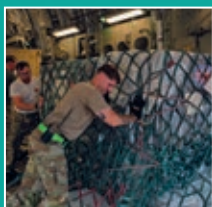


**The Forces' favourite paper**

**Brize Norton's movers always deliver**  
● See page 10



**A hit show inspired by the music of Bob Dylan**  
● See R'n'R page 5



**ROYAL AIR FORCE**

Friday, July 25, 2025  
Edition No.1613

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# RAF News

**Harrier vet Harv Smyth lands Air Force top job**

See page 5



**Shooting**  
**Palace date for hotshot**



● See page 23

**Sailing**  
**Wave of optimism**



● See page p24

**Waterskiing**  
**The RAF Champs**



● See page p27

## Storm rising

**UK Forces prepare for 'new era' of war**



**Simon Mander**

THE CHIEF of the Air Staff says UK Forces must prepare for

a new era of high-tech warfare to counter the growing threats in Europe and the Indo Pacific. Speaking at the Air and Space

Chiefs' annual conference ACM Sir Rich Knighton said: "We can no longer wait to find out what we know and then adapt when

the war starts. Our people need to be ready for the next storm rising."

● See pp14-15 for full story



BiteSize

“Sir Rich Knighton has achieved so much over the last two years,”

CAS designate  
AM Harv  
Smyth  
See p5



“It’s in the sweet spot of my teenage cultural experience,”

Mathew  
Horne is a  
music mogul  
in new  
Britpop play  
*The Battle*  
See R’n’R p4



“I did a demolition job on him,”

RAF  
Boxing  
pro Cpl  
Brad Axe  
on his  
return  
from  
injury  
See p26



GCAP build underway



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Staff Reporter

WORK BUILDING the flying prototype of the UK’s first sixth generation fighter is underway and RAF and industry test pilots have already flown more than 300 hours in a simulator designed to support the project. Manufacturing of the first demonstrator at BAE’s Lancashire plant BAE Systems is using cutting-edge techniques including 3D printing, ‘cobotics’ and model-based systems engineering. Known as the Global Combat Air Programme, it is a trilateral project with Japan and Italy and is expected to be delivered in a decade. The demonstrator will be a fully piloted aircraft which will be used to test the engineering and aviation concepts in live flying trials. Data generated in the simulator will be used to assess the aircraft’s handling and flight systems ahead of its first flight, expected within three years.

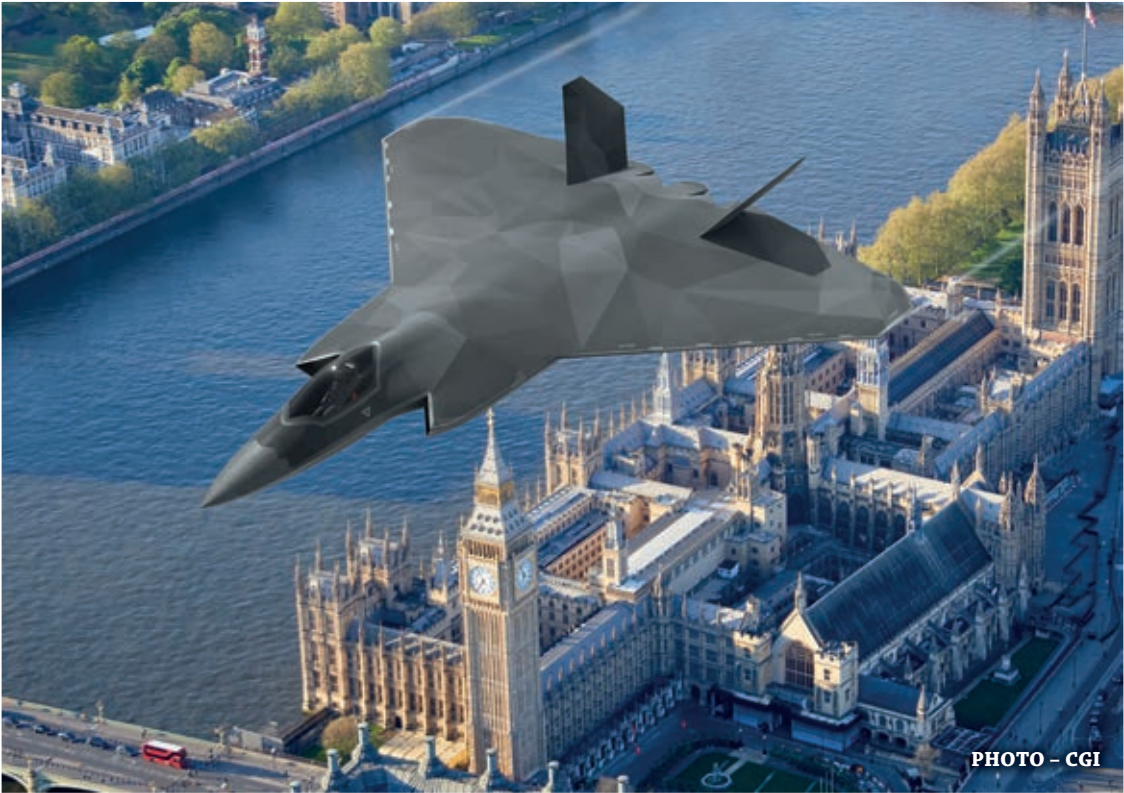


PHOTO - CGI

This Week In History



1954  
Hunter arrives

THE SINGLE-SEAT Hawker Hunter enters RAF service with 43 Sqn at RAF Leuchars in Fife.

1943  
Sicily raids

SPITFIRES REPEL a Luftwaffe attempt to reinforce troops in Sicily, shooting down 24 Junker Ju52 transport aircraft and four Messerschmitt 109 fighters.



1995  
Harriers deployed

HARRIER GR7S deploy to Gioia del Colle in southern Italy, carrying out ground attack and reconnaissance duties against Serbian targets in Bosnia Herzegovina.

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





LEAVING THEIR MARK: RAF Tornado on RAF Ellamy mission in 2011 and, below left, Flt Lt Nick Cogley with Royal Saudi Air Force officer

Flt Lt Cogley's final Saudi sortie crowns 32-year career

# Tornado 'farewell'

Simon Mander

A FIGHTER pilot has completed the last RAF-crewed Tornado sortie.

Top Gun Flt Lt Nick Cogley, who is set to leave the Service, is now on secondment to BAe in Saudi Arabia, and chose the mission to crown a 32-year career including more than 5,500 flying hours.

Known as 'Coggers' he has flown the Tornado GR1, Hawk and completed more than 520 hours on Jaguar.

He said: "This is believed to be the last ever Tornado sortie crewed by a member of the RAF.

"I earned my wings in July 1995 and wanted to fly single-seat fast jets, which

led to a cherished tour on the Jaguar.

"But I returned to the Tornado GR4 in 2010, completing 208 operational missions over Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan and Libya.

"My final flight on an RAF squadron was in support of Operation Shader in May 2018."

Much of Flt Lt Cogley's career involved his secondment to the Royal Saudi Air Force in Dhahran, where he served as an instructor pilot on the Tornado interdiction strike variant.

He taught on all three RSAF Tornado squadrons – 7 Sqn, 75 Sqn and 83 Sqn – and amassed 1,000 hours, bringing his total hours on all Tornado types to over 3,200.

MODSAP deputy head of



programmes Gp Capt Chris Ball said: "Flt Lt Cogley's role in Saudi Arabia perfectly illustrates the success of the project, which originated from the Al-Yamamah agreement in the 1980s involving the sale of Tornados to Saudi Arabia.

"Under the MODSAP umbrella many experienced personnel provide crucial training and support to the Royal Saudi Air Force, whilst simultaneously enjoying with their families the vibrant culture, travel opportunities and reward package offered."

The Defence partnership will be supporting Tornado for several more years, Typhoon, officer and aircrew training, and additional programmes.



REDS: Will be joined by BBMF aircraft for flypast

## Nation will honour VJ Day troops

THE RED Arrows will join historic Spitfire and Hurricane aircraft for a flypast over national VJ Day commemorations next month.

And the public are encouraged to participate in a national two-minute silence on August 15 to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II.

A Service of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, broadcast live on BBC1 from midday, will honour those who fought and died in the Far East.

It will host a tribute to veterans involving an RAF guard of honour, military bands and a flypast by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

Following peace in Europe, thousands of British and Commonwealth military personnel continued to fight Japanese forces in Asia and the Pacific for a further three months.

The service is a ticketed event, but members of the public visiting the Arboretum can watch it on large screens at a nearby public viewing area.

Defence Secretary John Healey said: "VJ Day was the final victory in a war that changed the world, and we honour those who served in the Far East with enduring gratitude."

Royal British Legion director general Mark Atkinson said: "It was so moving to see the nation come together for VE80 and putting veterans at the heart of these commemorations – now we have one of our last chances to honour all those VJ Day veterans whose service and sacrifice finally brought an end to the war."

The national commemorations start with a reception with veterans, and government buildings and High Commissions across the globe will also be lit up.

In addition, Imperial War Museums will be screening *I Saw The World End*, a digital public artwork, in Piccadilly Circus on August 6 to commemorate the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



NORTHOLT: Prince William greets President Macron with Princess Catherine, opposite

## KCS honour guard for French President

PERSONNEL FROM The King's Colour Squadron gave the French premier a red carpet welcome during his state visit.

Gunners lined the route as President Macron walked off his aircraft to greet the Prince and Princess of Wales and the station commander of RAF Northolt.

He moved on to Windsor Castle to be greeted by The King, accompanied by the RAF's Central Band, who played the French national anthem.

A total of 1,000 personnel from all three Services were involved in the three-day visit, with 650 of them on parade in the Berkshire town.

The visit came as French paratroopers prepared to jump into the skies above RAF Brize Norton using UK kit, under the watchful eyes of British instructors.







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# Harrier star Harvey lands RAF top post

## AM Smyth to take over next month

**Simon Mander**

**HARRIER VETERAN** Air Marshal Harv Smyth is to be appointed Chief of the Air Staff in the rank of Air Chief Marshal.

Defence Secretary John Healey confirmed the King has approved the appointment, starting next month.

The ex-jump jet pilot and weapons instructor spent 15 years flying hundreds of missions over Bosnia, Kosovo, Serbia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

AM Smyth also played a leading role in the development of the UK's F-35 programme and the introduction of the RAF's fifth-generation fighter into operational service.

The appointment follows the Strategic Defence Review which announced the acquisition of 12 F-35A fighters to join Nato's nuclear mission.

As the nation's most senior aviator, the Chief of the Air Staff is responsible to the Secretary of State for Defence for the fighting effectiveness, efficiency and morale of the RAF.

Speaking after the announcement



confirming the appointment Air Marshal Smyth said: "The Strategic Defence Review makes clear the need for us to rapidly evolve and modernise to meet current and future threats."

"I take over from Sir Richard Knighton, who has achieved so much over the past two years, preparing the RAF for the challenges that we currently face and developing the operational mindset that we need, should we transition to conflict."

Mr Healey said: "I warmly congratulate Air Marshal Harv Smyth on his appointment as Chief of the Air Staff. His previous roles have equipped him well to lead the RAF in a crucial period of transformation for the force."

Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Knighton will soon replace Admiral Sir Tony Radakin as Chief of the Defence Staff.

Sir Richard said: "As I hand over to Air Marshal Smyth, I know that under his command the RAF will go from strength to strength, and he will ensure that we are always ready to fly and fight."



**WAR FIGHTER:** CAS-designate Air Marshal Harv Smyth served in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. *Inset above*, as a young airman at the start of his flying career in the early 1990s

### Bulletin



**SIX APPEAL:** Berks town to be UK HQ for Global Air Programme to develop a new 6th-generation fighter

## Reading set to go global

**Simon Mander**

A NEW headquarters that will deliver a sixth-generation supersonic stealth fighter jet for the RAF has opened in Reading.

It's part of the Global Combat Air Programme – a joint initiative between the UK, Japan and Italy to develop a next-generation aircraft.

Opened by Defence Procurement Minister Maria Eagle, it brings together three industry partners – BAE Systems, Leonardo and the Aircraft Industrial Enhancement Co Ltd.

There are currently more than 3,500 people, including engineers and programmers, working on the project in the UK.

Defence Secretary John Healey said: "We are helping to ensure the UK remains at the forefront of combat air power innovation for decades to come and that defence is the engine for growth across the country."

New figures show 151,000 UK jobs are directly supported by the MOD's spend with industry, an increase of 14,000 on the previous year.



**LE CRUNCH BUNCH:** UK and French cyber warriors at Brize Norton

## Crunch time for tech team

**BRIZE CYBER** warriors teamed up with their French counterparts at the Oxfordshire station to hone their high tech skills in a joint exercise.

Exercise Cyber Crunch is part of the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force drive to enhance frontline capabilities and safeguard communications systems.

# Lightning hits Pacific heights with CSG

**Amy Casey**

South Pacific

**AIR FORCE personnel will take part in one of the world's largest multinational military exercises conducted across thousands of miles of Australia.**

Exercise Talisman Sabre will unite 35,000 military from 19 nations, including more than 100 RAF, some attached to Australian Defence Force units.

It's the first time it will be hosted partly by Papua New Guinea and the 11th time the big-ticket combat training exercise has been held.

Manoeuvres will include advanced air combat, logistical support, and synchronised air

operations alongside naval and ground forces including the UK Carrier Strike Group currently making its way to Australia as part of Operation Highmast.

There will also be a live-fire exercise and field training incorporating amphibious landings, ground force manoeuvres, air combat and maritime operations.

In preparation, RAF squadrons will focus on refining their air superiority capabilities, tactical mobility, and reconnaissance and surveillance skills.

War fighting drills are due to take place at air bases across Western Australia, the Northern Territory, New South Wales and Christmas Island.







**Royal Air Force  
Benevolent Fund**



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# Families lead the tribute to The Few

Becca Collier-Cook

RELATIVES OF the Few gathered at the memorial at Capel-le-Ferne to honour the pilots who fought and died during the Battle of Britain.

The Battle of Britain Memorial Trust's annual Memorial Day marked the 85th anniversary of the epic fight for Britain's skies as the RAF halted the Nazi air invasion over the Channel.

The clifftop memorial, perched above the Channel near Folkestone, offered the perfect setting for this poignant and personal act of remembrance.

Echoing last year's rain-soaked event, poor weather once again grounded the planned flypast by two Spitfires from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

This private gathering remains an opportunity for relatives to come together, reflect, and pay their respects to those whose courage and sacrifice helped keep



**SUPPORT:** CAS Sir Richard Knighton, Lady Knighton, former CAS Sir Stephen Dalton and Lady Dalton joined guests

this country free from invasion in its darkest hour, organisers said.

Guest of Honour at this year's Memorial Day was Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Knighton, who joined a host of distinguished guests and family members in paying tribute to The Few.

The wreath-laying at the National Memorial was led by Jo Holmes, representing the Lord Lieutenant of Kent. It was followed by the much-loved and now traditional reading of Flt Lt William Walker's poem *Our Wall*, read by his great-grandchildren, Leo, Zara and Sasha.



**REMEMBERING THE FEW:** Flt Lt Walker's great-great grandchildren Leo, Zara and Sasha recite his famous poem at Capel-le-Ferne



**ANNIVERSARY:** Serving and veteran Shawbury personnel mark 75 years

## Shawbury landmark

FUTURE WARFIGHTERS gathered with comrades from the past to mark 75 years of RAF air operations training at Shawbury.

Teaching began in 1950 on Ansons, Vampires and Jet Provosts until simulators arrived. Today the base's Defence College of Air and Space Operations trains personnel from all Services.

College Commandant Gp Capt Mike Jordan said: "The DCASO will continue to play a critical role in training outstanding warfighters and leaders, ensuring the readiness of the Armed Forces and the UK's global allies."

"I have seen first-hand the growth of the College from its foundations in the Central Air Traffic Control School, School of Aerospace Battle Management, and School of Air Operations Control."

# Chop Guns on target

HELICOPTER AIRCREW have been learning to fight above the rolling North Yorkshire landscape in their latest combat training.

Students will take on air-to-air combat, electronic warfare, and air assault training drills as they seek to navigate an undulating rural environment during Hades Warrior.

Exercise leader Sqn Ldr Macgillivray said: "We have designed the course to upskill frontline rotary pilots and rear crew. Training in a Tri-Service environment helps sharpen the capabilities of Joint Aviation Command assets, including Merlins, Chinooks, Apaches and Wildcats."

The two-week assessment is based out of Leeming for pilots hoping to become Qualified Weapons Instructors and Qualified Helicopter Tactics Instructors.

The 10 students come from all services and will become the main point of contact for tactics and flying queries from other aircrew.



**ROTARY FIREPOWER:** Chinook, Apache, Merlin and Wildcat helicopters honing their air assault skills in North Yorkshire  
PHOTOS: ASI JOSH GORMAN





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# Regt marks Royal links

Simon Mander

SIGNED PORTRAITS of The King in uniform have been given to the RAF Regiment.

In a ceremony, the Corps' most senior members presented the portraits to two of its youngest graduates.

Air Vice-Marshal Smeath gave a picture to AS2 Thomas on behalf of the Training Wing, while Deputy Commandant General Gp Capt Sutton gave another to AS2 Lawrence for The King's Colour Sqn.

Seventeen-year-old AS2 Thomas, from Blackpool,

whose father currently serves with 34 Sqn, will soon join 1 Sqn hoping to specialise in Counter-Uncrewed Air Systems.

Former Torquay FC semi-professional AS2 Lawrence said: "This is the culmination of weeks of hard work and dedication and will remain with me during my time on KCS and throughout my career."

Personally signed by The King, the portraits will be displayed alongside The King's Colour for the Royal Air Force and The King's Colour for the RAF Regiment.



**ROYAL HONOUR:** AS2 Lawrence (right) accepts the signed portrait of His Majesty from Gp Capt Sutton

# Military WAGS alcohol warning

## Health chiefs issue binge-drinking alert

Simon Mander

BINGE DRINKING among UK military wives is higher than for their Civvie Street counterparts and other Allied forces, according to a new report.

The Forces in Mind Trust-funded study found pressures including uncertainty over plans, stress or boredom, and drinking to celebrate the return of serving partners were reasons.

One mum 'Elizabeth' wrote in her diary: "Bad news regarding husband's next posting and accommodation so I had a drink. It is what it is. It's a lonely and miserable existence sometimes, but it won't change."

Another, 'Danielle' said: "I did aim not to drink any alcohol between Monday and Friday but haven't managed to stick to that very well, which I feel guilty about... A bit stressed by the upcoming move and a bit lonely with my husband away so I was snacking too much, especially in the evenings."

Although direct comparisons are not made the findings suggest alcohol misuse may be higher among UK military partners than those in America.

And 65 per cent of UK military partners reported monthly binge-drinking compared to 45 per cent of civilians.

Partners who were maritally



**HOME FRONT:** Domestic upheaval and deployment uncertainty blamed for rise in drinking

separated from personnel were more likely to engage in risky drinking.

And there were mixed findings relating to deployment which was not associated with heavy drinking in the UK but was in the US.

One mother, identified as 'Alison', said: "I would have not drunk as much if I didn't have to put up with random deployments

and having to do so much solo-parenting and running the household alone. I think that took a toll on my mental health, which increased the drinking."

No alcohol support programmes for military partners were identified.

King's College lecturer Dr Rachael Gribble, who led the research team, said: "The study is the first to qualitatively explore

alcohol use among the partners of UK military personnel.

"We hope this evidence can start to push for better targeted support that understands the military context."

Forces in Mind chief executive Michelle Alston said: "The unique pressures military families can face can all affect their health and wellbeing and it is therefore important to understand these."

## Bulletin



**SPIT OFF THE OLD BLOCK:** The engine from Mk 11b Spitfire is on display at the BoB Memorial Trust

## Spit Ace exhibit

Malcolm Triggs

A ROLLS Royce Merlin Mk XII engine from a Spitfire flown by some of the Battle of Britain's most celebrated Polish Aces is now on display at the Kent home of the National Memorial to the Few.

The engine was excavated from a crash site in France and has been loaned to the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust's clifftop tribute at Capel-le-Ferne, near Folkestone, by Laguna's Spitfire Legacy.

302 (Polish) Sqn's Wg Cdr Piotr Laguna died when Mk IIB Spitfire P8331 Sumatra went down over France during World War II.

The log book confirms that the aircraft was also flown by fellow Polish Aces Drobinski and Lapkowski before the fatal crash.

LSL is now restoring the airframe, described as one of the three most important Spitfires in the world because of its links to the famous Polish squadron, a spokesman said.

P8331 was first to leave the factory armed with cannon. Only 170 Mk 11bs were built and LSL plans to present the restored aircraft to the Polish Air Force.



## News



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# Deep strike missile deal



**CRUISE CONTROL:** Anglo-French contract to replace Storm Shadow currently used by Typhoon

## Simon Mander

**BRITAIN AND France are to develop the replacement for the RAF's Storm Shadow cruise missile.**

A new deal means both countries will make deep strike and anti-ship missiles and, for the first time, their nuclear deterrents will be co-ordinated against an enemy.

Defence Secretary John Healey said: "The UK and France are ensuring our armed forces can operate side by side – from the High North to the Black Sea."

The new partnerships will be developed under the refreshed Lancaster House agreement to include upgraded production lines in Stevenage to bolster national stockpiles and deliver next

generation, beyond visual range, air-to-air missiles for RAF fighter jets.

Also under development are high-tech radio frequency devices such as microwave weapons and jammers to shoot down drones and missiles and the use of AI to develop algorithms for synchronised strikes.

A Combined UK and French Corps is to be formed for the first time to work side by side with Nato allies, integrating space and cyber forces.

Both countries also reaffirmed their joint leadership of the Coalition of the Willing to coordinate military support for Ukraine while the UK-led DIAMOND initiative will ensure different air defence systems across Nato operate better and more jointly, a spokesman said.

# Brize team deliver for Carrier Strike Group

## Staff Reporter

**AIR MOBILITY** personnel flipped cargo rollers inside a C-17 transporter following a delivery to Britain's Carrier Strike Group.

The Brize-based 99 Sqn aircraft made the airlift in support of Operation Highmast and members of No.1 Air Mobility Wing flew with the supplies.

US aviators from the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing helped unload and refuel the aircraft.

99 Sqn OC Wg Cdr Nicola Lofthouse said: "The C-17 continues to deliver high volumes of cargo, munitions and oversized loads across the globe in support of UK operations."

"C-17 aircraft are especially critical to defence output and operational activity and these sorties were another great example of just how seamless this



**AMERICAN EXPRESS:** 99 Sqn C-17 crews joined USAF movers to fly in cargo for the CSG

activity is becoming."

Supplies have been pre-positioned along the route of the Task Force to the Indo-Pacific to make deliveries easier.



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Royal Air Force

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**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**

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# Chute-alors

**French Paras jump to it at Brize**



**FALL GUYS:** RAF and Army instructors brief 11e Brigade Parachutiste ahead of jump from Atlas A400M



## Simon Mander

**FRENCH PARATROOPERS** flew into Brize to test their combat skills alongside the RAF as King Charles welcomed President Macron to Windsor Castle during his state visit.

British Airborne Forces – a joint Army and RAF unit – delivered parachute training to more than 20 members of the 11e Brigade Parachutiste as part of the unit's long-standing accord with the UK's elite 16 Air Assault Brigade.

Airborne Delivery chief Wg Cdr Rich Lewis said: "It is a privilege to welcome our French colleagues, and to enable their parachute training alongside their British counterparts."

"This enhances interoperability across Nato and the Joint Expeditionary Force, it also builds upon a longstanding



**PRESIDENT MACRON**

bond of friendship and collaboration between the UK and France."

Around 20 troops from the French 11e Brigade Parachutiste jumped in the skies of Oxfordshire under British parachutes as Emmanuel Macron drove with the King through Windsor streets lined by military personnel.

They trained on the British military's low-level parachute kit at Brize's Parachute Training School before jumping from an A400M Atlas to earn their 'Bonds of Friendship' wings.

The exercise is part of a partnership between 16 Air Assault Brigade and 11e BP, both brigades serve as their armies' rapid response forces and have been trained to deploy together in response to global crises since 2013.

Army Parachute Jump Instructor Cpl Craig Corrigan said: "The equipment and procedures we use are



slightly different to the French, but it all comes from the same principles, and they've adapted quickly. We are all paratroopers, with similar training and mindset, and being able to earn a different nation's parachute wings celebrates that bond."

11e BP jumpmaster

Sgt Jean-Baptiste taught British paratroopers to use French parachutes for a commemorative jump to mark the 81st anniversary of D-Day.

He said: "It is very interesting to see how a different army does the same job as we do but using different kit and methods."

## Bulletin



## Poppy power

### Simon Mander

**AIR FORCE** personnel who sowed poppies around St Mawgan's war memorial have won a top honour.

The Cornish airbase scooped Silver at the International Corporate Social Responsibility Awards, hosted by The Green Organisation.

The accolade for commitment to sustainability, community engagement and social responsibility was given for the RAF station's efforts to honour the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings.

The 2024 Ribbon of Poppies initiative sought to create a living tribute through planting poppies at key historic sites connected to the Normandy campaign.

The campaign's launch event was hosted by the station in March 2024, with Cornish veterans and Service children sowing poppy seeds.

Veterans Charity Trustee Iain Henderson said: "Seeing how our 'Ribbon of Poppies' initiative has been so enthusiastically embraced and further developed by sites such as St Mawgan is really special."



## Reaper strike

**A REAPER** armed with Hellfire missiles tracked and eliminated a Daesh terrorist on a motorbike according to information just released. The strike happened in the area of Sarmada in north-western Syria.

## Cosford crew digs in

**CONSTRUCTION WORK** on 50 new bedspaces at Cosford has started as part of a £12 million deal.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation has awarded the contract to Reds10 through a £1 billion programme to rehouse Armed Forces personnel.

The block has 50 en suite bedrooms, kitchenettes, communal space, equipment storage and laundries, plus air source heat pumps for heating and hot water.

More than £120,000 has

already been spent with local suppliers.

The project is one of the first to be delivered under the plan to see 16,000 new bedspaces built and to refurbish a further 40,000.

Cosford Station Commander Wg Cdr Penny Brady said: "When complete, the new Officers' Mess annex will have a hugely positive impact on those commissioned personnel living on the station, and those who visit."

Work is expected to be completed by July 2026.



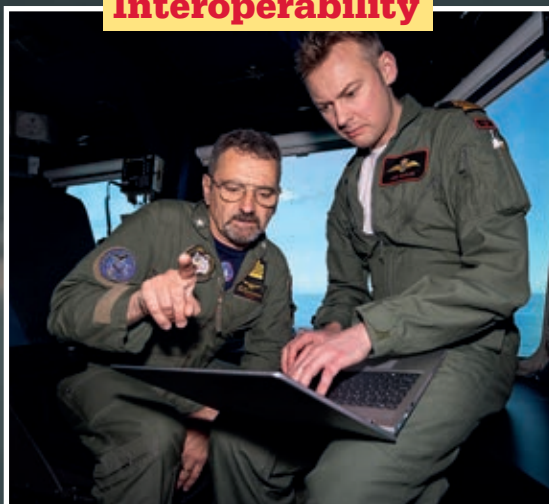
**BLOCK PARTY:** Wg Cdr Brady joins Reds10 team as work begins at Cosford



# Europe CAN we

## Allies MUST invest and integrate more to counter growing threats from Russia & China, warns CAS

### Interoperability



**LIAISON:** UK-Italy cooperation on Operation Highmast

### F-35 airpower



**CARRIER STRIKE GROUP:** F-35 Lightnings on HMS Prince of Wales

**THE PLEDGE** by Nato's European members to dramatically increase defence spending has been hailed as a watershed moment by the Chief of the Air Staff, ACM Sir Richard Knighton.

But he warns that the UK Forces must ramp up integration with key allies to prepare for what he calls the 'storm rising' across Europe and the Indo Pacific.

Global instability fuelled by Russian and Chinese aggression, advances in hypersonic military technology and dramatic climate, population and economic changes are challenging Nato's war-fighting doctrines.

In the UK, the pledge to boost defence budgets and investment in the Nexus satellite combat cloud, sixth-generation Global Combat Air programme and recent introduction of the StormShroud autonomous platform heralds a new era for the RAF.

But ACM Knighton (pictured right) says personnel must adapt to the rapidly changing challenges of multi-domain command and control to maintain air superiority and counter growing international threats.

Speaking at the Global Air

and Space Chiefs' conference in London he said: "After decades of peace dividend and fighting impressive counter terrorism campaigns globally, we need to change to avoid the kind of war we see playing out in Ukraine.

"Our response for demand for change has been to update our air operating concept – the idea of decision superiority supported by agility, integration and resilience.

"Putin's failure to achieve control of the air space in the opening days of the war with Ukraine exposes weaknesses in

Russian military capabilities.

"But as Russia ramps up missile production, Allies must be prepared to counter the threat with effective anti-access and area denial tactics and a fully-integrated, multi-domain, war-fighting ability."

He added: "We know Russia has always struggled to integrate air power on missions to deliver strategic effect. Those first few hours in Ukraine, what we saw was Russia's actions being stove-piped. They were deconflicted in time and space and fratricide was commonplace.

"Three years and a million casualties later, Russia is learning and we have to learn too. Our job as air chiefs is to educate our aviators and commanders for the next storm rising.

### Ukraine

"We should not imagine that Ukraine is the way we fight. It is a 19th century war fought with 20th century tactics and 21st century weapons. We need to fight a 21st century war with 21st century capability and thinking.

"2025 has given some examples of how air-led innovation and integration can make a difference – we've heard about Ukraine's audacious attacks against Russia's strategic

assets, and operations in Iran have shown us what air power integrated with other domain effects can do at the strategic and campaign levels.

"Today, not only is it feasible to integrate effects across multi

domains, it is essential. It's hard to do it on a national level. Doing it at international level across continents is exponentially more difficult – it is the challenge of our generation.

"Our adversaries know this





# Weather the storm

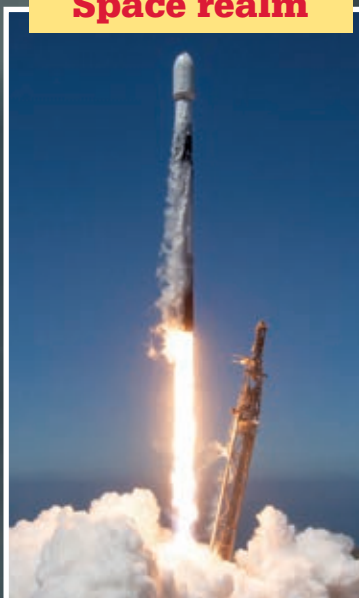


## War in Ukraine



**KYIV UNDER ATTACK:** But the conflict has highlighted Russia's weaknesses

## Space realm



**SPACE:** Military satellite

## Global Combat Air



**INVESTMENT:** Tri-national programme to develop next-gen crewed combat aircraft

## StormShroud

**ACP:** Autonomous Collaborative Platform 'blinds' enemy radars to protect and support Allied pilots

"Cyber can disrupt and degrade command and control systems, maritime can deliver fire or air defence and land might launch Storm Shroud and project special forces and launch attacks against targets.

"If we get this right we create control of the air – it might be limited in time and geography but it opens the opportunity for our forces to target opportunities.

"No plan survives contact with the enemy and we need the mechanism to adapt and react to ensure we are able to exploit opportunities and make the right decisions at the right time in a complex environment.

"Large-scale international combat training has shifted focus to test integrated war-fighting capability.

"While the annual US-based Exercise Red Flag and recent Pacific-based Exercise Bamboo Eagle – featuring 117 combat jets from the UK, Canada, the US and Australia – showcased Allied fire power, Europe



**LEADERS:** CAS and PM Keir Starmer

should develop its own premier league training area.

"We can no longer wait to find out what we know and adapt when the war starts. Our people need to be ready for the next storm rising.

"The Americans have shown the way with things like Bamboo Eagle and off the coast of California, but we here need something like that in Europe too. Somewhere we can bring our armies, navies and air forces together and find out how we command and control multi-domain effects.

"We have discussed at Nato about creating airspace we can turn on and off over the North Sea and our friends in Norway, Finland and Sweden have a lot of space and are keen to help. I would like to see European air forces pool resources and create that capacity in Europe.

"We have to be ready and we know it is going to be harder than it was in the Cold War; fighting a bespoke, exquisite air campaign that is not integrated into an evolving battle space will lead to failure.

"We need integrated multi-domain effects at the operational and strategic level – not just the tactical level, where we know we excel.

"We do this through thinking and practice. We can do some of it in the synthetic environment but we need to do it in the real world too.

"The answer starts with thinking and practice; through that we will be ready to deter, fight to win, tonight, tomorrow and together."

and are trying to emulate us – but they are showing us how not to do it. When Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022 it looked like integrated multi-domain operations, but the reality is that Russia sees air power differently. "We need an integrated approach.

We need space, cyber, land, sea and air to work together. Space will deliver ISR and damage assessment but it can also be used to disrupt adversaries' communications – we can shield our forces from their own satellites.





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**DEFENCE ATTACHÉS are the heart of UK defence engagement overseas.**

Dealing with visiting top brass and Ministers, often in fast-moving and high-pressure environments, they are there to make things happen.

They manage diplomatic overflight and landing requests, shape VIP visits and defence study tours, and support major multinational exercises.

But things rarely go according to plan. "There's always a last-minute diplomatic issue, an unexpected logistical challenge, or a situation beyond anyone's control that requires creative problem-solving under pressure," FS Searle told *RAF News*.

Running English language training is a key part of the job and one of Britain's most effective 'soft power' tools.

But the main role is dealing with top figures diplomatically.

"Being an Assistant Defence Attaché is not just about administration and logistics," said FS Searle.

"It also presents opportunities to engage at the highest levels. Over the years, I have met senior figures in host countries and across the entire diplomatic community."

In 2018 when, escorting athletes from the Highland Games and the Scottish Gunners to Kyrgyzstan's World Nomad Games, FS Searle was approached during a drill session by the event's producer and asked to perform in the opening ceremony.

"Another unforgettable experience was in 2019, when I was invited to witness an uncrewed Progress spacecraft on top of a Soyuz rocket launch at Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan, bound for the

**SPACE MISSION:** FS Matt Searle at Baikonur Cosmodrome, *above*; teaching Kazakh military personnel English, *inset*; and at a traditional wedding, *right*.

# From space & air power to soft power, VIPs, downing vodka and dancing like a horse, it's all in a day's work for 'our man' in Kazakhstan

International Space Station," said FS Searle.

But it's not all fun. During the Covid pandemic he remained at post in Astana while all non-essential staff, including his family, were evacuated to the UK.

He was left assisting his future Defence Section in Tbilisi, navigating border closures and travel restrictions, in an unparalleled professional challenge.

Then, shortly after FS Searle arrived in Georgia in 2020, the 44-day war between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh erupted.

The conflict culminated in 2023 with the mass displacement of Armenians following Azerbaijan's final offensive.

And current affairs are never far away.

"The year 2022 saw a mass influx of Russians into Georgia following Russia's invasion of Ukraine," said FS Searle.

"And the country has since experienced growing instability, with protests and internal disputes shaping its political landscape."

But outside the defence environment, he has experienced some surreal moments.

Invited to a local colleague's wedding, FS Searle found himself in a Land Cruiser convoy searching for landmarks for photos followed by a banquet with swan-themed dancers attended by more than 500 guests.

"It was less intimate reception and more epic production," said FS Searle.

After being given a traditional

robe and hat he took part in a 'vodka parade' of toasts to the bride.

"I quickly learned that the real endurance test wasn't the dancing, but surviving the toasting marathon," he said.

But there was more to come when FS Searle was asked to learn a traditional Kazakh folk dance meant to mimic a horse's gait.

He said: "After 10 minutes of frantic backstage practice, I was out on the floor, dancing in front of the entire banquet hall. I had always fancied myself as having a few moves... that illusion was shattered. The video evidence is, fortunately, classified."

Over a decade as a defence attaché FS Searle has supported Remembrance services in six countries, in temperatures from

-20°C to +40°C.

He has obtained musical support – from solo buglers to full bands – for these commemorations and the monarch's birthday parties.

But the role offers some incredible rewards.

"Before taking up post, you receive extensive training covering diplomatic protocol, security and cultural awareness," he said.

"In some cases, language training is also provided – I undertook a Russian language course before my Kazakhstan assignment."

"Another major perk is the opportunity to live and work in some of the most fascinating regions of the world. Serving in Central Asia and the South Caucasus has been an incredible experience."



## Graduations



# New Gunners score

## Regiment grows by 20



**JOYFUL OCCASION:** New recruit is congratulated, above, and on the parade ground, top

PHOTOS: AS1 JADEN HEWITT

THE RAF Regiment has 20 new members after the graduation of personnel on Trainee Gunner Course 5-24, Salalah Flight, at Honington.

The graduates were accompanied with The King's Colour for the RAF Regiment on parade. Chaplain Rev (Sqn Ldr) Young delivered the blessings and loved ones watched with pride from the sidelines of the Parade Square.

Representatives from all the receiving RAF Regiment Units met the new arrivals and their families after the event.

Air Vice-Marshal Mick Smeath, Director Global Defence Network, UK Strategic Command, was the Reviewing Officer.

The Gunners are now posted to either No. 1 Sqn RAF Regt (Honington), No. II Sqn RAF Regt (RAF Brize Norton), No. 15 Sqn RAF Regt (RAF Marham), No. 34 Sqn RAF Regt (RAF Leeming), No. 51 Sqn RAF Regt (RAF Lossiemouth) or No. 63 Sqn RAF Regt (RAF Northolt).

### Prize winners

- Frank Silvester Trophy for best all-round Trainee – AS2 Boyle.
- The RAF Regt Association Trophy for Drill and Deportment – AS2 Salter.
- WO Ramsey Physical Development Cup – AS2 Mills.
- LAC Beard Recruits' Trophy, voted for by trainees themselves – AS2 Stone.
- SAC Luders Champion Shot Trophy – AS2 Thomas.
- Cpl Bradfield Trophy for top Corporal Instructor – Cpl Gardner.
- The Slap Rowlands Trophy, awarded to the Graduating Gunner that has demonstrated the willingness to go above and beyond – AS2 Gardner.
- The McFerran Prize for best Trainee Gunner of 2024 – drawn from the pool of that year's winners of the Frank Silvester Trophy – AS2 Gordon-Smith of 34 Sqn RAF Regt.



# The renegade Hunter pilot who buzzed Parliament and flew through Tower Bridge

FLT LT Alan Pollock, who has died aged 89, gained national notoriety in 1968 when, following the failure of the Government to recognise the 50th anniversary of the founding of the RAF, he flew his Hawker Hunter jet fighter past the Houses of Parliament at very low level before departing along the River Thames and flying 'through' Tower Bridge.

Pollock entered the RAF College Cranwell in 1953, where he became an under officer and gained his colours at boxing. He was commissioned three years later and trained as a fighter pilot.

He flew Hunters with 26 Sqn based at Oldenberg and then Gutersloh in Germany. Part of the Second Tactical Air Force, the squadron provided air defence against any possible incursion from the Soviet Bloc.

## Gnat aerobatic team

After completing a course at the RAF's Central Flying School at Little Rissington, he trained pilots at RAF Cranwell on the Jet Provost. He then converted to the Gnat jet trainer in late 1962 and moved to the advanced flying training school at Valley in Anglesey, where he imbued his students with an aggressive fighter pilot's mentality.

He flew in the Gnat aerobatic team, the forerunner of the Red Arrows, and he was also the solo aerobatic display pilot.

In 1965, he left for Aden to fly the Hunter with 43 Sqn, where he saw operational service during the tribal disturbances when he flew ground attack missions against rebel strongholds near the Yemen border.

In April 1966 he was air testing a Hunter recently out of maintenance when a fire broke out in the rear fuselage just after take-off. He was able to make an emergency landing, but the aircraft was so badly damaged it never flew again. Pollock was assessed as an exceptional pilot. He left Aden later in 1966 to join 1 Sqn as a flight commander, based at West Raynham.

He displayed the Hunter at air shows and thrilled the crowds with his inverted flying along



**MAVERICK:** Alan Pollock at No.1 Sqn reunion in 2012, beside a painting showing his daredevil low pass beneath Tower Bridge

the runway at low level. One colleague commented: "No one got lower, or faster."

In 1968, the RAF was due to celebrate its 50th anniversary but no formal flypast was planned. Pollock had a passion for the history of the RAF, and he was determined to recognise the occasion. He decided to stage a series of low-level "beat ups" of nearby fighter airfields, dropping leaflets and an adequate supply of four-and-a-half-inch G.P. (Government property) toilet-rolls. With four fellow conspirators, each "attacked" their target fighter airfield to unload their "bump". This received a mixed reception from the various station commanders.

Not content with this demonstration of loyalty, he decided to stage a more spectacular tribute to the service he loved. On April 4 he had flown, with four other squadron pilots, to the fighter airfield at Tangmere, near Chichester, to attend a formal celebration. The

following morning, after a "good party", the five Hunters took off to return to West Raynham. Feigning a radio failure, Pollock managed to slip away unnoticed as the others headed for their home base.

## Houses of Parliament

He set course for London, avoiding civil air routes. In later years, he was to relate: "With the anniversary week coming to a close, I concluded that at least one celebration flag wave across the Houses of Parliament, Downing Street, the Ministry of Defence and, most of all, the RAF Memorial that day was quite in order. In our young Air Force, we had always been taught that an ounce of timely action and initiative was worth whole weighty volumes of passive, pompous pontification."

After a low pass over the airfield at Dunsfold, the home of the Hunter, he headed for central London. He swept round over Battersea and Vauxhall

Bridges towards the Houses of Parliament, where he opened the engine throttle to "wake up our MPs and remind other august figures, sitting chairborne at their ministerial desks below, that we still had a fighting Air Force."

He then set off eastwards along the Thames, dipping his wings as he passed the memorial to the RAF's founder, Viscount Trenchard, when Tower Bridge loomed ahead. A skilful low-level pilot, he lined up the bridge and flew through the towers as the startled traffic crossed the river beneath him. He then turned north to head for his base, paying appropriate low-level visits to military airfields en route to West Raynham.

On landing he was placed under arrest and underwent a series of medical and psychiatric tests. The RAF decided not to court martial him, with the inevitable publicity this would create. It was deemed more appropriate, and convenient, if he was medically discharged from

the Service. He received many letters of support, including some from those in his sister Services. One letter to the national press summed up the feelings of many when the correspondent wrote, "Good luck to the pilot. I would rather trust the defence of the country to a handful of his type than to a great number of the timids."

Pollock maintained a deep love and unwavering commitment to the history and traditions of the RAF. He was a devoted member of the RAF Historical Society, where he regularly contributed to the discussions during the twice-yearly seminars.

## Charities

He worked tirelessly for Service charities. He established the "They Were There" project to raise money for war widows when he discovered how little they received each week. He gathered over 300 signatures which surround the poignant print of the Battle of Britain painting, which captures the moment when James Nicolson, the only member of Fighter Command to receive a Victoria Cross, escaped from his Hawker Hurricane on August 16, 1940.

To produce this unique piece, he spent thousands of hours travelling 80,000 miles to track down people whose contribution to World War II gave us the freedoms we enjoy today. Not only did he gather their autographs but also their stories and memories, which he recorded for posterity.

His charitable work continued with other projects including raising money for Mencap and the establishment of the Tangmere Military Aviation Museum. For several years he maintained a register of ex-Hunter pilots keeping them informed through his "Light Blue Newsletters" of news of their colleagues. He was a joint author of *RAF Little Rissington – The Central Flying Years* (2006).

In many respects, Pollock came from a different age. Intensely loyal and patriotic, he was greatly admired by his colleagues.





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Tim Morris

Honda Civic Type R (from £50,050 otr)

**Motoring**

# Last of the **HOT** hatches



I'VE HAD immense fun over the years as a TV presenter and a motoring journo. I've done some really crazy things on film shoots but some of the best laughs I've ever had have been as a result of blasting around in hot hatches.

They were affordable, fast, loud, outrageously loutish and just phenomenal fun to hurl around. The 2001 Honda Civic Type R spent an entire week with me on three wheels. It was so well balanced that you could throw it into corners with such intensity that one back wheel was permanently airborne.

In 2007, the Type R was rebooted and I set out to discover whether it could be a fitting star car for a reboot of the classic 70s TV show *The Professionals*. Much driving through cardboard boxes, handbrake turns and burning rubber followed. Again, it was raw, agile and stupendous fun.

Now it's back and as much fun as ever. There's just one problem... the end is nigh! Come 2026, the Type R will be vanquished, outlawed by new European regulations. It's a tragedy.

## Exterior

The 2025 Type R is bigger than previous cars. It's now 15ft long and more than 6ft wide.



**CIVIC PRIDE:** 2008 Type R and our man Tim Morris doing his impression of Bodie from *The Professionals* at the wheel

That's the same size, give or take, as a BMW M3.

It's less dramatic than its predecessor though, with smaller wheels and less... err, ASBO. The signature details are still there: the three-pipe exhaust, the bold air vents, the high-wing and a great stance that develops more downforce at high speed.

## Interior

The Type R is designed to feel special and there are a number of details inside that set it apart from regular Civics. The racy, red suede-trimmed seats, red dashboard inlays, racing car-style steering wheel and faux carbon-fibre inserts do a good job of that. The quality is high too, feeling solidly built.

The front seats are exceptional and a major selling point. They're softer than you may expect, but

beautifully shaped to fit and they hold you in place extremely well. There's plenty of space inside and legroom is in good supply. There's even a big boot to add family wagon practicality.

The dashboard is clean and uncluttered, with a user-friendly layout. Physical controls for the air-conditioning and real buttons on the suede steering wheel are a welcome return to basics. You can save your digital gizmos for the EV.

Instrumentation is displayed on a 10.2in screen behind the steering wheel, which has plenty of clarity. There's a row of shift lights above it that light up as you head towards the rev limiter, helping you time that perfect upshift. You also get an audible beep to alert you. Proper race car stuff that.

The Type R has a 9.0 inch touchscreen infotainment system that is better than many rivals,

with intuitive menus and physical shortcut buttons to hop between them. You get Android Auto and Apple CarPlay, along with an eight-speaker sound system.

## On The Road

Let me start with a statement. The Type R is one of the best-handling hot hatches on the market today. The chassis is well-balanced and it grips like a massively miffed gorilla. It loves fast corners and will leave the best in class struggling to nudge past. On the track, it obliterates the lap times of front-wheel drive rivals, thanks to its limited-slip differential.

Flick the suspension into +R mode and the dampers are set to their stiffest level, eradicating body lean and engaging supercar-esque body control. It is brilliant, as a driver's machine.

Of course, things do still get a bit gnarly in the wet, when the Type R spins its wheels through first, second and third gears, but that's one of the things that makes a hot hatch a hot hatch.

0-62mph takes 5.4 seconds, but it feels a lot faster than that. Then there's the 2.0-litre, 325bhp engine, which just loves to be revved, red-lining at around 7000rpm. The six-speed gearbox completes the package and, in my book, is one of the best

## Honda Civic Type R 2025

### Pros

- Thrilling handling
- Awesome performance
- Brilliant manual gearbox

### Cons

- Not cheap to buy
- The last of its kind

### Verdict

The Honda Civic Type R is a brilliant driver's car. It offers awesome performance and supreme handling. It is, arguably, the best hot hatch ever built and holds a place in the history books as the last bastion of organic motoring. What a machine.

manual boxes ever built.

The exhaust note is tuneful and unembellished. In short, the Type R is one of the world's last real hot hatches. If it's all about the thrill of the drive, it doesn't get much better. Top end, 171mph.

Real-world fuel economy is around 30mpg, in mixed driving. If that sort of trivia interests you.





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## SHOOTING



WINNING IN HIS SIGHTS: WO Alex Lilley and King's Medal (right)

Palace date for hotshot WO after hat-trick of competition victories

# King for the day

## Daniel Abrahams

IT'S THIRD time lucky for WO Alex Lilley, who will be presented with The King's Medal for shooting by the Monarch at Windsor Castle later this month.

The RAF hotshot also won the prestigious gong – then The Queen's Medal for Champion Shots of the Air Forces – in 2016 and 2018, but didn't get a visit to a royal palace on either occasion.

He said: "Both times before, the medals were received in the post.

"It didn't detract from the importance of the medals to me, but it will be nice to finally receive

the medal from the Monarch."

The history of the medal stretches back to June 12, 1953, when Her Majesty The Queen approved the institution of a medal as an Air Force version of The Queen's Medal for Champion Shots in the Military Forces.

In 2023 King Charles III continued the tradition with the first King's Medal for Champion Shot of the Air Force.

The competition involves eight stages of match shooting, including rural, urban, short-range and long-range categories.

Lilley said: "I entered the competition in 2000 and had no idea what I was doing, most novices don't. But you attend

each year and improve and learn more.

"There have been some great firers over the years, and I have learned from them – Sgt Mark Wesson at RAF Coltishall took me under his wing and I began to progress from there, so it's great to now be able to pass on advice and tips myself.

"It took 16 years for me to win my first Queen's Medal, so you can see how challenging it is, and this year was no different."

At this year's event Lilley was pushed all the way by 2023 winner Sgt Kenroy Mitchell and last year's top shot Cpl Nathaniel Webb, who also won in 2022.

Lilley said: "I was 34 points



SHOOTING ROYALTY: Alex on the ceremonial sedan chair after competition victory

ahead going into the final day, but after the morning shoot, that was down to just nine points.

"The last 10 rounds could

have gone either way, so I am glad I managed to win, especially after I lost to Cpl Webb by just one point in 2022."

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](mailto:Sports@rafnews.co.uk)



## Sport

### SAILING

# Net gains for sailors

## Prestigious 100th anniversary race and new yacht on the way

### Daniel Abrahams

**SERVICE SAILING** is heading for new horizons over the next few years, with its first port of call the 100th anniversary of the Rolex Fastnet 25 race.

With this year's sailing diary focusing on the internationally renowned biennial race, next year will see the Service introduce a new yacht, bidding farewell to Red Arrow J109 and competing in the 200th anniversary of Cowes week.

RAF Sailing media officer and Fastnet crew member Sqn Ldr Andy King said: "Fastnet is the biggest sailing challenge aside from crossing an ocean."

"This is a prestigious race, and we are excited to be involved. Just to be part of that shows what our personnel can achieve."

"This is a new-look RAF Sailing, with the major events, new yacht and potential new sponsors, we will be on a better footing to show what our association has to offer to personnel."

Fastnet starts at Cowes, Isle of Wight, before circling Fastnet Lighthouse on the most southern tip of Ireland before returning to Cherbourg, France.



**FAITHFUL SERVANT:** But Red Arrow J109 (centre) has seen better days

The association, which boasts 700 members, is divided into four areas – Offshore, Dinghy, Powerboat and Windsurfing – offering something for everyone.

Having completed the opening four rounds of qualification for the biennial 695 nautical mile offshore yacht race, the Service team sits 24th out of 101 teams following the latest round – RORC St Malo – which the Service did not compete in due to maintenance requirements.

Having competed in the RORC (Royal Ocean Racing Club) rounds throughout May and June, the team will face one more challenge in the RORC Channel Race before Fastnet on July 26.

King added: "Fastnet's about the competition experience, which will be amazing. Things are going well so far. It's tough to get a crew together for the rapid-fire races, so we will only see the final eight of our team crew together at Fastnet, until then two members will race here and



**RAF SAILORS:** Future's so bright they have to wear shades

two there, and so on."

King, along with two thirds of the crew, have never sailed in Fastnet.

"Our yacht Red Arrow is 20 years old and not really designed for comfort, so sleep is at a

premium and it leaks quite a lot. The whole race is going to be tough.

"I think once it gets past Land's End, I will be happy."

● **Follow RAF Sailing** @rafsailing on Instagram.

### BMX

## Haywood and Watson wrap up National Series at Birmingham

THERE WAS a good showing from the Service's BMX stars in the final two rounds of the British Cycling BMX National Series in Birmingham Platt Fields.

The duo of Sgt Matt Haywood and Off Cdt Pete Watson took 13th and eighth in the series respectively, after good rides in the previous round for Haywood.



**VETERAN:** Sgt Matt Haywood produced consistently good rides

In the 50-54 Cruiser Grand Vets class Haywood was first in both moto 1 and 2, followed up with 4th in moto 3, securing second pick for his gate in the semi-final.

A strong start saw him take second to secure a place in the A Final and third pick for his gate. Despite initially being boxed in, he finished in eighth.

Day two saw Haywood gain back-to-back seconds and third in moto 3 was followed by fourth in the semi-final. Try as he might, he again could only manage eighth in the A Final for an overall rank of 13th for the series.

Off Cdt Watson kicked off his weekend on his Cruiser in the 19-29 Open with a fourth, third and seventh to secure a quarter-final berth. He would go on to book a B Final spot, crossing the line in third for 11th overall on the day.

On his 20" in the 19-29 Open,



**YOUNG GUN:** Off Cdt Pete Watson

PHOTOS: BILLY WRIGHT

he made a consistent sixth place in all three motos.

Day two started on the Cruiser with fourth, sixth and second in the opening motos, but he could only manage fifth in the quarters; ending the

aviator's day in that class.

On his 20" bike a fifth, sixth and fourth meant he did not qualify outside the opening rounds, seeing him finish 22nd on his 20" and 12th on his Cruiser in the series.



CLIMBING

# Euro team glory

...and Inter-Services success

Daniel Abrahams

THERE WAS international glory for RAF climbing as the association joined forces for a Tri-Service assault on the European Military Championships in Gloucester.

Last held in 2015, the decennial competition saw the combined team of RAF, Army, Royal Navy and Royal Marines face teams from France, Kosovo and Italy at the 270 Climbing Centre.

A team of nine climbers (*see opposite*) were selected to represent the Service, with the walls at the centre built just a week before the championships were held – making Service personnel the first to use the facilities.

Four aviators qualified for the final stages with AS1(T) Rhys Hall coming sixth, Sqn Ldr Dan Heath eighth, Cpl Brandon Phipps ninth and Sgt Dean Stock 10th, helping the team to overall victory ahead of Italy and France.

Phipps said: “This was a fantastic event, and I had so much fun. At points it was tough and go whether I was even going to make the finals.

“Going into the event, I felt

very strong. Months and months of training has gone into getting myself into a great physical position to compete against Europe’s strongest military climbers.

“As a boulderer at heart, I was devastated at finishing the bouldering qualifying in 18th. Knowing that the Lead climbing was on the following day and not my strongest discipline, I had a very uphill battle to fight my way into the final.

“After an intense qualifying lead round, I pulled on hard, dug deep, and qualified for the finals in 10th position after my combined scores from both the bouldering and lead qualifiers. I couldn’t be any happier with the ultimate result of ninth.”

The Inter-Services were also held at the venue, with the Army women and RAF men securing the team titles, with Heath coming second and Phipps third to seal the deal.

The Air Force also won the under-25s team title.

The next event will be the Armed Forces Bouldering League, starting in September.

● Follow RAF climbing @rafmountaineer on Instagram.



HANG TOUGH: Military climbers in Gloucester

## The RAF climbers

- AS1(T) Rhodri Jones (RAF Lossiemouth)
- Cpl Brandon Phipps (RAF Lossiemouth)
- Sqn Ldr Dan Heath (Abbey Wood)
- AS1(T) Rhys Hall (RAF Odiham)
- AS1(T) William Waller (RAF Odiham)
- AS1 Jasper Ray (RAF Boulmer)
- AS2 Callum Chater (RAF Wittering)
- Sgt Alex Michell (RAF Brize Norton)
- Sgt Dean Stock (MOD Lyneham)

KARTING



JACK'S THE LAD: Cpl Wood gives the thumbs up at Fulbeck, also inset right

## Jack's the man who Wood be King

THERE WAS a hot and sunny first place for Cpl Jack Wood as the RAF karting star stormed to third round championship glory at Fulbeck Circuit.

The track, which neighbours RAF Cranwell, saw a field of 64 teams battle out the Armed Forces Championship round, with Benson driver Wood taking overall top spot for team 7 Kart.

RAF Marham came home as the third military team, behind the two lead Navy outfits.

There was further Air Force success for Brize Norton, Benson, Leeming and Waddington, who all produced top-10 military class finishes.

In the Super Class, Leeming came second with



Waddington third.

The drivers next head to Crail Raceway Circuit, near St Andrews in Scotland, for round four of the Championship.



Sport

BOXING

# Fire instructor Axe wins by a unanimous verdict on his return from injury



## Daniel Abrahams

**IT WAS** the return fight of his dreams as Cpl Brad Axe lit up the capital with a unanimous defeat of Sam Kirk at London's York Hall.

The aviator, who had to wait six months for his second fight at the home of British boxing in Bethnal Green following a freak facial injury suffered during training, hit the ground running as he took the bout to his opponent in scintillating style.

He said: "While I was in there, I felt like I wasn't doing enough, I kept asking my corner, but when I look back now, I did a demolition job on him."

"He is a good journeyman, he knows how to cover up. I was patient. It would have been nice to get the knockout, but I put him down. Some of my body shots, I could hear him wince."

Axe, who started the fight without his usual corner man, took advantage of Central Flying School Performance Psychologist Flt Lt Alun Pepper.

The RAF fire fighting instructor, *inset right*, said: "Alun helped me prepare my mind perfectly, ready for battle."

And battle the aviator did, launching into consistent attacks with a stunning left hook in the opening minute of the clash

rocking his opponent – a move Axe backed up with a minute remaining in the second as Kirk was sent sprawling into the ropes by a big right hand and an incisor left.

Following an eight count Kirk was back for more, but Axe kept on the pressure until the final bell, coming away winning every round and with the bout invigorating the crowd at the famous London venue.

Axe said: "It was so hot in there. It is difficult to explain. I did three minutes warm-up, I normally do so much more. I knew if you added the crowd of 1,000 people, it would be boiling."

"To deal with it, I just paced things more, which was my game plan – relax and set up my shots, which I did."

"My next opponent will be a step up against a 50/50 fight like I did in America, in Brentwood live on DAZN in September. It is a high-level show, there will be a media day before and so on, it's really what I want and deserve."

He added: "I'm developing now, to have commentators like Spencer Oliver – ex-European champion – and European and WBO International middleweight champion Denzel Bentley say that I looked like a seasoned professional was amazing."

● Follow Brad Axe @brad\_axe\_ on Instagram.

**IN CONTROL:** A bloodied Sam Kirk covers up as aviator Cpl Brad Axe, left, jabs to the body and lines up another big right-hander



## WATERSKIING

# Tricks a treat from champ Flt Lt Jardine

## Jumping Jack's flash at Queensford



**PODIUM:** Jardine, centre, Sgt Tristan Fahey, left, and Off Cdt India Chambers

A HAT-TRICK of RAF waterskiing championship wins in Oxford for Flt Lt Jack Jardine was the perfect signal of intent for this year's Inter-Services in September.

A day of high-octane ski action ended a week of near perfect conditions, crammed with training and practice runs at Oxford Wakeboard and Ski Club's Queensford Lakes.

The field of 26 athletes battled it out for the championships in: Novice Slalom (Male and Female), Intermediate Slalom, Advanced Slalom, Intermediate and Advanced Jump, Intermediate and Advanced Trick and Novice Trick.

The flying Jardine took full advantage of the conditions snapping up the Advanced Trick and Advanced Jump wins, before being crowned overall champion.

Sgt Tristan Fahey was second overall and second in the Advanced Trick.

They returned to the ramp for another year of thrills, while five novice jumpers took on the challenge for the first time.

Association spokesperson Fg Off Charlotte Taylor, Intermediate Slalom winner, said: "With the RAF defending their titles in both waterskiing and wakeboarding, anticipation for the Inter-Services is high. Here's hoping this momentum carries forward for another victorious season after a great Champs."

"It was also a poignant moment as our association bid farewell to Sgt Pete Glassman, a longstanding committee member



**PYRAMID SCHEME:** RAF waterskiers including Flt Lt Jack Jardine, left

and coach, who is retiring from the RAF after 27 years of Service and 26 years of dedication to waterskiing."

Off Cdt India Chambers, who came third overall, secured the Female Novice Slalom title behind Cpl Alex Knight, coming second on the Novice Trick and first in the Novice Jump.

Off Cdt Ben Tyszkiewicz took the Men's Novice Slalom, while Flt Lt Lucy Carter topped out in the Advanced Slalom.

The annual event continued to grow in popularity, this year featuring five students from various University Air Squadrons.

Novice skiers tackled the slalom discipline with enthusiasm, focusing on the ½ and ¾ course using two skis.

Intermediate participants then took on the added challenge of mono skiing, working towards confidently completing the ¾ course. While advanced skiers pushed the pace on the full slalom course, competing at high speeds and showcasing refined technique.

The Waterski and Wakeboard Association will be at Liquid Leisure, near Windsor, in September for the Inter-Services.

## RUGBY UNION



**TRY:** AS1 Kim Grundy for UKAF v North of England XV

PHOTOS: UKAF RUGBY

## UKAF women have the Defence World Cup in their sights

### Daniel Abrahams

**FRESH FROM** Inter-Service battle the RAF's female rugby union stars are combining to storm the ramparts of the International Defence Rugby Championships, starting next month.

The team will kick off their campaign at the UK-hosted eight nation tournament against Tonga at Esher RFC in Surrey on August 17.

Cpl Órla Proctor, 22, said: "I am so excited for IDRC but first we have our final warm-up game against England Uni Students."

"This, and the final camp prior to the tournament, will set the standard for our team to improve and get comfortable playing with each other."

"Due to the nature of the military no UKAF team is ever the same, which is something really special and shows the depth of skilled players we have."

"Women's rugby as a whole is on an upwards trajectory. It's a really exciting time to be a player or a supporter"

The tournament sees teams divided into two pools of four, with six matches per pool.

The first and second place teams progress to the IDRC World Champion knockout rounds while the others enter a knockout tournament for

the Challenge Cup.

UKAF kicked off its preparations in style with an exciting 29-24 win over a North England XV side at Kingston Park in Newcastle.

With all the scores coming from RAF players, it was AS1 Kim Grundy who got the scoreboard ticking with two sublime tries out wide.

The aviator's scores put UKAF ahead 7-5, thanks to a Fahey conversion, then 12-10. The RAF kicker added a second as Flt Lt Lucy Nye made it 19-17 after the break, before Fahey converted her own try for 26-17 and scored a penalty late on for 29-24.

Fahey, having weighed in with 14 points, said: "The game was exactly what we needed, it was a proper battle."

"As players are thrown together, we only had a week with each other and then the game."

"We go to war a few weeks before in the Inter-Services, then we get together and we are all one shirt."

The dead ball expert added: "I was injured for the last IDRC in New Zealand, so I am excited for the chance now."

"I will have nerves, I always do before a game, but I want to enjoy it and give my best."

● Follow the team @ukafrugby on Instagram.



**14 POINTS:** Kicker AS1 Daisy Fahey, hands raised



# READY FOR CIVVY STREET?

**You've grafted.  
You've pushed yourself.  
You've got the job done.**

**But stepping  
into civvy life?  
Not everyone's  
got a plan for it.**

**HLP for  
HEROES**

**Help for Heroes is here for  
anyone who's worn the uniform**  
and your family, whatever challenges you might face.

**[helpforheroes.org.uk/get-help](https://helpforheroes.org.uk/get-help)**



**SCAN ME**



# R'n'R

## The Battle – Mathew Horne on stage

● See page 4



Win!

Win Broadway hit on Blu-ray ● p5





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

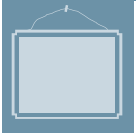
We all know it's good to talk. Host a Brew and Bake coffee morning or bake sale on station, at home, or in your community and make a life-changing difference to a veteran whilst having a brew, some banter and a slice of cake.



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





## Exhibition

Emily Kam Kngwarray

Tate Modern (until Jan 11, 2026)

# Kngwarray: godmother of Australian First Nation art

**E**UROPE'S FIRST major solo exhibition dedicated to one of the most extraordinary figures in international contemporary art, Emily Kam Kngwarray, has just opened at Tate Modern.

The show, which features more than 80 works by the artist – who didn't take up painting until she was in her 70s – runs until January 11, 2026.

Born around 1914, Kngwarray, who died in 1996, was an Aboriginal woman from the Sandover region in the Northern Territory of Australia.

A Tate Modern spokesperson said: "After learning the technique of making batik, in the late 1980s she transitioned to painting in acrylic on canvas. This exhibition presents Kngwarray's work through the lens of her own world, showcasing her as a matriarch of her community, storyteller, singer, visual artist and custodian of Country."

Kelli Cole, the exhibition's curator, said: "Not only was Emily Kam Kngwarray one of the most significant Australian artists



**NTANG DREAMING 1989:** NGA, Canberra. © Emily Kam Kngwarray Copyright Agency. Licensed by DACS 2025

to emerge in the 20th century, but she also blazed a trail for First Nation artists, women artists and Australian artists. This exhibition is a reminder that the stories and places Kngwarray painted are

enduring, the culture that informed them is very much alive. Her work continues to enthral audiences around the world, and we are delighted to bring the exhibition to the UK for the first time."

The spokesperson added: "Encapsulating the ecology of her homeland, Kngwarray's work features motifs derived from native plants, animals and natural forms. She regularly depicted the pencil yam (anwerlarr) and its edible underground tuber and seedpods (kam), after which she is named, as well as the emu (ankerr), reflecting the animal's significance to Aboriginal peoples."

Before she started painting, Kngwarray produced batiks for 11 years and a striking display of batiks on silk and cotton are shown alongside works from the early phase of the artist's painting career.

"These works are often rooted in the Dreaming (Altyerr), the eternal life force that created the land and its myriad living



**LATE STARTER:** Emily Kam Kngwarray near Mparntwe, Alice Springs in 1980 © Toly Sawenko



Emily Kam Kngwarray, Kam 1991. National Gallery of Victoria, Naarm/Narrm/Melbourne, purchased from Admission Funds, 1992. © Emily Kam Kngwarray/ Copyright Agency. Licensed by DACS 2025

forms and defined the social and cultural practices of people," the spokesperson said.

● Go to: [tate.org.uk](https://tate.org.uk) for opening times and booking details.



## Film Review

Dying (12A)

In cinemas now

# Life and death of a family

**M**ATHIAS GLASNER'S *Dying* explores the messiness of life through the tangled trauma of an estranged family.

Father Gerd (Hans-Uwe Bauer) has dementia and often wanders off naked and confused. Mother Lissy (Corinna Harfouch) has cancer and reduced mobility. Their adult son Tom (Lars Eidinger) is navigating a complex relationship with his ex and her newborn, while daughter Ellen (Lilith Stangenberg), a dental assistant, drinks destructively.

Told in chapters from each family member's perspective, the film spans an indistinct timeline, with overlapping events that anchor us in place. For instance, when the ageing parents are visited by an insurance agent, Ellen is supposed to be there. Later, we witness the drunken chaos that explains her absence.

In one scene, Lissy drives the car whilst Gerd directs: a poignant image of their co-dependency reaching its limit. Soon, Gerd will move into care, and a neighbour will offer Lissy help. Death and decline treated with clear-eyed matter-of-factness.

When we follow Tom, we see how relationships may appear messy from the outside but make emotional sense from within. Conductor of a youth orchestra, Tom works closely with Bernard (Robert Gwisdeck), who is composing a piece titled *Dying* while battling long-term



**TOM:** Conductor of a youth orchestra

depression. Ellen, prone to blackouts and waking in strangers' beds or even foreign countries, brings a streak of dark comedy. But hints elsewhere in the film suggest she is self-medicating, and an affair with her boss offers only partial escape.

While *Dying* portrays the bleakness of death and the long shadows of trauma, it also finds beauty and humour – in music's transcendence, and the intimacy of both romantic and parental love. It explores the challenges of parenting and reconciling one's childhood without over-explaining anyone's behaviour, instead showing how the chaos of one life spills into another, forming a web of harmonic dysfunction.

**Four out of five roundels** ●●●●  
**Review by Sam Cooney**



## Cinema

Irvine Welsh: Reality Is Not Enough

UK cinemas in September

# Edinburgh world premiere for documentary on Welsh

**A** DOCUMENTARY about *Trainspotting* author Irvine Welsh will have its world premiere on the closing night of the Edinburgh International Film Festival, ahead of its release in UK cinemas in September.

From award-winning filmmaker Paul Sng (*Poly Styrene: I Am a Cliché, Tish*), *Irvine Welsh: Reality Is Not Enough* is described as an illuminating documentary offering a rare glimpse into the mind of a prolific artist at work and play.

Welsh (pictured) is at a crossroads. After experiencing the huge success of several film adaptations and six million books sold worldwide, he has become acutely aware of his own mortality.

The film is a brutally honest examination of his life: how his creativity was fostered by his childhood in Edinburgh; the influences he gained living amongst 1970s London counterculture; and how groundbreaking work such as *Trainspotting* and *Filth* pulled him out of a self-destructive cycle, but also led him

to heights of fame he never could have imagined. And one burning question remains – what will come next?

The documentary combines intimate observational footage with readings from his novels narrated by Liam Neeson (*Taken*), *Batman Begins*, *Star Wars*), Maxine Peake (*The Theory of Everything*, *Shameless*), musician Nick Cave, Ruth Negga (*Ad Astra*, *Passing*) and Stephen Graham (*Adolescence*, *The Irishman*).

Sng said: "Irvine Welsh has remained an urgent and compelling voice in literature and film since the day he was first published. It's been a joy and a pleasure working with one of the great storytellers of our time and we're chuffed to launch the film in Edinburgh at this year's EIFF."

Welsh added: "When you grow up in a place, you're always kind of rebelling against it slightly. But Edinburgh is part of me and always will be, so I'm absolutely delighted that *Reality Is Not Enough* will have its world premiere here."





## R'n'R



**Theatre**  
The Battle  
UK tour

### Horne stars as Britpop music exec



HORNE: To play Andy Ross in *The Battle*

IT'S BEEN announced that Mathew Horne (star of the beloved TV comedy *Gavin and Stacey*) is to play influential Britpop music executive Andy Ross – caught in the crossfire of one of the most notorious rivalries in British music history – in *The Battle*.

Described as a blistering and darkly funny exploration of fame, ego and the cultural clashes of 1990s Britain, the play opens at Birmingham Rep on February 11, 2026, ahead of a major UK tour and prior to the West End.

Horne, who will appear as Ross until May 30, 2026, said: "This play is right in the sweet spot of my teenage cultural experience. I'm thrilled to be exploring this iconic era in music on stage with such a talented creative team involved."

Reliving the heady summer of 1995 when heavyweights of Britpop Blur and Oasis went head-to-head in the greatest chart contest of all time, *The Battle* is the first stage play by screenwriter and best-selling novelist John Niven (*O'Brother, Kill Your Friends* and *The Second Coming*).

Directed by Matthew Dunster (*2:22 A Ghost Story*, *The Pillowman*), *The Battle* draws on his deep insider knowledge of the music industry, shining a satirical light on the chaos behind the Cool Britannia façade.

Further cast and creatives are to be announced.

Go to: [ents24.com](https://ents24.com) for full tour dates.



**Theatre**  
Cirque Éloize  
UK tour

AWARD-WINNING Canadian company Cirque Éloize are performing their latest show *iD Reloaded* on an eight-venue UK tour starting on September 19 at the Marlow Theatre, Canterbury.

The tour also goes to the Wycombe Swan Theatre, High Wycombe from September 23-24; Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff from September 30 to October 1; Milton Keynes Theatre from October 11-12; and culminates at Hull New Theatre from October 17-18.

Jeannot Painchaud, the company's co-founder and the show's director, explained how *iD Reloaded* came into being.

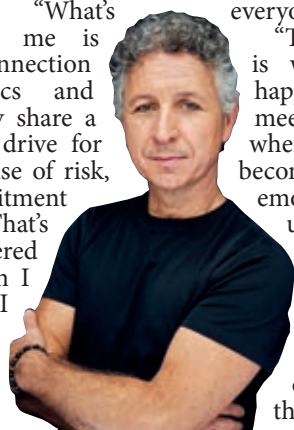
He said: "In the summer of 2024, we were hit by a major flood in our warehouses which forced us to halt operations for a while. We lost about 80 per cent of our equipment, although we were fortunate enough to salvage the set from a previous production.

"This unfortunate event ended up accelerating an idea I had been wanting to explore for some time: using an existing set as the foundation for a new creation. I had been thinking about [our show] *iD* for a while – the show's international success had always inspired me to imagine a sequel. The idea naturally took shape, especially since we already had the music. *iD* remains a highly relevant piece, and we decided to create *iD Reloaded*, a new version of *iD* – more futuristic, more cartoon-like and enriched with video projections."

He explained what audiences can expect to see on stage: "The show has often been described as an intoxicating blend of circus arts and urban culture – breakdance, hip hop, street dance and more. It's a high-energy fusion where Chinese pole, aerial silks, hoop, floor acrobatics, straps, trampoline and B-boying [breakdancing] come together.

"Each artist brings their own personality and background, pushing their discipline – and themselves – to be as unique and expressive as possible."

He added: "What's always fascinated me is the natural connection between acrobatics and urban dance. They share a common spirit: a drive for individuality, a sense of risk, and a deep commitment to community. That's something I discovered back in 2009 when I first created *iD*. I saw it in the way circus artists and B-boys trained – how they both



## Massive flood at warehouse gives rise to new show

# Circus meets c at Canadian tr

balance the desire to stand out with a collective energy that lifts everyone higher.

"That fusion, to me, is where the real magic happens. It's where style meets substance, and where physical performance becomes something emotionally charged and unforgettable."

As co-founder of Cirque Éloize back in the early 1990s, Painchaud has been at the forefront of the circus scene for more than 30 years. How does

he think circus has changed as an art form in that time?

He said: "Circus has evolved in an absolutely phenomenal way. All the work that's been done over the years has led to real recognition of contemporary circus in general to become a legitimate art form in its own right.

"Today, the boundaries between dance, acrobatics and theatre have all but disappeared. And, honestly, it's incredible to see how far we've come. When we first started, even the idea of presenting circus in a theatre was seen as completely absurd.

"When we began performing

on North American and European stages, we were practically the only circus company included in theatrical or contemporary dance programming. Now, no one questions the place of circus anymore. Its artistic relevance speaks for itself – and that changes everything."

Painchaud performed for more than 12 years, specialising in trick cycling and juggling. He explained that as Cirque Éloize was gaining international momentum, he made the decision to step off stage and fully commit himself to the direction and artistic vision of the company.



Edited by Tracey Allen

Win!



## DVDs

### Girl From the North Country (15)

Out now on 4k Ultra, Blu-ray & DVD (Dazzler Media)

# Broadway hit now on screen

AS IT returns to the London stage at The Old Vic Theatre, the Tony award-winning Broadway show *Girl From The North Country*, written and directed by Conor McPherson, is now available to own.

Set in 1934 Duluth, Minnesota, during the Great Depression, it centres on Nick Laine, who struggles to keep his guesthouse afloat amidst financial ruin.

His wife, Elizabeth, battles dementia, while their adopted daughter, Marianne, harbours a secret pregnancy. The guesthouse becomes a refuge for a diverse group of drifters, each grappling with their own hardships.

As their lives intertwine, themes of love, loss and hope emerge, all underscored by reimagined renditions of Bob Dylan's songs, including *Forever Young*, *All Along the Watchtower*,



STAGE SHOW: Broadway hit starring Todd Almond PHOTO: MATTHEW MURPHY



*Hurricane* and *Like a Rolling Stone*.

This cinematic adaptation brings the acclaimed Broadway production to the screen.

You could win a copy of *Girl From The North Country* on Blu-ray – for your chance to own it, simply answer this

question correctly:

**Who wrote and directed *Girl From The North Country*?**

Email your answer, marked *Girl From The North Country* Blu-ray competition, to: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by August 8. Remember to include your full postal address.



**Theatre**  
**Fawlty Towers**  
UK tour

# Fawlty role for Clifton

MUSICAL THEATRE star and former *Strictly Come Dancing* professional Joanne Clifton – who won the show in 2016 with partner Ore Oduba – is to play the part of Polly in the national tour of John Clee's classic comedy *Fawlty Towers*.

The production, which also stars Paul Nicholas as The Major and Danny Bayne as Basil Fawlty, with Hemi Yeroham reprising his role as Manuel, starts touring from September 30 and runs until August 8, 2026.

The show, that first opened in the West End in May 2024 to rave reviews, is an adaptation of three of comedy legend Clee's favourite original episodes of the TV series he co-wrote, first broadcast on BBC Two in September 1975.

Clee chose the episodes *The Hotel Inspector* and *The Germans* from series one and *Communication Problems* from



STRICTLY FOR LAUGHS: Clifton as Polly with Paul Nicholas as The Major PHOTO: HUGO GLENDIGGING

series two – and has adapted them into a two-hour play, complete with a new finale.

He said: "I'm thrilled with the top-class group of comedy actors that we've assembled for the UK tour of *Fawlty Towers* – *The Play*. September 2025 marks exactly 50 years since the first-ever TV episode was broadcast on the BBC. I never thought that all these years later the stage show would get the reception that it has. But here we are, still making theatres rock with laughter."

Following a tip-off that hotel inspectors may be visiting and eager to impress, Basil attempts to ingratiate himself with guests that he suspects are there to critique the establishment. The situation is further plagued by

a party of Germans, the deaf and dotty guest-from-hell, Mrs Richards, whose infuriating complaints prevent him from hiding a gambling win from his ever vigilant and bossy wife, Sybil. Together they run their hotel with a little help from the unflappable Polly, and very little help at all from Manuel, the trainee waiter from Barcelona who is the butt of Fawlty's frustration.

Set in a fictional hotel in the seaside town of Torquay, only 12 half-hour episodes of the original BBC comedy were ever made.

In 2000 the TV show was voted the best British programme of all time in a British Film Institute poll.

Go to: [FawltyTowersTour.co.uk](http://FawltyTowersTour.co.uk) for full tour details.



THE OLD AND THE NEW: Jeannot Painchaud in his performing days, inset above, and a dancer from today's iD Reloaded show, main picture

# dance troupe

He said: "It was a pivotal moment – a choice to focus all my energy on pushing the boundaries of what Cirque Éloize could become.

"Even after stepping back from performing, I've always believed that acrobatics must remain at the heart of what we do. I've never supported the idea of reducing the physical elements in favour of pure storytelling.

"For me, the ideal balance is a blend of powerful acrobatics, meaningful narrative, emotional depth, and a touch of poetry. High-level performance isn't just spectacle – it's what gives the emotion real weight and resonance."

Go to: [danceconsortium.com](http://danceconsortium.com) for more information.



TALENTED: Painchaud as trick cyclist, above, and show's director, inset left





## Your Announcements

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

### Seeking

I am seeking incidents of ghostly or paranormal phenomena at the ex-RAF base at Bircham Newton in Norfolk (now the Construction Industry Training Board), either on site or in the nearby accommodation. Thank you. Paul Lee, email: paul@paullee.com

**SEEKING** Warrant Officer Morgan Russell Price, MBE, formerly stationed at RAF Leeming, born in Loughborough in 1969. Urgently need to get in touch with him. Email: lyndasmart31@gmail.com

**SEEKING** anyone that served with or knew WO Henry Hamar during and/or following WWII, any information will be gladly received, contact: andyhilton75@hotmail.com

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

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

### Reunions

**309** Entry RAF Hereford C Flt 4 Sqn Cooks, April 1967–May 1968. If anyone knows anybody from that Entry and wants to get in touch, with a view to meeting for a 60th anniversary celebration

in 2027, please call Ian Dell on: 01202 722058

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

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

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

**103RD** Entry RAF Halton Apprentices Reunion October 17 at the The Park House Hotel in Shifnal, TF11 9BA, 7pm. Contact Mick Woodhouse on: 07811 401040, email: mickwoodhouse1946@gmail.com or through: 103rd-entry.org.uk

### Associations

**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: [www.rafregtwoandsnco.org.uk](http://www.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: [www.591suassociation.co.uk](http://www.591suassociation.co.uk) for membership details and news of the next annual reunion along with other upcoming events for 2025.

**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](http://rafadappasn.org); or contact the Membership Secretary on: 07866 085834 or the Chairman on: 01933 443673.

**RAF** Catering Warrant Officers' and Seniors' Association: all serving or retired TG19 WO or FS and all former Catering Branch Officers are invited to join the RAF CWO&SA. We meet twice yearly with a vibrant gathering of retired and serving members. For more information please send an email to: [janedjones6@btinternet.com](mailto:janedjones6@btinternet.com). The first year of membership is free.

## Shoot scores for Fund



**VICTORIOUS:** The Worshipful Company of Carpenters with WWII veteran Colin Bell, centre

THE ELEVENTH annual Inter-Livery Target Rifle Shoot was held recently at Bisley Camp Surrey, the home of British Rifle Shooting, raising around £7,000 for the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Organised by volunteers from the Worshipful Company of Bakers and the Royal Air Force Small Arms Association, the competition saw 48 Livery members from 16 Livery companies take part.

Co-founded by past Master of The Worshipful Company of Bakers Colin Sach, the event involved six disciplines including the 1,000-yard Target Rifle, 300-yard Sniper Rifle, Running Boar Moving Target, Black Power Pistol, .22 Rimfire Gallery Rifle against the clock, and Bell Target.

Prizes for individuals and teams are awarded for each discipline. This year, The Worshipful Company of Carpenters were the overall winning team and were awarded

the Bakers Cup, donated by the Worshipful Company of Bakers.

The Tim Bone Rose Bowl for highest individual score was won by David Stevens of the Worshipful Company of Tallow Chandlers.

For the eleventh anniversary, the rifle shoot was attended by Fund supporter and World War II Mosquito pilot Colin Bell, 104, who handed out prizes to the day's winners.

Mr Sach said: "Bringing people together at Bisley for a day of shooting, coupling it with raising funds for the Benevolent Fund, has been wonderful.

"The sheer enthusiasm of everyone, whether an experienced competitor or complete novice, returning to the event and raising funds for a good cause was fantastic."

Over the past 11 years, the Inter-Livery Rifle Shoot has raised more than £63,000 for the Fund.

## Final Cockpit-Fest held

NEWARK AIR Museum hosted its twenty-fifth – and final – annual Cockpit-Fest event last month.

It became a fixture on the aviation calendar attracting visiting cockpits and associated displays. This year there were more than 40 visiting cockpits at the event, including military jet cockpits, helicopters and civilian aircraft types.

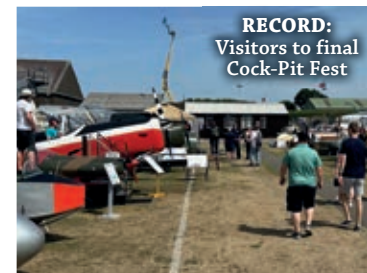
Museum trustee Howard Heeley said: "We would like to thank everyone who has supported Cockpit-Fest over the years.

"We are proud to have finished on a high with the most visiting cockpits ever displayed; a record number of visiting displays and with combined visitor figures over the weekend in the top five that we have ever recorded."

"Various factors have

combined to guide us toward deciding to stop running Cockpit-Fest. These include: museum volunteer organisers retiring; indications from some cockpit owners that this was to be their last event; and ever more onerous Event Safety Planning guidelines.

"At the moment the museum's plan is to continue with single day events like AeroBoots, and perhaps specific aircraft-related events and gatherings."



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Having a ball for veterans

SOCIALITE AND YOUTUBE star Lady Colin Campbell threw open the gates of her stately home, Castle Goring, for the annual ball for Care for Veterans, raising thousands for the charity.

The Summer Ball was held at Lady Campbell's home, close to the charity's Worthing care home, earlier this month.

More than £5,000 was raised through the dinner, which included a three-course meal and charity auction and raffle, with prizes including an afternoon tea with Lady C, as she is affectionately known. The evening ended with a DJ playing as guests partied into the early hours.

It is the third year in a row that Lady C has hosted an annual ball for Care for Veterans.

Over 160 guests attended, and afterwards Lady C said: "I always look forward to the Castle Goring Summer Ball, it's a wonderful evening. It is also a privilege to raise money for the Care for Veterans Home at the same time."

Guest Clare Silva, Care for



WONDERFUL EVENING: Lady Colin Campbell, centre, with guests at Castle Goring

Veterans' High Value Events & Corporate Manager, said: "We're grateful to Lady C for her continued support to Care for Veterans. This fantastic evening has helped raise a huge sum of money, which will help us continue providing outstanding care to an extraordinary group of people."

Care for Veterans provides

long-term nursing, rehabilitation, respite and end-of-life care to veterans and their families who live with disabilities, including acquired brain injury and degenerative neurological conditions. The care home is now part of the Royal Star & Garter group, following a recent merger.

● Go to: [careforveterans.org.uk](http://careforveterans.org.uk) for more information.



DREAM DRIVE:  
The famous  
Rolls-Royce  
Phantom V

Lennon's car is the star


A WHITE Rolls-Royce once owned by John Lennon is the centrepiece of a new, sound-based exhibition *Beep-Beep, Yeah!* at the British Motor Museum that runs until next spring.

A Museum spokesperson said: "The exhibition explores the emotional connection of sound, music and the motor car, from the engine rumble to the rhythm of our favourite tunes, and examines why the sounds we

listen to in our cars can influence the way we drive.

"Visitors can tune a 1970s radio, feel the noise of a BRM V16 P15 race car engine, or sit inside a 2022 Bentley Bentayga to experience its incredibly powerful audio systems."

The exhibition's star car is the Rolls-Royce Phantom V that appeared in the Beatles film *Let It Be*. It was sold in 1969 to Allen Klein, the Beatles' manager at the time.



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Crossword

No. 390

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

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

Across

- 1. Girl to email mother (4)
- 8. And 14 Across. NATO exercise involving RAF in intimidating defence (10,6)
- 9. Union for only two people (8)
- 10. Football Association led Mary Earps initially to stardom (4)
- 12. A 100 and a 101 want a tree (6)
- 14. See 8 Across
- 15. Six take Princess Royal back to capital (6)
- 17. Inside Epernay, things become more complex (6)
- 18. Perform! Perform! It's done! (4)
- 19. It helped writers from the past upset kind ants (8)
- 21. We begin supplementing northern station (10)
- 22. Used by Georgia Member of Parliament when it rains? (4)

Down

- 2. Cherry harmonicas broken (10)
- 3. RAF makes a return from a long way off (4)
- 4. Give a District Attorney weapons against navy (6)
- 5. Ships favoured by rulers? (6)
- 6. Fine face disfigured by stimulant (8)
- 7. Sounds like top tennis player to give up (4)
- 11. For a long period, philosopher suffers ennui at start of month (10)
- 13. Agreement before final departure of iconic plane (8)
- 16. The greatest points about sci-fi film (6)
- 17. RAF plane from North or South (6)
- 18. Old Penny to possess part of Northern Ireland (4)
- 20. Dance loses nothing to Ginger (4)

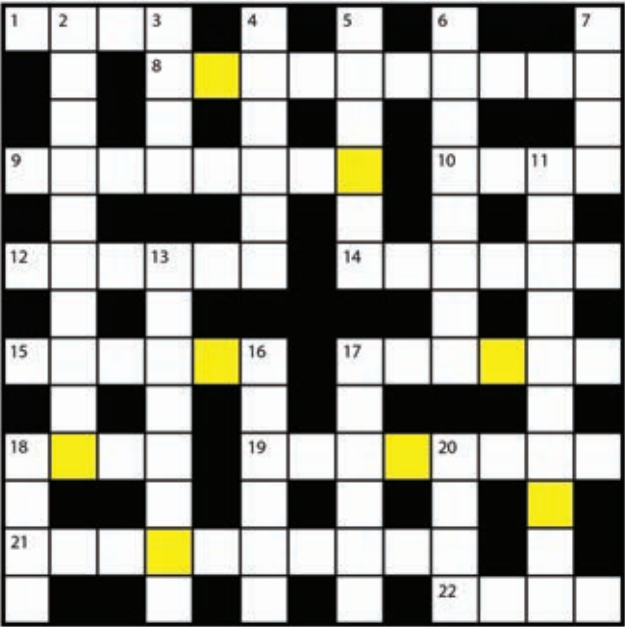
Name: .....

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RAF aircraft: ..... Crossword No. 390



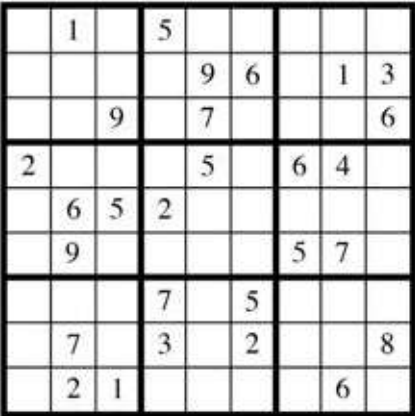
**Solution to Crossword No. 389**  
**Across** – 7. Agenda 8. Halton 10. Explore 11. Roast 12. Apse 13. Agree 17. Witty 18. Raft 22. Logic 23. Initial 24. Edited 25. Morass  
**Down** – 1. Paveway 2. Tempest 3. Idiot 4. Harrier 5. Atlas 6. Unite 9. Wedgetail 14. Aircrew 15. Halifax 16. At A Loss 19. Fleet 20. Again 21. Timon  
**RAF term** – Red Arrows



Su Doku

No. 400

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. 399

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



Museums

Military Art in the Age of Queen Victoria  
National Army Museum, Chelsea (until Nov 1, 2026)

The military and its image within Victorian Britain

MORE THAN 140 paintings, sketches and miniatures charting the changing attitudes to the military during the 19th century are featured in a new exhibition – *Myth and Reality: Military Art in the Age of Queen Victoria* – now on at the National Army Museum in London.

It includes the 5m-wide oil painting *The Capitulation of Kars* by Thomas Barker Jones – on display for the first time in 20 years – and features some of the most celebrated artists of the era.

Taking four overarching themes – The Female Perspective, The Great Campaigns, Patriotism and Portraiture, and Realism and Reportage – highlights include the significant collection of 25 works by Elizabeth Thompson, Lady Butler, who rocketed to

fame in the 19th century for her depictions of Waterloo and Crimea, as well as significant loans from the Royal Collection and National Portrait Gallery.

Susan Ward, Head of Art at the Museum, said: ‘This is the first time the National Army Museum has brought together artworks from the Victorian era in their own special display. The exhibition space captures the feel of a 19th century art salon, and visitors will be immersed into the space as exhibition goers were during Queen Victoria’s reign.

‘These images are not only powerful, but they also shaped how British people thought about the Army and its soldiers for many years to come. Through this exhibition we explore whether they were a true reflection of the reality of service.’



STRIKING: *The Capitulation of Kars*, by Thomas Jones Barker, oil on canvas; has not been on public display for more than 20 years

Brig (Ret'd) Justin Maciejewski, Director of the National Army Museum, said: ‘This exhibition tells the story of a period of history when the Armed Forces were in action across the world, and brings it to life through artworks created on the frontline and at home.

‘This was a time when the ordinary soldier’s experiences were highlighted as never before, which had a huge impact on both politicians and the public. The legacy of these artworks is still evident today.’

● Go to: [nam.ac.uk](http://nam.ac.uk) for more information.



FEATURED: Elizabeth Southerden Butler, Lady Butler, *The Roll Call*: calling the roll after an engagement, Crimea, 1874. Painted by Lady Butler, 1874, oil on canvas © Royal Collection Enterprises Limited 2025 | Royal Collection Trust