

**The Forces' favourite paper**

**Park life**  
**Tribute to WWII hero Sir Keith**

● See page 21



**TV finale**  
**Faith takes cover**

● See R'n'R pages 4-5



**ROYAL AIR FORCE**

Friday **March 26** 2021  
No. 1511 **70p**

# RAF News



## Making sure no one's left behind

RAF St Mawgan's world-class extraction training



● Pages 16-17

**Rugby**  
**RAF pair feel Bullish**



● See p29

**Bobsleigh**  
**Games bid put on ice**



● See pp30-31

# Forces rethink to challenge tech threat



**Herc: Retired**



**F35: Pledge**



**Tempest: Boost**



**RADICAL RETHINK:** PM Boris Johnson

THE BRITISH military is facing its biggest overhaul for decades as Defence chiefs look to move away from traditional battlefield kit to counter emerging threats from cyber warfare and space-based weapons.

The British Army looks set to bear the brunt of the radical rethink with cuts in the number of troops from 76,500 to 72,500 while the RAF will lose its fleet of workhorse Hercules C130-J transport aircraft.

The Government has also pledged that the UK's fleet of F-35s will rise to 48 by 2025 and continue to grow beyond that.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said: "I am profoundly optimistic about the UK's place in the world and our ability to seize the opportunities ahead."

"The ingenuity of our citizens and the strength of our Union will combine with our international partnerships, modernised Armed Forces and a new green agenda, enabling us to look forward with confidence as we shape the world of the future."

● Continued on p3





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“The RAF has always been very supportive of my sporting endeavours”

Flt Lt Linda McLean on her Bradford Bulls call-up  
**See p29**



“Plastic is an immediate global issue that we can resolve”

Brize’s recycling champion Sgt Ryan Duffy  
**See p7**



“I have to remember to pack my stockings”

TV’s Ore Oduba is on a Rocky road  
**RnR p3**



## RAF News

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# Forces equipment overhaul

## Continued from front

There are plans to fast-track the sixth-generation Tempest future air system with a £2 billion investment package and develop the unmanned high speed ‘Loyal Wingman’ drone which will operate alongside F-35 and Typhoon fighters and establish ‘swarming drones’ capabilities to disrupt enemy defences.

The RAF’s ageing E-3D fleet is to be replaced by three ‘Wedgetail’ surveillance aircraft to be based at Lossiemouth and the Air Force will form part of a new National Cyber Force in partnership with GCHQ.

Mr Wallace confirmed upgrades to the Typhoon radar system and the introduction of the Spearcat missile system.

He added: “The Integrated Review is modernising Defence to counter future threats and promote our interests and values in a more competitive age.

“This Review addresses the challenges and opportunities the UK faces in a more competitive world, where new powers are using all the tools at their disposal to redefine the international order and – in some cases – undermine the open and liberal international



**UPGRADE:** Wedgetail will replace E-3D at Lossiemouth

system that emerged in the wake of the Cold War.”

To challenge the emerging

threats posed by Russia and China in space and the cyber realm the UK government has pledged a

package of £24 billion to develop a new range of unmanned platforms and space-based technology.

## This Week In History



**1919**

### Trenchard in post

MAJOR GENERAL Sir Hugh Trenchard is reappointed as Chief of the Air Force, a year after the official formation of the RAF.

**1942**

### Incendiary raid

BOMBER COMMAND mounts its first concentrated raid against a German city as 234 aircraft attack Lubeck with incendiary bombs.



**1984**

### Vulcan bows out

THE VULCAN, which carried Britain’s nuclear weapons, is withdrawn from service as 50 Sqn is disbanded at RAF Waddington.

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



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Vehicle shown may not reflect latest UK specifications.

Figures shown are for comparability purposes only; they only compare fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

**Search: Ford Military Sales**

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# Where Eagles dare



CAS: In F-15 Eagle cockpit



FLIGHT: CAS (left) and Maj Gen Norkin

BRITISH and Israeli air chiefs flew on an F-15 Eagle during a visit to the Middle East.

And Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Wigston, met a 101-year-old former RAF fighter pilot during his fact-finding mission.

Maj Gen (Rtd) Dan Tolkovsky (pictured right) served in the UK during World War II and on leaving as a Flight Lieutenant in 1946 joined the newly-created Israeli Air Force in 1948,

rising through the ranks to become its fifth Commanding Officer in 1953.

ACM Wigston was a guest of the current Israeli Air Chief Major General Amikam Norkin, who gave him a tour of the Tel Nof, Palmachim and Nevatim air bases to promote key collaborative efforts and strengthen ties between the nations' militaries.

The Chiefs flew in an IAF F-15 aircraft from the 106th Squadron

based at Tel Nof Airbase and visited Squadron 210 – dubbed the Defensive Sword Unit of the IAF's Air Defence System – as part of talks on UAVs.

ACM Wigston said: "This has been an excellent opportunity to engage with the Israeli Air Force, to celebrate our common heritage, to nurture our enduring relationship, and to explore many areas of mutual interest. I am very grateful to Maj Gen Norkin and his excellent team for hosting the visit."



# SAC Wilson hopes to deliver chart success



AN SAC from RAF Benson is making his bid for stardom with the launch of his first album this month.

Air Force logistician James Wilson, who performs under the name Jamie Nicks, has just released his debut album, *Anthology*, which features 11 self-penned tracks. And he's already had one of the songs, *Silly Boys*, played on the radio in America.

The 34-year-old, who cites the Sex Pistols and US rockers The Ramones as his main musical influences, said: "The first half of the album is all about questioning things and the second half is nicer songs. It's like going through a journey.

"When I was younger I heard bands and wanted to copy them, but now it just goes off what I'm feeling at the time.

"I had an email from Amazing Radio in the States that my track



PROUD SCOT: James Wilson has just released his debut album *Anthology*, inset above

had been played. I was delighted, considering the talent out there."

Jamie's music has also been promoted by BBC Music Introducing, BBC radio's online

platform supporting unsigned, undiscovered talent.

He said: "BBC Introducing emailed to say my song *Christmas Town* had been broadcast and sent

me a link. I think being played on the BBC definitely helps promote your music – for many upcoming artists, being played on the BBC is the creme de la creme."

He added: "If people like the tunes, that is great. I want to be able to look back and say I gave it a go.

"My intention wasn't to write an album. Last year I had a surge of song ideas. Eight of the 11 songs on my album were written in the past six months.

"When Covid restrictions are lifted I hope to play at various festivals. Once everything is up and running, I will do my best to get some festival slots."

The talented Scotsman, who hails from Aberdeen, plays the guitar, bass, piano and bagpipes. He added: "This is my first album and I am proud to say there's some cracking tunes on there. Each song is different in style and depth due to my state of mind being

influenced by the ups and downs of daily life. That's what this album is all about, a state of mind."

■ *Anthology* is available on Spotify, Amazon and Apple Music. Go to Jamie's Facebook page – [Jamienicksmusic](#) – for more information.



TEA BREAK: SAC Wilson in uniform





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# Brize nets eco prize

**AIR FORCE green schemes have won awards for protecting the environment as Defence battles to help the UK hit its zero emissions target.**

Among the prize winners of the latest MoD Sanctuary Awards is RAF Brize Norton-based Sgt Ryan Duffy who scooped the individual achievement title for his fight against single-use plastics.

The SNCO launched a mission to slash landfill waste and reduce the carbon footprint of the Oxfordshire station while saving money for Defence.

He said: "Plastic is an immediate global issue that we can resolve, starting in your own home and workplace."

"Once the momentum had begun, I wanted to make further changes on station. I'm really proud to win this award. It is something I am so passionate about."

The annual presentation took place virtually for the first time with awards for environmental protection, energy efficiency, preserving heritage and sustainable procurement.

The winners could go on to feature in UK Defence's Climate Change and Sustainability review, due to be published in the coming weeks.

Defence Minister Jeremy Quin said: "I am proud of the innovative work being delivered to create greener ways of working and embedding a culture of sustainability."

"Climate change is a global threat underpinning our commitment to a more sustainable organisation."

RAF Shawbury's 'Be Seen, Be Safer' project was highly commended in the social value and community category.

The scheme was the brainchild of Sqn Ldr Kim Leach to ensure aircrew are trained to avoid disturbing horse riders when low flying and reduce complaints from the local community.

Several airbases were mentioned for their part in the award-winning Curlew Head Start project run in partnership with the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust's Slimbridge Reserve, Natural England and others to protect rare birds' nests.



**PLASTIC FANTASTIC:** Sgt Duffy pioneered recycling scheme at Brize Norton. Above, endangered curlew



## Jack books place on best-seller list

**AUTISTIC ARTIST** Jack Berry has outgunned some of the UK's top aviation authors, racking up thousands of sales of his paintings of iconic World War II aircraft.

The talented 14-year-old has sold more than 4,200 copies of his debut collection *Flying High in the Sunlit Silence* in less than a month.

Jack has severe autism, depression, anxiety and is selectively mute and started painting to help him cope during the pandemic.

His artwork caught the eye of crews on the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight before being snapped up by Bomber Command Books.

A spokesman for aviation publisher Grub Street said: "In our world you could certainly call it a mini best-seller."

For specialist aviation titles 2,000 sales is about average, so he's done really well."

PM Boris Johnson paid tribute to the talented youngster last month by presenting him with a national 'Points of Light' award.



# Harrier hero Andy's handy for rookies

## Simon Mander

**GULF WAR HERO** Sqn Ldr Andy Tagg won't be hanging up his flying suit anytime soon despite retiring from regular duties after 35 years service.

After a short break the Harrier veteran of operations over northern Iraq and the Balkans will take a drop in rank to return to teaching rookie pilots to fly.

He said: "As a Squadron Leader you're not only instructing, you have an entire squadron to manage and everything that goes with it."

"It's a great job, but as a Flight Lieutenant I'll be able just to concentrate on the instructing, which I'm really looking forward to."

He joined up in 1986 as non-commissioned aircrew and began officer training at Cranwell in 1990 with his sights set on a different aircraft to the iconic jump jet in which he made his name.

He said: "I was just coming to the end of my weapons training at Chivenor and had put down the Jaguar as my choice on the wish-list."

"One of the staff came to me and said I should consider the Harrier, so that's what I put down and that's what I ended up flying."

Following tours enforcing no-

fly zones after Gulf War I and over the former Yugoslavia he became a Qualified Flying Instructor on the Harrier and three other aircraft types.

He has taught on the Hawk, Harrier and Grob Tutor but his time as a Tucano trainer at Linton-on-Ouse in Yorkshire remains the defining period in his career.

He said: "My first QFI tour was at Linton. It was very busy, there was lots of flying, the students were great. It was the building block of where I am now and the foundation of what I became."

Andy's retirement from RAF Wittering is the latest part of his long association with the Cambridgeshire station where he first arrived as an air cadet in 1982 for summer camps.

He returned first as a Harrier pilot, and then in 2017 to command 115 Sqn teaching qualified pilots to become Grob Tutor instructors.

Wittering station chief, Gp Capt Jo Lincoln, said: "There are hundreds of pilots who owe their flying careers to Andy's skilled tuition."

"Here at Wittering he has taken the reins in our Heritage Centre and we wish him every success in his new role."



**TAGG TEAM:** Sqn Ldr Tagg served with Harrier squadrons in the Gulf and Balkans during his 35-year Air Force career





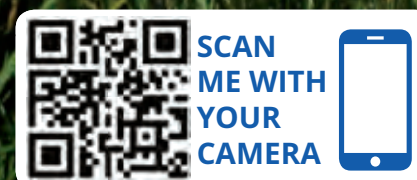
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# Typhoon surge rocks Iraq terror lair



**PRECISION:** Laser-guided Paveway IV destroys Daesh target in an earlier raid in Iraq



**Simon Mander**

**TYPHOONS UNLEASHED** Storm Shadow 'bunker buster' cruise missiles on a terrorist cave complex in Northern Iraq.

The operation was part of a series of strikes in a deadly RAF surge against a terrorist cell tracked by surveillance teams

in the area. During a series of strikes Typhoons blasted targets with a total of 20 Paveway IV laser-guided, high-precision bombs.

A pair of UK combat jets were called in after the Iraqi Army identified underground hideouts used by Islamist

terrorists south west of the city of Erbil.

After confirming the area was free of civilians, RAF crews fired a number of the long-range, air launched, stand-off missiles, at what was assessed as a particularly difficult target.

Two other nearby locations identified

by surveillance efforts as being used by Daesh were blasted using six Paveway IVs.

The following day Typhoons bombed another group of caves with eight Paveways and on the third day a further six of the weapons were dropped on other hideouts in the same remote, mountainous area.



**RADICAL:** Computer image of prototype trainer

## Thales joins Transformer team

BELFAST AEROSPACE specialist Aeralis has teamed up with defence contractor Thales to speed up development of a 'Transformer' training aircraft for the RAF.

The prototype platform will be designed to switch from basic trainer to fast jet and uncrewed attack variants through ground-breaking design processes.

Both firms will work with the RAF's Rapid Capabilities Office to research production and design

processes. Aeralis chief executive Tristan Crawford said: "This partnership will provide solid foundations for the support of the Future Combat Air System whilst also revitalising the whole British aircraft design and manufacturing industry."

The company has completed the first design phases in preparation for the development of a pre-production aircraft with the first flight targeted within three years.

## Forces Nightingale medics sign off

BRIZE MEDICS have returned home after three months supporting NHS staff battling coronavirus.

The 10-strong team joined the largest UK peacetime military operation by backing up nurses on four wards of the Nightingale North West Hospital to ease pressure on the Health Service.

Sgt Craig Taylor said: "Working alongside our NHS colleagues has been emotional and inspiring."

The 1,000-bed unit in Manchester was the third centre set up to treat infected patients.

The team will now return to their main role providing worldwide aeromedical evacuation services.

Tactical Medical Wing's Wg Cdr Jo Bland said: "Their rapid deployment in support of the national effort has been exemplary, as has their drive and professionalism."



**JAB DONE:** RAF medical team have completed three-month deployment to treatment centre



## News

### Photo of the week

# Puma drill is Ab Fab

**MORE THAN 300 paras took to the skies to hone their combat skills with Air Force crews at RAF Brize Norton, practising fast-roping and abseiling techniques used to insert troops in areas where helicopters can't touch down.**

**After indoor training from a high platform, soldiers attempted rope descents from the Puma hovering 50ft above the ground.**

PHOTO: CPL DANNY HOUGHTON



### In Brief



**UP FOR GRABS:** Holidays, cars and motorbikes among prizes in vets draw

## Lotto luck

LUXURY PRIZES including tax free cash, sports cars, motorbikes and holidays can be won through buying raffle tickets from The Veterans Prize Competitions, which has teamed up with Forces charity SSAFA to raise funds for the military community.

Part of the ticket purchase price is donated to SSAFA, said a spokesperson for The Veterans Competitions Ltd, founded by an Armed Forces veteran.

Its CEO added: "Veterans Prize Competitions want to give back to the veterans that have put their lives on the frontline and those who have supported them through their military days."

● **Open to any entrants from the UK. Tickets start at £20. See Facebook page at: [theveteranscompetitions.co.uk](https://www.facebook.com/theveteranscompetitions) and go to: [ssafa.org.uk](https://www.ssafa.org.uk) for more information.**

# Ready, Freddie, Go

**Simon Mander**

RAF MUSICIANS are keeping it in the family as a long-serving violinist mum hands over the baton to her new recruit son.

Sgt Justine Stringer is leaving the Service after 29 years but is staying long enough to see her boy, SAC Freddie, graduate from Recruit Training Squadron and join the Band of the Royal Air Force College.

Former Air Cadet Freddie, from Flackwell Heath, High Wycombe, has performed since he was seven years old and was principal percussionist with the youth wing's National Concert and Marching Bands.

And, like mother like son, he completed basic training top-of-the-class; him for best drill and her for best sports recruit, in 1992.

Justine led the RAF Salon Orchestra for four years and has performed around the world while also representing the Air Force in golf, basketball and table tennis.

Dad Barry became a Yeoman Warder of the Tower of London after 33 years as an RAF musician including the post of Band Sergeant for the Central Band of the RAF.

Iraq veteran Barry led performances throughout the Service's centenary celebrations, but says the highlight of his career was performing the *Ashokan Farewell* with Justine at the Royal Albert Hall for Classic FM Live.

Freddie is no stranger to concert tours – he has been attending events with his parents since he was three months old, including high-profile events like the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance.

A founder member of the Spitfire Kids Choir, he was accepted into the prestigious Trinity Laban Conservatoire but decided to pursue a career in the RAF instead.

## Rookie percussionist banging the drum for family values following parents into RAF band

### TOWERING TALENTS:

Freddie, left, joins Dad Barry and Mum Justine at the Tower of London. Far right, recruit Freddie after graduating from Halton



**EXTENSION:** Chief of the Defence Staff Sir Nick Carter

## Carter stays on

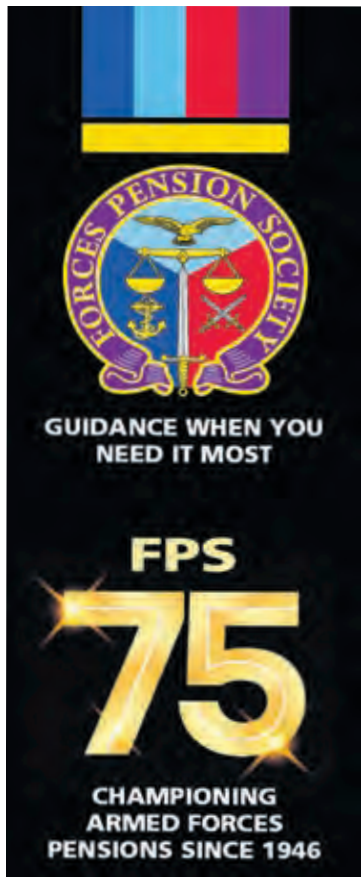
CHIEF OF the Defence Staff Gen Sir Nick Carter is to remain in the post until November this year.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace made the announcement as details of the Government's Integrated Defence Review were revealed this month.

A Defence spokesman said: "The Prime Minister has asked General Carter to remain in post to ensure continuity and stability while the conclusions of the Integrated Review are implemented."



# How your pension rights may be affected by the McCloud case



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

UNDERSTANDABLY, following the recent announcement of the outcome of the Government's consultation, our Members have been concerned to find out how their pension rights might be affected. In this brief summary, I list the key questions we're being asked and provide our guideline answers.

## **What is the McCloud Case and who is affected?**

In late 2018 an age discrimination ruling was made in the courts against Public Sector Pension Schemes introduced in 2015. This resulted in the Government having to find a remedy for all those affected, namely all personnel in service both on or before 31st March 2012 and on or after 1st April 2015 – including service leavers.

## **What was Government's decision and how might it impact me?**

Government considered two options and chose the one we at the Forces Pension Society advocated as being in the best interests of the Armed Forces Community.

It has the unlikely title "Deferred Choice Underpin" and it means that when benefits become payable, all those impacted will be able to choose between the benefits of their legacy scheme (AFPS 75 or 05) or the reformed pension scheme (AFPS 15) for the remedy period of 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022.

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

The great advantage of this option is that it allows you to make an informed decision based on actual pension benefits earned.

## **How will I make a decision when the time comes?**

You will need to assess the pros and cons of the alternatives and judge which is best for you, based on your and your family's needs at that time. This could involve a complex calculation – and depending on your circumstances may require guidance for our Members from our Pension Advisory Team. As always, we will be here to support our Members and help them make better choices.

## **When will I need to deal with this?**

Right now there is no need for you to take any action – though you might want to consider joining the Forces Pension Society as many already have - in order to be kept fully informed step by step as more details become clear.

It will likely be several months until the necessary legislation has been enacted. By the time the process is in place, if you have already left the Armed Forces or are in Resettlement, you will be contacted by MoD/Veterans UK and provided with the information you will need. If you would like to join more than 60,000 existing Members of the Forces Pension Society, please visit [forcespensionsociety.org](http://forcespensionsociety.org) or email [memsec@forpen.co.uk](mailto:memsec@forpen.co.uk)

As we always say, it pays to understand your pension.



**● INFORMED DECISIONS: Maj Gen Neil Marshall**







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**CHALLENGE:**  
Teaching assistant Sam and husband John hitting the road for local NHS medics



## Battling Sam goes extra mile for medics

**Staff Reporter**

CANCER SUFFERER Sam Andrews and her airman husband John are set to complete a virtual Land's End to John O'Groats challenge to raise cash for the charity and hospital that support her.

Sam, who has been battling stage four breast cancer since August 2016, began a sponsored walk with her Abbey Wood-based spouse John last November, aiming to complete 870 miles and raise funds for SSAFA and The Royal United Hospital Bath.

John said: "When the lockdown first hit, Sam was unable to leave the house because she was classed as clinically extremely vulnerable,

but there was a need to keep fit, both physically and mentally. We wanted to buy a treadmill, but we couldn't get hold of one anywhere.

"We got in touch with SSAFA and one of the volunteers, Dawn, drove to collect one from RAF High Wycombe and delivered it to us. It was such an incredible and selfless thing for them to do and made a real difference to Sam's wellbeing."

The couple are walking locally up to 26 miles a day to reach their target of 874 miles.

John said: "Sam works as a teaching assistant at a local school and last October the pupils took on their own walking challenge. We decided to join in and then decided to take on our own challenge."

The couple originally aimed to complete it in 12 months, then set a six-month target and, so far, they've hit the 800-mile mark and are in sight of reaching the finishing line in four months.

● If you would like to support John and Sam, visit: [uk.virginmoneygiving.com/SamJohnAndrews](http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/SamJohnAndrews)



# UK steps up support for Mali terror fight



**Simon Mander**

**A NEW CHIEF has taken command of the RAF Chinook detachment in Mali supporting French anti-terror operations.**

Royal Navy Lynx Pilot Cdr Colin Kiernan succeeded Army Air Corps Lt Col Steve Brining in a handover at Gao Airbase.

He takes over as the detachment steps up missions in response to a rising operational tempo.

UK helicopters have flown nearly 700 hours, delivering 400 tonnes of freight and more than 3,500 personnel in the past six months across the Sahel region.

Three 1310 Flight CH-47 Chinooks are being flown by 27 Sqn to back up French troops by providing heavy lift capability and under-slung load movements of armoured vehicles, containers and freight. Cdr Kiernan (inset and near right) said:



"I have been handed a highly-motivated and capable team of RAF and Army personnel who, despite the environmental and operational challenges are always ready to deliver."

The Odiham-based Chinooks back up French, G5 Sahel force and Malian military operations and deliver forward-area refuelling to both UK and French aircraft. The G5 Sahel unit is made up of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger forces, who have joined the French to counter terrorism and organised crime made worse by weak governance in the region.

Lt Col Brining said: "It has been an immense privilege to have been the National Component Commander for an outstanding tri-Service team that has delivered operations 24/7 in the most challenging of environments, and the team has done it in the face of a significant enemy threat."



**HANDOVER:** Lt Col Brining, centre, and French counterpart welcome new 1310 Flt Chinook crews at Gao Airbase in Mali. UK Forces are supporting French-led operations against terror organisations across the region

### In Brief



**RETHINK:** RAFA-owned hotel Rothbury House to be redeveloped for housing

## RAFA unveils housing plans

TWO FORMER RAF Association hotels are to be turned into retirement housing and an accommodation, training and learning facility for young people at risk of becoming homeless.

The move for the charity's two 'Wings Break' hotels comes after the Association carried out extensive research into the future use of the hotel sites – Rothbury House, Northumberland, and Flowerdown House, Somerset – following their closure last year amid Covid-19 restrictions.

A RAFA spokeswoman said a survey of almost 20,000 RAF Association members aged 65 and over revealed significant demand for good quality retirement housing where residents could share their RAF connection. More than 500 respondents said they would be interested in moving to Rothbury House.

A 25-year lease for Flowerdown House in Weston-super-Mare has been agreed with YMCA Dulverton Group. Services provided by the charity, which plans to retain the building's RAF-themed décor, are open to all vulnerable young people in north Somerset, including members of the RAF community.

RAFA's Rory O'Connor added: "The current design of Rothbury House lends itself to retirement living. We believe we can offer a safe setting at Rothbury, where people with a shared experience can find a sense of belonging."





## RAF News

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# Lightning strike for Gunners

## Stealth jet security drill as F-35s prepare for first Carrier Strike Force role

**Simon Mander**

FORCE PROTECTION teams are stepping up security drills to guard the UK's fleet of F-35 stealth fighters ahead of the aircraft's first deployment with the Carrier Strike Group later this year.

In the latest exercise Gunners simulated a call-out as an F-35 jet is diverted to a foreign airfield, air crash scenarios and rescue procedures in hostile territory.

3 Force Protection Wing honed their combat skills on Exercise Agile Protector at Marham, home to the RAF's Lightning Force, and ranges in Norfolk.

Three flights from 15 Sqn tested their fieldcraft, carried out patrols and deployed

to Wales to practise operations in a high-threat environment against 'enemy' forces.

It included the first training exercise for the new integrated Tactical Police Flight – set up to provide commanders with specialist protective security, counter-intelligence and law enforcement skills – deployed for the first time.

Air Force teams set up a protective security bubble around an F-35 during a simulated emergency landing in Somalia, currently battling Islamist terror group Al Shabab – responsible for a spate of bomb attacks in the capital Mogadishu, and neighbouring Kenya.



**GUARD:** 3FP team set up security bubble around F-35; below, Tactical Police Flight support exercise. *Inset below left*, F-35 pilot on board QEC, due to deploy later this year  
PHOTOS: SAC BEN MAYFIELD



## Rock stars net Gib awards

**Staff Reporter**  
RAF Gibraltar

STATION CHIEF Wg Cdr Nel Doherty led the Air Force winners as British Forces in Gibraltar honoured high-flying personnel.

Fighter control specialist Nel was awarded a Long Service and Good Conduct award after 25 years service, including frontline tours in Afghanistan, Iraq, Africa and North America.

Also honoured was Flt Lt Martin Hughes, awarded a Commander British Forces Commendation for setting up mental health and well-being projects for UK military personnel stationed on The Rock.

Airfield Manager Cpl Diane Rutter was awarded a Long Service and Good Conduct medal in recognition of her 15 years of exemplary service.

SAC Desmond Evans, on detachment to Gibraltar from



**WG CDR NEL DOHERTY**



Tactical Supply Wing in the UK, was awarded the Station Commander's Safety

Commendation for maintaining air safety at the Mediterranean base and clearing debris from the edge of the airfield.



**SAC DESMOND EVANS**



**FLT LT MARTIN HUGHES**



**CPL DIANE RUTTER**

### In Brief



## MoD green fuel drive

PIONEERING RAF green schemes look set to be expanded to help the UK meet its target of net zero emissions by 2050.

Along with increased use of solar panels and biogas boilers on bases, renewable energy initiatives already on some Air Force stations are likely to feature in Gen Richard Nugge's Climate Change and Sustainability review in the coming weeks.

They include using algae, alcohol and household waste to power fast jets and air source heat pumps which warm outside air to provide hot water for radiators and underfloor heating.



# NO ONE LEFT BEHIND



**CALL OF DUTY:** Two instructors from St Mawgan's Defence SERE Training Organisation make an urgent request for an RAF Puma helicopter during the course  
PHOTOS: Cpl Andrew Morris

## RAF St Mawgan instructors deliver world-class Tri-Service personnel recovery training

**S**URVIVAL TRAINING has been overhauled to ensure British military personnel downed behind enemy lines can be rescued from anywhere in the world.

And Air Force specialists at St Mawgan are spearheading the changes ahead of the UK Carrier Strike Group's first deployment with F-35 jets to the Far East.

"The iconic photos of a ground extraction force or a combat search and rescue helicopter picking up downed aircrew is about the limit of many people's knowledge when it comes to the recovery of an isolated person on operations," said station spokesman Flt Lt Jon Lord.

"Coupled with films like *Behind Enemy Lines*, the traditional thought has always been that someone, somewhere, will know what to do if, and when, a person on Ops becomes isolated," he said.

But after the Coalition air war against Col Gaddafi's regime in Libya 10 years ago – which saw horrific images of a Jordanian Pilot captured by ISIS broadcast on the internet – Britain realised it needed a review of how to rescue downed aircrew if it wasn't to be totally reliant on its Allies.

And now a dedicated team of experts at St Mawgan's Defence SERE Training Organisation has overhauled survival training which is integrated into planning at the highest levels and exercised on a routine basis.

**D**STO's Chief Instructor Flt Lt John Hudson says the changes will massively improve the UK military's ability to get its people home.

"We've come a long way in recent years. It wasn't so long ago that our ability to plan for a worst-case scenario of an isolated person was left to a couple of guys talking it through in the crew room," he said.

"Now, we are regularly delivering a world-class product to people who are deploying all over the globe to plan and execute joint personnel recovery operations."

RAF rescue specialists are now permanently embedded in operational nerve centres in the Middle East, the Joint Personnel Recovery Centre in Washington, USA, and the European Personnel Recovery Centre in Europe to take part in joined-up coalition rescue missions.

And ahead of fleet flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth II's deployment with 617 (Dambusters) Sqn Lightnings, the next Exercise Joint Warrior

will provide the perfect opportunity for recent students of survival courses to implement their newly-acquired knowledge.

According to one recent graduate, Lt Carl Davis, the use of ground extraction forces is quite well developed, but opportunities to combine hardware and planning are needed to further refine the capability.

**T**ri-Service instructor Lt Cdr Justin Stark said: "Following Op Ellamy in Libya, it became very clear from the post-Operations reports that the UK needed to have a much better plan in place to recover its personnel should they find themselves isolated."

"Joint Personnel Recovery is essential for us to retain strategic freedom of action and mitigate risk to our personnel while protecting our national reputation."

The new way of doing business is not just about daring raids with Special Forces fast-roping out of helicopters but incorporates using diplomatic channels and non-conventional recovery methods to retrieve personnel.

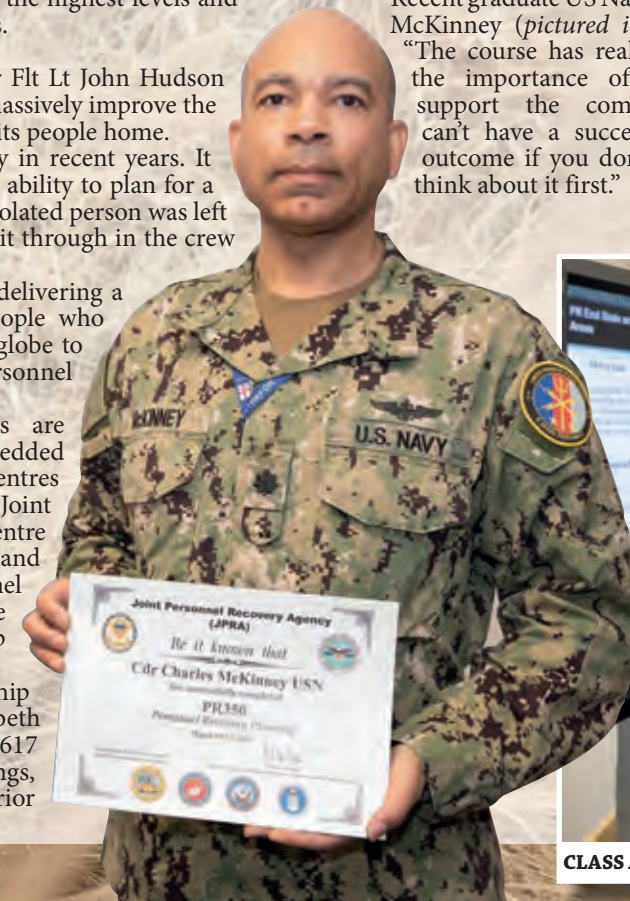
The methods are taught on new American Personnel Recovery training courses delivered at RAF St Mawgan and are viewed as vital training for units deploying on Ops.

Recent graduate US Navy Cdr Charles McKinney (pictured inset left) said:

"The course has really highlighted the importance of planning to support the commander. You can't have a successful recovery outcome if you don't successfully think about it first."



**MOOR THE MERRIER:** On the radio calling in air support on Bodmin



**CLASS ACTS:** Royal Navy's Lt Carl Davies (left) plans an extraction with US Navy's Cdr McKinney (centre) and a Royal Marine



**Announcements**

- P6-7
- Puzzles**
- P8

# R'n'R

**Win!**



**Win: WWII  
drama on  
DVD ● p3**

**Faith's return – Eve  
Myles ● p4-5**



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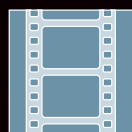
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# Surreal snapshot of the frailties of being human



## Film Review Apples (12A)

On Curzon Home Cinema now



**A**RIS (ARIS SERVETALIS) rides the bus to its final destination having forgotten his stop, along with his name, and so is carted off to hospital with the many others being diagnosed with sudden amnesia.

Set in a skewed version of Athens, this world has a playfully surrealist touch, and so when no one comes to collect Aris, he begins an odd process that will somehow make him a productive member of society. The 'New Identity Program' provides patients with a place to live, where they will regularly be set objectives that need to be completed and documented with Polaroid pictures.

These recreational tasks are bizarre in their specificity, from riding a bike and catching a perch to getting a lap dance or having a one-night stand. Drifting further away from reality, *Apples* is able to humorously deconstruct everyday life and relationships through its circus-mirror reflection.

The vacant determination of Aris as he completes increasingly peculiar tasks is strangely funny, and though it becomes more familiar over the course of the film, it is never predictable and so there



**LAPPING IT UP:** One of the tasks set for Aris is to have a dance from a stripper. Other challenges he photographs as proof (inset top left)

is always an uneasy tension behind the laugh.

It takes an M. Night Shyamalan concept and plants it in the Yorgos Lanthimos universe (somewhere between *The Happening* and *The Lobster*), creating a high concept black comedy, mired in tragedy and trauma. It feels like it was written by AI imagining what it means to be human, to experience

lust, empathy or even grief.

Made prior to 2020, *Apples* has a prophetic resonance: a pandemic forcing many people to live the same lives – proving their existence by taking photos of their activities. The absurdity of the situations draw attention away from the seriousness, though it can be called into play in an instant. In fact, the final act creates

real pathos in having Aris interact with terminally ill patients of a hospital, having his humanity remain intact as though it were a universal condition that cannot be forgotten.

If you can adjust to its tone, *Apples* manages to be both poignant and gleefully ridiculous.

**4 out of 5 roundels** ●●●●

Review by Sam Cooney



## Music Van Morrison Latest Record Project

## 42nd street for Morrison



**VAN MAN:** Blues/R&B legend Morrison

**V**AN MORRISON will release his new album *Latest Record Project: Volume 1* on May 7 – his 42nd.

It's a 28-track delve into the Ulsterman's ongoing love of blues, R&B, jazz and soul.

"I'm getting away from the perceived same songs, same albums all the time," he said. "This guy's done 500 songs, maybe more, so hello? Why do you keep promoting the same 10? I'm trying to get out of the box."

*Latest Record Project: Volume 1* is the result of the worldwide enforced period of isolation. Unable to tour, Morrison remained busy with constant songwriting, starting ideas on piano, guitar or saxophone. What emerged was a wealth of new material, with the title track released this month as the first single from the album.

Two songs – *Love Should Come With a Warning* and *Mistaken Identity* – feature lyrics that were written with the legendary Don Black. Morrison approached Black after hearing something in his 1969 pop ballad *On Days Like These*, sung by Matt Monro for the soundtrack to the classic Michael Caine film *The Italian Job*, which reminded him of his own style. It led to Black writing *Mistaken Identity* – the most autobiographical song on the album.

*Latest Record Project: Volume 1* will be released on double-CD, deluxe-CD, triple-vinyl and digital formats. It's available to pre-order, with the song *Latest Record Project* provided to fans as an instant download.

Go to: [www.vanmorrison.com](http://www.vanmorrison.com) for the latest updates and ticket details for live performances, including rescheduled dates on April 14, 15, 17 and 18 at the London Palladium and other dates throughout the UK this summer.



## Competition

### Torpedo U-235 (15)

On Blu-ray, DVD and digital download (Dazzler Media)



**Win!**

## Nazi sub war drama

**I**N THIS epic cinematic adventure resistance fighters accept a suicide mission to deliver uranium from the Belgian Congo in a stolen Nazi submarine to the United States.

Hunted by Hitler's army, the crew must outwit the German Navy to bring the cargo safely to America.

Filled with exhilarating action and suspense and with a great ensemble cast headlined by Koen De Bouw (*The Last Tycoon*), Thure Riefenstein (*12 Monkeys*) and Ella-June Henrard (*Admiral*), *Torpedo: U-235*, from new Belgian writer-director Sven Huybrechts, has been described as one of the most exciting war films of the year.

We have copies of *Torpedo U-235* on DVD to give away. To be in with a chance of winning one, just answer the following question correctly:



**MISSION:** Resistance fighters aboard U-235

### Who directed *Torpedo U-235*?

Email your answer, marked *Torpedo* DVD competition, to: [competitions@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:competitions@rafnews.co.uk) or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by April 9. Don't forget to include your full postal address with your entry.





**Music**  
**Paul Weller**  
Tour & new album

## Full-Fat Weller

**PAUL WELLER** releases his new album, *Fat Pop (Volume 1)*, on May 14 – his 16th solo album since his self-titled debut in 1992. The release comes just under 12 months after June 2020's chart-topping *On Sunset*.

Last spring, after his tour was postponed, Weller needed something else to focus on. With many ideas for new songs stored on his phone, he started to record them on his own with just vocals, piano and guitar, which he'd send to his core band members (drummer Ben Gordelier, Steve Cradock on guitar and bassist Andy Crofts) to add their parts.

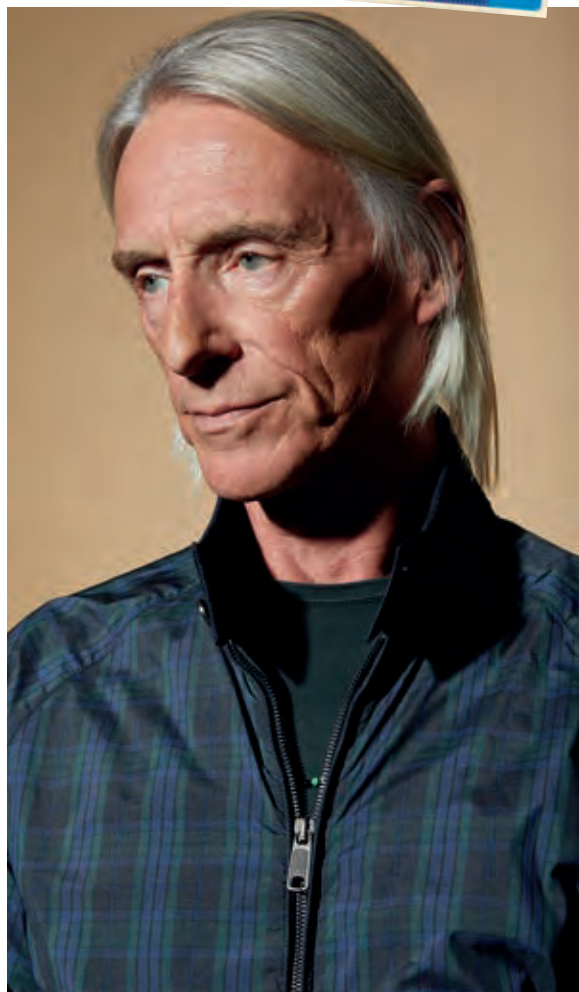
Despite it being strange not being together, it kept the wheels rolling and sanity prevailing. The band reconvened at Weller's Black Barn studio in Surrey when lockdown restrictions were lifted to finish the work.

*Fat Pop* sees a number of guests contributing including Lia Metcalfe, the young Liverpool singer with The Mysterines. Andy Fairweather Low adds his distinctive vocals to the track *Testify* and Paul's daughter Leah co-wrote and features on the three-minute *Shades of Blue*, which will be the first single taken from the album.

*Fat Pop* comes in several formats including CD, cassette, coloured vinyl, heavyweight vinyl and picture disc vinyl. Deluxe formats include *Fat Pop*, *Mid-Sommer Musik* (the live special from November last year) and bonus tracks; a three-CD box set and a three-LP box set.

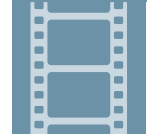
Weller's live performance from the Barbican Centre in London with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Jules Buckley, due to take place on March 10, has been rescheduled to May 15.

Go to: [paulweller.com](http://paulweller.com) for the latest news on tour dates.



PAUL WELLER: BBC Symphony Orchestra date lined up

FAT POP:  
New album



**Film**  
**Moustache Man/Turn Around**  
Greenlit.com

## New films get the Green light



WRONGED: Box with granddaughter Mary Lou

**FILM CROWDFUNDING**  
platform Greenlit.com's new projects include *Moustache Man* starring Mark Gatiss (*The League of Gentlemen*, *Sherlock*, *Doctor Who*) and Breanna Box's true crime gangster documentary *Turn Around*.

Director Sean J. Young's comedy short film *Moustache Man* follows a boy taking care of his grieving mother after the death of his father. He thinks maybe the best way to make things better is to become his father, so he grows a moustache.

Gatiss, who plays 'The Boss' in the film said: "*Moustache Man* is based on Sean's direct experiences of being a young carer from his 20s to the present day. It's a terrific, funny and very moving script.

"I've known Sean since he appeared in *Sherlock* when he was about two and I was very honoured to be in his great series *Two Housemates*.

"He's a fantastic talent, a very funny guy. In these unprecedented times for the creative industry, funding for short films is, uh well, short... so get involved."

*Turn Around* follows the life of James Box, who was falsely convicted and sentenced to 35 years in prison in one of the largest drug busts in the world in 1989.



Model Breanna Box, James Box's granddaughter, is directing.

She said: "*Turn Around* is a story I've wanted to tell my whole life as a full TV series, but after my grandfather got Covid I felt time is only passing by and is extremely precious.

"This is for him, and for the world to see how unjust our justice system is, how a man from nothing made something out of his life; no matter the circumstances. It's stranger than fiction, the things he's been through."

Crowd  
pleasers



**Competition**  
**Michael Palin: Travels of a Lifetime (E)**  
Out on April 5 on Blu-ray, DVD and digital (Dazzler Media)

## TV's journeyman

**COMEDIAN, ACTOR, writer** and much-loved TV traveller Michael Palin's famous documentary series is out next month on Blu-ray, DVD and digital.

In intimate conversation, and using his personal archive, Palin reflects on how he became addicted to travel, and reveals the challenges he faced making these groundbreaking series.

Famous fans including fellow globetrotters Sir David Attenborough, Simon Reeve and Joanna Lumley explain how Palin inspired them to

embark on adventures of their own.

The four-episode series looks at how ex-Monty Python comic Palin became an accidental traveller when he accepted an offer to go around the world in 80 days, following the route of Phileas Fogg in the classic Jules Verne story.

He looks back on the programmes and his diaries to reveal how the series was made and the impact it had. Little did he know that not only would it become a huge hit, it would also change the face



Win!



WANDERLUST: Michael Palin has been almost everywhere

of TV travel programmes.

We have a copy of *Michael Palin: Travels of a Lifetime* on DVD to win. For your chance to own it, simply tell us:

Which famous comedy troupe did Michael Palin belong to?

Email your answer, marked Palin DVD competition, to: [competitions@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:competitions@rafnews.co.uk) or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by April 9.

### The Big Event Keeping Faith

# See how it all ends for put upon Faith

## Final series of the hit Welsh crime drama

**THE THRILLER** *Keeping Faith* was a huge success for the BBC two seasons running. Now the highly anticipated third and final series is about to be shown and fans can't wait.

In series one we followed Welsh solicitor Faith Howells (Eve Myles) on the painful and dangerous journey to discover her husband's double life and web of lies.

Series two asked – will Faith survive the betrayal? And the final series asks the question – who is Faith Howells?

Creator and writer Matthew Hall said: "This last series sees Faith forced to draw on her deepest reserves of faith and love and her undying hunger for the truth as she takes on both the biggest case of her career – that of teenager Osian, who is given up for dead by doctors who refuse to risk further treatment – while confronting the darkest secrets and lies of her past. Who really is Faith? Where does she come from?"

He added: "In a journey that veers between tragedy and hope, tears and laughter, Faith is tested to her limits as a mother, daughter, lover, wife, best friend and lawyer until her story erupts in an emotional and unexpected climax... and her final goodbye."

Myles returns as Faith, who attempts to navigate the fall-

out of her marriage break-up while taking on an emotionally wrenching legal medical case involving a gravely-ill boy. The action is again set in the fictional town of Abercorran in West Wales, with Faith's home overlooking the estuary and the castle at Laugharne.

Faith and Evan (Myles' real-life husband Bradley Freeguard) are making final arrangements pending an amicable divorce after two years of separation. She's left the family law firm Howells and set up her own legal business with former Howells colleague Cerys. Faith's best friend Lisa (Cath Ayres) is drinking more than ever and running a successful 'dinner dating club'.

Former criminal Steve Baldini (Mark Lewis Jones), Faith's previous love interest, has kept his word – he hasn't spoken to her for two years and has withdrawn to a place in the woods, but he's still in love with her.

Joining the regular cast are Celia Imrie (*Dinnerladies*, *Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*) Matthew Aubrey (*Made in Dagenham*, *The Gospel of Us*), and Dame Sian Phillips (*I, Claudius*, *Tinker, Taylor, Soldier, Spy*)

Myles said: "We left Faith at the end of series two asking Evan to leave, and a divorce was imminent. She had come to learn of all his dark secrets and become embroiled in the dark underworld Evan was running away from.

"In the new series you can expect the unexpected and even more secrets revealed. There's a new character who



CELIA IMRIE: Joining cast



WOODSMAN: Former love interest Steve Baldini (Mark Lewis Jones) has kept his distance

shakes Faith's world just as she's about to get back onto her feet. New and old characters fight for their family and justice, and Faith's past is coming back to haunt her."

Myles described filming during a pandemic as 'difficult'. She said: "It was difficult, it changed everything really, but we were lucky with the stuff we had already shot. It's funny how the new protocols become normal very quickly.

"The main thing was everyone must stay safe and be vigilant at all times, in and outside of work. We got

it done safely, that's the main thing for me."

Her character's clothes – especially her coats and shoes – have attracted plenty of attention from fans. Myles revealed: "My favourite coat is the yellow mac... it's the go-to, always."

Looking back on series three, she cited the day the cast spent on the water at Laugharne – famous for once being Welsh poet Dylan Thomas's home – as her favourite memory.

She added: "The tide came in and out so fast, the sunset was magical



**Competition**  
**Bloodlands (15)**  
Out now on Blu-ray, DVD and digital (Dazzler Media)

## The NI problem

**BLOODLANDS**, the critically acclaimed BBC One crime drama, has just been released on Blu-ray, DVD and digital.

Created by new writer Chris Brandon with *Line of Duty* and *Bodyguard* creator Jed Mercurio as executive producer, the series stars James Nesbitt (*The Missing*, *Cold Feet*) as veteran Northern Ireland police detective Tom Brannick.

When a car is pulled from the sea Brannick instantly sees

the connection to an infamous cold case that holds enormous personal significance for him – a notorious and long-buried series of mysterious disappearances.

*Bloodlands* follows Brannick's obsessive campaign to identify and unmask the legendary assassin behind these events – a figure code-named Goliath, after the giant shipyard cranes Samson and Goliath that dominate the Belfast skyline.

What follows is a dogged



Win!

hunt and an explosive cat-and-mouse game where the stakes have never been higher.

We have a copy of the series on DVD up for grabs. For your chance to win it, simply answer this question correctly:

Who plays Tom Brannick in *Bloodlands*?

Email your answer, marked Bloodlands DVD competition, to: [competitions@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:competitions@rafnews.co.uk) or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by April 9. Please remember to include your full postal address.



TAKING COVER: Things are never easy for lawyer and mum Faith Howells (Eve Myles)



and every-one kept saying, "wow this isn't work, this is a treat!"

And she revealed her favourite thing about her feisty character: "She will never give up. I will miss her courage."

Olivier-award winner Imrie plays Rose Fairchild who she described as 'tough, regretful, ruthless... wants to make amends with her past but has left it all too late'.

Imrie revealed she 'adored' filming on location in south Wales.

She said: "I adored it, that is one of the great treats of our work, you go to places you might never have had the chance to visit before. I was mesmerised by the beauty of the Welsh language."

And she summed up the drama as 'original, passionate, unsentimental yet heartbreaking'.

The series is filmed in both English and Welsh. The Welsh language version *Un Bore Mercher* (*One Wednesday Morning*) was aired last November on S4C.

The first episode of series 3 in English is due to be broadcast on March 27.





## Your Announcements

You can email photos for announcements on this page to: [tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk)

### Death

**STOUT** George, Flt Sgt (Retired) sadly passed away on Tuesday, March 9 aged 77. Much-loved husband of Beryl, loving dad to Tracy and Julie and father-in-law to Graham and Colin and dearly loved Gramps to Michael and Adam. A well-travelled man, forever in our thoughts, keeping flying.

### Seeking

I am grateful for any information about Reginald J. Fuller, Service Number: 2221635 with the RAF. He was a British engineer in my father's Canadian crew in 1944 and 1945 at Tholthorpe, Yorkshire with 28 operations completed before war's end. It's clear that he was talented, admired, and a great asset to the crew, but when allied members immediately returned to Canada, they lost touch. I would be so very happy to hear from anyone who might know Mr Fuller's family and ultimately help me to conclude a story that pays tribute equally for his contributions. Please email: [denis.thieven@gmail.com](mailto:denis.thieven@gmail.com)



**Reginald Fuller**

I am looking for background information on my father Cpl John J Murphy, who served in the RAF from 1947 to 1978, with a small break in the 1950s. He did tours in Africa and also in

Northern Ireland in the 1960s. He passed away, aged 90, in February, 2020. Unfortunately, I know very little about him and am trying to track down any information about his early life and family. I believe he was born in Ireland, that his father worked for the Belfast Shipping Company and in the 1960s he was married to Shirley, but know almost nothing else. Please email me on: [thebrookners@aol.com](mailto:thebrookners@aol.com) if you have any information that could help.



**Cpl John Murphy**

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

### Reunions

**DID** you serve at RAF Changi or HQFEAF Singapore? The RAF Changi Association (inc. HQFEAF). Founded May 1996 welcomes new Members from all ranks ex RAF/WRAF/WAAF and civilian personnel who served at RAF Changi (inc. HQFEAF) during 1946-72. For more information please contact our Membership Secretary: Malcolm Flack on 01494 728562 or email: [MemSecChangi@outlook.com](mailto:MemSecChangi@outlook.com)

com or visit: [www.rafchangi.com](http://www.rafchangi.com) for more details.

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

**RAF Bawdsey** Reunion Association. Having cancelled our 2020 reunion, we were planning the next reunion for June 5 2021, but the continuing Covid-19 restrictions make it impossible to hold a successful reunion for our members, so the June 5 event is cancelled. A consensus showed that members were not in favour of a reunion in September 2021 therefore we have provisionally planned the next reunion for Saturday May 21, 2022, before The Queen's Jubilee celebrations and the extended public holidays in early June, and we look forward to seeing our friends again then. In the meantime we wish you all a safe and healthy time as the roadmap out of lockdown progresses. If you have any queries please email: [doreen.bawdseyreunion@btinternet.com](mailto:doreen.bawdseyreunion@btinternet.com) or call: 07513 301723.

### Apprentices' Assoc

**ARE** you a Trenchard Brat who did your training at RAF Halton? Maybe you were trained at No. 1 S of TT RAF Cosford or at RAF Cranwell? Some Brats were trained at other RAF training schools, many were Boy Entrants trained at RAF Cosford or St Athan. We were known throughout the RAF as the Trenchard BRATS. Our Association, The RAF Halton Apprentices'

Association, (The Old Haltonians) welcomes you all. Check us out via our website 'Old Haltonians' and then contact us at: [membership@rafhaa.co.uk](mailto:membership@rafhaa.co.uk) for further details.

### Admin Association

**THE** RAF Administrative Apprentice Association welcomes all Administrative apprentices who trained as Suppliers or Clerks at RAF St Athan, RAF Bircham Newton, RAF Halton, RAF Ruislip or RAF Hereford. Go to: [rafadappassn.org](http://rafadappassn.org) for further details.

### Catering Association

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

### Museum of Firefighting

**COULD** you help find a new home for the Museum of RAF Firefighting? The Museum's Chris Bradley said it has to vacate its current home in Scunthorpe because the premises are for sale. If you can help please contact Chris or Steve via: [firemuseum.uk](http://firemuseum.uk) or call: 015227 30198.

## Top tech discounts for Defence staff

**DEFENCE** PERSONNEL can save up to 40 per cent on a range of top-quality tech brands including Apple, Samsung, Hotpoint and O2, according to Defence Discount Service.

Veterans, those who work for the UK's Armed Forces and the wider Defence community are eligible for the savings, which are to say thank you to Defence workers who helped support the fight against Covid-19, said a spokesperson for the Service.

Tom Dalby, CEO of Defence Discount Service, said: "We are always blown away by the efforts of everyone working on the frontline, both at home and overseas, but the past 12 months have

really highlighted their commitment and dedication to keeping us safe.

"We hope our discounts help our members and their families to treat themselves to something special and offer a 'thank you' in some small way for all that they do."

Savings include up to 40 per cent on Garmin, 20 per cent on all Hotpoint products, 25 per cent on Sky and 25 per cent on O2 Refresh Airtime plans.

To register or find out more, visit [defencediscountservice.co.uk](http://defencediscountservice.co.uk)

■ **All discounts correct at the time of publishing. Refer to the website for all up-to-date discounts.**

## Sign up for virtual challenge

**THERE'S** STILL time to sign up for the RAF Museum's Virtual Lancaster Challenge to celebrate 80 years since the first flight of the Avro Lancaster.

You can participate and complete it from anywhere in the world. Choose from distances of 80K, 150K or 500K and run, walk, cycle or walk the dog to complete your challenge.

■ **Go to: [rafmuseum.org](http://rafmuseum.org) to register by May 17 and for more details.**



## Concert dates rescheduled



**MEMORABLE DATE:** RAF100 anniversary concert at Lincoln Cathedral in 2018

**HAVING** HAD to cancel its entire charity concert tour in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Royal Air Force Music Charitable Trust has now provisionally rescheduled several dates.

These include concerts at CAST, Doncaster on April 22, at Weston-Super-Mare Winter Gardens on July 9 and at the Palace Theatre, Newark on September 17.

Other concerts due to go ahead include

at the Corn Exchange, King's Lynn on October 3 and at the Winston Churchill Hall, Ruislip on October 21, November 4 and December 9.

Run on a voluntary basis by just three trustees, the charity prides itself on now being the primary single sponsor of RAF band concerts.

■ **Go to: [rafmct.org.uk](http://rafmct.org.uk) for more details.**

### 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](mailto:tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk). Please note that due to the coronavirus pandemic we are currently unable to accept notices submitted by post.

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## Your Announcements

You can email photos for announcements on this page  
to: [tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk)

# Classic Jaguars on display

WHEN COVID-19 restrictions are lifted on May 17, the British Motor Museum plans to reopen with a new E-type Evolution Exhibition from the Jaguar Daimler Heritage Trust (JDHT) to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the E-type's launch.

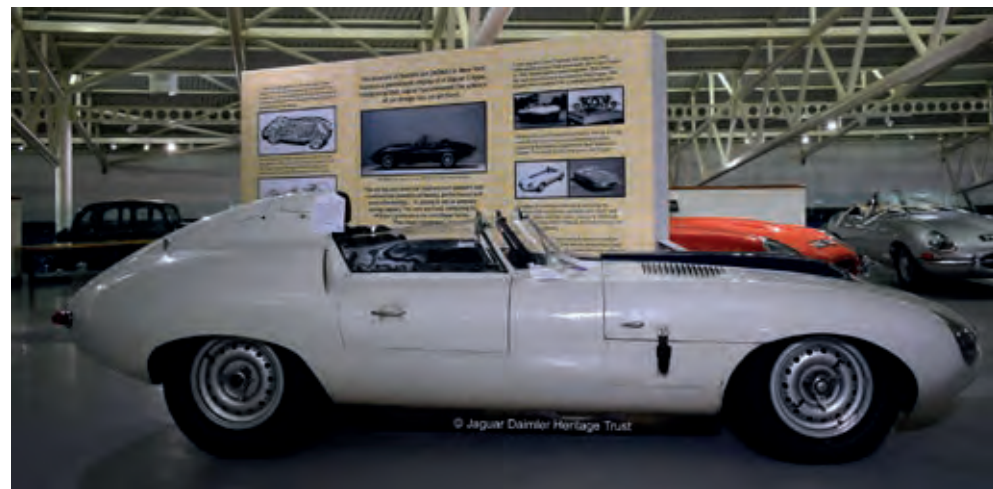
Running until the end of June, the exhibition tells the story of the evolution of the E-type from the racing C and D-types of the 1950s, the E2A Prototype and its launch at Geneva on March 15, 1961. It finishes with a couple of very successful Racing V12 E-types from the 1970s.

The exhibition starts with a summary of the story of the launch of the E-type at the Parc des Eaux Vives in Geneva, which has become a Jaguar legend, said a museum spokeswoman.

Jaguar PR man Bob Berry drove the fixed head coupé 9600 HP to act as the press car but there was so much demand for press drives that 'Mr Jaguar' Sir William Lyons instructed test driver Norman Dewis to drive the E-type Roadster 77 RW from Coventry to Geneva, to arrive before 10am the next day.

Especially for this exhibition JDHT has colour enhanced the famous image of Sir William with 9600 HP in Geneva which greets visitors as they arrive at the museum's Mezzanine Gallery. And there's a video of Norman Dewis telling visitors the story of what has become known as his 'Mad Dash to Geneva'.

■ Go to: [jaguarheritage.com/event/etype-evolution-exhibition](http://jaguarheritage.com/event/etype-evolution-exhibition) or call: 01926 927 823.



# Run for Blind Veterans



THE CHARITY Blind Veterans UK is inviting supporters to help raise funds by entering the virtual Virgin Money London Marathon this year.

Participants have the chance to complete the race in 24 hours wherever they are in the world.

The charity says everyone who completes the virtual event on Sunday, October 3 and uploads proof of completion will be sent a finisher's medal and an exclusive New Balance finisher T-shirt.



The registration fee is £10 (plus £5 p&p for overseas runners).

You can also fundraise by entering the virtual Land's End to John O'Groats walk as part of a team.

The challenge launched on March 1 and you have until VE Day (May 8) to complete the distance.

Blind Veterans UK, whose patron is The Countess of Wessex (pictured above left), helps blind ex-Servicemen and women lead

independent and fulfilling lives by supporting them with in-depth expertise, experience and a full range of services.

It gives veterans support to adjust to sight loss, overcome the challenges of blindness and enjoy daily life.

The charity has been offering physical and emotional support to vision-impaired veterans since 1915.

■ Go to: [blindveterans.org.uk](http://blindveterans.org.uk) for more information.

## Do You Want To be FIRST IN?

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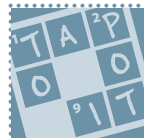
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#UKFirstIn







## Prize Crossword

No. 293

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

### Across

1. Canine supporter is grand (4)
8. Rallies her, upset by troublemaker (4-6)
9. And 13 Down, 17 Across, 6 Down. Fulmar, in other words (8,8,6,8)
10. Its possession and consumption are mutually exclusive (4)
12. In the Sahara, Mister Dumas meets boon companion (6)
14. Santa bearing article (6)
15. Type of comedy practised by one Parliamentarian in central Moravia (6)
17. See 9 Across
18. Listen! Privy Seal is on way (4)
19. 100 jogged admirably to station (8)
21. Mulls movie adapted from short story (4,6)
22. Keats inspired by Italian river, alien though it is (4)

### Down

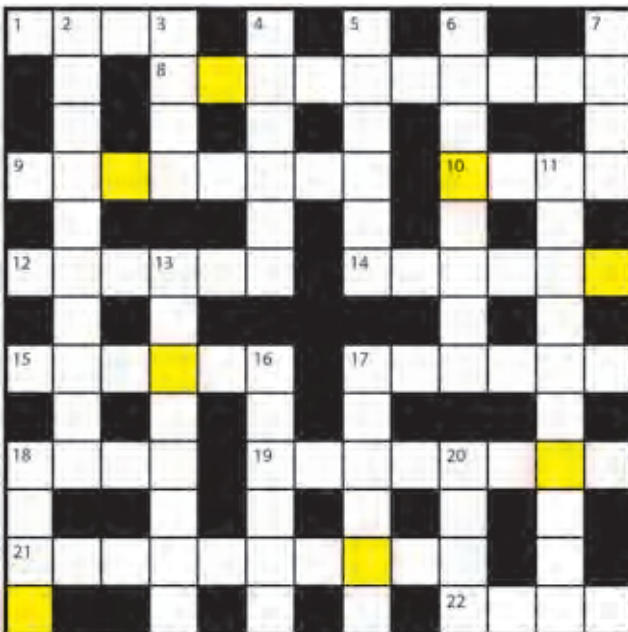
2. Rose roamed round RAF bases (10)
3. Butter evokes amazed response, we hear (4)
4. Razor-sharp aerobatic aces (6)
5. Having golf club in charge is paradoxical (6)
6. See 9 Across
7. The first French street is correctly positioned (4)
11. Loving way to save someone? (4,2,4)
13. See 9 Across
16. All-conquering aircraft? (6)
17. Pandemic outside Pontypool involves malaria (6)
18. David's wife, as was, hops around (4)
20. The two of us even help with blubber (4)

Name .....

Address .....

Aircraft:..... Crossword No. 293

The winners of Prize Crossword 293 and Prize Su Doku 303 will be published in our April 9 edition. Send entries to the address printed in the adjacent Su Doku panel to arrive by April 9.

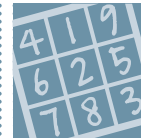


■ The winner of Crossword No. 292 is Ms A Swarbrooke of Lincoln.

### Solution to Crossword No. 292:

Across – 7. Couple 8. Simone 10. Antonio 11. Grace 12. Chop 13. Milan 17. Limbo 18. Tofu 22. Clock 23. Obelisk 24. Marham 25. Engine  
Down – 1. Scratch 2. Auction 3. Plane 4. Wingman 5. Loyal 6. Seven 9. Sonic Boom 14. Silkman 15. Bolivia 16. Bunk Bed 19. Scamp 20. Board 21. Penny

RAF aircraft – Lightning

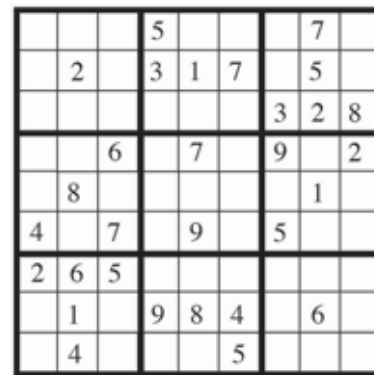


## Prize Su Doku

No. 303

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

Solutions should be sent in a sealed envelope marked 'Su Doku' with the number in the top left-hand corner to RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP14 4UE, to arrive by April 9.



Name .....

Address .....

..... Su Doku No. 303

### Solution to Su Doku No. 302



■ The winner of Su Doku No. 302 is Mrs Penny Littlefair of Haverhill, Suffolk.



## Theatre

### The Rocky Horror Show

UK tour

# Ore's a Rock(y) star

ACTOR, PRESENTER and winner of *Strictly Come Dancing* Ore Oduba (*Curtains*, *Grease*) stars as Brad Majors in Richard O'Brien's *Rocky Horror Show*. The legendary musical will tour the UK between July this year and June 2022.

Oduba said: "I can't wait to join the cast of the *Rocky Horror Show*. Like everybody, I've missed the stage so much and *Rocky* really is the perfect show to welcome audiences back to theatres. It's such an iconic musical with songs that everyone knows, so I'm sure the *Rocky* fans will be desperate to do the *Time Warp* again."

"I'm so excited to get started and tour the country with our production... just got to remember to pack my stockings!"

The *Rocky Horror Show* tells the story of Brad and his fiancée Janet, two squeaky clean college kids who meet Dr Frank'n Furter by chance when their car breaks down outside his house while on their way to visit their favourite college professor.



ALL-ROUNDER: Actor, dancer, presenter Oduba (left) stars in *Rocky Horror* (above)

It's an adventure they'll never forget, with fun, frolics, frocks and frivolity, bursting with timeless songs and outrageous outfits. The *Rocky Horror Show* famously combines science-fiction, horror, comedy and music while encouraging audience participation – meaning, of

course, getting dressed up in the most outrageous fancy dress.

Returning to the cast as Frank is Stephen Webb (*Jersey Boys*, *Legally Blonde*), alongside Philip Franks (*The Darling Buds of May*) as The Narrator, and Haley Flaherty (*Mamma Mia*, *Chicago*) as Janet.

Since it first opened in London in June 1973 at the Royal Court's Theatre Upstairs, Richard O'Brien's *Rocky Horror Show* has become probably the world's favourite rock'n'roll musical, having been performed worldwide for over 45 years in more than 30 countries and translated into 20 languages.

■ Go to: [RockyHorror.co.uk](http://RockyHorror.co.uk) for more details.



## Competition

Journey to the Far Side of the Sun (PG)

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

Win!

# Enter at the double to win sci-fi classic

THE CLASSIC sci-fi adventure *Journey to the Far Side of the Sun* was written and produced by Gerry Anderson and Sylvia Anderson of *Thunderbirds*, *Stingray* and *Captain Scarlet* fame.

*Journey to the Far Side of the Sun* was their first major live-action production.

It's 2069 and two astronauts are sent to uncover the secrets of a 'duplicate' Earth on the other side of the sun. When they crash land three weeks earlier than they had planned, they must embark on a life-or-death mission to determine whether they have arrived back home or on the strange mirror world.

Filmed in 1969, *Journey to the Far Side of the Sun* was originally released in Europe under the title *Doppelgänger*.

The cast includes Ian Hendry (*Get Carter*), Patrick Wymark (*The Plane Makers*) and Herbert Lom (*The Ladykillers*).

New artwork by Graham Humphreys appears on the reversible sleeve. Humphreys is responsible for some of the most memorable film posters of the 1980s including *The Evil Dead* and *A Nightmare on Elm Street*.

We have a copy of the film on both Blu-ray and DVD up for



grabs. For your chance to own it, tell us:

Who wrote and produced *Journey to the Far Side of the Sun*?

Email your answer, marked Journey film competition, to: [competitions@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:competitions@rafnews.co.uk) or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by April 9.

Please state on your entry whether you prefer to win the Blu-ray or DVD prize and include your full postal address.



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# Why growing up in a Forces family isn't always child's play

**AIR FORCE families have welcomed a drive to take some of the stress out of growing up in the military after children voiced their concerns as part of a ground-breaking research programme.**

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

Almost 100 children and young people at various stages in primary and secondary school from five different areas in the UK took part in the research programme – the first of its kind ever conducted.

Youngsters interviewed highlighted coping with deployment anxieties, frequent home moves, leaving friends behind and disruption to their education as the main causes of stress in their lives.

The findings, published earlier this month, have led for calls for more community support for families, the standardisation of school applications from region to region and more information about deployments.

Dr Hannah Brooking, Welfare Research Executive at the RAF Benevolent Fund, said: "We intend to provide parents with more support to understand what their children are going through and how they might be feeling. There is also an opportunity for Airplay to provide more wellbeing support.

"We are raising awareness of the challenges RAF children face and how to help them and ensure the findings of this research and other recent studies are fully reflected."

RAF High Wycombe Station Warrant Officer Emma Kerslake and her husband WO Andy eventually placed their eldest daughter Emily, now 16, in boarding school after changing her school four times in just two years.

They also went on to secure a boarding place for their son Billy, 14, to halt the disruption to his education.

SWO Kerslake said: "Changing jobs every two years or so is a real issue for Service parents. The children just get settled and then you are moving again. They lose the friends they

have made and have to get used to a new home. Boarding school has helped a lot – they have stayed in the same place and have had a lot of support from the school and their friends.

"Forces life has been tough on Emily and Billy – there have been times when they did not know what was happening.

"The report is the first time children have been able to have their say and it is something that should have been done years ago.

"One problem that really needs addressing on a government level is the difference between the way councils provide services – they all seem to do things differently when it comes to schools.

"There should be one policy about how to register at a surgery, apply for a school place. The Government should make sure that local councils are mindful of children moving from county to county."

Air Force logistics specialist Sqn Ldr Michael Neaves and his wife Laura say they have been lucky to avoid the constant upheaval that is often part of Forces family life. The couple have two teenage children, 18-year-old Sophie and Josh, who has just turned 14.

The family has been able to stay in the same property for more than a decade, but overseas deployments and watching their children lose friends they have made has also taken its toll.

Laura said: "There is a great sense of community growing up in the military. Most families are in the same boat and they do a lot to look after each other.

"We have been lucky but our situation is very unusual. Most people don't get that kind of stability.

"Being in the military does have a lot of positives but it can also be difficult – especially with deployments.

"It is good to be part of a strong and understanding community – that is a lifeline when your partner is out of the country on deployments. It is fantastic for children growing up in the



FORCES MUM: Laura Neaves



RAF to have their own say."

The report, backed by Defence Minister Johnny Mercer, makes six recommendations including promoting the charity's own welfare

services for young people and expanding counselling service for children and young people, alongside services targeted at their parents.

It also calls for further support,

through the Fund's online workshops and station grants programme, for RAF personnel to help them understand the feelings their children have.



UPHEAVAL: SWO Emma Kerslake



# FlightPRO is Oceans apart



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

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

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

## Data Driven

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

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

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



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

tool. The list is not exhaustive.

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

## Fully integrated

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

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

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

## Machine learning

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

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

The addition of Artificial Intelligence and Machine



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

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

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

## Train as you fight

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

proposition.

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

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



By Tracey Allen

Air Force greats

Feature

# Park and pride

Win!



PILOT: Park with Hurricane he used to visit 11 Group bases. Below, the statue erected in London to the great man, belatedly, in 2009

## The RAF hero treated so shabbily by Air Council

**I**T'S SAID that victory in the Battle of Britain could never have happened without the inspirational command and leadership of Keith Park.

A New Zealander, Park and Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding ensured that Fighter Command was prepared for the Nazi onslaught, says author Murray Rowlands in his new biography of Park, published by Pen & Sword Aviation.

Park took command of No 11 Group, responsible for London and South East England's defence, in April 1940.

Dowding and Park were dismissed from their commands in the aftermath of victory due to internal RAF politics, said Rowlands. But the career of Park, with a reputation as a shrewd tactician and hands-on commander, was far from over and his management of the defence of Malta made a significant contribution to British victory in the Mediterranean.

Rowlands' book *Air Marshal Sir Keith Park* subtitled *Victor of the Battle of Britain, Defender of Malta*, said the author, is "...a political story which crosses 80 years and covers the treatment of Dowding and Park at the moment

of victory in November 1940. Those who conspired in this shoddy act operated in the shadow of two great men."

It wasn't until 2009, following a campaign, that a statue of Park was erected in central London, 69 years after the RAF triumphed in the Battle of Britain.

Then Chief of the Air Staff, ACM Sir Stephen Dalton, led tributes at the unveiling. He said: "Sir Keith Park was a brave and exceptional fighter pilot; he was an outstanding senior officer, who never failed at any task he was given."

"He inspired all who worked with and for him, with his quiet gallantry, supreme personal inspiration, organisation and mental agility. He is a hero to the Royal Air Force, to this country, and to New Zealand, whose citizens have so often joined us in battle."

Rowlands said: "Publications now recognise Park as being the architect of

victory and yet the memory of his contribution seems to have faded. I hope my book will remedy this."

Keith Park was born in 1892 in Thames on New Zealand's North Island. His father, John Livingstone Park, was Director of the Thames School of Mines and with his wife Frances had 10 children – seven girls and three boys.

**K**eith was the ninth child, and, said Rowlands, "his earliest memories were of the giant machines crushing the ore to remove the gold" at Thames, a settlement established by the gold rush that started in the late 1860s.

In WWI Park joined the New Zealand Army and fought at Gallipoli. He went on to become a flying ace.

Although his outstanding leadership and service is celebrated today, he was

criticised by ACM Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, who, with Deputy Chief of the Air Staff Sholto Douglas, led the activity in the wartime Air Ministry against Park and Dowding. Leigh-Mallory replaced Park as commander of 11 Group and Douglas replaced Dowding as commander-in-chief at Fighter Command after an infamous meeting of the Air Council in 1941 known as 'The Meeting of Shame'.

Rowlands' book includes a photograph of a revealing letter written about his dismissal by Park in October 1956 to Flt Lt JJ Hunt.

Park wrote: "During the Battle of Britain there were two Air Marshals at Air Ministry who very much wanted Lord Dowding's job at HQ Fighter Command."

"...Dowding was so highly thought of by the Cabinet that his position appeared to be unassailable, until ...the conspirators at Air Ministry discovered an Air Vice Marshal in No 12 Group who badly wanted my job commanding 11 Group."

Park went on to be appointed Air Officer Commanding in Egypt, then famously commanded the air defence of Malta. In January

1944 he became Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief Middle East Command and in February 1945 was appointed Allied Air Commander South-East Asia, where he served until the end of World War II.

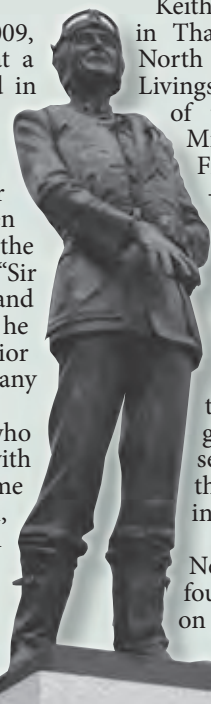
He was promoted to ACM in December 1946 and returned to New Zealand, where he died, aged 82 in 1975.

## Win the book

**WE HAVE** copies of Murray Rowlands' new biography of AM Sir Keith Park (rrp £19.99, pen-and-sword.co.uk) up for grabs. For your chance to own one, simply tell us the correct answer to this question:

*Where was Keith Park born?*

Email your answer, marked Park biography, to: [competitions@rafnews.co.uk](mailto:competitions@rafnews.co.uk) or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by April 9. Please make sure you include your postal address.



AIR COUNCIL: 'Meeting of Shame' did for Park & Dowding



ISLAND LIFE: Park at the controls of a Hurricane in Malta



DOWDING: C-in-C Fighter Command



VETERAN: Park with WWI decorations



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## Competition

# The heroes of WWII ATA



**Win!**



**IMPORTANT ROLE:** Female pilots of the ATA during the Second World War

**T**HE MEN and women who volunteered for the Air Transport Auxiliary carried out invaluable work in the Second World War.

The civilian organisation was tasked with the collection and delivery of military aircraft from factories to RAF and Royal Navy stations.

Famous ATA girls include Amy Johnson, the first woman to fly solo from London to Australia; Diana Barnato Walker, the first woman to break the sound barrier; Elsie Davison, the first female pilot killed on active service; Joan Hughes – at 21 the youngest female pilot to join, in 1940; and Pauline Gower, who was in charge of the organisation's women's section.

“Men who joined the organisation had to be exempt from having to undertake wartime military service due to health or age, but other than that there were very few restrictions on who could join, which accounted for one-legged, one-armed, one-eyed and short-sighted pilots being accepted,” said Stephen Wynn, author of a new book *Air Transport Auxiliary At War* (Pen & Sword Aviation), that celebrates the 80th anniversary of ATA's formation.

The book also features some of

ATA's less well-known members, such as Belgian millionaire Pilot Officer ‘Bobby’ Lowenstein; Chang, the son of Chiang Kai-sek, the former leader of the republic of China; and flight engineer John Gulson. Gulson was awarded the George Medal in July 1944 for saving the crew of a Halifax bomber that crashed at White Waltham in Berkshire, the organisation's headquarters.



**BARNATO WALKER:** Broke sound barrier

At first, only men were allowed to work for ATA. “By December 1939, British authorities were persuaded by Pauline Gower (the daughter of Sir Robert Vaughan Gower, a wartime Conservative MP, and an accomplished pilot in her own right), to establish a women's section of the Air Transport Auxiliary, of which she was put in charge,” said Wynn.

“The first eight women were accepted in to the service, but it would not be until 1943 that its male and female members received the same pay.”

He added: “By the end of the war 147 different types of aircraft had been flown by the men and women of the Air Transport Auxiliary, including Spitfire fighter aircraft and Lancaster bombers.

“These brave pilots were not just British, but came from 28 Commonwealth and neutral countries and their efforts sometimes came at a price: 174 Air Transport Auxiliary pilots, both men and women, died during the war whilst flying for the service.”

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Sqn Ldr William 'Mac' McIlroy

**Obituary**



**PORTRAIT:** Sqn Ldr William 'Mac' McIlroy

# One of the last survivors from Stalag Luft III

**SQUADRON LEADER** William 'Mac' McIlroy, who has died aged 99, was shot down during World War Two, imprisoned in Stalag Luft III and endured the Long March before escaping. He later became a signals expert during a long career in the RAF.

He was born on his parent's farm in Ireland in September 1921, and after leaving school he joined the Post Office Telecommunications as a trainee engineer before joining the RAF in January 1939.

He qualified as a wireless operator and was posted to the flying staff of No 2 School of Air Navigation training navigators. After two years he started a conversion course on bombers. On the night of May 30-31, 1942, Bomber Command launched the first of three Thousand Bomber Raids. To achieve the required number of aircraft, it was necessary to use some from the bomber-training units. Flying in a twin-engine Hampden, McIlroy flew on all three of the raids, the first to Cologne.

He joined 408 Squadron at Balderton near Newark and completed a further 11 missions on the Hampden before the squadron converted to the four-engine Halifax and moved to Leeming. On April 3, 1943 he and his crew attacked Essen. On return, the undercarriage failed to lower and the bomber crash-landed and was destroyed. McIlroy escaped uninjured.

**E**leven days later, on the night of April 14, 1943, McIlroy and the crew took off to attack Stuttgart. It was his 28<sup>th</sup> operation. After successfully attacking the target, the bomber was shot down over Reims by a German night fighter. Seven of the eight-man crew baled out, one evaded capture and the others, including McIlroy, became PoWs. The pilot, Pilot Officer I. Mackenzie RAAF, died at the controls to avoid crashing on houses in the village of La Neuville. The villagers later erected a memorial in his memory.

McIlroy was severely injured on landing and remained in a German-run hospital in Reims for nine months before being transferred to Stalag Luft III, scene of the Great Escape.



**VIP PASSENGER:** Field Marshal Montgomery (left) was one of the VIPs transported by Mac (right) and his crew whilst in Austria with Gen Sir Richard McCreery

On the night of January 27, 1945, the prisoners were given a few hours to evacuate the camp as the Russians approached from the east. The long column of PoWs headed west with minimum food and belongings during the harshest winter for many years. Known as The Long March, many prisoners perished. They eventually reached an overcrowded camp at Luckenwalde.

As the Russians approached, McIlroy and two colleagues escaped and walked westwards for

three days. They finally reached the River Elbe, where they met US troops. Within days, they were flown back to Britain.

**A**fter recuperating, McIlroy joined 24 (VIP) Squadron as an air signaller. He and his crew were posted to Vienna as the personal crew for General Sir Richard McCreery, GOC of the British Forces of Occupation in Austria. His crew took senior officers, politicians and others to various peace conferences in Europe.

Amongst his passengers was Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery.

McIlroy's flying career continued until 1953 and he served on 49 Squadron, initially flying Lancasters and then the Lincoln bomber from Upwood in Huntingdonshire.

McIlroy transferred to the RAF's engineering branch and specialised in signals and electronics, much of it highly secret. He worked on guided missile systems, including the ill-fated Blue Streak, and later on strategic communications, which included service in Cyprus.

His final five years in uniform were at the Joint Air Reconnaissance Intelligence Centre (JARIC) at Brampton.

On retirement in 1976, he spent a further five years as a specialist with the unit before moving to the engineering department at Cambridge University, where he carried out research and tutored students studying for their PhD.

Late in his life, McIlroy returned to Reims to visit the family of the French nurse who cared for him during his long stay in hospital.





HM Government

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By Tim Martin

Ford Raptor

**Motoring**

# Thug in a suit

## No, not our man, Ford's awesome Raptor

IN THE village where I grew up every farm had at least one pick-up and they were solid, working bits of agricultural machinery on which exhaust silencers or tread on the tyres were optional extras. They were cheap bits of kit that were absolutely indestructible.

The Ford Range Raptor is not that. It's not a pick-up truck in the traditional sense and the tax man has rumbled it – with something like Isuzu's D-Max XTR you can reclaim the VAT if you're a business, but not so with the Raptor. No, this is a performance, off-road, racing machine that happens to have a flatbed.

The Raptor's reduced load capacity of 'just' 600kg is what really disqualifies it, but we won't hold that against it. The bottom line is that it's immense fun and it brings a whopping grin to your face every time you drive it.

### Exterior

The Raptor is instantly recognisable from every angle. It's more imposing than any other Ranger on sale in the UK and has a distinctly American look thanks to a unique Ford grille. This has been borrowed from the F-150 Raptor sold in the US and is the most obvious nod to its bigger, more powerful American cousin. Massive wheel arches, BF Goodrich all-terrain tyres and the hardy headlamp covers, all inspired by the US version, complete the look.

As UK cars go, the Raptor is BIG. It's nowhere near as bulky as the F-150, which is basically the size of a small lorry, but it won't fit into your average parking space either – which is actually great fun!

I decided that the only option was to occupy two spaces every time I used a car park and the reactions from passers-by brought the broadest of smiles to my petrol-head face.

### Interior

The Raptor really is a pick-up in a suit. Sporting



**STAR:** Ford had me Raptor round their fingers

electric, suede, heated front seats, it really looks sharp. Bespoke Raptor graphics and blue stitched leather on the most noticeable surfaces set the theme. It's packed with the sort of tech that you'd expect to find in a big executive saloon and Ford's SYNC 3, 8in touchscreen infotainment system is one of the best on the market so it feels expensive – which is just as well because, as pick-ups go, it's pretty steep.

It's not all about looks. The sports seats are supportive and comfortable, while there's a huge amount of space for passengers in the cabin. Six-footers have plenty of head and knee room in the back and visibility is surprisingly good

for such a large vehicle.

Shorties may have an issue with getting in, of course, due to the Raptor's immense height but side steps help and there are grab handles in all four corners of the cabin to let you haul yourself in.

### On the road

The Fox shock absorbers are worth every penny because the Raptor is the most refined, best handling pick-up by far. Isuzu's XTR comes a good second but the Raptor leads by a fair margin.

The ride is comfortable under all circumstances and it handles surprisingly well on tarmac when pushed hard. It handles corners well for its size and glides over big bumps effortlessly.

The Ranger Raptor gets a 10-speed automatic gearbox as standard, the same one found in Ford's Mustang. It's a sharp shifting system that works well with the six different driving modes. You can tune your Raptor at the flick of a switch between Normal, Sport, Grass/Gravel/Snow, Mud/Sand, Rock and Baja. Each mode tunes the steering, acceleration and gears to suit the terrain you're on and, if I'm honest, it's Baja you'll love.

**BEASTS:** All-terrain tyres



### Performance

A lot of motoring journalists have made a big thing about the fact that the UK version of the Raptor doesn't have the 444bhp, 3.5-litre twin-turbo V6 petrol engine found in the US F-150 Raptor. Some have also been quick to point out that it doesn't have the 3.2-litre Duratorq diesel available in the Ranger Wildtrak either.

Firstly, the UK version is a fraction of the weight/size of the F-150 and, secondly, the twin turbo, 210bhp, 2.0 diesel in the UK Raptor develops more kick than the Wildtrak's 3.2. It is the most powerful engine available in this body type. Let's put it this way, in a vehicle of this size, you'll lose your bottle before it runs out of steam, on and off-road.

### Verdict

#### Pros

- One of the best-looking pick-ups on the market
- Fast, fun and agile (for such a capable pick-up)
- The sportiest pick-up interior on the market
- Brilliant suspension
- Comfortable on almost every surface
- A practical utility vehicle

#### Cons

- At £48,785 it's steep, really steep, for a pick-up
- At 31mpg it drinks hard when you push it
- The roller load cover is heavy to close and you need to be over 6ft to reach it
- Tricky load bars that have to be unlocked and unbolted to move
- 2,500kg towing capacity, down from 3,500kg on other Rangers
- Can't reclaim the VAT



## Top honour as collegiate continues to improve offering for boarding students

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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## Nurturing a love of learning

At Bromsgrove all pupils, regardless of their age, develop natural curiosity and a love of learning in a safe yet stimulating setting.

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A boarding community of over 580 youngsters, aged 7 to 18, live in comfortable houses, looked after by dedicated houseparents and a wide range

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

Pupils start at the Prep School at age 7, many progressing from the School's own Pre-Preparatory School.

At Prep School academic and extra-curricular horizons naturally wide; the curriculum is broad and enriching and the opportunities for sport and extra-curricular activities are extensive.

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them to their full potential.

Senior School is where pupils become more independent in their learning both in and out of the classroom.

The activities programme encourages them to take on responsibilities and to develop more skills whether that's in programming robots, taking part in music and drama, CCF and kitcar teams or editing the award winning pupil magazine there is something for everyone.

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





# 3 pages of **RAF Sport** start here

● Rally ace joins the elite: **p31**

## RUGBY LEAGUE



**BULLISH:** Cpl Alice Fisher (*far left*) and Flt Lt Linda McLean at RAF Coningsby  
PHOTO: SAC Kirwan-Taylor

# RAF pair a different league



**Andy O'Hara**

**TYPHOON FORCE** sports stars Flt Lt Linda McLean and Cpl Alice Fisher are celebrating another great partnership – this time for Bradford Bulls.

The Coningsby-based airwomen help keep the RAF fast jets flying – McLean as a Flight Test Engineer and Fisher in Flight Ops – now they're hoping to go for Super League glory together.

Centre McLean (*left*) has recently had the call-up for the Bulls and joins Fisher, who was selected as a forward for the top-flight outfit almost two years ago.

McLean told *RAF News*: "I'm delighted to be selected. The RAF played Bradford in the Challenge Cup in the 2019 season and afterwards it was suggested that I might like to go up north for trials. I did and must have managed to impress as I got selected."

## Air Force rugby players in Bradford Bulls call-up

Linda represents the RAF in both rugby league AND rugby union and what with the Bulls, looks like being kept very busy as sport opens up again as Covid restrictions are eased.

**"I'm hoping there are not too many games that clash"**

She said: "I'm hoping there are not too many games that clash. Rugby league is a summer sport and union a winter one, but there is

a bit of an overlap. Hopefully, we'll be able to sort it all out though."

And thankfully for both RAF women, they've got bosses who are league fans and do what they can to help their sporting endeavours.

"We are very lucky like that," said McLean.

With a rugby union background, the Scot started playing league five or six years ago, and loved it.

"It's more of a backs game," she said. And pressed to pick her

favourite code, "It has to be league," she conceded.

Now she and Fisher (*below*) are hoping to take Bradford Bulls Women to Super League glory for the first time and are keen to encourage others to take up the sport ahead of the World Cup in the UK this November.

McLean is aiming to debut for the Bulls in their first game of the new season against fellow giants St Helens on April 18.

"I'll be doing everything I can to be in the starting line-up," she said. "I promise you that."

**For more on women's rugby league in the RAF** see [@RAFRLA](#) on Facebook or [@RAFRugbyLeague](#) on Twitter.





Sport

INDOOR ROWING

# PTIs are fit for purpose

## World rowing success

RAF PTIs proved they were fit for purpose with storming performances at the World Rowing Indoor Championships (WRIC).

Linton on Ouse-based Sgt Danny Graham was part of the first UK Armed Forces team to compete in such an event and exceeded all expectations to claim bronze, narrowly missing out on second place in the prestigious event.

And relative novice Cpl Toria Needham, from RAF Shawbury, put in a huge shift to finish an impressive sixth in her category of the global race.

When the pandemic forced the 2021 WRIC to go virtual it meant a new way of racing.

Starting with continental qualifying rounds that began last December and including open pathways for anyone in the world to participate, the finalists were determined for the WRIC, that took place recently.

The finalists raced live from their bedrooms, balconies, bathrooms, kitchens and gyms on Concept2 indoor rowing machines.

From the first day of racing world records began to fall across the categories, which included a variety of distances and age groups as well as para rowing and team events.

Nearly 1,000 racing spots were filled by athletes from the 63 nations which took part in the championships. Racing started each day at noon and was streamed live on YouTube. Each rower was videoed racing from wherever they were in the world.

These individual races were then linked through a virtual studio with commentary on each race. Each athlete was connected to a screen where they could see how they were doing against their competitors.

PTIs Sgt Graham and Cpl Needham were the only RAF qualifiers for the competition, competing in the Men's relay and Women's lightweight 30-39 2km events respectively.

Cpl Needham, who only started indoor rowing in preparation for the event's British championships



**OARSOME:** Indoor rowing competitors Sgt Danny Graham and Cpl Toria Needham (below)



last year, put in a gutsy effort finishing an extremely respectable 6th place, with a time of 7 mins 41.7 secs.

With a slight change to this year's relay team set-up, the RAF teamed up with Navy and Army indoor rowers to form the first UKAF

indoor team to compete at an event. The relay had all four rowers rowing at the same time, taking an average score for the 3 minutes rowed by each individual.

The three teams including a Men's, Ladies' and Mixed team rowed exceptionally well, but it was the men's team consisting of airman Sgt Graham and James Wade (Royal Navy), Stu Elvin (Army) and Duncan Campbell who put on the performance of the day.

Despite a mix-up with the online technology, putting all four members in the wrong virtual boat, the team performed brilliantly pulling an average 3-minute distance of 1,014m, securing them a bronze just 1m behind second place.

**If you are interested in indoor rowing email danny.graham671@mod.gov.uk or search 'RAF Indoor Rowing' on Facebook and Instagram.**

BOBSLEIGH



**SPEED KINGS:** Stephens and teammates start off on another high-octane run

# Games bid put on ice

## Not such cool runnings as track 'freezer' malfunctions

**QUEEN'S COLOUR Squadron's bobsleigh ace L/Cpl Shanwayne Stephens is ramping up his bid to compete at the 2022 Winter Olympics.**

But his battle to qualify to represent Jamaica and the Royal Air Force could easily have been put on ice... ironically by a lack of ice.

The setback came when a vital race in Bavaria had to be cancelled because the track's refrigeration system broke down, making the run unfit for competition.

Before that blow, Gunner Stephens (pictured below) was back in Igls, Austria, competing in another challenging World Cup race.

A larger field this time around meant tighter competition at the premier bobsleigh racing circuit and the battling airman finished 23rd, just 1.27 seconds behind eventual race winner Germany's Francesco Freidrich.

"Freidrich has dominated most races this season by 0.5 of a second, so for Shan to be closing the gap on the world's elite is a credit to him and his completely

novice team," said Stephens' team manager Chf Tech Mark Silva.

"Last week in Königssee they were 1.8 seconds off the winner, so to knock a third off that is impressive and shows the progress Shan is making."

Two weeks of four-man training followed in preparation for the final race in Königssee.

The two-man event was used as preparation for the main four-man race, with Stephens needing to finish to progress to World Cup four-man action next season.

But disaster struck the day before the race when the refrigeration system at the Bavaria track broke down, meaning the event was axed.

Now 63 Squadron's Stephens must hope that the sport's governing body, the International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation [IBSF], takes the cancellation into account when it makes a ruling later this month and does not stand in the way of his bid for glory in Beijing next year.

Silva said: "If things go against us with the IBSF it removes the option of racing four-man at World Cup level next year, which will make qualification harder, though not impossible."

He added: "Overall it's



**OLYMPIC DREAM:** L/Cpl Shanwayne Stephens with Matthew Wepke

been a hugely successful season for the team with considerable steps forward and a few back.

"Covid meant Shanwyne was very lucky to have a season at all, however through his hard work and determination the results have been both progressive and impressive."

"To qualify for an Olympics is no given, and Stephens has the biggest

12 months of his life in front of him to make this happen. He is in a good place to give it his best shot."

"Whilst qualification is not certain, one thing that is though is his commitment and determination."

"Shan will leave no stone unturned in his bid to represent Jamaica and the RAF at the 2022 Winter Olympic Games."

MOTORSPORT

# RAF rally co-driver Hall is fast-tracked to elite group

RAF RESERVIST Phil Hall is on the fast track to rallying success.

He is one of the first co-drivers in Britain to be selected for the Team UK squad as part of a new initiative from the sport's development body.

The Motorsport UK Academy aims to equip the country's most promising young drivers and co-drivers with the knowledge, skills and attitude needed to maximise their performance.

Hall, from Nottinghamshire, who joined the Academy programme in 2015, said: "I'm extremely proud to be recognised for my efforts in the sport at this level."

"I've been working hard throughout my career to progress into the top-flight of the sport and that has offered me opportunities to co-drive across the world. But having the support of a programme such as Team UK will enable me to reach new heights with my skills, fitness and performance, which is a real privilege."

The airman has been a regular in the World Rally Championship over the past few years, after debuting in Australia in 2015. Like many, the Covid-19 pandemic forced Hall out of the co-drivers seat last season but he has been working hard behind the scenes to return to active competition in the near future.

As part of the scheme, Hall will be mentored by front-running WRC co-driver Seb Marshall.

"It will be great to learn from



**GOING PLACES:** Hall racing and, insert, planning the next stage PHOTOS: JWRC/M-Sport

Seb and the Academy team as I continue to climb the WRC ladder," said the Reservist.

He has built his career from grassroots rallying with support from the RAF Motor Sports Association. Its chairman, Gp Capt Brian Watson said: "RAF motorsports reached a new milestone today with the selection of RAFMSA rally co-driver Cpl Phil Hall for the Motorsport UK Team as one of the first UK and the first RAF co-driver to be selected for this elite squad."

"My congratulations go to Cpl Hall on this very significant

achievement, which is just reward for his hard work and dedication and the next step on realising his potential."

"The RAF MSA possesses a rich cross-section of talent on two and four wheels and Cpl Hall's selection demonstrates that there is a pathway to the highest level of motorsport within the UK and the world stage for RAF competitors."

"It also demonstrates that RAF sport provides the opportunity for reaching the highest level of competition and that our reputation for professional excellence now extends even further."



**ATHLETICS** **IN THE RUNNING:** Inter-services champ Mike Measter (second from right) in Queensland event

# Aussie sport's got Covid on the run

**SPORT** might still be largely in hibernation in the UK, but a rookie RAF pilot has been in the thick of the action on the other side of the world.

Fg Off Michael Measter has been representing the RAF in Australia while he is on 'hold' awaiting his next round of flying training at RAF Cranwell, between 674 Sqn AAC and 45 Sqn.

He recently reached the finals of the 100m at Queensland State Athletics Championships and although only placing ninth overall, reaching the final of the hotly-contested event was no

mean feat and augers well for the future.

Measter placed third in his heat and did well in his semi to reach the final, but then ran out of steam.

He told RAF News: "Competing in the final was an incredible experience racing alongside two world class athletes whom had already gained their Tokyo Olympic qualifiers this season."

"Unfortunately, however, I had very little energy left at this point and finished the race in ninth place in my slowest time of the season."

"My coach reassured me that this was to be expected with the little conditioning I have had on the lead-up to this season but she and I were both very pleased with how far I have come as an athlete."

"My slowest performance this season of 11.2s was the time in which I won the Inter-services 100m last year whilst running on very fresh legs."

"I look forward to continuing to develop as an athlete over my final three months here whilst I train for the European season, where I can peak my performance whilst representing the RAF."





## THE NEW WAY TO CONTACT YOUR MEDICAL CENTRE

### FOR ADVICE ON:

- SYMPTOMS, CONDITIONS OR TREATMENT
- REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS
- MEDICALS
- LIGHT DUTIES CHITS
- TEST RESULTS

### TO GET STARTED:

1. GO TO ECONSULT AND FIND YOUR MEDICAL CENTRE
2. FIND YOUR SYMPTOM, CONDITION OR REQUEST
3. FILL OUT A QUICK FORM
4. YOUR PRACTICE RESPONDS WITH ADVICE, A PRESCRIPTION OR AN APPOINTMENT



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