possibly, the company executive-focused 508, Peugeots are geared proudly towards the family market.

The marque's latest seven-seat 5008 is a cracking bit of kit that is just the ticket when you've been so invested in the family creation department that a five-seat 3008 will no longer cut it. It also doubles convincingly as a small van if needed.

It's relatively affordable to buy and run too, especially if you go for the hybrid petrol found in our test car. In short, there's a lot to like in the pride's biggest Lion.

Exterior

It's a smart-looking vehicle. Sleek lines disguise the 5008's heft well and the nose looks imposing. The front bumper styling won't be for everyone but it certainly makes the car instantly recognisable.

Some may say that it looks too similar to the outgoing 3008 SUV, but look again and there's enough to give it its own identity. Funky wheels, well-thought-out contours that catch the light and Peugeot's smart signature rear end all help to give it aesthetic appeal.

Interior

It's very comfy in here. Everything is solidly built, with a premium feel. There's a nice mix of materials to enhance the ambience.

Everything, from the inserts on the dash to the chrome highlights around the centre console, have been well thought out and it looks even better in the dark. The interior is then bathed in a subtle glow from the ambient lighting. It's a lovely place to be when you're on a long run, night and day.

There's plenty of adjustment on the seats and steering wheel and electrically-adjustable seats with memory presets and a massaging function are available as an option in GT cars.

The 5008's tiny steering wheel doesn't obscure the instruments as much as it can in smaller Peugeots and the digital



VERSATILE: The 5008's seats can be folded flat when more stowage space is needed



driver display is very clear. You can set this up in multiple ways, with the option of showing your clocks or the navigation map across the entire 12.3 inch screen.

The only possible drawbacks are that the climate controls are hidden in the menu, which is a faff to operate on the move, and rear visibility isn't great. Fear not though, all versions come with a reversing camera as standard.

On The Road

The 5008 is a bulky family car, so it won't surprise you to hear that there's nothing particularly exciting about driving it. Your passengers however will be far more impressed because, as a refined people mover, it performs well. It's relaxed and smooth, a car that doesn't like to be rattled along at high speeds on winding roads, but lopes along cheerfully.

The steering is accurate and quick to respond, possibly too sharp at times for the size of car. Once you've got the feel of it however, it's a doddle to thread through the bends and there's plenty of lock when you're parking in tight spots. Body roll is fairly well damped and the 5008 glides over most speed bumps and potholes with ease.

Our hefty GT trim test car was powered by a... wait for it... 1.2 litre, 3 cylinder, petrol hybrid system. Yes, a 1.2 in something with seven seats, and yet it performed surprisingly well. 0-62mph in the hybrid is achieved in 10.4 seconds and it will reach a top end of 124mph. Combined fuel consumption is given as 45.6 – 53.3mpg and we achieved around 47mpg. It's therefore an achievable claim.

There's also a diesel version on sale which gives similar stats. The 134bhp hybrid petrol and 129bhp diesel are

both rated at 45mpg and will get you to 62mph in around 10-11 seconds.

My only gripe would be the six-speed auto gearbox, that can feel a little rough at times and certainly takes an age shifting between Drive and Reverse. You really notice this when the 5008 is manoeuvring on a hill, because the car's weight makes it roll a fair way before the gear kicks in to catch it. Otherwise, however, it's a solid, practical performer and a great way to move the clan around.

Peugeot 5008

Pros

- Nicely crafted, plush interior
- Loads of interior space
- Good fuel economy

Cons

- Slow-witted gearbox
- Laggy infotainment system
- Rear headroom could be better

Verdict

Peugeot's biggest Lion covers all the bases well. It's stylish, practical and fairly good to drive, being a much more convincing SUV than the original 5008 was as an MPV. The interior is excellent and it has enough exterior detail to make it interesting. It's both affordable to buy and cheap to run, so there's a lot to like if you need that seven-seat capability.





Squadron Leader John Peters Gulf War PoW

Tuesday 17th September 2024 at 7pm
RAF Coltishall Heritage Centre, Norwich NR10 5FB

John Peters came to the world's attention in January 1991 during the first Gulf War, when his bruised and battered face flashed onto television screens around the world. It was his disfigured image that became a potent symbol of Saddam Hussein's ruthless aggression. His dramatic and sometimes harrowing experiences reach deep into our innermost minds, showing us how we can overcome even our worst fears and nightmares. His war was not all as he expected – it became a seven-week ordeal of torture and interrogation testing John Peters to the absolute limit and bringing him close to death. By no means a doom and gloom story, his insights are powerful, passionate, emotive & challenging with an innate sense of humour.

John started his career as an RAF fast-jet pilot flying Tornado GR1. Many will remember him from the first Gulf War in 1991 as the bruised and battered POW who was paraded on Iraqi State television. Subsequently, he has written two best-selling books on his experiences; 'Tornado Down' and 'Team Tornado', and the

documentary; 'Tornado Down' was Independent Documentary of the Year and a BAFTA Award Nominee.

This experience sparked an international business speaker reputation that has spanned the last 30 years. Of note, he was the sole reader representing the British Armed Forces at the National Gulf Memorial Service, in front of Her Majesty, The Queen, presented the Sir James Martin Lecture at the Royal Aeronautical Society in the presence of Prince Philip, and has followed Mr Nelson Mandela on stage in South Africa.

In 2000, John retired from the RAF to start his own management consultancy firm. Working internationally with corporates, business schools, government and the Third Sector, Monkey Business provides business critical development, consulting and coaching through a leadership lens. John lives in the Worcestershire countryside with his wife, Helen, and dog Spartacus. His son is a City banker and daughter an Event Manager.



Come and listen to Squadron Leader John Peters share his incredible story as a Prisoner of War. An inspirational talk that you won't want to miss. Tickets are priced at £30 each and include refreshments.

To book please scan the QR code or email:
Carl Lamb - carl.lamb1988@gmail.com

HOPEFULS: RAF
Esport gamers

Duty calls for hotshots

ESPORTS

Daniel Abrahams

SERVICE ESPORTS will be targeting the newest hotshots in a bid to triumph at the Call of Duty Endowment Bowl V in America next month.

The day of gaming action will see the RAF team compete against their sister UK Services, all six US Services, the Royal Canadian Air Force and Call of Duty Influencers to win the coveted trophy, which they took for the first time in 2022.

RAF Esports chair Flt Lt Stephen Rennie, who will head up the team at the biggest international competition of



FLT LT RENNIE

the year, said: "It's a massive opportunity to highlight what we do and also to meet other Service personnel and our Allies in American and Canada.

"It will help with joint

operations, and it really is an amazing opportunity for those selected. We are looking to win this year."

The competition will feature two hours of play time across four matches in a battle royale;

20 teams begin at the same time, with a virtual drop and points totted up for the most kills deciding the outcome.

The event also raises awareness of the Call of Duty Endowment Charity, which finds jobs for veterans and also supports RBL and Walking with the Wounded.

Rennie added: "We usually finish in the top three but last year we dropped to fourth, a real dip, and this year we are aiming to win or at least place.

"We expected Esports to be popular but I am surprised at how much interest there has been. It's nice seeing it growing at such a rapid rate.

"We currently have four disciplines – Call of Duty, Rocket

League, League of Legends and Formula One – and game leads who work closely with association members in each."

Hotshots selected at trials at RAF Benson this month will be given expert tuition at a Tri-Service coaching event facilitated by the British Esports Federation at The Place in Sunderland on August 19-25.

Rennie will also be heading to the US as part of a tri-lateral steering group to study how video game software can be used in training by the wider military.

● Follow RAF Esports on Twitch: [twitch.tv/RAFesports](https://www.twitch.tv/RAFesports), on Facebook: @RoyalAirForceEsports and on X: @RAF_Esports.



COLLEGIATE GAMES



All pulling together

THE RAF will be looking for revenge at this year's Inter Collegiate Games at Cranwell after losing to the Army last year at the annual Cadet extravaganza.

Forty personnel will take part in

the event, which is switched between the RAF military school, the Army's Sandhurst and Britannia Royal Navy College Dartmouth.

Cadets take part in seven activities

including relay, football, tug of war, circuits, volleyball and swimming before a Superstars-style event to close things out.

Flt Lt Sam Burgess, OIC for the games on July 13, said: "It is a great event, going since the

1950s, and gives the cadets the opportunity to build relationships for the future."

Similar events are also held with the French Air Force Training Academy and the Royal Netherlands Academy.



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)

Under The Disc

A newly formed group led by RAF Odiham to unite serving and ex-serving personnel who have worked closely with the Chinook Force.

Under The Disc** aims to **bring together current and ex-serving members** of the Armed Forces who are working or have previously worked closely with the Chinook Force. The aim is to **reconnect, socialise, and most importantly remain part of the Chinook family!

For its inaugural event, members will be invited to RAF Odiham for a coffee morning hosted by the Chinook Force Commander, Group Captain Matt Roberts alongside attendance from SSAFA, RAFA and RAF Benevolent Fund. The event will take place on **Tuesday 10 September 2024** in 18(B) Squadron's hangar where food and drink will be provided. Further details will be communicated to members in due course.



To become a member, please send your name, email address and details of your affiliation with the Chinook Force to Squadron Leader Adam Calvesbert.

Contact email: adam.calvesbert362@mod.gov.uk



SUPPORTED BY



**Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund**

Under The Disc is based at RAF Odiham, Hampshire. RAF Odiham is the home of the UK Chinook Force, operating three Chinook squadrons, 18(B) Sqn, 27 Sqn and 7 Sqn.

28 Sqn is a training squadron based at RAF Benson.

Mike and Sandra win big on clay at 104th tennis championships

TENNIS

AFTER 104 years the Service's tennis championships still provided non-stop action with double victors AS1 Mike Greedy and Flt Lt Sandra Butcher taking the blue riband events.

Greedy stormed to the men's singles title with a 6-0, 7-6 victory over AS1 Javial Ma before taking the double's title with FS Martyn Ledbury, while Butcher beat Flt Lt Rachael Kidner 6-1, 6-3 to the women's crown, before joining forces with Kidner to triumph in the women's doubles.

Dominant

A bumper crowd of 70 personnel watched the action at Halton Village Tennis Club on its clay courts and it was Greedy who took centre stage in the men's competition, blasting his way through the opening set of the final with a dominant forehand to take it 6-0.

However Ma, also known for his powerful forehand, mounted a fierce comeback in the second set. Greedy, pushed to his limits, took it 7-6 for victory.

Greedy and Ledbury used their guile to win through to face Flt Lt Tom Elwick and Sgt Chris Gregg in the doubles final. Despite a valiant effort, Elwick and Gregg were not able to match the formidable pair, who triumphed 6-4, 6-2.

Thrilling matches through the women's tournament culminated in an exciting singles final between Butcher and Kidner.

Butcher carved out a decisive



DOUBLES VICTORS: AS1 Mike Greedy (left) and Flt Sgt Martyn Ledbury

Greedy for silverware

victory, showcasing her superior technique and strategy to win 6-1, 6-3.

The doubles final in the ladies' category was equally compelling. Butcher then teamed up with her singles foe Kidner to face Flt Lt Samantha Mouldsdaile and Fg Off Sophia Anderson.

Butcher and Kidner used well-coordinated plays and strategic

shots to emerge victorious, 6-3, 7-5.

Other results at the Championships included:

- Men's Novice Winner: AS1 James Yeomen
- Men's Novice Doubles Winners: AS1 Robert Keen and AS1 James Yeoman
- Ladies' Novice Singles Winner – Sqn Ldr Laura Macdonald
- Men's 40+ Singles Winner: FS



GREEDY: Also took singles title

Luke James

- Men's 40+ Doubles Winners: Wg Cdr Rick Longworth and FS Martyn Ledbury
- Ladies' 40+ Doubles Winners:

Wg Cdr Helen Stewart and Cpl Rhae Honey

- Mixed Double Winners: Fg Off Sophia Anderson and Sgt Kevin Watson.

EQUESTRIAN

The magnificent



Meikle leads dressage title haul

Daniel Abrahams

A TEAM of 16 RAF riders brought home a magnificent seven titles from the UKAF Dressage Championships in Melton Mowbray, with top honours for Flt Lt Mandy Meikle.

The event, with 37 riders on show, featured the emergency services for the first time.

Meikle, riding Faeside Sir Derry, recorded 12.942 points, with Army rider LCpl Lauren Sweetland, riding Rolanda, runner-up with 9.481 points.

Meikle also had the highest single score over the weekend, with 81.774 points.

Having seen the intro class go to the Army, Sqn Ldr Elisabeth Hale, riding Ballynash Merry Freddie, took first in the Prelim

with 4.591 points, with 2Lt Brian Leung (Army), riding Jay, second with 3.55 points.

Meikle took the Novice title with 12.942 points, over Sweetland with 9.481, she also stormed to the Elementary discipline title with 7.707 points, with the Army's Maj Rebecca Darke, riding Edge of Night, runner-up with 2.384 points and PC Kelly Gladstone, riding Milwaukee Jazz, third on 2.384.

The Medium title went the way of the light blues as AS1 Holly Brown, on Nipna King's Ransom, won with 3.231 points, with FS Mel Day, riding Dolderwydd Maisie, making it a RAF one-two with 0.292 points.

UKAFDC Director Sgt Lauren Sing (RAF) said: "The trophy has moved between RAF and Army riders over the years and proudly

remains with the winner for the next year.

"With so many riders across the levels this year the scoring was based on the averages in each class. With the help of a spreadsheet to do the sums, riders were rewarded with points for how far their score was above the average for that class. The average from both tests was then taken, rewarding consistency over the weekend. This meant that we had to wait for the final few scores to come in before we could confirm the Champion for 2024.

"The Champion, Flt Lt Mandy Meikle, was awarded the trophy from Amanda Watson of The Equestrian Index, to whom we are grateful for their continued support. I am incredibly proud of the UKAFDC and cannot wait for next year."

CHAMPION: Flt Lt Mandy Meikle achieved highest single score of the weekend



Sport

SKATEBOARDING

Hard day's night for skate stars

THE SERVICE'S board stars will be testing their endurance at Ultraskate24 in Betteshanger Country Park, Kent.

The RAF team of four skateboarders, consisting of Sqn Ldr Barney Polden, Chf Tech Ian Savage, and Cpls Dom Brown and Tom Spurling, will attend the International Distance Skateboarding Association endorsed event on July 13-14.

Savage said: "The event - the second of its kind to be run in the UK - offers riders and teams from around the world the opportunity to push themselves to their physical limits."

The Aviators have been training in preparation for the event, which takes the form of a relay and will see all four taking it in turns to carry a timing chip around the 1.3-mile track for the 24-hour period.

Savage added: "The goal is to cover as many miles as possible during the 24 hours. There is also a team of Army skateboarders taking part, so there will undoubtedly be some friendly competition."

The event will also include an individual category. A similar race in Florida recently saw the winner cover 302 miles.

The RAF team will be fundraising for youth work charity TRAIN, a local group that Cpl Brown works with.



MOTORSPORTS

It's a hard Knock life



RAIN PAIN: Scottish downpours made for difficult conditions
PHOTOS: FLAT OUT PHOTOGRAPHY, MOLLY McGRANAGHAN

Daniel Abrahams

ROUNDS TWO and three of the British Sidecar Championship were a mend it and make do affair for RAF pairing Cpls Mark Middleton and Rob Atkinson.

Having lost Middleton to continued work duties, the team were relying on loan rider Josh Smith from team SSR, with Atkinson still getting used to his new 600cc Yamaha ARS.

He rode the bike for only the third time at Donington Park in the Midlands in round two, before heading to Scotland's Knockhill circuit for round three.

The different set-up was hampered further with Smith, who had raced with the RAF team at Pembrey in April, missing free practice to sit a university exam.

Atkinson said: "With practice missed, we had no great expectations and having

completed just eight laps we felt vibrations from the new back tyre."

The pair ended up 15th in a field of 18 in qualifying at Donington before placing 10th in race one.

Atkinson said: "We showed good progression. 20 laps around the Donington GP circuit is a graft at the best of times, let alone on an unfamiliar bike with a top class sidecar field."

The pair were 11th in race two.

Torrential rain greeted the team after a 20-hour drive to Fife from Brize Norton, with qualifying and practice at Knockhill also suffering from the weather.

Atkinson said: "Practice got under way and having never rode the new F1 bike in the rain before, our mission was to find out how it behaved."

Qualifying later over the 1.2-mile circuit in torrential rain saw them produce

a fabulous top-10 time of 1.05.4, four seconds off pole.

A delayed race start, with the weather still torrential, saw the first nine bikes skidding into the infamous turn one, with the RAF team wisely dropping back into 10th place. As the race went on there was an incident at the last corner on lap seven, with another rider ejecting a passenger and sliding into the gravel trap unhurt.

Atkinson and Smith dodged their way through to end in ninth (fourth in class), following a red flag due to a bike trapped in the gravel.

A battle to avoid spinning off cost the pairing valuable time and places in race two, before they used another red flag to their advantage, coming back on 'wets' for a sixth-place finish.

● Follow the team on Instagram @ RAFSidecarTeam

WEIGHTLIFTING

It's silver Cutler-y for Masters Mike

A SILVER MEDAL European Masters championships debut saw weightlifter Cpl Michael Cutler announce his arrival in style.

Cutler, accompanied to Norway by his coach Sgt Leighton James, started strong in the snatch category, successfully lifting 123kg, 129kg, followed by an impressive 134kg. The last lift was the biggest snatch in his group and ranked as the fourth highest of the entire competition.

In the clean and jerk segment, he continued to demonstrate his prowess, successfully lifting 153kg and then 157kg. However, his gold medal hopes were shattered after a failed lift. Looking to complete the jerk

at 162kg and after a successful clean, which would have given him a 3kg lead over his closest competitor, he could not complete the lift.

Despite the setback, the military man secured silver with a total lift of 291kg, just 2kg shy of gold.

Cutler, who will now represent the RAF at the British Championships this month and Great Britain at the World Championships in September, said: "For my first foray into international competition, I needed to undertake a 20-hour journey to Norway, but it was a great chance to showcase my potential against some of the top weightlifters from across Europe."



STRONGMAN: Cutler on his way to snatching silver

CRICKET

Getty XI draw

"SUMMER FEELS like it has officially started," said UKAF men's captain Flt Lt Adam Fisher after a draw at Wormsley Cricket Ground against Sir Paul Getty's XI.

The idyllic venue in Stokenchurch, Buckinghamshire, saw Fisher's side play a timed format of two hours before lunch followed by another two hours before tea and 20 overs after 5.30pm.

UKAF opened the batting, going on to score 289-6 after 54 overs, with L/Cpl Liam Fletcher, on 100, carrying his bat until the final delivery of the innings and Cpl Tom Shorthouse producing a quickfire 66, setting up the team.

UKAF took four wickets but could not stop the match ending in a draw on a flat pitch which made taking wickets difficult.

● Follow UKAF cricket on Instagram @ukafsport.

RUGBY UNION

UKAF too hot to handle for North of England XV

Daniel Abrahams

ON A try-tastic afternoon the UKAF rugby union men's team ran riot as they won the annual Military versus Cancer charity game 90-15 against a North of England Select XV.

The military side were red-hot from the first whistle at a sun-drenched Newcastle Falcons' Kingston Park ground with open play the order of the day from both sides to entertain a bumper crowd of 2,300.

Forwards coach FS Justin Coleman said: "After a good couple of days training at RAF Leeming it was pleasing to see the guys gel so quickly with a lot of new faces to the UKAF squad and youngsters who had impressed during the Inter-Services.

"The set pieces came together quickly and functioned really well and with a lot of front-foot ball it was great to release the pace of the back line for this high-scoring game.

"The offloading and support play was outstanding, with the bench and rotations adding real impact to keep the scoreline ticking over."

Coleman was joined by physio Flt Lt Faye Harrison and team manager Fg Off Aidan Duffy, while Flt Lt Dave

UKAF	90
North of England Select XV	15

Manning donned the captain's armband.

The Services side burst into a 17-0 lead before the hosts replied – as the military men combined solid play at the back, punishing any loose balls from NoE with quick passing moves and a powerful ruck.

Pitch-length tries were also on show throughout the game, with RAF star Cpl Ryan Crowley showing a quicksilver pair of heels to make the score 71-15, collecting a pass on his 22-metre line he was uncatchable, touching down between the posts.

Speaking after the game, Manning said: "It was a fantastic result for us and it was great to show the spectators what the pinnacle of military rugby is all about.

"There was some outstanding running rugby, all underpinned by hard work in defence, allowing us to build an early lead. The guys continued to play at a really high level throughout the match, enabling us to score 14



MERCURIAL: RAF star Cpl Ryan Crowley thrilled with a try from his own 22 and was a handful for North of England defenders all afternoon. Inset left, Captain Flt Lt Dave Manning lifts the winners' trophy

PHOTOS: CRAIG WATSON, ALLIGINUK

tries and achieve dominance on the scoreboard.

"We've had a brilliant week together as a team and we put a real emphasis on enjoying each other's company and the type of rugby we want to play. I think it was pretty

evident that we achieved that out on the field today.

"It was great to be able to bring UKAF rugby to the Northeast and, importantly, raise money and awareness for charity."

● **Military versus Cancer works**

to alleviate the effects of cancer on serving personnel and their families. It helps fund nursing care, home adaptations, special trips and respite breaks and offers various forms of support for sufferers and loved ones.



AS1 Fahey puts the boot in

A COMFORTABLE 38-5 win over a North of England Select XV proved to be a perfect Military versus Cancer debut for UKAF's women rugby union stars.

The six-try romp was backed up by eight points from the boot of RAF kicker AS1 Daisy Fahey (left) and was a great return to the UKAF colours for the team as quick passing and a superb play out wide saw them burst into a seven-point lead.

Speaking to RAF News after the opening clash of the day, Cpl Kat Robinson said: "At the beginning it took us a while to get going, but once we did it was great to see.

"Watching the way we grew into the game was so pleasing. We don't get together very often, so to see the team build together during the week before the clash was another highlight for me. It was great to see some of the players

UKAF Women	38
North of England Select XV	5

I am normally against doing their thing on my side. I was grateful they were watching some of the full-blooded tackles going in.

"This is the first of the Military versus Cancer games we have been invited to as a team, outside of Remembrance games, so it is really important.

It is a great opportunity to build the women's game and get women's rugby out there, especially in front of a good crowd, like today."

Never behind from their first try, UKAF produced an all-round game with powerful mauls and precision attacks to lead 14-5 at the break and cruise through the second half to victory.



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



Rain's a pain for sidecar riders

See page 26

OLYMPICS

It's Game on for Aviators

RAF Hockey sensation and boxing supremo make the grade for Paris

Daniel Abrahams

RAF, ENGLAND and GB hockey star AS1 Liam Sanford's GB selection for the upcoming Paris summer Olympics is the major milestone during a season of success.

Sanford kicked off his rich vein of form with a 3-1 win in the English Hockey Championship final with his team Old Georgians over Surbiton in April before helping GB to an unbeaten Pro League run of five wins and a draw, with a 3-0 victory over Ireland at Lee Valley stadium.

He was awarded the first ever RAF Cap after the win by RAF hockey chair Wg Cdr Sharon Eveleigh-Hall.

The Aviator, who is known for his solid defensive displays, is no stranger to summer Olympics having helped GB to fifth at the Tokyo Games in 2020.

Speaking from the GB training camp, he said: "I am totally buzzing and incredibly proud to be selected to represent GB in what will be my second Olympics, as always as a proud member of the RAF and the RAF hockey family."

"I am incredibly grateful for the support I have received from the Royal Air Force, RAF Hockey, the RAF Sports Board and the Elite Athlete Scheme."

"I am also incredibly proud to be the first recipient of an RAF Hockey Cap."

Sanford and his British teammates will



INTERNATIONAL DUTY: AS1 Liam Sanford (left) plays for GB, against Argentina

PHOTO: WSP

be in Pool A of the hockey tournament, where they will kick off the competition with a match against Spain on July 27 at 9am GMT at the Yves-du-Manoir Stadium Paris, home of the French Hockey Federation, before facing South Africa on July 28 at 7.15pm.

They will then go up against Australia

on July 29 at 4pm before playing Holland on July 30 at 11.45am, before facing the hosts on August 1 at the same time.

GB close out their pool games with a match against Germany at 7.15pm on August 2 before the knock out stages begin.

● Follow GB Hockey at: greatbritainhockey.co.uk.

It's official: Gp Capt in Olympics debut



EXPERIENCED OFFICIAL:
Gp Capt Ray Morley refs a bout

FOR GP Capt Ray Morley selection as boxing International Technical Officer for the Paris summer Olympics comes after a lifetime devoted to the hardest game.

On his selection Morley, who was a referee and judge at the Delhi Commonwealth Games in 2010, said: "I think my involvement in Paris reflects well on RAF boxing. The sport consumes you and takes up a lot of your time, well most of my time outside my work, and the days in Paris will be long ones – they have been so far in all the qualifying and selection events I have been present at and Paris will be the same, normally from 6am to 11pm, it is really hardcore."

"Yes, it is exciting, but it's a heavy burden. I am passionate about boxing, as are all those with me at these Games, and that drives us on."

The sport at the Games will be run by the Paris Boxing Unit.

Morley added: "When I was a referee there

were three judges and one referee, now the sport has grown to be the safest and cleanest it has ever been."

"This whole process began in Poland last year and has seen us cover qualifying events in Italy and Thailand."

He was also present at the Paris Games test event at Roland Garros last July, where the later stages of the boxing will be.

Morley held the under-19 middleweight belt from 1981-82 and fought at Combined Service level. He has refereed some of Britain's brightest talents, including current IBF light heavyweight champion Ben Whittaker and two-time former unified world heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua.

The Gp Capt's Olympics will officially begin with the women's 54kg preliminary rounds at the North Paris Arena from July 27.

● See Instagram: @RAFBBoxing.

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CAS congratulates Games pair: see p13

R'n'R

Win!



Win hit time
travel series
on DVD or
Blu-ray ● p8

Summer nights – Grease is the word

● See
pages
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Announcements
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Film Review

Kinds of Kindness (18)

In cinemas now

Let's be kind: some people will love this

Dark trilogy won't be for all

THREE SEPARATE stories form the anthology *Kinds of Kindness*, dealing with subjects of control, power and trust, and how they can be manipulated to gruesome and violent effect.

It's only fitting that acclaimed surrealist Yorgos Lanthimos' latest film (made during the post-production of his hit *Poor Things*) should have this title and explore the levels of cruelty

that are carried out by humans on themselves, others and even animals.

The first story centres on successful businessman Robert Fletcher (Jesse Plemons) whose every decision is predetermined by his boss (Willem Dafoe), from breakfast to whether or not he should have kids. Pushed to the edge of what he will sacrifice, he attempts to take control of his life, finding that independence might

not be as attractive as it seems. Emma Stone appears briefly as a distraction to existentially tormented Robert.

In the second tale, Plemons reappears as a cop whose wife, Stone, has mysteriously returned after being presumed lost at sea. Convinced that she is an imposter, he subjects her to a series of cruel and disturbing tests, driven by paranoid and mistrust.

The final story features Plemons and Stone as members of a cult, led by Dafoe and Hong Chau, who are on a quest to find a person with the ability to resurrect the dead.

At almost three hours, the film's slow pacing is intentional, allowing each story to gradually escalate in intensity and madness. By the final story you become almost numb to the shock and expect

the insanity, which sometimes has a great comic effect, but can otherwise leave you bored and wanting.

Though his longest, *Kinds of Kindness* is Lanthimos' most stripped back: fewer bells and whistles and instead the cold, dark humour of his early work. A testing film for a certain palate.

Review by Sam Cooney
3 roundels out of 5



THREE'S A CROWD:
Margaret Qualle,
Jesse Plemons and
Willem Dafoe



Film Review

Hounds (15)

In cinemas and on Curzon Home Cinema now



REVENGE MISSION:
Dib and his
son Issam

Gritty Moroccan caper's got bite

AFATHER, perpetually down on his luck, ropes his son into a job that will spiral into chaos in this tense Moroccan crime thriller.

Hounds opens appropriately, but nonetheless upsettingly, at the end of a dog fight in which Dib (Abdellatif Lebkiri) sits collapsed by his bloodied and lifeless canine. Believing that the victor and his crew have cheated, it sparks a desire for vengeance in which no one is without fault – there are no 'good' people.

Jailbird Hassan (Abdellatif Masstouri) is eager to make money however he can and so takes Dib up on his offer to kidnap one of the crew, taking along his more streetwise and cautious son Issam (Ayoub Elaid). But when the rental car for the job is delivered and is coloured red, apparently a bad omen, things are not destined to be that easy. There is a knowing black-humour that accompanies the grimmer turns as the

assignment becomes more involved.

Set in the darkly-lit underbelly of Casablanca, a grittiness envelopes our men on a mission as they become more entangled: each situation hairier than the last, each hurdle that much higher. Hassan and his son will have to avoid the police, the rival crew and any potential onlookers as they scramble to fix their predicament, all of this whilst plagued by superstition.

Over the course of this one crazy night it will become clear that the central duo are the titular hounds, the underlings employed for the dirty work.

The impressive cast are made up of non-actors, giving an authenticity that is helped by the documentary shooting style.

Hounds is a simple, lean and suspenseful debut film from writer-director Kamal Lazraq.

Review by Sam Cooney
Four roundels out of five



Music

Van Morrison

New Arrangements And Duets

Van teams up with Joss & Nelson for duets album

VAN MORRISON has announced the release, on September 27, of *New Arrangements And Duets*. The album's first single, *Choppin' Wood*, is out now.

The album represents a small percentage of the huge amount of unreleased material Morrison is hoping to roll out in the near future, rather than letting it gather dust in some archive, said a spokesperson.

The big band tracks were recorded in 2014 and the duets, recorded across 2018 and 2019, highlight an array of leading vocalists in the shape of Kurt Elling, Curtis Stigers, Joss Stone and Willie Nelson.

The Willie Nelson duets – *What's Wrong With This Picture* and *Steal My Heart Away* – also showcase the guitar talents of Lukas Nelson of Promise Of The Real. *Choppin' Wood* provides a taste of what to expect, with Morrison's inimitable vocals leading a rousing big band performance. It's also a song that pays tribute to his late father, with its references to Belfast, the Harland & Wolff shipyard and his father's admiration for jazz greats such as Sidney Bechet, Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton. The original version of the song featured on Van's 2002 album *Down The Road*.

New Arrangements And Duets will be released on black double-vinyl, orange double-vinyl, CD and digital formats.

● **Go to:** vanmorrison.com for more details.



MORRISON: Large catalogue of unreleased material

R'n'R



Music

Alison Moyet
Key

The songs *Key* to forty years of success for Alison Moyet

IT'S BEEN 40 years since Alison Moyet stepped out from Yazoo and fired up a solo career with her No 1 debut album *Alf* and Top 10 hits *Love Resurrection* and *All Cried Out*. That unmistakable voice has taken her on quite a journey since, with career highlights including two No 1 albums, six Top 10 singles, two BRIT Awards and a Grammy nomination.

Following her graduation from Brighton University in 2023 with a first-class degree in Fine Art Printmaking, she has combined art and music, creating the album art herself to celebrate her 40th year as a solo artist with the release of *Key* on October 4 – a collection of 16 reworked singles, fan favourites and deep cuts, as well as two new songs.

Moyet (inset right) said: "I wanted to take the opportunity to look at the trajectory of the past four decades and explore songs that, in their original form, were never fully realised or have had their relevance to me altered by time."

The songs that feature on *Key* were all reimagined alongside her producer, arranger and musical director Sean McGhee. Some songs remain closer to the originals; *All Cried Out* and *Love Resurrection* are refreshed rather than reinvented. And others are cast in a new light, such as



McGhee's arrangements of the Guy Sigsworth track *Filigree*, co-written with Moyet.

The new album has allowed her to revisit some of the songwriting highlights of her career including tracks such as *Can't Say It Like I Mean It* and *This House*.

"*Key* distils 40 years of music-making, presenting a cohesive overview of a long and dazzling journey," Moyet said. "I hope this collection will be the key to those unopened doors. Let yourself in."

And she's announced a long-awaited world tour in 2025 – her first full headline tour since 2017, with dates in the UK, Ireland and Europe in February, March and April. Dates in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are to be announced.

She added: "Live work really matters to me. I can't dial in a performance. I love the physical feeling that singing gives me. It's totally primal and euphoric. On stage I remember how to connect with myself."

Go to: alisonmoyetmusic.com for more information.



Theatre

Grease
UK tour

CHOREOGRAPHED BY Dame Arlene Phillips (*Strictly Come Dancing*, *Hot Gossip*), the iconic musical *Grease* is on a UK tour this summer and into the autumn.

Marley Fenton plays Danny and Hope Dawe is Sandy in the roles made famous by John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John in the classic 1978 film adaptation.

After a whirlwind summer romance, leather-clad greaser Danny and girl-next-door Sandy are unexpectedly reunited when she transfers to Rydell High for senior year. But can they survive the trials and tribulations of teenage life and find true love once more?

Bursting with hits, including, *Summer Nights*, *Greased Lightnin'*, *Hopelessly Devoted To You* and *You're the One That I Want*, this new version of the show, directed by Nikolai Foster, is brought to life by a fresh young cast.

Tour dates include Birmingham Alexandra (July 15-20), Milton Keynes Theatre (August 5-10), Wales Millennium Centre Cardiff (September 2-7), Oxford's New Theatre (September 24-28) and the Swan Theatre, High Wycombe (October 21-26). The tour finishes at the Lyceum, Sheffield on November 16.

Foster said: "It has all the moments you love from the film and the original but with some extra grit, guts, gravitas and spice. Audiences are in for an electrifying night of explosive choreography and incredible songs as they witness the raw talent of the greatest young performers working on stage today."

Written by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey, *Grease* opened in Chicago in 1971 and played Broadway the following year, where it was nominated for seven Tony awards. It ran for eight years and featured such little-known (at the time) performers as Patrick Swayze, Travolta and Richard Gere.

In all versions of the 1950s-set musical, Danny and Sandy enjoy a summer fling but he's too cool to continue the romance when she turns up at the same school. It's a narrative Nikolai believes resonates with everyone.

He explained: "We've all been teenagers and experienced the elation of first love and the sense of heartbreak when the person you think you're in love with doesn't feel the same way. We've all experienced the highs and lows of school life. *Grease* is about a group of teenagers going through the messy years of adolescence and as such it's something we can all relate to."



Grease gains modern re

"The film was shot in sunny LA and is very much a candy floss vision of high school life," Foster added. "Our *Grease* sets the show in its original Chicago location, where it's much closer to real life and not quite as sunny."

Fenton said: "It's such an iconic show and such an iconic love story, so for us it's about paying homage to a classic."

He agreed that the stage version is grittier than people might expect. "You've got all that great music but there are serious themes going on too. There are tensions within the Pink Ladies and the Burger Palace Boys (renamed the T-Birds for the film) but it's also a celebration of friendship, just as the song *We Go Together* proves. And ultimately it's so much fun and such a feel-good show."

Hope concurred: "By the end everyone is on their feet for the megamix and they go away humming all those brilliant songs."

Fenton is a graduate of the Arts Educational School and has appeared in West End musicals.

He said: "When I was growing



ON A HIGH: The 'teenagers' from Rydell

up, I'd always kind of put myself in the position of playing either the black character or the character that is the best friend. But when I went through drama school training, I realised 'Why can't I be a Danny Zuko? Why

Edited by Tracey Allen



YOUNG LOVE: Danny and Sandy (Marley Fenton and Hope Dawe) head a cast including Joe Gash, inset above

ins grit in newworking



PHOTOS: MARC BRENNER

can't I be the lead who has always been seen as a white person when there's nothing in the story to say that they have to be?" So this is such a cool moment for me."

Dawe trained at Mountview

Academy of Theatre Arts and *Grease* marks her professional debut.

She said: "I feel very lucky and grateful to be surrounded by so many people that I'm learning a lot from. It's amazing."

Phillips said of the show: "It's like seeing the film come to life, only edgier."

The original stage version was based on a real high school (the William Howard Taft School in Chicago) that Jacobs himself attended and many of the characters were inspired by his fellow pupils.

Phillips added: "A lot of people don't know that this is a real story about real-life people. Only the names have been changed."

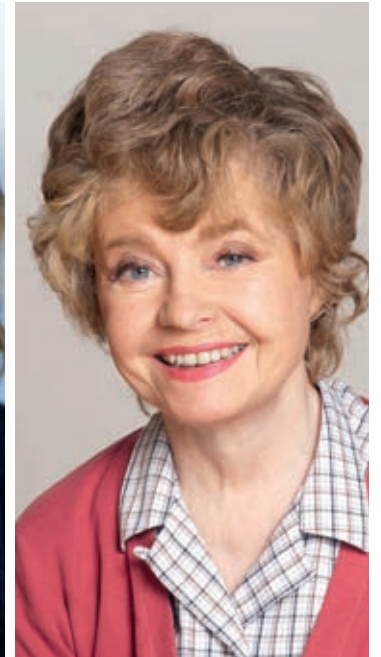
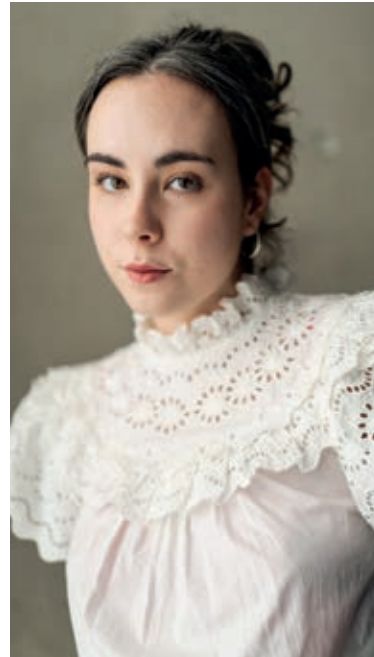
She paid tribute to the young cast: "They all have to be brilliant and to be triple threats. They have to sing and dance and act, and they bring so much energy to it. It feels like a giant party because everyone in the company is so excited to be doing this show."

● **Go to:** greasemusical.co.uk for tour details.



Theatre Queen

Edinburgh Fringe Festival



QUEENS: (From left) Grace Darling and Sara Crowe perform, and original star Prunella Scales provides her voice

Queen Victoria in her own words could be a prequel to *The Crown*

QUEEN - A play written entirely in Queen Victoria's own words - taken from her letters and journals - will play the Assembly Rooms at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, from August 1-25. There will be two previews at the Tabard Theatre in London on July 28.

Starring Sara Crowe, Grace Darling and the voice of Prunella Scales, and directed by Denise Silvey, *Queen* is a revival of Katrina Hendrey's acclaimed one-woman show *An Evening With Queen Victoria*, which Scales performed for 28 years, starting at the Old Vic in 1980.

Now adapted and retitled by writer Julian Machin, this production incorporates a recently-made

voiceover of Scales as the elderly monarch whose recorded words are interlaced into the action.

Queen also features music (by the late Richard Burnett) recorded by Michael Dussek on an 1822 grand piano by Muzio Clementi.

Machin said: "Following the death of Elizabeth II, who based her reign on Victoria's, the play has come into its own. It's so insightful, because it's all in her own words and acts like a prism through which the entire modern monarchy can be seen."

Silvey said: "It really is like a prequel to *The Crown*."

● **Go to:** assemblyfestival.com and tabard.org.uk for ticket details.



Theatre The Duchess

Trafalgar Theatre

RETURNING TO the stage for the first time in more than a decade, Jodie Whittaker (*Doctor Who*, *Broadchurch*) takes on the role of a lifetime in Zinnie Harris' acclaimed contemporary production of *The Duchess*.

This adaptation of John Webster's classic *The Duchess of Malfi* opens for a strictly limited 11-week West End season at the Trafalgar Theatre from October 5 to December 20.

Whittaker said: "I'm beyond delighted to return to the stage after over a decade, and even more so to lead Zinnie Harris's incredibly powerful adaptation of John Webster's harrowing drama."

"Zinnie has so brilliantly propelled *The Duchess of Malfi* into contemporary culture, which is what originally drew me to the piece. Being able to portray the Duchess' tragic and captivating



Jodie in theatre return

story on stage every night is a true honour."

Recently widowed and in search of a new lease of life, the Duchess (Whittaker) defies her family's wishes by remarrying beneath her class. However, when her brothers, driven by insurmountable greed and rage, discover her second marriage

they unleash a series of cruel and devastating punishments against her that repress her power. But will their vicious atrocities come back to haunt them?

Further casting for this contemporary production will be announced soon.

● **Go to:** TheDuchessPlay.com for further details.



Your Announcements

You can email photos for announcements on this page to:
tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk

Seeking

I have been trying to locate Flt Lt AFW Cartledge SEO RAF Bahrain who was based at RAF Marham in 1960/61. Any information please contact: 80andrews90@gmail.com.

I am currently searching for Ivan Spring, a South African Airman who was based at RAF Marham in the 1950s for my mum, maiden name Susan Clarke (now Susan Bennett) who has dementia. She recalls Ivan fondly and has photos of when she went to visit his family in South Africa but doesn't appear to have any photos of him. She lived in Cambridge when she knew Ivan and her mother worked as a housemistress at Queens' College. It would be lovely to find out what happened to him and complete the story. If anyone can help, please email: bekygoff542@gmail.com or telephone: 07985 424308.

Reunions

THE RAF Masirah and RAF Salalah Veterans Association Reunion Gala Dinner is to be held on Saturday, October 12 at the Hatton Court Hotel, Upton St Leonards, Gloucester GL4 8DE. All Members are welcome to attend. If you are interested in attending the Dinner, please contact Alan Teasdale on joalteas@btinternet.com. If you would like to join the Association as a Member, please visit our website: www.omanrafveterans.org for further information.

ANNUAL Reunion: The Association of RAF Women Officers Annual (ARAFWO) Reunion Lunch will take place on Saturday, October 12 at the RAF Club, Piccadilly, from 11am. Our speaker will be Dorit Oliver-Wolff. Dorit survived the holocaust, is an accomplished public speaker and is dedicated to educating others about the consequences of the Holocaust.

For tickets to attend this inspiring reunion, please contact Fiona Morgan Frise by email: ffrise713@gmail.com. For further information about ARAFWO, please visit arafwo.co.uk.

124 Entry Apprentices – RAF Cosford, 1974-77. 50th anniversary reunion. Members will be meeting at The Limes Country Lodge Hotel, Earlswood, Solihull on Saturday, October 12 with an informal buffet luncheon to follow on in the evening of Sunday, October 13. For further information please email: nigelcooper1@live.co.uk or call/WhatsApp on: 07986 200137. We have currently managed to locate and contact more than 30 of our 49 original members so a great time is assured.

CALLING all former TG11 T/phonist, TPOs, Tels, Wop Spec, TCO, TCC, TRC, all are welcome to attend the TG11 Association reunion to be held Friday, March 21 to Sunday March 23, 2025, at the Marriot Delta Hotels Nottingham Belfry, Mellors Way, off Woodhouse Way, Nottingham NG8 6PY. Further details can be found on the TG11 website: www.tg11association.com, if not a member please press on the motif to join.

Associations

WHAT do you know about the 2 Halifax RAF Sqns 346 and 347 which flew from RAF Elvington near York in World War II? Why not join the Sud-Ouest France Branch of RAFA to find out more? You will be welcomed with open arms or un Accueil Chaleureux! For further details contact Terry Dennett at Admin@Rafsudouest.fr or call: 0033546953889.

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 the website: rafaarmourers.co.uk or you can contact the committee via email at this address: plumbersrest@outlook.com.

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

SUAS – have you been a member of Southampton University Air Squadron as a student or staff member? If so, please join our Facebook page, 'Southampton UAS Association' or email: 6FTS-SUASAdmin@mod.gov.uk to join our association community so that we can welcome you back.

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. So why not join us? For more information send an email to: janedjones6@btinternet.com. The first year of membership is free.

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

RAF Wainfleet

LOOKING for photos/memorabilia/stories from RAF Wainfleet. The current owner of the tower would love you to get in touch. Please contact: willroughton@hotmail.com.

Event raises funds for two charities



CELEBRATION: RAF Lossiemouth Station piper, Barry Ashby, welcomes guests to the charity dinner. Inset, Tammy Main, left and Christine Whitton from Abbie's Sparkle Foundation with guest speaker comedian Fred MacAulay

A CHARITY dinner was held at the Mansfield Hotel, Elgin last month by the Lossiemouth Development Programme (LDP) to celebrate the completion of the £0.5 billion infrastructure programme at RAF Lossiemouth.

Over the past seven years the LDP has been improving the infrastructure on station to support the growth of the Typhoon and Poseidon P-8A fleets as well as preparing for the arrival of the E-7 Wedgetail aircraft, said a station spokesperson.

Supported by the main LDP contractors (Tetra Tech, Mott MacDonald, Volker Fitzpatrick, Galliford Try, Lagan Aviation & Infrastructure, FES, Robertsons Construction and Henry Brothers) and Boeing Defence UK, the dinner raised £5,600 through auction prizes donated by local companies.

The final total raised is likely to be more than £12,000 to be split between the RAF Benevolent Fund and Abbie's Sparkle Foundation.

Battle of Britain service

THE ROYAL Air Force announces that the 84th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain Service of Thanksgiving and Rededication will be held in Westminster Abbey at 11am on Sunday, September 15.

Applications for tickets, stating all names, addresses, telephone number/email address, place and date of birth, passport or driving licence number of individuals wishing to attend, should be made in writing and are to be accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope.

Applications should reach Mrs Michèle Small, SO3 RAF Ceremonial Events, RAF Ceremonial Office, RAF Northolt, West End Road, Middlesex, HA4 6NG by July 26.

To assist with seating in the Abbey, applicants are requested to state which of the following categories is appropriate: former Battle of Britain era Royal Air Force personnel or Emergency Services and role; past or present members of the Royal Air Force and its Reserve Forces; or member of the general public. In addition, we are particularly interested to hear from relatives of Battle of Britain era Royal Air Force personnel.

Please state if you are a wheelchair user.

Tickets, and a note on dress and timings for the occasion, will be issued two weeks before the Service.

Applications should not be made to Westminster Abbey.

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. Please note that due to the coronavirus pandemic we are currently unable to accept notices submitted by post.

Important Notice

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Your Announcements

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Vet meets his young fans

MORE THAN 80 years may separate them, but for one ex-RAF Corporal and a group of schoolchildren, age really is no barrier to lasting friendships, writes **Laurence Parker**.

An article in *RAF News* about a nursery changing to become RAFA Kidz prompted 87-year-old veteran Brian Hanks from Lincolnshire to write to his granddaughter – who works at the Medmenham branch of RAFA Kidz.

The letter was read out to the children at the nursery and a penpal relationship between Brian, who has 10 grandchildren of his own, and the youngsters quickly developed.

"The children wrote a letter back to Brian asking him about his time in the RAF, whether he flew aircraft, his hobbies and any favourite colours," said Amanda Brown, manager of RAFA Kidz Medmenham. "His letters are displayed on our wall with his responses."

Brian was a ground radar fitter and later worked in Germany on a flight station,



CAPTIVE AUDIENCE: Brian talks to the children at RAFA Kidz. Inset, as a young airman

overseeing the installation of missiles on UK aircraft. He revealed that, unbeknown to his granddaughters, he had also worked as an engineer on Concorde.

"The children requested that Brian post them a letter back as they love going to the post box to send their replies," said Amanda.

The school is hoping to send letters to their veteran penpal every couple of months.

Brian was invited to Medmenham recently to meet the excited children. Due to his deafness they wrote down their

questions for him to answer. Showing sepia pictures of himself in uniform to his little fans together with the cap he wore encouraged the children to dress up in RAF, Navy and Army uniforms from their dressing-up box.

Amanda added: "Brian was exceptionally good with the children. He loved that they wanted to talk to him about his Air Force days. He really interacted with everyone."

Before leaving Brian was given a thank you card made by the children and some chocolates.



LATEST EXHIBIT: The Meteor F8 in its temporary new home

Museum loans Meteor

The RAF Museum has loaned its Gloster Meteor F8 – often called the Prone Meteor – to Newark Air Museum.

The aircraft was moved from the RAF Museum's Cosford site to NAM in eastern Nottinghamshire last month.

Staff from the Michael Beetham Conservation Centre (MBCC) at Cosford supervised the move, which was undertaken by SPH Plant Limited from Telford. Then over two days MBCC staff reassembled the Prone Meteor, before moving it into Hangar 2 on NAM's Southfield site.

Dr Harry Raffal from the RAF Museum said: "We are delighted that through our loan of the Meteor F8 to Newark Air Museum new audiences will engage with this unique strand of the RAF story. The loan will provide an exciting new exhibit at Newark Air Museum whilst helping the RAF Museum share our collection more widely."

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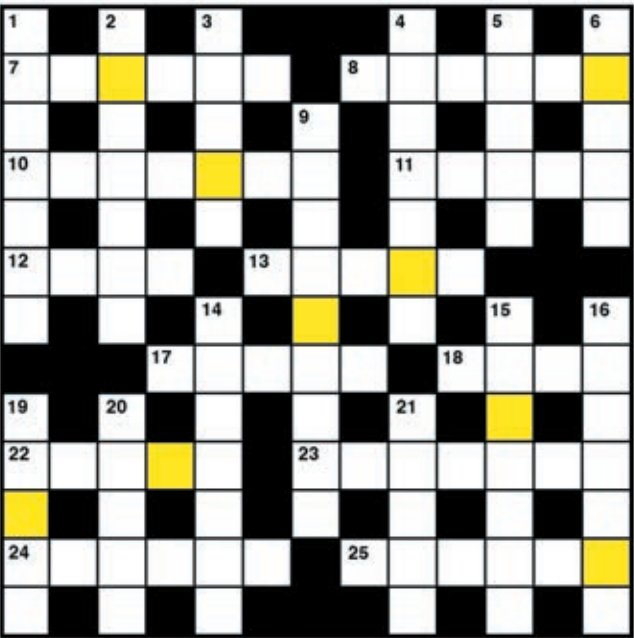
Prize Crossword
No. 365

Solve the crossword, then rearrange the 9 letters in yellow squares to find an RAF aircraft

- Across**
- 7. Move across to achieve cinematic awards (6)
 - 8. Well-known Football Association joins Mickey Most (6)
 - 10. Daddy right to cut vegetable (7)
 - 11. Some crank left joint (5)
 - 12. Huge river reaches Portishead (4)
 - 13. Cut a hole in GP who's unwell (5)
 - 17. River close to a medallist, we hear (5)
 - 18. Points gold at Biblical salesman (4)
 - 22. Atkinson's tree (5)
 - 23. Blokes I changed into a pillar (7)
 - 24. Shakespearean party? Righty-ho! (4,2)
 - 25. Jacket worn by RAF personnel? (6)
- Down**
- 1. Trooped around naval weapon (7)
 - 2. Mark allowed this colour to be used (7)
 - 3. And 5 Down. Air Base with impressive branches? (5,5)
 - 4. See 9 Down
 - 5. See 3 Down
 - 6. Drug dealer loses head at wedding guest (5)
 - 9. And 4 Down. The Nazis found this quite deceptive in 1944 (9,7)
 - 14. And root around RAF plane (7)
 - 15. Plant on a street I left in middle of barbecue (7)
 - 16. UK drink spilled while watching this movie (7)
 - 19. RAF personnel on voyage, by the sound of it (5)
 - 20. Toff in southern Spring (5)
 - 21. Bird the girl's operating (5)

Name:
Address:
.....
.....
RAF aircraft: Crossword No. 365

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 July 26.
Prize Crossword No. 363 winner is: Michael Bennett, Cardiff.



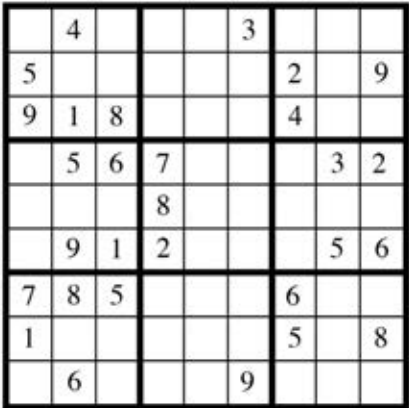
Solution to Crossword No. 364
Across – 6. Sorties 7. Duran 9. Spade 10. Turbine 12. Royal Flying 14. Helicopters 18. Bravery 19. Duran 21. Eglin 22. Feeling
Down – 1. Corps 2. Studio 3. Red 4. Bubbly 5. Bar None 8. Outfits 11. Labours 13. Peerage 15. In Vain 16. Rouble 17. Gaunt 20. Jet
RAF station: Linton-on-Ouse



Prize Su Doku
No. 375

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 July 26.
The winner of Su Doku No: 373 is: Natasha Booker, Aldershot.



Solution to Su Doku No. 374

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



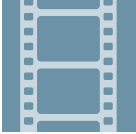
Competition
La Brea – The Final Journey (15)
On Blu-ray and DVD from July 15
Fabulous Films Ltd/Spirit Entertainment

Time travel's the pits for LA Harris family

ALL SIX episodes from the third and final season of the hit NBC Universal series *La Brea* – *The Final Journey* are out soon on Blu-ray and DVD.
The time-travelling adventures began when a massive sinkhole opened in Los Angeles, plunging people into a primeval world (actually filmed in Australia). The survivors stranded in the past fight for one last chance to return home.
After delving deeper into the mysteries of the primeval world, the Harris family must race against time to find Eve. The stakes are higher than ever as they face the most dangerous prehistoric creatures yet – with one shot to reunite and get back to the world they once knew.
Due to strike action by writers, directors and actors'



guilds in the US, NBC ordered only six episodes of *La Brea* Season 3 – which were released at the beginning of this year. Knowing the series was ending allowed creator and showrunner David Appelbaum the opportunity to end the story and provide closure to all the leading characters.
For your chance to win a copy of *La Brea* Series 3 on Blu-ray or DVD, answer this question correctly:
What is the name of La Brea's creator?
Email your answer, marked La Brea S3 competition, to: 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 July 26. Please state on your entry if you prefer to win the series on Blu-ray or on DVD.



Film Review
The Exorcism (15)
In cinemas now

Terror gets real for the actors in horror remake

AWASHED-UP actor is cast in the remake of a legendary horror film, but his own demons, and the one described in the script, appear to converge as real evil manifests on set.
Russell Crowe is Anthony Miller, a once-celebrated actor who spiralled into the pitfalls of fame and alcohol addiction, abandoning his dying wife and neglecting his fatherly duties.
Now, estranged daughter Lee (Ryan Simkins) is 16 years old and reluctantly in his care, although she refuses to call him Dad, and he has finally got himself a lead role again.
Following the mysterious death of the initially cast actor, Anthony takes the part of a priest in a film that heavily nods to *The Exorcist*, weaving its narrative around the themes of faith and redemption, the parallel of his own experience as a reluctant father setting things up neatly.
Without making an actual sequel, prequel or reboot to the franchise, the film is able to play on these familiar themes whilst borrowing from its story template, to say nothing of the iconic costumes or locations.
Setting the film around a cursed production adds a clever contemporary twist: the hot-shot young actress playing the possessed young girl (Chloe Bailey) is even seen burning sage before making her way to set, after the spooky tales of what happened on the original film. Meanwhile Anthony is dealing



LEADING MAN: But things get hairy for Miller (Russell Crowe)
with his own repressed trauma as an altar boy. These heavy themes will resurface later but are nonetheless shocking.
A couple of jump-scares help to set the tone and keep you on edge for whenever the score falls silent, but once things go full-tilt horror, the originality falters. Anthony's descent into darkness, although compelling initially, ultimately feels clichéd and forced, detracting from the film's earlier promise.
Review by Sam Cooney
Three out of five roundels