

The Forces' favourite paper

£157 folk festival ticket to be won

● See R'n'R pages 4-5



Win!

Arnhem Para's moving account

● See page 19



Win!

ROYAL AIR FORCE

Friday, June 13, 2025
Edition No.1610

Only 99p

RAF News



The love story of the missing Catalina pilot and his pregnant wife



See pages 14-15

Rugby Legends sign off



● See page 23

Football President's Cup heroics



● See page p28

Cricket Men take IST20 title



● See page p28

UK fit for the fight



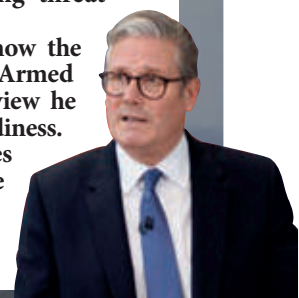
Forces to be battle-ready to face down Putin threat

Simon Mander

PRIME MINISTER Sir Keir Starmer says Britain must be battle-ready to counter the growing threat from Russia.

Speaking as he unveiled details of how the government plans to strengthen the Armed Forces under the Strategic Defence Review he said: "We are moving to war fighting readiness. We are being directly threatened by states with advanced military forces and the most effective way to deter them is to show them that we are ready."

● Continued pp2 -3



BiteSize

“We have to learn about 10,000 historical facts,”

Former SWO Andy Harris on becoming a Yeoman Warder
See page 7



“I started writing about my own battles with myself,”

James Morrison on new album *Fight Another Day*
See R'n'R page 8



“We only lost three wickets all tournament,”

IST20 winning captain Flt Lt Adam Fisher
See p28



ROYAL AIR FORCE
RAF News

RAF News

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

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

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

News Editor: Simon Mander

Sport: sports@rafnews.co.uk

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

Subscriptions and distribution:
RAF News Subscriptions
c/o Intermedia,
Unit 6 The Enterprise Centre,
Kelvin Lane, Crawley
RH10 9PE
Tel: 01293 312191
Email: rafnewssubs@subscriptionhelpline.co.uk

CAS: 'New era of threat'

Staff Reporter

CHIEF OF the Air Staff, ACM Sir Richard Knighton, has welcomed the government pledge to bolster the RAF's frontline capability with an investment programme for the F-35, Typhoon and ISTAR fleet.

He said: "We are in a new era of threat which demands a new era for UK Defence."

"The RAF has great people and great kit but we need to invest to get more out of what we have got."

"I am pleased that the Strategic Defence Review reflects these priorities and makes clear recommendations for how the RAF evolves."

"Investment in Defence equips us with the resources that we need to defend the UK robustly and to deter those who would do us harm."

"Together we are ready to fly and fight, to defend our country, our families and our Allies."



FIREPOWER: Typhoon



ISTAR: Protector



INVESTMENT: ACM Sir Richard Knighton with Sir Keir Starmer at the recent launch of the RAF's StormShroud Autonomous Collaborative Platform

This Week In History



1957 Nuke test

SNQ LDR A Steele drops the final thermonuclear weapon in the UK test program from a 49 Sqn Valiant during Operation Grapple.

1968 Royal Review

HM QUEEN Elizabeth II carries out a Royal Review of the RAF at Abingdon to mark the 50th anniversary of the Service.



1982 Laser bomb debut

HARRIER PILOT Wg Cdr Peter Squire carries out the first precision strike using laser-guided Paveway bombs, on Argentinian targets on Mount Tumbledown.

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

Lightning strikes twice

Defence Review calls for boost to F-35 fleet



- **More Wedgetail E-7s**
- **Protector maritime role**
- **Extra A400M aircraft**
- **Invest in Brize Norton**
- **Replace Reds' Hawk T1**
- **Axe costly bureaucracy**

Simon Mander

BRITAIN'S FLEET of Lightning stealth aircraft is to be expanded and the new Protector could watch the UK's seas under the Strategic Defence Review.

And Brize Norton, the RAF's biggest station, is to be given preference for any new money, while bureaucratic hurdles to training are to be removed as part of the shake-up.

Defence Secretary John Healey said: "We will create a next-generation RAF, with F-35s, upgraded Typhoons, next-generation fast jets through the Global Combat Air Programme, and autonomous fighters to defend Britain's skies and strike anywhere in the world."

"The world has changed. The threats we now face are more serious and less predictable than at any time since the Cold War, including war in Europe, growing Russian aggression, new nuclear risks, and daily cyber-attacks at home."

"Drones now kill more



people than traditional artillery in the war in Ukraine, and whoever gets new technology into the hands of their Armed Forces the quickest will win."

The Review says the RAF must move from crewed combat jets like Typhoon to a mix of crewed and uncrewed systems, such as the Tempest, to increasingly autonomous aircraft integrated into the UK's digital targeting web and able to fly from Britain's aircraft carriers.

It was conducted for the first time by Whitehall outsiders Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, General Sir Richard Barrons and Dr Fiona Hill.

They say:

- More F-35s will be required over the next decade, possibly a mix of F-35A and B models.
- Further Wedgetail E-7 early warning and control aircraft should be procured when funding allows.
- Protector should be given a maritime surveillance capability, integrated with P-8 Poseidons and Type 26 frigates.
- The existing fleet of A400Ms should be augmented.



NEW-TECH: Defence Secretary John Healey is shown the lightweight LANNER (RAF) Autonomous Collaborative Platform at the Land Warfare Centre in Wiltshire PHOTO: CPL TIM HAMMOND (RAF)

- RAF Brize Norton should be a high priority for investment.
- The Red Arrows' Hawk T1 should be replaced with a cost-effective fast jet trainer.
- Regulations that place unnecessary constraints on training and impose cost in the lifecycle of expensive weapons should be removed.

Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer (pictured left) said: "We must recognise the very nature of warfare is being

transformed on the battlefields of Ukraine and adapt our Armed Forces and our industry to lead this innovation."

The Review comes after the Government increased defence spending to 2.5 per cent with "the ambition" of reaching 3 per cent in the next Parliament.

Sir Keir said: "We also need to see the biggest shift in mindset in my lifetime: to put security and defence front and centre to make it the fundamental organising principle of government."



**Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund**

Free online support for your family

If you think you would benefit from useful resources to support your relationships, we can help.

Building Stronger Families is our free online platform, exclusively for RAF personnel and their families. The platform covers a range of self-directed topics tailored to your life in the RAF, including the impact of deployments.

We also provide relationship counselling to help you through difficult periods.

Find out more: **rafbf.org/families**
Call our helpline: **0300 102 1919**



Scan
me with
your
camera



Bulletin

UK vets net podium prize



ELECTRIFYING: E-prix winner Dan Ticktum (centre) celebrates Tokyo win

Staff Reporter

FORCES CHARITY Help for Heroes has netted a \$100,000 donation – thanks to UK Formula-E race ace Dan Ticktum and YouTube superstar Mr Beast.

The Cupra Kiro driver took up the vlogger's charity challenge, topping the podium at the recent Tokyo E-prix and donated the prize purse to his favourite military charity.

He said: "Globally, but especially in the UK, I don't think there's any excuse for the way some veterans and people who have fought for our country are treated.

"In the UK, money often goes to the wrong places, and I think veterans should receive far more support.

"That's why I chose to donate to Help for Heroes, which is a charity I really respect for the work that they do."

Gun slingers

Forces target cancer with 1,000-mile field gun challenge

A TRI-SERVICE team is gunning for glory by hauling a vintage 1.3 tonne cannon across the entire length of the UK to help fight cancer.

Dozens of Forces volunteers have signed up to take part in the epic 1,000-mile challenge, which will see teams transport the field gun carriage from John o'Groats on the Northern tip of Scotland to Land's End in Cornwall.

The Military Vs Cancer event kicks off in September and will take in some of the most rugged terrain in the country, including the Scottish Highlands and the Lake District, and is expected to take nine weeks to complete.

Among those taking part are FS Elton 'Dobbo' Dobson from Waddington's Electronic Warfare Centre and Physical training instructor WO Gareth Evans, who have both been affected by the killer disease.

FS Dobson, who is helping to organise the event, said: "I lost my

Mum to cancer a few years ago, which affected me deeply.

"I have never done a field gun event but am always open to new challenges. The nature of the people involved with the charity means that any event we organise has a physical element, which in turn means that the people who take part are generally the people who relish that type of physical challenge.

"I like to mix up my training and adjust leading up to an event. With the field gun, strength and endurance is the key. In the military we're inherently competitive so having a good healthy fitness baseline generally gives me a head start."

WO Evans became a trustee of the Military Vs Cancer charity last year after losing a close RAF pal to lung cancer, while his 13-year-old nephew was recently diagnosed with leukaemia.

He said: "I'm training hard for this event but pushing a field

gun over mountains and through valleys is nothing compared to the physical and mental challenge to those we are doing this for.

"Physically, it will require a lot of strength and conditioning work in the gym with a likely mix of sled pushing and dragging, deadlifts and squats and some loaded marches.

"That will build the physical ability but teamwork and group cohesion will support the mental barriers that this event will challenge."

● For more details or to volunteer email: david.bathgate@militaryvscancer.com



WO GARETH EVANS



FS ELTON DOBSON

Battle of Britain hero laid to rest

Simon Mander

A BATTLE of Britain pilot who lay in an unmarked grave for 85 years has been given a service of rededication and a new headstone.

FO Philip Anthony Neville Cox was reported missing, believed dead, when his Hurricane failed to return from an operation over Dover on July 27, 1940.

A month later a body was washed ashore on the Dutch coast and buried as an unknown British Air Force Officer.

Later when his remains were concentrated into Bergen op

Zoom cemetery in 1946 his name and Service number were accidentally struck off, resulting in him being buried as an 'Unknown'.

The rededication service, organised by the MoD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre, also known as the 'MoD War Detectives', was held in The Netherlands.

JCCC Caseworker Tracey Bowers said: "I am grateful to the researcher who originally submitted evidence suggesting this brave pilot was buried in the grave in Bergen op Zoom cemetery. Cox was a brave and talented officer and excelled in all

aspects of Service life, serving his country for eight years, he will never be forgotten."

Research showed the 501 (County of Gloucestershire) Sqn, Royal Auxiliary Air Force pilot was also a sportsman excelling in both fencing and soccer.

The service was conducted by Odiham chaplain the Reverend Jonathan Stewart.

CWGC Commemorations Case Officer Fergus Read said: "It was a privilege to play a part in establishing where this Battle of Britain pilot was buried and the Commission will care for his grave, in perpetuity."



REDEDICATION: Hurricane pilot FO Cox died during a mission in 1940

Royal Air Force In Concert

Princess Alexandra Auditorium, Yarm

Band of the Royal Air Force College

7.30pm Friday 11 July 2025

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

 **ROYAL Music**
AIR FORCE Charitable Trust
www.rafmct.uk/concerts



Andy's Tower-ing achievement

Next generation on parade at Halton as dad goes from SWO to Yeo at historic site

TEENAGE ROOKIE Cadeyrn Harris stepped on to the graduation parade square at Halton this month to launch his Forces career – as proud dad SWO Andy bowed out of the Royal Air Force after serving for 37 years.

The 18-year-old aviator was also joined at the Bucks training station by his grandfather Alun who served for 33 years, first as a Regular and then a Reservist, and mum Lynn Cowderoy, who notched up 12 years as a weapons engineer.

Northolt-based Andy said: "Cadeyrn always wanted to join up – it's a fabulous life and seeing him graduate was an incredible moment for all of us. We're immensely proud."

While AS1 Harris eyes a posting at Shawbury to pursue his dream of becoming a helicopter weapons system specialist, dad Andy is heading for the Tower of London where he will join a seven-strong RAF contingent as a Yeoman Warder.

To qualify for the prestigious role as a member of the 1,000-year-old Royal bodyguard, candidates must have served for at least 22 years, hold the rank of Warrant Officer and have received the Good Conduct Medal.

Former Armourer Andy has served all over the world, including frontline deployments on Operation Granby during the first Gulf War, Afghanistan and Iraq.

As Northolt's Station Warrant



FORCES FAMILY: 18-year-old Cadeyrn Harris (centre) with grandfather Alun (left) mum Lynn, sister Megan and dad Andy at Halton Graduation PHOTO: FIONA BUSSEY

YEO BRO: Andy Harris

Officer he also played key roles in Queen Elizabeth II's funeral and the Coronation of King Charles.

Now he's bringing his military experience to the task of preserving British history for the estimated three million visitors who flock to the fortress every

year – and guarding the Crown Jewels.

He'll also be working alongside the site's Ravenmasters, who care for the flock of seven birds believed to guarantee the future of the kingdom.

He said: "I'm currently

going through the training, which includes learning about 10,000 historical facts covering a thousand years of history, including the details of the executions and a host of other scandals and intrigues.

"We are also the official

bodyguard to The King and responsible for guarding the Crown Jewels, but day today we are there to inspire visitors from all over the world.

"It is a unique role and a huge privilege to live and work in such an important and historic site."

Texan stars

FLYING INSTRUCTOR Gp Capt (ret'd) Andy Lewis took to the skies with his son, fast jet trainee Flt Lt James Lewis, in a Texan T1 at RAF Valley.

Veteran airman Andy took up the flying instructor post with Ascent as the contractor took over fast jet duties at the Anglesey station, which prepares the next generation of frontline fliers for combat duties.

He said: "Flying with James was a moment I'll always treasure, not only as his father but as a fellow pilot. For me, seeing James soar, both literally and figuratively, has been the greatest privilege of all."



NEXT GENERATION: Instructor Andy Lewis (left) prepares for take-off with his son, Flt Lt James Lewis, at RAF Valley

Medicine man

VET CHRIS McDowell has launched a 500-mile fundraising trek across the UK – carrying a 3kg medicine ball.

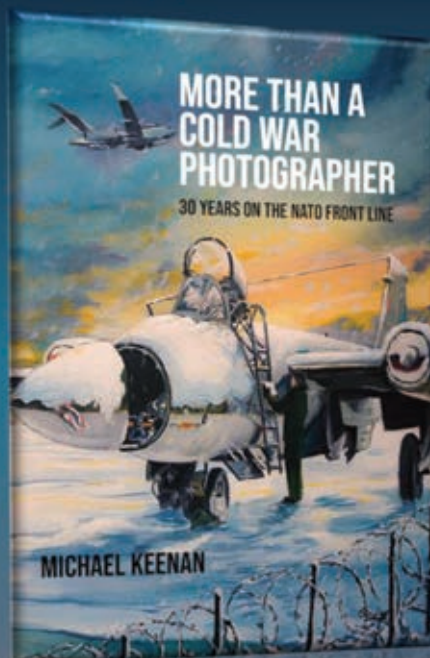
The 39-year-old former aviator, who now works for Tesco, will be walking and cycling from Edinburgh to Welwyn Garden City in 15 days, stopping at Tesco stores en route to raise funds for Combat Stress after battling PTSD.

He said: "The medicine ball represents the mental health burden that's not always seen but always felt. And just as I'll carry it mile after mile, veterans can carry those struggles long after their service has ended."

● Go to: events.combatstress.org.uk/fundraisers/Onemanandhismedball



MORE THAN A COLD WAR PHOTOGRAPHER



NEW RELEASE BY
VETERAN AUTHOR
MICHAEL KEENAN

The story of a RAF trainee photographer looking for travel and something different in the way of work. Follow his 30-year career through aviation technology and radar and how he got from 5 Squadron Lightning fighters to 5 Sqn Sentinel Radar Reconnaissance.

Available to buy on Kindle
and in Paperback at



ROYAL
AIR FORCE



RAF News

The Forces Favourite Read

Hit your target market with **RAF News** - the official newspaper of the Royal Air Force since 1961.

To discuss your advertising in **RAF News** please call or email:
T: +44 (0)7482 571535
E: edwin.rodrigues@rafnews.co.uk

Reaching an audience of more than 50,000 readers every fortnight, **RAF News** is the Forces' favourite newspaper delivering exclusive news, features and sports action from across UK Defence.

RAF News
The official voice of the Royal Air Force



FEATURING
**ROCKET
LEAGUE**

COMPETE IN THE FIRST EVER ESPORTS LEAGUE FOR THE
UK ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY.

£15,000+ IN PRIZES UP FOR GRABS

SIGN-UP DEADLINE: 22/07/2025

The BFBS Pro League is open to all members of the UK Armed Forces community. This includes Serving UK Armed Forces personnel, Reservists, Cadets, Royal Fleet Auxiliary personnel, Veterans, MOD Civil Servants, direct family members of serving personnel and members of the bereaved community. All competitors must be 13 years or older.



SIGN UP NOW
<https://bfbsesports.com>



Invictus star Ben tests rookie crews

Simon Mander

ROOKIE AIRCREW are being taught lifesaving skills by an Invictus Games gold medallist whose military career was cut short by a hit-and-run smash.

New instructor Royal Marine veteran Ben Lucowski was helping to set up a Cranwell-like Survival, Evasion and Resistance school in Ukraine in July 2022 when his efforts were ended by a serious road accident that caused brain injury.

Despite enlisting in 2006 and serving in 42 Commando in Afghanistan, Iraq and on Operations Ellamy, Herrick and Shader, he was little prepared for what lay ahead.

Aircrew SERE Training Centre instructor Mark Fairhead said: "Initially he thought he'd done well to survive and due to his high state of physical fitness his body was able to recover, but the brain injury has significantly changed Ben's life."

Signing on the base's Wall of Honour Ben shared his experience of emotional turmoil, hyper aggression, profound depression, reclusive behaviours, and frustration and, crucially, what to do to seek the positives and reconnect with purpose.

"A truly inspirational speaker, he spoke openly and honestly about the difficulties of making tough decisions, his disappointment at having to leave his beloved Corps and the trauma of battle and dealing with wounds both physical and



mental," said Mr Fairhead. "He spoke of the importance of humility, and acceptance, of knowing your limitations and respecting them, but never accepting defeat."

"He epitomises the very essence of our motto Animus Invictus, not least of all driving himself to train and compete and winning two gold medals in indoor rowing so far."



Cpl Hudson: 'Truly special'

Staff Reporter

TRIBUTES HAVE been paid to an RAF dog handler who has died aged 32.

Coningsby-based Cpl Rebecca Hudson twice won station dog trials, earning a place in the national UK Military Dogs contest after joining the Air Force in 2015.

Devoted to her charges – named Ina and Dax – and her teammates, the Stourport NCO's loss is keenly felt.

Provost Marshal Gp Capt Samantha Bunn said: "Her absence will be felt for many

years to come, not just by the dogs she dedicated so much time to, but the whole of the RAF Police.

"We have been deprived of a truly special individual who has been taken from us far too soon."

Coningsby Station Commander Gp Capt Paul O'Grady added: "Bec was one of our brightest and best. She undertook her duties as an RAF Police Dog Handler with commitment and professionalism, and with the joy of someone who was passionate about her task."

Reds head Museum makeover

VISITORS TO the RAF Museum in the Midlands will soon be met by a Red Arrows Hawk T1 and a life-size model of the future Tempest combat air system in a refurbished 1930s hangar after investment by BAE Systems.

Work will begin later this year, with completion expected by summer 2027. The project has also been funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the RAF.

Museum chief Maggie Appleton said: "We're hugely grateful to BAE Systems for their significant investment and continued commitment to helping us transform how we share the Air Force story."

The Museum will also deliver



a Collections Hub, displaying its stored items for the first time.

BAE Director of Defence Capability Sir Stuart Atha said:

"This is an initiative that will help tell the story of the RAF and through outreach programmes inspire current and future generations."

Rowers track sea threat

Staff Reporter

DATA COLLECTED by Cadets Ambassador Wg Cdr Emma Wolstenholme and her team of record-breaking rowers during an epic 2,000-mile voyage around the UK reveals sea temperatures in Britain's coastal waters have risen.

A report by the University of Portsmouth and GB Row Challenge using data provided by the all-women team found UK seas were an average 0.39°C warmer in 2023 compared to 2022.

The data was gathered by the Team Ithaca crew who took the 2023 GB Row Challenge title – the first female crew to complete the event.

Environmental ocean DNA,

underwater sound and microplastic data was collected during the 60-day voyage which took in some of the UK's most dangerous waters.

University of Portsmouth's Prof Fay Couceiro, said: "We expect fluctuations but we don't want to see this increasing number of marine heatwaves."

"Some regions, including the Celtic and Irish Seas and the northern North Sea, experienced temperature increases exceeding 2°C during a marine heatwave."

GB Row Challenge founder William de Laszlo added: "Team Ithaca's dedication and resilience have not only set a new benchmark in ocean rowing but have also provided critical insights into the challenges facing Britain's coastal waters."



News

Putin alert tests NATO defences



SCRAMBLE: II Sqn Typhoon intercepts Russian Ilyushin Il 20 Coot surveillance aircraft as it closes in on Nato airspace.

Simon Mander

TYPHOONS WERE scrambled from their base in Northern Poland to intercept a Russian spy plane close to Nato airspace.

The Malbork-based fighters intercepted an Ilyushin Il-20M that had previously been tracked by three other pairs of allied aircraft earlier that day until it turned toward the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad.

The rogue surveillance aircraft, known

as a COOT-A, then turned towards Polish air space prompting the Typhoon launch to escort the aircraft until it was handed over to Danish Quick Reaction Alert jets.

An RAF spokesman said: "Once intercepted Nato instructed us to escort the aircraft to ensure the safety of all air space users in the vicinity."

"At no point did the Ilyushin file a flight plan or communicate with civilian

air traffic control and was also transiting without squawking."

Aircrew from II (AC) Sqn, part of 140 Expeditionary Air Wing are currently conducting QRA as part of Nato enhanced Air Policing.

The mission, codenamed Operation Chessman, sees personnel from across the RAF deployed to Malbork alongside Nato's newest member Sweden.



WWII Halifax crew honoured

FAMILIES OF eight crewmen killed in a wartime air crash staged a service at a Lincolnshire golf club which houses two memorials to them.

Relatives of the five Canadian and three RAF men who died when Halifax LK 954 crashed at South Kyme in November 1943 attended.

Local airbases provided a mixed honour guard from both nations and a brass quintet from the RAF Central Band performed in the clubhouse following the ceremony.

All three families and an RAF representative laid wreaths at the service, performed by Canadian Padre Warren Clapham, which was attended by more than 100 people.

RAF SPORTS LOTTERY



WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH OUR £10,000 WEEKLY JACKPOT?

More chances to win, now with up to **6** tickets and still only **£1** per ticket!

Exclusively open to all serving and former serving RAF personnel.



"I think the wider camaraderie and value of sport should not be underestimated. Sport not only improves your fitness, but can give you structure, goals and friendships, to name just a few of the benefits. Whilst sport might feel like a luxury when we are working at capacity and with the operational tempo increasing, the resilience sport helps foster will ultimately benefit our service in the longer term."

Squadron Leader Sam May



1ST PRIZE

£10,000

2ND PRIZE

£3,000

3RD PRIZE

£2,000

Support your RAF charity by playing today at: www.rafcf.org.uk

RAFCentralFund

BeGambleAware.org

The RAF Sports Lottery operates as a society lottery within the Royal Air Force Central Fund and is licensed and regulated by the Gambling Commission (www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk). The Royal Air Force Central Fund is a company registered in England and Wales 8555984, Charity registered in England and Wales 1152560, Charity registered in Scotland SC044299.



BY APPOINTMENT TO
HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES III
MEDALLISTS
WORCESTERSHIRE MEDAL SERVICE LTD
BROMSGROVE



WORCESTERSHIRE MEDAL SERVICE LTD

Specialists in the manufacture and supply
of full and miniature size medals,
medal mounting and framing.

Visit Our Website:
www.worcmedals.com

+44(0)1527 835375
sales@worcmedals.com

124 High Street, Bromsgrove, B61 8HJ





Do you need some headspace?

We offer **FREE** memberships to the online mindfulness app Headspace, for RAF serving personnel and their partners.

- ✓ Improved mood, relaxation and sleep quality
- ✓ Focus on specific areas such as sport, health or happiness

Sign up today: rafbf.org/headspace

Call our helpline: **0300 102 1919**



SCAN
ME WITH
YOUR
CAMERA



**Royal Air Force
Benevolent Fund**



headspace



CUP WINNER: Capt Horace Shield beat Sir Hugh Dowding to win the flying award in his Bristol biplane in 1923. Inset below, great-great-grandchildren James and Anna Munday with the trophy at Cranwell



Generation fame for cadet duo

Simon Mander

A TROPHY won by an RAF pilot more than 100 years ago has been lifted by his Air Cadet great-great-grandchildren.

RAF Eastchurch flier Capt Horace Scott Shield won the award beating 15 other competitors – including Battle of Britain mastermind Air Cdre

Hugh Dowding – flying a Bristol F2B over a 100-mile triangular course.

Treasurer 1094 (Ely) Sqn ATC Kathy Munday found that the 1923 Air League Challenge Trophy won by her great-grandfather was stored at Cranwell after finding a photo of Capt Shield holding the trophy with Air Vice Marshal Sir William Sefton Brancker.

In 1991 the Air League presented the cup to the Air Cadets and it is now presented annually to the best

volunteer gliding squadron.

Her son CWO James Munday said: “It was an amazing experience to go from originally having the photo of my great-great-grandfather winning the trophy in 1923 to 102 years later being able to hold the same trophy.”

Daughter Sgt Anna Munday said: “It’s such a coincidence that James and I have joined the Air Training Corps and that we traced the Air League Challenge Cup to HQ RAFAC.”

Rescue mission for wartime lifesaver

Simon Mander

CAMPAIGNERS ARE hoping to raise £20,000 to get an RAF Air Sea Rescue launch submerged in the Norfolk Broads since World War II restored to its former glory.

The project is the brainchild of Steve Hale, whose father sailed in a similar vessel – known as a ‘whaleback’ due to its graceful deck lines.

He said: “My father joined up in 1941. He never spoke about his war experience but I do remember a single black and white photo that hung in every house I lived in as a youngster.

“It showed one of the boats he served on in the rear gun turret and once he started talking about saving the entire crew of an American bomber in the North Sea.”

Mr Hale’s research found very few books on this RAF branch that worldwide saved more than 14,000 aircrew lives.

He was determined to put them on the map and started a Facebook group to bring together relatives of boat crews and those they rescued.

“Several years ago, I became aware of a whaleback somewhere in England. But it was in a bad way. Research tracked it down to the Norfolk Broads,” said Mr Hale.

“I approached the owner, a local businessman, and he agreed that I might attempt a rescue.”



SEARCH AND RESCUE: Volunteers are hoping to raise £20,000 to salvage WWII launch abandoned in a Norfolk river

A small volunteer team set about floating it and Norfolk Fire Museum supplied pumping equipment, but clearly there were big holes somewhere in the submerged hull.

“So, we decided to fother, the ancient art of dragging an impervious sheet (a sail back in the day) under the boat to

wrap it up,” said Mr Hale.

Using a pond liner big enough so that no join was required, the operation was successful.

Coordinating with the Broads Authority, the vessel was towed three miles to a secure safe and free temporary berth nearby.

“The owner decided to gift the boat to us and now we are

planning to move it somewhere where she can be lifted out for road transport to a drying place,” said Mr Hale.

The team have a target of £20,000 to raise from individual donors and corporate sponsorship and can be found on a YouTube channel.

● Go to: whaleback.org

Bulletin



AI on target

AIR CREWS are among those set to benefit from new kit driven by artificial intelligence following the largest ever UK defence trials.

Advanced target recognition systems that can process information from multiple airborne sensors simultaneously, reducing demands on pilots and crews, are among the equipment being tested.

Around 200 scientists joined RAF personnel for the third exercise of its kind to develop and validate AI algorithms.

Dubbed Wintermute, participants gathered at Portland Harbour to develop systems for automatic target detection and recognition, including those in manned and unmanned aircraft, operating in mission-based scenarios.

Procurement Minister Maria Eagle said: “Significant trials like this, working with international and industry partners, demonstrate the rapid progress we’re making to utilise new technology for keeping Britain secure at home and strong abroad.”

Feature

Missing in Action

IT'S A story that has all the elements of a gripping romantic novel, featuring a dashing World War II RAF hero who disappeared mysteriously on operations leaving behind his grieving 21-year-old wife Diana, a beautiful aspiring actress – the love of his life – who was pregnant with their child. And it's all true.

Flt Lt Wallace Arthur Robert Keddie, known as Bob, was just 25 when the Catalina flying boat he captained disappeared over the Norwegian sea. He was taking part in a reconnaissance patrol for the protection of convoys carrying vital supplies to the Russians. His aircraft disappeared – no trace of it and its crew were ever found.

Letters

For *We've All Life Before Us, A Love Story of the Second World War* (fonthill.media) Caroline Cecil Bose has edited letters and diary entries that chart the progression of Bob's wartime RAF training to his command of that ill-fated Catalina. The book also tells the moving story of a young couple's deep love for each other and their anger at the war for separating them.

On May 16, 1942, the crew of 210 Squadron's Catalina AH535/J were taken by dinghy to their aircraft.

Caroline explained: "Radio silence was enforced when the crew reached their patrol area off the coast of Trondheim, sufficiently far from the Norwegian shoreline to avoid detection. The aircraft started flying circuits of the patrol route, each of which could take more than two hours to complete. At 1739 hours, one of the crew requested a forecast for landing back at Sullom Voe [a RAF station on the Shetland Islands]. Whatever happened next was to have tragic consequences. Probably the Catalina had turned for home. At 1804 hours, RAF Sullom Voe called the Catalina with the forecast but received no reply. The aircraft was never found. All of the crew were reported missing in action."

Sacrifice

She added: "No one knows what happened, but as with every death in war, the story did not end there. Diana kept all the letters, diaries, sketches and poems Bob had sent her over the previous two years. In that preserved correspondence is the deeply poignant yet still joyous tale of their love, a story that is both unique and, in its explanation of tremendous sacrifice and loss, characteristic of their noble generation."



NEWLY-WEDS:
Bob and Diana

Born in 1917, Bob was the eldest of three boys – his brothers were Dick and John – and the siblings grew up near the Essex coast. Their father Wallace served in the Royal Flying Corps in World War I.

At school, Bob was a talented all-round sportsman. Caroline said: "In 1937 he passed his flying certificate at Southend Flying Club. This was probably when he was recruited into the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, created the year before to provide airmen in the event of war."

Accountant

After leaving school Bob trained as an accountant for a London-based firm that is now part of the multinational EY – previously known as Ernst & Young.



AUTHOR:
Caroline
Cecil Bose

Caroline said: "The training was to equip him to go into the family business, the eponymous Keddie's department store in Southend, but he still found time to indulge in adventurous sporting pursuits."

"In January 1939 Bob and Dick made their first attempts at the Cresta Run, the world-famous natural ice toboggan track at St Moritz in Switzerland. Bob's star shone spectacularly on the Cresta."

He won all the major races, and his performance in the Curzon Cup got plenty of media coverage.

"As a result of this success," Caroline added, "Bob and Dick, who was in the Navy and had to return early that season to his ship, hoped to compete in the 1940 Olympics, but war was to intervene. And not only that – Bob's life was to be overturned when he met Diana."

Born in 1920, her ambition was to become an actress. She trained at London's Central School of Speech and Drama. But when war broke out, theatres went dark.

Vivacious

"Diana's beauty, her vivacious but slightly shy nature, and the joyful way in which she told stories made an impression on those she met. There is no doubt that these qualities and her interest in literature, poetry

Love story missing and his young a

Diana was pregnant with
hopeful Bob went missing



CRESTA CURZON CUP RIDERS, 1939: Bob is fourth from left, front row. Standing extreme right is Joe K.

and nature, which she shared with Bob, drew them together," said Caroline.

"They knew each other for only

two years, but with Bob's death, Diana's life was shattered. The war was also to claim the lives of Bob's two brothers; an entire generation

by Tracey Allen

Story of the RAF pilot glamorous actress wife

in their child when dashing Olympic
on patrol over the Norwegian Sea



IN LOVE: Bob Keddie and Diana Ladner, possibly in their pre-wedding photograph. Diana wears a brooch in the style of RAF wings. Below, a young Diana plays with pets at her childhood home in Little Baddow, Essex



Kennedy, brother of future US president John F Kennedy
of the Keddie family was lost. What
consoled Diana through so much
tragedy was reading Bob's diaries and
letters."



Win copy of book

YOU COULD own a copy of Caroline's brilliant book – to be in with a chance of winning one, tell us:

In which year did Bob and Dick Keddie first attempt the Cresta Run?

Email your answer, marked We've All Life Before Us 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 June 27.

The couple's daughter, Penny, was born five months after Bob died. She told Caroline that, never having met her father, reading his letters decades after they were written was 'a surreal experience.'

Diana had known Caroline's mother Alison since they were young children and later on introduced Caroline's father Anthony to her mother.

Hero

Caroline, who also grew up in Essex, said her uncle, Rupert Gascoyne-Cecil – a wartime RAF hero himself – aroused her interest in WWII.

She said: "Rupert was a Wg Cdr and knew Bob Keddie – the



RUPERT GASCOYNE-CECIL: Portrait by war artist and WWI pilot Cuthbert Orde

two families lived about half a mile apart – and Bob mentioned his name in a letter [included in



the book]. Sadly, I didn't know this before my uncle died.

"Rupert was a bomber pilot and then became a scientific intelligence officer and helped to plan the RAF's attacks against German radar before D-Day.

"A member of the RAFVR, he was called up at the start of the war and in June 1941 joined 61 Sqn and flew in Hampden bombers. After almost 30 operations he was awarded the DFC.

"Following time as an instructor, in February 1943 he returned to 61 Sqn, now operating Lancasters. He was made a flight commander as Bomber Command started its campaign against the industrial cities of the Ruhr.

"On completion of this second tour, he was awarded a bar to his DFC for having 'displayed fearless determination to bomb the target in the face of the heaviest opposition and for setting a magnificent example to his unit.'

DFC and bar

She added: "I knew Rupert very well – he died 20 years ago – and was incredibly fond of him. There are lots of family stories about him which we still tell."

Bob and his crew were officially declared dead in January 1943. Their names are inscribed on the Air Forces Memorial at Runnymede in Surrey.



Exciting news!

Applications open 1st April 2025



Scan to start
applying now!



**Improving the lives of Defence
Communities, one project at a time.**
Applications open 1st Apr – 30th May

Above projects, left to right:
A Garden Oasis for **HMS Collingwood**
RAF Cranwell's New Tabletop Gaming Haven
NAAFI Fund Scores Big for **Gibraltar Hockey Goalies**

   
@naafisocial

Light up the sky

Lightweight autonomous weapon leading the UK's drone fleet

Simon Mander

DRONES AND other military hardware transforming the way Britain fights were on display when Defence Secretary John Healey visited the Land Warfare Centre in Warminster.

Among them was the RAF's LANNER Autonomous Collaborative Platform whose airframe unit is made of lightweight, rapid-build compressed foam.

The move comes as the Strategic Defence Review revealed drones were now killing more people than traditional artillery in the war in Ukraine.

It states that whoever gets new technology into the hands of their Armed Forces the quickest will win.

Mr Healey was shown a PSK (PS-Killer) and a DefendTex device, both of which are designed for high-impact, self-destructive attacks on high-value targets.

And he saw a small, highly-maneuvrable drone that was destroyed by the DragonFire High Powered Laser Directed Energy Weapon System and a Rheinmetall Mission Master Uncrewed Ground Vehicle used to move a simulated casualty.

Mr Healey said: "We're delivering the Strategic Defence Review's vision to put the UK at the leading edge of innovation in Nato.

"We're doubling investment into drones to £4bn, backing British jobs and industry and fast-tracking the kit of the future into the hands of our frontline troops."

The Review predicts that over the next two decades, the UK and its Allies will have to compete harder for control of the air due to the rapid development of enemy capability designed to counter Western strengths.

It says aerial attack and defence is becoming ever more difficult as surveillance and air defence weapon systems are challenging the primacy of crewed aircraft.

And while Typhoons and F-35s provide the UK and Nato with protection against cruise missile attack, more needs to be done using



INNOVATION: Defence Secretary Mr Healey is shown the foam LANNER Autonomous Collaborative Platform at the Land Warfare Centre in Wiltshire

artificial intelligence to integrate them into the Alliance's defences.

The Air Force's logistics must be more resilient to disruption and military assault with Agile Combat Employment aircraft operating across Nato, using commercial airfields in times of crisis.

Brize Norton, the main hub in the UK for much of what the RAF delivers globally, will be enhanced with the military fleet of Voyager, C-17, and A400M



BEAM US UP: Mr Healey with a small, highly-maneuvrable drone that was destroyed by the DragonFire High Powered Laser Directed Energy Weapon System (pictured) PHOTOS: CPL TIM HAMMOND (RAF)

aircraft supplemented by civilian charter options for transporting people and cargo, and for air-to-air refuelling.

And it's hoped the RAF will "set the pace for warfighting as the

leading European air force," with an upgraded Typhoon including better radar, defensive aids, avionics, and weapons – and two squadrons of F-35Bs.

They will be replaced by Tempest and a combination of crewed, uncrewed and

autonomous aircraft, effectors, and multi-domain network connectivity.

Earlier Mr Healey met Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte and Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov in Brussels.

LETHAL: Soldier from 2nd Battalion The Royal Yorkshire Regiment prepares to launch Defendtex D40 drone





STONYHURST

AGES 3-18

Creating **men & women** *for others*



Forces families pay no more than 10% of the annual CEA allowance.
7 day full boarding tradition and child centred academic pathway.
Stonyhurst offers accompanied travel and on-site accommodation
for visiting forces families.



Scan the QR code
to book your place



Open Days **in March & May**



Co-ed 3-18 | Boarding & Day | Jesuit, Catholic School



stonyhurst.ac.uk/opendays

Arnhem Para John's unquenchable thirst for action



OPERATION MARKET Garden has long fascinated military historians. Was it possible that the war could have been won in 1944 if the Rhine had been crossed at Arnhem, allowing Allied armour to burst out into the North German Plain?

Of course, in the face of stiffened German resistance the efforts of 40,000 brave paratroopers to seize and hold the vital bridges to facilitate a rapid advance were frustrated. It proved to be 'a bridge too far'.

The publication of the paperback edition of *Arnhem's Last Para* (Penguin, £10.99, penguin.co.uk) marks a valuable addition to the literature covering this ferocious struggle. Dubbed 'the final first-hand account of the battle', it is an engaging collaboration between the veteran John Humphreys and the writer Stuart Tootal, a former paratrooper and army Colonel.

The collaboration, grounded on weekly meetings over seven months between the two, worked well. The hardback was published in August 2024. Sadly, this was shortly after John's death in March, aged 102, in the Royal Hospital Chelsea where he was a gentleman pensioner.

Humphreys was a remarkable man who had a remarkable war.

The book is the inspirational story of John the man. It describes a military career beginning in 1936 when, aged 14, he joined the Army. After a three-year technical apprenticeship, he joined the Royal Engineers.

When war came, he served in the UK, West Africa and North Africa, before surviving Arnhem. Incredibly, he escaped from both Italian and German captivity.

At every opportunity John



JOHN: The Chelsea Pensioner © Royal Hospital Chelsea



ESCAPE: The four prisoners who broke out of a POW camp in Germany after reaching Nijmegen, John far left © Crown copyright

sought action. He was prepared to lose rank and pay in order to fight. He always wanted to serve his country.

The reader is confronted with the daily difficulties of soldiering in the desert. John recounted how the front in North Africa moved back and forward with his vivid impressions of the dangers of minefields, khamsin sandstorms and demolitions and demoralisation during the fall of Tobruk (June 1942).

The Germans captured John at Tobruk and he was one of almost 80,000 Allied prisoners held in Italy between 1941 and 1943. His

Copies of the book up for grabs



WE HAVE copies of *Arnhem's Last Para* in paperback to win. For your chance to own one, answer this question correctly:

How old was John Humphreys when he joined the Army?

Email your answer, marked *Arnhem's Last Para* 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 June 27. Please include your full postal address with your entry.

Win!

abiding memory was of hunger. Red Cross parcels provided some salvation but his weight plunged from 12 stone to little more than seven.

He was not prepared to waste away. He attempted to escape

from two camps. On his third attempt he was lucky. Eventually, after some close scrapes, John and his two companions met advancing British forces in southern Italy in autumn 1943.

However, he was still itching

INTREPID: A gaunt photo of John after his escape as a POW in Italy in September 1943 © John Humphreys Estate

for action. Rather than accept a commission in the Royal Engineers, with little prospect of a role in a forthcoming invasion of Europe, John applied for the Airborne Forces.

The brutal training and the sheer terror of his first parachute jumps are well conveyed.

Initially there was frustration with the varied cancelled operations as the Allies advanced through France. However, their hour would come.

The final third of the book focuses on Arnhem.

Despite reservations, including doubts about the performance of the Horsa gliders, a veritable air armada headed towards Holland on September 17, 1944.

Unfortunately, the initial surprise so vital for a successful airborne operation was soon lost. By the end of the first day, real problems were evident, notably the presence nearby of large numbers of SS troops.

John recalled in grim detail the bitter fighting in the girls' school adjacent to the bridge, the German counterattacks and assaults by an array of armour, including two Tiger tanks.

Taken prisoner, he escaped from German captivity with three others. They secured a rowing boat, being taken by the current down the Rhine to Nijmegen and British lines.

When the survivors were gathered together the devastating extent of the losses became clear. Only 11 out of 153 men of John's 1st Parachute Squadron Royal Engineers could be mustered in Nijmegen on September 26.

Arnhem is integral to this book. It is a story of determination, valour and loss. It is also the culmination of a fascinating and moving account by a very brave man.

Review by Alastair Noble

There when you need her



You're always
ready but is your
safety net?

In the armed forces you plan for every possibility. But what happens if illness or injury means you or your family need unexpected care?

Lady Grover is there when you need her, helping to cover care costs, so you can stay prepared whatever life throws your way. From just £60 per year.

Join today: ladygrover.org.uk



Lady Grover

Armed Forces' Health Support



Tim Morris

Audi A8 L TFSI e (from £98,430 otr)

Motoring



MODEL TESTED: A8 L TFSI e Sport 60 Quattro, £105,425 otr

LET'S NOT beat around the bush, the Audi A8 is one of the automotive world's biggest beasts. I don't just mean physically, although it is huge, I mean in terms of stature.

It's been the weapon of choice for celebrities, royalty and heads of state for years. It's a common sight to see an A8 L picking up corporate CEOs from the airport. It's a car for those who want to travel in absolute comfort, without attracting undue attention.

It's pricey, yes, but a precision-built piece of engineering that delivers performance, comfort and serenity in a subtle package.

Exterior

It's only when you see it in the metal that you realise just how imposing the A8 L is. It's Audi's flagship model, the definition of German precision. Every panel is perfectly spaced and doors close with a satisfying thud. It's unmistakably Audi, with the latest LED lights, signature grille and a sleek saloon profile. If you had to sum up the A8's outer looks in three words, big, sleek

and powerful would be at the top of the list.

Interior

Big on the outside, big on the inside. Slide behind the A8's steering wheel and you find a huge range of adjustment, 22 directions from the electrically operated driver's seat, to be precise. The adjustable lumbar support is standard, and the seats are nicely supportive. The steering wheel has a great range of adjustment too. The result is a car that's supremely comfortable for long-distance journeys.

The consistency of finish is legendary too. It's not flashy, it's not trying to make a fashion statement, it's just classy luxury that's fit for a VIP.

Driver visibility is good, for a car in this class, backed up by the usual suite of cameras and sensors. Standard intelligent LED headlights also make for outstanding visibility at night. These shield oncoming traffic from being dazzled, but maintain main beam on other areas. Brilliantly effective!

Technology is, in fact, the A8's real talking point, because it is industry-leading stuff. I could write a small book on the features

available, from four-wheel steering to intelligent driving autonomy, but we just don't have space.

Sticking to the basics, the 12.3in digital instrument display behind the steering wheel is wonderfully clear, delivering a lot of information, while two high-definition touchscreens, a 10.1inch top screen and 8.6 inch one below it, dominate the dashboard. My usual grumble about trying to operate complicated menus on the move stands but, considering the huge number of features available, the A8 is pretty user-friendly.

Rear seat passengers have access to many of the same features from a screen mounted in the centre armrest. You can also add a pair of high-definition 10.1 inch screens to entertain back-seat passengers. The optional Rear Comfort pack adds electrically adjustable and massaging rear seats.

On The Road

The A8 is the king of the Autobahn. It's probably the best-riding car in its class and simply glides along. Audi has honed the adaptive suspension to a tee, making it one of the most comfortable cars in the world,

for both front and rear seat passengers. You really are sitting in first class.

Through the bends, it's sure-footed, thanks to Quattro levels of grip, and it copes well with everything the British weather can throw at it. It does wallow a bit through the bends when you're really shifting, like most limos, but it's well controlled and predictable.

Around town, the 60 TFSI e plug-in hybrid (PHEV) is well-suited. Zero emissions, silent running and an official electric-only range of 36 miles make it a practical vehicle to run. Granted, its Mercedes rival can cover 63 miles on battery power but, for most buyers, the A8 L is a winner.

The stats are healthy: 0-62mph in 4.7 seconds, a top end of 155mph and power output of 462PS. The combined fuel consumption figure is a little suspect, at 148.7mpg, but all PHEV's give these odd numbers. In the real world, we found our test car averaged around 40mpg, but that's still impressive for a limo of this heft.

The only downside is the charging time, which we found to be around two hours on a home charger.

Audi A8 L

Pros

- Masses of space, particularly in the rear
- Superb interior quality
- Limo-level comfort

Cons

- Electric-only range could be better
- Depreciation higher than some rivals

Verdict

The A8 L is beautifully built. On the road, it delivers a blend of performance, comfort and serenity that's hard to match and it is perfectly suited to high-speed, long-distance driving. Inside, it's well-equipped, with a level of technology that most cars won't see in the next decade. In short, it's up there with the best in class, a good drive and a supremely comfortable limo.



EMPLOYER
RECOGNITION
SCHEME

GOLD AWARD

★ Trustpilot



4.7

Reviews 5,624

WiFi for the RAF

Private internet access to browse, stream and game
at your air base and 150 MOD sites

- ✓ Flexible subscriptions – pause up to twice a year
- ✓ Unlimited data
- ✓ Unfiltered content



Connect to **Wifinity PAYG**
or visit wifinity.co.uk/get-online

wifinity

RUGBY

Farewell to two titans of RAF Rugby

Flt Lt Dave Manning

RAF RUGBY union bid farewell to its most capped player, Flt Lt Dave Manning, with the final whistle of this year's IS championship.

Manning began his Service playing career with his first cap against the Royal Navy in 2011, going on to win a total of 25 caps for the RAF and 19 CS/UKAF caps.

He played in four Defence World Cups, recorded two IS wins – in 2015 and 2018 – and took on his last Service game in a coach/player role. He remains in the post of Rugby Development Officer.

IS-winning teammate, RAF head coach FS Tom Gardner, said: "We first crossed paths in around 2008. He has been a friend, player and colleague. I coached him and played with him at Henley Hawks and now the same with the RAF.

"He can play both sides of the scrum, which is a special talent – loose head or tight head.

"He is held in high regard, not just by me but across the sport. He will always push for perfection and push standards."

Outside Service rugby Manning played and coached for Henley Hawks and Oxford Harlequins and played for Newport.

Fellow teammate Sgt Josh McNally said: "It's been a pleasure and a privilege to share the last 15 years



POWERHOUSE: Manning in action against the Navy in April

with David. Pretty much every memory I have in an RAF shirt includes him, from my first ever training session at RAF Cosford, all the way to sharing the field for his 25th cap against the Royal Navy.

"David's infectious energy and work ethic has pushed me and so many others to reach potentials we could only dream of.

"He held my hand down to our first training session at Henley Hawks, showing both of us what could be possible, bridging the gap between civilian and military rugby. He will be remembered as one of the greatest ever to pull on the light blue."

WO John Wilding

RAF WOMEN'S Rugby Union said goodbye to one its greatest servants, as WO John Wilding signed off his 36-year Service rugby career with his final game at Kingsholm.

Wilding's Sports Award nomination said: "John is regarded as the most outstanding women's coach in RAF history.

"His contributions have forever changed the landscape of Women's Rugby within the RAF, and his influence continues to inspire future generations of players and coaches alike."

The only coach to bring home the women's Inter-Service title, in 2019, the former UKAF head coach won more Inter-Service games than any other coach in the RAFRU in the last 40 years.

He also coached the first RAFRU Women's team to beat the Army, and was the first coach to appoint a woman to a RAFRU coaching role (Helen Verney in 2005).

It was apt that he had his last



WILDING: Only Women's IS-winning RAF coach

game working alongside the first female RAF Women's coach, Sgt Sian Williams.

Fellow RAFRUW coach Sqn Ldr Ian Cokayne said: "John's retirement marks the end of a truly remarkable chapter in RAF Women's Rugby.

"His leadership has been instrumental in transforming the RAFRUW programme from its amateur roots into a professional and highly-respected force.

"John's depth of rugby knowledge, meticulous attention

to detail and tireless dedication – often giving up much of his off-duty time – have been the foundation of our success.

"Beyond his coaching achievements with UKAF, Saracens and Wasps Women, John has been a passionate mentor and coach developer, nurturing both players and staff alike.

"His legacy is evident in the strength of our current coaching team and the continued growth of the sport within the RAF. We owe him a great debt of gratitude."

Speaking after the final whistle at Kingsholm, Williams said: "John's been a huge asset to our squad for many years and not only was he an amazing coach, but he's also an even better person and will be hugely missed.

"We wish him all the best in the future and look forward to seeing him each year cheering us on."

Cokayne signs for Sale Sharks in two-year deal

SERVICE RUGBY union star Flt Lt Amy Cokayne was celebrating a bright new future in the women's game after signing a two-year contract with Premiership side Sale Sharks.

The move sees Cokayne, who recently celebrated winning her 83rd England cap as the Red Roses won a sixth Six Nations tournament in a row, leave Leicester Tigers from the start of the 2025/26 season.

Cokayne said: "I've really loved my time at Leicester Tigers, but I had a tough run with injuries. With my contract coming to an end, the opportunity to join Sale Sharks came at the perfect time for a fresh start.

"Their vision for the future really resonated with me. The owner, Michelle Orange, is extremely passionate and her commitment to building a pathway for girls in the north is something I'm proud to be part of. We want to show young northern girls you don't have

to move south to succeed in rugby.

"I can't wait to get started after the World Cup, which kicks off at the Stadium of Light in Sunderland in August."

The aviator, who has previously played for Harlequins and Wasps, will form part of newly-appointed head coach Tom Hudson's Sale team.

He said: "At the risk of sounding predictable, it's Amy's world-class ability around the set piece that should get the north excited.

"To play the brand of rugby we want to play next year, we will need to create a platform to build off and I can't think of a better player in the PWR [Premiership Women's Rugby] to secure and improve those foundations than Amy.

"This is a really exciting signing, and it's just the start for us. We've got big ambitions for this club and we're confident that we're building a team that can really compete in the coming seasons."



RED ROSE: Cokayne

Josh McNally to extend his contract with Cardiff

RAF MEN'S rugby union star Sgt Josh McNally has committed his future to Cardiff after the elite status player signed a one-year extension contract to the club.

McNally, 34, who recently appeared for the RAF in its Inter-Services championship opener against the Royal Navy, signed the extension after joining the club last summer, recording 18 appearances and scoring one try.

McNally, who played second row for the Welsh side, said: "I'm extremely grateful to be staying at Cardiff Rugby for another year. I have absolutely loved this last season, on and off the field.

"A year ago, I was ready to step away from rugby, but moving to Cardiff has reignited my love for the game."

Having recently captained the side in the BKT United Rugby Championship encounter

Hollywoodbets Sharks, McNally added: "The Royal Air Force has also played a crucial role in my career and continues to support me here at Cardiff. They opened the door for me to pursue professional rugby, and I'm extremely grateful for their ongoing support."

Cardiff Rugby head coach Matt Sherratt said: "Josh has been excellent this season. Most importantly, he has come and shown his quality on the field.

"His set-piece work and physicality has made a real difference to our game and for a big man he has really good soft skills.

"He is also really good in our environment and off the back of his performances on the field his voice and leadership has grown off it.

"I was really pleased when Josh indicated he wanted to play another year as he has made a big impression in a short space of time."



ELITE: McNally

Would you like 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



RAF News

The Forces Favourite Read

Hit your target market with **RAF News** - the official newspaper of the Royal Air Force since 1961.

Reaching an audience of more than 50,000 readers every fortnight, **RAF News** is the Forces' favourite newspaper delivering exclusive news, features and sports action from across UK Defence.

To discuss your advertising in
RAF News please call or email:
T: +44 (0)7482 571535
E: edwin.rodriques@rafnews.co.uk

RAF News

The official voice of the Royal Air Force

Good Lord's, we did it!



KISS IS THE LIFE: Flt Lt Adam Fisher and the team celebrate with the IST20 trophy after their thumping win at Lord's
PHOTOS: Lt Cdr SP Roster RN

WO is a Cup winner

WHILE CRYSTAL Palace had its day in the sun at Wembley Stadium winning its first FA Cup, WO Andy Oakley was preparing the trophy and medals presentation.

Service football stalwart Oakley (*below*) said: "It was an absolute honour to be a part of the Military Ceremonial Team, representing the RAF."

"I played in the FA Cup for several seasons with various clubs due to different assignments in the UK, I never actually thought I would ever get my hands on the trophy – what an experience."

"Thanks to those involved with RAF Football who put me forward, after 32 years involvement with the game in the RAF and as I approach the end of my Service career, it's a fantastic memory that will stay with me forever."



ROO ARE YOU: Meeting Wayne Rooney

"Our version, the RAF FA Challenge Cup, means just as much to me, the commitment from all those out there who are involved with station football is fantastic and has ensured the competition's success year after year, long may that continue."

To cap it all for Oakley, he got to meet England legend Wayne Rooney, now a coach and manager.

● Follow RAF Football on Instagram @raffootball.



CRICKET

● Continued from back page played the right selection of shots and deliveries."

The exciting batting saw Cpl Tom Shorthouse unbeaten on 66 and Flt Lt Sam Moorby 42, Flt Lt Luke Hansford 22 not out.

With the ball the aviators were lethal. Shorthouse had the holders 2-1 bowling Hewitt, before AS2 Harry Hollingsworth saw them at 74-3 with a brace of wickets – Robbins (37) and Johnstone (19) – before they were 116-6, then 118-8, as Hollingsworth, Flt Lt Touseef Ahmed and Cpl Jack Fuller laid waste to the opposition's batting.

"Our batsmen were awesome. We wanted to play well, to entertain," said Fisher. "I was given the chance to captain for this year, I immediately said yes."

"We're in a good place, I am excited about the future, if we don't rest on our laurels. We want to be as strong as we can for as long as we can."

Playing at the nursery grounds at the home of Hampshire County Cricket Club in the opening clash the RAF reduced the Army to 142-8 after 20 overs, before Shorthouse was the most influential for the light blues by scoring 73 runs in total, with Hansford on 43, to finish a strong innings, with Fisher guiding the team home.



EASY PREY: RAF Odiham's Cpl Jon Hawk takes a Navy wicket on way to victory

Sport

MOTORSPORT



Pair back on track

Daniel Abrahams

SECURING A second and a third in class, Cpl Rob Atkinson described the RAF sidecar team's Donington Park outing as a "huge leap forward."

He added: "We have been able to iron out the handling gremlins that plagued us throughout last season.

"We immediately cut 1.5 seconds off our lap times from 2024, which has pushed us into the thick of the field, fighting with Isle of Man TT winners and former British champions.

"I feel very confident for the season ahead with our focus now changing to the top step

rather than just hunting for podium places."

Teammate Sgt Mark Middleton said: "For me, Donington couldn't have been more of a success, after a tough 2024. It's psychological as well as physical and now it's clear Donington has been the catalyst to conquer some demons and hopefully have a successful season and come home with some more silverware."

The team returned to Donington Park for the first round of the British Sidecar Championship – running alongside the Bennetts British Superbike Championship – producing a positive series of practice sessions to kick off the weekend well.

Race one saw the team make solid progress, finishing seventh overall and second in class, while recording a new personal best lap time, which highlighted the team's hard work over the winter and testing at Snetterton.

Race two saw the aviators locked in a gripping 10-lap chase behind the Kirby/Salmon outfit, fighting to try and make a move.

Despite exerting pressure, the military men couldn't get close enough to pass, coming home third in class, rounding off a consistent and encouraging weekend.

● Follow RAF Side Car on Instagram @rafmotorcycleroad racing.

MOTORSPORT



MACLEOD: Second place at Oulton Park

Lossie's Cpl MacLeod is a True Hero

THERE WAS a battling second place for new RAF Road Racing star Cpl Kenny MacLeod in the ROKiT OFF BMW F900 Cup at the Bennetts British Superbike Championship.

Riding as part of the prestigious True Heroes Racing team, the Lossiemouth rider produced an incredible second place finish at Oulton Park in Cheshire, having started the race at the back of the grid for the UK's first and only motorcycle race team dedicated to supporting sick and injured UK Armed Forces personnel and veterans.

Despite two spills in other races, it was a good outing for MacLeod, who said: "Despite the lows there were also a lot of highs, including the second-place finish from the back of the grid.

"Along with this, I have learned so much about myself and the bike. It's now time to rest up, recover and come back ready to attack round 2 at Snetterton later this month."

RAF Road Racing Team OIC WO Alan Sharp said: "After impressing with the RAF team Cpl MacLeod was given the amazing opportunity to take the next step in his racing career and compete at a national level with True Heroes Racing.

"After a long winter where he had very limited time on the bike before the season began, he has far exceeded the expectations of himself and the team."

Having qualified in the first heat race, MacLeod settled into a rhythm in 11th, but on lap four of eight he caught the engine casing, causing the front wheel to be lifted off the ground, and ended up in the gravel.

In the Last Chance Qualifier race, where his DNF (did not finish) saw him at the back of the grid in 18th, the aviator rose to the occasion to come second.

He was forced into the gravel again in the main race as a rider spilled in front of him on the first corner of the 12-lap event.

UKAF putting the flags out for the French

FLAG FOOTBALL

THE UK Armed Forces' American football stars secured a win and a loss at the third annual New York Jets-sponsored NFL Flag Day at RAF Lakenheath.

The event, promoted as New York Jets' salute to the Service game, saw three teams compete this year for the first time: the host US Visiting Forces, UKAF and France's Football Americain Des Armees.

The Euro clash between UKAF and FAA went the way of the Brits, 45-6, before a 33-14 defeat to USVF.

The loss saw a valiant effort from UKAF with the game poised at 14-14 until the last seconds of the half, when USVF scored to make it 20-14 at the break.

With USVF in control, they didn't look back and UKAF were playing catch-up.

One highlight was the performance of newcomer ASI Elliott Knight, who scored two touchdowns in the game.

The final match was USVF vs FAA, with the Americans taking it 38-6 and becoming the overall winners.

The tournament sees the New York Jets provide jerseys, game balls and flags, adding to the authentic American football atmosphere.

Chief Master Sgt Peter Martinez, 48th Fighter Wing command chief, said: "Whether we agree on which sport should be called football or not, it was still fun to share our version with our NATO allies, to do our part



NEWCOMERS: France play UKAF

in bringing us together."

The newly-formed RAF flag football team, which helped form part of the UKAF set-up, began the NFL tournament build-up with a training camp at Wittering.

Assistant head coach RAF Mustangs, Chf Tech Paul Wakeford, said: "The camp was part of RAF NFL building towards the first Inter-

Service championships, to be held in 2027. There was a good turnout, with personnel from the contact team and new players alike.

"The camp was three days long, consisting of both classroom and field work, with players learning both offence and defence."

● Follow RAF NFL on Instagram @rafamericanfootball.

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Enduro trail blazers

FIVE STAGES of tough mountain biking and three top finishes were the Service's return from the British National Enduro Series Round one at Machynlleth in west Wales.

The event was held over five fast and challenging forest trails: Star Wars, Deck the Halls, Funfactor 10, Funfactor 10.5 and Red Bull Foxhunt.

WO Adam Fieldsend came second in the Hardtail Category,

Flt Lt Stu Bell sixth in the E Nike Veterans class and Cpl Gareth Hernamen was ninth in the Masters.

Gravity MTB secretary Flt Lt Stu McCarthy said: "The race was run over a 22km loop with 840m of elevation, testing every bit of skill, endurance and focus.

"Stages had to be raced in order to record an overall time. A huge shout out to everyone who raced or supported us."



ROOT OF ALL EVIL: Trees on thin soil made for tricky conditions for riders



BOXING

Sweet taste of success for Three Peaks boxers... and RAFA

RAF BOXERS fuelled by jam sandwiches took 23 hours to conquer the Three-Peaks challenge, raising £3,423 for RAFA.

Spokesman Sgt Ben Baily said: "Every year, RAF Boxing takes on a new challenge in an attempt to raise money for the RAF Association.

"RAFA supports RAF Boxing every year with a healthy amount of sponsorship, alongside all the fantastic work they do to support the wider RAF family, so, it is only fitting that we take the opportunity to return that backing.

"This year, we chose to take on the National 3 Peaks Challenge, tackling Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon – 23 miles of hiking, up 3,408m of elevation and 450 miles of driving, all within 24 hours."

The team of 12 RAF Boxing association members left Fox Barracks in Chester to begin the challenge with Ben Nevis, before moving on to Scafell Pike and Snowdon.

Following a three-hour drive to Ben Nevis the team completed the 16km climb in five hours.

A five-hour drive to Scafell Pike followed, with the team refuelling on jam sandwiches and electrolytes. Donning head torches, they battled lost time and a turn in the weather to complete the climb in less than four hours.

Travelling to Snowdon through the early hours of the morning, the team – who had been awake for more than 24 hours – were struggling with blisters and muscle soreness.

Baily added: "Fuelled by sugar and caffeine, we made the final hard push up the Pyg track and summited Snowdon, our third peak, around 23 hours after we started.

"A fantastic effort from the team despite various hurdles along the way, that made it far from an easy task."

● Follow RAF Boxing in Instagram @rafboxing.



WE'VE PEAKED: RAF Boxing members at summit of Snowdon

5 RAF Sport

pages of



Rugby's most capped signs off

See page 23



French join the gridiron flagstaff

See page 26

FOOTBALL

Dutch courage in shoot-out heroics

RAF pair get UKAF out of an Amster-jam in President's Cup

Daniel Abrahams

A FOUR-GOAL thriller and a penalty shoot-out saw UKAF's women footballers secure back-to-back President's Cup wins over the Dutch Air Force in Amsterdam.

The Service team had heroines all over the pitch as they retained the title in the 2-2 clash – from goalkeeper AS1 Jamie-Lee Bamford saving a brace of penalties, to opening goal scorer AS1 Shaunna Jenkins, who, having missed the final spot kick to lose to the Dutch three years ago in Havant, stepped up to net the winning penalty to dash Dutch hopes.

Head coach FS Karl Milgate said: "It would have been nice to win it during the game. We felt having gone a goal up twice and conceding two soft goals, to lose on penalties at the end would have been tough for the players to take.

"We had a great week together and to retain the Cup, especially overseas, is nice."

He added: "We had 10 out of 18 in our squad from the RAF, so to be able to combine players with five IS wins under their belts, with the best players from the Army and Royal Navy, we knew we had a winning set-up."

Determination sparked UKAF's opener as Jenkins chased



THRILLER: Both sides had their chances. Inset below, UKAF lift the Cup

down to the dead-ball line before turning back inside and beating the Dutch keeper on her near post.

UKAF could not hold on, letting the Dutch back in to level, before Cpl Pip Wilson put them back in the lead after 71 minutes.

Once again, the hosts levelled, capitalising on some soft defending, before missing a gilt-edged chance late on to win it.

Bamford came to the rescue then, and she would do it again minutes later as the game went to penalties to decide the outcome.

With captain Sgt Cat Beaver

missing the first kick from the spot, UKAF could have been forgiven for letting nerves take over, but Bamford levelled things up saving the next spot kick, before going on to seal it with the second save, with Jenkins slotting home to win it.

Speaking about her opener and winning penalty, Jenkins said: "I chased the ball down, there was a square pass on, or I could take the chance myself, I took it and thankfully it worked out."

She added: "Scoring the winning penalty, last time I took one I missed, so it makes it all the better to see it hit the back of the net and win it."

● Follow UKAF women's football on Instagram @ukaffootball.



WINNING RUN: RAF's Cpl Tom Shorthouse PHOTO: LT CDR SP ROSTER RN

RAF take IST20 in 9-wicket win

CRICKET

THE RAF finally scratched their seven-year IST20 itch, winning the title for the first time since 2018 at Lord's with a crushing defeat of the Royal Navy.

The nine-wicket win at the Home of Cricket came after the aviators had blasted their way to victory in the tournament opener at the Utilita Bowl, Hampshire over the Army.

RAF Captain Flt Lt Adam Fisher described his team's batting display as 'awesome'.

He said: "We have great depth and some outstanding players, that really came to the fore this year and we managed to get over the line.

"We only lost three wickets all tournament, and we really found the split matches, playing a few days apart, worked well for us.

"Everyone wants to play at Lord's twice, but it's a tough ask. We benefited from the break. You have to adapt to two different grounds, which we did well, and the lads

● Continued on p25



ISSN 0035-8614



22

9 770035 861068

British Enduro Round One

See page 27

R'n'R

VICKI BEEBY
High Hopes
for the
Bomber Girls



Win!

Win whole set
of Bomber Girls
novels ● p 5

**Blitz: the club
that shaped
the 80s**

● 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



Museums

Blitz: the club that shaped the 80s

Design Museum, Sept 20 to March 29, 2026

The other London Blitz

THE LEGENDARY London nightclub Blitz, known as 'the club that shaped the 80s' is the subject of a major exhibition at the capital's Design Museum opening this autumn.

Despite its short lifespan – running for just 18 months from 1979-1980 in London's Covent Garden – the club generated a creative scene that had an enormous global impact on popular culture in the decade that followed: from fashion and music, to film, art and design.

The scene launched the careers of many stars, including chart-topping performers Spandau Ballet, Visage, Boy George and Marilyn, as well as a long list of designers, artists, filmmakers and writers – from couture milliner Stephen Jones and *Game of Thrones* costume designer Michele Clapton, to DJ and fashion writer Princess Julia and BBC broadcaster Robert Elms.

Danielle Thom, the exhibition's curator, said: "It's remarkable that so much of 1980s pop culture can be traced back to the Blitz scene. That the club night only ran for little over a year but shaped a whole decade is really astonishing, and so 45 years on feels like the right time to explore the club's enduring legacy in a major exhibition, as well as its continued impact today."

"This wasn't just a club night. It was the scene from which a decade was born."



ALTERNATIVE CROWD: Vivienne Lynn, Boy George, Chris Sullivan, Kim Bowen, Theresa Thurmer, and a Blitz attendee, 1980. © Derek Ridgers c/o Unravel Productions

In London in 1979 – at the tail end of Punk and at the start of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's decade in power – a small but influential group of young creatives came together every Tuesday at the Blitz wine bar in Covent Garden.

A Design Museum spokesperson explained: "Co-hosted by Steve Strange and Rusty Egan, this weekly club night drew a daring, restless new generation. They rejected both the conformity of mainstream culture and the rigidity of



LEGENDARY CLUB: Outside Blitz in Covent Garden in 1979

PHOTO: SHEILA ROCK

existing subcultures, and instead pushed the boundaries of taste with their outrageous fashions and futuristic music."

The house band was Spandau Ballet, the cloakroom attendant was Boy George and singer Marilyn was a regular.

Founders Strange and Egan formed Visage with fellow club

goer Midge Ure. Elms, Perry Haines, who co-founded i-D magazine, and Chris Sullivan of Blue Rondo à la Turk were spotted in the crowds.

Blitz: the club that shaped the 80s, which runs from September 20 to March 29, 2026 – will feature more than 250 items, including clothing and accessories, design

sketches, musical instruments, flyers, magazines, furniture, artworks, photography, vinyl records and rare film footage.

● **Go to:** designmuseum.org for booking details.

FRONT COVER PHOTO: Stephen Linard at the Blitz, about 1980. Robyn Beeche Foundation.



Film

The Seed of the Sacred Fig (15)

Out now on Blu-ray and DVD (Dazzler Media)

Win!

The seed of rebellion

THE SEED of the Sacred Fig follows Imam (Missagh Zareh), a father in Tehran promoted to investigator for the revolutionary court just as the 2022-23 anti-theocratic protests begin to escalate. The role brings prestige but places his family in danger, and reveals a growing divide within their home.

Directed by the defiantly political Mohammad Rasoulof, who was sentenced to eight years in prison after completing the film, *The Seed of the Sacred Fig* is not just a work of cinema but an act of resistance (Rasoulof has since fled Iran.)

The film, like Imam's wife

and two teenage daughters, is largely confined to the home. The daughters' access to the outside world comes through their phones – Instagram reels of real protest footage that reveal both the hope and brutality of the uprisings. These clash starkly with the sanitised state news, exposing the dissonance between official narratives and lived experience.

At the core is a generational rift. Imam is devout, rigid in his belief in God's law, while his daughters (Mahsa Rostami and Setareh Maleki) crave self-expression. Their mother, played with quiet power by Soheila Golestani, is caught



FAMILY STRIFE IN IRAN: Gun given to Imam (Missagh Zareh) is discovered by his worried wife, played by Soheila Golestani

in the middle, protective yet bewildered by her daughters' defiance.

Though Imam's work mostly happens off screen, the toll it takes is visible. He is made to rule swiftly on hundreds of cases involving protestors – even children and the elderly. Given a gun for protection, he begins leaving it around the house, distracted and worn down. When the gun disappears, the film turns into a domestic

thriller. Imam turns on his family, and mistrust swells. The home becomes a mirror of the violence outside – a place of paranoia, surveillance, and rebellion.

The Seed of the Sacred Fig is a brave, tightly wound political drama. Though its final act loses focus, it remains a vital portrait of a family – and a nation – in crisis.

3 out of 5 roundels ●●●
Review by Sam Cooney

Win the DVD

SHOT ENTIRELY in secret, *The Seed of the Sacred Fig* was nominated for the prestigious Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival, ultimately winning the Special Jury Prize and FIPRESCI Award for writer-director Mohammad Rasoulof.

You could win a copy of this important political drama on DVD. To be in with a chance of winning one, tell us: **Who directed The Seed of the Sacred Fig?** Email your answer, marked Seed of the Sacred

Fig 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 June 27.





Galleries
Tate Britain

Lee Miller (Oct 2, 2025 to Feb 15, 2026)



Lee Miller, Model Elizabeth Cowell wearing Digby Morton suit, London 1941. Lee Miller Archives. © Lee Miller Archives, England 2025. All rights reserved. leemiller.co.uk

Tate Britain features trailblazer Lee Miller

THIS AUTUMN, Tate Britain will present the UK's largest retrospective of pioneering war correspondent and photographer Lee Miller.

A spokesperson said: "The exhibition will reveal how her innovative and fearless approach pushed the boundaries of photography, producing some of the most iconic images of the modern era.

"Around 230 vintage and modern prints, including works on display for the first time, will be presented alongside unseen archival material and ephemera, shining a light on the richness of her photographic legacy."

Born in 1907 in Poughkeepsie, New York State, Miller initially studied painting and stage design, but her time as a professional model inspired her to pursue photography. *Lee Miller*, which runs from October 2 to February 15, 2026, will trace her journey from modelling in New York, where she was photographed by celebrated figures like Cecil Beaton, to working behind the lens in Paris, where she moved in 1929.

There she began working with the surrealist Man Ray and also apprenticed at French *Vogue*, establishing her own commercial photographic studio.

Returning to New York in 1932, she set up Lee Miller Studios Inc. and opened her first solo exhibition. She moved to Cairo in 1934 and Tate Britain will include

her depictions of contemporary Cairo, the Egyptian desert, and travels across rural Syria and Romania, some of which have never previously been exhibited.

By this point in her career, Miller had a sprawling transnational network of friends, and the exhibition will present her playful portraits of artists, writers, actors and filmmakers, including Charlie Chaplin and Leonora Carrington.

When war broke out Miller moved to London and quickly became a leading fashion photographer for *British Vogue*. The exhibition will showcase her inventive body of work made in Blitz-torn London. She went on to become one of the few accredited female war correspondents, documenting not only women's contributions on the home front, but also harrowing scenes from the frontline, as well as the devastation and deprivation in post-liberation communities across France, Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium, Denmark, Austria, Hungary and Romania.

The spokesperson added: "The show will also include the portraits of Miller and David E. Scherman in Hitler's private bath in April 1945. A radical performative gesture staged directly after the pair returned from photographing the Dachau concentration camp, these are considered to be some of the most extraordinary images of the 20th century."

● Go to: tate.org.uk for further details.



Festivals
Folk at the Oak

Hatfield Park, Sunday, July 20

Take the lit

Parkland music festival is *very* family friendly

AN UPLIFTING summer day of the finest folk, roots and acoustic music, Folk by the Oak delivers a family-friendly, relaxed vibe alongside the full-on festival experience.

Returning to their tree-lined arena in Hatfield Park on Sunday, July 20, the festival's 2025 Main Stage line-up headliners are Ivor Novello Award nominees Bear's Den, renowned for their anthemic songs, accomplished musicianship, flowing melodies and engaging lyrics.

Kate Rusby

Also on the bill are Mercury Prize Winner and six-times BBC Radio 2 Folk Award Winner the 'First Lady of Folk' Kate Rusby, a consummate performer with a warm, Yorkshire wit and unprecedented cross-over appeal, plus Fisherman's Friends, the merry band of shanty singing fishermen and their friends who became world-famous thanks to the blockbuster self-titled feature films inspired by their story.

Headlining the Acorn Stage is neo-trad trio Project Smok. A band renowned for joyous, high energy performances that effortlessly blend trad music with contemporary new-age pop influences, they promise to close the festival's second stage in style.

Overall there are 12 bands to enjoy at Folk by the Oak and,

thanks to the festival's unique schedule and clever layout of two stages in one beautiful, parkland arena, you can catch every single set. There's even a dedicated family area within sight and sound of the Main Stage, with most of the activities free of charge, making the festival a truly family-friendly day out for music lovers.

Car parking is also free, but the organisers encourage everyone to consider car-sharing or going by train. The festival entrance is just a 10-minute walk from Hatfield Station, which is served by regular Great Northern trains from King's Cross and Moorgate in central London.

You can book direct (where there's no hidden booking fees) and view the full line-up at: folkbytheoak.com, or enter our not-to-be-missed competition to win a family pass to this fabulous festival.

Win a family ticket

To be in with a chance of winning a family pass (worth £157), answer this question correctly:

How many times has Kate Rusby won the BBC Radio 2 Folk Award?

Email your answer to: info@folkbytheoak.com, subject: RAF NEWS FBTO COMPETITION, by June 27, 2025 (*see below for terms and conditions).



KATE
RUSBY:
The First
Lady of
Folk

HEADLINERS:
Bear's Den

*Please note entries must be sent by email so that your family pass can be sent out electronically. By entering the competition, you agree to subscribe to Folk by the Oak e-marketing database. JSL Productions will never share your personal data with third-parties who intend to use it for their own purposes without your consent.

Edited by Tracey Allen

Win!

ttle folk



GREAT SETTING:
Hatfield
Park in
Herts



Competition terms & conditions

You can unsubscribe at any time using the unsubscribe option on JSL Productions marketing emails. Winners will be selected at random on June 27, 2025 and notified by email. Tickets are

transferable but cannot be exchanged for any other goods. Winners agree to abide by concert and estate rules. Please email: info@folkbytheoak.com for full competition T&Cs.



Books

High Hopes for the Bomber Girls
canelo.co

Win!

One final mission for WAAF Jenny and the Bomber Girls

SHE'S BACK – WAAF Jenny Hazleton, one of the heroines of historical novelist Vicky Beeby's popular *Bomber Girls* books – returns this month for the much-anticipated final instalment of the feel-good World War II saga.

Beeby's new novel, *High Hopes for the Bomber Girls* (canelo.co), completes the quartet of titles that includes *The Girls of Bomber Command*, *A Wedding for the Bomber Girls* and *Christmas for the Bomber Girls*.

Although peace is on the horizon, Jenny's keen weather forecasting allows the pilots to continue their missions, including food drops to starving allies and the repatriation of prisoners of war.

Navigating many of these missions is Fg Off Edwin Holland, whose rejection of Jenny's advances at Christmas still stings. Edwin is increasingly haunted by his role in the



war, including the bombing of Dresden, and she yearns to comfort him.

But when he reveals the shocking reason he turned her down, she must decide if their

friendship is well and truly over.

After a local young woman is found dead under suspicious circumstances, Jenny and Edwin come together to track down the killer. Can they rebuild their friendship – and can they ever be more than just friends? Or are the scars of war too deep to truly heal?

High Hopes for the Bomber Girls, is out on June 19 and three lucky readers can win a full set of all four of the *Bomber Girls* titles.

To be in with a chance of winning these inspiring reads tell us:

What is Edwin Holland's rank?

Email your answer, marked Bomber Girls books 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 June 27. Please include your full postal address with your entry.



Theatre

Murder at Midnight
UK tour

Keep an eye out for The Cyclops

A UK tour of new thriller *Murder at Midnight* starring stage and screen favourites Jason Durr, Susie Blake and Max Bowden kicks off this autumn.

The play, by Torben Betts (*Murder in the Dark*), featuring familiar faces Durr (*Heartbeat*, *Casualty*), Blake (*Victoria Wood as seen on TV*, *Coronation Street*) and Bowden (*Birdsong*, *EastEnders*), will be directed by Philip Franks (*Murder in the Dark*, *The Mousetrap*).

It is produced by the award-winning Original Theatre, whose previous productions include Agatha Christie's *The Mirror Crack'd*, and the critically acclaimed *Birdsong*.

Murder at Midnight is set on New Year's Eve in rural Kent, and Jonny 'The Cyclops' has decided to throw a party. But amidst the drinking, music and fireworks exploding overhead, a twisted trail of destruction emerges. As midnight looms, tarot cards foretell doom, police lights flash in the distance and a killer is in the house. Everyone's hiding something – but who's telling the truth?

Bowden said: "I'm excited to begin working on this ambitious



FAMILIAR FACES: Jason Durr, Susie Blake and Max Bowden star in *Murder at Midnight*

new dark comedy from a writer and a team I admire greatly. It's a new challenge and an exciting shift for my career, and I'm looking forward to working with Original Theatre again."

Franks added: "*Murder at Midnight* is a dark and often very funny thriller set in the luxury Kent mansion of a one-eyed drug dealer, pig farmer and possible gangland killer, 'Jonny The Cyclops'. At midnight on New Year's Eve his past is catching up with him fast. It's Feydeau rewritten by Tarantino."

The tour of *Murder at Midnight* will play Derby Theatre

(September 5–13), Birmingham Rep (Sept 16–20), Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham (Sept 23–27), Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford (Sept 30–Oct 4), Malvern Theatres (Oct 7–11), Palace Theatre, Southend (Oct 13–18), York Theatre Royal (Oct 21–25), Devonshire Park Theatre, Eastbourne (Oct 27–31), New Theatre, Cardiff (Nov 4–8), Fareham Live (Nov 18–22) and Churchill Theatre Bromley (Nov 25–29), with further dates to be announced.

● **Go to: murderplay.com for more information and to book tickets.**



Your Announcements

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

Seeking

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 get-together sometime 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

45TH Entry RAF Hereford Suppliers. 63rd Reunion June 27-28 at Barns Hotel, Cannock. Contact Dave Bell, Hull: 01482 377625.

12 ex 72nd Entry Aircraft Apprentices (RAF Locking) will meet on the weekend July 25-27 to celebrate the passing of 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 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. BMMF & IBCC trips planned for during the day with a formal dinner on the evening of October 1. 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: www.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.

28TH entry RAF Cosford, June 1956 to November 1957. Trade Group 19. How many of us left? Contact: David Slough. d.slough@outlook.com

Associations

THE Southend Group of the National Service (RAF) Association holds its next Social Lunch on June 25 at the Castle Hadleigh, Essex at 1pm. Guest speaker will be Wg Cdr (Ret'd) Neil Tomlin, Area Director of the RAF Benevolent Fund. All RAF veterans and guests are welcome. Contact Area Organiser Ron Spack: 01268 779697 for more information.

THE Association of RAF Regiment WOs and SNCOs will be celebrating their 50th anniversary at various events throughout 2025. The Association was formed at RAF Catterick, on September 13, 1975, and membership is open to all serving and retired WOs and SNCOs of the RAF Regiment, together with WOs and SNCOs

of other trades, who served on the posted strength of a formed RAF Regt unit. Membership of this association is free. The 2025 AGM and Reunion event will take place from Monday, September 29 to Thursday, October 2, at The Parsonage Hotel and Spa, Escrick, York. For further information visit the association website (currently under construction) at: rafregtwoandsnco.org.uk or contact: honsecretary@rafregtwoandsnco.org.uk

591 SU Association. In its 72nd year of existence, 591 Signal Unit has established an Association (better late than never!). Its aim is to foster esprit de corps and comradeship, to promote and maintain the ethos and heritage of this incredible Signals Unit. Ex-members and currently serving ex members of 591 SU are invited to visit the Association's website at: 591suassociation.co.uk for membership details and news of the next annual reunion along with other upcoming events for 2025

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

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

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 across heritage sites in the county. The sites will include Wickenby Aerodrome, Scampton Church and the International Bomber Command Centre. Go to: rafbf.org for more details.



HONOUR: RAF Valley aviators took part in the celebration of a historic milestone

Valley joins Bangor parade

MILITARY PERSONNEL from RAF Valley, the 1st Battalion Royal Welsh, the Welsh Guards and 106 Medical Squadron Reservists took part in a special parade last month to celebrate the 1500th anniversary of the city of Bangor in North Wales.

The Army Band from Catterick provided music to mark the event, with veterans and cadets also marching in the parade.

L/Cpl Shenkin, the Royal Welsh Regiment's goat, led the procession through the city following his Army ration of a pint of Guinness.

Gp Capt Gez Currie, Valley's Station Commander, said: "It was a terrific honour for all those on parade to take part in this historic milestone for Bangor and a great privilege for those serving at RAF Valley to be part of this special occasion."

The parade was reviewed by the Mayor of Bangor, Councillor Gareth Parry. Brigadier Mark Davis, commander of the 160th (Welsh) Brigade, was joined at the town clock saluting point by Gp Capt Currie and senior Army and RAF officers from London, Tidworth and Cardiff.

BoB memorial service

EACH YEAR the Royal Air Force commemorates the Battle of Britain and those who flew and fought in the air and on the ground, at a service in Westminster Abbey.

The RAF Ceremonial Office is seeking to improve its knowledge of this unique demographic and to offer places at the formal Battle of Britain Thanksgiving and Rededication Service.

This year's service is planned for Sunday, September 21, and in subsequent years.

We would very much like to hear from the widows, family descendants and any other family members of those who participated in the Battle. If you are a family member, or know someone who is, please write to: Mrs Michele

Small, Ceremonial Office, Bentley Priory Building, RAF Northolt, Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 6NG, providing details of your relationship to your relative who served in the RAF between July and October 1940 and your email address and a contact phone number.

Additionally, for the purpose of allocating tickets, please also send your full name, home address, date and place of birth, and passport or driving licence number (at any time and without notice or justification the RAF reserves the right to void tickets and refuse entry to Westminster Abbey before or on the day).

This information is also required for any additional guests who wish to attend the Service with you – thank you.

How to use our service

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

Important Notice

The publishers of *RAF News* cannot accept responsibility for the quality, safe delivery or operation of any products advertised or mentioned in this publication.

Reasonable precautions are taken before advertisements are accepted but such acceptance does not imply any form of approval or recommendation. Advertisements (or other inserted material) are accepted subject to the approval of the publishers and their current terms and conditions. The publishers will accept an advertisement or other inserted material only on the condition that the advertiser warrants that such advertisement does not in any way contravene the provisions of the Trade Descriptions Act.

All copy is subject to the approval of the publishers, who reserve the right to refuse, amend, withdraw or otherwise deal with advertisements submitted to them at their absolute discretion and without explanation.

All advertisements must comply with the British Code of Advertising Practice. Mail order advertisers are required to state in advertisements their true surname or full company name, together with an address from which the business is managed.



Your Announcements

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

Olympian comes to Marham



INSPIRING: Fatima Whitbread, centre, with RAF Marham and Starz Fostering C.I.C. personnel

OLYMPIAN Fatima Whitbread visited RAF Marham to talk about growing up in the care system and her career as an elite athlete.

The retired javelin thrower spoke about her life in sport, Games medals, breaking world records and her time on reality shows such as *Come Dine With Me* and *SAS Who Dares Wins*.

She also discussed her childhood growing up in foster care and meeting the family who later adopted her.

An attendee said: "I found Fatima's story incredibly inspiring."

"The way she opened up was so

raw and honest and compelling."

And Starz Fostering C.I.C., a local non-profit fostering agency, gave a presentation on how to become a foster family, explaining the process step by step.

A military family spokesperson said: "We have considered fostering, but with the reality of us moving around every few years we believed we would be turned down."

"But after hearing the process broken down into steps and how military families can still offer children stability and security, it has given us that reassurance we needed to move forward and consider fostering in the future."

Museum hosts careers days

THE BRITISH Motor Museum in Gaydon, Warwickshire, will host three STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Careers Days later this month with engineering experts from Capgemini, the global leader in consulting, technology services and engineering.

The events, on June 24, 25 and 26, will include a range of interactive STEM-based activities for secondary school pupils and young people in home education.

"On June 24 students can follow the journey of designing a car from initial sketches to aerodynamic testing. This full-day event is aimed specifically at secondary school girls in years 7 to 10, and features exclusive access to industry experts, curriculum-linked activities and inspiring stories of women in STEM," said a museum spokesperson.

"On June 25 secondary students in years 7 to 10 can come along to an immersive problem-solving event, ideal for both boys and girls with an interest in science, engineering and design," the spokesperson added.



RIDING HIGH: School students take a seat in a 1909 Albion at the Museum

On June 26, 11 to 15-year-olds can explore the fascinating process of car design, with activities led by real engineers including experts from Capgemini.

Claire Broader, from the Museum's Learning and Engagement Team, said: "We're delighted to be once again hosting our STEM Careers Days, which were incredibly popular and successful last year."

"We're really passionate about

supporting the next generation of technicians, engineers and scientists."

"We believe that whatever your background or strengths, the world of STEM has something to offer everyone."

To continue their learning at home or school, students will also receive a goody bag containing two STEM activities, including a salt-powered car kit to take away.

● Go to: britishmotormuseum.co.uk for more information.

ROYAL AIR FORCE

RAF News

The Forces Favourite Read

Hit your target market with **RAF News** - the official newspaper of the Royal Air Force since 1961.

Reaching an audience of more than 50,000 readers every fortnight, **RAF News** is the Forces' favourite newspaper delivering exclusive news, features and sports action from across UK Defence.

To discuss your advertising in **RAF News** please call or email:
T: +44 (0)7482 571535
E: edwin.rodrigues@rafnews.co.uk

RAF News

The official voice of the Royal Air Force

R'n'R



Crossword

No. 387

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

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.



Su Doku

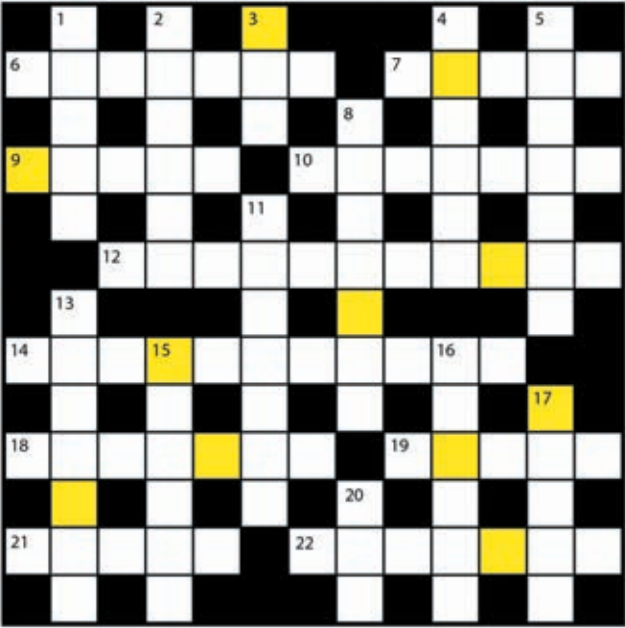
No. 397

Across

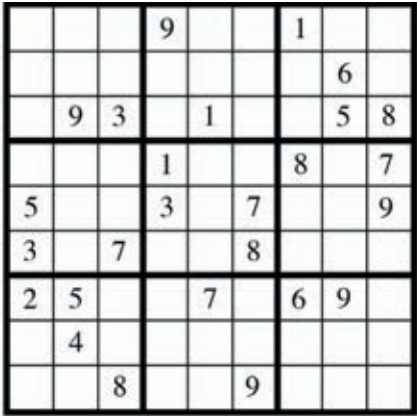
- 6. RAF bomb may cover road (7)
- 7. Bury Italian football team (5)
- 9. In daze, Bradley spots striper (5)
- 10. The Few cut Capone (7)
- 12. Thrums doors disturbing uncrewed aircraft (11)
- 14. World leader on RAF plane (11)
- 18. See 3 Down
- 19. It reached 80 recently (2,3)
- 21. A simple character, I'm embraced by Cain, say (5)
- 22. Southern fish run furtively (7)

Down

- 1. Evil Queen meets RAF legend (5)
- 2. Mourn right bird (6)
- 3. And 18 Across. Franc loafs around display team (3,7)
- 4. Dressed and driving (2,4)
- 5. Winged horse on military aircraft (7)
- 8. Upset Penny's sister but carry on (7)
- 11. Falsely accusing wronged RAF dynasty (7)
- 13. Another country after Scotland upsets Ian (7)
- 15. Entice Ken Cob to change (6)
- 16. What a pilot in trouble has to do (6)
- 17. At end of November, friend attends mass meeting (5)
- 20. First aircraft could provoke radar-jamming drone (3)



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. 396

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

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

RAF station: Crossword No. 387

Solution to Crossword No. 386

Across – 1. Spud 8. Icebreaker 9. Hercules 10. Weep 12. Stocky 14. Nimrod 15. Glance 17. Renege 18. Jane 19. Highmast 21. Hurricanes 22. Side Down – 2. Potentilla 3. Disc 4. Healey 5. Prison 6. Batwoman 7. Drip 11. Enough Said 13. Canberra 16. Ethics 17. Regent 18. John 20. Miss RAF plane: *Hornet*



Books

Nuclear Copper
amberley-books.com



Secrets of the nuclear police force

MATTHEW OKUHARA joined the Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) shortly after its creation in 2005. Now he has written *Nuclear Copper, The Secret World of Nuclear Policing* (amberley-books.com) that delves into the fascinating and covert world of armed nuclear policing.

In the book the veil of secrecy surrounding nuclear policing is lifted, and readers are granted a rare glimpse into the clandestine world of safeguarding nuclear assets.

Working hand-in-hand with international partners, PC Okuhara's experiences are not confined to his home country. The narrative includes collaborative efforts with special forces, the French Marines and the Japanese Coastguard. These international partnerships bring

unique challenges and cultural dynamics, but also a shared purpose.

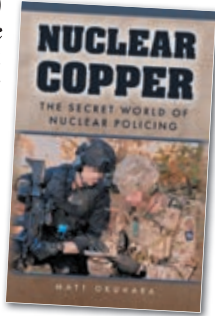
The author reveals untold stories that shed light on the meticulous planning and intricate operations that underpin nuclear policing. The risks are omnipresent, and the consequences of failure are unthinkable. From identifying potential threats to uncovering covert attempts at nuclear espionage, the officers of the CNC navigate a world where precision, adaptability and resolve are essential qualities.

Before joining the CNC Okuhara served in the British Army and then the police. He now lives and works in Japan as an interpreter and martial artist for a samurai display team.

We have copies of this absorbing book to win. To be in with a chance of winning one, tell us:

When did Matthew Okuhara join the CNC?

Email your answer, marked Nuclear Copper book, 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 June 27.



Music

James Morrison
Fight Another Day

James is up for the fight



THE CHART-TOPPING, multiple-Platinum, BRIT Award winner James Morrison is set to release his sixth album *Fight Another Day* on October 3.

It's his first new record in six years and it's just been announced that he will headline four UK dates in Birmingham, Glasgow, Manchester and London this September.

The new release is an album born of difficult times and heavy emotions but one that, ultimately, leans into the light and joy and hope, explained the singer-songwriter.

"When I leaned into how I was feeling, that's when the songs started coming. I started writing about what I was going through. My own struggles with myself. Every day being a bit of a battle. Trying to eke the light out after what felt like darkness for ages.

"I'm really proud of the album in terms of the creative, sonic elements and how I dealt with truthful stuff. But also, it's an album of songs that hopefully make you feel better and make you nod your head and stamp your feet and sing along," he said.

The title track proved to be the song that set the emotions for the rest of the album to follow, making it a natural choice for a first single.

Morrison added: "It just sums up what the record is. It's about reminding yourself what's good. About convincing yourself you've got enough strength to keep the fight going."

Go to: jamesmorrisonmusic.com for more information.

MORRISON:
New album
out soon