

The Forces' favourite paper

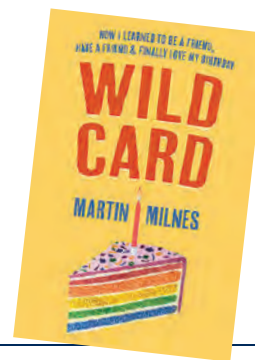
The Other One
Rebecca Fronts it out in new comedy role

● RnR p4-5



Win Win Win
Actor's book tribute to RAF hero pal

● RnR P3



ROYAL AIR FORCE

Friday **June 26** 2020
No 1494 **70p**

RAF News

Royal jets join the Covid frontline



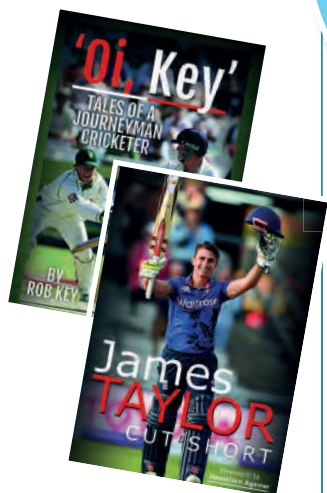
● See p9

Chile start
Ski star sets up fund run



● Sport p25

Win Win
Brace of top cricket titles



● Sport p26

Baltic B-52 bodyguard



Simon Mander

TYPHOONS ESCORTED two American B-52 bombers on a training mission before being scrambled twice to intercept Russian aircraft over the Baltic Sea.

Coningsby jets met up with the pair of Stratofortresses off the north of Scotland as they arrived from the States to take part in the annual Nato Baltops exercise in the region.

The XI(F) Sqn swing-role fighters shadowed the B-52s across the North Sea, where they were refuelled by USAF KC-135 tankers from RAF Mildenhall.

PHOTOS: CPL WILL DRUMMEE

● Continued on p3



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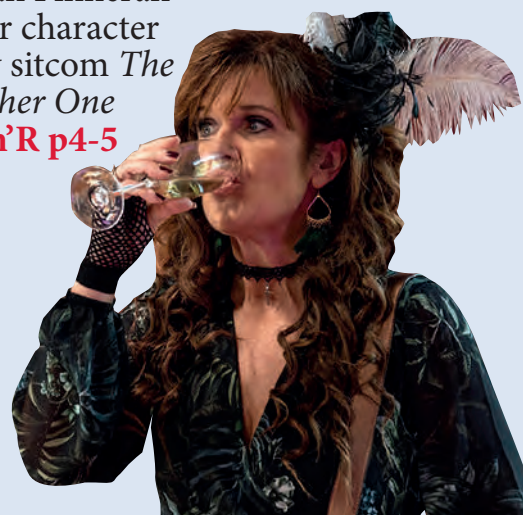
“XFE was established on the solid foundations of enterprise and community”

X-Forces Enterprise boss Lt Col Ren Kapur **pp14-15**



“Marilyn is an amazing mix of wonderful and wacky”

Siobhan Finneran on her character in new sitcom *The Other One* **R'n'R p4-5**



“The lockdown has given me time to review everything, we will hit the ground running”

Sgt Justin Coleman on his new role as RAFRU men's head coach **p27**



RAF News

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Typhoon escort for Baltic B-52

● *Continued from p1*

The British fighters were backed up by a Brize-based Voyager tanker with coordination being provided by Sentry and Sentinel aircraft from RAF Waddington.

As the B-52s from the 5th Bomb Wing, Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, left Danish airspace they trained with French Mirage 2000 and 6 Sqn Typhoons on the Baltic Air Policing mission as they flew over Latvia and Estonia.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: “Nato remains the best guarantor of our collective security and we continue to stand alongside our allies in the Baltic.”

The 6 Sqn jets deployed in Lithuania broke off the exercise after being scrambled to intercept a SU-24 Fencer E and two SU-35 Flanker aircraft and in another launch followed a Russian IL-20 Coot spy plane over the Baltic Sea.

135 Expeditionary Air Wing Commander Wg Cdr Stu Gwinnutt said: “Whether it's working with the US Bomber Task Force or reacting to live Baltic airspace incursions, we are ready to react.”

WAR DRILL: XI(F)
Sqn Typhoons
policing Nato
skies refuel from a
Voyager tanker
PHOTO: CPL WILL
DRUMMEE



This Week In History



1939

WAAF formation

The Women's Auxiliary Air Force is formed under the directorship of Miss J Trefusis Forbes, from the RAF Companies of the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS).

1982

Harrier debut

1 Sqn Harriers disembark from HMS Hermes and land at Stanley airport on the Falkland Islands.



1988

Piper Alpha rig rescue

Sea King SAR crews from Boulmer and Lossiemouth play a major role in the rescue of survivors of the Piper Alpha oil rig disaster, which claimed 167 lives.

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



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News

Buster's top dog tribute

Hero hound to be honoured at new memorial for Forces animals

Tracey Allen

CELEBRITY DOG lovers Paul O'Grady and Clare Balding are backing a campaign for a national military working dogs memorial – featuring RAF dogs Buster and Lucky.

So far £52,000 has been raised towards the £200,000 needed for the development and maintenance of the memorial, to be built at The Pet Cemetery in Holywell, North Wales.

Bronze statues of German Shepherd Lucky, an RAF Police anti-terrorist tracker dog deployed on active service from 1949-52 during the Malaya Campaign, and Springer Spaniel Buster, who completed five tours of duty to Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan, will be on two of the memorial's four plinths.

The other heroic hounds to be honoured are English Pointer Judy – the only dog to be registered as a Prisoner of War, in Japan, and who was mascot of river gunboat HMS



Grasshopper, and Spaniel Theo, who served with the Royal Army Veterinary Corps in Afghanistan and died in the line of duty.

Spokeswoman Emma Ward said: "The project aims to develop and maintain the first national statue monument within the UK which will serve as a reminder of the

contribution military working dogs have made and continue to make to the country's security.

"It will have a traditional central folly with four decorative paths leading North, South, East and West culminating in four plinths which will each support a bronze statue depicting medal-winning dogs representing the branch of the military service in which each served."

She added: "We hope to have the memorial built by summer 2021. All the money raised to date is from public donation and fundraising.

"We were gifted £4,600 from the Officer and Aircrew Training Unit at RAF College Cranwell. Their amazing fundraising efforts took place over a few events



FRONTLINE CANINES: Legendary airdog Buster with handler FS Will Barrow in Afghanistan; above, WWII German Shepherd Lucky. Far left, artist's sketch of new memorial.



BACKING: Paul O'Grady

including Inter-Squadron games, raffles, quiz nights, cake sale, auctions and a lip sync battle."

The public can donate in memory of a loved one and of a beloved pet and have a

photograph and message added to the charity's online memorial wall.

Former First Sea Lord Admiral Lord West is the project's patron and the campaign is also looking for other military backing.

● **Go to:** nmwdm.org.uk to support the campaign.

TRAINING DEAL: RAF and Qatari pilots prepare for their first training sorties together with joint squadron. Inset, squadron badge features British and Qatari flags
PHOTO: LACIWAN LEWIS



Qatar call for 12 Sqn crews

QATARI PILOTS with the first joint RAF squadron to be formed since World War II launched their first training sorties in Typhoon fighter jets from Coningsby.

The unit was reformed after the Gulf state signed a £5 billion deal with BAE to buy 24 Typhoon

swing-role fighters. As part of the agreement Qatari Emir Air Force pilots and engineers will train alongside their RAF counterparts at the Lincolnshire base.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: "12 Squadron is a testament

to our enduring friendship and commitment to Qatar, the only nation with which the UK has a joint squadron.

"Together we are protecting populations and securing our mutual interests across the Middle East."

Farewell to the 'Forces Sweetheart' Vera Lynn

TRIBUTES HAVE been paid to Forces Sweetheart Dame Vera Lynn who has died aged 103.

Royal Air Force Association chief Nick Bunting was among leading Forces figures to honour the singer's memory.

He said: "We are incredibly grateful for Dame Vera's many decades of support for the Association and wider RAF community."

Dame Vera was a great supporter of many RAFA branches, including its Amsterdam branch, attending its spring charity ball for 21 years.

In 2016, the national Soldiering On Awards judges presented her with an Outstanding Contribution Award. The prestigious accolade is in recognition of an individual or organisation whose achievements are considered remarkable and significant to the Armed Forces and wider community.

The veteran singer was founder and president of the Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity for youngsters with cerebral palsy and other motor learning difficulties. Recently she urged people to get behind the charity's Keep Smiling Through Appeal to help it survive the effect of the coronavirus



VOICE OF WWII: Dame Vera Lynn, pictured with her daughter Virginia

pandemic on its fundraising.

In 2009, aged 92, Dame Vera became the oldest living artist to reach No. 1 on the British album chart, and in 2017 she was the oldest living artist to enter the UK official albums chart.

Her iconic song *We'll Meet Again* took on a special meaning in the Covid-19 crisis and was mentioned by The Queen in her speech to the nation in April.



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Reds' Churchill salute marks wartime plea

Macron visit celebrates 80th anniversary of De Gaulle call to arms

Simon Mander

A CENTURY of Anglo-French military co-operation was marked by a spectacular flypast over a statue of Britain's wartime leader.

The Red Arrows and their Gallic counterparts La Patrouille de France flew over the capital's landmarks, including the statue of Winston Churchill in Westminster, to mark a visit by President Emmanuel Macron.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: "The visit is an important opportunity to remember our shared sacrifices and achievements in defeating fascism."

The event marked 80 years since De Gaulle's historic L'Appel broadcast to Occupied France on June 18, 1940 – said to have inspired the nation's resistance to the Nazis.

In the BBC broadcast he famously told his people: "France is not alone! She is not alone... She can align with the British Empire that holds the sea and continues to fight."

The visit came after both nations' most recent joint mission – participation in Nato's exercise in the Baltic Sea, to deter Russian aggression.

France has also contributed to the British-led battlegroup in Estonia and both powers have pledged to support the operation again next year.



JOINING FORCES: Red Arrows and French display team La Patrouille de France fly over Westminster; below, President Macron and Boris Johnson mark key WWII date



Mr Wallace said: "We can look back on more than a century of cooperation between our Armed Forces and feel proud of what our countries have achieved, side by side, at so many great turning points in history."

"The UK and France continue that close partnership today, working together from the Caribbean to Africa and the Middle East, as guarantors of peace and security."

The MoD has extended the deployment of three RAF Chinooks and 100 personnel to the French counter-terrorism mission in Mali.

So far, the Odiham-based unit has completed more than 2,000 flying hours transporting 13,000 personnel. President Macron's last visit, in 2018, marked the formation of a Combined Joint Expeditionary Force which, fully operational, will be able to deploy 10,000 military personnel.



MENTAL HEALTH ALERT: FS Barrow and her campaign mascot

Black dog bid to banish blues

FS TRACY Barrow has teamed up with a canine mascot to promote mental health issues.

The campaigning airwoman will be accompanied by the stuffed toy, dubbed Sirius, while she carries out her duties at Benson.

The stunt was inspired by wartime leader Winston's Churchill famous description of his own mental health issues as the 'black dog'.

FS Barrow, who has battled depression herself, said: "I didn't ask for help because of the stigma. Reducing the stigma of mental health is the most important thing. It's okay not to be okay."



ON YOUR BIKE: Fundraising organiser Squadron Leader Colin Green

Lions' lift for lockdown vets

SOCIAL DISTANCING rules didn't deter Wittering-based bikers determined to help vulnerable veterans.

Pedal pushers from the Golden Lions Cycling Club split into teams of six and rode circuits around Newark and the Cambridgeshire station to complete 100 miles for the RAF Association.

Organiser Sqn Ldr Colin Green said: "Maintaining social distancing was the key. One rider stayed at home on his turbo-trainer and the remaining riders did circular routes around their homes."

The Newark team finished first after the Wittering team was hit by mechanical problems.

The event has raised more than £2,000 so far, which will be donated to welfare groups supporting vets struggling with lockdown.

● Go to www.justgiving.com/team/GoldenLions

REMEMBRANCE: Padre Flt Lt Chris Hodder conducts service at Mount Pleasant; inset right, 1435 Flt Typhoon performs a flypast. PHOTOS: SGT DAVE ROSE



Liberation day tribute to the Falklands fallen

Tamsin Jessop

BRITISH FORCES stationed in the South Atlantic paid tribute to UK troops who died during the Falklands conflict as the UK marked the 38th anniversary of the liberation of the islands.

Air Force, Army and Navy personnel held a number of events to mark the date ahead of a special ceremony at the Mount Pleasant complex.

In Stanley, the last area to fall to British forces, a thanksgiving service was held in Christ Church Cathedral, followed by a wreath-laying ceremony. As military personnel marked the moment

Argentinian forces surrendered at Mount Pleasant, three Typhoons with 1435 Flt – deployed to the South Atlantic to guard UK sovereign airspace – performed a flypast over the



congregation. Flt Lt Max McNamara said: "As a Typhoon pilot it was a real privilege to be able to take part in the Liberation Day commemorations."

"It is an honour to be able to pay our respects, and being able to perform a flypast in the skies that saw so much 38 years ago gives a very humbling perspective to the ceremony."





OF SUPPORT TO OUR RAF COMMUNITY



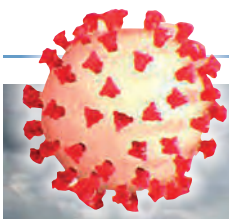
SSAFA is proud that 2020 marks the 30th anniversary of our Personal Support & Social Work Service, providing practical and emotional support to serving RAF personnel and their families.

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For more information, visit: ssafa.org.uk/RAFSocialWork

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TRAINING: RAF medics prepare to transport a 'patient' aboard a 32 Sqn BAe146
PHOTOS: SGT 'MATTY' MATTHEWS

'Royal' jets join the Covid fight

32 Sqn BAe146s to make debut in aeromed role

A PAIR of Royal Air Force transporters have been adapted to carry medical patients to boost Forces support in the UK fight against coronavirus.

Two BAe146 aircraft operated by 32 (The Royal) Squadron will be used to carry critically-ill patients and medical staff for the first time.

The jets will add to the medical capability already provided by Atlas, Hercules, Globemaster and Voyager transporters and Chinook and Puma helicopters.

The smaller 146 can land on shorter airstrips inaccessible to larger aircraft in the RAF fleet.

The project is a collaboration between 32 Sqn, the Brize Norton-based Tactical Medical Wing, Joint Air Delivery Test and Evaluation Unit and specialists from across UK Defence.

The conversion of the jets, designed to carry VIPs and Royal passengers, has been completed under the RAF's Astra programme – launched to boost innovation across the Service.

TMW commander Wg Cdr Jo Bland



(pictured below) said: "This has been an amazing achievement which embodies the very spirit of

Astra; using existing military aircraft in a dual-hatted role and optimising Defence assets.

"We have never delivered aeromed on



the BAe146 in this manner before and it has been achieved at zero cost and in record time.

"The aircraft can land at airports where Voyager can't because of its smaller size and footprint. It suits our purposes brilliantly for short hops which can be completed at less cost and with less impact on the environment."

The 146 uses stretcher stanchions already in use on Voyager which are fixed to pallet flooring inside the aircraft to secure medical equipment used by Air Force Critical Care teams.

The BAe146 was declared cleared for take-off in its new role following crew training and prototype trials by JADTEU, within two months of the initial request.

Lt/Col Sam Allinson, JADTEU Commanding Officer, added: "We have a superb team of experts drawn from across the military and Civil Service.

"Our core business is operational trials and evaluation for the delivery of personnel,



BAE146: Smaller, adaptable RAF transporter

equipment and material by air. It has been gratifying to be able to design, test and manufacture a solution so quickly in support of Defence's medical transportation capability."

Wg Cdr Delia Chadwick, OC 32 (The Royal) Sqn (pictured right) said: "This project is an exemplar of what Defence can achieve in a short space of time when the operational need exists."



News

News bulletin



Dan dares you to take Forces quiz

HISTORY MAN Dan Snow and a host of celebrity quizmasters are challenging Forces brainboxes to put their military knowledge to the test for charity.

The presenter will be hosting the Big Battle of Britain Virtual Quiz next month to raise cash for the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Dan said: "I know the difference the Fund makes to the lives of those who have served their country and fallen on hard times by providing a safety net for all."

The online event takes place on July 11, starting at 8pm.

Go to: rafbf.org to sign up.



A HERCULES C130J loads up a Foxhound patrol vehicle as it prepares for a supply sortie on Operation Shader.

The RAF workhorse transporter was the first aircraft to be deployed on the Coalition mission in Iraq.

PHOTO: SGT NEIL BRYDEN



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Nato battles Covid and Putin threat with Baltic Sea drill

Simon Mander

TYPHOONS SIMULATED air attacks on battleships in the largest annual Nato maritime exercise in the Baltic region.

Lossiemouth-based 6 Sqn jets wargamed with Polish Su-22s as around 3,000 personnel from 19 Alliance countries and partners took part in manoeuvres.

This year the long-standing combat drill took place exclusively at sea to protect military personnel against coronavirus.

"The Baltic Sea is of vital strategic importance for the Alliance and is bordered by six Nato countries and two close partners," said Nato spokesperson Oana Lungescu.

"While we continue to take all the necessary measures to protect our armed forces against the health crisis, our operational readiness remains undiminished."

A Typhoon pilot who took part said: "Working with aircraft and naval units from a variety of Nato members made for an interesting and valuable training opportunity."

The British squadron, currently deployed to Šiauliai in Lithuania, took on Polish F-16 fighters defending a Combined Naval Task Group including Type 23 Frigate HMS Kent.

"This exercise provides the opportunity for Nato and partner nations to operate together, sharing best practices to improve real world operations," said US Vice Admiral Lisa Franchetti, commander US 6th Fleet.

Nato's Combined Air Operations Centre in Uedem, Germany, directed air operations with support

from AWACS surveillance aircraft which coordinated some of the air manoeuvres.

As combat jets launched maritime strikes more than 20 ships carried out naval manoeuvres including air defence, anti-

submarine and mine-hunting drills.

Among them is HMS Ramsey, which arrived in the Baltic last month as part of a Nato mine warfare group operating off the coast of Estonia and Lithuania, dealing with leftover World War II

ordnance. The Royal Navy maintains a presence in the region most of the year as part of the Alliance task group.

It is the second year running that the Faslane-based minehunter has taken part in annual Baltic war games.

Participating personnel come from Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the UK and the United States.

ON TARGET: HMS Kent's weapons crews practise close-range gunnery whilst on Baltops 20 exercise; inset above, Typhoon

PHOTO: DAN ROSENBAUM

News bulletin

Online mind gym expands to cope with Covid crisis

Tracey Allen

HEADSPACE, the online mindfulness site launched by the RAF Benevolent Fund for serving personnel, can now be accessed by partners and spouses.

Around 600 RAF members signed up for the service in its first weeks – now more than 3,400 are using the online support, said an RAFBF spokesperson.

The platform offers exercises focusing on specific areas such as sport, health or happiness.

Alison Wyman, the Fund's head of strategy and programmes, said: "Given the current climate, it's more important than ever to take care of our mental health, and providing free access to Headspace is one way

that personnel and their partners can do so from their own homes.

"The decision to expand our Headspace offering is the latest development for our ever-evolving welfare provision."

The Fund has launched several initiatives to help support members of the RAF family throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown.

Its Listening and Counselling Service has been expanded to provide 24-hour emotional support to veterans and serving personnel and their partners.

The Fund has also created an online mental wellbeing zone on its website where veterans and personnel can find advice, support and where to go for more help.

● [Go to rafbf.org/headspace](https://www.rafbf.org/headspace)

James delivers the bear necessities

ARMED FORCES charity SSAFA and the UK's oldest remaining teddy bear manufacturer, Merrythought, have collaborated to create a teddy to raise funds for Service personnel and their families.

The British-made collectable, named James after SSAFA founder, Major James Gildea, was made during Merrythought's 90th anniversary year.

Managing director Sarah Holmes said: "My grandfather, Trayton Holmes, proudly served in the RAF during World War II and Merrythought helped with the war effort, making textile items such as gas mask covers, kit bags, and clothing."

James Bear has been crafted from soft, sandy-gold mohair plush and features felt paws and a hand-embroidered nose and smile. His tweed scarf incorporates SSAFA's red and blue brand colours.

SSAFA's Rebecca Keaveney said: "This is a significant year for us as



READY TEDDY GO: Ten per cent of sales of James Bear will be donated to Forces Charity SSAFA

we celebrate our 135th anniversary and also commemorate 75 years since the end of the war.

"We hope these bears will be passed down through generations, along with the knowledge that the purchase of each one has made a difference to our

nation's Armed Forces family."

James Bear has been made to a limited edition of only 1885, to reflect the year SSAFA was founded.

The teddy costs £125 and is available from merrythought.com. Up to £12.50 for every James Bear sold will go to support SSAFA.



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News

News bulletin



FIGHTING FUND: Reservist Gunner takes up charity challenge.

Air ambulance gets a cash lift

GUNNERS TURNED their lockdown fitness regime into a moneyspinner for the Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire Air Ambulance.

The 2503 Regiment Reserves trained every day for a month to banish the Covid-19 blues and support their local airborne emergency team.

They set up a donations page pledging to run, row or cycle 2503 km to net £1000 for the charity.

The fundraising team smashed their target totalling 3276 miles, and raising £1590.



CHARITY BID: L/Cpl Burns will be completing ultra marathon this month

Eamon steps up the pace

A GUNNER is to run 30 miles in one day to raise cash for a Service charity.

L/Cpl Eamon Burns of 34 Sqn RAF Regiment will pound the paths from Leeming to Catterick Garrison and back in aid of SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity.

L/Cpl Burns said: "SSAFA has helped thousands of serving and ex-serving personnel and their families each year and has personally supported my family both financially and emotionally.

"It is my pleasure to be able to give back to such a fantastic organisation and help them to continue to help others."

Big Lizzie lift off for Lightning



LIGHTNING JETS landed on HMS Queen Elizabeth to begin sea trials off the coast of Portsmouth, ahead of their maiden voyage together next year.

The F-35Bs will then be linking up with US, European and other Nato allies.

Commander Mark Sparrow of 617 'Dambusters' Sqn said: "We are excited to be on board the carrier and we have been training hard to be here."

This is the first time the ship and its operational squadron has embarked and worked together.

Commander Ed Phillips added: "This is a significant moment for HMS Queen Elizabeth on the road to delivering carrier strike operations for the Royal Navy."

The ship recently completed sea trials and the further tests are designed to demonstrate the jets can successfully defend it through combat air patrols, short notice take offs and working alongside Merlin helicopters.

Gulf War great who led the first strikes against Saddam dies at 69

TRIBUTES HAVE been paid to Gulf War hero Air Cdre Jerry Witts who has died aged 69.

Witts, awarded the DSO, led a Tornado bombing mission to an airfield in Iraq on the first night of the Gulf War in January 1991.

ACM Sir William Wratten, who was then Deputy Commander British Forces Middle East and Air Commander, said: "Although I had met Jerry Witts before, the Gulf War of 1991 was the first time we had served together.

"His squadron's primary task would be delivering the large 10,000 lbs JP233 airfield denial weapon.

"Jerry Witts inspired confidence. His softly spoken, direct manner gave an immediate impression that he knew precisely how his squadron would go about meeting its task, one of the most hazardous in theatre.

"That he and his crews went on to deliver the JP233 with unerring accuracy was a tribute to them all and Jerry's eventual award of the DSO was most richly deserved."

ACM Wratten added: "An article



SHOCK AND AWE: A pair of Tornado GR.1s take off from Muharraq on a raid against Iraqi positions during Operation Granby. Inset right, Air Cdre Jerry Witts.

he wrote in Air Clues titled 'Stormin' with Norman' reflected the drama of Tornado's JP233 profile and the humour he injected into the danger of an operational sortie.

"He had led from the front throughout, flying his squadron's

first mission of the war."

Witts was Life Vice-President of the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust and the Trust's immediate past president. Former Chief of the Air Staff ACM Sir Michael Graydon described him as 'a man

to remember.'

Trust chairman Richard Hunting said: "Jerry was a skilled pilot, a great character, a highly valued Trustee and a great friend to many people. He will be sadly missed."

● See p19 for full obituary.

Can-do attitude and resilience make Forces veterans model entrepreneurs

Never giving up is an invaluable asset in business that former military personnel have in spades, says new support group patron Lt Gen Richard Nugee

THE MILITARY'S ability to keep going in the face of adversity is one of the main reasons why Armed Forces veterans make successful entrepreneurs, says former Chief of Defence People (CDP) Lt Gen Richard Nugee.

Currently leading the MOD's climate change policy, he has just been appointed patron of X-Forces Enterprise (XFE), the UK's largest provider of support to former military personnel in business.

Lt Gen Nugee said: "You are taught in the military not to give up in the face of adversity – what you do is work out how to go around obstacles and deliver the outcome you have been told to deliver."

"The military are really strong on values and standards, on an ethos, but underpinning that is you never run away because that's what destroys a unit, destroys cohesion on the battlefield."

"So, you're determined to stick it out and make it work for you – if you don't have the initiative you do something to regain it. That sort of training is really powerful and something anyone running their own company would understand."

He added: "Having those values, being determined, your work ethic, the ethos of looking after other people and of providing a service is really important. You don't just give up – that's what you need when going through the difficulty of setting up your own business."

XFE offers free support to Service leavers, veterans, reservists, spouses, widows, cadets and dependants over 18. Since it was set up in 2012 it has helped more than 2,000 entrepreneurs launch their own businesses, ranging from a brewery to sports therapy massage. Among those to have benefited from its help are former Flight Lieutenant Hannah Saunders, who founded skincare company Toddle Born Wild, named Start-up of the Year at last year's Heropreneur Awards.

Lt Gen Nugee said: "Through my role as CDP I saw first-hand how equipping Service personnel with key skills not only maintained the

high standards of the UK's fighting force, but saw a huge number of opportunities open up when they transitioned to civilian life.

"XFE don't just provide some training and the opportunity to arrange a loan, they keep the relationship going for as long as the individual setting up the company wants. That is pretty rare in today's world and really exceptional."

Lt Col Ren Kapur, XFE's founder and chief executive, pictured below, said: "XFE was established on the solid foundations of enterprise and community, with a huge focus on the importance of collaborative relationship and that all-important sense of belonging."

"You're determined to stick it out and make it work for you – if you don't have the initiative you do something to regain it. That sort of training is really powerful and something anyone running their own company would understand"

"This not only provides a much-needed safety net but, most importantly, emulates the confidence personnel have when they are serving. Lt Gen Nugee's insight and expertise will help us to understand and support even more of those who need our help most."

The Lt Gen conceded that there is still a misconception among the public about military

veterans – written off as unemployable due to PTSD, alcohol and drug problems and homelessness.

He said: "There is definitely a perception problem but the fact is that of those who have been through the Career Transition Partnership [resettlement for Service leavers], which is the majority, around 85 per cent have got a job within six months and are doing very well. Of the remaining 15 per cent, about 10 per cent don't want jobs because they want to retire, are carers or have gone into education."

Veterans' involvement in key work during the coronavirus pandemic has helped improve their public

perception, said the Lt Gen. "It's been immensely valuable. Being seen on the UK's streets as a force for good, they are seen as doing something for the benefit of society. The reality is that they have always done things to help society but most of it's not seen. It's just sad that it's taken a crisis of these proportions for people to recognise that."

Earlier this year Minister for Veterans Affairs Johnny Mercer unveiled a £30 million programme that including boosting ex-Forces job hunters' prospects with a scheme to give applicants guaranteed interviews for public sector posts.

Lt Gen Nugee said: "That's a really good idea. Armed Forces veterans have

More info at:
x-forces.com
xfehub.com



LT GEN NUGEE: XFE patron



AWARDS: Recognising achievements of veterans including skincare chief Hannah Saunders

only provides peer-to-peer support; it will inspire experts within both the business and charity sectors to engage, contribute or simply have the reassurance that their beneficiaries are being supported."

Ren Kapur added: "The partnership will allow easier entry for start-up and scale-up business to have continued support from a membership organisation with the same values as XFE."

Those using the hub can match up with a business captain – an expert in a specific area who can offer support and guidance. XFE is looking for potential business captains from various backgrounds, who may be veterans themselves, and want to give something back to the military community.

Lt Gen Nugee revealed that among XFE's future plans are the creation of an academy with a set of alumni and a centre of excellence where people can find expertise.

He said: "That's really attractive and something I am very strongly encouraging."

He added: "Veterans in all nations are similar, they have all stepped up to the plate, all said they wanted to serve their country, and serve something bigger than themselves. I have learned that by meeting so many of them from different countries."

"I genuinely believe XFE is exportable across the world."

Go to: x-forces.com for more information and see: xfehub.com to find out more about matching with or becoming a Business Captain.

'We want the UK to be the best place in the world to be a veteran'



PLEDGE: RAF News report (above) of pledge by Defence Minister Johnny Mercer (left) to veterans



Success is skin deep for Hannah



SUCCESS: Ex-RAF officer Hannah Saunders

so much to offer – the public sector would do well to employ more."

Anot-for-profit organisation, XFE launched its new knowledge exchange hub and its partnership with the Federation of Small Businesses in Virtual Armed Forces Week recently.

Lt Gen Nugee said: "The partnership with the FSB coupled with the launch of the new knowledge exchange hub is a fantastic illustration of the growing importance of enterprise learning across the Armed Forces community."

"The revolutionary XFE hub not



FLASHBACK: Discrimination disgrace



Win heart-
warming
memoir

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The Open
University



Books Wild Card

zuleika.london

FRIEND OF THE RAF: West End star Martin Milnes with veterans. The actor is also a supporter of The Battle of Britain Memorial Trust



VIRGINIA CAMPBELL: Worked with the greats



PALS: Lenny Lambert with author and actor Martin Milnes



VIP: Lenny meeting RAF chief Hugh Trenchard

WEST END actor Martin Milnes says he is passionate about World War II history, so it's no surprise that his recent memoir *Wild Card* features his friendship with RAF heroes including D-Day veteran Wg Cdr Leonard 'Lenny' Lambert who escaped, by himself, from Dunkirk, before reclaiming the beaches of France as a Squadron Leader.

A director and lecturer as well as a performer, Martin is a strong supporter of the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust.

He said: "The chapter of my memoir of which I'm most proud is Lenny's escape from Dunkirk. He was abandoned by his Commanding Officer, left behind after the official evacuation. To preserve Lenny's story, in his own words, was very important to me."

"I'd always been passionate about WWII history – so to call these heroes friends, and hear their stories of bravery, first-hand, was both humbling and inspiring."

"It also made the history which I'd read about real and personal. That puts matters into perspective. I try to recapture the immediacy and emotion of the veterans' stories when passing them on to others."

"Once I'd become involved with the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust it wasn't just something I wanted to do, it was something I needed to do."

Lenny died in 2016, aged 96.

Best known as one half of musical theatre duo Ferris & Milnes, Martin

Lenny's lone Dunkirk escape... and Audrey Hepburn's fishnets

West End star Martin Milnes' *very* different memoir

directed the first professional revival of Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Grand Duke* and the London premiere of Gyles Brandreth and Julian Slade's *Now We Are Sixty*. He lectures in musical theatre and film history.

Brandreth said of *Wild Card*: "This is a coming-of-age, coming-out, come-and-meet-me story that's by turns funny and touching, revelatory and heart-warming."

The book features insight into the golden age of film and musical theatre, with first-hand memories from those who were there, such as Lenny's wife Virginia Campbell who lived to be 102 and danced on

Broadway with Gene Kelly, made Hollywood movies with Marilyn Monroe and Cecil B. DeMille, and inspired a character in Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*.

Jean Bayless, the original West End 'Maria' in *The Sound of Music*, confided to Martin that fellow chorus girl Audrey Hepburn, "gave me my first pair of fishnets" in 1949 and Hollywood star Peggy Cummins told him, "Charlie Chaplin hid in the boot of my car."

Martin said: "I hope that *Wild Card* will speak to those who have similarly struggled to accept themselves; we all need to embrace and celebrate who we really are."

Get a piece of the action Win!



WE HAVE copies of *Wild Card* (zuleika.london) to win – for your chance to own one, answer this question correctly:

What is the name of the musical theatre duo that features Martin?

Email your answer, marked Wild Card book competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk to arrive by July 10. Sorry, but due to the coronavirus crisis, we are currently unable to accept entries by post.



TV

Two Doors Down

BBC

The door's opened for new series

A NEW SERIES – the fifth – of hit comedy *Two Doors Down* has been commissioned by the BBC.

Filming will take place in Glasgow with the show expected on screen in 2021, said the Beeb.

Set in the fictional Scottish suburban street of Latimer Crescent, the six-part series will again feature the core cast of Arabella Weir as Beth and Alex Norton as Eric – the long-suffering Bairds whose home is often at the heart of the comedy – Elaine C. Smith as Christine, Doon Mackichan as Cathy and Jonathan Watson as her husband Colin.

Also returning are Jamie Quinn as the Bairds' son Ian and Kieran Hodgson as his boyfriend Gordon. Graeme 'Grado' Stevely and Joy McAvooy will return as Alan and Michelle.

BBC Comedy Commissioning



PUT UPON: Beth and Eric (Arabella Weir and Alex Norton) often end up hosting neighbours

controller Shane Allen said: "The audience popularity across BBC Two and iPlayer has led to huge affection for a show that now rubs shoulders with *The Royle Family* and *Gavin And Stacey* as a firm and long-lasting sitcom favourite.

"The writing is so precise, the characters burst with comic vitality and the performances are a masterclass in comedy delivery. Poor Eric, what fresh hell is he in for?"

Written by Simon Carlyle and Gregor Sharp, *Two Doors Down* first aired as a pilot in 2013, with series one launching in 2016. It went on to receive multiple awards, including for best comedy at the 2017 Royal Television Society Scotland Awards. Elaine C. Smith won Best Actress at the Bafta Scotland Awards in 2018.

The pilot, along with all four series of *Two Doors Down*, is available to watch on BBC iPlayer.

More laughs



TV

British Academy TV Awards

BBC One

Hoping to be a big IT

THE IT Crowd and *Travel Man* star Richard Ayoade has been announced as the new host for the Virgin Media British Academy Television Awards.

The event will now take place on July 31 and will be broadcast as live on BBC One that evening.

The British Academy of Film and Television Arts (Bafta) confirmed the new date for the event, originally scheduled for spring 2020, but postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The ceremony will take place as a closed studio, socially-distanced show, with nominees invited to accept their awards virtually.

Presenter, comedian, writer, actor and director Ayoade will take the helm for the first time. He said: "I am as surprised as you are that this is still going ahead."

Amanda Berry, Bafta's chief executive, said: "We want to celebrate and reward the talented individuals who make up the television industry, both behind and in front of the camera, many of whom have continued to entertain and inform the nation in recent weeks.

"I am thrilled that Richard Ayoade will be hosting the



WELL-TRAVELLED: Ayoade in his role as host of award-winning Channel 4 show

Television Awards for the first time and, with him at the helm, the evening is set to be great entertainment."

Ayoade won a Bafta for Best Male Performance in a Comedy Programme for *The IT Crowd*, and has been nominated for a Bafta twice more – in the British Academy Film Awards, for Outstanding Debut by a British

Writer, Director or Producer of *Submarine*, and for *Travel Man*, nominated for Best Feature in the Television Awards in 2017.

Comedian and *The Great British Sewing Bee* host Joe Lycett (left) has been announced as the new presenter of *Travel Man*.



The Big Event

The Other One

WHAT HAPPENS when you discover your dead dad has a secret family and you have a sister you didn't know anything about?

All is revealed in the new BBC One sitcom *The Other One* by Holly Walsh (*Motherland*) and Pippa Brown (*Bad Education*). It stars Siobhan Finneran (*Downton Abbey*, *Happy Valley*), Rebecca Front (*The Thick of It*, *War and Peace*), Ellie White (*Inside No 9*, *The Windsors*), Lauren Socha (*Misfits*, *Catastrophe*) and Amit Shah (*Hospital People*, *W1A*).

White said: "Holly's an amazing writer and the script stood out as soon as I read it. I've never played a lead part before, and one who's funny is the absolute cherry on the cake. There's such a lovely tone to the whole thing: a silly sitcom with big characters but with real emotion."

Best known as Princess Beatrice in Channel 4 comedy *The Windsors*, White described her new character, Cathy Walcott, as "uptight and neurotic."

She explained: "She's in her late 20s and works in re-insurance. She's uptight and neurotic but conversely quite naive and never wants to offend. I would say she's a bit of a perfectionist and wants things done her way. She's not exactly street smart, in fact probably the opposite, and meeting her new sister Cat (Socha) certainly opens her eyes to the world beyond her small bubble – which after the death of her dad I think she finds quite cathartic."

How would White react if she found herself in the same situation?

She revealed: "I think I'd find it quite fun to be honest. I've always wanted a sister so it would be interesting. I mean if we didn't get on I would disown her and pretend it never happened, but if we did, great."

Her favourite scene comes in the final episode where Cat and Cathy take their dad's boat out.

She said: "It was incredibly fun to film, and playful. Cathy is much more free and loose than she has been before, so I hope people will enjoy those scenes. There was also added excitement and jeopardy when we filmed it, in seeing whether or not Lauren would fall into the freezing cold water and get the entire shoot shut down."

How does White think Cathy would react to lockdown?

She said: "Probably a few anxiety attacks mixed with super-organised shopping trips mixed

with extensive sanitising mixed with trying desperately to volunteer for the NHS and making a hundred rainbows for the window. Then a mild breakdown."

Rebecca Front (left) plays widow Tess – a woman, as Front described, 'who has always towed the line.' "She's played it by the rules, and the rules matter to her. So, when she discovers, after her husband's untimely death, that he has defied the rules throughout their marriage – by having a whole other family and not



Cat's out of the bag

Cathy's got a sister she knew nothing about... and they're chalk and cheese



ODD COUPLE: Uptight, middle-class Cathy (left) and her half-sister Cat (Lauren Socha). Below, Cathy (Ellie White) with fiancé Marcus (Amit Shah)



telling her – she is understandably furious," she explained.

She added: "I loved the premise – it felt like something I hadn't seen before, even though stories like this pop up from time to time in the news. And I thought Holly and Pippa's script was very funny. Plus, it's still relatively unusual to do something as female-led as this."

Front revealed that she didn't think she was at all similar to her character.

She said: "I don't think we're very alike at all. I'm much more of a pushover than Tess, and I like to think I'm a bit more laid back and self-aware. I'm not sure we'd be friends if we met."

How would she react if she found herself in Tess's situation?

"I'd be utterly devastated... who wouldn't? But I think I'd get some counselling to help me process it, which Tess could really do with in my opinion."

Finneran's character Marilyn, 'the other woman' and Cat's mother, is vastly different from the scheming maid O'Brien she played in *Downton Abbey*.

She said: "Marilyn is an amazing mix of wonderful and wacky, which is why I wanted to play her. She is naive, she is eccentric, she is damaged, she is fragile, and she is fun. She's honest, but has lived a life of secrets and lies for years."

"She is very confident with her sexuality and makes no excuses for the life she's been living for 30 years. She seems to have coped with it extremely well on the surface – people may perceive her as arrogant but she's not."

"Marilyn lives in a medicated bubble most of the time, which I think is probably her way of coping with the life she has been living."

Finneran (below) added: "Working with the other three actresses was fantastic. I particularly enjoyed Cathy's and Cat's responses to practically everything – there's a childlike innocence they both have which I find charming, funny and at times very moving."

"Tess is dealing with shock, grief, anger and every emotion under the sun and I think Rebecca is brilliant at making that heartbreaking whilst also hilarious."

The Other One continues on Fridays at 9pm on BBC One and the whole series is available on BBC iPlayer.



Sister act



Music

Travis

10 Songs

Ninth album

No isolation clay feet for Travis – just a Clay feat



BIG DRAW: Travis with frontman and artist Healy, right

SCOTTISH ROCKERS Travis are back with the first taste of new music from their forthcoming ninth studio album, *10 Songs* – out on October 9.

The single *A Ghost* has an animated video directed and drawn by frontman Fran Healy, with his son Clay leading the cinematography work – all done whilst in isolation.

Healy said: "The video started out as a mocked-up picture of me and three ghosts playing the last chorus of the song in a deserted alleyway. Just when everything was ready to shoot, the world went into lockdown, so we had this great song with no way to make a video, so I decided to draw it."

"I worked out that it would take around 30 days, with 2,500 drawings. Most of the animation is rotoscoped, and one day I was watching a sequence back and when it got to the end, it flashed and went into live action. This was the moment I realised I could shoot the mock up picture of me playing with my band of ghosts in the alleyway."

"It was clear that filming the last 47 seconds would save me 10 days of drawing, I could recruit my 14-year-old son Clay as the cameraman as he has a drone and,

most importantly, we could film it socially distant. It was the most bizarre video shoot I have ever worked on, but it turned out great."

10 Songs (below) was co-produced by Fran and Robin Baynton (Coldplay, Florence & The Machine), and recorded at RAK Studios as 2019 turned into 2020.

It's been 25 years since the four members of Travis – Healy, Andy Dunlop, Dougie Payne and Neil Primrose – first set foot in a Glaswegian rehearsal room.

The band have sold millions of albums, been the subject of the award-winning feature length documentary *Almost Fashionable* and Healy has elicited acclaim from Paul McCartney, Elton John and Graham Nash.

To sum up the new album, Healy said: "There's a song on the record called *Butterflies*. And that's really how I think about songwriting. These things are floating around. And you have to be very quiet, and be very quick, and be very respectful."

"You catch them, you look at them for a little while, and then you set them free again. And that's the whole point of songs. That's the point of songwriting."

Go to: travisonline.com for details.





Your Announcements

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

Seeking

I am looking to regain contact with Stuart Taylor who was based at Brize Norton approx 1997-2002, worked in the electrical/mechanical ground side. Possibly 216 Sqn, 101 Sqn or 10 Sqn. He will be 49/50 now. Lived in Blackpool in the 80s. Worked briefly at the Tower around 1987. Lost touch during Brize days due to house/job change. If you can help reconnect please email: Marie at whiskymac73@gmail.com

Reunions

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

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

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

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

COASTAL Command Officers' Reunion, October 10, 2020. Please contact Ray Curtis, call: 01264 735349 or email: hjn3@btinternet.com

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

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

barrycox124@hotmail.com.

Cranwell memories

THIS YEAR is the centenary of the RAF College Cranwell, pictured below, and it is in the process of collecting memories from people who may have lived or worked there in any capacity. If you would like to share your stories and memories please email: crn-sce-generalenquiries@mod.gov.uk or write to: Media and Communications Office, RAF College Cranwell, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 8HB.



Operation Manna



THE INTERNATIONAL Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln needs your help to tell the story of Operation Manna, for its 75th anniversary year. It saw nearly 12,000 tons of food dropped to the Netherlands, saving almost one million

people from starvation. Were you a farmer who helped with supplies? Did you help with loading the aircraft? Do you remember the fleets of aircraft flying from Lincolnshire's stations between April 29 and May 8, 1945? Was your family saved by the Operation? Was a member of your family a Food Dropper?

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

VITAL AID: Below, left, a Lancaster being loaded with food by 115 Sqn personnel at RAF Wrating Common

Museum appeal

BENTLEY Museum is seeking volunteers for its project 'Defending Britain from Nazi & Nuclear Threat'. It will record and share the memories of RAF and WAAF personnel who worked in the top secret bunker at RAF Bentley Priory, focusing on the Battle of Britain in 1940 and the Cold War from 1945 to 1991.

The project will be launched this year to mark the 80th anniversary year of the Battle of Britain and the 30th anniversary of the reunification of Germany in 1990. It will include a temporary and permanent exhibition, resources for schools and family activities during school holidays. Volunteers are needed to support research, carry out oral history interviews and co-curate the temporary exhibition. Initially these tasks can be carried out remotely. Please email the Museum at: collectionproject@bentleypriorymuseum.org.uk if interested.

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



TOP SECRET: Above, the World War II Operations Room at Bentley Priory Museum PHOTO: IWM

80K challenge

TO COMMEMORATE 80 years since the Battle of

Britain, the RAF Museum has launched the Hurricane 80K Challenge, encouraging keen runners and novices alike to run 80K in 80 days. Runners have until July 10 – the start of the Battle of Britain – to run, walk, swim or bike the distance in a location of their choice. Entry costs £20 for the general public and £10 for cadets, serving personnel, veterans and their families. All proceeds from the Challenge will go towards the RAF Museum. To register for the event visit: rafmuseum.org



■ The annual Spitfire 10K will return to the RAF Museum, London on August 29 and RAF Museum, Cosford on August 30.

Cockpit Fest delayed



LAST SUMMER: Above, Cockpit-Fest 2019 at Newark Air Museum

THE Newark Air Museum Cockpit-Fest & Aeroboot Sale that was provisionally rescheduled for the weekend of August 8 and 9 has been cancelled. The decision was reached following a review of the latest Covid-19 guidelines. It was felt the events would have presented unworkable self-distancing arrangements around visiting cockpits, displays and the stalls at the Aeroboot, said a NAM spokesman.

He added: "These combined events are typically our busiest events and we felt that it would be too difficult to cope with any large number of visitors in a safe and secure manner."

"Our current thinking is to re-establish the event in 2021. Some people already have Aeroboot payment held over from the cancelled spring indoor sale and the current plan is to hold these over again for an indoor event in October. Should

that not prove possible we will endeavour to arrange for refunds to be made. "We are sorry for any inconvenience these changes may cause, especially to those people and groups who have been working on preparations on their displays for this event for many months."

Reimagining victory

A NEW digital series that explores the state of war and peace in relation to 21st century conflict sees leading journalists, peacebuilders, artists and academics question the concept of victory.

Speakers for *Reimagining Victory*, include psychologist and author Steven Pinker; former President of Colombia and Nobel Peace Prize winner Juan Manuel Santos; the BBC's Chief International Correspondent Lyse Doucet (below); Channel 4's International Editor Lindsey Hilsum and Jonathan Powell, negotiator of the Good Friday Agreement.

Created by the Imperial War Museum's Institute with Conciliation Resources, the series is free to view via IWM's YouTube channel from June 30.



Arboretum open again

THE National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire has reopened, allowing pre-booked visitors to explore the outdoor elements of the 150-acre garden and woodland site. People will need to book their vehicle online at: maximcloud.co.uk/nationalmemorialarboretum/eventslist/ before their visit. A limited number of spaces will be available daily. Anyone without a valid booking will not be admitted. Visitors will need to maintain social distancing guidelines. Scooters and wheelchairs will be unable for hire until further notice; visitors are encouraged to bring their own if required.



Your Announcements

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

Museum shop reopens

THE NEWARK Air Museum shop has now reopened after a full set of Covid-secure risk assessments were completed.

The shop will be open on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, from 10 to 11am for museum members and 11am to 4pm for the public.

Only one shopper will be allowed into the shop at a time and there will be a contact number by the entrance to gain access.

Social distancing measures will be in place and shoppers will be encouraged to collect kits and books from the displays themselves – they will be discouraged from opening kits and spending time 'reading' the books.

There will be no access to the wider museum site, display buildings or café.

To help people to decide whether or not to come and shop, NAM has created virtual product lists, featuring photographs of the museum shop's key sections. Shoppers are encouraged to email to request copies of



BACK IN BUSINESS: The NAM specialises in aviation books

these lists for main product areas including aircraft kits and aviation books.

For any such enquiries NAM will email details explaining how shoppers can check for stock availability and request a price for items.

A museum spokesperson said: "This is not a perfect solution, but it does act as a step towards normal opening and help generate vital fund at this challenging time."

"This gradual reopening process will also provide important experience to help NAM to evaluate and understand how social distancing measures might need to be implemented elsewhere on the larger site when the museum is eventually able to reopen."

Go to the museum website's news section for full details: newarkairmuseum.org/latest-news



Team run for Fund

FOUR RAF Coningsby personnel have run a combined total of 102km around their airfield to commemorate 102 years since the RAF was formed – raising more than £1,000 for the RAF Benevolent Fund.

The team of Cpl Chris Partridge and SAC(T)s Charlie Merriman, Dylan Marte and Andrew Pue, pictured above, are all members of C4i Squadron.

Cpl Partridge said: "All four of us have seen first-hand the Benevolent Fund's fantastic work. We had originally entered the Snowdon24 challenge, but sadly this was cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions. However, we still wanted to help support the

Fund during this difficult time.

"We decided on the Coningsby C4i 102km challenge as we knew we could safely complete it around the airfield while still abiding by social distancing rules."

Lisa Hunt, the charity's regional fundraiser, said: "The coronavirus lockdown has had led to many fundraising events being cancelled, so we're incredibly grateful that Chris and the team were able to complete this challenge."

"Last year alone we spent nearly £250,000 supporting personnel and their families at RAF Coningsby."

■ Go to: justgiving.com/christopher-partridge2 to donate.

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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Crossword

No. 276

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

Across

6. Part of intestine of the Spanish officer (7)
7. Scoundrel alien to member of RAF (5)
9. Two graduates and I see animated film (5)
10. Medical condition of hair requires German agreement with West (7)
12. Will settler romp around bird? (5,6)
14. Plane that's a world-beater obviously (11)
18. Wave breaks inside discharge of RAF bomb (7)
19. Intelligent forms of transport make comeback (5)
21. Violet's volunteers on 'Panorama' (5)
22. Most of China ducks King's Head choppers (7)

Down

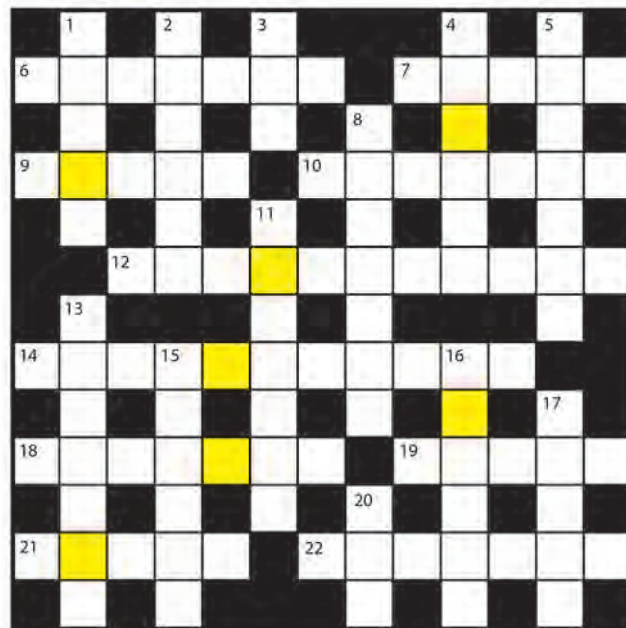
1. Out east, O'Leary damages sovereign (5)
2. Small intercom battered during battle (6)
3. See 20 Down
4. Ship carrying wolves outside Egypt (6)
5. Inside, thespian Oliver careless and carefree (7)
8. Tom's cop doctored fertiliser (7)
11. O'Shanter has right motoring organisation returning vehicle (7)
13. Saint and I join a European country (7)
15. Faint breeze shakes the bar (6)
16. Fur Queen wears down pit (6)
17. Attendant leading Greek chamber (5)
20. And 3 Down. I leave criminal initially ensconced with RAF heroes (3,3)

Solution to Crossword No. 274:

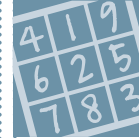
Across – 6. Ramadan 7. Basic 9. Tonga 10. Cyanide 12. Brize Norton 14. Grizzly Bear 18. Crimean 19. Craze 21. e-mail 22. Network

Down – 1. Bacon 2. Hangar 3. War 4. Manner 5. Airdrop 8. By And By 11. Azaleas 13. Trireme 15. Zambia 16. Arrows 17. Azure 20. Red

Aviator: Amelia Earhart



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



Su Doku

No. 286

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.

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

Solution to Su Doku No: 285

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



Books

The Battle of Britain

Hitler's First Bloody Nose



Giving Hitler a bloody nose



HEROES: The Few's Tom Neil (left) and Geoff Wellum at 75th Battle of Britain celebrations

IN THE run-up to the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, ex-RAF pilot Ron Powell has published an illustrated book about it subtitled *Hitler's First Bloody Nose*.

The author said: "There are so many sources of information on the Battle that you'd think it would be easy to get a clear picture of what it was all about. But I've found that not all authors agree on even the most basic aspects, so I've tried to find a way through the clutter to provide a brief and readable narrative, supported by plenty of pictures.

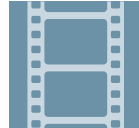
"Chief among my inspirations is the short life of Pilot Officer Laurie Whitbread, a Spitfire pilot from my home town of

Ludlow, shot down and killed in September, 1940. He inspired my 32-year career in the RAF, and my Battle of Britain novel, *Wings Over Summer*.

"I was also influenced by encounters with two survivors of the Battle, Sqn Ldrs Geoffrey Wellum and Tony Iveson – the book is dedicated to them.

"Their stories sit alongside a selection of others in a narrative that outlines the opposing forces, the equipment and tactics, and how the combat unfolded. I've also tried to highlight the historic importance of the Battle."

● The title is available as an e-book or in paperback. Go to: ronpowell.co.uk for details.



Film Review

The Ascent

On digital download (15)

Stairway to hell

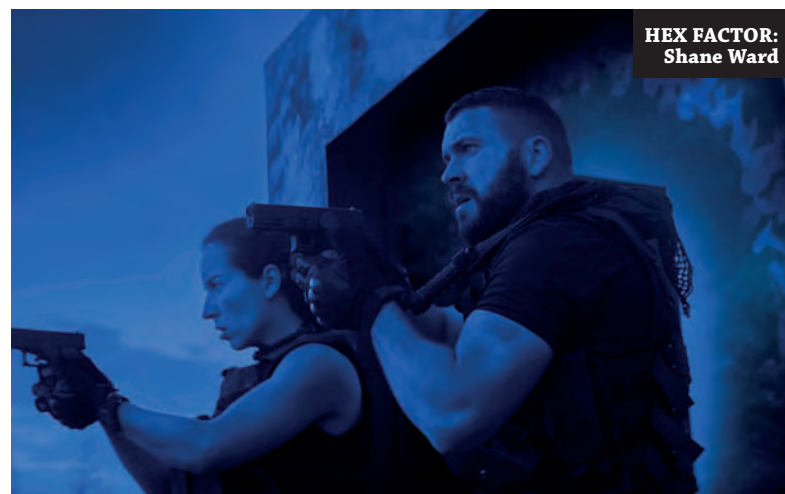
IN *THE ASCENT* an elite squad known as 'Hell's Bastards' are sent into a vaguely described civil conflict to retrieve intel, but make a decision that will come back to haunt them, over and over, until they can find a way back to change it.

Ordered to clear a campsite, merciless Captain Will Stanton (Shayne Ward, *Coronation Street*, *The X Factor*) insists that they leave no survivors. Even when they discover a prisoner (Julia Szamalek), he demands that she be killed, forcing Kia Clarke (Samantha Schnitzler) to carry out the execution at gunpoint.

On their return to HQ the lifts aren't working and so they begin to scale the concrete stairs, but after some time it becomes clear that they are no closer to the top.

The handiwork of MC Escher, these stairs form the perfect purgatorial metaphor; a neverending climb punctuated by sirens and red light, and members of the team being picked off by an apparent evil presence following after them.

Through this shrewd and straightforward effect, the filmmakers are able to make one location last infinitely, which



HEX FACTOR: Shayne Ward

reminded me of the simple ingenuity of high-concept cult horror *Cube*.

The squad will discover one exit along the stairway, but this leads them back in time to when they began the mission, a portal through which they can view their own sin perhaps, and maybe find a way out of the cycle.

An ambitious blend of science fiction, horror and action, the tone of *The Ascent* is set by the interactions of the group. Initially there is some dark humour reminiscent of another cult

classic featuring soldiers versus the supernatural in *Dog Soldiers*. Unfortunately, this fades into self-serious monologues that drift toward the generic.

Cursed by design, set in a time loop, the repetition becomes tiring and gets a little lost, but is brought around by the end of the film in some impressive and inventive ways. *The Ascent* is an ambitious project that takes chances and makes the most of its resources.

3 out of 5 roundels

Review by Sam Cooney

Feature

We salute local heroes in the Battle of Britain

MORE THAN 20,000 Forces personnel have been deployed to fight on the frontline of Britain's battle with Covid-19.

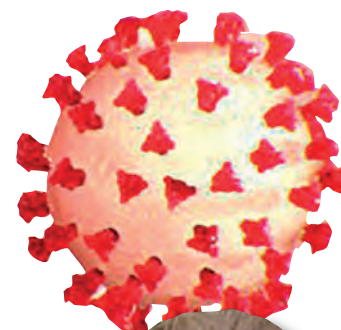
Forces units have built emergency Nightingale hospitals across the UK

while RAF aircrews and medical teams were brought in to transport critically ill patients and essential NHS staff.

As the Military Covid Task Force swung into action nationwide Air Force

volunteers stepped up to support their local communities and medical teams.

RAF News salutes some of those whose personal efforts are helping beat the virus.



Blue light special

HALTON-BASED AMBULANCE volunteers stepped up their role with their local hospital Stoke Mandeville to make sure patients with serious medical needs get treatment.

Volunteer co-responders Sqn Ldr Claire Stanley, Sgt Owen Clarke and Cpl 'Crash' Stevenson are working alongside hospital transport teams battling with the surge caused by the Covid-19 crisis.

The RAF team operate two vehicles and are on constant standby to take patients to and from urgent medical appointments and minimising vulnerable patients' exposure to risk from the virus.

WO Alex Bedborough and Sgt Dan Dillon also volunteered as emergency care assistants working directly with a clinician on frontline ambulances. Sgt Sue Berrecloth stepped up as an emergency

operations centre dispatcher, coordinating ambulance cover for emergency calls.

WO Bedborough said: "The Service has been under an enormous amount of pressure during these unprecedented times. Halton personnel have deployed with such professionalism and dedication to their South Central Ambulance Service roles and I've received nothing but praise from all areas of the Trust."

Hospital Head of Operations, Mark Begley, said: "Air Force staff have provided invaluable support to our services at a time when the welfare of patients and the emergency first responders sent to their aid was even more crucial.

"We are truly grateful to our RAF colleagues who we undoubtedly consider to be part of our team."

Benson team away test at Reading FC

RESERVISTS FROM 606 (Chiltern) Sqn have been called up on mobile testing duties supporting Operation Rescript; the military response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Benson-based team completed training with the 4th Battalion Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment ahead of joining a mobile facility at Reading Football Club.

SAC Alice Noakes, pictured right, who works as an administrator, said: "This deployment is very different to my civilian job. It has been exciting having to adapt to the challenge, learn new skills and

having to put them into practice straightaway in order to fulfil my responsibilities."

The squadron volunteers were put on 48 hours notice before taking on the role, carrying out thousands of tests a day.

FS Andrew Fuller said: "The team has taken in a lot of information during some very intense training and have been very adaptable as plans were finalised.

"We have had to work long hours to get up to speed on the processes but everyone has taken everything in their stride."



Chinook crews stand and deliver the goods

CHINOOK CREWS are used to hauling heavyweight kit on operations – so they volunteered to help out their local food bank by delivering more than 12 tonnes of supplies in just eight hours.

The team of seven volunteers from Odiham-based 27 Sqn kept the charity's supply chain going by loading up 47 pallets of stock donated by local shops and businesses in record time.

As well as delivering food supplies the team was also happy to help the Basingstoke food bank staff

relocate to new premises without a hitch during a surge in demand for essential supplies caused by the Covid crisis.

MaCR Jim Fowler said: "It was a pleasure and a privilege to be able to provide support to the local community, especially during the current situation.

"I think everyone had a humbling sense of achievement and we are hugely thankful to the food bank staff for the belt-fess brews and endless supply of chocolate that kept us going."

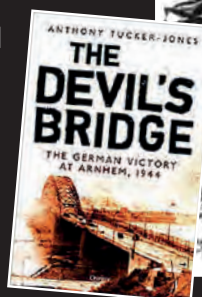


By Simon Mander

Feature

New book explodes the myth of the 'glorious' failure

Arnhem: Britain's shameful military disaster



CAPTURED: Germans process injured Allied troops. *Inset left*, the new book by Anthony Tucker-Jones
PHOTOS: Getty Images

OF ALL the great British military disasters of World War II – including Dunkirk 1940 and the fall of Singapore in 1942 – the annihilation of the 1st Airborne Division at Arnhem between September 17-26, 1944 must rank as the most shameful.

Dickie Attenborough's 1977 classic film *A Bridge Too Far*, captured the essence of the debacle which left more than 1,500 Allied soldiers dead, while Montgomery, who sanctioned Operation Market Garden, claimed the campaign was 90 per cent successful.

Maybe hindsight, or the casting of Captain Derek 'Pip' Bogaerde, (aka matinée idol Dirk Bogarde), who witnessed the final British evacuation from the bridge and

starred in the movie, kept the producers honest.

But the same can't be said for the usual media and establishment suspects who, nine days after the disaster, staged a heroes' welcome, for the undoubtedly brave survivors and handed out gongs as if it was a great victory.

As Professor Peter Caddick-Adams points out in the forward of the new book by Anthony Tucker-Jones, despite the recent deluge of WWII accounts, some prompted in part perhaps by the money-making potential of 'significant' anniversaries, *The Devil's Bridge* is the only study of Arnhem for 30 years.

And, like a few histories, it gains insight by relating events from the German perspective.

He says the book shows how resourceful the German defenders were despite having no air cover, limited kit and manpower and yet: "The ragtag collection of Wehrmacht, Luftwaffe and Waffen-SS units in Holland – some travelling by bicycle – combined into ad hoc battle groups and crushed their opponents."

And they even beat James Bond as Sean Connery, playing 1st Airborne's commander Major General Roy Urquhart, demonstrated in the film.



NAZI COMMANDER: General Walther Von Model takes charge



OUTGUNNED: British troops take cover behind a knocked-out Nazi tank as they advance

But the key question for most RAF News readers may be, should aerial reconnaissance have forewarned the top brass that they were about to drop relatively lightly-armed paratroopers on top of two German panzer divisions?

Author Tucker-Jones (pictured left) thinks not: "RAF photo reconnaissance was not as thorough as it could have been in the week leading up to Market Garden.



Photo by Mick Kavanagh

"The RAF was distracted by the urgent hunt for the V-2 launch sites and other operational requirements. It was also hampered by the poor weather, which helped conceal German troop traffic," he said.

Nevertheless, he concedes, photographs of tanks tucked into woods were brought to British Airborne Corps commander Gen Frederick 'Boy' Browning's attention by his intelligence chief Major Tony Hibbert, who was put on sick leave for his pains.

However, Tucker-Jones says they



ARNHEM BRIDGE: Bombed by Americans

"...were Panzer IVs and obsolete Panzer IIIs. They did not belong to the 2nd SS-Panzer Corps, as first suspected, so were not the smoking gun that many have since claimed them to have been."

He then adds with monumental understatement: "As these vehicles were for driver training, they were probably not in the best condition. Nonetheless, they were still tanks."

You can say that again.

Writing with an admirable clarity and simplicity, Tucker-Jones has made an invaluable and accessible addition to the historical record, and, by seeking the truth behind the spin, pays proper tribute to those who fought and died and couldn't or wouldn't speak for themselves.

As another famous actor-soldier, former Lt Col David Niven reportedly said when recounting being asked by American friends to find the grave of their son near Bastogne, the epicentre of the Hitler's Ardennes offensive which followed Arnhem: "I found it where they told me I would, but it was among 27,000 others."

He said: "And I told myself that here, Niven, were 27,000 reasons why you should keep your mouth shut after the war."

■ The Devil's Bridge: The German Victory at Arnhem, 1944, by Anthony Tucker-Jones, is published in hardback by Osprey priced £20.



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The official voice of the Royal Air Force

Tornado leader in Gulf War

AIR COMMODORE JERRY WITTS, who has died aged 69, led a formation of Tornado bombers to attack an Iraqi airfield on the first night of the Gulf War in January 1991. His leadership over the next few weeks led to the award of the DSO.

He joined the RAF in September 1968 to be a pilot. After two tours flying the Vulcan, first as a co-pilot in Cyprus and then as a captain on 44 Squadron at RAF Waddington near Lincoln, he trained to fly the Buccaneer and was posted in late 1979 to 16 Squadron, based in Germany.

He spent five years in Germany on the Buccaneer force and became a flight commander. He left for HQ Strike Command, where he was dealing with the operational support of the UK-based Tornado ground attack squadrons. After attending Staff College he served in the flight safety department in MoD.

In early 1989 he assumed command of 31 Squadron based at RAF Bruggen. At the time of Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, the squadron was in Canada on an exercise. It was recalled and Witts immediately set about preparing and training the squadron for a possible future deployment. His forward thinking and planning ensured that his crews were ready when the time came for them to head for Dhahran at the beginning of January 1991.

Witts was appointed to lead one of the three replacement detachments of Tornados. His own squadron formed the nucleus of the Dhahran detachment, with crews and aircraft from five other Tornado squadrons reinforcing 31 Squadron. Among the 33 crews under Witts' command were three other squadron commanders, an unusual situation that Witts handled with tact and understanding.

His detachment arrived in Saudi Arabia in early January 1991 and was the largest of the three Tornado forces, with 21 aircraft and 400 ground tradesmen in addition to the aircrew.

After a period of intensive training the crews were combat ready by January 15, a day before the UN deadline to Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

On the afternoon of the 16th, Witts (pictured right) was briefed that air attacks were to be launched just after midnight and he decided to lead the first mission by four of his Tornados. Their target was the airfield at Mudays in Central Iraq. Each aircraft carried two of the JP 233 runway cratering and airfield denial weapons.

Flying at 200 feet and high speed against intense anti-aircraft fire,

the four bombers released their weapons successfully before returning to base, landing after a four-hour flight.

Within a few days it was clear that the Iraqi Air Force no longer posed a threat so the Tornados reverted to bombing infrastructure targets from medium level. With the arrival of a force of Buccaneer aircraft to provide laser target marking, the Tornados were then able to drop laser-guided bombs with great accuracy against bridges and airfield facilities, including hardened shelters, which housed Iraqi combat aircraft.

Witts led formations of four and eight aircraft against these targets and by the end of February he had completed 14 operations, all as the leader. In addition to planning, co-ordinating and leading these hazardous missions, Witts had to deal with an intrusive media, pressures from higher authorities, and the morale of his large force.

One of his officers commented: "Throughout all the troubles, Jerry stood tall; taking a pragmatic view at all times. His leadership was outstanding and I do not know any one of 400 of us out there who would not follow him anywhere."

A former Chief of the Air Staff has described him as: "An outstanding airborne leader and a brave man, as he so convincingly demonstrated during Gulf War I."

Witts was awarded the DSO. The citation highlighted his concern and quiet encouragement of his young crews and for ensuring that when losses were suffered it did not affect morale. It concluded: "Wing Commander Witts has led his squadron with consummate courage, outstanding flying skill, and in a manner that reflects the highest traditions of the Service."

After his tour on 31 Squadron, he returned to the MoD, this time in the important RAF plans and policy division – where he proved to be an excellent Staff Officer. On promotion to Group Captain he served as the air executive officer to the Commander of Allied Air Forces Central Europe based at Ramstein in Germany, where his USAF general held him in high regard.

In December 1997 Witts assumed command of RAF Northolt, the home of the Royal Squadron and where he was responsible for arrangements for the many VVIPs and VIPs who used the airfield. He also had under command numerous other units as the base expanded to accommodate those deployed at various locations around London. During this period he was appointed an ADC to HM The Queen. A popular Station Commander, a road was named after



GULF WAR: Witts after a mission (front, right) and (top, right) with his Nav Flt Lt AJ Smith PHOTOS: LES HENDRY

him on his departure two years later.

In 1999 Witts was the air commander at Solenzara in Corsica where Tornados were based for operations over Kosovo. His final appointment in the RAF was as air attaché and deputy defence attaché in Washington DC. He retired in September 2005.

He became the director of finance and administration at University College School, Hampstead, but his health began to deteriorate in 2013. He was later diagnosed with a brain disease known as corticobasal degeneration. Over the years that followed his condition

steadily worsened, eventually requiring 24-hour care. Throughout his ordeal he received the devoted attention of his wife Liz and his stoicism and courage were greatly admired and an inspiration to others.

A big man, Witts exuded steadiness and determination, which gave confidence to those who served with and for him. Until his health prevented his attendance, he never missed the gatherings of his colleagues at the annual 'Buccaneer Blitz', an event that epitomises the deep and lasting friendships that he enjoyed and helped to make.

Obituary

Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Beavis

Air chief flew non-stop to Australia in Vulcan

AIR CHIEF Marshal Sir Michael Beavis, who has died aged 90, was the pilot of a Vulcan bomber that flew non-stop from England to Sydney in Australia, and who later held senior posts in the RAF and in NATO.

Born in 1929 he joined the RAF in 1947 and, after completing his training; he spent his early years as a fighter pilot flying the Meteor with 43 Sqn at Tangmere and 608 Sqn at Leuchars in Fife.

In 1954 he began a two-year exchange appointment with the RNZAF when he flew Vampires with 75 Sqn based at Ohakea on the North Island. He was a member of the squadron's four aircraft aerobatic team performing at air shows and local airports.

With the demise of many fighter squadrons, and the build up of the UK's nuclear capability as a result of the Duncan Sandys' 1957 Defence Review, Beavis joined many other fighter pilots and transferred to the new force of nuclear V-bombers.

In July 1958 he trained on the Vulcan and later joined 617 Sqn as a flight commander.

He and his crew completed training in the techniques of air-to-air refuelling from a Valiant tanker before being selected to fly non-stop to Australia in order to demonstrate the global reach of the V-Force.

The Vulcan (XH 481) took off from Scampton at 11 am on June 20, 1961 and headed for Cyprus to rendezvous with a Valiant of 214 Sqn.

Beavis made contact with the tanker's refuelling hose and fuel was transferred before the Vulcan headed towards Pakistan. Two pre-positioned Valiants were airborne from Karachi and the rendezvous was successful.

However, after a short time, problems were encountered with the fuel transfer and Beavis had to withdraw from the tanker twice.

He then transferred to the secondary tanker just as the combination encountered high cloud and turbulence as it approached an area of thunderstorms.

In these difficult conditions Beavis succeeded in receiving sufficient fuel before pressing on south. The captain of the Valiant tanker commented: "I do not know how Mike Beavis kept in contact".

Refuelling over Singapore was successful and the Vulcan headed for Australia, landing at Sydney's Richmond Airport after a non-stop flight of 20 hours and eight minutes.

Over the following weeks, Beavis and his crew took the Vulcan to other Australian cities before returning to Scampton via British bases in Malaya, the island of Gan,



in Canberra wrote: "The flight provided the United Kingdom with some of its best prestige publicity for some years creating an outstanding amount of public interest."

In the following New Year's Honours list, Beavis received the AFC and each of his crew were awarded a Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air.

After attending the Staff College in 1966, Beavis became the commanding officer of No 10 Squadron, which was being equipped with the new VC-10 strategic transport aircraft.

He proposed that the aircraft, with its VC-10 designation, would be most suited for commemorating Victoria Cross recipients.

The idea was approved and a ceremony on November 11 1968, attended by relatives of VC holders, saw the first of 14 aircraft named. This was to Flt Lt David Lord, the

LONG HAUL: 617 Sqn Vulcan refuels from 214 Sqn Valiant during epic flight in 1960



only transport pilot to receive the supreme award for valour.

In 1968 Beavis moved to Cyprus as a group captain to command the flying wing at Akrotiri, one of the RAF's largest flying bases at the time. A Lightning squadron provided air defence and two Vulcan squadrons were assigned to CENTO with a nuclear capability.

Beavis maintained his flying

currency on the Vulcan and also flew with the resident Hercules squadron.

Promoted to air commodore, he spent the next three years in the MoD as the assistant director of defence policy before attending RCDS.

In 1976, at the height of the Cold War, his varied flying career took another turn when he moved

to RAF Germany, and became the senior air staff officer.

The squadrons on the four operational bases had settled into their new routine having been re-equipped with the latest generation of combat aircraft. This included seven nuclear-armed aircraft holding 15 minutes quick reaction alert for 365 days of each year. Beavis also had oversight of all intelligence-gathering assets, including facilities in Berlin, and photographic sorties along the Berlin corridor.

To meet Nato requirements the four airfields had just been upgraded with hardened aircraft shelters, airfield defence measures, including surface to air missiles, and these required new operating procedures to be developed.

The Harrier and helicopter forces based forward regularly practiced their dispersed off base operations.

Beavis returned to MoD in 1977, this time as director general of training responsible for the policy of all aspects of air and ground training in the RAF. One of his senior staff officers wrote: "It was a delight to work for him. He was an excellent boss."

He was next appointed as Commandant of the RAF Staff College at Bracknell before becoming the Air Officer Commander-in-Chief of RAF Support Command in April 1981 where he was responsible for the training of all RAF personnel, and also for all logistical and maintenance support requirements for the Service. Managing cost savings, with the inevitable need to cut jobs, created many difficult decisions for Beavis.

His final appointment was as Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces Central Europe (AFCENT) based at Brunsum in the Netherlands where he was very effective and popular and achieved much in creating co-operation amongst the Alliance member nations.

Beavis, was a very friendly, sociable man comfortable with all ranks. He was excellent company with a great sense of humour who enjoyed travel, golf and wine.

He retired from the RAF in 1987 having been appointed KCB (1981), CBE (1977) and OBE (1969). He was made a Liveryman of the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators in 1983.

During his service at RAF Akrotiri he developed a great fondness for Cyprus and bought a house in Pissouri. When he finally retired he and his wife moved permanently to the island, enjoying his golf at Episkopi and the company of other expats. He died on June 7.

Just what the doctor ordered



BLUE-TIFUL: We're potty about the celadon paint job on this Clio - and the more upmarket interior

AS COVID-19 forced the world into lockdown it halted production of TV shows and publications around the globe, which left the little Clio with a far more important task... running my brave wife to and from her frontline job in the emergency department of our local hospital.

Partly because of her essential work and partly because it would have put drivers at risk to recover it, Renault kindly allowed us to hang on to the car. It therefore continued doing just that for over two months and never missed a beat - reliable to a fault.

The car

This particular Clio is the Iconic TCe 100 in celadon blue, and it looks great in bright sunlight. It's the latest revision of Europe's bestselling B-segment supermini.

The large front grille and new C-shaped daytime running lights bring it into line with the rest of the Renault range. It's shorter than its predecessor, a tad wider, and a little lower too. Yet inside there's more space and bigger load capacity. In fact, at 391 litres, the boot's not just bigger than those of its direct rivals, it's bigger than some found in the class above.

Interior

The new Clio's cabin is a massive improvement over the old one. The 7.0in touchscreen infotainment system looks glossy and modern.

TIM MORRIS
Motoring
Correspondent



Its operation is a little laggy at times and can't quite match the high-resolution graphics found on some rivals but the menus are really well laid out and easy to understand. The system also has Android Auto and Apple CarPlay smartphone mirroring to make things even more user-friendly.

Rotary knobs for the air con and large buttons for other functions are handily placed just below the screen. It sounds simple but it avoids having to do battle with fiddly menus. What's more, unlike previous incarnations of the Clio, you even have an uninterrupted view of the main instrument cluster.

There are better materials, more comfortable seats and everything has been crafted to feel, well, more upmarket. The increased use of soft-touch plastics makes a real difference. There's even a choice of colours for your ambient lighting.

The driver's seat comes with a good range of adjustment, while the steering wheel is adjustable for reach and rake. Electric seat and column adjustment isn't available on any trim level.

On the road

The new Clio is nice and predictable. There's not much body

lean and no nasty surprises. Push it into a tight bend too hard and you get gentle understeer. Brake hard and you get minimal weight shift at the tail end. The chassis is pretty well balanced and the car generally rides better than its predecessor.

The steering doesn't offer much feedback but it is firm and reasonably accurate. It's not quite as much fun to drive as a Ford Fiesta but it's still a cracking little car.



Performance

The Clio has a bit more power than the Volkswagen Polo 1.0 and you'd therefore expect the TCe 100 to feel a fair bit quicker. Sadly, it doesn't.

Part of the problem is the lower torque output but it's the turbo lag that catches you out. This is still a 1.0-litre, three-cylinder petrol and if you don't get your revs up well

in advance and make sure you're in the right gear early enough it doesn't perform at all well.

Even when you do get it right you have to work the engine relatively hard at times to make it swift so it shouldn't come as a massive shock.

On the plus side, the clutch is light and the manual 5-speed gearbox is slick. The 999cc power unit emits 99g/km of CO₂ and returns average fuel consumption of 54.3mpg. On a motorway it cruises effortlessly and has enough power to overtake without too much fuss. Not bad for something that's effectively powered by a lawnmower engine.

If you're after something fast on the other hand, don't write the Clio off yet because we understand that an RS is already in the pipeline.

Value:

The smallest non-turbocharged engine, in the most basic trim, the Clio is cheaper than any Polo but this particular car weighed in at £18,105 with all the extras. There is a lot of kit for the extra outlay though and the Iconic trim, coupled with the TCe100 engine, is the best choice in the range.

Our car came with adaptive cruise control, lane-keeping assistance, climate control, front/rear parking sensors, a reversing camera, automatic headlamps and wipers, all-round electric windows and keyless entry. It also had 16in 'Philia' alloy wheels, Automatic

Emergency Braking (AEB) and traffic sign recognition.

Besides its low running costs, the Clio TCe 100 is in a very affordable insurance bracket. It's cheaper to insure than the outgoing car thanks to a few clever design tweaks. It also comes equipped with a five-star Euro NCAP score and a five-year, 100,000-mile warranty.

Verdict

Pros

- Smart new design
- Classy interior
- Practical boot
- Cheap to run and insure

Cons

- Hates potholes
- Turbo lag
- Slightly slow infotainment system
- High boot-loading lip

Verdict

This is the Mk5 Clio and although it shares many of the characteristics that made the 1990 car such a success, it's definitely a new model. There's more space, less weight and a suite of new technology. The Clio has definitely moved with the times. It's not the most fun small car to drive or the most refined but the Clio continues to be a great all-rounder. It's a well-priced and practical little family car with bags of character.

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4 pages of **RAF Sport** starts here

● RAFRU's new head coach Coleman talks: P26

CHARITY CHALLENGE

Trans Europe bid

Ice sports skeleton racers join forces to raise cash for Benevolent Fund



BEST FOOT FORWARD: Cpl Lou Webb, inset, secures the RAF Ladies skeleton team Inter-Service win in Konigssee in March. Below, Sgt Neil Palmer and Sgt Claire Watts taking part in the challenge on their bikes
PHOTOS: SAC MATT SMITH ACSSU

Daniel Abrahams
HQ Air Command

WHAT STARTED off as a one-way charity challenge for the Service's skeleton winter sports stars has ended as a virtual cross-Europe one.

The brainchild of Cpl Lou Webb, the event was designed to raise funds for the RAF Benevolent Fund and see competitors 'complete' the equivalent journey from RAF Waddington to Igls, in Austria.

Webb, 30, said: "We completed the initial challenge inside seven days (879 miles), so as we wanted

to really push ourselves, we decided to take in all the European skeleton tracks, which meant a 30-day challenge with a finish of 3,446 miles or 5,548km."

The challenge would now 'finish' at Konigssee, where the team and association recorded great success in the Inter-Services in March.

Team members who will walk, run, swim, cycle and row their way to the target can be selected and chosen for donations at the Everyday Hero link below.

RAF skeleton team manager Sqn Ldr Maddie Smith said: "This has been an excellent opportunity to work together as a team, albeit apart, to achieve a common goal. Whilst we are used to training separately for our Ice Sport competitions, this opportunity has brought us all together to push our boundaries and raise money for a fantastic cause close to our hearts."

Webb added: "As all of the gyms are currently closed due to

Covid, it has impacted training and motivation for many of us. The challenge was created as a way of coming together as a team, albeit virtually, to achieve a collective

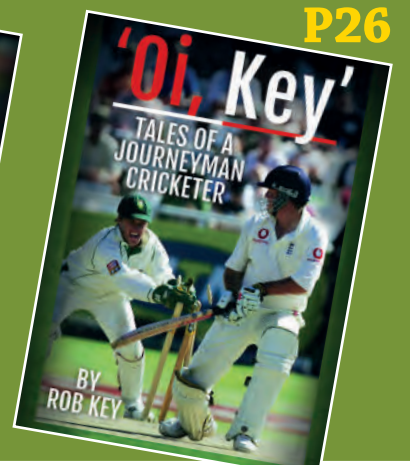
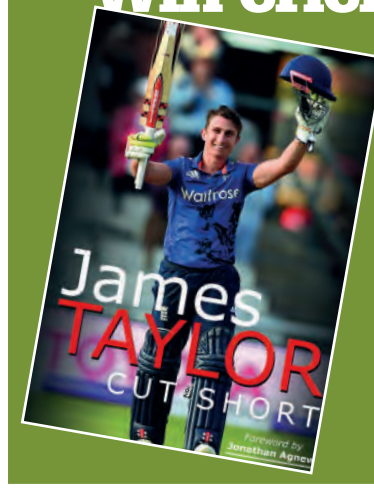
goal. We are raising money for the Benevolent Fund, which has supported us financially to buy cold weather clothing."

Continued on page 26:



Win cricket books

P26



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CHALLENGE



DREAM TEAM: Cpl Rachel Hughes, challenge brainchild, at this year's Inter-Services in Meribel; right, the map so far for the competitors; and, below, members of the team

PHOTOS: CPL NICK EGAN ACSSU

Skiers feel heat with Chile trial

8,000-mile 'trek' sees stars raise funds for charity

Daniel Abrahams
HQ Air Command

THEY SHOULD be hitting speeds of 70mph on the ski slopes of Chile – instead the Service's Alpine stars are carrying out a virtual charity journey of 7,541 miles.

The team would normally be taking part in its annual two-week speed training camp in Corralco, Chile, but are facing a summer without training and meeting up because of the coronavirus lockdown.

That was until women's alpine team star Cpl Rachel Hughes and men's skier Flt Lt Tom Carrington set a plan to carry out the entire journey to the camp in Chile, virtually, through riding, running and in some cases bunny hops and bear crawls. The challenge, which sees competitors log their activity on the Strava mobile phone app, is also to raise money for the RAF Central Fund.

Hughes said: "Keeping motivated at this time is very difficult. I've been struggling, as have many of my colleagues, so while Tom and I were chatting we thought this idea would help keep people active into June and beyond. The reaction's



been brilliant and it has attracted lots of interest from non-skiers, who are completing miles and also chatting with team members and getting an idea of what our association involves."

The team, who have given themselves until August to complete the distance, had reached almost 5,000 miles as *RAF News* went to print.

Hughes said: "I don't think we truly realised how far the camp was when we agreed to do it, but we will get there. Everyone is pulling together and without the Central

Fund we know we wouldn't be able to ski and compete the way we do, so that is an extra drive."

Ross Perriam, RAF Central Fund CEO, said: "As the RAF charity for sport and physical activities, it is great to see that personnel are making us their chosen charity when taking on a fundraising challenge of this nature – a big thank you to everyone involved."

■ Donate at the team's Just Giving page: [justgiving.com/fundraising/raf-skiteam-chile](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/raf-skiteam-chile) and follow them on Facebook at: RAF Alpine Ski Team and Twitter @RAFSkiers.



Sport

WINTER SPORTS

Skeleton crew go Euro for RAF charity



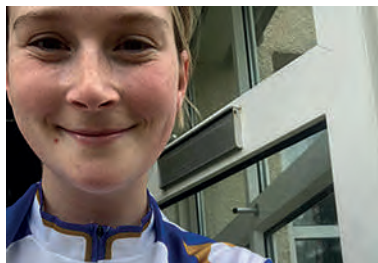
Continued from page 23:

“When we are training, the temperature is regularly well below freezing and having team clothing to hand out is essential. It also provides a great sense of team cohesion through the uniformity.”

Lisa Hunt, regional fundraiser at the RAF Benevolent Fund, added: “Lockdown measures have meant many of our exciting fundraising events have been cancelled or rescheduled.

“However, the RAF Family are still in need of our support, so we’re thrilled the RAF skeleton team are helping us continue to meet those needs.

“This is a demanding physical challenge and I know just how hard the whole team are working to



TEAM EFFORT: Top, a member of the RAF ladies team sliding to victory in Königssee; above, SAC Katie Thomas, who cycled to raise funds PHOTO: SAC MATT SMITH

achieve this, so from all of us here at the Fund, thank you.”

The challenge runs until the end of June and has so far raised more than £1,500.

■ **Donate at:** give.everydayhero.com/uk/raf-skeleton-team

ATHLETICS

Coleman looks for hot streak as Union boss



MARSHALLING HIS TROOPS: Head coach Coleman, also inset, talks tactics during a training session

Continued from page 27:

“Our analysis coach FS Jason Roberts has been working closely with us using GPS, stats and analysis readings of the players and video footage.

“Our strength and conditioning coach Sgt Kyle Love has also wasted no time in putting systems in place.

“We have to maintain as high a level of involvement and fitness as possible for all players, whatever their situation.”

Coleman has also wasted no time advertising the talent on his books to civilian union clubs, sending out videos of the players and making calls. He said: “We have to make sure the players are

ready. All three Services are in the same boat so it would be remiss of me not to expose my players to the best opportunities.

“We will be ready for January if that’s the restart date and I will do everything in my power to be set by then.”

■ **Follow RAFRU on Twitter** @RAF Rugby Union.

Some cracking cricket reading

THE REAL summer game may well be on hold, for the next few weeks at least, but cricket lovers can still get their fill with our fabulous books giveaway.

We have two excellent titles to win in our simple to enter competition, featuring the tough tale of one of the game’s brightest talents, James Taylor, in his book *Cut Short* and Richard Key’s book *‘Oi Key’ Tales of a Journeyman*.

Cut Short is a brilliant read about a talented cricketer who cut, drove and pulled his way to county then country appearances, with some scintillating displays.

The pint-sized Taylor had the world in his hands and at his feet, and his book talks about having scaled the heights of the game to play in international test matches alongside current England captain Joe Root.

Having done so, he was faced with a challenge that would eclipse any he had encountered so far.

At the age of just 26, Taylor was struck down with a serious heart condition that wiped out his career in an instant and almost killed him in a ground’s changing room.

Cut Short is written with humour and humility, and not one drop of anger towards the situation, which has seen him galvanise his life and find a new career as a TV sports commentator.

He also carries out charity work for the British Heart Foundation as an ambassador.

Key, another larger-than-life cricketing character and television sports commentator, provides a hugely entertaining trawl back through his career, with plenty of laughs along the way.

‘Oi Key’ includes some cutting comments on the current game along with views on fitness, sledging and cricket captaincy.

Key, who played five One Day

internationals and 15 tests for England, blends comedy and calamity in his book, with his humorous stories highlighting his approach as a Sky sports pundit, which has made him a firm favourite among fans of the game.

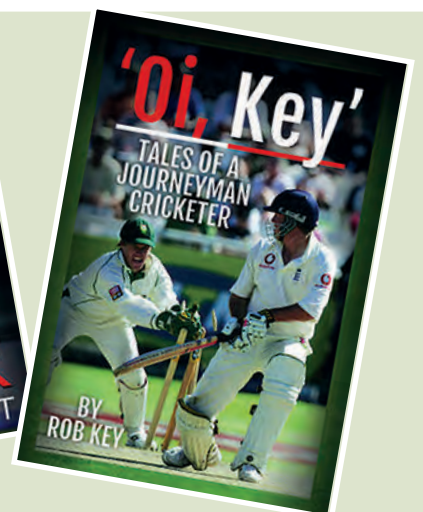
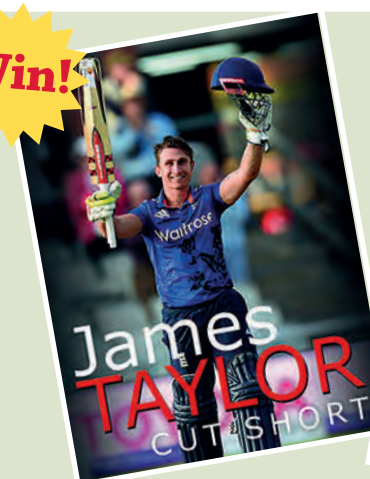
Both books are published by White Owl with ‘Oi Key’ priced £20 in hardback and *Cut Short* £9.99.

WE HAVE two copies of each book to give away, so for a chance to win one of each, answer this question correctly:

How many test matches did Richard Key play for England?

Email your answer, marked Wild Card book competition, to: sports@rafnews.co.uk to arrive by July 10. Due to the coronavirus crisis, we are currently unable to accept entries by post.

Win!



FOURSOME: Main, Taylor, left, with England captain Joe Root; right, Key with Andrew Flintoff and Steve Harmison PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

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Email: sports@rafnews.co.uk
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Coleman heats it up

New rugby union men's coach won't let pandemic lock him down

**LE FLAIR LINES:** Action from the RAFRU win over the Armée de l'Air before the Covid lockdown began in new coach Sgt Coleman's first game in charge. *Below right, star player Cpl Josh McNally*

PHOTOS: SBS

Daniel Abrahams
HQ Air Command

SGT JUSTIN Coleman may have had the strangest start to life as RAF Rugby Union head coach, with his first season in charge being hit by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Having taken over at short notice in February, after Wg Cdr Howard Parr stepped down due to work commitments, Coleman began putting his imprint on the side to rebuild things following last year's Inter-Service defeats.

Following a



**“I want to
hit the ground
running as soon
as we can”**

solid 22-14 win over the Armée de l'Air and a 52-15 defeat to Chinnor in March, Coleman's reign was halted due to lockdown. Like the robust playing style of the man himself, the team and coach faced the issue head on

and they now appear to be strong enough to be ready for a return in January.

Coleman, 39, (pictured left) said: “The lockdown has given us time for a good review. We'd begun looking at new players, especially ones who could handle the intensity of IS matches. We want personnel who can develop enough to fit into a team that would feature other key players such as Cpl Josh McNally.

“This is the exciting bit, it's great to build a set-up where no shirt is safe and ensure we have as much depth as possible across the squad.”

The combative attitude towards lockdown comes from a man with 20 years involvement in the RAFRU set-up – as a player, starring in U21 and U23 sides and captaining the RAF Hawks and then as forwards coach, alongside WO Paul Shanks,

for the RAF Hawks and then the Senior and UKAF U23s sides, with civilian coaching positions at Brighton Blues and Penryn RFC.

Coleman said: “I want to hit the ground running as soon as we can,

so without matches we began to hold regular Skype chats – which we do anyway – but now we have more time to discuss things to the nth degree.”

Continued on page 26:



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