

The Forces' favourite paper

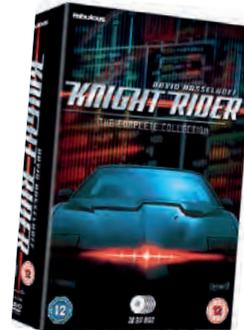
Take it to the Maxxx
The girl Dunn good

● R'n'R p4-5



Win New KITT up for grabs

● R'n'R p5



ROYAL AIR FORCE

Friday **April 17 2020**
 No 1489 **70p**

RAF News

Ice Sports
Chair aims even higher



● Sport p24-25

Superbike
Reserves look to future



● Sport p23

Motor sport
Rally in 2020 virtual vision



● Sport p27

Meet Puma teams fighting Covid-19

See page 10

Brize Turkish delight



LIFESAVERS: Brize crews unload thousands of items of PPE kit from a Turkish A400M ahead of delivery to UK hospitals

Simon Mander

VITAL SUPPLIES of personal protective equipment from Turkey for frontline NHS medics have landed at Brize Norton for distribution across Britain.

A total of 250,000 items including 50,000 N-95 face masks, 100,000 surgical masks, and 100,000 protective suits arrived at the Oxfordshire base following an agreement between London and Ankara.

The consignment comes as Britain braces itself for a further three weeks of lockdown after the UK death toll hit 11,329 with the pandemic's peak still days away.

The lifesaving kit arrived on board a Turkish Airbus A400M flown by the 221st Squadron, part of the 12th Air Transportation Main Base Command, which made the 1823-mile flight from Ankara.

The supplies were taken to a regional NHS distribution hub to be delivered to medical centres across the country.

● See pp3-5



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“It was the most fulfilling process of my life, but that’s different to fun”

O-T Fagbenle on creating new E4 sitcom Maxxx
RnR p4-5



“Athletes are being asked to sit in their sleds at home and watch track runs on YouTube”

Sqn Ldr Heather Ratnage-Black on the present and future of RAF ice sports
Sport p24-25



“All personnel arriving on the Falklands are being isolated for 14 days”

BFSA Base Commander Gp Capt Rupert Joel **p7**



RAF News

RAF News
Room 68
Lancaster Building
HQ Air Command
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP14 4UE

Editor: Simon Williams
Email: editor@rafnews.co.uk

Sports Editor: Daniel Abrahams
Email: sports@rafnews.co.uk
Tel: 07966 429755

Features Editor: Tracey Allen
Email: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk

News Editor: Simon Mander

All advertising:
Edwin Rodrigues
Tel: 07482 571535
Email: edwin.rodrigues@rafnews.co.uk

Subscriptions and distribution:
JPIMedia Print Holdings Ltd
26 Whitehall Road
Leeds
LS12 1BE
Tel: 020 7855 7574
Email: rafnews@jpress.co.uk

Vital kit lands at Brize

● *From front page*

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: “The delivery of this vital equipment will bring protection and relief to thousands of critical workers across the UK, as they bravely and tirelessly work to keep us safe.

“It is also a tribute to the strong bilateral ties with our ally Turkey, and I am immensely grateful for their kind gesture. As Nato allies we can always depend on each other, whatever the threats we face.”

Elsewhere the Armed Forces are helping to establish temporary hospitals, deliver supplies and provide logistical support to the NHS and other public bodies.

Brize-based British Atlas C1 A400Ms have airlifted critically ill patients from remote parts of the country to intensive care units.

And 13 RAF, Navy and Army helicopters with around 300 personnel have formed a Covid-19 aviation task force deployed across Britain to boost the air ambulance system.

The equipment delivery by Turkey comes after 37 tonnes of UK aid was supplied by an RAF C-17 transporter last month to those affected by the



crisis on its border with Syria.

The UK has also received 60 ventilator units from the German army, as it continues to strengthen

its resources to fight coronavirus.

RAF bases have been a vital resource during the coronavirus pandemic, with military and

chartered civilian flights utilising them to deliver resources and repatriate Britons stranded across the globe.

This Week In History



1918
Red Baron killed

Capt Manfred Baron von Richthofen was shot down and killed over the Somme. Capt A.A. Brown attacked his aircraft, which was also hit by ground fire.

1923
Band's BBC debut

The Central Band of the RAF was chosen to be the first military ensemble to make a radio broadcast, which was transmitted from the BBC's Marconi House.



1958
Victor enters service

The Victor – the RAF's third V-Bomber – enters service with 10 Sqn at RAF Cottesmore.

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



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News

Forces Covid-19 Update

- Puma and Chinook standby
- Urgent PPE supplies hit Brize
- RAF medics bolster NHS



BATTLE OF BRITAIN: Brize Norton teams unload vital PPE kit, *below right*, Puma crews standby at Kinloss, *bottom right*, NHS medical teams practice medical evacuation drills with RAF aircrew. PHOTOS MOD

Simon Mander

THOUSANDS OF military personnel across Britain are now on the front line in the fight against coronavirus as the first patients arrived at the UK's Nightingale hospitals.

All three-Armed Services are backing hard pressed NHS staff driving ambulances, building temporary hospitals and delivering new ventilators.

The 4,000 bed Nightingale unit in London, constructed with the help of the Army in only nine days, was opened at the ExCel Centre.

Similar emergency medical facilities are now operating in Belfast, Birmingham and Penrith, while testing stations are in place at Manchester Airport and Edgebaston.

Crucial supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) for medical staff have been delivered into RAF Brize Norton for distribution around the country.

Following an agreement between the UK and Turkey, 250,000 items of PPE equipment to the UK, including 50,000 N-95 face masks; 100,000 surgical masks; and 100,000 protective suits, arrived at the Oxfordshire station on Good Friday.

The supplies will be taken to a regional NHS distribution hub to be delivered to medical centres across the country.

RAF bases have been a vital resource during the coronavirus pandemic, with military and chartered civilian flights utilising them to deliver resources and repatriate Britons stranded across the globe.

The delivery by Turkey comes after 37 tonnes of UK aid was supplied by an RAF C-17 last month



EVAC DRILL: NHS Medics rehearse with military crews PHOTO SAC EMMA WADE

to those affected by the crisis on its border with Syria.

The UK has also received 60 ventilator units from the German army, as it continues to strengthen its resources to fight coronavirus. Manchester and Edgebaston near Birmingham.

Meanwhile, Kinloss-based RAF Puma helicopters have been supporting the Scottish Ambulance Service trialling the EpiShuttle medical isolation and transportation system used to take patients to emergency care facilities across the country.

Puma crewman Flt Sgt Stephen Cassidy said: "Our engineers changed the aircraft to a six-seat fit from the traditional 12-seat fit, a configuration we haven't used before, to transport medical staff and accommodate the EpiShuttle which is similar in size to the Nato stretcher that we've transported on numerous operations.

RAF Detachment Commander Sqn Cdr Johnny Longland said: "My crews haven't conducted

medical evacuations with NHS partners before, but their vast operational experience will ensure that they can deliver whatever is needed when the time comes, and we can work together to provide a life-saving service."

The Pumas are working with the Army Air Corps Wildcat, two RAF Chinook and Royal Navy Merlin helicopters to provide medical evacuation capabilities for people in remote rural and island communities and deliver essential equipment and personnel.

In south west England, three Merlin Mk2 aircraft based at RNAS Culdrose have been called in to deliver helicopter support for the NHS and Ambulance Services.

Royal Navy aviators from 820 Naval Air Squadron will be at high readiness to provide support across Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Bristol, Somerset, the Channel Islands and the Isles of Scilly – serving a population of over 4.5 million residents.

Their normal role is to defend the nation's Carrier Task Group but Merlins have been reconfigured to carry multiple stretchers, passengers and stores.

Elsewhere, the first 300 new ventilators have arrived at MOD Donnington on a flight from China.

The initial batch of Penlon machines were delivered to Defence Equipment and Support's Defence Fulfilment Centre in Shropshire and urgently despatched to hospitals by the MOD Distribution Service.

Earlier this month 80 military personnel were mobilised to support the South Central Ambulance Service, manning emergency response cars, taking calls from those in need and driving ambulances.





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Falklands goes into lockdown

Army duo recovering after positive test for Covid-19

Staff Reporter

STRICT LOCKDOWN procedures are in force on the Falkland Islands to halt the possible spread of Covid-19 following two confirmed cases of the virus.

All tours at the British Force's most remote base have been extended and leave cancelled for the 1800 MoD personnel who are under orders to follow strict social distancing rules.

All personnel arriving on the islands are also being isolated for 14 days at an isolation facility at the Mount Pleasant airfield.

RAF base commander Gp Capt Rupert Joel said: "We brought in the same measures as stations in the UK and took this action early.

"We have dramatically reduced the number of people coming and going out and all leave is cancelled.

"The gyms have been reconfigured so people do not get close to another and the bars and cinemas are closed. Despite that, morale here is high.

"If our people are needed back in the UK for essential duties to help fight Covid-19 then we will assess that on a case-by-case basis."

The first victim is receiving treatment in hospital while the other serviceman to contract the illness is recovering in self isolation, the MoD said.

Defence chiefs said the cases posed 'no threat to colleagues or the work environment,'

but schools and nurseries have been shut down and non-critical workers told to stay at home.

RAF Voyager and Atlas A400M transporters are still flying to and from the UK twice a week bringing in urgent supplies including rations and aircraft parts.

Airbridge flights were diverted to Dakar, Senegal, earlier this month as the borders at the usual refuelling stop at Cape Verde were closed.

Four UK Typhoons are also stationed at Mount Pleasant to patrol UK skies while two Augusta Westland 189 helicopters operate search and rescue duties across a vast stretch of the South Atlantic.

Military personnel are not currently being routinely screened for the virus, however medical teams have

carried out more than 130 Covid-19 tests on civilians.

Despite the global lockdown the tempo of operations remains high for British Forces in the South Atlantic, according to RAF chiefs.

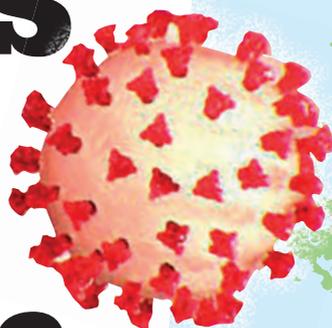
Wg Cdr Jon Allen, who commands the Falkland Islands-based 905 Expeditionary Air Wing, said: "Military personnel from all three Services are here and there is a real mission to deliver against.

"The potential to respond to alerts is high. There is a significant job for us to deliver down here.

"We are 8,000 miles from mainland UK but we are working extra hard to maintain Defence outputs as normal."



BASE COMMANDER: Gp Capt Joel



AIRBRIDGE: Voyager rerouted through Dakar after closure of Cape Verde. Below left, RAF crews unload supplies at Mount Pleasant PHOTOS: SGT DAVE ROSE

Cash lifeline for charities

THE CORONAVIRUS crisis could change the way military welfare groups get funds to help veterans, charity bosses warn.

One ex-Service group admits it has had to delay the launch of some projects because of the uncertainty caused by the pandemic.

Forces in Mind Trust chief executive Ray Lock said: "Who would argue that someone with two years' national service in the 1950s is more deserving than an intensive care nurse, veteran of Covid-19?"

"Needs will change, and so will the means with which they are met. Will the Armed Forces Covenant survive in its current form?"

He said coming out of lockdown and losing the national unity generated by the crisis and the backing of emergency powers within the Coronavirus Bill will quite possibly be more challenging than what the voluntary sector has faced so far.

Since the start of the crisis the Trust has been in touch with all its grant holders to assess the impact on them.

Mr Lock said few were unaffected with some asking for time extensions to existing campaigns, more funding to deliver projects or advanced final payments to help with cash flow.

"Our mission, to enable successful and sustainable transition from military to civilian life, hasn't changed. Neither has our strategy.

"But the environment within which we will be operating most certainly has," he added.

"Our contribution is to look for important and impactful work.

"We are continuing to award grants where we believe this to be the case, and will shortly announce the latest batch, some of which were made before the extent of the pandemic was known.

"Looking ahead, working collaboratively, supporting others, persuading, convening, cajoling – this is what we're good at, and this is how we're going to help the Armed Forces Community through Covid-19."

Frontline NHS staff bag Cadets kit

AIR CADETS in Northern Ireland are donating surplus combat kit to provide scrubs and masks for frontline NHS workers battling coronavirus.

A RAF squadron in Omagh responded to an appeal to help medical staff by donating more than 100 sets of surplus combat uniforms.

Ft Lt Graham, who commands Omagh and Fermanagh Cadets, said: "At this time of national emergency, our cadets stepped up and did what we could to support our fantastic NHS and health care staff across Northern Ireland.

"Good citizenship is at the core of what we do and this donation will support those battling the threat by providing vital items of equipment.

"Surplus uniform is ideal for medical use as it is high-quality polycotton which can be reused.



"The response of the local community has been fantastic and we are honoured to play our part in protecting everyone involved in protecting us," added Ft Lt Graham.



News

News bulletin



PIONEER: Dame Helen Gwynne Vaughan

House call for Heritage chiefs

Tracey Allen

DAME HELEN Gwynne-Vaughan, Commandant of the WRAF, has been commemorated with an English Heritage blue plaque at her London home.

Professor Gwynne-Vaughan was a prominent English botanist recognised for her pioneering roles in the military and public service.

English Heritage plans to unveil six plaques honouring women this year – including World War II Special Operations agents Noor Inayat Khan and Christine Granville.

The move is part of a drive to increase the number of plaques dedicated to women who currently account for just 14 per cent of the total.



WWII HEROINE: Noor Inayat Khan

Khan was Britain's first Muslim war heroine and the first female radio operator sent into Nazi-occupied France.

Her blue plaque will mark the house in Bloomsbury that was her family home when she left for France in 1943.

She was executed by firing squad at Dachau concentration camp in September 1944, aged 30, and posthumously awarded the George Cross in 1949.

In 2012 the Princess Royal unveiled a memorial to Noor in London, the first erected in the UK to an Asian woman.

Born Krystyna Skarbak, Christine Granville was the longest-serving female agent during WWII and undertook many successful missions in Nazi-occupied Europe.

Her plaque was unveiled at the west London hotel where she lived for the last three years of her life, which was her only long-term base in the capital.

Anna Eavis, English Heritage Blue Plaques Panel, said: "There are now more women shortlisted for Blue Plaques than men and 2020 will see more plaques to women than we have unveiled in 20 years."

Chop Guns

Dam aces net international aviation award

CHINOOK CREWS who saved a Derbyshire village threatened by floodwaters have won a top aviation award.

The Odiham-based personnel who moved 600 tonnes of aggregate to plug a hole in Toddbrook Reservoir, near Whaley Bridge in Derbyshire, in 2019 have scooped the Vertical Flight Society Kossler Award for their work.

They were nominated by Boeing for flying three Chinooks for 58 flying hours to secure the structure while emergency services worked around the clock to drain millions of gallons of water.

Among them was MACr Lee Renard, who said: "It was truly inspiring to be part of the collective effort that saved Whaley Bridge."

"We often think of the Chinook as a battlefield helicopter used overseas. Tasks such as this will show the Great British public that we are here for them 365 days a year."

The Society's Capt William J. Kossler Award honours the memory of a US Coast Guard airman and early advocate of the use of helicopters in search and rescue operations.

Previous military winners include US Army National Guard aviators who helped victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2006, Russian pilots for flying over the site of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986, the Iraq War Desert Storm first strike Apache team in 1992, and Vietnam helicopter units in 1964.

The Society's Awards Program was initiated in 1944 and over the years



DAM FIXERS: RAF Chinook crews fly in tonnes of rubble to shore up damaged reservoir walls as floods hit Midlands; inset, crew eye view as heavy lift helicopter takes off
PHOTOS: CPL ROB TRAVIS

has acted as a catalyst for technological advances in vertical flight aircraft.

RAF Odiham's Chief of Staff Wg Cdr Sarah Moorehead said: "It is fantastic that the Chinook Force has been internationally recognised by the Vertical Flight Society and I am

grateful to Boeing for nominating us. "This award represents a whole force effort, led by the dedicated and professional aircrews of 18(B) and 27 Squadrons."

Odiham's Station Commander, Gp Capt Nicholas Knight, said:

"We must also thank those at Joint Helicopter Support Squadron at Benson whose assistance was critical. The Chinook Force feel humbled to be recognised amongst such an outstanding cadre of previous winners."

Regiment dad's French reconnection

Julie Brown
RAF Honington

A RAF Regiment officer working with the French Air Force has told of the dramatic dash to keep his family together as flights were halted.

Bordeaux-based Sqn Ldr Chris Jordan's daughters were in Ipswich and Leeds when France announced restrictions on March 17 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

He said: "Through our network of UK-based family and friends we managed to get our three girls to fly out just days before commercial flights at Bordeaux were halted. Our greatest fear was to be separated from our kids."

He said being in lockdown under French restrictions, where paperwork must be produced for each essential outing, was tough. But the family have been reassured by direct links with the British Embassy and the Regiment.

"The children can access their studies online and Joe Wicks' workouts keep us sane," he added.



REUNITED: RAF Regt officer Sqn Ldr Chris Jordan with his family in Bordeaux

News

Runway success



HEAVYWEIGHT: A400M operates from Mount Pleasant, below, Crew make Falklands approach PHOTOS SGT DAVE ROSE

MILITARY PERSONNEL in the Falklands staged a socially distanced ceremony after the recent completion of airfield upgrade.

The reopening of a 300m stretch of the main runway at Mount Pleasant took place

a week ahead of schedule without disruption to operational capability.

The improvements will allow a wider variety of aircraft to access the base.

Base Commander Gp Capt Rupert Joel said: "A lot of preparation was done to

ensure the works would go smoothly. "We learnt lessons from recent runway re-surfacing at Northolt and Waddington to ensure success".

The project was hit by adverse weather, additional flights in the airfield schedule

and a last-minute design change.

Contractors used more than 700 tonnes of asphalt to cover the surface in a collaboration between the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, Interserve and COLAS.



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Crew View

Op Rescript



SAC Harvey Bellamy, Logistics Driver, RAF Benson

“This is my first time being deployed on an Op. Knowing that I am supporting the fight against this horrible virus makes me proud to be a Logs Driver. During this Op it has given me a vast and quick knowledge on just how the RAF deploys at short notice. It has given me experience with the TMV whilst covering ops 24/7.”

RAF PUMA and Chinook helicopters joined battling NHS teams and civil authorities earlier this month to help halt the spread of coronavirus. RAF News spoke to Air Force and Army personnel based at Kinloss in Scotland, who are operating three Pumas in Britain's battle with Covid-19.

Cpl Geena Austin - Tactical Supply Wing

“I like a challenge and providing Rotors Turning Refuels and possible forward fuel sites across the Highlands is just that. Operating overseas to places like Fox Bay in the Falklands has prepared me for working in isolated conditions and making sure we deliver the same output required with limited contact. Deploying here has tested our team's flexibility to respond so quickly to a crisis and personally I feel proud to support civilian authorities in this testing time.”



Cpl Jim Watts - Survival Equipment Tech, RAF Benson

“Being back in Scotland is always nice and aiding the NHS at this difficult time is extremely important. As JNCO SES I am responsible for a four-man team that maintains the serviceability of all Aircrew Equipment Assemblies used on the Puma HC2 Aircraft. With the nature of Op Rescript, it poses a completely different environment to anywhere I have worked before, so a new challenge is always good.”



Flt Lt Dave Rawson - 2IC A Flt, 33 Sqn

“Using recent operational experiences from Afghanistan, working alongside our civilian agency colleagues, we are trained, prepared and configured to provide aviation support to the NHS in Scotland. Flying in some of the most remote parts of the Scottish Highlands presents some new challenges for our crews. It also offers a fantastic opportunity to directly support the UK population and enhance our aviation skill sets.”



Maj Rich Schanda - Puma USAF Exchange Pilot, A Flt, 33 Sqn

“Being the USAF exchange pilot flying RAF Pumas has been the highlight of my career. Participating on Op Rescript has been particularly rewarding as it has given us the opportunity to use our skills to provide medical alert coverage to the Scottish population. My background is flying HH-60 Pavehawks and conducting Combat Search and Rescue.”



SAC Adam Curtis - Puma Force Flight Ops Assistant

“I have been on Puma Force for nine months now, and this is my first Operational Deployment with the Force. I was deployed at short notice after being placed on a 24-hour readiness state at RAF Benson. As an Ops Specialist it is my job to manage and update all the mission-critical planning and navigation equipment to ensure the crews are always flying with up-to-date information.”



SAC(T) Jake Clark - Puma A Tech M

“Adapting to work in different operational environments is part of our role within the RAF. With the current on-going crisis things are a little different at work, that said, we can't let that impact our excellence and allow our standards to drop. It's a proud feeling to know that you are doing your part in assisting other services and ultimately saving lives within our country at this difficult time.”



Sgt Kai Donnelly - A Tech Av

“Being isolated so far from home is a daunting thought but the pride of working with a fantastic team to deliver life-saving aid to the people of Scotland makes it worth it.”



Sgt Si Robinson - Logs Supplier, RAF Benson

“I have deployed on many occasions during my career, but this is my first UK-based Op supporting the country during this pandemic. Looking for new opportunities to test myself, deploying as the DSG Cdr on Op Rescript leading a team of 15 personnel from six ground trades forming the J4 Support Element has been a new challenge which I have thrived upon.”



Sgt Steve Graham - Puma Crewman, A Flt, 33 Sqn

“As a recently qualified Puma crewman, deploying on Op Rescript as part of the ATF has been rewarding. The experience gained and the lessons I've learned have been invaluable, especially as an LCR crewman. The Op has shown the potential capabilities of the Puma outside of its normal operating and how important the crewman's role is in this unpredictable environment.”



Pte Joe Toomey - Joint Helicopter Support Sqn

“This is the first time I've deployed with JHSS. I'm enjoying it and am pleased knowing that something I'm a part of is making a difference in these difficult times. There's been some unexpected challenges, under surreal circumstances. Social distancing is difficult within our role but something we have to take into account and work around the best we can.”

Royal team goes the distance



WG CDR Caz Viles and Wg Cdr Delia Chadwick go the distance as the coronavirus crisis shakes up the handover of command at the Royal Squadron.

The Air Force duo followed the government's strict Covid-19 rules and kept two metres apart when retiring 32 Squadron commander Caz welcomed her successor at Northolt.

Speaking after taking over the RAF's VIP transport flight, Wg Cdr Chadwick said: "It is an extremely busy time to take over.

"I'm looking forward to continuing the squadron's legacy of professionalism and service as we deal with the developing Covid-19 pandemic.

"Our contribution, in whatever form it takes, will form an important part of the overall military and government response."

PHOTO: EDDIE DUNLOP

News bulletin



SADDLE SCORE: Sgt Roach in action in the gym PHOTO: CPL ANDY FERGUSON

Home spun

SUPERFIT SGT Aaron Roach is cycling, spinning, running and swimming the 8,017 miles from the Falklands to his Grimsby home to raise cash for charity.

The Odiham-based NCO, who was posted to the Engineering and Logistics Wing at the Mount Pleasant base, has taken full advantage of its excellent gym facilities to complete 45 miles a day for his entire six-month deployment, in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support.

He said: "I chose MacMillan Cancer Support as my wife and I have both lost people to the disease and the treatment they provided was second to none"

Currently he has 2609 miles left to go in two months.

Bombs away

THE RAF'S 5131 Bomb Disposal Sqn has stood down for the last time as the Service handed over duties to the Army.

Founded in the 1940s to defuse unexploded devices dropped during Nazi air raids, the unit has seen action in every conflict since World War II.

The 5131 Squadron pennant was lowered for the last time by FS Duncan MacLachlan during an emotional ceremony at Wittering in Cambridgeshire.

Gp Capt Jo Lincoln said: "We are united in saying a heartfelt thank you to these remarkable men and women, past and present, who have made such an extraordinary contribution to the defence and safety of this country."

At the height of WWII the RAF boasted 29 bomb disposal squads consisting of 870 personnel.

In conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq teams worked alongside the Army clearing deadly IEDs which claimed an estimated 80 per cent of coalition lives lost.

Since its formation 5131 bomb technicians have won a total of 43 bravery awards including six George Crosses and 11 George Medals.



PROUD HISTORY: left, 5131 Sqn bomb experts handle a 10,000lb Tall Boy bomb during WWII

During Operation Herrick in Afghanistan one Chief Technician was awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal for completing 19 tasks in three days making safe 350kg of explosives planted by insurgents.

However 5131 Sqn's key role in the modern era has been to protect crews and airfields, securing the latest range of weapons carried by Typhoons and the F-35 Lightning in the fight against Daesh in Iraq and Syria.

The squadron has also been on 24-hour standby to dispose of lethal relics of the Luftwaffe raids.

38 Group Commander Air Vice-Marshal Simon Ellard said: "Every member past and present takes great satisfaction in everything they have achieved."





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News bulletin



CRISIS: RAF veteran Andrew with family

Clean break

THE UK is washing its hands more than ever to help halt coronavirus, but for one RAF veteran keeping clean came close to wrecking his life.

Former SAC Andrew Stevens' RAF career was cut short when he was made redundant in 2007.

He became preoccupied with washing his hands and developed severe obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD).

He said: "I served for seven years as a painter and finisher on Tornados at Lossiemouth.

"Despite being successful in finding a civilian job, I became anxious and depressed and things spiralled out of control. I worried about everything – my finances, family, new job, home. Eventually that worry turned into compulsion and I was washing my hands four or five times.

"I stopped going out and spent hours in the shower. I wouldn't go near my children. I know it sounds crazy, but I couldn't do it."

A doctor diagnosed Andrew with severe OCD and he sought help from the RAF Benevolent Fund.

He said: "They saved my life. The support I've received has taught me how to manage my condition, and I've been able to continue my job as a supermarket delivery driver throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

"I'm proud to be on the frontline again, supporting the keyworkers and the rest of the country as we battle this virus. If it wasn't for the Fund, I wouldn't be able to do that."

Typhoon eyes Baltic beat

Transport teams ship 400 tonnes of kit to support Nato mission



NATO MISSION: Typhoon on a training sortie in Lithuania; *above*, intercepting Russian Sukoi fighter during Baltic air policing in Estonia last year



Simon Mander

VITAL SUPPLIES have begun to arrive in Lithuania to support RAF Typhoons on Air Policing duties this summer.

The RAF's 2 Mechanical Transport Squadron based at Wittering is delivering 400 tonnes of kit to back up the Nato mission codenamed Operation Azotize.

The squadron's drivers have been collecting the equipment and airfield support vehicles from RAF stations across the country for shipment to northern Europe.

Flying Officer Lucy Heal said: "2MT Sqn Ops have been busy co-ordinating a vast amount of critical equipment to be conveyed to Southampton and then shipped to the air base in Lithuania."

5001 Sqn ground engineers from the Cambridgeshire base are also deploying.

They will be tasked with build storage shelters and refit hangars for Typhoon jets.

Detachment Commander Flight Sergeant Leon Moxam said: "Deploying the team in advance is crucial to provide



ON THE MOVE: Wittering MT team

the engineering support for the aircraft to operate effectively."

Wittering Station Commander Gp Capt Jo Lincoln said: "Everything we're doing right now to support the government's Covid-19 operations, we are doing in addition to our normal duties. We also have to ensure we have the right people and equipment on the ground to sustain air missions."

The RAF will be flying from Lithuania this year after a successful deployment to Estonia in 2019 and completing other Alliance reassurance missions to Iceland and Romania.

Cabbies rank Tim as one of the best

A CIVVIE street driver who volunteered for duty as a RAF Reservist has scooped a top award from Britain's cabbies.

SAC Tim Gallop won praise from the Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers for keeping jets in the air as part of the refuelling team on the four-nation Exercise Bersama Lima in South East Asia last year.

Speaking after receiving his Award for Excellence, 40-year-old Tim, who is currently stationed in the Falklands, said: "I'm proud, but taken aback. I had no idea that I had even been put forward."



MT MARVEL: SAC Tim Gallop is honoured by British cab bosses for his Reservist role with the Royal Air Force. PHOTO: SGT DAVE ROSE

WWII Lancaster pilot Ron passes on aged 98

BOMBER COMMAND veteran and former Lancaster pilot Ron Green has died aged 98.

Ron, (*right*) was born in Chalk Farm, London, in 1921. He joined the RAF in 1941, serving with 550 Sqn, and was based at RAF North Killingholme during World War II.

Immediately after the war, Ron was involved in transporting people from the UK to attend the Nuremberg Trials and flew aid missions during the Berlin Blockade.

He married his wartime sweetheart, Peggy, in 1946, and left the RAF the following year as a Flight Sergeant. He got a job with Brent Chemicals and worked his way up to become the firm's marketing manager.

He was an active member of



the RAF Association and a former chairman of his local branch in Windsor, Berkshire.

He is survived by his two daughters, Janice and Hilary, five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Vogue's war on slovenliness

With 'sloppy' dress considered bad for morale, step forward the editor of Britain's aspirational fashion bible: the indomitable Audrey Withers

AS THE bombs rained down on London during the Blitz, the inimitable *British Vogue* editor Audrey Withers carried on working undaunted from a basement office in New Bond Street.

She was adept at handling her celebrated contributors, including photographers Cecil Beaton and Norman Parkinson and model-turned-war reporter and photographer Lee Miller. She championed austerity – she was nicknamed 'Austerity Withers' – helped keep the nation's spirits up and increased the magazine's sales during wartime to 80,000 a month. *Vogue* – and Withers – had a good war.

But why has this phenomenally successful woman remained largely forgotten – until now?

In her fascinating biography of Withers, *Dressed for War* (simonandschuster.co.uk), bestselling author and historian Julie Summers (*Fashion On The Ration, Jambusters* – the inspiration for the hit ITV series *Home Fires*) reveals that it was partly because of the 'Swinging Sixties.'

Withers, who edited *Vogue* from 1940 until 1960, realised that the new decade wanted fresh faces and was hungry for youth. By then, Withers was 55.

Summers said: "I think the Sixties took everyone by surprise. *Vogue* did change quite dramatically with the influx of models like Twiggy and Jean Shrimpton and photographers like David Bailey.

"When Audrey retired the terrible back problems she had suffered from became acute. Her second husband, Victor Kennett [a Russian-born photographer], thought she was



BLITZ SPIRIT: Harry Yoxall, managing director of *British Vogue*, sits at his desk and talks on the telephone after the London *Vogue* office was bombed in October 1940. Broken glass and wood fragments litter the desk and floor. His secretary Vera Self stands ready to take a letter

fourth in the USA. She added: "It was, and has remained, the world's pre-eminent fashion magazine. From the beginning, it championed excellence in all areas. It has also had the confidence to change with the times."

Withers went on to become managing editor, then editor, where she cultivated a team of top-flight talent, including Beaton – embedded with the RAF during World War II – and the fearless photojournalist Miller, who covered the concentration camps at Buchenwald and Dachau for *Vogue*. She was the first female photographer to enter Dachau.

It was Withers' idea to commission Beaton in 1941 to take the iconic photograph 'Fashion is indestructible', showing a model posing against the bombed ruins of the Temple in London (right).

Summers said: "Beaton and Miller loathed each other, due to professional jealousy. Beaton was so important to *Vogue* and saw Lee as an interloper.

"Lee was everything Audrey was not: attractive, sexy, outspoken, she drank heavily, smoked prodigiously and swore like the proverbial trouper. She fizzed with energy, humour and artistic talent, but she was also vulnerable, a side that few who met her saw. Audrey saw it all – and liked what she saw."

She added: "Audrey's legacy was her work with Lee. It was tremendous. Anthony Penrose [Lee Miller's son] said she was the only person who could handle his mother."

While researching *Dressed for War*, Summers came across an incredible find – an archive of



WITHERS: At work

hundreds of memos between Withers and her US *Vogue* counterpart, Edna Woolman Chase.

The author said: "There were 900 memos and I am the only person who has read them all."

When the 35-year-old Withers took over as editor of *Vogue* on September 25, 1940, three weeks into the Blitz, the magazine was somewhat in the shadow of *American Vogue*, its older stablemate. As the war continued Withers' influence over *British Vogue* increased and the magazine drew away from the style and preoccupations of the US title.

Summers said: "Audrey had a 'can do' attitude. She realised she had a weapon of war in *Vogue* and used it. There was spending power because there was full employment during the war – women had money for the first time.

"Audrey was very good at telling people how to deal with austerity. The government was very keen to get its message across and what better

place to read that message than in a magazine you revere and trust. The government didn't want people to be dressed sloppily because it was very bad for morale."

She added: "Government ministers in every department consulted her, as the editor of the most influential women's magazine in the country, whose readers were people of prominence and status. If *Vogue* readers could be persuaded to change the way they dressed, what they ate or how they worked then the rest of the female population would follow. "Over the course of WWII Audrey came to be recognised as one of the most powerful women in London."

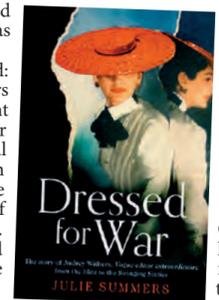
After the war Audrey reigned supreme at *Vogue* for another

15 years. She also served on the committee for the Britain Can Make It exhibition at the Victoria & Albert

Museum with Anne Scott-James, editor of rival magazine *Harper's Bazaar* (and mother of the military historian Max Hastings).

The exhibition was the brainchild of Board of Trade president Sir Stafford Cripps. The board had set up the Council for Industrial Design to support Britain's economic recovery after the war and promote the improvement of design in the products of British industry."

Audrey Withers died in 2001, aged 96. Summers said: "Everyone who met her commented on her eyes that sparkled with enthusiasm, even when she was well into her nineties."



BOOK: The story of Withers

Regulars

Announcements ● P6-7

Crossword & Su Doku ● P8

R'n'R

Win cult
TV show
box set
● P5



Model behaviour

Jourdan Dunn and O-T Fagbenle ● p4-5

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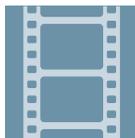
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Film

Storm Boy (PG)

Digital download now, DVD later this year

Pelican brief

GEOFFREY RUSH (*Pirates of the Caribbean, The King's Speech*) plays Michael Kingley, an ageing businessman who is about to vote on whether a mining company can exploit the land that he grew up on – the beautiful South Australian beaches of Coorong.

This casts him back into memories of his childhood and in particular his relationship with Mr Percival: a pelican. Mostly told through flashbacks, Mike is played by Finn Little as a young boy, living in a shack with his stoic but sweet father (Jai Courtney), reading *Lord of the Flies* together, apparently serving as a corporate manifesto in this context.

However, it is when he meets a local indigenous man by the name of Fingerbone Bill (Trevor Jamieson) that young Mike starts to connect more with nature. The birds native to the island are being hunted for sport and whilst his own father is indifferent, he feels an urge



BIRDBRAIN: Young Mike with his pelican and, inset, as an ageing businessman (Rush)

to protect them. Discovering an orphaned nest of chicks with Bill, he takes them home to raise them himself.

Whilst his father is initially resistant, Mike sees the passion that has awoken his boy and so supports him in designing contraptions to help feed the chicks until they can feed themselves.

Although not quite having the emotional turmoil of Casper and Kes, young Michael still finds an escape in the rearing of the birds, opting to keep one as the family pet.

As they grow larger we see some footage of these remarkably playful pelicans, creating a real connection

between Michael and the birds. It is the unobtrusive dialogue that treads on the tenderness of the story. The framing device with Rush doesn't really add anything to the story, other than a heavy-handed morality.

Apparently a well-known Australian novel that had been adapted into a beloved-to-some movie, this recent adaptation doesn't do anything very interesting, but the innocence of children and animals is a surefire way to get a dose of empathy.

2 out of 5 ●●○

Review by Sam Cooney



Music

Mystery Jets

A Billion Heartbeats

NEW LP:
Mystery Jets



Almost 7th heaven for Jets

COMING IN heavy with their seventh album opener *Screwdriver*, Mystery Jets take on the splits in the nation and street protests of recent times. The track switches quickly from the anger of civil disobedience to finding love, to push home the hope of 'when the power of love overcomes the love of power'.

Petty Drone begins for all the world like PIL's 1980s hit *Rise*, until the vocal melody sees lead singer Blaine Harrison pull the track towards more whimsical and melodic lines, similar to American duo The Lemon Twigs. Heavy guitar then drives the song towards its end.

History Has Its Eyes on You stays on the theme of the world's current social situation, a theme Harrison seems keen to explore throughout the album.

The track *A Billion Heartbeats* begins like a number from a musical theatre production, before the chorus and middle eight clips it away smartly. Drifting keyboards and a nice drum rhythm then pull it away from the stage impression. Harrison's vocal, pushing out words of self-accusation, brings the song to a worthy and uplifting crescendo.

The album's first single release was warmly welcomed during initial airplay.

Endless City is a nice anthemic toe-tapper. Live it will have fans raising their arms and is kept to a perfect length to avoid becoming indulgent.

It's unusual to see many acts reach seventh album status and Mystery Jets' ability to wear many musical hats, even during each song, may be the reason they have remained while others have slid by to the wayside.

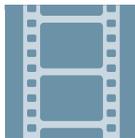
Hospital Radio is the album's standout track, it flows perfectly, with a lovely, balanced ending.

Watching Yourself Disappear is a sure-fire movie soundtrack number. *Wrong Side of The Tracks* is apparently a homage to Greta Thunberg, but the whole album is loosely based around homages – from the NHS, to the fight for gender equality. *A Billion Heartbeats* is a worthy effort.

3 out of 5 ●●●○

Review by Daniel Abrahams

● Released on Caroline International now. Available on Deezer, Spotify, iTunes, Google Play Music and other download platforms.



Film

The Rest of Us (15)

Available now on digital download

Sleeping with the 'enemy'

Love rivals in an unlikely alliance



MOMENT OF PEACE:
Cami (Graham) and Rachel (Balfour)

CAMI (HEATHER GRAHAM: *Austin Powers*) and her teenage daughter Aster (Sophie Nélisse: *The Book Thief*) live in a beautiful hilltop home isolated from the world – that is until some guests arrive in the shape of her ex-husband's new wife and young daughter following his sudden accidental death.

When Cami finds out that Rachel (Jodi Balfour: *The Crown*), the so-called 'homewrecker', has not only been widowed, but unravelling financial struggles have led to her being evicted, she offers her slice of paradise as a place to stay. What was perhaps a sympathetic gesture is initially refused, but soon becomes the only option – much to the annoyance of everyone involved.

The Rest of Us looks at the relationships between these women, how they deal with grief over this absent male presence, and the ripples of his decisions that continue to affect them. Both mothers fail to connect with their own daughters, Cami professing to have a way with kids, where Rachel is closer in age with a rebellious mindset to get the teenager's approval. Together forming a yin-yang of roles, this, of course, does not account for jealousy, rivalry and social tensions – with some secrets threatening to divide the family up once more.

There is a maturity to the storytelling which is able to avoid over-explaining. A quick cutting style punctuates some funny moments and dramatic turns at the end of a scene, but its continued

use makes it feel choppy. It has all the makings of an indie film and the editing style of an action movie. The fast pace moves the story along, but also stops it from finding a rhythm or slowing down enough to connect with characters emotionally – strange considering the film is centred around the grieving process.

What it does achieve though is to show a range of female voices, both in front of and behind the camera (the director is Aisling Chin-Yee). Playing off stereotyped hostility, these characters exhibit solidarity without it being too clean and patronising. It is messy and complex, but ultimately humanitarian.

3 out of 5 ●●●○

Review by Sam Cooney



HARD TIMES:
Rachel and her daughter

Music
Mystery Jets/Queen+ Adam Lambert
New album and new tour dates/Tour rescheduled

The state of the nation

MYSTERY JETS have released their new album *A Billion Heartbeats*, following its postponement last September because of the ill health of lead singer Blaine Harrison, who has spina bifida.

The new release [see review on p3] has been described as 'very much a state of the nation, but also a state of a generation record.'

The band, who exploded on to the indie scene in the mid noughties from beginnings on London's Eel Pie Island, have always ploughed their own musical furrow.

They released their critically acclaimed album *Curve of the Earth* in 2016, which featured the Ivor Novello nominated track *Telomere*.

They recently announced their rescheduled 2020 tour dates, which include a date at The Mill in Birmingham on November 26.

The band also released a statement, telling fans: "We hope you're all keeping well and finding new ways to stay in high spirits amidst the unforeseen strangeness of these times."

"So many of you have been asking whether our UK tour dates would still be going ahead, and rightly so."

"Our 2020 UK tour will still be going ahead, but in the autumn. The same towns, the same venues and exactly the same music. We are also putting together touring plans for other corners of the world towards the end of the summer,



COMEBACK KIDS: Mystery Jets had setbacks due to singer Harrison's ill health

which we will announce as soon as we have them.

"As many of you know, this has been a difficult year for us as a band. But so has it been for the entire world, and all of us in it. That is why we must all do everything we can to stay connected, keep each other safe and fight this thing off

together. That is the only way our world can heal.

"There will be an almighty mother of a party after all this has blown over, and we'll be playing at it. We can't wait to see you all there." ■ **Go to: seetickets.com/tour/mystery-jets-for-rescheduled-tour-dates.**

Queen aiming to reign in 2021

QUEEN + ADAM LAMBERT have announced that their upcoming 27-date UK and European Rhapsody tour is being postponed due to the ongoing global coronavirus outbreak.

The 2020 tour was due to start in Italy on May 24, with the itinerary also including a massive run of 10 London concerts at The O2 arena, as well as a pair of shows each in Manchester and Birmingham, before further mainland European dates were set to conclude with two Madrid shows on July 7 and 8.

The decision has been made with the safety of the band's audiences, crew and venue staff in mind and with close on 400,000 tickets sold it was not taken lightly, the band said.

The shows are now set for matching or similar dates in 2021. All tickets will be valid for the rescheduled show dates. Ticket holders are advised to contact their point of purchase for information on ticket exchanges for the 2021 dates.

The postponement comes as a major disappointment for the band having only recently enjoyed performing one of their biggest ever tours with their massively successful six-week stadium tour of



QUEEN: With singer Adam Lambert

South Korea, Japan, New Zealand and Australia, playing to audiences reaching up to 60,000 a night.

The trek also included a special appearance at the Sydney Fire Fight Australia benefit concert for bushfire relief, for which the band reprised their iconic 22-minute Live Aid set, helping to raise \$9.5 million for those affected by Australia's massive

bushfires. Guitarist Brian May said: "We're very sad to announce the postponement of our summer shows in Europe, although in the present crazy state of the world, it cannot be a surprise to our fans."

"Those incredible scenes at our concerts just over a month ago now seem like an impossibly distant dream. We were so lucky to be able to complete that tour, running just ahead of the wave that was about to break on us. I know many of our fans are having similar moments of disbelief and bewilderment out there."

"Of course, we would have gone ahead with the dates had it been humanly possible. The good news is that we do now have a Plan B ready to roll. If you hold on to your tickets they will be valid for the rescheduled shows. God willing, we will be there with bells on."

Singer Lambert added: "I am very disappointed that we won't be touring Europe as planned, but we have to look after each other and put everyone's health first. Look forward to getting out there when it's safe."

■ **Go to: queenonline.com to view the rescheduled dates.**

The Big Event Maxxx, E4

MAXXXIMUM IMPACT

Has-been wants to be a somebody again... and win back the girl

ACTOR O-T FAGBENLE is not only the star but also the writer and co-director of new E4 sitcom *Maxxx*, about a formerly famous boyband star turned drug-shamed tabloid laughing stock.

Maxxx is down, but not out...

he's trying to make a comeback to prove to the world - but mostly to his supermodel ex-girlfriend (Jourdan Dunn) - that he's not the massive loser everyone says he is.

But with his adopted teenage son Amit (Alan Assad) in serious need of daddy-advice, his cousin-slash-superfan-slash-stalker Rose (Helen Monks) popping up around every corner, and with most people thinking he's already dead, the journey back to stardom isn't going to be easy.

Enter Tamzin (Pippa Bennett-Warner), with her dreams of becoming an internationally respected manager. But with Maxxx as her only client, she has her work cut out.

Fagbenle said: "Maxxx is this boy-band star from back in the day, but his star has fallen and he's got a bit of a fragile ego."

"He's desperate to get his ex-girlfriend back and he'll stop at nothing to make that happen, even if it means he has to get really famous again."

"He also has a son who he adopted at the height of his fame - he loves him, but he's completely ill-equipped to be a father."

"I sometimes think of him as a 17-year-old who really wanted to be a famous musician - not a good

one, but a famous one.

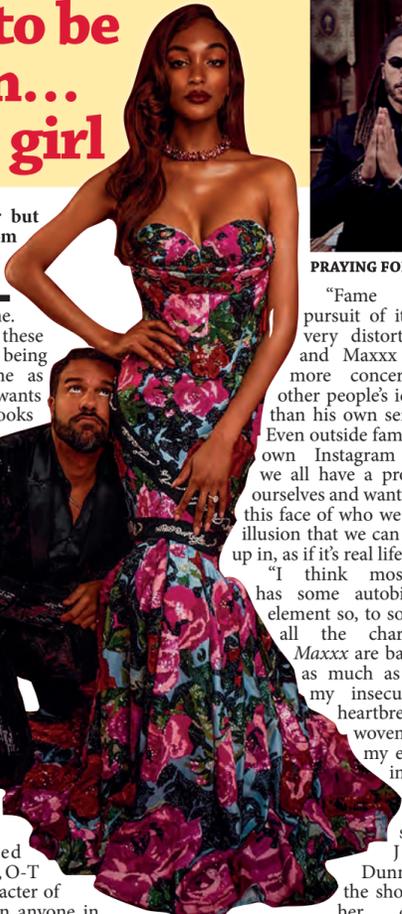
"He's one of these people who thinks being famous is the same as being respected. He wants to be valued but looks for it in the wrong ways. He's in a panic about it, stuck between who he aspires to be and who he f e a r s

MODEL: Dunn & O-T.

he might be. I think we all struggle with that."

Star of the critically-acclaimed *The Handmaid's Tale*, O-T denied that the character of Maxxx was based on anyone in particular.

He said: "No one specific, but we all know this kind of celebrity and we know people in our lives desperate to become celebrities."



PRAYING FOR SUCCESS: O-T (Maxxx, centre), Luti (left) and Javone Prince

"Fame and the pursuit of it can be a very distorting thing, and Maxxx is always more concerned with other people's idea of him than his own sense of self. Even outside fame, with our own Instagram accounts, we all have a projection of ourselves and want to keep up this face of who we are. It's an illusion that we can get caught up in, as if it's real life."

"I think most writing has some autobiographical element so, to some extent, all the characters in *Maxxx* are based on me as much as anyone - my insecurities and heartbreaks are woven in there, my experiences in the industry."

He said that Jourdan Dunn joined the show through her connection

with his brother Luti, who plays Maxxx's former bandmate Rico and is the comedy's executive producer.

O-T said: "Luti worked with her on a video he produced for Drake."

"Originally, she was going to pop in for one minute, like the other celebrity cameos, but Jourdan was up for multiple days of filming and she is an extraordinary improviser."

"The role expanded through us finding her as a talent: we had to rethink the character completely and how she exists in the show."

As the writer, co-director, star, singer and songwriter for *Maxxx*, O-T was candid about taking on so much.

He revealed: "It was a stupid idea. Throughout making this show, people asked me if I enjoyed it and I was like, 'No.' I did not enjoy it."

"It was the most fulfilling process of my life, but that's different to fun."

Luti Fagbenle said: "O-T's a phenomenal talent. We've been shooting short films together since we were kids. We speak the same language and have each other's backs, which means a lot in this business."

Playing Rico is Luti's first acting role since *Hollyoaks* in 2005. He went on to produce videos for stars including Drake, Nicky Minaj, Jay-Z and Beyoncé.

How realistic is *Maxxx*'s portrayal of the music industry?

Rico said: "This goes behind the curtain. In my career I've worked with some horrific people. The music industry is still the Wild West."

■ **Maxxx continues on E4 at 9.30pm on Thursdays.**

More of the new Normal

THE HIGHLY-ANTICIPATED TV adaptation of Sally Rooney's international bestselling novel *Normal People* will be released as a box set on BBC Three on April 26.

The 12-part series will also air on BBC One - at a date to be confirmed.

Produced by Element Pictures and adapted by Rooney alongside writers Alice Birch and Mark O'Rowe, *Normal People* tracks the tender, but complicated relationship of Marianne (Daisy Edgar-Jones: *Cold Feet*, *Gentleman Jack*) and Connell (newcomer Paul Mescal) from the end of their school days in a small west of Ireland town to their undergraduate years at Trinity College, Dublin.

At school, Connell is well-liked and popular, while Marianne is

lonely, proud and intimidating. When Connell comes to pick up his mother from her cleaning job at Marianne's house, a strange and indelible connection grows between the two teenagers - one they are determined to conceal. A year later, they're both studying in Dublin and Marianne has found her feet in a new social world, but Connell hangs at the sidelines, shy and uncertain.

Normal People sees the pair weave in and out of each other's lives and explores how complicated intimacy and young love can be.

Filming took place in Dublin, Sligo, Italy and Sweden with directors Lenny Abrahamson (*Room*, *The Little Stranger*, *Frank*) and Hettie McDonald (*Howard's End*).

Rooney, also the series' executive

producer, said: "As a long-time admirer of Lenny Abrahamson's work, it's a special privilege for me to be working alongside him on the adaptation of *Normal People*."

"I couldn't be happier with the cast and team we've put together, and I'm very excited to watch them bringing new life to the story on screen."

Following Rooney's critically acclaimed debut novel *Conversations with Friends*, she was named winner of 2017's *Sunday Times* Writer of the Year Award.

Normal People was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2018 and won 2019's Book of the Year at the British Book Awards. In America, *Normal People* entered the *New York Times* Bestseller list at number three.



YOUNG LOVE: Marianne (Daisy Edgar-Jones) and Connell (Paul Mescal) in *Normal People*

Theatre
Cilla The Musical
Aylesbury Waterside Theatre

Sheridan returns as singer Cilla

WE MAY be denied the chance to see live theatre at the moment because of the coronavirus pandemic but, hopefully, by the autumn things should be back to 'normal'.

And there's plenty to look forward to, including Sheridan Smith starring as national treasure Cilla Black in *Cilla The Musical* at Aylesbury's Waterside Theatre from October 19-24.

Sheridan wowed fans and critics alike with her portrayal of the beloved singer and TV personality in Jeff Pope's BAFTA award-winning ITV series *Cilla*. Her acclaimed portrayal of the British icon won Sheridan both a 2015 National TV Award and a 2015 TV Choice Award, and she was nominated for a BAFTA and an international EMMY award.

After roles in hit sitcoms including *The Royle Family*, *Two Pints of Lager*, *Gavin & Stacey* and *Benidorm*, she starred in *Jonathan Creek* (2013) and went on to receive acclaim in television dramas *Mrs Biggs* (2012), *The C Word* (2015), *Black Work* (2015) and *The Moorside* (2017).

Theatre credits include her first Olivier Award nomination for *Little Shop of Horrors* at the Menier Chocolate Factory and her first Olivier Award and WhatsOnStage Award for her role as Elle Woods in *Legally Blonde*. She also enjoyed a celebrated run in the West End as Fanny Bryce in *Funny Girl*.

Cilla The Musical has been described as 'a spectacular and heart-warming' musical adaptation of the TV series. The 2017 debut tour was met with five-star reviews and standing ovations nationwide.



STAR ACT: Sheridan Smith (right) reprises her role as Cilla Black, pictured here opening Waterside Theatre in 2010

The story follows the extraordinary life of an ordinary teenager from Liverpool, Priscilla White, and her rise to fame. By 25 she was recognised as international singing star Cilla Black.

The musical's score features Cilla's greatest hits, including *Anyone Who Had a Heart*, *Alfie* and *Something Tells Me*, alongside

a backdrop of the legendary Liverpool Sound.

The show's timely arrival at the Waterside will be part of the venue's 10th birthday celebrations. Cilla played a huge part in opening the theatre, cutting the ribbon to the auditorium doors on opening night and starring in the venue's first pantomime, *Cinderella*.

1st Competitions
DVDs

Knight Rider, The Complete Collection (Fabulous Films Ltd/Fremantle Media Enterprises)



Get set for Knights in watching TV

GEAR UP for action with superstar David Hasselhoff and his supercar K.I.T.T. as they throttle crime in all 90 high-octane episodes of '80s TV classic *Knight Rider*, now fully restored.

Guest stars include Jason Bateman (*Arrested Development*), Bobby Brown (*New Edition*) and Geena Davis (*Stuart Little*, *Thelma & Louise*).

Creator Glen A. Larson (*Battlestar Galactica*, *The Fall Guy*, *Manimal*, *Automan*) likened K.I.T.T. to Tonto from *The Lone Ranger*, 'riding across the plains and going from one town to another

to help law and order.' KITT, as all *Knight Rider* fans know, stands for Knight Industries Two Thousand. Hasselhoff stars as Michael Knight, a detective thought to be dead, who is given a new face and identity.

His assignment is to fight crime with the help of an artificially intelligent talking car named K.I.T.T., a high-speed, futuristic weapon fitted with high-tech gadgets and a personality of its own. Driven by justice, they set out to take down

criminals who operate above the law. We have a box set of *Knight Rider The Complete Collection*, rrp

£84.99, released on April 27, for one lucky reader to win. For your chance to own it, simply answer this question correctly:

Who created Knight Rider?

Email your answer, marked Knight Rider box set competition, to: competitions@rafnew.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE to arrive by May 1.

Extras include: 'Knight of the Phoenix' commentary with David Hasselhoff and writer/creator Glen Larson, *Knight Moves*, *Knight Rider: Under The Hood*, Photo Gallery, Blueprints Gallery and *The Great 80s TV Flashback*.





Your Announcements

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

Death



Fred Mills

AE (Fred) Mills passed away March 26 aged 85. Born September 12, 1934. Served in the RAF for 22 years. Joined the RAF for National Service in 1952 finally retiring as Chief Tech MT fitter at RAF Lyneham in 1976. Served in Germany, UK, Libya, Cyprus, Nicosia, N Ireland, UK, BAOR Germany with 26 RCT/REME, UK, Cyprus Akrotiri and RAF Lyneham. Played football in goal and cricket as spin bowler/batsman for many of the units he served in. Also was often coerced into

running evening classes in motor vehicle maintenance. Member of the RAFA Chingford and Romford branches. He was married to Sylvia Pullen for 64 years and is sadly missed by his four children and his many-grandchildren and great grandchildren. Funeral held at South Essex Crematorium on April 8, sadly under Covid-19 restrictions.

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: ehkl1965@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.

THE Red Arrows Association is calling for new members. It organises various events, has a Facebook page and biannual newsletter and holds a popular annual reunion. Membership is £5 a year and is conditional on having served on the Red Arrows (including the Yellowjacks) as either aircrew, ground crew or civilian support staff at any time since its formation in 1964. Associate membership is also available to people closely connected to the team. Email: secretary@redarrowsassociation.co.uk

or visit: redarrowsassociation.co.uk.

237 OCU. Due to the coronavirus outbreak, the eighth annual 237 OCU Groundcrew Reunion will now be held on Saturday, September 5, 2020 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, 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 call: 0751 3301 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.

No Cold War Call Up

WE HAVE taken the sad decision to cancel the *Cold War Call Up* event that was due to take place on May 16 and 17, writes **Howard Heeley, Secretary & Museum Trustee of Newark Air Museum**. Many participants in things like the planned Meet & Greet sessions are in the age group that are now self-isolating and are likely to be doing so for the next 12 weeks.

In order to give people as much notice as possible of our intentions it is felt that this is the best time to make this decision.

Our current thinking is to try to run a similar event sometime in 2021. We will be notifying people via email.

In the coming weeks we may use our Twitter timeline to continue with some tweets for a Virtual Cold War Call Up feed, using some material that we were already preparing.

We have also taken a decision to postpone the Cockpit-Fest 2020 and the Aeroboot event in June. This two-day event was due to take place on June 20 and 21.

One possibility that we are looking at is to rearrange these combined events for Saturday and Sunday, August 8 and 9. At the moment this is not a firm date and a lot will still depend on when the current lockdown arrangements are lifted.

However, we would welcome your thoughts and feedback via the usual communication routes and on social media.

We are sorry for any inconvenience these changes may cause, especially to those people and groups who have been working on preparations on their displays for this event for many months.

This includes external participants and our own museum members who have been working tirelessly on many different aircraft and projects like the Yellow Sun rebuild.

We will be communicating directly with everyone who had already made a commitment to the events.

Catering Association

MEMBERSHIP is open to those who are serving or who have served as a WO or FS in Trade Group 19 and former RAF Catering Officers. Please email Eddie Jones: janedjones6@tiscali.co.uk or call: 01487 823480 for more information.

Mess dress for sale

TWO WO/SNCOs Mess dress for sale: 1 - 38" chest, 30" waist, 29" leg; 2. - 36" chest, 26" waist, 28" leg. Contact: marheat@hotmail.com.

How to use our service

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Share your memories of RAF College Cranwell

THIS YEAR is the centenary of the RAF College Cranwell (pictured above) and the College is in the process of collecting memories from people who may have lived or worked at RAF College Cranwell 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, Sleaford, Lincolnshire NG34 8HB.



Your Announcements

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

Wild times for Lincs

THE CALL of the Wild festival, that offers 25 per cent discount to all Defence Card holders and was due to go ahead in May, will now be held in the autumn, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Lincolnshire's biggest rock festival has been rescheduled for September 18-20 at Lincolnshire Showground. More than 50 bands from around the world are set to appear including Motörhead's Phil Campbell with his project Phil Campbell & the Bastard Sons (pictured right).

A Festival spokesperson said: "We are hopeful that most of our ticket buyers will be able to join us in September, but appreciate that customers might have existing plans or commitments.

"Our ticketing partner Gigantic will be emailing all purchasers with the following options: tickets can be transferred automatically to the new date, tickets can be transferred to the 2021 event or full refunds can be arranged.

"It will also be possible



to swap day tickets or claim a full refund. Please respond to Gigantic's email or – if preferred – contact them at: customerservices@gigantic.com.

"Anyone who purchased Earlybird tickets directly from us at the festival last year should contact: info@callofthewildfestival.co.uk and we will sort things out, on the same terms as above."

The spokesperson added: "We wish to show our

thanks by allocating 500 free weekend tickets to all NHS workers. These can be applied for by contacting: info@callofthewildfestival.co.uk with proof/ID.

"However, if you have already bought a ticket for this year we will allocate you free weekend tickets for 2021."

The deadline for applications is April 30. Visit: callofthewildfestival.com for more details.



HIGH FLYER: *Only Fools and Horses* star Sue Holderness hosts the *All Stations* podcast

Write a script for the Fund

DO YOU fancy being a scriptwriter? 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.

A judging panel will decide on the winning script, which will then be dramatised, recorded and produced as an audio drama. It will be released as a bonus episode of the second series of the Fund's *All Stations* podcast on Battle of Britain

Day on September 15.

The second series of *All Stations* will commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, the RAF's most well-known operation.

Actress Sue Holderness, the *All Stations* podcast host, said: "I am immensely proud of my RAF links with my father and his brothers flying throughout World War II.

"One of my uncles flew in the Battle of Britain, which is why I wanted to be involved in this project to

commemorate their bravery and pay tribute to their sacrifice."

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 in performance length and the deadline for entries is May 31. Go to: rafbf.org/battle-of-britain/competition.

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R'n'R



Prize Crossword

No. 271

Solve the crossword, then rearrange the nine letters in yellow squares to find a bomber

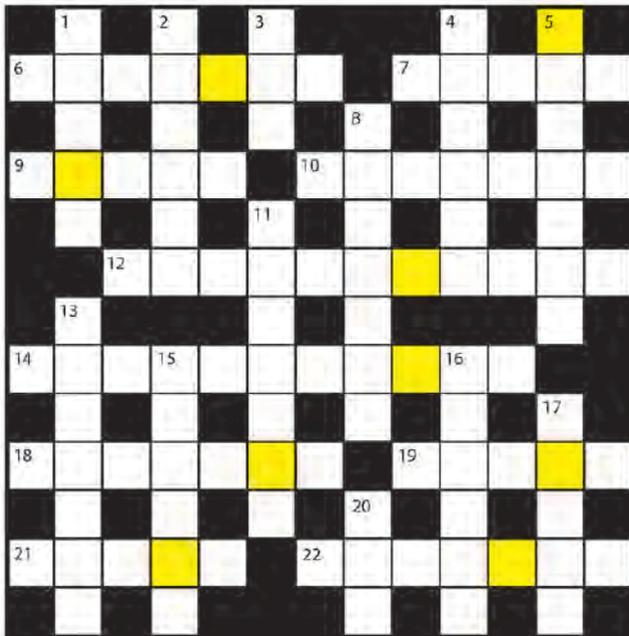
Across

- 6. In a cult growing eccentric (7)
- 7. **And 17 Down.** UK-US collaboration to transfix nightclub (5,5)
- 9. A scrap, more or less (5)
- 10. Out east, joints fixed by parliament (7)
- 12. Supporter damages weird banner (11)
- 14. **And 18 Across, 16 Down.** Perhaps spacecar warranted Iran fee to RAF institution (3,3,5,7,6)
- 18. **See 14 Across**
- 19. **See 1 Down**
- 21. Love an entrance, by the sound of it (5)
- 22. Present flower (7)

Down

- 1. **And 19 Across.** A trying sport, at best (5,5)
- 2. German agreement before sentry almost spotted cat (6)
- 3. Russian fighter comes back from losing imagination (3)
- 4. **See 20 Down**
- 5. Left mountain without southern animal (7)
- 8. Disorderly, headless nuns cried... (7)
- 11. ...and entered challenge to space hero (3,4)
- 13. Frenchman and I give Cape currency to a girl (7)
- 15. Sounds like an ex-President will pay for it (6)
- 16. **See 14 Across**
- 17. **See 7 Across**
- 20. **And 4 Down.** Busy going round RAF legend (3,6)

Solutions should be sent in a sealed envelope marked 'Prize Crossword' with the number in the top left-hand corner to RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP14 4UE to arrive by May 15, 2020.



Solution to Crossword No. 269:

Across – 1. Rhea 8. Blueprints 9. Financed 10. Cleo 12. Toucan 14. Reader 15. Strand 17. Meteor 18. Draw 19. Kilowatt 21. Wall Street 22. Hate

Down – 2. Helicopter 3. ABBA 4. Vulcan 5. Spider 6. Aircraft 7. Oslo 11. Eye Contact 13. Cranwell 16. Dakota 17. Mildew 18. Dawn 20. With

Aircraft: Canberra

Name.....
 Address.....

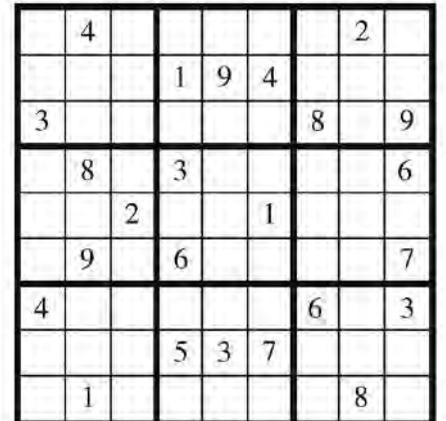
 RAF bomber:..... Crossword No. 271



Prize Su Doku

No. 281

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.



Name.....

 Address.....

 Su Doku No. 281

Solution to Su Doku No: 280

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

Solutions should be sent in a sealed envelope marked 'Su Doku' with the number in the top left-hand corner to RAF News, to arrive by May 15, 2020.



Music

Ned's Atomic Dustbin

Tour dates



It's bin a long time coming

RETURNING TO where it all began, Ned's Atomic Dustbin have announced two special shows at Stourbridge Town Hall in December, with two at London's Dingwalls the week before.

It's been more than three decades since the band recorded their debut release, *The Ingredients EP*, just a few hundred yards from Stourbridge Town Hall. Although reunited since 2008, this will be the first time the original five-member line-up have played in the Midlands town since 1988 and the first time they have played Dingwalls, the iconic Camden Town venue – their first London headline and sell-out – since 1990.

Singer Jonn Penney said: "Looks like we're finally coming home. Thirty years since we released *The Ingredients EP* we're going to get to play the songs in Stourbridge. It's a homecoming that's been a long time coming. I think 30 years is

long enough to leave it. We can't wait to play there – it'll feel like a new venue to us because it's been such a long time."

Songs from *The Ingredients EP* were instrumental in claiming the band's earliest UK audiences and subsequently a global following that added up to a million album sales.

The song *Grey Cell Green* won over fans on early UK tours with The Wonder Stuff, Pop Will Eat Itself and Jesus Jones. With the release of their debut album *God Fodder*, *Grey Cell Green* became a hit on US college radio and gained rotation on MTV, helping the band crack the States.

"It seems so weird now to think that we wrote *Grey Cell Green* so early on – we were still just boys and we had no idea we would ever even release a record at the time. That particular song seems to have defined us well before our 'hits' like *Kill Your Television*, *Happy*



INDIE IDOLS: Penney and Ned's Atomic Dustbin. Inset, early days

and *Intact* were even written," said Penney. Along with fellow Stourbridge bands Pop Will Eat Itself and The Wonder Stuff, Ned's Atomic Dustbin were part of the 'Stourbridge' scene that emerged in the late 80s.

With three Indie chart-topping records under their belts, they

signed to Sony Music and notched up appearances on *Top of the Pops* and *The Word*, then after three albums and a final show in New York, the band split up in 1995.

They are promising a different set each night in London and in Stourbridge to include all tracks from *The Ingredients EP*

interspersed with tracks from throughout their catalogue.

Fifty limited-edition show-specific T-shirt and ticket packages will be available for each show – first come, first served.

■ Tickets are on sale now. Go to: nedsatomicdustbin.com for details.

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.



■ Please note letters must be a maximum of 250 words and any accompanying pictures sent as attached, hi-res jpeg files

Email: editor@rafnews.co.uk

Letters

DFC OC was all at sea, too

✍ I AM a regular reader of *RAF News*, now aged 80, and served in the RAF from 1956-69 as an Aircraft Engine Mechanic/Fitter.

On completion of my tour in the Far East [TourEx] we departed RAF Katunayake, Ceylon [now Sri Lanka] and headed to RAF Gan in the Maldives in a Handley Page Hastings of 48 Squadron Changi.

Star letter

We hit a tropical storm whilst attempting to land and ended up in the sea 1.5 miles east of the runway.

All six crew and 14 passengers were rescued by a combination of SAR Avro Shackleton and two ASR launches. We sustained minor injuries.

The passengers continued by Bristol Britannia the next day to the UK via Karachi and Nicosia. On board the ditched aircraft was Station Commander of RAF Katunayake, Wg Cdr G A Atherton DFC.*

John Cooper, via email

HAIRY TIMES

✍ I SERVED for eight years at RAF Gutersloh, West Germany, as an armourer during the Cold War. During my time there, all exercises were carried out wearing full NBC protective clothing, with respirator carried on our belt for ease of access. Once a year we went into the gas chamber, CS gas was set off and wearing our respirators we entered said gas chamber to ensure that this piece of very necessary kit formed a good seal around our faces.

At the same time, although we smelt like polecats after wearing NBC kit for a day or three, we were encouraged to at least shave to ensure the effectiveness of the seal. During exercises, Di-staff would sometimes aerosol CS gas around in buildings to:

a) ensure we were masked up when required to do so.

b) that the seal worked as it was meant to.

Which naturally brings me to today's RAF 'Survive to Fight' as it was called back then. Are today's personnel trained in using a respirator and with the advent of beards now being allowed, how efficient is it? If in real time, the Cold War had become hot and we had got a whiff of sarin or tabun nerve agents, both extremely lethal, and got our respirator



HIRSUTE: The modern face of deployed RAF

on fast enough, we would then self-inject with Atropine through our clothing into our thigh with at least some chance of surviving.

Unless today's personnel have some other antidote, I don't see that the combination of a set of hairy chops and gas mask is going to work too well. Back in the day it applied to aircrew as well, they wore NBC flying kit.

Possibly someone who knows could give the official opinion to this conundrum.

Alan Mudge
King's Lynn
Norfolk

RAF Regt deserve proper recognition

✍ I AM to say the least very disappointed with the article in *RAF News* number 1488 regarding Battle Honours. This clearly shows a blatant lack of respect to all those RAF Regiment squadrons and more importantly those gunners that paid the ultimate price.

Yes, you did mention nine RAF Regiment 'Units' however this article is clearly focused on flying squadrons.

Nine RAF Regiment squadrons received 'Battle honour with Emblazonment' – higher honour than the 32 flying squadrons that received Battle Honours. Why then were they just squashed under the bottom of the flying squadrons?

This gives me the impression that the RAF Regiment's contribution was in some way less important and less valued. Articles like this have a direct impact on RAF Regiment gunners when they read them – giving them reason to question what they do and if it is valued and worthwhile. Please be aware of this for future articles.

Scott Andrews
Via email

Editor's note: Unfortunately, space constraints mean we are not always able to give featured subjects the prominence they deserve. This was in no way meant to diminish the RAF Regiment's proud history and achievements on the battlefield.

Win bottle of spirits

THE WRITER of our star letter or email of the month wins their choice of either a bottle of refined Spitfire Heritage Gin or smooth Supermarine Vodka 'built to be the best' from spitfireheritagegin.com. Spitfire Heritage Distillers support the Spitfire Heritage Trust.



The Crate Escape

Show some bottle and win a round of top beers on us

THE BRITISH military thrives on tradition – but there is one Air Force custom *RAF News* is happy to call time on.

Getting 'crated' by your pals for appearing in the Forces' favourite newspaper could cost you more than a few quid these days.

So we've teamed up with the UK's oldest brewer Shepherd Neame to offer readers the chance to win a crate of Spitfire Ale by featuring in the paper.

Show some bottle and send us a pic of yourself or your colleagues reading *RAF News* and we'll pay your debt to society by buying YOU a round of beers.



SENTRY CREWS recce the Air Force's Favourite Newspaper Down Under before the Covid-19 crisis, during a brief break from training on the E-7B Wedgetail that will come into RAF service under a five aircraft £1.51Bn defence deal. Waddington-based 8 Sqn personnel are at RAAF Williamtown near Newcastle, New South Wales, the home of 2 Squadron, which currently operates E-7A Wedgetails similar to the E-7Bs that will replace the ageing E3-D.

● To be in with a chance of winning a crate of Spitfire Amber Ale send your pictures to: editor@rafnews.co.uk along with your postal address and phone number.



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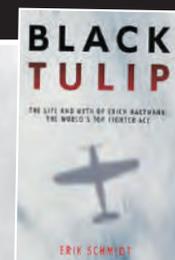
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By Simon Mander

Feature

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

Devil's in the detail



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



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

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

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

Over two-and-a-half years he shot down 352 enemy aircraft over the Eastern front during 1404 combat missions – roughly one kill for every four sorties.

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

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

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

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

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

Knight of Germany – Hartmann the man remains elusive.

Personally, I wanted to know was he a diehard Nazi like Hans-Ulrich Rudel whose memoir *Stuka* describes how he destroyed 2000 ground targets including 519 Soviet tanks, and was endorsed by Douglas Bader? Or was he a knight of the air like the legendary World War I 'Red' Baron Manfred von Richthofen, who the British buried with elaborate ceremony, which as Schmidt says with cutting understatement, was 'a notable act in a war that had left so many of the dead strewn anonymously in the trenches'? Or was he something in between?

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

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

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

Perhaps surprisingly Hartmann's

stellar military career doesn't dominate the book as one might expect.

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

But there's one incident that perhaps illuminates his adherence

minutes," Hartmann said, and mounds of the dead littered the forest floor afterward. It was the kind of carnage he and his fellow pilots had always been sheltered from.

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

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

Black Tulip: The Life and Myth of Erich Hartmann, The World's Top Fighter Ace by Eric Schmidt is

a fascinating insight into the making of a flying legend which exposes through rigorous analysis how myths are made, and sometimes used, to excuse one of the most evil mass slaughters in history.

Sometimes the facts are all you have.

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



CRUDE: Soviet I-16 'Flying Squirrel'



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

or otherwise to the murderous Hitler regime that made his exploits possible.

Forced down behind enemy lines by shrapnel from a Sturmovik bomber he had just despatched – Hartmann was never shot down – he was forced to seek refuge with a Waffen-SS platoon.

That day he witnessed the unit ambush 200 Soviet soldiers with MG-42 machine guns nicknamed 'Hitler's Zipper'.

"The shooting lasted 30

Obituary

617 Sqn WWII navigator who hunted down Tirpitz

BASIL FISH, who has died aged 97, was one of the last survivors of 617 Squadron who attacked the German battleship Tirpitz.

He bombed it twice, the second time on November 12, 1944, when the 'The Beast' as Winston Churchill dubbed the ship, was finally destroyed by the Lancasters of Bomber Command.

Fish was studying at Manchester University when he was called up in 1942 and trained as a navigator in South Africa.

On his return to Britain he teamed up with a New Zealand pilot, Arthur Joplin, and they joined 617 Sqn in August 1944 when the squadron was based at Woodhall Spa.

Their first raid was to attack the U-boat pens at Brest. They next attacked the Kembs Barrage on the River Rhine near the Swiss border, a daring raid led by the Squadron Commander Wg Cdr 'Willie' Tait.

On October 28, Lancasters of 9 and 617 Sqns positioned at airfields on the Moray Firth. The following morning 39 aircraft, armed with the 12,000lb 'Tallboy' bomb, headed for Tromso in northern Norway where the battleship was moored.

Cloud obscured the target, but the aircraft bombed and one hit damaged Tirpitz. Joplin and Fish released their Tallboy at 13,400 feet.

Fish remembered the AOC, Air Vice-Marshal Cochrane, visiting Woodhall Spa and addressing the crews. He said the Lancasters would be sent back 'again and again' until the job had been done.

On November 11 the Lancasters again headed north to their advance bases in Scotland.

The following day they headed for Norway. As the force approached Tirpitz they met a barrage of anti-aircraft fire, but, to their surprise, enemy fighters based nearby did not appear. The weather was clear and the bomb aimers were able to target the battleship.

This time the concentrated bombing found its target. Joplin and Fish dropped theirs from 15,000 feet and later reported: "Our bomb fell in the smoke which covered the ship. One direct hit and two near misses were seen." As the Lancasters departed 'The Beast' rolled over and capsized with great loss of life.

On December 21 Fish and his crew were sent to bomb an oil refinery at Politz, near Stettin.

On their return, Lincolnshire was shrouded in fog, but owing to mixed messages the crew headed back to Woodhall Spa, and then tried to divert to Ludford Magna, which was equipped with the fog dispersal aid FIDO. The aircraft struck rising ground on their approach and the Lancaster crashed, killing two of the crew.



TAMING THE BEAST: Insert top left, Fish, a smiling navigator, main, the stricken Tirpitz

Fish was instrumental in extracting his pilot, who was trapped in the burning wreckage with two broken legs. He also extinguished the smouldering clothing of another crew member before venturing back into the blazing wreckage in an attempt to rescue others, only to be beaten back by the heat and exploding ammunition.

He made the others as comfortable as possible and then, realising that he was the only one

capable of summoning assistance, set off across fog- overed fields – eventually finding a farmhouse, whose occupant led him to a phone box from where he summoned assistance and waited to lead rescue services back to the aircraft.

Within two months Fish had returned to operations with a new crew, attacking canal and rail targets (including the Bielefeld viaduct) with Tallboy, and later the 22,000lb Grand Slam 'earthquake bomb'.

He flew in three attempts

to bomb the cruiser Lutzow at Swinemunde before attacking the U-boat construction pen at Farge.

His seventeenth and final operation of the war was the attack on Hitler's retreat at Berchtesgaden on April 24.

Later in life he said: "I was very relieved at the end. Afterwards, I missed the crew. We were like a family."

Fish was released from the Service in 1946 as a Flying Officer and returned to Manchester

University to complete a degree in civil engineering.

A successful career followed in this field both in the UK and Africa – with Fish gaining a pilot's licence at the age of 60, logging several hundred hours flying in various parts of the world on business and for pleasure.

In 1984 Fish and his bomb-aimer visited their pilot in New Zealand and at 08:42 hours drank a toast at the exact moment they'd dropped their Tallboy 40 years earlier.

Mikaella's future is all mapped out

Top award for RAF Cartographer



GRADUATE: Former builder LAC Euan Hussey



NEW ROLE: LAC Freddie Knight joins data section

DESPITE THE ongoing Covid-19 crisis causing a brief interruption for Course 78 of the Air Cartography trade, three trainees successfully graduated earlier this month.

LAC Mikaella Theodoulou, LAC Euan Hussey and LAC Freddie Knight endured a challenging and intense eight-week course at the School of Air Cartography, No. 1 AIDU, based at RAF Northolt.

They will now play a pivotal role within the Unit, providing flight safety critical aeronautical information in the form of Terminal procedural mapping, digital cockpit display mapping, low flying and en-route charts in support of defence objectives around the world.

LAC Theodoulou, 28, will be working in the Terminal Chart section, providing take-off and landing charts. She has previously worked in the Cypriot Army as a Mortar team observer.

LAC Hussey, 21, will be starting his Air Cartography career in the Digital Mapping section, providing cockpit display mapping for a variety of defence platforms. Prior to joining the RAF, he worked in the construction industry.

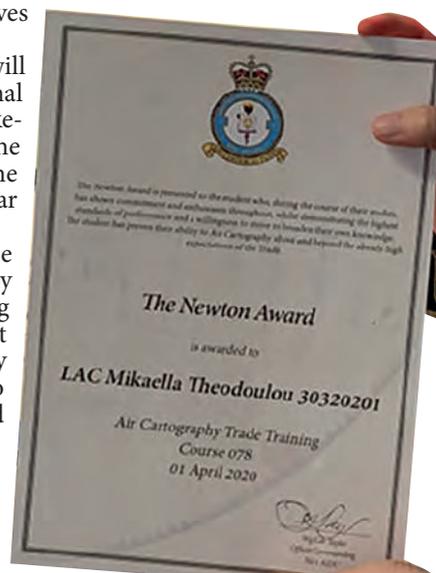
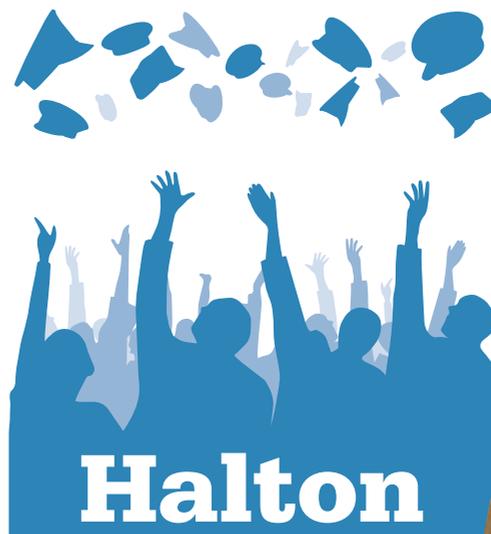
LAC Knight, 26, will be starting his Air Cartography career in the Database Management section, where he will be incorporating information vital to the creation of a multitude of No. 1 AIDU products.

The 'Newton' award was also awarded for the first time in three years, to the student who goes above and beyond on the course.

It went to LAC Theodoulou, who put a great amount of effort not only into her own studies, but also assisted her fellow trainees.

Sgt Brett Aherne, Chief Instructor, thanked all the students for their hard work.

He said: "The standard of person we are seeing pass through phase 1 and into the phase 2 environment is getting more and more impressive. That can only be a good thing for the longevity of both the Air Cartography trade and the RAF."



NEWTON AWARD:
LAC Mikaella Theodoulou



OC: Wg Cdr Paul Taylor made presentations, while practising social distancing



Motoring

Nissan Leaf



MILES BETTER: The new Leaf has extended range

Nissan's original EV ups its game with better range

Turning over a new Leaf

TIM MORRIS

Motoring Correspondent



WHEN I reviewed the original Nissan Leaf back in 2011 it really was squeaky bum time for motoring journalists. *Top Gear* had recently been sued by Tesla and then stirred up massive controversy by deliberately running a Leaf out of charge in Lincoln for comedy value.

This item ran two days before my piece was due to air so, naturally, Nissan was on high alert and I had a solicitor on speed dial. Fortunately, however, my review was a genuinely favourable one so it went down well.

As an avid petrolhead it always surprised me that I liked the original Leaf so much, but I did. What's more I like the new version too.

I could tell you that it appeals to my better nature, my inherent desire to save the planet, but that's not really it. Worthy though those points are, I really like the Leaf because it goes like stink from a standing start. Yes, its size and performance off the mark (0-62mph in sub 7 seconds) place it nicely in GTi territory.

Not only is it feisty but it's built using technology that's been honed over a number of years so the range on a single charge is up to a substantial 239 miles if you drive like a granny. Unfortunately, I don't and therefore my real world range was closer to 150 but I have no doubt that I could have done better.

On The Road

Despite its rapid take-off the Leaf isn't really a hot hatch in terms of handling. It does tackle bends better than rivals such as the



DUAL CHARGE: Charging at home takes about eight hours but there is a rapid-charge option

Volkswagen e-Golf or the Renault ZoE but somehow it feels slightly unnatural at times.

The steering is nicely weighted however and relatively precise so there is a lot to like if you're not expecting GTi poise. For the price, the BMW i3 has been seen as the pinnacle of composure until now but I think the new Leaf knocks it off the top spot on undulating roads.

Top speed of the 62KWh Leaf is a mere 98mph so you won't be taking it to the track anytime soon but that's not what this car is designed for. Up to 50mph it's pretty ruddy rapid and it's eager to overtake on the motorway.

At cruising speed it's almost silent and its ProPILOT system means that it practically drives itself.

Marmite

The new Leaf comes equipped with what Nissan calls the 'e-Pedal' system. You'll either love it or hate

it. All EVs harness regenerative braking but the Leaf takes it to a new level. Fortunately you can ramp it up in stages, from the gentle friction braking that we're used to, all the way up to full 'e-Pedal' mode where the car actually stops when you lift your foot off the accelerator.

In The Cabin

Managing expectations is key when you're looking at trim in electric vehicles. Everything is built to save weight and manufacturers will shave off a few pounds anywhere they can to increase range. The Leaf is no different and there are a few small downsides.

The steering column, for example, doesn't adjust for reach so drivers of a certain height might find it awkward to get comfortable. Then there's the dashboard materials, which look a little cheap in places and feature an unhealthy smattering of rough plastic.

But the most obvious surfaces are finished with nicely stitched leather

and it's smarter than the interior of a Renault ZoE, for instance. It also feels more solidly screwed together.

Infotainment

The e+ Tekna comes with an 8.0in touchscreen that's pretty simple to use. The operating system is fairly logical and the physical short cut buttons around the screen make it easy to hop between functions. Parking is made easy thanks to a suite of cameras that display a bird's eye view of the car on the central touchscreen, not to mention the usual front and rear parking sensors. It also features a Bose stereo.

Practicality

The big concern about buying an EV for many is the thought that it might leave you stranded when the battery runs out. Then there are fears about reliability, depreciation and cost. On almost all these issues the Leaf scores well.

It uses the same Type 2 connector for normal charging as most of its rivals but it now has a CHAdeMO connector for fast charging too.

Charging at home overnight will take around eight hours but plugging in to a 50kW CHAdeMO charger will take the Leaf back to 80 per cent charge in roughly 40 minutes. In reality that will give you a 300-mile journey with a single stop for a cup of char and a bit of smartphone bashing.

Finding a charging 'pump' is not difficult either through a range of apps.

Moving on to the other points, residuals are extremely strong and the Leaf has been around for long enough to know that there are no reliability issues or battery problems.

Cost is possibly the Leaf's only weak area because it certainly isn't

cheap – our car had a hefty £36,820 price tag.

Even when you take into account the government's £3500 grant and the fact that the Leaf is exempt from road tax, a small petrol hatchback will still be a much cheaper option if you're not hell-bent on going electric.

Verdict

Pros

- Rapid off the mark
- Impressive technology
- Plenty of space with a big boot
- Much-improved range

Cons

- Driving position not ideal
- Rear headroom limited
- Some rivals still offer better range

Overall

THE LEAF is a seriously impressive bit of kit. It's evolved well and Nissan has managed to improve on an already successful formula. When it came to the end of the road the outgoing Leaf was still outselling almost all other pure electric cars put together in the UK. With its new look and upgraded features the new model is likely to be just as popular. This is an attractive, practical family hatch with tiny running costs. If you clock up hundreds of miles on a motorway every day it's not the car for you, neither is it a car for GTi petrolheads. For anyone else however the Leaf's silent, precise power delivery may prove irresistible.

Email: sports@rafnews.co.uk
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Sport



5 pages of **RAF Sport** starts here

● **Hall leads virtual rally charge P27**



KEEPING AHEAD

Ice chair looks to future
P24

Jordan rolls in

Service team sign star

Staff Reporter
Air Command

THE RANKS of the RAF Regular & Reserve team were bolstered by the signing of Northern Irishman Paul Jordan for the 2020 International road racing season.

The 28-year-old will ride on the Kawasaki ZX-10RR machinery in the Superbike and Superstock class at the International North West 200. He will also contest the Macau Grand Prix for the third time, enjoying a top 20 finish there last year.

In addition, the Northern Irish rider will compete for the RAF team in the Supersport races at the NW200 riding a Yamaha YZF-R6.

The former 125cc British



TEAM WORKS: Main, Jordan, left, Hardy are all smiles after the team's announcement of signing the Irish rider

PHOTO: TIM KEETON IMPACT IMAGERY

Championship race winner will also compete in selected rounds of the Pirelli National Superstock

1000 Championship ahead of the road race season. Speaking about the deal, Jordan said: "I'm over the

moon to have signed for the RAF Regular & Reserve Kawasaki team.

Continued on page 26:

New bloods steal show at Halton

THE RAF Tennis season got underway with the new kids on the block stealing the opening thunder at Halton Tennis Centre.

Hosting the 2020 Winter Championships the centre saw 41 participants, take to the indoor dome courts where organiser Cpl Kevin Watson did his best to squeeze in all 84 matches.

Out of the field of 13 female competitors, debutant UAS Officer Cadet Jodie Mitchell smashed her way through the competition to claim the final.

Once there she defeated Cpl Michelle Rogan 4-1 4-1. Elsewhere, there were close matches with four going the distance to a championship tie break.

The men's event was a fierce competition with 28 participants including all, bar three, of the A/B squads, along with new faces to the sport.

The new association star, Fg Off Nick Hallchurch, defeated experienced men's captain FS Martyn Ledbury 6-2 6-3 to claim the title.

Continued on page 26:

Chair aims for the sun

IS triumph is simply launching pad for more

Daniel Abrahams
HQ Air Command

RAF ICE Sports chairman Sqn Ldr Heather Ratnage-Black believes the huge medal haul from the IS championships in Germany was simply proof of the association's hard work.

The association won all but one of the Inter-Service team events in skeleton, luge and bobsleigh where the men's team finished runner-up by 0.21s to the Royal Navy.

Ratnage-Black has already begun planning for next year's events, with some unique ways of overcoming the current coronavirus outbreak's impact on the training and fitness of her athletes.

She said: "In Königssee, we had a dedicated team working together for the season, we've had a lot of structural changes internally across the board – in some ways in response to the situation we had in 2017 at the novice championships in Igls."

The 2017 incident saw a novice luge athlete suffer injury during one of her runs.

Through the Service Inquiry recommendations the RAF BLSA began a root and branch overhaul of all its approaches, across all three disciplines to ensure even more focus on athlete outcomes.

Ratnage-Black added: "It is true to say, out of that situation, we have become much more of a combined

organisation at every level. That managerial bond cascades down the athletes. We also have a superb pool of talent.

"Couple this with the incredible Station level support that allows athletes, elite or beginner, to compete across the world and learn at training camps and you see the outcome at the Inter-Services this year in Germany."

"We are calling on athletes to go and sit in their sleds or get on the floor in their living rooms and go through runs on tracks using YouTube or other sim providers"

Never one to rest on her laurels, Ratnage-Black is looking to push for new equipment. She said: "I am hoping the Service's sports charities will help in that area. You need to remain up with your competitors, who have both just had an injection of funds in that area, so we will be looking to level that playing field if we can."

Despite the lack of opportunities to train outdoors, the association and its chairman have some unique

approaches to combating the situation.

"The NGB (National Governing Body) are implementing social distancing measures at the push track at Bath University, so it can be used effectively to enable access, so we may not suffer so badly in the medium term with that.

"We are calling on athletes to go and sit in their sleds or get on the floor in their living rooms and go through runs on tracks using YouTube or other simulator providers.

"It's a bit different than it used to be back in my day, when we only had a drawing, but these days they can do as much mental preparation as possible. So, combining this with their fitness, they will be in as good a position as possible."

Of the future, Ratnage-Black said: "The Inter-Service results bore out what a great position we are in right now, but if you look at bobsleigh driver and RAF Regt Gunner L/Cpl Shanwayne Stephens, he is a rising star, where I do think the other Services have stars at the end of their careers.

"We have several guys looking to be brakemen for Team GB, and we really have talent across the board ready to push on.

"So, it's very promising, and if these stars inspire anyone interested in taking part in the sport, well, it's even better." Follow the RAF Ice Sports Association on Twitter @raficesports.



SMILES AND MILES PER HOUR: Above, Ratnage-Black is all smiles at Königssee after a dominant display by the Service's ice sports stars, below, L/Cpl Shanwayne Stephens takes a curve at high speed at the Austrian track during a battle royale with the Army and Royal Navy. PHOTOS: SAC MATT SMITH ACSSU



ONLY WAY IS UP: Above, Off Cdt Rhys Thornbury shows where he will be on the winner's podium after the skeleton stormed to a win. PHOTO: SAC MATT SMITH ACSSU

MOTOR SPORT



MUD AND GLORY: Above, images from the VR championship, below, Hall.

PHOTO: E/SPORTS/M-SPORT/JMRC

Service rally stars play new game for 2020 championship

Five stage event open to association members and RAF lottery ticket holders

Continued from back page:

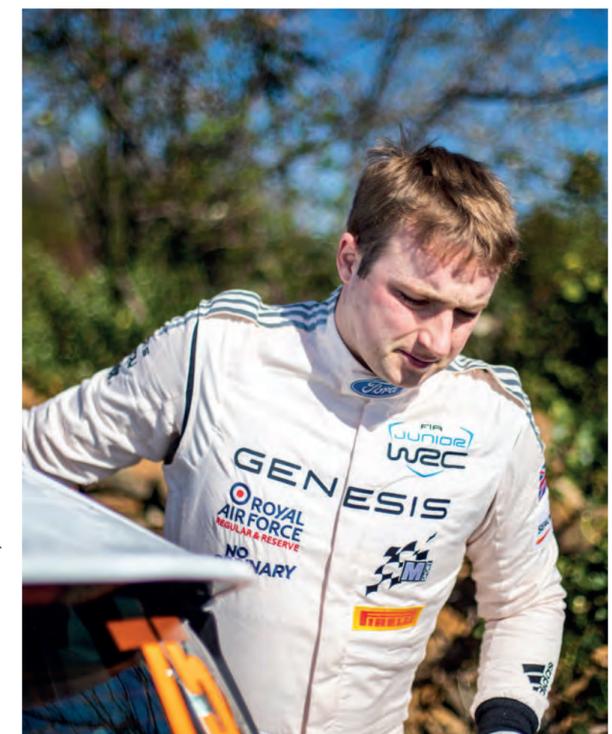
Wg Cdr Craig Teasdale, RAF Rallying Competition Secretary, said: "Given the exceptional circumstances we are experiencing, the VR championship is an ideal way for personnel to continue to enjoy and compete in Motorsport.

"The programme is also aimed at developing the skills, experience, and knowledge"

"This is so realistic that the gap between simulation and reality is closer than ever before. There is sure to be some fierce competition throughout. Competitors need to sign up for the championship by the end of April."

Part of the development programme will see one member of the championship – who has never competed in a real life rally – drive a real rally car on a real rally stage (with instruction).

Visit RAF Motorsport's social media pages on Facebook or email: rafvirtualrally@gmail.com to sign up. Follow Phil Hall on Twitter @philhallrally.



Sport

RUGBY UNION

Horus look to future

Season curtailed, but charity team is setting sights on 2021



DANIEL ABRAHAMS
HQ Air Command

THE SERVICE'S charity sevens rugby union team Horus 7s has vowed not to let Covid-19 halt its work.

The team, started to honour injured colleague Cpl Rob Bugden, had begun the year in impressive style seeing the culmination of its first year of a community training programme, along with picking up a prestigious award.

The multi-Guinness World Record-holding team, had then set their eyes on further record attempts, but the recent pandemic halted the plans for the year.

As team spokesman Sgt Phil Thomas promised the team will

simply move the proposed record attempts, which included a 15s rugby union marathon rugby world record until next summer.

"This season hasn't gone as planned, however we respect the decisions of all event organisers and their decisions to abide by the government's requests. All of the team are disappointed that many of our events are cancelled due to the right reasons, but are hoping to maybe participate in some at the back end of 2020.

"Even if this isn't the case, we are in the early planning stages of attempting the 15s Marathon Rugby World record next July against South West Wales Wildcats."

In March the team marked the first year of its community outreach project. Eighteen sessions

throughout the year were held to rehabilitate inmates at an Oxfordshire-based prison and to help them develop their coaching skills. The inmates also designed their own playing strip and played their first game versus a Barbarian charity team resulting in a 14-14 draw.

Thomas added: "The project was highly praised by the Prison Governor and is now something he would consider seeing introduced in other prisons."

The team were shortlisted for various awards including the Oxford Mail Sports Awards, RAF Brize Norton 'Brize Recognition Awards for Valued and Outstanding Service' (BRAVOS) and the National Rugby awards. Follow the team on Twitter @Horus7s.



TEAM WORKS: Main, Sgt Phil Thomas prepares to break the line during a clash earlier in the year, above, Sgt Dave Hankinson crosses the try line

PHOTOS: BEN LONSDALE WILDEST MEDIA

Central Fund spin and win

AS STAYING in is the new going out, the RAF Central fund has produced a timely team up with fitness company Les Mills.

The partnership gives all serving RAF personnel 60 days free access to their online fitness programme LES MILLS™ On Demand.

Central Fund CEO Ross Perriam said: "It is our charity's mission to support all serving personnel by providing them with opportunities to access sport and physical activities at all levels.

"We are therefore delighted to have this partnership, particularly at a time when access to sport and physical activities in the RAF has been severely hampered by the coronavirus outbreak.

"In light of the Covid-19

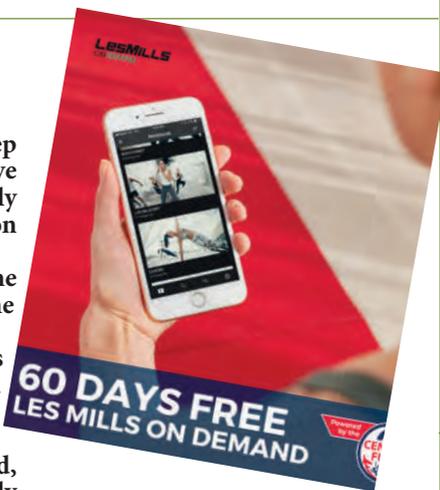
pandemic, this offer will help keep serving personnel fit and active as Station gyms are temporarily closed and Service sport is put on hold.

"We hope that everyone in the RAF will take advantage of the offer."

The offer also includes a special discounted rate for continued membership beyond the 60-day period, with a reduced monthly membership rate of £7.95, normally £11.95.

The service offers more than 800 workouts across 13 categories.

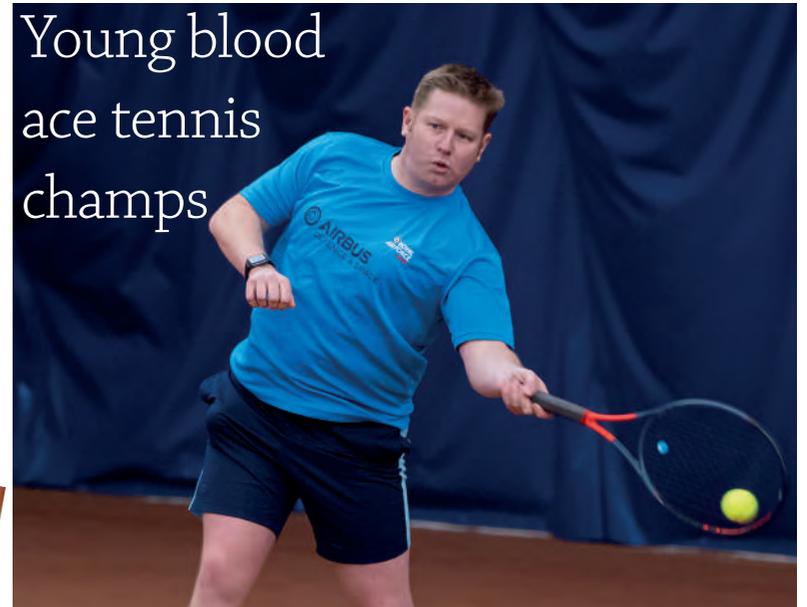
Subscribers to their online platform can work out with classic programmes such as BODYPUMP™ and BODYCOMBAT™, take part in mindfulness exercises.



There are active sessions for children, using the company's BORN TO MOVE™ classes. Workouts range from 15 to 55 minutes and there are options for all fitness levels.

The free trial can be accessed at the charity's website: rafcf.org.uk. Search for: [free-online-workouts-for-the-raf](#).

Young blood ace tennis champs



Continued from page 23:

In the opening rounds SACs Wadhams and Walmsley battled out an epic three-set match in the lower order of the draw to decide who returned to their Unit with bragging rights.

An association spokesman said: "Overall, the event has given the captains plenty to think about in preparation for squad selection for the Inter-Service B Championships when they happen."

New rider set to fire Reserves

Continued from page 23:

When Lee put the offer on the table, it was an easy decision to make.

"I like what the team has done in BSB with Jake Dixon and Ryan Vickers and the ethos of the team in nurturing young riders appealed to me greatly."

Team owner Lee Hardy said: "I am really excited to have made this signing.

"Up until now we have had proven riders on the roads side of the team and I feel it's time to change the ethos to what we do well as a team elsewhere and that is to help develop a younger rider."

Sport

Email: sports@rafnews.co.uk
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Only one aim for Service ice stars

● Sport P24-25



Horus aim high into the future

● Sport P26



NI rider set to light up RAF

● Sport P23



MOTOR SPORT

VR's a champion idea

Association won't be halting for pandemic as online rally fires up



Daniel Abrahams
HQ Air Command

THE COURSES may be closed, but RAF rally fans can get up close and personal with the championship through the brilliant new virtual championships.

Driving aces such as SAC Phil Hall and Service stars such as Wg Cdr Craig Teasdale are all part of the 2020 (RAFMSA) Royal Air Force Motorsports Association's Virtual Rally Championship in collaboration with RAF Esports.

This year's VR event is open to all members of RAFMSA Rally Discipline or RAF VGEA, and valid RAF Sports Lottery ticket holders.

Junior World Rally Championship co-driver SAC Hall said: "I've been involved in the project from its conception. My

role is to liaise with competitors and ensure that the championship is executed smoothly and fairly.

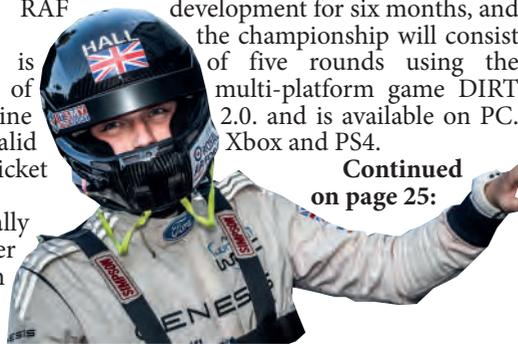
"We have a strong team, with people running the championship online and, of course, building ideas for the future.

"The championship will deliver a development programme for competitors over its course.

"The programme is also aimed at developing the skills, experience, and knowledge of all competitors to maybe move on to the real thing."

The concept has been in development for six months, and the championship will consist of five rounds using the multi-platform game DIRT Rally 2.0. and is available on PC, Xbox and PS4.

Continued on page 25:



REVVING UP: Main and below right, images from the upcoming VR championship, below left, Hall during the World Rally Championship PHOTO: E/SPORTS/M-SPORT/JMRC



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