The Forces' favourite paper

Cool-hand Luke's joy at Antarctic triumph

See p9

Fitting tribute to diamond geezer Rex's 60 years of RAF service

See p17

ROYAL AIR FORCE

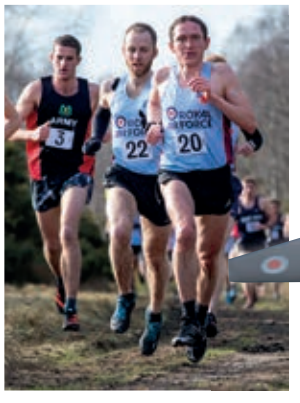
Friday **March 6** 2020
No 1486 **70p**

RAF News

Football
MDS take the Inters

● Sport p35

Athletics
Men in 11th Inters victory



● Sport p30

House about that

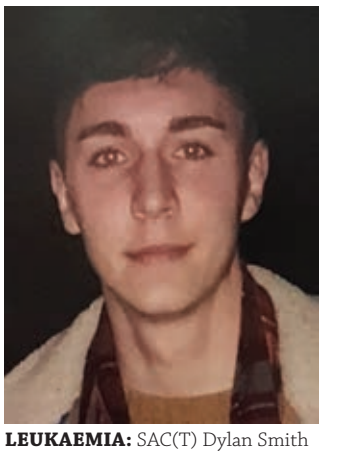
Tempest brewing

IT'S THE future, but Tempest is already having a major impact on RAF air power. See how the technologies helping to shape the combat aircraft of tomorrow are already benefiting today's Typhoon Force.

Turn to p18

See p18

Squadron raises cash to renovate cancer-hit colleague's derelict pad



LEUKAEMIA: SAC(T) Dylan Smith

AN AIRMAN struck down with an incurable disease has told how he was stunned when his comrades secretly raised thousands of pounds to renovate his derelict home.

SAC(T) Dylan Smith

● Turn to p3

finding it tough?
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BiteSize

"We used to fight on the land, then in the sea and the air, now we have the space and cyber realms"

ACAS AVM Ian Gale who is launching the Astra progamme
p7

"I try to do a play each year. You have to keep practising to get good at anything"

Actress Susan Penhaligon stars in The Mousetrap
RnR pp4-5

"It was quite tight and every position counts. We all ran our guts out"

Fg Off Mike Kallenberg after the RAF men take the cross country Inter-Services title for the 11th time
p30

ROYAL AIR FORCE
RAF News

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Pals hit a home run

● From front page

discovered he had chronic myeloid leukaemia – cancer of the blood and bone – in November 2019.

He said: "Around eight months before I was diagnosed, I started to feel very tired and would finish work, go straight to bed then get up at 7am the next day for work.

"I lost two stone in weight and while on leave I noticed my stomach had swollen and decided to get it checked out."

SAC Smith told his Sergeant on Waddington-based 8 Squadron and was signed off work for three months.

After a week in hospital having blood transfusions and chemotherapy tablets doctors told him if he had left it any longer, he would have died.

They said his condition is non-curable, he will have it for the rest of his life, and he must take four chemo tablets a day to manage it.

But there was another shock for the airman who joined the RAF in 2015 and still hopes to serve on a fast jet unit, when he returned to the Lincolnshire base in January.

WADD AN OFFER: 8 Sqn, which operates the E-3D AWACS at Waddington have rallied round.

Two years ago, he bought a house in his home town of Doncaster which urgently needed renovations.

He had completed the upstairs, but the chemo tablets 'destroy' his immune system so dust particles and the general state of the downstairs of the property meant he couldn't live in it.

But while he was off sick his good friend SAC(T) Aidan Harvey decided to act.

He said: "People on the squadron often joke that Dylan and I are always seen hanging out together and go everywhere together.

"I was in close contact with Dylan during his three months off, met some of his family, saw his house and wanted to do something."

So secretly Aidan rallied round the squadron to raise funds for the house renovations and since the diagnosis the AWACs unit has raised more than £3,000, mainly from its Christmas festivities.

Now Dylan's colleagues want to employ builders to complete the project soon so he can move in.

SAC Smith said: "When I came back to work, I had no idea Aidan had been raising money.

"I was called into my Boss's office and I thought it was something bad, instead Aidan was there and told me all about the money he had raised from squadron personnel and handed it to me.

"I was overwhelmed and quite emotional, and also cross at Aidan for not telling me," he said.

This Week In History

1936
Avro Anson arrives
The RAF's first operational 'modern' monoplane, with a retractable undercarriage, enters service with No. 48 Sqn at RAF Manston.

1942
Malta Spitfires
The first Spitfires reach Malta. 15 aircraft are flown off the aircraft carrier USS Wasp and complete the 400-mile flight to RAF Takali. No. 249 Sqn, re-equipped with the Spitfire, became operational on March 10.

1937
Big beast
The Whitley Bomber enters service with No. 10 Sqn at RAF Dishforth.

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

The Institution of Engineering and Technology

Nominate someone outstanding today

Thomas Sutherland, who completed his Technical Apprenticeship for Leonardo and now works on the Eurofighter Typhoon Radar integrating current and next-gen systems, was named IET Apprentice of the Year in 2019.

After senior management identified both his technical and leadership talents, Thomas secured sponsorship for university and was placed on a bespoke development plan accelerating him to engineering leadership roles. Talking about his award win, Thomas said:

"Winning the IET Apprentice of the Year award was a moment I'm sure I'll never forget. It was such a special night shared with some truly remarkable people. I remember reading about the other award recipients and realising how much their impact is apparent in my life through all of the technology I use every day.

Having my name mentioned amongst these people inspired me to continue to push my career forward, as this is really just the start.

"The award has boosted my career significantly, presenting opportunities I never imagined I would have. The recognition I've received from people I work with and new connections within the industry shows how highly the award is thought of.

"Following the win, the IET has given me the opportunity to represent apprentices on a global scale. I want to be an example of what can be achieved by people who have chosen the Apprenticeship pathway and create opportunities for others to develop as I have."

Nominations close

15 May 2020

theiet.org/achievement

Help us shine a light on exceptional individuals, like Thomas, by nominating them for an IET Achievement Medal, or IET Apprentice or Technician of the Year Award.

The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) is registered as a Charity in England and Wales (No. 211014) and Scotland (No. SC038698). The Institution of Engineering and Technology, Michael Faraday House, Six Hills Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 2AY, United Kingdom.

Swiss aerobatic aces on a roll with Cosford show

Staff Reporter
RAF Cosford

SWISS PC-7 aerobatic aces will be bidding to retain their air show title when they take to the skies at Cosford this summer for their second year running.

The team scooped the coveted Hartree Trophy for best display in 2019 and will be showcasing their latest routine in front of an estimated 50,000 aviation fans in June.

Air show director Clive Elliot said: "We are extremely pleased to welcome our friends from the Swiss Air Force back to Cosford and excited to see another award-winning display from the PC-7 Team.

Named after the training aircraft they fly, the team has added some new elements to their routine including multiple crossings and mirror flights.

This year's event will also feature the RAF Typhoon display and the Red Arrows.

● *Go to: cosfordairshow.co.uk for more details.*

SWISS TIMING: PC-7 aerobatic team in action at Cosford, inset left, the Red Arrows

Shetland scramble

TYPHOONS HAVE been scrambled after reports of unidentified aircraft flying towards UK airspace.

The aircraft, thought to have been Russian bombers, were spotted off the Shetland Islands.

A spokesman for RAF Lossiemouth in Moray said swing-role fighters had been launched in response to the incident.

The bombers were not intercepted as they remained outside of the area considered UK airspace.

Defence must win info wars

Staff Reporter

UK DEFENCE needs to harness the latest commercial information technology to maintain its combat-winning edge against adversaries, according to Air Chiefs.

With Britain facing escalating threats from cyber hackers and space based kit Forces leaders are calling for closer ties with industry experts to boost information-sharing capability across the battle zone.

More than 500 Air Chiefs, defence contractors and technology experts will meet this summer to raise the stakes in the escalating information war at the annual Air and Space Power Conference.

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Mike Wigston *(pictured below)* said: "Information will be at the very heart of the future air and space environment which is why achieving and maintaining information advantage is so important to all our futures.

"Our aim is to put information advantage at the forefront of the international air and space power debate."

The RAF's new Poseidon P8 maritime patrol aircraft and the unmanned Protector due to arrive next year are both designed as data-sharing platforms.

The eagerly awaited E7 Wedgetail which will replace the UK's ageing fleet of AWACS E-3D surveillance aircraft, will also operate as an airborne command and control centre, collecting and feeding data to units on the ground, on sea and in the air.

PROTECTOR : Data-driven platform

Air Vice-Marshal Ian Gale said: "Today's battles are now all about time and how you can synchronise the flow of information across the domains of land, air, sea and space and the cyber realm faster than anyone else.

"It is obvious that whoever gets there first wins. Information flow has got exponentially faster.

"We must exploit the technology enhanced parts of the information flow to get through the multi-domains faster.

"The technology that does that is in the commercial areas and the military has struggled to incorporate outside technology into our own ecosystems."

WEDGETAIL: Airborne command and control which networks data across combat domains

Key speakers at the Air and Space Power conference will also include cyber security experts from industry, the UK's first Space Director, AVM Harv Smyth, and the US Space Force chief Gen John Raymond.

Minister for the Armed Forces, James Heappey, said: "It's no longer enough to have a battle-winning edge in terms of fire power; there's a responsibility to win the information battle.

"It's no longer enough to have highly complex systems; you need all of the data that comes from that system in order to get a better understanding of what the enemy is doing and what the opportunities are to exploit and win the battle."

Air and Space Power Association President Air Marshal Greg Bagwell added: "We can't keep living in denial. We are not harnessing the latest commercial capabilities well enough.

"The military has traditionally been ahead but we are now behind the market place."

● *The Air and Space Power conference takes place in July. Go to: airpower.org.uk for more details.*

VACANCIES IN THE SULTANATE OF OMAN

Vacancies exist in the Sultanate of Oman (The Royal Air Force of Oman) for the following posts:

Qualified Flying Instructor (No. 1 Squadron)

Applicants must be A2 Category or equivalent, have Turbo Prop experience combined with no less than 400 hours as an instructor. You will preferably have held an executive position and have some fighter experience. We are ideally seeking an English native speaker with a high level of computer competency.

Ground School Instructor (No.1 Squadron)

Applicants must possess a degree in aviation or experience as a background pilot. You must be an English native speaker with a high level of competency in computer skills. You will preferably have teaching experience, ideally complemented by a teaching qualification.

Music Instructors (RAFO Band)

Applicants must possess a Higher Diploma in Arts in Music (relevant to the instrument played) and in Arts (Music Theory) from an internationally accredited university, college or recognized institute. We seek a member of a military band with a minimum of 4 years' experience as an instructor acquainted with the history of the field specialized in. A Music Theory Instructor, you must also be a music theory specialist - pianist, harmonist and arranger. Ideally you will be a multi-instrumentalist.

Bagpipes & Drums Band Instructors

We are seeking candidates qualified in teaching bagpipes and drums at all levels, involving both Theory and Performance (practical) and who possess an internationally recognized Bagpipes Trainer Certificate.

To succeed you will have a minimum of 4 years experience as an instructor and have participated in the world pipes band championships at the highest categories: Grade One, Grade Two, Grade Three ''A'', and Grade Three ''B''.

You will be experienced in playing all ''Piobaireachd'' manuscripts and have passed the Pipe Major Course. It is essential that you have the knowledge and skills to train a bagpipe band in how to perform various pieces of music in local and overseas events.

We are seeking candidates with a Higher Diploma in Arts (Piping & Drumming) from an internationally accredited university, college or recognized institution, and experience as a member of a military band.

General terms: For all of these roles, potential applicants should be UK nationals, aged between 25-55, capable of passing medical examinations and willing to accept appointment to any of the RAFO stations.

Interested candidates are invited to submit an up-to-date CV along with copies of qualifications/certificates to RAFO Recruitment Office via rtg@rafo.gov.om Potential applicants will be subsequently provided with the job offer letter which includes details of the salary, health insurance, catering, accommodation, annual leave and more.

Defence eyes tech and cyber aces for top job

THE NEXT Chief of the Air Staff could be a non-pilot for the first time in history under radical plans to shake up the Service and counter new tech-based threats against Britain and its allies.

As the British Armed Forces sets its sights on cyber hackers and the growing use of information technology, the RAF is looking beyond the cockpit for its next generation of leaders.

MISSION: ACAS Air Vice Marshal Ian Gale, who is launching the Astra programme to open up opportunities across the Royal Air Force

> **"In the old days it was what the pilot said that mattered. We must not perpetuate that narrow band of thinking"**

The move is part of a wide ranging programme of reforms across the Air Force under the recently launched Astra programme.

The 20-year project is designed to shift the RAF's focus from its traditional air combat role to a multi-domain approach in a bid to win the information war.

Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, AVM Ian Gale said: "We should see a Chief of the Air Staff who is not a pilot.

"With Project Astra we are reshaping our Force so everyone understands they can be the chief and that they have a role in deciding the direction of the organisation in the future.

"We used to fight in land, then on sea and then in the air. Now we have the space and cyber realms.

"The key difference today is time – we must synchronise all of those domains faster than our adversaries. Who gets their fastest wins.

"Cognitive diversity is vital. In the old days it was what the pilot said that mattered as the air domain was their preserve.

"We must not perpetuate a narrow band of thinking. Battle space managers, cyber and space specialists all sit in the domains we are fighting in. We need to incorporate the views of everybody.

"In the RAF we do have glass ceilings in some career branches. We want to do something that is totally unremarkable in the outside world and that is to say we want to select the best person for the job."

The Astra programme aims to build on the RAF's Thinking To Win campaign launched in 2016 to reboot the military mindset by challenging the chain of command and encouraging innovation across the ranks.

News Bulletin

HONOUR: New facility named after former RAF helicopter pilot HRH Prince William

Royal revival for training school

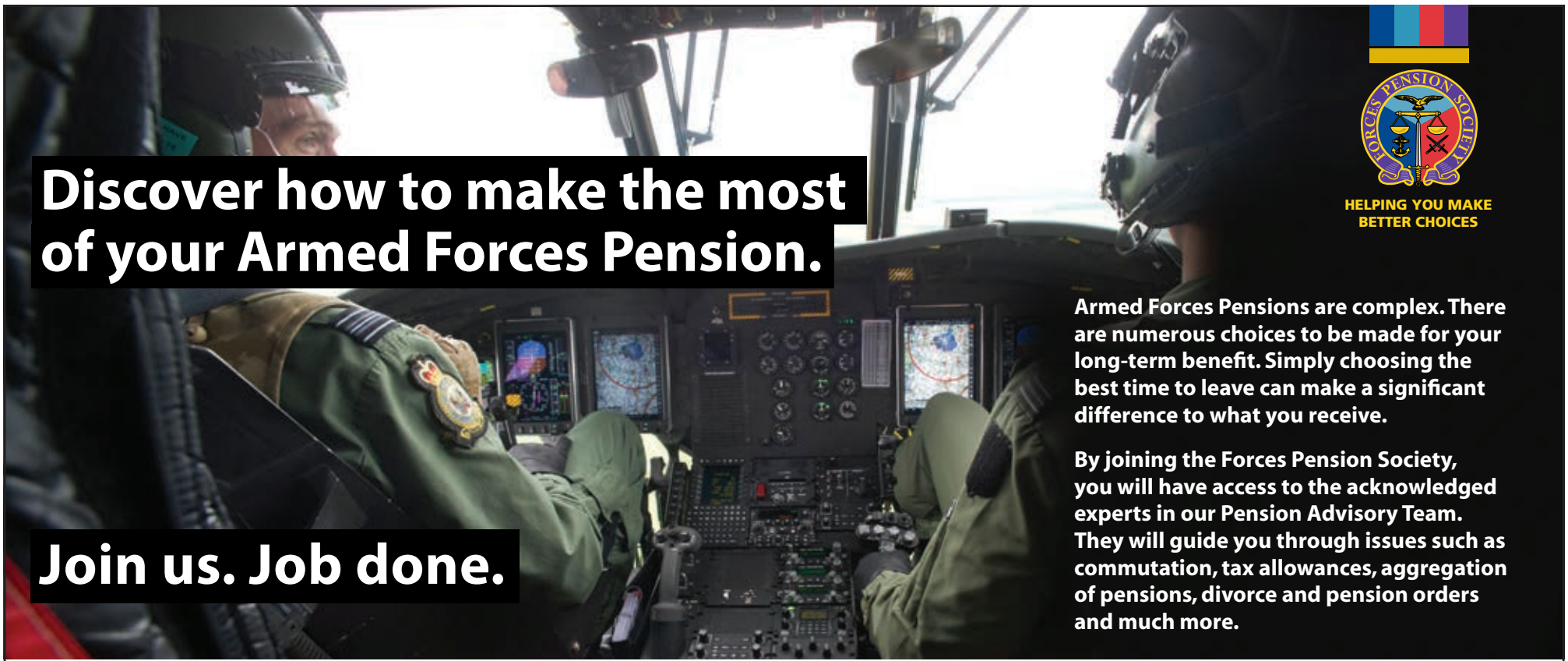
THE RAF'S oldest teaching establishment has been given a new lease of life and a new home named after one of its most illustrious former pupils.

The No 1 Flying Training School was stood down in 2019 following moves to close Linton-on-Ouse and transfer of 72 Sqn to Valley.

Now the Defence Helicopter Flying School at Shawbury has been rebadged 1 FTS and housed in a new state-of-the-art Duke of Cambridge Building.

HRH Prince William said: "I have very happy memories of learning to fly at RAF Shawbury.

"I am sure that the future generation will benefit greatly from these world-class facilities."



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Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO_2 figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. *There is a new test used for fuel consumption and CO_2 figures. The CO_2 figures shown, however, are based on the outgoing test cycle and will be used to calculate vehicle tax on first registration.

Cool hand Luke

Bomb blast Gunner kicked off World Marathon Challenge in Antarctica

Staff Reporter

A FORMER Gunner who suffered horrific leg injuries in a Taliban bomb blast is king of the world after completing seven marathons in seven days on seven continents.

SAC Luke Wigman had to have part of his leg rebuilt and fought off gangrene after the attack during a tour of Afghanistan in 2011.

Since battling back to fitness the RAF man has taken part in endurance events across the world and has just covered more than 150 miles across some of the most extreme places on the planet – for the second time.

He kicked off the World Marathon Challenge in the sub-zero temperatures of Antarctica before taking on stages in the searing heat of Africa and South America to come home fourth against some of the world's top athletes.

He said: "Fewer people have run seven marathons on seven continents in seven days than have climbed Mount Everest.

"Antarctica was a tough place to start but that's when the energy is at its highest.

"The fifth marathon, in Madrid, was a difficult one mentally as you still have three more to run, and at this stage you would have accumulated just over 100 miles."

It is the second time Wigman has entered the event. In 2017 he finished third with an average time of just over three hours.

The double Invictus Gold medal winning athlete trained six times a week but talked down his chances before the event.

He said: "I was as fit as last time so it was just about enjoying the running for me, every step of every marathon."

The IED blast damaged the soft tissues around the lower part of his left leg and he required an intense 12 months of hospital treatment and clinical rehabilitation to help him regain the strength needed to walk and, ultimately, run.

The veteran endurance star earned a Sun Millie award for his amazing comeback from injury and has become an ambassador for the RAF Benevolent Fund, which helped support him financially after he was discharged from the Service.

In 2018 Luke returned to hospital to have the skin grafts on his leg removed and re-grafted and part of his leg rebuilt.

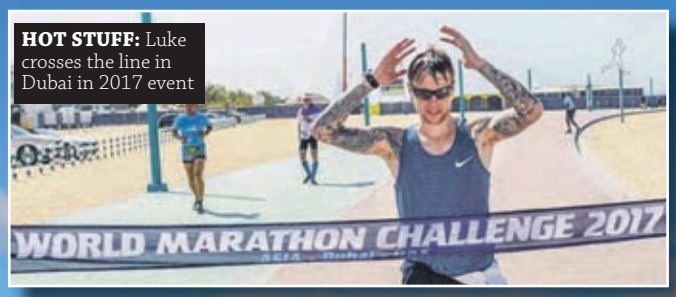
Following the latest round of surgery Luke's leg became so infected he required intravenous antibiotics for three weeks. The setback means what should have taken six weeks took six months of treatment and rehabilitation.

Luke said: "Because the recovery was much longer the treatment took its toll on me mentally, physically and emotionally.

"I found it very difficult to get back into training, and I put on a stone in weight.

"It wasn't until the RAF Benevolent Fund stepped in with a grant to cover my costs for being off work and the endless hospital trips that I was able to get back on track."

FAMILY SUPPORT: Luke with wife Nikki and dog Ernie



HOT STUFF: Luke crosses the line in Dubai in 2017 event

MILLIE-ONAIRE: Receiving award from Bear Grylls

GOLDEN BOY: Invictus champ with Prince Harry

Regt issues call-up to RAF Gunner veterans

A GROUP which brings together RAF veterans is appealing for more members.

Formed in 1975, the Association of RAF Regiment Warrant Officers and Senior Non-Commissioned Officers supports ex-Gunners through charitable events, reunions and formal functions, at home and overseas.

In 2017, it marked the Corps' 75th anniversary celebrations by successfully campaigning for a 'Fallen Gunner' tribute and Commemorative Tablet in the National Memorial Arboretum.

And in September 2020 it marks its 45th AGM and Reunion.

Membership is open to serving or retired WOs and SNCOs of the RAF Regiment, the Royal Auxiliary Air Force Regiment, and other trade groups posted to Gunner units.

To join visit; www.rafregtwoandsnco.org.uk scroll down and click on the 'Become a Member' link or visit: facebook.com/rafregtwosandsncos

RAF PERSONNEL marked the 75th anniversary of the infamous 'Long March,' by Allied PoWs from Stalag Luft III in January 1945.

Airmen and women paraded in Zagan, Poland, the town nearest the camp, immortalised in the 1963 film *The Great Escape*.

An estimated 80,000 servicemen were herded at gunpoint across Poland, the former Czechslovakia and Germany, in blizzards and temperatures of -25C as the Nazis fled the advancing Red Army.

Hundreds died on the way from starvation, disease and exhaustion.

TRIBUTE: RAF personnel parade at Zagan, *inset above*, SAC Adam Rosbottom performs *The Last Post*

Cape crusaders

Tamsin Jessup
Falkland Islands

AIR FORCE athletes took on the world's most southerly endurance event in the Falklands.

More than 20 runners turned out for the 13-mile Cape Pembroke half marathon.

The route took competitors from Stanley to the Cape Pembroke lighthouse.

First across the line was 28-year-old Fylingdales based runner SAC Jamie Arkle (*inset*), who completed the course in just over 1 hour 20 mins.

He said: "It was tough coming back from the lighthouse and running constantly into the wind."

Medical officer Sqn Ldr Kirsty Hollier Cox *(pictured left)* was the first women to finish, in a time of one hour 50 mins.

Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund

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The RAF Benevolent Fund is a registered charity in England and Wales (1081009) and Scotland (SC038109). CHALLENGE A3 Poster

Data lab lifts F-35

Staff Reporter
Florida

A JOINT UK and Australian military data centre in Florida supporting F-35 jets is operational after 10 years of development.

The facility provides vital mission information which the fifth-generation fighter fuses with data gathered by its advanced suite of sensors to provide a complete picture of the battle space it is operating in.

RAF fast-jet navigator Wg Cdr Gerry McCormack said: "The facility enables the F-35 to make sense of the world around it. Without the mission data that this laboratory provides, the aircraft cannot make sense of all that information it gathers."

Technicians at the Australian, Canadian and United Kingdom Reprogramming Laboratory, highly-trained specialists, compile and test mission data which is transmitted to F-35 crews.

More than 100 specialised personnel from the Royal Air Force, Royal Navy, Royal Australian Air Force, Lockheed Martin, US Government and US contractors are currently based at the centre.

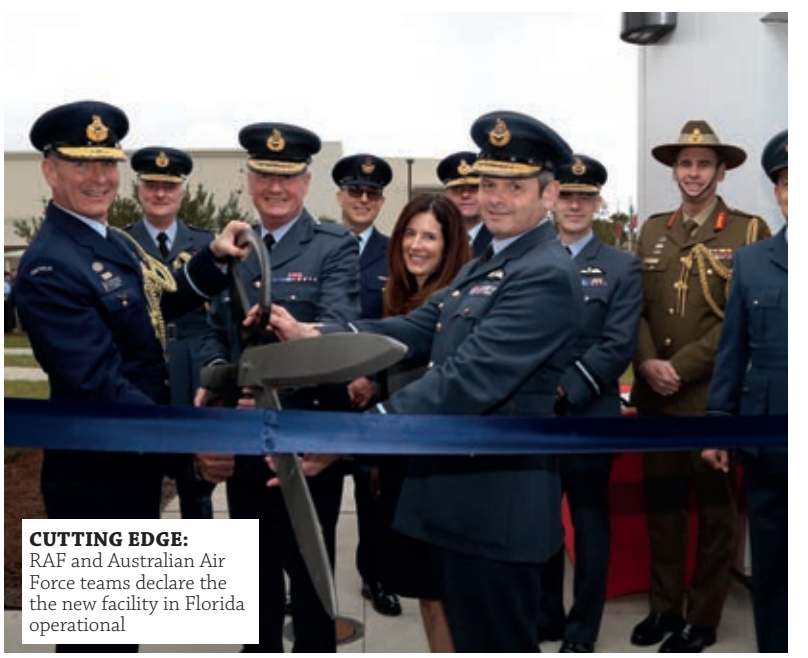
Wg Cdr McCormack added: "The importance of working alongside our American colleagues means that we can benefit from their experience in building mission data and can act as a force of innovation within this enterprise.

"The laboratory also plays a vital role in keeping the F-35 safe.

"It is a very costly platform and the work we do here is vital to their survivability, hence another reason why the UK and Australia have invested so much money in this facility.

"We can make sure that our F-35 aircrew are as protected as they possibly can be.

"That is what motivates the men and women who work here."



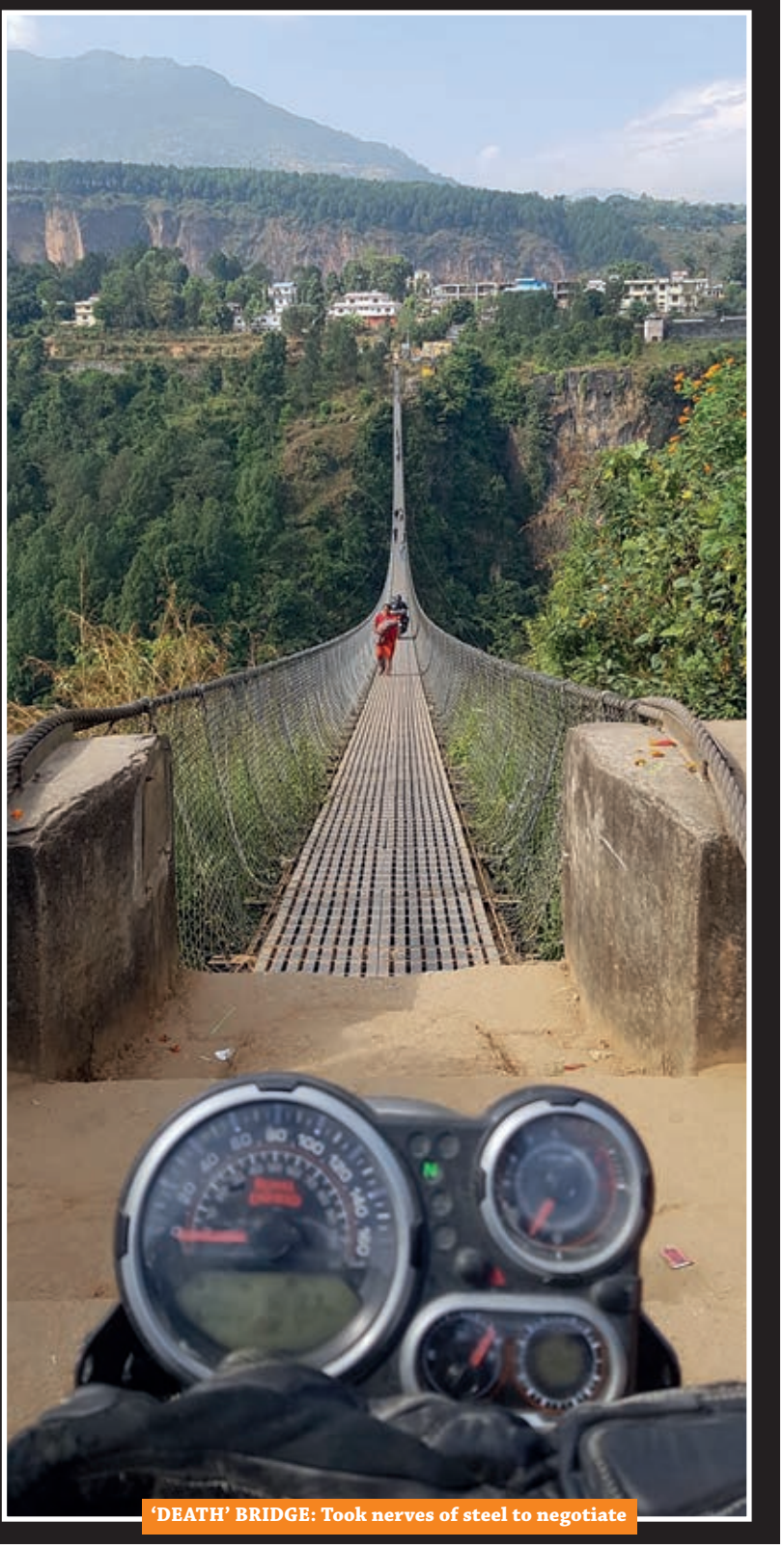
CUTTING EDGE: RAF and Australian Air Force teams declare the the new facility in Florida operational

BRIDGE OF SIGHS: Tricky river crossing

RESOURCEFUL: Carrying out repairs along the way

Benson bikers take on intrepid Himalaya mission

NEPAL OR NOTHING



'DEATH' BRIDGE: Took nerves of steel to negotiate

BENSON BIKERS braved breakdowns, giant deadly spiders and food poisoning to complete an intrepid expedition across Nepal.

Riding rented Royal Enfield bikes, they crossed the Greater Kathmandu Valley climbing to 4000m before descending south to Chitwan Region.

They faced river crossings, arduous terrain, extreme weather, altitude sickness and food poisoning while nursing their machines and their bodies to the finish line.

The airmen used their battlefield repair skills after a rear wheel bearing collapsed on a narrow mountain pass as they struggled to reach Pokhara.

Disaster struck again as one rider suffered a blow-out as they attempted to cross the notorious three-foot wide Kushma bridge suspended 475 feet above the valley.

They battled energy-sapping loose mud along daunting high cliff edges by day with evenings spent repairing and maintaining bikes by the light of head-torches.

Respite came on a visit to the stunning Gurkha Museum in Gorkha, and five monasteries, the highest being the staggering Muktinath Temple at more than 3700m.

Entering the 550-year-old Kag Chode Thupten Samphel Ling Monastery in the medieval mountain town of Kagbeni, the RAF personnel were welcomed by monks and joined their game of cricket.

WILD THINGS: Benson bikers braved treacherous conditions and deadly spiders

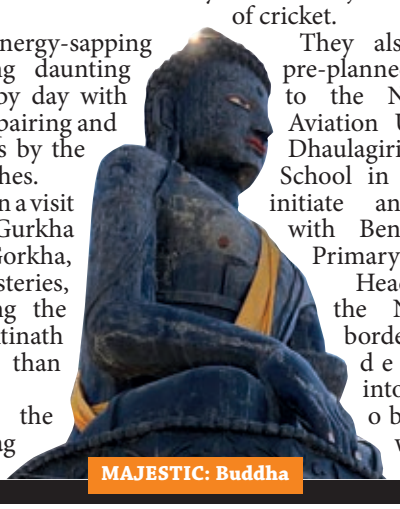
They also had two pre-planned visits: to the Nepal Army Aviation Unit and to Dhaulagiri Boarding School in Jomsom, to initiate an affiliation with Benson Village Primary School.

Heading towards the Nepal-Indian border, they descended into the jungle observing wild rhinos, crocodiles, monkeys, boar and large spiders waiting patiently in their huge webs to catch unsuspecting Royal Enfield riders.

Some of the team were struck down by food poisoning as they launched their bid to return to the start point at Kathmandu.

After three weeks, three tyres, two inner tubes, two chain and sprockets, two spark plugs, two plug caps, countless other spare parts, 900 litres of drinking water and buckets of curry they made it back to base.

The team's Facebook page reached 250,000 people and they now plan to visit schools, universities and Combined Cadet Forces to talk about the expedition.



MAJESTIC: Buddha

ADOPTION

Thinking about ADOPTION?

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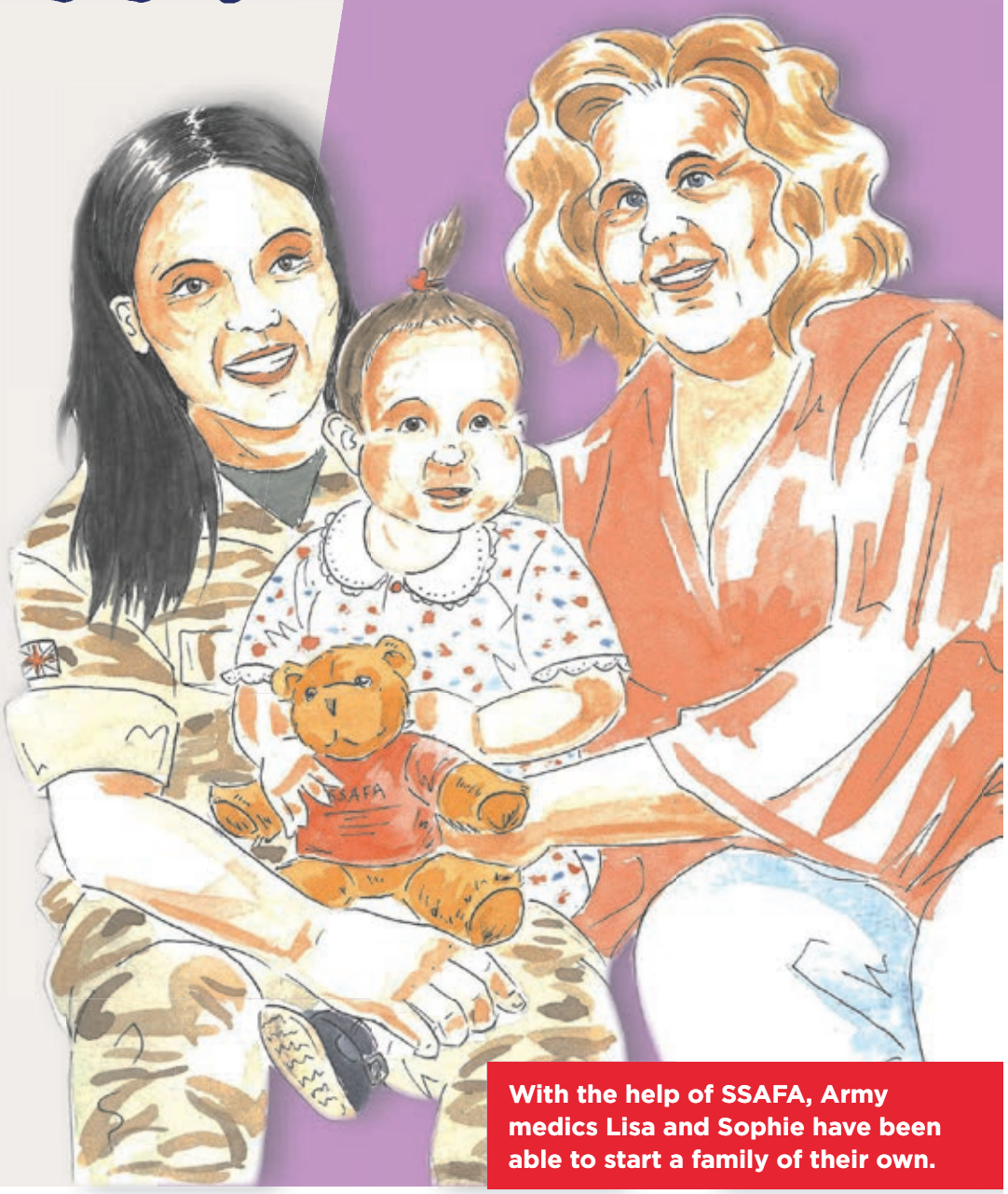

With the help of SSAFA, Army medics Lisa and Sophie have been able to start a family of their own.

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Wittering joins rental revolution

Cambs station first to launch housing shake-up pilot study

Staff Reporter
RAF Wittering

WITTERING HAS become the first Air Force station in the UK to offer personnel the chance to move into private rented accommodation under a major shake-up of Forces housing.

The Cambridgeshire station is making the offer as part of a pilot study for the MoD's Future Accommodation programme to give serving personnel more choices and make the military more attractive to recruits.

The deal is open to married couples, those in long-term relationships including same-sex couples, and anyone currently in single living accommodation who has served for four years or more.

The Ministry of Defence will also support those who buy a new property during the pilot with a monthly payment of £125 and could also cover the costs of moving in.

Under the pilot scheme Military renters will receive individually-calculated monthly payments based on the cost of housing in their area and other factors such as the number of children living at the property.

Defence housing chiefs say if the offer is rolled out nationally those living in areas with high property prices such as the South East and London would not be expected to contribute any more than those living in less expensive areas of the UK.

TO LET: And now Wittering personnel have more choice

Personnel at Wittering can apply to move off site from this month ahead of the official launch in June when the first payments will be made.

The RAF scheme follows similar studies at Clyde Naval base and Aldershot Barracks.

Submariner Aaron Chapman and his wife Hannah were among the first to move out of Services family accommodation at Clyde and into a four-bedroom rental property a few miles from the base.

Hannah said: "It makes sense to have a bigger property for the same price you would pay for marital quarters anyway. It's a win-win situation."

● *Go to gov.uk/futureaccommodationmodel or contact the FAM office at Wittering.*

We've done it again...

Joy for the men at 11th Inter-Services cross country triumph

See p30

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News bulletin

Tigers recall for Rugby ace

FORMER RAF pilot and rugby star Rory Underwood celebrated Leicester Tigers signing the Armed Forces Covenant.

The ex-England international returned to his old club as Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire to see it pledge support for Servicemen and women.

He was joined by Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Mike Wigston and personnel from all three Services.

More than 23,500 fans packed the Welford Road ground to watch the Tigers beat Wasps 18-9 with military supporters benefiting from a special discounted ticket in recognition of their service, as part of the annual fixture in the club's calendar.

Rovers return

VETERAN Ashley Wood has proudly displayed two superbly restored Tactical Fire Vehicles at Honington.

The former firefighter was last at the Suffolk station as the Buccaneers left and Tornados began to arrive in 1982.

Since then he and his son Alex have restored a Series 3 Land Rover and a six-wheel Range Rover, also known to have served at Lyneham and Brize Norton, from their chassis upwards.

Welfare pledge for injured personnel

Simon Mander

HELPING LONG-TERM sick and wounded personnel return to duty was discussed at a recent national symposium of RAF welfare staff.

Around 120 people including padres, medical staff and voluntary sector partners attended the event at the Victory Services Club to be updated on policy changes.

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Mike Wigston *(pictured right)* said: "This symposium highlighted the tremendous work our welfare and support agencies do to assist all members of the RAF Family.

"The agility to act quickly to address issues before they manifest is crucial and our people need to know effective support is always available if needed."

Among the speakers were experts from the Battle Back Centre at the National Sports Centre Lilleshall, who run an adaptive sport and adventurous training programme for recovering personnel designed to develop confidence and self-esteem by focusing on what they can, not what they can't, do. There were contributions from Personnel Recovery Centre staff who provide relaxed environments to help individual Servicemen and women work through their difficulties run in conjunction with the Ministry of Defence's key partners, Help for Heroes and The Royal British Legion.

Two RAF personnel told delegates of their journeys from long-term sickness back to duty.

"A new updated long-term sickness absence policy was also discussed.

Air COS Personnel Delivery, Air Cdre Alan Opie said: "The event provided the perfect opportunity to launch and explain the RAF's new policy for providing the best possible support for our personnel and their families when they are most in need."

Organisers now hope to set up regional seminars across the UK with another national event scheduled within two years.

Mart puts Spandau in the works

EIGHTIES POP icon Martin Kemp and his ex-Wham! backing singer wife Shirlie will join top flight RAF musicians in two special concerts.

The former Spandau Ballet bass player and his partner, who was also part of the 80s duo Pepsi and Shirlie, join Air Force bandsmen in gigs at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham on March 30 and the London Palladium on April 1.

The couple, who have been touring with their Big Band Broadway show, will perform two celebrated numbers from the Great American Songbook – *You Make Me Feel So Young* and *The Way You Look Tonight*.

Featuring a thrilling programme of music blending traditional and contemporary numbers by Queen, Bowie and McFly's Tom Fletcher, the show takes the audience on a thrilling journey to the final frontier – Space, courtesy of a specially-recorded message from astronaut Tim Peake.

Among the highlights of the evening will be a special appearance by actress and rapper Paigey Cakey, who will perform alongside the Queen's Colour Squadron.

Add to this a rousing finale featuring *This is Me* from the smash-hit musical *The Greatest Showman*.

● ***For Birmingham tickets go to: https://www.thsh.co.uk/how-to-book or call 0121 780 3333. For London tickets go to: www.thelondonpalladium.co.uk or call 0207 087 7755***

Shoreham hero honoured at Northolt awards

THE RAF man who spearheaded the military response to the Shoreham air crash in which a civilian display pilot's jet exploded killing 11 people led the honours at Northolt's annual awards ceremony.

Wg Cdr Paul Taylor received a second clasp to his medal having served since 1984, including a considerable time on operations including dealing with the aftermath of the 2015 Shoreham disaster.

He said: "I can't believe I have been in over 35 years, I can honestly say I have loved every minute of my service."

A total of 11 prizes were presented by AOC No 2 Gp Air Vice-Marshal Al Gillespie, including sports colours for windsurfing and the Javelin. But it was the bandsmen who made the most noise.

WO Steve McGuiness was presented with his Royal Warrant for services to RAF Music, including being drum major at nine Edinburgh Tattoos.

Sgt Hilary Rosenthal received her Long Service and Good Conduct medal for having been the first female drum major to lead an RAF Band at the annual Scottish military spectacular.

She said: "Every day with the band creates great memories and RAF music services has been a great career and given me some superb opportunities."

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COGES

Gunners' India mission

RAF FORCE PROTECTION teams are training alongside their Indian counterparts to improve security skills used to protect jets and personnel on an operational airfield.

Police and Gunners have arrived at Hindan Air Force base in Ghaziabad – the largest station in Asia – for Exercise Indradhanush.

The programme includes British and Indian Air Force personnel using the RAF's Panther and Foxhound armoured vehicles, which were delivered by an A400M transporter (*left*).

The UK team will also visit the Garud Regimental Training Centre in Chandinager in the New Delhi region to train with weapons, dog patrols and helicopters.

Officer Commanding 8 Force Protection Wing, Wg Cdr Lee Wales said: "The training will strengthen relationships between both forces by exchanging tactics, techniques and procedures, and also demonstrate Force Protection Armoured Vehicle capability."

The Exercise is part of an ongoing bi-lateral UK/Indian Air Force exercise programme begun in 2013.

FITTER LORD IS A DIAMOND GEEZER

Rex celebrates more than ***sixty*** years of service to the RAF

VETERAN AIRCRAFT fitter Rex Lord can claim to be one of the longest-serving instructors in the RAF, completing 39 years teaching Air Cadets after serving 22 years as a regular.

And the 87-year-old, who has now clocked up a total of 61 years working for the Air Force, still drives himself three miles twice-a-week to his local squadron in Sleaford to teach young people about airframes and engines.

He said: "I had a great life in the Air Force, and I enjoy giving something back to the young people in the country."

He admits night driving is getting trickier for him and recently his car was damaged when he was lecturing, and the culprit made off, so he had to pay for the repairs himself.

Born in Bolton in 1933, Rex completed an aircraft engineering apprenticeship with De Havilland before being called up in 1953 and serving across the UK at Manby, Cranwell, Turnhill, Acklington, Whatton and Marham.

He also deployed overseas with 60 Squadron at RAF Tengah in Singapore with Venoms; RAF Eastleigh in Nairobi on Beverleys, and RAF El Adem in Libya during the Gaddafi uprising.

"I did quite well in my RAF career, when I was at Tengah we flew all over the Middle East and from Nairobi we went all over Africa," said Rex.

"My last posting was in Libya and during the uprising me and my family were on the last aircraft out of there during the evacuation."

On his return he taught engineering officers at Cranwell, then volunteered at 2160 ATC Squadron before his final posting to Marham with 57/232 Victor Squadron.

Rex has been awarded the General Service (Malaya), RAF Long Service and Good Conduct medals.

He retired as a Chief Tech in 1975 and became an ATC Civilian Instructor in 1981 and has won the ATC Long Service and Meritorious Service awards.

He has also accompanied cadets to summer camps and on shooting practice. He is a dad of three and has four grandchildren.

STARTING OUT: Rex in uniform in 1950s

ALWAYS ON HAND TO HELP: Rex Lord at the air museum with cadets, *top*. He has been teaching young people about aircraft and the RAF for almost 40 years

YOUNG BLOOD: Rex (*far left*) on the wing of a 60 Squadron Vampire at RAF Tengah in Singapore in 1957

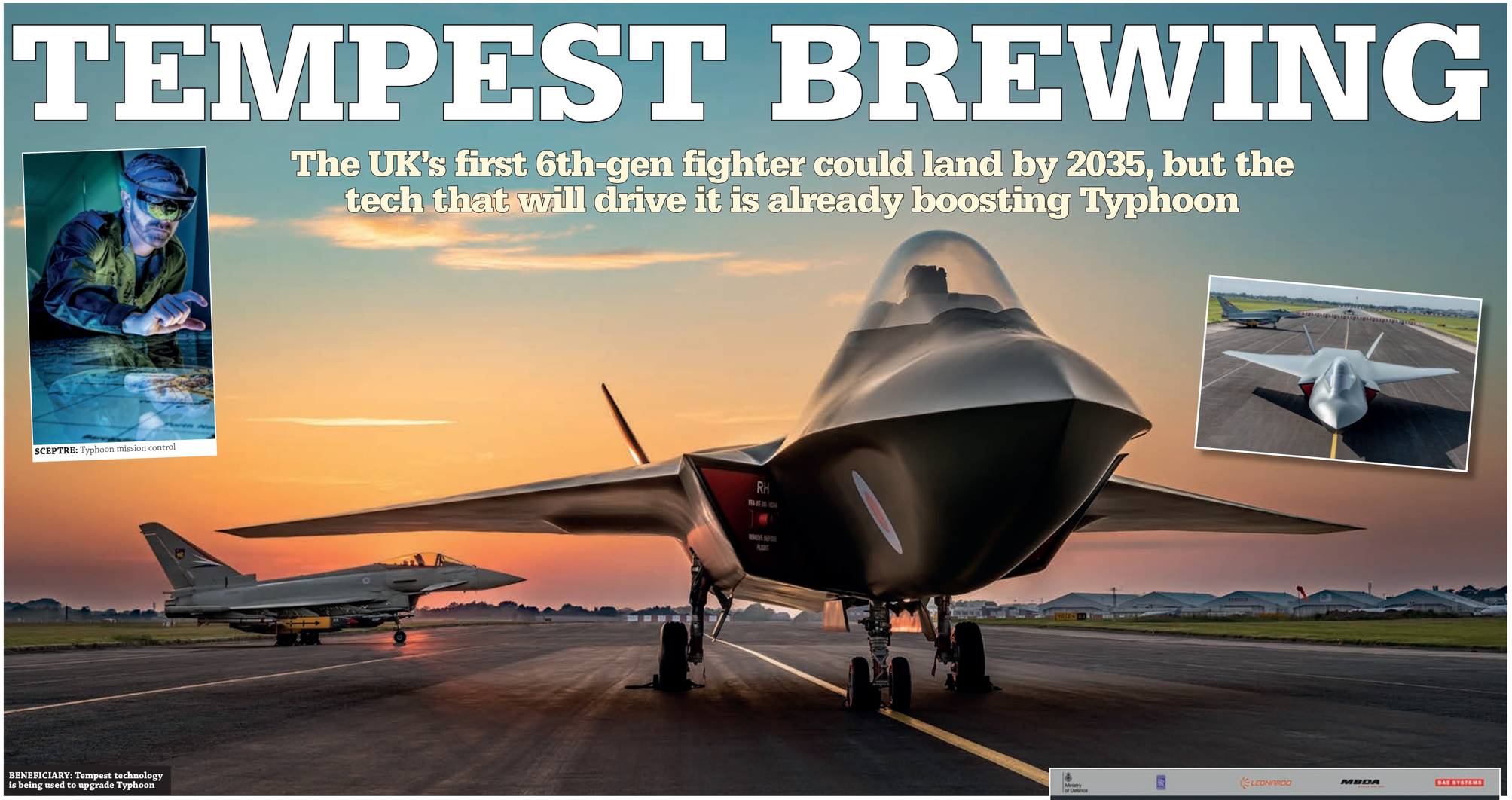
Feature Future air power

Simon Mander reports

TEMPEST BREWING

The UK's first 6th-gen fighter could land by 2035, but the tech that will drive it is already boosting Typhoon

SCEPTRE: Typhoon mission control



BENEFICIARY: Tempest technology is being used to upgrade Typhoon

DEFENCE contractor BAE Systems hopes the 2020s will be the Decade of Tempest as it bids to turn the RAF's fighter of the future from concept to cockpit.

And it believes innovations being tried and tested at its Warton HQ will benefit Typhoon as it moves beyond the Project Centurion weapons upgrades that made it more potent than Tornado.

"As we develop new technologies within Team Tempest, we need to spin out those capabilities as soon as possible to make sure Typhoon remains world-leading up until the day it leaves service," says BAE's strategic campaigns director Andrew Kennedy.

Among the breakthroughs already benefiting today's Top Guns are the new Striker 2 helmet, which current RAF pilots are helping develop, and the Sceptre mission planning system which BAE is under contract to deliver to the Air Force.

Launched in 2018, Team Tempest is a £2bn joint British government/industry programme to find a replacement for Typhoon by 2040.

Mr Kennedy said: "That announcement was a statement of intent that the UK has been a world leader in combat air for more than 100 years and wants to continue to be.

"Team Tempest at its launch was a British initiative and recognises that we haven't designed, developed and brought into service anything since Typhoon.

"It's about developing not just the technologies, but also the experiences, tools and processes that we think are necessary to sit at the top table of the design and development of the next-generation combat air system."

The next milestone comes towards the end of this year when the MoD and BAE submit an outline business case to release funding for the next phase of the project and meanwhile the company will continue to try to enlist other countries as partners.

Named after the legendary World War Two fighter, Tempest is currently still a concept – despite the life-size model currently touring air shows – which arguably bears more than a passing resemblance to an F-35.

And it's up against some stiff competition from the Franco-German-Spanish Future Combat Air System launched to find a successor to the Rafale and German Eurofighter, and rival systems developed by America, Japan and South Korea.

KENNEDY: BAE campaigns chief

Designing a future fighter due to achieve initial operating capability by 2035 and fully in service by 2040 is such an ambitious plan that the first Tempest pilot or 'mission commander,' as they may become known, is probably now starting senior school.

But BAE say it's a lot quicker 'from flash to bang,' than comparable programmes including Typhoon and F-35.

And whatever emerges will need to connect seamlessly with the RAF's newest kit including the P-8 Poseidon sub hunter and the Wedgetail AWACS aircraft that will replace the E3-D Sentry.

"Tempest will have to link up, there's no other option, with weapons systems, adjuncts such as unmanned air systems, and how it interacts with ISR platforms, space satellites and all the five domains, because it's unlikely you'll go to a military operation just flying an aircraft," said Mr Kennedy.

Meanwhile, the company's Air Laboratories section looks like its been taken over by video gamers – which doesn't surprise human factors engineer Suzy Broadbent, whose team is pioneering cockpit upgrades and new pilot helmets.

Her mission is to strip out as many dials, buttons, switches and screens as possible so that physical displays, which have become too numerous to fit into a confined space, are replaced wherever possible by virtual reality projected into the pilot's helmet.

This software-based pre-configurable cockpit means the RAF won't have to ground entire squadrons to carry out expensive hardware upgrades and, as it's portable, it can be customised for aircraft types, missions or even individuals.

"Everyone's mobile phone looks different so why can't everyone's cockpit?" said Ms Broadbent.

"What we're expecting in the future is for the pilot to be less of a stick-and-rudder flying person but to be there to make battlespace decisions and be the human operator at the sharp end, so we need to make sure that all the information they need is easy to present and understand."

Key to this is the Striker II digital helmet mounted display currently being flight tested by Typhoon pilots which, unlike its predecessor, is light, full-colour and 3-D audio and visual capable.

But the team want to go even further and are working with aircrew to 'de-risk' head-and-eye-tracking and gesture-control technology to enhance it still further.

"The idea here is we buy gaming technology off the shelf for as little as £100 so we can do a lot of our prototyping as the same software works on our headset," said Ms Broadbent.

"It's stuff we can get in cheaply and it's improving all the time, the new technology that is out there is amazing – I used eye trackers years ago and they'd take 20-25 minutes to set up and weren't comfortable, now we can build it into the virtual reality system in the helmet and it calibrates in 30 seconds or less."

The team are also experimenting with monitoring electrical impulses in the pilot's brain and heart rate via sensors embedded in the helmet and flying suit.

"We've always had warning panels for the aircraft showing when things go wrong so can we in the world of Fitbit start monitoring the pilot to see when they're starting to flag a little?" said Ms Broadbent.

And, ultimately, they hope to invent an in-flight virtual assistant to prevent aircrew overload by sharing tasks.

"We want the communication between the human and the system to be as smooth as it would be between a Pilot and Navigator.

"So, another research issue we have is how do you get that trust and camaraderie between them, which is normally built in a bar on a Saturday night. Also, what form should the virtual assistant take – is it a Twitter feed or a 3-D image of a person behind you whose expression you can read?"

Back on the ground head of mission planning programmes Louise Aiken says BAE's Sceptre system will transform the way Typhoon crews plan, brief, execute and debrief missions.

It combines 3-D in-cockpit views, representations of digital aeronautical flight information, potential hazards and conflict detection with real-time weather information, an intelligence picture and fast jet performance data.

And the Windows-based system can be used on tablets, personal computers and interactive touch tables for briefing and de-briefing missions.

"Crucially, the big difference is that Sceptre is not just a data system but a mission portal sucking in live-tasking information from the Air Operations Centre without having to fat finger input it," said Ms Aiken.

"It can process intelligence, threat and other data in a congested, contested, and connected battlespace from different feeds and bring them all together so you can plan an effective mission and maintain an advantage."

Sceptre has been developed since 2015 by BAE's Yeovil team, which devised a similar Cage system for Wildcat and Merlin helicopters.

It will be delivered to the RAF Typhoon Force by the end of this year, to Saudi Arabia by 2021 and Qatar for use on its Eurofighters and Hawks making them the first customer to use it on two platforms.

Placing Sceptre within the development cycle of the jet means it will be automatically updated but BAE say its application is potentially much wider.

"We're up to the latest Typhoon standard but we're pitching it as platform agnostic," said Ms Aiken.

"Its modular architecture means we can add in new capability more quickly and cheaply and so we'll be ready for when the next Combat Air platform comes in.

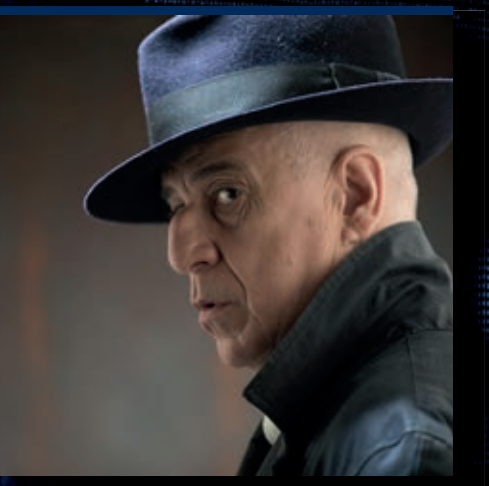
"This could become a battlespace management system not just a mission planner – and the Carrier Strike concept offers potential opportunities for it to expand.

"It doesn't just have to be an Air tool, everyone has this image in their heads of paper maps on a table and people pushing things around, I like to think this is the 2020 version of that," she said.

ABOVE: Sceptre mission planner in development. It is due to be delivered for the Typhoon Force this year

R'n'R

Regulars &
Announcements
● p6-7



Mobster oozes class

● p3

Will you escape the Mousetrap? ● p4-5

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Film review

5 Is the Perfect Number/Stolen Days

Cert TBC

Gangland lives large on Italian screen

IT HAS been praised as 'visually arresting' and 'highly entertaining' and Igor Tuveri's latest offering *5 Is The Perfect Number (5 è il numero perfetto)* is exactly that.

This is a gangster film like none other, as we see retired hit man Peppino Lo Cicero played by Tony Servillo, analysing the autumn years of his life in Naples and welcoming his son Nino (Lorenzo Lancellotti), into the family business. As Peppino presents his son with a special 38 calibre Colt Cobra on his birthday, all seems good for the pair to begin new chapters in their lives.

Following Nino's subsequent death later that evening, the old killer comes back out of the shadows and swears revenge.

Based on the directors' graphic novel, the film is framed in such a way to emulate the publication and makes for mesmerising viewing.

The gun fight scenes are played out beautifully, as Peppino along with long time friend Totò the Butcher (Carlo Buccirosso) and an enigmatic beauty from the past, Rita (Valeria Golino), team up to track down his son's killer. Screened as part of the Cinema Made in Italy festival which runs in London until March 9, *5 Is The Perfect Number*, is a must see of the cult event in London. It maintains a solid pace of action, drama and intrigue, while focusing on the dark heart needed to live out such a life where love can pay a heavy price. Will Peppino get revenge, or will the underworld drag him back in and end crush his hopes of peace and dreams and leaving the life?

GUIDO LOMBARDI'S *Stolen Days* is another peak into the Italian gangland world, but this time the film provides a non-holds barred look at a father-son relationship.

Salvo played by Augusto Zazzaro and his father Vincenzo played by Riccardo Scarmacio begin the film at a beach when Salvo picks up and claims another child's toy for his. Salvo is then confronted by the child asking for his toy back, before being told to keep it, adding: "My father buys me toys."

Minutes later Augusto is arrested by police for his crimes in the underworld. In this short scene the director speaks volumes about the tumbling relationship, that becomes the subject of the film.

Stolen Days is a terrific movie that does not sweeten the truth of some fathers decisions.

Lives carry on without a thought for their children. Later when Salvo is bought a toy, Augusto quips: "Are you not too old to play with toys?" Lombardi studies the pair brilliantly, as Salvo comes to terms with his wayward father. One question that remains throughout is, will Augusto's life rub off on the kind caring Salvo and will his father care?

Both films are showing at the Cinema Made in Italy festival. Certificates and UK release dates are yet to be confirmed.

For tickets and further film information visit: institutfrancais.org.uk/cinema-italy.

Music

The Slow Rush

Modular Recordings OUT NOW

Tame Impala lead man Parker unlocks more gold with new LP

KEVIN PARKER and his merry band of jesters Tame Impala are back with another thumper of an LP in the shape of *The Slow Rush*, but once again it's all change at TI HQ.

The band who entered the world as a fully formed psychedelic dream-fest, have now, three albums later, become a latent cross between Herbie Hancock, synth sequencing gods Kraftwerk and 80s Disco.

There are smatterings of Madonna here on *Borderline*, dabbles of Curtis Mayfield and Tor Y Moi, Skylar Spence, Earth Wind and Fire, Elton John elsewhere and even Genesis, but don't let that put you off, elsewhere.

There are so many 'smatterings' it's almost impossible to pinpoint the influences or are they a homage?

Parker, has always had the ability to reflect his original sounds and that of his influences or fancies, but he still blazes a new trail.

His use of swirling slightly out of tune keyboards that smack of Thundercat and Unknown Orchestra are terrific. It is difficult to pick out a favourite track on the album, which just does not seem to give in.

Audio wise Parker makes this a wet dream through hi-fi speakers, headphones or in the car. *The Slow Rush* is such a superbly produced album, it is more an experience into sound rather than a collection of songs. One thing for certain is you are in the hands of a total talent.

Tomorrow's Dust could well be the best track on an album where in truth the only downside is that the tracks can tend to run into each other.

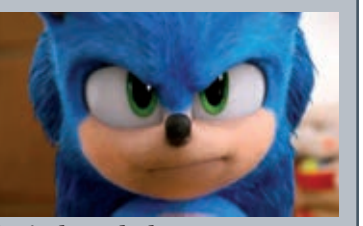
It Might Be Time stands out as one song constructed like an old-fashioned tune, rather than being built around a repeated dance beat and choral hook.

The album closer *One More Hour* starts like a rock opera, before it drifts sublimely off into a tune reminiscent of a reprise of tracks fromthe band's previous album *Currents*. It's been a long wait for this release, but it's been worth it.

The Slow Rush is out now on Modular Recordings on all platforms.

UK Box Office Top 10

1	Sonic the Hedgehog
2	Dolittle
3	Parasite
4	The Call of the Wild
5	Emma
6	1917
7	Birds of Prey
8	Like a Boss
9	Brahms: The Boy II
10	Bad Boys for Life



Sonic the Hedgehog

Source: BFI

The Big Interview Susan Penhaligon

There's a killer on the loose

ADAM LILLEY: As Giles Ralston

LAURA COSTELLO: Plays Miss Casewell

Christie's *Mousetrap* still captivates in 68th year

SHE IS famed for her starring roles in TV's *Bouquet of Barbed Wire*, *A Fine Romance* and *Emmerdale* and now Susan Penhaligon is set to play Mrs Boyle in the world-renowned murder mystery *The Mousetrap*.

Queen of Crime Agatha Christie's legendary play continues its record-breaking run in the West End, where it's now in its 68th year, coupled with its national tour returning due to popular demand to thrill audiences across the country.

Penhaligon stars in the thriller alongside Martin Allanson, from TV drama *Doctors*, who plays Detective Sgt Trotter; theatre star Laura Costello, who plays Miss Casewell; and Steven Elliott, who starred in Danny Boyle's production of *Frankenstein* as Mr Paravicini.

Penhaligon, who heads up the play directed by Gareth Armstrong, spoke to RnR about the role and returning to the stage.

Q How do you feel to be performing in the new UK tour of *The Mousetrap* and in such an iconic production?
I never thought I'd be in *The Mousetrap*. I've been in two of Agatha Christie's other plays, *And Then There Were None* and a little-known one called *Verdict*, but I'd never seen *The Mousetrap* or read it. When the part came up, I read the play and I thought 'wow', it's funny, tense, has great characters, brilliant plot, and what struck me was that it was based on a real event – chilling really.

Q You're well-known for your roles in TV programmes *Bouquet of Barbed Wire, A Fine Romance* and *Emmerdale*. How does performing on stage compare to screen?
I've done a lot of theatre, touring, West End and fringe. I started in a two-weekly rep in Worthing as an acting ASM when I was 21. There isn't a better way to understand and learn about the theatre. For some reason all through the seventies and eighties I seemed to land lots of TV and film roles. I just went with the flow. But I always tried to do a play once a year if I could. You have to keep practising to get good at anything.

Q Are you an Agatha Christie fan?
Yes, I am. I've read most of her books and I've read her biography. I think she's fascinating.

Q What can audiences expect from *The Mousetrap*?
It's a great story. A guessing game of a whodunnit, and a brilliant one at that.

Q What is your favourite element of Mrs Boyle? Do you share any character traits?
I like Mrs Boyle because she says it as it is, she doesn't hold back. She's the type of woman who is used to being in control of situations. Probably to make herself feel safe. I don't think she feels safe in *The Mousetrap*! She's funny too.

Q What do you think it is about *The Mousetrap* that has made it the longest-running play in the world and has audiences coming back again and again?
It's a perfect plot, it's vintage with very recognisable period characters, and it's spooky. It's great quality entertainment. I think it's interesting to see an original play of hers on the stage rather than on TV, particularly as it was written for the theatre. It's a different animal. But I think nowadays, because of the many TV Agatha's, audiences are familiar with the world they are entering.

Q Why should people come and see *The Mousetrap*?
Come and see an iconic show and find out why it's been on for 67 years. It's a fantastic night out.

■ ***The Mousetrap* is at Aylesbury Waterside Theatre from March 16-21 and the Opera House Manchester from July 13-18. Tickets are available now. Call 0844 871 7607 (bkg fee. Calls cost up to 7p per minute plus your phone company's access charge) or visit atgtickets.com/aylesbury (bkg fee).**

SUSAN PENHALIGON: Stars as Mrs Boyle

GEORGE NAYLOR: 'Christopher Wren'

EDITH KIRKWOOD: 'Mollie Ralston'

MARTIN ALLANSON: 'Det Sgt Trotter'

STEVEN ELLIOTT: 'Mr Paravicini'
PHOTOS: JOHAN PERSSON

Competition
Books
Avro Lancaster (Haynes, £12.99)

Win!

True icon of World War II

EVER WANTED to get the lowdown on the inner workings of the historic Lancaster Bomber, well now you can with the fabulous Haynes icons book *Avro Lancaster*.

The classic title follows its usual in-depth look into the inner workings of British and world cars, and transfers it the iconic bomber, covering the restoration projects of BBMF PA474, to the wartime heroics of the plane that was never really meant to be built – tracing its impact on the German warship Tirpitz, to the main production variants.

Of particular quirky interest is the section on purchasing a Lanc, to insurance and running costs – if you have your own.

Readers can run through pre-flight checks, start-up and take-off. BBMF Lancaster captain Flt Lt Ed Straw also gives a detailed and enthralling rundown of display-flying the famous old bird.

In all, this is a title for plane and Lanc fans alike, and RnR has three copies to give away.

To enter, just answer the following question:

What is the plane number of the BBMF Lancaster?

Email your answer, marked Haynes Lanc book competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by March 20.

Please remember to include your full postal address with all competition entries.

By entering RAF News competitions you agree to us holding personal details for the purpose of sending out prizes.

The book is priced £12.99 and is published by Haynes publishing.

Competition
Books
Fighting With Pride

Win!

The battle for equality

WITH THE military celebrating 20 years since it lifted the ban on LGBTQ personnel in the Services, the timing of the release of Craig Jones's new book could not be better.

***Fighting With Pride, LGBTQ in the Armed Forces*, published by Pen and Sword, is a poignant look at the Service by LGBTQ men and women from the Second World War, Northern Ireland and the Cold War right up to the Afghanistan campaigns.**

For every tale of heroics, the book covers instances of persecution, dismissals in disgrace, investigations and arrests.

The title follows the battles for equality, which saw cases taken to every court in the UK, before finally the European Court of Human Rights.

The book celebrates the lives of LGBTQ personnel in all three Services, and culminates by focusing on the successful experiences of those at the frontline and finding their place in an Armed Forces that now values and welcomes their input.

RnR has one copy of this excellent title to give away. To enter, answer the following question:

When was the ban on LGBTQ Servicemen and women lifted in the military?

Email your answer, marked Pride book competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by March 20.

Please remember to include your full postal address with all competition entries.

By entering RAF News competitions you agree to us holding personal details for the purpose of sending out prizes.

***Fighting With Pride, LGBTQ in the Armed Forces* is priced £25 in hardback.**

R'n'R

Your Announcements

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

Deaths

Bill Adams

ADAMS (Elgin). Peacefully at Burnbank Care Home, Buckie, on February 16, 2020. William (Bill), aged 92 years, beloved husband of the late Margaret, much loved Dad of Margaret and Dawn, dear Father-in-law, Granda, and Bobo.

GILLEN Joseph, passed away on February 12, 2020. Born on March 30, 1932. He completed his National Service with the RAF and then signed on for full term, leaving in 1976. He was a Chief Tech Armourer with 11, 16, 19 and 29 Squadrons and served throughout UK, Cyprus, Zambia and Germany. His service number was Q2482352. He was fiercely proud to serve with the RAF. He is survived by his wife Maud and their children Peta and David. Sadly his other daughters died last year, Jo Bruce in Portugal in September and Jacqueline in Cambridge in December 2019. His funeral service was in Surefleet Crematorium, Nr Spalding in Lincolnshire.

O'NEILL John Patrick, died February 3, 2020. Served as an avionics engineer from 1976 until 2014. Leaves wife Janet and children Megan and Patrick.He died peacefully at home surrounded by family.

SHARP Alan Ernest Ch/Tech RAF passed away February 10, 2020, missed by all his family, now resting with wife Louisa. Will miss you with all my heart dad, love as always Diane.

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.
Help us to avoid errors by typing your announcement or using block capitals.
We cannot, under any circumstances, take announcements over the telephone. They can be sent by post to: *RAF News*, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, RAF High Wycombe, Naphill, Buckinghamshire, HP14 4UE or by email to: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk

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Please send to: *RAF News*, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, RAF High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP14 4UE.

Seeking

IS YOUR surname Mortimer, Dale, Keen or Jones? I'm hoping to make contact with any relatives of those who died with my uncle Edward McLaughlin on 22/8/1941 while serving with 37 Squadron in Egypt and are buried in the Suez war cemetery. Please contact Elaine Kelly at ehkl1965@gmail.com

Reunions

THE Red Arrows Association is calling for new members. It organises various events, has a Facebook page and biannual newsletter and holds a popular annual reunion. Membership is £5 a year and is conditional on having served on the Red Arrows (including the Yellowjacks) as either aircrew, ground crew or civilian support staff at any time since its formation in 1964. Associate membership is also available to people closely connected to the team. Email: secretary@redarrowsassociation.co.uk or visit: redarrowsassociation.co.uk.

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

318TH Entry – 3 S of TT RAF Hereford. Admin/Craft Apprentices are organising a reunion to celebrate our 50th Anniversary on May 1, 2020. Any ex Apprentices who are interested in attending should contact Paul Leggott at: pleggott53@gmail.com.

CALLING all 308 Entry Admin Apprentices. A 53rd Anniversary Reunion is being held at the National Memorial Arboretum on June 3, 2020 at Alrewas in Staffordshire. For further information, please contact Nick Nicholson on: 01691 682174 or email: www.nich33@btinternet.com.

RAF Bawdsey Reunion Association. The annual reunion lunch will be held on Saturday, June 6 at Bawdsey Manor. Anyone who has served at RAF Bawdsey is invited to join our Association and attend the reunion. For details please contact: doreen.bawdseyreunion@btinternet.com or call: 0751 3301 723.

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

THE RAF Locking 119/219/404 Apprentice Entries 50th Anniversary Reunion will be held on October 23 and 24, 2020.An informal evening on October 23, 2020 will allow ex-apprentices to gather before the formal dinner on October 24. The formal event will take place in the ballroom of the Weston-super-Mare Winter Gardens BS23 1AJ, for all RAF Locking 119/219/404 Entry Apprentices and wives/partners. For further details please contact Barry Cox at: barrycox124@hotmail.com.

A limited number of tickets are available for all serving and retired members of the Mechanical Transport/Logs Driver Trade for the weekend of Friday, March 20 to Sunday March 22, 2020. Two nights' B&B and a gala five course dinner on Saturday with first class cabaret and entertainment both nights at one of Blackpool's most popular seafront hotels, all for the bargain offer price of £98 per person. For a great weekend in Blackpool with like-minded people 'pull up a sandbag'… For further details please email: Driver Trade Administration at: 2020rafmt@gmail.com. Please note tickets are selling fast – and will be sent out on a first come, first served.

BOY Entrants 41st Entry all trades get together to celebrate 60 years. Midlands venue. At Leamington Spa May 15-17. Contact: peterjohnson645@btinternet.com.

237 OCU This year sees the 8th annual 237 OCU Groundcrew Reunion, to be held on Saturday 13th June 2020 from 1200hrs at The Compleat Angler, 120 Prince of Wales Road, Norwich NR1 1NS. Ex-237 OCU members of all trades and any era welcome. Just turn up and join in. For more information, search for 237 OCU on Facebook, email me at 237OCU@gmail.com or contact Si Roberts at 1 Manor Gardens, Carnoustie, Angus DD7 6HY or on 07546 400085.

5131 Sqn event

APRIL 1 will see the formal disbandment of 5131 (Bomb Disposal) Squadron, the last remaining bomb disposal unit in the RAF. To mark the event, the squadron will be taking part in a final parade followed by an evening of celebration at RAF Wittering. Anyone who has served on the squadron or undertaken EOD duties is invited to express an interest in attending. Final date to be confirmed but will be held in April, 2020. For further details please email: 5131bd75@gmail.com including name, rank held, and phone number and whether still serving or not. Once numbers of attendees are known, formal invitations will be sent.

Concert for RAFA

TO celebrate 70 years since the formation of the Sheringham & District Branch of the Royal Air Force Association, a Big Band Concert by the Royal Air Force College Band will be held on February 29 at St Peter's Church, Sheringham, starting at 2.30pm. The College Band's first concert at Sheringham, in 2018, was sold out within days of tickets being released. All profits from the February concert will be donated to the RAF Association 2020 Wings Appeal.
Tickets, priced £15, are available from Sheringham Little Theatre, either in person, online or by phone: 01263 822347. For more information please contact your local RAFA Branch on: 01263 479507.

Mess dress for sale

TWO WO/SNCOs Mess dress for sale: 1 – 38" chest, 30" waist, 29" leg; 2. – 36" chest, 26" waist, 28" leg. Contact: marheat@hotmail.com.

Night with the RAF

THE London Palladium hosts a glittering *Night With The Royal Air Force* on April 1, two days after its inaugural performance at Birmingham's Symphony Hall on March 30. Showcasing the Bands of the Royal Air Force and the Queen's Colour Squadron the concerts will feature a youth choir and guest rapper and are in support of the RAF Charitable Trust. For more details go to: thsh.co.uk/boxoffice/ticket/882736 (for Birmingham); 1wtheatres.co.uk/whats-on/a-night-with-the-royal-air-force-and-friends/ (for London Palladium).

VE Day 75

WITH LESS than 100 days until VE 75 Day begins, the sell-out SSAFA Royal Albert Hall concert is set to be screened at more than 400 cinemas nationwide. SSAFA, the UK's oldest national tri-service military charity, will hold the concert on May 8. Audiences will enjoy the Royal Albert Hall experience with stunning cinematic surround sound. The concert will feature stirring and emotional music from some of Britain's greatest composers – from 'Elgar's *Nimrod* and *Pomp and Circumstance* ('Land of Hope and Glory') to Ron Goodwin's *Battle Of Britain Theme*, a Dame Vera Lynn classic and many more. This event is in support of SSAFA. The Armed Forces charity offers support to those currently serving, regulars and Reservists.
TO search and find your local cinema screening of 'VE Day 75', visit: veday75.co.uk.

Your Announcements

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

Dementia drop-in at Star

SUPPORT FOR personnel coping, caring and living with dementia and their loved ones will be available to the High Wycombe community at a new Royal Star & Garter drop-in café.

The Hughenden Avenue Home welcomes people living with dementia and their family and friends for companionship, help and advice on the last Wednesday of every month.

The charity provides long-term, short-break and day care services. The new drop-in café will also be open to non-serving members of the community.

Complimentary hot drinks and cakes will also be offered at the sessions, which take place between 2-4pm on the last Wednesday of every month.

The sessions offer stimulating and interactive activities to promote a sense of well-being and belonging.

Visitors will also be able to seek advice from carers and nurses who specialise in dementia care, while the home's in-house activities and physiotherapy teams will also be present, to provide advice.

For further information call: 01494 927555.

Music to mark Lancaster heroes

BIRD IN FLIGHT: Lancaster cruises into a darkened sky PHOTO: SGT SIMON BUTCHER

THE ANNUAL RAFA Cranwell Branch Bomber County Charity Concert is set to be held on March 14, 7–10pm.

The concert is dedicated to the brave airmen of Bomber Command who Served, and especially the 545 who lost their lives on this single night's raid in Nuremburg.

This year's event also celebrates the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain and the 75th Anniversary of victory in Europe day, VE-Day.

An evening of excellent musical entertainment will be provided by the Sleaford Concert Band, with Director of Music Richard Joyce. With around 40 amateur and semi-amateur musicians, the band is going from strength to strength.

The night will feature music including classical, big band, jazz, TV and film and light concert pieces. It will be held at St George's Academy Hall, Westgate, Sleaford.

Tickets, priced £7.50 are available from the Arcade Cobbler, Hockmeyer's Garage and Tesco Sleaford and on the door.

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R'n'R

Prize Crossword
No. 268

Solve the crossword, then rearrange the 11 letters in yellow squares to find an RAF term.

Across

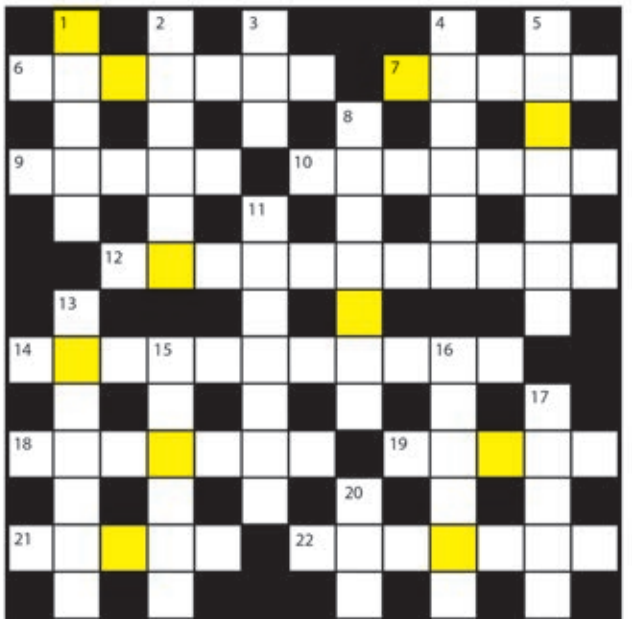
6. Signs of royalty unsettling Algeria **(7)**
7. Colour for putting on **(5)**
9. See 3 Down
10. See 20 Down
12. See 15 Down
14. Placate left over facial problem **(5,6)**
18. Hard worker takes public transport at end of day to be home eventually **(4,3)**
19. Gift from Aberdeen dowager **(5)**
21. Soft Scotsman embraced by Teletubby **(5)**
22. Before near problem, check he was in RAF **(7)**

Down

1. Wild Frenchman eagerly runs after ladies initially **(5)**
2. Grotto where The Beatles could be found **(6)**
3. And 9 Across. Planes use these as Serbia crumbles **(3,5)**
4. Confused private loses a hedge **(6)**
5. Polynesian garland certain to involve relaxation **(7)**
8. Problems result when Burt and Leo clash **(7)**
11. Southern hat in Cork **(7)**
13. Praise Patrol Leader before inspection **(7)**
15. And 12 Across. They help you get up and stay up **(6,11)**
16. It's incendiary when Communist louse returns **(6)**
17. Wow! A lieutenant goes pinkish-red! **(5)**
20. And 10 Across. Poor television jest about retired trainer **(3,7)**

Name .....
Address .....
.....
.....
RAF word ..... Crossword No. 268

Solutions should be sent in a sealed envelope marked **'Prize Crossword'** with the number in the top left-hand corner to *RAF News*, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP14 4UE to arrive by March 20, 2020.



Solution to Crossword No. 266

Across – **7.** Ericas **8.** Bowler 10. Prefect **11.** Amiss **12.** Grob **13.** Blues **17.** Prime **18.** Moth **22.** Hours **23.** Nairobi **24.** Flying **25.** Seance

Down – **1.** Seepage **2.** Viceroy **3.** Danes 4. Voyager **5.** Ulric **6.** Cross **9.** St Clement **14.** Present **15.** Cologne **16.** Shrivel **19.** Shaft **20.** Quays **21.** Tiger

RAF word: Hurricane

Prize Su Doku
No. 278

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.

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

Name .....
.....
Address .....
.....
.....Su Doku No. 278

Solutions should be sent in a sealed envelope marked 'Su Doku' with the number in the top left-hand corner to *RAF News*, to arrive by March 20, 2020.

Solution to Su Doku No: 277

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

Books
Older Dog? No Worries!
Veloce Books, £10.99

Looking after a man's best friend in the later years

DOGS AND the RAF have gone hand in lead since the Service's formative years. Countless famous names have sported canine companions, most famously Guy Gibson of 617 Squadron.

Once the days of jumping in and out of cockpits are over, many older dogs, not pilots, struggle, but new book *Older Dog? No Worries!* By Sian Ryan could well be the answer to hanging up their lead for a comfy bed.

The book aims to maintain your senior dog's physical, mental and emotional wellbeing and RnR has three copies of the book, published by Veloce Books for £10.99, to give away.

The book features full colour photographic illustrations from simple games to stimulate all your dog's senses to clear explanations for training and the latest cognitive research.

There is even a section giving practical and compassionate advice on dealing with the end of life of your loyal golden oldie.

To be in with a chance of winning a copy of *Older Dog? No Worries!* simply answer the following question:

What Squadron did Guy Gibson most famously belong to?

Email your answer, marked Dogs book competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: *RAF News*, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by March 20.

Please remember to include your full postal address with all competition entries.

By entering *RAF News* competitions you agree to us holding personal details for the purpose of sending out prizes.

COMPANIONS: WWII Ace Wg Cdr JE 'Johnnie' Johnson, leader of 144 (Canadian) Wing, rests on the wing of his Supermarine Spitfire IX with his Labrador retriever, Sally

Feature Gunpowder & Glory

FRANK BROCK: Little-known hero of the First World War

The real-life Q and Bond all rolled into one

Rocket man Brock was an inventor, spy and officer in all three Services

THE UNTOLD STORY of a spy, soldier and inventor who made an extraordinary contribution to victory in the First World War has been revealed in a new book.

Frank Arthur Brock is hailed as a remarkable real-life James Bond and 'Q' combined – 35 years before author Ian Fleming conjured up the characters.

Unusually commissioned as an officer in all three services – RAF, Navy and Army – he became a legend after ending Germany's dream of air supremacy by inventing a 'magic' bullet that could shoot down Zeppelin airships.

And his pioneering work in developing flares to illuminate targets and air-to-air missile technology grew into a key component of air warfare.

"He was far more than a back-room 'boffin'. He was also a man of action – a superb shot, an intrepid pilot and an expert in unarmed combat," says Lord Ashcroft in the book's forward.

"Frank Brock was my kind of hero, and it is high time that his extraordinary story was told… prepare to be inspired."

And authors Harry Smee, Brock's grandson and former acting editor of the *Sunday Express* Henry Macrory don't disappoint in *Gunpowder & Glory,* the first biography of a man whose initials appropriately spelt FAB.

It tells how before the war he was in the eighth generation of a world-famous family of pyrotechnicians and used his fireworks background in many of his inventions.

It details his ingenious invention of the Brock Bullet – a mixture of potassium chlorate and mercury sulphocyanide – which could pierce an airship's hydrogen gasbag and set fire to it.

It was the weapon that RFC ace 21-year-old Lieutenant William Leefe Robinson had in the machine guns of his 39 Sqn BE2c when he took off on a 'search and find,' mission on September 2, 1916.

Spotting an airship caught in searchlights 12,500 feet above London he riddled its entire length with bullets, but it flew on.

AIR-TO-AIR MISSILES: Le Prieur Rockets

"To the thousands of fascinated spectators who had gathered below, Leefe Robinson's plane looked like an insect fluttering around a great lamp.

"The young pilot had one drum of ammunition left and precious little fuel. Taking up position behind the airship, he dived down and poured the last of his bullets at the twin rudders.

"Seconds later the entire hull went up in flames as thousands of cubic feet of hydrogen ignited with a brilliance that turned night into day."

The airship plunged into a field in Hertfordshire, the other attacking Zeppelins turned and fled, and 48 hours later Leefe Robinson was awarded the VC.

But that wasn't Brock's only breakthrough. He developed coloured smoke signalling cartridges for British pilots to use in order to stop friendly fire accidents in daylight.

He designed and brought into production one of the earliest air-to-air missiles, the button-fired Brock Immediate Rocket carried and fired from tubes attached to the struts between the biplanes' wings they were praised for being half the size and weight of the rival Le Prieur Rockets.

And Brock's personal bravery knew no bounds.

On his wedding day he dashed to France, rowed across a lake into enemy territory and prepared the ground for the world's first strategic bombing raid on a Zeppelin base in South Germany.

His artificial fog invention to mask attacking vessels played a pivotal role in Zeebrugge, the war's most daring raid. Involved in the action, he was the most senior officer to fight and die on the mole in a naval sword fight.

Brock's Fireworks in Cheam was one of the most famous brands in the world and staged huge patriotic displays across the globe.

The company was behind the Official Peace Displays in 1919 and 1946 to mark the end of both World Wars and the Coronation Displays of King Edward VII, King George V, and Queen Elizabeth II.

■ ***Gunpowder & Glory: The Short Explosive Life of Frank Brock OBE*** **by Harry Smee & Henry Macrory is published in hardback by Casemate on March 16, priced £25.**

Chance to grab free book

WE HAVE copies of *Gunpowder & Glory* to give away. To be in with a chance of winning one, answer this question correctly:

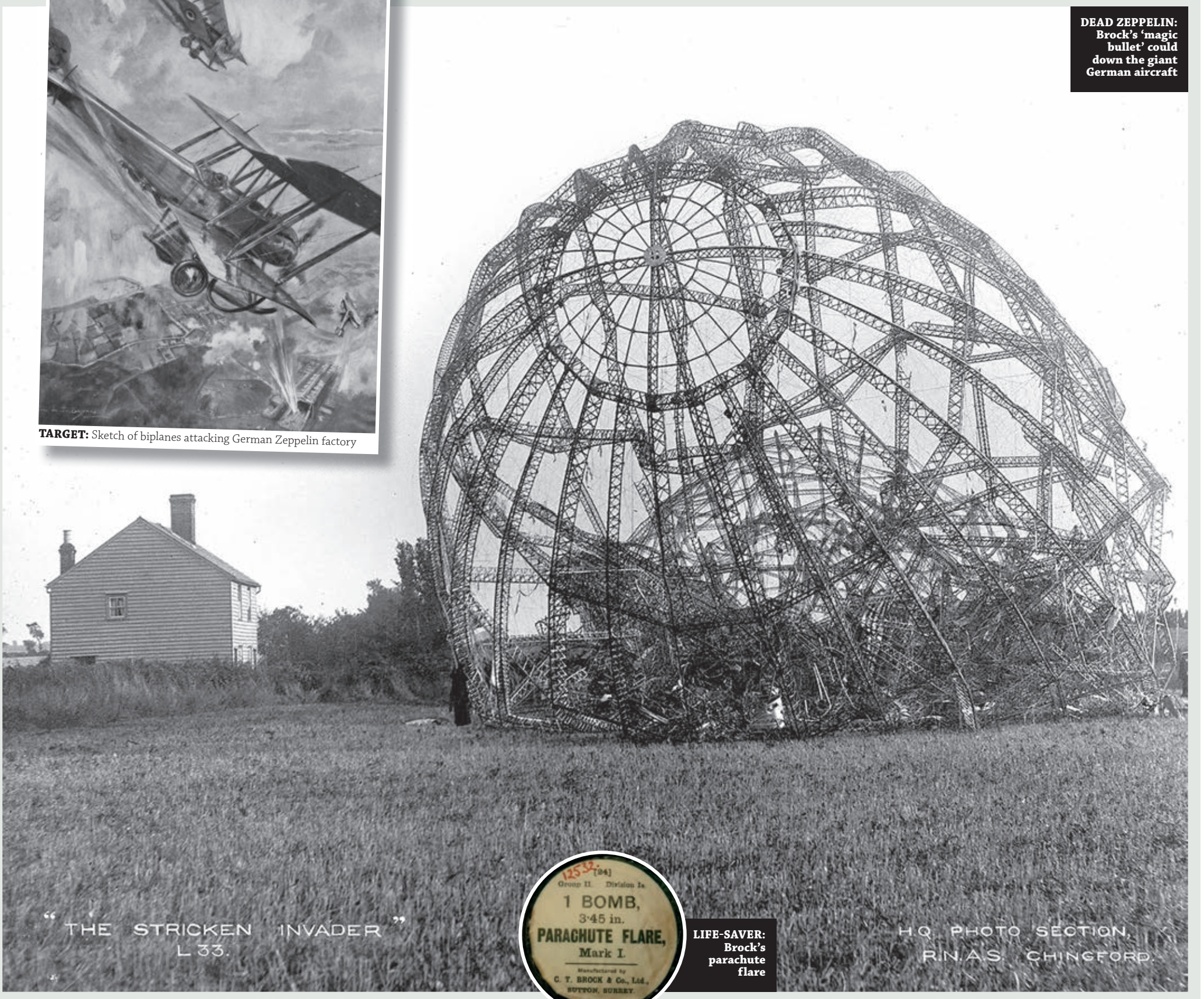
Where was Brock's Fireworks based?

Win!

Email your answer, marked Gunpowder competition, to: competitions@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by March 20.

By Simon Mander

TARGET: Sketch of biplanes attacking German Zeppelin factory



DEAD ZEPPELIN: Brock's 'magic bullet' could down the giant German aircraft

LIFE-SAVER: Brock's parachute flare

My grandad's lasting legacy

FRANK BROCK'S inventions revolutionised warfare writes author and grandson Harry Smee:

"By the time Frank Brock was commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1914 aged 30, he was already a brilliant and experienced pyrotechnician working for the British state.

"He had visited a Zeppelin base disguised as an American to research its potential vulnerabilities and had worked on smoke for screening and signalling purposes.

"During World War One his inventions solved significant problems for the Navy and Royal Naval Air Service, including coloured signalling flares and smoke cartridges to reduce the danger of friendly fire; parachute flares, dropped by pilots to illuminate ground or water below; and very strong flares suspended from kite balloons and towed behind ships to show up U-boats.

"Running air intelligence for the RNAS he was acutely aware of the importance of accurate aerial photography. He developed the use by British Forces of the French aluminium-framed, 120cm focal length cameras and developed a range of coloured filters (for goggles, binoculars and cameras) to increase clarity in bad weather.

"He improved bomb aiming techniques for aerial attack, but his major triumphs were: the anti-Zeppelin bullet; the Dover or Deck Flares that lit up the Channel at night and forced U-boats into deep mine fields and his smoke screen that enabled the Navy to approach the Mole at Zeebrugge on St George's Day 1918 – and then sail away without getting sunk.

"That smoke screen was still being used by the Navy in WWII and flares, including those used by the RAF Pathfinders in WWII, were based on technology originally developed by Frank Brock and his family."

PRIDE: Harry Smee (*r*) with co-author Macrory

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Obituary

Canadian Ace defied Nazi V-bomb terror

WING COMMANDER Russell Bannock, who has died aged 100, was one of the last of the Canadian 'Ace' fighter pilots.

Born in Edmonton, Canada, he began flying in 1938, gaining his commercial pilot's licence in April 1939 before flying with the Yukon Southern Air Transport.

He joined the RCAF in September 1939 and, after completing his training, he was employed as a flying instructor, a role he filled for the next three years.

In January 1944 he trained on the Mosquito and travelled to Britain to join No. 418 Squadron in June.

In the following 10 months, flying a Mosquito VI night fighter, he destroyed nine enemy aircraft in the air, two on the ground and shot down 19 V-1 flying bombs.

His first success came within a week of joining the squadron when he destroyed a Messerschmitt Bf 110 during an intruder mission over France.

For the next two months, with Flying Officer Bob Bruce as his navigator, he was active over the English Channel shooting down the V-1 'Doodlebugs' launched from the Pas de Calais towards London.

Bannock's first success against the V-1 came on the night of June 19.

On July 3 he was on a night patrol over the Channel when he shot down three of the terror weapons and three nights later he went one better when he shot down four in just one hour.

By the middle of August he had accounted for 19. In the meantime, he had also flown a few long-range intruder sorties to intercept German aircraft over their airfields. He shot down one and damaged another.

A return to full intruder missions at the end of August brought three further aerial victories.

On a sortie to Parow airfield on the Baltic coast on the night of September 27, Bannock saw a number of aircraft in the landing pattern and shot down two of them.

Flying debris from the second damaged his aircraft and he flew the 600 miles back to base at tree-top level on one engine. Bannock was awarded the DFC, with Bruce receiving one a month later.

Bannock was promoted to wing commander and took command of No 406 (RCAF) Squadron in October. He destroyed a Junkers 88 bomber over Paderborn on December 24. Ten days later he was over the airfield at Husum in Schleswig when he saw a Heinkel III preparing to land and he shot it down.

He then attacked another aircraft as it taxied on the airfield. On January 9, 1945, he was awarded a Bar to his DFC.

In March he flew to the Vienna area and damaged an enemy aircraft before shooting up a train.

On the night of April 4 he was heading for east Germany when he saw the airfield at Delmenhorst lit up and he attacked a Focke Wulf 190 and saw strikes on the aircraft before the lights were extinguished, so could only claim a "probable".

Bannock's final success came on April 23 when he found a Junkers 88 bomber over Wittstock airfield and shot it down.

Bannock left 406 Squadron at the end of May and shortly after he was awarded the DSO.

The citation concluded: "Under this officer's inspiring leadership his squadron has obtained a fine record of successes." He was Canada's leading night fighter pilot.

He spoke highly of his pilots and credited his various navigators for much of his success saying: "It was teamwork, very much so."

The importance of his missions had been brought home to him when his brother-in-law, a 20-year-old Lancaster pilot, was killed in action.

Bannock left the RCAF in May 1946 and joined de Havilland (Canada) as chief test pilot and operations manager. In 1947 he flew the de Havilland DHC-2 Beaver prototype and demonstrated its short take-off and landing (STOL) capabilities so well that the US Forces subsequently ordered 978.

Throughout the next 20 years, Bannock found success selling the company's other STOL aircraft, including the Otter, Twin Otter, Caribou and Beaver.

He rose to become the company's head of military sales and later president and chief executive officer. In 1978 he retired to form Bannock Aerospace specialising in trading and leasing de Havilland aircraft, working until well into his 70s.

He became the chairman of the Canadian Fighter Pilots' Association and was inducted into Canada's Hall of Fame in 1983.

For his contribution to the Canadian aerospace industry he was appointed to the Order of Ontario.

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HOBSON'S CHOICE: Engines only come in petrol

LITTLE BEAUTY: But A1 lacks a bit of punch

A1's a NOT hatch

It's more luke warm than 'hot'

AUDI HAS been a benchmark for precision engineering for many years and if you're looking for a nippy city car then the A1 is not only the smallest Audi in the range but also the cheapest. Prices start from £18,540 but most buyers choose to upgrade to either Sport or S Line models to give their A1s that bit more prestige.

As diesel is now a rather dirty word for the Volkswagen Audi Group, you won't find one in the new A1 range. Instead you can choose petrols that range from the baby 94 Bhp model to the beefy 197 Bhp 2.0.

Our car was the midpoint 147 Bhp 1.5-litre TFSI, that hits 62mph in 7.5 seconds. The S Line Style Edition costs £27,770 on the road and comes with all the whistles and bells, including a special LED lighting pack. It's not especially fast by hot hatch standards but it gets into its stride at around 1500 rpm and just keeps going, so it's a lot of fun. It's certainly a snappy hatch that's in Mini Cooper territory, although disappointingly it doesn't come in 3-door guise so it's not really a true hot hatch in that respect.

This is the second generation A1 and it's been a while coming. After eight years Audi finally decided that it was time to risk a complete reboot of its popular baby model and the result is likely to please A1 fans.

Underneath it all, the new A1 is basically the same chassis as the VW Polo and the Seat Ibiza but it's easy to forget that. Externally it looks very different and, with a more athletic stance, it appears to be quite a muscular little machine. It may not have as much character as a Mini but it looks like a mean little bit of kit when it appears in your rear view mirror.

On the road

The A1 is a really eager little car to drive. The speed-adaptive steering works well, feeling light around town but having enough weight to remain steady on faster, winding roads. The steering is also reassuringly precise.

There is a small amount of body roll on tight bends at speed but it's nothing major and the A1 is, in fact, particularly tenacious in terms of grip. When it does eventually reach the limit the break away is gradual and predictable too. It's not the best handling car in this class but it comes a good way up the list.

On the motorway the engine is hushed and the ride is forgiving. There is a little wind and road noise, the latter amplified a little by the larger alloy wheels, but it's nothing that's going to put you off.

The manual 6-speed box has a slightly longer travel than you would expect and it's not the slickest shift either. The clutch is really fierce and unless you get your revs well up in advance it's very easy to stall it, which is not ideal. A seven-speed twin clutch auto box is available for £1,520 but we've yet to put that to the test.

PRESTIGE: Audi logo adds value

Sadly, Audi's iconic Quattro four-wheel drive system isn't offered on any A1. There's also no sign of an S1 on the horizon, or a full electric variant either for that matter.

In the cabin

Despite being a small car the A1 has plenty of room inside. Head room and interior width in the front are almost best in class, but you'll find slightly less leg room than in the new Mini. The A1 doesn't lead its class for space in the rear either but it's fine for everyday use.

The seats in the A1 S Line feel particularly plush for a small car, finished in what Audi calls 'Twin Leather'. The driving position's spot on, with the steering wheel and pedals perfectly aligned to the driver. The steering wheel also has plenty of adjustment for reach and rake. The wheel itself is taken from the TT and it gives the A1 a real sports performance look.

If you're expecting the A1 to feel like a hot hatch though you may be disappointed because the driver's seat doesn't go quite low enough in my book. Likewise, the seats don't offer quite enough support to hold you in place through the tight corners.

INTERIOR: There's plenty of room

One thing I do like is that the dashboard features actual controls, physical buttons that keep the heating system away from the fiddly touch-screens that we so often find these days. That's not to say that the A1 S Line is in any way low-tech, far from it.

Our car came with Audi's 'Virtual Cockpit' a fully-digital dash. Part of this is the 10.1in infotainment system which is an impressive set-up for such a small car. It includes sat-nav, wireless phone charging and a handwriting pad. Thrown in is also a 36-month subscription to Audi Connect, which will give you features like email and Google Earth. On the downside, like many of these systems, using the touchscreen is fiddly enough to require a lengthy look away from the road.

Also fitted was the optional 11-speaker, 560-watt Bang & Olufsen sound system which produced seriously loud, crystal-clear audio. Lower models come with Bluetooth, a DAB radio and Apple CarPlay/Android Auto smartphone mirroring as standard. These allow you to use selected apps on your smartphone, including its sat-nav, through the touchscreen.

Overall the cabin is very well put together and feels reassuringly upmarket but when you look closer it does have a few drawbacks. The largest of these is the choice of plastics in some areas. Things like the centre console, the cup holders and the tops of the doors feel scratchy and, quite frankly, scruffy. Interior quality is therefore no longer outstanding in an A1, which is a pity.

Visibility

Front visibility is good thanks to relatively thin front pillars. Rear visibility is less impressive however due to chunky rear panels and a relatively small rear screen. The S Line reduces the problem with a suite of parking aids that include sensors and a rear camera. These are available as an option on lower models and we'd heartily recommend them.

Value

The A1 is produced to be a designer brand. It's a small car but it's still an Audi and that's something VAG thinks customers will be willing to pay for. Compared to its VW Polo cousin you'll pay a good premium on top and yet it's still cheaper than an equivalent BMW Mini 5dr.

Where Audi's A1 really wins in the value department however is that it has the lowest depreciation of any car in the class, so it will always be a sound investment.

Audi A1

Pros

- Awesome resale values
- Plenty of cabin space
- Smooth ride & smart handling
- Relatively quiet at higher speeds
- Great interior design
- Impressive touchscreen interface

Cons

- Little feedback through the steering
- Poorly equipped in lower models
- Not as affordable as a Volkswagen Polo
- Solid engines but not dynamic
- Poor exhaust note – no real tune under load

Verdict

Overall, the A1 is a great little car. It's a pleasant driving experience, nicely predictable and it's no slouch. What it isn't is a Quattro or a hot hatch and that misses an open goal as far as we're concerned. At the end of the day it has its faults but it's relatively spacious inside and offers a better premium package than most small cars. The Volkswagen Polo has very similar qualities and is available for far less but, let's be honest, badges matter. When it comes to price-holding prestige, the A1 excels.

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6 pages of **RAF Sport** start here

RAF Men on an amazing run in Cross Country Inter-Services: p30

PADDY POWER

DARK ART: Dusk snowboarding
PHOTO: CPL NICK EGAN

WINTER SPORTS

RAF boarder Patrick gives 'em all hell in Meribel

HATTA BOY: Flt Lt Paddy Morris

IT WAS touted as a year of change and that's exactly what it proved to be for the RAF's Alpine sports stars at the Inter-Services in Meribel.

New blood for the skiers and a focus on grass-roots development for the snowboarders meant podiums were not the target for 2020 at the blizzard-hit French resort, which saw delays and alterations to races because of the extreme weather.

> "This was the most successful year in recent history"

So to have brought home a top-spot finish for the women's skiers and an individual snowboarding title in the men's event for Flt Lt Patrick 'Paddy' Morris proved the quality still at the heart of each of the association's teams.

Women's ski team captain Flt Lt Claire Nixon said: "This was the most successful year in recent history. Our victory was decisive with the RAF winning

Turn to p34 for more

Sport

CROSS COUNTRY

Rock steady

Men take Inters crown for 11th time at Gibraltar Barracks in, er, Hampshire

WINNING STREAK: The RAF's Fg Off Mike Kallenberg (No. 22) and Wg Cdr Ben Livesey (No. 20)
PHOTOS: PETER DAVIES, *SOLDIER MAGAZINE*

TRUE GRIT: LAC Chloe Richardson

U23s and Masters also celebrate victories

IT WAS business as usual at the Inter-Services Cross Country Championships as the Royal Air Force men claimed an 11th successive title, albeit by the narrowest of margins.

At the end of a gruelling 10km slog at Gibraltar Barracks, in Minley, it was just a single point that proved decisive as the defending champions held off the challenge of a resurgent Army squad.

RAF LADIES: Good showing but beaten by the Army

> "It was quite tight and every position counts. We all ran our guts out"

Fg Off Mike Kallenberg won the battle for individual honours as he pulled clear of Army rival Maj Ed Knudsen (REME) to cross the line in first place.

With teammates Wg Cdr Ben Livesey and SAC Will Gardner claiming third and fourth spots respectively the RAF looked well set for another dominant win, but with their rivals scoring welcome points down the field the outcome proved to be far from straightforward.

The close nature of the contest resulted in a lengthy scrutiny of the final standings before the victors were eventually announced.

Speaking afterwards Kallenberg said: "The main thing is the team result. It was quite tight today and every position counts. We all ran our guts out."

Livesey added: "It is a team race. The plan was to see how good Ed was, I held back and Mike went with him. It certainly worked out well for us."

Elsewhere, the RAF also celebrated wins in the under-23s and masters competitions, but the Army hosts were triumphant in the women's race, where they claimed a 15th successive title.

RUGBY UNION

Red Roses regular is in her elements

FG OFF AMY COKAYNE has seen her return to the England rugby union fold blow hot and cold, but not in her titanic performances, rather the extremes of the British weather.

Cokayne, who was central to the Red Roses' hard-fought win over France in Pau in the team's opening Six Nations clash in the blazing sun, was then selected as replacement for the team's 53-0 demolition of Scotland in Edinburgh in snow blizzards.

She said: "It was good to be back in camp with the England Squad for this Six Nations, the conditions for the French game in Pau were perfect for running rugby; sunny and 28 degrees.

"The next game against Scotland couldn't have been more different. We were scheduled to play on the Sunday, but due to Storm Ciara the match was postponed and moved from Glasgow to Murrayfield, in Edinburgh.

"Due to the rescheduling the game was played win no spectators on Monday afternoon, in blizzard conditions at times.

"The front row had been rotated so I came off the bench in the second half. Despite the conditions we still managed to work the ball wide and our back three got on the scoreboard several times. I came on as a finisher and I was happy with my performance.

"My core roles went well and we pushed their scrum over the line for a try. I got a bit more ball in hand and I felt I supported the team, who were frozen when I came on, by bringing more energy in attack and defence.

"We eventually came away with the win against a much-improved Scotland team.

"On March 7 we're at the Stoop, which is where I play for my club, Harlequins. This will be a really special occasion as it could be my 50th England cap. It would be great if the RAF Family could be there in force to help me celebrate.

"If anyone has tickets for the men's game at Twickenham, why not have a few beers in The Stoop before you move to HQ?"

■ Follow Flt Lt Cokayne and the Red Roses on Twitter @Englandrugby and the RAF women's team @ RAFRU_Women.

STOOP TO CONQUER: Fg Off Amy Cokayne wants RAF support at home of Quins

TABLE TENNIS

Young guns bring plenty to the table

...but Johnson proves experience is king by walking off with crown

THE FUTURE was bright at the Service's Festival of Table Tennis, which returned to its usual 'Home for Sport' of RAF Halton with a large turnout of players of all abilities, including several new faces.

The round robin tournament lasted three days and produced several surprise victories.

Experienced Chf Tech Richie Johnson remained undefeated and walked away as overall winner, with the remaining four of the top five all players who have been challenging for the title in the last few years.

SAC Ben Law put in an exceptional performance to take second overall, while the remaining top-five spots went to players all sitting outside the top 20 of RAF ranked players.

Young guns SACs Liam Irlam and Sam Evans took third and fourth respectively.

Cpl Joe Newbould made good progress and deservedly took fifth, with several unexpected wins.

The new RAF TTA President, Air Cdre Nigel Colman, attended the final day – playing in the last round of matches.

Chf Tech Craig Walton said: "The festival is a great introduction to table tennis for those new to the sport and it's a great opportunity to develop personnel who already play, either at station level or beyond.

"The next competition is the RAF Table Tennis Championships on March 25-27 at Halton, which is open to all RAF personnel.

"Additionally, there are several training academies held throughout the year to coach and develop players of all abilities. Look out for more information on the RAF TT page on MODNet or search RAF Table Tennis on Facebook."

THIRD: SAC Liam Irlam; and (*inset left*) SAC Louise Hart in play

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Sport

FOOTBALL

How we won IS 2020

HEAD COACH Sgt Leon Duke was rightly brimming with pride after his U23 MDS side hammered the Royal Navy 4-0 to take the Inter-Services title.

Here, he tells *RAF News* how they did it.

"Having watched a very good Navy team win the 2019 championship, I felt I needed to go away and learn a new system to get the absolute best out of the players we had at our disposal.

"I went away all summer with a club in Wales who used this system to keep learning and asking questions.

"Around November we played Dorking Wanderers away (3-0) and something clicked. Pretty much from then I knew we'd have a great chance at IS.

"I felt two weeks ago we showed about 60 per cent of what we could do, yesterday I challenged the players to give me at least 20/30 per cent more.

"In my time as a player, coach and manager at U23 level that was one of the most complete performances I've ever seen: the boys' drive, ruthlessness and understanding of the system. I think it showed, if you were lucky enough to watch the game live.

NEW SYSTEM: Sgt Duke

"It is difficult to pick a stand-out player, but in this system if you get a centre forward, full back or both on the scoresheet it's testament to them understanding the method, so to get both centre forwards and both full backs on the score sheet is fantastic.

"It's a great achievement."

■ Continued from p35

out and stopped them playing and then just got into our game.

"We were aware of last year, so I just kept the lads up for it really, it could have turned, but we didn't allow that."

Fully focused on not letting their lead slip, the RAF squeezed the Navy into their own half. Once beaten into submission, the RAF team set about winning the tie. Spalding showed his poaching talent in the 56th minute, making it 3-0. From there the Service side began taking pot shots from all angles, with SAC Sam Dawson making it four at the back post in the 90th minute.

LEAGUES AHEAD: Convincing win for RAF MDS PHOTOS: SAC RYAN MURRAY

INDOOR ROWING

FS Saxton on top of world in Paris

Rowers make their mark in gruelling test of fitness and endurance

RAF ATHLETES stamped their name on the first ever World Indoor Rowing Championships (WIRC) to feature all three Services, in Paris.

The event, the third of its kind and the first to be held outside the US, saw the team of six in light blue achieve a number of top-10 and 20 finishes against some of the best on the planet.

FS James Saxton recorded six minutes and 11 seconds, the quickest UKAF two-kilometre time of the day, in the over-40 group. The run secured him fourth in the world.

He said: "We are all hoping the impressive finishes will encourage further participation among the wider RAF in what is a very accessible sport."

A field of more than 2000 athletes from a record 51 different countries took part at the Pierre de Coubertin Stadium.

Cpl Andy Nexcombe (Honington) was first to go in the Men's 50-54 category, finishing 43rd in a personal best time of one minute, 38 seconds.

Boulmer's FS Saxton and Chf Tech Gerry Armstrong (Brize) were next in the 40-49 race. Saxton's PB (1.22) secured 14th, with Armstrong's 1.23.7 sealing 19th.

The highest RAF placing of the day saw Cpl Tom Jackman (Honington, 1.19.7) secure a top-10 finish in the 30-39 group.

In the same race Sgt Paul Savage (Honington) finished 22nd in (1.23). The RAF's only female competitor, SAC Alex Robinson (High Wycombe), finished 13th (1.42.9).

In the men's 2000m Newcombe, came 43rd (7.35), Saxton then produced his wonder row to come fourth, with Armstrong 18th.

The Men's 30-39 category saw Jackman and Savage get 14th and 19th respectively. SAC Robinson's 7.46.7 sealed 22nd.

The RAF Indoor Rowing Club will be holding training camps throughout the year until the season restarts in October. Follow the club on Twitter @RAF_Rowing_Club for more details.

ON YOUR MARKS: Rowers prepare for the start of a lung-busting row in Paris

Sport

WINTER SPORTS

SKILL: RAF skier
PHOTO: CPL NICHOLAS EGAN

Inters team elation for the ladies

RAF skiers scoop most of the titles in France

● **Continued from p29**

the coveted overall team event as well as the Slalom, Giant Slalom and Super G.

"Individually, ladies won an impressive number of podium places with Cpl Rachel Hughes once again becoming the Inter-Services overall champion, the Super G, Super Combined champion and the Giant Slalom champion. She also achieved silver in the Downhill and Slalom events.

"I placed third in the overall individual competition as well as second in the Super Combined and third in the Giant Slalom, so am delighted with that."

Snowboard chairman, Wg Cdr Nicola Duncan, said: "Both the men's and ladies' snowboard teams gave it their all in the three events, both mentally and physically. While we didn't win the team events, Flt Lt Paddy Morris won the PGS and SBX, which sealed his victory as the overall UK Armed Forces male champion.

SAC(T) Barnaby Rudge, men's ski team captain, added: "This was another building year for the men, where we again finished third, with four new guys making the team.

"There were some excellent individual performances from all the guys, especially a couple of the new arrivals, who earned counting times for the team in their first year."

Telemark captain Sqn Ldr Johnny Young was proud of his charges, despite coming third.

He said: "The team did well at Meribel, but still came third overall. We had some good individual performances and worked very well as a team."

Any female personnel interested in finding out about the ski team should email Flt Lt Nixon: Claire.nixon510@mod.gov.uk. For Telemark check out the team's Facebook page: RAF Telemark or on Twitter @RAFTelemark.

OVERALL WINNERS: RAF Ladies Skiers, with Cpl Rachel Hughes (*far left*)

TOUGH GOING: RAF men's team skier battles on

FULL OF TRICKS: RAF snowboarders

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Paddy powers to Inters victory

Sport P29

Runners stride to 11 titles in a row

Sport P30

Young guns make their mark in the table tennis

Sport P31

FOOTBALL

That's four-some

PHOTO: SAC Ryan Murray

Celebrations as goal blitz sinks Navy in Inters

THE SERVICE'S U23 men's football team produced a 4-0 result two years in the making to secure the 2020 IS title.

Head Coach Sgt Leon Duke's men were a class above in every position as they dispatched the Royal Navy in the tournament's third clash, at Oxford City's Court Place Farm ground. They'd opened their account beating the Army 2-1 in the first game, at Aldershot.

RAF U23 MDS	4
Royal Navy U23 MDS	0

Duke said: "I'm absolutely delighted. We had a good night last night, but for a few their season isn't over, they now need to put it behind them so we can all focus our attention and support to the senior teams and hope that they can use a little of this momentum to gain success in their championships."

A rainy and cold Farm ground saw the Service men battle out an even opening against the Navy. Duke's men were looking to use the quick-firing front line of SACs Alex More, Liam Wood and Joe Spalding out wide to get in behind the visitors. In the ninth minute More got a sight of goal, forcing a good parry from the Navy keeper. SAC Ross Glibbery then tried his luck from range in the 14th minute, after great work from More and team captain SAC Kyle Willis.

More slotted home after 19 minutes, from a stunning Willis pass. Ten minutes later it was 2-0 as Wood saw an effort parried back out into the penalty area, before SAC Brodie Gray smashed home off a deflection.

Willis said: "Things clicked throughout. The boys were class from start to finish, we shut them

Continued on p33

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