

**The Forces' favourite paper**

**Win DVD tribute to the heroes of the Normandy landings**

See R'n'R page 8 for competition details



**ROYAL AIR FORCE**

Friday, May 31, 2024  
Edition No. 1585 £1.20

# RAF News

**The Overlords: Crews who paved the way for Allied invasion**

See pages 14-15



**Ice Hockey**  
Women get IS skates on



● See page 25

**Cricket**  
IST20 – Balls of confusion



● See page 26

**Football**  
Time to man up: Hamilton



● See page 28

# D-Day to remember



**D-DAY VETERANS** Bernard Morgan and George Chandler joined forces in Downing Street as the UK and World War II Allied nations prepared to mark the 80th anniversary of the Normandy Landings.

RAF vet Bernard, 100, worked as a code breaker with the 83 Group Control centre – a mobile signals unit controlling the movements of Allied aircraft, and landed on Gold Beach.

He said: "The sad thing I shall always remember is seeing all the dead bodies on the beaches.

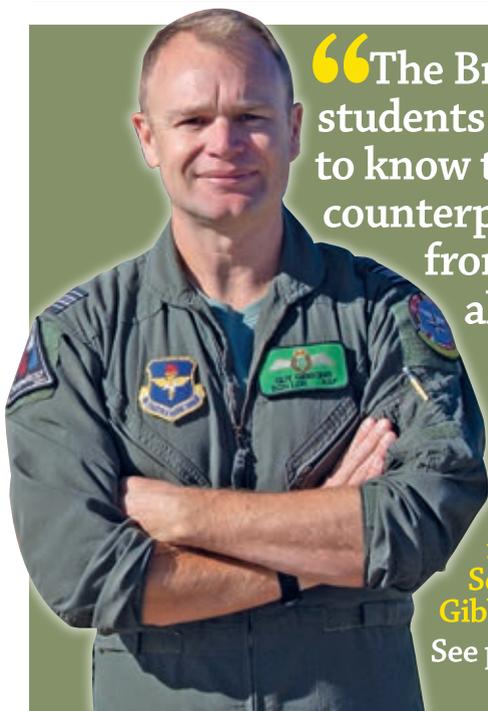
"They were mainly Allied soldiers who had arrived in the morning in the small landing craft, but unfortunately they'd been dropped off in deep water."

Many of Britain's last surviving veterans will travel to the British Normandy Memorial in Ver-sur-Mer to remember the fallen, alongside more than 1,600 serving military personnel.

● Continues on p2

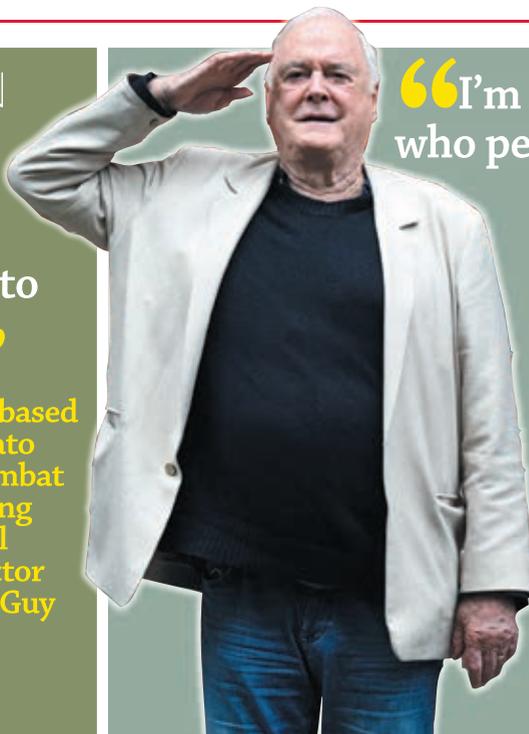
**HEROES UNITED:** RAF veteran Bernard Morgan (right) and Army veteran George Chandler arrive in Downing Street as the UK prepares to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day

# BiteSize



“The British students get to know their counterparts from Nato allies,”

Texas-based UK Nato air combat training school instructor Sqn Ldr Guy Gibbons  
See page 9



“I’m a writer who performs,”

Fawlty Towers legend John Cleese  
See R’n’R page 5



“It was a challenge I thought I had to take,”

Highly successful women’s football boss Sgt Chris Hamilton takes on role of men’s head coach  
See back page

# Allies’ D-Day salute



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

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

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

**News Editor:** Simon Mander

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

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

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

● *Continued from front page*

Other events will be held across the UK and France, including services at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire and Bayeux War Cemetery in Northern France, where the names of 25,000 Allied fighters buried at the site will be read out.

Veterans and their families attending the main memorial events in France will be given a send-off from Portsmouth, which will include a flypast by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, while Royal Navy ships in Portsmouth Harbour will sail past in formation, sounding their sirens.

The focus of the UK celebrations will be South Sea Common in Portsmouth, which will feature the testimonies of military personnel and veterans with performances by Forces musicians.

An 80th anniversary Torch of Liberation, designed by engineering students in Ontario, Canada, made the first step of its journey through capital cities



**LIBERATION DAY:** School pupil Eleanor Duftin carries the D-Day Torch of Liberation to Horse Guards Parade PHOTO: ROSIE HALLAM

of the home nations, carried by school pupil Eleanor Duftin.

Army veteran George Chandler, 99, landed on Omaha

Beach. Speaking to school pupils who gathered to lead the salute to the two war heroes, he added: “Nobody ever wins a war – one

side gives in and that doesn’t mean to say you’ve won a war if the other side has decided they’ve had enough.”

## This Week In History



**1944**  
**Overlord begins**

THE ALLIED invasion of north-west Europe starts with Operation Overlord. Allied bombers drop 5,000 tons on Coastal batteries as 99 Sqn Stirlings jam enemy radars.



**1982**  
**Harrier strikes**

SEA HARRIER pilot Flt Lt David Morgan shoots down two Argentinian A-4B Skyhawks over Choiseul Sound in the South Atlantic.



**1940**  
**Dunkirk complete**

THE EVACUATION of 338,226 Allied troops from the beaches of Dunkirk is completed at the cost of 177 RAF aircraft, including 106 fighters.



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



AWARD: Flt Lt Andy Cornes with CAS

## Long service 3-clasp first

LEEMING SAFETY officer Flt Lt Andy Cornes has scored an Air Force first, earning a third clasp for his Long Service medal after more than 45 years in the Forces.

The award was presented by Chief of the Air Staff, ACM Sir Richard Knighton and is believed to be the first achieved through service and the third ever granted. Previous awards were presented on an honorary basis to Prince Edward, The Duke of Kent and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

In a career dating back to basic infantry training with the Royal Irish Rangers in 1978, Andy served as a jungle training instructor in Belize before rebadging to the Army Air Corps as an airgunner.

Gaining his pilot wings in 1988, he was the first student ever to claim the hat trick of Bob Bowls Trophy for best student, Smithson Trophy for the best fixed-wing student and Blackwood Trophy for best exam results.

Divided almost equally between the Army and RAF, Flt Lt Cornes' career included operational tours of Northern Ireland, the Balkans, the Falklands, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Andy's final decade of Full Time Reserve service has been as a key member of the Flight Safety Team, developing RAF Leeming's error management system.

He said: "I've absolutely loved my life in the military. I've loved everything about it, it has provided my family with everything we have, and I'm very proud of that. From charity events to my last operational tour in Afghanistan, I was doing what I trained to do."

# D-Day pilgrimage for RAF Jack, 102

## Charity chief will honour pal Stuart & all the fallen

### Jo Lamb

ONE OF the RAF's oldest World War II veterans, 102-year-old Jack Hemmings, will head to Normandy with the last of Britain's D-Day heroes to mark the 80th anniversary of the Allied landings.

Jack's special trip will also honour his close friend Stuart King, who served with 247 Fighter Sqn on D-Day operating Hawker Typhoons to provide close air support for ground forces in Normandy.

The two set up an international charity, the Mission Aviation Fellowship, after the war to fly life-saving aid to some of the world's most remote and poorest areas. MAF still operates today.

Stuart passed away aged 98 during the height of the 2020 lockdown with no formal funeral. So, Jack is retracing Stuart's steps to remember his best friend on the momentous 80th anniversary.

Jack said: "I often look on myself as a rarity, being a WWII survivor at the age of 102."

"But the camaraderie we will feel being together to celebrate D-Day will be poignant. Knowing all these folk have been through what I have, and a lot worse, will be very humbling indeed. I'm immensely proud of Stuart and the D-Day chaps; and I feel it's a privilege to be alive today."

The remarkable veteran took control of a Spitfire early this year and is thought to be the oldest



SPITFIRE FEAT: Jack flies WWII icon earlier this year; and in 1948, inset, and with charity partner and pal Stuart King in 2019

British pilot to fly the iconic wartime aircraft. In doing so, Jack raised £10,000 for MAF, the charity he and Stuart pioneered almost 80 years ago.

After demobilisation, Jack and Stuart joined a handful of RAF airmen and women to rally support for a wooden Miles Gemini aircraft and launch MAF's first British humanitarian survey of Central Africa in 1948.

The epic mission saw Jack and Stuart embark on a 10-month recce to assess the needs of more than 100 remote communities, with little more than a map, compass and the river Nile as their guide.

Today, MAF has grown to become the world's largest humanitarian air service, delivering aid, medicine and development opportunities to

the world's most vulnerable and isolated communities. Stuart served the charity throughout his life, alongside Jack.

Jack was based in India between 1942 and 1946, flying Lockheed Hudson aircraft to protect the Bay of Bengal from the Japanese. He was promoted to Leader of 353 Sqn in 1945 and received the Air Force Cross for exemplary gallantry while flying.

He earned the nickname 'Crasher' after a rough dirt-strip landing in Africa on a MAF sortie but went on to win the RAF's Master Air Pilot award in 2017 and performed aerobatics on his 100th birthday.

Stuart received the Legion D'Honneur in 2016. Speaking about D-Day at the time he said: "We felt we were fighting for freedom and fighting against evil. During the first landings in

Normandy, we were losing about 50 pilots every month. I doubt I would have survived if I had been one of those.

"We saw death and destruction for many years. War is terrible and some of us, when we left the Air Force, felt God had something better. Aeroplanes could be used for more than death and destruction, and that is where MAF was born.

"I am grateful for the privilege both of being involved in the liberation of France, and later the liberation of many people from hardship, ill health and many difficulties across isolated parts of the world."

Jack is married to Kate, a French woman whose father was an undercover soldier serving alongside Charles de Gaulle in London during wartime.

The couple live in Horam, Sussex, and Jack has a son and three grandchildren, including Will Hemmings who will accompany his grandfather in Normandy.



STUART KING

## Remembering radar heroes of the Normandy landings

AMERICAN, FRENCH and UK military personnel are to take part in a ceremony in a small French town on June 4 to mark the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings and the 120th anniversary of the Entente Cordiale Treaty.

A contingent of 40 US soldiers along with a bugler, a band and a flypast, and members of both the French Air and Space Force and the RAF Air Surveillance and Control System Force, and UK Exchange and Liaison Officers from the French Network, will parade together in Vierville-sur-Mer.

The town is home to the monument to the US 29th Infantry Division which sits opposite the RAF monument – the only memorial to Service personnel who provided an air defence 'umbrella' to the Allies as they landed on the Normandy beaches.

RAF Liaison Officer Wg Cdr Yves Gagnon said: "Wreaths will be laid from the French/RAF contingent on the American memorial, and vice versa."

He added: "The monument, in honour of 15082 GCI which landed on Omaha Beach, is the only RAF

monument in the assault sectors."

The Radar and Radio Unit supported the US landings on Omaha Beach for Operation Overlord by providing vital air defence intelligence.

During the landings the airmen came ashore under heavy shellfire. Of 27 vehicles that managed to disembark only eight were eventually able to drive off the beach.

Of the 120 airmen, 47 were killed or injured and six are buried at the nearby Bayeux cemetery. The Unit earned four Military Crosses, two Military Medals and one Croix de Guerre.



TRIBUTE: Ceremony at Vierville-sur-Mer for D-Day 75, in 2019



**Royal Air Force  
Benevolent Fund**

## BUILDING STRONGER FAMILIES

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

We also provide relationship counselling and mediation support.

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



SCAN  
ME WITH  
YOUR  
CAMERA



# Shawbury first for Irish pilot graduates

## Staff Reporter

**FOUR MEMBERS of the Irish Air Corps have been presented with their RAF Wings after graduating at Shawbury.**

The first-ever Irish airmen to complete the course were presented with the coveted credentials at a ceremony at the Flying Training School after more than a year of training.

Graduate Lt Shane O'Connell said: "It's great to have the relief and the pride of getting through the course, and it's a great way to wrap it up at the end of the day."

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, Air Marshal Sean Reynolds, Air Officer for Northern Ireland, underlined

the importance of UK and Irish military connections.

He said: "In an ever-uncertain world, with things going off in the Atlantic two years ago, after the invasion of Ukraine, it's really important that we stay close."

"Not just with helicopters, but our maritime control aircraft. So, all of those relationships are more important than ever."

The rookie recruits began their training at the Staffordshire station 15 months ago and have now clocked up 140 hours of flying experience on Juno helicopters with Shawbury instructors.

The pilots will now continue their operational training with the Irish Air Corps.



AM REYNOLDS

**SHAW THING:** The first Irish Air Corps helicopter pilots graduate at Shawbury

# Honington goes to war



**GLOBAL CHALLENGE:** Gunners react to airfield attack; inset above, medics treat battlefield casualties

**RAPID DEPLOYMENT teams from across the RAF staged realistic combat drills to test their frontline skills against near-peer adversaries.**

Force elements from the 8,000-strong Global Enablement Organisation – designed to react to military threats anywhere in the world at short notice – rehearsed war-fighting scenarios to support UK combat air power.

More than 90 frontline personnel including medics, transport specialists, engineers, caterers and Force Protection units faced



security alerts and battlefield injuries at the Complex Air Ground Environment Training Area at RAF Honington.

Exercise Auxilium Fort has taken seven months to plan and is the latest drill to incorporate the Nato-wide Agile Combat Employment tactics.

Exercise director Wg Cdr Steve Micklewright said: "Exercise Auxilium Fort is the culmination of seven months of intensive planning by the Support Force's exercise planning team, with fantastic support from colleagues across Global Enablement."

"For many, this has been their first experience of such conditions and I have been delighted by the way they have responded."

"Their enthusiasm, flexibility and teamwork has seen them through to success and enhanced their readiness for high-tempo operations."

Air Commodore Thompson, Global Enablement commander, added: "Enabling Air and Space Power is at the core of our mission. The exercise highlights the diverse skills of RAF Global Enablement Forces, from medics to logistics specialists and beyond."

"This exercise demonstrates our dedication to supporting, protecting and sustaining air operations globally."

## In Brief



**TRIBUTE:** Bike team mark 80th anniversary of the Stalag breakout

## Bikers hike marks date

A TEAM of motorcyclists have raised £8,200 for the RAF Association with an epic journey from RAF Cranwell to Zagan, Poland and back, to mark the 80th anniversary of the Great Escape.

The military and civilian bikers commemorated the anniversary at the exit of Tunnel 'Harry' before riding 560 miles to the Hook of Holland in one day, then returning to RAF Cranwell, covering nearly 1,900 miles in just over four days.

Full-time RAF Reservist Terry Jones came up with the idea for the trip with a group of eight bikers which included RAF regular, reserves and veterans, as well as ex-civilian police and civilians.

A team spokesman said: "It was a real privilege to be involved in marking this event and to be able to honour the bravery and resilience of those who fought for freedom during such challenging times."

They presented a cheque for the money raised to the President of the RAF Association, AM Sir Baz North.



Compere: Howard Leader  
TV and Radio Presenter



Royal Air Force  
**In Concert**

**100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force**

**Royal Hall, Harrogate**

**7.30pm Friday 28 June 2024**

Tickets from £20 Box Office 01423 502116

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

# Museum on song

THE STARS of *An Officer and a Gentleman - The Musical* got up close to the exhibits at the RAF Museum in north London recently while the show is on tour.

Georgia Lennon, Jamal Crawford, Paul French and Olivia Foster-Browne explored the museum's collection of aircraft, sat in the cockpit of an 1982 Phantom Jet - similar to the jets their characters would be training to pilot - enjoyed a 4D Red Arrows flight experience and tried out the museum's flight simulator.

Based on the award-winning film starring Richard Gere, the musical tells the story of fearless young officer candidate Zack Mayo and the captivating Paula Pokrifki.



# Number's up

THE INTERNATIONAL Bomber Command Centre has welcomed its 500,000th visitor.

Simon Poole and his family were presented with a family goodie bag to celebrate the milestone.

Since opening in May 2018, the IBC has collected 34 different awards and been visited by people from 54 nations.

Nicky van der Drift, the Centre's chief executive, said: "Hitting the milestone of half a million is quite the achievement."



**LANDMARK:** 100-year-old veteran Ida celebrates with her great-grandchildren George and Emily

# Ida marks her 100th

A VETERAN who drove pilots from 617 Sqn, the famous Dambusters, to and from the airfield at RAF Scampton has celebrated her 100th birthday.

Ida Vogel joined the Air Force in 1942, aged 17, and served until World War II ended. She also drove an ambulance during her wartime service.

After the war she dedicated her time to bringing up her five children and 10 grandchildren. She also has seven great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren.

To mark her special day, 30 family members travelled from across the UK, Europe, the USA and Australia to be with her for a party at her care home in Maidenhead.

Ida said: "It was wonderful to see so many special faces make the trip to see me. I feel very loved and blessed to have a wonderful family."

Her daughter-in-law Gaye Vogel added: "Ida laughs at being 100 and said she still feels 18."

Born in Russell Square, St Pancras, London in 1924 Ida, was one of 15. She later became a seamstress for a company in Chiswick making stage costumes, some of them for actor and singer Tommy Steele.

# NATO plays ACE card on US-led war games

**Typhoons join Polish F-16s**

**on Allies' Eastern front**



**FACING DOWN THREAT:** Typhoon and F-16 at Krzesiny air base. Above, LXX Sqn Atlas A400M delivers to frontline



## Staff Reporter

Krzesiny Air Base

**UK TYPHOONS policing Nato skies from Romania launched the latest Agile Combat Employment drills alongside Polish F-16 fighters during a US-led air and missile defence exercise.**

Three RAF fighter jets supported by 50 personnel flew out from Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base in Romania to the Polish 31st Air Base at Krzesiny, flying joint air operations with the Polish Air Force F-16s, alongside more than 5,000 troops from the United States, Lithuania, Greece and Denmark.

The trio of UK fighters was joined by

an Atlas A400M transporter delivering troops and frontline kit during the six-day deployment on Exercise Astral Knight.

Typhoon pilot Flt Lt Clarke said: "Our role in the exercise was conducting Defensive Counter Air, we were going up and acting in very much a defensive posture against a simulated attack on European countries.

"There's been a lot of nations contributing to this exercise, and we've all learned a lot from each other on how to move forward as part of Nato.

"It has been a very successful mission and the Polish Air Force have supported us fantastically. We're very grateful for all their support throughout the exercise, and we look forward to working with them again

in the near future."

The large-scale exercise is the latest opportunity for crews to hone their Agile Combat Employment skills - operating from remote and austere environments to avoid detection by enemy surveillance.

Detachment commander Sqn Ldr Bennett added: "As a Polish speaker it's given me the opportunity to help the detachment integrate better with the Polish Air Force, building better relations at all levels.

"Working with the Polish Air Force has been a very good experience for all of our personnel.

"The Polish Air Force operates modern aircraft similar to our own and are very keen to learn from us, as we are from them."



By Appointment to  
H.M The Queen  
Medallists  
Worcestershire Medal Service Ltd.  
Bromsgrove



# Worcestershire Medal Service Ltd

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



124 High Street  
Bromsgrove  
Worcestershire  
B61 8HJ

01527 835375

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

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



**ADDICA**

Promotional and Corporate Gifting

01527 509380

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

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



# Guy's goodbye goes down a storm

Tracey Allen

THE TRADITIONAL parting gift of a bowler and a broly came in handy for WO Guy Collinge who braved a rain storm as he took a bow at Coningsby after nearly 40 years' service.

Station pals got a soaking as it rained on Guy's farewell parade. But the deluge failed to dampen spirits as he headed for the exit and Civvy Street.

Guy, who joined up in 1985 as a chef, said: "It's flown by to be honest. I've really enjoyed it and to finish as a Station Warrant Officer, which is kind of the top of the tree, on the main camp of the RAF. It's been a huge privilege."

WO Nikki Nolan takes up the post at the Lincs Typhoon base after serving all over the UK and completing tours in South Africa, America, Gibraltar, Minhad and the Falkland Islands.



**BROLY GOOD SHOW:** Coningsby Station Warrant Officer Guy Collinge retires after 39 years' service  
PHOTOS: ASI SHAUNA MARTIN

## In Brief



**SADDLE UP:** Digby cyclists start their 300-mile ride to honour Dambusters

## Digby team goes Dutch

A TEAM of cyclists from Digby launched a 300-mile bike hike to Holland to honour the 53 airmen who lost their lives during the legendary Dambuster raids.

The seven-strong crew set off from the International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln heading for a memorial to the RAF's Bomber Command crews near Amsterdam to mark the 81st anniversary of the raid.



**VITAL ROLE:** But after service life can be tough for the UK's foreign fighters

# Texas Talons are out for UK pilot training

Staff Reporter

UK PILOTS are set to move to Britain's frontline Typhoon and F-35 squadrons after completing Nato flying training in Texas.

They are among 200 students from European member states honing their war-fighting skills in T-6 Texans and T-38 Talons on the course run by the USAF's 80th Flying Training Wing from Sheppard air base.

After graduating from the Nato Joint Jet Pilot Training course, crews will return to the UK for a short synthetic-based course at RAF Valley, before moving to Typhoon and F-35 Lightning Operational Conversion Units.

UK instructor Sqn Ldr Guy Gibbons said: "Most of the other European air forces are of a similar size to the RAF and, as I've learnt, you get to know most of the people in your era."

"The benefit the British students who come here will have is that they'll know their equivalents in other Nato air forces."

"Students coming through this system get to learn about other nations as well, not only culturally but also to build professional



**SQN LDR GIBBONS**



**LONE STAR PUPIL:** UK pilot during a training sortie at Sheppard air force base in Texas

## Nightmare on Civvy St for non-UK Vets

FOREIGN NATIONALS who serve in the UK Armed Forces face tougher challenges adapting to life in Civvy Street after leaving than their UK comrades, according to a survey by the MOD.

Many face problems navigating benefits and housing support and struggle to cope with the British way of life, researchers say.

Veterans Minister Johnny Mercer said: "Non-UK veterans are, and always will be, an important and valued part of the UK Armed Forces Community."

"We have a duty to support these individuals and their families in their military-to-civilian transition and ensure they thrive in their post-Service life."

knowledge of other Nato air Forces. This is something they'll have to learn throughout their career, and which they get organically here."

Junior pilots on the programme can train for up to 10 hours a day

at Sheppard, which launches 15 to 20 sorties an hour supervised by combat-hardened instructors from across the alliance.

UK student Flt Lt Tabs added: "The method of training, the scale, the weather and the heat are all different factors. The weather allows for a high pace of training. It's pretty relentless, we haven't stopped since I arrived."

"I could fly in a four-ship with eight different nationalities which can bring challenges in terms of language but typically speaking it's always enriching."

"Equally people are always in the flight room, and I've had the chance, for example, to talk to Norwegians about how they do business and the Germans about their flying training system."

News



**FORMER SERVING?**

**DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN STILL PLAY THE SPORTS LOTTERY?**

Only open to serving and former serving, the exclusive nature of our RAF charity lottery gives players a great chance of winning a cash prize. So why not show your support for as little as £1 a week and you could be a £10,000 jackpot winner!

Join today or increase your tickets at:

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



HOW MUCH IS IT?  
**£1 PER TICKET**  
HOLD BETWEEN 1-6

LEAVING THE RAFT  
**UPDATE CIVI DETAILS**  
0370 050 5893

WIN BIG CASH PRIZES!  
**£10,000 TOP PRIZE**  
20 WINNERS EVERY WEEK!

**RAFCentralFund** **BeGambleAware.org**

The RAF Sports Lottery operates as a society lottery within the Royal Air Force Central Fund and is licensed and regulated by the Gambling Commission (www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk). The Royal Air Force Central Fund is a company registered in England and Wales 8555984. Charity registered in England and Wales 1192560. Charity registered in Scotland SC044299.

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

# Clean-up ace Cheryl's BoB mission



**MAKEOVER:** Kent manager Cheryl Harrison led a team of more than 40 volunteers who revamped the UK's memorial to The Few at Capel-Le-Ferne

## Malcolm Triggs

THE UK'S clifftop tribute to the heroes of the Battle of Britain has received a remarkable makeover thanks to the generosity of business bosses and their staff.

Teams of volunteers carried out work estimated to have saved the Trust tens of thousands of pounds, including repainting the distinctive giant white propeller blades set into the ground from the memorial and repairing access roads and parking areas.

The two-day revamp was led by Vinci Facilities manager Cheryl Harrison, who brought together a 40-strong volunteer workforce to spruce up the site, which receives no government support.

"The teams worked incredibly hard over two days – avoiding the rain on day two – to get an incredible amount done to a very high standard," said site manager Jules Gomez, who helped coordinate the work.

She added: "The work has made a huge difference and has saved us thousands of pounds, particularly in the car park, which was in need of resurfacing. The aggregate alone would have cost more than £15,000 if we had had to buy it."

Cheryl spent two months organising the project, persuading her own team to donate the two days a year Vinci staff usually spend on community projects and encouraging other local contractors to contribute.

She said: "Vinci staff are encouraged to use their two days to help in the community by litter picking or gardening or supporting a charity in some other way.

"I'm based in Folkestone and I know the Memorial well so I persuaded 40 of our



workforce to join me."

She brought in Maidstone-based BJJ Group to refurbish the access road and car parks on the site. Gwella Contracting Services jet washed paths and trimmed greenery, while Brewers in Folkestone and Bedec provided the 120 litres of white paint for the propeller blades free of charge.

"We went to Brewers hoping for a discounted price and were delighted when they gave it to us for free," said Cheryl.

Hendersons Ltd installed a new soakaway to solve drainage problems while grounds maintenance specialists Tivoli, Folkestone tree surgeons and horticulturalists Tag Trees were on hand to tidy up the green areas around the site.

"This is a lovely memorial and I'm delighted that we have been able to make it even better," Cheryl added.

**You need to know  
what you're worth  
before you decide  
to leave.  
Join us. Job done.**



**HELPING YOU MAKE  
BETTER CHOICES**

Many of those serving decide to leave before taking all considerations about their pension into account. Worse, many do not appreciate their worth, often underestimating their pension value. At today's values, a pension income of £20,000pa would require a pension pot of at least £400,000.

Seeking individual guidance from the Forces Pensions Consultants at the Forces Pension Society, will help you secure a firm financial base before advancing into the outside world. Even timing your departure to best advantage can make a significant difference to what you receive.

Here's what one Society Member wrote to us recently:

**"As I approach my final weeks in service, the Forces Pension Society has been amazing. Incredibly patient with my questions. A brilliant organisation, providing such important support to Service leavers. Thank you!"**

Your pension will be a significant element of your entry into the civilian sector or into retirement. Either way, your, and your family's, well-being depends on matching your pension choices to your personal circumstances.

Join us and arm yourself with the information you need about your real worth before you decide to leave.

#### **Independent, not-for-profit**

Pension guidance is just one of the many benefits of membership. As an independent, not-for-profit organisation, our membership subscriptions help to fund our support for the Veterans' Community, our Roadshows and Webinars, our attendance at CTP Employment Fairs, plus our vigilance in taking governments to task whenever we spot unfairness or injustice in the system.

And importantly, we provide the whole military community with a voice that counts, on the representative bodies for Armed Forces and Public Sector Pensions.

#### **Visit: [forcespensionsociety.org/join-now/](https://forcespensionsociety.org/join-now/)**

Annual membership for you and your spouse/partner is just **£45**. You will have exclusive access to our Forces Pensions Consultants, our informative Members' Webinars and you'll receive our bi-annual newsletters and our magazine, Pennant.

You'll also have access to our wide range of membership benefits from discounts on new cars to insurances, including our latest range of travel policies.



**IT PAYS TO UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF YOUR PENSION**

#### **Forces Pension Society**

68 South Lambeth Road, Vauxhall, London SW8 1RL.

T:020 7820 9988 E: [memsec@forpen.co.uk](mailto:memsec@forpen.co.uk) [www.forcespensionsociety.org](http://www.forcespensionsociety.org)



# Stunning new family homes near Stamford

Come and view our exclusive collection of 4 and 5-bedroom family homes in Colsterworth.



**FEATURED PROPERTY** 'The Whitton'

4-bedroom detached home with garage  
Priced at just **£399,950**, including flooring throughout, fully fitted kitchen and wardrobes to bedroom 1.  
**PLUS** £20,000 to spend your way!\*

Designed for modern living, these exceptional new homes enjoy a fantastic village location, close to the A1 with easy access to Stamford, Grantham and Oakham.

Prices start from **£349,950**.

**Show Home and Marketing Suite open Thursday – Monday, 10am – 5pm**

Bourne Road, Colsterworth, Grantham, NG33 5JF

Tel: 07763 212627

Email: [newtonmeadows@balfourbeattyhomes.com](mailto:newtonmeadows@balfourbeattyhomes.com)



**Balfour Beatty**  
HOMES

Disclaimer: Computer generated images show a typical street scene and Whitton house type at Newton Meadows. Elevational treatments and handing may vary. \*Incentive available on selected plots only. Terms and conditions apply, available on request.

[balfourbeattyhomes.com](http://balfourbeattyhomes.com)

# Air Cadet Exclusive Offer

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

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

## RAF News - The Forces' Favourite Paper

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



# RAF News



RAF News  
p18/17



# Overlord: the aerial

- **200,000 aircraft flew on missions**
- **200,000 tons of bombs dropped**
- **Over 4,600 photo recon sorties**

**T**HE STRATEGY for an Anglo-American invasion was agreed at the Casablanca Conference in January 1943 and planning for Operation Overlord began in the following April.

Air operations in support of Overlord had, in effect, already begun. In April 1943 the USAAF General Eaker had proposed a combined bomber offensive from the United Kingdom, which was accepted in June as the 'Pointblank' directive.

This was aimed at attacks on the Luftwaffe and its supporting industries such as airframe, aero-engine, aircraft component and ball-bearing factories and the repair depots and storage parks. This became the primary task of the USAAF's 8th Air Force but the RAF's C-in-C of Bomber Command, Air Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, was much more liberal in his interpretation of the directive.

In the event, Bomber Command's main aim remained the general disorganisation of German industry and attacks against 'those industrial towns in which there was the largest number of aircraft component factories'.

With air support considered imperative for an amphibious and airborne landing, the planning staff had narrowed the choice of landing to the Normandy coast or to the Pas de Calais region. Although Normandy presented major logistical problems and a longer sea passage for the amphibious force, it offered a broad front, was less well defended and was not likely to be the expected area.

The Combined Chiefs of Staff approved the Overlord plan in early December 1943 with instructions to proceed with the detailed planning for a landing in Normandy. The American General Dwight D. Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Commander and Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder was appointed as the Deputy. General Sir Bernard Montgomery was to command the Allied armies. Air Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallorie was confirmed as the Air Commander-in-Chief. In January, the Desert Air Force veteran Air Marshal Sir

By Air Commodore Graeme Pitchfork, military historian



Arthur Coningham was appointed to command the 2nd Tactical Air Force.

### The Air Plan

The overall air plan was issued on April 15, 1944. The principal air tasks were to cripple the German Air Force, provide continuous reconnaissance of the enemy's movements and disrupt enemy communications and channels of supply by air attack.

Key to success was support for the landing and advance of the Allied armies, offensive strikes against enemy naval vessels and airlift for airborne forces.

### Preliminary Phase

Operation Pointblank had achieved success in reducing German air power, in particular its fighter strength, an essential requirement for the success of Overlord. Allied fighter sweeps aimed to reduce the Luftwaffe by engaging its fighters in the air and attacking airfields, forcing the evacuation of many of the enemy's sites in range of the south coast of England.

The photographic reconnaissance squadrons had done immensely valuable work. Once the decision to land in Normandy had been made, many sorties had to be flown to produce a detailed picture of the enemy's defences and installations in the area. The whole of the European coastline from Brest to Den Helder had been photographed and target dossiers produced.

It was essential to keep the German High Command guessing on plans for an invasion. Elaborate deception plans were developed. Air operations were mounted across a wide area and for every

sortie flown in the Normandy area, two were mounted to other possible assault areas, in particular the Pas-de-Calais region.

### Preparatory Phase

It was intended that as D-Day approached the air attacks would be increasingly directed to the invasion itself. No assault could be undertaken if the enemy enjoyed any local air superiority, therefore Pointblank remained crucially important since it had resulted in the continuous attrition of the Luftwaffe. However, there was a great deal of other work needed before the invasion armada was launched.

The number of these requirements was too much for the Tactical Air Forces alone so it was agreed that the heavy bombers were to be called on when necessary, even if the targets were tactical. In addition to airfields and aircraft production facilities, this involved attacks against railway communications, coastal batteries, Crossbow (the V-1) sites and naval targets. Air reconnaissance was intensified to monitor enemy dispositions, movements and construction tasks.

### The Transportation Plan

The key to the success was the ability to establish a secure and strong beachhead. In addition to gaining air superiority, it was essential German reinforcements could not reach the area quickly to repel the invasion.

The French railway system was a key element that the Germans would have to use to reinforce the invasion area. As D-Day drew nearer, a tactical phase was to attack railway and road centres, bridges and rolling stock to paralyse the invasion area and the routes leading to the region.

Seventy-five railway targets were identified and most destroyed or damaged during April and May, crippling transport in Northern

France. Almost 22,000 sorties were flown and 66,517 tons of bombs dropped.

The concluding phase of the Plan, which began on May 24, was the destruction of all the rail and road bridges to isolate the assault area. The task was given to the fighter-bombers of the tactical squadrons of the 2nd TAF and the USAAF 9th Air Force. By June 6, all 24 bridges between Rouen and Paris were blocked, with 18 destroyed. A further 12 major bridges along possible German reinforcements routes had been destroyed.

There were other very important targets, in particular the need to attack the huge coastal defence batteries, which had the potential to inflict great damage on the invasion fleet.

Ten days before D-Day the bomber forces had already dropped 8,600 tons on these batteries and on the final night, 1,000 Halifaxes, Lancasters and Mosquitoes attacked 10 batteries in the invasion area. It was claimed that only four were active during the assault and these were subjected to a naval bombardment.

One of the greatest obstacles was the enemy radar chain along the Western European coastline. Installations that could not be jammed and those that could report on shipping or direct batteries to repel an airborne assault were scheduled for destruction. As with all the other operations, for every target attacked in the invasion area, two were attacked outside.

The raids were postponed as long as possible, giving the enemy the minimum of time to repair or replace damaged installations. Attacks on long-range early warning systems began on May 10, launched on 42 sites.

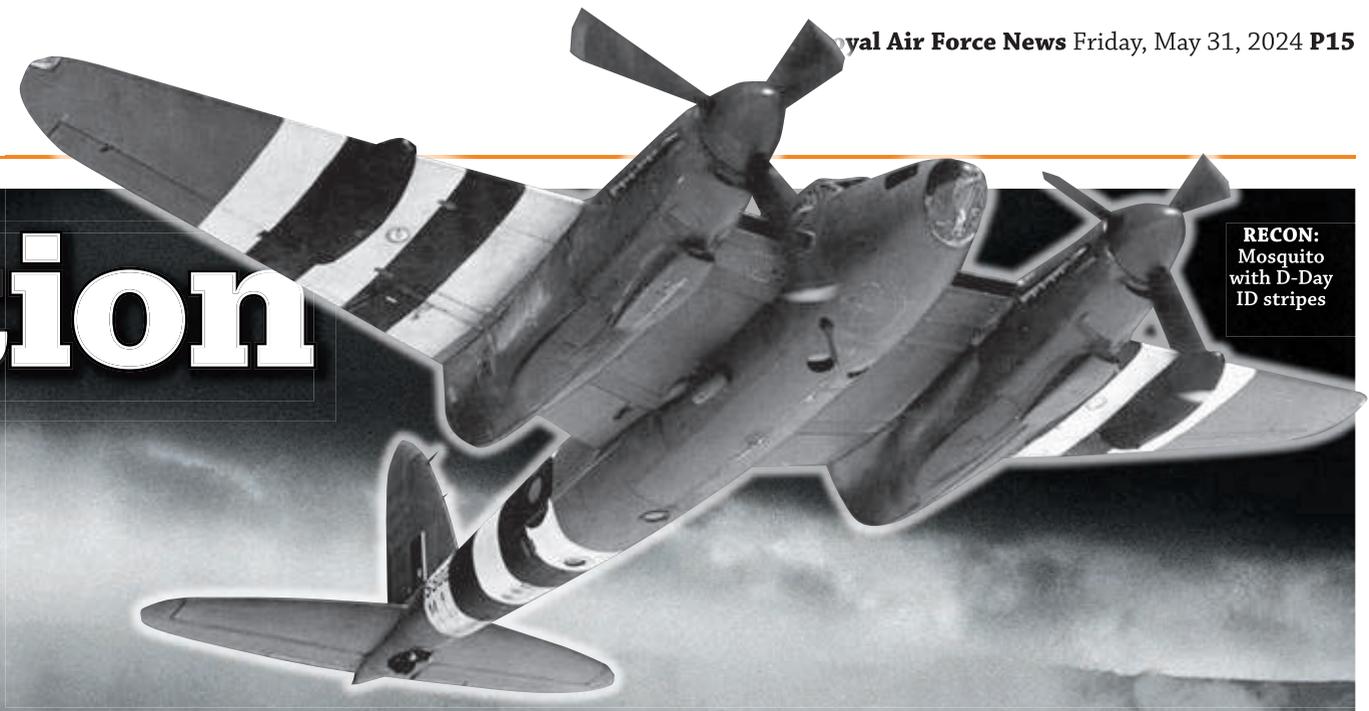
### The Airfield Plan

Although the Luftwaffe had suffered heavy losses during the Pointblank campaign, it was essential to achieve and maintain air supremacy. Airfields in Belgium and northern France could be used by the Luftwaffe so a plan was devised to destroy all aircraft maintenance and repair facilities on main airfields within a radius



of 150 miles of Caen attacks on runways, ha aircraft, control centre installations. Attacks began on Ma fighter airfields within and against 59 bomber l west Europe. Another 3 attacked before D-Day by the USAAF but Bom and 2nd TAF also played

# operation



**RECON:**  
Mosquito  
with D-Day  
ID stripes



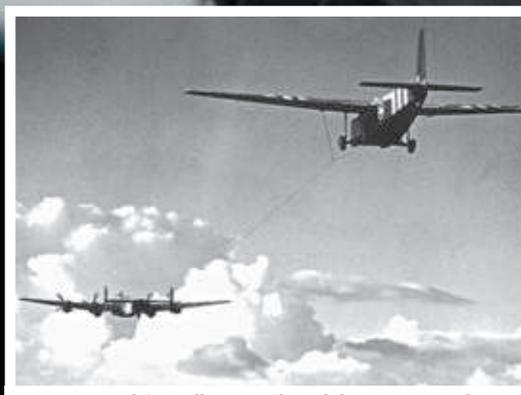
**AMERICANS:**  
1st Infantry  
Division  
troops storm  
Omaha Beach  
on June 6



aded onto a 245 Sqn Typhoon



**BRITISH:** Soldiers struggle ashore at Sword Beach on D-Day



**ON TOW:** Halifax pulls a Hamilcar glider to Normandy



**CHIEFS:** AM Coningham, AVM Broadhurst & ACM Tedder

... followed by  
hangars, parked  
... and airfield  
...  
... 11 against 40  
... range of Caen  
... bases in north-  
... 4 airfields were  
... the majority  
... ber Command  
... d a part.

### Air Reconnaissance

Once the air operations for the preparatory phase were in full swing in March, there was an increase in reconnaissance activity. There was an urgent need for aerial photographs to monitor German forces and assess the battle damage on targets that had been attacked. Images were taken of beaches and their exits, of airfields, drop and landing zones, camps, supply dumps,

gun emplacements and many other kinds of military installations. Many of these required the aircraft fitted with oblique cameras to fly at low level over heavily defended targets. One RAF Mobile Field Photographic Section alone made 120,000 prints for the Army in the two weeks before D-Day. Reconnaissance aircraft under AEF flew 3,125 sorties between April 1 and D-Day, while 106 Group and 8th

Air Force aircraft flew 1,519 Overlord sorties in the same period. **Ready for the Assault** When hundreds of aircraft took off during the late evening of June 5, the preparatory work for the greatest invasion in history was complete. Nearly 200,000 aircraft had flown on Overlord missions in the two months leading up to the invasion. Almost

200,000 tons of bombs, as well as other armaments, had been dropped on the enemy. The first air operations in support of the assault commenced as soon as the convoys sailed and the air war moved into a new phase. The preparation was complete and its success would be measured by the achievements of those setting out, and to follow, on the re-conquest of Europe.



Help us recognise  
engineering excellence



# MAKING WAVES

# MAKING HISTORY

Nominate an Armed Forces  
Technician today



The IET Achievement Awards 2024

[theiet.org/AFTech-award](https://theiet.org/AFTech-award)

■ Please note letters must be a MAXIMUM of 300 words and any accompanying pictures sent as attached, hi-res JPEG files

Email: editor@rafnews.co.uk Post: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP14 4UE

Letters

# A Valiant effort

Royal Air Force News Friday, March 22, 2024 P14

Feature

## Secrets of V-Force nuke role revealed



**SECRETARY OF DEFENCE** Sir Peter Dutton has announced that the V-Force Victor bomber will be decommissioned in 2025.

**LOT** has been written about the Valiant, the Victor and the Vulcan, but not much about their strategic nuclear strike role.

**THE** author Dr Tony Redding has aimed to correct that with his new book *V-Bombers, Britain's Nuclear Deterrence in the Cold War* (grubstreet.co.uk).

**THE** book includes much from material on V-Force weapons, war mission tactics for attack, defence and nuclear deterrence.

**THE** author interviewed more than 75 V-Force air and ground crew and reviewed more than 300 operational records reports and other official documents.

**HE** shows how the V-Bombers retained a vital capacity to deliver a small number of the very largest cities in the Soviet Union in the period until the handover of Britain's nuclear deterrence to the United States in 1969.

**THE** book concludes that within the first few hours, a small force of surviving V-bombers could have undertaken a nuclear mission in relation to the United States. In other words, a few British V-bombers had the destructive capacity to destabilise the balance between the superpowers.

**THE** book concludes that within the first few hours, a small force of surviving V-bombers could have undertaken a nuclear mission in relation to the United States. In other words, a few British V-bombers had the destructive capacity to destabilise the balance between the superpowers.

**THE** book concludes that within the first few hours, a small force of surviving V-bombers could have undertaken a nuclear mission in relation to the United States. In other words, a few British V-bombers had the destructive capacity to destabilise the balance between the superpowers.

### Point of order

A REPORT in *RAF News* No 1584 (May 17) omitted to include the announcement that HM King Charles III has accepted the patronage of the RAF Benevolent Fund, following in the footsteps of his mother, the late Queen Elizabeth II, who was the Fund's Patron from 1952 until her death in 2022.

**I** READ the very interesting article in *RAF News* No. 1580 (March 22) relating to the V-Force in the 50s and 60s (see above).

I did my National Service at Honington (3 Group) and did two years in the control tower. I was therefore very familiar with Valiants (I would like a £1 coin for every one I saw take off and land!).

From the tower I often saw low-loaders in a convoy taking

'something' to the Station Secret Area. Such convoys were heavily guarded by civil police, military police and others – I wonder what they were guarding...

Just out of interest, I was a passenger on a Valiant for a formation – Valiant, Vulcan and Victor – flypast at the Farnborough Air Show in late August 1958. I was demobbed two weeks later.

Alan Vincent  
Ex-SAC 5031583

Royal Air Force News Friday, March 22, 2024 P15

By Tracey Allen



### Unique Victor's on display at Duxford

ONE OF the few remaining Cold War bombers of its kind is on display at Duxford following a five-year restoration project supported by a fundraising campaign that raised more than £250,000.

The Handley Page Victor XB66, a historic jet-powered strategic bomber, made its first flight in November 1959, and was then flown with 15 Sqn based at RAF Cottesmore, as part of the Far East Air Force during the confrontation with Indonesia in 1963-65.

On return from Indonesia it was converted by Handley Page in 1965 into a two-point tanker and spent six years with 15 Sqn at Marham before being moved to Duxford just over a year later. The aircraft has been operated with 15 Sqn since 2017.

Retired Sqn Ldr Gordon 'Gary' Vind, who flew

more than 1,000 hours on the Victor, including on XB66, and was part of the restoration project, said: "It's an honour to see one of the Victor MB 161 returned to its finest form. Its unique and remarkable strategic bomber, made its first flight in November 1959, and was then flown with 15 Sqn based at RAF Cottesmore, as part of the Far East Air Force during the confrontation with Indonesia in 1963-65.

On return from Indonesia it was converted by Handley Page in 1965 into a two-point tanker and spent six years with 15 Sqn at Marham before being moved to Duxford just over a year later. The aircraft has been operated with 15 Sqn since 2017.

Retired Sqn Ldr Gordon 'Gary' Vind, who flew

research on higher command policy and tactics by the Bomber Command Operational Research Branch with first-hand accounts from many aircrew and supporting ground crew who flew or worked on the aircraft.

Dr Redding added: "This book is also about the dedicated aircrew and ground personnel, the aircraft, equipment and weapons and, of course, the V-bomber long period of supplementary nuclear services alongside the submarines, a period ending perhaps ironically, in the Black Buck raids of the Falklands War in 1982."



TRAIL-BLAZER: Olivia Cornell

## Best of luck to Olivia

**AS** EVER *RAF News* has good stuff – thank you to the Editor and staff.

One of the articles that caught my eye in *RAF News* No 1581 (April 5) was that wonderful item on page 5 about Olivia Cornell

being the first deaf RAF Cadet to fly an aircraft.

I thought that was just splendid and I wish her the very best of luck as she grows up.

John Stubbington  
By email

# Win former Sqn Ldr's latest WWII novel

A FORMER RAF officer, now a published author, has released his second novel which he describes as "my love letter to the wartime RAF"

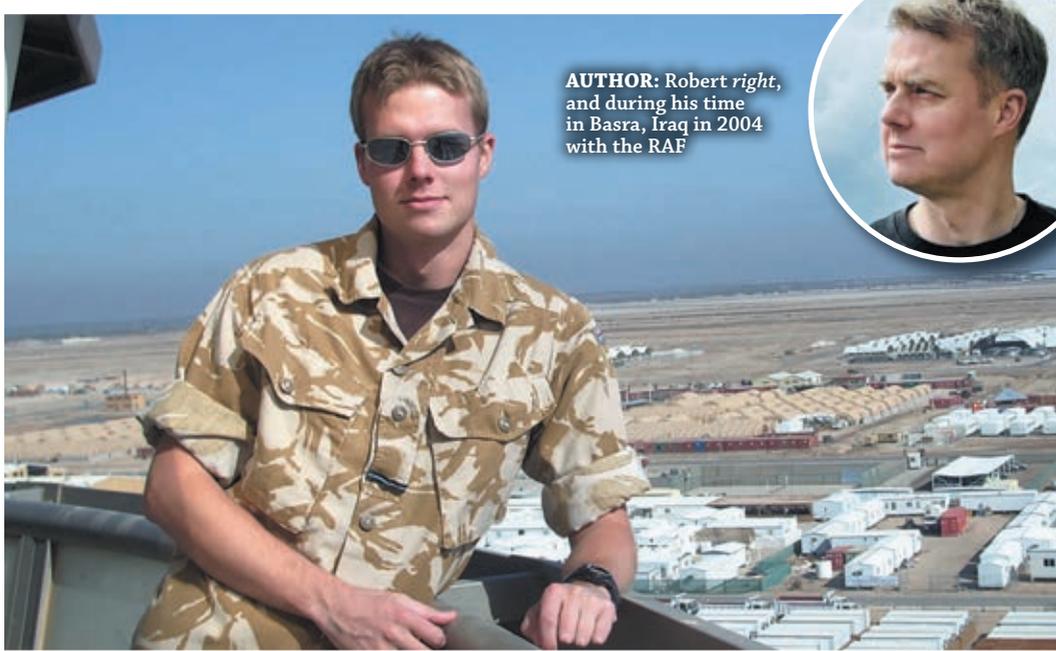
Retired Sqn Ldr Rob Smith, who writes as Robert Lassen, completed his first novel, *Night Fighters*, a supernatural thriller about World War II air combat operations, while serving. His latest book, *Operation Afterlight* (silvertailbooks.com) is, he said, "a straight-up historical military thriller in the Robert Harris/Ken Follett mould, built around a specialised RAF Mosquito strike squadron but with a heavy dose of Special Operations Executive and SS espionage operations."

The book has been endorsed by two bestselling authors, thriller writer James Swallow and aviation specialist Rowland White.

*Operation Afterlight* starts in March, 1945, when Hitler's fate is sealed. Allied forces have crossed the Rhine and the Red Army is closing in on Berlin. The war is all but over. But from the darkest depths of the Nazi terror machine, a new danger emerges – the final, awful product of history's most twisted minds. An ultimate act of bloody defiance against humanity itself.

Four unlikely allies are the only ones who can stop the horror: RAF pilot Andrew Durban, whose medals hide deep scars of battle; Johnny Grant, his terror-stricken navigator; Sarah Lane, a brilliant but ostracised SOE spymaster, haunted by the agents she sent to their deaths, and Jan Stahl, renegade SS assassin who carries his own devastating secrets.

From the deadly skies over Germany to the



**AUTHOR:** Robert Lassen, and during his time in Basra, Iraq in 2004 with the RAF

panic-filled streets of a collapsing Reich, they must find a way to not only uncover a nightmare vision, but to stop it becoming a reality.

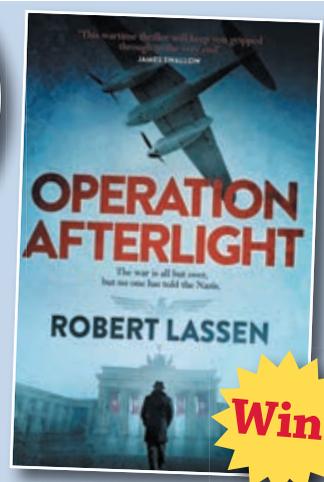
Born in Oxford and raised in Cheshire, Rob served in the RAF for 18 years including multiple operational tours in the Middle East, but said his first love was always writing. He now lives in Germany with his American wife and their two children.

He has written dozens of short stories and

novellas and is the author of the *K Department* series of novels about a secretive wartime UK government intelligence organisation that uses borderline supernatural methods to fight back against the Nazis.

He was also one of the lead high fantasy tie-in writers for Sony Online Entertainment's *Everquest Next* game project.

● Go to: [robertlassen.com](http://robertlassen.com) for more information about his fiction.



Win!

WE HAVE a signed copy of *Operation Afterlight* up for grabs. For your chance to own it, send us the correct answer to the following question:

**What is the title of Robert Lassen's first novel?**

Email your answer, marked *Operation Afterlight* book competition, to: [tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk) or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by June 14.

## 2007 Porsche Caymen S: F15 RAF



Could split registration. Manual 6-speed, 58,000 miles.  
Full Porsche specialist service. No MOT advisories.  
Zun body kit front and back.

● *Details and photos from [mrb@aviationprojects.co.uk](mailto:mrb@aviationprojects.co.uk)*

To advertise in

### RAF News

contact 07482571535

or

email on [edwin.rodriques@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:edwin.rodriques@rafnews.co.uk)

**NAAFI**  
FUND

**2024**

Supporting projects that improve the quality of life for UK Armed Forces communities, wherever they are in the world.



**APPLICATIONS OPEN 1<sup>ST</sup> MAY**

Deadline to apply 31<sup>st</sup> May



Scan me to get started!

  
[@naafisocial](https://www.instagram.com/naafisocial)

# QUEEN ETHELBURGA'S COLLEGIATE

Welcoming day students from  
3 months to 19 years  
and boarders  
from Year 3



Next Open Morning: 9 March 2024

email [admissions@qe.org](mailto:admissions@qe.org) to book a tour or call 01423 333333

## Obituary

Flt Lt Desmond Curtis DFC

# Navigator helped keep the U-boats out of Channel in build up to D-Day

**F**LIGHT LIEUTENANT Desmond Curtis, who has died aged 100, flew more than 70 sorties in Beaufighter and Mosquito strike aircraft and was awarded the DFC for his exceptional navigational skills.

He enlisted in the RAF in 1940 and trained as a navigator. After converting to the Beaufighter, where he teamed up with Doug Turner, the beginning of a two-year partnership, they joined 235 Squadron and began flying from Leuchars in Fife at the end of 1942.

The squadron flew reconnaissance sorties over the North Sea seeking enemy warships. They also escorted torpedo bombers attacking shipping off the Norwegian coast. To counter these operations, the Luftwaffe reinforced its fighter squadrons based in Norway. On one occasion they were attacked by an enemy fighter when Turner descended to very low level and began to take evasive action, preventing the pursuing aircraft from firing a shot. Curtis later described the action as “an exhilarating 10 minutes or so.”

Curtis and Turner left 235 Sqn in March 1943 to join 618 Sqn. After their first flight in a Mosquito, Curtis described it as “like going from a Morris Minor to a Rolls-Royce.”

On April 1, 1943, they arrived at the remote and bleak airfield at Skitten, north of Wick in Caithness, to join a new, top secret squadron, No 618. The squadron, equipped with the Mosquito, was to carry a smaller version of the Barnes Wallis bouncing bomb being developed for 617 (Dambuster) Sqn, which was to attack the Ruhr Dams. With the bomb, codenamed Highball, the squadron was to mount a low-level attack against the German battleship Tirpitz, moored in Altenfjord in the far north of Norway.

The Tirpitz was moored at the extreme range of the Mosquito, which presented unique challenges for Curtis and his fellow navigators. Numerous long-range trial flights were flown,



**DESMOND CURTIS:** The Navigator aged 22

which also allowed fuel consumption tests to be carried out.

Detailed study of the position of Tirpitz, the surrounding terrain and the extreme range caused the aircrew to consider the attack as “a suicide mission.” Curtis considered it to be “a one-way mission.”

Following constant delays, senior RAF and Royal Navy commanders decided in July 1943 that an attack against Tirpitz would be mounted by midget submarines. This decision served to highlight the problem of what to do with 618 Sqn.

The squadron began training for anti-submarine operations. Curtis and Turner left for Cornwall. Most of Germany’s U-boats, in addition to a large surface fleet of destroyers and minesweepers, were based at French ports on the Bay of Biscay. They posed a major threat to the impending

operations for D-Day. Curtis and Turner discovered that they would be flying the Mosquito Mk XVIII, which was equipped with a 57mm anti-tank gun with a 6lb warhead mounted under the nose (known as the Tsetse gun) in addition to its standard fit with rockets and cannons.

On March 25, 1944, flying at 50 feet, Turner spotted a surfaced U-boat off La Pallice and made four frontal attacks with his six-pounder Tsetse. Hits were observed before the submarine (U-976) submerged, leaving an oil patch on the surface. Four crew were killed but the remaining 49 escaped the sinking submarine, including the captain, Raimund Tiesler.

Two days later, Turner spotted another surfaced U-boat and he and his wingman attacked from out of the sun. At least four six-pounder hits were observed. The U-960 was seriously damaged, one shell hitting the conning tower, demolishing the periscope and injuring 14 of the crew. The submarine limped into La Pallice. Both Curtis and Turner were awarded the DFC for “exemplary gallantry.”

In the days leading up to D-Day, Turner and Curtis, now with the Tsetse flight of 248 Sqn, were out every day as part of Operation Cork, Coastal Command’s effective operation to stop any U-boats or surface ships entering the English Channel to pose a threat to the great seaborne armada. In addition to seeking out submarines, the aircraft were now used to attack the German surface fleet endeavouring to break into the Channel.

On June 7, Turner and Curtis spotted the wash of a surfacing U-boat. Despite the low cloud, they made two attacks hitting the conning tower and the hull and forcing the submarine to crash dive. A patch of oil was seen on the surface of the sea and U-212 headed back to La Pallice for repairs and took no further part in the operations to interrupt the D-Day landings and build-up.

In the days that followed, Curtis and Turner attacked German launches and minesweepers. In early July, they used the Tsetse gun against Sperrbrecher flak ships and M-class minesweepers in the mouth of the Gironde.

Coastal Command’s operations before and during the landings and the massive build up that followed proved highly successful, with no U-boats penetrating the English Channel and the German surface fleet kept at bay.

Once the French U-boat ports had been recaptured, the squadron moved to join the Banff Strike Wing in Morayshire. After arriving at Banff, Curtis and Turner flew on many sorties attacking enemy shipping off the Norwegian coast when the Mosquito formations claimed the destruction of many ships.

Curtis left the squadron in January 1945. He commented, “the main thing was we both survived, and, with only a few exceptions, we returned the aircraft in the same condition as we got into it.”

In December 1989 he established contact with Raimund Tiesler, the commander of U-976, and so began a close personal friendship between the two former adversaries. During the 50th anniversary of VE Day, Curtis, Tiesler and three of his U-boat crew sailed from St Nazaire with a French diving team and cast a wreath over the wreck of the submarine in memory of the four German seamen who had lost their lives.

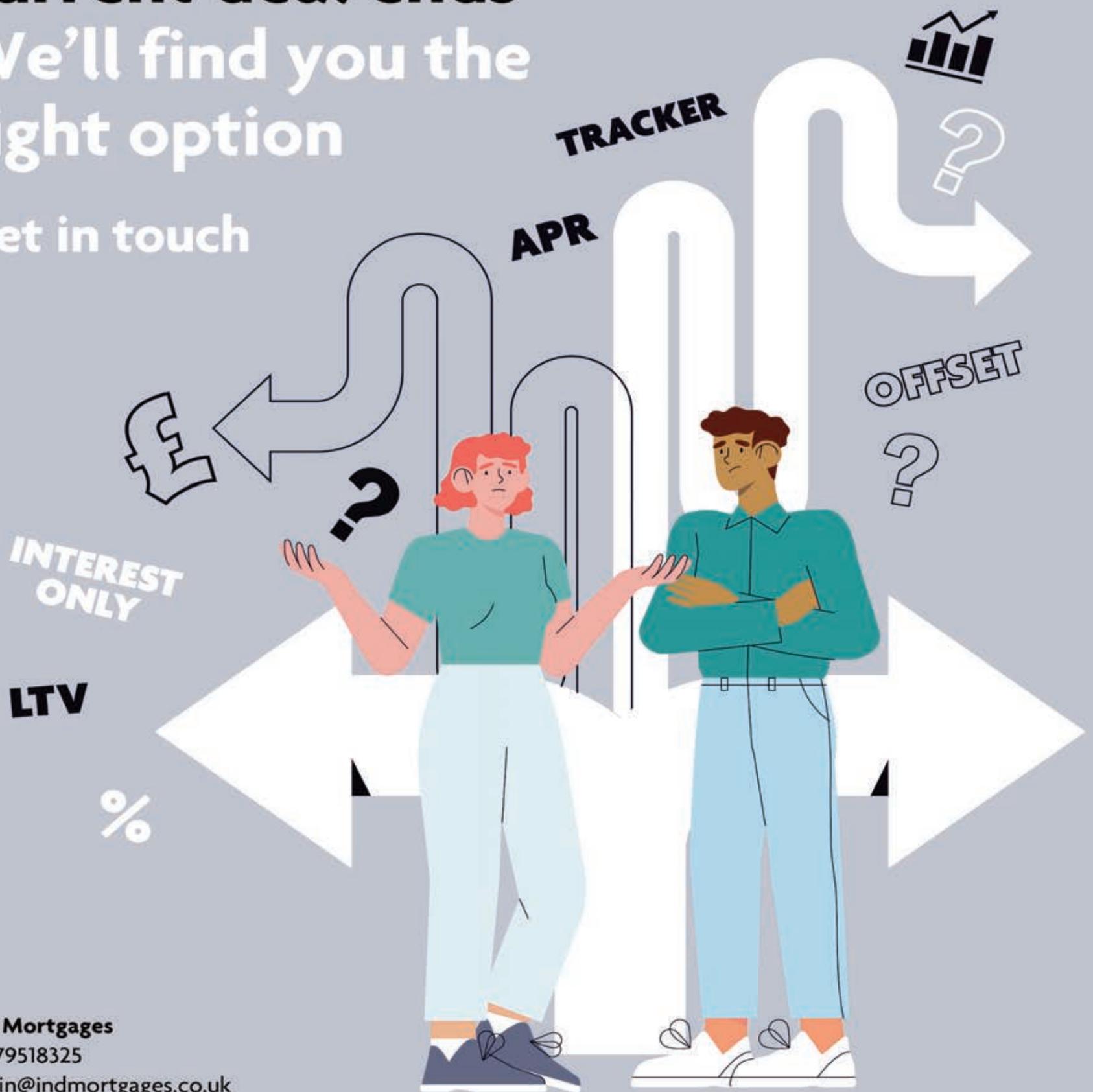
Curtis and Tiesler and their families visited each other on a regular basis. At a large gathering, the German said quietly: “Des, why did I have to wait so long for a younger brother?”. Curtis commented, “That moment pointed to the futility of war, when two honourable people who had fought to kill each other realised how absurd the whole war was.”

In retirement, Curtis was a dedicated supporter and volunteer of numerous charities, including SSAFA and the Devon and Dorset Air Ambulance.

# Worried your mortgage payments will rise when your current deal ends We'll find you the right option



Get in touch



JND Mortgages  
07879518325  
edwin@jndmortgages.co.uk

Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up repayments on your mortgage

# Kia's stealth bomber

**Futuristic EV6 does 0-62 in 3.5 seconds**



BEHOLD KIA'S new flagship model, the EV6 GT, the most powerful car the Korean giant has ever produced. Delivering a stonking 577bhp and 0-62mph acceleration time of 3.5 seconds, the GT nudges the boundaries of EV supercar territory. To back up that statement, it finished the 2023 1000 Miglia Green as the first-placed performance EV. Kia is therefore very proud of it and quite right too.

## Outside

There are very few external differences between the standard EV6 and the GT, but larger alloys, neon brake callipers and small GT badge on the tail are subtle clues as to what lies beneath the skin. Upgraded bumpers and a smart spoiler add to the effect.

Sleek, angular lines draw the eye to a number of distinctive features. The rounded front arches, angular rear LED lights and chiselled side skirts that channel these lines seamlessly towards the nose are all of note. It's the definition of futuristic. If you produced a Korean version of *Star Wars*, this is how a speeder would look. In matte grey, it has an even more 'stealth-fighter' vibe.

## Inside

The cabin is generally a nice place to sit, incorporating styling details that remind you you're driving something pretty special. You get suede-trimmed bucket seats, with neon piping, and unique inserts on the dashboard, to name a couple. The eco-friendly use of recycled bottles and 'vegan' fake leather are carried



over from the standard EV6. The interior quality is excellent. Seats are comfortable and there's plenty of space all-round.

The infotainment system can take a few minutes to get your head around, with its many functions, as can the driver display. Once you've set everything up to your specification, however, it's pretty intuitive. There's no shortage of physical buttons, from the steering wheel to the centre console, which helps to make the car easy to operate on the move. There are actual knobs to control temperature too. Everything is well laid out and it all works, well.

## On The Road

If you're looking for pure acceleration, off the mark, the GT is astounding. You get 215bhp from the front motor and 362bhp

from the back, which delivers a lot of G. 0-62mph takes just 3.5 seconds, which is ruddy close to the 3.2 second time of a Porsche Taycan Turbo. It is rapid and will leave you clinging on for dear life. You might want to warn your passengers first.

It takes off like a supercar but unfortunately it doesn't handle like one through the bends. It's perfectly capable and reassuringly predictable, with a flat ride, but it doesn't change direction like a swallow on steroids. Then again, this is a car that weighs 2,610 kg, a GT, rather than a track machine. With this in mind, we won't hold that against it.

Around town, the ride is fairly refined and blissfully silent. It's also easy to live with as an everyday family wagon, which makes it a sensible performance buy. You

## Kia EV6 GT

### Pros

- Stonking acceleration
- Practical family motoring
- Fast recharging
- Distinctive styling

### Cons

- Handling could be sharper
- Range not the greatest

### Verdict

The EV6 is a cracking family EV and the GT takes it to a new level. Rivals are more fun to drive, but the GT delivers straight-line performance that puts it in the game with some serious players. Cost is relative here. Starting from £62,675, it isn't cheap but you'd spend over £100k to get your backside to 60mph this quick elsewhere. Absolutely worth a test-drive.

get a 77kWh battery that will deliver an official WLTP range of 252 miles on a charge. Start hoofing it though and you'll get nowhere near that. If you suffer easily with range-anxiety on a long run, you'll be twitching with this one. You may want to consider the entry level RWD version, which manages 328 miles.

If you want a car that's fast off the mark though, this is brilliant and, costing around £40k less than rivals such as the Porsche Taycan, or the Audi E-Tron GT, it's a bargain.



**THIS WEEK** we're back in the US for the final destination in our Florida travel series. The jewel in the Sunshine State's crown, the closest thing to paradise in the Continental United States. The Florida Keys are a real wonder, full of natural beauty, character and adventure. They were home to Ernest Hemingway, Tennessee Williams and Jimmy Buffett, to name but a few. Also a favourite retreat for presidents Truman and Clinton.

You can drive from the mainland to Key Largo and onwards, all the way down to Key West. The Overseas Highway stretches for more than 100 miles into the Gulf of Mexico, connecting the main islands of the archipelago via 42 bridges.

When I say the Keys have character, I mean it. In 1982 there was even a revolution here. The Mayor of Key West at the time, Dennis Wardlow, read a Declaration of Secession, christened the Florida Keys the Conch Republic, then declared war on the United States of America.

The war lasted for 60 seconds, but it was a brilliant publicity stunt that grabbed the attention of the world. It was a protest about the fact that traffic between the Keys and the mainland was being targeted for drugs checks in the early 80s, causing huge delays. It worked. The checks were removed and tourism flourished once more.

Sightseeing, diving, fishing, watersports, golf and shopping are all on the cards by day, with a colourful sunset celebration held each evening in Mallory Square to top it off. Jugglers, musicians and acrobats perform as the sun sets dramatically over the Gulf of Mexico.

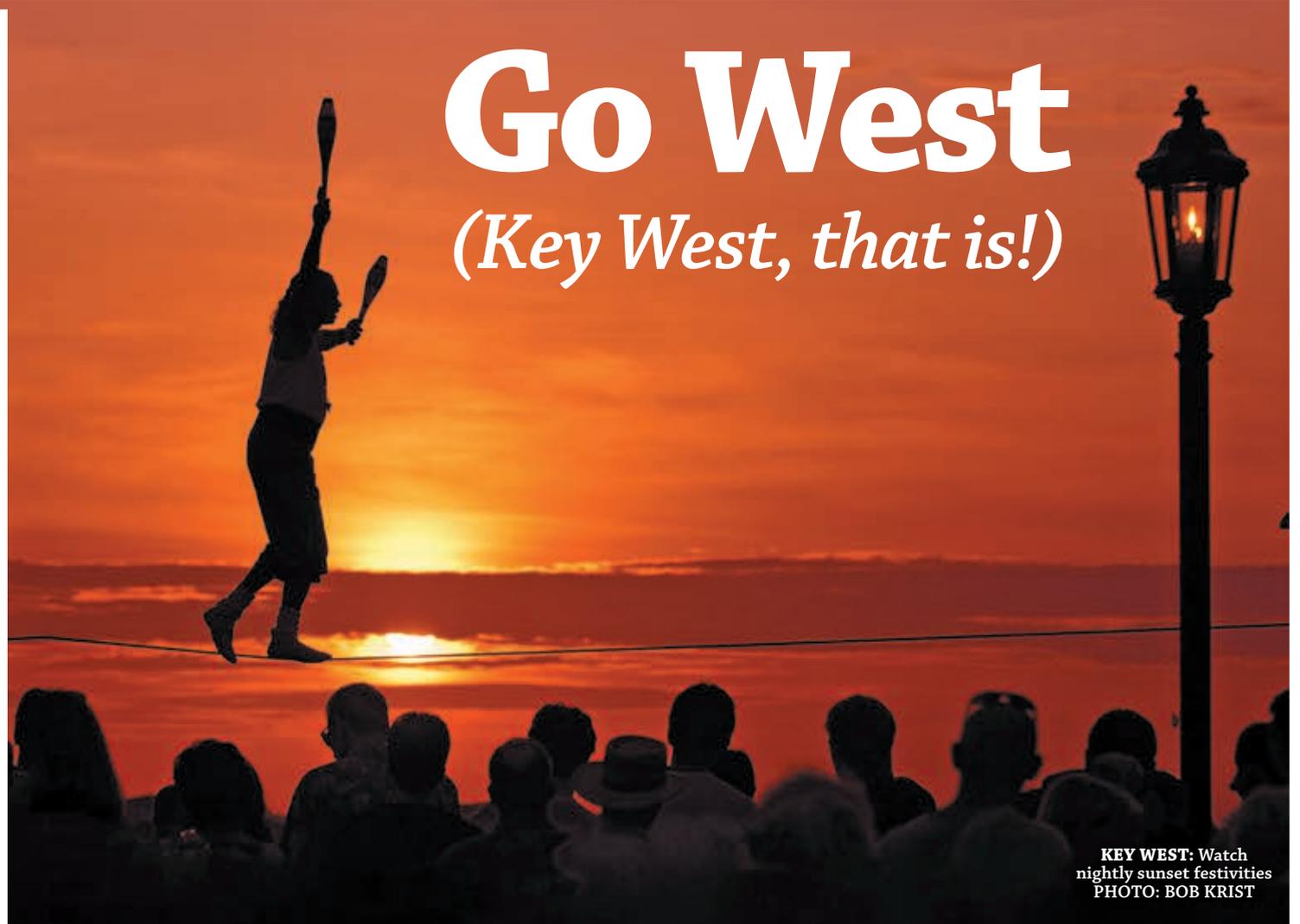
At night, there are sidewalk cafes, open-air bars, legendary pubs and world-class restaurants to keep you entertained. Palm trees line streets and walkways, while warm ocean breezes create an ideal climate for much of the year. The best time to visit is between December and May, it's generally sunny and temperatures are between 70f (21c) to 90f (32c). Mid-August to October herald hurricane season, so beware.

**Getting Around**

To me, the best way to explore the Keys is on the water. Jet skis and boat trips are a must. On land, parking is at a premium, so park up at the hotel and get around by bike if you want to enjoy the sights. There are also plenty of tour trains, trolleys and taxis if you prefer.

**Adventure**

Key West – Jet skis are the way forward here and nowhere does watersports better than Barefoot Billy's. Founded in 1992, Barefoot Billy's Island Tour was



# Go West

*(Key West, that is!)*

**KEY WEST:** Watch nightly sunset festivities  
PHOTO: BOB KRIST



**RIDE:** Stunning cycle lanes



**NATURAL BEAUTY:** Gulf of Mexico



**GREAT RESTAURANTS:** Seafood a speciality



**CYCLE:** Key Lime Bike Tours

the first around-island jet ski experience. Today it's as popular as ever. Hopping choppy water at 50mph really thrills the senses, then you find yourself bobbing in calm, turquoise waters, hidden in secluded bays that are unspoilt by tourism. For around \$160 for a 90-minute guided tour, it's worth every penny (barefootbillys.com).

Islamorada – Transparansea is a new excursion company that operates the only, Seakeeper stabilized 46-foot glass bottom boat in Florida. It's an instant hit with lovers of nature. They also run night excursions, lit by 60,000 lumens of LEDs. There the reefs take on a totally different look (robbies.com/glass-bottom-boat.htm).

**Relax**

The Keys are not known for their natural beaches but there are plenty of perfect sandy spots created by the water's edge if you want to lounge. Chances are though, you'll be out on the water.

Key West – To truly unwind in paradise, join Sebago Watersports for a Sunset Sail. On board a large catamaran, you'll enjoy live music, free drinks and stunning sunset views of Key West's picturesque landmarks, all under the flutter of the huge sails. If you want more adrenaline, try out a parasail tour instead (keywestsebago.com).

Getting around by bicycle is another relaxing way to spend your days.

Key West – There are many rental companies around, but Key Lime Bike Tours offers a guided ride that is second to none (keylimebiketours.com).

Marathon – Another great cycling experience, this time from Bike Marathon. Pick up your cycle from the store and bingle down the old Seven Mile Bridge to picturesque Pigeon Key. Here, you'll find yourself surrounded by dazzling turquoise water on a settlement that has been lost in time (bikemarathonbikerentals.com).

**Stay**

Key West – The Capitana is one of the best hotels on the island, in my book, with a man-made private beach, a beautifully landscaped pool, a tiki bar and well-appointed accommodation. Owned and operated by the Opal Group, it's a well-designed, luxury boutique hotel, positioned right on the water's edge. Our room had a stunning waterfront view, with bright, airy décor, two comfy queen-sized beds and a generous en suite bathroom. A small kitchen area, relaxing lounge seating and a balcony added to the appeal. Service was outstanding and it's located near all the major Key West attractions (opalcollection.com/capitana).

Islamorada – Amara Cay Resort is a breathtaking spot that is a popular wedding venue. Another one with a man-made beach, palm trees lining the turquoise water's edge and hammocks strung between them. Inside, the hotel

facilities are smart and modern (islamoradaresortcollection.com/amara-cay-resort).

**Eat**

There are so many amazing places to eat in the Keys that you're absolutely spoilt for choice, but here are my top picks.

Key West – Half Shell Raw Bar, situated right on the water's edge, in the harbour, the seafood here is truly outstanding (halfshellrawbar.com).

Islamorada – The Hungry Tarpon is another great restaurant. This one is situated at Robbie's Marina, an idyllic spot where you can see huge tarpon swim around the dock in shallow, clear water. Again, the seafood is amazing (hungrytarpon.com).

Islamorada – Chef Michael's is a cut above the rest and closer to fine dining. Everything is sourced locally and served with flair (foodtotalkabout.com).

- [visitflorida.com](http://visitflorida.com)
- [fla-keys.co.uk](http://fla-keys.co.uk)

ANGLING

# Mark of champs

## Whopper Scar helps pair seal Barston win



UNCOMMON COMMON: Winners Sgts James Mitchell (left) and Lee Hasbury with 22lb giant Scar

### Daniel Abrahams

SERGEANTS LEE Hasbury and James Mitchell took the season's opening carp angling event at Barston Lakes in Solihull.

The duo produced an 85lb total catch weight to win by three pounds over Sgt Bobby Harrison and Cpl Chris Trevor at the picturesque 21-acre site at West Midlands Golf Club.

The event saw 28 anglers in teams of two battle it out over 48 hours for the top spot, with the five biggest fish scoring.

Mitchell opened proceedings with a 14lb 4oz mirror carp, quickly followed by his partner Hasbury landing a 15lb fish and topping the leader board.

The prolific venue did not disappoint, as anglers were steadily catching throughout the day. WO Richard Cooke landed what proved to be the biggest fish of the match, a common carp weighing 22lb 8oz.

Eventual runners-up Trevor and Harrison had a good afternoon run landing six fish, the biggest topping the scales at 19lb 8oz.

The pair led after the first evening with five fish weighing 81lb 12oz, with Hasbury and Mitchell in second on 81lb 1oz and Sgt Stuart Jepson and Cpl Jamie Page with 80lb. Later that evening Mitchell hooked one of the lake's largest common carp, known as



BIG CATCH: Flt Lt Carl Booth

Scar, weighing 22lb 1oz, the catch giving the pair a good chance of winning the event.

The second day provided further action across the lake but the top three remained in contention, although with fish of 16lb 8oz and 15lb 3oz Hasbury and Mitchell improved their score, taking the lead with a weight of 85lb.

On the final morning WO Jason Verney hooked an 18lb 12oz prize, which saw him and WO Richard Cooke into third place on 82lb 2oz.



WINNERS: (left to right) Cpl Christopher Trevor, Sgt Bobby Harrison, Sgt James Mitchell, WO Richard Cooke and WO Jason Verney

SCENIC: Well-stocked Barston Lakes in Solihull

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)



# RAF News

The Forces Favourite Read

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

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

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

**RAF News**

The official voice of the Royal Air Force

ICE HOCKEY

# Hungry like the wolf

Daniel Abrahams

HAVING ACHIEVED the highest-profile officiating role in his ice hockey career in the NIHL South play-off final, Cpl Lewis McCracken told *RAF News Sport*: "I'll keep pushing."

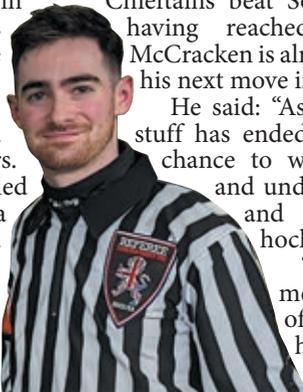
McCracken was a linesman at the semi-final at London's Alexandra Palace between Solent Devils and Streatham RedHawks and, after an excellent performance, was also asked to officiate in the final.

He said: "It is the high point of my officiating so far. I had a great team around me for both games and to be asked to officiate in the final as well was a great honour. At 23 I have plenty more to learn, but I am officiating at events like this and working with experienced officials."

McCracken oversaw a shock semi result as Solent beat league-topping Streatham 3-2. He said: "I prepared in my usual way – music blaring in the dressing room before. I like a bit of 80s tunes *Hungry Like The Wolf, Girls on Film* – Duran Duran tends to be the type of thing. Then we had a chat about the coming game, but soon enough I was out there and knew I was officiating in a big event. The crowd was immense and the game fast and furious."

The aviator had to change a call he made and explain it to the players. "I think that really settled me down, I had made a mistake and I corrected it," he said.

"The players appreciated my taking control in that way and I was complimented by the



## Duran Duran fan linesman eyes move to reffing after South play-off final success



FINALS ACTION: Cpl Lewis McCracken on the ice and helmet off, inset below

referee's official after the end of the period."

The final saw Chelmsford Chieftains beat Solent 6-1, but having reached that peak McCracken is already planning his next move in the sport.

He said: "As the semi-pro stuff has ended, it's now my chance to work at junior and under-18 matches and recreational hockey."

"I will be mentoring new officials and hopefully see those coming

online for a few matches later in the seasons.

"I spoke with Sqn Ldr James Tasker, a fellow official, and he congratulated me, he had worked on the North League Two Finals of NIHL North 1 – massive congrats to him as well.

Not resting on his laurels, the linesman is now making the jump to refereeing.

He said: "It will mean I have to go back to the junior level but I'll speak with Ice Hockey UK and see what they say."

The move could initially see McCracken officiating as a linesman on Saturdays and

reffing on Sundays. Next up he will be attending the National Ice Hockey Officials camp in August, at Nottingham Nation Ice Centre, where he will be tested on rules, fitness and ice tests. Passing this could win a promotion to premier league action.

But his first mission is finding a place to keep his finals coin from Ally Pally.

"I have just moved to Brize Norton and I think I will mount it on the wall in my garage. I am planning on building a bar in there, so it will fit in perfectly," he said.

● Follow RAF Ice Hockey on Instagram @RAFIceHockey

ICE HOCKEY

# IS history for ladies



RAF PUMAS: History-makers

ICE HOCKEY will make history next month as the RAF Pumas host the British Army Fury in the inaugural women's Inter-Services fixture at Ice Sheffield.

For the clash on June 3 the Pumas and RAF Aces (men's team) will take to the ice bolstered by the arrival of new personnel in the shape of ex-GB player Cpl Jess Barnicoat, the first military female coach, and Cpl Tom Hill, on the coaching side for the Aces.

Sgt Andy Rourke, head coach of the Pumas, said: "We are really hoping to get personnel along to support the team for what is such an historic event."

Regarding the new coaches, Rourke added: "Both bring a new way of thinking. Barnicoat's wealth of knowledge of the women's game coupled with Hill's desire to mentor bring excellent supporting elements to the coaching set-up."

"Having two individuals that want to progress as coaches themselves, as well as develop the players and push the female game forward, will ensure the drive for success and titles continues."

Aces' Programme Director Fg Off Adam Rosbottom added: "Our focus remains on winning the Inter-Service Championships. While our two most recent IS campaigns have been unsuccessful, it has highlighted many learning points to develop and improve on."

"The players have continued to work hard on and off the ice over the past 12 months and are ready to compete at Sheffield."

The preparation for the championships began in April, when the Pumas held a week-long selection Camp in Telford, where new players were able to compete for IS squad places.

Rourke said: "The Pumas are all working hard with their WNIHL or RAF regional teams to get the extra advantage leading up to the IS clash."

The Aces will face the Royal Navy at 7pm on June 4, before the loser of that game faces the Army the next day and the winner plays the Army on June 6. All clashes are held at Ice Sheffield, face-off is 7pm and admission is free.

WINDSURFING

# Braving Kathleen for Wave Championship

STORM KATHLEEN wasn't enough to deter Service windsurfers from hosting their Spring Wave Championships in Anglesey, Wales, with the dramatic backdrop the perfect kickstart to the season.

Ten to 12ft swell rolling into Rhosneigr Bay meant competitors were launched high into the air and able to show off their best jumps, loops and wave riding.

A hard battle was fought which took its toll on body and kit, but after battling it out for the afternoon, the competitors were brought into the beach and were given the judges' verdict.

Flt Lt Freddie Hunter took the

gold, with Flt Lt Mark Thompson the silver and Flt Lt John Rigg the bronze (after a dramatic kit-breaking crash). While AS1 Oliver Gregorelli came away with the best newcomer.

Hunter said: "While the country battered down the hatches, the RAF windsurfers counted their lucky stars that 'wind-roulette' looked to be paying out, and dusted off the high-wind kit ready to battle the elements. Gale force winds anywhere up to 50 knots whipped up a swell and threw the full power of nature on Traeth Crigyll, providing quite the theatre for the RAF Spring Wave Championships."



JUST SWELL: RAF waveriders were spoilt for choice PHOTO: PHIL DAWSON

Following the partial destruction of his kit in the waves and a lengthy swim back to the beach, Flt Lt Rigg said: "It's 100 per cent pure adrenaline out there. Some guys jump out of planes for it, when all you have to

do is ride the waves."

● Anyone interested in trying the sport and experienced windsurfers should contact Flt Lt Caroline Sharpe or visit: [rafsailing.co.uk/windsurfing](http://rafsailing.co.uk/windsurfing) for further information.

**Sport**

**WEIGHTLIFTING**



**STRENGTH:** AS1 Ellie McManus is one to watch PHOTOS: NICK JONES

# Young stars carry the weight of expectation

**Staff Reporter**

**ALL WEIGHTLIFTING eyes are focused on June 5 as the Service holds its annual championship to decide who takes to the stage to battle for Inter-Service glory in November.**

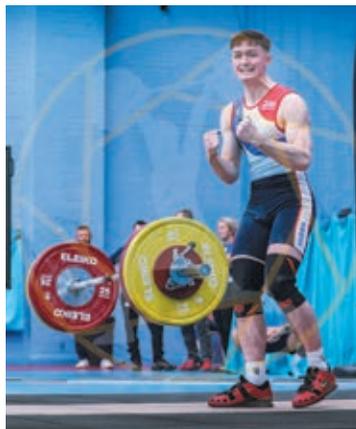
Sgt Lee Coonan, Head of Performance (Inter-Services Squad Coach) said: "I am incredibly excited to coach the RAF's elite male and female athletes at the British championships in July, but I am also looking forward to being the driving force behind the team to defend and retain the Inter-Service title for a third time later this year."

There is extra incentive for this year's IS stars with the event being held at RAF Cosford.

Cpl Mike Cutler, Operations and Team Manager, said: "Despite crashing out at my first event back in 2019, I found a passion for the sport. Since then, I have had the privilege to captain the RAF Olympic Weightlifting Association team to two Inter-Service titles, won two individual titles and was honoured to be selected as captain of the UKAF team twice.

"I will, of course, be aiming to lead the RAF to our third successive Inter-Service title, win the British/English Master Championships and represent at the British/English seniors champs for a second consecutive year."

The Service took the opportunity to shine at the recent British Weightlifting (BWL) Home Nations U23 v UKAF, a



**TALENT:** AS1 Josh Hibbs celebrates

precursor to the Champs, which was also hosted at Cosford.

The event, organised by the RAFOWA, saw GB's best junior and youth athletes face the best lifters in the UK Armed Forces. The event proved such a success, BWL, the National Governing Body for Olympic Weightlifting, has expressed interest in conducting further events with the RAFOWA in the months to come.

The strength in depth of the Service's lifters was highlighted by two of the most promising young lifters: AS1 Josh Hibbs and AS1 Ellie McManus.

After a 110kg snatch and 141kg clean and jerk, Hibbs is now hoping for a call-up to the Scotland Squad, while great things are also expected from McManus, who managed a 62kg snatch and 70kg clean and jerk. Both are expected to shine at the upcoming Cosford event.

● See RAF weightlifting on Instagram: @RAF\_WeightLifting

**CRICKET**

# SUM-THING'S WRONG HERE

It doesn't add up for RAF in IST20 at Lord's

**THE SERVICE'S** cricketers won their game against the Royal Navy but lost the IST20 at Lord's after being set a run chase but not the calculation by which to do it.

On a day where the cricket was continually confused by the weather, the ultimate confusion came in the final game of the day, where the RAF won the match, but not in the requisite number of overs for a win on run rate.

RAF captain Cpl Tom Shorthouse said: "I don't really understand what happened. We needed to get the score in a certain number of balls but for some reason we weren't told what that was. We tried to work it out ourselves, but nobody knew how to do it.

"In past tournaments other teams have been told what they would have to do, we weren't. I think we played the best cricket and haven't got across the line.

"We have Service referees, scorers and umpires on the day, who are not professional. I think it's good we have them, it's just a shame the day came down to this issue."

The opening clash of the day, UKAF women versus MCC women, fell victim to rain, and once the action did begin the RAF were put in to bat against the Army.

Shorthouse set about racking up a score, hitting three quick



**CLOSE GAME:** RAF v Army

PHOTOS: ALLIGIN

boundaries, while Sgt Ross Diver pulled a six to hit 45.

The two quick wickets from Army bowler Denzel James saw Shorthouse out for 24 and his replacement, Flt Lt Adam Fisher, go for a duck. Rain stopped play and the game was then reduced to 12 overs.

Diver bowled out on 27 with the RAF reaching 87-3, setting the Army 98 under Duckworth Lewis [a mathematical calculation for setting the target score in interrupted games].

The RAF took two quick wickets, but the Army settled. At 57-4 the Army were quickly reduced to 57-5, but they

somehow got home and the result, coupled with the Army losing to the Navy in their fixture two days before Lord's, blew things wide open.

Having bowled, the RAF were then left to chase down the RN total of 156 in their second match.

Shorthouse started brightly, 27 runs off 14 balls, while Fisher with Diver took the RAF to 82 runs before Diver was stumped.

Cpl Adam Sutcliffe, hitting five boundaries, three of which were sixes, left the RAF on 136-3, needing 21 runs, but being so close to victory the RAF pressed on only to finally win the game yet lose out on run rate.

**HOCKEY**

# Wg Cdr is a national champion

RAF HOCKEY Chair Wg Cdr Sharon Eveleigh-Hall had a capital day in London as her High Wycombe team became National Tier 2 Champions.

The weekend of action at the Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park saw both RAF hockey associations' chair and deputy chair in action but for Wg Cdr David Oatley it was to be silver not gold as his Reading team lost the O50s National Cup final 2-1 to Canterbury.

Playing for Wycombe Ladies versus Herne Bay in the Tier 2 final, Eveleigh-Hall came out victorious



**FLYING THE FLAG:** Wg Cdrs Sharon Eveleigh-Hall and David Oatley at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in East London

1-0 after a hard-fought game.

Oatley was playing for Reading O50s against Canterbury in the O50s National Cup final.

Having won the trophy for the previous three years, Oatley and his teammates were gunning for an unprecedented fourth win on the bounce. He said: "Alas it wasn't to be, Canterbury came

out of the blocks the sharper and, having defended well, scored twice on the counter-attack."

Reading managed to pull one goal back with plenty of time remaining, but Canterbury defended valiantly, with their ex-first team and GB capped keeper Simon Triggs, keeping Reading at bay.

RUGBY

**CAPTAIN'S BALL:**  
Fg Off Alex Stanley  
secures possession



# Coach in pledge to come back stronger from double losses

RAF	21
Army	45

**“WE HAVE a really tight bunch and young squad who will come back stronger,”** said FS Justin Coleman after the RAF men’s second IS championship defeat.

Following the 21-45 loss at Kingsholm, Gloucester to the Army, Coleman added: “Our depth and quality of players needs to be looked at further, we are moving in the right direction but the whole of our game needs to improve.

“We have made strides, but when our bench is patching up injuries and your opposition can then empty its bench with quality and, of course, Fijian internationals as the Army could, it’s always going to be a tough ask.”

On the field the RAF came within a point of the Navy at Brickfields, Plymouth, 25-24 in the IS opener. That result, coupled with a last gasp 43-42 Army win



**WORK TO DO:** RAF head coach FS Justin Coleman is interviewed by BFBS reporter Richard Wyeth after Army game at Kingsholm  
PHOTOS: SBS

at Twickenham against the Navy, meant the Kingsholm clash was winner takes all.

Things started badly for the RAF, with an early try for the Army, but a great move by Cpl Zack Taylor released Cpl Will Lamont, who went over despite the aviators being a man down because of a tough yellow against Cpl Josh McNally.

The game ebbed and flowed with the RAF going behind before McNally brought them back into it at 14-19 early in the second half.

Another yellow card, awarded

to Cpl Toby Evans, and a penalty try spelled the end of the game as the Army ran in a series of scores, before McNally set up Taylor for a consolation try.

Coleman added: “We lost players in the week before the Army game and the two harsh yellow cards cost us and changed the momentum for us.

“We held on for the first half, but when we lost Toby, the energy we had put into defending that loss in the first half killed us off really, and the game as well.”

● Follow RAF Rugby Union on Instagram @RAFRugby.

# A game of two halves

## Army clean-sheet after break kills off IS dream

Daniel Abrahams

RAF	19
Army	36

**THE SERVICE’S** women’s rugby union stars suffered the classic game of two halves as they lost out to the Army for IS glory this year 19-36.

The light blues produced a scintillating 30-minute, first-half display of pace, power and precision as they blasted into a 19-5 lead at the Kingsholm ground, Gloucester, with terrific rolling maul tries from Flt Lt Amy Cokayne and Cpl Katherine Robinson, with AS1 Daisy Fehy adding the extras.

Then, as quickly as Flt Lt Carys Williams-Morris touched down her incredible individual try – which saw her run three quarters of the pitch to touch down under the posts – the game began to slide away as the Army ran in a series of tries to go in

19-17 at the break and keep a second-half clean sheet to take the championship.

Assistant coach Sqn Ldr Ian Cokayne said: “Amid the disappointment, we shouldn’t lose sight of just how far we’ve come as a group. The standard of rugby on display from both teams was outstanding. The ferocity of the hits and the accuracy of play made this a great advert for the women’s game.

“The first 35 minutes showcased what levels we can achieve; we scored some great tries and went into a 19-5 lead, and we looked in control. However, the momentum shifted in the last five minutes of the first half and the Army scored two



**SOLO EFFORT:** Flt Lt Carys Williams-Morris  
PHOTOS: SBS

quick tries before the break. At the start of the second half, we had two great chances to extend our lead; however, we didn’t get over the line and the momentum gradually shifted to the Army, and we couldn’t wrestle it back.

“The players were desperate to

win this game for our outgoing head coach WO John Wilding, who has done so much for RAF rugby as a player, coach and development officer during his 36 years’ service.”

The RAF had blitzed the Royal Navy 34-12 in the IS clash at

Brickfields Stadium, Plymouth with Williams-Morris, AS1 Rebecca Di Filippo and Cpl Orla Proctor bagging a brace of tries each.

● RAFRUW will run development camps at the end of the year, email: Air-RAFRU-women@mod.gov.uk to get involved.

# 5 pages of the best of RAF Sports action



**Run-rate mix-up hits RAF for six**

See page 26

**FOOTBALL**

# Hamilton does the double as new SRT chief

## All-conquering women's team head coach to sprinkle his magic for men

**Daniel Abrahams**

FORMER WRT football head coach Sgt Chris Hamilton will be the third among equals after securing the top post for the Service's men's team.

He becomes only the third person to take on both the WRT and SRT roles, alongside outgoing SRT head coach WO Andy Kuchta (WRT 2011-2013 and SRT 2020-2024) and Sqn Ldr Martin Wilkinson (WRT 2006-2008 and SRT 2013-2016).

Hamilton saw out this season with an IS win for the women's senior team - his second as head coach - and had planned to return to civilian football before the announcement of the vacant men's head coach post was made.

He said: "It was a challenge I thought I had to take. I was all set to walk away from Service football as I felt I had done all I could in the WRT role.

"When I heard that Cookie (Kuchta) had stepped away from the SRT role I decided to apply. Things went down to a final three and I came out as the one chosen, which is a great honour."

Kuchta and Hamilton had both seen out their tenures in their respective roles and felt that each post needed new blood, with Kuchta narrowly missing a hat-trick of IS



**CHAMPS:**  
RAF Women



championship wins, losing out 2-1 to a late Royal Navy winner, while Hamilton's charges beat RN 1-0.

Hamilton said: "I am looking forward to starting. I am looking forward to working

with the players. It is a good group, they get along famously, so the set-up is a nice one to walk into.

"I always spoke with Cookie after the IS games and we have spoken since I got the post.

"I have been building a good backroom team, it's just a shame we need to wait until the summer is over as I am excited to get to work. I will give them time to rest now and get to it in August."

**PROVEN RECORD:** New SRT head coach Sgt Chris Hamilton (right) and his assistant manager Cpl Jack Housley-Stott, who was also his WRT deputy

Young guns beat vets at Cardiff City



**OFFICERS:** Icarus 1st XI v Vets

**YOUTH** won out over experience as officers' team Icarus beat Icarus Veterans 3-0 at Cardiff City Stadium.

The 33,000-capacity ground was an illustrious venue for the end of season clash.

Two quick-fire goals on 60 and 62 minutes from Fg Off Toby Andrews broke the deadlock. A third followed from Flt Lt Jack Murray at the death to cap off a well-deserved win from the First XI, but it was a valiant effort from the Vets who remained competitive throughout despite being 15+ years older on average than their opponents.

The match was the perfect end to a successful season for Icarus, with the First XI winning their group in the RAF Astra league - losing 3-0 in the semi-finals to RAF TG5 FC - while the Vets finished third in the Unisport Hellenic League Veterans Division 1 East, Icarus's first ever civilian league competition. Both teams also beat their Army equivalents.

Icarus FC is open to all serving and retired RAF officers. Visit: [icarusfc.co.uk](http://icarusfc.co.uk) for details.



**Announcements**

- p6-7  
**Puzzles**
- p8

# R'n'R



**Win hit TV series  
on DVD ● p5**

# Fantasmagorical! – Chitty Chitty Bang Bang on stage

● See  
pages  
4-5



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

**GREAT  
GIFT!**

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

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

## Look what you can find out!

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

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



## **RAF News** SPECIAL OFFER!

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

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

\*Your discount is automatically applied

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

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

01984 632120

Win!



**LOUD AND PROUD:** There will be 193 live firing cannons and fireworks



**TV FAVOURITE:** Britain's Got Talent soprano Denise Leigh



**DROPPING IN:** Army parachute display team the Red Devils

# The fresh-air Proms

Win tickets to summer's outdoors music and displays spectacular

**P**ACK YOUR picnics, chill the fizz, and get ready for the ultimate Proms in the Park. With vintage and orchestral music plus dramatic ground and aerial displays, all set in the grounds of four of the UK's most celebrated stately homes, The Battle Proms are picnic concerts like no other, and we have six pairs of tickets to give away.

The music begins mid-afternoon with the vintage harmonies of The Battle Proms Belles, warming up the crowd with toe-tapping tunes from a bygone era. But in true 'proms' tradition, The Battle Proms is not just about the music.

The Red Devils will be dropping in with a daring freefall parachute display. Back on the ground the horsemen and women of the Worcestershire Cavalry will be taking the audience on a horseback journey through time, with thrilling skill-



at-arms displays in a variety of historic regalia. There's even a chance to meet the horses and riders up close before they return to accompany the orchestra during the Musical Ride.

With the opening pieces of the orchestral programme, including

Elgar's *Nimrod*, the audience will enjoy a moving aerial display by the legendary Grace Spitfire, an appearance made especially poignant in 2024 as this very plane shot down the first enemy aircraft on D-Day 80 years ago this June.

Other much-loved classical favourites will follow, including Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto*, Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* and Battle Proms' signature piece Beethoven's *Battle Symphony*, complete with 193 live firing cannons providing a thunderous percussion. This year's orchestral programme also features music from film, TV and the musicals, including the *Dam Busters March*, the *Downton Abbey* theme and Gershwin's *Summertime*, performed by Denise Leigh, the blind soprano currently winning the hearts of the nation with her standout performance on *Britain's Got Talent*.

The perfect summer's evening culminates in a jubilant, flag-waving finale with all your 'last night of the proms' favourites, led by Denise, under a sky of dazzling fireworks.

Six lucky readers can win a pair of tickets to the concert of their choice: Blenheim Palace,

Oxfordshire, Saturday, July 6; Burghley House, Lincolnshire, Saturday, July 13; Hatfield Park, Hertfordshire, Saturday, July 20; Highclere Castle, Hampshire, Saturday, August 3.

To be in with a chance of winning a pair of tickets to Battle Proms (rrp £110), answer this question correctly:

**Who is the soprano appearing at Battle Proms concerts this year?**

Email your answer to: info@battleproms.com, subject: RAF NEWS COMPETITION, to arrive by June 14, 2024. Please note entries must be sent by email so that your prize tickets can be sent out electronically. Please remember to state on your entry your first and second choice of venue from the four listed above.

Don't want to leave it to chance? Head to battleproms.com to book your tickets and make the most of the military and group discounts.



## Competition

### The Promised Land (15)

Blu-ray, DVD and digital (Icon Film Distribution)

**I**N 1755, the impoverished Captain Ludvig Kahlen sets out to conquer the uninhabitable Danish heath in the name of the King. But the sole ruler of the area, the merciless Frederik de Schinkel, who believes the land belongs to him, swears revenge when the maid Ann Barbara and her serf husband escape for refuge with Kahlen.

From BAFTA-nominated writer and director Nikolaj Arcel (*A Royal Affair*,



## Film full of Promise

*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*), this epic film stars BAFTA nominee Mads Mikkelsen (*The Hunt*, *Another Round*), Amanda Collin (*Raised by Wolves*), Simon Bennebjerg (*Borgen*), Kristine Kujath Thorp (*Sick of Myself*) and Gustav Lindh (*The Northman*).

The powerful Nordic western had its world premiere at the

Venice Film Festival, where it was in competition for the coveted Golden Lion. *The Promised Land* was chosen as Denmark's submission for Best International Feature at the 2024 Oscars, with Mikkelsen awarded best European Actor at the European Film Awards.

We have copies of *The Promised Land* on DVD up for grabs. For your chance of winning one, answer this question correctly:

Win!

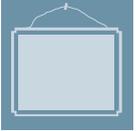


**Who directed *The Promised Land*?**

Email your answer, marked The Promised Land DVD 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 June 14.

# R'n'R



**Galleries**  
**Expressionists**  
 Tate Modern, until Oct 20

## Spirit of the Blue Rider at London showing

**T**ATE MODERN'S major new exhibition *Expressionists: Kandinsky, Münter and the Blue Rider* focuses on an international circle of friends who came together in the early 20th century to transform modern art.

Staged at the London venue until October 20, this dazzling exhibition celebrates the artists' radical experimentation with form, colour, sound and performance and includes work by famous artists such as Wassily Kandinsky, Gabriela Münter, Franz Marc and Paul Klee, as well as that of previously overlooked figures.

The landmark show draws on the world's richest collection of expressionist masterpieces at the Lenbachhaus art museum in Munich, alongside rare loans from public and private collections.

"The Blue Rider was a loosely affiliated and diverse network of artists, connected by their desire to express personal experiences and spiritual ideas," said a Tate Modern spokesperson. "The exhibition explores the ground-breaking work of the group. This is the first major presentation of the Blue Rider in the UK for 64 years and features more than 130 artworks. An incredible 50 of the works have never been on show



Franz Marc, *Tiger*, 1912, Lenbachhaus Munich, donation of the Bernhard and Elly Koehler Foundation 1965



Wassily Kandinsky, *Improvisation Deluge*, 1913, Lenbachhaus Munich, donation of Gabriele Münter, 1957

in the UK before.

"The exhibition reveals the multicultural and transnational nature of this key moment in early modernist art. We are especially pleased to be able to highlight the individual contribution from women artists at the times with around half of the works in the show by women, who played a

central role in the movement."

The group was founded in Munich in 1911 by Kandinsky and Marc.

The show features paintings, sculpture and photography, including experimental photographs by Münter.

Curator Natalia Sidlina said: "Through carefully curated narrative we unveil the relationships which brought this incredible collective together.

"It was expressionist artists' ideas, modus operandi, propensity towards crossing the boundaries and questioning of distinctions between art and non-art that gave licence to the generation of artists who emerged in the 1950s and 1960s to affirm experimental art forms such as performance, happenings, eco-activism, installation, time-based media and sound art."

The spokesperson added: "With the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 the collective was dispersed, but their ideas and aspirations for a transnational creative community still resonate powerfully today."

● **Go to: [tate.org.uk](http://tate.org.uk) for more information.**



Kandinsky and Erma Bossi at the Table, 1912, Lenbachhaus Munich, donation Gabriele Münter © DACS 2024



**Theatre**  
**Chitty Chitty Bang Bang**  
 UK tour

MAGICAL ADVENTURES: Chitty, the Potts family and Truly Scrumptious. PHOTOS: Paul Coltas



## More Bang for buck with ol'

**W**EST END star Adam Garcia, *EastEnders'* Charlie Brooks, *Emmerdale's* Liam Fox and *Two Doors Down's* Elaine C. Smith lead the cast of the new touring musical of Ian Fleming's classic children's story *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*.

Olivier-nominee Garcia plays Caractacus Potts, alongside Fox as Grandpa Potts and Brooks in the role of The Childcatcher – Smith is The Childcatcher at the Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Glasgow and Inverness shows.

The musical tells the story of absent-minded inventor Potts who restores a broken-down old racing car with the help of his children Jemima and Jeremy. Soon the family discover the car has magical powers and, along with Truly Scrumptious, end up on a fantastical adventure to far-off lands.

It features the unforgettable songs by the Sherman Brothers including *Toot Sweets*, *Hushabye Mountain*, *Truly Scrumptious* and, of course, the Academy Award-nominated title song, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*.

The nationwide tour runs until May 10, 2025 and goes to venues including Milton Keynes Theatre (July 2-7), Torquay's Princess Theatre (August 6-11) and the New Theatre Oxford (October

1-6). Garcia will be appearing up to and including Blackpool (Opera House 10-29 December) and Brooks will be appearing up to and including Norwich (Theatre Royal, September 24-29), excluding the Scotland dates.

Based on James Bond creator Fleming's timeless tale, later made into the famous 1968 film starring Dick van Dyke, Sally Ann Howes and Robert Helpmann, the musical is choreographed by Karen Bruce (*Strictly Come Dancing*) and directed by Thom Southerland (*Titanic, Parade*).

"It's been over 20 years since *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* first premiered at the London Palladium and we are bringing a brand-new production of this well-loved story to stage. For me, Chitty is like an old friend," said Southerland (pictured below).

"I used to watch it as a child and was, in fact, in the audience at the very first preview of the Palladium production, so it's a show that has always stuck with me and it now feels very special to be putting my own stamp on it.

"Ian Fleming wrote the book over 50 years ago and the musical is an amalgamation of his original story, the film version by Roald Dahl, and the previous stage production." Southerland said the touring





# or your Chitty

version has brought a fresh look to the show. He explained: "Although this is a story that is very well-known and loved by audiences, there are also aspects of the original story which are lesser known and which we are showcasing in our version. Of course, our show still has all the wonderful parts that we remember from the film. Caractacus Potts still has his bamboo stick to dance to *Me Ol' Bamboo*, and we dance through Scrumptious's Sweet Factory to *Toot Sweets*, but we also bring something that feels fresh and new within this story and have even added some new songs.

"One thing we definitely aren't changing, though, is Chitty herself. She is as spectacular as ever."

He added: "I really hope that when people come to see *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, they simply enjoy a wonderful evening at the theatre. This is a wildly entertaining show which all the family can enjoy. It has beautifully lavish sets and costumes, phenomenal special effects and, in my opinion, one of the greatest musical scores ever written.

"Chitty in three words would be extravagant, joyful and, dare I say, fantasmagorical! We have a phenomenal cast, as led by Adam in the central role of Caractacus Potts, who are really helping to create a unique retelling of this story on stage.

"It's been a real collaborative process with the entire team, from the creatives to our incredible cast."

● Go to: [chittyontour.com](http://chittyontour.com) for more details about tour dates and venues.



**Theatre**  
**Fawlty Towers**  
Apollo Theatre, London

## Basil's back... and he's angry as ever

IT'S A hit with audiences and critics alike – *Fawlty Towers: The Play* is now at London's Apollo Theatre nearly 50 years after the TV sitcom's success.

Its co-creator, *Monty Python* legend John Cleese, has based the stage version on three episodes from the original TV series – *The Hotel Inspector*, *The Germans* and *Communication Problems*.

None of the original TV cast appear in the play but West End star Paul Nicholas (*Jesus Christ, Superstar*) is the Major. Adam Jackson-Smith is irascible hotel boss Basil Fawlty, Anna-Jane Casey his formidable wife Sybil, with Hemi Yeroham as Spanish waiter Manuel and Victoria Fox as unflappable staff member Polly.

At a press conference for *Fawlty Towers: The Play*, Cleese revealed: "Basil exemplifies a certain kind of lower-middle class figure, like the people I grew up with in Weston-Super-Mare, who think it's a terrible loss of face to lose your temper... but being angry isn't funny. Repressing anger is funny."

Tying the three episodes together was like carpentry", said Cleese. "We move from one story to the other which means it's pretty action-packed."

Cleese (who wrote the *Fawlty Towers* TV show with his then-wife Connie Booth, who played Polly) co-directs the play with Caroline Jay Ranger (*Only Fools*

and *Horses The Musical* and *Monty Python Live*).

Jackson-Smith said Cleese wasn't at all precious about someone else taking on the role of Basil.

Cleese explained: "I think of myself as a writer who happens to perform. When you write a part, you don't necessarily think that only one person is going to play it."

Yeroham admitted that before landing the role of Manuel he was unfamiliar with *Fawlty Towers*.

He said: "I was born and raised in Istanbul and came to the UK to study drama when I was 20. I approached Manuel fresh, I didn't have to worry too much about fitting into something, just did the script, then watched the show. That lovability comes from Andrew Sachs [who played Manuel on TV]. He's just a loveable man."

He added: "I don't think Manuel is annoying. I think Basil is annoying. Manuel is just trying to survive, he's trying his best."

Cleese added: "The point about Manuel is that he's never mean-spirited."

Nicholas said he considered himself very fortunate to be a part of the stage version of *Fawlty Towers*, an iconic sitcom.

Now 79, he added: "I'm at that stage in my life where Peter Pan is no longer an option."

Cleese said: "Working with actors, I enjoy it enormously



**COMEDY GIANT:** Cleese (second from left) with Manuel (Hemi Yeroham), Sybil (Anna-Jane Casey), Basil (Adam Jackson-Smith) and Polly (Victoria Fox) and, below, The Major (Paul Nicholas) PHOTOS: DAVID J HOGAN



because it's very cooperative it becomes a two-way process, it's just enormous fun. I think the play will be tremendous in June. Comedy is all about timing and when you have a comedy or farce the audience becomes a part of

that. You've got to go in front of an audience a lot of times before you get the timing exactly right."

*Fawlty Towers: The Play* runs until September 28.

● Go to: [fawltytowerswestend.com](http://fawltytowerswestend.com) for more details.



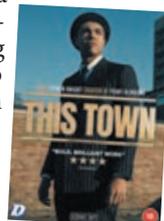
**DVDs**  
**This Town (18)**  
On DVD, Blu-ray and download now (Dazzler Media)

## Music and unrest in 1980s Birmingham

**PEAKY BLINDERS** and *SAS Rogue Heroes* creator Steven Knight's latest TV hit tells a compelling story of family ties, teenage kicks and redemption.

*This Town* opens in 1981, at a moment of huge social unrest. The six-part series follows a group of young people in Birmingham fighting to choose their own paths, each of them in need of the second chance that music offers.

Levi Brown plays protagonist Dante Williams, with Eve Austin as fellow Brummie band member Jeannie, and the cast features a star turn from Michelle Dockery – in a role light years away from *Downton Abbey's* Lady Mary – as alcoholic singer Estella.



But it's not just a show about music; a parallel storyline follows Dante's cousin and Estella's son Bardon (Ben Quinn) from Coventry who struggles with his bullying Northern Irish father Brendan's determination to involve him in the local branch of the IRA.

We have copies of *This Town* on DVD to win. For your chance to own one, tell us:

**Who is the creator of This Town?**

Email your answer, marked This Town DVD competition, to: [tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk) or post it to:

RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by June 14. Entrants must be over 18.



**MUSICAL YOUTH:** Jeannie (Eve Austin) and Dante (Levi Brown)





## Your Announcements

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

### Death

**O'HARA** Thomas (Tom) of Moseley Road, Naphill, Bucks died on May 14. Tom, who was 94 and a retired RAF carpenter, served on many stations in the UK including HQ Strike Command. He served overseas in Hong Kong and BRIXMIS in Germany. Tom, a life member of the RAFA, will be sorely missed by his wife, Madelinea, extended family and his many friends.

### Seeking

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: [beckygoff542@gmail.com](mailto:beckygoff542@gmail.com) or telephone: 07985 424308.

### Reunions

**SUTTON** Coldfield branch of NS(RAF)Association are to hold an 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings event on June 6. There will be a meal and entertainment by singer Lola Lamour. Guests of Honour will be members Joan Langley and Geoff Spencer, who were both in service in World War II in the WAAF and RAF respectively. Joan was 103 on May 23 and regularly attends our monthly lunch meetings. Email: [johnlonghorne@outlook.com](mailto:johnlonghorne@outlook.com) for details.

**45TH** Entry C Flt 3 Sqn Suppliers. 64th anniversary reunion at Barn Hotel, Cocksparrow Lane,

Cannock on Friday/Saturday June 28-29. If interested please contact Dave Bell on: 01482 377625.

**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](mailto: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.

### 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](mailto: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](http://rafaarmourers.co.uk) or you can contact the committee via email at this address: [plumbersrest@outlook.com](mailto:plumbersrest@outlook.com).

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

**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](mailto: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 come along and join us? For more information send an email to: [janedjones6@btinternet.com](mailto:janedjones6@btinternet.com). The first year of membership is free.

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

**RAF** Physical Training Instructors Association holds an Annual Dinner and AGM over a weekend plus locally organised events. Please contact RAFPTIA Honorary Secretary Denise Street-Brown on: [ptisec@outlook.com](mailto:ptisec@outlook.com) for membership enquiries. To become a member of the Association you will have had to have successfully passed the RAF Physical Training Instructors Basic Training Course. The Association was formed in 1996 to bring together serving and retired PTIs. It currently has 600 PTI members.

### 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](mailto:willroughton@hotmail.com).



**PAINT RACE:** The Colour Run is inspired by the Hindu festival of Holi

## Colourful charity run

RAF LINCOLNSHIRE personnel and their families will be taking part in a particularly colourful event next month - a Colour Run to raise money for the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Held on June 12 at 4pm at RAF Cranwell, the run is a 5km paint race inspired by the Hindu festival of Holi. Participants are encouraged to walk, jog or sprint their way through the 5k course while getting showered with bursts of colour.

The event is open to Whole Force and families and welcomes all ages and fitness levels.

Amber Satterthwaite, the RAFBF's community fundraising team leader, said: "Whether you're a seasoned runner or just looking for a fun time, this event

is perfect for all ages and fitness levels. Proceeds from the event will help to change the lives of members of the RAF Family through the work of the Fund."

The Colour Run takes place at RAF Cranwell, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 8HB. Parking will be available at the Stadium car park. Access to the station will be via Whittle Hall gate and a valid ID will be required.

Registration will open at 3pm. Please arrive in good time to register at the front of CHOM. On registration you will receive a plain white T-shirt (one size fits all) and glasses, said the organisers.

● **Go to:** [rafbf.org/colourrun](http://rafbf.org/colourrun) to sign up for the event.

## Get Dad a great gift



**IF YOU'RE** looking for the ideal gift for Father's Day on June 16 for the historic aircraft enthusiast in your life, look no further than a membership to the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Club.

Membership starts at £30 and includes a host of exclusive benefits as well as a membership pack (pictured above) full of fascinating information and gifts. Go to: [memorialflightclub.com](http://memorialflightclub.com) to find out more.

### How to use our service

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

### Important Notice

The publishers of *RAF News* cannot accept responsibility for the quality, safe delivery or operation of any products advertised or mentioned in this publication.

Reasonable precautions are taken before advertisements are accepted but such acceptance does not imply any form of approval or recommendation. Advertisements (or other inserted material) are accepted subject to the approval of the publishers and their current terms and conditions. The publishers will accept an advertisement or other inserted material only on the condition that the advertiser warrants that such advertisement does not in any way contravene the provisions of the Trade Descriptions Act.

All copy is subject to the approval of the publishers, who reserve the right to refuse, amend, withdraw or otherwise deal with advertisements submitted to them at their absolute discretion and without explanation.

All advertisements must comply with the British Code of Advertising Practice. Mail order advertisers are required to state in advertisements their true surname or full company name, together with an address from which the business is managed.



### Your Announcements

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



**DIGGING IT:** Youngsters on a Wings to the Past project

## Take part in Roman dig

RAF PERSONNEL and their families have the chance to take part in an archaeological project this August.

Applications are open to join The Caistor Roman Project in Norfolk, run by the organisation Wings to the Past.

A spokesperson said: "The project offers an exciting chance to see how our ancestors lived in the Roman period and the years before and after.

"They have offered three places for their first week of digging and four places for a family during their second week.

"Wings to the Past gives the RAF family a chance to engage with collaborative archaeological projects, creating time, memories and supporting personal resilience."

● Go to: [wingstothepast.org](http://wingstothepast.org) to apply. The closing date is June 13.

# Sing with the Spitfires

DO YOU enjoy singing? The RAF Spitfires Choir is looking for new members. It's an amateur choir made up of serving RAF Regular and Reservists and Civil Servants working alongside the Air Force.

Choir co-manager Chf Tech Sophie Hobson said: "Choir members serve in a variety of roles across the RAF, coming together voluntarily to enjoy singing and to be the best possible cultural ambassadors for our Service.

"The Spitfires Choir has tackled a diverse range of performances, including collaborations with the BBC Singers and broadcasts on BBC radio and television for the anniversaries of the Battle of Britain and the Battle of the Somme."

The choir recorded a single for the RAF Benevolent Fund 1914 - *The Carol of Christmas* in 2014, and performed for two years on the BBC's *Strictly Come Dancing* programme for their Remembrance Day shows.

Chf Tech Hobson added: "Proudly representing our Service,



**IN TUNE:** The choir in Brussels in 2022

the choir has also performed at numerous international and Six Nation Rugby matches.

"In 2018 the choir took part in the RAF 100 Gala Concert in the Royal Albert Hall. It attended its first overseas multi-national event singing at a two-day *Nuits Des Choeurs* in Brussels in 2022 alongside other international

choirs, including The Kingdom Choir.

"We regularly support fundraising events for the various military charities including the RAF Benevolent fund and Royal British Legion."

● Email the choir manager at: [BZN-RAF-Spitfires-Choir@mod.gov.uk](mailto:BZN-RAF-Spitfires-Choir@mod.gov.uk) for more information.

## RAF News

The Forces Favourite Read

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

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

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

# R'n'R



## Prize Crossword No. 362

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

### Across

- 1. From keypad, Zebedee used this tool (4)
- 8. Rhythmical response to 'Water Music'? (3-7)
- 9. As a result of errant tank shot (6,2)
- 10. On return, produced cheese (4)
- 12. Sways Arab leaders, by the sound of it (6)
- 14. Time for a fall? (6)
- 15. A registered nurse in charge of a treatment for bruises (6)
- 17. End conversation about neurosis (4-2)
- 18. Quick drink? (4)
- 19. Flat Iris redecorated in rescue missions (8)
- 21. Pardoning sailor is the answer (10)
- 22. Emergency call is nothing unremarkable (2-2)

### Down

- 2. Had pithier solution to disease (10)
- 3. School makes a mess of pudding (4)
- 4. Jerks visit springs outside Memphis (2)
- 5. Plane from North and South (6)
- 6. Mischievous dog not returned to station (8)
- 7. Look at own goal by the French (4)
- 11. Daubs terms about famous RAF squadron (10)
- 13. RAF chief takes Lancelot on (8)
- 16. Its beads aid calculation (6)
- 17. Missing note, pursues Bomber Command legend (6)
- 18. Operation Neptune, in other words (1-3)
- 20. Models without 100 molecules (4)

Name: .....

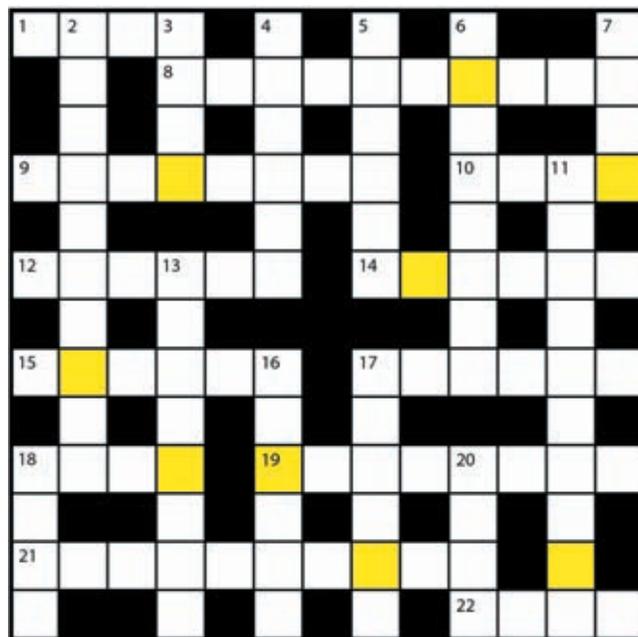
Address: .....

.....

.....

RAF aircraft: ..... Crossword No. 362

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 June 14. Prize Crossword No. 360 winner is: Miss A Gilliland, Cheltenham.



### Solution to Crossword No. 361

Across – 6. Algeria 7. Gasps 9. Drone 10. Cockpit 12. Information 14. Diamond Nine 18. Falcons 19. Arrow 21. Tower 22. Exhaust  
Down – 1. Slurp 2. Lennon 3. Air 4. Racket 5. Apricot 8. Command 11. Conning 13. Picador 15. Mickey 16. Norway 17. Mouse 20. Axe

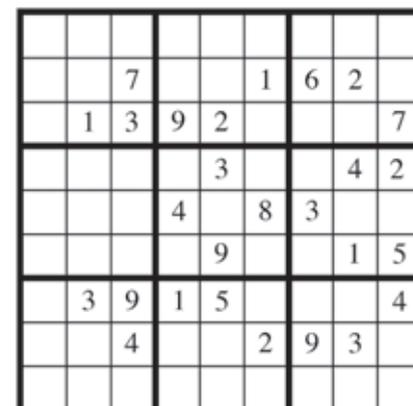
RAF word – *Airshow*



## Prize Su Doku No. 372

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 June 14. The winner of Su Doku No: 370 is: Mr DG Fraser, Aviemore.



### Solution to Su Doku No. 371

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



**DVDs**  
D-Day 80th Anniversary  
DVD & digital (Reel2Reel Films)



# Allied landings that liberated western Europe

MARKING THE 80th anniversary of this important event that led to the end of World War II, Bruce Vigar (*The Flying Scotsman 100th Anniversary*) directs a fascinating new feature documentary, *D-Day 80th Anniversary*.

On June 6, 1944, the Allied Forces executed Operation Overlord, the largest seaborne invasion in history, storming the beaches of Normandy. This significant event, known as D-Day, liberated France and Western Europe and played a vital role in bringing an end to World War II.

This eye-opening film, which will appeal to audiences of all ages, offers an enthralling exploration of Operation Overlord's planning, execution and aftermath. Featuring interviews with military experts, esteemed historians, eyewitnesses and rare



archival footage, it sheds light on the strategic decisions, heroic acts and human sacrifices that defined this momentous day.

A powerful testament to those who fought for their country, the lives lost and the bravery, sacrifice and unity of nations in the face of adversity, *D-Day 80th Anniversary* offers a fresh perspective on a chapter of history that continues to resonate today.

We have copies of *D-Day 80th Anniversary* on DVD to



win. For the chance to add one to your collection, send us the correct answer to the following question:

**What was the name of the largest seaborne invasion in history?**

Email your answer, marked D-Day 80th Anniversary DVD 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 June 14.

