

**The Forces' favourite paper**

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● See RnR p5



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● See RnR p3

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**ROYAL AIR FORCE**

Friday **January 15** 2021  
No. 1506 **70p**

# RAF News



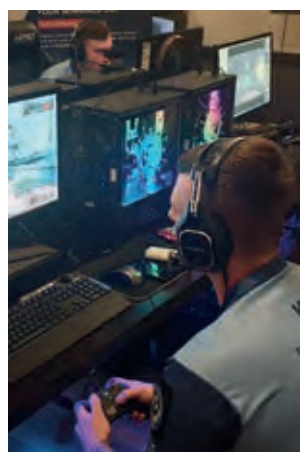
## New Year Honours – full listings

● Pages 18-19



### Esports

Screen test for VR team



● See p28

### Equestrian

Duo make their point



● See p29

# Service Rejoiners recruitment surge



PRIME MINISTER Boris Johnson has called in the military to wage war on Covid-19 as a new variant sparked another national lockdown and a spike in infections across the UK.  
● See p3

## Civvie jobs doubt lures back leavers

**Simon Mander**

FORMER FORCES leavers are flooding back to the military and filling RAF posts across the ranks.

A recruitment drive aimed at skilled ex-military personnel is luring back record numbers as fears grow over the civilian job market and rising levels of unemployment.

More than 150 Army, Navy and Air Force rejoiners have signed up with the RAF since the first nationwide lockdown, recruitment chiefs revealed.

That figure is expected to rise to 300 by the end of the financial year.

● See p16-17 for full report







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“I’m excited to be coming to London for 15 weeks of farce and frolic”

Will & Grace star Megan Mullally on her West End debut this summer in *Anything Goes*  
**See RnR p4-5**



“There are so many opportunities for a photog in the Falklands”

**Top RAF snapper Cpl Phil Dye: See p10**

“We are not done with this pandemic, but we look forward to further sport when we can”

Deputy director Sports Directorate Rich Fogden  
**See p27**



## RAF News

### RAF News

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# Forces war on Covid

## Continued from front

More than 5,000 Armed Forces personnel – including airmen and women – are being deployed on Covid response duties in what has been described as the biggest homeland operation in peacetime.

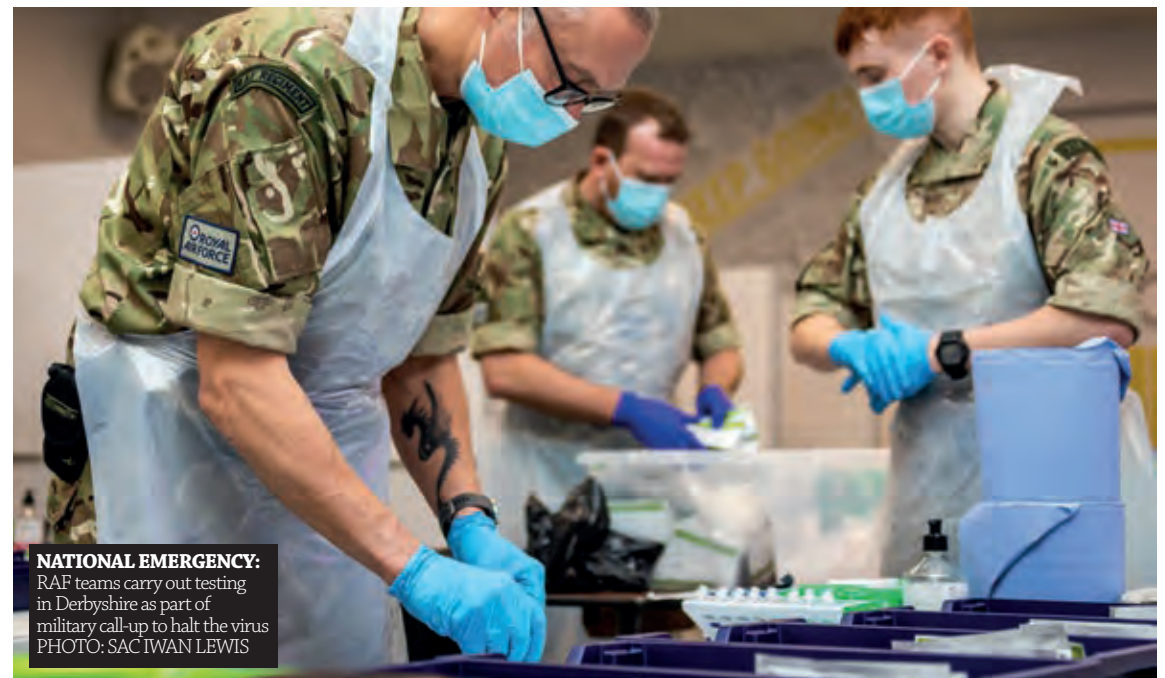
As *RAF News* went to press, the Moderna vaccine became the third Covid-19 jab approved for use in the UK and all international arrivals to Britain were required to test negative before being allowed entry.

Military personnel are working on 70 different tasks including testing and the rollout of vaccines – more than at any previous point in the pandemic.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: “The new year will see new levels of Armed Forces support to overcoming this pandemic. Thousands of Service personnel are working throughout the UK, wherever they are needed, to assist the civil authorities”

Numbers recently deployed to beef up community testing include Manchester (800), Kent (390), Swadlincote, Derbyshire (130), Kirklees, Yorkshire (75), and Lancashire (420).

In addition, more than 150



**NATIONAL EMERGENCY:**  
RAF teams carry out testing in Derbyshire as part of military call-up to halt the virus  
PHOTO: SACTIWAN LEWIS

personnel are deployed across the UK supporting regional vaccine planning, end-to-end logistics and delivery.

The government has also announced a Vaccine Quick Reaction Force of 21 teams of six personnel assigned to the seven

NHS England regions, able to provide surge support to the vaccine roll-out if required.

In Wales 90 Servicemen and women are backing up Health Boards and for the first time trained defence medics will help administer the vaccine while 94

military are driving ambulances.

In Scotland military planners are supporting the testing and vaccine programmes.

In Northern Ireland the Armed Forces have medevac capabilities on standby for Covid-19 patients when needed.

## This Week In History



**1942**

### Singapore sting

HURRICANES BASED in the Far East shoot down eight of a formation of 27 unescorted Japanese bombers over Singapore.

**1944**

### Stalag march

ALLIED POWS at Stalag Luft III at Sagan are roused late at night and evacuated, beginning the infamous Long March. Hundreds die during the 500-mile trek.



**1991**

### Tornado Iraqi strike

A strike force of 20 Tornado GR1s attack airfields in Iraq during Operation Desert Storm. RAF pilot John Peters and navigator John Nichol are shot down and captured by Iraqi Forces.

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





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# Carrier strike group set for frontline

F-35 B JETS are now on stand-by for short notice missions after Britain's Carrier Strike Group declared initial operating capability.

The milestone means 617 (Dambusters) Sqn pilots and ground crews are fully trained to handle weapons and equipment.

The move also sees the integration of anti-submarine frigates and destroyers, fixed and rotary wing aircraft able to operate alongside the carrier.

Defence Minister Jeremy Quin said: "This achievement is a testament to the determination of our Service personnel and industry

workforce who have delivered this first-rate military capability held by only a handful of nations.

"I wish the entire Carrier Strike Group well ahead of their first operational deployment this year."

Reaching its readiness state on schedule follows the success of the Nato Joint Warrior Exercises last autumn which saw the HMS Queen Elizabeth II train with 13 of the UK's allies.

It also saw the largest number of aircraft on a Royal Navy carrier since 1983, and the most F-35B jets at sea across the globe.

The Group is expected to achieve full capability by December 2023.



**LIFT OFF:**  
F-35s on deck during recent Nato exercises



## Forces get the Bug

A NANO-DRONE weighing less than a mobile phone has been issued to Forces combat units.

The hand-held 200g device dubbed the Bug has a two-mile range and is designed to transmit tactical intel to frontline fighters operating in extreme weather conditions. The device was developed by British tech firm UAVTEK and BAE.

### In brief



**DUST UP:** C-17 lands on rough terrain strip during trials in Louisiana

## Low down and dirty

UK C-17 crews are honing their skills conducting dirt strip landings alongside the USAF in Louisiana.

The heavyweight transporter operated by 99 Sqn from RAF Brize Norton has carried out a series of Semi-Prepared Runway Operations during the drill to develop the aircraft's capability for military and humanitarian missions.



## Runway success

LOSSIEMOUTH'S £75 million runway upgrade has been completed ahead of schedule after a year-long construction programme.

Typhoon and P-8 Maritime patrol aircraft were moved to former RAF stations Kinloss and Leuchars for three months during the main resurfacing work, completed in October last year.

# Spear sharpens F-35 capability

**Simon Mander**

**LIGHTNING JETS are to be armed with one of the world's deadliest missiles under a £550 million arms deal.**

The F-35B will carry the supersonic SPEAR 3 air-to-ground rockets when they launch from Britain's new aircraft carriers.

The turbo jet powered weapon (pictured) has a range of more than 140kms and can operate across land and sea, day or night, while the pilot and aircraft remain a safe distance away.

Defence Minister Jeremy Quin said: "This next-generation missile will allow us to protect our personnel and assets on the ground, from thousands of metres in the sky above."

Following a successful development phase, the new seven-year demonstration and manufacture contract with MBDA will support more than 700 UK jobs.

Project leader Col Martin French said: "We are in the demonstration phase to prove the system against the UK's requirements and integrate the weapon onto the F-35."



Spear will be fired from a Typhoon during initial trials.

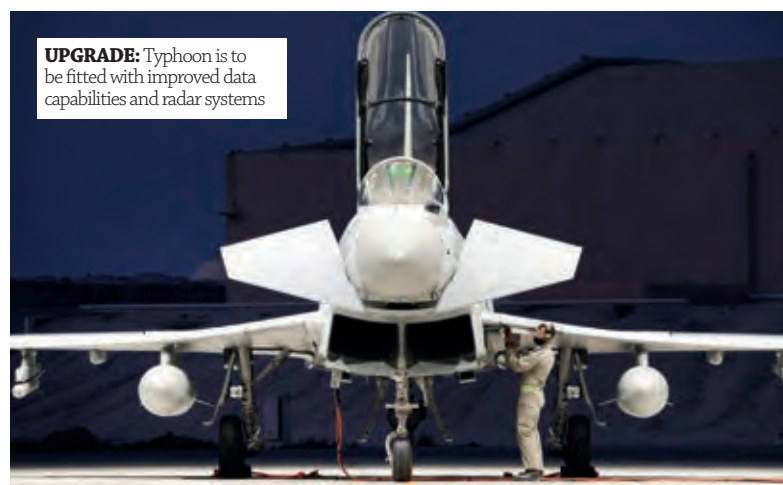
With its unique combination of stealth, cutting-edge radar, sensor technology, and armed with SPEAR3, the F-35 will protect

aircraft carriers from enemy ships, submarines, aircraft and missiles, weapons chiefs said.

The UK currently has 21 fifth-generation F-35Bs, having received three new jets on November 30.

Lightning declared initial operating capability at sea recently and F-35 jets will sail with HMS Queen Elizabeth on her maiden Global Carrier Strike Group '21 deployment later this year.

**UPGRADE:** Typhoon is to be fitted with improved data capabilities and radar systems



## Typhoon radar boost

TYPHOONS WILL get updated radar and better data analytics for operational missions under a new £127 million contract between the MOD and defence contractor QinetiQ.

The five-year deal is part of the Engineering Delivery Partner scheme under which the firm will work with Defence Equipment and Support to provide support services for the RAF's multi-role fighter and optimise its

capabilities, a spokesman said.

QinetiQ group managing director air & space, Nic Anderson, said: "We provide essential engineering expertise and are proud to contribute to the UK's critical defence capabilities through the Typhoon programme."

He said the contract took the total orders received under the partner programme to more than 1,000 worth £500 million since it began two years ago.





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# Vet's joy as Spit picture lost in raid is replaced

A WARTIME Spitfire pilot has had a treasured heirloom replaced by air historians after burglars stole the original from his Falmouth home.

Heartless thieves took a cherished photo of the last surviving 288 Sqn aviator Dr Edmund James flying the iconic fighter.

But after hearing of his plight, Air Historical Branch researchers tracked down a sequence of 16 images taken seconds apart which almost matched the aerial shot that took pride of place on his wall. The 98-year-old was moved to tears when he was presented with the pictures by St Mawgan Station Commander Wg Cdr Marshall Kinnear and a message from Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston.

Dr James said: "This is such a wonderful surprise; I can't tell you how much it means to have this photo back on my wall next to my medals. The photo was given to me on my wedding day as a present from my Squadron colleagues

when I was just 19 years old."

Unfortunately, the signatures of his fellow airmen on the original photo, many of whom died in combat, cannot be replaced.

Wg Cdr Kinnear said: "It's a real honour to be able to deliver this photo to such a valued member of our RAF family, knowing how much it meant to him."

The Air Historical Branch confirmed Dr James' Service record as a fighter pilot flying missions over Germany and France during the Second World War between 1940 and 1946.

Veterans Minister Johnny Mercer said: "I was deeply saddened to hear that Dr James' much-loved Spitfire picture had been stolen.

"Dr James has treasured the memento since his service in the Second World War.

"While something so special can never be replaced, we hope that our gift – a picture of the same Spitfire – will bring him some joy."

**HAPPY RETURNS:** WWII Spitfire pilot Dr Edmund James with a replacement picture of his 288 Sqn Spitfire presented to him by RAF chiefs  
PHOTO: CPL ANDREW MORRIS



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## Six of best

SIX STUDENT pilots have graduated at a socially-distanced ceremony at Cranwell.

Four Royal Air Force and two Army Air Corps students marked the completion of the first stage of their flying training on 57 Squadron Grob Prefect aircraft.

Prizes were awarded to Fg Off Charlie Mathews, who won the VT Aerospace trophy for best performance in the air, and Fg Off James Gray, who received the Bertram Dickson memorial trophy for the best all-round performance and the Laurence Minot memorial trophy for embodying the spirit and ethos of 57 Sqn.

The graduates have now been



**NEW PILOTS:** The students graduate at RAF College Cranwell in a Covid-safe ceremony

'streamed' into their future career paths with two of the RAF students remaining on the Prefect for additional training before

moving on to fast jet and multi-engine aircraft while two others will join their AAC colleagues on helicopter training at Shawbury.

## Console-ation prize

RAF GAMERS needed console-ation after being beaten in the finals of an international contest.

The US Space Force became cyber champs after defeating all American and British military branches during a Call of Duty: Black Ops Cold War tournament.

The COD-fathers put the British Army in third place, followed by the US Army, Royal Navy, US Marine Corps, US Navy, and the US Air Force. The Space Force became the US military's newest independent service branch in 2019 and unlike the American Army and Navy, does not have an official e-sports team.

Each of the eight teams consisted of four service members with others selected from a tournament. Each team was coached by high-profile

civilian players and streamers who gave advice in real-time.

The tournament was created by the non-profit Call of Duty Endowment (CODE) organisation launched by Activision Blizzard to provide civilian jobs for unemployed military veterans.

The gaming giant has donated more than \$38 million to the group, which has a goal of putting 100,000 veterans back into the job market by 2024. "Space Force isn't even a year old so this may have been their very first win in anything competitive against any of the other services," CODE executive director Dan Goldenberg said at the event. "So it's a heck of a great way to start off their history."

*For more on this story see p28*



**POWER LINE-UP:** 12 Squadron Typhoon FGR4 leads a flypast over landmarks in Doha, Qatar. It was joined by a Qatar Emiri Air Force Rafale and Mirage 2000-5. Inset, pilot gives thumbs-up

PHOTOS: CPL BABBS ROBINSON

# Sixty Epic missions for 12 Sqn

BRITISH AND Qatari Typhoons staged a dramatic flypast over Doha as part of the Middle Eastern state's National Day parade.

The display marked the joint force's successful completion of 60 missions together on Exercise Epic Skies.

Covid-19 restrictions stopped spotters watching the celebrations from their usual vantage point - Doha's Corniche waterfront promenade - so most Qataris viewed the event on TV or online instead.



During the month-long training mission fast jets operating from Doha air base practised close air support missions and dogfighting scenarios alongside and against the Emirate's Rafales and Mirage 2000-5s.

Qatar has ordered 24 Typhoons, nine fast jet Hawk trainers and a £6 billion support package. The first of its Eurofighters

are due to be ready in 2022 and Qatari pilots currently on RAF Coningsby-based 12 Sqn are likely to be the first to fly them as part of the country's new Typhoon squadron.

Deputy Officer Commanding 12 Sqn, Lt Col Faisal Al-Ghanim, said: "Returning to Qatar to fly the Typhoon for the first time as a joint squadron has been an exceptionally proud moment. I am very excited

to return to the UK where we will soon be welcoming new pilots and technicians on to 12 Sqn."

The first Qatari Typhoon technicians graduate from Cosford later this year and will work alongside their RAF counterparts to maintain the jet's avionics, airframe, and weapons.

Officer Commanding 12 Sqn, Wg Cdr Chris Wright,

said: "This year's Exercise Epic Skies has marked the coming of age for our joint squadron and a real step change in terms of the tactics we have been able to employ in a wide range of training scenarios."

The first Qatari pilots to fly Typhoons with 12 Sqn started in June at Coningsby and several of them returned home for the exercise as part of the joint squadron.



**KITTED OUT:** 12 Sqn personnel masked up and hard at work in Doha

## Qatar link-up coming of age for joint endeavour



News

# Hotshot Phil eclipses rivals

**SHARPSHOOTER** CPL Phil Dye is hitting new heights after being crowned the RAF's best photographer.

The talented 35-year-old topped a public poll with his stunning shot of a winchman – and was brought in to capture high-altitude images of the recent solar eclipse and the super-iceberg in the South Atlantic.

His winning picture of a medical evacuation drill with 84 Sqn crews in Akrotiri netted thousands of votes to win the annual RAF award while his images of the trillion tonne ice monster have been seen across the globe.

Speaking about the challenges of capturing his winning shot he said: "I had been flying with 84 Sqn many times and had got to know the crew well enough to suggest we try something different after the exercise had ended.

"I laid flat on my back whilst battling the downwash from the rotor blades and had the challenge of the sun directly behind both subjects.

"I was reliant on the winchman being able to get super close to me as I was operating with a wide-angled lens. He must have been just inches away from me."



**GO ON MY SUN:** Cpl Dye captures eclipse on board A400M; right, competition-winning winchman shot; below right, superberg in South Atlantic

Cpl Dye (*below*) was deployed to the Falklands late last year, flying sorties with the RAF's A400M Atlas crews from Mount Pleasant.

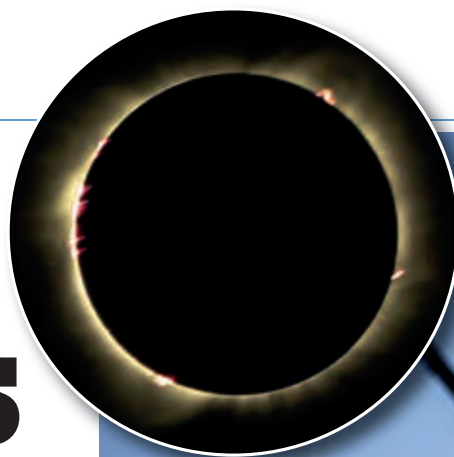
He launched two high-altitude missions when British scientists called in the RAF to capture images of December's eclipse and track the titanic iceberg A68a threatening the coast of South

Georgia. The 'berg is so large it can only be fully seen from space.

Cpl Dye added: "We were operating at 30,000ft for those. I had numerous adventures with the Atlas flying down to South Georgia.

"There are so many opportunities for a photographer in the Falklands.

"Working in a Tri-Service environment gives a real insight into the challenges of maintaining an overseas station."



More winners p20-21

## Double Deutsche



**BRITISH** and German Typhoons have flown joint sorties over Eastern Europe.

RAF Lossiemouth-based 6 Squadron jets linked up with the Luftwaffe's Jagdgeschwader 71 'Richthofen', currently based at Amari Air Base in Estonia where

they are on Nato's Baltic Air Policing mission.

RAF photographer SAC Samantha Holden captured this powerful image of a pair of German Typhoons beside a 101 Sqn Voyager air-to-air refuelling tanker from Brize Norton.



**VISIT:** MP meets RAF Military Police

## MPs & MPs

**POLITICIANS** were given an exclusive look at the latest technology used to protect airbases on a visit to Honington.

Eight MPs from all parties got to grips with a virtual reality training system being trialled by the RAF Regiment and watched an operational demonstration of airfield defence and close-quarter battle techniques.

They were also briefed on RAF Police counter intelligence and special investigations and the Force Protection Centre's role in pioneering the use of Remotely Piloted Air Systems and training personnel to deploy across the globe into high-risk areas.

The socially distanced visit was hosted by Station Commander Gp Capt Matt Radnall and the RAF Force Protection Force Commander, Air Cdre Scott Miller, and included discussions with Servicemen and women on how they had adjusted to the Covid pandemic.



In brief



PEDAL POWER: Terry Butcher

## Brave Terry battling on

RAF VETERAN Terry Butcher is cycling 100 miles to raise money for SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity.

The former aircraft engineer took up the challenge after being diagnosed with terminal cancer while battling diabetes and a stroke.

Now he plans to pedal 100 miles a month to raise cash for good causes, including the Devon SSAFA branch that supported him.

He said: "It looked like the cancer was beaten as I overcame the stroke and diabetes. Unfortunately for me the cancer escaped and got into my lungs and liver. This is terminal but I hope it will take some considerable time to get to that stage."

Terry was referred to SSAFA and it secured funding from the RAF Benevolent Fund for a special bed, household equipment, and an e-bike.

● To support Terry visit: [justgiving.com/fundraising/terry-butcher2](https://justgiving.com/fundraising/terry-butcher2)



NEW ROLE: Former airman Andy Jones

## That's Andy for RAF vet

THE RAF Benevolent Fund has awarded £15,000 to The Poppy Factory in Richmond, which helps wounded, injured and sick veterans get back to employment.

RAF veteran Andy Jones experienced burn-out and mental health pressures during his military and civilian careers.

After being made redundant from a civvy role last year he was helped by a Poppy Factory advisor and now has a new job in logistics.

The Surrey-based charity has helped more than 150 ex-Forces men and women with health conditions move into work since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

# Island guardians



CLOSE AIR SUPPORT: RAF Typhoon provides cover as Grenadier Guard moves inland during exercise PHOTOS: CPL PHIL DYE

FALKLANDS-BASED fast jets provided air cover for troops practising assault manoeuvres on the South Atlantic islands.

A 1435 Flight Typhoon roared overhead as Grenadier and Scots Guards disembarked

from HMS Forth and stormed a beach using the uneven and rocky landscape to cover their movements.

The manoeuvres are part of Exercise Cape Bayonet, which tests the resident British Army

Roulement Infantry Company's combat readiness.

The joint training also provided the Falkland Islands Defence Force with the opportunity to develop its tactical edge by taking part in a series of challenging scenarios.

Four Typhoons, a Voyager tanker, a Hercules transporter and a Chinook helicopter are based at Mount Pleasant station, which was opened in 1985 to provide round-the-clock air defence for the British overseas territory.

## Oli presses on to honour grandad's memory

RAF POLICEMAN Corporal Oliver Jinks and his comrades bench pressed the combined weight of the Red Arrows in an epic challenge for Cancer Research UK.

Oli thought up the stunt after his grandfather, David Blease, was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in July at the age of 71.

Sadly, Mr Blease passed away in October, but Oli was determined to honour his memory.

Cpl Jinks said: "Four hundred and fifty people die of cancer every day and I thought 'this isn't okay'. I wanted to change that."

Oli and five of his colleagues from the RAF Police bench pressed the equivalent weight of all nine Red Arrows jets at the RAF Wittering gym – a staggering 32.65 tonnes in total. Amazingly, the challenge was completed in less than half an hour, raising almost £3,000.



FIT FOR PURPOSE: Oli, left, and Cpl Matt Anthony

Oli said: "Thank you to all my mates who helped with this, they've done amazingly well. We'll have some sore

chest and triceps in the morning but it has been worth it."

Patrick Keely, Cancer Research UK spokesperson for the East of England, said: "We are absolutely delighted that Oli is helping to raise vital funds for us with his amazing and unique weightlifting challenge."

"Our work into the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer has been at the heart of the progress that has seen survival in the UK double in the last 40 years."

Wittering OC Gp Capt Jo Lincoln congratulated the young corporal and his colleagues on their achievement.

She said: "What an incredible effort from Oli and his teammates. To bench press that much weight in such a short space of time is just outstanding."

"All of us know someone who has been affected by cancer. I am so proud that he has gone to such lengths to make a real difference. Brilliant work Cpl Jinks, well done."





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CAMERA**





In brief



LIFELINE: Airplay scheme for RAF kids

## Airplay nets tennis bonus

THE AIRPLAY youth scheme for children of RAF personnel is to get a £110,000 boost.

It will receive the funding over the next three years from the Wimbledon Foundation, the charity of The All England Lawn Tennis Club.

A spokeswoman for the RAF Benevolent Fund, which runs Airplay, said: "Airplay has operated on RAF stations for more than 10 years, giving young people aged eight to 18 access to youth club sessions with their peers and the support of specially-trained youth workers.

"In response to lockdown restrictions, the Fund launched Airplay Connect, a digital platform where youngsters can get in touch with each other and their youth workers."



HAPPY VALLEY: Lt Cdr Dave Bouyac

## 4,000 up for Valley QFI

AN RAF Valley flying instructor has achieved a career milestone – clocking up 4,000 flying hours.

Royal Navy fast jet supremo Lt Cdr Dave Bouyac is a Qualified Flying Instructor and Flight Commander on IV(AC) Sqn flying the Hawk T2. He trains the next generation of fast jet pilots for the RAF and Royal Navy, who will go on to fly the Typhoon FGR4 and F35.

He joined up in 1998 and began his flying career on the Commando Helicopter Force flying the 'Jungle' Sea King with 848 Naval Air Squadron. He has served on operations in Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

He said: "Forgive the pun, but the past 23 years have literally flown by. It's been an honour and a privilege to have had such a varied flying career."

## Bin bag bombers to reduce landfill and cut CO2 emissions

# The Dumpbusters



WASTE NOT, WANT NOT: F-35s and Typhoons could use fuel made from rubbish

### Staff Reporter

**FIGHTERS OF the future could be fuelled from household waste under bold MOD plans to slash carbon emissions.**

Bin bag contents including hydrogenated fats and oils, wood, alcohol, sugar, biomass and algae could power fast jets, says Defence Secretary Ben Wallace.

F-35s, Typhoons and Wildcat helicopters currently burn kerosene, but could use up to 50 per cent sustainable sources under new MOD aviation fuel standards.

Aviation consumes two thirds of fuel used across Defence and it's hoped the move will slash emissions and the military's carbon footprint.

Experts say substituting 30 per cent of normal fuel with an alternative source in a jet travelling 1,000 nautical miles could reduce CO2 emissions by 18 per cent.

And the development would cut packaging, grass cuttings and food scraps being sent to landfill.

Mr Wallace said: "By refining our aviation fuel standards, we are taking simple yet effective steps to reduce the environmental footprint

of Defence. As we strive to meet this government's net zero carbon emissions target by 2050, it is right that we spearhead these positive changes across both military and civilian sectors."

The MOD's announcement opens the door to civilian airlines making similar moves and may influence Australia and several Nato countries which follow the Defence standard as there is no commercial equivalent.

Madrid-based firm CLH-PS – which provides fuel to military airfields and Heathrow, Gatwick,

and Manchester airports – has welcomed the changes.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps added: "From powering RAF jets to the passenger planes which get us from A to B, sustainable fuels will play a huge part in decarbonising aviation and I'm excited to explore the possibilities as we make transport cleaner, greener and more efficient."

Further measures to make the military greener will be announced in the MOD's Climate Change and Sustainability Review with findings set to be published early this year.

## Bike ride for Dambuster Johnny's 100<sup>th</sup>

A CYCLE challenge to celebrate the centenary of the last surviving Dambuster, Sqn Ldr George 'Johnny' Johnson, is due to go ahead in May.

Participants can choose either a 56-mile or a 100-mile bike ride, organised by the RAF Benevolent Fund and dubbed the Dambusters Ride.

Both routes start and finish at the Petwood Hotel in Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire, the home of the Dambusters – 617 Squadron.

The shorter route will visit RAF College, Cranwell, where the Dambusters completed their training, and the longer route will also go to RAF Scampton, where the Dambusters flew from, and Highfields School,

Newark, where Johnny was a teacher after his wartime service.

You can also take part in the event virtually.

Johnny (pictured left), who was 99 in November, said: "Not only will this event raise vital funds to support RAF personnel, past and present, it will also pay tribute to the brave men of Bomber Command who made the ultimate sacrifice on the Dambusters raid and throughout World War II.

"Their loss must never be forgotten and it is my hope that through this event a new generation will learn about the cost of the freedom they enjoy today.



"The Benevolent Fund does incredible work supporting RAF veterans and serving personnel and I would like to thank anyone who signs up for this cycle ride."

AVM Chris Elliott, the RAFBF's Controller, said: "Johnny showed true heroism in his time with 617 Sqn, so what better way to honour his centenary than by launching a new fundraising challenge that will help support other RAF veterans and personnel?"

Cyclists can take part either as individual riders or in a team of up to 10. The top individual fundraiser will win a flight in a Tiger Moth and the top fundraising team VIP tickets to the Fund's Dambuster Dinner at the Petwood Hotel in October.

The minimum fundraising target is £100 and the registration deadline is January 31.

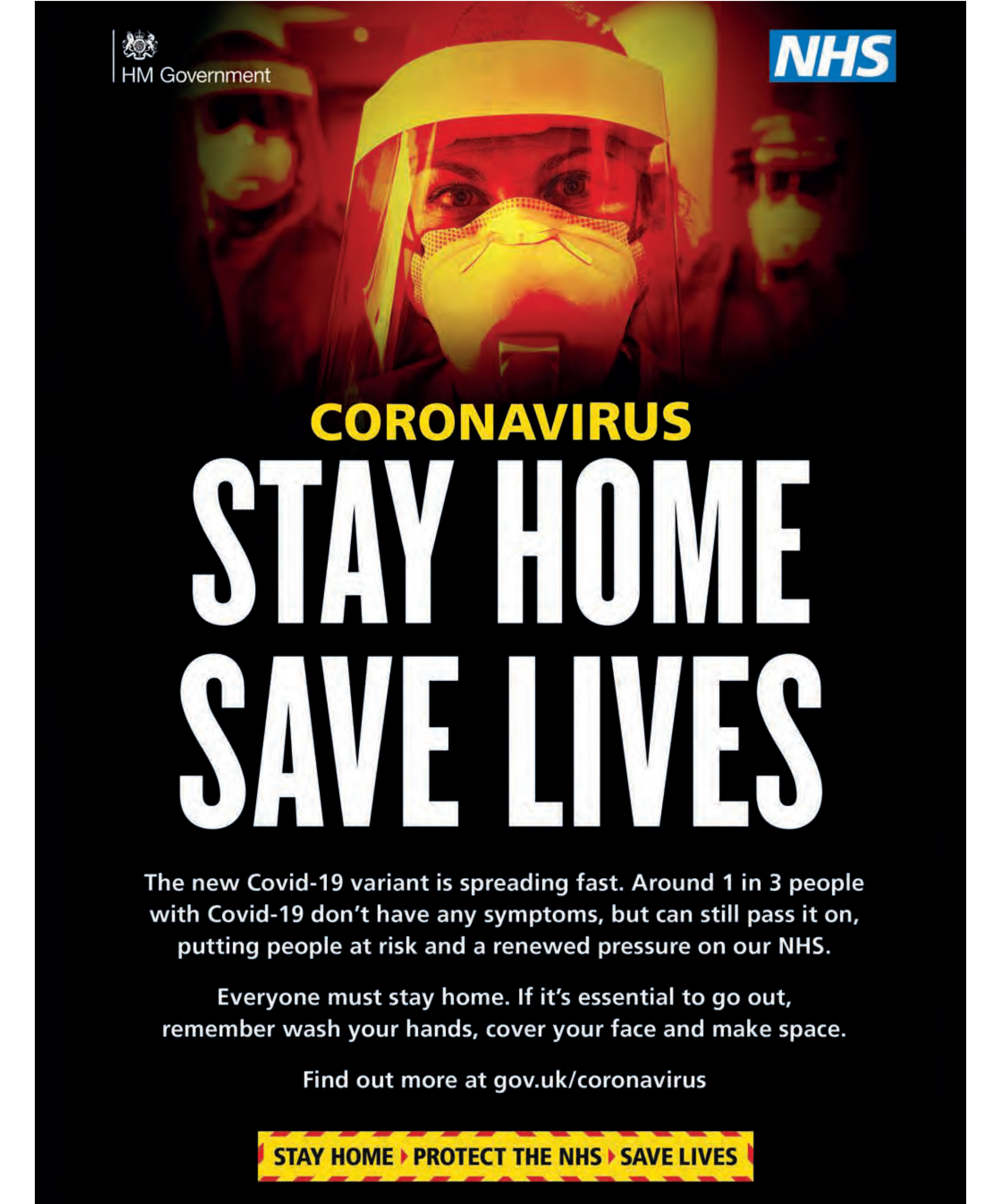
Go to: rafbf.org for more details.





HM Government

**NHS**

The background of the poster is a photograph of healthcare workers in full personal protective equipment (PPE), including face shields and masks. The image is tinted with a red and orange color scheme, creating a sense of urgency and danger.

**CORONAVIRUS**

# STAY HOME SAVE LIVES

The new Covid-19 variant is spreading fast. Around 1 in 3 people with Covid-19 don't have any symptoms, but can still pass it on, putting people at risk and a renewed pressure on our NHS.

Everyone must stay home. If it's essential to go out, remember wash your hands, cover your face and make space.

Find out more at [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://gov.uk/coronavirus)

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



## News

### RAFA's cycle world appeal

THE RAF Association is appealing for people to join its fundraising initiative to 'cycle the world' in 24 hours.

Riders are being asked to collectively pedal 24,901 miles – equal to circling the world at the equator.

The ride is split into two formats – an on-road event in Leicestershire on June 5 and a virtual event on static or moving bikes anywhere in the world between 7pm on June 4 and 7pm on June 5.

Registration is £35 for the road event and £20 for the virtual one.

● Goto: [rafa.org.uk/rafarides2021](http://rafa.org.uk/rafarides2021) for more information and to register.



AIR FORCE  
STALWART:  
WO Hanson

### 36 not out for WO

ENGINEER Warrant Officer Emma Hanson was bowled over by her colleagues after retiring as a regular with 36 years' unbroken service.

But it's not quite civvy street yet for the Wittering-based veteran who takes up another hot seat as a reservist.

WO Hanson dreamed of being a pilot after enlisting in 1984 but is proud of her avionics expertise, which has taken her to Germany, Afghanistan, Texas, the Falklands, Norway and Denmark.

She said: "There were no opportunities for female pilots back in the day, so they suggested to me that if I

couldn't fly them, why not fix them?"

Her regular career ended on a high working as the Cambridgeshire station's Executive Officer – a post normally only given to officers of Squadron Leader rank.

And she plans to take up a new challenge from April as full-time RAF Community Careers Liaison Officer for the East Midlands and East Anglia.

She said: "To a young woman who is thinking about having an engineering career in the RAF today I would say 'just do it'. It is remarkable, diverse, challenging and 100 per cent rewarding."

# Benefits boost could be worth thousands to veterans Credit where credit's due..

## Tracey Allen

THOUSANDS OF Armed Forces veterans could see increases in their Universal Credit payments, thanks to a clarification in Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) policy brought about by the RAF Benevolent Fund and The Royal British Legion.

Welfare benefits executives at the Fund identified an inconsistency in the way Service Attributable Pensions (SAPs) and attributable Service Invalidity Pensions (SIPs) were treated when considering Universal Credit applications.

In some cases, this pension was treated as income meaning the Universal Credit payment was lower, in other cases it was disregarded, said the RAFBF.

A spokeswoman said: "The Fund's benefit executives, who operate the Advice and Advocacy service, have successfully advocated on behalf of its beneficiaries and overturned these decisions in the past, often enabling them to receive back-dated payments amounting to thousands of pounds.

"The DWP looked into this and agreed to clarify their guidance for decision makers to make it clear that this type of income should be disregarded when calculating entitlement to Universal Credit."

AVM Chris Elliot, the RAFBF's chief executive, said: "This decision will have a significant impact on any Armed Forces member who receives a Service Attributable Pension or an attributable Service Invalidity Pension and claims Universal Credit.

"Veterans should not be disadvantaged due to their service and we wholeheartedly support tightening up this area of DWP policy."

Laura Austin-Pugh, the Fund's welfare benefits executive, added: "The uncertainty around this area just meant the DWP were making inconsistent decisions – sometimes ignoring SAP income for Universal Credit and sometimes taking it into account. As a result, claimants were being over or underpaid and, as advisers, we could not confidently advise on how SAP income would be treated for Universal Credit purposes.

"We did not want our advice to result in an overpayment that the beneficiary would later need to repay."

■ Call: 0300 102 1919 and ask to speak to a welfare benefits advisor or email: [advice@rafbf.org.uk](mailto:advice@rafbf.org.uk) for more information.



INTEROPERABILITY: French Rafale refuels from a RAF Voyager, inset, and lining up with RAF Typhoons, main picture  
PHOTOS: SAC KIMBERLEY WATERSON and SAC MEGAN WODHOUSE

BRITISH and French fast jets scrambled together in an exercise to practise repelling potential enemies.

RAF Coningsby-based Typhoons linked up with Armée de l'air Rafales to intercept a simulated non-Nato military aircraft entering UK airspace.

The scenario simulated tracking aircraft heading towards Britain,

triggering the launch of Lossiemouth jets, which then handed over to Coningsby-based fighters while French Quick Reaction Alert pilots also took off.

Air Officer Commanding 11 Group Air Vice-Marshal Ian Duguid said: "Enhanced air security training with France is a demonstration of our close cooperation and interoperability with

our Nato partners."

The scenario included Brize Norton-based Voyager air-to-air refuelling tankers which support the fighters protecting the skies.

It's planned to repeat the exercises twice yearly to hone the tactical co-ordination involved with international cross-border operations.



# DEMOBBED? NOW REMOB

RAF Rejoiners team working hard to lure former military personnel back into the fold

**R**ECRUITERS ARE enticing ex-military personnel to leave civvy street to fill RAF vacancies.

And they're offering Army and Royal Navy veterans benefits if they remob in light blue.

The Cranwell-based Rejoiners team is entering its third successful year filling manpower shortages across all trades and branches at all ranks.

Its efforts have solved the Service's pilot shortage by recruiting ex-military, civilian airline aircrew who have signed on again in the wake of the Covid crisis.

Recruitment and selection chief Gp Capt Will Dole said: "The team is a dedicated group that specialises in returning and rejoining personnel to the RAF."

"It has remained focused, working tirelessly to ensure frontline units

have the required suitably qualified and experienced personnel to continue to deliver air and space power on a global stage."

From April to November 153 rejoiners successfully filled RAF roles, with that total expected to grow to more than 300 personnel by the end of the financial year.

They include:

- 91 Officers, including 71 pilots across all aircraft types
- 62 Other Ranks
- 23 Army and Royal Navy transferees.

Rejoiners team leader Flt Lt Chris Thornton said his unit offered a bespoke service for individuals considering returning to khaki.

He said a fast-track process was available to veterans up to 57 years old with re-entry at a different rank available for those with the right experience.

All posts come with regular terms and conditions, but shorter engagements are available for ex-Army and Royal Navy recruits.

Flt Lt Thornton said: "Interested ex-serving or personnel wishing to transfer should consult the RAF Rejoiners website for further details on trades and branches."

"Rejoiners are able to rejoin the RAF at their previous rank and increment level. Naturally, they should comply with current security, medical and fitness standards. I am very fortunate to be a member of the Rejoiners team offering individuals a chance to be part of the RAF again. The team have been a real joy to work with."

The unit is currently keen to recruit people with online expertise as Defence beefs up its cyber warfare capabilities.



ARMY DAYS: WO2 Peter Wells (circled)

## Sgt Peter Wells, Logistics Supplier

Sgt Wells had a full 23-year Army career serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and Nato HQ. He was a US Army Aviation civilian contractor before joining the RAF Regulars.

"Having served under command of the RAF both at Odiham and twice in the Falkland Islands, it was an opportunity not to be missed when I saw the Rejoiner/Transferee advert on the Career Transition website."



RAF TRAINING: Sgt Wells

## SAC Scott Millar, Air and Space Operations Specialist (Flight Operations)

Afghanistan veteran SAC Millar served eight years as a Flight Operations Assistant, including a spell on the first Typhoon Squadron, before leaving.

"I had a few civilian jobs since I left, I trained as a bus driver, then worked with a driver agency delivering parcels before becoming a baggage handler at Inverness airport. I just couldn't settle in civvy street. It is a hard environment to not have the same job security and perks that come with the RAF lifestyle. I missed the job and the people you serve with."



BACK IN THE SWING OF MILITARY LIFE: SAC Millar reacquaints himself with a gas mask and a rifle at RAF Halton



FIRING ON ALL CYLINDERS: Sgt Peter Wells undertakes weapons training on a recent Rejoiners course at RAF Halton



## Cpl Charmaine Hawkins, Personnel Support

Ex-soldier Cpl Hawkins served 15 years in the Regular Army, including tours of Iraq and Northern Ireland, before taking voluntary redundancy in 2013 and joining the Army Reserves to balance staying in with the commitments of a young family. She left in 2019, to apply for Regular RAF Service and is now 606 Reserve Sqn's HR specialist.

"I had heard great things about the RAF, and I wanted to go in a different direction. I also wanted to be financially secure and be in a more permanent role."

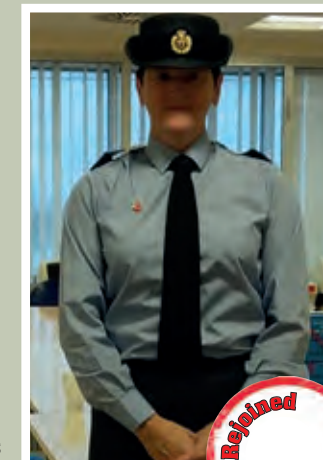


## Sgt Jen Holt, Personnel Support

Former RAF Regular and Reservist of 13 years Sgt Holt became a Prison Officer after leaving the service when being LGBTQ+ was not permitted in the Armed Forces.

She rejoined in October 19 and is now on the Rejoiners Recruitment Team at High Wycombe.

"I learned that the RAF had full-time Reservist roles at Benson close to where I owned a home, it was wonderful to be back in light blue. It was through my role in recruitment that I heard about the RAF Regular Rejoiners Scheme, and the rest is history. It was great to be reinstated as a Sgt, which is what I originally left the regular RAF as 17 years previously. It is great to see the strides that the UK Armed Forces have made to become more inclusive, I always felt there was unfinished business for me and the RAF. To have this second chance has been amazing."



## Cpl Kehinde Lajuwomi, Personnel Support

Former soldier Cpl Lajuwomi served 10 years as an Army Personnel Administrator supporting the REME, Household Cavalry and Royal Engineers before transferring to the RAF.

"It has always been my aspiration to be versatile in my career in the Armed Forces. I believe this will enhance my ability to meet various demands and needs of the Service. Whilst assigned to a Tri-Service Unit, I discovered that the RAF offers the opportunities for me to meet my aspirations and serve to the best of my abilities."



RESERVE: In Chinook





**Win: US war  
drama on  
DVD ● p3**

# R'n'R



## Family affair – Finding Alice ● p3

**Announcements**

- P6-7
- Puzzles**
- P8



# H

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Our Armed Forces Discount is available across all of our developments. The Government's Forces Help to Buy scheme can be used in conjunction with this offer, which enables service personnel to borrow up to 50% of their salary (to a maximum of £25,000), interest free, to help them buy their first home, move to another property on assignment, or as their family needs change. Contact us today for details.

[HAYFIELDHOMES.CO.UK](http://HAYFIELDHOMES.CO.UK)







**ALICE:**  
Partner  
dies in  
new home

# Curiouser and curiouser

## Bereaved Alice finds herself out of her depth in new 'smart' house

**THE TEAM** behind hit show *The Durrells* – actor Keeley Hawes, writer Simon Nye and director Roger Goldby – have reunited for ITV's new drama *Finding Alice*.

In the six-part series Hawes plays Alice Dillon who is going through an 'honest, raw, blackly comic journey of grief' after her partner Harry's death.

The all-star cast includes Joanna Lumley (*Gangster Granny*, *Absolutely Fabulous*) and Nigel Havers (*Benidorm*, *Coronation Street*) as Alice's parents Sarah and Roger, with Jason Merrells (*Agatha Raisin*, *Safe House*) as Harry. Gemma Jones (*Gentleman Jack*, *Unforgotten*) and Kenneth Cranham (*Hatton Garden*, *Bancroft*) play Minnie and Gerry, Alice's in-laws.

For Alice, Harry and their daughter Charlotte (Isabella Pappas), moving into their new high-tech 'smart' home should have been a dream come true. But it quickly turns into a nightmare when Alice discovers Harry dead at the bottom of the stairs.

Then the police turn up asking questions about the night Harry died. To make matters worse, more unexpected visitors start knocking on Alice's door, and she begins to realise that Harry's business debt wasn't the only secret he kept hidden from her.

Lumley's character, Sarah, is

described as 'blunt and prickly'. Once a glamorous model, she had big dreams of fame and fortune but finds herself stuck in a strained marriage with small-town solicitor Roger and feels cheated. But she'll stop at nothing to save her daughter from suffering the same fate as her.

Lumley said: "I thought *Finding Alice* was enthralling from the very beginning. Something completely different. Funny, but quite tragic without being self-pitying."

**“Sarah is a terrific snob and looks down on Harry's parents and sister”**

"Sarah doesn't hold back. I don't think she has been a particularly good mother to Alice. She seems a bit of a cold fish."

"When she married Roger he was an up and coming young, good-looking lawyer and the feeling was he would become a QC and she would be a glamorous society hostess. And, of course, it didn't work out like that."

"They have ended up in a small suburban house. Sarah is slightly aggrieved as she feels they should have



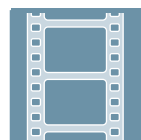
**THE PARENTS:** Social climber Sarah (Lumley) and small-town solicitor Roger (Havers)

done better. She feels antagonistic towards Alice but she dotes on Charlotte."

She added: "Sarah is a terrific snob and looks down on Harry's parents and sister. She thinks Alice could have done much better for herself. And I think secretly she might not be too sad that Harry

has gone. Sarah is also pretty nonchalant. And says she is the only one who is being honest. Which is true. She is clear sighted. Sarah has a forensic mind and says things without any tact at all. I loved playing her."

● *Finding Alice* starts on Sunday on ITV at 9pm.



## Film

### Recon 1944: The Enemy Within (15)

On Blu-ray, DVD and digital download from January 18. Dazzler Media

# Look out for Recon



**STARRING** ALEXANDER LUDWIG and screen legend Franco Nero (the original Django), *Recon 1944: The Enemy Within*, set in Italy during the final days of World War II, follows four American soldiers sent on a reconnaissance mission hiking up a mountain with only a local man as their guide.

The men are haunted by their sergeant's cold-blooded murder of a civilian, debating the morality of his actions, and their own. Facing the punishing cold and finding themselves tracked by an enemy sniper, their situation goes from bad to worse.

Oscar-winning director and screenwriter Robert Port (*Twin Towers*) adapted the script from *Peace*, a bestselling novel by Richard Bausch, based on a true story.

Port told *RAF News*: "These characters are already at their low point when we meet them. It was a way to bring my own creative twist to the film. If we see fresh-faced

soldiers going to war, no one can do it better than *Saving Private Ryan* or *Dunkirk*, so we had to be different."

Filmed in the snow-covered wilderness of Canada, which doubled for Italy in 1944, authenticity was vital. Port explained: "There are classic movies we all love, but I laugh when you can see the snow doesn't touch the uniforms. We found out through our research that the real American soldiers wore thin Army field jackets because they thought they'd be in Rome by summer, so they weren't expecting to spend winter there."

"They wore thin jackets and no gloves. It must have been horrible. On the first day of filming, I wore the same thing in solidarity with the cast. These kids froze their asses off."

With his own family connection to the material, *Recon* was a personal project for Port. "My family is Jewish and my grandfather



**TWITCHY:** The US Servicemen in the mountains of 'Italy'. Inset left, director Robert Port does a little recon of his own on set

fought in WWII," he explained. "He escaped from Germany, went back to fight and helped liberate a concentration camp. He won a bronze star too, so I have great respect for the military. Many of us on set had these stories, often from our grandfathers, so it was a great, shared tribute."

As something of a military enthusiast, Port is no stranger to the RAF too.

He said: "As a child I was fascinated by the RAF. I had this image of sharply dressed, handsome men flying these incredible airplanes, fearless against such large numbers. When I was 18 I bought a real RAF patch from an antique shop in San Francisco. I'd never

paid so much for anything and I still have it. I think it comes from my love of history and the military. *Recon* symbolises that one simple

action, like helping someone, can have a very powerful effect. I hope it makes people think about that in a positive way."

## Win the DVD

WE HAVE copies of *Recon 1944: The Enemy Within* on DVD to win. For your chance to own one, just tell us:

**Who directed Recon?**

Email your answer, marked Recon 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 January 29. Please include your address.







PACKED ARENAS: Planet Earth II is hoping to be playing to full stadiums once more when the Covid-hit tour finally starts, in March 2022

## Hard time for Planet Earth

**P**LANET EARTH II Live in Concert has once again decided to reschedule its arena tour of the UK and Ireland.

With the coronavirus pandemic very much ongoing, its promoter has decided even the dates for 2021 would be unviable.

The original 2020 tour was previously postponed twice and rescheduled to March 2021 following government advice and the closure of venues across the UK. Now it has been decided to reschedule the shows once more, to March 2022.

Barry Campbell, MD of promoter FKP Scorpio UK, said: "We make these changes with a heavy heart but it is very important to us that the public should feel safe and be able to attend the shows without any safety worries. We promise it will be a fantastic tour well worth waiting for and thank all ticket purchasers for their patience and understanding in these most difficult times."

The concerts will be hosted by science and natural history TV presenter Liz Bonnin, with behind the scenes insights from Mike Gunton, the executive producer of the BAFTA and Emmy award-winning BBC television series.

Featuring breathtaking footage shown in 4K ultra high-definition on a gigantic LED screen, the City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Matthew Freeman, will perform the music by Oscar winner Hans Zimmer, Jacob Shea and Jasha Klebe.

Host Bonnin (pictured below) said: "2020 has been incredibly difficult for everyone and we are reeling from the impact of this pandemic. Our hope is that, once we begin to recover from this extraordinary situation, our tour can play a small part in offering joy, healing and optimism. It will be an uplifting experience, celebrating the majesty of life and all the beauty and wonder that Mother

Earth has to offer. I'm all the more excited to be able to share it with you."

All previously purchased tickets remain valid for the rescheduled dates. They are:

- March 18, 2022, Cardiff Motorpoint Arena
- March 19, 2022, Bournemouth International Centre (new date)
- March 20, 2022, London The O2 (matinee & evening performances)
- March 22, 2022, Dublin 3 Arena
- March 24, 2022, Leeds First Direct Arena
- March 25, 2022, Manchester AO Arena
- March 26, 2022, Birmingham Resorts World Arena
- March 27, 2022, Glasgow SSE Hydro.

All children under 14 are entitled to a £10 discount per ticket (excluding London evening and Dublin show). £5 discount per ticket for group bookings of 10 or more.

■ Go to [planetearth2live.uk](http://planetearth2live.uk) for further ticket information.

## The Big Event Anything Goes

# All aboard SS American for madcap frolics and fun on the ocean waves

## Lindsay and Mullally star in Wodehouse/Porter classic

**B**IG NAMES Robert Lindsay (*My Family*) and Megan Mullally (*Will & Grace*) will star in one of the all-time greatest musicals *Anything Goes* on the London stage later this year.

The show, in which Emmy award-winning Mullally makes her West End musical debut, is due to run at the Barbican Theatre for 15 weeks only, from May 8 to August 22.

Probably best known to UK audiences as Karen Walker in the hit US sitcom *Will & Grace*, Mullally will play Reno Sweeney with Tony and Olivier award winner Lindsay taking the role of Moonface Martin.

The production of Cole Porter and PG Wodehouse's classic will be directed and choreographed by three-time Tony award winner Kathleen Marshall. Her Broadway production of *Anything Goes* was a major hit and received huge critical acclaim. Now Marshall, in her West End directing debut, will reinvent this classic musical for London audiences.

The show will feature a full supporting company including 14 tap dancing sailors. Further casting will be announced soon.

Mullally said: "Anything really does go, is the thing, and I'm excited to be coming to London where Robert Lindsay and I will promptly unleash ourselves upon that wonderful town for 15 weeks of farce and frolic. Under the tutelage of the devilishly clever Kathleen Marshall we shall endeavour to do the memory of Cole Porter proud."

"Meanwhile, I will endeavour to get my a\*\* to a tap class. A brand new rendering of a great old entertainment is on the horizon... something tells me I'll get a kick out of spending my summer in London. Tally-ho!"

Robert Lindsay said: "I am so looking forward to returning to the stage in the medium I love – musical comedy. And what better than Kathleen Marshall's revival of *Anything Goes* at the wonderful Barbican Theatre. The perfect remedy to shake off the blues of 2020."

*Anything Goes* sets sail on the ocean liner the SS American bound from New York to London. As the ship heads out to sea, etiquette and convention head

out of the portholes as two unlikely pairs set off on the course to true love... proving that sometimes destiny needs a little help from a crew of singing sailors, a comical disguise and some good old-fashioned blackmail.

The musical features some of theatre's most memorable songs, including *I Get a Kick Out of You*, *Anything Goes*, *You're the Top* and *It's De-Lovely*.

Marshall said: "I'm so thrilled to have the opportunity to reimagine *Anything Goes* for the West End. I'm a huge fan of both Megan and Robert and I know we will have a blast working together on this iconic musical comedy. I adore London and can't wait to bring this joyous show to UK audiences."

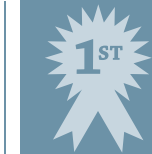
■ Go to: [barbican.org.uk](http://barbican.org.uk) for more details.



ROBERT LINDSAY: Plays Moonface Martin



MEGAN MULLALLY: Stars as Reno Sweeney



## Competition

DVDs  
Fabulous Films Ltd/Fremantle Media Enterprises



# Cruise into 2021 with a thought-provoking film

**T**OM CRUISE stars as Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic in Oliver Stone's Academy Award-winning *Born on the Fourth of July* (cert 18), based on a true story.

It follows the young Kovic from a zealous teen who eagerly volunteered for the Vietnam War, to an embittered veteran paralysed from the mid-chest down.

Deeply in love with his country, Kovic returned to an environment vastly different from the one he left, and struggled before emerging as a brave new voice for the disenchanted.

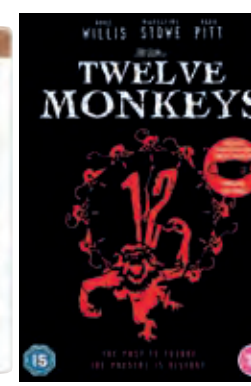
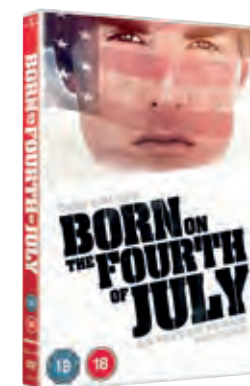
The second film in Stone's Vietnam trilogy which includes *Platoon* (1986) and *Heaven & Earth* (1993), it's based on Kovic's 1976 autobiographical book of the same name.

The film is out now on Blu-ray and DVD and we have DVD copies to win.

We also have copies up for grabs of the new *Twelve Monkeys* limited edition DVD (cert 15) with a free pandemic face mask.

Directed by Terry Gilliam and starring Bruce Willis, Brad Pitt and Madeleine Stowe, it was inspired by Chris Marker's 1962 short film *La Jetée*.

The year is 2035 and humankind subsists in a desolate netherworld following the eradication of 99 per cent of the Earth's population, a holocaust that makes the planet's surface uninhabitable and mankind's destiny uncertain.



Cole (Bruce Willis), a reluctant volunteer aided by Dr Kathryn Railey (Madeline Stowe), has only two clues to solve the puzzle of the Twelve Monkeys which threatens to completely erase humanity from the planet...

And don't miss your chance to own a copy on DVD of the hit American-Norwegian gangster series *Lilyhammer* (cert 15).

After Frank 'The Fixer' Tagliano (Steven Van Zandt) testifies against his Mafia boss in New York, he enters the Witness Protection Programme and makes an unusual demand: he wants to set up with a new life in the Norwegian town of Lillehammer after falling in love with the place while watching the 1994 Winter Olympic Games.

Frank knows he is a marked man and thinks nobody will ever look for him there. Thrust into a brand new world, it's not long before he

is back to his old ruthless ways and involved in shady dealings with the locals. Confronted with a colourful cast of characters totally unlike the New York variety, he soon finds out that the past always has a way of catching up with you.

To win a copy of one of these three great titles on DVD, just tell us:

**Who directed Twelve Monkeys?**

Email your answer, marked DVDs 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 January 29.

Please mark on your entry which title you prefer to win: *Born on the Fourth of July*, *Twelve Monkeys* or *Lilyhammer* and include your full postal address. Please note, *Born on the Fourth of July* winners must be over 18.



## TV New series

Cornwall and Devon Walks with Julia Bradbury, ITV



# Julia takes a walk on the wild side

**J**ULIA BRADBURY will be exploring Cornwall and Devon in a new eight-part TV series for ITV. The presenter takes viewers from the epic wilderness of Dartmoor to the soaring cliffs of Land's End in *Cornwall and Devon Walks with Julia Bradbury* that ventures to parts of the West Country that can only be explored on foot.

From beautiful beaches to remote wilderness, ancient woodlands to winding estuaries, the series focuses on a love of the outdoors and the best walks the South West has to offer.

Along the way Julia will meet the people who live and work in these two counties as well as sampling some of its legendary food. Episodes include: Salcombe, Dartmoor, the Dart Valley, Isles of Scilly, Land's End, Helford, The Lizard and Padstow.

She said: "There couldn't be a more apposite series right now: nature and green spaces are more important to us than ever before. In this series I feel that connection strongly and I hope it inspires people to head out and experience Vitamin N (nature) for themselves, in the best possible way – on foot."



IN HER ELEMENT: Julia gets back to nature in her new show

"I encountered some truly inspirational people in Cornwall and Devon who kindly shared their passion and knowledge of the outdoors. If this doesn't nudge people to explore the nature available to them, I'll eat my sustainably-sourced, biodegradable straw hat." The series continues on Wednesday nights.

## Adam's brush with death

**E**ASTENDERS STALWART Adam Woodyatt is set to return to the stage in a play for the first time since 1982 when he takes the lead role in the world premiere of thriller supremo Peter James's bestselling novel *Looking Good Dead*.

The BBC soap's longest-serving cast member, Woodyatt has played Ian Beale continuously since the show started in 1985.

The UK tour of *Looking Good Dead*, in which he stars as Tom Bryce, is due to start at Bromley's Churchill Theatre on April 1 then



goes to venues including Brighton, Milton Keynes, Glasgow, Richmond, Birmingham and Woking.

Woodyatt (pictured) said: "I am so excited to be swapping the square for the road in the world premiere stage production of Peter's fantastic novel *Looking Good Dead*."

"I can't wait to tour the UK and to experience the feeling of performing this thrilling play in front of a live audience every night. There are not many things that would persuade me to take a break from *EastEnders*, but this is one of them."

Peter James said: "I am thrilled that Adam is going to star in *Looking Good Dead*. He's a wonderful actor and I can't wait to see him play the multi-layered character of Tom Bryce brilliantly. I've been humbled by the incredible reaction to my plays over the last few years and we now look forward to being able to thrill theatre audiences again, with this new play in 2021."

*Looking Good Dead* is James's fifth novel to be brought to the stage and follows productions of *The House on Cold Hill* starring Joe McFadden

and Rita Simons in 2019, *Not Dead Enough* featuring Shane Richie and Laura Whitmore in 2017, *The Perfect Murder* with Richie and Jessie Wallace in 2016 and *Dead Simple*, starring Tina Hobley in 2015.

Hours after picking up a USB memory stick, left behind on a train seat, Tom Bryce inadvertently becomes a witness to a vicious murder. Reporting the crime to the police has disastrous consequences, placing him and his family in grave danger.

When Detective Superintendent

Roy Grace becomes involved, he has his own demons to contend with while he tries to crack the case in time to save the Bryce family's lives.

The last time Woodyatt was in a play on stage was as a 13-year-old at the National Theatre in Tom Stoppard's *On The Razzle*. As well as *EastEnders*, Woodyatt has also appeared on TV programmes including *Robot Wars*, *A Question of Sport* and *Celebrity Masterchef* as well as starring in panto.

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





## Your Announcements

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

### Deaths

**BARTON** Les, Sqn Ldr died January 3 after a long illness, aged 88. Beloved husband to the late May and more recently to Gwen. Father to the late Ian and daughter Susan, grandfather to Darren, Simon and Christopher and great-grandfather to Lexie, Bastien and James. He always remembered his days in the RAF with great pride, starting as a Gunner in the B29, 'Flying Fortress' on loan from the US Airforce, moving up the ranks and changing to Air Traffic Control. He served all over the world including Singapore (Tengah), Germany (Laarbruck, Wildenrath), Valley, Anglesey and other postings in the UK such as Shawbury and Benson and finally at LATCC (then London Air Traffic Control Centre-Distress and Diversion) and making lifelong friends as he went. On retirement from the RAF he fulfilled a dream when he took over a country pub in a small village in Oxfordshire, before finally retiring to the Isle of Man, Merseyside and then to Haddenham, Bucks. In accordance with the current guidelines the funeral will be private. Donations in his memory gratefully received, if desired, to the RAF Benevolent Fund or Alzheimers UK c/o Surman & Horwood Funeral Services Ltd, 7 Buttermarket, Thame, Oxfordshire OX9 3EW.



**Sqn Ldr Les Barton**

**COPPING** Graham Charles Alistair, Sqn Ldr (Ret'd) died suddenly on December 28, 2020, aged 65. Graham served on RAF stations at Mountbatten, Swinderby, Gütersloh, Cranwell, Brize Norton and Rudloe Manor. He will be sorely missed by his wife Valerie, their sons, grandchildren and family.

**JEFFERY** Maurice, Warrant Officer MBE. Passed away unexpectedly at home December 2, aged 90. Dad was attested at RAF Northweald on May 1, 1947 as a future Admin Apprentice in what was the first post war entry. On completion of his training, AC2 Jeffery was posted to RAF Waddington in April 1949. Loving husband to my late mum, Jeanette after meeting at RAF Abu Suer during the Suez crisis. Father to my late sister, Sarah and to myself (Peter). Dad served at both home and overseas, including RAF Andover, Germany, RAF Brampton, Tobruk, El Adem, RAF Sopley, RAF Stanmore Park, The Air Ministry, RAF Innsworth and RAF Hereford. The highlight of his career was being awarded the MBE by Her Majesty The Queen in 1985. (I am contactable at, [petethejeep@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:petethejeep@hotmail.co.uk)).



**WO Maurice Jeffrey and family**

**LAW** (née Booth) Lynn, wife of John Law (ex. Air Eng.), Melksham, Wiltshire. Lynn passed away peacefully in her sleep, holding his hand, after a short battle with cancer at

Dorothy House Hospice, Winsley, Wiltshire, aged 60. Originally from Derbyshire, but moved throughout the UK. Much loved wife of John, loving mother to Samantha and Emma, and cherished and spoiling Momma to Esme and Thomas.

Lynn served with John on 8 Sqn, 24 Sqn, 201 Sqn, 47 Sqn, 6 FTS, MRF, HATS, 24 Sqn and 70 Sqn, and a few OCU's in between. She also provided support for John when he flew with Transafrik in support of UN and WFP operations in Angola, DR Congo, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. A true Forces Wife to the end.

There was a funeral service and cremation on December 24 at Semington, Wiltshire. Donations gratefully received in her memory, if desired, for the Dorothy House Hospice, to: c/o DJ Bewley, 15 Bank St, Melksham, SN12 6LE. (01225 702521). John Law: 07597572637

**TAYLOR** Tony (TT), Flt Lt (Ret'd) of St Ives, passed away peacefully at home with his family on Monday December 7, 2020 aged 82.



**Tony Taylor as a young airman**

Beloved husband of 61 years to Val, much loved father of

Dawn, Suzanne and son-in-law Mike. Treasured Grandad of Amy, Erin, Eleanor and Pippa, also Matthew, Erin's husband and loved brother of Val. Tony started his National Service with the RAF as an AC in October 1958 extending his term of service to become a Warrant Officer, he was then commissioned as an officer in 1981. He retired from RAF Wyton in 1993 after 35 years service as an Air Traffic Controller in Area Radar, completing postings in Germany, Italy, Belgium and across the UK. A private family funeral service has taken place.

**MCCULLOUGH** Brian (ex FS Eng Tech EL). It is with great sadness that we announce the untimely death of Brian on October 20, 2020 after a short stay in Lincoln County Hospital. Brian enlisted as a Boy Entrant at RAF Cosford in 1958 as an Air Radar Mechanic before retraining in 1964 as Ground Wireless Fitter at RAF Locking. He had many postings both overseas in Singapore, Malaya, Cyprus, Belgium, Germany, Malta and The Gulf as well as many locations in the UK, including Henlow a few times. Brian's RAF career ended in 1996, from there he became a Civil Servant and served for 11 years. He had a full and active RAF career as well as travelling to some interesting places around the globe.

Brian was a mentor to many Servicemen from all three Services as well as his young brother, Graham, who followed him into the RAF as an Administrative Apprentice in 1965. Private cremation took place in November. For further information contact: [graham594920@gmail.com](mailto:graham594920@gmail.com). Graham and Denny will miss you Brian, deeply.

### In Memoriam

**FORAN** Mike & Wyn. In loving memory of our parents who married in Gwelo, Rhodesia on December 30, 1950. Always in our thoughts. With much love from Maureen, Tricia and Wendy, sons-in-law Roger and Phil, grandchildren Adam and Marc and great-grandchildren Chelsea, Pippa and Hugo.

### Seeking

**BOY** Entrants 45th Ground Wireless. Tracing the above for a reunion in York, June

2021. 57 out of 107 traced with, sadly, 12 deaths. Contact [suddesr@aol.com](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.

## Honour for vets charity worker

A CHARITY healthcare assistant who has supported veterans for almost 40 years has been awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) in The Queen's New Year Honours List 2021.

Emrys Owen (*pictured*), lead healthcare assistant at Royal Star & Garter, received his award for services to veterans during the Covid-19 pandemic.

He has been with the charity, which cares for veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia, since 1982. Originally working in the charity's former Richmond home, he was there to support the residents' move to its award-winning care

### 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. Wherever we were trained we were known throughout the RAF as the Trenchard BRATS. Our Association, The RAF Halton Apprentices' Association, (The Old Haltonians) welcomes you all.

Why not join this elite group of RAF people today as either a Full or Associate Member? Check us out via our website 'Old Haltonians' and then contact us at: [membership@rafhaa.co.uk](mailto:membership@rafhaa.co.uk) for further details.

### Catering Association

**MEMBERSHIP** is open to serving or former WOs or FSs in Trade Group 19 and to former RAF Catering Officers. Please email: [janedjones6@btinternet.com](mailto:janedjones6@btinternet.com) or call: 01480 823480 for more information.

### 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.

home in Surbiton in 2013.

He said: "I'm highly delighted that someone like me could receive such an award. It's mostly the people I have looked after over the years, the stories I have heard and the characters that I have met that makes the job so worthwhile."

"I wouldn't want to work anywhere else, it's an amazing organisation to work for."



### How to use our service

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

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## Your Announcements

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## Seeking classic car stories

READER GRAHAME Bull is appealing for help with his research for a proposed book on the history of Jaguar SS cars, especially the SS100.

Grahame, *pictured above in his SS100*, said: "These cars were particularly popular post-war with RAF Servicemen and pilots up until the mid 1960s. During my research I have managed to complete a lot of the survival rate of the SS100s, SS90s and SS1 tourers and coupes. Many of the cars I am tracing were at some point in areas very close to RAF bases, such as Andover, Middle Wallop, Burtonwood and Oakham.

"I would be interested to hear from anyone who may have owned a Jaguar SS post-war, up until the late 60s. I am also happy should you want to contact me to find out if I have a record of any cars you or any relatives may have owned back then."

He added: "It's quite possible during the period mentioned that cars may have been owned by US Servicemen who were in the UK at the time. All information will be dealt with in strict confidence."

You can email Grahame at: [grahamebull@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:grahamebull@tiscali.co.uk) and contact him on 07836 203159 or 01252 614163.

## Tune in to 'inspiring' podcast

ACTOR RAY Winstone, Olympian Kriss Akabusi, Paralympian Tanni Grey-Thompson and singer-songwriter Judith Owen are among the famous names featuring in a series of podcasts from Blesma, the Limbless Veterans Charity, that brings them together with other injured veterans.

In The Resilience Sessions guests chat about their experiences with presenters Alice Driver and Stewart Harris, sharing how they have navigated their ups and downs.

A spokeswoman for the charity said: "The Resilience Sessions podcast grew out of the Making Generation R campaign, a project that trains injured veterans from Blesma to share their incredible stories of overcoming adversity with schools and workplaces across the UK."

"To date, Making Generation R has inspired more than 100,000 young people, frontline workers and First Responders."

In the latest podcast, former SAS member Mark 'Billy' Billingham, now star of

the hit TV adventures series *Who Dares Wins*, reveals the guilt he felt about the impact his danger-fuelled life had on his family.

He said: "You just have to compartmentalise things, and the family becomes one of them. You feel guilty at

Billy, who was involved in clandestine operations around the world in a 27-year military career, went on to become a bodyguard to stars including Tom Cruise, Brad Pitt and Russell Crowe.

"Al and Billy talk openly about how they faced really tough situations and the result is empowering," said Jon Bryant, Blesma's chief executive.

"Our members have been through hugely traumatic experiences and they want to help others to develop the same sort of resilience that they have had to."

Alice Driver, *pictured, inset*, founder of The Drive Project which devised the programme, said: "The podcasts are inspirational. You feel like you are part of the conversation between individuals who have been through tough challenges but have come out the other end and are able to talk about how they did it."

● You can listen to the podcasts at: [smarturl.it/resiliencesessions](https://smarturl.it/resiliencesessions).

The series has a new episode every week throughout January.

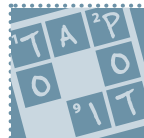


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United Kingdom  
Special Forces

Creative Media Design ADR000027





## Prize Crossword

No. 288

Solve the crossword, then rearrange the 13 letters in yellow squares to find an RAF station

### Across

- Central request to vessel, a WWII menace (1-4)
- Maybe I batter clerical topper (7)
- Being numbered pointlessly offers no solution (4,3)
- Bad smell about award for dessert (5)
- Air attack ravages army in desert initially (4)
- Disease affecting fruit repeatedly, we hear (8)
- Drink and be cheerful at heart (4)
- Sally on aircraft gaining speed (4)
- Is 'Knock On Wood' an example of this? (3,5)
- Dad and I are a right couple (4)
- A part of hospital to prize (5)
- Tom Hanks, say, shattered when I enter a foreign country (7)
- Decapitated most challenging peak (7)
- Barbarian may live on a street (5)

### Down

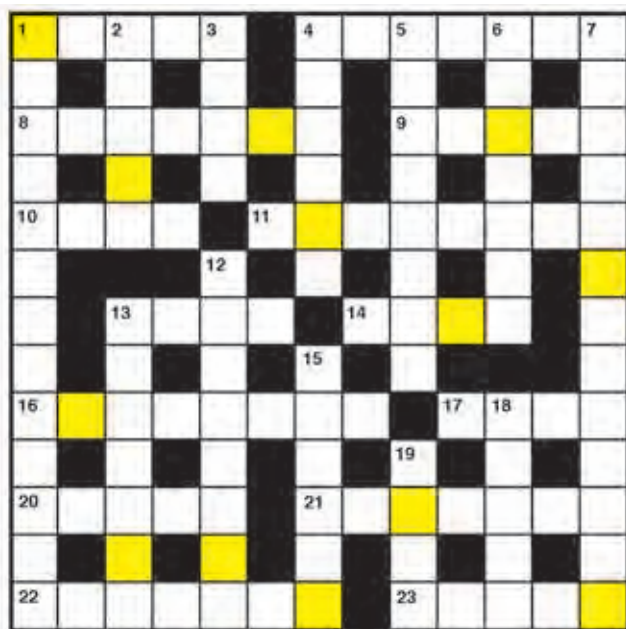
- Part of plane in nice rearguard action (13)
- In Bangkok a pint-sized creature emerges (5)
- Oddly, three take King on expedition (4)
- Harass animal (6)
- Spoke endlessly... about 'Watership Down'? (8)
- Will this RAF plane be Shakespearean? (7)
- The malaria era destroyed aviatrix (6,7)
- Confuse Elmer J, left in insect's grasp (8)
- Graduate has one idea for aircraft (7)
- Losing two points Crosby can't catch predator (3,3)
- RAF campaign because odd tartan added (5)
- 9 loses bearing and becomes explosive (4)

Name .....

Address .....

RAF station..... Crossword No. 288

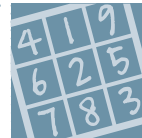
The winners of Prize Crossword 287 and Prize Su Doku 297 will be published in our January 29 edition. Send entries to the address printed in the Su Doku panel opposite



■ The winner of Crossword No. 286 is Mrs M Gilliland of Cheltenham.

### Solution to Crossword No. 287:

**Across** – 1. Able 8. Attributes 9. Cranwell 10. Ears 12. Galaxy 14. Praise 15. Adults 17. Cheers 18. Knit 19. Unafraid 21. Supersonic 22. Host  
**Down** – 2. Beer Garden 3. Earn 4. Steely 5. Phillip 6. Fuselage 7. Asps 11. Reservists 13. All At Sea 16. Squash 17. Chains 18. Kiss 20. Rich  
**RAF word** – Aircraft

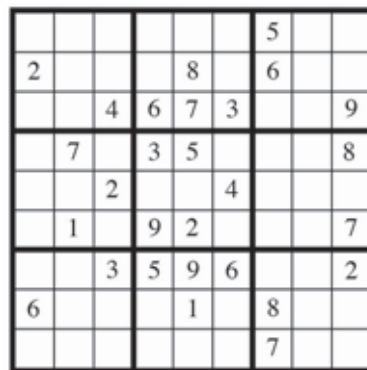


## Prize Su Doku

No. 298

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

Solutions should be sent in a sealed envelope marked 'Su Doku' with the number in the top left-hand corner to RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP14 4UE, to arrive by January 29, 2021.



Name .....

Address .....

..... Su Doku No. 298

### Solution to Su Doku No: 297



■ The winner of Su Doku No. 296 is Russell Coe of Towcester.



## Books

### WWII

*Duel Under The Stars* by Wilhelm Johnen (greenhillbooks.com)

*Eagles Over The Sea 1943-45* by Lawrence Paterson (seaforthpublishing.com)

Win!

# The German perspective

**T**HE REISSUE of Wilhelm Johnen's *Duel Under The Stars: The Memoir of a Luftwaffe Pilot in World War II* is long awaited and very welcome.

First published in 1956, before an English print a year later, the book is a no-holds-barred tale of a nachtigjagdfliieger (night fighter), who ended the war highly decorated and, above all, alive.

Unlike many titles of this kind, there is no political adoration of Hitler to trawl through, Johnen writes simply as a fighter in the new cutting-edge squadrons, designed to counter increasing Allied air power following the loss in the Battle of Britain.

The book leaps straight into the war, seeing a crew crash to its death during Johnen's initial training. The pace doesn't let, there are no childhood moments, simply the sharp end of his life as a pilot. Johnen was eventually forced from the skies in 1941, after his Messerschmitt Bf110 was hit over Switzerland. His capture, albeit in a neutral country, saw Reichmarshal Herman Goering intervene to negotiate his release. From here the book covers the slow collapse of the Reich and the Luftwaffe.

I found this book completely enthralling – well worth checking out.

LAWRENCE PATERSON'S *Eagles Over the Sea 1943-45: A History of Luftwaffe Maritime Operations* is his second volume on this subject and, like the first, is impeccably researched and delivered.

Having left us in 1942, where Wehrmacht maritime aviation was being hamstrung by



the continued red tape of Goering's Air Ministry, Paterson's second volume sees the reader launched into Operation Torch. It is here the maritime reconnaissance units attempted to stem the increasing Allied seaborne invasion of North Africa.

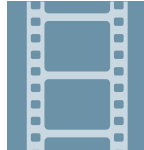
The book shows how the service, that was expected to play such a vital role as the war changed direction for Germany, was thwarted and ultimately overwhelmed despite its best efforts, by those in a position to do the right thing. Another fascinating read.

*Reviews by Daniel Abrahams*

**WE HAVE copies of both of these excellent titles to win. For your chance to own one, answer the following question correctly:**

**When was Wilhelm Johnen's *Duel Under The Stars* first published?**

Email your answer, marked WWII Books 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 January 29. Please mark on your entry if you prefer to win *Duel Under The Stars* (hardback, rrp £19.99) or *Eagles Over The Sea 1943-45* (hardback, rrp £30).



## Film Review

### Muscle (18)

On Digital Download from January 18 and Blu-ray & DVD February 1 Dazzler Media – trailer: [youtube/FeyGCFLX5us](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FeyGCFLX5us)

Win!



# Terry muscles his way in

**G**ROUND DOWN by a job he hates, in a loveless relationship, Simon seeks a change in lifestyle from a local gym – instead finding Terry (Craig Fairbrass).

A scruffy wet lettuce working in telesales, Simon (Cavan Clerkin) is left bitterly lethargic, not keen to just 'get some coke' as a colleague suggests. That's when he walks into Atlantis Gym and pays for six months up front despite the intimidating jeers of the beefy clientele.

Shot in black and white, with a droning synth score by The The, there is an artistic edge to this testosterone-soaked thriller. The focus on the overly-ripped men and their bulging physique creates a church of masculinity for Simon to refocus his ideals – if he fixes this everything else might just fall into place.

Ex-military, Terry sniffs out Simon's desperation and in a cruel twist of fate imparts his own sales technique, becoming Simon's personal trainer. Simon seems to be both scared of, and enamoured by, his new training partner, their relationship becomes increasingly more entangled as Terry's grip over him tightens; so, when Simon's girlfriend Sarah (Polly Maberly) leaves, of course Terry moves in.

Craig Fairbrass's menace as Terry (pictured right) is obvious, but the manner in which he ingratiates himself, the levels of manipulation and contradiction (hilariously labelled

'Terry Logic') make him uncomfortably entrancing. A person for whom prison was a place with a good gym, good friends and good routine, he has machismo bravado and yet shows moments of vulnerability – and there's nothing more frightening than being unpredictable.

The transformation of Simon, shown in a collapsed stylised montage, allows writer/director Gerard Johnson to really use the cinematic form to mark a change, not only physical but cemented by his physicality. The scenes that replace sound with the isolating score effectively elevate the performances and dial up the paranoia.

Although it fails to pay off the tension, *Muscle* is able to dig into a parasitic psychology that reminds us that the scariest home invasions are the ones that follow an invitation.

**4 out of 5 rounds**

*Review by Sam Cooney*

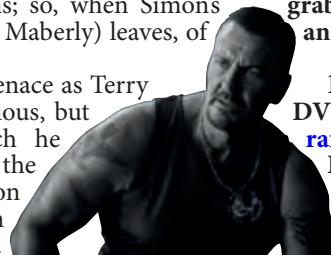
**WE HAVE a copy of *Muscle* on DVD up for grabs. For your chance to win it, simply answer this question correctly:**

**Who plays Terry in *Muscle*?**

Email your answer, marked *Muscle* 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 January 29. Please note: entrants must be over 18.



BREAK-UP: Simon & Sarah





## News Royal Air Force New Year Honours List 2021

ROYAL AIR Force personnel have been honoured by Her Majesty The Queen in the annual New Year Honours list. They are as follows:

**Promotions and appointments to the military division of the most honourable order of the Bath**

### As Companions (CB)

- AVM Ian DUGUID, OBE
- AVM Stephen Jeffrey SHELL, OBE.

**Promotions in and appointments to the military division of the most excellent order of the British Empire**

### As Commanders (CBE)

- Gp Capt Kevin Roy BAILEY
- Air Cdre Thomas James Patrick BURKE
- Air Cdre Paul Edward O'NEILL
- Air Cdre Philip Jeremy ROBINSON, OBE, DFC\*\*

### As Officers (OBE)

- Gp Capt Simon Nicholas DOWLING
- Gp Capt Anne-Marie HOUGHTON
- Gp Capt Simon David JOY
- Gp Capt Rachel Elizabeth MAWDSLEY
- Wg Cdr James Jody MCMECKING
- Gp Capt Christopher David SNAITH
- Wg Cdr Caroline Susan VILES

### As Members (MBE)

- Sqn Ldr Trudy ASKEW
- Flt Lt Steve Anthony GRAHAM
- Sqn Ldr David John HIGGINS
- MAcr Timothy Neil MACK
- WO Allan MILLIGAN
- Cpl Adam Gareth Mark OYTABEN
- Flt Lt James Andrew PETERSON
- Sqn Ldr Mark Philip SANGER
- A/Sgt Richard WARDLOW
- WO Robert Lee WARREN
- Sqn Ldr Jamie WHITE
- Sqn Ldr Stuart Graham WILLIAMS
- WO Peter Barrie WILSON

**Royal Red Cross**  
As an Ordinary Member of the Royal Red Cross, First Class  
● Gp Capt Michael John PRIESTLEY

**Queen's Volunteer Reserves Medal**  
● A/Flt Sgt Christopher MEDLEY  
● Sgt Ian James STAFFORD

**APPOINTMENTS TO AND PROMOTIONS IN THE CIVILIAN DIVISION OF THE MOST EXCELLENT ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE**

**BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL**  
● Mrs G.E. ANGEL  
● Rev B.J. RUMBOLD

**MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL, CAS, DEPUTY COMMANDERS' AND AOC COMMENDATIONS**

**1 SIGNALS REGIMENTAL HQ**  
**DCom Ops Commendation**  
● Capt G. SARU (British Army)

**AOC 22 Gp Commendation**  
● Sgt G.R. WEBBER (British Army)

**3 FLYING TRAINING SCHOOL**

**AOC 22 Gp Commendation**  
● Flt Lt O.T. THORNTON  
● Mr P. TRAINOR

**90 SIGNALS UNIT**  
**DCom Ops Commendation**  
● Sgt O. BLAKE

**AOC 38 Gp Commendation**  
● Sgt C. BAMBROUGH

- Cpl J.A. SMITH
- Mrs P. HAMBLIN

**Team Commendations**  
● RAID DCC Interoperability Team  
● 90SU Ex RED FLAG 20-1

**ASSISTANT CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF STRATEGY**

**CAS Commendation**  
● Ms J. LARNER

**DCom Ops Team Commendation**  
● Virtual Air Tattoo RAF Project Team

**HQ 1 GROUP**

**AOC 1 Gp Commendation**  
● Flt Lt (now acting Sqn Ldr) S.M. MARSHALL

**HQ 11 GROUP**

**DCom Ops Commendation**  
● Squadron Leader O.M. CHEVERTON

**HQ 22 GROUP**

**Team Commendation**  
● HQ 22 Gp and COVID Response Team

**CHIEF OF STAFF CAPABILITY**

**DCom Cap Commendation**  
● Lt Col I. HAMLYN (U.S. Air Force)  
● Mrs H. OLIVE

**AOC 38 Gp Commendation**  
● Sqn Ldr P. MASKELL  
● Flt Lt A.E. DRUMMOND  
● Mr G. HENDERSON

**AIR OFFICER A6**

**AOC 38 Gp Commendation**  
● Sqn Ldr C.I. LONGLEY  
● Fg Off D.R.C. REID

**Team Commendation**  
● COVID-19 A6 Response Team

**ACOS CAREER MANAGEMENT**

**CAS Commendation**  
● Flt Sgt (now A/WO) S.M. FENWICK

**DCom Cap Team Commendation**  
● HQ Air Ground Trades Promotions Team

**AOC 38 Gp Commendation**  
● Sqn Ldr J.L. DENNIS

**ACOS OPERATIONS**

**DCom Ops Team Commendation**  
● HQ Air COVID-19 Team

**AOC 11 Gp Commendation**  
● Wg Cdr A.P. BARON

**ACOS AIR INFRASTRUCTURE**

**DCom Ops Team Commendation**  
● Wg Cdr J. CRENNELL

**AOC 22 Gp Commendation**  
● Flt Lt L. COPE

**AOC 38 Gp Commendation**  
● Sqn Ldr G.L. WYETH

**ACOS PERSONNEL POLICY**

**Meritorious Service Medal**  
● WO (now Flt Lt) G.M. WILLIAMS

**DCom Cap Commendation**  
● Wg Cdr P.W. ANDERSON  
● WO N.C. HECKELS

**Team Commendation**  
● RAF JPA Focal Point MIDA Team

**AOC 2 Gp Commendation**  
● Flt Lt R. BIRD

**JOINT FORCE AIR COMPONENT COMMANDER**

**VCDS Commendation**  
● Gp Capt M.J. FARRELL

**DCom Ops Commendation**  
● Lt Col M.I. BRIANT  
● Wg Cdr R.K. DUGUID

**AOC 11 Gp Commendation**  
● Flt Sgt P.M. COWAN

**HQ AIR CADETS CRANWELL**

**CAS Commendation**  
● Mr C.J. MORRELL

**AOC 22 Gp Commendation**  
● Wg Cdr C. COPSEY  
● Wg Cdr H. GOULD  
● Sqn Ldr K.L. CHARTER  
● Sqn Ldr K. RITCHIE  
● Flt Lt D. SMITH  
● Mr K. PHILLIPS

**Team Commendation**  
● Trent Wing Multi-Activity Camp Team

**HQ RAF RECRUITING AND SELECTION**

**DCom Cap Team Commendation**  
● Armed Forces Careers Office (RAF) Glasgow

**AOC 38 Gp Commendation**  
● Cpl M. BOYES

**AIR & SPACE WARFARE CENTRE**

**DCom Ops Commendation**  
● Cdr C. CHILDERS (U.S. Navy)  
● SAC (now A/Cpl) J.M. BEATTIE  
● SAC R.J. CATHERS

**AOC 1 Gp Commendation**  
● Flt Lt (now Sqn Ldr) C. MENEAR  
● Flt Lt M. REDMOND  
● Fg Off (now Flt Lt) P.D. CHARNOCK

**A/WO T.A. QUARTERMAN**  
● Flt Sgt M.A. TAYLOR  
● Sgt C.A. FOUNTAIN  
● Sgt B.D. NIMMO

**Team Commendations**  
● Air & Space Warfare School  
● Engineering Section – Joint Air Delivery Test & Evaluation Unit  
● MOD Boscombe Down Operation RESCRIPT Team

**AOC 38 Gp Commendation**  
● Flt Lt S.P. MISKELLY

**ATOMIC WEAPONS ESTABLISHMENT ALDERMASTON**

**CGS Commendation**  
● Maj (now Sqn Ldr) D.F.W. TICKNER

**COMMANDANT CENTRAL FLYING SCHOOL RAF COLLEGE CRANWELL**

**Meritorious Service Medal**  
● MAcr D.E. DIBLE

**COLLECTIVE TRAINING GROUP BRITISH ARMY TRAINING UNIT KENYA COMMANDER**

**AOC 22 Gp Commendation**  
● Sgt A.J. CAMPBELL

**DEFENCE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS INFORMATION SYSTEMS HQ**

**AOC 22 Gp Commendation**  
● Sgt (now SSgt) L.J. HARRINGTON (British Army)

**DEFENCE COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL TRAINING**

**Meritorious Service Medal**  
● WO 1 T.M. NORMAN (British Army)  
● WO 1 P.S. VERNON (British Army)  
● SSgt N.D. HORTON (British Army)  
● WO P.W. KENT  
● Sgt T.L. JAMES

**VCDS Commendation**  
● Capt W. HIGGINS (British Army)

**Comd SJC(UK) Commendation**  
● Sqn Ld J.H. McCLUSKIE  
● Lt P.A. WELSH (British Army)

**DCom Ops Commendation**  
● Maj T.R. KENT (British Army)  
● Flt Lt A.A.S.A. AL KALBANI

**AOC 22 Gp Commendation**  
● Sgt S.J. CLEMENT  
● Sgt E.L. MORGAN  
● Cpl T. DOWN  
● L/Cpl L. GILLBANKS-MILLER (British Army)  
● Lt Col (Ret'd) D. BALL  
● Mrs S. BEESE  
● Mr R. JENKINS  
● Mrs A. LEATHER  
● Mrs S. SMITH

**Team Commendation**  
● Defensive Cyber Protect Training Team

**DEFENCE COLLEGE OF LOGISTICS, POLICING AND ADMINISTRATION WORTHY DOWN**

**AOC 2 Gp Commendation**  
● Cpl (now A/Sgt) D.S. DAVIES

**HEAD OFFICE, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**

**Meritorious Service Medal**  
● WO L.C. McLOUGHLIN  
● WO M. PATTERSON  
● Sgt K.J. BARRY  
● Sgt J.G. MURPHY

**DCom Ops Team Commendation**  
● The Mod's Defence Airspace and Air Traffic Management Team (DAATM)

**UK STRATEGIC COMMAND**

**Meritorious Service Medal**  
● WO J.C. IBBS  
● WO J.S.A. WRIGHT

**CAS Commendation**  
● SAC N. GARDNER



CB: AVM Ian Duguid

**DCom Ops Commendation**  
● WO D.E. JAMES

**DCom Cap Commendation**  
● Sqn Ldr P.S. FOSTER

**AOC 1 Gp Commendation**  
● Cpl A.J. MacMENEMEY

**AOC 2 Gp Commendation**  
● Sqn Ldr (now Wg Cdr) A.J. FIELD  
● Flt Lt L.C. PLAYLE  
● Cpl A.J. POYNTON

**AOC 22 Gp Commendation**  
● Sgt G.L. HOBBS

**JOINT FORCE DEVELOPMENT SHRIVENHAM**

**CAS Commendation**  
● Sqn Ldr D.M. FISHER

**COMMANDER JOINT HELICOPTER COMMAND**

**AOC 2 Gp Commendation**  
● Sgt B. MIDDLEBROOK  
● SAC P. PHUTTARAKSA

**Team Commendations**  
● RAF Benson Sports Bar  
● Survival Equipment Flight, RAF Odiham

**AOC 22 Gp Commendation**  
● Flt Sgt (now A/WO) S.D. GRIFFITHS

**MOD ABBEY WOOD – DEFENCE EQUIPMENT & SUPPORT**

**Meritorious Service Medal**  
● WO P.R. FOWLER

**AOC 1 Gp Commendation**  
● Flt Lt M.C. CAINE

**MOD ABBEY WOOD – DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT**

**DCom Ops Team Commendation**  
● RAFAT Administration Team, Exercise WESTERNHAWK 2019

**AOC 22 Gp Commendation**  
● Sqn Ldr T.J. CARTER  
● Mr S. MURPHY

**RAF BOULMER**

**Meritorious Service Medal**  
● WO D.I. BARR

**AOC 2 Gp Commendation**  
● A/WO (now Flt Sgt) J.P. MORTIMER  
● Flt Sgt M.A. LEONARD

**Team Commendation**  
● Infrastructure Squadron

**RAF BRIZE NORTON**

**Meritorious Service Medal**  
● WO J.C.P. HANDS  
● WO (now Flt Lt) M.J. MAGUIRE

**DCom Ops Commendation**  
● Wg Cdr J. HETHERINGTON  
● SAC R.A. DUNN

**AOC 2 Gp Commendation**  
● Flt Lt C.J. JONES  
● Flt Lt C.J. MARLAND  
● Flt Lt M.W.H. RUSSI  
● Flt Lt L.A. WATERHOUSE  
● MAcr M. BOTTMOLEY  
● MAcr M. GIBBONS  
● Flt Sgt A.D. FARR  
● Chf Tech R.P. FREER  
● A/Sgt (now Cpl) L.S. WATERFIELD  
● SAC B. HETHERTON  
● Mr N. ROZELAAR

**Team Commendations**  
● A400M Atlas Paper Technical Log Engineering Team  
● Station Operations Flight

**AOC 22 Gp Commendation**  
● A/Sgt R.L.A. SMALL

**RAF CONINGSBY**

**Meritorious Service Medal**  
● Flt Sgt (now A/WO) C. RUSSELL  
● Sgt G.J. CLARKE

**CAS Commendation**  
● Sqn Ldr K. RAITHBY-VEALL

**AOC 1 Gp Commendation**  
● Flt Sgt D.P. BURKE  
● Sgt C.J. BARRETT  
● SAC (Tech) K.R. McGUINNESS  
● Mrs P. HAWORTH

**RAF COLLEGE CRANWELL**

**CAS Commendation**  
● Sgt (now A/Flt Sgt) P. JORDAN

**DCom Ops Commendation**  
● WO M. WILLIS

**AOC 22 Gp Commendation**  
● Sqn Ldr C. LAW  
● Flt Lt H. KINGSWOOD  
● Flt Lt A.P. MARTIN  
● Flt Lt R.J. PARKE  
● Off Cdt J.E. MITCHELL  
● Cpl T.A. SMITH  
● Mrs E.R. DUGAN  
● Mr M. IGNATOWSKI

**Team Commendation**  
● Project MERCURY

**AOC 38 Gp Commendation**  
● Flt Lt T.J. DOYLE  
● Cpl L. WHEELER

**RAF FYLINGDALES**

**AOC 2 Gp Commendation**  
● Sqn Ldr R.D. STRANGWOOD  
● A/Sgt (now Cpl) S.E. CAMPBELL

**RAF HALTON**

**AOC 22 Gp Commendation**  
● Flt Lt J. SPENCE  
● Fg Off B.L. DZEKASHU  
● Fg Off J.R. PARSONAGE

**Team Commendations**  
● Community Support Team  
● Airmen's Command Squadron DE SNCO Delivery Team  
● Recruit Training Squadron

**AOC 38 Gp Commendation**  
● Fg Off (now Flt Lt) M.T. ALLEN

**RAF HENLOW**

**AOC 2 Gp Commendation**  
● Mrs H. MARSHALLSAY

**RAF HIGH WYCOMBE**

**AOC 38 Gp Commendation**  
● Cpl S.C. WORTHING  
● Mrs H. McNAUGHTON

**Team Commendations**  
● Medical Treatment Facility  
● Digital Development and Exploitation Squadron, Information Systems Wing  
● Networks Team, Information Systems Wing

**RAF HONINGTON**

**Meritorious Service Medal**  
● WO D.J. MARTIN

**CAS Commendations**  
● Sgt C.N. MOORE  
● L/Cpl K.T. RAVELLO

**DCom Ops Commendation**  
● Sgt S.C. ANDREWS

**AOC 2 Gp Commendation**  
● Sqn Ldr P.C. HAMMOND  
● Flt Lt R.P. McELHINNEY  
● Plt Off (now Fg Off) J.C.



**OUTTERTSIDE**  
● Cpl G.S. MacDonald  
● L/Cpl T.C. MITCHELL  
● SAC A.J. MOUNT  
● Mrs S. GLAISTER  
● Mrs S. MOUNTFORD-JONES

**Team Commendations**  
● Complex Air Ground Environment Training Facility Development Team  
● Regimental Training Squadron – Basics (Bastion Squadron) RAF Regiment Training Wing

**RAF LEEMING**

**Meritorious Service Medal**  
● WO G.M. WEBSTER  
● Sgt P. RICHARDSON

**AOC 1 Gp Commendation**  
● Flt Lt B.V. CULLEN  
● Flt Sgt D.G. MORLEY  
● Flt Sgt L.J. NORMAN

**Team Commendation**  
● Op PANTHER Support Team

**RAF LINTON-ON-OUSE**

**CAS Commendation**  
● Mr M.A. AKERS

**RAF LOSSIEMOUTH**

**Meritorious Service Medal**  
● WO J.M. SMITH  
● WO B.G. DODDS

**Comd SJC(UK) Commendation**  
● Sgt N.T. FALCONER

**DCom Ops Commendation**  
● Sqn Ldr M.A.P. MASON  
● Sqn Ldr R.E. RILEY  
● Sqn Ldr H.A. WOOD

**Team Commendation**  
● Lossiemouth Development Team

**AOC 1 Gp Commendation**  
● Sqn Ldr R.B. LEASK  
● Flt Lt C.D. SMITH

● WO I. SUTHERLAND  
● Sgt R.R. McALLISTER  
● Sgt N.R. McDUGALL  
● SAC (Tech) C.O. BENSON  
● Mrs S. GLAISTER  
● Mrs D. PARKER-BANFIELD

**Team Commendations**  
● Information Services Flight  
● P-8A Tactical Operations Centre – Data Management Team

**AOC 2 Gp Commendation**  
● SAC (Tech) D.J.M. MILNE

**AOC 11 Gp Commendation**  
● Sqn Ldr R.E. HACKWELL

**AOC 38 Gp Commendation**  
● Flt Lt R. DENTON

**RAF MARHAM**

**Meritorious Service Medal**  
● WO K.A. HOLMES

**DCom Ops Commendation**  
● WO S.J. ROBINSON

**AOC 1 Gp Commendation**  
● Sqn Ldr R.S. BOSTROM  
● Lt Cdr N.E. SMITH (Royal Navy)  
● Sqn Ldr A.A. TOMCZYNSKI  
● Flt Sgt D.H. KING  
● Flt Sgt I.G. STOCKER

**Team Commendations**  
● Exercise WESTLANT 19 – Cyberspace Squadron Detachment  
● Lightning Continuing Airworthiness Management Organisation

**RAF NORTHOLT**

**CAS Commendation**  
● Flt Sgt M.J. ALLISON

**AOC 2 Gp Commendation**  
● Sqn Ldr A. DOONA  
● A/Flt Lt F.A. SIMONS  
● SAC M. RUSH

**Team Commendation**  
● Air Movements Squadron

**RAF POLICE**

**DCom Ops Commendation**  
● Cpl B.A.J. OLIVER

**Team Commendation**  
● Armaments and Explosive Search Team, Operation HELVETIC

**AOC 2 Gp Commendation**  
● Cpl (now A/Sgt) R.D. WYNN

**Team Commendation**  
● Police and Security Flight, RAF Halton

**RAF SCAMPTON**

**AOC 1 Gp Commendation**  
● Sgt (now A/Flt Sgt) M.J. CRYER

**AOC 2 Gp Commendation**  
● Sqn Ldr A.E.M. SCOTT  
● Mr T. MARTISON

**RAF SHAWBURY**



# Focus on the RAF: Photo comp 2020



1st

## Personnel

- 1st – NVG, Mr Ian Forshaw, RAF Shawbury.
- 2nd – Can't Take My Eyes Off of You, Cpl Ben Tritta, RAF Brize Norton.
- 3rd – Passion, Cpl Rob Travis, 77th Brigade.
- Highly Commended: Retired, SAC Kim Waterson, RAF Wittering.



2nd



3rd

“The winners have provided a stunning visual showcase of the work of the RAF over the last year”



1st

THE RAF'S top snappers have been recognised in the Service's annual photographic awards.

A highly-contested competition saw the number of categories reduced from 13 to just four this year, because of the impact of Covid-19.

More than 900 images were submitted across the board, vying for

the honours under the headings of Personnel, Current RAF Equipment, RAF Operations and Exercises, and the People's Choice.

The winner of the People's Choice, Helping Hand by Cpl Phil Dye (pictured right), was voted for by the general public via the RAF's Facebook page.



2nd

RAF Benson's Sgt Andy Holmes celebrated a great double, scooping first place in both the Equipment and Ops & Exercises categories, while the Personnel section was won by Mr Ian Forshaw, from RAF Shawbury, with NVG.

The judges were freelance photographer Edmond Terakopian, Martin Keene from the Press Association and Jim Hedge, picture editor at *The Guardian*.

Mr Hedge said: “As ever, the photographic standard was extremely high. The work of RAF photographers provides a vital historical record, as well as illustrating the complexity, nuance and character of that work. All the participants are worthy winners, and those we selected have produced a stunning visual showcase of the work of the RAF over the last year. It has been a privilege to have been involved in the judging.”

## Royal Air Force Operations and Exercises

- 1st – Ground Zero, Sgt Andy Holmes, RAF Benson.
- 2nd – See Off, SAC Hazel Reader, RAF Coningsby.
- 3rd – Helping Hand, Cpl Phil Dye, RAF Akrotiri.
- Highly Commended: Approaching the Dam, Cpl Rob Travis, 77th Brigade.



3rd

## People's Choice

- Winner: Helping Hand, Cpl Phil Dye, RAF Akrotiri.



1st

## RAF Equipment

- 1st – Astra, Sgt Andy Holmes, RAF Benson.
- 2nd – The Gunslinger, Cpl Rob Travis, 77th Brigade.
- 3rd – Face Off, Sgt Paul Oldfield, RAF Coningsby.
- Highly Commended: Pot of Gold, Cpl Tim Laurence, RAF Odiham.



2nd



3rd



# Annual Allowance: submit your tax return by Jan 31st!

ADVERTORIAL



● SUBMIT TAX RETURNS NOW: Maj Gen Neil Marshall

IT'S that time of the year once more.

Letters notifying those who have breached the AA limit for the tax year to April 2020 have been issued by the MoD.

If you've received one, do not ignore it. You will need to complete a self-assessment tax return (SATR) by the 31st January 2021 deadline.

First establish whether you have a tax charge to pay. The online AA tax calculator can help you do this.

If there's no tax to pay, you need take no further action. If you believe you do have tax to pay, there's a helpful MoD guide online to help you complete the tax return.

It's important to note that you can amend your return after submission if necessary.

Our advice therefore is for you to complete your SATR and submit it by the due date. In that way you'll avoid any late submission penalty charges.

At the Forces Pension Society, our Pension Advisory Team will do its best to reply to Members' AA

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

The online AA calculator can help you to work out if you owe any tax

enquiries before the 31st January deadline but please note we cannot guarantee this for enquiries received after 18th January.

● If you would like information about the Forces Pension Society, our Pension Advisory Service and the many benefits of membership, please visit [www.forcespensionsociety.org](http://www.forcespensionsociety.org)



The Forces Pension Society is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that acts as a pension watchdog for the entire military community.





# RAF Voyager fills in for the French



**REFUEL:** Thirsty French Mirage jets get a much-needed drink thanks to RAF Voyager

PHOTOS: SAC TOM CANN & SAC SAMANTHA HOLDEN

BRITISH VOYAGER tankers refuelled four French fighters during a 4,000-mile journey to North East Africa.

Two Brize-based aircraft transferred 90,000 litres of kerosene to Armée de l'air Mirage 2000 jets on their way to take part in Exercise Shaheen.

The mission required one of the RAF aircraft to fly ahead to Greece to meet the transiting jets south of Crete for the final leg to Djibouti.

Paris-based Defence Attaché Air Cdre Tim Below said: "This mission clearly demonstrates the close Franco-British relationship and our ability to work together to rapidly project air power across the globe."

The sortie was carried out by the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force that recently declared full operational capability and promotes regular cooperation between the RAF and the French Air & Space Force.





## 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)**



GENEROUS FORCES' BURSARIES

**One of the UK's leading day and boarding schools**

Small classes and inspirational teaching.

Set in a good central England location, easy to reach from all corners of the country.

Exceptional results at A level, IB Diploma and GCSE.

A strong House and tutor system to look after your child's pastoral and academic wellbeing.

An outstanding range of extra-curricular activities.

[admissions@bromsgrove-school.co.uk](mailto:admissions@bromsgrove-school.co.uk)  
[bromsgrove-school.co.uk](http://bromsgrove-school.co.uk)



**BROMSGROVE SCHOOL**

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FLAIR  
DISCIPLINE

ACADEMIC RIGOUR

**A FLOURISHING BOARDING COMMUNITY**

Over 560 boarders:  
85 prep boarders  
and  
480 senior boarders

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details

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



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.**



Gp Capt Derek Rake, OBE, AFC\*

Obituary

# Spitfire pilot outfoxed Nazis in chicken coop

## Wounded airman evaded Germans after crash landing



IN THE THICK OF IT: Rake (centre) in Italy with 32 Sqn comrades

**G**ROUP CAPTAIN Derek Rake, who has died aged 98, flew Spitfires over the Balkans and NW Europe when he was involved in combat with Luftwaffe jets in the closing weeks of World War II.

After serving on Southampton University Air Squadron, Rake joined the RAF and trained as a pilot in the United States where he graduated first in his class. To his frustration, he was retained to be a flying instructor. Finally, after much pestering, he returned to England in April 1943 and trained on the Spitfire.

He joined 32 Squadron in August 1944, when it was based in southern Italy. He flew ground-attack operations as the Allied armies advanced in Italy, and also in support of the partisans in Yugoslavia.

He took a flight of Spitfires to the island of Viz, off the Dalmatian coast, for operations over Yugoslavia. Very heavy rain flooded the short landing strip, leaving the Spitfires stranded. Rake then issued IOUs, on behalf of the British Government, to the local population who worked for five days and nights to clear a 350-yard strip, the absolute minimum for a Spitfire take-off.

Rake and his pilots barely cleared the trees at the end of the strip when they took off. He always regretted that he was never able to

return to the island to ensure that the Government had honoured the IOUs.

At the beginning of November 1944, the squadron moved to an airfield in Greece. On the 18<sup>th</sup>, Rake was flying a mission in the Vardar Valley, near Srebrenica, when his Spitfire was hit by anti-aircraft fire as he attacked a train. He managed to crash land in a field, where his Spitfire overturned. Despite arm and hand wounds and being soaked in aviation fuel, he managed to extricate himself.

**A** local farmer and his wife sheltered him overnight in a chicken coop. German forces searched the farm overnight, but they ignored the coop. He was handed over to the Resistance, who took him over the mountains into Greece and, 12 days after being shot down, he returned to his squadron at Salonika, much to the surprise of his colleagues. After recovering, he returned to England to recuperate.

In March 1945, he joined 41 Squadron, which was part of the Second Tactical Air Force and flew

from captured Luftwaffe airfields in the Netherlands and Germany. The squadron was equipped with the superb Mark XIV version of the Spitfire, which was powered by a Rolls-Royce Griffon engine.

The squadron flew armed reconnaissance missions over Germany, attacking rail and road movements and patrolling over German airfields.

The Luftwaffe had deployed jet fighter and bomber aircraft and 41 Squadron's Spitfires were soon in combat with them. On April 20, Rake took off from Twenthe in eastern Holland as the No. 2 to the Australian 'ace' Tony Gaze. Clearing cloud at 20,000 feet near Bremen, they saw an Arado 234 twin-engine jet bomber. Gaze attacked and

damaged the enemy aircraft, which dived away. Rake followed it and later described the action: "My opening burst hit the port engine, which began to smoke as it rolled over and dived towards the cloud. I got in one or two more bursts as I followed it down."

The pilot attempted to land his stricken aircraft but it exploded

on impact. Gaze and Rake were credited as having shared in the destruction of the jet bomber.

The squadron was in constant action for another two weeks. On May 3, Rake attacked and destroyed a Junkers JU 188 bomber in the Lubeck area. It was 41 Squadron's 200<sup>th</sup> and final enemy aircraft shot down.

**I**n August 1945, he was posted to India as an instructor on fighter tactics, and in March 1946 he moved to Mingaladon in Burma to be the flight commander on 20 Squadron flying Spitfires and Tempests.

At the end of 1949, he formed the Hong Kong Auxiliary Air Force equipped with training aircraft and with Spitfires to protect the local air space. He also established a fighter control unit equipped with radars to control patrolling Spitfires. After two years he was awarded the AFC.

After attending RAF Staff College in 1952, he served at HQ Coastal Command responsible for major works services on the Command's airfields, which resulted in him being appointed OBE.

He spent two years serving at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe at Rocquencourt in France, before returning to flying duties in July 1958. He was appointed to command 192 Squadron at Watton in Norfolk, and

equipped with specially-modified Comet and Canberra aircraft.

Re-designated 51 Squadron, the unit was tasked with collecting electronic and radio intelligence. The aircraft flew patrols in international waters off the coasts of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact countries. This frequently involved flights from bases in northern Norway and from Cyprus. During his two-year period in command, Rake flew more than 50 operational intelligence-gathering sorties. He was awarded a Bar to his AFC.

He served in the Air Ministry coordinating these secret flights before serving as the senior air staff officer at the Central Signals Establishment. Rake maintained his close involvement in intelligence collection when he was appointed to command RAF Wyton in January 1967. This was the home of his old squadron, No 51, a squadron of Victor strategic reconnaissance aircraft and a Canberra photographic reconnaissance squadron.

Throughout his two-and-a-half years in command, Rake continued to fly all the station's aircraft. He always regarded this tour as the peak of his career.

After a series of staff appointments, he decided to retire in March 1976 and became the general manager of the newly-opened Wembley Conference Centre.



PORTRAIT: Gp Capt Rake



# FlightPRO is Oceans apart



**AI-ENHANCED:**  
Cloud based web apps allow data to 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



- Air Traffic Control
- Airfield status
- Deconfliction
- Bird control
- Emergency Services
- Transient movements
- Maintenance reports
- Logistical Ops
- In-flight catering
- Ordnance control
- Customs/immigration
- 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.





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**Sport**

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

● **Masked marauder: Fulker shines in skeleton world circuit p30**

**SPORTS DIRECTORATE**

# Sport battles on as Covid hits 2021 schedule

## Director Fogden talks state of play

**EYES HAVE IT:**  
Fogden at the Inter-Service winter sports event in Meribel, 2020

**Daniel Abrahams**

HQ Air Command

**THE DEMANDS on Service sport throughout the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic have seen athletes, associations, the governing body and supporting charities continually needing to adapt... and the battle still goes on.**

The latest national lockdown has once again demanded further change. *RAF News* spoke with Sports Directorate Deputy Director Rich Fogden, who was buoyed by the continuing achievements of sporting personnel and confident about the fight ahead.

He said: "We were pleased to be able to return to RAF Sport at association and unit levels in Tiers 1 and 2 in early December, and to be able to restart unit level sport in Tier 3 too.

"Since then, we saw the introduction of Tier 4 and the revision of most of the country to Tier 3, with the potential of more to come. We were pretty much back to individual exercise, as and where permitted, and following the most recent announcement, on January 4, this state of play has been confirmed.

"Obviously, we support AIR's position of keeping everyone as safe as practicable, by complying with direction and guidance as it emerges. So we are not anticipating much more and, of course, we had already seen the cancellation of the winter sports alpine and ice seasons, normally highlights of this period.

"That said, in the typical style of our sports people, we were pleased to see RAF Equestrian Winter Show Jumping take place [see page 29], and RAF Polo return to play at Druids Lodge Polo Club, while RAF Mountaineering met in the Lake District [see *RAF News* No. 1505], all before the latest restrictions."

While outdoor events saw associations adapt and overcome, virtual sports also rose to new

heights, and overseas Service stars have also shone.

Fogden added: "We were obviously thrilled to see RAF Esports competing in a transatlantic Call of Duty Bowl event, with the other UK Services and their US counterparts – brilliantly they came second overall to US Space Command, which is no mean feat in terms of play and connectivity. [See *RAF News* 1505].

"And we have seen Corporal Alice Fisher's selection to the Bradford Bulls Rugby League squad and our elite ice athletes Cpl Shanwayne Stephens (Bobsleigh) and SAC Ben Fulker (Skeleton) excel in their World Cup events. Last but by no means least, the postponed RAF Football Inter-Station Cup Final was held, with RAF Odiham ultimately victorious in the 2019/20 season finale.

"So, things may well be constrained for now, but we'll be back as soon as we can.

"I have to thank everyone out there in the RAF, Whole Force and wider community who help us to deliver RAF Sport. It is fair to say 2020 was a trying year and we are not done with the pandemic situation, but we look forward to further sport at each and every level when we can."

● **Continued on page 31**



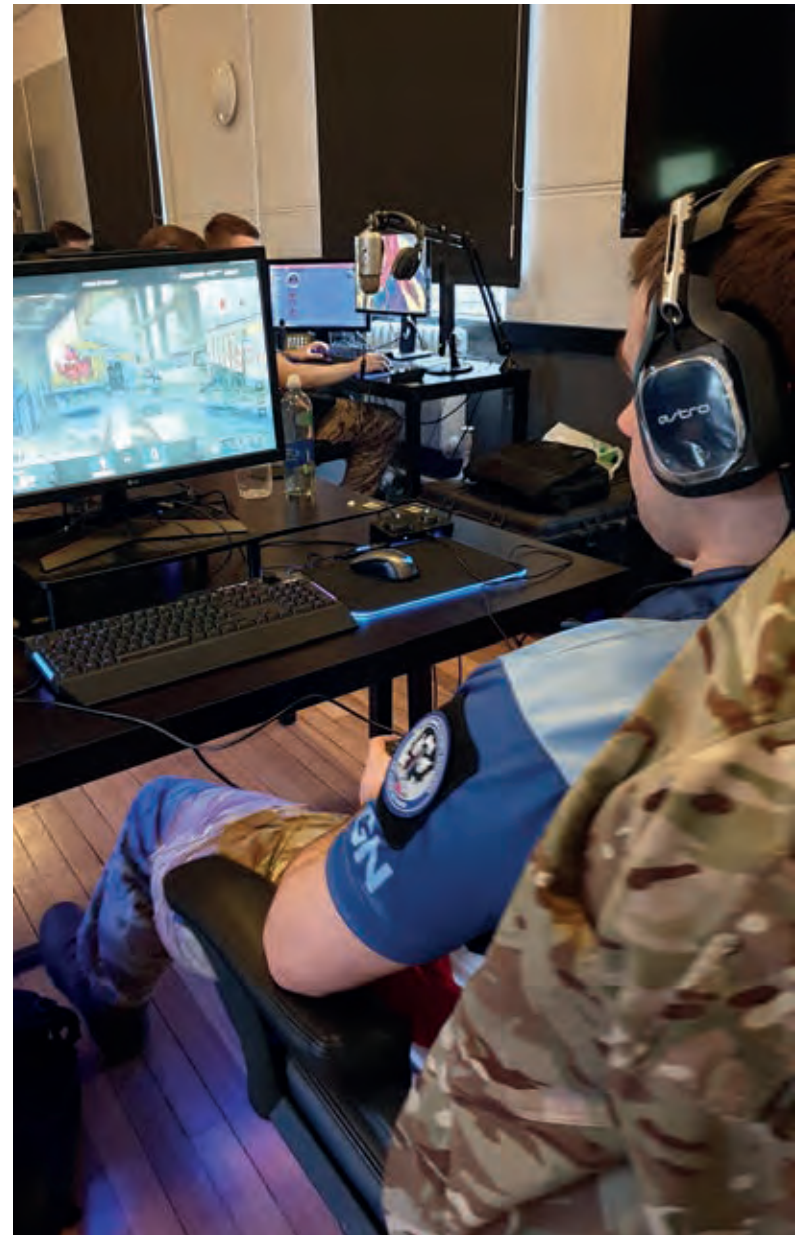


## Sport

### ESPORTS

# VR stars go close

## Runners-up in debut tournament



**Kennet Pike**  
HQ Air Command

**IT WAS a debut international tournament for the RAF Reapers Call of Duty Team, part of the RAF Esports Association.**

The team entered the fray as part of the second-ever Call of Duty Endowment Bowl, where they produced a superb runners-up finish.

Team leader SAC(T) Sam Arden, screen name Raden, said: "We're really happy with our overall performance."

"We were the only team with a perfect score in a game and everyone was playing incredibly well."

"Obviously, we're disappointed that we couldn't close out the tournament after leading throughout."

"However, the professional players on the US Space Force team were two of the very best in the world, so there's no shame in finishing second to them."

"It's an extremely important milestone for the RAF and UK Armed Forces Esports, and now looking to the future we hope to build on the success we've had and continue to improve as players and as an organisation."

Hosted by the developer Activision, CODEBowl, as it's known, was originally set up as a tournament between the American

military branches (Army, Navy Air Force, Marines, Space Force) to raise money to support military veterans find new jobs and retrain, but this year included the UK Forces.

The format consists of two rounds of timed 'public' games, where the teams compete with as many random public teams as possible in a one-hour period.

The debutant RAF team may have benefitted from beginners' luck, leading the table after the first round.

They proved it was not simply that though as they continued to lead throughout the tournament. What was still in question was whether their inexperience would tell against the reknowned US team as the tournament went on.

A controversial second round then saw the US Special Forces team and Reapers holding the top two spots and going into a final hour of play head-to-head versus numerous public teams.

It wasn't until the third round that the RAF side dropped two points and they saw the tournament slip away after a tie-break decider.

L/Cpl Jamie Griffiths (screen name Dash Dash), and SAC Kalum Johnson (screen name Kali), collected the Player of the Game and MVP awards to help soften the blow.

● Follow the RAF Esports association on Twitter @RAF\_Esports.

**LET BATTLE COMMENCE:** Above, SAC Kalum Johnson is focused during a clash; right, RAF team member pushes for another win

PHOTOS: KENNET PIKE AIR M&C

### ROWING

## Brit of alright for rowers

A TEAM of 24 RAF personnel produced notable finishes at the British Rowing Indoor Championships (BRIC).

The competition, usually held at the London Velodrome, was held virtually, with the RAF producing six top 10 finishes, including Cpl Toria Needham winning the women's lightweight 2k masters event, and Cpl Robyn Wainwright-Turner, who stormed to victory in the women's masters openweight 2k race. This brought home the first silverware.

There were no podium finishes in the 500m race, with team manager Sgt Danny Graham missing out on a medal by 0.2 of a second and SAC Alex Robinson, top RAF Ladies finisher, missing out on bronze by 0.4 seconds.

The relay closed out the final

day of action, as teams of four rowed 1km with the final race time being used as the team's average.

The Spitfires team, consisting of Sgt Paul Savage, Sgt Kris Stirk, Cpl Adam Smith and Cpl Ryan Hepworth, all RAF Honington PTIs, led at the halfway point following a quick start, but they could not hold out, slipping to fourth.

The Hurricanes, who took bronze and consisted of Graham, Cpl Tom Jackman, CT Gerry Armstrong and Cpl Aaron Docherty, won by 0.6 of a second, placing them third overall.

The Lancasters, the first all-female team to compete at BRIC, (SAC Alex Robinson, FS Steph Whyte, Cpl Toria Needham and Flt Lt Sophie Trotter), managed a fifth-place overall finish.

Finally, RAF 4 - The Dakotas, a mixed team consisting of two males and two females, made another RAF team debut. FS Pete Clowes, Sgt Stacey Denyer, Fg Off Emma Symons and Cpl Edward Carpenter secured a silver medal with a strong overall time of 3 minutes 27.9 seconds.

Team manager Sgt Danny Graham said: "Medals in both the men's and mixed relay event meant that Team RAF has won a medal at the last four British Indoor Rowing competitions."

"All in all it proved to be an excellent weekend of virtual racing and the largest turnout for any RAF team at an indoor rowing event."

● Anyone interested in the sport should email: danny.graham671@mod.gov.uk.



## SHOWJUMPING

# Classic rounds see RAF riders jump up the British rankings



**HOT STREAK:** Left, Wg Cdr Tostevin gets airborne; right, FS Martin on her horse Rachan Wind Dancer  
PHOTOS: EMM PIX

## STAFF REPORTER

Onley Grounds, Rugby

**ONLEY GROUNDS** Equestrian Centre proved to be a successful venue for Service showjumpers as they recorded several top 10 finishes at the Winter Classic event.

Despite Covid-19 tier restrictions, FS Keeley Martin and Wg Cdr Laurie Tostevin represented the Service's association at the five-day competition, and took full advantage of the Classic being an affiliated event.

Affiliation meant that every double clear round the duo secured

resulted in five points in the British Show Jumping Bronze league table.

Martin and Tostevin were among those unhindered by travel restrictions and were looking forward to plenty of showjumping challenges ranging from 90cm-1.45m, with numerous qualifiers for future shows across the UK, at

the tight indoor arena.

Martin said: "The benefits of riding in a competitive environment creates an atmosphere that is difficult to replicate at home. It's been a difficult year to get out and compete or even ride our horses.

"We have made huge improvements over the year, but the lack of competitions definitely has an impact. So, the Classic was a great opportunity to get back out and build assurance. For me the event was just what we needed to get back to a place that we were at almost a year previously."

The event featured back-to-back classes over consecutive days, enabling horse and rider combinations to ride, review and adjust within short timescales.

Both of the RAF riders had been training in the months leading up to the event and the five days were perfect to consolidate that hard work. FS Martin rode her own horse, Rachan Wind Dancer,

and, having benefitted from three days of training, started with a confidence-building round.

She produced a double clear in the British Novice (BN 90cm-1m); attaining another qualification towards the BSJ second round.

Keeley went on to ride four more double clear rounds over the next two days in the Novice, Discovery and 1.05cm rounds.

Wg Cdr Tostevin attended on the third day, riding her own horse Ellatine. Like Keeley, Tostevin used similar tactics to consolidate learning, by competing in the 1m, where she finished on a double clear in the 1.05cm.

She said: "We are very grateful to the RAFEA and Sports Board for their continued support that has enabled us to compete within the tier system. I'm thrilled that all the training during lockdown has led to success at Onley. It really proves perseverance is worthwhile."

● Visit: [RAFEquestrian](#) on Twitter.

## Hope springs eternal for footie charity

WG CDR Neil Hope celebrated a landmark figure to close out 2020 as his Taking Football to Africa charity passed the 250,000 mark in football kit delivery.

The RAF Shawbury-based charity, full name Taking Football to Africa and Beyond Charitable Appeal, delivers 'Aid through Football' - donating items to impoverished areas of the world.

In 2020 the charity handed over

kits donated by clubs including Premier League clubs Leicester City, Brighton & Hove Albion, Aston Villa and Manchester United (through the Manchester United Foundation) and English Football League clubs including QPR, plus County Football Associations.

Hope said: "Since we started in 2006 the appeal to date has delivered 265,000 items,

including 78,000 football shirts, to 58 countries.

"In 2020 alone we delivered 19,000 items.

"The difficulties due to the global Covid pandemic have made our deliveries more important than ever."

The charity's planned trip to Kenya and Nepal, originally cited for this month, has been rescheduled for April.



## Skeleton

**Dan Abrahams**  
HQ Air Command

AS THE country went into lockdown SAC Ben Fulker was rocking the skeleton ice runs of Europe, taking on all-comers and producing an historic podium finish.

The elite sporting Flight Ops Assistant saw the culmination of three years hard work with Team GB bobsleigh and skeleton as he secured a European Cup third place in Winterberg, Germany. The finish was his first podium spot, and during a very impressive few weeks racing he went on to two further BMW IBSF World Cup top 20 finishes and a seventh and 12<sup>th</sup> in the European Cup. The results rounded off a hugely successful Christmas and New Year of racing for the RAF man.

A delighted Fulker said: "It was definitely a special experience being on the podium and seeing the flag raised. It was a proud moment in my life and one I won't be forgetting. I'm glad I was able to get a good result after all the support I've received from the RAF."

Fulker, whose last races in RAF colours saw him secure a Service team win at the Inter-Services in

Königssee last March, produced a seventh in the European Cup with a time of one minute, 52.66 seconds.

That finish was plus 1.22 seconds down on the eventual German winner, Seibel Felix. The next day he sped home in third with a combined time of one minute, 52.33 seconds, which meant the RAF man finished plus 0.55 seconds down on eventual German winner Von Schleinitz Kilian.



He then went on to finish 12<sup>th</sup> in Innsbruck in the World Cup just 0.35 seconds away from a top 10 spot, with two further 14<sup>th</sup> place European Cup finishes back in Winterberg.

He said: "I'd love to get another podium and it's definitely a goal.

There are a couple of races where it could happen, but the competitors are always really good so we will see.

"Covid created a lot of uncertainty, especially during the summer. I was unsure whether the season would actually go ahead. I had to do most of my training in my back garden until we were allowed to return to gymnasiums.

"Now the season is underway, things are very different, face masks, social distancing, limited coach access allowed at the track and regular Covid testing is standard.

"I was disappointed when I found out this year's Inters were cancelled, but it's understandable with the current situation.

"I always enjoy the champs as I can give a lot back to the RAF team from what I have learned with British Skeleton. It's always great seeing how much the guys improve in such a short time."

Fulker, 24, is now preparing for further European Cup races in Altenberg and Königssee in Germany and Igls in Austria.

● **Keep up to date with SAC Fulker's races on the IBSF YouTube channel: bobskelevt and RAF ice sports and the RAF skeleton on Twitter @RAFSkeleton.**

# Fulker's a flyer

SAC secures podium finish as he warms to winter skeleton season



**ICE-CAPADES:** Top and left, Fulker produces a fast start during a World cup race; right, focusing and starting off for GB

**PHOTOS:** VIESTURS LACIS REKORDS



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Telephone: 07966 429755

## Sports roundup

Directorate helps steer Covid course

● Continued from page 27:  
"So, we are constrained for now but we'll be back when we can. In the meantime, we will continue to live up to the RAF motto, reaping the mental and physical health and wellbeing benefits of sport and activity, to help us deal with the pandemic personally and in our work.

"And we look forward to being able to do 'more' soon – more sport at each and every level, for all. Keep active, but stay safe."

Keep up to date with the RAF Sports Directorate @HQAfSport.

## 500 cycle ride sees Collins show support

CORPORAL LIAM Collins began his mission to complete the Rapha 500 cycling challenge due to tragedy, but ended it in celebration.

The RAF cyclist decided to take on the 500km event, which saw riders complete the distance between Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve for charity, after two of his close friends suffered the loss of a child. Now with the pair celebrating their marriage, Collins has completed the ride and raised £5,000 for charity SiMBA, which supports bereaved parents.

Collins said: "I had heard the tragic news from my friends and it was not something I could really comprehend. As if the last year wasn't tough enough. I then got thinking how could I get involved in an event to help their situation in some way.

"I decided to get involved in the Rapha 500, and found a tough 25km loop in the Welsh valleys, starting out of Blaenllechau, up over to Llanwonno down to Pontypridd and back up to Blaenllechau.

"My ride then coincided with the news my friends had tied the knot in Greta Green."

Collins, one of RAF cycling's shining stars, battled wind, rain and 6,000 feet of climbing to complete the challenge in 21 hours of riding, 32 hours in total including toilet and feed breaks.

"There was a fair bit of climbing, but it wasn't a race, it was a plod and with stuff like this I've done before, an endurance feat, it's really about focusing on eating and cycling, so it wasn't out of the ordinary for the festive season at least."

Collins added: "I knew it wasn't going to be easy, but when you've got fuel for the fire like I had with my friends' loss, that was enough to drive me."

He said: "I let Simon and Meg choose the charity and when I read about it, it was perfect. If I can raise some awareness and raise some money for a fantastic cause, I've achieved something."

● Follow Collins' efforts on Instagram @Liam2324.



**PODIUM STAR:** Below, SAC Benji Fulker, right, stands on the third-place podium spot; above, Covid safe trackside, above inset, all smiles, Fulker middle with RAF teammates at last year's IS championship PHOTOS: VIESTURS LACIS REKORDS/SAC MATT SMITH ACCSU







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