

**The Forces' favourite paper**

**WWII jets  
Spotter's  
fighter  
guide**

● See p21

**Win!**



**Tiktok star Nate  
Weller  
man's a  
dream**

● RnR p4-5



**ROYAL  
AIR FORCE**

Friday **February 12** 2021  
No. 1508 **70p**

# RAF News



## Nose for trouble

**Fifth Poseidon sub hunter arrives at RAF Lossiemouth**

● Pages 16-17

**Ice Sports  
Olympics  
hope alive**



● See p30-31

**Win  
New F1 title**



● See p29

## Gift of the jab

**Armed Forces  
supporting UK's  
vaccs mission**



**CALL TO  
ARMS:** LAC  
Terrey joins  
Forces volunteers  
on Covid  
frontline  
**PHOTO:** CPL  
DANIELLE  
DAWSON

**Simon Mander**

RAF RESERVISTS are among the latest military personnel to join Britain's battle against Covid-19.

Part-time airmen and women and comrades from the Army and Royal Navy mobilised to back up NHS community testing in Greater Manchester.

The 82-strong force, including 41 personnel from 611 Sqn, began screening to prevent asymptomatic carriers spreading the virus.

Among them was LAC Gemma Terrey (pictured), currently studying for a Master's degree in psychological wellbeing and clinical practice in Manchester before applying for an NHS traineeship next year.

She said: "Everyone has been really inspired by the NHS workers over the last year and it would be nice to be a part of that."

The move came as more than 12 million Britons had received their first jab and the number of UK coronavirus deaths exceeded 112,000.

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“This year the association celebrates its 25th anniversary. I want to recognise this momentous occasion”



Sqn Ldr Mike Burch on his appointment as the RAFRL's new chairman  
**See p28**

“The space domain underpins not only military operations but broader everyday activities”



New Space Commander Air Cdre Paul Godfrey  
**See p7**

“This is the quiz show I've been waiting all my life for”

Jason Manford on his new daytime show Unbeatable  
**RnR p5**



## RAF News

### RAF News

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# QEC's eastern promise

BRITISH LIGHTNING jets are to operate alongside Japan's Air Self-Defense Force fighters during a groundbreaking deployment to the Far East later this year.

The mission, led by the carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, is billed as heralding a new era of military cooperation between the two countries, providing opportunities for the RAF and Royal Navy to collaborate on both nations' F-35 and Amphibious programmes.

Japan is buying 42 F-35Bs, the variant flown by 617 Sqn, while Britain will eventually have an upper limit of 138 F-35Bs – 48 of the fighters by 2025.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: "Japan and the UK have forged a close defence and security partnership that is being elevated to new heights this year when the UK Carrier Strike Group visits the Indo-Pacific."

"The most significant Royal Navy deployment in a generation demonstrates the UK's commitment to working with our partners in the region to uphold the rules-based international system and promote our shared security and prosperity."

Mr Wallace and Foreign



**SHARED INTERESTS:**  
Japan has signed up to the F-35B variant operated by RAF and Navy; inset above, UK and US jets onboard QEC  
PHOTOS: MOD

Secretary Dominic Raab discussed the deployment during a virtual meeting with their Japanese counterparts, Ministers Nobuo Kishi and Toshimitsu Motegi.

The agreement builds on a recent Maritime Security Arrangement agreed between the Royal Navy and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Forces to create a safe environment

for international shipping transiting between the Indo-Pacific and Europe, including monitoring illicit ship-to-ship transfers by North Korea.

## This Week In History



**1945**

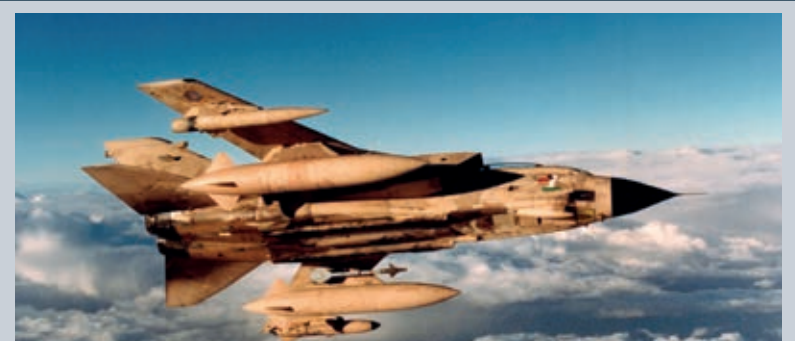
### WWII Dresden raid

BOMBER COMMAND launches 805 bombers to attack Dresden in Germany, causing devastating damage as Allied Forces push forward across mainland Europe.

**1958**

### Valiant fuels fight

214 SQN Valiants begin the operational development of air-to-air refuelling, supporting record long-distance flights.



**1991**

### Desert Storm begins

ALLIED COALITION air forces start intensive bombing ahead of the ground offensive to liberate Kuwait as Operation Desert Storm begins.

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





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



● See feature p16-17



### Staff Reporter

THE RAF'S fifth P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft touched down at Lossiemouth after an eight-hour flight from the United States.

Dubbed 'Fulmar' in honour of the Scots station's Navy links, the UK's latest sub hunter flew direct from Boeing Field, near Seattle, to Scotland.

The RAF has ordered a fleet of nine P-8As, equipped with sensors and weapons systems for anti-submarine warfare, as well as surveillance and search and rescue missions.

The Boeing-built aircraft, operated by CXX Sqn, also features an APY-10 radar for high-resolution mapping and an acoustic sensor system.

The delivery of the fifth jet comes as Nato chiefs report a surge in Russian sub activity near

Alliance territorial waters.

CXX's Sqn Ldr Rob McCartney said: "As an island nation and a member of Nato, securing our waters and the North Atlantic has always been of strategic importance.

"As the capability of the Poseidon MRA1 force grows, we will start to take more responsibility back from those who have supported us over the last 10 years."

**POSEIDON ADVENTURE:**  
Sqn Ldr Rob McCartney

### News bulletin



**UK CHALLENGE:** Hercules during training off the coast of Britain

## Home run for Brize crews

C-130J HERCULES crews have carried out frontline combat drills from their Brize Norton base as Covid restrictions hit training.

Air Mobility teams rehearsed low-level resupply missions, formation and night vision flying in addition to ground-based loading challenges during Exercise Brize Spirit.

Annual training is usually carried out from a deployed location but this year flights have been to places across the UK.

25 Sqn Commanding Officer Wg Cdr Andy McIntyre said: "The squadron's ability to generate and sustain the C-130J frontline requirements within the complex backdrop that Covid provides is vital but continues to test us all."

**ROUGH TERRAIN:**  
Crew take in the view

# Fred letter day

## WWII veteran marks 100th with a sack of mail and Royal greeting



### Tracey Allen

A FORMER RAF Servicing Commando who served in Burma during World War II has celebrated his 100th birthday.

Veteran Fred Hammett netted a deluge of more than 500 birthday cards and letters from well-wishers – including the traditional greeting from Her Majesty The Queen.

Within two weeks of volunteering for the RAF at Okehampton in Devon, he started a journey into the unknown that took him to the Far East. He returned home five years later.

Aged 20, after basic training, Fred left Liverpool on a ship bound for Durban, South Africa – where he was billeted for a few weeks before travelling to India, arriving there in June, 1942.

He served first with 126 R&SU then 3210 Servicing Commandos before moving into the jungles of Burma.

Fred stayed on after VJ Day and travelled back to England in January, 1946.

He was allowed four weeks leave to get married in August before being demobbed in October, 1946.

After the war Fred worked at his wife's family's local village stores before becoming a travelling salesman for Brooke Bond and Unilever.

He marked his centenary with



a chicken dinner at his care home, Venville House in Princetown, Dartmoor, cooked specially for him by the home's manager Lindsey Huntley.

He was also presented with a birthday cake, a plaque from the RAF Servicing Commando Association and the message of congratulations from The Queen.

Mrs Huntley said: "Fred is well known in our village and the area has a strong connection with Service personnel."

### SPECIAL DELIVERY:

WWII vet Fred reads his traditional 100th birthday greeting from HM The Queen; left, Fred poses for a portrait in India during WWII





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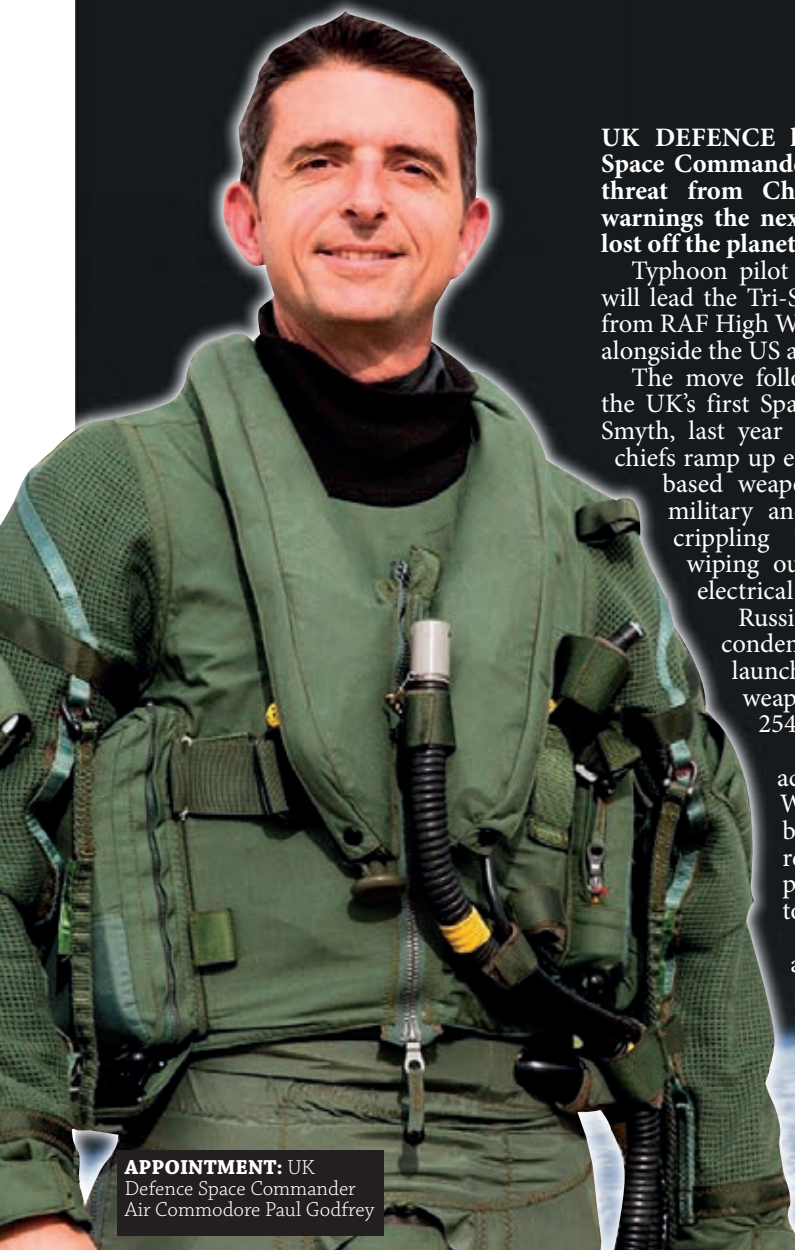
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The RAF Sports Lottery operates as a society lottery within the Royal Air Force Central Fund and is licensed and regulated by the Gambling Commission (www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk). The Royal Air Force Central Fund is a company registered in England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



# Space Ace targets *Star Wars* threat



**APPOINTMENT:** UK Defence Space Commander Air Commodore Paul Godfrey

UK DEFENCE has appointed its first Space Commander to combat the rising threat from China and Russia amid warnings the next war will be won and lost off the planet.

Typhoon pilot Air Cdre Paul Godfrey will lead the Tri-Service Space Command from RAF High Wycombe, working closely alongside the US and other Allied nations.

The move follows the appointment of the UK's first Space Director, AVM Harv Smyth, last year as UK and US defence chiefs ramp up efforts to counter spaced-based weapons which could target military and commercial satellites, crippling traditional forces and wiping out banking systems and electrical grids.

Russia faced international condemnation last year for launching a series of tests with weapons fitted to its Cosmos 2542 and 2543 satellites.

The Kremlin is also accused of targeting Western allies' space kit by conducting 'proximity rendezvous' operations – parking its satellites close to rival space vehicles.

Ahead of his appointment, Air Cdre

Godfrey worked alongside US space commanders deploying coalition air and space power in the Middle East.

He said: "I have seen first-hand how critical the space domain is and how it underpins not only military operations, but broader every day activities.

"As it becomes ever more congested and contested, it is critical that the UK is integrated in its approach to space and the formation of this Command will provide a key focal point for this complex operating environment."



**DIRECTOR:** AVM Harv Smyth

last year as the UK became the first formal partner in the recent US-led operation to strengthen defences against hostile actors in space.

Britain also joined a space operations initiative to boost collaboration across the US, Canada, Australia, France and Germany.

UK defence has also unveiled plans for a low-earth orbit 'constellation' of small Brit-built satellites, dubbed Artemis.

The cloud-based Aurora system to monitor hostile space activity is also under development, along with the SkyNet 6 project to provide command-and-control ability across earth and space-based hardware.

AVM Smyth said: "The threat from adversaries in this rapidly maturing domain is real and it is here now.

"If we fail to understand how to operate successfully in the Space Domain through integrated operations, we lose our battle-winning edge.

"The establishment of a UK Space Command is a crucial step in our development and will underpin our ability to understand and operate in space."

**"The threat from adversaries in this rapidly maturing domain is real and it is here now"**

As the space arms race gathers pace the UK is consolidating its military and technological links with the US and France and across the commercial sector.

The RAF appointed AVM Harv Smyth

## Campbell's in at Cranwell

GP CAPT Joanne Campbell has landed the top job at RAF College Cranwell.

She takes over from outgoing Station Commander Gp Capt Gordon Bettington.

Speaking after taking up the role, she said: "It is a huge privilege to be taking command of the spiritual home of the Royal Air Force.

"This is an exceptionally busy station and I'm looking forward to working with everyone here."



## On song to beat Covid blues

### Staff Reporter

THE MILITARY Wives Choir is beating the lockdown blues by holding singing sessions on the web – and is looking for new members.

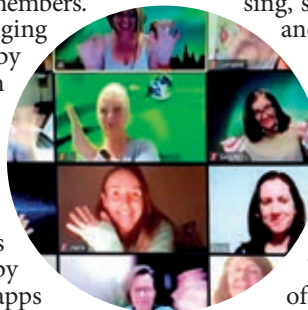
The Forces singing community – set up by TV choirmaster Gareth Malone (pictured far right) – now has more than 70 branches in the UK and abroad.

Live performances are on hold but choirs are keeping on song by using live web-chat apps (inset).

Maggie Pedder, chair of trustees and choir member, said: "I

would urge anyone with a Forces connection to consider joining the Military Wives Choirs.

"We bring women from across the military community together to sing, share and support one another."



Recruits do not have to pass an audition and are being invited to join one of the movement's sessions.

The Military Wives Choirs is part of the charity SSAFA.

For more details send an email to: [joinus@militarywiveschoirs.org](mailto:joinus@militarywiveschoirs.org)





News

# Typhoons strike Daesh terror lair

News bulletin



## Storm damaged Spit gets polish

LOCAL BUSINESS bosses stepped in to help repair a replica Spitfire at the UK's shrine to The Few that was smashed as storms battered the British coast.

The replica fighter, which sits alongside a Hurricane at the Battle of Britain Memorial at Capel-le-Ferne in Kent, was ripped from its mountings and damaged by gale force winds.

Builders merchants Chris Levitt and Wayne Vincent, who run local firm Youngs, stepped in and delivered wooden pallets to prop up the stricken model as restoration work got underway.

Trust chairman Richard Hunting said: "We are very grateful to Youngs. Capel-le-Ferne is on the edge of the famous White Cliffs, which, while dramatic and thought provoking is very exposed.

"Like other charities the last year has been a difficult one with no income from our shop, café or car park. We hope people who know the site and enjoy seeing the replicas will help contribute to the cost of repairing them."

● To make a donation go to [battleofbritainmemorial.org](http://battleofbritainmemorial.org)

## House call for UK military

THOUSANDS OF Armed Forces personnel are living in sub-standard accommodation because of government short-term cost-cutting, the National Audit Office has warned.

The Whitehall spending watchdog said a 'fix on fail' approach to maintenance by the MOD had led to the build up of a £1.5bn backlog of repairs in military accommodation.



**TERROR STRIKE:** A pair of Typhoons carrying laser-guided Paveway IV bombs launch from RAF Akrotiri. *Above*, Pilots' view of Daesh lair near Bayji, Iraq

### Simon Mander

#### A PAIR of Typhoons wiped out Daesh fighters in caves in northern Iraq.

The jets unleashed four Paveway IV guided bombs on targets 10 miles north of Bayji.

The latest Operation Shader mission comes after Daesh claimed responsibility for a double suicide bombing in Baghdad in January, killing at least 32 people and wounding more than 100.

The attack on the Shia Muslim target was the biggest in the Iraqi capital for three years.

Earlier a Coalition surveillance aircraft located the terror cells a mile

and a half apart before Typhoons struck after checking the area was clear of civilians.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: "The UK Armed Forces are still maintaining their primary defence tasks while also supporting the domestic Covid response.

"These RAF strikes help maintain the pressure on Daesh and prevent them from once again inflicting their twisted ideology on the people of Iraq."

RAF aircrews are flying daily armed reconnaissance patrols to prevent a Daesh resurgence in Syria and Iraq.



# Waddington set for Protector UK debut

### Staff Reporter

THE FIRST unmanned air vehicle capable of flying in all UK airspace will arrive at Waddington later this year.

Britain has ordered three Protectors, which will replace the Reaper currently operating from the Lincolnshire station.

Dubbed SkyGuardian by manufacturer General Atomics-Aeronautical Systems, the newcomer will be followed by an

additional 13 aircraft, four ground control stations and support equipment.

Air Cdre Richard Barrow said: "The return of SkyGuardian, which will be known as Protector in RAF service in 2023, to the UK this summer offers an exciting glimpse of the future.

"Protector will be able to fly for up to 40 hours in civil airspace, meaning it will be able to deliver an array of military or civil support missions."

The unmanned air vehicle, which touches down in July, will eventually operate alongside fixed wing aircraft.

On its latest visit, it is expected to make its debut on Exercise Joint Warrior and undertake capability demonstrations to partners and allies.

Protector is the first UAV to be designed, built and certified against stringent Nato and UK safety standards equivalent to those for manned aircraft.



**UAV UPGRADE:** Protector will be able to operate in UK civilian air space



# V-bombs away

## Historic hoard of Cold War era Vulcan and Victor cockpits going under the hammer

### Tracey Allen

A UNIQUE collection of V-bomber cockpits from Vulcans and Victors which took part in the 8,000-mile Black Buck raids on Port Stanley during the Falklands War are being auctioned off.

Aviation enthusiast Nigel Towler spent 40 years salvaging and restoring the collection – but has brought in BBC *Antiques Road Trip* auctioneer Charles Hanson to save the historic hoard from the scrapyard.

Items include a cockpit from Victor tanker XH669 which joined the long-haul 1982 raid and Vulcan K2 XH560, converted to tanking duty during the conflict.

The sale also features the nose section from B(K) 1 XD826, which flew with 7, 90, 138 and 543 squadrons and the 232 Operational Conversion Unit, and XH670, the last surviving section of a Victor B2 Bomber variant.

The collection, offered by BBC regular Hanson's auction house, is expected to net up to £300,000 when it goes under the hammer next month.

Mr Towler, 65, said: "The collection should be in a museum or on display but I haven't got the wherewithal to make that happen. It's time for me to pass the baton. I hope someone will come along with the same passion and dedication as me. If these cockpits are scrapped and the parts sold off



**HAMMER TIME:** Auctioneer Charles Hanson



**COLLECTOR:** Nigel Towler



**V-SPECIAL:** Main, Vulcan and Victor cockpits at owner Nigel Towler's storage site; right, inside the cockpit of Victor XH670; left, Vulcan refuels over the Atlantic during daring Black Buck Falklands raid in 1982



individually it would be impossible for someone else to piece something like this together. "My ambition was always to make

these cockpits 100 per cent correct so former crews would find them as accurate as when they flew them.

"I've been known to drive to the north of Scotland for a part worth only £5 but essential for authenticity."

Rik Alexander, who is managing the sale for Hanson's, added: "We have been hugely impressed by this collection and the incredible work Nigel has put into preserving British aviation history. We are hoping we can find the perfect buyer."

### In Brief



**TARGETING LONELINESS:** Charity chiefs extending funding for scheme

## Funding lift for lonely veterans

FORCES CHARITY chiefs are to extend a scheme to tackle loneliness in the veterans community after netting an extra £450,000 in government funding.

SSAFA's 'Keep Calm, Get Connected and Carry On' programme was launched last year to combat problems associated with isolation during the UK's first lockdown.

More than 4,000 volunteers across the UK signed up with the charity to distribute food parcels and provide social contact for vets living in rural communities.

The funding will cover the cost of continuing a visiting service, helpline, one-to-one mentoring service and activities for groups more at risk of loneliness, a spokesman said.

SSAFA controller Sir Andrew Gregory, added: "We are most grateful for this second grant that will enable us to continue to address a real, current issue that has been heightened over the last year."

● Go to [ssafa.org.uk](http://ssafa.org.uk) for details.



**BLADES AEROBATIC** acs have joined forces with the RAF Benevolent Fund for another year with plans for a number of virtual events to support the charity.

Since teaming up in 2014, the display pilots have raised more than £190,000 and they have pledged to keep the cash flooding in through lockdown.

Blades leader Andy Evans said: "Fundraising last year was extremely difficult but we are looking forward to building on the partnership's success and doing as much as we can to spread the Fund's message."

## UK pledge to combat East Africa terror threat

### Staff Reporter

UK AND Kenyan defence chiefs have signed an anti-terror pact to counter the threat from hardline East African Islamist group Al-Shabaab.

The move comes after Defence Secretary Ben Wallace held talks with Kenyan Cabinet Secretary Dr Fred Matiang'i, in the capital Nairobi, and Somali President Mohamed

Abdullahi Farmaajo in Mogadishu.

The UK currently has more than 200 troops in Kenya and the two nations will share intelligence on the terror group, cyber crime and human trafficking, the MOD said.

Nine people died in the most recent attack by the al-Qaeda linked Islamist insurgents on a hotel in the Somali capital Mogadishu last month, local security forces said.



**SECURITY PACT:** UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace



# FlightPRO is Oceans apart



**AI-ENHANCED:**  
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be shared across  
Ops area reducing  
risk and boosting  
interoperability

FOR OVER 25 years, Ocean Software has been producing class-leading time, task & resource management software optimised for military air operations.

Its principal product, FlightPRO, is now the cornerstone air planning tool for 13 militaries globally, providing a scalable and configurable system for the precise management of operations and training processes.

## Data Driven

FlightPRO delivers a single source of data truth from which any number of reports can be generated to understand and analyse performance data such as utilisation rates, capability and readiness. Currency and qualification recording, together with automatic conflict resolution, significantly reduce the burden of scheduling and flight authorisation, while enhancing safety.

Meanwhile, FlightPRO's training management application set allows the planning and tracking of course syllabi and training assets, including simulators and classrooms, which can also be integrated with Learning Management Systems and student reporting.

Other FlightPRO features include MS Outlook notifications, an electronic logbook, a long range planner and an airspace deconfliction



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- Airspace coordination
- RAF Regt & security
- Contractor services

tool. The list is not exhaustive. Yet, whilst an increasing number of flying squadrons benefit from a superior level of situational awareness and data management, the same cannot be said of the myriad units and organisations that support flying operations across an air base, with many still using stand-alone tools and processes such as whiteboards, spreadsheets and emails.

## Fully integrated

Indeed, the lack of IT systems' integration across air bases overall is inefficient by modern commercial standards, reducing interoperability over a range of crucial base functional areas and exposing personnel to unnecessary operational risk.

To address the apparent disparity, Ocean Software is now deeply invested in evolving the core facets of FlightPRO into a

far broader capability to address the burgeoning need for an Integrated Base Management Solution (IBMS).

## Machine learning

An IBMS could be best described as a single repository for data sharing and system integration that reduces duplication of effort and communication errors and improves interoperability across all air base functional areas. In short, Ocean is developing the concept of a 'smart' airfield and is calling it SmartBase.

Recognising information as its lifeblood, SmartBase will deliver an unprecedented level of coordination, situational awareness and governance through a real-time, collaborative Common Operating Picture for commanders and operators alike.

The addition of Artificial Intelligence and Machine



Learning will add powerful decision support capability, enabling optimised scheduling recommendations delivered through an intuitive visual user interface.

With affordability in mind, SmartBase is being developed as a modular and totally scalable tool. Functional areas of an airbase can be added over time to suit the scale of operational need and budget.

For some air bases, the IBMS may need to comprise only the sharing of fundamental data: planning, resourcing, asset availability, scheduling, reporting and readiness.

## Train as you fight

The inclusion of automated conflict detection and alerts, automated notifications where required, and custom-built drill-down dashboard reporting on targeted KPIs for commanders, constitute an effective and affordable IBMS entry

proposition.

As a cloud-based web application that integrates and shares all required inputs, system data can be relayed on monitors around all common operating areas. And, in-keeping with the philosophy of 'train as you fight', SmartBase will be operable and supportable from deployed locations.

SmartBase will help to modernise air bases, embrace networks and data, and create a world-class, integrated, capable and inclusive Air Force. It will continue the legacy of FlightPRO's future-proofed technology platform delivered in a COTS environment to ensure supportability and sustainability. SmartBase will place data at the heart of an air base ecosystem, while protecting against cyber threat, enhancing compliance with appropriate standards of governance and improving efficiency.





**McCloud Case Pension Ruling.  
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The McCloud case relates to an age discrimination ruling in 2019 against the Public Sector Pension Schemes introduced in 2015. Since then, the Government has been looking at two options for how to remedy the problem. That decision has now been made and it affects all personnel in service before 31st March 2012 and on or after 1st April 2015 (including service leavers). So there's a good chance it will affect your and your family's future income.

The decision has been taken in favour of "Deferred Choice Underpin". This was the option we at the Forces Pension Society supported and for which we lobbied hard. It means you will be able to make an informed decision based on the actual pension benefits earned, calculated toward the end of your service. And your right to do this will be underpinned by legislation. You need not take any immediate action, though as always, the Society will be on hand to advise and support our Members.

### Independent, not-for-profit

Independence is vital to our work, calling Governments to account whenever we spot injustice or unfairness in the system. This year we celebrate our 75th Anniversary of supporting the Armed Forces Community, championing their pensions.

We are funded entirely by subscriptions from our membership, now over 60,000 strong and growing. Any surplus helps fund our outreach programme of free-to-attend Roadshows and Webinars at bases throughout the country and overseas – and our attendance at CTP Employment Fairs.

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

Annual membership for you and your spouse/partner is just £41. As a Member, you will have exclusive access to our Pension Advisory Team who can advise on the implications for you of the McCloud ruling. You'll also have exclusive access to Members' Webinars and our bi-annual e-newsletters and magazine, Pennant.

And you'll have access to our wide range of membership benefits from discounts on new cars and white goods to insurances, low-cost money transfers and a good deal more.

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# ARE YOU A BRITISH NATIONAL **VETERAN** LIVING IN EUROPE?

# OR DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER LIVING IN EUROPE?

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

Cyprus, freephone: **0780077058**

France, freephone: **0805119617**

Germany, freephone: **08000009913**

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# Drone swarm hits Spadeadam in defence deal

**Simon Mander**

SWARMING DRONES have been tested in the UK for the first time under a £2.5 million development deal.

Five different types of fixed wing devices carrying six different payloads have completed initial trials at Spadeadam in Cumbria.

The exercise follows a Defence Science and Technology Laboratory commercial competition.

The deal was awarded to a consortium of Blue Bear Systems Research, Plextek DTS, IQHQ, Airbus and Durham University.

The contract will assess the technical and military capability of swarms of up to 20 small UAVs operating together, a Defence spokesman said.

Operators flew more than 200 sorties during the two-week trial, including swarm formations beyond line of sight.

A DSTL spokesman said: "This is a significant step forward in our understanding of the capabilities of swarming drones."

"This 18-month collaboration has demonstrated an operationally relevant capability and will inform future choices and decisions."



**REFORM:** Vets minister Johnny Mercer

## Fair cop for vets

A POLICE watchdog is to be set up to enable Forces families to complain about the handling of cases, Minister Johnny Mercer has revealed.

The Armed Forces Bill will allow complaints from individuals and families about Service policing to be handled independently.



**TRIBUTE:** Artist's impression of new V-Force memorial

## Cold War call

PLANS FOR a national V-Force Memorial honouring the RAF's Cold War era crews is to be built at a museum housing the last airworthy Vulcan bomber.

The Vulcan to the Sky charity is planning to build a national memorial at the Vulcan Experience site, formerly RAF Finningley, near Doncaster, where Vulcan XH558 has been based after being grounded in 2018.

The group has launched a fund-raising drive for the memorial alongside its ongoing appeal to cover the £2.5 million cost of a new hangar for exhibits.

Chief executive Dr Robert Fleming said: "We risk forgetting that if those V-bomber aircrews had carried out their orders to drop their retaliatory nuclear payloads on the Soviet Union, there would have been nothing to return to in the UK."

"It is surely justified to build a National V-Force Memorial to honour their service."

● For more details and to donate visit [vulcantothesky.org](http://vulcantothesky.org)

**APPEAL:** Vulcan to the Sky chief Dr Robert Fleming

# Who dares swings

## First UK multi-role weapons trial unleashes more Typhoon firepower

**Simon Mander**

TYPHOONS HAVE successfully completed their first-ever swing role trials.

Jets from XI (F) Sqn carrying multiple-weapon loads attacked a range of surface targets during pre-deployment training on ranges at Aberporth.

The exercises were designed to enable the aircraft to quickly switch between missions or carry out two different operations during the same mission.

Previously Typhoons have flown separate sorties and single payloads.

During the exercise, the squadrons fired ASRAAM air-to-air missiles, dropped Paveway bombs and strafed targets with Frangible Armour Piercing rounds.

Sqn Ldr Carl Rich said: "These new range capabilities are the culmination of three years of target



development between the RAF's Air and Space Warfare Centre and QinetiQ, which manages a number of defence test ranges."

He said increased Range capability provided cost-effective advanced aircrew and pre-operations deployment training for RAF pilots on frontline squadrons.

Multiple aerial targets were used for ASRAAM firing by 29 Sqn, who

also conducted a Qualified Weapons Instructor Course during the same period.

The ASRAAM trials were a mixture of high explosive and telemetered rounds while Paveway IV bombs were used in air burst mode and strafing sorties engaged surface targets.

To further enhance the pilot experience Forward Air Controllers directed the missions.

QinetiQ managing director Steve Fitz-Gerald said: "The recent training exercise at Aberporth provided us with valuable opportunities to evaluate their weapons systems in realistic scenarios."

"The developments on the range are providing our customers with the airspace they need to offer excellent real-world and pre-deployment training, providing valuable skills and experience for future operations."

**HOME ON THE RANGE:** Radar tower monitors live weapons drills at MoD Aberporth; inset left, fully-armed Typhoon

## L/Cpl Stephens keeps hopes for Beijing 2022 Olympic glory alive



See p30





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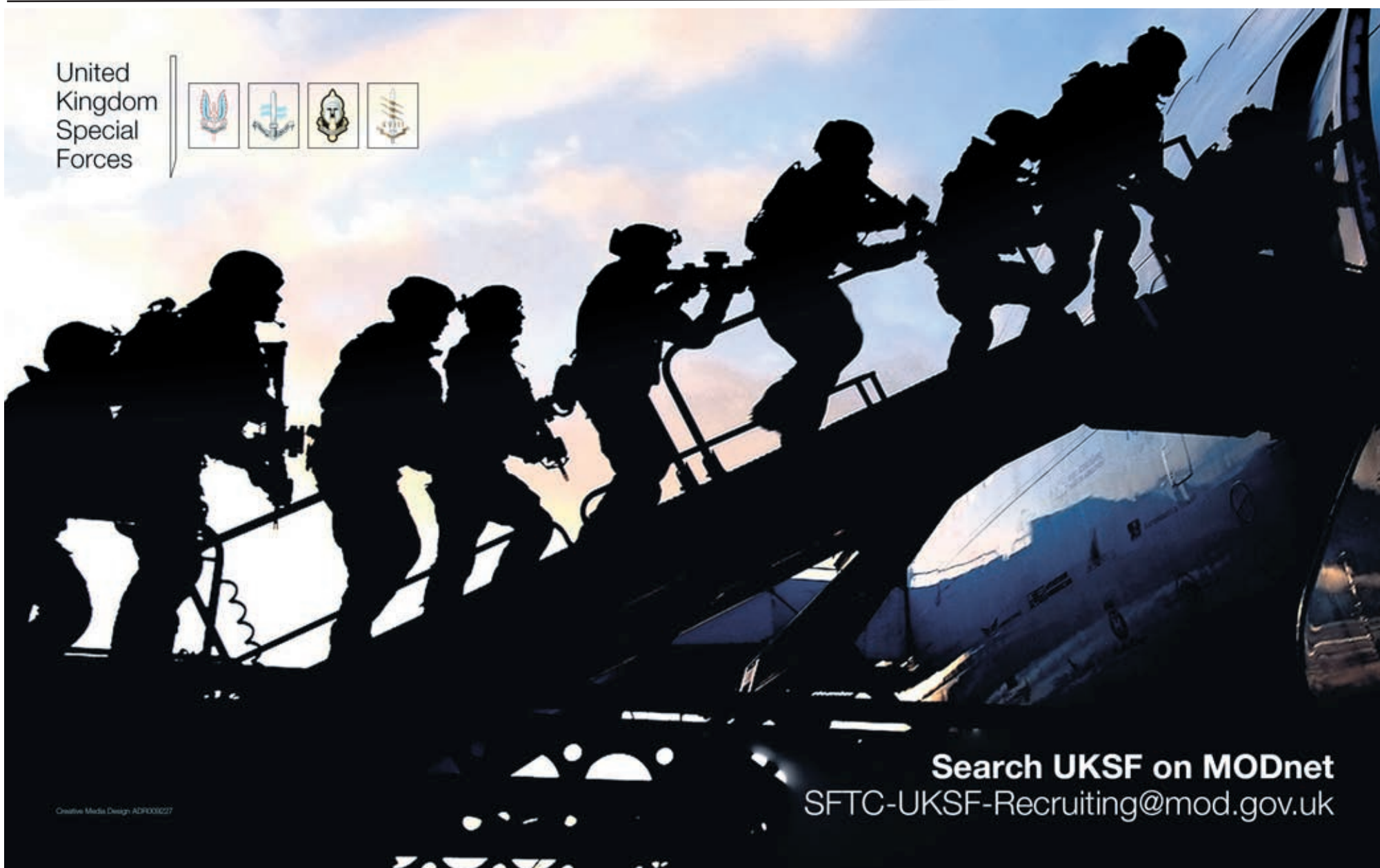
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**CLASS ACT:** Air Force teams assisting schools vaccination programme

## School run for support team

RAF TEAMS are providing Covid support to 625,000 pupils across eastern England.

Stations including Coningsby, Halton, Honington, High Wycombe, Marham, Northolt and Waddington have responded to pleas by education chiefs for help with testing and training.

Personnel from trades including Gunners, drivers, suppliers, air operations and aircraft engineering are backing up 94,000 teaching staff in 812 schools.

RAF personnel offered online support before arriving at school locations when requested to explain how to lay out testing areas and use lateral flow devices.

Wg Cdr Mark Raimondo, of the Air Resilience Unit, said: "We have sought to do all that we can as a military unit to help the schools in the region prepare for delivery of Covid testing of pupils and teachers."

"We've been able to offer the lessons of our experience gained from community testing and share this with the local schools as part of the national effort against the Covid virus."

## Point Of Order



IN OUR coverage of the 30th anniversary of Operation Granby in the last edition (1507) we incorrectly captioned an image of captured airmen being released.

The caption should have read: 'From top: John Nichol, Rupert Clark, David Waddington and Robbie Stewart.' We are happy to correct this error.

# Defence vaccine mission

**Biggest ever Forces peacetime operation supports jab program**

### Simon Mander

AIR FORCE personnel have been deployed across Britain to support frontline NHS workers giving coronavirus vaccines to thousands of people as part of the biggest ever peacetime military operation.

In Wales, 93-year-old RAF veteran Ronald Maidment chatted to medics after receiving his Covid vaccine jab.

SAC James Maund, at the centre in Gwent, said: "It's great that we're able to work with the NHS here to get people vaccinated. The people coming here have been really pleased to see us helping out too."

In England a team from Wittering No 2 Mechanical Transport Squadron helped keep children safe by setting up a testing system at Bourne Grammar School.

Meanwhile, the RAF's Top Gunner Air Commodore Scott Miller visited teams working at Midway Community Centre, Swadlincote, South Derbyshire.

He took a lateral flow test and donned PPE before witnessing the results process first hand.

He said: 'It was great to visit the Covid testing team and see their exceptionally professional work to support the local population.'

As RAF News went to press



more than 5,000 military personnel were deployed across the UK providing testing, vaccines and clinical support for the NHS.

They included 20 Vaccine Quick Reaction Force teams with a further 21 standing up to double the Armed Forces support available for vaccinating.



**FRONTLINE FIGHT:** Main, SAC Maund at the Gwent vaccination centre; left, RAF Regt chief Air Cdre Scott Miller; below, Gunners training ahead of deploying to support NHS testing teams



Another 800 defence medics are joining NHS workers on the frontline of hospitals and 2,400 personnel are supporting community testing across England – nearly half of the deployed force.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: "Defence medics are now deployed on the home front in the

highest numbers during peacetime, supporting the NHS in testing, vaccinating and hospitals.

"Armed Forces personnel are deployed in all four corners of the United Kingdom, helping communities across the country to combat the effects of this virus. They are working hard alongside colleagues in the NHS and local authorities and are ready to do more if and when the call comes."

## 8,000-mile vaccine flight for Falklands

THOUSANDS OF doses of coronavirus vaccine have been airlifted to the Falkland Islands.

A Brize Norton-based aircraft touched down after an 8,000-mile journey with 3,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

Flt Lt Anne Scott said: "The mission requires careful planning and controlled temperatures to ensure a safe delivery of the vaccine."

"We are used to

transporting medical supplies and we maintain the correct temperature on the aircraft to protect the quality of the cargo throughout the flight."

It took 17 hours to complete the mission with a two-hour stopover in West Africa for refuelling.

The Falkland Islands have had 41 cases of Covid-19 but no one has died from the virus.

With a population of just over 3,500, the government's focus is on vaccinating those at risk and frontline staff.

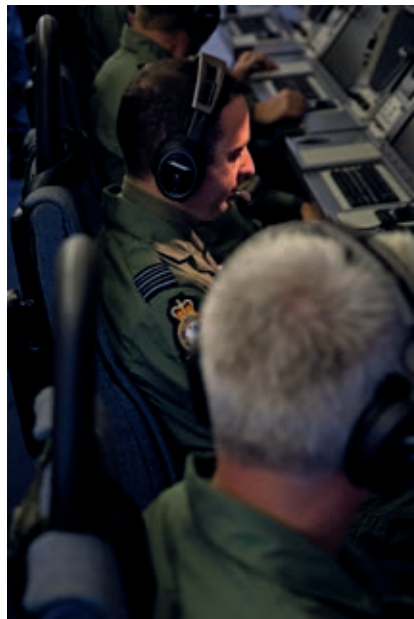


**LONG HAUL:** RAF Voyager loaded up at Brize Norton ahead of Falklands flight

A second batch of vaccines will be sent to the Falklands later this month.



The arrival of the RAF's latest Poseidon sub hunter further closes a decade-long gap in Britain's sea defences. As the fifth Maritime Patrol Aircraft touched down in Scotland this month, *RAF News* spoke to one of the aircrew operating the aircraft



GUARDIANS: P-8 crew members at work



LATEST ADDITION: ZP805 Fulmar arrives at RAF Lossiemouth

**“T**HE ARRIVAL of ZP805 ‘Fulmar’ at RAF Lossiemouth represents an uplift in capability for the RAF’s maritime force,” said Sqn Ldr Robert McCartney of 120 (CXX) Sqn.

“The UK will ultimately receive nine Poseidon MRA1 aircraft by the end of 2021, with Fulmar being the fifth aircraft to be delivered.

The latest P-8’s name was a nod to the airbase’s naval past as HMS Fulmer (notwithstanding the different spelling) and was the first to be flown directly from Boeing’s factory near Seattle on an eight-hour journey to the Moray station.

It follows in the slipstreams of the Pride of Moray, City of Elgin, Terence Bulloch DSO DFC and Spirit of Reykjavik – the first of which touched down in Scotland more than a year ago, on February 4, 2020.

With the arrival of the first two Poseidons, the RAF declared the force had initial operating capability in April and the serious business of searching for potentially hostile submarines and protecting Britain’s nuclear deterrent began.

The fleet’s first multi-national Nato exercise came in July – where it sharpened its war-fighting skills alongside ships, submarines and aircraft from six Allied nations.

The training, codenamed Dynamic Mongoose, focused on tracking nuclear-powered submarines in a 200x200 square nautical mile box of open ocean.

On one sortie an RAF Poseidon launched simulated attacks within 10 minutes of taking over from a US Navy P-8.

A Poseidon began monitoring real-life Russian naval activity in August when it shadowed the warship Vasily Bykov as it passed through the North Sea.

The incident was the first operational mission for 120 (CXX) Sqn in the new aircraft, supported

by Typhoon fighters and a Voyager tanker, and demonstrated the continuing need for Britain to defend its waters.

Sqn Ldr McCartney said: “It confirms that strategic players still view sea power as a way of exerting influence on the global stage.

“As an island nation and a member of Nato, securing our waters and the North Atlantic has always been of strategic importance.

“Since the retirement of Nimrod MR2, we have been supported by Nato partners in securing our end of the Atlantic.

“As the capability of the Poseidon

MRA1 force grows, we will start to take more responsibility back from those who have supported us over the last 10 years.”

**N**ine Poseidons have been ordered at a cost of £3 billion, with the latest addition of ZP805 taking the number in the fleet past the halfway mark.

It fills a 10-year gap left after the programme to build a Nimrod MRA4 to replace the MR2 was cancelled in the 2010 Strategic Defence Review, when it was found to be £789 million over budget and nine years behind schedule.

“The Poseidon MRA1 is based on a Boeing 737, so the ride is a lot smoother,” said Sqn Ldr McCartney.

“The sensor suite is more advanced than the Nimrod MR2, and the communications capability has been brought into the 21st century.

“As the RAF unlocks the full capability of this new platform, the Poseidon MRA1 represents a highly capable deterrent to sub-surface and surface maritime threats.”

Manufactured by Boeing, Poseidon has been billed as a multi-role maritime patrol aircraft,

NUMBER 01: Pride of Moray  
PHOTO: Cpl Lee Matthews

IMPORTANT  
ROLE: Sqn Ldr  
Rob McCartney



equipped with sensors and weapons systems for anti-submarine warfare, as well as surveillance and search and rescue missions.

It features an APY-10 radar for high-resolution mapping, an acoustic sensor system, an electro-optical turret and electronic support measures and can be armed with torpedoes.

And while other parts of the RAF are moving increasingly towards the use of unmanned air vehicles such as the new Protector which arrives in the UK

in July, it seems that the unique challenges of safeguarding sea lanes will, for the foreseeable future, continue to rely on the aviator’s eye.

“Not all forms of warfare can be conducted remotely,” said Sqn Ldr McCartney.

“The challenge with maritime warfare is the fusion of information collected by multiple sensors, in a dynamic environment, with the aim of recognising a very small window where you have the upper hand over a determined and elusive enemy.

“Currently, Remotely Piloted Air Systems are not optimised for this sort of warfare.”



THE HUMAN TOUCH: Poseidon crew keep an eye out

PHOTO: CPL TRISH JAMES



ALL SEA-ING:  
P-8 Poseidon



# R'n'R

**Win!**



**Win: Action  
horror film**

● p5

**Rising soul star –  
Celeste ● p4-5**

**Announcements**

○ P6-7

**Puzzles**

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## Music

Nathan Evans

TikTok star



R'n'R

# Bring on Weller, man

## TikTok sensation wants link-up with Jam legend Paul

**N**ATHAN EVANS is a phenomenon. The TikTok sea shanty star – who was a postman until a month ago – is now No.1 in the iTunes singles charts with his beautiful rendition of traditional whaling song *The Wellerman*.

It's a global hit, from America to Australia, and has garnered online collaborations from top celebrities including Andrew Lloyd Webber and Brian May. And there's one particular rock star Nathan, 26, from Airdrie, would really like to hear from – Paul Weller.

The young Scotsman said: "That would be quite fitting, hopefully he will be the next one. I woke up this morning and there was a message on my phone that Brian May had done a duet with me on Instagram, it's incredible, so surreal – it's crazy."

Not that Nathan is complaining about his success, which he described as 'a whirlwind'.

He said: "I put something on TikTok back in January 2020 and was taking suggestions, one of which was the sea shanty *Leave Her Johnny* that I posted in July. The feedback from that was amazing, that led to *The Wellerman* – and it snowballed."

**M**ore than three billion views have been recorded for his hashtag on the social media site and now he's looking forward to releasing his next single, recording an album and, hopefully, performing some live shows when it's safe to do so.

He said: "It's always been a dream of mine to be on stage playing my music to loads of people. To be given this opportunity is a dream come true."

"I'll be so excited to be playing for everyone and giving back something to all



**DELIVERING AT No.1:**  
Former postie Nathan  
and, inset top, pop  
icon Paul Weller

the people who have supported me. This took off when we were locked down so I haven't really been anywhere yet, I've been doing all this from the comfort of my room."

He's planning to release the new single in the next few months – no details as yet – and

an album by the end of the year.

The North Lanarkshire-based musician has been playing the guitar since he was eight and, in the last few years, has taught himself to play the piano.

He added: "I write my own songs, so

the album might be a combination of my compositions and some other sea shanties. *The Wellerman* will definitely be on it – that's a given."

**W**hy does he think sea shanties are currently so popular?

He explained: "When they were sung on sailing ships in the nineteenth century they were to keep morale high, keep everyone on time and be involved."

"In the 21st century it's doing the same thing; we're all stuck in the house at the moment and it does get a bit lonely, this kind of brings everybody together."

Online accompaniments to *The Wellerman*, a New Zealand song that refers to the 'wellermen' supply ships owned by the English-born Weller brothers, include the additions of bass voices and violin and harp accompaniments.

Nathan said: "It's just amazing and someone has taken all the duets and put them together in one big video, it's like one big choir."

He cites Ed Sheeran, Van Morrison, Bob Dylan, Dermot Kennedy and Foy Vance among his favourite musicians and revealed it's his ambition to work with Sheeran.

Nathan added: "That would be ideal, just amazing to collaborate with him or anyone on that list of my favourite artists."

But for now, he's just happy to continue as a social media sensation – and hopes Weller calls.

*By Tracey Allen*

■ Go to: TikTok and Instagram to connect with Nathan Evans.



## Film Review

### Away (U)

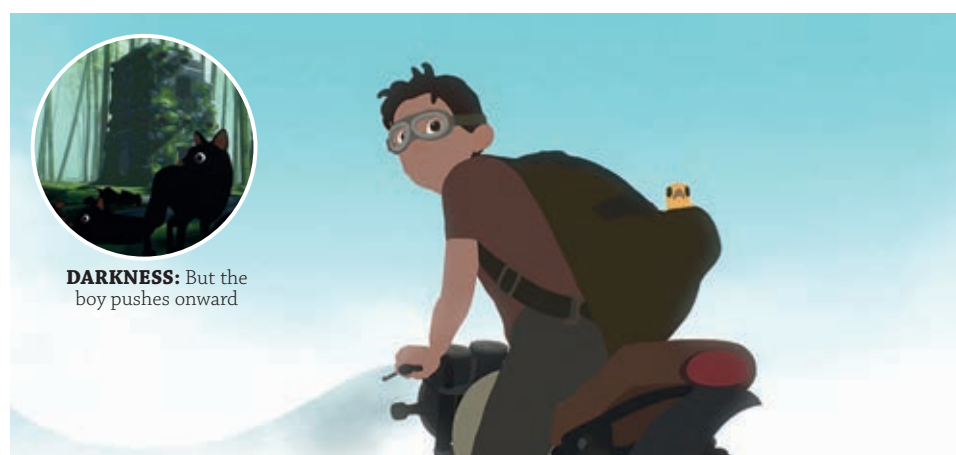
Out now on all major digital download and independent cinema platforms

# Simply super

**C**REATED IN its entirety by one person, *Away* is an animated feature that follows a young boy as he crash lands on an exotic island, chased through a dreamlike oasis by a giant creature.

Gints Zilbalodis has the sole credit on the film, a 26-year-old Latvian prodigy with no formal training in animation, working with little to no budget. Writing and directing as well as providing the score, which is pivotal in imparting the tone and sense of unfolding wonder, he put together this minimal but dazzling film over the course of three years.

The story is simple and unfolds more as a series of obstacles, as the young boy finds ways to evade this ominous dark spirit and push onward. The pace is gentle, working with the score to put you in a sort of trance, allowing you to experience the scale and spectacle despite the style of animation.



**DARKNESS:** But the boy pushes onward

Made without dialogue, it is the combination of music and sound design that plunges you into the world, finding moments of reflection in the boy's interactions with different animals.

The visuals can be quite crude, like a video game from decades past, notable particularly in rigid, unnatural movement. In some places, with the ripple of a waterfall, or licking flames from a fire, there is an elegance to be found in its abstract simplicity. For the most part though it's

hard to look past the style – even whilst appreciating it, I felt unable to forget about its presentation.

It is some feat then, that with this reminder at the forefront of the experience, you are still able to be transported and care about the boy or the small bird that he befriends along the way. Considering its humble beginnings, this is a remarkable achievement.

4 out of 5 roundels

*Review by Sam Cooney*





**Comedy**  
Kevin Orkian  
New Jongleurs

Spring  
tour  
hopes

# Jongleurs comedy name lives on after pantomime academy boss buys brand

**K**EV ORKIAN is a man on a mission. As well as being a comedian, musician, actor, motivational speaker and founder of the British Pantomime Academy he's now bought the famous Jongleurs Comedy Club brand.

And one of his main aims is to make sure that comics left unpaid when Jongleurs became insolvent now have gigs on a forthcoming tour.

He said: "When Jongleurs went into administration under the previous ownership there were a few comics left without pay, our first step on reinvigorating the brand is to begin to help to rectify this and build trust again within the circuit and we will be offering those entertainers paid performance opportunities with Jongleurs as a priority."

Due to the third lockdown, the proposed Jongleurs on the Road tour had to be postponed, with gigs organised throughout January, February and March now moved to April, May and June. The line-up includes names such as Hal Cruttenden, Rudi Lickwood, Jarred Christmas and Kev himself and venues range from the Century Club in London's Soho to Blackpool Tower.

Kev added: "We are experiencing incredibly difficult times; the entertainment industry has been hit very hard during the pandemic with the temporary closure of many venues. Many great comedians and entertainers



ORKIAN: Comic, businessman and British Panto Academy founder



WHAT'S UP DOC? Comedian Rudi Lickwood hopes to get on the road this spring



TOUR SLOT: Comic Hal Cruttenden

have been without work for almost a year. Not only has this impacted on their family lives but also their mental health, so now, more than ever, we want to bring this great brand back, giving hope and work to some of the best comedy artists on the circuit, providing venues with world-class shows and much-needed laughter to audiences who are desperately in need of it after a dark year."

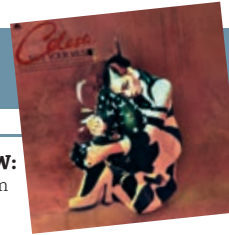
A classically-trained pianist, multi-talented Kev has performed for the British Forces Foundation, including a private event for the Duke of Edinburgh, who loved his show. He's done gigs for the troops in places ranging from Afghanistan to Akrotiri and is hoping to launch a comedy tour for Forces audiences throughout the UK later this year.

He said: "It will be great to be back putting on shows for our wonderful girls and boys in the Services."

■ Go to: [jongleurs.com](http://jongleurs.com) for more details.

## The Big Interview Celeste

OUT NOW:  
New album



# Star Celeste's stellar success

BRIT triumph before debut album



MIXING IT UP A BIT:  
Hot new artist Celeste

**I**T WAS no real surprise to anyone who had come across British-Jamaican soul singer Celeste's prodigious talents previously when she won both BBC Sound of 2020 and the BRITs Rising Star award last year – and her trajectory since then has been no less stellar.

After working with Golden Globe-nominated composer Daniel Pemberton on *Hear My Voice*, the focus track for Aaron Sorkin's film *The Trial of The Chicago 7*, Celeste also became the first artist to write and record an original song for John Lewis's Christmas advert campaign, with the stunning *A Little Love*, while Pixar Studios called her in to lend her vocals to the final track on their latest hit film *Soul*.

Her highly-anticipated debut album, *Not Your Muse*, has just been released and went straight to No.1 in the iTunes charts.

For Celeste, it's been a very organic process, but one with a very clear end goal too.

She said: "I knew from the beginning to follow my instincts to try and have a sound I felt an affinity with, which comes from a jazz and soul world. I didn't want it to sound too poppy, or similar to whatever the popular sound was at the moment."

The album might have been the work of only the last couple of years, but Celeste has drawn on aspects and experiences of her whole life so far to bring it to life.

She explained: "Some of the songs I'm writing from the perspective of how I felt as a teenager, but through the lens of who I am now all these years later, in that I have been able to process it all. It's definitely all-encompassing of all those different feelings that I have had over the years but reflecting on them at an older age."

"I've pinpointed certain things from my childhood and teenage years, which has been a really interesting experience. You're learning more about yourself as you are learning to get those ideas out in a song too."

Last year was difficult for everyone, Celeste included, and she did her best to make the most of the enforced free time she had during lockdown to both recharge her batteries and deliver the best album she could.

She said: "It was such an up and down year, where, even amongst all that was going on, I had some of the happiest and most spontaneous times I have had in a long time. Even though we had all these new rules and constraints, I found the fact I didn't have a diary that was set out for the rest of the year and beyond quite liberating. Just simple things like riding my bike around or listening to music felt freeing in a way they wouldn't have otherwise."

"I was supposed to finish the album last March, but everything

shut down. I had written most of it, so all I needed to do was go in with my producer and band to go over the last few bits, meaning there wasn't much I could do by myself but wait."

"What happened, though, is I started looking at ideas I hadn't finished before starting work on the album and it became apparent they were the missing ingredients that I needed for the album to feel right. I put a lot of work in to

get them ready and wrote lots of lyrics during that period when we couldn't get into the studio, so in that respect I tried to make the most of the situation."

Those BRIT and BBC accolades have undoubtedly been a huge boost to the young singer's career and confidence, but she's careful not to get too carried away, either by praise or pressure.

She said: "I'm still figuring out what

effect those things have had on me, to be honest. People keep telling you that 'you are destined for great things', but that's not something I've ever focused on. I'm never going to think I'm the best thing ever or anything like that and I'm still going to put as much effort into what I do, but I became very aware of the expectation that I had to live up to."

After *The Trial of The Chicago 7* became such a huge worldwide hit, talk turned to the very real possibility that Celeste's track could be in line for a Best Original Song nomination at the Academy Awards.

She said: "Making music for film is definitely something I want to do more of, so if I don't get the nod this time, hopefully there'll be opportunities in the future where it might happen."

Interview by Jules Boyle

■ Celeste has just announced details of her first headline UK tour. She will perform six shows in spring 2022, culminating at London's Roundhouse on April 21. The tour starts at Birmingham Institute on March 31 and also goes to Bristol, Glasgow, Cambridge and Manchester.

Executive producer Caryn Mandabach said: "We have been working diligently to ensure we can get *Peaky* safely back into production; the safety of our cast and crew is always our priority. Thank you to all the *Peaky* fans who have been so unwaveringly



**DVD & Blu-ray**  
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Win!

## Dead good horror films to win

**H**AS EVIL finally met its match? Directed by Stephen Sommers (*The Mummy*) and starring Hugh Jackman (*X-Men*) and Kate Beckinsale (*Underworld*), *Van Helsing* brings together legendary monsters including Count Dracula, Frankenstein's Monster, Mr Hyde and a smattering of werewolves.

Famous monster hunter Gabriel Van Helsing (Jackman) is sent by the Vatican to distant Transylvania, a land terrorised by the powerful Count Dracula. Joining forces with valiant Anna Valerious (Beckinsale) – who is determined to end an ancient curse on her family by defeating the infamous vampire – Van Helsing continues his quest to rid the world of evil.

The character Van Helsing is inspired by the Dutch vampire hunter Abraham Van Helsing from Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*. Stoker named the character after himself – Bram being a shortened form of Abraham.

TWO DECADES after master filmmaker George A. Romero's

zombies last scared audiences around the globe, the 'Godfather of the zombie genre' returned with *Land of the Dead* (2005).

This is Romero's fourth of six instalments of the 'Dead' series which started in 1968 with *Night of the Living Dead*. This release includes a reversible sleeve with all new artwork by Graham Humphreys.

Zombies have taken over the world forcing the living to survive in a walled city to protect them from the dead. But all is not well where it's most safe. The rich live in skyscrapers, the poor live in squalor. As a revolution threatens to overthrow the city's leadership, the zombies are evolving and becoming more advanced. With the survival of the city at stake, a group of hardened mercenaries is called into action to protect the living from an army of zombies.

Starring Dennis Hopper, *Land of the Dead* – Romero's largest-budget studio-backed film – became one

of his biggest box office successes.

George A. Romero loved Simon Pegg and Edgar Wright's zom-com *Shaun of the Dead* which pays homage to his 'Dead' series, calling it an "absolute blast." Romero repaid them both by giving them cameo roles in *Land of the Dead*, where they appear as zombies.

We have copies of *Van Helsing* and *Land of the Dead* up for grabs on both Blu-ray and DVD. To be in with a chance of winning one, simply tell us:

Who directed *Land of the Dead*?

Email your answer, marked Horror titles, to: [competitions@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:competitions@rafnews.co.uk) or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster

Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by February 26. Please remember to include your full postal address and tell us your preferred prize – *Van Helsing* or *Land of the Dead*, and in which format (DVD or Blu-ray). Please note *Land of the Dead* winners must be over 18.



**TV**  
**New series**  
Peaky Blinders/Unbeatable (BBC)

Story  
set to  
go on

## Blinders Peaks for final series

**P**EAKY BLINDERS, one of the BBC's most successful ever dramas, has become a huge international phenomenon – the story of Tommy Shelby (Cillian Murphy) and his notorious family's rise to prominence and power, set against the backdrop of working class, post-World War I Birmingham.

The broadcaster recently announced that the Bafta award-winning show has returned to production – for its sixth and final series.

Creator and writer Steven Knight said: "Peaky is back and with a bang. After the enforced production delay due to the Covid pandemic, we find the family in extreme jeopardy and the stakes have never been higher. We believe this will be the best series of all and are sure that our amazing fans will love it. While the TV series will be coming to an end, the story will continue in another form."

Executive producer Caryn Mandabach said: "We have been working diligently to ensure we can get *Peaky* safely back into production; the safety of our cast and crew is always our priority. Thank you to all the *Peaky* fans who have been so unwaveringly



COVID-SAFE: Cillian Murphy stars in 'Peaky'

'Unbeatable' answer and streak ahead of the competition to win a cash prize?

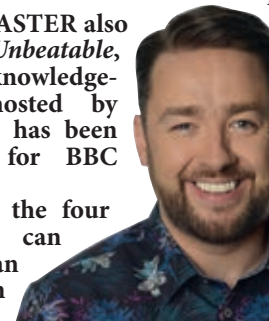
The knockout competition is easy for viewers to play along with at home, said the Beeb. Contestants and viewers will see just how 'unbeatable' they are...

Manford said: "I know how important daytime quizzes are for a lot of people, I used to sit with my Nana Manford and mum watching them, they keep the brain going, they're a chuckle and I'm really looking forward to being a part of this exciting brand new one."

"The great thing about *Unbeatable* is you don't even need to know the actual answer to appear clever. I feel like this is the quiz show I've been waiting for my whole life."

THE BROADCASTER also revealed that *Unbeatable*, a new general knowledge-based quiz hosted by Jason Manford, has been commissioned for BBC One afternoons.

In the quiz, the four contestants can always give an answer – but can they give the



■ Audiences can apply to take part in *Unbeatable* on the BBC's Shows and Tours website: [bbc.co.uk/showsandtours/take-part](http://bbc.co.uk/showsandtours/take-part). The closing date is February 19.

MANFORD:  
Quiz host





## Your Announcements

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

### Death

**HAINES** David Leo, Warrant Officer (Ret'd) (50th entry RAF Halton). Passed away on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at Marham House Care Home aged 92. Dearly loved husband of the late Dorothy and cherished Dad to Elizabeth, Carolyn and Heather. Much loved father-in-law, Grandad and Great-grandad. He will be sadly missed by his family and friends. A private service will take place for David with family flowers only. However, donations if desired are being collected for the RAF Benevolent Fund and may be sent via the following link: [david-leo-haines.muchloved.com](http://david-leo-haines.muchloved.com)



**WO David Haines with his wife Dorothy**

### Seeking

I am looking for background information on my father Cpl John J Murphy who served in the RAF from 1947 to 1978, with a small break in the 1950s. He did tours in Africa and also in Northern Ireland in the 1960s. He passed away, aged 90, in February, 2020. Unfortunately, I know very little about him and am trying to track down any information about his early life and family. I believe he was born in Ireland, that his father worked for the Belfast Shipping Company and in

the 1960s he was married to Shirley, but know almost nothing else. Please email me on: [thebrookners@aol.com](mailto:thebrookners@aol.com) if you have any information that could help.



**Cpl John Murphy**

**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](mailto:suddesr@aol.com)

### 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](mailto:MemSecChangi@telco4u.net) or visit: [www.rafchangi.com](http://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. Email: [peterpriscott@aol.com](mailto:peterpriscott@aol.com) or call: 01842 878554.

**RAF** Bawdsey Reunion Association. Due to the coronavirus pandemic we regrettably had to cancel the

annual reunion last summer. We have provisionally planned the next reunion for Saturday, June 5, 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](mailto:doreen.bawdseyreunion@btinternet.com) or call: 07513 301723.

### 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](http://rafadappasn.org) for further details.

### Catering Association

**SERVING** and Retired Catering WOs and FSs plus former Catering Officers are welcome to full membership. For further information and an application form please email Eddie Jones: [janedjones6@btinternet.com](mailto:janedjones6@btinternet.com); call: 01480 823480; Facebook: RAFCWO&SA.

### Apprentices' Assoc

**ARE** you a Trenchard Brat who did your training at RAF Halton? 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. We were known throughout the RAF as the 'Trenchard BRATS'. Our Association, The RAF Halton Apprentices' Association, (The Old Haltonians) welcomes you all. Check us out via our website 'Old Haltonians' and then contact us at: [membership@rafhaa.co.uk](mailto:membership@rafhaa.co.uk) for further details.

# RAF concerts planned for July and October

**"HAVING HAD to cancel the entire charity concert tour in 2020 and accept the loss of all associated welfare fundraising income for the year, the Royal Air Force Music Charitable Trust had hoped 2021 might start rather better,"** said Malcolm Goodman, founder and honorary administrator of the charity, and a former RAF musician.

After months of planning for another concert tour with nine concerts scheduled, the charity trustees were hopeful Covid-19 might now be a distant memory. However, following Downing Street briefings and discussions with concert venues and the RAF the return of live music is unlikely to be for a few more months, he added.

Mr Goodman said: "Having lost all our concerts and fundraising last year, it's tragic that such events continue to be unviable whilst Covid-19 restrictions remain, so the trustees face some very difficult decisions."

Run on a voluntary basis by just three trustees,



**MAKING MUSIC:** RAF100 anniversary concert at Lincoln Cathedral in 2018

the charity prides itself on now being the primary single sponsor of RAF band concerts. Consequently, all such cancellations have a significant impact on audiences and RAF musicians alike, and after so much work and planning, are a very regrettable decision for the trustees, he added.

Trevor McDonald, charity chairman said: "Sadly we live in very difficult times, with the pandemic affecting all our lives. Music still remains such a significant part of our daily lives, and yet is so often taken for granted. We're

working hard to get RAF music back on the concert stage as soon as we can."

The trustees have had to cancel the first two concerts of the 2021 tour at the De Montfort Hall in Leicester and Cast in Doncaster – which will be rescheduled for a later date in 2022.

Other concerts due to go ahead include at The Hawth Theatre, Crawley on July 2, at Weston-Super-Mare Winter Gardens on July 3 and at the Corn Exchange, King's Lynn on October 9.

■ Go to: [rafmct.org.uk](http://rafmct.org.uk) for more details.

# War hero's cufflinks for sale

### EYE-CATCHING:

These stunning gold cufflinks belonged to DFC winner Sqn Ldr Donald Frederick Darling – and could now be yours



**OFFERS ARE** invited for a family pair of gold RAF badge engraved cufflinks that belonged to Sqn Ldr DFW Darling DFC.

Killed in action on January 30, 1943 over Berlin, aged just 24, it seems fitting that after this time they should belong to

someone who is in, or was in, the RAF, says the seller.

Reasonable offers considered to: [dfwdarlingdfc@gmail.com](mailto:dfwdarlingdfc@gmail.com).

His medals and flying log book have been donated to the RAF Museum Hendon.

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

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## Your Announcements

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# Vets' charity cash boost

SPEKE HOUSE, Liverpool's largest military veterans' accommodation provider, has secured £49,772 in funding to support two vital services to help residents.

The funding comes from the Steve Morgan Foundation, under the Community Match Challenge initiative, part of the government's £750 million emergency support package to support charities and social enterprises impacted by Covid-19.

Priority has been given to frontline regional organisations which provide direct support to mitigate the impact of Covid-19.

Speke House is managed by the charity Launchpad, that provides accommodation and support to help veterans in need transition successfully to civilian life.

It is using the money to employ two temporary workers to address significant challenges over the next two years that have arisen as a



ON BOARD: Kate Riley and James Oakes have joined the Speke House staff

result of Covid-19, said a Launchpad spokesman.

The first post is for the appointment of specialist caseworker Kate Riley to help Speke House residents overcome mental health, gambling, drug and alcohol issues and to move them on to stable, independent lives.

The second post sees James Oakes appointed as a maintenance worker to help with the extra demands in keeping Speke House as safe from Covid as possible and to help clear any backlog of non-emergency repairs

which have built up during lockdown, the spokesman added.

Sam Jackson, Speke House manager, said: "Since the Covid-19 outbreak we have seen a significant impact on our operations and residents, many of whom are vulnerable and need additional support.

"Like many other charities we rely on additional funding through personal and corporate donations to enable us to deliver the excellent services we provide to veterans."

# Art aids aviation causes

THE INTERNATIONAL Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln is among the Service charities that will benefit from sales of a new book by young artist Jack Berry.

Jack, 14, has autism and is selectively mute. He communicates through drawing and painting and has just published *Flying High in the Sunlit Silence* (inset) featuring his artwork and contributions from aviation personalities.

The title, available from Amazon at £11.99 for a paperback and £4.99 for an



ebook, will help raise funds for three of Jack's favourite charities – the IBCC, SSAFA and the Lincolnshire Lancaster Association.

Jack's proud mum Sara

said: "His passion for planes really brings out the best in him.

"This is true for any autistic person; it's their love and passion that can really engage them and it's wonderful to see.

"Jack has been so lucky with the people around him who can help develop his love of planes and the history of war."

She added: "Jack has excelled when meeting pilots or people from museums, he's been focused and then drawn out his own recollection of the meetings."

COULD YOU help find a new home for the Museum of RAF Firefighting?

The museum's Chris Bradley said it has to vacate its current home in Scunthorpe because the premises are for sale. If you can help please contact Chris or Steve via: [firemuseum.uk](http://firemuseum.uk) or call: 015227 30498.



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## Prize Crossword

### No. 290

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

#### Across

7. After posturing, submarine goes back to plane (6)  
8. See 22 Across  
10. And 25 Across. 1980s rockers play prison dance (7,6)  
11. Hollow Northern Ireland revolutionary (5)  
12. In Luxor, gyrate during lovefest (4)  
13. Oil that's obviously unrefined (5)  
17. Composer consumes the first consignment (5)  
18. Fabulist initially lost in air raid (4)  
22. And 8 Across. Bronze or tin sculpture in station (5,6)  
23. Is it laid aside for a rainy day? (4,3)  
24. Five Give A Cry Returning To Station (6)  
25. See 10 Across

#### Down

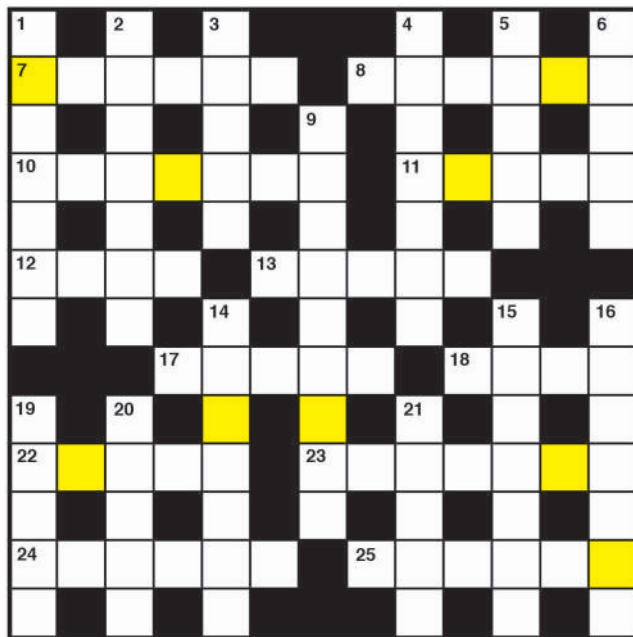
1. No Mastermind, I go on emotion (7)  
2. Order a variety, by the sound of it (7)  
3. Holly's pal (5)  
4. RAF plane goes to Royal Navy difficulty (7)  
5. Hit outright and immobilised (5)  
6. Rene's upset by contemptuous look (5)  
9. We hear Spurs striker is reasonably close to RAF veteran (9)  
14. Ancestors who liked the club? (7)  
15. Shoot cunning, glowing insect (7)  
16. If great transformation affects warship (7)  
19. Senior sailor with nothing vintage outside (5)  
20. Fiona takes two beginners to your first horse (5)  
21. I criticise religion (5)

Name .....

Address .....

RAF word ..... Crossword No. 290

The winners of Prize Crossword 290 and Prize Su Doku 300 will be published in our February 26 edition. Send entries to the address printed in the Su Doku panel opposite.



■ The winner of Crossword No. 289 is William Mounsey of Edinburgh.

#### Solution to Crossword No. 289:

Across – 6. Typhoon 7. Macho 9. Wokka 10. Archery 12. Arch-enemies 14. Eurofighter 18. Abashed 19. Wokka 21. Cadet 22. Militia

Down – 1. Byron 2. Choker 3. Low 4. Marham 5. Charger 8. Crunchy 11. Shrivel 13. Bugbear 15. Oyster 16. Exotic 17. Skein 20. Air Plane – Wellington

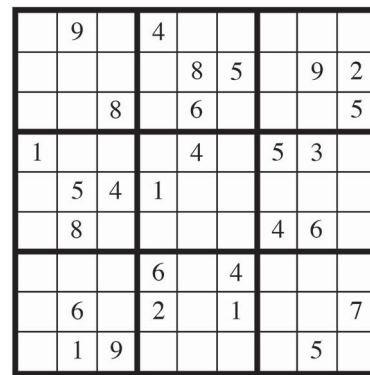


## Prize Su Doku

### No. 300

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 February 26, 2021.



Name .....

Address .....

..... Su Doku No. 300

#### Solution to Su Doku No: 299

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

■ The winner of Su Doku No. 299 is Raymond Burn of Brackley, Northamptonshire.

## Film Review

### Tokyo Dragon Chef (15)

Out now on DVD and digital – Terracotta Distribution

# Amen for ramen

WHERE TO start with *Tokyo Dragon Chef*, Yoshihiro Nishimura's latest release?

The director of such Japanese action-comedy cinema classics as *Toyko Gore Police* and *Meatball Machine: Kodoku* has truly outdone himself with this tribute to the country's cultural lifeblood – ramen soup.

The film begins with a *Blues Brothers* homage as Ryu (Yasukaze Motomiya) greets his brother Tatsu (Yoshiyuki Yamaguchi) from prison in a noodle van, rather than a police car.

On the journey back the pair, former Yakuza (Japanese gangsters), plan to move away from the underworld and open a ramen shop. Cue crazy song and dance routines which feature naked men in saunas and brightly dressed girls in washrooms. From here the film becomes a food-crazed feast, as rival Yakuza Hitoshi Ozawa as Jin and Kazuyoshi Ozawa as Kazu open a ramen cart across the road.

Nishimura creates some weird and wonderful characters throughout the film, notably YouTube stars Narusa and Mimi (big eating idol) and, of course, not to forget Ramen Girl Yokosa.



MIMI: YouTuber is petite but has a huge appetite

She sings a heartfelt ode to the famous soup entitled: *I Love Ramen* – well, what else would it be called? As the rival chefs do battle for YouTube and Tokyo foodie fame, enter Gizumo (Tak Sakaguchi).

With his gang of eye-bulb helmet, boiler suit-wearing nutcases, he wants to rid Tokyo of the old ways and set about destroying the chefs and their restaurants. Cue even more madness, plus no little violence. The film is a kitsch, chaotic gem which has no real point to it, except to be as extreme as possible, which it succeeds in doing, in spades.

Review by Daniel Abrahams  
3 out of 5 roundels



RAMEN GIRL: Yokosa

## Film Review & Competition

### The Wacky Hen (U)

Out now on DVD and digital – Dazzler Media



# Not much to look at, it's clucky that Turu can talk



LIFE ON THE FARM: But an adventure in the big city awaits Turu

AN EYESORE compared to the other hens, it is by some strange stroke of luck that Turu, the titular oddity, is bought for an elderly woman's farm. Odder still, that in lieu of laying eggs, she has taken to speaking the language and is prone to bang out the odd tune.

Stranger things have happened in children's animated films, and you can see elements of them propping up this simply plotted romp. When elderly saviour and vocal coach Isabel falls from her roof and is carted off to hospital Turu chases her to the big city by way of a travelling circus.

Dubbed from the original Spanish, *The Wacky Hen* incorporates contemporary pop songs to keep the energy high, with montages and car chases to ensure the little ones are attentive. The sense of mild peril is constant, what with the circus being threatened with foreclosure if they can't get a decent audience, and Isabel seeming to suffer a bout of concussion-induced amnesia.

But it never feels too serious and it's clear how it will play out: Turu packing the tent to the rafters with a thankfully reworked version

of *The Macarena* Though the message and moral is that it doesn't matter what you look like on the outside, the implication is that this only applies if you're talented. For Turu it's a matter of having one eye in the land of the blind as no other animal can talk; fortunate for our feathered hero as she wouldn't have survived the first-round elimination of *Sing*.

Jackson's view (his picture of Turu, top): It is wacky. The hen can talk and join the circus. The clowns were funny. It was like *Animal Crackers*.

3 out of 5 roundels

Review by Sam Cooney,  
& Jackson Cooney (aged five)

TO HELP keep your youngsters amused during lockdown we have copies of *The Wacky Hen* to win. To enter, all you have to do is send us the correct answer to this question:

What sort of animal is Turu?

Email your answer, marked The Wacky Hen DVD competition, to: [competitions@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:competitions@rafnews.co.uk) or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by February 26 – and include your full postal address.





HM Government

**NHS**

# LOOK HER IN THE EYES

# AND TELL HER YOU NEVER BEND THE RULES.

*Lorna Covid-19 patient*

Around 1 in 3 people who have Covid-19 have no symptoms and are spreading it without knowing. Are you absolutely positive you're not one of them? Only go out if essential. Sticking to the rules stops the spread.

**STAY HOME ► PROTECT THE NHS ► SAVE LIVES**





**LAST FILM ROLE:** Kenneth More as Jarvis Lorry in *A Tale of Two Cities*  
PHOTO: ANGELA MORE

## Tracey Allen

**H**IS MOST famous role, the one that made him a star, was World War II hero Gp Capt Douglas Bader in the classic film *Reach for the Sky*. But what's less well known about Kenneth More is that he also played wartime spy 'The White Rabbit', Wg Cdr Forest Yeo-Thomas – thought by many to be one of his best performances, even better perhaps than his role as Bader.

Ironically, More was turned down when he volunteered to join the RAF. This and other fascinating details are revealed in *More, Please!* a highly readable new biography by Nick Pourgourides, a long-term fan, represents the late actor's estate in his personal time through KennethMore.com.

The book is the first-ever biography of More, Britain's most popular actor of the 1950s, who starred in much-loved films including *Genevieve*, *North-West Frontier* and *The Thirty-Nine Steps*.

Nick, who works as a publicist for top writers and directors, said: "Kenny had written two autobiographies and a more anecdotal collection, *Kindly Leave The Stage*, all out of print now.

"I couldn't understand why no one had written a biography about someone so successful and there was nothing really about him online."

The website and biography have been endorsed by More's family, including his widow, actress Angela Douglas.

It interweaves More's own words with exclusive extracts from his final autobiography, *More or Less*, and includes previously unseen photographs from the family archive plus interviews with colleagues including Wendy Craig, Susan Hampshire, Ronald Pickup and Christopher Timothy.

Nick readily admitted that More is his childhood hero and he's seen 'everything it's possible to see' of More's films.

He said: "*Reach for the Sky* is probably my favourite. It was the role he was born to play and made him the leading man he always wanted to be."



**PROUD TO SERVE:** A young Kenneth More in uniform during his days in the Royal Navy

PHOTO: JANE MORE



**BOOK:** Tells of how More played RAF ace Douglas Bader, right, and Yeo-Thomas, honoured by plaque, left



**LARKS:** In the Sussex countryside with wife Angela Douglas  
PHOTO: ANGELA MORE

# Reach for the Sky star More than 'a short-arsed nobody who got lucky'

## Modest actor made his mark as Bader and White Rabbit

Angela said: "He was Britain's brightest star. We couldn't go anywhere without being recognised. He was always gracious and never took his popularity lightly. He once told me: 'I'm just a short-arsed nobody who got lucky.' The fact that he said that tells you a lot about the sort of man he was."

**N**ick said More was very proud of the Armed Forces and his own military service, serving in the Royal Navy during WWII.

His adored father Bertie was a pilot in the Royal Naval Air Service during World War I.

Wanting to follow in Bertie's footsteps, More applied to join the RAF but was turned down during his medical because of a disorder with his equilibrium – and having no school certificate.

He had no training as an actor, but, aged 20, passing London's famous Windmill Theatre one day he noticed the manager's name – Vivian Van Damm, who'd had business dealings with Bertie. Van Damm took young More on as a stagehand, with, said Nick, 'the

proviso that he never became an actor.' He stayed at the Windmill for two years.

After leaving the Navy in 1946, the quintessential Englishman found work on stage and made his West End debut that year. Nick said: "He was proud of having been a Naval officer and went to auditions in his uniform."

After film success in the comedies *Genevieve* and *Doctor in the House*, legendary director David Lean offered More the starring role of a young RAF officer in India in the film *The Wind Cannot Read*, but he turned it down because he felt an audience wouldn't accept him in such a serious role.

Nick said: "Sir Laurence Olivier and the producer Alexander Korda thought he was mad to reject working with Lean...years later Kenny greatly regretted passing up that chance. He often said Lean never forgave him either."

More had read *Reach for the Sky*, Paul Brickhill's biography of Bader, on holiday.

The actor wrote: "I was immediately impressed by its

possibilities for a film. Bader was a man who never gave up, who adamantly refused to be beaten."

Despite having both legs amputated after a flying accident, Bader, fitted with tin legs, became one of WWII's greatest pilots.

More added: "His whole attitude to life was mine. I wanted this part, not just because I felt I could do full justice to it, but because it was an embodiment of my own belief that courage, faith and determination can overcome all obstacles."

**H**is portrayal of Bader resulted in a lifelong friendship between the two.

Nick said: "Kenny was probably just as keen to play the role of Yeo-Thomas as he was Bader, both real-life heroes."

Yeo-Thomas was the most highly decorated secret agent of WWII, the first to receive the George Cross and be commemorated with an English Heritage blue plaque.

*The White Rabbit* became a four-part BBC series in 1967. Nick said More considered it his hardest physical role and the darkest drama he had ever appeared in, featuring gruelling torture scenes.

Nick added: "Frustratingly, due

to the conditions of the one-off airing, the tapes were destroyed. Hope springs eternal it may one day resurface."

He is currently working on an updated version of *More, Please!* due out in July.

He said: "It really struck me during my research for the book that Kenny was so well-liked. Every actor or director I spoke to said they loved working with him – and that's rare in the industry."

"The updated version has come about because, since the book was published more people, including the actresses Claire Bloom and Gemma Jones, have come forward who want to share memories of working with Kenny."

He added: "His films have great resonance to this day, they are a real tonic for our current times, very much upbeat, striving against adversity. He embodied all these qualities so well."

"The aim of the estate now is, post-Covid, to have a cinema retrospective of his work and an exhibition including his BAFTA, CBE and best actor award for *Reach for the Sky*."

■ *More, Please!* is available to buy from Amazon, in paperback, at £7.99.



**HERO:** Bader





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# We can spotter good 'un

New WWII fighter guide is great prize

**R**EGULAR RAF NEWS readers know their Hurricanes from their Bf 109s, but for the less knowledgeable, we're running a competition to win free copies of a new comprehensive guide to the iconic aircraft of World War II.

Compact, with full-colour profile artwork throughout to aid recognition, the volume provides essential information on 90 types, from the wingspan of the A6M Zero-sen to the top speed of the jet-powered Me 262.

Written by Osprey's aviation editor Tony Holmes, the *World War II Fighter Planes Spotter's Guide* is out now, priced £7.99.

## Ask the Author

Author Tony Holmes has written more than 30 books over the past 35 years since moving to England from Western Australia, and he has also been responsible for devising and editing the publisher's highly successful *Aircraft of the Aces*, *Combat Aircraft*, *Aviation Elite Units*, *Duel* and *X-Planes* series.

Here, he tells RAF News what inspired his latest title.

**What made you bring out a Spotter's Guide 75 years after the end of World War II?**

There is great interest in the aircraft that fought in World War II, with so many examples surviving in museums and private collections in Britain. I felt that a handy guide to all the fighters that saw action – on both sides – would be useful.

**Who do you think will buy it?**

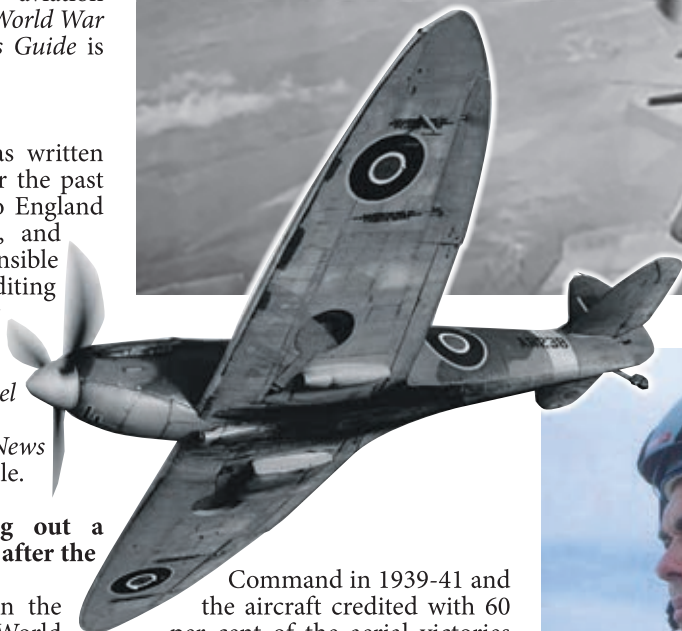
Thanks to its modest price, yet comprehensive content (it contains 50,000 words), this volume should appeal to a broad audience. The text is written so it is accessible both to aviation enthusiasts and amateur historians. Furthermore, the stunning profile artworks (all 566 of them) provide a visual treat. These have been sourced from Osprey's vast archive created by a handpicked group of highly-talented artists, the profile artworks having been the backbone of our aviation series titles for the past 25 years.

**Of the 283 aircraft in the book, what's your favourite and why?**

I have a soft spot for the humble Hawker Hurricane, the unsung workhorse of RAF Fighter



**EARLY AIRPOWER:** The WWII Typhoon, above, and the iconic Spitfire, left PHOTOS: AIR HISTORICAL BRANCH (RAF)



Command in 1939-41 and the aircraft credited with 60 per cent of the aerial victories claimed by pilots in the Battle of Britain.

**What's the most unusual aircraft in it?**

Great question! Almost certainly the Messerschmitt Me 163B Komet, which was the only rocket-powered fighter to see combat in World War II. It had an astonishing 15,950ft-per-minute rate of climb – by comparison, the piston-engined Spitfire IX's rate of climb was 4,620ft-per-minute.



**AUTHOR:** Aviation expert Tony Holmes

**How long did it take you to do the research?**

Although I am the sole author of the book, many of the facts in this new volume have been gleaned from my time editing some of the 137 volumes in the *Aircraft of the Aces*

series. With this information base readily to hand, it took me three months to research the *Spotter's Guide* and four weeks to compile the text.

**What surprised you the most when researching the aircraft?**

The most surprising fact was just how much fighter aircraft had developed in the six-year span of World War II. For example, Messerschmitt's Bf 109E was capable

of speeds approaching 350mph in September 1939. By May 1945, the same company's jet-powered Me 262 could reach 540mph in level flight.

**Which aircraft do you think had the biggest impact during World War II and why?**

I think it would have to be the Merlin-engined P-51 Mustang. American B-17 and B-24 bombers lacked full fighter escort to and from targets deep in Germany up until the arrival of the P-51B in late 1943, allowing enemy fighters to take a deadly toll. This all stopped with the advent of the Mustang, allowing the Allies to secure aerial dominance in the skies over the Third Reich.

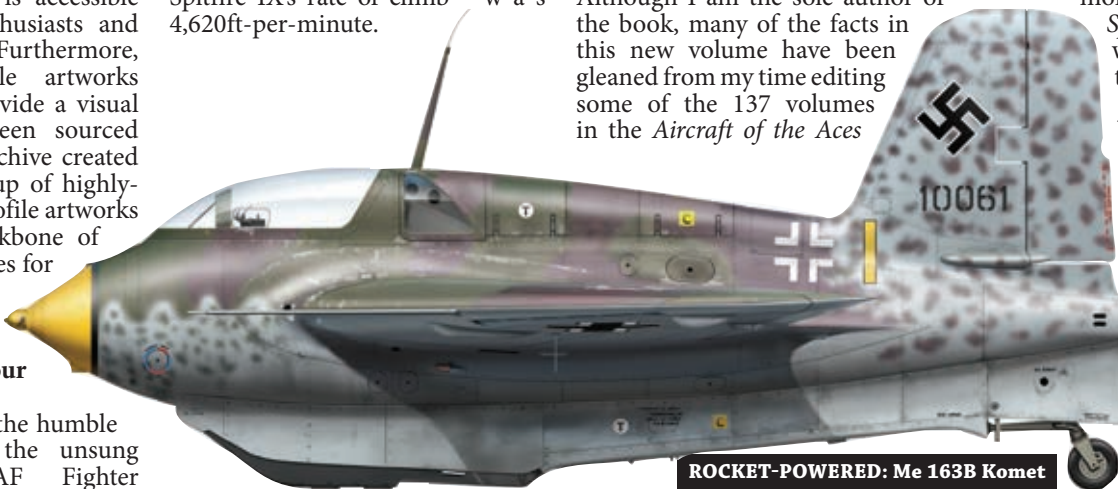
## Free copy up for grabs

TO BE in with a chance of winning one of FIVE copies of the *Spotter's Guide*, just answer this question correctly:

**How fast could the rocket-powered Messerschmitt Me 163B Komet climb?**

**Win!**

Email your answer, marked **Spotter's Guide competition**, to: [competitions@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:competitions@rafnews.co.uk) or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by February 26. Please remember to include your full postal address with your entry.



**ROCKET-POWERED:** Me 163B Komet





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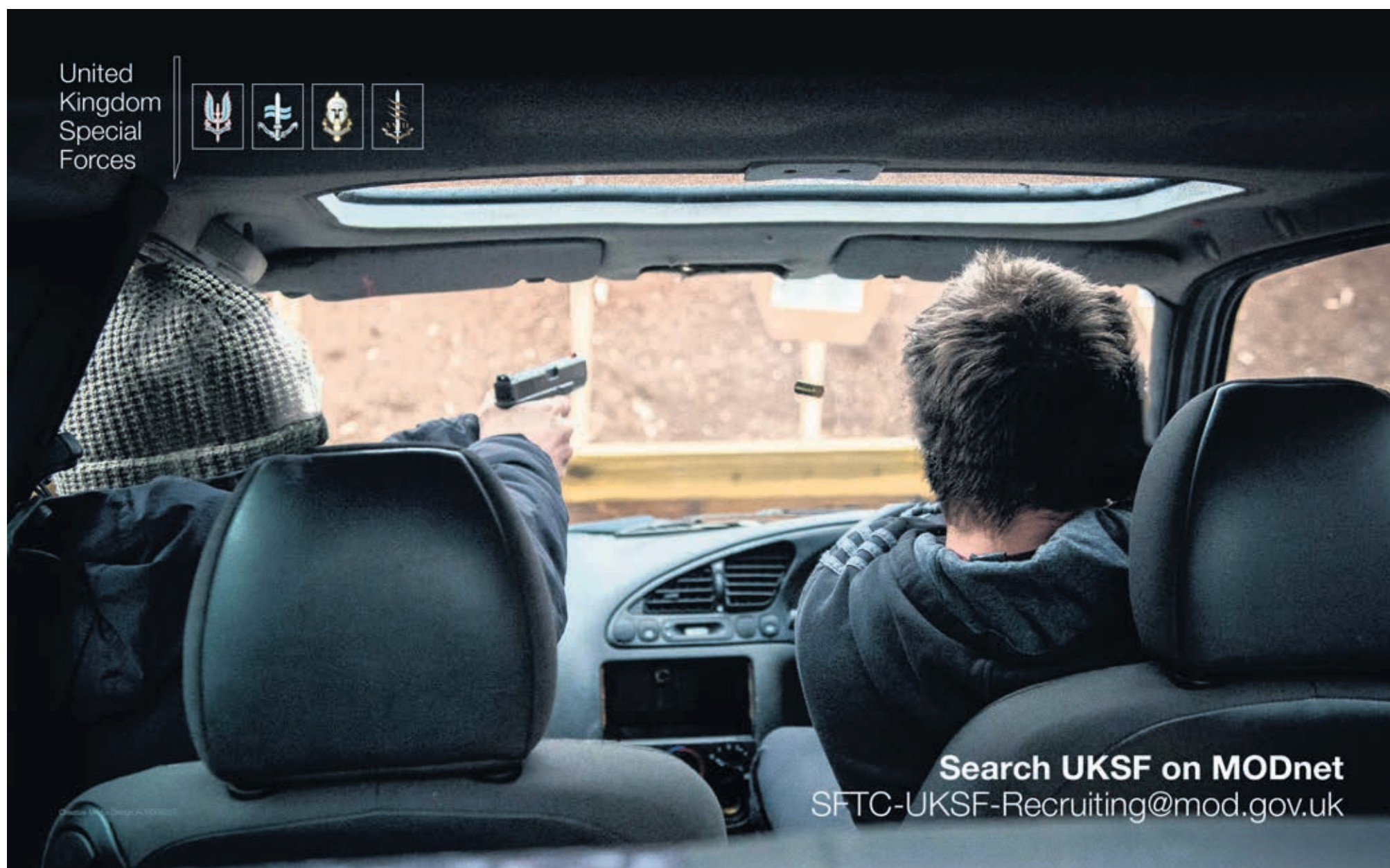
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Flt Lt Arthur Bird, DFC

Obituary

# Night fighter pilot Bird attacked Nazi airfields

## Both 'Dickie' and navigator Hodder awarded the DFC

**F**LIGHT LIEUTENANT Arthur 'Dickie' Bird, who has died aged 100, flew intruder missions over Germany to attack airfields and suppress the activities of the Luftwaffe. He was awarded the DFC.

In 1937 he joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve and learnt to fly at Carlisle. He was already mobilised when war broke out. Of the 30 pilots in training with him, only seven survived the war.

After further training at Cranwell, he was commissioned and joined 23 Squadron at Ford, in Sussex, in November 1940. The squadron flew Blenheim fighters and was soon tasked with night intruder flights over enemy airfields. In April 1941, the squadron re-equipped with the American-built Havoc, a fighter derivative of a light bomber.

On August 12, Bird was patrolling over the Dutch airfield at Gilze-Rijen when all the airfield lights were suddenly switched on. He saw numerous aircraft in the circuit and immediately engaged them. He attacked seven and claimed two probably destroyed and five damaged before the remaining aircraft doused their lights. To add to the confusion, he bombed the aircraft dispersals.

In December 1941, Bird transferred to an experimental unit, which was equipped with the Havoc. A searchlight was mounted in the nose of the aircraft so that the bomber, given the name Turbinlite, could illuminate enemy planes and allow two accompanying Hurricane fighters to attack. The experiment had very limited success.

**A**fter a series of appointments training night fighter pilots, Bird, together with his navigator Les Hodder, joined 605 (County of Warwick) Squadron equipped with the Mosquito. During the next six months they flew 60 operations, some over five hours long.

The squadron's role was to fly at night and patrol near enemy airfields in France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany to attack German night fighters as they took off to intercept raids mounted by Bomber Command. No 605

employed numerous aircraft in succession over each target in order to catch returning enemy fighters.

On January 28, 1944, Bird and Hodder headed for the Baltic coast to patrol over the airfield at Grieswald. They recorded activity before departing, and when they landed, they had been airborne for almost six hours and had barely sufficient fuel to reach their airfield in Essex.

In February 1944 they shot down an enemy aircraft over an airfield in Belgium and a week later damaged another over Eindhoven. Occasionally their aircraft carried bombs to drop on airfield installations but the Mosquito's main weapon was the cannon. On missions when they failed to find enemy night fighters, Bird and Hodder attacked road and rail transports and on a number of sorties, they destroyed a locomotive and rolling stock.

**O**n March 30, the night that Bomber Command attacked Nuremburg and suffered its greatest wartime losses, Bird was patrolling over an airfield near Mainz. He was about to attack a Dornier aircraft when a Focke Wulf 190 flashed passed him. He gave pursuit but was unable to engage the fighter. Instead he headed for Mainz railway station and attacked trains standing in a marshalling yard, destroying at least one locomotive.

On May 6, flying from Manston in Kent, he took the US General George Patton for a flight in his Mosquito. Flying at low level along the south coast, Patton was able to see the troops assembling for the Normandy landings.

Both Bird and Hodder completed their tour of operations in May, when they received the DFC. The citation for Bird commented on his: 'skill and courage of a high order, setting an excellent example'.

In September 1944 he joined a Ferry Unit at Pershore in Worcestershire. During this period he flew a wide variety of aircraft on delivery flights ranging from the Spitfire to the Halifax, converted for transport duties. He left the RAF at the end of 1945 and returned to the family dairy farm near Penrith.



DFCs: 605 Squadron's Bird (right) and his navigator Hodder with their Mosquito night fighter. They were both honoured for their bravery



## 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](http://www.qe.org)**



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THE  
GOOD  
SCHOOLS  
GUIDE

## 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.**



# LET IT SNOW



LEAP FORWARD: Infotainment system

**TIM MORRIS**

Motoring  
Correspondent



**B**ACK IN the day a Land Rover was for life, if it broke you unbolted the bit that had gone wrong and repaired it. If you crashed it, you pulled off the dented panel and slapped on a new one. Or you just ignored it and carried on driving.

It was seriously simple motoring, designed to be easily fixed in a muddy field, a jungle, the Arctic, or a desert. It was equipped with all the finery and finesse of a pig farmer's pants, but by thunder it could go anywhere.

By the 80s that thoroughbred off-road DNA had evolved into the Defender. It was, quite simply, the best 4x4 in the world.

But then the world changed. Modern safety regulations made the old Defender a thing of the past. But then Jaguar Land Rover took on one of the biggest challenges in its history, redesigning this car from scratch.

## Design

Does it look like a Defender? Of course not, but it is an incredibly striking vehicle. The exterior is instantly identifiable and full of character. There are overt nods to the past but it's completely modern and remains the most extreme Land Rover available.

The Defender remains the boxiest of boxes. It's just right for the hardcore SUV, that it is. The short overhangs are functional to help it perform well off-road but they do give it a nice beefy profile and it's subtly curved, not flat-sided. We think it looks pretty darn good, actually.

Utility is the order of the day, however. Almost everything is stronger and it is solidly bolted together. You can also order a Commercial, van-sided, version with hardy steel wheels if you want the toughest of the tough.

## Interior

We love the new Defender's cabin. Unlike the old car, there's



## This could be best off-roader in the world

masses of room and you don't elbow the door frame every time you turn a corner. No other car has an interior quite like it in fact. It's very comfortable but remains deliberately functional.

Little details like the exposed bolts on the door trim, hardy floor coverings that you can just swill out with a hose pipe and the sturdy alloy grab handle that the dashboard is bolted to (although this is leather covered these days) remind you what this car is. You can happily get in wearing your wellies, drop a gallon container of milk into the centre console and drive home through a river without any worries.

There's loads of leg room, storage spaces everywhere and you can order the car with several

interior layouts. For the first time in ages this includes a folding centre front jump-seat.

## Technology

Possibly the biggest leap forward is the infotainment system. The greatest computing power in the old Defender was a digital clock but the new 10 Pivi Pro infotainment system is one of the most intuitive we've ever tested.

The new Defender also has 85 ECUs that process every aspect of the car's performance, on and off road. It channels the processing power required to make a moon landing into navigating rocks, mud and water. It is very, very clever.

The 110 has air suspension as standard, which adds to its off-road ground clearance and wading

ability. During wading, the car senses the depth of the water, displays it as an animated graphic and raises the suspension up to maximum height. It even drags the brakes for a short while afterwards to dry them out.

## On the road

The Defender 110 has air suspension as standard, while the shorter wheelbase 90 model uses conventional steel springs (you can order air suspension as an option and it does make a massive difference to the on-road ride.)

Our car was fitted with the upgraded 20in 'Style' alloy wheels, with off-road tyres, and it did a

## Verdict

### Pros

- Stupendous off-road ability
- Decent on-road refinement
- A national icon
- Slow depreciation
- Versatile configuration

### Cons

- Very pricey trim levels
- Annoying flat spot when pulling away rapidly
- Big for most parking spaces

### Overall:

The Land Rover Defender is the pinnacle of JLR's off-road range. It's one of the most focused 4x4s in the world and yet it has impeccable manners on tarmac. It's a blend of abilities that gives it the edge over almost every rival. Granted, watching someone in a 110 trying to get it into a supermarket parking space is a bit like watching a fat man trying to squeeze into tight leather trousers but, if you are ever going to tackle snow or floods, this is the gold standard.

surprisingly good job of ironing out most road surfaces. We actually think the 110 is more refined on tarmac than the Volvo XC90 and, for such a hardy off-roader, that's a massive achievement.

Around town and on the motorway its ride has a clear lead over mud-plugging rivals such as the Jeep Wrangler and the Toyota Land Cruiser too.

## Handling

The Defender has an agricultural feel but it doesn't wobble through bends as much as you'd expect.

You can't throw it into undulating corners like you would an Audi Q7 but the steering is light and reasonably accurate, considering the car's dimensions.

As you would expect, there isn't much feedback through the wheel but it does provide progressive precision. As a result, it delivers the kind of luxury car experience that you'd expect from a Range Rover. If you've ever driven the old Defender you'll understand what an incredible change this is.

## Off-road

Unbelievably good. Possibly the world's best off-roader.

We'll get to that over the next few editions with our in-depth, long-term test but it's a yes from us.



BOXY: Rear



WATER: No problem





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## 5 pages of **RAF Sport** start here

● **SAC keeps Eurovision alive: p31**

### RUGBY LEAGUE

# World stage the aim for League stalwart

Sqn Ldr uses setbacks for post-Covid resurgence

**Daniel Abrahams**

HQ Air Command

**SERVICE RUGBY** League has been dealt a series of blows recently, but Sqn Ldr Damian Clayton is battling to make sure it still gets a try in 2021.

Covid-19 saw the Service's teams omitted, along with all amateur clubs, from the recent Coral Challenge Cup draws – the first time in 23 years (see *RAF News* 1508).

That news came off the back of the cancellation of the Festival of World Cups, in which UKAFRL has taken part in all the three of the last tournaments, winning one.

The decision, made once again due to the ongoing global pandemic, scuppered the event planned for June in Manchester and Hull.

The festival formed part of the run-up to the professional tournament cited, Covid allowing, for November in cities across the country from London to Manchester, Hull and Doncaster.

It is here, Sqn Ldr Clayton, UKAFRL Chief Operating Officer, aims to make a huge impact for the



**TRY, TRY AGAIN:** SAC Josh Scott breaks for the tryline surrounded by New Zealand Defence Force players during the 2017 Festival of World Cups in Australia



**SHIRT ON IT:** Clayton sporting a GB Armed Forces jersey

Services.

He said: "The UK were to host the Armed Forces Festival alongside the Police and Student tournaments, but they were cancelled, with the International Rugby League Federation making the call last year.

"Logistically the decision saved a lot of work. There is so much that goes into something like this.

"The rugby is important, but what players, coaches and backroom staff gain from an experience such as this, both in their careers and personally, is significant and will be the highlight of their careers for many.

"The decision was made for the right reasons, but now we are putting pressure on the federation to host a World Cup as soon as possible, perhaps in Australia.

"As such, I am engaging with my southern hemisphere colleagues to see what their appetite is like to host something, possibly this time next year.

"Talks are at a very early stage, but I am passionate to get something held.

"Playwise, this puts pressure on the UKAFRL head coach CPO Danny Johnson, as his team haven't

played for 18-months. But, it's the same for every country involved."

Planning for the professional World Cup tournament is still underway, and it is here the Squadron Leader aims to keep the Services front and centre.

He said: "I am involved with the tournament's organisers to have military involvement at the marquee events.

"We have nothing across the line yet, but

UKAFRL with the RFL and World Cup organisers are keen to make the experience better for everybody involved.



"From a military perspective, that could be trophy presentation, ceremonial work, to instalments such as capability hardware situated outside the grounds for fans to see.

"I am sitting alongside Kait Ludwig (customer lead for the Rugby League World Cup 2021) and we will be fully involved with the 'Match Day Experience'.

"The Service is firmly a part of the World Cup family and this is a massive event, not only for the sport but the military.

"-As it will be the first major sporting event after Covid if it goes ahead, it's huge."

■ **For more information on the tournament visit: [rlwc2021.com](http://rlwc2021.com)**



## Sport

### RUGBY LEAGUE



#### Daniel Abrahams HQ Air Command

**“IT’S A great honour,” is how the new chair of RAF Rugby League Sqn Ldr Mike Burch has described his new role in the sport he loves.**

The appointment of Burch, a mainstay in the background of the association over the past six years, was made recently with former chairman Wg Cdr Lee Gordon moving to become president.

Burch, 38, who helped train GB triathlon sensations Alistair and Jonny Brownlee during their early years, is hoping to enable more personnel to experience and be involved in the sport.

He said: “I am a passionate fan of RAF rugby league, although I never played for the Service. My sport of choice in my younger days was swimming. I swam and coached swimmers to national level.

“I have a Sports Science and Nutrition degree and worked for British Triathlon, where I was lucky enough to work with the Brownlees. So, with a background in sports administration, all roads led to my involvement with RAFRL.”

Currently based out of Air Command, in Executive Support, Burch (pictured right) brought his skills to bear promoting the Claytons Cup competition. He’s used the current cessation in sports

participation to ensure the association is ready to hit the ground running once play can resume. He said: “When I came onboard as chair, Covid was already having a significant impact, so my focus was to get us into the best position to mitigate the risks and enable the safe return to playing when we’re able to.

“This year the association celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being a recognised sport. I want to celebrate this momentous occasion; and look forward to creating many more.”



Burch admits the administration side of things may not have the same excitement levels as the action on the pitch but added: “The Association’s Steering Group is vital for the safe and smooth delivery of as many Rugby League opportunities as possible.

“For example, we have the new kit ready and have instigated a Safety and Medical Working Group, so we’ve been busy.”

Along with planning the RAF Regiment’s overseas tour and a proposed Ladies’ tour to Gibraltar for next year, Burch is looking for new ways to help players, coaches, referees and support staff.

He added: “This is an exciting association. The pathway from learning to play league to making an impact at a professional level is open and accessible to all.

“We’ve had former players star for Super League clubs [SAC Jordan Andrade, who signed for Salford in 2015], we currently have Cpl Alice Fisher on the books of the Bradford Bulls.

“We have always enjoyed an arguably unrivalled relationship with the RFL, with former presidents of the Association presenting the Challenge Cup trophy at Wembley and serving a term as president of the RFL.

“I want to not only celebrate these achievements but build on them.”

#### Olympic sensations



**WINNING WAYS:** Above, the Brownlee Brothers celebrate another victory; below, former SAC Jordan Andrade playing for the RAF, before signing for Salford  
PHOTOS: SBS/PA PHOTOS

#### Super League star





## FENCING

# First blood to fencers

THE FUTURE looks bright for the RAF Fencing Union after they announced their post-pandemic diary dates outlining their events for 2021.

Boasting six events, it starts with a Beginners and Development Camp at RAF Cosford from April 21-25 and also includes the Inter-Services championships at HMS Temeraire from July 19-22.

The move is a hugely positive one from the driven association, which held a successful event between the two national Covid lockdowns.

SAC Matt Ives, director of communications for the association, said: "Of course, currently everything is on pause, but we are in constant liaison with our National Governing Body, British Fencing and Sport England and have a dedicated Covid officer – meaning the committee can constantly review the outlook

and determine what potential measures, such as masks within our masks, we may have to deploy.

"Throughout Covid, for every service sport it has been incredibly hard to plan.

"However, RAFFU has been growing in numbers and profile over the last couple of years and we are optimistic that, as the pandemic eases, we can be fluid in our response, to when and what type of events, we lay on across stations."

Other events in the diary are the RAF Championships (Cosford) May 20-23 and open event (Cosford) June 26-27. There are also further training camps.

■ **RAF Fencing is on the lookout for new members and can be reached on Instagram @raffencing and Twitter @RAF\_fencing or on Facebook at: Royal Air Force Fencing.**



## GIVEAWAY

## Win, Win, Win

### This season's must-have F1 racing title

BOASTING FASCINATING details on teams, drivers, tracks and records, *Formula One 2021* by Bruce Jones is the must-have title for all F1 fans.

Jones's book, published by Welbeck Publishing, accelerates off with analysis of the 2021 season expertly covering all the teams and their drivers, with names such as Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen, HAAS F1 and Nikita Mazepin.

Up next the excellent Talking Points series of four feature articles covering the most salient questions for the coming season and on in the sport.

The title then produces a track-by-track analysis of the season, with historic races brought into view, with statistics and finishing positions along with excellent track graphics.

In a sport driven as much by statistics, records and speed timings as the drivers, *Formula One 2021* is a page-turning fact fest, coupled superbly with fast-paced views and records.

It's all here, from records of

drivers' fastest laps, to their most wins. This is all bookended with some beautiful photographs. The title is a one-stop shop for every petrol head looking forward to the coming season.

RAF News has teamed up with Welbeck Publishing to offer five lucky readers the chance to win a copy of this brilliant title, priced £14.99 in paperback.

For a chance to win a copy, simply answer the following question correctly: **What season does the F1 title relate to?**

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Bobsleigh

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# 2021: And Service Ice Men Cometh..

## Stephens keeping hope alive for the Beijing Olympics

Flame still burns for RAF bobsleigh man

STAFF REPORTER  
HQ Air Command

SERVICE BOBSLEIGH star L/CPL Shanwayne Stephens rounded the corner into 2021 in impressive style – producing three top-20 Europa Cup finishes.

The RAF man, who has built his own team in his bid to feature at the 2022 Winter Olympics in China, overcame his first hurdle – that of actually leaving the country following Covid restrictions.

Having done that, the QCS man's expected 12-hour journey to Innsbruck took 48 hours.

His race schedule started with a two-man EC race and two four-man EC races at Igls, Austria, before moving on to a final two-man World Cup race at Königssee, Germany.

In order to slide in the four-man next season Stephens has to complete 5-3-2, which means competing in five races at three different tracks over two years.

The RAF man has already

“The pressure was really on. With Shanwayne having to finish in all four-man EC races, he had no room to fail”

completed two of the races, (see RAF News 1508).

Covid and work commitments meant Stephens was left one athlete short for his four-man crew – step up Flying Officer Scott Cecy, OC SHF from RAF Benson.

Chf Tech Mark Silva, Stephens' team manager, said: “For international competition (not including Olympics) the athletes need to be registered to a country.

“Although that means Fg Off Cecy will never be able to represent Jamaica at the Olympics himself, his involvement does mean Stephens could continue.

“The pressure was really on. With Shanwayne having to finish in all four-man EC races, he had no room to fail.”

Stephens came 13<sup>th</sup> out of 28 sleds in the two-man race, but with a crew who had never met or practised, in a 30-year-old sled, the four-man event was always going to be tough.

The four produced two 15<sup>th</sup> place finishes, +6.04 and +7.81 seconds down respectively on the winning German team, led by Zielasko Philipps.

Stephens then turned his attention to the Elite stage World Cup racing, against a field of premier athletes.

Snow affected his training runs and a small driving mistake left the RAF man disappointed with his 24<sup>th</sup> place finish, despite the quality of the field. He finished +1.83 seconds down on the German winning pair of Friedrich Francesco and Margis Thorsten.

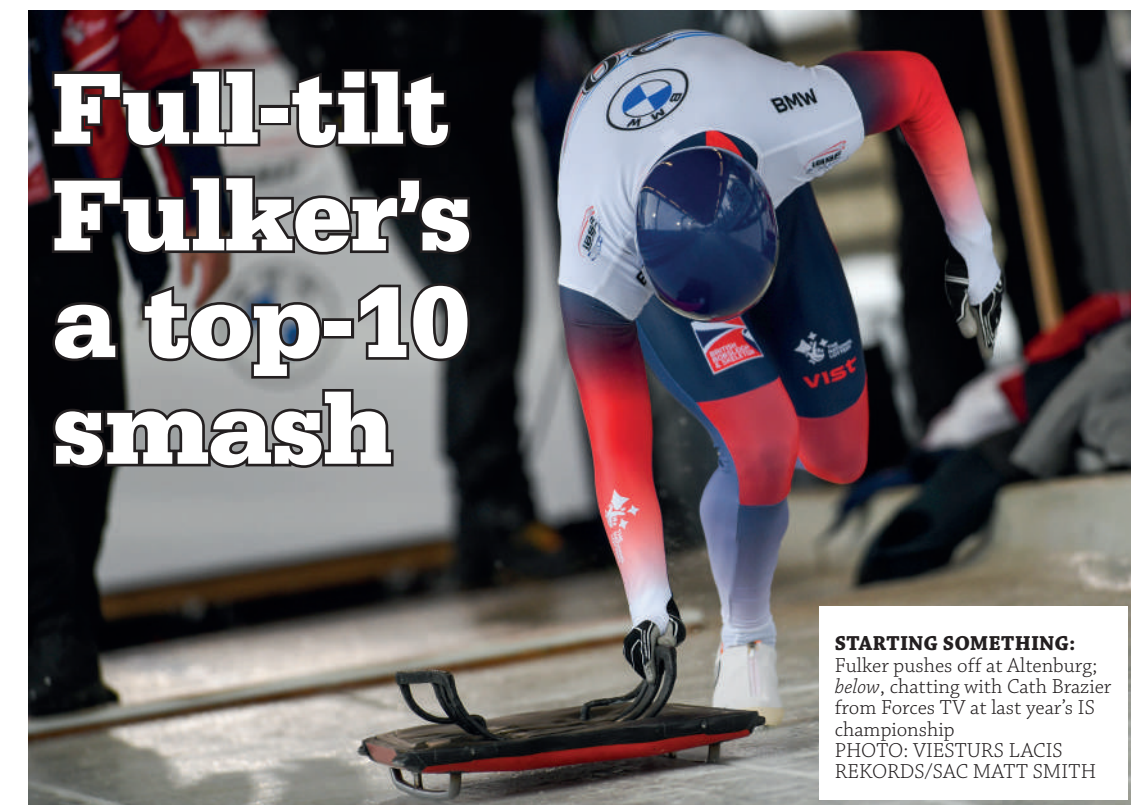
■ Follow Stephens' upcoming runs on Twitter @raficesports.



TRACK STARS: Top, Stephens with Matthew Wepke; here, Stephens taking a corner; left, push start in RAF colours at Königssee during the Inter-Service championships 2020. PHOTOS: VIESTURS LACIS REKORDS/ SAC MATT SMITH/SAC KATRINA KNOX

### SKELETON

## Full-tilt Fulker's a top-10 smash



STARTING SOMETHING: Fulker pushes off at Altenburg; below, chatting with Cath Brazier from Forces TV at last year's IS championship. PHOTO: VIESTURS LACIS REKORDS/SAC MATT SMITH

DESPITE a lack of podium finishes, SAC BEN Fulker has continued his blast into 2021 on the international skeleton scene.

Securing a 10<sup>th</sup> place finish at Altenburg in the European Cup was confirmation of his rising star. The finish came off the back of a third and top 10 finishes before the New Year.

The Altenburg track was dominated by British racer Matt Weston who stormed to first place with a total time of one minute 55.24 seconds, with the RAF racer +3.23 seconds down in 10<sup>th</sup>.

On his runs Fulker, 24, hit some impressive speeds, maxing out at 112.25kmh on his first run.

Next up the Serviceman went two places better in the Intercontinental Cup race, again at Altenburg. This time German sledder Axel Jungk took first place after the two heats, with a

total finish time of one minute, 53.11 seconds. Fulker, producing speeds of 115.49kmh, stormed to eighth, an impressive +2.24 seconds down on the top spot.

Fulker said: “Overall, I was happy with the results considering everything. I learned a lot from my race weeks in Altenburg that I will take forward into upcoming races.

“On both races the fields were quite tough since a lot of the more experienced sliders were using the race as extra ice time for practice towards the World

Championships, which will be held at the same track.

“I was a little disappointed with my performance in the European Cup, especially on the second run, but I was still getting to grips with the track.

“I slid a lot better in the ICC race, but my push let me down, due to some recurring back issues.

“The push is a huge factor towards your overall speed and downtime.”

The Service racer has two more outings before he completes his season, first in Germany at Königssee, closing things out at his favourite track in Igls, Austria.

■ Follow SAC Fulker's next two races on Twitter @raficesports.







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ISSN 0035-8614



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