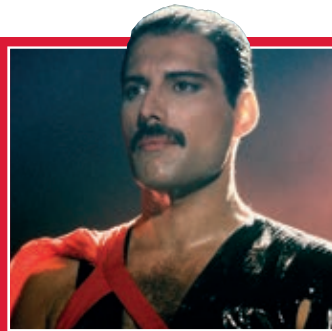


The Forces' favourite paper



Host with the most
See page 7



A kind of magic – Freddie Mercury
See R'n'R page 4

ROYAL AIR FORCE

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RAF News

Jump-ace Alice first RAF woman 'Para'



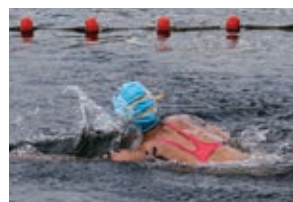
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Athletics
Lossie Sgt has a bawl



See p23

Swimming
Centenary dominance continues



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Watersports
All aboard for Inters



See page 27

Russia star wars threat



THIS DRAMATIC shot of a Chinook crewman taking in the views during Arctic training topped the vote in this year's RAF Photographic competition 'People's Choice' award.

Cpl Jake Hobbs collected the trophy for his image titled *Heavy is the Crown* at the winners' ceremony at Bentley Priory.



AIR CHIEFS are set to boost UK space capabilities as part of a £9 billion investment to safeguard military and commercial satellites from Russian aggression.

The announcement comes after the MOD revealed details of Russian space assets closing in on Finnish communications satellites and disruptions to GPS services across Europe, Greenland and Canada.

Chief of the Air Staff, ACM Sir Harv Smyth, has announced the formation of a new Space Effects Squadron to guard satellites delivering GPS to military and commercial users, alongside a £2bn boost to the military Skynet system.

ACM Smyth said: "Our adversaries are developing sophisticated space systems and have the capability and the intent to use them. It's time to act and deliver with our space capabilities."

See page 3 for full story

BiteSize

“They changed my hair because they said I looked too German,”



Leeming Met Office expert lands role in D-Day blockbuster

See page 5

“Wake up Britain, we need to do something about our defences,”



Dame Penny Mordaunt – See R’n’Rp3

“I’m delighted for the fans, who turned out in numbers,”



Wolves Women manager WO Dan McNamara on his team’s strong start to the season

See p24



ROYAL AIR FORCE
RAF News

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Hawk Anglesey crash

HAWK OPERATIONS, including Red Arrows displays, have been temporarily paused following a crash near RAF Valley.

Both pilots ejected safely before the aircraft plummeted to the ground in nearby Pencarnisiog, Anglesey.

Chief of the Air Staff, ACM Sir Harv Smyth, said the accident was a stark reminder of the risks inherent in military aviation.

He said: “My thoughts are with the two pilots, who safely ejected and continue to receive medical treatment, their families and all those affected.”

The trainee and instructor who parachuted from the aircraft are expected to make a full recovery after being treated for their injuries.

ACM Smyth added: “I am greatly relieved that both pilots survived and that there were no reported casualties on the ground. Incidents such as this are rare and serve as a testament to the professionalism and dedication of the aviators who keep our aircraft flying safely every day.”



This Week In History



1943 WAAF posting

AIR CDT Lady Mary Welsh is appointed director of the WAAF before being promoted to Chief Air Commandant. She retires in 1946 and the rank is never used again.

1969 Nimrod debut

THE FIRST Nimrod maritime reconnaissance aircraft enters service with the Maritime Operational Training unit at St Mawgan.



1980 RAF prison duty

PM MARGARET Thatcher calls in the RAF Police to enhance security at prisons across the UK during a strike by national prison officers.

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

BLAST OFF: SpaceX Falcon rocket launches the UK's first military satellite, Tyche, from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California in 2024

RAF must deliver on space Ops

CAS warning as Russia targets Nato satellites

Simon Mander

UK DEFENCE is ramping up space operations amid growing fears of enemy attacks on military and commercial satellites in low earth orbit.

Air Force space chiefs revealed aggressive actions by five Russian military space vehicles closing in on commercial satellites operated by Nato's newest member, Finland, in May this year.

In another incident Russian space assets were able to disrupt GPS communications across Europe, Greenland and Canada over two months earlier this summer.

Defence chiefs have unveiled £9 billion of funding to strengthen UK space operations, including a £2bn investment in the existing Skynet satellite system and the development of new space tech.

The government also hopes to build a sovereign space port capable of launching satellites from Saxa Vord in the Shetland Islands.

Speaking to senior military commanders from across the Nato alliance at the UK Space Conference in London, Chief of the Air Staff, ACM Sir Harv Smyth, said: "We are now seeing more and more irresponsible and provocative actions.

"Our adversaries are developing sophisticated space systems and they have both the capability and the intent to use them.

"At the heart of the UK space arsenal, and a major offer to our global alliance, is Skynet. It's the backbone of the UK's sovereign global comms capability and provides command and control for our entire integrated force.

"The new Space Strategy outlines

how the UK government will act as regards space, making our nation a competitive space power, assertive in protecting our interests and driving our own economic growth. To protect the nation to help it prosper is the MOD's aim.

"Whilst we are building sovereign space capabilities, these will always be part of a Nato force and always part of our strategic deterrence approach.

"Nato has expanded the scope of our collective defence policy, making it clear that attacks to, from, or within space present a clear threat to the alliance. An attack on one of us in space is an attack on all of us, just as it is in the other, more traditional domains.

"It is time to get moving. It's time to act, and it's time to deliver more meaningfully with our space capabilities."

New squadron eyes star wars threat

Simon Mander

SATELLITES VITAL to everyday life in the UK are to be protected from hostile threats by a new Air Force unit.

III Space Effects Sqn will focus on disrupting, degrading and denying enemy activity targeting British interests in space.

It will guard satellites that guide British ships, connect mobile phones and warn of missile attacks.

The announcement was made by CAS ACM Sir Harv Smith at the first UK Space Conference.

He said: "Space no longer supports operations from the sidelines. It's a domain of direct competition, where our military advantage can be won or lost.

"III Space Effects Sqn will safeguard the vital benefits that space gives to our integrated Armed Forces and will be capable of denying those benefits to our adversaries."

While I and II Space Operations Sqn give the RAF the ability to watch and warn of threats in space, the new unit will act against those threats, using advanced technology.

The squadron will support both offensive and defensive space operations and will expand over time as new capabilities enter service.

The work delivers on the UK Space Strategy published earlier this month, and builds on the

Strategic Defence Review, which made clear that the ability to operate in, from and through space underpins the UK's security, prosperity and way of life.

Britain has formally ruled out destructive anti-satellite missile testing and continues to work through the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to promote norms, rules and principles of responsible space behaviours.





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Pressure on Met ace

Weatherman Bill lands Hollywood role

STORMING PERFORMANCE: Leeming Met officer Bill Shiel Dods on set during filming of blockbuster movie *Pressure*. Inset below, in period uniform

Lynn Dunne

LEEMING'S SENIOR Met officer's traditional forecasting skills won him a background role in Hollywood's latest blockbuster movie, documenting the drama behind the most important weather forecast in military history.

Pressure documents the tense run-up to Operation Overlord. Scottish meteorologist Gp Capt James Stagg clashed with US Col Irving P Krick about the most favourable date for thousands of troops to land on Normandy beaches for D-Day.

Relying on historical patterns and analogue forecasting, Krick argued that the originally planned date of June 5 should go ahead. Stagg, however, stood firm in his analysis of intelligence from numerous weather stations,

predicting that invasion on that date would be disastrous.

Weather charts during WWII were drawn and plotted by hand – something that was still a core skill when Bill Shiel Dods joined the profession in 1984.

Now more used to consulting radars and satellites, he was thrilled when he heard that movie makers were seeking applications from forecasters who could calculate the old-fashioned way.

He said: "I was sent a two-minute script, and my team videoed me plotting surface charts. I sent that off and thought I probably wouldn't hear anything – a few weeks later I went down to Borehamwood for a costume fitting!"

Filming took place at Mentmore Towers in

Buckinghamshire, where Bill was astonished by the attention to detail in the recreated forecast room. "It took me back to when I joined the Met Office – it felt utterly authentic and the charts looked absolutely spot on from the era. Even the ashtrays were full of cigarette butts.

"I was given a vintage watch to wear and prescription glasses. They even changed my hair because they said I looked too German!"

Bill was able to get up close to actors Andrew Scott and Brendan Fraser but managed to not get too star struck.

"People were just so busy and professional, trying to do a good job. The scene

I'm in took pretty much a whole day to film," he said.

The Met Office continues to play a vital role for the Royal Air Force, whether on operations or helping to ensure safe flying for stations across the UK. *Pressure* has served as a timely reminder of its importance.

Bill said: "There is a real connection between what we do and what Stagg was doing.

"Met officers give the best unbiased, unvarnished forecast that we can so that the military can make safe operational decisions. I can empathise with Stagg and to an extent with Krick as well.

"They were making decisions which were mission critical. It wasn't just people's lives at risk – it was the fate of the rest of the war. I could really put myself in his shoes."

Drone strike Atlas alert

Simon Mander

TRANSPORT CREWS deployed to Poland are honing counter drone techniques following recent Russian attacks across Ukraine.

70 Sqn Atlas crews launched tactical take-off and landing drills after an Italian Air Force jet shot down a UAV over Lithuania.

Working alongside Polish Air Force pilots, British crews are

also rehearsing low-level flying and loading and unloading Nato vehicles.

Officer Commanding 70 Sqn, Wg Cdr Doug Grove, said: "Giving our crews the chance to practise unprepared runway operations ensures the RAF remains ready to fly and fight.

"Seamless interoperability with our Nato partners reinforces the cohesion of the Alliance and a great deal of mutual learning has taken

place with our Polish friends."

Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte said Russian drone strikes near the Ukraine-Poland border would drive the alliance to increase its support for Kyiv.

He said: "The strikes on trains in Ukraine close to Nato territory again show Putin's desperation and desire to sow fear and terror.

"Russia is growing increasingly reckless as it continues its terrible war against Ukraine."



TOP JOB: Chaplain-in-Chief AVM Giles Legood (left) with the rebuilt steeple

Tip top

THE REBUILT steeple at the RAF's church, St Clement Danes in The Strand, London, has a newly-regilded weathervane after a topping out ceremony.

Chair of Trustees Alan Gillespie attended along with representatives of the Project Team and contractor Universal Stone Ltd.

A topping out ceremony is traditionally held to mark the fixing of the last piece of a significant building component and provides an opportunity for all those who have been involved with the project to celebrate its completion.

In the case of a church, it is also not unusual for a blessing to be made by way of thanks.

Runway upgrade

A £53 MILLION refurbishment of Waddington airfield has begun.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation has appointed Ramboll UK to do the work at the home of the RAF's ISTAR Force and the Red Arrows.

Flying operations will continue during the work upgrading aircraft bays and drainage and installing new lighting.

Head of Air Infrastructure Air Cdre Phil Reid said: "Our commitment to investing in the RAF's operational capability is clearly demonstrated in this project."





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FUNDRAISER: Lady Colin Campbell (right) with Star and Garter's Clare Silva

Lady C's Star turn

Staff Reporter

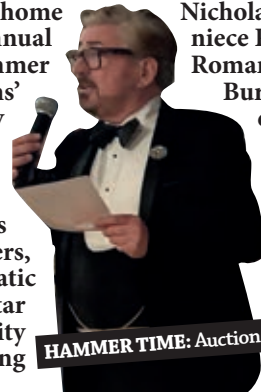
SOCIETY YOUTUBER Lady Colin Campbell threw open the gates of her Castle Goring stately home to host an annual fundraising summer ball for veterans' housing charity the Star and Garter.

Known as Lady C to her thousands of followers, the aristocratic internet star hosted a charity auction netting

nearly £10,000 for the group which provides care for vets battling dementia.

More than 170 guests joined Lady's C's family and Tsar Nicholas II of Russia's grand-niece Princess Olga Andreevna Romanoff and the Earl of Burford, who flew in for the event by helicopter.

Speaking after the event, Lady C said: "It was a pleasure to open my home again for this wonderful charity and support the important work Care for Veterans do for veterans and their families."



HAMMER TIME: Auction

Bulletin



AWARD: Youngsters take part in learning activities at RAF Museum

Museum win

THE RAF Museum's London venue has netted a top educational award for its learning programme aimed at school age kids. Museum bosses were presented with the Sandford Award – the second time it's won it in the last five years.



Station honour

FYLINGDALES IS set to receive the highest honour that can be bestowed by local council chiefs in recognition of its role in Britain's defence.

Whitby civic leaders will meet later this month to consider granting the base on the North York Moors the Honorary Freedom of the Town of Whitby.

Although such honours are often awarded to individuals, they can also be conferred on military establishments in recognition of their collective service.

The council said the award would recognise the station's 'distinguished service' and close association with Whitby over more than six decades.

If approved, the honour would formally recognise a relationship that has seen "generations of Service personnel, civilian staff and their families" live and work in Whitby and the surrounding area, a town council report said.

A council spokesperson said the Freedom of the Town was traditionally granted to military units and establishments in recognition of their service and enduring relationship with a community.

"Although individual personnel will change over time, the honour remains with the military unit or establishment to which it has been granted," they said.

Cobra nations strike in the UK



Simon Mander

THE UK'S biggest homeland defence drill kicked off with aircraft from four Nato nations flying into Lincolnshire.

Jets from Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the US will put in appearances as the allies seek to practise fighting together.

Chief of the Air Staff ACM Sir Harv Smyth said: "The return of great power competition across the globe and the significant, and growing, threat posed by Russia to the UK and Nato makes this, by

far, the most dangerous period in my 35 years of service. Cobra Warrior gives us the opportunity to practise our response to aggression, ensuring we are testing our defences and ability to operate alongside Nato partners during a real conflict."

Due to take part in the twice-yearly training are Typhoons, Lightnings, F-15E Strike Eagle helicopters and Chinooks.

Personnel from Odiham's 27 Sqn operating out of Leeming flew low level in the rugged terrain of the North of England to evade fast jets trying to intercept.

They moved members of the RAF

Regiment, getting them to their intended target where they disembarked or fast roped.

Earlier this month German jets landed at Cranwell, where they are staying for the duration of the exercise.

Cranwell station commander Wg Cdr Mathew Thornton said: "Visits such as these are invaluable and we are incredibly proud to welcome them."

P-8 Poseidons, a Voyager tanker, Airbus 400M, a C-17, Wildcat helicopters and a Dassault Falcon 20 jet are also set to take part.



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SADDLE SCORE: RBL riders have raised £10 million over the last 30 years

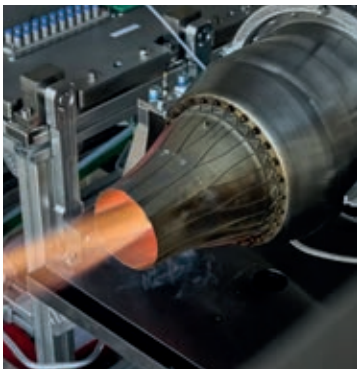
Arc & ride

CYCLISTS SET off from Biggin Hill in the longest-running charity bike ride that has so far raised more than £10.5 million over the past 30 years.

More than 100 riders will attempt the 285 miles to the French capital, passing through the Somme before reaching the finishing line at the Arc de Triomphe.

Money raised by Pedal to Paris allows the Royal British Legion to provide recovery programmes for injured Service personnel and grants for housing and the transition to civilian life.

RBL's Teresa Greener said: "To see such dedicated people from across the country come together to show their support for the Armed Forces community is truly inspiring."



Jet deal

FUTURE DRONES and larger aircraft could be powered by a new family of digitally manufactured turbojet engines, built entirely in Britain.

And a partnership between the MOD and UK start-up Allied has seen one engine taken from concept to flight in under seven months.

Built and tested in Britain using digital design and manufacturing they can be developed and scaled faster than traditional methods allow.

Defence Readiness Minister Luke Pollard said: "The threats we face demand the ability to produce cutting-edge technology on demand and at scale."

"This programme delivers that, combining sovereign manufacturing, digital engineering and industrial innovation to ensure our Armed Forces retain an operational advantage."

Bob wings it for bucket list



WHO DARES WINGS: Retired aircraft tech Bob Barwise will be wing walking on a Boeing biplane as part of his charity bucket list challenge

Simon Mander

A 69-YEAR-OLD veteran is launching a daring bid to fulfil his life-long dream of doing a stunt plane wing walk – and raising funds for the Air Force charity which is supporting him as he fights terminal cancer.

Former aircraft tech Bob Barwise added the stunt to his bucket list of challenges after being diagnosed with the incurable blood disease in 2020.

The Cornwall-based veteran will be taking to the air strapped to a 1940's Boeing Stearman

biplane from RFC Rendcomb Airfield near Cirencester next month and performing zoom climbs, dives and banking turns.

He said: "It's something I've wanted to do since childhood, ever since I saw a film from the 1920's of a young girl doing the Charleston during a wing walk."

"She wasn't strapped in of course, but I will be, thank

goodness," added Bob, who spent over 20 years as an aircraft technician.

"I want to spend what time I have left doing the things I want to do while I'm still able to do them. Being able to raise money for a worthy cause is a bonus."

An active member of the RAF Association's St Mawgan Branch

in Newquay, Bob has praised the support of fellow members and friends since his diagnosis, in particular Rev Wg Cdr Andrew Turner.

"Andrew has been an absolute diamond. He's come to the hospital with me for all my appointments and he's really kept me going – he's been a real godsend," he said.

So far Bob has raised £1,200 for the Association. RAFA fundraiser Helen Tempest said: "Bob is an inspiration to us all and proof that it's never too late to achieve your dreams."



Vulcan returns to Waddington

Simon Mander

WADDINGTON'S ICONIC Vulcan gate guardian has been restored to her place of honour outside the Lincolnshire airbase following urgent preservation work.

The bomber, part of the UK's V-Force nuclear deterrent during the Cold War, is famous for its part in the Operation Black Buck mission against Argentine positions during the Falklands War.

Restorers working with Vulcan heritage organisations, the Joint Aircraft Recovery and Transportation Sqn and

contractors have now returned XM607 to her original position overlooking the A15 after the restoration.

Personnel from 71 (IR) Sqn worked with specialists who provided expertise in paint removal, surface preparation and repainting ahead of the fitting of landing gear follow-up doors and elevator re-skinning.

XM607 will later be air bagged onto her permanent metal support stands with JARTS assistance, removing weight from the wheels and helping preserve the increasingly rare tyre assemblies for the future.



DELTA FORCE: Air Force JARTS team return XM607 to her position as gate guardian at Waddington. PHOTO: ASI WILLIAM MOULTON

News



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Heart felt



Stu hits the road for life savers



MARATHON BID: Veteran Stu raising funds for LIVES first responders who saved him after heart attack

Simon Mander

A FORMER RAF policeman is to take part in a half marathon to raise money for the charity that helped save his life.

Coningsby's Stuart Burgham, 54, was watching television at home with wife Sarah when he suffered a cardiac arrest.

She called 999 and began CPR before volunteer responders arrived within minutes and took over treatment as an ambulance crew raced to the scene.

Now the Training and Development Flight clerk is back at work and planning to compete in the Lincolnshire half marathon.

He said: "I had absolutely no symptoms beforehand. Earlier that weekend I had been running, exercising and carrying on as normal.

"One minute I was sitting watching television and the next I was unconscious. Without Sarah's quick actions and the support from LIVES responders I wouldn't be here today."

Following multiple cardiac arrests and weeks

in hospital, Mr Burgham underwent surgery to receive a defibrillator capable of monitoring and correcting potentially life-threatening heart rhythms.

Despite extensive tests, medical specialists have been unable to find the cause of his cardiac arrest.

Mr Burgham, who served for more than 22 years as a member of the RAF Police, said: "It's been really good to get back to work and get back to some sense of normality.

"I've still got some recovery ahead of me, but being back with colleagues has made a real difference.

"I didn't originally plan to return to distance running this soon, but when I heard LIVES were looking for people to raise awareness and funds, I wanted to help.

"Whether I run the whole distance or run and walk doesn't matter. I just want to complete it and raise as much money as possible for an organisation that played such a huge role in saving my life."

● Go to: justgiving.com/page/stuart-burgham-6



Intel centre opens at Wyton

Staff Reporter

A NEW intelligence centre has opened at RAF Wyton.

The new Fairfax Collaboration Hub is a joint programme between Defence Intelligence, Huntingdonshire District Council and four industry partners.

Located within a secure perimeter, the airbase has been chosen for significant defence investment over the next five to seven years, with the nerve centre part of plans to deepen ties.

Defence Intelligence provides the analysis that supports UK defence decision-making, using open-source data to help commanders, policymakers and allies.

Director Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance AVM Adam Bone said: "The threats facing this country are growing more complex by the day.

"Defence Intelligence's partnership with industry and academia at Wyton is about staying ahead of those who wish us harm, giving our people the tools and insight they need to keep the UK safe."

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Turk Typhoon training debut

Simon Mander

THE FIRST Turkish Air Force pilots have begun training on RAF Typhoons as part of an £8 billion deal.

The pair will undertake their nine months training with Coningsby's 29 Sqn, with follow-on instructor tuition taking a further three months.

Programme director Gp Capt Atila Batu said: "The first two Turkish Air Force pilots will operate side by side with RAF personnel.

"They will spend the initial weeks of training learning Typhoon systems and the procedures used in UK military airspace before they launch on their first sortie.

"I know that these Turkish pilots are extremely proud to have been selected as their nation's first-ever Typhoon pilots."

Following graduation from their training courses, the pilots will remain with 29 Sqn as instructors until Türkiye receives their first delivery of new

NATO ROLE: The recent £8 billion deal to sell Typhoon Eurofighter will strengthen Alliance firepower in the East, defence chiefs say



TYPHOON FGR4

Eurofighter Typhoon aircraft, from BAE Systems, in 2030.

The UK and Türkiye contract is worth over £8 billion for 20 Typhoon fighter jets and the associated weapons, support and training

needed to operate the aircraft.

The support deal will see 10 pilots and nearly 100 ground crew trained in Britain.

More than a third of every aircraft is built in the UK with

20,000 jobs secured by the contract.

The Turkish agreement will strengthen Türkiye's national Combat Air capabilities whilst bolstering Nato's eastern flank.

Bulletin



The KIDZ are alright

RAFAKidz is in the running for a hat-trick at the UK's biggest childcare awards.

The Forces nursery group, which operates 23 early years facilities across the UK, has been shortlisted for the Parent Engagement award and the Support Nursery Group of the Year award at the National NMT awards.

It is also through to the finals of the Nursery World Awards.

Josie Mapes, Executive Director at RAFAKidz, said: "We're absolutely over the moon to be shortlisted for these awards.

"Working closely with our families and supporting children with additional needs are at the heart of everything we do at RAFAKidz, so to be recognised for our work in these areas is incredibly special."

Families fair deal

Simon Mander

FREE TRAIN tickets on national rail services are being offered to bereaved military family members to attend Remembrance events.

It means mourners will be able to go to commemorative events, including the Cenotaph, without the cost of travel being a barrier, provided they get tickets before October 16.

For the first time, one next of kin of a Service person who died while serving will be able to travel if they apply for a free ticket through the Defence Medical Welfare Service.

Veterans Minister Calvin Bailey said: "Remembrance is a deeply personal time.

"We must never forget that behind every name we remember is a family whose lives have been changed forever."

Rail Delivery Group chief Ola Ogun said: "Railways have long been connected to remembrance commemorations, recognising the importance of their contribution during wartime."



Scotty's on point

Clare Wildblood

Cranwell

AIR FORCE training ace Flt Lt Scotty Toomer has netted one of the college's top honours.

The Leadership Instructor was presented with the Sword of Merit by former Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Andrew Pulford.

Scotty earned the honour for his 'inspirational' leadership and role reinforcing the Service's core values

His citation states: "Recognised as a role model and mentor, Flt Lt Toomer has not only made a significant impact on Initial Officer Training but has also influenced the entire Officer Cadet body, epitomising what it means to serve, develop others, and lead by example."

Alice in wonderland



KEEPING TABS:
Flt Lt on tough speed march with weapon and Bergen

ALICE ADAMS-CAIRNS has every reason to be very proud of herself – the Flt Lt has become the first woman in the RAF to pass the incredibly demanding All Arms Pre Para Selection (AAPPS) course.

Formerly OC of The Falcons, the RAF's parachute display team, Alice made history by successfully completing the course, known as 'P Company' this summer – she received her coveted maroon beret last month.

SO3 Para

Currently serving a two-year tour as SO3 Para for 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team at Merville Barracks, Colchester, the 31-year-old said she was 'delighted' to finish the course, but admitted she felt like pulling out at times.

The extremely gruelling course consisted of six weeks of

Former Falcons OC is first woman to pass gruelling Paras

what's called 'beat up' training at Merville, followed by three and a half weeks of arduous tests at Catterick that included loaded marches – aka 'tabbing' – log and stretcher races and an aerial confidence course. Eight tests have to be completed during the final week and a half.

Alice explained: "We started with about 115 personnel, including one other woman, who, sadly, went home on the first day. We finished with about 70 or 80, mostly from the Army, with five RAF Regiment lads and myself from the Air Force."

At every event participants ran

the risk of getting a red card – if given more than two red cards they were sent home.

The AAPPS course is designed to test military personnel to see if they have the physical and mental resilience necessary to serve in the Airborne Forces. If you pass you become eligible to take the parachuting course needed to earn your military parachute wings.

A parachute jumping instructor by trade, needless to say Alice had already passed the parachuting course – four years ago – so why did she want to put herself through the ordeal of the AAPPS course?

"When I moved to Colchester I was walking around with my wings on already. I wanted to feel I had actually earned them and done it properly, to test myself and to feel like I deserved the wings" she explained. "Everyone who works in 16 AABCT wears a maroon beret regardless but I now feel like I deserve to wear it, that I truly earned it."

Beret

Successful completion of the course culminates with the presentation of the beret.

Alice added: "During the beret

parade they call out who has passed and who has failed – you don't know until then. If you fail you get marched off the parade square, it's pretty savage.

"You can be sent home at any point during the Catterick course. Most of those who don't make the grade are cut before the beret parade but a few don't get enough points to pass and are turned away at the last second."

Alice explained that the main part of the whole course is tabbing – fast marches and running with a weighted Bergen. Everyone carries the same weight – 35lb, plus water and a weapon. The

by Tracey Allen

erland



GOOD TRAINING GROUND:
Flt Lt Adams-Cairns during
her time with RAF Falcons



PROUD MOMENT: Alice is presented with her red beret, above, and poses wearing it at Merville Barracks, top

first RAF woman selection course

shortest test is a two-mile tab to be completed in a set time and the longest is 20 miles.

"Within that you also had to do certain running events where you're not carrying weight but have to hit a specific time. There's also milling which is one minute of controlled aggression – punching your partner in the face for a minute, and you're not allowed to duck or defend, because on the battlefield if you're getting fired at, you just keep going regardless."

She added: "I've always done a lot of running but I hadn't really done any tabbing before until I moved to work with the Army last

October. That was all new to me and the biggest thing was trying not to get injured when you're carrying that weight. I wasn't given a lighter Bergen because I'm a smaller female."

Mental robustness

Along with physical strength, course members have to show mental robustness. Alice revealed: "That was probably the hardest bit for me because one of the challenges of the course is that you're not allowed to wear a watch or any kind of GPS device, so when you're out on these long

tabs you have absolutely no idea of how long you've been going for, and how long's left. You just have to keep going without knowing where the end is – I found that quite difficult because I've always run with a watch, so it was getting used to basically going as hard as you can until someone tells you to stop."

Alice admitted that in the last week and a half when she was struggling with an injury and was really sick on one day, she felt like she couldn't carry on.

She said: "I remember feeling really desperate for someone to pull me off the course but

no one will, you have to take yourself off. That was a real low point. But as soon as you start the next event you just battle through the pain and try to hang on until the end."

When it was all over, she felt overwhelmed.

"As soon as I finished the milling, the last event, I burst into tears. I felt so overwhelmed that everything was over, there was nothing more I could do. I'm not a particularly emotional person but I just couldn't hold it in."

Stress

Having finished, she drove home and had a Chinese takeaway with her husband, Alastair, also a Flt Lt.

She said: "It was the first time I was able to eat properly in weeks because of the stress. So afterwards I just ate a lot and did a lot of sleeping."

Alice is happy to talk to any RAF Servicewomen who would

like to attempt the course and stressed that she never came across any sexism during it.

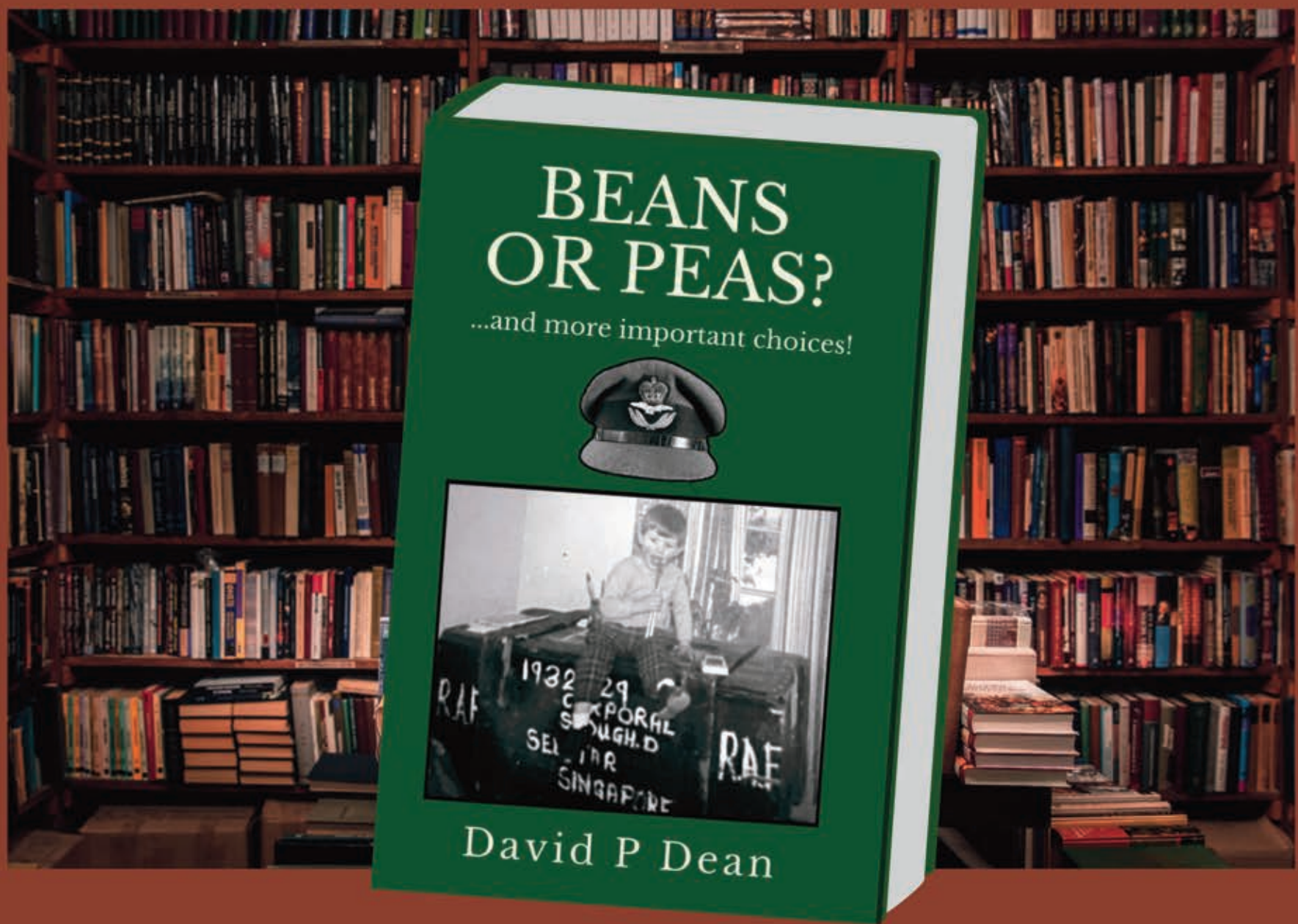
"I was treated exactly the same as everybody else there, which is just what I wanted," she said.

"You need to be serving with the Regiment or 16 Air Assault Brigade to take part. It would be great to see more women coming through because there are a lot out there capable of doing it but they're maybe just aren't aware of the course."

"It's always been a very male-dominated activity. There is no lowering of standards at all for women – that's a common misconception."

Now she's setting her sights on representing the RAF at athletics.

She said: "I've focused on strength training for the past few years which really helped with the tabbing. I'd like to compete for the RAF in running in the next year or two."



This non-fiction memoir tells the story of a disillusioned young man who, unable to fulfill his potential as a dancer, decides to join the RAF Boy Entrant Scheme in the mid '50s as a trainee cook.

It's the tale of an ordinary, often rebellious, but caring young man who blunders from disaster to disaster in the days of National Service as a cook on an RAF station in Middle England, told in the first person; a rollicking irreverent depiction of life from seventy years ago.

There is plenty of bawdy humour, with sexual encounters never far away, and authority, of course, is snubbed at every possible opportunity. An interesting insight into life on an RAF station in the '50s that goes beyond station life and ventures into the private turmoil encountered by those who stepped up to support their country.

Join Dixie as he ventures from continent to continent, country to country and ultimately from fecklessness to faithfulness.

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BATTLE HONOURS

856 personnel killed in aerial conflict are remembered

Simon Mander

AIR FORCE chiefs from across the world joined the Defence Secretary Wes Streeting at the 86th annual Battle of Britain memorial service in London.

Beforehand, Chief of the Air Staff, ACM Sir Harv Smyth, and multinational military partners laid wreaths at the RAF Memorial on the Embankment commemorating the 856 personnel killed in the conflict.

The service saw a flypast by two Typhoons and an appearance by Mr Streeting. Similar events took place nationwide.

The battle, the first of its kind, was fought entirely in the air, and lasted over three months, ending on October 31, 1940.

In Coningsby personnel undertook key ceremonial roles at Boston's commemorations.

Fg Off Tom Bone commanded his first ceremonial parade, while WO Billy Hammond attended for the first time as SWO and WO Lee Hargreaves made his debut as Parade WO.

Coningsby chief Gp Capt Andy Hampshire said: "As one generation passes its legacy to the next, it is fitting that our newer personnel are entrusted with these responsibilities."

Meanwhile, Wittering personnel marched through Stamford for an open-air remembrance service. Wreaths were laid at the War Memorial and Stamford Poet Laureate Michelle Liebst also read a poem written for the occasion.



REMEMBRANCE: CAS, ACM Sir Harv Smyth, is joined by multi-national military partners as they prepare to lay wreaths at the RAF Memorial on the Embankment (above and below) and the Battle of Britain Memorial Roll at Westminster Abbey (left) PHOTOS: CPL IAIN CURLETT & AS1 NATHAN BURDEN



STAMFORD PARADE: RAF Wittering personnel are joined by residents in the town centre PHOTO: AS1 JASON BARFIELD



SERVICE: Capel-le-Ferne Battle of Britain Memorial in Kent



VETERANS: Standard bearers welcome guests at Westminster Abbey



'A terrific storyteller'
BOOKLIST

'A pulse-pounding adventure'
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Images: BFBS/British Esports/Jonas Kontautas

Pilot who brought Diana home on her final journey

Squadron Leader flew more than 2,000 royal flights

SQUADRON LEADER Graham Laurie, who has died aged 80, was the personal pilot to Prince Charles, the then Prince of Wales, over a period of 19 years when they flew together on more than 700 occasions. Most notably, he was the pilot of the aircraft that brought Princess Diana's body back to England after her death in Paris in August 1997.

Laurie joined the RAF in 1964 and trained as a pilot. After completing his training, he flew the twin-engine Andover tactical transport aircraft with 46 Squadron. This versatile aircraft was to dominate most of his early flying years and his time on 46 Sqn honed his piloting skills in support of the Parachute Regiment and Special Forces, as well as undertaking medical evacuations and more routine general communication tasks.

Andover

He spent two-and-a-half years serving on the Sultan of Brunei's VIP flight flying the Hawker Siddeley 748, from which the Andover was spawned, before joining 32 Sqn at RAF Northolt to fly the VIP-configured Andover. He became an examiner, which involved close contact with the Queen's Flight.

In 1981 he was chosen to be the personal pilot to the Prince of Wales, and he joined the Queen's Flight at RAF Benson in Oxfordshire.

Many of the overseas flights he made were to remote regions and routes and to destinations which were not familiar to RAF crews, so it was essential to conduct a reconnaissance and proving flights in advance. He took the Prince of Wales to Papua New Guinea, and the Princess Royal visited the Darfur region of Sudan. For the latter, sparse maps and a photograph taken many years earlier were all that was available.

The Andover had a limited range (approximately 1,000 miles) so the four jet engine

British Aerospace BAe 146, with its range of 1,500 miles, was added to the fleet.

In addition to his duties as personal pilot to the Prince of Wales, Laurie flew all members of the Royal Family and several Prime Ministers at various times. On numerous occasions he occupied the second pilot's seat when the Duke of Edinburgh flew the aircraft.

In March 1995, when the Queen's Flight was disbanded and the royal duties passed to 32 Sqn at RAF Northolt, all the personnel transferred to the new organisation re-titled 32 (Royal) Sqn. The end of an era was marked by visits to RAF Benson by all the members of the Royal Family, where they met personnel from the Flight.

On Sunday, August 31, 1997, Laurie was scheduled to pick up Prince Charles and Prince Harry from Aberdeen and fly them to RAF Lyneham in a British Aerospace BAe 146 aircraft of the Queen's Flight. Following the news that Princess Diana had died in a car crash in Paris overnight, Prince Charles decided to fly to Paris and bring her body back to London.

En-route to Aberdeen to collect the Prince, Laurie landed at RAF Wittering to pick up Diana's sisters. Leaving Aberdeen for Paris/Villacoublay airport later in the day, he was alerted by radio to the plans for his return to Northolt later that evening after collecting Princess Diana's body. He landed at Northolt shortly before 7pm and taxied to the aircraft apron where airmen of the RAF's Queen's Colour Squadron were waiting to act as pall bearers and to form a guard of honour.

Balmoral

Some 20 minutes later, he took off to return Prince Charles to Aberdeen to join the Royal Family who were in residence at Balmoral. Laurie returned to Northolt the following day.

Following the funeral on



ROYAL DUTIES: Sqn Ldr Graham Laurie was personal pilot to Charles, the then Prince of Wales

September 6, he flew Her Majesty The Queen and the Queen Mother back to Aberdeen. Later, he commented, "having flown Princess Diana over 200 times in the past, I was honoured to fly her on her final flight home."

Laurie was due to retire in 2000. Before doing so, he was particularly keen to fly the Queen Mother on her 100th birthday so he turned down the opportunity to fly to the United States on a training sortie. He flew the

Queen Mother to Wick for her annual visit to her home at the Castle of Mey, and her return a few weeks later. His final flight was a five-day tour with the Prince of Wales to Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Switzerland.

MVO

During his service with the Queen's Flight, Laurie flew more than 2,000 royal flights, 735 as personal pilot to the Prince of

Wales. By the time he retired he had accumulated 13,500 hours flying time. For his services to the Royal Family, he was appointed MVO.

In retirement he became president of the Queen's Flight Association. He was in great demand as a speaker when he related his experiences with the Queen's Flight. These events raised over £25,000 for the RAF Benevolent Fund. For this and other work he and his wife were made ambassadors of the Fund.

“Having flown Princess Diana over 200 times in the past, I was honoured to fly her on her final flight home”



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Tim Morris

PEMBROKESHIRE IS a county of dramatic coastlines, open beaches, winding estuaries, rolling hills, wooded corners and tucked away places that reward unhurried exploration. If you're planning on camping, it's the perfect choice.

'Visit Pembrokeshire' presents it as 'a place where natural wonders, coast and countryside sit close together, giving travellers an easy rhythm of beach days, heritage stops, coastal walks and local food'. They're not wrong, as we discovered when we arrived in the sleepy seaside village of Manorbier. Its sandy cove, its medieval castle and the warmth of the welcome made it a location not to be missed.

Manorbier Beach is the natural centrepiece, a sandy, dune-backed cove, with a stream running along its northern end. The beach faces south-west into the Atlantic, giving it unique character and light. The crystal clear waters are inviting and, when we visited in the height of a UK heatwave, the sea was very warm. A dip here is always refreshing after a long road trip. Just bring a wetsuit for cooler months.

A fine medieval castle and a quaint Norman church overlook the bay, giving the area character, that's steeped in history. It was designated a conservation area by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park in 1997, and its history reaches far beyond the castle walls. Archaeological finds in the surrounding area have been dated back to the Mesolithic and early Neolithic periods. King's Quoit, a Neolithic burial chamber, stands near the cliff path east of the bay. A walk here is a real pleasure. In the village, a cosy pub and a thriving community give the place heart and a welcoming vibe.

Relax

Manorbier is made for the kind of beach day that does not need much planning and is perfect for camping adventures. Arrive early, let the tide decide the shape of the morning, and settle into the shelter of dunes with a picnic. The stream at the northern end adds a gentle detail for families and paddlers, while the changing width of the sand encourages a slower pace. Try, beachcombing, watching the



SIMPLE PLEASURE: While away the hours with a spot of beachcombing



SIT BACK: Have a cup of tea and admire the rugged coast and rolling fields of Pembrokeshire



The welcoming but wild Welsh coastline

A road trip for slow days, salt air and sea-swept adventures

light travel across the rocks, or simply listen to the long wash of waves. The beach has toilets and, in season, the simple pleasure of an ice cream van, which is often all a good seaside day requires. There are several places to park a campervan, that provide magnificent views. Put the kettle on, eh?

Manorbier Castle sits above the beach, with a commanding view over the bay. Even from outside its walls, it helps frame the scene, turning a day by the sea into a postcard of Welsh heritage. If you have the time, take a tour, it's well worth it.

Manorbier's charm lies in the balance between welcome and

wildness and is one where the day widens naturally from beach towel to castle view, to an easy drink or tea in the village.

Adventure

Manorbier's south-westerly exposure makes it a favourite among surfers and that gives the bay an energy, even on days when you stay dry. Boards appear on car roofs, wetsuits hang over walls, and the surf line becomes a moving focus for the whole beach. Confident surfers will understand why the cove is loved, while beginners can enjoy a safe experience, provided by a number of excellent local surf schools. It's important to remember, though, this is a coastline with proper waves and strong currents. Judgement matters, as much as enthusiasm, when you're out of the shallows.

Hiking west, along the Pembrokeshire Coast Path, opens up a world of drama, with scenery that shifts between open water, rugged rock and green

fields. Cycling, wildlife watching, foraging, boat trips and heritage trails all sit within easy reach. That's what makes this corner of the county feel so alive.

Stay

Today we're staying in our comfortable Grand California campervan (see *Motors* on p22) but there is a wide range of accommodation available in the village. Of note is the Castle Mead Hotel, which has a particularly good restaurant. The décor is a little dated and worn in places, but rooms are spacious. You can get a room with a nice sea view and the gardens are a very relaxing place to sit with a drink.

Eat

Food at the Castle Mead Hotel is served in the 'Kitchen Restaurant' and is a fine affair, with the vast majority of ingredients being sourced locally, or home-grown in the garden. Everything is certainly fresh and succulent. There's a well-stocked

wine menu and the dining environment feels like fine-dining, in a classic country house setting. Nevertheless, it's a relaxed experience, that is friendly and not overly stuffy. The nearby pub provides a more lively alternative, if you'd rather watch the footie while you eat.

For travellers making Pembrokeshire a wider food journey, the county offers plenty beyond the village: coastal foraging experiences, farm produce, harbour towns, bakeries, cafes and restaurants that draw on the surrounding land and sea. Menus change to match the season.

The ideal Manorbier day ends simply. Watch the tide reclaim the sand, enjoy a perfect meal and retire for the evening with the gentle sound of waves on the shore.

Manorbier Beach is not a haven of nightlife on the Welsh coast, but that's precisely its strength. It invites you to slow down, step outside, taste the salt on the air and discover why this corner of Pembrokeshire stays with people long after the road trip home.

● See visitpembrokeshire.com for more information.



IT WAS a glorious summer and the perfect time for *RAF News* to take the newly-revamped Volkswagen Grand California camper on a road trip to the sun-kissed beaches of Pembrokeshire.

To get to our destination we covered 200 miles of varied tarmac, taking in motorways, fast A roads and winding coastal lanes, all in a wagon with more real-estate than a Parisian apartment.

We could have chosen anywhere in the world for this road test, as it happens, and the GC would have been right at home, but the idyllic coastline of South Wales provided the perfect proving ground.

Exterior

The latest GC comes with a few subtle changes, such as a redesigned front bumper and a stealth grille that loses its flashy chrome effect. Beyond that, there are very few differences and the GC is exactly what you'd expect a high-end campervan to look like. The optional two-tone paint helps it stand out and the sharp alloy wheels give the profile character.

Interior

Let's start with the beautifully styled, perfectly bolstered, swivelling captain's chairs up front. If there is one feature that sets the GC ahead of the pack, these are it.

The front cabin is open and airy, with plenty of leg/shoulder room. Just behind the front seats is the dining area, with a spacious bench seat for two people. A removable table can be fitted below the window to give rear seat passengers an experience similar to a railway carriage. The front seats can be swivelled 180 degrees to create a four-person dining area when stationary.

The cockpit uses the same hard-wearing materials found in the regular VW Crafter van, which lets the upmarket feel down somewhat.

The scratchy plastic, particularly on the front doors is easy to scuff and I guarantee you will bash them when you try to swivel the front seats. Here's my tip... open the front doors for clearance.

The infotainment screen has been upgraded and is now a 10-inch unit. It's more intuitive to use and responds faster than its predecessor. Customers can also



Welcome to the hotel California

upgrade to a larger 12.0in screen.

Behind the wheel, the digital driver's display is also clear and concise. It can be customised to display many things, including your driving route and music details. Other standard features include Android Auto and Apple CarPlay connectivity.

Living Space

Here's the bit that matters. You don't normally live in your car but, in many ways, buying a campervan is like buying a new home. You'll spend a lot of time in here.

The GC is not a motorhome, that's a far bigger unit, but it's as grand as a campervan gets. The biggest fish in the camper pond, if you like. Inside you get new bamboo trim for the floors, countertops and table. Then, when the sliding side door is open, the kitchen unit can be extended outside.

You get a proper bathroom, with a toilet, a sink and a shower. You also get a 70-litre fridge, a twin-ring gas hob and a kitchen sink. On the tail end there's a well sprung double bed with loads of storage above and what camper manufacturers call a

VW Grand California

Pros

- Relaxed cruiser
- Loads of low-down grunt
- Spacious living area
- Slow depreciation

Cons

- Plenty of dashboard plastics on view
- Buffeting and sway apparent in high winds
- Handles like a loaded van through bends

Verdict

Summer may be over in

the UK, but if you have one of these bad boys sitting on your drive, Europe is a small ferry hop away. With a Grand California you could spend the colder months living on the French Riviera in civilised fashion. It isn't the cheapest campervan on the market, by a long way, but it may just be the ultimate road trip vehicle. It's built in-house by VW too, so it's covered by a comprehensive V-Dub warranty. Reassuring.

'garage' below. That's basically a giant boot, for all of your holiday clutter.

The beds are comfortable and there are loads of windows/skylights to make the living area feel bright. There's also plenty of standing room inside – even for six-footers.

There's a 110-litre freshwater storage tank and gas, or electric, heating/hot water is standard. You can upgrade to a diesel heater for £720. This makes wild-

camping entirely practical and you can stop in the most isolated, stunning locations with the GC.

On The Road

What we really learned from our road trip with the GC is that, at more than 2 metres wide, it's a big old bus to take down narrow coastal roads. The steering is, however, light and it's a reassuringly predictable vehicle to navigate.

The raised driving position

and big windows give the driver a clear view of the road ahead and the door mirrors are big enough when you reverse. All Grand Californias come with front and rear parking sensors, with an optional reversing camera also available.

On fast B roads, the GC performs pretty well. Body roll is well controlled, which comes as a welcome surprise, given the soft suspension set-up. It's never going to be as sharp through the bends as a van, of course, but that's just as well really. Remember, crockery doesn't like rapid changes of direction and there's a whole kitchen full onboard here.

Power has been reduced on the latest GC, from 175bhp to 161bhp, but there's method in the madness here too, because the 2.0-litre turbodiesel in the GC continues to comply with the latest, stricter, emissions regs. Torque remains unaffected, at 302lb ft.

To me, it feels like the latest GC could do with a little more grunt to get it off the mark with any urgency, but it's responsive enough for lazy cruising.

At just under 3m tall, the 600 can be buffeted by crosswinds, but that is what one would expect from any high-sided wagon. It's not massively noticeable in all but the highest winds, but VW has worked to reduce the effect by adding an assist system that operates the brakes to limit the impact of crosswinds. Adaptive cruise control is also standard and useful for covering big distances. Over 400 miles, we averaged 24mpg.

Don't expect too much refinement though, it's fairly obvious that this clattery diesel also powers workhorse Crafters.

Practicality

Prices start at just over £85,000 for the 600 in the UK and £88,186 for the 680. Worth noting that only the entry-level 600 can be driven on a regular Category B licence in the UK as it's rated for 3.5 tonnes. All other Grand Californias are rated for over 3.8 tonnes, including the all-wheel drive variants.

That start price isn't what you'll pay though, because building a campervan is like building a house, it's a very personal process. Start ticking a few boxes on the options list and the price tag soon starts to add up. Our test vehicle, with all the toys, weighed in at a hefty £97,383.

ATHLETICS

Tugging at heartstrings

Lossie lose out on place in final



Daniel Abrahams

THERE WAS a semi-final heartbreak for RAF Lossiemouth's tug of war team at the Braemar Games, where the Service produced numerous top-five athletics finishes for an impressive weekend.

RAF Odiham's TOW team produced an impressive seventh, while

RAF Leeming finished first in the relay, Lossiemouth fourth and Waddington fifth, with several top five individual



finishes including a first in the 80m British championships.

Sqn Ldr Gareth Davies, head of RAF tug of war and RAF Contingent commander for the Braemar Games, said: "We had a great showing, with Lossiemouth narrowly missing out on a place in the final and Odiham running in seventh.

AS1 Tindle produced an outstanding male track and field performance."

Lossiemouth TOW coach Sgt Nathan Elton-Nichols (pictured inset gearing up his charges) was left disappointed as his battling team fell one spot short of the final after defeat against Royal Signals but still hailed a great day.

While Odiham TOW coach AS1 Billie Duxbury said: "I am very proud of my novice team, who fought well for their victories in the incredible arena."

In the individual athletics events, Tindle came sixth in the 100yds handicap and first in the 80m British Championship, while Waddington's Sgt Smerdon was runner-up in the high jump.

Sibling AR Tindle was fourth in the 80 Brit Champs and third in triple jump, with AS1 Chugg fourth in high jump and fifth in the long jump.

PHOTOS: AS1(T) Cochrane-Edwards (Insta @Eddies_Engine)

BOXING



STAYING POWER: (left to right) RAF Boxing's WO John Kearns (57km), Sgt Al Marsden (57km), Sqn Ldr Greg Boast (100km), Mr Ant Lydon (57km), Sqn Ldr Joel Sweeney (57km) and Sgt Ben Baily (100km)

Going the extra mile

A **KNOCKOUT team of six personnel from the RAF Boxing team took on the 100km South Coast Ultra Challenge to raise funds for the RAF Association.**

Four of the team – WO John Kearns (57km), Sgt Al Marsden (57km), Mr Ant Lydon (57km) and Sqn Ldr Joel Sweeney (57km) – completed the first half of the run, with Sqn Ldr Greg Boast and Sgt Ben Baily covering the entire distance, equivalent to almost two and a half full marathons with elevations the same as scaling Ben Nevis twice.

The team raised more than £2,500, with fundraising ongoing. Baily finished in Arundel in 16 hrs 50 minutes, with Boast following in 18 hrs 31 mins.

Baily said: "Each year the RAF Boxing Association takes on a challenge to raise funds for the Royal Air Forces Association to show support for the years of support and sponsorship they have provided to us. For this year, it was the South Coast Challenge.

"I've never been a great runner but have always been interested in ultra endurance and inspired by the athletes covering massive distances, so I jumped at the chance to tick something off my bucket list and raise funds for a worthy cause at the same time."

The team of six started in Eastbourne amid scorching conditions on the picturesque South Downs coastline.

Baily said: "Finishing the first 57km in Brighton, this is where the real challenge began. As the rest of the group relaxed, I got my hands on a hot meal and some fresh socks as I still had over a marathon distance to cover.

Now alone, and in the dark, the mental challenge kicked in.

"This was the most horrendous and yet most amazing experience, digging deep and finding out how much mental and physical resilience I really have."

● Follow RAF Boxing on Instagram @RAFBoxing.

GOING THE DISTANCE: Sqn Ldr Greg Boast (in T-shirt) and Sgt Ben Baily



To see your sport featured in **RAF News**, send a short report (max. 300 words) and a couple of photographs (attached hi-res jpegs) to: Sports@rafnews.co.uk

Sport

HOCKEY

World Cup silver for Wg Cdr Dave

Training days look to future

RAF HOCKEY stalwart Wg Cdr David Oatley helped England Men Over-55s to a runner-up spot at the World Hockey Masters World Cup in Brasschaat, Antwerp.

Playing as attacking wide midfielder, he played a key role in England's impressive run to the final, competing in seven matches across nine days against some of the world's leading masters hockey nations.

England's campaign saw mixed group stage results – beating Argentina 1-0, Scotland 2-0 and France 4-0, but suffering a 4-0 defeat to tournament favourites Holland.

Reflecting on the competition, Oatley described the experience as 'incredible'.

Having previously won the World Cup with England at Over-40 level in 2012, the aviator said: "In 2012 there were perhaps only one or two difficult opponents. Now every game is competitive and had the potential to be a banana skin. The overall quality and fitness levels throughout the tournament was exceptionally high.

"Despite the disappointment of missing out on gold, we return home proud of our achievements after an outstanding World Cup campaign that culminated in a



MASTERLY DISPLAY: Wg Cdr David Oatley (centre) representing England Over-55s

hard-earned silver medal on the world stage."

The prestigious tournament – staged across three locations in Belgium – featured 400 teams from across the globe, with men's and women's competitions ranging from Over-35s to Over-80s age groups, making it one of the largest international hockey

events in the world.

Having secured a place in the knockout stages, England produced a strong performance to overcome New Zealand 3-1 in the quarter-final, but the aviator sustained a hamstring injury.

He battled on with a heavily strapped leg, as England edged past Germany in a tense goalless

semi-final before triumphing in a penalty shoot-out to book a place in the World Cup final.

England – unbeaten in the Home Nations tournament held in the run-up to the WC – could not muster one more win, losing 3-1 to a strong Dutch side in a fiercely contested match, worthy of culminating the tournament.

THE FUTURE of Service hockey was again set after a recent training camp saw 24 personnel equipped for the future of the sport.

Representing multiple bases and a wide range of playing experience, players came together to enjoy two days of hockey, learning and development for the camp's second year, facilitated by GB Hockey.

Event spokesperson FS Andy Murphy said: "It was a wonderful opportunity for both players and coaches to get an unique insight to different perspectives and to strengthen the link between both associations.

"Both RAF Hockey and GB Advance Coaching Programme (ACP) are keen for this partnership to continue."

Personnel took part in sessions focusing on individual skills, disguising passes and aerial passing with key areas including: accuracy and control, selecting the appropriate height and distance, identifying space, receiving the ball safely and understanding when an aerial pass is the best option.

FS Murphy added: "The two days provided an opportunity for players from different backgrounds and experience levels to work together, challenge themselves and share their knowledge and experiences."

● Follow RAF Hockey on Instagram @RAFHockey.

GOLF



CHAMP: Russ Baldwin (right) with OIC Golf Sgt Dan Ecob

Russ takes title

A SUPERB ROUND OF 76 was enough for Russ Baldwin to win the RAF Brize Norton golf Gross Championship at Cumberwell Park Golf Club.

Baldwin beat Chris Wood to the title.

Simon Williams shot 77 to claim the Nett Championship title, beating Callum Woolly on a day of jam-packed golf action to celebrate the annual event.

With a strong field and a course in excellent condition, there was little room for error, and the venue once again offered a proper test of golf while delivering the perfect setting.

RUGBY UNION

Red Roses missing injured Flt Lt, Amy

IT WAS a tough weekend of international rugby for England and Scotland stars Flt Lts Amy Cokayne and Sarah Bonar in the WXV Global Series 2026.

Red Roses star Cokayne saw her England colleagues lose their

winning run after drawing 26-26 with Canada, while Bonar, a replacement for Scotland, saw her team lose 14-66 to New Zealand.

Cokayne is currently battling a calf injury forcing her to miss the

opening 48-15 win over Australia at the CorPacq Stadium in Manchester as well as the Canada game.

Bonar, returning from injury herself, saw Scotland lose 26-64 to Canada at the Hive, Stadium,

Edinburgh in their first game of the tournament.

Cokayne, who currently sits on 94 international caps, will be aiming to hit the century next spring once her calf issue resolves.

Scotland face Australia and England take on New Zealand as both countries close out their opening home series of the tournament.



INJURED: Red Roses hooker Cokayne

FOOTBALL

WSL2 FOOTBALL was served a double Big Mac as WO Dan McNamara's Wolves Women's team secured back-to-back wins to sit second in the league.

The aviator's team, who secured promotion to WSL2 last season, crushed Burnley with a first half three-goal blitz at the SEAH Stadium.

The win came after Wolves thumped Sheffield Utd 3-1 the week before to sit one

Double Big Mac

place behind leaders Sunderland with just a single goal dividing the teams.

McNamara (left) said: "I'm delighted for the fans, who turned out in their numbers tonight, a good, exciting environment for the players to help them through the tough moments.

"But look, it's six points, we've got more to go, more to get through and I'm looking forward to the next challenge."

On beating Sheffield Utd, he said: "We produced a convincing performance especially after half-time, we took a stranglehold and I was delighted to get three points, so we moved on to Burnley which is a rivalry created over the past few years facing the team we fought out promotion with.

"They edged the last game last season and today offered us the chance to correct that. It was a memorable game."



SWIMMING

ALL'S WELL FOR DODWELL

Flt Lt dominates at IS Open Water Championships

PHOTO:
Cpl Sally
Raimondo

Daniel Abrahams

ANOTHER ANNIVERSARY year victory saw the RAF's swimmers dominate the Inter-Services Open Water Championships at South Hykeham in Lincolnshire.

Multiple victories across numerous events helped cement overall Air Force supremacy in this year's IS aquatics competitions.

Held at Activities Away Lake, the championships attracted 34 competitors

from across the three Services, competing in 3.2km and 1.6km individual races, alongside a 4x500m relay.

Flt Lt Dodwell was the standout performer, winning both the women's 3.2km and 1.6km events and recording the fastest overall time in the championship.

AS1 Holland claimed second place in the men's 3.2km race and third in the 1.6km event, while Cpl Casewell came third and second respectively.

The aviators' strength in depth

proved decisive, with both the men's and women's relay teams finishing first in their categories.

The men's team of AS1 Holland, Cpl Casewell, Flt Lt Cocks and AS1 Whitwam, along with the women's quartet of Flt Lt Dodwell, Sqn Ldr Mackay, Sgt Forster and Flt Lt Armitage, delivered commanding performances to secure relay honours.

The men's competition was fiercely contested, with the RAF men edging the Army by approximately 30 seconds,

while the RAF women secured a far more comfortable victory by several minutes.

The result contributed to a dominant RAF performance with Swimming, Diving and Water Polo competing in the Aldershot pool in July, where the Service won five of the eight disciplines contested, finished second in two events and placed third in only one.

The RAF topped the final standings with 20 points, finishing five points clear of the Army in second place for a bumper year in the association's centenary.

FOOTBALL

Brize take prize

SERVICE FOOTY got its ever popular kick-off with the Festival of Football at Birmingham's Star City, with RAF Brize Norton winning the Cup and Waddington the Plate event.

The traditional season curtain-raiser brought together 20 five-a-side teams for this year's event. The tournament also marked a significant milestone, becoming an international event for the first time with the participation of a team representing USAF Europe Lakenheath finishing bottom of group A, topped by Brize.

Mildenhall, finished third in group D, topped by Odiham A, knocked out 4-2 by Coningsby (b) in the quarter-finals. Wyton topped Group C and Cosford Group B.

Long-standing RAF Football sponsor SecureCloud+ also entered a team, finishing bottom of Group B.

A1(C) Thomas, representing USAFE, said: "We've taken part in tournaments in Majorca, Germany and many other places and, compared to those, this tournament has a great atmosphere and good vibes."

The knockout stages delivered plenty of drama during the afternoon. In a thrilling Men's Plate Final, Waddington edged out Boulmer 4-3 in a match that swung from end to end before Waddington secured victory.

The Men's Cup Final saw Brize Norton overcome defending champions Wyton 3-1 in a closely-fought contest to claim the tournament's top prize.

Event OIC Sgt Chris said: "With competitive matches, strong camaraderie, excellent weather and an outstanding atmosphere, the festival once again demonstrated the very best of RAF Football and provided the perfect start to the season."



BRIZE GUYS: Team from RAF Brize Norton took the main honours at tournament

richholmesphoto.com

To see your sport featured in **RAF News**, send a short report (max. 300 words) and a couple of photographs (attached hi-res jpegs) to: Sports@rafnews.co.uk

Sport

TABLE TENNIS

Proud days for Wadd

Station's Cup win

Daniel Abrahams

THREE DAYS of fast and frantic table tennis action saw RAF Waddington winning the prized Inter-Stations Cup and Lossiemouth becoming the Plate Champions.

Association spokesperson FS Craig Walton said: "It has been another fantastic championship competition for the sport, highlighting its enduring appeal and inclusivity amongst Service personnel. The next event is the Festival of Table Tennis taking place this month, to which all abilities are welcome."

After working their way through to the Plate final on day one of three, Chf Tech Witting and AS1(T) Gofton (Lossiemouth) faced Fg Off Du Preez and AS1 West from 78 Squadron (NATS Swanwick).



EYE ON THE BALL: RAF Waddington's AS1 Proud
Photo: Eleanor Kedge

After four games coming down to just points, Lossiemouth emerged victorious.

The Cup final featured a series of fiercely contested matches, Cpl Harrison, AS1 Proud and AS1 Lloyd securing a win for Waddington, with FS Walton, Chf Tech Williams and Sgt

Sutherland finishing as runners up for Coningsby.

The doubles contest saw another victory from AS1 Proud and AS1 Lloyd (Waddington) over Sgt Bache and Cpl Hopper (Brize Norton).

The second day of the championships commenced

with the individual and doubles men's and ladies' tournaments, including an under 25s and a veterans' competition – culminating on the final day with AS1 Proud and AS1 Lloyd securing a mixed final victory against Cpl Wodecki and AS1 Heslop.

For the men's doubles final, Flt Lt Cullen and AS1(T) Gofton beat AS1 Lloyd and AS1 Heslop. Following a rapid round of games with powerful shots and high-paced points, AS1 Proud won the under 25s trophy, beating AS1(T) Gofton. Flt Lt Cullen secured the veterans' title with a victory over Sgt Bache.

The men's singles cup final saw AS1 Heslop face off against AS1(T) Gofton in another fiercely contested encounter before AS1 Heslop took the men's singles trophy. Cpl Bird completed the finals programme, winning against Cpl Jarvis to bring home the men's plate.

Chf Tech Williams was awarded the Chris Moffat trophy in recognition of his years of dedicated service to the Association, while AS1 Lloyd was presented the Daphne Veitch-Wilson Trophy for embodying the ethos of RAF sport, going above and beyond to achieve his coaching qualification and teaching others at monthly training academies.

● Follow RAF Table Tennis on Instagram @raftabletennis.

EQUESTRIAN

A RoRing success for riders

Staff Reporter

THE SERVICE'S horse riders celebrated a month of success with top-five finishes at the

UK Armed Forces Equestrian Championships at Bury Farm in Buckinghamshire.

Flt Lt Nicole Gent, riding her own horse Billy, jumped

a clear round in the Loriners class, placing second. Gent also represented the RAF at the Offchurch British Eventing 100 class.

Sgt Nicole Stevenson, riding Cappo, jumped in the 75cm class, placing third, before also placing third in the RoR (retraining of racehorses) Amateur Ridden Series qualifier, which saw the pair qualify to jump at Hickstead.

Flt Lt Ellie Brewer, riding Mr Rex at the RoR National Champs at Aintree, placed third and seventh in the Medium championships. She also finished eighth in the Elementary championship and managed to qualify for the Freestyle to Music gala evening, coming third in the Elementary final.

Outside of the UKAF champs, the Services eventing team represented the RAF at the International Horse Trials.

WO Keeley Martin competed at the prestigious Scone Palace International Horse Trials in Scotland, but had an unfortunate tumble in the cross country phase.



MAIN EVENT: Flt Lt Nicole Gent on her own horse, Billy



ROR OF THE CROWD: Flt Lt Ellie Brewer with Mr Rex and winner's rosettes

To see your sport featured in **RAF News**, send a short report (max. 300 words) and a couple of photographs (attached hi-res jpegs) to: **Sports@rafnews.co.uk**

5 RAF Sport

pages of



Lossie Sgt is having a bawl at the Braemar Games

See p23

TRIATHLON

British title for FS Hill

FS SCOTT Hill was flying high after a first and second in his latest two triathlon outings, topping the pile in the Always Aim High Bala Triathlon.

The Olympic distance Bala race saw the aviator come away with the British Triathlon National Age Group Championship title in a time of two hours and five minutes, beating the runner-up by more than three minutes.

The impressive finishing time was despite tough weather conditions making things difficult for Hill.

He said: "The weather was overcast to start and then the wind picked up shortly afterwards. It meant the swim was held in some choppy swim conditions and it was a slow affair for all."

"The bike was rolling but fast and I had to dig deep to run into first place by over three minutes, taking a British national title."

Next up was an impressive runner-up spot in the European Middle-Distance Championships in Banyoles, Spain, which has seen the aviator invited back to represent GB in 2027.

Hill will be representing GB in the World Long Distance Championships in Abu Dhabi in November.



FS SCOTT HILL: British AG champ

WATERSPORTS

RAF dominate ski and board championships



WINNERS: Waterski Captains Flt Lt Lucy Carter and CT Gav Harrison with Inter-Services Waterski Trophy, alongside RAF Sport supremo Air Cdre Rich Fogden, left

On the crest of a wave

Daniel Abrahams

SERVICE WATERSKI and wakeboard was five alive as it stormed to Inter-Service glory, taking five of the six championship titles on offer at Windsor Lakes.

The women made IS history with their first cleansweep and overall team victory, taking 13 of the 18 podium positions available.

Retiring on a high after eight years as the Association Chairman, Sqn Ldr Nick Harrington said: "This is the best possible leaving present and I'm especially pleased to see the Ladies Waterski Team take all three podium places, a first for the RAF."

"Team morale has been fantastic, with skiers and riders all supporting each other."

Day One saw the waterski competition begin under



NO.1: Ladies Waterski Champion and Ladies Waterski Team Captain Flt Lt Lucy Carter

drizzling skies with the ladies' team storming to victory securing all three podium positions, with Flt Lt Lucy Carter taking the title, followed by Cpl Morgan Wollen (silver) and Fg Off Jess Storrie (bronze).

Not to be outdone, the Men's



JUMPING JACK FLASH: Men's Cable Wakeboard Champion and Men's Wakeboard Team Captain Flt Lt Aran McGuckin gets airborne at Windsor Lakes

team matched the ladies podium success and then went one better securing the first four positions, with Sqn Ldr Dave Jenkins taking the title, followed by CT Gav Harrison (silver) and Fg Off Alex Helm (bronze), with Flt Lt Mike Jenkins taking the fourth slot.

Day two saw wakeboarding, with the RAF's three Team GB riders setting the standard, with Sgt Hayley Phillips taking the Ladies title, with Flt Lt Francesca Kennard-Kettle in third. In the Men's event there was a close competition between Team GB's Flt Lt Aran McGuckin and Chf Tech Rich Philips, with Philips winning out.

The start of day three saw the RAF Team in the overall lead but knowing that they would be facing stiff competition in the cable wakeboard.

The RAF Ladies stormed off the dock with Phillips taking silver, and Kennard-Kettle bronze.

At the end of the men's heats, two RAF riders had made the final – Flt Lt Khalil Duncan and Flt Lt Aran McGuckin, whose big air and rail tricks saw him take the Men's title and seal an RAF win in the overall competition.



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H**LP for
HEROES**

R'n'R

A kind of magic –
Freddie Mercury

● See
page 4



IT'S TIME TO BREW AND BAKE FOR VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH.

We all know it's good to talk. Host a Brew and Bake coffee morning or bake sale on station, at home, or in your community and make a life-changing difference to a veteran whilst having a brew, some banter and a slice of cake.



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delicious brew and some baked goodies.

**COMBAT
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FOR VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH



TV

The Wargame
Sky & NOW

RECENTLY LAUNCHED on Sky and NOW, *The Wargame* is a four-episode documentary series where a group of real-world politicians, intelligence and military experts must confront a simulated high-stakes crisis: a Russian attack on UK soil.

A spokesperson explained: "Prime Minister' Michael Gove and his team begin by piecing together grey-zone events, from the mysterious assassination of two RAF pilots to the source of a crippling cyber-attack on the NHS – is this the start of something bigger? When a Russian spy ship sinks in stormy seas off the coast of Scotland, the Kremlin paints the UK as the aggressor and takes the opportunity to 'retaliate', torpedoing a UK warship.

"With the 'cabinet' working diplomatic angles, Russia deploys a deep fake hot-mic to discredit Deputy Prime Minister Nicola Sturgeon and damage UK relations with America.

"The crisis escalates as the UK's targeted strikes destroy key Russian assets, and Britain suffers its biggest missile attack since the Blitz."



WARNINGS: Dame Penny Mordaunt (above) is featured alongside 'cabinet' colleagues including Michael Gove, Nicola Sturgeon and General Sir Richard Barrons (inset right)

Facing down Russia



The spokesperson added: "The tide seems to turn when European allies rally to the UK's aid, but the launch of a hypersonic dual-capable missile at the UK changes everything. With no way of knowing if the missile is conventional or nuclear, the Prime Minister faces an impossible choice."

The core cast of *The Wargame* includes former Defence Secretary Dame Penny Mordaunt, whose role in the scenario is the Defence Secretary, General Sir Richard Barrons' role is Chief of Defence Staff

and Baroness Harman is Home Secretary.

Why did Dame Penny want to take part in *The Wargame*?

She said: "If you've seen me on any media I'm usually saying something along the lines of 'Wake up Britain, we have to do something about our defences.' We are however now at a crunch point and have very little time in which to re-arm. If we don't I believe we are going to face a conflict situation.

"So, I thought this was an amazing opportunity to do something which is going to have

huge reach and can illustrate just how little choice we have should we be faced with some very difficult and dangerous situations."

She added: "Like a few others around the table, I was one of those who had done the role [of Defence Secretary] before in real life and so I felt my job was to help others round the table who had less experience of things like COBR meetings or details of our national defence capabilities, to give them the information they needed.

"Obviously, I have long

supported a strong Armed Forces and understand that if you don't look like you're prepared to use them, you lose all credibility and any ability to deter your foes. So, I was really ensuring that people understood the consequences of not just being strong and protecting the United Kingdom in terms of the show, but also because this documentary is going to be viewed by our enemies. We had to look prepared to show the resolve to defend ourselves."

● Go to: [sky.com](https://www.sky.com) for more information.

Vicky's queen of day dance scene

THERE AREN'T many live events where the dancefloor is full by mid-afternoon, generations mingle without a second thought and everyone is home in time for the evening.

Yet that's exactly what has happened with Day Fever.

What began as a simple idea between friends has become one of Britain's most unexpected live entertainment success stories, said a spokesperson.

As Day Fever approaches its third birthday this December, the daytime clubbing phenomenon continues to sell out venues across the UK.

For co-founder Vicky McClure, star of hit ITV series *Trigger Point*, there wasn't a single lightbulb moment when it all changed, but she remembers when it became clear the idea had struck a chord.

"Around six months in, it was seeing how, even in the warmer months, people still wanted a Saturday day out to dance. It also



STAR TURN: Vicky McClure

became a real talking point when I met people. As well as my work, they wanted to talk about Day Fever."

Upcoming club dates run from October 3-31 at venues around the country including Cardiff, London, Sheffield, York, Lincoln, Manchester and Glasgow.

● Go to: [day-fever.com](https://www.day-fever.com) for a full list.



Film Review

Bad Apples (15)

Out now

Danny's rotten to the core

A PRIMARY school teacher plagued by one particularly troublesome pupil decides to take matters into her own hands in Jonatan Etzler's debut black comedy.

Saoirse Ronan is Maria, or rather Miss Spencer, the teacher struggling to maintain order in her classroom of 10-year-olds. Danny (Eddie Waller) is the demon seed whose violent outbursts not only disrupt lessons and field trips, but result in one girl getting her arm broken.

In a far-fetched turn of events, Maria will end up kidnapping young Danny and keeping him chained up in her basement. This, it should be said, is not a punishment, but rather a method of trying to break through to him. In his absence, however, things seem to improve for everyone else. Well, everyone except Danny's dad.

Bad Apples quickly establishes its outlandish story and sense of humour. Ronan does a good job, remaining sympathetic despite Maria's increasingly unhinged decisions. In this heightened unreality, though, things never seem quite real, and so the stakes are hard to appreciate. Having a nice teacher abduct a child and keep him prisoner, then treating this as equally tense to an Ofsted inspection is a funny idea, but comes at the price of any real tension.

Considering its deranged premise, once feral Danny is locked up things stay pretty tame and escalate very gradually. Setting the bar so high so



PUSHED TO LIMIT: Miss Spencer, played by Saoirse Ronan

early means it's hard to be shocked by anything that follows unless it becomes considerably more extreme.

Recent film *Good Boy* had an uncannily similar premise, but was able to maintain that tension throughout.

Bad Apples could have gone harder, and it struggles to match the madness of its setup. By the time it finally starts to embrace its more deranged possibilities, it feels like too little, too late.

Review by Sam Cooney

Three roundels out of five ●●●



Museums

Displays

The Burberry Trench, V&A, until Jan 3, 2027

Coat entrenched in British history

A FREE DISPLAY celebrating the history and innovation of the Burberry trench coat is now on at the V&A Museum in London.

Running until January 3, 2027, *The Burberry Trench: Crafting an Icon* celebrates a fashion staple that has adapted and endured through the decades, marking the brand's 170th anniversary.

Bringing together rare material from the Burberry Archive and the V&A collection, the display traces the history of the Burberry trench from its origins as practical outerwear and military attire to a world-renowned icon of fashion.

Carly Eck, Brand Curator for Burberry, said: "As we mark 170 years of the house, we are thrilled to partner with the V&A to celebrate the enduring legacy of the Burberry trench coat – a global design icon rooted in British craftsmanship and a symbol of innovation, creativity and timeless style. A myriad of objects from the brand's archive will be publicly exhibited for the first time – from early 20th-century catalogues to a Burberry trench coat worn by fashion designer Hardy Amies."

And on October 24 *Freddie Mercury Splendid Things* opens at the V&A – eight looks spanning Queen frontman Mercury's career go on temporary display until January 17, 2027.

The free display marks the 80th anniversary year of Freddie's birth, paying tribute to one of the world's most beloved performers.

Developed with Mary Austin,



BOLD LOOK: Men's mirror-embroidered Burberry trench coat, Autumn/Winter 2015



STATEMENT PIECE: Men's pink metallic silk Burberry trench coat, Spring/Summer 2013

Freddie's former fiancée, close friend and confidante of 20 years, the trail celebrates Mercury's career through costumes and accessories worn in some of the most memorable music videos and pop performances of modern times. Mary is lending seven of the looks to the V&A for the display.

She said: "As we celebrate Freddie's legacy in what would have been his 80th year, the clothes and costumes to be displayed at the V&A tell a hugely important part of his story, both on and off the stage. Never mere accoutrements, his costumes and clothes were essential to his performances, creative vision, and wider self-expression, carefully designed to create a lasting visual and emotional impact that has reached across the generations and still reverberates today."

● Go to: vam.ac.uk for more information.



SPLENDID THINGS: Freddie Mercury in the *Made in Heaven* music video. Photography by Simon Fowler © Mercury Songs Ltd



MILITARY HISTORIAN: James Holland



FICTION PROGRAMMES: Victoria Hislop



DOMESTIC

Under starter's o for other Cheltenham

IN THE National Year of Reading The Times and Sunday Times Cheltenham Literature Festival returns from October 9-18 with a programme of more than 500 events.

The world's longest-running literature festival takes place at various venues around the vibrant Regency town.

Across 10 packed days, world-famous names will appear alongside brand new voices, with literary greats, stars of stage and screen, incisive political thinkers and cultural commentators. There's also a lively family and schools programme, performances and literary happenings scattered across the town, said a spokesperson.

Bestselling historian James Holland tells the story of the statesmen who rebuilt the world after the devastation of World War II and helped create an era of unprecedented peace and prosperity. Bestselling storyteller and historian Sinclair McKay and actor Jeffrey Holland tell the story of the real Home Guard, immortalised by the beloved fictional platoon in *Dad's Army*, created by Jimmy Perry and David Croft.

Queen of classics Mary Beard will explore the surprising connections between antiquity and the present, while acclaimed fiction writer Robert Harris will discuss his return to ancient Rome in his latest novel. And historian,



TRAITORS STAR: Author David Olusoga

broadcaster and author, *Celebrity Traitors* star David Olusoga explores his remarkable career and how he has transformed the way we understand Britain's past by bringing overlooked histories to wider audiences.

This year's fiction programme features Victoria Hislop discussing her new book, *The Wine-Dark Sea*. Maggie O'Farrell introduces her latest novel, *Land*, inspired by her own family's history. Sebastian Faulks discusses *Farewell to Eden*, his portrait of post-war Britain, and *Life of Pi* author Yann Martel

explores his new novel, *Son of Nobody*. Jeffrey Archer joins Times Radio broadcaster and Labour peer Ayesha Hazarika to discuss *Adam and Eve*, his ambitious final novel. Hazarika will also be in conversation with Ian Hislop, marking his 40th year as editor of *Private Eye*.

In global politics, former Director of Chatham House Robin Niblett leads a conversation with Director of the NATO Defence College Research Division Florence Gaub, foreign affairs correspondent Gideon Rachman and former British ambassador to the United States Kim Darroch that examines whether the international community is headed towards the next world war.

Elsewhere, national security expert Elisabeth Braw and award-winning investigative journalist Bojan Pancevski ask whether the deep sea is becoming the next geopolitical frontline, examining the high-stakes fragility of the undersea cables and pipelines that sustain our world.

Alongside her extraordinary career in food, Mary Berry reveals her second great love: gardening. In conversation with comedian and former *Great British Bake Off* host Mel Giedroyc, she will share seasonal wisdom, personal anecdotes and photographs from her own garden and introduce her forthcoming cookbook.



GODDESS: Mary Berry on gardening and cooking

orders nham

In *The Book of Panto, Strictly Come Dancing judge* and pantomime star Craig Revel Horwood explores the rich, surprising history of Britain's favourite festive tradition, tracing its journey from ancient roots to modern-day phenomenon, revealing why pantomime remains one of the nation's most enduring and beloved forms of entertainment.

Julian Lloyd Webber reflects with Gavin Plumley on an extraordinary life in music and Blur's Dave Rowntree shares the tales behind the band's formative years through unheard stories alongside candid photos from his new bestselling book *No One You Know*. Keyboardist, rhythm guitarist and co-songwriter Neil Codling, and bassist Mat Osman discuss their life and times in Suede during the second act of their 35-year career, with award-winning writer Rodge Glass on writing the band's intimate biography.

Celebrating Jilly Cooper, hosted by Caitlin Moran, toasts the life, work and enduring appeal of one of Britain's most beloved authors. With a special focus on the hit screen adaptation of *Rivals*, the panel features actor Katherine Parkinson, *Rivals* executive producer Dominic Treadwell-Collins, novelist and *Bridget Jones* creator Helen Fielding, Jilly's agent, Felicity Blunt and Jilly's daughter, Emily Tarrant to explore Cooper's extraordinary legacy, and the lasting appeal of the Rutshire novels.

Go to: cheltenhamfestivals.org for full programme details.



Film
24 Hour Party People (18)
In cinemas from Oct 9

Still mad fer it in Manchester

CELEBRATING 24 years since the release of Michael Winterbottom's iconic film, *24 Hour Party People* makes a return to UK and Irish cinemas on October 9, remastered in 4K. The film will be available to own on Digital and 4K UHD disc from October 26.

A premiere screening will open Beyond The Music, Greater Manchester's music and media industry conference, and music festival at MediaCity, Salford on October 6, followed by a Q&A featuring Steve Coogan, Michael Winterbottom and Andrew Eaton.

A Revolution Films production, *24 Hour Party People* was written by Frank Cottrell-Boyce and also stars Paddy Considine (*MobLand*), Shirley Henderson (*Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy*), Lennie James (*The Walking Dead*), John Simm (*Life On Mars*), Ralf Little (*The Royle Family*), Andy Serkis (*Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*), Peter Kay (*Car Share*), Sean Harris (*Mission Impossible: Fallout*) and John Thomson (*Inkheart*) alongside a host of cameos from the Manchester scene.

Manchester 1976: Granada TV presenter, Tony Wilson (Coogan), is at a Sex Pistols gig. Totally inspired by this pivotal moment in music history, he and his friends set up a record label, Factory Records, and proceed to sign a number of local bands destined to be some of the most influential artists of their time. First, Joy Division, who go on to become New Order; then come the Happy Mondays.

What ensues is a blackly comic tale of music, sex, drugs, larger-than-life characters, and the birth of one of the most famous dance clubs in the world, The Hacienda. Told through the eyes of one man who was in the centre of it all, throughout the film graphically documents the vibrancy that made Mad-chester the place to be.

A riotous, genre-defying portrait of the Manchester music scene, *24 Hour Party People* was one of the most celebrated British films of the decade, earning widespread critical acclaim following its release in 2002.

Go to: beyondthemusic.co.uk/24hour/ for more details.



PARTY ANIMAL: Steve Coogan as entrepreneur Tony Wilson Photo: Altitude

Tapestry's the talk of the festival



THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY: Hear its incredible story told by Michael Lewis

THE POPULAR Chalke History Festival runs from June 21-27, 2027 and tickets are already on sale.

Taking place at Broad Chalke, Wiltshire, the week-long festival has attracted a host of top speakers including Al Murray, Sir Michael Palin, Mary Beard, Antony Beevor, Saul David and James Holland.

You can also become a Festival member and get your history fix year-round with access to compelling history conversations. Members receive exclusive access to the very best recordings from the festival, alongside live debates and discussions with leading historians, authors and subject experts, a Festival spokesperson said.

The Festival's autumn and winter online talks series is now underway and on October 7 features a talk celebrating the landmark loan of the Bayeux Tapestry with British Museum

curator Michael Lewis. The live online talk is from 7 to 8pm, free for members, £5 for non-members.

The Bayeux Tapestry is the most famous artwork to survive from medieval Europe. The 70-metre-long embroidery narrates events leading to the Battle of Hastings in 1066 and the Norman Conquest of England. As the only contemporary visual depiction of these events, it is a witness to history as well as a daringly ambitious undertaking, cinematic in its storytelling and imagery, the spokesperson added.

You can join Michael Lewis to discover the incredible story of the Bayeux Tapestry and celebrate its landmark loan to the British Museum this autumn, the first time it has returned to England for nearly 1,000 years. The discussion will be followed by a live Q&A session.

Go to: chalkefestival.com for more details.



Your Announcements

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Death

TRUSSLER Wg Cdr JD (Chas) passed away on August 21 aged 85, after a short battle with Motor Neurone Disease. Chas joined the RAF as an Aircraft Apprentice in 1957 (87th Entry) and retired on December 6, 1995. Chas and Sue were married for 65 years. Chas is survived by wife Sue, son Michael and family and daughter Jeanette and family.



Wg Cdr Chas Trussler

Seeking

SEEKING two mates from my days at St Athan in the early 70s, Wiggy McVey and Geordie Hepple, they were painters and finishers based at West Camp, St Athan. Please contact Charles Bell: chabell36@aol.com

SEEKING contact with former aircrew and ground crew of 80 Sqn who served prior to the September 1969 disbandment. I am looking to collect, document, and preserve first-hand accounts, photos and flight logs from this era. Please email: andrew.nash.722@mod.gov.uk

SEEKING Paul Bishop: I want to contact Paul who left Brentwood School in 1976 to join the RAF, possibly after a university scholarship. It's 50 years since our 'A'-levels and I've traced 11 of our class of 13 for a reunion. Contact me at: matthewchell@yahoo.co.uk or please pass this

notice on to Paul.

SEEKING Con Roscrow/Roscoe (not 100 per cent sure of his surname). Con was a Col. engine fitter when I was posted to 56 Sqn at RAF Waterbeach in April 1956 as a young airman. Over the next four years he mentored me until I became Junior Tech (engines) and was posted to Australia. During this time we became good friends and I have looked for him for many years, problem being he would be in his early 90s now as I'm 88. Please contact: petterandell286@btinternet.com

FORTY years ago I interviewed a large number of veterans for a television series *The Road to D-Day*. Recognising the historic value of these interviews I archived them. Now that I am retiring, I am anxious that these historic contributions should not simply be thrown away. I am seeking to contact Dennis Sweeting DFC, 198 Sqn, Bunny Holden of 16 Sqn and Pat Porteous VC or their families/squadron historians. I am now nearly 93 and uniting these unique interviews with next of kin/units is an important part of my 'bucket list'. Given current privacy laws, making these contacts is a mammoth task; I hope someone can help. Contact: Peter@pwtv.co.uk

I would be very keen to hear from any former members of Number 44G State Enrolled Nurse Course who undertook their programme of Nurse Education at RAF Hospital Ely (as it was at that time) between 1971 and 1973. Please email: retiredraf8030192@gmail.com. Paul Elliott P8030192, served between 1971 and 1985.

Reunions

THE RAF Masirah and RAF Salalah Veterans Association AGM and Reunion Gala Dinner is to be held on Saturday, October 10. This will be at The Eastwood Hall Hotel, Mansfield

Road, Nottingham NG16 3SS. All members are very welcome to attend. If you are interested in attending the event, please contact Alan Teasdale, on joalteas@btinternet.com. If you would like to join The Association, please visit our website: www.omanrafveterans.org for further details and information.

IF you have been a QHI or QHCI at RAF Shawbury during the last 50 years and would be interested in attending an evening function in October, please contact: SHY-ComdtOuterOffice@mod.gov.uk

CALLING all former TG11 comms personnel, T/phonists, TPOs, Tels, Wop Specs, TCOs, TRCs, plus all comms trades associated with the 'Sparks' badge. All are welcome to attend the Trade Group 11 Association reunion to be held Friday, April 9 to Sunday April 11, 2027. This will be at the Eastwood Hall Hotel, Mansfield Road, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, NG16 3SS. Please find further details at: tg11association.com where, if not already a member of the association, there is a facility to become one (just click on the register motif at the top of the website page).

309 Entry RAF Hereford C Flt 4 Sqn Cooks, April 1967 to May 1968. If anyone knows anybody from that Entry and wants to get in touch, with a view to meeting for a 60th anniversary celebration in 2027, please call Ian Dell on: 01202 722058.

Associations

THE RAF Air Loadmaster Association (ALMA) marked its 25th anniversary in May and is looking to recruit new members – serving personnel as well as veterans. If you are interested in joining, please email Les Weston on: lesalma9001@gmail.com or call: 07531 523456.

RAF Armourers past and present: RAF Association's Branch aims to provide welfare support and comradeship for all who have served or currently serve as an RAF Armourer. See: rafaarmourers.co.uk or email: plumbersrest@outlook.com.

HARTLEPOOL RAF Association Branch was formed on October 29, 1946 and continues to the present day. Current members and guests will gather to celebrate at Hartlepool Yacht Club on October 30 from 7pm, with dinner and entertainment. Guide price £15. All current, past and distant branch members are invited to apply for tickets by email to: treasurer@hartlepoolrafa.com or telephone: 07864857186.

THE Association of RAF Women Officers (ARAFWO) is a lively, friendly, world-wide networking group. Please visit our website: arafwo.co.uk and see what activities and events we offer all

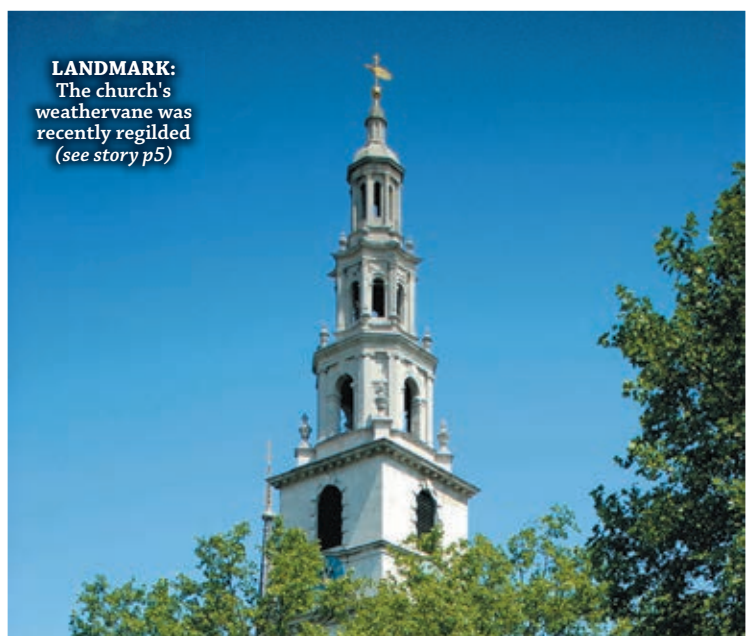
over the world.

591 SU Association. Ex-members and currently serving ex members of 591 SU are invited to visit the Association's website at: 591suassociation.co.uk for membership details and news of the next annual reunion plus other upcoming events for 2026.

IF you trained as an RAF Administrative Apprentice (or you are related to one) we would be delighted to welcome you to the RAFAA Association. Please see: rafadappasn.org; or you can contact the Membership Secretary on: 07866 085834 or contact the Chairman on: 01933 443673.

RAF Catering Warrant Officers' and Seniors' Association: all serving or retired TG19 WO or FS and all former Catering Branch Officers are invited to join the RAF CWO&SA. We meet twice yearly. Please email: jbateson@gmail.com for more information.

Free concert at the RAF's church, St Clement Danes



LANDMARK:
The church's
weathervane was
recently regilded
(see story p5)

THE CENTRAL Church of the RAF, St Clement Danes in the Strand, London, is holding its annual Friends Concert on Thursday, November 26, 2026, starting at 6.30pm.

The concert will be given by the Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment* and the choir of St Clement Danes (all professional opera singers). The audience can look forward to excellent musicians performing exciting new and well-loved musical favourites, followed by wine, soft drinks and snacks after the concert, with the chance to meet the performers.

More than 130 people have

already requested tickets for this free concert, but tickets are still available.

Simon Denny, concert co-ordinator, said: "The concert combines outstanding musicianship with the chance to contribute to the upkeep of the wonderful Central Church of the RAF and meet up with old and new friends in the RAF family, it is a wonderful opening to the build up to Christmas."

You can email: concert@fscd.org.uk to request tickets.

*The Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment plays by permission of the Air Force Board of the Defence Council.

How to use our service

There is no charge for conventionally-worded **birth, engagement, marriage, anniversary, death, in memoriam seeking and reunion** notices. For commercial small ads contact Edwin Rodrigues on: 07482 571535. We cannot, under any circumstances, take announcements over the telephone. They can be sent by email to: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk or by post to: **Announcements, RAF News, Room 68, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE.**

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Fund helps mum enjoy time outdoors with family

WHEN RAF spouse Bobbie's health suddenly deteriorated, life changed dramatically for her and her husband and children. But thanks to support from the RAF Benevolent Fund, she has regained her independence and is able to enjoy time outdoors with her family again.

Bobbie, whose husband Alex serves as a Cpl at RAF Marham, had always led an active life. But after becoming seriously unwell two years ago, she was diagnosed with severe ME and fibromyalgia, alongside living with Type 1 diabetes.

She explained: "Any physical



or mental stress can cause my body to shut down. I become extremely poorly and exhausted. At one point, my husband was carrying me upstairs to bed every night."

Alex, who has served in the RAF for nine years and has spent much of his career deployed away from home, suddenly found himself balancing military service with caring responsibilities for his wife and their four children.

Bobbie said: "The RAF have been absolutely fantastic. Alex hasn't had to be away once since I became unwell."

"They have been so supportive, giving him flexible hours so he can do the school run and help look after me and the children. It's taken away a huge amount of worry."

Bobbie was first connected to the RAFBF through SSAFA, who had been helping the family navigate the challenges they faced.

"SSAFA helped us with support for the children and pointed Alex in the right direction for advice. They then suggested we speak to

the Fund," she added.

"My old wheelchair was causing me problems. I kept falling out of it, and every trip out was stressful. But I wasn't sure anyone would be able to help as it was such a lot of money."

The Fund provided Bobbie with a specialist wheelchair worth £15,000.

"My new chair is incredible. It's completely tailor-made for me. The wheels are huge, and I can get over every type of terrain. I can go up hills and down tracks, and I've not got stuck once," she explained.

"I can actually relax in it. Before, all my energy went into simply getting around. Now I can look around, enjoy being outside, and spend time with my family without constantly worrying."

For Bobbie, the greatest difference has been being able to enjoy simple family moments again.

She said: "We took the children down to the river and along tracks I hadn't been able to go down in years. I could watch the kids play and our dogs run



FREEDOM:
Bobbie can now
join her children
for fun outside

around. It made me cry because I just wouldn't have been able to do that before."

She added: "Being able to walk the dogs with my family is a huge

deal. When the children want to run off and play, I can follow them. We don't have to plan every journey anymore. The freedom is amazing."

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R'n'R



Prize Crossword
No. 418

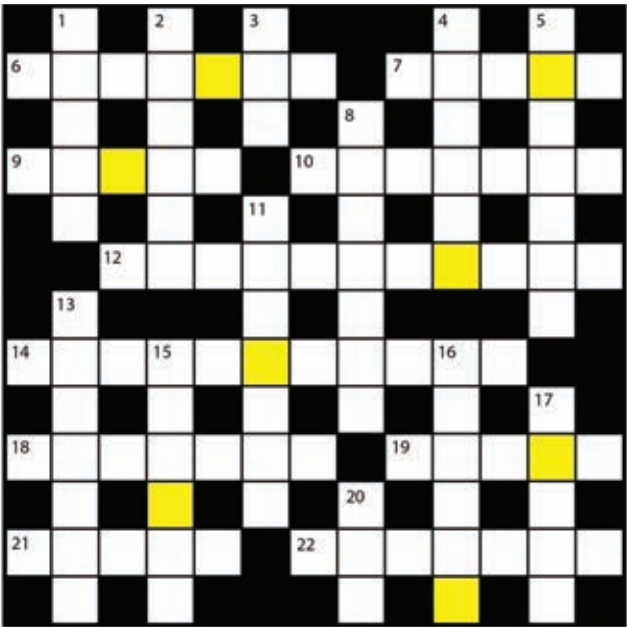
Solve the crossword, then rearrange the 8 letters in yellow squares to find an RAF aircraft.

- Across
- 6. I'm clear about this extraordinary event (7)
 - 7. The French and the English find flower underground (5)
 - 9. Get together with football team, almost (5)
 - 10. After Football Association left, studies RAF team (7)
 - 12. Receipt torn from type of RAF plane (11)
 - 14. Meagre bolts explode from RAF plane (11)
 - 18. Mother's beds bring good luck (7)
 - 19. After day of victory, sun returns to planet (5)
 - 21. And 22 Across. We can remember The Few here (5-2-5)
 - 22. See 21 Across

- Down
- 1. Scotsman falls in Italian river softly (5)
 - 2. Shakespearean Prince, real heavyweight, at station (6)
 - 3. A pair of beginners, everyone (3)
 - 4. It handles the national drink (6)
 - 5. RAF aircraft can handle itself nicely, operating over Kenya initially (7)
 - 8. Scorn upsets a crass Frenchman (7)
 - 11. RAF gear man left with baseball team (7)
 - 13. Handbook girl can upset (7)
 - 15. Lash US note to outside of Exocet (6)
 - 16. The Spanish First Lady performs northern number (6)
 - 17. Scottish writer blushes...(5)
 - 20. ...probably this colour (3)

Name:
Address:
.....
.....
RAF aircraft:Crossword No. 418

The winners of our Prize Crossword and Prize Su Doku puzzles will receive a recent aviation title – please send your entries to the address printed in the adjacent Su Doku panel, to arrive by October 16, 2026.



Prize Crossword No. 417 solution
Across – 7. Animal 8. Pilots 10. Assegai 11. Cobra 12. Hawk 13. Seven 17. Shark 18. Puma 22. Ideal 23. Sashimi 24. Gripen 25. Merlin
Down – 1. Panache 2. Jigsaws 3. Cargo 4. Aircrew 5. Bombs 6. Essay 9. Firecrest 14. Chelsea 15. Cubicle 16. Valiant 19. Bingo 20. Telic 21. Aster
RAF station – *Honington*

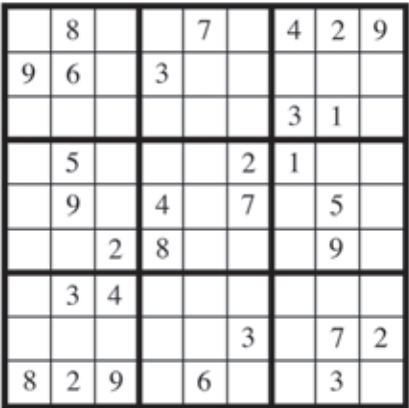
The winner of Crossword No. 415 is Mr S Barnes, Barrow Upon Humber; the winner of Crossword No.416 is: Kelly Hallam, RAF Cranwell.



Prize Su Doku
No. 428

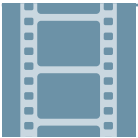
Fill in all the squares in the grid so that each row, each column and each 3x3 square contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

Solutions should be sent in a sealed envelope marked 'Su Doku' with the number in the top left-hand corner to:
RAF News,
Room 68,
Lancaster Building, HQ
Air Command,
High Wycombe,
Bucks,
HP14 4UE,
to arrive by October 16, 2026.
Su Doku No. 425 winner is: Mr J Mandall, Lincoln; Su Doku No. 426 winner is: Nicholas Kenney, Southport.



Solution to Su Doku No. 427

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



Film Review
Queen at Sea (15)
In cinemas now

Dementia and consent

A DAUGHTER tries to protect her mother, whose dementia has chipped away at her ability to communicate and consent, in Lance Hammer's devastating drama.

Amanda (Juliette Binoche) is checking in on her elderly mother when she walks in on her having sex with her husband, although the expression on her face is one of shock and confusion. Having warned her stepfather Martin (Tom Courtenay) about this in the past, Amanda learns that her mother Leslie (Anna Calder-Marshall) is considered unable to consent by the doctors, and so gets the police involved.

This is the opening of *Queen at Sea*, presenting a tricky moral scenario that will only grow more complex as you spend time with each of its characters. A challenging film, it probes ideas of intimacy and love and how this is expressed, between partners as well as within families. It looks at the institutions and safeguarding measures that we have in place at this time, but also spends time



INTIMATE: But Leslie is considered unable to consent to sex with her husband, Martin

with those affected, showing how nuanced and messy it can be when focusing on an individual. The film is made to feel very naturalistic, shot in a wintry London with an observational style, sometimes uncomfortably close but often obscured in some way. The combination of this photography and the phenomenal performances make for an uncomfortably real experience, that makes the drama hit particularly hard.

Meanwhile Amanda's teenage daughter Sara (Florence Hunt) begins seeing a boy, providing some relief from the film's heavier themes, but also illustrating beautifully another part of this human experience.

Queen at Sea is provocative and confrontational, a tough watch that is completely necessary given its subject, and refuses to offer any easy answers.

5 roundels out of 5
Review by Sam Cooney



Music
Mötley Crüe
Too Fast For Love anniversary edition

Band hit Crüe's control

MÖTLEY CRÜE have announced a special 45th Anniversary Limited Edition Box Set of their legendary debut album *Too Fast For Love*, out on October 30.

A spokesperson said: "One of the best debut albums of all time, *Too Fast For Love* was the first great Los Angeles hard rock album of the '80s, helping kick open the doors for that decade's fertile Hollywood rock scene, as well as the signing frenzy and imitators that followed."

"Originally self-released in November 1981 in a pressing of just 900 LPs on the band's own Leathür Records imprint, *Too Fast For Love* was a true DIY statement. Fuelled by the Crüe's explosive live shows, the album quickly became a sought-after underground release and Elektra Records signed the band less than six months later."

The spokesperson added: "With a retooled tracklist, a remixed and remastered version of *Too Fast For Love* was issued in August 1982. Lead single *Live Wire* hit the airwaves and the classic music video coincided with the recent launch of MTV



ROCK ON: The Crüe are still going strong

which gave many hard rock fans their introduction to the Crüe."

The centrepiece of the 45th anniversary celebration is a limited edition deluxe box set that includes the 1981 Leathür Records version, the 1982 Elektra Records version, live recordings from the legendary Perkins Palace shows in 1982 (previewing tracks from 1983's epic *Shout At The Devil*), never-before-released 5-track 1LP featuring demos from the band's first-ever studio sessions from March 1981, replica demo cassette, replica 7" single, 100-page hardcover photo book, replica poster and more.

Go to: motley.com for further details.