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October - December 2021



## International Cooperation




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# Welcome

**A**s a child of the Commonwealth – my grandparents lived in India, my father was brought up in Kenya, my mother in the United Kingdom, and I lived in Sierra Leone and Zambia before I was five – I am very pleased indeed to be able to mark the 95th anniversary of the founding of the organisation. Air Mail's theme this issue is international cooperation, to reflect the underlying principles of that collaborative institution and the outward-looking view of Global Britain.

Association President Air Marshal Sir Baz North talks more about the Commonwealth and about the importance of international cooperation for the RAF in his message on page six. We also meet the Qatari and British members of 12 Squadron, the first joint international squadron since WWII, talk to the Air and Space Attaché to the United States and hear about the great strides in universal cooperation as UK Space Command is stood up. In previous years, Association members were no slouches when it came to global cooperation – from Winston Alleyne, who travelled from Barbados to the UK and ended up as the first black Squadron Warrant Officer in the RAF to Adolph Malan, an early campaigner against apartheid in South Africa.

Plus all our usual news from across the Association and the RAF.

Happy reading.

**Annie O'Brian**  
Editor



### AIR MAIL MAGAZINE

Contact, comment, connect.

To contact the Air Mail team about editorial, notices or advertising or to submit articles and letters:

**airmail@rafa.org.uk**

Or write to us at the address to the left.

**Editor/Content Manager:**

Annie O'Brian

**Content Officers:**

Joe Hall; Dan Judson

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all contributors and supporters from across the membership and secretariat of the Association.

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## 7-23 NEWS

All the latest from the Association and the RAF community, including: awards nominees and winners; fundraising news; a new legacy campaign; an appeal to transform Rothbury House and an update on the £3m boost for branch clubs.

## Features

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The RAF and the Qatar Emiri Air Force have developed a strong relationship over the past few years. We catch up with personnel of 12 Squadron, the UK's first joint squadron since WWII, to explore international co-operation in the 21st century.

### 33 UK Space Command

What is UK Space Command? What will its role be? And which nations comprise the Combined Space Operations initiative? Air Mail brings you latest, hot on the heels of UK Space Command's official opening ceremony.

### 34 Life of an air and space attaché

Air Commodore Jez Attridge is the UK's Air and Space Attaché to the United States of America, based in the British Embassy in Washington DC. We talk to him about Global Britain, and our political, business and military connections with the greatest power on Earth.

### 38 From Barbados to Britain

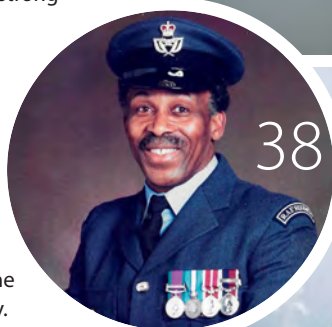
We explore the life and legacy of Winston Anthony Alleyne, who arrived in the UK in 1958 and went on to become the RAF Regiment's first black Squadron Warrant Officer.

### 42 Fighting for freedom

Adolph 'Sailor' Malan was a South African volunteer and one of the greatest RAF fighter pilots of WWII. Upon his return home however, he found himself at the forefront of the fight against the injustices of apartheid. Author and historian Dilip Sarkar tells his story.

### 59 India's finest

The RAF Museum's Peter Devitt takes a look at the life of India's first fighter ace, Indra Lal Roy DFC, who flew with the Royal Flying Corps and RAF during WWI.



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# Dear Air Mail...

... your letters and emails

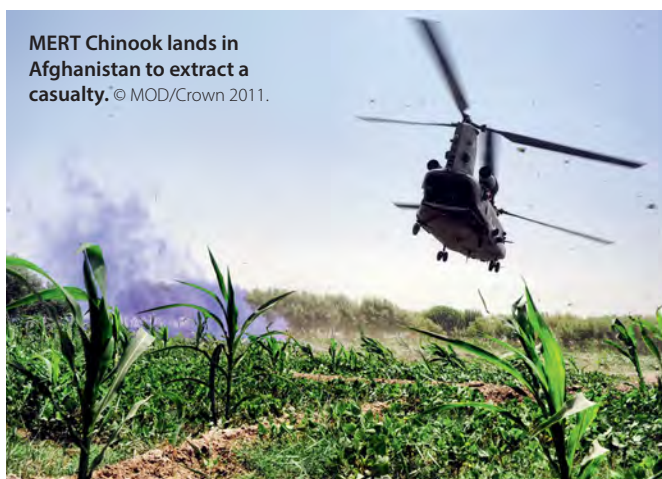


Blade change on Victory Green.  
© Ian Boyd-Thorpe

## Down, but not out

Reading the 'Wokka' article in the last Air Mail (pp.38-39) bought back happy memories of my Falklands tour in 1984. In the article Chris Cottrell mentioned a Chinook which suffered a blade strike that resulted in an emergency landing on Victory Green in Stanley. Myself and a few colleagues from Mechanical Transport Servicing Section were enjoying our last afternoon in Stanley before heading home the next day. We'd heard that a chopper had to make an

emergency landing so decided to head down to Victory Green. We whiled away our final hours on the island watching the repairs with a few cans of Elephant beer. It was a gorgeous sunny afternoon made all the better knowing the tour was done and we'd soon be on the boat home. The only downside was that Elephant beer had a habit of rendering your legs useless when you tried to get up!  
IAN BOYD-THORPE



MERT Chinook lands in  
Afghanistan to extract a  
casualty. © MOD/Crown 2011.

As a former Major in 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards, I was a frequent Chinook passenger on trips around Helmand Province. On one particular trip I was lucky to have been designated a priority passenger (T1) following a traumatic battlefield injury sustained South of Musa-Qaleh in 2009. The Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT) from 18 Squadron landed 'on' while under heavy enemy fire to take me and two others safely to Camp Bastion. I am fully aware, having spoken to the pilot and crew subsequently, that the decision to land in such a hostile area was not one they took lightly. Ultimately their decision saved my life. Without a doubt there are many service personnel that owe their lives to the MERT and the Chinook. Today, I consider myself fortunate to live under a flight path frequented by Chinooks. A tip of the hat and a smile always accompanies any sighting, or upon hearing the distinctive sound of the mighty airframe that saved many of us in our time of need. To those that flew, operated, maintained, supported and saved us – thank you.  
NICK GARLAND



# International 'cooperation'

While at RAF Tengah in Singapore in 1970, I became friendly with some 'Kiwis' from the Royal New Zealand Air Force. As they knew I played the bagpipes, one night they asked whether I would be willing to play an impromptu concert, and after hearing the details I agreed. At the appointed time, 2am, I started up the tune and piped right through a billet filled with visiting Australians in transit from RAAF Butterworth before very swiftly returning to my own. Next morning in the mess I overheard one ill-tempered Aussie say "I'd like to get my hands on that bloody Kiwi bagpiper!" Relieved I hadn't been identified, I went to the NAAFI where I discovered that four cases of Tiger beer had been left for me, courtesy of my delighted Kiwi friends. CHARLES CARRUTHERS

In 1963 RAF Wattisham was visited by some senior officers from Venezuela. To mark the occasion they were shown to the balcony of the control tower and treated to a display by an English Electric Lightning. As it passed between our hangar and the control tower we heard a gigantic boom. The roof lifted off our prefabricated line hut then dropped back down, and all the light fittings fell to the ground. Outside, several of the polarised glass windows fell out of the control tower, showering the VIPs with glass, and the windscreen on the fire engine parked at the foot of the tower disintegrated. The Station Commander was ready and waiting when the aircraft eventually landed. I understand the pilot was leaving the station the next day anyway! PETER MILLER

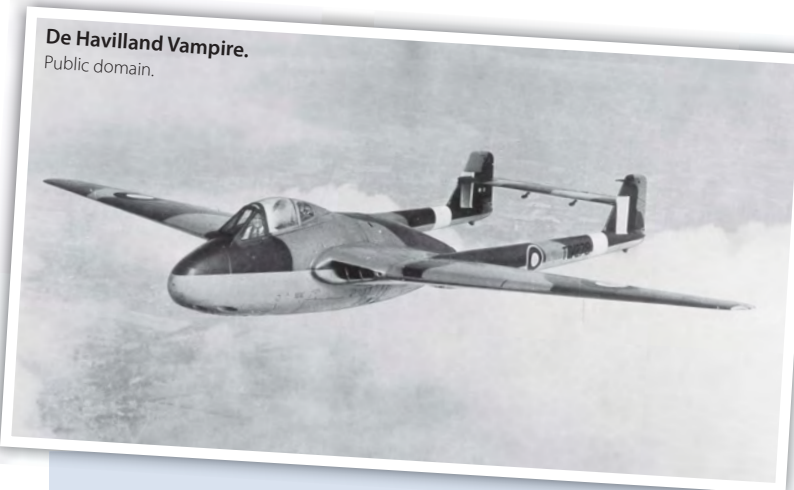
Maintenance on an RAF Hercules.

© MOD/Crown 2021.



De Havilland Vampire.

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## Aerial oversight

During my service with the RAF Regiment in the early 1950s I was posted to RAF Celle in Germany. On one occasion the squadron took part in field exercises, deploying its guns on Lunenburg Heath. Each gun had its own portable toilet, commonly called 'thunder boxes'. The toilets were well camouflaged with three-sided canvas walls and, though only temporary, the seats were scrubbed spotlessly clean to the point where they were actually white. When everything was set up a Vampire photographic aircraft flew over our positions to check the guns were well-hidden. When the film was developed however, each gun position was clearly located by a pattern of small white rings. An embarrassing lesson was learned that day. PETER MARTIN

## If I had a hammer...

In 1978 it was common for Hercules aircraft to arrive at RAF Odiham to pick up soldiers for parachute training. On one occasion however, the Hercules was about to return home to RAF Lyneham when it was discovered that one of its four engines wouldn't start. Unfortunately, none of the technicians on-station knew much about fixing a Hercules. Eventually, a Puma was despatched to Lyneham to pick up a technician more familiar with the aircraft. Upon its return the technician jumped out, walked over to the Hercules, ascended a step ladder, opened the panel on the side of the dead engine, took a hammer out of his pocket, hit something on the pipes surrounding the engine and shut the panel. He cleared the steps from the aircraft and gave the thumbs-up to the pilot. The engine started at the first attempt. The technician then hopped into the back of the Hercules and headed back to Lyneham! DOUG RENOUF

**Ed.** Have you come across an inventive, unusual or amusing way to solve a problem while in the RAF? Let us know via the contact details below.

To comment in or contribute to Air Mail, please email [airmail@rafa.org.uk](mailto:airmail@rafa.org.uk). Alternatively, write to Annie O'Brian, Editor, Air Mail, RAF Association, Atlas House, Wembley Road, Leicester, LE1 3UT. Your correspondence should be clearly marked FOR PUBLICATION. The editor's decision on inclusion is final, and longer letters may be abridged due to limited space. Only submissions made by email will be acknowledged before publication. The deadline for inclusion in the January 2022 issue is 5 November.



# From the President

**95** years ago this October, the Imperial Conference of 1926 brought together the prime ministers of the Dominions of the British Empire. It was notable for producing the Balfour Declaration which led to the formation of The Commonwealth.

This anniversary inspired the Air Mail team to bring us stories of modern and historic international cooperation from our members, and from the RAF, in this issue.

Those who are serving or who have served, will know that while supporting the concept of Global Britain, the RAF collaborates with government, military, and civilian partners in the UK and overseas to promote UK security, prosperity and national interests around the world. International cooperation fosters good relations with our allies and partners, enabling the RAF to operate from foreign national airbases thus expanding the Service's global reach. The RAF's training and cooperation with other air forces helps build mutual capacity in order to respond to threats and to prevent conflict.

Air power is most effective when it is conducted in a joint campaign with our other military services and government departments, all working towards a common national goal.

The Commonwealth and common national goals leads me to think of our Association as we too have a membership that shares values, principles and goals. Like the Commonwealth for its citizens, we in the RAF Association work together to respond to the needs of our members and the RAF family, no matter what their situation, rank or location may be.

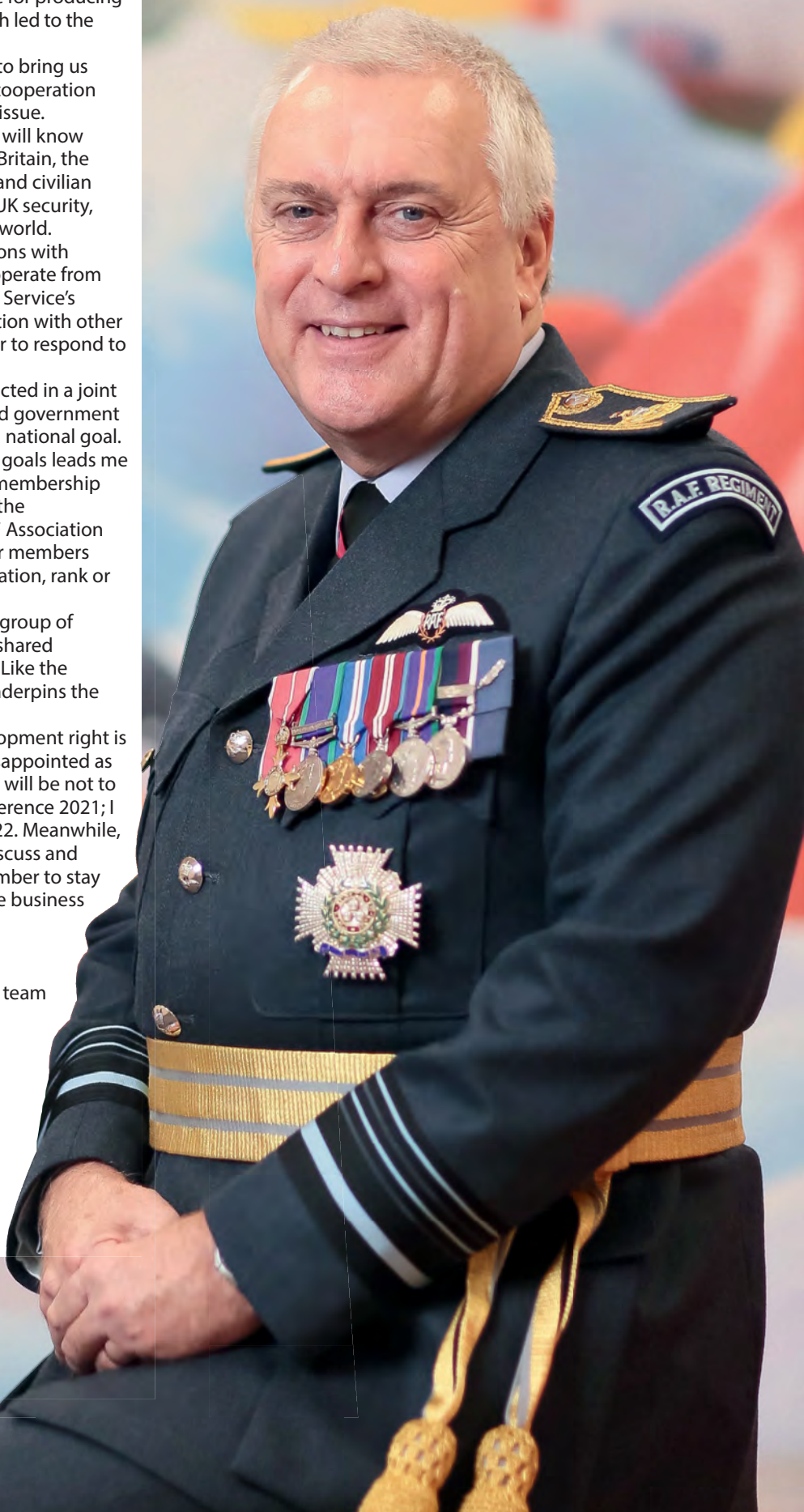
Whether we connect as a single member, a group of volunteers or a well-established branch, our shared principles are for the good of the RAF family. Like the Commonwealth and the RAF, cooperation underpins the Association and all its work.

Getting the Association's growth and development right is demanding and all-important and I am as disappointed as you that circumstances again dictate that we will be not to be able to meet face-to-face for Annual Conference 2021; I am confident that we shall do so again in 2022. Meanwhile, our Association has important business to discuss and progress this year and I encourage every member to stay in contact with your branch to hear about the business that your Council is considering.

If you are reading this before the Annual Conference and would like to follow the proceedings on 16 October, please email the team at: [Branch\\_Membership@rafa.org.uk](mailto:Branch_Membership@rafa.org.uk).



**Air Marshal Sir Baz North**  
President





# News

For members and the wider RAF family

## The Sky's the Limit



Above: Aircraft Fitter Rosie, an apprentice with Raytheon UK, talks about why she chose STEM subjects.

A booklet to spark students' interest in aerospace careers reached 50 per cent of its target downloads in its first week alone.

Raytheon UK and the Royal Air Forces Association designed 'The Sky's the Limit' to inspire students to study science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects at school and beyond - and show them the huge range of career opportunities in aviation, space, engineering, medicine and other RAF-related jobs.

Launched in early July, just in time for the long summer holidays, it was hoped that the booklet would reach 500 students. When 250 were downloaded in the first week alone, Raytheon UK and the Association were delighted.

Brimming with challenges and puzzles, the booklet is still available and aims to demonstrate how important STEM is to careers in the aerospace industry in organisations such as the Royal Air Force. It gives an overview of the key features of some of our most iconic aircraft as well as offering insight into developments in engineering, technology and communications. It also profiles STEM ambassadors: Corporal Amy who was inspired by palaeontologist Mary Anning; Flight Officer



© all images in the booklet, Raytheon UK

Above: From high tech airframes to how to make the most aerodynamic paper aeroplane, the booklet aims to educate and inspire.

Below right: The booklet was launched to show students the huge range of career opportunities in RAF-related jobs.

Fred who looks up to Sir Isaac Newton; Flight Lieutenant Tamsyn who admires the women of WWII who took on 'men's roles' as mechanics, pilots, engineers, etc; and Aircraft Fitter Rosie who was inspired by her dad's love of automotive engineering. All four talk about why they chose a career in aviation and who inspires them.



If you'd like to be inspired, or to help inspire someone else, you can still download an electronic copy of *The Sky's the Limit* here: [rafa.org.uk/airmail-stem](https://rafa.org.uk/airmail-stem) or use the QR code (left).

Right: Latest figures from the very popular Forces Families Jobs website. This is run by the RAF Families Federation in partnership with the Army and Navy Families Federations. It supports serving personnel and their families with training, volunteering and careers that fit service life. The image shows the number of jobs, job seekers, training providers, and users on the site in 2021 alone. The site is specifically for spouses and partners of currently serving and reserve personnel, and their adult children aged between 18 and 25, or for spouses and children of service personnel who have left the RAF in the last 12 months. Bereaved spouses and partners, and adult children can also access the service for up to two years from the end of the RAF service. All employers on the site have signed the Armed Forces Covenant. © RAF Families Federation





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# Home sweet home

**Choosing a home became reality for more than 300 RAF Wittering personnel as the Ministry of Defence Future Accommodation Model (FAM) completed its first year at the base in June.**

In 2019 the MOD decided to test the provision of more choice to more personnel over where, how, and with whom they live. RAF Wittering was chosen as one of three pilot sites for the FAM project.

Whether single, married, in a civil partnership, or an established long-term relationship, FAM applies to all eligible service personnel regardless of their relationship status. Service parents who have their children with them more than 80 nights a year can also apply.



Above: **Group Captain Jo Lincoln in conversation with Air Vice-Marshal Maria Byford on the launch day in June 2020** © MOD/Crown 2020



Danielle Rigby is the implementation lead for the FAM Project. She said: "Being able to choose the town, choose the house, choose the décor, choose the school; all these things make a difference to wellbeing and morale. FAM is a real step-up for Defence."

FAM has helped Senior Aircraftman Luke Summers from 5001 Squadron to buy his first home. He applied during the middle of the pandemic in October 2020. Luke said: "My experience of the FAM pilot has been impressively uncomplicated and rewarding. Even during the lockdown, I was receiving regular updates as to how it was progressing. I saved thousands when purchasing my first property and the monthly core payment helps with all the costs."

More than 300 applications have been processed for personnel who now have more choice, and who receive the financial support to achieve that.

For more information visit: [rafa.org.uk/accommodation](https://rafa.org.uk/accommodation)

## Help for RAF couples' careers

The first overseas Military Coworking Hub opened in July at RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus, to help dependants of forces personnel maintain their careers and education.

The facility will help remote working for serving family members' partners, spouses and families. It should reduce the need for partners to abandon education or training, uproot their families or find new employment every six months to three years.

The Akrotiri hub is one of twelve coworking hubs set up as part of the Military Coworking Network. It has eight desks, powerful wi-fi, printing facilities, air conditioning, a break out area and refreshments.

Post-pandemic remote and hybrid roles are often ideal for military partners. The hubs provide the facilities so families can have the confidence to take up and keep remote jobs, allowing people to build a career alongside their other half's military life.

Maria Lyle, Director of RAF Families Federation which helped develop the Cyprus facility said: "A really active group of volunteers worked hard to support this for some time. Thank you to the RAF Association which has channelled Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund

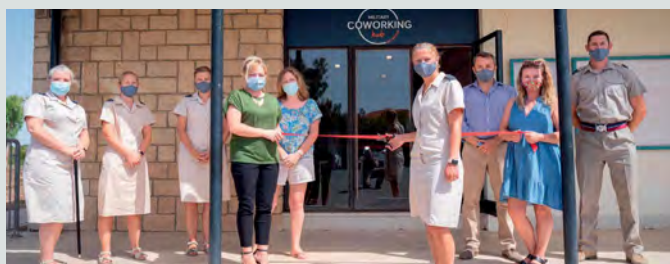
support into the initiative, and also to the Annington Trust, whose funding supported some features".

The RAF Families Federation is working closely with the Naval and Army Families Federations and with the founders of the Military Coworking Hubs to help expand the hubs network to other stations.



Above: **The coworking hub creates a professional and collaborative space.**

Left: **Station commander of RAF Akrotiri, Group Captain Nikki Thomas with volunteers and service personnel who helped bring the project to fruition.** © Military Coworking Hubs.





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# Duo up for national welfare award



George Prentice, centre, has been nominated for an RAF Benevolent Fund Award to recognise his casework with beneficiaries such as Tina and John Wren (left and right). © Phil Greig

Two of the three nominees for the RAF Benevolent Fund's 2021 caseworker of the year award are being recognised for their work for the RAF Association.

John Marsland BEM of Welfare Region West, and George Prentice BEM of Edinburgh and Lothians Branch have both been nominated. The category is one of eight celebrated by the Fund which said: "The annual awards are an important opportunity for the Fund to celebrate and

recognize every one of our supporters. From those tirelessly fundraising to others delivering services on the ground, these efforts are key."

The third person on the Welfare Caseworker of the Year shortlist is Alison Bulbeck of SSAFA. The winner will be announced at an awards ceremony in London in late October. We wish them all luck and also commend all other RAF Association members who are among the nominees in other categories.

The full list of categories is: *Above and Beyond; Airplay Outstanding Contribution; Fundraising Team of the Year; Outstanding Support from an Organisation; RAF Station of the Year; RAF Stations Challenge Cup; and Volunteer of the Year.*



The 2021 RAF Benevolent Fund Awards evening will reveal the winners on 21 October. © RAF Benevolent Fund

## Silver award status retained



The Royal Air Forces Association is proud to announce the renewal of its Defence Employer Recognition Scheme silver award.

The scheme honours organisations that employ and support those who serve, veterans and their families.

Nick Bunting, Secretary General of the Association, said: "To be recognised as supporting our employees, whether they have served, are reservists, cadet instructors or their partner is serving is something we are very proud of.

The RAF Association has supported the RAF

community for more than 90 years and the Employer Recognition Scheme Award is another way we show that unwavering support."

Silver award holders must show their support in many ways. These include signing the Armed Forces Covenant, proactively demonstrating that service personnel/armed forces community is not unfairly disadvantaged as part of recruitment and selection processes, employing at least one individual from the armed forces community category their nomination emphasises, and providing at least five days of additional leave for reservists.

## Housing hero

Bob Hingston, chairman of RAFA Housing Ltd has been shortlisted for a Lifetime Achievement in Housing Award.

Bob, a housing and regeneration expert, has led the board of the RAF Association's independent living accommodation at Storrington in West Sussex since 2019. The award category is part of the Housing Heroes Awards 2021.

Nominations were sought for people who have "been real ambassadors for the sector and demonstrated a real passion for housing over a long career and helped to put housing on the map".

In recommending Bob for the award, Mark Shields, Head of Community Support at the Association said: "Bob makes sure nobody



The RAF Association's independent living housing at Storrington. Bob Hingston is the chair of trustees.



who has served in the RAF or their immediate families – feels abandoned when they're most in need. If things go wrong, Bob and his team of warm-hearted, practical and highly trained trustees fly into action. The service has adapted and changed over the last year. Bob is always looking to re-design services or bring in external partners who can support the guest's needs and requirements. He is a family man and has a considerable amount of experience in the housing sector. He works tirelessly to ensure we provide high quality housing."

*RAFA Housing Ltd runs the Association's 32 self-contained retirement flats in*

*Storrington, West Sussex, helping residents benefit from a independent lifestyle as well as the chance to socialise with like-minded people who share an RAF connection.*



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**Peter McDermott,**  
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*Peter*



# Building Futures appeal launched



The RAF Association has launched a £400,000 appeal to help transform Rothbury House into community housing for RAF veterans.

People keen to reduce loneliness among elderly veterans are being urged to donate to the Building Futures appeal, which has already raised a quarter of the money needed. The donors will help create 26 new apartments so that more RAF veterans can live in a safe community in their later years.

The flats will be provided through the transformation of the charity's former Rothbury House Hotel, Northumberland, which closed in 2020. For many years, the hotel provided respite breaks for veterans and their spouses.

A planning application has been submitted for alterations that would see the building converted in two phases, with renovations – costing around £400,000 – starting in the summer. The first stage of the planning process is complete, with permission being granted for a change of use.

The RAF Association's Director of Welfare and Policy, Rory O'Connor, said research had revealed an overwhelming need for more good quality affordable retirement accommodation for veterans.

He said: "We estimate that almost 40% of RAF veterans are living alone, and we know that, tragically, isolation and loneliness is a huge problem among this group. Using the Association's many years' experience of running retirement complexes, we believe we can offer more accommodation where people with a shared experience can find a sense of belonging. The current design of Rothbury House lends itself to retirement living. All of its bedrooms, over four storeys, are en-suite and have level-entry access through wide corridors serviced by two lifts."

Rothbury House shares a site with existing RAF Association retirement accommodation – at Lord Tedder and Malcolm Courts. When the transformation is complete, all of the site's residents will be able to use communal facilities at the house, including a dining room, lounges and extensive gardens. Daily meals will also be provided.

Widow Ruth Birch, 90, is one of the site's existing residents. Her life has been transformed by being close to other members of the retired RAF community.



Left: Ruth Birch, resident at the neighbouring Lord Tedder Court says: "It's great place to live. There are so many opportunities to socialise." © Phil Greig

Right: Ruth and her late husband Bill at RAF Waddington's summer offices' mess ball in 2021. © Family archive. Top left: Shared terraces, lounges, dining rooms, and gardens will allow residents to get together regularly and for special events. © Phil Greig.

Ruth and her late husband, Bill – a Second World War Air Bomber, who helped to drop vital supplies into the Netherlands during Operation Manna – waited six years for a flat to become available at Lord Tedder Court. After moving in, in 2012, the couple were able to make friends with other residents – something that turned out to be a lifeline for Ruth when Bill died seven years later.

Ruth said: "The atmosphere here in the complex is very friendly, so nobody needs to feel alone. It will be lovely if Rothbury House can be developed into more independent living accommodation to grow our community."

For more information visit: [rafa.org.uk/rothbury-airmail](https://rafa.org.uk/rothbury-airmail)



# £173m raised in 70 years of Wings

This September, the Royal Air Forces Association celebrated 70 years of supporting the RAF community through its Wings Appeal.

From traditional collecting tins to Daleks on the streets, first day covers and Spitfire pulls, the diversity of fundraising since 1951 is testament to the energy and commitment of members and supporters through the decades.

Memories re-shared included from Association member George Williams who, in 1983, walked 5,500 miles around the British coast in 229 days with his dog Jack, raising thousands of pounds. Afterwards they both appeared on the Blue Peter and TV AM television shows. George had trained as an RAF staff nurse in Lincolnshire in 1975. He became a life member of the Association and contributed enormously to the Exeter Branch.

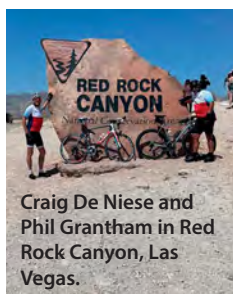
Nick Bunting, Secretary General of the RAF Association, said: "The Association thanks everyone who has stood collecting in the rain, wind or cold or in the blazing sun. Over its 70 years, our Wings Appeal has raised £173 million, allowing for inflation. This has been used to keep members of the RAF community connected and helped them out when in need. We are always researching new ways to help as times change. Not since the Second World War has the RAF been so constantly deployed around the world. Across the generations the need for support is becoming ever more complex. Demand for our services is increasing every year, so the Wings Appeal is as vital today as it was in 1951."



Below: Thousands of hours have been spent to raise funds and awareness; here by Llandaff and Ely Branch. Above right: An early Wings Appeal poster © RAF Association.



# 1 ride, 6 continents, 20 countries, 810 riders.



Craig De Niese and Phil Grantham in Red Rock Canyon, Las Vegas.

810 riders from all over the world joined together in RAFA Rides 21 - a worldwide coming together of RAF personnel and Association supporters, and a challenge event that raised £132,661.

Riders from 20 countries across six continents took part from North America, South America, Africa, the Middle East, and New Zealand, as well as across the UK and Europe. During the day, live video feeds linked the Association-organised cycling event

in Leicestershire with RAF personnel and supporters cycling in other nations. RAFA Rides 21 was made possible thanks to generous support from Lockheed Martin UK.

Air Vice-Marshal Gary Waterfall, RAF Association ambassador and RAFA Rides founder, said: "2021 has surpassed all expectations. This annual ride has become a real highlight in the cycling calendar - I am truly humbled by the incredible level of support. Having so many riders join us from so many places made it a truly global event for the RAF."

Riders travelled to Leicestershire from all over the UK, including RAF stations and Association branches. In the week running up to the event, cyclists from the Defence and National Rehabilitation Centre overcame considerable challenges to take part on static or hand cycles. Others chose to join in by cycling 100 miles round the WWI and WWII airfields of Gloucestershire and 100 miles around RAF Lossiemouth.

While every mile cycled by every participant was precious, a special mention goes to Wing Commander John Gorman based in Washington DC. He rode 450 miles in 24 hours on a static bike connected to an online cycling programme. Six hours in, he wanted to get off. But he was helped by people in the UK and around the world joining him online, some of them riding with him for 12 hours. Also cycling (on roads) in Washington DC was Air Commodore Jez Attridge. He believes the event had a wider impact for the RAF: "It's not just about fundraising, it is about being part of that team. And I think everybody that was



All together now: RAFA Rides 21 cyclists refueling at feed station at Langham, Rutland. © yourdigitalmemories.com

involved with it really got something from it. It was remarkable. Our guys were federated across most of the US states. To talk to everybody and then to see what the teams got up to - it was real commitment there. There was also the being part of it; it was wonderful. And we certainly did our part in explaining to the Americans what we were doing mid-day in a steaming hot Washington DC humid summer environment; they thought we were mad. Of course we all had the RAFA Rides 21 tops on and they could see that we were part of something much bigger. It was a good advertisement and actually there isn't a similar event in the US air force, so I know quite a few of them have picked up on that."

Anyone who loves cycling, and wants to join riders around the world supporting the RAF community, can sign up for RAFA Rides 22 now. Register online: [rafa.org.uk/airmail-rafarides](https://rafa.org.uk/airmail-rafarides). Or email the team to volunteer to support the event at [fundraising@rafa.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@rafa.org.uk).



# 500 do the Virtual 50 This 'crazy idea'

Tabbing, rowing and cycling were popular as more than 500 people accepted the challenge to 'do 50 miles (80km) in a week or less' in July and August. As Air Mail went to press, more than £33,000 had been raised.

The fundraising event, called Virtual 50, was conceived after the huge success of the Pathfinders Challenge in 2020. Run by an organising committee of Flight Lieutenant Paul Armstrong, Corporal Jayne Green, Sergeant Ash Oldroyd-Clark and Corporal Victoria Young, the challenge has been taken up by personnel from RAF stations in the UK and overseas.

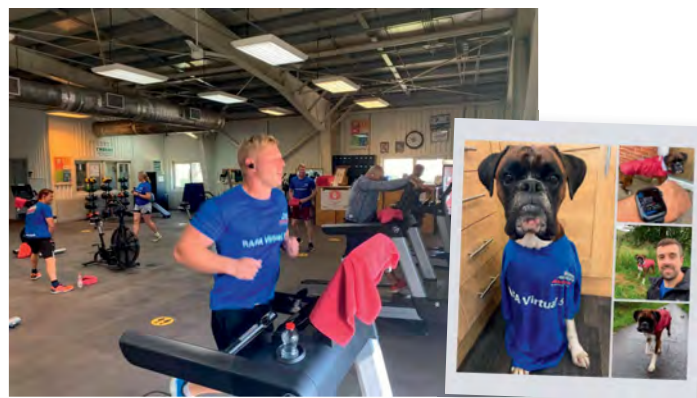
Reports and funds have come in from all over the world including Romania, the Falkland Islands, Cyprus and the USA.

55 deployed service personnel from 121 Expeditionary Air Wing, serving in Romania on a NATO enhanced Air Policing mission, took part and raised more than £2,500. With daily temperatures above 32 degrees Celsius during the challenge, personnel used the air conditioned gym



facilities on camp, or ran the perimeter track through the night to chip away at their mileage targets.

Flight Lieutenant Lesley Connor, Detachment Administration Officer said: "In addition to raising money for the RAF Association, the challenge also promotes team cohesion and lifts morale. Our original aim as an Expeditionary Air Wing was to try and raise over £1,000 and I am thrilled that we have managed to more than double this figure."



Above left: ...to the air conditioned gym of 121 Expeditionary Air Wing in Romania Above right: Fun event - where anyone could take part in any way they liked, as long as they did the 50 miles - raised more than £33,000.

© Participants' own images

Right:  
**Martin Wintermeyer (left) and Mal Craghill's epic Tornado Tribute Tour of England raised £22,500 and remembered 14 fallen colleagues.**

© MOD/Crown



The Tornado Tribute Tour of England finished in Washington, Tyne and Wear on 25 June, after ten gruelling days on the road.

Martin Wintermeyer and Mal Craghill, Tornado navigators who served during the first Gulf War, started their cycle challenge in St Eval, Cornwall on Friday 18 June with a service to remember Flight Lieutenant Steve Hicks of XV Squadron, who died in action on 14 February 1991. Their ride visited the graves of thirteen other British Tornado and Jaguar aircrew who died training for or during the conflict and one US Air Force pilot, killed on a training exercise.

Talking of the cycle challenge, Eunice Hicks, mother of Steve Hicks, said: "What Mal and Martin have achieved is amazing. It has been a huge comfort ... Tornado aircrew who lost their lives have not been forgotten."

Talking about their 'crazy idea', Mal and Martin said: "The support we have had has been incredible, from our sponsors to those who joined us virtually on our training rides and from those who joined us out on the road to everyone who has donated. Thank you."

Mal continued: "Thanks to all the RAF stations who held commemoration events. They immediately understood what we were trying to do and gave so much in support of our RAF community. I think the high point for me has been seeing how much the ride and tributes have meant to the families of those we were remembering."

Mal and Martin have thanked the following sponsors and supporters, without whom they could not have ridden so far and achieved so much: Collins Aerospace, Nova Systems, Endura, Affinity Flying Training Services, Inzpire, Blue Bear Systems Research, MASS, On Pole, Leonardo, 2Excel, Riverview Wellbeing Therapies and Garmin.

- £22,500 raised
- 690 miles cycled
- 30 years passed
- 14 air force friends and colleagues remembered
- 10 days completed
- 2 friends united
- 1 van tyre punctured



Above left and left: Supporters such as Johnny Mercer MP, Tornado pilot John Peters and other serving and retired RAF people joined the ride and attended the wreath laying ceremonies © MOD/Crown.

Above right: At the special National Memorial Arboretum service, Eunice Hicks, mother of Flight Lieutenant Steve Hicks said: "The service was a lovely event and I not only met old friends, but made some new ones too." © MOD/Crown.





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# Our utmost respect and admiration

How this year's National Presidential Certificate award winners have made a difference to so many lives. Moyne Blake, Jim Goodfellow and Stan Turner received NPC Awards to coincide with Her Majesty The Queen's Birthday Honours in June.

## Moyne Blake

"When I first opened the letter and saw that it was from Sir Baz I thought it was about a training course – I had no idea," says Moyne Blake, welfare officer, Wings Appeal coordinator and former treasurer with Cheltenham Branch.

Moyne worked as a photographic interpreter during her time in the RAF, and was approached by the RAF Association 23 years ago. She coordinates the branch's annual Wings Appeal, which has since raised in excess of £100,000, and also organises a weekly Wings Café to help to combat loneliness among the branch's more isolated members.

As branch welfare officer she has shown an exceptional devotion, and is acknowledged as an expert on claims for state financial benefits, medals and awards, Association welfare support, and Department for Work and Pensions assistance for those with disabilities. "If someone isn't getting what they're entitled to, a pension for example, then I enjoy taking their case and getting them what they're owed," says Moyne.

Branch Chairman, Michael Bryant, said: "Moyne has completed a vast number of welfare cases, some of which were particularly complex and required careful, tactful and deft handling. She has exploited her local knowledge to great effect ... and she has often travelled to neighbouring branches that have been unable to offer support to those in need of welfare.

"The time and effort she devotes without complaint is immense," continues Michael, "and we would be very hard-pressed to find someone else prepared to take on a role that contributes so much to both the welfare and fundraising activities of the branch. She has won the utmost respect and admiration of both colleagues and those who benefit from her welfare work."



Moyne Blake. © Michael Bryant.

## Jim Goodfellow

Described in his citation as one of the most courteous people ever met, Jim Goodfellow joined the North Staffordshire Branch of the RAF Association in 1961 and stayed until it closed in 1975. He then became a founder member of the new Newcastle-under-Lyme Branch. A former accountant, Jim served in the offices of the club, raised money for the Wings Appeal, supported veterans and their families and organised annual Battle of Britain Parades. He served as both chairman and treasurer, the latter continuously for 22 years until 2020. Jim built close relationships with the mayor's office and civic authorities to build support for the branch's Battle of Britain and Remembrance parades.

He first joined the RAF Air Cadets in 1951 and remained with them until 2015. Jim did national service in the RAF from 1953 to 1955 and then stayed on until 1961. He remains a trustee at Newcastle-under-Lyme Branch.

## Stan Turner

"Stan's welfare work has been exceptional," notes his award citation. "He has always approached the work in a quiet and unassuming manner, with the clients' needs being addressed to the best of his abilities in a very caring way. He has made a difference to many lives over the years."

Over at least 25 years, Stan Turner has held the positions of standard bearer, treasurer, Wings Appeal coordinator and welfare officer with Kettering Branch.

On the committee he "has a wealth of knowledge and experience," continues the citation. "Stan has provided much sage advice and quietly steers the younger committee members with a calm and informed manner. He has been a hugely significant influence."

Stan believed he'd already had his moment of recognition back in 2016 in the form of a certificate from his Area. "I was surprised when I learned of the National Presidential Certificate," he says, "I'm just doing the job I said I'd do."

After two years' national service with the RAF, Stan was demobbed in 1956. Some time afterwards he had found himself speaking to a member of his local RAF Association branch. "I listened to what he said about the Association. I thought it sounded quite interesting, so I joined. After attending few meetings I could see that there were jobs which needed doing, so I volunteered," says Stan. "That was many moons ago now."

Stan has recently decided to retire from his duties on the branch committee. His award citation stated that: "Replacing him will be no small challenge. He has been the very lifeblood of the branch."



The gold badge that only National Presidential Certificate recipients are entitled to wear. © RAF Association.



Above: NPC winners in 2019 at the president's drinks reception. © Heidi Burton.





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# 100th birthdays



Norman Chapman cranks up his Blenheim. © Richard Paver Photography.

## Norman Chapman

Norman Chapman's RAF career began at the age of 16 in October 1938. Having undergone a range of training, Norman worked as a mechanic, fixing everything from electrics to engines to hydraulics. Posted to 139 Squadron, he helped to 'bomb-up' a Blenheim which took part in the first RAF air raid of the war against German shipping. Norman then followed the squadron to France but in May 1940 it was overrun by the German advance. Narrowly missing boarding the ill-fated RMS Lancastria, he made his way back to England via tug boat from Cherbourg.

Norman was then sent to a motorised unit which recovered aircraft until, in 1942, he was transferred to Africa. There, among other duties, he spent six months maintaining tanks which were using a variant of an aircraft engine. He was also posted to East Africa to work on Catalinas and Sunderlands, which is where he ended the war.

Demobbed in 1946, he joined Skyways and was chief engineer for Freddy Laker. In 1986 Norman began restoring old aircraft in association with Duxford aerodrome before finally retiring in 1991. In June he celebrated his 100th birthday at Duxford, with his rebuilt P51 and beloved Blenheim.

## Charles Hastings-Winch

Charles 'Chas' Hastings-Winch joined the RAF in January 1937, aged 15, and became a member of the 35th entry into the RAF Aircraft Apprentices' scheme at Halton. In 1942 he was accepted for pilot training and sailed on the SS Otranto to South Africa.

On completion in 1943 he moved to Egypt, expecting to join a squadron in Italy, but ended up in India. There he joined 229 Group, delivering Spitfires, Hurricanes, P47s and Vultee Vengeances, among others, and returning with damaged aircraft. In May 1945 he was taken ill with typhoid fever, which ended his flying in India.

He retired from the RAF in 1956 and became an Air Traffic Control Officer, retiring in 1981. Charles celebrated his 100th birthday in June with a small group of family and friends at his home near Chester.



Charles Hastings-Winch. © Family archive.

## Duncan Rowlinson

Duncan Rowlinson celebrated his 100th birthday in July with Association branch members, RAF Air Cadets, family and staff at his care home in Hampshire. Squadron Leader John Plenty from RAF Odiham presented him with a framed print of a Chinook helicopter, signed by members of 27 Squadron.

Born in Manchester, Duncan joined the RAF Volunteer Reserves aged 20 as a wireless operator/air gunner. Initially, he trained at Blackpool before his postings in 1942-3 to RAFs Madley, Hendon, Manby and Bobbington where he flew on Avro Ansons.

While at RAF Madley Duncan married Pauline, who was by his side until her death in 2012.

In 1943 Duncan was posted to RAF Silverstone, where he met the crew who would become his Bomber Command family. In early 1944 Duncan began flying on the Avro Lancaster and moved to RAF Skellingthorpe, the home of 50 Squadron, at the same time as the late Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Michael Beetham. In later years he and Duncan corresponded about their shared experiences at Skellingthorpe.

Duncan flew on many night operations from Skellingthorpe in 1944, and his memories are still vivid – from assembling in the briefing room and being given the target for tonight, to the terrifying action and the prayed-for return. Later in 1944, Duncan became ill and was rushed to an RAF hospital as an emergency. Just a few days later, Duncan's crew flew to Brunswick but did not return. Hit by enemy fire over the coast, all the crew were lost, with just two bodies recovered from the North Sea.

At the age of 75 Duncan took a flight in a glider, handling the controls, and a few years later enjoyed a flight in a Chinook from Odiham. In 2014, Duncan was officially presented with his Bomber Command Clasp at RAF Odiham as aircraft from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight flew overhead.



Duncan Rowlinson. © Family archive.

## Pat Ryan

Pat Ryan celebrated her century with lunch with her children and grandchildren at home in Lyme Regis in July.

In 1939 she joined the WAAF as an airwomen, with her first posting being to the Air Ministry in London. She was then posted to RAF Debden, Essex as a plotter for Fighter Command where she scrambled Spitfires and Hurricanes during the Battle of Britain. Later she was posted to RAF Finningley and Bomber Command where she helped plan the RAF component for the raid on Dieppe. She also remembers training the Americans in the operations room when they came into the war.

After the war Pat met her husband at Tidworth Garrison where he was a Captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps. They later lived in Derbyshire where her husband was a GP, before retiring in 1992. To mark her birthday Pat was presented with a pilot teddy bear by members of Bridport and Lyme Regis Branch. When asked about her longevity she said: "no smoking, minimal alcohol, but above all a good sense of humour!"



Pat Ryan. © Family



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And the research shows this is mirrored among those who have not yet made a will. Of this group, 50 per cent of 16-24 year olds said they would consider leaving a gift, compared to 17 per cent of those aged older than 65. 61 per cent of this age group said they would not give.

Legacy income is critical for the RAF Association's welfare work. Its 2019 Annual Report shows that £9.46 million of its £16.2 million income was from gifts in wills. It is generally more than six years from the person pledging their gift until its arrival to be spent on the RAF Association's welfare work.



This autumn, the RAF Association has been running campaigns to encourage both existing supporters and people unconnected to the organisation to leave gifts in their wills to fund its welfare work. The communications are focusing on the greatest gift anyone can give – the sacrifice RAF personnel make to serve their country. The Association is encouraging people to never let down those who have served to protect our freedom, and to leave a percentage of their estate or a specific gift to the charity.

Find out more about leaving a gift in a will and get helpful resources (*like the leaflet pictured above*) by visiting: [rafa.org.uk/gift-in-a-will](https://rafa.org.uk/gift-in-a-will)

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Sharing good food and good conversation at the new veterans' breakfast club after the £143,000 transformation at Bognor Regis Branch Club. © Terry Applin.



Staff and volunteers at Bognor Regis Branch Club ready to welcome veterans to the breakfast club. © Terry Applin.



A cracking start to the day. The breakfast club is also supported by TESCO and the RAF Benevolent Fund. © Terry Applin.

# Silver linings

## £3m boost for branch clubs

Many of the Association's branch clubs have emerged from the difficulties of the lockdowns restored, repaired and ready to get going again. Their sustainability and, in some cases, huge improvements are thanks to £1.4million in grants from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (AFCFT) and around £1.7million from the government's COVID-19 business support measures.

"There is more of a buzz than before COVID," says Ann Hewings at Bognor Regis Branch Club in West Sussex. "Many members have said they didn't realise how much they would miss the club until it wasn't there."

Since the end of 2019, the club has had £150,000 worth of building work done; including solar panels, replacement windows, rewiring, and new flooring and redecoration. The funding has come from the AFCFT Veterans' Community Centres programme and, though much of it is invisible, the difference is palpable. It makes the building feel warmer and bigger, and helps keep running costs down.

"Our amazing members made further donations of time, paint, technology and more. We estimate that's been worth another £25,000 to £30,000," Ann adds. "Since lockdown restrictions were lifted, there have been gatherings to watch the football European Cup final and Wimbledon on the new big-screen televisions. The club's regular choir,

band nights, jazz and music jams are running again. Raffles, crown green bowling, the photography competition, reading club, bingo, skittles, Brews for the Few and karaoke are back and bringing in new and existing members. And the events have been supplemented by a new Veteran's Breakfast Club that attracted more than 30 former Royal Navy, British Army, and Royal Air Force personnel to its first serving. Ann says: "We have had two new members this week. Their families live miles away but they have taken out membership for everyone so they can all come in when they are down to visit."

Nationally, 29 branches were awarded funding by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust. This was bid for across three rounds of Veterans' Community Centre funding in 2019, and led by the Association's HQ trust fundraising team. The total funding awarded to the Association has been £1,430,851.

Though it has been difficult to progress the works during the various lockdowns and restrictions of the pandemic, 18 branches have completed their works, with 11 branches still working with their builders, planners and funders. £1,069,333 has been spent to date.

At Neath in the Welsh county of Glamorgan, work has been completed to stop leaks, damp and water damage to windows and to internal and external walls. The branch's report to the funder said: "It definitely feels much warmer and not as draughty. The outside of the building is much smarter – no more unsightly cracks." The aim now is to encourage even more people from of the RAF family to join the existing 200 members and benefit from the branch's welfare support and friendship.

At Crook Branch in County Durham the Spitfire Club was able to safely remove asbestos tiles, replace the roof and renovate almost every part of the first floor and ground floor of the building. A new bar, new function rooms and new toilets make the club more modern and welcoming and,





"It's much smarter....and it definitely feels warmer and less draughty" say Neath Branch Club members. © Neath Branch

**Our amazing members made further donations**

this July, it launched its first monthly Soul Club night.

Bedford Club had a kitchen that was more than 20 years old and was difficult to work in. Though the branch had played an important part in the community and for the RAF family since 1937, Association members had been frustrated by the cramped conditions and impact that was having on its ability to gather veterans and serving personnel together. Thanks to the grant, the new, commercial-standard kitchen means the branch can move ahead with its plans to host breakfasts, lunches and dinners as part of the Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club, hold Remembrance dinners, Christmas lunches, themed nights with French, German, Spanish, Italian and Indian foods, barbeques, and also private functions for members including wakes, birthdays and anniversaries. The branch is now encouraging more veterans to join and benefit from its support.

Weston-super-Mare branch in Somerset is in a former office building and the décor, fixtures, fittings and facilities were mostly unchanged since the 1960s. The five phases of renovation between 2019 and 2021 allowed the branch to meet all its building and fire safety regulations, and also create a brighter, more modern space for members that was less expensive to run. Improvements were made to function rooms, the bar, meeting rooms and to the courtyard - which will become another social space for the summer months. Weston-super-Mare branch club now plans to relaunch its talks,

quizzes, dinners, and film afternoons, breakfast clubs and more and to hold a recruitment weekend, to attract more members.

The Tornado Club in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, used their award of more than £100,000 to create a comfortable modern space after 50 years as a social hub. It has had a completely new kitchen area, updated toilet facilities for disabled and able-bodied members and a completely improved entrance area. Branch Chairman Paul Davies says: "Now it's completed, it will be a brilliant achievement by those involved to provide for those who need the help, friendship, social interaction and welfare that the Association can provide." Club Chairman Frances Tatlow said "It's great that the AFCFT has been so generous with this grant, and we are very grateful for the opportunity that it provides. I am looking forward to all our members enjoying our new facilities and there is a grand reopening planned for late 2021, to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the move to Asfordby Road." More widely, clubs have benefited from a further £1.7million in government COVID business support, allowing them to furlough employees and benefit from any other loans, tax relief and cash grants for which they have been eligible.

Paul Baker, Clubs Operations & Development Manager says: "It is clear that COVID-19-related Government funding has allowed many of our branch clubs to avoid permanent closure. This, coupled with the support of the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, has enabled our branch clubs to take stock and to improve their infrastructure as they welcome back members into a brighter, more vibrant, safer and more welcoming facility. Many of those who serve on committees have worked tirelessly to ensure the experience of members is improved, as we move through the next phase of this pandemic, and I really hope their efforts are rewarded."

**Around 30 veterans, their partners and carers already attend the Bognor Regis Branch breakfast club.** © Terry Applin.



**The very first visitors at the Weston-super-Mare Branch Club admire the transformation of the old 1960s office building.** © Weston-super-Mare Branch



Above: (Top left) **Bright and colourful new stained glass windows at Yeadon Branch Club.** © Yeadon Branch; (Top right) **New carpets at Huyton Branch Club contain the RAF Association crest.** © Huyton Branch; (Bottom) **Works to improve access at Bristol City Branch Club will help everyone arrive independently.** © Bristol City Branch.

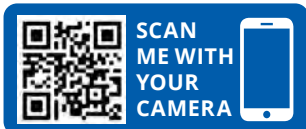




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Since 2018 the Royal Air Force and the Qatar Emiri Air Force have been developing an ever-stronger relationship; forming 12 Squadron, the UK's first joint squadron since the Second World War. Three years on we catch up with the British and Qatari personnel at RAF Coningsby to find out how the partnership has progressed, where it's going next and to hear about 21st century international co-operation.



# Salam Alaykum

## - peace be upon you

“Ultimately 12 Squadron doesn't really exist without our Qatari personnel,” says Squadron Leader Ryan Lawton. He is one of two executive officers (XOs) and is standing next to Captain Ali al Abdulla, his Qatari counterpart, on an overcast summer afternoon at RAF Coningsby in 2021. Today the cloud base is not stopping normal squadron operations and their conversation is against a background of the roar of Typhoons taking

off and landing. The air and ground crew are a mix of personnel from each nation. Ryan continues. “It's just fantastic. The more Qataris we bring on board, on the engineering side and on the pilot side, the greater the opportunities are for all of us.”

The first cohort of personnel from Qatar arrived in June 2020, after a slight delay while the world worked out how to continue to function in a pandemic. Captain Ali al Abdulla describes their arrival: “It was a bit different.

Top: **Captain Ali al Abdulla of 12 Squadron inspects his aircraft before a flight. The experienced Mirage pilot was in the first cohort of pilots and engineers to be trained on Typhoons at RAF Coningsby.** © MOD/Crown 2021

Above: **In the beginning: the Qatar Emiri Air Force display team in front of the Doha Corniche in 2018. Four RAF Typhoon FGR4's from Number 29 Squadron, RAF Coningsby, travelled to Doha to participate in this Qatari National Day flypast.** © MOD/Crown 2018.



The weather here is very different to what we have at home. The most difficult thing was operating during COVID-19 restrictions. It was hard to circulate with our colleagues here and with the RAF." But as the squadron settled and lockdowns eased, the personnel have gelled well. According to him, the best thing is: "being here in the UK in such a great environment and very high standards. It has added a lot to our experience."

#### How the squadron developed

12 Squadron was officially re-established on 24th July 2018 to become a joint Royal Air Force and Qatari Emiri Air Force squadron, integrating personnel from both nations.

The partnership was set up to boost Qatar's ability to tackle our shared security challenges

squadron in early 2020. Just as importantly, our time in Qatar has allowed us to work hard on our cultural awareness and even our Arabic."

In June 2020, Qatari Minister of State for Defence Affairs, His Excellency Dr Khalid bin Mohammad al Attiyah and United Kingdom Defence Secretary Ben Wallace marked the first joint flights from RAF Coningsby. The flags of both nations were raised, signalling the squadron's readiness to train pilots and ground crew from both air forces. His Excellency Dr Khalid said: "The raising of the flags side by side represents the alignment of vision and strategy in building for a stable and prosperous future for both nations and the world."

During the visit, Dr Khalid, a former fast jet pilot who trained at RAF Valley, was flown in a Typhoon to experience first-hand the expertise,

skills and professionalism of 12 Squadron.

#### Day-to-day on 12 Squadron

Back with the XO's at Coningsby, we discuss the VIP visit. "His Excellency, as a pilot, he always wants to take the jet and fly it by himself," says Ali. "Maybe when we deploy back to Qatar and have our own jets then I think he will be willing to fly the Typhoon as a single seater. Having His Excellency here, he saw the way we operate as 12 Squadron and he was impressed about the work we do here and, definitely, his visit was very successful." Ali and his fellow cohort-one pilots were experienced Mirage pilots before they arrived for Typhoon training. "Obviously learning a new jet, at the beginning, it's difficult," he says. "But after you gain some experience on the jet →



Left: Captain Ali al Abdulla also took part in Exercise Epic Skies IV in November 2020, with the first wave of Typhoons taking off from Doha Air Base. © MOD/Crown 2020.

Below: The tail crest of 12 Squadron, the first international joint squadron since the Second World War. © MOD/Crown 2020.



in the Middle East, contribute to regional stability and protect the prosperity and security of the UK at home. The Government of Qatar committed to a £6-billion package which includes delivery of 24 new Typhoons and nine new Hawk T2 Mk167 jet trainers from BAE Systems and other suppliers. It also includes a bespoke support package for the RAF to train Qatari pilots and ground crew. The Hawk and Typhoon aircraft ordered by the Government of Qatar are being assembled in the UK, supporting thousands of jobs at locations including BAE Systems' sites in Warton and Samlesbury until the middle of the decade.

By December 2019, 12 Squadron had completed a three-week exercise in Qatar, flying a number of sorties alongside the Qatari Emiri Air Force (QEAF) as part of Exercise Epic Skies III. The exercise runs annually but this was the first time that the squadron took part. Wing Commander Chris Wright, Officer Commanding at the time said: "The exercise has allowed this new team to test our mettle in a foreign location, following some hard work back at Coningsby since our re-formation, and ahead of the first of our QEAF personnel joining the

*"the Typhoon squadron will be the spine of our air force"*

With Tattershall Castle, Lincolnshire, behind: Squadron Leader Ryan Lawton, left, with Colonel Faisal Al-Ghanim. © MOD/Crown 2020.





## International cooperation

it gets easier and easier every time."

Ryan pays tribute to the skill of his Qatari colleagues: "The Typhoon is not too difficult to learn to fly and these guys are obviously very experienced in other aircraft. But the challenges for us are trying to translate what we do in the UK into ways these guys can take back home beyond that. Things like close air support, where you are operating as a single pilot, potentially at night, in poor weather. You've got two different radios to manage, both of which can be in your second language, while trying to listen to a joint terminal air controller on the ground who is trying to talk you onto a target with friendly forces in close proximity. It's about as hard as it gets really. And to do that in a second language is really a credit to these guys. With regards to how we can help with that as instructors, it's very much down to these guys. They have done so incredibly well and ultimately it's fresh and new for all of us."

### Exercises

As well as simulator and live training, there have been regular exercises for the squadron in Qatar and the UK.

Ryan describes: "the fantastic opportunity to go out to Qatar. The weather is much nicer out there, so that makes things a little bit easier, but it's a totally different environment to fly in. Qatar is quite a small country so there are some constraints on air space which make things a bit more challenging at times. But to work alongside Ali's colleagues back home to integrate on the Rafale and the Mirage and ultimately to prepare for when these guys get back to their air force with the Typhoon, is a great opportunity for us as a joint squadron."

In the UK, exercises have included Cobra Warrior. In autumn 2021 Exercise Magic Carpet will be running – a joint UK/Omani project, which 12 Squadron will join. The RAF tries to expose the Qataris to as many different opportunities as possible, from live strafe at Holbeach Range to live bomb drops at Garvie Island off the coast of Scotland. Ali describes the benefits: "Coming from an ex-Mirage, I had a chance to experience some of that, but I think it will be a new thing for the next guys in Cohort Two to practice this. Taking the experience from our colleagues here, definitely will help us setting up the squadron in Qatar. And using what we learned here and trained here to make it back home with our new squadron."

There have also been opportunities to train with the squadron's sister ship, the Type 45 HMS Defender. "To be able to operate alongside her and the carrier strike group in the North Sea is something that is a great opportunity for us as a joint squadron," says Ryan. "And Ali, I am

not sure how much you do with your naval or ground assets back home, but ..."

Ali picks up the theme: "Back home, sometimes we practice with the Navy. So definitely seeing how the RAF operates with the Royal Navy here is different. So that will help us, thinking ahead maybe in the future, to integrate more with our other armed forces in Qatar."

In this particular exercise, the squadron was looking at an air defence scenario. HMS Defender was acting as a control platform for the Typhoons and other assets in the airspace, as well as providing her own sea-based air defence system. The planning and the execution of these sorties are useful.

Planning on the ground before we fly ensures everyone gets their training objectives met – the Qataris, the Royal Air Force and the joint assets that were participating.

### The synthetic environment

The RAF trainers try to use a blend of synthetic and live flying throughout. To introduce a new training phase – Ali and his Cohort One colleagues were learning to be pairs lead instructors on the squadron when we spoke - they will be given some phase briefs, learn in the simulator, practice in the simulator, then go into the air to rehearse there. There is a set structure: flying a couple of waves a day, morning and afternoon, with some simulations thrown in as well. Ryan explains: "It's just about trying to integrate these guys into the squadron as much as possible, so trying to bring them into the planning and debriefing process as much as

**"that will help us integrate more with our other armed forces in Qatar"**



Above: Walking out to the Typhoon flight line at RAF Coningsby. Captain Ali al Abdulla is second from right. © MOD/Crown 2019.

possible as well. The synthetic environment gives us a great opportunity to really cement the basics, so we can concentrate on processes, work cycles, etc so we are not wasting time and resources airborne, trying to learn something that we could do on the ground. I think synthetic is a great tool initially. It doesn't quite replicate exactly how the aircraft works, and I know these guys are going to get some pretty decent synthetic devices back home in Qatar. But ultimately you are never going to be able to fully recreate what it's going to be like to fly in a real aircraft, in poor weather, with real air traffic control, and the physiological effects of flying a Typhoon as well."

Comparing training in the simulator to live flying, Ali said: "The synthetic actually is very helpful because it's not like the live - when you just have one hour and 30 in the live mission. In the synthetic if you get something wrong you can just stop and rewind and start from the beginning and definitely you can fly more on the synthetic than live. The synthetic helps a lot, especially during the first phase of learning and at the beginning of each phase."

RAF Coningsby is waiting for the arrival of the Typhoon Future Synthetic Training Devices which are being built now. As the Qatari Air Force sets up its own, new 7 Wing, it will also be equipped with this latest hardware and software, at an identical training facility in The Arabian Gulf.



Above: The UK Secretary of State for Defence The Right Honourable Ben Wallace MP (right) and The Qatar Deputy Prime Minister and The Minister of State for Defence his Excellency Dr Khalid (left) visited 12 Squadron, Royal Air Force Coningsby to formally open the newly formed 12 Squadron in October 2020. © MOD/Crown 2020

Right: Flying from RAF Coningsby on the day the flags of the United Kingdom and Qatar were raised at the station, to mark the official start of 12 Squadron's operations. © MOD/Crown 2020.







Left: **Left to right: Wing Commander Mark Baker RAF and Colonel Faisal Al-Ghanim QEAF. The (then) UK Typhoon pilots from RAF's Number 1 (Fighter) Squadron and Qatari Mirage pilots from the Qatar Emiri Air Force (QEAF) were attending in-brief ahead of the joint exercise EPIC SKIES II.** ©

MOD/Crown 2018. Below Left: **Some of the personnel involved in Exercise Epic Skies III with a Qatar Emiri Air Force Mirage and RAF Typhoon behind.** © MOD/Crown 2019.

will be planned to co-ordinate with the UK's operational and training needs and will benefit the RAF by enhancing its interoperability with international personnel and equipment.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: "In the face of new and emerging threats, it is vital we collaborate with our international allies to tackle our shared security challenges. Our long-standing relationship with Qatar exemplifies this."

The developments are seen as important steps in the ever-growing military international co-operation that joins the QEAF and the RAF. The joint Hawk training squadron is also seen as an integral component in increasing interoperability and coordination between both air forces, leading to closer cooperation and alignment in future military and peacekeeping efforts.

The formation of the second UK-Qatar joint squadron, which was initially announced in 2020, will provide additional flying hours for RAF pilots and see long-term international investment in new infrastructure and training facilities at RAF Leeming. This will include a Hawk training simulator, and the refurbishment of existing facilities.

## What next in Qatar?

When their training in the UK is finished, Ali and his colleagues will return to Qatar: "Next for me is to be able to deliver whatever I learn here in the United Kingdom, back home, and instruct on the platform for the young guys. Our colleagues in the RAF, they have very valuable experience in operating the Typhoon. The Qatari Air Force will receive the Typhoon next year, in 2022, and having 12 Squadron deployed to Qatar next year definitely will help us setting up our new squadron there, back home."

Standing up the QEAF 7 Wing "will be a great moment" according to Ali. "Already having the Rafale squadron in Qatar, that will help protecting our airspace. But the Typhoon squadron will, I think, be the spine of our air force."



## Cultural exchange

The RAF has always given opportunities to travel the world and learn about different cultures. The depth of international co-operation experienced in 12 Squadron possibly brings even more global experience to individuals. After Exercise Epic Skies III, Senior Aircraftman (Tech) Sam Melling said: "This has allowed me to start understanding Qatari culture. When we were looking around the Corniche [in Doha] one of the locals invited us onto a boat and talked us through the traditional way of boat building. I believe going forward these personal experiences will help us to create stronger bonds between the RAF and the QEAF."

Ryan describes how this has continued: "This has very much been a two-way stream. While the instruction and mentoring on how to fly the aircraft and operate the aircraft and engineer the aircraft is probably quite one-sided from the RAF to the Qataris, actually working together as a joint squadron has been a two-way stream. Yes, we are trying to introduce these guys into how an RAF squadron works, but on the flip side, we have learned an awful lot from these guys in how to manage a joint squadron and the cultural aspects of it. The way we socialise, the way we integrate as a squadron, has been a real opportunity for us to get to know these guys better. It means we are much better placed to understand how to operate in the Arabic world."

When asked about the number of foxes on station (from door knockers on the XO's office to taxidermy almost everywhere). Ali and all the Qatari personnel we spoke to say they hadn't really noticed them. It could be they were bringing their exquisite Middle Eastern

manners into play about the different ways of displaying the squadron emblem or that they have quite enough to do already - improving their technical English and learning to fly and look after multimillion-pound aircraft in a cold damp country.

## The future

In October 2020 and April 2021, the two nations agreed to build on the partnership and establish an additional joint squadron. As part of the agreement, RAF Leeming in North Yorkshire will become the British base for the new UK-Qatar joint Hawk training squadron, using Qatar's own new Hawk T2 variant aircraft.

Providing valuable training opportunities for both nations, the updated defence agreement will also see the RAF Voyager tanker deploy to Qatar to periodically provide air-to-air refuelling training for the QEAF's fleet of fast jets.

The Voyager fleet already supports defence activity around the world and the Qatar air-to-air refuelling service over the next two years will be part of this. The deployments

**Typhoons take off from Doha Air Base in November 2020 as part of Exercise Epic Skies** © MOD/Crown 2020.





Staff Sergeant Ali Al Sharshanni (Weapons Technician), was on his first day at 12 Squadron when we spoke to him. One of the best students of his course, he had been awarded the Silver Salver at RAF Cosford. The trophy recognises excellent exam results and improvement during the course and is part of the RAF National Apprenticeship Awards. We asked him about life and learning in the UK.

# Getting technical

"I joined the Qatari Air Force in 2018 and studied at RAF Cosford for two years. Then I moved to RAF Coningsby in May 2021 to do the Q Course" [eight weeks on the Typhoon studying avionics, mechanics and weapons].

## What are the differences between Qatar and the UK?

"The work environment and the aircraft are the same. The cold weather is not a usual thing for us. The temperature in Qatar is a maximum of 45 to 50 degrees."

## What can you teach your colleagues when you get back?

"It will be good to teach them. And the most important thing that we learned was the human factor. It's an important thing to teach people to save the human lives and, in a working environment, keep them safe."

## What was it like being trained here?

"It's not easy, and not hard. It's good to study a new thing. We had funny instructors. They make it more easy and simple. They didn't take

it too seriously, which is good for us to learn. All in all, the experience in the RAF and in the UK has been good. You need to do some work yourself to pass all the exams."

## What is your future career?

"First we will be technicians. In future I hope to be an instructor in our trade. I chose the trade because it is the most important thing in a fighter aircraft."

## Have you flown in a Typhoon yet?

"I haven't been able to fly in a Typhoon yet, but of course I want to."

## Are there differences in QEAF/RAF standards and procedures?

"The standards we have learned are a little bit different and the documents are different also. But in the Typhoon I think the documents will be the same and we will use those procedures in the future in the Qatari Air Force."

## What does an average week look like?

"We work on the maintenance in the bomb



Above: Weapons Technician, Staff Sergeant Ali Al Sharshanni was presented with the Silver Salver at RAF Cosford. © MOD/Crown 2021

bays and we work on maintenance and some things with the head team, which is between mechanics, avionics and weapons - and we try to work together in the team."

"We need to inspect the aircraft and make sure it is in a safe position. CN checks are when the aircraft has landed. CO checks are before its flight. There need to be lots of checks and inspections: the main body, the engines, and the fuel balancing of the aircraft. And all of these will be in the system, with the pilot inside the cockpit. And if there is any system fail, or anything, the pilot will ask. If there is a signal or a fail, avionics will come, or if there are scratches on the body, mech will come and fix it."

## How did it feel to win the Silver Salver?

"It was because of the performance on the course; how improved I was from the start of my class to my graduation. I was surprised and happy when my name was called out. I have already got it: I received it when I graduated from Cosford. I was immensely proud. We were sixteen students, but went down to eleven who stayed until we finished. The Silver Salver is something that will be useful for my career in the future."

## How does it feel to be working alongside the RAF technicians?

"I think it is a helpful thing for us to exchange our experiences together because they have a way to work with it and we have another way. And then we can do something good together."

## And what is next?

"I am looking forward to working with the Omani Air Force on Exercise Magic Carpet. It will be my first exercise. It will help me broaden my skills in many trades, and will help me to join other countries' teams and work with them." AM



Left: 12 Squadron ground crew inspecting a Typhoon at RAF Cosford on the day they commenced flying as a joint British and Qatari squadron from RAF Coningsby. © MOD/Crown 2020.



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**U**K Space Command is responsible for the UK's commitment to the Combined Space Operations initiative, which comprises seven nations: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, New Zealand, UK and the United States. The initiative improves cooperation, coordination, and interoperability opportunities in space, with the main efforts focussed on ensuring it remains a safe, secure and stable domain.

Space plays a vital role in the armed forces' ability to undertake the majority of defence tasks, with any disruption to the space domain leading to significant consequences for civilian, commercial, economic and military activity.

The stand-up of Space Command will help ensure the UK's interests in space are protected and builds on the commitments outlined in the Defence Command Paper to invest an additional £1.4 billion in space over the next ten years.

Minister for Defence Procurement Jeremy Quin said: "As our adversaries advance their space capabilities, it is vital we invest in space to ensure we maintain a battle-winning advantage across this fast-evolving operational domain."

Under the leadership of Air Vice-Marshal Paul Godfrey the Joint Command will have oversight of all space capability development in the Ministry of Defence across space operations, space workforce training and growth, and capability to develop and deliver space equipment programmes. When at full operating capacity, UK Space Command will command and control all of the country's space capabilities, including the UK's Space Operations Centre, RAF Fylingdales, and SKYNET. AM



# UK Space Command officially launched

The official opening ceremony of UK Space Command Headquarters at RAF High Wycombe in July marked a crucial step in the development of the nation's space defence, and celebrated our continued cooperation with our international allies.

## Working partners:

- **UK Strategic Command** and the **Defence Science and Technology Laboratory** – the RAF will draw on key expertise from across defence and ensure multi domain integration.
- The **MOD Space Directorate**, which is responsible for policy, strategy and cross-government and international coordination.
- Direction from the **National Space Council** flows through the MOD Space Directorate to Space Command and other relevant elements of defence.
- The UK Space Command will take command of the UK's participation in the **US-led Space Coalition** under Op OLYMPIC DEFENDER, and support the growth of the **NATO space enterprise**.
- Commercial: **UKspace** is working in partnership with the Royal Air Force to develop a new **Commercial Integration Cell (CIC)** at the **UK Space Operations Centre (SpOC)** to enable enhanced coordination of military and commercial space operations. Member companies will either be owner/operators of commercial satellites supporting the MOD, or service providers of operational space infrastructure and related systems. They will share space-related information with the RAF at the SpOC to improve co-ordination and maintain the safe and sustainable use of space. Similar to that currently operated by the United States Space Force at the Combined Space Operations Centre in Vandenberg, the CIC will improve interoperability between the allied nations in Operation OLYMPIC DEFENDER and also support national operations.



Top: UK Space Command will allow enhanced coordination of military and commercial space operations such as the Crew Dragon launch from Cape Canaveral in May 2020, pictured. This was tracked by personnel from RAF Fylingdales. The NASA launch was the first manned space vehicle for nine years to journey to the International Space Station, as part of a commercial enterprise between NASA and Elon Musk's SpaceX programme. RAF Fylingdales detected the launch once it came within their field of view and shared this information with the Space Operations Centre at Headquarters Air Command, and their sister sites in the United States. © Alamy.

Above: Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff Admiral Sir Tim Fraser, Air Vice-Marshal Paul Godfrey, Jeremy Quin MP, Commander UK Strategic Command General Sir Patrick Sanders, and Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston at the official opening of UK Space Command at RAF High Wycombe. © MOD/Crown 2021.



**Air Commodore Jez Attridge** is the UK's Air and Space Attaché to the United States of America. One year into the three-year posting we talk to him about operating out of the British Embassy in Washington DC, about Global Britain, and about our political, business and military connections.



# Life of... an air and space attaché



## **What does an Air and Space Attaché do?**

"It's clearly not just all about the military aspect to it; it is about soft power and Britain's place in the world. Now that we're sitting in the wake of the [UK Ministry of Defence's] integrated review, it's picking up on all the points that the Prime Minister pulled out and conveying them to our US friends over here. As you can imagine, this is the nexus for many countries who want to be engaged with the United States, so really it's explaining to them as well: who are we, what we are doing and how we are changing as we go forward."

Above: **Air Commodore Jez Attridge**, while UK Joint Force Air Component commander, answering questions during a media day for Point Blank 18-3 at RAF Lakenheath, England, in 2018. The exercise had an operational focus that included participation for coalition forces. Public domain via dvids, photo by Staff Sergeant Alex Echols. Left: **The U.S. Capitol in Washington D.C.** © Public domain via dvids, photo by Staff Sergeant Devlin drew.

## **How much do you link up with other attachés - say from Commonwealth countries and other allies?**

"Probably naively, I just thought that I'd be bilaterally engaging with the Americans. Pretty much every country in the world is represented here, for obvious reasons. A lot of my activity is sharing notes with the Five Eyes community, but also expanding relationships to all of those other countries. And I have just volunteered to be the Dean of the Air Attachés Association out here, which is a really rich community to oversee. We've got about 70 countries as part of the organisation. It's fantastic because it brings us all together; we've got a common purpose and it's just a great way of sharing information."

## **I understand there are 750 or so UK Ministry of Defence people based in the United States.**

"You captured probably the totality of our footprint whereas I look predominantly at the Air Force side and the US Space Force side as well."

"My relationship with them is, first of all, ensuring that they're enabled to do the job they've been sent out there to do, which is predominantly as exchange officers with the US. The reporting chains of some of these people depend on their rank. What we want to do is put the UK perspective on their US report, so that we can harmonise it back to the UK and ensure they are getting reported on correctly. We look for opportunity as well, such as 'have we got the right people in the right place? Does that meet our post-integrated review vision for the Royal Air Force and air defence?' So, it's a continuous circle of activity."



**It seems like a varied post. Do you have more of a military emphasis and then the business and the political side follows it, or are they equal?**

"I think the answer is 'it depends'. It's always 'it depends', isn't it? The central part of an attaché's job has changed. Before it was engagement through diplomacy, and this follows the engagement. You can then develop that soft power.

"I think where we are now is that we're very much 'the RAF forward', and if you think about the OODA loop (observe, orient, decide, act), we're very much in the first two parts of that. We're the observers. And then we orientate or help to orientate, give some suggestions, and then the headquarters makes the decision: what do we need to decide and where do we need to act? And so that's the continuum.

"Observing and orientating really dictates whether we need to integrate with industry, and where are the opportunities. Not just for picking up capabilities that we see over here with US industry, but what are the opportunities for UK industry into the US.

"It's also what do we do with our people over here. We've got acquisition people as well as military. So, it's a team sport. I get together with the science and technology people here in acquisition, as well as the army and the navy staff and then under the defense attaché, we work out where we're going forward, so it's quite dynamic.

"And I was very lucky. Twenty one years ago I was an exchange pilot in California so I saw it from that perspective and now I'm seeing from the headquarters' perspective in Washington DC"

**What I find interesting is the time of your move. Did you come here as we came out of the European Union? You must have seen a shift in the way things were moving?**

"Actually we arrived as a family after Britain had already exited the European Union so I can't really comment on that.

"What I would observe is that our relationship with the US is clearly very strong as it is with our European partners - although we're not in the European

Union, we are clearly still European. So, on the military side, I think it's just carried on with business as normal, supporting the alliances we are part of.

**I believe you got an RAF flying scholarship when you were 16 or so and then you went on to train to be a fast jet pilot. When you were doing that, did you see yourself as an air and space attaché in Washington?**

"Well, not really. But definitely when I was out here on a flying tour with the US Marines, I did look at this and think in years to come that wouldn't be such a bad job to come back to."

**What gives you a real sense of achievement on a good day?**

"Aside from the normal command goals that we've got here... If there's a problem, then trying to solve that and make life better for people under us, so they can actually get on and do their job. There's always a sense of relief when you can do that.

"But I think the biggest thing, going back to my OODA analogy, is if we can pick up on something, some atmospheric or some opportunities over here and then present those to the headquarters back in the UK and that really helps us as an air force or as the UK MOD to move forward. That's great because that's why we're being paid to be out here. So, it's striving for those - in some cases -

small areas that, if we put them together, make us a better partner and a more capable ally."

**Space defence is growing fast as an area of involvement for the RAF. How much influence does this have on your working life at the moment?**

"If you look at us, in some ways we are quite a mature space power. Space is important to us as a nation and also important to global commerce and global security as well. There is no doubt that - as has been expressed in the integrated review - with the amount of money that we're putting into the space domain we have huge ambition. This has been underwritten by the stand-up of UK Space Command under Air Vice-Marshal Paul Godfrey.

"So, there's a great story to tell over here about our vision for the future, and about UK industry in the space domain as well. Add to that that we



Air Commodore Jez Attridge, third from left, supporting Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston, third from right, on a visit to the Virgin Orbit programme in Long Beach, California. © Virgin Orbit.



# International cooperation

have a pilot on Virgin Orbit and will be part of the next launch, and also the fact that the Prime Minister has talked about wanting a UK launch to be a reality. We are definitely moving forward now and it's just a very, very exciting area to be part of it."

**Was it a plan or happy accidents which brought you here?**

"Most of my RAF CV has been either directly on operations or involved delivering air power so the diplomatic area wasn't really part of my portfolio. But what we do is a team sport, whether it's integrating with other nations on operations or exercises, et cetera. So I've made some really fantastic friends over the years. Collaborating and showing that actually there aren't any real national borders in terms of bringing the militaries together has projected me into the right area for this. I think if you said to me three years ago: 'Would you expect to be the air and space attaché in DC?', I wouldn't have. But the US is our primary partner in most of the activities that we do,



whether it's in the air or space domain, sea, or land. So to be here with the greatest power on Earth is a pretty impressive and interesting place to be. I can't ask for more.

"To be honest, you feel that you're at the at the forefront of development as there's so much synergy between the way that the US Air Force is changing now under, they call it, 'Accelerate, Change or Lose', and under 'Astra' under the Chief of the Air Staff. I am really enjoying it." *AM*

Top: **Air Commodore Jez Attridge, front left, next to Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston at a meeting on board Virgin Orbit.** © Virgin Orbit. Above centre: **American flags in Washington D.C.** Public domain via dvids, photo by Corporal Stephen Wright. Below: **The Washington Monument, Washington, D.C.** Public domain via dvids, photo by Cynthia Mitchell.

***"This is the nexus for many countries"***





# BATTLE OF BRITAIN

## LIMITED EDITION

The design of this watch is inspired by a Spitfire cockpit speedometer



### SECONDS

The white hand indicates the seconds. On the illustration, the second hand points 33 seconds

### HOURS

The target rotates clockwise and points to the exact time like an hour hand on a classic watch.

On the left illustration, it is 8HRS.

### MINUTES

The white tag opposite the "60" also rotates clockwise to indicate the minutes. The internal counter is composed of indexes ranging from 0 to 60.

The tag will therefore rotate to indicate the minutes.



In 1958, Winston Anthony Alleyne set foot on English soil for the first time. Though 6 feet 6 inches tall he was only 17 years old, alone with one suitcase and in an unfamiliar country.

His mother was an ardent champion of the British Empire, and had named him after Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden. Despite a strict but comfortable upbringing in Saint Michael, Barbados, a desire to see the world and follow opportunities in a land he'd heard so much about saw Winston set off across the Atlantic.

At the end of WWII, many men from the West Indies who had fought for Britain returned home to a life devoid of opportunities. Meanwhile, labour shortages in Britain and a concern over a declining population led the government to encourage British subjects abroad to fill the gaps within the UK labour market. For those who had recently returned to the West Indies, the choice was an easy one, and their patriotism – plus a need to find work – steered them back to the UK.

On 22 June 1948, the *SS Empire Windrush* docked at Tilbury in London, delivering hundreds of men from the West Indies. This was the beginning of mass migration into Britain, which saw peoples from the Empire, Commonwealth and beyond arrive to take their place in Britain's post-war society and economy.

Over the following decade immigration increased, and in 1958 – the same year that Winston arrived in the UK – tensions between members of the white working class and the new African Caribbean residents broke into open violence. The worst incidents were in Nottingham and London's Notting Hill, where attacks by white youths on Caribbean people and properties were followed by counter-attacks by members of the Caribbean population.

#### Life in the UK

With employment a priority, Winston soon

Arriving from Barbados in 1958, **Winston Alleyne** found England to be a less than welcoming place for a young black man – until an RAF recruitment poster caught his eye. In 1996 he retired from active service as the first black man to reach the rank of Squadron Warrant Officer in the RAF Regiment. To mark Black History Month and the 95th anniversary of the Commonwealth, we look at his life and legacy.

# From Barbados to Britain

found himself in the cotton mills of Oldham; a very different culture and environment to what he'd been used to. Having travelled more than 4,000 miles in search of a future, the cotton mill offered only bad pay and little chance of progression.

His education in Barbados had been good and, although Winston would play down his intellect, he was acutely aware that life as a cotton worker wouldn't provide the mental or physical challenges for which he had crossed an ocean. Alone in a new country, doubts began to set in. 'Have I made the right choice?'

he wondered, 'Is this all it's going to be?'

Life beyond his working day at the mill wasn't much better. Accommodation was hard to come by for a young man from Barbados, with many hotels and B&Bs displaying the sign: 'no blacks, no Irish, no dogs.' Prejudice was a daily reality, and racial tension never far from the surface.

"Britain was the mother country," explains Mary Chamberlain, Emeritus Professor of Caribbean History at Oxford Brookes University. "Many Barbadians knew more about the geography, history, and literature of Britain than they did of Barbados." Despite this, Britain was a culture shock; as Winston was discovering. Only his strong work ethic and determination to succeed allowed him carry on, always ready to seize any opportunity that came his way.

One day, Winston's eye was caught by a poster for the Royal Air Force. It promised a



Far Right: **Winston Alleyne** early in his RAF career.

© Sara-Eden Ludwell. Right: 1950s RAF Recruitment poster promising the opportunities, adventures and excitement which so appealed to Winston.

© Alamy. Left: Police clash with protestors in London as a petition arrives at Downing Street calling for a national referendum on immigration. Only a few months earlier the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968 had passed, which, had it been enacted a decade earlier, would have seen Winston barred from entering the UK. © Alamy.



career full of adventure, with good pay and opportunities for progression – everything he wanted.

### With the Regiment

Leaving the cotton mill behind, Winston enlisted as an RAF Regiment Gunner at Catterick on 31 July 1961. At the end of training in March 1962, he was posted to the Helicopter Force at RAF Odiham, and 10 months later to RAF Gutersloh in Germany to join 230 Squadron. Over the next two years he went on detachment to Cyprus – to restore peace after strained relations between the Greek and Turkish communities erupted into open war – and to the Far East.

By 1965 Winston was back at RAF Odiham with the Regiment's Ground Defence Section, but by November he was again posted to the Far East, to participate in the Indonesian confrontation.

That same month also saw the UK's first Race Relations Act come into force, prohibiting racial discrimination in public places and making the promotion of hatred on the grounds of 'colour, race, or ethnic or national origins' an offence. It was introduced in response to the increasing number of people who had moved to the UK from other Commonwealth countries, but it took another three years before another Act would tackle discrimination in employment and acquiring accommodation.

Though the RAF was more welcoming than civilian life had been, Winston was still aware of the potential for racial tension. If he found himself in a group which contained →

***"He set the bar for other black Regiment airmen."***







Left: Though still in the minority, Winston wasn't the only black serviceman in the RAF Regiment, as shown by this photograph of a crew manning a 5.5 inch medium gun at Labuan airfield, Indonesia, around the time of Winston's own posting there. © IWM RAF-T 5164.

Below: Winston (centre right) met Her Majesty The Queen twice during his service, firstly at the RAF Regiment's 50th anniversary in 1992, then again the next year during the presentation of The Queen's Colour. © Sara-Eden Ludwell.

Opposite top: Winston Alleyne as a Warrant Officer. © Sara-Eden Ludwell.

Opposite bottom: Members of an RAF Regiment Trainee Gunner Course parade during graduation at RAF Honington in August 2021. Today the RAF strives to attract, select and recruit talent from all sectors of society – particularly from underrepresented cohorts. © MOD/Crown 2021.



other black service personnel he would often acknowledge the fact with a quip to pre-empt any possible tensions. "Oh the 'brothers' are in," he'd joke, "people will think there's gonna' to be a riot!" Despite this, he was more than willing to tackle any comments head-on, and if ever referred to as 'coloured', would respond with: "'Coloured'? What is 'coloured'? Orange?"

In 1966 Winston was at RAF Seletar in Singapore, before a posting to RAF Kai Tek in Hong Kong in early 1968. Travel to six countries in as many years had made good on the promise on the recruitment poster, and he had certainly found a welcoming home with the RAF. But what about career progression?

"There wasn't such a barrier for non-white people in the RAF as there was in certain civilian occupations," says Alan Harby, Winston's long-time friend and former comrade. "There was an intensive assessment system, and the higher the rank the more assessments you had. You had to get there on merit alone, as Winston did."

In June 1968, Winston was promoted to corporal and posted to 37 Squadron RAF Regiment at Catterick. It was here that Kenny George, fresh out of basic training, first saw Winston.

The two would become lifelong friends. "He was the only black corporal on the squadron at the time," remembers Kenny, himself a black serviceman. "He was tall and elegant and very approachable. He also had a unique quality of understanding people, which gained him a lot of respect."

From June 1970 to June 1973 Winston was posted to RAF Rheindahlen in Germany. On the coach to Rheindahlen Winston met Steve Wild, an RAF motor transport driver. "We were on a new station and didn't know anybody, so we talked to each other," remembers Steve. The pair soon became firm friends. Another friend from Rheindahlen was Kev Rushby, who remembers Winston as "a big man with a good sense of humour, easy to get along with and very charismatic."

"He'd always help his friends in awkward situations, but wouldn't stand for any nonsense from us even though we were friends," continues Kev. "He would give us the 'Winston stare' as we called it. He took his work very seriously, and was able to separate his professional and social life with ease. He was a steadying influence."

"He certainly kept me in check!" says Steve Wild. "If I'd been out all night, in the morning he'd roll his eyes and say: that wasn't a good idea, was it?"

Detachments to Salalah in Oman and Northern Ireland followed, before another posting to RAF Wittering, then in October 1974 to RAF Catterick to work on the Tigercat Surface to Air Missile (SAM). It was here that Winston was promoted to Sergeant on 1 January 1975. Having converted to the Rapier SAM system,

the next decade saw Winston posted to Germany, Belize, and the Falkland Islands – being promoted to Flight Sergeant and becoming fluent in German along the way.

### A step up

In August 1985, Winston's hard work and record of outstanding competence finally paid off when he was promoted to Warrant Officer at RAF West Raynham – the first black man to reach the position in the history of the RAF Regiment.

It was as Warrant Officer that Winston really excelled. "The Warrant Officer is supposed to show certain standards that should be copied or reflected upon by more junior officers and other ranks," says Alan Harby. "Winston didn't suffer fools lightly, but he bent over backwards to help somebody if they were genuinely in trouble. He was always friendly and encouraging to the airmen, but he knew his place as a Warrant Officer; he wasn't one of the boys."

Shaun Griffin was a Senior Aircraftman at the time, and well remembers Winston's ability to mix humour with discipline. "As a 16 Squadron barman, I once cut the sleeves of my green shirt too short and tried to roll them up to hide the mistake," says Shaun. "Change that shirt immediately!" demanded Winston when he noticed the rolled sleeves. "You look like god-damn Bruce Springsteen!"

In addition to doling out the necessary

**"What is 'coloured'? Orange?"**



discipline on-station, Winston also liked to nurture talent in others, and would always have an encouraging word. "I never once heard him be critical unless it was constructive criticism," remembers Alan Harby. This outlook was also evident in Winston's home life. "He'd say 'You've got try your hardest, don't give up, keep going and always strive for the best,'" says his daughter Sara-Eden. "And I could see that he himself had done just that."

Six months after his original promotion Winston was again elevated, this time to Squadron Warrant Officer. Here, Winston found himself even more deeply involved with the maintenance of discipline and the general smooth running of the squadron. "Officers decided what a squadron should be doing," says Mac MacDonald, Station Warrant Officer at RAF Honington, "and the Squadron Warrant Officer decided how they would do it."

"The whole squadron's discipline, ethos and tone was set by Winston," adds Shaun Griffin, himself now Corps Warrant Officer in the RAF Regiment. "He had exacting standards that were enforced at the door."

"A little bit of me as a Warrant Officer will always be the type of Warrant Officer he was," Shaun continues. "He left an indelible print on my DNA as an NCO and then subsequently as a Squadron Warrant Officer."

Having arrived in 1958, young and alone in a country beset by racial tensions, Winston retired from active service as Squadron Warrant Officer in 1996. On his chest were the Military Service Medal, the UN Medal with clasp (Cyprus), the General Service Medal with clasp (N Ireland), and the RAF Long Service and Good Conduct medal with clasp.

His second career involved working in a unit to support people with complex needs, where his mix of compassion and discipline inspired even the most difficult-to-manage residents.

Winston Alleyne passed away in 2020. On learning of his death, Air Commodore Scott Miller – Commandant General RAF Regiment – noted that Winston was simply 'an RAF Regiment legend'.

### Winston's legacy

As the first black serviceman to reach Warrant Officer, then to become Squadron Warrant Officer, Winston's achievements had an effect well beyond his friends and family.

When Kenny George learned of Winston's promotion, he considered it a milestone for black servicemen personnel. "To me it was an important event, and I was very proud to have known him and to celebrate his fantastic achievement," says Kenny. "I fully believe he set the bar for other black Regiment airmen."

Years later, black RAF personnel who met his

daughter would say: "when I found out your dad had become a Warrant Officer it was phenomenal – I didn't know a black person who had reached that rank."

"We need more Winston Alleynes," says Sergeant Pascal Zgambo, currently serving as a Defence Trainer on the Junior Management and Leadership Course at RAF Halton.

"People like him help raise aspirations of young people from similar backgrounds, and show them that their goals are achievable."

"When I joined the RAF 14 years ago, I became the first Malawian to do so. I was welcomed into the RAF family with open arms, and was given the opportunity to thrive based on my skills and talents – nothing more. I personally owe a debt of gratitude to people like Winston for their selflessness in opening the door for people like myself. He's a true role model."

But who were Winston's role models? The RAF had few black servicemen when Winston first joined, and even fewer in positions of authority and responsibility. So what drove Winston to succeed?

"He just thought 'right, I'm going to do this. This is what I want,'" says his daughter Sara-Eden. "It is a struggle, and sometimes you do think 'Oh my God, do I have to always keep fighting?' but yes, you do, if you want to get somewhere."

**"He was easy to get along with and very charismatic".**



When he arrived in the UK, the RAF provided Winston Alleyne with a family and gave him the opportunity to advance as far as his abilities could take him. The fact that he reached Squadron Warrant Officer is a testament to those abilities, and makes him a true role model for those who come after. [AM](#)

*Our sincere thanks to everyone interviewed for this article, and to Sara-Eden Ludwell in particular, for their invaluable assistance in helping us to piece together Winston's RAF story.*

### Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and the RAF today

"The RAF has aspirations to be diverse and reflect the society it serves," says Warrant Officer Balbir Singh Flora MBE, of RAF Recruitment and Selection's Communities Engagement Team. "In order to do that we are looking at ways to better promote our roles by making sure all our advertising shows the diversity we already have. This helps attract a more diverse workforce who think differently and have different ways of processing information... This difference could be the edge we need when resolving critical or urgent problems."

"The RAF is engaging with the different BAME community groups," continues Balbir, "and increasing awareness of the careers and opportunities it can offer to all, regardless of race, gender or background."

"I think it's the core values and team ethos of the RAF that plays a big role in making us a cohesive family," he says. "We get on, and all do our bit to make sure the RAF's assets are ready, and its people are trained, for whatever is required. I myself have been the only Sikh or BAME person on station before, but getting the job done was and is always more important than my religion, background or skin colour."

In March 2021, the RAF met its government-set 10 per cent BAME recruitment target; a 4 per cent increase in BAME enrolments over the past 12 months. "The RAF recognises the values and benefits of being a diverse organisation," said a statement accompanying the news, "and offering a rewarding and challenging career to all."







Adolph 'Sailor' Malan was a South African volunteer now known as one of the greatest RAF fighter pilots of WWII. He also fought against the injustices of apartheid, which ravaged his homeland in the years following the war. Author and historian **Dilip Sarkar MBE** tells his story.

# Fighting for freedom

**T**he Malans are a proud and ancient family, persecuted Huguenots originating in Italy before settling in the Franco-Italian Alps, and later seeking refuge in the Netherlands from religious oppression. During the 17th century, the Dutch became the dominant European settlers in South Africa, specifically around the Cape of Good Hope. There the Dutch welcomed Huguenot refugees, and their knowledge of French viticulture advanced the Cape's prosperity.

Among these new settlers was Jacques Malan, who took a farm in Wellington, and

over time the Dutch, German and Huguenot frontier farming communities fused together to share a common language, 'Afrikaans', and became collectively known as 'Boers'.

In 1910 the British South Africa Act granted the country nominal independence, with the Union of South Africa becoming an entity on 31 May. This was also the year that Willem Adolph 'Willie' Malan married Evelyn Forde Jordan, an Englishwoman, and on 3 October Adolph Gysbert Malan was born. The British South Africa Act, coupled with the child's birthplace of Wellington, made Adolph a South African by birth. His childhood on a farm



at Slent was idyllic for Malan and his brothers, who roamed far and wide. Adolph, armed with a shotgun, was a natural marksman from an early age.

Afrikaner children attended farm schools, where Adolph experienced prejudice for the first time when a teacher, bitter about defeat in the Boer wars, was derogatory about the English. As the child of an English mother

Top: **Painting of Sailor Malan in action.** © Steven L Heyen, reproduced with permission.

Above: **Group Captain Malan in his Spitfire at Biggin Hill.** © Dilip Sarkar Archive. Colourised by Renee Chan.



Adolph was unable to reconcile this. He would later say: "All that hatred, it left a nasty impression on my mind".

After leaving school aged thirteen Adolph became a cadet, and it was from his time here that he picked up the nickname 'Sailor'. During training however, Sailor found a culture of violent discipline and institutionalised bullying by older cadets. "He developed a stoic indifference, but it had a profound effect on him," says relative Dr Yvonne Malan. "Not only because it made him tough, but because it solidified his fierce sense of justice and intense hatred of bullies." This would prove a significant factor throughout Sailor's life.

#### With the RAF

After spending some years at sea in the mercantile marine, and becoming an officer in the naval reserve, in 1936 Sailor took advantage of RAF expansion. As the clouds

of war gathered, he took a short service commission. Unimpressed by the Royal Navy's "starch-ridden" attitudes and "lack of human relations," Sailor noted that: "The difference in relationships when I joined the RAF was remarkable. I daresay that as a man from the Dominions I was to some extent favoured. The RAF liked chaps from the Empire".

While the dynamics between personnel may have been different to the Royal Navy, and the RAF would soon prove itself to be socially and racially progressive, it was distinctly similar to Sailors' South African naval experience: exclusively white. The Air Force (Constitution) Act of 1917 excluded recruits not of 'pure European descent' from serving in the RAF. In August 1923, the Air Ministry's Recruiting Regulations for the RAF confirmed that the nationality and ethnic origin of recruits was restricted to those of 'pure European descent and the sons of natural born or naturalised British subjects'. This remained

the case when Sailor joined the RAF at twenty-five, a worldly-wise and well-travelled officer used to leading men and strongly opposed to injustice and cruelty.

After flying training, Pilot Officer Malan was posted to fly Gloster

**"The RAF  
liked chaps  
from the  
Empire."**

Below: On the night of 18/19 June 1940, Flight Lieutenant Malan achieved the Spitfire's first nocturnal kill, destroying two He 111s. This was how one war artist envisioned the crash.

© Dilip Sarkar Archive.



#### Sailor's world

After 1815, South Africa was absorbed by the burgeoning British Empire. Many Boers left the British-ruled Cape, angered by the British freeing their slave-workers. The enforced cessation of slavery, coupled with increasing skirmishes with native tribes and the need for more fertile farming country, led to 10,000 Afrikaner 'Voortrekkers' beginning the 'Great Trek' from the Cape Colony, into the north and east interior of South Africa. The trek led to conflict with African tribes and division within the Afrikaner community, between those whose ancestors made the arduous journey, and those like the Malans who remained in the Cape, with less of a frontier outlook and less fear of what was known then as the 'Black Peril'.

The British, however, coveted the resource-rich lands claimed by the Boers, and inevitably war broke out. In the First Boer War, 1880-81, the Boers successfully resisted British encroachment, but were eventually defeated in the Second Boer War (1899-1902), during which over 27,000 Boer women and children perished in British 'concentration camps'. The Afrikaner Boers had not just been defeated by the British – they were humiliated, leaving a bitter and lasting legacy.

Throughout the period of Dutch and British rule, racial segregation between whites and non-whites was informal, an assumed position, although the settlement and movement of native peoples was controlled by the Native Location Act of 1879. The Natives' Land Act of 1913 would severely restrict black land ownership, and it was against this backdrop of white supremacy that the young Sailor Malan grew up.

Gauntlet fighters with 74 'Tiger' Squadron at Hornchurch, later converting to Spitfires. By the outbreak of war, Sailor, a fine aerobatic pilot, was a flight lieutenant and commanding 'A' Flight. Unfortunately, on 6 September 1939, he was leading 74 Squadron when a tragic incident of 'friendly fire' occurred, in which two Hurricanes were mistakenly shot down and a pilot killed. Not charged with any offence, Flight Lieutenant Malan appeared as a witness for the prosecution, although no action was ultimately taken against any of the parties involved.

The 'Battle of Barking Creek' remains a controversial and emotive subject, Malan having been accused of lying because the order he claimed to have given calling off the attack was unheard by the other Spitfire pilots. Recent research, however, suggests that this may have been because a radio-location device called 'pipsqueak' automatically blocked transmissions for fourteen seconds of every minute. This is not the place to





## International cooperation

forensically examine 'Barking Creek' but, suffice it to say, for Sailor to have lied would be contrary to everything we know about his character and integrity.

It was over Calais on 21 May 1940, just before the Dunkirk evacuation, that Sailor destroyed his first German aircraft, a He 111 bomber; it would be the first of many. Rapidly Sailor realised that Fighter Command's pre-war tactics were wrong, and that many of the paradigms of First World War fighter combat still held true: height, sun, and getting in very close before opening fire. After Dunkirk there was a lull, until the night of 19 June 1940, when Sailor destroyed two He 111s to record the Spitfire's first nocturnal victories.

By the Battle of Britain, Sailor was already an ace decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC), and 74 Squadron would be heavily engaged throughout. Indeed, Sailor wrote that: "Taking a Spitfire into the sky in September 1940 often corresponded to entering a dark room with a madman waving a knife behind your back". More victories followed, a bar to his DFC, command of the 'Tigers', and appointment to the Distinguished Service Order (DSO). In March 1941, Sailor was among the first wing leaders appointed, and until August 1941, with a bar to the DSO, led the Biggin Hill Wing on intensive offensive



operations over France.

Recognising in himself the signs of exhaustion and the negative consequences of that for those he led into action, Sailor was rested at his own request. By then he was the RAF's top-scoring fighter pilot with at least thirty-two enemy aircraft destroyed – a score only exceeded, in 1944, by Wing Commander Johnnie Johnson. Group Captain Malan then went into training as an instructor, writing his 'Ten Commandments of Air Fighting', before commanding RAF Biggin Hill. At the time of D-Day he commanded 19 (Fighter) Sector, and flew over the landing beaches with Free French Squadrons of 145 Wing.

The Second World War undoubtedly

accelerated social change in Britain, and the RAF's identity had changed beyond all recognition from the small, elite, service it had been pre-war. The service comprised professional airmen, amateur auxiliaries and volunteer reservists, men and women from the Empire and Commonwealth, and those from the occupied lands. In October 1939 the colour bar to service in the RAF had been relaxed, although numbers of non-white personnel

remained comparatively small.

Nonetheless, the RAF had become a much more diverse and progressive service, and throughout nearly ten years as an air force officer, Sailor mixed and served with people from all over the world – cementing his already strongly-held worldview. When the war ended, Sailor, by then the father of two children, left the RAF and returned to South Africa.

Top: As Station Commander, Group Captain Malan poses with pilots from the wing who shared Biggin Hill's 1,000th aerial victory. © Dilip Sarkar Archive. Colourised by Rarity Color. Above Left: Group Captain Malan in conversation with the Jamaican Spitfire pilot Flight Sergeant Vincent Bunting of 72 Squadron at Biggin Hill. © Dilip Sarkar Archive. Above Right: Sailor Malan, complete with iconic Irving flying jacket and medals, President of the Torch Commando and speaking at an anti-apartheid rally in 1948. © Dilip Sarkar Archive.



## From bullets to ballots

In South Africa the Afrikaners had been divided as to whether the country should fight for Britain. Scars from the Boer War still ran deep, and some had even believed in joining with Hitler against the old enemy. Not all from their own community saw Sailor and his three brothers, who also served, as heroes – some Afrikaners considered them traitors.

Back home post-war, Sailor was appalled by the actions of the racist Nationalist government. Various laws saw the country slide into overt fascism; interracial marriages became illegal, thousands of non-whites were removed from their jobs, and black South Africans were obliged to live on reserves and prevented from attending university.

In addition to violating basic human rights and dignities, this also created a vast economic gulf between the wealthy, who were almost exclusively white, and the poor, non-white masses – the majority of whom were black.

When black voters were disenfranchised and apartheid took hold, Sailor felt compelled to re-enter the spotlight, speaking out at multi-racial rallies all over the country. In one such rally, he accused the Nationalist government of depriving citizens of their freedom “with a fascist arrogance that we have not experienced since Hitler and Mussolini”.

Galvanising South Africa's ex-servicemen to fight this injustice, Sailor was elected to presidency of the anti-apartheid Torch Commando group. Among the

**“...a fascist arrogance not experienced since Hitler and Mussolini”.**

Right: **Sailor Malan with wife Lynda and the children, Jonathan and Valerie, on return to Capetown in 1946.**

Below Top: **Sailor Malan, the sheep farmer.**

Below Bottom: **The civic funeral of Group Captain Malan in Kimberley, 1963 – the nationalist government refused to honour South Africa's greatest war hero with a military funeral.** All three photographs © Dilip Sarkar Archive.



specialists for a ‘nervous disorder’ which turned out to be Parkinson's. On 17 September 1963, aged just fifty-two, Sailor Malan passed away. Forbidden a military funeral by the Nationalist government, the occasion was nonetheless attended by thousands of people in Kimberley.

Sailor Malan was much more than the decorated fighter ace he is best-known as outside South Africa. A man of immense moral courage, surprisingly soft-spoken and bordering on being shy, he was arguably a model human being in every respect; a global South African and a true freedom fighter – no matter the odds – deserving his place in history and for his story to be told. <sup>AM</sup>

Dilip Sarkar MBE is the author of ‘Sailor’ Malan: Freedom Fighter. The Inspirational Story of a Spitfire Ace, recently published by Pen & Sword.

Visit [rafa.org.uk/sailormalan](http://rafa.org.uk/sailormalan) or [dilipsarkarauthor.com](http://dilipsarkarauthor.com) for more information.



## TEN of MY RULES AIR FIGHTING.

- 1 Wait until you see the whites of his eyes. Fire short bursts of 1 to 2 seconds and only when your sights are definitely ON.
- 2 Whilst shooting think of nothing else, brace the whole of the body, have both hands on the stick, concentrate on your ring sight.
- 3 Always keep a sharp lookout. ‘Keep your finger out’!
- 4 Height gives you the initiative.
- 5 Always turn and face the attack.
- 6 Make your decisions promptly. It is better to act quickly even though your tactics are not the best.
- 7 Never fly straight and level for more than 30 seconds in the combat area.
- 8 When diving to attack always leave a proportion of your formation above to act as top guard.
- 9 INITIATIVE, AGGRESSION, AIR DISCIPLINE, and TEAM WORK are words that MEAN something in Air Fighting.
- 10 Go in quickly – Punch hard – Get out!



organisation's primary aims were: the protection of individual freedoms of speech, worship and language; the elimination of all forms of totalitarianism; and the promotion of racial harmony.

With 250,000 members, the government was rightly concerned about Torch Commando's popularity. In retaliation, the nationalist party passed a law prohibiting anyone employed in public service or the armed forces from joining Torch Commando, and the nationalist-controlled media relentlessly denigrated the organisation and its leaders. With a chest full of medals and a claim to be South Africa's greatest war hero, Sailor was seen as a traitor by the white supremacists who favoured the National Party.

In spite of all the opposition and activism, the National Party won the 1953 election, Torch Commando faded away and Sailor returned to farming. Offers to return to politics were declined, though Sailor did maintain his ties to the RAF, acting as President of the RAF Association's South African Area and enjoying life membership of the Johannesburg Branch.

By 1959 however, he was very ill and travelled back to Britain to consult

Left: **Sailor Malan's ‘Ten Rules for Air Fighting’.**  
© Dilip Sarkar Archive.



finding  
it tough?

## ~~MENTAL WELLBEING~~ COURSES

Okay.

So if you really want to know - yeah - things are a bit tough at the moment. I'm a 27 year old mum, and sometimes I look at my friends whose partners come home every night, regular as clockwork, and I do feel a bit envious.

I'm so proud of Simon but I do have moments when he's away when it all gets on top of me a bit. Trying to juggle kids, work - I feel just a bit overwhelmed sometimes I guess. I know it's stupid - he's always there on the end of the phone and he's so supportive -

I just can't help how I feel sometimes.

He's due back next week. I can't wait for him to get home and everything to be normal again. We just need to get through the first few days of all living in the same house together again - he'll be tired, the kids will be over the top excited and I'll be in the middle....

But I'm not moaning. There's plenty worse off than me. Si's a great husband and a great dad. I just need to be positive. Get on top of things.

Then I'll be fine.

Promise x

"No  
it's

+



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really,  
~~all good~~  
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12 RAF Association branches have no physical presence; no geographical footprint. Their members coalesce from around the world. Their business is conducted almost entirely online. They cherish current and former RAF personnel, fundraise, carefully look after the welfare of their members and advocate for the Association and its work. They are the Association's virtual branches.



# Virtually perfect?



Top: WRAF Branch members from the UK and Spain representing the branch at the Cenotaph in November 2019. © WRAF Branch. Above: Armourers Branch members meeting up at Horse Guards Parade on Remembrance Sunday 2018. It plans to have 70 armourers marching in November 2021. © Armourers Branch.

Whether it's your squadron, pride in a trade or because of your love of motorcycles, paragliding or triathlon, RAF folk join together with like-minded people, to do their best and show everyone else they are the best. So it's no surprise that groups of RAF Association members have formed virtual branches to continue that sense of belonging.

Virtual branches are not new; the Motorcycle Branch has been running since 2002. But the growth of the internet, social media and electronic communication has allowed more to flourish over the past decades. The Association's virtual branches mostly cover trades: armourers, personnel, signals, military transport, and medics whether regular or reserve, and also the RAF Air Cadets. But there is also strong membership in the Motorcycle Branch and the ever-growing WRAF Branch.

Martin Turner, Area representative for virtual branches says: "We sit in harmony with physical branches. We are one and the same except our communication is done 99% online. Our Facebook pages and websites support us in doing the things that physical branches do face-to-face. The pandemic has affected us all but, by-and-large, we were not

affected in our day-to-day operations because we do things virtually."

When the Armourers Branch heard of a veteran armourer turning 100 who had few friends or family who could celebrate with him during lockdown, they arranged for him to receive 100 cards from 100 armourers around the world. Its main aim is to be a direct route of communication for veteran and serving members of the armourers' trade into the Association if they need support. The branch has membership of more than 550, a busy website, three Facebook group pages (two for administrative purposes), a committee Messenger group, and 'The Big Bang' members' newsletter which is provided electronically and on paper. The committee also uses online voting software to canvas members.

Members donate and fundraise and Christmas boxes are prepared and dispatched by the committee. They also represent the Association, and specifically armourers, at events, funerals and Remembrance. Talking about lockdown, Martin Turner, in his capacity as Armourers Branch Chairman, said: "The only thing we did differently was initiate contact with the whole of our membership to make sure they were OK and had what they needed. It did throw up a few errors in our members' details but our brilliant membership secretary has now tracked them all down. Clearly, as with every branch, our events and fundraising activities suffered. But we initiated a virtual 'Bring Your Own' Coffee Morning once a week which is still going on today and will stay even after lockdowns are long gone: we have had over 70 now. We also had weekly quizzes testing the old grey matter of armourers; not difficult some might say. But you don't have



Above: The Global Branch dirty dozen skydiving team. Right: Sergeant Raffles in a Red Arrow, raising funds for the Global Branch Wings Appeal. Both © Global Branch.







## Branch in focus



to be a virtual branch to create these online activities. Zoom is a simple conferencing platform that is easy to use and allows you to have face-to-face communication with anyone anywhere in the world."

The WRAF Branch was formed 11 years ago to bring together all former and currently serving female members of the RAF, and now has more than 400 members as far afield as Australia, Canada, Singapore and Spain. Its aim is to provide help for the whole RAF family and it also regularly holds physical meetings and trips. Members have travelled from around the world to parade at the London Cenotaph six times, there have been sailing experiences with Turn2Us, visits to Gibraltar and the Tower of London, and the branch has been represented at local remembrance services around the world. Edna Hilditch, President, told Air Mail: "We have proved that you can still reach out and enjoy contact with other members, and the social aspect of our branch is just as strong as the physical branches: we have plans to travel to Poland/Auschwitz in 2022. Also, we move our AGM around the country so everyone has the chance to attend at least one without travelling too far. Waddington was our first in 2013 then Telford, Scarborough, Weston-super-Mare, London, Carlisle, Birmingham, Durham then our virtual one this year. The next one is planned for Nottingham in February 2022."

Caduceus Branch has more than 200 members in the RAF's medical and associated trades, working in the NHS or private sector or retired. See Air Mail July-Sept 2020, page 10 for more on their members' contribution to fighting the COVID-19 outbreak.

Set up in 2015, Global Branch is a welcoming haven for any member no matter where they reside in the world. It also caters for people who cannot be or choose not to be members of physical branches. All members have unrestricted access to the Global Branch's Facebook page and website. The branch now has more than 580 members spread across more than 28 countries and continues growing. Fundraising events, branch trips and a different RAF station as the venue for each AGM are organised each (non-pandemic) year and, as lockdowns ease in many places, the first tentative steps to face-to-face fundraising for the Wings Appeal have taken place at Thatcham Families Day. More are planned. Members have also braved wingwalking, tandem parachute jumps and other

Right: In 2019 WRAF Branch members visited RAF Gibraltar. A highlight of the visit was attendance at Her Majesty The Queen's birthday parade on Casemates Square. MOD/Crown 2019. Below: Martin 'Taff' Turner (right) and Chris 'Podge' Middleton (left) sporting their Armourers' lanyards and ties at Annual Conference 2019. © Heidi Burton.

*"We sit in harmony with physical branches"*

Above: In 2019 the WRAF Branch AGM had more than 80 attendees. This was an impressive increase on the first AGM (above left) held only six years before.

© WRAF Branch.

fearless ways of raising money for the Association's welfare work.

Chairman Steve Mullis says: "We are looking forward to meeting as many of our members as possible on our next public soiree and are finalising our 2022 AGM being held at RAF Valley in March. In the meantime, we continue to publish our information-packed newsletter and to chat and look out for each other on our Facebook page. Being a virtual branch allows our member in Botswana to feel as much a part of the RAF family as it does for our members who live here in the UK."

Martin Turner rounds up from the Armourers Branch perspective: "It is my belief that our legacy should be to leave a welfare system for our RAF family to access as and when needed." AM

Find out more about virtual branches by searching for their websites and Facebook pages, or by calling 0800 018 2361.



### RAF Association virtual branches and when they were set up:

- Armourers' Branch 1366: May 2014
- Caduceus Branch: Jan 2016 (Medical Services)
- Combined Cadet Force Branch: Jul 2019
- Global Branch 1370: Sep 2015
- Motorcycle Branch: Jul 2002
- RAF Education and Training Branch: Feb 2017
- RAF Guardians Branch: Jul 2019
- RAF Personnel Officers Alumni Branch: Feb 2015
- RAF Reserves Virtual Branch: Nov 2015
- TCW and 90SU Branch: Apr 2010. (Tactical Communications Wing, 90 Signals Unit)
- TG6 Branch: Mar 2017. (Trade Group 6 – Mechanical Transport Drivers)
- WRAF Branch: Feb 2012. (Women's Royal Air Force)





Alresford Branch.



Armourers' Branch.



Barrow in Furness Branch.

### Alresford and District

The branch attended a WWII re-enactment event in June, where members raised over £500 for the Wings Appeal. In May the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Royal British Legion was commemorated in Alresford by a wreath-laying ceremony at the war memorial of St. John's Church. As Alresford no longer has an active RBL branch the ceremony was attended by representatives of the other armed forces organisations. RAF Association attendees were: Derek Sweetenham BEM (Chairman); Alan Langford (Standard Bearer); Air Commodore Keith Monkhouse (President); Peter Colquhoun (Padre); and George Scott.

### Anglesey Branch

Association members at RAF Valley - Group Captain Chris Moon, Flying Officer James Davis, Warrant Officer Kevin Beattie and Sergeant John Wilkins - assisted the branch with outreach efforts to make phone calls and send letters during lockdown. This gave some vulnerable people the chance to discuss concerns, while offering advice and support. In February, the branch's secretary John Williams died aged 93. RAF Valley provided a flypast of three Hawk aircraft for the funeral, at which branch members turned out in force. John served in WWII in the RAF as a Sergeant Air Gunner on Lancasters.

### Armourers' Branch

Armourers' Branch was invited to provide their standard for a ceremony at the Lytham St Annes Spitfire Memorial. This year marks the 79th anniversary of the loss of RAF Sergeant Pilot Alan Lever-Ridings and his Spitfire. The Spitfire - W3644 - was purchased by the residents of the District of Lytham St Annes during WWII, and the memorial has been in place since August 2014.

### Banbury Branch

The branch's premises at Newland House in Banbury were reopened at the end of July, with fundraising seeing a total in excess of £500 from Armed Forces Day and the Oxford Bus Museum Military Day. The standard was also carried at Hook Norton during the funeral of a former WAAF who served as a RAF Plotter during WWII.

### Barnstaple and North Devon Branch

The branch's chairman, treasurer, welfare officer and membership secretary took part in the Association's RAFA Rides event in June, raising

over £1,000. Support for the four was provided by 94-year-old Jim Squires, an ex air gunner who completed 35 operations in Lancasters in WWII.

### Barrow in Furness Branch

Chairman Des Murphy completed a sponsored half marathon in May, walking from Greenodd to Barrow, escorted by two Royal British Legion riders, Dave Smith and Steve Ireland. The funds collected by family, friends and Morrisons supermarket staff for the Wings Appeal totalled just over £1,800. A subsequent application to Morrisons' match funding was successful, and a matched amount was awarded.

### Bognor Regis Branch

Club activities are again in full swing, with regular drop-in bowls taster events, plus matches through the summer. Line dancing has resumed, as has the monthly veterans' breakfast club, weekly social get-togethers and the choir. The club also opened under COVID-19 restrictions in May, in time for members to watch the UEFA Euro 2020 football tournament.

### Caduceus Branch

Branch member Carl Surgey undertook a 1,200 mile motorcycle ride for the Wings Appeal, visiting all his former UK stations. He exceeded his £1,000 target and, as this went to print, had reached just over £1,600. Carl was warmly welcomed wherever he went, with serving branch members turning out on station to give their support.

### Chelmsford Branch

The branch club's popular Saturday coffee mornings are once again up and running, offering coffee, conversation and a change of scenery. Over the summer the club hosted the Parachute Regiment Association and the RAF National Service Association, and in September it also began a weekly yoga session.

### Cheltenham Branch

To honour the achievements of some of its senior members the branch held a small reception. Long-time member and former WAAF Margaret Jackson celebrated her 100th birthday in June. Moyne Blake was awarded the National Presidential Certificate (see p.17); and Sue Adlam recently retired as the branch's administrator having also served as its secretary. Citations, certificates and flowers were presented by Chairman Mike Bryant and a vote of thanks was given by Branch President Air Marshal Sir Dusty Miller.





Maidstone Branch.



Caduceus Branch. © UK MOD Crown Copyright 2021.

## City and Central London Branch

To mark 90 years of continuous existence and service on 10 July 2021, six members of the branch, fully vaccinated and with a combined age of 490, held a get-together at the Union Jack Club in London. Centre of attention was, appropriately, 90-year-old member Eddie Duke-Low, former standard bearer and honorary welfare officer.

## Cranwell Branch

The first branch event since the lockdown was in June at a flag raising ceremony to mark Armed Forces Day in Sleaford. Military representatives, branch members and civic guests attended and the vicar of Sleaford and Armed Forces Chaplain within the RAF, the Reverend Philip Johnson, gave a blessing. Group Captain Joanne Campbell also gave a speech in her first public event as RAF Cranwell Station Commander.

## Dover and District RMG

Earlier this year the branch became a Registered Members Group (RMG), and intends to meet informally on a monthly basis to continue to provide friendship and mutual help. It is also hoped that the group will parade its standard on formal occasions, such as Armed Forces Day and Battle of Britain memorials.

## Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Branch

To mark its 90th anniversary, the branch has launched an 'Opening Doors' partnership project. This will renew and enhance existing contacts as well as create new partnerships within the community. Partnerships have been created with the South East of Scotland Wing (SESW) of the RAF Air Cadets and 603 (City of Edinburgh) Squadron RAuxAF. The next step is for the branch to make direct contact with the 20 SESW Squadrons within or adjacent to the branch's territory. In addition to this, the branch has reached out to other local community organisations with a view to creating meaningful and mutually beneficial contact.

## Hartlepool Branch

To celebrate 75 years of service this year, the branch dedicated its new branch standard. The ceremony took place during town's Armed Forces Day, with the standard being carried by Dene Gillespie. The blessing was by the branch's chaplain, Reverend Mother Gemma Samson, from St. Aidan's Church in Hartlepool.

## Huddersfield Branch

The branch recently received its 75th anniversary certificate. In 1946 a local newspaper reported on the meeting where the first steps were taken which led to the foundation of the branch – the official formation date is 25 April 1946. One founder member, 99-year-old Frank Smith, is still involved with the branch as life vice-president, making the anniversary as remarkable for him as it is for the branch. The members feel that those RAF veterans who first got together would surely have been delighted by the prospect of their group still being active three quarters of a century later.

## Huntingdon and District Branch

Despite the difficulties, the branch has kept in touch with its members throughout the pandemic. The membership was broken down into four local areas. Three committee members and one other member undertook to ring each of the people on a given list in their area. Some of those who were called had family and friends to help. Others were just pleased to have a telephone conversation with a branch member.

## Maidstone Branch

In June a memorial service for Australian RAAF pilot Warrant Officer AB Blumer was held at The Hop Pole Inn and was attended by a serving member of the RAAF, representatives of Maidstone Branch and many locals. Warrant Officer Blumer was killed when his Spitfire crashed near RAF West Malling in 1944.

## Newcastle and Gateshead Branch

Members turned out in force at Washington Cemetery (Tyne and Wear) to welcome the cyclists of the Tornado Tribute Tour who had made the long cycle journey from Cornwall. When they reached their final venue at the graveside of 14 Squadron Navigator Flight Lieutenant Norman Dent, who died in the 1991 Gulf War, they were joined by his mother and members of the local community for a graveside service conducted by Padre David Haslam of RAF Boulmer.

## Newcastle-under-Lyme Branch

Two branch members were represented at the RAFA Rides event in Leicestershire in June. Chairman Peter Hambley (85) was assisted by Alan Conlon in the 35 mile event and, though an extra five miles were added to the distance when they went off course, the ride was completed in three hours and 48 minutes. Their many supporters locally and online helped the pair raise £720 for the branch's Wings Appeal.





Sud-Ouest Branch.



Nottingham Branch. © Alamy.

### Nottingham Branch

The annual Albert Ball memorial service went ahead in May on the 104th anniversary of his death. Nottingham-born Captain Albert Ball VC flew with the Royal Flying Corps during WWI. He was killed in action and buried in Annoeullin, France. The service was organised by the branch and attended by Sir John Peace, Lord Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire. Approximately 25 people were in attendance, including four buglers from the Robin Hood Rifles Association. A number of wreaths and floral tributes were laid, including one from the Albert Ball College in Annoeullin.

### Sud-Ouest Branch

Branch members attended their first ceremony of commemoration in 2021 to mark the crash of a Mosquito in 1944 when the pilot and navigator survived but were captured. In 1994, the two airmen returned to the crash site to inaugurate a memorial to their survival. The branch has also arranged fly pasts at various ceremonies throughout the region with the owners of a Chipmunk aircraft. The Chipmunk itself also has a connection to the Association, having been flown by member Ian Gawn 58 years ago during his time as a Cranwell cadet.

### Peterborough Branch

Last year, 10 branch members had planned to attend the evening ceremony at the Menin Gate Memorial in Belgium for the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain. Due to the pandemic, Group Captain Barry Wroe, the branch's president, invited the 10 members to his garden for a small socially distanced ceremony instead. This year the event was repeated with 21 members, who were led in a short service by Padre Mike Elliot. The branch's new standard was again on parade in the hands of Ron Arthur.

### TCW & 90SU Branch

Members of Tactical Communications Wing and 90 Signals Unit Branch attended an annual service of remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum, commemorating serving members and veterans of TCW and 90SU who have passed away. Padre Sandy Gall presided over the service, and Wing Commander Marc Norris reaffirmed the importance of the memorial as a focal point to reflect with pride on the service of those who are remembered individually and collectively each year.

### Romsey Branch

Two branch members represented the Association at Salisbury City Council's Armed Forces Day cocktail evening, hosted by The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Salisbury City Council. The branch also attended the Test Valley Civil Military Forum and the Wales, Midland and South West Area Conference.

### York Branch

York Branch was represented at Kirkby Wharfe in June, when Standard Bearer Gordon Murden and member Sue Richmond attended a service at the grave of Squadron Leader Gary Lennox. Lennox and his navigator were killed in action during the First Gulf War. The service was part of the Tornado Tribute Tour when RAF veterans Mal Craghill and Martin Wintermeyer marked the conflict's 30th anniversary by cycling 690 miles across England to raise money for the RAF Association. En route they visited the graves of those in the Tornado squadron who lost their lives in action and in training.

### Ryedale Branch

The branch resumed events in July with a lunch at which 31 members attended. Fundraising for the Wings Appeal recommenced in August with a collection at Eden Camp Modern History Museum. The branch celebrated the milestone achieved by Pickering's Hidden Market, who raised over £2,000, with the presentation of a new certificate of appreciation. The first branch meeting of 2021 took place in September.

### Southampton and Eastleigh Branch

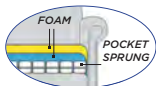
The last surviving WWII pilot from 41 Squadron received a surprise 99th birthday present in July from Tony and Ann Maasz, the branch's president and chairman respectively. Peter Hale was presented with a picture of Spitfire P7666 coded EB-Z. The Mark IIA Spitfire was paid for by members of the Observer Corps and presented to 41 Squadron in November 1940.

*We welcome all submissions for Branch News, preferably by email to [BranchNews@rafa.org.uk](mailto:BranchNews@rafa.org.uk). Word count should be **no more than 100 words**. You may submit one accompanying photograph. If sent via email, please attach as a separate image file and at a size of at least 1MB and 300dpi. Send postal submissions to the address on the inside front cover. Unfortunately photographs sent by post cannot be returned. Low quality pictures may not be published. Submission does not guarantee inclusion and where there are too many reports for an issue, the editor reserves the right to edit. Where the number of submissions exceeds the space available, preference will be given to news over photographs. Only submissions made by email will be acknowledged before publication. **The deadline for inclusion in the next Branch News is 5 November 2021.***



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# NEWS FROM THE RAF

by Mike Curtis



Poseidon flying with the RAF Aerobatic Team. The P-8A is based in the impressive new £100m P8 Strategic Facility – home to the UK's Maritime Patrol Aircraft. © MOD/Crown 2021

In August, Royal Air Force personnel and assets were heavily involved in Operation Pitting, providing military support for the evacuation of British nationals from Kabul and Afghanistan, and supporting former staff eligible for relocation under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy. Operation Pitting is commanded from the UK's Permanent Joint Headquarters in Northwood. Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: "Protecting British Nationals and ensuring their safety as they leave Afghanistan is our top priority. Over the next few weeks, we shall all do our very best to support the Afghan Government and those that have worked with us over 20 years."

Earlier in the summer, the RAF formally stood up UK Space Command and the ISTAR Air Wing, had discussions about deep space RADAR and placed an order for 13 more Protector unmanned aircraft.

Space plays a vital role in the UK Armed Forces' ability to undertake the majority of defence tasks, with any disruption to the space

domain likely to lead to significant consequences for civilian, commercial, economic and military activity. There is more on Space Command and the work of Air and Space Attachés earlier in this issue.

After the Command's new headquarters were officially opened at RAF High Wycombe, the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston, presented the first nine personnel with the new 'Space Operator' badges, which signify the excellence of space professionals across defence. Seven members of the RAF received the badge, as well as a British Army officer and an exchange officer from the United States.

The Chief of the Air Staff has also been discussing, with the United States military, plans to build a powerful new 'deep space' radar system to track targets up to 22,000 miles away. The US Space Force is developing a global system to monitor objects in deep space amid concerns about a new arms race developing there. The Ministry of Defence said discussions with the Americans had been 'positive'.

Known as DARC (Deep Space



Advanced Radar Capability) it will require three radar stations around the globe with possible sites in the UK, US and Australia. Sir Mike said there were a number of potential British sites under consideration but added that no final decisions had been made. The US already operates an early warning system to detect ballistic missiles in space, which includes a facility at RAF Fylingdales in North Yorkshire. However, that can only detect objects up to 12,000 miles away while DARC would look much further into space.

A £195 million contract for a further 13 cutting-edge Protector

Below: The new Space Operator badges. The design is based upon the Airborne Specialist badge.

It features a single silver angled wing and a blue laurel surrounding a delta, an orbit ellipse and a constellation of stars representative of the constellation of Aries.

Bottom: British citizens and dual nationals living in Afghanistan being relocated to the UK as part of Operation Pitting. © MOD/Crown 2021.



aircraft has been signed. Protector is a Remotely Piloted Aircraft System that will provide critical surveillance capability for the RAF. It will be equipped with a suite of surveillance equipment and precision strike weapons to deploy against potential adversaries around the globe and will be operated from RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire by mid-2024. Protector will double the capability currently provided by Reaper. The investment also includes four additional ground control stations and associated support equipment. Protector will be deployed in wide-ranging Intelligence, Surveillance, Targeting



and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) operations where its ability to fly consistently for up to 40 hours offers the RAF vastly improved armed surveillance capability.

At RAF Waddington, the official stand-up of the ISTAR Air Wing took place in May. It has been formed as part of the RAF Future Operating Model, a proposal that was set out by the Chief of the Air Staff to create the next generation Air Force. The ISTAR Air Wing will comprise the flying squadrons, Air Support Wing, Air Engineering Wing, No1 Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance Wing, and the ISTAR Operational Conversion Unit.

RAF Waddington will continue to operate as normal, with the base enabling the ISTAR Force and supporting the operational outputs of the Air and Space Warfare Centre, 8 Force Protection Wing and its various Reserve Units, while future projects include the implementation of Protector and integration of the Red Arrows when the team moves in from RAF Scampton.

The RAF's new submarine-hunter aircraft has flown in formation with the Red Arrows for the first time. Flanked by the Hawk jets of the RAF Aerobatic Team, the Poseidon MRA1 (P-8A) carried out the flypast over RAF Lossiemouth as part of the base's Friends and Family Day in July. Meanwhile Boeing and the Ministry of Defence have signed an agreement for Boeing to support the RAF's fleet of Poseidon aircraft, and train the crews that operate them, for the next five years.

After the celebrations to mark the Chinook's 40th anniversary in RAF service, this summer saw another significant milestone for a well-loved RAF helicopter. The Puma marked its 50th anniversary in RAF service with a series of flypasts around England. Up to nine of the aircraft were involved in each. The first RAF Puma helicopters were delivered into service in January 1971.

To commemorate 50 years of service, Puma HC Mk2 XW224 has been given a unique new paint scheme – and it led the flypast

which started and finished at RAF Benson in Oxfordshire.

A Boeing E-3D Sentry has returned to its home base at RAF Waddington following its final mission on Operation SHADER, bringing to a close 30 years of operational service. The Sentry aircraft flew its final sortie on the 30 July over Iraq as part of the counter-Daesh Operation SHADER. The aircraft from 8 Squadron had been deployed to RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus and this was the latest and last deployment since 2015. The Sentry will be retired from RAF service in the coming months.



Above: A new livery to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Puma helicopter in service with the Royal Air Force. Below: Ponytails, plaits, canerows, cornrows, twists or braids; the new appearance policy reflects the diverse Whole Force while continuing to uphold the appearance standards expected of serving personnel. © MOD/Crown 2021. Bottom: The E-3D Sentry team greet families after their final mission on Operation Shader, ending 30 years of operational service for the aircraft. © MOD/Crown 2021



The RAF Dress and Appearance policy for all serving women, both Regular and Reserves, and female Air Cadets, has been updated. Having already changed the policy to allow canerows, cornrows, twists and braids in 2020, the RAF has now introduced further policy changes that reflect the diversity within the service while continuing to uphold the appearance standards expected of serving personnel.

Gone are the days when the only style for woman with long hair was a bun, as they now have the choice to also wear a single plait or ponytail that can reach down to the top of their belts. Where a valid occupational, operational or safety requirement exists, women may still need to wear their hair tied up, such as medical personnel who

are to wear their hair off the collar when engaged in clinical duties. However, whatever style is chosen, it must still allow service issue headress to be worn correctly.

As the RAF announced the promotion of Air Commodore Suraya Marshall to Air Vice-Marshal and Air Officer Commanding No2 Group, the RAF also celebrated been awarded the Rising Star Award 2021 Company of the Year. This recognises its active support and training of female talent and its work to develop the next generation to fulfil their full potential. The Rising Star Awards are now in their 70th year, recognising and praising remarkable women below management level across different UK industries and professions. [AM](#)



Association members receive a discount on subscriptions to the paper version of the RAF's fortnightly newspaper, RAF News. Call RAF News/Johnson Press on 01909 517 331 or email [rafnews@jpress.co.uk](mailto:rafnews@jpress.co.uk). You will need to give your Association membership number to subscribe.



# Culture Vultures



## **"Magnificent Women and Flying Machines"**

by Sally Smith

*Publisher: The History Press*

**RRP £20**

Until now there has been no book that covers the roles played by the lesser-known British women in aviation. Amy Johnson might be a household name, but many other women also performed outstanding feats in this brave new world.

Mrs Hines became the first to complete a night-time balloon flight and water landing in 1785. Rose Spencer became the first British woman to fly a powered airship in 1902 – while 4 months pregnant. And Winifred Brown was the first and only woman to win the prestigious King's Cup Air Race, beating a formidable array of male pilots.

*Magnificent Women and Flying Machines: The First 200 Years of British Women in the Sky* records and presents the British women who were courageous enough to set the stage for future generations; revealing the tales of the key women who achieved 'firsts' in British aviation from 1785 to 1935. These extraordinary women deserve a place in the history books.

*This book will be published on 1 November 2021.*



## **"The Mosquito in the USAAF"**

by Tony Fairbairn

*Publisher: Pen & Sword Books*

**RRP £25**

In 1941, a group of American ambassadors and military chiefs visited the de Havilland Aircraft Company's airfield in England.

Ostensibly there to discover how US aircraft supplied to Britain were performing, the group also observed some of the latest British products being put through their paces; including the de Havilland Mosquito.

Striving to impress these visitors, the pilot – Geoffrey de Havilland himself – provided an outstanding display of speed and manoeuvrability. It was a routine that left the Americans in no doubt about the Mosquito's abilities. The visitors returned to the US with full details of the design, and following America's entry into the war, a formal request for Mosquitoes was placed.

In this highly illustrated book Tony Fairbairn explores the full story of why the Americans wanted Mosquitoes, how they went about obtaining them, and their success and popularity with United States Army Air Force units.

*This book will be published on 30 November 2021.*



## **"Caribbean Volunteers at War"**

by Mark Johnson

*Publisher: Pen & Sword Books*

**RRP £14.99**

"Suddenly there was the rush of an immense shadow coming towards him at terrific speed. It was the ground reaching up to gather him. The date was 26 June, 1943 and Cy Grant was the rarest of things – a black West Indian RAF crew member, and he had been blown out of his exploding Lancaster bomber."

The heroic exploits of the Caribbean men and women who volunteered their services to the Allied effort during WWII have, until now, passed by with little fanfare or attention. Indeed, while many people are aware of the contribution that the various Bomber Command units made in securing ultimate victory, little is said or understood of the achievements and sacrifices of the heroic Caribbean volunteers who contributed to some of their greatest victories.

Mark Johnson presents an account of the exploits of these individuals, illuminating the day-to-day reality of life as a Caribbean volunteer during WWII and the kind of culture-clash experiences that characterised their wartime careers.



## **"Tornado: In the Eye of the Storm"**

by John Nichol

*Publisher: Simon & Schuster*

**RRP £20**

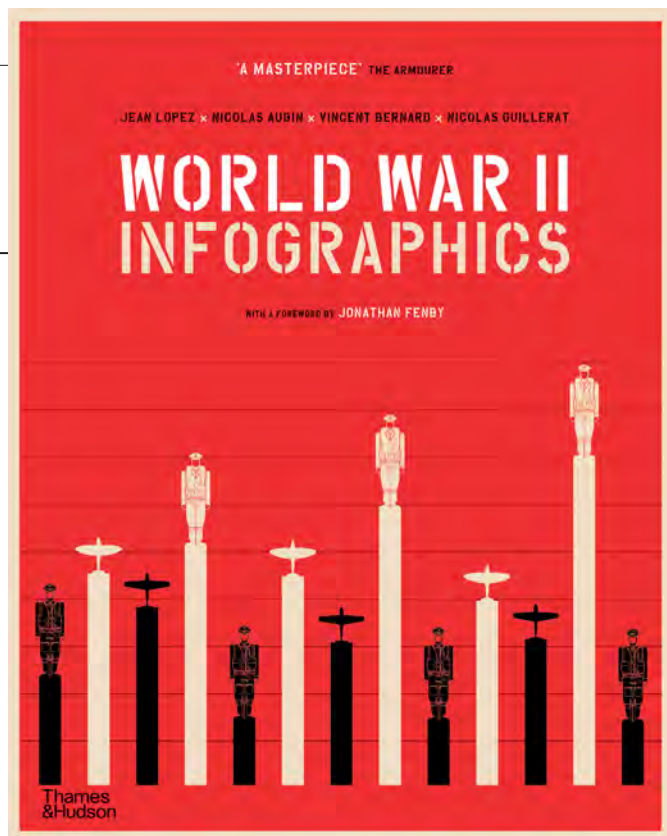
Former Tornado navigator John Nichol tells the story of the RAF Tornado force during the First Gulf War in 1991; the excitement and the danger, the fear and the losses.

"All I could see was a flame, like a very large firework, coming towards me. Then there was a huge white flash. I remember an enormous wind and then I was knocked unconscious. My last thoughts were that I was going to die."

In 1990, Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein ordered the invasion and occupation of neighbouring Kuwait. This is the story of the aircrew at the heart of Operation Desert Storm, almost none of whom had any prior experience of armed combat.

It is the story of the Tornado's missions, of those who did not return – and of the families who watched and waited as one of the most complex conflicts in recent history unfolded live on television. It is a story of untold fear and suffering, and astounding courage in the face of unimaginable adversity.





## "World War II: Infographics"

by Jean Lopez, Nicholas Aubin, Vincent Bernard and Nicolas Guillerat

Publisher: Thames & Hudson  
RRP £19.99

This book gives a unique panorama of the most devastating conflict the world has ever known, expressed through accessible, intricately detailed data visualisation.

The mass of available data about World War II has never been

as large as now, yet it has become increasingly complicated to interpret it in a meaningful way.

Packed with cleverly designed graphics, charts and diagrams, *World War II: Infographics* has a new approach – it tells the story of the conflict visually.

From the war's roots to its aftermath, more than 50 themes are treated in great detail, ranging from the rise of the Far Right in pre-war Europe and mass mobilisation, to evolving military tactics and technology and the financial and human cost of the conflict.

*"Superb, beautifully presented... [has] successfully developed creative and unique means to explain this intricate detail. A pleasing aesthetic runs throughout."*

- Britain at War magazine

The book contains more than 80 fully-illustrated double-page spreads. Of particular interest to Air Mail readers may be those covering the evolution and performance of fighter aircraft, the Battle of Britain, airborne paratrooper operations and bombing campaigns against the Third Reich.

Throughout the book, the shifting balance of power between the Axis and the Allies and the global nature of the war and its devastation are made strikingly clear.

*This book can be purchased from the RAF Association by visiting [rafa.org.uk/www2infographics](http://rafa.org.uk/www2infographics) or calling 0800 018 2361. Buying directly from the RAF Association ensures that all profits go back into our vital welfare work.*



## From World War to White Heat: the RAF in the Cold War

Future Learn

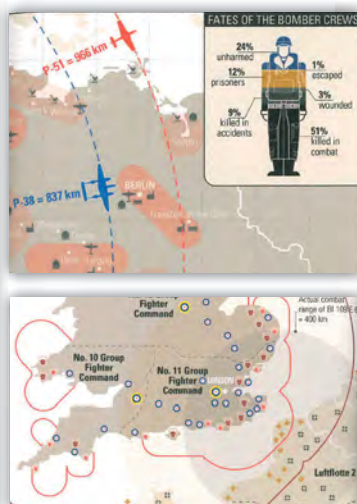
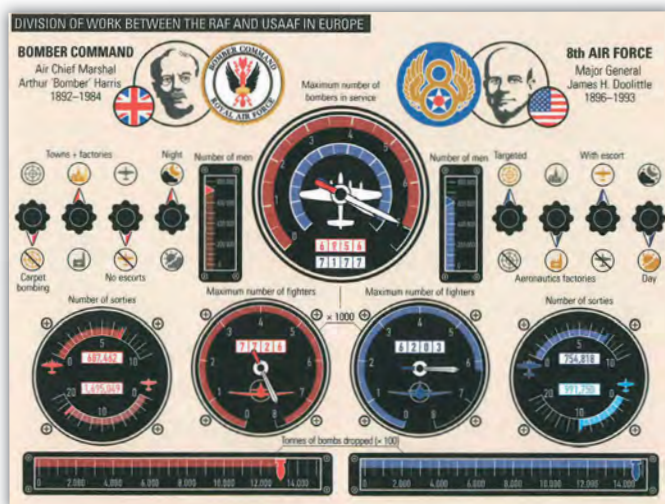
Free online course

This course is a collaboration between the RAF Museums and the Department of History at Royal Holloway, University of London. It introduces learners to some of the major turning points in the history of Britain in the post-1945 era.

The course covers: the role of the RAF in the early Cold War period; the RAF's operations across the globe; Britain's decision to develop a nuclear deterrent; the development of the RAF's strategic nuclear capability; the role of the RAF in defending UK airspace; the re-focus on NATO after East of Suez and the transfer of the strategic nuclear role to the Royal Navy; and the RAF's contribution to NATO.

It also looks at how the RAF has been remembered and memorialised through the Cold War and beyond, with the establishment of the RAF Museums at Hendon and Cosford, the National Cold War Exhibition, and the erection of statues and monuments after 1945.

To sign up for free, visit:  
[rafa.org.uk/coldwarcourse](http://rafa.org.uk/coldwarcourse)



Above: These three infographics are a small sample of the hundreds present throughout the book.



# WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES

"It's the best home improvement we have ever made. Our conservatory is now our dining room in the garden."

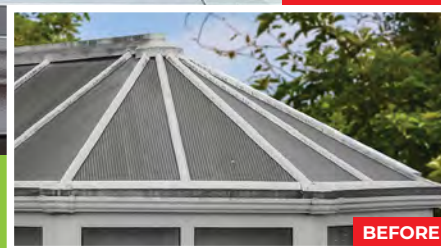
Mike Millis,  
Middleton On Sea

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RAF1021

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Mr & Mrs Barber, *Wells*

## WARMER IN WINTER

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David Birch, *Chichester*

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"The conservatory is now used throughout all seasons of the year and is far more comfortable to sit in whatever the weather outside."

Mr & Mrs Gibson, *Portishead*

## MOULD & CONDENSATION

"This is the best thing we have done in this house. Used to run with condensation and now zero."

Karen Thomas, *Chippenham*

## COOLER IN SUMMER

"You could have fried an egg on the table in there in the summer, I now look upon the conservatory as a new room. It is quiet, restful and cosy."

Carol Doyle, *Surrey*

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Anne Bird, *Bristol*

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Mr & Mrs Bailey-Webb, *Warsash*

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The RAF Museum's **Peter Devitt** takes a look at the life of India's first fighter ace, Indra Lal Roy DFC, who flew with the Royal Flying Corps and RAF during WWI.

# India's finest

**D**uring the First World War, 1.3 million volunteers enlisted in the Indian Army and served with distinction on the Western Front, at Gallipoli, and in Africa and the Middle East. Some 74,000 of these men lost their lives and 67,000 were wounded.

At that time, the British armed forces maintained a 'colour bar' and non-Europeans were not recruited. However, as the forces expanded, and casualties rose, this restriction was relaxed and small numbers of black and South Asian volunteers were permitted to serve.

The most successful of these was Lieutenant Indra Lal Roy DFC, a fighter pilot with the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and RAF. Roy was born into a close and loving family in Kolkata (Calcutta), West Bengal, on 2 December 1898. Nicknamed 'Laddie' by his parents, Roy was a pupil at St Paul's School in West London when war broke out in August 1914. As a

boy he was fascinated by aviation, and was determined to become a fighter pilot like his hero, Captain Albert Ball VC. As soon as he was old enough he applied to join the RFC, and was accepted on 26 March 1917.

Roy began training as a pilot, and having received his officer's commission on 5 July, was sent to the British Flying School at Vendôme, in France. While there, he promised to buy his sister, Leila, an RFC sweetheart brooch. His affectionate letter to her is held by the RAF Museum.

In October 1917 Roy was posted to 56 Squadron at Estrée-Blanche. Soon after, on 6 December, he became lost while flying in poor weather and his SE5a fighter crashed in no-man's-land. He was rescued, unconscious and badly injured, by British soldiers but was pronounced dead at a nearby field hospital and duly placed in the morgue.

Much to the surprise of the elderly French morgue attendant, Roy – having regained consciousness – began banging on the door

indignantly demanding to be let out. Recovering in England, he was classified as medically unfit to fly and returned to France in June 1918 as an equipment officer with 40 Squadron at Bruay.

The unit was equipped with SE5as and Roy managed to persuade his commanding officer, Major Arthur Keen, to let him fly again. A comrade on the squadron at the time remembered Roy as "a thorough little gentleman, handsome and as full of guts as a gamecock."

Roy's flight commander was the gifted Irish fighter ace Captain George McElroy, who had himself been a slow starter and prone to accidents. McElroy now taught Roy everything he knew about air combat and the young Indian proved an excellent pupil.

In an extraordinary run of success, from 6 to 19 July 1918 Roy was credited with shooting down 10 German aircraft; a rate of scoring comparable with the greatest aces

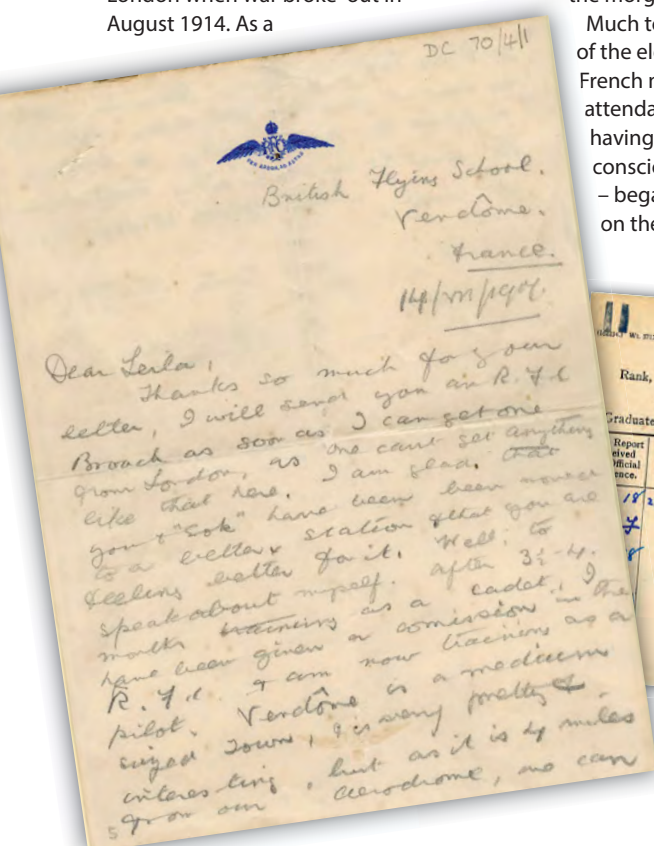


of the war. Sadly however, on the morning of 22 July, just three days after his last victory, he was killed when his aircraft was shot down in flames near Carvin.

On 21 September 1918, Lieutenant Indra Lal Roy was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the citation describing him as: 'A very gallant and determined officer.' Roy's mother, Lolita Roy, grieved deeply for her 19-year-old son, but she was content for his body to rest in the cemetery at Estevelles in France, saying that he "had offered his life as a sacrifice for the peace of the world and it had been accepted."

Future generations of Indians looked to Indra Lal Roy for inspiration, and his nephew, Subroto Mukerjee, would serve as a pilot in WWII before rising to command the Indian Air Force. [AM](#)

**"As full of guts as a gamecock."**



**CASUALTY CARD.** F.S. Form 559.

Rank, Name and Unit: RAF Roy, Lt. Indra Lal Tests completed: 10

Went overseas: Yes

Graduated as: Pilot on (date): 40 Sept At Time of Accident Employed as: Pilot

Report received Official notice	Date of Casualty	Where occurred	Type of Machine	Nature and Cause of Accident	Result of Accident	Name of other Occupant of Machine	Remarks
<u>17</u>	<u>12.7.18</u>	<u>France</u>	<u>SE5A</u>	<u>Controlled landing</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Observed report SE5A seen to have fallen in flames during combat</u>

*Planned*

Above: Lieutenant Indra Lal Roy, 1918. © RAF Museum.

Far Left: Letter from Indra Lal Roy to his sister, Leila, dated 14 July 1917.

Just one of the many fascinating documents housed in the RAF Museum archives. © RAF Museum.

Left: The 1918 Casualty Card for Lieutenant Indra Lal Roy, held by the RAF Museum. © RAF Museum.



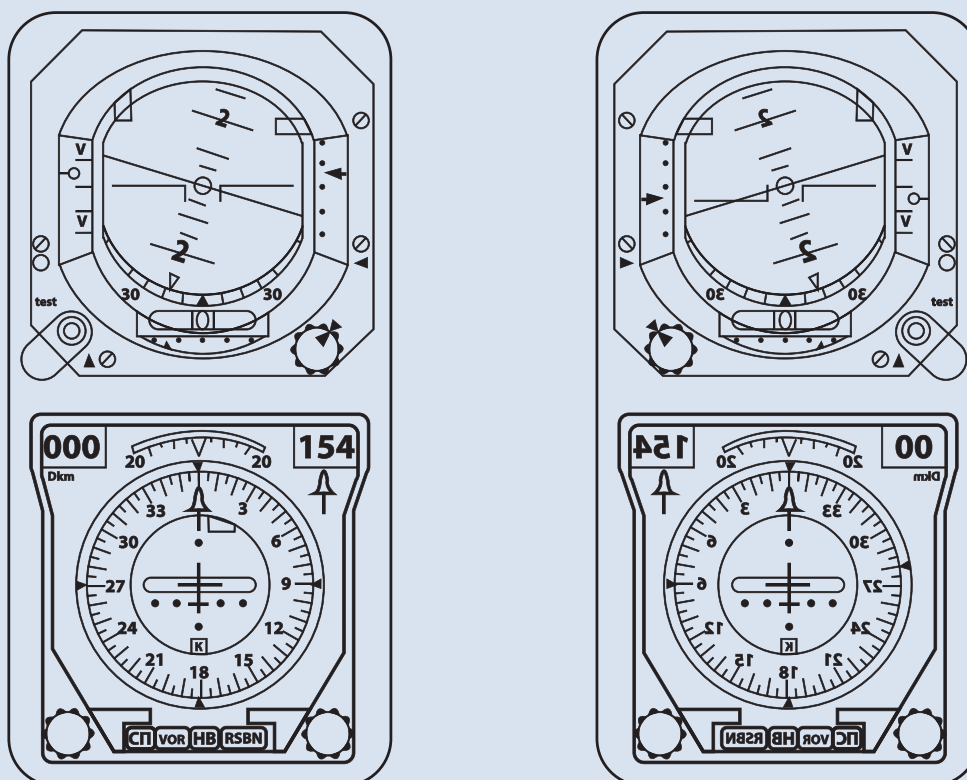
# Cockpit confusion

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## Briefing

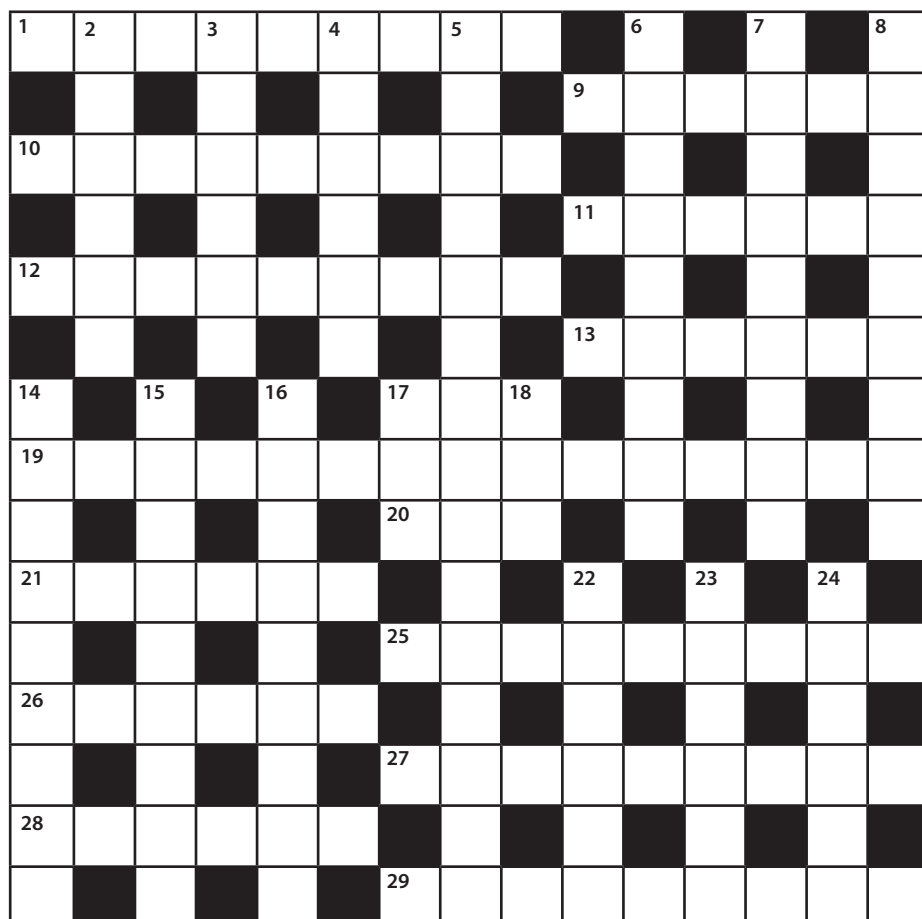
Find ten differences between the image below and its reflection opposite.  
*Solutions to the below are on page 65.*



**About the author:** Described as "The king of puzzles" Dr Gareth Moore has produced more than 100 puzzle and brain-training books for children and adults, including *The Mindfulness Puzzle Book*, *The Mammoth Book of New Sudoku* and *The Ordnance Survey Puzzle Book*. He is also the creator of the daily brain-training website *BrainedUp.com*, and runs popular puzzle site *PuzzleMix.com*. Find him online at [DrGarethMoore.com](http://DrGarethMoore.com).



by Enigma



1&10 Salutation on 25 December (9, 9)  
9 Somehow gleans heavenly beings (6)  
10 See 1  
11 Place of learning for many fish! (6)  
12 A hoarding (9)  
13 Visit casually (4, 2)  
17 Tom, perhaps (3)  
19 NI (8, 7)  
20 May change this kind of 'potato' (3)  
21 Summits reached by primates full of gas! (6)  
25 Persons reporting misdeeds of others (9)  
26 Native American has a positive pain (6)  
27 Table-napkin (9)  
28 Pub East of scene of some event (6)  
29 Large, flat fish (9)

- 2 She and he back up the recluse (6)
- 3 Standards of perfection from independent trades (6)
- 4 Maker of clothes (6)
- 5 Skilful treatment of wrath (5, 10)
- 6 Where a naughty child might be put (2, 1, 6)
- 7 Two fruits join to make a 3rd one – reap lemon,  
perhaps (5-4)
- 8 Level space for walking by the sea (9)
- 14 Incompetent and helplessly drunk! (9)
- 15 Release weapon to a self-employed person (9)
- 16 Entry point to a runway, for example (9)
- 17 Shout loudly in the church crypt (3)
- 18 “Tiptoe Through the Tulips” according to tiny  
singer (3)
- 22 This number of ‘pipers’ were ‘piping’ (6)
- 23 Rush into a life-long job (6)
- 24 Post railway guard (6)

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# AD ASTRA

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We record with sadness the passing of the following members of the RAF Association.

<b>Mrs J Acheson</b>	York
<b>Squadron Leader M Anscombe</b>	Thetford
<b>Mr G Appleby</b>	Christchurch
<b>Mr H B Aston</b>	Keyworth
<b>Reverend E Bale</b>	Bletchley (Milton Keynes)
<b>Mr D Ball</b>	South Lincolnshire
<b>Mr J Banks</b>	Crook and District
<b>Mr B Barratt</b>	Itchen and Hamble
<b>Mr R Barrett</b>	Chesham and Amersham
<b>Mr D Bateman</b>	Basingstoke
<b>Mr E Bearne</b>	Medway Towns
<b>Wing Commander M P Bednall</b>	Yeovil and District
<b>Mr R Bellfield</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Mr A Bennion</b>	Dunstable
<b>Mr N Berryman</b>	York
<b>Mr R J Billottet</b>	Lyon
<b>Wing Commander B Blackford</b>	RAF St Mawgan
<b>Mr D Blake</b>	Salisbury RMG
<b>Mr E Bourne</b>	Eastbourne
<b>Mr L Bowen</b>	Orpington RMG
<b>Mr P Branson</b>	Mid-Somerset
<b>Mr P M Brant</b>	Melton Mowbray
<b>Mr F Brooke</b>	Newcastle and Gateshead
<b>Mr J Bullen</b>	North Cornwall RMG
<b>Mr R A Cable</b>	Chelmsford
<b>Mr M J Canham</b>	Weymouth and Portland
<b>Mr M Canning</b>	1066
<b>Mr B Carter</b>	Brecon

<b>Mr A Carter</b>	Rothbury
<b>Mr F Cave</b>	Swindon and District
<b>Mr R Charman</b>	Bognor Regis
<b>Mr D Clark</b>	Bedale and RAF Leeming
<b>Mr J R Clark</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Mr C Clarke</b>	Bodmin
<b>Mr W Coates</b>	Diss
<b>Reverend P Collins</b>	Formby
<b>Mr D Cornwell</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Mr M Crellin</b>	Torquay
<b>Mr M Critchlow</b>	Sheffield
<b>Mr P B Crouch</b>	Downham Market
<b>Mr N D Cullen</b>	Ayr and Prestwick
<b>Mr J Cumming</b>	Hartlepool
<b>Mr A R Cunningham</b>	Sheffield
<b>Mr A Davies</b>	Leicester
<b>Mrs J Davies</b>	Leicester
<b>Air Commodore E Dawson CBE</b>	Bedford
<b>Mr B Daynes</b>	Lyon
<b>Mr M J W Dean</b>	Dereham and Swaffham
<b>Mr M E Diplock</b>	Eastbourne
<b>Mr R Dix</b>	Mid-Somerset
<b>Mr W Dobson</b>	South Shields
<b>Mr S Drewett</b>	Calne and District
<b>Mr H H Duckett</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Miss I Eady</b>	Global
<b>Mr W Eastwell</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Mrs B Edrich</b>	Diss
<b>Miss M England</b>	City and Central London
<b>Mr M Eversfield</b>	Hull
<b>Mr J Farrell</b>	Armagh
<b>Mr J G Ferry</b>	Stockton and Thornaby
<b>Mr D Field</b>	Romford
<b>Mr G Franklin</b>	City of Bristol
<b>Mr H French</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Mr C Gaskin</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Mr W Gates</b>	Swansea
<b>Mr R Gemmell</b>	Ayr and Prestwick
<b>Mr R Glennister</b>	Sturminster Newton and Gillingham
<b>Mr D Gravell</b>	Barnstaple and North Devon
<b>Mr S Gray</b>	Aylesford and Malling
<b>Mr W P Green</b>	Formby
<b>Mr I Greinig</b>	Swiss
<b>Mr A Griffin</b>	Sud-Ouest
<b>Mr A Griffiths</b>	Bedford
<b>Mr W J Halford</b>	York
<b>Mr A Hampson</b>	Evesham
<b>Mr W Harding</b>	Bognor Regis
<b>Mr M Hatch MBE</b>	Stafford
<b>Mr K Hather</b>	Scunthorpe
<b>Mrs B Henfrey</b>	1066
<b>Mr C Herold</b>	Moray
<b>Mr G Hickman</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Mr J V Hilton</b>	Swindon and District
<b>Mr D T Hines</b>	St Neots
<b>Wing Commander J Hobkinson</b>	RAF St Mawgan
<b>Mr D Hoper</b>	Hythe and Romney Marsh
<b>Wing Commander F D Hoskins OBE</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Mr R How</b>	Chesham and Amersham
<b>Mr T Howard</b>	Biggin Hill RMG
<b>Mr P Hudson</b>	Dover and District RMG
<b>Mr K Hyatt</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Mr D Ilsley</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Mr D Jelfs</b>	Birmingham Moseley
<b>Mr I Johnson</b>	Letchworth and Hitchin
<b>Mr M Jones</b>	Bognor Regis



<b>Mr T Jones</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Mr D Keir</b>	North Costa Blanca
<b>Air Mshl Sir J Kemball CBE DL KCB</b>	Sudbury
<b>Mrs J Kerry</b>	Grimsby, Cleethorpes and District
<b>Mr B Kirkby</b>	Torquay
<b>Squadron Leader H G Laing</b>	Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders
<b>Mr R Lansdowne</b>	Eastbourne
<b>Mrs P Latham-Scott</b>	Moray
<b>Mr G Lawes</b>	Exmouth
<b>Wing Commander P A G Leach MBE</b>	Aphrodite
<b>Mr D Lee</b>	Armourers
<b>Squadron Leader P Legge</b>	Windsor and Eton
<b>Mr H Lewis</b>	Abbots and Kings Langley
<b>Mr D Lewis</b>	Neath
<b>Mr D L Lewis OBE</b>	Penarth
<b>Mr A Lockyear</b>	Hartlepool
<b>Mr J Lymer</b>	Bromsgrove and Redditch
<b>Mr J MacDonald</b>	Stowmarket
<b>Mr E Marsh</b>	Costa Blanca
<b>Mr P Marsh</b>	Huntingdon and District
<b>Mr W H McCain</b>	Glasgow
<b>Mr C Merritt</b>	Nottingham
<b>Mr H Methley</b>	Rotherham and District
<b>Mr J Milliken</b>	Newtownards
<b>Mr J Millington</b>	York
<b>Mr D Mitchell</b>	Armagh
<b>Mr R Morgan</b>	TCW and 90SU
<b>Mr R W Morley</b>	Moray
<b>Mr F Nanson</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Mr B Newman</b>	Bletchley (Milton Keynes)
<b>Mr K Nichols</b>	Neath
<b>Mr I Orrick</b>	Southampton and Eastleigh
<b>Mr P Parker</b>	York
<b>Mrs D Partridge</b>	Wymondham
<b>Mr R Pate</b>	East Kilbride
<b>Mr W Paterson</b>	Formby
<b>Mr A Pavey</b>	Shoreham-by-Sea
<b>Mr T Payne</b>	South West Area HQ
<b>Mr J Peach</b>	Leicester
<b>Mr C Pearson</b>	Stockton and Thornaby
<b>Mrs J Pedelty</b>	Huddersfield
<b>Mr S Pomerance</b>	Chingford
<b>Mr L Price</b>	1066
<b>Mr B A Price</b>	Frome
<b>Mr L Raggett</b>	Swindon and District
<b>Mr CW Ratter</b>	Shetland
<b>Mr N Rees</b>	Solihull and District
<b>Mr L Richards</b>	Armagh
<b>Mr J Richardson</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Mr L Rigden</b>	Melksham
<b>Mr J Robbins</b>	Calne and District
<b>Mr L C Roberts</b>	Headquarters Branch

We specially remember those members who had reached or passed their **100th birthday**

# 100

<b>Mr E J Carter</b>	Bromsgrove and Redditch
<b>Mr W Divers</b>	Herne Bay
<b>Mr N Harris</b>	Horsham and Storrington RMG
<b>Mr J Hazzlewood</b>	Towyn and Aberdovey
<b>Mr R Hills</b>	Bridlington and District RMG
<b>Mrs V King</b>	Bognor Regis
<b>Mr T Knight</b>	North Weald and Ongar RMG
<b>Mr K Nichol</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Mrs M Roberts</b>	Anglesey

<b>Mr A Roe</b>	Haverfordwest
<b>Mr S G Rose</b>	Worthing
<b>Mr G A Salmon</b>	Harrow District
<b>Mr J L J Sargent</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Mr J Sermon</b>	North Cotswolds
<b>Mr R Shaw</b>	Barrow-in-Furness
<b>Mr D Smith</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Mr D Snow</b>	Wisbech
<b>Mr A Squibbs</b>	Haverfordwest
<b>Mr T St. John-Coleman</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Squadron Leader J Stabler</b>	Haywards Heath
<b>Mr C Stanyon</b>	York
<b>Mr G Sturman</b>	Kenley and Caterham
<b>Mr N Sutton</b>	Melton Mowbray
<b>Mr J M Tabernacle</b>	Headquarters Branch
<b>Mr V Tandy</b>	Aphrodite
<b>Mr D Tarry</b>	Leicester
<b>Mr B Tasker</b>	Aphrodite
<b>Mr F Taylor</b>	Grantham
<b>Mr L Taylor</b>	Letchworth and Hitchin
<b>Mr P Thayer</b>	Wokingham and Woodley
<b>Mr A Thomas</b>	Stafford
<b>Mr K Timms</b>	Leamington and Warwick
<b>Mr M Tiney</b>	Rushden
<b>Mr D Townsend</b>	Mansfield and District
<b>Mr P B Tune</b>	Halifax and District
<b>Mr E Turner</b>	City of Bristol
<b>Mrs I Waite</b>	Porthcawl and Kenfig Hill
<b>Mr D W Walker</b>	Dereham and Swaffham
<b>Mr A Walker</b>	Hartlepool
<b>Mr J Walker</b>	Leamington and Warwick
<b>Mr S West</b>	Bletchley (Milton Keynes)
<b>Mrs T G Weston</b>	Wimborne
<b>Mr E Wheeler</b>	RAF St Mawgan
<b>Mr D Whitehouse</b>	Medway Towns
<b>Mr G Whiteley</b>	Thirsk
<b>Mr D Whitter</b>	Global
<b>Mr J Wild</b>	Hartlepool
<b>Mr D Wildish</b>	Diss
<b>Mr M Wilkinson</b>	Rutland
<b>Mr R Williams</b>	Brecon
<b>Mr A Withey</b>	Christchurch
<b>Mr R A Wood</b>	Eastbourne
<b>Mr B Woodward</b>	Hull
<b>Mr T Wright</b>	Moffat and Lockerbie RMG



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To notify the RAF Association of the death of an RAF Association member, please contact their **branch**, email [membership@rafa.org.uk](mailto:membership@rafa.org.uk) or telephone our contact team on **0800 018 2361**. The Air Mail office regrets that we cannot directly accept notifications of a member's passing.

# Notices

© Robin Copping



## OLD COLLEAGUES

Are any member of the Second Line Armament Squadron from RAF Akrotiri (picture above) in 1961 still going strong? I, **Robin Copping** (front row, third from right), would be interested to hear from you. Please call me on 01733 245339.

In 1956 I was detached for three months to RAAF Edinburgh Fields in Australia as part of a six-man servicing team (right) to support a Valiant bomber. While awaiting its arrival we were employed in clearing up stores at Maralinga after the first nuclear bomb test in October. We stayed there for at least a week before our Valiant arrived and it could carry out its trials. I'd be interested to hear from anyone who has a similar story to tell, and particularly from any of my fellow servicing crew. Please contact **Eric Waterfall** at [ericandpamwaterfall@gmail.com](mailto:ericandpamwaterfall@gmail.com).

**Neville Alfred 'Alf' Sumpter** is looking for anyone who served in the signals section of ATCU Uxbridge (Hillingdon) between October 1952 and January 1955. The photo to the left shows some of the guys. I am standing in the middle centre. I would particularly like to contact: Michael 'Bann' Sawyer; John Price; Tom Coverdale and John 'Hank' McNeil from Glasgow. Please contact me via email at [nevillea@btinternet.com](mailto:nevillea@btinternet.com) or call on 02088 454 660 with any information.



© Neville Alfred Sumpter



© Eric Waterfall

Does anybody know the whereabouts of Junior Technician **Peter Horn** who served at RAF Kormakiti in the mid-fifties? Last known in the Macclesfield area in the early 1960s. Please contact Raymond Hirst with details at [raymondhirst357@btinternet.com](mailto:raymondhirst357@btinternet.com) or on 01524 752060.

## REUNIONS

**216 entry RAF Halton Apprentices** will be holding a reunion on 12 October to celebrate 50 years since graduating from their apprenticeships. For further details please contact Tony Green at [tonygreen216@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:tonygreen216@hotmail.co.uk).

**RAF Halton 219 Craft Apprentice Entry 50th anniversary.** A reunion will be held at RAF Halton on 21 and 22 October 2022 for those who completed training and passed out on 19 October 1972. To book a place or find out more contact [aidy\\_lawrence@btinternet.com](mailto:aidy_lawrence@btinternet.com).



# OTHER

If you trained as an **RAF Administrative Apprentice** (or are related to an ex-RAF Administrative Apprentice) we would be delighted to welcome you to the RAFAA Association. Our aim is to promote friendship and well-being among our veterans via social gatherings and activities as devised by an elected committee, and a regular newsletter. Visit [rafadappassn.org](http://rafadappassn.org) for details, or contact the membership secretary on 07866 085834 or chairman on 01933 443673. We want to hear from you.



© Charles Gamble

Do you know the man in the photo to the left? It was discovered among my father's possessions while house clearing. My father served in India and Burma during WWII, and at both Kohima and Imphal. If you have any information please contact Charles Gamble on 0141 641 2442.

Ian Millsted is researching the life of the writer **John Brunner** and would be very grateful to hear from anyone who knew him during his RAF national service days. Brunner was a Pilot Officer based partly at RAF Bletchley. His time in the RAF was from 1953 to 1954. Any information appreciated. Email: [ianmillsted@hotmail.com](mailto:ianmillsted@hotmail.com).

**216 Squadron Association** is working to erect a memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum on 2nd April 2022. The memorial will be dedicated to all those who have, and continue to, serve with Two Sixteen. If you wish to be a part of this, or for more details on how to join the Association, please contact Dave Maloney on [sec216squadronassociation@gmail.com](mailto:sec216squadronassociation@gmail.com), visit the website [216squadronassociation.org.uk](http://216squadronassociation.org.uk) or call 07809 374 754.

Gordon Fowler would like to contact any ex RAF personnel who served at **RAF Maralinga**, which is now a tourist attraction. If you would like to share stories and memories of RAF tours at Maralinga, please email Gordon at [gordon.fowler6@gmail.com](mailto:gordon.fowler6@gmail.com).



© Gordon Fowler

The **RAF Seletar & Tengah Association** brings together former comrades who served in Singapore, and holds an annual reunion and regional gatherings to foster new friendships. Membership is open to all RAF and civilian personnel and their relatives who served at any station on the island of Singapore. For more information about joining, visit [rafseletar.co.uk](http://rafseletar.co.uk), or contact David Edwin Lloyd at [david.lloyd84@ntlworld.com](mailto:david.lloyd84@ntlworld.com) or on 01730 260 030.

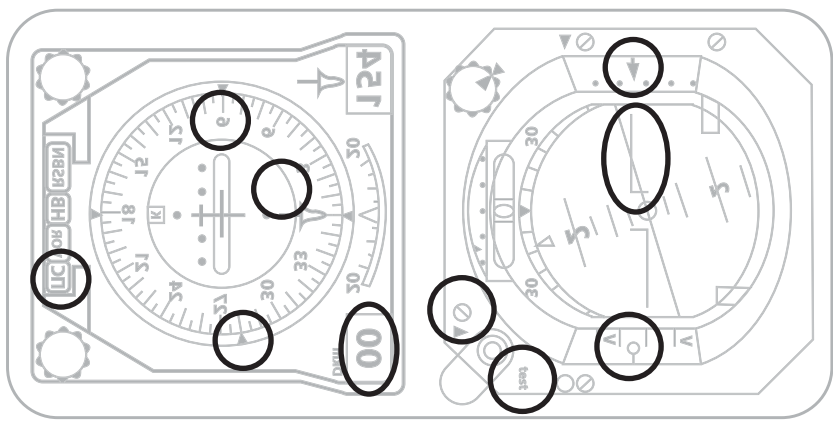
Calling **Handley Page Hastings aircrew and groundcrew**. I am writing a detailed history of the Hastings to be published by Air-Britain in 2022 and would like to hear from anyone who had first-hand experience with this aircraft. Please contact Chris Hobson on 01285 711 768 or [chobson208@gmail.com](mailto:chobson208@gmail.com).

## Submit your notices – free for all members

Notices is a free member benefit to help you keep connected with people and places from your time in the RAF or the RAF Association, or to announce news of births, marriages, christenings, engagements, and more.

For inclusion in the next issue, email your text to [notices@rafa.org.uk](mailto:notices@rafa.org.uk), post it to the address on the inside front cover or call **0800 018 2361** by **5 November**. Make sure to include an email address and/ or telephone number within your message so readers can contact you. This is a service for members only.

## SOLUTION: COCKPIT CONFUSION



- 2021 CROSSWORD SOLUTION: AUTUMN**
- Across:**
- 1 Christmas; 9 Angels;
  - 10 Greetings; 11 School;
  - 12 Billboard; 13 Drop in;
  - 17 Cat; 19 Northern Ireland;
  - 20 Yam; 21 Apexes;
  - 25 Tell-tales; 26 Apache;
  - 27 Serviette; 28 Locale;
  - 29 Stingrays.
- Down:**
- 2 Hermit; 3 Ideals; 4 Tailor;
  - 5 Anger management;
  - 6 In a corner; 7 Melon-pear;
  - 8 Esplanade; 14 Incapable;
  - 15 Freelance; 16 Threshold;
  - 17 Cry; 18 Tim; 22 Eleven;
  - 23 Career; 24 Sentry.

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