

The Forces' favourite paper

Competition
Win WWII
Malta Siege
book

● See p21

Win!



Unforgettable TV
Walker's
back in
hit series

● See RnR p4-5



ROYAL
AIR FORCE

Friday **February 26** 2021
No. 1509 **70p**

RAF News



Helping youngest of the RAF Family

Charity's new bid to do best for Service children



● Pages
16-17

Win, win
Sporting
book titles



● See p30-31

Cricket
September
date for T20



● See p28



RAF CREWS abseil from the ramp of a Chinook during a training exercise at Brize Norton.

The drill, supervised by the Joint Air Delivery Test and Evaluation Unit, also included fast roping from the side of Wildcat and Merlin helicopters.

● See p19 for more

Photo: Cpl Lee Matthews

Covid fight gets a shot in the arm

Forces medics step up NHS support as 'Roadmap' gives UK route out of lockdown

Simon Mander

RAF PERSONNEL from across the UK continued to assist NHS frontline workers as one in three British adults received a first inoculation against Covid-19.

As Prime Minister Boris Johnson prepared to announce the much-awaited 'roadmap' out of the latest lockdown the jabs total stood at almost 18 million.

Among those delivering the doses was a team led by Flt Lt Stephanie Drew at the Telford International Centre vaccination site – built to take up to 2,000 patients per day.

More than 450 medics and general duties personnel are supporting the vaccine rollout across England, Wales and Scotland in addition to the 1,600 military medical professionals working daily shifts in hospitals.



● See
p5 &
p11



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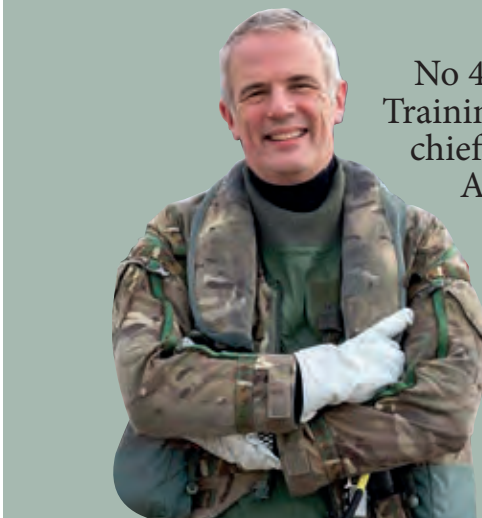
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“This was a massive result for us securing a top 20 in our first season”



Cpl John Stanbridge on his bobsleigh team's extreme efforts in 2021
See p30-31

“Students will feel equally at home in F-35 and Typhoon”



No 4 Flying Training School chief Gp Capt Andy Turk
See p13

“The relationship between Cassie and Sunny has connected with people”



Sanjeev Bhaskar on the new series of *Unforgotten*
RnR p4-5



RAF News

RAF News

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

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

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

News Editor: Simon Mander

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

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

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

Deployment blues hitting Forces kids, report claims

Tracey Allen

A MAJOR report into family life has been launched by the RAF Benevolent Fund.

The charity's *Growing Up in the RAF* probe is the first research to look exclusively at the wellbeing of children and young people in the UK with Air Force parents.

Children interviewed say their main anxieties are parents' deployment and frequent home moves, leaving friends behind and disruption to their education.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans, Johnny Mercer, endorsed the report.

He said: "I hope everyone involved in the lives of the children and young people with serving parents take note of this research."

"Together we can have a positive impact on the wellbeing of children and young people growing up with one or both parents serving in the RAF"

Some children described life with a parent in the RAF as 'sad, worrying, stressful and difficult' but many



recognised positives, such as job security, pride in their parents and perks like military discounts. Others called life in a Service family 'fun, exciting and cool.'



BACKING: Johnny Mercer

The report makes six recommendations including welfare services the RAFBF provides for young people be promoted more widely, including a counselling service for children

and young people, as well as family counselling. It calls for further support, through the Fund's online workshops and station grants programme, for RAF personnel to help them understand the feelings their children have.

It also recommends that deployment information provided by the RAF to RAF personnel and their partners should be reviewed to ensure the research's findings are fully reflected, including the support available.

AVM Chris Elliot, the Fund's Controller, said: "The subject of children and their mental wellbeing has been under a spotlight for much of the past 12 months in response to the disruption to their education, the effect of three national lockdowns and their general worries about coronavirus. It is timely that we are launching this research now."

The research is available to download at rafbf.org
● **See p16-17 for feature on family life in the Royal Air Force**

This Week In History



1945

Halifax raid

HALIFAX AIRCRAFT begin a trial bombing offensive against rail centres in Northern France ahead of the Allied invasion. More than 1,200 tons of bombs are dropped at Trappes, south west of Paris.

1984

Hunters withdraw

16 SQN finally withdraw from Laarbruch as 30 years of Hunter operations come to an end in Germany.



1991

Puma disaster mission

33 SQN Puma helicopters airlift 563 people and deliver 425 tons of humanitarian aid in the wake of a devastating cyclone and flooding in Mozambique.

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

SIERRA ALPHA VICTOR ECHO



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PERSONNEL SAVINGS ON SELECTED VEHICLES.



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TOMORROW**

Model shown is a New Puma ST-Line X 1.0 155PS Mild Hybrid Electric Vehicle (MHEV) Petrol 6 speed manual with optional LED Headlights and Driver Assistance Pack. Fuel economy mpg (l/100km) (Combined): 47.9 (5.9). CO2 emissions 135g/km.

Vehicle shown may not reflect latest UK specifications.

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

ford.co.uk

In Brief



DESERT STORM: An estimated 33,000 UK fighters affected

Nerve agent's Gulf War Syndrome link

SARIN NERVE agent and pesticides sprayed on Service personnel to prevent malaria are the most likely causes of Gulf War Syndrome, according to new research.

The condition, which the Royal British Legion says affects up to 33,000 UK veterans, was not caused by depleted uranium munitions, say scientists from the University of Portsmouth.

The study tested 154 American veterans with the illness and not a single trace of depleted uranium was found in any of the samples.

Researchers say the most likely remaining causes were exposure to sarin when troops destroyed Iraqi chemical weapons caches and the liberal use of pesticides to prevent malaria.

Vets make head count

VETERANS ARE to be included in the UK census for the first time, the Office for National Statistics says.

The once-in-a-decade survey will ask respondents about their military service to help provide better support to the veteran community.

Max Vax

Ascension Island is world's first fully vaccinated location after RAF mission



LONG HAUL: 2,000 doses of Covid vaccine are loaded onto Atlas A400M at Brize Norton ahead of 4,000-mile flight to Ascension Island; right, Islander receives jab at Georgetown Hospital.

Simon Mander

ASCENSION ISLAND will be the first place in the world to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 in one hit after an Air Force transporter delivered nearly 2,000 doses to the tiny Overseas Territory.

Emergency service workers and medics were first to receive the AstraZeneca jab at Georgetown Hospital, with the rest of the population of 900 people expected to be immunised in a matter of days.

After a 24-hour delay for aircraft maintenance, a RAF Brize Norton-based A400M completed the 12-hour sortie as part of Operation Broadshare – the military mission to assist overseas communities.

Officer Commanding 70 Sqn, Wg Cdr Lee Roberts, said: "We use the A400M due to its lift capacity and also because it is ideally

suited for going to Ascension Island. There's a lot of work going on down there, and, for us, it's quite an important hub for us moving around the world."

The sub-tropical volcanic island is near the equator and covers just 88 square kilometres but is strategically positioned around 4,000 miles from both Britain and the Falkland Islands.

On arrival, the 1,950 doses of the serum were sanitised before being transferred to Georgetown Hospital and refrigerated.

Governor Philip Rushbrook said: "The successful delivery of vaccines is excellent news and represents the culmination of a lot of hard work across several UK government departments, the RAF and within the Ascension Island government."

"These vaccines are the best opportunity we have to combat the effects of this virus

and we are very fortunate to be receiving this supply."

The first people to receive the vaccine were hospital employee Sylvia Isaac and her husband Mervyn.

Mrs Isaac said: "I feel very privileged to be able to receive this vaccine and I am thankful to the UK government for making it available to us."

"The vaccination itself was quick and painless. This vaccine will hopefully protect us against the worst effects of Covid-19, and also help to protect family, friends and the rest of the community."

Councillor Alan Nicholls, who has lived on Ascension for 15 years, said he was "extremely pleased, very privileged and of course, very thankful, to be the first place in the world to be able to reach 100 per cent vaccination against the coronavirus."

Typhoons rock Daesh as NATO steps up Iraqi security

TYPHOONS HAVE blasted Daesh targets in Iraq with Paveway IV precision-guided bombs for the second time this year.

The latest raid came just before Nato defence ministers pledged to beef up the fight against Islamist terrorism in the country.

Two jets struck after insurgents were identified occupying two dispersed encampments on the banks of the Tharthar River, west of the city of Baiji.

Further surveillance confirmed that the series of different targets were struck, and the mission had been a success.

The RAF's armed reconnaissance

missions support Iraqi security forces battling to prevent any resurgence of Daesh. Days later in Brussels, ministers agreed to expand the scope of the Nato mission, following Iraq's request.

Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said: "Not so long ago, Daesh controlled a territory as big as the United Kingdom and roughly eight million people."

"They have lost that control. But Daesh is still there."

"Daesh still operates in Iraq and we need to

make sure that they are not able to return. We have also seen some increase in attacks – and that just highlights the importance of strengthening the Iraqi forces."

He said while Nato was always prepared for big combat operations it preferred to train local forces to stabilise their own country and fight terrorists themselves.

Nato confirmed its Iraq mission will increase to 3,500 personnel with roles and capabilities set to be decided over the coming weeks and months.



We're here to help you **navigate the way.**

Thousands in the RAF community care for someone with dementia. Our Navigating Dementia service can help you find the advice and support you need.

Caring for a loved one with dementia can be bewildering and challenging. Sometimes, it's hard to know where or who to turn to for help. Often, it can feel like you're lost.

Now, the RAF Association can guide you through the fog. We've teamed up with Alzheimer's Society to create a service called Navigating Dementia.

This bespoke online hub connects you to other carers and families affected by dementia, and steers you towards further resources and support.

If you care for someone with dementia, or you know someone in the RAF community who does, visit rafa.org.uk/dementia now to find out more.

For 90 years, we've supported the RAF community through all kinds of adversity. Now, through Navigating Dementia, we can help you face one of your greatest ever challenges.

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**Navigating
Dementia**

Advice and support for carers

 **ROYAL
AIR FORCES
Association**
The charity that supports the RAF family

In Brief



GUNNER MISS YOU: Harry and Meghan; below, presenting new Queen's Colours at RAF Honington

Harry hands back Regt role

PRINCE HARRY has returned his honorary military appointment as RAF Honington's Air Commandant after he and Meghan told the Queen they will not return as 'working members' of the Royal Family.

The Air Force role, along with his other titles – Captain General Royal Marines, which he took over from Prince Phillip, and Honorary Commodore-in-Chief, Small Ships and Diving, Royal Naval Command – will be "redistributed among working members of the Royal Family," Buckingham Palace said.

But Prince Harry, an Armed Forces veteran of 10 years, will retain the promotions in all three Services he received in 2018, becoming an RAF Sqn Ldr, Royal Navy Lt Cdr and Army Major.



Victor falls at Marham



REPLACEMENT: Tornado GR4



FIRST CUT: Work gets underway dismantling V-Bomber



COLD WAR ICON: Section of fuselage loaded up by JARTS

Simon Mander

MARHAM'S VICTOR Gate Guardian has been scrapped after bids to find a home for the Cold War relic failed.

The V-bomber will be replaced with a Tornado guardian, celebrating the station's long association with the fast jet retired from service with the RAF in 2018.

Aircraft crash recovery specialists from Boscombe removed the airframe when the complexities and cost of removing and

maintaining the aircraft deterred potential buyers.

The Joint Aircraft Recovery and Transportation Squadron enlisted recovery mechanics from 7 Aviation Close Support Battalion REME with their specialist vehicles to pull the Victor from a gravel area onto the station car park for dismantling.

Following months of planning, hampered by the coronavirus pandemic and the bird-nesting season, the removal took two weeks with the team working into the night.

Gp Capt James Beck said: "It was sad to see the Victor go – the decision had to be made.

"Despite the fantastic efforts of a team of volunteers who tried to maintain her, the aircraft was in very poor condition.

"The Victor will not be forgotten though as there are plans to commemorate the V Force within the area where the Victor stood."

Victor aircraft can still be seen at the Royal Air Force Museum and the Imperial War Museum collection at Duxford.

Tribute to women war artists who captured crews in WWII

Tracey Allen

PIONEERING WOMEN artists whose work celebrated Allied crews and aircraft during World War II feature in a series of films online to mark Women's History Month in March at the RAF Museum.

Celebrating the Museum's London exhibition *In Air and Fire: War Artists, the Battle of Britain and the Blitz*, a playlist will showcase the work of various artists, including the significant contributions of women such as Dame Laura Knight, one of the twentieth century's leading artists and an Official WWII War Artist, whose portraits include those of Cpl J M Robins, one of the first women to be awarded the Military Medal for Bravery during the Battle of Britain in 1940, and *Take Off*, of a test crew on a Stirling MKIII.

The playlist includes art historian and novelist Dr Alicia Foster's film about Knight – see *In Air and Fire: War Artists, The Battle of Britain and the Blitz* – Dame Laura Knight



FINISHING TOUCHES: Dame Laura Knight adds some colour to a Short Stirling bomber at RAF Mildenhall, 1943

RA on YouTube. Also featured is a film about Elva Blacker – whose drawings made at Biggin Hill as a WAAF constitute the largest body of work documenting activities in an RAF station – made with the Museum by her niece Rebecca Jones.

The film playlist also highlights

the work of British-Chilean artist Olga Lehmann and artist Rachel Reckitt with a commentary from her niece, the Booker Prize-winning novelist Dame Penelope Lively. Reckitt rejected the comfort of her family estate in Somerset to help bombed out families in Whitechapel, where she worked during the Blitz,



TAKE OFF: Stirling III bomber crew (IWM)

evacuating children and rehoming people. She converted her country home into a war nursery for children looked after by a resident nurse, and Rachel's mother.

A RAF Museum spokesman said: "Reckitt has gone largely overlooked, despite being a fascinating artist and a modernist whose works must



PORTRAIT: Cpl Robins (IWM)

historically be counted as part of the Grosvenor School of Modern Art movement.

"She is a great modernist that time forgot."

● Search YouTube for: *In Air and Fire: War Artists, the Battle of Britain and the Blitz* – Rachel Reckitt's War Work.



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

Campaigners hail MoD medal ruling

Simon Mander

GAY RIGHTS campaigners have welcomed MoD moves to allow ex-military personnel dismissed because of their sexuality to apply to have their medals restored.

Former Servicemen and women can ask for awards forfeited due to disciplinary action and dismissal under the historic ban on homosexuality in the Forces, which was lifted in 2000.

Fighting With Pride joint chief executives Craig Jones and Caroline Paige said: "LGBT+ veterans are finally beginning their journey back to the military family."

“Many dismissed from the military still live in poverty and beyond the protection of the Armed Forces Covenant”

“We look forward to a better future where they are recognised for their service, their health needs are supported and they are recompensed for the wrongs of the past.

“We are also pleased to see the government's further commitment to investigate the long-term impact of being dismissed from our Armed Forces. Many still live in poverty and beyond the protections of the Armed Forces Covenant.”

All applications will be reviewed individually by the Defence Council and, if approved, the MoD Medal Office will arrange for a new award



DIVERSITY SALUTE: Reds fly over RAF Ensign and Rainbow flag during Pride event in 2018; inset left, Air Force personnel join march through London

to be given to the claimant.

Stonewall spokesman Robbie de Santos said: “This will go a long way in righting the wrongs of the past and will mean a lot to so many LGBT+ people who proudly served their country.”

The announcement comes as Defence celebrates LGBT History Month and embarks on initiatives looking at the experiences of transgender and intersex people in the workplace, and training people to be their allies.

Defence Minister Baroness

Goldie said: “It is deeply regrettable that because of their sexuality some members of the Armed Forces were in the past treated in a way that would not be acceptable today.

“As a result of disciplinary action and their dismissal from service, some personnel forfeited medals that they had earned, and others were denied the opportunity of continued service that could have resulted in the restoration of medals that were forfeited for different reasons.

“I am very pleased now to be in a position to address this wrong and

to invite any personnel affected or, in some circumstances, the families of those who are deceased, to apply to have their medals returned.”

Veterans Minister Johnny Mercer said: “LGBT personnel have and continue to make significant contributions to the Armed Forces.

“This announcement addresses a historic injustice and demonstrates that the military is a positive place to work for all who choose to serve.

“I encourage anyone who may have been affected to apply to have their medals returned.”

THE RAF'S first openly transgender woman to serve on the frontline is leading calls for reforms to the Armed Forces Covenant to heal the damage caused to personnel thrown out of the military because of their sexuality.

Caroline Paige served as a navigator on RAF helicopters in Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan after changing gender, earning a Commander-in-Chief's Commendation for her bravery.

She set up the Fighting With Pride organisation last year and is about to launch a two-year study with Northumbria University into the welfare of veterans prosecuted under the Forces' hardline ruling on homosexuality.

She said: “The legacy of the damage done to veterans can't be airbrushed. Those who were dismissed are growing older and reaching the point where health and wellbeing are very important.

“The government says that the nation respects those who have served their country but part of that community is still ignored. For the Covenant to mean anything it has to include all people who served and at the moment it doesn't.

“Serving in the military is a way of life – it's not just a job. For someone to say I was not part of that family after my service, where my skills and experience were never questioned, on the basis of how I identify, would have been unbearable for me.

“That kind of pressure and fear kept me hiding my true self for 19 years. For others it has meant the loss of their job, their homes, their friends and their families.”

Defence news update

Navy nets £11m haul

A TEAM of Royal Marines on board Royal Navy Warship HMS Montrose seized 2.6 tonnes of heroin and crystal methamphetamine after storming a traffickers' vessel in the Northern Arabian Sea.

The haul was intercepted following a 10-hour operation by UK Forces with the multinational Combined Maritime Task Force currently targeting smugglers in the Middle East and follows just days after another major bust by Navy teams.

Some of the combined haul, worth an estimated £11 million, would have been destined for British streets, a MoD spokesman said.

Armed Forces Minister James Heappey added: “The Royal Navy and Royal Marines have once again proven their professionalism and



DRUGS BUST: Major 2.6 tonne haul

operational capability in seizing illicit substances in transit

“The Armed Forces are committed to tackling organised crime around the world. The Royal Navy works with our allies in the Coalition Task Force to protect our people and our interests.

“As a result of these operations, Britain's streets are safer and a possible source of terrorist financing has been choked off.”

WWII pioneer Joan Potts dies, aged 102

Tracey Allen

FORMER RAF Filter Officer Winifred Joan Potts has died aged 102.

Known as Joan, she joined the newly-formed Women's Royal Air Force in June 1940. After basic training she was mustered as a Clerk Special Duties – a highly classified role and the trade name for all airmen and airwomen employed on operational duties within the secret Dowding System.

Joan was posted to the subsidiary Filter Centre at RAF Rudloe Manor in late July 1940 as the Battle of Britain was starting.

In early 1941 she was commissioned as an Assistant Section Officer and in April 1941 as a Filter Officer. She went on to serve at 13 Group, Newcastle, Fighter Command, HQ RAF Northern Ireland and RAF Bawdsey.



Promoted to Flight Officer in 1944 she was appointed Filter Officer, responsible for the accuracy of the production of the tactical air picture – the highest-level operational job a WAAF could do.

Joan stayed in the WAAF after the war, serving at RAF Hawkinge, Charter Hall, Acklington, 57 Maintenance Unit and the WAAF Recruiting Centre at Wilmslow before transferring to the reserves in June 1947.

She was recalled to service on a Short Service Commission of five years active service and four years reserve service in the Secretarial Branch. She served at RAF Duxford until July 1950 then on Combined Operations duties until being transferred to the reserves. She relinquished her reserve commission in March 1958.

Joan married Archie Potts, one of the Bawdsey radar scientists, in 1951. He served as Director of Scientific and Technical Intelligence at the Ministry of Defence from 1964-1974. She died on February 6 after a short illness. ● See p25

News

‘Transformer’ bid to fast track pilot training

A TRAINER that transforms itself into a jet fighter by switching its engines and wings is being developed for the RAF.

Suffolk-based firm Aeralis has been given £200,000 to develop a modular aircraft it says would be the first fully developed in Britain since the Hawk in 1974.

The two-seater aircraft will have at least three variants based around the same fuselage – a basic trainer, a fighter-style jet and a reconnaissance model.

“This is a disruptive and innovative approach to design, modelling and certification processes in military aerospace,” said Air Cdre Jez Holmes of the RAF’s Rapid Capabilities Office.

The aircraft will mainly be used for basic training to Top Gun-style combat exercises but will not replace the current Hawk fleet, a spokesman said.

It could feature longer wings for surveillance and operate as an unmanned fast-attack drone.

Aeralis has been given three years to develop the idea.

Air Marshal Richard Knighton said: “This private aircraft company is adopting an innovative approach that I have not seen before in the combat air sector.

“Its ingenious and innovative use of modularity offers the potential to break the capability cost curve that has dogged military fast jet programmes for many generations.”



GROUNDBREAKING:
How new trainer might look



TRIBUTES: RAF historian and linguist John Rennison

Farewell to history man

AVIATION HISTORIAN, linguist and RAF veteran John Rennison has died.

The author of *Wings over Gloucestershire*, *Wings Over Rutland* and *The Digby Diary*, which made a significant contribution to RAF Digby’s historical record, he wrote for a wide range of periodicals and publications in the UK and abroad.

John, his father and John’s son all served in the regular RAF. John was a linguist at RAF Gatow in Berlin in the mid-1970s and at Digby towards the end of his career, from 1993-1995.

Described as a ‘lovely chap’ by colleague Dave Harrigan, John was well respected for his trade knowledge as well as his friendly and caring character, said Flt Lt Chris Randall, Officer in Charge of the RAF Digby Museum.

He added: “As a Polish linguist, John took pride in his work in Polish Air Force activities during World War II and built up a reputation as a specialist on the subject.”

After regular service he served with the RAF Volunteer Reserve and was Officer Commanding 2292 (Market Rasen) Sqn Air Training Corps.

He had a wide-ranging interest in aviation; from giving presentations on aviation subjects to acting as a line judge at the 1986 World Aerobatic Championships.

RAF ‘Pop Pirate’ signs off

Reservist who found fame as Radio Caroline DJ hangs up his mic after 60 years on air



By Chris Sully

A FORMER RAF man who launched his career with 1960s pop pirates Radio Caroline has finally retired after a 60-year career.

Reservist Sqn Ldr Keith Skues was one of the first voices heard on Radio Caroline when it launched in 1964 and later on BBC Radio 1. He has been on-air ever since.

Prior to finding his sea legs, Keith worked for the British Forces Radio Network and got his broadcasting break when he was posted to Cologne in Germany.

He returned to the UK after his National Service in the Royal Air Force and joined Tony Blackburn on board Radio Caroline’s MV Mi Amigo vessel off the Essex coast.

He said: “We had more than 18 million listeners every week. It was just such fun.

After a couple of years Keith moved on to another North Sea pirate outfit, Radio London, where Kenny Everett was a shipmate.

It was during this period that,



for somewhat obscure reasons, Keith earned the on-air name of ‘Cardboard Shoes’.

Offshore stations were made illegal in summer 1967 and Keith jumped ship to the newly-launched Radio 1.

Years later, whilst working in commercial radio, a chance meeting with Alex Dickson, a radio contemporary who was also

a member of 7644 (PR) Squadron, led to Keith reconnecting with the RAF as a reservist media specialist.

His role took him to the Gulf in 1992, where he was acting as a PR officer on a base in Saudi Arabia when he was arrested by the Saudi Military Police for taking pictures of a Tornado.

He was awarded an MBE in 2004

and continued working with BBC local radio in the east of England until Christmas 2020, when he finally hung up his headphones for the very last time at the age of 81.

The late DJ John Peel once said “Skues would be the DJ I’d most like to employ if I had my own station.”

Asked if he’d change anything, Keith added: “I’d grow up, I think.”

In Brief

Brize giving

A £23,000 REFURBISHMENT project at RAF Brize Norton, supported by a £5,000 grant from the RAF Benevolent Fund, has revamped The Flat, the Oxfordshire station’s Airplay Senior Youth Club.

The revamp includes new kitchen facilities, corner patio and raised beds for gardening and improved outside seating areas.

The youth club plans to open once Covid-19 restrictions are loosened, the charity said.

Present arms:

Forces join Scottish

vaccination mission



Simon Mander

BRITISH MILITARY personnel have deployed across Scotland to battle Covid in the largest single operation north of the border since the start of the pandemic.

A further 353 Servicemen and women have been mobilised to support testing and vaccine delivery programmes, bringing the total combating the virus to 466.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: "The UK Armed Forces have demonstrated their professionalism and resilience throughout this pandemic.

"They are dedicated to delivering support to the fingertips of these islands and the increase of personnel in Scotland shows our commitment to assist the civil authorities wherever and whenever needed in the fight against Covid-19."

An additional 33 defence medical staff, from all three Services, will join their 57 colleagues already

working as part of the Vaccine Quick Reaction Force.

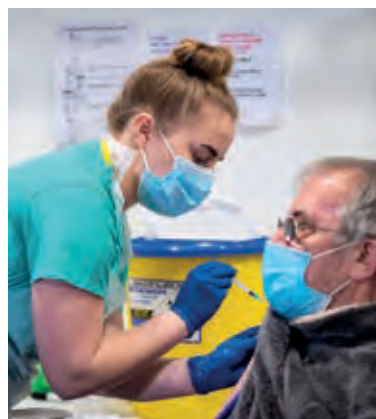
Split across three teams, they will assist NHS staff at vaccination centres in Dumfries and Galloway and Fife.

The news came as more than 13 million people had received their jabs across Britain with the government on track to meet its target of offering a first dose to the top four priority groups earlier this month.

As part of the Scottish government's programme of Asymptomatic Testing a total 320 personnel, from local British Army Regiments, will support the roll-out after that date.

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said: "As we continue to see during the pandemic, the strength of the Union and support offered by the UK government has never been more important."

Since March 2020, the military have provided Scotland with



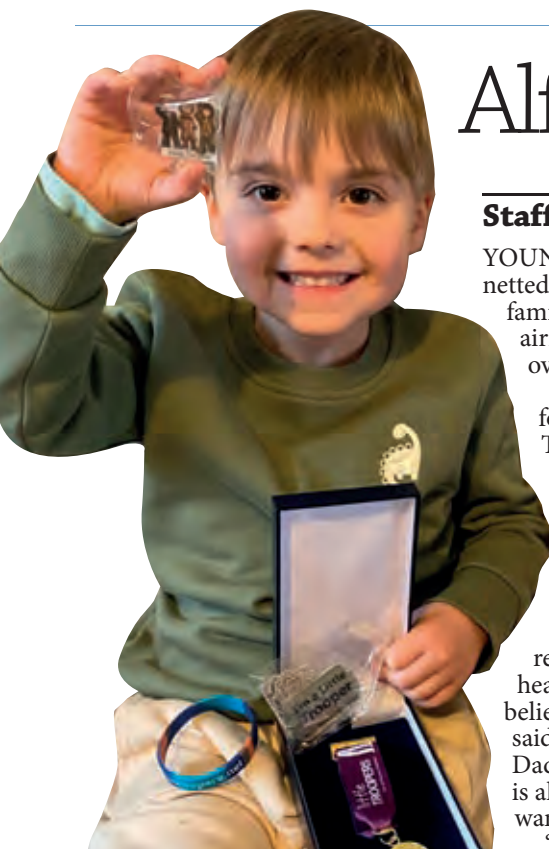
SUPPORT: Forces teams working on national vaccination programme

planners, logistics specialists, an aircraft medical evacuation capability, and a Mobile Testing Unit service throughout last summer.

Across Britain there are more than 5,200 personnel committed to winter and Covid-19 operations including the vaccine roll-out, NHS support and community testing.



VACCINE ROLL-OUT: Defence Secretary Ben Wallace joins military personnel in Stirling
PHOTO: MoD



Alfie's a Super Trooper

Staff Reporter

YOUNGSTER ALFIE Neale has netted an award for helping the family through lockdown while airman dad Andrew is on an overseas posting.

Mum Katie nominated the four-year-old for the Little Troopers accolade for battling on while she returned to work as a teacher as Cpl Neale was deployed abroad on a six-month tour with 303 Signals Unit.

"I just felt with all that change, with his age, he dealt really well with it. When I heard that he'd won it, I couldn't believe it. He is delighted," she said. "Every night he hopes that Daddy will soon be home and he is always talking about things he wants to do when he's back."

"We've had some tricky

moments along the way and lots of tears but he has done amazingly well and I couldn't be more proud of him. He is always my little hero."

Alfie and his younger brother George also started at a new nursery, putting extra strain on the family.

The Little Troopers charity recognises Forces kids with the award every month.

Little Troopers founder Louise Fetigan added: "All the changes that Alfie has been through would have been tricky enough for any child under normal circumstances."

"The Covid restrictions have put lots of added pressure onto military families like Alfie's, who have faced deployments alongside separation from their extended families."

"We think Alfie deserves to know what a special Little Trooper he is. We hope he feels proud and is looking forward to telling dad about his award."



See p28

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

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

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity is one of the organisations appointed by the UK Government, via the UK National Support Fund (UKNSF), to assist people in at-risk groups with their residency applications.

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

Cyprus, freephone: **0780077058**

France, freephone: **0805119617**

Germany, freephone: **08000009913**

United Kingdom: **08001930474**

To find out more or receive support

Email **UKVIE.Support@ssafa.org.uk**

Visit **www.ssafa.org.uk/vie**

For all other countries,

please visit

www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-europe

ssafa | the
Armed Forces
charity

Registered as a charity in England and Wales Number 210760 in Scotland Number SC038056 and in Republic of Ireland Number 20202001. Established 1885.



Texan stars

Fast jet rookies wing it on new Valley trainer



FRONTLINE FAST TRACK: Valley's latest graduates collect their wings

Dave Williams
RAF Valley

FIVE FUTURE fighter pilots were awarded their wings at a special virtual ceremony at Valley.

The graduates, four from the Air Force and one from the Royal Navy, are only the second course to complete Basic Flying Training on the new Texan T1 aircraft.

Their journey to the fast jet frontline is now two-thirds complete and their next step commences with Advanced Jet Training on the Hawk T2 at the Welsh station before moving on to the Typhoon or F-35 fleets.

RAF Valley Station Commander and Commandant No 4 Flying Training School Gp Capt Andy Turk said: "It is an absolute privilege to award the RAF and Royal Navy flying badges, or 'wings,' to our graduating pilots today.

"Ideally, we would wish to mark this prestigious occasion with VIPs, families and senior officers present, however we are able to welcome the families and friends of our graduates today 'virtually' in order to mark this fantastic achievement."



GP CAPT TURK

During their training, the students flew 74 hours in the Texan and 50 hours in new state-of-the-art simulators.

Gp Capt Turk added: "The introduction of 72 (Fighter) Squadron with their Texan T1 aircraft to Valley has meant that our fast jet training has become more aligned with the frontline requirement."

"Our modern simulators, our Texan T1 aircraft fleet with its 'glass cockpit' design and advanced courseware mean that students will feel equally at home in Typhoon and F-35 following their Valley training."



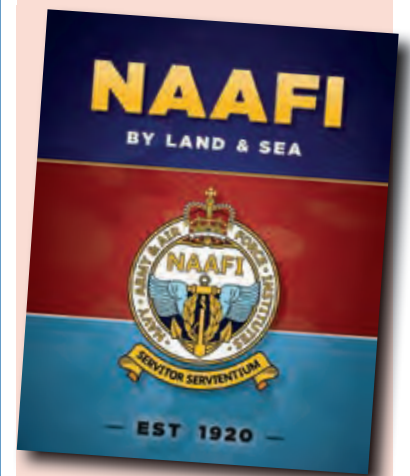
NAAFI serves up slice of nostalgia

A NEW book charting the history of the NAAFI has just been produced.

Author Sue Lowe has collected more than 500 stories and over 350 images for the 700-page title.

She said: "Looking into over 100 years of history was not going to be easy.

"The recent years would be mostly reliant on personal testimony. For the earlier years, the hunt was on to find the archives, the remains of the



museum and as much factual information as possible. It was not about rewriting history but telling it as it was written."

The book is a compilation of first-hand accounts from NAAFI personnel in war and peace, including the sinking of the Lancastria in June 1940, when more than 300 men were lost.

It also documents how the NAAFI adjusted to meet the needs of Service personnel around the world with new clubs after World War II to the recent drawdown in Germany.

Proceeds from sales go to the NCSEFI Association which celebrates its 75th anniversary this year.

Valkyries ride again

THE US AIR FORCE'S first UK-based F-35 squadron has been dubbed the 'Valkyries' following a public vote. The 495th Fighter Sqn received more than 700 suggestions after putting out the appeal for names ahead of its arrival at RAF Lakenheath later this year.

News bulletin



Brize on a charge for green motors

A TRIO of new e-vehicles are being put through their paces by ground crews at RAF Brize Norton as the Oxfordshire station bids to cut its carbon footprint.

The new vehicles can be preset to limit speeds across high-risk areas of the station and feature collision avoidance technology to improve safety near aircraft.

Mike's Cyc'd



AIRMAN MIKE Ainsworth has launched a bike bid to clock up more than 5,000 miles across the UK and Europe to honour the legendary Dambusters.

He hopes to complete 100 miles for each of the 56 airmen who died in the bombing raids on the Rhine dams powering the Nazi's war machine.

His challenge will also mark the 100th birthday of the last living Dambuster, bomb aimer Johnny Johnson, and raise funds for the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Mike said: "I grew up on RAF bases as my parents both served and one of my earliest memories is watching *The Dam Busters* film. I'm also 56 this year."

● Go to: rafbf.org/ride for details and to sponsor Mike.

SPORTS LOTTERY



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www.rafcf.org.uk

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Reservist and RAFCF beneficiary, Cpl Phil Hall - World Rally Championship co-driver

   **RAFCentralFund**

BeGambleAware.org

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



POUND FOR POUND: Odiham fundraiser Cpl Harrison Knight gets into his stride

Grin and bear it

A TEAM of RAF Odiham physical training instructors are running, cycling and bear crawling to raise money for charity.

Fitness guru Cpl Harrison Knight and his team are bidding to complete a kilometre for every pound raised so far this year for the RAF Benevolent Fund.

They are inviting other personnel to take part on Zoom by posting challenges and workouts on the Odiham fitness app and sharing video clips on social media.

Cpl Knight said: "We created this challenge to help stay motivated throughout lockdown."

"The Benevolent Fund makes massive contributions to our wellbeing on station."

"We know that many charities are struggling for donations so we wanted to make sure veterans, serving personnel and reservists can access whatever support they need."

● Go to: justgiving.com/rafodi to donate or take part.

Jack's driven to succeed



Staff Reporter

LOGISTICS SPECIALIST Cpl Jack Banks, right, who joined the forces before he had passed his driving test, has been crowned the RAF's Driver the Year.

The 30-year-old airman scooped the award for his work improving road safety in his local community, last year.

He was formally presented with the prize at Wittering this month after returning from an overseas deployment.

Cpl Banks joined up in 2008, completed his basic training at RAF Halton and got his licence after training

at the Defence School of Transport at Leconfield near Hull before graduating to HGVs, buses and off-road vehicles.

He said: "I don't come from a military family, so there was no one to guide me. But driving had always appealed to me, particularly the off-road element of the training."

RAF Wittering transport chief Sqd Ldr Dan Cook added: "Our specialist drivers are rightly proud of their tradecraft, so I expect there will be plenty of friendly competition to succeed him as the RAF's Driver of the Year."

RIAT grounded again as Covid fears hit UK summer events

THE ROYAL International Air Tattoo has been cancelled for the second year running as Covid continues to cast a shadow over this summer's large public events.

The world's biggest military air show was due to celebrate its 50th anniversary this year. But organisers finally pulled the plug after months of growing uncertainty.

RIAT chief executive Paul Atherton said: "If we knew what the situation would be in the summer we'd be able to plan ahead but, the truth is, we simply don't know."

"We have reached a point where, to plan further, would involve us committing large sums of money to secure the event infrastructure."

"Without any insurance being available this year, this money would be lost if the airshow had to cancel nearer the time. It was simply too big a risk to take."

"Public safety is paramount and we also have a duty to protect the



future of the show. By making this decision we will be in a far stronger position to bounce back in 2022."

RIAT launched in 1971 and went on to become the world's biggest military air show boasting a line

-up of the world's most iconic war birds and attracting more than 150,000 visitors.

Ticket holders will be offered either a refund or entry for next year's event planned for July, 2022.



Island life's five alive

FALKLANDS PERSONNEL have become the latest to take part in a global fitness craze.

Mount Pleasant Complex now hosts the most southerly Parkrun in the world after 55 personnel

tackled the new 5km route. The event normally take place every Saturday morning at more than 2,000 locations in 22 countries across five continents. UK events are currently suspended.

Keeping children at of RAF family

RAFBF Panel



RESEARCHER: Dr Hannah Brooking



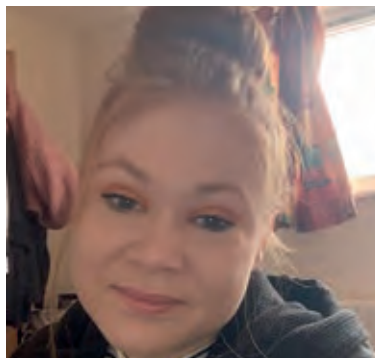
RAF FAMILIES FED: Louise Briggs



JENNY WITHERS: RAF communities expert



AIRPLAY BOSS: Tom Cavalot



SESSIONAL WORKER: Natalie Evans, 17

Charity's in-depth study into wellbeing aimed at helping kids cope with the trials of Service life

THE CORONAVIRUS pandemic has presented particular challenges for children and young people – from interrupted education to not being able to socialise with friends – and that includes the children of RAF personnel.

The RAF Benevolent Fund has conducted its first in-depth research into the wellbeing of youngsters who have one or both parents serving in the Air Force. A presentation and panel discussion about the research and its findings were held online recently and a full report is due to be published.

Speaking before the panel discussion took place, Chris Elliott, the Fund's Controller, said: "The mental wellbeing of our children during the Covid-19 crisis has been well documented.

"Especially in the past year with Covid, we have expanded our Children & Young People's counselling and listening service. We were very conscious that they just wanted somebody to talk to, someone who empathised and understood. The service is not anonymous but it is completely confidential."

The Fund has offered a £2,500 grant to each RAF station to provide an activity and wellbeing pack for RAF children and launched Airplay Connect, an online version of its youth support service.

Chris added: "We could not provide Airplay as usual due to the Covid physical restrictions and we had to move online to the digital platform Airplay Connect so the children can get access to the youth workers and vice-versa."

About 95 children and young people of primary and secondary school age, divided into 10 focus groups depending on their age, from

DIGITAL SUPPORT: RAFBF's Airplay Connect is helping children online during the coronavirus pandemic, while some of its other facilities have been forced to close



five different locations around the UK, took part in the research.

The panel discussion has five members – Dr Hannah Brooking, lead researcher at the Fund; Louise Briggs from the RAF Families Federation; Jenny Withers, chief community development advisor for the RAF; Tom Cavalot, who manages the Airplay project; and Natalie Evans, 17, an Airplay sessional worker, whose father is in the RAF.

Chris explained: "This is the first in-depth panel we have conducted and the first of this sort of research in the UK that

on children's voices. I don't think it's a surprise to learn there are positives and negatives they feel about growing up as part of the RAF family. Some struggle, perhaps with moving around a lot and deployment," she explained.

"But they are incredibly proud of their parents and they are really keen to say that parents' service often inspires service of their own, whether it's in the Air Force or other services."

She said three main themes emerged from the research – that young people found growing up with parents in the RAF was sometimes sad, hard and worrying.

She explained: "Sad that they are missing out with a parent not being there, not enjoying shared moments together at key events like school concerts – again not surprising but this feeling came out quite strongly."

“Children worry about a parent being away on deployed service”

"Being hard and difficult was all that 'trauma' – my word – moving around a lot, breaking up friendship groups and knowing they may have to do that many times."

"Worrying was about a parent being away on deployed service. However, it's not all negative – they also enjoy the benefits of being part of the RAF family, they love things like station open days and the community."

Chris said the findings of the report will be shared with the charity's stakeholders and partners including the Air Force, other military charities, and organisations with an interest in supporting children and young people, academic institutions, the Service Children's Progression Alliance and the Children's Commissioner's Office.

She said: "By sharing this widely it will hopefully help us get more positive outcomes for children and young people."

She added: "It helps us to develop services like Airplay, which represents support to thousands of young people every year and we're really proud to fund that."

FAMILY FAVOURITE: RAFBF helps Service mums and dads



WAY WE WERE: RAFBF is hoping to get traditional Airplay facilities open again as soon as it is ruled safe

RAFBF CHIEF: AVM Chris Elliott

Announcements

- P6-7
- Puzzles
- P8

R'n'R

Win!



**Win: Top rock
doc ● p3**

DETECTIVE CHIEF INSPECTOR
CASSANDRA STUART

Cassie's back – Nicola Walker ● p 4-5



HM Government

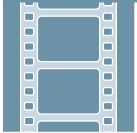
NHS

LOOK HER IN THE EYES AND TELL HER YOU NEVER BEND THE RULES.

Lorna Covid-19 patient

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

STAY HOME ▶ PROTECT THE NHS ▶ SAVE LIVES



Film Review

Echo in the Canyon – the birth of the California Sound (E)

Out now on DVD and Blu-ray (Dazzler Media)

Win!



DVD

Welcome to Sudden Death
Out now (Dazzler Media)

Win!

60s good vibrations

The sounds of Laurel Canyon

FORMER CAPITOL Records president Andrew Slater's superb documentary tells the story of the incredible music that came out of Laurel Canyon, Los Angeles in the Sixties – from The Byrds' *It Won't be Wrong* to the Mamas and Papas' *Monday, Monday*, and many more in between.

Great archive footage of bands including Buffalo Springfield and the Beach Boys are interspersed with clips from the 2015 Laurel Canyon 50th anniversary tribute concert featuring younger artists such as Jakob Dylan (Bob's son), Fiona Apple, Beck and Jade Castrinos performing excellent versions of classic tracks including *In My Room*.

Dylan (above, right with Tom Petty) interviews big names like Eric Clapton, Jackson Browne, the much-missed Petty (the film is dedicated to his memory) and Crosby, Stills and Nash throughout the film, and we also see Dylan junior with Beck, Regina Spektor and Cat Power rehearsing the lovely *Wild Mountain Thyme*.



The film features some fabulous quotes – from Browne's: "Laurel Canyon was the antithesis of the plastic, straight world you saw on television" to Ringo Starr's: "We [The Beatles] loved The Byrds. They introduced us to a hallucinogenic situation. We had a really good time."

And so will you throughout this excellent film's 79 fascinating minutes.

4 out of 5 roundels ●●●●

Review by Tracey Allen

Win Echo in the Canyon



WE HAVE copies of *Echo in the Canyon* on DVD to win. For your chance to own one, just tell us:

In which US city is Laurel Canyon?

Email your answer, marked Echos DVD, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to our address on p3 of the main paper to arrive by March 12, including your full postal address.

Jesse action movie packs a real punch

GET READY for a fight-filled reimagining of the Jean-Claude Van Damme 90s action classic with *Welcome to Sudden Death* (Cert 15).

Jesse Freeman (Michael Jai White, *Arrow*, *The Dark Knight*, *Black Dynamite*) is a former Special Forces officer and explosives expert now in a regular job as a security guard in a state-of-the-art sports arena.

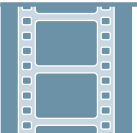
Trouble erupts when a tech-savvy cadre of terrorists kidnap the team's owner and Jesse's daughter during opening night.

Facing a ticking clock and impossible odds, it's up to Jesse to not only save them, but also a full house of fans in this highly-charged action thriller.

For your chance to own a copy of the movie on DVD, just answer this question correctly:

What is the name of the main character in *Welcome to Sudden Death*?

Email your answer, marked Sudden Death competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to our usual address (see page three) to arrive by March 12.



Film Review

23 Walks (12)

Out now on DVD & digital platforms (Parkland Entertainment)

Walking back to happiness?

TWO BEREFT strangers who have 'lived a lot of life' come to develop a relationship over a series of dog walks shared together in the green pastures of North London. This could sound terribly bland, and it certainly flirts with the possibility, but what makes *23 Walks* interesting is its rounded characters, realised with warts and all.

From the first moment we meet Fern (Alison Steadman, *Gavin & Stacey*) she is appalled by the fact that Dave (Dave Johns, *I, Daniel Blake*) hasn't a lead for his German Shepherd, despite being well-trained and unflinching in the face of her own riled up Yorkshire terrier. By the second time they bump into each other however, Dave is prepared with lead at

the ready, keen to make a good impression.

Fern's initial frostiness strikes as disingenuous – a conceit to keep the exchanges interesting maybe – but rather than explain away her mood over the course of the film, to provide a remedy in the form of Dave, it is unpacked and, if anything, resurfaces unapologetically.

These people are aware of themselves, they have been through relationships, had families, and don't have the time or patience for games.

The awkwardness that is the lifeblood of teen romance films is swatted away casually when, say, Fern comments that there will be no sex after agreeing to stay over. You believe these characters long for company, that they can skip the



PARK LIAISON:
But is Fern (Alison Steadman) leading Dave (Dave Johns) on?

parts of courting that have been played out in movies.

In keeping with this realism, they each have the baggage of their lives lived previously, some more dramatic and harder to reconcile. So whilst there is less kiss-chase and attempts at proving one's own self-

worth, it isn't without complication. Dave is being threatened with eviction from his home, and may not have been as upfront as he seemed in the beginning.

Ambling by its very nature, it could definitely have lost some of its runtime – maybe 12 Walks

would have sufficed.

Made for a particular audience, it is still a little flat and largely inoffensive – save for maybe some raunchiness that manages to slip its way in.

3 out of 5 roundels ●●●●

Review by Sam Cooney



Theatre

Billionaire Boy

Spring car park tour

Car
park
tour

This lucky pair are rolling in it

BEST-SELLING children's author David Walliams' *Billionaire Boy* is back with a covid-safe Car Park Party production.

Billionaire Boy started life as a Walliams novel for children in 2010 and in 2016 was adapted into a BBC production.

It tells the story of Joe Spud, who is 12 and the richest boy in the country. He has his own sports car, £100,000 a week pocket money and two crocodiles as pets. But what Joe doesn't have is a friend. So he decides to leave his posh school and start at the local comprehensive. But things don't go as planned for Joe and life becomes a rollercoaster as he tries to find the one thing money can't buy.

Walliams said: "I am delighted that families will have the opportunity to see some live theatre again. The show is hilarious and I hope spreads some happiness in these difficult times."

Birmingham Stage Company is



GOLDEN TOUCH: Writer David Walliams and Billionaire Boy Joe Spud (Matthew Gordon)

putting on the Easter show, which opens at the NEC, Birmingham, on April 2 and goes to venues including Manchester, Leeds, Bournemouth, Bath and Bristol and finishes at Cheltenham Racecourse on April 18.

■ **Go to:** carparkparty.com for more details.



Music

Rag 'n' Bone Man

New album

ALBUM: Life of Misadventure



Big man with big voice returns

RAG 'N' BONE MAN has returned three years after his award-winning debut, *Human*, with the first single, *All You Ever Wanted*, from his new album, *Life By Misadventure*.

"I'd felt sad looking around Brighton and London where I grew up... remembering all those cool places that aren't there anymore," Rory Graham, aka Rag 'n' Bone Man, said.

His 2017 debut *Human* was a phenomenal success; a four-times platinum album which shot to number one in the week of its release in the UK. It became the fastest-selling album by a male artist for the entire decade and earned him BRIT and Ivor Novello awards.

Rag 'n' Bone Man tore up the rule



book and went to Nashville to write and record what would become *Life By Misadventure*, returning to the UK just before the pandemic started.

The bulk of the album was produced and recorded by Grammy Award-winning producer and multi-instrumentalist Mike Elizondo (Eminem, 50 Cent, Fiona Apple, Alanis Morissette) at his studio just outside Nashville.

The album, out on April 23, has been purposefully recorded like a live album. Long-time collaborators Ben Jackson-Cook (keys, co-songwriter and co-producer of the album), Bill Banwell (bass and co-songwriter) and Desri Ramus (backing vocals) are joined by drummer Daru Jones (Lazaretto-Jack White) and guitarist Wendy Melvoin, who joined Prince's Revolution at the age of 19. One song was even recorded in Rag 'n' Bone Man's garage.

"We had quite a time to live with the songs this time around," he said. "Too often, how I'd done things before was that we'd written a song and I had to sing it the same day, and that was the version we'd use on the album. This way, it was far easier to get real emotion into the music."

■ **Go to:** ragnboman.com for more information.

BIG SHOT: Rory Graham

The Big Event

Unforgotten

Cold case cops are not to be forgotten

New riddle for Cassie and Sunny

NICOLA WALKER is in demand – she's back as DCI Cassie Stuart in the fourth series of the critically-acclaimed drama *Unforgotten* on ITV and the BBC has announced that she'll return as Hannah in the third and final series of *The Split* with co-star Stephen Mangan, due to start filming this year.

Sanjeev Bhaskar also reprises his *Unforgotten* role as DCI Sunny Khan in the six-part series that charts a fresh investigation into another emotionally-charged cold case murder.

The main cast is joined by Sheila Hancock, Susan Lynch, Liz White and Andy Nyman, with returning actors Peter Egan and Alastair Mackenzie.

The fourth series opened with the discovery of a dismembered body in a scrapyards, which the team believed had been stored in a domestic freezer for 30 years. A unique Millwall Football Club tattoo leads to the victim being identified as Matthew Walsh, a young man in his mid-20s who went missing in March 1990.

Writer Chris Lang said: "Cassie and Sunny take on perhaps their most challenging case to date. *Unforgotten 4* will once again explore the fallout from and the investigation into an historic murder case, but the primary theme of this series, will be society's relationship with the police.

"The investigation will show the best of the police and the worst, and at a time of unprecedented cutbacks, it will ask a number of difficult questions about the police force as an institution."

Walker (below) said the uncertainty of 2020 helped create the right atmosphere to bring Cassie back in the fourth series.

She explained: "Coming back to the role in January (2020) was so exciting because of the storyline and the suspects, this year it's very timely. Chris Lang seems to have a knack for that..."

"Through lockdown it was really strange because you are



SCRAPYARD HORROR: Cassie and Sunny investigate grim discovery

carrying this character around, all you're thinking about is this storyline and realising a few weeks in that you have to let it all go, including the lines..."

"When we came back the one thing I needed was four weeks advance notice to learn the lines again – you can't hold them in your head for that long... you come back to a job and you think 'I don't know if I can still do this.' It is a really strange feeling."

She added that returning to filming after the first lockdown was 'wholly positive'.

She said: "I felt incredibly safe and it was such a positive feeling to go back."

"Everyone was really relieved to be back in the working environment although it bore no relation to our normal working environment."

"It was surreal, of course because you are masked all the time apart from when you are actually on camera. The director, Andy Wilson, said it was like TV made by a bunch of bank robbers."

Walker revealed that Bhaskar's character Sunny is concerned about his friend and colleague Cassie.

"You see it quite a lot that Cassie will be pushing too hard, she wants to get the case completed and you can see Sunny seeing that and worrying about it," she said.

"It is really difficult for them both. He has no doubt she is capable of the work,



GUEST STAR: Actress Sheila Hancock



JOINING CAST: Susan Lynch gets on her bike

I don't think he has lost his faith in her skills to lead the team but he is definitely aware of what it is costing her and doing to her emotionally. But he is brilliant, he is supportive and understanding and sometimes scared for her."

Bhaskar (below) said: "Andy Wilson has directed every episode of *Unforgotten*, which is relatively unheard of, and I have learned more from his guidance than I have from any other director in my career."

"What I like about Sunny is that he has always been Cassie's rock; he is dependable both in terms of his work and his support of her."



"They have a shorthand and there is genuine love there and that is unusual in cop shows where you have a lead and a sidekick, as the sidekick's role is usually to back up the key investigator, but not as often emotionally. However, the bond between Sunny and Cassie has been something that has connected with people. Stepping back into Sunny's shoes is a wonderfully familiar feeling."

He added: "The calibre of the actors who come onto the show is always so strong, which makes it more challenging and scary for me because every time I see what they're doing it makes me want to raise my game. It keeps you on your toes, which is brilliant."

■ *Unforgotten* series 4 continues on ITV on Mondays at 9pm.



Theatre

Anything Goes

UK tour

West End musical debut for Kendal

FELICITY KENDAL will make her West End musical debut starring as Evangeline Harcourt, alongside leading West End actor Gary Wilmot as Elisha Whitney, in the musical *Anything Goes*.

The show opens at London's Barbican Theatre for a strictly limited 11-week engagement from June 5 and then goes on a UK tour.

The pair will join Emmy winner Megan Mullally as Reno Sweeney and Tony, Olivier and BAFTA award-winner Robert Lindsay as Moonface Martin.

Kendal said: "It's wonderful to be joining this classic, joyous show after the past terrible year of loss and lockdown. We need to connect together again in our theatres and there is nothing quite like the thrill of a live audience experiencing a great show."

Wilmot added: "*Anything Goes* is such a joyous musical and I'm thrilled to be joining the incredible cast for this wonderful revival."

The lavish production of Cole Porter and P.G. Wodehouse's classic, featuring a full company of more than 50 including a full-sized orchestra and 14 tap dancing sailors, will be directed and choreographed by three times Tony Award-winner Kathleen Marshall, in her West End directing debut.

When the S.S. American heads out to sea, etiquette and convention



FELICITY KENDAL: Stars as Evangeline Harcourt in Cole Porter classic *Anything Goes*

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.

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

■ **Go to:** anythinggoestickets.co.uk for more details.



DVD & Blu-ray

It's A Sin Certificate 15

On Blu-ray and DVD (Dazzler Media)



Chance to own TV hit on disc

TV HIT *It's A Sin* has just been released on Blu-ray and DVD – and we have a copy for one lucky reader to win.

It's 1981, the start of a new decade and Ritchie, Roscoe, Ash and Colin begin a new life in London. Strangers at first, these young gay lads, and their best friend Jill, find themselves thrown together, and soon share each other's adventures.

But a new virus is on the rise, and soon their lives will be tested in ways they never imagined. As the decade passes, and they grow up in the shadow of AIDS, they're determined to live and love more fiercely than ever.

The critically-acclaimed series is written by Russell T. Davies (*Queer as Folk*, *Torchwood*, *Years and Years*) and stars *Years & Years* lead singer Olly Alexander as Ritchie.

For your chance to own a copy on DVD, all you have to do is send us the correct answer to this question:

Who wrote *It's A Sin*?



BEST OF FRIENDS: Ritchie (Alexander) and Jill (Lydia West)

Email your answer, marked *It's A Sin* DVD 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 March 12.



Your Announcements

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

Death

MURRAY Val loving wife of Chf Tech Bill Murray (Ret'd) who passed away peacefully on February 3 in Shipdham Norfolk. Val worked at Bruggen and Laarbruch in the 70s and 4 Squadron Gutersloh in the 80s looking after "her boys" the pilots. She is survived by Bill. Mum will be greatly missed by her sons, daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

In Memoriam

QUANBROUGH Syd Ex Chief Technician. Fondly remembering my dearest husband who died on January 28, 2006. Never forgotten by your children and grandchildren and loved always by your devoted wife Margaret.

Seeking



Reginald Fuller

I AM grateful for any information about Reginald J. Fuller, Service Number: 2221635 with the RAF. He was a British engineer in my father's Canadian crew in 1944 and 1945, at Tholthorpe, Yorkshire with 28 operations completed before war's end. It's clear that he was talented, admired, and a great asset to the crew, but when allied members immediately returned to Canada, they lost touch. I would be so very

happy to hear from anyone who might know Mr Fuller's family and ultimately help me to conclude a story that pays tribute equally for his contributions. Please email: denis.thievin@gmail.com



Cpl John Murphy

I am looking for background information on my father Cpl John J Murphy who served in the RAF from 1947 to 1978, with a small break in the 1950s. He did tours in Africa and also in Northern Ireland in the 1960s. He passed away, aged 90, in February, 2020. Unfortunately, I know very little about him and am trying to track down any information about his early life and family. I believe he was born in Ireland, that his father worked for the Belfast Shipping Company and in the 1960s he was married to Shirley, but know almost nothing else. Please email me on: thebrookners@aol.com if you have any information that could help.

BOY Entrants 45th Ground Wireless. Tracing the above for a reunion in York, June 2021. 57 out of 107 traced with, sadly, 12 deaths. Contact suddesr@aol.com

Reunions

DID you serve at RAF Changi or HQFEAF Singapore? The RAF Changi Association (inc. HQFEAF),

founded May 1996, welcomes new members from all ranks ex RAF/WRAF/WAAF and civilian personnel who served at RAF Changi (inc. HQFEAF) during 1946-72. For more information please contact our Membership Secretary: Malcolm Flack on: 01494 728562 or email: MemSecChangi@telco4u.net or visit: www.rafchangi.com for more details.

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

RAF Bawdsey Reunion Association. Due to the coronavirus pandemic we regrettably had to cancel the annual reunion last summer. We have provisionally planned the next reunion for Saturday, June 5, and look forward to seeing our friends again then. In the meantime we wish you all a safe and healthy time during this unprecedented period. If you have any queries please email: doreen.bawdseyreunion@btinternet.com or call: 07513 301723.

Apprentices' Assoc

ARE you a Trenchard Brat who did your training at RAF Halton? Maybe you were trained at No. 1 S of TT RAF Cosford or at RAF Cranwell? Some Brats were trained at other RAF training schools, many were Boy Entrants trained at RAF Cosford or St Athan. We were known throughout the RAF as the 'Trenchard BRATS'. Our Association, The RAF Halton Apprentices' Association, (The Old Haltonians) welcomes you all. Check us out via our website 'Old Haltonians' and then contact us at: membership@rafhaa.co.uk for further details.

Admin Association

THE RAF Administrative Apprentice Association welcomes all Administrative apprentices who trained as Suppliers or Clerks at RAF St Athan, RAF Bircham Newton, RAF Halton, RAF Ruislip or RAF Hereford. Go to: rafadappasn.org for further details.

Catering Association

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

Squadron website

READER Rob Oliver is Squadron Historian for 152 (Hyderabad) Squadron and last September to mark the 80th anniversary of The Battle of Britain unveiled The Southwest Battle of Britain Memorial at Bowleaze cove in Weymouth. See the website at: www.152hyderabad.co.uk.



EYE-CATCHING: These stunning gold cufflinks belonged to DFC winner Sqn Ldr DFW Darling – and could now be yours

DFC winner's gold cufflinks for sale

OFFERS ARE invited for a family pair of gold RAF badge engraved cufflinks that belonged to war hero Squadron Leader Donald Frederick William Darling DFC.

He was killed in action on January 30, 1943 over Berlin, aged just 24. It seems

fitting that the cufflinks should now belong to someone who is in, or was in, the RAF, says the seller.

Reasonable offers considered. Please email: dfwdarlingdfc@gmail.com.

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

Target drone set for museum

DESPITE Newark Air Museum being closed due to the latest Covid-19 lockdown and the museum staff being furloughed, work behind the scenes has continued, writes *Howard Healey*.

The museum trustees have revealed that thanks to a collection review by Aerospace Bristol, the museum will soon be taking ownership of GAF Jindivik, A92-708.

The Jindivik is currently in store at Aerospace Bristol's site at Patchway, Bristol. When Covid guidelines allow, this example of the famous reusable pilotless target aircraft will be moved to Newark's Gateway Aviation Site in eastern Nottinghamshire.

"We are extremely grateful to Aerospace Bristol for helping us to complete this latest acquisition", said museum trustee Colin Savill.

"From its use as a target drone the Jindivik lies within two of our collecting remits; it will also complement the museum's UAV display.

"The UAV display was established as a collaborative exercise with the Institute of



REUSABLE PILOTLESS TARGET AIRCRAFT: The GAF Jindivik A92-708 is a new acquisition for Newark Air Museum

Engineering and Surveying and Space Geodesy (IESSG) at the University of Nottingham and the RAF Museum, Hendon.

"Firstly, it fits within our training collection where we have a considerable aircraft collection and other training aids.

"Secondly it complements our developing munitions

display including Blue Steel, Yellow Sun, various missiles and bomb disposal equipment."

He added: "The current plan is to display the Jindivik outdoors, with a longer term aim of displaying it under cover.

"We are really looking forward to adding this to our collection."

How to use our service

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

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Your Announcements

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War hero marks 100th

WORLD WAR II pilot Flt Lt Colin Bell, who carried out 50 bombing raids over Germany, celebrates his 100th birthday on March 5.

The DFC winner joined the Royal Air Force towards the end of 1940 and carried out flying training in 1941 in the United States under the 'Arnold Scheme'.

Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941 and having successfully completed his training, Colin was commissioned into the RAF; he was retained in the US by the American Army Air Corps as an advanced single-engine flying instructor training American and British pilots flying Stearmans, Vultee and Harvard aircraft types.

On his return to the UK in 1943 he converted to twin-engine Mosquito bombers and joined 608 Sqn (Pathfinder Group) at Downham Market in Norfolk. Thirteen of the, bombing raids Colin carried out were over Berlin.

His friend Flt Lt Penelope Broadway said: "608 Sqn was part of the Light Night

PROUD PILOT: Colin displays his wings in 2019; inset, as a young airman



Strike Force which operated extensively over Germany, bombing industrial areas like Bremen, Hamburg, Nuremberg, Dresden and Berlin – the most heavily defended city in the Third Reich."

After the war Colin was transferred to ferry duties bringing back newly-built Mosquitos from Canada to the UK. He ended his full-time RAF service in 1946 flying out of Blackbushe

in Camberley, carrying diplomatic mail to embassies in Europe and Africa.

Flt Lt Broadway added: "Colin still practises as a chartered surveyor and travels around the country attending conferences and giving after dinner talks on his WWII experiences. In 2019 he finally officially received his RAF wings at a graduation ceremony at RAF Linton-on-Ouse."



WINNER: Launchpad has been awarded bronze in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

Charity scoops MoD award

VETERANS' CHARITY Launchpad has received the bronze award from the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme.

Launched in 2014 the scheme recognises and rewards UK employers for their support and commitment to the Armed Forces Community in alignment with the Armed Forces Covenant.

Launchpad provides accommodation and a wide range of support for up to 80 residents across two houses in Liverpool and Newcastle upon Tyne to help them make a successful transition to civilian life.

The charity now aims to progress to silver level, which recognises employers

who actively demonstrate support, said a Launchpad spokesman.

Launchpad was founded by members of the Armed Forces community, and staff across both houses are former serving personnel or reservists.

Nicholas Tubbs, Launchpad chair, said: "Some of our staff and trustees also have military backgrounds. We are delighted to receive this award in recognition of our commitment and support to the Armed Forces – and the veterans we have supported as residents since inception. Veterans and reservists are a fundamental part of our expanding workforce."



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The Forces Help to Buy scheme is something that I give advice on too. I will be able to answer your questions regarding this to make sure that you feel fully informed if you decide to use this scheme. Previous forces personnel clients of mine have had success in using this scheme to buy their first property.



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Prize Crossword

No. 291

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

Across

6. Type that is attached to southern RAF missions (7)
7. Drama school right about RAF equipment (5)
9. Vegetable inside senior RAF rocket (5)
10. Six balls disturbed by gay RAF aircraft (7)
12. Maybe sorted terms for famous operation (6,5)
14. Way to go after leaving RAF (5,6)
18. Cunning Irishman has point about RAF flight (7)
19. Fruit a company gives to Royal Navy (5)
21. Even Otis Harris knows Russian chiefs (5)
22. Exercise that brings pilots down to earth (7)

Down

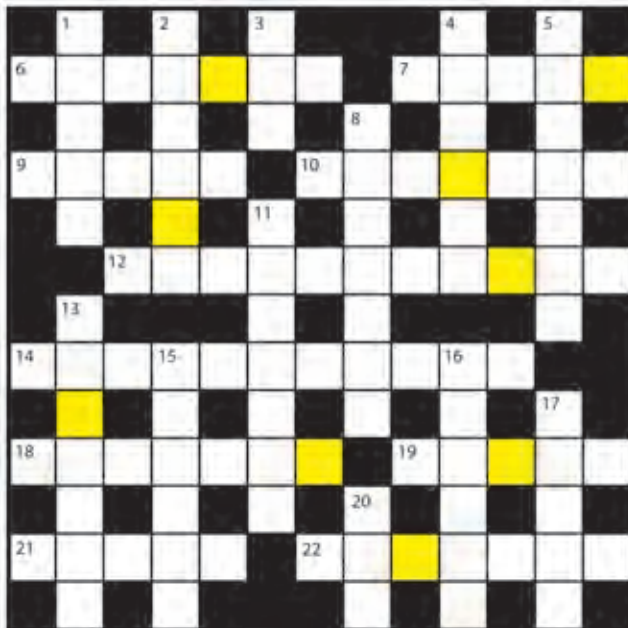
1. Military group finds most of dead body (5)
2. Aerial attack on street by RAF at end of siege (6)
3. Very black RAF plane? (3)
4. Graduates join a lieutenant on Rock... (6)
5. ...and forced terrorists on island (7)
8. Place in Stoke for snooker players? (7)
11. Corrupt priests carry on (7)
13. Advice for purposeless gunslingers? (7)
15. Celebrities surround the queen, the snakes! (6)
16. Foreign coin heartless empress gave copper at party (6)
17. Was Whittle a candid fellow? (5)
20. Reached Los Angeles, cross and slapdash (3)

Name

Address

RAF word Crossword No. 291

The winners of Prize Crossword 291 and Prize Su Doku 301 will be published in our March 12 edition. Send entries to the address printed in the Su Doku panel opposite.

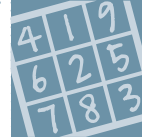


■ The winner of Crossword No. 290 is E James of Oxfordshire

Solution to Crossword No. 290:

Across – 7. Airbus 8. Norton 10. Spandau 11. Niche 12. Orgy 13. Crude 17. Batch 18. Liar 22. Brize 23. Nest Egg 24. Valley 25. Ballet
Down – 1. Passion 2. Arrange 3. Buddy 4. Tornado 5. Stuck 6. Sneer 9. Hurricane 14. Cavemen 15. Firefly 16. Frigate 19. Above 20. Filly 21. Islam

RAF word – *Navigator*

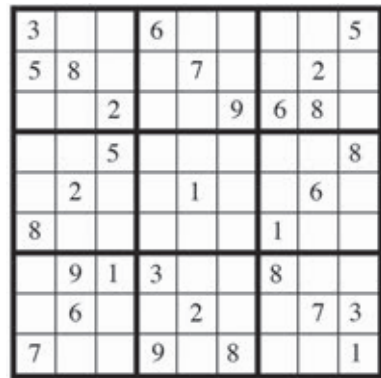


Prize Su Doku

No. 301

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 March 12, 2021.



Name

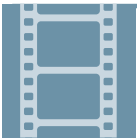
Address

..... Su Doku No. 301

Solution to Su Doku No. 300



■ The winner of Su Doku No. 300 is Chris Blackburn of Leeds.



Film Review

The Exception (15)

Out now on digital – Parkland Entertainment



SUSPICION:
The four
female
colleagues

Evil lurks within us all

DIRECTOR JESPER Nielsen's psychological thriller *The Exception* is an enjoyable romp, which admirably blends a film of two distinct halves.

Adapted from Christian Jungersen's novel of the same name, by screenwriter Christian Torpe, an impressive cast of Danica Curcic (Iben), Amanda Collin (Malene), *Borgen*'s Sidse Babett Knudsen (Anne-Lise) and Lene Maria Christensen (Camilla) all shine in what is no easy task – to bring a story which relies so much on the unseen to the screen.

The plot concerns four female colleagues working at a small NGO in Copenhagen which specialises in genocide. The subtle opening hour of the film reveals each character has issues, as new girl to the

working group, Anne-Lise, begins to experience alienation from Iben, Malene and Camilla.

Nielsen opens the film with an explanation of evil, which, it's claimed, is inherent in us all. With this he introduces almost voyeuristic camera angles and slow movements to draw the viewer in. Played against the eerie soundtrack of off-kilter cello strokes, you will quickly believe you are in some way complicit in the unfolding drama.

When two of the group receive death threats, they suspect a Serbian war criminal Merko Zigic (Borut Veselko); but they also start suspecting and turning on each other. Anne-Lise becomes the target for this mistrust, but various back storylines are dropped in to lead us to believe everyone

is potentially guilty. The opening half is all nuance, nods and looks, before it trades this for hammer blow twists and turns in the second half. In truth, if you can overlook the loss of the film's main plot point, the imperceptibility of evil in people and the changes that can bring it on – for obvious unsubtle viewing impact – then the upgrade works well.

There are still enough skeletons in closets and red herrings to keep the first half feeling resonant.

Watch out for the terrific *Columbo* 'Oh just one more thing' moment towards the end – it's lovely.

A very enjoyable, well-acted watch throughout.

3 rounds out of 5
Review by Daniel Abrahams



Competition

The Constant Gardener (15)/The Buddy Holly Story (PG)

Out now on DVD and Blu-ray – Fabulous Films Ltd/Fremantle Media Enterprises

le Carré's award-winner and *Buddy Holly Story*

ADAPTED FROM the best-selling spy novel of the same name by John le Carré, *The Constant Gardener* has been described as an edge-of-your-seat story of murder, deception and revenge. The film features electrifying performances from Ralph Fiennes and Rachel Weisz – who went on to win an Academy Award for her role as Tessa Quayle in this gripping suspense thriller.

Diplomat Justin Quayle (Fiennes), on the hunt for his wife's murderer, uncovers a trail of corruption involving a multinational pharmaceutical company's unethical drug trials on African people.

The film was a critical and box office success, winning numerous awards. It had four Oscar nominations, including Weisz's win for Best Supporting Actress. Bill Nighy and Pete Postlethwaite are also among the cast.

The Constant Gardener is just out on Blu-ray and DVD and we have DVD copies to win.

ALSO JUST released on Blu-Ray and DVD is *The Buddy Holly Story*,

featuring 12 of Holly's greatest hit songs.

A tribute to one of the most influential rock 'n' rollers of all time, the biopic won the 1978 Academy Award for Best Score Adaptation, with Gary Busey giving an Oscar-nominated performance as Holly.

The film follows Holly's life, from growing up in Texas to his early hit records, his quick national fame, his performances on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, his marriage and then his tragic untimely death, aged just 22, in a plane crash.

For your chance to win *The Constant Gardener* or *The Buddy Holly Story* on DVD, answer this question correctly:

Who wrote the spy novel on which the film *The Constant Gardener* is based?

Email your answer, marked DVDs 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 March 12.

Please mark on your entry which film you prefer to win and include your full postal address.



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Training drill is **Ab-Fab**



Staff Reporter
RAF Brize Norton

RAF CHINOOK personnel oversee a daredevil drop from the ramp of a helicopter during a training course at Brize Norton.

An Odiham-based Air Force workhorse led exercises to train instructors in troop insertion and extraction techniques including abseiling and fast-rope techniques used in rescue and extraction missions.

An Army Wildcat and Navy Merlin also took part in the first Joint Air Delivery Test and Evaluation Unit course this year.

Those completing the course are qualified to pass on their skills to other personnel in their respective Services.

TEAMWORK: Main, Chinook on exercise; top left, Army Wildcat; centre, abseiling from Wildcat; bottom, Royal Navy Merlin is put through its paces. PHOTO CPL LEE MATTHEWS

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Top honour as collegiate continues to improve offering for boarding students

STAFF and students at Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate (QE) are celebrating following the news that the school has been recognised by the UK Boarding Schools Association Awards as a Finalist for their work to continually improve their offer for boarding students, to better meet their needs.

The Collegiate has also been announced as a Finalist for its approach to supporting international students as they become part of the QE community.

QE welcomes girls and boys from three months and supports them through four schools – Chapter House (three months to Year 5), King's Magna (Years 6 to 9), The College and Faculty (both Year 10 to 13), with those wishing to board being able to do so from Year 3.

Set in 220 acres of picturesque North Yorkshire countryside, the Collegiate provides a safe and happy community environment for its 850 boarders. Weekends



are as busy on campus as during the week, with a wide range of sporting, creative and performing arts, cultural and outdoor activities on offer. Boarding houses also host a varied programme of activities, encouraging students to socialise and follow their individual interests.

Known locally, nationally and internationally as a place that promotes the highest standards in all that it does, the Collegiate's exam results consistently rank it amongst the top ten day and boarding schools in the UK. In 2020, students in the academically focused College achieved 97 per cent A*/B at A level and 100 per cent D*/D in the small number of BTECs taken to enrich the

A level programmes (equivalent in university points to A* and A grades at A level). The Faculty, which offers a wider range of academic, creative and vocational courses, achieved 96 per cent A*/B at A level and 86 per cent D*/D in BTECs.

The Collegiate has risen to the challenge of starting the new school year during the current COVID-19 pandemic, gaining the COVID Safe BSA Charter and providing boarders with the option of a two week pre-term stay for students to become accustomed to the changes put in place to ensure their safety, prepare for the school year ahead and complete any quarantine period that might be necessary.

Principal Jeff Smith explains: "QE has complied with, and gone beyond, the measures required by the Government and we have committed ourselves to the BSA School Safe Charter, putting adaptable plans in place for this coming year and beyond.

"We will continue to find ways to broaden and improve the curriculum and enrichment opportunities we offer and continue to extend students' learning beyond the classroom. We will use our recent online teaching experience to update our IT strategy, taking the opportunity to develop e-learning in an impactful way.

"Through our academic, pastoral and enrichment programmes, we will continue to develop the personal qualities of our students, such as leadership, resilience, critical thinking and responsibility. As always, we will prioritise the safeguarding, health and wellbeing of all our students and staff."

*** To note: At the time of writing, the BSA Awards 2020 ceremony had not yet taken place. To find out more about QE and to arrange a socially distanced private tour of campus, please visit www.qe.org**



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of professionals from nurses to caterers, all offering the most caring pastoral support. This gives just a flavour of what makes a Bromsgrove pupil so successful in their future careers.

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***To find out more information on how to join Bromsgrove School, and about our generous forces bursaries, don't hesitate to contact our admissions team who will be happy to help.**

By Tracey Allen

Malta's unsung heroes

Feature



AUTHOR: Paul McDonald

IT'S A STORY that has everything – bravery, romance, drama, action and mystery – and it's all true.

The fascinating tale of World War II ace Wg Cdr Adrian 'Warby' Warburton, dubbed 'the most valuable pilot in the RAF' and dancer Christina Ratcliffe who fell in love in besieged Malta, was told by retired Gp Capt Paul McDonald in his biography *Malta's Greater Siege & Adrian Warburton*.

The book is out in paperback this month (Pen & Sword Aviation), and Paul and playwright Philip Glassborow, who wrote the musical *Star of Strait Street* partly inspired by Paul's book, are now writing a radio play based on Christina's life. And Malta-based filmmaker Kim Dalli is working on a docudrama, provisionally called *The Women of George Cross Island*, featuring Christina's story.

Originally from Cheshire, Christina volunteered for highly classified work as a civilian aircraft plotter and was one of six women decorated for gallantry for their war work in Malta by George VI.

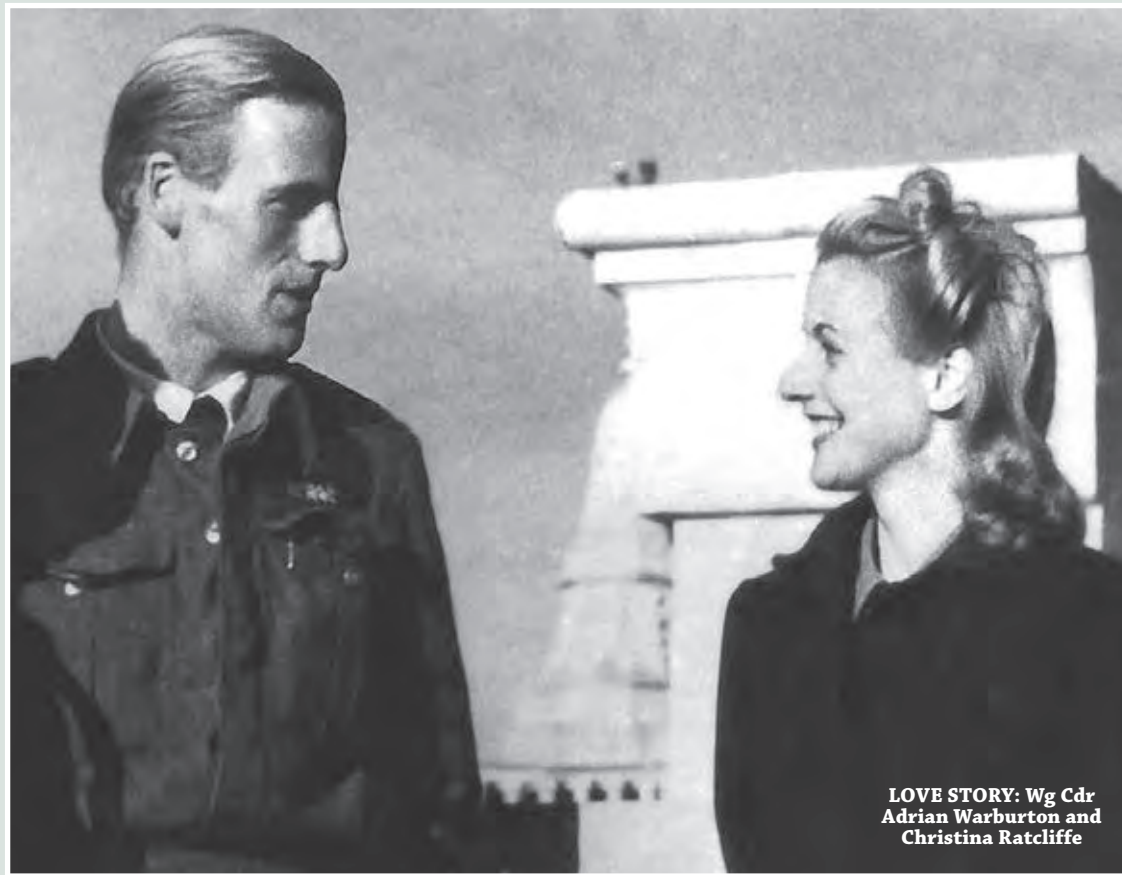
Paul, like Warby, a photo-reconnaissance pilot in Malta – 30 years later – also wrote a book about the women, *Ladies of Lascaris* (Pen & Sword History) which has a foreword by the actor John Rhys-Davies, who starred as Gimli and the voice of Treebeard in the *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy and sidekick Sallah in two Indiana Jones films. He knows Malta well.

Rhys-Davies said: "I share with Paul the deep affection he has for the island and its magical people. I first came in 1953 from Dar es Salaam to school in England."

The Welsh-born, now New Zealand-based actor, who has also starred in classic TV series including *Budgie* with Adam Faith (John played the gangster Laughing Spam Fritter), *I, Claudius*, *Reilly Ace of Spies* and *Robin of Sherwood*, – not to mention the James Bond movie *The Living Daylights* – added: "Malta is one of my favourite places in the world, I love the Maltese people, they have a gentleness and a grace."

Like many, he thinks the story would make a great film – and he'd be happy to play a role in it.

He said: "It's a fabulous story, Warby is such an interesting character. He was really in love with Christina. Into the night strides



LOVE STORY: Wg Cdr Adrian Warburton and Christina Ratcliffe

Love affair on besieged Med island

The dashing DFC and the pretty dancer



MALTA STORY: Kim Dalli (below) is working on a docudrama about Christina's life. Right, Paul's book



PLAY: Polly March portrayed the older Christina in *Star of Strait Street*

this Greek god with the DFC on his arm – when he first meets Christina, it's love."

He added: "For Christina, her love for Warby, who was the love of her life, and her love for the island she described as 'carved on my heart' was deep and enduring. Yet she suffered years of loneliness and her death was desperately sad."

Warby went missing in 1944 and Christina, who never

married, went to her grave in 1998 without ever knowing what had happened to him. He was found in the wreckage of his aircraft in Bavaria in 2002, 59 years after he went missing, aged 26.

Polly March, who appeared in *Star of Strait Street*, will play the older Christina in the forthcoming radio play, Kim will play her friend, Mary Miles, a fellow founder member of the Whizz Bangs Concert Party, and Rhys-Davies has



FOREWORD: Actor John Rhys-Davies

expressed interest in a role.

Paul said: "Mary was a talented singer and is also one of the characters in Kim's eight-part docudrama for Malta TV to celebrate the wartime contributions of the island's unsung heroines."

Kim, a former *Times of Malta* journalist, who is the lead researcher, scriptwriter and presenter for the series, said: "The series delves into the personal lives and stories of a 20-strong cast of young Maltese or Malta-based women, offering a uniquely female perspective at the heart of military conflict."

"Drawing from memoirs, autobiographies, interviews, archival documents and unique access to private collections, it will chart the work, lives, relationships and emotions of plotters, spies, air raid wardens, nurses, doctors, journalists and housewives."

She added: "Within a couple of short years' time, Malta will sadly be devoid of any people with first-hand recollections of World War II. In what will be the last chance to ever do so, this project will aim to interview and capture footage of the words and memories of the very last, living female survivors of the war."

"It strives to act as a tribute to a generation of brave, determined and uncompaining women who stood shoulder to shoulder with the men of Malta in the defence of their country and of freedom."



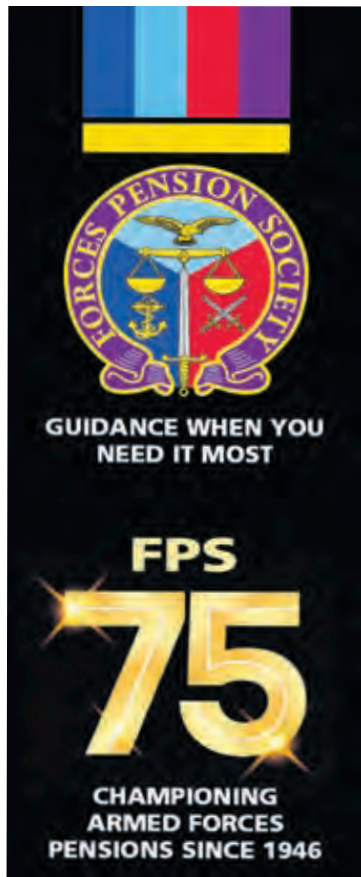
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Where was Christina Ratcliffe originally from?

Email your answer, marked Warburton 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 March 12.

McCloud case outcome: how it might affect you



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

FOLLOWING an age discrimination ruling made in 2019, many members of the Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS) will be affected by the outcome of the so-called McCloud Case.

If you were serving **both** on or before 31st March 2012 **and** on or after 1st April 2015 (including service leavers), the recently-announced Government decision on how to remedy the issue could be very relevant to you.

The Forces Pension Society (among others) lobbied hard in favour of one of the two remedial options being considered.

To its credit, the Government agreed with our recommendation, titled "Defence Choice Underpin". The decision means that toward the end of your career, for the 7 year 'remedy period' (1 Apr 15 – 31 Mar 22 or your retirement date if earlier) you will be able to choose between the pension benefits offered by your legacy (AFPS 75 or 05) scheme or the reformed (AFPS 15) scheme.

At your point of decision, you will have all the information you need about the actual pension benefits you've earned.

Your personal circumstances will then need to be assessed so you can make

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

New guidance on age discrimination

an informed decision. And the Forces Pension Society will be there to guide its Members through that decision-making process to best meet their, and their family's needs.

Right now there is no action for you to take since it is likely that it will be many months before the necessary legislation is enacted.

If, by the time the remedy process is in place, you are in Resettlement or have already left the Armed Forces, you will be contacted by MoD and provided with the information you require.

In the interim, the Members' Area of our website will be updated continuously with reference information and guidance.

● For information about joining the Forces Pension Society, visit www.forcespensionsociety.org



● INFORMED DECISIONS: Maj Gen Neil Marshall



Grads with eyes on the prize

New officers
top of class



ALMOST 100 officers of The Queen's Squadron graduated recently from Royal Air Force College Cranwell.

AOC 1 Gp, Air Vice-Marshal Allan Marshall, was the Reviewing Officer at the ceremony for the 97 from Modular Initial Officer Training Course No. 1.

They were as follows:

PILOT

- Fg Off C J Cornish
- Fg Off E C Green
- Fg Off C N Hoban BA

REMOTELY PILOTED AIR SYSTEMS (PILOT)

- Fg Off J R Axford-Pryse BA, MLitt
- Fg Off S Duncan
- Fg Off J D Field
- Fg Off C J Lear
- Fg Off L A D Martin BA
- Fg Off A M Nelson
- Fg Off A W Richards Eng Tech IET
- Fg Off A White

WEAPONS SYSTEMS OFFICER

- Fg Off R S Allen BA BSc
- Fg Off M G Huby
- Fg Off A P McLaughlin
- Fg Off D M Overton
- Fg Off A J Palmer
- Fg Off L C A J Quilter
- Fg Off D A Thomas MA BA

AIR OPERATIONS (CONTROL)

- Fg Off P B Bartlett BSc
- Plt Off J D Deas BSc
- Fg Off I C Eccles
- Plt Off T S Fish
- Plt Off R A J Garnett BSc
- Plt Off E P Hague BSc
- Plt Off J-L Hughes
- Plt Off I Lyman BSc
- Plt Off A J Mason BEng
- Plt Off G F Mockford BA
- Fg Off J A J Nicholas
- Plt Off J A Quick
- Fg Off D J Read BA
- Plt Off J P Sowerby
- Fg Off J L Stafford-Boutwood
- Fg Off G W Waller
- Fg Off A B Winkworth
- Fg Off P Worrell
- Fg Off D S Young

AIR OPERATIONS (SYSTEMS)

- Plt Off G H Crook BA
- Fg Off J S H Fraser
- Plt Off A J A Parrott
- Plt Off T W H Smith



LEADING THE WAY: The prize winners with Commandant RAF College Cranwell Air Cdre Suraya Marshall and Reviewing Officer AOC 1 Gp, Air Vice-Marshal Allan Marshall

- Fg Off M W R Speed
- Fg Off G J Spence
- Fg Off M D Turner

INTELLIGENCE

- Fg Off D J Abell
- Fg Off G Bruin
- Plt Off H L Bryant BA
- Plt Off M J Charnock
- Plt Off A M E Christen BSc
- Plt Off E T Day
- Plt Off G Feetham BA
- Plt Off I P Fields BSc
- Fg Off S W T Hardy
- Plt Off E D M Haylock BA
- Fg Off M R Long
- Plt Off T S Mawer BSc
- Fg Off S Mutimer BA
- Fg Off A D Neale
- Fg Off R Nicklin BA
- Plt Off J W O'Grady LLB
- Plt Off S K Rich
- Plt Off M J Wintermeyer BSc

ENGINEER (COMMUNICATIONS – ELECTRONICS)

- Fg Off E G Boughton BEng
- Fg Off W K Bradley FdSc ICTT Tech
- Fg Off L E Cooper FdSc
- Fg Off T C Dixon BSc
- Fg Off T I Finlow BSc Eng Tech
- Fg Off E Harrison BEng
- Fg Off M R Higginbottom BEng
- Fg Off L R Hissey BSc
- Fg Off K D Khan MEng
- Fg Off S J Michell BEng
- Fg Off M B Nesbit MSc BSc
- Fg Off L O'Connor
- Fg Off J C Rudkin FdSc

ENGINEER (AEROSYSTEMS)

- Fg Off J Adams BEng MSc PhDMIET
- Fg Off M J Cowley BSc EngTech
- Fg Off F M D Galvin BEng
- Fg Off A Houghton FdSc



PARADE: New graduates

- Fg Off J D Moorhouse BEng
- Fg Off S D L Nikols MEng
- Fg Off A J Parker BEng
- Fg Off A Shah MEng
- Fg Off J W Tharme BEng

LOGISTICS

- Plt Off E E Parsons

PERSONNEL SUPPORT

- Fg Off N K Beasley
- Plt Off E C Cowell MA BA
- Plt Off L R Edmond BA
- Fg Off G Hart BA
- Fg Off B J Hook
- Fg Off H Moxham BSc
- Plt Off E V Rennie BA

PERSONNEL TRAINING

- Plt Off J Gulliver BSc
- Fg Off A E Mills BSc
- Fg Off D T Morgan MSc BA
- Fg Off T P Roberts BA

MEDICAL

- Plt Off E J East-Nutall BSc

PRIZEWINNERS OF MODULAR INITIAL OFF TRAINING COURSE NO. 1

THE SWORD OF HONOUR
● Awarded to the most promising RAF cadet: **Off Cadet N K Beasley**

THE HENNESSY TROPHY AND PHILIP SASSOON MEMORIAL PRIZE

● Awarded to the best all-round cadet, other than the Sword of Honour, winner: **Off Cadet L C A J Quilter**

THE MacROBERT PRIZE
● Awarded by cadet peers: **Off Cadet G F Mockford BA**

THE BAE SYSTEMS TROPHY
● Awarded to the RAF or International cadet with the highest marks for professional studies: **Off Cadet H L Bryant Post BA**

THE GROUP CAPTAIN WILLIAMS' MEMORIAL TROPHY

● Awarded for greatest improvement: **Off Cadet L R Hissey BSc**

THE SARAH MOLAND MEMORIAL PRIZE

● Awarded for outstanding courage and fortitude to complete IOT: **Off Cadet E E Parsons**

THE WARRANT OFFICER BILL TORRANCE TROPHY

● Awarded for Physical Education excellence: **Off Cadet D T Morgan MSc BA**

THE RAF CLUB PRIZE

● Awarded for demonstrating grit and unwavering perseverance throughout the course: **Off Cadet J Gulliver BSc**



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RAF News

The official voice of the Royal Air Force

Flt Lt Joan Potts MBE

Obituary

WAAF in Battle of Britain Ops Room



IMPORTANT WORK: WAAF
Joan Potts
(also inset above right in more recent times)

Joan helped Command keep tabs on Luftwaffe

JOAN POTTS, who has died aged 102, was an early volunteer for the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) in World War II. She served during the Battle of Britain before being commissioned and training others in fighter control.

She enlisted in June 1940 as a special duties clerk, at the time a highly-classified role and the trade name used for those serving in a Fighter Command operations and control room.

In July 1940, a reorganisation of the structure of Fighter Command resulted in the formation of an additional Group, No 10 Group at Rudloe Manor near Bath, which was responsible for the air defence of south-west England. Joan was amongst the first to arrive after its creation.

She worked in the filter room where the inputs from early warning radar units, the Royal Observer Corps and aircraft on patrol were analysed and passed to the plotting room. Other WAAFs maintained the large map table, which displayed the crucial tactical air picture for the air commanders responsible for the direction and control of the fighter squadrons, anti-aircraft units and searchlights in the area. The information was also passed to the HQ of Fighter Command, where the major battle was being controlled.

Although the main activity during the Battle of Britain occurred over south-east England in No 11 Group's area, the Luftwaffe's attacks in the west increased during the latter stages of the Battle. Late in the year, during the Blitz, enemy bombers attacked industrial areas and aircraft factories in the region and, in late 1940, there were heavy attacks against Bristol and Avonmouth in addition to naval bases at Plymouth and Portland.

By March 1941, Joan had performed her duties in

the filter room so well she was promoted to corporal, and shortly afterwards was commissioned as an assistant section officer, which gave her greater responsibility in the Fighter Control Room.

She served at another Fighter Group headquarters in Newcastle and later transferred to Northern Ireland. During this time she was appointed to Filter Officer duties acting as deputy to the controller where she was responsible for the accuracy of the production of the tactical air picture. This was a key role and represented the highest-level operational appointment that a WAAF could rise to at that time.

She served as an instructor at the Filter Training School at Bawdsey and at the end of the war decided to remain in the RAF. With a rapid drawdown of operational roles, she filled administrative appointments serving on numerous units, including the WAAF depot at Wilmslow. She transferred to the reserves in July 1947.

With the inauguration of the Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF) in February 1949, Joan was recalled to service two months later to serve in the Secretarial Branch and served as a Flight Lieutenant. After 15 months at the fighter base at Duxford, she moved in July 1950 to work in Combined Operations in the MoD and remained there until the end of 1953, a period that covered the Korean War. For her work on secret operations and plans, she was appointed MBE.

Joan returned to civilian life on December 31, 1953 and shortly afterwards accompanied her husband to the Nato headquarters at Fontainebleau, where they remained for a number of years. In 1951 she had married Archie Potts, a scientist at the radar unit at RAF Bawdsey. He later became the Director of Scientific and Technical Intelligence at the MoD between 1964 and 1974.

Joan died on February 6.





HM Government

NHS

CORONAVIRUS

BENDING THE RULES COSTS LIVES

The new variant of Covid-19 is spreading fast.
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Stop the spread, stick to the rules.
If you bend the rules people will die.

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STAY HOME ▶ PROTECT THE NHS ▶ SAVE LIVES



PRESENCE: Chunky rear end



ABLE: Off-road ability is superb

TIM MORRIS
Motoring
Correspondent



XTR a large

THE RAF isn't always fond of pick-up trucks... not least because they sometimes have rocket launchers bolted to the back and are often up to something pretty dodgy, somewhere pretty sandy.

On operations in the Middle East they proved to be regular targets but these days it's not just insurgents and farmers that love them. No, they're becoming more and more popular on UK roads for an increasing spectrum of buyers.

To u g h n e s s , durability and value are big selling points today and that's exactly what Isuzu is famous for.

The D-Max XTR costs just over £34k and it's Isuzu's most extreme model. This all-singing, all-dancing, leather-lined, neon-stitched monster comes with cruise control, air-conditioning, off-road sat nav, uprated Pedders suspension, massive towing capacity and a flatbed that you could measure in acres.

There's utility galore but this version isn't dull... it's not even subtle.

Exterior

If Samuel L Jackson were ever in the market for an Isuzu, this is the version he'd pick because it has MF body armour!

It's positively 'hench', with massive arches, a menacing nose protector, street art body graphics and a roll cage that's sturdy enough for either a Light Bar or a Light

Machine Gun. Make no mistake the D-Max XTR is a car with huge presence.

With 250mm of ground clearance you also find yourself peering satisfyingly down on anyone in a regular SUV so the villains would be staring up in terror from their tiny Range Rovers at Sammy LJ.

If you're looking for a pick-up that makes a fashion statement, this says 'action and adventure' better than almost anything else on the market.

Interior

Four-door 'double cab' pick-ups are the most popular body style in the UK and it's easy to see why. You're effectively getting a family car with a flat bed for a boot. This means you can use it for work and still take everyone out for weekend adventures.

Front seat occupants have plenty of room and those in the back won't complain either. It's a comfortable place to be and the stylish XTR, neon-green-stitched, part-leather seats look sharp.

The XTR's 9in colour touchscreen infotainment system is bright and responsive. It offers a sat-

nav that allows you to input precise GPS coordinates, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto smartphone mirroring as standard. It's nowhere near the levels of luxury that you expect from expensive SUVs but it is a well-equipped, rugged 'wideboy' and that's part of its appeal.

On the road

The 161bhp 1.9-litre diesel is available with either a manual or an automatic six-speed gearbox. This is a heavy car and, as you can imagine, it's not rapid off the mark but it's designed to deliver some serious grunt.

It's also designed to carry payloads of more than a tonne over stupendously unforgiving terrain and can tow up to 3.5 tonnes. It does these things incredibly well but, as a pay-off, its size, weight and large turning circle make it a slightly cumbersome beast around town. There's also a bit of body roll through the corners and noise/vibration at higher speeds from the 32in Pirelli Scorpion all-terrain tyres.

By pick-up standards however, the XTR is exactly where you'd expect it to be.

The suspension and braking systems have been seriously upgraded on the XTR. Peer through the wheels and you'll notice the day-glow green Pedders springs

and huge brake calipers. These give the XTR serious stopping power when they bite into the Kevlar ceramic front discs.

Off-road specialists Pedders have spent years developing bespoke systems that seriously improve a vehicle's capabilities off the tarmac but, in the XTR, this has been done without hampering its on-road performance at all. Don't expect it to drive like a car because it isn't one, but it's no tractor either.

Off-road

Over rough ground the ride is brilliant for a pick-up. You can tackle some incredibly rough stuff at surprising speeds and still have your teeth left at the end of it. We were really impressed.

It always has plenty of grip and the locking differential will get you out of anything that's beyond the car's usual comfort zone. The Scorpion tyres are absolutely perfect on rocky ground too, with yards of sidewall protecting those 17in wheels.

That body armour does make it pretty wide, as my crew discovered when they took it for the initial shots. They managed to clip a bent over barbed wire fence before they'd even got it off-road.

This did put a scratch on the heavily protected front nearside arch but the same issue on an expensive SUV would have cost thousands to fix. Another plus point to the body armour is that



UPGRADE: Springs



HUGE: 32in tyres



PLUSH: Part-leather seats



STREET ART: XTR's trendy body graphics

Verdict

Pros

- Built like a brick privy
- Loads of low-level grunt
- Good infotainment
- Well-equipped
- Cost effective

Cons

- Difficult to park/turn
- Gruff diesel engine
- Unsettled on-road ride

Overall

The XTR is a car that, in many ways, rivals Ford's new Ranger Raptor and that's stonkingly impressive given the price difference. It comes with a five-year/125,000-mile warranty and, because it's classed as a light commercial vehicles (LCV), you can claim back the VAT if you're a business. If you can make use of it, it's a practical, rugged, fashion statement.

it does provide very handy visual reference points that enable you to precisely place the car on tight off-road tracks.

Consequently, off-road it is as good as it looks.

Sport

CRICKET

Bowled over by Lord's news

September date for IST20

HOWZAT: The RAF team celebrate taking a wicket during their IST20 win in 2018; below, Flt Lt Fisher plans his team's win during 2018 fixture
PHOTOS: CPL TIM LAURENCE

Daniel Abrahams
HQ Air Command

SERVICE CRICKET players and supporters have been bowled over by the news that the sport's premier short game fixture is back in the shape of the IST20.

September 20 is the new date set for the Tri-Service cricket day, taking place as usual at the Home of Cricket – Lord's.

Usually held in May, the announcement of the rescheduled fixture, which was last won by the RAF during its 100th anniversary year in 2018, has created a huge amount of excitement.

Association spokesperson Wg Cdr Emma Watkins said: "The RAF Cricket Association and UK Armed Forces Cricket are delighted that Lord's have been able to offer us a date for the Men's IST20 tournament this season.

"The new September date offers the advantage of a longer preparation time for the organisers and the players alike, and we think offers a greater chance of running a successful event.

"Plans are also

shaping up for the Women's IST20, which will be hosted at Arundel this year.

"Overall the fixtures list is building, but all of the plans are dependent on the pandemic and government guidelines.

"For now it is superb for all concerned to have something to look forward to in our cricketing calendars."

Welcoming the news, team captain Flt Lt Adam Fisher said: "It's so strange to have

anything in the diary, but it's great that we are still in the minds of Lord's and the MCC.

"To get the IST20 on is great, later in the summer is also good. We've been having some great weather than in previous years, so fingers crossed it could work out really nicely."

Fisher, who guided the team to the 2018 victory, added: "If there is no recreational cricket for the players involved, the IST20 2021 could be open to anyone on the day really.

"If players have had time to find their form with some matches, then maybe that will tell. If not, then it may be even more exciting and unpredictable than it has been in previous years."

Team manager Sqn Ldr Jim Iago reacted to the news saying: "The whole squad are exceptionally excited that the Lord's fixture is back on the calendar.

"I have been lucky enough to be involved in several of these outings to Lord's and I can confirm the novelty of playing there just never wears off.

"We'll look forward to a return to Lord's and hopefully winning the trophy back."

Follow RAF cricket on Twitter @rafcricquet



HORSE RACING

GM meet called off



THE HORSE racing season's biggest Service race, the Grand Military Cup at Sandown, has been cancelled due to the current Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

The announcement was made after the race, set for March 12, was called off by the British Horse Racing Authority. The news came after the Authority suspended all amateur racing, the category of racing the GM Cup falls under, for the foreseeable future.

The race, which has been run for more than 170 years, along with the Royal Artillery Gold Cup, are the high points of the National Hunt season for Service riders.

A race spokesperson said: "Many of our military-serving riders are on duty at the moment, some of them supporting the pandemic itself.

"For us to be advocating them to be moving around the country, to be riding the various racehorses and for the trainers who support them, and at the same time going to Sandown for the big day, that wasn't the right thing to do, so we had to take the unfortunate decision to cancel."

The six-race meet, held at Sandown since 1881, features two Military races, a steeplechase and three hurdle events.

Organisers hope it will be back in 2022.

SPORTS DIRECTORATE

Spring in sport's step for restart

Daniel Abrahams

HQ Air Command

IT'S BEEN a time of no little external, but also internal, change in the Service's sporting governing body, with next month tentatively being mooted as when there could be a return to action.

Newly-appointed director of the RAF Sports Directorate Richard Fogden, pictured right, again spoke with *RAF News Sport* on the current state of play in Service sport and explained the changes happening to push sport into 2021 and beyond.

After nearly a year of stop-start activity, Fogden is now hoping that a starting line is in sight, with next month acting as the first gun.

He said: "This is a moment of stand-by for action, as we are hoping for some easing of lockdown for sport from mid-March.

"So, conditions based and subject to other priorities too,

this is the tentative plan we are working towards.

"We'll be publishing the details for this internally as soon as we can and, of course, we will continue to engage with associations and units to this end."

As part of its preparations for the return to sport, the directorate has also been running Sport Safety Assurance workshops in February, with these continuing into March.

Fogden added: "Given that most of our sports won't have done much for going on a year, these are particularly important.

"If we can get back to some sort of activity in March, then safety is obviously going to be paramount. Also, to help us get in the right place, administration-wise as soon as possible, the Sports Federation will be running similar workshops."

This month, the new Sports Board chairman AOC 22 Gp, AVM Rich Maddison, chaired his first RAF Sports Board since

replacing, AVM 'Bunny' James last summer.

Of the move, Fogden explained: "One of the key aspects AVM Maddison will be looking to realise is the new vision for RAF Sport: 'Recognised, Resourced, Rewarding RAF Sport for All... challenging and developing the 'Whole Force' and will contribute to the overall RAF Strategy.

"It's an important element of our push to ensure all our personnel know what's available for them at each and every level in sport."

He added: "Within DRS itself, we will be seeing some new faces as the new Deputy Director, SO2 Sport Assurance and Sport Delivery Officer join us over the next few months.

"I'm delighted to have taken up the mantle of Director from Air Cdre Russ La Forte. A new deputy will be joining us in April, as will the new Assurance Officer, taking over from Flt Lt Wayne Howell.

"As ever, we'll be working as



much as we can with the RAF Sports Federation and the RAF Central Fund, to help associations

and units deliver great sport for all. So, everyone should really stand by for the restart."

FOOTBALL

Mayday, mayday: football returns?

Air Cdre hoping kick-off for station action not far away

THE MONTH of May could see the return of Service football. That's the hope of UKAFFC chairman Air Commodore Simon Harper.

He said: "Depending on when this lockdown ends and depending on when the national governing body wants to approach all levels of football, I think it's possible that some form of football will start before the end of this season – so before the end of May of this year."

With Service football having already lost the 2021 Inter-Services matches due to the pandemic, a potential May restart will be roundly welcomed in all corners.

Warm-up and friendly matches aside, the move would see unit or station level fixtures as the first to be played, with November targeted to host the centenary fixture of the Kentish Cup in Portsmouth, along with other Remembrance fixtures.

Harper added: "It's entirely possible and has been discussed,

but it's dependent on many, many different factors. All three Services will have their own priorities as to how they will want to begin things and, of course, it's not for me to direct or advise them."

On the potentially busy UKAF autumn of action, bolstered by supportive mutterings from both the French and Dutch teams, Harper said: "It's really good news that both the French and Dutch guys are willing to begin to think about travelling to HMS Temeraire to fulfil the fixtures."

The Air Commodore also added that there are plans for the UKAF women's team to play against Chelsea women's academy, after a Remembrance fixture between the two was cancelled.

"We're looking at the opportunity of doing something similar in that sort of timescale for November 2021," he added.

Follow UKAF football on Twitter @UKArmedForcesFA.



ALL TO PLAY FOR:

Top, centre Cpl Alex Woodhouse and Cpl Jake Gosling celebrate scoring in the 2019 Kentish Cup victory in Holland; below, players and staff lifting the cup; inset far left, Air Cdre Harper
PHOTOS: SAC
CONNOR TIERNEY
ACSSU



Bobsleigh

Email: sports@rafnews.co.uk
Telephone: 07966 429755

Scratch squad are up for any Euro tests

Corporal's flyers' move mountains in ice sport

Daniel Abrahams
HQ Air Command

AFTER A summer building a bobsleigh team, Cpl John Stanbridge has seen his team in a battle royale with fellow Service sliders and secure a top 20 finish.

Starting from scratch Stanbridge spoke to RAF News last September (1498 Stan's The GB Man) about his battle to build a GB bobsleigh team and gain sponsorship and equipment. Now six -months later his perseverance has seen the team of Stanbridge, L/Cpl Jason Joseph, SAC(T) Alex Cortes-Tankard and Cpl John Baines, cause more than a stir on the European Cup bobsleigh circuit.

He said: "In January we were facing down a Service heavyweight tussle with Royal Navy pilot Sgt Adam Baird and RAF hotshot L/ Cpl Shanwayne Stephens (13th) at Innsbruck, Austria for a European Cup race at the end of January. We secured 16th out of 28 sliders, the second highest GB sled.

"This proved, utilising old equipment, myself and Cortes-Tankard and the rest of the team could hold our own."

The team, who have one more EC race to complete their season at Konigssee, Germany have not had an easy ride on their way to the top 20-slot.

Stanbridge said: "Things have been tricky, we have also had issues with false negative tests coming in which have reduced our training time.

"The team have had nine weeks of sliding in total, travelling 8,500 miles since mid-November. Throughout that we have competed in four international competitions.

"We have also carried out loads of really good training and worked

through the administration aspects, with increased costs and border controls being closed, all of which we have overcome.

"Things began with some good training in Konigssee, Altenberg and Winterberg. We were then hit by the false negative tests."

At first the Covid testing issue didn't make any impact as the pairing of Tankard and Stanbridge in their debut GB turn coming 32nd and 30th at the beginning of December, but as Stanbridge explained, time lost due to the result cost the team dear.

"Ultimately the days that we missed out meant we were not as prepared.

"We were competing against a strong field of Olympic and World Cup pilots and we were set for a 24-25th place finish before a mishap on my part. We did however secure some really strong push times and PB's throughout."

The team then chose to carry out further training at Igls, rather than Altenberg. After the week at Igls, confidence in the team was high and has remained that way as they enter their final race of the season in Konigssee, Germany at the end of the month.

Stanbridge said: "We wanted to ensure that we could build up steady and use the same formula that worked in Igls for the team.

"We were proved to be right having qualified, and despite it being another tough field of World Cup sliders, not to mention rekindling our tussles with Shanwayne, and Baird, it's going to be exciting and another great challenge."

Follow Cpl Stanbridge on Twitter @johnstanners318, Instagram @johnstanners318 and on Linked in: linkedin.com/in/john_stanbridge-644b61171.



OLYMPIC DREAM: Main, Cpl John Stanbridge and SAC(T) Alex Cortes-Tankard take a bend during a run, top right, Stanbridge, Cortes-Tankard and L/Cpl Jason Joseph proudly sit with their sled, below far left, Stanbridge and Cortes-Tankard show off their GB kit, below left, Innsbruck start for the pairing, below, close up of the RAF pair pushing off their GB sled.

PHOTOS: CPL JOHN STANBRIDGE



Win!

COMPETITION

Perfect sporting titles for race and cricket fans

THE VALUE of sport has never risen higher than during the current pandemic. Cricket and motorsport have filled our screens and now they can fill your bookshelf.

We have teamed-up with the ever-excellent Pen and Sword books to give away two titles that relate to these two sports which have provided some of the best excitement.

For lovers of the summer game, who, like all sports fans talk endlessly over picking their best 11 players, Benedict Bermange's *Picking The Perfect Cricket Team* is manna from heaven.

How many pub gardens, dinner tables or school playgrounds

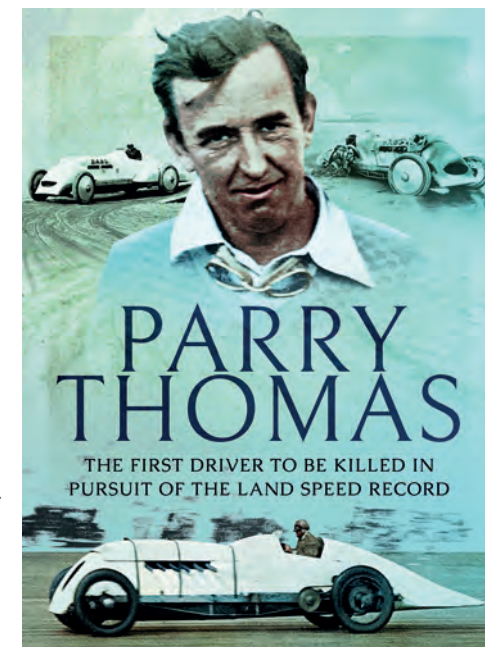
have seen fans sitting around discussing this very subject? Now fans can trawl through the comprehensive title which celebrates cricketers according to their expertise: openers, middle-order batsmen, fast and slow bowlers and so on.

Players of all positions are ranked, with the sport's love of facts and figures dutifully obeyed as Sky Sports cricket statistician Bermange, produces a fabulous, must have or all fans of the game.

The title is priced £14.99 in paperback on White Owl books.

Petrol heads of all ages may not know the name of John Godfrey Parry-Thomas, but after reading Hugh Tours title, *Parry Thomas: The First Driver to be Killed in Pursuit of the Land Speed Record*, they will and some.

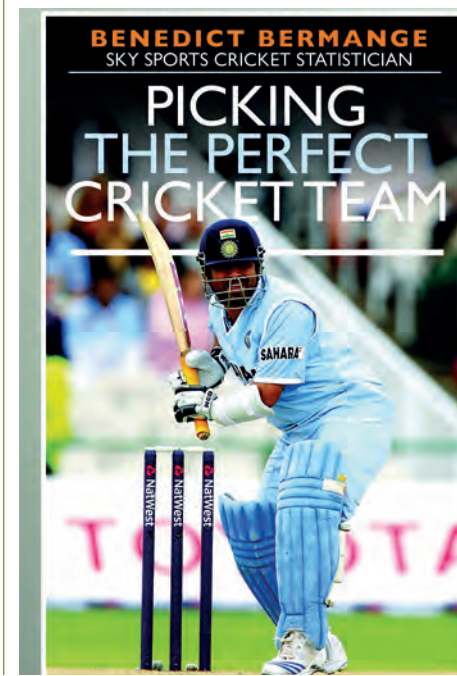
The book covers one of the pioneers of the early motor car industry, covering the incredible life of the racer who sped to victories at Brooklands in his Leyland Eight car. Tour charts how Parry-Thomas, in his Higham 'Special' named Babs, takes the land speed record off Malcolm



Campbell, before crashing during a second attempt to reclaim the crown again off Campbell on Pendine Sands, Wales on March 3, 1927. *Parry Thomas* by Hugh Tours is priced £19.99 in hardback on Pen & Sword Transport.

These titles are both cracking reads, for a chance to win one of two pairs simply answer the simple question correctly: **What was the name of John Godfrey Parry-Thomas' car in which he set the land speed record in?**

Email your answer, marked Sports books competition, to: sports@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by March 12.





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