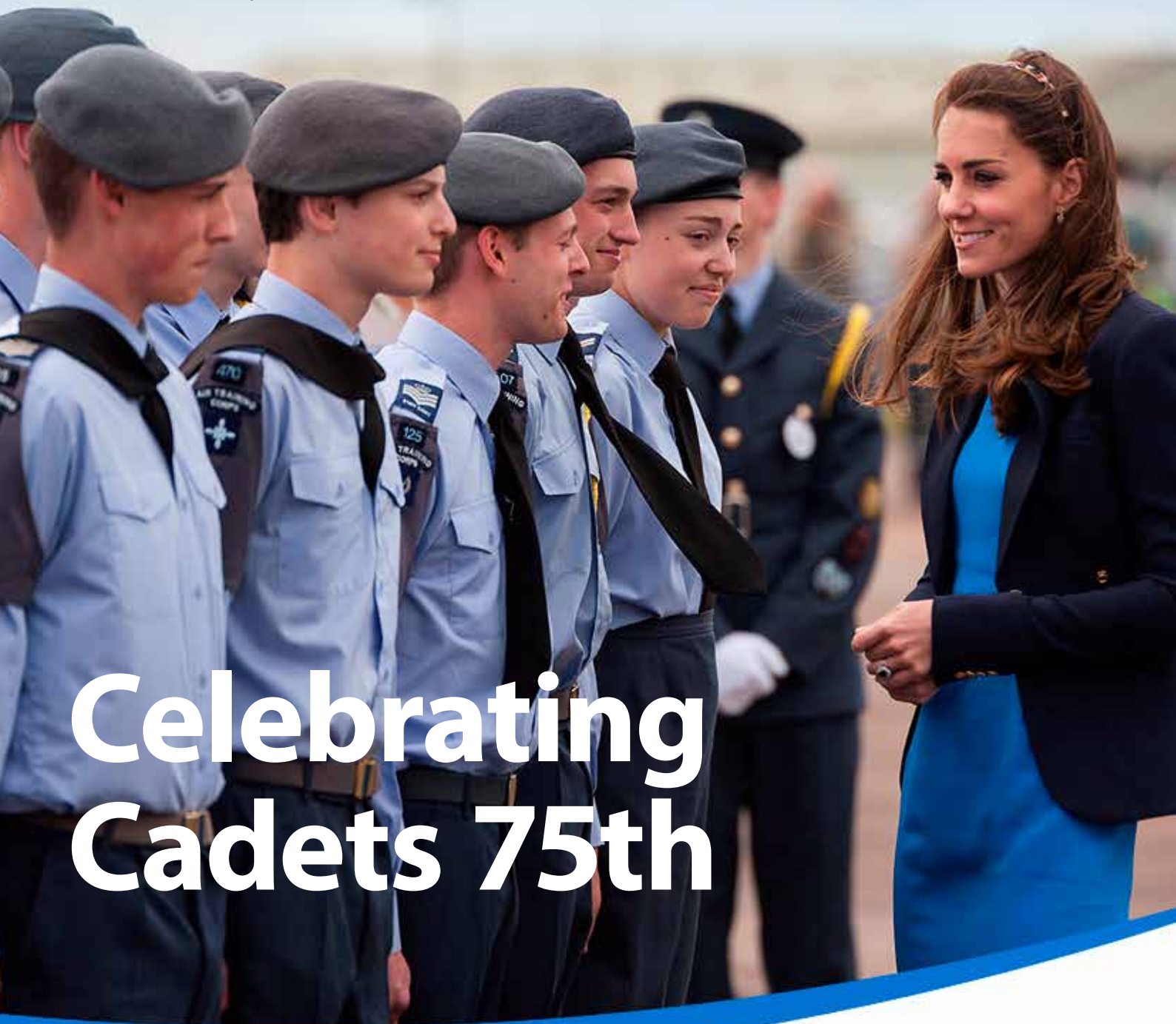




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Autumn 2016



Celebrating Cadets 75th





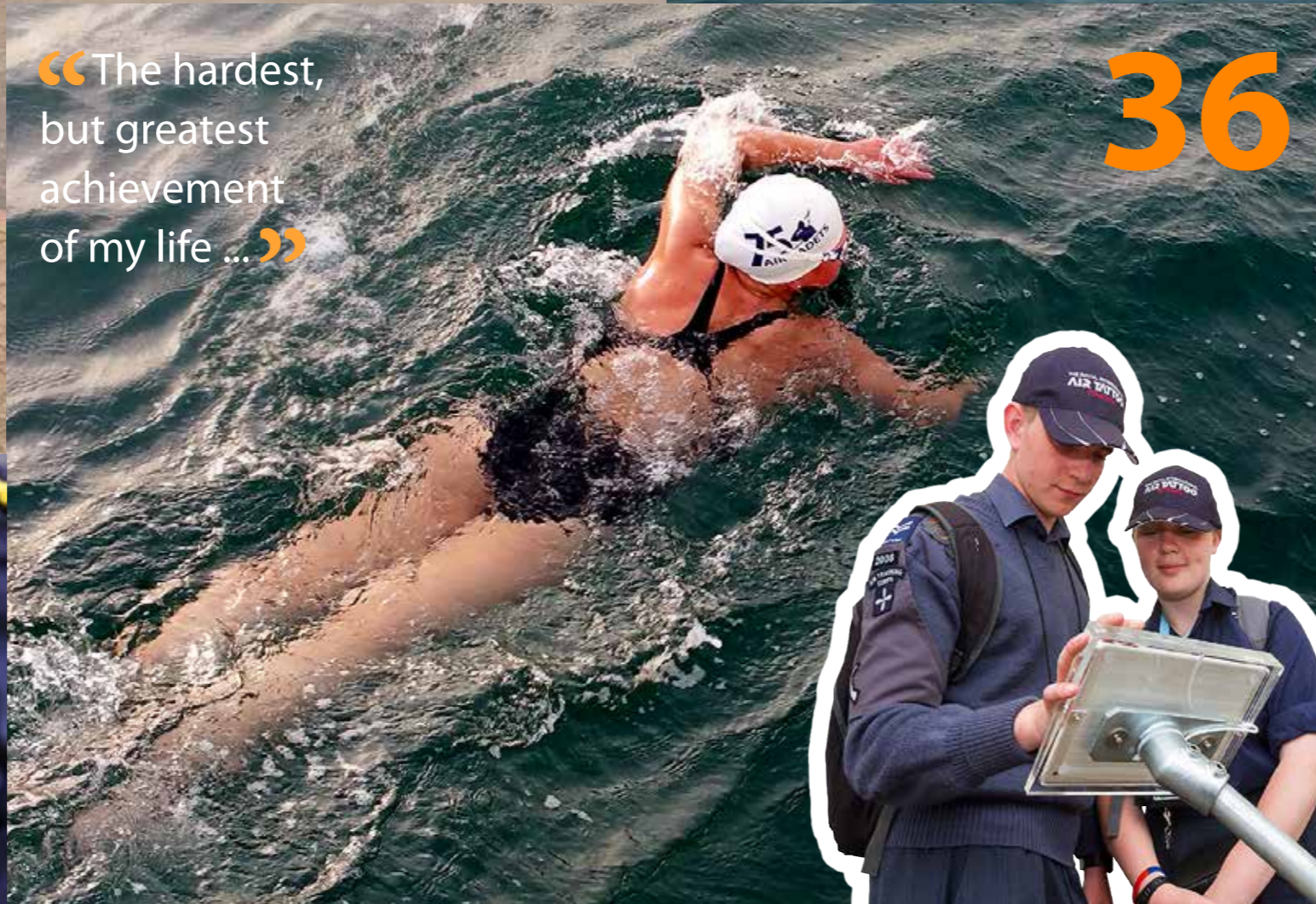
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Marking Our 75th In Style ...

So we did it – we marked the 75th Anniversary of the RAF Air Cadets and we did it in grand style.

Every cadet and volunteer can be justifiably proud of their magnificent achievements which raised our profile to the roof tops and beyond.

Communities across the UK and abroad followed our custom-made glistening torch as it travelled across water, land and through the air ensuring it touched every ATC Wing in a memorable and historic journey. The media covered our story at the highest levels – often with national and global publicity and we showed the world what we were made of – the crème de la crème by any other name.

From our Royal launch in February with HRH The Duchess of Cambridge to the sports challenge at squadrons, the flight for cadets with the Red Arrows, the parade at the Royal International Air Show, the delicious bespoke anniversary cakes, the English Channel swim and the anniversary tree planting we showed our mettle – the grit, resolve, the vigour and determination which makes us one

(if not the) best uniformed youth organisation in the world. The finale - or the icing on the cake to me - will always be the flagship parade and musical extravaganza which showcased what we are. With 350 smart cadets on the prestigious parade square at College Hall Officers' Mess at RAF Cranwell delivering precision drill whilst the Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier took the salute and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and the Red Arrows flying over it was utterly memorable.

When we put together our embryonic plans for the 75th we wanted to do things that would offer choice.

In so doing we were constrained by resource challenges but we knew that if we constructed a 10-month programme involving lots of different things then we stood a chance of capturing imaginations.

Well, pretty much everything ATC75 is now in the rear view mirror and what a journey it has been.



Whether you were an event organiser (a volunteer or permanent staff) and sweated blood and tears to make it happen or a participant I'd like to say thank you, the memories will be with us forever. Personally, I'm beaming from ear and ear and punching the air with pride. You were awesome! ■



Ex-cadet wins Queen's Medal

Flying Officer Alex Hughes was recently presented with the Queen's Medal by His Royal Highness the Earl of Wessex at the Sovereign's Parade at RAFC Cranwell.

Alex is currently a Logistics Officer at RAF Brize Norton and a Service Instructor but before joining the RAF he was a cadet and Civilian Instructor on 1927 (Petersfield) Squadron.

Alex said: "The ATC was a major factor in me applying and being successful with my application to join the RAF. If it had not been for my experiences in obtaining my Gold DofE, visiting Australia with the IACE and being a Lord Lieutenant's cadet, my aspirations would not have been achieved. I thank all the staff for their support." ■

On The Road

Air Cadets from 361 (Gateshead) Squadron are all set to take off thanks to a grant of £5,400 from the RAF Charitable Trust.

The money has been used to purchase a second-hand minibus which will enable the cadets to attend events and take part in a range of DofE Award activities. In order to buy the minibus, the squadron matched the charity's funding by staging a series of fundraising activities. ■



Welcome ! Wales & West has a NEW Regional Commandant.

He is Group Captain Roger Simon and he's a former cadet with 2507 (Bicester) Squadron. Group Captain Simon was born in Livingstone, Zambia but has lived the majority of his life in the United Kingdom.

He joined the Royal Air Force in February 1988 and completed Initial Officer Training at the Royal Air Force College Cranwell. Having sustained an injury whilst attending the Junior Regiment Officers' Course he re-branched, becoming an Administrative (Secretarial) Officer and completed his professional training at RAF Credenhill, Hereford in 1990.

His subsequent first tour was at RAF Coltishall as the Officer Commanding Accounts Flight. From Coltishall he undertook a five-month detachment to the Falkland Islands prior to his posting to RAF Halton where he was employed as a flight commander, overseeing the training of engineering tradesmen and apprentices.

During this tour he was deployed for five months in support of Operation DENVY FLIGHT. A spell on the support staff of the RAF Staff College, Bracknell followed in 1995. In 1997 he was posted to RAF Odiham as the OC Personnel Services Flight. Leaving Odiham in 1999 he took up a post on the staff of the Air Officer Administration, Headquarters Strike Command at RAF High Wycombe.

Promoted to Squadron Leader in January 2001, he continued to serve at High Wycombe before deployment to Saudi Arabia under Operation RESINATE SOUTH in 2002; this deployment was elongated by Operations TELIC and VERITAS. He returned in 2003 to take up the post of OC Personnel Management Squadron at RAF Lyneham.

In 2005 he was posted to the Permanent Joint Headquarters at Northwood where



he served in the Middle East Operations Team, responsible for the Joint Administration aspects of Operation TELIC and other contingent operations.

A short tour followed as the Career Manager for Administrative Branch Squadron Leaders before his promotion and selection for the Advanced Command and Staff Course.

A graduate of Number 11 Advanced Command and Staff Course, Group Captain Simon served as the OC Support Wing at RAF Wittering from mid-2008 until April 2010 before joining the team overseeing the drawdown of the Harrier aircraft and the closure of RAF Cottesmore.

Staff tours followed, most notably as the Chief of Staff within the Manning Directorate at Headquarters Air Command, before he took up post as the officer responsible for Exercises and Simulation in the Joint Services Command and Staff College. He left this last job to become the Air Cadet Regional Commandant for Wales and the West. ■



By Group Captain Nigel Gorman,
Central & East Region

Carol Vorderman helps celebrate Air Cadet 75th

Celebrity aviator Carol Vorderman joined thousands of cadets from across the UK at RAF Cranwell, Lincolnshire on August 13th to mark the 75th Anniversary of the RAF Air Cadets ...



By Denise Parker Housby
Head of Media & Communications



Ambassador to the RAF Air Cadets, Honorary Group Captain Carol Vorderman attended the historic national parade and musical extravaganza and met dozens of young cadets.

Also in attendance were VIP guests including the new Chief of the Air Force Air Chief Marshal Sir

Stephen Hillier, himself a former cadet.



The day of celebrations included a huge parade and musical extravaganza led by cadets, flypasts from the Red Arrows and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and the RAF Falcons also dropped in.

The historic event marked 75 years since the formation of the Air Training Corps and several units of the Combined Cadet Force (RAF), collectively known as the RAF Air Cadets.

Opening with a precision parade, 350 cadets performed a spectacular hour-long drill ceremony, before musically gifted

youngsters and volunteers took to the stage for the musical extravaganza with compere Peter Dickinson – the voice of the X-Factor. The day closed with a finale of fireworks.

In preparation for the parade, cadets attended a prestigious week-long drill and ceremonial camp at Beckingham Training Camp, 10 miles from RAF Cranwell, with camps for the band and choir at other venues.

Honour

Cadet Sergeant Shana Spalding, 16, of 2284 (Dunblane) Squadron said: "It was a huge honour – I have to admit that the band helped to keep us in step. We practised all week and then had two days' rehearsing on the parade square to perfect it – it was certainly tough but we did it – I do have a blister on my foot but I have a massive smile on my face."

Gp Capt Vorderman chatted with cadets including one of the youngest

in the organisation – 13-year-old Cadet Ethan Gray of 141 (Boston) Squadron (pictured below).

He said: "My parents met in the Air Training Corps and now I'm a cadet so you might say it runs in the family! I absolutely love the RAF Air Cadets and the activities it offers – I'm always trying something new and exciting – joining is the best decision I ever made.

"My great granddad was on Lancasters in the Second World War so wearing the light blue uniform goes back a generation or two."

Mr Sydney Marshall, Ethan's great granddad, said: "I am very proud to witness this event with my great grandson. I hope I have helped influence him to join. I really believe in this – Air Cadets is a wonderful start for any young person."

The parade was just one of the many celebrations that have taken place across the country this year after HRH The



IMAGES: Philip Jones, CUTOOUT IMAGE: Denise Parker Housby



“As a former Air Cadet, I am thrilled to be here today to help mark a very special moment in the history of the RAF Air Cadets.”



Duchess of Cambridge launched the 75th year at a reception in London in February.

Ambassador Honorary Group Captain Carol Vorderman said: “As Ambassador of the RAF Air Cadets I am delighted to be here at RAF Cranwell to see the flagship parade which marks the 75th Anniversary of the organisation.

“I am hugely proud to be part of the celebrations and to meet cadets from all over the country who have travelled here today.

“The cadets are wonderful citizens – they exemplify the best of British and I wish each and every one of them good luck for the future.

“The cadets are aged 12-19 and their determination, tenacity, teamwork, integrity and leadership skills often make them highly sought after employees in whatever walk of life they choose. It’s my pleasure to be their Ambassador.”

Many RAF Air Cadet activities are only possible with the support of

the RAF Charitable Trust, which has generously donated £2 million to the Air Cadets in the past two years to help provide adventurous training and flying opportunities for young people.

Special

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier said: “As a former Air Cadet, I am thrilled to be here today to help mark a very special moment in the history of the RAF Air Cadets.

“The commitment and achievement of our Air Cadets over the last 75 years has been tremendous and today we showcase their talent to the world.

“The cadets are smart, dedicated and disciplined, representing the next generation of good citizens. I wish each and every one of them good luck for the future whatever they choose to do.

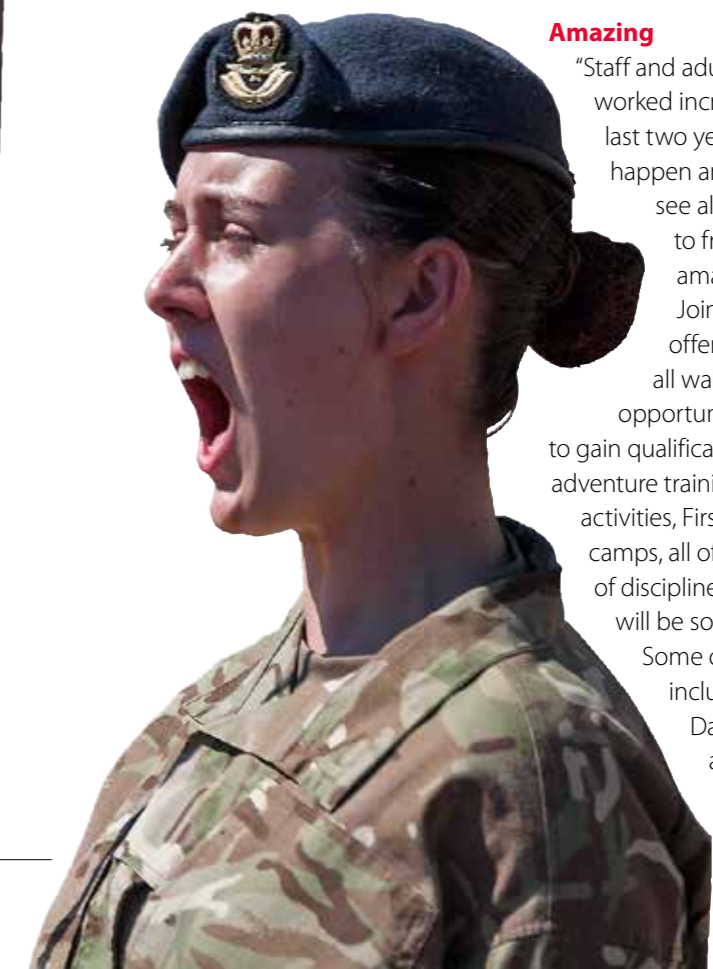
“As Chief of the Air Staff, it makes me extremely proud to see them in blue uniform - they are outstanding

ambassadors for the RAF and for the nation and I commend most highly their tremendous contribution to communities all over the UK.”

Commandant Air Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty said: “This is the largest event we have organised to mark our 75th Anniversary – with over 350 cadets and staff on parade, almost 200 cadet musicians performing in the concert and 3,000 cadets, volunteers and their families supporting the event.

“This is an historic milestone for our organisation and a really special day for each and every one of those able to join us.

“The cadets have been practising their drill and music for weeks and have spent days making sure that their uniform is immaculate and their shoes are shined to perfection.



Amazing

“Staff and adult volunteers have worked incredibly hard over the last two years to make this event happen and it’s wonderful to see all the plans coming to fruition on such an amazing scale. Joining the Air Cadets offers young people from all walks of life fantastic opportunities – the chance to gain qualifications, undertake adventure training, flying, sport, cyber activities, First Aid, expeditions and camps, all of which instil a sense of discipline and teamwork which will be so useful in later life.

Some of our former cadets include 007 actor Timothy Dalton, former NASA astronaut Dr Mike Foale, Harry Potter star Matthew



“The future of the RAF Air Cadets is extremely bright and I can only encourage others to join ...”



Lewis as well as scores of top business men and women, members of the Red Arrows and not forgetting our own Chief and other members of the RAF's Senior Leadership Team.

“Of course, we must also remember the young men who joined the Air Training Corps in the 1940s and went on to serve in the RAF – many paid the ultimate sacrifice for their nation and it is only right to pause for a moment and reflect on that in the midst of our celebrations.

“The future of the RAF Air Cadets is extremely bright and I can only encourage others to join as a cadet from the age of 12 and as adult volunteers from age 20 - we rely heavily on the latter to lead and inspire the next generation and we are forever grateful for their selfless support.”



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Simply the Best!

The winner of this year's prestigious Lees Trophy - awarded to the top squadron in the Air Training Corps - was 31 (Tower Hamlets) Squadron, London and South East Region ...

The runners-up and winners of the Morris Trophy are 126 (City of Derby) Squadron, Central and East Region. The announcement brings to a close the tough annual competition that has every single unit in the United Kingdom competing for the title of being the best squadron.

Six nominees – one from each region – are put forward for the final round of judging with Commandant Air Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty, travelling to each to inspect those put forward for the top trophy.

The winners of the six regional competitions - 1255 (St Austell & District), 62 (2nd Glasgow), 146 (Northwich), 126 (City of Derby), 31 (Tower Hamlets), and 148 (Barnsley) Sqns - were judged on a host of criteria, including the number of cadets and volunteers, the projects and activities they take part in and the awards they pick up in various competitions throughout the year.

31 (Tower Hamlets) will receive a £3,000 cheque and a visit to BA at Heathrow Airport, hosted by the Air League, where they will go behind the scenes and visit their state-of-the-art simulator. 126 (City of Derby) will receive £2,000 and each of the four runners-up will receive £1,000.

Air Commodore McCafferty congratulated the six finalists and said: "I know it's no consolation for the runners-up but I was genuinely delighted by the performance of each Squadron – living proof of a vibrant cadet experience across the UK."

The win for Tower Hamlets Squadron, formed just three years ago, comes hot on the heels of the presentation of the Queen's Award of Voluntary Service, a first for an Air Training Corps Squadron and the highest state award that can be given to a voluntary group.

Officer Commanding 31 (Tower Hamlets) Squadron, Flight Lieutenant Rex Nicholls, said: "The result is worthy recognition of an extremely dedicated volunteer and cadet NCO team who are tireless in their commitment to the young people of Tower Hamlets."

"The award is somewhat of a surprise given our short history and the level of delivery and achievement seen by the other Regional finalists."

OC 126 (City of Derby) Squadron (pictured above), Squadron Leader Ian Marshall, said: "I could not be more proud of how the cadets performed at the inspection and throughout the year. We are privileged to have come so far in the competition and to finish second out of around 1,000 units across the UK is a wonderful achievement." ■

“... living proof of a vibrant cadet experience across the UK ...”



CAS Commendation

Wing Commander Brian Rogers (Ret'd) from 148 (Barnsley) Squadron has been presented with a commendation for his service to the ATC by Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, at a special ceremony at RAF Northolt.

The award recognises Brian's amazing 64 years of uniformed service, starting as a cadet in 1949 and culminating as South Yorkshire Wing's Wing Commander. On retiring, Brian returned to 148 Sqn as a Civilian Instructor, where he is still treasured by the staff and cadets to this day 67 years after starting his service to the Corps. ■

Battle of Britain Parade

Hundreds of Air Cadets from across Devon and Somerset were joined by Commandant Air Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty, at a church service and a parade through Exeter to mark the 76th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

Some 250 Air Cadets led by the Wing band paraded through the town with their squadron banners proudly on display. Air Commodore McCafferty made a special visit to the Wing to mark this year's commemoration. ■



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Take to the Sky

Six exceptional young people will get the chance to fly thanks to the Royal Air Forces' Association Flying Scholarships programme.



The Flying Scholarship programme runs annually as a thank you to members of the Air Cadet Organisation for their continuous support to the Association.

The winning candidate is rewarded with a course of 35 hours' flight training in a light aircraft and the course covers all or part of the tuition needed to obtain a National Private Pilot Licence. Five runners-up receive 12 hours' training each.

Cadet Warrant Officer Christopher Clarke, from 156 (Kidderminster) Squadron, was one of last year's runners up and has completed some of his training at South Warwickshire Flying School. He said: "I would like to thank you sincerely for the opportunity to become one of the six RAF Association scholarship winners.

"The instruction provided was of an exceedingly high standard, which helped me achieve my first solo by the end of the first week! To say that I've enjoyed every second would be a huge understatement. I would like to thank everyone so much for helping me with my passion for aviation; I am now firmly on a path of pursuing a career in the RAF, hopefully as a pilot."

Interested? Scholarship applicants must be at least 16 years of age on 1 June 2017 and under 20 on 1 January 2017. Applicants must also have served at least 12 months with the ACO, GVCAC or Air (Explorer) Scouts on 1 June 2017. All applications must be received by 9 January 2017. Full terms and conditions and application forms can be downloaded from www.rafa.org.uk/flying-scholarships



Soapbox Derby

Cadets from Dorset & Wiltshire Wing gathered at Old Sarum Airfield for the inaugural Wing soapbox derby.

Teams from 1010 (City of Salisbury) Squadron, 992 (Malmesbury) and 2385 (Melksham) Squadrons battled it out for prizes in several categories with the cart designs ranging from a Eurofighter Typhoon to a cunningly modified office chair.

Whilst 1010 Squadron won the Judge's Choice prize with their Brimstone missile design, the cart from 992 Squadron – a Spitfire fashioned from a kayak - won prizes for the time trial, distance travelled as well as the Cadet's Choice for best design. Flight Lieutenant Suzanne Williamson, Commanding Officer of 1010 Squadron, said: "It has been a great day of fun and sportsmanship and the ingenuity of all the teams and their designs has been fantastic!"

On Parade

Hundreds of cadets and staff from Dorset & Wiltshire Wing gathered for a special parade to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Air Cadets.

The parade was held at Bowood House, Calne, by kind permission of Lord Lansdowne and the Inspecting Officer was Commandant Air Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty. Guests included Colonel James Arkell, Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Wiltshire; Group Captain Tom Lyons, Station Commander of MOD Boscombe Down; Wing Commander Phil Arnold, Station Commander Defence Academy of the United Kingdom and James Gray, MP for North Wiltshire.

"I am delighted that we had this opportunity to celebrate our 75th in such a splendid location" said Wg Cdr Vanessa Toth, Officer Commanding Dorset & Wilts Wing.





75
AIR CADETS

Cadets **steal** **the show** at RIAT

2016 will be remembered as an historic year for all those who attended the Royal International Air Tattoo in July ...

As Britain's new supersonic F-35B Lightning stealth jet made its UK debut with a thrilling flying display, on the ground the focus was firmly placed on the Air Cadet Organisation who made sure their 75th Anniversary Year was one to remember.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince George made a special visit to the Air Tattoo to mark the 75th

By Flight Lieutenant
Tarandeep Bhachoo

Anniversary of the RAF Air Cadets. The Duchess, who is Patron of the Air Cadet Organisation, was present as the air show staged its official celebrations for the Air Cadets' 75th Anniversary where they met just some of the 1,500-plus Air Cadets taking part in the event.

On arrival, the Duke and Duchess were presented to former Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Andrew Pulford, Air Marshal Sir Kevin Leeson, Chairman Royal Air Force Charitable Trust, General David Goldfein, Commander USAF and

Dame Janet Trotter, Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, Commandant Air Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty, and Air Cadet Ambassador, Honorary Group Captain Carol Vorderman before meeting 12 lucky cadets. Cadet Warrant Officer Matt Soar, 19, of Bicester, was among the cadets who met the Duke and Duchess.

He said: "I've been lucky enough to meet seven members of the Royal Family already – including the Queen – as I'm the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for Oxfordshire. It was fantastic and we spoke

about all elements of the Air Training Corps. The Duke of Cambridge was really interested in learning more about my flying scholarship and we spoke about my aspirations to join the Royal Air Force later this year.

"But meeting Prince George was amazing – he seemed really interested in the aircraft. I never thought I'd be in this position before joining the Air Cadets."

Fellow cadets Corporal Charlotte Lynham, 17, from 2532 (Milton Keynes) Squadron and Cadet Flight Sergeant

Alexander Welsh, 18, from 335 (Saltash) Squadron were also lucky enough to meet the family.

Charlotte said: "I'm in a lot of shock and never thought I'd get to meet anyone from the Royal family. The Duchess asked me why I joined the cadets and I explained that I went to airshows all the time when I was little and as soon as I was old enough I joined.

"Anyone who is considering becoming a cadet should do it; it really is the best experience. That was an unreal and surreal

experience. I don't think it has really hit me yet."

Andy Armstrong, Chief Executive of RAF Charitable Trust Enterprises, which runs the air show, said "There's no doubt that the Royal couple's attendance created an exciting atmosphere, particularly amongst our huge team of hard-working Air Cadets. Those who were lucky enough to meet the Duke and Duchess were thrilled.

"Their visit came as a very fitting acknowledgement of not only the hard





“Their visit came as a very fitting acknowledgement of ... the hard work and efforts of all of the Air Cadets ...”

work and efforts of all of the Air Cadets, but also those of the 2,000-plus team of Air Tattoo volunteers, who work so hard to make the show possible.”

The centre point of the Air Cadet engagement at RIAT was the march-past of 750 cadets and staff from across the United Kingdom. The parade, led by the Air Cadet Organisation Band, was amazing with the salute taken by Air Chief Marshal Sir Andrew Pulford, former Chief of the Air Staff, alongside Dame Janet Trotter, the High Sheriff of Gloucestershire,

and Honorary Group Captain Carol Vorderman, Ambassador of the Air Cadets. Air Marshal Sir Kevin Leeson, chairman of the Royal Air Force Charitable Trust, said that “the 2016 theme was the Next Generation: Inspiring Innovation and the cadets that have helped make this year our best ever are testament to that.

“They embody the spirit of RIAT and embrace the fusion of cultures, people and sheer excitement around an event like this and as a result gain high praise from all those who interact with them.

The Charitable Trust is grateful for the support they give us year on year and, in turn, we are delighted to help fuel their love for aviation by giving them the opportunity to get close to the next generation of aircraft.”

Ambassador, Honorary Group Captain Carol Vorderman spent two days with the Air Cadet Detachment at RIAT, chatting to cadets and staff about STEM and her upcoming flight around the world. She was able to view the final touches being put to the cadet campsite

that resembled a small village with various centres including medical and radio communications as well as the many tents which accommodate the 1,000 cadets supporting the air show.

She said: “The sheer scale of this site is spellbinding. The fact that there is so much more than a campsite is fantastic and what a location – you get some of the best views of the aircraft from here! It is always great to hear the cadets really engaging with aviation-

based subjects and getting up close and personal with some amazing aircraft”.

As well as impressing on the ground, the cadets also took to the skies. Nine lucky cadets flew into RAF Fairford with the Red Arrows from RAF Scampton – just the second time in history that the Red Arrows had flown cadets. The nine were all chosen for their outstanding achievements within the RAF Air Cadets (see the summer edition of Air Cadet magazine www.raf.mod.uk/aircadets). On landing after the 150-mile trip, the

cadets were buzzing with excitement. Cadet Warrant Officer Kathryn Flower from 215 (City of Swansea) Squadron said: “It was amazing – I didn’t want it to end.” Nineteen-year-old CWO Benjamin McMillan from 2484 (Cambourne) Cambridgeshire Wing flying with Red 5 added: “It was more than amazing - and very special.”

In all, more than 50 cadets were sent airborne in a variety of aircraft. Some 25 cadets and staff were lucky enough to be



“The hard work, determination and commitment of all cadets and volunteer staff was second to none.”



amongst the first Air Cadet personnel to fly in the A400M, taking in the sights over Bristol. And 19-year-old Cadet Warrant Officer Matthew Harvey-Samuel from 2491 (Lyneham) Squadron had his “best ever, ever, flight” aboard a Spitfire.

Matthew travelled to Goodwood airfield on the south coast to be flown in a historic Spitfire to one of the world’s largest air shows at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire.

Matthew, who at one point was allowed to take the controls of the famous fighter, said afterwards: “This is something I will never forget and is a definite pinnacle of a great career in the Air Cadets.

“The sound of the Merlin engine and sheer thrill of flying in

such an iconic aircraft will stay with me for many years to come”.

His pilot, Group Captain Willie Hackett, who is currently involved in testing the F-35B Lightning II, added: “Matthew is perhaps the only Air Cadet that will have ‘Spitfire’ listed in his Record of Service book!”

Helping the Air Cadets to celebrate their 75th Anniversary too was the actor Matthew Lewis. Arriving at RIAT for the first public day of the air show, the former cadet, who played Neville Longbottom in the hit Harry Potter films, joined a group of Air Cadets to cut a cake in celebration of the organisation’s anniversary.

A regular visitor to the Air Tattoo, Matthew was a keen cadet with the 2168 (Yeadon) Squadron, until filming commitments took priority.

As well as speaking to the cadets about their experience, the air show and, of course, Harry Potter, the actor cut a specially made cake in the air show’s

hugely popular Techno Zone. The zone has won critical acclaim for bringing STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) subjects to life through a range of interactive and engaging activities designed to inspire young people.

Describing his invitation to attend the Air Tattoo as a privilege, Matthew added: “This year, being the Air Cadets’ 75th Anniversary, it has been extra special for me having been an Air Cadet many years ago. Being asked to cut the celebratory cake in front of so many cadets and visitors has been a big deal for me and I have been thrilled to be asked to do it.”

Aside from the very special 75th celebrations, the air show was still very much a working camp with the massive cadet workforce hard at work behind the scenes, helping to prepare the site and carrying out duties at many key locations as well as staffing the three aerospace simulator platforms and the attractions within the RAF “Village”.

Air Commodore McCafferty, said: “I am blown away by the sheer scale of the operation at RIAT 2016. The efforts of the adult volunteers and cadets have really put the ACO stamp on an amazing weekend. The cadets that come to the Tattoo gain a fantastic camp experience and it very much encompasses all elements of the Air Cadet experience.

“RIAT offers opportunities for cadets to learn to work together, demonstrate teamwork, develop their leadership and communication skills and get to interact with some of the leading pilots the world over.

“The mentality of working hard and playing hard is just one part of a successful mix that sees so many come back year after year”.

One of the many highlights for the cadets working at RIAT was the chance to sit down for a question and answer session with the pilot of the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II and the leader

of the team responsible for introducing the new aircraft, Air Commodore Harvey Smyth. And the winners of the Red Sparrows competition, which recognises the 12 best cadets under-15 and attending their first RIAT, were treated to a VIP day out at RAF Brize Norton.

Cadet Dante De-Antonis, one of the 12 Red Sparrows, said: “It was an awesome day. My absolute highlight was being able to clamber all over a Hercules C-130J - you’d just never get to do stuff like that on a normal annual camp!”

Detachment Commander, Wing Commander Darran Williams, said: “The hard work, determination and commitment of all cadets and volunteer staff was second to none.

“I was taken aback at the ease in which everyone worked together. I am looking forward to an amazing year in 2017 and already have my sights set on supporting the RAF at RIAT when they celebrate their centenary in 2018!” ■

There is 'No Ordinary Job' in the RAF ...

The Royal Air Force offers more than 50 different job roles and apprenticeships for young people from the age of 16. With everything from chef and catering to technical and engineering opportunities – the options available are diverse no matter how you performed in your GCSEs or A-Levels.



“My family are extremely proud that I decided to join the RAF and my dad loves that I am part of the Red Arrows ...”

But the RAF is more than just a career choice – it is a lifestyle, with fantastic opportunities to explore the world, all while being paid a competitive wage to work alongside colleagues who quickly become friends.

You could be travelling the world with a famous aerobatic team before the age of 18 or in charge of 12 Eurofighter Typhoons that help keep Britain safe before you have even reached 30.

Whether you are looking for an apprenticeship to put money in your pocket and further your education or already have your sights on a long-term career as an RAF engineer or fast-jet pilot – the RAF really is no ordinary Job.

Find out what's so great about our job roles by reading the stories of those who live them on a daily basis ...

SAC Ellie Morgan

When Ellie decided to leave school at the age of 17, she began to look at other career options. 18 months later and she is an Aircraft Mechanic working with the world famous RAF Aerobatic Team – the Red Arrows. So how did everything change so quickly? And what's next for a young servicewoman with the world at her feet? Read Ellie's story below ...

“I left education at the age of 17 after finishing my first year of A-Levels and deciding education was just no longer for me. Two years later and I find myself working with the Red Arrows!

“After applying to join the RAF I completed a 10 week basic training course at RAF Halton, which taught me standard military skills and set me up for the next stage of my career. Before I got

my first proper posting (job) with the RAF I also completed a six month trade training course which taught me the technical side of the job.

“The courses set you up for the rest of your career and you are taught everything you need to know, so you don't require an engineering background before joining.”

“I was posted straight to the Red Arrows at the end of my training, which was a complete shock but a posting that I was very happy with. I currently travel all over the world with the team and am mainly involved in the servicing of the aircraft; working alongside the engineers. I also work closely with Team Leader, Red 1 - Squadron Leader Dave Montenegro.

“My family are extremely proud that I decided to join the RAF and my dad loves that I am part of the Red Arrows, so is forever talking about it and posting things on social media! It feels great to know that my parents are proud of me so early in my career. In the future I want to



continue to travel with the RAF – both overseas and around the UK. I am only 19, so still have my whole career ahead of me.

“If I could choose my next posting it would be to a squadron to work on fast-jets such as Lossiemouth in Scotland, where they have both the Tornado and Typhoon. But for now I am more than happy travelling the world with the Red Arrows!” ■

Flight Lieutenant

Harry Gopalakrishnan (Lucky)

Flight Lieutenant Harry Gopalakrishnan, also known as Lucky, always knew that he wanted to join the Royal Air Force. Lucky's interest in the Royal Air Force started aged 15 when a RAF Liaison Officer visited his school and gave a talk on career options.

Now aged 27, Lucky is flying-high in the RAF as an Engineer Officer based at RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire. So what is it like to be in command of 12 Eurofighter Typhoons before you have even reached the age of 30? Read Lucky's story below ...

“I decided I wanted to join the RAF before I had even sat my GCSEs. An RAF Liaison Officer visited my school and the information about the lifestyle of the air force was enough to make me sit up and find out more.





them, including opportunities such as playing sport, going on adventurous training expeditions and furthering your education.

"I can see a path of roles that I would love to take as my career progresses – either as the Senior Engineering Officer of a squadron deployed on operations, or by becoming the lead Engineering Officer on a RAF Station.

"As long as my future roles continue to give me the opportunity to command personnel, I can see myself fulfilling a hopefully distinguished career in the Royal Air Force." ■

“As long as my future roles continue to give me the opportunity ... I can see myself fulfilling a hopefully distinguished career in the RAF.”

"At Sixth-Form I was offered to be put forward for selection to receive RAF sponsorship. After fitness, aptitude and leadership assessments, I eventually received a bursary for university with a place on RAF Initial Officer Training (IOT) after my university graduation."

"My parents supported me: as refugees from the 1980s Sri Lankan civil war, they saw this as a chance to give back to a country that had given our family so much. Today I am the Junior Engineering Officer for a squadron of Eurofighter Typhoon aircraft; responsible for their engineering and for the 120 personnel who keep the aircraft flying.

The squadron's role includes holding Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) ensuring the RAF has aircraft armed and ready to take-off at a moment's notice to defend the skies of our country from hostile aircraft.

"The benefits which come with the RAF really are what you make of

The Royal Air Force's Latest Advertising Campaign
 #NoOrdinaryJob is now live on social media or by visiting www.raf.mod.uk/recruitment.

Visit the website or the RAF Facebook and Twitter accounts to watch videos of Ellie and Lucky show you why their role in the RAF is #NoOrdinaryJob. ■

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Mighty Yukon Canoe Quest ...

Paddling the Big Salmon River is no easy feat. Challenging canoeing, unpredictable weather and remote terrain make it a real test of physical endurance and psychological stamina. Throw in unexpected log jams, lively rapids and wilderness camping and it's not hard to see why this was such an epic adventure.

Paddling 17-foot open canoes in pristine waters past snow-capped mountains, the eight cadets and four staff set out from Quiet Lake on their 369km trip to Carmacks near the Arctic Circle.

The average day's travel consisted of five to seven hours' paddling, sometimes starting before sunrise to catch sight of the abundant wildlife, in fast-moving waters before camping overnight.

Challenge

With two years of planning, training and fundraising behind them, the team was eager to get started – despite the enormity of the challenge ahead of them.

Cadet Flight Sergeant Richard Baxter from 2530 (Uckfield) Squadron said: "The first night I was almost pinching myself thinking 'Ok, this is actually happening now!' after many months of waiting. And the scenery was phenomenal; I remember having a great view over the lake with enormous mountains towering over it and what seemed like millions of trees in between. I could never forget that view!"

The second day proved to be an early test for the team. Expedition Leader, Flight Lieutenant Dave Hill, said: "By the time we reached Big Salmon Lake the wind had picked up to a force 4 with some significant swell which was on the limits for our heavily laden boats.

"The looks of relief on the cadets' faces when we finally made camp at the entrance to Big Salmon River said what a challenge it had been!"

From then on, the team was on its own for the next eight days.

"The river now was fast, shallow, narrow and had very tight bends with lots of tree hazards at every turn. But the group managed it comfortably and were

Canada's Yukon ... a vast and sparsely populated wilderness, where most four-legged species outnumber humans. Few places in the world today have been so unchanged over the course of time. Sussex Wing cadets travelled there this summer to experience its grandeur and its beauty during an epic canoe expedition ...

Words by Flight Lieutenant Dave Hill
Images by Squadron Leader Chris Conley



“The river now was fast, shallow, narrow and had very tight bends with lots of tree hazards at every turn ...”



confluence of the North Big Salmon River. “The water now increased significantly in volume and speed from this point,” explained Flight Lieutenant Hill.

“Two hours of fast water, tight bends and big boulders in the flow gave us an exciting ride and an exhilarating start to the day. This was definitely not the place for mistakes and our team navigated this section like seasoned paddlers.”

This was the highlight of the trip for Cadet Corporal Emily Rowe from 1140 (Steyning) Sqn who said: “Going down the rapids where the water was very shallow and seeing the salmon swimming up the river was awesome.”

Remote

This was the day the team joined the Yukon River. Emphasising the remoteness of their location, Flt Lt Hill said: “Three kilometres from the confluence, the team met two people working for the Canadian Fisheries.

“They hadn’t seen or spoken to anyone else for three months and were keen to talk to us! In return, we learned all about how they checked and monitored the spawning Chinook salmon.

“The Yukon was a very different proposition. It was a massive, wide conveyor belt of water moving at around eight kph. We had to change our tactics here as any decisions had to be made very early otherwise you just flew past places on the bank.

“The group adapted well to the new challenge and we were soon in our first camp on the Yukon proper. We were treated to an amazing sunset over the river that evening followed by an equally amazing full moon.

“For most that was the best camp spot on the trip. Our tents were pitched less than two metres from the water of one of the largest rivers in North America. It doesn’t get any better than that! Our final day started very early and with visibility down to less than 50

learning with every kilometre covered,” said Flight Lieutenant Hill.

“The next couple of days were amazing paddling with the river flowing nicely, great views and scenery and wildlife at every bend. By Day 5 we were a little behind our plan, but still over 100 miles from the nearest road head or place of habitation. We needed to put in a big day. We covered 61 kilometres, a massive achievement especially as the last 10 kilometres the river slowed and meandered. We were back on track and had another amazing campsite for the night.”

Flying Officer Katherine Ettridge from 1216 (Eastleigh) Squadron added: “Around day four I just thought to myself I want to remember this, just paddling along, very relaxed, having seen an eagle and thinking life is too short not to enjoy things like this. Don’t let these opportunities pass you by!”

Exhilarating

A day of heavy rain could not dampen the spirits of the team as they reached the

metres on the water when we pushed off. The most challenging part of the trip was to come - navigating the multiple river channels by compass was a nerve racking task but eventually the weather cleared.

“And after 10 days and 369 kms we reached our final destination. A great achievement from all the team. Handshakes and hugs all round while we took in what we had just achieved.”

Fg Off Ettridge added: “I have been inspired. The ethos of the expedition really came through and it was wonderful to see the cadets develop from the first day assisting staff with the various roles through to the last two days when they took over everything. Seeing the impact on the cadets overcoming self-doubt and realising what they could achieve was amazing.”

Achievement

Cadet Flight Sergeant Oliver Trehearne from 172 (Haywards Heath) Sqn said: “I think that I have realised what I am actually capable of, that life isn’t all about phones and computers and everything, that there are amazing places out there with amazing things to do and I want to go and experience more!”

For Cadet Sergeant Tom Kosteletos from 1140 (Shoreham) Sqn too the expedition has rekindled his desire to travel and made him realise how much he enjoys adventure training within the ATC.

But was there any downside to his mighty Yukon canoe quest? “The lack of a proper tin opener; opening 14 portions of tuna was more of a challenge than you might think when you only have a multi-tool!” ■

The organisers would like to thank the Ulysses Trust, the RAF Charitable Trust and the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals for their generous support. ■

“I think that I have realised what I am actually capable of ... that there are amazing places out there with amazing things to do and I want to go and experience more !”





Walk On

Air Cadets from 308 (Colchester) Squadron recently celebrated the 75th Anniversary of the squadron and the ATC by completing the Nijmegen Marches, in Holland.

The squadron was given £1,200 by the RAFCT to purchase not only walking shirts, day packs and important hydration equipment, but also helped subsidise the cost of the trip for the cadets.

With a gruelling schedule that involved a 3.15am wake up call, the cadets walked 40km a day, with the exception of two who were over 18 and walked the longer course of 50km a day.

"Local residents would camp on their front lawns from 4am offering refreshments while offering encouragement to the walkers," said Flight Lieutenant Jean Robinson, OC 308 (Colchester) Squadron.

"It was a tough challenge which pushed the cadets. Everyone you speak to says it's worth it and the cadets' question at the end was – can we come back next year?"

See the feature on Nijmegen on page 42. ■

Trust Ambassador Flies The Flag



Last year's RAF Charitable Trust (RAFCT) Flying Excellence Trophy winner Tom Willis was on hand to greet visitors to the charity's stand in the Techno Zone at the Royal International Air Tattoo.

Acting as an Ambassador for RAFCT, he said: "I've been showing people around, talking to members of the public and telling them about the Air Cadets, the charity and all the good things that we do. The Trust have done a lot for me in the past six months, it's just as well I give something back."

Tom from 759 (Beccles) Squadron, who applied to the Air Cadet Pilot Scheme, completed his first solo last September. He clearly impressed his instructors because the following month he received a call from RAFCT Director Amanda Butcher telling him he had won the Flying Excellence trophy. Awarded annually by the RAFCT, the trophy is given to the Air Cadet who, in the opinion of the Air Cadet Organisation, has shown outstanding flying ability and exceptional personal

qualities. The award proved life-changing for Tom. He said: "When I got my A-level results, I thought I'd blown my chances of joining the RAF but then I won the award. At the ceremony I met people who had failed their A-levels, retaken them and then gone in to the RAF."

Tom received his award from Squadron Leader Dunc Mason, formerly Officer Commanding the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. "Speaking to him, I learned he had a very similar story to me but went on to be in the Red Arrows and the BBMF so that was quite inspirational. It spurred me on."

More good news followed when Tom was told by the Geoffrey de Havilland Flying Foundation that he has been awarded the John Cunningham Flying Scholarship. Known as 'Top Grob' amongst the Air Cadets, it's where the top four pilots from the ACPS go through for another 13 hours' flying.

Tom decided to write to Amanda Butcher to ask for further sponsorship and the Trust is giving him an additional 17 hours.

Amanda said: "It was clear when we first met Tom that he is an exceptional young man. We have been delighted to be able to help him on to the next stage of his flying career and look forward to hearing of his progress – and the result of his application to join the RAF." ■



Supporting Flying Excellence

The RAFCT received a generous donation of £7,000 from Lockheed Martin during the 2016 Royal International Air Tattoo.

The cheque was presented to RAFCT Chairman Air Marshal Sir Kevin Leeson by the aerospace giant's Chief Executive Officer Marillyn Hewson.

The money will enable the Trust to offer flying hours to the young recipient of its Flying Excellence Trophy thereby helping to further develop their piloting skills.

Awarded annually by the Trust, the trophy is given to an Air Cadet whom the Air Cadet Organisation considers to have shown exceptional flying ability and personal qualities.

Sir Kevin said: "The trophy is a prestigious award but, until now, didn't come with anything tangible. Thanks to Lockheed Martin the trophy winner will now be able to continue their journey towards first solo standard. It's a great prize that really means something."

The presentation took place in the Techno Zone. Sponsored by Lockheed Martin and supported by the Trust, the critically-acclaimed attraction aims to inspire young people with a range of interactive and engaging activities focused on STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) subjects. ■



Adventurous Summer For Air Cadets

Throughout the summer a number of Air Cadet squadrons from across the country have taken part in adventurous expeditions and activities supported by the RAF Charitable Trust.

The expeditions, which were part-funded by the RAFCT via the Ulysses Trust, ensured that all members of the Cadet Forces had the opportunity to take part in challenging adventurous and community-related activities benefitting the cadets on both an individual and community level. They were:

Sutton Valence Combined Cadet Force (CCF) travelled to Brunei for a Jungle Survival Expedition that saw the cadets trek the path of the infamous World War Two death march as well as spending a week living with a local Murut tribe learning about local culture. ■

Thames Valley Wing Air Training Corp (ATC) travelled to the Tarn Gorge in France for a four-day canoe expedition that marked the culmination of the cadets' Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award. It was the first overseas expedition that the group had undertaken and proved to be a roaring success (see page 44). ■

Oakham School CCF travelled to Norway for their Duke of Edinburgh Gold expedition. The cadets trekked across the ground taken in Operation GUNNERSIDE, a World War Two operation to destroy heavy water plants at Vemork, described by the SOE as "the most successful act of sabotage of World War Two." ■

Also using the expedition for their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award were **Essex Wing ATC** who travelled to Iceland for a six-day trek via the Landmannalaugar which they combined with volunteer work in order to learn more about Icelandic culture (see page 44). ■

1034 (Surbiton) Squadron ATC spent a week trekking the Swiss Alps in Valais with average ascents of 1,000m and nights spent in mountain huts. ■

Air Cadets from Dorset and Wilts Wing ATC travelled to Dartmoor to take part in the Ten Tors challenge.

The endurance trek covers 45 miles in two days over the ten highest points on Dartmoor, with all five teams completing the challenge. ■

218 (Rotherham) Squadron ATC recently returned from a camp on the Isle of Wight which saw cadets undertake a range of adventurous and challenge activities. RAFCT Trustees recognised the challenges facing many of the cadets in the Rotherham area and decided to provide a grant that would enable cadets to participate that would have otherwise missed the opportunity. ■

185 (Batley) Squadron's expedition saw them complete a Coast-to-Coast endurance challenge, mountain biking from Southport in the West to Hornsea in the East along the 207-mile trans-Pennine Trail.

HQ AC (NACATC Windermere) took a group of adult instructors to France to develop their mountaineering and expedition planning skills. Skills that will be used to further adventurous opportunities for other members of the cadet force. ■

Eight Air Cadets from **Sussex Wing ATC** took part in Expedition Yukon Adventure which saw them canoe 369kms down the Big Salmon and Yukon rivers deep into the Yukon Territory of Canada (see page 26). ■

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Cyber Challenge Accepted



Ian Whittle, whose father Sir Frank Whittle invented the Jet Engine, presented certificates and gold cyber badges to this year's cyber course graduates.

Back for its second year, the Air Cadet Cyber Course includes two one-week courses for 20 cadets and four staff volunteers. More than 170 applications from across the Air Training Corps and the Combined Cadet Force (RAF) were received for this year's courses at No. 1 Radio School at RAF Cosford. The course is open to cadets who have achieved their Silver Communications Badge and can demonstrate an interest in IT. The service instructors of No. 1 Radio School had devised an interesting and challenging programme for the cadets.

A spokesman said: "The course content is the same as that delivered to Phase 2 Cyberspace Communications Specialists students and engineering officers and gives the cadets a taste of real life within the Royal Air Force."

During the course the cadets were taught law relating to a cyber environment, before participating in class and online exercises. Network infiltration techniques were explained and demonstrated with cadets becoming aware of the dangers of insecure networks and online threats.

Acting as supervisory staff for the course was Squadron Leader Alex May, Contingent Commander for Thomas Hardy School CCF who commented that it was nice to see the CCF(RAF) being involved in such a prestigious RAF Air Cadet course.

Wing Commander Dave Taylor, ACO Cyber & Communications Officer, said: "Next year it is hoped to run courses not only at RAF Cosford but also with industry partners throughout the UK. Application forms and instructions will be posted on to Bader SharePoint in late February with a closing date of early May. I hope to meet some of you on next year's courses." ■



Air Cadets Victorious
Eighty cadets from across Nottinghamshire took part in a competition last weekend to battle it out for The Nottinghamshire Cadet Winners Shield.

Air Cadets from South and East Midlands Wing took on cadets from the Army Cadet Force, Sea Cadet Corps and Combined Cadet Force in a variety of events alongside representatives from East Midlands Ambulance Service.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire Sir John Peace, who attended the event, said: "I am immensely impressed with what I have seen and the standard of the cadets, they really are a credit to their respective organisations and the county of Nottinghamshire."

After gathering the scores for each event, this year's competition winners were the Air Cadets of South and East Midlands Wing for the second year in a row. ■

New Home
Chesterfield cadets have a new home. A former storage hut at Wallis Barracks in the town has been specially converted for use by 331 (Chesterfield) Squadron after they outgrew their previous accommodation.

Project Manager, Martin Capewell, Head of Estates at East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association, said: "We have created a new drill hall, interactive classrooms, IT suite, offices and a store room as well as new kitchen and bathroom facilities."

Squadron boss, Flight Lieutenant Simon Donaldson, said: "We are thrilled with the extra space and the standard of both the building and the equipment provided." ■

TOP IMAGE: Flt Lt J Gillespie, 878 (Highworth) Squadron

Out of this World



An experiment devised by cadets from 1140 (Steyning) Squadron has been selected to be launched into space by NASA. The cadets are taking part in the 'Cubes in Space' programme, which offers students the opportunity to devise science experiments that are then taken into space, in a small cube, on a NASA mission.

Youngsters devise experiments and hypotheses which are then tested by examining the outcome of their experiment once their cube is returned to them post-mission. Thousands of projects worldwide are submitted for the innovative programme. This year just 43 projects were chosen and the cadets at Steyning Squadron were thrilled to be one of those chosen.

Cadet Sergeants Oliver Levine and Oliver Hamilton explained: "We chose to do an experiment involving seeds. We think this project's findings could potentially help NASA design space storage solutions for growing and keeping food whilst in space."

"Our experiment investigates the effects of space on seeds. We created a lattice structure to strengthen the cube and then designed a 'spacesuit' for the seed, made out of different materials to investigate the effects of radiation on the seeds."

Cadet Max Morgan, 14, said: "I liked cutting out the foils and cloths to make the little spacesuits to protect the seeds. It wasn't easy and we all had to work together."



Cadet Sergeant Lawrence Clough-Young, 16, added: "I enjoyed trying to design the lattice support for the seeds. I learnt that the first design rarely works and that engineers keep refining until they get the results they need!"

The seeds inside their small cubes were launched into space on a sounding rocket from NASA Wallops Flight Facility on Wallops Island, Virginia and more will be on board a high altitude balloon launched from the NASA Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility at Fort Sumner, New Mexico.

Oliver said: "Our first seeds have now been to space and are on their way back to us. We intend to grow our seeds to see if space and the conditions they were exposed to have any effect on their growth or if they behave differently when growing after being in space."

Corporal Ellen Davoudi, 16, added: "We had to germinate lots of different seeds to choose the best type to send to space. We've also kept an experimental log of what we've done as we've gone along. I've been able to use what I've learnt at school in the real world!"

Pilot Officer Dilip Sethi, who has been overseeing Steyning's efforts, said: "This is a wonderful opportunity to get cadets involved in practical Aerospace and Engineering - something that goes right to the core ethos of the Air Training Corps." ■





Lighting the Way ...

To celebrate 75 years of the Air Training Corps, a special torch has travelled the entire length and breadth of the country visiting every region, every wing and as many squadrons as possible ...

Staff and cadets transported the torch by land, river, canal, sea and air as it made its way from John O'Groats down to Lands End and its final destination at Predannack Airfield, home of 626 VGS where it was handed over to Chief of the Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach.

The specially-commissioned torch has visited a huge number of sites and national landmarks as well as being carried to a several prominent addresses such as Buckingham Palace, No.10 Downing Street and Blackpool Tower.

It even reached the Corps' most southerly squadron when it was welcomed to Jersey by cadets from No. 7 Overseas (Jersey) Squadron and colleagues from Victoria College CCF.

Commandant Air Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty, visited many Wings as the torch continued

on its epic six-week relay and Air Cadets Ambassador, Honorary Group Captain Carol Vorderman joined Air Cadets on Clifton Suspension Bridge to pass on the torch from Bristol & Gloucestershire Wing to Devon & Somerset Wing.

In London, Cadet Warrant Officer D'Andre Usanga-Cummings of 343 (Camberwell) Squadron spent her last day in the Corps accompanying the ATC75 Torch on its route through London.

She said: It was a surprise to go into No. 10 Downing Street and the MOD Main Building, Whitehall with the torch. I knew we were going to many places in London but not exactly where."

D'Andre is now at Kingston University studying engineering and plans to join the University of London Air Squadron.

She is pictured opposite standing behind 91-year-old Chelsea Pensioner, Fred Richardson, (first left) during a visit to the Royal Hospital Chelsea. ■





ABOVE: The team with the former Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Andrew Pulford. The cadets and staff had been invited to lunch in the VIP enclosure at the Battle of Britain Memorial parade in Capel-le-Ferne as part of their camp at RAF Manston.

They come from all over the world to take on the 'Everest' of swimming. However, by mid-July, there had been just 15 successful swim crossings of the Channel this year - eight solo, seven in relay.

The shortest distance between England and France is 21 miles but the tide is capable of moving the swimmer several miles from side to side. This in conditions that can include force 6 winds, waves two metres high, and water temperatures that could send you hypothermic in minutes.

Add in the jellyfish and the estimated 600 tankers and 200 ferries a day and you can start to understand why so few people have managed to swim the Channel.

Yet, cadets and staff decided this would be an ideal way to mark the Air Training Corps' 75th Anniversary. Described at the time as the "heroic" element of the 75th celebrations, it brought together a unique team of young people and support staff from the ATC and the CCF (RAF) from all corners of the UK. Planning and training for the event began more than a year ago as Flight Lieutenant Ivan Murfin from the project team explained: "It all started with a rigorous selection process in September last year, and then putting support staff in place to co-ordinate the team of 12 swimmers who have been training hard for months in many different locations, building up endurance in preparation for their sea swim."

The swimmers, many of whom train regularly with local swimming clubs, also had to put in the hours on open water to help build up endurance and stamina as well as getting used to the motion of

Cadets Conquer The Channel

Testing tides, jellyfish and one of the world's busiest shipping lanes - the English Channel is the 'Everest' of swimming. Undaunted, a team of Air Cadets pulled on their goggles and stepped into the water at Dover to take on this heroic challenge.

Words by Squadron Leader Trishia Welsh
Images by Warrant Officer John McFetridge



the sea. As the window for the challenge approached, Commandant Air Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty, joined the team at their base, RAF Manston, and even joined them in the pool for a training session. She said: "I've been really impressed by their fitness and commitment to this challenge and especially how fast they are!"

With the training complete, the exact timing of the swim was down to the weather and tides plus confirmation from an experienced boat Pilot that all elements were ideal. The "good to go" for Attempt One was welcomed all round and after rigorous safety briefings on the boat 'Anastasia' in Dover Harbour, the team was taken to Shakespeare Bay to begin the marathon challenge.

First into the water was Lance Corporal Ross Ferreira from St Albans CCF who stepped off the boat at 11:34pm on July 5. Ross said: "I started off in the dark. It was a bit hairy and I met a few jellyfish but overall it was a good experience."

They team swam two sections each of an hour, encountering different conditions

through the night, into dawn and the morning as they progressed across the Channel guided by the Pilot boat.

Eleven hours and 42 minutes after Ross stepped into the water, 17-year-old Cadet Corporal Jack Fitzpatrick from 1063 (Herne Bay) Squadron arrived in France with the team swimming some 35 miles because of the tides. Jack said: "I was nervous and excited at the same time and I was overjoyed because we finished the swim in such a good time. The whole team got on really well together and the support team has been amazing."

Fellow swimmer Harry Barrett-Smith from 1163 (Colne Valley) Squadron agreed and said of the Challenge: "The hardest, but greatest, achievement of my life and I could not have done it without the team and support staff."

Congratulations for the team poured in, including a personal message from Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, on a 'superb achievement'.

Then it was a nervous wait at Manston for clearance for Attempt Two. Days passed without the right conditions and

then, finally, the attempt was on – only for the swimmers, who had trained so hard for so long, to be thwarted at the 11th hour by the quickly-changing conditions. The team, absolutely determined to complete their swim, returned to Kent at the beginning of August, when once again the weather and sea conditions were judged unfit for the relay swim.

Corps Sports Officer, Alex Maddison, based at HQ Air Cadets, RAF Cranwell, said: "Let us not underestimate the sheer courage, determination, physical strength and willpower of these young people and the adult staff."

"This has been a life-changing occasion for all of us. I applaud them for their team and individual achievements as well as the continued commitment of the whole team who will return next year to complete the Challenge." ■

BELOW: The swimmers including the successful cross-Channel relay team of Ross Ferreira; Anna Hulme from 1026 (Ormskirk) Sqn; Harry Barrett-Smith; Alice Wynne, 2196 (Trowbridge) Sqn, adult volunteer Kathy Batts, Kings School Rochester CCF and Jack Fitzpatrick.



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Air Squadron Trophy Day

It's the highlight of the year for the RAF Sections of the Combined Cadet Force: the Air Squadron Trophy Day at the historic Old Warden Aerodrome, Bedfordshire.

The special day is the culmination of the Air Squadron Trophy Competition national final which was held at RAF Halton earlier this year. As previously reported in Air Cadet, the best of the UK's RAF (CCF) cadets competed in seven disciplines for the prestigious trophy. In a closely fought contest, Dulwich College eventually emerged as victors with Wilson's School in second place and last year's winners, Kimbolton School, in third.

Cadets from those top three CCF(RAF) Sections paraded to receive their awards at the historic Old Warden airfield.

The parade was reviewed by former Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Dalton and addressed by Chief of Staff at HQ Air Cadets, Group Captain John Lawlor. The winners were rewarded by having an afternoon of flying in aircraft owned and operated by members of the Royal Air Squadron. These ranged from a vintage Tiger Moth to a modern helicopter and light aeroplanes. For the cadets, the ultimate prize is the Sir John Thomson Sword, awarded to the best CCF (RAF) cadet in the country

This year's winner was 18-year-old Cadet Warrant Officer Joseph Kelly from Abingdon School, who hopes to fly helicopters with the RAF. He said: "The CCF has been a major part of my life over the last five years and from it I have



gained confidence, new skills and most importantly enjoyment. It is a privilege to be able to bring something like this back to the CCF as recognition not only of what I have done, but of what the CCF has done for me and for the all the other cadets that have passed through the CCF over the last few years."

Squadron Leader Rebecca Cottam, the CCF Contingent Commander at Abingdon School, nominated Joseph for the award. She said: "This is a huge achievement for Joseph and is very well deserved."

Also present was Sqn Ldr Noel Rees (pictured), the 1998 winner of the Thomson Sword when he was a member of Portsmouth Grammar School's CCF(RAF) Section. He now flies the Typhoon and was the RAF's 2014 solo Typhoon Display pilot. He said: "Knowing I wanted a career in aviation at school the CCF(RAF) Section was a natural choice for me.

"My desire to join the RAF came from my first summer camp at RAF Coltishall and my first flight in a Chipmunk.

"Through my time in the CCF, I had so many opportunities to

experience the RAF, fly, build leadership skills all across the UK and overseas. Ultimately, it gave me a great 'kick-start' for a career in the RAF and I will be always grateful to the Air Cadet organisation for that."

Winners of Geoffrey de Havilland Flying Foundation Medals for Outstanding CCF Achievement 2016 were: CWO Ben Ayres, Kimbolton School; CWO Joseph Kelly, Abingdon School; CWO Matthew Munt, Robert Gordons College; CWO Ewan Robertson, Wilson's School; CWO Dan Russon, Queen Mary's Grammar School and CWO Ben Schlossman, Dulwich College.

HQ Air Cadets' Wing Commander Robert Chalklin added: "We are very grateful for the continuing support of the Royal Air Squadron, the Shuttleworth Collection and Cyma (UK) Petroleum to

provide the cadets with such an enjoyable and memorable day.

"All the cadets here have worked very hard and fully deserve the prizes awarded to them as well as the experience that such a day gives." ■



Words & images by Philip Jones

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Walking The Walk ...



The Nijmegen March is not for the faint hearted. It's the equivalent of completing four marathons in four days with 50,000 people, from 68 nations, undertaking the 100 mile journey. But this year's Nijmegen March was extra special as it marked a century of walking ...

The March's origins date back even earlier to 1909 when it was a Dutch military training exercise. In 1916, the first civilian entrants were accepted, and the March which takes place in the Dutch city of Nijmegen every July has since evolved to become a celebration of the liberation of the lowland countries in two world conflicts, each day starting on Nijmegen Bridge and visiting the town of Arnhem on day one.

The Air Cadet Organisation has been taking part since 1961 when London

Wing sent out the first team. Since then Air Cadet participation has grown year on year with more than 600 cadets and staff, including Commandant Air Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty, putting their best foot forward this year.

A record-breaking 29 Wings took part in the event this year all of whom have a healthy respect for the mental and physical challenges that the Nijmegen March brings.

Training for most begins at the start of the year, undertaking a comprehensive

schedule that is designed to build up the morale, strength and physical endurance of those taking part.

Add to that this year's soaring temperatures, and toting a 10kg pack and it's not hard to see why the March is one of the toughest challenges that cadets face.

Bristol and Gloucester road marching team leader, Warrant Officer Chris Wright from 1329 (Stroud) Squadron, who first attended the March as a cadet 17 years ago, says: "I believe it's one of the most



gruelling events the ATC has to offer. You need lots of time to train and get physically ready for the challenge and also to prepare the mind as it's such a mental challenge too.

"The event gives the cadets the opportunity to live on a multinational base for a week with 6,000 troops from all over the world and compete in the same challenges they do - and crucially gain the same respect.

"Nijmegen truly is an event without equal and, as long as my knees hold out, I'll keep cadets coming back to experience that magic that has captured us all ... 13 marches completed for me this year!"

Experiencing Nijmegen for the first time was a small team of cadets and staff from Durham and Northumberland Wing - the Wing's first Nijmegen team for over 30 years.

Team Leader, CI Sara Allison, says she was enormously proud of her team as they crossed the finish line and officially completed the 100th Nijmegen four-day March, "It was a fantastic achievement

BELOW: Plymouth and Cornwall Wing were so proud of the team's achievement at Nijmegen that they invited them to march the final leg of the 75th Anniversary Torch Relay, handing over the torch to the Chief of Defence Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach at its final destination having travelled the length of the country from John O' Groats to Lands End. ■



Cadet Flight Sergeants Andrew Houillebecq and Emily Savva from 7 Overseas (Jersey) Squadron joined the contingent from Dorset and Wiltshire Wing. Andrew said after completing the March: "It was undoubtedly one of the proudest moments I have experienced - I even met the Commandant. The final march into the centre of Nijmegen is incredible, formed up alongside the rest of the British Military Contingent and you just take in all of the atmosphere. It is highly rewarding and I would strongly recommend doing it at least once, I'm certainly looking forward to doing it again sometime!" ■

and they truly earned their road-marching medals and their Nijmegen badges."

She added: "Of 800 British Military Contingent marchers, including regular personnel and experienced marchers, more than 150 dropped out at some point during the four days.

"All the more credit to the Durham and Northumberland Wing contingent who, as first timers, gritted their teeth and completed the route against all odds."

Impressed too was Air Commodore McCafferty who had the honour of leading the British Military Contingent as they marched into Nijmegen.

She said: "I salute every single cadet and staff member who completed, or even attempted the 100-mile march. It was an incredibly tough event and those of you who finished, despite searing temperatures, pouring rain and blistered feet, certainly deserve your medals."

Joining her at the head of the British Military Contingent as they walked into Nijmegen to take the salute from the Queen of the Netherlands were cadets and staff from Kent Wing.

They were awarded the Jon Ford Trophy for the best Air Cadet Team in the British Military Contingent.

Flight Lieutenant Chris Tate, who led the Kent team, said: "To not only win the Jon Ford Trophy but also to lead the British Military Contingent at both the opening parade and into Nijmegen on the final day of the 100th year and the Air Training Corps' 75th Anniversary year is very, very special." ■

Want to be part of this marathon event next year? Squadron Leader Paul Thomson-Clark, the Corps Road Marching Officer, says: "Speak to your Squadron Commander. They will know who to speak to within your Wing.

"Be warned: it's a physically and mentally demanding challenge. It's one of the toughest things you will do in the Air Cadets and you will need to put in a huge amount of commitment. But crossing that finishing line after all that training? It's just awesome!" ■



Whether on foot, bike, horse or on the water, a DofE expedition is always an unforgettable experience.

However, this year, in celebration of the Corps' 75th Anniversary, cadets truly stretched their horizons and brought a rucksack full of amazing memories home ...

By Wing Commander (Ret'd) Chris Morrell
& Flight Lieutenant Alex Pye

OUT There ...



Whilst most DofE expeditions take place in the UK, this summer, to mark the Corps' 75th Anniversary, cadets took on two very different but equally challenging expeditions: one in France's Tarn Valley, by canoe, and the other trekking through the volcanic wilderness of Iceland.

Twenty staff and cadets from Essex Wing travelled to Iceland to carry out a circuit of Torfajokull, a stratovolcano covered by an icecap.

The team, after settling into the basecamp at Landmannalaugar, spent the next four days trekking through the area's remote but strikingly beautiful landscape, experiencing a mixture of terrain, from mountains, old lava fields, barren deserts created by volcanic ash, hot springs and river crossings.

The first two days took the groups through geothermal areas with boiling mud pools, hot springs and steam vents and on through a volcanic landscape before camping on a desolate high plateau. Wing Commander (Ret'd) Chris Morrell, one of the expedition's assessors, said: "On day three the cadets left the popular trails. They struck off across a black sand desert on a compass bearing and up into the hills following unmarked trails which led across and down to a natural hot pool.

"Some cadets cooked their meals in the boiling river alongside their camping area!"

The final day of the DofE expedition was to prove rather more challenging than anticipated. Wg Cdr Morrell explained: "The cadets took several attempts to find a way through a pass as the drops were too steep. When they finally they got through the way was barred by a deep river.

"At this point the cadets came across two American backpackers who had been trying to get through for several hours. As they did not have a map and only a GPS they followed the cadet groups.

"After discussion with assessors and supervisors a revised route was agreed and the cadets finished the DofE section of their trek on a high mountain ridge. Now joined with the staff trekking team, and the two Americans, the expedition split into small groups and followed a long high ridge line and descended steeply



into the valley that would take them back to the base camp.

"With a braided river all the way along the valley the groups had more than 20 major river crossings to contend with and, after 16 hours, we realised we were not going to get through that day so we camped in the valley.

"The following morning after more river crossings the whole expedition arrived back at Landmannalaugar and returned to Reykjavik after a truly unique, adventurous and outstanding expedition." ■

Slightly nearer to home, Thames Valley Wing decided to embark on an ambitious overseas adventure training expedition – the first within the Wing for some years – and the very first mounted overseas by canoe.

Exercise Golden Tarn saw six cadets undertake their Gold Duke of Edinburgh's

Award Expedition, paddling unsupported along 100 kilometres of the Tarn River in the Aveyron region of France.

Preparation for the expedition began two years ago, including a series of intensive training sessions in the UK that culminated in a practice expedition on the River Severn.

The cadets began their four-day expedition in sweltering 36 degree temperatures, paddling from Montbrun to La Malene through the heart of the 400m deep Gorge Du Tarn.

During the second day, the team paddled from La Malene to Le Rozier; a stretch which took them through the Pas de Souci, a huge rockfall and boulder field which includes a siphon. The team successfully portaged this area, before paddling on to the canoe shoot at Les Vignes down the river's 16ft barrage.

The penultimate day of the expedition allowed the cadets to start exploring the

smaller villages along the meandering River Tarn.

Flight Lieutenant Alex Pye said: "The paddling was, again, hot – peaking at 38 degrees – and the river continued to offer plenty of surprises with sufficient challenge – several lengthy stretches of rapids, several weirs and an epic canoe shoot which got the better of one of the canoes, leaving them high and dry, beached on a rock!"

Cadet Corporal Rowan Hayball, 17, added: "I expected to spend more time swimming the rapids than paddling them – I was surprised at how far our training had pushed us – and how prepared we were. The heat did make the swim feel quite inviting though!"

The final day's paddling saw the group descend from the Millau valley through some beautiful villages passing beneath the Millau Viaduct – Europe's tallest bridge – some 270m above the river. All the cadets successfully completed their Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award expedition.

Cadet Sergeant Jemima Croggon, 17, said: "I loved the feeling of independence we were given – trusted to make our own decisions, find our own way, cut our own path and make the expedition what we wanted." ■



75th Anniversary Aerospace Camp Takes Off ...

A national Aerospace Camp, that championed aviation, engineering and communication, was held at RAF Syerston, home of 2FTS, as part of the 75th Anniversary celebrations for the RAF Air Cadets.

Nearly 200 cadets from across the Air Training Corps and CCF(RAF) attended the national camp, which, after a smaller scale practice run in 2015, was back in style for the anniversary year. Its aim was to give the cadets a unique training experience through aviation, engineering, communication and aerospace activities.

The majority of the training was provided by 26 Qualified Aerospace Instructor Cadets (QAIC) who were supported by 30 staff qualified and experienced in the disciplines of the course.

Thanks to a generous £10,000 grant from the RAF Charitable Trust, the camp packed in visits to the Battlespace Management Centre at RAF Scampton, an operational Typhoon squadron at RAF Coningsby, the RAF Linton-on-Ouse Operational Acquaintance Centre simulator, STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) command tasks with the RAF Youth Development Team, the National Space Centre and Rolls Royce at Derby.

On-site training included the practical principles of flight, learning about the safe and responsible use of drones, as well as having the chance to fly them through targets, advanced simulation trainers including a rare opportunity to experience helicopter simulation, air traffic control exercises and the chance to gain communication qualifications and glider experience flights.

Cadet Gary Jordan from 2160 (Sleaford) Squadron said: "The camp was brilliant; I was awarded my first badge for communication. The best bit was the flight simulators at Linton-on-Ouse and Air Traffic Control. I would love to be a QAIC Cadet."

Cadet Robyn Bovenizer from 1579 (Erith) Squadron added: "I have really enjoyed the week. I want to be an engineer on leaving school. I have made new friends whilst on the course, and the best bit for me was the engineering."

In the middle of the week a VIP visitors' day offered the opportunity to showcase the activities on offer to the higher ranks of the Royal Air Force, senior and influential members of related industry and charitable organisations.

Cadets that graduated from the QAIC course were in charge of briefings and escorts on the day giving the youngsters

the opportunity to display their confidence and knowledge, as well as being on hand to answer any questions.

Top of the guest list was the Air Officer Commanding (AOC) 22 Group, Air Vice Marshal Andrew Turner, who said: "It is fabulous to see this amazing Aerospace Camp which brings together so many precisions to get aircraft flying.

"The cadets are amazing, disciplined, intelligent and focused and their spirit is 'out of the top drawer'. None of these things would be possible without the adult volunteers, who have given so much time to bring on the next generation."

During the final parade, Air Vice Marshal Andrew Turner presented 27 certificates for Blue Wings, part of the new flying and gliding syllabus.

Afterwards, the cadets, staff and the VIPs were treated to a spectacular display by the RAF Red Arrows. ■





Cadets In Cenotaph Parade

Air Cadets from 282 (East Ham) Squadron have taken part in an Anglo-Belgian Remembrance Parade at the Cenotaph in London, to remember Belgian and British victims of both world wars.

The cadets, led by Officer Commanding, Flight Lieutenant Chris Booty, along with members of the Royal Air Forces' Association and other British ex-Service associations, joined Belgian detachments of the Royal Military Academy, the Royal School for Non-commissioned officers, the Centres for Basic Training and Education and the Navy regular forces.

Also taking part were Belgian cadets and veterans, all of whom had travelled to London to take part in the annual Whitehall parade that dates back more than 80 years. During the moving service, wreaths were laid on the Cenotaph by the Belgian Defence Minister Steven Vandeput, Government officials and current military representatives as well as many ex-Service organisations.

The parade then made its way up Whitehall and on to Horse Guards which was flanked by mounted troops of the Royal Horse Artillery and a wreath was laid at the Guards Memorial.

The cadets would normally be dismissed from the parade at this point but all elected to continue with the march up Birdcage Walk to Wellington Barracks.

Those involved in the parade, particularly the veterans, received a warm reception from the crowds watching, both in Whitehall and on Horse Guards.

Cadet Hossain Mujahid, 13, said: "I've been a cadet since January and have been involved in parades at my Squadron, but this is my first big parade in Central London and I really enjoyed it. We were all given a commemorative coin by a member of the Belgian Forces as a thank you for our support."

Flt Lt Booty added: "This is the second year that we have joined the Belgian Forces for this parade and what an honour it is for all on the squadron."

In 1934 Belgium's King Albert I died as a result of a climbing accident. Touched by the death of his nephew and in recognition of the heroism and sacrifice of the Belgian Army in the First World War, King George V bestowed a unique honour on the Belgians never awarded to any other non-Commonwealth nation: a yearly parade at the Cenotaph in Whitehall.

Belgium is the only non-Commonwealth nation that is permitted to parade its troops in uniform and carrying arms in central London. ■



Sisters!

In what is believed to be a first for the Corps, 354 (Dover) has officially recognised Picatinny Squadron of the US Civil Air Patrol from Dover, New Jersey as an honorary sister squadron.

This milestone coincides with the 75th Anniversary of the founding of the CAP and, of course, of the Corps.

"We are honored with this designation and look forward to exchanging ideas and engaging in mutual activities between our two organisations," Picatinny Composite Squadron Commander Lieutenant Colonel Michael Dolan said.

"Our cadets are also excited that this 'hands across the Atlantic' opportunity is taking place as we each celebrate our 75th Anniversary."

Warrant Officer Matt Dando from 354 Sqn added: "We welcome our friends from America into our squadron and look forward to working with them." ■

Pedal to Paris

Flying Officer David Anderson from 2344 (Longbenton) Squadron has completed two gruelling challenges to raise funds for The Royal British Legion.

David joined more than 350 other cyclists for the four-day Pedal to Paris bike ride.

He said: "The event was a massive challenge. I only started riding a road bike four weeks before the event so, it was a huge learning curve.

"The day we pedalled into Paris was one I will never forget. I had so many emotions; pride, joy, excitement and, of course, relief!"

Seven days later and David was on the start line for the biggest half-marathon in the world - The Great North Run.

He said: "I was a little nervous due to my lack of running training; I had been so focused on getting to Paris! But the great support along the route kept me going." ■

Leading The Way ...

Staff and cadets from London & South East Region are piloting youth mental awareness training. More than a dozen cadets and staff attended the Youth Mental Health First Aid Training course run during the summer.

The first ever such training was brought to the Region by Squadron Leader Joseph Mulae, a Royal Air Force doctor and service helper at 39F (Barnes) Squadron. The aim of the course, delivered for Mental Health First Aid England, is to teach people how to recognise the signs and symptoms of common mental health issues, provide help on a first aid basis and effectively guide someone towards the right support services.

Flight Lieutenant Richard Sage, OC 1440 (Shoreham) Squadron, who was present at Shoreham Airshow at the time of the Hunter crash, attended the course.

He said: "It was eye opening. I don't think I've ever considered how much mental health can have an effect on your everyday life. The course covered a wide range of topics such as depression, self-harm, eating disorders and similar.

"We looked at the issues facing young people today, most of which were relevant to those of us not so young. I'm hoping that completion of the YMHA course and my new resolve to understand more around mental health issues will help me to help my cadets more."

Squadron Leader Mulae would like to see mental health awareness training available not only within the Corps, but to all

Cadet Forces. He said: "There was such positive and supportive feedback from those who attended the course, and with our Honorary Air Commandant, HRH The Duchess of Cambridge a keen supporter of mental health awareness in young people, I feel it is important that we should promote and encourage this type of training."

He added: "I believe mental health awareness should be promoted at every opportunity and a training course such as this provides evidence-based, research-led, proven and validated training by assured trainers. Furthermore they confer a provider award as evidence of successful completion of the training." ■

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