

The Forces' favourite paper

Spitfire ace and his *two* graves

● See page 19

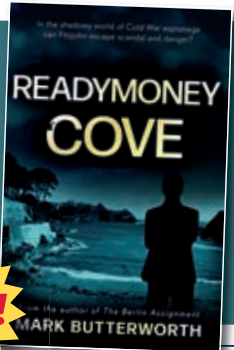
Win!



Cold War political thriller

● See R'n'R page 5

Win!



ROYAL AIR FORCE

Friday, July 11, 2025
Edition No.1612

Only 99p

RAF News



RIAT 2025

See pages 14-15

Polo Mimi's on Song in IS



● See page 23

Wakefest Liquid gold at Datchet



● See page p26

Boxing Al fresco at Akrotiri



● See page p27

Going Pro with NATO

Protector setting RPAS standard



WADDINGTON IS to become an international training centre for the next generation of Nato aircrew who operate remotely piloted aircraft like the UK's new Protector.

Air chiefs unveiled the new facility at the Lincolnshire station which houses ground control stations, simulators


and training areas and forms part of Nato's Flight Training Europe Campus.

Operated by 54 Sqn, it sits beside the RAF's Advanced Air ISTAR Academy which delivers over 30 multi-skilled courses for the ISTAR crews from 17 Alliance nations.

● Continued on p3

BiteSize

“Hopefully my English colleagues just accept it for what it is... a good rock song,”



Band member and proud Scot Sqn Ldr Gav Connolly hits charts with tune about Bannockburn
See page 13

“Hits across the generations, that’s the key,”



Actress Vicky McClure on the success of her daytime discos
See R’n’R pages 4-5

“Hosting outside in Cyprus under the lights is unique,”



Akrotiri Boxing chief's Flt Lt Sal Hill
See p27

Training landmark



ROYAL AIR FORCE RAF News

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MORE THAN 56,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been trained by the UK and 13 partner nations on Operation Interflex, the UK-led, multination training programme.

This month marks three years since the first Ukrainian trainees landed on British soil to begin the military training to help defend their nation.

Ukrainian pilots have also undergone intensive training under Royal Air Force instructors before moving to advanced tuition in France and Denmark and eventually piloting F-16 fighters under the US-led Air Capability Coalition.

Defence Minister Luke Pollard said: “Providing military support to Ukraine is essential to both UK and European security.

“The UK and its Allies are united in our support for Ukraine. I am sure they share my constant awe of the resilience shown by the Ukrainian people in the face of Russian aggression.”



FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL: Ukrainian conscript learns combat skills with the RAF Regt as part of Operation Interflex

This Week In History



1944 Meteor debut

THE RAF’S first operational jet aircraft, the Gloster Meteor, enters service with 616 (South Yorkshire) Sqn based at RAF Manston in Kent.

1957 BBMF evolves

THE HISTORIC Aircraft Flight forms at Biggin Hill. It is designated as the Battle of Britain Flight the following year, finally becoming the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight in 1973.



1969 Wessex deployed

FOUR 72 Sqn Wessex helicopters deploy to RAF Ballykelly to support Army units following outbreaks of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland.

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



Line of duty



UK F-35 SQUADRONS launched a strike force of eight Lightning stealth fighters in quick succession from the deck of HMS Prince of Wales as the Carrier Strike Group heads for the South Pacific. The drill is the latest combat air exercise which has seen RAF and Navy air crews fly

combat training sorties alongside Allies in the Mediterranean and Gulf en route to Australia during Operation Highmast. The CSG left Singapore earlier this month following the latest scheduled stop-off during the planned eight-month mission.

New NATO training hub at RAF Waddington for RPAS pilots

Continued from front page

Air Officer Commanding 1 Group, Air Vice-Marshall Mark Jackson, said: "This building has only been made possible through the tenacity and dedication of a team comprising RAF personnel, civil servants and vendors who have worked together to develop this site into a world-class facility and I thank them for their efforts."

The new building is dedicated to Gp Capt Bobby Oxspring, who fought in the Battle of Britain and went on to pilot the RAF's first jet fighter, the Vampire, on a

record-breaking flight across the Atlantic in 1949.

The opening of The Oxspring Nato Campus is designed to increase interoperability across Nato members and is backed by the Nato Support and Procurement Agency, a spokesman said.

Nato procurement chief Allan McLeod added: "The opening is a testament to what Nato nations can achieve when they come together with a shared purpose."

"By integrating world-class capabilities like Protector into the NFTE framework,

we are enabling the future of multinational aircrew training, while increasing availability and readiness across the Alliance."

Protector officially entered service with the RAF last month and is the first remotely-piloted platform which is authorised to operate in UK air space. Flown from Waddington, it can operate at heights up to 40,000 feet and has an endurance of more than 30 hours.

A MoD spokesman said: "Protector will deliver a unique and long-endurance

capability to UK Defence, specialising in intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance as well as strike operations. This advanced system can be deployed globally with minimal on-site support, making it highly versatile for various missions.

"Protector will deliver a cutting-edge RPAS for the UK, replacing the current Reaper capability, and will be the first remotely-piloted aircraft of this type capable of flying in the UK in all classes of airspace."

200,000 honour Armed Forces

THE RED ARROWS performed breathtaking stunts over the Humber Estuary as an estimated

200,000 people gathered to celebrate Armed Forces Day in Cleethorpes. Celebrations began with service

personnel, veterans and cadets marching along the seafront watched by crowds who lined the streets.

Among them was Defence Secretary John Healey who said: "I want to thank the people of Cleethorpes for hosting such a spectacular national event."

"On Armed Forces Day the nation unites to thank our military for making Britain secure at home, and strong abroad."

Event organiser Alex Baxter said: "Each year, we join with around 200,000 visitors to say thank you to our Armed Forces, both past and present, and their families."

Chief of the Air Staff and newly-appointed Chief of the Defence Staff Sir Richard Knighton joined the Defence Secretary and local



GENERATION GAME: Young women show their support, above, and RAF veteran Patrick Hague with Defence Secretary John Healey, right

VIPs to watch the parade. Chinook helicopters from Odiham flew over, and a Hurricane and Spitfire from Coningsby's Battle of Britain Memorial Flight performed a flypast.



GLEE-THORPES: Seaside town was out in force for military personnel



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 **SCAN ME**

New F-35 deal gives RAF nuclear option

Simon Mander

THE RAF is to get 12 new F-35A fighter jets and join Nato's dual capable aircraft nuclear mission.

At least a dozen of the aircraft, which can carry both nuclear and conventional weapons and are cheaper than the F-35B Lightnings flown from aircraft carriers, are to be purchased.

The new fast jets will be based at Marham, with the Government expected to procure 138 F-35s over the lifetime of the programme. The procurement will save up to 25 per cent per aircraft for the taxpayer.

The move reintroduces a nuclear role for the RAF for the first time since the UK retired its sovereign air-launched weapons following the end of the Cold War.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said: "We can no longer take peace for granted. These F-35 dual capable aircraft will herald a new era for the RAF and deter hostile threats that threaten the UK and our Allies."

"We must all step up to protect the Euro-Atlantic area for generations to come."

The Strategic Defence Review



LIGHTNING STRIKES TWICE: F-35Bs, pictured on the deck of HMS Prince of Wales in Singapore, will be joined by F-35A variant under new deal with Lockheed Martin

recommended that the UK further strengthen its commitment to the alliance. And Nato's nuclear deterrence also relies on the United States' nuclear weapons deployed in Europe.

Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte added: "This is yet another robust British contribution to Nato."

Defence Secretary John Healey said: "This commitment is an embodiment of our

Nato-first strategy."

The Government says this announcement further underlines the UK's commitment to collective defence under Article 5.

In Brief



Tribute to Trenchard

Shaun Carter

A NEW memorial to thousands of apprentices who trained at Halton has been unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

Called Trenchard's Legacy, the design by sculptor Timothy Potts was revealed at a ceremony attended by hundreds of veterans and Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Knighton.

The service was completed by a flypast by an RAF Atlas A400M aircraft.



NATO flexes air power with High North drill

Staff Reporter

PILOTS AND engineers from four different nations operated together in Finland for the first time.

British, French, and American personnel joined Nato's newest member for Exercise Atlantic Trident, to demonstrate the alliance's strength in the High North.

Using multiple bases throughout the Scandinavian country, all four air forces worked on each other's aircraft, to refuel the jets for rapid deployment.

"Atlantic Trident is a clear message of unity, readiness and resolve. For the Finnish people, this exercise reaffirms Nato's commitment to the principle that we are stronger together," said Wg Cdr Philip Skorge, Commanding Officer Lossiemouth's Global Readiness Wing.

They were joined by comrades from 140 Expeditionary Air Wing currently on Operation Chessman in Poland supported



NORTHERN FLIGHTS: Finnish F-18 joined Typhoon on latest NATO combat exercise

by 3 Force Protection Wing.

During the Exercise they trained together to protect airfields in an Agile Combat Employment environment which allows all Nato air forces to remain flexible and fast when operating together.

Wg Cdr Skorge said: "Finland

are now fully part of the team, bringing their own experiences and expertise to Nato, and this exercise is about understanding what each partner nation can bring to the fight.

"We are stronger together, and collective defence starts with working side by side every day."



ROYAL AIR Force Gunners are to take over from the King's Guard at the Tower of London.

The RAF Regiment's King's Colour Squadron will symbolically protect the Sovereign's fortress and demonstrate military discipline at state ceremonies.

Formed in 1960 and originally titled The Queen's Colour Squadron, it is responsible for the RAF's Sovereign's Colour.

Officially known as 63 Sqn, the Northolt-based unit specialises in precision drill displays and is trained and equipped for combat.



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Chinook stands by for blaze scramble



FIRE ALERT: Akrotiri based helicopter crews will support Cypriot emergency services as soaring temperatures threaten to spark wildfires across the island. Above, 84 Sqn fly over island inferno during last year's heatwave

Simon Mander

CHINOOKS ARE to tackle Cypriot wildfires for the first time as temperatures soar across southern Europe.

The 1310 Flt aircraft completed Exercise Pyrsos – the annual validation drill needed to join Cyprus fire fighting units preparing to battle forest blazes caused by the summer heatwave.

The Odiham-based unit will have a dedicated detachment with underslung water buckets and a forward logistics hub at Akrotiri to support operations.

AVM Simon Edwards said: "Exercise Pyrsos will enhance our ability to protect lives, property, and critical infrastructure from the increasing threat of wildfires across the region."

RAF crews are on standby on the

island throughout the summer, where temperatures top more than 40°C, supporting Cyprus emergency services across the region. Wild fires are a common occurrence as parched vegetation ignites, threatening residential areas.

The role was carried out by Puma helicopters operated by 84 Sqn prior to the retirement of the aircraft earlier this year.

UK crews were scrambled seven

times last year as Cypriot firefighters and forestry teams struggled to contain a blaze which ripped through areas of woodland near the south coast during a heatwave which saw temperatures hit 45°C.

Operating alongside Cyprus police Aires and Jordanian Blackhawk helicopters, the UK crew doused the flames with more than 60 tons of sea water.

Covid Angel's message to future frontline fighters

AN EX-MILITARY nurse who found herself on the frontline of Britain's Covid battle has signed on Cranwell's Wall of Honour.

Julie Ann Fulford found herself the first ex-Forces nurse in charge as civilian hospitals fought the virus, after serving four tours of Afghanistan and in Sierra Leone's ebola outbreak.

Survival instructor Mark Fairhead said: "Operating in surge and beyond their capacity of personnel and equip resource, Jules worked 14 hours straight, in full PPE, when the team were justly scared of contracting the virus themselves."

"She spoke of the scarcity of critical ventilators and of the impact on staff and families, whilst acting as liaison between the dying and their loved ones, who were prevented from being with them in their struggle to survive and their final moments of life."

"It highlights the courage and bravery of the NHS and military counterparts during that time, of the moral injury and of the despicable behaviour of the media and politicians then."

Jules joined the Army in 2005 and held the assembly of students and staff spellbound as she described her time in hospitals treating the most seriously injured during conflicts in Afghanistan and crises in Africa and the UK.

She spoke about her first patient on ops, a quadruple amputee, and the challenges of dealing with that and rolling into a 72-hour shift.

"Jules highlighted the fantastic

work done by the combat medics and MERT crews that kept people alive during battlefield evacuation and of the intensity and horrors of operating under pressure, often exhausted, saving lives," added Mr Fairhead.

During the presentation to rookie aircrew Jules urged them to find the courage to act when answers aren't clear and muddled by political influence.

A total of 860 health workers died from Covid compared to 695 military personnel in conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Deciding to leave the Army after the suicide of several colleagues, Jules is now a Help for Heroes case manager looking after seriously injured veterans.



JULIE ANN FULFORD



A TINY orphaned hoglet rescued by Air Force conservationists at St Mawgan has been christened Spitfire

The two-week old baby hedgehog strayed from its nest at a newly-created conservation area at the MoD

site and was suffering from dehydration and at risk from predators before volunteer Sgt Paul Smith stepped in.

Spitfire is now recuperating in an incubator provided by local hedgehog group Prickles and Paws.



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Bulletin



PEAK PERFORMANCE: Valley team battled record temperatures during adventure training course

Heat is on

ADVENTUROUS RAF personnel defied a heatwave by training in the stunning surroundings of Snowdonia National Park.

Four teams from three different units took up the challenge, organised by Valley's Force Development Squadron.

More than 30 personnel tackled logistical planning, and psychological and physical resilience during the adventure training challenge.

Teams crossed Llyn Gwynant before scaling Wales' highest peak, Mount Snowdon, and completing a 16km cycle ride.

Valley's Station Commander, Gp Capt Gez Currie, said: "This was a momentous challenge that embodied the war-fighter spirit, allowed us to implement heat illness prevention management and brought people together from across the region to participate."



LEGAL SAFEGUARDS: Mr Carns chats to military personnel at Armed Forces Day launch in Westminster

Vets pledge

NEW LEGAL protections are to be given to military personnel and veterans under Government plans.

The new legal duty will ensure fair access to services, priority support for the injured or bereaved and move to ensure local authorities, NHS bodies, and schools consider the needs of the Armed Forces community in decision-making.

Veterans and People Minister Alistair Carns said: "Whether you serve in the regular or reserve forces, you and your families stand to benefit from the Covenant Legal Duty Extension."

CAS lands Defence top job

Simon Mander

CHIEF OF the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Rich Knighton, became the first non-pilot to take the Service's top job in 2023.

Now he has been appointed Chief of the Defence Staff from September, taking over from Admiral Sir Tony Radakin.

ACM Knighton said: "I am acutely conscious of the dangers we face and the important role that the Armed Forces play in protecting the UK, our Allies, and our interests around the world."

"I want to pay tribute to Admiral Sir Tony Radakin for his exceptional work in leading the Armed Forces through the most

intense period of operational demand and strategic complexity, and for his unstinting support for Ukraine.

The 56-year-old Air Chief supported operations in Kosovo during the 1990s and takes the helm during an intense period of modernisation for the Armed Forces.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer, said: "Air Chief Marshal Sir Rich Knighton has led the RAF on operations across the world, while championing a culture of innovation and excellence."

"In a rapidly-changing global context, we need our Armed Forces to be more lethal, better integrated and equipped for the future."

Defence Secretary John Healey added: "As Chief of the Defence Staff, he will play a critical role in delivering the transformation set out in the Strategic Defence Review."

"I would like to thank Admiral Sir Tony Radakin for his distinguished service, particularly his unparalleled leadership on Ukraine."

APPOINTMENT: CAS Sir Richard Knighton will take up the post of CDS later this year



Atlas evac as Brits flee Iran missile terror



EVACUATION: An Atlas A400M carrying dozens of British citizens prepares to take off from Ben Gurion airport in Israel

Simon Mander

THE FIRST RAF flight to help British nationals wanting to leave Israel following Iranian rocket attacks has taken off from Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport.

Further flights are to be considered depending on demand and the latest security situation, the government said.

British nationals are urged to continue to register their presence to be contacted with

further guidance on any future flights.

Foreign Secretary David Lammy said: "The UK Government is working with the Israeli authorities to arrange RAF and charter flights to help those wanting to leave."

"While the situation in the Middle East remains volatile, we are working around the clock to secure more flights and bring more people home."

An RAF A400M aircraft was used for the flight from Tel Aviv to Cyprus – with

passengers due to transfer on to a civilian charter aircraft for the onwards journey to the UK. Those eligible for the flights will be expected to pay for their seat.

Consular officers deployed to the border in Jordan and Egypt are advising on onward travel to British nationals crossing.

Commercial flights are continuing to operate from Egypt and Jordan, and international land border crossings to these countries remain open.

News



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MORE THAN 1,500 fundraisers gathered at St Mawgan in Cornwall for the annual Rainbow Run, a three-mile charity trek around the air station's perimeter through clouds of brightly coloured powder paint.

The event, organised by engineer Cpl Dominic Main and the Children's Hospice South West, raised more than £100,000 for paediatric health care in the region.

Cpl Main said: "It's incredible to see the community keep on coming together year after year, not just for a run event but for a cause that truly makes a difference in people's lives."

Hollywood D-Day star joins Omaha tribute

Simon Mander

AIR FORCE personnel joined *Band of Brothers* actor James Madio during a visit to pay tribute to RAF D-Day heroes who landed on Normandy's coastline.

The Boulmer-based visitors were on Omaha beach, where 15082 Mobile Signals unit won the highest number of gallantry awards granted to an Air Force unit for a single operation outside of the Dambusters Raid.

The predecessors of today's Air Operations personnel were there to stop American troops being attacked from the air by establishing a radar warning and ground-control intercept capability as the landings began.

But it wasn't the four Military Crosses, two Military Medals and a Croix de Guerre won by the unit after just eight of its 27 vehicles unloaded by landing craft made it off the beach that most impressed.

Organiser Wg Cdr Yves Gagnon said: "We were all amazed to find ourselves stood next to one of the original *Band of Brothers* cast members, James Madio, who played Sgt Frank Perconte.

"Even 20 years on it was clear to me that James was still profoundly aware about the effect the show had on much of the world. Thanking us for our service and allowing obligatory selfies was a unique experience."

After laying a wreath on Omaha beach a French detachment from the Escadron de Détection et de Contrôle Mobile, also descendants of No 15082 GCI, joined the RAF party to pay their respects by

parading with them.

The visitors – Sqn Ldr Mike Roberts, Flt Lt Phil England, WO Shane Dwyer, AS1 Zach Frank, AS2 George Grogan and Ms Cath Drayton – also saw US Air Force flypasts and Dutch Fusiliers who sombrely remembered the Netherlands' contribution, drank Jägermeister and dived into the icy waters of the English Channel.

"The RAF's involvement in the Omaha beach landings is an incredible story. It is something that personnel should be proud about and it should be shouted about more. Its significance is huge," said Wg Cdr Gagnon.



OH BROTHER: Meeting Hollywood star James Madio, and the actor in hit movie, inset above

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Palace Theatre, Newark

Band of the Royal Air Force College

7.30pm Friday 19 September 2025

Cast, Doncaster

Band of the Royal Air Force College

3pm Sunday 21 September 2025

Epsom Playhouse

Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment

7.30pm Friday 3 October 2025

Terry O'Toole Theatre, Lincoln

Royal Air Force Swing Wing

7.30pm Friday 17 October 2025

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Calls to back UK veterans

Staff Reporter

ARMED FORCES charity chiefs have launched a campaign to highlight the care crisis facing many UK military veterans.

Help for Heroes' 'People's Promise' is urging the public to join calls to secure better health and welfare support for vets struggling with physical and mental health problems caused by military service and challenges adapting to life on civvy street.

Among the demands are better access to healthcare by medics with clinical understanding of veterans' issues and improved financial security by removing unnecessary hurdles to the benefits and support they are entitled to.

Campaign spokesman Mark Elliott said: "Every day, our team hears stories from those we support, and the ways they feel let down by the nation they served."

"Today, wounded, sick and injured veterans and their families are still not receiving the care and support they richly deserve."

"The People's Promise asks the Great British Public to stand united and fight alongside veterans to ensure they get the lifelong care they deserve."

Never mind the *Bannocks*

Scot-rock salute to Braveheart legend who routed the English

RAF ROCKERS Arcade Fortress are hoping to storm the download charts with their debut single inspired by Scottish legend William Wallace's defeat of the English in the 14th century.

The band released their hard-hitting rock anthem *Bannockburn* this month – but say they're not hoping to reignite age-old animosities when they perform in front of Forces audiences south of the border.

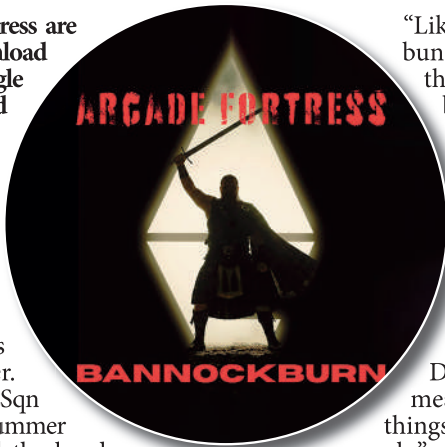
Frontman and songwriter Sqn Ldr Gavin Connolly and drummer Sqn Ldr Matt Stubbs formed the band when they met at Cranwell and brought in NHS worker Richard Fox to complete the line-up.

Gav, who is currently stationed with Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Belgium as a training officer, said: "In terms of inspiration for *Bannockburn*, I've tried to write some interesting lyrics based on what a soldier might have felt like in the moments before going into battle."

"As the song progresses, the battle commences, and I've tried to articulate the emotions and utter chaos of it all."

"Hopefully, my English colleagues and bandmates just enjoy listening to it for what it is – a good rock song."

"Whilst I'm from Dumbarton in Scotland, Richard is from Hillingdon and Matt is from Lincoln."



"Like the RAF, we're an eclectic bunch. We select the song ideas that we want to take forwards based on the music more than any other aspect."

"I always like to let the listener decide what our songs are about because how any music is interpreted by the listener is entirely subjective. Different songs mean different things to different people."

Arcade Fortress landed a recent spot on Forces radio network BFBS to promote the single and Gav is on a mission to become an ambassador for other Forces musical hopefuls. "If any of my fellow RAF folks want to chat about how they can collaborate and create their own music, I'd love them to get in touch," he added.

● Go to: linktr.ee/ArcadeFortress for more about the band and to download the single.



CHART BATTLE: Sqn Ldr Gavin Connolly set for chart debut with his band Arcade Fortress. Below, Mel Gibson as Wallace in *Braveheart*



ASRAAM firepower for Ukraine

Simon Mander

HUNDREDS OF air defence missiles usually fired by RAF combat jets are to be sent to Ukraine using funds seized from Russian assets.

Air Force engineers spent three months adapting the ASRAAM weapons to be fired from the back of trucks, dubbed the RAVEN Ground Based Air Defence System.

Now 350 missiles and five launchers are to protect Ukrainians from Putin's attacks using £70m worth of interest under the Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration scheme.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said: "Russia, not Ukraine, should

pay the price for Putin's barbaric and illegal war."

In March, he announced a historic £1.6 billion deal to provide more than 5,000 air defence missiles for Ukraine.

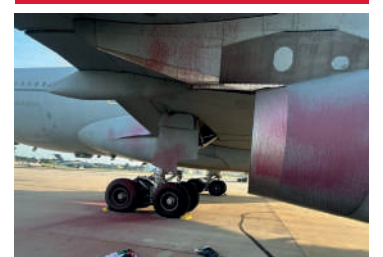
Defence Secretary John Healey said: "Putin is not serious about peace, and it's right that we use funds from seized Russian assets to help Ukraine defend itself from this onslaught."

The UK will also invest a record £350m this year to increase the supply of drones to Ukraine from a target of 10,000 in 2024 to 100,000 in 2025.

Britain has sent around 400 different capabilities to Ukraine including drones, boats and munitions.



Bulletin



Brize charges

FOUR PEOPLE have been charged after members of the Palestine Action group breached security and damaged two Voyager aircraft at RAF Brize Norton.

The suspects were arrested following an investigation by counter-terror police.

They have been charged with conspiracy to enter a prohibited place knowingly for a purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of the UK – and conspiracy to commit criminal damage.

Feature

Royal International Air Tattoo 2025: RAF Fairford, July 18-20

Showtime

Typhoon's 20th – fast jet thrills

THE TYPHOON Display Team is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year having been forced to cancel a season due to the Covid pandemic.

Making its debut at the Royal International Air Tattoo in 2005, with Sqn Ldr Matthew Elliott flying a Tranche 1 aircraft, this year's show is led by Tornado veteran Sqn Ldr Nathan Shawyer.

Typhoon Display Team Manager Flt Lt Nina Wilkinson said: "The eagle-eyed will have spotted that this would make 2025 our 21st anniversary year.

"However, the unfortunate events of 2020 saw that year's display season cancelled, hence we celebrate our 20th display season in 2025."

All this year's display jets are frontline-ready, despite their hectic summer schedule.

Flt Lt Wilkinson added: "Although the pilot and the aircraft are the focal point, it is important to note that the display is a team effort, pulling together aspects from all over the squadron and the station at Coningsby.

"We have a group of highly committed and talented engineers who face tough competition to be selected for their role.

"They make up three teams – Moggy, Blackjack and Gina –

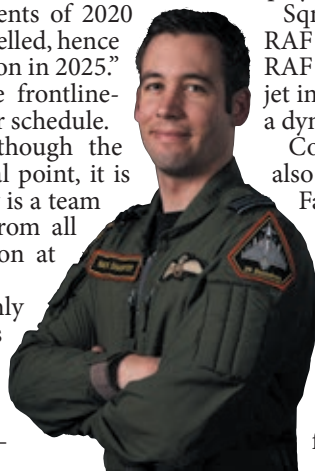
named in homage to the nicknames given to previous paint schemes. They will travel to the European and Asian continents with the display this summer."

Sqn Ldr Shawyer (pictured) joined the RAF in 2009 aged 18 and was the last ever RAF airman to fly the Tornado GR4 – the jet in which he won a commendation for a dynamic sortie over Mosul, Iraq.

Converting to Typhoon, he has also completed deployments to the Falklands, Estonia, Romania and the Middle East.

He was selected as the 2025 Typhoon Display pilot after shadowing his predecessor and friend 'Turbo' through his season last year.

Since equipping with the Typhoon in 2005, it has chiefly fallen to 29 Sqn to support the team.



Up close and personal v

FANS OF the mighty Chinook have a treat to look forward to at RIAT 2025 – this year's role demo promises to be 'up close and personal'.

The four-strong crew from RAF Odiham, led by role demo captain Flt Lt Cal Pearson, will be putting the redoubtable combat workhorse through its paces in front of an international audience.

Sgt Josh Lyons said: "We've got members of the Joint Helicopter Support Squadron with us again, like at RIAT last year. We're up close and personal – we can come a little bit closer to the crowd line than the jets can and we can come a bit lower.

"The benefit of the role demo is that you can demonstrate what the aircraft can achieve on a normal tasking sortie. It looks like a lumbering beast but it's very agile for



a helicopter that weighs around tonnes.

"And the beauty of the demo is that we can display a of the aircraft's abilities but in a short time-frame – 15 minutes. So you'll see us demonstrating different profiles like a weapon employment profile that we'd use on operations, underslung loads and



FLT LT PEARSON

Inspiring the RAF's next generation

THE RED ARROWS are hoping to build on last year's hugely successful diamond anniversary season with a new show of innovation, speed and precision.

Filled with the team's biggest and most complex formation shapes, the display aims to entertain and inspire millions of people of all ages and backgrounds.

Officer Commanding Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team Wg Cdr Adam Collins said: "Many of us in the Red Arrows decided to pursue a career in the military after first seeing the team as children."

"Each season, we change this show to ensure it remains dynamic, innovative and true to the Red Arrows' pedigree."

Formed 60 years ago, and having completed some 5,000 shows in 57 countries, the Red Arrows have a rich heritage.

But this year onlookers will also see challenging shapes, such as the Big Battle arrival, Swan Loop and Typhoon Roll.

The first half of the 23-minute show mixes the longest and widest formations in the team's repertoire, including Big Vixen – flown with air brakes extended and at almost full power to add plenty of excitement and colour.

Having been brought back last season for the first time in two decades, the distinctive 5/4 Split is retained but also gets a splash of red, white, and blue.

The 2025 Team Leader and Red One, Sqn Ldr Jon Bond (right),



said: "During the display's second half, there are debut manoeuvres called Tempest and Chainsaw for Reds 6-9, who comprise the rear section of the team – known as Hanna."

"In Chainsaw, two jets are flown upside down, going

head-to-head at 380mph, with Hanna aircraft crossing just 100ft apart."

The show concludes with a finale spectacle that hasn't been seen for many seasons, with all nine aircraft completing the display together, combining the arena-filling Palm Split with Opposition Barrel Rolls.

Amongst the latest Reds' line-up is Flt Lt Andrew McEwen – the first

F-35B Lightning II pilot to join the team.

The former 617 Sqn Dambuster pilot added: "The F-35B has the wonder of modern technology, auto pilot and superior situational awareness."

"The Hawk T1 has none of that and is a true pilot's machine that involves raw flying."

with Chinook Display Team

fast roping approaches."

Cal added: "It's an honour and a privilege to be selected as role demo captain. It's a really nice opportunity to do something different alongside the day job."

"The Chinook is a very capable machine, it makes a great noise, it can do a lot of different things and we've got such a repertoire of skills."

Acting FS Dave Sims gets to wear and wave the team's famous big orange 'hands' that the crowds love.

He said: "It gives the demo a bit more of an 'intimate' feel. It's great to meet the public afterwards, they always have lots of questions."

Co-pilot Flt Lt Jacob 'CJ' Cameron-Johnson added:

"People talk about the Chinook's 'wokka wokka' sounds and the bladeslap

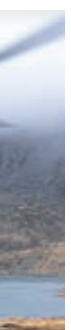
– it's very identifiable. And it's very manoeuvrable, it will pretty much do what you ask it to."

"The crew's favourite manoeuvre is the Gornji departure – a spiral climb followed by a fairly sharp nose dive. It's how we finish the show, we love it."

The iconic double-rotor helicopter, nicknamed the Wokka-Wokka because of its distinctive sound, has been the backbone of land-based combat and humanitarian missions since it was introduced in 1980.

It has seen action in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Iraq and Afghanistan, carrying Medical Emergency Reaction teams rescuing injured personnel from the battlefield.

In Afghanistan alone Chinooks flew more than 41,000 hours, extracted 13,000 casualties and its crews won 23 DFCs for bravery in the air.



A/FS SIMS

FLT LT CAMERON-JOHNSON





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AGES 3-18

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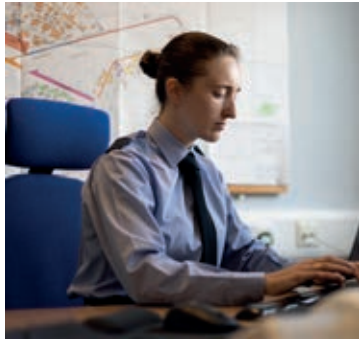


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The highly-trained team keeping the skies of Lincolnshire safe



IN CHARGE: Sqn Ldr Andrea Jackson

By Ed Palmer

LINCOLNSHIRE'S AIRSPACE is busy and keeping it safe for civilian and military aircraft is the job of the Terminal Air Traffic Control Centre (TATCC) at RAF Coningsby.

The team manage the flow of aircraft in and out of the county's airfields and the surrounding areas. With four flying stations (Barkston Heath, Coningsby, Cranwell and Waddington) it's very much RAF country. And because Coningsby is a 24/7 station delivering Quick Reaction Alert, there are always qualified controllers on duty in the tower.

The more than 70-strong team is led by Sqn Ldr Andrea Jackson. "The airspace is busy and complex; there are four busy flying stations, all within 15 miles of each other," she said. "Daily, all of them deliver operational output and critical flying training, conduct display flying and act as bases for multinational exercises. This is in addition to the general aircraft traffic, and the airborne emergency services."

The last-look checks of an aircraft prior to landing, controlling vehicle movements on the airfield and updating air traffic systems with flight critical information are some of the many responsibilities of the squadron's Air & Space Operations Specialists (ASOS).

Sqn Ldr Jackson said: "The controllers manage the airspace, but our ASOS contingent makes sure that the TATCC has up to date critical information, and that RAF Coningsby has a safe operating environment on the ground."

Air & Space Operations Specialist AS1 Wade Tear joined the RAF in 2002. He said: "No two days are ever the same here at Coningsby. There's always something going on, with new challenges to face and tasks to complete which assist in the station's flying output. You could be called up to help with an aircraft emergency or the launch of our QRA Typhoons in the flick of a switch."

All four stations have visual control rooms, where controllers can see aircraft arriving, landing and departing from their airfields. But the TATCC's Ops



ALWAYS CONCENTRATING AND CALM UNDER PRESSURE: An Air & Space Operations Specialist in the 'caravan' at RAF Coningsby, watching a Typhoon depart

We're in control

screen in front of them into a three-dimensional image in their minds. They need to rapidly assimilate multiple inputs safely and effectively, requiring mental agility.

"And then there's communication; controllers must understand their aircraft, routing and restrictions, whilst effectively communicating with correct wording and maintaining a safe service."

At Coningsby alone there are five fast jet Typhoon squadrons, and the piston-engine Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. These aircraft fly and manoeuvre at completely different speeds, but they take off and land at the same airfield. At RAF Waddington there are fast jet and multi engine aircraft, RAFAT (Red Arrows) and Protector, which is a remotely piloted aircraft.

Wg Cdr French is OC Operations Support Wing, of which Air Traffic Control is a part. She said: "Air safety is our top priority. We must make sure that everyone who uses Lincolnshire's airspace is deconflicted and has enough room to do what they need to do safely. It sounds simple, but you need qualified personnel who take their roles extremely seriously."

She added: "The team in Air Traffic have an extremely complex and challenging role in one of the UK's busiest areas of airspace. All personnel are highly skilled and form an integral part of keeping our skies and aircraft safe 24/7."



AS1 TEAR: Likes variety of ASOS tasks



HANDS ON: Sqn Ldr Jackson in the radar control room

Room at Coningsby is the nerve centre for all the stations in Lincolnshire's airspace. On their screens the controllers can see

and direct aircraft up to 40 miles away. In 2024 the Lincs TATCC provided Air Traffic Services to around 60,000 aircraft.

Sqn Ldr Jackson added: "It is a challenging job because controllers must reinterpret a two-dimensional image on the

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The Spitfire ace with two graves

HE WAS considered one of the forgotten heroes of World War II – until now. Flt Lt Desmond Ibbotson flew with three of the RAF's elite squadrons – over France, North Africa and Italy – amassed more than 650 hours flying seven types of Spitfire, was credited with 11 confirmed victories and was awarded the DFC and Bar, escaped capture by the Germans and even met Rommel.

But the Spitfire ace was tragically killed, aged only 23, on a routine test flight in 1944. And although he had a marked grave, a Spitfire was excavated from a field in Italy 62 years after his death with his remains still inside.

After more than 20 years of meticulous research, former RAF officer James B. Wright has written *On Silver Wings, A Spitfire Ace Rediscovered* (thehistorypress.co.uk) that examines Ibbotson's short but eventful career and investigates his death and how he came to have two graves.

The author said: "I had journeyed into Desmond's life and death and grown to admire him enormously. What had started out as researching a few additional facts to add to the family's knowledge and understanding of what their relative had done had turned into a personal quest to find the truth behind his untimely death and reveal the full extent of his daring exploits."

RAFVR

Ibbotson joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve in July 1940 hoping to fly Spitfires – he achieved his aim aged just 19.

Born in 1921, he grew up in the West Yorkshire village of Harewood.

He left Harrogate Grammar School in 1935 and in October 1936, with his parents Horace and Sarah, and his two sisters, sailed to New Zealand to start a new life, arriving a month later in Auckland.

Desmond took carpentry and joinery classes, but Horace couldn't settle and the Ibbotsons went back to England six months later, returning to Harewood in June, 1937. Desmond started work as an apprentice draughtsman with a firm near Leeds.

After enlisting into the RAF Volunteer Reserve he was selected for training as a pilot/observer, then sent to RAF North Weald, a frontline airfield, on August 17 at the height of the



601 SQN: Des in Spitfire, February 23, 1943, after being awarded the DFC



NEW WINGS: Des, July 2, 1941
(Both B&W photos © Ibbotson Family)



MEMORIALS: Eugenio Pannacchi with stone honouring Des at site of crash. Mr Pannacchi saw the Spitfire come down in 1944 and was the first to arrive at the scene to help. *Right*, military burial for Ibbotson at cemetery in Assisi



Battle of Britain. He went back to Yorkshire to begin flying Tiger Moths at No 4 Elementary Flying Training School, then went to No 8 Service Flying Training School in Montrose, Scotland and made his first solo flight in a Hurricane on May 6, 1941. He graduated from advanced training and was selected to fly Spitfires.

Rommel

In August 1941, he joined 54 Squadron in Hornchurch, Essex. Posted to North Africa the following year, he saw action with 112 Squadron and was engaged in dogfights in ME109s and Italian MC202s. He was then posted to 601 Squadron, reporting to his new unit on October 11. The second Battle of El Alamein began on October 23.

Shot down on November 7, he crash landed at an airstrip the Germans had just captured, was taken prisoner by soldiers of the



Copies up for grabs

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

When did Desmond Ibbotson join the RAF Volunteer Reserve?

Email your answer, marked **On Silver Wings** book competition, to: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by July 25.

Win!

Afrika Korps then taken to see Erwin Rommel, the 'Desert Fox'.

Wright explained: "It is true that Rommel did make every effort to meet captured PoWs when the opportunity arose.... He saw it as an opportunity to gauge the enemy's state of mind, their morale and what their perception of war's progress was."

"It was said the two exchanged

pleasantries, and Desmond was assured he would be well treated."

When it got dark, Desmond slipped away from his captors. He managed to evade recapture, helped by Bedouins who hid him from the Germans, and returned to his squadron on November 8.

Wright said: "There happened to be an official war photographer on the base, looking for a story

about the successes and escapes a front-line squadron had to tell about its part in the Battle of El Alamein. Desmond's escape fitted the bill nicely and the photographer captured a close-up image of him, laughing as he celebrated his lucky escape. Neither of them knew that picture would become a lasting tribute to him."

After finishing his second tour on ops and being promoted to Flt Lt, Desmond was posted to No 5 Refresher Flying Unit, which moved to Perugia in Italy's Umbria region.

Test flight

On Sunday, November 19, he took a Spitfire out on a test flight but, on the way home, the aircraft entered a dive and crashed into a field with such force parts of it were buried eight metres below the surface. Desmond was killed instantly.

A recovery operation was ordered and enough of his remains were recovered for him to be identified. A burial took place at the British Military Cemetery on the outskirts of Assisi.

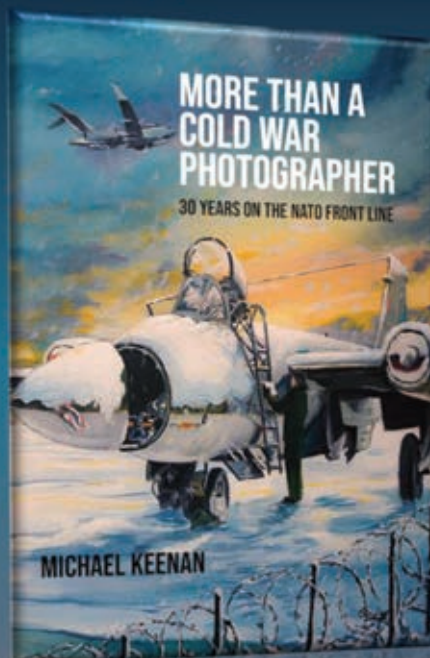
Over 60 years later, a team of aviation archaeologists uncovered bits of his wrecked Spitfire from the field, as well as some human remains thought to be his.

On June 9, 2007 Desmond was reburied with full military honours at Rivortorto Military Cemetery and a special memorial stone positioned at the edge of the field where he died was formally unveiled.

Wright said: "It is not clear cut what the cause of Desmond's fatal dive was, and in truth we shall never know."

"Imagine if his luck had held though. What a story he would have had to tell."

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THE ISUZU D-Max Basecamp edition is a rare bit of precision engineering. Seldom has a motor car been built with more purpose. It is designed to do one thing brilliantly – tackle the most arduous terrain that the world can throw at it.

Most cars are driven in whichever direction the road takes them but, in the Basecamp, the road ahead is literally anything you point it at. What's more, it comes with all the gear you'll need to comfortably camp wherever you decide to stop.

For the purpose of this test I took it from idyllic Devon to magnificent Snowdonia, and what an experience.

Exterior

Looking at the Basecamp, glistening in the early Devon sun, I was hit by a blast from the past, a voice from my early days as a motoring journalist. Back then, I was presenting a show for LIVE TV, called DRIVE LIVE, with a real character called Tim Barnes-Clay. Barnes had a favourite phrase for cars with this kind of on-road presence... "this car is a complete BEAST."

He'd be in his element here. With hulking wheel arches, a menacing front grille and towering height, thanks to the Bilstein lift kit, the Basecamp is the beast of beasts. The camping kit bolted to the roof and Lazer Light pack enhance the dimensions even further. It is seriously impressive when you see it in the metal.

It is the biggest pick-up on sale in the UK, short of Ford's US-styled Ranger Raptor, so you can't miss it. But, just in case you do, Isuzu has decided to make it stand out further with unique Arctic Truck detailing and, of course, some subtle Basecamp branding (you may detect a note of irony in that last bit).

Interior

The Arctic Truck branding continues in the cabin, with branded headrests and a few flourishes of trim. Otherwise, the interior is what we've come to expect from the D-Max.

You sit up higher than most pick-ups, with a commanding view of whatever lies ahead. There's plenty of electric adjustment on the driver's seat and the steering wheel can be hauled into a good range

of positions too. From that perspective, it's easy to find the right driving position and, if there was just a little more padding, the seats would be very comfortable. As it is, they're a bit firm, especially over coarse surfaces on a long-distance run.



Visibility is surprisingly good, despite all the camping kit in the back, thanks to huge door mirrors, cameras and sensors. It's relatively easy to place the Basecamp where you want it and you soon get used to the immense bulk.

The infotainment system is operated via a 9.0 inch touchscreen, set in the middle of the dash. It's simple, sensible and easy to operate, with plenty of audio input options, including the all-important Apple CarPlay/Android Auto smartphone

mirroring solutions. Just as well, because there's no in-built sat-nav. You'll need your phone, a slightly odd choice for a car that's designed to operate where there's no cellular signal. Remember to download your maps in advance.

Home-from-home comforts include a hard-shell roof tent, a ladder to get you up there, and an aluminium storage canopy that could be used for storing important things, like bear traps and other things that outdoorsy types need on wilderness adventures. There's a 12V power shower (with an attachable cover) on the tail end, along with a slide-out kitchen. You get a three-burner gas stove, a 12-litre collapsible sink and an electric fridge. It's a proper bit of kit for wild camping.

Parked up, overlooking the glistening Devon ocean, or the lakes of Snowdonia National Park, the views from our tent windows were magnificent.

On The Road

The Basecamp is built on the Arctic Truck AT35, powered by a 162bhp, 1.9 litre turbo diesel. That's a relatively small engine to shift a lot of weight, but there's torque in abundance on tap.

Of course, we are talking about a 0-62mph time of around 13 seconds, but it's enough to climb pretty much anything. Maximum payload weight is 1,045kg for the auto and 1,075kg for the manual.

Pure beast

Isuzu D-Max Basecamp

Pros

- Amazing off-road
- A real fashion statement
- Well-designed camping gear
- Good payload
- Long warranty

Cons

- Coarse sounding engine
- Feels decidedly agricultural on-road
- Not as plush in the cabin as some rivals
- Starting at £52,495, it's pricey

Verdict

The Basecamp is a truck that seriously impresses, with its unrivalled ability to get you to the most remote parts of the planet and set up camp in style when you get there. It's brilliant for green lanes and mountain climbing, not so much for motorway cruising and town work. The warranty is generous though and it is stonkingly good fun.

Maximum towing weight is 3,500kg.

Refinement is not the Basecamp's strong-suit. The rugged, agricultural undertones of the TD engine and the purpose-built, all-terrain set-up override any semblance of grace. There's a lot of tractor type clatter from under the bonnet, a goodly amount of wind noise at higher speeds and a symphony of road noise from the huge off-road tyres. It does also have a tendency to wander, so you find yourself driving like a Connery era James Bond to keep it in a straight line.

Where it wins is off the beaten-track, in its natural environment. This is a car for climbing mountains and fording rivers. A wading depth of 800mm, 266mm of front clearance, 290mm at the

rear, a 35 degree approach angle, a 34 degree breakover angle are all tools that allow this camper wagon to get up, over, down and through pretty much anything.

Two/four-wheel drive, a high/low ratio gearbox, a locking rear dif and hill decent control all help to make this a precision off-road tool.

Even on a steep glacier, you'd struggle to push this machine beyond its limits.

The optional Lazer light pack is truly amazing, literally turning night into day. The lamps produce enough power to run a small solar system. I genuinely have never seen headlamps this good. You have to see them to believe it. You're unlikely to drive off a cliff in the dark with these bad boys.



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GOLF



Sam's master stroke

SCORES OF 69, 67 and 74 secured a third Strokeplays golf championship for AS1 Sam Whitaker after three days of golf action.

Whitaker produced a total gross of 210 (-3) at Seaton Carew Golf Club – in the top-10 hardest links courses in the country.

Sgt Lewis Ainsworth went on to win the Nett Championship with a score of 217, playing off a handicap of 1.5.

● Follow RAF golf on Instagram @rafgolf_

POLO

Mimi's on Song

Flt Lt's mount is Best Pony as RAF win Duke of York's Cup

Staff reporter

A STORMING 3-1 win saw the Service's polo stars start their season with an opening IS victory over the Royal Navy to take the Duke of York's Cup.

The closely-fought match at Tedworth Park saw the RAF jump to a two-goal lead over the first couple of chukkas, showing good open play and executing their set plays well, straight out of team coach Giles Ormerod's training book.

The Duke of York's Cup has been fought for since 1928 – when the Duke of Gloucester donated the trophy for the annual Inter-Service polo match – and the Navy weren't giving up the ghost without a fight, clawing a goal back from a well-placed penalty.

The aviator team of Sqn Ldr Ross Thomson, Flt Lt Mimi Figgins, Gp Capt Ed Whitechurch and Wg



TOP TEAM: Figgins and Song (right)

Cdr Vicky Woodhead dug deep, producing some great defending to keep the Navy's charge to just one goal,

before producing another themselves.

Figgins' Druid Lodge Polo Club-owned pony Song was

a popular choice for Best Playing Pony.

● Follow RAF polo on Instagram @rafpoloofficial

OBSTACLE COURSE RACING



HANG TOUGH: Sanders in action

Now the Army needs you...

Daniel Abrahams

THE ARMY needs you... well, Sgt Reece Sanders does.

He's hoping to form a British Obstacle Course Racing (OCR) team to compete worldwide in the fast-growing sport.

Speaking to *RAF News Sport* from 1st NATO Signal Battalion, Germany, soldier Sanders, a veteran of more than 50 races in the last four years, said: "We want to raise awareness of our sport within the Services, as it seems the Army are the only ones with an active team at present."

"OCR is a rapidly-growing sport, national, European and World championships."

Sanders thinks a RAF team could compete in at least 10 races a year, in the UK alone.

He said: "Once the sport becomes recognised, funding could be available for European events. The Army has members, including me, who compete all over the world."

"Courses range from 100m all the way up to 50km plus. I compete in standard distance events, which are usually from 10-25km."



BALANCED DIET: Courses tests many skills

"They are trail runs, usually on the hardest terrain in that area. In Greece, for example, they're set in the foothills of the Peloponnese mountain range."

"There are many obstacles involved, from carries, crawls and technical obstacles such as monkey bars, rigs, balance beams, the list goes on."

"OCR is more than mud and medals, it's a test of mental toughness, physical readiness, adaptability and teamwork – traits that align perfectly with military values."

"Governing body British Obstacle Sport is working to build teams across the Army, RAF, Royal Navy, Police, Ambulance, Fire and Coastguard – with a vision of forming an overarching UK Combined Services team that can compete at national and international level. But the ambition doesn't stop there."

"There will be opportunities to represent the UK Armed Forces and Team GB at national and international championships – including European, World and Olympic pathways."

● Email reece.sanders100@mod.gov.uk for more information.

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



FIELD OF DREAMS: Taking new skills to the pitch

Back to the classroom for gridiron Mustangs

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

IT WAS back to basics for RAF American football with a summer camp at Northolt as the team aim to introduce new players to the game.

Featuring pitch and class-based training sessions with video analysis, the week-long camp then transferred lessons learned in the classroom to match scenarios.

RAF Mustangs assistant coach

Chf Tech Paul Wakeford said: "From footwork and catching to tackling and blocking, everyone went through the proper form of how to do these skills controlled and repeatedly, to get them right."

"The classroom sessions allowed players to see their mistakes to enable them to be corrected the following day. "Naturally, the week progressed

with more game scenarios introduced with the introduction to what beginners may see as a complex playbook.

"It culminated in a small scrimmage at the end of the week, allowing the new players a taste of what it's like on the field of play."

● Follow RAF Mustangs @ rafamericanfootball on Instagram.

BOBSLEIGH

Alex is Hall in for gold

Cpl Cartagena's Olympic dream

Daniel Abrahams

AFTER FOUR years of bumps, bruises, heartache and graft, Cpl Alex Cartagena is now set

to be a winter Olympian in Italy next year.

The RAF bobsleigh star, who has one Inter-Service title under his belt alongside

L/Cpl Shanwayne Stephens in 2022, began to show his talents alongside fellow aviator Cpl John Stanbridge in his bid for World Championship and Olympic glory.

Now, with the Milano Cortina 2026 Games next February in sight, Cartagena is aiming to take gold for Team GB with driver Brad Hall.

Another mission for the aviator? To put the shine back into the team after the black cloud of doping befell it following the doping suspension of Arron Gulliver in March this year.

The suspension ironically left a seat on the team, which Cartagena has filled.

He said: "I'm in pole position to help show what we can do. I've been pushing for elite athlete status for a good while now and pushing for GB, so this is another push."

The run-in to his Olympic hot seat was interrupted by a deployment at the turn of the year, which he now feels helped him hone his focus for GB duties.

"I was testing with Team Hall [Brad Hall] to begin the season, I tested well and began to get noticed," he said.

"From there I was with the GB2 four-man in Winterberg, then St Moritz, and Igls in the World Cup.

"I was on deployment in Cyprus, I just got my head down and trained."

Looking to finally seal an Olympic slot with GB2,



WINNING FEELING: Alex (right) with team-mate Austin Millward, and inset below

the RAF Waddington aircraft mechanic saw his chances scuppered on the last corner of

an Olympic qualifier run in Igls.

Then, a call-up to Team Hall saw Cartagena secure gold in their first qualifier and go, in his words, "from the top of GB2 to the bottom of GB1."

Having achieved his bobsleigh dream, Cartagena is now relishing the challenge of four days a week training.

"I belong here. I've worked my way up. I had imposter syndrome when I first arrived in Bath to join the team and saw the full set-up, but now we just train and train until it becomes muscle memory and then we go for Olympic gold," he said.

● Follow GB Bobsleigh @britishbobsleighandskeleton on Instagram.



DUEL ROLE: Cartagena the aviator and the sports star



MOTORSPORT

Snetterton snags



BATTLING ON: Anderson and Middleton
PHOTOS: LC PHOTOGRAPHY

Classic team roar into Donington

RAF MOTORSPORT will be at Donington Park next month for the world-famous track's Classic Festival on August 2-3.

The weekend event is the biggest date on the Service association's calendar, with it being involved since 2016.

During this time thousands of visitors have met personnel there to speak about all things RAF and bikes, with the set-up bolstered by the involvement of the RAF engagement team, recruiting and STEM representatives.

RAF Classic's team manager Chf Tech Gavin Hegg said: "We are all looking forward to the weekend. It's a great event and the number of people who visit us there is terrific."

"Classic club is in the top eight of events at Donington; we are very lucky to have a good-sized pitch right at the front as people come in."

"The initial response is one of surprise that the RAF are involved with classic racing, they then see our branding and the bikes and that always sparks plenty of conversations, not only about the club, but about our careers."

"We always have interest from the younger generation about recruitment."

It is not all standing around chatting for the team, who will also have seven riders competing throughout the weekend, plus several veteran riders, taking aviator track presence up to 20 riders.

● Follow RAF Classic Motorcycle Club on Instagram @rafmotorscycleroad racing



ON TRACK: RAF Classic rider at previous Donny event

RAF pair have to shift down a gear because of mechanical issues

Daniel Abrahams

"A FRUSTRATING weekend with some positive points," said Sgt Mark Middleton speaking after round 2 of the British sidecar championship at Snetterton.

Despite encountering mechanical issues throughout, the Service duo of Middleton and Cpl Robert Atkinson looked strong throughout, with Middleton adding: "We've proved that the team has the pace to run up at the front of the cup class and fight for wins."

The team had two sessions – practice and qualifying – on the opening day and despite the blistering heat providing a challenge, the aviators settled into their rhythm and were soon back on pace, qualifying seventh, and third in class.

Getting off to a good start in race one, they sat in the opening group and were looking strong

before a gear linkage failure on lap five left them stuck in third gear.

Limping back to the pits, the team worked hard to fix the issue for the following day's action.

A fast lap in race one saw the aviators move up a starting place to sixth, but again the gremlins struck.

Having got off the block quickly they encountered issues on lap one.

In repairing the gear linkage, the gear lever had slightly moved which meant Atkinson's foot kept tapping it, activating the quick-shifter and cutting the engine.

Not severe enough to put an end to their race, the issue was bad enough to halt any further progress up the rankings.

Despite this, they managed to finish sixth, and third in class.

● Follow RAF Sidecar @ rafmotorcycleroad racing on Instagram.

Sport



FEST IS BEST: Personnel at the Datchet watersports centre, near Windsor

WAKEBOARDING

Cash title dash at Wakefest

Cable crown for Off Cdt

Daniel Abrahams

THERE WERE five days of intense action as Wakefest 2025 hit Datchet Liquid Leisure Watersports Centre for the RAF Cable and Board Championships.

A field of 35 riders from across the UK fought for six titles, three in each discipline, with two of the Service's three Team GB riders – Sgt Rich Phillips and Cpl Mat McCreadie – on show to add some heavyweight support to the high-class event.

RAF Waterski and Wakeboard Association chairman Sqn Ldr Nick Harrington said: "The event couldn't have been run without the outstanding support of the team at Liquid Leisure,

Ultrasport, RAF Central Fund and our Sponsor, Atlantic Aviation Group Defence Services, so a big shout out to them all after what was a bumper event of amazing skill and action.

"Next stop for the RAF Wakeboarder and Water Ski teams is the Inter-Service Championships, also at Liquid Leisure, in September.

"As the defending champions in both disciplines, let's hope that we can repeat the successes of last year."

Wakefest kicked off with three-days of training on boat and cable, before battle commenced with the men's and women's categories, sub-divided by ability level.

Competition for all categories was strong, with the podium



CREST OF A WAVE: Competition was exhilarating PHOTOS: CPL WILL DRUMMEE

places decided by small margins, and the men's Cable title going to Off Cdt Andrew Cash (Glasgow UAS), who beat Fg Off Khalid Duncan into second, with Cpl Sam Anderton taking third. The women's winner was Sgt Bryany Lowe, who beat Flt Lt Claudia Durran.

The Cable intermediate men's crown went to Sgt Tommy Woods, with Flt Lt Dean Tergoning second and Fg Off Calladan Ballard third.

Flt Lt Craig Altass took the novice mixed crown, with AS2 Liam West and Cpl Ryan

Aspland-West second and third respectively.

In the boat, Sgt Rich Phillips took first off Cpl Mat McCreadie in a very closely-fought advanced men's final, with Cash third.

Duncan went one better than in the cable, winning the intermediate title over Cpl Shane Seward and AS1(T) Lewis Horsley. Durran was the top-placed lady, taking the Novice Boat mixed with Lowe second and Cpl James Richardson third.

● Follow RAF Waterski and Wakeboard on Instagram @ raf_waterski_and_wakeboard.



BOAT: Men's Advanced



BOAT: Men's Intermediate



BOAT: Mixed Novice



CABLE: Men's Intermediate



CABLE: Mixed Novice



CABLE: Women's Intermediate

BMX

Sgt Haywood goes it alone in National Series at Hampshire



TOUGH WEEKEND: Sgt Haywood (2nd from right) PHOTO: DEAN LOWE

ROUNDS SEVEN and eight of the British cycling BMX National Series proved to be a seaside slog for Sgt Matt Haywood in Gosport.

As the only aviator in attendance, Haywood was eager to improve on the previous rounds racing in Manchester, where he crashed on day two meaning an early exit from the moto,os.

Saturday started with a seventh placein a stacked first moto that was more akin to a final, with all the big names involved.

Haywood backed this up with a fifth-place finish in moto 2, meaning he needed third or better

to secure a semi-final slot.

He didn't disappoint, a good start had the aviator leading going into the first corner and down the second straight, but GT team factory rider Darren Reidy got inside on turn two.

Haywood held on to second place all the way to the line and a place in the semi, where a poor start left him at the back of the pack, finishing in seventh.

In the B final the aviator got a good start and pushed into second, holding the place to the line meant he finished 10th for the day.

The second day's action proved

more fruitful for the Service rider. Good results of second, third and second gave him third pick in the semi-final for his gate.

A strong start put him in a good place going into the first corner, coming out in third, which he kept to the line, securing his first A final of the season.

Starting from gate seven, it was going to be a big ask in a stacked final. A slower start saw Haywood at the back of the pack, but he persisted and kept up with the pack, taking eighth overall for the day.

● Follow RAF BMX on Instagram @RAFCABMXRacing.

BOXING

Ringging the changes



DARK ART: Akrotiri fight night

PHOTOS: AS1 NATALIE ADAMS

First outdoor fight night at RAF Akrotiri

Daniel Abrahams

A KNOCKOUT piece of Service boxing history was made at RAF Akrotiri as the station's Officers' Mess held its first outdoor event under the lights.

The eight-bout fight card, the brainchild of former RAF boxing star Flt Lt Sal Hill, transformed the Officers' Mess Garden into a 350-seat arena for a battle between a RAF Select and Army Select – including teams from the REME, 1PWRR and 16RA, with RAF

boxers from Northolt, Wittering, Coningsby and Akrotiri.

Hill, the event's organiser, said: "It was a fantastic evening of sport and camaraderie. Hosting an outdoor boxing show under the lights in Cyprus is a unique experience that showcases not only the skill of our boxers but also the incredible opportunities available in the military."

In the first bout, middleweight Cpl Asa Eversley-John lost to Marcel Lincoln-Francis from the REME, who won unanimously to earn the



HARD DAY'S NIGHT: RAF Northolt's Cpl Rob Hewark lost to Cfn Farren Morgan REME

title of Best Boxer of the night.

The second bout saw middleweight aviator Cpl Robert Hewark take on Cfn Farren

Morgan from the REME, with another unanimous victory for a REME boxer.

Next up, AS1 Todd Samways from RAF Wyton edged out AS1 Ryan Young from 16 Reg RA with a strong third-round display to win unanimously as well in the welterweight class clash.

Light middleweight AS1 Alex Masterman then faced off against Cpl Liam Weldon in a high-intensity clash, which Weldon won thanks to a split decision, despite being put down in the first round.

Debutant boxer in the development cruiserweight class AS1 Joe Oliver (Akrotiri) faced L/Cpl David Lockey, who applied constant pressure from the start and won unanimously.

PTE Sam Ingram's unanimous light middleweight win over Lance Cpl Mackenzie Malone in a high-quality contest was deemed fight of the night.



ORGANISER: RAF Akrotiri's Flt Lt Sal Hill (left) with AS1 Alex Masterman

Tall light heavyweight southpaw AS1 Mason Slender faced Cfn David O'Gara from the REME, who managed to close the distance and secure a unanimous victory in the penultimate bout of the night, with development heavyweight Pte Ben Taylor facing LCpl Cian Materson, and Materson winning by split decision in a hard-hitting finale with both leaving it all in the ring until the very last bell.

Arrows fly at Air Tattoo

VISITORS TO the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford on July 18-20 are in for a special surprise as *Bullseye* TV show's Bully will be on hand at the RAF Experience.

Cpl Zara Warhurst will be with the beefy mascot in her capacity as OIC RAF Darts, and will be chatting everything arrows to visitors.

She said: "It was fun getting the photo of Bully taken at RAF High Wycombe [right]. Everyone who was coming into camp was looking and smiling.

"This is our first opportunity to represent RAF Darts at RIAT and there will be a highest-score darts competition with prizes and Bully will be around for everyone to enjoy."

● Follow RAF Darts on Facebook @RAF Darts





baesystems.com/air

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R'n'R



Win Cold War
thriller ● p5



**Deep dive – win
Ocean Film
Festival tickets**

● See
page 3



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.



Simply sign up online for your free fundraising pack.
Raise funds by asking for donations in return for a
delicious brew and some baked goodies.

**COMBAT
STRESS**
FOR VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH

Win!

Film
Ocean Film Festival
UK tour

Oceans 12

ALL ABOARD for a big-screen ocean adventure – the Ocean Film Festival World Tour is bringing a new collection of thrilling ocean-themed films to venues around the UK this autumn.

Starring gripping ocean adventures and mesmerising marine-life, the Festival showcases the wonder and power of the sea, through a selection of short films from around the world.

“The Ocean Film Festival is more than just a film event; it’s a celebration of our planet’s blue heart,” said tour director Nell Teasdale.

The 2025 line-up includes *We The Surfers*, about how surfing can change lives, plus films about freediving, extreme bodyboarding and more. The inspirational documentaries are introduced by a compère, and each screening will see a free prize giveaway to win ocean-related goodies.

“Whether you’re a seasoned ocean enthusiast, a weekend surfer, or someone who marvels at the mysteries of the deep, this

festival promises an unforgettable cinematic journey,” Nell added.

The Ocean Film Festival was created in Australia to inspire people to enjoy, explore and protect our oceans, and this is the 12th year it has toured in the UK. The tour starts in Edinburgh on September 6 and goes to various venues including Bristol, Abingdon, Brighton, Liverpool, Cambridge, London and Exeter, culminating in Norwich on November 22.

Highlights include *Astronauts In The Ocean* about bodyboarding, often seen as surfing’s uncool sibling... but that’s about to change. Bodyboarder Shane Ackerman catches daunting waves that others shy away from. While professional surfers bask in fame and fortune, Shane is a crane operator by day. For him, work is merely a means to an end – a way to fund the moments of absolute liberation found on his bodyboard.

Aquaballet focuses on a mesmerising performance by freediver Marianne Aventurier. Filmed in the crystal waters of French Polynesia, *Aquaballet* is described as a poetic dance with



TURTLE-Y CAPTIVATING: Freediver Marianne Aventurier in *Aquaballet*

© Hand Studio, Frechou, Bourbon, 2024

Win pair of tickets to festival

WE HAVE a pair of tickets to the Ocean Film Festival to give away. For your chance to win them, tell us:

In which country was the Ocean Film Festival created?

Email your answer, marked Ocean Film Festival competition, to: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk

or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by August 8. Please say which venue you would like to attend and include your FULL postal address.

Go to: oceanfilmfestival.co.uk for a full list of venues.



DVDs
Amandaland (15)
On Blu-ray & DVD now



Win!



NEIGHBOURS: Put-upon Mal (Samuel Anderson) with ‘Queen’ Amanda (Lucy Punch)

STARRING LUCY Punch and Joanna Lumley, *Amandaland* is the smash hit follow-up to the BAFTA-winning BBC TV comedy *Motherland*.

The BBC has confirmed that a second series of *Amandaland* has been given the go-ahead and is likely to be on our screens in early January.

After her divorce, Amanda (Lucy Punch) has had to downsize and up sticks to South Harlesden, or as the estate agent calls it, SoHa.

With her children Manus and Georgie now at secondary school, Amanda has

to try to get her head around raising teenagers and dealing with modern motherhood horrors. Lumley stars as Amanda’s glamorous mother Felicity.

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

Who plays Amanda’s mother Felicity?

Email your answer, marked Amandaland DVD competition, to: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by July 25.



DVDs
Mussolini, Son of the Century (15)
On Blu-ray, DVD & download from July 14



Win!

Mussolini: Godfather of fascism

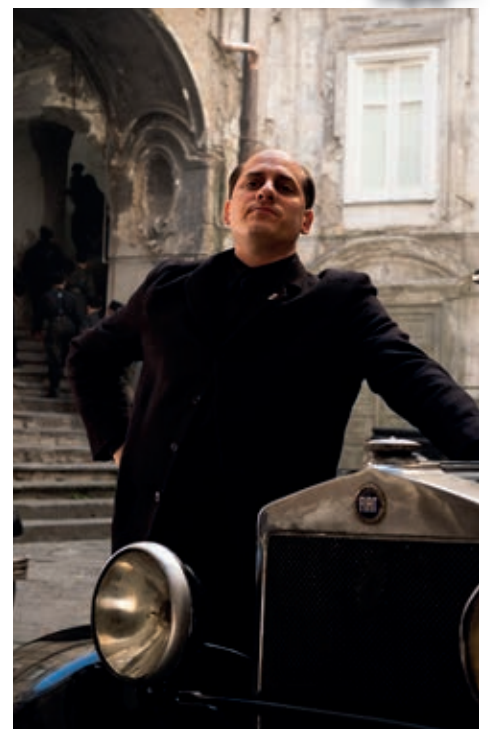
WE ALSO have *Mussolini, Son of the Century* on Blu-ray to win. Directed by Joe Wright (*Atonement*, *Darkest Hour*), the series recounts the political rise of Mussolini and his creation: fascism.

First a movement, then a party he leads to the apex of Italian government, only to subvert democracy and establish a dictatorship.

Through contemporary language, *Mussolini* breaks the fourth wall and addresses the viewer directly to reveal his most unspeakable thoughts and comment on the turning points of history. The series offers an original, ‘pop’ portrait, at times full of dark humour, of the man who – though he betrayed ideals, people and institutions and committed acts of unprecedented violence – became Italy’s undisputed ‘Duce’.

The series boasts a powerful, charismatic lead performance from Luca Marinelli (*Martin Eden*, *The Eight Mountains*).

For your chance to win a copy of this three-disc series, tell us:



IL DUCE: Benito Mussolini (Luca Marinelli)

Who directs Mussolini, Son of the Century?

Email your answer or post it to the addresses on the left, marked Mussolini Blu-ray competition, to arrive by July 25 and make sure you include your full postal address.

R'n'R



Theatre
Fiddler on the Roof
UK and Ireland tour



LEAD ROLES: Matthew Woodyatt (Tevye) and Beverley Klein (matchmaker Yente)

Tevye's still milking
it in *Fiddler on Roof*

AFTER CAPTIVATING audiences and critics alike during its West End run – and following a triumphant win for Best Musical Revival at this year's Olivier Awards – casting has been announced for the highly-anticipated UK and Ireland tour of the acclaimed production of *Fiddler on the Roof*.

The tour opens at Bromley's Churchill Theatre on July 24 – where the run is already sold out – then travels to cities and towns across the country until January 3 next year.

Leading the cast in this revival, direct from its current summer season at London's Barbican Theatre, is Matthew Woodyatt as Tevye, Jodie Jacobs as Golde and Olivier Award nominee Beverley Klein as Yente. It will be the first UK tour of this classic musical in more than 12 years.

The tour producers said: "We're thrilled to be taking this landmark production of *Fiddler on the Roof* on tour. Following the success at this year's Olivier

Awards, it's a privilege to share this powerful and timeless story with a wider audience.

"Our remarkable cast can't wait to bring this beloved classic musical, with all its heart, humour and humanity, to theatres around the country and in Dublin too."

Fiddler on the Roof is described as one of the greatest musicals of all time with one of the finest scores ever written, featuring *If I Were A Rich Man*, *Tradition*, *Matchmaker* and *Sunrise, Sunset*.

It's 1905 in the tiny village of Anatevka where Tevye, a Jewish milkman, lives his life by their proud traditions. For his five daughters, that means a visit from the matchmaker. As each daughter challenges his beliefs, against the backdrop of a changing world, can Tevye hold on to his roots, or must he bend to the will of his children and learn to embrace the unfamiliar?

● Go to: FiddlerOnTheRoofUK.com for full tour details.



HIGH ENERGY: Cast make merry in scene from *Fiddler on the Roof*



Clubs
Day Fever
UK tour

IF YOU thought clubbing was just for the under-25s, think again. Day Fever, the unstoppable daytime disco dreamt up by actor Vicky McClure (*Line of Duty*, *Trigger Point*), her husband Jonny Owen, and pals including Jon McClure of Reverend & The Makers, is flipping the nightlife script, one sunlit dancefloor at a time.

Born from a WhatsApp chat and now heading to 24 towns and cities in September, Day Fever brings affordable, joy-filled clubbing into the daylight hours. "The first one sold out in two seconds," Vicky beams. "We did Nottingham, then Sheffield, then Merthyr and Cardiff and it just flew from there."

It all started with a simple idea. "Jonny just said, 'Have you ever seen those bars in town during the day? They're rammed!'" laughs Jon. "We were like, come on then, let's do it and it went nuts."

Now, this feel-good phenomenon sees people, from their 20s to their 70s, letting loose on packed dancefloors. "We've had Jonny's mum sneak in a bottle of gin and stash it in a bush outside in Cardiff," Jon jokes. "That's the vibe! Bit of mischief, loads of laughs, and not a bit of trouble."

And it's that warmth, spontaneity, and inclusiveness that keeps people coming back.

Vicky's voice lifts when she talks about the kind of people turning up to dance: "It's mothers and daughters, friends reconnecting, people on chemo, people grieving. These are your nurses, your cleaners, your teachers. These are the people keeping the world spinning and now they've got somewhere to let go and feel joy."

One story that's stayed with her is a woman who had barely seen her friends or family unless it was for a wedding or a funeral. "Now she's got a new frock every month, and she's out at Day Fever. She goes shopping Friday night, gets her hair done, and makes a proper event of it. That's magic, isn't it?"

Inclusivity isn't just a buzzword here, it's baked into the experience. "We've had people in wheelchairs come up on stage, and the crowd goes wild. It's electric. We want it to be accessible to everyone," says Vicky, visibly moved. "It makes your hairs stand on end."

While you might catch a familiar face on the decks, Jonny, Vicky, or even Jon's wife Laura, most Day Fever events are led



MARRIED TO THEIR PET PROJECT: Jonny Owen and actress wife Vicky McClure at one of their events

Day of the
disco div

by local DJs. "We've been really selective," Vicky explains. "They know their crowd; they know what their people want to hear. And they're smashing it."

And yes, music is taken very seriously. "There's a loose structure," Jon explains. "Bit of Northern Soul to kick off, disco, 80s bangers, 90s dance, a singalong, maybe some indie... but we always have Whitney. If Vicky's there, it's the law."

Vicky grins: "Hits across the generations, that's the key. We've

done themed nights, even Christmas clubs."

Regional pride plays a part too. "Manchester goes mad for Oasis, Nottingham's got its favourites, and we make sure to tap into that local energy," says Vicky. "It's about community, about people being together."

With so many entertainment options pricing people out, Day Fever deliberately keeps things cheap. Vicky says. "We've always wanted it to be affordable. A night



DECKS APPEAL: Jon McClure sometimes DJs, as does Vicky McClure, no relation (inset right)

Edited by Tracey Allen

Win!



Books
Readymoney Cove
bookguild.co.uk

Cold War thriller is right on the money for author Butterworth

THRILLER WRITER Mark Butterworth's latest novel, just published, is the third in his Adam Devon series.

Set against the backdrop of 1950s and 60s tensions, intertwining espionage, political ambition and forbidden love, *Readymoney Cove* (bookguild.co.uk) follows Henry Fitzjohn's meteoric rise in politics and Devon's perilous encounters with Soviet agents, as their lives intersect with the enigmatic Vanessa Paget and the shadowy world of Cold War espionage.

Fitzjohn is the golden boy of the Conservative government and aspires to rise to the top. But his penchant for London's West End nightlife leads him into a seedy world of call girls and corruption, exposing him to scandal and dismissal from the Party.

Fitzjohn's role as a Cabinet minister requires him to lead the British response to the perilous Cold War threat from Russia but he



finds security and love in the quiet and beauty of Readymoney Cove, Cornwall, unaware of the secret dangers that threaten his life and seemingly untroubled about the risks to his reputation.

Meanwhile, Adam Devon, a pilot instructor on maritime RAF squadrons based in Cornwall, is hunting Soviet submarines

and comes under attack, bringing the UK to the verge of all-out war. When Moscow targets Fitzjohn, Hannah – Devon's wife and a former Israeli secret agent – finds herself pulled into the conspiracy.

Can Fitzjohn escape scandal and danger? How will the government pull back from the brink of war? And what fate awaits Hannah?

Butterworth (inset below) worked in the City of London in financial services for over 30 years. He has also published a contemporary romance, *The Ffryes Affair*.

We have copies of *Readymoney Cove* – ideal to take away with you on a summer break – up for grabs. To be in with a chance of winning one, tell us:

In which county is Readymoney Cove?

Email your answer, marked Readymoney Cove book competition, to: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by July 25. Please include your FULL postal address.



Theatre
It's All About Me!
UK & Ireland tour

The life of Brian

MULTI AWARD-winning actor Brian Cox will take to the road for his first-ever one-man show *It's All About Me!* this autumn.

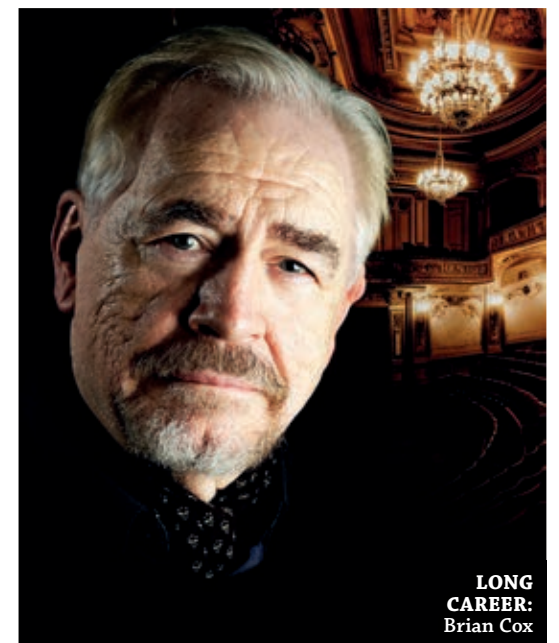
The 18-date tour kicks off on October 1 at Northampton's Royal & Derngate Theatre and visit venues all over the UK and Ireland, culminating in London's West End at the Adelphi Theatre on November 4.

Brian will take audiences on a journey through his life and incredible career – from the back streets of Dundee to the glittering lights of Hollywood. In act II, he will be joined on stage by producer Clive Tulloh, who will put questions from the audience to him.

Brian Cox said: "I am looking forward to this tour as it marks something a little different for me – sharing the stage with myself. As the title indicates, the show will focus more than ever on my life and career. In the second half, the tables are turned and the audience will have the chance to put their questions to me. It should be a lot of fun."

Brian Cox – All About Me! will play Northampton, Bristol, Ipswich, Edinburgh, Dublin, Belfast, Dundee, Brighton, Nottingham, Oxford, Plymouth, Southend, Bournemouth, Newcastle, Liverpool, Manchester, York and London.

Considered one of the greatest actors of his generation and winner of numerous prestigious awards for both stage and screen, Brian is now a



LONG CAREER:
Brian Cox

household name due to his role as Logan Roy from the international hit TV show *Succession*, for which he won a Golden Globe. Over Brian's 65 years in the acting business, he has also been the recipient of a Primetime Emmy Award, Screen Actors Guild Award and two Olivier Awards.

He has appeared in numerous films including *The Long Kiss Goodnight*, *The Boxer*, *Rushmore*, *Super Troopers*, *The Ring*, *Troy*, *Red Eye*, *Zodiac*, *The Escapist*, *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*, *Coriolanus*, *Manhunter*, *Churchill*, and *The Bourne Trilog*y.

Go to: BrianCoxOnTour.com for more details.

SUPPORT: Vicky with *Line of Duty* co-stars Craig Parkinson and Martin Compston



Day Fever discos in Liverpool. Below, revellers get in the spirit of things at the same event



out can be £100 easy. We didn't want this to be that."

Jon adds: "Jonny said from day one, it's for ordinary people. Families, people with kids. We're not here to rip people off."

Venues love it too. "We shut up shop at 8pm," Vicky explains, "they do a quick turnaround and run their usual night from 10. They're making great takings and reaching a new crowd. It's been a game changer for loads of clubs."

If Day Fever feels like a family party, that's because... it kind of is. "Jonny and I are married, Jon's wife DJs, his brother Chris and childhood friend Jamie are involved. Even Jonny's daughter Katie's behind the decks," Vicky laughs. "It's one big gang, and when people come through the doors, they're part of it too."

It's not uncommon to see Vicky herself dancing on stage with partygoers, selfies flying and smiles everywhere. "When people realise we're just there to have fun too, that we're not up on a pedestal, they really get into it," she says. "And I mean, come

on, when do you get to go clubbing with your mum?!"

With festivals like Splendour and Reverend & The Makers' 20th anniversary show in Sheffield this summer, things are scaling up – but slowly. "We've had offers to take it abroad, but we're being really careful," Vicky says. "It's only 18 months old, it feels like a decade, but we want to make sure we look after what we've built."

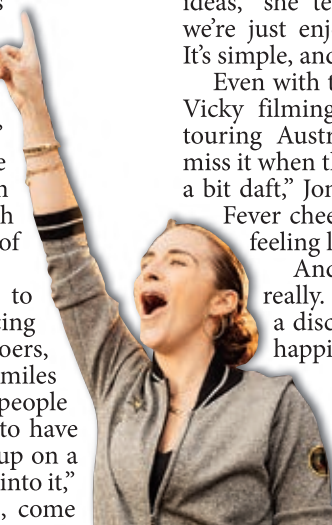
They've even announced their own Day Fever festival at Nottingham's Arboretum on August 23. "We've got loads of ideas," she teases. "But for now, we're just enjoying this moment. It's simple, and it works."

Even with their busy schedules, Vicky filming *Trigger Point*, Jon touring Australia, both say they miss it when they're away. "Sounds a bit daft," Jon chuckles, "but Day Fever cheers me up. You leave feeling lighter."

And that's the magic, really. Day Fever isn't just a disco, it's a dose of pure happiness.

Interview by
Warren Higgins

Go to: day-fever.com for ticket details.





Your Announcements

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

Deaths

ANGOOD Bryan 'John' Warrant officer (Rtd) served 1959-1986 as a Clerk Sec and later years as cashier and WO Works Services. Died June 26. He served in many units, latterly Lossiemouth and Leuchars. Service of thanksgiving to be held on July 28 at South Lincs Crematorium, PE114AA at 2pm where all will be welcome. No ties to be worn. Contact: angoodies@googlegmail.com

DAMMENT John Sqn Ldr (Rtd), passed away June 16 aged 93. Funeral at St. Cuthberts, Embleton, Cumbria, July 14, 1100. John served 33 years El Adam, Aden (1967 where he was also a radio DJ), Lyneham, Harrogate, Hendon to name only a few. In later years he was a member of the catering society in Keswick and a valued member of a few choirs. He is survived by his five children, 13 grandchildren and so far nine great-grandchildren. He will be missed by many.



John Damment

Seeking

SEEKING old friend Cpl Mick Lerigo who worked in the avionics bay at RAF Laarbruch between 1973 to 1976. I was SAC Chris Joyce working as an airframe mechanic on 15 Squadron Buccaneers. We often went to the Ardennes in Belgium on organised walks, and nights out to a jazz club in Venlo, Holland. I would love to meet up if he is still around. I am 75 now. Please email: c.joyce70@outlook.com

CALLING ex members of 230 OCU RAF Finningley who served there during the 1960s. I am seeking 230 OCU's Squadron Crest to make a wall shield. Email: rogerparker1944@icloud.com maybe for a get-together some time in the future.

Reunions

309 Entry RAF Hereford C Flt 4 Sqn Cooks, April 1967-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

ALL ex Clk Secs who were trained on the Apprentice Wing at RAF Credenhill in the 1960s and 1970s are cordially invited to contact the undersigned with a view to arranging a reunion in 2025. Please email: David.tibbett@ntlworld.com

12 ex 72nd Entry Aircraft Apprentices (RAF Locking) will meet on the weekend of July 25-27 to celebrate 70 years since passing out. We think that it is a great effort to meet up after all that time. Part of our weekend celebration will be a visit to the International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln. Please contact Dave Gunby via email: davegunby@btinternet.com for more information.

217 Craft Apprentices RAF Halton, 55 years Reunion, September 30 and October 1 at the Petwood Hotel, Woodhall Spa, LN10 6QG. BBMF & IBCC trips planned for during the day with a formal dinner on the evening of October 1. Please contact Gerry Evans on: 01793 764236 or email: gerry.e.54@btinternet.com.

THE RAF Masirah and RAF Salalah Veterans Association AGM and Reunion Gala Dinner is to be held on Saturday, October 4 at The Park Royal Hotel, Stretton, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 4NS. All Members are welcome to attend. If you are interested in attending the reunion, please contact Alan Teasdale on: joalteas@btinternet.com. If you would like to join the Association as a member, please visit our website: omanrafveterans.org for further information.

103RD Entry RAF Halton Apprentices Reunion October 17 at the The Park House Hotel in Shifnal, TF11 9BA, 7pm. Contact Mick Woodhouse on: 07811 401040, email: mickjwoodhouse1946@gmail.com or through: 103rd-entry.org.uk.

Associations

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. Please see: rafaarmourers.co.uk or you can contact the committee via email: plumbersrest@outlook.com.

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



REMEMBERING: The cyclists at Luckenwalde Stalag IIIA cemetery

Ride pays tribute to PoWs

A TEAM of fundraisers have completed a 309km cycle ride retracing the route their relatives were forced to march as prisoners during World War II.

The ride took place from Zagan, Poland, the site of Stalag Luft III, to Berlin over four days and has raised more than £10,400 to be split between four charities: the RAF Benevolent Fund, the Royal Air Force Association, the Royal British Legion, Coventry Cathedral and the Stalag Luft III Museum.

The team was made up of RAF veterans, friends and relatives of prisoners of war all wanting to share remembrance for the unimaginable hardships endured, explained an RAFBF spokesperson.

"The Long March of PoWs, often referred to as the Death March, occurred in the latter stages of WWII. As Russian forces advanced from the East, the German High Command hastily evacuated prisoner of war camps, compelling some 80,000 prisoners (and their German guards) to march hundreds of miles under harsh conditions resulting from the worst winter

in the region for 50 years. Many perished due to exhaustion, malnutrition and the brutal cold," the spokesperson added.

Roger Churchill organised the challenge in memory of his late father, Sqn Ldr Dick Churchill of 104 Sqn, who was forced to march the gruelling distance from Poland to Berlin, alongside thousands of Allied soldiers.

He said: "My father was shot down in his Hampden plane on September 2, 1940 and held as a PoW for the rest of the war. He was initially in Stalag Luft I, then transferred to Stalag Luft III and was involved in many escapes, including the Wooden Horse and The Great Escape."

He added: "My father was subsequently heavily involved with the RAF Benevolent Fund, helping to fundraise and working as a support person in the southwest of England in his later years."

"It is important to me to support the Fund now, to honour his memory."

Dick Churchill died in 2019, aged 99, as the last surviving member of the Great Escape team.

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Charity cycle challenge

THE RAF Benevolent Fund is to hold its new Heritage Ride in Lincolnshire on September 27.

The event is a 40 or 100-mile cycle challenge taking place both virtually and physically through some of the county's most iconic RAF heritage sites, starting and finishing at RAF Digby.

The sites will include Wickenby Aerodrome, Scampton Church and

the International Bomber Command Centre, as well as passing Woodhall Spa and RAF Waddington.

The theme for this year's ride is 'Your Heritage, Your Ride', encouraging participants to share their personal links to the RAF and inspiration behind their decision to support the RAF Family.

● Go to: rafbf.org for more information.



Your Announcements

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

Funding boost for veterans

MINISTER FOR Veterans and People Al Carns announced a £295,000 grant to deliver the Reducing Veteran Homelessness Programme on a recent visit to homeless vets' charity Launchpad in Liverpool.

Mr Carns had a tour of the charity's Speke House and met staff and residents to hear first-hand the impact the programme has had on the veterans living at the scheme, which has 50 self-contained, one-bedroom flats.

"As part of the overall £2.9 million funding allocated by the Office for Veterans' Affairs recently, Launchpad will provide sustained support to a further 135 homeless veterans across all three of its houses until March 2026," said a Launchpad spokesperson.

"Support will include combined addiction/mental health psychotherapy, intensive training/employment support, greater access to wellbeing enhancing community activities, and support to transition into and retain independent accommodation."

Mr Carns said: "Every veteran



SUPPORT: Veterans and People Minister Al Carns met vets and staff on a visit to homeless charity Launchpad in Liverpool

deserves a safe place to call home after serving our country. I'm proud that our Reducing Veteran Homelessness Programme will enable Launchpad to support 135 more veterans in need.

"Successful organisations like Launchpad show what can be achieved through targeted support.

"They help to address the complex challenges that some veterans experience, improve

their mental health and support them to move forward with their lives.

"This Government is committed to ensuring no veteran falls through the cracks."

Launchpad works alongside Op Fortitude, a government backed UK-wide referral pathway supporting homeless veterans – or veterans at risk of homelessness – into housing, the spokesperson added.



COLLABORATION: SSAFA is offering emotional health support to the military community overseas

Help for military families

THE NHS team behind the Solihull Approach, a provider of online learning focused on children's emotional health and wellbeing, has partnered with Armed Forces charity SSAFA to increase access to and emotional health support for the military community overseas.

A spokesperson for the charity said: "Through this collaboration, SSAFA's Community Health Team (SSAFA CHT), based in

Cyprus, has funded a multi-user licence, enabling all of its overseas families to access a comprehensive range of online learning and resources freely available as part of its extensive community health services for military families."

● To access the courses, visit inourplace.co.uk and follow the registration process inputting the access code MILITARY.





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Crossword

No. 389

Solve the crossword, then rearrange the 9 letters in yellow squares to find an RAF term

This edition's Crossword and Su Doku puzzles are just for fun for you to do at home, no need to send your entries in.

Across

- 7. Plan James Bond almost joins district attorney (6)
- 8. Shakespearean prince not upset at station (6)
- 10. Investigate former place for metal (7)
- 11. Criticise shifting rotas (5)
- 12. Find part of church on map, senora (4)
- 13. See eye to eye with a conservationist out north (5)
- 17. Comic originally watching Italian tourists telling yarns (5)
- 18. Our high-fliers' first Tornado spots emergency boat (4)
- 22. Branch in charge of common sense (5)
- 23. Letter opening (7)
- 24. Sheeran takes it, Sheeran cut (6)
- 25. From middle of the road, donkey ends in quicksand (6)

Down

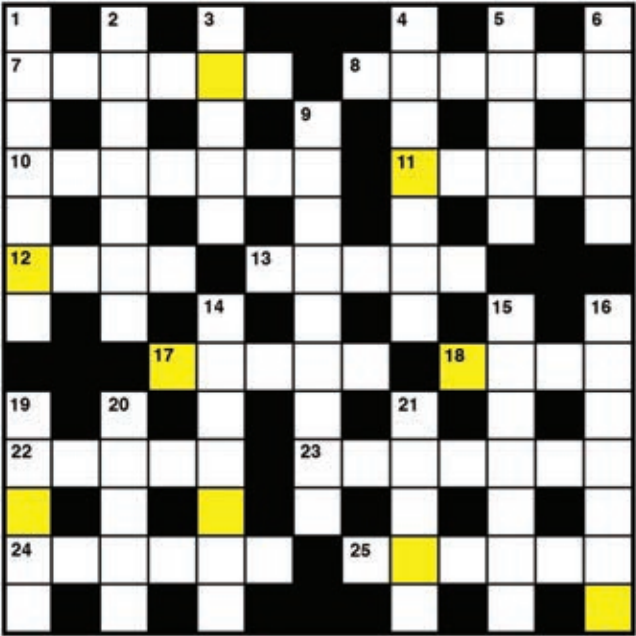
- 1. RAF bombs cover road (7)
- 2. RAF aircraft in Shakespearean storm (7)
- 3. Amin to return jackass (5)
- 4. Plane that's more like the Duke of Sussex (7)
- 5. Finally, almost reaches mountains (5)
- 6. Join military team heading east (5)
- 9. Waited leg operation on RAF aircraft (9)
- 14. Raw rice cooked by RAF personnel (7)
- 15. Same Shakespearean prince I contact on RAF plane (7)
- 16. Puzzled by being in debt (2,1,4)
- 19. Fast-moving RAF planes? (5)
- 20. Stove present once more (5)
- 21. Henman working for Shakespeare's Athenian (5)

Name:

Address:

.....

RAF term:Crossword No. 389



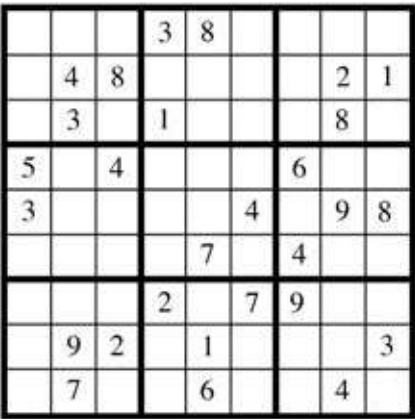
Solution to Crossword No. 388
Across – 1. Thai 8. Receptions 9. Mosquito 10. Tide 12. Jet Set 14. Spot On 15. Linton- 17. On-Ouse 18. Deli 19. Caffeine 21. Lancasters 22. Task
Down – 2. Homogenise 3. Iraq 4. Script 5. Spoons 6. Virtuoso 7. Esme 11. Drowsiness 13. Set Piece 16. Nicest 17. Off-key 18. Doll 20. East Aviation term – Aircraft



Su Doku

No. 399

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.



Solution to Su Doku No. 398

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



Music

Maroon 5

Love Is Like



NEW ALBUM: Maroon 5 get back to basics

PHOTO: HUGH LIPPE

Maroon 5 feeling the love

THREE-TIME Grammy award-winning multi-platinum band Maroon 5 have announced their eighth studio album, *Love Is Like*, will be out on August 15. To celebrate, they have released a new single, *All Night*.

The band have also announced a US arena tour that will kick off this autumn.

They recently previewed their new album with the single

Priceless, a collaboration with Lisa of Blackpink.

Maroon 5's frontman Adam Levine said: "I feel like we've gone back to what we used to do, which is to not pay attention to where we fit and producing the music organically. This is kind of how we stuck out in the beginning, when we started our career."

Go to: maroon5.com for more information.



Film Review

Goebbels and the Führer (15)

In cinemas now

The Nazi propaganda machine

GOEBBELS AND the Führer charts the relationship between Hitler and his right-hand man – his so-called 'sorcerer' – from March 1938 through to May 1945, in Joachim Lang's controversial German language film.

Where recent film *The Zone of Interest* explored the banality of evil in the domestic lives of Rudolf Höss and his family, this film focuses on the backrooms and machinations of the propaganda machine, helmed by Joseph Goebbels (Robert Stadlober).

The most striking details lie in the portrayal of the Führer himself, played by Fritz Karl. He is far more subdued than we're used to – seen in quiet moments before or after his rousing speeches – coldly calculating and driven to escalate war efforts despite doubt among close followers, including Goebbels.

Centred around real speeches, the film cuts to authentic audio and footage – not just from rallies and meetings, but also cinematic works used to spread grandiose anti-Semitic propaganda to the masses. It's an intentionally jarring style that never lets you forget the historical context, illustrating how these speeches were written, rehearsed and deployed.

During one of Goebbels' bouts of self-adulation, he compares propaganda to painting, positioning himself as a master of mass control. At one point, he even compares his work to seducing a woman – hinting at another thread that distances him further from Hitler. His affair with a Czech mistress, while publicly decrying Slavic people, highlights the hypocrisy embedded in his fanaticism.



FÜHRER: Adolf Hitler (Fritz Karl) soaking up the adulation

"I decide what's true," Goebbels proclaims. "Truth is what's good for the German people."

It's not just the propaganda that's shown, but its barbaric results: including real footage of shootings and hangings. A haunting epilogue features a Holocaust survivor speaking directly to camera, followed by a quote from Primo Levi that makes the film's purpose chillingly clear: "It happened, therefore it can happen again: this is the core of what we have to say."

Four out of five roundels 
Review by Sam Cooney