

The Forces' favourite paper

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● See RnR p3

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Strike Force
Burke's back
as Rowling's
super sleuth

● See RnR p4-5



ROYAL AIR FORCE

Friday **September 4** 2020
No 1498 **70p**

RAF News

**Big beast
of WWII**

See
pages
18-19



Bobsleigh
Iceman Stan
stands tall



● See p30-31

Football
Vets move
to the Beatt



● See p34

Iraq Herc hero heads UK fight against terror

● Pilot who flew first Daesh sortie takes
command as mission enters seventh year

AIR POWER: Typhoon
and Voyager prepare for a
mission in Iraq
PHOTO: SGT NEIL BRYDEN



Simon Mander

A HERCULES pilot who carried out the first aid drops at the start of Operation Shader has returned to lead the campaign as UK operations enter the seventh year.

Wg Cdr Calvin Bailey flew vital water, shelter and supplies to the Yazidi people trapped on Mount Sinjar in Northern Iraq after fleeing genocidal attacks by Daesh at the start of the campaign in 2014.

He said: "It was emotional, and still is emotional. It gives a great sense of pride that we live in a country that chooses to go and help in situations like that."

"It gives great legitimacy to your underlying reasons for service."

● Continued on p3



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“The training was tough but, because of the camaraderie, enjoyable”

Fg Off Emma Graves, one of the RAF Regiment's first female officers
See p9



“I'm quite a fan of catastrophe. I'd quite like things to go very, very wrong”

Tom Burke on his on-screen relationship with Holliday Grainger
R'n'R p4-5



“We have reached out to the Royal Navy FA to talk through rescheduling our final Inter-Service match”

FS (Ret'd) Matt Beattie, veteran men's football manager, on restarting the season
See p34



RAF News

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Frontline role for Herc hero

● *Continued from p1*

He added: “The sense of having connected with people at that moment was overwhelming for everyone.”

Wg Cdr Bailey is back serving on the mission as the Commanding Officer of 903 Expeditionary Air Wing.

Following seven aid drops in August 2014, the RAF switched to a surveillance role deploying the RC-135 Rivet Joint on its first-ever operational sortie and Tornado GR4s, Reaper, Sentinel and E-3D Sentries on intelligence-gathering sorties.

The first attack on Islamist militants took place on September 30 after Iraq presented a letter to the UN Security Council calling for military assistance against Daesh.

Tornados have been replaced by Typhoons, which conduct surveillance missions and air strikes against terrorist targets.

Wg Cdr Bailey said: “We remain at the request of the Government of Iraq but with circumstances significantly improved.

“The Daesh attempt to set up a so-called caliphate has been

defeated and we are now supporting Iraq to rebuild and establish security across their entire country as they fight the terrorist insurgency. Daesh are now conducting.”



FIRST IN: RAF Hercules C130-J launched during mission to support Kurds fleeing advance of Daesh fighters at start of UK mission in 2014



Belgium backs Protector

Simon Mander

BRITAIN AND Belgium have teamed up to develop the new Protector Remotely Piloted Air System.

Under a bilateral agreement both nations are acquiring the aircraft which will replace Reaper and is the first of its kind, designed, built and certified to fly in unsegregated civilian airspace.

Last month Defence Secretary Ben Wallace announced a contract to build the first three, with an option for 13 more, while Belgium

is procuring four MQ-9Bs.

Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Mike Wigston said: “The RAF and Belgian Air Force will explore opportunities to train, maintain and work together on this game-changing aircraft using its cutting-edge sensors and systems to protect national, Nato and European security.”

Under the deal both countries will work together on training, maintenance, logistic support, interoperability and enhancing the capability of the aircraft.

This Week In History



1956

Vulcan record flight

THE RAF'S first Vulcan XA897 leaves Boscombe Down en route to Melbourne, Australia.

The aircraft arrives after a 23-hour flight with stops at Singapore and Aden.

1940

Nazis blitz London

THE LUFTWAFFE begins bombing London. An estimated 1,000 German aircraft launch an afternoon attack on the capital followed by nighttime raids on the city river the next few days.



1983

Buccaneer crews in Beirut

SIX BUCCANEERS from 12 and 208 Sqn fly into RAF Akrotiri to support British troops in Beirut. Two aircraft make a series of low-level passes over the city to announce their presence.

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



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Horror smash family thank hero Gunners



AC ALLAN



CPL STANLEY



AC TAYLOR-MORGAN



CPL WAUGH

Vikki Quamina

Honington

A MOTORIST who was pulled from the wreckage of his crashed car by two trainee Gunners has paid tribute to his rescuers.

Darren Ruck, 40, spent three weeks in hospital after suffering a heart attack at the wheel of his vehicle while out for a Father's Day drive with his family near Honington.

His wife, Marie, who was in the back seat with the couple's children, managed to grab the wheel, but they crashed off the road on Green Lane just past the Suffolk airbase.

Aircraftsmen Thomas Allan and Troy Taylor-Morgan were on their way back to the station in the opposite direction and were among the first on the scene.

They pulled Darren, who was lapsing in and out of consciousness, over the back seats of his car due to the damage.

Cpl Ed Stanley then arrived with his wife, a nurse, who immediately began life-saving CPR at the scene.

She was joined by Cpls Alexander Bates and Sam Waugh, who also assisted.

Mr Ruck was taken to Papworth Hospital where he was sedated for three days and spent five days on a ventilator before being transferred to Addenbrooke's Hospital to have stents and a defibrillator fitted.

Reunited with his rescuers at Honington, Mr Ruck, who still cannot remember the events, said: "Thank God the guys were there so soon to help."



HEART ATTACK ORDEAL: Darren Ruck (centre) with wife Marie, their two daughters and his father Graham. PHOTOS: CPL DAVE BLACKBURN

Female secret agent murdered by Nazis heads Heritage honours

Tracey Allen

WWII HEROINE Noor Inayat Khan has been commemorated with a blue plaque at the house in London she left for Nazi-occupied France in 1943 as an undercover radio operator.

It was the first blue plaque unveiling since lockdown due to the coronavirus outbreak and was carried out by Noor's biographer, Shrabani Basu, in Taverton Street, Bloomsbury.

She said: "When Noor Inayat Khan left this house on her last mission, she would never have dreamed that one day she would become a symbol of bravery."

"She was an unlikely spy. As a Sufi she believed in non-violence and religious harmony. Yet when her adopted country needed her, she unhesitatingly gave her life in the fight against fascism."

"It is fitting that she is the first woman of Indian origin to be remembered with a blue plaque. In today's world, her vision of unity and freedom is more important than ever."

WAAF Noor was Britain's first Muslim war heroine in Europe and the first female radio operator sent into Nazi-occupied France to aid the Resistance.

She ran a cell of spies across the French capital single-handed until she was betrayed and captured.

Noor was executed by firing squad at Dachau concentration camp in September 1944, aged 30. Her final word was "Liberté".

Given the code name Madeline, she died having revealed

nothing to her captors, not even her real name.

She was posthumously awarded the George Cross in 1949 and in 2012 the Princess Royal unveiled a statue of Noor in Gordon Square, Bloomsbury, near her home.

It was the first memorial in the UK erected to an Asian woman.

Born in Moscow in

1914 to an Indian father and an American mother, she was a direct descendant of Tipu Sultan, the notorious 18th century 'Tiger of Mysore' who refused to submit to British rule and died in battle in 1799.

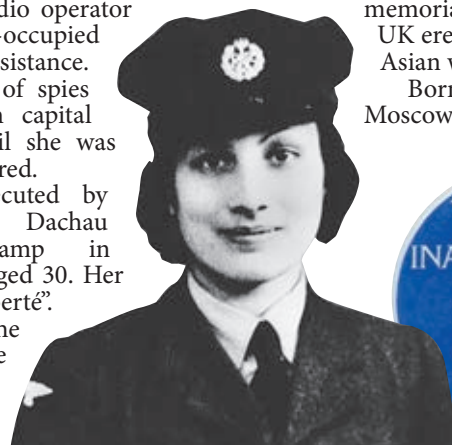
Brought up in Paris, she was a fluent French speaker and joined the SOE in June 1943.

Anna Eavis, curatorial director at English Heritage, said: "We're so pleased to continue unveiling our blue plaques with this virtual ceremony."

"Noor Inayat Khan's courage was unfaltering, even in the face of extreme danger."

Only 14 per cent of more than 950 London blue plaques celebrate women.

English Heritage's





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In brief



RETIREMENT: Gp Capt Baker is given a rousing send-off after 31 years

Cosford turns out for Tone

COSFORD STATION Commander Gp Capt Tone Baker took a bow after 31 years in the Service.

RAF personnel lined the route to the station gates as the Shropshire station chief left for the last time.

Gp Capt Gareth Bryant, who joined up as an engineering officer, succeeds Gp Capt Baker as Station Commander.

He said: "Cosford is the home of RAF engineering, delivering world-class technical training."



Brize WWII tribute

RAF BRIZE Norton chief Gp Capt Emily Flynn led tributes to the World War II bomber crew who died when their Albatross aircraft overshot the runway and exploded in 1944.

She laid a wreath during the ceremony at the crash site at Mill Farm, where five airmen lost their lives in the accident.

Running total

A GROUP of runners are tackling a five-day challenge next month to raise funds for the National Memorial to The Few and the Kent Battle of Britain Museum Trust.

FS Christopher Marsh and two civilian friends will be running 80 miles over five days to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain and aim to raise £3,000.

They will lay memorial crosses at 16 World War II fighter stations and locations including Duxford, Biggin Hill, Uxbridge, Bentley Priory, Tangmere and Manston.

Go to: [justgiving.com/crowdfunding/battleofbritain80](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/battleofbritain80)

Newlyweds' testing time on covid duty

Mary-Kay James

TWO RECENTLY-MARRIED RAF Reservists hit the posting jackpot when they were mobilised on the same virus testing team in the UK's fight against Covid-19.

Newlyweds Corporal Karen Mellows-Marais, 41, and LAC Sam Mellows-Marais, 28, had been hitched for less than a year when they answered the call to support the fight against the pandemic.

The pair spent their first wedding anniversary packing their kit on standby then joined colleagues from across the RAF Reserves as they carried out C-19 tests at pop-up drive-in centres across the South East.

"When we volunteered, we thought we would be at opposite ends of the country from each other," said Sam, who is a watersports instructor in civilian life. "We were really surprised when we discovered we would be working together."

Karen added: "It wasn't until the first day of training that we realised we were going to be on the same unit."

The couple, from Wootton



Bassett, Wiltshire, are both drivers on 501 Squadron, a specialist logistics unit based at RAF Brize Norton.

Karen, who gained her HGV licence with the Reserves, has been mobilised before and served in the Falkland Islands.

Sam recently finished her basic training and is due to start driver training. "I thought about joining the Army but then I saw what Karen was doing and I thought I would also like to drive a full range of military vehicles with the RAF," she said.

Karen, whose great uncle was awarded the DFC with Bomber Command, added: "It's ticked many boxes, having this opportunity, we joined to serve and we are happy to be able to do that and the fact we are together is a bonus."



VIRUS FRONTLINE: Carrying out tests at one of the UK's drive-in centres; below, Karen (left) and Sam on their wedding day



HOOP DARES WINS: RAF top dog Zantos shows off his skills with trainer Cpl Walshe at Honington; right, military working dog Bruce ready for action
PHOTOS: SAC RYAN MURRAY

Zantos hits peak paw-formance



MILITARY WORKING dog Zantos and his trainer Cpl Walshe, from Brize Norton, hone their routine ahead of the Service's canine showdown at RAF Honington later this year.

It will be the first test since the RAF's dog stars performed in front of a TV audience of five million at Crufts in March, just before the UK went into lockdown.

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Regt women eye frontline

Simon Mander

THE FIRST female RAF Regiment officers are set to lead their units on the frontline.

Pioneering Flying Officers Emma Graves, 22, from Verwood, Dorset, and 26-year-old Juliette Abson, from Hereford, defied Covid-19 restrictions to pass the gruelling 25-week course needed to lead one of the Corps' field squadrons.

They follow 19-year-old SAC Georgia Sandover of Kings Lynn, Norfolk, who became the first woman to join the Regiment's ranks earlier this year.

Sports fan Juliette, who comes from a military family, said she hoped other women would be inspired to join up.

"If it is what you want, go for it and don't let anyone's opinions hold you back," she said.

Former Air Cadet Emma said its Junior Leaders' Course had given her the confidence to tackle officer



FG OFF EMMA GRAVES



training which had been 'tough,' but due to the camaraderie of fellow coursemates, enjoyable.

Regt Commandant General Air Cdre Scott Miller said: "Our latest graduates, including our first female officers, have demonstrated exceptional skill, fortitude and resilience."

"I am proud to welcome them into our Corps. They have earned their right to wear the RAF Regiment 'mudguard' and to join our frontline."

The Junior Regiment Officers' Course consists



MILITARY FAMILY: Fg Off Juliette Abson

of three parts, covering soldiering and command skills, and, once commissioned, graduates embark on their first tour of duty and are posted to one of the Regiment's Field Squadrons.



WEAPONS DRILL: Fg Off Abson takes on tough Regiment training
PHOTO: SAC JAMES LEDGER

Charity trail blazers



HOT STUFF: RAF firefighters take a breather after 10km run; below, pitch battle with local police team

RAF PERSONNEL guarding the Baltic have raised £3,400 to help disadvantaged children and homeless people in Lithuania.

Firefighters donned their equipment to run 10km around Šiauliai Air Base for a local orphanage while a charity football match between the RAF and local police team netted more cash for the homeless.

Organiser Cpl Nick Slaney said: "It was important to me that



we could have a positive impact in the local area and could support local charities."



COOT IN THE ACT: Russian spy plane closing in on Nato air space, inset above left, Typhoon launching from Lithuania

Putin spy plane sparks Baltic scramble

Staff Reporter

SCOTTISH-BASED TYPHOON fighters scrambled to intercept a Russian reconnaissance aircraft over the Baltic Sea.

A pair of 6 Sqn jets from Lossiemouth currently on Nato Air Policing duties closed in on the Ilyushin IL-20 Coot after launching from Šiauliai Air Base in Lithuania where they are operating alongside

a detachment of Spanish F-18 fighters of Ejercito Del Aire.

The RAF has been policing the skies over the Baltic since 2014 following moves by Nato to counter emerging threats from Russia.

News

News bulletin



AIR ASSAULT AND BATTERY: Marham chief Gp Capt Jim Beck opens new facility

Charge of the F-35 Lightning brigade

A NEW battery bay has been formally opened at RAF Marham – home to the UK’s fleet of F-35 Lightning jets. The facility will be used for maintenance of the aircraft’s on-board lithium-ion power units which drive the stealth fighter’s control surfaces and actuators. The battery bay features a temperature-controlled storage area, separate charging section with sophisticated fire suppression and extraction systems.



A 24 Squadron Hercules prepares to take on fuel from a Voyager tanker over the North Sea during a six-hour training sortie. The C-130 J transporter, crewed by an instructor and three pilots, conducted a series of air-to-air refuelling drills at 20,000ft including a banking manoeuvre. PHOTOS: SGT MATTY MATTHEWS

United Kingdom Special Forces





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Beirut blast mission

UK C-17 flies in aid after chemical explosion levels Lebanese port

AN RAF airlift has delivered aid to rescuers working in the wake of the Beirut blast that killed at least 200 people and wounded more than 5,000.

The explosion caused by a fire at a stockpile of explosive chemicals at the port of the Lebanese capital sent an earthquake-like jolt through the city, levelling entire blocks.

A Brize-based C-17 transporter carrying cold-storage containers to store medical supplies arrived at Beirut International Airport to support Lebanese Armed Forces carrying out disaster relief operations. The mission follows a damage survey conducted by HMS Enterprise to help re-establish the strategic shipping hub which takes in most of the country's imports.

Earlier, soldiers from the 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment, who deployed from Cyprus onboard HMS Enterprise, delivered a field kitchen and accommodation tents for 500 Lebanese personnel.

Widespread public protest at the disaster led to the resignation of the country's government.

Military advisors are continuing to assess what further assistance the UK Armed Forces can provide.



AIR AID: Brize-based C-17 crew landed at Beirut International Airport

APOCALYPTIC: Rescue workers search epicentre of chemical blast which flattened Beirut port area and destroyed entire city blocks killing more than 200
PHOTO: PA

In brief



BLAST OFF: Cpl Astbury

Space ace Mitch

CPL MITCHELL Astbury has become the first from an overseas nation to qualify as an orbital analyst with US Space Command.

He is part of a team at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California tracking more than 900,000 pieces of man-made debris orbiting the earth to safeguard space missions.

Astbury, who is based at the UK's early warning station at Fylingdales, said: "Being part of an expanding space force, getting to watch new launches and missions, is remarkable."

Regt leads Nato air strike drill

Simon Mander

FAST JET controllers from four countries commanded by an RAF Regiment officer guided British Typhoons and Spanish EF-18 Hornets on simulated ground attack sorties in the first-ever training mission of its kind to be held in Lithuania.

Teams of Joint Terminal Attack Controllers from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, overseen by Sqn Ldr Rich May, coordinated Close Air Support drills with aircraft from the Nato Air Policing Mission over three weeks during Exercise Furious Wolf.

Sqn Ldr May, currently serving with the Headquarters of the British-led Nato Battlegroup in Estonia, said: "Opportunities to work together are vital and the joy of standardised training means



ON TARGET: Nato JTAC team. Right, Sqn Ldr Rich May

we all speak the same language and understand key words, even if English is not a first language."

Estonian Battle Group Commander Col Paul Clayton said: "It was a great demonstration of the

close Nato cooperation and interoperability between land forces across all Battlegroups and the Air Forces who protect the skies as part of the enhanced Air Policing mission."





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Subhunter targets Channel migrants



Simon Mander

SUBHUNTERS AND surveillance planes were called in to patrol the Channel after the number of illegal migrants attempting to enter Britain reached an all-time high.

Border Force officials requested RAF support for the first time after 235 people and 17 boats were intercepted in one day.

The first intelligence gathering sorties were carried out by a Brize-based Atlas A400M to track small boats used by people smugglers.

MoD chiefs called in a P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft and a Shadow R1 surveillance aircraft to monitor UK waters.

Lossiemouth commander Gp Capt Chris Layden said: "The Home Office requested support and we quickly deployed Poseidon MRA1.

"The aircraft has significant range and endurance and ability to support command and control and search and rescue operations."

The P8 Poseidon's maritime radar has a highly-sophisticated search and tracking capability while the Shadow R1 is equipped with electro optical and infra-red sensors.

The intervention came as Calais Mayor Natacha Bouchart described calls for Royal Navy action to tackle migrant crossings as a 'declaration of maritime war'.

DANGEROUS WATERS: Fears over rising death toll of migrants launching cross-Channel bids in flimsy dinghies; left, Poseidon crews track vessels in the Channel; right, airman keeps a lookout on board Atlas A400M; bottom, Poseidon



Sir Ian Duncan Smith and Defence Select Committee chairman Tobias Ellwood said the war analogy was 'irresponsible'.

Immigration Minister Chris Philp suggested Channel surveillance could be conducted by unmanned air vehicles.

Unconfirmed reports estimate that up to 4,000 migrants have made the perilous crossing from France so far this year.

The A400M sortie is the first time a military aircraft has flown in support of the Border Force, which used the information it gathered



to speed up the interception of migrant boats.

Earlier the Poseidon made its

operational debut supporting Royal Navy ships tracking a Russian vessel close to UK waters.



TECH TESTS: RAF Gunner tries out gaming-based simulator

Game on for RAF Gunners

Staff Reporter

AIR FORCE Gunners are testing the latest computer gaming tech to boost training for frontline operations.

Defence chiefs have signed a £300,000 deal with veterans-run software firm SimCentric to develop a virtual reality system for UK combat troops.

A team from the RAF Regiment has been brought in to help develop the new kit before it is rolled out across the wider military.

A spokesman said: "The software allows the RAF training wing to recreate the environments that we operate in with zero disruption to air operations.

"The technology is accelerating all the time. Having an understanding of its current capabilities and providing our input at these stages of development to make it fit our need is crucial, in order for us to keep up with the ever-progressing technology."

WO bows out after 40 years

ONE OF the longest serving members of the RAF took a bow at Wittering this month after a 40-year career.

Engineer WO Ian Coates signed up at the age of 17 in 1980 and since then has served all over the world including Afghanistan and the Balkans, working on Harrier, Jaguar and Tornado aircraft.

He was given a traditional send off by being presented with a bowler hat and towed from the station in an ejector seat.

Despite retiring he will be keeping his links with pals at Wittering - and is set to return as a full-time reservist with the station's Operations Wing.



Brits' VJ Day dismay

NEARLY HALF of British people have no idea what VJ Day stands for and don't think it is worth marking, according to a poll.

Last month was the 75th anniversary of the Japanese surrender, ending World War II.

But while most UK citizens would be happy to celebrate the Allies' victory in Europe and the invasion of Berlin, less than half bothered with the Victory in Asia.

The survey by Forces charity SSAFA also revealed that just five per cent of those questioned thought it was a date that they would celebrate in the future.

SSAFA chairman Sir Gary Coward said: "We should all be aware of our national history, especially



HATS OFF: RAF crews celebrate surrender

when associated with an unrelenting campaign and huge sacrifice. VJ Day marks such an event.

"This year, we remembered 75 years since the day Japan surrendered, in effect bringing the Second World War to a final conclusion."



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Ant on deck

Russian giant flies in Poseidon subhunter training facility

Simon Mander

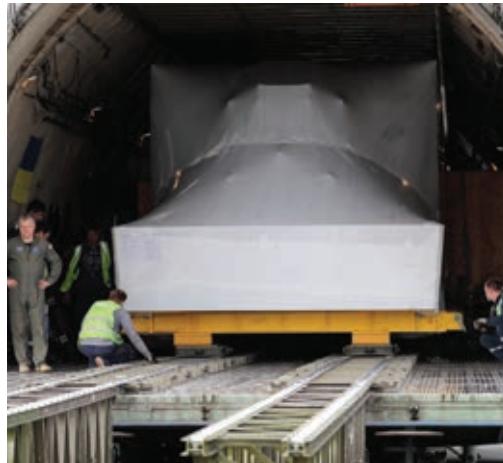
GIANT ANTONOV transporters took on two special deliveries to British Forces in the same week.

The first touched down at Prestwick Airport to drop off an oversized operational flight trainer heading to RAF Lossiemouth. Another arrived at Brize to be loaded with armoured cars for Army manoeuvres.

The simulator is one of two to be installed in the new £100-million base of the UK's submarine-hunting Poseidon MRA Mk1 Maritime Patrol Aircraft fleet.

The equipment weighs in at nine and a half tonnes and is 7.39m long, 4.01m wide and 3.73m high. It was flown more than 4,000 miles from Orlando, Florida and transported by road to the Moray airbase.

Poseidon delivery team project manager Mark Corden said: "The weight of the simulator is not such an issue. It's the width and



SPECIAL DELIVERY: Antonov lands at Prestwick airport. Inset left, unloading the Poseidon flight simulator which was taken by road to RAF Lossiemouth

height, which make it too big to be transported by any RAF aircraft. The Antonov is one of only a few aircraft in the world large enough to transport it."

Meanwhile, another Antonov took Army kit to Sarajevo to support Exercise Quick Response.

Earlier, Parachute Regiment

soldiers were landed by RAF Hercules in the Bosnian capital with food and equipment.

Having spent two weeks in Covid isolation in Britain and undergoing a medical screening at Camp Butmir, the troops got straight to work unloading the Foxhound vehicles.

New top dog at RAF St Pawgan



OUTGOING STATION chief Wg Cdr Heidi Madden and her black Labrador Bo welcomed their replacements at St Mawgan – Wg Cdr Marshall Kinnear and his matching dog Scout.

Air operations specialist Wg Cdr Kinnear will oversee the UK military's survival training centre alongside running the busy Cornish station.

Speaking after she and Bo handed over command, Wg Cdr Madden said: "In my two years as Station Commander it has been a privilege to work with such an amazing cohort of individuals, both on the station and in the wider community.

"I want to thank everyone for their unwavering support. Bo and I will miss Cornwall very much.

HEIDI BYE: Wg Cdr Madden and Bo welcome Wg Cdr Marshall Kinnear and Scout

Bomber site scoops top tourism award

THE INTERNATIONAL Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln has scooped a Travellers' Choice Award from Tripadvisor, placing it amongst the top 10 per cent of attractions worldwide.

The awards are given to businesses that have consistently received excellent reviews over the previous 12 months.

Nicky van der Drift, IBCC chief

executive, said: "We are absolutely delighted to have been recognised.

"It is wonderful to see the hard work, dedication and passion of our team of staff and volunteers rewarded so publicly."

The National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire has also been awarded a Travellers' Choice Award.

The venue has been reviewed

on the Tripadvisor website 3,500 times, with 97 per cent of reviewers awarding four or five stars.

Mark Ellis from the Arboretum said: "This award is a testament to our incredible team of staff and volunteers.

"Our people are always ready to go the extra mile in providing a first-class experience for all of our visitors."



WYCOMBE CHIEF Gp Capt Sean Harris tests out the new facilities at the Buckinghamshire station – after a £150,000 refurbishment programme for RAF families.

The new play area funded by the RAFBF is a big hit with Air Force youngsters coming out of lockdown and was opened by the charity's controller AVM Chris Elliot (pictured inset).

She said: "We are very,

very grateful to the Fund for providing this facility. It makes such a big difference to our Forces families."



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News bulletin



PEDAL POWER: Brize Norton fundraiser

Who dares spins

FUNDRAISERS AT Brize hit the charity trail during the nationwide Cycle to Work event.

Four teams went head to head on the station's exercise bikes to rack up as many miles as they could in 30 minutes.

A four-strong team from the Ground Engineering Flight took top honours, covering more than 70 miles and raising £200 for the RAF Benevolent Fund.



PREMIER LEAGUE SUPPORT: WWII veteran Sqn Ldr Lawrence 'Benny' Goodman and Chelsea performance manager Petr Cech

Chelsea nets bomber deal

PREMIER LEAGUE giants Chelsea have adopted a Lancaster bomber as part of their Say No To Antisemitism campaign.

The World War II icon is one of 13 aircraft on offer for adoption from the RAF Museum alongside 50 other historic objects including playing cards with hidden maps, an Amy Johnson doll and a bomber crew mascot Twinkletoes the Cat.

Museum chief Maggie Appleton said: "We are delighted to receive support from our friends at Chelsea. The adoption of the Lancaster is a fitting tribute from the team to the Jewish RAF personnel who served with Bomber Command."



LANCASTER: Premier League bomber

Family's just loco over Coco

Tracey Allen

A RAF mum says she's overjoyed to finally receive a special assistance dog to help her young autistic son, after struggling to secure funding.

Sgt Gemma Luxton and her family have welcomed Labrador Coco into their home to support four-year-old Yian, whose condition stopped him speaking.

The dog is specially trained to nuzzle and make a fuss over Yian if he becomes anxious or agitated and they hope the new member of the family will help develop his language skills.

Military charities SSAFA and the RAF Benevolent Fund paid for the Autism Dogs Community Interest Company to train Coco and place him with the family.

RAF medic Gemma said: "With assistance dogs, you usually have a series of one-to-one training sessions but due to Covid-19 Coco came to us straight away."

"Yian is the youngest child to be accepted on the scheme and we're so excited to have Coco in our family."

She added: "Yian finds it difficult to make connections with other people but seems to have an affinity with animals. We are hoping that Coco will be a best friend for him."

"If he gets overcome or compulsive, Coco can take charge of the situation through nuzzling and licking Yian to calm and comfort him."

"We feel very lucky. We can't thank the charities enough for everything they have done for us."

The Autism Dogs company matches and trains pets to meet a service user's needs. Its assistance dog scheme is the first to be awarded Autistic Society accreditation.

DOG STAR: Specially-trained Labrador Coco is helping four-year-old Yian overcome speech difficulty



Tribute to victims of Nazi Honington blitz



Simon Mander

THE VICTIMS of two wartime Luftwaffe raids on RAF Honington have been honoured after 80 years.

At least seven personnel were killed and 20 injured in attacks by a single aircraft using high explosives and incendiaries, followed by a Dornier 17 raid that destroyed two Wellingtons and a Magister, part of the roof on E Hangar and cratered the aerodrome.

Among the dead was 20-year-old rookie Aircraftman George Dudley of IX (B) Sqn, who died crossing the parade ground in what was just his second week in the RAF.

His nephew Michael Dudley, 80, said: "My father didn't know about



REMEMBERING THE FALLEN: Michael Dudley, Station Commander Gp Capt Matt Radnall and Padre Craig Lancaster. Far left, brothers George and Arthur Dudley.

George's death for a month until his mother's letter reached his base in Curaçao in the West Indies."

His father, Arthur Dudley, was also killed during World War II – serving in the King's Shropshire Light Infantry near Arnhem in October 1944 when the ambulance he was being carried in was struck by a direct hit.

Bullet holes can still be seen today

on the former Junior Ranks Mess at the Suffolk station, where the Luftwaffe machine-gunned those queuing outside for tea.

Recalling the event, IX (B) Sqn Sgt "Tiny" Cooling, who was in the Mess at the time, said: "One bomb hit the parade ground and killed a number of airmen and WAAFs in the lunch queue, about a dozen."

"Another hit the barrack block and blew it to bits, and another blew in the window of my quarters."

"When the racket died down, most of us sat back at the table and finished our lunch. We would find out what happened later."

A wreath was laid at the station's RAF Association Memorial to those who died.

RAF'S BIG BEAST OF WWII

The Lancaster bomber may not have been pretty, but it was certainly fit for purpose

IT MAY NOT be thought of as 'pretty' like the Spitfire, but the Lancaster bomber is considered just as iconic an aircraft and is equally revered.

Author John Nichol has followed up his bestseller about the Spitfire with another huge hit – this time telling the epic story of the Lancaster that he describes as 'purposeful'.

The former RAF navigator, now a writer and broadcaster, said: "It's as iconic and as British as the Spitfire. The Lancaster is purposeful. You cannot look at it and not know what that aircraft was for. It was designed with one thing in mind – to take the war to the heart of Germany."

The book is a tribute to the World War II bomber and its heroic crews – the average age of a seven-man crew was just 22. A staggering 7,377 Lancasters were built during WWII and only one in 20 completed more than 100 wartime missions. By 1943 only one in 40 airmen was expected to survive through a second tour of 30 operations, giving them a worse survival rate than the soldiers in the trenches in WWI.

Nichol said: "Many crewmen joined up aged just 17 or 18. Not one of them would describe themselves as brave or courageous. A lot said 'I just did my best, we were expected to. It was our duty'. I don't think they fully understood the statistical risks."

If you flew in Bomber Command you had only about a 40 per cent chance of surviving the war unscathed, at least physically.

Bomber Command's chief, Sir Arthur Harris, called the Lancaster 'the greatest single factor in winning the war against Germany'.

shot down during a mission over Iraq. He and his pilot, John Peters, were captured, tortured, held as prisoners of war, and paraded on television.

Nichol said: "Having been shot down myself allowed me to ask questions of the Lancaster veterans that other interviewers might not have felt comfortable with, more personal questions that someone else might find difficult, about the loss of friends."



NEW BOOK:
Lancaster,
by John Nichol



PRODUCTION LINE: Lancaster factory in Woodford, 1943

Photo ©Clive Rowley

It's an aircraft that's amassed some impressive statistics – each one cost about £50,000 to produce, about four times as much as a Spitfire. Each Lancaster was made up of around 55,000 separate parts and its assembly took 500,000 different manufacturing processes, taking more than 700,000 man hours.

More Service personnel were involved in building, flying and maintaining the Lancaster than any other British aircraft in history. At the height of the war, more than a million men and women were employed producing the bomber and parts for it at hundreds of factories on two continents.

On active duty in the Gulf War in 1991, Nichol's Tornado bomber was

Nichol cites the experience of veteran Ron Needle as among the most moving stories in the book.

He said: "An apprentice butcher from Birmingham, Ron joined up aged 17-and-a-half, because of a sense of duty, because his friends were doing it – that's what you did. Bomber Command didn't care where you came from, if you were a butcher's boy or a public schoolboy, as long as you could do the job."

In January 1945, the rear gunner's Lancaster was shot down and crashed in a remote French forest. Sgt Needle and only one other crew member, Harry Stunell,

survived, though Harry was badly burnt. Ron, who had to have the lower part of his right leg amputated, said the Lancaster saved his life.

When he got married in November, 1945, he was on crutches as his artificial leg wasn't ready.

Ron said: "I'd decided to wear my best RAF uniform and was very pleased the photographer was able to take the photographs making it appear that I had two legs."

As he got older, Ron said he yearned for some kind of reunion

with his past, for closure. In 1982 he found the cemetery in France where his fallen comrades lay and four years later he visited the site where his Lancaster crashed and was reunited with the local man, André Fromont, who had rescued Ron more than four decades earlier.

In 1990 Ron and Harry Stunell attended the unveiling of a marker at the crash site and a memorial plaque at the local church to their fallen comrades.

Poignantly, before he died, Ron

told Nichol: "I can't wait to be back with my friends." He passed away in 2019, aged 94.

Among the other notable personnel featured in the book are 25-year-old flight engineer Norman Jackson who was awarded the Victoria Cross and pilot Thomas Murray, who went on to fly secretive missions with the Special Operations Executive and, as an Acting Wg Cdr in charge of 138 Sqn, made a drop on VE Day for Operation Manna.

Another distinguished Lancaster pilot was former Chief of the Air Staff, Marshal of the RAF Sir Michael Beetham who said: "There are not many of us left... when we are gone our stories of flying and fighting the Lancaster should not die with us."

Nichol is currently writing his next book, about the Tornado in the first Gulf War, due to be published in summer 2021.

■ Lancaster The Forging of a Very British Legend, by John Nichol, is published by Simon & Schuster.



PILOT: CAS Sir Michael



CHIEF: 'Bomber' Harris



VC: Norman Jackson



SOE: Thomas Murray



REAR GUNNER: Ron Needle



INSPIRATION: Author John Nichol with former Lancaster crewman Ron Needle under the imposing bomber at the RAF Museum in 2018



STANDING PROUD: Amputee Ron Needle marrying wife Sylvia



ROYAL APPROVAL: King George VI inspects Lancaster crews at Waddington in 1942
Photo ©Clive Rowley



BIG BIRDS: Avro Lancasters flying above huge columns of smoke from fires and exploding bombs during a daylight attack on the flying bomb launch site at Beauvoir, Pas de Calais, France, on July 2, 1944



DEBRIEF: Jean Barclay with Lancaster crew after a raid in 1943
Photo ©IX(B) Sqn Association Archive



PAYING RESPECTS: Ron Needle and Harry Stunell reunited in France in 1990

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R'n'R



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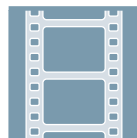
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Film review The Rifleman

Cert 15 – out now

Win!

Rifleman hits target

WHAT STARTS as a seemingly jingoistic World War I movie, Dzintars Dreiberger's *The Rifleman*, ends as one of the most poignant films of this genre in years.

Latvia's biggest grossing film of all time, based on Aleksandrs Grins' novel *Blizzard of Soul*, *The Rifleman* may well feature the biggest unseen U-turn, if you do not know the context, in war film history. Trading the childlike pride and nationalistic nonsense of the first hour and a half, the film becomes a salient lesson of betrayal, showing that in a war of many sides, there really cannot be any truth to brothers in arms.

At the beginning we see main character Artur Vanags, played excellently by Oto Brantevics, and the remainder of his family, brother Edgars and old warhorse father

Vanags (played by Raimonds Celms and Martins Vilsons respectively), go to battle for the dreams of being men and dying for their country.

The lie they all follow blindly is only mirrored by Artur's fear of actually firing a rifle or killing his fellow man. Having lost his mother and their family farm to the impending arrival of the German Imperial Army, the Vanags and their fellow Latvian comrades

take up arms. From here we are shown singing, drinking and bonding, amidst brilliantly shot scenes of battles, death and confusion. To add to the message, on several occasions Artur is seen facing his own soldiers by mistake.

The viewer is easily fooled into believing they may be watching a well thought-out version of a Hollywood blockbuster of this genre. On show are all the usual



CHAOTIC:
Mid battle



tropes: muffled battle scene audio, with frozen-hearted Artur unable to fire his gun; officers barking out orders and trying to 'man him up' and kill or be killed; even an innocent love interest with hospital nurse Marta, played by Greta Trusina.

On the death of Vanags, Artur suddenly becomes more of a soldier and begins fighting for the cause with gusto. It is from here Dreiberger does a brilliant job of projecting Artur into the arms of the Red Army, only to be completely betrayed and turned on

his own, like his Latvian brothers. With the country having been split down the middle fighting for both the Germans and Russians, they are finally forced to turn on their former masters to find freedom, but for how long?

The wonderful closing scenes are difficult to watch, only for the painful truth they contain.

3.5 out of 5 rounds Review by Daniel Abrahams

Win the DVD

WE HAVE copies of *The Rifleman* on DVD up for grabs. To be in with a chance of owning one, send us the correct answer to this question:

Who directs The Rifleman?

Email your answer, marked *The Rifleman* DVD, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by September 18.



Competition DVD

Empty Skies
(Trinity Creative Partnerships)

Win!

Battle of Britain heroes

TO TIE in with the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain – Battle of Britain Day is September 15 – Trinity Creative Partnerships are this month releasing a special documentary on DVD.

Empty Skies, out on September 7, tells the story of 19 men and women who were involved in the Battle – through a series of filmed interviews their stories have been preserved, allowing them to tell the part they played in the nation's defence in their own words, creating a unique collection of accounts.

Among the 17 Battle of Britain pilots who appear in the film are Flt Lt Terry Clark, Sqn Ldr Geoffrey Wellum, Wg Cdr Tom Neil and Flt Lt William Walker.

Exclusive to the DVD is a 52-minute film, *Battle of Britain*, which looks at the aircraft flown by both sides and at how the battle evolved into four distinct phases before Hitler turned his attention to the impending invasion of Russia.

We have copies of this not-to-



INTERVIEWS: Late Battle of Britain pilots Tom Neil (left) and Geoffrey Wellum

be-missed DVD up for grabs. For your chance to win one, just answer this question correctly:

What is the date of Battle of Britain Day?

Email your answer, marked *Battle of Britain* DVD competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by September 18. Please remember to include your full postal address with your entry.

See the trailer at: <https://vimeo.com/403670732>. The title is also available on Blu-Ray.



Exhibition Finding The Fallen

Leicester Museum and Art Gallery

Halifax crew debris tribute

ART AND World War II history combine for a new exhibition at Leicester Museum and Art Gallery. *Finding The Fallen* tells the story of artist Loz Atkinson's great-grandfather Arthur Pinder, a Halifax flight engineer who was killed when his aircraft crashed in 1944.

Last July, Loz, accompanied by Italian aeronautical archaeologist Francesco Sabini and photographer Zoe Childerley, climbed Monte Zatta in Northern Italy to explore the crash site of Arthur's Halifax MKII JP237 bomber. Tragically, Arthur and the entire crew perished in the accident on June 24, 1944. He was a member of 148 Sqn's Special Operations Executive.

A museum spokesperson said: "Coinciding with the 75th anniversary of the end of WWII, the exhibition explores the universal need to connect with our personal heritage. Discovering how objects turn into relics and hold powerful memories, Loz shows how with time these objects can convey new meaning despite being made from the debris of the past."

On display are artworks created directly into the landscape of the mountain and wreckage



LOST: Crew of JP237, with Arthur Pinder bottom left. Below, *Fragment From The Mountain* 2019 artwork by Loz Atkinson

collected from the crash site. Other exhibits include airframe and fuselage pieces found on Loz's journey and personal items from the crew, such as a heel from one of their boots and buttons from their uniforms.

Loz said: "This project has been hugely personal, but I hope it inspires people to delve into their heritage to discover incredible stories within their own past or set out on their own adventure to inspire future generations."

She added: "The work is made more poignant being shown in what continues to be a politically turbulent time across the globe."

"It raises issues of how we commemorate the sacrifices of individuals without glorifying war, highlighting that if we don't learn from history, we are doomed to repeat it."

■ *Finding The Fallen* VE75 – A Pilgrim's Journey Of Remembrance runs until November 15. Entry is free, booking is essential. Go to: leicestermuseums.org for more information.



R'n'R



Music Joe Bonamassa Royal Tea

JOE BONAMASSA'S new solo studio album *Royal Tea*, inspired by his British guitar heroes Jeff Beck, John Mayall & The Bluesbreakers, Eric Clapton and Cream – which was recorded at the legendary Abbey Road Studios in London – will be released on October 23.

Talking about *Royal Tea*, Bonamassa admitted: "This whole adventure was a bucket-list thing for me."

The album reconnects the 43-year-old with the guitar-slurping kid from upstate New York, who stumbled across the best of British blues music in his dad's vinyl collection – whose influences have shaped him to be the player he is today.

He said: "I would have been about 12 years old, and it was the sound I heard in my head. Like, 'OK, I'm in. That's what I want to be.'"

The 10 original tracks on *Royal Tea* were co-written by Joe and a cast of hometown notables including former Whitesnake guitarist Bernie Marsden, ex-Cream lyricist Pete Brown and musician and TV presenter Jools Holland.

"Writing this record in London



Musician is guitar royal-tea

AXE HERO:
Bonamassa

OUT
SOON:
New
album

has done its job," Bonamassa reflected. "It really does sound inherently British. Bernie and I, we finish each other's sentences. We're cut from the same cloth."

Bonamassa revealed that he will perform a special livestream concert from the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, Tennessee on September 20, featuring songs from his new album before the official release.

He has never performed a full, unreleased album for audiences like this before. Along with *Royal*

Tea he'll play classic remixes from his 20th anniversary album *A New Day Now*.

The concert is presented by Bonamassa's non-profit Keeping the Blues Alive Foundation. Each ticket purchase will include a \$1 donation to Joe's Fueling Musicians Program, which, to date, has raised more than \$295,000 and supported more than 163 musicians in need due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

■ Go to: jbonamassa.com for more details.



TV George Clarke's National Trust Unlocked

Best of
British

Covid UK Unlocked

EVERY YEAR around 27 million visits are made to the National Trust's 300 houses and gardens, but this all came to a halt in March as tourism sites across the country closed. For a new six-part Channel 4 series, George Clarke was granted special access to some of these historic and extraordinary places, delving into the hidden recesses that visitors don't normally get to see.

In *George Clarke's National Trust Unlocked*, while adhering to social distancing, he meets the people keeping these sites in working order until they are ready to be re-opened. He discovers some of the UK's most impressive historic homes; finds out more about the fascinating architecture, design and stories behind each property and explores the stunning gardens, open countryside and spectacular surrounding scenery of these treasured estates.

He is joined by his faithful four-legged companion, Loki the Siberian husky, to walk around some of the most scenic outdoor spaces in and around the National Trust's properties.

Clarke said: "The history of our architecture tells the stories of our past, both good and bad, and the National Trust grounds and walks have made me realise, now more than ever, just how important our open, green and beautiful spaces are to our happiness, well-being and mental health."

"What an opportunity for me to explore so many properties, many of which I've never seen before. Stay safe, sit back and enjoy the series, because it's the most unique series of programmes I've ever made."

The series continues on C4 at 9pm on Sundays.



COAST WITH THE MOST: Clarke and Loki tour the UK

The Big Event Strike: Lethal White



UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Robin (Holliday Grainger, left) is newly married and Strike (Tom Burke) has a girlfriend, but the pair are struggling to hide their mutual attraction

Will this pair end up Rowling in the hay?

TOM BURKE and Holliday Grainger are back in the latest TV adaptation of JK Rowling's – writing as Robert Galbraith – Cormoran Strike novels.

Lethal White is the fourth book about private detective Strike (Burke) and his professional partner Robin Ellacott (Grainger).

Tom Edge, who adapted the book for the BBC One mini-series, said: "*Lethal White* also sees Strike and Robin forced to face quite a few things from their own recent pasts and relationships. What we see, in a sense, is a sort of attempt by both of them to make their respective relationships with other people work, while keeping their eyes off each other."

He added: "*Lethal White* is the story of Strike's investigation into two families, which lead him quite deep into the past. You have the Chiswell family who have a grand, rambling estate and a London home. But all is not well beneath the surface. There's another family tied to them, the Knights, and through them Strike ends up with the Chiswells."

"There are two brothers: Jimmy and Billy Knight. Billy is very mentally unwell, and shows up unannounced at Strike's office in the midst of a real emotional crisis. He's haunted by a memory from his childhood when he

witnessed a little girl being strangled in ritualistic fashion, then buried behind his father's cottage. Strike begins to unpick the connections that lie between these two families, which takes us primarily into the world of politics."

"But there are two ends of the political spectrum at play. You have the traditional right, embodied by a Conservative MP, as well as the anarchic left. As ever, Jo [Rowling] approaches both with a scalpel-like gaze, examining them in an even-handed manner."

Burke explained: "In the book, the first murder doesn't occur until about 200 pages in, but there's an awful lot of other stuff going on. There's a cold case that is alluded to. In fact, it was never a case; there's a murder that is alleged to have happened, and they're trying to get to the bottom of it. In a very noir-ish way, two different cases start to overlap each other."

How far does the actor think his character's relationship with Robin has come?

He said: "I had a sense of Strike being, emotionally, one layer of skin thinner in this one. There's this beat, this moment that happens near the beginning, which the book frequently returns to. It's at Robin and Matthew's wedding. Robin and Strike don't quite know what's happened, only that something has, and both of them carry that throughout the four episodes."

"They're a little awkward with each other at times, not quite knowing how to get back to where they were before. They don't quite understand what they're doing or where they're going."

He added: "Robin and Strike's relationship seems to me to be the heart of the show."

What does he think the future holds for the characters? He said: "I don't know. Not in real life, of course, but I'm quite a fan of catastrophe. I'd quite like things to go very, very wrong. But I don't know – we'll see."

Grainger said: "Robin has a great sense of fun, and she relishes taking on different roles. In *Lethal White*, she goes undercover

as the goddaughter of an MP in the House of Commons, complete with a pair of brown contact lenses and all. To be completely honest when I first read the book I was a bit dubious that contacts could change a person's appearance that much, but I was completely wrong – they really do, it transforms your whole face. And it's fascinating the effect that then has on your personality too."

"It's not her only stint undercover, either. She also goes from the corridors of Whitehall to Camden Town, where she starts working in a jewellery shop in the hope of infiltrating a left-wing protest group. So I've got this black wig, black clothes, Doc Martens and goth eye make-up look going on too."

What is it about the *Strike* series that has fans gripped and keeps them returning for more?

Grainger revealed: "Well, Robin and Strike's relationship has captured so many hearts and minds, mine included. But I also think the series' success lies in the way that each new case leads us into a new world."



TV Don't Rock The Boat

Celebs are all at sea



PRESENTERS: Odudu and Flintoff

ITV HAS revealed the 12 celebrities taking part in what it calls 'the challenge of a lifetime' – to row the entire length of Britain – in its new adventure series *Don't Rock The Boat*.

Presented by former international cricketer, now *Top Gear* presenter Freddie Flintoff and *The Voice's* AJ Odudu, the five-part series will see the dozen famous faces step out of their comfort zones and onto their sea legs as they compete in two teams of six.

The celebs are politician Tom Watson, sports presenter and Olympic gold medallist Denise Lewis, supermodel and broadcaster Jodie Kidd, actor Craig Charles, singer-songwriter Fleur East, YouTuber Joe Weller and *Love Island* winner Jack Fincham.

Also confirmed are *Coronation Street* actress Lucy Fallon, Olympic, World and European Champion cyclist Victoria Pendleton, *The Chase's* Dark Destroyer Shaun Wallace, actor and presenter Adam Thomas and member of The Pussycat Dolls Kimberly Wyatt.

Flintoff said: "I'm thrilled to be hosting this new show for ITV. It sounds like it's going to be a huge challenge for the 12 rowers so I'm pleased that I'll be spending most of my time on dry land... hopefully. It should be a great watch for everyone at home and I can't wait to get started."

Odudu added: "This is going to be a great show, with an epic line-up. Such a brilliant mix of personalities and challenges which always makes for good telly. I cannot wait to get going – especially filming with the legend that is Freddie Flintoff."

Don't Rock The Boat, to be shown later this year, aims to push the celebrities to their physical and mental limits as they battle it out to complete over 500 gruelling miles. It could be 'oar-inspiring'...



Books The Final Warning Published by Zuleika, out Sept 17

Win!

What is to become of U.S.?

PETER ISDELL-CARPENTER'S debut novel *The Final Warning* shakes up fact and fiction in what's been described as an intense, alarming thriller that will satisfy even the most exhausted of news junkies.

Trump is history, Queen Elizabeth is no more, and a few years later a popular new president of the United States is left to protect America from a devastating new conspiracy. But can truth and security be restored in a nation now powered by greed and deception?

On November 4, Donald Trump's administration left to breathe. While the next Commander-in-Chief may strive to protect the United States from its dangerous trajectory, new president Adam Sukova and his young White House intern are on the frontline to forestall the greatest ever threat to American freedom – before it's too late. But as President Sukova works tirelessly to save the nation from decline, a newer, more real conspiracy emerges, unlike anything the nation has ever seen.

"The novel examines what bad people can do to a country when it is left in a state of exhausted vulnerability," the author explained. "Many people are wondering what the 2020 elections will bring for the United States and, whoever wins, what state the country will be left in after that."

"My book imagines the future for a dispirited nation facing a new and terrifying threat, where suddenly nothing can be believed or protected anymore. And it's all frighteningly plausible."

The Final Warning (published by Zuleika) is out on September 17 and we have copies to win. For your chance to own one, simply send us the correct answer to this question:

What is the name of the new president of the USA in *The Final Warning*?

Email your answer, marked *The Final Warning* novel competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP14 4UE, to arrive by September 18.



Exhibitions Refugees Imperial War Museum

Worth
a visit

Chinese dissident in first for the IWM

THROUGH TWO major exhibitions, a new artistic commission and a series of immersive events at its Duxford and London sites, Imperial War Museum's *Refugees* season unlocks the personal stories of people forced to flee their homes and those who work to support them. It's said that every two seconds someone is forced to leave their home as a result of conflict or persecution.

Objects, film and photography from IWM's rich historical collections are presented alongside contemporary material,



BOMBS: Fills IWM London's atrium gallery © IWM

cutting-edge research and newly commissioned artworks to reveal the personal stories of refugees and displaced people, from World War I to the present day.

As part of the *Refugees* season, for the first time in its history IWM London's atrium has been given over to an artist – the internationally renowned Ai Weiwei who is considered one of the leading cultural figures of his generation.

His new, site specific artwork, *History of Bombs*, draws on the artist's ongoing investigation into politics and power and will be on display until May 2021.



FLED CHINA: Artist Ai Weiwei PHOTO: GAO YUAN



Your Announcements

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

Deaths

NOCKEMANN Harry passed away on July 19 aged 80. He joined the RAF in 1959 serving at Bruggen twice, Khormaksar, Aden and Akrotiri, Cyprus as well as stations in Lincolnshire and Hampshire, retiring as WO Supply at RAF West Drayton in 1985. He became Supply Manager for an aircraft company in Portsmouth but suffered with heart problems for nearly 30 years. He is sadly missed by Pam (ex SACW Griffin), his wife for 57 years, daughter Karin, son Rob and grandchildren.

ROGERS Allan WO (Ret'd) Airframe fitter 78th Entry ex Brat sends his farewell to all who knew him at Halton and various stations in his 39 years with the Royal Air Force on his death August 8, 2020.



WO Bryn Williams

WILLIAMS Bryn WO (Ret'd) BEM, passed away peacefully aged 86 at home in North Hykeham on August 16, surrounded by his family. Bryn was born in Lambeth, London, on December 6, 1933 and joined the RAF as a boy entrant at age 15, as an Armourer. He had numerous postings in the UK as well as to Gibraltar and Germany (Fassberg, Jever, Wildenrath, Gutersloh and Laarbruch). He enjoyed many detachments overseas including Singapore,

Belize, Australia, Norway, Christmas Island, Hawaii and Canada. Bryn worked on numerous aircraft and particularly loved the Vulcan and the Harrier. Whilst at 3(F) Squadron, RAF Gutersloh, he was awarded the BEM for his outstanding contribution to the squadron and to the local community. He was a gifted marksman and began representing the RAF in 1958, winning many competitions including ones at Bisley, and was the RAF Small Bore Champion. He shared his expertise and was the North Lincolnshire County Coach and coached the WRAF team whilst stationed at RAF Scampton. Following Bryn's retirement in 1988 aged 55, he became the Range Officer at RAF Scampton for two years after which he then gave his time to the ATC, training young cadets for many years as the Squadron Warrant Officer, Range Officer, Team Armourer and Senior Instructor, with his service being extended well beyond the normal retirement age. Bryn enjoyed a full life that was well lived, and the RAF remained a passion throughout his life. He is sadly missed by his beloved wife Anita whom he had been married to for 63 years, sons Gordon and Paul (both who followed him into the RAF), daughter Joanne, son-in-law Roly, daughters -in-law Pauline and Kaye, grandchildren Emma, Martin, Ben, Lucy and Amy and great-grandchildren Brooke, Aaron and Ethan. Bryn was a wonderful and much loved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather who will always be remembered with enduring love and is greatly missed.

In Memoriam

CLEARY (Steve) Junior Technician. April 29, 2000, aged 29. Still missed beyond

words by Mum, Dad and Neil.

DIXON John Birkett WO (Ret'd). Mess Manager. Taken April 13, 2002. Still missed, still loved, never more than a thought away. Devoted wife Margaret and all your loving family.

IN loving memory of WO Alex MacPherson - RAF Brampton Cmd Accts, died May 15, 2004. Our thoughts are always with you
Our memories never fade
We treasure all the years we shared
And all the love you gave
You were so very special
What more is there to say
We only wish with all our hearts
That you were here today.
Much missed by loving wife Marguerite and family.

Reunions

SINGAPORE Armed Forces Reunion. Were you seconded from the RAF to the SAF at RAF Tengah between 1971-75? If so please contact Peter Priscott for a 50th anniversary reunion in August 2021. Email: peterpriscott@aol.com or call: 01842 878554.

158 Squadron Bomber Command. The 158 Association is very active and we want to contact any veteran or relative of a veteran. We are planning a reunion and memorial service for autumn 2020. Please contact: KevB@silenicus.com.

RAF Bawdsey Reunion Association. Due to the coronavirus pandemic we have, regrettably, had to cancel the annual reunion lunch planned for Saturday, June 6. Those who have booked a place and paid their fee will have their money refunded. We have provisionally planned the

next reunion for Saturday, June 5, 2021 and look forward to seeing our friends again then. In the meantime we wish you all a safe and healthy time during this unprecedented period. If you have any queries please email: doreen.bawdseyreunion@btinternet.com or you can call: 07513 301 723.

COASTAL Command Officers' Reunion, October 10, 2020. Please contact Ray Curtis, call: 01264 735349 or email: hjn3@btinternet.com

ASSOCIATION RAF Women Officers Annual Reunion. All RAF Women Officers are invited to attend the Annual Reunion Lunch at the RAF Club on Saturday, October 10. We meet for pre-lunch drinks from 11.30 followed by lunch. All will be made very welcome, especially new members of the Association. For further details about the lunch or the Association of RAF Women Officers, please contact Sue Arnold on: 07740 865685 or email: suearnold474@gmail.com.

THE RAF Locking 119/219/404 Apprentice Entries 50th Anniversary Reunion will be held on October 23 and 24. An informal evening on October 23 will allow ex-apprentices to gather before the formal dinner on October 24. The formal event will take place in the ballroom of the Weston-super-Mare Winter Gardens, BS23 1AJ, for all RAF Locking 119/219/404 Entry Apprentices and wives/partners. For further details please contact Barry Cox at: barrycox124@hotmail.com.

Seeking

SEEKING three ex-colleagues: Mike (Mick) Legg, Engine Fitter, ex Khormaksar, and latterly Queens Flight - Mike was an Hampshire lad who may have retired there or maybe stayed in the Benson area due to the time he spent on QF; Doug Carole, Air Electrician, ex Lyneham when I knew him '67-'70 - Duggie's home was Goring-on-Thames; Peter (Taff) Hill, Clerk Secretarial. Last known posting by me was RAF Cottesmore, '65, but we did meet up in Saudi Arabia, '79 (ish). Taff's home town was/is Haverfordwest, which I should have visited in 1965, if he has forgiven the omission. Taff was sadly, a terrible squash player, he could not grasp the essentials, try as I did to coach him. **AS** I'm in the Benson area

the beginning of October if they are in the region and amenable, I'd like to make contact.

Paul Holyoak S1945080 Sgt Engine Fitter, last unit: RAF Odiham, 1973. May be contacted by email: paul.angela.h@gmail.com or on: 01772 784249

IAN Christopher Loynes (born London, October 7, 1945, died Corby, Northants, December 15, 1999), was my cousin, and unfortunately we lost touch a number of years ago; sadly, it seems that he lost contact with pretty much all the family. I'm working on our family tree, alongside which I'm writing a narrative history of the family, to 'put some flesh on the bones' as it were of family members. I've found no-one who recalls Ian and I'd hate for him to be simply forgotten - to become nothing more than a footnote. I understand that he served in the RAF - I'm told possibly somewhere on the south coast. If there are any of his old colleagues who are able to give me any information at all, I'd be most grateful. Please email me: andrewswirles@aol.com

READER Pat Vinycomb wants to trace the descendants of her father Sqn Ldr Stanley Booker's crew, whose 10 Squadron Halifax 111 MZ630 was shot down over St Andre De L'Eure, France on June 3, 1944. Along with pilot Fg Off Alexander Murray, wireless operator WO John Williams, who were killed in the crash, and Pat's father, navigator Fg Off Stanley Booker, the crew were flight engineer Sgt John Osselton from Staines, Surrey, rear gunner Sgt Terrance Gould from Caerphilly, air gunner Sgt Clifford Hallett from Chard, Somerset and bomb aimer Sgt Ernest 'Snooky' Stokes from Catford, London.



Stanley Booker, now 98, (pictured above as a young airman) was 22 when the Halifax crashed. It was flying from RAF Melbourne to Trappes in France following a successful bombing raid

on marshalling and railway yards. Please email Pat on: patvinycomb@gmail.com if you can help.

DOES anyone know about the special liaison unit under Victoria Station during World War II? Please email: ipmoird80@gmail.com

Admin Association

THE RAF Administrative Apprentice Association welcomes all Administrative apprentices who trained as Suppliers or Clerks at RAF St Athan, RAF Bircham Newton, RAF Halton, RAF Ruislip or RAF Hereford. Further details of YOUR Association can be found at www.rafadappasn.org

For sale

SERGEANTS' Mess uniform for sale, small size. Chest 34, waist 32, trouser length 28. Email Mrs Jean Grimshawe at: chirogirl2@outlook.com; call: 07544 338869.

Catering Association

MEMBERSHIP is open to serving or former Warrant Officers or Flight Sergeants in Trade Group 19 and to former RAF Catering Officers. Please email: janedjones6@tiscali.co.uk or you can call: 01487 823480 for more information and an application form.

Aeroboot at NAM

NEWARK Air Museum will host an aeroboot aviation and avionics outdoor sale on the museum's Southfield site on September 26. The aeroboot will be a stand-alone event, with no general access to the main museum site or facilities. The £3 admission ticket will allow buyers a discounted admission to the museum, but this will need to be made via the new Covid-Secure one-way system. The funds raised from the event will be used to support the development of additional facilities. Visitors will be able to search through a selection of aviation and avionic items including books, paintings, prints, DVDs, plastic kits, radio equipment and aircraft parts. Regular updates and sellers' information are being posted on the museum website's news page. Go to: newarkairmuseum.org for more information.

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Your Announcements

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



SERVICE: Cpl 'Buster' Thomas, far left, with colleagues in Germany in the 1950s, inset, at Fradley Airbase, Lichfield in 1961

Please help find Buster

READER THERESA Kilbride is trying to trace her godfather, Cpl Grenville D Thomas, who served in the RAF in World War II and during the 1950s and 60s.

Known as 'Buster' he joined the Service in

Jamaica and was stationed at Fradley Aerodrome, Lichfield, between 1944 and 1946 with Theresa's father Eric C. Morrison.

She said: "Buster was also stationed in Style, Germany, in the 1950s and I was last in touch with him in

1966 when he was stationed at RAF Doncaster.

"Hopefully someone may remember him from the past."

■ Please email Theresa on: tkilbride61@hotmail.co.uk if you can help.

Steven's 'wrinkly' ride

WHEELIE GOOD: Steven Hanson gets ready to saddle up on his vintage motorbike, inset



AN RAF veteran is taking part in a fundraising event dubbed 'the Wrinkly Ride' on his vintage motorbike, in aid of the RAF Association Wings Appeal.

Steven Hanson, a Wings Appeal Officer for RAFA Cranwell, is visiting 80 current and former RAF stations on his Honda CB 400F Super Sport.

He started the Wrinkly Ride on August 1 and is due to finish it at Cranwell on September 15, Battle of Britain Day, commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Battle.

Steven said: "All funds raised will go to the Wings Appeal to help finance their welfare commitment to serving and veterans of the RAF and Air Forces of the Commonwealth, their spouses, partners and dependants."

"We, the fundraisers, have lost much of our pre-coronavirus pandemic income, more than 40 per cent down on this time last year. At Cranwell we had to cancel our annual charity concert, all our stalls at country and military shows, in-store collections and our annual Wings Day street collection."

He added: "While we still have our collecting tins in many shops, pubs and other businesses, the amount donated has fallen dramatically as many of these businesses have not only been closed but have not taken cash because card use is safer."

Steven has already smashed his £500 target and raised more than £600 and now aims to reach £1,000 – go to: justgiving.com/fundraising/steven-hanson to donate.

Search UKSF on MODnet
SFTC-UKSF-Recruiting@mod.gov.uk



United
Kingdom
Special
Forces





Prize Crossword

No. 280

Solve the crossword, then rearrange the seven letters in yellow squares to find an RAF word

Across

1. Savage wolf identified, looking dangerous initially (4)
8. High-fliers destroy opener, alas (10)
9. Mythological sub hunter? (8)
10. Where people eat during Inca festival (4)
12. Bashed in large tubs returned by Edward (6)
14. 100 leave Regency breaking spirit (6)
15. Out east, minare' t constructed in county (6)
17. Mathematical terms used by company groups (6)
18. It holds water most satisfactorily (4)
19. Users are confused by comfort (8)
21. Lloyd Wright almost gave US soldier sheet of paste (10)
22. Fruity engagement? (4)

Down

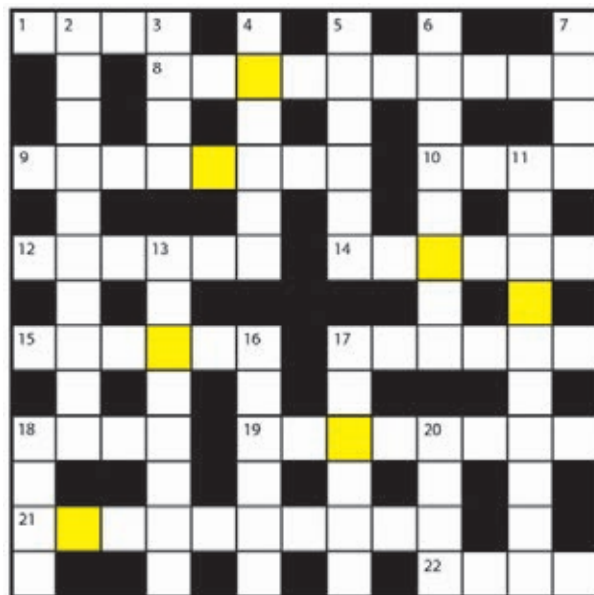
2. Clout Timor pecan into pieces (10)
3. **And 13 Down.** Envy alderman bewitched by sweetheart (4,4,4)
4. Swapped traditional for updated, ultimately (6)
5. Live off cake (6)
6. Prances around a part of the body (8)
7. Wight, say, is near the French (4)
11. Tyson Fury takes lignite on plane (7,3)
13. **See 3 Down**
16. A magical RAF engine, obviously (6)
17. After smashing car into tank, it's worn at the neck (6)
18. Small Kiwi fellow seeks partner (4)
20. Get rid of lean-to (4)

Name

Address

RAF word Crossword No. 280

We are now able to receive competition entries by post again. The winners of Prize Crossword 280 and Prize Su Doku 290 will be published in our September 18 edition. Send entries to the address printed in the Su Doku panel opposite



Solution to Crossword No. 278:

Across – 6. Fatigue 7. Malta 9. Qatar 10. Sea King 12. Celebrities 14. Lissiemouth

18. Flanker 19. Green 21. Angry 22. Tornado

Down – 1. Salad 2. Mirage 3. Gun 4. Racket 5. Stanley 8. Bedroom 11. Referee 13. Gosling 15. Sentry 16. Throne 17. Ready 20. Top

RAF aircraft – Hercules

Solution to Crossword No. 279:

Across – 7. Eleven 8. Disarm 10. Prevail 11. Steer 12. Nine 13. Idiot 17. Cloak 18. Mini 22. Rooks 23. October 24. Wessex 25. Muesli

Down – 1. Vespina 2. Le-Ferne 3. Feral 4. Mission 5. Capel 6. Amari 9. Gladiator 14. Gloster 15. Air Base 16. Air Raid 19. Crown 20. Morse 21. Stout

Aircraft – Transporter

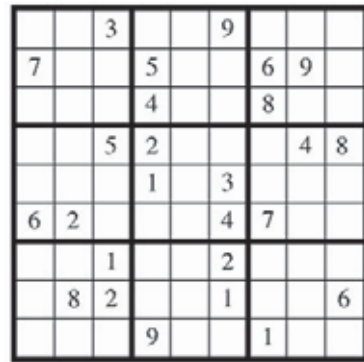


Prize Su Doku

No. 290

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 September 18, 2020.



Name

Address

Su Doku No. 290

Solution to Su Doku No. 289

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



Music

New albums

Elvis Costello, Ward Thomas & Emily Barker



ALL ON SONG

SOME BIG names have announced new albums out this autumn – **Ward Thomas** are back with *Invitation*, released on October 2, and **Elvis Costello's** *Hey Clockface* is scheduled for release on October 30.

Sisters Catherine and Lizzy of Ward Thomas said: “2020 has been a year full of learning, which we feel has changed our approach to this album. We recorded a lot of it from our cottage, and working remotely came with its share of challenges, but also new opportunities.

“Although recorded during uncertain times, the record feels like an invitation to a more positive time; to a more open and exciting new chapter. We named it after a lyric in the song *Open Your Mind* because the album feels like an invitation – whether it be figuratively, an invitation to self-reflect, or physically, to a time when we can all party again.”

The girls will also embark on an intimate *Invitation* acoustic



LP: Elvis Costello

PHOTO: LENS O'TOOLE

tour, which was rescheduled due to Covid-19, in April next year. The 16-date run will include two dates at London's Union Chapel on April 26 and 27. The tour will also visit Liverpool, Leeds, Norwich, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Brighton, Manchester and Bath.

Costello's *Hey Clockface* was recorded in Helsinki, Paris and New York and mixed in Los Angeles. Following the solo recording of three tracks in Helsinki, Costello immediately travelled to Paris for a weekend studio session.

He said: “I sang live on the studio floor, directing from the



SISTER ACT: Ward Thomas

PHOTO: SOPHIA BURNELL

vocal booth. We cut nine songs in two days. We spoke very little. Almost everything the musicians played was a spontaneous response to the song I was singing. I'd had a dream of recording in Paris like this, one day.”

Probably best known as the writer and performer of the award-winning theme to BBC crime drama *Wallander*, starring Kenneth Branagh, **Emily Barker's** new album *A Dark Murmuration of Words* is out on September 4.

The Australian singer-songwriter, now based in the UK, has released the video for the new

track *Where Have The Sparrows Gone?*

The reflective song looks outside an apartment window and imagines a post-apocalyptic, birdless London; the video focuses on a family's search for closure as a metaphor for the loss of species and destruction of natural environments.

Barker said: “Over the last few decades the sparrow has gone from being one of the world's most common and widespread birds to being Red Listed as a species of high conservation concern.

“When writing the song, my thoughts returned to the sparrows

SONGWRITER: Emily Barker



outside my window – how sad it would be to look out and not see and hear their vibrant movement and chatter. I hope that day never comes.”

■ Go to: emilybarker.com and see also: wardthomasmusic.co.uk and elviscostello.com for more details.

Jacob's on the record-breaking run

Tracey Allen

SIX-YEAR-OLD FUNDRAISING star Jacob Newson has been training hard for a record-breaking mission – walking the gruelling escape route used by a downed RAF pilot on the run from the Nazis in World War II.

The aviation-mad youngster and his dad Andrew are walking the escape route in Belgium and France taken by RAF fighter pilot Al Deere, shot down 80 years ago.

Last year Jacob raised £6,500 for the RAF Benevolent Fund climbing Pen-y-Ghent, one of the highest peaks in Yorkshire.

Now he's planning to be the youngest person ever to walk the entire British Army evacuation front used during Operation Dynamo, in an RAF flying suit. Andrew said: "He is walking the escape and evasion route of Pilot Officer Al Deere, just over 80 years to the day he crashed in Belgium and escaped back to Britain from Dunkirk to fight in the Battle of Britain.

"Jacob is walking the 25km distance over two days.

"His start point is the exact crash site where the Spitfire still is today, around 30 metres under the sand. At the halfway point we are going to camp for the night and finish on the East Mole at Dunkirk the following day. Al Deere became a Battle of Britain Ace with 54 Sqn, Jacob is



wearing their Sqn crest on his flying suit."

He added: "Jacob has been training very hard during the last few months doing lots of walking and cycling and we climbed Pen-Y-Ghent again last month as part of his fitness programme."

By the end of the Dunkirk evacuation New Zealander Deere had claimed seven enemy aircraft destroyed and two shared destroyed. He

was awarded the DSO, OBE, Croix de Guerre and the American DFC. He served in the RAF until 1967, retiring as an Air Commodore after 30 years distinguished service.

Jacob was due to start his Dunkirk challenge in May but the event had to be postponed due to the coronavirus crisis. He is on course to achieve his aim of raising a total of £17,500 for the RAFBF, having raised more than £16,200 so far.

● Go to: justgiving.com/fundraising/Andrew-newson2 to support Jacob's Dunkirk Challenge 2020.

RAF FAN: Six-year-old Jacob in his flying suit; right, with veteran Sqn Ldr 'Johnny' Johnson; inset right, meeting the Red Arrows at the Royal International Air Tattoo in 2019

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By Simon Mander

Feature

SAR: A late tribute

Book pays homage to RAF Search and Rescue... four years after it's disbanded



FAE EAST: A casualty is lifted into a pannier fixed to the fuselage of a Dragonfly operating with the Casualty Evacuation Flight in Malaya, December 1951 Photo © Air Historical Branch (RAF)



ADEN: A casualty, wounded during operations near the Yemeni border, is carried from a Sycamore helicopter flown into the Dhala airstrip, February 1957 Photo © Air Historical Branch (RAF)



SEA KING: SAR in action during the flooding at Boscastle, Cornwall, in 2004 Photo © Air Historical Branch (RAF)

WHEN RAF Search and Rescue was disbanded in 2016 the iconic yellow Sea King helicopters disappeared from Britain's skies forever.

Despite a history dating back to 1941, when it was formed to save desperately needed pilots who would otherwise have perished in the Channel, only part of this unique Force's achievement was ever celebrated.

For reasons still unexplained, official statistics for the missions it carried out only go back to 1983.

But the numbers are still worth repeating.

Over that period, six Search and Rescue (SAR) flights saved 26,853 people in 34,025 call-outs over 1.1 million square miles of land and sea, earning its personnel six George Medals and more than 50 Air Force Crosses.

Before 1983, rescues still happened of course, as Paul Eden's book dramatically illustrates.

Its jacket cover shows winchman Sergeant Eric Smith dangling perilously off the grounded trawler Jeanne Gougy before dragging two French fishermen to safety, which earned Sgt Smith the Service's second George Medal.

In its later years SAR's heroic exploits repeatedly hit the headlines, and not just because of the dramatic footage sometimes made available to the media by the helicopter's on-board cameras.

Disasters, such as Piper Alpha in 1988 – when four RAF helicopters and a Nimrod joined a rescue bid after a series of explosions on the North Sea platform killed 167 men – shocked the public.

Bizarrely, despite enlisting the services of the Air Historical Branch's excellent Lee Barton, who unearths some rare shots of early SAR helicopters – including the Dragonfly, Hoverfly and Sycamore in Aden – for the book, its lack of Piper Alpha imagery seems a glaring omission.

Unlike Boscastle, where news crews captured the exploits of RAF and Royal Navy Sea Kings who prevented any loss of life when torrential rain burst river banks sending an estimated 440 million gallons of water surging through the Cornish town in 2004.

Then there's the inspiring individual feats of heroism such as those of Sgt Rachael Robinson – in 2013 the RAF's only female winchman when she won The Queen's Gallantry Medal descending six times in raging seas to rescue a crewman with serious head injuries on the French trawler Alf.

And, of course there's SAR's Royal connection – Prince William, a veteran of 156 SAR operations including the 2011 sinking of the Swanland in high seas off North Wales in which six Russian sailors died, and, by all accounts here an 'exceptional aviator,' according to his peers at Valley.

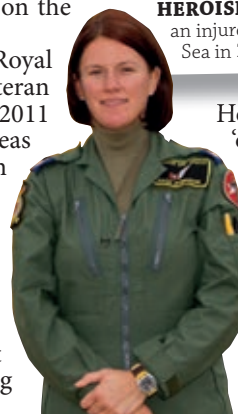
HRH writes the foreword and the book claims that his was among many attempts to save the Service from being stood down and its work contracted out in controversial circumstances involving the now much criticised PFI scheme.



LIFE-SAVERS: The winchman of a Whirlwind SAR helicopter from 22 Squadron is lowered down to rescue survivors from the French trawler Jeanne Gougy which had run aground near Land's End in November 1962 Photo © Air Historical Branch (RAF)



HEROISM: RAF SAR winchman Sgt Rachael Robinson (also inset left) descends to the aid of an injured fisherman on the French trawler Alf in raging waters during a storm in the Irish Sea in 2013. Her actions later won her The Queen's Gallantry Medal



How he, and the unnamed 'others,' who joined him, did this – perhaps the real story behind this account – is sadly never revealed by the author.

This is a workman-like tome from Eden, typically packed, perhaps too much, with squadron and aircraft profiles.

But at £25 a pop it's

hard to see who the audience is for an 'official' reference work of this kind, given ex-SAR personnel have long since been dispersed and their bases closed. A worthy effort – a pity it's four years too late.

■ **The Official Illustrated History of RAF Search and Rescue** by Paul E Eden is published by Bloomsbury



He's Fast AND

Who Dares doesn't always Win - but being risk-averse is putting Britain on the fast track to nowhere, says world speed champ Richard Noble

HE IS the world's undisputed king of speed whose jet-powered supersonic cars put Britain on pole position for engineering audacity.

The land speed record Richard Noble's jet-powered Thrust SSC set with RAF combat pilot Andy Green is still standing 23 years after the duo risked all in the Black Rock Desert in Nevada before the dawn of the new Millennium.

The buccaneering engineering evangelist drove his most recent venture, the Bloodhound, to the brink of success – and then over the cliff edge of bankruptcy.

He was edged out of the project when it was sold to UK engineering tycoon Ian Warhurst last year after racking up debts of £25 million.

The cash-hungry supersonic car, designed to hit 1050mph and finally smash Noble and Green's own long-standing record, has stalled once more under the new owner after blistering 600mph-plus runs across South Africa's Hakskeen Pan and it's future remains in the balance.

Noble said: "By the end of my involvement with Bloodhound I was totally exhausted. One of the engineers jokingly pointed out that I had been at war every day for more than a decade with that project. It felt like it. I was ill. when I left it took three months to recover. I was so tired. After 11 years and 55,000 man hours I really needed a break."

Noble has been taking body blows in his battle to push the limits of the possible since his first high-speed, high-risk venture – the original Thrust rocket car – and later with the jet engine powered Thrust II, which he drove to claim his first world record, hitting 633mph.

He later handed over driving duties to RAF combat pilot Andy Green, who hit the dizzying heights of 763mph back in 1997 in the mighty Thrust SSC, powered by two Rolls Royce Phantom engines.

Despite the bruising Bloodhound experience Noble's passion is undiminished – he

means to rekindle the spirit of Barnes Wallace and Frank Whittle in a bid to put Britain back where he thinks it belongs, as a world leader in innovation and engineering excellence.

He said: "Britain is in a very serious situation. Our culture has changed and it is very difficult to get backing for anything innovative."

"We are failing our young people by not exposing them to risk and to the things that are possible. We are cossetting them."

“We are failing our young people by not exposing them to risk. Their exposure to extreme reality is minimal”

"As a country we do not take risk. There is a huge amount of risk analysis but no actual risk taking. Ask young people what they think Britain is and they don't really know – it is an amorphous country."

"As a country America has it right. People love new projects and they love taking risk. We are regarded as a country that follows not one that leads. We need to take risk and change the place."

Noble has issued a call to arms in his latest book, *Take Risk!*, which gives a candid account of his failures and successes and pays tribute to those who stepped up when the going got tough.

He has enjoyed a long relationship with the RAF, which has supplied the firepower for most of his high-speed projects.

A born salesman, he has managed to blag jet engines from Lightnings, Phantoms and, most recently, a Typhoon.

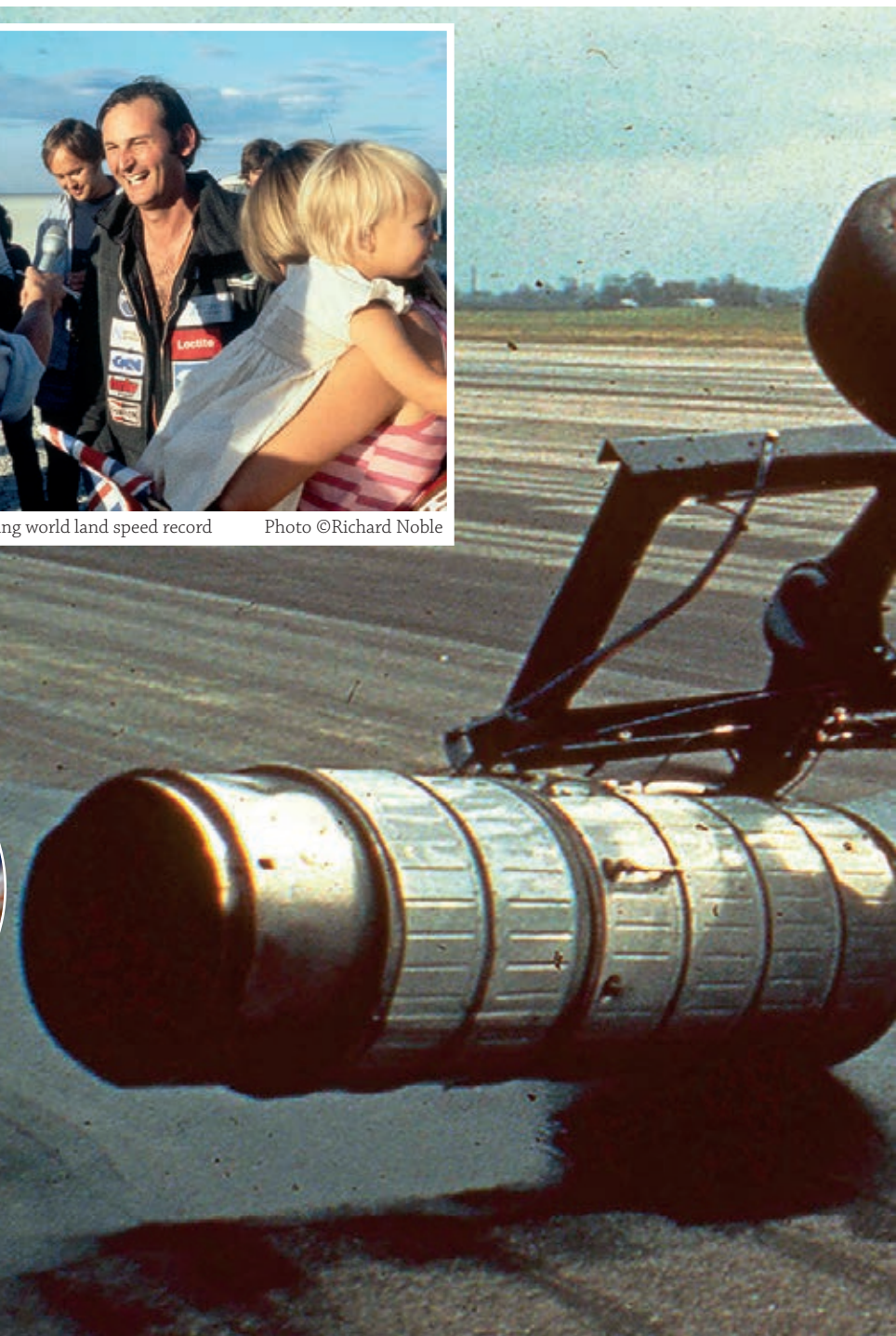
"The RAF has been amazing. It started with my first car, Thrust. Sgt Jim Matthews and the team down at St Athan helped me get the engine and played a key role in testing."



FAST WORK: Noble after setting world land speed record Photo ©Richard Noble



CRASH AND LEARN: It all goes wrong for Thrust I on RAF Fairford's runway PHOTO: COURTESY RICHARD NOBLE



After the original Thrust project crashed and burned – literally, during high speed testing at the RAF Fairford runway – Noble raised the stakes with plans for Thrust II.

Again he turned to the RAF for help and approached the then director of public relations Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hines, then an air commodore.

Writing in the book Noble recalls: "Paddy came straight to the point. 'You want to break the world land speed record? How can we help?'"

"The RAF was scrapping its Lightning fighters and some were being used as airfield decoys. I ended up borrowing funds and buying a Lightning Avon 210 jet engine for £500... Now we had a 25ft engine and some 35,000 horsepower."

The Royal Air Force also supplied an EJ200 Typhoon jet engine for Bloodhound and a Royal Air Force team of aircraft engineers to design the car's huge tail fin.

Noble added: "We could never have designed and built the tail fin without them. I suppose I am gradually repurposing the RAF."

His brushes with government and UK sponsors were less fruitful. As the Bloodhound project spluttered he hauled the 60ft car to Downing Street to generate publicity and sponsorship.

As a PR stunt it was a success, attracting huge crowds. In business terms it backfired massively. Noble said: "More than 8000 people turned out to see us and we generated



£60,000 sales in merchandise.

"But as soon as we put the actual car on its wheels to show it off the sponsors ran away. They realised

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By Simon Williams

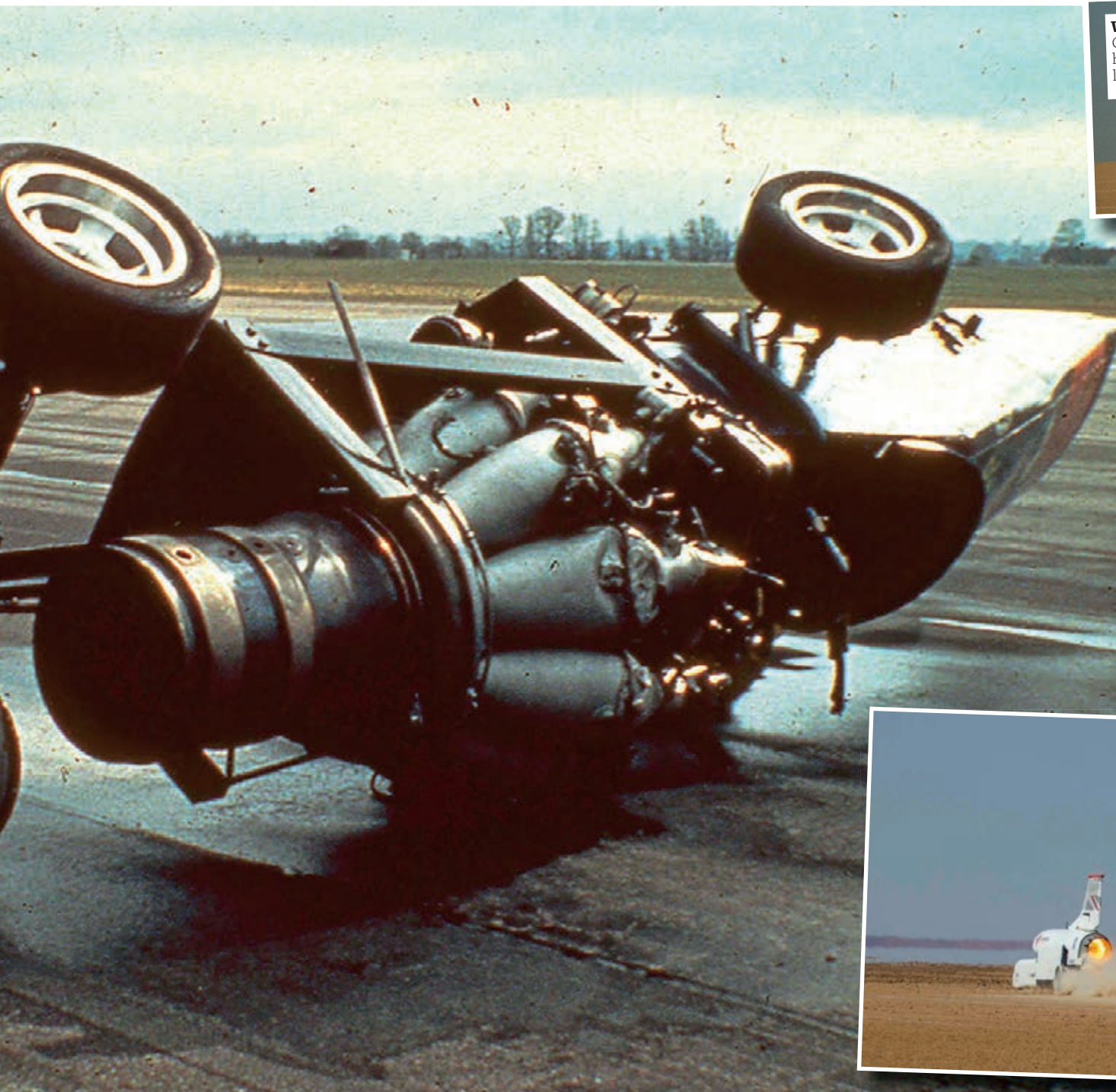
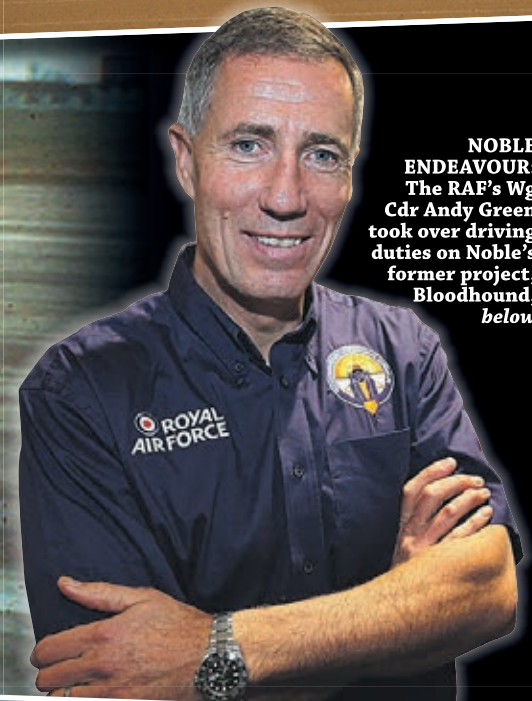
D Furious



WORLD-BEATER:RAF man Andy Green driving Noble's Thrust SSC on his way to setting the current world land speed record in Nevada in 1997



NOBLE ENDEAVOUR: The RAF's Wg Cdr Andy Green took over driving duties on Noble's former project, Bloodhound, below



in the book

HAVE signed copies of *Take Risk!* (evropublishing.com) to win. To with a chance of owning one, for this question correctly:

Which desert did Richard Noble set his current land speed record?

Mail your answer marked Take Risk! competitions@rafnews.

that we actually meant to run it at 1000mph and could see that it was full of risk."

Worse was to come. Now desperate

for funding Noble approached Chancellor George Osborne, pitching Bloodhound as a celebration of British engineering knowhow.

The government came up with an offer of £4.5 million but issued the team with a comprehensive list of conditions.

The Bloodhound team went into overdrive and ticked every bureaucratic box. When they returned to the negotiating table they were met with chilling disdain. They were never supposed to meet the criteria.

Noble said: "We had very little time to comply with the conditions but we did it. We were on a high when we went back."

"When two teams come together and the bar that is set so high has been achieved you are excited."

"They seemed miserable. Initially we could not work it out. Then it dawned on me. We were never supposed to meet the criteria. It was a set-up."

Despite the gathering financial storm Bloodhound launched its first live testing – a 200mph blast down the short runway at Newquay Airport in front of thousands of schoolchildren.

Noble said: "The kids who turned out could not believe what they were seeing. They were obsessed and completely blown away by it."

"The young generation is all about screens. The source of their information is a screen and they know anything on it can be faked."

"Their exposure to extreme

reality is minimal and when they do experience it, that reality has a massive effect on them."

Now recovered from the Bloodhound bloodbath, Britain's high priest of speed has thrown his redoubtable energies into a couple of high-velocity projects. "Retirement is death," he explained.

Noble remains tight-lipped about one but reveals the other is a long-held ambition to revive a design for a jet powered boat by maverick engineer Reid Railton who worked with John Cobb on his ill-fated water speed record bid in 1952.

Noble said: "After Cobb's death Railton went back to the drawing board and came up with some wind tunnel and track test models."

"All the money went to Donald Campbell and the Bluebird and Railton's design was never realised. Bluebird was aiming for 300mph when Campbell died. 300mph is where Railton's design starts."

"I have been in touch with the Railton family and have approval to develop it. We already have two six-foot, radio-controlled models. As soon as the lockdown is lifted we will be running them and see if they have a future."

Noble single-handedly disproves the military boast that Who Dares Wins. But in the maverick speed demon's mind the alternative is certain failure and worse – a betrayal of Britain's world class engineering pioneers and the nation's future.

The life and myths of the world's top fighter ace

Devil's in the detail



WAR HORSE: A restored Messerschmitt Bf109 – like those flown so expertly by Hartmann – takes off

SOMETIMES THE facts don't tell the whole story. At first glance you might think Erik Schmidt's book is just another hagiography about a legendary war hero.

And there's no doubt this subject, Erich Hartmann, the highest-scoring Luftwaffe Experten ace, deserves that description.

Over two-and-a-half years he shot down 352 enemy aircraft over the Eastern front during 1,404 combat missions – roughly one kill for every four sorties.

Statistically no other pilot came close – his nearest rival the top Allied ace of the war Soviet flier Ivan Kozhedub eventually claimed 63 kills, and, as Schmidt points out “no British or American ace came within 20 of that figure.”

And Hartmann had other traits of air combat greatness – the eponymous Black Tulip of the title refers to the menacing white saw tooth design he had painted round the nose of his Bf109 which prompted his enemies to nickname him the Black Devil and Stalin to put a price on his head.

So far, so *Boy's Own* then, and if Schmidt were to stop there the book would be just another retelling of a worthy war memoir.

But he doesn't and in this, his first book, he aims admirably and ambitiously to set the man and his military career in its proper historical context.

And it's no mean feat as, despite other works – principal among which is his original biography modestly entitled *The Blond*

Knight of Germany – Hartmann the man remains elusive.

Personally, I wanted to know was he a diehard Nazi like Hans-Ulrich Rudel whose memoir *Stuka* describes how he destroyed 2,000 ground targets including 519 Soviet tanks, and was endorsed by Douglas Bader. Or was he a knight of the air like the legendary WW1 'Red' Baron Manfred von Richthofen, who the British buried with elaborate ceremony, which as Schmidt says with cutting understatement, was “a notable act in a war that had left so many of the dead strewn anonymously in the trenches”.

Or was he something in-between?

To find out, the first part of the book traces Hartmann's early life – his boyhood in China with his doctor father and a mother who was herself an accomplished pilot, his education and career in the glider wing of the Hitler Youth.

Throughout the narrative Schmidt seeks to contextualise his findings by examining the impact of Nazism throughout German society.

Along the way he examines the claim that the Luftwaffe – founded by Goring – was the most Nazified of the Wehrmacht branches as, unlike the Army, it had no aristocratic or military heritage from which to reference back.



BLACK DEVIL: Luftwaffe ace Erich Hartmann and, left, the black tulip markings which inspired the book's title (on a Sabre at a Berlin museum)

Perhaps surprisingly Hartmann's stellar military career doesn't dominate the book as one might expect.

Instead, Schmidt addresses questions such as how the inferiority of a Soviet air force flying underpowered, crude workhorses like the I-16 'Flying Squirrel' against the Bf109 – more of which were built than any other fighter in history – contributed to Hartmann's astonishing kill rate.

But there's one incident that

nicknamed 'Hitler's Zipper'.

“The shooting lasted 30 minutes,” Hartmann said, and mounds of the dead littered the forest floor afterward. It was the kind of carnage he and his fellow pilots had always been sheltered from.

“They finished the killing and then sat down and ate,” Hartmann recalled. “I thought to myself, these SS men are tough, nothing fazed them... they were of a different mindset. I think all the hard ground fighting created a different kind of human being.”

Post-war Hartmann spent 10 years in grim Soviet POW camps before returning home and embarking on a second career in the newly-formed West German Air Force, where he sparked further controversy by painting the Black Tulip motif on his unit's Sabre Mk 6 jets.

Black Tulip: The Life and Myth of Erich Hartmann, The World's Top Fighter Ace by Erik Schmidt is a fascinating insight into the making of a flying legend which exposes through rigorous analysis how myths are made, and sometimes used, to excuse one of the most evil mass slaughters in history.

Sometimes the facts are all you have.

Published by Casemate, priced £25, see casematepublishing.co.uk/black-tulip.html for more details.



CRUDE: Soviet I-16 'Flying Squirrel'



1943 PRODUCTION LINE: Nazi Germany churned out huge numbers of Bf109s

By Tracey Allen

Feature

Fast-jet pilot, motivational speaker and author



FORCE OF NATURE: Flt Lt Amanda Wells sits on her Tornado with colleague Michel Dupont



YEAR 2000: Mandy on Op Bolton, her first mission



2002: After a sortie on Op Resinate South, Kuwait

Mandy: A woman on a mission

WHEN MANDY WELLS joined the RAF in 1994 she had no plans to be a trailblazer – but she became only the UK's second woman to fly the Tornado GR4 operationally.

She flew 50 missions over Iraq with No 11 (AC) Squadron, patrolling the no-fly zone as part of Operation Southern Watch, and was one of just five female Tornado pilots in the Air Force.

Now a sought-after motivational speaker with an international client list, the former Flt Lt has written a book about her Service life that's picking up five-star reviews.

An Officer, Not A Gentleman tells the story of her determination to succeed at her dream job, overcoming plenty of obstacles on the way – including sexism.

She showed exceptional talent as a pilot early on. As an undergraduate she won a regional aerobatics competition, representing the University of Birmingham Air Squadron – beating three RAF-sponsored pilots.

On her 21st birthday, her grandfather, Wg Cdr Frank Cuttill, who flew Oxfords and Harvards in World War II, proudly gave her his war medals.

At 6ft tall Mandy was an imposing figure – her nickname on the squadron was 'Big

Bird'. During her first term of officer training at Cranwell her boss told her 'although you are very Amazonian in nature, you are not particularly feminine'. She was ordered to 'be more feminine' and stop buying half pints in the bar – female candidates had already been advised not to drink pints.

Once on the squadron, she tried hard to be 'one of the lads.'

She said: "Looking back, I was probably trying to be a bit more blokey, swearing far more than I normally would. Before we went to the Gulf, I was certainly drinking too much because it was very much part of the culture. I was just trying to fit into the mould of a junior fast jet pilot, regardless of gender. I was very happy to join in, I'm a really sociable animal."

She added: "One time I noticed I had 'morphed' into a guy was when we were going to the States and I was wearing the same RAF 'uniform' as the boys – chinos, deck shoes, a checked shirt and a blazer. I thought 'I've become a man' – you don't realise you're doing it until you catch yourself."

Before deploying, while at RAF Marham, Mandy had to deal with being confronted with pictures of naked women on calendars

and screensavers in the junior aircrew crew room.

She said: "I let this pass for a couple of days and then I surreptitiously changed them all to pictures of scantily-clad men. Surprisingly the next day they were all miraculously scenic landscapes."

A few months before going to Kuwait the squadron took part in Exercise Red Flag in Las Vegas. Mandy discovered that her friend Suraya (now Air Cdre Marshall, Commandant of The RAF College, Cranwell) was also there, as a navigator with a Tornado F3 squadron. They were pals from university and officer training days.

The girls decided to have a night out in Vegas and, after downing cocktails, took part in a steamy dance contest in a nightclub to win \$1,000 dollars. They almost won and the next day Mandy found out the ground crew had all been at the club and had seen her performance.

She said: "I seemed to have garnered a new-found respect. 'Welcome to the squadron' seemed to be the message."

"Suraya and I used to have fun – we're still good friends."

On the squadron in Kuwait in 2000 Mandy was the only woman – apart from one female ground crew – among 250 personnel.

She said: "I was their first female pilot and they weren't used to it. I wasn't used to it."

"A lot of people felt pressure to conform

– I think that's changed now. In the time I was on the squadron I saw it change from the older generation, the second tourists, to the new guys coming in – that felt like a breath of fresh air.

"Society changes and what was acceptable as banter in those days no longer is. At the same time, you could argue that it's lost a lot of its camaraderie because of political correctness – there is a middle ground."

Mandy explained: "I think it really helped on the squadron to know I had a boyfriend back at home. I realised I had to get the wives on board, I was going to be away for months on end with their husbands. I made sure my boyfriend Craig, a Royal Navy pilot, came to functions. He never felt me going away was a threat and it helped them to know I had a very strong relationship."

Craig and Mandy were married in 2008 and the couple have two teenage sons.

Without doubt a pioneer and a high-achiever, Mandy said she and her fellow women pilots didn't feel they had to set an example as female high-fliers.

She said: "Bizarrely, we didn't think of ourselves as doing that. You don't feel you're holding the weight of 'women's lib' on your shoulders. You're just trying to do your best."

● *An Officer, Not A Gentleman* by Mandy Hickson (£9.99, amazon.co.uk).



PALS: Officer training with Suraya (now an Air Cdre)



YOUNG GUN: With her university air squadron



MANDY: Mrs motivator





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Still king

TIM MORRIS

Motoring
Correspondent



THERE ARE a few classic sports cars that have real pedigree, models that have been around for decades in one form or another but have consistently evolved to stay at the front of the grid. The Porsche 911 is one.

We tested the entry-level Carrera S. Buyers can choose between this and the all-wheel-drive Carrera 4S. Both have been given an extra 30bhp in the latest revamp, which is enough extra oomph to cut our car's 0-62mph time to 3.5sec.

It's priced from just over £93k but with a few whistles and bells added, this particular vehicle is worth over £109k. Ouch.

Justified

On paper, that seems like a fair chunk of change but the Carrera S and the more expensive 4S still considerably undercut the Aston Martin Vantage and Audi R8. It is more expensive than the Jaguar F-Type coupé but it's just about where it needs to be. Resale values are always very strong too, so it's a sound investment.

Pedigree

The 911 is one of the best loved touring cars in the world and still a style icon. A lot of work has gone into making the latest version of the 911, confusingly known as the 992, more streamlined but it's instantly recognisable from any angle.

I may not have fallen in love with its handling but it certainly was a poster car from my childhood. The new car is visibly wider than its predecessors and that makes it the most dramatic 911 ever.

The whale tail fin of the 80s is gone but many other details remain. This is still a thoroughbred racing car.

Inside

Porsche has done a good job of updating the 911's cockpit without losing the car's charisma. The clock on top of the dash, the central rev counter and the speedometer all feel bang on. It has kept the spacing of other instruments so the fuel gauge is still partially obscured by the steering wheel. Eccentricity is part of racing DNA, so I rather like it.

The cabin looks sporty but expensive and the quality of finish sets the 911 apart from all its key rivals. The switchgear is sturdy and smooth, while almost everything else you need to touch is covered with well-stitched leather.

An eight-speaker infotainment and sat nav system is included and offers a pin-sharp 10.9in touchscreen that is quick to respond and easy to reach. It



of the road



911: Old-school looks and charm

also features Apple CarPlay and smartphone mirroring.

Driving Position

You sit close to the floor in a 911, which gives it a real race car feel. The position of the pedals and the supportive sports seats also help to complete the experience.

Our car came with the optional 18-way adjustable electronic memory seats, so it fit like a glove.

Manoeuvrability

Driving a GT car usually involves making serious sacrifices in terms of visibility, but placing the nose is easy thanks to obvious wing bulges around the headlights. Navigating a 911 through tight spots is considerably easier than doing it in a Mercedes AMG GT.

Even rear visibility is good because the large rear window and all-round parking sensors come as standard.

Front space

Plenty.

Rear space

Don't be silly. Enough for small children or a set of golf clubs.

On the road

The 6-cylinder 3.0 twin turbo charged engine develops 450bhp, which will take the Carrera S from 0-100mph as fast as a hot hatch reaches 60. Its top speed is 191mph.

The 911 has several mode settings and when you're in Sport or Sport Plus it sounds incredible.

You get that familiar 911 shove

from behind as all the power hits you in the back but these days it launches you into hyperspace without all the spinning and dying. Unlike many modern turbocharged engines, the 911's twin-turbo flat-six feels relentless. This car doesn't run out of acceleration, all the way up to its red line – a whopping 7,500rpm.

From a standing start that 3.5 seconds 0-62 mph feels really quick. That's partly down to the seamless gear change and you really appreciate the way the dual-clutch 8-speed Porsche Doppelkupplung (PDK) automatic gearbox manages the power delivery. Both up shifts and down shifts are perfectly balanced.

For those who prefer a more pure motoring experience, a traditional manual will also join the range a little later on.

Handling

The 911 is still imperious when it comes to long, winding roads. The beautifully weighted steering is communicative and measured. Electronically controlled dampers and wet driving mode mean you can now push a 911 right up to the limit of its grip with complete confidence.

Overall the rear-wheel drive Carrera S feels very linear in its movements, just as a great touring car should.

Toys

The 911 comes with a suite of clever features including an unmarked red button in the middle

of the performance settings dial on the steering wheel. It puts the car into 'attack mode' for 30 seconds at a time delivering short burst of racetrack performance and giving you a satisfying countdown to its cut-off point. It's addictive.

Downsides

A bit of wind noise is noticeable around the side windows at higher speeds and the tractor-sized tyres generate noise on coarse surfaces, but it doesn't matter. It's a 911. Enough said.

Verdict

Pros

- Seriously quick
- A motoring icon
- Nicely finished
- Handles well

Cons

- Too wide for parking bays
- Moderate road noise
- Expensive options

Overall

The new 911 has enough manners to be driven normally at lower speeds but it has the sheer power to assert itself easily when you want it to. It makes you smile. In supercar terms it's possibly a bit too well-built, clinical almost, but Porsche has once again managed to hone the racing capabilities of the 911 without losing its touring car qualities.

Email: sports@rafnews.co.uk
Telephone: 07966 429755

Sport



7 pages of **RAF Sport** start here

● Corporal kickstarts military GB team: P30-31



Tyre-ing shift for charity

Duo's 12-hr flip-out for Benevolent Fund



BID AND BEND 'EM: Cpl James Todd puts his back into it during the 12-hour event; below, SAC Davey gets into the event; inset main, the duo having completed the bid
PHOTOS: SAC ROSE BUCHANAN
RAF Waddington

Daniel Abrahams
HQ Air Command

TUG OF war head coach Cpl James Todd has flipped out after the Covid-19 lockdown, in a bid to raise much-needed funds for the RAF Benevolent Fund.

The corporal, ably supported by fellow Tug of War team member SAC Patrick Davey, undertook a gruelling 12-hour challenge which saw the pair flip a truck tyre, weighing approximately 80kg, 180 times an hour, aiming for a total of 2,160 flips over the whole challenge.

Todd said: "It all started with my Warrant Officer asking if I had undertaken a charity event this reporting year, to which my answer was 'no'. His response was, 'can you do something by the end of September?'"

"A few days later I had decided on the tyre flip, but work commitments and deployment meant I did not have much time."

The duo decided on a day and began their efforts on the sports field behind their housing block at RAF Waddington. The challenge



started at 7.30am with the last flip being made at 7.30pm that evening.

The pair found that they had achieved their target of 2,160 flips with an hour of the challenge still remaining, so they continued and reached an impressive 2,291.

Todd said: "As RAF Tug of War head coach and the RAF Benevolent Fund sponsoring us every year, I thought it was only fitting that I raise some money for them as they

do such important work. We set a target of £1,000, which I thought was pushing it and would have been happy with making £500, but we have now raised £1,025, which is incredible."

To donate visit: justgiving.com/fundraising/james-todd17.

For more information on RAF Tug of War and joining the team, email Cpl Todd on: james.todd754@mod.gov.uk.

Murphy Sparks some interest

RG4 SPARKS football team has so far been the brainchild of Sgt Andy Murphy, now the team looks set to kick off, having launched its hunt for playing staff.

Murphy, who has an extensive background in Service football having worked as U23s goalkeeping coach and kit man for both the development and senior men's team, began his bid to set up a team several months ago and is now within the whitewash of achieving his aim.

He said: "I've been in and around the game for years and noticed the success of other trades advertising themselves as it were, and I thought that our trade – Trade Group 4, which is so widely spread across the Service – should have a team."

"We have plenty to be proud of and to show off, and I know we have some quality footballers, so

I wanted to get the word out that we are now looking for players, with an eye on our first training meet in November."

The team will be based out of Cosford (home of the trades training school) and while



Murphy will be managing it and acting as general manager he has already worked with colleagues to set up its full staffing structure, with Flt Lt Baz Laws as OIC and a coaching team made up of Sgt Gaz Derbyshire, FS Gavin Roberts and Sgt Gary Duncan.

Murphy added: "We have set up social media pages, designed a logo and badge and we are now in discussions over our kit, so it really is gathering pace."

To find out more email: Andrew.murphy124@mod.gov.uk or visit the Twitter page @Tg4Fc.

MOTORSPORT

Valiant Vickers

RAF Regular rider kickstarts season in top-10 style



FULL SPEED AHEAD: Ryan Vickers on his RAF Regular and Reserve Kawasaki shone in the first round of the BSB championship at Donington

PHOTOS: TIM KEETON – Impact Images

Staff Reporter

HQ Air Command

THE RAF Regular & Reserve Kawasaki team finally got its 2020 Bennetts British Superbike Championship campaign underway at the Donington Park circuit, Ryan Vickers providing three strong finishes.

Having secured ninth, 11th and eighth-place finishes, Vickers said: “It’s been a good weekend and I’m pleased to have come away with three trouble-free races and a good haul of points.

“I had a few crashes in 2019 and that was the last thing I wanted in a shortened

season, so with the bike even better than what it was last year I came away with some good results. That was the aim from the outset.”

Practice and qualifying at the Leicestershire track took place in high temperatures and a 16th place during qualifying on his Kawasaki ZX-10RR wasn’t as high as Vickers had hoped, but the team were confident of improving upon that in the three races around the 1.9-mile national circuit.

A good start saw the Thetford rider immediately make up three places in the opening race and as

early as lap seven he was running inside the top 10.

Having overtaken Peter Hickman and with Kyle Ryde retiring he hit eighth, where he became locked in a battle with pacesetter Jason O’Halloran, finally finishing ninth.

“I came away with some good results. That was the aim from the outset”

Sunday’s first 26-lap race, held in slightly cooler and windier conditions, saw another fine ride from the 21-year-old, with 11th place the outcome – just nine seconds adrift of race winner Andrew Irwin.

Running 12th at the end of the first lap of the final race, Vickers was in the top 10 by the halfway mark. Lapping consistently he successfully saw off the challenges of Lee Jackson and Bradley Ray to cross the line in a fine ninth place.

After the race runner-up Irwin was later disqualified, which saw



DON GOOD: Left and above, Vickers shows his mettle during three excellent rides to spark his season and land 20 valuable BSB Championship points



Vickers moved up the order to eighth for his best result of the weekend, with his total of 20 points placing him 10th overall in the championship standings.

Team owner Lee Hardy said: “It’s been a very positive weekend. We set out our targets at the beginning and that was to finish all three

races. After such a long break from racing we knew Donington was going to be hard.

“The next round is at Snetterton, Norfolk and it’s Ryan’s home round so with the first round now out of the way, we can look to make further strides up the leader board and score even better finishes.”

Inside line

Getting behind the face of RAF sport

Stan the GB man

Corporal launches bid for British Service team



TEAM PLAYER: Above, Cpl Stanbridge with his sled at Bath University; right, eyeing up a run during the recent IS Championships in Königssee, Germany
PHOTO: SAC MATT SMITH ACSSU AND TEAM GB

Daniel Abrahams

HQ Air Command

SERVICE BOBSLEIGH driver Cpl John Stanbridge has become a one-man promotion team following his recent training stint with the GB development squad at Bath University.

Stanbridge, who has seen his ice sports career fast-tracked from RAF driver to international driver in recent years, is launching a military GB team.

An integral part of the successful RAF bobsleigh team's Inter-Services efforts in Königssee, Germany in March, he was part of the recent GB bobsleigh development squad training at Bath University.

While there, he was informed that funding for the GB team was being removed, due to poor performances at the 2018 Winter Olympics.

Stanbridge, 30, who was a brakeman for the New Zealand team last season and also secured eighth place in the recent North

American Cup competition, proposed creating a military-built GB team that will seek its own funding, with its ultimate aim of competing in the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

He said: "The year has been a crazy one, well my whole three years with the RAF men's team has been the same.

"The final evaluation for the GB training comes in October, but

in beginning his search for funding. Having selected his team, *see right*, he began a series of promotional radio interviews with BBC Lincolnshire and 3 Counties, and a TV interview with BBC *Look North* is planned in the coming weeks.

He said: "The radio interviews were a complete leap in the dark, but it's been a great learning experience – as is this whole team idea. The plan is to compete at five races on the European Cup for this season starting at Winterberg, Germany in October, with the official season starting at Lillehammer.

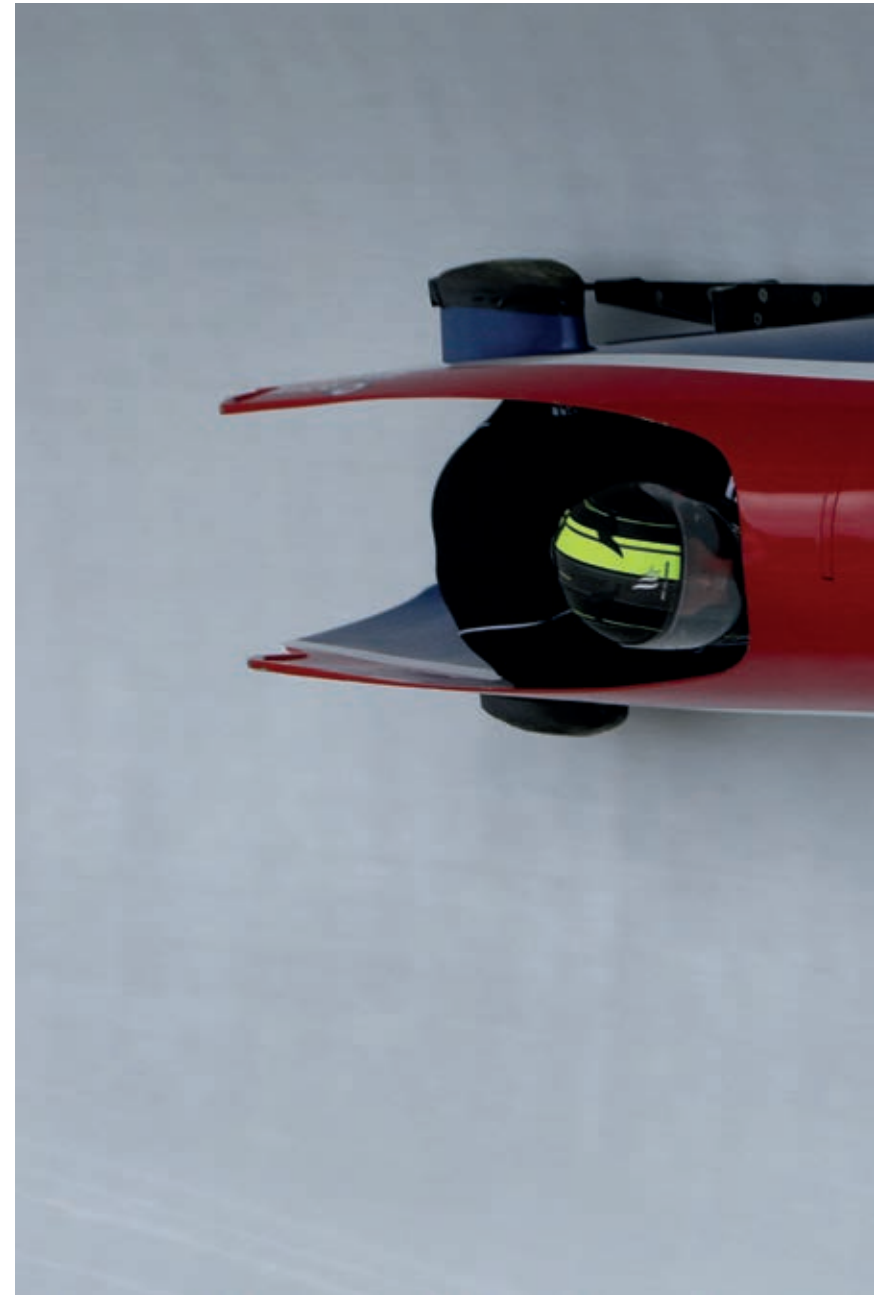
"For us, this will be a building year to develop driver skill and learn the tracks. We want to compete on the World Cup circuit for the 2021/22 season and World Championship. That in turn is the Olympic qualification year. So that is our ultimate goal."

Despite the continued uncertainty about the coming season, the aircraft technician has kept himself fit building a squat

as one of three drivers I began to think about creating a military arm of the team to bring in some more of the expertise we use in our daily Service life."

Stanbridge has wasted no time

"We want to compete on the World Cup circuit and in the World Championship. That is the Olympic qualification year"



rack and bench and employing the help of two times GB Olympic brakeman Ben Simons' Semtex strength and conditioning system to maintain his fitness.

Stanbridge – who weights 92kg but is aiming to bulk up to 96kg to help with his pushing during the coming season – added: "Our fundraising target is £15,000, that

will see us through the season. If not we will have to fund the team out of our own pockets."

To sponsor the team visit:
Twitter @johnstanners318,
Instagram: johnstanners318
and LinkedIn: John Stanbridge
or email: john_bobsleigh_stanbridge@outlook.com



SPRING IS IN THE AIR: Stanbridge during the IS Championships in March; *below*, taking part in sprint intervals at Bath University; and, *right*, undertaking training and IS runs
PHOTOS: SAC MATT SMITH ACSSU/TEAM GB



The GB military crew:
Cpl John Stanbridge – pilot
Cpl John Baines – brakeman
L/Cpl Jason Joseph
SAC(T) Alex Cortes – Tankard
SAC(T) Alex Cartagena



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 **ROYAL
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Sport

VIRTUAL MOTORSPORT

VR rally stars flying high as championship hots up

Virtual racing helped keep passion for the sport strong throughout lockdown

Daniel Abrahams
HQ Air Command

HAVING DUSTED itself off and bounced back in style from sporting lockdown, the RAF rally team is now two rounds into its Virtual Rally championships for 2020.

As reported in *RAF News* 1493, RAF Co-Driving champion Cpl Phil Hall and driver Nathan Yates decided to organise the first RAF Virtual Rally Championship on DiRT Rally 2.0.

The Championship takes place over four months with four very different events to complete.

The team also opened entries to the RAF's eSports (RAFFVGEA) community so there is an opportunity for more enthusiasts to get involved.

The rally is well underway, with the first two rounds being completed and the third round now being live.

Set in the forests of New England, USA, the first round saw Cpl Nathan Yates get the strongest start in the event, winning SS1 with Hall close behind.

In SS2 a system failure saw Yates pick up a maximum time penalty, while Hall crashed, dropping 48 seconds and leaving the top spot for newcomer Flt Lt Alex Magee.

Despite going on to put in the



NOSE FIRST: Main, SAC(T) Phil Hall crashes down his virtual Ford KA front first during the rounds; inset, Hall in real life, during last year's Junior World Championship; below, one of the RAF-branded cars featured in the championship
PHOTO: RICARDO OLIVIERA

best times of the rally, Yates couldn't recover his lost time, finishing last.

In SS2 Hall used all his

experience but could not catch Magee, who went on to take the stage.

SAC Gregor Webb, an RAFFVGEA member, put in a solid performance, coming in third.

The second round, set in Ribadelles, Spain, saw Magee press home his advantage, winning the stage by six seconds with Hall and Yates close behind.

The first half of the event saw mixed weather conditions, and while Magee had worked up a considerable lead over Hall in the dry conditions, the old warhorse showed his cool in the wet, clawing back time on the leader.

The final two stages in a mix of wet and dry conditions saw Magee take his second win, with Hall second and Yates a respectable third. The third round, which is currently live, has seen the drivers move to the sandy twists and turns of Hawkes Bay, New Zealand, while the final round will be held in the unforgiving canyons of Catamarca Province, Argentina.

(DiRT Rally 2.0 is released by Codemasters and is available on PC, Xbox One or PS4).

The championship is open to all members of the RAFFVGEA and RAFFMSA, with no entry fee.

Anyone interested in joining should contact RAF Rallying, or for further involvement in motorsports, two-wheeled, four-wheeled, Rally, Track or Karting, contact the RAF Motor Sports Association via the RAF Sports Federation website, or on Twitter @raf_motorsports.



Sport

FOOTBALL



TALKING ACTION: Matt Beattie, RAF veterans head coach, gives a talk during training; *right*, the RAF veterans team in an aerial battle during one of their matches earlier in the year

RAF Vetting ready

Beattie's charges looking to make up for lost time with brace of clashes

Daniel Abrahams
HQ Air Command

FS (RET'D) MATT BEATTIE has rallied his troops for a back-to-back weekend of football to kickstart the team's Inter-Service charge, having seen the competition halted before lockdown.

Beattie's men, who won their first IS clash against the Army, will

oversee a weekend of matches at St George's Park National Football Centre in Burton, starting with a clash against England over 55s and Sutton Coldfield veterans.

Beattie, *inset right*, said: "Our main objective was to continue engaging with our members and players throughout the lockdown, and



we are on target with our first over-50s fixture and the over-35s match, which will see our season begin.

"We have reached out to the Royal Navy FA to talk through reorganising the final Inter-Services clash against the Navy.

"We beat the Army 1-0 at TNS, our home ground, earlier in the year, in what was a

tough and close match and were delighted to get the win, now we are focused on October for the final clash."

He added: "In general, we have kept busy over the whole lockdown period, we have been able to action numerous landmark events, lifetime achievement awards (see *RAF News* 1497), player of the year awards (Sgt Dave Wanless). We've had a virtual AGM and even

some quizzes, all to keep everyone involved.

"We've kept that side of things active, but now it's back to the pitch and to kick off our IS campaign again and these matches at St George's will be the perfect launch pad."

■ Follow the team on Twitter @RaffaVets and on Facebook RAFFA Veterans Football.

CYCLING

VR's racing ahead again

SERVICE CYCLISTS are back on the virtual road again as they prepare to do battle for the inaugural RAF Cycling eChamps.

Having blazed a trail and fully embraced the virtual training and racing using Zwift, holding a hugely successful first ever Inter-Services in July, it will now host the eChamps on September 8 at 6.30pm, via the UKAF Cycling Community's time slot on Zwift.

Announcing the course, via an online draw, on the association's Twitter page, newly-appointed eSports Secretary Chf Tech Ian Swinscoe selected the 2015 UCI World Road Race course, in Richmond, USA.

This course will see riders compete on a 16.2km route with 142m of elevation – three laps for the men and two laps for the women. The climbs are short and punchy with up to 10 per cent

gradient. Riders can take part in either the Championship event or in the Open event for all other competitors.

An association spokesman said: "With all the development around Covid-19 regulations, the opportunity now exists for anyone with the right equipment (and access to the Zwift platform) to compete and win the RAF Road eRacing championships.

"We are actively encouraging members and anyone new to the sport to try this easily accessible method of competing, it really helps to build up experience of competitive racing.

"It could not be easier, and, despite the heat of combat, it is all done safely from the comfort of a rider's own personal room, garage or wherever they have an internet connection."

Entry is open to all RAFFA



members and all serving members of the UK Armed Forces. Results are taken from the website [zwiftpower](#).

To enter visit the RAFFA SharePoint site for a copy of the Admin Order or contact eSports secretary Chf Tech Swinscoe via email on: ian.swinscoe192@mod.gov.uk

ENDURANCE

Indefatigable Doyle is on target again

THE SEEMINGLY unstoppable AC Paddy Doyle completed another brace of endurance challenges, reaching a new target of 687.

He kicked off the month with a 10km cross country challenge, which saw him walk while carrying a 60lb backpack over the Heart of England Way and North Arden Trail footpaths Maxstoke, North Warwickshire.

Doyle said: "I gave it 100 per cent, which paid off touching the last checkpoint in one hour, 15 minutes and seven seconds.

"Although it was very hot, due to the mini-heatwave, I made sure I took on plenty of fluids and kept to the pace required to reach the finish.

"It was hard going but a great feeling to win another walk challenge course record."

Six days later Doyle completed



PUSHING: Above, Doyle during the 10km record run

a 12km distance carrying the same weight, in one hour and 47 minutes over the same course.

He said: "The 10km was arduous, while the 12km featured footpaths and inclines that were slippery. I went over a few times but managed to keep going.

"I am looking forward to another mountain bike challenge later this month."



VR Rally stars busy getting into top gear

● Sport P33



UKAF' boys are back in town

● Sport P34

Wind wonders

Wales weekender is perfect for surfers

SERVICE WINDSURFERS took full advantage of a post-lockdown outing to Rhosneigr Beach in Wales where gale force winds of 40 knots made for the perfect way to dust off any Covid-19 cobwebs.

Flt Lt Fred Hunter said: "Like every other sports association we've been stuck at home watching training videos and maintaining our general fitness. That time, although useful, studying tutorials and

looping manoeuvres, cannot compare to the real thing.

"So it's fair to say that everyone was thrilled to be back on the water in their 'natural environment' once again and training, whilst hopeful for a return to competition in 2020.

"The high winds were a real treat. After months on land the guys and girls couldn't believe their luck.

"Their local spot provided not only a hefty wind, but also some pretty sizeable swell, so it really was a great way to blast away any cobwebs."

If you are interested in finding out more about RAF windsurfing email: Victoria.Kellagher100@mod.gov.uk. The association is open to all levels of athlete from beginner to professional.

WAVE HELLO: *Top and below, action from RAF windsurfers*



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