

Summer 2020

Air Cadet

 ROYAL
AIR FORCE
AIR CADETS
the next generation

Space

Beyond the
final frontier

Commandant's Handover

Air Cadet
Heroes

Air Cadets
In Lockdown





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Cover Image: Pushing beyond the final frontier... 51 years ago the historic Apollo 11 mission to put a man on the Moon launched from the Kennedy Space Centre: NASA

Image Left: Comet Neowise thrilled skywatchers recently in Europe, North America and in space. If you missed it, it will be approximately 6,800 years before Neowise returns to the inner parts of the solar system: Earth Science and Remote Sensing Unit, NASA Johnson Space Center

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“The Cadet Force is the future of our #NextGenRAF and I am proud of the fascinating career opportunities we offer in air, space and cyber.”

*Air Vice-Marshal Ian Gale,
Assistant Chief of the Air Staff*



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New Commandant Announced

The Royal Air Force has appointed Air Commodore Tony Keeling as the next Commandant of the RAF Air Cadets.

Air Commodore Keeling was until recently the Air Officer responsible for the RAF's Aerospace Engineering & Logistics capabilities, Photographers and Music Services.

He said: "I am delighted to be appointed as the next Commandant of the RAF Air Cadets. As a former cadet myself, I am a huge fan of the ATC and CCF and the brilliance, ambition and achievements of the cadets, but I know that the organization would not enjoy its high reputation without the determination and commitment of an excellent team of permanent staff working with an amazing network of adult volunteers.

"I have enormous respect for everything that Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty has achieved for the RAF Air Cadets during her tenure as Commandant, and I'm really looking forward to joining the team in September."

Tony, 51, who lives in Lincolnshire, was a former cadet with 145 (Altrincham & Hale) Squadron, Cheshire and joined the RAF in 1987 as an apprentice. He originally trained as an airframe and propulsion technician before taking a commission in 1999 as an Engineering Officer after completing a university cadetship at the Royal Military College of Science.

Tony's first tour was on 5(AC) Squadron maintaining Tornado F3 and in 2006 he was appointed as the Senior Engineering Officer of 2(AC) Squadron responsible for engineering Tornado GR4, culminating in a deployment to Operation TELIC.

In 2010, he joined the then newly formed Military Aviation Authority and the following year, as Officer



of Staff for the AngloFrench Combined Joint Expeditionary Force. A return to MOD followed, this time focused on strategic finance and military capability planning. In 2017, he commanded RAF Wittering, a busy flying training airfield and home to the A4 Force who deliver the RAF's specialist engineering and logistics functions.

Last September he was promoted to Air Commodore and became the A4 Force Commander. In that post, he directed the RAF Engineering and Logistics branches and trades, over 2,500 types of airfield and engineering equipment, the full range of RAF Logistics capabilities, RAF Photography and the RAF's Music Services.

A chartered engineer, Tony is a graduate of the

RAF Advanced Command & Staff Course, Defence Senior Leadership Programme and the Windsor Leadership Trust. He holds a Bachelor's degree in aeromechanical systems engineering and a Master's in Defence Studies. He also undertook distance learning for a Master of Business Administration (Defence) from Cranfield University.

Air Commodore Keeling is also a Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) Ambassador, Fellow of both the Royal Aeronautical Society and the Institute of Engineering Technology. He is also the RAF's LGBT+ Advocate, a member of the Royal Academy of Engineering's Diversity & Inclusivity Leadership Group, and volunteers as a governor at a further education college.

Outside of work, Air Commodore Keeling is married to Bobby and they have two children, Tom and Alice - both at university. Tony enjoys running and long walks with his dogs. Long road marches with cadets will be no problem! ■

Commanding the Engineering & Logistics Wing at RAF Lossiemouth, Tony commanded a large team at a time of organisational change and operational tempo.

“I am a huge fan of the ATC and CCF...”

Immediately following that tour, he deployed as Chief of Staff Support to 904 Expeditionary Air Wing based at Kandahar in Afghanistan, supporting Reaper, Tornado GR4, C130 Hercules and BAe146. Tony has a broad support background having worked in the Defence Logistics Organisation as Hawk T Mk1 Fleet Manager, the MOD Saudi Armed Forces Project supporting Hawk Mk65, and in Defence Equipment & Support reviewing airworthiness standards.

Promoted to Group Captain in May 2015, he was posted to Joint Forces Command where he was the Chief



Commandant Handover

The baton of command for the RAF Air Cadets has been handed over from Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty to Air Commodore Tony Keeling.

Tony does not formally take up post until September 21st so, until then, RAF Air Cadets (RAFAC) has an Interim Commandant – Group Captain John Lawlor.

Dawn has been Commandant for eight years and is retiring to the South West. John has been Chief of Staff at HQ RAFAC for 10 years – a job he will continue to do after Tony becomes Commandant in September.

Fortunately the rain just held off for the handover at HQ RAFAC at RAF Cranwell in Lincolnshire.

Air Commodore McCafferty said: "It has been a genuine privilege to command the RAF Air Cadets for the last eight years and, whilst I am sorry to be leaving, I know the organisation is in great shape and in safe hands for the future.

"I thank all members of the RAF Air Cadets for their support and friendship and wish them continuing success."

Group Capt Lawlor said: "It is a privilege to hold the fort so to speak for two months until Air Commodore Keeling arrives. I wish Air Commodore McCafferty a wonderful retirement." ■



Image: Paul Saxby, RAF Cranwell

“I know the organisation is in great shape and in safe hands for the future.”



Red Arrows' message of support

Squadron Leader Martin Pert, Red 1 and Team Leader of the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team, has this message for cadets and volunteers during COVID-19... He said: "Many of the Red Arrows' pilots and wider team were air cadets during their teenage years.

"It's a fantastic organisation which provides young people with so many chances to build crucial life skills and gain amazing experiences.

"Even while undertaking distancing measures, working as a team - to inspire people of all ages and backgrounds - is a key aim of the Red Arrows.

"That theme is never more important than now, when everyday life feels very different.

"Hopefully all cadets and their leaders can help inspire and support one another, albeit remotely.

"I know many RAFAC squadrons are staging virtual meetings and providing digital resources - what a great way to stay involved and feel part of the RAF family." ■

Your Face Here?

A new e-poster to promote inclusivity within the RAF Air Cadets is being produced. The poster will feature a mosaic of 80 faces, representing as many people as possible from across the organisation.

Why 80 faces? Well, it's to tie in with the organisations 80th Anniversary next year and RAF Air Cadets #OneFamily is being incorporated.

If you want to be considered for the e-poster please send your image, face and shoulders, forward view, to denise.parker594@mod.gov.uk by the end of August. Put INCLUSIVITY in the subject line and make sure you tell us your rank, full name and squadron or unit. ■

Space: Beyond the final frontier

“It’s super exciting...
why wouldn’t you want
to be part of it?”



Boldly going where no man's gone before, Air Vice-Marshal Harvey Smyth has become Britain's first space commander, leading the country's developing military space policy.

A former army cadet – “it was the complete making of me, I mean that wholeheartedly” – AVM Smyth steps into his new role as Director Space within the MOD.

He joined the RAF straight out of school as a pilot, going through Fast Jet training and being streamed on to the Harrier. Having served in all the major conflicts of the late 20th and 21st centuries, he was OC 4 Squadron when the Harrier was withdrawn from service.

Subsequent roles included Station Commander at RAF Marham, where he hosted many Air Cadet Summer Camps and was the Reviewing Officer for several Air Cadet parades, as well as F35 Lightning Force Commander.

Most recently, he was AOC 1 Group, which oversees operations related to fast jets as well as aerial intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance.

His new role as Director Space has already seen him address this year's virtual Air and Space Power Conference and puts him in the midst of a defence space portfolio that is expected to be worth at least £7 billion over the next 10 years.

Groundbreaking

The military's involvement with Space is nothing new. AVM Smyth compares today's cutting edge developments to the evolution of flight over a century ago.

He said: “I think that if we went back 100 years, when we were just getting our teeth into flying aeroplanes, and people were looking up and saying, ‘this is exciting, this is different and we are exploring this new frontier’

“I think there is something in human nature that thinks this is exciting and wants to be involved with it, it's new and ground-breaking, leading the field... and that's what I sense about Space.”

Photo credit: NASA



Interview by Flt Lt Katy Lee,
South West STEM

“Imagine how many cadets are out there who are about to do the Space workbook, and in 30 years from now, they’re doing an interview like this, going ‘well, the reason why I run Space Command is because of this Space workbook I did in Air Cadets.’”

AVM Smyth

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At the beginning of this year, the Royal Air Force announced its new ASTRA programme – a 10 year project making meaningful changes across the board – force structure, people, training, bases, aircraft and equipment - to deliver the Next Generation Royal Air Force.

In terms of Space, the RAF has some very clear views on how it wants to grow its Space cadre: by 2030, the RAF hopes to have about 2,000 personnel concentrating on Space efforts (currently there are about 300-500 across the whole of Defence).

It’s quite an ambition for the Service to grow beyond where we are today and that reflects the understanding of the importance of space.

One of the first important tasks is to develop a space capability roadmap, which is where opportunity will arise for promoting UK prosperity, and giving opportunity for small industry up to large prime industry, so that they can see a pathway to their own growth.

“When people think of space, they think of people in spacesuits, rockets taking off,” said AVM Smyth. “Actually it’s the applications that we get from space that are so important, the communications, systems like GPS, what we use on our mobile phones...”

Important

“Those won’t work to the standard that society has become used to without satellites, air traffic wouldn’t work. It completely underpins everything we do – not just in the military but also in modern society and that’s why it’s so important to us and why we treat it as critical national infrastructure.”

Space is a hugely important sector for national defence, as well as for economic growth and improved standards of living. Satellites these days are already being used to enable individuals around the world who didn’t previously have any coverage to access the internet, as well as enabling organisations to track health

data quickly and effectively, certainly a pertinent issue at the moment.

The military, and indeed the UK as a whole, are involved in Space for a variety of reasons. The SKYNET satellites, which have been around since 1969, are coming into their 6th generation. These satellites provide world class secure communications around the world, for use by the British Military and NATO forces.

The upgraded system could be used, for example, to facilitate the transmission of secure communications from a ship at sea, support Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) operations, allow fighter jet pilots to receive or upload operational data in real-time, or enable land forces to conduct missions in remote environments.

The exciting new RAFAC space syllabus, developed in partnership with the Open University, represents a major step forward in the delivery of innovative and technology-led training.



Preparations for the lift-off of NASA's Tracking and Data Relay Satellite: NASA

This modern and dynamic space syllabus, developed over the last 18 months, provides a wide range of learning material that will be used across the Blue, Bronze, Silver and Gold Levels.

Cutting edge

The introductory Blue Level was launched in June this year and concentrates on the applications of technology developed for space travel. This allows cadets to research and understand where space begins, how satellites are used, how we look from space and how space exploration has developed.

The next levels of the syllabus will concentrate on topics including: the development of rocket engines, space

exploration and the Earth's relationship to the solar system.

“The cadets have done so much on STEM – it’s really exceptional.”

The roll out of STEM, Cyber and Space Ambassadors will allow the RAFAC to build a portfolio of talented people who can accelerate the changes needed to support the delivery of STEM-based training that is fit for the Next Generation.

AVM Smyth believes cadets should be enthusiastic about Space because it’s at the cutting edge of technology and

where, in the future, the real high-end technological gains and growth are going to be.

He enthused that “the opportunities are so amazing” within the cadets to learn new things and to open up the prospect of new and exciting career paths that you may not have even known existed before.

“It’s all about preparing for the future, there’s a real growth market here,” he added.

He has taken a look at the new Blue Space booklet and was hugely impressed with it, telling us “I wish I’d had this training... and I would advocate it, get stuck in!”



Royal Air Force Air Cadets in lockdown...

The RAF Air Cadets has faced many challenges in its near 80-year history but COVID-19 has undoubtedly been the most dramatic since WW2.

Words: Denise E Parker

The resilience demonstrated by this organisation of 60,000 cadets and adult volunteers, however, was immense.

They often say that we show strength in adversity. Nothing is more true looking at the tenacity and fortitude of the cadets, volunteers and the permanent staff in recent months.

Keeping upbeat and delivering and learning at distance and under unusual crisis conditions clearly showed professionalism, commitment and determination.

Many of our volunteers and some older cadets are also key workers in their primary role and we were humbled to see their actions, refer to page 16.

Look after each other

Interim Commandant, Group Captain Lawlor said: "We are liaising with the Ministry of Defence and hoping to re-start cadet activity in the autumn. We have come through a difficult time – much like those of our forebears who marked VE and VJ Days and we have to recover slowly making sure we take time to get it right.

“There really was an unprecedented digital explosion..”

"We have done pretty well so far but it is fair to say that there will be unknown consequences. We have to look after each other and be mindful.

"In the RAF Air Cadets we are one family and we need to be conscious that some people have had a tougher time than others. Our mental health and well-being is important.

"I am proud of each and every cadet, adult volunteer and staff member for the way they have showed true mettle and fortitude whilst coping with this challenge."

People kept connected

Most cadets and volunteers have kept connected thanks to Virtual Parade Nights (VPNs) and also via social media with a mountain of engaging posts week after week.

A massive team effort saw some outstanding posts and VPNs with celebrity guests such as our Ambassador, Honorary Group Captain Carol Vorderman, former RAF aviator John Nichol, senior members of the RAF and the Red Arrows.

Social media output included a spotlight on RAF service life, quizzes, plus information on qualifications and awards. All posts binding the organisation at a difficult time.

Digital Explosion

Head of Media Comms, Denise Parker said: "Our online profile is always high but there really was an unprecedented digital explosion unlike anything seen before. Social media has created a lifeline in lockdown.

"Nationally we went into overdrive creating compelling and topical content to maintain stakeholder engagement as soon lockdown was announced and regions, wings, squadrons and units mirrored that and absolutely excelled keeping a pipeline of powerful content flowing."



With the organisation's profile capturing so much attention it is not surprising that the enquiries from interested potential recruits - cadets and volunteers – have risen in some areas, all ready for when the doors open again.

Denise said: "On the national Facebook platform we elevated our position to generate interest. I never thought we would be able to do Facebook Live from the front line in the Middle East but we did it. Thanks to former cadet, now Squadron Leader Leah Richmond at 83 Expeditionary Air Group, for her sterling efforts.

"We also discussed how we could use our Training Tuesday spot on Facebook to the advantage of cadets and volunteers. Out of that was borne an excellent series of posts created by Training Ground."

Dedicated group

Wg Cdr Stuart McNeill, Director of Training, led a team that produced 31 electronic "How To" training guides and a new range of subject notebooks and syllabus topics covering Air Power and Space.

He said: "We faced an immense challenge and at first sight it seemed quite daunting but with the aid of a small dedicated group of permanent staff and volunteers from the HQ Training Ground Team we put together a training and engagement schedule which led to the training guides being produced on a weekly basis.

"The 'How To' guides were aimed at highlighting to squadron staff how they could continue to offer training in a lockdown environment. Our volunteers have since been able to navigate through the new world of virtual training and help cadets engage with VPN activities."

“Seeing staff pulling together in a challenging period has shown what we are all made of.”

Even after lockdown the new training material will be useful. Almost all squadrons have now participated in some kind of virtual parade and they are able to access the library-like resources to dip in and out of at any time. The guides have covered everything from STEM subjects, to space, to cyber and leadership. Electronic certificates have also been produced for cadets that help to celebrate their achievements at the point of completion.

Andy Bracegirdle, the Bader Team Lead, said: "The HQ Bader Team rolled out Teams in the first week of lockdown enabling the VPNs and the Volunteer Software Development Team supported the roll out through guides and training videos.

"Both Bader Team and VSDT integrated the VPNs into a squadron management system and Cadet Portal – the new admin hub for cadets. Delighted to say it worked very well."

Offers of help from the RAF flooded in and a serving officer suggested establishing a database to help squadrons connect with serving airmen and airwomen to talk to cadets at VPNs. Work is now underway.

Wg Cdr Colin Burrell, Officer Commanding Thames Valley Wing said: "I have been hugely impressed by the professionalism and enthusiasm of our volunteers in providing VPNs and progressive training.

"I have witnessed first-hand the tremendous capability in my own wing and across the wider organisation, seeing staff pulling together in what has been a challenging period has shown what we are all made of, we should all be rightly proud."

Ensuring cohesion

Weekly Command Board Plus meetings with Heads of Branch at HQ RAFAC and Regional Commandants were held to ensure cohesion throughout the COVID-19 lockdown. Similar meetings were and continue to be held in regions and wings.

The HQ produced the recovery plan for HQ RAFAC, Regional and Wing HQs to get back to the "new normal" whenever Government restrictions were lifted.

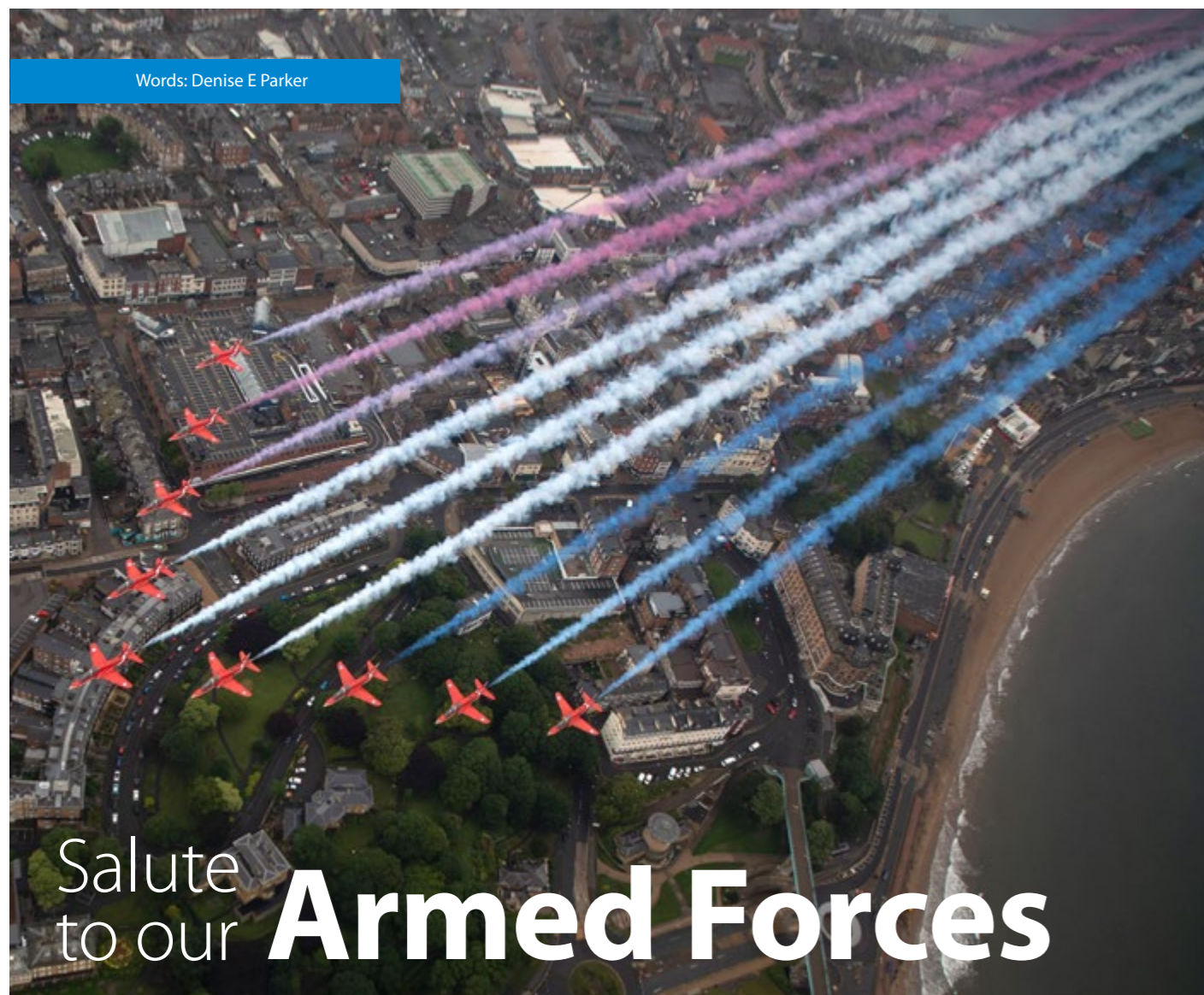
Meanwhile, Regional Commandant South West, Gp Capt Jase Chalk spearheaded the recovery plan to get cadets and volunteers back into the squadron buildings when the British Government gave the green light.

The first to re-open was 440 (Isle of Man) Squadron because the island was free of COVID-19 and the Isle of Man Government decided it was safe. Other islands including Cyprus, Jersey and Guernsey were also making good process.

Mental health

In lockdown, cadets and volunteers were offered support from mental health charities such as Mind. A full list is on our website at www.raf.mod.uk/aircadets.

Virtual well-being and resilience courses were also introduced. These were a shortened version of the usual day-long course, adapted for cadets by volunteer Wing Commander David Bentley Miller and his team. For more on mental health see page 39. ■



Words: Denise E Parker

Salute to our **Armed Forces**

Red Arrows images: Crown Copyright

Air Cadets across the UK marked their respect for members of the Royal Air Force, Royal Navy, Royal Marines and the Army.

The air cadets are proud of their association with their parent Service, the RAF, which helps with their funding and provides opportunities for camps and station visits...and sometimes even fantastic flying opportunities in aircraft. This year's Armed Forces Parade would have been in Scarborough and cadets and volunteers from the town would have been a large part of the celebrations.

COVID-19 changed those plans but the officer commanding 739 (Scarborough) Squadron says they are all primed for next year.

Flight Lieutenant Steven Lewis said: "We look forward each year to AFD as it is a key link between us and the Armed Forces, but in particular the RAF, our shared

history and the cadets' futures - for those who wish to serve.

"It brings together youth, volunteers, serving personnel and veterans in a unique way to honour the dedication of those who serve and protect this country and our allies in both peacetime and war.

"We were looking forward to holding the national event in Scarborough this year as it is a once in a cadet lifetime opportunity to be part of such a large event. However, we are now planning for the national event in 2021 with a lot of input from the cadets themselves as they are what the RAF Air Cadets are all about."

Two cadets from Scarborough squadron outline why they love the RAF Air Cadets and how it helps them.

Cadet Flight Sergeant Abbi Flynn said: 'Initially, I joined the RAF Air Cadets as my older brother was a member, watching him get to go flying, gliding, on camps etcetera I was so jealous and wanted to get involved.

Highlight

"The highlight of my cadet career thus far is undoubtedly winning a 12-hour Royal Air Force Association (RAFA) Flying Scholarship.

"Being lucky enough to have 12 hours of free flying training is something very few receive and something I will be eternally grateful to RAFA and the RAF Air Cadets for.



Cadet Flight Sergeant Jade Lewis at Armed Forces Day, running the radio exercises with Sgt Roxanne Mennell RAFAC in the background.



Cadet Flight Sergeant Abbi Flynn with her parents, on the award of her flying scholarship.



Flt Lt Steven Lewis, Officer Commanding 739 (Scarborough) Squadron Air Training Corps.

"The scholarship itself helped me make my first steps towards my dream career – a pilot in the RAF – a career which I hadn't even considered until joining the RAF Air Cadets.

"In the future, my ideal role would be as a pilot within the rotary wing, helping to deliver troops and vital equipment into combat zones - something I would love to do."

Cadet Flight Sergeant Jade Lewis said: "I joined the air cadets because it had been something that my dad had done when he was my age and I wanted to be closer to him and know more about the organisation I had heard so much about but mostly, I wanted to try something new.

"I hope to help my squadron grow and help other cadets achieve like my peers

did for me when I first joined, I want them to see that we are a family.

Opportunities

"I plan to go to university next year after the air cadets allowed me to discover my love for teaching and helping people grow. I want to show to everyone that the air cadets gives amazing opportunities and really allows you to develop yourself.

"I hope to stay a member of the Royal Air Force Air Cadets after I age out at 20 and become a member of volunteer staff in a few years because I love the adventure and the community that the organisation provides."

Jade joined the ATC in 2015. She quickly proved herself a dedicated and capable cadet earning promotion to Cadet

Corporal in March 2017, to Cadet Sergeant in May 2018 and to Cadet Flight Sergeant in April 2019 on recommendation from her volunteer instructors.

She has achieved her Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award, has nearly completed the Silver Award and has undertaken Blue Comms & Bronze Cyber awards.

She was nominated and interviewed for Station Commander's Cadet RAF Leeming in 2018 and 2019 and has recently been put forward to Wing selection for Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for North Yorkshire.

Jade is planning to go to Lincoln University next year to train as a teacher but for now she is content as a member of the RAF Air Cadets. Her father is the Officer Commanding at Scarborough Squadron so it is a real family affair! ■

As a salute to the work done by current troops, cadets and veterans, the Red Arrows performed a spectacular fly past over the skies of North Yorkshire.

The distinctive Hawk fast jets flew over the British Army's Catterick Garrison, RAF Leeming and the coastal town of Scarborough, where the event was due to take place.

Ahead of the fly past, a small number of representatives from all three services attended a short flag-raising service at Scarborough Castle alongside senior leaders from Scarborough Borough Council.

Her Majesty The Queen also thanked the Armed Forces, saying in a statement: "Having had members of my family serve in each of the Armed Services, I know only too well of the pride Service personnel take in their duty."



Air cadets commemorate **Battle of Britain 80th Anniversary**



What was the Battle of Britain?
 The Battle of Britain was a military campaign of the Second World War, in which the Royal Air Force defended the United Kingdom against large-scale attacks by Nazi Germany's air force, the Luftwaffe. It was described as the first major military campaign fought entirely by air forces. The British officially recognise the battle's duration as running from July 10 until October 31, 1940, which overlaps the period of large-scale night attacks known as the Blitz, that lasted from September 7, 1940 to May 11, 1941. Each year, September 15, 1940 is known as Battle of Britain Day. It is marked annually to remember the large-scale aerial battle that took place on that day during the Battle of Britain campaign. Source: Wiki 3rd Jul 2020.

Words: Denise E Parker, Aircraft images: Crown Copyright

The 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain was commemorated by air cadet squadrons across the United Kingdom and overseas.

Normally, cadets would be shining their shoes and ironing their kit to take part in parades within their communities and in the nation's capital but, with COVID-19 restrictions, other plans were made.

On social media, thousands of cadets and adult volunteers who help run the 1,200 cadet squadrons and units are joining in the national tribute marking the start of the anniversary of the Battle of Britain's four-month campaign.

Group Captain John Lawlor, Interim Commandant RAFAC, said: "This is an important anniversary which marks the 80th anniversary of the turning point of World War Two.

"The forebears of today's cadets helped in the effort to keep the UK safe and their dedication, teamwork and courage was remarkable and we will always remember them."

Gp Capt Lawlor, a former RAF navigator, said: "Whilst the RAF Air Cadets today is not a recruitment organisation for the Royal Air Force, it is true to say that many still do wish to serve their country and for that we can all be extremely grateful."

Air Defence Cadet Corps

Many air cadets in the Air Defence Cadet Corps (ADCC) from 1938-1941 specifically joined the Royal Air Force to help during World War Two.

The ADCC was the forerunner of the Air Training Corps which was established under Royal Warrant in February 1941.

Cadets were trained to fly as well as taught aeronautical engineering, physics, aircraft recognition, shooting, discipline and fitness.

Cadet Isabelle Evans (pictured left with her grandfather) said: "I think it's really important to remember those who fought and those who made sacrifices in the Battle of Britain. It's part of our history and makes me feel really proud."

Squadron Leader Mark Discombe, Leader of the RAF's Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF) and also a former cadet of 1092 (Bridgend) Squadron said: "Commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain is very important.

"The battle was the first fought solely in the air, witnessed by the population the aircrew were defending, and was also the Nazi's first defeat of World War Two.

"As Battle of Britain ace Air Commodore Peter Brothers said in his speech as Chairman of the Battle of Britain Fighter Association at RAF Northolt on 15th September 2005: 'The Battle of Trafalgar may have saved the nation but the Battle of Britain saved the world.' Lest We Forget." ■



Ex cadet Mark Discombe, checks the Hurricane.

“I think it's really important to remember those who fought and those who made sacrifices in the Battle of Britain.”



Landmark flight for ex-cadet



Beechcraft T-6C Texan II:



Powerplant:	one 1,100shp Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6A turboprop engine
Length:	33ft 4in (10.16m)
Height:	10ft 8in (3.25m)
Wingspan:	33ft 5in (10.20m)
Wing area:	175.30sqft (16.28m ²)
Maximum take-off weight:	6,900lb (3,130kg)
Maximum speed:	316kt (585km/h)
Ferry range:	884nm (1,637km)
Maximum altitude:	31,000ft

Images: Crown Copyright

BUDDING F-35 Lightning naval pilot Lieutenant and former air cadet Lewis Phillips has become the first trainee fast jet flier to 'go solo' in the UK's brand-new Texan T1 trainer aircraft.

Lewis, a former cadet with 327 (Havant) Squadron, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wing, took to Anglesey skies in the Texan T1 on his own – one important milestone on the road to sitting in the cockpit of an F-35 waiting to launch from HMS Queen Elizabeth.

The Texan T1, now in service with 72 Squadron at RAF Valley, North Wales, has replaced the Tucano in the fast jet training programme and is part of the government's £1.2bn investment

into fixed-wing aircraft training under the Military Flight Training System (MFTS) to train and prepare junior pilots across the three Services for the frontline.

The aircraft, which can reach top speeds of more than 360mph and climb as high as 31,000ft, can simulate missions in both fourth and fifth-generation aircraft such as the F35 Lightning II and Typhoon fast jets.

Lewis said of his milestone flight: "It certainly wasn't lost on me that I was the first UK student to fly the RAF's newest aircraft solo although this naturally culminated in some nerves before the flight.

"But when you kit up and crew in, your mind switches to the task at hand and the sortie was an incredibly enjoyable and rewarding one."

Trainees spend hours in the simulator to prepare for each flight, ensuring that valuable time in the skies isn't spent learning checks, allowing students to concentrate on developing their airmanship skills.

"Having flown the Tutor for Royal Navy Flying Grading and the Prefect for Elementary Flying Training, it felt like a natural progression rather than a leap. The main differences for me were getting used to all the kit - on-board oxygen generation, G-Suit, immersion

suit - and the fact that it is a tandem cockpit," added Lewis, who's training with a mix of Royal Navy and Royal Air Force aviators.

Going solo is far from the end of training with 72 Sqn – there are tests and assessments almost daily building up to aerobatics and 'max performance manoeuvres', pushing machine and pilot to the limit.

After successfully completing basic flying training with 72, pilots receive their wings, then progress to jets, first the Hawk T2, also taught at Valley, then the F-35 for naval aviators, F-35s and Typhoons for RAF fliers. ■



Cadet FS Omar Juwara, 338 (West Ham) Sqn

Air Cadet Omar Juwara, 17, from 338 (West Ham) Sqn has taken on a new job working within the NHS as a 'ward host' providing a food service to patients whilst adhering to strict hygiene protocols. Despite knowing of the heightened risk of infection during these challenging times, Omar readily responded to the call for help from his local hospital.

He said: "As a result, I chose to be a 'ward host' which involves taking the orders of patients and fixing breakfast, lunch and dinner and taking it straight to them. "Being a part of the RAFAC has given me confidence in the skills and qualifications I've gained that have previously helped me secure jobs and positions." "Lockdown isn't the worst thing as I don't really mind staying inside. I miss my friends, but I understand why I shouldn't meet them, to help all our other NHS workers who are working hard to fight against the virus."

Air Cadet heroes

Royal Air Force Air Cadet volunteers - some of whom are key workers in their professional careers working within the NHS, emergency services and other vital roles such as scientists, drivers, carers, food store operatives and delivery drivers - are operating around the clock in the battle against the coronavirus pandemic.



Wg Cdr Elliott Sharrard-Williams, OC Staffordshire Wing

I'm a Chief Superintendent in Staffordshire Police and Head of the Operational Support Directorate with responsibility for the command of around 800 police officers and staff (as well as 300 police cadets) covering more than 37 different functions from intelligence and covert policing to police dogs. I am a Gold Commander.

Currently I have the task of leading Staffordshire Police's tactical response to COVID-19. I need to make sure we keep the people of Staffordshire safe, whilst managing the impact the virus has on the police officers and staff of the force, including their health and well-being. I handle our response to government directives, such as the social distancing measures.

The next few months are going to be challenging but we will get through it if we stay connected and work together, but right now, the message needs to be a simple one...

Stay home, protect the NHS, and save lives.



Sqn Ldr Simon Blackmore Contingent Commander Victoria College CCF, Jersey

I've been a CFAV for 14 years and before that was a cadet in the CCF (RAF) and an Officer Cadet in Bristol University Officer Training Corps. Victoria College has the only CCF Contingent in Jersey with Navy, Army and Air Force Sections totalling around 140 cadets and 20 adult volunteers.

I am also a senior officer in the Jersey Customs & Immigration Service, currently working in freight clearance, ensuring all critical goods are cleared quickly and efficiently for the benefit of islanders. This can be medical goods for our local hospital and clinics to ensuring food supplies reach the supermarket shelves. As a small island we rely heavily on essential freight routes to/from the UK and France to sustain our population of over 105,000 residents. The current situation has put a real focus on us playing a critical part in assisting the Island community and I'm very proud to be doing my part.



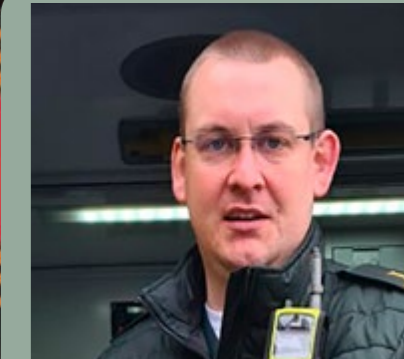
Flt Lt Graham Dodds, Scotland & Northern Ireland Regional Media Communications Officer

I'm a Chief Inspector with the Police Service of Northern Ireland in Omagh, County Tyrone and one of the senior officers leading the policing response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

This involves leading 250 police officers and staff to patrol the streets to ensure safety at key locations such as supermarkets, hospitals, fuel stations and pharmacies, as well as enforcing government rules on social distancing.

While not undertaking RAF Air Cadet volunteering duties due to the emergency, the values of our organisation are central to what I am doing every day and my dedication to the RAF Air Cadets is part of the reason for working hard to protect our community.

I want to keep people safe and make sure we all have a vibrant RAFAC to return to.



Flight Lieutenant Simon Walton, WSO, Cumbria & Lancashire Wing

For RAF Air Cadets, I'm a Health and Safety Advisor. For the North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust (NWAS), I've been an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT1) for over five years.

I am currently studying at the University of Cumbria to become a paramedic. COVID-19 has presented us with some new challenges over and above the normal work of an A&E ambulance crew.

I work in the Brough/Penrith and Keswick area mainly, so we always have great distances to cover. We are lucky to have a lot of dedicated hard working staff.

I know lots of cadets and volunteer staff are involved in their permanent jobs with the NHS or supply chain supporting us and the general public.

My message to you all is, remember to follow government advice. Keep safe.



Acting Pilot Officer Hannah Banks, 148 (Barnsley) Sqn

As a neighbourhood team officer, it is essential that we show the communities that we carry on regardless with everyone's health and welfare at the forefront of our daily patrols.

With the introduction of the Public Health Protection (Coronavirus restrictions) Regulations 2020, Police now have powers to disperse groups of people, with fines being introduced and potential arrests of those who are non-compliant. Crime is still happening even in these uncertain times with investigations ongoing.



Flt Lt Kate Bonney, OC 230 (Congleton) Sqn

I work for North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) as an Emergency Medical Technician. My son, a former Cadet Warrant Officer, is a recently qualified sergeant aircrew in the RAF, currently working on the Coronavirus Team, and on standby until the next phase of his training begins in January. My husband is an RAFAC Civilian Committee Chairman and works incredibly hard to raise funds for cadet equipment and activities, as well as being an experienced paramedic with 35 years of service with NWAS.

We are fighting this virus but we're human too and are exhausted mentally and physically after every shift. It's difficult not having the Air Training Corps to leave the house for, but it's been amazing to see my squadron come alive online, joining together virtually to keep talking and keep the spirit of the Corps going.



WO Mark Ellis, 188 (Ipswich) Sqn

As a key worker in the Police, its business as usual for me and my colleagues. People following the lockdown guidance and staying at home has meant we're being called to more domestic incidents and we're also having to keep a close eye on all of the unoccupied businesses to make sure they're not being damaged or broken into.. and of course reminding anyone we come across whilst we're out on patrol of social distancing and ensuring they're following the rules.



Sqn Ldr Andy Dobson, 379 (County of Ross) Sqn

As part of the key worker team, Andy's current role in the community is to deliver prescriptions to elderly customers who have had to self-isolate and have no family or friends able to collect medication, along with delivering medication to customers who have displayed symptoms of the COVID-19 virus.

Sqn Ldr Dobson RAFVR(T) Retd. said: "The last few weeks have been very challenging and without the positive atmosphere and great sense of humour within the team along with fantastic management, the unbelievable level of work each day would not have been achievable."



Civilian Instructor Graeme Vaughan, 1192 (Kirkcaldy) Sqn

A former cadet and now a Civilian Instructor and Adjutant of 1192 (Kirkcaldy) Sqn, Graeme works as an operating department practitioner (ODP) within NHS Fife. Normally he is employed within theatres supporting anaesthetists to deliver safe anaesthetics. As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, he is now involved with supporting extra Intensive Care Unit provision by giving technical support in the use of anaesthetic machines, that includes ventilators, in areas where ventilators are not normally available.



PO Denise Wilde, OC 2415 (Penkridge) Sqn

Myself and my husband are the only members of our Community Responders team currently on call, as everyone else in our team is having to self-isolate, a problem for the NHS right across the board. Clearly this will be sustained over many months.

We're also supporting our local food bank with deliveries when we're not responding to a call, as the key thing through this whole situation is about communities coming together, even if they're socially distanced.



Flt Lt Katherine Barton, Adventure Training Technical Officer, South & West Yorkshire Wing

I am an Obstetric and Gynaecology Registrar. So most of our workload is emergency work anyway. I help mums give birth and perform Caesarean sections and manage all emergencies relating to pregnancy.

I have helped create emergency drills for my department so that all staff are trained in what protective equipment to wear and how to manage coronavirus patients in our department. I've also helped redesign our theatre environment to accommodate patients with coronavirus.

We are also being retrained to help in the medical wards with non-invasive ventilation to support our colleagues should they need us in the coming weeks.



PO Kieran Whitford, 102 (Aberdeen Airport) Sqn

I've been with the Scottish Ambulance Service at Aberdeen Station for over four years now and could never have imagined being in this situation. Our team are all working hard to keep the public safe. Taking extra precautions with PPE and making challenging decisions. It's a hard time but the support we give each other, and that which we're receiving from the public, is incredible and is pulling us through!



Civilian Instructor Rich Davies

I'm a firefighter and we're literally doing the essential work only - that means 999 calls and on-station work/training and not leaving the station except for 999 response. We are cleaning down every aspect of the station where possible at the start and end of each shift, including the fire appliance cab internally and externally. We also clean down after every call. We are busy responding to incidents with added PPE, such as personal face masks, goggles and latex gloves. We are maintaining the highest standard of hygiene and safety as possible.



Sgt Paul Wade, 422 (Corby) Sqn

To show the squadron's thanks for the Key Workers of the Town's emergency services Paul decided to donate items, sweets, chocolate and snacks, mostly paid for by him with donations from other staff members in boxes labelled up with 422 (Corby) Squadron badges. The boxes have been delivered to the Corby Fire Station and the local Ambulance Station with a further box of goodies being delivered to the Kettering Police Hub. Paul said; "This is to show our appreciation for all that emergency services are doing for us and to cement already established links between them and the squadron."

**CORONAVIRUS
STAY ALERT TO THE
RISK OF INFECTION**

Remember it's critical to keep washing your hands regularly for 20 seconds. For more ways to stay safe go to [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

STAY ALERT > CONTROL THE VIRUS > SAVE LIVES

Commandant's special award



Images: Paul Saxby, RAF Cranwell

Two new awards have been established by Commandant Air Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty, in her final few days in post.

The COVID-19 pandemic altered her final farewell to staff members and volunteers but Air Commodore McCafferty announced two awards for outstanding member of permanent staff and outstanding volunteer.

The special awards - new legacy trophies - were presented to the winners - permanent staffer Mrs Jayne Maddison and volunteer Warrant Officer Donna Hall.

Jayne, who works at HQ RAFAC, RAF Cranwell in Lincolnshire, was chosen for her helpful, positive disposition and success and hard work at the annual conferences.

Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty said: "I did not ask for nominations as I wanted the inaugural awards to be to two people who had inspired and impressed me during my time.

"That said, it was a very hard decision to make as there are many outstanding staff members and volunteers who were equally worthy of consideration.

"I selected Mrs Maddison from our HQ simply because she is one of the most positive people I know, always cheerful, always happy to help and always willing to go the extra mile.

"Her contribution to our annual conferences has ensured their success and her hard work behind the scenes in the IHub keeps the rest of the organisation on its toes as far as data compliance goes - not the most exciting role in the HQ but one that is vital to our day-to-day operations. Jayne has made me smile and I hope this award does the same for her."

Recognition

Jayne said: "The award came out of the blue, I was extremely surprised. It is difficult to explain how I am feeling right now as I am both delighted and shocked in equal measure to be the first recipient.

"I would sincerely like to thank the Commandant for her recognition of my achievements and given the calibre of my colleagues I feel extremely proud that I was even considered.

"RAFAC has always been an enjoyable place to work and receiving this award has just made it even better! Thank you so much."

WO Donna Hall RAFAC, the Regional Warrant Officer for Wales & West Region

Air Training Corps received the award as most outstanding volunteer.

Air Commodore McCafferty said: "WO Hall is omnipresent across Wales & West Region and the wider Air Training Corps and rarely has any time off from supporting air cadets.

"She is passionate about her role, lives and breathes drill and ceremonial and supports wider initiatives with her hard work, good humour and positivity. Again, a member of our team who makes me smile and I know she inspires those around her."

Donna said: "I feel exceptionally honoured and humbled to receive this award. I volunteer because I love the Royal Air Force Air Cadets and everything we offer as an organisation to our cadets and volunteers.

"To be recognised for what I do by Commandant Air Cadets is beyond amazing. To be the recipient of this inaugural award has left me a little bit speechless, but I am truly grateful."

The Commandant presented the trophies - at distance - on her last day in post. ■

Going Ga Ga for National Choir



The National Choir of the Royal Air Force Cadets rocked the London Palladium when they auditioned for the hit television show Britain's Got Talent.

The choir - drawn from squadrons and CCF (RAF) units from across the country - performed a medley of songs, including Queen's "We Will Rock You" and "Radio Ga Ga" that had the 2,000-strong audience on its feet.

The amazing performance, led by Director of Music, Squadron Leader Dave Massam, was recently shown on an episode of Britain's Got Talent: Unseen Acts.

Amazing

Fifteen-year-old Cadet Abi Barks from 1406 (Spalding) Squadron said: "It was an amazing experience because not only did we get a standing ovation from all four judges, and the audience, but I got to meet Ant and Dec as well.

"I feel so privileged to have been selected to be part of the National Choir, as well as taking part in BGT and standing on stage at the London Palladium, performing with such an amazing group of people."

Filmed before the coronavirus lockdown, the cadets' performance



impressed judges Simon Cowell, Amanda Holden, Alesha Dixon and David Walliams and led to four 'yes' votes.

Surreal

Cadet Warrant Officer Jack Beaney from 1404 (Chatham) Sqn said: "You didn't see in the footage but Simon and Alesha wanted to press their gold buzzers but had already done so and were trying to egg the others on to do theirs!

"The experience was extremely surreal and hard to describe because it was all back to normal so quickly - I was

thinking to myself was it a dream or did it actually happen?"

Jose Lumactod, 18, a member of the CCF at All Saints' Academy in Cheltenham, added: "It was absolutely nerve-wracking. I never imagined being on stage but everyone in the choir was also anxious, so I wasn't alone in that sense.

"It was amazing seeing an entire theatre filled with people giving us standing ovations and hearing the judges giving us 'yesses' was the best experience I've felt yet." ■



By Sqn Ldr Al Munns

Around 40 Air Cadets attended an Air Cadet Pilot Scholarship Briefing Day at RAF Cranwell recently, in the hope of proving their worthiness for the keenly-contested scholarships.

The cadets from across the Central & East Region underwent a day of testing, assessing and interviewing to amass a point tally that will grade their suitability for the award of the prestigious scholarships.

This briefing, the final one of two run during the year, has ensured that more than 110 cadets are now in the "pool" for the scholarships awarded to the Region's cadets each year.

Funded through Headquarters RAF Air Cadets, the scholarships provide up to twelve hours of pilot tuition in single piston engine, fixed wing aircraft. The tuition is currently provided by Tayside Aviation of Dundee and cadets attend as a residential course - the cost of which is met within the scholarship.

Attending one of the briefing and selection days is a pre requisite for scholarship applications. Cadets must also have a keen interest in flying – something that will be assessed during their interview stage. The cadets are given an opportunity to show their flying aptitude utilising the Region's state of the art flying simulators. Their knowledge is then tested with a flying and aircraft based exam.

One of the candidates, 16 year old Cadet Sergeant Tegan Dodimead of 207 (Cranfield) Squadron, who joined the Air Cadets three years ago, said: "I very much want to be a pilot in the RAF and feel that a scholarship will help fulfil the dream."

Three of the Qualified Aerospace Instructor Cadets helping out on the course are past recipients of the scholarships and recounted their experiences and the differing scholarships that are available. ■

International Award for air cadet

An air cadet has been recognised with an international award in the name of the late Diana, Princess of Wales.

Michael Saunderson, 18, of Astor College Combined Cadet Force (RAF), Dover, has received The Diana Award for his achievements.

It is the highest accolade a young person can achieve for social action or humanitarian efforts.

Michael has been a part of the Combined Cadet Force (RAF) at Astor College for six years. For the last two years he has been a senior cadet attending twice a week despite his commitments as a young carer.

Flight Lieutenant Tara Young said: "His boundless commitment to his role and patience, taking time to listen to any concerns from the cadet leadership team, right down to the junior cadets has been amazing. "The unit has undergone a challenging period of change throughout which

Established in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, The Diana Award is the most prestigious accolade a young person aged 9-25 years can receive for their social action or humanitarian work. There are 184 recipients worldwide.

Cadet Flight Sergeant Saunderson has excelled in supporting the CCF, leading on activities and training for the younger cadets, as well as fundraising for key events."

Michael is now 18 but despite leaving school he is committed to his CCF "family" and intends to return as a volunteer helper in September.

Tessy Ojo, Chief Executive Officer of The Diana Award, said: "We congratulate all our new Diana Award recipients who are changemakers for their generation.

"We know by receiving this honour they will inspire more young people to get involved in their communities and begin their own journey as active citizens.

"For over 20 years The Diana Award has valued and invested in young people encouraging them to continue to make positive change in their communities and lives of others." ■



Virtual concert goes global

Air cadets tuned up for a virtual symphony of music which set the airwaves pumping across the world. Scores of cadets from across the UK performed from their own homes due to the COVID-19 lockdown and their composition of Toto's song 'Africa' definitely hit the right note.



Even Sky News and British Forces Broadcasting Service picked up on the musical initiative and ran the uplifting story as the talented cadets absolutely proved that distance was no object when it comes to playing music together.

They managed the online performance using nothing but a click-track and recorded using their mobile phones. That was then edited by volunteer staff.

Inspiring

Principal Clarinetist, Cadet Flight Sergeant Annabel Garrod, 17, from Lincolnshire said: "It has been a truly unique and inspiring experience that has given us all hope and a huge sense of achievement during these strange times.

"It was incredible to work as a team despite the distance between us all.

"It's definitely shown the potential we have as a band when we are next able to come together in person, but we also hope it's brought a smile to everyone's face."

The video of the performance went viral overnight, reaching more than 55,000 people worldwide within the first 24 hours then extending to an audience of 150,000 globally.

The National Concert Band of the RAF Air Cadets was meant to be marking its 25th anniversary over Easter weekend with a public concert, performed at the end of a week-long residential camp. When the lockdown was brought into force, the band had to devise a new plan.

Enthusiasm

A virtual ensemble was formed by National Concert Band's Director of Music, Squadron Leader Steph Godwin and the organisation's Bandmaster, Warrant Officer James Whicher.

The enthusiasm of the cadets and their parents enabled many of the challenges imposed by social distancing to be overcome, such as the inability to rehearse and record together and the

fact that some cadets were new to the band and had never met in person.

Without some percussion instruments at home, cadets even improvised using pans and a box.

Proud

Former Commandant RAFAC, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty said: "I could not be prouder of the way in which our cadets, volunteers and staff have responded so positively to the loss of face-to-face activity whilst we all join in the national fight against COVID-19 and support the NHS and other services.

"This week, thousands of air cadets would have been enjoying camps and activities across the UK, including music.

"Such is the spirit and positivity of our young people, they have overcome the odds to create a wonderful performance, all playing from their homes, dressed smartly in their uniforms and displaying their amazing talents.

"I am so proud of them all and hope this performance brings joy to many." ■



Images: Crown copyright

First Poseidon Aircraft delivered to the RAF

The RAF's new submarine-hunting Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) has touched down for the first time in the UK.

The MOD is investing £3 billion in nine state-of-the-art jets which will enhance the UK's tracking of hostile maritime targets, protect the British continuous at-sea nuclear deterrent, and play a central role in NATO missions across the North Atlantic.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: "The arrival of the world-class Poseidon aircraft marks a step-change in the UK's maritime patrol capability.

"Using the world's most advanced sensors and operating for long periods, these aircraft will transform the quality of intelligence available to our armed forces and protect our vital nuclear deterrent."

Following an unveiling ceremony in Seattle, the aircraft, which will be operated initially by 120 Squadron, was flown to Naval Air Station Jacksonville in Florida where RAF personnel are being

trained to operate the aircraft which is already in service with the US military.

On arrival Michelle Sanders, DE&S Delivery Team Leader, signed the paperwork to formally transfer the aircraft, named Pride of Moray, to UK ownership.

The aircraft was ordered by the UK to fill in the capability gap lost when the Nimrod fleet was retired from service in 2010.

UK RAF Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Mike Wigston said: "Poseidon is a game-changing maritime patrol aircraft, able to detect, track and if necessary destroy the most advanced submarines in the world today.

"With Poseidon MRA1, I am delighted and very proud that the Royal Air Force will once again have a maritime patrol force working alongside the Royal Navy, securing our seas to protect our nation."

The Poseidon MRA1 aircraft can conduct surveillance missions at both high and low altitudes. The aircraft is equipped with cutting-edge sensors which uses high-resolution area mapping to find both surface and sub-surface threats.

The P-8A Poseidon can carry 129 sonobuoys used to detect enemy submarines and surface vessels and can relay the information they detect back to the aircraft. Once a vessel is detected the aircraft can then transmit its position to the Royal Navy or engage itself using Harpoon anti-ship missiles and Mk 45 air-to-sea torpedoes.

Although operated by the RAF, the aircraft will form a central role in the Royal Navy's capability in the North Atlantic, helping the navy to keep tabs on adversary's ships and submarines in the region that could form a threat to NATO operations.

The fleet will be based at RAF Lossiemouth, Moray, and it is expected all nine P-8A Poseidon aircraft will be received by November 2021. ■



Ex-Cadet touches down

Former 1053 (Armthorpe) Squadron Cadet Warrant Officer and now RAF Master Aircrewman Keith Treece was on board the RAF's newest aircraft for its first flight into Kinloss. Keith, who went on to become an Adult Warrant Officer and Glider Pilot Instructor with the Corps, said: "Almost 10 years ago I was honoured to be part of the crew to fly the very last Nimrod MR2 from RAF Kinloss. Today, I was privileged to crew the RAF's first Poseidon, the future of the UK's Maritime Surveillance Capability, to where it began for me, Kinloss." ■



On Display

by Denise Parker, Head of Media & Communications
Images: Philip Jones

When the time comes for a public showcase, it's smart to plan ahead.

Running exhibitions and displays in the public arena can be a logistical nightmare but, with these tips, you can save yourself a lot of unnecessary hassle and look slick and professional with ease.

So let's start at the very beginning... look at the calendar early each year and - if you can - plot your events.

Next, find out if you will be allocated a specific space or if you can negotiate for a spot with higher footfall. Footfall is

where most visitors walk, for example at a crossroads inside a mall or show ground.

Then ask the event organisers for the size of the display zone so you can decide what type of display boards and props to use.

These days pull up boards are the quick and convenient way of constructing a colourful on-brand exhibition.

They are generally lightweight and convenient handles make them easy to carry if you are not able to park close by.

If constructed in a wide curve they may contain visitors long enough for them to pause a while longer and make key connections leading to recruitment or even sponsorship offers.

All wings, squadrons and CCF (RAF) units have been provided with pull up boards in recent years.

Teamed up with a table and two or three chairs your display will take on new shape and if a WiFi connection is available you're definitely cooking on gas!



Showing visitors a PowerPoint slideshow or video with colourful images of RAF Air Cadet activities, happy smiling faces and clearly outlining the benefits of joining is key to solid fruitful engagement.

Corporate recruitment flyers (download from the hangar at www.raf.mod.uk/aircadets) and perhaps some simple low cost but good quality giveaway merchandise is always extremely useful.

Banner sail flags can help too but watch the weather if outdoors, in particular the wind speed.

The most important feature of your exhibition or display will be the volunteers running it on the day. Never leave this to chance. Hand pick individuals who are good at talking to people.

If you have sales professionals among your volunteers they are likely to be excellent at this kind of work. Cadets who are confident are also a real asset. All in blue uniform of course, although the odd person in flying kit may add to the mix.

People who have wonderful knowledge about the organisation but can't communicate aren't right for this function. Instead choose bright, cheerful

characters who know the organisation well and are not afraid to demonstrate their enthusiasm. It truly can be infectious and before you know it visitors will be flocking to your stand keen to learn more.

Take down contact details from those who want follow up information sent.

You can do this on a laptop for easy storage but be sure to comply with data protection laws. Do not let one visitor see the contact information of the previous person...

Augmenting your display...

If you have enough room you can add a camping scene, a tent, kayak or glider to your display. Be imaginative but safe. Do a risk assessment.

A small flight simulator or at least a pc running a flight simulator programme can attract more attention.

Where do I get kit?

If you don't have enough on your squadron or unit ask your neighbouring squadrons. Wings have marquees too so if you have a lot of space at a county show or air show you may wish to deploy two or three. Arranged in a crescent shape again in they can prove very effective.

What about national events and large shows?

You can borrow equipment which is held in the RAFAC Royal International Air Show storage hangar at Little Rissington. Email: oc.riat@aircadets.org.

Merchandise

Marketing and recruitment merchandise also called "gizzits" are also available for events. Again please email OC RIAT for supplies.

Armed Forces Day

Event such as Armed Forces Day may be run by a regional team, however, a national team can deploy if required. Emails to OC RIAT - 10 weeks' notice is required.

Some units have a knack of creating brilliant displays that cut across all other marketing noise. Don't be afraid to copy their ideas.

Regional and Wing Media Comms Officers are also often the experts in this field so get them involved or ask for their advice.

Make sure that your display stands out from the crowd! ■

Climbing the Iron Paths of the Dolomites

Harness buckled, helmet fitted and karabiner locked, cadets crossed the jagged peaks of the Italian Dolomites, following in the footsteps of Italian and Austro-Hungarian armies who created these 'via ferrata' more than a century ago in World War One.

Words and Images Ft Lt Dave Hill

The via ferrata - 'iron path' - were first fixed to rock faces during the First World War, when Italian and Austrian troops fought ferocious battles on the Italian peaks and needed to get troops and supplies high into the mountains. As these precarious bases were established, they also began to include buildings perched above huge, precipitous drops and an impressive network of tunnels.

This jaw-dropping location was the destination for 22 cadets and eight staff from Sussex and Hants & Isle of Wight Wings who hoped to complete a challenging four-day trek linking several World War One sites as part of a Gold assessed expedition for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

The trek, supported by both the Ulysses Trust and the RAF Charitable Trust, also became known as the Ted Atkins Memorial Walk in memory of accomplished mountaineer and former RAF engineer and 2425 (Nottingham Airport) Squadron cadet, Flight Lieutenant Ted Atkins.

Ted, who had been working on the project with expedition team leader, Ft Lt Dave Hill, died in a climbing accident on Civetta in the Dolomites 12 months before the expedition finally took place.

The cadets, divided into three teams, set out from Piz Ciampei near the majestic high mountain Valparola Pass with the aim of reaching the Col Di Lana, the highest peak of the trek at





2520m above sea level, where there are numerous memorials as well as a church.

Flt Lt Hill said: "The teams faced strong winds and rain once up on the main ridge and had to take cover in a mountain refuge to let a thunderstorm pass before descending into Pia di Livianlongo."

"The descent was tricky as large sections of the route down were still blocked by fallen trees from a cyclone that had hit the area post the staff recce causing massive devastation to roads, paths and infrastructure."

The second day was a more sedate walk contouring the Val de Davedin to a wild campsite on the north bank of the Lago di Fedaiia. However, the final climb over the El Jof Pass was made difficult by more fallen trees.

The route afforded amazing mountain views as well as a sobering glimpse of history as the cadets trekked past an abandoned field gun, as well as numerous caves that had been turned into machine gun or artillery posts.

On the third day, the cadets climbed back up to El Jof Pass but by a less well made path north of the lake. En route a number of outposts were spotted, built into the rock. Again, damage caused by a landslide forced the cadets to adjust their route to reach the campsite at Malga Ciapela, underneath the mighty Marmolada, the highest mountain range in the Dolomites.



Day 4 followed a gorge all the way to Caprille where the damage caused by the cyclone and subsequent flooding was very obvious with large sections of the river bank destroyed and debris everywhere.

On returning to the campsite at the foot of Marmolada, the teams took the gondola up to the top of the mountain where they were able to visit the museum and the network of "ice caves", natural caves in the rocks that were converted into military posts.

Flt Lt Hill said: "It really struck the teams how cold it was with the glacier next door. We were there in late summer so it must have been unbearable in the height of winter with minimal kit and supplies."

The final day was a moderate Via Ferrata climb back at Valparola Pass.



The technique was developed by the Italians to flank the Austrian troops and, although much of the original iron wire has been replaced for safety, evidence still existed of the original routes put in by hand by the soldiers.

Flt Lt Hill said: "In places the route was more of a rock climb than a scramble. Sadly, the teams had to abandon the route just short of the top as rain turned through hail into snow making the climb dangerous. It did give, however, a unique insight into the technique and also took us past the ruins of a World War One military hospital high on the route."

All three teams successfully completed the trek, meeting the conditions for their Gold award, and are now completing the other sections with a view to visiting the Palace to collect their prized Gold awards soon! ■

High Flying Cadets Scoop National Awards

Winners of the RAF Air Cadets' prestigious annual awards competition have been chosen following an exciting 'virtual' Dragons' Den interview process.

The COVID-19 lockdown did not halt proceedings as electronic links made the traditional Dragons' Den system work seamlessly.

And the winners were...

ATC 75 Sword -
best female cadet in the Air Training Corps:
Cadet Warrant Officer Samantha Dutton
146 (Northwich) Squadron, Wales & West Region;

Dacre Sword -
best male cadet in the Air Training Corps:
Jointly presented to -
Cadet Warrant Officer Ivar Morganti
1159 (Edmonton) Squadron, London & South East Region and **Cadet Warrant Officer Benjamin Hudson** 216 (Redditch) Squadron, Wales & West Region

Sir John Thomson Memorial Sword -
best cadet in the Combined Cadet Force (RAF);
Cadet Sergeant Joshua Nicols of **George Herriots School**

to the finals. The candidates for these national awards are simply outstanding - an inspiration to other cadets, our staff and volunteers and an absolute credit to the Organisation, the parent Service and to the UK.

"These top cadets have taken every opportunity the RAF Air Cadets has to offer including gliding and flying, target shooting, camps, international exchanges, adventurous training, cyber and STEM, sport, music, drill, charity work and volunteering and so much more.

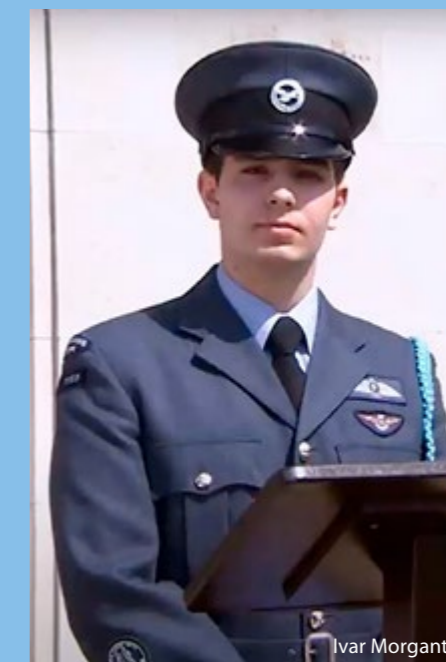
"Perhaps more importantly, they all give so much back to the RAF Air Cadets, mentoring and instructing younger cadets and supporting our hard-working adult volunteers.

"They are the best of British youth and I could not be prouder of them all."

The formal presentation of the swords will take place after lockdown. ■



Samantha Dutton



Ivar Morganti



Benjamin Hudson

On Cloud Nine



A young teenager has become the inaugural winner of a prestigious award presented in memory of a former Air Cadet, whose time with the organisation sparked a high-flying career in the aircraft industry.

Cadet Corporal Will Michael, 13, was announced the winner of the George Latimer Award for Aerospace Excellence, in recognition of the outstanding contribution he has made over the past year to 346 (Tynemouth) Squadron's aircraft recognition team.

And on hand to present the striking new trophy in the shape of a supersonic TSR-2 reconnaissance aircraft at the squadron's annual Sabena Awards, was George Latimer's widow, Janet, and members of his family.

Opportunities

George was an Air Cadet with 346 (Tynemouth) Sqn between 1961 and 1963 and regularly went flying in a De Havilland Chipmunk and on annual camps to the likes of RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire.

His association with the unit ended when he went to work at Heathrow for British European Airways – later British Airways – for nearly 40 years as an aircraft engineer.

However, he never forgot his time as a cadet and the opportunities it opened up to him. When he died at the age of 70 in 2018, his family decided to donate a trophy to the squadron in his memory to inspire a new generation of cadets towards aviation success.

Presenting the award to Cpl Michael, Janet Latimer said: "George would often talk with great affection about his time as a cadet and the drive it gave him to succeed. Being a cadet cemented his fascination with planes and the aircraft and aerospace industries.

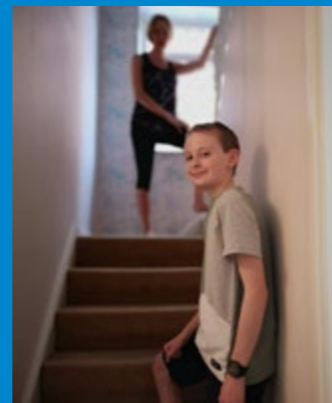
"I know he would be very pleased that his name is living on in this new award and, as a family, we hope it will encourage many more talented young people to move into the aviation and aerospace industries."

Cpl Michael said he was proud to be the first winner of the trophy. "I really love being an air cadet and the opportunities it is giving me. Since joining 346, I have tried so many activities others my age don't have the chance to and have learnt lots of new skills.

"It's the aircraft side that really interests me, though, and being the first winner of this award is a real honour."

Officer Commanding, Flying Officer Adam Whisson, said: "I am especially proud we have now added the George Latimer Award for Aerospace Excellence to our annual roll of honour. It is wonderful that his memory will live on through this trophy, and any cadet winning it can feel justifiably proud that they have shown the hard work, commitment, enterprise and positivity that is his legacy."

The Sabena Awards date back to the 1950s and are named after the former Belgian national airline which donated a trophy for the best all-round cadet, this year won by Cpl Alex Sutherland, 13. ■



Aiming High

Cadet Thomas Halford, 495 (Sutton Coldfield) Squadron, has got his hiking-boots on and is in the middle of an endeavour to climb Mount Everest.

There are no ice-axes or Sherpas in sight, because he decided to do this during lockdown by using his stairs, raising money for a charity close to his family's heart - The Platelet Society.

Tom's challenge is no mean feat, as he has to climb a total of 3,094 flights – that's 40,218 individual steps.

Tom is two weeks into the expedition and is currently resting out at Base Camp, at 17,400 feet.

His mother, Gayle, who is also undertaking the climb, said: "We're on target to finish in a couple of weeks."

She added: "I think we will need a new carpet after, anyway that's what I will tell my husband!" ■

Cadets help out

Omagh & Fermanagh RAF Air Cadets have donated a large quantity of surplus combat uniforms to the community effort to provide scrubs and masks for NHS staff in the front line of the COVID-19 national emergency.

The squadron, based at St Lucia Barracks in Omagh, responded to the urgent appeal to provide NHS staff with vital uniform by donating over 100 sets of surplus combat uniforms held by the unit. ■

New string to their bow!

RAF Air Cadets has a new band – the RAFAC National String Ensemble!

The Ensemble was formed at the end of last year and is looking forward to their first public performance soon.

Under the direction of Squadron Leader Nick Sermon, 15 cadets from ATC and CCF(RAF) units gathered at RAF Cranwell recently for the ensemble's inaugural training camp.

Sqn Ldr Sermon said: "I wanted to offer string players the chance to benefit from the opportunities that are available to players of all other instrument classes across the cadet movement.

"This camp not only allowed cadets to improve their playing abilities but

also allowed some to develop their coaching, conducting and other skills."

Eighteen-year-old Cadet Warrant Officer Melissa Doody from 1082 (Brimington & District) Squadron, who is also a member of the RAFAC National Choir, said: "My time with the National String Ensemble was incredibly enjoyable.

"I was able to play with like-minded people and was able to not only pass on the knowledge I had of ensemble playing but also learn and practise performing with a completely new group of people."

Unfortunately, the Ensemble's much anticipated Easter Camp had to be

cancelled because of the pandemic. However, that has not stopped the music! With some technical wizardry, the Ensemble has produced a number of virtual performances during the last few months that have been uploaded to the Royal Air Force Air Cadets Music facebook page prompting former Commandant Air Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty, to offer her online congratulations.

"Fabulous, fabulous, fabulous," she wrote. "Genuinely brought tears to my eyes to think that we had to miss your concert at Cranwell...so proud of you all!" ■



Words and Images Philip Jones



Words and Images Flt Lt Ben Wakefield

Stepping through the Cadet Portal

Following its organisation-wide release at the beginning of this year, Cadet Portal is now available to the 32,000 cadets across the Air Training Corps.

Cadet Portal is the accredited and approved platform for engaging with cadets online; bringing them information about events, allowing them to update key personal information and giving them direct access to their Progressive Training Syllabus progress. All of this, feeding straight from the Bader Squadron Management System to ensure a single point of data for cadets across the organisation.

Over the last six months, the Volunteer Software Development Team (VSDT), along with the Bader Development Team have deployed Cadet Portal with a structured rollout plan, including front line engagement with 13 key beta testing squadrons.

The 13 squadrons played a key role in putting Cadet Portal to use with their 633 cadets, highlighting any bugs and areas for improvement so that these could be fixed quickly ready for the wider deployment in the months ahead.

The feedback received directly from the cadets was constructive and positive, providing vital information about the cadets' experiences that allowed the team to focus on key areas for improvement.

Following the beta testing phase, Cadet Portal was rolled out to the rest of the organisation in several phases. This allowed the development team to monitor the progress, provide support to cadets and also ensure the increased level of use didn't impact the performance of the servers.

Since the launch, there has been some great feedback from staff and cadets across the organisation, with members of the VSDT delivering demonstrations at staff conferences.

The Squadron Management System (SMS) events module was completely redesigned, giving squadrons the opportunity to publish events and have cadets sign up to them through Cadet Portal.

The nominal roll for the SMS event is then automatically updated with the cadets' bids. Directing staff for that event can then make selections and the cadets are informed both on Cadet Portal and via email.

This has triggered a revolution when it comes to squadron noticeboards with

“ Cadet Portal has allowed our cadets to take ownership of their learning by giving them access to key documents. ”

Plt Off Naomi Easterbrook, OC 1440 (Shoreham) Sqn, Sussex Wing

units maximising on the built-in QR code system for cadets to sign up to events. The event specific QR codes can be accessed from the SMS event Reports menu (look for the sign up sheet which includes the QR code).

Noticeboards are being developed with bright colourful displays with QR codes for each event displayed in chronological order, to digital display systems with rotating QR codes for each event, squadron notices and welcome messages to visitors are all being proudly shared on social media.

Flt Lt Daniel McGlynn, OC 1279 (Melton Mowbray) Squadron, said: “Sharing events with my cadets is really simple; I just go to the event on SMS, decide what I want to share with the cadets and then publish it to them.

“It has completely revolutionised event management on the Squadron and streamlined everything. Cadets get told if they have a place on an event, parents

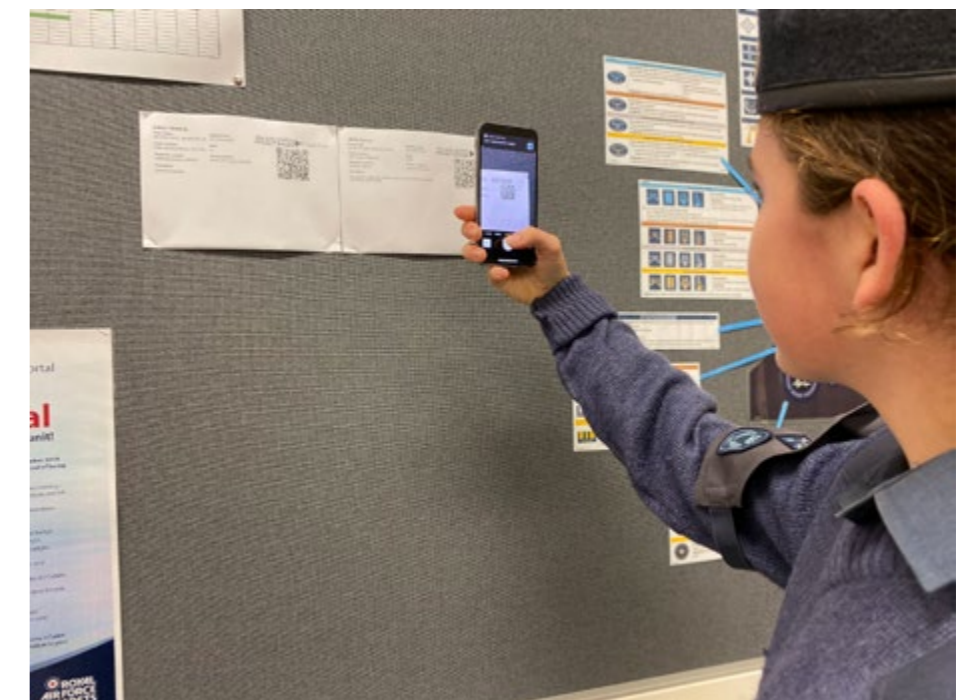
are better informed about what we are offering and the cadets have access away from the the Squadron – it's brilliant!”

Cadet Braddock from 733 (Newcastle Airport) Sqn added: “Cadet Portal is such a helpful feature for all cadets. It is easy to inform your squadron about nights you cannot attend and shows you any events coming up that you may not know about.

“It is useful for those who don't know where certain badges are to be placed on your brassard and how to look after your uniform. Cadets that are less experienced in drill can watch videos which show you how to perform certain manoeuvres which is extremely helpful.

“ I've found sharing the training programme via SMS to Cadet Portal to be very useful in keeping cadets updated and informed. And, if any changes or amendments are required to the programme, these can be updated and viewed by the cadets in real-time as soon as the new version is uploaded in SMS. ”

Fg Off Philip Magee, OC 1248 (Prudhoe) Sqn, Durham & Northumberland Wing





“Overall, I think Cadet Portal is a brilliant feature for everyone across the Wing.”
 Launching Cadet Portal is just the beginning - the work doesn't stop there! The development pipeline continues to grow with the great ideas coming in from across the organisation and the team has recently recruited some new volunteers to help speed up our development, support other projects and improve our communications.

We have appointed Pilot Officer Luke Bateson RAFAC as our Learning Management System Manager to lead the development of a replacement for the

“Cadet Portal is a massive improvement on Squadron Box by making signing up for camps and activities very simple. Also the training dashboard is a great way to keep track of your cadet career.”

Cadet Corporal Sutherland, 346 (Tynemouth) Sqn, Durham & Northumberland Wing

Statistics:
 Since the release of Cadet Portal we have received over 500 items of feedback directly from cadets logged in to Cadet Portal.

Since the final launch on 6 January, there have been over 208,000 active sessions on Cadet Portal.

14,145 cadets have signed up for events using Cadet Portal.

Utilearn system which cadets and staff use to take e-learning courses and tests. Sergeant Joe Clark RAFAC has joined the VSDT as a volunteer developer who will be working alongside the rest of the team to develop and release new features to improve Cadet Portal.

“Cadet Portal is an amazing resource. Cadets on my squadron have started to engage with off squadron activities much more than they had previously when they couldn't see who else was attending.”

Cadet Corporal Iqbal, 398 (Staines & Egham) Sqn, Middlesex Wing

Finally, Flight Lieutenant Ben Wakefield RAFAC has been appointed as Communications Manager to work with both the VSDT and the Bader teams to ensure that the right messages are developed and communicated.

Cadet Portal has been designed so that it is fully responsive and as such can be accessed through a browser on any device with an internet connection. You can also add Cadet Portal directly on to your home screen (and we are working on some custom icons!) in both iOS and Android to make it quicker and easier to access from a mobile device or tablet.

Over the coming weeks and months, the team will be working on further updates to Cadet Portal which will include a new-look events dashboard, improvements to My Brassard and the addition of eligibility criteria for certain types of events.

Mental Health and Resilience Awareness

Mental health problems affect about 1 in 10 children and young people and it's vital that we do all we can both as an organisation and as individuals to end the stigma of mental illness. Over the last few years, mental health has been discussed far more openly and has never been so high on the public agenda. RAFAC is tackling the issue head on.

Words: Katie O'Halloran

RAFAC has embraced mental health and resilience awareness over the last year with more than 50 courses already rolled out for adult volunteers.

A total of nearly 300 volunteers have received training in order to help cadets and fellow instructors including virtual courses delivered by a team of dedicated trainers during lockdown.

Wing Commander David Bentley Miller, the RAFAC Mental Health Awareness lead, said: “The course has a single aim - that is to raise awareness of some of the most common mental health conditions that we may encounter amongst young people and ourselves.

“Then, if necessary, we guide the participant to contact the appropriate and qualified professionals.

“The course feedback is consistently very high and most say that that it should



be made compulsory for all members of the RAFACs. We have stopped short of that and instead, have preferred to say that it is available to all, rather than mandatory.”

Lockdown restrictions

Lockdown restrictions imposed by the Government to keep everyone safe during the COVID-19 pandemic have inevitably brought challenges.

For some the feeling of being unable to escape their home for a few hours every day and enjoy normal freedom to see family, friends and to go to work, the gym, sports clubs or other groups has caused strain.

RAFAC has ensured on its official website that there are links to Mind, SSAFA and to other mental health organisations that can help with the virtual courses

“Outside of cadets, I'm kept busy as Head of Year 9 looking after student behaviour and welfare, so this course has been very useful for my professional and cadet role. To ensure my mental health is good during lockdown - I have started gardening. Taking time out is key and being in the fresh air has helped my well-being.”

Flt Lt Jordan Swaine: OC 250 (Halifax) Sqn

Some Stats...

1 in 10 children and young people aged 5-16 suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder, that is around 3 in every class

- 1 in 4 adults in the UK will suffer a mental health problem in any given year. This will ultimately cause a ripple on a pond effect, by affecting family, friends and others linked to the individual.
- More than half of all adults with mental health problems were diagnosed in childhood. Less than half were treated appropriately at the time.

Finding resilience in me....

Pick a parachute.....

- What things do you do to support your own emotional wellbeing?
- Write these down on your parachute...
- Learn from someone else's parachute ...

What can you do to help?

Listen non judgementally	Acknowledge emotional distress	Encourage individual to identify their own support network and encourage them to access other support	Recognise your limitations and refer to appropriate service for clinical assessment
Explain what is going to happen next	Show care and respect	Ensure that you have time and space to reflect-look after yourself too	

Next steps...

providing an extra safety net for cadets and volunteers.

David said: "For my part, I am very proud to lead this project and it is only possible thanks to a very dedicated team of trained instructors who give up their time to spread the message that we, as an organisation, care not just about their physical well-being, but just as importantly, their mental well-being which is of equal importance.

"I know that through the work we have done we have saved people and that makes it all very worthwhile."

It is fair to say that regardless of whether you are a cadet or an adult volunteer, the last few months have been the strangest of our lives, with the pandemic bringing huge change to the everyday lives of people across the UK and worldwide.

Daily routines changed significantly as everyone except key workers had to stick to the Government's strict guidelines which meant we could initially only mix with people within our households.

RAFAC saw its normal parade nights and activities paused.

Social media and virtual parade nights became the lifeline for many as electronic means of communication became the norm.

“I have been a member of the RAFAC family for nearly 30 years, am a qualified college lecturer and a Mental Health First Aider and trainer. I am passionate about this subject on both a personal and professional level. I have suffered with mental health issues since my teenage years. Now I try and go for daily walks and have taken up knitting to help me keep on top of my own mental health. I would recommend this course to anyone who is considering signing up - you have nothing to lose.”

Sqn Ldr Lynda Waplington-Richards:
S & E Midlands Wing Staff Training Officer

Impact

David said: "2020 has been an unusual year for many of us but we must remember that there are other elements of life that can impact on our mental health.

"Do you ever feel like you are in a great place one day and then wonder why things are so tough the next? Do you thrive under pressure or does it make you become anxious? These are just a few of the topics which are explored in the course."

RAFAC relies on its adult volunteers who give up their spare time to run squadrons and contingents.

“I’m 68, a retired regional manager in the food service and have been in the Corps since 1966. During lockdown and everyday life - a routine is key for me - I keep myself together by getting up at my normal time and have regular meal times. I sometimes retreat to my cabin (man cave) with my cat and spend time listening to music or learning new hobbies.”

Sqn Ldr John Thomas:
No 3 Welsh Wing First Aid Officer

They may seem super-human at times but they are not immune to the stresses of everyday life. They each have their normal lives and jobs before taking on additional responsibilities to help deliver the Air Cadet experience.

David designed the course collaborating with Young Minds, the UK's leading mental health charity for young people. As it rolled out,

“I am a trainee teacher, so this year has been pretty hectic. It was a real shock to the system to stop suddenly when schools were closed! To maintain my own wellbeing, I like to take a walk in my local woods - with or without my crazy collie Marnie! I am also trying to eat healthier and am keeping in touch with friends over video messaging platforms as well as staying in touch with my cadets and staff via Teams during our weekly Virtual Parade Nights!”

FS Liam Ellis: - 2247 (Hawarden) Sqn Training Officer

it instantly became very popular with volunteers.

What we have been doing in the RAFAC is two-fold: raising and developing awareness of mental health needs/issues as well as training Mental Health Awareness instructors.

The training helps adults understand how cadets could be feeling, the issues that impact their everyday lives and how they can provide support. It also helps the CFAVs to cope with any everyday pressures and strengthen their own mental health if they are struggling.

Support

Each ATC wing across the UK now has an instructor who is on hand to provide any support to volunteers who may be facing any issues in their area.

They also deliver awareness training to other adult volunteers and refresher training and there is a core team of permanent staff at HQ Air Cadets dedicated to supporting the mental health agenda and working with other areas of the RAFAC such as sport, adventure training, road marching etc.

The course has been very successful so far and other youth organisations have been working with RAFAC to implement similar training. The demand for sessions has been high and there will be a recruitment drive for more instructors over the next few months.

Do you want to find out more about the course and how you can get involved?

- It is open to all CFAVs across the UK.
- The course is designed to help and assist coping strategies.
- There are sites signposted in case anyone may need them. There are also coping strategies and exercises for people to use if they need to.
- If you would like to find out more about the workshops- please email Squadron Leader Ester-Louise Hall on firstaid.ww@aircadets.org
- Cadets and volunteers can access the Young Minds website - they have some great resources for you to access. They have materials to download or simply provide the ability for young people who are experiencing the same issues to chat with each other through their social media channels. www.youngminds.co.uk

Chad Flies High

A 19-year-old air cadet, who dreams of becoming a fast jet pilot, has received the highest award for flying excellence in the RAF Air Cadets at a special ceremony held at Bentley Priory, the historic home of RAF Fighter Command during World War Two.



Cadet Warrant Officer Chad Dodsworth, of 457 (Farnborough) Squadron, was presented with the RAF Charitable Trust Flying Excellence Trophy plus an additional £5,000 of flying training in recognition of his outstanding flying ability, strong personal qualities and his great potential.

Chad, who has already achieved his Private Pilot's Licence, was one of 11 Air Cadets who learnt to fly after receiving scholarships from RAFCT and the Geoffrey de Havilland Flying Foundation.

He said: "I've always been into aviation and my ideal job would be as a fast jet pilot in the Royal Air Force or flying off the front of ships in the Royal Navy.

"Learning to fly at Tayside Aviation was the best six weeks of my life and I am very grateful to both the Geoffrey de Havilland Flying Foundation and the RAF Charitable Trust for enabling me to grow. For someone who has always wanted to be in aviation this is a dream come true."

Chad said he was particularly inspired by his flying instructor Iskander Pedash. "He pushed me hard but I looked up to him. He was awesome."

The presentation to CWO Dodsworth was one of three trophies awarded at the ceremony. Cadet Flight Sergeant Patrick Mitchell was awarded the John Cunningham Trophy, awarded annually to the Air Cadet who gains the highest marks in all aspects of flying ability; and Cdt FS Harry Karmel received the John Hogg Memorial Prize, awarded to the Air Cadet who is assessed to be the best all-round individual.

A further award, the Thompson Sword, was presented to Grace Dodson, who had been selected as the top RAF cadet in the Combined Cadet Force.

RAF Charitable Trust Director Justine Morton paid tribute to the Air Cadets, saying: "You all had to work very hard to get to this point. The scholarships you received are the pinnacle of the Air Cadet flying experience. You should be particularly proud that you are considered the best of the best."

Last year, RAFCT Trustees awarded nine Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Knight Scholarships to Air Cadets who, in the opinion of the Commandant Air Cadets, display the most promise for a successful career in aviation and previous winners have gone on to successful careers in military and civil aviation. ■

In his father's footsteps...



Success seems to be a Ward family trait, after Cheshire air cadet Alex followed in the footsteps of his father in earning a prestigious award.

Cadet Sergeant Alex Ward of 146 (Northwich) Squadron was recently awarded a Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award exactly 30 years after his Dad earned his.

Richard Ward was also a member of the Air Cadets based in Northwich, achieving his Gold Award in 1990.

Alex completed his Gold award by volunteering as a senior cadet NCO, leading younger cadets. He also completed weekly fitness sessions for his physical section and learned to play the side drum as his skill element.

He undertook a residential week with North Region RAFAC marching band and completed a gruelling four day expedition in some very wet weather in Snowdonia! ■

Life saving cadet



New cadet Finlay Allen from 487 (Kingstanding and Perry Barr) Squadron used his Heartstart training to help a young girl who had collapsed.

Before the emergency services arrived, Finlay, who had only completed his Heartstart training a few months earlier, managed to stop the young girl from choking on her tongue, and safely placed her into the recovery position.

An initiative coordinated by the British Heart Foundation, Heartstart Training is undertaken by cadets during their initial training. ■

Air Cadet Drums up Support

A fourteen-year-old Air Cadet is literally drumming up support for a Milton Keynes hospital charity.

Ollie Simpson from 2366 (Bletchley Park) Squadron has been using his talent as a drummer to raise funds for a local community hospital.

His proud mother, Tracy, said: "Ollie has been drumming since he was six years old and when he joined the Air Cadets he started to learn military drumming with the Squadron's Band and loved it.

"The first week of the 'Clap for the NHS' he went out and drummed and got a massive cheer at the end of it. We were contacted by so many people saying how fabulous he was, so Ollie said he wanted to do it again."

Following that first performance, Ollie was gifted enough money to buy a better snare drum so he decided to donate the money he had been saving himself to purchase a drum to the hospital charity instead.

He also set up a 'Just Giving' account to go the hospital charity and has already raised more than a £1,000.

To top it all, Ollie was awarded a "Local Hero" award by the West Bletchley Council for his efforts on behalf of the charity.



Westminster Award



Congratulations to the 11 RAF Air Cadets who are among the 40 candidates who have made it through to the residential selection event for the prestigious 2020 CVQO Westminster Award.

Having navigated the initial nomination sift and the subsequent challenge, these successful candidates have now booked their place in Somerset and for 10 of them, a trip to South Africa awaits!

A spokesman for CVQO said: "Considering we received the highest number of nominations ever for this year's Award, for these 40 young people it's a phenomenal achievement and one that they should be rightly proud of."

However, the coronavirus pandemic means that CVQO had to make the difficult decision to postpone selection until later this year, with an awards ceremony taking place in December.

"Clearly, this has a knock-on effect on the 2020 South Africa trip that was scheduled to depart in early July," explained CVQO. "This has been postponed until 2021, when we will take this year's finalists along with 2021's, forming a 'double' expedition."

The air cadets who are 2020 selection event finalists are:

Alex Coombe, 233 (Pershore) Squadron; Cameron Steer, 234 (City of Durham) Sqn; Christopher Berridge, 104 (City of Cambridge) Sqn; Ellie Waterman, 54 (Eastbourne) Sqn; Hannah Taylor, 1801 (Alnwick) Sqn; Jess Prentice, 35 (Wetherby) Sqn; Matthew Knox, 2344 (Longbenton) Sqn; Olivia Smith, 102 (Aberdeen Airport) Sqn; Ollie Hales, 158 (Braintree) Sqn; Poppy Cooper, 182 (North Trafford) Sqn and Rory Donoghue, 1094 (City of Ely) Sqn.

Words: Sqn Ldr Mike Blakey
 Images: Philip Jones & Ft Sgt Edward Smart



Mountain Storm Blows away competition

Banff National Park – home to Rocky Mountain peaks, rugged canyons and turquoise glacial lakes. Created in 1885, it's the world's third-oldest national park – and Canada's first – and the destination for 'a proper, good, old-fashioned adventure'. A six-day, unsupported expedition to the wilderness of the northern Rockies in Canada has won the 2019 Shackleton Trophy.

The expedition last summer, which took in the snow-dusted, jagged peaks, scenery-shaping glaciers and restless white water rapids of Banff National Park, was carried out by 14 cadets and six staff from across Wales & West and South West Regions.

Expedition Mountain Storm was just one of six challenging expeditions represented at the 2019 Shackleton Trophy competition held at the Royal Geographical Society in London in November.

The competition was extremely tight as the teams delivered their gripping presentations in the prestigious surroundings of the Ondaatje Lecture theatre on a stage that has hosted many famous explorers and adventurers.

After two hours of competition in front of an audience of 150 guests, including Air Vice Marshal Andrew Roberts (Ret'd) President of the Shackleton Association, AVM Nick Kurth (Ret'd), President of the Ulysses Trust and Mr Geoff Hewett, Deputy Chief of Staff RAFAC, representing the Commandant, the judges returned their verdict.

The remaining five teams were all outstanding and close runners-up.



Despite their disappointment at not clinching the title, they were all able to enjoy their involvement in a remarkable celebration of Air Cadet expeditions which fully recognised the spirit of adventure, endeavour and determination.

The Shackleton Trophy is awarded annually to the Air Training Corps expedition judged to be the most successful, imaginative and adventurous over the previous 12 months.

Its originator was Jim Crail, Chairman of the Shackleton Association, who, through the trophy, thought to link the quality of endurance implicit in the aircraft's name and operations with that demanded from each ATC expedition and representing the Corps motto 'Venture Adventure'.

The trophy has been awarded to some 28 expeditions to date and it continues to inspire a sense of adventure and exploration amongst our cadets and



promotes a greater understanding of global society, social responsibility and the environment.

The distinctive trophy, a model of the famous Shackleton aircraft, is currently held on display at the RAF Club.

The runners-up were: 30(F) (City of Llandaff) Sqn – trekking in the Pyrenees; 2344 (Longbenton) Sqn – trekking in the Swiss Alps; Essex Wing – canoeing on the Ardèche; HQ Junior Leaders – a community project in Ghana and West Mercian Wing – trekking in the Swiss Alps.

Exercise Mountain Storm – some 18 months in the planning – came with many challenges, including one that was

unforeseen in the UK – isolation from the world.

"This meant that we started to learn the other team members low points and quickly managed to lift the mood," said Flight Sergeant Edward Smart. Many team members

struggled with the heat and heavy packs, however, others were always quick to provide encouragement and where necessary, share the load.

"The expedition didn't come without its physical challenges too. Along the way, we experienced difficult terrain, dehydration and broken kit - but all these problems only helped us to work more effectively as a team."

After the expedition, the cadets and staff went white water rafting and horse riding and also visited a glacier to learn more about the impact of humans on the local environment.

The team also spent some time at a bear sanctuary where they met orphaned bears –the victims of bear poaching.

"Although it was amazing to see a bear within an enclosed area of roughly 17 acres," said Ft Sgt Smart, "it was heartbreaking to hear about the many bears that have to be 'destroyed' because of human contact."

The expedition team was also grateful for the help given by the Canadian Air Cadets in Canmore. After networking with them for 18 months before going out to Canada, asking any questions about the area that we had, the team was thrilled to meet up with them, making friends and sharing experiences.

Sgt Lloyd from the expedition team said: "All in all, the trip was better than we could ever have expected. Not only did we gain life skills and experiences in a way that trumps any conventional cadet camp, but we did so whilst meeting some incredible people, and going on a proper good old-fashioned adventure in the most beautiful country on earth."

Exercise Mountain Storm is grateful for the support given by the Ulysses Trust, the Royal Air Force Charitable Trust and Bristol and Gloucestershire Wing. ■

CVQO Graduation Ceremony

Graduates from the RAF Air Cadets were joined by colleagues from the Army Cadet Force, Sea Cadet Corps, Combined Cadet Forces, St John Ambulance and Volunteer Police Cadets.

The 2019 ceremony also welcomed graduates not just of the ILM Level 3, 4 and 5, and City & Guilds Professional Recognition Awards, but also of the recently introduced BTEC Level 3 Award in Education and Training.

CVQO also celebrated the achievements of some of the brilliant VQOs (Vocational Qualifications Officers) who do so much to help deliver qualifications to young people within the Cadet Forces and youth groups every year.

CVQO Chief Executive Guy Horridge said: "Today we welcome graduates in the form of Cadet Force Adult Volunteers as well as direct candidates, from around the UK and beyond, to the home of the British Army where we will celebrate their achievements.

"Excitingly, we also welcome those who have completed our BTEC Level 3 Education and Training qualification this year. CVQO has been running this programme for two years now, so it feels right and proper that they are here with us too.

"Without adult volunteers, we simply would not be able to do what we do. They devote so much of their own time to

running Cadet Force and youth groups around the UK and so it is appropriate that today we can congratulate them and say thank you."

There was additional cause for celebration thanks to a set of awards given to candidates who had submitted exceptional pieces of work:

BTEC Level 3 Award in Education and Training

Lesley Ballard – Kent Wing
RAF Air Cadets

CVQO and the Worshipful Company of Educators Awards for the Most Outstanding ILM Submissions ILM Level 4 Award in Leadership and Management

Mark McPherson – London Wing
RAF Air Cadets

CVQO Awards for the Most Outstanding City & Guilds Submissions City & Guilds Level 5

Oliver Rice – Writhlington School
Combined Cadet Force

City & Guilds Level 7

Level 7 Membership: Mary Brennan
Dorset & Wiltshire Wing RAF Air Cadets

2019 Lord Lingfield Medal

Matt Stewart – Trent Wing RAF Air Cadets

CVQO's Graduation Ceremony for Cadet Force Adult Volunteers and direct candidates has taken place at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.



VIP guests at virtual parade nights

Air cadets have had the chance to meet a host of high-flying VIPs from the comfort of their own homes as parade nights have gone online during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Like thousands of other cadets across the nation, the youngsters from 346 (Tynemouth) Squadron have been staying connected during the lockdown with virtual parade nights.

And alongside their regular lectures and training, the cadets have been joined by a number of special visitors from the world of flying and literature.

Former Red Arrows' team manager Ruth Shackleton; James McMillan, who was the leader of the RAF aerobatic team's synchro pair; Jet2 pilot Alasdair Ness; and best-selling *Horrible Histories*' author Terry Deary have all used their time in isolation to give a series of inspiring talks to cadets.

The livestreams were opened up to units across Durham/Northumberland Wing, with up to 100 cadets each time enjoying the chance to not only hear about each guests' area of expertise, but quiz them about their exciting careers.

Ruth, who now works in the Crew Development Team for leisure airline Jet2.com, chatted about her RAF career during which she served in the Falkland Islands,

as well as on the frontline in Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq.

It also included postings to RAF Northolt where she was a Duty Operations Officer at 32 (The Royal Squadron), arranging VIP flights for the Royal Family, and to Naples, Italy where she spent two years as a NATO HQ Operations Officer.

Special

Ruth said: "I always enjoy meeting air cadets and, given my North East roots, to be invited by 346 Sqn to chat to not just their cadets, but others from across the region, was particularly special.

"I think it is fantastic that the RAF Air Cadets has initiated these virtual parade nights to not only keep the training and interest going, but ensure everyone stays in touch at this difficult time."

James McMillan, who now flies with the Blades Aerobatic Display Team, flew the Harrier and served in Afghanistan, before moving to the Red Arrows, and ending his RAF career as a Flight Commander at RAF Coningsby on the Typhoon.

Alasdair Ness, who is currently a First Officer on the Boeing 737 with Jet2, spoke about his lifelong love of planes and his route into the cockpit, which started as



an engineer with British Airways before putting himself through pilot training.

Terry Deary, who lives in County Durham, enthralled the cadets with his path from acting into writing, and peppered his talk with amusing anecdotes and lesser known horrible historical facts.

Fg Off Adam Whisson, Officer Commanding 346 (Tynemouth) Squadron, said: "It's been great that we have been able to break-up our activity nights with these virtual interviews. They have been very warmly received and we are very grateful to everyone who has taken the time to meet with us, albeit virtually.

At a time when normal life has been postponed for many of us, it has given our cadets a much-needed boost." ■

Unique reminder of a special day



A young cadet who played an important part in helping the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust commemorate the bravery and sacrifice of the Few at this year's annual Memorial Day has been presented with a unique memento.

RAF Air Cadets cadets add to the sense of occasion at Capel-le-Ferne, Kent, each year by providing the major part of the parade that is central to this moving event, as well as supporting the Trust in other ways.

At the recent Parade and Service of Commemoration, 14 year-old Cadet Kalina Maggs, from 99 (Folkestone) Squadron, played an important part by carrying the Polish Airmen's Association Standard.

With a Polish mother and family connections in the country, Kalina was the ideal choice to carry the standard and performed the task very well.

Group Captain Patrick Tootal, secretary of the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust, which looks after the National Memorial to the Few at the clifftop venue, presented Kalina with a framed photograph to remind her of her special day.

"The Trust is proud of its long association with Kent Wing and really values the support provided by the smartly-turned out cadets who attend each year," he said.

"Kalina did a splendid job and we hope this photograph will remind her of her day." ■

RAFAC presents Wings to Youngest Ever Solo Flyer



A teenager from Southport has become the youngest person in the history of the Royal Air Force Air Cadets to receive his Civilian Wings, aged just 14.

Maksim Ferguson received the honour from Wing Commander Eddie Challoner MBE at 611 (Formby) Squadron Air Cadet Headquarters and, coincidentally, on the very airfield where a 14-year-old Air Cadet Eddie Challoner had awaited his first air experience flight in an Avro Anson.

The accolade has seen the RAF Air Cadets review its own rules for bestowing Civilian Wings on promising young pilots; usually recipients are required to be at least 16 years old, the UK's legal age for flying solo in a powered aircraft.

However, as Maksim has already flown solo in Canada – and broke the record to become the UK's youngest person to solo pilot a powered aircraft – he's earned his wings and been awarded the honour two years earlier than any pilot in British history.

The presentation came as a complete surprise to Maksim, who made his first ever solo flight at Spectrum Airways in Burlington, Ontario in April 2019. He has been a member of the Royal Air Force Air Cadets for two years and understood that Civilian "C" Wings are usually only presented to aviators over the age of 16.

Maksim said: "The presentation was one of Wing Commander Challoner's last duties in the RAFAC before retiring and, as he was speaking, I thought how inspiring that he'd once been a 14-year-old cadet like me and had spent a lifetime with the Air Cadets and achieved so much.

"It was only when he started talking about a 14-year-old making history with his first solo flight that I realised that he was speaking about me.

"I was completely taken aback to be awarded my Wings. I'm so grateful for all the support and opportunities that the Air Cadets have given me and getting my Wings feels like a giant step forward in achieving my goals in aviation."

A shining example of the aims of the Air Cadets, Maksim took off in gusty conditions in a Piper PA-28 single engine, four-seater aeroplane for his first solo flight in April 2019. He initially flew a full circuit at Burlington Airfield at a height of 1000 feet, before going on to complete a further 2.5 hours of solo flight time and achieving his Canadian Student Pilot Permit.

His achievements have impressed both the officers and fellow cadets in Formby and across the country.

Presenting Maksim with his badge, Wing Commander Challoner said: "63 years ago, I too was a 14-year-old cadet standing here. I remember at aged 17 having to await my first solo flight and here we have someone who, aged just 14, has already achieved that amazing milestone. This 14-year-old is dynamic, focused and has come into aviation knowing exactly what he wants to do.

"Presenting the "C" Wings badge to Maksim Ferguson is a fitting end to my service as he embarks on what I'm certain will be an extraordinary career in aviation for him. He has an important job to do now; with this badge comes responsibility and I'm sure that he will rise to the challenge of being a role model for other young people."

Flight Lieutenant Peter Tipping, who is also the Officer Commanding 611 (Woodvale) Squadron, said: "Maksim's flying milestone is what the ATC is all about. Our organisation is about flight and encouraging the youth of today to aim high and realise what they achieve.

"Maksim will go far in the Air Cadets and in the wider world of aviation, as he's destined for big things." ■

Best Foot Forward

A new policy, giving cadets the opportunity to advance through a series of progressive awards, has just been introduced to reflect the increased popularity of road marching.



With more cadets than ever putting their best foot forward, The Air Cadet Road Marching Training Instructions (ACRoMaTIs) have been written to offer guidance, support, assurance and safety and are aligned to the Progressive Training Syllabus.

Cadets will be able to earn a series of progressive awards from blue through to gold, aimed at providing opportunities to enhance skills whilst, at the same time, building confidence and developing teamwork and leadership qualities.

The introduction of the ACRoMaTI will also see the appointment of Regional and Wing Road Marching Officers.

Additionally, Road Marching applications now come under a Road Marching activity tab rather than via the Sports or Adventure Training TAB and Regional Road Marching Officers and Wing Road Marching Officers will have access to authorise event applications.

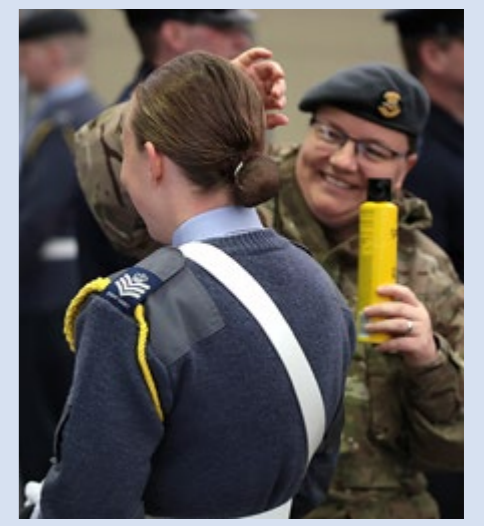
The ACRoMaTI will detail the introduction of the initial blue badge and how it will be introduced into the Progressive Training Syllabus.

RAF Air Cadets Road Marching Officer, Squadron Leader Amanda Evans (pictured) is delighted with the new steps being taken. She said: "Road marching to me is a means of promoting leadership, companionship, exercise, mental endurance, physical endurance and team work.

"I have a passion for road marching and am thrilled to see it being developed further within RAFAC. I look forward to meeting as many staff and cadets as possible whilst undertaking road marching activities."

A veteran of many marches both at home and overseas, including six Nijmegen Marches, Sqn Ldr Evans decided that it was time to 'rekindle' the Black Mountain March - something she remembered fondly from her days as a cadet!

She added: "This No 3 Welsh Wing March is offered to staff and cadets within the Wing and numbers have grown every year. It offers the opportunity for the cadets and staff to not only experience road marching and receive a medal for their achievement but also encourages participation in the 3WW Road Marching Team." ■



Drilled to Perfection



Cadets praised for their immaculate uniforms

“Some of the best shoes I have ever seen...” Those were the words of Flight Lieutenant Thomas Beddow, Deputy Squadron Commander, Officer Commanding Initial Force Protection Training, Recruit Training Squadron, RAF Halton, who was one of the judges inspecting cadets’ No. 2 uniforms at the National Drill Competition at RAF Cranwell.

Each year hundreds of cadets from across the Air Training Corps and sections from the Combined Cadet Forces (RAF) compete against each other for the coveted titles on offer. They all earned their places in the prestigious competition

by winning heats across the UK at Wing and Regional levels.

The competition started with uniform inspections, followed by the Foot-Drill Competition, The Banner Party Competition and the toe-tapping Continuity Arms Drill.

Wales and West Region’s air cadets have been the winners of the Continuity Drill for the past two years running – and continued with their winning ways. They rocked the cold, gloomy hangar at RAF Cranwell with a hair-raising performance of Come Alive from The Greatest Showman.

Warrant Officer Barry Johnson from the Recruit Training Squadron at Royal Air Force Halton said: “It has been great to watch and a fantastic day. T

“The standard of the drill has been exceptional, and you have to be reminded that these are cadets doing this as a hobby in their spare time. The level of performance has been really high.

“I was particularly impressed with the banner drill. I have done quite a few colour parties, so I know the standards we are looking for and they pretty much all nailed it on the head.

“You can see they have taken real pride in their appearances and taken a lot of time prepping - it’s really good to see. It has been a great day and an honour for my team to come over to RAF Cranwell and judge the competition.”

Top honours in both the Banner Party and Foot Drill competitions went to London & South East Region with Cadet

Warrant Officer Megan Breddy from 2419 (Quedgeley) Sqn representing South West Region being named Best Banner Bearer.

The standards of the day were very high, and the bar has been raised for next year’s competition.

Teamwork

When a group of 20 cadets walk on to a parade square they are all individuals, but as soon as a session of drill begins the cadets become a team, following the orders given by one person. Instead of numerous individual feet hitting the

ground, there is only one sound. This is the result of practice and teamwork.

Drill is also used when you are moving around in large groups in a smart, orderly fashion. Whatever the reason for a drill it’s an impressive sight and shows civilians and members of the Forces just how well disciplined you are.

As a cadet you’ll participate in various forms of drill, such as:

- Foot Drill
- Basic Drill (both quick & slow time)
- Banner Drill
- Band Drill

With a few years’ experience and, if you’ve attained a Non-Commissioned Officer rank, you could pass on your knowledge and experience to other cadets, instructing them on how to participate in a drill squad, taking charge of a drill squad yourself, or even playing a major part in ceremonial drill. Being a Standard Bearer at a Remembrance Day parade is a real moment of pride and achievement for a cadet. ■



Parade and drill

What’s the point of drill and parade? You may think it doesn’t have much to do with things like adventurous training, or leadership. That’s not the case at all! It shows how disciplined and organised you can be as an individual, remembering instructions and carrying them out accurately. More importantly, it shows your ability to work in a team and is a way of displaying the high standards of dress and behaviour which air cadets are renowned for.



Words: Katie O’Halloran
Images: Philip Jones



On the Red Carpet at the Pride of Britain Awards

More than 40 Royal Air Force Air Cadets from London & South East Region shared the red carpet at the glittering Pride of Britain Awards ceremony – one of the most exciting television events of the year.

Dozens of celebrities, music superstars and sporting legends all made their way into the Grosvenor House Hotel through a guard of honour provided by some of London & South East Region's top squadrons.

The Pride of Britain Awards recognise the unsung achievements of remarkable people – from the emergency services

and charity fundraisers, to brave young people overcoming extraordinary adversity and illness whilst fighting to raise awareness and support for others.

Pete Markey, Chief Marketing Officer, TSB, one of the partners of Pride of Britain, said: "Pride of Britain is a fantastic way of celebrating the nation's unsung heroes who make a difference to the lives of others."

"It gives us a snapshot of the ordinary people doing extraordinary things to help their communities thrive, and it shows us the power of working in partnership."

"I have found it truly humbling to hear so many stories of bravery, courage and kindness, which are both awe-inspiring and heartwarming."

The glittering awards ceremony, which was celebrating its 20th anniversary, was hosted by television personality, and Ambassador for the Royal Air Force Air Cadets, Honorary Group Captain Carol Vorderman, who invited the cadets to be involved.

The cadets and staff at the event came from squadrons in London, Essex, Kent and Sussex - units which had been selected to represent the Region for



the prestigious RAFAC Lees, Marshall or Morris Trophies.

Cadet Corporal Roberto Afrasinei from 282 (East Ham) Squadron said: "I absolutely loved being at the Pride of Britain Awards. Seeing so many celebrities was inspiring. I never thought I would be standing next to so many famous people. It's only because I am in the air cadets that I got to do this!"

Thirteen-year-old Cadet James Cooper from 40 (Maidstone) Sqn added: "Pride of Britain was an amazing experience. I got to meet lots of celebs but also lots of normal people who have done

great things. It was definitely a once in a lifetime opportunity and an honour to be selected to go."

Cadet Sergeant Amber Cook, also from 40 (Maidstone) Sqn, agreed that it was a huge honour to be at the event. She said: "There were so many inspirational people nominated for awards that we got to see and meet. The squadron stood on the red carpet with pride and greeted celebrities with smiles all round. An amazing night that none of us will forget."

Final words to Flt Lt Simon Taylor, Officer Commanding 2393 (Billericay)

Sqn, who said: "All the cadets found it an immense privilege and honour and thoroughly enjoyed the day."

"From seeing inside the RAF Club to lining the red carpet and seeing many of the stars, including our Honorary Group Captain Carol Vorderman, I believe they were a little star struck but also took the duty with the utmost seriousness, carrying it out with the greatest professionalism. Whilst it was cold, they didn't complain and all wanted to remain on the red carpet for as long as possible." ■

Words and Images: Philip Jones

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." ■

"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

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

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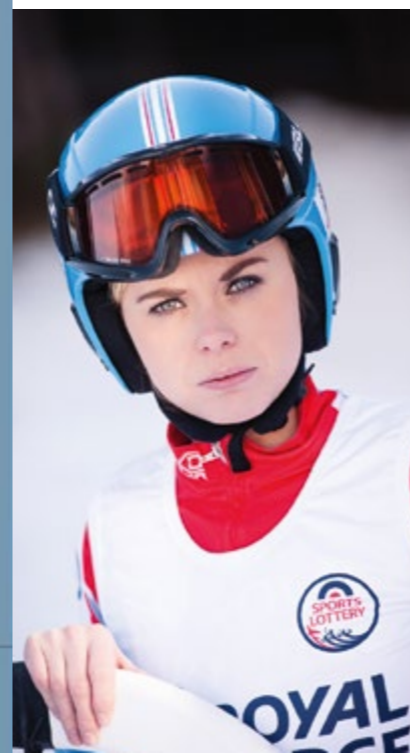
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Visit the website or the RAF Facebook and Twitter accounts to watch videos of Ellie and Lucky show you why their role in the RAF is #NoOrdinaryJob. ■



Honoured

The Royal Air Force Air Cadets is pleased to announce that the following members of the organisation have been honoured by HM The Queen. Congratulations to all of those who have received awards.

MBE

Squadron Leader Roger Beech (retired), Wing Staff Officer, Headquarters No. 1 Welsh Wing, has received an MBE. His award citation notes his outstanding leadership qualities, commitment, dedication and longevity that have provided an inspiration to all. He has spent nearly 45 years as a Squadron Commander, during which he has helped to develop more than 600 young people and provide them with citizenship, leadership and teamwork skills. Through his leadership, his staff and cadets have raised thousands of pounds for a vast array of charities.

On receiving the MBE, Squadron Leader Beech said: "I am normally never one lost for words. My Regional Commandant, Group Captain Simon, certainly silenced me when he told me the news. It's difficult to put into words but gobsmacked would sum it up!

"This award is at the top of my very long career along with when one of my cadets, Cpl Matthew Roderick, opened the Cadet Debate in the House of Lords on the First World War - truly remarkable.

"And that's what Air Cadets is all about - the MBE is something I will always be proud of but also the many cadets that I have met over the years for they have been my inspiration and my reward."

Roger Beech joined 277 (Blackwood) Squadron as a 13-year-old cadet, reaching the rank of Cadet Warrant Officer. He later became a Squadron OC before becoming a Wing Sports Officer and then the Central Sector Commander in the Wing. He finally stood down as OC 277 Sqn after 40 years at the helm. Since then he has served as the president of No. 1 Welsh Wing Sports Council.

Deputy Commander's Cap Commendation

Warrant Officer C J Marsh, Commandant Air Cadets Warrant Officer, RAFAC HQ
Mr KSF Watson for his service as a CI and Adjutant at 1063 Sqn on behalf of L&SER.

AOC 22 Gp Team Commendations

Kent Wing was awarded the commendation for the Nijmegen Team Leaders in L&SER
The Sting Aircraft Project team also received a team commendation on behalf of 2FTS.

AOC's Commendation

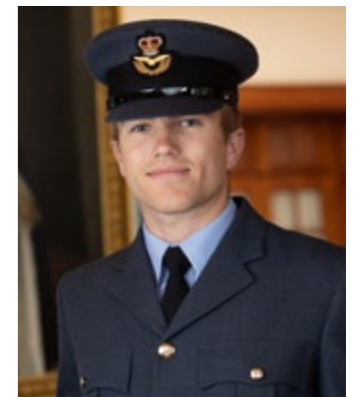
Flight Lieutenant Bell of 637 VGS
Flt Lt Mockeridge of 622 VGS
Warrant Officer Nash, Central & East Wing
Sqn Ldr Ross, Scotland and Northern Ireland Region
Flt Lt Swadling, Middlesex Wing
Mr Webb of 2FTS CGS

Former Commandant Air Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty said: "I am so proud to see another great group of RAF Air Cadets' staff and volunteers gain awards in the Annual Honours List. It's always worth the effort of crafting citations and staffing them through the system to see such special people gain well-deserved public recognition of their efforts.

"My warmest congratulations to all and a heartfelt thank you to every single member of the RAF Air Cadets for their amazing efforts during a very busy year." ■



PO Joshua Davies



FO Martyn Matt



PO Mathew Hillier



FO Jack Webb-Macleod

Four former air cadets were among the RAF's newest officers graduating from Royal Air Force College Cranwell, where His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales was Reviewing Officer for the Sovereign's Review.

In a socially-distanced graduation ceremony, there were no handshakes and the graduates picked up their awards from a table. The graduating officers' family and friends were not allowed to attend the ceremony.

Addressing the new officers, Prince Charles said: "I am immensely impressed that you have all managed to continue with your training and reach this stage, given the complexities that the Coronavirus pandemic has brought to every aspect of life.

"I know that this will not have been easy and is a testament to the flexibility and determination, not only of the staff, but of every one of you.

This same dedication, adaptability and willingness continually to push yourselves will be required time after time in your future careers. The same high standards that you have shown today will form the basis of safe and effective operations in the future, no matter what your role in the Royal Air Force."

After a parade and flypasts of a Typhoon and the Red Arrows, Prince

Charles spoke to graduates gathered in circles at a socially-distanced outdoor reception.

In keeping with tradition, he then planted a lime tree beside the College Parade Square.

Amongst those graduating was Pilot Officer Joshua Davies, 20, a former Cadet Warrant Officer from 83 (St Georges) Squadron in Telford.

The Lord Lieutenants cadet for Shropshire in 2019, Joshua has commissioned as an Air Traffic Control Officer and will now begin the next stage of his training.

He said: "It's a big achievement for me. Standing on College Hall parade square to commission has always been a dream of mine ever since I took part in the Air Cadet 75 parade at RAF College Cranwell."

He was joined by 19-year-old Plt Off Matthew Hillier, an ex-cadet of 2293 (Marlborough) Sqn, who has commissioned as an Air Operations Control Officer.

Alongside them were Flying Officers Martyn Matt and Jack Webb-Macleod,

who have both commissioned as Engineering Officers.

Martyn, 23, was a member of 2262 (Bexhill) Sqn and studied at the University of Southampton for a Masters degree in Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering.

He said: "In these exceptional times it is important to celebrate our graduation in an extraordinary manner. It is a shame not to celebrate with family and friends in attendance, but compared to the sacrifice and hardship so many are going through during this time it is an honour to be able to graduate with a parade at all."

A former cadet with 2070 (Glenfield) Sqn, Jack, 23, studied at Birmingham's Aston University for a Bachelor of Engineering in Design Engineering.

He said: "I am extremely pleased to have commissioned as a Junior Officer in the RAF. It has been an ambition of mine to serve in the Armed Forces since I joined the Air Training Corps.

"I look forward to all the opportunities in store for my future career as an Engineering Officer."



Cadets step up

Royal Air Force Air Cadets, Sergeant Sam Mason and Cadet Neave Williamson of 2070 (Glenfield) Squadron have been helping their local community during the coronavirus outbreak.

Sam jumped at the chance to volunteer at a local company that produces faces masks destined for the NHS and has spent many hours delivering food and medical parcels to those in the local Leicestershire villages who found themselves housebound during "lockdown".

Neave has been working alongside Sam at the Groby and Ratby Community Hub where both have also devoted some of their time on the telephone to those in need of a friendly chat or a reassuring word.

Sam said: "My years in the Cadets has been fantastic. This current crisis has given me a great opportunity to put something back into the community and help those who need it."

The pair have since been featured on Forces Television News, part of the British Forces Broadcasting Service, where they were interviewed about their volunteering.

Neave said: "I really enjoyed the interview and I thought that the interviewer was really nice. We had some good conversations when we weren't filming and she made me feel really confident."

"I loved the fact that I was seeing behind the scenes, especially since journalism is a career path I'm thinking about taking. It was really fun to be involved in something like this and I want to say thanks to the team for being so nice and helping to tell our story in such a positive way."

Search for the Oldest Surviving Air Cadet



The search is on for the country's oldest surviving air cadet.

Squadron Leader Al Munns from Headquarters Air Cadets said: "We are looking for those who were air cadets at the beginning of the Air Training Corps or were members of its predecessor, the Air Defence Cadet Corps (ADCC)

"If you are an air cadet 'veteran' we would love hear from you and perhaps visit you to listen to and record your memories of those early days."

The Air Training Corps (ATC) was formed in February 1941 and many young men from all over the country enrolled with the newly formed school and community squadrons in cities, towns and villages throughout the United Kingdom.

The age of joining in those days was between 16 and 18 years so those who signed on the dotted line at the birth of the ATC would now be in their mid 90's, although some were allowed to start at a younger age should a squadron have the facilities to accommodate them.

The Air Training Corps derived from the Air Defence Cadet Corps (ADCC) that was founded in 1938 by the Air League of the British Empire. Cadets from the ADCC became ATC Cadets when the ATC was formed.

A gentleman who joined the ADCC at the age of 13 in 1938, and became an ATC cadet in 1941 has asked if he could be "the oldest surviving air cadet?" It was decided to "test the water" and so inspired us to instigate a search for Air Cadets from that period.

The gentleman in question is Ken Muddimer. Ken began his cadet career at No 1 (City of Leicester) ADCC Squadron which became No1F (City of Leicester) Squadron, Air Training Corps,

Ken was invited to visit his old squadron one evening recently to see today's cadets and to give them an idea of life as a cadet during those early days.

Sqn Ldr Munns added: "After an article covering Ken's visit was published in the press, including Air Cadet magazine, another early cadet has emerged.

We are certain that there are more "founder cadets" out there that could tell us of their experiences in those early days."

If you were an Air Cadet in the early years or know of someone who was, please contact via letter: Headquarters Air Cadets, RAF Cranwell, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 8HB (for the attention of Media & Communications). ■

Lifetime Achievement Award

Congratulations to RAF Air Cadets' Interim Commandant, Group Captain John Lawlor, who has been presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the RAF Sports Awards!

Group Captain Lawlor is the Chairman of the RAF Athletic Association and was nominated for the award 'to mark the dedication he has afforded countless athletes of all abilities over decades of loyal service.'

An athlete, chairman, mentor and advocate, Gp Capt Lawlor has given immeasurable dedication to RAF Athletics spanning more than five decades. During this time, he has seen countless athletes develop and reach their potential, across multiple disciplines, achieving success at national, Olympics and World Championships.

His own performances are littered with success including Marathon times worthy of British championship qualification as early as 1986 through to being crowned British Veteran Marathon Champion in 2011.

His role in strategizing RAF Team Cross country running brought to an end decades of Army dominance in 2011 and the RAF has not lost a team Inter-Services since. And he is a world record holder as part of the RAF100 team of RAF runners, who each ran 10km around the Cosford track accumulating a time of 64 hours, 36 minutes beating the previous record by over four hours.

His citation concluded: "Whether engaging in his muddy track suit with an SAC new to the sport, seeking Elite Athlete



status for our prospective Olympians, pressing for solutions to safety regulations to benefit stations and athletes, or engaging with seniors, Gp Capt Lawlor has been the lifeblood of the Association, without whom we would be deficient in talent, titles, facilities and humility.

"The RAFAA are indebted to Gp Capt John Lawlor for his service and, as an Association, they have been enriched hugely by his contribution." ■

Hounds for Heroes



Air Cadets from Merseyside Wing took part in a pawsome event recently when a couple of canine ambassadors from the Hounds for Heroes charity visited RAF College Cranwell, Lincolnshire.

The charity was one of three main charities supported by the College last year and Acting Commandant, Group

Captain Gordon Bettington, was able to present Allan Parton with a cheque for £2,500 which was raised by Station personnel.

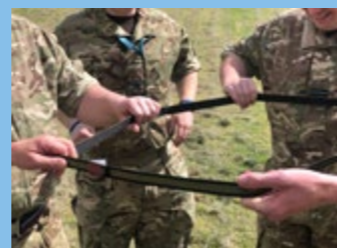
The visit also included an inspiring talk about the amazing work that the charity does to support injured personnel from the military and blue-light services. ■



Managing Director, Mel Ellis

Challenge Academy is a not for profit organisation with a focus on making adventure and active outdoor learning opportunities available to everyone.

Bringing Cadet Training into the Next Generation with **Mobile Equipment**



Managing Director, Mel Ellis, a retired RAF Squadron Leader (Physical Education branch), is highly experienced in making sure leadership development, physical challenge and adventure is accessible to young people, and empowering leaders to deliver engaging and rewarding training programmes.

Over the past 24 months the company has focused on creating bespoke robust training equipment, supporting materials and accredited programmes specifically for the youth sector.

Based in the West Midlands, Challenge Academy initially worked closely with the Central and Eastern region of the Air Cadets in 2016, to realise the requirement and develop the concept. From these discussions, the Mobile Challenge Course was born – a portable obstacle, fitness and team challenge equipment solution offering meaningful training that could be delivered anywhere.

The beauty of the equipment is that it fits into a box trailer and can be

assembled quickly and easily, in a choice of configurations to achieve a variety of outcomes including functional fitness, team challenges and obstacle courses.

The kit is extremely robust but the key to success is about maximising the learning potential of the equipment and empowering leaders to take ownership. Challenge Academy achieves this by delivering high quality and accredited training to key staff as part of the complete solution.

Following a trial by Central and Eastern Region, the Deputy Regional Commander reported: "This equipment has become a leadership and team building 'game changer' for the RAFAC. The quality of training and equipment that is now available to our cadets as a result of the Mobile Challenge Course is in stark contrast to the kit of yesteryear."

The training provides cadet staff with the confidence to build and operate the kit safely and the ability to deliver effective and engaging programmes to

cadets. On completion they also receive the Facilitation Skills for Experiential Learning, a nationally recognised qualification accredited by the Institute of Outdoor Learning (IOL). Since the inception of the partnership, over 60 regional RAF staff have received training on how to effectively use the equipment.

After trialling the equipment, the RAF Air Cadets successfully bid to its charitable trust for additional funding and commissioned a further five trailers to go out to every region across the UK.

Off the back of this 7 (Overseas) Squadron, Jersey and South West Region purchased extra kits and a number of squadrons have purchased 'Bags of Character', a sturdy weatherproof holdall full of ideas and equipment required for 80+ warm-ups, team challenge, reviews and session planning.

Challenge Academy is now working on more solutions for RAFAC so watch this space. For more information contact team@challengeacademy.co.uk

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"This equipment has become a leadership and team building 'game changer' for the RAFAC" Training and Safety Supervisor RAF Air Cadets - Central and Eastern Region

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Alpine Adventure...

Cadets and staff trekked a spectacular trail through the heart of the Alps – but the experience, amidst a world of glaciers and towering, snow-capped peaks, demanded the utmost resilience from every member of the team.

The expedition to the Swiss Alps was organised by West Mercian Wing and included trekking along part of the Chamonix to Zermatt Haute Route, culminating in the ascent of Oberrothorn. The Haute Route is a spectacular and demanding summer hike: a strenuous high-level traverse in the French and Swiss Alps that passes below the summits of 10 out of the 12 highest peaks in the Alps.

Former Commandant Air Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty pulled

on her walking boots and joined 10 young cadets, three members of staff and International Mountain Leader Will Close-Ash.

Arriving in Geneva, the team's first challenge was fitting enough kit for a week into a rucksack, knowing they would have to carry every kilo!

The first stage was only a short trek up to the overnight accommodation at La Sage but even that limited distance – 10km - reminded the team they were now at altitude and that, combined with

the heat, made the first ascent quite challenging.

But, after a night spent in a beautiful, traditional Swiss chalet, the toughest day of the trek was to follow.

The team donned their boots, lifted their rucksacks and began the long ascent up the mountain to Col De Tsate at 2868m.

The day's trek also included a 950m descent to the Moiry lake followed by a 400m ascent to the Cabane de Moiry at the side of the Moiry glacier.



"This was a long, hard slog in high temperatures," said Air Commodore McCafferty, "and the team was relieved to reach the top, only to discover that they had to descend almost the same height they had climbed and then climb again to their overnight accommodation at the Cabane de Moiry - an amazing mountain hut on the edge of a glacier."

Squadron Leader Bill Hoe, Mercian Wing's Adventure Training Officer, added: "The views throughout were truly breathtaking and the experience of sleeping next to a glacier and listening to it creak was one of the experiences of the trip."

The next day the team set off again, retracing their steps to the stunning, turquoise Moiry lake and continuing to cross over the Col de Sorebois at 2847m and descending into Zinal.

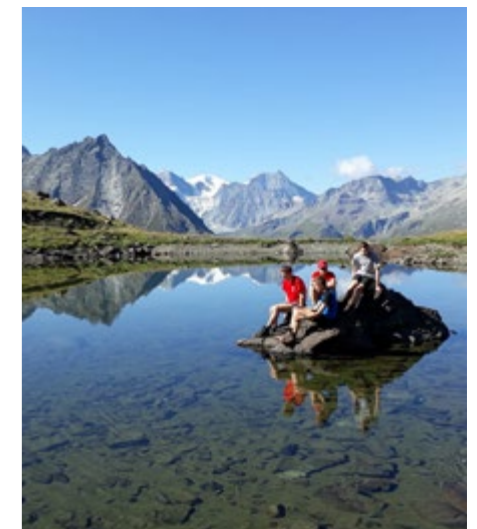
The next leg was the longest of the trip, most of it through woodland, as the team contoured the valley to the Cabane de Bella Tolla. This included another long hard slog up to Forceletta Furgilti at 2874m and perhaps the hardest descent of the trek, with a steep two-hour climb

down through forest paths into the beautiful village of Gruben.

The final leg of the trek, which was considered to be the second toughest day, started with an 1100m ascent from Gruben to the Augstbordpass at 2894m (the highest point of the trek). The team descended to Twara and on to Jungen where the high, rocky, narrow paths challenged several team members' fear of heights. The final experience of the trek was the cable car descending the 2000m to St Niklaus, where the train to Zermatt – and a day of rest - awaited.

The last day of the expedition saw the team climb out of Zermatt and up to a beautiful lake to achieve astounding views of the Matterhorn. It was another hot day and most of the team was ready for the final descent but others wanted to make a final ascent of the Oberrothorn, a mountain above the lake at over 3000m and therefore the highest point of the trip.

Accompanied by Will and the Commandant, the cadets reached the summit with the Commandant's Fitbit clocking almost 40,000 steps that day!



Afterwards, Commandant described her time in the Swiss Alps as "amazing."

She said: The team and I climbed over 5,500m, the equivalent of Mount Kilimanjaro, and trekked 75km, of which only approx 5km was flat.

"I pay tribute to our amazing Mountain Leader, Will Close-Ash, the adult staff and 10 super cadets who accepted me as part of the team and kept me going when the going got tough.

"It was one of the hardest physical and mental challenges I have ever done and I feel very lucky to have been able to complete this with such a lovely group of people." ■

The Team
The team comprised: International Mountain Leader Will Close-Ash, WATTO & Mountain Leader Sqn Ldr Bill Hoe, Adult Staff Sqn Ldr and Flt Lt John and Allison Feast and cadets Cpl Joe Bowkett, FS Alex Bryan, CWO Charlie Howard, Cdt Eva Jones, Cdt Sam Jones, Sgt Harry Kingston, Cpl Amber Leeper, FS Alex Lowe, FS Luke Thomas and Sgt Daniel Wright.

“The squadron is a wonderful asset to the community in Longbenton and is seen as a shining beacon of opportunity for young people.”



Top award for Longbenton

Cadets and staff from 2344 (Longbenton) Squadron have been presented with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK.

The award is considered “the MBE for volunteer groups” and is only presented to those organisations delivering exceptional service within their communities.

The Longbenton unit is one of the biggest squadrons in the North-East with a catalogue of achievements and successes to its name.

It has served the local community since 1956 and, despite coming close to closure in 2008, is now a thriving squadron offering exciting opportunities for hundreds of youngsters from the local area and supporting them to achieve more than 1,000 internationally recognised qualifications.

The squadron was recognised for the impressive way it supports and works with the community and the young people from within the community and has done so for a sustained period of time.

Achievements

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service Independent Committee Chair Sir Martyn Lewis, said: “This year's Queen's Awards highlight the considerable achievements of groups of volunteers who have been making a real impact to the fabric of our country for many years – in some cases decades.

“Inspired by all that is best in the human spirit, they are made up of local people who have come together to address particular issues and problems

facing their communities - often in new and imaginative ways.

“All of these award winners have demonstrated a long-term commitment to volunteering that gives real meaning to society, and which shows Britain at its best.”

Lord Lieutenant for Tyne and Wear, Mrs Susan Winfield OBE, said she was delighted that the squadron had received this prestigious award.

“The squadron is a wonderful asset to the community in Longbenton and is seen as a shining beacon of opportunity for young people who are encouraged to raise their ambitions, develop life skills and succeed,” she said.

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service was created in 2002 to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee and aims to recognise outstanding work by volunteer groups to benefit their local communities.

Officer Commanding 2344 Squadron, Flight Lieutenant Gary Richardson, said: “This award and the recognition it brings is an incredible appreciation of the huge amount of voluntary work gone in to the squadron by members past and present.

“Our cadets, adult volunteers and array of partners all regularly go above and beyond the call of duty to provide the highest standard of training and widest range of activities for all. Thank you to you everyone who has supported us and continues to do so.”



Red 5 logs in

Excited air cadets had a special visitor recently when they were joined by a member of the famous Red Arrows aerobatic display team for a virtual parade night.

Pilot Flight Lieutenant David Simmonds, who is currently Red 5, logged in for the virtual parade night at 495 (Sutton Coldfield) Squadron.

The unit also invited cadets from the neighbouring Combined Cadet Force at King Edward's School, Birmingham and Staffordshire Wing Air Training Corps.

The online event was hugely successful with more than 200 people “attending”, said Civilian Instructor Rubina Begum who organised the session.

Flt Lt Simmonds talked about his flying career, beginning as an air cadet with 118 (Ipswich) Squadron, through to becoming a member of the world renowned Red Arrows.

The event provided a glimpse into the daily life of a Red Arrows' pilot during the rigorous winter training regime and the effect of COVID-19 restrictions on them.

Following his presentation, David took questions from the cadets and he encouraged them to reach for the stars.

Commandant RAFAC, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty, said: “It's so cool that so many members of the RAF and other hugely inspirational people are connecting with cadets virtually to tell their stories and answer their questions. Thanks to all who are linking up.”

Poet Katie Wins Challenge

Cadet Katie Martin is our poetry champion!

Katie, of 878 (Highworth) Squadron, penned “Your Flight has been Delayed” in response to a challenge set by former Commandant RAF Air Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty.

The Commandant asked cadets to write a poem about the situation in which they found themselves as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

Katie, from Dorset and Wiltshire Wing of the Air Training Corps, was declared the winner, followed by three runners up -

- Cadet Corporal Joshua Rowland of 146 (Northwich) Squadron, Merseyside Wing, Wales & West Region;
- Cadet Jack Taylor of 495 Squadron, Warwickshire and Birmingham Wing, Central & East Region and
- Cadet Amelia Brien of 28 (Shawbury) Squadron, West Mercian Wing, Wales & West Region.

Here is Katie's winning entry:

Your Flight has been Delayed

The Royal Air Force Air Cadets your flight has been delayed,
You see a nasty, little virus is now somewhat a plague.
All face-to-face activity has now become suspended,
That is until the virus has at last and finally ended.

Cancelling our AEFs and postponing all events,
This virus is controlling us and we are in repent.
No more planes within the sky or shooting on the ground,
Even the parade squares are not making a sound.
Instead we turn online and this is where we meet,
To discuss our motivation and exams we must complete.

So as I said before cadets your flight has been delayed,
You see a nasty, little virus is now somewhat a plague.
Although you're trapped at home and cannot go outside,
Just know the Royal Air Force Air Cadets are always on
your side.
So listen to the government and heed what they command,
We must all work together and obey their every demand.
For if we just adhere we'll reach the skies once more,
And we will go above and beyond like we did before.
Your Flight has been Delayed

Lightning strikes



The decks of HMS Queen Elizabeth are roaring with the sound of F-35 Lightning jets as the famous Dambusters Squadron landed on the aircraft carrier for the first time for Carrier Sea Training.

Pilots, engineers, cyberspace and mission support staff from 617 Squadron, the UK's operational strike squadron, embarked the carrier over the weekend during a quick stop in Portsmouth for supplies before the four F-35B aircraft themselves landed on board.

It marks the first time 617 Squadron – famously known as the Dambusters – has fully joined HMS



Queen Elizabeth as the UK prepares to deploy the next generation squadron of fighter aircraft to operate from the sea.

The F-35 jets that landed on board will be the same aircraft that will sail

next year with the ship for her maiden Global Carrier Strike Group 21 deployment. ■

Images: Crown copyright

Images: Philip Jones



CCF shine in annual competition

Each team competes in six disciplines; drill, RAF knowledge, aircraft recognition, air rifle shooting First Aid and a command task. In addition there were non-competitive elements including a stand from the Royal Air Forces Association (RAFA) marking the formation of a special CCF Branch, the Royal Air Force's Outreach team and flight simulators that included use of virtual reality headsets.

The final results of 2020's competition were very close with 'count back' having to be used to separate the third and fourth placed teams. In the end, the results were: overall winner - Dulwich College; second place - George Heriot's School and third place - Victoria College.

Team leader for Dulwich College, 18 year old Cadet Warrant Officer William Brilliant, who won the individual RAF

Dulwich College have won the Royal Air Squadron Trophy – the award for the most prestigious competition within the Royal Air Force Sections of the Combined Cadet Force. More than 300 cadets representing 16 CCF(RAF) Sections competed in the national finals, held at RAF Halton.



knowledge prize, said: "Winning was a joint effort. As well as normal CCF parade times, all members of the team have put in a lot of extra practice in the run up to the competition, including weekends as well as some lunchtimes."

Head of the School's RAF Section, Pilot Officer Emily Rutter, added that she was "very proud of the cadets. They have worked really, really hard and should be proud of themselves."

Event organiser, Squadron Leader Roger Taylor, said: "With 16 teams and over 300 cadets and staff, this has been an extremely successful day. It has been thoroughly enjoyed by all and I must thank all of my small team for working so hard."

Former Commandant RAF Air Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty, who was in attendance for most of the day and took time to visit the various stands and talk to cadets and staff, presented the awards.

She paid tribute to the cadets and reminded them that whatever place they came in the day's competition they were the top of approximately 200 CCF(RAF) units around the country and that, in itself, was quite some achievement.

The winners of the drill competition, George Heriot's School in Edinburgh, went on to represent the CCF(RAF) in this year's RAFAC drill completion, competing against a team from each of the Air Training Corps' Regions.

Winning Sections for this competition will meet again at the Shuttleworth Collection's Old Warden airfield later on this year for a formal presentation ceremony by The Royal Air Squadron when cadets will also be given flights in aircraft belonging to RAST members. ■



Keenan's Story - Learning To Fly



Exhilarated - minutes after landing ZE527 on his first solo.

Words by Ken Myers

The RAF Air Cadets unlocks many doors to help young people journey towards a brighter future.

Here one cadet shares his story in the hope of inspiring others to follow their dreams and take every opportunity in this fast-paced world.

Long before he joined the RAF Air Cadets (RAFAC), nine-year-old Keenan Carr was treated to a one-hour flight gift voucher by his family.

The flight took place at Tayside Aviation, Dundee in a Grob Heron

G-BVHE - essentially a Tutor aircraft with a less powerful engine.

After take-off they followed the east coast of Scotland north to Montrose. During this leg and across to Forfar from Montrose, Keenan was – despite his young age – at the controls of the aircraft. Obviously under strict supervision.

He said: "As a child I found it difficult to focus on tasks, my head was usually in the clouds, but when I was in control of this aircraft it was all I could focus

on, I still have this same feeling today when flying.

"The excitement followed afterwards, once on the ground I was elated!"

In 2015, aged 13, he joined 571 (Cupar) Squadron, Air Training Corps. On joining, he became Cadet Keenan Carr and just three months later he was eligible to fly in the RAF's Tutor aircraft and formally start his flying career.

Squeezing in as much flying as he could, he eagerly grasped all opportunities presented to him.

During the June-July summer flying camps at RAF Leuchars, professional flying instructors from No.12 Air Experience Flight would spend significant time getting the most out of their aircraft and flying as many cadets as possible.

Keenan said: "I was in constant contact with the staff who organised cadet places. This was to express my availability on short notice to be at RAF Leuchars station to fly. This is something that any cadets nearby their Air Experience Flying unit can do.

"As a result, each year I averaged three flights during the summer months in my first three years, as well as one at RAF Cosford on my first annual camp.

"By the time I reached my fourth year in the cadets, I had 13 flights to my name and was on track to apply successfully for the RAF Air Cadet Pilot Scheme."

Keenan describes how it felt to be at the controls of an aircraft.

He said: "I felt very competent behind the controls, having learned the basics on my home PC using a flight simulator with just a joystick and throttle. Of course, with that, there was no control feedback or sense of the aircraft movement underneath.

"Flying a simulator relies massively on your sense of sight above all. You really fly with your eyes, watching keenly for the slightest bump which may require you to make a correction.

"On a real flight, the aircraft almost tells you what is happening through jolts of the controls as you hit turbulent air or slight fluctuations in G forces giving you either the feeling of falling or heaviness.

"In this way, it's not all on your eyes to fly the aircraft.

"The feeling is more intuitive than sight and if you've learned solely on sight the added feeling of your other senses is a godsend."

Opportunity knocks

Keenan was promoted to Cadet Corporal in 2017 and more doors began to open for him.

He said: "I was offered the opportunity to experience radio controlled (RC) flying at my local model flying club. This type of flying also afforded me solid and valuable



Soaring in ZE527 ...the day prior to Keenan's solo.

experience relevant in the world of normal flying.

"The Scottish Aeromodellers' Association (SAA) bronze safety award was my first hurdle."

“I became part of the first group of cadets from Scotland and Northern Ireland Region of the Air Training Corps to achieve both of my bronze flying and gliding wings.”

Gaining this qualification, Keenan would be able to fly model aircraft solo and earn him the privilege of instructing other cadets on RC flying.

The qualification involved a solo sortie of a model aircraft, performing various manoeuvres in a safe manner such as figure of eight patterns, loops and rolls.

Keenan said: "The challenge, as with all things in remote controlled model aircraft flying, is remembering that your controls appear reversed when the aircraft is travelling towards you. Thankfully, I adjusted quickly to this.

"Lining up with the runway when you don't have the ability to look from the aircraft perspective takes some getting used to.

"Fortunately, I passed with flying colours and this qualification gave me the

biggest confidence boost experienced in my early cadet career. I saw myself become more and more involved and wanting to instruct others."

To extend his knowledge, he attended Strathaven model aircraft show with fellow cadets from West Scotland Wing.

He learned to fly larger aircraft models and was taught how to manage a show schedule whilst also gaining knowledge from more experienced aero modellers.

"I felt I became a part of the aeromodelling culture - a close-knit group who all seem to be very welcoming.

"No matter where I went, I felt comfortable and confident enough to approach someone with a model aircraft and they would tell me their own tips and tricks of the trade."

Back at his Air Training Corps squadron, Keenan also progressed through the air cadet training syllabus.

He said: "I found the flying badges much easier to achieve using the basic flying principles that I practiced and fine-tuned through remote controlled flying.

"This aided me towards my bronze award in both powered aircraft and gliders.

"I became part of the first group of cadets from Scotland and Northern Ireland Region of the Air Training Corps



In front of Aquila G-TSDA.

to achieve both of my bronze flying and gliding wings.

"I flew in a Vigilant ZH123 aircraft for the bronze wings – part of the RAF Air Cadets' Aviation Training Package."

New challenges

At the age of 16, two further options became open to Keenan - the RAF Air Cadet Pilot Scheme or becoming a Flight Staff Cadet at a Volunteer Gliding Squadron (VGS).

He said: "I was keen to apply myself and go for both."

At an interview with the Officer Commanding 661 VGS at RAF Kirknewton, he relied on knowledge learned from flying remote controlled aircraft.

This supported him well and he became a Flight Staff Cadet on the gliding squadron officially in May 2018 and was soon promoted to sergeant.

During his time at 661 VGS, he went on to complete his method of instruction qualification and became a cadet instructor.

This guided him towards becoming an instructor on the VGS' part task trainer (PTT) flight simulator. The PTT is the cockpit of a Viking glider with three large monitors and controls.

He said: "It allowed me to teach other cadets their classification subjects, ensuring the next generation of cadets learn more and one day hopefully find

themselves in or beyond the position I am in today."

In July of 2019, during Exercise Viking Thunder, Keenan boarded Viking ZE527 and was sent on his first solo flight in a glider.

He said: "It's a moment I will never forget for as long as I live."

Meanwhile, Keenan's application for the RAF Air Cadet Pilot Scheme was accepted and he was given one of five regional placements.

He said: "On the 24th of October 2019 after battling against winds and low cloud, I completed my first solo in a powered aircraft with the RAF Air Cadets.

"Looking down at the ground thousands of feet below me, I thought 'Goal complete'".

On February 28, 2020 he was promoted to the rank of Flight Sergeant.

Keenan aims to dedicate most of his weekends to the volunteer gliding squadron aiming to continue his flying career.

He has also just received confirmation that he has been selected as one of two cadets from South East Scotland Wing who have passed the Wing selection board for the International Air Cadet Exchange (IACE).

He will now go up against others in the Scotland and Northern Ireland Region for one of the prestigious four places on offer to travel abroad and spend time in a



foreign country experiencing their culture and seeing first hand their aircraft and air force.

2020 and beyond

Keenan said: "I am working towards my next and final promotion as a cadet - that of Cadet Warrant Officer - and aim to have successfully completed a Wing interview board by the end of this year – circumstances allowing.

"I am also studying for my two Advanced Highers in English and physics and my higher mathematics and modern studies, I have my work cut out.

"If it wasn't for remote controlled flying, none of my flying and gliding would have been as achievable for me. I recommend to any of my fellow cadets that this is a direction well worth following.

"I don't think I'd be the person or the cadet I am today, without it.

"My plans are flexible, the Royal Air Force has always been my ideal destination. The blue uniform is really a part of my identity now, having built who I am whilst wearing it.

"To be a pilot or air traffic controller would be the dream although I could equally see myself taking the Tayside Aviation Degree Course route and working my way to trying for placement on an airline, perhaps Loganair, landing the Saab 340 at Dundee in front of an ACPS cadet soloing in the Aquila. Only time will tell." ■

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International virtual parade night



RAF air cadets in the UK have enjoyed a high-tech parade night with their Canadian 'cousins'. Although cadets in both nations were under a COVID-19 lockdown they connected electronically for an international virtual meeting across 'the pond'.

Cadets and volunteers of 121 (Nuneaton) Squadron linked up with their Royal Canadian Air Cadet colleagues from 121 Red Arrows Squadron.

Both squadrons were thrilled at the prospect of being able to parade together, joined by former Commandant RAF Air Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty.

During the international virtual parade, 121 Red Arrows Squadron gave a presentation about the Royal Canadian Air Cadets and everyone discussed the similarities and differences between the two organisations.

Air Commodore McCafferty said: "It was great to connect with the Canadian cadets and staff, what a great partnership to enjoy.

"This has been a fine example of people thinking outside of the box to make a parade very interesting for the cadets and it's been yet another first for me.

"I'm passing my best wishes to all staff and cadets and I hope they stay safe and well until we can meet again."

Following the parade, Flight Lieutenant Paul Hincks, OC 121 (Nuneaton) Squadron said, "We were delighted to have Major Steve Harwood, Captain Crag Miller and their team from 121 Red Arrows Squadron with us on parade this evening and having Air Commodore McCafferty with us made the evening even more special.

"I was really impressed with the presentation skills of cadet WO1 Amy Miller, WO2 Meadow Funkenhauser, FSgt Ehsan Patel and Sgt Marc Whelan of 121 Red Arrows Squadron, who all gave us such interesting presentations on different aspects of the Royal Canadian Air Cadets".

"The friendship and bond between both 121 Squadrons continues to grow and I am delighted to say that we are already planning further joint activities within the brave new world of the Virtual Parade". ■

Olympic Champion Congratulates Cadet



Cadet Toby Caisley was plunged into silence when Olympic, World, European and Commonwealth Champion swimmer Adam Peaty congratulated him on his amazing recovery after an accident.

Peaty, the 24-year-old world breaststroke record holder, sent his good wishes and a signed swimming cap to Toby on overcoming his injuries.

Toby had been badly injured during a Newcastle Swim Club training session, when he received a kick to the side of the head. He was rushed to hospital, suffering from severe concussion, which also led to memory loss.

Toby was cared for in the Major Trauma Ward, for a couple of days, where he made a strong physical recovery. His memory loss, which included forgetting who his parents were, took longer to mend. However, he was itching to get back into the pool! After a couple of weeks' rest, Toby did just that, with his swimming flare and ability winning him backstroke gold at the RAF Air Cadets National Swimming Championships, held at RAF Cranwell, Lincolnshire.

Toby won with a personal best before taking bronze in the freestyle and silver in the relay and finishing fourth in the individual medley.

Upon hearing of Toby's achievements, Adam Peaty sent him a signed swimming cap, which was presented to a very surprised Toby at 2344 (Longbenton) Squadron's dining-in.

"I just didn't know what to say," said 16-year-old Toby. "It was a massive surprise and I was thinking how am I getting this?"

"I just want to say thank you to Adam for his kindness and I'm really thankful for the support from the air cadets; it's helped me whilst at cadets but also outside of the squadron."

Squadron boss, Flight Lieutenant Gary Richardson said; "We are all tremendously proud of Toby and his achievements. Throughout his recent trauma he has maintained his strong sense of humour, ambition and courage and I'm sure this will see him continue to achieve as he grows into adulthood." ■

Marshall Trophy Winners

Cadets and staff from 1297 (Stonehaven) Squadron are celebrating as they have just scooped the Marshall Trophy as the most improved squadron in the Air Training Corps.



They pitched against hundreds of other squadrons across the UK to take the award after a remarkable journey making the unit excel for its young cadets.

Flight Lieutenant George Stephen, Officer Commanding 1297 Sqn said: "This is a huge achievement for 1297 Squadron, and everyone is genuinely speechless from this amazing result!"

"I have always felt so privileged to command such a fantastic squadron where everyone strives to achieve the best they can. But for me, it has never been about winning awards.

"The ATC had such a positive influence on me when I was a cadet and very much shaped who I am today. I've always been deeply motivated to give back to the next generation, an ambition shared by the staff and committee.

"I am immensely proud of the cadets and staff for all their achievements over the last few years. They have all worked so hard and are very well deserving of the Marshall Trophy."

Cadet Sergeant Coel Adams said: "I can't help but feel an immense amount of pride and gratitude. Pride for the heights that our squadron has reached by working together

as a team and gratitude to all members of our squadron for the effort and commitment shown in getting us to where we are now.

"I've been part of 1297 squadron for about five years and saw the squadron fall to three cadets regularly attending and then rise dramatically to 20 cadets. It has been truly amazing to see the tremendous improvements within our squadron."

Cadet Corporal Findlay Sharp, said: "When I heard the news, I was so happy. Everyone at 1297 has worked really hard."

Cadet Corporal Olivia Murray said: "Winning the Marshall Trophy is such an amazing achievement. I have only been a part of the squadron for a year-and-a-half, but even in that amount of time the improvement the squadron has made is incredible under Flt Lt Stephen's leadership."

Cadet Warren Smith said: "Amazing! When I found out that we had won the Marshall Trophy, I felt so proud. I have been a cadet in 1297 squadron now for just over a year, but in that time I have had so many amazing experiences like flying and camps. I can't stop smiling!" ■

A New Duke of Edinburgh's Award Officer has been appointed. Wing Commander Steve Wiggins, the Commanding Officer of Central and East Yorkshire Wing for the past 16 years, has taken over from Wg Cdr Helen Gerrish.



Changes ahead



Wg Cdr Wiggins is a Gold Award holder himself, as well as an accredited assessor, and is looking forward to the challenges ahead in his new role.

He has already met most of the Wing and Regional DofE officers and, after hearing about the County Project, a successful Sussex Wing initiative developed last year, is keen to promote it throughout the organisation.

The County Project evolved from an internal discussion on how Windsor DofE Head Office could greater support the National Operating Authorities (NOAs).

Each DofE operations officer chose a Wing/county within their NOA to support and work towards discovering the best practice to increase DofE involvement.



Approved Activity Providers (AAPs)

If you are struggling to get an expedition off the ground, an Award Activity Provider may be the answer, although there is a cost involved. These are organisations that are licensed by the DofE to provide a range of DofE activities, particularly all elements of the Expedition section.

However, if Squadron Commanders decide to use an AAP to deliver the Expedition section, they must still meet the requirements of the LO (i.e. the ATC), with regards to health and safety, notifications and qualifications.

Sussex Wing was chosen within the RAFAC and a plan of action was devised by Flight Lieutenant Dave Hill, Sussex Wing DofE Officer and William Veats, DofE Operations Officer.

The process was simple - communication. Dave Hill and William Veats attended squadron meetings that were set up to include leaders who are running DofE within their squadrons as well as leaders from at least two squadrons who are not offering DofE to their cadets.

Wing Commander Gerrish said: "They discussed the barriers, myths and difficulties in offering DofE to cadets, and these meetings were interesting, worrying and thought provoking.

"However, by the end of the meetings all concerns were dispelled leaving the leaders confident in being able to offer DofE to their cadets."

Flt Lt Hill added: "One of the first things we did was identify young and enthusiastic staff and senior cadets on squadrons to take the lead and then organised both several training courses through the regional DofE Officer to expand knowledge.

"We also set up regular Wing expedition weekends, over bank holidays mainly, where cadets could do training, practice and be assessed, pooling all the suitably experienced and qualified staff in the Wing.

"These weekends grew in popularity and by the fourth one late last year we had more than 150 cadets (over 25% of the cadets in the Wing) on a weekend in the South Downs, including 12 assessed teams as well as a lot of senior cadets, Gold Award holders themselves, on the delivery team."

At the end of the project, the Sussex stats spoke for themselves. The number of awards started had shot up to 250 - that's an increase of 103 from the previous 12 months - with the number of awards achieved almost doubling during the same period too.

Wg Cdr Wiggins is keen to see the project develop across the Corps. Whilst work has already started in Surrey and Hants and Isle of Wight Wings, he will be working closely with William and the Regional DofE Officers in rolling this out further. ■

Book Review

'Rate of Climb' by Rick Peacock-Edwards

This exciting hardback is an action-packed account of a flyer's life with endless great stories and colourful characters to match.



But once he focused on flying, the RAF and the skies, the world unfolded. Rick enjoyed a distinguished career in the RAF demonstrating skill and leadership during the Cold War and the first Gulf War.

At the same time he continues to have an extensive involvement with the RAF Air Cadets.

He flew on the Air Experience Flights for well over 20 years, especially with No.6 AEF at RAF Benson. Today he sits on RAFAC Industry Forum representing the Honourable Company of Air Pilots and once a year attends the graduation of the Air Cadets Qualified Aerospace Instructors Course (QAIC) and presents the main prize.

Dip into this book over a coffee or dive into it for the weekend!

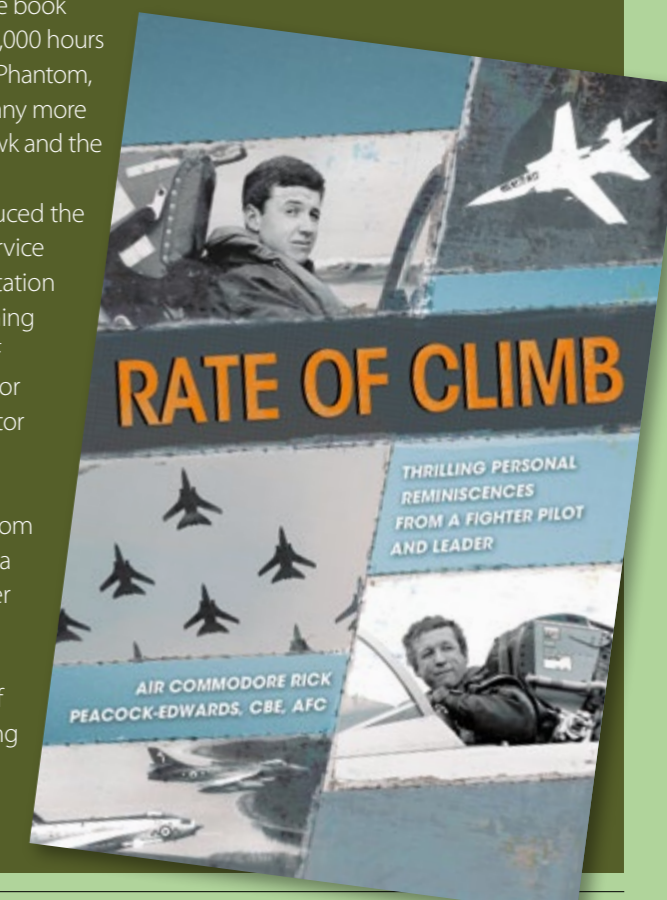
It tells the exciting tales of a fighter pilot and leader which will leave you begging for more!

Air Commodore Peacock-Edwards, as he is today, spent over 30 years in the RAF following an education in South Africa.

This illustrated 192-page book details how he flew over 1,000 hours on each of the Lightning, Phantom, Tornado and Gnat and many more on aircraft such as the Hawk and the Hunter.

He tells how he introduced the Tornado F2/3 into RAF service and eventually became station commander of RAF Leeming, deputy commander RAF Staff Washington, Inspector of Flight Safety and Director of Eurofighter.

This fascinating autobiography takes us from his early life in South Africa as the son of Flying Officer Teddy Peacock-Edwards, a famous Battle of Britain pilot, to the complexity of deciding on a career taking on a different route to flying, via accountancy.



Publisher: Grub Street
Price: £20
Reviewed by: Denise E Parker

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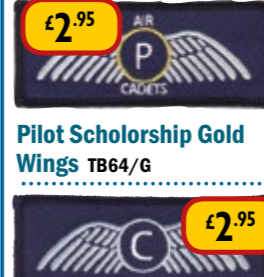
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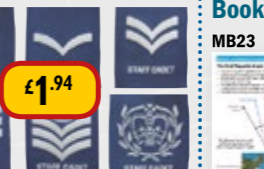
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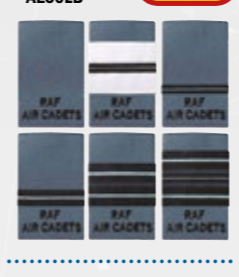
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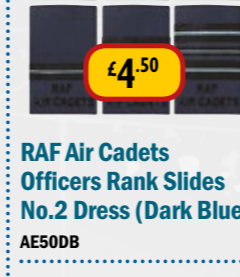
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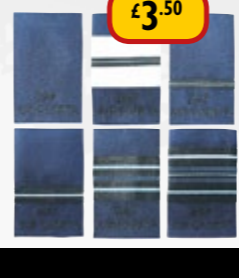
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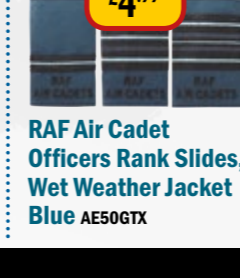
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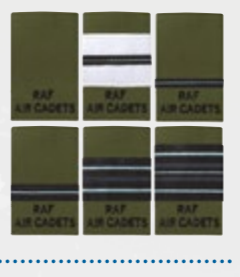
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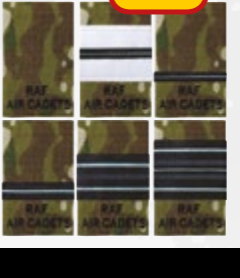
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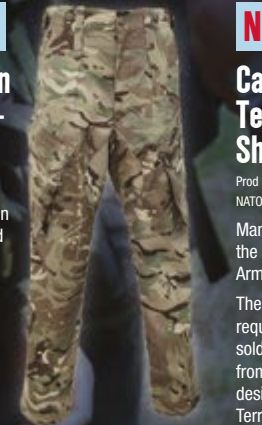
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