

The Forces' favourite paper

Rap movie classic
Bag Eminem
Oscar winner
on DVD

● See RnR p5

Win!



High-speed read
Bio of jet
genius
Whittle

● See p23

Win!



ROYAL AIR FORCE

Friday **January 29** 2021
No. 1507 **70p**

RAF News



GULF WAR
30 years on



● Pages 15-21

Motorsports
Setbacks
end season



● See p28

Cricket
Pandemic's
bowled out



● See p29

Wingman UAV gets £30m lift



Simon Mander

DEFENCE CHIEFS have unveiled plans for a fleet of uncrewed fighters designed to fly at high speed alongside RAF Typhoons and F-35s.

Belfast-based firm Spirit AeroSystems has landed a £30 million three-year deal to design prototypes of the aircraft, dubbed 'Loyal Wingman', which the RAF hopes will be supporting combat operations by 2030.

● Continued on p3



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“We’ve suffered in TV from female characters always having to be one certain thing”



Morven Christie, star of crime drama *The Bay*
See RnR p4-5

“I remain the RAF’s youngest living ex-prisoner of war. I hope that continues for a long time to come”



Gulf War veteran David Waddington
See p19

“The world’s changed due to Covid and thrown hurdles in my way, but I am giving it everything I can to get to China”



Bobsleigh star L/Cpl Shanwayne Stephens on his Olympic bid
See p30-31



RAF News

RAF News

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Wingman breaks cover

Continued from front

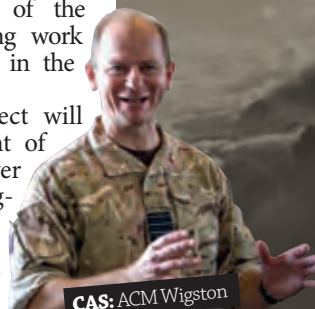
The new combat air platform is being developed alongside the RAF’s radical sixth-generation Tempest fighter.

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston, said: “We’re taking a revolutionary approach, looking at a game-changing mix of swarming drones and uncrewed fighter aircraft alongside piloted fighters like Tempest, that will transform the combat battlespace in a way not seen since the advent of the jet age.”

The deal with Spirit is expected to safeguard more than 100 jobs at the firm’s Northern Ireland site.

Defence Minister Jeremy Quin said: “This is a great win for the Northern Ireland defence industry and will showcase some of the most pioneering engineering work currently being undertaken in the UK.”

“The £30 million project will accelerate the development of the UK’s future air power by delivering cutting-edge uncrewed aircraft, maintaining our position as a world leader in emerging technologies.”



CAS: ACM Wigston



SUPPORT ACT : How the new Loyal Wingman unmanned aircraft could operate with the sixth-generation Tempest
PHOTO: MOD

This Week In History



1942

RAF Regiment forms

THE RAF Regiment is established under the command of Maj Gen C F Liardet, on loan from the Army. The new unit is composed of 150 existing defence squadrons.

1945

Mosquito mission

544 SQN Mosquitos launch Operation Haycock flying courier missions from RAF Benson to the Crimea, Cairo and Athens via Italy in support of the Yalta conference.



1991

Buccaneer laser debut

BUCCANEERS FLY their first operations on Operation Desert Storm providing laser designation for two Tornados attacking a bridge over the River Euphrates at Al Samawah. Six Paveway bombs destroy the structure.

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



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You've Ern-ed it

Tracey Allen

A FORMER Lancaster pilot who was imprisoned in the notorious Stalag Luft III camp and made to take part in the gruelling Long Marches has celebrated his 100th birthday.

Flt Lt Ernest 'Ernie' Holmes, who served on 76 Squadron and then with 35 Squadron on Pathfinder operations, was shot down near Eindhoven in May 1944 when returning from a mission over Dortmund in Germany.

Ernie was among three survivors of his eight-strong crew and spent eight weeks on the run before he was helped and hidden by Dutch families. He fought with the Resistance but was eventually captured and imprisoned in Stalag Luft III, made famous by the Hollywood film *The Great Escape*.

He took part in two of the Long Marches across Germany in 1945 when thousands of allied prisoners of war were forced to trek from prison camps by the Nazis in blizzard conditions towards the west in an attempt to stop them being liberated by the advancing Russian Army.

Ernie was liberated on May 9, 1945 and repatriated to Britain five days later.

On his return he discovered that he had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in 1944 for his 'keenness, courage and devotion.'

He stayed in the RAF after the war, leaving in 1962

for a career in civil aviation.

He later became a Qualified



Shot down, captured and then force marched across Europe by the retreating Nazis - WWII Lancaster pilot Ernie celebrates his 100th



DFC WINNER: Ernie Holmes (left) and at the helm of a Lancaster bomber

Flying Instructor for the East of Scotland University Air Squadron and Glasgow UAS.

In 2018 Ernie returned to Holland to take part in a memorial service in the field where his

aircraft and crew were shot down. He unveiled a memorial to the squadron and visited the graves in Eindhoven of his fallen crew.

He now lives in a care home in Perth, Scotland. Due to Covid-19 restrictions he was unable to receive visitors to congratulate him on his centenary but was sent audio birthday greetings.



SURVIVOR: Flt Lt Holmes was captured after eight weeks on the run. Inset below left, Dutch farmer Fons van der Heijden who sheltered the UK airman was executed by the Nazis

French honour Stalag Luft survivor

WORLD WAR II navigator Stanley Booker, 98, has been appointed Chevalier in the Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur – the highest French order of merit – by the President of France.

Stanley was serving with Bomber Command's 10 Sqn when his Halifax was shot down in flames and crashed near Dreux in northern France on June 3, 1944. His pilot and wireless operator were killed – five other crew members escaped by parachute and were hidden by the French resistance.

His daughter Pat Vinycombe said: "My father and a fellow crew member were betrayed to the Gestapo by a Belgian traitor. Stanley was denied prisoner of war status and was treated as a spy. After a gruelling five-day journey with other allied airmen packed



WWII HERO: Navigator Stanley Booker

into filthy cattle trucks where they experienced extreme privation, starvation and terrible thirst, they found themselves at the notorious Buchenwald Camp.

"He was transferred to Stalag Luft III in Poland, then forced to take part in the Long March back

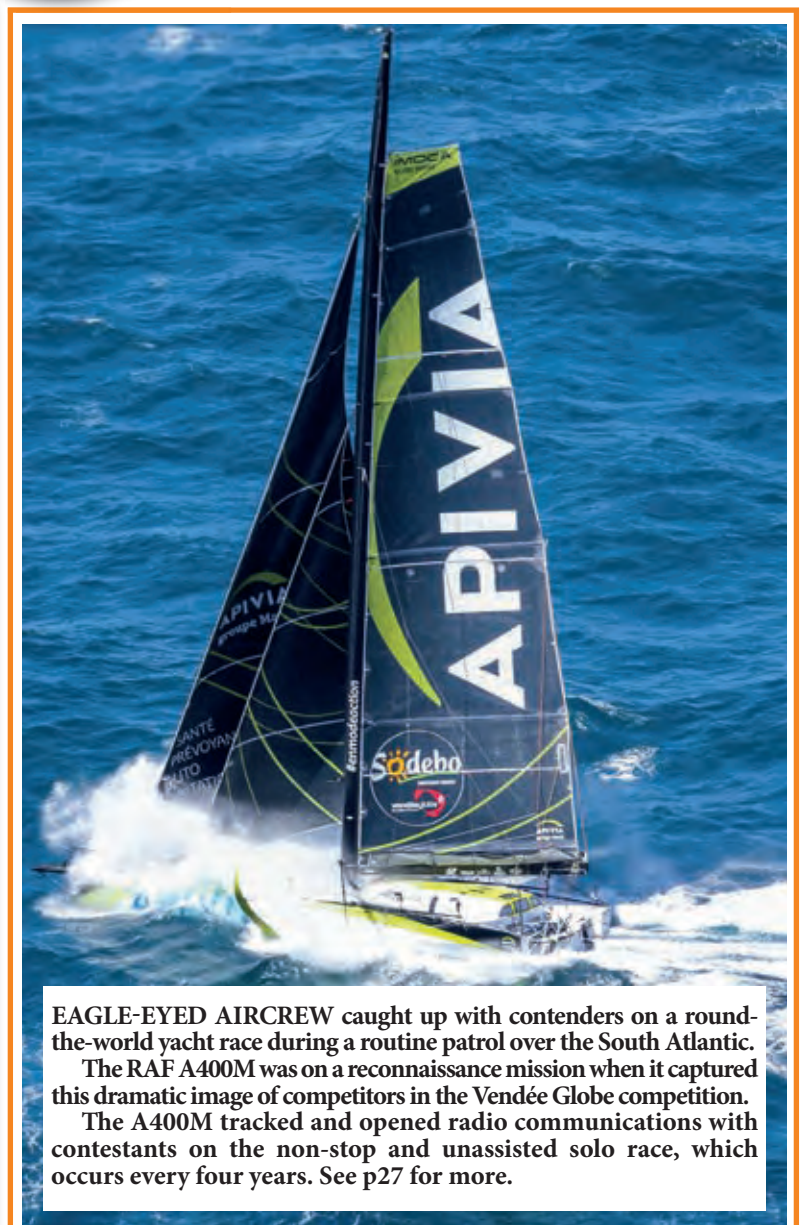
to Germany in January 1945 in appalling conditions."

She added: "Stanley and his compatriots arrived exhausted at Luckenwalde PoW camp near Berlin and then became prisoners and hostages of the Russian Army.

"They were held as political prisoners whilst the Russians negotiated the release of some Soviet prisoners held by the British and American forces. Finally, they were liberated by the Americans – three weeks after VE Day – and eventually flown back to the UK on May 29."

Then a 22-year-old Flying Officer, Stanley went on to be promoted to Sqn Ldr. In 1951 he was recruited to work for M16 in Hamburg and Berlin.

Pat is currently editing her father's autobiography.



EAGLE-EYED AIRCREW caught up with contenders on a round-the-world yacht race during a routine patrol over the South Atlantic.

The RAF A400M was on a reconnaissance mission when it captured this dramatic image of competitors in the Vendée Globe competition.

The A400M tracked and opened radio communications with contestants on the non-stop and unassisted solo race, which occurs every four years. See p27 for more.



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Farewell to ATA's Eleanor

Tracey Allen

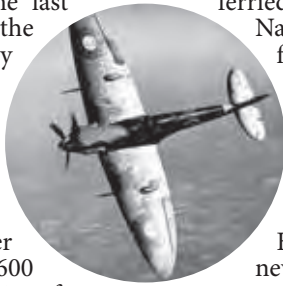
SPITFIRE GIRL Eleanor Wadsworth, one of the last women pilots with the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) in World War II, has died aged 103. Eleanor joined the ATA, a civilian organisation, in June 1943 and by the time she left in September 1945 had flown 600 hours on 22 different aircraft types, including the Hurricane and

Spitfire – which she said was her favourite.

The 'ATA girls' famously ferried RAF and Royal Navy warplanes between factories, maintenance units and frontline squadrons.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace paid tribute to Eleanor, from Bury St Edmunds. He said: "We should never forget Eleanor's example and achievements."

● See full obituary on p24.



WWII PILOT: Eleanor Wadsworth flew more than 22 different aircraft types with the Air Transport Auxiliary

In brief

BAE lands F-35 Lightning deal

DEFENCE GIANT BAE has landed a £70 million contract to boost mission and synthetic training services for F-35 Lightning crews at Marham, in Norfolk.

The announcement comes as the fifth-generation stealth fighter prepares for its first operational deployment on board the UK Carrier Strike Group.

Art ace Jack nets his own book deal

Publisher snaps up autistic 14-year-old's pictures of iconic RAF aircraft for aviation title

Tracey Allen

A SEVERELY autistic boy whose interest in drawing and painting historic RAF aircraft has helped him to communicate has published a book of his artwork.

Sales from 14-year-old Jack Berry's book will go towards military charities including SSAFA.

Jack, who started drawing aircraft last summer, suffers from anxiety and depression and has not spoken for five years.

His proud mum Sara explained that her son communicates through his pictures and is a huge fan of the RAF and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

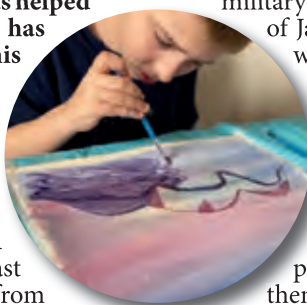
She said: "Drawing is a great outlet for him to express what he is thinking and feeling."

The book features snippets from pilots about their flying experience accompanied by Jack's illustrations.

Sara added: "We do not have a military connection but because of Jack's love of the military, we wanted to help families like ours in the Armed Forces. It must be really, really hard to be in the Armed Forces, to be away when your child has additional needs and know that your partner is looking after them 24/7.

"Even though he can't join up in the future, I feel that the RAF and the Services have opened their arms and accepted Jack for who he is. I think that is really important."

Part of the proceeds from Jack's book, available from Amazon, will go to SSAFA's Forces Additional Needs and Disability Forum, a tri-Service group for serving families or



BRUSH WITH FAME: RAF fan Jack Berry

individuals who have a child or adult dependent with an additional need or disability.

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In brief



ON-SIDE: Cpl Rich Barnes joins Forces teams at Bristol FC's stadium

Shot in the arm for Vacs mission

MILITARY MEDICS have been practising vaccination procedures at Ashton Gate Football Ground in Bristol so they can back up the NHS in the South West of England.

RAF Corporal Rich Barnes joined other Air Force and Royal Navy personnel training to qualify as part of the Vaccines Quick Reaction Force.

The nationwide Force has 21 teams, with three assigned to each of the seven NHS regions and headed up by a Medical Support Officer linked into the local Joint Military Command.

The medics will vaccinate people on a needs basis – when required and requested by the NHS in a ‘surge’ capacity.

Gib Jab



Simon Mander

THOUSANDS OF life-saving doses of the Covid-19 vaccine have been airlifted by the RAF to Gibraltar.

Enough of the breakthrough Pfizer-medicine to give 6,000 jabs were delivered to the Rock by a Brize-based A400M transporter.

Covering a mere 6.8 square kilometres and with a population of more than 33,000 people, the British Overseas Territory is one of the most densely populated places on Earth and vulnerable to an outbreak of the pandemic.

After landing at RAF Gibraltar,

the six cold cases of the vaccine were handed over to Royal Gibraltar Regiment soldiers, who rushed them to St Bernard's Hospital.

A total of 5,850 doses of the vaccine were kept at -70°C in temperature-controlled packaging with 10kg of dry ice on board the A400M. The vaccine will be used to protect Gibraltar's frontline workers and the most ‘at-risk’ members of the population.

Armed Forces Minister James Heapey said: “Following the RAF's delivery of thousands of vaccines this weekend, the airmen and women, sailors and soldiers

of British Forces Gibraltar are working together to get the life-saving jab into British arms as quickly as possible.”

Military personnel based in Gibraltar are also being held at readiness to provide logistical assistance to the government in their response to the pandemic.

The latest mission follows a similar deployment last March, when the Armed Forces provided logistical support to the delivery of PPE and medical advice.

Commander British Forces Gibraltar Cdre Steve Dainton said: “British Forces have worked

relentlessly alongside the Foreign Office and Gibraltar government colleagues to make this happen.”

The airlift is part of Operation Broadshare, the UK Armed Forces' response to the pandemic overseas, which has included delivering vital medical equipment including oxygen, medicine and PPE to the South Atlantic Islands.

So far, the military has assisted with repatriation flights from China, Peru, Japan, Senegal, Nepal and Cuba. Military assistance teams have also been deployed to the Turks and Caicos Islands and the Cayman Islands.

Point Of Order

IN THE *This Week In History* feature on p3 in the last edition of *RAF News* (1506, January 15) we stated that the Long March of PoWs from the German Stalag Luft III camp during World War II took place in 1944.

The correct date is 1945. Many thanks to *RAF News* reader Paul Scarbro for spotting the error.

Gunners mark historic West Africa mission

RAF GUNNERS commemorated the 20th anniversary of their part in a mission to quell a brutal civil war in Sierra Leone.

Operation Silkman in 2000 was the first British mass-parachute airborne operation since Suez and involved II Sqn RAF Regiment.

Three C-130 Hercules transporters flew from Ascension Island to drop paratroops at Yongro, near the country's capital Freetown, to quell a brutal civil war and demonstrate the UK's support for the government.

The show of strength was intended to deter the rebel Revolutionary United Front which had rampaged through the West African country in an 11-year conflict, amputating the limbs of their enemies and

brutalising civilians.

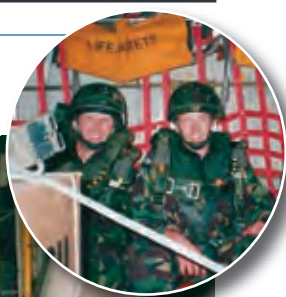
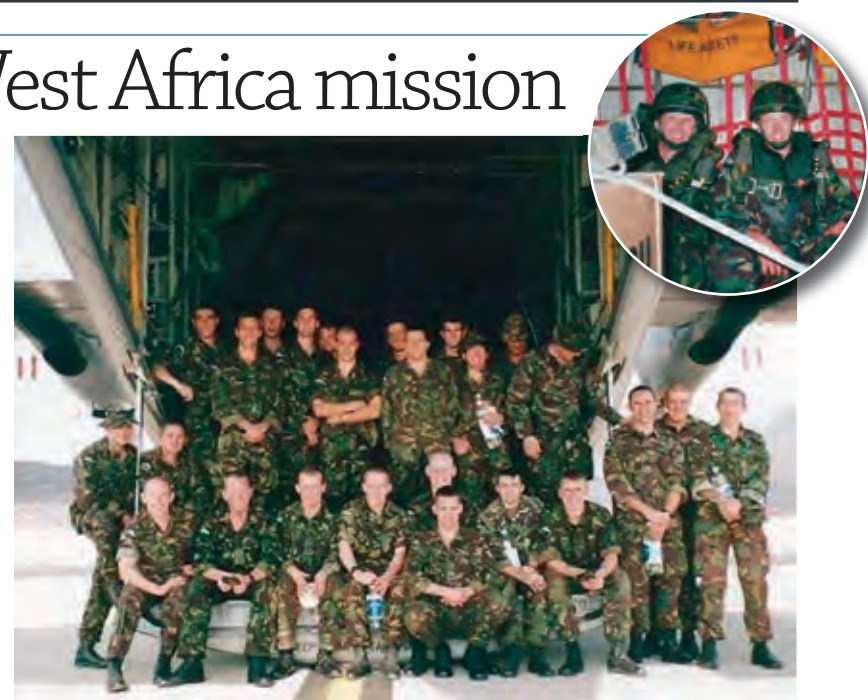
The drop coincided with a planned meeting between an insurgent leader and his Liberian backers to halt the illegal trade in ‘blood diamonds’.

The rendezvous was called off after the drop was publicised by the local media and watched by the country's President, defence and police chiefs.

After landing, the Gunners joined UN personnel demonstrating General Purpose Machine Gun and Mortar drills and conducted jungle patrols.

Operation Silkman followed a large-scale British amphibious assault the previous November to secure government control of the country.

SHOW OF STRENGTH: The Gunners



News



Photo of the week

AN RAF dual-role Voyager tanker and transporter touches down on the rain-soaked runway at Brize Norton as storms lashed the UK. This image was captured by RAF photographer Cpl Lee Matthews.



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News bulletin



Veterans risk PTSD spike

PERSONNEL WHO leave the Armed Forces after frontline combat tours are significantly more likely to develop PTSD symptoms than those who continue to serve, according to a new study.

Research by King's College London for the Forces in Mind Trust reveals ex-serving personnel are three per cent more likely to develop the condition than serving personnel, have worse long-term outcomes and are less likely to improve than personnel still in service.

Overall the incidence in PTSD amongst frontline fighters who served in Iraq and Afghanistan is 12 per cent but researchers say the loss of military support can speed up the development of symptoms.

FiMT chief executive Ray Lock said: "Transition from military to civilian life is key, so it must be a particular focus for change."

"This report highlights in particular the importance of promoting continuity and diversifying support structures. Action must now be taken to better support serving and ex-Service personnel with PTSD."



BRIZE AND SHINE: Canadian airman Capt Craig Hughes in the C-17 cockpit at RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire

Canada high

THE FIRST Royal Canadian Air Force pilot is flying sorties with Brize-based 99 Sqn C-17 crews under the multi-national exchange programme.

Capt Craig Hughes, who usually flies with 429 Transport Sqn at Trenton, Ontario, said: "It's a real honour to fly with the RAF."

"These exchanges are designed to share different experiences and expertise from one air force to another."

A 99 Sqn airman from Brize is currently filling Craig's seat with the Trenton-based squadron.

Russia raising Nato tensions



THREAT: President Vladimir Putin

SKY POLICE: UK Typhoon stationed in Estonia intercepts a Russian SU-30 Flanker skirting Nato airspace over the Baltic

RUSSIAN ATTEMPTS to test Nato air defences are on the increase, according to latest figures.

Alliance warplanes – including RAF fighters – scrambled more than 400 times in 2020 to intercept unknown aircraft approaching Alliance airspace, a moderate increase on the previous year.

And 90 per cent of these missions – around 350 – were in response to flights by Russian military aircraft.

"In recent years, we have seen

an increased level of Russian military air activity close to the Alliance's borders," said Nato spokesperson Oana Lungescu.

"Nato fighter jets are on duty around the clock, ready to scramble in case of suspicious or unannounced flights near the airspace of our Allies. Air policing is an important way in which Nato provides security for its members," she added.

Across Europe around 60 jets serve as a quick response force which

can be vectored in on potential intruders by 40 air surveillance radars and reporting hubs.

The RAF has completed Baltic Air Policing missions for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania since the three countries joined in 2004.

Nato also protects the Western Balkans – Albania, Slovenia, and Montenegro – which do not have fighters of their own while talks are underway to extend coverage to North Macedonia.

Last year the Allies also policed

the skies of Romania, Bulgaria and Iceland.

Nato jets respond to unannounced military flights and civilian aircraft losing communication with air traffic controllers due to technical problems or hijacking.

The Alliance has two air operations centres – one in Germany, covering northern Europe, and one in Spain covering the south – which monitor all air movements across Europe.

MT team helps drive school virus testing

Staff Reporter

AIR FORCE teams carried out Covid testing on school pupils in Lincolnshire as the Forces continue to support frontline health workers and the UK-wide virus screening programme.

Wittering personnel were called in to Bourne Grammar School where teachers are still holding classes for vulnerable youngsters and pupils whose parents are key workers.

The airmen and women from the nearby station's MT squadron provided staff and NHS workers with support as youngsters were tested to prevent the chance of the

infection spreading during lessons.

Wittering transport aces have also been brought in to deliver oxygen and PPE during the pandemic.

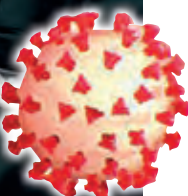
School head Alastair Anderson said: "We're delighted to have an RAF support team on site to assist us with developing a high-quality testing programme – their input will be invaluable in keeping our staff and students safe."

Station chief Gp Capt Jo Lincoln added: "I am proud Wittering personnel are helping our local community to keep their students and teachers safe during the pandemic."

"Assisting our local community in this way could help save lives."



CLASS ACT: Wittering teams overseeing testing of school pupils as part of the UK screening programme





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Dust busters

French call in Chinook to fuel Mali terror fight

Staff Reporter
Gao, Mali

A CHINOOK airlifted a massive fuel tank across a desert landscape so French and Malian troops can extend their fight against Islamist extremists in the West African Sahel region.

The 1310 Flt workhorse, currently flown by Odiham-based 27 Sqn personnel, underslung the container to transport it to a forward operating base 25 miles from their main airfield at Gao.

UK National Component Commander Lt Col Steve Brining said: "The UK provides heavy support helicopter lift to enable French and Malian ground and aviation elements to operate at significant range and remain resupplied."

Latest figures show that between July 20, 2018 and January 8, 2021 RAF crews have flown 2,790 hours, transporting 16,551 people and hauling almost 1,500 tonnes of freight.

British crews are now fully integrated with Danish Merlin and French, Cougar, Puma Tiger, Gazelle and Caiman helicopters supplying and transporting soldiers and



PERMISSION TO SAND:
1310 Flt Chinook whips up a dust storm as it lands at French FOB in trouble-stricken West African state Mali
PHOTO: FLT LT MATT JEFFERY

carrying out medical evacuations with personnel operating under the same command structure, sharing common missions and frequently flying as mixed formations.

French Commander Colonel Sylvain added: "The aim is to

provide direct support to ground units, deliver medical evacuations and provide the capability to conduct autonomous operations against armed terrorist groups.

"Given the huge scale of Mali and the operating area, these tasks are

achieved on a daily basis by French, British and Danish aviation aircrew and aircraft. These personnel are fully integrated into the structure of the GTD-A, all share common missions and often fly as mixed formations."



THREAT: Lossiemouth at risk from huge numbers of gulls and migrating geese

3D-radar beak performance

LOSSIEMOUTH HAS become the first RAF station to use 3-D radar technology to track airfield bird numbers to reduce the deadly threat of strikes during aircraft take-off and landing.

Based on the North Scottish coast, the station is at a high risk from the annual winter migration of an estimated 10,000 geese and nearby farmland attracts huge numbers of crows and seagulls.

The radar provides real-time height and positional information of airborne targets and accurately tracks bird activity out to 10km and up to a height of 700m.

Until now, flying activity at RAF Lossiemouth has been minimised during periods of peak bird activity to reduce the risk of a strike.

The pilot project has been delivered in just six months as Lossiemouth welcomes the arrival of the new P8-Poseidon maritime patrol fleet.

The Robin 3D MAX avian radar was selected for the 12-month trial due to its versatility and safe frequency band and could be rolled out at other stations, a spokesman said.

Civvy jet scramble Typhoon boom rocks Eastern UK

Staff Reporter

A PAIR of RAF Typhoons caused a sonic boom heard across the East of England after scrambling to intercept a private jet.

Residents in Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Cambridge and London heard the Coningsby-based fighters smash the sound barrier after launching in pursuit of a private charter civilian aircraft that had lost communications with air traffic control.

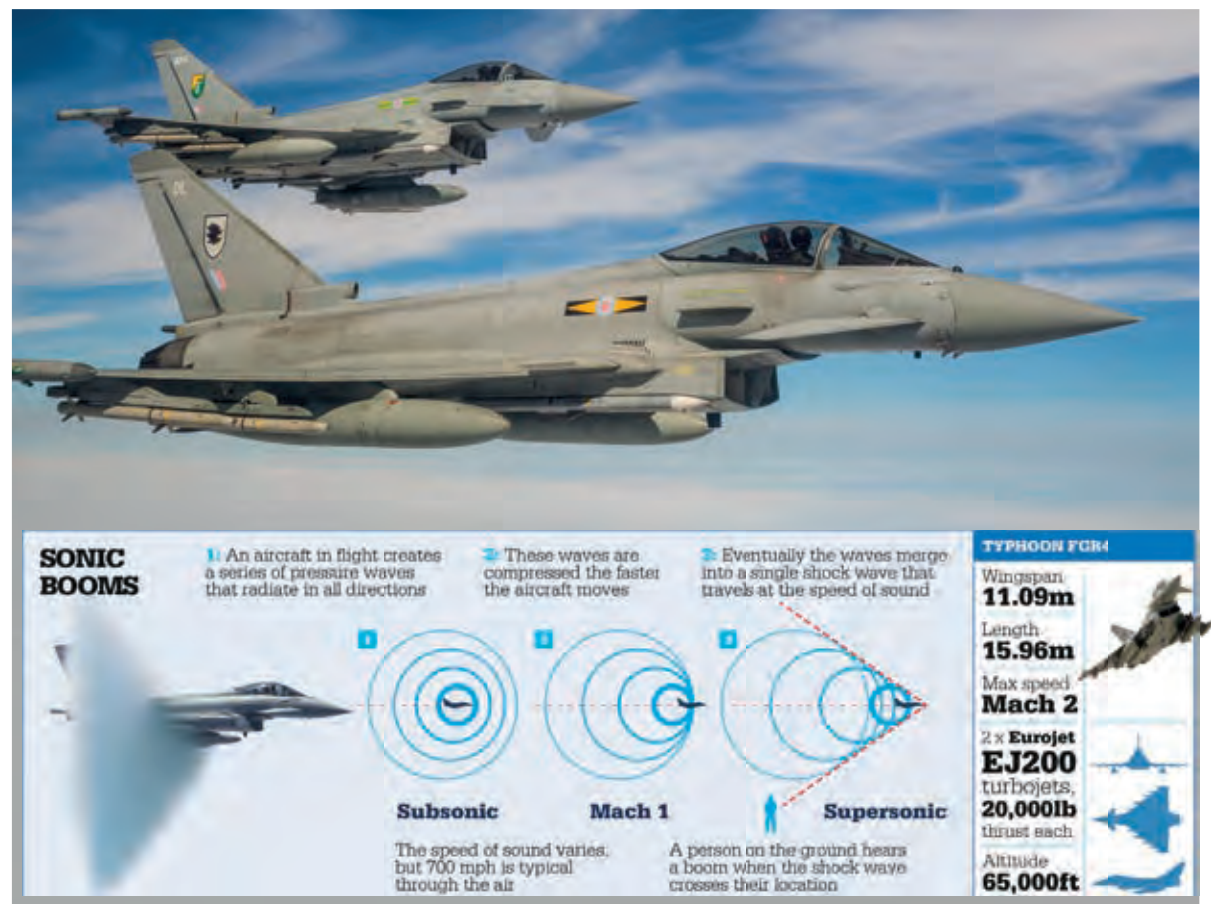
The unresponsive plane was later reported to be a rental Bombardier Global Express which was heading to Britain from Nuremberg in Germany when its radio went silent about an hour into its flight.

The swing-role fighters travelling at 1,150mph caught up with the jet which was escorted to Stansted airport where it remained until Essex Police gave the all-clear for it to resume its journey to Barbados in the West Indies.

An RAF spokesman said: "Quick Reaction Alert Typhoon aircraft were launched from Coningsby to intercept a civilian aircraft that had lost communications.

"Once communications were re-established, the aircraft was intercepted and safely escorted to Stansted Airport.

"The Typhoon aircraft were authorised to transit at supersonic speed for operational reasons."





HM Government

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Lorna Covid-19 patient

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Gulf War warriors



● Granby
30th – six
page special
report

FIRST GULF WAR: 30 YEARS ON

Invading Kuwait a huge miscalculation by Iraq's despotic leader Saddam Hussein

SADDAM HUSSEIN'S invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990 eventually precipitated the biggest air campaign involving the RAF since World War II.

Six days later the government announced the deployment of British forces to the Gulf region and, on August 10, Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine was appointed the Joint Commander of Operation Granby, with his headquarters at High Wycombe.

Air defence of Saudi Arabia was the initial priority and on August 10 a squadron of Tornado F3s deployed to Dhahran on the Saudi Arabian coast. A few days later, a squadron of Jaguars, with VC 10K air-to-air refuelling support, deployed to Oman, later moving to Bahrain and Saudi Arabia respectively. A Nimrod detachment arrived to patrol the Persian Gulf and by mid-August all three detachments were flying operational sorties.

On November 29 the United Nations Security Council approved a Resolution calling on Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait by January 15, 1991.

The build-up of RAF forces then gathered pace and by the end of the year the Air Commander in theatre, Air Vice-Marshal WJ. Wratten, had a formidable force available, drawn from across the RAF, to support Coalition operations.

135 aircraft were deployed in theatre with 46 Tornado attack and reconnaissance aircraft, 18 Tornado F3s, 12 Jaguars and 17 tankers. In addition to three Nimrods, there were 31 Chinook and Puma support helicopters and seven Hercules for in-theatre support.

RAF Regiment squadrons provided low-level air defence with Rapier missiles, plus the ground defence of airfields. The Tactical Support and Tactical Communications Wings were deployed in strength and medical teams were also moved to theatre.

The Coalition's Air Campaign Plan comprised five elements. The initial priority of achieving

BY GRAHAM PITCHFORK

Aviation historian, author and Air Cdre (Ret'd)



air superiority led into the destruction of the Iraqi Command, Control, Communication and Intelligence facilities; the location and destruction of all NBC sites; the pursuit and destruction of the Republican Guard; and, finally, the reduction of the Iraqi land capability by 50 per cent. The extent and diversity of the Coalition's air power was such that these elements could be pursued concurrently.

The UN deadline expired and the air campaign began just before midnight GMT on January 16, 1991. Among the initial waves were 20 Tornados armed with JP233 airfield denial weapons, reaching their targets having refuelled from Victor and VC10 tankers en route. Later in the day Jaguars were in action and Tornados mounted further attacks.

For the next five days, the Tornados continued to carry out their predominantly night attacks against Iraqi airfields. By January 23 it was clear that the Iraqi Air Force was not going to appear and as the destruction of Iraqi runways was now irrelevant, Tornado offensive operations switched to medium-level bombing. To improve accuracy a force of 12 Buccaneers were deployed to use their Paveway laser designation capability.

Tornados, now armed with laser-guided bombs, attacked targets marked by the Buccaneers. Accurate pin-point destruction of bridges, petroleum sites and hardened aircraft shelters resulted. Throughout the air campaign, the Tornados flew more than 1,500 offensive sorties and the Buccaneers 214. Tornado reconnaissance aircraft flew at night, deep into Iraqi territory seeking Scud missile sites and gathering vital intelligence.

During the campaign, the attack assets, ECM support

Jaguars attacked targets in Kuwait with bombs and rockets. Once the land campaign started on February 24, they were tasked against interdiction targets. They flew more than 600 sorties over enemy territory.

Offensive operations were predominantly conducted around large 'Force Packages' comprising attack assets, ECM support

aircraft, fighter escorts and defence suppression aircraft, all with AWACs and AAR support. Such tactics capitalised on lessons learned and tactics honed on the United States' Flag Training Programme.

Crucial to the attack sorties and the Tornado F3 air defence patrols was the RAF's airborne tanker force, a capability fundamental to deep

penetrations into Iraq, and also for increasing fighter time on CAP. AAR support also extended to support of other Coalition aircraft.

In addition to patrols in the Persian Gulf, the Nimrods operated in direct support of allied warships operating at the northern end of the Gulf.

The heavy involvement of the Air Transport Force of Hercules, VC10s and Tristars throughout the build-up phase continued during hostilities. By the end of the conflict,

the transport force had logged over 50,000 hours, more than twice their normal peacetime rate.

The 31 support helicopters in theatre, augmented by 12 Royal Navy Sea Kings, was employed in direct support of 1 (BR) Armoured Division. It operated in a variety of roles including casualty evacuation, ferrying prisoners of war to internment camps and direct support of ground operations. By the end of the hostilities they had flown 2,358 sorties.

In addition to air defence duties, the RAF Regiment provided support for the helicopter force, and as the land offensive approached, Scorpion and Spartan vehicles were flown into a desert airstrip, crossed into Iraq with 1 (BR) Armoured Division and ended the war astride the Kuwait-Basra highway.

This huge air effort could not have been achieved without the efforts of the logistics staffs in support of 160 aircraft of 16 different

types in theatre. Large stockpiles were created in theatre and regular air resupply allowed the operational task to be achieved. In addition, engineering staffs conducted extensive preparations to transform aircraft geared to a war in Central Europe to operations in the desert.

By the ceasefire on March 3, the RAF had flown more than 6,100 sorties, surpassed only by United States aircraft. Over 80,000 tons of bombs were dropped, of which some 7,400 tons were precision-guided.

The results were devastating with nearly 350 of Iraq's combat aircraft destroyed or driven into exile.

Half of Iraq's airfields required major repairs and two-thirds of their hardened aircraft shelters were destroyed. In addition, Iraq's electrical generation capacity, oil facilities and almost all the major bridges over the Tigris and Euphrates had been destroyed or severely damaged.

The six-week air campaign allowed the ground forces to liberate

Kuwait after just 100 hours, suffering remarkably few casualties. There were many lessons learned during the campaign, the most significant being the undeniable effectiveness of stealth technology and precision-guided weapons.

During Operation Desert Storm, air power emerged as the primary element of the Coalition forces. General McPeak, the USAF Chief of Staff, commented, "the first time in history that a field army had been defeated by airpower."



STRIKE FORCE: Jaguar and Tornado fighter-bombers in distinctive sand camouflage during Operation Granby

AIR POWER: Tornado GR.1s at low level over the Saudi desert



ABOVE: A Tornado GR.1 returns to Muharraq after successfully attacking a target during the Gulf War

BELOW: Two SEPECAT Jaguar GR.1A aircraft depart on another sortie



DEVASTATION: Precision air strikes crippled Iraqi forces and sent a strong message to regime

PHOTOS: AIR HISTORICAL BRANCH (RAF)



RAID: A 208 Sqn Buccaneer taking off from Muharraq, Bahrain, carrying a Paveway laser-guided bomb and Paveway targeting pod on the port wing weapons pylons

SUPPORT: A 55 Sqn Victor refuels a Tornado GR.1 and Buccaneer S.2 on their way to a target



TROOP SUPPORT: Westland Puma HC.1

The RAF PoWs

Young pilots and navs captured after falling to Saddam's brutal barrage of anti-aircraft guns



GULF VETERAN: Flt Lt John Nichol in 1995, sitting on the side of a Tornado F3

Flt Lt John Nichol

ONE OF the most memorable images from the start of the first Gulf War was of PoWs Flt Lts John Nichol and John Peters, battered and bruised by their captors. The Tornado pilot and navigator had been shot down and were kept captive by Iraqi forces for six weeks.

Thirty years on, Nichol (pictured inset below), now a bestselling writer, revealed fighting in the desert was a 'totally alien environment' for the Tornado force.

He said: "We were Cold War warriors. Every exercise and attachment was about countering the threat from the Soviet Union. To then find ourselves in the desert in a totally alien environment to where we had trained – Europe, Canada, Alaska, the UK – was astonishing and it was a massive learning curve for everyone."

Despite that, morale in the squadrons was high, said Nichol.

"It was bloody exciting. The war starting was certainly a surprise – I thought the politicians and the diplomats would sort it out. One crew per detachment were given the job of planning and they did that in absolute secrecy, no one else knew about the targets."

"The start of the war was a shock. I remember going into the Ops Room and hearing my squadron singing the squadron war song, the one we sang that signified the end of an exercise. I thought: 'Oh my God, we're going'."

"We stood in the Ops Room with the news on in the background and heard reports that Baghdad was under attack. We were listening to it unfold along with the rest of the world

while we were planning our sortie." Nichol explained that, contrary to some early opinion, Iraq was a formidable adversary.

He said: "There was a real sense of trepidation because we really feared the Iraqi military system. It was a very complex, hardened, battle-proven system [the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s lasted eight years]."

"We were fearful of their air force – they had really good Soviet fighter aircraft – of their surface-to-air missile systems and their integrated anti-aircraft artillery."

"For the guys on the first operation at night that sight of the integrated AAA over the airfields was heart-stopping. Nobody had seen it before until the first



Tornados flew into the first targets. We had never been to war, no one had launched mass attacks on that scale and we did not comprehend the amount of fire the Iraqis could put up."

He added: "Our tactics changed rapidly. The first couple of nights were low level airfield attacks trying to destroy enemy runways. There was only one way to get Iraq out of Kuwait and that was a ground war."

"We were stopping the Iraqi Air Force from taking off to attack the ground forces when the invasion came, to deny Iraq's Air Force the use of the skies."

"After a couple of nights, it became apparent that the IAF



PRISONERS: Flt Lt Nichol (left) and Flt Lt Peters were paraded, battered and bruised, on television by the Iraqis, in contravention of international law

was not getting airborne and our tactics changed again to medium level attacks and then again to medium level precision-guided attacks with laser-guided bombs.

"The Tornado was incredibly effective, it quickly adapted to being a precision bomber. But don't forget that it wasn't all about the Tornado. There was also a big Jaguar force out there doing an incredible job, they were attacking targets in Kuwait from day one, in daylight."

Nichol stressed: "The aircrew and groundcrew performed incredibly well in unprecedented circumstances."

Seven Tornado GR.1s were lost in combat and five aircrew killed in action, with seven captured, including Nichol and Peters, to become PoWs.

Nichol said: "I wouldn't be alone in saying I expected much greater casualties in the first few days. It was a tragedy there were losses, a number of my friends were killed."

Looking back to Gulf War I, he said: "It was one of the last fully successful conflicts – people have forgotten this. The military were requested and authorised by the UN to liberate Kuwait from occupation and did exactly that."

"I look at the men and women in the Air Force who have come after me and I see a different breed of warrior – they are more highly trained, more adaptable. As Cold War warriors we had to change almost on an hourly basis. Now our young men and women are fully prepared to go into conflict, and many are battle-hardened, that's probably the difference between us."

Flt Lt John Peters

JOHN PETERS describes the first Gulf War as "the last 'traditional' war".

The former Tornado GR.1 pilot, who now runs his own consultancy business, said: "I think it was a watershed of 'traditional' war, almost a World War II extension of the jet age into air power, the zenith of military airpower. It was the first indication of computerised technology in weaponry. "We went into that war with dumb [unguided] bombs and we ended it with laser-guided weaponry and cruise missiles."

"It scared the hell out of Russia and China because their philosophies – some of their missile systems, their aircraft – they thought were parable and it was blatantly shown that they weren't."

Remembering the events of January 1991, just before going into combat, he said: "When the Baker-Aziz talks broke down there was a real reflective moment when everyone just thought 'bloody hell, we are actually going to go to war'. The atmosphere changed. It was a mixture of excitement because of the operational flying and trepidation because you were going into the unknown."

He added: "Iraq had the most integrated air system outside the Central European front with good technology, fibre communications between missile sites and a good size air force. It also had one of the largest armies in the world."



JOHN PETERS: Runs a consultancy business

"There was huge fear among the Americans; the amount of body bags taken out to the Gulf was enormous because they thought it was going to be a bloodbath."

"There was huge fear among the Americans; the amount of body bags taken out to the Gulf was enormous because they thought it was going to be a bloodbath"



AT THE SHARP END: Tornado pilots were targeted by Iraq's extensive anti-aircraft artillery

Flt Lt David Waddington

THE RAPID deployment of RAF Tornado GR.1s to Muharraq air base in Bahrain in August 1990 as UK forces entered the first Gulf war marked the start of a new era of air operations.

Barely a year on from the collapse of the Soviet Union, a young generation of fast jet pilots ditched the Cold War doctrine and adapted fast to a very different enemy and an extreme environment.

At 24, Flt Lt David Waddington was one of the youngest pilots to face the menace of Saddam Hussein and his well-equipped and battle-hardened forces.

He said: "As a very junior guy on the squadron I had a lot of mixed emotions when the call came through that we were deploying."

"I felt real pride that I had been trusted to do this and be part of the team. There was professional excitement that I was going to do what I had been trained to do but anxiety about living up to the trust that had been placed in me."

Waddington, who went on to become the RAF's Tornado Force Commander, was part of the first deployment of Tornados to arrive in Bahrain.

With the Saddam war machine poised to push through Kuwait and into Saudi Arabia they were immediately put on Quick Reaction Alert.

Waddington said: "When I got to Bahrain I had an immediate sense that this was very real. There was a fear that the Iraqis were looking at pushing through to Saudi and that meant we would be flying straight away."

"That did not happen but we were still straight into it. It was fast. You just had time



YOUNG GUN: Flt Lt Dave Waddington in Bahrain in 1990, before being taken prisoner

to unpack your kit and then you were on QRA and ready to get out there to halt the Iraqis."

"We never underestimated the challenge in the early days. There is a natural tendency in the military to overestimate an enemy's capability but that is the right thing to do."

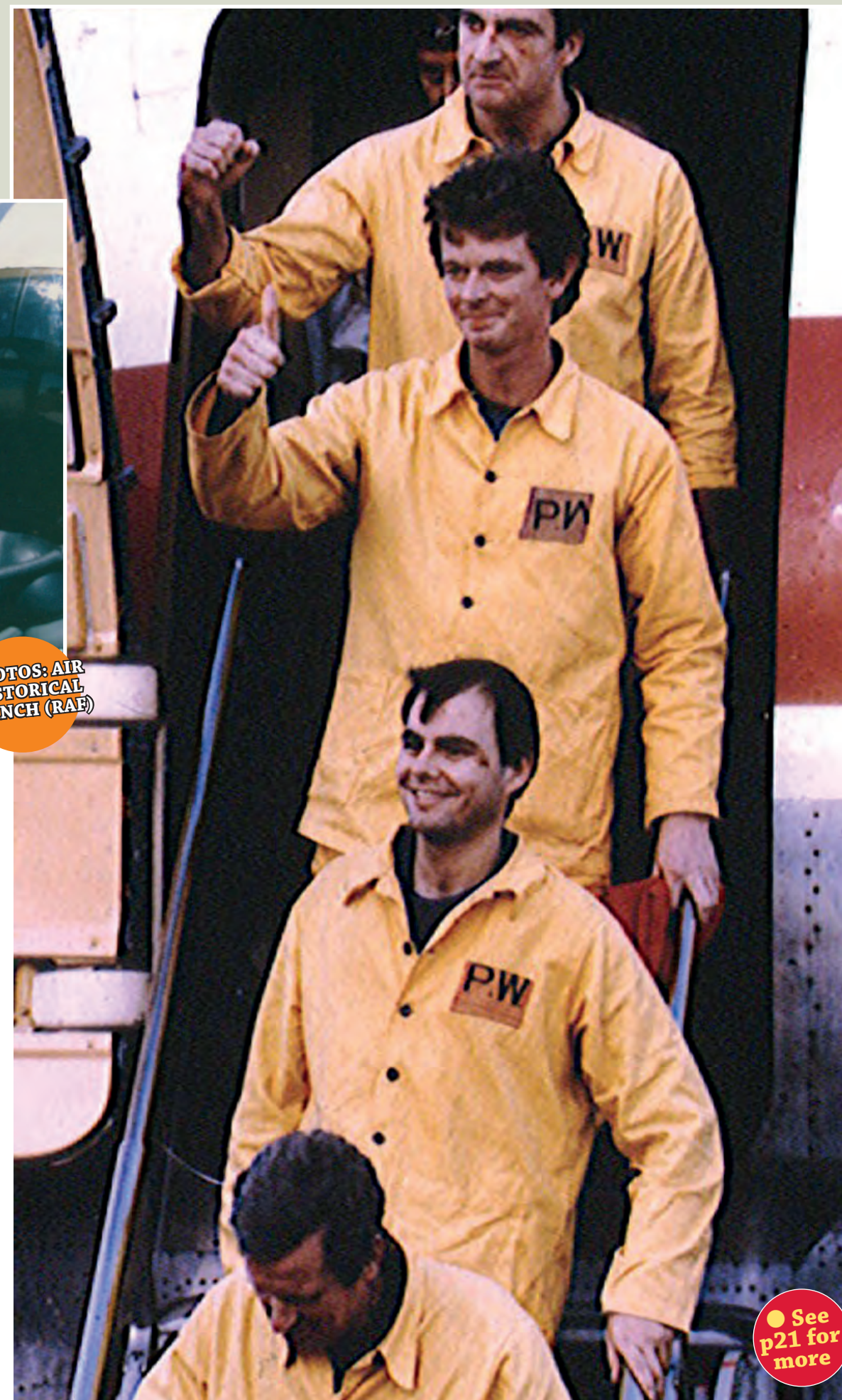
"We respected the threat from the Iraqi forces and we sensed there was an imminent and very real danger to us trying to protect the sovereign integrity of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia."

That instinct was well founded. Flt Lt Waddington and his navigator, Flt Lt Robbie Stewart, were shot down and taken prisoner during a strike on Al Tallil airfield.

He said: "There were eight Tornados. I was number two of the first four and our job was to launch 1000lb 'dumb' bombs to suppress the airfield defences and make it safer for the back four to come in low and drop the heavy JP233."



HIGH-FLYER: Dave Waddington went on to become an Air Cdre



PHOTOS: AIR HISTORICAL BRANCH (RAF)

FREEDOM: From top, RAF aircrew John Nichol, John Peters, Dave Waddington and Robbie Stewart return to the UK after their ordeal

"As we came in to start the last part of the attack profile I saw a missile shoot up directly in front of us."

Held for six weeks as PoWs, the ill-fated duo were released alongside RAF Tornado comrades John Nichol and John Peters.

Waddington returned to the UK and rose to the rank of Air Commodore, commanding the RAF's Tornado Force until his retirement in 2015. He added: "Operation Granby was the start

of a new era of air power where the RAF became much more capable of adapting to different circumstances and challenges."

"That became the mindset. You can't predict what you are going to have to do. You have to adapt and think. The Air Force has just got better and better at being able to do that."

"At the time everything from our doctrine to our mindset was probably still based on the Cold War strategy. The transition from

that to where we are now was accelerated by what we achieved in the Gulf War."

"Never forget that the enemy has a vote and never forget the risk you are taking. We have been fortunate in terms of the operations we have been involved in from the air perspective."

"I remain the RAF's youngest living ex-prisoner of war, I hope that continues for a long time to come."

● See p21 for more

Low-level, high-risk raids through a curtain of fire

XV Sqn's Wg Cdr John Broadbent arrived in Bahrain in November 1990, as the squadron commander with the RAF Tornado detachment. He recalls the first high-risk, low-level strikes against Iraqi airfields using the 10,000lb JP233 weapon

“THE EXHILARATION that I felt after landing from Muharraq's opening mission of the war with our eight-aircraft formation intact following our copy-book attack against Tallil airfield was short-lived.

The airfield's defences had been shocking in their intensity and it was scary as hell. Saddam's anti-aircraft artillery was putting a massive amount of lead in the air. There were dozens of them, each capable of firing 1,000 rounds a minute. With the tracer rounds, it looked like a solid curtain of fire.

Getting through it felt like trying to run through a shower without getting wet. Those 15 seconds it took to overfly the target were the longest of my life.

Surviving it seemed almost miraculous but didn't stop me from shouting some cheerful, albeit inane, encouragement across to Pablo Mason and Gary Stapleton, who were about to lead their formation on the next mission.

They were to return a few short hours later having suffered our squadron's first loss when John Nichol and John Peters were shot down, bringing home the grim reality of war. Two more nights brought a further two losses.

The crews were feeling the strain. We had started the conflict with 12 aircraft and 24 crews and not much more than 72 hours later we were three crews down, presumed dead. I wanted to put my arms around my detachment and share their grief.

But my main objective had



GULF VETERAN: John Broadbent

to be to show calm resolution, get on with the task and lead from the front. That third loss coincided with my own third low-level JP233 mission and one that turned out to be especially stressful.

The eight-ship mission aimed to disrupt operations at a major airfield. Half the formation were loaded with JP233 to be delivered from a level attack and the other half with eight 1,000lb bombs for defence suppression using a 'loft' manoeuvre.

One of the JP233 aircraft aborted on the ground, and a second experienced technical difficulties



MISSIONS: Broadbent



LEADER: Commanding XV Sqn from the front



NIGHT MISSIONS: The Tornado Force crews were kept busy

en route to the tanker and had to return to base. The remaining six aircraft rendezvoused with the tankers in thick cloud and horrendous turbulence so bad that nearly all of the refuelling baskets were damaged during our attempts to take on fuel.

Only three aircraft were able to get sufficient fuel to continue as a formation, the lead pair with JP233 together with one of the loft bombers.

Aborting the mission since we were reduced to less than half our force by the end of the tanking, or turning back in the face of the ferocity of the defences, never seriously crossed my mind.

But when we got back – given that we seemed to have achieved the goal of air superiority, and in the light of our losses – I felt it was time to transition to medium level, or at least change tactics.

We duly switched to medium level and that reduced the pressure but the Tornado weapon system was optimised for low-level ingress and weapon delivery and was ill-suited to medium-altitude bombing with free fall weapons.

With its terrain-following radar, the Tornado was able to operate at very low level at speed and it could do that automatically day or night.

That was where it excelled.

Conversely, fully loaded we were limited to a height of 20,000 feet and the results from level bombing at this altitude were poor. In an attempt to improve our accuracy HQ directed us to undertake high angle dive bombing instead.

Achieving a stable dive to release point and then recovery from such a relatively low starting altitude meant re-entering the effective anti-aircraft envelope. I was reluctant to ask my crews to do that.

What we really needed were precision-guided munitions and the means to deliver them. Fortunately, HQ resolved the issue of finding ramp space for the Buccaneer aircraft needed for laser designation and we flew our first PGM mission from Muharraq on February 2, transforming our results immediately.

On February 14 I led a formation of four Tornados each armed with three laser-guided bombs and two Buccaneers providing laser designation against hardened aircraft shelters on Al Taqaddum airfield.

By this stage of the war we had been delivering LGBs from medium level for almost two weeks

in a relatively benign environment.

The enemy fighter threat had been eliminated and, at 20,000 ft, we enjoyed relative safety from anti-aircraft fire.

The radar guided SAM threat remained but we hadn't been threatened by one for a long time and in any case our own radar-jamming pods were designed to negate those, plus we were usually part of a larger international package which included US Wild Weasel assets.

As we were approaching the target, one of our crews called a missile launch. That really got everyone's attention and immediately all eyes were out of the cockpit searching for the missile. It struck our number five aircraft, crewed by Rupert Clarke and Steve Hicks. Steve was killed in the strike. Rupert survived and was captured. That was another dreadful blow and low point for the team.

Overall, I am immensely proud of what our air and ground crews achieved, especially in those early days. They all displayed remarkable fortitude, resilience and flexibility. It was not an easy mission and we all had our own personal fears but we each overcame them in our own way.”



REPATRIATED: Sqn's Steve Hicks

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

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

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

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

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

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them to their full potential.

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

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

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

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Legend of Bruce Lee continues to intrigue

JASON SCOTT LEE and Lauren Holly star in *Dragon*, about the life of the film and martial arts legend Bruce Lee.

From a childhood of rigorous martial arts training, Bruce Lee (Jason Scott Lee – no relation) realises his dream of opening his own kung fu school in America. Before long, he is discovered by a Hollywood producer (Robert Wagner) and begins a meteoric rise to fame and an all-too-short reign as one of the most charismatic action heroes in film history.

Mystery surrounded the death of Bruce Lee at the age of 32 in 1973. When his 28-year-old son, Brandon Lee, died of an accidental gunshot wound on the set of *The Crow* a few months before the release of *Dragon*, conspiracy theories were fuelled about the 'curse' of Bruce Lee. *Dragon* is dedicated to Brandon Lee.



CURSE OF the Golden Flower is a stunning epic about the folly of war and the disintegration of one family under the weight of unrequited love, unforgivable betrayals, and a never-ending thirst for power, from the director of the stunning *Hero* and *House of Flying Daggers*, Zhang Yimou.

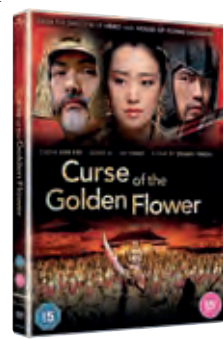
On the eve of the Chong Yong Festival, golden flowers fill the Imperial Palace and when the Emperor (Chow Yun Fat) unexpectedly returns to his Empress (Gong Li) and two sons, the tension is clear in his lavish kingdom.

His absence has given rise to illicit love affairs, dangerous alliances, and malicious conspiracies; all of which threaten to overthrow his power. However, it may well be the Emperor's own dark secret that

threatens him most of all.

As the secrets of the Imperial family unravel against this backdrop of breathtaking opulence and grandeur, an attack on the palace by myriad armoured warriors results in a spectacular climax of thrilling action and epic tragedy.

We have copies of *Dragon* and *Curse of the Golden Flower* on DVD to own. To be in with a chance of winning one, answer this question:



Who directed *Curse of the Golden Flower*?

Email your answer, marked DVDs competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to our usual competitions address – see p3 of the main paper, to arrive by February 12. Please

state on your entry if you prefer to win *Dragon* or *Curse of the Golden Flower* and add your postal address.

Israel's top fighter ace

HAWKEYE IS the autobiography of the top-scoring Israeli Air Force ace of aces, Brig Gen Giora Even-Epstein. He was nicknamed 'Hawkeye' because of his amazing vision of more than 20/15, enabling him to pick out enemy aircraft long before his squadron mates.

Born on an Israeli kibbutz in 1938, Giora flew fighters for the Israeli Air Force achieving recognition as a highly skilled military aviator and becoming the highest-scoring jet-mounted ace with the most number of confirmed victories in the French Mirage. Having overcome numerous hurdles just to learn how to fly, he went on to compile a record of Arab MiGs and Sukhoi kills that bettered any other combat aviators' tally.

This fast-moving autobiography details his experiences, particularly in the intense conflicts of 1967, the Six Day War, and 1973, the Yom Kippur War. The reader shares the cockpit with him as he describes every action he undertook with

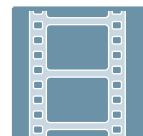
101 and 105 Sqn, including what's been described as the greatest jet-versus-jet air battle in history with four MiG-21 kills in one engagement. His final score was 17 aerial victories.

After his last battle he became commander of the First Jet Squadron, 117, began civilian flying, retrained to command 254 MMR Squadron in the 1982 Lebanon War and flew the F-16 aged 50 before retirement. Along the way he met numerous fighter pilot legends such as Douglas Bader, Al Deere, Pierre Clostermann and Randy Cunningham.

You could win a copy of this absorbing book. To enter, just tell us:

When was Giora Even-Epstein born?

Email your answer, marked Hawkeye competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to our usual competitions address – see p3 of the main paper, to arrive by February 12. Please add your full postal address.



Film Review

Freshman Year (12)

On digital release from February 19



BRIEF CONNECTION: Alex (right) with Maggie (Dylan Gelula)

ALEX IS in his first year of college, handsome and intelligent enough to get by, but his closest friend is a stuffed animal. Unable to connect with anyone, including his hedonistic roommate, he leaves parties to watch old family videos and feigns illness just to hear the voice of his mom over the phone.

Desperately homesick, moving from Texas to study in LA, Alex feels like a newborn baby but without the safety and warmth of his mother. This is what he tells Maggie (Dylan Gelula), a girl in the year above who has no such troubles, as they end up spending an impossibly long night together after both leaving a dorm party unfulfilled.

Finally having a moment of connection, Alex struggles to readjust and doesn't understand why Maggie then pretends that she doesn't know him.

Along with Bo Burnham's *Eighth Grade* and Olivia Wilde's *Booksmart*, it looks like we're going to have

A square peg in a round college hole

an indie film highlighting the pitfalls of each year in the American school system, all told from the perspective of the unsocial outsider. *Freshman Year* combines the themes of both of these debut features, looking at the party life of a college student but through the lens of someone struggling to adapt, and this it does with painful attention to realism.

Young Cooper Raiff writes, directs and stars as the ultra-sensitive Alex, impressively casting himself in an unflattering light, endearing at times but cringeworthy and self-pitying at others.

The interactions seem lived in, uncomfortably so. People mishear and misunderstand each other, and the silences stretch out in long takes. Youthful naivety is captured in essence through mumbled exchanges, ping-ponging between direct and deep questions and their swooping dismissal: "Did it affect you when your Dad died?... Death is ass."

Freshman Year is an impressive debut exploring the lesser seen college experience in its full awkward splendour.

4 out of five rounds

Review by Sam Cooney



PARTY POOPER: The socially-awkward freshman



TV
New series
Secrets of the
Museum, BBC2

Visit V&A
for a spot
of culture



HISTORIC: Leather despatch box owned
by Winston Churchill, 1921.
©V&A

THE BBC has announced
the return of *Secrets of the
Museum* following the popularity
of the first series shown last year.

At a time of national
lockdown, when the doors
to museums are shut, BBC
audiences are again invited into a
hidden world: behind the scenes
at the world-famous museum of
art, design and performance, the
V&A.

The series is part of the Beeb's
Culture In Quarantine initiative,
bringing arts and culture into the
homes of the nation.

Housing more than 2.3 million
objects that span over 5,000 years,
the V&A's collection ranges from
fashion to photography, sculpture
to ceramics, architecture to
theatre and performance.

Series two of the six-part
Secrets of the Museum will reveal
more of the objects and their
fascinating stories, as well as
some hidden gems not on display,
said the BBC.

The series will follow the work
of the curators, conservators
and technicians, whose job is to
preserve and care for priceless
objects.

Accompanying the V&A's
specialist teams, *Secrets of the
Museum* will reveal the tricks
of their trade: the painstaking
craftsmanship and expertise
involved in conserving, cleaning,
loaning, acquiring and displaying
some of the museum's objects.
They include Michelangelo's wax
models and Constable's sketches,
Winston Churchill's despatch
box and Vivien Leigh's attaché
case, costumes from Shirley
Bassey, Slade and the National
Theatre's production of *Follies*,
a 350-year-old doll's house
and contemporary pieces from
designers Molly Goddard and JW
Anderson.

Tristram Hunt, director of
the V&A, said: "At a time of
renewed lockdown and enforced
separation from our great
cultural centres, we are even more
delighted to invite audiences back
for another behind-the-scenes
look at the V&A."

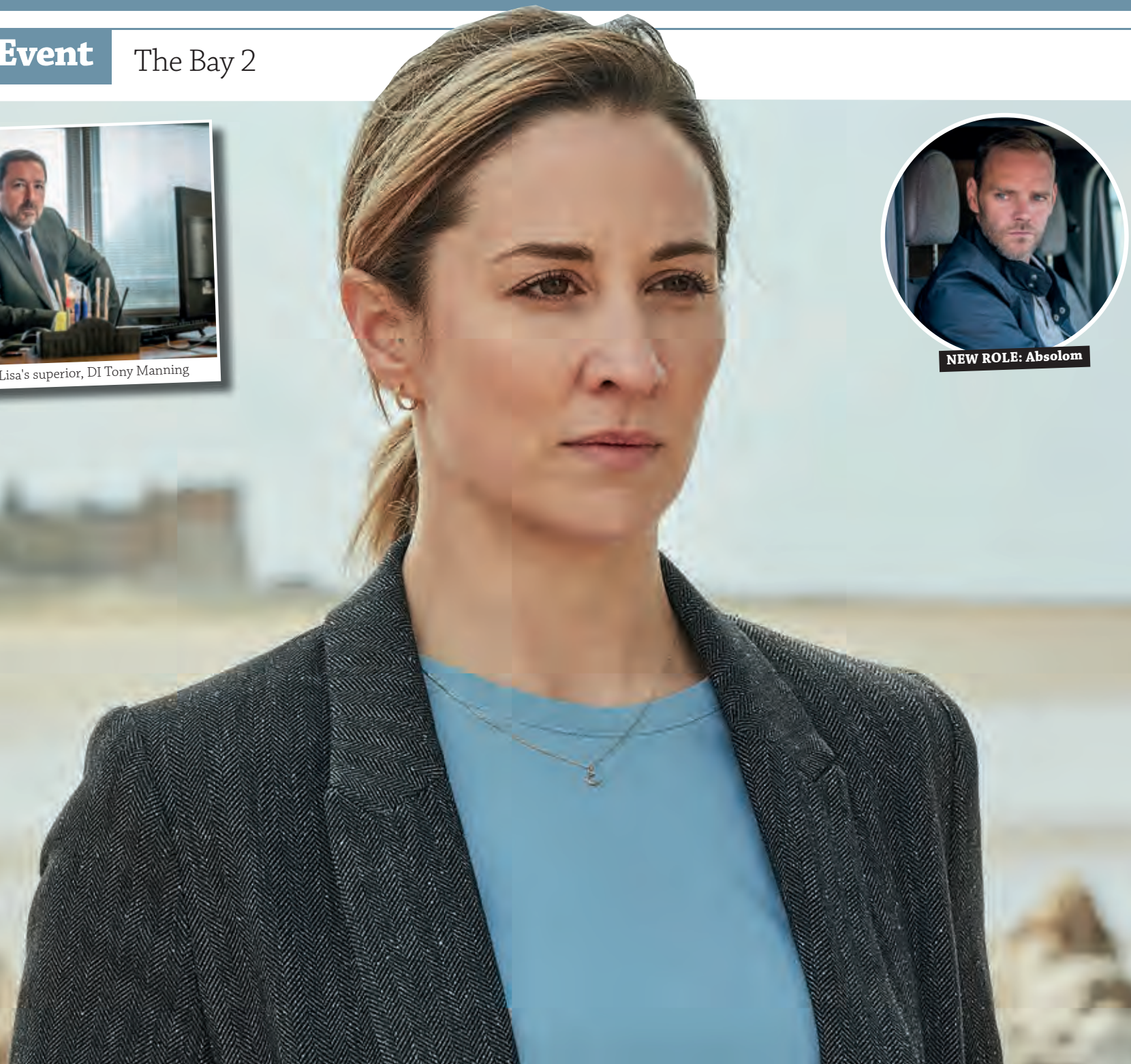
■ The series is due to be
broadcast in the spring. Series 1
of *Secrets of the Museum* can be
viewed now on BBC iPlayer.

The Big Event

The Bay 2



BOSS: Daniel Ryan as Lisa's superior, DI Tony Manning



NEW ROLE: Absolom

Demoted DS is all at sea in *The Bay*

MORVEN CHRISTIE is back as
police family liaison officer DS
Lisa Armstrong in the second
series of hit crime thriller *The Bay* on
ITV.

Armstrong (left) returns to Morecombe
Bay for a new case, after dealing with the
repercussions of her actions in series one.
She is given the opportunity to prove
herself when asked to assist a murder
investigation in the northern coastal town.

Reflecting on what made series one
such a success, executive producer
Catherine Oldfield said: "I think people
really connected to the world, the sense of
community and the characters as well as
the twists and turns of the investigation.
It's a very real show... *The Bay* feels like
somewhere you might live or you know
people who live in places like it."

Daniel Ryan reprises his role as DI Tony
Manning, with Taheen Modak (below)
returning as DC 'Med' Kharim, along with
the Armstrong family: Abbie (Imogen
King), Rob (Art Parkinson) and Penny
(Lindsey Coulson).

Joining the cast are some familiar
faces from TV drama including Stephen
Tompkinson, Sharon Small, James
Cosmo, Joe Absolom and Sunetra
Sarker.

Oldfield added: "We are exploring
a different part of Morecombe in the
crime story for series two – it's set in
a slightly more affluent part of town
than the previous series."

"This series focuses on a
new case that involves a family
who own and run a local
solicitors firm, headed up by

Bill (Cosmo) and Stephen (Tompkinson).

"We left Lisa in a bit of a state at the end
of series one and when we meet her again
she's still paying for her mistakes – she's
had to sell the house and is living in a small
flat with the kids. She's been demoted and
is no longer allowed to work as a FLO."

"There are real tensions in the police
team. She's definitely on the outside,
trying to prove her worth to reclaim the
trust and respect of Manning, Med and the
rest of her colleagues. However, her past is
about to reappear, throwing her home life
into turmoil."

Christie revealed: "Some of the things
that are often said to me about Lisa, about
her being complicated and flawed, feel like
it is unusual but the truth is every human
being is complicated and flawed."

"I feel we've suffered a little bit in TV
from female characters always having
to be one certain thing, so when they're
multi-layered, people aren't sure if they are
likeable."

"I like playing her because she's really
relatable. Lisa doesn't suffer fools, she's
very straightforward and she really, really
loves her kids."

"When she likes someone, when
she cares about someone, she really
cares about them. When someone's
annoying to her, she's really annoyed
by them. I like that. She's smart."

"Lisa is just a single mum who's
pushed her way through. She's made
some really heavy mistakes and
she's paying for it. She's in quite a
vulnerable place."

"She's got no money and
her professional life is in a

really precarious state because she's on
probation. There's doubt around whether
she'll ever be able to claw her way back up
to her previous role."

"She's tried to rebuild her relationship
with her children, which feels like it is on
the mend, but with the job that she has and
the time that takes up, that's always a little
bit delicate too."

She no longer has any of the things she
used to rely on. They've all been broken
down, so she's just a bit at sea and is trying
hard to get solid ground under her feet
again."

**“Lisa is like a comfy
outfit for me”**

She added: "The scripts are really
different this series. Series one was a lot
more character led. This year it feels more
crime led."

"There isn't anything quite like it on
TV – the characters in this show are quite
different. That was what always appealed
to me about it."

"It's also really nice to see Lisa trying to
redeem herself from some of the mistakes
she made and not necessarily succeeding
at that."

"It gets ever more complicated as new
elements are thrown in."

"Lisa is like a comfy outfit for me, when
I got the first scripts it was like sinking
back into an armchair."

■ *The Bay* series 2 continues on ITV at
9pm on Wednesdays.



DVDs
8 Mile
Fabulous Films Ltd/
Fremantle Media Ents

Eminem's
got awards
rapped up



Win!

RAPPER EMINEM won an
Oscar for his track *Lose
Yourself* for the film *8 Mile*
in which he stars with Kim
Basinger, Brittany Murphy and
Mekhi Phifer.

Directed by Academy Award-
winning producer/director Curtis
Lanson (*L.A. Confidential*) *8 Mile*
explores a week in the lives of a
group of young people struggling
to find their way in the urban
decay of 1995 Detroit.

For those like Jimmy 'Rabbit'
Smith Jr (Eminem) and his
friends, hip-hop is the only thing
standing between them and the
void.

Rabbit knows his ticket out
is through his rhymes, but to
succeed he has to channel his
anger into his lyrics and face the
showdown of his life.

Among numerous
nominations and wins, *8 Mile*
won the Academy Award for Best
Original Song for *Lose Yourself*
(beating Paul Simon and U2),
and making it the first hip-hop
song ever to receive the award.

Eminem won rave reviews
for his performance but it was
reported that he found the semi-
autobiographical role extremely
demanding, especially as he
appears in every scene. The film
was a reflection on his early
career.

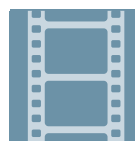
8 Mile is out on DVD and Blu-
ray on February 15, with extras
including the making of the film,
'Battle Rhyme for Real Time' –
Detroit MCs Take on Eminem,
plus never before seen freestyle
battle footage and an exclusive
Eminem Superman music video.

We have copies of *8 Mile* on
DVD up for grabs. To be in with
a chance of winning one, just tell
us:

Who directed *8 Mile*?

Email your answer, marked
8 Mile DVD competition, to:
competitions@rafnews.co.uk
or post it to: RAF News, Room
68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air
Command, High Wycombe,
HP14 4UE, to arrive by February
12.

Please remember to include
your full postal address. Entrants
must be over 18.



**Film
Help**

Out summer

Help's a tale of our lockdown times

NEW AWARD-WINNING
psychological thriller *Help* from
short film director Blake Ridder (*The
English Teacher, A Simple Robbery*)
was shot in just 12 days during
lockdown with a cast and crew of
only 20.

Set for release this summer, *Help*
follows Grace, who, after a painful
break-up, visits her friend Liv
who is living in the idyllic English
countryside with her boyfriend
Edward and his dog Polly. The trio
start the weekend in high spirits but
dark revelations soon plunge them
into chaos.

The film, starring a cast
including Louis James (Edward),
Emily Redpath (Grace) and Sarah
Alexandra Marks (Liv) – and a
cameo from Duncan James from
boyband Blue – is a New York Film
Festival 2020 award winner and also
scooped an award from the CKF
International Film Festival 2020.

Ridder said: "It still hasn't quite
sunk in yet that we made a film



VISIT: Grace (left), with Liv and Edward

Right, Duncan James has a cameo

during a lockdown two months ago,
and now it's ready for release. Not
only that, it's also getting so much
love from the festivals. It's a great
feeling. I can't wait for everyone to
see this. The film explores human
relationships in its rawest form."

"I wanted to tell a story about
something real and something that
I have experienced in my life, albeit

not to the extreme in
this film."

"From the get go,
I knew I wanted
this film to be a
very character-
driven story. So it
was important for
me to have every
character behave in a

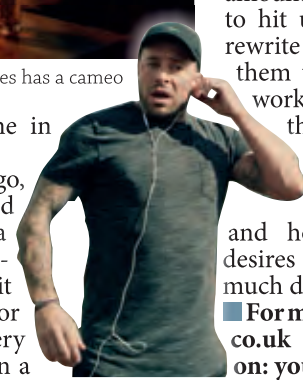
certain way with their own unique
weaknesses and traits."

Help was shot entirely in the UK,
so the team had to cope with the
challenges of the British climate.

James, also the film's producer,
explained: "Because of the micro-
budget we had [£40,000], time was
our enemy. We had several scenes
planned to be shot outdoors but a
few days into the production the
weather forecast predicted the worst
amount of rain of 2020 was about
to hit us, so Blake had to quickly
rewrite some of the scenes to make
them work indoors. In the end it
worked out so well that I liked
them even better."

Redpath said: "I hope
this film communicates the
intricacies of relationships
and how, if unaware, our base
desires can develop into something
much darker."

■ For more details go to: helpmovie.co.uk
and see the official trailer
on: [youtube.com/watch?v=xdfbvboYa2o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdfbvboYa2o)



**Music
Concerts**

Ibiza Classics, Olly Murs, Rick Astley

STAR DJ Pete Tong is due to
headline what's been described as
a hedonistic night of nostalgia when
he takes to the stage with The Heritage
Orchestra conducted by Jules Buckley
for the *Ibiza Classics* night.

The event, at Northampton's
Franklin's Gardens – the home of
rugby union team Northampton
Saints – on June 25, promises favourite
club tracks and fresh hits reimagined,
coupled with incredible visual effects
and the latest in music technology,
said its organisers.

Tong said: "I can't remember a
time when I was more excited and
looking forward to playing to the
people who will be coming to watch
Ibiza Classics at Franklin's Gardens.
After being locked down for over a
year that energy is going to blow the
place apart."

■ Go to: musicplussport.com
for tickets and sales@northamptonsts.co.uk
for information about hospitality
packages.



CONCERT HOPES: DJ Pete Tong on the decks, Murs (right) and Astley (inset)

FANS OF Olly Murs and Rick Astley
are also in for a treat this summer
– both are due to headline at the
Party in the Paddock at Newbury
Racecourse, on August 14 and

September 21 respectively.
Singer and TV
presenter Murs is set to
perform his biggest hits,
like *Heart Skips a Beat* and

Dance With Me Tonight as well as
tracks from his triple platinum
album *Never Been Better*. He will be
returning to the venue after his last
appearance there, in 2017, attracted
a 21,000-strong crowd.

Astley will be visiting Newbury
Racecourse for the first time, during
the Dubai Duty Free International
Weekend.

In 2019 he completed a massive
38-date stadium tour as special guest
of Take That, playing to more than
500,000 people. The *Never Gonna
Give You Up* singer who had 40
million sales in the Eighties, then
shot back to number 1 almost 30
years later with a new album
after a career break to focus
on his family, has also starred
on the main stage of Reading
Festival performing with one
of the world's biggest rock
bands, Foo Fighters.

■ Go to: newburyracecourse.co.uk
for details.

Hope it doesn't go Pete Tong



Your Announcements

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

Deaths

MILLIGAN David WO (Ret'd) passed away peacefully on January 16 from a short fight against cancer. David will be sadly missed by his wife, son and daughter. His three grandchildren will sadly miss him too. David served as a mess manager around Britain and also in Cyprus and Gibraltar.

PICKEN Keith MBE, ex Chief Technician formerly of Newcastle Under Lyme passed away peacefully on Wednesday, January 13, aged 61. A much loved and loving husband, dad, son and brother Keith will be sadly missed. The funeral service will take place at Fenland Crematorium, March, Cambridgeshire on Monday, February 8 at 3.30pm. No flowers by request but donations in Keith's memory are for the Stroke Association and Diabetes UK and can be made on the day or sent c/o Swearers Funeral Services, Blenheim Road, Ramsey Road, Ramsey, Cambridgeshire, PE26 1AL. Tel: 01487 812239

WILLIAMS, Ken, Flight Sergeant (Ret'd) of Grantham, Lincolnshire on January 14 at Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham, aged 81. Husband of Liz, father to Richard and Alun and



FS Ken Williams

grandfather of Victoria, James, Holly and Emma. Ken joined the RAF in 1955 when he was 16. He joined as

a Boy Entrant at RAF Halton (81st Entry). After passing out in 1958, he had a long career during which time he served at RAF Valley, RAF El Adem (1960), RAF Little Rissington (1962), RAF Seletar (1969), RAF Changi (1970), RAF Lyneham (1971), RAF Kemble (1975), RAFC Cranwell (1978), RAF Kinloss (1983) and RAF Sealand (1987). He retired in 1995 after 39 years' proud service. He will be sadly missed, but now at peace.

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. Email: peterpriscott@aol.com or call: 01842 878554.

RAF Bawdsey Reunion Association. Due to the coronavirus pandemic we regrettably had to cancel the annual reunion last summer. We have provisionally

planned the next reunion for Saturday, June 5, and look forward to seeing our friends again then. In the meantime we wish you all a safe and healthy time during this unprecedented period. If you have any queries please email: doreen.bawdseyreunion@btinternet.com or call: 07513 301723.

Apprentices' Assoc

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

Admin Association

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

Catering Association

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

Take part in global charity challenge

THE RAF Museum has launched a new virtual challenge, where participants can choose whether to complete 80K, 150K or 500K.

Registrations for the Lancaster Challenge opened earlier this month, 80 years since the first test flight of the Avro Lancaster.

Participants of the Challenge can walk, run, hike, swim, cycle or row their way to the finish line. They will have access to a downloadable log sheet to record their distance, before being rewarded with an exclusive, Lancaster Challenge medal after the challenge closes on May 17, the anniversary of Operation Chastise, better known as the Dambusters Raid, said the event's organiser.

As a virtual race, the Lancaster Challenge can be completed anywhere in the world. Within the first 48 hours of registrations opening, more than 1,850 people signed up with entries from around the globe including Australia, New Zealand, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, Canada, America, Singapore and Thailand. More than 400 Armed Forces personnel are already taking part.

RAF Museum London public events manager Ella Hewitt said: "The Lancaster

Challenge was due to start on March 2, 79 years since the Lancaster's first mission with the RAF, but we want to keep people motivated and moving in lockdown, so you can begin the challenge as soon as you sign up.

"Participants can select



the distance to suit their ability and complete the challenge at any time, anywhere, individually, or with members of their household bubble. It is open to participants of all ages, but we recommend under 16s are accompanied by an adult."

RAF Museum CEO Maggie Appleton (pictured above) said: "During these difficult times, looking after our mental and physical health is important for us all. Key to planning our recovery

during the next few months is that we concentrate more than ever on looking after ourselves and each other and that is why we are encouraging all our staff to take time out of their day, while working from home, to get outdoors and enjoy some daily exercise.

"Our staff will be leading the way by participating in the Lancaster Challenge and we hope families, participants from our previous challenge events, along with our friends in the RAF and partner organisations will join us. Support from our challengers enables us to keep the doors of our museums open for all generations to enjoy."

Participants can stay connected as they complete the Challenge by joining the RAF Museum Virtual Running Group on Facebook. You can meet other challengers, share your progress and ask fellow participants for advice. However you choose to complete the challenge, the museum says it would love to hear from you. Tag @rafmuseum in your photos on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram or with #LancasterChallenge2021.

■ To register for the Lancaster Challenge visit rafmuseum.org. Entry is £20 per person and all proceeds will go towards supporting the RAF Museum.

Wellbeing workshops for partners

A NEW series of online workshops aimed at supporting the partners of RAF personnel is to be launched next month.

The RAF Benevolent Fund's Thrive programme, which provides a range of courses aimed at helping spouses overcome employment challenges, will begin with 'developing courage' on February 4, teaching participants how to boost their confidence and self-belief.

Lauren Cooper, the Fund's welfare programmes coordinator, said: "We are inviting RAF partners or spouses who would

like to overcome personal challenges to sign up to the Thrive workshops."

Research carried out by the Fund found that identifying what they want to achieve and the appropriate routes to do it are the main employment challenges for the partners of serving RAF personnel rather than a lack of job experience or qualifications, CV writing skills or interview practice.

The second workshop course, due to start on March 11, will focus on 'goal setting'. The Thrive programme aims to help RAF partners overcome these barriers by increasing their self-

belief, boosting their skillset and employability, exploring alternatives to paid employment, improving wellbeing and emotional resilience, and reducing social isolation.

RAF spouse Charlie Whitford has benefitted from the programme. She said: "The Thrive workshops looked really, really good - something to help RAF spouses find their own value and self-worth, leading to better employment prospects. I found the whole course really useful."

■ Go to: rafbf.org/thrive for more information about the 90-minute workshops.

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

Remarkable life of service

WORLD WAR II veteran Vera King, who worked for Lord Mountbatten in Ceylon, has celebrated her 100th birthday.

Vera served for six years in the WAAF, joining in 1939.

David Hewings, secretary of the RAF Association's Bognor Regis branch, said: "Having exceptionally fast shorthand skills, Vera's services were much in demand and her repeated applications for overseas service were always declined. After D-Day, in September 1944, Vera made another

application which was immediately accepted.

"At RAF West Kirby, she joined a draft being prepared to go by sea to the South East Asia sector. Following interviews, Vera and a girl from the Women's Royal Navy Service were selected to fly out to Ceylon, in advance of the main party.

"They, two Servicemen and two war correspondents were given exclusive use of Lord Louis Mountbatten's – then Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia – personal aircraft, an Avro York. As the aircraft's identity was known by the staging airfields en route, they were always treated to a red carpet reception, even though Lord Mountbatten was not on board."

He added: "There the girls joined Lord Mountbatten's staff, taking dictation from him and the senior officers at the SEA Allied Forces Headquarters. Their duties included typing signals, reports and even some of his personal letters to 'My dear Cousin Bertie', King George VI, and others.

"Following the capitulation of the Japanese forces, Lord Mountbatten moved his headquarters to Singapore. Vera was responsible for packing up the furniture and equipment and sending them on before she returned to the UK."

After leaving the WAAF in 1945, Vera worked for an airline based at Speke Airport in Liverpool that was eventually absorbed into British European Airways.

On moving to Bognor Regis, she joined the local RAF Association branch and was a founder member of its WAAFs group, continuing to be its driving force until it disbanded in 2017, the year she received the badge recognising her 60 years of membership of the Association.

David said: "Covid-19 restrictions prevented the branch from celebrating her birthday as we would have wished. We will certainly be making amends when the restrictions are lifted. Vera remains one of our most respected and loved members."



BIRTHDAY GIRL: Vera King



Please help save fire museum

A PLEA has gone out to help find a new home for the Museum of RAF Firefighting – or it could be closed and its collection sold.

Chris Bradley from the museum said it now has to vacate its current home in Scunthorpe because the premises, owned by a used car dealership, are up for sale.

It will be the museum's fourth move in three years since it had to vacate RAF Scampton in 2017.

Chris said: "Sadly, some of the vehicles are rotting away outside now as we have nowhere to put them. Ideally, we would like a new home in Lincolnshire as the 40 plus volunteers mainly live locally.

"If we don't find anywhere soon, there is a chance the collection will have to be sold off and history will be lost."

The museum was started by former RAF firefighter Steve Shirley after his wife presented him with a model fire engine when he passed out from his initial training 36 years ago.

When he retired from the Air Force as a Warrant Officer Steve had amassed more than 50 military and civilian fire vehicles – the world's largest collection – ranging from Victorian to modern day models.

Chris added: "It is a priceless collection, with some sole survivors and prototypes with restored wartime vehicles which saw service during the D-Day landings and the Blitz."

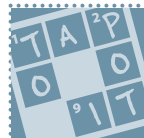
■ If you can help the museum find a new home please contact Chris or Steve via its website: firemuseum.uk or call: 015227 30198.

United Kingdom Special Forces



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

R'n'R



Prize Crossword

No. 289

Solve the crossword, then rearrange the 10 letters in yellow squares to find an aircraft

Across

6. See 14 Across
7. Red-blooded Scotsman has laugh (5)
9. And 19 Across. In other words a Chinook... in other words, a Chinook (5,5)
10. Hood's sport (7)
12. Knowing opponents? (4-7)
14. And 6 Across. Other figure changed by wind from plane (11,7)
18. Crestfallen at a party for newspaperman (7)
19. See 9 Across
21. See 20 Down
22. Military intelligence illuminated artificial intelligence back in force (7)

Down

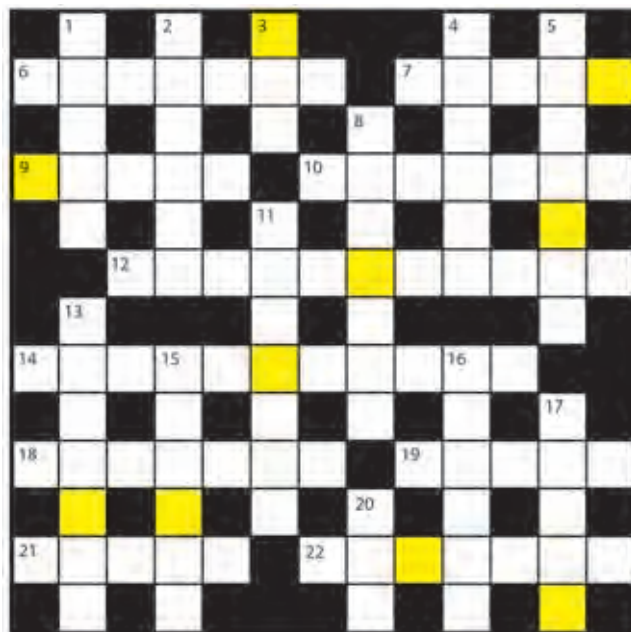
1. Poet goes past Weasley (5)
2. Necklace worn by faltering competitor? (6)
3. In Tupelo, Walter was depressed (3)
4. At beginning of month actor reaches station (6)
5. Cleaner Reginald returns horse (7)
8. Sounds like chocolate bar is pleasantly crisp (7)
11. Liverish, I leave upsetting shrink (7)
13. Small creature, big creature, right pain (7)
15. Crazy story has point about shellfish (6)
16. Once nothing, jerk becomes flamboyant (6)
17. What a gaggle becomes in flight (5)
20. And 21 Across. Acrid tea spilled by RAF aspirant (3,5)

Name

Address

RAF aircraft..... Crossword No. 289

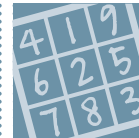
The winners of Prize Crossword 288 and Prize Su Doku 298 will be published in our February 12 edition. Send entries to the address printed in the Su Doku panel opposite.



■ The winner of Crossword No. 287 is Mr K Pentecost of Co Durham.

Solution to Crossword No. 288:

Across – 1. U-boat 4. Biretta 8. Dead End 9. Bombe 10. Raid 11. Beriberi 13. Beer 14. Jest 16. Rap Music 17. Pair 20. Award 21. Croatia 22. Everest 23. Beast
Down – 1. Undercarriage 2. Okapi 3. Trek 4. Badger 5. Rabbit 6. Tempest 7. Amelia Earhart 12. Befuddle 13. Biplane 15. Big Cat 18. Astra 19. Bomb
RAF station – Mount Pleasant

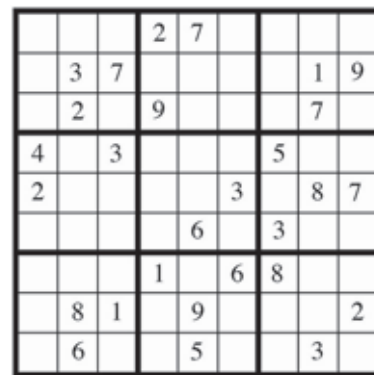


Prize Su Doku

No. 299

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 February 12.



Name

Address

..... Su Doku No. 299

Solution to Su Doku No: 298



■ The winner of Su Doku No. 298 is Mr TLD Williams of Llantwit Major, Vale of Glamorgan.



Passenger

Sword from the Stone (Gingerbread Mix)

New single and UK tour



PASSENGER:
Helped by the
pop superstar
Ed Sheeran

Passenger's Sheer joy

BRITISH SINGER-songwriter Passenger – aka Mike Rosenberg – has released a special single version of *Sword from the Stone (Gingerbread Mix)*, produced by his good mate Ed Sheeran. It's the opening track of Passenger's acclaimed new album *Songs for the Drunk and Broken Hearted*.

The album was originally due to be released in May last year, but when the global pandemic turned the world upside down, Rosenberg decided it wasn't quite finished – he took off a few songs and added three new ones, including *Sword from the Stone*.

He said: "I'm so excited about this one. It's that cliché that you make your most poignant work when you're having a bit of a hard time. I have played it to friends and family, to people in the

industry, to other musicians, and it seems to resonate across the board. I genuinely think it's had the best reaction of any song I've ever written."

He added: "Ed was really excited about the song when I played it to him and suggested that he produce a version that could potentially work as a radio single. It's not every day you have that kind of offer from a pop genius, and I'm so delighted with what he and Joe [co-producer Joe Rubel] have come up with. It has been such a fun one to work on."

Passenger's rescheduled tour dates for 2021, starting in Belfast on August 26, include a headline show at the London O2 Brixton Academy on September 8.

● Go to: passengermusic.com for tour details.



Music

Midge Ure & Band Electronica

2022 UK tour



Ure all the Rage, Midge



URE: Tour dates

FORMER ULTRAVOX frontman Midge Ure has announced a major 26-date tour with Band Electronica for 2022.

The *Voice and Visions* tour will feature highlights from the Ultravox albums *Rage in Eden* and *Quartet*, plus Ure's solo hits.

Ultravox, whose 1981 hit *Vienna* brought them global success, recorded *Rage in Eden*, their second album, in the same year and *Quartet*, their third album with Ure, in 1982 with production from legendary Beatles producer George Martin. It became their third Top 10 album, featuring four Top 20 singles including *Hymn*.

The *Voice & Visions* tour kicks off at York's historic Grand Opera House on February 22, 2022, visiting 26 cities across the UK before culminating at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall on April 2. The 2022 tour news follows the overwhelming response to Ure and Band Electronica's 'The 1980 Tour' in 2019.

Ure said: "I can't begin to tell you how great it feels to be back out touring after the uncertainty of the past two years and it is especially exciting to delve back in time and revitalise two standout albums from my career, *Rage in Eden* and *Quartet*. This is the logical and emotional follow up to the 1980 tour."

■ Go to: midgeure.gigantic.com and venue box offices for ticket details.

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

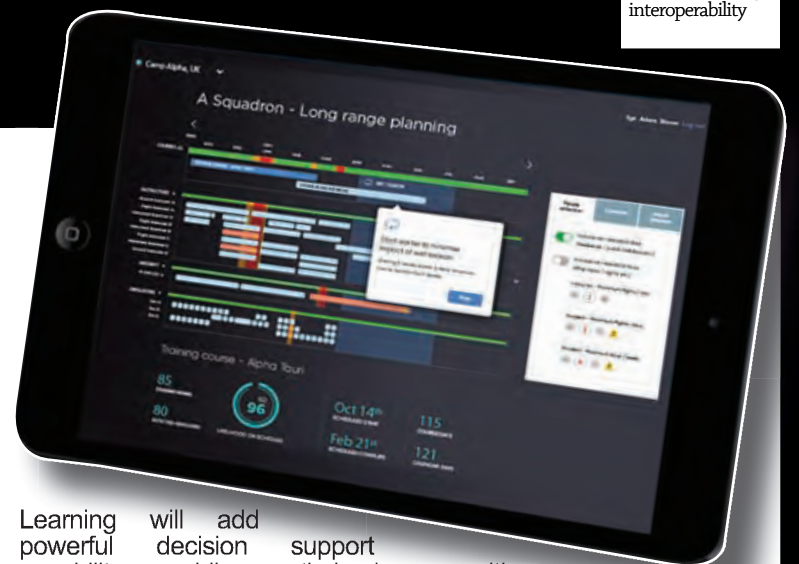
far broader capability to address the burgeoning need for an Integrated Base Management Solution (IBMS).

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.

Win!

Jet Man

Feature

Frank Whittle: Blessed with a brain quite out of the ordinary

FRANK WHITTLE was a man ahead of his time. But despite having been an engineering genius, a pioneer who invented the turbojet engine, after World War II he was invalided out of the RAF, his health destroyed at the age of just 40, a broken man.

In *Jet Man*, his fascinating biography of Whittle (headofzeus.com), Duncan Campbell-Smith tells the moving story of the talented maverick, described as 'a self-taught aeronautical obsessive and risk-takingly brilliant RAF pilot' who

suffered the frustration of seeing his ground-breaking project repeatedly unrecognised by the British government until it was too late to play a major part in the war.

In the book, subtitled *The Making And Breaking of Frank Whittle, Genius of the Jet Revolution*, the author reveals a highly driven, single-minded young man. Campbell-Smith said: "His drive to launch a successful jet plane, at first to fulfil a youthful vision and then to help vanquish Hitler's Germany, quickly became... all-consuming."

"He had virtually no social life after 1943, few if any friends beyond his immediate circle of colleagues at work, no significant other interests except flying and almost nothing to distract him from his pursuit of the jet save the demands (and these all too constrained) of his immediate family. He was on a mission, after all, to change the world."

"Many of the young graduates who rallied to his cause during the war cherished their memories of working with him for the rest of their lives"

Campbell-Smith portrays a complex, sometimes difficult, man. He said: "Whittle's slightly elusive character was part of what so intrigued many colleagues and forged friendships that lasted a lifetime."



OBSESSION: Air Cdre Frank Whittle eyes model jets on his desk at Brownsover Hall, post war

He added: "Many of the young graduates who rallied to his cause during the war cherished their memories of working with him for the rest of their lives."

"All who knew him well could agree, above all, that he was blessed (and sometimes burdened) with a

brain quite out of the ordinary."

Whittle retired from the RAF in 1948 as an Air Commodore. He was knighted that year and moved to America to work as a research professor at the US Naval Academy at Annapolis. Despite being a heavy smoker, he lived until the age of 89.



Story of a genius

WE HAVE copies of the book to win. For your chance to own one, simply answer the following question correctly: **What rank was Frank Whittle when he retired from the RAF?**

Email your answer, marked Jet Man 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 February 12. Please remember to include your full postal address with your entry.

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Obituary

Air Cdre Tom Bennett CBE

AIR COMMODORE TOM BENNETT, who has died aged 91, flew in support of an RAF detachment gathering air samples over the Pacific.

He later served in helicopters during the Malayan Emergency, in Northern Ireland and in Hong Kong.

Bennett graduated with the first post-war entry at the RAF College Cranwell and initially served on Hastings squadrons.

In January 1954, a high priority requirement arose to support a US nuclear test programme at the Bikini Atoll in the Pacific. Two Canberra aircraft, equipped to gather air samples, flew to Kwajalein Island in the Marshall Islands, situated 200 miles south of the test site. To support these two aircraft, and carry ground personnel and spares, three Hastings transport aircraft of 511 Squadron were tasked, one flown by Bennett.

The aircraft left their UK bases on February 14, 1954 and arrived nine days later having routed through the Far East and Australia. On the flight from Darwin to Townsville, Bennett's crew suffered from food poisoning. Fortunately, a Canberra pilot was amongst the passengers and was able to assist. Bennett recovered sufficiently to make the landing at Townsville.

“It was a fairly unusual trip”

On the final leg from Momote to Kwajalein, the engines overheated and most of the flight was flown on two of the four engines. Bennett commented: “It was a fairly unusual trip.”

Over the next 10 weeks, the US authorities carried out six nuclear tests and the Canberras collected air samples. A proportion of these were allocated to the British and Bennett and his crew then took them to Darwin for onward delivery to the UK for evaluation.

In the middle of May the test programme was complete and the Hastings and Canberras returned to their UK bases.

After attending CFS, he served at Cranwell as a flying instructor on the Balliol and then the Vampire.

In 1956 he opted to transfer to helicopters and in 1957 left for Kuala Lumpur and joined 155 Squadron to fly the Whirlwind during the Malayan Emergency.

He provided transport and casualty evacuation support for the Army and local police for their jungle operations against the Communist terrorists.

On return to Britain Bennett completed a guided weapons

Former RAF Commander in Hong Kong



HONOUR: Bennett (right) greets Prince Charles

course in 1960 before serving as the training officer on the Bloodhound ground-to-air missile.

In 1962 he volunteered for loan service with the Sudan Air Force, training pilots and paratroops on Dakota and Fokker F27 aircraft based at Khartoum.

On return, he commanded the operations wing at Lyneham during the Comet/Britannia/Hercules era.

In late 1969 he started a four-year period at the MoD, where he had responsibility for the development and introduction into service of the Puma helicopter.

His extensive experience in transport support and helicopter operations led to his appointment as Officer Commanding the operations wing at Aldergrove,

near Belfast. His two years in the troubled province coincided with extensive operations in support of the security forces.

The resident Wessex helicopter squadron and detachments of UK-based squadrons were vital for the success of many operations, particularly those near the border. At the end of his tour Bennett was appointed OBE.

After a further period in MoD, he was posted in January 1979 to Hong Kong as the RAF Commander where a Wessex squadron was based at Sek Kong to provide internal security, transport support and a rescue capability.

In the summer of 1981 he returned to MoD as an Air

Commodore in the post of Director of Quartering.

At the time, Bennett and his staff were occupied with works services and major upgrades of the RAF's airfields and establishments. At the beginning of April 1982, his attention had to be redirected to support the Falklands War.

The relatively bare base on Ascension Island became key to the whole operation as the forward operating base. There was an immediate requirement to enhance the facilities at Wideawake Airfield, including accommodation, technical and support facilities and storage.

After the recapture of the Falkland Islands there was an urgent need to provide essential

services to support the arrival of units deployed to the islands. Throughout this period it was necessary for Bennett to deal with higher levels of the other services and with other government departments.

He was described by his Air Marshal – a member of the Air Force Board – as, “an inspiration to his staff who has brought the greatest credit to his Service in the eyes of all who with whom he has had dealings.” For these services, Bennett was advanced to CBE. He retired in 1983.

He was the chairman of the committee of No 1349 (Woking) Squadron of the Air Training Corps and a strong supporter of the Aircrew Association, being the chairman of the Woking Branch.

Eleanor Wadsworth

Obituary



Spitfire Girl Eleanor was years ahead of her time

Pilot and ATA comrades trailblazers for equality

ELEANOR WADSWORTH, who has died aged 103, was the last surviving female pilot living in Britain who flew during World War II. She was one of 166 females who flew with the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA).

She was working as an assistant architect on the construction of new facilities for the ATA at White Waltham when a notice appeared seeking more pilots. Later in life she commented: "The thought of learning to fly for free was a great incentive [so] I put my name down and didn't think much about it."

Her application was successful and she was amongst the first six accepted from those who had no previous flying experience.

She joined in June 1943 and began her training at Thame, near Aylesbury, and went solo after 15 hours flying time. Her first task was to fly the 'air taxi', an aircraft used to shuttle pilots to factories and airfields to deliver aircraft and then return them to their parent airfield. As she gained more experience, she began delivering aircraft to squadrons.

On a delivery flight in December 1943 she ferried a Fairy Swordfish. Trussed up in her Irvin jacket in the open cockpit it took four days to get through very bad weather staging through three airfields before arriving at Machrihanish on the Mull of Kintyre.

In February 1944 she had gained sufficient experience to fly fighter aircraft and first flew a Hurricane in March. After delivering a number from the Hawker factory at Langley she progressed to the Spitfire, which she flew for the first time on May 18.

By July she was flying twin-engine aircraft.

On one occasion she was flying a single-engine Fairchild Argus to collect a crew after they had delivered a Lancaster bomber. Just after take-off, a piston failed and flew through the engine cowling. Reacting quickly, she immediately turned for the airfield and made a safe emergency cross-wind landing.

From October 1944 she was based at Ratcliffe near Leicester. In one month she flew 10 different types of aircraft including 20 Spitfires. The aircraft was her favourite: "It was so perfect to handle, just lovely and flew like you would want it to. [They had a] beautiful, throbbing engine in the front."

"It was so responsive, light to the touch. Like a beautiful sports car really."

In April 1945 she delivered a Spitfire Mk.V AR501 from Ratcliffe to Catfoss, near Scarborough. This aircraft is now based at the Shuttleworth Collection at Old Warden and recently completed a long-term restoration to fly.

Eleanor had the photo of 501 as she is today proudly placed in her logbook.

She left the ATA as a Third Officer in September 1945 having flown 600 hours on 22 different types of aircraft.

Eleanor was particularly proud that "We were the first to get equal pay for equal work. We were years ahead of our time in what we did but also how we were paid like for like."

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: "It was ordinary people doing extraordinary things that defeated fascism and we should never forget Eleanor's example and achievements."



MEMORIES: Eleanor with logbook



HM Government

NHS

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Sport

5 pages of **RAF Sport** start here

● **Stephens battles on for Olympic dream: p30-31**

RUGBY

Covid hits both codes

SERVICE RUGBY Union and League associations suffered a double set of Covid setbacks this week, as the Inter-Services and Challenge Cup involvement were both cancelled.

RAF rugby league, along with its sister Service teams and amateur sides, didn't feature in this year's Coral Challenge Cup first round draw, which only involved professional teams.

The move followed an announcement from the sport's governing body this week. The RAF has played in the Cup 22 times.

Chf Tech Garry Dunn, RAF men's team head coach, said: "It's disappointing, however understandable that the military sides, along with the top amateur clubs, will not be invited to participate in the Cup this year."

“We were looking forward to having the chance to retain our IS champions title”

“It's a great honour for us to compete in the competition, it allows us to tap into the heritage and spirit of it.”

Dunn's charges narrowly lost 10-18 to Bentley ARLFC at RAF Cosford in the 2020 first round, the team's last game.

He added: “Unfortunately, the Covid situation has forced the hand of the sport's governing body.”

The announcement of the first cancellation of the rugby union Inter-Services championship since World War II was also made by the sports management committees this week.

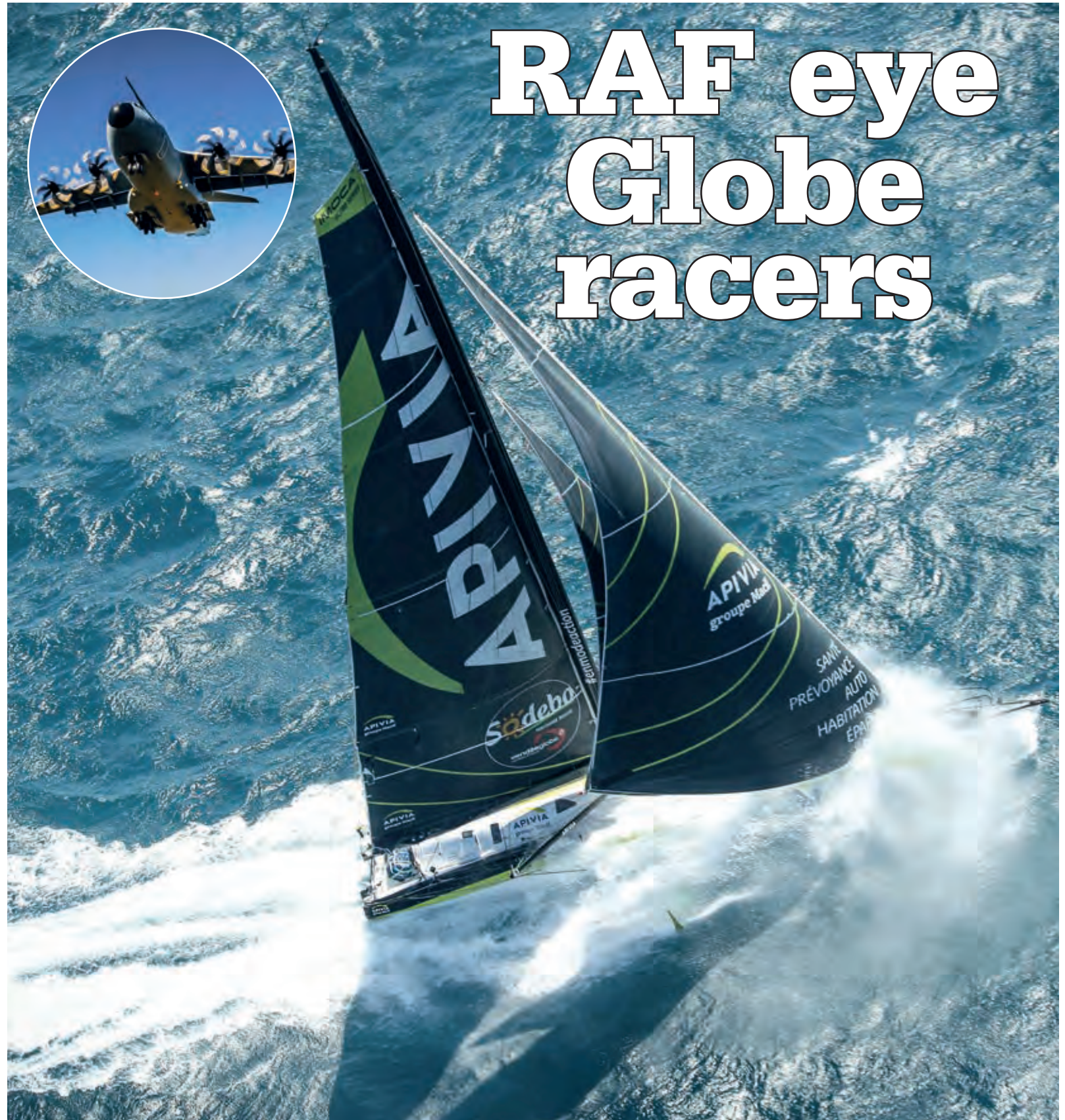
A joint Service statement read: “After considerable deliberation, we have made the collective and unanimous decision to cancel the 2021 competition. The heavy hearts which accompany such a decision will be understandable.

“By making the decision now we can instead turn our attention towards putting together an outstanding 2021/22 Inter-Services Championship.”

RAF women's team captain Sqn Ldr Chrissy Siczowa said: “We're obviously disappointed as we were looking forward to having the chance to retain our IS champions title. From here we'll be looking to build towards next year.”

● Continued on page 31

SAILING



SAFE AND SOUND: Brit Charlie Dalin's yacht Apivia; inset, RAF A400M

PHOTOS: CPL PHIL DYE - BFSAI/CPL LEE MATTHEWS JADTEU

Daniel Abrahams HQ Air Command

A PAIR of yachts competing in the Vendée Globe yacht race were given the RAF treatment recently as an RAF A400M monitored their journeys and made contact near the Falklands.

The flight from British Forces South Atlantic Islands (BFSAI), co-piloted by Flt Lt Rob Daniell, was on Maritime Routine Reconnaissance (MRR) in the Falkland Conservation Zone (FCZ) during which the crew sighted the Apivia and Omia-Water Family, both competing in the Vendée race.

A400M crew say hello below

Utilising the A400M capabilities, the aircraft and its crew were able to locate, observe and communicate with both vessels in the round the world, non-stop and unassisted solo race, held every four years.

Apivia, captained by Charlie Dalin, a Southampton University alumni and the Omia-Water Family, captained by Benjamin Dutreaux, were in second and sixth place respectively on day 58 of the race.

Flt Lt Daniell said: “From a personal aspect, this was a fantastic opportunity during my first operational tour of the Falkland Islands.

“It also enabled our crew to practise our maritime patrol and search procedures on a small, fast-moving craft.

“Making radio contact with Charlie and Benjamin was a great privilege and I wish them all the best for the remainder of the gruelling race.”

Sport

MOTORSPORTS

Plans Hatched



Final round sees spills, now time to plan for next season

Daniel Abrahams
HQ Air Command

MORE BAD luck struck the RAF Regular and Reserve BSB team during the final round of the championship at Brands Hatch.

After a paltry seven points for the Service team, manager Lee Hardy is now looking to the future to ensure his charges produce the results of which he knows they are capable.

A crash and mechanical issues ruined their final hurrah when both riders had been looking good for more top 10 finishes and Championship points.

The final Donington Park Circuit points tally had seen the duo of Ryan Vickers and Jack Kennedy secure 15th, on 45, and 17th, on 27 points respectively.

Vickers' Brands Hatch spill saw him remain in 15th, while Kennedy secured another seven points to rise one place in the final standings for the year.

The team had seen the last run in to their season blighted, not only by the Covid-19 pandemic, but by a series of crashes and mechanical issues.

“I would never have thought I would be seeing the season end in the middle of a pandemic”

The final round went the same way, as Vickers crashed out during qualifying, breaking his collar bone, leaving Kennedy as the sole representative.

Sadly, for him and the team, the demanding West Kingsdown track saw his Kawasaki develop

mechanical issues in the shape of an arm pump.

This forced him to retire from two of the weekend's races, acquiring seven points from his single completed outing.

Manager Hardy said: “When things began last year, I would never have thought I would be seeing the season end in the middle of a pandemic, but that's where we are.

“The team, event and

championship organisers worked extremely hard to see things through. For us, we had come out of the previous round with a mixed

bag, Vickers had secured a fifth place before crashing out in the next race, while Kennedy had come home seventh.

“Now after Brands we have to focus on next season and the plans are already in place and we will be announcing them very soon.

“So it's an exciting time for all involved in RAF Regular and Reserves.”

Follow the team on Twitter @RAF_Recruitment and @OfficialBSB.

INTO THE FUTURE:

Top and left, Kennedy shows his pace during a tough final BSB championship round at Brands Hatch

PHOTOS: TIM KEETON - IMPACT IMAGERY PHOTOGRAPHY



Sport

CRICKET



FIRING ON ALL CYLINDERS: Action from the RAF cricket match against the Honourable Artillery Company

PHOTO: SAC CONNOR TIERNEY

RAIN AND Covid may have stopped play, but the cricket association didn't let an entire season slip through its hands, holding a series of fixtures and an overseas tour.

The year began with RAF Cricket Association (RAFCA) players touring India and Sri Lanka under the UK Armed Forces Cricket Men's XI squad banner.

The tour provided the opportunity to play first-class sides in both countries, along with the team conducting International Defence Engagement with Commonwealth Nations and outreach projects.

Wg Cdr Emma Watkins said: "The cricket was hard-fought but, ultimately, the sheer class of the home sides playing in home conditions prevailed.

"With the onset of the pandemic, domestic cricket across the UK was obviously put on hold, and many wondered if there would be any play at all over the season.

"Thankfully, RAFCA Men's

Cricket on a roll

Covid-hit season still provided thrills and wins

XI were able to complete fixtures during the months of August and September – with all of them conducted with strict safety practices.

"In total seven fixtures were made possible thanks to the commitment, flexibility and energy of the management, coaches, players, officials and support staff within RAFCA and our opposition clubs. Wins against the MCC, Honourable Artillery Company, Northumbria Police and United Hospitals being the highlights."

RAF XI manager Sqn Ldr Jimmy Iago described the dominant seven-wicket, season opening win over the MCC as 'a great return to cricket'.

The follow-up match against the

Honourable Artillery Company was a harder-fought tie with just seven runs being the margin of victory.

After the team's successful day at Finsbury Barracks, they were invited to a three-way T20 competition at Tickhill CC against the Fire Service and Northumbria/Durham Police.

The Fire Service came out victorious by 33 runs over the Service side, but in the second game the RAF triumphed by 63 runs.

Success continued to come against the United Hospitals team at Vine Lane, Uxbridge, with a seven-wicket win.

The season concluded at Vine Lane, with two tough contests and

the visiting Free Foresters coming out on top.

Senior team coach Wg Cdr Stuart Bradford said: "It was great to see our captain, Flt Lt Adam Fisher, take a leading role and our bowlers show improvement in every game.

"We still have areas to improve on and the guys have a great opportunity to develop, setting us in good stead for the year ahead.

"Looking forward, the focus is on encouraging and supporting players to train individually and safely during the off-season, and to be ready for a return to cricket in 2021."

■ Follow RAF cricket on Twitter [@rafcricket](#).

FUNDRAISING



WOD is the way

ON THE hour, every hour, for 12 hours was the RAFRU Women Senior XV mantra as they stormed through the WOD'athon charity event.

WOD stands for 'Workout of the Day' and comprises a gruelling set of cross fit exercises to be completed in a set time.

The challenge is deemed tough to complete once, but the RAF girls completed it 12 times over a 12-hour period to raise money for the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Sgt Ben Brook, pictured above with Fg Off Hollie Wilkinson, the RAFRUW Strength and Conditioning coach, was the man pushing his charges to the limit.

He said: "The season has been a complete write-off for the players and with us based all around the country we have not had the opportunity to come together and train.

"This was the perfect way to bring everyone together."

The challenge was open to the military and civilians, with some athletes joining for an hour while others pushed themselves for the whole 12 hours.

Sgt Brook provided the workouts with 'special guest' sessions from Army Rugby Union and another of the RAFRUW's sponsors, SecureCloud+.

RAFRUW player SAC (T) Kat Robinson said: "It was a great effort from everyone involved.

"The initial aim was to raise £500, but the eventual total after 12 hours was an incredible £1,600, which reflects the effort put in by those involved and the desire to support RAFBF."

Women's Rugby Director Gp Capt Mark Jackson said: "The event was superb. All those who took part and donated should be justifiably proud of their achievements.

"In particular I would highlight Sgt Brook for his outstanding effort to organise the event and motivate us all through the 12 hours of exercise.

"It is so important that we continue to support the RAFBF, particularly at this time, a charity that continues to provide unstinting support to the RAF family."

FOOTBALL

Aki top league

RAF AKROTIRI has kicked off 2021 in style by winning the 2019/20 RAF Football Association Club of the year award.

A delighted Gp Capt Neil Jones told *RAF News*: "Football is the largest participation sport in the RAF, with more than 6,000 personnel engaged in the sport in some guise or other.

"Each station has some form of participation in the game, with the majority putting forward teams to play in competitive leagues.

"When you consider the size of some stations such as Brize Norton, Coningsby, Marham and Lossiemouth, it is an outstanding achievement that the exceptional work of all involved in RAF Football

in Cyprus has seen them rise to the top.

"The award is presented for performances on the pitch, as well as the administration and communication off it. It truly is a club award.

"Over the last 12 months RAF Akrotiri were second to none in every regard.

"This award is in recognition of all the outstanding work, participation and effort undertaken to truly bring RAF Akrotiri back into the RAF FA fold.

"The RAF Cup story of 19/20 wasn't to be, unfortunately, but I am hopeful that the legacy the current management will leave behind will forge the way for others to follow."



Bobsleigh

Stephens' rocket to target China '22

Olympic target but a tough road ahead

ALONG WITH the potential thrills and spills of a 100mph Olympic bobsleigh run, L/Cpl Shanwayne Stephens has encountered untold battles on his road to Beijing 2022.

Since competing at the Inter-Services ice sports in Königssee, Germany last year, Stephens has hit the national headlines, made HM The Queen laugh and is currently hand-building a team to help his charge for the China games.

RAF Regiment Gunner Stephens, 30, said: "Representing your country of birth and the RAF, whilst aiming for qualification for the 2022 Olympic Games, was never going to be easy. The world has changed due to Covid and thrown more hurdles in my way. Rest assured, I am giving everything I can to get 'Cool Runnings' back to where I believe it belongs."

The Queen's Colour Squadron man has battled bravely through 2020, became a national figure after he was pictured in a *Hello Magazine* article and gained BBC airtime after he spoke with HM The Queen,

virtually, about his unusual training methods.

The Queen's amused reply and laugh of: "Well, I suppose that's one way of training", came after Stephens explained how, due to gym closures, he had taken to pushing his Mini Cooper car up and down a road to simulate bobsleigh push starts.

In order to make the 2022 Olympic Games there were certain qualification standards he had to make this season.

Chf Tech Mark Silva, Stephens' team manager, said: "This includes completing five four-man races at three different tracks. The four-man is a tougher discipline than two man, which when you get wrong can be very dangerous."

Danger aside, finding three other athletes to work with would be tough enough, but during a global pandemic, it has proved extremely difficult.

Stephens seems to do difficult well, and instead of flying athletes around the world to see if he can build a team, the resourceful RAF

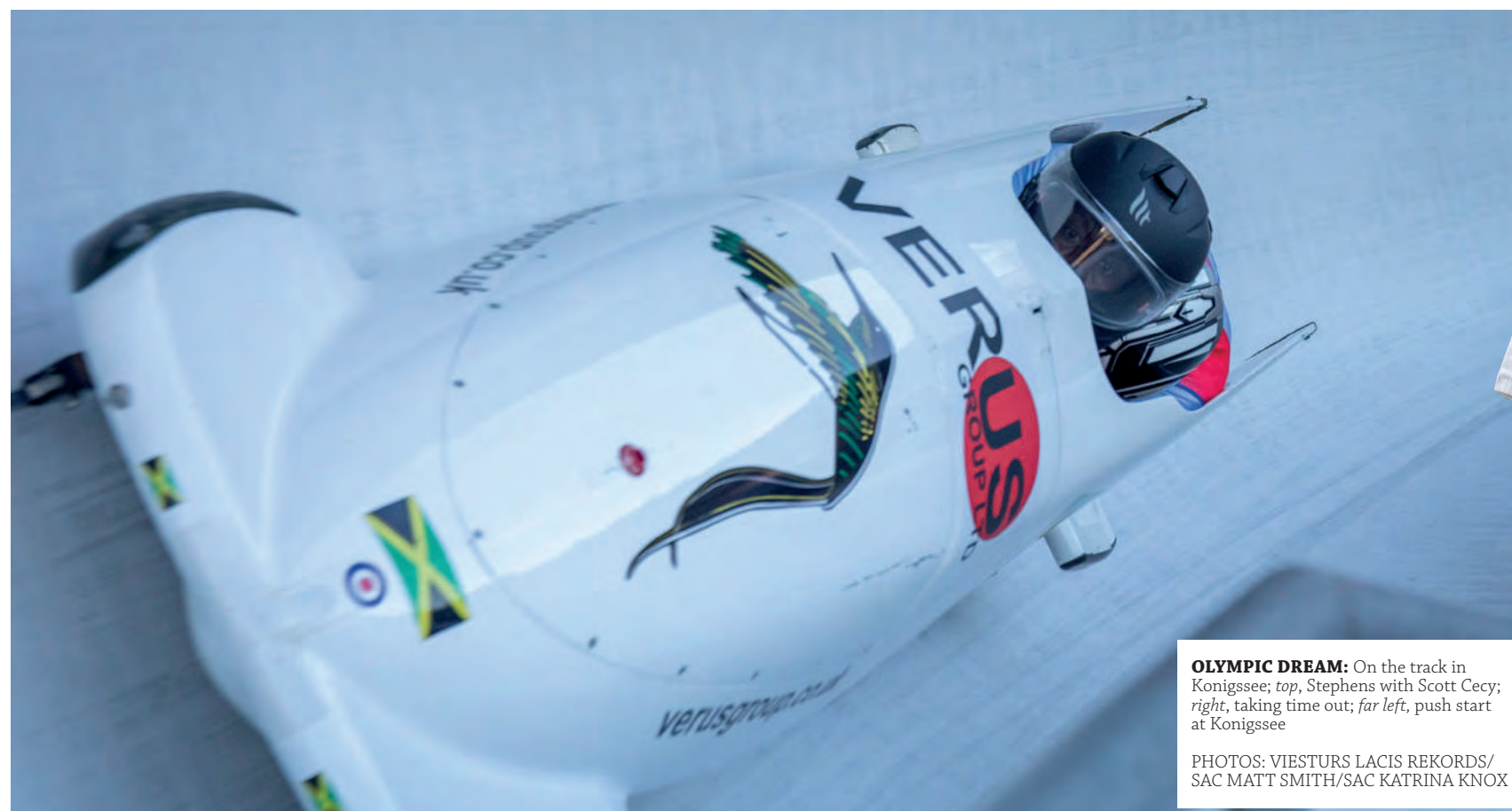
man organised a trial event in London in September to track down the illusive Jamaican bobsleigh stars of the future.

Silva said: "He was lucky to find a few athletes, none of whom had ever done bobsleigh, at the event and started to plan his season."

"Sponsorship for all sport has been hit by Covid so he was working on a shoestring budget. The new athletes – Samuel Caven, Dy'neal Fe'ssal, Matthew Wekpe and Scott Cecy – all had jobs in the UK and getting released for 6-8 weeks was proving difficult, not to mention the numerous Covid tests, rightfully required, which were a challenge in themselves."

Stephens, who has spent the last two seasons racing on the North America Cup circuit, this season formed part of the first male Jamaican team to represent at World Cup level since 2006 in two-man bobsleigh, alongside Wekpe, running at Igls, Austria.

● Follow L/Cpl Stephens on Twitter @jambobshan



OLYMPIC DREAM: On the track in Königssee, top, Stephens with Scott Cecy; right, taking time out; far left, push start at Königssee

PHOTOS: VIESTURS LACIS REKORDS/ SAC MATT SMITH/SAC KATRINA KNOX



Email: sports@rafnews.co.uk
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Sports roundup

Pandemic means Cup and IS woe

● Continued from p27
"We can now also look forward to the IDRC (World Cup) in New Zealand this September, where hopefully we will see strong RAF representation."

"We understand the huge challenges that Covid has brought upon not only RAF Sport, but the entire country as a whole and we all acknowledge and agree that this is the right decision."

"On a personal note, I'm looking forward to keeping hold of the trophy for another year."

Ft Lt launches 100k challenge

FORMER RAF Tug of War manager Ft Lt Gareth Davies has thrown down the gauntlet with a fitness challenge to raise fund for the RAF Central Fund.

He said: "The RAF School of Physical Training are challenging all-comers to kick-start their 2021 training and complete 100km in 30 days."

"The PT School is the second oldest in the RAF, formed in 1918 and now based at RAF Cosford near Wolverhampton – so it has plenty of experience in challenges and of course understanding the wider value of an event such as this."

"Entrants can break the challenge down to 3.2km a day or complete it in bigger chunks. It really is the perfect way to burn off any extra festive calories and set you up for what will hopefully be a much better year."

"Now it's up to everyone to decide if they are up to taking on the challenge."

Davies added: "The challenge is already proving popular, we already have CASWO and AOC 22 Gp signed up, so I have arranged for the numbers to be increased to 600 with each of the participants receiving a fantastic medal and at least £3,000 being raised for RAF Central Funds."

Entering the challenge and recording distances however they are completed – running, walking or cycling – can be easily done via the link at the bottom of the article.

Davies added: "Once entered, there is a personal domain, with entrants given 30 days to finish the challenge anywhere

that they wish. It's hoped this will help with people's headspace and their New Year's fitness plans at a time when we all need to focus on something stimulating."

■ See myrace.wlve.co.uk/event/raf-cosford-100k-challenge



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