



51° NORTH



Issue 3 2024

The Magazine of RAF Brize Norton



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	DEADLINE	DELIVERY DATE
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

Hello everyone and welcome to the latest edition of 51 Degrees North, the magazine of RAF Brize Norton.

It's been a busy time and this latest edition is packed with articles that I am sure you will find not only interesting but invigorating too; from amazing charity challenges to exceptional operational activities, I know there will be something for everyone.

We participated alongside our counterparts from across the world as we commemorate D-Day – 80 years on. The A400M played a significant role as paratroopers drop into Normandy to mark this historic day. As we continue into the summer months, we will see a hive of activity, including the King's Birthday Flypast, a spectacular event and one that we are extremely proud to be a part of. The RAF Falcons 2024 Season is now well under way after they received their Public Display Authority and subsequent launch day to excited school children from the local area; do keep your eyes to the skies and you may catch a glimpse of them as they practice on home turf.

I will of course ensure I share with you all the news and images to showcase our involvement in all these events.

During the summer months we will see a change of command here at RAF Brize Norton as we bid a fond farewell to Station Commander, Group Captain Claire O'Grady and Commander Air Wing, Group Captain Gareth Burdett, as they both move to pastures new. I look forward to introducing you to our new Command later in the autumn.

Please remember the media team are here to help promote the work you do; share your stories and showcase this amazing Station, so please do get in touch.

I will leave you all for now to enjoy this latest edition and the warm weather. Whatever you are doing, enjoy!

*Anita – MCO
Editor 51 Degrees North*



DEADLINE

PLEASE SUBMIT ALL ARTICLES BY 12TH JULY 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.

Paratroopers dropped over France to mark D-Day 80

To mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day, three Atlas C1 (A400M) aircraft have dropped paratroopers over Sannerville, mirroring the actions of RAF Dakota aircraft 80 years ago.

This event marked the first public display of the Atlas A400M's paratrooper deployment capabilities, and saw paratroopers jump from the aircraft's two side doors simultaneously.

The Atlas A400M led a formation followed by an United States Air Force C-130 Hercules and a Belgian Air Force A400M, which both dropped paratroopers from their respective Armed Forces.



A trio of RAF Atlas aircraft, part of Air Mobility Force, flew 16 Air Assault Brigade personnel over France, as part of a mass paratroop in commemoration of the 80th anniversary of Operation Overlord, mostly known as D-Day. Upon landing the parachutists took part in a number of commemorative events alongside talking to veterans from D-Day itself. Flying under a JIGSAW callsign, the aircraft were operated and crewed by members of XXIV Squadron and Standards and Evaluation Squadron. All working together to ensure the aircraft made their target time. The parachutists were dispatched by Parachute Jump Instructors of the Airborne Delivery Wing and Joint Air Delivery Test and Evaluation Unit. The allied invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944, marked the largest multinational amphibious attack and operational military airdrop in history. D-Day is considered the beginning of the end of WWII in Europe.

Air Vice-Marshal Mark Flewin, Air Officer Commanding No.1 Group said:

"Today is a very special day. It's poignant to remember the sacrifices our forebears made on what was an audacious multi-domain mission that unlocked a four-year grip on Western Europe."

It also gives us a chance to show the Atlas A400M, which is a phenomenal capability. Today we saw simultaneous stick parachuting out of the aircraft which allows us to deliver a lot of airborne troops in a very small drop zone."



BRIZE NORTON AND OPERATION OVERLORD (D-DAY)

RAF Brize Norton had a direct role in the invasion of Europe in June 1944 with its Sqns flying many operational sorties in direct support of 'Operation Overlord', but the Station's contribution to the eventual invasion actually began in July 1942 when the Heavy Glider Conversion Unit (HGCU) started activities at Brize, operating Whitley V glider tugs, Horsa Gliders and two Airspeed Oxfords.

The Whitley's were converted bombers, whilst the Horsa Glider with a crew of two could carry up to twenty-five troops or supplies including artillery and vehicles (Jeeps). The Oxfords were needed to ensure glider pilots maintained powered flying hours and unit communication duties.

The HGCU began training activities almost immediately and undertook both day and night training sorties, training for the use of glider borne troops for the landings in Sicily (Op Husky), the future invasion of mainland Europe.

By October 1942, RAF (Brize) Norton became the centre for heavy glider training with the formation of the Glider Instructors School. Furthermore 6MU (already based at Brize) expanded its operations to include glider assembly; a task it continued to do until the end of 1944. At the same time, to cater for

the increased number of aircraft and gliders at Brize, in early 1943, concrete runways were laid at Brize, and several new hangars were constructed across the airfield.

Glider and tug operations was not a simple activity; gliders had to be positioned, then the Whitley tugs had to be marshalled into position and the tow rope attached. Once in the air, the tug/glider combination needed a wide turning area, which resulted in a Central Glider Area and specific cross-country routes being designated to cater for the considerable number of training flights. Inevitably, there were a lot of accidents on the Station and in the local area (including Brize Village, Witney, and Black Bourton), many of them with fatalities.

In January 1944, the HGCU received some Short Stirling Mk III and IVs to help with glider pilot training, but in

March 1944, the HGCU moved to North Luffenham and Brize became (for the first time in many) a 38 Group station, taking on a formal operational role. On 9 March 1944, 296 and 297 Sqns moved to Brize Norton, both Sqns operating the Armstrong Whitworth Albemarle glider tug.

Training now focussed on the D-Day landings (Op Overlord) and during the months leading up to D-Day, many major exercises took place; both Sqns undertaking parachute drops as well as glider releases, some in front of senior D-Day planners such as Air Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder. Additionally, as operational Sqns, the Albemarle's of 296 and 297 Sqns also undertook leaflet dropping, as well as night dropping of agents and supplies over occupied France for the Special Operations Executive (SOE) losing a number of aircraft in these sorties.

Paratroops of the 5th Parachute Brigade Group wait nervously in the dark at Keevil airfield in Wiltshire on 5 June 1944 before emplaning their respective aircraft to take part in Operation TONGA, the opening phase of the invasion of Europe.



CONTINUED P-8

With the training and preparation completed, on 1 June 1944, the Station was sealed off for security reasons and the final work took place ahead of the invasion itself.

June 5, 1944, saw the culmination of months of training put to the test. 'Operation Overlord' was a combination of a number of sub-operations, the first one for Brize Norton being 'Op Tonga' which itself was divided into three phases, involving 24 Albemarle aircraft from Brize Norton, transporting troops of the 6th Airborne Division to Normandy ahead of the landings. The phases were as follows:

Phase 1 – Seven Albemarle (3 from 296 and 4 from 297) carrying Pathfinder Para troops took off from Brize at 2300 hrs on 5 June 1944. One aircraft from each Sqn carried troops from the 22nd Independent Parachute Company whilst the other aircraft carried sticks of ten men from the 5th Parachute Brigade to support the Pathfinders.

Phase 2 - At 2343 hrs on 5th June, a further eight 296 Sqn Albemarle departed Brize Norton to arrive overhead in France, each with sticks of nine reinforcements from the 5th Parachute Brigade, and nine 297 Sqn Albemarle took off from Brize with the remaining members of the main force of paratroopers from 5th Parachute Brigade to be dropped on a drop zone (DZ 'N') near to the East bank of the River Orne, to reinforce the personnel dropped during Phase 1.

Phase 3 – Sixteen Albemarle (8 from each Sqn) took off from Brize at 0110 hrs on 6 June 1944, with the main glider force to be cast off near to DZ 'N'. This force consisted of troops from the 5th Parachute Brigade and Royal Engineers. Finally, three 297 Sqn Albemarle took off from Brize at 0230hrs on 6 June 1944 with reinforcement Paratroopers of 9 Parachute Battalion carrying explosives destined for the German coastal gun battery at Merville which was soon captured.

As with most operations, not all aircraft successfully reached their destination, the main reason was unserviceability's to the tugs or glider and in one incident, the tow rope to a glider broke over UK leading to an emergency landing.

The second sub-operation of Op Overlord involving Brize Norton



Attaching glider tow rope to Albemarle Brize Apr 44.

Sqns was Op Mallard on 6 June 1944. This was the glider delivery, before dusk, of the remaining elements of the 6th Airborne Division. Shortly before 1900hrs, Twenty Albemarle from each of 296 and 297 Sqns took off towing their gliders to France. A glider crashed on take-off from Brize, another had to cast off and crash land whilst still in UK, and another glider was brought down by enemy fire in France. One 296 Albemarle was also shot down by enemy fire over Normandy.

On 7 June 1944, both Sqns from Brize participated in 'Op Cooney'. Three 296 Albemarle, each transported a stick of six paratroopers of the 4th French Parachute Battalion, whilst two 297 Sqn Albemarle carried SAS personnel into occupied France, the aim to disrupt communications between Brittany and the rest of France.



Operations continued after D-Day, through July and August leading up to Op Market Garden in late September 1944, which again involved 296 and 297 Sqn, this time deployed forward to RAF Manston because of the Albemarle's limited range.

Op Records are also available in the Heritage Centre, plus an article on the Albemarle.



Tactical Medical Wing Keep Skills Up to Date

Tactical Medical Wing (TMW) are keeping their life saving medical skills up to date through a partnership with Capital Air Ambulance, who provide rapid UK aeromedical services similar to TMW.

TMW's Critical Care Air Support Team (CCAST) are a specialised team who provide the medical capability to move critically ill patients through aeromedical evacuation. CCAST is routinely trained with real life scenarios, and this new partnership will enable RAF personnel to keep their live skills up to date by flying missions with Capital Air Ambulance.

Officer Commanding Tactical Medical Wing, Wing Commander Adam Smith said: "What's really important for us is to maintain the skills of our medical specialists while we hold them at readiness. The opportunity with Capital Air Ambulance for our people to work with them on their day-to-day operations, learn from one another, and ensure that when the time comes for the next RAF mission our CCAST are ready to deploy is fantastic."

The partnership not only gives TMW personnel access to live patients, but also allows Capital Air Ambulance medics to work with a group of medical specialists they wouldn't normally get the chance to, building strong relationships and sharing knowledge between both organisations. Tactical Medical Wing personnel will now complete a period of training and clinical checks with Capital Air Ambulance to make sure they're ready to begin flying on live missions later this year.



Flight Lieutenant Travis Belcham said
"This collaboration with Capital Air Ambulance gives us the chance to consolidate our CCAST skills which we provide for Defence, whilst working with a civilian partner. Not only do we get access to regular live patients it also gives us the opportunity to work on different aircraft with different people all trying to achieve the same goal. It's an invaluable opportunity."



501 Squadron

In February, as part of the annual continuous training period, RAF Reservists from 501 Sqn undertook adventurous training activities at the Edge Activity Centre in Shropshire.

After an overnight stop at RAF Cosford, the reservists moved to the activity centre set in rural Shropshire. Divided into teams, the reservists undertook various team and leadership challenges throughout the day including blindfold 4x4 driving; navigating across a minefield; Towers of Hanoi; and a map reading Treasure Hunt. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the day and were able to develop their teamwork and leadership skills through interesting and unusual activities.

AS1 Natalie Crowson said: "The blindfold driving challenge really took us out of our comfort zone and tested our communication skills to the fullest". One of the new Squadron members, AS2 John Jackson, said: "The activities were a great way to get to know my new colleagues".

A big thanks to SERFCA for supporting the event.





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We now have a dedicated team of horologists working alongside Steve, fixing everything from family heirlooms to recent purchases and everything in-between. Our shop in the town centre of Witney is an Aladdin's cave full of clocks, watches, tools and machinery with a backing track of ticks and Westminster chimes.

What really sets us apart from other clock and watch repair shops is that we don't have specific brand accreditations, meaning we are not bound by the same constraints that other workshops have, and we can source parts from all over the world as well as making them from scratch by hand. This allows us to carry out repairs that other places simply cannot.

The watch photographed here was brought to us after it was dropped and run over by a car; In a terrible state, it was seemingly irreparable, however our watchmakers and team were able to handmade new parts and completely restore the case and dial – now, the watch can be passed down for generations to come.

Most of our work is carried out in-house so does not need to be sent away, but we also have a trusted team of other specialists that we call on, including woodwork restoration, glass replacements, dial restoration and goldsmith repairs to name a few.

Whether your watch needs a straightforward service, or your clock needs a full restoration, we are more than happy to answer your questions.

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47 Air Despatch Squadron Restore Historic Gate Guardian

A restoration project of the 47 Air Despatch Squadron (47AD) Gate Guardian has started to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day and Operation Market Garden.

The Douglas C-47 Dakota sits outside 47 Air Despatch Squadron at RAF Brize Norton and is a poignant reminder of the role Air Despatchers played during the Second World War.

The Dakota has since 1944 been affectionately associated with Air Despatchers and is still worn today as an emblem by all ranks serving with the Air Despatch unit. The Golden Dakota on blue backing was approved for wear by King George VI for the "Good work done by the Air Despatch Group over Arnhem". Between 18-25 Sept 1944, Stirlings and Dakotas of Nos. 38 and 46 Group flew 628 resupply sorties. Of these, 89 aircraft were shot down. 151 Aircrew, 80 Air Despatchers and 2 passengers paid the ultimate price.

Officer Commanding 47 Air Despatch Squadron, Major Aaron Thompson said: "As we approach the 80th anniversaries of D-Day and Operation Market Garden this year, the restoration of the Dakota is an ongoing and fitting tribute. The next phase is for RAF Ground Engineers to restore and refit the broken tail, then



the body work will need to be sanded and repainted too. We'd like to thank the Serco aircraft wash bay team who kicked off the restoration project of our beloved Dakota with a deep clean and to all that are currently helping with the project."

47AD, part of the Royal Logistic Corps, is the only Air Despatch unit remaining in the British Army. Today the Squadron works hand in hand with the Air Mobility Force at RAF Brize Norton delivering aerial delivery capability for Defence.



FAREWELL TO MASTER AIRCREW THOMAS LEE

After 48 years of service to the Royal Air Force (both Regular and Reservist) we bid a fond farewell to Master Aircrew Thomas Lee.



Tom holds an impressive service history and has executed his roles in an exemplary and professional manner.

Starting his Regular career in 1976, he served at RAF Scampton, RAF St Athan and RAF Finningley as an Aircraft Technician Propulsion.

In January 1981 Tom obtained his Aircrew Brevet after graduating flying training as an Air Engineer. Subsequently, he was posted to the Hercules fleet at RAF Lyneham. Finally, in March 2000, he moved to RAF Brize Norton, to join 216 Squadron, flying with the Tristar fleet.

Tom finished his regular career in May 2014 after 38 years, and took up the Reservist role of Officer Commanding

Staff Rides. He is a keen military historian, with a wealth of knowledge, and a committed desire to ensure the Service and wartime sacrifices of past generations are not forgotten.

Tom facilitated an abundance of educational trips to Europe, including France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, and with the Eagles Team Norway and Poland. Embarking on journeys of remembrance and discovery, to compare events of the past to modern day.

Tom is now hanging up his uniform to enjoy retirement.



STEM

STUDY HIGHER EVENT

In April, as part of an event called Igniting Future members of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths Team hosted Study Higher from Oxford Brookes University and secondary school students from local counties.



The event was for young people from Armed Forces families to learn about careers and higher education specifically targeting students in years 9 and 10. The focus was looking at science, technology, engineering or maths careers and roles either in the Royal Air Force or outside the military. As well as discussions about the courses that are available if interested in studying at a university level or degree apprenticeship. The event also included an interactive activity where the students built a wind turbine; the challenge was to produce the highest voltage with their turbine.

Study Higher is a partnership of universities, further education colleges and other stakeholders working together to provide young people with high quality impartial advice and guidance about education opportunities.

Outreach Projects Manager from Study Higher, Claudia Lusardi said "The young people absolutely loved the wind turbine activity especially adding in a little bit of competition which always brings out the enthusiasm. They had to build it from scratch using the frame which they enjoyed. It was great for them to have the opportunity to talk to different members of the RAF about a variety of roles. Today has been a positive day for the students to have a practical hands on experience."

NORMANDY BEACHES STAFF RIDE

As a team we aimed to explore the historical significance of the D-Day landings and their relevance to modern military strategy.

The journey commenced with a comprehensive examination of the strategic significance of Caen, during World War II, establishing the context for the subsequent event. MACr Lee's profound expertise in military history became apparent as he gave a compelling narrative, enthralling the group and providing detailed insights into the obstacles encountered by Allied Forces. Each participant had been required to study and provide a short brief on related subjects.

They discussed topics such as the effectiveness of the Air Bombing Transportation Plan and its justification considering civilian casualties, the goal of the Allied Airborne Divisions, the logistical difficulties faced by the Allied Forces after Operation Overlord, and the utilisation of Airpower to prepare the battlefield for the Omaha beach landing.



One notable topic explored, was the challenges the Allied forces faced in setting up forward operating airfields. These included restricted airfield capacity, adverse weather conditions, and complex coordination of air and ground forces. An example of this were



the events at ALG B3, a sophisticated Allied landing site near Caen. During the open discussion, participants offered ideas and opinions on the difficulties faced by Allied forces in setting up and operating the airfield. These problems included German counterattacks and the urgent requirement to repair runways while being targeted by enemy fire. The courage and ingenuity demonstrated by the Allied Forces, provide us with an excellent insight to the practical aspects of combat support operations.



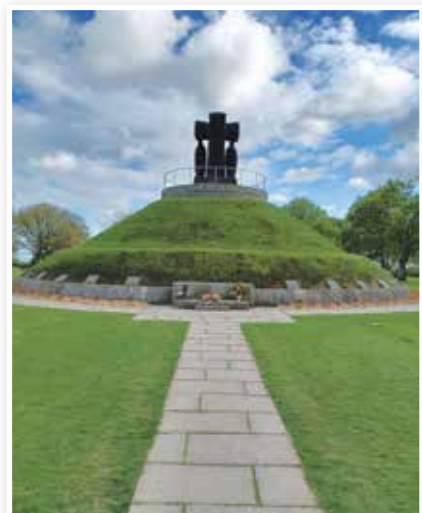
Other topics of discussion included the importance of the battery at Point du Hoc and the impracticality of relying solely on air attacks to accomplish objectives. We engaged in a rigorous examination of intricate issues, such as the moral dilemmas surrounding collateral damage as well as the practical limitations experienced by the Allied forces throughout the preparations for the invasion.

An especially captivating subject of conversation was General Montgomery's position as the Commander of the 21st Army Group. MACr Lee offered further perspective on Montgomery's leadership approach and strategic choices, encouraging attendees to contemplate the influence of individual leadership styles, on the results of military campaigns.

Throughout the event, MACr Lee encouraged open dialogue and reflection, challenging us to consider the implications of past decisions on present-day military strategy. His ability to foster meaningful discussions not only deepened our understanding of the historical context but also encouraged us to think critically about our own roles within the military.

The staff ride also stimulated contemplation of the more sombre facets of warfare, such as the atrocities that took place at the Ardenne Abbey and Audrieu, and the ideological motivations that compelled members of the 12 SS Panzer Division to murder Canadian POW's. Participants examined the moral responsibility and intricate interaction between individual decision-making and group behaviour in situations of war.

The content and experiences of this staff ride, superbly facilitated by MACr Lee, engendered a feeling of immense pride in being a member of HM Armed Forces as well as overwhelming gratitude and respect for those who fought in the D-Day Landings and the campaign to liberate Europe.



INFRA PROJECTS

Who are EMS? Estate Management Squadron's mission is to advise and coordinate infrastructure in order to develop the RAF Brize Norton estate.



We all know that across the Station there are some considerable infrastructure challenges, but where we can we look to undertake small projects to benefit building occupants and support operational output. Already this year they have been busy, refurbishing bathrooms across Station, what might seem like a very small project but one that really improves the lived experience for some of our personnel.

The poor and aged condition of the Airfield Support Mechanical Transport (ASMT) toilets was highlighted as a significant issue and they were placed at a high priority for refurbishment. Around £100,000 was spent from the LIG Infra budget to refurbish four sets of toilets and showers in ASMT, making a significant difference for all the staff that work within the section.

ASMT operates one of the largest and most diverse fleets of specialist airfield vehicles in the Royal Air Force. During a shift up to 30 RAF personnel and Serco contractors are operating within the Section. ASMT is staffed 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year: providing aircraft support with the transportation of potable water and In-Flight catering.

For the second project, at the CO's Inspection of S107, the Stn Cdr reviewed the condition of the male toilets, which were in such a poor state of repair that their refurbishment was prioritised. This was having a huge impact on staff and so was added to the Station priority list to be funded through LIG Infra. Costing circa. £60,000, the toilets were refurbished into male and female toilets which could be used by staff and visitors, making a huge difference to those working in the building daily.

Lastly, the toilets within the Air Terminal are used by a wide range of Station personnel and were in dire need of an update. The first phase has seen a complete refurbishment of the male toilets, with the female ones next on the list. Not only does this support the Station personnel who use the shop every day, but also offers better facilities for the circa 60,000 outbound passengers per year.

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RAF Benson Women's Network

We are pleased to share the success of the recent RAF Benson Women's Network Dining in Night which brought together 112 military Service Personnel, contractors and civil servants to celebrate the strength of women.

The gender pay gap in the civilian sector still sits at over 14% with only 18% of medium sized enterprises led by women. Only 11% of UK regular Armed Forces are women and figures show that more females are leaving the UK regular forces than are joining. The aim of the evening was to bring together women and allies of different ranks, stations and roles to share stories and inspire attendees to reach their full potential, a unique opportunity for networking, mentorship and personal growth.

The evening featured guest speakers including the first RAF Female Yeoman Warder, an Army Commonwealth Chef who has cooked for the Royals, an Atlantic Rower who completed the challenge solo and many more inspiring achievements from within our ranks. The evening was widely commended, offering a unique opportunity to learn from each other's stories of hard work, determination and passion.

We hope to see similar events in the future to inspire the next generation of Armed Forces personnel and the wider supporting networks.



Ex Mailly Le Camp

During May this year, 39 regular and reserve personnel departed RAF Brize Norton for Ex Mailly-Le-Camp Eagle 2024, in the Champagne region of France.

This exercise commemorated the anniversary of the bombing of Mailly-Le-Camp on 3 May 1944, part of the “softening-up” campaign prior to D-Day. The town, occupied by the German Wehrmacht, was a target to mitigate threats to the Allied landings. Due to radio issues, many RAF aircraft were left vulnerable under a bright moonlit sky, resulting in the loss of 258 RAF aircrew and 100 French civilians.

The group’s first stop was La Coupole, a WWII bunker complex used by Nazi Germany for V2 rocket launches. Here Wg Cdr Paul Summers, Officer Commanding 101 Squadron (OC 101 Squadron), provided an insight into the history of 101 Squadron and its high casualty rates. Learning of the loss of 1176 aircrew during WWII was sobering figure.

The following day centred around visiting cemeteries at Chapelle Vallon and St. Mesmin, conducting ceremonies to honour the fallen. Discussions took place analysing the Mailly raid, dubbed “a milk run” due to expected ease by the senior leadership. The heavy losses shifted Bomber Command’s policy in counting short range missions over France as only a third of an Op, from then on, these missions would be considered a full Op with the expectation of aircrew to complete 30 Ops in a tour. In Étoges, the group toured Borel Lucas champagne house, a 101 Squadron patron and supplier to Monaco’s Royal family; here they learned about the laborious process to create high quality champagne.

On 3 May, the 80th anniversary remembrance parade took place at Mailly, hosted by the French Garrison and local dignitaries. Re-counts of the raid were given by the Mayor Jean Claude Robert and national anthems observed for France, UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.

Afterwards one of the spectators, a 91-year-old lady spoke to OC 101 Squadron through her granddaughter. She had brought to the parade a compass that her father had found on the body

80th anniversary parade.



of an airman in the aftermath of the raid, 80 years to the day. It was kept safe and pristine by the family, and she felt it was now time to put it back into military hands. A touching display of the care and affection given by the locals to those who fought and gave their lives for French liberation.

In St.Remy-Sous-Barbuise the RAF stood alongside the town Mayor, Jean-Claude Jacquier, and members of the fire service to pay tribute in ceremonies at the town cenotaph and churchyard. The heavy rain did not stop the spectators, and everyone stood in a silent reflection commemorating the 16 crew members buried there. The small town with only a population of 250 then put on a reception in the town hall; Wg Cdr Summers thanked the mayor for his continued show of friendship and echoed the importance of remembering the shared history between his town and the RAF. Members of 57 Squadron also visited Le Voudoué to honour 57 Squadron crew lost on the return leg from the Mailly raid, followed by visits to other memorials.

Ex Mailly-Le-Camp Eagle serves as a powerful testament to the bravery and sacrifice of those who fought in WWII. The RAF members honoured their fallen comrades and the French civilians who

suffered; reflecting on leadership, history, and the lessons learned. The gratitude and hospitality of the local communities underscored the enduring impact of wartime alliances and the importance of remembrance. Through these staff rides, the memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice continues to be honoured, ensuring their courage and contributions are never forgotten.

Reception with locals.



St.Remy-Sous-Barbuise.



Reims city centre.

Aircrew memorial at Mailly-Le-Camp.





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The methods we use are based on horse psychology, and work with the horses to create mutual respect, communication and understanding. Over the last ten years we have built comprehensive horsemanship and riding training programmes and manage our equines in the kindest, most natural way possible. Where there is new scientific evidence available for welfare and training, we always consider and if necessary, incorporate the findings into our programme and care of our equines.

Our riding lessons are taught one on one with an instructor, and students always have the same horse to establish relationships and trust. The way we teach has proven extremely beneficial to our student's wellbeing, confidence, physical fitness and communication skills and we have recently extended our business further to offer alternative education provision during school hours.



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PHEC Training 4626 Sqn

TEAM

On Friday 10th May, a specialist training day was set aside by 4626 Aeromedical Evacuation Sqn with the sole focus of Pre Hospital Emergency Care (PHEC) training.

The training was specifically designed to address feedback from Sqn personnel around the level to which they feel prepared ahead of attending one or more of the core military medical courses; Battlefield Advance Trauma Life Support (BATLS), Major Incident Medical Management and Support (MIMMS) or the Medical Emergency Response Teams (MERT) course. It also sought to address feedback from personnel asking for training to give them increased awareness of the pre-hospital environment and treatments, this was particularly related to nurses working in Intensive Care. The Tactical Medical Wing training hangar was made available, including various medical resources for example medical bergens, training kit and access to the CH-47 (Chinook) and Puma rear crew trainers.

Previously, PHEC training has been incorporated into the training weekend programme; however, this then formed only one element of what may be a number of demands on the training time, e.g. RAF Fitness Test; mandatory briefs; admin tasks. As a result, the training time available, and availability of personnel can be highly variable. The day allowed for seven hours of pure (uninterrupted) PHEC focussed activity and allowed all participants to focus on the theory and practical aspect of the various PHEC procedures.

The course was supported by registered Sqn personnel that are members of PHEC teaching faculty for one or more of the courses listed above (BATLS, MIMMS or MERT). This proved to be extremely valuable, as each member could compare and contrast between the military system and the NHS. Time was of the essence and every opportunity was taken to listen, look and learn, but then reflect on the procedures and consider the impact on the patient.

Seven Sqn personnel attended in the capacity of facilitators and fourteen Sqn members attended and undertook the training. The day consisted of an introduction to each of the three courses listed above; what it is; what it does; how best to approach it; this was then followed with a practical



demonstration by faculty of a BATLS patient assessment. The course also included the introduction and discussion of performance psychology - e.g. how to approach assessed moulages as a challenge rather than a threat; common

errors people make when being assessed and how to address / avoid them. Throughout the day it was a 1 : 3 ratio (instructor to student) at the practical skills stations. The day ended with a series of MERT style multi-casualty patient lifts on the various platforms with each student being individually mentored / guided by a member of faculty.

The verbal feedback from all those that attended was overwhelmingly positive and it is planned to hold up to three courses over a 12 month period and if possible extend the invite to all medical reserves.





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Exercise Venture Spirit

TEAM

Exercise Venture Spirit is an Air Mobility Force (AMF) wide exercise to train agile combat employment skills which enable the force to deploy rapidly anywhere in the world to support global operations.

Exercise Venture Spirit took place in north-east Scotland and Suffolk, with the base of operations being RAF Lossiemouth and RAF Honington. It was a collaborative exercise with 24 Squadron, Atlas Force, 99 Squadron and several Global Enablement forces, all training for the delivery of a 'speedy response to crisis' as a cohesive unit.



Venture Spirit tested all personnel in their respective tasks, the engineering team worked round the clock to ensure serviceability and availability of the aircraft for each day's tasking, which ran from morning till night. Reacting to a changing flying program and overcoming technical snags in a dynamic environment. The operations enablers, including 47 Air Despatch, Safety Equipment fitters, movements staff, Ops support staff and TMW Aeromed team were on hand throughout, exercising in deployed conditions using a Hardened Aircraft Shelter as an operating base and maintaining their respective deployable equipment to keep the aircraft flying.

During Venture Spirit the junior co-pilot cadre expanded their skills and knowledge of the Atlas C.1 A400M, flying tactical low-level sorties in the Scottish Highlands, dropping light stores to a drop zone in the Rannoch Moor area and practicing essential flying skills within a threat zone. The newest co-pilots were tested in the Non-permissive Air Transport role both day and night, continuing their work



much from integrating with our A400Ms and C17s as we have with them."

During Exercise Venture Spirit the No 1 Expeditionary Logistics Squadron based at RAF Wittering deployed to RAF Honington in order to practice loading and unloading an air transportable refuelling system carrying out a defuel of an Atlas C.1 A400M in order to refuel to another fixed wing aircraft, in this exercise a C-17 Globemaster. This exercise gave the Squadron's Fuels Support Team (FST) the opportunity to test their ability to deploy and set up a fuel site anywhere in the world.

The Combat Readiness Force (CRF), 1 Sqn RAF Regiment and Tactical Air Traffic Control also played a key part in the exercise. This collaborative endeavour focused on integration with the RAF Air Mobility Force, reinforcing the CRF's commitment to seamless operational coordination. The exercise served as a platform for the highly skilled lead elements to hone their capabilities in preparation for future warfighting operations. The exercise underscored the Combat Readiness Force's dedication to maintaining peak operational performance and ensuring the RAF's continued effectiveness in any operational environment.

The success of Air Mobility Force is its ability to deliver what is required, when in any threat level and come back safely. Whether this is in support to non-combatant evacuations, humanitarian aid and disaster relief missions or combat operation. This training and Exercise Venture Spirit maintains the agility, responsiveness, and flexibility the Force needs to support this.

up to combat ready status. The Air Loadmasters were exposed to cargo hold operations covering aeromed, troops and fighting vehicles, oversized Army engineering vehicles and Air Landed Aircraft Refuelling System (ALARS) to provide a refuel option for aircraft at austere Tactical Landing Zones (TLZ). They also conducted live air drop serials and multiple engine running offloads of passengers and vehicles both at the TLZs and main operating bases. All personnel worked incredibly hard over the weeklong exercise and have taken a big step forward in preparation for deployed global tactical air transport operations.

Commander Air Wing, Gp Capt Gareth Burdett said:

"Exercise Venture Spirit is how we take our junior crews who are capable of worldwide Air Transport, and turn them into competent warfighters. It is our prime opportunity to practice flying as we would on live, contested operations, and to do so with our key partners in 16 Air Assault BCT and the RAF's own Global Enablement Force.

"On this iteration we've worked seamlessly with our Army colleagues, exercised our Tactical Fire, Air Traffic, Police and Medical Services, all from an unprepared airfield and deployed a forward refuelling capability. Training is always best when it meets multiple objectives, and these units have all got as

JET JET TEAM CELEBRATE ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL BLUE SKIES GRADUATION.

Thursday 16th May saw the annual Jon Egging Trust (JET) Blue Skies (BS) Graduation, which took place on Station. The event, led by Sergeants Amy Lockley and Louise Hartzenberg, celebrated 39 local student graduating across Blue Skies 1, 2 & 3 (Years 8, 9, & 10).



In attendance were the local corporate partners that support the initiative who include: Cotswold Wildlife Park, Bremont, AtkinsRéalis, Royal Agricultural University, Microsoft and RAL Space; whom afforded students valuable work experience opportunities ranging from looking after rhinos to designing watches, as well as "essential life skills" such as CV writing and job interview practice.

On Station, numerous sections have leant in with support over the year, including Voyager Force, 99 Sqn, Fire Section, PEd Section, Parachute Training Squadron, Air Traffic, SERE Flt, Air Tanker, RAF Police Dog Section, Tactical Medical Wing and Air Mobility Sqn. Their assistance with providing valuable experiences has enhanced students' confidence and developed their leadership and communication skills,

Special thanks was made by the Station Commander to Flt Lt Charlotte Mellor and Flt Lt Hannah Crowther, from XXIV Sqn, whom stepped in at short notice to run last October's County Fayre on Station. Flt Lt Ryan Cooke, from Voyager Force, whom has been a superb ambassador for the Voyager Force making them a

key visit on Station for future students; MACR Maria Keepa, from FHQ, whom moves on from Station JET after several successful years coordinating and managing the core JET team.

Subsequently this dedication, effort and support from across the Station was recognised with RAF Brize Norton being awarded Joint winners of the Annual JET Military Team Award, sharing with RAF Coningsby.



Dr Egging presenting the trophy to MACR Keepa – Station JET Lead Facilitator and Coord.

The Graduation Event culminated with the Falcons Dropping In with the graduation Certificates which were presented to the students by Dr Emma Egging and Sqn Ldr Gareth Bradley-Sessions, OIC Station JET and representing the Station Commander.



The graduation caps a fantastic year for JET on Station, who's success is built on the professionalism, passion and support of the personnel and contractors based on Station – Thank You.

If interested in supporting, in any capacity, please contact Flt Lt Craig Tranter, XXIV Sqn, OC MTS, the new JET Lead Facilitator and Coord.

TEDDY BEARS PICNIC

In April, RAFA Kidz Brize Norton nursery held a Teddy Bears picnic to celebrate the Month of the Military Child.

The nursery invited parents to enjoy a picnic with their children, just one of the events held through the month of April.



On a beautifully sunny day, families joined the nursery staff, finding a comfortable spot to share their picnic lunch. Designed to bring smiles to the children's faces and develop the sense of community at RAF Brize Norton.

RAF Brize Norton Station Commander said: "Month of the Military Child is a special month in the Station's calendar, and a brilliant opportunity to bring military families together. We are incredibly proud of RAFA Kidz Brize Norton Nursery and it was a pleasure to celebrate with them today. The resilience of our families is one of Defence's biggest assets and it's a privilege to support any initiative that brings our fantastic community together. A huge thank you to the brilliant RAFA Kidz team for organising the event and to all the parents/guardians who came down to support."



'GREAT BRIZE BAKE OFF'

CHARITY



The Great Brize Bake Off was held in the Station Community Centre on Monday 29th April.

There was a fabulous selection of cakes and brownies for the Station Commander to judge and crown the Brize Bake Off Champion 2024.

Organiser Cpl Nicky Leach, from BSW observed Gp Capt O'Grady whittling the entrants down to a initial four based on appearance, then a final two with a taste test proving very difficult, so much so it required a second confirmatory taste!

The close competition was between an Atlas (A400M) chocolate cake and a stacked Oreo drip cake. Ellie Dickinson was crowned Brize Bake Off Champion with a very impressive chocolate cake with a model of an Atlas A400M on top with Cpl Katie Arnold from TMW a very close second with her Oreo Drip cake.

The Station Commander thanked everyone for their fantastic efforts and looked forward to the next

"Bake off" organised by the Station Charities Committee with a date in the diary yet to be confirmed.

The Station Charities Committee would like to thank everyone who contributed by baking the amazing cakes and those who came to support through purchasing tea and cake with over £100 raised for Station Charities.

The Station Charities Committee raise funds throughout the year for the RAF Association, RAF Benevolent Fund

and SSAFA, supporting local community events and Station activity such as Brize Fest and Bonfire Night. We are always looking for volunteers and should you wish to become part of the team please email bnz-stationcharity@mod.gov.uk.



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Natasha Humphries Counselling

Hello, I'm Natasha.

I'm an experienced, qualified counsellor based in Witney and I work with clients from different age groups and backgrounds in areas including; anxiety, depression, identity, military life, family issues and relationships. Everyone is different and counselling is not a 'one size fits all' approach which is why I trained to be an integrative counsellor. Sometimes in life we feel out of control, lonely, stuck, struggle to cope, repeat destructive patterns or wonder why we're in the same situation again.

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RAF BEN FUND AWARD

RAF Brize Norton serviceman wins prestigious charity award.



AS1 Neil Robinson with Paul Cushen from Midlands at the RAF Benevolent Fund Awards ; Credit: Ollie Dixon.

saw groups and individuals of the RAF community challenged by the 47 Squadron to run, walk, or cycle 130 miles in 47 days. The year-long challenge raised over £5,300 for the RAF Benevolent Fund, the RAF's leading welfare charity.

Air Vice-Marshal Chris Elliot, Chief Executive at the RAF Benevolent Fund, said: ***"The Awards are a fantastic opportunity to recognise all of the great work that allows us to continue supporting RAF veterans, serving personnel and their families and making a real improvement to their lives. Many congratulations to all this year's winners including AS1 Neil Robinson for his inspirational enthusiasm, creativity, and generosity, which has been wonderful to see. From everyone at the RAF Benevolent Fund – thank you."***



RAF Brize Norton serviceman Air and Space Operations Specialist, Neil Robinson, has won the Outstanding Support from an Individual category at the RAF Benevolent Fund's annual awards ceremony.

The RAF Benevolent Fund Awards is now in its 12th year, celebrating the outstanding contributions of the fundraisers, volunteers and partners who support the charity. The 2024 Awards took place on Thursday 25 April at the Sheraton Grand in London and was attended by hundreds of RAF personnel, veterans, and supporters of the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Neil, from Swindon, won the award for his involvement in organising the C-130 challenge to commemorate the retirement of the iconic RAF C-130 Hercules aircraft in 2023. The virtual event

Air Specialist (Class 1) Neil Robinson said: ***"I am delighted to have won the Outstanding Support from an Individual Award. I created the C-130 fundraising fitness challenge event to commemorate the retirement of the iconic RAF C-130 Hercules aircraft, which brought the military community together to celebrate the long service of this amazing aircraft. At the same time, it raised lots of money for the RAF Benevolent Fund with 70 people participating, from serving military personnel, veterans and members of the public."***

"I witnessed the RAF Hercules depart Cyprus for the last time whilst deployed. It was a historic time and I'm proud this event was the success that it was. People wanted to do something to mark the occasion and reflect on their own personal connections to the Herc, and this event enabled them to do it."

The RAF Benevolent Fund is the RAF's leading welfare charity, providing practical, financial, and emotional support to RAF personnel, veterans, and their families. Last year, the RAF Benevolent Fund reached over 42,000 members of the RAF Family. Find out how you can support the Fund by visiting rafbf.org/get-involved

DMTS 65 IN 24 CHALLENGE

Three Army service personnel from Defence Movements Training School (DMTS) decided to mark the 31st year of the forming of the Royal Logistic Corps by completing the DMTS 65 in 24 challenge.

Walking from the Cenotaph in London to the RLC Memorial located on Worthy Down Camp in Winchester, they covered a total distance of 65 miles in less than 24hrs to raise money for Combat Stress and awareness of its support for all military personnel.

Following a quick photo at the cenotaph taken by a friendly passer-by, we stepped off at 0830 on Thursday 7 April. Navigating our way out of central London, we took in the sights and bustle of the city as we headed out onto the old London Road A30 heading for Basingstoke, then on towards Winchester along the busy A33.

We marked the route with seven designated stops at varying distances anywhere between 7 and 12 miles where our safety vehicle would meet us so we could replenish water, grab some snacks and conduct the all-important foot admin. The sight of three people sat on camping chairs at service stations or using foam rollers

and massage guns in car parks raised a few eyebrows in the early hours with the locals, but they were supportive.

Working on an average pace of 3mph we made every stop ahead of time, which meant on the night walk we could easily begin to slow down. However, in true military style we continued through the night at a good pace. Even with the weather worsening and the rain getting heavy around 3am, we persevered with aching feet and legs, remaining ahead of schedule the whole way, we completed the challenge in 22hrs and 12 minutes raising a total of £580 for Combat Stress.



EARTH DAY

With the arrival of spring, we were reminded of ways to protect our planet so we celebrated Earth Day on the 22nd April 2024.



1 01 Squadron Charity Committee, as a collective with the theme of Earth Day organised 50 plant pots to be decorated by the 3rd Carterton Brownies group and children from the local community.

Joining all forces; the local Brownies, a group of girls aged 7-10, children from the community who attended the 101 Sqn Charity Easter event and members of the 101 Sqn Charity committee. All plant pots were hand painted and potted with Peace Lilies. All plants were then sold on Station raising awareness for the Sqn's chosen charity SSNAP, Support for Sick Newborns and their Parents. SSNAP is a charity based at the John

Radcliffe Hospital, which is dedicated to supporting the families of sick and premature babies. SSNAP provide both emotional and practical support for families and play an important role in supporting the Paediatric Neuroimaging group's research. With great efforts from everyone, the Sqn managed to gain £300 during this event, pushing the Sqn one step closer towards the £3000 goal to purchase a new incubator for the John Radcliffe Hospital.



101 Sqn Charity Committee team: FS Becky Edwards, Sgt Gemma Connell, Cpl Robyn Hancock, Cpl Charlotte Warcott, A/Cpl Kamie Mellor, A/Cpl Bethany Parker, AS1 Emma Bennett, AS1 Megan Day, AS1 Jade Fitch, AS1 Megan Withers, AS1 Jess Wood and AS1 Candice Stafford



A/Cpl Parker

Flight Of The Giraffes

500 Cuddly Giraffes Take to The Skies.



For the second time RAF Brize Norton has helped raise money for Great Ormond Street Hospital by sending hundreds of cuddly toy giraffes on an air-to-air refuelling mission onboard an RAF Voyager.

Last year, the Giraffes on Tour team raised £4000 by flying 291 giraffes onboard a Voyager, with each toy sponsored for the flight. This year the team upped the passenger capacity to 500 giraffes, flying them on an evening air-to-air refuelling mission. The giraffes are now being sold on the Giraffes on

Tour website with proceeds going to Great Ormond Street. Since the flight sales of giraffes and other merchandise have exceeded £10,000.

Flight Lieutenant Mark Scott, 10 Squadron Voyager pilot said: "The charity's fundraising for Great Ormond Street Hospital has been close to my heart for several years, and it's an honour for me to use a "normal" day at work to help them do something extraordinary. After our successful night air-to-air refuelling training with an Atlas (A400M) we brought the giraffes safely back to



RAF Brize Norton, ready for their next adventures as they get sold to the public, raising even more money. They were all so well behaved during the flight, and I think they enjoyed their night out with the RAF!"

Giraffes On Tour has seen several cuddly giraffes fly in RAF aircraft over the years raising money in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital, in memory of Louise Conway who sadly lost her battle with Leukaemia in 2013.

Giraffes on Tour founder Ian Conway said: "When landing at 2am after spending 24 hours of excitement about the amazing opportunity the RAF has given us, I was hit by the enormity and reality of what this incredible adventure means to so many children and their families at Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital. Our 500 giraffes all had the most amazing time and we do hope that they can find new homes! We at "Giraffes on Tour" cannot thank the RAF enough!"



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AKI 7'S INTERSTATION'S TOURNAMENT

ADVENTURE
& SPORT

The first in history that the men's netball has been included in the Interstation's tournament.

In May, RAF Brize Norton travelled overseas for the first AKI 7's Interstation's tournament. Brize entered a full ladies team; including two male individuals who represented the Coningsby, Brize Norton and Akrotiri team (CBA). Coach Sgt Kirsty Floyd and OIC Sgt Rebecca Cuthbertson played a vital role in preparing both teams in developing the players core skills and creating partnerships between players who compliment with each other on the court.

Enthusiastic and eager to play, the ladies' team had a smashing start to the tournament; defeating RAF Boulmer 12-2, RAF Wyton men's team 15-14 (friendly) and RAF Benson 21-6. The player of the day was AS1 Sam Courtice, for her dominance as a goal shooter and depth of shooting.

Day 2 of the tournament, Brize had another fantastic day with a victory over Joint HQ 18-2, Wyton 19-3 and DHE 17-2. Player of the day tied between AS1 Olivia Towe and Cpl Stevie-Leigh McCall for their numerous interceptions and control through the court.

After a clean sweep of games so far, Team Brize Norton was placed into the Cup Tournament. Competing against the top teams, once again beating Wyton 8-1 and biggest rivals High Wycombe 12-4. Player of the day went to AS1 Maisie Amos for her relentless defending preventing her opponents from entering the shooting circle. To finish another successful day, a bespoke coaching session with RAF Coach Julie Tucker was held to showcase set plays and drills she has implemented into the RAF's first season.

A line dancing social at the rugby club got everyone dancing but that didn't stop the team's footwork going into day 4. Successfully winning against RAF Benson 22-7 and RAF Akrotiri 20-3. The local civilian AKI Team played against the RAF 'All Stars', which included three members from Brize. Selected was Cpl Stevie McCall, AS1 Katie McKenna and AS1 Lindsay Gray. Player of the day went to AS1 Georgia Atkinson for her determination and agility through the court causing the opponents to misplace the ball.



RAF Brize Norton's outstanding performance earned them a place in the first AKI 7s final. Led by team captain Cpl Millie Cooper, Brize had the task of taking on High Wycombe in the 28-degree heat. The final ended with a fantastic score of 12-7 to Brize Norton, making them undefeated champions, bringing the trophy for the 3rd Interstation's tournament in a row. What an amazing achievement, not only for the team but for all those that are representing the Station. The team's player of the tournament was voted AS2 Katie Hutchinson, one of our newest members for her fantastic shooting ability and physical commitment even in hot weather conditions.

The combined men's team (CBA) played RAF Wyton four times and two friendly matches against two of the female teams. Undefeated throughout, they competed in the final and came out on top against RAF Wyton with a unanimous score. The first in history that the men's netball has been included in the Interstation's tournament.

A massive congratulations to both teams and all the players, it was a great performance and experience. A special thank you goes to Sgt Rebecca Cuthbertson, if it wasn't for her outstanding administrative and organisation skills RAF Brize Norton would not have been able to attend AKI 7s tournament.

A promotional poster for the Brize Norton Inter-Section Football League. The top left features the Royal Air Force Football logo, and the top right features the England Football logo. The main title is 'BRIZE NORTON INTER-SECTION FOOTBALL LEAGUE' in large, bold, blue letters. Below the title, it says 'RAF FA AFFILIATED DUTY SPORT. VARIOUS TEAMS ALREADY ENTERED FROM ACROSS CAMP, CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFO'. At the bottom, it lists 'DATE: TUES & THURS 12:00-13:00', 'FORMAT: 11V11, MIXED GENDER', and 'CONTACT: GEORGE.SALLOWAY100@MOD.GOV.UK'. The right side of the poster features a circular inset image of two football players in action on a grass field; one is wearing a white and blue kit with 'Forces Mutual' on the front, and the other is wearing a green kit. The background of the poster is a dark blue sky with white stars.

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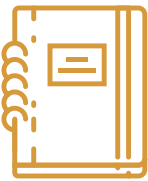


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