



51° NORTH



Issue 1 2024

The Magazine of RAF Brize Norton



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IP18 6SZ

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ISSUE 1	20 JAN	23 FEB
ISSUE 2	12 MAR	19 APR
ISSUE 3	12 MAY	21 JUN
ISSUE 4	12 JULY	23 AUG
ISSUE 5	12 SEPT	18 OCT
ISSUE 6	12 NOV	12 DEC



51° NORTH



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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Welcome to our first 2024 edition of 51 Degrees North. I do hope you enjoy reading our updates from the UK's largest RAF Station.

It seems like only yesterday we were all celebrating Christmas and the start of a New Year and here we are already into February!!

With the festivities well behind us we are looking forward to an action-packed year, bringing you all the news and successes of our people.

A huge congratulations to all who were recognised in the Kings New Year Honours; amazing recognition and so well deserved.

Our newly formed Darts Team are taking the Station by storm, their

enthusiasm for the sport has been outstanding. You can read their latest update inside this edition. I can't wait to bring you all their exciting news as the year progresses; you never know even Bully might just pay a visit!!

I am excited to see what this year brings us all and equally I am looking forward to sharing it all with you, without your contributions, this magazine would not be the success it is. Please keep your stories coming and I will eagerly share.

Chat to you all soon.

*Anita – MCO
Editor 51 Degrees North*



DEADLINE

PLEASE SUBMIT ALL ARTICLES BY 12TH MARCH 2024

Your article should aim to be between 300-500 words in length, with a high resolution picture over 1MB for every 100 words you write. You should ensure that personnel/activities in photos are named and that you provide the author's details, in case we require any more information. Send your completed articles to BZN-51DegreesNorth@mod.gov.uk. We look forward to receiving your articles and make every effort to publish as many of them as possible.

Royal Air Force C-17 airlifts Royal Navy Merlin back to the UK

The RAF Air Mobility Force has carried out sorties to recover this year's exercise equipment from the Middle East, including a Royal Navy helicopter.

The Royal Navy helicopter, from 845 Naval Air Squadron, is a Merlin MK4 that was loaded onto a 99 Squadron RAF C-17 Globemaster strategic transport aircraft. The loading, carried out by a combined RAF and RN team, took over 6 hours and was completed as the sun set over the Middle East, ready for the flight to the UK.

RAF Brize Norton based 99 Sqn C-17 Globemaster arrived where the Merlin will be reassembled and tested. It will then be flown to its home base of Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton, in Somerset. The sortie was carried out due to the range of a Merlin which would have required multiple through countries adding time, resources, and potential logistical issues.

Weighing twice as much as a double decker bus and as high as 3 large artificial Christmas trees, the dismantling of the Merlin for loading onto the C-17 took 5 days to prepare for the flight.

Chief Petty Officer Kay, 845 NAS's Flight Senior Maintenance Rating said: "Preparation for a move like this takes time primarily due to the weight of the kit. Firstly, the heavier parts such as the tail pylon and the rotor blades are removed, then smaller elements like the aerials and any hazardous materials such as fuel. This is an intricate task on a large scale, but our engineers are well trained so tackle the task with precision ensuring everything has run smoothly."

Once stripped, the parts are weighed by RAF Movers and organised for the intricate loading process whereby the Merlin is slowly winched onto the C-17.

Flight Sergeant Bevan, 99 Sqn Air Loadmaster, overseeing the load said: "Every movement is vital. This is a challenging move as the freight fits within an inch of the aircraft so every team member, whether they are RAF or Navy, plays a pivotal role in ensuring the task is completed with the precision it needs."

The C-17 can rapidly deliver all types of cargo and troops worldwide, however, this type of move is particularly difficult as other complex freight can be broken down into smaller parts.

Flight Sergeant Bevan said: "It's incredibly rewarding seeing the Merlin, and its kit and crew, loaded onto the C-17, ready to fly home for Christmas."

This sortie was just one of several that have returned equipment from all three services that have conducted exercises in the region during the year.



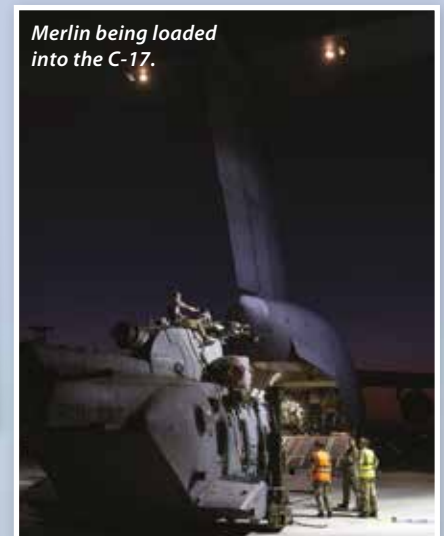
Crew working on prepping the Merlin.



Inside of the back of an aircraft.



Part of Merlin helicopter shown on the runway in front of C17.



Merlin being loaded into the C-17.



Merlin being pulled across the runway.



Merlin parts being taken on the runway to the C-17.

Retirement of WO Andy Machell

After an illustrious career serving both the regular and reserve Royal Air Force spanning over 44 years, 501 Sqn RAuxAF recently had the honour of formally saying farewell to their Sqn WO, Andy Machell.

WO Machell joined the RAF in August 1980, serving the Movements trade for 34 years before transitioning from regular to FTRS service upon his 55th birthday. Joining 501 RAuxAF Sqn upon its reformation as a Logistics Support Squadron providing specialist MT, Supply and Chef support. WO Machell officially exits the service on his 65th birthday having reached the maximum permissible age.

His impeccable service has seen him complete operational tours to Iraq during Op GRANBY and Op TELIC, Kosovo and Afghanistan, both with the RAF and NATO. As well as postings to RAF Northolt, Lyneham, MOD London, Brampton, Brize Norton and Air Command, WO Machell has also served overseas in Decimomannu, Belize, Akrotiri and Calgary. For his professionalism, dedication and commitment, WO Machell has been formally recognised with a Meritorious Service Medal, a 3 Star Commendation, four 2 Star



Commendations and a Lord Lieutenant of Oxford award for outstanding service to the RAF Reserves.

WO Machell added "Having served 44 years and 8 months in the RAF, the latter 10 years in the RAF Reserve, this feels like writing my own eulogy! Along my journey it has been a huge privilege to have met some incredible people some who have imparted skills and knowledge in me that, it is hoped was put to good use and was used well. This information was used to impart in my colleagues and peers to help them in their careers. Helping others has been a great driver for me in my career and the reward was a



huge amount of satisfaction, seeing people go from strength to strength. A great deal is owed to those people that have been in my career along the way. For those people I am eternally grateful. I leave 501 Sqn after 10 years with a heavy heart. However, that said, it is in very safe and capable hands. There is no doubt that with the skills and enthusiasm of the HQ Staff and the PTVRs, the Sqn will go from strength to strength. Onwards and upwards - Per Ardua Ad Astra."



Ex Global Dexterity

RAF lands in Australia to participate in Exercise Global Dexterity for the first time.

An RAF C-17 has touched down in Amberley, Australia, alongside the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and United States Air Force (USAF) to participate in Exercise Global Dexterity for the very first time.

The exercise sees aircrew and groundcrew from each military seamlessly fly and maintain each other's aircraft, with opportunities to practice low-level flying amongst the mountains of Papua New Guinea next week.

Additionally, crews will experience operating out of austere airfields with intentionally limited infrastructure in Northern Australia, where they will conduct flights into Papua New Guinea to practice tactical airlifts amidst the challenging terrain.

The UK, Australia and United States all rely on the C-17 to provide strategic and tactical airlift to destinations across the world. Our participation on Exercise Global Dexterity helps train our crews

to operate effectively in the Indo-Pacific region, as well as developing our interoperability with our American and Australian partners.



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RAF achieves Initial Operating Capability on its latest Terminal Air Traffic Control Centre

The third and final Royal Air Force Terminal Air Traffic Control Centre (TATCC) has achieved Initial Operating Capability at RAF Brize Norton.

The move has seen the amalgamation of the RAF Brize Norton and RAF Benson Air Traffic Control radar teams to create TATCC (South), the latest 'hub' concept of Air Traffic Service (ATS) delivery. The new centre joins existing hub sites at RAF Coningsby (TATCC (Lincs) providing services to Barkston, Cranwell and Waddington) and at RAF Marham (TATCC (East) providing services to Wittering).

The development has seen nine radar trained personnel move from Benson to Brize Norton where they have used the Thales TopSky display for the first time. The exploitation of feeds from cutting-edge STAR-NG and WAM surveillance sensors represents a huge stride forward in capability compared to legacy radar equipment.

This centralised model eliminates the need for radar staff to be dispersed over a wide geographic area, fosters improved co-ordination, and allows for future optimisation.

The change was welcomed by the TATCC (South) Commander, Squadron Leader Clayton who said: "It's a genuine privilege to be a part of the new beginning for Brize ATC now that it has transitioned to the TATCC (South). The incredible amount of effort by the team in the tower and on the Marshall Delivery Team is clear to see. I'm now looking forward to welcoming Odiham and Boscombe Down in the near future and delivering future optimisation."

The current staff strength of circa 70 personnel is set to rise to over 90 in 2024 when additional personnel from RAF Odiham and MOD Boscombe Down join the team. This expansion is the next step to a Full Operating Capability that will see TATCC (South) become the largest terminal ATS provider in the UK Military.

The move is part of Programme Marshall, a £1.9 Billion investment in Military Air Traffic equipment throughout the whole Defence estate, at home and abroad. The delivery of the complex and highly technical project has required significant cross-functional effort from teams within DE&S, 2 Group Battlespace Management and Aquila. The importance of this relationship was echoed by Aquila CEO,



Mike Stoller, who said: "The creation of the TATCC at RAF Brize Norton is the result of strong collaboration between Aquila, our team partners, and our customer the MOD. The TATCC or 'Hub' concept is at the very core of Marshall and just one of many benefits that the programme is delivering. Programme Marshall is set to transform air traffic management at our military sites across the UK and overseas."

With another key milestone reached, the programme continues at pace delivering new and proven equipment to ensure our



Air Traffic Service providers have the best tools available to them.



German Air Force Train Air-to-Air Refuelling with RAF Voyager for the First Time

For the first time a German Air Force A400M has received fuel from an RAF Voyager during an air-to-air refuelling (AAR) exercise.

German pilots from Air Transport Wing 62 Test and Evaluation Flight of the German Air Force flew their A400M to RAF Brize Norton to engage with RAF aircrew to build partnerships and improve interoperability between the two nations. The moment was significant as it marked the first time the German Air Force has used an A400M to receive fuel mid-air. For the crew, it was also the first time they have taken part in flying a receiver aircraft.

Major David Fischer from the German Air Force is currently the Exchange Officer on 30 Squadron at RAF Brize Norton. He was one of the first to take part in the air-to-air refuelling courses for the RAF Atlas A400M and has subsequently become an AAR instructor. For this training sortie, Major Fischer re-joined his German Air Force colleagues to introduce them to



air-to-air refuelling and instruct them for the first time onboard their aircraft.

For the RAF Voyager crews, the day also provided a fantastic opportunity for them to work alongside NATO partners. This demonstrated the high level of training and communications skills both Air Forces use are closely linked enabling a safe and seamless operational environment when working together.



Major Fischer said:

"Today was the first time a German A400M crew have acted as a receiving aircraft during air-to-air refuelling. It was a great opportunity to do this behind an RAF Voyager as the Royal Air Force have been conducting AAR with Voyager and A400M for some time. During my time on exchange with the RAF I have become an A400M air-to-air instructor, so I was pleased to instruct my German colleagues today. Interoperability is key between our nations and because the A400M is a true partnership platform, this will open the doors for further air-to-air refuelling training in the future".















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FLEUR DE LYS

Fleur de Lys is a warm and welcoming bistro with bedrooms, nestled in the relaxed market town in Bampton. The intention is to bring a relaxed, French flair to the Cotswolds, through seasonality and simplicity.

Created by Monsieur Olivier Bonte, who grew up, worked and travelled in France. Olivier's extensive experience - paired with the hospitality 'know how' - is how the team have been brought together to create, what is, the Fleur de Lys.

Fleur de Lys is a haven for those who love the rural, relaxed way of living. Surrounded by the charming countryside, it is the perfect Cotswold hideaway full of home comforts. A place where you can eat well, and sleep soundly.

Enjoy a long, loafing weekend, and meander your way across the Cotswolds. The bespoke boudoirs come in a variety of styles, you can expect bold wallpapers accompanied with vintage, reclaimed furniture. In true Fleur de Lys fashion, the rooms are deeply inspired by renowned French figures and classic Chateaux.

The Fleur de Lys food is seasonal and straightforward, with a menu that offers both French favourites and delicious British dishes. Think hearty Bourguignon and Roast Dinners in the cosy winter, and slurp worthy, Moules Marinière in the summer. The key being knowledge of when to champion local and when to treat guests with a bit of foreign finesse.

Fleur de Lys is as much for locals as it is for the out-of-town traveller. Head out to the garden with friends or join in with some of the locals to idle the afternoons away with the classic French game of Pétanque. A destination for those with an appreciation for French flair, alongside food, drink and good times.

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FALCONS' FOCUS



With an exciting display season just around the corner, the RAF Falcons are about to embark on their second phase of winter training: Exercise Falcon Stack.

The exercise will consist of five weeks of display training at Skydive Perris, California. During these intensive five weeks, the team will practice individual elements of the parachute display, starting in small groups and building up to the full 10-person display with smokes.

First year Falcons will undergo the Display Parachutist Course which will teach them advanced canopy handling techniques required for display parachuting. They will be taught by Team Coach, Flight Sergeant Liam Lyons and will also have the opportunity to learn from the more experienced second and third years on the team.

Third year Falcons will receive Display Leader Training which will develop the skills required to lead in a public display in the absence of the Team Coach.

On their return to the UK at the beginning of March, the team will begin their final phase of winter training: Exercise UK Stack. This exercise allows the team to practice the



full display in more testing UK weather conditions. This training will take place at RAF Brize Norton and the local area so look up and you may see them practising their display!

Flight Sergeant Liam Lyons, RAF Falcons Team Coach said: *"This is a very exciting time for us as we are about to deploy on our second winter training exercise of the season where we will put together the full parachute display with all ten display parachutists. Heading into my second display season as Team Coach, I feel incredibly honoured to work with such a talented and hard-working team to deliver our unique display to crowds both in the UK and overseas."*





EX BERLIN AIRLIFT "JUST ONE MORE THING"

A team from Air Mobility Force, embarked on Ex BERLIN AIRLIFT. The aim of this Force Development (FD) event was to visit military sites in the Berlin area, examining leadership, air power, and tactical lessons learned from historical events such as the Bomber Command offensive, the Berlin Airlift, and the Cold War. Under the guidance of the man, the myth, the legend, MEng Tom Lee, OC Staff Rides, we engaged in a series of discussions and site visits that delved into the historical era.

We began our journey at The Topography of Terror, a site that once housed the Gestapo and SS headquarters during World War II. Presented by Fg Off Ben Brook, we explored the dark history of Nazi Germany and its impact on the subsequent events that unfolded in Berlin.

With the WWII Clicker to the next location sounding, we headed up (only 200+ steps) to the Humboldthain Flak Tower, a towering structure that served as a defensive stronghold during World War II. Whilst we caught our breath and took in the views we conducted a stand, presented by Flt Lt Thomas Davison, on the Flak Tower concept.



After a lunch the team set off to explore Treptower Park, here we witnessed the grandeur of the Soviet War Memorial, which stands as a symbol of victory over fascism. Sqn Ldr Nik Bartram presented this stand. Moving on to the Soviet War Memorial in Tiergarten which pays tribute to the Soviet soldiers who lost their lives during the Battle of Berlin in 1945. Led by Wg Cdr Mark Frazer, the team reflected on the sacrifices made by these soldiers and the role they played in shaping the outcome of the war.

The trip continued to the Luftwaffe Museum providing a unique perspective on air power, showcasing the evolution of German aviation throughout history. We had the opportunity to examine the technological advancements made during the war and how they influenced subsequent conflicts. Presented by Flt Lt Touseef Ahmad, MEng Tom Lee and Cpl Steve Ridsdell.

Following a snowy walk, we arrived at the Berlin Commonwealth War Cemetery, where we paid tribute to the fallen soldiers from the Commonwealth who lost their lives during World War II which emphasised the importance of international cooperation. Sqn Ldr Lucy Playle presented this stand with the preparation done by Gp Capt Lee Roberts.

MEng Tom Lee navigated us to Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp, which served as a stark reminder of the atrocities committed during World War II. Sqn Ldr Parry presented this stand.

The final stop was to the Berlin Wall memorial, where we saw the division and subsequent reunification of the city. Wg Cdr Doug Grove held a stand on BRIXMIS and Air Cdre Dan James concluded the stands with a strategic level discussion on humanitarian aid.

Throughout the event, discussions were held (and lead by MEng Tom Lee) to analyse the historical events in question, drawing examples from foreign military forces. These discussions explored the relevance of these lessons to present-day operations and their implications for future activities.

Ex BERLIN LIFT provided an invaluable opportunity for Air Mobility Force personnel to gain a deeper understanding of the historical events that shaped Berlin and the lessons learned from them. By examining the past, we aim to enhance our leadership skills, air power strategies, and tactical decision-making abilities, ensuring we are well-prepared for future challenges.

A special mention to MEng Tom "just one more thing" Lee; his enthusiasm, professionalism and exceptional knowledge ensured the seamless execution of the trip; his historical knowledge was simply incredible, and on behalf of Air Mobility Force, we'd like to thank him for sharing this with us.



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Op SILK PURSE

With the prospect of a new build looking more and more unlikely and with a new OC in post in late 2022, 501 Squadron decided to embark upon a programme of self-help work to improve their technical accommodation.

Inhabiting three 1940's Nissan style huts and a dilapidated portacabin at RAF Brize Norton, all facilities were showing their age and needed a great deal of attention. Accepting that the finished product was never going to be as good as new, the programme of work came under the banner of Operation SILK PURSE with the aim of improving the 'sow's ear'.

Starting with an old classroom and dingy store in Nissan Hut One, the HQ team removed all the redundant equipment, washed down the walls, filled in all the holes, tidied up all the wiring and then redecorated the building, inside and out. With the support of Barrack Stores and a Local Initiative Grant, new office furniture was provided and carpets were fitted. The finished result was a smart new classroom and a briefing facility, both equipped with modern IT.

Op SILK PURSE Briefing Room.



Op SILK PURSE Inside Wall.



Op SILK PURSE New Carpet.



The next stage was the upgrade of the HQ offices and these all benefitted from a clean, redecoration and the installation of new carpets. We also managed to secure a community grant from Vinci, who fitted a new kitchen into the HQ Crew room.



Op SILK PURSE Nissan Hut Before.

Luck was on our side in the Summer of 2023, when an adjacent Nissan Hut became available and we managed to secure this additional building. This building was in a dire state so took a great deal of work to renovate it; however, it has now been established as a new Operations Room for our Part Time Reservists, as well as Crew Room.

The final part of the jigsaw was the redecoration of our Training Team & Support Flight building. All HQ team members, armed with a paint brush, set to in the week before Christmas and completed the painting and tidy up of Nissan Hut Number 4.

With a massive effort from the HQ Team, we have now finished the refurbishment of the four Nissan style huts on 501 Squadron and greatly improved the facilities. This has been recognised by our Part Time Reservist Volunteers, who appreciate the vast improvement in their working conditions. Operation SILK PURSE remains in action as we turn our attention to the stores, toilets and the refurbishment of our portacabin.



Op SILK PURSE OC.



Op SILK PURSE New Kitchen.



Op SILK PURSE Outside WO Mabelle FS Rudge.

Defence Darts Community

By means of introduction we are WO2 Lee Fox (PTSU) and Cpl Zara Warhurst (1AMW).

As I'm sure a lot of you are aware, back in July the WOSM held an "Uppers and Downers" event. The event was a darts night that saw members of the Station face off against each other to be crowned the inaugural Brize Norton champion, that title went to Cpl Pete Scott from the Medical Centre. Although we had five professional players attend it was the crowd that made it a fantastic evening for all involved. The event itself was a huge success, tickets sold out within days in anticipation; with ticket sales, the auction and the raffle we raised over £8,500 for SSAFA, as well as many people commenting that it was the best function they'd ever attended.

This event proved that many people enjoyed the darts, not just spectating but also playing, if that was the case at Brize alone then surely this would be similar on other stations/barracks too. At present darts isn't recognised as a sport, this is something we're working towards. We started to put the word out about getting it recognised and soon gained support of some high-ranking officers across all three services who also enjoyed the darts and agreed it should be a recognised sport. After speaking to the relevant sports boards we found out what we needed to do in order to make it happen.

To evidence the interest, Cpl Warhurst started to collate a spreadsheet of names of personnel across defence who play darts, this started to gain traction and



CAS playing darts in Darts Corner.

we now have over 600 names on the list, personnel from all three services and a range of all ranks from Private to Air Cdre. We started to appoint camp representatives who could then speak to each other and arrange fixtures, this was fantastic, a first of its kind.

After looking through the spreadsheet there were over 30 people at RAF Brize Norton alone, so WO2 Fox formed a darts team and entered Brize Norton into the local West Oxon and Witney league, this gained huge interest, not only within the Station, but also across social media we soon gained attraction and companies were wanting to sponsor us in our maiden season. Darts Corner (leading online darts shop) offered to use their brand "Mission" and make us free shirts to play in, The Sports Management company who manage some of the world's best players offered to pay for our food for the season and Pressed For Time (a local cleaning company) wash and iron

our shirts week in week out. The season is going really well and we currently sit top of the league.

While that's fantastic, it's not our main effort, we have people of all ranks in the team, from Squadron leaders – Air Specialist 1s, we also have females and Civilian Service members on the team, it really is a "Whole Force" effort and one of the most inclusive sports out there that doesn't discriminate and it's a fantastic platform to get together and meet others outside of your usual circle. We have also found out that the armed forces of Malta have a darts team, they have extended an invite for the UKAF darts team to go over to Malta and take them on, who are we to stop international relations!

Given the success of the team and the sponsorship opportunities gained, we realised there was nowhere on camp where all ranks could get together and play darts, so the team got together under AS1 Lloyd and did a few reces to find a location on camp that was fit for purpose, Cpl Warhurst spoke to Darts Corner who manufactured our shirts and they agreed to donate four full set ups. Over the space of a week we managed to get all the kit and equipment needed to set the area up. Cpl George Marchant decided we could give something back and came up with the idea of a sponsored 24hr dartathon, to mark the opening of the new facility and raising vital funds for SSAFA. We invited the owners of Darts Corner, Garry and Wayne, the owner of The Sports Management Company, Mac Elkin, and none other than the World number 10, professional player Damo "The Heat" Heta to come down for the launch. The Heat kick started the 24hour dartathon against

A400Darts.





**Darts Corner
Damon Heta.**

of, we have also held a Station Vs Station game at RAF High Wycombe, a game that Brize Norton won 13 -2, we then invited Tidworth Garrison (who were unbeaten) to darts corner for a match which resulted in another win for Brize Norton 14 – 7. So at present Brize Norton darts team are currently unbeaten and long may it continue.

Due to the nature of Operations we understand that not all the team will be present at all times, we're very interested in taking new players on, no matter the ability. Darts is extremely popular at the minute due the 16 YO sensation Luke "The Nuke" Littler taking the world championships by storm, so if anyone fancies taking on a new sport and getting involved please drop an email to bnz-raf-darts@mod.gov.uk

We look forward to seeing some new faces and seeing as many of you as possible at Operation BULLSEYE.

GAME ON!

Chief Of The Air Staff (CAS), a match that we're obliged to tell you ended in a draw. The Station Commander and the SWO closed the event with the final game, this was a nail-biting encounter that the SWO eventually won (imagine beating your 1 RO, do wonders for your SJAR). But all jokes aside the fundraiser helped raise £1,500 taking the total raised for SSAFA, by the DDC in 2023, to £10,000.

also given people a focus and a "look forward too" it's very easy to get stuck in our daily routine, stepping away from the laptop and on to the oche, even for 20 minutes, may be just the ticket you need to break up the day.

As you can see, the journey so far is snowballing, it's amazing to be a part

Not only are we trying to get darts recognised as a sport but we're also keen to help raise the profile of darts across defence, we're holding a huge event called Operation BULLSEYE at RAF Brize Norton on 11th July 2024. We have 16 professional players attending and taking part in a pairs event. Each pro will be paired with Serving/Veteran personnel, who will have earned their spot by winning one of the qualifying tournaments being held between January and May. Tickets for serving personnel wishing to attending Op BULLSEYE as a spectator, will go on sale in March, we'd love to see a lot of you there. On top of this Bullseye, the TV show have been in touch and are keen to get involved too, this is massive and the use of their mascot to help promote our event can only be seen as a huge bonus, watch this space.

Although all of the above is fantastic, I think the defining moment for us as a team is hearing people talk about the mental health benefits, a number of people including myself have struggled with mental health recently, getting together with someone over a game of darts allows us to open up and it soon becomes clear that we're not alone and are able to not only get things off of our chest but advise each other as best we can and even help in some cases, it's



Brize Vs Tidworth.





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RAF Brize Norton HIVE

New HIVE Information Officer

I am Samantha Reynolds-Dunn, the newly appointed RAF HIVE Information Officer. As a military partner with several years of experience, I bring a profound understanding of the challenges faced by individuals within the military community.

My familiarity with the Service community, coupled with a comprehensive knowledge of support provisions at RAF Brize Norton, positions me well to assist our community effectively. Additionally, my background includes working in local schools, providing me insight into the diverse needs of families and the available support.

The HIVE serves as an Information and Referral Service catering to the entire force, including Service personnel, their families, Civil Servants, and unit MOD contractors. Our Service delivery

is to offer information on a wide range of topics, such as station amenities, local community resources, places of interest, deployment support, accommodation, employment and training opportunities, early years, and education to name a few.

While HIVE Information Officers are not trained in welfare counselling, we can provide initial support to individuals and facilitate referrals to appropriate professional services. All HIVE staff adhere to a Code of Confidentiality.

Our HIVE office is situated within the Community Support Building on the Station, and our operating hours are Monday to Friday from 08:30 to 16:30.

In addition to our physical presence, RAF Brize Norton HIVE Service offers comprehensive online access to the latest information.

This includes updates on broader Service-related matters and pertinent local information through our official platforms.



Facebook -
RAFHIVEBrizeNorton



X.Com - BZNRAF

I look forward to meeting and supporting you all very soon.

Please do not hesitate to contact the HIVE Information Centre, should you require any information to assist and support you during your posting or role here at RAF Brize Norton.

Email: BZN-Hiveinfo@mod.gov.uk
Skype: +443001536663



Memoriam: Wing Commander David Jones

Squadron Leader Bradley-Sessions (2IC XXIV Sqn), represented OC XXIV Sqn at the funeral of Wg Cdr David Jones on Fri 10 November.

Wg Cdr Jones was the OC of XXIV Sqn from May 1980 – March 1983 during a regular Royal Air Force career spanning 30 years before working in the MOD. During this time he flew on many platforms and many an interesting mission, such as in 1970 extracting the injured Sultan of Oman at the dead of night from a desert airstrip during the country's coup. Wg Cdr Jones was also a poet and wordsmith and the following, as read at his funeral, reflects his time flying in Oman and over the Red Sea.

Our thoughts are with Wg Cdr Jones' family at this time.

In Omnia Parati



Celebrating the life of



David Robert Jones

22nd July 1938 - 13th October 2023

The Vale Crematorium, Pershore
Friday 10th November 2023 at 11am

Poem

A Red Sea Sky, by David Jones
read by Tony Shadforth

A Red Sea sky, a purple ocean,
Shoals of fish in mazy motion:
Ruby reds, magenta hues,
Glinting greens and blinding blues,
Lattice stripes of lucent green
Brightest blues you've ever seen
Rich as any Eastern queen...

Rising with the gentle swell
Slowly up and down they fell;
Quicker now, but sometimes quicker,
Rainbow fins with scarce a flicker,
Fish of gold and fish of jade
Fish of every tint and shade
A silver, sapphire cavalcade...

Still they rise and still they fall
Moving at the ocean's call,
Moving now and evermore
On that coral Red Sea shore.

SSAFA WINS £20 MILLION CONTRACT WITH RAF TO CONTINUE PROVIDING WELFARE SERVICE

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, is delighted to announce that it was successful in its bid to continue its RAF Personal Support and Social Work Service (RAF PS & SWS).

The contract, which is for an initial five-year period, with the option for a two-year extension by mutual agreement, amounts to more than £20 million over the seven-year period, and has sat with SSAFA since 1990 when it was first introduced.

The RAF PS & SWS team provides comprehensive and confidential support, with a special focus on services for adults, but includes children, young people and their families. It can offer support with issues such as mental ill-health, difficult relationships, domestic abuse, financial and cost-of-living concerns, resettlement, housing, childcare, equality issues, bereavement,

military discharge or deployments. This is a Service User focused confidential service that operates outside of the normal RAF chain of command.

SSAFA stands by to be innovative in its delivery of personal support and social work services and will provide a digital solution that meets the needs of a modern RAF. It will deliver an efficient, accessible, and intuitive welfare service that enhances local provision and offers both face-to-face and virtual support options.

Sir Andrew Gregory, CEO of SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity says: "For more than three decades SSAFA has worked in

partnership with the Royal Air Force to deliver personal support and social work to Service personnel and their families. We are extremely honoured to be given the opportunity to continue our work which has been essential in ensuring that RAF's military personnel can fulfil their roles. SSAFA staff have worked tirelessly to meet this remit, adapting as necessary, and we will continue to do so."



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The Not Forgotten Association

I was honoured to be invited to march in the Remembrance Parade in London last year with The Not Forgotten Association and found the whole event both emotional and rewarding in equal measures.

The parade brought back so many memories and reminded us of the comradery within the service community. 10,000 veterans and service supporting charities gathered on Horse Guards Parade in preparation to march, it's surprising that all those drills in basic training and beyond never leave you. Off down Whitehall towards the Cenotaph we paraded to cheering public and it's so difficult not to shed a tear, it really was very humbling.

part in the parade was something that we have always wanted to do but have never been able to and as such it has been a dream come true that we both aspired to reach.

The Not Forgotten Association not only facilitated the attendance but also paid for us both to stay in the Claremont Hotel in London and take part in a reunion event the evening before. It was so wonderful to spend time with other veterans in the same



The Not Forgotten Association is a charity that supports disabled and injured veterans, be it physical or mental needs. They provide a varied programme of social activities, outings, respite and challenge breaks for veterans and wounded serving personnel which improve physical and mental health, address isolation and loneliness, and promote a sense of community and balance, bringing veterans together, lifting spirits, supporting partners and families and transforming lives. Myself and my husband are very privileged to have been personally supported by the Association for the last 5 years, my husband having been injured in conflict and myself with registered disabilities. The support they have provided has been incredible and at times has been given when it was needed the most. Having the opportunity to take

position as us, being able to talk to people who understand the struggles that we have had to deal with over the past 30 years of both Army service and then on to civilian life. It's often said that the friends who you meet in your Military career become the family you choose and I for one whole heartedly agree with this sentiment.

I had to leave the Army, where I was a Combat Medical Technician 3 (CMT 3) when we decided to start a family. Sadly then it wasn't an option to remain in Service and as such I left and supported my husband's career as a Military Police Man with our sons Aaron and Rhys by our side. Nick went on to complete full service however he was sadly injured in conflict and had to retire in 2008. Since then we have both worked for the MOD; I don't think either of us would cope with being detached from the Military entirely, as my father used to say, it's in our blood.

WINTER HEALTH AND WELLBEING DAY

In December, personnel from PEd Flight held a packed day of stalls, motivational talks, and finishing with the annual Santa Run!

Many personnel from across the Station attended to visit the various stalls to try food samples, get fitness advice, speak with support groups, and find out about new sports.

The range of stalls included the Dental Centre, Med Centre, RAF Darts, RAF Volleyball, Community Support, RAF Weightlifting, and RAF Esports. Alongside were external stands from RAF Benevolent Fund, SSAFA, RAF Association, Gam Care, Talking Therapy, Oxfordshire Mind as well as many more.

Physical Training Instructor and event organiser, Corporal Taylor Floyd said:

"At RAF Brize Norton PEd Flt, we understand the importance of health and wellbeing. The annual winter health and wellbeing event was held in the gym, our aim was to encourage personnel across the station to get involved with health and wellbeing. Whether to find a new sport, get started in the gym, to get started with mindfulness, or just to get more active! We thank everyone who came along."



LORD WAKEFIELD RAF NOVICE BOXING CHAMPIONSHIPS 2023

Royal Air Force College Cranwell played host to the RAF Boxing Association as they hosted the 104th iteration of the Lord Wakefield RAF Novice Boxing Championships.

The annual event allows RAF Boxers to come together, showcase their skills and compete for the coveted title of Lord Wakefield Champion.



Since the revitalisation of the RAF Brize Norton Boxing club, this competition has been the club's focus point during almost a year of build-up training. As the months passed, it was time for the championship entries to be made. Based upon the progress made in developing their boxing skills and the hard work and dedication they had shown in training, the boxers selected for the team were AS1(T) Connor Knight and AS1 Rais

Howitt of Digital Support Flight, and AS1 Jake Nicoll and AS1 Ethan Neilson of the Station Fire Service. Under the leadership of coach Sgt Ben Baily an intense training camp ensued. Alongside early morning cardio sessions and various boxing sessions held every day in the club at Brize Norton, the most valuable tool of the camp was the support provided by Windrush Valley ABC in Bampton.





Knight Red vs Warwick Blue.



Nicoll.



Nicoll.

Through RAFBA Team Manager FS John Kearns and the coaching team at Windrush ABC, the team received some high class sparring with highly experienced boxers and expert input from fantastic coaches with decades of experience.

With all the hard work done, it was time to travel to RAF College Cranwell and put it into practice. The first championship weigh in was held on a Wednesday morning, with all the boxers making weight comfortably. Next, it was time for the draw. With only two entries in their respective weight classes, Knight and Howitt were straight into the finals. Disappointed that they were only going to box once, but finalists, nonetheless. With four entries in their respective weight classes, Nicoll and Neilson would have to earn their spot in the finals. First up was Neilson, taking on AS2 Regan Thomas of RAF Waddington in a light heavyweight semi-final. In a high

pace contest Neilson worked hard to chase down an elusive opponent, but it wasn't to be, and he lost out on a close decision. Next up was Nicoll, taking on Cpl Nick Webster of RAF Wittering in a Cruiserweight semi-final. A toe-to-toe battle between two powerful boxers saw Nicoll pick his punches perfectly to score an impressive first round stoppage victory.

After another successful weigh in for the finalists, it was time for finals night. First, Howitt up against AS1(T) Jack Andrew in the Welterweight final, an experienced, undefeated opponent from a strong RAF Coningsby team. In what was his first ever bout, Howitt comfortably outboxed his opponent for all 3 rounds. Disappointingly, the split decision went against him. Next was Nicoll, this time taking on Cpl Carl Harper of RAF Akrotiri who also scored an impressive stoppage win in his semi-final. An excellent display of boxing and true grit made for an

exciting contest, the end of which saw Nicoll crowned Cruiserweight Champion. Last but certainly not least was Knight, taking on AS1 Harry Warwick of RAF Odiham in a Super Heavyweight war. Both boxers gave everything and left it all in the ring, although Warwick emerged victorious, it was an excellent showing from Knight in his first ever bout.

All in all, the week was a great success for the Brize Norton Boxing Team, producing 1 Semi-finalist, 2 Finalists and 1 RAF Champion. The team has firmly established itself as one to watch for the future.

If you fancy joining the team, training sessions are held Mon & Wed 1200-1300 and Tue & Thu 1800-1900 in squash court 1. All levels are welcome, if you are interested contact Sgt Ben Bailly.



Team Brize.

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