

The Forces' favourite paper

Glasto Relive festival magic

● See R'n'R pp4-5



Prizes Win top aviation books

● See R'n'R page 5



Win!

ROYAL AIR FORCE

Friday **June 18** 2021
No. 1514 **70p**

RAF News

Win flight in a Tiger Moth to mark our anniversary

● See page 7



RAF Sport Streaming live link-up



● See p28

Fishing On course for Worlds



● See p29

Ruff and Ready

Chinook star hits 9,000 hrs



Simon Mander

A CHINOOK crewman has clocked up 9,000 flying hours while supporting French anti-terrorism operations in Mali.

Veteran Master Aircrew Ruffe, who helped rescue captured British troops in Sierra Leone and airlifted battlefield casualties in Afghanistan, is an instructor with 1310 Flight – currently in West Africa.

He said: "Passing this landmark makes me think how lucky I've been operating the Chinook whilst history has unfolded around me – from the troubles of Northern Ireland, through the conflicts of the Middle East, to humanitarian relief around the world."

His career milestone came during a sortie to recover a vehicle and back at base he was greeted by the traditional soaking to celebrate – delivered by buckets instead of the usual fire engine.

Of the 9,000 hours, the MACr has flown 7,800 of them

on Chinooks from the Mk1 through to the Mk6a since joining the RAF in 1985 and has deployed on operations for more than 2,000 days or nearly five-and-a-half years.

He said: "The Chinooks took a lot of punishment. I flew on sorties that took fire from RPGs, heavy machine guns and small arms fire on several occasions, so it hasn't all been plain sailing."

In 2002 he was awarded the MBE for developing Chinook insertion and extraction techniques and received a Lifetime Achievement Award from manufacturer Boeing.

RAF Chinooks arrived in Mali in January and have transported 18,000 soldiers in temperatures reaching 45°C-plus and frequent dust storms.

Wg Cdr Paul Butler, OC 1310 Flt, said: "He is an inspiration in the world of Chinook flying having been there and done it for so many years and is always ready to help other aircrew by sharing his vast knowledge and experience. Passing 9,000 hours operational flying is a formidable achievement."

● See p13

MILESTONE: MACr Ruffe



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“Once we got past the plethora of whistles and pipes it was easy to adapt to ship’s life”

Flt Lts Chris Smith and Hayden Rose, deployed aboard HMS Prince of Wales
See p9



“I’m so excited to be getting back on stage in London,”

Sutton Foster on her lead role in the musical *Anything Goes*
See R’n’R p5



“I like to think I can still give the whippersnappers a run for their money, though not at this level!”

New Team GB Luge boss Flt Lt Gavin Arnold
See p31



RAF News

RAF News

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Happy Birthday Ma'am



REDS TRIBUTE: HM The Queen at Windsor

THE RED ARROWS marked The Queen's Official Birthday with a rare flypast over Windsor Castle.

Trailing red, white and blue colours, the aerobatics aces provided the finale of a scaled-back Trooping the Colour ceremony.

Red One Sqn Ldr Tom Bould said: “It is always a huge honour to carry out a flypast to mark The

Queen's Official Birthday and even more so this year given the historic location.”

Traditionally, The Queen's Birthday Flypast occurs over Buckingham Palace and features a selection of RAF aircraft.

It's the first time since the Diamond Jubilee in 2012 the Red Arrows have performed over the Castle.

Have your say



● **RAF News** is back after a short break and we'd like to hear your views about the paper. Please take a few minutes to complete our survey and tell us what you think.

Go to this link: <http://bit.ly/RAFNewsSurvey>, or use the QR code below. It shouldn't take longer than 10 minutes to complete.



SCAN ME

This Week In History



1957

Nuclear tests

THE THIRD and final nuclear weapon is dropped from a 49 Sqn Valiant, completing Britain's first series of megaton weapons trials.

1990

Reds head east

THE RED Arrows depart for a six-day tour of Russia and Hungary – the team's first visit to countries of the former Warsaw Pact following the collapse of the Soviet Union.



1994

Queen's Flight to disband

DEFENCE SECRETARY Malcolm Rifkind announces plans to merge The Queen's Flight with 32 (The Royal Sqn) at Northolt.

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

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

Search: Ford Military Sales

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In Brief



CARING: Flt Lt Sharman with Lily

Support for new parents

A HIGH Wycombe-based Flt Lt has set up a support network to help RAF parents returning to work after maternity leave.

Logistics officer Flt Lt Jessica Sharman decided to start the group when she went back to work herself last July after having her first baby.

She said: "I was anxious about returning to work and leaving my daughter, Lily, at nursery, which was very emotional."

"I thought how nice it would be if I knew someone else who was in a similar situation, for mutual support. I wanted to put something together to make sure anyone else coming back from maternity leave could be put in touch with others experiencing the same thing."

The Support Group for RAF Parents Returning to Work now has volunteers at several RAF stations who run local branches. You can access the network through defencegateway.mod.uk or email Jess at: jessica.sharman101@mod.gov.uk for more details.



NEW CHIEF: 70 Sqn's Wg Cdr Bailey

Bailey Brizes to new challenge

TRANSPORT SPECIALIST Wg Cdr Calvin Bailey has taken over command of Brize Norton-based 70 Sqn, operating the Atlas A400.

Speaking after taking over from Wg Cdr Lee Roberts, he said: "It is a great honour to take command of a unit of such distinguished history and heritage, which is breaking new ground in the delivery of tactical air transport for our country."

F-35 airPoWer first



HMS Prince of Wales welcomes RAF Lightning

AN F-35B jet has landed onboard the Royal Navy's latest aircraft carrier, HMS Prince of Wales, for the first time.

The touchdown came during sea trials off the south coast of England and marks a significant step towards the 65,000-tonne vessel reaching full operational capability.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: "The first jet landing is a huge achievement for all involved."

"The vital partnership between HMS Prince of Wales and our F-35B aircraft signifies a momentous milestone in the capability of the fifth-generation carrier."

The F-35B is designed to fight alongside the RAF's Typhoons and is jointly operated with the Royal Navy.

Already operating from HMS Queen Elizabeth, Lightnings will deploy for the first

time overseas as part of the Carrier Strike Group 21 mission.

The 207 Sqn F-35B pilot who made the maiden landing said: "With all the training that we have previously undertaken with HMS Queen Elizabeth, we are now looking forward to using that experience and knowledge working with HMS Prince of Wales as she moves towards her full operational capability."

With a flight deck large enough to accommodate three football pitches, the ship can receive up to 36 F-35Bs and carries a crew of around 1,600 with jets onboard.

Commanding Officer of HMS Prince of Wales, Captain Darren Houston, said: "We look forward to rapidly growing our experience operating the F-35B through further trials and training later this year."

● F-35 on Big Lizzie, page 13



TWO'S COMPANY: Ship's crew witness proceedings

The ship left her home port of Portsmouth at the end of April to train with F-35Bs and helicopters.

Slovenia honours Spitfire hero killed in crash

A MEMORIAL to a Spitfire pilot killed hunting down German columns and trains in the final days of World War II has been unveiled at a remote crash site in the Balkans.

Sgt Edmund Ramsbotham was on a mission to support Yugoslav partisans when a munitions truck exploded during a low-altitude pass and his fighter came down on the edge of the Brkini Hills near the tiny Slovenian village of Suhorje.

The pilot was buried nearby by local people and his body was transferred to the military cemetery in Belgrade at the end of the war. But the memory of the tragedy on April 29, 1945 never faded in Suhorje and last year, on the 75th anniversary of his death, residents decided that a lasting tribute should be erected.

They turned to academic



TRIBUTE: Major General Robert Glavas at memorial with the British Embassy's Paul Jancar

sculptor Jurij Smole, who designed and made a monument at the exact location of the crash of local sandstone representing

the tail of a Spitfire.

Last year's anniversary went unmarked due to the global epidemic, but the structure has

now been unveiled by Slovenian Chief of the General Staff Major General Robert Glavas and British Defence Attaché Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Day.

Sgt Ramsbotham was born on May 17, 1923 in Backworth, Northumberland, and flew with 249 Squadron – considered one of the top-scoring fighter units of the RAF. Established in August 1918, it became famous in the Battle of Britain and then in battles over Malta, Sicily, Italy, Albania, the Balkans and, right at the end of the war, over Slovenia.

Sgt Ramsbotham was the last member of the squadron to die in the war.

The ceremony was marked by a special tribute to his memory by airmen of the 15th Regiment of the Slovenian Air Force, who performed a flypast with a group of Pilatus PC-9 aircraft.



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RAF News

60th anniversary



● Win!
Historic
Tiger Moth
flight



RAF NEWS has turned 60 – and to mark the event we have teamed up with the RAF Benevolent Fund and The Tiger Moth Experience to offer readers the chance to win a flight in the iconic bi-plane.

Since the first edition in 1961, the Forces' favourite newspaper has been dedicated to providing unrivalled coverage of news, features and sport across the Service and UK Defence.

Launching the first ever edition of RAF News, then Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Thomas Pike, promised a 'newspaper with a difference' designed to tell the Service about itself and celebrate the achievements of the men and women who serve.

He said: "There are already plenty of

publications dealing with our aircraft and equipment and this paper now gives the personal touch to emphasise that the Royal Air Force is today composed of men and women with high ability, lively personalities and broad interests.

"I warmly commend Royal Air Force News for your support and I am sure that you will find something in every issue to interest both yourselves and your families. I hope you enjoy it to the full."

The appearance may have changed but we hold true to our founding principles.

The ground-breaking first edition carried coverage of the first deployment of the Javelin in the Far East. This edition carries coverage of the first operational deployment of the RAF's latest F-35 stealth fighters on board the Royal

Navy carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth.

To mark this landmark in Forces publishing we are offering readers the chance to win a flight in a de Havilland Tiger Moth, introduced in 1931, operated by vintage aviation operators Tiger Moth Experience, and supported by The Fund.

The winner will receive a pre-flight briefing on the aircraft's capability and operation, a flight over the breathtaking Yorkshire countryside and the thrill of experiencing aerobatic manoeuvres. Back on the ground they will be presented with a spiffing gift pack and authentic Order to Report instruction certificate

The RAF Benevolent Fund supports serving and retired RAF personnel, their partners and families with practical, emotional and financial support to get them through the toughest times whenever



**Royal Air Force
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FOUNDER: ACM Pike

HISTORY MAN:
Aviation historian Mick Britton discovered his father's archive in his garden shed



News reader Mick nets treasure trove

SUBSCRIBER MICK Britton unearthed an historic haul of RAF News back copies – including the first ever edition – when he cleared out his late parents' garden shed.

The retired local government officer discovered more than 60 copies covering most of the 1960s that his father George, who served with the Royal Observer Corps, had kept as a memento of his time in the Forces.

Mick inherited his father's love of aviation and all things military and is a regular RAF News reader.

He said: "After my mother died I cleared out the shed and found the haul in a blanket box. George had a lifelong interest in the RAF, first as an air cadet during wartime and then as a member of the Royal Observer Corps post-war.

"Going through those old copies has been fascinating. This, among other stories of National Servicemen, gives a strong sense of the era in which the newspaper was launched.

"The hoard chronicles considerable

changes in the Service, both in its organisation and equipment as well as in the organ itself, and I'm looking forward to enjoying hours of interesting reading."

Among the treasure-trove was a piece in the sports section of the first edition on RAF Police Corporal and Service football star Ken Winhurst, who signed for First Division giants Wolves before going on to play for the Southampton Saints and Bristol City.

By the time the 100th edition was published in 1965, RAF News had an international readership of more than 35,000 during an era which saw the RAF deployed worldwide.

Mick, who regularly writes for aviation history publications, said: "Awareness of customer satisfaction led to the commissioning of a reader survey, the results of which revealed a more loyal and satisfied overseas readership who regarded the paper as a link with home and a means of keeping in touch with old comrades.

"Many respondents felt that



WELL-READ: Subscriber Mick compares the first ever RAF News edition with today's paper

room should be made for pin-ups, somewhat surprising given that the paper had never been averse to incorporating a touch of glamour, usually in the film column which was paradoxically the least popular section of the paper.

"The biggest demand of all from readers was for a bigger and better paper and for pages in colour. These were obviously taken on board as an improved version incorporating colour was launched in 1967."



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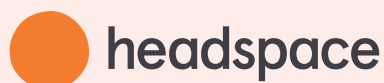
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Covid triggers surge in Forces crisis calls

Tracey Allen

THE COVID pandemic has seen a surge in demand for help from Forces personnel and veterans struggling with loneliness and isolation, according to military charity SSAFA.

The organisation's confidential helpline has seen a significant increase in calls, emails and online enquiries. Welfare teams report a 94 per cent rise in demand for SSAFA's mentoring service for people leaving the Armed Forces.

The group revealed a 34 per cent increase in attendance at online bereavement support groups, while engagement with families is up by 21 per cent from 2019 for the charity's forum for Forces families with additional needs and disabilities.

In 2020, SSAFA supported



HELPING HAND: SSAFA mentors

79,540 individuals with 54 per cent of its beneficiaries aged under 60, a charity spokesperson said.



D-DAY VETERAN Joe Cattini raises his walking stick like a machine gun as he and other veterans arrive at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard to mark the 77th anniversary of the Normandy landings.

WWII vets unable to travel to France under Covid restrictions also gathered at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire to remember fallen comrades.

PHOTO: PA

In Brief



TRIBUTE: Royal Air Force memorial

WWII lost honoured

TRIBUTES WERE paid to the 20,000 World War II airmen and women who have no known grave, at the Runnymede Air Forces Memorial.

Personnel who perished on operations in all RAF Commands from Britain and the Commonwealth, including refugees from Occupied Europe who flew against the Nazis, were remembered at the service on Coopers Hill overlooking the Thames.

This year around 30 personnel attended including the Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston, Andrew Stillman from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Air Vice-Marshal John Cliffe representing the RAF Association and the Mayor of Runnymede, Cllr Elaine Gill.



WREATH: Sir Mike Wigston

Duo hit the deck



MAKING A SPLASH: Flt Lt Rose and Flt Lt Smith on board HMS Prince of Wales. Above, Merlin and Chinook come in to land. PHOTOS: FINN HUTCHINS

TRAILBLAZING AIR Force officers have joined Britain's biggest warship HMS Prince of Wales as it launches sea trials off the UK coast.

Flt Lts Hayden Rose and Chris Smith are spending three months on board to help integrate RAF teams with the hundreds of sailors crewing the vessel.

And while waking up to a whistle and grappling with Senior Service slang, known as 'Jack speak', proved a challenge, the duo have found common ground with their seagoing comrades.

"There are obvious differences between the Royal Navy and RAF, but there is far more that unites us than divides us," said Flt Lt Smith.

"Close to the cuff humour, unwavering support for our colleagues and deep pride to serve.

"Once I got past the plethora of whistles and pipes and began to understand the routine it was easy to adapt and get used to ship's life," said Flt Lt Rose.

He says the food on board is "fantastic," a Saturday night at sea is "an experience I won't forget," and a trip around Torbay in one of the carrier's Pacific 24 RIB vessels gave a full insight into the size and

scale of the ship.

Both airmen agree that the working day in the RAF is much less structured as the Navy rigidly follows Daily Orders.

They say their light blue colleagues should consider time at sea as a deployment because when 4-4.30pm comes around, there's no going home.

"You're at work 24/7," said Flt Lt Smith. "Unable to just get in the car at the end of the day for a change of scenery, for down time you're limited by your shipmates, resources to hand and imagination."

He's found it challenging navigating the 65,000-tonne carrier leviathan and has been baffled by Naval acronyms like CUMDAFFER – which stands for Clear Up Mess Decks and Flats for Evening Rounds.

The airmen say their time at sea has proved more enjoyable than expected as the ship's company have embraced their Air Force comrades – with a bit of light ribbing on both sides.

Flt Lt Rose said: "It has been a pleasant surprise to be a part of the wardroom and also to meet the rest of the ship's company. Matelots aren't as weird as I thought they were going to be"

Although the carriers fly the White Ensign, both will always sail with an RAF contingent to support F-35 fast jets or Chinook helicopters.



News

Heavyweight champ goes the distance



Brize-based 99 Sqn celebrates 20 years of combat Ops and humanitarian missions with the Globemaster C-17 transporter



THE DUKE and Duchess of Cambridge chat to cadets at 282 (East Ham) Sqn preparing to take the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

The Duchess took over the role of Honorary Air Cdre of the ATC from Prince Philip in 2015 and arrived in East London as youngsters practised

their leadership drills.

282's Sqn Ldr Chris Booty said: "The cadets and staff needed some encouragement after such a long lay-off during the Covid crisis.

"They got straight back into it to prepare for the visit and the year ahead; what a great way to reopen."

Simon Mander

C-17 PILOTS and engineers will get world-leading interactive training following the award of a £274 million contract.

The news comes 20 years after the RAF's first Globemaster transporter arrived at Brize Norton.

And the deal with defence giant Boeing UK will see the aircraft to its expected out-of-service date of 2040.

Air Mobility Force Commander Air Cdre David Manning said: "The training service will support C-17 global operations, increasing fleet availability and enhancing the training delivered to our personnel."

Over the next 19 years Boeing will teach RAF crews at its International Training Centre in Farnborough on interactive flight simulators – from 2023 in a purpose-built facility.

Engineers will learn to diagnose faults and practise repairs without having to work on 'live' aircraft.

Defence Minister Jeremy Quin said: "This £274 million investment will allow air crews to operate this aircraft to its highest capability, maintain critical defence outputs, and extend our use of modern synthetic training techniques."



SIZE MATTERS: 99 Sqn C-17 lands at Brize Norton PHOTOS: CPL LEE MATTHEWS

Simulation training is based on real-life scenarios, enabling personnel to experience situations not easily replicated on live aircraft, and reduces emissions as fewer flying exercises are required.

Over the past two decades 99 Sqn has flown 150,000 miles and travelled the equivalent of 2,000 laps around the globe, carrying people and cargo from animals, submarines and helicopters to medicine, food and shelter.

OC 99 Sqn Wg Cdr Kevin Latchman said: "It's difficult to put into words the value the C-17 has provided over the last 20 years and the countless number of people it has provided support to in times of crisis, all over the world.

"Having first flown the C-17 as a junior Flight Lieutenant over a decade ago, it's been a true honour to return to

the fleet to command 99 Sqn.

"Flying the C-17 is just as rewarding and exhilarating today as it was when I first qualified as a co-pilot in 2007."

Since entering service in 2001 the C-17 has maintained airbridges between the UK and combat zones overseas, first to Afghanistan, then Iraq during Gulf War II and most recently to forces on Operation Shader and the battle against Daesh.

The C-17 has delivered humanitarian aid during natural disasters, including to the British Virgin Islands after Hurricane Irma in 2017, the aeromedical evacuation of critically-ill Britons during the Ebola crisis, and flying lifesaving Covid-19 vaccines to British Overseas Territories.

Former Brize station chief and now Boeing boss Malcolm Brecht took delivery of the first RAF C-17 ZZ171 from Long Beach, California, on May 17, 2001, and supported its introduction into service as the first OC 99 Sqn.

"There was just a year and a day between the decision to procure the C-17 and its delivery to the UK," he said.

"During that year, my RAF colleagues and I were based in the US and trained on every nut and bolt of the aircraft collecting the first of the RAF's C-17s and flying it across the Atlantic with only five flight hours on the clock."



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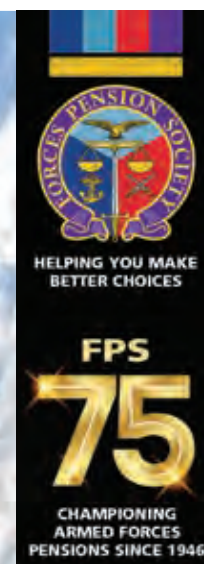
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SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity is here to help support those in the Armed Forces community when they turn to us for help. After everything they do for us, it is only right we are there for them in their hour of need.

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F-35 Big Lizzie lift-off

Simon Mander

NAVY CHIEFS ramped up the pressure on Britain's adversaries by witnessing a take-off by an F-35B jet on board HMS Queen Elizabeth.

The 1st Sea Lord Admiral Tony Radakin joined heads of service from France and the USA during the Anglo-French Exercise Gallic Strike.

'Big Lizzie' is the flagship for Carrier Strike Group 21,

which will work with more than 40 countries around the world during a seven-month mission.

The Group is the largest deployment of fifth-generation fighter jets in history and includes 617 (Dambusters) Sqn Lightnings alongside 820 NAS, 815 NAS and 845 NAS aircraft.

It includes American and Dutch ships, the US Marine Corps, Royal Navy frigates, destroyers and two RFA supply ships.



In Brief



AWARD: GSM with clasp

Crews net West Africa honour

CREWS RETURNING from Mali recently received the first five campaign medals to mark their achievement.

RAF Odiham Station Commander Gp Capt Nick Knight said: "This is a well-deserved recognition of all the hard work Joint Helicopter Command personnel have carried out over several years now, in arduous and challenging conditions, to support the French Operations in the Sahel region."

The award is the General Service Medal (2008) with clasp 'Western Africa' and will be issued to all personnel who have served for 30 days continuously or aggregated 45 days service in the Sahel region of Western and Northern Africa.



Who flares wins

Chinooks mark Mali milestone



LIGHT SHOW: 1310 Flt Chinook banks as it launches defensive flares during a sortie supporting French Forces. Left, crews deployed at Gao airfield

Simon Mander

CHINOOK CREWS backing up French counter terrorism operations in West Africa marked a campaign milestone with a dramatic display of flares.

The Odiham-based aircraft of 1310 Flight have clocked up 3,000 operational flying hours since arriving in Mali in July 2018.

And not a single sortie has been missed due to the global coronavirus pandemic.

RAF Detachment Commander Sqn Ldr Sam Bennett said: "This deployment has been particularly challenging due to Covid-19,

however, our mitigations have kept the detachment 100 per cent free of the virus, resulting in no lost sorties.

"In addition, the harsh conditions in which we operate have added a number of substantial technical issues that test the engineers on a daily basis. Despite this, the team has managed to provide over 100 flying hours per month and so achieve our mission to support our French allies."

So far, the CH47s have moved more than 1,500 tonnes of freight and 18,000 French soldiers to forward operating bases and desert

locations around Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger.

The aircraft are currently flown by 27 Sqn crews supported by Tri-Service personnel from Joint Helicopter Command.

Since arriving in mid-January, the latest detachment has transported more than 1,000 soldiers in temperatures exceeding 45°C in frequent dust storms.

Flying out of Gao Airfield Chinooks regularly under-sling armoured fighting vehicles and ferry French commandos to pre-assault forming-up points.

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Back in Jack

RED, WHITE AND FLEW: Typhoon sports new livery, below, display pilot Flt Lt James Sainty



PATRIOTIC RAF pilots will be flying the flag at air shows this summer with a Typhoon and Chinook bearing spectacular red, white and blue paint jobs.

The Union Flag covers the 29 Sqn jet's fuselage and wings and will soar above air show goers for the next two summers.

The 2021 display pilot Flt Lt James Sainty said: "I am extremely proud to be literally flying the flag in this aircraft."

OC 29 Sqn Wg Cdr Jim Calvert added: "We are proud to be displaying a Typhoon in a stunning livery this year at venues across the UK and Europe."

Not to be outdone, 18(B) Sqn have given one of their Chinooks a makeover with the UK's colours to mark the 40th anniversary of the iconic combat helicopter and will be showcasing its abilities during the air show season. Sqn chief Wg Cdr Matt Roberts said: "We are rightly proud of our history and excited about our future and remain focused on supporting the troops."



Air show aces Red-dy to go



REDS OC: Wg Cdr David Montenegro

STUNNING VIDEO footage of the Red Arrows' latest aerobatic formations have been released as the team gets the go-ahead to display for the first time in two years.

Pictures taken from the back seat of Red 10 show nine jets in Feathered Arrow (Fred) Formation during a loop in glorious Greek sunshine ahead of the forthcoming air show season.

The award of Public Display Authority marks the start of the unit's 57th season at events across the UK for the first time since July 2019, after the pandemic forced organisers to cancel dates last year.

The 2021 season will also see the Red Arrows led by a new Team Leader, Sqn Ldr Tom Bould.

The former Typhoon pilot, who

flies as Red 1, said: "I am hugely proud of what the whole team has achieved in being awarded Public Display Authority and being ready to perform for people in the UK, and beyond, across the new season."

The Arrows deployed to Greece to carry out essential pre-season training in a five-week visit known as Exercise Springhawk, which finished at the end of May.



RED 1: Sqn Ldr Bould

The deployment provided the chance to fly up to three times a day in settled weather, with the aim of improving every sortie and testing each manoeuvre ready to perform for millions of fans.

The superb aerial images were captured by team photographer Cpl Adam Fletcher, flying with Sqn Ldr Adam Collins.

In Brief



PIONEERS: Air show founders Tim Prince (left) and Paul Bowen

RIAT founders celebrate 50th

THE FOUNDERS of the Royal International Air Tattoo marked the blockbuster event's 50th anniversary at a Battle of Britain airfield.

Celebrations took place after organisers announced that the show will be streamed online for the second year running due to uncertainty over the lifting of Covid regulations.

Air show founders Tim Prince and Paul Bowen were reunited at North Weald in Essex to mark the date, alongside current Tattoo chief Paul Atherton.

"It's hugely disappointing that the pandemic has meant we've been unable to stage an Air Tattoo this year," said Mr Atherton.

"I am reminded of all the wonderful people who stepped into the unknown back in 1971 and staged an event that was to become world famous."

Keeping the peace on Nato's Eastern front

TYPHOON FIGHTERS scrambled in a practice intercept of two USAF long-range bombers in Romanian airspace.

It's the second time the Lossiemouth-based IX (Bomber) Sqn jets joined B-52H Stratofortress aircraft during their current four-month Nato enhanced Air Policing mission.

Commanding Officer Wg Cdr Simon Batt said: "These training sorties provide us with a valuable test of our preparedness and are a visible demonstration of our ability to integrate effectively with our Nato allies."

The RAF's 121 Expeditionary Air Wing is deployed to Mihail Kogălniceanu Air Base, near Constanța, until September to back up the Romanian Air Force.

The four-strong Typhoon unit complements their hosts' own Quick Reaction Alert force of MiG -21 Lancer and American built F-16 aircraft.

The mission, codenamed Operation Biloxi, marks 60 years of Nato Air Policing with different Alliance air forces rotating to protect other members' airspace.

The UK contribution is also part of Nato Assurance Measures introduced in 2014 – following the annexation of Crimea by Russia – designed to deter and defend against aggression on its eastern flank.

As part of the deployment the Typhoons have also carried out Close Air Support training with the US Air Force and the Italian Army Joint Terminal Attack Controllers guiding RAF pilots to their targets from forward positions.

USAF Technical Sergeant Sean Palmer, who led the exercise, said: "While simulators can be fantastic training, no one can replicate a pilot flying better than an actual pilot."

It's the third time the RAF has deployed to protect the Black Sea region and follows a similar tour in 2018.

The jets are supported by 180 personnel making up 121 EAW, drawn from airbases across the UK.

The RAF received Nato accreditation to conduct patrols at the end of April after taking over from the Spanish Air Force.

UK Ambassador to Romania Andrew Noble said: "The RAF's continuing involvement in air policing missions in the Black Sea region demonstrates the UK's steadfast commitment to Nato and the assurance, enduring defence and freedoms of our Allies and our Romanian hosts in particular."

The RAF plans to return to Romania in 2022.



SORTIE: RAF Typhoons 'intercept' US Stratofortress
PHOTO: SAC Ben Mayfield



BIG BEAST: US Army's Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle makes the earth shake at Romanian air base

Gunners call in the cavalry

GUNNERS got a demonstration of the US Army's Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle on a joint training day with personnel from the 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Armoured Brigade Combat Team.

RAF Regiment personnel are currently sharing the Romanian Mihail Kogălniceanu Air Base with the cavalrymen while providing Force Protection to 121 Expeditionary Air Wing on the Nato enhanced Air Policing mission.

US Army Captain and Company

Commander Patrick Peake said: "It is so important for Nato allies to be able to work and train together. We have shared our experiences and been able to showcase the fantastic Bradley Fighting Vehicle's capabilities."

"The ultimate goal is to ensure interoperability with all our Nato allies so that we can operate effectively in future operations."

Nearly 30 RAF regular and reservist gunners make up part of 121 EAW, responsible for securing, guarding and defending deployed personnel and four Typhoons.



FINAL KIT ADJUSTMENTS: Gunner lends a hand to US 5th Cavalryman

PHOTOS: SAC Hazel Reader



TEAM WORK: RAF pilots, Nato JTACs and other Tactical Air Control Party members
PHOTO: SAC Ben Mayfield

JTACs provide vital support

ELSEWHERE IN Eastern Europe an RAF-led Tactical Air Control Party deployed with the British Army Battlegroup integrated into the 1st Estonian Brigade as part of the Nato enhanced Forward Presence mission.

The team of Joint Terminal Attack Controllers and signallers made up a Fire Support Team directing and controlling air support for soldiers based at Tapa Camp, Estonia.

Flt Lt John Ennals from the RAF Regiment said: "We have been exercising our role of co-ordinating and delivering air support in close proximity of friendly forces."

"We have exercised so far with Italian and German Typhoons and Italian F-35s, all of which are conducting the Nato

Baltic Air Policing mission. We have also been supported by the Estonian Air Force -equipped Robinson R44 helicopter training squadron that can act as an Apache attack helicopter."

The JTACS also joined the USAF Ex Agile Liberty, working with American F-15s.

The mission, codenamed Op Cabrit, is part of the long-standing British deployment to Estonia where the UK is the lead nation and principal contributor to a Nato multinational battlegroup.

The mission was first announced at the Nato summit in Warsaw in 2014 and is designed to provide robust, multinational, combat-ready forces to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland on a persistent, rotational basis.



ALLIES: US and Italian JTACS call in air support
PHOTO: SAC Ben Mayfield

Announcements

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Puzzles
- P8

R'n'R

Win!



**Win: Epic double
bill on DVD ● p3**

**Mum's the word –
Samantha Womack ● p8**

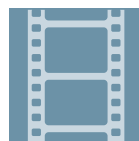
COVID-19

Having friends round
to watch the game?
Open a window.

Fresh air blows the virus particles away.

Let's take this next step safely.





Film

Emperor (15)

Digital & DVD (Kaleidoscope Ents)

Win!

FREEDOM FIGHTER

RIDING OUT:
Okeniyi and
Cromwell

HOLLYWOOD PRODUCER Mark Amin has many major films under his belt, including *JT LeRoy* starring Kristen Stewart, *Miles Ahead* starring Don Cheadle and *Good Kill* starring Ethan Hawke. Now he has written and directed his first feature film, *Emperor*, inspired by the legend of 19th century slave Shields 'Emperor' Green.

While little is known about his early life, Green escaped from a plantation and joined famous abolitionist John Brown to raid an armoury while protesting slavery. This action, in part, helped pre-empt the American Civil War. Both men were hanged for their participation. A monument stands today in their memory in Oberlin, Ohio.

Discussing the origin of his film, Amin explained: "I'm a history buff, not a historian, but I'm enthusiastic about the subject. I've watched a lot of films and read a lot of books

about slavery and I noticed that they always focus on the misery. Why aren't there more stories about resistance and fighting back?

"Then I discovered the story of Shields Green. Not only did he escape, but he crossed paths with some very important figures from history. His story is deeply inspiring, and I gained a huge amount of admiration for him."

Rising star Dayo Okeniyi, best known from *The Hunger Games* and TV series *Shades of Blue*, opposite Jennifer Lopez, plays the lead role. When it came to finding the right actor, Amin recalled: "I was very impressed by his passion and his understanding of the role. I wanted this character to have a heroic presence, but he's not a superhero, there's vulnerability. Dayo got that balance right."

Rounding out the cast, *Emperor* co-stars Ben Robson (*Animal Kingdom*, *Vikings*), James Cromwell (*The Young Pope*, *The Green Mile*), Kat Graham (*All Eyez on Me*,

The Vampire Diaries) and Bruce Dern (*The Hateful Eight*, *Nebraska*). The film is also produced by Reginald Hudlin, best known for Quentin Tarantino's *Django Unchained*.

With Amin possessing a wealth of film experience, though now in his early 70s, he confessed that directing the film was a challenge. "Doing this at my age, working 16-hour days with four or five hours of sleep each night was tough, but I had a great team around me."

"I learned that my biggest satisfaction doesn't come from the act of directing, it comes from the end result and hearing great reactions to the film," he said.

Creating an action-packed western with elements of real history isn't easy, but it's something *Emperor* has achieved.

Amin concluded: "I hope audiences see the film as a fast-paced ride, and maybe leave with a curiosity to learn more about

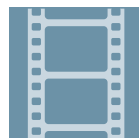
the subject. The world is in a fairly chaotic state right now. Making one movie won't make a difference, but if it helps people ask questions and start a conversation, I hope it has a positive effect."

Interview by Mike Fury

Win epic DVDs

WE HAVE an epic double bill prize to win – a copy of *Emperor* and of *The Warrior Queen of Jhansi* on DVD. For a chance to own them, tell us: **Who plays the lead role in Emperor?**

Email your answer, marked Epic DVDs competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE by July 2



Film Review

The Eight Hundred (15)

DVD, Blu-Ray & digital (CineAsia)

Defending China against odds



NUMBERS GAME: The 800 in the warehouse were really little more than 400

HOPE AND honour are tested in this stand-off of truly epic proportions.

Based on an historic moment early in the Second Sino-Japanese War, *The Eight Hundred* looks at the four days of attack in 1937 that were endured by the Chinese National Army at the Sihang Warehouse, as the Imperial Japanese Army continued its domination and captured Shanghai.

The defence of this building became a symbolic gesture, viewed by the world's press: some of whom were posted just over the river in the neutral zone, watching with the public like some twisted entertainment. The film is not short of symbols, from the reoccurrence of a hope-inspiring white horse, to the suicidal operation to plant a Chinese flag on the roof whilst under rain of fire.

Huge in scale, the sprawling sets

and locations combine with special effects create a grand spectacle that is impressively coherent and involving. The film moves fluidly from large-scale battles viewed from the sky to violent combat up close – there is a particularly striking image when the camera dunks into the sewers of the warehouse to see a band of Japanese soldiers infiltrating topless, their tattooed torsos marching underwater, before rising out to see the knives in their mouths.

The titular eight hundred refers to the dwindling Chinese National Army who were actually closer to half that number, exaggerated as a deterrent to the invading Japanese forces. This is courteously narrowed

down further in the film to a dozen or so officers and soldiers so that we have a point of focus through these four gruelling days.

With such a broad focus, it means that even these few characters are not afforded the time for much of a backstory, but then the message is clearly not about individuals, it isn't really even about the 800/400 – it is about loyalty to the cause.

There is a comparison to be made with *Dunkirk* when looking at the nobility of defensive military operation, especially with such grandeur – but *The Eight Hundred* has an insistent patriotic flare that is certainly an imported flavour.

3 out of 5 roundels

Review by Sam Cooney



WATCHING: Civilians and press



Exhibitions
The Making of Rodin
Tate Modern, London

Tate date

The master modeller

ART LOVERS have been enjoying visits to museums and galleries after lockdown restrictions were lifted – and a major new exhibition of August Rodin's work at Tate Modern in London promises to be a highlight in the summer cultural calendar.

The EY Exhibition: *The Making of Rodin* runs until October 31. It shows how Rodin (1804-1917) broke the rules of classical sculpture to create a dramatically different image of the human body, mirroring the ruptures, complexities and uncertainties of the modern age.

The exhibition features more than 200 works, many of which have never been shown outside the artist's native France, and includes iconic works such as *The Thinker* (1881) and *The Three Shades* (1886).

Although best known for his bronze and marble sculptures, Rodin personally only worked as a modeller, capturing movement, emotion, light and volume in pliable materials such as clay which were then cast in plaster. The Tate Modern exhibition is the first show to focus in-depth on Rodin's use of plaster, taking inspiration from the artist's landmark self-organised exhibition at the Pavillon de l'Alma in 1900.

A spokeswoman for Tate Modern said: "A stockpile of plaster body parts on loan from the Musée Rodin reveals how he continually experimented with fragmentation, repetition and joining existing parts in unconventional ways."

"Individually crafted heads, hands, arms, legs and feet allowed him to dismantle and reassemble his works time and again in countless combinations and poses."

"The exhibition explores how these experiments went on to influence some of the artist's best-known sculptures, including the newly restored plaster for *The Burghers of Calais* 1889 displayed



STUDENT OF THE HUMAN FORM: Rodin. © Musée Rodin (photo Jean de Calan). Left, Main droite de Pierre et Jacques de Wissant

as Rodin had originally intended." Archival images, many of which Rodin chose to display alongside his plaster works at the Pavillon de l'Alma, show how he used photography to explore combinations of forms and analyse his sculptures from multiple viewpoints.

A series of the artist's delicate watercolour drawings in which he further experimented are also on show.

Organised by Tate Modern and Musée Rodin, Paris, the exhibition is accompanied by a programme of online talks and events.

■ **Go to:** tate.org.uk for more information.

Jake's living for the weekend

JAKE BUGG has announced the release of his fifth album, *Saturday Night, Sunday Morning* – out on August 20 and available to pre-order now.

The 27-year-old singer-songwriter who shot to fame back in 2012 with the hit single *Lightning Bolt* when he was just 18, has also announced a tour for spring 2022.

It starts at Newcastle's City Hall on March 14 and takes in dates including Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester, Edinburgh, Belfast, Birmingham, Cardiff, Bristol and Oxford, finishing at the O2 Academy, Brixton on April 5.

Tickets for the tour are on sale now. Jake said working on the new album was 'the most fun I've ever had making a record'. Album tracks include previous singles *All I Need* and *Kiss Like The Sun* alongside a new single release this month.

Jake and his band played nine sold-out UK dates last spring before the first lockdown, which followed his November 2019 tour performing at venues including London's legendary Roundhouse and a hometown show at Nottingham's Rock City. ■ **Go to:** jakebugg.com for more details.



BUGG: New album and a tour in pipeline

The Big Event

The Glastonbury Experience 2021

Glast from the past



CROWDED HOUSE: Glastonbury 2019 and, inset right, from top, performers Michael Kiwanuka, George Ezra, Honey Dijon and Damon Albarn

Relive best of Worthy Farm through the decades

FOR A second year BBC Music brings the magic of Worthy Farm to viewers and listeners with what the Beeb has dubbed 'a musical extravaganza' – *The Glastonbury Experience 2021* – a celebration of Glastonbury Festival across BBC TV, iPlayer, radio and BBC Sounds, from Friday, June 25 to Sunday, June 27.

Across the weekend the BBC iPlayer channel will stream a mix of classic sets, documentaries and specially-curated programmes from Radio 2's Jo Whiley, Radio 1's Clara Amfo and 6 Music's Lauren Laverne. Each day of programming will focus on a different theme at Glastonbury: the 1990s (Friday), the 21st Century (Saturday) and Legends (Sunday).

More than 50 Glastonbury sets from the BBC archives will be available to watch on iPlayer and more than 30 sets to listen to on BBC Sounds, from June 21.

Individual Live At Worthy Farm performances will be available to stream on iPlayer from June 24.

Glastonbury presents Live At Worthy Farm premiered online last month and featured performances from Wolf Alice, Michael Kiwanuka, George Ezra, IDLES, HAIM, Coldplay, Damon Albarn, Jorja Smith, The Smile, Kano and Honey Dijon featuring Róisín Murphy.

Lorna Clarke, Controller, BBC Pop Music, said: "Summer wouldn't be complete without a celebration of Glastonbury on the BBC and this year will be no exception. We'll be making many of the spectacular performances that the BBC and Glastonbury Festival have worked together to capture over the years available

across TV, radio and digital platforms. I'm also delighted that Emily and Michael Eavis have allowed us to broadcast highlights from *Live At Worthy Farm*, for listeners and viewers to enjoy whenever they wish and wherever they are."

Whiley said: "Whilst we can't be together in the fields of Pilton just yet, I can't wait to go back in time and share a selection of my favourite Glastonbury memories and performances with you all."

"I have incredibly fond memories of the 90s at Glastonbury, so join me on June 25 to relive some of the very best moments from that unforgettable decade."

"I had a fantastic time at *Live At Worthy Farm* in May, so I'm also really looking forward to showing viewers exactly what went on behind the scenes."

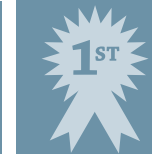
Lauren Laverne said: "Bringing the world's greatest festival into viewers' homes with the BBC Glastonbury team



WOLF ALICE: Live At Worthy Farm performance

is pretty much the best job in the world. A close second, however, is being given access to the archive to help curate a selection of performances by some of the many music icons to have graced the Glastonbury stages. I've got a line-up of legends for your living room on Sunday and I can't wait to share it with you. See you down the front!"

Clara Amfo added: "As a nation of music lovers, Glastonbury is truly a part of our DNA. Whether it's two or 20 performances, we all have a collection of them seared into our memory from many a previous weekend on this Somerset farm. Sharing some of my personal faves is a real treat and a testament to the hard work from the Eavis family and these brilliant artists."



Competition
Books
Dresden and the Heavy Bombers/Britain's Glorious Aircraft Industry

Win!

Dresden & UK aviation

DRESDEN AND the Heavy Bombers by Frank Musgrove (Pen & Sword Aviation, rrp £16.99) is a first-hand account of a young man's entry into World War II in 1941, culminating in his role in the bombing of Dresden in February 1945 by RAF Bomber Command.

In this memoir the author pays particular attention to fear, morale and, as he explains, the myth of leadership felt by those involved.

Several raids are described in detail and illustrate the variety of experiences, problems and dangers involved in such hazardous warfare. First published nearly 60 years after his experiences, Musgrove recollects the bombing of factories and cities and reflects on the grave moral issues brought on by this particular raid.

Britain's aircraft industry started in 1908, with the first formally registered organisation in the world to offer to design and build an aeroplane 'for commercial gain'. This was when siblings Oswald, Eustace and Horace Short decided that aeroplanes would overtake balloons as a business opportunity in the aeronautical world and formed the 'Short Brothers' partnership.

From this start, the UK aircraft industry expanded and grew rapidly, going on to achieve many 'firsts' in the aeronautical world throughout the rest of the 20th century, with remarkable technical successes. There were also setbacks along the way.

Britain's Glorious Aircraft Industry by J Paul Hodgson (Air World, rrp £30) tells the complete story of the 110 years since the start of aviation, including the companies formed and the aircraft they produced, highlighting the advances in aeronautical ambition and technology.



It is the story of the creation, survival and decline of all 123 of the aircraft design and construction companies formed between 1908 and 2020.

The book's conclusion speculates on the future of the aircraft industry in Britain.

We have copies of each title to win. For your chance to own one, tell us:

In which month and year during WWII did the bombing of Dresden take place?

Email your answer, marked Aviation books competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE to arrive by July 2. Please state on your entry which book you would prefer to win and include your postal address.



Theatre
Anything Goes
Barbican Theatre, London

New star

Foster takes centre stage

BROADWAY STAR Sutton Foster is to reprise her Tony Award-winning performance as Reno Sweeney in the lavish musical *Anything Goes* at London's Barbican Theatre from July 23 for a strictly limited season.

Foster replaces *Will & Grace* star Megan Mullally who had to withdraw due to a short-term injury.

Foster, who will be making her West End debut in the musical by Cole Porter and PG Wodehouse, will star alongside Tony, Olivier and BAFTA Award-winner Robert Lindsay as Moonface Martin, Evening Standard Theatre Award winner Felicity Kendal (*The Good Life*), also making her West End musical debut as Evangeline Harcourt, and leading West End musical actor Gary Wilmot, as Elisha Whitney.

Foster said: "I have been looking forward to performing on the West End for a long time and I am thrilled to be making my debut by revisiting the iconic role of Reno Sweeney."

"I am so excited to get back on stage and feel grateful to be a part of welcoming London audiences back to the theatres this summer."



FOSTER: Replaces crooked Megan Mullally

Broadway production of *Anything Goes* was a major hit and received huge critical acclaim. Now Marshall, in her West End directing debut, will reinvent the musical for London audiences.

Mullally said: "I am heartbroken to miss the opportunity to work on this amazing classic musical with Kathleen Marshall and the whole gang, but my body has informed me (mainly while at tap class) that I need to have a few rods replaced before I can get back onstage. Hopefully that will be as soon as possible."

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

Anything Goes features a collection of some of theatre's most memorable songs – including *I Get a Kick Out of You*, *Anything Goes*, and *You're the Top*.

■ **The show runs until October 17. Go to:** barbican.org.uk and see AnythingGoesMusical.co.uk for more details.



Your Announcements

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

Wedding anniversary

SQN Ldr Alan Giggs and his wife Julia celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on April 3. Alan enlisted as a 26th entry Admin Apprentice in 1955 and, following tours of duty both at home and overseas, including Cyprus, Christmas Island and Germany, he retired in 2004.



Alan and Julia Giggs

Deaths

CALLEN David William Chief Technician (Ret'd). Dave passed away peacefully at home in Carterton surrounded by his family on May 16, aged 63. Adored husband to Ann, much loved Dad, Grand pops, brother, uncle, cousin and friend to many. He will be sadly missed by all who knew and loved him. A private funeral has taken place for David's immediate family. Donations if desired in memory of David are welcomed to benefit Kates Home Nursing and can be made online via: www.davidcallen.muchloved.com. All enquiries please to Co-operative Funeralcare, 4 Brize Norton Road, Carterton. Tel: 01993 843359.

COMERFORD Edward (Eddie), MBE, Flight Sergeant (Retired). The family sadly announces that Eddie passed away in Doncaster on March 21 aged 74. Eddie was a much-loved

brother, uncle and friend to many. A beautiful person, who loved his time in the RAF and always embraced all that life offered. He will be missed and remembered always. Fly high Eddie.



FS Eddie Comerford receives the MBE from the Prince of Wales in November 2000

FULLER Brian James passed away April 9 peacefully at home aged 83 after a long illness. He joined the RAF aged 17 enlisting in the 79th entry of aircraft apprentices in 1955 at RAF Halton, serving 23 years and making the rank of Chief Technician. Will be sadly missed by his wife Heather and all his family.



Chf Tech Brian Fuller

MARKWELL Martyn Keith Sgt RAF Regiment (Ret'd) sadly passed away on April 23 aged 64 after losing his final battle with cancer. A beloved son, father, grandfather, brother and uncle. He will

be deeply missed by all his family and friends.



Sgt Martyn Markwell

MEDLAND Terry (ex WO Clk Accts/PersAdmin) on May 23 at Newton Abbot Community Hospital after a short illness aged 86. He served with pride from 1952 on many UK units, Gan and the British Embassy, Paris. He retired in 1977 whilst at Command Accounts, HQ STC and had lived in his beloved Paignton since then. He will be greatly missed by Thelma, his wife of 60 years, his sons Tim and Neil and his daughter Debbie, grandchildren Jonathan, Amber, Connor, Andrew, Devon, Holly, Shayne and Lelo and his brother Brian as well as all the members of his greater family.

ROSE Robert WO. The funeral took place on April 27 at Cromer Crematorium of ex Warrant Officer Robert (Bob) Rose, BEM, MSM, chef. Bob joined as a B/E cook in the 39th entry at Hereford in 1960 and on his retirement had completed 40 years service at home and abroad. His stations included West Raynham twice, Binbrook, Christmas Island, Marham, Rheindahlen. Waddington twice, Salalah, Coltishall, Cosford, Chessington, Headley Court, Aldergrove and finally Coltishall. On retirement he became the area catering manager at Kingswood schools on the North Norfolk coast.

A very well respected and well known Serviceman who always gave of his best. He died very suddenly at his home in North Walsham. Three standards led the hearse through a guard of honour made up of Spirit of Coltishall Members, of which he was one of the founders. He leaves his wife of 56 years, Jennifer, two sons, James and Jonathan, and grandsons Joshua, Jacob and their families, RIP.

WALLACE Jim Warrant Officer (Ret'd), Service number 1568309. Jim joined the RAF at the age of 17 in 1941 and served until his retirement in 1974.

During World War II he trained as a navigator and flew with 30, 40 and 70 Squadrons in the Middle East and Italy. After the war he was re-mustered and continued to serve with various units in the UK and in Germany, Kenya, Bahrain and Cyprus where he was adjutant of 103 Maintenance Unit. During his service he received two C-in-C Commendations. A keen footballer, he played for and coached a number of RAF teams.

Jim died on March 10 at the age of 97. He was a devoted husband to Eileen and a much-loved stepfather, grandfather and great-grandfather, who will be sadly missed by all family and friends.



WO Jim Wallace

WOLLEY John Howard Sqn Lr (Ret'd) sadly passed away on March 6 aged 89. He served on squadrons which included 9, 36, 10 and ASCUE. He was a devoted husband to the late Dot and wonderful father to Cheryl, grandfather to Gemma and Marco and great-grandfather to Viola. He was a good friend to many and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

John retired in 1993 after 43 years of service as a pilot. His essence was flying and he carried out his training in

1950-51 in Heany, Rhodesia and went on to fly 24 different planes which include the DH82, Meteor, Vampire, Harvard, Chipmunk, Hunter, Devon, Caribou, Phantom, Jaguar, Hercules and the VC10, just to mention a few. He was stationed on numerous stations including Tangmere, North Luffenham, Leconfield, Benson, Lyneham and Brize Norton. He was also posted to Germany in 1959-61 and Decimomannu (Sardinia) from 1976-1978 and went on a detachment to Malaysia in 1965. He was on active service in the Dacca evacuation during the India -Pakistan war, the Falklands War 1982 and the Gulf War 1990.



Sqn Ldr John Wolley

He ended his career on 10 Sqn Brize Norton and was overjoyed when he was given an extension, even after his due retirement date, to continue flying the VC10, which he considered the 'Queen of the Skies'. During his long career he was awarded an MBE in 1989, Queen's Commendations in 1972 and 1976 and a commendation from Support Command in 1968. The funeral service took place on March 23 at the cemetery chapel in Ramsgate.

Thanks to all those who attended and especially to Lindsay and Daniela Baigent, daughters of John's life-long friend the late Flt Lt Baigent. Donations either to Blind Veterans UK, the RAF Benevolent Fund or SSAFA.

In Memoriam

DIXON John Birkett WO. Mess Manager (Ret'd), taken April 13, 2002. Still missed, loved, never forgotten. Loving wife Margaret and all your loving family.

WATT Catherine Grace (née Leech). Former WAAF Corporal. Passed away June 12, 2002. "Nineteen years gone, The pain and sorrow lives on."

WATT Alfred Warrant Officer retired. Passed away May 25, 2009. Both remembered with love and sadly missed.

Seeking

IN August 1968, I was posted to RAF Akrotiri, accompanied by my wife and two young children. Four days after arrival, my wife was unexpectedly admitted to hospital (Akrotiri) where she remained until we were repatriated to the UK three months later.

On arrival in the UK my wife was immediately transferred to the RAF Hospital at Wroughton and I returned home to Kent, with my children, for a posting to RAF Biggin Hill. Weeks later, my wife was transferred to the Royal Marsden Hospital at Sutton, remaining there until shortly before I left the RAF on compassionate grounds in August, 1969. My wife passed away from leukaemia the following month.

For the three months I was in Cyprus my next-door neighbours in Limassol were Junior Technician David Jennings with his wife Margaret and children. Margaret cared for my two children, then aged three and four months, as though they were her own.

In the rush to prepare for an unexpected and hasty return to England, I was never able to express my sincere thanks to Margaret and David for the immense load taken off my shoulders or to actually say goodbye on, or prior to, the day of my departure.

After 45 years of marriage that was to follow, I have now lost my second wife and I constantly think of David and Margaret and the fact that I did not, properly, say goodbye. I constantly feel that it seems I took them for granted - I didn't.

I feel a deep debt of gratitude towards them and am hoping to regain contact with them. If you can help please email me, David Line: davshe2006@yahoo.co.uk



PROUD DAD: David Line pictured in the late 1960s with his son Adrian at Biggin Hill

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Hubert marks his centenary

AN RAF radio expert who went on to build the first colour television in Swansea has celebrated his 100th birthday.

Called up for the Air Force aged 20 in 1941, former radio mechanic Hubert Jones saw service in India and the Far East.

After two years at RAF Defford, near Worcester, he was sent to India. He said: "Our first stop was Bombay where I was absorbed into a Mobile Signals Unit of about 50 men. We set up under canvas at Sangli State, south of Poona, where we trained with American Radio Transmitting Units. The object of our small unit was to land in Malaya and pass information back to South East Asia Command HQ in Ceylon.

"Eventually I was sent back to Bombay Docks to supervise

the loading of a cargo boat. I sailed with her and went ashore at a deserted beach on the west coast of Malaya.

"The equipment we carried was short-lived due to batteries running out.

"After penetration into Malaya and travelling well up north, I lost touch with all my mates who had landed with me and was on my own. I covered miles of land and rivers using only the sun and a compass as I wasn't allowed to carry maps."

Hubert managed to get back to Malaya and from Kuala Lumpur drove a truck to Singapore.

He said: "Arriving at Singapore, it was turmoil. I encountered prisoners being released from Changi jail, some alive, others seemed half-dead.

"Joining up with the other RAF boys who had landed there I was absorbed into 2



RADIO SUPREMO: Hubert Jones with his cat Socks; inset, Hubert as a young airman in 1942

Base Signals Radar Unit."

With the Army, his unit worked on upgrading landing facilities at Tengah airfield where Hubert organised the erection of 100ft tall communication masts. He then went to Sumatra to help develop an airfield at Medan, where there was just a grass strip to take small aircraft.

He explained: "Sumatra was occupied by the Japanese and as Japanese Units were rounded up, the Indonesian population rose up against

the Dutch settlers.

"The native/Dutch problem grew and attempts to improve the airfield were abandoned. I returned to Singapore with my colleagues. Soon, my demob came up and I went back to the UK."

Hubert's son-in-law Roger Knight said: "Hubert is remarkably independent and keeps himself busy with his lifelong passion of carpentry and furniture making.

"After the war he opened a radio repair business and, in 1964, a shop. He built the first ever colour television in Swansea, which is now in Swansea University's museum. He installed more than 20,000 television aerials in Swansea."

Roger added that Hubert, who was 100 in April, received 98 birthday cards in total from family, the local junior school where his memoirs were read out to the pupils, from many RAF veterans from the Swansea Branch of the RAF Association and members of the RAF Changi Association.



REFLECT AND GROW: Tending to the garden at a Royal Star & Garter home

Flower power

ROYAL STAR & Garter is inviting people to grow sunflowers this summer to support the charity, which provides care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia.

Supporters are invited to make a £10 donation to the charity, which has care homes in Solihull, Surbiton and High Wycombe, to receive a family-fun activity pack.

This includes five sunflower seeds with step-by-step planting instructions, a colouring-in sheet, markings to measure your flowers as they grow and a table to chart their progress.

Participants will be encouraged to share photos of their soaring sunflowers on social media, tagging Royal Star & Garter, said a spokesman for the charity.

He added: "As Royal Star & Garter celebrated its 105th anniversary earlier this year, it is aiming to have at least 105 people take part in our Reflect & Grow campaign."

Visit: starandgarter.org/reflect-and-grow to get your Reflect & Grow activity pack and seeds.



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Prize Crossword

No. 294

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

Across

7. I object when Royal National Lifeboat Institution upset by helicopter (6)
8. Bomber used by Queen almost to the end (6)
10. Pour top-class beer over crowns and sceptres (7)
11. Cilla confused by colour (5)
12. Medic returns from eastern convention (4)
13. Vessel to cross snow very loudly (5)
17. In Haiti, a rainbow band appears (5)
18. In Los Angeles, Ziggy was heartless and lethargic (4)
22. Rope sounds like harmonic grouping (5)
23. Shingle broken by native tongue (7)
24. Maybe Mao hid in station (6)
25. Fruit for a Royal Opera barber (6)

Down

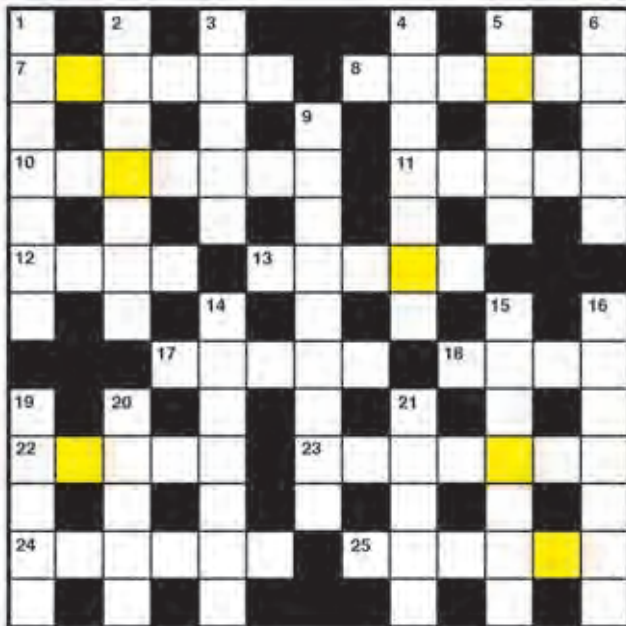
1. In the morning Heather reaches country (7)
2. A bridge destroyed by battalion (7)
3. Insect flies round the Italian horse (5)
4. Before elevator song about RAF manoeuvre (7)
5. Stuffy small story (5)
6. Practice without part of play has worth (5)
9. Handmaidens of the 495th Fighter Squadron? (9)
14. Hot-tempered helicopter? (7)
15. RAF aircraft is capital in Nova Scotia (7)
16. Type of tea first necked by fighter (7)
19. Southern policeman has nothing exclusive (5)
20. At first, Thatcher opposed party in closing argument (5)
21. A profit once more (5)

Name

Address

RAF word Crossword No. 294

The winners of Prize Crossword 294 and Prize Su Doku 304 will be published in the next edition. Send entries to the address printed in the adjacent Su Doku panel



■ The winner of Crossword No. 293 is Mrs C Ford of Wisbech

Solution to Crossword No. 293:

Across – 1. Fang 8. Hell-raiser 9. Poseidon 10. Cake 12. Aramis 14. Clause 15. Improv 17. Patrol 18. Psst 19. Cranwell 21. Slim Volume 22. Poet

Down – 2. Aerodromes 3. Ghee 4. Blades 5. Ironic 6. Aircraft 7. True 11. Kiss of Life 13. Maritime 16. Victor 17. Plague 18. Posh 20. Weep
Plane – Hercules

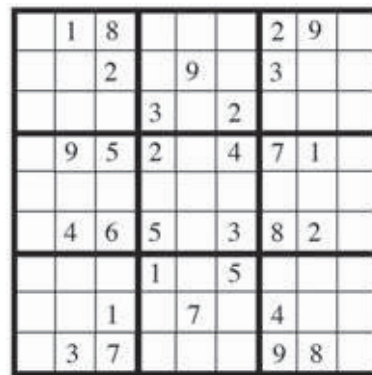


Prize Su Doku

No. 304

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

Solutions should be sent in a sealed envelope marked 'Su Doku' with the number in the top left-hand corner to RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP14 4UE, to arrive by July 2, 2021.



Name

Address

..... Su Doku No. 304

Solution to Su Doku No. 303



■ The winner of Su Doku No. 303 is Patrick Cull of Leuchars, Fife.



Theatre

Dreamgirls/The Addams Family

UK tours

The Dream lives on

Hit musical is returning

THE FIRST ever UK tour of the hit musical *Dreamgirls*, which was due to start in 2020, will now open at the Liverpool Empire Theatre in December before visiting cities across the country throughout 2022 and into 2023.

Featuring the classic songs *And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going*, *Listen* and *One Night Only*, the multi-award-winning production had its critically-acclaimed West End Premiere in December 2016 at London's Savoy Theatre, 35 years on from opening on Broadway.

The Dreams – Effie, Lorrell and Deena – are three talented young singers in the turbulent 1960s, a revolutionary time in American music history. The production follows the friends as they embark on a musical rollercoaster ride through a world of fame, fortune and the ruthless realities of show business, testing their friendships to the limit.

Nicole Raquel Dennis will play the role of Effie White in the UK tour of *Dreamgirls*. Her London stage credits include Alana Beck in



ROCKY ROAD:
The Dreams

the original West End cast of *Dear Evan Hansen*, the original West End cast of *Waitress* and *The Book Of Mormon*.

A finalist on ITV's *The Voice* in 2019, Nicole wowed viewers

and judges at her blind audition, performing the *Dreamgirls* mega-hit *And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going* alongside team mentor Jennifer Hudson. Hudson won the Best Supporting Actress Oscar for

her portrayal of Effie in the 2006 film of *Dreamgirls*, which also starred Beyoncé, Eddie Murphy and Jamie Foxx.

■ Go to: dreamgirlsthemusical.co.uk for more information.

Back in black

RESCHEDULED DATES for the UK and Ireland tour of musical comedy *The Addams Family* have been announced. The tour, starring Samantha Womack (probably best known as Ronnie Mitchell in *EastEnders*) as Morticia Adams and Cameron Blakely as Gomez Addams, will now open at Woking's New Victoria Theatre on August 17.

Wednesday Addams (Kingsley Morton), the ultimate princess of darkness, has grown up and has a shocking secret that only Gomez knows; she's fallen in love with a sweet, smart young man from a respectable family.

Now, Gomez must do something he's never done before – keep a secret from his beloved wife, Morticia. Everything will change for the whole family on the fateful night they host a dinner for Wednesday's 'normal' boyfriend and his parents. All the usual clan are present, including Uncle Fester, Lurch and Pugsley.

The tour goes to venues including Milton Keynes, Glasgow, Cardiff, Birmingham, Oxford and Newcastle and finishes at Bromley's Churchill Theatre on March 5, 2022.

■ Go to: theaddamsfamily.co.uk for further details.



SPOOKY: Gomez & Morticia

ROCKETMEN: THE BOMBER COMMAND HEROES OF PEENEMÜNDE



DV202: Bill Quance in his flying suit
© Quance Family Collection



LANCASTER DV202 AND CREW: (l-r) Prendergast, Weston, Quance, McDermott, Shaw, Harding and Pynisky at RAF Dunholme Lodge © Towlson Family Collection



STEVEN CASSELL: Wireless operator from ED647, whose body was washed up from the sea near Peenemünde



HEADSTONE: Air Gunner Adam Brand is the only DV202 crewman to have a recognised grave (in Poznań, Poland)



BACKGROUND PHOTOGRAPH: A wooden cross and poppy on the south shore of the Kolpinsee lake, Peenemünde, where Lancaster DV202 and its crew went down © Mike McLeod



OP HYDRA SURVIVOR: Halifax pilot George Dunn DFC in uniform (right); getting a ride in a Spitfire in recent times (above) and relaxing with the flight commander's dog, George, during the war. Top, with others at RAF Wyton celebrating VE Day outside the Officers' Mess



TWO VERY different books are linked by the daring raid on the Nazis' secret rocket research establishment at Peenemünde on August 17/18 1943 and by one of the Bomber Command veterans who survived it.

And they illustrate two very different ways of telling his story, approaches starkly summed up by Joe Stalin's terrible truism that to the human psyche: "A single death is a tragedy; a million deaths is a statistic."

That Halifax pilot George Dunn, his flight engineer Ferris Newton and the rest of his crew didn't suffer the same fate as 245 of their comrades killed that night on what was codenamed Operation Hydra, he, perhaps too modestly, puts down to... the weather.

Told that the target must be wiped out the first time or they would go until it was, on the orders of Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur 'Butch' Harris, George's No 4 Group was originally scheduled to fly in the last wave.

presented the possibility that smoke would shield the target, so they went in first.

"Our aiming point was the living quarters of the scientists and technicians, and these could be clearly seen by the bomb aimer as it was a brilliant moonlit night and the target had been well marked by the pathfinders," said George.

"As far as we were concerned it was a piece of cake. The flak was only light to start with. We went in, bombed and out straight away. By the time the later waves reached the target the German night fighters, realising the attack on Berlin by Mosquitos was a diversion, arrived.

"Our good fortune in going in first was sadly not so for the later waves."

About the aftermath, and the fate of the 40 crews that never came home, more later.

Bomber Boys; their gallantry and character.

Among the best anecdotes are recollections of:

● The completely informal way crews formed themselves on the basis of friendships made – though George admits choosing Ferris partly because his mother and wife ran a pub called The Old Ball (or Knackered Bollock) which they frequented in his Morris 8.

● Air Gunner Joe Scrivener landing George in hot water by smuggling a WAAF officer called Cecile on an air test flight on the first day after he was commissioned

● Ferris escaping a bomb hit on his block killing everyone except one chap on the toilet: "Blast knocked poor Jack out of bed. Lucky for him the bomb fell at the other end. MY end. Lucky for me I was out night flying."

As author Steve Darlow rightly points out, the terrible attrition rates among Bomber Command crews show George and his friends more than lived up to the 76 Sqn motto – they were Resolute in every sense, and we will not see their like again.



76 SQN: George Dunn and his Lancaster crewmates

Appropriately, George writes the foreword for Mike McLeod and Sean Feast's masterful investigation into the aircrew left behind whose fresh young faces stare ghostlike from the book's cover.

In many ways *The Lost Graves of Peenemünde* is the ideal companion to George's memoir, an intensively researched, well written and slim

volume that examines the wider context of the raid and its aftermath – including whether it was worth the human sacrifice – which is a contentious issue to this day.

Some have suggested it wasn't the RAF that did the damage but three subsequent American raids, the Nazis claimed it only delayed their rocket programme between four

to six weeks, either way with a total of 517 rockets landing on London killing 2,700 civilians, any respite was worthwhile.

It praises the post-war efforts of the Missing Research and Inquiry Service to find the bodies of those left behind and bury them in Commonwealth War Graves – until the cash dried up and the Soviets blocked access to the site.

It reveals the dedication of contemporary archaeologist Kai Schaake who has used photographic evidence, computer modelling and geomagnetic survey techniques to identify possible burial sites despite opposition from a local landowner 'who does not appreciate visitors who want to dig up his land and his country's past.'

It contrasts the refusal of the MoD to search for bodies using cadaver dogs like those deployed after the Lockerbie crash due to lack of resources with the attitude of the American POW/MIA Agency 'which appears to stop at nothing to recover its fallen men.'

Perhaps, most importantly, it preserves the memory of the missing – of men like air gunner Francis Garrett (49 operations) and wireless operator Derrick Fielden (50 trips) both lost on one of the last missions of their second tours, after which they could not have been obliged to fight again.

Otherwise, all they and their comrades have is a commemoration on the Runnymede Memorial in Surrey as having no known grave.

Win a copy of Resolute **Win!**



RAF NEWS has copies of *Resolute* to be won. To enter, tell us:

What was the codename of the Peenemünde Raid?

Email your answer, marked *Resolute* book competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by April 23.

is surely time that this very real injustice to these brave men and their families is addressed.

● *Resolute: To war with Bomber Command* by George Dunn DFC, Ld'H and Ferris Newton DFM

with Steve Darlow, published by Fighting High Ltd, priced £17.99.

● *The Lost Graves of Peenemünde* by Mike McLeod and Sean Feast, also published by Fighting High Ltd, priced £19.95.

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By Tracey Allen

Feature

Lord Dowding's my cup of tea

AT FIRST glance you might not expect actor Diane Morgan – probably best known as her comedy persona Philomena Cunk – to have much in common with Battle of Britain hero Lord Dowding.

But the star of hit TV comedy series *Mandy* (that she also wrote and directed), *Motherland* and *After Life* revealed that she feels an affinity with and is a great admirer of the distinguished war hero who was in charge of RAF Fighter Command from 1936 to 1940.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding, and Commander of No

Comedy actor Morgan reveals her surprising affinity with RAF great

11 Group Keith Park, were later dismissed from their commands following the infamous 1941 Air Council 'Meeting of Shame' and replaced by their chief critics – ACM Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory and Sholto Douglas.

Morgan said she feels a strong

sense of injustice that Dowding was treated so shabbily and, his achievements having been forgotten by so many, is keen to raise his profile, especially with those of her generation and younger who have probably never even heard of him.

She said: "I'd really like to make a documentary about him – there is so much to him. Until last year, when I read his book *Many Mansions*, I didn't know anything about him. I couldn't believe he had passed me by."

A vegetarian and huge animal lover, Morgan was also intrigued by fellow vegetarian Dowding's championing of animal rights and his interest in spiritualism. An anti-vivisectionist, he spoke in the House of Lords for the humane killing of animals for food. With his second wife, Muriel, he founded the organisation Beauty Without Cruelty in 1959.

A teetotaller, he was given the nickname 'Stuffey' Dowding, but, Morgan discovered, he had a dry sense of humour.

She said: "He was a quiet man. I've always been a quiet person – it's a misconception about actors and comedians that they're all extroverts."

She was introduced to Dowding's story after her local bookshop, during the first lockdown last spring, sent her a list of esoteric titles to peruse.

She said: "Something just drew me to *Many Mansions* [first published in 1943]. When I started reading it I thought it was really interesting and really honest, just like he was talking to you. It struck a chord with me so strongly."

She was fascinated to learn that Dowding, who had an empathy not often associated with senior military men of his era, became interested in the afterlife after the wives of airmen killed in World War II contacted him, asking 'where is my dead husband?'

Morgan said: "He went to a local priest who said 'Tell them they are with God' but that didn't really cut the mustard so Dowding started to do his own research into life after death and ended up convinced that there was something."

She chose Dowding as her subject for the popular BBC Radio 4 series *Great Lives*, during which

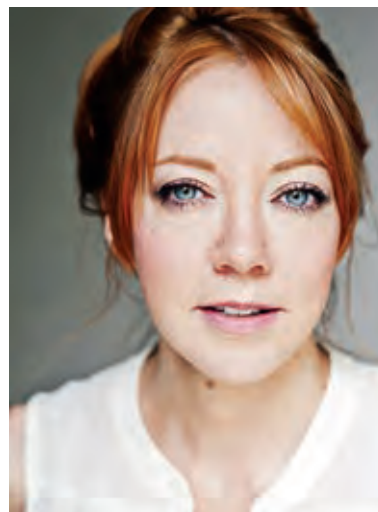


DRINKING IT UP: Morgan is a fan of Dowding's *Many Mansions* and has his photo on a mug

she talked about her own other-worldly experience.

She explained that, aged 12, while at her grandmother's home in Wales after her grandfather's death, she was brushing her hair in the bedroom one morning and looking in the mirror when she had a strong feeling that someone was very close to her face, staring intently at her.

She said: "It was daylight but the curtains were closed, then I saw a black shadow on the wall. I dropped the brush and ran downstairs."



ACTOR: Diane **PHOTO:** RUTH CRAFER

"I didn't say anything at the time because I didn't want to upset my mother and grandmother. I told my mother about it once we were back home in England and she said my grandmother told her she had seen the same thing."

"It was so odd and so intense it made me think perhaps there is some kind of afterlife. I'm almost disappointed that I've never had a similar experience since."

She added: "After *Great Lives* was broadcast I had so many messages from people saying thank you for talking about Dowding and that they wanted to find out more about him."

"There isn't much footage of him and when you do see him on film it's exciting, like seeing a ghost."

Despite the lockdowns, Morgan's been able to keep busy filming several TV shows. She was back on our screens recently reprising her role as wonderfully cynical single mother Liz in the third series of hilarious BBC sitcom *Motherland*. She has also filmed the comedy *Intelligence* with David Schwimmer and Nick Mohammed and a second series of the Australia-set comedy-drama *Frayed*, both for Sky. And she's returning as Kath in Ricky Gervais's acclaimed comedy-drama *After Life* on Netflix.

Morgan revealed that the spectacularly daft Philomena Cunk, who first shot to fame on *Charlie Brooker's Weekly Wipe*, could be returning for another series in which she quizzes experts on a range of subjects, asking them gormless questions while remaining fabulously straightfaced.

She revealed: "It's one of my favourite things, it's so much fun."

■ Series 1, 2 and 3 of *Motherland* are on available on BBC iPlayer.



FROCK AND AWE: A glamorous Morgan at a BAFTA ceremony in London in 2019



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By Tracey Allen

SSAFA **Feature**

Pilot's daughter and unborn baby killed in horror lorry collision

Wife broke neck in smash with dangerous driver

AN RAF pilot who suffered a devastating personal tragedy three years ago has spoken about the trauma that shattered his young family.

Flt Lt Haydn Wiggin was serving in the Falkland Islands when he was told the harrowing news that his wife Collette and young daughter Isla had been seriously injured in a road accident near Oxford.

Isla, three, and the couple's unborn son, died following the horror crash on the A34.

Haydn decided to speak about his terrible experience as the lorry driver jailed for causing death by dangerous driving after the accident was about to be released, having served half of a six-year sentence.

After his boss in the Falklands broke the news about the accident Haydn called the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford and was told Collette had broken her neck but was alive. He managed to speak to her.

He said: "At that stage our baby was alive and Isla was alive, but she had head and neck injuries. The RAF were incredible at getting me back home – but each hour was torture."

The next morning, while waiting to board a flight back to Brize Norton, he called Collette and she broke the news their unborn baby had died.

He said: "It was an 18-hour journey back from the Falklands. I spent two eight-hour flights crying and thinking of every next possible outcome, ranging from, 'Are Collette and Isla both going to die?' to 'Will I have to leave work to care for them?'"

From Brize, a Chinook flew Haydn to the hospital.

He said: "I had to see Isla. I had spoken to Collette so I knew she was alive and could speak. I needed to see my little girl."

"I sat with Isla for a bit then went to see Collette."

She had a brace on for her broken neck. She'd impacted the steering wheel... She'd had an operation by then, to repair her septum. She looked like she'd been 10 rounds with Mike Tyson.

"Isla's consultant took me and my mum into a room, to give us the writing on the wall. I think I expected him to say, 'Isla's going to be here for a couple of months,' but it was, 'She's very ill, and I've never seen anyone with this kind of brain injury survive'. That is when I knew that she was going to die."

"No one had told Collette just how serious Isla's injuries were. I had to tell her that Isla wasn't going



HELPED BY SSAFA: Haydn Wiggin and his wife, Collette, needed support after the death of little Isla, left, and their unborn child

to make it. That was hard."

Their daughter died on the Saturday. On the Wednesday Collette had to be induced to deliver the baby the couple had lost.

After the crash, Haydn took four months off work. Supported by the RAF and members of his squadron, he was able to be with Collette and help her recover.

He said: "The RAF was amazing. My current boss (flight commander) was in the Falklands with me and my previous flight commander (now my squadron boss), turned up at the hospital. I remember asking him, 'What do I do about work?' He told me to take as much time as I needed."

Haydn added: "When I left the Falklands, it meant there was a shortfall.

Someone has to leave their family and fill the gap. I've never thanked that guy. He's got two kids that he left to go and do that, which he wasn't expecting to. I'm extremely grateful to him."

Collette had to wear the neck brace for 12 weeks. Haydn said: "Once she got the brace off we went to the Caribbean, I bought a new three-piece suite, new TV, new car and a new motorbike – I just threw money at the problem."

"I didn't think I needed any additional help, but friends said it will eventually catch up with you"

He thought he was coping, but sadness caught up with him and he was recommended to contact SSAFA for help.

He said: "It was two years after the accident, I got pretty sad. Initially, straight after Isla died, I would talk to friends and run it through with them, and I felt like I was being really open so I didn't need additional help. But some

friends and my boss said, 'It will eventually catch up with you, and it will hit you like a train.'

"SSAFA came at just the right time. They arranged for me to see a licensed counsellor, paid for by the RAF Benevolent Fund."

"Collette was all for me getting help too, because she had counselling through the insurance and it really helped her. Because I wasn't in the car when the crash happened, I wasn't entitled to anything."

Haydn added: "I've got massive respect for what SSAFA does and I wouldn't hesitate to encourage other people to use them."

"I appreciate the people who support SSAFA and donate to them too so people like me can access help when we need it most."

Haydn and Collette now have another daughter, Taryn, who has just turned three.

Her proud dad said: "Taryn is brilliant. Life, though difficult at times, in general is really good. I still don't sleep very well, and I probably never will again. But I know that I have wonderful friends and family, a great support network and I have Collette."

■ To contact SSAFA go to: ssafa.org.uk or call: 0800 260 6767.

FlightPRO is Oceans apart



AI-ENHANCED:
Cloud based web apps allow data to be shared across Ops area reducing risk and boosting interoperability

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

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

Data Driven

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

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

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



- Air Traffic Control
- Airfield status
- Deconfliction
- Bird control
- Emergency Services
- Transient movements
- Maintenance reports
- Logistical Ops
- In-flight catering
- Ordnance control
- Customs/immigration
- Airspace coordination
- RAF Regt & security
- Contractor services

tool. The list is not exhaustive.

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

Fully integrated

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

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

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

Machine learning

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

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

The addition of Artificial Intelligence and Machine



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

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

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

Train as you fight

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

proposition.

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

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

Speed king Campbell honoured

Simon Mander

HAWK JETS soared over Coniston Water to mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of speed king Donald Campbell CBE as the family held a remembrance service.

Two IV(AC) Sqn aircraft from RAF Valley in Anglesey took part in the tribute near to where Campbell died in his jet-powered Bluebird boat while relatives laid flowers on a jetty then paid their respects at the cemetery where he is buried.

Daughter Gina said: "I am touched by the RAF's mark of respect and their act was a fitting tribute to my father, who would have been thrilled by the gesture."

"I cannot thank the RAF and the crews who flew enough for their thoughtful tribute, especially Flt Lt Eddie Craig who led the flypast."

"My father is buried in Coniston, but it is also his spiritual home and every year thousands of people visit the Ruskin Museum to learn more about his incredible journey through life, gaining speed records on both land and water."

Mr Campbell held eight world speed records in the 1950s and 1960s in Bluebird cars and boats. He died in 1967 after reaching 328mph before his boat somersaulted and broke in two.

Shortly after his death a 12(B)

Sqn Vulcan bomber paid an impromptu tribute, flying over the site and conducting a wing wave as a mark of respect.

Flt Lt Craig said: "It is a huge honour to continue the RAF tradition of paying tribute to Donald Campbell and to celebrate, not only his achievements, but also his spirit of courage and determination."

"Today we flew two Hawk T2 aircraft used to train the next generation of fighter pilots for the RAF and Royal Navy."



CENTENARY SALUTE: A pair of IV Sqn Hawks flew over Coniston in Cumbria where Campbell, *inset*, died seconds after smashing the world speed record. *Main*, daughter Gina threw a wreath into the water

UK Nimrod crews join the heroes of Bomber Command at memorial

Simon Mander

Lincoln

THE NAMES of aircrew who served on the Nimrod sub hunter and maritime patrol aircraft over 40 years are to be included at the International Bomber Command Centre near Lincoln.

Among them are personnel killed in three tragic accidents – two of them 11 years apart.

Seven aircrew died in September 1995 in Toronto when XV239 crashed while performing at the Canadian Air Tattoo.

In 2006, all 14 personnel on board XV230 perished when a fire broke out on board shortly after

air-to-air refuelling with a Tristar tanker while on a Nato mission near Kandahar airbase in Afghanistan.

The tragedy was the single biggest loss of Service lives since the Falklands War and led to the Haddon-Cave report on aircraft safety.

The Nimrod Ribbon of Remembrance also pays tribute to two pilots killed on XV 256 on November 17, 1980 when

their aircraft was brought down by multiple bird strikes shortly after taking off from their base at the former RAF Kinloss.

The aircraft was retired from service with the RAF in 2011.



In Brief



Recruiters smash diversity targets

AIR FORCE recruitment of women and applicants from ethnic backgrounds has hit record levels, smashing government targets for the Armed Forces.

The latest RAF figures show that one in five recruits are now women – five per cent higher than the Defence target of 15 per cent, while 10 per cent are from the BAME community.

The Service hopes to continue to double the current figures in the next 10 years, a spokesman said.



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TIM MORRIS

Motoring
Correspondent



COMIC BOOK monsters and heroes, we need this in black!

Every incarnation of Batman has had a hulking, jet-powered, Batmobile and none of them ever seemed to have a problem navigating the crime-ridden streets of Gotham.

In the UK, however, space in the city is a bit tighter and the Dark Knight would need something a little more nimble to get around – something like this: the latest Civic Type R GT, the least subtle Honda ever.

As a pocket-rocket Batmobile it's the perfect weapon of choice because, not only does it look outrageous, it's fast enough too. It even snaps through direction changes like a hyper-bat on speed. As a driver's car, it's actually brilliant.

Exterior

Nothing says 'get some' louder than an extreme hot hatch and the Type R GT is pretty gobby at that. It's such a fashion statement that you feel massively overdressed in a suit and massively underdressed without a baseball cap/tatts. Even in uniform you feel obliged to wear your beret the wrong way round!

The razor sharp angular lines, the deep air intakes, the 20-inch Berlina Black alloys and, of course, the massive rear wing make it instantly recognisable. It's not exactly subtle but, let's be honest, none of this kit is simply for show. The Type R develops 316bhp and will hit 169mph at the top end so it needs some serious downforce to keep it planted.

In 2017 it set the fastest lap time at the Nürburgring of any front-wheel-drive car, ever, so we'll forgive its eccentricity.

Interior

The Type R even looks fast on the inside. Crisp, modern digital instruments and liberal use of red suede on the seats all set this up as a racing machine.

The driving position is perfect for a hot hatch too. You sit on the floor with everything wrapped around you. The chrome gear lever sits nice and high by comparison and there's a great amount of adjustment on the body-hugging



RACY:
Red cabin



TYPE R:
Comic
book
styling

Type R goes like a bat out of hell



WINGED WONDER: Hot hatch needs a huge spoiler to stop it taking off under acceleration

On the road

Let's start with the obvious consideration, performance. The Type R's 320Ps 2.0-litre turbocharged engine can't outrun a Mercedes A35 AMG but it will certainly pin you firmly into your seat on take-off. It feels lightning fast, quicker than rivals such as the Renault Megane RS or the Ford Focus ST and the super slick manual gearbox makes its acceleration an addictive experience.

The engine loves to be revved and 7000rpm is the needle's natural habitat.

On winding roads it's razor sharp in almost every respect. It out-handles rivals such as the Volkswagen Golf GTI thanks to a stiffer set-up and flows from corner to corner with precision. Steering, gears, power delivery, braking, all bang on-point for a hot hatch.

Granted, if the road is wet when you're booting it, the front wheels struggle to put the power down without spinning but the limited-slip differential does an impressive job of keeping it under control. The same system allows you to aggressively tackle corners with confidence. Employ tactical braking on the in, then stomp on the power at the first sniff of an exit and you're gone. All done safe in the knowledge that the diff will drag you out of the apex with amazing stability. It may look like a gobby street fighter but it can back up every word.

racing seats. In my book these put the seats in many supercars to shame and are the best you'll find in a hot hatch.

The positioning of the pedals is bang on for fast driving, while the Alcantara suede-wrapped steering wheel adjusts well for rake and reach.

The Type R will almost certainly fit you perfectly and hold you firmly in place during any rapid direction changes.

The quality is a brilliant fit for this segment. It's not as solidly built

as a Mercedes A35 AMG so it still feels raw, like a hot hatch should.

On the other hand, it feels considerably plusher inside than the Renault Megane RS so it hits the street racer sweet spot.

That signature wing does stuff up rear visibility somewhat but it's otherwise very easy to place the Civic in tight spots and the GT comes with a rear camera/sensors as standard.

On this model in fact everything comes as standard, except the £525 pearlescent paint which pushes the on the road price to a little over £34k.

Verdict

Pros

- Exciting driving experience
- Razor-sharp handling
- Brilliant manual gearbox
- Goes like stink
- More comfortable than most rivals

Cons

- Outrageous looks that won't be for everyone
- Some road noise
- Fiddly infotainment system
- Not cheap

Overall

The Honda Civic Type R is a real driver's car, possibly the best hot hatch in the world. It delivers awesome performance and sharp handling without being uncomfortable or impractical. It's well priced and returns a reasonable 36.7mpg on a combined cycle. Granted, the insurance won't be funny (unless you're too old to own one) but that's a common hot hatch thin. If you like to shake things up you'll love the Type R's DC Universe Chiroptera styling but if you're not a winged vigilante you may wish to consider the Sport Line model which has the same performance but more subtle styling.

Sport

Email: sports@rafnews.co.uk



4 pages of **RAF Sport** start here

● The Philgood factor: Hall looks on bright side: p30



OWZAT: Cricket will be streamed



FIGHTING FOR VIEWS: Martial Arts associations

RAF sport goes **live**

Fifty associations sign up to innovative streaming service

SPORTS FANS can live stream all the action from their favourite RAF stars following a three-year deal with tech company Joymo.

The move means up to 10,000 athletes in the Service's 50 associations can access their chosen game through the firm's video platform.

The RAF Central Fund – the charity that provides grants to ensure personnel can access sport and physical activities – hopes to have the service onboard in the coming weeks.

Fund CEO Ross Perriam said: "We can't wait to get RAF Sport streaming with Joymo."

"Sport is a vital component of any armed force and a critical element of how to build operational capability."

"As such, we are always looking for ways to encourage more Servicemen and women to get involved and improve the



LIVE STREAM: Joymo sports platform

experience of those who already participate for RAF sport teams.

"We are delighted that fans, family, friends, coaches and the participants themselves will be able to watch our RAF teams compete anytime and anywhere on the Joymo platform."

Joymo CEO Mike Emery added: "Joymo is all about empowering athletes, coaches and fans at all levels of sport."

"Our tools and technology provide a seamless streaming capability that opens up sporting competitions and events to all in a cost-effective manner that can actually generate additional funds for individual RAF sporting associations."

The platform enables teams to broadcast their content directly to fans who can watch live or on demand.

Users can charge supporters per game, competition or event or offer a longer-term 'season ticket', with revenues going back directly to the content creators.

The system uses a dedicated app and a 4K HD automatic action-tracking camera to capture games.

RAF sports signed up to the scheme include Athletics, Basketball, Boxing, Cricket, Equitation, Flying Clubs, Football, Golf, Judo, Hockey, Tennis, Martial Arts, Motor Sports, Netball, Power Lifting, Rowing, Rugby League, Rugby Union, Triathlon, volleyball, Winter Sports and many more.



ACTION HEROES: RAF rugby stars and judo players (inset right)



Would you like to see your sport featured in RAF News? Send a short report (max 300 words) and a couple of photographs (attached jpegs) to: Sports@rafnews.co.uk

Doyle's a true Lanc bomber



IRON MAN: Paddy Doyle

FORMER RAF Reservist Paddy Doyle set three new fitness endurance records during the recent Lancaster 80km charity challenge.

His efforts mean he is closing in on his decades-old target of setting 700 sporting landmarks – including world bests.

The 57-year-old doorman trainer's first record was achieving a distance of 30km mountain biking cross country on a low technical route carrying a 22lb back pack along the Grand Union and Stratford-upon-Avon canals and Heart of England Way footpath in South Warwickshire, finishing in a time of 1 hr, 48 mins, 48 secs.

The endurance specialist's second feat was completing a distance of 14 km cross country carrying a 30lb back pack in a time of 1 hr, 45 mins, 39 secs on the Claverdon and Langley Village footpaths in Warwickshire.

Doyle rounded off his latest set of sporting landmarks with a 36 km cross country yomp carrying a 30lb back pack – again in Warwickshire – in 4 hrs, 12 mins, 12 secs.

This now brings his career documented fitness endurance challenges and world records to 696.

He told *RAF News*: "It was great to complete the 80km Lancaster challenge and see my entry fee go towards a good cause [the RAF Museum Charity]."

The former 4624, 504 and 605 Sqn Reservist got his first taste for fitness challenges when he set a world's best in 1987 by doing 4,100 push ups with a 50lb weight on his back. In 2015 he set a world five-mile road speed march record of 1 hr, 29 mins and 40 secs whilst carrying a 120lb back pack.

RICH ON COARSE FOR THE WORLD CHAMPS

Simon Mander

TOP ANGLER and ex-Hercules pilot Rich Tomala is hoping for a big catch after being selected to represent Wales at the World Coarse Angling Championships.

The Cranwell-based former Wing Commander will be pitching his bivvy beside an Italian river in September, provided the coronavirus pandemic doesn't scupper the contest for another year.

"If vaccine passports are in place by then, I expect most of the home nations will take part," he said.

"If not, given the amount of kit we have to carry, the two-day drive through France and Switzerland to the event, with quarantine, would probably take a month and most people wouldn't be able to take that amount of time off."

A final decision on whether the competition can take place is expected from organisers FIPSeD in mid-July.

And if it does, the now Flight Lieutenant Tomala, who joined the Reserves as a full-time flying instructor on the same day he left the regulars, will be targeting mainly bream and carp in the clear but weedy waters of the River Mincio, which flows out of Lake Garda near Verona.

"I was picked for the Welsh team because I'm predominantly a natural venue angler, although I haven't fished the Mincio before," he said.



BIG FISH: Former Wing Commander Rich Tomala – now a Flt Lt in the Reserves – is hoping for a good catch in Italy, pandemic allowing

Although he's been selected for his country before and took part in the world championships in the Czech Republic in 2012, the cost of competing has kept the Principality out of contention in recent times.

And the ace angler from Cwmbran, near Newport, will need all his bankside ability to help his fellow countrymen up the world

rankings with Wales currently 25th behind the top three nations Hungary, Italy and England.

He said: "Wales haven't attempted to take advantage of the final overs and was dismissed for 53. The RAF had made 166 all out, a good recovery from 83-8."

After a quick lunch break the RAF Men set about defending their total. LCpl Jon Iniff and Cpl Sam Bloor took the new Dukes ball and troubled the FF openers early on with some accurate swing and seam bowling.

Iniff took the first wicket, caught behind by Fisher in front of Diver at slip. What followed was a period of extremely attritional cricket as Shorthouse rotated his bowlers frequently in an attempt to break the partnership which was growing steadily.

Beales, Pearce and Shorthouse all bowled nicely but without success in the middle overs as the game meandered towards a FF victory. As the RAF struggled to create chances the FFs reached their 100 in the 26th over just 2 down.

The veteran aviator, who now instructs 57 Squadron rookies on Grob Prefects, says his best-ever catch by weight was a 183lb haul in Holland.

"In international competition at a natural venue a good catch would be around 100lb, in most UK venues it would be between 30 and 40lbs," he added.

Stumped by free-scoring Foresters

AFTER THE disappointment of having their first game of the season against Berkshire CCC prematurely cancelled due to inclement weather, the RAF Cricket Association Men's Senior XI finally began their 50 over season against Free Foresters CC at RAF Vine Lane.

On a gloriously sunny day in Uxbridge, newly-appointed RAFA Senior Men's Captain SAC(T) Tom Shorthouse won the toss and elected to bat first. The RAF's opening pair of Cpl Ross Diver and Cpl Adam Sutcliffe strode out to the crease hoping to put a competitive score on the board, but Diver was dismissed caught behind on just the second ball of the game.

Soon after, 0-1 became 10-2 as number 3 Flt Lt Adam Fisher also fell victim to the Foresters' opening bowler – caught in the slips, much to his dismay.

Sutcliffe was joined at the crease by skipper Shorthouse, who got off the mark in extraordinary fashion by dispatching the FF seamer's surprise bouncer for a huge 6 over square leg. At the other end,

Sutcliffe was unperturbed by the wickets falling around him and tucked into some wayward bowling to race to 28 from just 28 balls. Sutcliffe and Shorthouse put on 47 for the third wicket before the skipper mistimed a drive on the up to short cover, falling for 21 runs.

Flt Lt Avish Patel fell shortly after to a lethal full swinging delivery for a golden duck. This wicket brought SAC Sam Beales to the crease at number 6, on the back of a hundred for his civilian club the previous week.

When Sutcliffe was dismissed by the leg spinner for 35, another two wickets fell quickly as Cpl Andy McGeorge and Cpl Sam Bloor didn't overly trouble the scorers. When Flt Lt Tom Berzins was run out without facing a ball, the RAF were staring down the barrel of an embarrassing total at 83-8.

Sgt Keiran Pearce joined Beales at the crease and the pair batted with calmness to rebuild the innings over the next 18 overs, reaching their 50 partnership in the 38th over from 87 balls.

When Pearce eventually fell in

the 43rd over for a valuable 27, Beales continued batting and reached his first RAF Senior Men's half century. The innings came to an end in the 47th over as Beales selflessly attempted to take advantage of the final overs and was dismissed for 53. The RAF had made 166 all out, a good recovery from 83-8.

After a quick lunch break the RAF Men set about defending their total. LCpl Jon Iniff and Cpl Sam Bloor took the new Dukes ball and troubled the FF openers early on with some accurate swing and seam bowling.

Iniff took the first wicket, caught behind by Fisher in front of Diver at slip. What followed was a period of extremely attritional cricket as Shorthouse rotated his bowlers frequently in an attempt to break the partnership which was growing steadily.

Beales, Pearce and Shorthouse all bowled nicely but without success in the middle overs as the game meandered towards a FF victory. As the RAF struggled to create chances the FFs reached their 100 in the 26th over just 2 down.

Patel and Sutcliffe came on to bowl but also struggled to make an impact against the dead bat of the FF number 3. The partnership was eventually broken in the 39th over when Smith was caught at long on by Sutcliffe off the bowling of the returning Iniff. By this point the game was all but won by the FFs, who went on to take victory just 3 wickets down in the 43rd over.

Skipper Shorthouse said: "I was pleased with the lower middle order performances from Sam Beales and Keiran Pearce, but want more from the top order in the next game against Huntingdonshire."

"With the fixture programme packed full of tough games against strong opposition, we will have to bounce back strongly before the Inter-Services in July."

■ The RAF Cricket Association welcomes regular or reservist serving RAF men and women. Its home is RAF Halton. Twitter @RAFCricket and @RAFLadiesCC. Insta @royalairforcecricket and @rafwomenscricket. Email RAFCricket@gmail.com.

Sport

Email: sports@rafnews.co.uk

It's Portugalling



**Engine failure
blows it for
RAF Reserve...
but he takes
the positives**

KING OF THE HILL: But engine blow-out ended RAF Reserve Hall's charge for the top spot in Portugal
PHOTOS: JWRC/M-Sport



Staff Reporter

FIA JUNIOR World Rally Championship co-driver Phil Hall says he is still upbeat despite an engine failure which denied him a top result in Portugal in the second round of the series.

The RAF Reserves High Performing Athlete and Motorsport UK Team UK squad member resumed his Junior WRC title charge alongside fellow Briton Jon Armstrong, after taking his maiden world-level victory at the first round of the series in Croatia just a few weeks ago. Despite the new partnership, Hall guided Armstrong to a series of top times during the season opener and that performance continued on the gruelling gravel tracks of Portugal, winning five from eight stages on the opening day.

Sadly the pairing would suffer an engine failure, putting them out of the rally. However, thanks to earning

bonus points from the opening half of the event, Hall still sits third in the co-driver standings.

Fresh from his opening round exploits, the 32-year-old from Nottinghamshire would tackle his third Rally de Portugal and was able to bring his previous rally and Royal Air Force experiences to the car, a valuable asset when going head-to-head with seven other rapid Junior contenders during the weekend's formidable rough, sandy stages.

The pairing went fastest on four of the five morning's stages and would have secured a substantial category lead into the second day had it not been for a time-zapping puncture on the sixth stage.

Dropping over four minutes, they immediately replied with another fastest time to end the day in fourth. With a long way still to go, the crew would continue to push the envelope as the unpredictable nature of the event had the potential to see a climb up the leaderboard. After the morning loop, another fastest time on stage 11 brought the British duo into third overall.

However, on the 14th stage of the rally, disaster struck when the engine

in the Fiesta had a terminal technical failure. Hall was forced out of the rally from third place.

"It would be easy to focus on the result but that really isn't the news story here," said Hall.

"It was great to be able to pick up where we left off in Croatia and the pace was certainly there throughout each aspect of the weekend. Winning six from 13 stages [completed] is a huge achievement in the Junior WRC – it is such a closely-fought series. It really shows what we are capable of.

"It's great that I'm still third in the championship but even more positive is that we've shown that our pace is right up there at the front and that we can do it consistently.

"It was great to have the support of the British Embassy, Ambassador, and Defence Attaché to Portugal via social media throughout the rally and it was an honour to fly the flag for the UK and the Royal Air Force in another World Championship event.

"Everything bodes well for the remainder of the season and we will continue to focus on our strengths and build towards the next round, Rally Estonia [July 15-18]."

**RISING STAR:** Cpl Luke Farrar**PROVEN FORM:** Flt Lt Gav Arnold wins a silver at the GB Luge Champs in 2013

PHOTO: SAC DANIEL HERRICK

ROAR TALENT: Arnold helps secure victory for RAF at 2013 Inter-Services

PHOTO: SAC DANIEL HERRICK

Beijing Games a Voyager of discovery for new luge chief



VOYAGER PILOT Flt Lt Gavin Arnold has China in his sights as he spearheads the charge by Team GB's luge stars at the 2022 Winter Olympics.

The 38-year-old airman has been confirmed as team leader for the battling Brits, who will be taking on the world's best on the ice in Beijing next year.

National hopes rest with 20-year-old sled sensation Rupert Staudinger, who netted a podium place in the recent British Championships and managed a top-10 finish in the recent European event.

Rising RAF luge star and elite athlete Cpl Luke Farrar is expected to sit the event out on the reserve bench in China, but has been tipped by the new team boss as a contender for the 2026 Games.

Arnold is realistic about the team's medal prospects, but says the China showdown will give his athletes a chance to put British luge on the map alongside other winter sports teams.

He told *RAF News*: "With luge we are still quite a small nation and realistically I don't think we are in with a chance of a medal. We are aiming for top-20 places."

Beijing could be a breakthrough event for the underfunded luge athletes. While Team GB bosses

**TEAM BOSS:** Flt Lt Gavin Arnold

back higher-profile bobsleigh and skeleton competitors with budgets that run into millions, the luge outfit is entirely self-funded.

Arnold added: "Our athletes have to fund themselves, we receive nothing from Team GB. I don't even get travel expenses. Just getting to the games is an achievement."

In his bid to hone talent for the future, the 101 Sqn officer runs training camps for Forces sled-rookies in the winter sports hotspot Igls in Austria.

That has been put on hold throughout the Covid pandemic but Arnold says once the restrictions are lifted he will be looking to get the next generation of luge stars

out on the ice to nurture Air Force talent.

He added: "We are continuing to build up the Air Force team. Our aim is to do well at the Inter-Services when they resume and use that as a talent-spotting exercise."

"We try to get novice athletes out on the ice every year. We haven't been able to do that for the last two years but we generally try to take 15 athletes completely fresh and see how they get on at Igls."

"The Armed Forces is a great proving ground and the only way in for a lot of people. We develop talent and see where we can take it. It is how I started."

That introduction worked well for the luge supremo. From a standing start in 2011 he was competing for his country at the World Cup by 2013, before stepping into management as the Chief Executive of GB Luge.

He added: "In ice sports generally the military ethos fits really well. It's about physical courage and putting yourself on the line. When it comes to organisation at a high level I use a lot of the skills the RAF has taught me."

"As an athlete I am at the age where my best years are behind me but I like to think I can still give the whippersnappers a run for their money – but not at this level."

**ABOVE:** Team GB stars in action on the runs ahead of the Winter Olympics, Beijing 2022



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