

The Forces' favourite paper

A class show Hit drama The A Word returns to BBC One

● R'n'R p4-5



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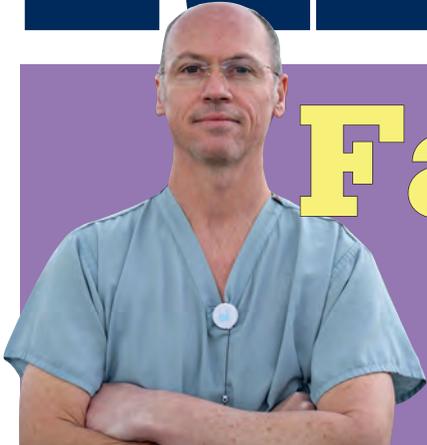
● P17



ROYAL AIR FORCE

Friday **May 15** 2020
No 1491 **70p**

RAF News



Family's frontline Covid-19 fight



● See p5

Fitness
Amy's home front push



● Sport p25

Fencing
Tailor-made for history



● Sport p26

Vet rescue

98-year-old launches fundraising crusade to save veterans club

Tracey Allen

A 98-YEAR-OLD RAF veteran has helped to raise almost €100,000 to stop the closure of a veterans club in Belgium with a sponsored walk on the 75th anniversary of VE Day.

George Sutherland said he was inspired by fundraising phenomenon Col Tom Moore, 100, to walk part of the way between the World War I cemetery at Lijssenthoek and the club, Talbot House, in the centre of Poperinge in West Flanders.

So far he has raised €89,635 of the €100,000 target. Joined on the walk by his son Alex, the former Leading Aircraftman was cheered on by supporters along the 3.5km route. He was accompanied by a bagpiper for the final half kilometre.

Before starting the walk, George said: "I'm still a fit man - I used to be a footballer."

Talbot House, which opened in 1915, was in danger of having to shut its doors permanently after being forced by the coronavirus pandemic to close for the first time since the German occupation in 1940. ● Cont. p3



HAVE-A-GO HERO: WWII veteran George Sutherland hits the fundraising trail in Belgium; above, as an aircraft mechanic in Amiens; left, posing at the Lijssenthoek war cemetery after completing his walk

INSPIRATION: Col Tom Moore



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“While everyone was out hunting for toilet rolls, I was out hunting for gym equipment”



Fg Off Amy Cokyane on her home gym, built to keep fit during lockdown
Sport p25

“I often get people crying and saying: ‘Thank you very much for doing it because we never see anything about autism on TV’”

Actor Christopher Ecclestone on the new series of The A Word
Rn’R p4-5



“My legs are tired but my mind is racing”

Capt Tom **p11**



RAF News

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Supervet goes the distance

● *continued from front*

Talbot House manager Simon Louagie said: “We’re immensely proud of George. I have known him for most of my life and he is a very modest man.

“Talbot House means a lot to people – it has always been there for the Armed Forces and vice-versa.

“George said he wants to be able to go back to Talbot House to have his cuppa and meet people. If the place closes he will lose his hobby.”

Born in Poperinge, the son of a Scottish father and a Flemish mother, George enlisted in the RAF in January 1941 at Edinburgh and trained as an airframe mechanic, entering service with 141 Squadron at St Athan.

He went on to see action on 20 different airfields in the UK and in Europe. After having worked on Beaufighters, his main job was repairing damaged Mosquito night-fighters.

In August 1946 he resumed his old job as a gardener with the Imperial War Graves Commission and continued to look after Lijssehoek War Cemetery for the



WALK OF VALOUR: George Sutherland assisted by his son Alex starts his challenge. PHOTO: Eric Compernelle

next 40 years.

Simon said: “George is a local celebrity, everyone knows him. He

has helped people all his life.

“George’s goal was to raise awareness of Talbot House too. We

hope to close the gap soon to reach the fundraising total.”

● **Go to: GoFundMe to donate.**

This Week In History



1941

Bismark mission

A PRU Spitfire flying from RAF Wick spots the German warship Bismark anchored near Bergen in Norway. The mission provides the intelligence leading to the chase and eventual sinking of the pride of the German fleet.

1963

V-Force Euro role

The RAF’s V-Force is formally assigned to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe for targeting, planning and execution of nuclear strikes. It remains under British control for national operations.



2001

C-17 weighs in

The C-17 Globemaster III heavy lift transport aircraft enters service with the Royal Air Force with 99 Sqn at Brize Norton in Oxfordshire

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



**Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund**

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News bulletin



WWII SURVIVOR: Mieczysław Stachiewicz

Polish Bomber Command hero dies aged 102

A POLISH pilot who took part in Bomber Command's famous 1000-bomber raid over Cologne and completed 33 missions over Occupied Europe has died aged 102.

At the outbreak of WWII Mieczysław Stachiewicz was posted to 4 Air Force Regiment having graduated from the Polish Air Force School in Dęblin and recently started studying architecture at Warsaw Polytechnic.

In September 1939, he was evacuated to Romania and interned but escaped to France where he joined the Polish Air Force.



After the French surrendered, he fled to Britain and in June 1940 completed pilot training and joined 301 'Land of Pomerania' Bomber Squadron flying Fairey Battle and Vickers Wellington aircraft.

Despite wartime service Stachiewicz continued studying and graduated in architectural engineering from Liverpool University in 1946.

He relinquished his commission as a Flying Officer in 1948. He was awarded the Silver Cross of the Virtutis Militari War Order, the Cross of Valour and two bars, the Air Medal, the Pilot's Field Badge, as well as commemorative British decorations.

An architect for many decades, his memoirs were published in the Polish Journal, and later as books entitled *Memories of War* (2003) and *My First Ninety Years* (2008).

An active member of the Polish Airmen's Association UK and the Chairman of the Józef Piłsudski Institute of Research in London, in 2017 he received the Order of the White Eagle, Poland's highest award, from the Polish President Andrzej Duda.

Family on the NHS frontline

LAC James joins medic parents in Britain's battle against Covid-19

Tony Durrant

THE FIGHT against Covid-19 is a family affair for a Reservist airman whose parents are NHS nurses.

LAC James Brown, 23, stepped up for full-time duty with the Covid Task Force after being inspired by his father David Brown, a theatre nurse, and mother Debbie, a health visitor.

"At the start of the pandemic I was worried about Mum and Dad and the risks they faced," said LAC Brown, of 611 (West Lancashire) Sqn, RAF Woodvale, on Merseyside.

"I am immensely proud of them and stepping up to volunteer for full-time duty was my way of helping them and the NHS."

Specialist anaesthetic nurse Mr Brown works in full PPE to deal with Covid-19 patients at the James Cook University Hospital, Middlesbrough, while Mrs Brown masks up to care for vulnerable families in the area.

Mrs Brown, who works for Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust, said: "When I heard James was committed to the Covid Task Force I was a little wary but know he will be well



SPECIALIST: Anaesthetic nurse David Brown



HEALTH VISITOR: Mum Debbie Brown

supported in his role. I'm very proud of him."

Former RAF photographer Mr Brown said: "I'm proud of James and wasn't surprised that he volunteered. With the RAF's training and resources, I know

he'll be well looked after."

LAC Brown has just finished a degree in Aerospace Engineering at Teesside University and lives at the family home in Middlesbrough, where he is on standby for task force duties.

He said: "I'm very conscious of the hours my parents are working and the pressures they are under so we give each other space at home."

Mrs Brown added: "As a family we are coping well.

"We're committed, we are a team, making sure we get enough rest. We talk to each other and make time for exercise, which helps immensely."

FAMILY AFFAIR:
LAC James Brown joins parents to fight coronavirus with Task Force
PHOTOS: FLT LT MARK MCKINSTRY



The Few become one

BATTLE OF Britain air gunner Flt Lt Terry Clark has died at the age of 101 - leaving just one surviving member of the World War II heroes dubbed The Few by Winston Churchill.

Born in Croydon he signed up in 1938 at the age of just 16 seeking adventure and was posted with 614 Sqn at Kenley.

He was a seasoned airman at the start of the war and joined 219 Sqn in 1940, operating the Blenheim bomber from Catterick in North Yorkshire.

In the final days of the Battle of Britain the squadron was re-equipped with the new Beaufighter boasting an advanced radar system.

Clark commented: "Now we

have an aircraft built for the job?"

Flying from RAF Tangmere in Sussex Clark was part of a crew who shot down a number of German aircraft including a Junkers bomber, a Messerschmitt 410 night fighter and a Heinkel.

He was awarded the DFM for one attack on a Junker and later made contact with a German crewman he shot down and corresponded with the family, regularly exchanging Christmas cards.

After retiring he maintained his links with the RAF and was a regular visitor to RAF Leeming and RAF Linton-on-Ouse.

RAF Benevolent Fund chief Air Vice-Marshel Chris Elliot said: "Terry belonged to a generation of Servicemen and women who answered their country's call without question. We owe a debt of gratitude to every one of them and their legacy must be to remember their service."

Mr Clark's death leaves John 'Paddy' Hemingway as the last surviving member of The Few. ● See p20 for obituary





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News



HIGH STAKES: SAS prepare to storm the Iranian Embassy in London in 1980

Embassy siege hero reveals Air Force past

A FORMER Air Force Gunner who was part of the SAS unit who stormed the Iranian Embassy has revealed how he became a member of one of the world's most elite units on the 40th anniversary of the raid.

Former Regiment man Bob Shepherd said the three years he served as a Gunner on 2 Sqn before SAS selection in the mid 1970s made him the soldier he was to become.

He said: "Back in 1972 from an RAF Regt defensive position I'd watch the SAS fighting the adoo (enemy) up in the mountains of Dhofar Province, Oman.

"I was only 17 years young, looking 14. I would see at night the green tracer from the adoo heading towards the SAS positions. Red tracer from the SAS heading out towards the insurgents.



FORMER GUNNER: SAS hero Bob Shepherd

"They were about four miles forward of us while we were located on the flat Salalah coastal plain defending the airfield. From that moment I was hooked, I'm on my way to the SAS.

"As my great RAF NCOs reminded me, I was wet behind the ears and a few years in 2 Sqn was the place to gain that experience.

"I have the Officers, NCOs and men of 2 Squadron RAF Regiment to thank for helping me on my way to passing SAS selection at the age of 20.

"They ensured I became the best soldier I could be. I will always be incredibly grateful."

Shepherd went on to serve in Dhofar, The Falklands War, the first Gulf War, Bosnia, and a number of operations he still can't reveal.

He added: "My pre-para course with 2 Sqn in 1972 and New Zealand SAS tracking course much later were all equally important stepping stones to enhancing the ability of any soldier.

"Today at the age of 65, I sit with awesome memories of my time from a Rock to a Pilgrim."

Five-year-old fundraiser Ben has Capt Tom in his sights

Vikki Quamina

THERE'S 95 years between them but youngster Benjamin Lower has launched a bid to follow in Capt Tom Moore's fundraising footsteps with his own charity crusade to support his local NHS workers.

The five-year-old is bidding to clock up 100kms in 10 days and has already raised £1000 for his local NHS Trust and has challenged Gunner dad Robert to keep up with him.

Benjamin came up with the idea after joining his Honington-based parents

on daily bike rides through the local countryside as part of their family lockdown exercise routine.

He said: "I love riding my bike. Staying at home and not seeing my friends is difficult.

I want to challenge Mum and Dad to do 10km every day for the next 10 days until we have done 100km and get some money to help look after Covid-19 patients at our hospital."



INSPIRING: Capt Tom



justgiving.com/fundraising/benjamin-lower

Dust busters

UK crews battle desert storms on Mali mission



DUST UP: 1310 Flt Chinook launches mission with French troops during sand storm. Left, heavy lifting duties PHOTOS: MOD

Simon Mander

CHINOOK CREWS are battling dust storms and scorching desert heat to back French troops combating Islamist insurgents in West Africa.

Despite the global pandemic the Odiham-based workhorses have clocked up more than 2000 flying hours moving 1000 tonnes of equipment and 12,000 passengers since they started their Mali mission in 2018.

Royal Air Force detachment commander Wg Cdr Si Elsey said: "Unfortunately, terrorism does not recognise pandemics.

"Deployed personnel have maintained communications with isolated loved ones back home during the worldwide turmoil



caused by Covid-19. We have not lost a sortie due to coronavirus and the French have maintained a high tempo of operations throughout.

"Once their troops are in the field, we resupply them and can lift vehicles in and out as required."

The helicopters are flown by 18(B) Sqn supported by RAF and Army ground crew on three to four-month tours.

They have flown 340 hours, lifted 247 tonnes of freight and transported 1150 passengers since arriving in January, operating in temperatures of up to 47° C.

The Mali detachment is designated as 1310 Flight and based at Gao Airfield.

Britain has three Chinooks supporting the French Operation Barkhane with crews flying over and landing in territory controlled by extremists.

Al-Qaeda-linked Islamic extremists exploited a separatist revolt to seize control of desert areas north of Mali in early 2012.



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 **ROYAL
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ROYAL PATRON: Duchess of Cambridge

Help keeping calm and carrying on

THE MOD has joined forces with mental health experts and the Royal Foundation to launch an online programme to help defence workers cope with stress.

The HeadFIT website provides advice on a range of mental health problems, relaxation techniques and breathing exercises.

The unrestricted website is available to the public, but has been designed to operate on the MoD's internal computer systems, which often restricts access to other sites.

Defence Minister Johnny Mercer said: "We train our Armed Forces to be both physically and mentally fit. Mental resilience has never been more important than it is during the coronavirus pandemic."

● Go to headfit.org.

Typhoon blitz on terror lair

Staff Reporter

Akrotiri

UK TYPHOONS blitzed an underground lair used by a Daesh terror cell in a multiple strike in Northern Iraq.

The RAF swing-role fighters and other Coalition aircraft were called in after surveillance teams tracked heavily-armed terrorists to a network of caves in the Bayji region of the country.

Typhoons unleashed Paveway precision-guided bombs which destroyed six cave entrances. Surveillance teams later confirmed the raid destroyed a weapons cache.

An RAF Voyager tanker was also scrambled from Akrotiri to support the mission.

In a separate raid two Typhoons and a Reaper aircraft used precision-guided bombs to destroy a second remote terrorist hideout west of the Iraqi city of Tuz Khurma.

A group of fortified buildings was destroyed in the raid which killed a number of Daesh fighters, the MoD said.

FUELLING THE FIGHT: Voyager tanker



Defence Secretary Ben Wallace added: "Britain's adversaries have not let Covid-19 stop them posing a risk to our citizens and allies.

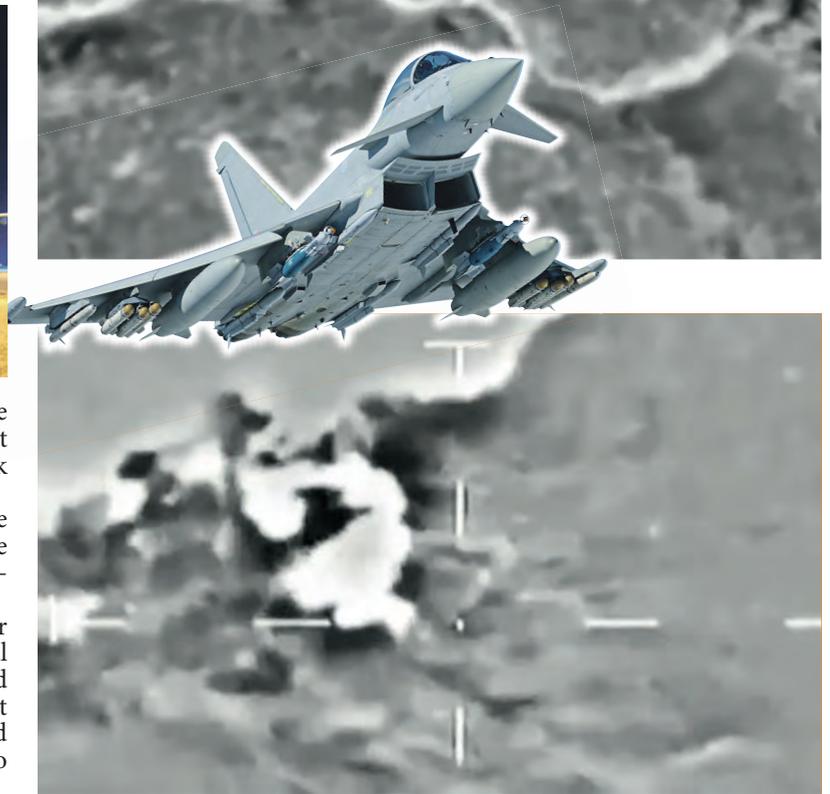
"It is for that reason that Defence continues to take whatever steps are necessary – at home and abroad – to keep the nation safe.

"The use of RAF jets and a Reaper aircraft to deliver a successful strike against Daesh terrorists and their hideout demonstrates that the UK's Defence never sleeps and will always do what is necessary to protect our people."



TRACKING TERROR:

Typhoon closes in on Daesh hideout before unleashing Paveway IV precision bombs. Left, unmanned Reaper aircraft PHOTOS: MOD



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VC WINNER: John Cruickshank received Britain's highest military honour for an audacious attack on a Nazi U-boat in the Arctic Circle



DFC WINNER: Flt Lt Kenneth Booth was officially reported missing in action in the Mediterranean but was washed up on a beach

CHEERS: Ken celebrates his 100th with a pint; below, official telegram reports him missing in action

Air Force super vets join Capt Tom in the UK Forces 100 Club

THE LAST RAF pilot to win the Victoria Cross for a daring attack on a Nazi U-boat which almost cost him his life is also celebrating his 100th birthday.

World War II hero John Cruickshank (pictured, inset as a young airman) was presented with the nation's highest military honour for the low-level raid on the surfacing German sub between Iceland and Norway in 1944.

He suffered severe chest and leg wounds when Nazi gunners blasted his Catalina, ripping holes in the fuselage, killing his navigator and wounding two other crew members.

Despite his injuries Cruickshank was able to release six depth charges at 50ft, which sank the vessel.

Lapsing in and out of consciousness he refused morphine injections and returned to the cockpit despite being restrained by members of the crew battling to treat his wounds as his co-pilot tried to nurse the stricken aircraft back to base at Sullom Vov in the Shetland Islands.

Cruickshank was struggling to breathe because of his injuries but managed to grab the controls as the co-pilot misjudged a water landing and the aircraft bounced high into the air.

Despite huge blood loss



U-BOAT DESTROYER: An RAF Catalina

Cruickshank was able to ease the Catalina gently onto the water.

As the aircraft started to take on water through the holes in the fuselage he again took control and was able to beach it.

He collapsed at the controls and had to be lifted through the front hatch into an inflatable rescue dinghy.

Medics who raced to the scene gave him an immediate blood transfusion. He was rushed to hospital where it was discovered he had suffered 72 individual wounds, mainly to his chest and legs.

Today he is Honorary President of the Aircrew Association and an active member of the VC and GC Association.

During a recent interview he referred to his status as the last surviving airman to be awarded a VC. He said: "When I go I suppose I had better turn out the light."

Tracey Allen

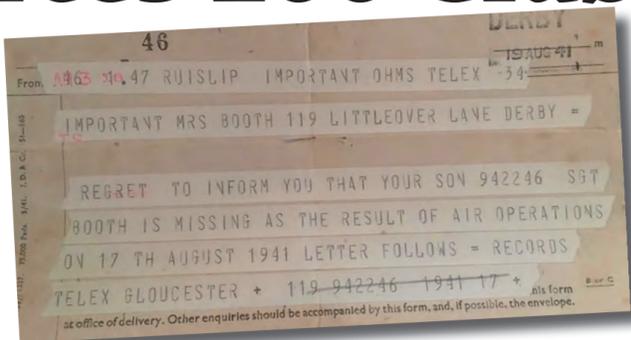
FLT LT Kenneth Booth survived several near-death experiences during World War II and was reported 'missing in action'.

He survived 'ditching' in the Mediterranean Sea after his right engine failed at low level while searching for an Italian convoy. He had one opportunity to make a radio call and chose to give the ship's position and not make a mayday call. He was subsequently reported as 'missing in action' to his parents.

He washed ashore three days later on the coast near Benghazi, Libya, and was found by a Royal Artillery (8th Army) 25-pound gun crew and taken to hospital.

A letter from the War Office informed his parents that he was missing in action, followed by the welcome news some months later that he had been found safe, although 'slightly injured'.

Flt Lt Booth was forced down twice more during his time in the RAF, both due to anti-aircraft fire - the first time over Munich when he managed to get safely to Pisa and the second over Tobruk while



flying a 680 Sqn Mosquito. He managed to land in Durna (Libya) after flying the aircraft with only one of its two engines.

He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal and Distinguished Flying Cross.

Born in Derby, Kenneth Booth flew more than 20 different types of aircraft during his distinguished RAF career, including the Tiger Moth, Blenheim, Maryland, Mosquito, Wellington, Lancaster and Spitfire. He served mainly on 603 Sqn and 680 Sqn.

He joined the RAF as a Sergeant in 1938 and commissioned in 1942 while flying the Mosquito.

His biggest regret was not piloting the Hurricane



HAPPY CAMPER: Kenneth as Pilot Officer with 70 OTU in Shandur in 1943

before he left the RAF in 1946.

Kenneth's grandson, Sqn Ldr Adam Booth, said: "He inspired me to join the RAF."

"He once flew a Blenheim IV down to Gibraltar to RV with HMS Furious to lead Hurricanes into Malta.

"It was supposed to be a quick trip before returning to the UK. He was stolen by the one-star there and sent to Egypt to join a new squadron. He returned to the UK four years later."

Kenneth marked his centenary at home in Norwich. His birthday party had to be postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Capt that

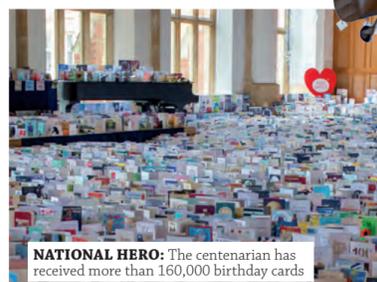
Iconic Battle of Britain flypast as Tom marks 100th with promotion



FUNDRAISING SUPERSTAR Capt Tom Moore celebrated his 100th birthday with a promotion and a flypast by a Spitfire and Hurricane from the RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

The iconic World War II aircraft flew low over his Bedfordshire home, completing three laps as he celebrated the landmark event with his family.

The centenary charity crusader hoped to raise a modest £1000 by completing 100 laps of his garden with his walking frame to mark his 100th birthday but has netted more than £30 million, becoming an international superstar.



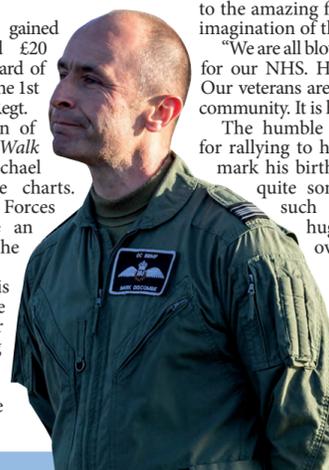
NATIONAL HERO: The centenarian has received more than 160,000 birthday cards

"My legs are tired but my mind is racing - I'll be back soon with other ways to help people and support communities"

As his charity bid gained momentum and topped £20 million he was given a guard of honour from troops from the 1st Battalion of the Yorkshire Regt.

He recorded a version of the anthem *You'll Never Walk Alone* with singer Michael Ball, which topped the charts. The cricket-loving Forces veteran was also made an honorary member of the English cricket team.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson joined the tributes, writing to Mr Moore and describing him as a 'hero' and a 'point of light in all our lives' who had lifted the hearts of the nation.



He was later promoted to the position of Honorary Colonel and received more than 160,000 birthday cards from supporters - plus the customary telegram from The Queen.

BBMF OC, Hurricane pilot Sqn Ldr Mark 'Disco' Discombe, said: "We feel honoured to be selected to mark his birthday and pay tribute to the amazing fundraising. It has captured the imagination of the nation."

"We are all blown away by what he has achieved for our NHS. His achievement is breathtaking. Our veterans are still giving huge support to the community. It is heartwarming."

The humble hero has thanked the public for rallying to his cause. Writing in a letter to mark his birthday he said: "Reaching 100 is quite something. Reaching 100 with such interest in me and the huge generosity is very overwhelming."

"My legs may be tired but my mind is racing and I will be back soon with other ways in which I can help people and support communities."



WWII ICON: Spitfire flown by Flt Lt Andy Preece

CAPTAIN MARVEL: Centenary fundraising superstar Capt Tom raised more than £30 million by walking laps of his garden to support the NHS. Inset below left, Sqn Ldr Mark Discombe
PHOTOS: MOD



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News bulletin



TOP ROLE: Cpl Evie Griffin has been appointed as Wittering Station Commander's Cadet

Cadets duo flying high at Wittering

Staff Reporter

RAF Wittering

HIGH-FLYING cadets Evie Griffin and Jessica Brown have landed top posts at RAF Wittering and will get a taste of life at the Lincolnshire base shadowing station chiefs for a year.

Cpl Griffin has been appointed as the Station Commander's Cadet, while Jess takes up the post of A4 Commander's Cadet.

The duo, who are both hoping to sign up after finishing school, topped a county-wide search to fill the positions and will be given a unique chance to see how the station supports frontline RAF squadrons.

Evie said: "When I was told I had got the role I was speechless and ecstatic. I couldn't believe it - I'm only a Corporal."

Jess added: "I feel beyond honoured to think station chiefs saw something in me. I hope that I will go above and beyond their expectations."

Station Commander Gp Capt Jo Lincoln said: "It is going to be a brilliant journey for them and something which will hopefully stay with them for a lifetime."

HONOUR:

Cpl Jess Brown will join A4 logistics teams



Gunners answer Covid-19 NHS call



SUPPORT: WO Karl Phillips is leading a Honington-based team
PHOTOS: SAC JAMES LEDGER

Simon Mander

HONINGTON PERSONNEL are operating two ambulances from their Suffolk station to help hard-pressed NHS workers tackling the coronavirus.

A team of six First Responders, including RAF police, physical trainers and military transport divers, have already answered emergency 999 calls supporting the East of England Ambulance Trust

from the Suffolk station.

Co-response team leader WO Karl Phillips said: "The training provided by the Trust was superb and enhanced by the Covid-19 specific tuition we received. We are following personal protection equipment hospital handover procedures and emergency transfer protocols."

WO Phillips joined the First Responders scheme in 2003 and has amassed thousands of hours as an

emergency volunteer responding to 999 calls. He has been Honington team leader since 2018.

He said: "I am extremely proud of my team and we, collectively, are equally as proud to operate alongside East England crews and assist the NHS in the ongoing battle against the coronavirus pandemic."

Ex-RAF Regt FS (Ret'd) Marty Park is the most experienced and longest-serving member of the team

and since 2002 has volunteered many thousands of hours.

Honington Station Commander Gp Capt Matt Radnall said: "Our personnel are being used to man double-staffed ambulances operating on a 12-hour shift rota.

"At just two days into the first week, the Honington team have already attended a number of life-threatening emergencies along with several calls requiring an urgent patient transfer."

Online archive eases search for war lost

Tracey Allen

THE REMARKABLE story of one of the few Indian fighter pilots killed in combat in World War I has been made public for the first time.

The heartbreaking tale of Lieutenant Shri Krishna Chanda Welinkar (pictured right) has been released by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission from its archive of thousands of stories from WWI, preserved in family correspondence.

The never-before-published files contain letters, pictures and other papers sent between the Commission and the next of kin of WWI dead.

Welinkar, from Bombay, overcame prejudice to become one of a handful of WWI Indian fighter pilots.

He went missing while on patrol

over the Western Front in June 1918. His family waited three years before they finally knew he had died, aged just 23, and his grave was located.

Following the 1918 Armistice the then Imperial War Graves Commission began building cemeteries and memorials for the 1.1 million Empire war dead, more than half of whom were missing.

During this early period the organisation exchanged tens of thousands of letters and appeals with families searching for loved ones, a Commission spokesman said.

He added: "Many struggle to deal with the lack of closure and their efforts

to locate a dead or missing relative can take decades of correspondence that can now be viewed online.

"By digitising files we hope a new generation of researchers and students will be able to understand the impact of losing loved ones during WWI."

Chief archivist Andrew Fetherston added: "For everyone who died in WWI there was a partner, parent or child back home with questions.

The heartbreaking letters in our archive show us what it was like for those families trying to come to terms with their loss.

"They are stories that show

desperate searches, former enemies uniting and often the sad realisation that a missing loved one would always remain so.

"This invaluable piece of world war history is accessible to a new generation and will help deepen our understanding of how WWI impacted those who were left behind."

The records - known as enquiry files - are part of a collection of nearly 3000 documents. Almost half have been digitised alongside a previously unreleased collection of more than 16,000 photographs held in negatives in the Commission's archive.

● To view the CWGC's archive through the new online portal visit: cwgc.org/history-and-archives/cwgc-archive



With 100s of new airfields covering its length and breadth, WWII Britain became...

HIMIS UK: The unsinkable aircraft carrier

Ask the author:
Stuart Hadaway



What made you decide to research WWII airfields?

There's a natural tendency to concentrate on aircraft and aircrews, but of course airfields were the backbone of the RAF's capabilities. Their size and facilities had a great effect on operations. They were also the everyday workplace of the majority of the RAF's personnel.

Why do you find them so interesting?

Airfields are an unsung technological marvel of the Second World War. It was probably the biggest engineering project in British history – over a third of Britain's daily war expenditure and a third of Britain's builders and civil engineers were dedicated to airfield construction in 1942. Their growth in complexity and capability is astounding.

How long did it take you to gather material for the book?

A lifetime of interest, right from listening to my grandad's stories of being in the Airfield Construction Branch as a small child, to the last 16 years working in RAF heritage and history.

What was the most unusual/surprising thing you discovered about old airfields?

How many surviving buildings there still are! Not only were over 450 new airfields built, but on average each one contained around 500 buildings. There are remnants of airfields and related facilities everywhere if you know what to look for.

Who do you think your book will appeal to?

It's intended as an introduction to the subject, although there is a lot in there for the more seasoned aviation enthusiast as well. I know RAF history pretty well, but even so I learned a lot while doing the detailed research for it.

Which former airfield is the best to visit?

Undoubtedly the Imperial War Museum site at Duxford, where huge parts of the old airfield remain. But partial sites, including some other excellent museums, are scattered all across the country.

Should any airfields be preserved as a reminder of our WWII heritage? If so, which?

Duxford already stands as an excellent tribute. The trouble with preserving airfields is their sheer size and the cost of maintaining them. Equally, so many have good (wartime) drainage and local infrastructure that they're ideal for other uses.

Next project?

Hard to say. The RAF had such a rich and varied history, and there are still so many untold stories that deserve attention.



TEA TIME: Queuing at the NAAFI van for a brew

AT THE HEIGHT of World War II more than a third of Britain's daily expenditure went, not on weapons or food, but on airfields.

One of the biggest single building schemes ever seen involving 1.3 billion man hours saw enough concrete and tarmac laid to nearly cover Birmingham and took the number of frontline stations in East Anglia alone from four in 1934, to 107 in 1944.

Why it matters is explained at the outset of Stuart Hadaway's book – it transformed the UK into an 'Unsinkable aircraft carrier', without which, there arguably could have been no D-Day and Hitler would have remained master of Europe.

You'd never guess the importance of the subject matter of this slim volume from its frankly uninspiring title and equally monotonous cover picture and Shire Publications have done the author no favours by presenting his work in this way.

Once you open it there's a veritable treasure trove of excellent imagery and insightful analysis on the defensive and offensive roles played by airfields and what life was like on these bases, most of which now lie forgotten or built over.

Some of the details are intriguing, for example:

- RAF Northolt's urban camouflage, which included houses painted on the sides of hangars and street layouts on their roofs, was so effective two swans crashed trying to land on the scheme's fake pond.
- Red lamps were placed in church spires to warn returning night fighters of the hazard – much to the hilarity of local villagers.
- Station perimeters had gaps where airmen could unofficially come and go unseen – the former RAF Linton's nearby canal is said to be full of Air Ministry-issue bicycles whose owners ditched them rather than wrestle them through a hole in the fence.

“It's no wonder my hair's white. Armourers had such dangerous jobs and so many died through bomb explosions ... when we approached aircraft... other ground crew trades cleared off”

PHOTOS: AIR HISTORICAL BRANCH (RAE)

But most impressive are the anecdotal first-hand accounts from ex-Servicemen – here Sgt W.D. Morgan recalls that only SNCOs could fuse bombs before they were loaded on to aircraft.

“When I did, I cleared everyone else away, for even talking about the ‘flicks’, would distract one, as only one part turn to the left meant self-destruction,” he said.

“It's no wonder my hair's white. Armourers had such dangerous jobs and so many died through bomb explosions ... when we approached aircraft... other ground crew trades cleared off”

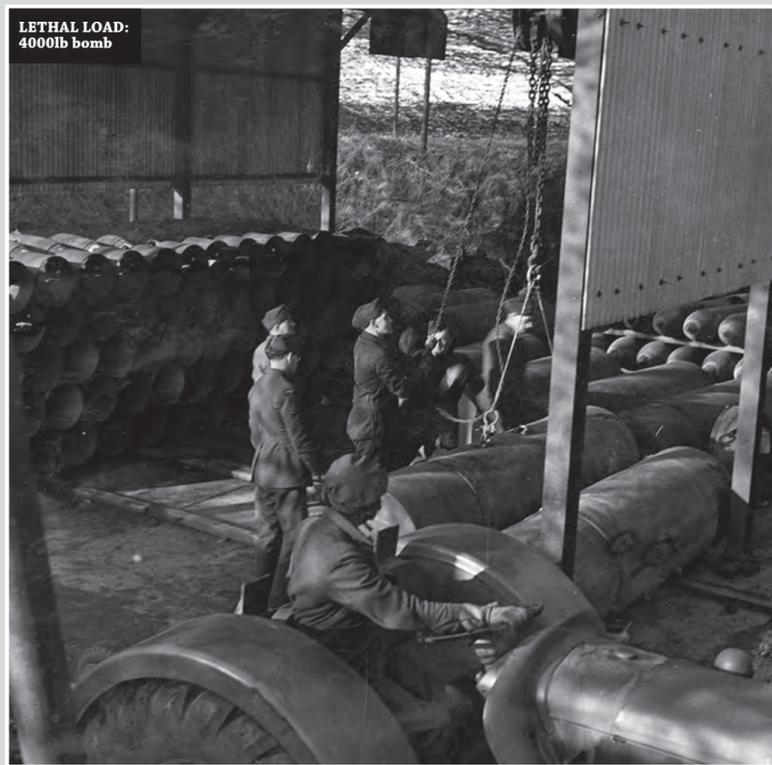
At only 63 pages the book is an entertaining and informative account by an Air Historical Branch senior researcher that will appeal to veterans and ex-National Servicemen as it recreates life much as it must have been for them.

From freezing on a bunk in a Nissen hut to queuing for 'tea and a wad' at the NAAFI van, the book is reminiscent of the infamous fictional 1950s station RAF Skelton immortalised in the Thames TV sitcom *Get Some In*.

British Airfields of the Second World War by Stuart Hadaway is published by Shire Publications priced £8.99.



LANC LINE: A sergeant signaller on the airfield



LETHAL LOAD: 4000lb bomb



CAMP LIFE: WAAF spud bashing



EYES RIGHT: Officers of the Intelligence Section hard at work at RAF High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire

R'n'R



Win!

**Win story of
'The Few'**
● p5

Announcements

- P6-7
- Puzzles
- P8

Twinnie

Hollywood Gypsy ● p4-5

Recognise the passion - who's made an impact?

We're still seeking nominations for the world's top engineering and technology talent, to honour them with medals and trophies for their services to the industry at a glamorous and inspiring ceremony in London.

Last year's IET Armed Forces Technician of the Year Award was won by Warrant Officer Class 2 (WO2) Kay Howells, an Army Ammunition Technician with over 15 years' experience in all aspects of ammunition, surveillance, repair and disposal.

She is one of the British Army's most highly skilled bomb disposal experts and has conducted bomb disposal operations in hostile environments; most notably in Afghanistan and during a recent Weapons Intelligence role in Iraq. She leads the Advanced Counter IED team at the Defence's Explosives, Munitions and Search School. A keen promoter of Science Technology Engineering and Maths in the workplace, Kay actively seeks to inspire future generations into STEM trades within the military.

On winning, she said: "Promoting the ammunition technician trade means a great deal to me and I am thankful to the IET for inviting us to these awards. It is great to receive recognition for my work."

So, who do you think should win this year?

Nominations are open until 15 May, so hop online to view the various award criteria and nominate someone exceptional at: theiet.org/achievement

The IET Achievement Awards exist to recognise individuals from all over the world who have made exceptional contributions to the advancement of engineering, technology and science in any sector, and therefore made demonstrable impact to society.

This can be through research and development in their respective technical field or through their leadership of an enterprise.

The calibre of nominees for these awards are always exceptionally high, with each year's nominees surpassing the last, making it a very difficult award for the judging panel to award!

IET President Dr Peter Bonfield OBE said: "All the IET Armed Forces Technician Award finalists demonstrated skills and knowledge through their work that went far beyond their roles. They have taken on challenging tasks and through innovation and determination to succeed have brought real benefits to those they



work for and with."

2018's IET Armed Forces Technician of the Year was awarded to Sergeant (Sgt) Dan Hardwick, a Mechanical Aircraft Technician in the RAF and proactive STEM ambassador. He was chosen for his contributions to the development of aircraft tools and for his dedication to promoting STEM throughout the Norfolk region.

He said: "It felt great to be nominated for the awards and to be recognised in my own workplace, [and] then to be shortlisted was amazing, I did not expect it at all. Looking at previous winners citations I didn't think I

would make the mark at all. Then when I won the award I didn't really have words for how I felt. To be recognised for my efforts in engineering and STEM by an organisation like the IET is incredible. It really made me feel proud.

"Winning the award has helped me to raise my profile as a STEM ambassador, [and] it has also gained me higher respect in my wider organisation. Seeing what a great organisation the IET is has spurred me on to enhance my professional registration and gain Incorporated Engineer status. I have had time to reflect on my career achievements and this will undoubtedly help me find a rewarding engineering career when my time in the RAF has come to an end."

The IET Awards programme provides recognition and support in awards, prizes, scholarships and bursaries to celebrate excellence and research in the sector and encourage the next generation of engineers and technicians. All IET Awards seek to inspire and reward engineering excellence,

including apprentices at the start of their careers through to reputable, established professional engineers and technicians.





Music

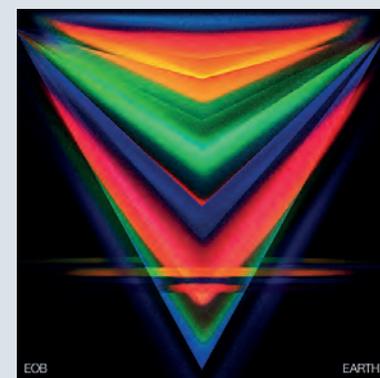
Ed O'Brien

Earth

In perfect isolation



LEFT FIELD:
Ed O'Brien



Back to *Earth*

AFTER 30 years as guitarist for Radiohead, a lot has been said in the build up to Ed O'Brien's debut album *Earth*.

As an integral part of Radiohead, who, apart from their first three albums, must be considered to be one of the most innovative bands in British musical history, O'Brien was always going to struggle to provide anything 'original'.

With the opening track *Shangri-La* he stays safely at home, with smatterings of Blur in the soundscape. It is a solid starting point, and with *Brazil* he begins to spread his wings. Acoustic guitar and gentle melancholic vocals drift in, before a steadily driving bass drum pulls things forwards with some delicious acoustics and the repeated mantra 'Feel the Love, Feel the Love, Again', flowing in. This is comfort zone music for O'Brien, but it is undoubtedly beautiful.

Deep Days is up next, and the chorus works well after a return to acoustic guitar to build the opening. O'Brien's vocals are soft and ease into your soul like Ray Davies of The Kinks, all very English and refreshing at a time when every singer sounds like they are American.

Long Time Coming is simply terrific. It begins with a gentle timbre on guitar with ethereal vocal harmonies, then darker electronic keyboards drift in with real menace. The instrumental piece works well before O'Brien bounces off to the current world situation in *Banksters*. I always worry when musicians put their oar into world commentary. It's usually with a clank and bang as the obvious lyrics spit out, and from a privileged position of wealth, in many cases, they stick in my craw. *Banksters* is a good tune, the lyrics are a tad obvious, but for some reason with the world in total flux you can forgive them as they simply speak the truth.

Olympik is a pop bag bonanza, all jangling guitars, ethereal vocals and stripped back drums.

Cloak of Night closes out the nine-track album. It's a pure guitar track and a lovely lilting way to end proceedings.

Review by Daniel Abrahams

Rating: 4 out of 5

■ *Earth* is out on Capital Records now. On all digital download platforms.

Radiohead star thankful to be in Wales for brush with Covid-19

FACING UP to life in lockdown has proved eventful in more ways than one for Radiohead's Ed O'Brien, writes Neil Barston.

Having contracted coronavirus the guitarist has been recovering at the family home in mid Wales, which happens to coincide with promotion of his long-awaited debut solo album *Earth* (see review, right).

He seems notably calm about his brush with the condition that has brought the world to a near standstill and put all touring prospects on hold.

"People have had different experiences with coronavirus, but for me, it was like flu and though I felt I was getting better, it's something that lingers," he said.

"But we're very lucky that we're out in the countryside. I am very aware a lot of families out there don't have a lot of access to nature, which especially resonates with me."

It's been many years since he upped sticks from his native Oxfordshire, and he seems more than content with his present surroundings alongside his wife, two children and their pet dog.

Having spent more than seven years finalising his album's material, the 52-year-old explained it was a mission he felt had to be completed. But with the group's frontman, Thom Yorke, and bandmates Jonny Greenwood and Phil Selway having all conjured

their own respective solo projects, he grappled with whether to pursue his own venture.

"Making a record isn't easy, it takes a lot of work and a lot of soul searching. But doing this was something I felt compelled to do. If I didn't do it then a creative part of me might have died. It was one of those 'what if' moments, you just have to follow your instincts," he said.

Featuring the production talents of Flood, who has worked with the likes of a-ha, New Order, The Killers, U2 and Foals, *Earth* offers an eclectic mix of sounds that reflects its complex journey.

Its inspiration straddles everything from early Primal Scream rave anthems, as witnessed with the opener, *Shangri-La*, through to its closing track, *Cloak of the Night*, an elegant duet with Laura Marling.

"My debut has elements of soul, rock and ambient music, but lyrically it's a gospel album, about having been through the dark and moving towards the light," he explained.

He said there's a sense of vindication in finally completing the album, released under the moniker of EOB.

After nine studio albums, Radiohead proved their resilience many times over, and last year entered the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

He acknowledged that growing

up in a particularly musical household had served him extremely well in his career.

"Both my mum and dad loved music, getting me into The Beatles, and bands like Creedence Clearwater Revival," enthused Ed, who added he was also exposed to a lot of classical music, singing soprano as a youngster. In his teens, he eagerly lapped up all that punk, New Wave and bands such as the Smiths, The Jam and The Police had to offer.

Radiohead, or On a Friday as they were originally named (after their rehearsal day), met at Abingdon School in the mid 80s. Ed, playing Lysander in a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, encountered the young Thom, who was arranging the show's musical score.

"I don't know if it was a case of knowing we were going to be special, but it felt instinctively the right place to be as part of the band, right from the very first moment," Ed revealed.

"We became thick as thieves and it was like a brotherhood, which I have always thought has been really important. For us, it's never been just being all about the music, though we are all very different characters."

With so much history, how challenging is it to pick an ultimate career highlight?

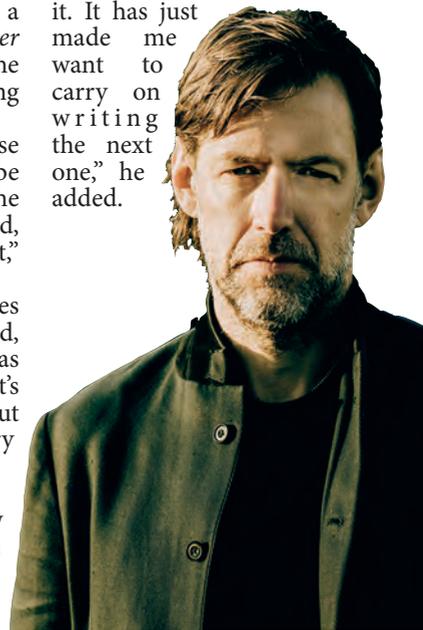
He said: "There have been so many moments – the last

time we played Glastonbury was definitely one, but my favourite ever gig was probably a festival we did in Brazil for the In Rainbows tour, which had such a great atmosphere."

It's been four years since Radiohead's last album, *A Moon Shaped Pool*, which saw them return to the limelight.

While Ed says they've had conversations about their next potential move, it seems this year offers a welcome pause for focusing on their respective projects.

"I feel really happy about where I am now that my album is done, after all that has been put into it. It has just made me want to carry on writing the next one," he added.





Music
Twinnie
UK tour & new album

From Hollyoaks star to Hollywood Gypsy

Playlist Top 10

Now playing

SUE HOLDERNESS – Marlene from *Only Fools and Horses* – is the host of the RAF Benevolent Fund's All Stations podcast. The charity has launched a competition for a script about the Battle of Britain for the show – see RnR p6 for details. Here's her Top 10 tunes:

- Eva Cassidy**
Somewhere Over the Rainbow
- Fats Domino**
Blueberry Hill
- Queen**
Don't Stop Me Now
- Peggy Lee**
Why Don't You Do Right?
- Ella Fitzgerald**
Someone to Watch Over Me
- Liza Minnelli**
Maybe This Time (Cabaret)
- Jacques Brel**
If We Only Have Love
- Jacques Brel**
Ne Me Quitte Pas
- Simply Red**
Holding Back the Years
- The Beatles**
Come Together



The talented country songstress, actress and model has been co-writing with multi-Grammy award-winning writers and producers Nathan Chapman (Taylor Swift, Shania Twain) and Dave Barns (Carrie Underwood, Maren Morris). Last year saw Twinnie headline a sold-out show at The Lexington in north London, support the likes of Jack Savoretti and Lauren Alaina, win Best Breakthrough Act at the 2019 BCMA Awards, and appear at a host of UK events including main stages at The Long Road and the British Country Music festivals. She also supported Kiefer Sutherland on his 2019 tour.

Go to: twinnieofficial.com for live date details.

The Big Event

The A Word

THE POPULAR drama *The A Word*, about a young autistic boy and his family, is back for a third series.

Two years on a lot has changed for the Hughes family. Joe (Max Vento) is 10 and living in two places at once. His parents Alison (Morven Christie) and Paul (Lee Ingleby) are divorced, living 100 miles apart. Eddie (Greg McHugh), Alison's brother, lives with his dad. Only Maurice (Christopher Eccleston), Joe's grandfather, is holding it together.

A new face joining this series is Julie Hesmondhalgh (*Broadchurch*, *Coronation Street*) as Heather, head of the specialist school Joe goes to in Manchester.

She said: "I was already a massive fan of *The A Word* before being invited to join the third series, so it was a proper honour for me.

"I had never seen anything quite like it. Having a child with that specific issue going on at the heart of a drama was so new. The setting of it, being in the rural lakes as well, just seemed such a beautiful landscape against it. And then this sort of sprawling family saga, but with this idea of everybody trying to cope with Joe and with his neurodiversity; what he brought to the family and trying to find their own, individual ways through that."

She admitted: "I was thrilled and a little bit nervous to be asked to play Heather. I knew I would be working within the setting of a specialist school, with some of the actual children from the school.

"To go into that world and become part of it for a little while is quite challenging because you don't want to overdo it, overstep boundaries. But you don't want to be timid about it either and sit back so the children can't have any relationship with you. Actually, I didn't have to worry about any of it, because the school itself is so wonderful and the staff are just the best people you'll ever meet."

Why did writer Peter Bowker bring in the character of Heather? Hesmondhalgh explained: "I think because Joe had started at the school and is ensconced there now. But there's a lot going on at home in this series and he becomes very attached to the school as somewhere where he feels safe, where he knows exactly what's going on from the second he steps in, to the second he steps out.

"He starts to create a reality where that's his safe space really, so he attaches to Heather in a way that isn't necessarily healthy and a good thing for him."

She added: "Heather and Joe are very, very close, and they have quite a playful relationship. It's lovely actually.

"It was a big deal for me to join the third series. It always is when you join an established series that's very popular and loved, and the actors have a relationship with each other and the crew.



MUSIC OBSESSED: Joe (Max Vento). Inset right, Joe's mum Alison (Morven Christie) and, top left, Louise (Pooky Quesnel). Below left, Heather (Julie Hesmondhalgh) and Maurice (Christopher Eccleston)

A Word in your ear

Eccleston & Hesmondhalgh talk to R'n'R on the return of the hit BBC drama about child autism

onwards, I always feel I should be at the gate with my autograph book and somehow I've got in."

At the end of series two, Maurice had proposed to Louise (Pooky Quesnel), and been turned down.

Eccleston said: "The audience might be sad to hear it, but some of Maurice's rough



edges have been taken off [in series three].

"He's a happier man. He's probably happier than his children, which bemuses him. His children are in early middle age and are splintering. Their lives are falling apart, really, or certainly changing, so I think that's quite bemusing for Maurice."

He explained: "Maurice behaves a lot better around women. He tends to be very competitive and disparaging about males, but with women he's more sensitive and enjoys their company more.

"One of the joys of this series is the relationship between Maurice and Eddie, and the changes in there. It comes to a head in a scene where Maurice is holding a chainsaw. Eddie really stands up for himself, and the psychology of their relationship becomes clear to him, possibly from the loss of his own family and his own dream.

"When Eddie leaves that's very painful for Maurice, and when Eddie returns there's a new note to their relationship. Maurice learns he has to give Eddie his space. It's a beautiful thing that happens between Maurice and Eddie in this series."

Eccleston added: "I'm known for probably three other significant roles: *Doctor Who*, *Our Friends in the North*, and *Cracker*. And I'm a runner, so I'm often out and about

and get stopped a lot in the street. I'm stopped just as much about *The A Word* as I am for those three, which has surprised me.

"The reason I'm stopped is because it seems autism has impacted on every person you meet – be

it people's children, grandchildren, best friends. It's had an enormous impact on me, personally. I often get people crying and saying, 'thank you very much for doing it because we never see anything about autism on the television. And thank you very much for not being, for want of a better word, pompous about it.'"

He said: "Our central character is portrayed as living with autism. We have Leon Harrop and Sarah Gordy, actors living with Down's Syndrome. It's an extraordinary event and I think we have created opportunities for the future. This show is as important to me as anything I've ever done."

■ *The A Word* continues on BBC One at 9pm on Tuesdays. The full boxset is available on BBC iPlayer, along with series one and two.



Competitions
Books
Churchill's Few (menschpublishing.com)



The Few, in their own words

EIGHTY YEARS after the Battle of Britain *Churchill's Few* by John Willis (menschpublishing.com) tells the story, in their own words, of six brave young men who fought courageously in the skies above England to prevent Hitler's invasion of Britain.

These Hurricane and Spitfire pilot were 'The Few' to whom Churchill (*below*) said the nation owed so much.

The six men featured were from vastly contrasting backgrounds. Geoffrey Page, shot down in his Hurricane and the victim of horrendous burns, was a founder member of the legendary Guinea Pig Club.

Bob Doe, also badly injured, was one of the most successful fighter aces but remained unheralded and out of the public eye. Cyril Bamberger rose from humble origins as a Sergeant Pilot to win a DFC and bar.

Joseph Slagowski was one of the small band of heroic Polish pilots whose contribution to the Battle, as the book reveals, remained scandalously undervalued.

Former *Daily Telegraph* journalist Geoffrey Myers,



pilot Ulrich Steinhilper, shot down and captured over Kent and destined to become one of the greatest escapers of World War II, evading British and Canadian prison camp guards five times.

Churchill's Few throws light on the long-term consequences of the Battle of Britain on the lives of the young pilots in the frontline.

We have a copy of the book (hardback rrp £16.99) for one lucky reader to win. For your chance to own it, simply tell us:

What was the name of the legendary club of which Geoffrey Page was a founder member?

Email your answer, marked *Churchill's Few* competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk to arrive by May 29. Please note that due to the coronavirus pandemic we are currently unable to accept competition entries by post.



Music
Dion
Blues with Friends

Dion's matey at 80

THE LEGENDARY Dion (*The Wanderer*, *Runaround Sue*) has a new album out next month, titled *Blues With Friends*, and what friends...

No less than Bob Dylan wrote the liner notes and the new release features musical contributions from Jeff Beck, Joe Bonamassa, ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons, Patti Scialfa, Bruce Springsteen, Samantha Fish, Paul Simon, Van Morrison and Steve Van Zandt among others.

Dion, 80, said *Blues With Friends* represented the fulfilment of a lifelong vision. He explained: "I wanted an album of songs that were strong and memorable and told stories that were worth telling. The blues have been at the heart of my music since the early 1960s. *The Wanderer* is a 12-bar



blues and I was covering Willie Dixon and Jimmy Reed in my early years at Columbia – much to the dismay of my corporate masters."

He came up with the music and lyrics for 12 of the 14 original songs on the album and finished them with co-writer Mike Aquilina.

Dion said: "I needed to round up the best guitarists and musicians alive and pick them from every generation, every variation of blues. "Great songs, great guitarists. What more do you need?"

Dion's *Blues With Friends* will be released on June 5 through Keeping The Blues Alive Records, a new label started by Joe Bonamassa and his manager Roy Weisman, an offshoot of Keeping The Blues Alive Foundation, Bonamassa's non-profit organisation.

The label's objective is to provide a platform for musical talent in blues and blues-rock based music and to help encourage the careers of extraordinary musical talent.

Ten per cent of all profits from the label will be donated back to the Foundation for promoting music education to students and schools in need.



ZZ TOP: Gibbons



Your Announcements

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

Death

BARDGETT Eddy passed away on April 15 aged 96. Served with Coastal Command's 230 Squadron. Trained on the Empire Training Scheme in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Canada (1943). Set off in June 1945 in Mark V Sunderland with skipper and long-time friend the late Graham Stevens from Lough Erne in Northern Ireland for 230 Sqn based at Red Hills Lake in Madras, with stops in Morocco, Sicily, Egypt, Iraq, Bahrain and Ceylon. Once in Madras, was involved in first stage repatriation of newly-liberated POWs. Later joined the NHS in 1948 as a hospital administrator and oversaw the building of two London hospitals – Hillingdon (1967) and the Royal Free (1978). Enjoyed a long retirement in Bristol with his wife Brenda. Sadly missed by his three daughters and grandchildren.

Seeking

IS YOUR surname Mortimer, Dale, Keen or Jones? I'm hoping to make contact with any relatives of those who died with my uncle Edward McLaughlin on August 22, 1941, while serving with 37 Squadron in Egypt and are buried in the Suez war cemetery. Please contact Elaine Kelly at: ehk11965@gmail.com.

I WOULD like to reconnect with Stuart Taylor. He was based at RAF Brize Norton 90s/00s working in the electrical/avionics ground crew section. Possibly 216 Sqn, 101 Sqn or 10 Sqn. He will be 49-50 now. Lived in Blackpool in the 80s (briefly at the Tower in '87). Lost touch due to house/job change. Please email Marie at: whiskymac73@gmail.com if you can help.

Reunions

SINGAPORE Armed Forces Reunion. Were you seconded

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

237 OCU. Due to the coronavirus outbreak, the eighth annual 237 OCU Groundcrew Reunion will now be held on Saturday, September 5 from noon at The Compleat Angler, 120 Prince of Wales Road, Norwich, NR1 1NS. Ex-237 OCU members of all trades and any era welcome. Just turn up and join in. For more information, please search for 237 OCU on Facebook, email me at: 237OCU@gmail.com or contact Si Roberts at 1 Manor Gardens, Carnoustie, Angus, DD7 6HY or call: 07546 400085.

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

RAF Bawdsey Reunion Association. Due to the coronavirus pandemic we have, regrettably, had to cancel the annual reunion lunch planned for Saturday, June 6. Those who have booked a place and paid their fee will have their money refunded. We have provisionally planned the next reunion for Saturday, June 5, 2021 and look forward to seeing our friends again then. In the meantime we wish you all a safe and healthy time during this unprecedented period. If you have any queries please email: doreen.bawdseyreunion@btinternet.com or you can call: 07513 301 723.

COASTAL Command Officers' Reunion, October

10, 2020. Please contact Ray Curtis, call: 01264 735349 or email: hjn3@btinternet.com.

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

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

SSAFA concert

MILITARY charity SSAFA's *VE Day 75 With The Daily Mail* concert has been rescheduled for Sunday, September 20. Due to the Government's coronavirus restrictions, the Royal Albert Hall and UK cinemas were closed on Bank Holiday Friday, May 8 – the 75th anniversary of VE Day. A SSAFA spokesperson said: "Tickets already purchased for the Royal Albert Hall will be valid for the new date. The venue will contact all patrons with details of how to request a refund if they cannot make the new date. Cinema tickets will be back on sale in due course via local cinemas." Ticket holders should contact their local cinema box office directly to confirm it is screening this event on the new date or to receive a refund. For news and updates go to: www.veday75.co.uk.

Catering Association

MEMBERSHIP is open to those serving or who have served as a WO or FS in Trade Group 19 and former RAF Catering Officers. Email: janedjones6@tiscali.co.uk or call: 01487 823480.

Manna anniversary



VITAL AID: A Lancaster being loaded with food by 115 Sqn personnel at RAF Wrattling Common

THE INTERNATIONAL Bomber Command Centre, based in Lincoln, needs your help to tell the story of Operation Manna, in readiness for the 75th anniversary this year.

The Operation saw nearly 12,000 tons of food dropped to the stricken Netherlands population, saving almost one million people from starvation.

Were you a farmer who helped with supplies? Did

you help with loading the aircraft? Do you remember the fleets of aircraft flying from Lincolnshire's stations between April 29 and May 8, 1945? Was your family saved by the Operation? Was a member of your family a Food Dropper?

To share memories contact the IBCC at: info@internationalbcc.co.uk or write to: Op Manna, IBCC, 13 Cherry Holt Road, Bourne, Lincs, PE10 9LA.

Memories of Cranwell



THIS YEAR is the centenary of the RAF College Cranwell (pictured above) and it is in the process of collecting memories from people who may have lived or worked there in any capacity.

If you would like to share

your stories and memories please email: crn-sce-generalenquiries@mod.gov.uk or write to: Media and Communications Office, RAF College Cranwell, Seaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 8HB.

Write a script for popular podcast

THE RAF Benevolent Fund has launched a competition inviting the public to write a script telling a fictional story based on the Battle of Britain.

The script competition aims to engage younger audiences, as previous research by the Fund revealed 40 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds did not know what the Battle of Britain was. Submissions should be 10-25 minutes long and the deadline for entries is May 31, 2020. Go to: rafb.org/battle-of-britain/competition for more details.



The podcast is hosted by *Only Fools and Horses* actress Sue Holderness (inset).

The script competition aims to engage younger audiences, as previous research by the Fund revealed 40 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds did not know what the Battle of Britain was. Submissions should be 10-25 minutes long and the deadline for entries is May 31, 2020. Go to: rafb.org/battle-of-britain/competition for more details.



Your Announcements

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

Care with courage

THE ROYAL Star & Garter charity, which cares for ex-Servicemen and women, has launched a new fundraising campaign, **Care with courage**, during the Covid-19 crisis, highlighting the everyday bravery of its residents and staff.

The charity is facing increased costs and a loss of income during the coronavirus pandemic.

Sophie Wiseman, who works at the Solihull Home where staff lived and worked on-site in April to reduce the risk of infection, said: "The staff have gone above and beyond to keep our residents safe, well and happy. I have, like others I work with, changed roles, so that we can continue to provide outstanding care."

Julia Annandale whose mother is at the Surbiton Home, said: "I can't thank the Royal Star & Garter staff enough for turning up every day during this crisis, and for making what must be enormous efforts to keep everything as normal as possible."



FIRST-CLASS CARE: Resident Bibi enjoys flower arranging with staff. Inset, Will with his Granny, who lives at Royal Star & Garter's Surbiton Home

Her son Will added: "We've been really worried that Granny would be stressed or anxious, but every single member of staff and every carer has done an amazing job at Royal Star & Garter over the past few weeks in managing the knock-on effect of what's happening at the moment. We're incredibly grateful that Granny's being so well

looked after. We want to thank them for everything they do."

Andy Cole, the charity's chief executive, said: "Our veterans have shown such dedication and service to our country, we now need to be there for them." Go to: starandgarter.org/carewithcourage/ to support Royal Star & Garter's Care with Courage campaign.

TOP SECRET: The exterior of the bunker at Bentley Priory Museum that houses the World War II Operations Room (inset) PHOTO: IWM



Museum launches new project

BENTLEY PRIORY Museum has secured a £68,500 grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the project 'Defending Britain from Nazi & Nuclear Threat'.

It will record and share the memories of RAF and WAAF personnel who worked in the top secret bunker at RAF Bentley Priory, focusing on the Battle of Britain in 1940 and the Cold War from 1945 to 1991.

The underground bunker was completed in haste in 1940 as Nazi Germany threatened to invade Britain and was developed for use

throughout the Cold War. It closed in 2008 when the RAF left Bentley Priory.

The project will be launched this year to mark the 80th anniversary year of the Battle of Britain and the 30th anniversary of the reunification of Germany in 1990. It will include both a temporary and permanent exhibition, resources for schools and family activities during school holidays.

The museum's chair of trustees, AM Cliff Spink, said of the grant: "It was a great lift to us all to receive such positive news."

Volunteers will be critical to the project – supporting research, carrying out oral history interviews and co-curating the temporary exhibition. Initially these tasks can all be carried out remotely.

Please email the Museum at: collectionsproject@bentleypriorymuseum.org.uk if you are interested in volunteering on the project.

The museum is keen to hear from anyone who worked in the bunker, or has any memories or photographs of it they would like to share.

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Crossword

No. 273

Solve the crossword, then rearrange the seven letters in yellow squares to find an old aircraft

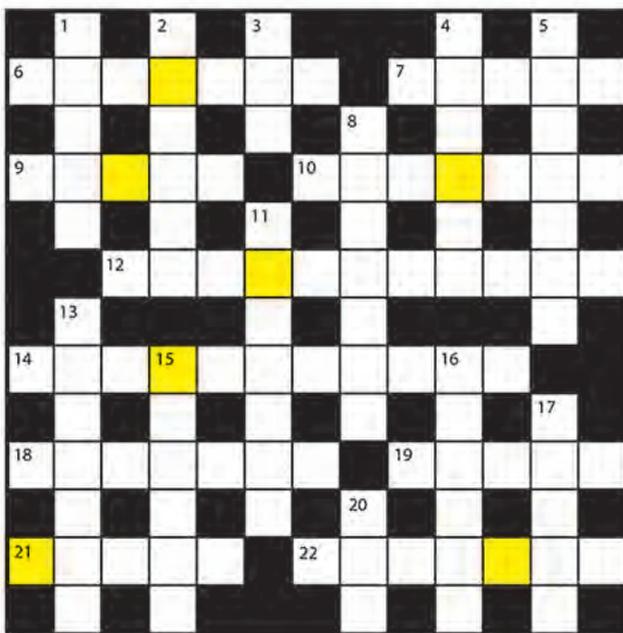
Across

- 6. Queen of the fairies almost joins 100 on ship (7)
- 7. An attractive angle? (5)
- 9. In hamper, there is something from Scottish city (5)
- 10. Sounds like a dangerous place for swimming (4,3)
- 12. See 20 Down
- 14. Unchains gem for use on Spitfire (7,4)
- 18. Is duck behind cloister? (7)
- 19. American returns his badly cooked dish... which should be raw (5)
- 21. Crow is nearly starving (5)
- 22. This includes first woman who steals (7)

Down

- 1. And 2 Down. Long-distance teacher uses monoplane (5,6)
- 2. See 1 Down
- 3. And 17 Down, 13 Down. Half Irish camera broken by RAF boss (3,5,7)
- 4. Bitter about a police force in charge (6)
- 5. Try to persuade Anne Tyler, at first (7)
- 8. Retribution exacted by little clergyman at end of Stonehenge (7)
- 11. Greedy birds, presumably (7)
- 13. See 3 Down
- 15. It offers protection in flight (6)
- 16. Unhappy Sean consumes gold: this is the inevitable result (6)
- 17. See 3 Down
- 20. And 12 Across. Dramatic way RAF prisoners left Stalag Luft III (3,5,6)

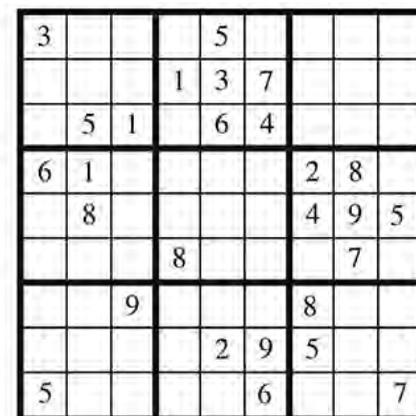
Due to the coronavirus pandemic we are currently unable to accept Crossword and Su Doku entries by post, so for the time being, please complete them just for fun. We will resume sending prizes for winning entries as soon as possible.



Su Doku

No. 283

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.



Solution to Su Doku No: 282

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

Solution to Crossword No. 271:

Across – 6. Lunatic 7. Rivet 9. About 10. Knesset 12. Breadwinner 14. Air And Space 18. Warfare 19. Union 21. Adore 22. Current
Down – 1. Rugby 2. Jaguar 3. MiG 4. Gibson 5. Leveret 8. Unswept 11. Dan Dare 13. Miranda 15. Afford 16. Centre 17. Joint 20. Guy
Bomber – Liberator



Books

Meteor Boys/Tornado Boys

grubstreet.co.uk (£12.99 each, paperback)



The Boys are back in town

THROUGH INTERVIEWING more than 40 veterans, in *Meteor Boys* Steve Bond has written a detailed account of the iconic aircraft, supported by anecdotes and accounts from those who knew it best.

One is Alan McDonald who described the aircraft as 'a bit unforgiving if you got it wrong, as many pilots found out to their cost, especially on one engine, but I must admit I got to like it very much – it was a great adrenalin rush.'

Alongside these anecdotes is the story of the Meteor's origins and development. Starting with the first deliveries in 1944 working through to the present day, Bond documents the jet's diverse role – from use in operations against the V1, photo-reconnaissance missions, as a training machine and later a display aircraft. Particular attention is given to its major service period of the 1950s to the early 1960s.

SINCE THE 1970s, when it was first used as a Cold War nuclear deterrent, the Panavia Tornado played a vital role in the RAF until its retirement from service in April 2019.

Serving in both Gulf Wars and more recently as a key player in Middle East operations, this unique aircraft achieved many great things including being the first aircraft to be flown by men and women

in the RAF following the introduction of female pilots to the Service in 1994.

Tornado Boys by Ian Hall features stories of Scud hunting in Iraq and Red Flag exercises in the US, along with the tale of a stunning competition victory over the USAF's Strategic Air Command in their own backyard.

There are also tales from those who flew Tornados on exchange, loan and contract service with foreign air forces. The book also highlights the essential part played by ground crew in the Tornado story, with chapters by frontline engineers.

We have copies of *Meteor Boys* and *Tornado Boys* (both grubstreet.co.uk, rrp £12.99 paperback) from Grub Street's Jet Age series, to win.

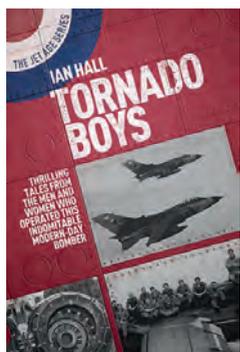
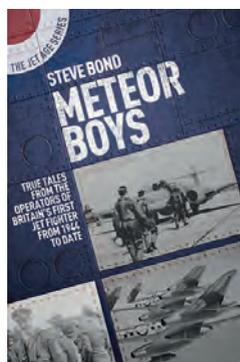
For your chance to own one, just answer this question:

When was the Tornado retired from RAF service?

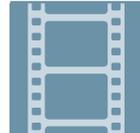
Email your answer, marked Jet Age books competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk to arrive by May 29. Remember

to state on your entry whether you prefer to win a copy of *Meteor Boys* or *Tornado Boys*.

Please note that due to the coronavirus pandemic we are unable currently to accept competition entries by post.



BOOKS: Jet Age Series



Film review

Skies the limit

Camino Skies

On digital release now with Curzon Home Cinema and all major digital platforms from June 1



A GROUP of six New Zealanders and Australians come together to make the famous pilgrimage of the Camino de Santiago, united not only through the physical journey but the hardships that have led them here.

This documentary follows these individuals, delving into their often heartbreaking motivation, joining them as they come to know each other and find some form of reward in the trials ahead. For some this seems to be a personal challenge, for others an escape or quest for meaning.

For more than a thousand years many people have made this journey across

north-western Spain to the shrine of Saint James in search of spiritual growth. The filmmakers here are gifted beautiful backdrops for conversations with these largely senior travellers, who talk very frankly about the tragedies they have suffered and continue to shoulder.

Whilst it could feel exploitative, the subjects often seem to be taking great motivation or catharsis from their heartfelt interviews. Inserted throughout, we are given more insight and more reason to be impressed by their perseverance.

A large part of the group appear to be mourning the death of a loved one, in some

cases their own children. Perhaps this journey to the other side of the world will afford them some sense of closure before they head back home.

Sue Morris is an 80-year-old who has recently separated from her husband and is determined to walk the 800km distance, despite having severe arthritis and suffering incredible pain.

In the same manner in which these strangers come to form bonds simply by treading the same path and sharing their stories, walking alongside them you can't help but take inspiration.

Review by Sam Cooney
Three out of five

How appeal victory might affect your pension rights



You have probably read that the judges and firefighters successfully challenged the rules under which some members of their respective pension schemes were transferred to the 2015 public sector pension schemes.

The successful challenge was on the grounds of age discrimination. In December 2018 the Court of Appeal ruled in favour of the judges and firefighters and, in June 2019, the government was refused leave to appeal to the Supreme Court.

The lead complainant for the judges was called McCloud and, for that reason, our website always refers to this issue as 'McCloud'.

In the following Q&A Mary Petley of the Forces Pension Society sets out what their success might mean for you.

Advice now is to wait until the end of the consultation period before deciding

Q1. It is entirely legal to change pension scheme arrangements, so what were they challenging?

A1. The transitional rules for transfer to the 2015 public sector pension arrangements singled out those who were in service on 31 March 2012 with more than 10 years to serve until normal pension age for transfer to the new schemes.

Those with less than 10 years to serve until normal pension age were allowed to remain on their current pension scheme. That meant that age was a determinant in these arrangements - and age discrimination is illegal.

Q2. The Court ruled for the judges and firefighters, not for the Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS) so why should that matter to me?

A2. The government accepted that the Court of Appeal's ruling in respect of the judges and firefighters had a read across to all the other public sector pension schemes as they, too, used age as a determinant for transfer in their transitional rules.

Q3. As public sector scheme authorities knew in 2018 that there was a read across and, in June 2019, they knew that leave to appeal to the Supreme Court had been refused, why hasn't the position of transferees been sorted out?

A3. It is not that easy. Some people find that they are better off in AFPS 15 and it would be unfair to simply return them to AFPS 75 or AFPS 05. MOD have been considering all the options and are expecting to put their proposals out to public consultation later in the year.

We in the FPS, representing your interests, will be looking very carefully at what they propose. We have already set out 3 'tests' against which any proposed remedy will be judged against before we commit to supporting it. These are that the remedy:

(1) unequivocally addresses the age discrimination contained in the 2015 Scheme's transitional arrangements;

(2) in relation to the remedy period, provides the Member with the same unequivocal assurance that no one will be worse off and that those with accrued benefits will keep them;

(3) provides the member with the full understanding and opportunity to make informed decisions about their financial future.

MOD staff are aware of these tests; the FPS Chief Executive, Major General (Retd) Neil Marshall, has been directly involved in the technical discussions with the MOD and will remain closely engaged as the process moves to public consultation later this year.

Q4. So everybody who was transferred to AFPS 15 is going to be entitled to whatever remedy MOD propose?

A4. No. Only those who were in service on 31 March 2012, still in service on 31 March 2015 and then transferred to AFPS 15 on 1 April 2015 are included.

If, for example, you were in Regular service on 31 March 2012, left for more than 30 days (periods of 30 days or less count as continuous service) and re-joined the Regulars before 31 March 2015, you would not be included.

Q5. I was transferred to AFPS 15 but I have since left the Armed Forces. Will I be excluded from MOD's proposals?

A5. If you meet the criteria set out in the answer above, you will be included in whatever remedy is finally decided upon.

Q6. So now what?

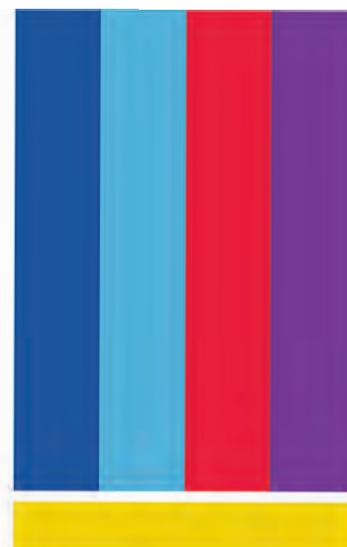
A6. We all need to wait patiently for the end of the consultation period and the announcement of MOD's plans.

Keep an eye on the FPS website which will keep you posted on the latest information. We must emphasise that there is no point asking the FPS Pensions Team for 'what if' calculations at this stage because before we know what is actually planned we would simply be wasting our time and your money.

If you are a Member of the Forces Pension Society and have pensions-related questions (but, at the moment, excluding McCloud, for the reasons explained above), email us at:

pensionenquiries@forpen.co.uk

If you are not a Member but would like to learn more about us, visit www.forcespensionsociety.org



HELPING YOU MAKE BETTER CHOICES

“

We in the FPS, representing your interests, will be looking very carefully at what they propose. We have already set out 3 'tests' against which any proposed remedy will be judged against before we commit to supporting it.

”

**ADVERTISEMENT
FEATURE**

By Tracey Allen

Feature

With only the most basic kit, intrepid RFC pilots were always...

WINGING IT

THROUGHOUT WORLD WAR I developments in military aviation were profound – not just in aerial warfare but also in the uniforms and equipment aircrew used. In *Royal Flying Corps Kitbag* (frontline-books.com) Mark Hillier looks at all the objects an RFC pilot or air mechanic was issued with for sorties over the Western Front – from flying clothing to headgear, personal weapons, gloves, goggles and early life preservers.

This fascinating book examines in detail what Corps aircrew wore as they took on their German enemies over the trenches in what were the formative years of military aviation.

Hillier said: “The difficulties faced by the first Royal Flying Corps pilots and observers, who met the challenges of early aviation in open cockpit machines, can only be imagined.

“Aircraft and engine serviceability were not great, and the risk of being shot down by the enemy either by ground fire or by return fire was high.

“For those who mastered the air, they had to learn on the job. This included finding ways of keeping warm and alert whilst flying and adapting and adopting the kit available at the time. Keeping warm was not just about creature comforts, but maintaining alertness which meant the odds of surviving increased on long or high-altitude sorties.”

He added: “Parachutes, life jackets, hearing protection and immersion suits have all developed over the past century of aviation. However, before the First World War, pilots had no real concept of the environment and what they were up against.”

Hillier explained that many would-be pilots, both before and after the RFC was established, looked to automobile clothing manufacturers for protective equipment. Aviator combination suits, fleece-lined boots,

specialised goggles, rainproof gauntlets and leather coats were produced by companies including Burberry, Gamages, Dunhill, Robinson & Cleaver and Gieves.

Before the RFC was formed, the Royal Engineers had developed an air battalion that operated with balloons and the first fixed-wing aircraft.

Hillier said: “On April 13, 1912 the King issued a Royal Warrant for a new service and the battalion was replaced with the RFC, which had both

by Army drivers and despatch riders.

“However, there was some equipment on offer as issue and this was listed in the scale of provision of 1914 and included weatherproof coats, goggles, gauntlets, leather boots and leather caps.

“Aircrew still had the option to purchase their own clothing and commercial companies continued to develop their motoring ranges into more specialised flying clothing.”

He added: “As the war progressed the exposure of aircrew became starkly apparent with pilots suffering from frostbite and chilblains, and the RFC looked to develop better kit for their aviators.”

The book includes many previously unpublished photographs plus images of original items of equipment held in both museums and private collections, such as the photograph of a pair of metal boot warmers (right) that could be filled with hot water in cold and wet weather to help dry out field boots.

The 1915 *Training Manual RFC* lists the clothing aircrew were expected to wear as ‘two pairs of thick long drawers, a woollen waistcoat, a British ‘warm coat’, with a waterproof

oilskin over it, a cap with ear pads, two balaclavas, a flying helmet, goggles, a warm scarf and two pairs of socks and gloves.’

Hillier explained that it was important for aircrew to dress only immediately before each sortie to prevent them sweating as the excess perspiration would freeze at altitude.

He said: “Fire was the aircrews’ biggest fear and to a degree the leather helmets, goggles made of Triplex and leather flying coats gave some protection, but parachutes were still not issued and these may have saved lives.

“Sadly, some aircrew took to carrying pistols, not for self-defence but with which to take their own lives rather than face being burned to death.”



DAPPER: Officers of 39 (Home Defence) Sqn in various headgear

a military wing and a naval wing with a joint Central Flying School.

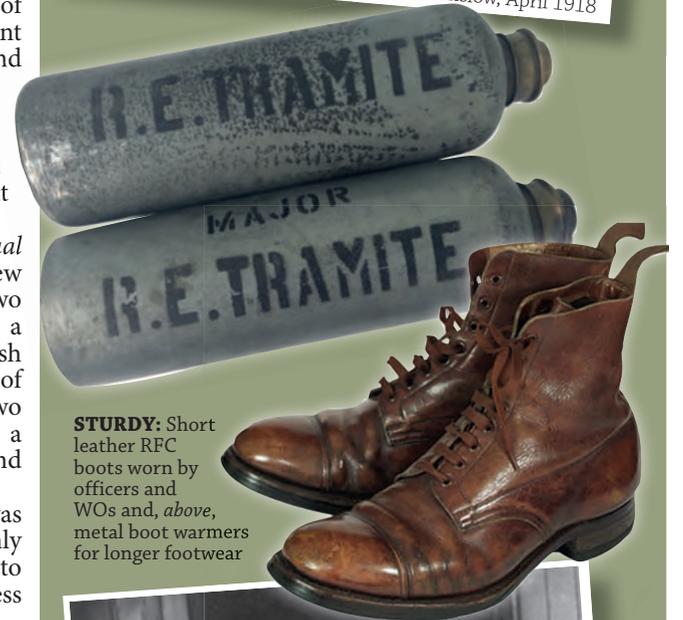
“The uniform adopted for the military wing at this time was khaki and officers were seconded to the wing from existing regiments, initially retaining their uniforms and only adding RFC pilot’s wings as a means of identification.”

When the Royal Air Force was formed in 1918, a specific uniform in blue featuring RAF insignia was developed. During WWI the uniform was khaki for operational use.

Hillier said: “The formal issue of clothing to RFC and Royal Naval Air Service pilots was limited and often adapted from motoring garments used



EARLY RAF: Lts Kelly & Warner, 85 Sqn, Hounslow, April 1918

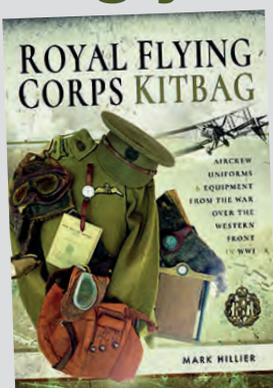


STURDY: Short leather RFC boots worn by officers and WOs and, above, metal boot warmers for longer footwear



RFC: 2Lt pilot in 1917 wearing shoulder-rank Service dress uniform with his observer, who stands behind in fug boots

Bag yourself a copy **Win!**



WE HAVE copies of *Royal Flying Corps Kitbag* up for grabs. To be in with a chance of winning one, simply answer this question correctly:

When was the Royal Air Force formed?

Email your answer, marked RFC Kitbag book competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk to arrive by May 29.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic we are currently unable to accept competition entries by post.



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Thought you knew everything there was to know about the Battle of Britain? Think again

Authors of new book *To Defeat the Few* – Douglas C. Dildy and Paul F. Crickmore – tell *RAF News*, in their own words, how examining Luftwaffe records has enabled them to reveal the *real* story of history's most significant air battle

WRITING IN his preface to the seminal *Air Defence of Great Britain* just four years after the Battle of Britain, TCG James admitted 'there is much that is not yet certain. Details, reliable information and authoritative explanations are still not available'.

Despite this reservation, James's authoritative work has spawned over 75 years of Battle of Britain histories that parrot his assumptions, assertions and assessments with little more than cursory examination of surviving Luftwaffe records or post-war German histories.

Today's chief of the Air Historical Branch, Sebastian Cox, maintains that the RAF's official account and those based on it 'should be read in conjunction with more recent scholarship on German actions and intentions.'

In *To Defeat the Few*, we have done just that. Using the Luftwaffe's official histories – 42 volumes written by surviving high-ranking Luftwaffe officers between 1952-1958 and daily 'situation reports' for July 1 through to September 30, 1940 – we correlated German strategy, operational plans and tactical missions with original RAF reports.

We studied group, unit and station operation records to develop an accurate, balanced and comprehensive account of what actually happened and why.

Examining the Luftwaffe's air campaign at the strategic and operational levels unearthed several important discoveries and new considerations in the conduct of this campaign.

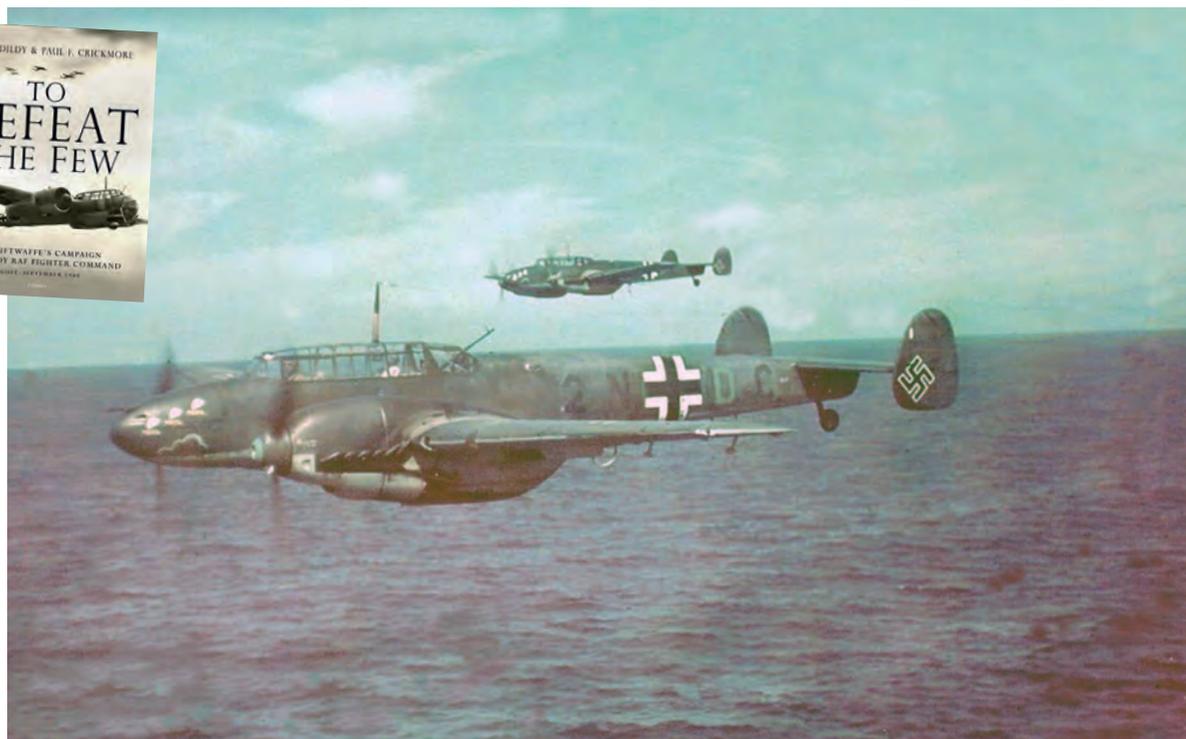
German sources make it clear that the Battle's 'first phase', known as 'Kanalkampf' (Channel Battle) to the Luftwaffe, was actually a maritime air campaign resulting from a separate and entirely different strategy on how to affect Britain's strategic defeat.

It was not the first phase of the Battle of Britain, but a completely different air campaign altogether until superseded by the Luftwaffe's attempt to destroy Fighter Command and attain air superiority over south eastern England for the planned cross-Channel invasion.

At the operational level, we discovered many previously unidentified factors that played crucial roles in the outcome of the campaign.

Luftwaffe fighter formations 'out-gunned' their RAF opponents at virtually the same ratio as their resulting 'kill and loss' records.

Fighter Command's rigid, obsolete and three-aircraft engaged tactics permitted only one fighter in the section – the leader – to be the 'shooter' while the two wingmen guarded his tail. So, a 12-aircraft RAF squadron had four shooters at the outset of an engagement.



BIG BUT VULNERABLE: The Bf 110 'Zerstörer' (Destroyer) was a long-range bomber escort fighter, mounting a nose battery of two 20mm cannons and four 7.92mm machine guns. However, it lacked manoeuvrability when pitched against RAF Spitfires and Hurricanes and suffered accordingly (© Andy Saunders)

The Luftwaffe used modern, fluid 'finger-four' formations where the flight leader and his deputy were both designated 'shooters'.

Therefore a German 12-fighter formation had six 'shooters' – a 1.5 to 1 advantage in squadron-versus-squadron combat.

Interestingly, the RAF's overall loss-vs-victory ratio in fighter-versus-fighter dogfights was 1.77:1, statistically virtually identical.

There was also a technical limitation that imposed an operational restriction on the number of squadrons each Sector Operations Centre could control in the defence of its airspace.

The 'Pip Squeak' and Huff-Duff' equipment for tracking intercepting units could only accommodate four individual squadrons at one time – about 48 fighters – who would frequently be overwhelmed by German raiders totalling twice or three times that number.

Under this restriction, Fighter Command was battling for a draw

Rewriting the legend of The Few

Other discoveries in *To Defeat the Few* include an analysis of the limitation of Douglas Bader's so-called 'Big Wing'.

The slow response due to the extra time needed to gather the formation of four or five squadrons together was only the second-greatest limitation. Many historians have wondered why Biggin Hill was singled out for such a concentrated series of heavy attacks – the answer is in our book.

The devastating September 7 raid on London's East End Docks was not effectively intercepted by 11 Group before 'bombs away' because of the difference between an 'active defence' versus a 'static defence' along the line of approach.

Since its declassification 'Ultra' has been represented to have played a vital role in the Battle of Britain and Fighter Command's victory.

The target of the Luftwaffe's September 7 attack was not known despite three days of 'Ultra' intercepts because of bureaucracy.

We have examined why the Luftwaffe consciously chose to bomb airfields that were not Fighter Command bases, how the Y-Service helped Fighter Command anticipate the approach and composition of Luftwaffe formations.

While our narrative presents the operational aspects of this first-ever independent air campaign, its tactical facets are illustrated in more than 300 images (many published for the first time) and their detailed captions.

To Defeat the Few provides a professional military account and assessment of history's first Offensive Counter Air Campaign waged against the world's first Integrated Air Defence System, establishing the blueprint for all that followed it, from the Arab-Israeli 'Six Day War' through Operation Desert Storm.

For this reason, the Battle of Britain – as told from an air campaign perspective – remains vitally relevant even 80 years after it occurred.



SITTING 'DAFFY' DUCK: The Boulton Paul Defiant, four-gun turret fighter, proved to be a disaster. Heavy and with no forward armament, they were decimated by Luftwaffe fighters (Doug Dildy Collection, colourisation by Richard Molloy)

(despite the unfavourable 'exchange ratio') until Air Vice-Marshal Keith Park began pairing squadrons together to meet the incoming raiders with superior numbers of interceptors.

Using this major revision in operational tactics, after a series of dramatic defeats during the concluding week that month, the battle, at least during daylight hours, became a British victory.

Obituary Flt Lt Terry Clark DFM

Battle of Britain air gunner's death means just one of The Few remains

WITH THE death of Flight Lieutenant Terry Clark at the age of 101 there is now just one survivor of The Few, the men who fought in the Battle of Britain.

Clark was born in Croydon and left school when he was 14 to work at the local gas works. After two years he wanted more adventure, so answered an advert seeking air gunners for the newly-formed No 615 Squadron at nearby Kenley. He joined in March 1938 and began his training. In July 1940 he was transferred to No. 219 Squadron.

Clark was an Aircraftman Second Class when he joined No. 219 Squadron as an air gunner in late July 1940. The squadron, based at Catterick, operated the Blenheim Mark I in the night fighter role.

On August 3, newly-promoted to Sergeant, he and his pilot took off to investigate an unidentified aircraft but nothing was seen. Further patrols were flown, but with the early generation air intercept radar still in its infancy, contacts with enemy aircraft were rare, resulting in no successful engagements.

With the onset of the heavy German night raids, which commenced on the night of September 7/8, the squadron moved south. Towards the end of the month, as the Battle was coming to a close, the squadron re-equipped with the outstanding Beaufighter, with its more advanced radar.

Clark and his fellow air gunners were given a short course on the radar before becoming navigator/radio. Clark commented: "Now we have an aircraft built for the job."

After a period of training with the new Beaufighter, the squadron started operations in early 1941 from RAF Tangmere in Sussex. In February 1941 the squadron had a new CO, Wing Commander Thomas Pike, a future Marshal of the RAF and chief of the air staff.

On April 16 Clark was tasked to fly with the CO, whose own navigator was unfit. Later that evening they were scrambled. Clark soon picked up a contact on his radar at 17,000 feet and directed Pike astern of a Junkers Ju 88 bomber, which Pike shot down over Surrey. Shortly afterwards, Clark gained another contact, and after closing to 200 yards, Pike destroyed a Heinkel III. Clark saw two parachutes emerge from the stricken aircraft.

On April 27, flying with his usual pilot, Flying Officer Dudley Hobbs, they

intercepted a Junkers 88, which they shot down into the Solent. Their next success came on June 13 when Clark made contact with an enemy aircraft; Hobbs closed in to 100 yards and a Heinkel III fell to his cannon fire.

After the war, Clark made contact with Herbert Schick, one of the German crew from the Heinkel, and corresponded with him. After Schick's death, his son and Clark exchanged Christmas cards every year.

In July Clark was awarded an immediate DFM and his pilot received the DFC. They were posted to a Havoc night fighter squadron, an aircraft ill-suited to night fighting, and both men found it a frustrating time. After a period as instructors, the two were posted back on operations, this time with No. 488 (RNZAF) Squadron equipped with the Mosquito. An accident grounded Clark and it was not until October 1943 that he was able to resume flying.

On November 25, his pilot Dudley Hobbs took off on his final flight before leaving the squadron. Clark was disappointed that his long-standing pilot – they had been together three years – would be flying that night with another radar operator. The aircraft caught fire over the North Sea and the crew were lost. Clark was deeply upset at the loss of his old friend.

Flying with a new pilot on December 20, Clark gained a contact at 15,000 feet and after closing in, a Messerschmitt 410 night fighter was shot down over Sussex. In March 1944 he was rested and worked in the sector operations room at RAF North Weald in Essex, where he trained as a fighter controller.

During a brief few days visiting 488 Squadron in late July, he flew with his old pilot and they intercepted a Junkers 188 bomber. After a long combat, they shot the bomber down. It was Clark's sixth and final success. He went to a ground control approach school before a brief spell in France, then with No. 1 Ground Control Approach unit at RAF Prestwick. He was released from the RAF in November 1945 as a Flight Lieutenant.

He returned to Croydon Gas as the store's manager and joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve as a fighter controller, serving at weekends and on annual two-week camps. He received the Air Efficiency Award.

Looking back on his time in the RAF, and the events of 1940 and 1941, he commented:



DFM: Terry Clark with No. 488 (RNZAF) Squadron at Bradwell Bay, summer 1943, before a night flying test

"Straight after the war, I wasn't really aware of what we had been involved in. It was just another part of the war. I was pleased I was

part of it. I would not have missed it for the world. Every sailor, soldier, airmen did their bit. They should all be thanked."

Towering figure

Youthful pilot who survived The Long March as Nazi POW

SQUADRON LEADER Jack Simmonds, who has died aged 99, was 20 years old when he was shot down in his Whitley bomber.

After training as a pilot whilst still a teenager, he joined No. 77 Squadron at Topcliffe in April 1941. With his very youthful looks, his squadron friends called him 'Junior'. He flew his first bombing raid as a co-pilot when he attacked Hamburg.

Over the next few weeks he flew a further seven operations, when he was made a captain. His first operation with his own crew was to join a force of 80 Whitleys to bomb the railway yards at Schwerte, in north west Germany.

On the night of July 6/7 he took part in a raid with 45 aircraft to bomb Dortmund. Over the target his aircraft was hit by flak and his observer was wounded. With his observer unable to bale out, and with one of the two engines useless, he made a crash landing five miles from Eindhoven, in the Netherlands. The crew were soon captured.

Simmonds soon found himself with 18 other officers at Oflag VIIC at Laufen Castle in Bavaria but his stay was short and he was moved by cattle truck to Oflag VC at Lubeck, a journey that took seven days. By the end of 1941, many RAF officers were moved to Oflag VIB at Warburg and it was here that the first mass escape was attempted. By April 1942 four escape tunnels were being worked on and Simmonds was involved in the tunnelling party.

In May just before the tunnel was completed, the German guards discovered it. A large party of the POWs who had been involved in various escape attempts were moved in September to a new camp at Oflag XXIB, at Schubin in Poland, where Simmonds met up with others who had been on 77 Squadron.

Once Stalag Luft III at Sagan, the specially constructed camp run by the Luftwaffe for RAF prisoners and the scene of the Great Escape, had been completed, the majority of POWs at Schubin were



THAMES TAXI: Simmonds - circled below at Oflag XXIB at Schubin - landed his Sunderland on the river in 1951 to mark Battle of Britain Week

transferred to the East Camp.

It was from here that Simmonds joined the team that assisted three POWs to make a successful escape in October 1943 using a 'Wooden Horse', and which was immortalised by a film of the same name in 1950.

Simmonds remained at Sagan until late January 1945 when the prisoners were given a few hours notice to leave the camp. As the Soviet Army advanced westwards, the long column of prisoners trekked into Germany in appalling weather conditions on what became known as 'The Long March'. His column arrived at Luckenwalde south of Berlin where the Russians liberated them. Eventually, the US Army arrived and he was flown home from Brussels.

He remained in the RAF and in November 1945 joined the air headquarters in Cairo. He later became the camp adjutant at Lydda in Palestine before being seconded to the Army to be the adjutant of No. 651 (AOP) Squadron flying Austers. One day he was off duty in the King David Hotel when it was blown up by the Irgun terrorist group, with heavy loss of life.

After converting to four-engine aircraft, Simmonds flew



the Sunderland flying boat and was flight commander of No. 201 Squadron at Pembroke Dock. In 1951, to commemorate Battle of Britain Week, he landed his Sunderland on the River Thames near Greenwich and taxied it to Tower Bridge, which was opened

for him, and where his aircraft was moored for six days.

He spent two years as the chief ground instructor at the Maritime Operational Training Unit at St Mawgan before a two-year appointment with the Royal Navy at Portland, where he was the RAF

member of a joint war-gaming team.

He later specialised in signals and after tours at HQ NEAF in Cyprus and at HQ Coastal Command he returned to flying at RAF Lindholme before retiring in 1968.



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4 pages of **RAF Sport** start here

● Union star Amy's fitness fight on home front P25

MOTOR SPORT

Hall in Central role

Rally star takes up ambassador post for Service sporting charity



AIR APPARENT: Main, Cpl Phil Hall gets up and away during the Rally of Finland, below, Hall, who will be looking to take his new role for the RAF Central Fund to hit the heights

PHOTO: CHARLY LOPEZ

DANIEL ABRAHAMS

HQ Air Command

“A PRESTIGIOUS honour and opportunity”, is how World Rally Championship co-driving ace Cpl Phil Hall described his selection for ambassador of the RAF Central Fund.

Hall, 30, from Nottinghamshire, said: “Without the Royal Air Force, I would not be in the incredible position I am today, competing at the top level of rallying and now I’ll be able to put something back into the charity which has so actively supported me throughout my co-driving career. It would be great to think that I can also inspire other members of the RAF

to get more involved in sport, no matter what level or discipline.” In his new role Hall will be taking time out of his co-

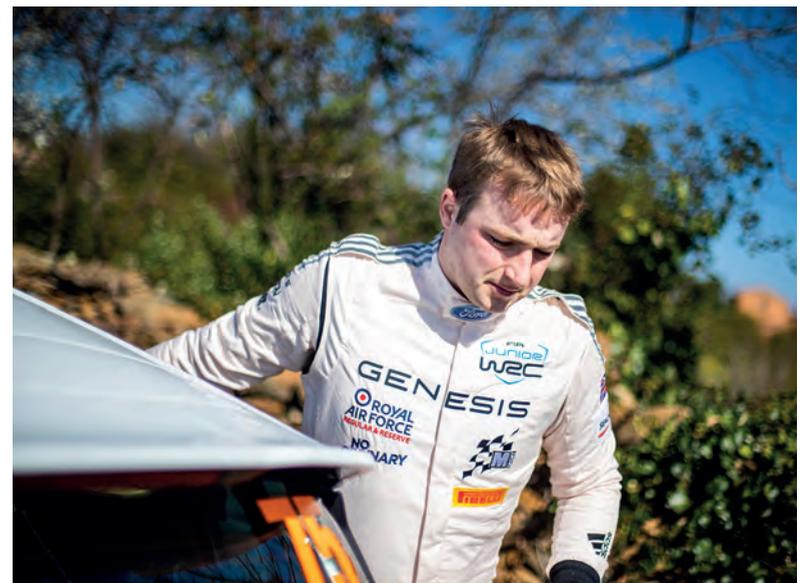


driving calendar to spend time with RAF personnel who have expressed an interest in taking up or progressing in their chosen sport.

The RAF Central Fund is a charity which supports serving RAF personnel, enabling them to take part in sports and physical activities at all levels, regardless of role, rank, or physical ability. The charity funds sports facilities, equipment and physical training and provides support to safeguard both RAF Regulars and Reservists’ health and wellbeing.

“I’m excited to be visiting RAF Stations and Squadrons around the UK to talk about my sporting experiences within the Force

Continued on page 26:



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RUGBY UNION

Vroom with a phew..

Red Rose star Amy really motoring in garage home gym

RAF AND England rugby union star Amy Cokayne is never one to back down from a challenge, and she has been no different during lockdown.

Having risen to Six Nations, World Cup and Inter-Services glory, the Flying Officer has built her own home-based gym in her garage to keep fit during the coronavirus outbreak.

RAF News spoke with her about the move and asked how she's maintaining fitness during these unprecedented times.

Q How different has the change been going from competition to no rugby at all?

It's a huge shame about this year's Inters, but it's totally understandable. So, if my last game for a while was beating Wales for my 50th cap, it's not a bad way to pause things.

Q Do you have any tips on mentally dealing with the lockdown?

I have found myself without the structure of regular training. So, I built the gym at home. Mentally, it's important to stay busy. I keep a daily schedule, with to-do lists. People could consider learning a new skill or language. Have a go at some online courses. Little things like making your bed also help.

Q What is your normal fitness regime?

During the season I do three weights sessions a week for upper, lower body and total body work-outs. I will have two 'on-feet' conditioning sessions, plus two evening squad training sessions with a game on Saturday. Finally, I include a bike or rowing session.

Q How have you altered this to fit the current situation?

I am still given a strength and conditioning programme to follow, it has less skills and 'on-feet' conditioning and more circuit training.

Q Any tips on reducing fitness time, yet maintaining fitness levels and results?

If I had no kit and limited time, I would prioritise High Intensity Interval Training. This only takes a matter of minutes and gives a big bang for your buck. There are lots of free online sessions available. The RAF Central Fund has teamed up with LES MILLS On Demand (see RAF News Sport 1490) which offers all serving RAF personnel 60 days free access and a discounted package after that.

Q How has your diet changed?

This is an area I have been concentrating on. I am eating fewer calories, as I'm not burning as many. Balancing calorie needs with goals is extremely important. I try to stick to normal meal times and avoid grazing. My advice would be to eat a balanced diet, control portion size and get lots of different colours on your plate. Also look for recipes to experiment with.

Q When did you first decide to set up your home gym?

A week or two before things really kicked off. While some people were out getting toilet rolls, I went on the hunt for gym equipment. It took two days to paint and lay the floor, then I've just been adding equipment. I started with a rack, bar, weights, kettlebells and a slam ball. I've



TRANSFORMED: Amy's garage before she got to work on it



added ropes, dumbbells and an assault bike since. But you can do lots of stuff with just body weight exercises and the RAF PTIs have a great programme on YouTube.

Q You have added some personal touches too.

Yes, I painted a section of the wall black and use coloured chalks to write up sessions. I added some lights as I wanted to get a nice gym environment to encourage me to use it daily.

Q What is your gym and fitness regime now?

Physically you can build up and improve areas that you wouldn't typically be able to during a season. I have added more functional training compared to strength exercises with three weekly running

sessions. I work on a four-week cycle of exercises, with changes in weight, repetition and sets weekly.

Q How important would you say fitness is at this time?

Fitness is very important. It's essential to maintain a healthy body and mind. I find setting fitness goals gives me purpose and keeps my training on track.

Q Do you take part in virtual training sessions?

Our RAF rugby strength and conditioning coach, Sgt Ben Brook, has teamed up with other PTIs to do a daily session on social media – he is second-to-none. We have a virtual training session each week with the girls, which keeps us all connected.

Q You said you wanted your 50th cap to inspire, has your new home gym also inspired you?

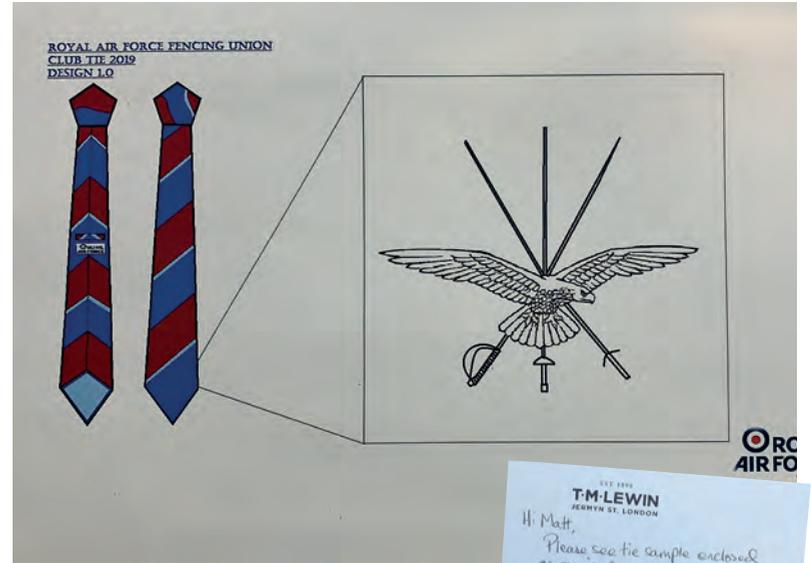
I have had lots of support since I've been posting pictures of my gym. People love the lights and some are doing the same thing and are asking for advice.

Q How proud are you of seeing your Service rise to the challenge by helping in the UK fight against Covid-19?

I am really proud to see the RAF getting involved and helping the country to get through this difficult time. It's especially great to see my rugby teammates making such a contribution to the effort, we have lots of medics, nurses, logisticians, police and technicians in the squad who I know are working extremely hard.

Sport

FENCING



CLUB TOGETHER: Main, Fg Off Luke Hilton receiving the new tie from TM Lewin's Cliff Burgess as SAC Matt Ives looks on, inset left, new tie, top right, Hilton's design idea, right, the original tie sported by former club president AVM Ret'd Sir Bob Peters

the company's original Club and Military design book with RAF tie design, inset right, the

Sharp look is just capital for fencers

New tie design rebuilds links with Service history

STAFF REPORTER
HQ Air Command

A CHANCE visit and a pair of eagle eyes have rekindled a piece of RAF fencing history in the shape of the association's club tie.

The 'original' tie design was spotted by the association's media team SAC Matt Ives and Fg Off Luke Hilton during a visit to RAF Cosford for the RAF Championships, by former club president AVM Ret'd Sir Bob Peters.

The eye-catching maroon tie, sporting two crossed swords, was keenly observed by Hilton and Ives.

It then sparked a journey by the pair to find the original tie design and recommission it.

Ives said: "The visit was last spring, and after talking with Sir Bob, we discovered the tie had been produced by TM Lewin and Sons, so we set about finding an original sample and speaking with Lewin."

They contacted Lewin's Military

and Club Tie department, but nothing could be found in the company's archive and what followed was two months of design ideas and talks with various other tailors, with Ives producing sketches, pictured top right, to include all three weapons from the sport.

Hilton said: "We then took the plunge and ventured to their Head Offices to discuss the potential of them producing a new tie, harking back to elements of the old design, but with a modern twist."

"The meeting with the company's Corporate and Partnership Manager, Cliff Burgess, was a huge success and we started to re-establish the decades long partnership between the company and Service."

In January a prototype design landed on the pair's desks and a month later they travelled back into London to collect a box of 100 ties.

Ives said: "If things could get any better, our final meeting at the

company's head office in Holborn had a real champagne moment for us all. It happened while we were chatting over the ties with Cliff and taking part in a photography shoot organised by the company to help promote the tie when one of their executives, Geoff Quinn, overheard us discussing the project."

Quinn, the head of Lewin's Club and Military tie department in the 1980s, then found a book containing every club tie the company had ever produced and within minutes the original RAF tie, pictured right, was spotted by Hilton.

He said: "It was a genuinely exciting moment, and nicely capped off the project to bring this old design back to life. We were over the moon, it was a perfect end to a 10-month-long project that has bought RAF Fencing's history back to life."

For further information about RAF Fencing visit: @raffencing on social media or email: fencing.info@rafsportsfederation.uk.

MOTORSPORT



Continued from p23:

and how that has helped me progress onto the world stage.

"Hopefully along the way it will generate further interest in the Fund and the RAF Sports Lottery and highlight just how vital the role they play is in the progression of Servicemen and women in sport."

Ross Perriam, CEO of the RAF Central Fund, said of the appointment: "Our charity exists to support all serving personnel throughout their careers, whether they are regulars or reservists."

"Corporal Hall personifies that, having benefitted from our support

both as a regular when he first joined the RAF and now during his time as a reservist.

"It is great for the Fund that he is choosing to give something back and highlighting to his fellow Servicemen and women the benefits of participating in sport and how as a charity the Central Fund can help them achieve their goals."

Hall has recently helped front the RAF Motorsport Association's Virtual Rally Championship, see RAF News 1489.

Follow him on Twitter @ and the RAF Central Fund @ RAFCentralFund.

Sport

Rally man takes Central role

● Sport P23



Cokayne on taking fitness fight home

● Sport P25



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CROSSFIT

Thinking out of the box

Cosford Crossfit team go it alone to keep tournament hopes alive



HANGING AROUND: Main, the Cosford team before the coronavirus lockdown, top right, Flt Lt Tom Goble, middle right, Sgt Luke Toner, bottom right, Charlotte Franks all taking part in the challenge from home



Daniel Abrahams
HQ Air Command

PERSONNEL FROM the RAF CrossFit1918 team were not going to let the coronavirus pandemic stop them competing.

The team of nine had just got their Crossfit Box gym set up and running at RAF Cosford's gym when the virus struck, so now they have turned their collective attention to the Support Your Local Box online CrossFit competition and finished 3152nd out of 10,473 Boxes (teams).

Flt Lt Sophie Foxen said: "We had a great set up installed in the gym and were excited to train there. However, of course, safety comes first, and we have dutifully not been to the gym in over a month now.

"Our community remains strong and we have been working out together over Instagram and sharing our personal workouts too.

"We then took part in the online competition, which involved more than 10,000 other boxes worldwide. Anyone could enter and three workouts were announced, which you timed for yourself. Entrants could tailor exercises to their own preferences using household items instead of gym kit."

"Each athlete put their score in and the Box they belonged to."

CrossFit is a Trademark for a form of functional training, which covers all areas of fitness – from strength to cardiovascular, gymnastics to coordination. It offers high intensity and constantly varied training.

Foxen added: "There is a great sense of community in a CrossFit Box and CrossFit 1918 is no different.

"It's becoming increasingly popular in the military due to the transferability of skills and how fun it is."

"Our box is made up of both military and civilian members. For many this was their first CrossFit competition.

"It was a superb challenge and a chance to find areas to work on. It also brought us together during this difficult time, with brilliant motivation to exercise, improving mental health and a bit of banter."

With the competition finished, members of the team have entered the Foodspring online competition, with four members currently placed on the leaders board.

The 1918 team train every Monday at 1730 at RAF Cosford (when the gym reopens), with new members always welcome and no experience necessary. You can follow the team on Instagram: @CrossFit_1918.

To enter the Foodspring competition please visit the website: [competitioncorner.net/events/3870](https://www.competitioncorner.net/events/3870).

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