

# ARIES

The Magazine of RAF Shawbury

 **ROYAL  
AIR FORCE  
SHAWBURY**

Edition 3  
2024





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Team GB BMX Freestyle riders presented with RAF Shawbury cycling shirts.



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## Editor's Welcome

By Sqn Ldr Tim Mason

As you read this edition of *Aries* magazine, the sun will have set on another British summer. It seemed to be a season of slow starts. Personally, having normally got into various summer activities by end of June, it appeared that very little had been ticked off the 'family list' event by the middle of July. Our home football teams also seemed to relish in frustratingly slow tournament starts and styles of play at the World Cup - although for England this did come of course with yet another so near, yet so far, winning finish!



May, culminating in the RAF Falcons dropping in at the very edge of their wind limits and on one of their first displays of the season. In June, we had two more personnel invited by the Drapers' Company to London, with a very worthy winner of the Drapers' Medal in Warrant Officer Morley. July saw the inaugural Last Night of the Proms Film Tribute night raising over £27,000 for Charity and, in August, RAF Shawbury held

another superb Families Day. It was also great to see Team GB's incredible medal success at the Olympics, including Kieran Reilly's Silver in the BMX Freestyle after the time he spent training at the Station in the lead-up to Paris.

In contrast and what is always obvious at RAF Shawbury, is that there never seems a slowing of the pace of activities and events which our personnel and their families get involved in. As the articles show in this edition, there was no slow start, middle or end to our summer. Our annual Landowners' and Horse Riders Awareness Day was a fantastic success in

These events highlight just some of the hard work and dedication of our Whole Force personnel to make such activities happen. I hope you enjoy reading about them and more in this edition, as well as seeing some of the fantastic images from our 'not so slow' Summer.

# FOREWORD

by Lieutenant Colonel P L Woodhouse MBE cfs AAC – Commanding Officer 9 Regiment Army Air Corps

The Editor has finally cornered me for the foreword of the Aries magazine. I arrived at RAF Shawbury a little over 12 months ago and I can no longer be labelled as an Aries Foreword dodger, it is my turn.



What is not to like about being at RAF Shawbury? We do not work on too many weekends, last minute taskings are unusual, the gym is amazing (big building over the road), Shropshire is better still than I ever imagined, and Shrewsbury has a superb variety of public houses and restaurants.

I graduated from flying training in February 1991. I am closer to death than birth and I am completely content. My focus is on how we train our aviators, everything has changed but what we are training for is pretty much the same. There are plenty of bad folk out there to keep us stimulated but our contract must extend beyond that. Stimulation alone will not defeat a technically smart enemy.

The war fighting podium does not have a second or third place, it is win or lose! I remain convinced that the biggest advantage we have over our adversaries is our fighting spirit, built on aptitude, attitude and culture.

I was asked recently to explain my vision for the next 18 months of command at 9 Regiment AAC. As a Late Entry officer, I struggle with

original thoughts, so I usually borrow the minds of others. In response to the request, I have produced 'The 9 Line'...

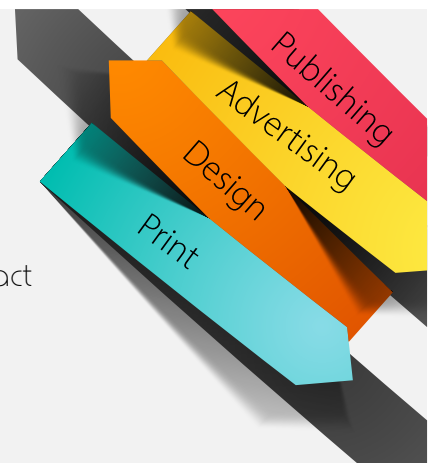
1. Excellence is not an act but a habit (Aristotle).
2. I will not ignore dishonesty, disloyalty or inadequacy.
3. I expect intelligence, hard work, competence, integrity, mutual sacrifice and public duty.
4. Error is a bruise not a tattoo (You must own your error; I will own mine).
5. Have grit, be rigorous and smile.
6. Don't underestimate the power of positivity. Display optimism and enthusiasm.
7. Those that amputate spirit should look for employment elsewhere.
8. Be kind and contribute (Barrack Obama).
9. Respect H Hour.

In addition to 'The 9 Line', I work with some very smart people - by listening to them I reckon I will get out of this assignment unscathed, morally intact and healthy. I will leave you with the thoughts of another smart bloke, "The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new." (Socrates).



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# Battle of Britain Commemoration

On Sunday 15 September, Battle of Britain Day, RAF Shawbury marked the 84th anniversary of the Battle of Britain to remember the fallen and service of our forebears.



*The parade takes the general salute*



*Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire, Air Vice Marshal (Retd) Bunny James*

The Sixty Squadron Standard was paraded, and a service was held at the Quarry War Memorial in Shrewsbury followed by a wreath laying ceremony. Wreaths were laid by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire, High Sheriff of Shropshire, Mayor of Shrewsbury, Station Commander, and Royal Air Forces Association.



*RAF Shawbury personnel march towards the Quarry War Memorial*

# Landowners' and Horse Rider Awareness Day

On 23 May RAF Shawbury was delighted to host over 65 guests at our annual Landowners' and Horse Rider Awareness Day.

The generosity of landowners, who allow us use of confined areas and key features of their land, is critical to No 1 Flying Training School being able to train tri-Service helicopter aircrew with essential skills for UK Defence. The Day allows us to underline their importance to us and to say thank you. As well as hearing

from the Station Commander and Air Operations, our visitors are shown the highly technical simulated training environments used to train helicopter aircrew and air operations professionals of the future.

Equally important is our ability to operate safely over Shropshire and surrounding counties. Horse riders from eight Clubs across Low Flying Area 9 got the opportunity to fly in a Juno helicopter and see first-hand the difference a pilot can see between riders wearing High Visibility clothing and those who are not. This is a key communication and education opportunity as part of our ongoing Be Seen Be Safer Campaign.

After a lunch and lively discussions between Station personnel, landowners



The RAF Falcons Parachute Display Team drop in at the edge of their weather window



No 1 Flying Training School simulators provide a great demonstration of the challenges of flying a helicopter

and horse riders on all things which happen at RAF Shawbury and across our low-flying area, the finale of the day was a fantastic display by the RAF Falcons who dropped in at the very limits of their wind envelope!



The RAF Falcons take the salute from the Station Commander after a fantastic display



Guests preparing to fly in a Juno helicopter from No 1 Flying Training School



Guests and Station personnel gather for lunch in the Officers' Mess

# Families Day

Every year RAF Shawbury holds a Families Day, which is a closed event, to say thank you to the families of our Whole Force for their enduring support and commitment. After a showery start, the blue skies made an appearance and provided the perfect backdrop to the flying displays. The beautiful Rolls Royce Heritage Flight Spitfire PR XIX arguably stole the show, but the families were equally wowed by the Royal Navy Wildcat helicopter and the RAF Shawbury Gliding Club displays.

*The Gliding Club put on a display*



*Not all the action was in the air*



*Vehicles old and new*

Back on the ground there was lots to entertain young and old alike with the gleaming sports car club vehicles, demonstrations from West Mercia Police, face painting, a digger simulator, archery, inflatables, charity stands, craft stands and a range of food outlets. An evening party with Fish & Chips and music rounded off a memorable day. These events do not just happen, the Project Officer and his team should be congratulated on all their hard work and fully deserve the plaudits for a fantastic event.

*Below: Families enjoying the static aircraft display*



*Unmistakeable Spitfire*





# RAF Shawbury's Summer of BMX



RAF Shawbury families enjoying top-level BMX coaching

Amazing displays by BMX professionals at the Community Day

As you can see from the front cover of this edition, RAF Shawbury has had a busy summer supporting Team GB's Olympic BMX Team.

The Station was delighted to provide a venue for British Cycling to build freestyle ramps and to host athletes as they contested for coveted places and trained for the Games.

On 4th July a No 1 Flying Training School Juno crewed by Major John Moreton-Race and Sergeant Sammy Collier made a very special delivery at the end of a training sortie, announcing Kieran Reilly and Charlotte Worthington as the BMX freestyle athletes who

would be representing their Country in Paris. Congratulations to both and especially to Kieran on his fantastic Silver medal success. The discipline and application required of elite athletes mirrors much of the Services' ethos and hence it was our privilege to play even a small part in British Cycling's success at the 2024 Olympics.



Kieran Reilly and Charlotte Worthington receive the good news



Major Moreton-Race and Sergeant Collier dropped in to announce the GB BMX Freestyle Team

Luckily for us, the story didn't end there and British Cycling held a fabulous Community Day on 17th August to thank the Station for its support. This included providing free BMX coaching sessions for children of families serving at RAF Shawbury or neighbouring RAF Cosford, as well as incredible demonstrations by BMX professionals for everyone to watch. The RAF BMX Team also had free access to the ramps which was both a first and a great opportunity for their growing numbers to train on a world-class facility. The ramps were then used to host a National Series Event 24th to 26th August, with top-level club athletes from across the UK competing at the highest levels. Again, this provided some unique spectating opportunities for families and friends of RAF Shawbury and the local community. We are looking forward to more to come.

# Drapers' Company Medal

Warrant Officer Morley from the Defence College of Air and Space Operations and Lieutenant Commander Holley from No 1 Flying Training School were invited to Central London at the request of the Drapers' Company to attend an awards ceremony in recognition of their achievements and contributions in going far and beyond their normal duties. The nominees were escorted by the Station Commander, Wing Commander Jones, who addressed the Drapers' Panel and read out the citations of both candidates.

## The Drapers' Company Background and Links to RAF Shawbury

The Drapers' Company dates back to the 14th Century when a group of merchants came together to promote and protect their trade in the woollen industry. The group grew significantly over time and philanthropy became a core part of the Company. Today the company has evolved into a grant giving organisation that attracts people from all trades and professions. One of the main areas of their focus is education, training and welfare, with the Company providing grants and support to fund endeavours in these areas.



The Station Commander, Lieutenant Commander Holley and Warrant Morley with the Master Draper

The Company also raises awareness of the work carried out by individuals at its affiliated units through an annual awards ceremony, with RAF Shawbury having been affiliated since 2007. Deserving personnel from Units are put forward, with two candidates per Unit being chosen to be presented to the Draper's Panel.

## Awards Presentation

Lieutenant Commander Holley was nominated for the outstanding impact he has had on Royal Naval and Defence

helicopter flying over his 45-year career. As an instructor with over 3700 teaching flying hours and as Head of Standards for the Maritime Air Wing, he has guided and mentored hundreds of instructors. Indeed, the world-leading reputation of No1 FTS instruction draws much genesis from his continuous and dedicated service. Warrant Officer Morely was the eventual winner of the Drapers' Company Medal, being nominated for his exceptional work as RAF Shawbury's Air Cadet Liaison Officer, as well as his support of the delivery of training, social and welfare aims of the UK Cadet organisation as a whole. In 2023 alone, he organised activities which benefitted over 1120 cadets and adult volunteers. His impact on providing opportunities for the next generation and the adult volunteers who support them has been second to none.

After the presentation of medals and certificates, all attendees were invited for lunch with the council members. The day finished with a guided tour of the impressive Drapers' Hall, including all the various reception rooms and splendid formal dining room.



Pictured left: The Station Commander, Wing Commander Jones, reads out the citations for RAF Shawbury's Drapers' Company Medal nominations

# Tag Der Bundeswehr

For the second consecutive year military personnel from all three Services had the privilege of representing 1 FTS at the 'Tag Der Bundeswehr' in Holzdorf Germany on Saturday 8 June 2024.

**T**ag Der Bundeswehr is the German equivalent to Armed Forces Day, comprising of a collection of events across the country showing off the vast array of vehicles, air systems and equipment of the Bundeswehr to the German public. This year, Holzdorf Air invited 1 FTS to participate in their celebration. German graduates of 1 FTS are now stationed at Holzdorf, awaiting training on their future frontline aircraft types.



*Crew No 1 immediately after crossing the channel and landing at Breda international airport*

Members of 2 Maritime Air Wing and 9 Regiment AAC flew a H135

Juno helicopter out to the event, by conducting a two-day European transit across three countries. The transit provided an excellent training opportunity for members of the detachment, for many of whom it was the first time operating an aircraft outside of UK airspace.

The day itself was lively with over 40,000 people visiting dozens of air and ground forces demonstration stands. In addition to this, the crowds had the pleasure of watching many flying displays which were complimented by the sunny conditions throughout the day.

At the end of a long working day, the German hosts finished the event in style when the adjacent A400M transport aircraft deployed its secret weapon, an Air Transportable German bar! After baking in the glorious German sunshine all day and hosting thousands of visitors (including the German Chief of Defence) a chilled beverage was much appreciated by all the team.

The exemplary behaviour and enthusiasm of the 1 FTS representatives was hugely appreciated by the Bundeswehr and made for a fantastic trip. Our German colleagues at Helicopter Wing 64 were extremely good hosts. We look forward to Tag De Bundeswehr 2025 to continue the budding relationship 1 FTS now has with its German colleagues.

*The event in full swing*



*The end of a long day*

# 1 FTS at the Royal International Air Tattoo

I was fortunate enough to be selected to attend RIAT 2024, representing 1 FTS in one of the crews that static-displayed three of our aircraft. In total we took two Junos, one Jupiter and 11 staff from across 1 FTS.

Initially we were taken to the primary social area of the event, known affectionately as 'The Aircrew Tent'. After a full day of hosting the public and the gradual hearing loss after the 10th fast jet display, this was a great place to decompress and enjoy the company of different people and cultures over an ice-cold beverage.

On the Friday we were asked to take part in the 'crew competition'. Here each nation displaying an aircraft were allowed to enter one team of four to compete against each other over



a day of activities, ending with their annual gala dinner. The Gala attendee list comprised of over 650 people, 40 Chief of Air Staffs and many notable personnel from across the aviation industry.

Over the course of the weekend, we met a multitude of different people ranging from young children; air cadets, people my age and those older, all keen to sit in our helicopters. I was genuinely surprised by the interest we had, given the 'spicier' aircraft we were surrounded by. It was great to be able to give back to those happy to listen, to spread the word about RAF Shawbury and to give an insight into the hard work that goes on across Station to train the next generation of helicopter crews.

One thing that stuck with me from the whole event was the speech given by

the Padre at the gala dinner. They highlighted that annually the RAF sets a target of reaching over 500,000 young people through STEM projects; this year we not only achieved this but far surpassed it by reaching up to 1 million. I'm proud to say I've played a small part in what is a large contribution made by personnel from RAF Shawbury towards that goal.

## Sgt Collier



Ready for the Gala Dinner – Including left to right: Lt Andrews; Sgt McCormish, Maj Cooper, Sgt Collier



Left to right: Lt Andrews, Maj Cooper, Sgt Collier, Sgt McCormish

# Recent Graduations

## No 1 Flying Training School achieves another first!

Four Helicopter pilot trainees from the Irish Air Corps graduated alongside 23 tri-Service pilots and rear-crew in May. These were the first Irish Air Corps pilots to be trained by No 1 FTS at RAF Shawbury, representing the culmination of 15 months of training. The Air Officer Commanding Northern Ireland, Air Marshal Sean Reynolds CB

CBE DFC RAF, was the Reviewing Officer and he paid tribute to the success of the Military Flying Training System at RAF Shawbury, as well as congratulating all of those on the Wings parade. RAF Shawbury was delighted to welcome Brigadier General O'Conner, General Officer Commanding Irish Air Corps, to the mark this important occasion.



Brigadier General O'Conner with Irish Air Corps graduates



The Reviewing Officer with graduates

## In July 18 aircrew trainees graduated and were awarded their flying badges.

The Reviewing Officer on this occasion was Major General Michael Keating CBE, Chief of Staff Allied Rapid Reaction Corps. The Major General was a previous commanding officer of 9 Regiment Army Air Corps, which now forms part of No 1 FTS.



Pictured left: The Reviewing Officer with a Royal Navy and Army pilot graduates



The Reviewing Officer with RAF graduates



The Reviewing Officer with Army rearcrew graduates

# 1 FTS

## Out and About

### Wem Access School Community Engagement

On 24 July a Juno and its crew from RAF Shawbury visited Wem Access School, an open access school that is located northwest of the airfield. The crew were on the ground for a couple of hours, during which time the children were able to have a look inside the aircraft, get some pictures and speak to the crew about flying helicopters. Flight Lieutenant Gray presented a Juno print to the school's staff and some STEM 'gizzets' were given to the children in hopes to boost further enthusiasm for the RAF, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths.

It was a great success and really appreciated by the children and teachers alike.

**Flight Lieutenant Gary**



Juno on the ground at Wem Access School

### Weston-under-Redcastle Village Show

On 4 August 2024, a crew of three from 60 Squadron took a Juno helicopter to the annual Weston-under-Redcastle village show just north of RAF Shawbury. There, the crew spoke to show visitors explaining the role of 1FTS and RAF Shawbury, walking them around the Juno helicopter, much to the delight of local children. Events like these are great opportunities for personnel at RAF Shawbury to get out into the community and showcase who we are and what we do.

**Flight Lieutenant Burns**



A dusty arrival at the Weston-under-Redcastle Show



## CHRISTMAS TREE SALE

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### 1st Wem Scouts

1st Wem Scouts started selling beautiful Nordman Fir Christmas Trees in Wem and the surrounding areas as a fundraising idea in 2019. Five years on, and we have grown and grown, now selling around 150 Shropshire-grown trees a year, alongside our tree stands and handmade wreaths & posies, to local people. The funds raised have helped the group grow and thrive, offering amazing experiences to local young people.



Our Scouts get involved with making wreaths and posies, delivering our flyers, selling the trees and love helping to deliver the products directly to people's doors.

We sell at events in Wem, as well as through our website, and offer free delivery to people in Wem and surrounding areas, including Shawbury.

Quality, local products, at a sensible price, raising funds for a worthy cause...what's not to love?!



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# RAF Shawbury Gliding Club (RSGC) take the Aerobatics Ride

Operating close to the limitations of both pilot and aircraft, aerobatics is addictive. It's also a step in mastering precise aircraft control, in pushing your own skills to new heights, and in experiencing the exhilaration of flight like never before.

You may have seen us over RAF Shawbury as we train for and practice our aerobatics routines and this year has been especially rewarding. Ian Gallacher, RSGC Chief Flying Instructor (CFI) is only one of four pilots in the UK authorised to undertake aerobatic instructor coach training and assessments.

But you don't need to be a CFI or aerobatic instructor to take the aerobatics ride. Supported by the RAF Central Fund, our Mechanics Endowment Fund (MEF) Gliding Bursary gets you into the air and develops your flying capabilities regardless of whether you have any previous experience in the air. The flying programme includes a launch to 4000ft to then experience an aerobatic flight and the consequent g-loading on the airframe and body. The MEF flying programme is also planned so that the participants reach a sufficient standard to go solo or carry



Showers overhead as RSGC's Ian Gallacher in the club's ASK 21 runs in behind the tug for his display at the RAF Cosford Air Show.  
Ian Gallacher

on their attendance with the RAFGSA Go Solo Scholarship funding, which is available to students who wish to continue to solo pilot standard.

One person who took the aerobatics ride this summer is club member Laura. Starting her aerobatics journey some 3 years ago, Laura decided to challenge herself by entering her first aerobatics competition, The Saltby Open, held at Buckminster Gliding Club in Lincolnshire. Laura entered the club class, which serves as a starter for those getting into aerobatic competition for the first time, coming first and winning the British Aerobatics Association club class plaque.

Closer to home congratulations to Pilot Officer Charlie McNab, on his first solo at RAF Shawbury Gliding Club. Charlie is attending a Surveillance Foundation



With VR headset, RSGC's Laura Martin, winner of the BAe club class plaque, practices her winning aerobatics routine.

Course at RAF Shawbury, a course that finishes at the end of August when Charlie aims to continue gliding at his nearest RAGFSA club.



RSGC 2 Charlie McNab is congratulated after his first solo by instructor Ch Tech Norm Potts Geoff Catling



RSGC's Laura Martin practices her winning aerobatics routine over RAF Shawbury.  
Ian Gallacher

If this has captured your interest and you want to know more contact: Squadron Leader Franki Kuwan [Franklin.Kuwan100@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Franklin.Kuwan100@mod.gov.uk), or Ian Gallacher [ian.gallacher375@mod.gov.uk](mailto:ian.gallacher375@mod.gov.uk), both of whom will be delighted to answer your questions. Also available on ModNET Skype or Teams. You can also find more details on our website at <https://www.rafshawburygc.co.uk>

# DCASO Dits

## AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TRAINING SCHOOL (ATCTS)

This period has seen another "old JATCC" (Joint Air Traffic Control Course) class graduate, which has left the last (and largest) course in house to finish on a high. The 18 students will be the last incumbent of the course to go through before the dawn of the new course in Jan 25. To that end, ATCTS is working through the final and most challenging parts of the course redesign, whilst maintaining the output of training.

RAF Shawbury also saw personnel from all corners of the Air Operations profession attend the annual Air Ops 5-a-side Football Tournament, fondly

known as "The Fives". Teams from all over Air Ops and Space battled to win the coveted trophy and a year of bragging rights. This year ATCTS made a huge achievement by placing second in the tournament, winning the runners-up prize.

Sadly, we have seen multiple good personalities leaving the Sqn for new postings and new pastures in the big wide world. Flt Lt Crosthwaite will be leaving us to work with our civilian brethren at the Civilian Air Authority (CAA). His time in the service has been exemplary and he will be sorely missed.

## AIR AND SPACE OPERATIONS TRAINING SQUADRON (ASOTS)

It feels like only yesterday that summer was on the horizon yet here we are, coming towards the end of a rather damp June, July, and August for the most part. ASOTS have been surprisingly light on the arrival and departure front for a change; perhaps owing to a high turnover in the previous 6 months. There have been no goodbyes since the last edition; however, we have had two new budding arrivals in the form of Corporal (Cpl) Rhys Hopkins and Cpl Meg Waring. We welcome them with open arms into the world of ASOTS; they will make excellent additions to the team, bringing a wealth of varied experience and knowledge. ASOTS would also like to congratulate future Sergeants Anna Garner, Kieran Garner, Tom 'Chappers' Chapman, and 'Dangerous' Dave Rowe on their recent promotions.

## AEROSPACE BATTLE MANAGEMENT TRAINING SQUADRON (ABMTS)

ABMTS have been very busy over the last few months with many arrivals, departures, courses, and exercises. On 6 June 2024 two Air Specialist Class 1's (AS1's) Matthew Greenslade and Amy Gisborn, organised an event running a small team at St Mary's primary school in Shawbury. The event involved giving a school presentation on D-Day and engaging with smaller groups throughout the day delivering facts and information on general military history.

AS1 Jordan Collings was nominated to participate in a lead program, attending

the RAF lead program induction at RAF High Wycombe. The programme gave him some valuable knowledge and insight on how to develop both himself and his peers for future progression.

An array of sports was participated in throughout the last three months. AS1 Hilton-Jones joined the fishing club and excelled, achieving first place at his first joint services competition. Flight Lieutenant (Flt Lt) Bantges completed the RAFA Ride raising money for charity. Flying Officer Carr Captained the United Kingdom Armed Forces (UKAF)

hockey team winning all 3 games and scoring 4 goals. Flt Lt Hillier led the RAF Motorsport Association (MSA) stand at the Royal International Air Tattoo. Flt Lt Davies has become the safety officer for RAF Surfing beginner's week travelling to various locations of the country to ensure all participants are both safe and enjoying themselves. AS1 Amy Gisborn took part in the Lady's Football Tournament. Cpl Lally was involved in the trade Football team in June, playing multiple matches against other trades and winning 80% of the games played.

Mission Support Flight (MSF) welcomed AS1 Jack Crisp to the team; a very experienced simulator operator, who arrived from RAF Boulmer in July. MSF have unfortunately also had to say goodbye to AS1 Will Cherry who leaves for RAF Spadeadam and AS1 Jack Baldock posted to RAF Lossiemouth. Controller Training Flight (CTF) have lost two amazing instructors, Flight Sergeant (FS) Troy Hamm and Flt Lt Marrison, who have both been posted to RAF Cranwell.



*RAF Motorsport Association (MSA) stand at the Royal International Air Tattoo*



by The DCASO Diarists

## CORPORAL CARL LEIGHTON – NATO SUMMIT EXPO

From 23 to 26 June I took part in the NATO HQ AIRCOM Enlisted Summit 2024 at Ramstein Air Base. I was one of three individuals selected by the Tedder Academy of Leadership to represent the Royal Air Force at the event. The aim of the summit was the development of the enlisted cadre (OR 4-6) and provision of mentoring opportunities for CSEs (Command Senior Enlisted Leader - OR 9). The event will integrate all NATO nationalities, empower the enlisted cadre, and encourage innovative and creative thinking. The event is designed to ensure the enlisted cadre feel valued and provides excellent mentoring and leadership opportunities.

For the main part of the summit, we worked in 8 multi-national teams to consider OPSEC; C2, training



requirements, deception, and innovation. Our solutions were then briefed to CSEL with the best elements from each group forming a brief that was delivered to Chief of Staff Major General Gianluca Ercolani. The summit

was an interesting experience and combined with some good socials with our NATO allies, I'd recommend looking at the Tedder Academy of Leadership page on SharePoint for anyone who is interested.

## KINGPIN



The Defence College of Air and Space Operations main role is to train personnel for the Air Operations profession, but such is the expertise at the College their own personnel are often called to deploy on current operations. Air and Space Ops personnel from RAF Shawbury, RAF Boulmer, RAF(U) Swanwick and RAF Brize Norton frequently deploy to the Control and Reporting Centre (CRC) in support of Middle East Operations at Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina.

The CRC, callsign KINGPIN, is responsible for operations within the

CENTCOM region covering 1.1million square miles. Numerous UK and Coalition nations undertake missions with oversight from KINGPIN, enabling the safe execution of missions, as well as early warning of threats in the operating areas.

A crew of eight, made up of Air Operations Controllers, both Weapons and Air Traffic Controllers, Air Operations Systems Officers and Air and Space Operations Specialists embed themselves within the coalition



Typical KINGPIN Operations Room

team at Shaw Air Force Base to deliver constant Tactical Air Command and Control 365/24/7.

**Flight Lieutenant Thompson-Watts**

# Recent Graduations

The Defence College of Air and Space Operations has recently graduated several courses.

## JATCC 464



*JATCC 464 with Reviewing Officer Air Vice-Marshal Appleton*

Joint Air Traffic Control Course 464 graduated on 24 May. The Reviewing Officer was Air Vice-Marshal Jason Appleton MA RAF. The Bunting trophy was won by Flying Officer Shingler. The Marshall Trophy was won by Flying Officer Shingler. The Alenia Marconi Systems Trophy was won by Sergeant Shave. The Ashwood Trophy was won by Flying Officer Jolly.

## JATCC 465

Joint Air Traffic Control Course 465 graduated on 25 July. The Reviewing Officer was Air Commodore Philip Wadlow BEng (Hons) MA RAF. Head of Strategic Engagement Ministry of Defence. The Bunting trophy was won by Sub Lieutenant Tellam. The Marshall Trophy was won by Petty Officer Farr. The Alenia Marconi Systems Trophy was won by Sub Lieutenant Tellam.

*Pictured below: JATCC 465 with Reviewing Officer Air Commodore Wadlow*



## SFC 24-1



*SFC 24-1 with Air Vice-Marshal Appleton*

Surveillance Foundation Course 24-1 graduated on 7 June. The Reviewing Officer was Air Vice-Marshal Jason Appleton MA RAF.

## FOTC 4

Flight Operations Training Course 4 graduated on 21 June. The Reviewing Officer was Air Marshal Lloyd CBE MSc MA MDA BEng CEng FIMechE. Deputy Chief of the Air Staff.

The Morley Trophy was won by Flying Officer Beer. The Mulvihill Trophy was won by Squadron Leader Laurence.



## ASOSC 16

Air and Space Operations Specialist Course 16 graduated on 25 July. The Reviewing Officer was Air Commodore Philip Wadlow BEng (Hons) MA RAF. Head of Strategic Engagement Ministry of Defence.

The Daren Hucknall Memorial Trophy was won by Air Specialist 2 Braithwaite. The Salesian Trophy was won by Air Specialist 2 Goldsmith.

*Pictured below: ASOSC 16 with Reviewing Officer Air Commodore Wadlow*



*Pictured above: ASOSC 15 with Reviewing Officer Air Marshal Lloyd.*

## ASOSC 15

Air and Space Operations Specialist Course 15 graduated on 21 June. The Reviewing Officer was Air Marshal Paul Lloyd CBE MSc MA MDA BEng CEng FIMechE. Deputy Chief of the Air Staff.

The Daren Hucknall Memorial Trophy was won by Air Specialist 2 Procter. The Salesian Trophy was won by Air Specialist 2 Rees.



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# Ex NORMANDY SWORD

## CFS(H) Sqn staff visit to the Normandy beaches

In May, members of Central Flying School (Helicopter) Squadron made the arduous and treacherous crossing to assault the Normandy beaches. .... to be fair, other than the early start, the crossing from Portsmouth to Ouistreham wasn't especially arduous; unlike 80 years ago, the Channel was very calm and the team were victorious in the Brittany Ferries general knowledge quiz – naturally.

Exercise Normandy Sword was an opportunity for the squadron staff to visit the Normandy coast and gain an insight into D-Day, Operation OVERLORD, and how the Allies gained a foothold into Nazi held Northern France prior to their advance on Berlin.

The first visit was to the Ryes British Military cemetery at Bazenville. Bazenville is 8km east of Bayeux and was liberated on the same day as the Normandy landings on 6 June 1944. The village became the site of an interim Canadian aerodrome. There are nearly 1000 graves, 652 British and Commonwealth from the three services and 335 German.

From here, it was a short journey to the coast and the site of the German



The grave of an RAF pilot

battery at Longues-sur-Mer. This artillery battery, consisting of 4x 150mm and 1x 120mm guns was perfectly located to oppose the landings on 6 June. Its guns were positioned right between Omaha and Gold Beaches. On D-Day, this battery fought a duel with the Allied fleet before it was silenced at sunset. A few miles east along the coast is the town of Arromanches-les-Bains. Arromanches is the site of Mulberry B, the artificial harbour that was pivotal in the operation. Over 2.5 million troops and 500,000 vehicles were landed over a 10-month period. Some of the caissons are still visible out to sea and some you can walk up to on the beach. There is an excellent 360 cinema that tells the story of the landings.

From Arromanches, the team continued east and the last stop of the day, Juno beach. This beach was assaulted by units of the Canadian 3rd Infantry Division. Casualties were high but they succeeded in wresting control from the defending Germans by the days end.

The next day the team travelled west to Omaha beach. Entering the memorial site and walking down the tree-lined path with the birds chirping gives no inkling of the scale until confronted with the immaculate 9,388 white crosses and the 1,557 wall of the missing. The underground museum provides an excellent overview of the planning, training and deception operations.

As the rain set in, the final visit of the day was to La Point du Hoc. This peninsula lies between Omaha and Utah beaches and was the position of six 155mm German howitzers. The area took a huge bombardment from battleships and destroyers before the vertical 100ft cliffs were assaulted by 260 US Rangers. Only 90 from the original assault remained 2 days later, until relieved by the 29th Division. Prior to the return sea crossing, the team's closing stand was at Pegasus Bridge. Securing and holding the bridges across the Caen canal and river Orne at Bénouville were vital in preventing a German counter offensive from west of the river and putting the Merville battery (in range of Juno and Sword beaches) out of action.



A striking D-Day memorial



The team at Pegasus Bridge

An audacious aerial raid in the very early hours of 6 June by Major John Howard's D Company, the Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, was incredible in its courage and skill. Three Horsa gliders were landed silently, just after midnight, having been released 11 nm and 6000ft out to within 70yds of the objective. Pegasus Bridge was seized and the demolition charges diffused in just 10 minutes. With 600 men of 7th Battalion, the Parachute Regiment landing 30 mins later, the crossings were then held throughout the 6 June, under fierce fighting, until further reinforced from the beach landings.

We should all be aware that this year commemorates the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings. There are many films and documentaries telling the story of what took place that day and beyond, but being present at the locations of such a momentous point in history provides a great sense of perspective, and a reminder of the incredible gallantry and sacrifices made.

Lt Cdr Oakes  
CFS(H) Sqn

# 70th Anniversary

Central Flying School (Helicopters) Squadron celebrated its 70th Anniversary on 27 June 2024. With over 60 people in attendance, including the Commandant of the Central Flying School (CFS) and the previous Air Officer Commanding 22 Group and now Deputy Lieutenant of Shropshire, Air-Vice Marshal 'Bunny' James, the anniversary was marked with a formal lunch and a special flypast from the Red Arrows.

In 1953, after the Malayan emergency proved the worth of the helicopter, particularly in the role of casualty evacuation, the CFS was tasked with establishing a unit to study the techniques of helicopter flying. This led to the formation of the CFS Helicopter Development Unit at Middle Wallop in May 1954, some 70 years ago, moving to South Cerney shortly after. Equipped with 3 Dragonflies, the unit was tasked to evaluate instructional techniques and procedures.

In August 1961, the CFS(H) Squadron moved from South Cerney to RAF



*A flypast by three Red Arrow Hawks*

Tern Hill in Shropshire as part of an expansion programme and became a Wing, eventually with three squadrons; two squadrons training basic and advanced phases for both pilot and Qualified Helicopter Instructor (QHI) training, and the third the Standards squadron responsible for QHI re-categorisations and standards for all helicopter units across the three Services.

In 1972, CFS(H) relinquished the basic flying training task to Training Command and became a squadron once again, concerned with the art and science of helicopter instruction. 1974 saw the introduction of the Gazelle, replacing the Sioux and Whirlwind then in use and, two years later, all helicopter training was moved from RAF Tern Hill to RAF Shawbury, forming the CFS(H) that we recognise today.



*Past and present members of CFS(H) gathered to mark the 70th Anniversary*

## Lieutenant Commander Dave Bouyac - Three Up

Lieutenant Commander Dave Bouyac from No 1 Flying Training School was recently successful in his helicopter instructor upgrade assessment, and in doing so, has become the first UK military flying instructor in recent memory (possibly ever) to achieve above average status on fixed-wing piston, fast jet and rotary-wing aircraft. Achieving the coveted A2 Qualified Helicopter Instructor (QHI) or A2 Qualified Flying Instructor (QFI) status requires a lot of hard work and dedication, so to achieve it on three different types is exceptional. While others have achieved the qualification on piston, multi-engine and rotary, none have the fast jet element in their portfolio.

Dave joined the Royal Navy in 1998 and has since had a varied aviation career. He has served in Bosnia and Iraq on the Sea King Mk IV, and Afghanistan on the Harrier GR9. Other roles have included Training Officer and QFI at Elementary Flying Training on the Grob Tutor, Senior Pilot and QFI on the Maritime Aggressor Squadron on the Hawk T1, and Flight Commander and QFI on Advanced Jet Training on the Hawk T2. He is currently a QHI on Sixty Squadron flying the Juno HT1 and Jupiter HT1, teaching student pilots how to fly in the Support Helicopter role prior to them moving on to their allocated Operational Conversion Units.

Having recently been awarded his A2 QHI certificate by Commandant Central Flying School, Group Captain Mike Jordan, Dave said "It's been a real privilege to have had such a varied flying career. The feeling of being a



*Commandant Central Flying School presents Lieutenant Commander Bouyac with his A2 QHI Certificate*

student in the flying training system, with the huge amounts of pressure to succeed, has never left me, so it's been an honour to be able to teach the new trainees coming through and pass on what I've learned. Every day is a school day though, so I can't rest on my laurels!"

# Ascent at RIAT

The Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) in July, once again proved to be a fantastic event, giving Ascent and the UK Military Flying Training System (MFTS) a chance to welcome visitors to their showcase and share with them their enthusiasm for training.

Hundreds of people had a look around four of the UKMFTS training aircraft – including an RAF Shawbury Juno – during the three-day event, meeting pilots and trainees and finding out more about the work of Ascent and UKMFTS. Also our young visitors had a little taste of what it's like to be a pilot, with an opportunity to try out simulated training flight via VR Headsets.



Getting to grips with VR



Dan from Ascent with RAF Air Cadets

An Ascent/UKMFTS promotional video played on screens across the show field, new aircraft 'pylons' gave visitors key facts about UKMFTS aircraft, and dozens of groups of cadets and other young people had a chance to get up close to training aircraft and be inspired to think about future careers.

Ascent's RAF Shawbury General Manager, Simon Vorley, said, "Our attendance at RIAT allowed us to promote our state-of-the-art aircraft, technology and high calibre personnel that make 1 FTS a world class training organisation. Thank you to all who supported our attendance at RIAT and helped to make it such a success."

Ascent was delighted to directly support the RAF's Charitable Trust through this event, which in turn invests across the UK in STEM and outreach.



In the cockpit

The Trust has made over £7m in grants since launching in 2005, and aims to reach 500,000 young people by 2026, inspiring them to fulfil their potential in air, space and technology.



# Heroes on Water: The Aquila Avengers!

The Shrewsbury annual charity dragon boat race hosted by Severn Hospice saw a splash of colour this year as a team of colleagues, dressed as superheroes, competed in the event. The team, known as the Aquila Avengers, took part in three heats, winning their last race and raising over £3000 for Severn Hospice. Despite not making it to the final, their journey was marked by a remarkable improvement and an undeniable sense of fun and philanthropy.



*Superheroes on the River*

The Aquila Avengers, based at RAF Shawbury, rowed together for a cause close to their hearts. Organiser Kevin Lutman brought together a team including Superman, Wonder Woman, Wolverine, and The Hulk, with a goal to raise money for Severn Hospice in the memory of loved ones, some of which were cared for by the charity, namely Bernice Scullion,

Roger Grafton, Reg Stephens, Graham Ashley, Elizabeth Darbyshire and Frank Hayden. The day comprised three heats, each providing the team with a platform to refine their technique and improve their time. In their first outing the Aquila Avengers rowed with enthusiasm but faced challenges in coordination. Their initial time placed them on the lower end of the table, but the team viewed it as a learning experience. For the next heats, and with

growing confidence, the Avengers had a stronger mind set and heightened energy. The team finished first in their final heat, a testament to their determination and camaraderie.

Despite significant improvement and final heat victory the Aquila Avengers did not qualify for the final. However, their journey was far from a disappointment. The true triumph of the day was the team's fundraising achievement. And, as the day came to an end, and the river calmed, the sight of superheroes rowing for an important cause was a reminder of the impact that dedicated individuals can have.



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*Pictured below:  
Dragon boat  
Superheroes*



# Shawbury Fields: A Story of Growth and Resilience

A group of individuals at RAF Shawbury have transformed a once unused and unloved piece of land into a flourishing garden project that is changing lives and fostering a sense of well-being among its participants.

Four years ago, the seeds of this initiative were sown when Warrant Officer Tudor-Smith saw a video of RAF Leeming's recent projects and was inspired by their thriving polytunnel, chickens, and bees. Fuelled by this vision, a team was created, and they embarked on a journey filled with challenges and triumphs as they sought to replicate this model at RAF Shawbury.

The dedicated team succeeded in securing a designated area of land for their project. What once seemed like a distant dream has now become a reality, thanks to the unwavering commitment and perseverance of all those involved.

Today, the fruits of their labour are on full display as ten raised beds stand proudly on the land, each bursting with a colourful array of fruits, vegetables, and herbs. These beds not only provide fresh, organic produce for the tenants but also serve as an area for reflection and respite for those who tend to them. The impact of the RAF Shawbury community project extends far beyond the boundaries of the base, reaching out to touch the lives of the families who benefit from the bountiful harvest grown on the land. For these families, the project is not just about food - it



Station Commander with members of the Shawbury Fields Team

is about empowerment, connecting with nature, and a renewed sense of purpose. The Shawbury Fields project is an example of what can be achieved when individuals come together with a common goal and a shared vision for a brighter, healthier future and all with the simple act of planting a seed.

If you are interested in the project, please get in touch with Warrant Officer Tudor-Smith (Officer in Charge), or Corporal Arkle (Secretary).



Station Commander opening Shawbury Fields



Work party supplied by ABMTS (Surveillance and Weapons trainees)



# Shawbury Military Wives Choir News

## Armed Forces Day Shrewsbury Castle 2024

We had a wonderful day at this year's Armed Forces Day held again in the grounds of the beautiful Shrewsbury Castle. The event was so well attended, and it was lovely to see so many familiar faces from our local Armed Forces community.

Meeting and chatting to three fabulous Chelsea Pensioners was an unexpected highlight of the day and the choir have been invited to perform at the Royal Hospital Chelsea next year.

**Sharon Reardon**

I was privileged to join the Arborfield Military Wives Choir and representatives from six further choirs to travel to Belgium, performing at the Menin Gate, Last Post Ceremony, in May.

There were 45 ladies in total, led by Dan Tickler (Arborfield Musical Director). We performed 'The Poppy Red' and 'Home Thought From Abroad', to a large and appreciative crowd. We were joined by three guest Buglers, from the American Forces. One of their number was a young woman who was the first female Bugler ever to play at the ceremony.

In addition, we performed to over 100 guests at Talbot House (Poperinge), Tyne Cot Cemetery, and the Hooge Crater Museum. It was a very moving and poignant trip and it demonstrated the very best of the Military Wives Choirs ethos of Sing, Share, Support.



*Choir members with Chelsea Pensioners at Armed Force Day*

The trip had its lighter moments, not least when we flash mobbed a group of diners at Talbot House. Whilst they sat quietly enjoying brunch in the garden, they were suddenly surrounded by 45 very excitable and happy ladies who serenaded them with our core song 'Stronger Together'! It was a great moment. We hope to return soon.

**Gwen Marsh**

# Visit to Grinshill Animal Rescue

Over the course of two days, Air and Space Operations Specialist Course (ASOSC) Number 16 volunteered to help at a local animal shelter.

We arrived on the day and were shown around the kennels and cattery, listening to the history of the family run charity, learning about the different kinds of animals they would look after and the challenges they face. We were then introduced to some of the dogs, and as part of the assistance we were offering, took the dogs out in small groups for a nice long walk. By the time we got the dogs back to the kennels, they were pooped! We then helped to build a new agility course, which will be used for training and rehabilitation, as well as good exercise for the more energetic dogs. We spent the rest of the afternoon painting the shelters, trying to make them look as new and as homely as they could be for the animals. It was a great experience from both sides, and the students thoroughly enjoyed it! Historically, ASOSCs would visit Grinshill regularly, and this visit has paved the way for that to resume.



*The Trainees with two of the rescue dogs*



*The Agility Course the trainees helped re-build*

# Ultra Marathon for SSAFA

Earlier this year Flight Lieutenant James Nicholas of Air Traffic Control Squadron completed his 2-part fund-raising challenge for SSAFA (The Armed Forces Charity) in the sport of trail running.

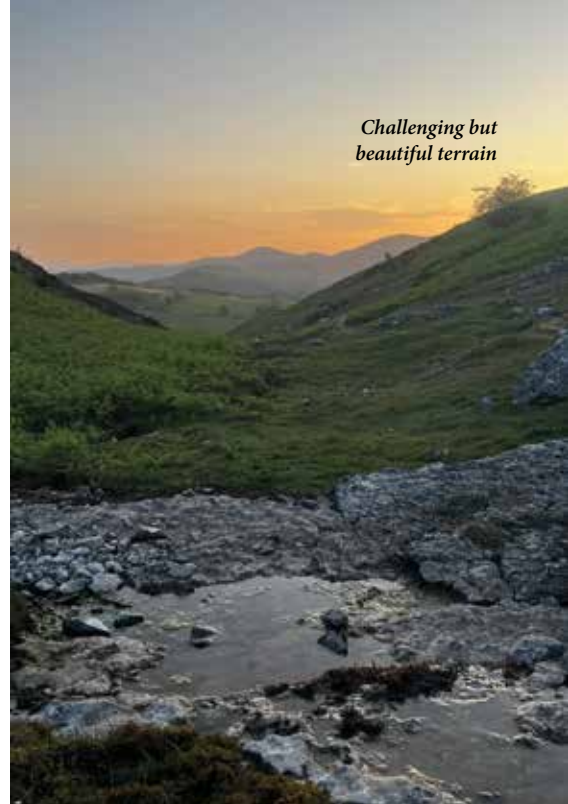


Job done!

In 2023, James set himself a goal of completing both a trail running Marathon and Ultra-Marathon to show his support for SSAFA charity by raising funds and awareness; a charity utilised by him and his family in a time of need. Training with the help of his 6-year-old, juggled with raising a newborn certainly had its challenges.

In September 2023, having only ever completed a 10km trail race prior, he dragged himself over the finish line during the hottest day of the year to finish stage one – the trail marathon. The event was held in beautiful Church Stretton, Shropshire by a local running event company called 'Running Monk Trail Events'. The heat on the day was arguably the biggest factor, it caused many of the athletes to not finish, proving that a little bit of military resilience goes a long way!

In May 2024, after what seemed to be an endless winter, training in arduous wet and cold weather leading up to the event; he completed 50km trail running and could then call himself an ultra-runner. The event was held along the Offa's Dyke Way, which as some will



Challenging but beautiful terrain

know is quite challenging both up and down the Wales/England border! It was a very tough event but made easier with all the support and donations received during both races. James raised over £500 for SSAFA, covering 9000ft (2750m) elevation and nearly 60 miles distance.

<https://www.ssafa.org.uk/>



## WEM TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB



**WEM TOWN FC RUNS 2 ADULT TEAMS PLAYING IN LOCAL COMPETITIONS.**

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In addition, the club has a thriving Junior Section with teams in age groups ranging from under 7 up to under 15. There is also training sessions for younger players from 4 years old and upwards.

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# First Night at the Proms



*Members of The Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment*

RAF Shawbury held a memorable evening in July, First Night at the Proms, featuring The Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment and a very special guest performance by Lucy Illingworth, the highly talented blind pianist who won Channel 4's 'The Piano' in 2023.



*Batman and Storm Troopers greet the guests*



*Lucy Illingworth*

Families and friends donned their evening wear for a tribute to film music. The fantastic event was set against a glitzy backdrop of iconic film characters, cars and aircraft. The hard work of the Project Officer Warrant Officer 2 Bahr and his team paid off in style as the event raised in excess of £27,000 for Scotty's Little Soldiers and the charities and good causes being supported by RAF Shawbury in 2024.



*Cars and aircraft added to the glamour*

# Shawbury Military Wives Choir and RAF Air Cadets support Restart Africa and Lottie's Way

I travelled to Kenya earlier this year in support of the Restart Africa and Lottie's Way charities, taking sports kit to disadvantaged children in the poorest areas of Nairobi and its surrounding area.

**A**s a member of RAF Shawbury Military Wives Choir, the choir members wanted to support the charity and over a few weeks we had filled several bulging bags of donated items of clothing. The bags were collected, sorted into age-appropriate bundles, and counted by Shawbury's 28 Squadron RAF Air Cadets.

1500 items were packed into sea boxes in readiness for the next shipment to Kenya.



RAF Shawbury Wives Choir with Lottie's Way T-shirts

To then witness the huge smiles on the faces of these young people when they receive these items is humbling.

played an important part of the journey this year.

Thank you to the Shawbury Military Wives Choir and the Air Cadets who



# 60 Squadron 'Top Goats' at the Severn Hospice Dragonboat Race

by Lieutenant Treacy

Students and staff from 60 Squadron laced up their trainers, donned their life jackets and tested their rhythm at the annual Severn Hospice Dragonboat Race.

Some 22 members of the squadron spent a rather warm Saturday on the shore of the River Severn. Eager to beat their 2023 time, they discussed tactics and pacing, with the advice of veteran drummer, Flight Lieutenant Cone. Once the crew got their chance, 17 staff and students crewed in and warmed up with the 200m row to the start line. Racing against the 'SWG Sailors', the Top Goats set the standard with 01:10:49, 9 seconds ahead of the next fastest team. After a further two heats, the time stood up to the test, winning the competition for a 3rd year in a row. Of course, it's not all about winning. In the months leading up to the race, trainees on advance rotary training put on breakfast barbeques in the Duke

of Cambridge building in order to raise funds for the charity. On top of this, the team continued to raise money on the day of the race with their team barbeque (kindly facilitated by the finest of German engineering). In total, 60 Squadron raised £4000, and will continue to do so in years to come.



On the river

### Severn Hospice Mission

"Our mission is to provide the highest standards of specialist palliative and specialist end-of-life care through a range of hospice services, 'here and at home', that recognise the individual and their preferences."



60 Squadron 'Top Goats' prevail again



Team mascot!

If you wish to read more, or donate to this worthwhile cause, follow the link below.

<https://www.severnhospice.org.uk/support-us/donate>

## RAF Shawbury Golf Simulator

In June this year, RAF Shawbury had a brand-new Golf Simulator installed which was opened by the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Rich Knighton.



Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Rich Knighton, tries out the Golf Simulator

The high-tech system is a Foresight GC3 Launch Monitor, commonly seen in pro-shops and driving ranges. Since its inception the simulator has seen an exceptional amount of use within its first few months, with personnel signing up to become members. The Golf Simulator membership is open to the Whole Force including dependants and civilian contractors.

All of this would not have been possible but for the hard work of Flight Lieutenant Evan Bridgeman, an Air Traffic Control Trainer at DCASO. He successfully managed to gather funds of more than £21,000 from the incredibly supportive RAF Central Fund, Army Welfare Fund, and the Stn Sports Fund. The simulator can be used for practice play with three driving ranges, or to play one of the 34 world courses available. Golfers of all experience levels are welcome.

**For information on how to join, pricing, booking and location please contact Flying Officer Adam Macey (Sim Mgr) or Flight Sergeant Mike Armitage (Dep Sim Mgr) via MODNet.**

## Wakeboarding Club

### Did you know the Station had a Wakeboard Club?

It's a great afternoon out at 'Wild Shore Delamere', which is where the Stn Cable Wakeboarding club goes once a month on a Wednesday afternoon. A recent visit was a bit of a 'bumper session', with extra slots booked for some of the Station Executives (CO 9 Regiment, CO 2 Maritime Air Wing and OC Defence College of Air and Space Operations) to mark the end of Commander Mike Brown's time at 1 FTS.

The Wakeboarding Club is open to the Whole Force at RAF Shawbury, and welcomes riders of all abilities, from absolute novices to representative standard. Lieutenant Sian Lewis (RN) was there that week, getting some practice in ahead of the Inter-Services in September and was clearly a level or 2 above the Exces!

The activity is subsidised by the Station Sports Fund, so incurs no cost to the individual and all equipment is provided.



Learning the ropes

If anyone is interested in giving Wakeboarding a try they should contact the Officer In Charge, Flight Lieutenant Russ Norman, at [Russell.Norman@ascentflighttraining.com](mailto:Russell.Norman@ascentflighttraining.com).

## MilFit 24

Following their success last year, a team from No 1 Flying Training School headed back to Germany in May to compete in the Bundeswehr MilFit Cup and defend their 'Fittest International Team' title. The 4-day event is designed to test military-based functional fitness. The team successfully defended their title this year and further strengthened ties with our international partners.



Pictured above: The Tyre Flip event

Pictured left: The successful team

## RAF Shawbury support to FA Disability Cup

This year saw personnel from RAF Shawbury once again support the FA Disability Cup Finals weekend, which takes place at the prestigious setting of St George's Park, the home of all England football teams.

The event consists of six different disciplines across the disability spectrum – partially sighted, amputee, blind, powerchair, cerebral palsy and deaf. This is essentially their FA Cup Final, which is the reward for the hard work of the players and coaching staff and the culmination of a season's work.

This is the 6th year that RAF Shawbury have supported the FA Disability Cup and the relationship between the RAF and the FA continues to grow stronger. We have already been asked to support once more in 2025. The support from RAF Shawbury is always welcomed by the FA as they have every confidence that personnel will support and aid the event in running smoothly, as well as deal with any issues which arise on the day and give further gravitas to the prestigious event.

This year's volunteers included students from various DCASO courses, DCASO Trainers, 1FTS students, 1FTS Instructors, Physical Education Flight, Military Provost Guard Service, 19 Squadron



Football action



A winning team on and off the field

RAF Boulmer and RAF Wyton. Even an extremely unsociable start time of 0500 didn't faze the volunteers, mainly due to the fact they were all eager to get going and get most of the experience they were being exposed to.

There were a variety of support roles taken up by the members of RAF Shawbury, ranging from VIP and team liaison, setting up presentation displays, trophy bearers and ball retrievers (arguably the luckiest people as they were able to watch a full day of football)! The experience area was a welcome addition as this allowed the spectators to experience the various disciplines, our volunteers were only

too happy to try out the experiences too.

All of volunteers were in awe of the talent that was show at St George's Park and it made them think about skills which could be transferred into their military careers; teamwork, perseverance and overcoming obstacles to achieve aims being just some of these. Although the discipline which was spoken about the most of Blind Football with these players displaying an unbelievably high degree of awareness and skill, all players earned the respect and admiration of the volunteers and left them talking about the amazing experience all the way back to RAF Shawbury.



Prize Ceremony line-up

Squadron Leader Mark Smales of 19 Sqn RAF Boulmer, the RAF lead for the FADC said of the event, "The FA Disability Cup Finals weekend is going from strength to strength and is only going to be an even bigger event in the future. Over the last few years, the RAF's support has been integral to the rising success of this weekend and we are honoured to be involved. It is a great opportunity for trainees and permanent staff to give something back to the wider community, portray the Service in a positive light and showcase the best of the Armed Forces, all whilst experiencing some simply outstanding football".

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**- Al Dyer**



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