

The Forces' favourite paper



Bake Off star Prue chutes in with the help of Brize

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Definitive work on Battle of Britain

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ROYAL AIR FORCE

Friday, October 3, 2025
Edition No.1617

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RAF News



The *real* story of the genius behind the Supermarine Spitfire



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Shooting Hotshots on target



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Rugby Cokayne's World bid



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Facing down Putin threat

Typhoon and Voyager NATO mission



Simon Mander

RAF TYPHOONS have flown their first Nato air defence sortie over Poland following Russian drone attacks.

Two jets blasted off from Coningsby supported by a 10 Sqn Voyager tanker to counter Moscow's aerial threats.

This first Eastern Sentry mission follows the violation of Alliance airspace by President Putin with a drone incursion into Poland and further breaches by jets entering Estonian airspace.

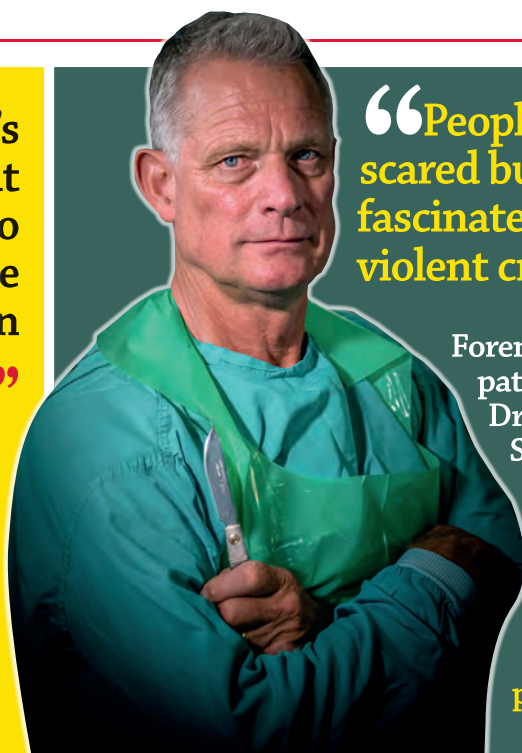
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“It’s a great honour to join the Yeoman Body”

Former Gunner Alex Macdonald
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“People are scared but fascinated by violent crime”

Forensic pathologist Dr Richard Shepherd

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“I’m hoping to make it third time lucky”

Red Rose Flt Lt Amy Cokayne bids to win Women’s Rugby World Cup
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ROYAL AIR FORCE
RAF News

RAF News

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Paras go Dutch

Staff Reporter
Eindhoven

BRIZE NORTON transport crews launched combat drills alongside elite Army paras from across the Nato alliance as part of Exercise Falcons Leap.

More than 70 British Army troops from 16 Air assault Brigade conducted static line jumps from a 70 Sqn Atlas under the supervision of RAF Parachute Instructors during the two-week multinational combat drill.

Based at Eindhoven, the annual exercise hosted by the Royal Netherlands Army is designed to test air and land integration and targeted cargo delivery into the combat zone, bringing together troops and air crew from Germany, Poland, the US and France.

During sorties air crews flew over the Market Garden drop zone in Ede to honour the WWII operation to supply Allied forces.



This Week In History



1938 Wellington lands

THE TWIN-ENGINE medium range Vickers Wellington bomber enters service with the RAF, initially operated by 99 Sqn at Mildenhall.

1949 Airlift ends

A HASTINGS flies the final sortie for the Berlin Airlift. During the four-month operation the RAF transports nearly 400,000 tons of aid and carries 170,000 passengers.



1993 Victor bows out

THE LAST of the RAF’s Cold War V-bombers, the Victor, retires after 36 years of service with the disbandment of 55 Sqn.

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



Awards launch

NOMINATIONS FOR the RAF Benevolent Fund Awards 2026 are now open.

The annual awards give the charity an opportunity to formally recognise the contributions made by individuals, RAF Stations, squadrons and partner organisations that supported the RAF Family throughout 2025.

AVM Chris Elliot, the Fund's Chief Executive, said: "Our awards are an opportunity to recognise the outstanding people and organisations who support the RAF Family."

"Their efforts ensure we can continue to stand beside serving personnel, veterans, the bereaved and their families when they need it most."

Go to: rafbf.org/awards



Wish you were SERE

SURVIVALISTS at St Mawgan staged a surprise appearance for a visit of The King's Forester to the Cornish base.

Head Forester to The King Geraint Richards and local landowner Rupert Hanbury-Tenison were there to discuss the use of new sites to replicate austere environments for SERE survival training.

Typhoon Poland mission counters Putin air threat



Simon Mander

TYPHOONS HAVE flown their first Eastern Sentry Nato air defence sortie following the incursion of Russian drones into Polish airspace.

Two jets took off from Coningsby supported by a Voyager tanker to patrol Polish skies and deter aerial threats, including drones.

The deployment comes after the most significant violation of Nato airspace by Russian aircraft, the MOD said.

Defence Secretary John Healey visited Brize Norton to announce the UK's contribution and met with some of the 400 personnel

set to support the mission.

He said: "I'm proud of the outstanding British pilots and air crew who took part in this successful operation to defend our Allies."

Chief of the Air Staff, ACM Harv Smyth, said: "This sortie marks the RAF's first operational mission on Eastern Sentry, reinforcing the UK's steadfast commitment to Nato."

The RAF aircraft will join Danish F-16s, French Rafales and German Eurofighters to counter growing Russian aggression on Nato's Eastern flank.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said: "Russia's reckless behaviour is a direct threat to European

security and a violation of international law, which is why the UK will support Nato's Eastern Sentry mission."

"These aircraft are vital in deterring aggression, securing Alliance airspace, and protecting our national security and that of our Allies."

The commitment comes after Warsaw requested consultations under Article 4 of the Washington Treaty.

Air Marshal Allan Marshall, RAF Air & Space Commander, added: "Russia's reckless violation of Polish airspace with multiple drones is unacceptable."

"Nato's Eastern Sentry mission is to protect Alliance airspace and

sends a clear message: that we stand united against any threat to our Allies."

"This deployment underscores the RAF's readiness and ability to project airpower swiftly and decisively."

"These missions will strengthen Nato air defences and serve as a deterrent against Russian aggression, while maintaining the RAF's commitment to defending UK skies and multiple other operational outputs at home and overseas."

Over the past 18 months, the RAF has deployed Typhoons to Poland and Romania to protect Nato airspace.

SAR star hits mark

Simon Mander

A **VETERAN** Search and Rescue helicopter pilot has clocked up 7,000 flying hours during his 30-year flying career.

Central Flying School instructor Flt Lt Charlie Logan (inset) reached the milestone after first flying a Cambridge University Air Squadron Bulldog trainer in 1994.

He flew the Tucano and Hawk before settling into helicopters with the



Squirrel and Griffin at Shawbury.

But it was in the RAF's yellow Sea King that he flourished at Lossiemouth and Boulmer with 202 Sqn and 78 Sqn in the Falklands.

He became an instructor in 2009 and now flies the AW139 and Chinook, teaching would-be Central Flying School (Helicopter) squadron instructors.

Flt Lt Logan leaves the unit to return to full-time fixed wing instruction on the Prefect trainer in the autumn.



LOGAN'S RUN: Charlie (holding champagne bottle) celebrates with colleagues from CFS (H) Sqn after reaching 7,000 hours



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Cobra strikes

**UK showdown for
NATO Top Guns**



NATO EXERCISE: Royal Canadian Air Force F-18 pilot Lt/Col Renaud prepares for a sortie at Waddington. Inset left, Hercules delivers at Waddington

Simon Mander

NATO TOP guns are testing their war-fighting skills in one of the UK's largest combat exercises, based at Waddington.

American F-18 Hornets and C-130 Hercules transports are among visitors joining German and Italian aircraft launching simulated combat sorties from the Lincolnshire base during Exercise Cobra Warrior.

Gp Capt Ray Morley said: "Cobra Warrior is one of our

Combat Air Collective Training events where we practise in the joint space alongside our Allied partners, defeating peer threats in a contested, degraded and operationally limited environment, at a time and place of our choosing."

The Cobra war drill includes USAF F-35 Lightning II, F-15 Eagle, B-52 Stratofortress, KC-135 Stratotanker, KC-46 Pegasus, CV-22 Osprey, and C-130J Super Hercules, Italian Typhoons and G550 early warning aircraft.

The training aims to develop joint mission planning, integration and tactical skills within the framework of Nato's Composite Air Operations strategy.

USAF F-35s and RCAF F-15s are challenging German Typhoons for control of the air during realistic air-to-air combat sorties, supported by tankers and ground crews from across the Alliance.

They will be up against German Typhoons whose Top Aces unit will act as aggressor aircraft.

The Nato-focused large-scale multinational exercise is designed to challenge warfighting tactics in a peer-on-peer environment, a spokesman said.

Aircrew will plan missions as if they are facing a capable adversary and UK personnel will hope to pass Qualified Weapons Instructor courses as part of the exercise.

Waddington will provide Air Traffic Control, Fire and Rescue Services, and accommodation throughout the two-week drill.

Forces record for state visit



THOUSANDS OF military personnel took part in the largest-ever British military ceremonial welcome for a foreign head of state as US President Donald Trump arrived for his second state visit to the UK.

The King's Colour Sqn welcomed the President and First Lady Melania Trump as Air Force One landed at Stansted before a force of UK-US F-35s performed a flypast over the capital.

The three-day visit saw the largest guard of honour ever in the UK at Windsor as the Red Arrows flew over the Royal residence.

Atlas ace gets the point

Alex Gill
Brize Norton

ATLAS ENGINEERING ace Flt Lt Ewers has been presented with the prestigious Gill Sword for improving spares supply for the RAF's transporter aircraft.

The Brize-based aviator was given the honour for overseeing the contracts process which has now been adopted across the Airbus A400 fleet, leading international meetings in Madrid with German, Spanish and Belgian operators.

He was nominated for the award by Wg Cdr John Gorman,

who said: "His achievements go well beyond that expected of his rank. He has often been the only UK representative in multinational and industry forums, leading on UK requirements.

"The way he has conducted himself has not only provided a class-leading solution, it has also positioned the UK as a leading nation in the A400M multinational enterprise."

The sword, first awarded in 1979, is competed for annually by Junior Officers of the Logistics Profession.

AWARD:
Atlas
engineer
Flt Lt
Ewers was
presented
with the Gill
Sword



In Brief



REUNITED: Black Buck veterans Bob Tuxford (left) and Martin Withers. Below, Vulcan lands at Ascension after a raid

Falklands vets Buck in business

Mick Britton

V-FORCE PILOTS who took part in the legendary Black Buck bombing raids on Stanley air strip during the Falklands War were reunited at the recent Yorkshire Air Museums Victor celebration.

Vulcan Captain Martin Withers and Victor pilot Bob Tuxford joined forces at the event as organisers fired up the engines on the last

Victor, XL231, dubbed 'Lusty Linda' because of the cheeky nose art added during the Gulf War, and which Bob flew as an instructor on 232 Operational Conversion Unit.

At 15 hours long, the Black Buck raids launched from Ascension Island in 1982 were the longest bombing missions in the history of air warfare and involved the transfer of 50,000 gallons of fuel from the Victor tankers.





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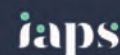
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Wedge pledge

BRITAIN IS set to build military aircraft for the United States for the first time in more than 50 years.

Under a new contract between the UK and Boeing the RAF's fleet of E-7 Wedgetail aircraft will be modified in Birmingham.

It will see two 737 aircraft overhauled and upgraded to create advanced prototype early-warning surveillance aircraft and will generate more than £36million to the economy.

Defence Secretary John Healey said: "This new deal with Boeing creates and supports hundreds of jobs across the UK."

More than 40 UK-based suppliers are involved in the UK E-7 programme, including the construction of two new engineering facilities at Lossiemouth.

Britain has already ordered three Wedgetails which can detect incoming hostile aircraft, missiles or drones from more than 300 miles away, and are scheduled to enter service next year.

Gunner Alex Beefs up for Tower post

Tracey Allen

A FORMER Gunner has become a Beefeater after a distinguished 34-year career in the RAF Regiment – joining the Yeoman Warders at the Tower of London.

Alex Macdonald, from the Wirral, served with The Queen's Colour Squadron before joining the RAF UK Youth and STEM team.

His wife Sara, a Sqn Ldr, won't be joining him just yet at his apartment in the historic Tower grounds – she's taken up a posting in Washington DC as a Liaison Officer.

He added: "It is a tremendous honour to join the ranks of the Yeoman Body and be selected in continuing a tradition that stretches back centuries."

"Helping to bring the Tower's history to life for visitors is incredibly exciting and I am proud to serve alongside my



YEO-BROS: Veteran Gunner Alex Macdonald (far left) joins new Army recruit Dan Partridge at Tower of London

fellow Yeoman Warders and contribute to this unique and historic institution."

Alex signed up for Tower duty alongside ex-soldier Daniel Partridge, who served for more than 20 years with the

Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters, the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, and the King's Royal Hussars.

Dan added: "It still feels surreal to think that I once watched the Yeoman Warders

on television, and now I am here, living it every day.

"I'm looking forward to welcoming visitors and sharing the Tower's extraordinary history with people from around the world."



A POSEIDON P-8 has been refuelled in UK airspace for the first time marking a milestone in the maritime patrol aircraft programme.

The 42(Bomber) Sqn P-8 took fuel from a USAF KC-135

Stratotanker from Mildenhall during Exercise Cobra Warrior.

A spokesman said: "P-8 is already a versatile aircraft but being able to extend time in the air will be of huge benefit to both the RAF and our Allies."

In Brief

Chutes you

GREAT BRITISH Bake Off judge Prue Leith stole the show when she hit the catwalk at London Fashion week sporting a frock made from RAF parachute silk supplied by Brize Norton.

The 84-year-old celebrity cook donned the outfit as part of the event's 'sustainability in fashion' theme.



Advertorial.



FROM SOLDIER TO CIVILIAN: THE UNSEEN TOLL OF MEDICAL DISCHARGE

For 15 years, Craig lived his dream as a Royal Engineer in the British Army, rising to the rank of Lance Corporal. From childhood, he had only ever imagined one future: a life in the military.

“As a child, I used to say to my mum and dad, ‘I don’t really need school – I’m going in the Army,’” he said. “It was all I ever wanted. So, it was a kick in the teeth to be told I couldn’t do it anymore.”

Craig’s military career was cut short by a wrist injury he sustained playing rugby for his regiment. The injury was initially missed. As Craig continued to work and exercise, it got worse until one day it completely gave way. Further tests revealed it had become a serious and complex break. After major reconstruction surgery, Craig was sent home to recover. Complications followed, and further operations were needed.

“For 14 to 15 months, I was completely isolated at home. I barely spoke to my unit. I was forgotten,” Craig said. “Before the injury, I was a ‘can-do-anything invincible soldier.’ Afterwards, I couldn’t even do basic household or garden tasks. I felt useless, a burden

to my wife. I was no longer invincible – I was broken.”

Despite his hope of returning to duty, Craig was sent to a medical board and discharged from service in November 2018.

“By the next morning, I wasn’t a soldier anymore. Just like that. When I handed back my kit, most people had moved on. Very few people in the squadron even knew who I was. I felt like I’d never existed,” he said. “The process made me feel isolated and unimportant after giving 15 good years to the Army.”

Craig’s experience is not unique. Every day, five people are medically discharged from the Armed Forces due to illness or injury*. Many, like Craig, struggle with the abrupt end of their military career and face the daunting task of adjusting to civilian life.

“I was given three months to prepare for discharge – most people leaving the military get 12 months. I was still receiving treatment, still in pain, and had no idea what came next,” Craig recalled. “It took months for my first Army pension payment to come through. Without my family, I don’t know what I would’ve done. I can see how so many veterans end up homeless.”

Help for Heroes has been a vital part of Craig’s recovery.

The charity provided him with occupational health support, pain management advice, and a specially designed wrist splint. He also receives therapy for post-traumatic stress disorder through their Hidden Wounds service, which offers counselling and psychological support tailored to veterans and their families.

Craig’s medical discharge was tough for his family too, especially his wife, Georgina. The couple have two young children together.

“Craig’s discharge has been an emotional rollercoaster,” she said. “He lost the only job he ever wanted and his sense of identity. There was huge pressure on me to support him through the pain and provide for our family. The system must change to support families during these vulnerable times.”

Craig has since retrained as an electrical engineer but worries about the long-term impact of his injury. Now, he’s encouraging others facing similar challenges to seek support.

“Don’t be afraid to ask for help,” he said. “Help for Heroes are always there when I need them, but it shouldn’t fall to charities to do what the military should be doing for its own.”

* MOD: Annual Medical Discharges in the UK Regular Armed Forces (2024)



Help for Heroes is there for anyone who’s worn the uniform, for as long as it takes. Find out more at helpforheroes.org.uk/get-help.

**HELP for
HEROES**

Drone deal ramps up production

Simon Mander

THE UK'S largest drone production facility is to open next year in Swindon making weapons for the RAF.

The new factory, operated by Tekever, was announced by the Defence Secretary John Healey last month.

Swindon helped produce the Spitfire in World War II and the new site will make weapons including the RAF's StormShroud. In May, the

Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced an additional £19 million of investment by the Air Force into Tekever's AR3 StormShroud drones.

Since the start of the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the UK has bought £270 million of Tekever drones to provide to Ukraine, used extensively in destroying advanced Russian air defences.

Mr Healey said: "This government is making defence an engine for growth across the UK. By backing Britain's defence

industry, we strengthen both our economy and national security."

Tekever's new facility will be its fourth location in the UK.

The 254,000 square foot site will support the full drone production cycle – from producing prototypes to manufacturing, research and development.

It will bring core production of the AR5 unmanned aerial system to the UK for the first time, while scaling up existing work on the AR3.



In Brief



ON TARGET: Saints set their sights on success this season

Touch down at Leeming

PREMIERSHIP RUGBY acs the Northampton Saints put their pre-season fitness to the test at Leeming ahead of their clash with rivals Exeter.

The team took on a military training challenge in the station gym under the supervision of Air Force PTIs and were given a tour of the 34 Sqn counter drone centre before hitting the Leeming pitch to showcase their skills.

Brize hosts civic chiefs

RAF BRIZE NORTON welcomed the Mayor of Cardiff Cllr Adrian Robson and senior Senedd member James Evans as Welsh-based Reservists showcased their role at the UK's largest Air Force station.

614 (City of Glamorgan) Sqn deployed to the Oxfordshire station carrying out a security and ground support role and extended the invitation to their local political chiefs.

Mr Evans said: "It was great to see Welsh reservists making such a contribution to UK Defence at Brize Norton."



Eagles have landed

Japanese combat jets' UK debut at Coningsby



Simon Mander

JAPANESE AIRCRAFT made their first flight to Europe to take part in Britain's Atlantic Eagles mission.

The country's F-15s touched down at Coningsby, marking the first time they've ventured west in their 71-year history.

Two jets supported by KC-767, KC-46A and C-2 transport aircraft, along with approximately 180 personnel, joined the latest UK-based war drill.

Japan Air Self-Defense Force Chief of Staff, General Morita Takehiro, said: "This marks our first fighter deployment to Europe in the 71-year history of the Koku-Jieitai. We have named this mission 'Atlantic

Eagles', symbolising our F-15 jets spreading their wings across the Atlantic."

The route included stops at America's Eielson Air Force Base, Canada's Goose Bay station and Germany's Laage complex before arriving at Coningsby and Brize Norton.

Chief of the Air Staff ACM Harv Smyth said: "The arrival of your fighters on UK soil is not only a milestone for the Koku-Jieitai, but also a powerful symbol of how far our partnership has advanced. This is not simply a visit; it is a demonstration of operational trust and shared purpose."

It builds on a summer of high-profile defence engagements with the UK Carrier Strike Group conducting joint training

with Japanese F-2, F-15, and F-35 fighters alongside RAF F-35Bs.

"The security of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions are interconnected," said Gen Takehiro.

The deployment marks the beginning of a new era in defence cooperation, laying the groundwork for enduring partnerships that will shape the future of air power and safeguard shared values across generations.

Last month, the defence ministers of both nations released their first joint statement, acknowledging strengthening relations and defence cooperation reaching new dimensions.

The Japan Air Self-Defense Force was established in 1954.

News



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CAS honour for lost ace



FAMILY HONOUR: CAS, ACM Harv Smyth (right), presents Flt Lt Davis's medals to his grandchildren, Helen Davis, Jules Jermyn and Rob Davis, at the RAF Museum

Tracey Allen

THE FAMILY of a Battle of Britain fighter ace who died fighting off Nazi aircraft over Kent have been presented with his war medals by the Chief of the Air Staff.

601 Sqn Hurricane pilot Flt Lt Carl Raymond Davis earned the Distinguished Flying Cross after shooting down 11 enemy aircraft months before losing his life when his unit was attacked by more than 50 Me 109s at the height of the Battle of Britain in September, 1940.

Outnumbered 10 to one, the 11 RAF pilots shot down five Luftwaffe fighters. Flt Lt Davis, known as Ray, was one of two pilots killed when his stricken aircraft crashed into a garden near Tunbridge Wells.

His widow was presented with her husband's DFC in late 1940, but his other campaign medals – the 1939-45 Star with Battle of Britain Clasp, Aircrew Europe Star and 1939-45 Medal – were never claimed.

CAS, ACM Harv Smyth, presented the awards to the Battle of Britain hero's grandchildren, Helen Davis, Jules Jermyn and Rob Davis, at the RAF Museum as the nation marked the 85th anniversary of the epic fight to halt the Nazi invasion.

Speaking at the ceremony at the Hendon venue, ACM Smyth said: "It is my great honour and a true privilege to present Ray's



AWARDS: Flt Lt Davis's DFC, Star with Battle of Britain clasp, Europe Star and WWII Service Medal

hard-earned medals to his grandchildren... on behalf of a very grateful Royal Air Force and nation."

A chance conversation with Ray's descendants at a commemorative stone laying service at the National Memorial Arboretum led to the presentation of the medals at the dinner at the RAF Museum in Hendon, a spokesman said.

Speaking at the event, 601 Sqn's Wg Cdr John Chappell added: "It was a great privilege to be part of this story and to help the family claim Ray's campaign medals and thus complete a missing part of his story and legacy."

"When collecting Ray's DFC from the family it was very emotional to be reading the personal letters that he had written in the days preceding his death, which give an indication of the combat fatigue that he and his fellow squadron pilots were suffering from at that point in the battle."





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John Williams

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Lincoln Cathedral

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Compere Melvyn Prior

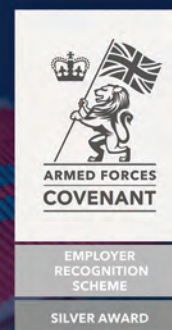
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Instructor's 'legacy lives on at Valley...'

Staff Reporter

RAF Valley

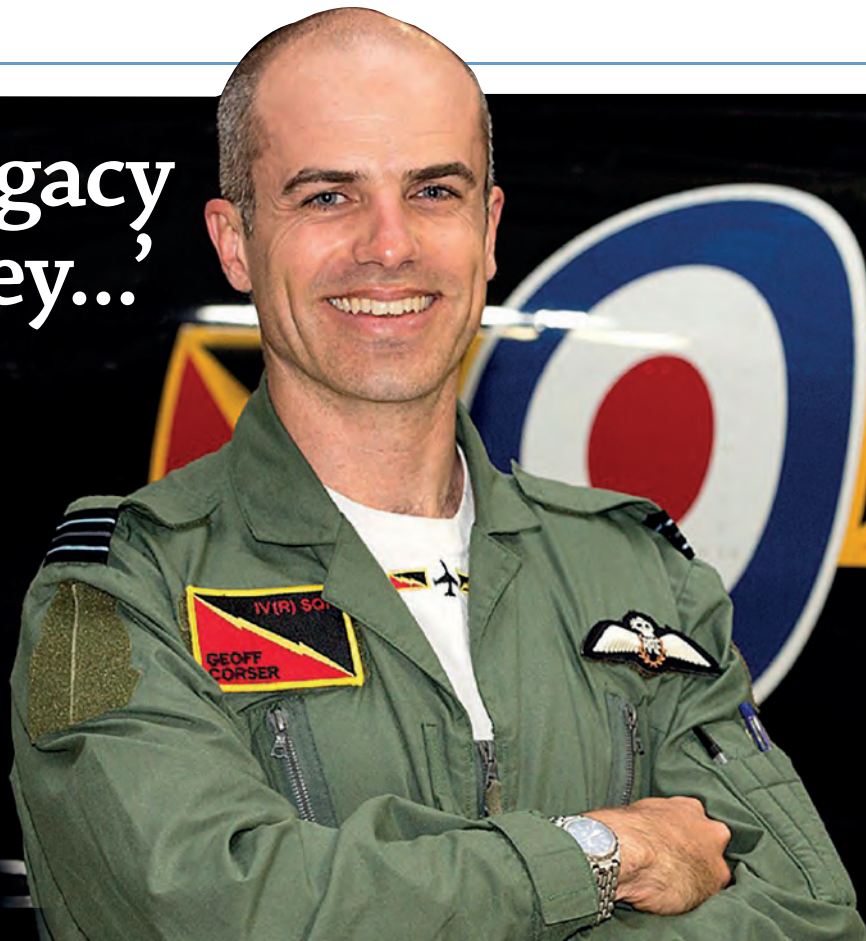
TRIBUTES HAVE been paid to an RAF pilot killed in a paragliding accident.

Flying instructor Flt Lt Geoff Corser died at Dinorwig Quarry, North Wales.

A funeral service took place at St Padarn's Church, Llanberis with a wake at the nearby Royal Victoria Hotel.

4 Flying Training School Commandant Gp Capt Peter Ward said: "Valley is heartbroken at the loss of our colleague and friend, Flt Lt Geoff Corser, he was a brilliant instructor and fighter pilot.

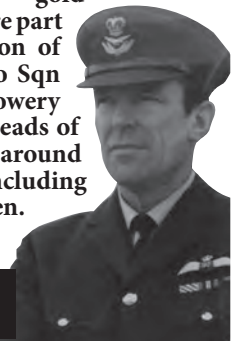
"His professional legacy - excellence, selflessness, humility - lives on through the many Royal Air Force and Royal Navy fighter pilots he helped to train who now defend our nation at home and abroad."



Off the cuff

CUFFLINKS PRESENTED by Queen Elizabeth II to the RAF pilot who flew the body of the Duke of Windsor back to the UK in 1972 have sold at auction for £1,700 - more than four times their estimate.

The gold cufflinks were part of a collection of gifts given to Sqn Ldr Denis Lowery from royal heads of state from around the world, including the late Queen.



SQN LDR LOWERY



£20m boost for Forces firepower

Simon Mander

MILITARY PERSONNEL are to get an improved machine gun under a £20m deal.

The 10-year contract will overcome obsolescence, improve performance and reliability, and reduce through-life support costs for the Armed Forces' L111A1 weapon.

Defence Equipment and Support awarded the work to FN UK, the only manufacturer and assembler of machine guns in the UK.

It will see the firm undertake a comprehensive mid-life improvement programme over two years, followed by eight years of in-service support at its Kent plant.

The L111A1 is an updated version of the Browning M2 and is a direct fire small calibre weapon, with an effective range

of approximately 1,800 metres.

DE&S director Richard Murray said: "This contract ensures our forces will continue to benefit from one of the world's most capable heavy machine guns, with enhanced performance and reliability for years to come."

The contract comes as FN UK marks 50 years of manufacturing in Britain.

The company traces its origins to Manroy Engineering in 1975, which initially produced machine gun parts for the Ministry of Defence.

Upgrades are expected to commence with 18 per cent of machine guns to be delivered by March 2026, 50 per cent by March 2027, and the remaining 32 per cent by March 2028.

NATO boss crosses the Finnish line

Simon Mander

AN AIR FORCE training boss led a two-ship Hawk jet formation against simulated threats and his former instructor during a visit to Nato newcomer Finland.

Alliance Chair of the Flight Training Europe Steering Board, Air Cdre Rob Caine, took the controls of the country's Live, Virtual and Constructive system at Tikkakoski Airbase.

He was facing his old tutor and principal officer Jas Hawker in the fast jet training mission, who was now his virtual adversary, operating from a ground station via datalink.

Enemy aircraft, though computer-generated, appeared on cockpit displays as if they were airborne during the sortie, which would have required eight jets just a few years ago.

Despite Hawker's best-efforts, Caine won - which he chalked up to "20 years of excellent



TIKK TOP:: Air Cdre Rob Caine takes the helm at Tikkakoski Air Base during training sorties with Finnish crews

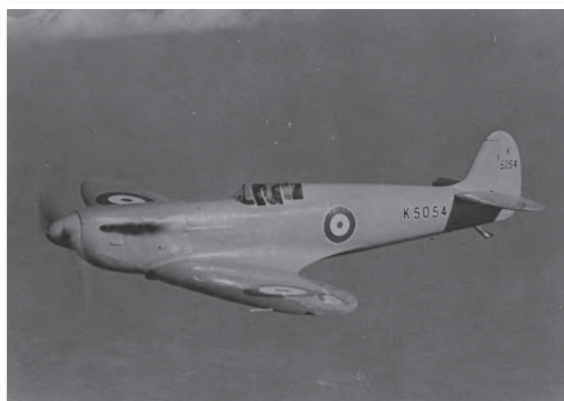
instruction finally paying off."

"The Finnish Air Force fast jet pilot training system is certainly world-class," he added.

"It ably demonstrates how

an agile and innovative Air Force can adopt technology into existing resources to increase the effectiveness of their pilot training."

Feature Genius behind the Spitfire



TEST FLIGHT: The Type 300 high above the Hampshire countryside on May 11, 1936, flown by Mutt Summers. The picture was taken from the company's Miles 'chase plane', flown by Jeffrey Quill with Mitchell aboard
© National Aerospace Library, Royal Aeronautical Society



PROVING FLIGHT: Mitchell (right) aboard a Swan II in a wicker-backed seat, for the Southampton-Channel Islands service. Likely flown by Henri Baird in June 1926
PHOTO: Mitchell Family Archive

HE IS considered one of the greatest names in aviation history – a visionary engineer with a passion for speed. His legacy is the Spitfire, regarded as the most iconic fighter aircraft of all time.

Tragically, Reginald Mitchell didn't live to see the Spitfire in action, but his innovative work led to triumph at the Battle of Britain.

Now leading aviation historian, broadcaster and author Paul Beaver has written a biography of RJ Mitchell. In *Mitchell, Father of the Spitfire* (Elliott & Thompson, eandtbooks.com) he draws on new interviews, private archives and previously unpublished material for the book, which has been hailed as an exhilarating biography that tells Mitchell's full story for the first time.

Obsession

Beaver is also an historic aircraft pilot who has been flying the Spitfire since 2011. The book is dedicated to 'my long-suffering family who have supported me through the years of my Spitfire obsession.'

He explained: "Reginald Mitchell has been in my consciousness ever since I can remember. Coming from Hampshire, I knew the Spitfire was our county's aeroplane, but it was a while before I realised that Mitchell was actually from Staffordshire."

"When I learned that he had died aged 42 after accomplishing



AUTHOR: Spitfire fanatic and pilot Paul Beaver

PHOTO: JOHN GOODMAN

so much – winning the Schneider Trophy, designing magnificent flying boats and putting together the team which created the finest fighter aeroplane of World War II – I was stunned.

"Anyone with an engineering background will understand the processes of conceiving an aeroplane but few will have realised that Mitchell had failed in his first attempt. The Type 224 of 1934 was as useless as it was ugly. Mitchell was not overwhelmed; he sat down with his trusted lieutenants and designed something better. I wanted to know more about this man and, finding very little about his personality or background, I relished the opportunity my publisher gave me to write the biography of a great engineer."

He described Mitchell as 'a highly innovative and cool-headed engineer.'

Beaver added: "Having a strong mechanical background from his apprenticeship in the railway locomotive industry – then at the cutting edge of engineering – Mitchell could have created any form of transportation, but his heart was in aeronautics. As an aeronautical engineer, few surpassed him in Britain at the time, especially when he joined forces with Sir Henry Royce at Rolls-Royce, the engine maker."

Supermarine

"From the very beginning of his career at Supermarine, it was clear that Mitchell had the qualities of a genius – innovation and forethought, radical vision and attention to detail, to name but four reasons for his outstanding achievements. Imagine, he was Chief Designer at 24 and Chief Engineer just months later, finally being appointed Technical Director within a few short years."

During his research Beaver discovered that Mitchell was 'a real family man and dog lover.'

"I researched his family background to understand his roots and travelled to Staffordshire to meet descendants," he said. "Stoke-on-Trent has a very fine museum with its own Spitfire standing proud. They are perhaps



prouder of Mitchell in Stoke-on-Trent than in Southampton, where he spent his working life."

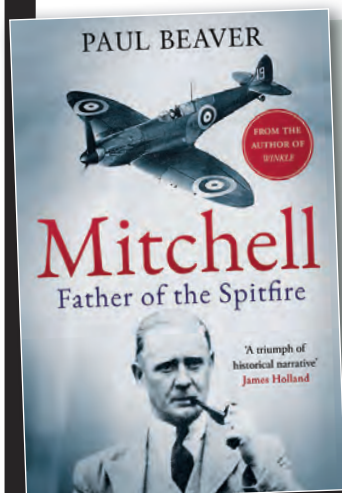
In his introduction the author states that the book 'will challenge many of the myths that surround Mitchell's life and work.'

He explained: "Many people of my generation first came across Mitchell through a 1942 Hollywood propaganda film *The First of the Few*, starring, produced and directed by Leslie Howard. He wanted to make a highly emotive, pre-war aeroplane movie in which the courage of the star – Mitchell – would be a metaphor for plucky Britain. The film had been conceived at a time when

America was still not in the war and Howard was hugely engaged in promoting its support. The issue is that the film is full of partial truths, fabrication and complete fantasy. Too many people have come to believe that the film is a documentary and represents a true history. Hopefully, my book will help to dispel some myths and give credit to the others in the Supermarine team – more than 150 of them."

Alf Faddy

He added: "Mitchell cared about his people and trusted them. I love the story of Alf Faddy, the design team leader, and Mitchell sitting down after



Copies up for grabs

YOU COULD win a copy of *Mitchell, Father of the Spitfire* – for your chance to own one, tell us:

How old was Reginald Mitchell when he became Chief Designer at Supermarine?

Email your answer, marked Mitchell book competition, to: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe HP14 4UE, to arrive by October 17.

Win!

Tracey Allen



ICON: Type 300 prototype camouflaged for war after the Munich Crisis in 1938, by which time Mitchell was dead
© National Aerospace Library, Royal Aeronautical Society



ENGINEER: Mitchell
Photo: National Aerospace Library

Mitchell: True of aviation

a Sunday lunch and sketching out the general arrangement of the new fighter on the wall behind the dining table, only to have Mrs Faddy wipe it off with some scolding.

“Faddy’s son David told me the story with great glee, and I am sure only a little embellishment. David, too, was an aeronautical engineer with a distinguished career at the Royal Aircraft Establishment. Sadly, he too has passed away. Mitchell had the courage to pass the key design work to his lieutenants and to adopt the Shenstone elliptical wing design on which the Canadian engineer had worked in Germany for his doctoral thesis.”

Mitchell died from cancer in 1937 after first battling the disease

in 1933. What might he have gone on to achieve had he not passed away so young?

Beaver said: “Besides the B12/36 bomber, he was working on a high-speed amphibious flying boat and a twin-engined long-range version of the Spitfire. One of the great what-ifs of WWII aviation is what Mitchell could have done with the jet engine. What would he have created? And in the peace after 1945, might he have ‘fathered’ a long-range commercial airliner with his team at Supermarine?”

Wartime

He added: “I have wanted to write this book for 40 years to tell the real story of the Spitfire. I am keen to explore further the finer

details and preserve the knowledge that we have – including my notes from talking to Supermarine workers, pilots, ground crew and those who actually saw the Spitfire fly in wartime.”

What is it like to fly the legendary aircraft?

Beaver explained: “The Spitfire is every pilot’s dream. When a pilot talks about thinking a fighter into a turn, he is talking about the Spitfire. It is light to the touch and very responsive. I was lucky to have a number of opportunities to fly the Spitfire, starting at Duxford in a two-seater and working up my knowledge to the front seat. Now, I stand and watch a new generation of pilots take enthusiasts flying from Biggin Hill or Goodwood.”



FACTORY: Supermarine Works at Woolston PHOTO: AUTHOR’S COLLECTION

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Descendants honour Battle of Britain great and newly-recognised member of 'The Few'



Sir Keith's relatives in pilgrimage from New Zealand

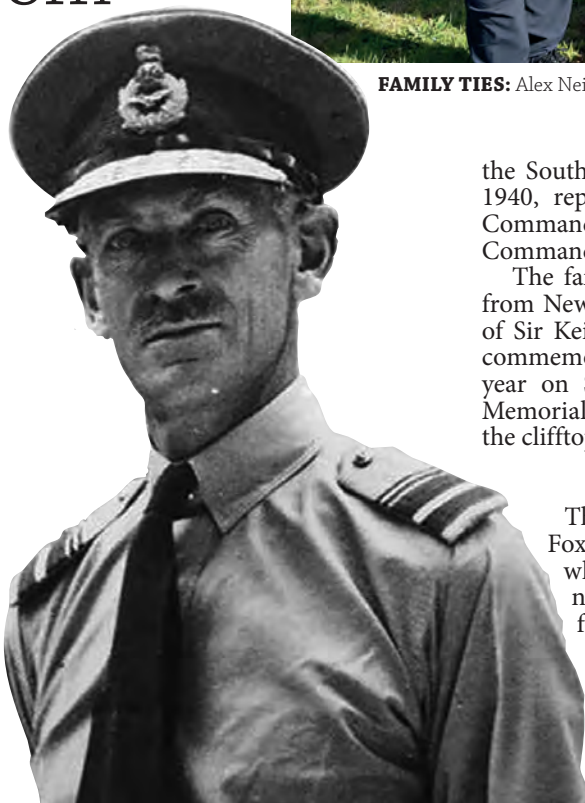
By Malcolm Triggs

THREE DESCENDANTS of one of the greatest names in military aviation history paid their respects to their great-uncle at a commemoration to mark the 85th anniversary of Battle of Britain Day.

The event, at the Battle of Britain Memorial at Capel-le-Ferne near Folkestone in Kent, paid tribute to Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Park (pictured right), one of the men who helped mastermind the RAF's victory in the aerial conflict that changed the course of history.

On Battle of Britain Day, September 15, Brian Park, the grandson of Sir Keith's brother Frank, joined Alex Neill, the grandson of Sir Keith's sister Lily, and Susie Hunt, the granddaughter of his eldest sister Frances, to lay a wreath below a bust of the famed wartime commander.

Sir Keith was in command of Fighter Command's 11 Group, which was responsible for defending London and



FAMILY TIES: Alex Neill, Brian Park and Susie Hunt at bust of their famous relation, and laying wreaths at memorial, left

the South East corner of the country in 1940, reporting directly to Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of RAF Fighter Command, Sir Hugh Dowding.

The family members, visiting the UK from New Zealand, which was the home of Sir Keith, also took part in the short commemorative service that is held each year on September 15 at the National Memorial to The Few, the centrepiece of the cliff-top tribute.

Sarkar

They also visited the Christopher Foxley-Norris Memorial Wall, on which the Air Chief Marshal's name now appears after he was formally recognised as one of 'The Few', the airmen who took part in the Battle.

The research that led to that honour being granted was led by historian, author and honorary vice-president of

the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust Dilip Sarkar, who has recently completed a one million word official history of the Battle for the Trust.

On September 14 Sarkar was joined by historian and filmmaker Philip Harvey to present a well-attended presentation entitled *Missing in Action: Resting in Peace?* which looked at the fate of the 'missing Few' – the airmen who were shot down and listed as 'missing' during the Battle.

Philip's short film *Forgotten* was also shown and the two men answered questions from those attending before Dilip signed copies of his eight-volume epic.

Sarkar, a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and of the Royal Aeronautical Society, said it had been a privilege to have met members of the Park family and to see Sir Keith's name on the memorial wall at Capel-le-Ferne after the author's work to prove he flew operationally during the Battle.

Graduations

BBMIF flypast for Duke



REVIEWING OFFICER: HRH The Duke of Gloucester inspects officers, and takes salute, right

PHOTOS: ANDREW WHEELER

THE DUKE of Gloucester was the Reviewing Officer for the Sovereign's Review at RAF Cranwell.

He arrived on the College Parade Square escorted by the Commandant of the Royal Air Force College, Air Cdre John Lyle, to take the Royal Salute, with a spectacular flypast from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

After inspecting the parade of graduating officers, HRH presented prizes to the top performing cadets from the course and annual awards to those who have completed Modular Initial Officer Training over the last 12 months.

A flypast by a Typhoon from 29 Sqn, based at RAF Coningsby, marked the conclusion of the parade.

Air Cdre Lyle said: "It is a privilege to welcome His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester to review our graduating officers as they embark on the start of their commissioned careers. I am incredibly proud of the young women and men that have been deemed to meet the high standards required to be an officer in the Royal Air Force, and



to have the chance to showcase this to The Duke."

The Sovereign's Review witnessed the graduation of officer cadets from No. 36 Modular Initial Officer Training Course, No. 31 Commissioned Warrant Officer Course and No.1 Commissioning Flight Sergeant Course.

After the parade, The Duke met with graduating officers, their families and friends in College Hall Officers' Mess before planting a lime tree in front of station personnel and children from both Cranwell Primary School and RAFAKidz nursery.

The Band of the Royal Air Force College provided musical accompaniment to the parade, under the direction of Fg Off Tim Hynd, Director of Music.

Feature

AS A formation of Luftwaffe bombers droned towards the Firth of Forth, intent on knocking the Royal Navy ships docked at Rosyth out of the war before it had barely started, reservists from 602 Sqn raced to their Spitfires to meet their foe.

Among them was George Pinkerton, a farmer from Renfrewshire. He had joined the Auxiliary Air Force in 1933, and now, six years later, had a Nazi bomber in his sights. Letting off an initial burst from his machine guns, he had just fired the opening shots of the air war, and later that day would assist 603 (City of Edinburgh) Sqn in sending a Junkers 88 spiralling downwards into the sea. The action wouldn't go unnoticed, with Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding, Commander-in-Chief of Fighter Command, declaring: "Well done. First blood to the Auxiliaries."

Twelve days later, George's colleague, Archie McKellar, a plasterer by trade, would chalk up another first by downing the first German aircraft on British soil. The Heinkel He 111H-2 would crashland near the small village of Humber in East Lothian, with locals flocking to the site to catch an up-close glimpse of the enemy.

Firsts, it seemed, were in the very DNA of 602 Sqn. Perhaps that's unsurprising, as last month the squadron celebrated arguably its

A century of firsts for 602 Sqn

THE CREATION of 602 Sqn, the RAF's first Auxiliary Air Force squadron, made history and it's something Glasgow's own have continued to do ever since, writes Benjamin Russell

biggest first, which it achieved on the very day it came into existence 100 years ago.

In May 1925, 502 (Ulster) Sqn was formed in Belfast as part of the RAF Special Reserve, a mix of regular personnel and reservists. But later that year, on September 12, 602 (City of Glasgow) Sqn became the first unit of the newly-created Auxiliary Air Force – an organisation made up entirely of civilian reservists, and the foundation of today's RAF Reserve.

This perhaps set the bar for 602, and making history would become something of a habit for "Glasgow's Own" – in peacetime as well as during conflict. Such was the case in 1933, when the summit of Everest still remained unclimbed. But OC 602, Douglas Douglas-Hamilton, the 14th Duke of Hamilton, had another idea of how to conquer it – approach it from the air.



NEW ROLE: 602 Sqn personnel

And so it was that the Duke and fellow 602 man David McIntyre braved sub-zero temperatures and extreme altitudes, in open-cockpit Westland aircraft fitted with oxygen systems, to become the first men to fly over the world's tallest mountain. Both were awarded the Air Force Cross and granted the Freedom of Renfrew for the feat.

What's more, the aerial photographs they captured would be of great benefit to Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay – making that untouched summit a little more familiar than it otherwise would have been when they planted their flag on it two decades later.

After those initial clashes in the skies over Scotland, the squadron

would go on to play a major part in World War II; from the Battle of Britain, defending the Clydeside during the Blitz, to covering the D-Day landings and countless missions across Europe.

Budget cuts saw the squadron disbanded in 1957 before it was reformed in 2006, and today its reservists provide expertise in intelligence, logistics, cyber, air operations and law. Its personnel have deployed worldwide, while also supporting the London Olympics and the UK's Covid-19 response.

But, crucially, it continues its pioneering legacy, last year making history again with the creation of the first dedicated reserve Space Flight in Scotland, which works

directly with UK Space Command, supporting its work in assuring the security and utility of the Space Domain.

One hundred years to the day of its creation, the squadron celebrated reaching its first century with a civic reception held at the Glasgow City Chambers, hosted by the Lord Provost and attended by Air Cdre His Grace the Duke of Hamilton & Brandon.

It also marked the occasion by holding a Friends and Families Day at its Kings Park headquarters, and with a joint centenary and Battle of Britain service at Glasgow Cathedral.

Sqn Ldr James Martin VR, OC 602 Sqn, said: "I am extremely honoured to be a member of the squadron at such a milestone in our illustrious history. Celebrating a century of service is a once-in-a-lifetime moment. I am both humbled and proud of all our RAF Reserve personnel.

"From flying biplanes in the early years, to now recruiting personnel from civilian life to serve in cutting-edge professions such as space and cyber, our centenary celebrates the RAuxAF journey – and we look forward to another 100 years."

at Sovereign's Review



SWORD OF HONOUR: Off Cdt Tynan



RED-LETTER DAY: Duke presents King's Medal to Fg Off Day



MACROBERT SWORD OF HONOUR: Fg Off Susca

AWARD WINNERS

● **The Sword of Honour** – Off Cdt C.P. Tynan. Awarded to the RAF cadet who, during Modular Initial Officer Training, has demonstrated outstanding ability, leadership and other officer qualities and potential for further development.

● **The Hennessy Trophy and Philip Sassoon Memorial Prize** – Off Cdt S.L. Morris. Awarded to the RAF cadet who has proved to be the best all-round cadet, other than the Sword of Honour winner.

● **The BAE Systems Trophy** – Off Cdt J.F. Davies. Awarded to the RAF or International cadet who has attained the highest marks for professional studies on the course.

● **The MacRobert Prize** – Off Cdt O.E. Swanepoel. Awarded to the cadet who, in the opinion of their peers, has made the greatest contribution to the bourse.

● **The Group Captain Williams Memorial Trophy** – Off Cdt S.E. Fraser. Awarded to the RAF cadet who, during MIOT, has shown the greatest improvement.

● **The Overseas Students' Prize** – Off Cdt R.S. Al-Shafi. Awarded to the international cadet who has produced the best overall performance in leadership, officer qualities and professional studies on the course.

● **The RAF Club Prize** – Off Cdt E.E. Conroy-Oakes. Awarded to the RAF cadet who, in the eyes of the directing staff, has shown grit and unwavering perseverance, meeting every challenge with enthusiasm.



FLYPAST: BMBF aircraft and Spitfire Award winner AR Ellen Turnbull, right

ANNUAL PRIZE WINNERS 2024

● **King's Medal** – Fg Off S. Day. Awarded to the RAF Officer who, during MIOT, proved to be the most outstanding cadet of the year.

● **The MacRobert Sword of Honour** – Fg Off M. Susca. Awarded each year to the Royal Air Force Reserve officer who, during MIOT, proved to be the most outstanding cadet of the year.

● **The Jackie Moggridge Spitfire Award** – AR J. Ellen Turnbull. Awarded to the female aircrew or engineer who has best demonstrated outstanding potential.

● **The Argentine Air Force Prize** – Fg Off S. Day. Awarded to the RAF Officer, irrespective of branch, who attained certain high standards in all aspects of training at Cranwell. This prize is always awarded to The King's Medal winner, who has proved to be the most outstanding cadet of the year.

● **The R S May Memorial Prize** – Fg Off S. Day. The award is given to The King's Medal Winner who in the calendar year has proved to be the most outstanding cadet of the year.

● **The Ecole De L'Air Trophy** – Fg Off L. Jacklin. Awarded to the RAF Officer who produced the most distinguished performance of the year in Academic Studies.

● **The Prince Bandar Trophy** – Fg Off L. Jacklin. Awarded to the RAF Officer who submitted the best presentation of the year on a Defence-related topic.

● **The John Constable Memorial Prize** – Fg Off R. McDowell. Awarded to the RAF Officer, under the age of 25 at entry to the RAF College, who demonstrated the greatest potential during the previous year.

● **The Adrian Nicholas Award** – Fg Off D. Veale. Awarded to the RAF officer who, amongst the recipients of the Sarah Moland Memorial Prize for outstanding qualities of courage and fortitude to complete Modularised Initial Officer Training during the year, has stood out in that most inspiring of cohorts.

● **The Officers' Association Prize** – Fg Off R. Tapscott. Awarded to the RAF Officer who was judged to have contributed most to charity, or to those less fortunate in society.

● **The Cranwellian's Association Prize** – Fg Off P. Smith. Awarded to the best all-round RAF Officer who, amongst the recipients of the Hennessy Trophy and Phillip Sassoon Memorial Prize winners, has stood out to be the most deserving of the award during the year.



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Service for BoB 85th

Staff reporter

CHIEF OF the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Harv Smyth, was among the special guests at a service of thanksgiving and rededication held to mark the 85th anniversary of the Battle of Britain at Westminster Abbey last month.

Also present was the Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and, representing The King, Marshal of the Royal Air Force, The Lord Stirrup.

Before the service began wreaths were laid at the RAF Memorial by serving personnel from New Zealand, Canada, Australia, South Africa and representatives from the Royal Air Force Association and the RAF Benevolent Fund.

At the start of the service the RAF Colour was paraded out during the service. The congregation sang the National Anthem and the Dean of Westminster, The Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle, delivered a briefing. Chaplain-in-Chief of the RAF, The Venerable Dr (AVM) Giles Legood, gave the address.

The service included an Act of Remembrance during which the Battle of Britain Roll of Honour was borne from the



SALUTE: CAS, ACM Harv Smyth with personnel and veterans

Grave of the Unknown Warrior to the sacrum, led by a serving descendant from the Battle of Britain, RAF Aircrew, and Royal Auxiliary Air Force personnel currently serving on former Battle of Britain squadrons.

The roll contains the names of 1,497 pilots and aircrew killed or mortally wounded during the Battle, including 449 in Fighter Command, 732 in Bomber Command, 268 in Coastal Command, 14 in other RAF commands and 34 in the Fleet Air Arm. Among them are the names of 47 Canadians, 47

New Zealanders, 35 Poles, 24 Australians, 20 Czechoslovaks, 17 South Africans, six Belgians and one American, as well as those from the United Kingdom and Colonies.

The service concluded with a trumpeter playing *The Last Post* followed by the *Reveille*.

As they left the Abbey, the congregation watched a flypast of an Avro Lancaster bomber from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

The anniversary is particularly poignant this year as the RAuxAF marks its centenary. A quarter



PARADE: RAF Colour is paraded out at start of Westminster Abbey service

of the squadrons in the Battle of Britain were Auxiliary Air Force squadrons who accounted for a third of the combat

victories. Reservists from several reserve squadrons were in the congregation or played an active role during the service.

Penultimate volume in definitive Battle of Britain series

THE SEVENTH in an eight-volume history of the Battle of Britain by renowned military historian and author Dilip Sarkar has been published.

Battle of Britain The Final Curtain 1 October 1940-31 October 1940 (pen-and-sword.co.uk) explores how the last month of the Battle comprised largely smaller scale daylight fighter-bomber attacks while large-scale night attacks continued, mainly against London.

The book was compiled in association with the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust, the charity that cares for the National Memorial to the Few in Kent.

Full of human stories and first-hand accounts, it includes new information uncovered by the Battle of Britain People's Project, a joint collaboration by Sarkar, his publisher and the Trust to support the writing of the book and its series.

Volume 7 meticulously chronicles the day-to-day events of the fifth and final phase of the Battle, detailing every raid and squadron action and places them within a broader context, including the roles of Bomber and Coastal Commands and the impact on the Home Front.

Known for his evidence-based research, Sarkar revisits primary sources to challenge established narratives. His series represents the most comprehensive and up-to-date research on the Battle of Britain.

Volume 6 explored Reichsmarschall Göring's determination to continue Luftwaffe attacks despite mounting losses. By late September 1940, the German



PILOTS OF 501 SQN AT KENLEY: 501 was in the frontline throughout the entire 16 weeks of the Battle of Britain, losing 19 pilots, more than any other squadron

He 111 bombers were shifted to night operations due to unsustainable daylight losses.

The final phase saw Me109 fighter-bombers and high-altitude fighter sweeps dominating daylight engagements. While these tactics were unlikely to defeat Britain, RAF pilots recall this period as the most gruelling, with intense high-altitude

dogfights between Spitfires and Me 109s.

This volume concludes with a review of October 1940's key events, questioning the month's designation as the Battle's end and reflecting on the overall significance of the summer's aerial engagements.

Sarkar has more than 60 books to his name and is an internationally recognised authority on the Battle of Britain.

Copies up for grabs

YOU COULD win a copy of the book, a must for aviation history enthusiasts. For your chance to own one, tell us:

Which charity cares for the National Memorial to the Few?

Email your answer, marked The Final Curtain book competition, to: tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk or post it to: RAF

News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, HP14 4UE, to arrive by October 17.

Win!



In the book's foreword Piers Dowding, 3rd Baron of Bentley Priory, Patron of the RAF Fighter Control Association and the grandson of Lord Dowding, writes: "The author lays out newly discovered records in vivid and relentless detail, bringing alive the grinding, seemingly endless battle of attrition in, above and around the Britain of autumn 1940."



Just what you're looking 4?

THE ELECTRIC SUV market is hotly contested. In fact, it's a real dogfight. The latest version of Volkswagen's ID.4 has recently entered the fray and it is armed with all the characteristics that are likely to make it victorious

in battle. It's big, it's practical and it now delivers a respectable range between charges. If it wasn't up against the best, of the best, rivals that are faster and have higher levels of tech on-board, it would be a

shoe-in. As it is, the ID.4 will just have to battle it out. It's in with a fighting chance.

Interior

The ID.4's cabin is a big step up, in terms of quality, from the ID.3. There's more glossy black, shiny silver and soft-touch surfaces on display. You can still spot a goodly amount of hard plastic, if you look for it, but everything is well screwed together.

The seats are supportive through the bends and it's easy to get comfortable behind the wheel. There's a good amount of adjustment on the wheel itself and, quite cleverly, the pod for the digital driver's display moves with it, so you can always see the screen (why didn't anyone else think of that before? Genius).

Both front seats have armrests, which help to make long journeys a more comfortable experience. It's not quite as laid-back as resting on a fat, padded centre console, but they help. The cabin is big enough to ensure that there's plenty of passenger space all-round.

Something that does let the dashboard down, in my book, is that there are very few physical buttons. Instead, most functions are operated through the infotainment touchscreen. There are separate touch-sensitive sliders for the cabin temperature, but everything is, generally, a faff to find.

On a brighter note, the ID.4's

12.9 inch touchscreen works quickly and the permanent shortcut buttons across the top of the screen help.

On The Road

On winding roads, the ID.4 feels composed and capable, by class standards, at least. It's a tall, boxy beast, that can feel a little top-heavy when you're really hoofing it but, for the most part, it's sure-footed and deft for a large, family, electric SUV.

The steering responds progressively and weights up nicely at speed, making it easy to place the nose of the car. There's plenty of grip and body-roll is well controlled. Sports suspension comes as standard on the GTX.

Our test car was the entry-level Match model, equipped with the bigger 77kWh battery. It weighed in at a hefty two tonnes, but the 282bhp motor easily propelled it from standstill to 62mph in 6.6 seconds. It certainly felt lively enough and had plenty of mid-range shove for overtaking.

The ID.4 is a simple EV to drive, with a conventional display. There are no complicated energy consumption readouts, or paddles on the steering wheel to select different levels of regenerative braking. It's a nice, relaxed EV driving experience, with no frills. Driven gently, you're likely to get around 237-261 miles on a charge, based on our experience.



Pros

- Solidly built
- Tidy handling
- Well equipped
- Lots of cabin space

Cons

- Fiddly menus
- Some rivals are more comfortable
- Depreciation may be a consideration for some

Verdict

THE ID.4 is up against some serious competition in this segment, the best of which are faster, look more expensive inside, have next-gen infotainment systems and take less time to charge. Nevertheless, it's a solid electric car with a roomy cabin, loads of clever storage spaces and a decent range on a single charge (certainly with the 77kWh battery). It also has an excellent safety score. Worth a test drive, if you ask us.

Sport

ATHLETICS

Cam's Royal honour after team relay win

THE RAF'S Braemar Games team gained Royal approval for a second year running as the relay team won gold at the annual Scottish Games.

His Majesty The King presented relay team captain AS1 Cameron Tindle with a trophy to cap off a weekend which saw the Service represented in track and field, tug of war and the hill climb race, with a fabulous second place in high jump to round off the successes in front of a sell-out crowd of 1,600.

Tindle said: "Getting the trophy from the King topped off a great day."

The RAF contingent, totalling 30 personnel, were led by Sqn Ldr Gareth Davies. They had a mixed day with the tug of war teams failing to repeat last year's win despite taking matches off some very good outfits.

The RAF v RAF clash saw Odiham sneak the win over Lossiemouth. In the high jump the RAF took second place in both the male and female categories.

The track saw the result of the day for the RAF, with the relay team taking the win in the final.

Davies said: "It was a superb day for RAF Athletics as a whole. I was very proud of the great performances from everyone in our 30-strong squad and it was all topped off with a trophy from the King."

RAF Odiham tug of war team manager Cpl Tristan Gower said: "I'm so proud of what we've achieved this year, it's been a tough season organising teams into events but being here makes it all worthwhile."

● To get involved with RAF Tug of War, email: gareth.davies599@mod.gov.uk.



PRESENTATION: AS1 Cameron Tindle receives plaque and a handshake from HM The King, and RAF tug of war team in action, bottom left

GRIDIRON

Mustangs straining at the bit for IS finale



OPENER: Mustangs beat the Navy 64-6 in first leg of the Inter-Services

PHOTOS: THE 70S DJ PHOTOGRAPHY

"WE'RE IN a good place, ready to hit the ground running," said RAF Mustangs Assistant Head Coach Chf Tech Paul Wakeford ahead of this month's NFL Inter-Services decider.

The aviators, who won the championship opener against the Royal Navy 64-6 back in March, face the Army at the end of October at Tilbury Park, Oxford. Before that they are holding a training camp at their new Home for Sport, RAF Northolt.

Wakeford (pictured inset) said: "Northolt is a great home for us, there are all-weather pitches so no matter what time of year we train we are sure to have no issues there, and the classrooms which we are allowed access to enable us to hold breakout groups to go over

video analysis and so on, which is amazing.

"The buzz around the team is great. We have found some new talent, with players also finding civilian clubs to play at – so that arm of things is going well.

"We have increased our online presence, so any new players are able to ask questions before the camp starts, saving time and meaning we can hit the ground running."

The team has announced three captains for the tournament: Cpl Curtis Calhoun, Sgt Martin Unsworth and Sgt Ben Harris.

Wakeford added: "There is a real excitement about the game and camp, we are in a good place."

● Follow RAF Mustangs on Instagram @rafamericanfootball.



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

Sport

SAILING

Fastnet sailors hoping to be an inspiration



FASTNET CREW: Sqn Ldr Adam King wants others to experience the famous race

RAF SAILING'S Sqn Ldr Adam King is hoping this year's top 100 finish in the internationally-renowned biennial Fastnet race will inspire personnel to take up the sport.

The eight-personnel crew, captained by Gp Capt Gill Burgess (*inset*), finished 67th in IRC 4 (out of 94), 293rd in IRC overall (out of 380) and were the 338th monohull across the line (out of 404) at the 695 nautical mile Cowes to Cherbourg race via the Fastnet Rock – in the penultimate bow for the Service's beloved Red Arrow J-109 boat.

The crew completed the course in five days, eight hours, 40 minutes and 35 seconds, beating Trojan (Royal Engineer Yacht Club's J109), which finished 355th overall.

King said: "With Fastnet successfully completed, the next challenge for RAFSA's offshore

sailors will be the Hamble Winter Series, where Red Arrow will continue to fly the ensign on the Solent.

"We also want to attract new members to the association, which is transforming, with new opportunities and kit, and I hope races like Fastnet and Hamble inspire personnel to come forward."

"Whether someone is an experienced sailor or new to the sport, there are opportunities to race, cruise and train at every level, with the four active divisions – Offshore, Dinghy, Powerboat and Windsurfing – meaning there is something for everyone."

"The next Rolex Fastnet Race takes place in 2027, so there is plenty of time to train and work up to become part of the crew."

● Follow RAF Sailing on Instagram @rafsailing.



MOUNTAIN BIKING



Lochhead and Wordsworth lead the way

THE RAF'S mountain bike stars produced an Inter-Services downhill team and individual title win and second place enduro team finish plus a brace of individual wins in Scotland.

The men's and women's teams shone, Sgt Andy Lochhead and AS1 Helen Wordsworth proving the individual stars of the show.

Things began well for the aviators at Innerleithen Down Hill trials course, where Lochhead and Wordsworth were both first in their respective classes, while they sealed the team championship from the Army by a single point, with the Royal Navy close behind.

The pair were ably supported by AS1 James Woods (fifth), Flt Lt Stuart Bell (ninth) and Cpl Robert Nijhuis in 10th in the men's race, with Cpl Alice Papierowski fourth in the women's event.

It was the same individually in the enduro in Golfie, with Lochhead first, Nijhuis third and Bell ninth in the men's, and Wordsworth first and Papierowski sixth for the women, with the team finishing runner-up to the Army.

● Follow RAF MTB on Instagram @rafgravityMTB.



CYCLING

RAF's true Crit



OUT IN FRONT: RAF control the race and finish with all three podium spots, left

Daniel Abrahams

SERVICE CYCLISTS made podium history in Portsmouth as they took all three top spots at the IS Criterium Open Championships for the first time.

Timing finishes perfectly to utilise their speed and punish the Army riders, the aviators saw Cpl Euan Campbell storm through to win, with Cpl Danny Hedley (RAF) who'd expertly followed the wheel of Campbell, taking second place.

A sensational bridge across in the final two laps from Sgt Craig Robinson (RAF) meant he stormed past the fatigued Army riders for

a full Royal Air Force podium lockout and the RAF being crowned the IS Criterium Team Champions – a feat never achieved before by an RAF team.

The annual Open Championships took place at The Mountbatten Centre, with all three Services lining up in the sunshine for the one-hour, three-lap race.

Setting a strong pace right from the off, the 10-rider aviator team utilised this technique to stop breakaways, along with sending riders up the road to form a group for the other Services to chase, with the aim of wearing down the Army and Navy's strongest athletes.

The combined tactics worked well, ensuring that Sgt Richard Summerbell lapped the field with one Army rider quickly, with a larger group of seven riders featuring three RAF in pursuit.

Shutting down any Army attacks, the RAF tried to pull the race to a sprint finish.

As the Army looked to set up their sprinter for the win, Campbell struck, utilising the Army leadout to sprint for the win, followed by Hedley and Robinson.

The historic podium lockout secured the team title and was the perfect end to the season.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Inters title race hots up

RAF are bidding to be back-to-back champs

Daniel Abrahams

A GAME of two halves saw the RAF's rugby league stars win their opening Inter-Services match 18-16 over the Royal Navy at the DIY Kitchens Stadium Wakefield.

The aviators stormed to a 18-4 half-time lead in their title defence, with AS1(T) Kieron Prescott (brace) and Cpl Nathan Barker touching down.

The Navy arrived at Wakefield fresh off a 20-10 win over the Army in Portsmouth, but looked shellshocked at the break.

Head coach Sgt James Hutchinson said: "We went in at half-time and felt like we were really in control of the game.

"We also knew the Navy wouldn't give up and would throw everything at us to get back in the game, which they did, and it was very close in the end."

He added: "In IS rugby the result is the most important thing,

Royal Air Force	18
Royal Navy	16



AS1 TYLER RICHARDSON



so getting off to a winning start was huge as it leaves our destiny in our own hands. If we beat the Army next week we win the competition. So, we'll prepare well at Cranwell this week, fix up a few areas and be ready to go again."

It took RN minutes to score a converted try after the restart and with 10 minutes remaining, they were over the whitewash again to make it 18-16.

Team captain Sgt Liam Bradley said: "It was probably not our best 80 minutes of rugby this year, but we ground out the win.

"We put points on the board, playing some good footy in the first half, but the break probably came at the wrong time for us as we felt good.

"We knew they'd come out and throw everything at us. The boys showed a lot of character in defence.

"We know if we stick to our structure then we've more than enough talent to be back-to-back IS champions."

The Navy came close to scoring again in the final tense minutes, but the RAF defence held up.

The title race now moves to Hull, where Hutchinson's men face the Army in the title race decider.

FOOTBALL



IN THE PINK: RAF Brize Norton women (centre) PHOTO: LUKA WAYCOTT

Brize take the prize

GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL kicked off the new season in style with the Festival of Football 2025 at Goals Birmingham Star City.

The annual curtain raiser saw 26 RAF teams in the men's and women's five-a-side competitions taking place on 10 rooftop pitches.

The group stages were in the morning, determining the teams that would progress to the knockout stages in the afternoon.

In the Men's Festival Plate,

Brize Norton triumphed over Benson 4-1 in an Oxfordshire derby, while in the Men's Festival Cup, Wyton beat Cosford in a tight 2-1 battle.

In the Women's Festival Cup, Marham overcame Boulmer to reach the final of the tournament, but left as runners-up after being unable to beat a strong team from Brize Norton, who retained their crown.

Player of the Tournament awards went to Cosford keeper Cpl Josh Oliver and Cpl Meg Herbert of Brize Norton.

SHOOTING

Bang tidy win for aviators

SERVICE SHOOTING ended the clay pigeon season with a bang, beating the all-powerful Army team by eight points to take the final Armed and Emergency Services event.

The aviators hosted the competition at their Home For Sport – Nottingham & District Gun Club – keen to halt the Army's dominance, with the soldiers having won the five previous rounds.

More than 110 competitors from the RAF, Royal Navy, British Army, Fire Service, Prison Service and Police Service did battle, as the aviators scored 915 points out of 1,000 targets, with Army second on 907 and Police third on 904.

The RAF High Gun Award went to WO Simon Gaines, shooting 94/100, as the RAF recorded its first event win in several years.

Sqn Ldr Emma Lacey, RAF Clay Pigeon Shooting Association Chair, said: "It is always an honour to host the final fixture of the Inter-Services. 2025 has been a challenging year and it's always difficult to field 24 RAF competitors for six fixtures across six months, but the whole team stepped up.

"With the introduction of a new team structure, it's clear everyone is pushing each other to perform; including our new development team members who will be quickly fighting for first team places.

"Since I took on the role of chair, we have always been a few clays behind the Army but getting ever closer and it's a fantastic way to end the season by beating them. I look forward to seeing the progress this team can make in the 2026 season."

FS Rob Millin, RAF CPSA Captain, added: "This was a fantastic result for the RAF and shows that the self-development, selection, coaching days and Open series opportunities are paying off.

"We continue striving to succeed and developing



HISTORIC VICTORY: RAF clay pigeon shooting team member

new shooters into the sport, and look forward to providing newcomer training days and open series events throughout the coming months, which are open to everyone."

● Follow RAF Clay Pigeon Shooting on Instagram @rafcpa.

Sport

Moore the merrier

Lloyd and Lee end carp pairs season on a high



LUCKY FOR SOME: Peg 13 worked out well for FS Lee Wharlington and Sgt Lloyd Moore

ANGLING

Daniel Abrahams

FS LEE Wharlington and Sgt Lloyd Moore ended the 2025 carp pairs season on a high, winning at Linear Fisheries' Oxlease Lake in Oxford.

The pair took the final series of the year, beating WO Jason Verney and WO Richard Cooke into second place by 17lbs and 6oz after 48 hours of action with a field of 28 anglers.

Oxlease Lake was the perfect setting for the fifth series of the year and just an hour in Wharlington and Moore landed the first catch, a 26lb 09oz mirror carp, quickly

followed by a 17lb 03oz mirror.

Their early success set the tone for a competitive session with Verney and Cooke responding quickly with a 17lb 06oz mirror.

The first 24 hours saw steady action across the lake, with the standout catch coming from AS1 Zak Hope and Cpl Luke Davenport, who landed a colossal 36lb 14oz mirror, the biggest fish of the match.

At the halfway mark, Wharlington and Moore led the field with a combined weight of 112lb 04oz, closely followed by FS Jim Thomas and Sgt Dave Jones with 111lb 12oz. Cpl Ryan Culverhouse and AS1 Lee Turner

held third with 50lb 06oz.

As night fell on the final evening, the top three were separated by just 2lb 02oz. A late surge from Verney and Cooke, three fish in quick succession, threatened to shake up the leaderboard. But Wharlington and Moore responded with two more fish, including a 34lb 10oz mirror landed by Wharlington, securing their lead.

The new morning saw



Thomas and Jones land a fish, to put them within striking distance – just one big catch away from the lead, with the pair coming third on 141lb 12oz, while Verney and Cooke also added to their tally, making for a nail-biting final few hours.

Follow RAF Carp Angling on Instagram @raf_carp.

BIGGEST FISH: AS1 Zak Hope and Cpl Luke Davenport with 36lb 14oz mirror carp

BASKETBALL

UK ARMED Forces Basketball got an extra lift from RAF players at Cosford as the team prepared for the upcoming SHAPE International Tournament.

The preparations, led by Head Coach Wg Cdr Christopher McIntyre, kicked off with a high-intensity camp designed to sharpen skills and build cohesion ahead of the prestigious NATO competition.

Team spokesperson Capt Anyegwi Tambi Spicely said: "Wg Cdr McIntyre's leadership and expertise ensured a structured, competitive and highly

Hoop stars SHAPE up nicely

successful programme. Under his guidance, the squad benefitted from tough sessions and valuable match experience, including two friendly fixtures against National League Division two opposition."

Among a number of standout performances from the RAF contingent within the squad was that of Cpl Billy Cousins, who emerged as the top player across the camp and the two friendly games.

The aviator showcased an outstanding all-round game; demonstrating a strong defensive mindset, sharp shooting, aggressive drives to the rim, and effective communication to lead his teammates on the floor.

Capt Spicely added: "Another key RAF presence was AS1 Oliver Tate, a consistently high-performing athlete for UKAF Basketball. Despite joining the camp mid-week, Tate delivered a

superb performance against the Black Country Steelers, starting the game and making a major impact on both ends of the court. The RAF contributions were a highlight of the camp, underlining the strength and depth of talent across the UKAF programme.

"Thanks goes to Wg Cdr McIntyre for his leadership and commitment in making the camp such a success, and to the RAF players whose performances set the tone for what promises to be an exciting campaign heading into SHAPE."

5 RAF Sport

pages of

RUGBY UNION

Red Roses hope to get job done in final

Daniel Abrahams

FLT LT Amy Cokayne scored a 'cheeky' vital try for England as they beat France 35-17 to secure a home World Cup final place against Canada.

The Red Roses hooker, who now has three tries to her name from the four matches she has played in the 2025 tournament, said: "I was lucky enough to score a cheeky try, as my fellow forwards drove a maul for 20 metres.

"Any time England play France, it's always something special. There's a psychological element as well as a real physical battle, and this semi-final was no different."

Cokayne's 46th minute try at Ashton Gate, Bristol gave England an important 11-point lead after a too-close-to-call first 40 minutes.

She added: "Playing in front of another sell-out crowd in Bristol was incredible; you could sense the edginess in the stands in the first half, but within the team we never stopped believing in our systems.

"We stayed calm at the half-time break and focused on what we needed to do to exert pressure on the French and break them down.

"We went back to our 'super strengths' in the second half, and this ultimately paid dividends, along with our tremendous

Third time lucky for 'cheeky' Cokayne?



finishers from the bench. That belief and composure made all the difference against a tough French side."

The final will be a chance for Cokayne, like many of the experienced England players, to banish some rugby ghosts after defeats in both the 2021 and 2017 finals to New Zealand.

The game is at Twickenham's Allianz Stadium on September 27, after RAF News goes to press.

Cokayne (left) said: "To have the chance to play the final in front of 82,000 at Twickenham is a dream come true. This will be my third straight World Cup final, so hopefully it'll be third time lucky. I'm so proud of this great team and can't wait for the final."



MAUL TO PLAY FOR: Cokayne keeps the ball alive for England in the semi-final against France at Bristol @catgorynphotography



Royal honour for victorious relay team at Braemar

See page 23



MIXING IT UP: Flt Lt Sarah Bonar (far left) and Flt Lt Cokayne swapped shirts after the game
PHOTOS: CAT GORYN

RAF World Cup Bon Amy

"WE'LL BOTH be forever grateful to the RAF for these amazing experiences," said Flt Lt Amy Cokayne after England's 40-8 World Cup win over Scotland and colleague Flt Lt Sarah Bonar.

The historic clash at Ashton Gate Stadium, Bristol, saw the two RAF stars go head to head in the quarter-final stage of the tournament, with Cokayne weighing in with a 46th-minute try following her pinpoint line-out, before driving a scrum over the line to make it 26-3.

Showing sheer determination Bonar, known as Bons, was not going to miss out on Scotland's moment in the sun as she supported her team's 82nd-minute try, punching the air in celebration.

She said: "The game was frustrating, we wanted a better scoreline. We didn't stop fighting until the end, so we are proud of that.

"To face Amy on the world stage was incredible. To have two of us perform and show what she and I can do and the support the RAF gives its athletes is cool."

Cokayne's try came in the opening minutes of the second half, having been denied a try earlier in the first half due to an obstruction call, the hooker was not going to miss out at the second opportunity.

She said: "Scoring was a great feeling, especially after



TRY-SCORER: Flt Lt Amy Cokayne



DETERMINATION: Flt Lt Sarah Bonar

having one chalked off earlier for obstruction. We'd worked hard on our maul, and it was nice to see it come off cleanly the second time.

"Facing Bons was surreal in the best way. She had a great game, but no surprises there. She's a nightmare in the line-out, and I knew she'd be doing everything she could to disrupt us.

"To have a hug after a pose with the ensign meant a lot, two best mates, two RAF provost officers, on the world stage. It's a memory I will always treasure."

● Follow RAF women's rugby in Instagram @rafrugbyunion.

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R'n'R



Win ● Hit nature series on Blu-ray p5

The talented Miss Smith – EastEnders' Maisie on stage

● See page 3



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

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Theatre The Talented Mr Ripley UK tour

IT'S 70 years since Patricia Highsmith's novel *The Talented Mr Ripley* was published. There have been numerous film and TV adaptations since then, plus a radio play and a stage version. But as writer and director Mark Leipacher launched the first-ever UK tour of the classic psychological thriller, he's gone back to the story's roots.

"It's very much the novel on stage," he said. "And audiences are in for an edge-of-the seat ride. We're honouring the origins of the character, which will please people who know and love the book. Then for those who are coming to it fresh, they'll find themselves in the company of an incredibly fascinating and captivating anti-hero."

Said anti-hero comes in the shape of Tom Ripley – a nobody until he's tasked with travelling to Italy and bringing home the wealthy and carefree Dickie Greenleaf (Bruce Herbelin-Earle). But as Tom is drawn into Dickie's privileged world, his obsession takes a dark turn. What begins as an innocent invitation spirals into a web of lies, identity theft and murder, in a story that asks: "How far would you go to be someone else?"

The show continues touring to Oxford Playhouse (October 13-18), Bristol Old Vic (November 3-8) and the Lowry, Salford (Nov 18-22)

The Crown's Ed McVey takes the title role, with *EastEnders* star Maisie Smith as Marge. Leipacher said: "It makes for an incredibly entertaining and thrilling evening. Highsmith wrote a thriller that's about travel, adventure and style, and those

Mr Ripley goes back to his roots



STAR CAST: Maisie Smith and Ed McVey, with Cary Crankson, left. Writer and director Mark Leipacher is pictured inset below
PHOTOS: DANNY KAN

are all things that we're seeking to capture in the production."

McVey didn't hesitate to say yes when he read Mark's script. "I thought it was fantastic," he said. "The character and the story are so well-known, so of course I had preconceived notions from the various adaptations. Then I read the script and it just popped, with so much energy to it and a fresh take."

The actor summed up Ripley as he's portrayed in the play with: "He is a product of his past. He

had a very hard time growing up and hasn't been dealt all the best cards. He's someone who just wants a better life for himself, which I think many people can relate to."

He added: "Most people can't relate to Tom's methods, of course. I certainly can't, although I do connect with the idea of being a dreamer and wanting the best for yourself."



Smith was drawn to Marge because: "She's very smart, she's creative and I'd say she's intuitive too because she's probably one of the

only people who suspects that Tom Ripley is twisted. Everyone else is completely involved in his lie, but Marge sees through it."

She agreed with Leipacher that Marge in the play is far from

a typical 1950s female character: "She's a very strong woman, she has her own house and she and Dickie aren't in a relationship as such, so she's an empowered woman, not just a 'wife' character or anything like that."

The Talented Mr Ripley is her first straight play. "It's really exciting," she said "and I'm really looking forward to seeing how this character and the scenes evolve over the next few months."

● **Go to:** thetalentedmrripley.com for more information.



Film Urchin (15) In cinemas now

URCHIN IS the directorial debut of the precociously-talented Harris Dickinson (*Babygirl*, *The King's Man*), and it's a film that stays with you.

Frank Dillane (*The Essex Serpent*, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*) stars as Mike, a young rough sleeper trying to survive on the mean streets of London. Although not without intelligence and some charm, he is his own worst enemy and struggles to escape his addictions and self-destructive ways.

When a well-meaning passer-by intervenes as Mike is involved in a brawl with homeless acquaintance Nathan (played by Dickinson), after accepting the man's help, Mike attacks him and



SETTING FIRE TO HIS LIFE: Mike, right, has a self-destructive streak he can't control

steals his watch.

He lies about committing the crime but it's all caught on CCTV and lands him with an

eight-month prison sentence. On release he is given a room in a hostel, gets a job in a hotel kitchen and manages to stay sober for a

while. As he listens to meditation tapes in his room, Dickinson introduces an element of magical realism with Mike disappearing into strange underground worlds.

Dillane delivers a compelling performance as the vulnerable Mike – you can't help rooting for him, willing him to escape his dreadful life for something better, despite his arrogance and bad behaviour.

After losing the kitchen job he gets one picking up litter, starts a relationship with a colleague (Megan Northam), makes friends with her older, hippyish pals and things are looking up. But he takes ketamine with them and it all starts to fall apart.

With *Urchin*, Dickinson, who



WRITER: Harris Dickinson as Nathan

works with a homeless charity, has succeeded in bringing the plight of homeless people to our attention and making us think hard about it.

4 roundels out of 5 ●●●●●
Review by Tracey Allen

R'n'R



Cinema

Kenny Dalglish

October 29



KENNY DALGLISH: Liverpool FC legend after scoring the winner against Chelsea that sealed the Division One Championship for the Reds in the 1985/86 season

Spend an evening with the Kop's King Kenny

THE FILM *Kenny Dalglish* will be shown in cinemas across the UK and Ireland for one night only on October 29 with exclusive additional content and will then launch on Prime Video from November 4.

The legendary footballer narrates his own journey, joined by his wife Marina and closest footballing friends Graeme Souness and Alan Hansen along with other fans.

Drawing from hundreds of hours of archival footage, including never-before-seen personal clips from his playing career and home life, the film reveals the remarkable story of the Scotsman considered one of the greatest players of all time and a true icon of the sport for what he did off the pitch as much as on it.

It's the latest documentary from acclaimed filmmaker Asif Kapadia who said: "Kenny Dalglish was my hero as a kid and I had his picture on my wall in North London where I grew up.

"I wanted to make this film for people like me who remember Kenny as a player, the Celtic, Liverpool and Scottish fans, but also for my kids' generation who only know Kenny from playing FIFA.

"They know the name but they have never seen how good he was as a player or, more importantly, what he did off the pitch for the people of Liverpool.

"Kenny was the leader who always stepped up and led us when we needed him."

Kapadia is the Oscar and BAFTA-winning director of *Senna*, *Amy* and *Diego Maradona*.

Kenny Dalglish features an original score from Antonio Pinto (*Diego Maradona*).

Altitude's recent releases include Berlin Film Festival winner *Christy* from Brendan Canty, *The Cut* starring Orlando Bloom and the documentary *Blur: To The End*.

● Go to: altitude.film for more information.



Theatre

Time of Death – More unnatural Causes

UK tour

DESCRIBED AS the UK's most distinguished forensic pathologist, Dr Richard Shepherd is back on stage with a new show. Following his popular tour *Unnatural Causes*, based on his bestselling book of the same name, his latest show, *Time of Death – More Unnatural Causes*, kicked off last month and runs until November 1.

And Shepherd returned to TV screens in September with *Body in the Water*.

With more than 24,000 autopsies to his name, he has worked on many well-known cases including The Spy in the Bag (Gareth Williams), the Hungerford Massacre, the sinking of the Marchioness, the Princess Diana Inquiry, the 9/11 terrorist attack, the murder of Jo Cox MP and the London 7/7 bombings.

Time of Death – More Unnatural Causes will see Dr Shepherd explore why the understanding of the passing of time is one of the most important factors in unravelling the secrets of a life cut short.

Audiences will be able to look 'behind the headlines' with Shepherd to understand the truths. From the chilling crime scenes to the silent evidence left behind by those long dead, he reveals the painstaking process of solving the ultimate puzzles of life and death.

He explained: "When I retired as a Home Office pathologist, I took up a long-held interest in learning how to mend clocks and as someone pointed out I'd spent my whole career taking things apart and not being able to put them back together, and that mending clocks meant I was taking complex things apart in the hope that I could put them back together and get them to work again.

"It made me think again about how time is so important in terms of forensic medicine. When did the crime happen? How old is that injury? How long did someone survive? All crucial questions.

"So, [in the new show] we talk about the importance of time in forensic medicine using examples of some interesting and different cases that I have dealt with."

He added: "I have always enjoyed talking to people and explaining what I do and why. I have spent a lot of time giving lectures to medical students, policemen, paramedics and the public and I've never found it difficult to

Return of Dr Death

New tour for leading forensic pathologist

speak to large groups so going on tour is just another way of trying to give people a little bit of an understanding about what we really do as so much of that work goes on in the background.

"Many people think that what I do is just destructive, and some people may think it is an awful thing to do, but my focus is always on finding the truth and then trying to make sure that the relatives understand. The truth may be difficult to hear – but that is ultimately far

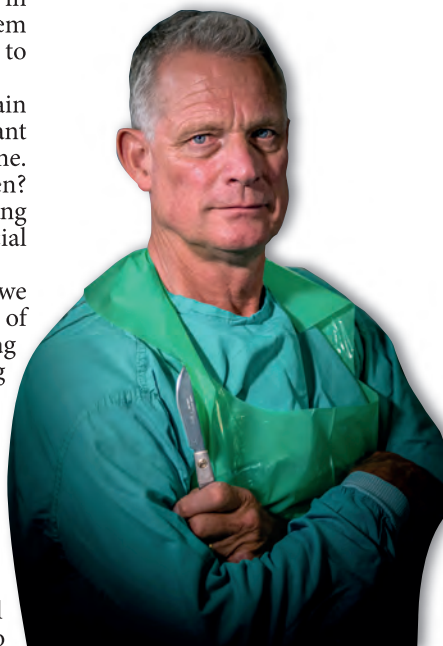
less distressing than not knowing or having unanswered questions about the death of someone you are close to."

How does he explain the public's huge interest in true crime on TV and are women more interested than men?

"I think that people have always been both scared and fascinated by violent crimes – the victims, the perpetrators and those who must investigate them," he said. "Initially it was the *Penny Dreadful* magazines from the 18th and 19th centuries with hand-drawn dramatic pictures of the events and very descriptive stories. These were often sold at the time of the execution of the convicted perpetrator. Nowadays we have more sophisticated magazines, books and TV programmes to satisfy this interest, this continuing need to get into the nitty-gritty of how crime works.

"After the tours I have done and books I have written, I am fascinated that people are prepared to spend an evening listening to me. I am not sure of the demographic of the various audiences – I am just pleased to hopefully be able to show that there is empathy as well as investigation and punishment."

Shepherd has worked on mass disaster cases, including the 7/7 bombings in London, the Bali bombings, and the Hungerford Massacre. Do events like this in the news affect him?



Edited by Tracey Allen



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WE ARE FAMILY: A Shetland otter with her two cubs. PHOTO: © Richard Shucksmith



animal parents in a world that is changing rapidly around them.

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Who narrates Parenthood?

Email your answer, marked *Parenthood* 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 October 17. Please include your full postal address.



**Music
Happy Mondays
UK tour**

Monday's still chasing thrills

ONE OF Manchester's most famous exports, the Happy Mondays, have confirmed a 22-date tour for March and April 2026 ahead of the 35th anniversary of their classic album *Pills 'n' Thrills And Bellyaches*.

Frontman Shaun Ryder, Bez – credited with 'freaky dancing and percussion' – and bandmates Mark Day, Gary Whelan, Dan Broad and Firouzeh Berry will perform the album's highlights, including the massive hit singles, *Step On*, *Kinky Afro* and *Loose Fit*, in addition to other hits and fan favourites, such as *24 Hour Party People* and *Hallelujah*.

The tour starts in Newcastle on March 13 and ends in Belfast on April 24, and includes dates at The Roundhouse in London (March 27) and a hometown show at Manchester's O2 Victoria Warehouse (April 11).

Joining the tour are special guests The Farm and Northside – both on the bill for the Happy Mondays' legendary 1991 concert at Elland Road in Leeds.

Ryder said: "I'm really looking forward to getting back on tour with the Mondays in 2026,



HAPPY MONDAYS: Reuniting with The Farm for 22-date tour next spring

especially with our old mates The Farm who are touring with us."

Bez added: "Really excited to be going back on tour again in the UK in 2026! I love being on the road with the Mondays, there is no better feeling than playing to the fans of live music. I'll see you all next year."

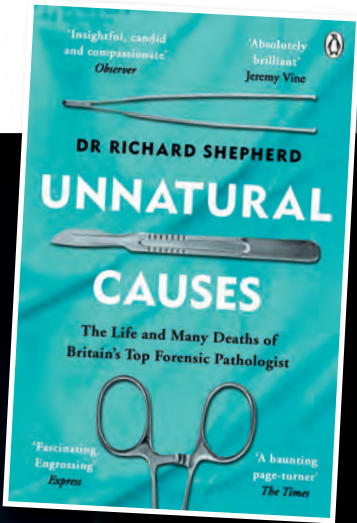
Happy Mondays became the pioneers of the Madchester sound after signing to Tony Wilson's Factory Records in the late 80s, blending their love of funk, rock, psychedelia

and house with the sounds of the UK's emerging rave scene.

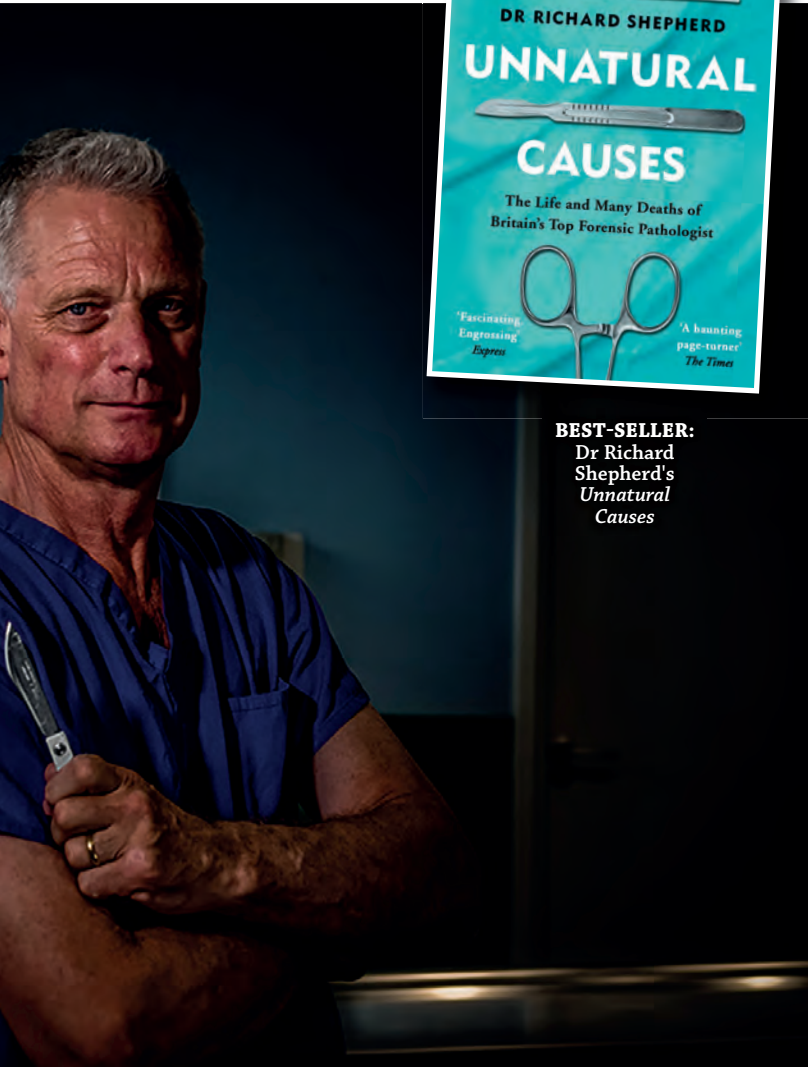
The Farm made their breakthrough in 1990, the first of their nine Top 40 singles being the huge hits *Groovy Train* and the evergreen *All Together Now*.

Lead singer Peter Hooton said: "We are absolutely delighted to be joining the Happy Mondays as special guests on their forthcoming tour, we go back a long way."

● **Go to:** happymondaysofficial.co.uk for full tour details.



BEST-SELLER:
Dr Richard Shepherd's
Unnatural Causes



PILOT: Dr Richard Shepherd flies a Cessna and a Piper Arrow out of Liverpool Airport

He explained: "The recent Air India crash was something I followed in the news. Managing the results of a mass disaster is a real skill. Of course, we do need to establish identity and how the individual died but we do it in a really caring way that cherishes the families as best as we can."

Dr Shepherd is a keen pilot in his spare time. He said: "I started flying when I met a CID officer when I was doing a post-mortem who turned out to be an instructor for the Metropolitan Police Flying Club and who invited me to fly with them. I now fly a little Cessna and a Piper Arrow, and it's brilliant fun. We live in Cheshire, so I fly the Cessna out of Liverpool Airport.

"On nice weekend days my wife Linda and I can put our Jack Russells in their crates in the back of the plane and fly over the Wirral and Welsh mountains, past Anglesey down to Carnarvon – a trip which takes two hours by car but just half an hour by plane. We walk the dogs up and down the beach, have lunch, and then fly home. It's fabulous!"

● **Go to:** drrichardshepherd.com to book tour tickets.

● **Body In The Water** airs Tuesdays at 10pm on True Crime with episodes available to stream on Watch Free UK following linear broadcast, and via True Crime UK on ITVX.

Interview by Clair Woodward



Your Announcements

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tracey.allen@rafnews.co.uk

Seeking

SEEKING Flt Lt Bev Webb who was the station MO (Medical Officer) at RAF Wyton in the 70s, 1972-74. Any information will be gladly received. I was on Tactical Supply and we spent many weekends flying at Panshangar in the two Auster aircraft they had. Please call Maurine Boakes on: 0116 2849332 or contact me on Facebook.

SEEKING memorabilia relating to the Victor Bomber, in particular hanging china/porcelain wall plates. If you can help please contact Dick Squire on: dick.squire4@gmail.com.

225 Squadron – I am seeking the current custodian of the 225 Sqn Association archives. Shortly before his death in 2011 my father, Maurice Potts (pictured below in 1943), loaned his wartime logbook to someone in the Association for research purposes, but it was never returned – perhaps because of his passing. The last contact I can find is 225's former CO, Sqn Ldr Gordon Henderson, but he died in 2009. I am now pursuing my own research into the squadron with a view to publication of my father's extensive wartime diary, and would be very grateful for the safe return of his logbook so that I can ratify various facts. Please email: marcus@cmcgraphics.co.uk



Reunions

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

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: tibbett@ntlworld.com

ASSOCIATION of RAF Women Officers Annual Reunion Weekend October 11-12. Saturday, October 11 – Reunion lunch at the Royal Air Force Club, Piccadilly, London, attended by our Patron The Countess Peel. Speaker: Candy Adkins, daughter of Spitfire Girl Jackie Moggridge. Raffle prizes requested (please bring them on the day). Ticket sales by cash or card. Sunday, October 12 – WAAF, WRAF, RAFW Church Service, St Clement Danes. For further details and to book your place please email Morgan Frist: ffrise713@gmail.com. New members of the Association of RAF Women Officers are always welcome. Please see our website: arafwo.co.uk for further details and to join.

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

CALLING all former TG11 comms personnel, T/phonists, TPOs, Tels, Wop Spec, TCOs, TCCs, TRCs and any comms titles that may have superseded the aforementioned.

All are welcome to attend the Trade Group 11 Association reunion to be held on Friday, March 20 to Sunday, March 22, 2026.

The venue will be at The Marriott Delta Hotels, Mellors Way, off Woodhouse Way, Nottingham Belfry, Nottingham NG8 6PY. Further details if required can be found on the TG11 Association website at www.tg11association.com.

If not a member, details can be found on how to join.

Associations

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 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; 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. The first year of membership is free.

RAFA honours Brian



CHARITY CHAMPION: Brian receives his Certificate from Air Cdre (Ret'd) Alan Opie

GROUP PRESIDENT of the RAF Association's Beccles and Southwold Area branch Brian Vousden has been honoured with the award of the Area President's Certificate for his work supporting members in the Beccles and North East of Suffolk Area and the RAF charity overall.

He was due to be presented with the award by Air Cdre (Ret'd) Allen Vaughan, retiring East and South East Area President.

Air Cdre Vaughan praised Mr Vousden for being "instrumental in opening the branch in 2009 and from then on being the mainstay in growing the branch" and helping to raise thousands of pounds for the Wings Appeal over the years.

He added: "Your liaisons with the other local organisations such as the RBL and organising the Battle of Britain services

and parades are equally commendable."

As Mr Vousden was unable to attend the Area Conference in April to be presented with the award due to illness, arrangements were made for him to receive the certificate at a future meeting. It was presented to him by Air Cdre (Ret'd) Alan Opie, newly-appointed RAFA East and South East Area President, at a luncheon in Beccles in August.

Mr Vousden, 92, said: "To all those colleagues and organisations who contributed and supported myself and the branch, now and over many past years, both locally and nationally, the RBL, RNA, RAFAC (both Beccles and Lowestoft Sqn), and many others including Beccles Town Council, I give my sincere thanks."

He added: "No one person could have achieved what we did and still do in Beccles without such support."

Fundraisers feel the heat

A **FIREWALK** challenge has helped to raise more than £3,800 for a veterans' care home in Worthing, with the total expected to rise to over £4,000.

Fifteen 'brave soles' walked across 600°C coals in aid of residents at Care for Veterans – a Royal Star & Garter Home, at Worthing Rugby Club,

last month. Among those taking part was Care for Veterans Home manager Vicky Strange (inset below), who raised £1,400.

She said: "It was amazing to see so many people step out of their comfort zones to support our veterans. I've never done anything like this before but I wanted to give something back to our veteran community and, as the home manager, to lead by example for future events and to get more people involved. Thanks to everyone – firewalkers, volunteers and supporters – for making it such a memorable, fun and worthwhile event."

● Go to: careforveterans.org.uk information.



'BRAVE SOLE': Walking on coals

How to use our service

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

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Your Announcements

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ON THEIR BIKES:
Andrew's team

Pedal power supports Airplay

BOLTON BUSINESSMAN and lifelong cycling enthusiast Andrew Crompton, leading a team of 15 riders on a gruelling eight-day challenge, has raised more than £25,000 for the RAF Benevolent Fund. The team covered more than 600 miles between RAF Lossiemouth and RAF Wyton for the Riding on Air cycle challenge in aid of the Fund's youth support programme, Airplay, which celebrates its

15th anniversary this year. Andrew said: "Airplay is a truly inspiring programme that supports young people from RAF families. Our goal is to raise as much money and awareness as possible to ensure this vital support continues." He has set an ambitious fundraising target of £60,000 for the challenge. Supporters can back the team by donating via JustGiving.



CELEBRATION:
Maureen with son
Quentin on her
special day. Inset,
as a young woman

Hurricane girl makes her century

A FORMER factory worker whose firm made the legendary Hurricane fighter has marked her 100th birthday. Hampshire-born Maureen Smith went in 1941 aged 15 to work at the Hawker plant in Kingston, which designed and built the aircraft which played a crucial role in the Battle of Britain. She often jokes: "It was the

Hurricane that won the war, not the Spitfire!" Maureen worked at Hawker's until 1953, before becoming a mum and later worked for the Inland Revenue. On her big day, Maureen enjoyed a lunch with her son Quentin followed by tea with birthday cakes and sparkling wine for residents and guests at the Royal Star & Garter home in Surbiton where she lives.

Afterwards she said: "I've had a fantastic day. I had a lovely lunch with my family and thoroughly enjoyed the party. I thought everyone put in a good effort." During the war she would write letters to boyfriend Colin, who was serving in the Royal Signals. The couple married after the conflict, and their son still has copies of the letters his parents wrote to each other.



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Prize Crossword
No. 394

Solve the crossword, then rearrange the 7 letters in yellow squares to find an RAF station.

- Across**
- 6. And 15 Down. Bedraggled trooper mobbed by RAF Squadron (7,6)
 - 7. See 11 Down
 - 9. Southern instrument is razor-edged (5)
 - 10. The previous queen and I take a stroll (7)
 - 12. Hurl carafes around old station (3,8)
 - 14. But souvenir damaged in a modest way (11)
 - 18. 100 join supple mountaineer (7)
 - 19. For the record, mostly egg white (5)
 - 21. Drug-dealer loses the head with escort (5)
 - 22. Spike like American aircraft (7)
- Down**
- 1. Maurice swaps tea for coffee (5)
 - 2. Box volunteers in Greek city (6)
 - 3. Fuss about a party (3)
 - 4. Bearing fish with awful smell (6)
 - 5. We hear that during rows this can be the result (2,5)
 - 8. Plea concerning hunt for the Holy Grail (7)
 - 11. And 7 Across. Kissing it leads to eloquence (7,5)
 - 13. At conclusion, smaller amount is incalculable (7)
 - 15. See 6 Across
 - 16. RAF plane favoured by Spock? (6)
 - 17. By the sound of it, used by Ronnie O'Sullivan in row (5)
 - 20. Ant's partner in short month (3)

Name:

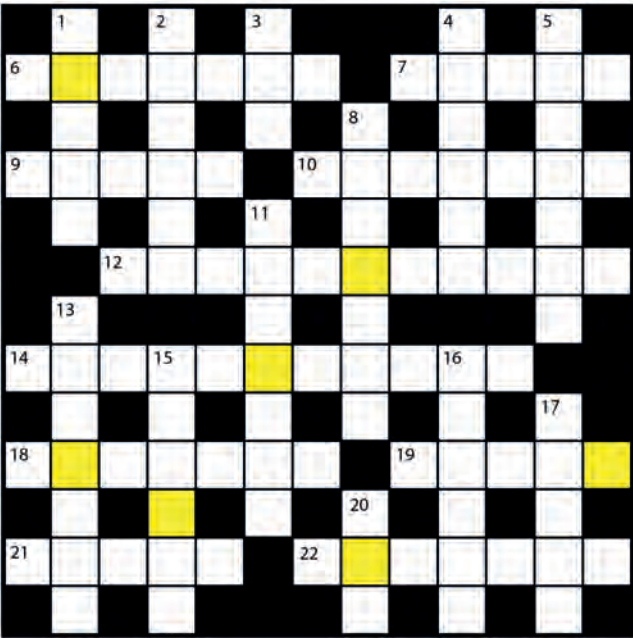
Address:

.....

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RAF station:Crossword No. 394

It's back – the winners of our Prize Crossword and Prize Su Doku puzzles will receive a recent top aviation title – please send your entries to the address printed in the adjacent Su Doku panel, to arrive by October 17, 2025.



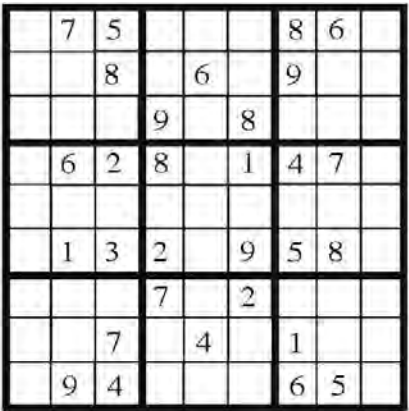
Solution to Crossword No. 393
Across – 1. Epic 8. Hurricane 9. Vampires 10. Dais 12. Thrift 14. Cruise 15. Stocks 17. Refuse 18. Asia 19. Missiles 21. Gargantuan 22. Shed
Down - 2. Parachutes 3. Chip 4. Dry Rot 5. Air Sac 6. Dandruff 7. Isis 11. Insistence 13. In Charge 16. So Many 17. Rescue 18. Argo 20. Inns
RAF plane – Avro Anson



Prize Su Doku
No. 404

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

Solutions should be sent in a sealed envelope marked 'Su Doku' with the number in the top left-hand corner to: RAF News, Room 68, Lancaster Building, HQ Air Command, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP14 4UE, to arrive by October 17, 2025.



Solution to Su Doku No. 403

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



Theatre
Lock-In-Live
Autumn tour

Rugby's
veterans
are back
on tour

ENGLAND rugby greats James Haskell and Mike Tindall with sports presenter Alex Payne are on the road again – out on tour in October and November.

Their Lock-In-Live show is at Warwick Arts Centre on October 29, then goes to Birmingham, Cardiff, Oxford and Reading, culminating on November 5 at Guildford G-Live.

The Good, The Bad & The Rugby – the name of the trio's podcast that debuted at No. 1 in the Apple charts before releasing its first episode – will present "...Lions and World Cup debriefs, stories of our weirdest, darkest, greatest and most unforgettable days and those who have entertained,

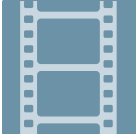


THREE WISE MONKEYS: Mike Tindall (top), James Haskell (centre) and Alex Payne

frightened, stunned and broken us during a combined 60 years in the game," they said.

Alex is Good, James is Bad and Mike is Rugby.

Go to: Myticket.co.uk/goodbadrugby.com for full tour details.



Film Review
Red Sonja (15)

On DVD now (Signature Entertainment)

Red Sonja still battling

ALONE female warrior stands between a vindictive emperor and the natural world he seeks to dominate in this revived fantasy action film.

Conceived by swords-and-sorcery pioneer Robert E. Howard, *Red Sonja* has had a handful of appearances and adaptations since the 1970s – from early Marvel comics to adventures alongside Conan the Barbarian – each with varying degrees of camp and cult appeal.

In M.J. Bassett's version, Matilda Lutz takes on the role of the red-headed heroine, still occasionally rocking the armoured bikini, but reluctantly. Sonja hails from a land conquered by barbarians, developing an affinity with nature that is demonstrated in the film's opening as she gallivants aimlessly around the woods with her horse.

Her opposite is Draygan the Magnificent (a non-committal Robbie Sheehan), an emperor who has developed technology to control the minds of this world's creatures – from giant scorpions to cyclopes. A sadist at heart, he stages brutal spectacles where captured fighters battle his hypnotised beasts. Sonja soon finds herself among them, underestimated by both Draygan and her fellow captives – including Michael Bisping and Luca Pasqualino. To escape and take revenge, she must prove herself in a series of gladiatorial trials.

Red Sonja feels like a relic from another era: not only because of its high-fantasy setting, but also its cheesy B-movie aura. The dialogue often lands awkwardly, and the performances rarely feel as though they belong in the same film, yet the action



RED PASSION: Matilda Lutz as the fiery Sonja

sequences deliver enough spectacle to distract. Hiding flaws in shadow and stretching its \$17 million budget to the limit, the battles carry a rough charm that compensates for questionable CGI and pull focus from its strained drama.

Not serious enough to be epic, and not silly enough to be pure schlock, *Red Sonja* lands uncomfortably in-between, but packs just enough action into its second half to keep you engaged.

Three out of five roundels
Review by Sam Cooney