

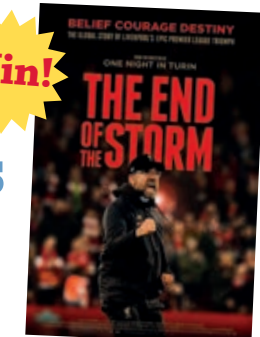
The Forces' favourite paper



Panto is back
Sleeping Beauty returns
● See RnR page 4



Top DVDs **Win!**
Cracking Christmas viewing
● See RnR p5 & p8



ROYAL AIR FORCE
Friday **December 11** 2020
No. 1505 **70p**

RAF News



From coronavirus to Space Command – 2020 reviewed

● Pages 15-17

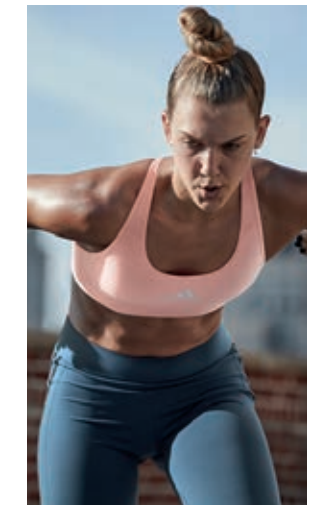


Football
IS dream is over for vets



● See p27

Central Fund
Discounts on new kit



● See p31

Super-berg scramble

Atlas crew tracks ice monster heading for Falkland Islands



Hanna Jones
The Falklands

BREATHTAKING PICTURES of the world's biggest iceberg currently on a collision course with South Georgia have been captured by an RAF reconnaissance aircraft.

Swooping beneath low cloud cover guided by satellite tracking, the 1312 Flt A400M recorded in

unprecedented detail the frozen giant the size of Somerset that can only be seen as a whole from space. Officer Commanding 1312 Flt, Sqn Ldr Michael Wilkinson, said: "This is certainly a unique and unforgettable task to be involved in."

"We dispatched our Airbus A400M to try to understand the behaviour and potential effects of the iceberg, A68a."

● More pictures on p3



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Celebrities wish you a Merry Christmas

Broadcaster and historian Dan Snow

EIGHTY YEARS ago the RAF turned the tide of World War II with their victory over the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain. It's been such a pleasure this year commemorating that victory and meeting so many RAF personnel. Particularly at this time of year, I am totally in awe of your attitude, hard work and sacrifice. Our safety and freedom this Christmas are down to you all, thank you!
Dan Snow



See pages 10-11 for more festive greetings from the biggest stars

“I am proud and honoured to join this fantastic team”

New RAF Valley OC
Gp Capt Andy Turk, DFC
See p7



“The situation with the Inter-Service fixture is tough to take”

Vets head coach Matt Beattie doesn't think his side will get to play their final IS game
See p27



ROYAL AIR FORCE

RAF News

RAF News

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Islands braced for 'berg eco-disaster

● **Continued from front**

PHOTOGRAPHS OF the trillion tonne leviathan that broke from the Larsen C ice shelf in 2017 and has been drifting north ever since show its 30m high steep vertical sides, tunnels and deep fissures extending downwards.

The images will be shared with scientists assessing the threat it poses to the local area.

British Antarctic Survey ecologist Professor Geraint Tarling said: “There's a danger here that if this iceberg gets stuck it could be there for 10 years with massive implications for where land-based predators might be able to forage.

“When you're talking about penguins and seals during the pup and chick-rearing period – the actual distance they have to travel to find food is crucial.

“If they have to do a big detour, it means they're not going to get back to their young in time to prevent them from starving to death.”

Whales, seals and penguins feed off the Falklands and the European Space Agency has been asked for



GO WITH THE FLOE:
Atlas crew fly out across vast ice field; inset right, the view from the rear of the aircraft
PHOTOS: CPL PHIL DYE



more satellite imagery from its pair of Sentinel-1 radar spacecraft.

Currently the finger-shaped berg, with a surface area of around 4,200 square kilometres, appears to be on a trajectory to ground-out

near South Georgia towards the end of December.

It has already entered the 1.24million km2 Marine Protected Area surrounding South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

The RAF crew witnessed large slabs of ice known as 'growlers' breaking off that could pose a threat to ships including the Royal Navy's HMS Forth fishery patrol vessel.

This Week In History



1937

Hurricane debut

THE FIRST Hurricane to enter operational service is delivered to 111 Sqn at RAF Northolt. The aircraft is the RAF's first eight-gun fighter.

1994

Fast jet first

THE RAF'S first female fast jet pilot Flt Lt Jo Salter is awarded combat-ready status with 617 Sqn.



1998

Tonka targets Saddam

12 SQN Tornados operating from Ali al Salem airbase in Kuwait launch attacks on Tahlil airfield near Baghdad and military targets at Basra as part of Operation Desert Fox.

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

ARE YOU A BRITISH NATIONAL VETERAN LIVING IN EUROPE? OR DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER LIVING IN EUROPE?

On the 31 October 2019, the UK left the EU with a deal called the **Withdrawal Agreement**. Under the terms of this agreement, **UK Nationals living in the EU at the end of the transition period can continue to live and work in their host country**. However, UK Nationals will need to register or apply for residency in order to secure their rights under the Withdrawal Agreement. The exact steps they will need to take and timelines, vary by country.

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, is one of the organisations supporting UK National veterans living in **France, Germany and Cyprus**. Please note, **all UK Nationals must apply for residency regardless** of how long they have lived in their host country.

We are therefore **calling on the Armed Forces family to contact anyone they know, who may need to apply**. We are particularly concerned that people who fall into the 'at-risk' groups are contacted and offered support. These groups are those who may find it harder to complete the paperwork required for residency applications. This includes pensioners, those in care facilities, disabled people, people living in remote areas or who have mobility difficulties, and those who require help with language translation or interpretation. We are asking you to check on friends and family, to ensure they are aware they do need to apply.

**We have caseworkers offering support.
Please contact:**

Cyprus, freephone: 0780077058

France, freephone: 0805119617

Germany, freephone: 08000009913

United Kingdom: 07385 085 756

To find out more or receive support

Email UKVIE.Support@ssafa.org.uk

Visit www.ssafa.org.uk/vie

**For all other countries,
please visit www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-europe**

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News bulletin



NET GAINS: SAC Yasmin Kaashoek

Volley good

RISING VOLLEYBALL ace SAC Yasmin Kaashoek joined a line-up of Halton sports stars who have netted a top station award.

She is one of five competitors who received their Sports Colours from station chief Gp Capt Dan Startup this month.

Also honoured for their achievements are netball player Cpl Simone Bromley, canoeing duo Chf Tech David Duff and Cpl Luke Williams and judo expert Cpl Craig Makin.



OARSOME PERFORMANCE: Canoeist Cpl Luke Williams receives award

Sweden joins Gunners drill



COMBAT READY: European FP specialists take part in Exercise Volcanex at Honington

SWEDISH FORCE Protection specialists are to take part in combat exercises alongside RAF Gunners and teams from seven other European nations.

Sweden is the latest to sign up to the programme to enhance military interoperability across the European Air Group, based at Air Command in High Wycombe.

The move will see Swedish troops deploy on exercises such as last year's Volcanex drill to hone their war-fighting skills with partner nations.

Bidders get ahead in UK space race



DEFENCE CHIEFS have awarded contracts to technology start-ups following *Dragons'* Den-style pitches from developers.

The move comes as the government steps up investment in space and data-driven kit to counter the growing threat to military and commercial satellites and space vehicles.

Ten tech developers secured same-day contracts worth up to £53,000 to fast-track their designs after pitching direct to UK, US and Nato military leaders.

UK Forces' first Space Director Air Vice-Marshall Harvey Smyth unveiled the winners in front of a global audience during the first Defence

Space Conference, hosted from London.

It is the first time same-day contracts have been awarded in this way to industry by the UK Ministry of Defence.

Fifteen proposals from tech start-ups and innovators battled it out to win funding.

Three of the 10 successful bidders are UK-based, along with five from the US and single winners from Australia and India.

Air Vice-Marshall Smyth



SPACE DIRECTOR:
AVM Harv Smyth

said: "The first International Space Pitch Day has captured the imagination of innovators and militaries, not just across the UK and US, but all over the world.

"We look forward to building on its success as we seek to fast-track innovation and cutting-edge technology to the frontline quicker than ever before with fresh ways of working with industry to make sure we stay ahead of our shared adversaries and the threats they pose."

Atlas launches UN sortie as UK boosts support for Mali mission

Simon Mander

HUNDREDS OF British troops have left RAF Brize Norton to strengthen support for the United Nations mission against Islamist extremists in Mali.

Light Dragoon soldiers were the first to be airlifted to the region on a LXX Sqn A400M Atlas transporter from the Oxfordshire station.

Brize Station Commander Gp Capt Emily Flynn said: "This airbase is the centre of a network that supports the UK's military operations and activities across the world."

The troops will back up the peacekeeping mission by conducting long-range reconnaissance patrols to gather intelligence from a newly-constructed base dubbed Camp Bagnold in Gao.

Light Dragoons CO Lt Col Tom Robinson said: "The 300-strong Light Dragoon task group is joining more than 14,000 peacekeepers from 56 nations as part of this challenging UN mission



in Mali to help protect the people from violence and support political dialogue.

"We're proud to be the first

British soldiers to join in this team effort to help combat instability in the Sahel."

The mission is separate from the

ongoing RAF operation that has three Chinooks supporting French forces on counter-insurgency operations in Mali.

ANTI-TERROR MISSION:
Army Dragoons board Atlas A400M at Brize for flight to Gao in Mali
PHOTO: SAC TOM CANN



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Benevolent Fund**

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us

what

you

think!



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Dog gong it

Hero hound Kuno nets animal VC for Special Forces raid

Staff Reporter

MILITARY DOG Kuno has been awarded an animal 'VC' for charging through a hail of enemy bullets to take down a heavily-armed terrorist as Special Forces stormed an al-Qaeda stronghold in Afghanistan.

The Belgian Malinois suffered serious injuries when he launched a lone-wolf attack allowing SBS and Afghan Special Forces under machine-gun fire to take the position during the daring UK-led operation in 2019.

Bullets shattered one of his hind legs and ripped through the other but the Forces dog fought on, dragging the terrorist to the ground and allowing Coalition troops to move forward and complete their mission.

Kuno was presented with the Dickin Medal, introduced by PDSA animal charity founder Maria Dickin in 1943 to recognise animals who serve on the frontline.

The four-year-old military working dog was given life-saving

treatment by his handler and Forces medics on board a RAF Chinook as the team was airlifted to safety from the battlefield.

His injuries were so severe he required several operations including the amputation of part of his back leg before he was stable enough to fly back to the UK.

He became the first animal in Britain to be fitted with specially designed prosthetic limbs by British vets and has now retired from military service and been rehomed.

Kuno's bravery has also been recognised by Defence Secretary Ben Wallace who said: "I'm delighted that Kuno has received the PDSA Dickin Medal. It is testament to his training, tireless bravery and devotion to duty."

"He saved lives during a raid which was one of the most significant achievements against al-Qaeda in several years."

Other recipients of the animal award include RAF air dog Buster who saved countless lives in Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan sniffing out IEDs; Royal Navy cat Simon who kept an



on-board rat infestation under control in 1949; and another Malinois, Diesel, who led a raid on a Paris terror cell after Islamist attacks in the French capital which killed 130 people, in 2015.

KU DARES WINS: Malinois Kuno poses with a dog handler after receiving his award; *below*, getting treatment on a RAF Medevac flight back to the UK



F-35 trio land at Marham

THE LATEST three F-35 Lightning stealth fighters to join the UK fleet flew in to RAF Marham from Texas.

The jets were piloted by 617 Sqn and 207 Sqn crews and landed at the Norfolk station after a five-hour flight from Lockheed Martin's US production facility.

Britain has received 21 jets from an initial order of 48.

UK and US Marine Corps F-35s recently took part in large-scale war games from HMS Queen Elizabeth ahead of the first deployment of the Carrier Strike Force.

Gulf star takes on Valley 'Top Gun' academy

Dave Williams

IRAQ WAR campaigner Gp Capt Andy Turk has taken over command of UK military fast jet training at RAF Valley.

The former Tornado navigator arrived at the Anglesey station after playing a leading role in the campaign against terror group Daesh as deputy Air Component Commander in the Middle East.

He trained at Valley himself on the Tornado GR1 in the early 1990s before joining 17 Sqn at Bruggen and 617 Sqn, then based at Lossiemouth.

Turk was awarded one of military aviation's highest awards, the Distinguished Flying

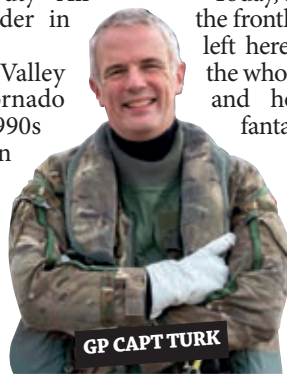
Cross, in 2003 during the second Iraq conflict.

He said: "In the 25 years since I was last at RAF Valley much has changed, including the transition of basic flying training from RAF Linton-on-Ouse."

"The station has continued to adapt and deliver the mission without pause."

"Today, fighter pilots are joining the frontline having only recently left here due to the tenacity of the whole force here. I am proud and honoured to join this fantastic team."

He takes over the post from outgoing station chief Gp Capt Chris Moon, who is moving on to RAF Waddington after a two-year stint at the helm of the Anglesey station.



GP CAPT TURK



HANDOVER: Gp Capt Moon (pictured right) takes a final flight as he welcomes Gp Capt Turk to Valley

Gp Capt Moon handed over command of the station after taking a final flight in a Hawk T2 training jet. He added: "It is testament to the

people at Valley that our output has not only continued through the challenges of Covid but has increased in many areas."

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- Personalised online dedication
- Digital image of your adoption
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Qatar Typhoon tie-up for 12 Sqn



GULF CLUB: 12 Sqn Typhoons flown by RAF and Qatari crews take to the skies in training first. PHOTOS: CPL BABBS ROBINSON

Dan Chorley
The Gulf

BRITISH AND Qatari aircrew are flying Typhoons together for the first time as a joint squadron during training in the Middle East.

More than 130 RAF personnel attached to 12 Sqn are in the region to hone their combat skills on the two-week Exercise Epic Skies.

Officer Commanding 12 SqnWg Cdr Chris Wright said: “Considerable progress has been made since last year’s Epic Skies, with many pilots and engineers from the Qatar Emiri Air Force thoroughly embedded into 12 Sqn.

“The first Qatari pilots to fly the Typhoon are eager to put their new skills and training to the test in a series of challenging scenarios on home turf.”

The Emirate has ordered 24 Eurofighters as part of a £6 billion deal which also includes nine Hawk jet trainers, support and training.

They also have a contract with MBDA to supply weapons.

Qatari pilots and ground crew have been learning how to fly and maintain the Typhoon at Coningsby since June.



DOHA DUO: 12 Sqn Instructor and Qatari pilot take to the skies in a two-seat Typhoon. Below, RAF and Qatari crews prepare for a sortie from Doha Air Base

Deputy Officer Commanding 12 Sqn Lt Col Faisal Al-Ghanim said: “This year is the first time I return home to fly the Typhoon alongside my RAF and Qatari colleagues, wearing the 12 Sqn crest.”

During the exercise, 12 Sqn will train alongside Qatari Rafales and Mirage 2000-5s aided by 8 Sqn weapons controllers and logistical, medical, and administrative support.

All personnel have quarantined in accordance with UK and Qatari Covid-19 laws and guidance and preventative measures have been put in place to reduce the risk of infection, a spokesman said.



In brief



George grabs D-Day award

Staff Reporter

A ROOKIE pilot landed a top award after dropping in at Cranwell during a routine training flight.

Fast jet hopeful Fg Off George Findlay landed his 16 Sqn Grob Tutor training aircraft at the Lincolnshire base to pick up a commendation.

The accolade recognised the work he did in his previous post in the Ceremonial Events Team managing the D-Day 75th anniversary VIP programme.

He said: "I feel very grateful to be recognised in this way."

"It was a privilege to be part of D-Day75, and to be given the opportunity to work on the planning and delivery of such an important global commemorative event."

"The team worked tirelessly for several months to pull together the programme. Being there to see the reactions of the veterans was incredibly satisfying."

Gp Capt Jon Nixon made the presentation on behalf of VCDS Admiral Sir Timothy Fraser.

Few more

A NEW supplement to the most comprehensive work on the men who fought the Battle of Britain has been published.

The addendum to the *The Men of the Battle of Britain* by Kenneth Wynn provides new information on the lives of The Few, publishers say.

The new material will be published as a supplement.

Go to: enquiries@battleofbritainmemorial.org



INTERCEPTORS: Typhoons tracked Russian maritime surveillance aircraft

Typhoon heads Bear hunt

TYPHOONS INTERCEPTED two Russian sub hunters operating close to UK sovereign airspace.

Lossiemouth-based jets supported by Brize-based Voyager tankers launched to shadow a pair of Tu-142 Bear F aircraft operating within the UK Flight Information Region.

Other Nato fast jets joined the monitoring mission that was co-ordinated by Scampton-based fighter controllers and Nato's

Combined Air Operations Centre in Uedem, Germany.

An RAF spokesperson said: "The Quick Reaction Alert crew did a fantastic job, locating aircraft that were not easy to detect very quickly."

"Again, the RAF has scrambled to defend the interests of the UK and Nato."

"It demonstrates the efficiency and resilience of our personnel, aircraft and systems."

Defence Covid call

Simon Mander

THOUSANDS OF military personnel are on alert to back up councils and health authorities battling the Covid crisis.

The news comes as a 170-strong RAF unit deployed to Merthyr Tydfil in South Wales to carry out the latest round of whole town testing as part of the counter coronavirus effort, codenamed Operation Rescript.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace told the House of Commons Defence Committee that 14,000 soldiers, sailors and airmen have been put at readiness to support other government departments and civil authorities over the winter.

And Prime Minister Boris Johnson claimed Liverpool as a success story after the Armed Forces helped bring infections down from 700 to 162 per 100,000 following a mass testing programme run in conjunction with the city council.

Military support has been offered to local authorities in all tier 3 areas announced recently.

In Wales the RAF has helped set up 14 testing sites working alongside Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, NHS Wales, and the Cardiff-based government.

Airmen and women deployed from several airbases across the UK joined council volunteers.

Many of them are the newest members of the RAF – straight out of their first phase of recruit

Military to target UK's Tier 3 zones



FRONTLINE VIRUS FIGHT: RAF teams are supporting local council staff in South Wales

training at Halton – putting into practice the skills they were taught only weeks ago.

Military testers undergo PPE and Covid screening training

when they arrive in the region and are expected to increase testing capacity to more than 60,000 in one of the hardest hit areas of Wales.

The move follows large-scale RAF deployments since the

beginning of the outbreak in March, including the nationwide delivery of millions of items of PPE, transporting frontline medical teams and airlifting critically injured patients from remote areas.



HOMEWARD BOUND: Forces personnel cleared for travel over the festive period

Forces ease virus travel ban for Christmas

RAF PERSONNEL and their families stationed in Europe can travel home to see loved ones this Christmas after changes in Covid quarantine rules.

The move follows research by the European Joint Support Unit, based at Nato's Shape complex in Belgium, which looks after British military on the Continent.

The group is also preparing to help servicemen and women at Nato bases and UK Embassies cope with the effects of Brexit.

Fg Off Christopher Fedden said: "The welfare of personnel has been strained by Covid travel restrictions preventing people from seeing loved ones back in the UK."

"We have detailed the adverse effects quarantine restrictions are having on the mental health of our people."

"This has resulted in exemption from quarantine for personnel and dependants travelling back on welfare grounds; just in time for Christmas."

The 3,000-strong unit looks after

personnel from 17 countries, deployed over nine million square kilometres from the Arctic Circle to the Mediterranean.

Formed in 2012, it provides day-to-day support for personnel in Naples, Ramstein, Lisbon and less populous postings such as Tallinn or Thessaloniki.

"We are in the process of extending its reach to capture service people posts in Europe to ensure those in remote places get the same support as those in an Embassy," said Fg Off Fedden.

"When this is complete, six new


countries and hundreds of new individuals will come under the umbrella."

The unit set up a round-the-clock Ops Cell to manage Covid issues ranging from confirmed cases to large-scale outbreaks.

It will incorporate a dedicated EU Transition team as EJSU prepares for the UK's eventual deal or no deal Brexit.

"Either outcome will have an immediate and lasting impact on UK personnel overseas," said Fg Off Fedden.


Christmas messages




Broadcaster and writer Jeremy Clarkson
DEAR EVERYONE in the Royal Air Force, may I take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a better new year than the one we've just finished. I'm grateful to you for the work you do, and the sacrifices you make to keep us safe. Thank you.
Jeremy Clarkson




Actor and presenter Bradley Walsh
FROM MY days in the ATC at Leavesden aerodrome I always wanted to be in the RAF. The closest I ever got was doing CSE shows all over the world and we were always transported and looked after by the RAF. Keep doing the fantastic work you do, it's totally appreciated. I wish you all and your families a very merry Xmas and an even better New Year.
God bless, Brad X



Author Jilly Cooper
MERRY CHRISTMAS and a hopefuller happier New Year to RAF News, a wonderful newspaper which so brilliantly and entertainingly celebrates our marvellous guardians: the Royal Air Force, who work so bravely and tirelessly to protect our country and ensure it stays safe.
Jilly Cooper CBE




Author and broadcaster Gyles Brandreth
KEEP FLYING high - you're the best!
Gyles Brandreth



Actor Sir David Jason
I AM sending my grateful thanks to all RAF personnel and their families at this time of year. I have witnessed first-hand the professionalism and camaraderie involved to keep our Air Force in such a superb state of readiness with all the training involved, either on the ground or in the air. You are part of an elite team and I salute you for your sacrifice and dedication. With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year ahead.
Sir David Jason




Rugby League legend Kevin Sinfield
SENDING MY very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to you all. We in rugby league have massive links with the military; you stand for all of the right reasons and protect and serve, for which I am truly thankful. Enjoy yourselves and rip in!
Kevin Sinfield MBE




Actor, author and presenter Joanna Lumley
TO THE whole vast family of the RAF I send loving, grateful, distanced hugs and my very warmest wishes for a Merry Christmas, all tied up with a giant red ribbon made of gratitude and admiration.
Joanna Lumley



Singer Tony Hadley
WISHING EVERYONE in our glorious RAF and their families, wherever you are, a wonderful, peaceful and happy Christmas. I've had the great pleasure of entertaining the RAF several years ago on a CSE tour and you guys were so much fun. Some of the after-show parties were legendary! So let's all party this Christmas and hope for a happy and healthy 2021.
Love and wishes, Tone xx




Comedian, author and broadcaster Paul O'Grady
I'VE JUST flown over the White Cliffs of Dover in a Tiger Moth, to say it was exhilarating would be an understatement. Am I too old to join up? I hope you all have a very happy Christmas wherever you are.
With love and respect, Paul O'Grady



Author and Gulf War veteran John Nichol
I AM sending huge Christmas greetings to all RAF personnel at home and overseas. During my 15 years in the RAF, I spent six Christmases on duty; three on overseas operations, so I especially think of all those who will be away from their loved ones over the festive period. As a country, we don't say this nearly enough: "Thank you all for your service."
John Nichol



TV chef Matt Tebbutt
THANK YOU for everything you're doing for us in the UK and overseas. I really hope you get a chance to sit down with colleagues and enjoy some good food over this festive season, wherever you are in the world.
Happy Christmas to you all!
Matt Tebbutt



Actor Frank Harper
TO ALL the men and women of our Armed Forces, thank you for your service. Have a great Christmas and stay safe.
With respect,
Frank Harper

'Outstanding' RAF scheme judged one of best in Britain

Accolade for apprentice work in landmark year

THE RAF has received a coveted national award for its apprenticeship scheme, which this year marks its centenary. More than 90 per cent of new recruits undergo this type of training, qualifying in 24 trades at airbases across the UK. And now the scheme, set up in 1920, has been highly commended at this year's virtual National Apprenticeship Awards ceremony. Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston said: "This award reflects the enduring importance of our apprenticeships, unleashing potential and developing highly-skilled, committed and motivated people. "Having one of the UK's top apprenticeship schemes enables us

to attract the high-calibre people we need, delivering air and space power to protect our nation into the future." The awards, now in their 17th year, recognise the best of Britain's apprentice employers, from more than 1,100 entries. This year's event proved particularly poignant given the challenges employers and apprentices faced during the coronavirus pandemic. With more than 3,400 apprentices at any one time the Air Force is one of the largest providers in the country. Following its last inspection its programme was assessed as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted and listed at No. 10 in the prestigious Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers List.



RAF ENGINEERING APPRENTICE: Junior personnel receive top on-the-job training



WHAT WOULD YOU SPEND

£10,000 ON THIS CHRISTMAS?

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www.rafcf.org.uk

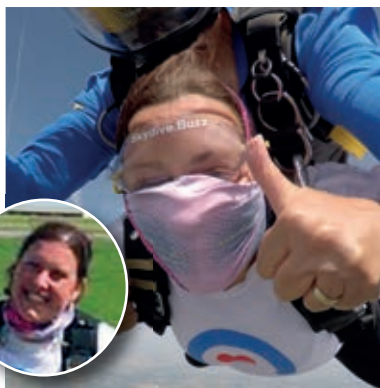


   **RAFCentralFund**

BeGambleAware.org

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

News bulletin



WHO DARES LYNNE: Halton Civvie Lynne Winnerah jumps to it for charity

Chute-ing star

DEFENCE CIVVIE Lynne Winnerah took a fall for charity – with a tandem jump from 15,000ft. The Halton-based admin worker signed up for the skydive to help her overcome her fear of heights, raising £670 for the RAF Benevolent Fund.

She said: “My husband bought the parachute jump for Christmas last year but I never thought I would be able to go through with it.”

Charity launches audience survey

PARTICIPANTS COULD win a £20 Amazon voucher when they take part in the RAF Benevolent Fund’s new audience research project.

The charity has launched a survey in partnership with the agency Bunnyfoot to find out more about its supporters, beneficiaries, and those who may be eligible for support from the Fund.

Participants are asked to answer questions about themselves and their relationship to the Fund. All data will be anonymised said the RAFBF.

The survey takes around 20 minutes and respondents will be entered into a prize draw for the chance to win one of three Amazon vouchers.

Go to: bunnyfoot.com/rafbfsurvey to take the survey. The closing date is January 11, 2021.



COVID ROLE: Reservist Wg Cdr Eklund

Dylan's delight

RESERVIST WG Cdr Dylan Eklund scooped a Forces award for supporting the military fight against Covid.

He was presented with a RAF communications award this month by the Lord Mayor of London.

Charity star Luke's Xmas box bonanza



CHRISTMAS MISSION: Flt Lt Pearce raised more than £100k

Staff Reporter

CAMPAIGNING AIRMAN Flt Lt Luke Pearce – who raised more than £100k to fund a statue of his uncle, Welsh boxing legend Dave ‘Bomber’ Pearce in their hometown – is spreading Yuletide joy for those in need this Christmas.

The Newport-born charity star has launched a heart-warming mission to deliver presents to local children hospitalised over the festive season.

The project he set up to honour the heavyweight boxing hero, who tragically died at the age of 41 after his storming career was cut short by epilepsy, is also funding a different cause each day in the 12 days before Christmas.

Luke said: “I did a lot of research into my own family when I was working on the statue campaign and realised that the story was all about the area we came from. It’s not just about boxing and Bomber Pearce, who is rightly known as Newport’s Rocky.

“Seeing the statue unveiled was one of the proudest days of my life. It stands right opposite the University of South Wales campus and I hope it helps inspire some of

our young people to continue in education.”

The 38-year-old joined the Royal Welsh Guards before moving to the RAF and recently commissioned as a Flight Lieutenant at Cranwell.

He added: “I have always believed you have to act on the hopes and ideas you have yourself.

“I started out as a Welsh Guardsman and now I am an officer in the RAF. I want to be inspired and I want to help to inspire other people.”

Among those he and his team will be supporting are the homeless, autistic youngsters, charities for the disabled and a host of local sports teams for young people.

Luke smashed his original target of £60k to build the life-sized ‘Rocky’-style statue of Bomber Pearce in Newport after donations from locals and boxing stars including Lennox Lewis and Tyson Fury poured in.

He set up a trust, The Dave Bomber Pearce Legacy, with the extra funds to help nurture promising sporting talent in the town and support local good causes.

Since 2018 it has also donated cash to a range of military charities including the RAF Benevolent Fund, Royal Welsh Guards and the Royal Marines.

It scooped Newport Mayor William Routley’s Charity of the Year accolade and has donated thousands supporting local teams and good causes.

Luke was forced to cancel a glitzy fundraising auction earlier this year following the Covid outbreak but he and his team are continuing to organise events to keep the money rolling in.

He says he’s been knocked out by the response from the local community in his hometown. He added: “People know that what we

are doing is all about helping our young people. That is why it has really taken off like it has.”

During his prime, ‘Bomber’ Pearce was one of British boxing’s brightest prospects, despite a height and weight disadvantage.

He was named as one of the top 10 underrated British champions of all time in the boxing press and floored champions Joe Bugner and Trevor Birbeck during sparring sessions but was denied the chance to fight either for a title.

Pearce lost his licence just after he had signed to fight for the WBA Cruiserweight title, when he was ranked seventh in the world and number one in the British Commonwealth Heavyweight division.



LOCAL HERO: The life-size bronze statue of Dave ‘Bomber’ Pearce was unveiled in Newport in 2018



NEWPORT'S ROCKY: Bomber Pearce in the ring and posing with belt, below



FESTIVE FUN: Luke Pearce joins Mayor William Routley, staff and young patients at the Royal Gwent Hospital last year

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Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO₂ figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real-life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted, variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

RAF News

Review of the year 2020

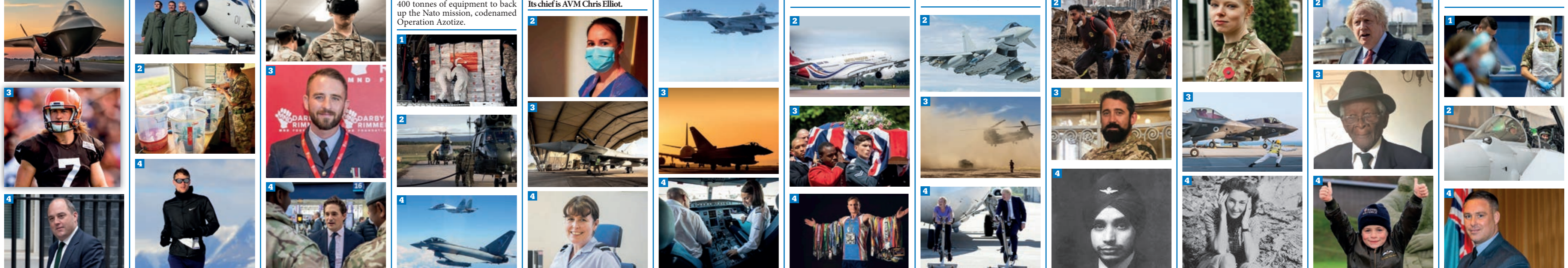


Review of the year 2020



January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12

- Trail-blazing 19-year-old recruit LAC Georgia Sandover makes Forces history as the first female Regiment Gunner to graduate from Honington and is set to join specialist frontline RAF Force Protection teams in a close combat role.
- The RAF's first sixth-generation fighter could enter service by 2035, according to aerospace chiefs. The Tempest is set to be the first warplane designed to fly with or without a pilot and will feature a range of experimental systems.
- Rising British NFL star Jamie Gillan made his professional debut Stateside – as airman dad Colin performed a flypast over the Cleveland Brown's stadium in the RAF's new P-8 Poseidon subhunter.
- Vets are guaranteed job interviews and employers offered tax breaks to employ ex-Forces candidates under proposals laid out by Defence Secretary Ben Wallace as part of a Defence Review.
- Sqn Ldr Mark Faulds flies the first of the UK's nine P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft into Kinloss Barracks, Moray, as work continues to prepare a new £132 million facility at Lossiemouth.
- Brize bio-boffins receive £1 million to develop ways of recycling aircraft waste. The 47 Sqn team receive the funding after scooping the RAF 100 Engineering Competition with their idea to reuse waste oils and lubricants.
- Comedian Johnny Vegas launches a bid to become the new owner of Marham's ageing Victor gate guardian. He said: "It's a gorgeous tribute to engineering. It can't be scrapped."
- SAC Luke Wigman, who suffered horrific leg injuries in a Taliban bomb blast, completes seven marathons in seven days on seven continents. The RAF veteran had part of his leg rebuilt and fought off gangrene after the attack.
- Putin's bombers are warned to stay out of UK airspace after Typhoons scramble THREE times in less than a week. The stance demonstrates Nato's determination to defend its airspace at a time of heightened tensions with Russia.
- A virtual reality training system based on the popular Fortnite game is trialled by the British Armed Forces. The new platform uses virtual reality tech to make military training more realistic while lowering costs, the MOD says.
- Tributes are paid to 34-year-old SAC David Kenwright whose body was found in a river after a two-day search. Air Force bosses and Lincolnshire police launched a hunt after the Wittering-based airman failed to return after a night out in Stamford.
- Veterans and their families find it easier to get help with bereavement, leaving the military and compensation claims after an overhaul of a defence website. The revamp is part of a range of measures launched by Defence Minister Johnny Mercer to support ex-Forces fighters.
- Military training helps Warrant Officer Wanda Hughes, and other Air Force medics battling alongside NHS nurses, save lives in the UK's war against coronavirus. She is one of more than 30 Princess Mary's RAF nurses working 12-hour shifts at Oxford's John Radcliffe Hospital.
- Military-minded RAF nurses pass on their frontline combat medical skills to NHS colleagues in the fight against Covid-19 after they are called in to help civilian staff cope with critical care of virus victims.
- The global pandemic fails to halt Britain's contribution to the fight against Daesh. Since 2014 RAF aircrew based in Cyprus have been flying missions over Iraq and Syria as part of a Coalition of nations, combating Islamist militants.
- The RAF's biggest charity launches a cash lifeline for vets hit by financial troubles during lockdown. The RAF Benevolent Fund is the first military charity to introduce an online application service for emergency payments of up to £750. Its chief is AVM Chris Elliot.
- A pair of RAF transporters are adapted by the Tactical Medical Wing to carry patients and boost Forces support in the UK fight against coronavirus. The two BAe146 aircraft are operated by 32 Sqn.
- Helicopter crews fighting fires in the sweltering Cyprus summer have a new look to keep them cool. Akrotiri-based 84 Sqn personnel swap their traditional flying suits for a new two-piece with lightweight boots.
- The RAF's newly-repainted VIP Voyager tanker and troop carrier is scrambled from Brize Norton to support Typhoons scrambled from Lossiemouth to track a long-range Russian aircraft skirting UK airspace off the Scottish coast.
- Spitfire and Hurricane aircraft stage a flypast tribute at the funeral of Forces' 'Sweetheart' Dame Vera Lynn, following her death aged 103. Military personnel carry her coffin and play the Last Post during the procession from Ditchling, East Sussex, where she lived.
- More than £13,000 is raised in tribute to ultramarathon runner and charity crusader Cpl Jon Ward following his sudden death, aged 34. The RAF endurance athlete marked the Service's 100th anniversary by running 100 marathons and completed a series of gruelling events for good causes.
- Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak unveils a £200 million programme to revamp thousands of Forces families' homes. As part of the housing pledge 3,500 homes and single living quarters are to be given a makeover.
- Typhoons track a Russian nuclear submarine after being scrambled from Lithuania. The vessel, capable of carrying cruise missiles, is spotted by 6 Sqn pilots scrambled to intercept an IL-38 maritime patrol aircraft escorted by two SU-27 Flanker B Fighters.
- Chinook crews brave violent thunderstorms to airlift French troops battling Islamist terrorists in the Sahel region of Africa. They fly through the night alongside French Caiman helicopters to insert 130 soldiers, recovering them 36 hours later.
- PM Boris Johnson and Chancellor Rishi Sunak join Cpl Gemma Connell at RAF Northolt for her 24-hour fundraising cycle challenge for Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital where her young relative is receiving treatment.
- The first female RAF Regiment officers are posted to frontline squadrons after passing a gruelling training course. Fg Offs Emma Graves and Juliette Abson join 19-year-old SAC Georgia Sandover, who became the first woman Gunner earlier this year.
- A RAF C-17 airlifts lifesaving aid to rescuers working in the wake of the Beirut chemical blast that killed at least 200 people and levelled entire blocks with an earthquake-style shock wave.
- Fast jet controllers commanded by an RAF Regt officer direct simulated ground attacks in the first mission of its kind. Sqn Ldr Rich May leads a team from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland on Exercise Furious Wolf with Typhoons and Spanish EF-18 Hornets.
- A Sikh DFC winner is honoured during the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. Mahinder Singh Puji was one of the first Indian pilots to join the RAF in WWII flying sorties over occupied France and reconnaissance missions in Burma.
- Royals pay tribute to the fallen at a Remembrance ceremony closed to the public due to the coronavirus lockdown. The Queen makes a solitary visit to the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior while the Duchess of Cambridge pays her respects at Buckingham Palace.
- Medic Fgt Lt Samantha Rawlinson spearheads the British Legion's Covid-hit Poppy Appeal. The 27-year-old, who joined the Air Force as a cadet at university, is working in a Birmingham intensive care unit.
- 617 Sqn pilots line up alongside the US Marines Avengers on board HMS Queen Elizabeth as Nato launches a series of war games over the North Sea.
- Churchill's 'favourite spy', Christine Granville, is honoured by English Heritage. The SOE agent, said to have inspired the glamorous Bond character Vesper Lynd, is immortalised on a blue plaque on the London hotel where she lived.
- Seven-year-old RAF superfan Jacob Newson defies Covid-19 constraints to raise £30,000 for the RAF Benevolent Fund. He walks 30 miles with dad Andy to the Battle of Britain Memorial at Capel-le-Ferne near Folkestone for the charity.
- Thousands of Forces personnel are deployed across the UK to support local authorities' testing programmes as the UK comes out of a second lockdown and a vaccination programme is announced.
- 12 Sqn Typhoons arrive in Qatar for Exercise Epic Skies. RAF and Qatar Emiri Air Force pilots fly together for the first time as a joint squadron in the Gulf state following the sale of 24 of the British-built swing role fighters.
- Military dog Kuno is awarded an animal 'VC' for charging through a hail of enemy bullets to take down a heavily-armed terrorist as Special Forces stormed an Al Qaeda stronghold in Afghanistan. The four-year-old Malinois who suffered serious injuries receives the Dickin Medal.
- Campaigning airman Fgt Lt Luke Pearce – who raised more than £100k to fund a statue of Welsh boxing legend Dave 'Bomber' Pearce in their hometown of Newport in Wales – spreads Yuletide joy by donating to 12 different causes over 12 days over the festive season.



R'n'R

Win!



**Win:
Christmas
romcom classic
on DVD ● p3**



Announcements

- P6-7
Puzzles
- P8

**Panto's back – oh
yes it is! ● p4**

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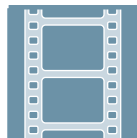
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Film Review

A Christmas Carol (PG)

Out now

Reworked classic fails to make an impression

THE LATEST adaptation of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* ambitiously blends theatre with cinema as a star cast lend their voices to characters using modern dance.

The story begins with a Victorian family, gathered by a toy theatre, as the grandmother tells a largely abridged tale of Ebenezer Scrooge and his visitations from Christmas past, present and future.

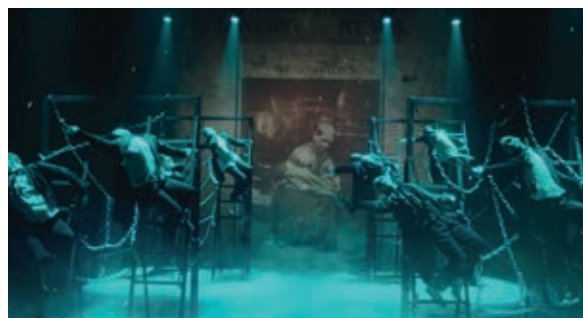
We are suddenly transported into the imagination of one of the children and enveloped by the diorama: characters manifest on a snowy street, the grandmother becoming narrator, using Dickens' original text from the novel.

This creative take on the yuletide classic comes to life quite literally with a handful of players resurrected in dance, to a contemporary rendition of *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*, an exciting transition that showcases the twist of this telling with a flourish.

Shot on sets that resemble a stage, it lends a fantastical element that builds on the audience's own imagination – remembering the story and its previous iterations. Backdrops are filled by illustrations from the book, blown-up to life-size, right alongside the performers.

The cast, which consists of Carey Mulligan, Andy Serkis and Daniel Kaluuya to name a few, appear as voices, their dialogue overlaying scenes in which their corporeal counterpart dances about the stage.

It lands somewhere between a ballet and an art film, but unfortunately having the impact of neither. The mixing of styles becomes confused as film techniques



SPECTRE-CAL: Ghostly dance scene from *A Christmas Carol*

(that render ghosts transparent for example) detract from the grounding of practical effects. Then add to this a distractingly dense layer of narration and dialogue.

Though creative, the ideas often don't dovetail together and appear disjointed. There are moments that manage to find this balance, such as the appearance of Scrooge's late business partner Marley – an apparition, chained and thrown around wildly as though pulled in different directions. For the most part however, the dance remains minimal so as not to detract from the story being told – which seems to defeat the point.

It's an inventive take on a classic, but you keep hoping for a visit from adaptations past – any Bill Murray or Kermit would do.

Two roundels out of five

Review by Sam Cooney

Competition

Various DVDs

Fabulous Films Ltd/Fremantle Media Enterprises

Win!

Make a date with Diaz

IT'S SAID director Nancy Myers already had stars Cameron Diaz and Kate Winslet in mind for the lead roles of Amanda and Iris when she wrote the script for romcom *The Holiday* (Cert 12), that went on to become a big hit.

Iris (Winslet) and Amanda (Diaz) couldn't be more different – one lives in a cosy English cottage, the other in Hollywood – but neither has much luck with men. In desperate need of an escape, they meet online and impulsively switch homes for the festive season. Both find the last thing either wants or expects – a new romance – and discover that a change of address really can change your life.

Senna (Cert E) is the true story of Brazilian motor-racing legend Ayrton Senna – many believe he was the greatest driver who ever lived. Spanning Senna's titanic Formula 1 career, the film charts his physical and spiritual journey, both on track and off.

In the sci-fi classic *Silent*



Running (Cert U) Bruce Dern stars as botanist Freeman Lowell, who has spent eight years aboard the space freighter Valley Forge preserving the only botanical specimens left from Earth under huge geodesic domes. When he receives orders to destroy the project and return home, Lowell rebels and hijacks the freighter, while plunging the craft into the gaseous rings of Saturn.

We have copies of *The Holiday*, *Senna* and *Silent Running* on DVD to win. For your chance to own a copy, simply tell us:

Who directed *The Holiday*?

Email your answer, marked Fabulous Films 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 January 4. Please state whether you prefer to win *The Holiday*, *Senna* or *Silent Running*.

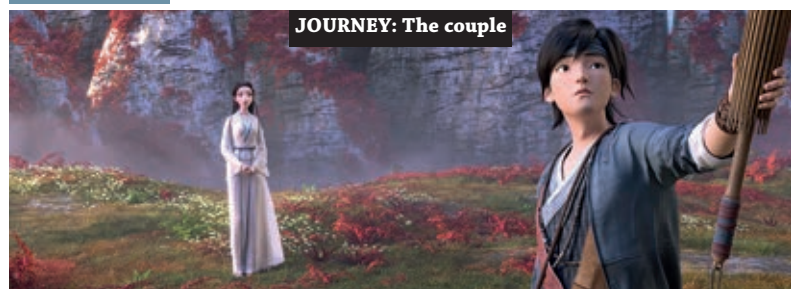


Competition

White Snake (PG)

Dazzler Media – out on DVD & Blu-Ray and download

Win!



One not to be mythed

FROM ONE of China's premiere animation studios, Light Chaser Animation, comes *White Snake*, a visually stunning new take on a classic legend of mythology.

One day, a young woman named Blanca is saved by Xuan, a snake catcher from a nearby village. She has lost her memory, and together the couple go on a journey to discover her real identity, developing deeper feelings for one another along the way. But as they learn more about her past, they uncover a darker plot of supernatural forces vying for power, with the fate of the world hanging in the balance.

Based on one of the most

ancient and enduring stories in Chinese history, *White Snake* is out now on DVD, Blu-ray and digital download – and we have copies on DVD up for grabs. To be in with a chance of winning one, send us the answer to the following question:

What is the name of the snake catcher in *White Snake*?

Email your answer, marked *White Snake* 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 January 4.



Frank's back on big screen with Brit gangster flick

HE IS in many ways the godfather of British gangster films, and after a self-imposed lay-off due to no scripts appealing to him, the *Football Factory* star Frank Harper bursts back onto our screens in the Christmas gangland film *Silent Night* (see review, RnR p8).

Harper (*inset, right*) who plays nasty underworld boss Caddy, was tempted back after reading director/writer Will Thorne's hard-hitting script.

"I had been turning down scripts for ages, so much so someone said I'd retired. *Silent Night* was the first thing that came along that I thought was worthwhile, and we shot it last year. To get any British film produced now is not easy," said

the actor. His everyman style, with characters who never quite get their way, continues with Caddy. Despite being a nasty piece of work, Harper still manages to get the audience to feel a kinship with him.

He said: "When we first meet Caddy in the film, he is calling the shots in a Chinese restaurant surrounded by his henchmen and women. It isn't long before he lets his bad side out."

"That scene was difficult to shoot, we were working in a big restaurant that was only half closed – a birthday party was being held round one side. Every now and then we'd hear cheers and people laughing or things being chopped up and cooked."

"It was a great scene; the editors must be credited for doing a good job and getting that menace across."

Harper (who famously played Dog in *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*) described *Silent Night* as a real look at the underside of the gangster world.

He said: "I always say these films

are Westerns. Every Western was a crime drama.

"For me *The Italian Job* and *Get Carter*, both starring Michael Caine, are two standout British films. They show the ironic dark sense of humour a lot of these gangland characters have."

"Caddy is such a dark bloke, I needed to underplay it so the audience could affiliate with him, which I hope has come across."

"People identify with these characters, it goes back to the Wild West gunslingers, Robin Hood or Dick Turpin, there is a fascination with them, people live vicariously through them."

Following his pre-*Silent Night* sabbatical, Harper, who has worked on the short film *Sisterhood* with film students via London's The Reel Scene drama school, returns to our screens in *Nemesis*, with Nick Moran (*Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*) and Billy Murray (*Call of Duty, EastEnders*) next year.

Interview by Daniel Abrahams

See *Silent Night* review RnR p8





Theatre
Panto
Various

Sleeping Beauty is rousing

LIVE PANTO is back – oh yes it is! After almost a year of theatre closures due to the Covid crisis, *Sleeping Beauty*, featuring some familiar TV faces, will be staged by Milton Keynes Theatre from December 19 to January 10.

The theatre has announced that all tickets for the first performance of the socially-distanced panto will be gifted to NHS workers and their families.

Emma Sullivan, the venue's director, said: "We are totally overjoyed to be opening our doors again for a fantastic family pantomime. We will be able to host an unforgettable festive experience with all the laughs and thrills you would expect, while making sure the theatre is absolutely safe for our audiences."

NHS workers should go to: healthservicediscounts.com and register for the ticket ballot.

Lee Mead (below) makes his royal return to Milton Keynes after starring in the venue's 2019 panto, *Aladdin*. This year the *Holby City* star swaps his scrubs for something a little more regal as The Prince. Joining him will be stage and screen star Claire Sweeney in the role of the evil Carabosse,



CO-STARS: Claire Sweeney as Carabosse and Hearsay's Suzanne Shaw as The Enchantress



along with Hearsay's Suzanne Shaw as The Enchantress.

● Go to: atgtickets.com for more details.

Other live shows for the festive season include comedian Jimmy Carr at the New Theatre, Peterborough on December 12; *Santa's Christmas Cracker*, a new show for two to seven-year-olds at the Landmark Theatre, Ilfracombe on December 19 and Christmas Eve; Jason Merrells (Agatha Raisin, Emmerdale, Casualty) in a new

adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* at the Queen's Theatre, Barnstaple from December 17-19 and Gareth Gates' *Barnstaple's Christmas Cracker*, also at the Queen's, from December 21-31.

The show celebrates the best in variety and pantomime, comedy routines and music starring the original winner of *Pop Idol*, said a spokesperson for theatre company Selladoor Worldwide.

● Go to: queenstheatre-barnstaple.com, landmark-ilfracombe.com and newtheatre-peterborough.com for more information.



TV
New series

Line of Duty (BBC1)/This Way Up (C4)

AC-12 lines up new series

THE SIXTH series of Jed Mercurio's hit crime thriller *Line of Duty* has finished filming, the BBC has announced.

The show features Kelly Macdonald as Detective Chief Inspector Joanne Davidson, the senior investigating officer on an unsolved murder case whose unconventional conduct attracts the attention of AC-12.

Line of Duty regulars Martin Compston (DS Steve Arnott), Adrian Dunbar (Supt Ted Hastings) and Vicky McClure (DI Kate Fleming) all return for the new series.

Mercurio said: "Thanks so much to our brilliant cast and crew who applied rigorous Covid safety measures to deliver *Line of Duty*



DCI DAVIDSON: Macdonald

six to our wonderful fans. We're all immensely grateful to World Productions and the BBC for the unwavering support they've given us in a time of unprecedented challenges to UK television production."

A date for the new series will be announced in due course. Series one to five of *Line of Duty* are available to stream in the UK on BBC iPlayer.

A second series of Aisling Bea's comedy *This Way Up* has been commissioned for Channel 4. In series two Aine (Bea) is starting to leave her time in rehab behind and live less cautiously, which may not be entirely wise...

Bea, the series' creator, said: "The themes of loneliness and vulnerability seemed to connect in a far more widespread way than I had anticipated, and it feels particularly



ON THE UP: Aine (Aisling Bea) returns

relevant writing series two during the last few months.

"I was so touched by the people from different countries, ages, genders and backgrounds who have gotten in touch to share their stories since the show has aired."

Sharon Horgan, who returns as Aine's sister Shona, said: "It's been a really tough, strange old year. We know we're lucky to be back working at all but especially lucky to be working again on *This Way Up*."

The Big Event

Gordon, Gino and Fred: Desperately Seeking Santa

AS WELL as specials of favourite shows – from *Britain's Got Talent At Christmas* to festive episodes of *The Masked Singer*, *The Chase*, *The Price is Right* and *Tenable* – ITV's seasonal offerings feature some of our best-loved famous faces, including Ant & Dec, Gordon, Gino and Fred and Rowan Atkinson.

The Gordie duo reunite with their old pal Cat Deeley for *The Story of SM:TV Live*, a nostalgic look back at the Saturday morning kids' show. Covering the first three years of the show (1999-2001) which catapulted the three hosts to stardom, they reminisce on how it came to be, what made it a success, and choose their favourite segments.

The programme also features interviews with regular SM:TV guests and memories from celebrity fans.

The hit comedy *Birds of a Feather* returns for a one-off extended Christmas episode. It's been three years since we last saw the Birds, after Tracey reluctantly sold the house they all shared to Dorian.

Sharon has escaped to the other side of the world and is stuck on a Covid-cruise... so who can fill Tracey and Dorian's Sharon-shaped hole in their lives this Christmas?

Linda Robson and Lesley Joseph reprise their roles as Tracey Stubbs and Dorian Green with guest star Les Dennis as Dorian's new flame, Graeme.

No one would deny that 2020 has been a bit bleak, to say the least, and in *Gordon, Gino and Fred: Desperately Seeking Santa* the boys are keen to end the year with a bang.

After Gino led them to the deserts of Morocco on last year's misadventure, Gordon is determined they celebrate the season properly this time, so he's arranged a trip to Lapland, where the trio and their trusty RV experience festive fare and meet Father Christmas.

Gino has a letter he wants to hand deliver to Santa from his daughter Mia, Fred is keen to witness the Northern Lights and Gordon is eager they encounter the country's culinary delights.

The boys have a not so traditional Christmas feast with the Sami people, the only indigenous people within the EU who have been herding reindeer for centuries. And they face plenty of off-menu distractions in the land of ice swimming and saunas, snowmobiles and huskies.

Jeremy Clarkson hosts TV review of the year show *It's Clarkson On TV: The Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* presenter



FESTIVE FOOD WE LOVE: Ainsley Harriott



SNOW MAN: Gordon is off to Lapland

Gordon Laps it up

The three amigos go in search of different festive fare... and Santa

reviews the best, worst and most bizarre offerings of 2020. Clarkson passes judgement on what the British public watched... and reveals the shows he loved and loathed.

Happy Birthday Mr Bean is a celebratory documentary looking back at the 30 years since the comedy character played by Rowan Atkinson came to our screens. It features classic clips and interviews from key creators, including Atkinson.

And in *Stephen Fry's 21st Century Firsts*, the 90-minute special focuses on major developments over the last two decades, including mobile phones, sat-navs and social media.

On Christmas Day, James Martin serves up a feast of festive food



BIRDS ARE BACK: Tracey & Dorian (Linda Robson & Lesley Joseph, centre) with Ami Metcalf & Les Dennis

and entertainment, including a recipe from Michelin-starred Tom Kerridge. James will also create a delicious dish with a little help from

a British food hero and lay on a culinary masterclass that will teach you how to cook a Christmas classic.

In *John and Lisa's Christmas*

Kitchen, the couple get into the festive spirit as they approach their second Christmas together as husband and wife.

World-renowned chef Raymond Blanc, i-n his first show for ITV, shares the secrets of a new collection of simple, rustic recipes that can be put together easily and quickly whilst still delivering amazing results. He reveals the workings of the extensive gardens at the famous Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons in Oxfordshire where he is chef patron, explaining how much of the produce used in the kitchens is grown there, before using some of his favourite fruits and vegetables in the featured recipes.

And in *Ainsley's Festive Food We Love* singer and actress Martine McCutcheon joins the host as he cooks a Thai-style turkey broth and everyone's favourite panto star Christopher Biggins stops by for some of Ainsley's indulgent chocolate panettone bread and butter pudding.



SPECIAL GUESTS: James Martin



Competition Books

Mole's Bedtime Story
Funny Bunny's Magic Show (David Wood on Amazon)

Win!

Make slot for Mole and Funny Bunny

PLAYWRIGHT, ACTOR and author David Wood and illustrator Richard Fowler are celebrating the 25th and 20th anniversaries of their much-loved pop-through-the-slot children's books, *Mole's Bedtime Story* and *Funny Bunny's Magic Show* – and we have copies for three lucky readers to win.

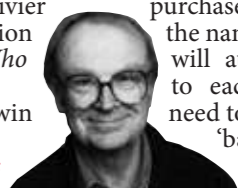
Readers can also receive a free *Scary Mary* book when they buy *Mole's Bedtime Story* or *Funny Bunny's Magic Show* from David Wood on Amazon (see below for details) – a great Christmas gift for little ones.

All three story books use the device of a cut-out animal character which young readers can have fun moving through the slots in the pages as the story progresses.

Dubbed 'the national children's dramatist' Wood (pictured below) has written more than 60 plays for kids including the Olivier Award-nominated adaptation of Judith Kerr's *The Tiger Who Came to Tea*.

For your chance to win these top titles, just tell us:

How many plays has



David written children?

Email your answer, marked: David Wood books competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe HP12 3EL, to arrive by December 21. First prize winner receives a copy of all three titles, second prize winner gets two titles and third prize is one title.

● The David Wood on Amazon books offer applies only to purchases via David Wood as the named seller; the free copy will automatically be added to each order, there is no need to add *Scary Mary* to the 'basket'; offer subject to availability).



Competition DVDs

Billy Connolly (Cert E)/Frankie Boyle (E)
Dazzler Media, out now on Blu-Ray, DVD and digital download

Win!

Billy & Frankie on tour

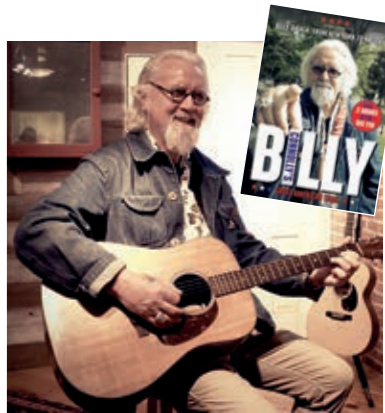
FANS OF stand-up megastar Billy Connolly have a treat in store with the release this month of the new DVD *Billy Connolly's Great American Trail*.

The three-part travelogue sees the comedy legend going far off the beaten track as he follows the migratory trail of the Scots through the USA, starting in New York and finishing in Nashville, Tennessee.

Fellow Glasgow-born comedian Frankie Boyle also has a DVD out this month – *Frankie Boyle's Tour of Scotland*. On four trips to four gigs he meets a heady mix of people, from the cities of the south to the wilds of the north, for his unique look at the history of his country, alongside contemporary ideas of Scottish identity.

We have copies of each title on DVD up for grabs. To be in with a chance of winning one, just answer this question correctly:

In which Scottish city



BILLY: Big Yin's on the Great American Trail

were Billy Connolly and Frankie Boyle born?

Email your answer, marked Connolly and Boyle DVDs, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP12 3EL, to arrive by January 4, 2021. Don't forget to include your full postal address.





Your Announcements

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

Deaths

GRIFFITHS Gp Capt Harry Griffiths, November 18. Peacefully after a short illness. Formerly of Harwich and Dinas Mawddwy, aged 86. Beloved husband of the late Elisabeth and Jennifer, loving father to Catherine, Edward and James, adored Tai Tai to Chester and Oscar. In accordance with the current guidance the funeral will be private. Donations in his memory gratefully received, if desired, to The RAF Benevolent Fund or Alzheimers UK c/o Glyn Rees and Son Funeral Directors, Dinas Mawddwy, Machynlleth, Powys, SY20 9JD, tel: 01650 531 240.

MCCULLOCH Brian (ex FS Eng Tech EL). It is with great sadness that we announce the untimely death of Brian on October 20 after a short stay in Lincoln County Hospital. Brian enlisted as a Boy Entrant at RAF Cosford in 1958 as an Air Radar Mechanic before retraining in 1964 as a Ground Wireless Fitter at RAF Locking. He had many postings, both overseas in Singapore, Malaya, Cyprus, Belgium, Germany, Malta and The Gulf as well as many locations in the UK, including Henlow a few times. Brian's RAF career ended in 1996, he then became a civil servant and served for 11 years. He had a full and active RAF career as well as travelling to some interesting places around the globe. Brian was a mentor to many Servicemen from all three Services as well as to his young brother, Graham, who followed him into the RAF as an Administrative Apprentice in 1965. Private cremation took place in November. For further information contact: graham594920@gmail.com. Graham and Denny will miss you Brian, deeply.

Seeking

BOY Entrants 45th Ground Wireless. Tracing the above for a reunion in York, June 2021. 57 out of 107 traced with, sadly, 12 deaths. Contact suddesr@aol.com.

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. Buster (*pictured below*) was also stationed in Style, Germany, in the 1950s and Theresa was last in touch with him in 1966 when he was stationed at RAF Doncaster. Please email Theresa on: tkilbride61@hotmail.co.uk if you can help.



I AM trying to establish the identity of the pilot who gave the best Vulcan display I ever saw for a book I am currently writing on the Mildenhall Air Fetes. This display was at the 1982 event and concluded with a barrel roll. The aircraft which gave the display was in 44 Sqn markings. Please contact me at: mbritton2@aol.com if you can help.

Reunions

DID you serve at RAF Changi or HQFEAF Singapore? The RAF Changi Association (inc. HQFEAF), founded May 1996, welcomes new

members from all ranks ex RAF/WRAF/WAAF and civilian personnel who served at RAF Changi (inc. HQFEAF) during 1946-72. For more information please contact our Membership Secretary: Malcolm Flack on: 01494 728562 or email: MemSecChangi@telco4u.net or visit: www.rafchangi.com for more details.

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.

RAF Bawdsey Reunion Association. Due to the coronavirus pandemic we regrettably had to cancel the annual reunion in the summer. 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 call: 07513 301723.

Apprentices' Assoc

ARE you a Trenchard Brat who did your training at RAF Halton, probably as an aircraft, craft, mechanical, technician apprentice or perhaps as a dental, medical or admin apprentice? Maybe you were trained at No. 1 S of TT RAF Cosford or at RAF Cranwell? Some Brats were trained at other RAF training schools, many were Boy Entrants trained at RAF Cosford or St Athan. Wherever we were trained we were known throughout the RAF as the Trenchard BRATS. Our

Association, The RAF Halton Apprentices' Association, (The Old Haltonians) welcomes you all. So, as a Trenchard Brat, why not join this elite group of RAF people today as either a Full or Associate Member? Check us out via our website 'Old Haltonians' and then contact us at: membership@rafhaa.co.uk for further details.

Reader's quest

READER ALLAN Fegen would like to return a box of personal information he found in a second-hand store in the Scottish Borders, to the family of Sgt W. Gibbs and his wife-to be, Cpl E. Bullock. The box includes photos, wartime Service records and medals. Allan said: "It also contains driving licences and photographs of their wedding in 1950 and subsequent family. I would very much like to return this box of important family history to someone. "Mr and Mrs Gibbs and family were married in 1950 and, guessing the age of their family now, they will be in their 60s." Please contact Mr Fegen via email at: pandafegen@btinternet.com if you can help him reunite his find with the Gibbs family.



WARTIME SERVICE: Bill Gibbs in South Africa in 1942, one of the photos Mr Fegen found

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. Go to: rafadappasn.org for further details.

Christmas greetings

ALL members of the Beccles and Southwold Area Branch of the RAF Association send their Christmas and New Year greetings to all readers of *RAF News*, wherever they may be. Stay safe, there are better times coming.



WOODLAND SITE: From left, James Cadman and Tina Jones from JB Kind with Andy Ansell and Philippa Rawlinson from the NMA. Inset, close-up of the interpretation panel. PHOTO: @PhillipNixon

Kind tree donation marks anniversary

A DERBYSHIRE firm has sponsored the planting of 15 new witch hazel trees at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

The donation of the hamamelis (witch hazels) by wooden door specialists JB Kind comprises the start of what the Arboretum aims to develop as a new national collection of the variety – a national plant collection is a registered and documented collection of a group of plants, which are part of a registered conservation scheme.

JB Kind managing director James Cadman said: "We are very proud to be celebrating our 150th anniversary and can think of no more appropriate way to mark such a significant achievement than by donating 15 trees to the NMA. The Memorial Arboretum is a charity that is close to all our hearts."

Each of the new hamamelis represents one decade since JB Kind's founder, John Blower Kind, started out as a joiner in 1870. An interpretation panel for visitors to find out more about the witch hazel variety has been put up next to JB Kind's copse of trees.

The NMA's 150-acre garden and woodland site is home to more than 26,000 trees. The site has more than 390 memorials remembering those who lost their lives in service to their country, in the Armed Forces and civilian services.

Andy Ansell, head of estates at the NMA, said: "We are striving to further develop the arboreal interest within our grounds. We are delighted to be able to start a hamamelis collection that will add additional colour and interest to the Arboretum from December to March."

Museum is open again

NEWARK AIR Museum has reopened to the public after lockdown and will be open throughout the Christmas holiday period, with some restrictions in place.

In recognition of this the trustees have lowered the admission cost to £5 per adult (all ages), with free admission to accompanied children under 16.

To comply with regulations, NAM will not be able to open its two aircraft display hangars, the engine hall or the small object display hall to visitors, so only outdoor exhibits will be accessible, said a museum

spokesman. There is no need to pre-book but visitors will need to comply with Tier 3 Covid regulations and guidance, he added.

The NAM's revised opening times for December are: 10am-3pm (last admission at 2pm).

The spokesman said: "We will keep these dates under review and may change them if Tier 3 regulations or our circumstances alter."

■ **Go to:** newarkairmuseum.org/latest-news or call: 01636 707170 before you visit for the latest information or follow Newark Air Museum on Twitter.

How to use our service

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

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Your Announcements

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

Cash boost for vets

NATIONAL CHARITIES Launchpad and the Veterans' Foundation have agreed to form a partnership to support homeless veterans.

The Veterans' Foundation will give £50,000 for the next three quarters, subject to quarterly reviews, to Launchpad which provides accommodation and other support to 80 veterans.

Since it was founded in 2013, Launchpad has supported almost 500 homeless veterans at Speke House in Liverpool and Avondale House in Newcastle upon Tyne.

Around 85 per cent of the veterans who arrive at Launchpad are homeless and are supported for up to two years – longer if necessary. They are referred to the organisation through a network of UK military charities, local authorities and housing partners.

"The generous donation of this significant grant will contribute towards helping homeless and unemployed veterans," said a Launchpad spokesman.

Major General David Shaw, CEO of the Veterans'



BENEFICIARIES: Veterans Luke, left, and David are residents at Launchpad's Speke House in Liverpool

Foundation, added: "No veteran should find themselves homeless and I am a big advocate of encouraging more organisations, charities and the authorities to support our homeless veterans who have put their lives on the line and served our country.

"These are unprecedented times for all charities and with the reduction of donations and fundraising income, it is difficult for them to continue to provide the excellent services they deliver.

"The Veterans' Foundation has a rewarding partnership with Launchpad and we are looking forward



to continuing to support them with this additional funding."

Nicholas Tubbs, chair of Launchpad, said: "As a charity, we need to raise at least £340,000 per year in donations and grants to contribute towards the costs of running both houses.

"That is a huge amount of money to find, particularly when people and organisations are already facing the challenges of recession.

"This funding will make a big difference to supporting homeless veterans around the UK."

Gulf war duo's tribute tour

TWO GULF War veterans are taking on a 670-mile bike ride challenge in memory of their fallen comrades.

Mal Craghill and Martin Wintermeyer will begin their 'Tornado Tribute Tour of England', from Cornwall to Tyne and Wear next February, marking the 30th anniversary of the 1991 Gulf War. Before starting their journey, they will lay a wreath at the grave of Flt Lt Steve Hicks, who died while on operations in the Gulf.

Mal and Martin, who were both navigators on the Tornado GR1, are aiming to raise £10,000 for the RAF Association – and have already raised half that amount.

Along their route they will visit and lay wreaths at the English grave sites of Tornado aircrew lost in the Middle East 30 years ago.

Their final stop will be on February 28 at the grave of Flt Lt Norman Dent in Washington, Tyne and Wear. The date marks the 30th anniversary of the ceasefire that ended the war.

Mal said: "The RAF deployed a large force of



ON THEIR BIKES: Mal and Martin

Tornado GR1 attack and reconnaissance aircraft to the Gulf and, sadly, not all of the aircrew came home. "This charity cycle ride is our way of remembering them, while raising money for a great cause."

Martin added: "With over 50 years' service between the two of us, we have seen how much of a difference the RAF Association has made to the lives of many members of the RAF family."

The pair are being supported by Gulf War

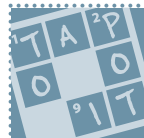
veteran John Peters, who was shot down by Iraqi forces, held as a PoW, and then paraded on television by Saddam Hussein's regime.

John said: "Mal and Martin's cycle challenge is a hugely impressive undertaking, especially given that they be riding in February. I hope to join them on February 23 when they ride from Sutton Coldfield to the National Memorial Arboretum."

■ Go to: justgiving.com/fundraising/TTTE to donate.

United Kingdom Special Forces

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



Prize Crossword

No. 287

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

Across

1. Skilful Lincoln has left (4)
8. Features at testimonials (10)
9. Maybe call wren at station (8)
10. They are able to detect some nuclear sounds (4)
12. US aircraft out of this world? (6)
14. First President to elevate and commend (6)
15. In our time polite lieutenants become grown-ups (6)
17. Revolutionary joins Queen's applause (6)
18. Come together with louse, by the sound of it (4)
19. Peace-keepers scramble RAF to help courageous (8)
21. Percussion disturbed by jets travelling at this speed (10)
22. Presenter has Oscar sending tweets, initially (4)

Down

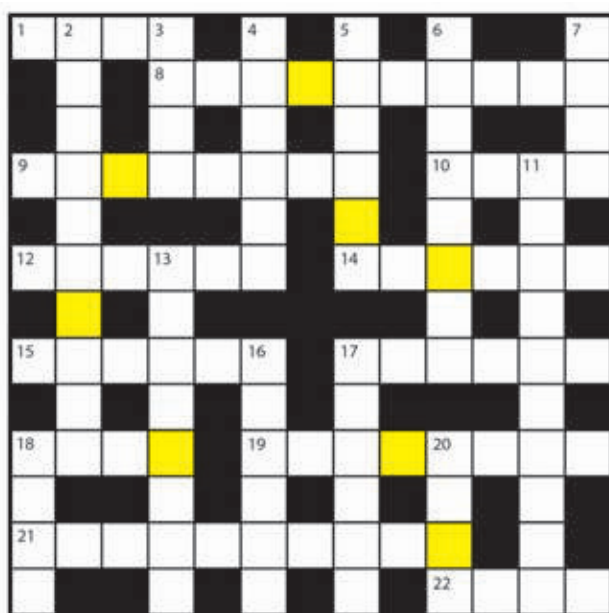
2. Blooming boozy venue, presumably? (4,6)
3. Mostly study and prosper (4)
4. Ruthless Sylvester consumes Peg (6)
5. Turnover involving the Italian stimulus (6)
6. Marry the French gendarme outside part of plane (8)
7. Mastermind response confuses snakes (4)
11. They are ready and waiting to serve (10)
13. How to describe sailors out of their depth? (3,2,3)
16. Trample sport underfoot (6)
17. Double ones are unwelcome around Austrian leader's cuffs (6)
18. King is at end of his caress (4)
20. Choir loses nothing becoming better off (4)

Name

Address

RAF word Crossword No. 287

Send entries for Prize Crossword No. 287 to the address printed in the Su Doku panel opposite to arrive by January 4, 2021.



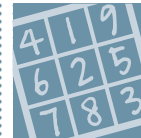
■ The winner of Crossword No. 285 is Mr P Mathews of Lincoln.

Solution to Crossword No. 286:

Across – 7. Phenom 8. Trilby 10. Embraer 11. Maize 12. Puck 13. Annoy 17. Lathe 18. Dali 22. Ulcer 23. Release 24. City Of 25. Odiham

Down – 1. Uptempo 2. Get Back 3. Loyal 4. Crimson 5. Elgin 6. Pyres 9. Trenchard 14. Warrior 15. Panache 16. Dilemma 19. Punch 20. Acute 21. Blade

Plane – Dornier

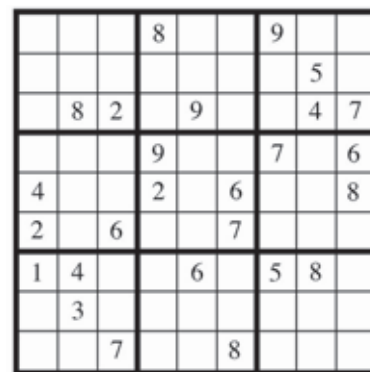


Prize Su Doku

No. 297

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

Solutions should be sent in a sealed envelope marked 'Su Doku' with the number in the top left-hand corner to RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP14 4UE, to arrive by January 4, 2021.



Name

Address

..... Su Doku No. 297

Solution to Su Doku No: 296



■ The winner of Su Doku No. 295 is Mr B Tanner of Windsor.

Film Review

The End of the Storm

Cert PG – out now on digital, DVD and Blu-ray

Top doc should go down a Storm with Reds fans

IT'S BEEN a long time coming... and I don't just mean the 30 years without a league title for Liverpool Football Club... I mean the documentary to celebrate it.

As a lifelong Reds fan, the 2019-20 season was nothing if not exciting. There was the team's playing style and the larger-than-life manager Jurgen Klopp. The introduction of lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic could have spelled the end of the title race before it was decided.

All this made for a very memorable Premier League season, to say the least. So, there seemed plenty to make James Erskine's (*The Ice King, Shooting for Socrates*) documentary a classic.

The cover shot shows Klopp celebrating and, given the concentration on him, *The End of the Storm* does not quite achieve all it sets out to – to be something for all fans.

There is plenty here to whet the appetite of supporters across the board, but parts of it seem superfluous, for example the lengthy interview with Klopp's father. Although the sections on the

manager are enjoyable, they are not really relevant.

If other supporters have an affinity with Klopp they will love it, but more about the fans and the team would have worked better. The sections that deal with the lockdown are brilliant, as a current overseas fan myself, I really related to these and the final piece and credits which talk about the club's anthem, *You'll Never Walk Alone*, will have fans jumping for joy and also perhaps shedding a tear.

Review by Brett Curran

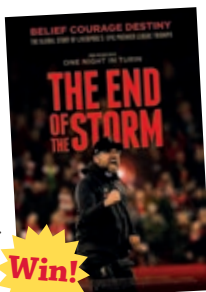
4 roundels out of 5

WE HAVE copies of this not-to-be-missed DVD up for grabs.

For your chance to win one, just answer this question correctly:

In which season did Liverpool FC win its last Premier League title?

Email your answer, marked **The End of The Storm 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 January 4. Please remember to include your full postal address with your entry.**



Win!

Film Review

Silent Night

In cinemas from December 11, download from December 14 and on DVD from December 28. Lightbulb Film Distribution and Break Em Films Trailer: www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5mfsyHp5v0

An unlikely Xmas hit

Ex-con wants to go straight but gang boss has other ideas

IT HAS been a while since the arrival of a new British underworld genre film has caused any form of excitement or anticipation.

So, when the trailer arrived for Will Thorne's *Silent Night*, featuring *Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, *St George's Day and Football Factory* Brit-flick bulldozer Frank Harper, it is fair to say I jumped at the chance to view it.

Silent Night's story is not the usual 'gangland family loses drug shipment and needs to get it back' fare. It revolves around Mark (Bradley Taylor, *EastEnders*, *Dark Heart*), a low-level hitman fresh out of jail who is trying to remain on the straight and narrow and provide a special Christmas for his young, estranged daughter Daisy.

Shadowed by his former cellmate Alan, played superbly by screen debutant Cary Crankson, Mark is avoiding the South London criminal family headed by Caddy (Harper). Despite Mark having



CRIME BOSS: Caddy (Frank Harper, above) wants hitman Mark (Bradley Taylor, inset) to do another job. See our interview with Frank Harper on RnRp3

spent the last six years of his life in prison for the family, Caddy wants him to carry out one more job before they set him free.

Sadly, Harper takes too much of a back seat in *Silent Night*, in fact many of the characters who hail from Mark's past do, and this leaves the viewer struggling to understand their relevance.

Thorne's script has too many loose ends and too little character arc. This becomes even more chaotic and telling once Caddy informs Mark that he has to carry out three hits to eradicate another gangland family. Will the hit finally spell freedom or are there more lies and half-truths beneath the surface?

The scenes between Alan and

Mark, which are obviously where Thorne feels most at home behind the lens, work well. They simply take up too much of the film. The interplay between him and presumed friends Seamus (Joel Fry, *Yesterday*, *Game of Thrones*) and Pete, known as The Chemist (Nathaniel Martello-White, *Red Tails*), are similar but lead nowhere. That is until the end of the film lurches into view, almost without explanation. Despite this *Silent Night* is thoroughly entertaining, but it does leave too many questions unanswered.

It could do with being another half-hour longer to explain itself better, but definitely one to catch.

3 roundels out of 5
Review by Daniel Abrahams

Top honour as collegiate continues to improve offering for boarding students

STAFF and students at Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate (QE) are celebrating following the news that the school has been recognised by the UK Boarding Schools Association Awards as a Finalist for their work to continually improve their offer for boarding students, to better meet their needs.

The Collegiate has also been announced as a Finalist for its approach to supporting international students as they become part of the QE community.

QE welcomes girls and boys from three months and supports them through four schools – Chapter House (three months to Year 5), King's Magna (Years 6 to 9), The College and Faculty (both Year 10 to 13), with those wishing to board being able to do so from Year 3.

Set in 220 acres of picturesque North Yorkshire countryside, the Collegiate provides a safe and happy community environment for its 850 boarders. Weekends



are as busy on campus as during the week, with a wide range of sporting, creative and performing arts, cultural and outdoor activities on offer. Boarding houses also host a varied programme of activities, encouraging students to socialise and follow their individual interests.

Known locally, nationally and internationally as a place that promotes the highest standards in all that it does, the Collegiate's exam results consistently rank it amongst the top ten day and boarding schools in the UK. In 2020, students in the academically focused College achieved 97 per cent A*/B at A level and 100 per cent D*/D in the small number of BTECs taken to enrich the

A level programmes (equivalent in university points to A* and A grades at A level). The Faculty, which offers a wider range of academic, creative and vocational courses, achieved 96 per cent A*/B at A level and 86 per cent D*/D in BTECs.

The Collegiate has risen to the challenge of starting the new school year during the current COVID-19 pandemic, gaining the COVID Safe BSA Charter and providing boarders with the option of a two week pre-term stay for students to become accustomed to the changes put in place to ensure their safety, prepare for the school year ahead and complete any quarantine period that might be necessary.

Principal Jeff Smith explains: "QE has complied with, and gone beyond, the measures required by the Government and we have committed ourselves to the BSA School Safe Charter, putting adaptable plans in place for this coming year and beyond.

"We will continue to find ways to broaden and improve the curriculum and enrichment opportunities we offer and continue to extend students' learning beyond the classroom. We will use our recent online teaching experience to update our IT strategy, taking the opportunity to develop e-learning in an impactful way.

"Through our academic, pastoral and enrichment programmes, we will continue to develop the personal qualities of our students, such as leadership, resilience, critical thinking and responsibility. As always, we will prioritise the safeguarding, health and wellbeing of all our students and staff."

*** To note: At the time of writing, the BSA Awards 2020 ceremony had not yet taken place. To find out more about QE and to arrange a socially distanced private tour of campus, please visit www.qe.org**



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Co-educational, Day and Boarding
990 pupils aged 13-18
720 pupils aged 3 - 13
560 boarders from the age of 7+



Nurturing a love of learning

At Bromsgrove all pupils, regardless of their age, develop natural curiosity and a love of learning in a safe yet stimulating setting.

The Preparatory and Senior Schools provide continuity of education for children from the age of seven to eighteen years.

Having the advantage of beautiful grounds spread over 100 acres, with gardens, wildlife areas, forest school and extensive outdoor sports pitches, Bromsgrove's boarders have plenty of space around them.

A boarding community of over 580 youngsters, aged 7 to 18, live in comfortable houses, looked after by dedicated houseparents and a wide range

of professionals from nurses to caterers, all offering the most caring pastoral support. This gives just a flavour of what makes a Bromsgrove pupil so successful in their future careers.

Pupils start at the Prep School at age 7, many progressing from the School's own Pre-Preparatory School.

At Prep School academic and extra-curricular horizons naturally wide; the curriculum is broad and enriching and the opportunities for sport and extra-curricular activities are extensive.

With national level sports teams, award winning choirs and musicians, and multiple individual honours, whatever your child shows a talent or interest in we aim develop

them to their full potential.

Senior School is where pupils become more independent in their learning both in and out of the classroom.

The activities programme encourages them to take on responsibilities and to develop more skills whether that's in programming robots, taking part in music and drama, CCF and kitcar teams or editing the award winning pupil magazine there is something for everyone.

***To find out more information on how to join Bromsgrove School, and about our generous forces bursaries, don't hesitate to contact our admissions team who will be happy to help.**

A CHARITY chief has launched an urgent Christmas appeal to help combat loneliness among veterans.

The RAF Association has warned that thousands of elderly and vulnerable people face a festive season of loneliness compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic.

While lockdown rules will be temporarily eased to allow families to meet, many veterans are likely to spend Christmas feeling as isolated as ever because they have no relatives or are continuing to self-isolate to protect their health, the charity added.

The Association has called for the public to support its appeal to expand its national telephone friendship service, Connections for Life.

RAFA's Secretary General Nick Bunting said: "2020 has been a really tough year for our charity, at a time when people have needed us more than ever. We launched Connections for Life as soon as the government issued its 'stay at home' message in March. Our amazing volunteers have so far made more than 50,000 calls to lonely RAF veterans, but it's not enough.

"It's our aim that nobody should feel alone or isolated over the Christmas period and beyond, so we are relying on people's generosity to help us to keep up our additional work and light up veterans' lives at an otherwise dark time.

"We anticipate that a large number of older people will have



CONNECT: Help lonely veterans like 'Clive'

Answer the call



even less, if any, social contact than usual because of the ongoing pandemic.

"People without family or close friends to support them would normally have some opportunity to chat while out shopping, and to meet like-minded people at community clubs and events, but this year they won't even have that."

Nick said recent research by the RAF Association among the RAF community had revealed that almost half of those surveyed had experienced loneliness since the pandemic began.

"When asked how long they had gone without an in-depth conversation since the start of the first national lockdown, more

than a third of those surveyed said three or more days. Asked if they felt an outreach service to contact vulnerable individuals would be useful, 81 per cent of participants said yes," he added.

Among those already benefiting from the charity's friendship service is 76-year-old RAF veteran Clive. To promote their Christmas appeal,

the RAF Association has launched a television commercial which aims to help people to understand the loneliness faced by veterans. The advert, featuring Clive's story, portrayed by an actor to protect his privacy, is being broadcast throughout December.

Go to: christmas.rafa.org.uk for more about the appeal.

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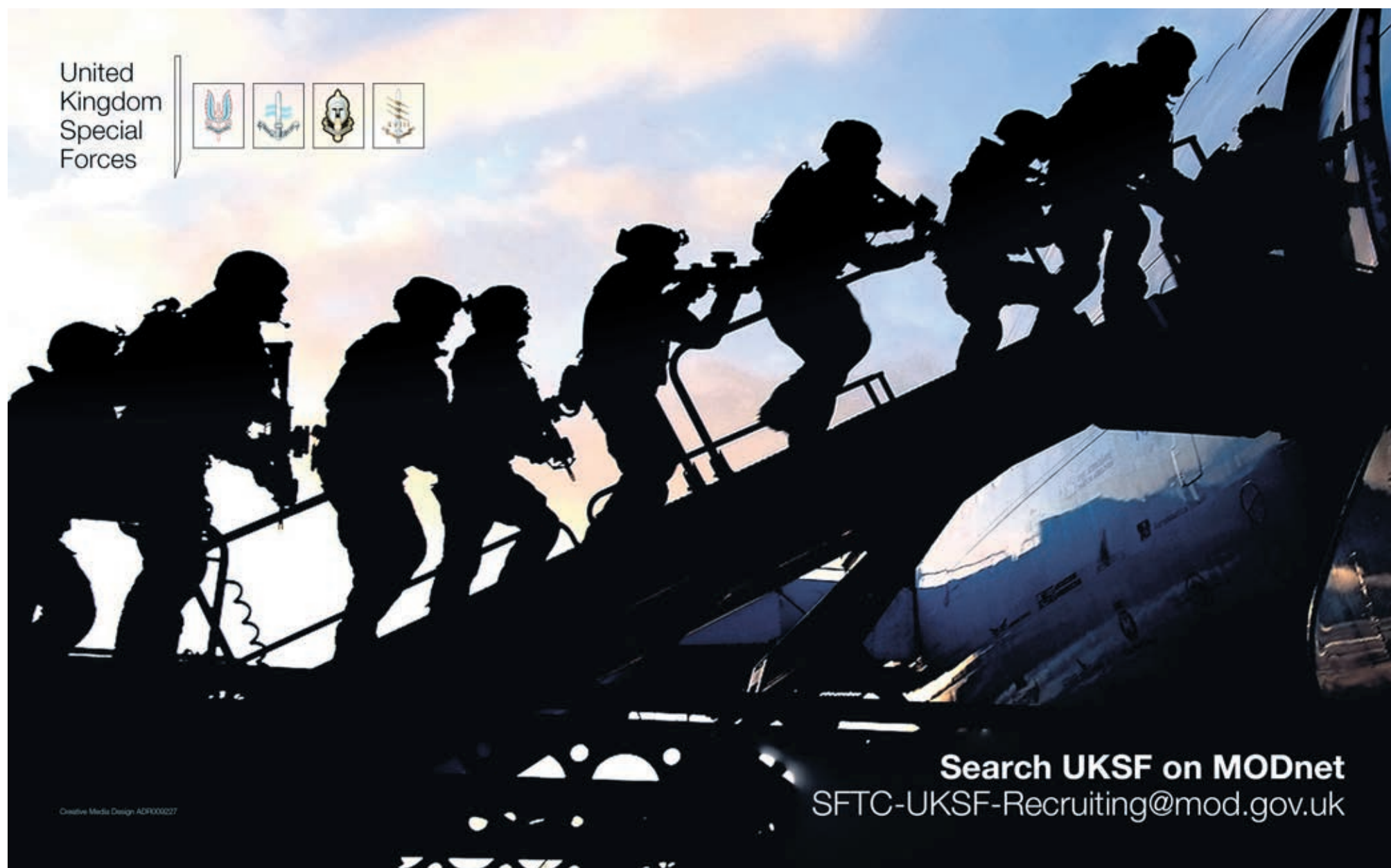
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PROUD HERITAGE: Graduates of El Alamein Flight have some very big boots to fill

Getting their just deserts

El Alamein Flight's recruits graduate at misty Honington

SEVENTEEN MEMBERS of TG 2-20, El Alamein Flight, are the newest members of the RAF Regiment after graduating from RAF Honington.

Reviewing Officer Wing Commander Stephen Turner said: "I am delighted to welcome the graduating Gunners of TG 2-20, El Alamein Flight into the RAF Regiment today. To succeed in phase 2 training requires uncompromising levels of field-proficiency, teamwork and determination, in preparation for the rigours of operational service.

"The coronavirus pandemic has added to the challenges of an already demanding course, confirming the ability of these young men to prevail, through adversity. I am particularly pleased to welcome those family members and friends who have attended the graduation today, albeit virtually, from the relative safety of their own homes.

"The graduating Gunners should feel justifiably proud of their achievement, and the contributions



they will make in the coming weeks and months, in support to the nation's priorities."

The trainee Gunner graduations continue to take place behind closed doors, however this is the third graduation that has been livestreamed via Panopto; video streaming and lecture capture software designed as a knowledge sharing platform and newly introduced and used by Training Wing.

On graduating from the course, the Leading Aircraftmen are posted to either 1 Sqn RAF Regt at RAF Honington, 34 Sqn RAF Regt (RAF Leeming), 51 Sqn RAF Regt (RAF Lossiemouth), or 63 Sqn RAF Regt (RAF Northolt), where they will be trained for operations.

Further congratulations go to the Prize Winners:

■ **Frank Sylvester Trophy: LAC Buick**

To commemorate her late husband's dedication to the Corps and in particular to the training of young Gunners, his widow presented the Frank Sylvester Trophy to the best all-round Trainee Gunner.

■ **The RAF Regt Association Trophy for Drill and Deportment: LAC Voss**

This award is made to the Trainee Gunner who has developed an excellent military deportment, assessed both on and off duty, on the parade square and, most importantly during field exercises.



SALUTE: Graduate on the parade ground

PHOTOS CPL DAVE BLACKBURN

■ **WO Ramsey Physical Development Cup: LAC Taylor Morgan**

This prize is awarded to the Trainee Gunner who achieves the greatest improvement during the physical development course.

■ **LAC Beard Recruits' Trophy: LAC Buick**

Awarded to the Gunner who has been voted by his peers on the course as the most inspirational and supportive member of the Flight.

■ **SAC Luders Champion Shot Trophy: LAC Allsopp**

This prize is awarded to the Trainee Gunner who has shot consistently well throughout the course and shown consistent military awareness.

■ **Cpl Bradfield Trophy: Cpl Cartledge**

Awarded to the Corporal Instructor who has displayed leadership, motivation and, above all else, has set an exemplary standard for the recruits to follow.



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Sqn Ldr Tom 'Tam' Syme, QCVSA, DFC

Obituary

Pilot who led from front saw action all over the turbulent Middle East

SQUADRON LEADER
Tom 'Tam' Syme, who has died aged 92, flew during the Suez Campaign and against dissident tribesmen in Aden and Oman.

He commenced his national service in the RAF in October 1949 and six months later was commissioned into the physical fitness branch of the RAF. In August 1951 he transferred to the general duties branch and trained as a pilot.

After gaining his wings he was selected to be a flying instructor and, after completing the course at the Central Flying Training School in December 1952, he served at an advanced flying training school teaching students to fly the Meteor jet.

In June 1955 he converted to the Venom fight-bomber before joining 249 Squadron, which was based at Amman in Jordan. Soon after relocating to Akrotiri in Cyprus, the squadron was in action during the Suez campaign.

Taking off from the RAF base at Akrotiri in Cyprus on the morning of November 1, 1956, Syme led a section of Venom fighter-bombers to attack the Egyptian airfield at Fayid.

A hangar and parked aircraft were hit by rockets before the Venoms strafed buildings at a second airfield at Kasfareet. During the afternoon, he led another strike against airfields when he damaged a Meteor, a MiG fighter and a Fury fighter. His section encountered heavy ground fire but the Venoms returned safely.

The following morning, Syme led an attack against the Egyptian Army's main tank and transport depot near Almaza.

During this attack his aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire causing a hydraulic failure, but he managed to return to Akrotiri.

Syme was in action again on the 3rd when he rocketed and strafed a tank-transporter and lorries. The following day he returned to the same area to strafe more military vehicles. On the 5th, he flew an armed reconnaissance

mission in support of French paratroopers.

The following day 32 Venoms took off from Akrotiri at dawn and headed for Egypt. Syme recorded: "Abortive strike against mole at Port Said. Recced the road to Ismailia. Rocketed trucks in army camp. Flak and tracer."

A ceasefire was declared on November 6 and a few days later Syme was posted to another Venom squadron, No. 8, based at Khormaksar in Aden.

He was soon in action again flying rocket and cannon strikes against Yemeni insurgents in the Beihan and Jebel Dhamat area, whilst giving support to the Special

rebel strongholds in the Jebel Akhdar region.

During a 12-day period in August he led other strikes against rebel forts. After a period of relative quiet, trouble broke out in November and Syme was again in action.

In June 1958 it was announced that he had been awarded the DFC: "In recognition of gallantry and devotion to duty on air operations in Oman."

Early in 1958, he joined 65 Squadron as a flight commander. The squadron operated the Hunter from Duxford. Flying in the day fighter role, he was selected for an elite team to participate in an annual Nato air gunnery

to Aden, this time as the commanding officer of 8 Squadron flying Hunters from Khormaksar. For the next two years he led his squadron of young pilots with great dash. The Aden Protectorate was familiar to him and, once again, he found himself leading patrols along the Yemen border.

In January 1964, Operation Nutcracker was launched against dissident tribesmen in the Radfan. The Hunters based at Khormaksar were used in support of the ground forces when they were frequently called on to mount rocket firing and cannon attacks against rebel forces.

Syme's great experience of these operations, and his aggressive flying, made him an ideal commanding officer during these testing times. One of his flight commanders commented: "Tam always led from the front, be it at work or at play, and was a source of inspiration to all of his squadron."

Syme returned to England and a ground appointment in June 1965, but this did not suit his restless and adventurous nature and he chose to leave the RAF in May 1968.

In 1969 he began a long period in the crop spraying industry.

For many years he worked in Panama flying for Atopan and Chiquita Banana. In 1988 he joined the Sultan of Oman's Air Force for three years, where he flew as a flying instructor.

In retirement he settled in Florida and became a US citizen.

"Tam always led from the front, be it at work or at play, and was a source of inspiration to all of his squadron"

Air Service and the Aden Protectorate Levies.

In July 1957, a rebellion broke out in Central Oman and a force of 8 Squadron Venoms was ordered to RAF Sharjah in the Persian Gulf to provide support to land forces.

Syme led the first operations on July 22, and over the next 10 days he flew 16 strike operations against

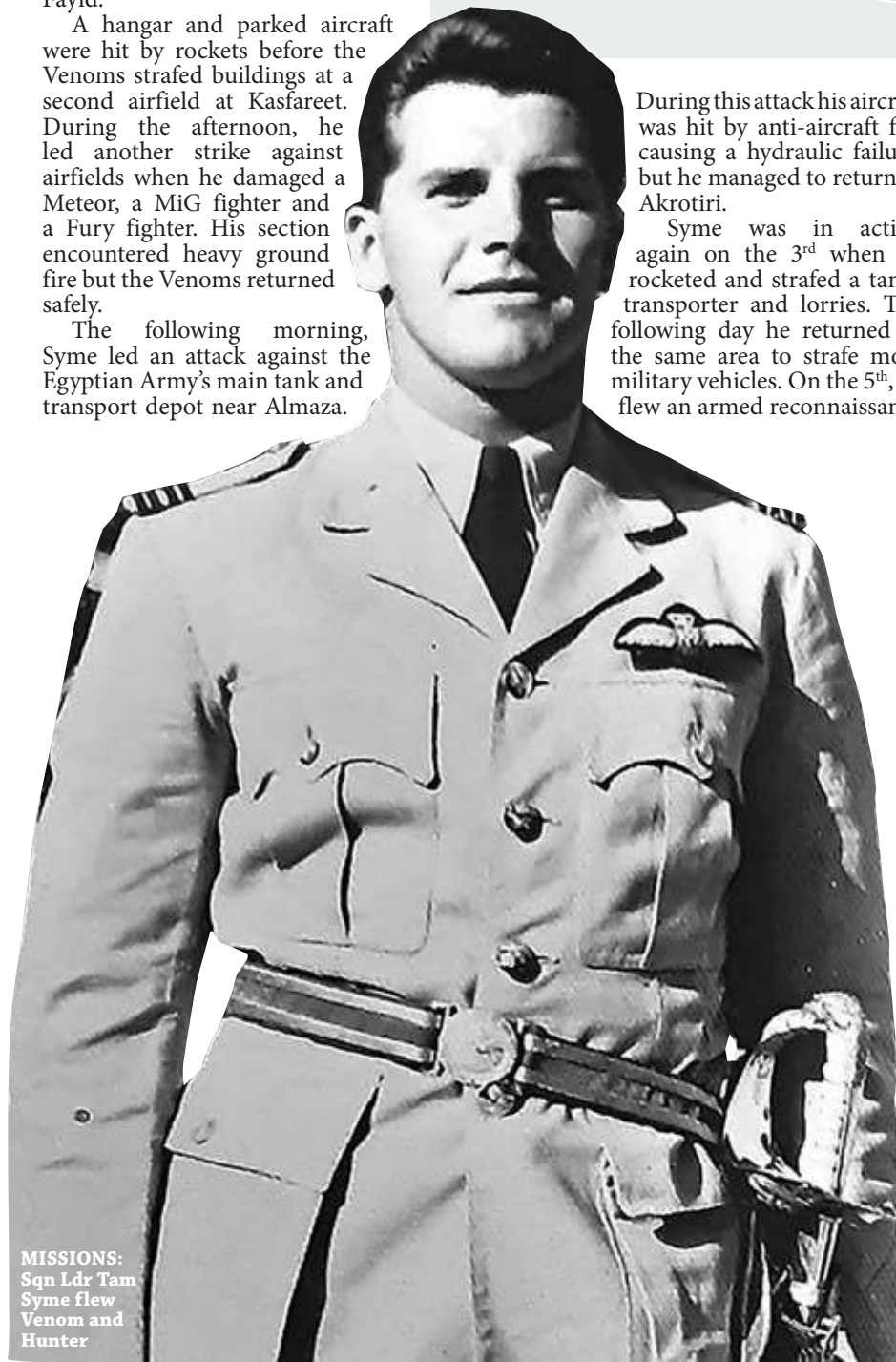
competition. The team came second to one from the Royal Canadian Air Force.

After two-and-a-half years on No. 65, he was awarded a Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air.

For two years he was a member of an operational studies team at the RAF Flying College.

In April 1963 he returned

MISSIONS:
Sqn Ldr Tam Syme flew Venom and Hunter



How age discrimination ruling might affect you



● LOBBIED STRONGLY: Maj Gen Neil Marshall

YOU will no doubt have heard of the McCloud case. It relates to an age discrimination ruling that concerns the transitional arrangements across Public Sector pensions when the 2015 schemes were introduced (AFPS 15 for the Armed Forces).

In essence, a remedy needs to be found for all those affected which includes all personnel in service on or before 31st March 2012 and on or after 1st April 2015.

Service leavers in this period will also be retrofitted with the remedy.

A Public Consultation ran between 16th July and 11th October and a decision on the outcome is expected in early 2021.

Two options to correct the problem over the so-called 'remedy period' of between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2022 have been set out (after that all active members will be transferred to the reformed 2015 scheme). One option titled Immediate Choice (IC) involves you making a decision based on likely future benefits using assumptions and possible future career outcomes.

The other option, Deferred Choice Underpin (DCU) involves making a decision based on your actual pension benefits earned, calculated towards the end of your service using factual information, with the right to do so, "underpinned by legislation".

It won't surprise you to know that we at The Forces Pension Society have lob-

From Maj Gen Neil Marshall,
CEO of the Forces Pension
Society

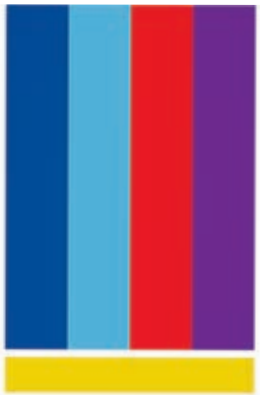
'Whichever option is selected by the Government you will be able to rely on The Forces Pension Society to guide you'

bied strongly in favour of DCU and our response to the Public Consultation made that crystal clear. DCU would provide you with full understanding and the opportunity to make informed decisions about your financial future.

Whichever option is selected by Government, you will, of course be able to rely on The Forces Pension Society to guide you through the process to ensure you have the information you need to make the best choice for you and your family.

If you would like further information on McCloud and to become a Member of the Society, please visit www.forcespensionsociety.org

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Janine De Greef

Obituary

Heroine of the Comete Escape Line

JANINE DE GREEF, who has died aged 95, was one of the few surviving heroines of the 'Comete' Escape Line that helped more than 300 shot down Allied airmen evade capture by the Germans and escape across the Pyrenees into Spain.

When the Nazis invaded the Low Countries on May 10, 1940, 15-year-old Janine escaped from Brussels with her family and arrived in Anglet in the foothills of the Pyrenees near Biarritz, where they became key members of the Belgian-run 'Comete' Line.

In October 1941 the first of more than 300 evaders passed through the De Greef house, with arrangements made by Janine's parents to smuggle them across the Pyrenees into Spain where British M19 agents received them.

Janine's mother, code name

'Tante Go', set up, with others, a network of safe houses in the region and arranged Basque mountain guides, amongst them some smugglers. Her contacts with the latter led to her discovering the involvement of some German officers in the smuggling business, and this gave her some useful blackmailing power over them.

As a young and pretty girl, Janine could escort groups of evaders without raising suspicion. She accompanied evaders on train journeys from Paris to Anglet via Bordeaux. Bob Frost, a Wellington rear gunner, told of one occasion in 1942 when she was the sole escort in a train compartment full of evaders when an American stood up and, unthinkingly speaking English, offered his seat to a lady in the corridor. Janine handled the situation with skill and maturity,

and the incident passed without trouble.

Her main work was in the region between 'Villa Voisin' and the dangerous forbidden border zone. On some 30 occasions she took evaders from Bayonne to the 'Last House', a safe house close to the Spanish border, using a local train before walking or cycling the last miles. She made the 20-mile return journey by bicycle.

She also made longer trips to the border to deliver evaders to a rendezvous with the Basque guides. The use of so many bicycles for the final phase caused a large build-up after the evaders had left for the mountains and concealing and dispersing them became a major problem.

After a number of significant betrayals, which led to numerous executions, by which time 106



COURAGE:
Janine De
Greef

evaders had crossed the Pyrenees, the Comete Line was in danger of collapsing. However, by the combined efforts of the De Greef family, it was able to recover and continue until the Allied landings in June 1944, when a further 200 airmen had successfully crossed into Spain. At this time, the key members of the network were in danger of being arrested by the Germans, so M19 instructed the De Greefs and others to escape to Spain, but Tante Go refused to leave her mother so remained in France.

Janine crossed the mountains with three other young female helpers and her brother, and they travelled to Madrid before being flown to England. Once the whole of France had been liberated, she returned, initially to Biarritz.

After the war, Janine worked for the British Embassy in Brussels as a commercial attaché. She was awarded the King's Medal for Courage in the Cause of Freedom, the US Medal of Freedom and other Belgian and French awards for gallantry.

Feature

Air Scouts look ahead to big date

NEXT MONTH the UK Air Scouts organisation celebrates its 80th anniversary. Founded in January 1941, it now has around 100 units all over the country.

Air Scouts make up just one per cent of the Scout Association and are keen to recruit new members in their special anniversary year, said Clint Marler, the HQ UK Air Scouting specialist advisor.

Clint, a former Royal Auxiliary Air Force member, who founded the 1st Sywell Air Scout group six years ago, said: "We currently have around 70 members and if it wasn't for the Covid crisis we could have doubled our membership this year. We are the only air scout group in Northamptonshire so we have youngsters coming to us from three different counties."

"Although everyone knows of the Scout Association, many people aren't aware of UK Air Scouts. We'd really like to increase awareness of our existence and encourage new members to join, especially in our anniversary year."

The Air Scouting branch was founded for air-minded young



RED LETTER DAY: Visiting Arrows and, left, helping at RAFA stall



people too young for the Air Training Corps, which used to have a minimum joining age of 16. Air Scouts are aged from 10-and-a-half to 14 and, like the Scouts, there's also an Explorers group, called Spitfire Explorers, for older members aged 14 to 18.

Clint explained: "We do all the

normal things Scouts do, from archery to zorbing – we just have a slant towards aviation matters. We have outdoor activities, guest speakers and visits to airfields and we have a series of air activities badges our members can earn."

"My unit has had a visit from the RAF Chinook Display Team and The Blades aerobatic team, a talk by an RAF Air Traffic Controller and a virtual presentation from 4626



TRUE INSPIRATION: Air Scouts are delighted to meet the British astronaut Tim Peake

Movements Squadron from Brize Norton.

"About 30 of our units are RAF recognised – that means they have to fulfil the criteria in the RAF Recognition Scheme, which include meeting dress standards. We like to think of ourselves as part of the RAF family and we are very proud to wear our RAF recognition patch on our uniforms."

Some of the units are based on RAF stations, including at Benson, Halton, Brize Norton, Odiham and Shawbury.

An Air Scouting team made the finals of the RAF Engineering

Competition in 2018 and 2020.

Clint said: "Since the pandemic we have been having virtual meetings on Zoom, we can't wait to get back to face-to-face meetings and holding outdoor activities again."

"We have an 80th anniversary badge to work for and we will be holding some special anniversary events, even if they still have to be on Zoom."

● If you're interested in joining the Air Scouts or becoming an adult volunteer for the organisation, email: Air.Scouts@scouts.org.uk for more information.



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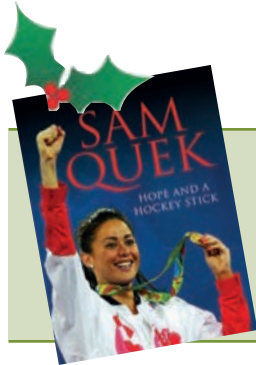
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Sport

5 pages of **RAF Sport** start here

● Win copies of GB hockey star's autobiography: P28

FOOTBALL



SHAKE ON IT: Above and right, action from the fantastic 9-0 win over England Veterans; inset, Beattie

PHOTOS: SAC SAM DALE, RAF COSFORD

What might have been?

Veterans coach calls time on 2020 IS hopes, but still dreams big for '21

Daniel Abrahams
HQ Air Command

RAF VETERANS football manager FS (Ret'd) Matt Beattie has confirmed to RAF News he has all but given up on the thought of Inter-Service glory in 2020.

Beattie, whose team won their opening IS match 1-0 over the Army earlier in the year at TNS, had set his sights on the Sir Chris Colville Trophy against the Royal Navy in Portsmouth in November.

Having hit a run of form that has seen them produce blistering results against high-quality opposition with recent 4-2 and 9-0 wins, the

team saw the fixture postponed as a result of the second lockdown.

Beattie said: "The Navy do not seem to have an appetite to play the final fixture due to where they are in their season following the second lockdown.

"We have two good squads, over-35s and 50s, with some excellent players coming in from the SRT, so it's all looking great. The situation with the IS fixture is tough to take, but we totally understand that associations plan and prepare things differently.

"Each of us have different pressures on personnel, especially at this time, but to have had the

“In the case of the match against England, it was the best I have seen in my six years in charge”

match in our sights and to have played the way we have makes it tough."

Against Stanford Vets at St George's Park, the Service side saw a brace of goals from Cpl Phil Grove by half-time, with him sealing his

hat-trick after 52 minutes, just after George Pickering had slotted in the third.

Stamford pulled two goals back late on, to flatter the scoreline.

The following day, the team faced a strong England FA Veterans side and produced what Beattie described as the 'best 45 minutes of football I've seen from the RAF at any level'.

The goals started after 10 minutes through Cpl Gaz Seddon, with Cpl Lee Croft making it 2-0 five minutes later.

Cpl Steve Norton completed his brace after 32 and 51 minutes, with Sgt Jonny Watkins making it

four after 39 minutes and Sgt Dave Wanless five after 40. SAC Danny Dixon added two more on 54 and 75 minutes, while Cpl Grove netted after 62 minutes for an emphatic win.

Beattie added: "In the case of the match against England, it was the best I have seen in my six years in charge, being where we are performance wise it was a complete game from the whole team.

"We will now plan for 2021 and focus on next March and try to not think about what might have been too much."

■ Follow the team on Twitter @RaffaVets.

Sport

RUGBY UNION

Cokayne sets sights on World Cup after series win

Red Roses storm past France to seal Autumn Internationals

Daniel Abrahams
HQ Air Command

HAVING COME on to help her England teammates storm to Autumn International glory, Fg Off Amy Cokayne is now focusing on World Cup glory.

Cokayne was a late replacement to the action at Twickenham, as England's women produced a second-half fightback to beat France 25-23 and seal the two-game series.

The win, the seventh in a row for the Red Roses, maintained vital momentum as the team eyes World Cup glory in New Zealand, where they will face France again in Pool B along with Fiji and South Africa.

Cokayne was a finalist in the 2017 tournament, held in Ireland, when England lost to New Zealand 41-32.

England will be looking to avenge that result, having won the trophy just twice – once in 1994 and then in 2014 – despite playing in five of the nine tournament finals.

The hosts will be looking to add to their five WC trophy wins.

Cokayne said: "The World Cup feels ever nearer now that we have had the draw and we know who we are playing.

"It certainly provided some added motivation to our game against France the following day at



UP FOR IT: World Cup trophy

Twickenham, having beaten them the previous week in Grenoble.

"France are a team we play

quite regularly so we know them quite well, whereas South Africa and Fiji are more of an unknown, so they will be interesting fixtures for us, to play teams we don't get the opportunity to very often."

The finals draw took place in Auckland, with the city hosting the ninth edition of the tournament next September.

Cokayne added: "The autumn series was a good time for us as a squad to give experience to some players and try out combinations.

"As we move into a World Cup year, we won't get a lot of opportunity to test our strength in depth.

"Playing top class opposition like France back to back is always tough, so we're really happy to have finished on top in both fixtures.

"That will give us some confidence building into the Six Nations and World Cup next year.

"The performance at the weekend wasn't a pretty one, but sometimes finding a way to win in those tough games is invaluable experience and something we can look at and work on going forward."

● Follow the England Women's Rugby Union team on Twitter @Englandrugby.

Sudden Impact



WINNING WAYS:
Above, Fg Off Cokayne makes an immediate impact coming on as a replacement against France; right, training before the match; below, Cokayne celebrates with her teammates after the final whistle
PHOTO: RFU



Celebration



GIVEAWAY

Quek march

Win Olympic hockey star's autobiography

SAM QUEK stormed to public attention following her Olympic gold medal win as part of the Team GB women's hockey side in the Rio 2016 Games.

The pint-sized powerhouse then became a household name with a stint on *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!*, before becoming a mainstay of BT Sport and BBC sports commentary teams, on her beloved sport and men's and women's football and NFL. Outspoken on social media, Quek is not one to pull any punches, and her autobiography doesn't shirk from describing her tough path to glory.

Having won her first GB cap aged just 18, the star struggled for GB selection, missing out on Beijing 2008 and London 2012.

This pushed the Liverpoolian to contemplate quitting the sport, before digging her heels in and becoming part of the GB team

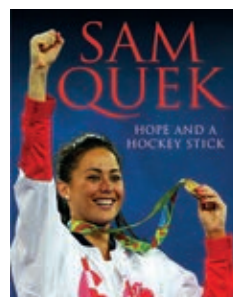
that captivated millions of TV viewers across the globe.

The book is a funny read from a courageous sports personality, whose rise from humble beginnings led to a road paved with gold.

RAF News has teamed up with Pen and Sword Books to offer three copies of this brilliant autobiography to win. For your chance to own one, answer this question correctly: *At what age did Sam Quek win her first Team GB hockey cap?*

Email your answer, marked Quek competition, to: sports@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by December 21. Please include your full postal address with your entry.

● Sam Quek: *Hope and a Hockey Stick* is available through White Owl publishing, priced £20.



POLO



Ride on

Twin camps are the perfect end to year

CAMPING OUT: Training at Manor Farm; below, the riders line up for the two-day event

PHOTO: KATE PARROTT, HALTON

Staff Reporter

HQ Air Command

THE RAF Equitation trio of Wg Cdr Laurie Tostevin, Sqn Ldr Haley Norris and Flt Lt Nat Morrell were pushed to their limits to pull off the latest training event.

The Polo Association Regional South event, hit by the impact of nationwide pandemic restrictions, meant that training had to take place separately at RAF Northolt Saddle Club and Manor Farm, near RAF Halton.

Flt Lt Will Easterbrook, a relative newcomer with his horse Barney, said: "It was a fantastic couple of days.

"The improvement for each horse and riding combination was evident throughout.

"It was plain to see the horses' and riders' confidence kept improving and it was thoroughly good fun as well."

With riders of all levels working together on the two-day event, the days consisted of lessons in flatwork, pole work and jumping, including course walking. Each of

the training exercises was designed to improve rider and horse straightness and balance.

FS Keeley Martin, who attended the Manor Farm camp with her horse Zephyr, said: "Zephyr and I both found the exercises challenging, and they really helped to highlight what elements we both need to work on over the winter, ready for the 2021 competition season."

■ To find out more about RAF Polo visit the association's Twitter page @RAFPoloOfficial.



SEA ANGLING



AT THE SHARP END: FS Scott Rennie (right) mentors RAF News man Dan Abrahams at the 2018 Shore Championships; inset, Chas Tibble catches a sole PHOTO: CPL NICK EGAN

Shore bet angling is on the way back

WITH THE recent government news on relaxing lockdown restrictions, the Service sea anglers are raring to make up for lost time.

Association spokesman WO Daz Rose said: "Angling was one of the first recreational activities allowed following this year's spring lockdown. A

Covid-safe outdoor activity with physical and mental benefits, the sport is very appealing.

"It has certainly seen a huge upsurge in activity with individuals finding respite from isolation and families enjoying recreational fun within their own bubble."

Match angling was banned during lockdown but Rose hopes to organise a competition soon.

He added: "In the main the sport is extremely well governed by the Angling Trust and all the latest Covid advice, including for angling in Wales and Scotland, is available to all on their website.

"From our side of things, anyone interested in the sport should know we have an extremely active Sea Angling Association

that continues to organise Covid-safe events.

"We have a UK-wide serving and retired membership who are regularly involved in boat and shore angling.

"The summer months are always very appealing for boat angling, but now until February is prime time for shore fishing.

"The mackerel are replaced by whiting and cod, the holy grail for many, start to make an appearance.

"We are looking to capitalise on the times now to give new anglers the chance to experience this side of the sport.

"Once the spring season arrives, between March and June, the bass, dogfish, sole and rays will start to show up and the annual cycle resets itself for another year.

"Anyone who has recently picked up a rod, whether for the first time or the first time in a long while, and who wants to get involved, should visit our RAF Sports Sea Angling webpage, or our Facebook group, where updates for events will be posted."



Sport

FENCING



EN GARDE: (Above and below) Action from the recent four-day Return to Fencing camp at RAF Cosford Home for Sport

PHOTOS: SAC MATTHEW IVES/CPL SARAH JONES, RAF COSFORD

Return event has cutting edge

Covid-restricted camp at Home For Sport bolsters fencing association

SERVICE SWORD-WIELDERS made their point during a four-day Return to Fencing event at RAF Cosford Home For Sport.

The successful camp saw an encouraging turnout from both newcomers and existing members.

Each day covered all three of the sport's weapons: foil, epee and sabre – with the final day assigned to competition-focused training.

The event included professional coaching from RAF Fencing and daily fitness sessions.

Event spokesman SAC Matthew Ives said: "The camp saw us strictly follow IAW British



Fencing guidelines, with various measures put in place to adhere to Covid safety and security of the event, which was a great success."

The measures included wearing masks under helmets, face coverings when off the piste, spectating or receiving light tuition, along with daily 'pods' of group sizes being no more than six to avoid social mixing.

Ives added: "We were delighted to be featured live on BFBS, along with a demonstration on radio for Amy Casey, host of the station's breakfast show, and some interviews on Northants-based radio station Inspiration FM, which really boosted the profile of the association."

The event, supported by the RAF Central Fund, also opened its doors to RAF Cosford Fencing Club, giving ACs and trainees at the

station the chance to try the sport.

Ives added: "Alongside the assigned Covid safety officer and Cosford club chairman Sgt Dave Neve, the event was overseen by our director combats, Fg Off Luke Hilton, who did a sterling job in making it something that was fun, inclusive and open to all.

"It also proved that fencing can still be done in a safe, secure but enjoyable way.

"Sadly, it is unlikely that any further events will happen this year. However, we hope to resume usual operations in 2021."

■ **For updates visit the association's Twitter page @RAF_fencing or Instagram @raffencing.**

Doyle on par with 10k Paras

FORMER RAF Serviceman (AC Ret'd) Paddy Doyle has completed another military athletic record.

The extreme fitness athlete completed the National Individual Paras 10-mile challenge, carrying a 45lb back pack. He finished in a time of two hours, nine minutes and six seconds.

Doyle attempted his latest feat over the Barston Village footpaths in Solihull.

He said: "The footpaths were muddy and waterlogged from the first mile to the last, which made it even harder to complete from the recent heavy rain falls."

Serving and former Paras, and other ex Servicemen and



endurance athletes around the UK also took on this year's individual Paras 10-miler. It meant Doyle achieved his 691st documented fitness endurance challenge and World Record under nine different sporting disciplines.

Captain McNally's team focus

BATH and RAF rugby union star Cpl Josh McNally preferred to concentrate on his team rather than personal glory following his second stint as captain recently.

McNally, right, who led the Gallagher Premiership side in a narrow 19-12 defeat to

Newcastle Falcons, said:

"Obviously, I am very disappointed with the game. We showed positive glimpses of things we have been working on in the short pre-season we had. Overall, we didn't put Newcastle under

enough pressure and we turned the ball over far too much.

"Fair play to Newcastle, they'd been preparing for this game a long time and they really turned up physically, which we failed to match.

"We will have to get over this pretty quickly as we prepare for the upcoming European Champions fixtures."



McNally, who was given the captain's armband for his club side's opening Gallagher Premiership clash, said he was 'equally proud' to be given the responsibility again, but sadly he could not help stop the Falcons from winning at The Recreation Ground, despite taking an early 7-0 lead and then levelling the game at 12-12 in the 46th minute. They could not halt newly-promoted Newcastle's final score in the 50th minute.

Bath currently sit 12th in the Premiership table.

■ Follow Bath RFC on Twitter @BathRugby.



RAIN PIERCER: Sgt Michael Riddle pulls a wheelie in the wet at Cadwell Park
PHOTO: JOHN BARNES - JACKS SNAPS

MOTORSPORT

Chair: 'Heroes one and all'

RAFMSA CHAIRMAN Gp Capt Brian Watson has lauded his association's riders following their dominant winning close to the Covid-19 interrupted 2020 season.

The team stormed all comers at the final race of the season at Cadwell Park, (RAF News 1504 – Cad'll do Fine) and Watson spoke to the paper about his pride in the riders and team. He said: "The real strength of this team is evident in their domination of the top half of the championship table. With the top eight riders from each Service counting towards the overall team points, the middle order make or break the team's success.

"Nine of our riders were in the top 16, compared to four from the Army and three from the Royal Navy. So you can see they never stood a chance.

"This in itself highlights the effort and teamwork of the RAF."

He added: "Across the board riders pulled out the stops, for example Sgt Bobby Campbell who produced a very strong finish at Cadwell and Cpl Steve Rathbone who battled back from injury last season to shine in this one.

"Cpl Andy Castle's consistency on his Kawasaki ER6 saw an excellent finish, while Sgt Gary Lawton was much improved for the season coming 16th out of 35 riders. Sgt Daniel Southerland, our illustrious captain, produced a 14th-place finish despite missing out two races. Reservist Sgt Paul Cunvin's three poles have seen him become one of our fastest riders. We cannot wait until 2021 to see more from him.

"2020 also saw Sgt Ben Rainbow finish every race for a

10th place overall, while reservist Sgt Mick Riddle was a tower of consistency, coming in ninth. Cpl Rob Vickerman did well throughout with a standout third at Mallory Park.

"Flt Lt James Leslie, in only his second season, recorded a first place on the final day to seal the team trophy and fourth overall in the championship.

"Eric Telger, (Kawasaki ZX6R) our American exchange rider, well, let's just say he'll be missed. Chf Tech Dave Langley was our top rider, even on a pair of 21-year-old 600cc Hondas he secured podium spot in every race he entered, symbolic of the team's total effort."

■ For more on the sport visit RAFMSA and RAF Motorcycle Road Racing pages on Facebook and Instagram for updates.

RAF CENTRAL FUND

Fund remains Central in tie-up

Fitness brand link-up great for personnel

THE RAF Central Fund has teamed up with Specialist Sports, one of the country's top retailers for Adidas products, to become its preferred supplier.

The move means the fund will be able to offer serving personnel applying for individual support a large range of footwear, clothing and equipment from more than 10 Adidas performance sports categories at discounted rates.

Every purchase made through the Specialist Sports online store will also see the distributor make a donation to the fund, to help it support sport and physical activities across the RAF.

Ross Perriam, CEO of the RAF Central Fund, said: "We are delighted to announce Specialist Sports as our preferred supplier of kit for our beneficiaries.

"They have a vast offering of the latest Adidas performance products, under categories which mirror some RAF Association sports including hockey, running, cricket, boxing, tennis, football and more.

"I'm certain our beneficiaries will be able to find some great sports gear that more than suits their needs, plus everything that is bought via their online store will help us raise more funds to continue our charitable work."

Specialist Sports director John Tayler said: "We are delighted that the RAF Central Fund has chosen us as its preferred supplier.

"Together, we will enable serving personnel to take part in physical



STYLE AND ABILITY: Images from the new ranges available to RAF personnel on the Specialist Sports website; inset, Ross Perriam, RAF Central Fund CEO

PHOTOS: ETHAN SCOTT

activity, to help support both mental and physical health.

"For every product purchased, we will support with a donation to allow RAFCF to continue supporting those who need it most."

■ The online store is available now for all serving RAF personnel. Visit sponsored.specialistsports.com/raf to see the kit.

The site offers up to 40 per cent discount on selected lines by clicking on a specific sport's tile and selecting 'Show Offers'.

■ Keep up to date with the RAF Central Fund on Twitter @RAFCentralFund.



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