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March 2015

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# Global Gateway

In March's issue

**Global Gateway**  
March 2015



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## Submitting Articles

Thanks to all of you who took time to write the variety of articles in this issue. To send submissions to the Global Gateway, email BZN-GlobalGateway-Editor@mod.uk and any articles that we receive by the 12th of each month will be in the following month's magazine. When you submit articles, remember that accompanying them with high resolution images really makes a difference. Please send a maximum of 2 images per email to work around our DII email size limitations. We very much look forward to reading about your endeavours this month!



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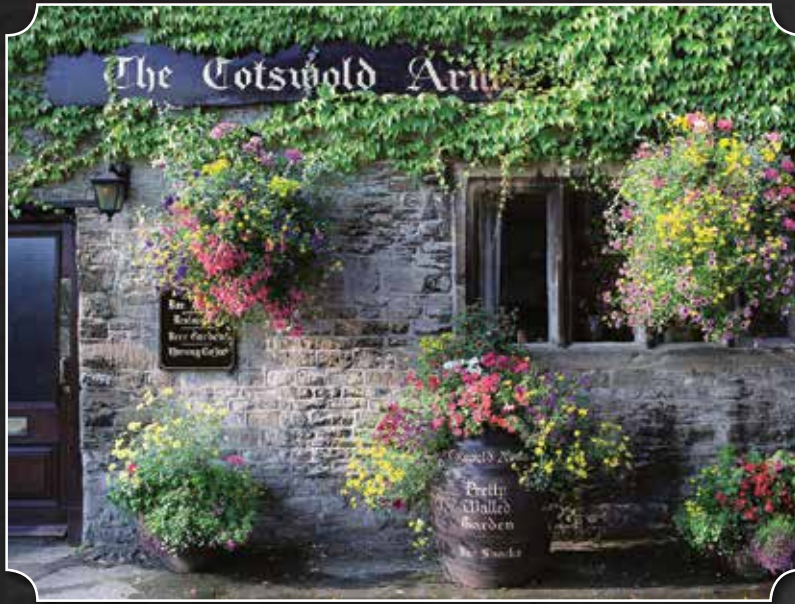
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During the month there is live music alternate Wednesday and Thursdays with some great acts lined up.

You'll also be able to catch the bass player from Ocean Colour Scene, Dan Sealey performing as part of a duo on Sat 21st March.

This comes after the culmination of the Six Nations Rugby which is always a busy day in the bar as everyone wants a seat in front of the biggest screen in Town.

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# COMMANDERS' FOREWORD

A warm welcome to the March edition of *Global Gateway* magazine. The Station is, as usual, busy-yet-thriving. This year has already seen the No 10 Squadron Centenary Royal Parade and the arrival of our second A400M Atlas airframe with the first Atlas aircraft being formally named 'City of Bristol'. There have also been some wonderful charitable exploits to read about this month, most notably, the Movements Conversion Unit's challenge of running, swimming and cycling the distance from the North Pole to RAF Brize Norton and back: some 8562km! Huge congratulations go to all involved in this truly exceptional feat for Polymicrogyria Family Support. In addition, the RAFA Great Brize Bake Off was also a success raising almost £1600 for charity and, whilst not a winning entry (that honour went to Corporal Charlotte Dunn in C4I with her 'perfectly faultless' Carrot Cake), Gp Capt Support's chocolate and banana cake was a popular choice with the paying customers!

Of note in this issue is No 99 Squadron's milestone of 100,000 flying hours. Reflecting on the Squadron's achievements since the C-17's inception, with no continent untouched, the worldwide nature of their Operations is clear. Op HERRICK may be over, but the Squadron's C-17s continue flying into Afghanistan, are the airframe of choice for Ebola Aeromed flights and remain heavily committed to the Defence Exercise Programme. As they build up capability through 2015, No 70 Squadron will start to take on more of the airlift burden. The first Operational Atlas load was delivered to Op SHADER in Cyprus on 3 Mar - a sign of things to come. With the C130 and Voyager Force both as committed as ever, we remain busy and battle-ready.



Please do pay special attention this month to the Community Support page which gives details of a useful Joint Services Housing Brief on 24 March as well as information on registering to vote in time for the May General Election. The Community Support office, now situated next to the HIVE, is a fantastic resource and their friendly personnel can advise on everything from welfare support to how to book the brand new Brize Norton static caravan in Dorset. In addition, if you or your partner are deployed for as little as 4 weeks, you are entitled to additional support in the form of leisure vouchers and cinema passes, free sticker charts for children to count down the days and much more, so do pay them a visit.

The last few months of Winter and early Spring can deliver a lethal combination of short daylight hours and poor visibility on our roads. Please take on board the messages from the Road Safety Team, especially those of you who are riding bicycles or motorbikes. Ensure you wear reflective clothing and a helmet, that all

lights are operational and clean and watch out for greasy roads and potholes. Leave plenty of time to get to work safely and don't take any unnecessary risks.

As we read about the activities happening on Station each month, it is clear that there is a huge amount of activity that goes unmentioned: individuals, sections and squadrons simply getting on with their jobs, doing fantastic things and allowing RAF Brize Norton to continue its relentless operational output. We are keen to celebrate all these activities so we encourage you to submit articles to the *Global Gateway* Magazine for inclusion in future editions.

Finally, in the last month we have seen the latest round of Commendations presented to worthy recipients and Awards announced. It is a reminder that alongside all we do stands the unwavering support of our families and loved ones, without which, we could not continue to deliver to such exceptional standards; our continued and sincerest thanks to you all.

Gp Capt Simon Edwards : Gp Capt Polly Perkins  
Station Commander : Head Of Establishment



# EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Whether you enjoy the occasional copy while sitting in the Med Centre waiting room, or are a loyal *Global Gateway* regular, I welcome you to the March 2015 edition – and my first as Editor.

I am honoured to be at the helm of this distinguished periodical and am relishing the opportunity of working with what I already know to be outstanding editorial and media teams, delivering this professional magazine to you every month. As neither my engineering degree nor my current role as Flt Cdr Ops on 99 Sqn have endowed me with literary creativity, you won't be surprised to hear that it is you wordsmiths out there whose submissions I am longing to receive, read and publish. The *Global Gateway* is the perfect medium through which to impart to all of us at Brize Norton a snapshot of what you, your sqn or wing have been up to. Without the generosity of our contributors this fantastic publication would wither, denying us all our collective view into the rich kaleidoscope of Stn activity of which we are, all too often, blissfully



unaware. So please continue putting pen to paper – or start if you've not before – and send your submissions and photos to us on dii at BZN-Global Gateway-Editor.

Finally, I'd like to thank the departing editor, Sqn Ldr Mike Udall, for the fantastic job he has done in producing such professional copy throughout

what was a hectic 2014 for Brize. The *Global Gateway* is always bursting with information and inspiration for its readers. While I have big editorial boots to fill, with copious help from my excellent team, we will continue to deliver, together, the brilliant magazine Mike leaves us.

**Sqn Ldr Richard Fawkes**  
Editor

## The Megametre Row

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# Padre's PEACE

Jesus withdrew about a stone's throw away.  
(Mk 22:41)

**Taking time out is often seen as a luxury; life is so busy for most of us that there is barely time to stop in the day, let alone plan real time out.**

Lent, that season in the Christian calendar beginning on Ash Wednesday and journeying towards Easter, invites us to take time out from our all-consuming daily lives, and to spend a precious 40 days clearing away the clutter that so often distorts, and can even alter, our priorities. Lent entices us to locate and then relocate the real me; the me that God calls to be and not just simply do. So how is your Lent going so far? Is it going at all? The good news is it's never too late to begin Lent personally!

Frequently in the Gospels Jesus takes time out, often going off to 'lonely places' (see Luke 5:16), places where he could be alone. He rarely goes far, just a mere 'stone's throw away'. But why does he take these frequent mini breaks? These retreats tend to happen when things become rather intense for him the need arises for things to simmer down a little, or when a significant event lies just ahead for him.

So simply, he goes off to pray! Far from running from a challenge, Jesus wisely goes off to ponder all that God might be calling him to be and do. He is then renewed and can re-engage with his duty.

When was the last time you took the time to be still and allow sufficient head space to look beyond the purely functional chores you have, important as they are? When did you last take time to ponder the bigger questions of life, which sooner or later demand our inner attention? If it's been some time, or maybe you've never done so, why not make this suggestion your Lenten priority?

So, is time out a luxury or a necessity? Well, if eating, drinking, breathing, regular exercise and sleep are all daily essentials if we are to remain physically well, then providing suitable mental and spiritual down time and space are surely also survival essentials too. Of course we don't need to physically go anywhere to find space. For me, seeking to follow Jesus' example I often go a metaphorical 'stone's throw away' from the business of life, in order to pray and to re-think my priorities, and to discern who God want me to be.

This Lent I pray that you will 'withdraw



about a stone's throw away' in order to make time - time to pause, time to reflect positively and courageously on the bigger picture of your own life, and to give thanks for all that is good there, but also to reprioritise, where this is needed too.

**Padre Dave Skillen**





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# 30 Squadron Update



**With winter 2014 bringing a close to the end of operations in Afghanistan, 30 Squadron has continued in the true spirit of its motto 'Ventre A Terra - Flat Out'. With the New Year, there has been a tangible sense of change and new things to come for the Squadron.**

In October, 30 Sqn were heavily involved in the exit from Afghanistan. This manifested itself as the UK C130J support to the withdrawal of ISAF forces from Camp Bastion in Helmand Province. A 30 Sqn crew completed the very last departure of a UK fixed wing aircraft from Camp Bastion on the evening of 26 Oct 14.

No sooner had we departed from Camp Bastion - led by OC 30 Sqn Wing Commander Garbutt, Op SHADER was upon us. So immediate was the requirement for personnel, one captain - having just flown a detachment in Afghanistan, was flown out of the Op HERRICK theatre and dropped off at RAF Akrotiri by the homebound aircraft to pick up a week's worth of Op SHADER tasking. Another crew had previously deployed to Cyprus on Op SHADER mid Oct, as part of what we now know to be an enduring commitment for the UK C130J fleet.

This has not been the only change in tasking that the Squadron has seen in

recent weeks. 30 Squadron are now involved in the Broader Middle East (BME) route which is a 'Hub and Spoke' operation, starting from here at RAF Brize Norton and heading off to Minhad for a number of days to provide Air Mobility to several airfields around the Middle East.

30 Squadron continues its operations to provide global Air Mobility within the Hercules fleet. Though the C130J may require to land and refuel more often than certain other aircraft, we continue to operate at a high state of readiness to send people, equipment and aircraft all over the world. This has been exemplified in the support of Ex AUSTRAL SPIRIT - providing a crew to bring an aircraft back from Punta Arenas, South America. Air Transport for Royal Marines to and from Norway during their Arctic Training season, flights to the US in support of larger coalition exercises, as well as a wide variety of 'SPEC' tasking around Europe and Africa.



Aside from Operational tasking, the Squadron keeps up its busy training programme with UK flying, and training flights around Europe. The emphasis of this training has already started to change due to two key events. Firstly, the start of the transition of the C130J detachment





in the Falkland Islands from 47 Sqn to 30 Sqn which is due to take effect in March this year. Secondly, as a result of the shrinking of the fleet towards its 'forecast' out of service date in 2020, the C130J fleet is morphing into a smaller, yet still as capable one. The shift for the Squadron has been a closer look into Tactical flying including low level, airdrop and maritime reconnaissance, whilst maintaining the capability to deploy at a moment's notice to deliver strategic Air Mobility.

During this time of change we have also been lucky enough to enjoy the continued reciprocal support of the 30 Squadron Association, the Goldsmiths Company and the Royal Air Force Association and have gladly hosted a number of members of these organisations whenever we can. It has truly been heartening for members of the Squadron to meet with people who have been in our shoes before or who support us so wholeheartedly in our efforts. In January, the Squadron had the pleasure

to host Mr John Gilbert, whose father had served on 30 Squadron in the 1930s. During the visit he showed his father's pictures and logbook and discussed our common history.

Of course, it has not been all flying! In January, the Squadron embarked on the annual ski expedition Ex SNOWY PALM. The expedition took place in Val Thorens, organised by the Squadron and led by RAF Brize Norton ATIs. The week in all was a resounding success with skills sharpened, technique improved and possibly most surprisingly no injuries!

At the time of writing, 30 Squadron is preparing for its Centenary. With an increase in activity already inevitable whilst keeping up our operational tasking, *Ventre A Terra* could not be more apt. This momentous occasion is planned for the 24th March and we have already been offered and received great support from around RAF Brize Norton. This event will be the last high profile of which Wg Cdr A Garbutt will be OC 30 Squadron as he is due to handover command to Wg Cdr R Caston a matter of weeks later. The planned proceedings are to include a formal parade - the reviewing officer of which will be Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal, followed by a dining-in night in the Officers' Mess for the squadron members and guests to celebrate and commemorate the people who are and have been members of 30 Squadron history and future.



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# 24 SQN

**It has been another busy period in the XXIV Sqn** life but then everyone always says that don't they? 22 Jan saw the new boss take up the XXIV reigns from, according to the XO in his speech, the 'Old' boss. Personally, I think outgoing would have been a kinder term to use. It was very apparent that Wg Cdr Doz James would be sorely missed as his tenure was both successful and popular. He oversaw a huge change in the Sqn with the Sqn taking responsibility for new buildings, new courses and the A400M OCU, all the while maintaining an interest in the people at the coalface. In return for being a great boss, Wg Cdr James saw it fit that he should have about 4 swansongs including a route over the Christmas stand-down period that had him see in the New Year in the Bahamas and then disappear off to the West Coast of the States for HAPC. We all wish Doz the best of luck in his new role in AARC.

In the wake of Wg Cdr James leaving, we welcome Wg Cdr Rawlins as the new OC XXIV Sqn. He arrives as an ex XO of the Sqn so I'm sure won't take too long at all to get his feet under the table. As he said in his speech though, he has been around the building for the previous 5 months whilst on the OCU in the longest handover in history.

Other comings and goings include a warm welcome to Armando from the Italian Air Force (although he has already stated that he can't do the early afternoon sim as that's siesta time) and an entire changeover of the planning team. We wish Flynnie well on the A400M and Matt Williams is off to the tower (ATC, not The Tower). Welcome to Gibbo and Lindsay and welcome back Tash. They've all stepped straight up to the plate of changing the plan 8 times a day just to keep us on our toes.

Elsewhere on the Sqn, the A400M continues apace with an actual aircraft to play with and also use as backdrops for handover photos. Its clearances are coming thick and fast and it has been seen gracing the pans of Gibraltar, Akrotiri, Evros, Nice and Hannover. The first operational crews are currently passing through the course to resurrect the revered 70 Sqn crest.

Anyway, its time to sign off now as I have to plan for another exciting route State-side. I'll let you know how it goes in the next exciting instalment of the life of XXIV Sqn.

**Ft Lt Rob Platt**





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# An Atlas Update

In last month's magazine you will have read about XXIV Sqn C Flight's first sortie from RAF Brize Norton in the RAF's very first Airbus A400M Atlas. There is much to report since that important milestone. A couple of weeks after that flight the Minister for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology was the principal guest at ceremony to mark the acceptance of that first aircraft, followed immediately by a visit from the Prime Minister.

With those acceptance formalities complete the Atlas team have set about working the aircraft as hard as they can. As can be expected with bringing a brand new aircraft into service, and particularly one as technologically advanced as Atlas, the first few weeks have not been without their challenges. Much, however, has been achieved both on the ground and in the air. Training sorties have been conducted across a number of UK airfields and further afield, to destinations in France, Germany, Denmark, Norway, and to Akrotiri and Gibraltar as the initial cadre of Pilot Instructors, Weapons System Operator (Crewmen) and Movements personnel have taken every opportunity available to increase their experience on the aircraft. Even OC LXX Squadron has found time to take a break from the office and take to the skies with his XXIV Sqn C Flight colleagues! Whilst in Norway



*LXX Sqn's Chief Technician Stephens at work in the cockpit*





206(R) Squadron's A400M Atlas Test and Evaluation Flight were able to conduct some hugely valuable cold weather trials on the aircraft. The work continues apace to develop the aircraft's strategic Air Transport capabilities and, in due course, its tactical roles in order to enhance the way Atlas will be operated in RAF service by LXX Squadron's front line crews; the first RAF-trained LXX Squadron pilots should complete their training at XXIV Squadron's A400M Atlas Schoolhouse this summer, with Weapons System Operator (Crewmen) and additional RAF engineers following them.

A second aircraft was delivered to RAF Brize Norton at the end of February. More will follow throughout the course of 2015 and beyond. There is much work to do by the Atlas team here at Brize, but it is hugely satisfying to see the progress that is now being made as the years of careful planning and preparation by the RAF, Defence Equipment and Support, Airbus Defence and Space and other Industry partners comes to fruition.

#### **Engineering Developments**

The manner in which the aircraft is maintained is, of course, fundamental to successful output. The newly formed Atlas Single Engineering Organisation continues to develop, with LXX Squadron's engineers looking forward to increasing the opportunities that they have to work alongside their Industry colleagues.

Importantly, Flybe have undertaken the first scheduled base maintenance of the aircraft, or 'A-Check' as it is known. Flybe Aviation Services were approached by Airbus Defence and Space to support their role as prime contractor for the A400M RAF entry-into-service as far back as July 2011, but it wasn't until April 2014 that they were announced as the selected partner. This maintenance check saw the aircraft returned to the recently refurbished facilities in Base Hangar for four days and was the culmination of nine months of concerted effort by a dedicated team to build an A400M line and base maintenance capability at RAF Brize Norton. The check was managed by a Flybe team including eight licensed engineers who completed their training at Airbus Defence and Space International Training Centre in Seville, Spain alongside RAF



*206(R) Squadron's Flight Lieutenants Steve Whitnall and V Butler*



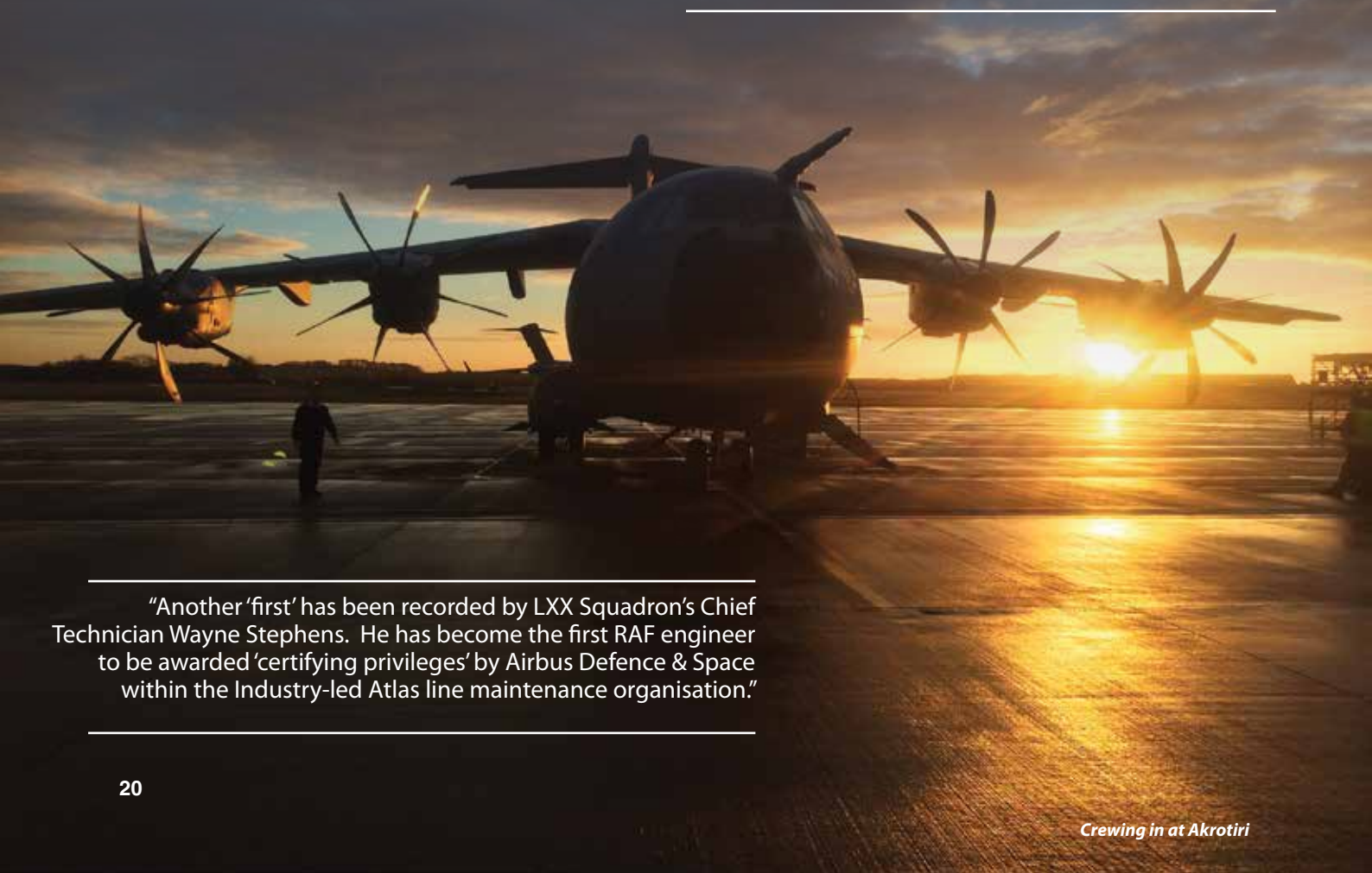


**OC LXX Sqn gives the Prime Minister a tour.**



and Airbus colleagues. The check itself involved accessing and testing virtually all systems from engines to ramp mechanisms. Flybe will now continue to build the capability and capacity to support the delivery of additional aircraft and to undertake more in-depth aircraft 'C-Checks' within the next two years. This will involve the recruitment of Licenced Aircraft Engineers, Project Management Engineers and Mechanics as well as the development of a new build hangar and the design of staging that will be shared between Airbus Defence and Space, the RAF and Flybe Aviation Services.

Another 'first' has been recorded by LXX Squadron's Chief Technician Wayne Stephens. He has become the first RAF engineer to be awarded 'certifying privileges' by Airbus Defence & Space within the Industry-led Atlas line maintenance organisation. This means that he is now able to certify his own work and supervise others on Atlas within his B2 Avionics specialisation. Following tours as an Avionics Technician on Tornado and Harrier, and latterly 9 years on the Hercules C-130K and C-130J, he spent a year on the A400M Multi-National Entry into Service Team in Orleans, France evaluating the aircraft prior to the UK's first delivery before joining LXX Squadron. He has brought that wealth of experience back to the UK with him and it will without doubt pay dividends as he works alongside his RAF and Industry engineering colleagues to maintain Atlas as the fleet grows over the months ahead. Several fellow members of the LXX Squadron RAF engineering team should be achieving a similar qualification in the near future, either in the B2 Avionics or B1 Mechanical specialisation.



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**"Another 'first' has been recorded by LXX Squadron's Chief Technician Wayne Stephens. He has become the first RAF engineer to be awarded 'certifying privileges' by Airbus Defence & Space within the Industry-led Atlas line maintenance organisation."**

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### First RAF Atlas is named 'City of Bristol'

As the keen-eyed amongst you may have spotted our first Atlas is sporting a striking crest by the crew door. In early February, at a ceremony at the Airbus Wings Plant at Filton with the Minister for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology and the Lord Mayor of Bristol amongst the principal guests, the first aircraft was named 'City of Bristol'. XXIV Squadron C Flight conducted a flypast of the Wings Plant in support of the naming event, which was enjoyed by a large number of assembled workers who had contributed to the manufacture of the wings on every Atlas. The previous week a crew from 206(R) Squadron had conducted a memorable flypast of the Severn Bridges and the Clifton Suspension Bridge to mark this occasion, with photo-chase aircraft capturing the moment for posterity. The decision by the RAF to name the aircraft 'City of Bristol' reflects the important contribution that the Bristol-based aviation industry has made to aircraft in RAF service over the decades and particularly in the case of the development and manufacture of Atlas. Whilst the transfer on the outside of the aircraft is a temporary measure, a plaque has been created for the inside of the aircraft so that this important link between the RAF and the City is marked permanently and visibly.



TEAM



# Qatar Makes Air Tattoo Debut

**Qatar will make its UK airshow debut this summer when it takes part in the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford in the Cotswolds.**

The Qatar Emiri Air Force will send for the show's static display a C-130J-30 Hercules transport aircraft, one of four such aircraft delivered to the small but strategically and economically-important Arab state by manufacturer Lockheed Martin in 2011-12. Qatar thus became the first Middle Eastern customer for the C-130J model.

Based at Al Udeid Air Base in Doha, the country's capital, the C-130J-30s - the stretched version of the so-called Super Hercules - and four Boeing C-17A Globemaster IIIs have provided Qatar with a much-improved air transport capability, for use on both military airlift and humanitarian taskings.

The Qatari aircraft joins the legendary Vulcan bomber and Swiss

Air Force aircraft on the list of early confirmed participants for this summer's Air Tattoo on July 17-19 and brings to 55, the number of nations that have taken part in the airshow since it was first staged in 1971.

Air Tattoo Chief Executive Andy Armstrong said: "Our thanks go to the Qatar Emiri Air Force for agreeing to participate in this year's Air Tattoo. I'm particularly pleased that new nations continue to be added to the long list of those that have supported the event over the years. We look forward to welcoming the C-130 and its crew to Fairford in July."

The Air Tattoo is staged annually in support of the RAF Charitable Trust. Tickets for the event on July 17-19 are only available in advance. Special Super Earlybird tickets priced from £26 are available until January 31 from [airtattoo.com](http://airtattoo.com) or by calling 0800 107 1940. All accompanied under-16s go free. Free parking.

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TEAM

# A ROYAL VISIT TO RAF BRIZE NORTON

On 30th January 2015, Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, attended the Centenary parade of Number 10 Squadron held at RAF Brize Norton.

The Princess Royal, who is Honorary Air Commodore to RAF Brize Norton, reviewed members of the Squadron on parade in front of a small audience, marking 100 years of significant history.

Past and present members of the Squadron were invited to the event, which was held in the Squadron's maintenance hangar. Afterwards, a reception was held to give crews the opportunity to debate the merits of its previously flown aircraft and the Squadron's newest aircraft type, Voyager.

Wing Commander Jamie Osborne, Officer Commanding Number 10 Sqn, said:

*"Reaching a centenary is phenomenal. I was talking to the guys yesterday during our parade practices and explaining to them that to be the only people who are going to be on parade, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of a squadron, we are it. We are the only people that would experience that, and that it was*

**HRH the Princess Royal inspecting the parade.**







Members of the parade marching the 'Standard' in front of the Voyager aircraft.



something to hold dear..."

Number 10 Sqn, Royal Flying Corps, was formed at Farnborough airfield on 1st January, 1915 and subsequently earned its nickname 'Shiny Ten'. The Squadron has operated numerous aircraft types, including the English Electric Canberra and Handley Page Victor, before receiving the VC10 C1 in July 1966, which it then operated for nearly 40 years.

The Squadron, along with its VC10 aircraft, moved to its current base, RAF Brize Norton, in May 1967. Six years following its disbandment in 2005, the Squadron reformed, becoming the first RAF Squadron to operate the new Airbus A330 'Voyager' aircraft, a role it shares with its sister Squadron; Number 101 Squadron.

Both Squadrons operate the Voyager aircraft, which is the RAF's main air-to-air refueling and passenger transport aircraft.





TEAM

# 99 | 100,000 SQN | HOURS

Since reforming in November 2000, Number 99 Squadron has accumulated 100,000 hours or 11.4 years of flying time. This monumental benchmark has been achieved through support to UK military operations, international disaster relief, humanitarian support missions, aeromedical evacuations and a myriad of tri-Service exercises.

- 1 Op ENDURING FREEDOM/ VERITAS/ HERRICK/ TORAL 2000-2015
- 2 Op HAILSTORM 2013
- 3 Op CATALINA/SUNDERLAND 2013-2014
- 4 Op NEWCOMBE 2013
- 5 Op ROTAL/SANGARIS 2012-2013
- 6 Op PATWIN 2013
- 7 Op JINGLER Darfur 2013
- 8 Op KIPION 2012-2014
- 9 Op GRITROCK 2015
- 10 Op TELIC 2003-2011
- 11 Op PABBAY As of 12 December 2014, British forces have suffered 453 fatalities during Op Herrick.
- 12 Op TORAL 2015
- 13 Op ELLAMY/VOCATE 2011
- 14 Op SHADER 2014-CURRENT
- 15 KAMCHATKA- RUSSIAN AS28 SUBMARINE RESCUE 5-9 Aug 2005
- 16 Op GIRROCK
- 17 Op GRITLOCK
- 18 Op GARRON 2004-2005 Tsunami disaster relief
- 19 Op MATURIN 2005 Earthquake disaster relief
- 20 Op BESSEMER Macedonia 2001
- 21 Chile disaster relief 2010
- 22 Op UNIFIED RESPONSE 2010 Haiti disaster relief



**"RAF delivers further humanitarian aid to the Philippine Islands after Typhoon Haiyan" BBC 2013. Secretary of State for International Development Justine Greening said: "Britain's deployment of the RAF C-17 is a huge boost in our ability to get large amounts of kit and aid over to the people of the Philippines, almost 7,000 miles away."**

The UK C-17 journey started with the 1998 Strategic Defence Review which identified the requirement for a strategic air-lifter. The Short-Term Strategic Airlift (STSA) competition commenced in September of that year but tendering was cancelled in August 1999 because ministers felt some bids were too expensive. However, the project continued with the C-17 seen as the favourite. In the light of Airbus A400M delays, the then UK Secretary of State for Defence, Geoff Hoon, announced that the RAF would lease four C-17s from Boeing at an annual cost of £100 million for an initial seven year period with an optional two-year extension and an option to buy the aircraft at the end of the contract.

The aircraft immediately excelled in RAF service and in July 2004, the UK Government announced that it would buy the four aircraft at the end of the lease. The C-17 gave Defence an irreplaceable strategic capability; it has a maximum payload carrying capability of 169,500 lb (77,000 kg), and can be rapidly 're-roled' enabling it to carry 92% of the UK's air freight military items. It can carry a maximum of 131 passengers and crucially, it can be used as an airborne hospital for medical evacuation missions.

Following the success of the first four aircraft, the UK ordered a fifth C-17 in August 2006, a sixth in July 2007 (to increase support for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan), a seventh in December



**Map Key: Red stars: Operations  
Green dots: Exercise tasks.**



Op JINGLER Sudan, Juba NEO182 Pax/212 POB



2009 and finally an eighth C-17 in 2012. Up until December 2014, these aircraft have been tasked principally in support of Operation HERRICK, with a majority of missions flown into either Camp Bastion or Kandahar.

## Focus On Afghanistan

Number 99 Squadron have moved a huge volume of equipment (approximately 5000 containers and 3500 vehicles) in support of the Reverse Supply Chain and redeployment of UK forces from Afghanistan. Additionally they have transported a considerable number of passengers in and out of Theatre, routing via hubs elsewhere in the Middle East. In addition to the aircraft's standard passenger fit of 54, each of the countermeasures-equipped aircraft can move up to 131 personnel utilising additional palletised centreline seating "Since entering the RAF inventory in May 2001, the C-17 has become indispensable to the wider Defence effort. Pivotal in both the early days of the UK involvement in Afghanistan post 9/11, we were also heavily tasked in support of operations in Iraq. However, since 2005, our main focus has been the provision of the vital 'airbridge' used to resupply UK forces in Afghanistan", says Wing Commander Rhodri Evans, Officer Commanding 99 Squadron. "We have moved transport, utility and attack helicopters, armoured ground vehicles, plant and equipment and everything in between, down to 'toilet roll and bubble wrap. However, perhaps our greatest contribution was the 24 hour standby aeromed capability we offered, with a crew constantly at readiness to launch a return trip to Afghanistan to return our wounded to Birmingham to undergo treatment back in the UK'.

Air Vice-Marshal Sean Reynolds, Air Officer Commanding Number 2 Group said, "99 Squadron spearheaded the challenging final phase of drawdown during Op Herrick in 2014," being the "main effort within the main effort." In Theatre, Number 99 Squadron's C-17 aircraft would typically carry a payload of around 59,000kg (130,000lb), five times that of a Lockheed Martin C-130, and each hour flown using a C-17 equates to approximately seven hours using the smaller type. "99 Squadron's fleet has now achieved more

than 100,000 flight hours, with C-17 tasking historically running at around 15% above the planned 8000 hour baseline annual flying tasking (AFT) rate. An annual total of around 8,300h was being flown with six aircraft, and the availability of eight aircraft has sustained this high tempo of flying up to and now beyond the critical final withdrawal phase of HERRICK whilst offering capacity to other operations and the Defence exercise Programme", says Evans.

In reality, the fleet expansion covers the rotation of one aircraft at a time for an eight-month period of modernisation at Boeing's San Antonio facility in Texas, and a second aircraft in forward maintenance at Brize Norton. A third aircraft is either undergoing minor servicing or is in use for pilot training; this equates to a planning assumption of five aircraft available per day for tasking. "The C-17 is an electric jet, and likes to be flown hard," says Officer Commanding 99 Squadron. "We're regularly flying five from five."

In keeping with the size of its aircraft, 99 Squadron is a large unit, totalling around 434 Whole Force personnel. This includes 122 aircrew, plus uniformed engineering staff and Boeing Contractors. "We may no longer be the biggest example of the Whole Force concept within the RAF, but the early and continued success of our partnership with Boeing was certainly fundamental in driving forward other co-operative enterprises with industry," said OC 99 Sqn. Despite the busy operational nature the unit has no trouble in attracting or retaining personnel. "People are clamouring to fly or work on the jet," says Evans. Number 99 Squadron has been a global 'first responder' over the past 14 years, providing the Government with an ideal rapid flash to bang option. The C17 has the "flexibility, agility and adaptability to respond to humanitarian and disaster relief operations,"



Op JINGLER Sudan, Juba "99 Sqn C-17 aircraft provides South Sudan evacuation" Daily Telegraph 2014



Op GARRON Tsunami devastation in Sumatra, seen from a C-17 on final approach to Banda Aceh airport. 2004



AS-28, seven sailors were rescued after the cables snaring their submarine were cut by a British remotely operated vehicle transported by 99 Sqn C17. 5 August 2005



Ebola virus medevac from Sierra Leone 2014





# TEAM

says Evans. "It has been called upon, over the last decade and a half, to support natural disasters and humanitarian crises in the form of earthquakes, tsunamis, tropical cyclones and more recently the Ebola virus epidemic. These recent humanitarian aid flights have underpinned our wider strategic utility for the UK," says Evans.

Although the aircraft can be operated by a crew of only two pilots and one loadmaster, most tasks are usually augmented with two ground engineering personnel. For tasks of longer duration, typically up to 24 hours, a third pilot and second loadmaster augment the basic crew. Augmented crew operations were crucial during many aeromedical evacuation missions conducted in support of Op HERRICK, Afghanistan. Augmented crews would regularly fly from RAF Brize Norton to Afghanistan, then directly to Birmingham in a single crew period, bringing injured Servicemen back to the UK in order to save life, limb or sight. The Squadron is currently conducting similar missions to Sierra Leone to repatriate UK personnel injured whilst supporting the fight against the Ebola virus. Additionally, other more dynamic types of long range missions are often augmented due to their complexity and to increase flexibility.

The UK is a member of Boeing's Globemaster III Integrated Sustainment Program. Predominantly designed to keep the US Air Force's fleet of 200 C17s serviceable all around the world, the programme enables international C-17 nations to access a "virtual fleet" of spares and support services whilst 'down route'. "Wherever we are, we can get access to spares pretty quickly," says Evans. Number 99 Squadron are fortunate enough to have 54 Boeing employees working alongside them at RAF Brize Norton. These personnel support the aircraft's scheduled maintenance programme, provide spares support and vital technical advice and expertise. "We're embedded with the squadron," says Bob Rabbitt, Boeings base manager.

## Future Plans

Now that the UK's Afghan Redeployment is complete, Number 99 Squadron is reconfiguring for future contingent operations. "We've gone through a period of a seven-year lease to a permanent squadron," Evans says, "I'm now looking at a post-Herrick world with the exciting prospect of broadening 99 Squadron's roles to offer yet more capability to Defence".

Boeing has recently set up a complete C17 training facility at Farnborough, which includes a state of the art flight simulator. This enables aircrew to prepare for missions and profiles they may be required to fly at



**Op PATWIN 8 November 2013 the Philippines became victim to typhoon Haiyan the strongest ever storm recorded at landfall. "RAF 'keeps Britain's promise' with C17s in the Philippines" Daily Telegraph**



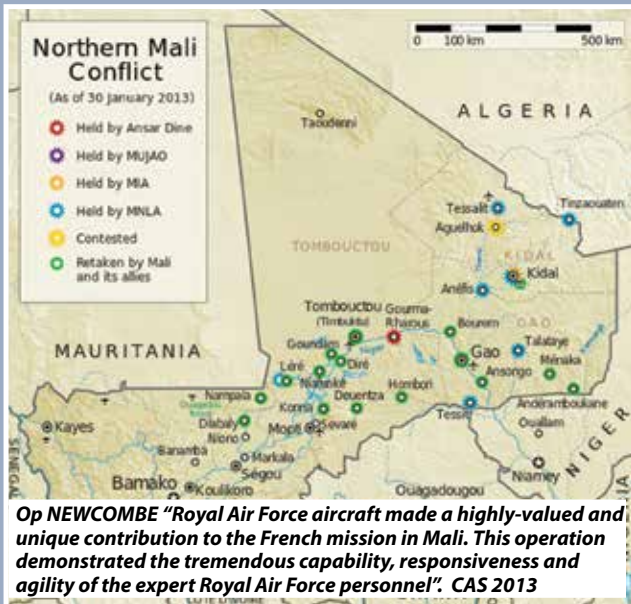
**CCAST Aeromedical Missions 2001-2015**



**Op PABBAY Repatriation RAF Lyneham 2001-2012/ RAF Brize Norton 2012-current.**



**Camp Bastion 90% of UK C17 hours have been accrued during Op Herrick**



**Op NEWCOMBE "Royal Air Force aircraft made a highly-valued and unique contribution to the French mission in Mali. This operation demonstrated the tremendous capability, responsiveness and agility of the expert Royal Air Force personnel!". CAS 2013**



**SANGARIS "RAF Help French Military Stabilize Central African Republic" 2013 Times.**

short notice. This can include flying on night vision goggles, formation, semi prepared runway operations and in the future, Farnborough may be used to train crews for para and airdrop missions. The facility also caters for 99 Squadron's engineers, providing engine ground running courses; this vital training has already increased aircraft availability and therefore the Squadron's operational output to Defence.

Whatever the future holds, OC 99 Squadron knows that his Squadron will remain busy. 'One never knows whatever the future holds, but even post Op HERRICK, the Sqn is still being kept busy supporting operations such as SHADER and GRITROCK. Plus with the need for all of Defence to train for contingency operations, there will be a continued demand for us to deliver materiel in support of exercises worldwide. We stand ready, at short notice, to assist with any HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief) situation that could happen without warning. The C-17 is unequivocally an incredibly flexible strategic platform and provides Defence and wider UK government with a plethora of options to respond to a crisis of whatever nature', says Evans.

**Flt Lt Bruce Lloyd**



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# Force Development T

**With the hundred year centenary of World War One commemorations fast approaching, Cpl Rob Naylor from The Defence Movements Training School felt it was poignant to organise a Force Development day covering several significant places of interest around London.**

So on the 5th November 2014, on a chilly but sunny day fourteen members of DMTS set off to the capital. With the itinerary to begin with a brief history of RAF Northolt, from there heading onwards by tube to The Imperial War Museum, the Cenotaph at Whitehall, the Bomber Command Memorial and last but not least The Tower of London for the magnificent display of ceramic poppies and to be present for the extremely moving Last Post Ceremony.

Our mission was to explore the ethos and heritage of the RAF, including the development and implementation of air power during WW1, WW2 and the Battle of Britain and to translate how these are still relevant today and to project this

into how these will still be relevant for the future. We achieved this by each of us giving Force Development stands on the history behind the monuments and by some adding personal stories from the past and present times.

"FD activities that focus on Air Power, ethos and heritage provide individuals with time to reflect on generations before and identify what is unique and important about being in uniform serving HM today. FD discussions encourage individuals to practice articulating and promoting wider understanding of their contribution to Air Power. FD discussions also provide a forum in which to discuss topics in the current context such as SDRS, NEM and Whole Force Concept and to consider individuals contributions to future Air Power for example, becoming leaders amongst peer groups and as Line Managers developing tomorrow's recruit". Flt Lt Sheikh, OC Trg Support Flt, Defence Movements Trg School.

So our day commenced at RAF Northolt where Cpl Naylor gave an introduction to the day and a brief history of the base. Sgt Taylor having been based at Northolt for many years added this:

*"RAF Northolt celebrates its centenary as a military airfield next year. RAF Northolt played a vital role as a front line station*

**by the Defence Movements Training School**

*during World War Two, which included the role as a vital sector station within 11 Group during the Battle of Britain. Today RAF Northolt continues to be an extremely active airfield and is at the forefront of current operations"*

From there we went on to the amazing Imperial War Museum, where we began with Cpl Steed, talking about the beginnings of World War I, SAC Down followed this up with the birth of the RAF and the role of the Royal Air Force during the First World War.

We all separated out and visited different exhibitions around the museum. Some visited the First World War, others visited the Holocaust exhibition. At the end of the visit we discussed what each of us had seen, learned, and just how awful it must have been for the people of that time and what it had meant/means to us.

FS Felstead had this to say;

*"When visiting the Museum, the Holocaust exhibition particularly caught my interest, I found it really moving and humbling and what I really took away from the exhibit is how different things are in the modern military and really we have no grounds to complain when it comes to out of areas and detachments, what those people went through was horrific, from living in trenches*





# Trip to London

*for years on end to the inhumane treatment others suffered is something I hope never gets repeated".*

Following on from the museum Sgt Pursglove gave his stand on air power, its definition, characteristics, and the different forms the RAF took in providing valuable support in the air and the ground specifically for the recent operations within Afghanistan he had this to say;

*"Reflecting on the huge logistical effort of the Berlin Airlift in post-war Germany, technological advancements have increased our strategic capabilities in terms of the speed of deployment and the distance, or reach, of a modern day airbridge such as that in Afghanistan. Brize Norton's Air Mobility Force is at the forefront of projecting UK Air Power to distant theatres through it's support to combat operations. The RAF's newly modernised fleet of large transport aircraft is capable of deploying troops and supporting combat aircraft on a scale hitherto unseen. The Movements trade is the focal point for all such deployments, both in the initial phase and its enduring support at both ends of the logistics chain".*

Our second port of call was to The Cenotaph in Whitehall, we felt it was particularly important to visit here because it is and has been the central focal point for remembrance commemorations for the last 100 years.

"We included the Cenotaph as one of our monuments to visit, as it's a significant place of remembrance for the people that have lost their lives, in the past- namely both World Wars and for the more recent conflicts of Iraq and Afghanistan, which is particularly close to my heart, it's a place we can all 'pay our respects to.'" Cpl Rob Naylor.

From there we walked along the Mall and onto the Bomber Command

memorial, which was only recently opened in 2012 by HM Queen Elizabeth II, the memorial features a bronze sculpture of seven aircrew, designed to look as though they have just returned from a bombing mission and left their aircraft. The Bomber Command Memorial had particular significance for Sgt Bidwell...

"My Grandfather served as a bomb aimer on the Handley Page Halifax MkII heavy bomber, flying 52 missions over enemy territory. A total of 55,573 allied aircrew lost their lives serving under Bomber Command but went largely unrecognised after the war due to the growing political unease over the direction the strategic bombing campaign took during the latter stages of the war. My Grandfather and his crew didn't live to see the memorial finally being unveiled in 2012 after a long campaign to build it, or to finally be awarded the Bomber Command clasp but I know they would draw a great deal of satisfaction in finally being recognised for their dedication and bravery. In contrast, we can see it is now possible to recognise and celebrate the work of our armed

forces, even when the campaign they are taking part in is unpopular with the public."

Our final destination was the Tower of London, where we were all eager to see the display of 888,246 ceramic poppies, encompassing the tower, each handmade poppy representing a life lost at war. We were all unified in our wish to be present for the Last Post ceremony, which took place as the sun set over the tower, making the experience ever more touching. The sense of loss felt by us all was overwhelming, Cpl Georgina Smith had this to say:

*"The highlight of the day for me was of course the Poppies at the Tower of London. The enormity of the loss suffered during WW1 was devastating and to put it into context as the Poppy Installation has done; is sobering."*

In conclusion we all had a valuable day, where we all learned more about the First and Second World Wars, we shared experiences whilst serving and we were able to be present for Last Post ceremony at the 100 year commemorations.

Finally Flt Lt Sheikh had this to say  
*"The RAF's investment in a variety of Force Development activities enables continuous development of physical and moral resilience as part of ongoing training activity in addition to formal training through life. FD can be exploited for vast benefits, when supported and enabled by LM and in liaison with station FDF to ensure that quality FD experiences are afforded to our people. I personally identify this as an enduring need in particular at a time of Whole Force rhetoric and recruiting and retaining talent in competition with civilian employers. Which highlights once again the importance of reflecting on what it means to wear the uniform? How are we developing our people - the moral component of our force- including intellectual capital?"*

DMTS would like to thank the Station Force Development Flight for supporting this FD training activity.







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I DID



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## Families Consultative Group (FCG) Meetings

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**In Attendance Will Be:**

Officer Commanding Personnel Management Squadron

Community Development Officer

Raf Brize Norton Community Support Team

Ministry Of Defence Police

Community Police

Neighbourhood Watch Team

Representatives From Carillionamey

24 Jun 15: Shrivenham - Jubilee Centre At 1830

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Community Covenant

## Armed Forces Community Covenant

Working together with the military to support the armed forces community.

The aim is to encourage charities, local authorities, businesses, communities and individuals to work together with the military to offer support to service personnel and their families as well as reservists and veterans.

The aims of the covenant are to:

- encourage local communities to support the armed forces community in their areas, and vice versa
- promote understanding and awareness among the public of issues affecting the armed forces community
- recognise and remember the sacrifices made by the armed forces community
- encourage activities which help to integrate the armed forces community into local life.

The government has published a new tri-service Armed Forces Covenant. The first of its kind, it sets the tone for government policy aimed at improving the support available for the armed forces community. Visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-armed-forces-covenant> more information about the covenant.



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## Here's My Busy Week Tear off Pads



The RAF Charitable Trust has provided the funding for the provision of these new books for children of deployed Serving Personnel.

The book is filled out each week by the child with their weeks activities, then simply tear from the pad, fold and seal with stickers.

Books available from the HIVE Office.



# Contact Houses

The Community Support Team have 8 houses (4 x 2 bed and 4 x 3 bed) available for use by all personnel whatever the occasion. They are fully furnished and all you need to take with you is a towel. Should you wish to use these facilities then please contact **Mrs Abby Gibson on Ext 5956** or visit the MOSS website to check availability and book, the link is available on the RAF Brize Norton landing page.



# Contact Numbers

The Community Support Team:

OC PSF	01993 89 7475
SCSO	01993 89 5350
FS Comm Spt	01993 89 7733
SNCO Comm Spt	01993 89 7464
JNCO Comm Spt	01933 89 7072
SAC Comm Spt	01993 89 7072
Welfare Houses Clk	01993 89 5956
CDO	01993 89 7068
HIVE	01993 89 5349



If you would like to be added to our Community Support email distribution list, please contact BZN-BSW-PMSCOMMSPTGroup@mod.uk



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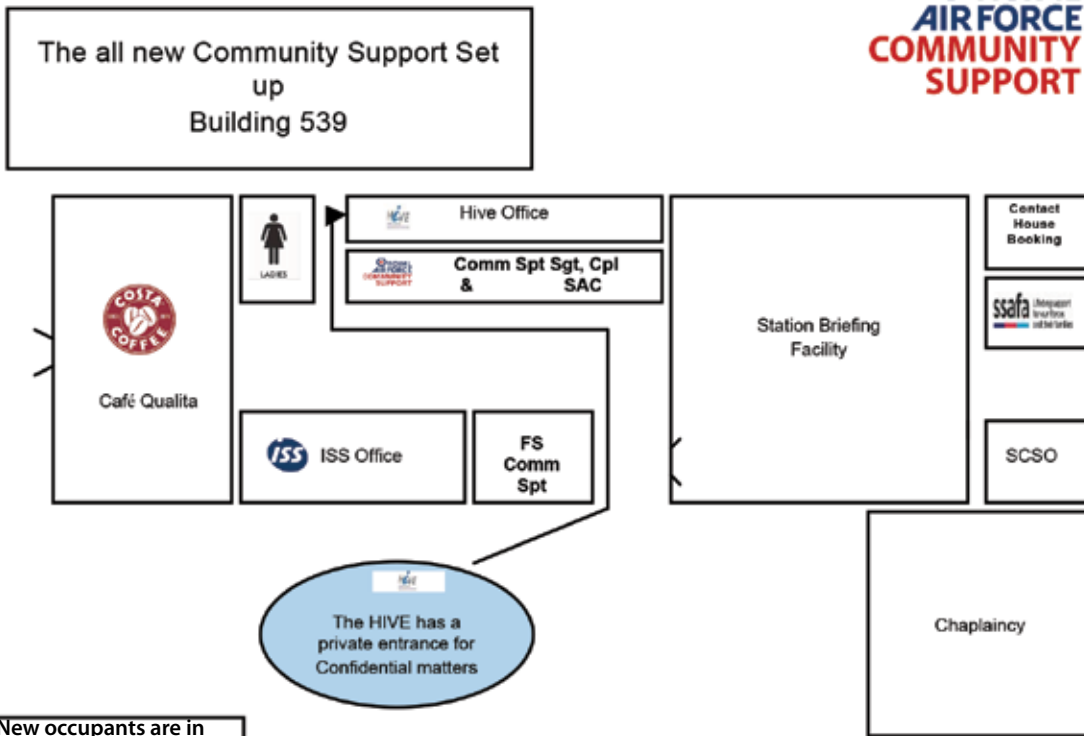
**Service personnel** can experience difficulty in accessing commercial products and services due to their mobility and time spent outside the UK. The MOD has worked with the financial sector to improve the ability of armed forces personnel to access financial products. The representative bodies for the financial sector are raising awareness within their membership of the need to avoid disadvantage for Service personnel and have worked with the MOD to produce guidance notes offering practical help for personnel applying for secured (mortgages) and unsecured loans (credit cards, motor finance, etc).

- Guidance notes for service personnel when applying for unsecured credit
- Guidance notes for service personnel applying for a mortgage



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/financial-top-tips-for-service-personnel>

# Community Support have moved.....



Please come to our families coffee mornings held on a Thursday @ 0900 – 1200 outside the Station Briefing Facility in the Community Support Centre.



Completely confidential relationship support for RAF couples. The RAF Benevolent fund will pay for up to 6 private counselling sessions. 0845 077 5556



<https://forcespensionsociety.org/>

Join our **facebook** page 'RAF Brize Norton Community Support' for regular updates!



## Jurassic Gateway

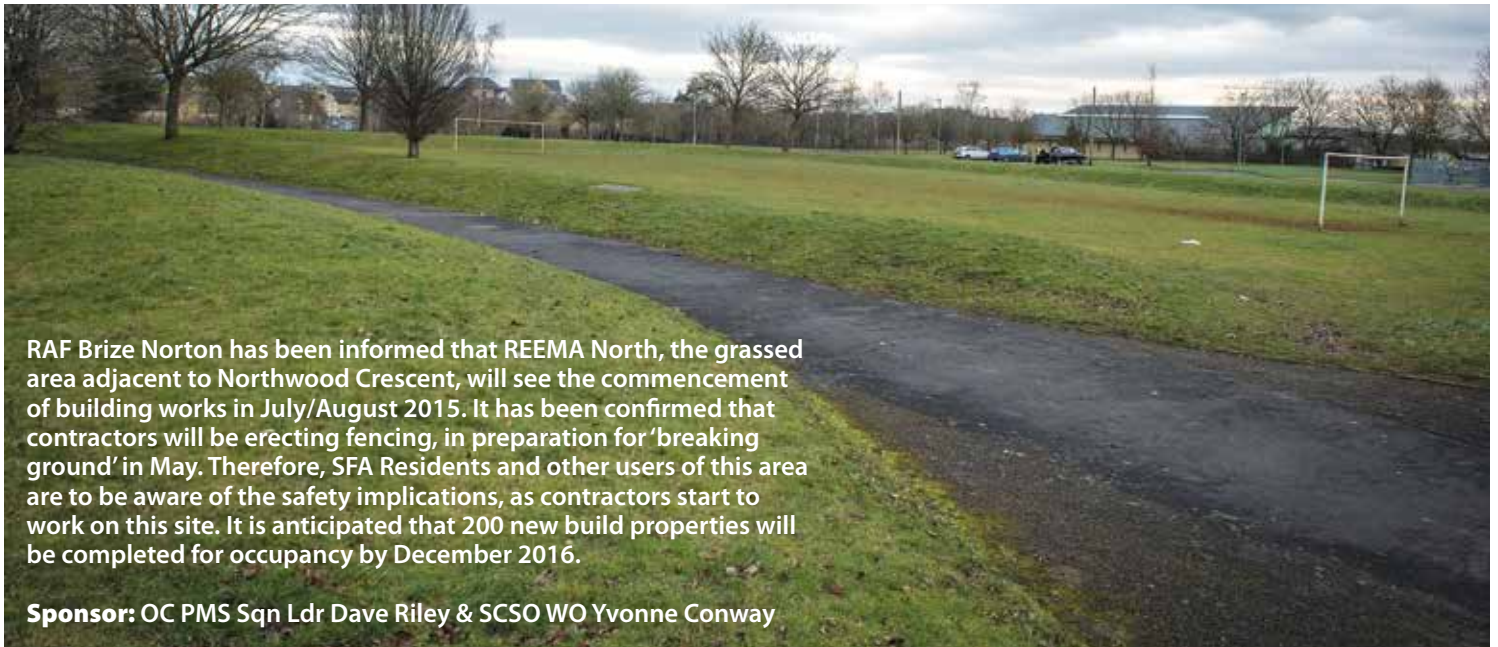
Jurassic Gateway' is an 8 berth static caravan located at West Bay Parkdean holiday park in the heart of Dorset on the Jurassic coastline. It is owned by RAF Brize Norton having been generously funded by RAF Central Funds.

**We still have available dates**

**Contact Mrs Abby Gibson on Ext 5956 for availability and pricing**



## REEMA North SFA Building to Commence



RAF Brize Norton has been informed that REEMA North, the grassed area adjacent to Northwood Crescent, will see the commencement of building works in July/August 2015. It has been confirmed that contractors will be erecting fencing, in preparation for 'breaking ground' in May. Therefore, SFA Residents and other users of this area are to be aware of the safety implications, as contractors start to work on this site. It is anticipated that 200 new build properties will be completed for occupancy by December 2016.

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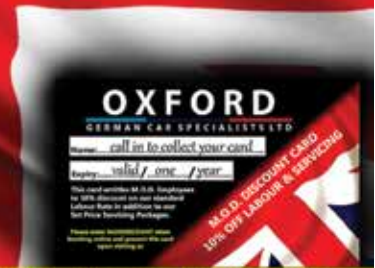
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# TEAM



An excited, yet slightly apprehensive, 12 members from Airfield Wg departed Brize Norton, eager in the knowledge of what lay ahead. After a long drive on an early morning and a not so incredibly successful time at Gatwick Airport (Unserviceable aircraft) the team were finally bound for Spain.

Day one started with essential safety briefs and kit prep, along with laying out the plan for the week and the rock climbing activities for the day. The team soon scrambled into the two mini-buses and made our way to some brilliant cliff faces; upon arrival you were immediately hit with the outstanding view of the sea adjoining Calpe rock. Further briefs followed, techniques were demonstrated. Morale and motivation was high, and with a warm and welcoming November sun on our backs the team began climbing. Starting on the basic routes, the team soon began making strong progress, moving onto Level 4 grades and even learning to lead climb.

After a highly successful day of rock climbing the team's next activity was trekking across a variety of Spanish Peaks. Another morning of briefs started the day, the route was set and navigators were chosen. After managing to get lost, finding the worst places to turn around and driving on some awful roads the team finally arrived at base camp. The essential kit packed earlier then became apparent, cold, wet and windy, more befitting of Mount Snowdon than a Spanish peak. The team ploughed on upwards, a good pace was set and morale was high. Eventually the summit was reached, along with a strange Spanish military RADAR station. Continuing on, the miles started racking up, the team really started bonding well, conversation was flowing and this led to some good 'line book' moments: 'I like holes' and 'Those trees are green' just to name a few. A warm

glow from the appearing sun met the group as they completed the descent, almost as a reward which added to the satisfaction felt by everyone. The first glimpse of the vehicles seemed to alleviate the sore feet and a fresh burst of energy pushed everyone on to the end.

On day three, a beautiful morning greeted the team, preparing them for the days mountain biking. A short journey down the coast by minibus and we arrived at the bike shop. We quickly got sized up with some excellent kit and after a short familiarisation session, we set off. The familiarisation went well, up until the point you needed to slow down, these bikes being European had the brakes the opposite way around to the UK norm, and this did cause some tricky situations! Initially we rode down the coast line, a lovely calm day. The ride quickly changed its tempo, the ground turning into a dusty track and the inclines started increasing. After some intense hills, tight tracks and the odd quick break, the ride became more technical, involving some fast and bumpy downhill sections which provided some excellent footage for the groups' entertainment. With almost impeccable timing, the now tired team arrived back at the bike shop, a few minor scrapes had been picked up along the way with many sore bums. The day drew to a close and needless to say everyone slept very well that night!

For day four, a second days mountain biking lay ahead. The sore bums being quite apparent, yet the team happily ploughed on with the wonderful weather inspiring us. The tempo this time was quite different; less technical but more speed and distance; the ride followed some outstanding routes, past lakes, winding hills and through tunnels of sugar cane. Smaller but quite technical routes were added along the ride, these did allow for a few 'inadvertent dismounting' of the bikes, many of which were captured on helmet cameras! After a long hill climb the team stopped for a spot of lunch at a small café, this allowed for our own Ft



**After an arduous year of high tempo operations, Airfield Wg launched an AT expedition to Calpe in Spain. The 7-day expedition involved a variety of demanding AT activities designed to stretch individuals' and the team's abilities, both physically and mentally.**

# EX CALPE CONTROLLER





Lt Hendstock to practice the some of his 'eloquent' Spanish, to everyone's delight. The short break revitalised the team, giving that fresh burst of energy needed to get back to the bike shop. Some more technical and this time sandy downhill sections pushed the group harder, a few more minor crashes followed, and a flat tyre. Arriving back at the bike shop, the team, although tired was also sad, knowing that was the final bike ride of the expedition.

By the final morning, the group was slightly tired, some aches and pains had developed but they were still keen for the days rock climbing. A different set of climbs were planned with varying difficulty from grades 4 through to 6, again involving some lead climbing. Another twisting drive and walk and we reached the start point, getting lost on the way seemed to be the norm by now. As it was the final day the team really was working efficiently, routes were set and people were climbing with little delay; learning had certainly taken place! The routes this time were longer, more technical and on a different, more painful type of rock, the motivation from the group was brilliant as everyone seemed to be pushing their boundaries. Unfortunately, when the day came to an end, a slightly sad team started making their way back to the vehicles under the realisation that they were heading

back to the UK the next day. The two ATIs summoned a debrief to hear the thoughts of the group, nothing but positive comments were made, the group had bonded well, really pushing their limits and making some excellent memories in the process. The usual end of expedition meal took place that evening; conversation was flowing, the team reminiscing of the weeks activities, proud of what they had accomplished.

The Airfield Wg expedition was a huge success; all members grasped this opportunity and thoroughly applied themselves to the activities set. The group of individuals that started the expedition soon made a strong team, quickly learning to encourage and support each other making some great friendships along the way. Special thanks must go to Cpl Kym MacDonald and Flt Lt John Hendstock as expedition co-ordinator and OIC. Finally, the expedition wouldn't have been possible without the keen input of the two highly motivated ATIs that ensured the smooth running throughout; Sgt Greg Henry and Cpl Mike Davies.



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TEAM

# 2624 SQN

With an extremely successful and demanding Annual Continuation Training (ACT) period completed in September on Sennelager Ranges in Germany, the Gunners of No 2624 RAuxAF Regt Sqn have continued to train for their role as air minded infantry soldiers in support of Royal Air Force Operations around the Globe.



*Sgt Buckland keeps the Flight Reserve informed of the battle ahead, preparing to launch them forward to the Flt Cdr to continue the fight. Fresh troops into the fray...*





*Main picture: Delta Fire Team providing a fire base to enable Charlie Fire Team to go "left flanking" on an enemy position. .*

An annual requirement for all Reservist personnel is to complete a continual period of training that must be a minimum of 15 days. For a Reservist Gunner, it is a prime opportunity to develop confidence with numerous weapon systems, including the 5.56mm Light Machine Gun, the L109 High Explosive Grenade and 7.62mm General Purpose Machine Gun. During this period of training, they also completed their annual requirement to reach a base level within the Live Fire Tactical Training (LFTT) environment. A highly dangerous, dynamic and challenging method of training all Dismounted Close Combat (DCC) personnel within the Armed Forces; LFTT is viewed as the very basic requirement for regular members of the RAF Regiment. In simulating rolling 'contacts' for periods exceeding 12 hours in some cases, the Gunners worked to perfecting their fire control, movement and communication skills in extremely confusing and ever changing firefights with 'the enemy'. The culmination of ACT consisted of a Squadron sized element (96 men) clearing an area of 15 miles (on foot) whilst under constant simulated contacts. A test for regulars and reservists alike!

On returning from ACT, the skills learnt were developed during blank fire exercises on Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA). This weekend, coupled with an additional weekend of training in November, also gave the Sqn the opportunity to train a team for the RAuxAF Regiment Strickland Competition. Arduous, both physically and mentally, the Strickland Competition gives the Reservist units a stage in which to 'battle it out', the winner of which is

crowned the best Sqn in a tactical environment. Due to an extremely high number of Regiment reservists being mobilised for Operations in Afghanistan during 2014, the available cadre of manpower was small, but tough. After 48 hours being tested in their Section Battle Drills, Navigation (at night over long and difficult terrain), first aid and fitness, the 2624 Sqn placed a proud 4th. It must be noted that it was the only Sqn able to enter a team of solely Sqn members and that all those that placed above were hybrid teams...

January gave the Sqn members an opportunity to complete their Module 1 training (formerly known as CCS) and annual RAF fitness tests. Especially important during this training was the chance to 'dust off' the General Service Respirators. With the responsibility given to the RAF Regiment to provide training to all three services with regards to CBRN environment, all our Gunners must also ensure they are up to speed on all the drills themselves. The training programme for 2015 is already almost full. The Sqn will be deploying to Salisbury Plain Training Area on numerous occasions to build upon basic infantry skills before beginning the progression to Live Fire Tactical Training at Hythe and Lydd ranges. Once complete, further training to teach the Gunners Close Quarter Battle and Urban Operations will close off the end of the calendar year. For further information on becoming a member of 2624 RAuxAF Regiment Squadron, please email; 2624AUX-Sqn General Enquires or phone 01993 7718.

**PER ARDUA**



TEAM



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# RAF BENSON FLYING CLUB



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RAF Benson Flying Club exists to provide flying training and low cost light aircraft flying for all members of the Armed Forces, and in particular to offer aviation opportunities to Junior Ranks. This includes Civil Servants, members of the RAuxAF, Volunteer Reserves, Cadet Forces and all former Service personnel.

The club is registered with the Enhanced Learning Credit Scheme and a number of bursaries and grants may be available. We also provide training for Service aircrew.



The club operates two Cessna C-152 and one Piper PA-28 aircraft for training/hire and provides all training manuals and equipment for flights in club aircraft at no charge. Annual membership is £51 for Junior Ranks, £63 for SNCOs and £75 for Officers.

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TEAM



# ARMOURERS' CHALLENGE



On the 31st January the Brize Norton Armourers completed a charity row the distance of Dover to Calais and back again in Sainsbury's in Witney. The team managed to row 86km in total and raised £1081 for the Sobell House Hospice. The Armourers charity committee chose Sobell House to support for the forthcoming year. The plan is to do one event per month as well as make regular visits to the hospice to help with gardening and last month we even painted some benches for the residents. For next months event, the Armourers will be ironing clothes for the customers of Kriss Kross hair studio in Carterton, as well as selling cakes and coffees. This will be on March the 31st so please feel free to book in for a hair cut and bring a small bag of clothes with you!

Cpl Stubbins





**The Movements Conversion Unit (MovCU) recently undertook a charity challenge of swimming, running and cycling from RAF Brize Norton to the North Pole and back. This massive distance equates to a total distance of 8562km.**

The MovCU are part of the Air Movs Sqn within APOE Wg. Phase 3 trainees are mentored by experienced tradesmen and women over a period of 4-6 months, completing their NVQ Apprenticeship. They then receive their first posting as operational tradesmen to either AMS or 1AMW.

On 1st October the MovCU started to undertake this massive distance of 8562km in order to reach their target distance before Christmas with the aim of raising awareness and as much funding as possible for their chosen charity Polymicrogyria Family Support. One of the main reasons for choosing this charity was that a member of the movements trades daughter suffers from the daily struggles' Polymicrogyria causes. The MovCU members felt that with this being so close to home this made it the most relevant charity of choice on this occasion.

Common problems associated with Polymicrogyria are; difficulties with swallowing meaning some sufferers have to be tube or peg fed. Many have problems with gross motor skills meaning they are unable to sit, stand

# Movements Conversion Unit Charity Challenge

or walk unaided. Some have problems with their vision and hearing, and in some cases breathing and maintaining their body temperature. Many sufferers also have little or no speech, meaning that they have to find alternative ways to communicate their needs. Half of Polymicrogyria sufferers have epilepsy and require medication or in some very rare cases brain surgery to help control the seizures. As the condition is very rare and all cases are very different, doctors are unable to give a prognosis for sufferers. This means that adults and children with Polymicrogyria do not know what the future holds for them. The only certainty is that the condition is not degenerative, meaning that it will not worsen over time.

The mission of the charity is to raise awareness on Polymicrogyria and money for families that are affected by the condition. The charity has a vision of building a holiday respite home specifically designed for the

needs of children and adults alike with Polymicrogyria, with a sensory room, hydro therapy pool and a soft play area.

By the final week there was still a distance of around 1800km, left of the journey to complete. Members of the MovCU collaborated together to have a final push on a single day of Wednesday 10th December. This took place in the Station Gym entrance and at the Passenger Terminal. They successfully hit their target with seven spinning bikes running constantly for eight hours. The last stretch was a big challenge but with the team work and determination of the members of the MovCuU made with it one epic final push.

All the participants agreed that they had been on an amazing journey and felt humbled that they had been able to help such a great cause without even leaving Brize Norton. The total amount raised on the day with the two locations combined was an impressive £376.

**SAC King**

## **More Stories To Wing Their Way Home**

Storybook Wings from the RAF Association is now open to all RAF parents separated from their children by duty – whether they're two or 2,000 miles apart.

Storybook Wings has been providing a vital link between serving RAF personnel deployed overseas and their children since 2008. It enables parents to record bedtime stories, along with personal messages, for their children to listen to while they are away, helping to ease the anxiety caused by separation. Lisa Thipthorp, manager of the initiative project said: "Initially stories could only be recorded by parents who were deployed overseas for a minimum

of three months. We recognise that children who have to be away from their parent for shorter periods due to working away from home during the week suffer from separation anxiety too. The RAF Association is also keen to support the welfare needs of these families."



The RAF Association provides recording equipment to parents for them to record their chosen stories. Once edited, a soundtrack is added to give each story a really special feel. The completed CD is then sent to the children in a personalised CD cover, and is ready for them to listen to whenever they like. If you would like to record a story, please contact either the Hive or Lisa via [storybookwings@rafa.org.uk](mailto:storybookwings@rafa.org.uk) or by calling 01780 783645/RAF Wittering Mil. (95351) 7538.

***Lisa is always looking for volunteer editors, so if you would like to help a child feel closer to a parent while they're apart do get in touch.***

# NORTON RECEIPT

## RAF BRIZE

25 individual grants	£	52,665
Relate counselling	£	5,500
Airplay youth workers	£	50,161
CAB outreach clinic	£	15,000
	£	123,326
	£	<b>123,326</b>

GBP

CHECK US OUT

In 2014 the RAF Benevolent Fund spent £123,326 at RAF Brize Norton helping serving personnel and their families with a wide range of issues from childcare, relationship difficulties and debt to injury, disability and bereavement.

Every member of the RAF family is important to us so if you or your family are in need of our help, simply give RAF Brize Norton's Chief Clerk a call on extension 1463 or find further information at [www.rafbf.org](http://www.rafbf.org)

If you would like to get involved with fundraising or volunteering for us, please call the regional team on 01993 895 291 or email [brize@rafbf.org.uk](mailto:brize@rafbf.org.uk)

[www.rafbf.org](http://www.rafbf.org)

The RAFBF is a registered charity in England and Wales (1081009) and Scotland (SC038109)





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