

The Forces' favourite paper

Comedy classic Python 50-year box set



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Win £265 AVI-8 Flyboy watch is fit for heroes

● See page 21

ROYAL AIR FORCE

Friday **November 27** 2020
No. 1504 **70p**

RAF News



Wokk 'n' Roll
40 years of
RAF Chinook

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Rugby Union
Roses win for Amy



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Climbing
Living on the Edge



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Boris Defence bonanza fuels UK space race

MAY THE FORCES BE WITH YOU: Boris Johnson has pledged extra funding for military space defence technology

£16.5bn to combat Russia & China 'Star Wars' threat



Simon Mander

DEFENCE IS set for the biggest funding lift since the end of the Cold War with a government budget boost of £16.5 billion to transform the Armed Forces.

PM Boris Johnson announced the spending spree to counter the growing threat from Russia and China in space and the cyber realm.

Among the projects to receive extra funding are a national Cyber Force and RAF Space Command, to safeguard military and commercial satellites from attack by adversaries.

Senior Air chiefs this week warned the next major conflict could be won or lost in space and that a move away from traditional military war fighting is vital to protect the UK and its allies.

Mr Johnson said: "I have taken this decision in the teeth of the pandemic because the defence of the realm must come first."

"The international situation is more perilous and intensely competitive than at any time since the Cold War and Britain must be true to our history and stand alongside our allies. To achieve this, we need to upgrade our capabilities across the board."

"This is our chance to end the era of retreat, transform our Armed Forces, bolster our global influence, unite and level up our country, pioneer new technology and defend our people and way of life."

● Continued p3

● **RAF Space Aces**
p16/17



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“Conditions were dire but we had to fly or the Afghan soldier would die”



DFC Chinook
hero Flt Lt
Chris Gent
See p4-5

“As a boy, space barely figured in my thoughts at all”

Brit astronaut
Tim Peake
See p19



“Our adversaries will try to eliminate our space-based capabilities”

U.S. Space
Commander
Gen Jay
Raymond
See p16-17



RAF News

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

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

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

News Editor: Simon Mander

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

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

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

Defence funding boost to counter space threat

● Continued from front

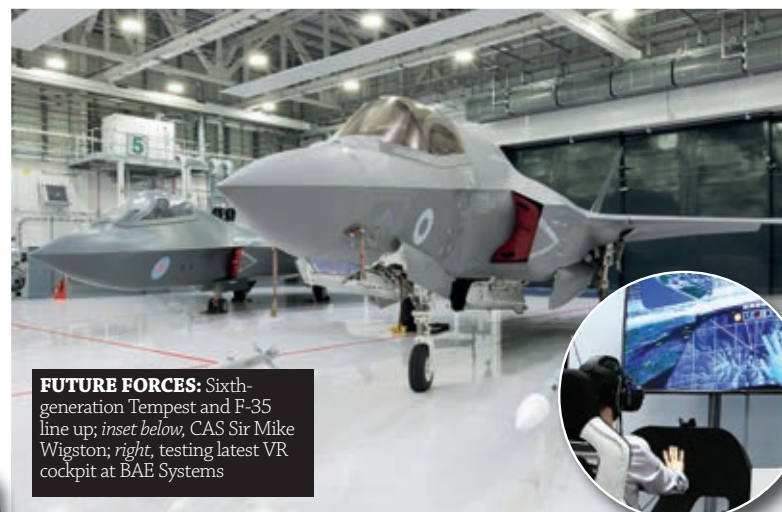
The latest funding commitment, combined with the government's manifesto pledge on defence spending, is expected to net the Forces an extra £24 billion over the next four years.

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston, said: “We have to be ready to protect and if necessary defend our critical national interests in space.

“We see nations like China and Russia and others developing anti-satellite capabilities.

“We must ensure the security and safety of the space domain. That means understanding what malign actors are doing and being prepared to fight to defend those interests if it came to it.”

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace added: “This is excellent news for Defence, and provides us with the financial certainty we need



FUTURE FORCES: Sixth-generation Tempest and F-35 line up; inset below, CAS Sir Mike Wigston; right, testing latest VR cockpit at BAE Systems

to modernise, plan for the future and adapt to the threats we face.

“This settlement secures UK jobs and livelihoods, allows us to invest in our fantastic shipyards and aerospace industry, spreading prosperity to every

corner of the UK.”

An additional £1.5 billion will go to military research – including the RAF's sixth-generation Tempest project, launched in 2019.

The formation of a national Cyber Force, which will operate with GCHQ, will counter the threat from terrorists, hostile state activity

and criminals and transform the UK's digital capabilities, Mr Wallace said.

The Royal Navy is to receive the go-ahead for an order of eight Type 26 and five Type 31 frigates, and the development for a next-generation Type 32.

A new range of autonomous vehicles, swarm drones, and cutting-edge battlefield awareness systems will also be developed for military use.

Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Nick Carter, said: “This multi-year settlement is very welcome for the Armed Forces.

“It funds a pathway to modernisation and the digital force we need for the 2030s, integrated across the domains of maritime, air, land, cyber and space.

“It allows us to adapt in the near-term to deter the range of complex threats we face. It secures the defence of our country, gives meaning to the vision of Global Britain, and sends a powerful message to our allies and opponents.”

This Week In History



1940

Malta mission

148 SQN, equipped with Wellingtons, is established on Malta – becoming the first bomber squadron to be based on the besieged island.

1967

Aden drawdown

BRITISH FORCES complete their withdrawal from Aden, ending 128 years of British rule and for the RAF, 48 years of occupation at Khormaksar and Steamer Point.



1980

First Chinook delivered

THE FIRST of an initial batch of 33 Boeing-built Chinook heavy-lift helicopters is accepted into service at RAF Odiham in Hampshire.

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

News

Chinook crew DFCs

OVER ITS four decades Chinook crew have been awarded numerous bravery awards. Here and opposite *RAF News* features six Afghanistan Wokka Wokka DFC winners.

Flt Lt Alex Duncan

FLT LT Alex 'Frenchie' Duncan was awarded the DFC for flying two daring high stakes mission in one week.

Flying a group of high-ranking Afghan VIPs to Musa Qala, his Chinook was blasted by a rocket-propelled grenade from the ground which damaged the hydraulics and smashed a large hole in one rotor blade [pictured]. Despite the damage he was able to fly his passengers and crew to safety.

Days later he led a two-ship air assault through intense enemy fire to insert reinforcements who took a vital Taliban position.

Flt Lt Chris Gordon

FLT LT CHRIS Gordon received the award for landing his Chinook in the middle of an ambush in a Taliban stronghold to rescue ISAF Forces pinned down by heavily armed fighters at the height of the conflict.

With his aircraft under heavy fire the airman held his ground to allow troops to get onboard before lifting off.

The 27 Sqn Chinook was badly damaged during the rescue mission but the pilot and crew managed to fly the stricken aircraft to safety with just one engine.

Military chiefs praised his



BRAVERY: Flt Lt Duncan (2nd from right) with his crew. Left, damaged rotor blade

His medal citation praised his 'bravery and stoicism' and stated 'Flt Lt Duncan displayed consummate professionalism and strength of character throughout both incidents.'

skills and selfless bravery for placing the damaged Chinook between Coalition troops under fire and the enemy to protect them as they boarded the aircraft.

During the daring extraction mission Flt Lt Gordon re-calculated his aircraft's performance and executed a highly advanced low-level escape.

Flt Lt Gordon, who completed five tours of Afghanistan with 27 Sqn, said: "The award is recognition for all the air and ground crew who operate helicopters in Afghanistan. All of them regularly take risks and go above and beyond the call of duty to protect our troops."

Flt Lt Charlie Lockyear

RAF PILOT Flt Lt Charlie Lockyear (pictured below) whose helicopter was riddled with bullets as he dropped off troops in Afghanistan received the RAF's highest honour for returning to rescue them.

His Chinook helicopter was damaged and one of his crew wounded by intense Taliban fire as he came in to drop off his passengers during the mission in May 2013.

The fire was so heavy he aborted the drop-off and withdrew, but because the radio and intercom had been shot up, he was unaware some troops had already got off and were left behind in a firefight with the insurgents.

During the

"The GPS, engine instruments, flight instruments, radios, the autopilot had all gone down. They were camouflaged and they weren't waving because they were still in a firefight but we found them"

40 years of Wokka Wokka

- Supporting UK troops
- Evacuating casualties
- Saving lives in theatre

- Delivering aid & fuel
- Providing flood relief
- Covid-19 Task Force



GURKHAS: Soldiers in Afghanistan, 2007



MALI: Carrying French troops



MERT: Transporting wounded in Op Herrick



1980: First Chinook welcomed at RAF Odiham



ZA672/FF: The trailblazer, December 2, 1980



1999: Supporting NATO ops in Kosovo

Chinook crew DFCs

Maj Laura Nicholson

AIRWOMAN Laura Nicholson became the second woman in history to be awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for launching a double rescue mission to save the lives of a US Marine and an Afghan mother gunned down in a Taliban ambush.

Laura is now with the Army Air Corps, but it was as an RAF Chinook pilot that she flew into a fierce firefight twice to evacuate the critically injured American Serviceman and a civilian mum of four.

Nicholson and her RAF crewmates faced down a hail of bullets and a rocket attack during the rescue bid.

Landing in the middle of a fierce gun battle, Nicholson held her ground as the aircraft came under fire from insurgents armed with machine guns and rocket



propelled grenades.

The 38-year-old pilot flew the injured man back to Bastion hospital for life saving treatment and flew straight back into the combat zone to rescue an Afghan mother who was shot in the head when she was caught in the crossfire.

As she lifted off for the second time the cabin of the Chinook was hit by a number of rounds. One bullet smashed through the side of the aircraft, hitting a crewman in the back.

Flt Lt Chris Gent

OPERATING IN near zero-visibility Flt Lt Chris Gent launched a rescue mission to evacuate a critically injured Afghan soldier who had been shot in the head.

After collecting the injured man, the Odiham-based pilot retraced the route at low altitude, making the aircraft an easy target for Taliban gunmen. Flt Lt Gent said: "The flying conditions were dire but we absolutely needed to fly because we knew the man would very quickly die without our help."

"RAF pilots are highly-trained for these scenarios, and I was aided by the aircraft's high-tech navigational instruments and my crew, who were my extra eyes in the fog."

"Having the chance to save someone's life is all the motivation I need in my role; it really doesn't get any more



SAVING LIVES: Flt Lt Chris Gent

rewarding than that.

"Our helicopters are rugged and versatile and we're assigned to high-priority aeromedical evacuation missions because with four medics and life-saving medical kit onboard we're well-placed to offer patients immediate care."

Maj Mark Hammond

ARMY MAJOR Mark Hammond was awarded the DFC for carrying out THREE rescue missions to save UK paratroopers injured in a fierce gun battle.

During an attempt to land at the Para outpost in Musa Qala two rocket-propelled grenades passed within 10ft of his helicopter and four rounds hit it, forcing him to abandon

the rescue bid. After landing the stricken aircraft at Camp Bastion he found another Chinook and made another trip, rescuing a soldier while under heavy fire.

The missions would have been "sufficient to shake most men," his citation read, but Major Hammond "remained calm, resolute and dedicated throughout."



Chinook Factfile



- Used by 20 defence forces around the world.
- Invented by aviation pioneer Frank Piasecki in the 1940s.
- Manufactured in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- Can handle loads of up to 50,000lbs.
- Can operate at height in hot and crosswind conditions that keep others grounded.

Simon Mander

CHINOOK VETERANS have paid tribute to the iconic tandem rotor helicopter which celebrates 40 years of RAF service.

Since entering service at Odiham in November 1980, the aircraft, affectionately nicknamed the Wokka Wokka, has saved countless lives and earned its crews numerous bravery awards.

Joint Helicopter Command chief Air Vice-Marshal Nigel Colman said: "All those involved with Chinook operations, both past and present, should take great pride in what they have achieved. The Chinook will continue to be a familiar sight and sound in the years ahead."

One of the original aircraft

ordered by the RAF in 1978, BN718 or Bravo November as it was known, saw four of its pilots awarded the DFC.

Arriving in the UK in 1980, it achieved fame during the Falklands War in 1982, was nicknamed The Survivor and remains in service today, after several upgrades.

Since then, Chinooks have seen action in every major conflict – Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, and Iraq – carrying Medical Emergency Reaction Teams rescuing injured personnel from the battlefield.

But the helicopter's unbroken 13-year deployment in the extreme conditions in Afghanistan until combat operations ended in October 2014 is the one most Service personnel will remember.

Officer Commanding 18(B) Sqn, Wg Cdr Matt Roberts, said: "Our 40 years of history points to one main theme – support to the boots on the ground. We are rightly proud of our history and excited about our future, but we remain focused on the support to our soldiers, both now and in the years to come."

During Op Herrick, Chinooks flew more than 41,000 hours, extracted 13,000 casualties and its crews won 23 DFCs for bravery in the air.

At the time, Air Vice-Marshal Julian Young, a former Chinook and Puma engineering officer, said: "The Chinook Mk6 is now as good as it gets. It now has a digital cockpit, better engines, can lift more and has a digital flight control system that makes it much safer to fly in a degraded visual environment."

Back in Britain, the aircraft were most recently part of the government's Covid-19 Aviation Task Force earlier this summer.

They have delivered aid and fuel to snowbound communities in the North of England, provided flood relief in Lincolnshire and famously plugged a breached dam at Toddbrook Reservoir in Derbyshire.

The rotary workhorse scrambled to drop 500 tonnes of stone to prevent 300 million gallons of water engulfing the town of Whaley Bridge.

The helicopter's flood rescue work led to it being awarded the Captain William J. Kossler Award for the greatest achievement in the practical application or operation of a vertical-flight aircraft.

Internationally, Chinooks today are supporting French forces in Mali battling Islamist extremists.

In 2015, they were sent to Nepal on Op Layland to assist with relief efforts

following a devastating earthquake.

Chinook Force and Odiham Commander Gp Capt Nick Knight, who led the detachment, said: "From its first deployment to the Falklands to its current operations in West Africa, the Chinook has continually delivered on operations."

In 2018, the Chinook spearheaded the UK's response in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma in the Caribbean delivering food, water, medical supplies and materials to desperate island residents.

The 60-strong RAF fleet, the largest in Europe, is currently undergoing its most in-depth and complex aviation modification programme to date.

So far more than 40 UK aircraft have had the Digital Automatic Flight Control System installed, with the rest to be completed in 2021.



FLOODS: UK duties

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Northern Ireland pays tribute to 'humble' D-Day hero

Tracey Allen

TRIBUTES HAVE been paid to **Bill Eames**, one of the last surviving D-Day pilots, who has died aged 97.

Born in Enniskillen, he was involved in the Allied plan to secure Pegasus Bridge and Operation Market Garden and during D-Day towed gliders to Ouistreham in Normandy.

Despite being badly wounded by anti-aircraft fire during Operation Market Garden, he carried on and helped his crew members bring their bomber home, but was

hospitalised when he returned. He later resumed active duty, flying Stirlings with 196 Sqn.

Northern Ireland's First Minister, Arlene Foster, tweeted that she was 'deeply saddened' to hear of the death of Mr Eames – whom she called her 'dear friend.'

The US Consulate in Belfast paid tribute to Mr Eames, saying his 'heroism at the forefront of allied efforts in World War II will never be forgotten.'

The former Flt Lt was awarded

the British Empire Medal in The Queen's New Year's Honours this year for his services to the RAF Association and community work in County Fermanagh.

RAFA's Ray Hall said: "Bill's quiet determination, guidance and selflessness was admired by all who met him. People who talked with Bill about his wartime memories were always struck by his modesty and humility."

"Bill made a huge contribution to the work of our branch and to the wider Association, and he will be missed very much by all of us."



CADET: Mr Eames



LOCAL HERO: Bill chatting to a school pupil in Enniskillen

In brief

Beau-rest



GRAPE ESCAPE: Flash motors from last year's driving fundraiser to France

FORCES' drivers in the annual Beaujolais Run have put their feet up for this year's rally.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions entrants raised money from the comfort of their sofas as the 2020 event went virtual.

Competitors joined the event online to share their stories including Red 10, Sqn Ldr Adam Collins, Blades captain Ben Murphy and RAF Benevolent Fund ambassador Mike Goody.

The event has raised more than £50,000 for the RAFBF over the last three years.

Crews man up in Falklands



AIR MALES: Service personnel and civilian contractors at Mount Pleasant mark International Men's Day

MILITARY AND defence civvy teams stationed in the Falklands marked International Men's Day at Mount Pleasant airport.

Personnel took time out from their duties to pose for this picture to mark the annual event.

Typhoon Turkish showdown



NATO ASSURANCE: Turkish F-16 in the skies over Konya airbase. Inset above, going head to head with Typhoon
PHOTOS: SAC SIAN STEPHENS

Staff Reporter

UK TYPHOONS went head-to-head with **Turkish F-16s** in the latest Nato war games to boost Alliance combat air power.

9(B) Sqn Typhoons based at Lossiemouth in Scotland spent three days exercising alongside the Turkish Airforce jets at the Konya air base.

RAF Voyager tankers and an Atlas A400M

transporter supported the mission to enhance a Nato package of assurance measures, a spokesman said.

The training exercise coincided with a visit by Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston, who toured the detachments as part of a wider visit to Turkey.

CAS met Brig Ge Yüksel Fidan, Commander 3rd Main Jet Base, and Turkish aircrews at the Exercise Anatolian Eagle facility.

A RAF spokesman added: "Operating away from a home base offers a range of training opportunities for the aircrew and engineers."

"Flying alongside other nations provides invaluable insight into each other's tactics and procedures."

"Each of our pilots got to fly against their Turkish counterparts in a variety of basic fighter manoeuvres during one-on-one scenarios."

Night raiders air assault hits Wittering

TRANSPORT AIRCREWS honed their night flying skills with elite 16 Air Assault Brigade troops during frontline combat training at RAF Wittering.

The Cambridgeshire station went back to basics to create austere conditions frontline forces might experience on rapid deployment missions globally.

Air Force C-17, A400M and C-130 Hercules crews flew simulated missions with Army paratroopers and Gurkhas to perfect their war-fighting skills. The training was run by Brize-based 1 Air Mobility Wing, which specialises in aircraft, passenger and cargo handling.

During Exercise Swift Pirate personnel live as though they were on operations in basic conditions, regularly exposed to simulated threats from hostile forces.

SAC Joseph Tuitoga from the Air Mobility Wing said: "It's my first exercise and it's been a challenge. It's designed to stretch you so that in a real-life situation you know how to handle it."

Wittering Station Commander Gp Capt Jo Lincoln said: "It is a real test for the station and for the Wing, and we've been fortunate to have the participation of 16 Air Assault Brigade."

TRAINING: Atlas, Herc and C-17 night vision tests. Inset, SAC Joseph Tuitoga
PHOTOS: KIMBERLY WATERSON





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News bulletin



CALL OUT: Firefighters stationed with 83 EAG in the Middle East.

Gulf fire alert

FIREFIGHTERS WEARING breathing apparatus tackled a blaze at a Coalition airbase in the Middle East.

The four-strong RAF team searched through thick smoke to ensure nobody was trapped after a faulty air conditioning unit burst into flames.

One of the firefighters, on his first four-month operational tour, said: "I was excited to use my training carrying out a search to identify the fire room and extinguishing the blaze, preventing further damage to the building."



HEARTFELT CAUSE: Cpl Thompson organised event to support children's hospice. Inset below, Benson runner

Rob hits the road for local hospice

RAF BENSON fundraisers hit the road to complete their local half marathon and net cash for terminally-ill children in Oxfordshire.

An 11-strong team covered the 13-mile distance along a route near the Chinook and Puma training station to help the Helen & Douglas House Hospice.

The event was organised by 31-year-old Cpl Rob Thompson.

He said: "I have a personal connection to Helen & Douglas as a family friend received their support during treatment for his leukaemia a few years ago."

"I began organising events on their behalf in 2017 and wanted to continue raising funds and awareness of their work after I moved from Brize Norton to Benson."

F-35 faces US threat test



SIMULATOR: 266 Sqn unit 'fires' on F-35

CARRIER DRILL: UK F-35 comes into land on the deck of the Royal Navy flagship Queen Elizabeth

Simon Mander

DAMBUSTERS PILOTS ran the gauntlet of one of the world's most sophisticated threat simulation systems during recent trials on-board HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Experts from the US 266th Range Squadron deployed to Britain for the first time with their state-of-the-art kit to put F-35 aircrews through their paces.

The Air National Guard unit uses digital and electronic signals to mimic multiple attacks by surface-to-air missiles and anti-aircraft artillery on 617 (Dambusters) Sqn and USMC

Lightnings flying from the Royal Navy flagship.

Sqn Ldr Rod Clark, A7 Training Enabler, said: "This was the first time these highly capable pieces of equipment and their operators had been deployed to the UK in support of this high-profile Defence Exercise."

The American outfit normally provides simulations of ground-based air defence threats using real world tactics at its Mountain Home range complex in Idaho.

Earlier, RAF trainers teamed up with defence contractor Northrop Grumman to organise the transport of their kit and

personnel more than 4,700 miles from America to Brize Norton on-board a C-17 transporter.

Sqn Ldr Clark added: "Due to Covid-19 restrictions the 266th personnel were required to isolate for 14 days on arrival into the UK."

"They had tested negative for coronavirus before boarding the C-17 to ensure they were fit to travel and interact with RAF crews. A second C-17 arrived with the remaining equipment and personnel three days later."

Following their lockdown, the team set off for Tain Air Weapons Range in Scotland.

During the training, 266th

operators were able to electronically queue on to the fast jets from other systems allowing them to target F-35s without highlighting their own position.

They were in constant communication with exercise controllers ensuring the Lightnings were confronted with realistic threat alerts.

Sqn Ldr Clark said: "The 266th were a potent threat and added another level of realism to a high tempo exercise."

The RAF has already requested their support for the next phase of Carrier Strike Group training in 2021.

Civic tribute for Typhoon crews targeting terror

TYPHOON CREWS have been honoured for their role in the fight against Daesh Islamist terrorists and on wider operations in the Middle East.

RAF Lossiemouth-based 6 Sqn personnel received medals for outstanding service on Operation Shader from the Lord Lieutenant of Moray, Major General Seymour Munro, in a socially-distanced ceremony at the Scottish airbase.

Maj Gen Munro said: "It is always a genuine privilege to present operational medals. 6 Sqn had an excellent tour on Operation Shader dealing with a multitude of adversaries

in the air and on the ground.

"It was a successful endeavour for everyone and an anxious time for the families at home. I congratulate everyone; you have enhanced the reputation of Lossiemouth. Moray is proud of you."

Officer Commanding 6 Sqn, Wg Cdr Matthew D'Aubyn, said: "I'm delighted that we were able to formally recognise the outstanding service and commitment of 6 Sqn personnel in support of Operation Shader."

"I also congratulate their amazing families who support us every step of the way and would normally share in these special occasions."



LOCAL HEROES: Maj Gen Munro honours 6 Sqn crews at Lossiemouth

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DISPLAY: WO Flora with his collection of Service turbans, donated to the RAF Museum

TURBANS WORN by Sikh WO Balbir Singh Flora have gone on display at the RAF Museum in Hendon, North London. He donated three of his Service turbans – two examples of the current issue, Warrant Officer's and Airman's turbans and an earlier light blue style worn by WO Flora when he first joined the RAF. He signed up when he was 17, as a logistician and now works as part of the Royal Air Force Special Engagement Team which tours the UK.

Wittering first for tech Alicia

Staff Reporter

A FORMER Red Arrows engineer has become the first woman to command Wittering's 5001 Sqn.

Sqn Ldr Alicia Mason takes the top job with the globally-deployable technical unit after postings with Typhoon outfits and the RAF's aerobatics aces.

She said: "Any time a flying squadron goes anywhere, any kind of deployment that needs an engineering element – you can bet that 5001 Sqn will be involved, getting the place set up and ready."

Recently its technicians built aircraft shelters, provided air conditioning and maintained power supplies at air bases in Estonia and Lithuania for fast jets on the Nato Baltic Air Policing Mission, Operation Azotize.

A former air cadet and engineering graduate, Sqn Ldr Mason has served in Afghanistan and the wider Middle East as well as travelling worldwide with the Red Arrows.

She said: "A lot of the time I was doing hands-on maintenance, servicing Red One's aircraft before and after displays.

"It was a such a practical tour, which is why it was so valuable, you're really in amongst it."

A keen athlete who has competed in the Inter-Services skiing and snowboarding championships, Flt Lt Mason was originally intended to be second in command at 5001 but received her promotion to Squadron Leader just as the top spot became vacant.

OPS SUPPORT:

Former Reds engineer Sqn Ldr Mason takes up top job at 5001 Sqn; below, working on display Hawk





Duo coin it in

HALTON CIVVY finance aces Tammy Stoker and Sharlene LaBorde (pictured above) are coining it in – after netting a station award.

The duo received the newly-minted Station Commander's coins for revamping accountancy procedures during a staffing shortage.

Charlene said: "It is always nice to know that the senior members of the hierarchy are aware of the hard work we do in Accounts Flight."

Wittering on a charge with new fleet



WITTERING IS the latest RAF station to go electric – with a new battery-powered fleet of motors.

The Cambridgeshire base's MT section took delivery of five Peugeot 208 cars and a pair of fully electric

delivery vans in a bid to help cut emissions across Defence.

FS Darren Lewis manages RAF Wittering's vehicles and its military and civilian drivers.

He said: "We need environmentally

friendly motors and these new electric cars are a great start."

The MoD hopes electric vehicles account for 25 per cent of its fleet of non-military vehicles by 2023.



GOING GREEN: Station Commander Gp Capt Jo Lincoln with the new fleet

WWII veteran Albert laps up medal honour



Tracey Allen

A 96-YEAR-OLD Jamaican-born RAF veteran has finally received his campaign medal, 75 years after World War II ended.

Albert Jarrett volunteered for the Air Force aged 17 and, in 1943, moved from his native Jamaica to an airbase near Sutton Coldfield in the West Midlands.

He worked on aircraft maintenance during the war and had never been awarded the 1939-45 War Medal he was entitled to.

His friend, retired WO Donald Campbell, said: "I noticed when he attended various events and ceremonies that Albert wasn't wearing a medal. I asked him about it and he couldn't remember applying for one. I told him 'You have to get your medal' and helped him to apply for it."

"I know the importance of having medals on your chest when you are representing veterans at public events. When Albert finally received his medal he was really, really pleased."

When WWII ended Mr Jarrett returned to the Caribbean then came back to Britain

permanently in 1953. He settled in Birmingham and went on to run his own businesses, including a record shop.

He is a loyal member of the National Caribbean Monument Charity, supporting a campaign spearheaded by WO Campbell for a permanent monument to Caribbean Armed Forces personnel at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

A keen internet user, Mr Jarrett was also recently presented with a laptop by local businessman Bevil Williams from IT recycling and repurposing social enterprise firm REPC Limited.

WO Campbell said: "As the gatekeeper for Mr Jarrett, I noticed how keen he was on using the internet and keeping up with online meetings. However, his frustration with his ageing computer was evident when, on numerous occasions, he tried unsuccessfully to connect to the outside

world for his many interviews with the media. "Talking to Mr Williams I mentioned Mr Jarrett's plight and he said he would gift a laptop to him."

A delighted Mr Jarrett said: "I can access the world much easier and quicker now, especially now that I am able to join the many Zoom meetings I am invited to. I am also able to keep in touch with family and loved-ones during the current Covid-19 pandemic much more easily."

RECOGNITION:

96-year-old RAF aircraft engineer Albert Jarrett finally receives his Service medal – along with a new laptop donated by a local businessman. Above, Albert during his wartime service

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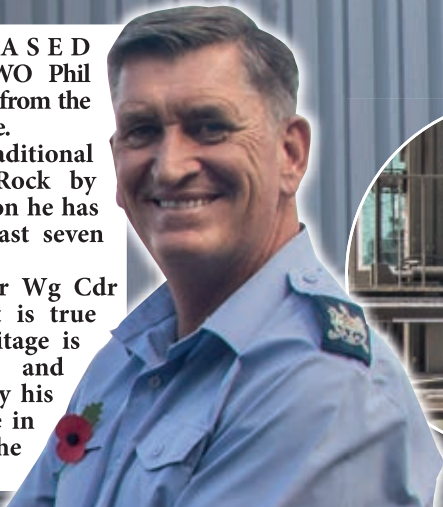
Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO₂ figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real-life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted, variations in weather,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

Rock star Phil makes a move

GIBRALTAR-BASED Movements specialist WO Phil Armitage has signed off from the RAF after 37 years service.

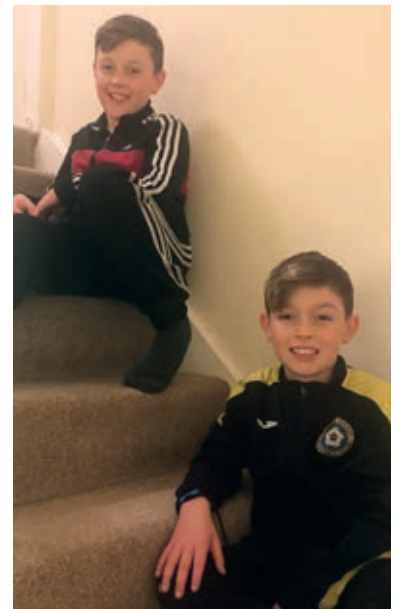
He was given a traditional send-off from The Rock by colleagues at the section he has commanded for the last seven years.

Station Commander Wg Cdr Nel Doherty said: "It is true to say that Phil Armitage is loved and respected and will be truly missed by his RAF family, both here in Gibraltar and back in the UK."



MOVING ON: WO Phil Armitage makes an exit after completing his last tour in Gibraltar; below left, forklift to the gates

In brief



STAIR MASTERS: Oliver and Harvey Sparkes at 'base camp' at Marham

Duo hit home run

A RAF MARHAM family have taken on a charity challenge with a difference – climbing the equivalent of Mount Everest on their staircase at home.

Mum Rachel Sparkes said it was her children Oliver, 10, and Harvey, nine, who came up with the idea for the month-long feat, in aid of the Royal British Legion.

She said: "Harvey said he wanted to climb a mountain for his ninth birthday and have a tea party at the top. So we did that, in the Brecon Beacons, this summer.

"The boys got such a buzz when they reached the summit and started thinking about their next challenge. I think they chose Everest as it was one of the few mountains they've heard of.

"Because of Covid-19 and the costs we realised we wouldn't be able to get to Nepal, but the boys suggested we could do the climb at home.

Dad Gary, a Sgt at the Norfolk base, is also putting in his quota of steps every day.

Rachel added: "The children love a challenge and with charities missing out on fundraising this year we agreed it would be a great idea.

"As a family we have always made an effort to support Remembrance Day but we couldn't go to any parades or services this year because of the restrictions."

To achieve the Everest climb, the Sparkes family worked out that they would have to walk up a total of 55,725 stairs. They aim to raise at least £200 for the RBL.

Rachel said: "We divided this between the four of us and split it down so that our challenge could run for the whole of November.

"We each complete 31 flights of stairs a day. None of us are mountain climbers and it's pushing our comfort zones.

"Our legs are constantly aching but we're enjoying the challenge and encouraging each other to keep going."

Go to: [justgiving.com/fundraising/sparkesfamily](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sparkesfamily) to donate.

Plain sailing for Chinook crews

Salisbury combat drill tests Anglo-French Forces

Simon Mander

CHINOOK CREWS were in the thick of the action as British and French paratroopers trained side by side on Salisbury Plain.

An Odiham-based battlefield workhorse arrived at Knook Camp to pick up soldiers from 2e Régiment Etranger de Parachutistes as part of Exercise Wessex Storm.

As reported in the last edition of *RAF News*, the manoeuvres marked the 10th anniversary of the Lancaster House accords which set up a long-term military partnership between the two nations that will continue beyond Brexit.

The Combined Joint Expeditionary Force is now capable of deploying a 10,000-strong unit to combat-shared threats anywhere in the world, defence chiefs say.

During the training 2 PARA soldiers provided range overwatch as French paratroopers fired an Anti-Tank 4 missile.

Earlier UK and French troops were briefed on procedures for boarding and exiting the Chinook, before taking to the air to practise combat insertion and extraction techniques.

RAPID DEPLOYMENT: Chinook flies in UK and French forces; right, anti-tank missile is fired; inset left, military working dogs join training exercise

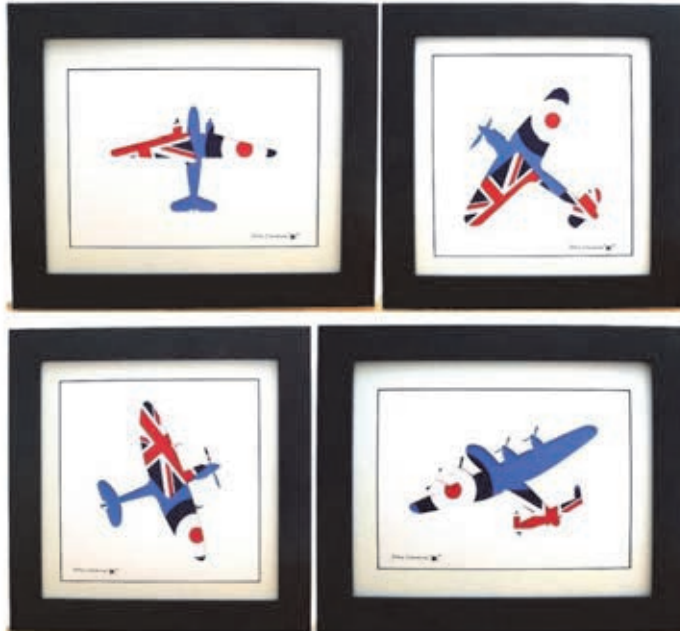


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News bulletin



HEAVYWEIGHT CHALLENGE: Air Force cop Oliver Jinks will be lifting weight of Arrows jets

Ollie gives Reds a lift

AN RAF policeman is bench pressing the weight of the Red Arrows, in memory of his grandad who died from cancer.

Cpl Oliver Jinks's grandfather died on October 21, after a long and painful battle with the illness.

In his memory, he and a team of five other RAF policemen have set out to bench press 32 tonnes – the equivalent combined weight of nine Hawk jets – in the shortest time possible by the end of the month.

● Go to www.justgiving.com/fundraising/raf-police-red-arrows1

Moss grows charity total



RAF PILOT Flt Lt Paul Moss is taking on a 1,000-mile run to raise cash for cancer research in memory of his mother.

The Cranwell-based flying instructor says he launched his bid to raise £1,000 for the 1,000 people diagnosed with the disease in Britain every day.

He is on the home straight after already clocking up 800 miles and smashing his fundraising target.

He said: "I turned 50 this year, which was the same age as my mother when she died, and I wanted to mark the occasion by doing something different to help raise money for cancer research."

"The relentless pounding has taken its toll and the 'chassis' has taken a bit of a beating but I hope to limp over the finishing line before Christmas."

Night vision for The Few

THE NATIONAL Memorial to the Few is now lit by floodlights after dark, thanks to a donation from a local businessman.

The lights switch-on marks the end of the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, which took place between July and October.

Businessman Alastair Kerr made the donation in memory of three members of his family who served in the RAF during WWII.

He has also helped cover the cost of installing new entrance gates, which formerly stood at RAF Biggin Hill, named in

honour of former Chief of the Air Staff ACM Sir Michael Graydon, President of the Trust.

Mr Kerr said: "I hope I have helped the Trust keep this pivotal period in Britain and Western Europe's history very much alive, not only for the present but for all the generations to come."

"Both sides of my family saw fine men and women serving in both world wars. I felt I should show my respect and appreciation of them, the combatants and the previous generations for their bravery and determination."



NIGHT SIGHT: Memorial statue lights up the sky in Kent following donation

UK nets £1.3 billion deal as Nato boosts Eurofighter power



TYPHOON TIE-UP: German Eurofighters flying alongside RAF Typhoons during training exercises in the Baltic region; left, RAF pilot chats to German technician in Estonia
PHOTOS: MOD

Simon Mander

THE GERMAN Air Force is set to give Britain's economy a £1.3 billion boost by buying 38 Eurofighters.

The deal secures more than 5,000 BAE jobs in Lancashire by maintaining Typhoon production through to the mid-2020s.

BAE Systems will deliver more than a third of the components for each of the new Luftwaffe jets, including the front fuselage and tail. Final assembly will be undertaken by Airbus in Germany.

The new aircraft will be equipped with the latest technology, including an advanced electronically-scanning radar.

BAE Systems chief executive Charles Woodburn said: "Germany's decision to purchase additional Typhoons reinforces the aircraft's position as one of the world's

most successful combat military aircraft. The Typhoon programme generates billions of pounds through exports and supports more than 15,000 jobs across the UK."

Combat air sector delivers £6 billion of revenue to the nation's economy every year and is responsible for an estimated 87 per cent of defence exports.

The deal comes following an announcement that UK and German Typhoons could deploy as a joint unit to guard Nato airspace along the Russian border.

RAF 3 Sqn Typhoons launched combat sorties alongside the Luftwaffe's 'Richthofen' Tactical Air Force Wing 71 on a Nato Air Policing Mission to Amari in Estonia earlier this year.

German Eurofighters also took part in combined Quick Reaction Alert training

with the RAF during their Baltic Air Policing mission in Lithuania, developing the 'plug in and fight' concept.

The latest phase sees British Typhoons 'plugged into' the German detachment, with both countries planning, executing and debriefing flying missions.

BAE says Typhoon sales have already returned more than double the Government's £12 billion investment in the programme.

Engineers are producing 3D-printed components for the aircraft and an environmental cooling system for its next-generation radar.

Typhoons are in operational service with seven nations – Germany, Italy, Spain, the UK, Austria, Oman and Saudi Arabia – with production orders underway for Kuwait and Qatar.

Airspace power struggle



UK SATELLITE:
Carbonite-2

Attacks on UK satellites could:

- Cripple banking system
- Wipe out national grid
- Bring roads to standstill



AVM HARV
SMYTH: RAF
Space Director

The next major conflict could be won or lost in space, according to Air chiefs bidding to combat the growing threat from Russia and China.

The warning comes as UK and US defence chiefs ramp up efforts to gain a technological edge to safeguard commercial and military interests against a new generation of space-based weapons being tested by adversaries.

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston, said: "We have to be ready to protect and, if necessary, defend our critical national interests in space. We see nations like China and Russia and others developing anti-satellite capabilities.

"We must ensure the security and safety of the space domain. That means understanding what malign actors are doing in space; that means protecting our critical interests and freedom of operations in space and being prepared to fight to defend those interests if it came to it."

A strike on commercial satellites could cripple banking and transport services, wipe out the national grid and cause mayhem on the UK roads, bringing the UK to a standstill, military chiefs say.

With military operations becoming increasingly dependent on space-based precision timing, GPS location and communications networks, strategic strikes in space could cripple traditional land, sea and air defences.

Sir Mike added: "It's a grim picture. We have work to do to prepare for that worst case outcome. Space is a far from benign environment, with almost daily cyber attacks and dubious sub-threshold activity."

Russia came under fire earlier this year for launching a series of tests with weapons fitted to its Cosmos 2542 and 2543 satellites.

The Kremlin is also accused of targeting Western allies' space kit by conducting 'proximity rendezvous' operations – parking its satellites close to rival commercial and military vehicles in low earth orbit.

As off-planet tensions continue to escalate, Britain is leading the drive for a United Nations resolution to regulate the weaponisation of space-based assets.

UK defence has also unveiled plans for a low earth orbit 'constellation' of small Brit-built satellites, dubbed Artemis.

A cloud-based Aurora system designed to fuse analysis of hostile space activity is also under development, along with the SkyNet 6 project – which will provide command-and-control ability across earth and space-based hardware.

The high-tech drive to counter the emerging threat from China and Russia led to the creation of US Space Command in 2019, which



STAR WARS: UK Defence satellite Carbonite 2 is launched from India in 2018, left, Russian President Vladimir Putin.

is expected to grow to more than 6,000 personnel by early 2021.

Speaking at the Air and Space conference, US Space Commander Gen Jay Raymond said: "A war that begins or extends into space will be conducted over great distance and at tremendous speeds.

"Larger distance allows for extended time parameters but that is not the case in space. Anti-satellite missiles reach low earth orbit in minutes, while jamming and direct energy weapons move at the speed of light. On Orbit

capabilities move at speeds greater than 17,000mph.

"Our adversaries will try to degrade or eliminate our space-based capabilities. China and Russia have a menu of space weapons, from cyber weapons to jammers, lasers, missiles and space-based weapons systems.

"Their doctrine advocates for counter-space employment early in a conflict because they understand how dependent our forces are on space."

As the space arms race gathers pace the UK is consolidating its military and technological links with the US and France and across the commercial sector.

This year the RAF appointed its first Space Director, AVM Harv Smyth, and hopes to follow the US with its own Space Command.

Britain became the first formal partner in the recent US-led operation Olympic Defender – a multi-national coalition formed to strengthen defences against hostile actors in space – and joined a space operations initiative to boost collaboration across the US, Canada, Australia, France and Germany.

Gen Raymond added: "The United States does not go to war alone. We are focused on building security partnerships, just as our militaries have done in every other domain on the ground, in the air and at sea

"The US Space Force and the RAF must continue to identify opportunities to improve integration. Our shared payloads, missiles systems and architectures build capacity over our adversaries but we must consistently evolve and innovate together."

UK Defence has also set up a commercial integration cell to coordinate government and commercial capability and this month held a *Dragons' Den*-style pitch day, awarding contracts to 10 tech start-up projects to boost capability.

Air Chief Marshal Wigston said: "Every military operation from a land battle to the Carrier Strike Group is dependent on space.

"The UK Space Operations Centre is the UK Armed Forces' current operational level Command and Control organisation that provides space effects across all domains and monitors what our potential adversaries are up to.

"Space operations for the Royal Air Force are not conceptual or experimental; they are an essential element of the multi-domain integrated force of today."



POTENTIAL TARGET: Enemy strikes from space could hit UK assets including the Queen Elizabeth carrier and its F-35s



GUARDIANS: US
Space Commander
General Jay
Raymond and CAS,
Sir Mike Wigston



Announcements

- P6-7
- Puzzles**
- P8

R'n'R



**Win: TV hits
on DVD**

● p5

**Festive feasts –
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Competition

Monty Python's Flying Circus Norwegian Blu-ray Edition (12)

Available exclusively from networkonair.com

Win!

Exploding Python: handle with care

THE SKETCHES from *Monty Python's Flying Circus* have become more than folklore, they are in many ways part of the international language of comedy.

The fiftieth anniversary 'exploding' *Monty Python's Flying Circus Norwegian Blu-ray Edition* box set is a one-stop shop for some of Python's greatest works; and RAF News has teamed up with Network Distribution to offer the chance to win one (rrp £100).

It features such unforgettable classics as *The funniest, most deadly joke in the world*, *The ex-parrot sketch*, *Hell's Grannies*, plus the iconic *Lumberjack* song and *Ministry of Silly Walks*.

The box set has seven discs containing all 45 episodes, restored and uncut, available for the first time worldwide, including special and rare content from the legendary Python team of Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones, and Michael Palin, from the start of the cult comedy act in 1969.

Sketches, some cut after initial broadcast, some excised completely, have

been carefully restored to their intended length.

The majority of Terry Gilliam's animations have been newly scanned in high-definition and restored to a specification way beyond their original format. Hitherto unseen outtakes, film inserts and studio recordings have been retrieved, adding yet another dimension to this exclusive release, making it the ultimate television restoration and a must for every generation of Python fans.

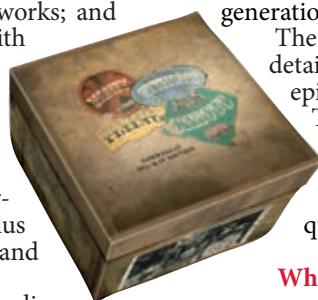
The box set also includes four books detailing an exhaustive episode-by-episode production history, penned by TV and film historian Andrew Pixley.

We have one box set to give away in our simple to enter competition. For a chance to win answer this question correctly:

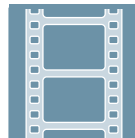
What year did Monty Python start?

Email your answer, marked Python box set competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by December 11.

■ For further information visit: www.networkonair.com, [@networktweets](https://twitter.com/networktweets) #Python50, facebook.com/NetworkDistributing or Instagram: [com/networkonair](https://www.instagram.com/networkonair).



IT'LL GO DOWN A BOMB: Exclusive prize set includes all 45 episodes and four books



Film Review

Finding Steve McQueen

Cert 15 – out now on digital download

A PALE IMITATION

A TEAM of unpractised criminals catch wind of where President Nixon might be stashing some illegal funds and plan a bank heist to seize what they believe deserves to be stolen.

This comedy caper is inoffensive and unremarkable, which is some feat considering it's based on the 1972 United California Bank Robbery and set around the Watergate scandal. The choice to be light and frothy was intentional but it's weightlessness and lack of story leave it without character, relying on its cast to keep us involved.

Unfortunately, there lies another disappointment – Travis Fimmel's (*Vikings*) Harry Barber is apparently infatuated with Steve McQueen; *Bullitt* poster on his wall and Mustang in his driveway. A few references are made now and again, some directly to camera, but they are a confusing distraction.

With his blond coiffed hair, Harry does bear some physical resemblance to the cinematic icon, though he is painted as a dimwit. This is a funny idea, half executed: his idiocy is played as a punchline, but he often provides the 'smarts' that keep the story going. Fimmel lands in this limbo, where he's not fully able to commit to the slapstick required to pull attention from the underwhelming script.

Told in the form of flashbacks, Harry sits with girlfriend Molly Murphy (Rachael Taylor,



ICON DO BETTER: McQueen fanatic Harry (Fimmel)

Transformers) in a diner confessing to his exploits – giving us a run-down of the job, though we also see the side of the FBI detectives in pursuit, played by Forest Whitaker (*Black Panther*) and Lily Rabe (*American Horror Story*) [both pictured right].

The police procedural element is another wasted effort,



seemingly included for the sake of it: it never really adds threat or even comedy and pads out the story so that it looks, on the surface, to be a cat-and-mouse heist film.

By no means awful, *Finding Steve McQueen* ends up a pretty simple and shallow story, short of gags and imitating something like nostalgia but without the emotion.

Review by Sam Cooney

Two roundels out of five



UK Box Office Top 10

1	The Secret Garden
2	Billie
3	Honest Thief
4	War Horse – NT Live 2020 (Theatre)
5	Two by Two: Overboard!
6	Cats & Dogs: Paws Unite!
7	A Christmas Gift From Bob
8	Tenet (below)
9	Jurassic Park (Re:2020)
10	100% Wolf



Source: BFI



Theatre

Horrible Christmas

UK tour

Festive fun

Horrible panto is coming to a car park near you.. oh yes it is

ALTHOUGH THE Covid crisis has had a devastating effect on theatres this year and most pantos won't be going ahead this Christmas, Birmingham Stage Company has come up with an ambitious festive show promising audiences they can still have yuletide family fun in safety.

Its *Horrible Christmas* car park panto show, based on Terry Deary's popular *Horrible Histories* series, will be performed on a portable stage and giant screens with audiences sitting in their cars and sound streamed direct onto their dashboards.

The model was trialled over the summer when it toured another of its *Horrible History* shows, *Barmy Britain*, to car parks and racecourses in front of huge – but socially distanced – audiences.

BSC actor/manager Neal Foster said: "We'd played *Barmy Britain* outside before but never like that and I had no feel for how a show being watched in a car would work. But it really does."

"When you're in the theatre you might want your child to be quiet so they don't disturb anyone but when they are just sitting in a car with you they can talk as much as they like, ask you questions, join in. So, the experience of sitting in a car was in some ways easier."

He added: "The Christmas story



OH DEER ME: Rudolph won't let Sidney Claus ruin Christmas for the boys and girls

was originally written by Terry Deary, the genius who has written all the *Horrible Histories* books. It's perfect for us to stage this year because it's about a boy who's trying to save Christmas.

"Sidney Claus is trying to destroy Christmas forever, because he hates Christmas. He's got a magic time machine and keeps going back in time to the pivotal moments that created Christmas as we know it today to try to destroy it. This young boy, Watson Williams, teams up with Shirley Holmes and they keep following Sidney Claus back in time to stop him."

"Because this boy is trying to save Christmas it feels so much of today. We are dealing with a time when we are all wondering whether there will be Christmas or whether it will be banned."

"I'm hoping that when people drive home after watching *Horrible Christmas* they will think about how precious Christmas is and they can reflect on how great it is that we can still celebrate."

Interview by Diane Parkes

■ *Horrible Christmas* is on tour from December 11 until January 3. Go to: carparkparty.com for details.



Theatre

Jason Manford

UK tour

Not 'liking' tour delay

JASON MANFORD has announced that his *Like Me* UK tour, originally set to begin in January 2021, has been rescheduled – due to the ongoing closure of UK theatres because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

All tickets are valid for the rescheduled dates and ticket holders will be contacted in due course, said the tour's organisers. Jason (pictured) said: "I'm completely heartbroken to have to reschedule my tour until a safer time for you, me and the staff at all the venues. I want you to be able to come to the show without any stress or worries and to enjoy yourselves like we always have."

"After attempting a handful of gigs with Covid restrictions this year, I just don't think it's going to be the same experience for the audiences, so I've taken the difficult decision to postpone my UK tour to a more suitable time when we should be able to have a big old laugh together. Thanks for

your understanding, I can't wait to see you."

Like Me is now set to hit the road for a massive 95-date UK tour, kicking off in Chatham on September 22, 2021 and finishing in Aberdeen on November 19.

Jason's work spans comedy, acting, singing and presenting and features a host of top TV credits including *Scarborough, 8 Out of 10 Cats, Sunday Night at the Palladium, Live at the Apollo, Have I Got News For You, QI* and *The Royal Variety Performance*.

■ Go to: jasonmanford.com for more information.



The Big Event

Paul O'Grady's Great British Escape



RAF FAMILY: O'Grady was thinking of his airman father while flying in a Tiger Moth

The Great Escape...

O'Grady explores his adopted 'home' county

IN HIS new six-part ITV series Paul O'Grady shares the sights, stories and secrets of his adopted home county, Kent.

With foreign holidays off the cards, he heads off in search of thrills, spills and misadventure on his very own doorstep, travelling around the county to discover the weird and wonderful gems it has to offer.

He said: "I was born in a quaint little hamlet called Tranmere in Birkenhead and when I grew up I emigrated down south and had quite a good fling with London for a few years. Then I found myself down here in Kent. I love the place."

He kicked off *Paul O'Grady's Great British Escape* by taking to the skies in style, in a 1935 Tiger Moth, previously used for training pilots in the war.

Paul said: "My old dad would be proud if he was alive, because he was in the RAF in the war."

Taking in the view of Dover's famous chalky cliffs, he added: "When you see the white cliffs of Dover and you think this is the first thing the pilots saw when they were flying back from a mission in France, they must have breathed a sigh of relief. It makes you sort of proud..."

"When I was in the Tiger Moth I really started thinking about my dad and how young he was and how he coped. He was fresh off a farm, then on the beaches of Normandy."

"It was never talked about. My

mother had plenty to say, but my dad, nothing. They came back from war and went back to work as if nothing had happened."

"Our house was quite near Cammell Laird on the Dock Road, the ship builders. She said she didn't have windows for the duration of



HIGH POINT: Atop Canterbury Cathedral

the war because they were constantly blown out. And she wouldn't go in the shelter, so she'd be lying in bed with two babies and bombs dropping right, left and centre."

"Then she'd get up and go to work in the morning. It makes you realise this [the coronavirus crisis] is nothing

compared to what they went through."

"So, making this series made me think about the war and how brave they were in Kent, keeping them at bay. This area was so badly bombed it was known as Hell's Corner because, as they flew back from London, any excess bombs, they just dropped them here. For the first time I just really thought about the war and what it must have been like to live through it."

"This is still the Garden of England"

Paul revealed that the Covid crisis had a part to play in his decision to make the new series. "Like everybody, there are things I've missed out on doing this year. I was supposed to go to Thailand to see elephants, there was a studio show postponed, there's no *For the Love of Dogs* at Christmas, it just seemed endless. Someone suggested I go around Kent, because it was safe to go out on my own doorstep," he explained.

"I've lived here over 20 years now and I'm really fond of the place. I know at the moment it's known for the lorry parks and Operation Stack and asylum seekers assessment camps, but there's more to the place than that."

"It niggled me a bit and I thought, 'Henry VIII coined the phrase Garden of England, and it still is'. And that's



MEETING THE LOCALS: Paul makes friends with a couple of alpacas on Romney Marshes

what we tried to show in the series."

Paul also got to survey the county from the top of Canterbury Cathedral.

He said: "We went to the cathedral and I was going on the roof. However, it was so windy and rainy that they couldn't use the lift, so they asked if I'd mind going up the scaffolding steps. Like a fool, I said, 'No, not at all'. And up I went and I laid a stone in the steeple. I was really thrilled about that."

■ *Paul O'Grady's Great British Escape* continues on Wednesdays on ITV at 8pm.



Competition

DVDs

The Singapore Grip (15), ITV Studios – out now on DVD and digital download
Roadkill (15), Dazzler Media – out now on Blu-Ray and DVD

Gripping yarns on offer

Win!

TWO RECENT top TV dramas are now out on DVD – and we have copies to win.

An ambitious and exotic family saga set in Singapore during World War II at the time of the Japanese invasion, *The Singapore Grip* features a star cast including David Morrissey (*Britannia*), Jane Horrocks (*Absolutely Fabulous*), Luke Treadaway (*Traitors*), Elizabeth Tan (*Top Boy*) and Charles Dance (*Game of Thrones*).

Adapted by distinguished screenwriter Christopher Hampton from JG Farrell's classic novel, the epic story centres on the wealthy Blackett family. Rubber merchant Walter (Morrissey) and his wife Sylvia (Horrocks), ruthless daughter Joan and spoilt son Monty live a life of luxury, seemingly untouched by the troubles in Europe.

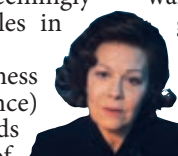
With Walter's business partner Mr Webb's (Dance) health failing, Walter needs to ensure that the future of

the firm is secure. He decides that Webb's son Matthew (Treadaway) is the perfect match for Joan and she is happy to agree.

However, Matthew's idealism leaves Walter increasingly suspicious as Matthew, a reluctant hero, falls under the spell of Vera Chiang (Tan), a mysterious Chinese refugee.

The critically-acclaimed *Roadkill* focuses on self-made, forceful and charismatic politician Peter Laurence (Hugh Laurie, *The Night Manager*, *House M.D.*). Peter's public and private life seems to be falling apart – or rather is being picked apart by his enemies.

As the personal revelations spiral, he is shamelessly untroubled by guilt or remorse, expertly walking a high wire between glory and catastrophe as he seeks to further his own agenda, while others plot to bring him down. However,



ROADKILL: McCrory co-stars



TV

Doctor Who

Series 13



Just look Who's back

THE THIRTEENTH Doctor is on her way back as filming for series 13 of *Doctor Who* is now underway, with Jodie Whittaker (pictured) once again in the lead role.

With safety protocols in place, the *Doctor Who* team are filming under strict

industry and government guidelines to ensure the safety of all cast and crew, said the BBC. With the added time and protocols required, there will be eight episodes rather than the usual 11.

Before then, there is a festive special for fans to look forward to.

IWM's food for thought

THE THIRD panel event for *Refugee Nights*, a new virtual festival from the Imperial War Museum Institute, will be held on December 1 from 7 to 8pm.

Chaired by CNN's Chief International Correspondent Clarissa Ward, the panel will bring together Oxford University Professor Alexander Betts, academic and author Maya Goodfellow and Chief Executive of Oxfam Danny Skrisandarajah to explore how the world should respond to refugees today.



The new London-based Syrian chef Imad Alarnab (above) will close *Refugee Nights*, sharing insights on Syrian recipes and traditions, cooking for viewers as he tells his story.

Refugee Nights is part of IWM's *Refugees* season of free exhibitions, artistic commissions and immersive events taking place across IWM London and IWM North in 2020 and 2021. Episodes can be streamed free via YouTube. The season also includes the major exhibition *Refugees: Forced to Flee*.





Your Announcements

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

Death

BOAK – John Desmond, FS Police died aged 79 on 29 October 29. Greatly missed by wife of 55 years Phil, son Stephen and daughter Emma, son-in-law Ian and grandsons Frazer, Alex, Patrick, Oliver and Callum. John joined the RAF in 1961 doing Basic Training at Wilmslow followed by Police Training at Netheravon. Posted to Steamer Point in Aden followed by RAF Wyton '61-64. It was here that he met SACW Phil Scallan who worked in the PBX and so began a long-distance courtship when John was posted to Sharjah '64-'65 whilst Phil was posted to Changi. John and Phil married in December 1964 in Kings Lynn (Phil's family home was in Norfolk as her father was employed by The Queen at the Royal Stud, Sandringham). A posting to Northern Ireland followed then West Raynham where first Stephen (ex-Naval Constructor) and Emma (former WRAF Flt Lt ATC) were born. In 1967 the family moved to Penang before returning to Blighty in March '70 for two years to RAF Debden.



FS John Boak

The next posting was to sunny Cyprus where John was part of the CI Team at P&SS (NEAF) Det RAF Nicosia, followed by a move to RAF Limassol. Unfortunately the Turkish invasion happened during this time – Phil and the children were evacuated first to RAF Episkopi then back home to the UK, whilst John remained in Cyprus assisting the UN until he rejoined the family in '75

at Swaffham. John's next appointment was to the St Helen's CIO – a job he greatly enjoyed, cut short due to promotion and posting to High Wycombe from '77 to '79. RAF Waddington, home of the mighty Vulcan, was the next posting – John commuted from Cranwell to Waddington for a while, as the children had started school in Sleaford, before being posted to RAF Cranwell. During this posting he had a short detachment to the Falkland Islands. This was after the Falklands War had ended and when the base needed establishing for a more permanent and larger military (little did he know that his future son-in-law would spend many happy detachments of his own there with the Phantom Force). Back to the UK saw a posting to RAF Valley, RAF Wildenrath and RAF Wyton – all of which he undertook unaccompanied so that the children could have an uninterrupted secondary education. John left the service in 1988 and this was the start of the globe-trotting years for John and Phil together, as John joined the Foreign and Commonwealth Office employed in Embassy Security Roles. Their first posting was to the British Embassy in Moscow, followed by tours in Tokyo, Havana and culminating in the British Embassy in Washington DC. John and Phil returned to the UK in 1999 and settled in Oakham, Rutland near family. John was diagnosed with Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (IPF) seven years ago, he volunteered to assist with IPF Research for the benefit of future generations. He enjoyed a final holiday in Cyprus with Phil in March – cut short due to lockdown. Family can be contacted via: ejmccombie@btinternet.com – we would love to hear from anyone who remembers John (and Phil).

IT is with great sadness that we announce the death of FS Melville 'Dave' Doran born May 25, 1935. Died peacefully at home in the presence of his family on November 6. Much loved father leaves behind his four children, daughters Christine and Lynn, and sons Phillip and John. You will forever be in our hearts.



FS Melville 'Dave' Doran

Seeking

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

Reunions

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

SINGAPORE Armed Forces Reunion. Were you seconded from the RAF to the SAF at RAF Tengah between 1971-75? If so

please contact Peter Priscott for a 50th anniversary reunion in August 2021. Email: peterpriscott@aol.com or call: 01842 878554.

RAF Bawdsey Reunion Association. Due to the coronavirus pandemic we regrettably had to cancel the annual reunion in the summer. We have provisionally planned the next reunion for Saturday, June 5, 2021 and look forward to seeing our friends again then. In the meantime we wish you all a safe and healthy time during this unprecedented period. If you have any queries please email: doreen.bawdseyreunion@btinternet.com or call: 07513 301723.

Apprentices' Assoc

ARE you a Trenchard Brat who did your training at RAF Halton, probably as an aircraft, craft, mechanical, technician apprentice or perhaps as a dental, medical or admin apprentice? 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. Wherever we were trained we were known throughout the RAF as the Trenchard BRATS. Our Association, The RAF Halton Apprentices' Association, (The Old Haltonians) welcomes you all. So, as a Trenchard Brat, why not join this elite group of RAF people today as either a Full or Associate Member? Check us out via our Website 'Old Haltonians' and then contact us at membership@rafhaa.co.uk for further details.

Admin Association

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

Catering Association

MEMBERSHIP is open to serving or former WOs or FS in Trade Group 19 and to former RAF Catering Officers. Please email: janedjones6@tiscali.co.uk or call: 01487 823480 for more information.

Des saddles up for charity



RAF VETERAN Des Roberts has taken to pedal power for a charity challenge.

The former tech is aiming to raise £1,000 for the RAF Benevolent Fund by completing 300 miles, either on a static bike, on rollers, or cycling on the road throughout November.

Keen cyclist Des (*pictured above*) said: "I usually compete in time trials for my cycling club, Bedfordshire Road CC, but with the pandemic this year I have hardly been out on my bike."

"I usually take a break from cycling in November to recover from a season's riding, to do any maintenance and give my legs a bit of a rest. I

thought I'd turn this year on its head and set myself this goal."

Des served for 15 years and was based at stations including RAF Wittering, Wildenrath, Gütersloh and Lyneham.

He added: "I chose to do this challenge for the Benevolent Fund because there are many members of the Service, past and present, who are facing hardship."

"I had a good career in the RAF and it set me up for civilian life in aircraft maintenance, then I branched out into training."

● **Go to:** [justgiving.com/fundraising/desmond-roberts](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/desmond-roberts) to donate.



Lights on at NMA

ILLUMINATED ARBORETUM at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire, will take place daily next month from December 9-19.

Tickets for the event are sold out but any tickets that become available will go online via: thenma.org.uk, said the NMA.

Sarah Oakden, head of marketing at the National Memorial Arboretum, said: "Illuminated Arboretum is one of our most popular annual events, offering an exciting, multi-sensory, immersive experience for the whole family as we approach the Christmas season."

"This year we're introducing a new and improved route, that will be more beautiful than ever and with plenty of space to enable social distancing. Visitors of all ages will be captivated by the stunning light display during what will truly be a night to remember."

How to use our service

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

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Your Announcements

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



NAAFI celebrates centenary

THE NAVY, Army and Air Force Institutes (NAAFI) celebrates its centenary next month and to mark the occasion the British Forces Philatelic Service (BFPS) has produced a special commemorative cover, to be issued on December 9.

It features the NAAFI centenary logo with a Royal Mail bespoke Personal Smiler® stamp bearing the current NAAFI corporate logo. The stamp will be cancelled by a BFPS special handstamp carrying the unique BFPS number 3232.

The standard version of the cover costs £9, and the limited edition signed by the Managing Director of NAAFI is £18.

All covers include an information insert telling the story of the organisation and are presented in a protective cellophane sleeve.

The NAAFI was established by the British Government in December 1920 when the Expeditionary Force Canteens and the Navy and Army Canteen Board were combined to run the recreational establishments needed by the Armed Forces, and to sell goods to Servicemen and their families.

Since then the NAAFI has supported British Forces at home and abroad.

The covers can be ordered from the BFPS online shop (bfps.org.uk) or by post by sending a cheque (payable to 'BFPS CIC') to: BFPS, The Old Post Office, Links Place, Elie, LEVEN, KY9 1AX.

BFPS fundraises for Service charities through philately and is run by volunteers who are Armed Forces veterans.

Gifts from the museum

IF YOU'RE looking for a Christmas gift with a difference, the RAF Museum, Cosford, has plenty to offer from its Adopt an Artefact programme.

A Christmas Gift Box from the Defence Catering Group is the latest artefact available for adoption, alongside more than 60 other objects – from lucky mascots to playing cards with hidden maps.

The tradition of the Christmas Gift Box began in 1914 when Princess Mary supported the creation of a fund to pay for boxes to be sent to every serving member of the UK Armed Forces. Originally made of brass, its contents included smoking materials, chocolate and a photograph of the Princess.

The Christmas Gift Box you can adopt from the museum was distributed to RAF personnel serving in Iraq and contained food, toiletries and novelty items including a stress ball, flashing red nose and a Christmas card.

If you adopt an artefact in the run-up to

Christmas you'll receive a Christmas card and the option to add a bespoke RAF Museum gift – a Christmas bauble, snowflake mug, festive fudge, or advent calendar. All adoptions with the additional gift placed by December 18 are guaranteed to arrive in time for you to present your loved one with their card and gift on Christmas Day, said the museum.

Adoptions last for 12 months, starting from December 25. All adoptees receive a digital adoption certificate and photo of their adopted artefact, along

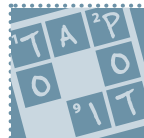
with exclusive updates and information on your chosen object throughout the year.

Recognition of your adoption will feature alongside the museum's new Collections Online digital collections system, where you can add a dedicated message along with the name of adoptee. Visit rafmuseum.org.uk/support-us/adopt-an-artefact for more details.

The museum is planning to reopen on December 5 (Government guidelines permitting). Visitors are asked to pre-book their arrival time online at rafmuseum.org



Search UKSF on MODnet
SFTC-UKSF-Recruiting@mod.gov.uk



Prize Crossword

No. 286

Solve the crossword, then rearrange the seven letters in yellow squares to find a famous aircraft

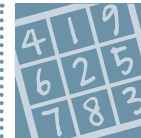
Send your Prize Crossword entries to the address printed in the Su Doku panel opposite



Solution to Crossword No. 285:

Across – 7. Aboard 8. Nevada 10. Thought 11. Pulse 12. Icon 13. Flash 17. Balmy 18. Dido 22. Odour 23. Neutron 24. Nelson 25. Strike
Down – 1. RAF Tain 2. Solomon 3. Frogs 4. Tempest 5. Eagle 6. Danes 9. St Clement 14. Warrior 15. Air Raid 16. Roundel 19. Joint 20. Holly 21. Gusto

Word – Helicopter

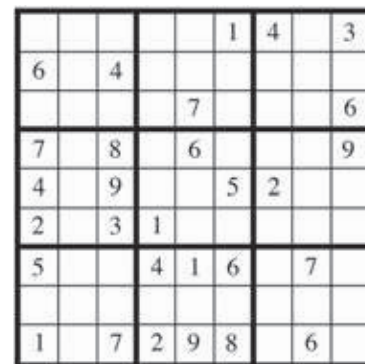


Prize Su Doku

No. 296

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 December 11, 2020.



Name

Address

..... Su Doku No. 296

Solution to Su Doku No: 295

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



Competition

Oh Cook! James May

Pavilion Books (www.pavilionbooks.com)

Win!

Spam and 'spongey things'

May sets out to prove that anyone can cook

MOTORING EXPERT James May is best known as one of the stars of Amazon Prime Video's *The Grand Tour* and the presenter of popular BBC programmes such as *The Reassembler* and *Toy Stories*.

Now he has added another string to his bow – as the author of a new cookbook aimed at even the most basic of home cooks.

Subtitled *60 Easy Recipes That Any Idiot Can Make, Oh Cook!* (Pavilion Books, rrp £14.99) is described as a fool-proof manual and has chapters including Brunch, Pasta, Pub Grub, Roasts, Curry Nights, Asian Fusion, Spongey Things and Store Cupboard Saviours (for when the fridge is empty). It also features recipes for his beloved Spam, as well as hints and tips.

Oh Cook! is a TV tie-in title that accompanies May's Amazon Prime Video series of the same name.

Taking readers on a culinary tour (around his kitchen), James builds on his cookery skills, recreating dishes from his travels as well as rediscovering some nostalgic childhood favourites along the way.

The cookbook is a trusty companion for anyone seeking to gain confidence in the kitchen and arm themselves with some tried



and tested recipes, all created and tweaked by May.

To be in with a chance of winning a copy of this brilliant book, just send us the correct answer to the following question:

Who publishes *Oh Cook!* by James May?

Email your answer, marked James May cookbook competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by December 11.

■ Don't forget to include your full postal address with your entry.



TV

Nigella's Cook, Eat, Repeat

BBC Two

Feed your soul

Nigella's tasty treats

NIGELLA LAWSON is back on our TV screens, cooking up a storm with her new BBC Two series *Nigella's Cook, Eat, Repeat* and she's revealed a tempting morsel of what's to come in her Christmas special.

She said: "Christmas presents shouldn't be opened early so I will only say a very little. But the Christmas Special certainly did feel special to make. It is really about revelling in the season, a total immersion in Christmasiness.

"In common with lots of people, I haven't been away anywhere this year, and won't be, so this is about travelling at the table, with some of my favourite Christmas recipes from abroad, as well as home-grown treats."

Is she pleased a lot more people have taken up cooking during lockdown?

"I think the reason a lot of people are nervous about cooking is they think there is one perfect way and they are frightened of getting it wrong. Lockdown showed people who don't consider themselves confident cooks that cooking is all about improvisation. It gave them

confidence. You are not talking about making showstoppers; you are talking about cobbling things together to make supper," she said.

After such a strange year the popular TV cook and food writer revealed it was good to return to the small screen.

"This is about travelling at the table"

"It feels really lovely to be back," she said, "I'm lucky enough to work with a team I love, and have worked with forever. It feels really wonderful to be able to share my new recipes.

Of course, for all of us, there was a bit of culture shock at first having been living and working remotely for so long suddenly finding ourselves on set, but after two days it felt like we had been doing it forever."

How did they make the series Covid secure?

She explained: "In some senses, the biggest difference from our



DOMESTIC GODDESS: Nigella's latest series features recipes for new dishes, including steak with anchovy elixir (inset)

usual set-up is that we all had to keep two metres distance from one another.

"I think we all felt so fortunate to be working that we really didn't focus on the constraints. But, of course, it did have an impact editorially, not least in the sense that we couldn't have our usual eating scenes with friends. But I made the supreme sacrifice and ate everything myself."

■ *Nigella's Cook, Eat, Repeat* continues on BBC Two at 8pm on Mondays and is repeated at 11.30am on Saturdays on BBC One.

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

Space ace **Feature****Win!**

The world beater

ROOM WITH A VIEW: Peake spent six months on the International Space Station © NASA

A BOYHOOD passion for flight propelled Tim Peake to heights most of us could only dream of. Not only did he fulfil his ambition to be a pilot, joining the Army Air Corps, he went on to achieve the ultimate aim – space flight.

Now the former Major has written his autobiography in which he charts his journey to become an astronaut, chosen from more than 8,000 candidates.

In *Limitless* (published by Century, penguin.co.uk), he relives his selection by the European Space Agency and his gruelling six years of training to be an astronaut; tested physically, psychologically, emotionally and intellectually – from learning Russian in St Petersburg to coping with the darkness and claustrophobia of living for days in caves in Sardinia and under the ocean off the Florida coast.

By his own admission, in his youth, he didn't stand out as someone who would go on to prove he had 'the right stuff'.

He said: "Among my boyhood preoccupations, space barely figured at all. In December 1972, when Apollo 17 landed on the moon, the last of the Apollo mission to do so, I was just eight months old."

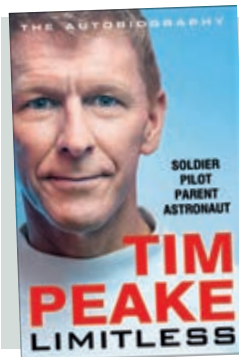
"By the time I opened Tom Wolfe's *The Right Stuff*, I was in my 20s and training to be an Army pilot."

"I can claim no youthful plans to go into space. But I did very badly want a radio-controlled plane. Actually, what I really lusted after was a radio-controlled helicopter. I had longed for one of those since I was nine, when I saw a feature on *Blue Peter* about the opening sequence for the James



BOSNIA: With Gazelle, 1996

How Brit astronaut Tim Peake refused to settle for mediocrity



His amazing story

WE HAVE copies of *Limitless* to win. For your chance to own one, tell us:

What was Tim Peake's rank when he left the Army?

Email your answer to: **Limitless competition**, or post it to: **RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE**, to arrive by December 11.

Bond movie *For Your Eyes Only*."

Young Tim was soon bitten by the model aeroplane bug, even designing his own plane, and joined a local group flying model aircraft.

At 12, he became a member of his school's Cadet Corps and loved it, including weekends away taking part in night exercises and outdoor activities such as orienteering and sea-kayaking.

Despite not shining academically – he admitted his grades were 'consistently below average' – his enthusiasm for the Combined Cadet Force revealed a determination and tenacity that would come to the fore later on.

He said: "CCF seemed to me

to be essentially saying: 'Here's a challenge – see if you can step up to it.'"

In the autumn half-term of 1986 when he went to his local cadet training centre to do the Cadet Sergeant's course he realised he was the youngest, and the smallest, student there. But that didn't bother him.

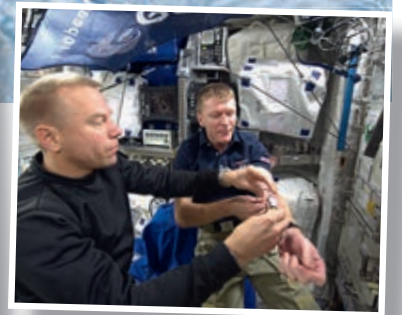
He got promoted to Cadet Warrant Officer and was in charge of his school's Army and Air Force sections, though, he admitted: "As passionate as I was about flying, it didn't occur to me to join the Cadets' Royal Air Force section. The activities on the Army side were much more appealing to me."



MOON WALK: Launch day in Kazakhstan



WING MAN: Peake (seated on aircraft, far right) on his pilots' course at Middle Wallop after returning from duty in Northern Ireland



TESTS: Giving blood – one of many blood donations during Peake's time in space © NASA

But when he heard the Air Force Cadets were going gliding he pleaded with the teachers to let him go too.

In September 1991, Peake started his Army officer training at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. He served with the 1st Battalion The Royal Green Jackets in Northern Ireland from 1992-93, spent 1993-94 on the Army Pilots' Course at Middle Wallop then went on to join 1 Regt Army Air Corps in Gütersloh, Germany, serving for four years until 1998 with time spent on deployment with 5 Regt AAC in Northern Ireland in 1995 and in Kenya and Bosnia the following year.

He trained to become a qualified helicopter instructor at RAF Shawbury in 1998 then spent three years as an Apache pilot with 1st US Cavalry Division in Fort Hood, Texas. By 2005 he was an Apache helicopter instructor and later that year joined the Empire

Test Pilots' Course as a helicopter test pilot. He started the European Space Agency's astronaut selection process in 2008.

Peake admitted that before applying to the ESA he 'didn't know a huge amount' about the Agency.

He said: "I regarded myself as an interested observer of human spaceflight, and certainly not as somebody who was considering it as a potential career."

By 2009 he had begun basic astronaut training, started advanced astronaut training the following year and International Space Station (ISS) Mission training by 2013.

In December 2015 he became the first British ESA astronaut to visit the International Space Station and conduct a spacewalk during his six-month mission. He spent a total time of 26 weeks, three days, 23 hours, 11 minutes and 50 seconds in space, returning to Earth on June 18, 2016. On April 24 that year, he ran the London Marathon in space for the Prince's Trust.

He said: "Nowadays, when I meet young people and see the awe and wonder in their faces when I talk about space, it fills me with deep satisfaction to reflect that they are the generation who will see us take the next big step for humankind... maybe I have already met the first person who will set foot on Mars."

Top honour as collegiate continues to improve offering for boarding students

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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THE
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GUIDE

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.

The Preparatory and Senior Schools provide continuity of education for children from the age of seven to eighteen years.

Having the advantage of beautiful grounds spread over 100 acres, with gardens, wildlife areas, forest school and extensive outdoor sports pitches, Bromsgrove's boarders have plenty of space around them.

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.**

Competition

Win a watch fit for Heroes

THE AVI-8 Flyboy Engineer Automatic is the first of the Help for Heroes collaboration watches to launch, with a limited edition of just 300 pieces – and we have one, worth £265, to win.

Dartmouth Brands, the parent company of AVI-8 watches, Spinnaker watches and RGMT watches, says it will donate a minimum of £25,000 to Help for Heroes from a series of watch launches across the three brands. Another AVI-8, a Spinnaker and a RGMT watch will be launched in January 2021.

Support

Each watch sold contributes directly to Help For Heroes' role in providing emotional, social, and financial support to those with injuries and illnesses attributable to their service in the British Armed Forces. The charity's courses and activities aim to



empower veterans to look beyond illness and injury, regain their purpose, reach their potential and have a positive impact on society.

RAF veteran Matt Neve (pictured below) is the first brand ambassador for the Help For Heroes watches campaign. The former RAF driver was medically discharged from the Service in 2004 after a tour in Iraq as part of Op Telic left him suffering from PTSD. Matt discovered the rehabilitative nature of sport after taking up archery and went on to win a gold medal at the 2017 Invictus Games.

The AVI-8 Flyboy Engineer Automatic showcases powerful yet subtle design cues to pay tribute to those who sacrificed their lives for their nation. The classic pilot's watch is 42mm, forged



Win!

AVI-8: One watch, two great looks

out of solid stainless steel, and has a brushed case topped with a domed sapphire lens for maximum durability. A moulded roundel inspired by the markings on British World War II fighters sits on the edge of an ergonomically shaped conical crown.

The three colours (navy blue, red and light blue) on the dial represent Help For Heroes' support for those who served in the UK Armed Forces – the RAF, Royal Navy and Army.

A textured fumé dial is framed by a raised chapter ring featuring the words 'In Support of Help For Heroes' at the 6 o'clock position.

A Japanese NH35 automatic movement powers the watch



– which has an articulated solid-steel, 5-link, engineer-style bracelet. The timepiece also comes with an extra hand-stitched leather strap.

Limited edition

Each watch is uniquely numbered as part of a limited edition of 300 pieces and comes in a striking tri-colour canvas-wrapped gift box.

For your chance to own one of these fabulous timepieces, answer this question correctly:

What is the name of the parent company of AVI-8 watches, Spinnaker watches and RGMT watches?

Email your answer, marked Limited Edition Watch competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by December 11.

● **Go to: avi-8.co.uk for more details about the Help For Heroes Limited Edition watch.**

Funding SOS for Caribbean tribute

ALTHOUGH THOUSANDS of men and women from Caribbean colonies fought for Britain during World War I and II, the UK still has no permanent monument dedicated to them, and to those who have served since.

Retired Warrant Officer Donald Campbell is determined to change that and is spearheading a campaign by the National Caribbean Monument Charity (NCMC) to raise funds for a memorial.

WO Campbell, a former aircraft engineer who had a 36-year career in the RAF, said the monument – to be sited at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) in Staffordshire – is to remember the sacrifices and contributions made by all Caribbean military personnel in support of Britain.

So far, around £35,000 has been raised towards the £500,000 needed to build, install and maintain the structure – which has been allocated a plot next to the WWI Sikh memorial at the arboretum.

WO Campbell said: "The monument will be a focal point of historical learning and a legacy representing past, present and future generations. I would like it to be a focal point where our

MODEL:
Planned monument



PILOT: Flt Lt Bunting

youngsters can look, see and appreciate that their fore-parents have fought and died for this country and make them realise that a part of this land is theirs. It is important that people know why Britain is as free as it is today."

Leading sculptor Martin Jennings – whose work includes statues of pioneering plastic surgeon Sir Archibald McIndoe and the British-Jamaican nurse and Crimean War heroine Mary



PIONEER: First black pilot William Robinson Clarke

Seacole – was commissioned to produce a model of the monument.

WO Campbell explained: "We approached Martin because of what he did with the Mary Seacole statue and the symbolism of it. He has produced a design for us with the Royal Air Force, Royal Navy, Army and a female representation of all the Services."

He added: "Our plot at the NMA was secured until December 2021 but, because of the coronavirus pandemic which has had such a detrimental effect on being

able to hold fundraising events, we have been given an extension to June 2022."

Mosquito navigator Ulric Cross, Spitfire pilot Flt Lt Vincent Bunting and WWI airman William Robinson Clarke, the first black pilot to fly for Britain, are some of the better-known heroes of Caribbean origin who volunteered for 'the mother country'.

The monument will also honour the many unsung personnel from 18 British



CAMPAIGN: WO Donald Campbell

Caribbean Islands who have served or are serving.

The NCMC organises presentations all over the country, including visits to schools, about the little-known stories of the contribution of Caribbean personnel to the UK Armed Forces.

● **Go to: [GoFundme:](http://GoFundme.com) shorturl.at/akCV1 or: justgiving.com/fundraising/caribbean-monument**
● **See: tncmc.org for more information.**



NAVIGATOR: Ulric Cross



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AVM Sean Bell (ret'd)

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Competition

Get ready for some Christmas cheese

IT'S A festive tradition – find the cheesiest, naffest Christmas jumper you can and proudly wear it on the big day. Now Marshall Julius, the man behind a range he describes as 'thrillingly gaudy', has produced superb seasonal sweatshirt designs guaranteed to outshine those yuletide knits – and we have some up for grabs.

Four winners will each win an Ugly Xmas sweatshirt (rrp £24.99) in green, red or blue and you can choose from one of three great designs – Owl I Want For Christmas Is You!, Naughty or Nice?, or Recharging At Xmas!

Marshall said: "Although by trade I'm a film critic, broadcaster and social wiz with a large, enthusiastic Twitter following, during lockdown I tried my hand at drawing, creating a series of crosshatched rainbow robots, now immortalised as sweatshirts, tees and the like by Hot Merch, a UK-based retail site created by and for nerds."

The sweatshirts and T-shirts come in five sizes – small, medium, large, X-large and XX-large.

Marshall's special range of seasonal goodies also includes Christmas ceramic mugs and insulated water bottles – both with



WANT
CHEESE?
No sweat

free personalisation, all in a choice of the Owl I Want For Christmas Is You!, Naughty or Nice?, or Recharging At Xmas! designs.

Marshall, who calls himself a

'veteran nerd', has also designed a non-Christmassy range of T-shirts and face masks featuring funky robot designs, available from Hot Merch.

For your chance to win an Ugly Xmas sweatshirt, simply send us the correct answer to the following question:

What is the name of the designer



FESTIVE COSINESS: Owl and the pussy cat

who has produced the Ugly Xmas sweatshirt and T-shirt range for Hot Merch?

Email your answer, marked Ugly Xmas Sweatshirt competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by December 11.

Please remember to mark on your entry which size sweatshirt you prefer to win, which colour – green, red or blue – and which design: Owl I Want For Christmas Is You!, Naughty or Nice?, or Recharging At Xmas!

And don't forget to include your full postal address.

■ **For more information about the Marshall Julius Christmas range go to: hotmerch.co.uk/HoHoRobots and see: hotmerch.co.uk/marshbots for the non-Christmas range.**

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RAF medical chief who helped tame The Dragon Lady

Doctor kept pilots safe on ultra high-altitude spy plane the Lockheed U-2 then went on to be Surgeon General

AIR MARSHAL SIR JOHN BAIRD, who specialised in aviation medicine, became the head of RAF Medical Services before becoming Surgeon General for all three defence forces.

He graduated from the medical school at Edinburgh University in 1961 before spending six months in Sarawak. When the rebellion in Brunei broke out he became involved in setting up a casualty clearing station in the small town of Marudi on the Barum River. He was also involved in the rescue of patients in the severe floods following a typhoon along the Sarawak coast.

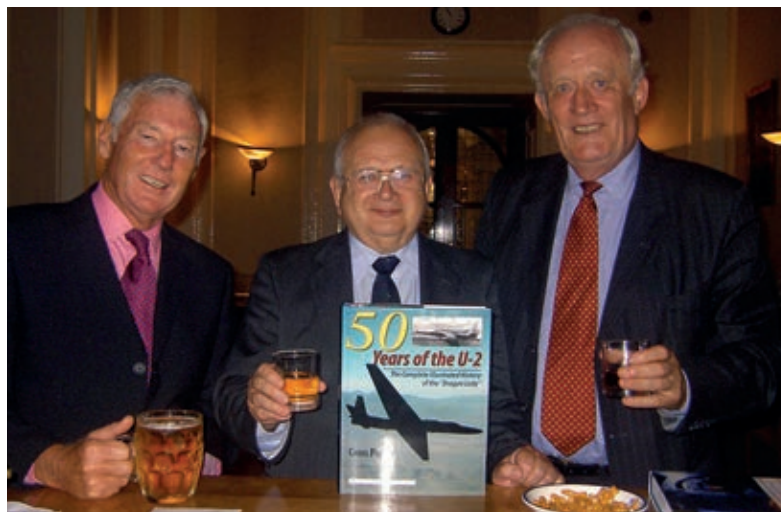
In each of these two incidents he was flown in RAF light transport aircraft and helicopters, experiences that convinced him to join the RAF as a medical officer.

During his early service, Baird was a medical officer at Coningsby and then at Tengah in Singapore and these posts stimulated an interest in the medical aspects of high-performance flying. As a result, in 1967 he was selected to attend No. 1 Course at the RAF Institute of Aviation Medicine at Farnborough, where he gained the Diploma in Aviation Medicine.

In 1970 he joined a small group of RAF officers who were engaged on, what was then, a top secret programme based at Edwards Air Force Base in California. These officers were assigned to an American unit, which was operating the Lockheed U-2 reconnaissance aircraft, dubbed 'The Dragon Lady'.

Baird was one of the flight surgeons who supported the global role of the entire unit. His special interest was in the life support equipment worn by the pilots on very high altitude flights, which were often of long duration. He closely observed all the operational activities of his RAF charges and became expert in this highly specialist field.

One of the RAF pilots serving on this unique unit commented: "As a



REUNION: AM Baird (centre) with RAF Dragon Pilots Harry Drew (left) and Ian McBride

flight surgeon, medical practitioner and representative of his parent service, he was highly respected and admired by all who worked with him, none of whom were surprised by the trajectory of his subsequent career."

On his return from the USA in 1973 he served as the senior medical officer at RAF Valley and then at Lossiemouth, where he enjoyed his close work with the aircrew, of whom he had the highest regard – and they of him. He devoted much of his career to their care and regarded his ability to keep them flying safely as his highest priority.

On many occasions he stuck his neck out at medical boards to avoid grounding aircrew, often in defiance of medical colleagues. Because of these views, he was held in the highest trust by aircrew and he valued this above all other aspects of the job. He flew with them whenever he could and used to say he had the best of everything – medicine and flying.

He next went to HQ Strike Command as the Command Flight Medical Officer, an aviation medicine role covering all aircrew roles in the large command. During this time he became deeply involved in the in-flight medical issues

on the very long-range missions during the Falklands War. For this work he was awarded the Richard Fox-Linton Memorial Prize.

In 1987 he assumed command of the RAF Hospital at Ely. While there, the Princess of Wales visited the hospital and it became the Princess of Wales RAF Hospital.

On promotion to Air Cdre he went to RAF Germany as the Principal Medical Officer and three years later, on further promotion, he filled the same post at Strike Command. This was followed by three years as the Director General RAF Medical Services. Following a defence cost study instigated as part of 'Options for Change', he was frustrated and dismayed over the closure of the RAF Institute of Aviation Medicine and the planned closure of RAF hospitals.

In 1997 he became the Surgeon General Defence Medical Services, with the responsibility for the health of all Service personnel. The ramifications of the significant cuts from the major defence reviews of the post-Cold War era remained a major issue, and he now had to address this extremely difficult situation across the whole defence medical arena. He had to implement the severe cutbacks, with the subsequent reduction in medical personnel, the final

closures of military hospitals and the subsequent issues of morale, recruitment and retention in the service.

In all these he worked closely with senior staff officers, civil servants and ministers and was never afraid to "talk tough." Unfortunately, his words often fell on deaf ears. He had a mountain to climb in restoring morale in medical services but fought all the battles with great resolve.

A senior Army colleague wrote: "Air Marshal Sir John Baird came over without doubt the most able and distinguished Surgeon General of the late 20th century – his arrival saw a sea change in our general situation, cessation of flannel and denial, and acceptance of problems with a clear effort to work to correct them."

He was an Honorary Physician

to The Queen from 1991 to 2000, when he retired to his home near Ely.

He was appointed KBE (1999) and a Commander Brother of the Order of St John.

AM Baird was very committed to the Far East Prisoners of War Association and became its patron.

He served on the Royal Society of Medicine's United Services Committee and the Royal Aeronautical Society Aviation Medicine Group.

He was a Fellow of numerous learned bodies.

He was also an avid ornithologist and travelled the world birding, "never twitching", and was an extremely competent field observer who loved being out in the wilds.

He was for many years the President of the RAF Ornithological Society and a passionate conservationist.

Sir John died on November 11, aged 83, and is survived by Lady Baird.



RESPECTED:
Air Marshal
Sir John Baird



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Sport



5 pages of **RAF Sport** start here

● Cokayne fires Red Roses to Six Nations glory: P29

MOTORSPORT

Follow the leader



HEAD BOY: Flt Lt James Leslie sets the pace at Cadwell Park
PHOTO: PISTONCLICK.COM

RAF RIDERS
BLITZ FIELD AT
CADWELL PARK
p30-31

SPORTS FEDERATION

Covid hits sport again

Chief seeks out new plans to boost return after lockdown



Daniel Abrahams
HQ Air Command

IT'S BACK to the Covid drawing board for Service Sport, as the fields of play, tracks, pitches and courses fell silent as the country went back into lockdown.

Rich Fogden, Deputy Director RAF Sport, said: "Bottom line RAF Sport (association and unit-level) is suspended in England.

"I am just awaiting direction on any wider application, but I don't see any easing, given the current timescale. I am pleased our people will be able to exercise outdoors at least. It's really important in maintaining wellbeing and for when we can get back to sport."

He added: "2020 has certainly been a challenge and RAF Sport has taken a hit. But there has been, and we look forward to, more light at the end of the tunnel.

"With the easing of lockdown back in June, we had seen a return to play. Many of the various associations demonstrated true dedication to ensure things were Covid secure, to hold successful events and salvage

"I am pleased our people will be able to exercise outdoors at least"

what was left of their seasons."

Angling, tennis, sailing, football, orienteering, equitation, fencing, polo, mountaineering, canoe, powerkiting and waterski and wakeboard all held events, while eSports came to the fore in motorsports, athletics and cycling.

Fogden added: "The cycling

association is now in the midst of planning its first ever RAFCA Virtual Training Camp.

"Its members have been helped in this by our latest RAF Video Gaming and eSports Association, which provided a great additional channel for the virtual Air Tattoo, showcasing a range of RAF Sport disciplines."

He added: "We are working with all the associations, units and our supporting charities to build on the lateral thinking to adapt and move forward against the backdrop of this challenge."

● Follow RAF sport on Twitter @RAFSportsFederation.

TOP DOG: Rich Fogden, left, during last year's IS Alpine sports championship

Sport

MOUNTAINEERING

HIGH TIMES: O/Cdt Bex Capewell-Salisbury belaying Cpl Matt Rands on rugged Bamford Edge

Ending year on a high...

Peak District event a morale booster

Daniel Abrahams
HQ Air Command

THE SERVICE'S mountaineers have been on a restricted diet of their favourite sport, with only the second meet held since the first lockdown.

The RAF Mountaineering Association's recent Peak District meet saw climbers gather for the socially-distanced event, in the village of Hathersage.

Having arranged to stay in Covid-controlled accommodation, the group's main climbing venue was near Ladybower Reservoir – used by the men of 617 Sqn for training in advance of the raids on the Ruhr Valley dam raids during World War II.

The hill walkers present were being put through their paces as part of the team selection for the forthcoming RAFMA expedition – Corsica Venture 2021.

During the weekend, indoor climbing coaching sessions were also held, with GB Climbing Team Development Coach Ian Dunn.

He said: "Again, notwithstanding the necessary social distancing constraints, the climbers found it really beneficial, especially since most have been able to undertake little climbing this year."

Association member Flt Lt Stephen Day said: "Although this was only the second time that RAFMA had managed to run a weekend meet since lockdown, it was a great success.

"Through meticulous planning and risk assessment we were able to put in place measures that allowed our climbers and hill walkers to meet up and remain Covid secure, while enjoying some stunning countryside.

"The weather was definitely on our side and meant we could provide new members with a really good understanding of the wide range of activities we offer.

"We were fortunate to have started the



NEW HEIGHTS: Top, swinging from Gargoyle Flake on the Great Butress – Upper Tier of Bamford Edge; above, Sqn Ldr Gordon Henderson, with Sgt Jo Lynch belaying

year with some stunning winter mountaineering, but the lack of access meant many of our members were forced to change the way they trained.

"Being able to run meets in a Covid secure manner is really

important for both ensuring the wellbeing of our Association and the currency of the skills held within it. Our hope for next year is to welcome new members, so they can also enjoy the same positive benefits."

RUGBY UNION



Amy's Six of the best

RAF star shines as Red Roses seal title

Daniel Abrahams
HQ Air Command

IN THE end it was a comfortable Six Nations win for the England Women's rugby union side and Fg Off Amy Cokayne, beating Italy 54-0 in Parma.

The win makes it back-to-back

Six Nations titles for the Red Roses, with RAF star Cokayne coming on as replacement for the final half hour of a match which saw England run in eight tries to claim the bonus point.

The win meant England finished 14 points above France in the championship table.

Following the Championship win, Cokayne spoke with *RAF News*, saying: "To win the Grand Slam for the second year in a row was an incredible feeling."

"It's hard to believe we played round four of the Six

Nations in March and after lots of uncertainty we finally got to play round five in November.

"We have such a good squad now, with depth in every position, which bodes well as we move to the autumn internationals and next year's world cup in New Zealand."

"I was pleased with my performance on the day, I executed my core roles well and definitely enjoyed the opportunity to get some scrums under my belt."

"Last year we won the Grand Slam against Scotland at Twickenham. We had a reception after the game with the Scotland girls and our friends and family."

"This year we had a Zoom call with our friends and family."



UP FOR THE CUP: Left, Amy flanked by Shaunagh Brown and Jess Breach with the Six Nations trophy; above, Amy during warm-ups before the final clash; and, top, celebrating with her teammates in Parma
PHOTOS: NAOMI BAKER AND CHRIS RICCO RFU

Unfortunately, we couldn't mix with the Italian girls, so we were back in our beds by 11pm."

The journey back to rugby after lockdown started for Cokayne with club rugby for Harlequins in October.

RFU law variations – which include fewer scrums and mauls,

all designed to mitigate Covid-19 transmission – mean the RAF star can continue to play for her club. She will return to the England training camp for the Autumn Internationals.

● Follow England women's rugby union on Twitter @EnglandRugby.



MOTORSPORT

Cad'll do fine

Daniel Abrahams
HQ RAF Sport

THE RAF Motorcycle Road Racing Team made up for lost time and blitzed all-comers at Cadwell Park.

Having lost the opening half of the season due to the lockdown and Covid-19 pandemic, the reduced field of riders met at the Lincolnshire track for the socially-distanced event.

RAFMSA chairman Gp Capt Brian Watson said: "From the top-level international superstars down to national club racing, all riders had to surrender the first half of the season as the world struggled to deal with the impact of this virus."

"As restrictions lifted, we dared to dream and with a huge amount of work – not limited to face masks, social distancing and a small truckload of hand sanitiser – the military championship finally commenced."

The previous rounds saw the Army gain a 42-point lead following a double win, before the RAF hauled this back and built a 68-point lead with second and third-place finishes.

The penultimate race of the season at Oulton Park saw the RAF finally taking a win, thanks to their American exchange rider Eric Telger.

He was closely followed by a string of light blue riders securing the top five positions, making the weekend the association's most successful on record.

Watson added: "The brilliant weekend meant our lead now stretched from 68 points to 140."

"As thrilled as we were with our newfound position, it was with caution that we headed to Cadwell for the last weekend in our racing calendar."

"Knowing how quickly we achieved this lead also gave awareness to how quickly it could be chipped away."

Knowing all they had to do was play it safe and bring home a few points to make sure of the team trophy, the RAF's job was made harder by the intervention of the British weather.

Storms and heavy rain wreaked havoc on the course, making for an

Park victory sees Service riders claim the title in Covid-hit season



"It's with great pride that I can say the RAF won by more than 200 points"

extremely challenging weekend, despite the small amount of points required.

While the riders and their team mechanics argued over using wet or dry tyres, the storms washed out the first race.

A second victory came into play for the Service with the championship team title being won by the ever-improving Flt Lt David Leslie.

He was joined on the podium by Chf Tech Dave Langley (third), to secure the vital points.

The fact that the remainder of the team filled most of the top 10 positions not only signalled the Service's utter dominance, but cut off any other

possible points to the sister Services' riders.

A delighted Watson added: "It is with great pride that I can say that the RAF came top of the field with a lead of more than 200 points. From believing we had plenty of time earlier in the year to haul back the Army's lead, we lost that chance, so to win it like this is brilliant."

The Army took second and the Royal Navy a close third.

For more information on the sport visit the RAFMSA and RAF Motorcycle Road Racing pages on Facebook and Instagram for all the latest updates from the team, including Sidecars and Classic Racing.



RIDING HIGH: Top, Flt Lt David Leslie in the starting pack; above, Chf Tech Dave Langley pulls a wheeler; right, Cpl Andy Castle skids off.
PHOTOS: JOHN BARNES - JACKS SNAPS



GIVEAWAY

Get your gloves on hit boxing encyclopedia

WITH THE country boasting two of the biggest-hitting boxers on the planet, the release of *The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Boxing* couldn't be more apt.

RAF News has teamed up with Welbeck Publishing to offer five copies of this fabulous hardback book to give away in our Christmas competition.

As British fighter, two-time unified heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua prepares to defend his titles against Kubrat Pulev before he fights fellow Brit WBC heavyweight champion Tyson Fury, read about the two fighters' routes to the top of the pile in the pages of this stunning title by boxing writers Harry Mullan, Bob Mee and Matt Bozeat.

The title features in-depth and beautifully presented sections on the origins of the sport, with the brilliant *Great Boxers* pages featuring a pared down 224 greatest of all time.

Read about the careers, best fights and records of ring legends like Muhammed Ali, Max Baer, Marco Antonio Barrera, Jack Dempsey, Marvin Hagler and Joe Frazier to name a few.

That is followed by the in-depth *Legends of The Ring* section, which delves deeper into the stories behind such

THE BIG BANG: Right, the cover of *The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Boxing*; below, British boxing champion Anthony Joshua
PHOTOS: WELBECK PUBLISHING



icons as mentioned and numerous others.

The *Great Fights* section begins with James Corbett's 21st round, World Heavyweight win in New Orleans in 1892 and ends with Fury's victory over Deontay Wilder in February of this year at New York's MGM Grand.

The book also features sections on trainers including Ray Arcel and Jack Blackburn, managers Mickey

and administration, along with a fact-packed history of each weight division, plus venues from London's Royal Albert Hall to America's Madison Square Gardens.

For a chance to win a copy, simply answer the following question correctly:

Who will Anthony Joshua fight next?

Email answers, marked Boxing Competition, to: sports@rafnews.co.uk or post to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE.

Deadline for entries is December 20. Please include your full postal address.

The Ultimate Encyclopaedia of Boxing is available through Welbeck Publishing and all major outlets, priced £25. Follow Welbeck Publishing on Twitter @welbeckpublish.

VR cyclists shine on World course

THE INAUGURAL RAF cycling eRacing championships proved a tough test as riders pitted themselves against the virtual 2015 Richmond Virginia, UCI World Championship course.

There were good results all round in the ladies' and men's races, which provided action throughout.

Cpl Adam Baker, who came in second, said: "Having raced the Helvellyn Triathlon the weekend before the eIS race, I came into

the event with distinctly sore legs.

"My tactic for the race was to sit in the group as much as possible. Sadly, I left it too late to catch the breakaway and ended up three seconds back in second place."

Fg Off Ed Callow said: "I was happy to come away with third against some strong riders on the day. I wanted to thin out the group with attacks, but I lost the wheel of the top two riders, although I still managed to battle my way to a podium spot."

The first key point in the race came at the Libby Hill climb, the short punchy incline where a series of attacks began stringing the riders out. Then, one main group produced a breakaway, which split the podium spots.

Riding in the two-lap ladies' race, Sqn Ldr Carrington-Smith said: "Being new to RAF cycling I wasn't sure what to expect. I thought I'd try to stick with leading riders for as long as I could."

"At halfway I was really suffering. I managed to recover a bit on the flat sections of the second lap so I could attack the final hills. I knew I wouldn't out-sprint anyone near the line, so I made a break with a couple of kilometres to go and somehow managed to hold that lead."

"The whole event was great and I hope it leads to more female riders getting involved."

Follow RAF cycling on Twitter @RAFCycling.

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